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# Assessing the Stability of Elite Political Culture: An Empirical Analysis of the Attitudes of Elected Officials in Canada

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**Canada**



Assessing the Stability of Elite Political Culture  
An Empirical Analysis of the Attitudes of Elected Officials in Canada

By

Lydia Summerlee

*Bachelor of Arts Honours, Queen's University, 2008*

THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Political Science

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

Master of Arts

Wilfrid Laurier University

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## Abstract

Do attitudes of Members of the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> parliament differ on issues of political ethics? Or have attitudes remained unchanged? Based on interviews of 44 members of the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament and 107 members of the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament, this thesis explores attitude shifts across time. The study reveals that in the areas of conflict of interest and patronage attitudes have hardened. Members of Parliament (MPs) from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament are more sensitive to these dimensions of political corruption as opposed to MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament. For ethically charged scenarios dealing with gifts & gains and lying, MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament are more tolerant than MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament. Finally, the thesis calls for future research on potential differences in opinions related to factors such as years of service, regionalism and the role of partisanship.

*“Governments vary as the dispositions of men vary,  
And that there must be as many of the one as there are of the other  
For we cannot suppose that States are made of ‘oak and rock’  
And not out of the human natures which are in them ”  
-Plato’s Republic*

## Table of Contents

<b>LIST OF</b>	
<b>FIGURES</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>TABLES</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>POLITICS AND CULTURE AN EXPLANATORY TOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
CRITIQUES OF POLITICAL CULTURE	5
A SUBCULTURE POLITICAL ELITES	7
TODAY'S ELITE POLITICAL CULTURE	8
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	<b>18</b>
INTRODUCTION	18
RESULTS	19
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>SURVEY RESULTS</b>	<b>30</b>
CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS	31
ETHICAL PRINCIPLES	35
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	<b>43</b>
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	49
GIFTS AND GAINS	51
PATRONAGE	55
LYING	59
HYPOTHESES TESTING	62

**CHAPTER FIVE** **72**

---

PROBLEMS WITH SAMPLES 75

FUTURE RESEARCH 76

**APPENDIX** **79**

---

**THE SURVEY** **79**

**APPENDIX II LETTERS** **90**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** **92**



## List of Figures

### FIGURES

---

FIGURE 2 1 SAMPLE SIZE IN RELATION TO HOUSE OF COMMONS	19
FIGURE 2 2 PARTY REPRESENTATION 1984 SAMPLE AND HOUSE OF COMMONS	20
FIGURE 2 3 PARTY REPRESENTATION FOR THE HOUSE AND 2010 SAMPLE	20
FIGURE 2 4 FEMALE REPRESENTATION OF SAMPLE AND HOUSE	22
FIGURE 2 5 FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN 1984 AND 2010 SAMPLE	23
FIGURE 2 6 ETHICAL STANDARDS OF FEMALE POLITICIANS	23
FIGURE 2 7 ETHICAL STANDARDS OF FEMALE POLITICIANS BY GENDER 2010 SAMPLE	24
FIGURE 2 8 ETHICAL STANDARDS OF FEMALE POLITICIANS BY GENDER 1984 SAMPLE	24
FIGURE 2 9 REPRESENTATION OF 2010 SAMPLE YEARS OF SERVICE	27
FIGURE 2 10 REGIONAL REPRESENTATION	28
FIGURE 3 1 MOST IMPORTANT VALUE	31
FIGURE 3 2 CONFIDENCE IN COURTS	31
FIGURE 3 3 CONFIDENCE IN PARLIAMENT	32
FIGURE 3 4 CONFIDENCE IN CIVIL SERVICE	32
FIGURE 3 5 CONFIDENCE IN PARLIAMENT 2010 SAMPLE BY GENDER AND PARTY AFFILIATION	34
FIGURE 3 6 ETHICAL STANDARDS OF JUDGES	35
FIGURE 3 7 ETHICAL STANDARDS OF MPS	36
FIGURE 3 8 ETHICAL STANDARDS OF CIVIL SERVANTS	37
FIGURE 3 9 ETHICAL STANDARDS OF CIVIL SERVANTS BY PARTY AFFILIATION	37
FIGURE 3 10 IMPROVING STANDARDS IN GOVERNMENT	42
FIGURE 4 6 CONFLICT OF INTEREST SCENARIOS 2010 SAMPLE	50
FIGURE 4 7 CONFLICT OF INTEREST SCENARIOS 1984 SAMPLE	51
FIGURE 4 8 CONFLICT OF INTEREST CONTRACT SCENARIO	51

FIGURE 4 9 GIFTS AND GAINS PRIVATE MORALITY	54
FIGURE 4 10 GIFTS AND GAINS FORCED SCENARIO	55
FIGURE 4 11 GIFTS AND GAINS SCENARIOS 2010 SAMPLE	56
FIGURE 4 12 GIFTS AND GAINS SCENARIOS 1984 SAMPLE	56
FIGURE 4 13 PATRONAGE PRIVATE MORALITY	59
FIGURE 4 14 PATRONAGE SCENARIOS 2010 SAMPLE	59
FIGURE 4 15 PATRONAGE SCENARIOS 1984 SAMPLE	60
FIGURE 4 16 LYING SCENARIOS 2010 SAMPLE	62
FIGURE 4 17 LYING SCENARIOS 1984 SAMPLE	62
FIGURE 5 1 POLITICAL CORRUPTION IS A WIDESPREAD PROBLEM	73

## List of Tables

### TABLE

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TABLE 1 1 MANCUSO'S DIMENSIONAL SCHEMA	12
TABLE 3 1 PRIVATE MORALITY SCENARIOS	38
TABLE 3 2 HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIOS	39
TABLE 4 1 PETERS AND WELCH SCORE ON TEN POTENTIALLY CORRUPT ACTS	46
TABLE 4 2 CORRELATION MATRIX OF PERCEIVED CONFLICT OF INTEREST ITEMS	47
TABLE 4 3 CORRELATION MATRIX OF PERCEIVED GIFTS AND GAINS ITEMS	47
TABLE 4 4 CORRELATION MATRIX OF LYING ITEMS	48
TABLE 4 5 CORRELATION MATRIX OF PATRONAGE ITEMS	48
TABLE 4 6 HYPOTHESES	65
TABLE 4 7 CONFLICT OF INTEREST SCENARIOS MEAN SCORES	67
TABLE 4 8 GIFTS AND GAINS SCENARIOS MEAN SCORES	68
TABLE 4 9 LYING SCENARIOS MEAN SCORES	69
TABLE 4 10 PATRONAGE SCENARIOS MEAN SCORES	70

## Preface

*“Those who serve in government at the turn of the current century are likely to confront an important cultural phenomenon. As they seek to address the major domestic and international problems of this era they will do so in an environment characterized by widespread citizen distrust of government and skepticism about its ability to solve the problems it seeks to address”<sup>1</sup>*

*-Robert J Blendon et al*

The research presented in this thesis will explore whether the current level of apathy and cynicism on behalf of the public is due to the attitudes and behaviour of politicians themselves. As representatives of the public, elected officials ought to adhere to the highest level of ethical standards. Their behaviour is governed by legislation, codes of conduct and ethical guidelines that encourage a system of honesty and transparency. However, unethical behaviour continues to occur within the political system. It is important to understand the attitudes of Canadians in general toward issues of political ethics and the attitudes of elected officials, to answer the fundamental question of where public cynicism, or lack of confidence in government, arises.<sup>2</sup> Could it be there has been a shift in attitudes of elected officials towards issues of political ethics? Is the decline of public confidence in government a recent trend, or is it endemic in the practice of politics? Is this a case of increased awareness of scandals or increased prevalence in unethical behaviour? The

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<sup>1</sup> Blendon, Robert J et al, “Changing Attitudes in America,” in *Why Don't People Trust Government*, edited by Joseph S Nye Jr, Philip D Zelikow and David C King, (London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 205

<sup>2</sup> Blendon et al, 231

challenge is to understand if, and how, attitudes shape or affect public confidence in government

The phenomenon of political corruption occurs beyond the scope of public scrutiny. Since the Pacific Railway Scandal, the appraisal of political corruption has been transferred from the media, who plays the role of public watchdog in exposing unethical behavior, to the systematic study of corruption as part of the political process, whereby academics have complemented the complex understanding of corruption through historical analyses of the political scandals. Recent literature on political ethics has been through survey methodology and focus groups of attitudes. This research has been extended by the addition of the attitudes of journalists and politicians. Studies have also examined legislation created by the political system to govern behaviour and how political culture is essentially shaped by these ethical guidelines. The literature has revealed a divergence among attitudes of the public and elite. What the analysis suggests is that attitudes need to be traced across time to provide substantive recommendations to prevent future abuse of power. By directly probing politicians' attitudes, there is chance that the public and politicians could converge on normative behaviour: how office-holders ought to act and how they ought not to act. Curbing unethical behaviour may help to restore public trust and confidence in government. By tracing the evolution of the study of political corruption in Canada, this thesis will explore value changes of Members of Parliament (MPs) in order to assess and answer questions regarding confidence in government.

Chapter One will define the parameters of political culture and explore its use as an explanatory tool. As an alternative approach to rational choice or new institutionalism, the case will be made for the use of political culture theory in the discipline of political science. Next, the chapter will address the critiques which political culture faces due to its expansive definition and applicability. Political culture will be analyzed further by categorizing and identifying the subculture of elite political culture. The chapter concludes with a description and interpretation of today's elite political culture in Canada.

Chapter Two serves as an introduction to the survey instrument, outlining the collection of data and representativeness of the sample. The strengths and weaknesses of the methodology will be assessed, emphasizing the usefulness of this type of data for future attitudinal studies.

Chapter Three provides descriptive statistics of both sample groups on each question that appears in the survey, and gives a glimpse of the results from comparing attitudes of MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> parliament.

Chapter Four describes the types of ethical dilemmas faced by elected officials in the political system: conflict of interest, gifts and gains, patronage and lying. It is hypothesized that politicians will be less tolerant to scenarios of political corruption in the four dimensions, particularly in the areas of conflicts of interest and gifts and gains. The pattern of political scandals appears to cause a realignment and hardening of attitudes. It would follow that in lieu of a scandal of great magnitude, politicians would be more sensitive to issues of political ethics.

Chapter Five concludes with thoughts on the use of this type of study. What does the data reveal about elite political culture, what part of the story is not being told, and where does the information lead us on the path to understanding political culture in Canada? This data leaves more questions than it answers. Future research needs to assess the impact of regionalism, political experience, age and gender. For example, are attitudes of MPs on the east coast different from those in the West coast? Is there a difference in attitudes across the country? How do previous positions of power and years of service affect attitudes? Are MPs who have been in politics longer more sensitized to political corruption and accept certain acts as part of the political process? Does an MP's previous experience shape attitudes? Does a generational gap exist between MPs? And finally, what role does gender play in the assessment of ethical situations? Women politicians are known to be "political cleaners,"<sup>3</sup> does a difference in attitudes exist between men and women? Due to the limitations of the size and representativeness of both the 1984 and 2010 sample these factors cannot be explored, however future research should employ these independent variables and study their affects on predisposed attitudes.

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<sup>3</sup> Anne Marie Goetz, "Political Cleaners: Women as the Current Anti-Corruption Force," *Development and Change* 38, no. 1 (2007): 89.

## *Chapter One Politics and Culture as an Explanatory Tool*

The discipline of political science has applied various perspectives in analyzing political systems. From the study of tangible measures, such as economic factors in rational choice theory, to a more societal-based theory, which involves the interaction between institutions and society, the political system has been subject to appraisal by a range of approaches. The influential theoretical framework of rational choice theory assumes that actors in a political system will use a cost-benefit analysis that will result in maximum utility, applying an economic perspective to behaviour. The paradigm of new institutionalism shifts the focus to institutions and their interaction with norms and how they affect society. These approaches have either deemphasized the importance of culture, or completely ignored the relevance of cultural factors in explaining the political system and predicting behaviour. The appreciation of culture into the analysis provides a useful explanatory tool in the interpretation of politics and political action. A true understanding of the system is not just about institutions that shape policy or economic factors that constrain or facilitate politics, it requires being fully entrenched in cultural norms and how those expectations unfold in the political arena.



Political culture refers to the collective opinions, attitudes and values of individuals. The perspective attempts to measure attitudes, beliefs and values and how these translate into political behaviour. Theorists understand political culture to mean certain mental predispositions that people hold toward “particular beliefs about how the world works, certain values that they honor, and various practical commitments to which they subscribe”<sup>1</sup>. The foundation of culture is in the shared norms or predispositions that people possess. Different cultures hold distinct values and belief systems, which in turn, shape the political, economic and social landscape.<sup>2</sup>

The concept and definition of culture varies in time and place. As a result of this variation, there is a debate as to what political culture encompasses, whether it remains as predisposed attributes to beliefs and values, or whether it extends beyond these orientations into political actions and reactions. Despite the debate surrounding the contested concept and the lack of a single uniform political culture to analyze, there is a certain commonality in explaining culture, namely that the definition centers on culture as mental *predispositions* or set of *orientations*.

Culture has been used to explain politics for thousands of years. As early as Plato and Aristotle, who examined human nature and the interplay between political structure and culture, to later theorists like Rousseau, who illustrated political

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<sup>1</sup> Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, “The Study of Political Culture,” in *Culture and Politics: A Reader*, edited by Lane Crothers and Charles Lockhart (New York: Library of Congress, 2000), xv

<sup>2</sup> Woshinsky, Oliver H., *Culture and Politics: An Introduction to Mass and Elite Political Behaviour*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 19

culture through *morality, custom and opinion*,<sup>3</sup> cultural explanations have played an integral role in studying politics. Theorists such as Tocqueville have used the categorization of subculture to explain American democracy.<sup>4</sup>

Political culture as a theory gained salience in the 1960s with Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba's publication of the *Civic Culture* which presented patterns of political attitudes in five countries: Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy, and Mexico. The study emphasized that

"individual political orientations must be separated analytically from other kinds of psychological orientations, in order for us to test hypotheses about the relationship between political and other attitudes. We also defined the political culture as the particular incidence of patterns of political orientation in the population of a political system."<sup>5</sup>

Almond and Verba's study was one of the first of its kind to probe directly the interplay between culture and politics. Determining activity reflected in culture provides the possibility to predict political outcomes. In the wake of *Civic Culture*, many other theorists have applied this perspective to the study of political development, the structure and diversity of political culture and individuals in politics, the personality of elected officials within a given culture. This evolution of political culture theory resulted in its popular use as an explanatory tool, especially with the movement toward survey methodology, which allowed for the theory to be more tangible and applicable in explaining the political system, not just a theoretical framework.

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<sup>3</sup> Almond and Verba, *Culture and Politics*, 7

<sup>4</sup> Alexis de Toqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: George Dearborn & Co, 1838)

<sup>5</sup> Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), 32

In application, political culture theory has been used to determine shades of political development. In *Political Culture and Political Development*, Lucian Pye uses the theory of political culture to distinguish development in various democratic countries, asking the question of whether there are certain cultures that promote political development and democratic values. Pye identifies political culture as a combination of sociological factors and views the political system as consisting of two distinct dimensions: individual orientation and experience and structural rules.<sup>6</sup> Although culture is innate at the individual level, the study understands patterns at the aggregate level which make up culture. Based on the differences across cultures, Pye suggests that there is no uniform single political culture, but that all political systems have a distinct culture consisting of norms, values and beliefs. Despite the variation of culture across countries, the subculture of *mass* and *elite* attitudes is apparent in each case study. Political culture literature argues that “the evolution and persistence of mass-based democracy requires the emergence of certain supportive habits and attitudes among the general public.”<sup>7</sup> Elite political culture has a different set of norms and expectations which are governed by formal rules and codes of conduct. Elites will act in a way that conforms to the expectation of the masses, but will also behave in an anticipatory style, calculating behaviour based on what they ought to do, as a representative of the public, and what will happen if they do not act normatively.<sup>8</sup> This type of high-risk political game means

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<sup>6</sup> Lucian Pye, *Political Culture and Political Development*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), 7

<sup>7</sup> Ronald Inglehart, “The Renaissance of Political Culture,” *The American Political Science Review* 82, no. 4 (1988): 1204

<sup>8</sup> Pye, *Political Culture and Political Development*, 7

that elites have more at stake when assessing behaviour and must adhere to the cultural norms

### *Critiques of the Cultural Approach*

Political culture theory has evolved as an approach which is distinct from the economic or new institutionalist perspective. The paradigm focuses on using cultural factors to explain and predict behavioural patterns. Culture can be understood, in the terms of this study, as the aggregate of individual's values, orientations and beliefs.<sup>9</sup> Political culture theory has been used in comparative politics as an explanatory tool, however there exists as with any other paradigm, critiques of the cultural approach, which need to be addressed. Despite these critiques, cultural theory still provides the necessary framework to help in explaining why people act the way they do. "Culture is the basis for social and political identity that affects how people line up and how they act on a wide range of matters."<sup>10</sup> The mounting critiques can be organized into attacks on the soundness and validity of the methodology and on issues of generalizability. As a unit of analysis, culture can encompass a broad range of issues. In its inception, the allowance for such an expansive definition led to a lack of common understanding as to what culture is, and what it is not. This vagueness can be seen as a devastating critique: how can culture be used as a method of analysis if there are no clear,

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<sup>9</sup> Almond, *Culture and Politics: A Reader*, 55-59

<sup>10</sup> Marc Ross, "Culture and Identity in Comparative Political Analysis," in *Culture and Politics: A Reader*, ed. Lane Crothers and Charles Lockhart, (New York: Library of Congress, 2000), 42

identifiable borders, and a lack of what constitutes the core of culture<sup>211</sup> Cultural theorists have defended this attack on the method of analysis by noting that the definition relies on the chosen set of aggregate orientations under study Using culture as a unit of analysis is a situational approach that requires a constant re-tooling of the definition In a sense, this gives cultural theory longevity and flexibility as an explanatory tool, unlike other paradigms, as it is constantly being re-worked Despite the broadness of the definition there still exists a shared understanding on what the core elements of culture are

The second critique examines the comparative nature of culture and its general applicability It does not account for within-versus between-cultural variation <sup>12</sup> This critique returns to the first attack on the vagueness of a definition of culture what orientations or values do people have in common? The answer to this question is not clear An overall “culture” can be established, taking into account aggregate values and orientations of individuals in a given culture, however *within* a culture, predispositions can vary quite substantially Taking the aggregate level of these attitudes does not account for the variation within the culture Not only is there diversity of orientations among individuals within a given culture, there is also variation from culture to culture, discrediting any ability to generalize to the public In terms of culture’s value in a comparative setting, it is difficult as culture can be viewed as a slow-changing entity <sup>13</sup> Understanding culture in this way would require an extensive and costly study The definition of culture allows for some

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<sup>11</sup> Ross, “Culture and Identity in Comparative Political Analysis,” 61

<sup>12</sup> Ibid , 63

<sup>13</sup> Ibid , 64

flexibility against this last critique if cultural theorists claim that culture is defined by the group under analysis, or situationally defined, then there is no threat in terms of time constraints This type of analysis is more of a snapshot of culture and can therefore be re-produced across time

This study clearly defines culture as the aggregate set of individual orientations<sup>14</sup> The subculture identified in the analysis is elites, more specifically attitudes of Members of Parliament (MPs) toward issues of political ethics The study compares attitudes over time, by analyzing samples of MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> parliament to see whether attitudes have changed have MPs attitudes' hardened, or are they more tolerant toward ethically charged situations and resulting behaviour?

#### *A Subculture Elite Political Culture*

Elite political culture requires a full understanding of ideology, operational codes and political behaviour Culture is deeply entrenched in political systems and political structures, more specifically among political actors In this sense, culture is normative as it dictates how elected officials ought to behave Elite political culture, as a subculture, can be used as a perspective to analyze different political phenomenon As representatives of the people, elected officials have a more

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<sup>14</sup> Almond and Verba, *Culture and Politics*, 55

complex web of decision making that is very different from mass political culture <sup>15</sup> It is becoming increasingly relevant to study elite political culture and the personality of politicians because their actions are a direct result of their predisposed set of orientations. Knowing how attitudes are shaped across time gains insight into behaviour and misbehaviour. In its capacity as an explanatory tool, elite political culture has been applied to the systematic study of political systems across the world. In Canada, Mancuso and Atkinson probed the question of elite political culture through interviews with a sample of backbench MPs. In particular they were interested in legislators' informal codes of conduct. <sup>16</sup> The study found that no single elite political culture of corruption existed in Canada and that the difference in attitudes can be attributed to factors such as partisanship, political experience and spatial cleavages. This research and the nature of elite political culture itself, requires a substantive and in depth analysis into the differences and similarities that exist within the subculture.

### *Today's Elite Political Culture*

The Canadian political system is not immune to the dichotomy of elite and mass cultures. The distinction between the two subcultures is apparent in the formation of norms and expectations. Elites are understood in this context to be the elected officials and are required to fulfill the expectations of the public, while

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<sup>15</sup> Robert Putnam, "Studying Elite Political Culture: The Case of Ideology and Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971), 652.

<sup>16</sup> Maureen Mancuso and Michael Atkinson, "Do We Need a Code of Conduct for Politicians? The Search for an Elite Political Culture of Corruption in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 18, no. 3 (1985), 459.

operating in the public and private domain. Politicians are the only actors within the political system who perform this dual role. Both the private and public domain require a unique set of judgments in ethically charged situations. The domains are not separated by a definitive boundary, however "situations are more rooted in one realm than the other"<sup>17</sup>. Unethical behaviour within the private realm is more discrete and complex. Mancuso distinguishes between the private and public domain in "Contexts in Conflict: Public and Private Components of Assessment in Ethical Judgements". Focus groups were conducted to discuss issues of ethics, in particular instances of political corruption. Using the same survey published in *A Question of Ethics* and also used in this thesis, the focus groups were designed to illicit opinions and attitudes for different ethical dimensions. Hypothetical scenarios were posed to the groups that dealt with varying degrees of corruption and the results were used to distinguish which scenarios, whether in the public or private sphere (or straddling both domains), were more tolerated and which were judged more harshly.

The hypothetical scenarios discussed within the focus groups fall into four categories: conflict of interest, gifts and gains, lying and patronage. In *Honest Politics: Seeking Integrity in Public Office*, Greene and Shugarman distinguish between real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. A real conflict of interest occurs when a politician is "knowingly being in a position to make a private profit

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<sup>17</sup> Maureen Mancuso, "Contexts in Conflict: Public and Private Components of Assessment in Ethical Judgements," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39, no. 2 (2005), 201.



from public office and continuing in that situation”<sup>18</sup> An apparent conflict exists when there is reason to believe that private interests may compromise the performance of an elected official’s duty<sup>19</sup> Potential conflicts of interest are scenarios which have the capacity to evolve into real conflicts The intention of written rules and codes is to avoid potential conflicts The three types of conflicts are all equally unacceptable politicians’ actions should fall in line with the interests of the public The second dimension involves politicians accepting gifts and gains Gifts can take the form of small tokens of appreciation, for example from a constituent to their local representative, to more substantial financial contributions in the form of pay-offs or bribes Gains are understood to be any perks, privileges or special benefits that politicians receive, which they are not necessarily entitled to The third dimension is the practice of patronage This occurs when political parties, or their representatives, reward friends and supporters, violating any sense of equality or codes of conduct<sup>20</sup> The final dimension is lying, or being dishonest There are all types of lies told, some with extenuating circumstances, and all with varying degrees of severity, such as lies of omission or broken campaign promises

Mancuso’s analysis emphasizes the salience of situating these ethical dimensions in the public or private realm, to allow for the ability to predict how the public will perceive the activities The survey used in the focus groups involved two degrees of conflict sharing and exclusive The first involved an MP voting in favour

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<sup>18</sup> Ian Greene and David P Shugarman, *Honest Politics Seeking Integrity in Canadian Public Life*, (Toronto Lorimer, 1997), 63

<sup>19</sup> Ibid , 63

<sup>20</sup> Ibid , 45

of legislation that would be mutually beneficial. The second scenario dealt with a Minister in a position of personal benefit.<sup>21</sup> In each of these scenarios there appears to be no clear distinction between the public and private realm as both are mutually beneficial scenarios. The exclusive conflict of interest scenarios dealt with elite appointments at the expense of the public.<sup>22</sup> The focus groups indicated that of the two degrees of conflict, the scenarios that involved some sharing between the public and politicians were more acceptable, while exclusive deals made to blatantly benefit politicians were viewed more harshly. **Table 1.1** outlines the scale of acceptability and unacceptability of the ethical dimensions, adapted from Mancuso's "Contexts in Conflict"

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<sup>21</sup> Q15 "An MP owns a local clothing store, he votes in favour of legislation to provide loans to small business" Q 18 "The Minister of Agriculture owns a large farm"

<sup>22</sup> Q 19 "The Minister of Tourism owns a large hotel" Q 21 "A senator who has no other outside employment, agrees to serve as a corporate director for a small fee"

Table 1 1 Mancuso's Dimensional Schema

Acceptability and Unacceptability

**ACCEPTABLE**

*Public Conflict  
of Interest (Sharing)*

*Private Lying*

*Private / Low-Profile Patronage*

**UNACCEPTABLE**

*Private Conflict  
of Interest (Exclusivity)*

*Public Lying*

*Public Patronage*

*\*Gifts and Gains – straddles both public and private  
distinction between public cost vs private benefit*

*\*Table is adapted from Mancuso's article "Contexts in Conflict"*

The second dimension dealt with issues of lying in the public and private realm. The respondents from the focus groups were asked questions that involved a range of lies from a protective lie<sup>23</sup> to a broken campaign promise<sup>24</sup> and finally, a lie of omission<sup>25</sup>. The focus groups indicated that the instance of the lie told in

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<sup>23</sup> Q27 "A Cabinet Minister learns his deputy minister is being secretly investigated by the RCMP. To protect the reputation of his deputy, the minister claims to know nothing about the investigation when asked in Parliament."

<sup>24</sup> Q 25 "During an election campaign, a political party promises not to close any hospital. After the election the party finds it must close one hospital because of its deficit reduction plan."

<sup>25</sup> Q 40 "The Minister of Finance is scheduled to make a major speech to international investors about the Canadian economy. At the last minute he learns that the deficit is much larger than expected. Should the minister (a) present the

Parliament to protect the deputy was the least tolerated of all the scenarios. The second scenario regarding the broken campaign promise is not a new concept in politics, there was little tolerance for this question and responses evoked considerable debate around election promises and how both the public and politicians perceive them. The most tolerated of all the lies was the scenario involving the economic issues. Respondents were more forgiving of this scenario on the understanding that economic situations can change without warning. Each lie is rooted in either the public or private domain, but as a direct result of the public-private nature of the lives of politicians, lies straddle both domains.

The third dimension involved the issue of patronage in the public and private domain. Both politicians and the public judge patronage differently. For example, politicians view the appointment of a "like-minded" person as representing their common interests or goals, whereas the public might misjudge these types of appointments as elites favouring friends over other qualified candidates, or unequal treatment. The focus groups were asked questions involving various political appointments.<sup>26</sup> The first was the appointment, made by the Prime Minister, to head the CBC. This scenario was viewed the most harshly, for reasons mentioned earlier. The situation involving the appointment of the campaign worker was more tolerated, perhaps because it emphasized the fact that the worker was fully

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current deficit estimates, (b) cancel his speech, (c) make the speech, and say nothing about the deficit.

<sup>26</sup> Q 9 "The Prime Minister appoints a loyal party supporter to head the CBC." Q 11 "A campaign worker is rewarded with a government job for which he is fully qualified." Q 30 regarding the appointment of the judge was used in the focus groups, however the results will not be discussed as the method of appointment for judges has changed and the situation is therefore not applicable to the paper.

qualified Mancuso distinguishes between the upper and lower levels of patronage exemplified by these two questions. Issues of patronage that are less visible, the campaign worker, are more tolerated, whereas scenarios of high profile patronage, the appointment of the head of the CBC, are more public and therefore likely to be criticized.

The final dimension of gifts and gains alludes to a more complicated relationship than the other dimensions. In dealing with these scenarios involving accepting gift, or perks and privileges, politicians calculate both the public cost and private benefit.<sup>27</sup> The assessment of the situation depends on the type of gain or value associated with the gift. Accepting gifts such as a bottle of wine are part and parcel of the political process and are viewed as more of a token of appreciation than a bribe. Equating valuable gifts, such as the carving scenario<sup>28</sup> to personal gain is an unacceptable abuse of office.

Unpacking how these ethically charged situations are perceived outlines what is required of politicians, who are distinguished from the mass by their role in both the public and private domain. In *Honest Politics*, Greene and Shugarman underscore that an

“ethical approach to democratic politics is one where political actors are expected to make principled decisions based on mutual respect. If they put personal gain or the interests of political friends ahead of public interest, they have acted unethically by abusing the trust placed in them. Even if they

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<sup>27</sup> Mancuso, “Contexts in Conflict,” 198

<sup>28</sup> Q 14 “On a trip to the Northwest Territories, a cabinet minister meets with a group of local artists who present him with a valuable carving. On his return, he displays the carving in his home.”

behave dishonestly while believing their behaviour is in the public interest, there is an ethical lapse ”<sup>29</sup>

There are normative expectations accompanying any positions of power. Public office holders are elected on the assumption that they will represent the interests of the public and therefore must consciously avoid instances of political corruption. It is clear that behaviour that deviates from these expectations threatens public confidence in government.

It is important to understand elite attitudes and behaviour in order to explore the expectations and normative behaviour in the context of political ethics. There are certain rules and guidelines which govern behaviour and outline appropriate conduct. Ethically charged situations which operate in the infamous “grey-zone” are not accompanied by a set of written rules. It is in these situations that elected officials are required to make decisions based on the interest of the public. When misbehaviour occurs and private interests trump public interest, the result is a loss of trust in elected officials and by extension a lack of confidence in the political system.

Types of unethical behaviour which fall under the umbrella of the “grey-zone” are manifest in political scandals such as the Sponsorship Scandal. The infamous Sponsorship Scandal began with the narrow margin of votes on a question of secession in the Quebec Referendum on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1995. With 49.4% agreeing that Quebec should separate from Canada there was a need for the federal

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<sup>29</sup> Ian Greene and David P. Shugarman, *Honest Politics: Seeking Integrity in Canadian Public Life*, (1997) 21

government to push for a strong unified country<sup>30</sup> Then-Prime Minister Chrétien appointed Chuck Guité to create sponsorship programs to boost federal presence and a unified Canada in the province of Quebec. The programs ran from 1994 to 2000 and were contracted through advertising agency work. In February 2000 an audit of the programs was conducted revealing \$332 million dollars worth of special programs and sponsorships funded by the government of Canada, with 44.4% of this money (or \$147 million) spent on fees and commissions paid to advertising and communication agencies.<sup>31</sup> Through elaborate kickback schemes, the funds were severely misused at the expense of the public purse. The result was devastating for the Liberals, costing them the election in 2006, and giving the Conservatives a minority government. Prime Minister Harper and his Conservatives promised to establish a more open, honest and transparent government in lieu of the Sponsorship Scandal, with a piece of legislation to strictly govern actions of elected officials. The Federal Accountability Act was introduced in 2006 with the idea of creating

“a current culture of accountability that will change forever the way business is done in Ottawa. Canadians have every right to expect that public office holders and public sector employees will be guided by the highest standards of ethical conduct. Recent political scandals – notably those concerning government sponsorship and advertising activities – have contributed to a further erosion of Canadians’ trust and confidence in government, and have brought issues of accountability, transparency, and integrity to the forefront of public discussion and debate. This Action Plan

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<sup>30</sup> Speech from the Throne to Open the Second Session of the Thirty-Fifth Parliament of Canada, accessed online < <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=information&sub=publications&doc=sft-ddt/1996-eng.htm> >

<sup>31</sup> Gomery Inquiry, “History of the Sponsorship Program,” accessed online <[www.cbc.ca/currents/background/groupaction/report/ES\\_history\\_v01.pdf](http://www.cbc.ca/currents/background/groupaction/report/ES_history_v01.pdf)>

represents the Government of Canada's response to those concerns. It is a blueprint for more accountable, open and ethical government."<sup>32</sup>

There is a strong debate as to whether increased legislation could curb unethical behaviour. Atkinson and Bierling note that investing time, money and resources into increasing regulation will not work to reduce the existing gap between what the public expects and how politicians behave on matters of political ethics.<sup>33</sup> Regulations created to solve the problem of ethical scandals have been a haphazard process, which ultimately lead to an uninformed understanding of the development of a concrete and effective set of standards.<sup>34</sup> Regulation has the ability to manage "routine ethical requirements, but it will not reduce episodes of ethical theatre."<sup>35</sup> The research presented in this paper emphasizes the need for substantive studies of the attitudes of elected officials toward political ethics.

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<sup>32</sup> Prime Minister Stephen Harper in *Federal Accountability Act* accessed online <[www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1096](http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1096)>

<sup>33</sup> Atkinson and Bierling, 1004

<sup>34</sup> Maureen Mancuso, "Contexts in Conflict: Public and Private Components of Assessment in Ethical Judgements," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39, no. 2 (2005) 179

<sup>35</sup> Atkinson and Bierling, 1004

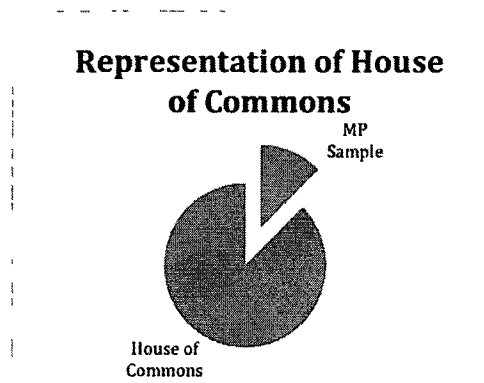


## *Chapter Two An Attitudinal Approach to Ethics*

Survey methodology was employed to probe attitudes of elites toward issues of political ethics in Canada. The survey used in this study was created by Mancuso et al. and published in *A Question of Ethics*. It was the first of its kind to directly measure attitudes of the public, journalists and politicians, toward issues of political ethics in Canada. This study seeks to expand the existing literature on attitudes toward political ethics and elite political culture in Canada by comparing a sample of Members of Parliament (MPs) from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament and a sample of MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament to assess whether or not there has been a change in attitudes.

First, a pre-test was conducted among five former MPs to test the validity of the survey questions. Since the initial survey was conducted over ten years ago, the pre-test was conducted to ensure that the questions were still measuring what they were intended to measure. A few questions were adjusted to account for changes to the political system. Next, members of the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament were chosen at random to participate in the survey. MPs were contacted by mail asking them to participate in the survey. The letters were followed up by calls to either the constituency or Parliament Hill to set up an interview. The shortest phone interviews lasted twenty minutes and the longest interview lasted forty-five minutes.

Representation of the 2010 sample size can be understood in terms of the sample's representativeness to the House of Commons, the sample's party affiliation, years of service, gender and regional representation. Are these factors likely to predispose MPs attitudes? The 2010 sample size included forty-four Members of Parliament, shown in **Figure 2.1**. The small size of the 2010 sample (with less than fifty respondents) creates a potential problem of low statistical power, however the research provides a framework for future studies.



**Figure 2 1 Sample Size in relation to House of Commons**

## Party Representation: Former Sample and House of Commons

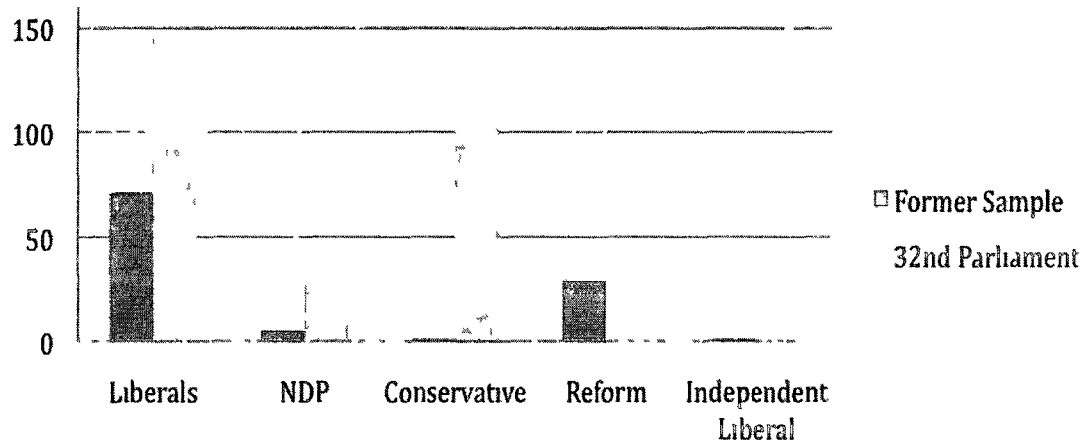


Figure 2 2<sup>36</sup>

## Party Representation

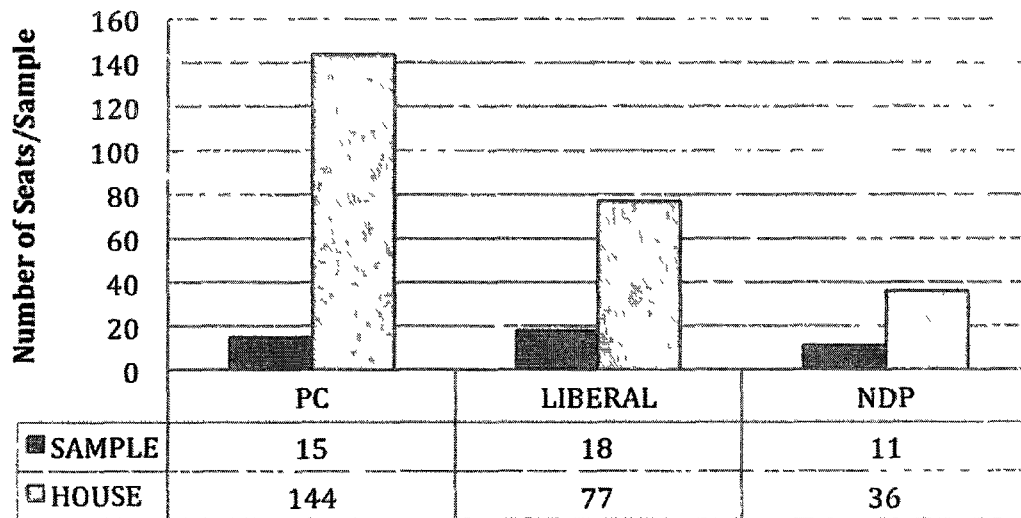


Figure 2 3

<sup>36</sup> The 1984 sample included interviews with MLAs, MPs, Senators, Journalists and the Public. The 1984 sample used for this study selected the MPs cases to analyze and compare with the 2010 sample of MPs.

The break down of party affiliation included fifteen Conservatives, eighteen Liberals and eleven New Democrats Mancuso and Atkinson suggest that differences in party affiliation and the party's proximity to power are political variables worth exploring in relation to the predisposition of attitudes toward political corruption The origins of both the New Democrats and the Conservatives could be reflected in how tolerant or intolerant their attitudes are, inferring that the "Conservatives are likely to be the most tolerant of corrupt acts, the New Democrats the least tolerant and Liberals somewhere in between"<sup>37</sup> Party proximity to power may also affect the evaluation of corrupt acts, with those who are in positions of power being able to participate in political corruption and therefore making them more tolerant<sup>38</sup>

**Figure 2.3** shows the 2010 sample in reference to the seats in the House of Commons, with the sample representing 34% of the Conservative seats, 23% of the Liberal seats and 31% of New Democrats seats The 1984 sample, in **Figure 2.2**, consisted of a majority of Liberal respondents The 2010 sample of MPs included fourteen women, representing 32% of the test group as shown in **Figure 2.4** This sample is being compared to the current make-up of the House of Commons, of which only 22% are women Therefore, it is important to note upfront, that the 2010 sample has an over representation of women, which could present a potential bias in the results Studies have shown that women have a higher moral nature and "an assumed propensity to bring this to bear on public life, and particularly on the

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<sup>37</sup> Mancuso and Atkinson, "Do We Need A Code of Conduct for Politicians", 475

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 475

conduct of politics”<sup>39</sup> Women may have been more inclined to participate in the study because of this sensitivity to high moral and ethical standards **Figure 2.5** shows that in the 1984 sample of politicians, women only represented 2% of the sample as compared to the 2010 sample with 32% women

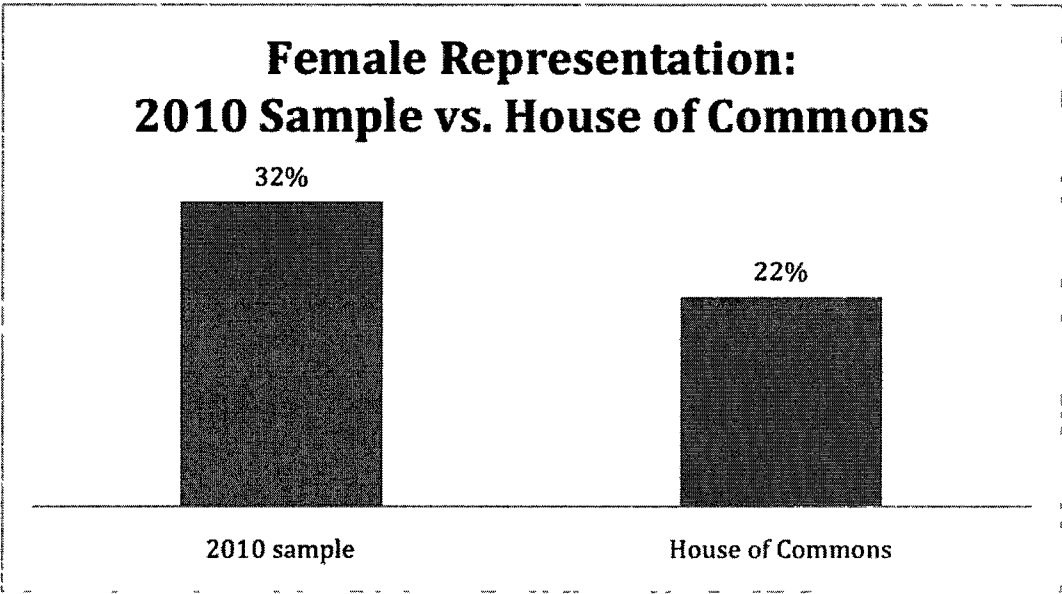


Figure 2 4

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<sup>39</sup> Anne Marie Goetz, "Political Cleaners Women as the Current Anti-Corruption Force," *Development and Change* 38, no 1 (2007) 89

## Female Representation: 2010 and 1984 Sample

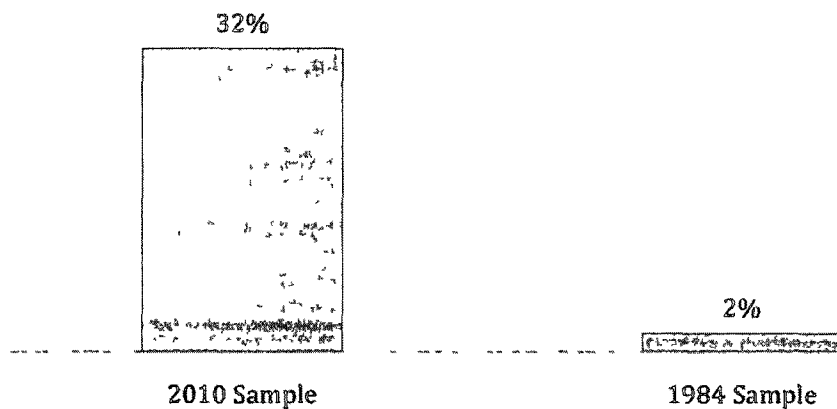


Figure 2 5

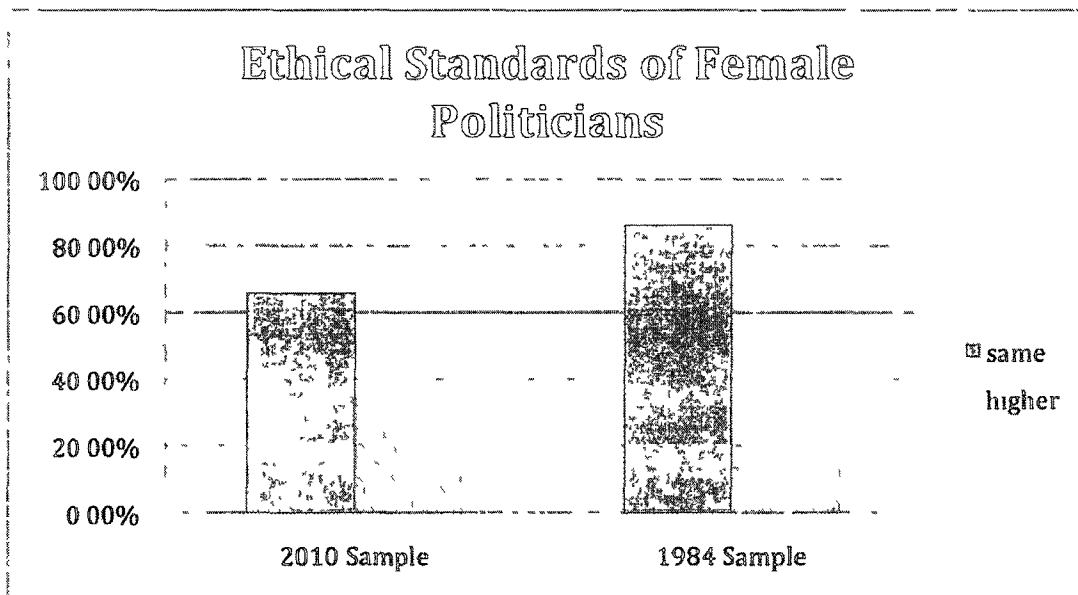


Figure 2 6

## Ethical Standards of Female Politicians: Current Sample by Gender

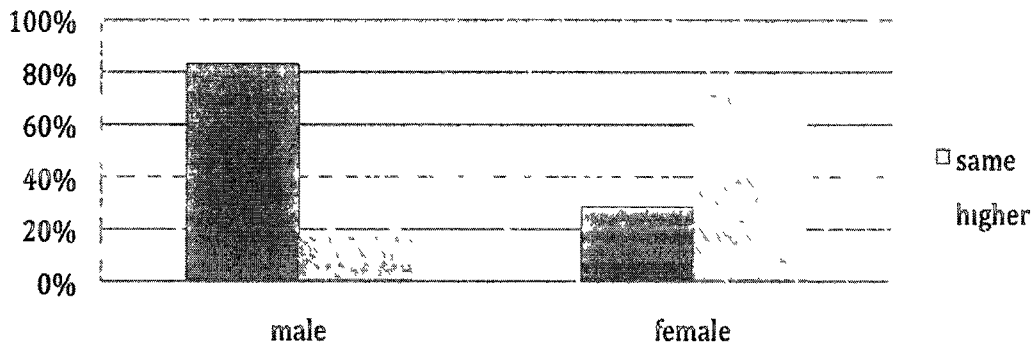


Figure 2 7 2010 Sample by Gender

## Ethical Standards of Female Politicians: Former Sample by Gender

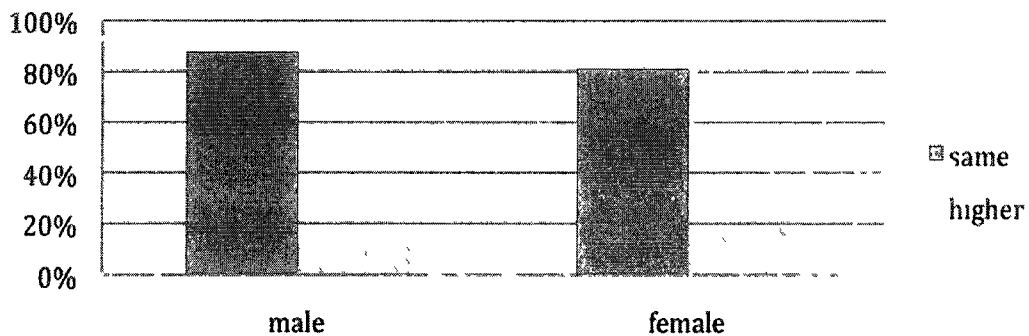


Figure 2 8 1984 Sample by Gender

Figure 2.6 shows the responses from both the 1984 and 2010 sample on the question of whether the ethical standards of women politicians are higher, lower or

about the same as male politicians<sup>40</sup> **Figure 2.7** and **Figure 2.8** give the gender break down for this question by sample. Females in both samples were more likely to think fellow female MPs had the same or higher ethical standards than male politicians. More of the female MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament believed that the ethical standards of other female politicians were higher, with 71.4% of the sample favouring this response as opposed to 18.8% of the 1984 sample.<sup>41</sup> It is difficult to attribute this shift in attitudes as true over time or as a result of over representation of women in the 2010 sample. Are female politicians really less tolerant than their male counterparts?<sup>42</sup>

Could years of service be a determinant in shaping attitudes of politicians? It would be expected that those MPs who have spent a longer amount of time in government are more familiar with the system, and are therefore conditioned by

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<sup>40</sup> A cross-tab was run on the question of whether ethical standards of female politicians are higher, lower or about the same as their male counterparts (Q57, See Appendix I for specific question wording). The shift in attitudes here is statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). The Pearson's Chi-Square is 8.180, and Cramer's V score is 0.236. Subsequent tests were run to compare the proportions difference in the cross-tab cells. The tests indicated that the 'same' category shows a statistically significant difference in proportions (2.41) and the 'higher' category is approaching a statistically significant difference (-1.39).

<sup>41</sup> The cross-tabs for the 2010 sample (using gender as the dependent variable) indicate that the difference in attitudes between male and female is statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) with a Pearson's Chi-Square value of 12.740. The proportions show a statistically significant difference in proportions for the 'same' category ( $z = 2.15$ ) and the 'higher' category ( $z = -2.11$ ). For the 1984 sample the difference between gender was not statistically significant.

<sup>42</sup> Gender was not used as a potential explanatory variable in this study as the representation of women in the 1984 sample was under represented (2%) and for the 2010 sample, women are over-represented as compared to the composition of the House of Commons.



their environment<sup>43</sup> It would follow then, that established MPs would be more tolerant in ethically charged situations<sup>44</sup> Experienced MPs would also be familiar with rules and might be more aware of potential loopholes Along the same vein of thinking, new MPs would conform more meticulously to the rules and codes of conduct The difference in years could be a factor in determining attitudes and opinions of elected officials<sup>45</sup>

The 2010 sample included MPs who are presently serving in the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament (November 2008) to those who have been in power since the 36<sup>th</sup> parliament (September 1997) **Figure 2.9** shows the percentage of respondents' years of service The average number of terms served is 2.57 years Most of the respondents have served either in the current parliament or three parliaments (29.5%)

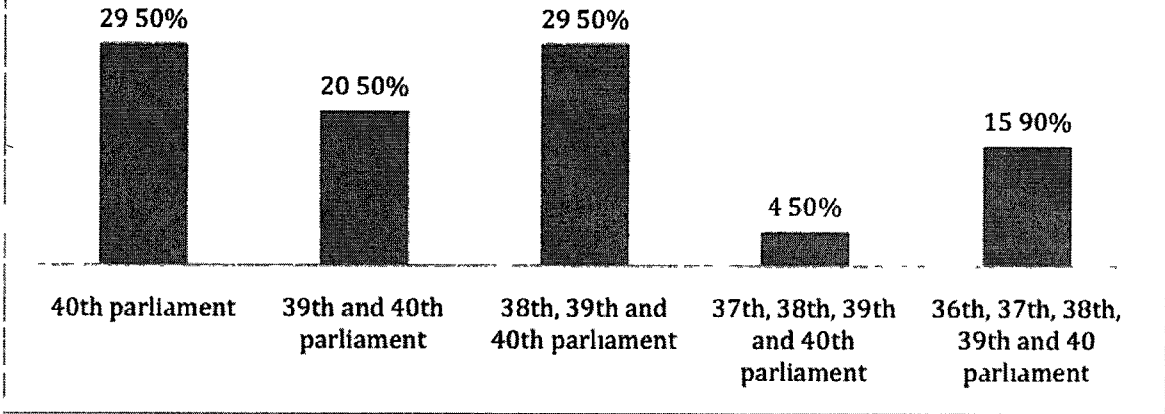
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<sup>43</sup> Mancuso and Atkinson, "Do We Need a Code of Conduct for Politicians?", 479

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 479

<sup>45</sup> The years of service was recoded into 'young' and 'established' MPs Those in the young category served one or two terms (N=22) and established MPs served three or more terms (N=22) Means tests were run for the conflict of interest, gifts and gains, patronage and lying scenario None of the mean differences were statistically significant except for one of the lying scenarios (Q7) The mean score for the young MPs was 7.23, acceptable, whereas the mean score for the established MPs was 3.86 (a mean difference of 3.364, statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ )

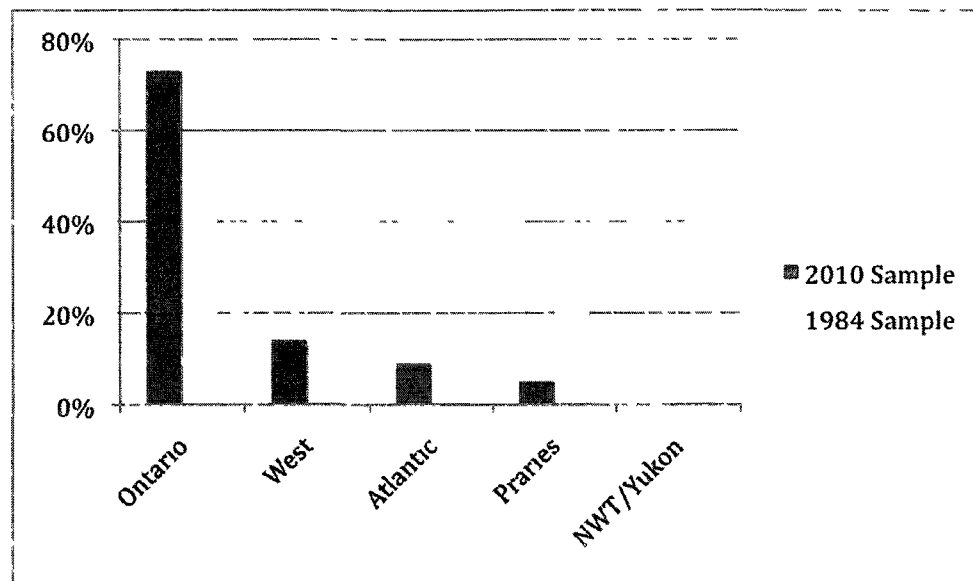
## Years of Service: The 2010 Sample



**Figure 2.9 Years of Service**

The regional representation of both the 2010 and 1984 sample is detailed in **Figure 2.10**. Respondents were mostly from Ontario in both samples. 50% of 1984 sample were from Ontario, while 73% of the 2010 sample surveyed were from Ontario. The North West Territories, the Yukon and Quebec were not represented in the 2010 sample. As a result of the discrepancy between Ontario and all other regions, including those parts of Canada not included, regionalism cannot be used as an explanatory factor of predisposed attitudes.

**Figure 2.10** 2010 and 1984 Sample Regional Representation



Age is another socio-demographic factor that could be used to explain the formation of attitudes. It would be expected that, similar to the affect of political experience, that older respondents would be more tolerant than their younger counterparts<sup>46</sup>. The average age of the 1984 sample was 53 years old, with respondents ranging from 34 years to 68 years old. The age distribution for the 2010 sample ranged from 35 years to 68 years old, with an average age of 55 years old<sup>47</sup>.

Education, occupation prior to entering politics, and religious affiliation are other socio-economic variables that could function in the formation of attitudes. Are

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<sup>46</sup> Mancuso and Atkinson, "Do We Need a Code of Conduct for Politicians?", 479

<sup>47</sup> This variable was not explored in this research due to limitations in sample size and issues of over and under-representation. However, it is these types of socio-economic factors that could be used in future research to understand the predictive capacity of an elite political culture of corruption.

elites attitudes influenced by these socio-economic factors or is there a parliamentary socialization process at work?

### *Chapter Three Descriptive Statistics*

The attitudinal approach employed in studying ethics and political corruption is useful in that it provides tangible measures to expand the already existing theoretical frameworks. The survey instrument used in this research has been adapted from an American study<sup>48</sup>. Mancuso et al., developed an extensive survey, published in *A Question of Ethics: Canadians Speak Out*, based in the Peters and Welch methodology, to provide an ethical snapshot of Canadian attitudes.

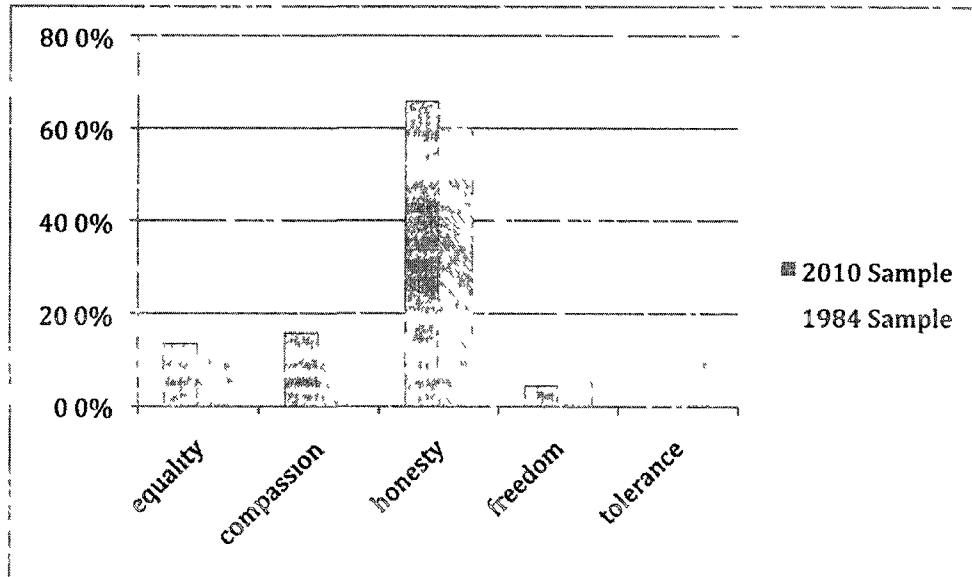
The initial survey questions were intended to create an ethical baseline comparison of the 1984 and 2010 samples. First, participants were asked to select their most important value. In **Figure 3.1**, honesty is ranked as the most important value with 60.2% of MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament and 65.9% of MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament giving this response priority.<sup>49</sup>

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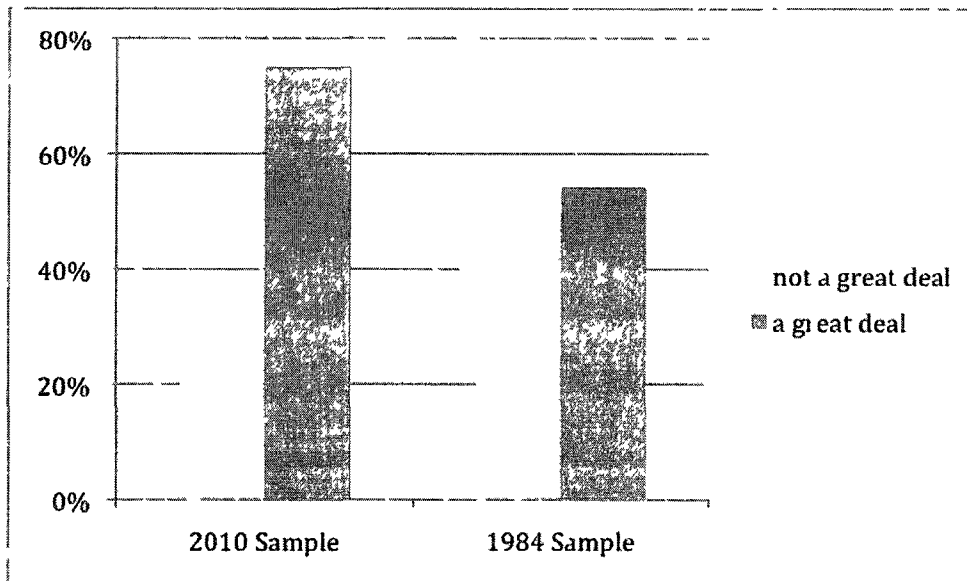
<sup>48</sup> The dimensional schema to study political corruption in this manner was first introduced by Peters and Welch in "Political Corruption in America." The scale was adapted to the Canadian context by Mancuso and administered to politicians, the public and journalists.

<sup>49</sup> A cross tab was run to look at the difference in attitudes between 2010 and 1984 sample. There was no statistically significant change in values produced by the cross tab, or by subsequent proportions tests.

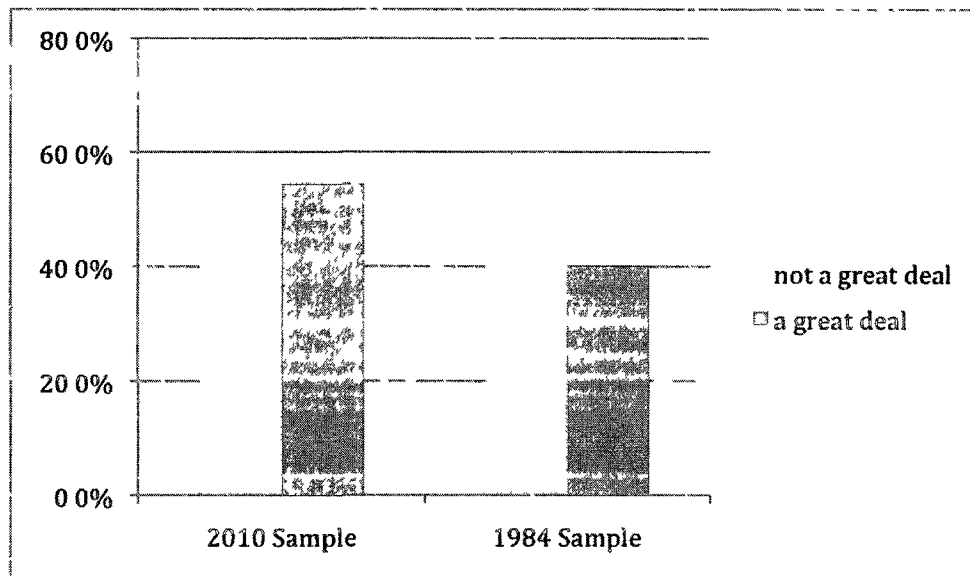
**Figure 3.1 2010 Sample Most Important Value**



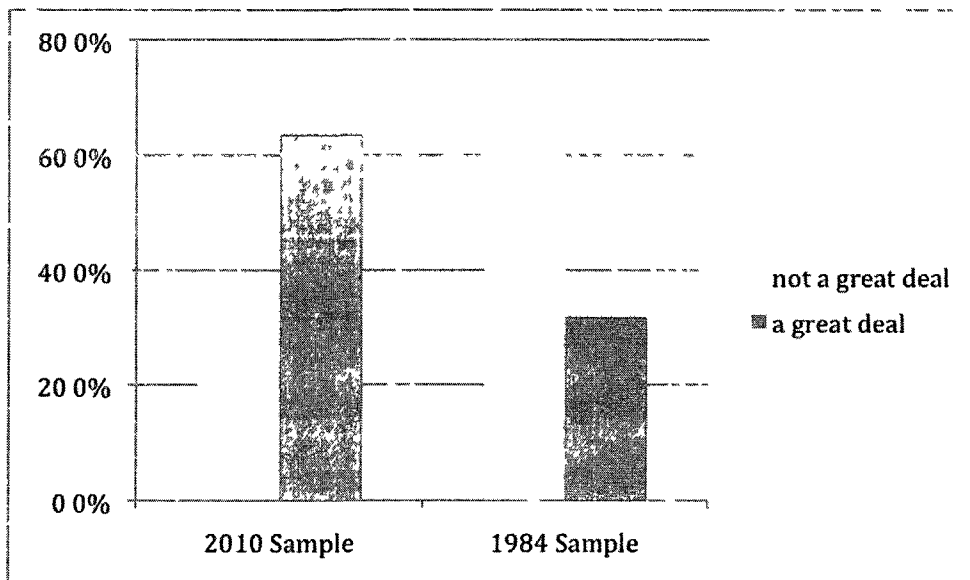
**Figure 3.2 Confidence in Courts**



**Figure 3.3 Confidence in Parliament** <sup>50</sup>



**Figure 3.4 Confidence in Civil Service**



<sup>50</sup> The descriptive statistics produced in the cross-tab for this question do not indicate a statistically significant change in attitudes (sig=0.107)

Next, respondents were asked how much confidence they had in various political institutions. There were four categories to choose from: a great deal, some, a little, or none at all. The answers were recoded into two categories in order to run descriptive statistics. The first category was 'a great deal' (which only included those who answered 'a great deal') and the second category was simply, 'not a great deal' (this included the 'some', 'a little', and 'none at all' categories from the original survey). The data indicated that the 2010 sample had more confidence in the courts, with 75% of the MPs responding 'a great deal,' as compared to 54.2% of the 1984 sample (**Figure 3.2**)<sup>51</sup>. MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament also have more confidence in the civil service (63.6%) as opposed to MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament (31.8%) shown in **Figure 3.4**<sup>52</sup>. Low levels of confidence in senate still remain, with both samples overwhelmingly responding 'not a great deal'. Confidence in parliament has increased, with 54.5% of MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament having a great deal of confidence, while only 40.2% of MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament held this view (**Figure 3.3**). Further cross-tabs were run within the 2010 sample group to explore confidence with party affiliation and gender as the dependent variable (**Figure**

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<sup>51</sup> The descriptive statistics from the cross-tab show a statistically significant difference in attitudes for confidence in the courts ( $p < 0.05$ ). The Pearson's Chi-Square is 5.630. The proportions tests also show that there is a statistically significant difference in proportions for the 'great deal' category (-1.95), and approaching statistical significance for the 'not a great deal' category (1.27).

<sup>52</sup> The cross-tab produced a statistically significant change in attitudes here ( $p < 0.001$ ), with a Pearson's Chi-Square value of 13.078. The proportions tests indicate that both categories approach statistically significant difference in proportions for the 99% confidence interval. The difference in proportions for the 'not a great deal' category was 2.35, and for the 'great deal' category was -2.54.



3.5)<sup>53</sup> Females hold more confidence in parliament (57.1%) than males (53.3%) Differences among the three parties indicate that Conservatives hold the most confidence in parliament (53.3%) and NDPs the least (36.4%) It is as expected that Conservatives, as the minority government would hold more confidence in parliament as compared to the opposition

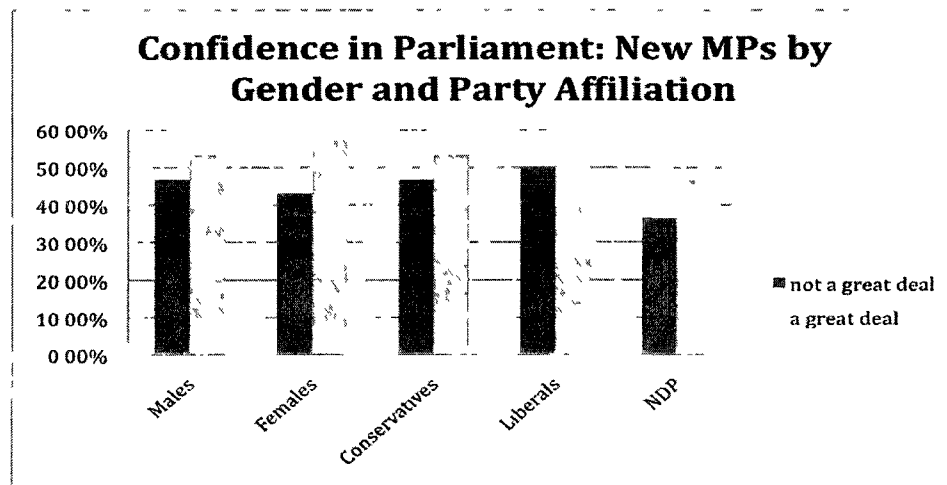


Figure 3.5

The next set of baseline questions probed respondent's assessment of the ethical principles of officials, fellow Members of Parliament and civil servants in Canada **Figure 3.6** and **Figure 3.7** show no significant changes in attitudes regarding the ethical principles of judges and MPs<sup>54</sup> MP from both samples felt their colleagues held the same ethical standards as the average person The assessment of the ethical principles of civil servants by the 1984 sample was concentrated in the

<sup>53</sup> The cross-tabs for the party affiliation produced a small cell count for the NDPs and therefore it is not possible to assume this shift in attitudes would be observed among all MPs in general The results from the cross-tab using gender as the dependent variable does not produce statistically significant changes in attitudes

<sup>54</sup> The cross-tab results do not indicate a statistically significant change in attitudes between 2010 and 1984 sample for the assessment of the ethical standards of judges (sig=0.767) and MPs (0.999)

category of 'about the same' (85.7%)<sup>55</sup> The party breakdown of the 2010 sample reveals that the concentration of 'lower' ethical principles of civil servants is held mostly by Conservatives (20%) and only 5.6% by the Liberals, and 0% of NDPs, indicating distrust on the part of Conservatives<sup>56</sup>

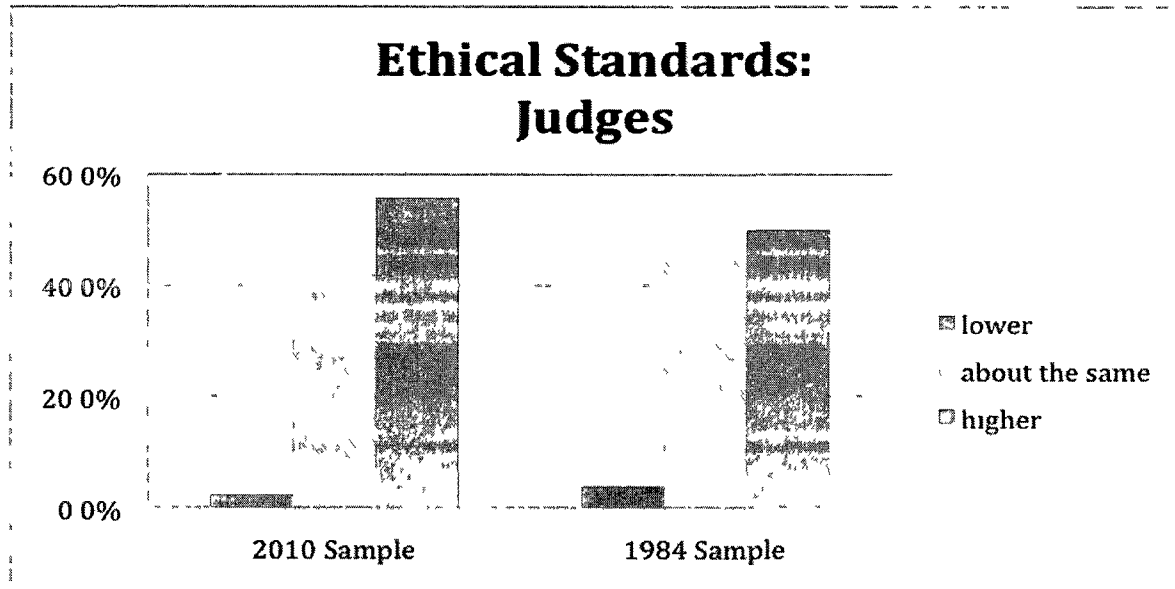


Figure 3.6

<sup>55</sup> The results from the crosstab run for the ethical standards of civil servants yielded a statistically significant score at the  $p < 0.05$  ( $P = 6429$  and  $N = 149$ ). Due to the small sample size, the lower than average category, for both the 2010 and 1984 sample, had a cell count less than 5, therefore it is not possible to assume this shift in attitudes would be observed among all MPs in general.

<sup>56</sup> The partisan differences here are not statistically significant ( $0.191$ ) and an issue of small cell counts appears in this crosstab.

## Ethical Standards: MPs

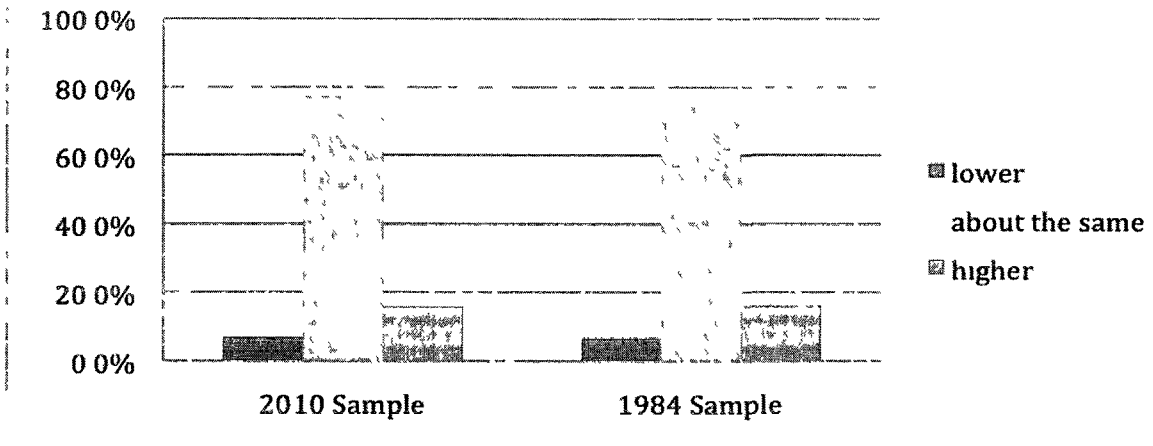


Figure 3 7

## Ethical Standards: Civil Servants

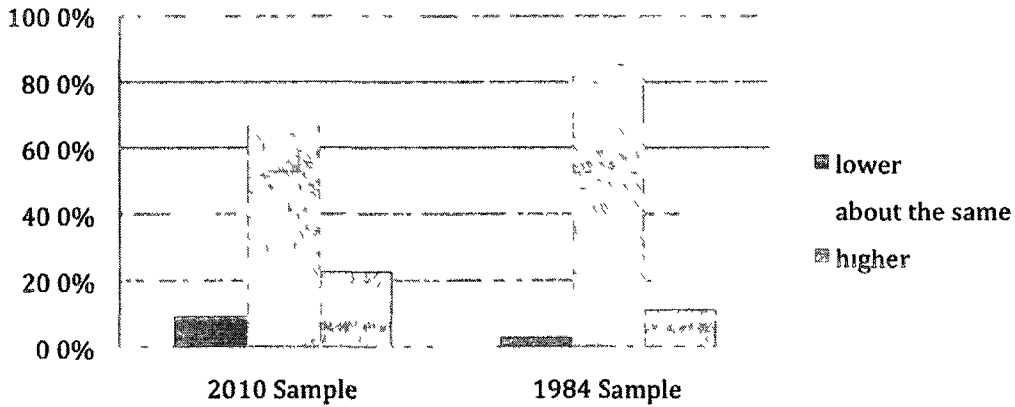


Figure 3.8

## Ethical Standards of Civil Service: By Party Affiliation

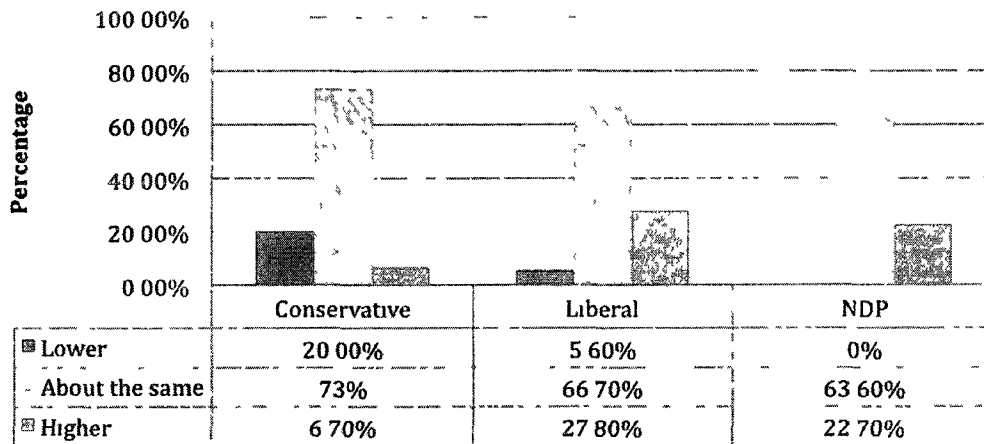


Figure 3.9

The next section of the survey included a battery of questions regarding 'things people do' (Table 3.1). Participants were asked whether these situations were usually, sometimes, rarely or never acceptable to do. Similar to the baseline

questions regarding confidence in institutions and ethical principles, these questions were designed to establish respondent’s “ethical code”<sup>57</sup>

<b>Table 3 1</b>	
Private Morality – ‘Things People Do’ ‘Usually’, ‘Sometimes’, ‘Rarely’, or ‘Never’ acceptable	
6a	Failing to report damage accidentally done to a parked car
6b	Paying cash to a plumber to avoid taxes
6c	Lying to protect a friend
6d	Accepting a gift for doing your job
6e	Not telling the whole truth to avoid embarrassment
6f	Claiming benefits which you are not entitled to
6g	Using your influence to get a friend a job
6h	Giving a police officer money to avoid a speeding ticket
6i	Not declaring to customs things brought in from another country
6j	Break a promise

The subsequent section of the survey posed hypothetical situations and asked respondents to identify how acceptable the scenario was on a Likert-scale with 0 being ‘totally unacceptable’ and 10 being ‘totally acceptable’ Each question and corresponding abbreviation is detailed in **Table 3.2**

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<sup>57</sup> Mancuso et al , *A Question of Ethics Canadians Speak Out*, 47

**Table 3 2**

Hypothetical Scenarios – Numeric Response (0-10)		
	<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>ABBREVIATION</b>
7	A cabinet minister is seeing a psychiatrist and decides not to tell the Prime Minister about it	<i>Psychiatrist</i>
8	An MP who has cancer denies this fact when asked by a journalist	<i>Cancer</i>
9	The Prime Minister appoints a loyal party supporter to head the CBC	<i>CBC</i>
11	A campaign worker is rewarded with a government job, for which he is fully qualified	<i>Campaign</i>
12	At Christmas a Member of Parliament accepts a bottle of wine from a constituent who is grateful for help in speeding up the paperwork to get a passport	<i>Wine</i>
14	On a trip to the Northwest Territories, a cabinet minister meets with a group of local artists who present him with a valuable carving. On his return, he displays the carving in his home	<i>Carving</i>
15	An MP owns a local clothing store. He votes in favour of legislation to provide loans to small business	<i>Store</i>
17	The Minister of Tourism owns a large hotel	<i>Hotel</i>
18	The Minister of Agriculture owns a large farm	<i>Farm</i>
19	A cabinet minister helps a builder get an important government contract. In return the minister accepts the free use of the builder's cottage for a week	<i>Contract</i>
21	A Senator who has no other outside employment, agrees to serve as a corporate director for a small fee	<i>Director</i>
22	An MP uses the parliamentary restaurant, where the prices are subsidized, to host dinners for visiting constituents	<i>Restaurant</i>
24	After working late on constituency business, an MP takes a cab home and charges it to the government	<i>Cab ride</i>

**Table 3 2 continued**

25	During an election campaign, a political party promises not to close any hospitals. After the election, the party finds it must close on hospital because of its deficit-reduction plan	<i>Hospital</i>
27	A cabinet minister learns that his deputy minister is being secretly investigated by the RCMP. To protect the reputation of his deputy, the Minister claims to know nothing about the investigation when asked in Parliament	<i>RCMP</i>

The next section of the survey provided the same construct of degrees of ethically charged scenarios, however in this section, respondents were asked to indicate what they, personally, would do in the situation. The scenarios included three possible options for the participants to choose, also known as forced-choice scenarios. This type of questioning represents the debut of 'forced-choice' questions in attitudinal studies of political corruption<sup>58</sup> (See **Appendix I** for specific question wording)

The survey then asked a set of general attitudinal questions about politics and corruption. The attitudinal statements probed issues such as the frequency of political corruption in Canada, the treatment of the media, and the mechanics of the political system. Respondents were asked whether they agreed ('strongly', 'somewhat') or disagreed ('strongly', 'somewhat') to the statements.

The survey concluded with a list of proposals to reduce corruption from enforcing stricter penalties for corrupt behaviour to strengthening the role of the

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<sup>58</sup> Mancuso, *A Question of Ethics Canadian Speak Out*, 51

Ethics Commissioner to investigate the public's complaints (See **Appendix I** for specific question wording) The final question in the battery of proposals asked respondents other ways to improve standards in government (**Figure 3.10**) Of the 2010 sample, the most frequent answer, with 29%, was more accountability and transparency One respondent mentioned that "the Accountability Act had no teeth and was not followed by top leadership Transparency means that people need to understand questionable situations" Education of the public was the next popular response A recurring concern from the 2010 sample was that the public does not fully understand all the rules and regulations that politicians must follow and that education would help increase awareness of these issues Some MPs responded that the system is working well as is and that increased rules only make the job harder as there are more obstacles in the way when it comes to making decisions Another respondent discussed the issue of pay for MPs

"if the pay is too low only those who can afford it will run for office, like the House of Lords If the pay is too high then people are in positions of power who are less qualified There needs to be a balance People in the current parliament are working for half of what they'd make in the private sector"

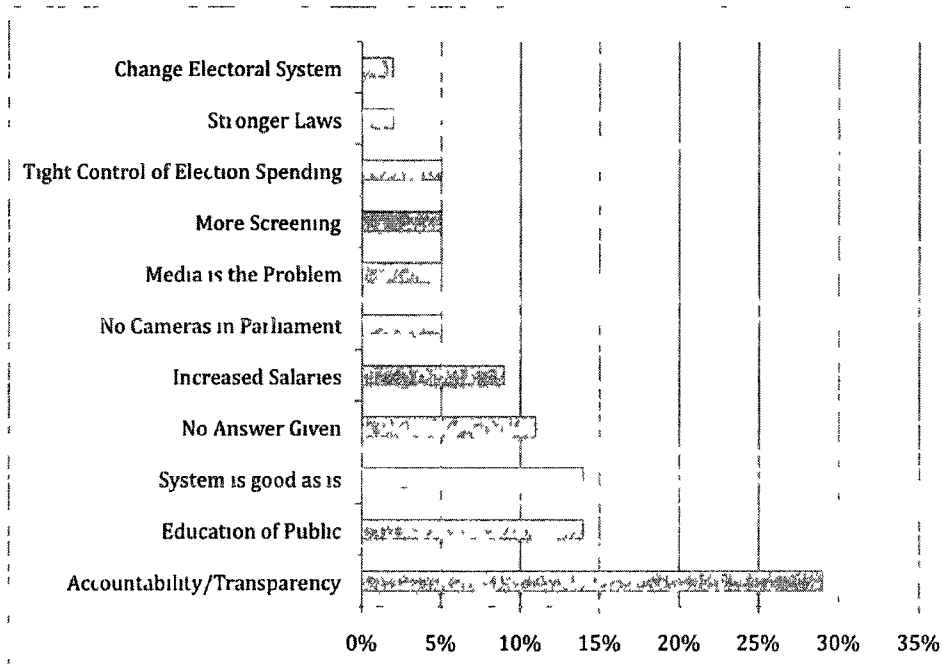
Others called for reform to the electoral system in order to create better representation

"We need to get at the underlying issues of public cynicism, this is in part done by the media, and requires us to look at politics from an individual or structure standpoint and ask the question of why people feel so distant this calls for changing the electoral system to be more representative"



These basic values, opinions and beliefs captured by the survey represent a snapshot of politicians from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament. These moral characteristics help to understand attitudes and attitude formation.

**Figure 3.10: Improving Standards in Government (2010 Sample)**



## *Chapter Four: The Results*

The reason for the lack of a systematic appraisal of political corruption lies in the debate over a definition. Peters and Welch argue that political corruption can be based in three different approaches: acts which are condemned for legal reasons, acts deemed corruption based on normative public interest or common good, and acts which are determined corrupt by public opinion.<sup>59</sup> Each of these competing definitions is accompanied by particular limitations. Corruption can easily be defined as acts which break the law or violate codes of conduct. However, this definition lacks the ability to capture misbehaviour which is not governed by formal rules and regulations. Acts that are considered corrupt based on the assessment of the public's best interest also lack a definitional focus, as almost any act could be justified for the common good.<sup>60</sup> The final approach is a definition rooted in public opinion. This approach seeks to condemn acts which are corrupt based on what the public deems appropriate and inappropriate. The definition is hampered by the fact that public opinion can be ambiguous, or differ strongly from issue to issue.

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<sup>59</sup> This classification was outlined by Peters and Welch in "Political Corruption in America," one of the first articles to provide a systematic appraisal of political corruption in America.

<sup>60</sup> Peters and Welch's critique of the normative public interest definition of corruption is that the definition expands the possibility of capturing corrupt acts, however it may in fact make the definition too broad in nature.

Peters and Welch argue, "a definition of corruption based on public opinion must consider the differences which may exist between the public and political elites in their assessment of appropriate standards of public conduct"<sup>61</sup> These differences can be accounted for in Arnold Heidenheimer's colour typology of political corruption <sup>62</sup> Corrupt acts can be understood in terms of the assessment by both the public and the elite (elected officials) and can be classified as black, white or gray Areas of "black" corruption include behaviour that is judged to be repugnant and is wholly condemned by both the public and elected officials, demanding punishment On the other side of the spectrum, "white" corruption, is manifest in acts that are judged to be corrupt by both the public and elites, however neither group feels strongly enough about the act to seek sanctions for misbehaviour The "gray" zone lies between these two extremes behaviour, which is difficult to understand and define, and "consequently are potentially most destructive to a political system organized along democratic principles"<sup>63</sup>

It is precisely this type of behaviour which needs to be addressed by formal rules, or perhaps extensive training of elected officials to aid in identifying and avoiding potential and apparent corrupt acts Peters and Welch's contribution to the appraisal of political corruption advances Heidenheimer's typology by providing a conceptual framework to understand the dimensions and complexity of the phenomenon Peters and Welch probed the attitudes of state legislators in America

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<sup>61</sup> Peters and Welch, "Political Corruption in America," *The American Political Science Review* 72, no 3 (1978) 975

<sup>62</sup> Arnold Heidenheimer, *Political Corruption Readings in Comparative Analysis*, (New York 1970)

<sup>63</sup> Peters and Welch, "Political Corruption in America," (Pg 975)

on four components of corruption the donor, the favor, the public official and the payoff Acts were considered more corrupt if the elite was acting in a public rather than a partisan capacity and holds a judicial or other nonpolitical post<sup>64</sup> The analysis explored different perceptions of the corruptness of various acts, expanding the predictive capacity of this type of dimensional schema, while reinforcing the definition of political corruption as rooted in public opinion

Mancuso and Atkinson replicated the Peters and Welch research instrument, and adapted the questions to fit the Canadian context<sup>65</sup> In “Do We Need a Code of Conduct for Politicians?” Mancuso and Atkinson interviewed a sample of 120 backbench MPs in 1983 **Table 4.1** indicates the ten potentially corrupt acts (dimensional schema) used in both the Canadian and American study, and the corresponding corruption scores (using a likert scale from 1 to 7, with a higher score indicating unacceptability) Each of these corrupt acts can be classified using the Heidenheimer colour typology Acts that include bribery or misappropriation of funds (the LEADER, PROPOSAL, DRIVEWAY and TRAVEL scenario) can be classified as “black” corruption Whereas conflict of interest acts (JUDGE, DEFENSE and ROADS) can be incorporated into the “gray” zone of political corruption Constituency-service acts such as the SCHOOL and WEAPON scenario, and minor acts of influence peddling can be classified as “white” corruption

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<sup>64</sup> Mancuso and Atkinson, “Do We Need a Code of Conduct for Politicians,” 465

<sup>65</sup> This is indicated in **Table 4.1** by the asterisks (\*) The modification involved changing the questions to fit a parliamentary context – Canadian officials and institutions were substituted for American counterparts

TABLE 4 1

## PETERS AND WELCH SCORE ON TEN POTENTIALLY CORRUPT ACTS

Corrupt Acts	Scores
The driveway of the mayor's private home is paved by the city work crew (DRIVEWAY)	(7)
A provincial cabinet minister while chairman of the public roads committee authorizes the purchase of land he had recently acquired (ROADS)*	(7)
An elected official uses public funds for personal travel (TRAVEL)	(7)
A judge hears a case concerning a corporation in which he has \$50,000 worth of stock (JUDGE)	(6)
An MP who holds a large amount of stock in Gulf Canada (about \$50,000 worth) works to change the provisions of the National Energy Policy (NEP)*	(5-1/2)
A minister of defence owns \$50,000 in stock in a company with which the Defence Department has a million dollar contract (DEFENCE)*	(5)
A legislator accepts a large campaign contribution in return for supporting a legislative proposal (PROPOSAL)*	(5)
A national party leader promises an appointed political position in exchange for campaign contributions (LEADER)*	(5)
A cabinet minister uses his influence to obtain a weapons contract for a firm in his constituency (WEAPONS)*	(4)
An elected official uses his influence to get a friend or relative admitted to Law of medical school or some other type of professional institute (SCHOOL)	(3-1/2) <sup>66</sup>

The intention of the replicated study was to not only gauge attitudes of elected officials on varying degrees of corruption in the Canadian context, but also to explore the potential of a unified elite political culture. The data revealed that no single elite political culture of corruption existed necessitating a code of conduct to govern behaviour outside the jurisdiction of formal rules. The differences, or

<sup>66</sup> the score denotes the potential corruption dimensions or weighting of the corruption acts (Likert scale from 1 to 7, 7 being the most corrupt)

“existence of some distinct communities of opinions” is attributed to political and spatial factors, rather than socio-demographic factors

The purpose of this thesis is to re-administer a similar survey to explore elite political culture over time. The research instrument was taken from *A Question of Ethics: Canadians Speak Out*. **Tables 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5** provide a correlation matrix for each dimension in the 2010 sample <sup>67</sup>

TABLE 4.2

CORRELATION MATRIX OF PERCEIVED CONFLICT OF INTEREST ITEMS

	<u>STORE</u>	<u>HOTEL</u>	<u>FARM</u>	<u>CONTRACT</u>	<u>SENATOR</u>
STORE	-	0.278**	0.325**	0.029	0.202*
HOTEL	0.278**	-	0.757**	0.097	0.219*
FARM	0.325**	0.757**	-	0.05	0.231*
CONTRACT	0.029	0.097	0.05	-	0.108
SENATOR	0.202*	0.219**	0.231**	0.108	-

\*\*\*p<0.001

\*\*p<0.01

\*p<0.05

TABLE 4.3

CORRELATION MATRIX OF PERCEIVED GIFTS & GAINS ITEMS

	<u>WINE</u>	<u>CARVING</u>	<u>CAB RIDE</u>
WINE	-	0.285***	0.185**
CARVING	0.285***	-	0.038
CAB RIDE	0.185*	0.038	-

\*\*\*p<0.001

\*\*p<0.01

\*p<0.05

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<sup>67</sup> these dimensions (conflict of interest, gifts & gains, lying and patronage) will be referred to throughout the thesis as a way of operationalizing political corruption

TABLE 4 4

CORRELATION MATRIX OF PERCEIVED LYING ITEMS

	<u>PYSCH</u>	<u>CANCER</u>	<u>HOSPITAL</u>	<u>RCMP</u>
PSYCH	-	0 179*	0 055	0 136
CANCER	0 179*	-	0 109	0 195*
HOSPITAL	0 055	0 109	-	0 257**
RCMP	0 136	0 195*	0 257*	-

\*\*\*p<0 001

\*\*p<0 01

\*p<0 05

TABLE 4 5

CORRELATION MATRIX OF PERCEIVED PATRONAGE ITEMS

	<u>CBC</u>	<u>CAMPAIGN</u>
CBC	-	0 404***
CAMPAIGN	0 404***	-

\*\*\*p<0 001

\*\*p<0 01

\*p<0 05

Future research should employ the black, white and gray typology to the sample of elite interviews According to the Peters and Welch scale the only identified area of colour are the conflict of interest scenarios which fall under the “gray” zone of corruption, because there exists the most divergence of opinions on these types of issues

### *Ethical Dimensions*

The survey asked a battery of hypothetical scenarios which probed the four ethical dimensions – conflict of interest, gifts and gains, patronage and lying (**Table 3.2**) Respondents were asked to score the questions on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 representing totally unacceptable and 10 being the most acceptable Two types of descriptive statistics were run – cross-tabs and independent samples t-tests For the cross-tabs, the questions were recoded into ‘unacceptable’ (those who scored 0 to 4), ‘neutral’ (5) and ‘acceptable’ (scores of 6 to 10) The variables were recoded in such a way to avoid small cell counts Using these categories, cross-tabs were run to test whether or not there have been any statistically significant changes between MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> parliament

### *Conflict of Interest*

The questions in the survey that dealt with conflict of interest scenarios can be categorized as sharing or exclusive conflicts The results in **Figure 4.6** and **Figure 4.7** indicate there has been a shift in attitudes regarding Q15, an MP voting in favour of legislation which he or she has a private interest in The 2010 sample view this act as more acceptable (72.7%) versus the 1984 sample (61.9%), an increase of just over ten percentage points<sup>68</sup> Respondents from the 2010 sample qualified their answer by mentioning that it is the obligation of the MP to vote in favour of the legislation when in such position, as the scenario does not involve pecuniary interests MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament believed that elected officials

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<sup>68</sup> The cross-tabs indicate that although there has been a shift in attitudes, that it is not statistically significant (sig=0.405) The proportions tests indicate that there is no statistically significant difference for any of the three categories



should use their knowledge and experience to benefit the public interest. The conflict in Q19, involving the minister accepting the use of the builder's cottage after helping to secure a contract, is still viewed the most harshly of the conflict of interest scenarios, showing no significant shift in attitudes among MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> parliament (Figure 4.8). The range of responses for both the samples was from 0 to 5, therefore it was recoded into 'totally unacceptable' (those who scored 0) and 'unacceptable' (scores from 1 to 5).

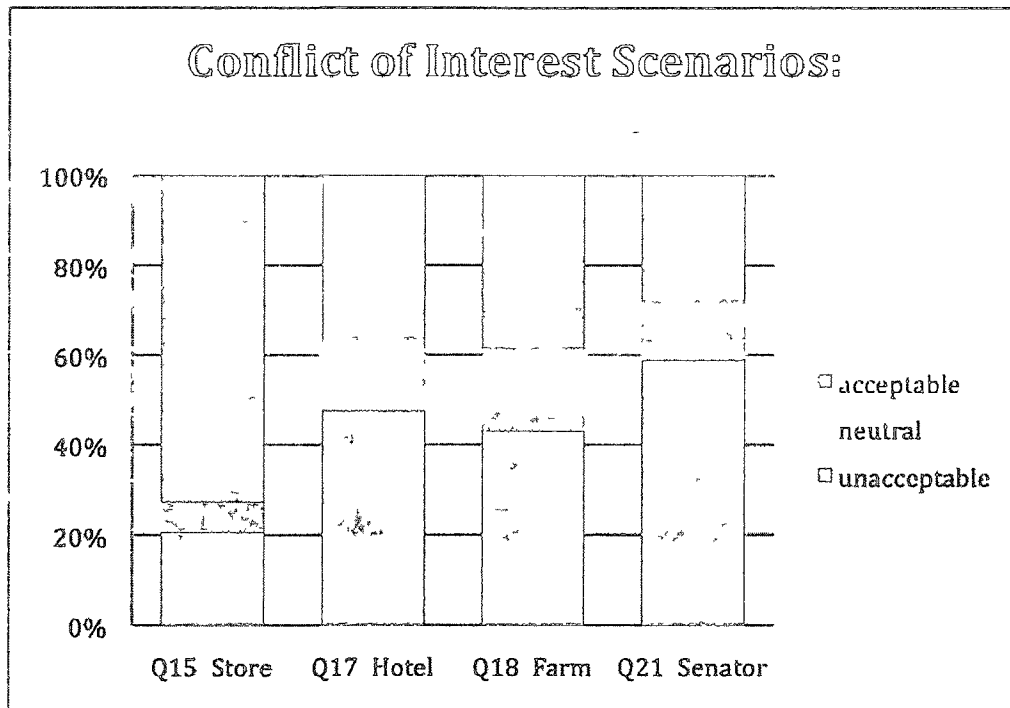


Figure 4.6 MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Conflict of Interest Scenarios:

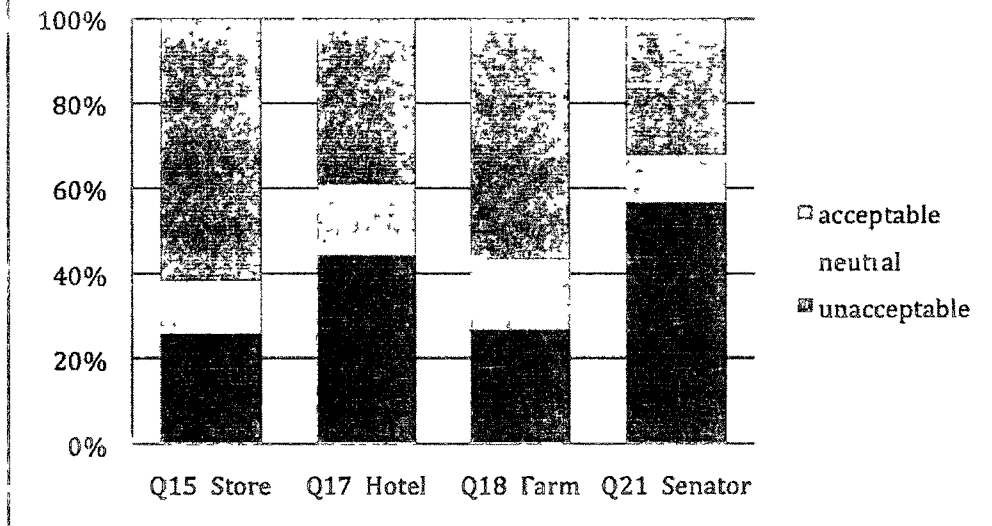


Figure 4 7 MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Parliament

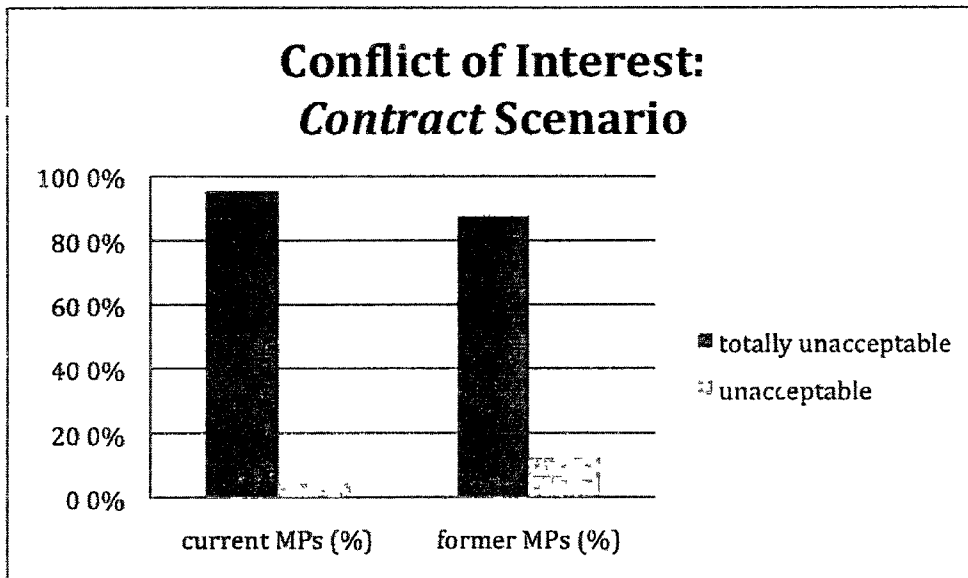


Figure 4 8 Contract Scenario

The *hotel* and *farm* scenario pose exclusive and sharing conflicts of interest. The Minister of Tourism owning a large hotel appears to be more of an exclusive appointment. One respondent likened this situation to the Paul Martin scandal.

involving the shipping industry, “these people are elected as members who are land owners, they need to divest their interests” The crosstabs indicate that there have been no statistically significant shifts in attitudes between MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> parliament for the *hotel* scenario, confirmed by insignificant proportions tests An MP reinforced the fact that people with experience like this should not be excluded from positions of power Most of the respondents either mentioned the issue of blind trust or presumed that the business was already put in trust The scenario involving the Minister of Agriculture owning a large farm is example of a sharing conflict as the farm can be viewed as mutually beneficial for the public and the politician Respondents in the 2010 sample qualified this statement by indicating “this is okay because the Minister needs to have experience, however this scenario sounds more acceptable than the Minister of Tourism” Another respondent mentioned that “they should have experience, but shouldn’t vote, it should be put in blind trust” The scenario shows a change in attitudes with MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament believing this is acceptable (56.7%) to MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament being less tolerant of the scenario (43.2% scored this as ‘unacceptable’) <sup>69</sup> Both these conflict of interest scenarios (Q17 and Q18) are set up in a similar manner, with a Minister being in a position of power that could be used for personal benefit Although the crosstabs do not produce statistically significant differences, it is clear that MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament are less tolerant of both the scenarios, as compared with MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament who distinguish between

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<sup>69</sup> The cross-tabs and proportions tests indicate that there has been no statistically significant changes in attitudes

the two and classified the farm scenario as more acceptable <sup>70</sup> This difference could be attributed to the changing nature of the farming industry what was once classified as a family business has evolved into an agro-business

The final conflict of interest scenario regarding the senator who has no other outside employment, accepting a position as a corporate director was slightly more unacceptable to MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament (59%) as compared with MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament (56.5%) Both samples categorized this as unacceptable, indicating there has been no statistically significant change in attitudes <sup>71</sup>

### *Gifts and Gains*

Ethically charged situations that involve gifts, gains, perks or privileges suggest a more complicated relationship, as they exist in both the public and private sphere Politicians, who are entrenched in both the public and private domain, are required to make calculated decisions on these issues in order to preserve public confidence There are certain rules governing the process of receiving gifts all valuable gifts must be declared to the Ethics Commissioner <sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> The finding that respondents are less likely to criticize the farm scenario than the hotel was also true for the public sample in *A Question of Ethics*

<sup>71</sup> Proportions tests confirm that there is no statistically significant difference of proportions between the categories

<sup>72</sup> Government of Canada, "Public Works and Government Services Canada and the Private Sector Fostering an Ethical Relationship," accessed online <<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/dgs-dob/erfe-fer-eng.html#a9>>

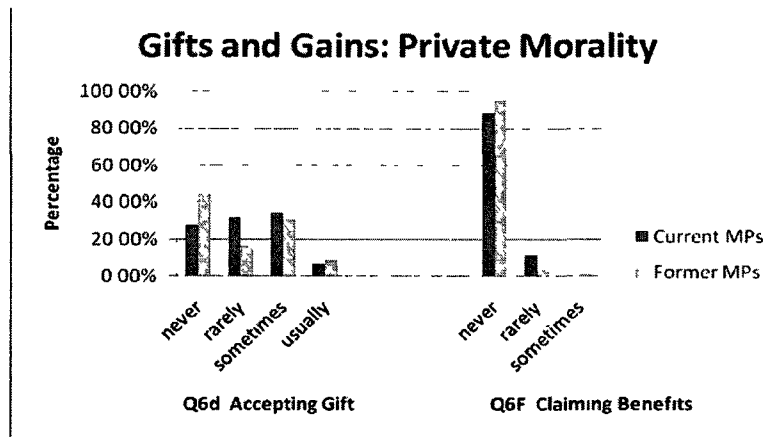
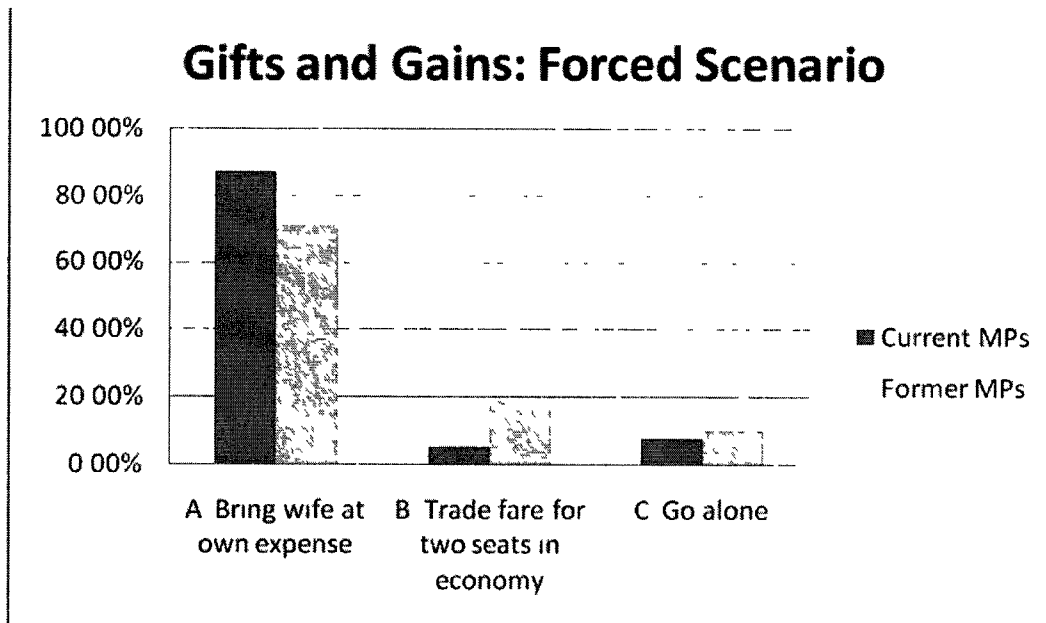


Figure 4.9 'Gifts and Gains'<sup>73</sup>

Figure 4.9 presents the baseline questions on private morality MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament strongly believed that accepting a gift was acceptable (72.7%). One respondent claimed, “the definition of gift differs from culture to culture. This is a complicated question for politicians: is this a bribe? Or simply a gift?” MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament responded that accepting a gift for doing your job was also acceptable (55.8%). Q6f, claiming benefits when you are not entitled to them, resounded as never acceptable by both the 2010 sample (88.6%) and 1984 sample (95.3%)<sup>74</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Cross-tabs were run on Q6d and Q6f. For the gift scenario, the change in attitudes was close to being significant at  $p < 0.05$ , with a significance score of 0.053. The proportions tests indicate that the second category, ‘acceptable’, is approach statistical significance  $z = -1.58$ .

<sup>74</sup> The cross-tabs indicate that the slight change in attitudes (approximately 7 percentage points) is not statistically significant.



**Figure 4.10 'Gifts and Gains Forced Choice'**<sup>75</sup>

The forced choice scenario in **Figure 4.10** asked whether an MP should bring his wife along on a business trip to Europe. Both the 2010 and 1984 sample favoured bringing the MP's wife along at her own expense. However, MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament were more likely than MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament to trade in the fare for two seats in economy, with 18.8% of former respondents choosing this and only 5.1% of MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament believed this was a viable option. One MP mentioned that "MPs should always travel economy, but I feel as though I am the only MP who does this, ethically, I think this is the only way to travel."

<sup>75</sup> The cross-tabs produces a small cell count issue here for the 2010 sample size (for options *b* and *c*) and the change in attitudes was not statistically significant (sig=0.1)

### Gifts & Gains Scenarios:

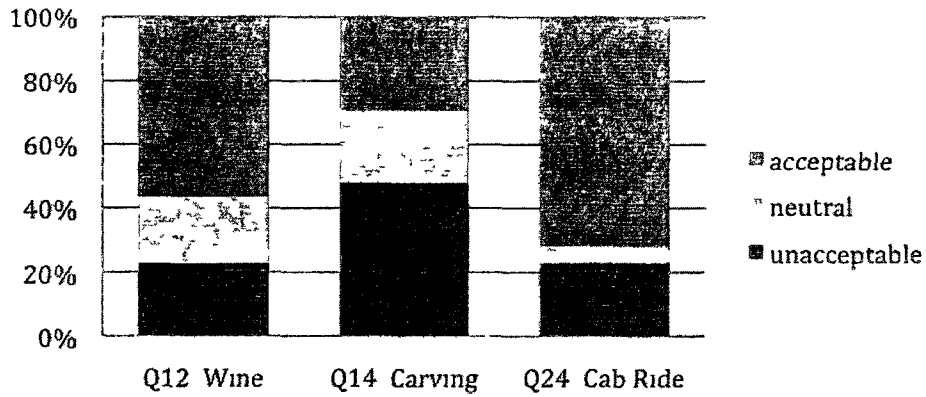


Figure 4 11 MPs from the 40 Parliament

### Gifts & Gains Scenarios:

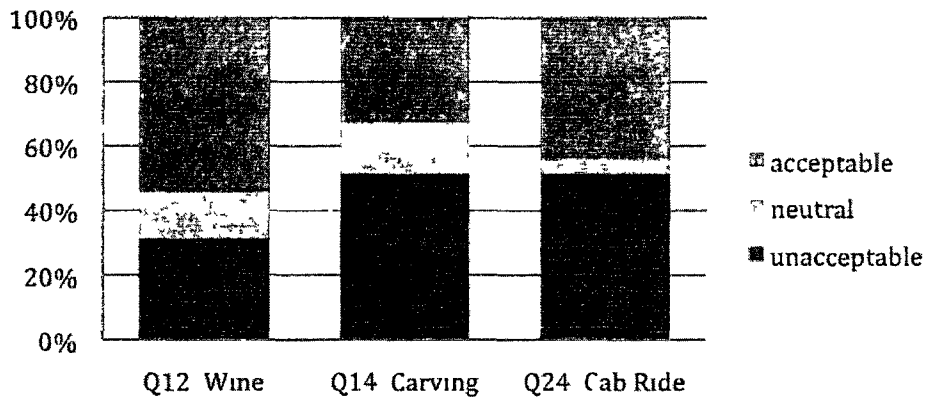


Figure 4 12 MPs from the 32nd Parliament

Figure 4.11 and Figure 4.12 show how acceptable both samples of MPs scored the hypothetical gifts and gains scenarios. The majority of the 2010 sample (56.8%) and 1984 sample (54.3%) viewed the scenario that involved an MP

accepting a bottle of wine from a constituent as acceptable<sup>76</sup> Many of the respondents from the 2010 sample indicated that receiving a bottle of wine from a constituent, or even baked good, desserts or flowers, is common place at the constituency levels These small tokens of appreciation are viewed as gifts not just for the politician, but for the staff as well There has been a slight shift towards a more neutral opinion of the carving scenario, an increase of approximately seven percentage points<sup>77</sup> There has been a very noticeable, and statistically significant shift in attitudes on the cab ride scenario<sup>78</sup> Of the 2010 MP sample, 72% believed that this was acceptable, mentioning that this was absolutely acceptable given there is money allotted for transport in their travel budgets Only 44.2%, of the 1984 sample believed this was acceptable This difference could be attributed to a temporal aspect, or a change in regulations, rather than an abuse of power as this type of travel expense might not have been included as a benefit for members of the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament

### *Patronage*

Political patronage is an exchange between a patron and a client for political loyalty or support Patronage is endemic to any political systems and is viewed by politicians as a process which reinforces the unity of political parties The public and

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<sup>76</sup> The cross-tabs indicate that there are no statistically significant changes in attitudes The proportions tests confirm this

<sup>77</sup> The cross-tabs show that the shift in attitudes is not statistically significant (sig=0.576)

<sup>78</sup> The cross-tab run on this question indicates that the change in attitudes is statistically significant (p<0.001) The Pearson's Chi-Square value is 9.918 The proportions tests show a statistically significant difference in proportions for the 'acceptable' category (z=-2.36) and approaching significance for the 'unacceptable' category (z=1.65)



politicians view acts of patronage very differently. The focus groups conducted by Mancuso in “Contexts in Conflict” indicate that there are two levels of patronage: low profile and high stakes. Although patronage is rooted in the private domain, appointments are made in the eye of the public. The responses in **Figure 4.13** deal with patronage at the level of private morality. MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament mostly believed that using your influence to get a friend a job is never acceptable, or in some instances was sometimes acceptable, confirming this as an instance of influence peddling.<sup>79</sup> A respondent from the 2010 sample indicated that they would “only take it so far as to pass along a resume of a qualified person.” MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament were more tolerant of this type of patronage, favouring this as sometimes acceptable (42.7%). For the other private morality scenario, both of the samples strongly disagreed that loyalty to friend is more important than obeying the law.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> The cross-tabs show 34.1% of the 2010 sample responding that this was ‘never acceptable’ and 31.8% indicating the scenario was ‘sometimes acceptable’. Despite the change in attitudes between the 2010 and 1984 sample, the difference is not statistically significant (sig=0.440). Proportions tests confirm that the difference between proportions is not statistically significant.

<sup>80</sup> The responses were recoded into ‘disagree’ and ‘agree’ (See Appendix II for exact question wording). Cross-tabs were run to assess whether there has been a statistically significant change in attitudes. The results indicate that both the 2010 sample (93.2%) and the 1984 sample (95.1%) disagree with the statement. The cross-tabs were not statistically significant and there was a case of small cell counts for the ‘somewhat agree’ category. Only three MPs from the 2010 sample and five MPs from the 1984 sample somewhat agreed with the statement.

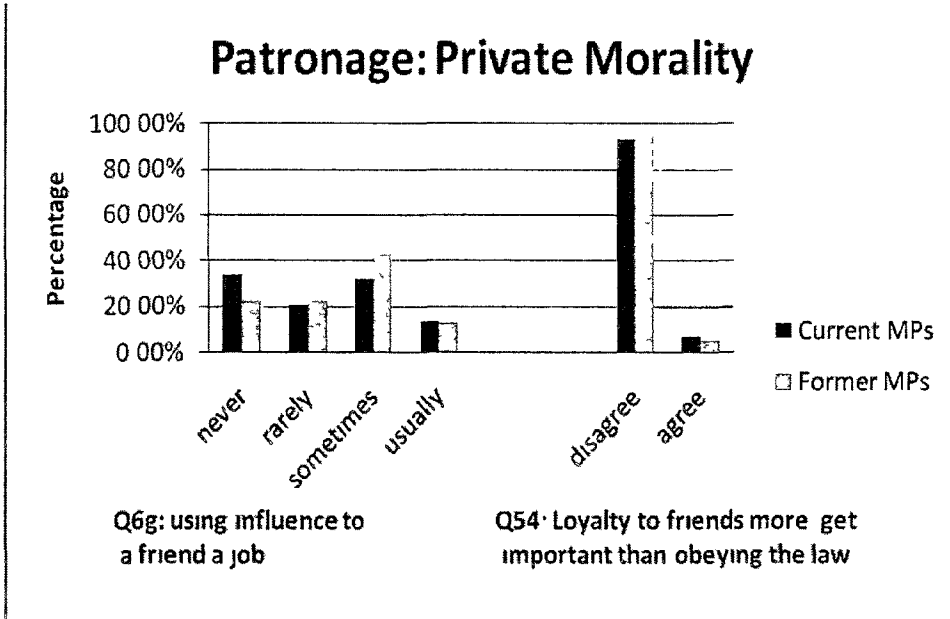


Figure 4 13 'Patronage Private Morality'

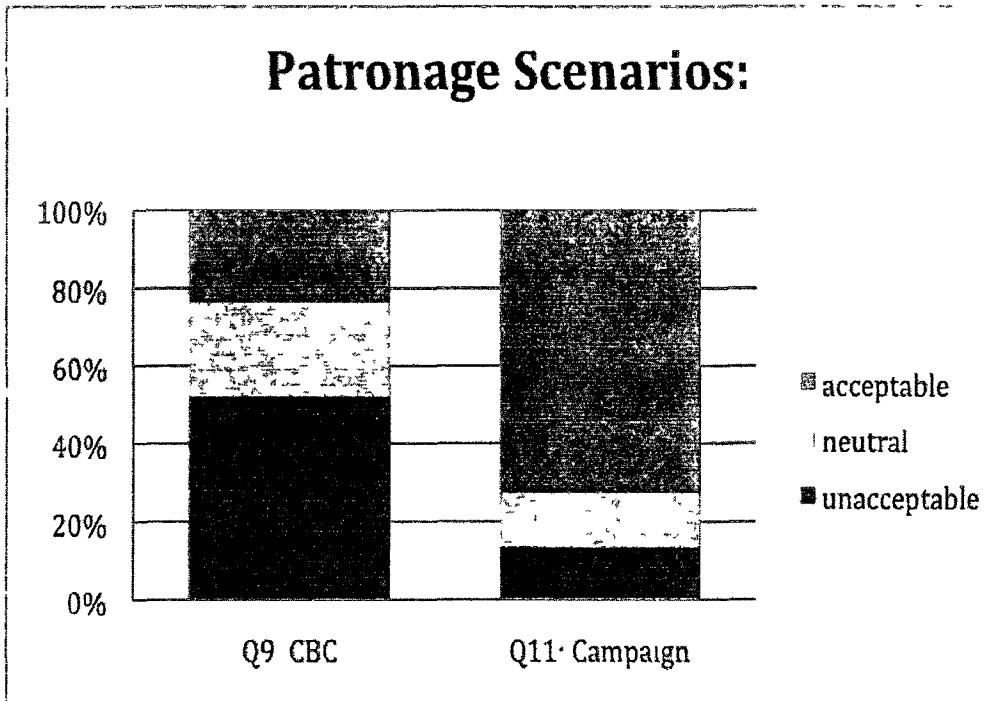


Figure 4 14 MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament

## Patronage Scenarios:

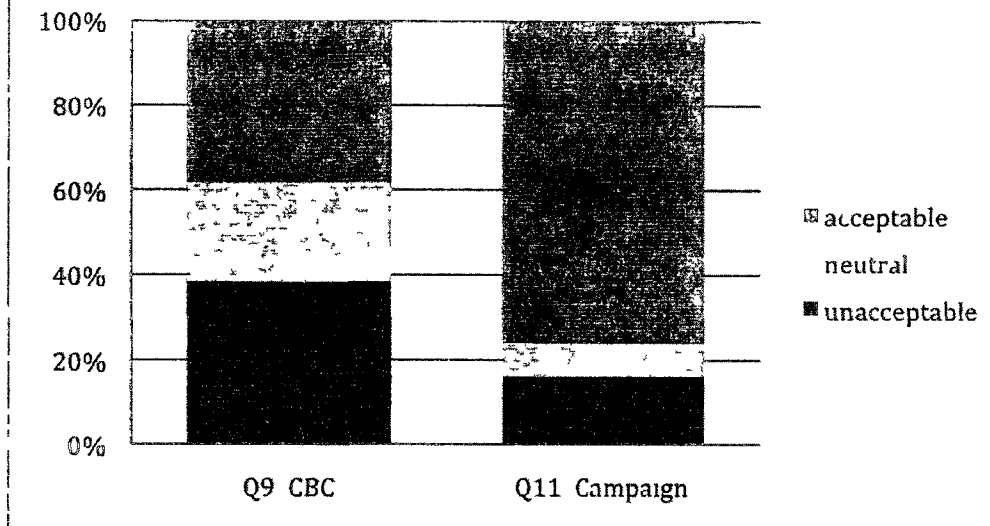


Figure 4.15 MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament

Figure 4.14 and Figure 4.15 display the level of acceptability for the hypothetical patronage scenarios the appointment of a loyal party supporter and a campaign worker. There has been a shift in attitudes regarding the CBC appointment. MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament view the appointment as unacceptable (52.4%) as compared to 38.5% of MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament<sup>81</sup>. One respondent took issue with this question, stating

“we want people to be more involved in politics, yet political parties continue to discriminate by making partisan appointments. I come from a background in broadcast journalism, and this type of patronage is inescapable. We want people with the right skill sets to get involved.”

<sup>81</sup> Cross-tabs indicate that the change in attitudes is not statistically significant (sig=0.197). This is confirmed by subsequent insignificant proportions tests.

When asked whether people in politics frequently made these types of appointments, 82.9% of the 2010 sample and 86.6% of the 1984 sample responded yes. A number of the MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament mentioned that these appointments are made frequently, however it depends on the party in power. The second patronage scenario indicated that there has not been a shift in attitudes regarding the appointment of the campaign worker, with both the 1984 sample (76.2%) and the 2010 sample (72.7%) believing the appointment is acceptable.<sup>82</sup> Respondents took issue with the scenario stating that the word “reward” sounded offensive. Of the two patronage scenarios, the instance of the campaign worker is much more acceptable to both samples of MPs, classifying it as low-profile patronage.

### *Lying*

“Perfect honesty is an abstract ideal.”<sup>83</sup> When politicians, and by extension political parties, make a lie of omission, or intention, the lie straddles both the public and private domain. The types of lying scenarios in the survey involved a variety of lies, from personal, to campaign promises, to lies told in the House of Commons.

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<sup>82</sup> The cross-tabs do not show a statistically significant change in attitudes (sig=.503)

<sup>83</sup> Mancuso “Contexts in Conflict,” 187

### Lying Scenarios:

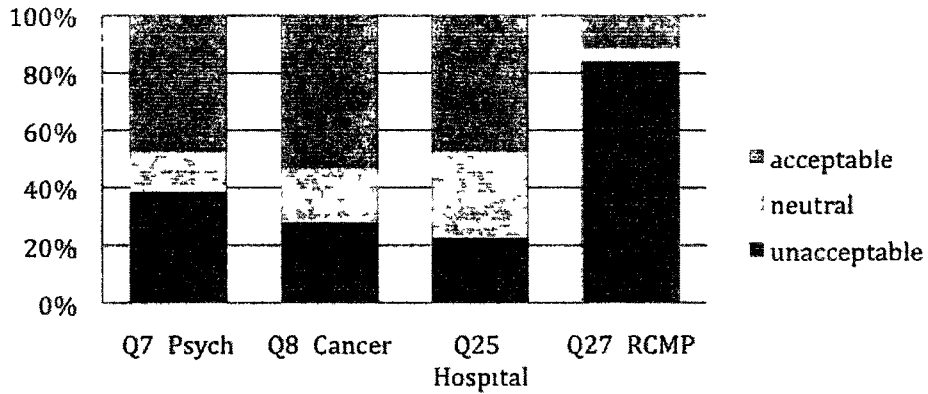


Figure 4 16 MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

### Lying Scenarios:

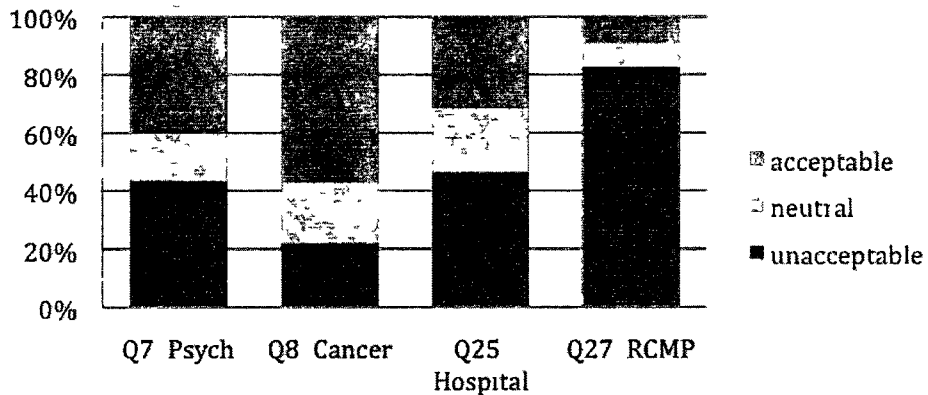


Figure 4 17 MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Parliament

Figure 4 16 and Figure 4.17 show the level of acceptability of each of the lying scenarios. There has no significant shift in attitudes for the *psych* scenario. MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament are more accepting of this scenario (47.7%), as compared

to 40.6% of MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament<sup>84</sup> There has been no change in attitudes for the *cancer* scenario lying to a journalist about having cancer is viewed as acceptable due to its personal nature Both the 1984 sample (57.3%) and the 2010 sample (53.5%) believed this lie of omission was acceptable<sup>85</sup> Respondents from the 2010 sample stated that “this type of information has no bearing on the performance of the MP and therefore is none of the journalist’s business It is this kind of behaviour that strains the relationship between MPs and the media They should follow best practices ” There has also been no shift in attitudes regarding the *RCMP* scenario, which is still viewed as unacceptable by both samples of MPs<sup>86</sup> There has however, been a change in attitudes regarding breaking a campaign promise, the *hospital* scenario MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament (47.7%) believe that this lie is more acceptable, than MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament (31.7%), indicating that the 2010 sample of MPs are more tolerant of this type of lie as compared to their counterparts<sup>87</sup> One MP stated that “if they knew about the deficit going into the election, the party should not have made that promise, it all depends on the information the party has when the promise is made” Another MP likened this to

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<sup>84</sup> Cross-tabs run on the *psych* scenario do not show a statistically significant change in attitudes (sig=0.726) Proportions tests confirm this finding, with no statistically significant differences in proportions

<sup>85</sup> The cross-tabs and proportions tests run on the *cancer* question confirm that there is no statistically significant change in attitudes here (sig=0.726)

<sup>86</sup> Cross-tabs and proportions tests indicated that there is no statistically significant change in attitudes or difference in proportions An issue of small cell count appears in this question, as the majority of respondents from both the 2010 and 1984 sample indicated that this scenario was ‘unacceptable’

<sup>87</sup> Cross-tabs indicate that the change in attitudes here, regarding broken campaign promises, is statistically significant (p<0.05) Subsequent proportions tests show that there is no statistically significant difference in proportions, however the ‘unacceptable’ category is approach significance with a z-score of 1.40

the “we haven’t seen the books” excuse, which is acceptable however “they will end up paying the consequences for doing this ” Overall, the most acceptable instance of lying was the *cancer* scenario It would be expected that a lie of this sensitive nature, would be viewed as acceptable

The most interesting finding to note here is the scenario involving the broken campaign promise Respondents from the 2010 sample were adamant about contextualizing the scenario Campaigns are designed to illicit many promises to the electorate, in the hopes of garnering support, however they are made on the understanding that there are always extenuating circumstances which parties might not anticipate In a sense, this nonchalant attitude of MPs regarding campaign promises could have a serious impact on how the public view the intentions of politicians in general Another explanation could be in the wording of the question, which only indicates one hospital being closed, making it more acceptable, in the greater context, than closing many hospitals

### *Hypotheses Testing*

In the hopes of reforming the political system, rules and regulations have been ratcheted up to curb unethical behaviour and elected officials have become increasingly aware that political malfeasance jeopardizes public confidence in government It is therefore expected that elites will be less tolerant to instances of political corruption Corruption will be operationalized in four different dimensions conflict of interest, gifts and gains, lying and patronage

#### **TABLE 4.6: HYPOTHESES**

H<sub>1</sub> MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament will be less tolerant to conflict of interest scenarios than MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament

H<sub>2</sub> MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament will be less tolerant to gifts and gains scenarios than MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament

H<sub>3</sub> MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament will be less tolerant to lying scenarios than MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament

H<sub>4</sub> MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament will be less tolerant to patronage scenarios than MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament

The second set of tests used to assess the attitudes of MPs included a battery of independent samples t-tests. The hypothetical scenarios asked in the survey (Q7 through Q27) used a likert-scale from 0 to 10, with 10 being the most acceptable and 0 being the least acceptable. Four models were run to test the hypotheses for each of the dimensions of political corruption (in reference to the elaborated hypotheses in **Table 4.6**). Each scenario was classified in a particular realm (either public or private) and the mean scores were calculated by t-tests to determine statistically significant changes in attitudes.

#### *Conflict of Interest*

The Conflict of Interest Act indicates that private interests of elected officials do not represent public interests. MPs are to operate in such a manner that real,



potential or apparent conflicts of interests are avoided<sup>88</sup> H<sub>1</sub> expected MPs to be less tolerant of exclusive conflicts of interest scenarios. The hypothesis can be partially supported. The mean scores presented in **Table 4.7** show an increase in the score for the *store* scenario and a decrease in the score for the *farm* scenario. MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament were more tolerant of the *store* scenario, with the justification that in owning the store, the MP would act in the best interest of all small business owners when voting on related pieces of legislation. On the other hand, MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament were less tolerant of the sharing scenario involving the Minister of Agriculture. The private or exclusive scenarios, presented in the *contract* and *senator* scenario were less tolerated. This confirms the expected shift in attitudes between the 2010 and 1984 sample. Overall, MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament viewed both the *farm* and *hotel* as unacceptable, whereas MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament distinguished between the conflicts of interests as exclusive and sharing, being more tolerant of the latter.

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<sup>88</sup> Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, "Conflict of Interest Act," <<http://ciec-ccie.gc.ca/resources/files/English/Public%20Office%20Hformers/Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Act/Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Act.pdf>>

**Table 4.7: Conflict of Interest Scenarios**

Question	Realm	Mean Score		Movement
		1984 Sample	2010 Sample	
Q15 Store	Sharing (Public)	6.26	7.02	Increase
Q17 Hotel	Exclusive (Private)	4.72	4.39	Decrease
Q18: Farm <sup>89</sup>	Sharing (Public)	6.23	4.64	Decrease
Q19: Contract	Exclusive (Private)	0.47	0.2	Decrease
Q21: Senator	Exclusive (Private)	4.05	3.51	Decrease

Source: 1984 and 2010 database

*Gifts and Gains*

The Conflict of Interest Act specifically states that public officials cannot solicit or accept transfers of economic benefit<sup>90</sup> According to this principle gifts of any value used for private benefit are strictly prohibited and must be declared to the Ethics Commissioner for review H<sub>2</sub> expected that MPs would be less tolerant of gifts and gains that are of public cost The data reveals that the hypothesis can be partially supported as MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament are more tolerant of gifts and gains which are of low public cost, and less tolerant of scenarios which are of high public cost or understood as a private benefit Respondents from the 2010 sample qualified the *wine* scenario as commonplace at the constituency level indicating that this type of exchange is seen as a gesture of thanks rather than a bribe **Table 4.8** indicates that the *cab ride* scenario was viewed as more acceptable by the 2010 sample, with more than a two-point increase in mean score Respondents stated that

<sup>89</sup> The independent samples t-test indicates that of all the conflict of interest scenarios, Q18 yielded the only statistically significant response (p<0.05)

<sup>90</sup> Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, "Conflict of Interest Act," <http://ciec-ccie.gc.ca/resources/files/English/Public%20Office%20Formerers/Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Act/Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Act.pdf>

this type of expense is included in designated travel budgets and is therefore acceptable. The evaluation of the *cab ride* scenario was a point of contention among the public and MPs in *A Question of Ethics*, highlighting the difference in mass and elite attitudes.<sup>91</sup> The gap in attitudes indicates that the public might not be aware of MPs' expenses and automatically conclude it is for private benefit.

Question	Realm	Mean Score		Movement
		1984 Sample	2010 Sample	
Q12 Wine	Low Public Cost	5.56	6.25	increase
Q14: Carving	Public cost / Private Benefit	4.2	4.05	decrease
Q24 Cab Ride <sup>92</sup>	Low Public Cost (travel budget)	4.32	7.26	increase
Source: 1984 and 2010 database				

### *Lying*

The hypothesis regarding the lying scenarios assumed that MPs would be less tolerant of lying that was based in the public realm. The Conflict of Interest Act governing the principles of MPs indicates that they must act with honesty and the highest of ethical standards.<sup>93</sup> Conforming to this tenet requires MPs to be open, honest and transparent, especially under public scrutiny. Lies told in private, perhaps amongst friends or acquaintances, can be seen as more acceptable in the general sense, however blatant lies told to the public such as lies of omission, by

<sup>91</sup> In *A Question of Ethics*, this question represented one of the strongest divergences between the public and politicians.

<sup>92</sup> The independent samples t-test indicates that of the three scenarios which probed the gifts and gains scenarios, only Q24 was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

<sup>93</sup> Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, "Conflict of Interest Act,"

<http://ciec-ccie.gc.ca/resources/files/English/Public%20Office%20Formerers/Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Act/Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Act.pdf>

officials who are elected with the intention to serve the public good, are more harshly criticized and least acceptable

Of the two private scenarios in the survey, the *cancer* scenario was the most acceptable to both the 2010 and 1984 sample MPs from 40<sup>th</sup> parliament were also more tolerant of the *psych* scenario than MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament Respondents from the 2010 sample qualified this with the fact that this was acceptable however “if the reasons for seeking consultation affects job performance the Prime Minister should be informed ” According to the mean score of the public lying scenarios, the *hospital* scenario regarding campaign promises is viewed as more tolerable by the 2010 sample The mean scores in **Table 4.9** indicate that the expected hypothesis cannot be supported, there has been an increase in mean scores for all the questions except the *cancer* scenario

<u>Table 4.9. Lying Scenarios</u>				
Question	Realm	Mean Score		Movement
		1984 Sample	2010 Sample	
Q 7 <i>Psych</i>	Private	4.89	5.55	increase
Q8: <i>Cancer</i>	Private	6.29	6.07	decrease
Q 25 <i>Hospital</i> <sup>94</sup>	Public	4.4	5.57	increase
Q 27 <i>RCMP</i>	Public	1.52	1.89	increase
Source 1984 and 2010 database				

### *Patronage*

In the Code of Conduct, one of the key principles office holders are required to adhere to is avoiding any preferential treatment, meaning they are not to step out

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<sup>94</sup> The independent samples t-test indicate that of the four questions dealing with lying scenarios, only the *hospital* scenario was statistically significant (p<0.05)

of their official roles of representing public interest<sup>95</sup> H<sub>4</sub> expected MPs to be less tolerant of more public or high-stake instances of patronage In the survey, this type of high-stake patronage is explored in the scenario with the Prime Minister hiring a like-minded person to head the Canadian Broadcast Company (CBC) The implication for the 2010 sample was that the appointment was a result of the person being a loyal party supporter, which one respondent claimed, “is the definition of patronage, being a loyal party supporter does not equate to being qualified” The *campaign* scenario represented a low-profile instance of patronage and was aided by the fact that the worker was “fully qualified” for the position MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament were less tolerant of both scenarios, however the mean scores presented in **Table 4.10** indicate that the *campaign* scenario is scored as the most acceptable of the two scenarios The decrease in mean scores supports the hypothesis that attitudes of MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament have hardened toward issues of patronage

<u>Table 4 10: Patronage Scenarios</u>				
Question	Realm	Mean Score		Movement
		1984 Sample	2010 Sample	
Q9 CBC	High Stakes Patronage	4.98	3.74	decrease
Q11: Campaign <sup>96</sup>	Low Profile Patronage	7.13	6.93	decrease
Source: 1984 and 2010 database				

<sup>95</sup> Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, “Conflict of Interest Act,” <http://ciec-ccie.gc.ca/resources/files/English/Public%20Office%20Formerers/Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Act/Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Act.pdf>

The limitation of the datasets only allow attitudes to be explored in a baseline fashion. The methods employed to assess the change in attitudes of MPs over time provide an overall ranking, through cross tabulations, and difference in means through independent samples t-tests. The first group of tests revealed the opposite of what was anticipated. Of the statistically significant changes in attitudes, both the *cab ride* and *hospital* scenario were more acceptable to MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament than MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament. In these particular areas of gifts and gains and lying, MPs are more tolerant. For the conflict of interest and patronage scenarios, no statistically significant shifts in attitudes were exposed through cross tabulations.

The second group of tests, the independent samples t-tests, tells a different story for these dimensions. For the conflict of interest and patronage questions, the t-tests show a decrease in mean score for the *farm* and *campaign* scenario, statistically significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level. The t-tests confirm the statistically significant increase in mean scores for the *hospital* and *cab ride* scenario, as previously discovered by the cross-tab analysis. The purpose of performing both cross-tabs and t-tests was to account for any discrete changes in attitudes keeping in mind the small sample size and low statistical power.

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<sup>96</sup> The independent samples t-test indicate that of the two scenarios which probed the dimension of patronage, only the *campaign* scenario produced a statistically significant difference in mean score ( $p < 0.05$ )

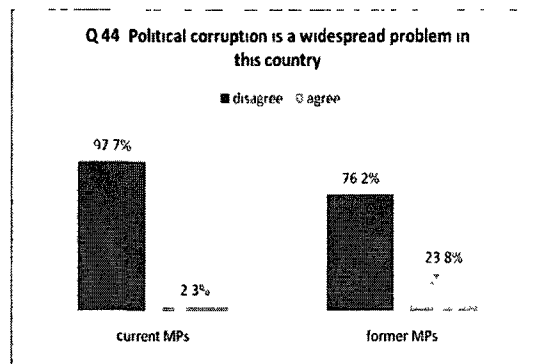
## *Chapter Five Conclusions*

An attitudinal approach to studying political corruption in Canada has been focused on the divergence of opinions between elites and the public. In this respect, reform has been treated as a process of increased legislation—a ratcheting up of rules and regulations to govern behaviour. In the wake of the Sponsorship Scandal, the Conservative government passed the Federal Accountability Act (2006), with the intention of curbing unethical behaviour by creating more accountability, honesty and transparency. The Act included the Conflict of Interest Act which explicitly defined what a conflict of interest was and outlined the rules associated with gifts, gains, perks and privileges. The Act concluded with specific repercussions associated with any political malfeasance in realm of conflict of interest and gifts and gains.

Despite the increase in the imposition of rules and regulations, unethical behaviour continues to occur. More recently, during the In-and-Out scandal in 2006, members of the Conservative party abused the campaign spending limits and circumvented the law, increasing their overall campaign expenditure, ultimately

giving them an unfair advantage in the election<sup>97</sup> Looking to the east of Canada, in Newfoundland and Labrador with the case of four Members of the Legislative Assembly being implicated in an expense scandal Altering the outcome of an election or reaping private benefits from the public purse represent examples of political corruption, or simply put, abuses of power Codes of conduct, formal rules detailing expected behaviour, should function to prevent political corruption and converge mass and elite attitudes on what is acceptable and unacceptable

Overall, MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament do not believe that political corruption is a widespread problem in this country **Figure 5.1** indicates that MPs from the 40<sup>th</sup> parliament have a more optimistic view of political corruption in Canada, than MPs from the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament, signaling that MPs in general, strongly believe that political corruption is not an issue that plagues the political system<sup>98</sup>



**Figure 5 1**

<sup>97</sup> As a result of issues over campaign spending in 2006, the Federal Court of Appeal has ruled against the conservative party after Elections Canada laid charges against four senior conservative (an unanimous decision) – a series of invoices tipped off Elections Canada

<sup>98</sup> Cross-tabs on yield a Pearson’s Chi-Square value of 10.382, and is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ )



The rules and codes of conduct are the institutional structures which facilitate or mediate political corruption. Reform of the system occurs after scandalous behaviour has been exposed in the hopes of changing the rules to prevent future abuses of power. The path dependency between institutions and individuals is difficult to distinguish.

“It’s very hard to separate individuals and systems. You can always point at someone who didn’t do what they should have. But the question then is what the system allowed them to do that (and) what can be done to prevent it happening again”<sup>99</sup>

Perhaps it is impossible to think of a political system that does not suffer from instances of political corruption, as this type of behaviour is endemic to the system itself. The intention of this research is not to expose political wrong-doings and point blame at politicians and their lack of adherence to the rules in the case of scandalous behaviour, but is rather an attempt to understand the complexity of political corruption and attitudes toward political ethics in Canada. The hope is that in understanding what elites think and how they behave, particularly how they ought not to behave, will help to bridge the gap between the public and elected officials.

Kenneth Gibbons suggests that Canada’s proximity to the United States extends beyond sharing a border to sharing similar fundamental characteristics, and that behaviour and attitudes in Canada may follow the same pattern of unethical

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<sup>99</sup> Ned Franks, “Gomery Report-Phase Two Restoring Accountability,” accessed online  
<[www.cbc.ca/currents/background/groupaction/gomeryreport\\_phasetwo.html](http://www.cbc.ca/currents/background/groupaction/gomeryreport_phasetwo.html)>

behaviour as our neighbours “The Watergate crisis reminded Canadians that democracy and economic development are not guarantees of immunity from the occurrence of serious improbity”<sup>100</sup> The lessons which we learn from our American counterparts may temper our behaviour and misbehaviour, and play a role in shaping attitudes, opinions, beliefs and values of elected officials

### *Problems associated with the 2010 and 1984 Samples*

There are three major issues which this thesis confronts in regards to the representativeness of the samples<sup>101</sup> The 1984 sample included an over-representation of the liberal party, which could skew the data (if partisan differences exist in attitudes of elected officials) The 1984 sample included 107 interviews, of which 48% represented the Liberal seats in the House of Commons during the 32<sup>nd</sup> parliament, 1% represented the Conservative seats and 16% represented the New Democrats' seats In terms of the representation of gender, only 2% of the former sample were female as compared to 32% of the 2010 sample This discrepancy in female representation could have biased the results The final issue of representation was the regional make-up of the 2010 sample of MPs Approximately 73% of the 2010 sample were MPs from Ontario The majority of the 1984 sample was also from Ontario, however the over-representation of the 2010 sample only really explores attitudes of MPs from central Canada As a result,

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<sup>100</sup> Kenneth M Gibbons, “The Political Culture of Corruption in Canada,” in *Political Corruption in Canada Cases, Causes and Cures* edited by Kenneth M Gibbons and Donald C Rowat (McClelland and Stewart Limited 1976), vii

<sup>101</sup> These concerns were addressed at the beginning of the thesis and are a result of secondary data accommodation and time/budget limitation

regionalism could not be used as an explanatory variable in any of the models  
Future research should include an appropriate sample to represent the make-up of  
the House of Commons

### *Future Research*

The research presented in this thesis provides a snapshot of attitudes of MPs  
from the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> parliament Future research should assess the impact of  
political, spatial and socio-economic factors, on attitudes of elected officials to  
illucidate an elite political culture in Canada

The political variables for further analysis are the years of experience an elected  
official has in politics, and occupation prior to entering politics Years of service in  
government could function as a de-sensitization process the longer an elected  
official has been in government the more aware they are of rules and possibly  
loopholes and the more familiar they are with the mechanics of the system This  
sense of familiarity with the political system could make elected officials more  
tolerant to instances of corruption, in the sense that they have witnessed political  
malfeasance throughout their time in office and believe misbehaviour to be inherent  
in the practice of politics The next political variable to consider would be the MPs  
job prior to entering office Occupations before holding office could also play a role  
in how familiar candidates are with the ins-and-outs of government, or the formal  
rules and codes of conduct The variety of occupations of the 2010 and 1984 sample

made this variable difficult to use as a determinant of attitudes<sup>102</sup> Exploring these variables and attitude formation would help to understand and unpack the variation of elite political culture, and explain areas of agreement and disagreement

The spatial variables to be considered include the impact of regionalism on attitudes and the degree of urban/ruralness of the area that the MP represents Regionalism in Canada “seems to explain some differences in the cultural reactions to corruption”<sup>103</sup> Regional difference in attitudes have been identified at the public level, does this trend hold true for elected officials?<sup>104</sup> People in Quebec tend to be the least tolerant region of Canada and were more critical of instances of corruption If regional differences exist among elected officials, does this transcend political or socio-demographic variables? Should legislation be tailored to different regions in order to account for these differences? Another geographic variable is the degree of urban and ruralness of MP’s constituency Are MPs who live in rural communities less tolerant to corruption than MPs who live in urban settings? Does the place an MP is from, shape their attitudes toward political corruption?

Finally, do socio-demographic variables, such as age or gender, act as a determinant of attitudes? Is there a generational gap which exists between young politicians and more experienced members? Those who are older may be more tolerant to instances of corruption, like in the case of political experience, because

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<sup>102</sup> The most frequent occupation of the 2010 and 1984 sample was lawyers or positions of management

<sup>103</sup> Gibbons, *Political Corruption in Canada Cases, Causes and Cures*, 247

<sup>104</sup> *A Question of Ethics Canadians Speak Out* explored the differences in attitudes across regions of Canada Mancuso et al found that Quebec was the most critical of political corruption compared to other regions in Canada

they are accustomed to behaviour and misbehaviour, or are arguably more desensitized than their younger counterparts. Alternatively, does gender come into play in explaining differences in attitudes? Are women less tolerant than men to ethically charged situations?

These questions need to be asked in order to fully comprehend what, if any, variables account for attitude change. Is there a parliamentary socialization process at work, or do political, spatial, and socio-demographic variables transcend this? The research presented in this thesis has provided valuable insight into the attitudes of federal Members of Parliament toward issues of political ethics, however, it has left many questions unanswered such as what accounts for variation in attitudes between the 1984 and 2010 sample? Or more broadly, are there distinct cultures at different levels of government, or is there a more uniform culture across the political system?

## APPENDIX I

### Political Ethics in Canada

Here's the first question

1 Among the following five values, which is, for you personally, the most important of all?

Equality	1		
Compassion	2		
Honesty	3		
Freedom	4	don't know	6
Tolerance	5	refused	7

2 And which is the second most important?

Equality	1		
Compassion	2		
Honesty	3		
Freedom	4	don't know	6
Tolerance	5	refused	7

3 Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

Can be trusted	1	don't know	3
Can't be too careful	2	refused	4

4 Here is a list of different institutions. For each one, can you tell me how much confidence you have in them. A great deal, some, a little, or none at all **(Circle their response)**

	<u>A Great Deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>None at All</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Refuse</u>
a The Courts	1	2	3	4	5	6
b The Media	1	2	3	4	5	6
c Parliament	1	2	3	4	5	6
d Civil Service	1	2	3	4	5	6
e The Senate	1	2	3	4	5	6

5 Here is a list of groups of people. I'd like you to tell me if you think the ethical principles of these people **ARE** higher, lower, or about the same as those of the average person

	<u>Higher</u>	<u>Lower</u>	<u>About Same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Refused</u>
a Judges	1	2	3	4	5
b Journalists	1	2	3	4	5
c Members of Parliament	1	2	3	4	5
d Civil Servants	1	2	3	4	5

6 Here's a list of things that some people do We are interested in whether you think each one is acceptable or unacceptable [read item a ]

	<u>Usually Acceptable</u>	<u>Sometimes Acceptable</u>	<u>Rarely Acceptable</u>	<u>Never Acceptable</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Refuse</u>
a Failing to report damage accidentally done to a parked car	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Is that usually acceptable, sometimes acceptable, rarely acceptable, or never acceptable?** [circle response above]

	<u>Usually Acceptable</u>	<u>Sometimes Acceptable</u>	<u>Rarely Acceptable</u>	<u>Never Acceptable</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Refuse</u>
b Paying cash to a plumber to avoid taxes	1	2	3	4	5	6
c Lying to protect a friend	1	2	3	4	5	6
d Accepting a gift for doing your job	1	2	3	4	5	6
e Not telling the whole truth to avoid embarrassment	1	2	3	4	5	6
f Claiming benefits when you are not entitled to	1	2	3	4	5	6
g Using your influence to get a friend a job	1	2	3	4	5	6
h Giving a police officer money to avoid a speeding ticket	1	2	3	4	5	6
i Not declaring to	1	2	3	4	5	6

customs things  
brought in from  
another country  
j Breaking a  
promise

1 2 3 4 5 6

Now here are some different situations We're going to use a scale that goes from 0 to 10, 0 means **totally unacceptable**, and 10 means **totally acceptable** Choose the number from 0 to 10 that best reflects **your** view Here's the first situation (*Circle the appropriate numerical response*)

7 A Cabinet Minister is seeing a psychiatrist and decides not to tell the Prime Minister about it

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know* *Refused*  
(11) (12)

**Remember**, we're using numbers 0 means **totally unacceptable** and 10 means **totally acceptable** You can choose **any** number between 0 and 10

8 An MP who has cancer, denies this fact when asked by a journalist

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know* *Refused*  
(11) (12)

9 The Prime Minister appoints a loyal party supporter to head the CBC

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know* *Refused*  
(11) (12)

10 Do you think people in politics make these sorts of appointments frequently (*yes or no*)?

**Yes (1)**                      **No (2)**                      *don't know (3)*                      *refuse (4)*

*[If necessary, repeat instructions on using scale]*

11 A campaign worker is rewarded with a government job, for which he is fully qualified

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know* *Refused*  
(11) (12)

12 At Christmas a Member of Parliament accepts a bottle of wine from a constituent who is grateful for help in speeding up the paperwork to get a passport



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know* *Refused*  
(11) (12)

13 Do you think people in politics frequently accept gifts like this (*yes or no*)?

**Yes (1)** **No (2)** *don't know (3)* *refuse (4)*

14 On a trip to the North-West Territories, a Cabinet Member meets with a group of local artists who present him with a valuable carving. On his return, he displays the carving in his home

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know* *Refused*  
(11) (12)

15 An MP owns a local clothing store. He votes in favour of legislation to provide loans to small business

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know* *Refused*  
(11) (12)

16 Do you think people in politics do this sort of thing frequently (*yes or no*)?

**Yes (1)** **No (2)** *don't know (3)* *refuse (4)*

*[If necessary, repeat instructions on using scale]*

17 The Minister of Tourism owns a large hotel

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know* *Refused*  
(11) (12)

18 The Minister of Agriculture owns a large farm

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know* *Refused*  
(11) (12)

19 A Cabinet Minister helps a builder get an important government contract. In return, the Minister accepts the free use of the builder's cottage for a week

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know* *Refused*  
(11) (12)

20 Do you think people in politics do this sort of thing frequently (*yes or no*)?

**Yes (1)**

**No (2)**

*don't know (3)*

*refuse (4)*

21 A Senator who has no other outside employment agrees to serve as a corporate director for a small fee

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know (11)* *Refused (12)*

22 An MP uses the parliamentary restaurant, where the prices are subsidized, to host dinners for visiting constituents

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know (11)* *Refused (12)*

23 Do you think people in politics do this sort of thing frequently (*yes or no*)?

**Yes (1)**

**No (2)**

*don't know (3)*

*refuse (4)*

24 After working late on constituency business, an MP takes a cab home and charges it to the government

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know (11)* *Refused (12)*

25 During an election campaign, a political party promises not to close any hospitals. After the election, the party finds it must close one hospital because of its deficit-reduction plan

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know (11)* *Refused (12)*

26 Do you think people in politics do this sort of thing frequently (*yes or no*)?

**Yes (1)**  
*refuse (4)*

**No (2)**

*don't know (3)*

27 A Cabinet Minister learns that his deputy minister is being secretly investigated by the RCMP. To protect the reputation of his deputy, the Minister claims to know nothing about the investigation when asked in Parliament

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *don't know (11)* *Refused (12)*

For the next few examples, I'd like you to tell me what **you** think the politician should do  
Here is the first situation

28 A Cabinet Minister is seeing a marriage counselor. A journalist asks him if this is true.  
Should the Minister say

- a "It's none of your business"
- b "Every marriage has its rough spots"
- c "Yes, I'm seeing a counselor"
- d *don't know*
- e *refused*

29 Do you think that, given this situation, most people in politics would choose the same answer as you (*yes or no*)?

(4)                      **yes (1)**                      **no (2)**                      *don't know (3)*                      *refused*

30 The Minister of Justice has to appoint a judge. Who should the Minister consider

- a any qualified persons
- b qualified persons who are loyal party members
- c qualified persons selected by a non-partisan committee
- d *don't know*
- e *refused*

31 Do you think that, given this situation, most people in politics would choose the same answer as you (*yes or no*)?

(4)                      **yes (1)**                      **no (2)**                      *don't know (3)*                      *refused*

32 An MP helps a local restaurant owner get a liquor license. A few weeks later, the owner sends the MP a cheque for \$5,000. The MP should

- a return the cheque
- b cash the cheque and donate the money to charity
- c report the matter to police
- d *don't know*
- e *refused*

33 Do you think that, given this situation, most people in politics would choose the same answer as you (*yes or no*)?

**yes (1)**                      **no (2)**                      *don't know (3)* *refused (4)*

34 The former Energy Minister is asked by his brother, who works for an oil company, for advice as to who to talk to about a tax break for his company. The former Minister should

- a be as helpful as possible
- b refer his brother to an industry consultant
- c say he's sorry, but he can't give any advice
- d *don't know*
- e *refused*

[If the respondent inquires about when the Minister resigned, the answer is "6 months ago"]

35 Do you think that, given this situation, most people in politics would choose the same answer as you (*yes or no*)?

(4)                      **yes (1)**                      **no (2)**                      *don't know (3)*                      *refused*

36 A Cabinet Minister is faced with a large debt following his reelection. His advisers tell him that the best way to raise money is to invite people to a private breakfast meeting where anyone who pays \$500 can talk to the Minister about their concerns. Should the Minister

- a go along with the plan
- b set no fee, but encourage people to make donations
- c reject the idea
- d *don't know*
- e *refused*

37 Do you think that, given this situation, most people in politics would choose the same answer as you (*yes or no*)?

**yes (1)**                      **no (2)**                      *don't know (3)* *refused (4)*

38 A Minister **has** to attend an important meeting in Europe. He is issued a first-class plane ticket. His wife, who sees very little of her husband, would like to go along. Should the Minister

- a bring his wife along at her own expense
- b trade in his first class fare for two seats in economy
- c go alone
- d *don't know*
- e *refused*

39 Do you think that, given this situation, most people in politics would choose the same answer as you (*yes or no*)?

**yes (1)**                      **no (2)**                      *don't know (3)* *refused (4)*

40 The Minister of Finance is scheduled to make a major speech to international investors about the Canadian economy. At the last minute he learns that the deficit is much larger than expected. Should the Minister

- a present the new deficit estimates
- b cancel his speech
- c make the speech, and say nothing about the deficit
- d *don't know*
- e *refused*

41 Do you think that, given this situation, most people in politics would choose the same answer as you (*yes or no*)?

- yes (1)
- no (2)
- don't know* (3) *refused* (4)

Now I am going to read you some statements. I'd like you to tell me if you **strongly agree**, **somewhat agree**, **somewhat disagree**, or **strongly disagree** (Circle responses)

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Refuse</u>
42 No matter what we do, we can never put an end to political corruption in this country	1	2	3	4	5	6
43 Politicians cannot expect to have the same degree of privacy as everyone else	1	2	3	4	5	6
44 Political corruption is a widespread problem in this country	1	2	3	4	5	6
45 Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn	1	2	3	4	5	6
46 People who run for election are usually out for themselves	1	2	3	4	5	6

47 The media say too much about the private lives of politicians	1	2	3	4	5	6
48 The public should not expect MPs to have higher ethical standards than the average person	1	2	3	4	5	6
49 Journalists judge politicians by standards that journalists themselves don't meet	1	2	3	4	5	6
50 What cabinet ministers do in their private lives tells us whether they would be good leaders	1	2	3	4	5	6
51 People distrust politicians because they don't understand what politics is all about	1	2	3	4	5	6
52 In general, politicians are very well-paid	1	2	3	4	5	6
53 It is important to protect fully the rights of radicals	1	2	3	4	5	6
54 Loyalty to friends is often more important than obeying the law	1	2	3	4	5	6
55 No MP should be allowed to hold office for more than 10 years	1	2	3	4	5	6

Now let's think about some comparisons

56 Do you think there is **more, less, or the same** amount of corruption in government as there is in business?

**more (1)**      **less (2)**      **the same (3)**      *don't know (4)*  
*refused (5)*

57 Do you think women politicians have **higher, lower, or about the same** ethical standards as male politicians?

**higher (1)**      **lower (2)**      **the same (3)**      *don't know (4)*  
*refused (5)*

58 Some people think that corruption is part of politics and that there is nothing we can do about it. Others think it is possible to reduce it if we take the proper steps. Do you think the following proposals would reduce corruptions **a lot, a little, or not at all?**

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	<u>Refused</u>
58 Bring in stiffer penalties for corrupt behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
59 Require all politicians to reveal publicly their tax returns	1	2	3	4	5
60 Make politicians take a course on public ethics	1	2	3	4	5
61 Strengthen the ability of the independent ethics commissioner to investigate the public's complaints	1	2	3	4	5
62 Screen those seeking public office for gaps in their personal ethics	1	2	3	4	5

63 Is there anything else that you think could be done to improve standards in government?

---

64 In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

*don't know* 1

*refused* 2

**Thank you** for your time and views We appreciate comments and assistance

If respondent asks how they might receive a copy of the results of the study, they can contact Lydia Summerlee, Department of Political Science, Wilfrid Laurier University, at [summ1430@wlu.ca](mailto:summ1430@wlu.ca) or 519-830-4705



## APPENDIX II

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Dear MP,

I am currently enrolled in the Master's program in Political Science at Wilfrid Laurier University and am seeking your help. I am being supervised by Dr. David Docherty, and my thesis research is an attitudinal approach to political ethics in Canada. This project has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at Wilfrid Laurier.

The intent of my thesis is to replicate a national study, which was conducted in Canada, by Maureen Mancuso, Michael Atkinson, Neil Nevitte and Andre Blais, published in *A Question of Ethics: Canadians Speak Out*. The book examined the views of Canadians on a series of questions on ethics, including an understanding of the ethical questions faced by public officials in Canada.

I would like to re-administer the survey to approximately thirty Members of Parliament. This opportunity will allow me to compare the attitudes of elected officials and the public, to explore the changes in attitudes since the last survey ten years ago. I have been able to pre-test the survey with Liberal Candidate and former parliamentary Whip, Karen Redman.

You are one of the MPs whose assistance I am hoping to obtain. I can administer the questions in approximately thirty minutes, and your anonymity is completely assured. The questionnaire will be conducted via telephone and a copy of the results will be provided to you once the data have been analyzed.

I will be in contact with you within the next ten days, to arrange a suitable interview time. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and I look forward to speaking with you.

Yours Sincerely,

Lydia Summerlee

*February 22, 2010*

Dear Member of Parliament,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my Master's student Ms Lydia Summerlee. As indicated in her letter to you, Ms Summerlee is conducting research on questions of political ethics as in order to complete her Master's thesis in political science at Wilfrid Laurier University. Part of this research includes interviews with sitting members of parliament.

I have worked with Ms Summerlee since she arrived at Laurier this past fall. Ms Summerlee is a dedicated and serious student who is passionate about her area of research. Her research is in no way partisan or ideologically driven but rather reflects her genuine interest in questions of political ethics and the role of members of parliament in building public trust in our political institutions. Ms Summerlee's questions have been pre-tested on both former and sitting members from both sides of the House, and have been cleared by the Laurier Committee on Research Ethics.

Having conducted numerous studies on parliament myself, including many interviews with MP's, I understand the busy schedules you keep and the difficulty in finding time to meet with researchers. However, I would stress that this research does not seek out to expose individual views or partisan policy positions from our political parties. Responses will be kept confidential and will not be used that can in any way identify the respondent.

Any courtesy you can show Ms Summerlee would be greatly appreciated on our end. The greater the participation from members of parliament, the greater the reliability of her findings. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Ms Summerlee.

Sincerely,

David C. Docherty, Ph.D.

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Initiatives

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