
Elementary Kinship Structures in Parliament Since 1867

Jacques P. Gagnon

The title of this study is a nod to the distinguished ethnologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) who demonstrated that multiple family structures (monogamous, polyandrous or polygynous; patrilineal, matrilineal or bilateral, extended or restricted) all serve the same social functions to varying degrees. Since 2000, the Library of Parliament's PARLINFO service has made available on its website kinship ties of senators and MPs from 1867 to the present on its website. This database is the source for this article. It allows us to look at the considerable number of parliamentarians who are spouses, brothers, sons or daughters of other parliamentarians.

People who share both a bedchamber and a parliamentary chamber are rare worldwide. Only about twenty married couples over three quarters of a century have sat in the Parliament of Canada. Intuitively, we would expect these couples to share the same ideology and to be more common among the less conservative parties. We would also expect that increasing numbers of couples were elected as more women left the home and entered the workforce and that they would be more common in urban areas than rural ones.

Our Canadian sample shows that most of our intuitions are wrong. Of 20 couples, half are from conservative parties. The two periods with the most couples in Parliament were the 1960s and the 2000s, with no gradual progression from 1930 to 2008. The urban-rural divide is no more apparent: we note only that Ontario sent the most couples to Ottawa (6 of 20).

Nonetheless, we do note the following trends; husbands and wives always shared the same political philosophy; the husband's political career usually preceded the wife's (18 of 20); the wife's career often

began later in life than her husband's (14 of 20). Half the time, a riding was a "political legacy" passed on from husband to wife.

Am I my Brother's Keeper?

Since 1867, 105 parliamentarians (92 MPs and 13 senators) have held office alongside their brothers. They were part of 50 families, 5 of which had three parliamentarians each (the Dorions, Geoffrions, Horners, Macdonalds and Prices). Most often, the older brother began his career before (35 cases) or at the same time (5 cases) as his brother(s). There was no significant difference in the ages of the brothers when they began their parliamentary career.¹ Most held office in the same province (43 of 50), if not in the same riding. The brothers most often represented the same party (42 of 50). The exceptions are most often from the 19th century, when party discipline was less strict than it is today.

Let us now look at the provincial and party distribution for the 105 brothers. Brothers were clearly more frequently elected in Quebec than in Ontario and more often in the Maritimes than in the Western provinces. The Liberal Party had more brothers in its ranks than the Conservatives or the other parties.

The more complicated question is how the representation of brothers in Parliament changed over time. To find out, we divided history into four "political generations" that correspond to four periods of hegemony of one of the two major parties or alternation between them. How many brothers started their parliamentary careers in each period?

Jacques P. Gagnon holds a master's degree in political science from Université Laval and is former president of the Quebec federation of genealogy societies (2001–2004). The author thanks Ms. Denise Ledoux, coordinator of PARLINFO at the Library of Parliament, and her team for giving him access to their database which is found at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/parlinfo/compilations/parliament/FamilyTies.aspx?Language=E>.

Husbands and Wives in Parliament

Couple	Province	Riding	Party	Start of Mandate	Age
Wilson, Norman Frank	ON	Russell	Liberal	1904	28
Wilson, Cairine Reay	ON	Senate	Liberal	1930	45
Casgrain, Pierre-François	Qc	Charlevoix-Montmorency	Liberal	1917	31
Casgrain, Thérèse Forget	Qc	Senate	Independent	1970	74
Black, George	YK	Yukon	Conservative	1921	48
Black, Martha Louise	YK	Yukon	Independent-Conservative	1935	69
Casselman, Arza	ON	Grenville	Conservative	1921	30
Wadds, Jean Casselman	ON	Grenville-Dundas	Conservative	1958	38
MacInnis, Angus	BC	Vancouver-South	Independent Labour	1930	46
MacInnis, Grace	BC	Vancouver-Kingsway	NDP	1965	60
Casselman, Frederic	AB	Edmonton-East	Liberal	1940	55
Casselman, Cora	AB	Edmonton-East	Liberal	1941	53
Hardie, Mervyn	NT	Mackenzie River	Liberal	1953	35
Hardie, Isabel J. Tibbie	NT	Northwest Territories	Liberal	1962	46
Jones, Henry	SK	Saskatoon	Conservative	1957	37
Jones, Eloise	SK	Saskatoon	Conservative	1964	47
Macdonald, John	PE	King's	Conservative	1957	44
Macdonald, Margaret	PE	King's	Conservative	1961	51
Rideout, Sherwood	NB	Westmorland	Liberal	1962	45
Rideout, Margaret Isabel	NB	Westmorland	Liberal	1964	41
Sauvé, Maurice	Qc	Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Liberal	1962	39
Sauvé, Jeanne	Qc	Ahuntsic	Liberal	1972	50
Moore, Frank	NT	Bonavista-Trinity-Conception	Conservative	1968	35
Johnson, Janis	MB	Senate	Conservative	1990	44
Cossitt, Thomas	ON	Leeds	Conservative	1972	45
Cossitt, Jennifer	ON	Leeds-Grenville	Conservative	1982	34
Milne, William	ON	Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe	Liberal	1974	42
Milne, Lorna	ON	Senate	Liberal	1995	61
Cadman, Chuck	BC	Surrey-North	Reform	1997	49
Cadman, Dona	BC	Surrey-North	Conservative	2008	58
Grewal, Gurmant	BC	Surrey Central	Reform	1997	40
Grewal, Nina	BC	Fleetwood-Port Kells	Conservative	2004	46
Jaffer, Rahim	AB	Edmonton-Strathcona	Reform	1997	26
Guergis, Helena	ON	Simcoe-Grey	Conservative	2004	35
Finley, Diane	ON	Haldimand-Norfolk	Conservative	2004	47
Finley, Doug	ON	Senate	Conservative	2009	63
Layton, Jack	ON	Toronto-Danforth	NDP	2004	54
Chow, Olivia	ON	Trinity- Spadina	NDP	2006	49
Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thai	Qc	Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot	Bloc québécois	2007	35
Guimond, Claude	Qc	Rimouski-Neigette-Témiscouata-Les Basques	Bloc québécois	2008	45

Note: Because of the difficulty in tracing past parliamentarians' family relations and the inadequacy of printed sources, the present listing may not be complete.

• 1867–1896	Quasi-hegemony of Conservatives	48
• 1896–1935	Liberals and Conservatives alternate	33
• 1935–1968	Quasi-hegemony of Liberals	15
• 1968–2008	Liberals and Conservatives alternate	<u>9</u>
Total		105

The trend is very clear: the frequency of brothers in Parliament has noticeably diminished over time.

Brothers in Parliament			
By Province		By Party	
Québec	44	Liberal	65
Ontario	34	Conservative	26
Nova Scotia	6	Liberal-Conservative	6
Prince Edward Island	6	Progressive	2
New Brunswick	4	NDP	2
British Columbia	4	Independent	2
Alberta	3	Anti-Confederate	1
Saskatchewan	2	Unionist	1
Manitoba	2		
Total	105		105

Like Father (or Mother), Like Son (or Daughter)

Now we will consider the daughters, who number only eight. Let us compare their situation with that of the parliamentary wives. There is only one senator who had a senator daughter but four female senators

had a father who was an MP or senator. Daughters and fathers shared the same ideology; as many daughters represented the Conservative Party as the Liberal Party; the daughter's career began at a more advanced age than (5 cases) or the same age (2 cases) as her father's did. Moreover, the father did not pass on his riding to his daughter except in one case. One or two daughters began their political careers in each decade over the last fifty years. Ontario has the most parliamentary daughters (5 of the 8).

What about the sons of parliamentarians? They are far more numerous: 133 from 127 families, for a total of 260 parliamentarians—fathers and sons—comprising 210 MPs and 50 senators. This means that some fathers had two sons in Parliament (the Barnards, Crawfords, Moffats and Sinclairs). Ralph Horner even had three sons sit in Parliament. George Rideout was the son of two parliamentarians. Another female parliamentarian, Marion Dewar, was the mother of a MP, Paul Dewar.

Of course, the provinces and parties represented were more or less the same for father and son. As with brothers in Parliament, Quebec had more than Ontario, and the Maritimes more than the West. However, the Liberals' lead over the Conservatives is not as large for fathers and sons in Parliament.

Fathers and Daughters in Parliament					
Father-Daughter	Province	Riding	Party	Start of Mandate	Age
Forget, Joseph David	Québec	Charlevoix	Conservative	1904	43
Casgrain, Thérèse Forget	Québec	Senate	Independent	1970	74
Woodsworth, James	Manitoba	Winnipeg-Centre	Labour	1921	47
MacInnis, Grace	British Columbia	Vancouver-Kingsway	NDP	1965	60
Rowe, William Earl	Ontario	Dufferin-Simcoe	Conservative	1925	31
Wadds, Jean Casselman	Ontario	Grenville-Dundas	Conservative	1958	38
Bissett, Edgar	Manitoba	Springfield	Liberal-Progressive	1926	36
Neiman, Joan	Ontario	Senate	Liberal	1972	52
Jackman, Harry	Ontario	Rosedale	Conservative	1940	40
Nancy Ruth	Ontario	Senate	Conservative	2005	63
Drope, Robert	Ontario	Northumberland	Conservative	1945	47
Browes, Pauline	Ontario	Scarborough	Conservative	1984	46
Connolly, Harold	Nova Scotia	Senate	Liberal	1955	54
Carstairs, Sharon	Manitoba	Senate	Liberal	1994	52
Whelan, Eugene	Ontario	Essex-South	Liberal	1962	38
Whelan, Susan	Ontario	Essex-Windsor	Liberal	1993	30

Note: Because of the difficulty in tracing past parliamentarians' family relations and the inadequacy of printed sources, the present listing may not be complete.

Fathers and Sons in Parliament			
By Province	Fathers (Sons)	By Party	Fathers (Sons)
Québec	47 (48)	Liberal	59 (68)
Ontario	34 (31)	Conservative	46 (52)
New Brunswick	16 (15)	Liberal-Conservative	6 (2)
Nova Scotia	12 (12)	National Government	1 (1)
Prince Edward Island	2 (3)	Anti-Confederate	4 (0)
Newfoundland and Labrador	1 (1)	CCF/NDP	3 (4)
British Columbia	5 (10)	Social Credit	2 (1)
Alberta	4 (5)	Unionist	2 (1)
Saskatchewan	3 (5)	Nationalist	1 (2)
Manitoba	1 (3)	Independent/None	3 (1)
Northwest Territories	1 (0)	Reform Party	0 (1)
Yukon	1 (0)		
Total	127 (133)	Total	127 (133)

We will now look at the change in fathers and sons in Parliament over time by comparing the entry dates of the 256 parliamentarians.²

• 1867–1896	Quasi-hegemony of Conservatives	94
• 1896–1935	Liberals and Conservatives alternating	68
• 1935–1968	Quasi-hegemony of Liberals	57
• 1968–2011	Liberals and Conservatives alternating	37
Total		256

As with brothers in Parliament, the trend is toward fewer fathers and sons over time.³

Do these sons of parliamentarians take up their political careers early? It seems to be the case given that 85 sons began their career at an earlier age than their fathers did.⁴ Of course, the voters in ridings elect MPs, and the prime minister chooses senators, but the numbers are clear.

How many sons inherited their ridings from their fathers? This trend has been significant; it was the case with over 100 father and son parliamentarians. Quebec had the most of these, followed by Ontario and the Maritimes.

Let us conclude with a few remarks on names. Fifteen of the 20 parliamentary wives had the same name as their husbands; just 1 daughter kept her father's name; 9 of 133 sons had the same first name as their father.

Notes

1. In 20 cases, the older brother started his parliamentary career at a more advanced age than his brother; in 24 cases, the opposite occurred; in 11 cases, the brothers began at the same age or within two years. (This makes for a total of 55 cases, including the five families with three brothers who sat in Parliament.)
2. Not 260 as in the preceding table. Four parliamentarians were counted twice since they are both sons and fathers of other parliamentarians. They are MPs Charles-Eugène Pouliot and Charles-Gavan Power and senators Charles-Philippe Beaubien and Louis-Athanase David.
3. In the present House of Commons the following had fathers who were also MPs: Maxime Bernier, Jack Layton, Dominic Leblanc, Peter MacKay, Geoff Regan, Mark Strahl and Justin Trudeau.
4. Thirty fathers began their careers at a younger age than their sons, 11 at roughly the same age (plus or minus two years).