

The Unanticipated Consequences of Fewer Politicians: Bill 81, Federalism, and Constituency Party Organization in Ontario

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En Ontario, depuis l'entrée en vigueur de la Loi réduisant le nombre de députés, en 1999, les circonscriptions provinciales et fédérales sont identiques. Cette loi avait pour objectif de permettre de réduire les coûts et d'accroître l'efficacité de l'administration ; mais elle a également eu d'importants effets imprévus sur l'organisation des partis politiques ontariens. Dans cet article, j'examine d'abord l'introduction de la Loi. Je présente ensuite le compte rendu de 60 interviews que j'ai menées avec des responsables d'associations de circonscription de différents partis, dont 7 qui faisaient déjà ce travail avant l'entrée en vigueur de la Loi. En faisant des comparaisons entre les associations de circonscription de l'Ontario et du Nouveau-Brunswick (où les circonscriptions fédérales et provinciales sont différentes), je démontre que l'existence de circonscriptions provinciales et fédérales identiques facilite l'intégration des partis politiques fédéraux et provinciaux et leur coopération dans les circonscriptions, parce que, sur les plans de la géographie et de l'écologie humaine, les contextes sur la base desquels les partis fédéraux et provinciaux se structurent sont alors les mêmes, et parce que le nombre d'intervenants est réduit. On peut donc considérer la Loi réduisant le nombre de députés comme l'exemple d'une loi qui comporte d'importants effets imprévus, et c'est en évaluant la Loi de ce point de vue que je conclus l'étude.

Mots clés : partis politiques, moins de députés, circonscriptions électorales, institutions, Ontario

The Fewer Politicians Act (FPA), 1999 (Ontario) led to the creation of identical national and provincial electoral constituencies in the province. While the bill was intended by the provincial Conservative government to reduce costs and increase efficiency, the FPA has also had substantial unanticipated consequences for political party organizations in Ontario. I first review the introduction of the FPA and, second, draw on 60 interviews with party constituency association officials, including seven long-term participants with experience prior to the introduction of the FPA, and make a comparison of associations in Ontario and New Brunswick (where boundaries are not identical) to demonstrate that congruent boundaries facilitate integration and cooperation between national and provincial political parties in the constituencies. Congruent riding boundaries do so by merging the geographic and ecological contexts that both national and provincial party organizations structure themselves in response to, and by reducing the number of actors participating in national-provincial cooperation. The FPA can therefore be understood as a case study of legislation containing important unanticipated consequences, and I conclude the article by evaluating the FPA from this perspective.

Keywords: political parties, fewer politicians, electoral constituencies, institutions, Ontario

INTRODUCTION

Political parties in office occasionally pass legislation that alters the electoral-institutional environments in which they themselves exist. Such alterations to the “rules of the game” change the ways parties carry out their primary functions, particularly how they organize themselves to contest elections. In recent years, political scientists have paid substantial attention to two legislative initiatives that altered the rules of the game for Canadian parties: party finance legislation at the national level (Jansen and Young 2011) and provincial legislation creating citizens’ assemblies on electoral reform (Cross 2005). In introducing this legislation, the parties in government opened the door to possibly having to remake their organizations in response to new electoral-institutional incentives.

In both these cases, parties in government set out to alter the rules of the game in which they themselves participate. In other cases, however, parties alter their electoral-institutional environments without realizing that they are doing so. This occurs when legislation has unanticipated downstream consequences for the parties themselves, resulting in new and unexpected challenges. This paper explores one example of this type of legislation: Ontario’s Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act (FPA): “An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts.” Bill 81 abolished the position of provincial boundary commissioner and linked redistributions of provincial ridings in Ontario to those of national constituencies. The result has been the development of congruent national and provincial electoral constituencies in the province of Ontario, with a small number of exceptions in the northern region of the province.

The nature of riding boundaries is a crucial element of the electoral-institutional context within which Canadian parties’ constituency associations organize. In this paper, I demonstrate that linking

provincial to national constituency boundaries has removed a significant obstacle to national-provincial coordination of party organization, resources, personnel, and effort in the ridings, with the following argument resulting:

Argument: Identical national and provincial constituency boundaries facilitate integration and cooperation between national and provincial party constituency associations.

This occurs as a result of two mechanisms.

Mechanism 1: Identical constituency boundaries reduce the number of actors participating in national-provincial cooperation from several in provinces other than Ontario to two in Ontario (one national and one provincial). A lower number of participants reduces the complexity of cooperation, enhancing the attractiveness of integration to local activists (White 2005).

Mechanism 2: Identical constituency boundaries merge the geographic and ecological conditions that both national and provincial constituency associations organize themselves in response to. The result is that national and provincial associations have common priorities and a “convergence of purpose,” both of which are conducive to the development of alliances (Doz 1988). Since constituency associations are accorded substantial autonomy to organize themselves in response to local incentives (Carty and Cross 2006, 97), congruent boundaries create incentives to national and provincial associations to cooperate in organizing within identical geographic spaces.

The result has been coordination between national and provincial parties and integration of several party functions in the ridings, especially when compared to party constituency organizations in provinces not characterized by identical national and provincial boundaries. In this paper, I exploit this key institutional difference between two provinces,

Ontario and New Brunswick, and interview long-term party activists with experience in both pre- and post-FPA Ontario to explore how congruent constituencies contribute to national-provincial integration in the ridings.

In making the argument that the FPA contributes to integration of national and provincial constituency associations, I am not suggesting that congruent boundaries exercise a clear determinative effect on the nature of party organizations, or that congruent boundaries are the sole factor influencing the development of integrated organizations. Instead, I am arguing that congruence of national and sub-national constituency boundaries (or lack thereof) is one important aspect of the overall institutional context within which parties organize themselves between the two levels (also see [Filippov, Ordeshook, and Shvetsova 2004](#), 196). As [Thelen and Steinmo \(1992, 13\)](#) remind us, “Institutions constrain and refract politics, but they are never the only cause of outcomes.” This aspect of parties’ institutional arrangements interacts with others, as well as contextual and political variables, to shape how local elites organize themselves at the grassroots.

From the perspective of scholars of public policy, the FPA provides a case study of how legislation altering the rules of the game for political parties may have far-reaching, unanticipated consequences for the structures and operations of political parties (for example, [Immergut 1992](#)). The scholarly study of unintended consequences dates back to the work of [Merton \(1936\)](#), who systematically analyzed the unanticipated consequences of purposive social action. Unintended outcomes are a natural by-product of interventions in complex systems, and the increasing complexity of state apparatus means that governments cannot anticipate all possible consequences of public policy decisions. [Pierson \(2000\)](#) convincingly makes this argument with respect to institutional design, demonstrating that not only complexity, but also the increasing interconnectedness of state and society increases the potential for and range of unanticipated consequences.

The effect of the FPA on constituency party organization is what [Jervis \(1997\)](#) refers to as a “system effect:” the unexpected consequence of a decision that affects a number of interconnected policy processes. The bill was introduced by the Conservative government of Ontario not as a democratic reform designed to alter how parties conduct themselves, but rather as one component of the government’s wider neo-conservative agenda in order to lend legitimacy to its cost-cutting program ([Pond 2005](#), 171). The government of the day did not appear to anticipate the far-reaching changes that the bill held for national and provincial party organizations. Nevertheless, the FPA and resulting boundary congruence have significantly altered the electoral-institutional context within which Ontario’s national and provincial parties operate, with important unforeseen consequences as to how those parties organize themselves in the ridings.

This article also contributes to the growing literature in Canada addressing the drawing (and re-drawing) of both national and provincial constituency boundaries (for example, [Courtney 2001](#); [Eagles 2007](#)). Constituency composition can, of course, have important electoral consequences for political parties, and this article demonstrates the consequences of redistributions for the national-provincial organizations of those parties.

I first provide a descriptive account of the FPA and the government’s rationale for fewer politicians. I then demonstrate how distinctive national and provincial constituency boundaries complicate processes of local integration and, as a result, contribute to the development of separated national and provincial organizations. After a summary of the paper’s methodology, I account for the effect of congruent national and provincial riding boundaries on party organizations through a close observation of the Liberal Party’s constituency associations in Ontario and New Brunswick, through 60 one-on-one interviews with constituency party activists in those provinces, including seven who participated prior to the 1996 introduction of the FPA. The paper closes

with a discussion of this work's wider implications and applicability, as well as a normative discussion of the FPA's unanticipated consequences.

BILL 81: THE FEWER POLITICIANS ACT

Bill 81 was introduced in 1996 as one component of the New Right agenda of Ontario's Progressive Conservative Party under leader Mike Harris. The promise to reduce the number of Members of the Provincial Parliament (MPPs) was codified in the party's 1995 "Common Sense Revolution" (CSR) election platform. Bill 81 can be understood within the wider context of Harris's neo-liberal conception of and approach to governance, which resembled the governing approaches of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US President Ronald Reagan (Pond 2005, 172).

Laycock (2001) specifies two defining characteristics of the policies proposed and implemented by Canadian New Right political parties. First, these parties are opposed to the growth of the state, and accordingly attempt to curb government revenues and spending while in office. Second, New Right parties bring a populist hostility to party politics and politicians. In addition to these defining characteristics of Canadian New Right parties and governments can be added a skepticism regarding the role of knowledge and "experts" in the political process.¹

All three characteristics are discernible in Bill 81 and in the government's justifications for the legislation. First, Bill 81 was introduced as part of the government's wider cost-cutting and state-shrinking program (Docherty 2005, 118); indeed, the bill's explanatory note states simply that it was intended to "achieve savings by reducing the number of Ontario's provincial electoral districts." The government estimated that \$11 million would be saved annually in MPP salaries and administrative expenses (Hansard October 30, 1996). David Johnson, chair of the cabinet management board and sponsor of the bill, for example, situated Bill

81 within the wider cost-cutting program of the government during its second reading:

I will point out that in doing better for less this is another aspect of our program. . . . We've cut the administrative costs of government by some 200 million to this point. Another 80 million has been taken out of the agencies, boards and commissions to make them run more efficiently. Of course, we are downsizing the civil service to have a more efficient and effective government. This bill furthers that particular overall program of this government. (Johnson 1996)

Another aspect of the neo-liberal program of shrinking the state is simplicity. It is not only the case that the state has become too big; it is also problematic for New Right politicians that the state has become too complex and therefore opaque to citizens. With this in mind, Noel (1997, 15) notes the parallels between the CSR and the views of an earlier Toronto proponent of simple government, Goldwin Smith, who argued that complex government apparatus could be replaced with "a good practical council of reeves."

This justification for Bill 81 provided by the government relates to the simplicity it would lend to the conduct of party politics as well as the administration of national and provincial elections. Johnson provided this justification for the FPA:

By harmonizing our boundaries with the federal government we will reduce the complexity of the existing political system and make the system more transparent, more accountable and more understandable to the people of the province of Ontario. . . . Clarity, simplicity and a more understandable and more workable system for the people of Ontario, whom we are elected to serve, are important to us. . . . (Johnson 1996)

To New Right politicians, complexity comes with opaqueness; so the FPA can also be understood as an attempt to simplify the processes of representation and render them more accessible to citizens.

Bill 81 also demonstrated the Harris government's hostility toward politicians and party politics. The name itself—*Courtney* (2001, 184) refers to the bill as “delightfully named”—conveys a populist appeal to having fewer droning politicians in Toronto. Self-deprecating government members took up this line of defense. Tory MPP Bill Grimmett, for example, claimed, “Many of my constituents, while consoling me at the apparent loss of a riding, have indicated that this makes so much common sense it could not have been designed by politicians” (Grimmett 1996).

Merton (1936) speculates on several causes of unanticipated consequences, including ignorance, error, immediate interest, the influence of basic values, and self-defeating prophecies. The discussion above demonstrates that ignorance was a key factor contributing to the unanticipated consequence of local party integration, as there is no evidence that the government was aware of the potential effects of Bill 81 on constituency party organizations. Merton (1936, 900) points out that the role of ignorance in creating unintended consequences comes naturally since “we usually act . . . not on the basis of scientific knowledge, but opinion and estimate.” In this sense, the failure of the Conservative government to foresee the party organizational consequences of Bill 81 is attributable to its failure to consult experts on these consequences, which in turn is related to New Right politicians' populist tendency to reject the advice of experts. It is clear that the government did not foresee the consequences of the FPA for constituency party organizations.

DISTINCTIVE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES COMPLICATE PARTY INTEGRATION

The organizations of Canadian political parties at the national and provincial levels are understood to be largely separate from one another, even when those parties share a common name (for example, Wolinetz and Carty 2006, 54). This

national-provincial separation results in part from several characteristics of Canada's federal and electoral institutions, including a decentralized federal system (Thorlakson 2009, 164-5), non-concurrent national and provincial elections (Fabre 2010), and the importance of intergovernmental negotiations to party leaders (Cairns 1977, 715). Distinctive patterns of party competition between national and provincial levels in some provinces also contribute to friction between national and provincial counterparts (for example, Black 1972; Blake 1985).

Another electoral-institutional characteristic of Canadian federalism relates to the traditional distinctiveness of national and provincial constituency boundaries. Distinctive riding boundaries have always complicated any form of national-provincial integration in the constituencies, since whatever roles local activists played at the two levels, national and provincial parties were forced to maintain separate local structures in each constituency in order to service distinctive areas and electorates. Following this logic, Perlin provides a bottom-up explanation of national-provincial separation:

The presence of a strong provincial party does not necessarily produce strong federal constituency organization. The problem is that there is little congruence between federal and provincial constituency boundaries, which has meant that it has been necessary to maintain separate federal and provincial constituency organization. This imposes conflicting demands on local activists. (1980, 22)

Since distinctive national and provincial riding boundaries force the local organizations of these parties to operate in different geographic spaces, they necessitate the maintenance of distinctive national and provincial party organizations in the constituencies (Franks 2007, 26). Distinctive riding boundaries are therefore one factor contributing to the finding of Carty and Eagles that “the party organizations exist in two political worlds. The real party machinery has separated and partisan activity no longer binds federal and provincial

political life together” (2003, 385). The question is whether the merging of national and provincial constituency boundaries in Ontario has had the effect of reintegrating national and provincial party organizations in the constituencies when compared to other provinces (such as New Brunswick) where national and provincial constituency boundaries remain distinctive.

METHODOLOGY AND CASE SELECTION

Data collection for this article took place in two phases. In the first phase, I interviewed 53 local party activists in 11 national ridings in Ontario and New Brunswick.² Interviewees were recruited from publicly available sources. These face-to-face interviews were open-ended to start, but became semi-structured over time in order to produce comparable data. Ontario and New Brunswick ridings were chosen for study in part because they allowed me to contrast the impact of congruent boundaries in Ontario with that of non-congruent ridings in New Brunswick. Whereas most Ontario constituencies are congruent, national ridings in New Brunswick at the time of these interviews contained an average of 5.5 provincial constituencies.

In addition, constituencies containing ranges of ecological and competitive contexts were selected within each province. Local party organizations differ greatly between urban, suburban, and rural constituencies (Sayers 1999, Chapter 7). The selection of case study constituencies from each type captures the effects of boundary congruence on party organization in each of them, and by carefully selecting constituencies, I was able to control for differences in urbanization between Ontario and New Brunswick. In addition, party organization is naturally altered depending on the electoral strength of the local party, and this is particularly true when an incumbent MP is present (Carty and Eagles 2005, 27). To account for these differences, I selected case-study constituencies where the Liberal Party was in a range of competitive situations. In

the second phase of data collection, I interviewed seven constituency association presidents in Ontario on the basis of their tenure of experience in the Liberal Party. In particular, I recruited interviewees who had been active in the Liberal Party prior to the 1996 introduction of the FPA. Such experience allowed these interviewees to describe constituency organization in Ontario both prior to and following the introduction of constituency congruence. Interviewing these two distinctive groups of Liberal Party activists allowed me to compare constituency organization both between provinces and between time periods within Ontario.

This study focuses on the national and provincial Liberal parties and not on the Conservative or New Democratic parties. This research design decision was made for three reasons. First, since qualitative research is demanding in terms of resources and time, focusing on a single party allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of congruent boundaries on the organizations of that one party. Second, case studies are appropriate for the formulation of theory and the development of empirical frameworks (Lijphart 1971, 685); the selection of a single case was therefore an appropriate methodological decision given that very little is known about the relationship between federal constituency boundaries and political party organization. The framework developed in this paper can and should be applied to the other major parties, as well as parties in other multi-level states. Finally, by focusing on a single party, I was able to explore the effect of congruent boundaries without also taking into account differences in the extent to which the parties are integrated between the national and provincial levels.

CONGRUENT NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES FACILITATE CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATION INTEGRATION

Constituency associations are the party structures that exist in the ridings between election campaigns. While constituency associations encompass the

entire local party membership, their most important aspects are their executives. Executives are small groups of local elites elected by the party membership once a year to oversee the month-to-month business of the association, as well as to prepare for upcoming election campaigns. Officers—including presidents, vice-presidents, treasurers, and secretaries—are also typically selected at these meetings (Koop 2010, 898-99). Associations fundraise, maintain local membership bases, plan community outreach events to present themselves as partisan “ambassadors to the community,” organize nomination and renomination contests in the ridings, and provide support for incumbents (Carty 1991; Koop and Bittner 2011; Scarrow 1996).

Two mechanisms of congruent riding boundaries result in their facilitating the development of integrated constituency associations. First, congruent national and provincial boundaries facilitate integration by reducing the number of actors involved in alliances between the national and provincial levels. Second, these boundaries facilitate integration by merging the local contexts that the national and provincial associations must organize themselves in response to, thereby creating incentives for the development of joint solutions to common problems. The following subsections provide several illustrations of how these mechanisms allow congruent constituencies to facilitate national-provincial integration.

Mechanism 1: Congruent constituency boundaries facilitate integration by reducing the number of national and provincial actors to cooperate.

Limited numbers of actors in the ridings facilitate integration and encourage cooperation between national and provincial associations by easing the difficulty of communication between the two levels. This can be seen in the ex-officio rule that allows national and provincial associations in Ontario to maintain formal contact with one another. In most Ontario ridings in which I conducted interviews, the president of the national association is provided with

ex-officio status on the provincial executive, and vice versa. Ex-officio presidents deliver reports on the business of their own associations at both national and provincial executive meetings. These updates allow presidents to advertise events, solicit assistance, and even ask for advice from experienced members at the other level. For example, when the provincial Liberal association in an Ontario riding was planning a Christmas event where citizens could trade in their Christmas tree lights for energy-efficient bulbs, the provincial president attended the national executive meeting in order to advertise the event. Members of the national association accordingly advertised the event in their local newsletter and turned out in order to support the provincial association.

In addition, updates provided by ex-officio presidents create opportunities for cooperation between the national and provincial levels. Regular party members who sit on both national and provincial executives (common in Ontario where the two executives service identical geographic areas) supplement these updates. In this way, the presence of a single provincial riding within the boundaries of the national constituency simplifies communication between associations at the two levels.

These patterns of interaction in congruent ridings can be contrasted with the experiences of the national and provincial Liberal associations in the New Brunswick constituency of Acadie-Bathurst, which contains no fewer than seven provincial ridings. The ex-officio rule also exists in this riding, so the national executive assumes a federative nature, as its meetings are crowded with several provincial presidents. However, practical difficulties impede this form of communication between the national executive and its provincial counterparts. Bringing together the national and provincial presidents in a single meeting introduces logistical difficulties, so fully attended meetings are rare. In addition, some provincial associations are weak and lack committed volunteers; such associations approach the status of “paper association” described by Carty (1991, 57-65). These associations have placeholder

presidents who rarely attend national executive meetings or communicate with national organizers in the riding, and who are reluctant to enter into cooperative relationships with other associations. Still other provincial associations in New Brunswick have MPPs who are reluctant to see their organizations cooperate with the party at the other level.³ In Acadie-Bathurst and other New Brunswick ridings, non-congruent constituency boundaries render national-provincial communication difficult, certainly more so than in Ontario where congruent boundaries allow for a simple set of two-way communication between one national and one provincial association.

Since communication is simplified within the context of congruent constituencies, national and provincial associations more easily cooperate in carrying out their functions. One result, according to long-term party activists, has been an overall increase in the number of joint functions and events held by national and provincial associations in Ontario since the introduction of congruent riding boundaries. One example of such cooperation is the annual picnic held in the Toronto riding of Don Valley East, which is designed as a community outreach event in a low-income neighbourhood. The event is jointly planned and executed by members of the national and provincial associations in the riding and necessarily draws on the talents and efforts of members from both associations. Members of both the national and provincial executives, for example, staff the organizing committee, and members of both associations (including the joint national-provincial youth auxiliary in the riding) turn out to assist with the event. In this case, close cooperation between national and provincial associations in carrying out their community outreach functions is aided by congruent national and provincial ridings.

Such cooperation is possible, but presents practical difficulties in national constituencies that contain several provincial ridings, as demonstrated in New Brunswick's national constituencies, where there are very few joint national-provincial events

of the sort hosted in Don Valley East. This is even true in urban ridings where such cooperation is more feasible. Instead, national and provincial associations in New Brunswick lend informal support to events hosted at the other level, such as by advertising events to their own members and/or sending their own members. In the provincial riding of Nepisiguit, for example, executive members travelled as a group to a lobster-dinner fundraiser hosted by the national executive in order to support their national colleagues and in the hope that the national executive would similarly send members to their upcoming bean-breakfast fundraiser. So while the national and provincial associations support one another, non-congruent constituency boundaries render direct cooperation of the sort exhibited in Don Valley East difficult.

Even when national and provincial associations do not actively cooperate with one another, congruent boundaries allow them to coordinate activities in order to maximize effectiveness. Such coordination is also made possible by communication between the two levels. "Provincial and federal people in the same areas now talk to each other," notes one long-term party activist when asked to compare cooperation before and after the advent of congruence constituency boundaries. "Before, you would talk to two or three different people depending on the intersection of your boundaries. Now it's just two people. . . . So information sharing has increased."

Ex-officio members of national and provincial executives tend to enhance communication and thus coordination between them. This is the case in the Ontario riding of Oxford. Notes the president of the provincial association in the riding:

I'm on the [national] executive . . . as president of the provincial association. . . . I think this is positive in the sense that for things that we're going to be doing that may complement or compete with each other, we can at least get a feel for what's going on.

Members of both the national and provincial executives in this riding are also aware that they cannot demand too many financial contributions from the small Liberal membership base in the riding; so they have devised a scheme whereby they hold an annual golf tournament fundraiser, with responsibility and proceeds alternating between the national and provincial associations from year to year. As a result, the associations are able to coordinate their fundraising in order to avoid exhausting the generosity of local contributors.

Crucially, friendly relations and good communication between the two executives have allowed exceptions to this rule. During the national Liberal leadership race in 2006, the provincial association allowed the national association to hold the golf tournament for an extra year so that the latter could recruit leadership candidates to meet with local Liberals. Communication between the two levels—simplified by congruent boundaries and the presence of only two actors—was essential to this cooperation. “Because I was on both boards,” reports the provincial president, “I was able to convey back to the provincial board what was going on and convey back to the feds that we were up to speed on what was happening.” Such coordination is difficult in non-congruent ridings, given the number of actors that must be included in any agreement. “They were pretty successful and they did get some [leadership contenders] out,” notes the provincial president, “so we made it a big deal and it was a big splash.”

This example also illustrates how congruent riding boundaries alter the ways that members of national and provincial associations conceive of their relationships with one another. When there are several provincial ridings contained within the boundaries of a single national constituency, national executives tend to view the smaller provincial associations as “poor cousins” in much the same way that MPs often view provincial representatives (Franks 2007, 38). Small provincial constituencies in New Brunswick, for example, are typically

dismissed by federal Liberals as the “little fiefdoms” of their provincial representatives. But congruent boundaries alter this relationship, as executives are more likely to conceive of one another as partners pursuing similar goals in identical geographic spaces yet different electoral realms. In this way, boundary congruence also increases perceptions of equity between national and provincial partners, contributing to the continued success of local alliances (Kumar and Nti 1998).

Mechanism 2: Congruent constituency boundaries facilitate integration by merging the local incentives faced by national and provincial constituency associations.

Common geographic and ecological bases of operation play a role in drawing national and provincial associations into cooperative roles. When national ridings are divided into several provincial constituencies, then provincial associations tailor their functions to their own small, distinctive communities. In contrast, common boundaries mean that both national and provincial associations face identical ecological imperatives in organizing their activities.

Constituency associations plan inter-election maintenance events in such a way as to reach out to the distinctive combinations of groups that make up their ridings, with the result that associations in different ridings organize very different types of events in order to appeal to different communities. An urban Ontario association, for example, plans an annual Eid event to appeal to its large Muslim population. In contrast, an association in a rural Ontario riding organizes a booth at a local farmers’ fair and auction in order to reach out to agricultural owners and their support industries in the riding. The national and provincial associations in both of these ridings cooperate in order to bring about these outreach events. This is because congruent boundaries merge the citizenries and therefore the incentives encountered by both the national and provincial associations in organizing such outreach

events. In contrast, associations do not face this incentive in New Brunswick, where national and provincial parties organize themselves in response to distinctive local interests.

Even when national and provincial associations in Ontario's congruent ridings do not actively cooperate in planning such events, they nevertheless often share membership lists in order to boost turnout for events at the other level. In some cases, national executive members not only provided the national membership list, but also helped provincial organizers contact members to advertise an upcoming provincial event.

List sharing in non-congruent ridings, however, is more difficult. Attempts by national association elites in New Brunswick to cooperate with several provincial associations often raised the possibility that one or more of the associations was unwilling to share lists for fear of violating the privacy of members. There is also a higher likelihood in these situations that one or more of the provincial associations present will not have pursued membership recruitment or maintenance, resulting in a deficient list. The result is that the national association will have access to provincial lists that cover some geographic areas of the riding, but not others.

Membership lists at the national and provincial levels are useful to both associations when riding boundaries are congruent. Provincial organizers use the national membership list to invite national party members to provincial events, and vice versa. Both associations benefit from their support, since these members are all located within the boundaries of the same national and provincial riding.

The result is that executive members informally pass the lists to the other level, with the expectation that the favour will be returned. A long-term activist compares activist bases prior to and following the FPA by referring to mathematical set theory: "The federal party is a set and the provincial party is a

set. [Prior to the FPA,] there were people associated in both and some were common. Now, all of them are common. So this means that there's a greater amount of cohesion."

Shared membership lists, however, are less useful in non-congruent, overlapping ridings where many members of the national association do not actually reside in provincial ridings and (to a lesser extent) vice versa.

Congruent boundaries also alter the ways that associations approach incumbent support, which is a crucial function of constituency associations (Carty 1991, 60). When there are Liberal incumbents at both the national and provincial levels, associations in Ontario's congruent ridings generally cooperate by providing support for both the MP and MPP. National and provincial organizers take into account the needs of both in planning fundraisers and preparing for election campaigns. If a provincial election is approaching, organizers in both associations shift their priorities—especially related to fundraising—to the provincial level. The same occurs in the lead-up to national elections. A striking example of this is the practice in the riding of Ajax-Pickering of cancelling executive meetings and other activities at one level in the lead-up to and during campaigns at the other level so that local activists can concentrate on those campaigns. This is indicative of the partnerships that characterize many national and provincial associations in Ontario's congruent constituencies.

In addition, when an MP or MPP is present at one level but not the other, then that representative typically plays a role in assisting the organization at the other level. When party elites are involved at both levels or are in contact with the association at the other level, they generally enlist the support of the MP or MPP in order to strengthen the party at both the national and provincial levels. In many Ontario ridings, for example, MPs and MPPs turn out to events held by the association at the other level in order to provide support and draw crowds. And

when one association is weak and the other strong, congruent boundaries allow the weaker organization to learn about and adapt best practices from the stronger organization, thus increasing the overall value of cooperation for both partners.

One way that this cooperation manifests itself is in expertise sharing. In one Ontario riding, a database specialist updated and modernized the national association's membership and calling lists. Thanked profusely at the national executive meeting in the presence of the provincial ex-officio member, he was subsequently convinced to perform a similar service for the provincial association. In another riding, the national association president contacted his provincial counterpart to marvel at the professionalism of the provincial association's newsletter. The provincial president subsequently provided contact information for the volunteer who had composed the newsletter and who was soon passing along his expertise to the national newsletter volunteer. The value of national-provincial partnerships is enhanced in congruent ridings by the sharing of expertise and the adoption of best practices (Kogut 1988, 319).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The FPA provides an excellent example of public policy that contains substantial unanticipated consequences for the organizations of political parties. By merging national and provincial constituency boundaries, the FPA created incentives for the development of integrated constituency associations, as well as cooperation between the two levels. In this paper, I have first demonstrated how this consequence was unanticipated by the government of the day and second, described the mechanisms through which congruent constituency boundaries facilitate cooperation and integration. In this conclusion, I briefly expand on the wider implications and applicability of these findings and evaluate the FPA's unintended consequences from the perspective of the parties themselves.

To what extent are these findings applicable in other contexts, particularly provinces where national constituencies contain two or more provincial ridings that do not cross national boundaries? While this is not the case in New Brunswick, where provincial constituencies cross over national riding boundaries, it is a situation that is likely to arise in provinces where national and provincial boundary commissions use identical natural and man-made landmarks as guides to draw boundaries. The number of actors involved in collaboration within such ridings would be higher than in Ontario, and would tend to complicate processes of local integration. Furthermore, the local ecological incentives encountered by national and provincial associations would diverge, as a higher number of provincial ridings would mean that provincial associations must necessarily organize in response to local incentives that may differ from those of the overall national constituency. The "convergence of purpose" that binds together national and provincial associations under conditions of boundary congruence would no longer be present, and so members of these associations would be expected to view integration less favorably.

Do the findings of this study of Liberal constituency associations extend to other parties? The national and provincial Liberal parties were useful cases with which to compare the effect of constituency congruence on local organizational integration. While Canadian national and provincial parties are formally separate from one another, there are important differences in their informal linkages between the two levels (for example, Koop 2011; Esselment 2010). When such linkages are taken into account, the consensus is that the Liberal Party occupies a middle position between the more strongly integrated New Democratic Party (NDP) and the more separated Conservative party (for example, Dyck 1996, 163). This suggests that congruent national and provincial constituencies will exercise an even stronger effect on NDP constituency associations. The existence of joint NDP associations

in Ontario demonstrates that this party has taken advantage of boundary congruence to construct stronger ties between the national and provincial levels. In contrast, while congruent boundaries may encourage integration, Conservative associations are likely to face more difficulty in constructing linkages between the two levels.

What consequences do coterminous constituencies hold for the nature of representation in the Canadian federation? Within the context of single-member constituencies, national and provincial representatives may enter into competition with one another to satisfy electors' service needs or they may actively cooperate by, for example, forwarding requests outside of their jurisdictions to the representative at the other level. While the Theory of Compound Representation developed by Tuschhoff (1999, 19) suggests that representatives are likely to compete in areas of concurrent jurisdiction, Docherty (2005, 87) finds that federal and provincial representatives in Canada are likely to cooperate by forwarding concerns to one another. Further, Docherty finds that partisanship does not play a role in determining whether such cooperation takes place.

However, my findings suggest that the effect of partisanship may take on pronounced importance within the context of congruent constituencies and integrated constituency organizations. Common constituency organizations may act to bind national and provincial representatives to one another when they are from the same party, with the result that cooperation is more likely to take place. In contrast, common constituency organizations may play a greater role in drawing representatives into the electoral process at the other level, and therefore become less likely to cooperate with representatives from different parties at that level. The view that partisanship plays an amplifying role in encouraging both cooperation between partisan friends at both levels and discouraging cooperation between partisan opponents may be tested in jurisdictions such as

Ontario, where national and provincial constituency boundaries are congruent.

The final question to be asked is: how can the FPA and its unanticipated consequences be evaluated from a normative perspective? Proponents of the FPA argued during its adoption that there were savings associated with fewer politicians and accompanying staff. Other commentators, in observing the effects of the FPA, have praised the simplicity of the new system for determining provincial boundaries and argued against a return to distinctive national and provincial constituencies (for example, *Orangeville Citizen* 2007).

However, the FPA has always encountered substantial scholarly opposition. In particular, critiques have focused on the representative implications of fewer politicians. The FPA, by decreasing the number of provincial constituencies, increased the representative burden on each individual MPP (Pond 2005, 183-84). MacDermid (2009, 3), therefore, memorably refers to the FPA as a "rationing of representation." This is particularly true for MPPs from large rural ridings, who must familiarize themselves with the service needs of distinctive communities separated by substantial amounts of space. During the initial debate over the FPA, for example, the MPP from the vast rural Algoma constituency rose to ask "whether members in southern Ontario constituencies really have any concept of what it would be like to represent a riding that would run from Windsor to Quebec City" (Wildman 1996).

There are also negative consequences associated with smaller legislatures in general. White (1990), for example, argues that small backbenches are more likely than large backbenches to succumb to strong party discipline, as a result empowering the political executive. In addition, Docherty (2005) and Franks (1987) both point out that smaller numbers of representatives create an incentive for backbenchers to stress promotion over their other functions, such as local representation and committee work.

In contrast, large numbers of representatives render the prospect of advancement unrealistic to the vast majority of backbenchers, causing them to focus on these other, valuable aspects of the job.

For the parties, however, the FPA appears to have produced positive unanticipated consequences. The vast majority of activists spoken to expressed satisfaction with integration and cooperation, and hoped that the national and provincial associations could cooperate even more closely. By easing cooperation, the FPA enabled a form of local party organization that is—overall—appreciated by local activists. As outlined in the last section, integration allows for coordination of personnel and resources in ways that are advantageous to both national and provincial organizations. In contrast, activists in New Brunswick bemoaned a lack of integration, particularly when the presence of distinctive national and provincial ridings rendered integration difficult. For the parties, then, the unanticipated consequences of the FPA have been largely beneficial.

NOTES

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¹ This tendency to reject expert advice has a longstanding pedigree in the history of right-wing populist Canadian politicians and, for example, is evident in the national Conservative government's 2010 decision to abandon the census long form despite the objections of experts from Statistics Canada (Veall 2010).

² Ontario constituencies in which I conducted interviews were Ajax-Pickering, Don Valley East, Hal-dimand-Norfolk, Oxford, Perth-Wellington, Richmond Hill, and York West. The New Brunswick constituencies were Acadie-Bathurst, Fundy Royal, New Brunswick Southwest, and Saint John. The number of national constituencies included as case studies from New Brunswick

is lower because each riding contains several provincial constituencies. For further details on the characteristics of these constituencies, please see (Koop 2011, Chapter 2).

³ I use the term "MPP" to refer to all members of provincial parliaments and legislatures.

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