

A House of outsiders and idealists

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As noted variously elsewhere, Samara has released the [first of its reports](#) on the lives of MPs, research drawn from interviews with 65 former Members of Parliament. Among the initial findings: an interesting assertion of [outsider status](#).

Perhaps more powerful than their stated motivations was the way so many of the MPs described himself or herself as an outsider. This was not an explicit question in our interview, but nevertheless emerged as a proactively-volunteered self-description the MPs expressed in a variety of ways. Sometimes it played out in their decision to pursue politics, and sometimes it was made as part of a broader point.

This is the opposite of what a traditional public perception of politicians as consummate insiders would have suggested.

There are all sorts of specific explanations for this, which the report reviews. There are also, from the MP testimonials, obviously impassioned claims to [idealism and principle](#). Those motivations may or may not be related, but to apply those ideas to Ottawa—to attempt to explain Ottawa as a result of those forces—leads to all sorts of fascinating questions about why this place is the way it is.