Who Selects the Party Leader?

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Abstract

We study the degree of formal influence that rank and file members have on the selection of party leaders in the five principal Westminster countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. We cover the period between 1965 and 2007. We find a general movement towards granting party members greater influence in the choice of the leader. We observe that the decision to broaden the selectorate is made by parties when they are in opposition and following a poor electoral performance. The findings are consistent with the view that there is a constant push for giving party members a greater say in the choice of the leader and that the party elite successfully resists such demands except when it is weakened by severe electoral setbacks.

Adopting the phrase 'presidentialization' of party politics, Poguntke and Webb (2005) have argued that party leaders are becoming increasingly important in contemporary political parties. They suggest that leaders are

accumulating power and influence in all three phases of party activity: legislative, electoral and organizational. Whether one accepts or rejects this argument, there is no denying that party leaders occupy a central place in western democracies. Allowing for some variance among parties and party systems, it can generally be said that leaders are the public face of a party during election campaigns, exercise considerable control over the extra parliamentary party and its resources, lead the legislative party and in some cases the executive. This privileged place of leaders raises important questions relating to the manner in which they are selected. Those with influence over the selection of the party leader have important currency in internal party struggles and over the policy agenda as set both by the parties and the legislature (Marsh 1993a).

This study is about *who* selects party leaders. We are particularly interested in ascertaining the role that is ascribed to rank and file party members in the choice of "their" leader. We focus on parliamentary Westminster systems where two of the party leaders become Prime Minister and Leader of the Official Opposition respectively. The starting point for all the parties which are included in this study is that party members have nothing to say in the selection of the leader. The question then becomes: Under what circumstances is the party elite willing to grant some influence to the rank and file?

We start with the following assumptions or intuitions. We suppose that the party elite generally prefer to keep as much power as possible for itself, so they resist movements to give members more influence. This of course often assumes that the party elite is united. Minorities within the elite may reason that they would be better off if the rank and file was involved. We also suppose that for the same reason most of the party members would prefer to have a say in the decision about who will be the leader. Finally, we assume that in contemporary democracies universal suffrage is a widespread public norm. Control of the leadership selection process by the elite is perceived to be "anti-democratic". The party elite would like to keep things as they are, but they are on the defensive because the public mood is favorable to the democratization of the selection process.

The situation is similar to that found at the beginning of the 20th century with regard to the electoral system. Proportional representation was then largely viewed as "the" democratic system and was indeed adopted in many countries though not everywhere as resistance to the new idea depended on a number of factors, the most important being prevailing electoral institutions (Blais et al. 2005).

The basic idea, then, is that during the period considered here there is constant push for giving party members a greater say in the selection of the leader but that the party elite attempts, more or less successfully, to resist demand for change. Most of the time, the elite has the last word, and nothing changes. But there are special occasions when the elite become particularly weak, and this provides rank and file members, or minority members of the elite, with the opportunity to extract "democratic" concessions. We suppose that the elite loses some of its power when it fails to deliver, that is, when the party does not perform well at the polls, suffering severe electoral defeats that lead to a broad questioning of existing practices, including the party leader selection process. Thus, our general hypothesis is that democratization of the selection process takes place when and where the party is in difficulty, leading many within the party to challenge the power of the elite.

This raises the question whether "democratizing" the selection process is likely to improve the electoral performance of the party. This is not entirely clear. Kernell (2009) nicely reviews the arguments about the potential consequences of "decentralized" candidate selection. On the positive side, party members may be more in touch with voters and therefore more able to choose "good" candidates. On the negative side, party members may be more ideological and they may be less inclined to make strategic decisions and to invest time and money into determining which candidate has the greatest electoral appeal. According to Kernell, the negative consequences are likely to outweigh the positive ones, and so opening up the selection process may be counterproductive in terms of electoral performance. But that may not matter that much. The electoral

consequences of democratizing the process are unknown when reform is being debated, and the general feeling may well be that, given the difficult situation, it is time to experiment with a more democratic approach.

This is the "stylized" story that we wish to test in this paper. There is a constant push for "democratizing" the leader selection process and that push becomes extremely difficult to resist when the party faces some crisis following poor electoral performance. We show that such an interpretation is basically valid.

The literature on party leadership selection is largely restricted to studies of individual party systems and is most extensive in Canada and the United Kingdom (see, for example, Carty and Blake 1999, Cross 1996, Courtney 1995 and 1973, Quinn 2004, Alderman 1999, Stark 1996 and Punnett 1992). For many countries there is no published detailed account of the procedures of party leadership selection, instead there are fleeting references in texts about party organization and in studies covering individual transitions in leadership. Similarly there is very little written from a cross national perspective. Two important exceptions are Leduc (2001) who examines leadership selection methods in Canada, the U.K. and the United States, and a 1993 special edition of the *European Journal of Political Research* in which Marsh edits a collection of country specific essays on the topic.

By examining which groups select the leader, we are able to identify points of transition in the definition of the leadership selectorate. We find that when change has occurred, it has almost always been an enlargement of the selectorate representing an expansion of influence granted to the extra parliamentary party. This is consistent with Seyd's (1999) observations regarding a rise in the plebiscitary model of party politics. Consistent with the 'iron law of oligarchy' we find that governing parties are reluctant to expand the circle of influence in leadership selection and that change is most common among opposition parties and parties having recently suffered a disappointing electoral outcome.

We consider who selects party leaders in the five principal Westminster countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. In Westminster countries party leaders are the candidates from among whom voters select their prime ministers, and both the executive and legislative responsibilities are dominated by them. Leaders also play a crucial role in election campaigns. While this varies among countries, largely dependent on the electoral system in use, in every case leaders are central figures in the campaign and voters' perceptions of them play a significant role in determining outcomes.

While all of our cases have similar forms of parliamentary democracy, this sample provides us with diversity in terms of the electoral systems used in general elections and the degree of fragmentation of the party system. The period of our study is 1965 to 2007. Beginning in 1965 allows us to start at a point at which all parties in our sample had established formal rules of leadership selection. By spanning four decades, we are able to track changes over time and to test hypotheses relating to the types of change enacted and the catalysts for change.

We include in our study any party that finished in the top five (in terms of legislative seats won) or received at least five per cent of the legislative seats in either of the two most recent elections (as of December 2007) to the lower house of parliament. The only exception is that regionally based parties that contest some constituencies in national elections, but whose leaders sit in regional legislatures (such as the Scottish National Party), are not included. We examine the method of leadership selection used by these parties since 1965 or their year of origin (whichever is more recent). In some cases parties have merged and splintered and we are required to make judgment calls regarding the point of origin of the party and whether to include an earlier party operating under a different name as essentially the same party. In total we have 22 parties meeting our criteria in 2007. Because many of these parties were formed at some point during the period of our study, the number of parties included in 1965 is 14. An additional four parties, the Progressive

Conservatives and Reform/Alliance in Canada, and the Liberals and Social Democrats in the United Kingdom, are included as predecessor parties of currently existing ones. This means that we consider the cases of 26 parties in all.

In the Westminster systems it is easy to identify a party leader as there is unity between the leadership of the parliamentary and organizational, or extra parliamentary, party. In all of the parties in these countries responsibility for leading both branches of the party now effectively resides with a single party leader who leads the party both in election campaigns and in the legislature, the only exceptions being the New Zealand Green and Maori parties, with male and female co-leaders who share full responsibility for both wings of the party.

Both secondary and primary data sources are used. Where available we have reviewed both contemporary and historic party statutes, newspaper accounts of leadership contests and party rules changes, and the literature on parties and leaders' biographies. We also conducted a series of semi-structured elite interviews with party officials, academic experts and political journalists. Current and former party leaders, members of parliament, party secretaries and senior party staff were among those interviewed. In order to preserve confidentiality individual interviewees are not identified.

The paper proceeds in the following fashion. We first establish our typology of leadership selectorates, which we utilize throughout the analysis. As we indicate, the typology is based on the relative degree of formal influence that is granted to the rank and file in the choice of the party leader. We then provide an overview of the distribution of types at the beginning and end of the period under examination. We document a general trend in the expansion of the leadership selectorate. The following section focuses on cases of change; we briefly examine the context under which each decision to give party members a greater say was made. The last section aims at providing a general explanation for why parties do or do not expand the role of the rank and file.

A Typology of Leadership Selectorates

Theoretically, on a continuum considering the exclusivity of a leadership selectorate, one end point is one or a small group of party elites anointing the leader and the other is all partisans of the party in the general electorate making the selection. The first method was in place in many of our cases in earlier times but is not found in any of them at our starting point in 1965. The later method, something akin to a US style primary, is also not in use in any of the Westminster parties as none extends participation in leadership selection beyond formal members of their party.[i] During our period of study, we find that the answer to the question who selects the leader in the Westminster parties primarily involves consideration of the relative influence exercised by the parliamentary and extra parliamentary parties.

Several scholars have noted a general trend away from a concentration of leadership selection influence in the parliamentary party towards an increase in the role of the rank-and-file membership (Leduc, 2001; Carty & Blake 1999). We organize our analysis around the relative degree of influence that members exercise in the leadership choice and classify party processes into one of three categories: party members have full authority in the choice of a leader, rank-and-file members have some but limited authority in leadership selection, and party members have no formal role in the selection of the leader.

The first category (labeled 'full') includes cases where the party leader is chosen through a vote of the extra parliamentary party's membership in an unmediated fashion.[ii] The second category (labeled 'some') includes those cases where rank-and-file party members have opportunity to express their preferences and these collectively have some formal influence in the choice but are not fully determinative. These cases fall into two sub-categories: those in which the authority to select the leader is shared between party members

and another constituency within the party, and those in which the preferences of party members are mediated through delegates to a party conference. The third category (labeled 'none') includes cases in which a party's membership has no formal influence in leadership selection.[iii] This category is dominated by cases in which the parliamentary caucus is empowered to make the choice on its own but also includes cases of an exclusive party board or executive making the choice.

The Appendix indicates how much formal influence (none, some, or full) the rank and file has in the leadership selection process for each party included in the study for each year between 1965 and 2007.

Who Participates in Leadership Selection?

Beginning in 1965 we find most of our parties falling into the 'none' category meaning they grant no authority to their rank-and-file members whatsoever. At this time, as shown in Table 1, all eleven parties in four of our countries (Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom) granted the parliamentary caucus full authority to select the leader. The only exception was Canada, in which all three parties fell into the 'some' category.

Table 1 about here

In 1965, all of the Canadian parties selected their leaders at party conferences and had done so for quite some time. The Canadian Liberals were the first to move away from selection by a formal vote of the parliamentary caucus in 1919. At this point they were in opposition and were replacing their long serving leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The party had suffered through a deep internal divide over the issue of conscription in World War 1 and suffered one of its worst electoral defeats in the general election of 1917. The result was a small parliamentary caucus, comprised disproportionately of francophone MPs from Quebec. The party was keenly aware that its future electoral success required a rebuilding of the party in English Canada, and political historians generally point to the un-representativeness of the parliamentary caucus as the principal reason for the decision to include the extra parliamentary party in the selection process (Courtney 1995). The Liberals chose their leader through a vote of delegates at party conference.

The Canadian Conservatives copied the Liberals in the selection of their next leader in 1927. It is worth noting that they too were in opposition at the time of making this decision, with a parliamentary caucus "even less representative of the country as a whole than the Liberals had been" in 1919 (Courtney 1995, 11). Courtney identifies this representational imperative as the key factor in the decision to change, concluding that: "What is clear from the 1919 and 1927 experiences is that Canada's two oldest parties embarked on a new course for choosing their leaders at the federal level principally to overcome the representational inadequacies of their respective parliamentary parties" (1995, 11-12). Some observers also point to the popularity of new populist-based farmers' parties during this decade (the Progressives at the federal level) as one factor pushing the old line parties in this more inclusive direction (Cross 2004, 79). The Canadian New Democrats were formed in 1961 and selected their first leader at a party conference held that year.

As shown in Table 2, the picture in 2007 is considerably different from that of 1965. First, there is far greater diversity than in 1965, with cases fitting into each of our three categories. Three countries have cases in the 'none' category, four in 'some' and three in 'full.' Second, while there is no intra country diversity in 1965, every country, except Australia, has parties using different methods by 2007. Third, there is considerable movement away from 'none' and towards 'full.' In 1965, in 11 of our 14 parties members had no authority and in not a single case did they have full authority to select the leader. In 2007 a majority of our cases granted party members formal influence in the leadership choice with only 9 of 22 not doing so. By 2007, five parties vested full authority with the grassroots membership to select the leader.

Table 2 about here

There is a clear movement over time towards greater authority for party membership. This is both a result of movement between categories by parties between 1965 to 2007 and the introduction of new parties post 1965. Of the 12 parties that appear in both tables, in 1965 ten of them fell in the 'none' category and two in 'some.' In 2007, six of these same 12 parties allowed no formal influence for party members, five provided for members to exercise some influence and one allowed members full influence in the choice. Of the ten 'new' parties appearing in Table 2, three fall in the 'none' column, three in 'some' and four in 'full.'

Two of the parties from the 1965 table, the Canadian PCs and the British Liberals, do not appear in 2007 as they merged with other parties to form the Canadian Conservative party and the British Liberal Democrats. It is worth noting that while these new parties are both in the 'full' category, the old line parties that formed part of the merger had moved into the 'full' category before the merger (this is illustrated in table 3). Thus, if the Liberal Democrats and Canadian Conservatives are considered as a continuation of the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives we observe even greater movement between 1965 and 2007 away from the 'none' end of the spectrum towards the 'full' end.

Twelve parties emerged between 1965 and 2007. Of these 12 parties, nine of them provide some formal influence to their members. Three Canadian parties (Reform/Alliance, Conservatives and BQ), two UK parties (Liberal Democrats and Social Democrats) and the Irish Greens all were formed during this period and grant full authority to their members. The UK parties and the Canadian Conservatives did so from their outset and Reform/Alliance and the BQ both moved to the 'full' category shortly after contesting their first general election. The Irish Green Party began selecting leaders in 2001 and did so through a vote of its membership and the Progressive Democrats moved from none to some after contesting several elections. It is only in New Zealand that we find some new parties not including their rank and file in the leadership choice. While the Green and Maori parties have selected all of their leaders at party conferences, thus granting members some influence, the ACT, United Future and NZ First do not include their rank and file in the selectorate. There are no new Australian parties that meet our criteria in terms of elected members to the lower house. Nonetheless, we do have the example of the Australian Democrats, formed in 1977, being the only Australian party to select their leader through a vote of the party membership, while the three old line parties continue to use the caucus form.

This overview of formal rules concerning the role of rank and file members in the selection of party leaders shows substantial differences across the five countries. Despite these differences, however, there is strong convergence in over time changes. When rules change, they are systematically in the direction of greater influence for party members. The goal is to understand the reasons both for this general movement and for variations across countries and parties. The first step is to grasp the context under which parties sometime decide to change the rules.

Decisions to include extra parliamentary party members in leadership selection

In this section we briefly examine the circumstances surrounding decisions to include members in leadership selection. Our focus is on parties in which the relative influence of members has changed during our period of study.

United Kingdom

The *Liberal Party* was the first British party to formally include its members in the leadership choice. A special party assembly held in June 1976 adopted provisions for future leaders to be chosen through a vote of the entire party membership. Prior to this, recent leaders had been chosen by the parliamentary party. Punnett (1992, 136) and Stark (1996, 69) trace support for member involvement in leadership selection in the

Liberals back to a 1927 party reform group. This first suggestion followed the party's devastating performance in the 1924 election in which it lost 118 of its 158 parliamentary seats. No action was taken in this regard until the 1970s when there was growing support for democratization in party decision making among grassroots supporters. This was coupled with general dissatisfaction with the 1967 leadership selection process that was criticized on the grounds that it was conducted too quickly to allow for any input from the constituencies, and that the size of the parliamentary caucus had grown too small (12 at the time) to serve as a representative selectorate of the several million supporters the party had in the electorate (Denham and Dorey 2006, 29). Punnett (1992, 136) further suggests that any claim by MPs to be representative of the broader party "was weakened by the fact that most of them were from rural constituencies in the Celtic fringe, whereas the bulk of Liberal activists were found in urban centres of population." Notwithstanding this growing pressure for change, the party's 1975 conference voted to maintain the status quo. It was only after a leadership crisis emerged several months on, centering around charges of financial and sexual improprieties of the current leader and ultimately resulting in his resignation, that the issue gained new momentum. A special assembly was called after Thorpe's resignation to consider a National Executive Committee proposal that the next leader be selected under rules dividing the authority among local constituency associations, MPs and the party's national council. Assembly delegates instead adopted a plan that eliminated MPs and party council votes from the proposal and directed that local associations ballot their members directly (Stark 1996, 73).

The *Labour Party* first adopted rules including grassroots members in their leadership selection process in 1981. According to Stark (1996, 41): "The roots of the campaign to expand the leadership franchise began to take hold during Wilson's second government." However, while there was some discussion of change and some resolutions at party conferences calling for expansion of the leadership selectorate throughout the 1970s they were routinely defeated. According to Russell (2005, 36-37) the matter first reached the conference agenda in 1972, however, nothing really came of these efforts until the party was defeated in the 1979 election. The party did establish a working group to consider the issue in 1976 and it presented options to the 1978 conference which voted two-to-one to maintain selection by the parliamentary party. Stark (1996, 45) suggests that it was the extraordinary determination and mobilization skills of the reformers and the stinging defeat the party suffered in the 1979 elections that ultimately led to the change. At the party's 1980 conference a general resolution to expand the leadership franchise was very narrowly passed. Votes on specific proposals were then held with none receiving majority support, resulting in adoption of a motion to hold a special party conference in January 1981 dedicated to the selection of a new leadership process. This special conference voted overwhelmingly in favor of the 'electoral college' proposal that divided leadership votes among the parliamentary party, the constituency membership and trade unions. Proposals ranged from granting MPs anywhere between 30 and 75 per cent of the vote and trade unions and constituencies anywhere between 10 and 40 per cent (Stark 1996, 56). In the end, the final decision awarded trade unions (and other affiliated groups such as the socialist societies) 40 per cent of the vote, the parliamentary party and constituencies 30 per cent each. Two important subsequent changes have taken place. In 1989, a rule was adopted requiring that constituency parties ballot their members to determine how to cast their votes (something that some were already doing) and in 1993 the vote allocations were adjusted to one-third for each of the three groups.

The *Conservatives* were the last of the major UK parties to expand formal participation in the leadership vote beyond the parliamentary party. The party did so in 1998 adopting a process by which the parliamentary party selects the two finalists from between whom the membership selects the leader. Discussion in the party concerning the involvement of the extra parliamentary party in the leadership choice had taken place occasionally ever since the selection rules were formalized in 1965. These resulted in varying requirements for consultation between the constituencies and MPs; however, suggestions to actually grant a share of the vote to the extra parliamentary party had never received serious consideration (Alderman 1999, 264-65). Outrage among grassroots activists with the ouster of Heath and particularly Thatcher

resulted in demands for greater consultation but again no serious party wide discussion of changing the leadership selectorate took place. When the Conservatives were defeated in 1997 and Major resigned the leadership, there were "widespread demands for an immediate change to give the extra-parliamentary party a share of the votes in deciding the succession" (Alderman 1999, 265). These were ignored by the parliamentary party which not only selected the next leader itself, but in choosing William Hague ignored the clear preference of the party membership for Kenneth Clarke. Party activists expressed outrage at having their views repeatedly ignored by the MPs. The need to rebuild the party after the 1997 election loss and the view that leadership selection should not be decided by a minority parliamentary party dominated by members from southern England with no representation from Scotland and Wales came together to make the demands for change unstoppable (Heppell 2008, 132, Alderman 1999, 260, Norton 1998, 10). The parliamentary party, fearful in this environment that it might lose complete control over the leadership choice, adopted a one member one vote rule in 1998 with the caveat that the caucus would choose the two candidates who would appear on the final ballot. In this way, the parliamentary party believed it was avoiding the worst outcome -- an electoral college arrangement with MPs having a minority share of the vote -- allowing for the possibility of the extra parliamentary party choosing a leader completely unacceptable to parliamentarians (Denham and O'Hara 2008, 53 and Alderman 1999, 269-70).

Ireland

Labour was the first Irish party to expand the leadership selectorate beyond the parliamentary party. From its creation until 1989 all leaders were chosen by the parliamentary wing. The issue of expanding the selectorate was first debated at the party's 1987 annual conference. This was in the wake of the party suffering the loss of nearly 50 percent of its voters and one-quarter of its parliamentary seats in that year's general election. This was Labour's worst electoral result in more than four decades. The party also found itself back on the opposition benches after a term in government with Fine Gael. The result was a bitter divide in the party over whether the decision to join government was a desirable course of action or whether it resulted in undue compromising of principles and was responsible for the subsequent decline in vote share. It was within this context that activists from the party's left wing moved a proposal at the 1987 conference that subsequent leaders be elected every three years at party conferences. The proposal included a further requirement that effectively gave affiliated trade unions a veto over leadership candidates (Lyons 2003). This proposal was seen as a sharp attack on the current leadership and the direction of the parliamentary party in the previous Dail and was vigorously opposed by party leader Dick Spring. Evidencing the divide within the party, Spring's supporters managed to have the matter referred to a committee only by agreeing that the committee would prepare precise proposals for a new method of leadership selection by the extra parliamentary party (Marsh 1993b, 309). This proposal, recommending that the leader be chosen through a ballot of the entire party membership, was adopted at the 1989 conference. Marsh (1993b, 309) suggests that support for change resulted from dissatisfaction with the current leadership, dissension over the policy of joining Fine Gael in coalition, anger over the independence of the parliamentary party from constituency supporters and a more general demand for an increase in intra party democracy.

Fine Gael expanded formal influence beyond the parliamentary party in 2004. This followed one of the party's worst ever electoral results in the 2002 general election in which it saw its number of TDs drop from 54 to 31 and its share of first preference votes decline from 33 to 19 per cent. The party had first considered widening the leadership selectorate in 1993 following an internal report on party democracy by the Joyce Commission which called for party members to receive 40 per cent of the leadership vote in an electoral college arrangement (Rafter 2003, Mockler 1994, Marsh 1993b). The proposal was opposed by the party leadership and nothing came of it. The later process that resulted in change has its origins at the party's pre election 2002 ard-fheis in which Young Fine Gael pushed to have the party adopt an electoral college mechanism providing the parliamentary party with 50 per cent of the vote, party members 30 per cent and local elected representatives 20 per cent. The party leadership was opposed and maneuvered to have the ard fheis instead adopt a more general motion supporting the principal of broadening the leadership selectorate to

include the extra parliamentary party. Lacking a clearly defined proposal or process leading to change, Rafter (2003, 111) refers to this outcome as "a similar suggestion to that made a decade earlier by an internal party renewal commission" that resulted in no change. Pressure for reform mounted dramatically after that spring's electoral debacle and the immediate resignation from the leadership of Michael Noonan. Young Fine Gael, now supported by other reformers, pushed to have the choice of a new leader delayed to allow time for the party to adopt a new process. According to Rafter (2003, 112): "Most senior Fine Gael figures were, however, unhappy about changing the electoral system" and the parliamentary party decided it "would proceed with the election of a new Fine Gael leader, despite continued pressure from party members and Young Fine Gael for a delay to allow the electoral system to be overhauled" (113). Many party activists were deeply upset with this maneuver by the parliamentary party and this helped fuel broader support for change. Ultimately, and still without enthusiasm from the parliamentary party, a 2004 special party conference adopted an electoral college system with the parliamentary party holding 65 per cent of the vote, the party membership 25 per cent and local public office holders 10 per cent. The high share awarded the parliamentary party was seen as an attempt at compromise given their reluctance to adopt change. The arguments advanced in support of the move included a desire for greater intra party democracy, a sense that the now relatively small group of parliamentarians was not representative of the party as a whole (with particular concern regarding the under representation of Dublin), a view that the parliamentary party had grown distant from constituency activists and support for the proposition that the party was in need of revitalization at the grassroots.

The *Progressive Democrats* adopted the electoral college form of leadership selection in 2004; prior to this the selection was made by the parliamentary party. The formula adopted in 2004 provided parliamentarians 40 per cent of the vote, with party members receiving 30 per cent and local elected officials and members of the national executive accounting for the remaining 30 per cent. The party made the change while in government as a junior member of successive Fianna Fail administrations. In the 2002 general election the party's first preference vote declined from 4.7 to 4 per cent but its number of TDs increased from four to eight. Mary Harney was party leader at the time and had been since 1993. While Harney had not indicated any intention to resign the leadership, there was speculation that she would not lead the party into the next general election and would-be leadership candidates were quietly organizing. There is some suggestion that pressure for change in the leadership selectorate was brought by supporters of a particular leadership hopeful who believed a wider franchise would favor their candidate. The initial push to change the selection method seems to have been in the form of a conference motion offered by the Dublin South East constituency, the home constituency of TD and leadership aspirant Michael McDowell, calling for adoption of a pure membership vote method (Sheahan 2003). While this motion was ultimately withdrawn it sparked discussions relating to the appropriate form of selection to choose Harney's successor. A committee established by party conference subsequently recommended the electoral college process and this was approved at a special conference open to all party members in February 2004 (Collins 2004, Brennock 2004).

Canada[iv]

While all of the Canadian parties included their membership in the selection process through delegated leadership conventions for many decades, the *Liberal Party* was first to endorse selection through an unmediated ballot of members in 1990. The party was influenced in its decision by experiences in the provinces. In the 1980s several provincial parties adopted membership votes for leadership selection and by the 1990s these processes had been adopted by parties of different partisan stripes in many provinces (Cross 1996).

Support for a membership vote in the Liberal party first materialized in a meaningful way in 1985. This followed on the heels of the party's electoral drubbing in the 1984 election when it was removed from government losing 107 of its 147 seats in the House of Commons as its popular vote share declined from 45 to 28 per cent. According to Courtney (1995, 260): "In early 1985 party president Iona Campagnola

expressed the sentiments of a growing number of Liberals when she proclaimed that… 'We don't know yet how we're going to do it, but within a decade, whether it's by a primary system, or a version of the Parti Québécois method used recently, we'll have direct election of our leadership." The mandate of a party task force on organizational reform established in 1985 included consideration of universal membership suffrage in leadership contests. However, partially due to near constant maneuvering and tensions between rival leadership camps and uncertainty over how any new rules would affect subsequent contests, no change was made until after the next leadership contest. These changes followed the 1988 election in which both the party's popular vote and seat share rebounded somewhat but remained far below their historic norms. At the 1990 delegated party conference, called for the purpose of selecting a successor to John Turner as leader, the party approved a recommendation to select its next leader through a universal ballot of members. A leading rationale for this reform seems to have been a desire to be the first federal party to adopt a direct membership vote and thus be able "to make the claim that they were at the forefront of intra-party democracy in Canada," (Courtney 1995, 262). The party was also responding to perceived abuses in the delegate selection processes in recent conventions. In what Carty (1988) calls 'trench warfare' candidates were running extremely aggressive and expensive campaigns often with the objective of essentially taking over local constituency associations and ensuring the selection of sympathetic delegates. Courtney (1995, 262) suggests that the fact the "Liberals were in opposition at the time also helps to explain" their desire to reform the process as "in opposition, a party's lines of authority are weakened and its degree of freedom to experiment with new forms of intra-party arrangements are increased."

The party never did use a membership ballot to select a leader as it reverted to a form of convention selection prior to its next leadership contest. The 1990 decision was void of any detail instead calling upon a party commission to recommend a one member, one vote process. When the party next met in convention in 1992, delegates decided overwhelmingly not to adopt a one member one vote process, but, rather to clean up what it saw as abuses in the delegate convention process. The principal change was that party members would now vote directly for their favored leadership candidate (instead of solely for delegates) and convention delegates would be awarded to the candidates in a way that reflected the proportion of votes they received from the membership. One of the major issues at play in party discussions in the period between 1990 and 1992 was regional representation. Supporters of the delegated convention argued that it guaranteed all regions of the country equitable representation in the leadership election and that the choice was made in a deliberative fashion with representatives from all regions gathered together in one place. Others argued that the spectacle of the convention provided considerable positive media attention to the party that was lost with a membership vote (Courtney 1995, 266-70).[v]

The *Progressive Conservatives* suffered an unparalleled electoral drubbing in the 1993 general election seeing their seat total fall from 169 to 2 and their vote share decline from 43 to 16 per cent, as they fell from first to fifth place and found themselves back on the opposition benches after nearly a decade in government. In the aftermath of this defeat, the party engaged in a comprehensive reform process centered around a 'restructuring committee' travelling the country to meet with party activists. One of the messages the committee heard repeatedly was that the parliamentary party while in government had grown too detached from the constituencies and that there was strong desire for grassroots members to play a more central role in party decision making. The process culminated in a 'reform' convention held in April 1995 to consider many organizational changes mostly aimed at empowering the party's grassroots supporters. Among these was a proposal for a universal membership ballot for leadership selection (Courtney 1995, 255). The arguments advanced in favor of the proposal included that it was a more 'democratic' process and that it would help revitalize the party in the constituencies. Supporters pointed to the experiences of several of their provincial affiliates, including the Alberta Conservative party, in successfully using a membership vote as a way of rejuvenating themselves. There was little opposition to the proposal and it passed easily. This was a remarkable turnaround in party opinion. A survey of delegates to the party's pre election 1993 convention found that only one-third of them favored any form of a membership vote for leadership selection

(Courtney 1995, 262). The party selected Joe Clark as leader using a membership vote in 1998. Finishing second to Clark on the final ballot was David Orchard. Orchard's candidacy was highly controversial as he had no history in the party, opposed many of its key policy planks and was supported primarily by new recruits to the party. Clark referred to Orchard and his supporters as "tourists" in the party (Stewart and Carty 2002). When Clark resigned the leadership in 2002, delegates to a party convention decided to revert to a delegate convention for the selection of his successor. Two primary reasons were advanced for this decision. The first was a belief that the convention method would protect the party from being taken over by a candidate such as Orchard, while others argued that a leadership convention provided a focal point for excitement and media coverage that was lost in a membership vote (Cheadle 2002, Curry and Alberts 2003).[vi]

The *Reform Party* adopted a direct membership vote as its method of leadership selection at its 1991 conference. The party was formed in 1987 and at its founding convention adopted a constitution that included provision for its leaders to be chosen at a delegated convention of the sort then in use by all of Canada's federal parties (see Courtney 1995, 258-59). In its first election in 1988 Reform failed to elect any candidates but did elect its first MP in a by-election a few months later. One of the pillar's of Reform's electoral message was an appeal to populist and participatory sentiments as part of an anti elite message. The party was a champion of direct democracy and was completely consistent with this ethos when it amended its constitution in 1991 to adopt a direct vote of party members for future leadership selections. The decision was made by party members at an annual conference and there was little opposition.

The *Bloc Québécois* was formed in 1991. The party was created when then senior cabinet minister Lucien Bouchard left the Progressive Conservative government during a crisis over constitutional reform. Bouchard and a group of about half a dozen other MPs initially formed a loose association as independent MPs that quickly developed into the BQ as a formal political party. As the best known MP to join the group and as the leading parliamentary spokesman from Quebec opposing the constitutional accord, Bouchard was seen as the party's natural leader. His leadership was unanimously endorsed by a vote of delegates at the party's inaugural conference. Likely a result of it being unclear how long the party would last, and particularly if it would outlast Bouchard, the conference did not adopt formal rules for leadership selection. The party won the second highest number of seats in the 1993 election and formed the official opposition. When Bouchard unexpectedly left the leadership in early 1996, the party was not prepared for a leadership contest and had not thought through a process for selection of a successor (Cornellier 1996, A1). The next regularly scheduled party conference was to be held in April 1997, some fifteen months away. In the end, the party's General Council chose the new leader arguing that a drawn out process of waiting for the next party convention, or agreeing on a new selection method, and conducting a more open contest would result in a political vacuum. There was also some suggestion that the outgoing leader favored the closed process as it would allow him greater influence in the choice (Johnson, 1996). The General Council consisted of 167 members including all of the party's MPs, riding association presidents, regional officials and members of the provincial steering committee. The leader chosen in this process, Michel Gauthier, never fought an election campaign and lasted only a little over one year, before resigning under pressure from party members. The party's provincial cousin, the Parti Québécois, was the first major Canadian party to select its leader through a membership vote so it seemed fully logical that BQ activists, the vast majority of whom were also PQ party supporters, would favor this option. The party did adopt a one member one vote process for the 1997 contest and the selectorate has remained unchanged since.

Explaining changes in the leadership selectorate

At both the aggregate and individual party level, we find change in the leadership selectorate to be in one direction – expanding the role of those outside the parliamentary caucus. Considering all 12 cases in which parties have switched categories, in terms of the relative influence of party members, only in Canada do we find parties moving to a more restrictive leadership franchise and in both of these cases the move was

temporary with the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives later moving to grant full authority over leadership selection to their rank-and-file members. Notwithstanding these cases, in every party in our study, there has either been no movement in the share of influence granted to party members in the leadership choice or there has been movement in the direction of expanding members' influence. We find no party granting its members less authority in this choice in 2007 than in 1965.

We are interested in identifying common factors influencing the decision to change the composition of a party's leadership selectorate and, given the direction of change, specifically in the decision to enhance the role of party members. Our general hypothesis is that such a decision is likely to be made when the party has suffered severe electoral defeats, provoking the questioning of existing practices. This hypothesis is in line with Harmel and Janda's (1994) interpretation according to which electoral setbacks are key catalysts for organizational reform. The difficulty is in defining an electoral setback. Harmel and Janda (1994, 269) suggest that: "What constitutes a 'failure' would, of course, be in the eye of the beholder… It is probably better to listen to the party itself than to attempt to indirectly assess when such shocks have occurred."

Our most obvious finding, as illustrated in Table 3, is that this is a decision made by opposition parties. Of the 16 parties that have granted influence to their extra parliamentary members in leadership selection, 15 of them were in opposition at the time. Our cases are evenly split between eight parties that had never been in government and eight that had been governing parties. The Irish Progressive Democrats are the only party to have made the decision to include their members while in government; they did so while they were minor coalition partners in a Fianna Fail led cabinet. The other seven governing parties all waited until they were in opposition before expanding the leadership selectorate.

Table 3 about here

We do find evidence of parties resisting change while in government and then changing quickly once in opposition. For example, Reformers in the UK Labour party pushed for change in leadership selection throughout the 1970s but did not realize any success until shortly after the party was defeated in the 1979 general election. Similarly, constituency activists in the UK Tories were pushing for change at least since the early 1980s, and particularly after Thatcher's ouster in 1990, but had no success until shortly after the party's loss to Blair in 1997. The Canadian Progressive Conservatives also resisted change while in government from 1984 to 1993, and adopted leadership selection rules including members with little opposition shortly after being removed from power. We believe that this results from a shift in the balance of power between the parliamentary and extra parliamentary parties, with the relative power of the parliamentary party declining with removal from government. The shift towards grassroots members' involvement in leadership selection is almost always coupled with a decline in the parliamentary party's authority. As Michels (1966) argued long ago, parties are like any organization in which those in power are unlikely to willingly diminish their authority.

Similarly we find support for the argument that change is more likely to occur following a poor electoral showing. As Deschouwer (1992) suggests, this is difficult to quantify as electoral success and defeat is relative and best determined by the expectations of the party itself. In Table 3 we show the parties' electoral results from the campaign immediately preceding the decision to change the method of selection. For the eight parties that ran candidates in at least two elections prior to expanding their leadership selectorate, we find that six saw their share of seats decline in the most recent election, and the median change is a 10.8 point decrease in seat share. Furthermore, the 'exceptions' may be deceiving; in one case (the Canadian Liberals), despite the gain in seats, the electoral outcome was a disappointment as the party was hopeful of winning the election at mid-campaign and the result was well below their historic norm. The findings for seven of the eight cases thus offer support for the argument that organizational change follows disappointing election results. This is likely related to both a shift in the balance of power between the parliamentary and extra

parliamentary parties and the belief that the party needs to revitalize its supporters as part of a rebuilding effort. This is consistent with many of the individual stories outlined above. Fine Gael adopted the electoral college method following their worst ever electoral showing in the 2002 Irish general election; The Canadian Progessive Conservatives did so after their near annihilation in the 1993 general election; the Canadian Liberals in the wake of the 1988 election which was the first time in nearly 100 years that the party saw any of its competitors win consecutive majority governments; the UK Labour party made the change following its 1979 electoral drubbing by Thatcher; and the UK Conservatives following their 1997 electoral collapse.

Major parties that make the change do so in the aftermath of an electoral defeat for two reasons. Firstly, there often is pent up demand for change that is contained while the party is in government. The reasons for this include the relatively strong position of the parliamentary caucus in intra party power struggles in governing parties and the unwillingness of the existing leaders to encourage any discussion of leadership rules which may raise questions regarding the security of their own tenure in the office. Once the party suffers an electoral defeat, the balance of power shifts and activists desiring an expansion of the leadership selectorate are in a stronger position vis-a-vis an incumbent leader who is not also Prime Minister and a parliamentary party reduced in both size and stature. Secondly, strong electoral defeats raise the importance and urgency of revitalizing the party at the grassroots and the need for the party to show that it is listening to the electorate and responding to their ballot-box rebuke. When finding themselves in such a position and with other actors in the party system having expanded their leadership selectorate, major parties are keen to portray themselves as opening up their internal decision making and at least appearing to become more responsive to their grassroots partisans whose efforts will be needed in any rebuilding effort.

Closely related to a poor electoral showing and a decline in the relative power of the parliamentary party is the often raised argument that the parliamentary party, particularly when recently reduced in size, is not representative of the party generally and thus should not be vested with the power of leadership selection. This argument was raised in the Canadian cases around the adoption of leadership conventions, and during the course of our study was important to decisions in Fine Gael and the UK Liberal, Conservative and Labour parties. In each of these cases, the relatively small parliamentary party did not include representatives from significant portions of the country and reformers argued that the extra parliamentary party must be given a vote in order to ensure that all regions are represented.

While some party scholars suggest that a party's attitudes towards organizational democracy will be strongly influenced by their ideology (Kittilson and Scarrow 2003, Kitschelt and McGann 1997), we do not find a relationship between the ideological positioning of a party within a party system and the choice of leadership selectorate. We find parties on the right choosing their leaders via a membership vote (Canadian and UK Conservatives) by an electoral college (Fine Gael and Irish PDs) and by parliamentary caucus (Australian Nationals and Liberals, NZ Nationals). Similar divergence is found on the left with the Canadian Bloc Québécois, and the Irish Labour and Green parties using membership votes, the Canadian New Democrats using an electoral college, the NZ Greens using a party convention, and the Labour parties in Australia and NZ restricting the choice to their parliamentary caucuses. The centrist Canadian Liberals use a delegate convention, UK Labour has an electoral college and the British Liberal Democrats use a membership vote.[vii]

As Table 3 shows, the movement towards inclusion of members in leadership selection includes both new and more established parties. Parties that have waged two election campaigns prior to the expansion of the selectorate are considered 'old.' Ten of our cases fit this category while six of the parties fall into the 'new' category. Of these, four of them included members in their first set of leadership selection rules while the Canadian Reform and Bloc Québécois parties expanded their selectorate after their first general election campaign.

As illustrated in Table 4, we find that small parties are the first in a party system to make the shift to granting formal influence to their members. In the four countries in which the parties that were first to move did so during the course of our study, they all held fewer than 10 per cent of the legislative seats. This may reflect the willingness of smaller parties to experiment with different forms of party democracy. The adoption of a selectorate beyond the parliamentary caucus is more easily managed in smaller parties. By definition these have small (sometimes no) parliamentary caucuses and the parties are often largely extra parliamentary organizations. In these cases the extra parliamentary party typically has more influence in party decision making and faces less opposition from a caucus protecting what it sees as its natural turf. Smaller and new parties may also be trying to differentiate themselves from their larger competitors and as new entrants in the party system to present themselves as more responsive and open than their older, arguably more oligarchic competitors. Exceptions to this are small parties that are formed around a single parliamentary personality without strong extra parliamentary organizations. For example, New Zealand's United Future and NZ First are essentially parliamentary parties organized around a dominant personality, which have resisted expanding the leadership selectorate. Similarly, the Bloc Québécois did not expand its selectorate until after the departure of its founding leader.

Table 4 about here

Given the diversity within party systems and cross-nationally among party type it is difficult to discern a contagion effect that leads to a particular method being chosen. Nonetheless, we find support for the hypothesis that once one party expands the leadership selectorate to include partisans beyond the parliamentary party pressure builds in other parties to expand their franchise as well. In Canada and the United Kingdom all of the parties offer their extra parliamentary supporters an influential voice in leadership selection. In Canada once the Liberals adopted the party convention method in 1919 the other parties followed within a decade and all of the parties expanded the role of rank and file members in the 1990s. The later changes followed adoption of membership votes by parties of all stripes at the provincial level (Cross 1996). The shift came later in the UK with the Liberals moving first in 1976 and the other parties following with the Tories being the last to do so in 1998. The delay in the cases of Labour and the Conservatives appears to be related to periods in government.

In Ireland the shift began with Labour in 1989 and is now nearly complete with all but Fianna Fail having abandoned the caucus method. Again this may be related to the fact that Fianna Fail has been in power uninterrupted since 1997, has won the largest number of seats in each election it has contested since 1932 and has never been out of government for more than one electoral cycle. As a result, Fianna Fail very much views itself as a governing party and the grassroots are deferential towards the parliamentary party, to the extent that there is no formal record kept of resolutions passed at the party's annual ard fheis. These are viewed by party elites and members alike as consultative and not decision making exercises. It remains to be seen whether a strong electoral defeat, both placing the party in opposition and making a return to government not appear imminent, would shift the balance of power and with it bring demands for membership involvement in leadership selection.

The lack of a contagion effect away from the caucus method in New Zealand and Australia might be partially explained by the fact that the parties that have tried other methods are all relatively minor ones: the Democrats in Australia and the Greens and Maori in New Zealand. The cases in our study suggest that once one of the major parties in a system expands the leadership selectorate others are likely to follow.

What is more difficult to explain is why none of the major parties in New Zealand or Australia has included its members in the leadership selectorate. In a series of interviews with elites in these parties, the most common reason offered is that the condensed, three year, electoral cycle does not allow a major party the

luxury of being 'leaderless' for any extended period of time. Party officials often point to the length of time membership votes take in the UK and Canada and argue that this would not be practical in a system with elections every two-and-a-half to three years. There is external evidence of the strength of this sentiment in the dispatch with which these parties move to choose new leaders when a vacancy occurs. For example, the NZ Labour party selected Phil Goff as its new leader just three days after Helen Clark's resignation on election night on November 8, 2008. During the period of our study there are many examples of new leaders being chosen within a day or two of the removal of the incumbent (and sometimes on the same day).

An illustrative example of the speed with which leadership transitions take place in these parties occurred in the Australian Liberal party following the party's defeat in the 2007 election and leader John Howard's resignation announcement on election night, 24 November. Deputy Leader Peter Costello announced on 27 November that the parliamentary party would select the new leader on 29 November. There were three initial candidates with one dropping out the day before the vote. Because so little time had passed since Election day, final counts were not completed in all electorates and thus it was not certain which Liberal MPs had been reelected when caucus convened. This led some in the party room to suggest that the contest be postponed for a few days until who was re-elected and thus eligible to vote in the contest was known. Several senior caucus members spoke against this idea noting that it would be unacceptable not to have a leader in place immediately to hold the new government accountable. The party room agreed with the urgency of selecting a new leader and decided to allow all those deemed 'likely' to be returned to vote in the contest. In the end, Nelson defeated Turnbull 45 – 42 and at least two MPs who voted in the contest were subsequently deemed to have lost their seats. This did lead to grumbling among some Turnbull supporters that the party should have delayed to ensure the sanctity of the selectorate.

The electoral system may be another factor influencing the lack of change in these parties. Representatives to the federal Australian senate are elected via the single transferable vote within each state. This guarantees representation from each state within the parliamentary caucus of each of the major parties. And as all the parties allow senators to participate in the selection of leaders, the parties have not faced situations like those outlined above in the Canadian, British and Irish parties in which key geographic regions were not represented in the party room. Similarly, the use of closed, national lists in the New Zealand form of MMP allows the major parties to ensure some representation from all parts of the country in their parliamentary caucuses.

There have not been any sustained efforts in these parties for rule changes. In NZ Labour there was some discussion of change in the early 1990s. This was following a period of leadership uncertainty and a selection of successive leaders from the party's right which was not well received by many of Labour's progressive activists. Tim Barnett, a party activist from the South Island, wrote a discussion paper on the subject. Barnett was a recent immigrant from the UK and was well versed in the British Labour party's recent adoption of the electoral college. Barnett's proposal spurred some initial interest among the left of the party. However, much of this dissipated when Clark took over the leadership as she was a popular choice with many of the party's activists and with the more progressive wing. Barnett subsequently was elected to parliament and became the party's whip but did not continue to push for change in the leadership selectorate. The two main arguments raised against this proposal were that MPs know the candidates best and thus should be charged with making the selection and that leadership politics can be nasty and divisive and thus is best dealt with quickly behind the closed doors of the party caucus rather than allowing it to linger on and divide the wider party. Officials with both principal New Zealand parties also suggest that the introduction of electoral system change in the mid-1990s has made them reluctant to consider other major institutional reform as it may be too much change too quickly.

Conclusion

Leadership selection is one of the most important activities engaged in by political parties. In all of our cases leaders are key figures in the electoral and organizational activities of parties. In the Westminster systems they are also central players in the legislative and executive spheres. The influence leaders have within their parties, and more broadly on public decision making, makes the question of who selects them relevant to any enquiry about who wields democratic influence in a polity. Given changing norms of intra party democracy and the growing influence of party leaders, it is not surprising that we find significant change in selection methods in recent years. The general trend is away from selection by a small group of party elites and towards empowerment of a party's rank and file members.

We have identified common factors influencing decisions to expand the leadership selectorate that may be thought of as necessary, though not sufficient conditions. The first is that these choices are made by opposition parties. Our study includes many cases of parties resisting change while in government and then embracing it rather quickly once in opposition. The second is that this decision is made either by new parties yet to wage an election campaign or by existing parties that have recently suffered a disappointing electoral result. The disappointing electoral campaign produces a perceived need to revitalize the party and a shift in intra party authority away from the parliamentary caucus to the extra parliamentary party, both of which make the ground fertile for reformers seeking to expand the influence of party members in leadership politics. Similarly, a regional imbalance in a parliamentary caucus reduced in size by electoral defeat often leads to calls for expansion of the leadership selectorate to ensure that all regions are represented in the selection process.

One result of the degree of change in leadership selection in recent decades is greater diversity within party systems regarding the way in which leaders are chosen. Parties are able to express their democratic ethos in the method of selection they choose. Parties with long and historic ties to trade unions, such as the Canadian NDP and UK Labour, employ processes that give a significant share of the vote to these privileged party supporters. Parties with a strong tradition of parliamentary party dominance have adopted processes that invite members to participate while essentially preserving a veto for their MPs, the UK Tories and Irish Fine Gael being examples. Other parties, less concerned with preserving the authority of the party room, have moved full responsibility for leadership selection to the extra parliamentary party, including the Greens in Ireland and NZ, Labour in Ireland and all of the Canadian parties. This flexibility permits parties to develop processes that reflect both their democratic ethos and their organizational needs and priorities.

This study has focused entirely on why parties do or do not grant their members a greater say in the selection of the leader. We have shown that while the idea that the rank and file should be involved in the process has gained considerable appeal, the elites have been able to resist movement for change except when and where they had been doing badly at the polls. This raises the question whether democratizing the process does foster a better electoral performance. This is clearly the next issue that must be addressed. If, as Kernell (2009) argues, decentralization of candidate election is usually counterproductive, we would have to explain why parties have failed to learn the "optimal" way of choosing their leader.

Table 1
Degree of formal influence over leadership choice by rank-and-file party members: 1965

	None	Some	Full
Australia	Labour Party Liberal Party National Party		
Canada		Liberal Party New Democratic Party Progressive Conservative Party	
Ireland	Fianna Fail Fine Gael Labour Party		
New Zealand	Labour Party National Party		
United Kingdom	Conservative Party Labour Party Liberal Party		

Table 2
Degree of formal influence over leadership choice by rank-and-file party members: 2007

	None	Some	Full
Australia	Labour Party Liberal Party National Party		
Canada		Liberal Party New Democratic Party	Conservative Party Bloc Quebecois
Ireland	Fianna Fail	Fine Gael Progressive Democrats	Labour Party Green Party
New Zealand	Labour Party National Party ACT NZ NZ First Party United Future	Green Party Maori Party	
United Kingdom		Conservative Party Labour Party	Liberal Democrats

Table 3
Status of parties at time of increasing the relative influence of party members in leadership selection (1965 to 2007)

	left-right	% of seats won in most recent election	percentage point change over prior election	old/new*	position
movement from none or some to full					
Canada					
Liberal Party (1990)	centre	27.8	13.6	old	opposition
Reform Party (1991)	right	0	n/a	new	opposition
Progressive Conservative Party (1995)	right	0.7	-56.90	old	opposition
Bloc Quebecois (1996)	centre	18.3	n/a	new	opposition
Ireland					
Labour Party (1989)	centre	7.2	-2.4	old	opposition
United Kingdom					
Liberal Party (1976)	centre	2.0	-0.2	old	opposition
movement from none to some					
Ireland					
Fine Gael (2004)	centre	18.7	-13.8	old	opposition
Progressive Democrats (2004)	right	4.8	2.4	old	government
United Kingdom					
Labour Party (1981)	centre	42.4	-7.8	old	opposition
Conservative Party (1998)	right	25.0	-26.6	old	opposition
adoption of some or full for first leadership selection					
New Zealand					
Green Party (1995)	left	n/a	n/a	old	opposition
Maori Party (2004)	centre	n/a	n/a	new	opposition
Ireland					
Green Party (2001)	left	1.2	0.6	old	opposition
United Kingdom					
Social Democrats (1982)	centre	n/a	n/a	new	opposition
Liberal Democrats (1988)	centre	n/a	n/a	new	opposition
Canada					
Conservative Party (2003)	right	n/a	n/a	new	opposition

* parties that contested at least two elections prior to changing their leadership rules are considered ‘old’.

Table 4
First party to include members in a leadership vote (post 1965)

		% of seats held
New Zealand	Greens (1995)	n/a
Ireland:	Labour (1989)	7.2
Australia:	Democrats (1977)	n/a
United Kingdom:	Liberals (1976)	2.0

(The NZ Greens ran candidates as part of the Alliance in the prior campaign; the Australian Democrats had not yet contested a general election. In the Canadian case the three principal parties were choosing their leaders through delegated conventions prior to 1965).

APPENDIX: Degree of Formal Influence by Party Members in Leadership Selection

	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia																																											
Liberal Party of Australia	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
National Party of Australia	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Australian Labor Party	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
New Zealand																																											
New Zealand Labour Party	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
New Zealand National Party	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
ACT New Zealand																														N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand																															S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Maori Party																																								S	S	S	S
New Zealand First Party																													N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
United Future																																				N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
United Kingdom																																											
Conservative Party	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Labour Party	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Liberal Democrats																								F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Liberal Party	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F																						
Social Democratic Party																		F	F	F	F	F	F																						
Ireland																																											
Labour Party	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Fianna Fàil	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Fine Gael	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S	S	S	S	S
Progressive Democrats																							N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S	S	S	S	S
Green Party																																					F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Canada																																											
Liberal Party	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	F	F	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
New Democratic Party	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Progressive Conservative Party	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	S	S					
Reform Party/Canadian Alliance																							S	S	S	S	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F					
Conservative Party of Canada																																							F	F	F	F	F
Bloc Québéçois																											S	S	S	S	N	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

N = none S = some F = full

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NOTES

[i] Parties differ in terms of their definition of 'member' for purposes of participation in leadership selection. The principal difference concerns the length of membership required. Some parties require membership of a year or more in order to be eligible to participate while others encourage leadership candidates to enroll new members during the contest and grant these new recruits a vote. For more on this point see Cross and Crysler 2009.

[ii] Note, however, that the parliamentary party may have some influence, especially when obtaining significant caucus support is a condition for being a candidate.

[iii] The focus here is on formal rules. In parties where members are granted no formal role they may be consulted by the parliamentary party. An example is the 2004 "consultative" postal ballot of all party members engaged in by ACT New Zealand prior to the parliamentary party's meeting to select a new leader.

[iv] While the Canadian New Democrats remain in the 'some' category throughout our period of study, they did significantly change their selection process in 2001. They moved away from selection at a delegated convention and adopted an 'electoral college' process in which a ballot of party members accounts for 75 per cent of the total vote with the preferences of organized labour accounting for the remainder.

[v] In 2009 the party once again amended its rules adopting a direct membership vote for the selection of future leaders.

[vi] When the party later merged with the Canadian Alliance to form the Conservative Party it agreed to the selection of future leaders through a vote of the entire membership.

[vii] Parties have been coded as left, centre or right on the basis of Benoit and Laver (2006), Huber and Inglehart (1995), Castles and Mair (1984) and personal interviews with country experts.