

CANADIAN STUDY  
OF  
PARLIAMENT GROUP



THE REQUISITES OF LEADERSHIP  
IN THE  
MODERN HOUSE OF COMMONS

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## INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth paper in the Canadian Study of Parliament Groups *Parliamentary Perspectives*. First launched in 1998, the perspective series is intended as a vehicle for distributing both studies prepared by academics and the reflections of others who have a particular interest in these themes. The papers are offered as a benefit of membership in the CSPG.

Successful heads of political parties require a host of personal and leadership skills. Leaders in Westminster systems must answer to rank and file party members and try to attract the support of the broader public. Further, and perhaps more difficult, they must manage a caucus full of elected members - some of whom are after the top job themselves. It should not be surprising that the demands on party leaders are high and that many individuals fail to live up to expectations.

At the most basic level, the yardstick to measure leadership success is obvious. Win more seats than you had in the previous Parliament. But what are the requisites of leadership, and are their institutional advantages and disadvantages provided for different party leaders in the House of Commons?

In her examination of leadership in the House of Commons, Cristine de Clercy argues that the arrangements of rules in the House of Commons helps to “shape” the behaviour and success of parliamentary leaders. For example, the institution of the scrum in Canada allowed the quick thinking Pierre Trudeau to shine while casting Joe Clark in a less favourable light. Mr. Clark’s more recent performances demonstrate a better appreciation of the importance of quick debate both inside and outside the chamber.

There are other tests as well. The high level of party discipline in Canada can be a double-edged sword for leaders. While it provides a method to reign in maverick party members, it can also highlight perceived weaknesses in leaders. As Dr. de Clercy argues, by the time a leader is publicly pulling a member back into the confines of party solidarity, the damage to that leader’s authority is apparent.

Dr. de Clercy concludes her paper by examining parliamentary leaders from 1867 to 2001. She argues that modern leaders are not as secure in their jobs as their predecessors. The combination of more parties and shorter tenure in office suggests that modern leaders are seen as more transient and therefore more easily replaced than leaders of previous generations. This fact alone adds further burdens to the job of party leader.

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## THE REQUISITES OF LEADERSHIP IN THE MODERN HOUSE OF COMMONS

“It is easier to forge iron any time than a speech,  
especially if you ain’t brought up in the business.”  
T.C. Haliburton, *Sam Slick*, 1840.

Political leadership generally is a difficult art to master, and the task is enlarged in a parliamentary arena where the institutional demands are numerous and daunting. This paper focuses on identifying some central requisites of political leadership in the modern House of Commons and probing the success of modern parliamentary leaders.\* Three queries help to focus the analysis below. The question guiding discussion in the first section asks: what sorts of leaders are most likely to be successful in the modern House of Commons? To this end the study devotes a good deal of attention to considering how the Chamber’s rules and process shape leaders’ behaviour. Second, and in light of several highly publicized cases where party leaders have resigned this office shortly after winning it, we ask whether modern party leaders in parliament truly are less successful than their historical counterparts. Here leaders’ longevity in office is measured and compared over time. In light of the institutional strictures and turnover rates discussed in the preceding parts, the last section explores briefly what factor or factors might help to account for leadership success. A few basic propositions are tested, and the findings suggest that two factors – leaders’ proximity to power and the method by which leaders are selected - are important explanatory elements.

### Leadership and Political Leadership

The subject of leadership is studied formally in many fields such as psychology, sociology, industrial organization, anthropology as well as political science. Interest in the subject certainly is not confined to the dusty corridors of university libraries. As those readers who spend much time perusing the stock of airport bookstores know, the topic of leadership is a best seller on the business organization booklists. With titles such as *Five Leadership Behaviours for Excellence*, most of these works promise to teach managers how to motivate their employees toward enhanced productivity or how to win the support of supervisors. These works can be confusing mainly because they offer contradictory advice on how to lead successfully. One author, for example, might suggest that a positive attitude combined with a high level of employee participation attracts followers; while another pundit argues that real leaders motivate people by applying unyielding pressure while ignoring subordinates’ views. Considering such divergent prescriptions presents us with a central lesson: context is important when discussing leadership. Acts of leadership occur within specific arenas and they are bounded by particular rules, customs and expectations. This is why analysts disagree about the best way to exercise leadership, and why political leadership must be approached as a unique category of the phenomenon.

While most scholars usually consider leadership to result from the interaction of a leader and a set of followers, Gary Wills underscores the importance of adding group objectives to the definition. Leadership in his view is produced when a leader mobilizes others toward a shared

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\* Thanks to Ms. Jessica Waiser for research assistance.

goal.<sup>1</sup> Wills' definition is particularly appropriate for the study of political leadership, since it is the presence of shared goals that permits connection between a single politician and hundreds or millions of citizens. Here leadership is defined as the product of leaders mobilizing followers within political contexts to support shared objectives.<sup>2</sup> Because it is the centre of national politics, the House of Commons constitutes the context under study. Beyond its walls, Canadian political leaders usually are responsible to other follower sets, such as the extra-parliamentary party and constituents. Yet it is in this arena where leaders compete and collaborate in pursuit of power, and so the forum itself empowers leaders. This is why party leaders without seats appear somewhat ineffective or compromised. Inside the walls, several types of leaders can be identified. There is a relatively large literature on prime ministerial leadership but little attention has been devoted to explaining how other types of parliamentary leaders behave. To remedy this oversight, the analysis below focuses mainly on the leaders of parties in the House, and also gives some consideration to the leadership roles assigned to Cabinet members and the official Opposition.

### The House of Commons and the Requisites of Leadership

Certainly it is true, as many authors suggest, that successful political leaders usually possess a bundle of desirable attributes that enhance their efforts to lead.<sup>3</sup> This list of virtues includes abilities such as superior organization, above normal intelligence, and excellent interpersonal skills. Other factors, such as good health, appropriate educational credentials and respectable moral character, are thought to be necessary. Any single individual rarely possesses all of these ideal leadership traits. In real life, people possess excellent abilities in some areas and not others. As well, although particular abilities and traits may supply a necessary foundation for success in the exercise of leadership, they alone are not sufficient. Political institutions present unique contexts for political action. Because they create behavioural incentives and constraints these rules shape how politicians act. Success in the exercise of leadership is contingent on the interplay between a leader's particular abilities and the institutional context in which the leader operates.

For example, say that we are visiting the legislature of a foreign country. Perhaps the traditions of this assembly emphasize consensual decision-making and co-operation among diverse groups. These values may be reflected in procedural rules that allocate to all members equal time to express opinions, require them to remain seated when speaking, and penalize those members speaking too loudly or aggressively. Here it might be usual to find that party leaders, seeking to be seen as examples of deference, elect to recline fully on couches while speaking supportively of others in a monotone voice. Decisions here may take a very long time to reach as leaders defer to each other in an effort to arrive at a consensus. The most powerful leaders may well be the least verbose. As visitors unfamiliar with the rules, we will likely be somewhat puzzled by the spectacle of parliamentarians lazing about the chamber during the conduct of business. Puzzling to us, such behaviours obviously are rational responses to the assembly's traditions and rules. Moreover, any attempt to understand how this assembly's

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<sup>1</sup> Gary Wills, *Certain Trumpets: The Call of Leaders*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Within this definition it is implied that followers' support may be expressed actively (such as via voting) or passively (simply by not opposing a course of action chosen by the leader toward a shared goal).

<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of leadership typologies see Bernard Bass, *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research and Managerial Applications*, third edition, (New York NY: The Free Press, 1990).

politicians exercise leadership is rendered meaningless without reference to the key institutional parameters.

Alexander J. Groth wrote one of the more informative examinations of how institutions influence the exercise of leadership more than thirty years ago.<sup>4</sup> Comparing Britain's parliamentary system to the American presidential system, Groth succinctly summarizes the large effect of institutional processes upon the leadership act. He underscores an important point: the demands of particular institutional configurations delineate how leaders should behave, and therefore create standards for success in the exercise of leadership. Considering the Canadian House of Commons from such a vantage point, its rules clearly set out how leaders ought to act. In turn the rules shape public expectations about how leaders behave and so set the standards by which leaders are evaluated. In the next section, we explore how these rules establish certain requisites for leadership in four areas: 1) undertaking oral argument and debate; 2) fulfilling "in" and "out" leadership roles; 3) maintaining party discipline; and 4) creating professional entourages.

### What Sort of Leaders Are Successful?

#### *1. Undertaking oral argument and debate*

After reviewing the rules of the American "separation of powers" system, Groth concludes that its executive leaders are "virtually *prevented* from engaging in public debate on policy by the institutional setting."<sup>5</sup> The president lacks a formal arena in which to debate his critics and communicate the full scope of his position to his public. The parliamentary system, however, produces the opposite result. As the system has evolved in Canada, both legislative and executive leaders are compelled to engage consistently in debating public policy issues. Despite great change in communications technology, the House remains a forum largely devoted to oral argument and the art of rhetoric.<sup>6</sup> This fact is obvious (or perhaps not so obvious) to regular viewers of the proceedings and it is deeply embedded in parliamentary procedure. As W.F. Dawson complained in the early 1960s, "Members of Parliament never weary of telling one another that the word "parliament" is derived from the French verb *parler* and that therefore it is their right and duty to talk."<sup>7</sup>

Of course, rather than constituting free and unrestricted speech, parliamentary debate is regulated carefully by procedural rules. The rules reward leaders who excel in verbal communication, who can think and respond quickly and cogently to an opponent's charge, and who understand the subtle tactical implications of particular questions. For example, consider the procedural rules about how one addresses the House. It is a longstanding principle that speeches should be delivered to the assembled Members, rather than simply read from a

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander J. Groth, "Britain and America: Some Requisites of Executive Leadership Compared," *Political Science Quarterly* LXXXV, no. 2 (June 1970): 217-239.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>6</sup> David E. Smith, "Myths, Legends and Foundations for Canadian Politics," review article, *Canadian Public Administration* vol. 43 no. 3 (Winter): 488.

<sup>7</sup> W.F. Dawson, *Procedure in the Canadian House of Commons*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 3.

prepared text. At Confederation, as Robert Marleau and Camille Montpetit note, the tradition of not reading speeches existed. In 1886, the House adopted a resolution specifically denigrating the presentation of “carefully and elaborately prepared written essays” owing to their tendency to “encourage a discursive and diffuse, rather than an incisive and concise style of public speaking” and “repel the public from a careful and intelligent consideration of the proceedings of Parliament.”<sup>8</sup> Further evidence of the Chamber’s emphasis on the value of spontaneous speech is found in the noticeable absence of TelePrompters or other communication aids. The Honourable Members do not address the Speaker via PowerPoint presentations. In fact the use of props such as charts and displays consistently have been ruled out of order and, with the exception of the Minister of Finance, Members cannot use lecterns when delivering a speech in the Chamber.<sup>9</sup> Despite technological change, the rules surrounding the form and manner of address continue to emphasize the importance of largely unscripted communication in the assembly.<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly, this broad rule creates behavioural expectations regarding MPs generally and leaders particularly. For example, in cases where the recitation of prepared texts procedurally is acceptable (such as during the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne) analysts treat these texts disparagingly. Such addresses are derogated often because they “are not even prepared by the members who speak, but by hired hacks.”<sup>11</sup> As the spokespeople for their political organizations, party leaders must be prepared consistently to communicate their party’s position or response in the House. This behavioural expectation extends beyond its walls. For example, press scrums in the corridors are predicated upon the assumption that parliamentary leaders can cogently answer reporters’ questions without the benefit of prepared texts or pre-arranged queries. Leaders are evaluated on their lobby performances consistently, and the basis for this measurement reflects the overarching rules of oral tradition.

For example, the noted parliamentary press correspondent Jeffrey Simpson, in 1980, summarized the differences between Pierre Trudeau and Joe Clark in terms of their prowess in the scrum. Simpson writes that, “asked a question on a unfamiliar subject, Trudeau would deflect the question with an impressive, if occasionally irrelevant, display of logic or abstract philosophy. [Joe] Clark, asked a similar question, would stumble for a reply, his sentences losing their grammatical shape as he scrambles to hide his ignorance on the subject.”<sup>12</sup> Clearly, this journalist evaluates leaders partly owing to their ability to respond to unscripted questions

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Marleau and Camille Montpetit (eds.), *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, House of Commons, 2000), 516.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 520; 517.

<sup>10</sup> Members, of course, may refer to their notes when speaking in the Commons. The reading of prepared speech texts is allowed in certain cases, such as leaders addressing the House on important policy issues, Members involved in debating matters of a technical nature, those making their maiden speeches, or representatives engaged in debates on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. In 1956, Speaker Beaudoin summarized the rules on this topic and his guidelines are the ones currently in use.

<sup>11</sup> Norman Ward, *Dawson’s The Government of Canada*, sixth edition, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 139-140.

<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Simpson, *Discipline of Power: The Conservative Interlude and the Liberal Restoration*, (Toronto: Personal Library Publishers, 1980), 72-73.

on unfamiliar topics. Interestingly here what matters is how the leader approaches the question rather than the actual content of the reply.

The persistent expectation that leaders always must respond quickly and adroitly to questions from opponents and the media constitutes an important standard. Leaders who avoid difficult questions or who try to manage the press risk being judged as evasive, inarticulate or unresponsive to their publics. For example, in the 1993 campaign Prime Minister Kim Campbell was queried by journalist Hugh Winsor about her policy views on the subject of social program revision. Campbell refused to respond to his question because “the issues are much too complex to try and generate some kind of a blueprint in the forty-seven days that’s available in an election campaign.”<sup>13</sup> The next day *The Globe and Mail’s* front-page story declared: “PM won’t touch key issue.”<sup>14</sup> The opposition party leaders suggested that her reluctance to answer the question indicated that she was hiding plans to dramatically reduce the scope of social program services. This placed Campbell in a difficult position. By refusing to discuss social programs during the campaign because of their great value and complexity, she was unable to respond to her critics because to do so would draw her into the social program discussion while lending the impression that she discarded her principles easily. These examples suggest that leaders are expected to be able to always respond to questions, and that the substance of what they say seems less important than their ability to supply any sort of answer.

## 2. Fulfilling “in” and “out” leadership roles

The institutional emphasis on skilled verbal communication obviously marks the organization of Question Period. In addition, Question Period supplies a good example of how the institutional rules create specific leadership roles and expectations. Originally Canada’s parliamentary process, in imitation of Westminster, recognized only two sides: those in and out of power.<sup>15</sup> This characteristic influences how leaders behave, particularly when the “outs” are the focus of attention. Certainly Question Period is an essential element of responsible government because it facilitates the opposition’s right to hold the government accountable. At the same time, Question Period reflects the ongoing contest for power by parties and individuals; it is a proving ground. Most future leaders are selected from the pool of novice representatives sent to the Commons after each general election. Political careers are built or undermined partly owing to one’s parliamentary performance. The expectations flowing from Question Period influences leaders’ behaviour whether they are in or out of power.

For example, in the case of ministers of the Crown, their leadership ability perpetually is evaluated on the basis of responses to questions from the Opposition. The objectives of the questions are numerous and varied: the purpose of a query may simply be to secure information, or it may represent a covert attack on a minister. As C.E.S. Franks writes,

to a Minister, the opposition, far from looking like defenders of the public and minority interests, are a pack of hostile and, on occasion, vicious and unscrupulous opponents

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<sup>13</sup> Kim Campbell, *Time and Chance: The Political Memoirs of Canada’s First Woman Prime Minister*, (Toronto: Seal Books/Bantam, 1996), 371.

<sup>14</sup> Jeff Sallot and Hugh Winsor, “PM won’t touch key issue,” *The Globe and Mail*, September 24, 1993: A1; A8.

<sup>15</sup> Dawson, 11.

who will use any means at their disposal, fair or foul, to discredit him and his colleagues. Accountability in parliament is not a matter of getting a fair hearing, but rather a confrontation and contest in which points can be scored by low blows as well as clean jabs.<sup>16</sup>

While ministers may decline to answer any question, this tactic is rare and often interpreted as a sign of fault or weakness.<sup>17</sup> As many observers note, ministerial responses to opposition questions are not judged necessarily on the quality of information disseminated. Rather, ministers are judged often on how well they address subtle strategic issues created by the questions, such as how they defend their department's integrity or whether they manage to avoid raising controversial issues in their responses.

By effectively forcing ministers consistently to answer to the House, Question Period's structure provides a rigorous environment in which ministerial talent must prove its worth and right to hold power.<sup>18</sup> Ministers must act to protect and defend the executive: this is a large measure of their effectiveness as leaders. Moreover, successful ministers necessarily are highly skilled communicators who can evaluate problems quickly. In this context people who take too much time to compose an answer may be judged as being less competent than their peers. At the same time, the ability to respond effectively in the House must be tempered by caution and sound judgement. Ministerial leaders who fail to consider the strategic implications of questions, or who speak without careful monitoring what sort of information they communicate, do not remain ministers for long in this legislative environment.

For example, as a member of the Conservative opposition in the 1970s, John Crosbie's unique manner of speaking gained him fame and notoriety. Once he told the Commons that Canada should respond to a seal hunt trade sanction by banning the importation of French wine because the French "brutalize the grapes when they pound them with their feet."<sup>19</sup> His Newfoundland accent and sharp humour sparked some concern, though, when he was named to the Cabinet as Minister of Finance. At the outset a longtime Crosbie crony, Don Jamieson, worried that the new Finance Minister "has by his very nature an opposition kind of mentality. I'm not at all certain that he's equipped to do what one has to do as Minister of Finance when every word you utter in the House of Commons has a bearing on the stock market and prices and goodness knows what else."<sup>20</sup> In this case, Jamieson's fears largely were unrealized. Although he regularly attracted attention for comments that bordered on propriety, Crosbie was not dismissed from cabinet for such errors. However, his lack of caution did circumscribe his career ambitions. Shortly after the Mulroney government won the 1988 election, Crosbie was passed over as interim Minister of Justice by a prime minister who distrusted this candid but unpredictable politician.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> C.E.S. Franks, *The Parliament of Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 232.

<sup>17</sup> Marleau and Montpetit, 433.

<sup>18</sup> Ward, 88.

<sup>19</sup> Simpson, 207.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Alan Fotheringham, *Birds of a Feather: The Press and the Politicians*, (Toronto: Key Porter, 1989), 239.

In a more recent example of ministerial indiscretion, Canada's Solicitor General, Lawrence MacAulay, was criticized for communicating sensitive information about Canada's role in counterterrorism activities. Chantal Hébert suggests that up to this point Minister MacAulay had "got away with blunders that would have cost others their future, mostly because he was too innocuous to have one."<sup>22</sup> She went on to castigate the government, noting that "judging from their amused reaction to MacAulay's antics, the Liberals seem to enjoy having a buffoon on their front bench." Therefore, the House's rules shape expectations about how leaders in power ought to behave, and a central maxim here dictates that ministers must be accountable to the Commons while avoiding strategic mistakes or improprieties such as revealing privileged information.

As Franks suggests, the rules encourage leaders of opposition groups to be relentless and thorough in their efforts. Because "the prime minister must always face men who are permanently dedicated to his overthrow by constitutional means, always probing his armour, always of the trail of his exposure," the House neatly defines the role of non-governmental leaders regardless of party affiliation.<sup>23</sup> Opposition leaders, particularly in Question Period, are expected to confront and criticize the government consistently. They are to cultivate "a wakeful and morbid suspiciousness," about the government's policy proposals while displaying diligence in uncovering cases of waste and scandal. Leaders who do not hold power are expected to fulfil their roles with alacrity and energy, thereby demonstrating their fitness to form the government should the opportunity to arise. Not all politicians adapt to this role's demands easily. In his study of Preston Manning and the Reform Party, Tom Flanagan recounts how Manning's experiences failed to prepare him for a legislative environment where to be effective he had to work within the agenda established by the governing Liberals.<sup>24</sup> Relegated to the opposition benches after the 1979 election, Pierre Trudeau gave a poor performance in his new capacity. He agreed with the government on some key initiatives such as the broad thrust of John Crosbie's 1979 budget, and generally devoted little energy to this position.<sup>25</sup> John Turner, in contrast, won much admiration for his position on the free trade issue in 1988. Initially a reluctant critic, "his emotional and well-crafted free trade speeches easily became the best of his House of Commons performances."<sup>26</sup> His performance as Opposition Leader on this issue compensated for several lacklustre years at the helm of the Liberals.

One final factor merits discussion when considering how the Chamber's rules shape leaders' behaviour. Particularly among the "outs" there is competition for dominance. Leaders in this camp compete for power and attention with their opposition counterparts as well as with the government. At the same time, and especially in "pizza parliament" environments where numerous opposition parties struggle for dominance and public attention, leaders of parties in opposition may expend an inordinate level of resources in competing with their counterparts to

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<sup>22</sup> Chantal Hébert, "Loose-lips minister worrisome," *The StarPhoenix*, November 5, 2001, A10.

<sup>23</sup> Groth, 232.

<sup>24</sup> Tom Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning*, (Toronto: Stoddart, 1995), 166-167.

<sup>25</sup> Ron Graham, *One-Eyed Kings: Promise and Illusion in Canadian Politics*, (Toronto: Collins, 1986), 26-27.

<sup>26</sup> G. Bruce Doern and Brian W. Tomlin, *Faith and Fear: The Free Trade Story*, (Toronto: Stoddart, 1991), 232.

holding the government to account.<sup>27</sup> While intra-opposition competition is an understudied area, it is fair to suggest that such contexts are quite demanding on these leaders.

As well as creating incentives to compete, the Chamber's rules create incentives for co-operation among groups. Functionally, there are three groups in the House: the Ministry and its Parliamentary Secretaries, members who support the government and those who oppose it.<sup>28</sup> Members in the latter group share a common interest: exposing the government's flaws for public scrutiny. Obviously, on some issues opposition leaders will secure this objective more successfully through joining forces and co-ordinating their strategies. Similarly, small opposition groups lacking resources and official party recognition may benefit from co-operating with a larger party. So opposition party leaders, with a view toward fulfilling their larger institutional role, must be able to co-operate with their competitors when such action is beneficial. Clearly the role prescribed for opposition leaders demands flexibility and pragmatism: in some cases competition might constitute the best strategy while in other cases working in consensus with one's opposition colleagues produces the greatest overall benefit.<sup>29</sup> In contrast, party leaders who are unable or unwilling to co-operate when such action is warranted suffer. Not only do they forsake the benefits of collaboration, but also they may be seen to be eschewing their overarching responsibility to hold the government accountable to the House.

In the case of the debate over free trade, for example, preceding the 1988 election the New Democratic Party (NDP) possessed opinion poll results that suggested Canadians were divided evenly over the issue. This meant that the anti-free trade vote would split between the NDP and the Liberals.<sup>30</sup> Both leaders considered the possibility of joining together in an informal coalition on this issue publicly. Ultimately this option was rejected on partisan grounds and the two opposition parties fought each other vigorously in the ensuing election, splitting votes as predicted.<sup>31</sup> The Conservatives easily won another majority government. In short, the legislative environment creates both competitive and co-operative pressures that tend to reward pragmatists and punish ideologues and extreme partisans.

### *3. Maintaining party discipline*

While parties have been recognized increasingly in House procedure, party discipline has changed little since 1867. Legislatures in other places such as Britain or the United States allow for the demonstration of more independent thought and action by governmental representatives. Canada's MPs, however, are denigrated as mere "trained seals" who bend consistently to their leadership's dictates. The institution of party discipline has developed alongside Canada's parliamentary system. For example, Franks notes that "the sources of the party discipline that determines MPs behaviour are. . . largely within parliament itself, in the

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<sup>27</sup> See David C. Docherty, "It's Awfully Crowded in Here: Adjusting to the Five-Party House of Commons," *Parliamentary Perspectives* no. 2 (October 1998):3-20.

<sup>28</sup> Marleau and Montpetit, 32.

<sup>29</sup> Note that the same contradictory pressures may push parties that usually are ideologically opposed toward collaboration when no single party holds a majority of seats.

<sup>30</sup> Doern and Tomlin, 234.

<sup>31</sup> Jeffrey Simpson, *The Anxious Years: Politics in the Age of Mulroney and Chretien*, (Toronto: Lester, 1996), 120-122.

structure, values, and processes of the parties in parliament, and in parliamentary procedure and practice.”<sup>32</sup> In a recent essay, Réjean Pelletier finds that the presence of party discipline predates the granting of responsible government in 1848, and that these two elements have evolved in close relationship with each other.<sup>33</sup> The centrality of party discipline within the Chamber’s process is obvious. Less studied are its effects upon the exercise of parliamentary leadership.

Analysts refer to the practice of party discipline in two ways. The first concerns the rather mundane efforts of party whips to ensure that their Members are present for key votes and vote properly. In this narrow view, rewards and penalties are distributed on behalf of the Leader to ensure conformity. Interestingly, some of the means by which discipline is enacted depend on the Speaker’s collaboration. For example, while the decision concerning who may address the House rests with the Speaker alone, he or she usually accepts the whips’ recommendations.<sup>34</sup> Therefore the Speaker’s acquiescence enables the party whips to deprive members of certain benefits such as parliamentary visibility and the opportunity to address the assembly. This is another example of how a good deal of leadership behaviour spring from the Common’s own rules and traditions.

Far too much attention is paid in the press and in parliamentary studies to the negative, coercive mechanisms employed in the name of unity in the Commons.<sup>35</sup> The sanctions imposed by the leadership for most offences are relatively insignificant. Moreover, in this regard the arsenal of opposition leaders is much less impressive than that of the prime minister. The presence of a few weak punishments does not help to explain fully the large degree of party unity that exists in the House: a broader conceptualization is necessary. The second method of understanding party discipline focuses on the solidarity of the parliamentary caucus in support of their leader, who mobilizes supporters toward common objectives. This larger appreciation of party discipline (which may be better understood as caucus unity) refers to the exercise of leadership. Surely the reciprocal relationship created between leaders and followers constitutes the best sort of political cement. Leaders who can lead their followers, and who can depend on their followers to follow, have little need of threats and petty intimidations. Viewed in this way, the norm of party discipline is the demand that leaders exercise leadership. Those who cannot mobilize MPs toward shared goals without imposing penalties (or offering a steady supply of bribes) cannot hold onto the headship for long.

Once the leader has engaged the caucus’s support, some resources must be devoted toward maintaining this support. Sometimes leaders may need to lend only negligible effort toward maintaining support in the caucus while in other circumstances leaders may be required to attend closely to the wishes of the parliamentary party. This task may be onerous and demanding. Asked to comment on his health, Preston Manning reported once that he found “the internal bickering and quarrelling among our own Reform people, usually over minor issues and personality conflicts, to be far more stressful to myself than any attacks or stress caused by

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<sup>32</sup> Franks, 101.

<sup>33</sup> Réjean Pelletier, “Responsible Government: Victory or Defeat for Parliament?” in F. Leslie Seidle and Louis Massicotte (eds.) *Taking Stock of 150 years of Responsible Government in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Study of Parliament Group, 1999), 56-57.

<sup>34</sup> Marleau and Montpetit, 270; 423; 423 note 49.

<sup>35</sup> For example see Franks on the subject of party discipline, 100-114.

external opposition or the challenge of meeting contemporary political issues.”<sup>36</sup> Manning’s observations suggests that leaders spend a good deal of energy on smoothing over divisions and keeping supporters unified.

Over time party discipline has strengthened, to the point where consistent loyalty to the party and its leadership is the normal state of affairs. Pelletier notes now that “dissent is always the exception, whereas party discipline remains the rule.”<sup>37</sup> There are two intriguing effects flowing from what some analysts find to be excessive pressure to conform to the leadership’s wishes in the House. First and most obviously, this places great pressure on leaders to generate loyalty from their followers consistently. Second, this norm magnifies the effects of dissent and so empowers dissidents.

Addressing the first effect, clearly Members’ loyalty is the foundation for the edifice of party discipline. The norm of party discipline forces parliamentary leaders (or their delegates) to exercise leadership on almost a daily basis as whips and house leaders vigilantly monitor backbencher satisfaction. The Leader may be criticized in caucus, but in public he or she must appear to have the support of the group consistently. Such expectations inflate the value of Members’ loyalty. This explains why, as David Docherty found in his survey of parliamentarians, 35<sup>th</sup> Parliament rookies underestimated the importance of loyalty to the leader as a requirement for advancing their careers.<sup>38</sup> Because the institutional norm of excessive party discipline motivates leaders to generate support consistently from their membership, any deviation from this standard invites criticism of the leader’s abilities.

This leads to the second effect. The centrality of party conformity within the Chamber serves to magnify the effect of dissent where it occurs. Party discipline permeates parties in, as well as out of, government. Certainly party unity is important with respect to the confidence convention. At the same time, the norm itself is standard by which leadership abilities are measured. Therefore it is equally important for leaders on both sides of the House to sustain their MPs’ support or else risk being perceived as weak. In cases where a Member flouts the leadership, the issue must be addressed quickly and privately to avoid communicating publicly any diminishment in the leader’s capacity to extract support. When Members refuse to bend to the party’s position, the leader must resort to imposing disciplinary tactics. In cases where severe measures are taken, such as suspending an MP from attending caucus or stripping him or her of committee responsibilities, the main objective is not to force the dissident to rejoin the ranks. Rather in such cases the leader makes an example of the miscreant to warn others as well as tries to repair any damage to one’s reputation. Usually by the point at which severe disciplinary measures are imposed, the leader has failed to exercise leadership and the dissident has already abandoned his or her loyalties. The expulsion of John Nunziata from the Liberal party caucus in 1997 over his refusal to follow Cabinet’s position on the GST is a good example of this sort of disciplinary dynamic.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Flanagan, 18.

<sup>37</sup> David Docherty, *Mr. Smith Goes to Ottawa: Life in the House of Commons*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 58.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 107-108.

<sup>39</sup> “Toeing the Line: The Rule of Party Discipline Gives the Prime Minister and Premiers Immense Power,” *Canada and the World Backgrounder*, v. 63 (1) Spring 97: 10.

Leaders constantly are evaluated on how well they are supported in the House, and so the maintenance of party discipline constitutes a critical measure of leaders' capacity. Ironically, the party solidarity serves the purpose of those who elect to challenge the leadership publicly. Precisely because public disobedience is so rare, a dissident receives extraordinary attention in the media. As a result, the public may greatly overestimate the significance of dissent with respect to support for the leader. In such cases, the norm of party discipline leaves leaders little choice but to punish offenders swiftly or suffer injury to one's reputation. On this point, in the case of Canadian Alliance leader Stockwell Day's troubles in the spring and summer of 2001, it seems that dissatisfaction with the leader's role in the 2000 general election spurred dissidents to challenge the leadership openly. So, one might argue that public perceptions of the leader's competence was diminished well before his resignation was demanded by some Alliance MPs.

However, many parliamentary leaders (such as John G. Diefenbaker, Pierre Trudeau, Audrey McLaughlin and Kim Campbell) have experienced trouble in asserting leadership over their caucus members in the wake of an unsuccessful election campaign. Day may have exacerbated his problems by adopting a strategy that sought to return the dissidents to the fold while at the same time threatening them with retribution if they failed to conform to the leadership's wishes. While five MPs eventually returned to the fold, eight others left to sit in coalition with the Progressive Conservatives. At most comprising one-fifth of the caucus, the dissidents were able to dominate media coverage for several months while the Alliance leader was criticized widely for being indecisive and weak. This case is still developing, so its conclusion is not yet clear. This line of reasoning suggests that the rarity of public dissent in the House effectively forces leaders to act swiftly to preserve their image of strength and leadership ability. Precisely because dissent is rare, its mere presence may undermine public perceptions of leaders' competence.

#### *4) Creating professional entourages.*

One final area where the House of Commons' form and process influences the exercise of leadership concerns the professionalization of leadership offices. Less than forty years ago, W.F. Dawson suggested that parliamentary procedure would be positively influenced if MPs were treated as full-time representatives. Since then, MPs' roles have become complex and full-time careers. The careers of parliamentary leaders too have been transformed in a few key areas. There are several excellent works that probe how the distribution of leadership resources and power has changed. Donald Savoie, for example, argues in a recent analysis that executive power has shifted to the PM and his senior advisors at both the political and public service levels, and away from Cabinet and its committees.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, S.J.R. Noel suggests that the creation of leaders' personal entourages has become an indispensable aspect of leadership. Describing them as "the most effective type of organizational unit in modern Canadian politics," entourages characteristically are small groups of trusted advisors and consultants devoted to ensuring the leader's success.<sup>41</sup> Useful particularly in leadership contests, entourages supply loyal service in exchange for particular rewards, usually in some form of patronage. While the power exercised by these elite networks usually is obvious mainly to party insiders, entourages now are a regular feature of leadership politics in Ottawa.

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<sup>40</sup> Donald J. Savoie, *Governing from the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 7.

<sup>41</sup> S.J.R. Noel, "Patronage and Entourages, Action-Sets, Networks," in A. Brian Tanguay and Alain-G. Gagnon (eds.), *Canadian Parties in Transition*, second edition, (Scarborough, Ont: Nelson, 1996), 242.

Undeniably, entourages have contributed to the professionalization of Canada's parliamentary leadership. No respectable parliamentary leader tries to fulfil his or her duties without the advice of a reliable pollster and a media spokesperson. Image consultants, policy specialists, speech coaches and public relations experts also may supply aid. Entourages are so deeply enmeshed in the political process that they have become institutionalized in politicians' resource budgets: leaders' offices now are well equipped to bear the expenses of this group. Noel notes that ministers' budgets allow for a substantial entourage and that the "leader of the official Opposition also receives substantial funding for this purpose, as do the Leaders of minor parties that elect at least 12 members."<sup>42</sup> The rise of these elite networks places pressure on political leaders in at least three important ways. First, leaders must be willing and able to recruit and retain a skilled entourage. It is not at all unusual for nascent leaders to be deficient in this area. In his analysis of Preston Manning's leadership, for example, Tom Flanagan notes that he lacked initially this type of network.<sup>43</sup> Only slowly did Manning's entourage grow in terms of size and competence.

Second, leaders must submit to their counsellors' image management. This task seems easy initially, yet it can be quite difficult to alter deeply ingrained behaviours such as how one laughs, gestures or smiles. For example, a politician who feels most confident in tailored suits may take some time to become comfortable addressing large crowds in a cardigan sweater designed to soften his image. In the example of Manning, in time he accepted advice, "muted his more extreme social conservatism, polished his appearance- shedding the spectacles and donning a new hair style- and enrolled in French classes."<sup>44</sup>

Finally, leaders must reflect the benefits of professional advice. The powerful influence of good image management is exemplified in an article about Kim Campbell's brief tenure as Prime Minister. By her own account, she had a difficult time initially adjusting to the demands of a large group of advisors and functionaries who were unfamiliar with her needs. As well, she was determined to approach politics in a manner far different than that of her predecessor.<sup>45</sup> So, she often rejected counsel and acted on her own initiative. As she settled into the office, she began to accept advice more freely. The effects were profound. Her supporters welcomed her crisper, livelier performance, remarking that "she's got rid of her handlers." Ron Graham writes that in reality she was more herself when she was overconfident and over her head. In fact "she looked and sounded better . . . largely because she had let herself be programmed into becoming a better politician."<sup>46</sup> So, this case suggests that the advice of entourages is indispensable in helping leaders to behave as leaders.

Indeed, the more a leader's image is polished, the less room there is for ineptitude. Here it seems that the effects of entourages are most noticeable with respect to public expectations about leaders' behaviour. For example, if leaders embrace the tutelage of speech coaches and so refine their eloquence in the House, then the assembled Members, the media

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>43</sup> Flanagan, 19.

<sup>44</sup> Canadian Press Newswire, "Manning's future uncertain as party he masterminded shuns him," Canadian Press Newswire, July 8, 2000. Canadian Business and Current Affairs online record accessed October 29, 2001 at <http://datalib.usask.ca:8590>.

<sup>45</sup> Campbell, 341-346.

<sup>46</sup> Ron Graham, "The Campbell Gamble," *Report on Business Magazine*, (September 1993): 41.

and the public may come to expect that parliamentary leaders generally are highly eloquent. Similarly, if skilled consultants manipulate leaders' images to appear more photogenic, then citizens may logically expect leaders to be more photogenic than the rest of the population. As well, if leaders' parliamentary comments are carefully crafted to ensure that few mistakes are made, then people may expect that leaders generally make fewer mistakes than other politicians such as backbench MPs. In short, the efforts of entourages may have had an unanticipated "third party" effect on the informal institutional rules: the creation of a cult of perfectionism. If the advice of professionals helps to create a "perfect" leader, then perfection becomes the new institutional standard. As in the case of excessive party discipline, the norm of leader perfectionism serves to magnify deviations from the norm. Here ordinary mistakes and imperfections grow large in the eyes of beholders whose expectations are unrealistic entirely: despite professional advice, leaders cannot behave perfectly always or be admired by everybody. However, where the norm of perfection prevails, followers may too easily leaders are imperfect. In such an environment parliamentary leaders must avoid mistakes, even small errors, at all costs.

### Are Current Parliamentary Leaders Less Successful Than Their Historical Counterparts?

Reviewing the qualities, abilities and expectations typically associated with successful leaders in the Canadian House of Commons brings us to the next part of our study. There is a tradition in the Canadian parliament of extensive service in leadership positions. Politicians such as Sir John A. Macdonald, Mackenzie King, Pierre Trudeau and Tommy Douglas led their parties in the Commons for a decade or longer. At the same time, it seems that a large number of party leaders recently have been introduced to the Commons only to resign their positions a short while later. While much recent attention has focussed on the Alliance leader's truncated tenure, other party leaders now seem barely willing or able to remain in their offices for four years, let alone a full decade. Are today's leaders in fact spending much less time in their positions? If this is true, what does this say about their success in exercising leadership?

As Maureen Mancuso notes, political scientists have paid little analytic attention to studying patterns of exit from leadership positions.<sup>47</sup> One way to assess how successful leaders are is to measure the amount of time spanning their arrival into office to their departure. How long leaders hold their positions is a good indicator of their success in the exercise of leadership. Probing leaders' political longevity sheds some light on whether Canada's current leaders in the Commons are as successful as their predecessors. To this end, from 1867 to 2001 information about MPs who officially held office as party leader and who sat in the House of Commons was gathered. Within this time period, all the cases of party leaders in the Commons who left their positions were reviewed. A total of forty-four leaders are under study here; their names appear in Appendix A.<sup>48</sup> To test the proposition that the longevity of modern leaders is diminished in comparison to their predecessors, the collection of leaders (excluding those currently in office) was divided using three different division points or "cut" points. The first cut point selected is 1934, which represents the halfway mark in the period 1867 to 2001.

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<sup>47</sup> Maureen Mancuso, "The Politics of Shame: Leaving in Disgrace," in Maureen Mancuso, Richard G. Price and Ronald Wagenberg (eds.), *Leaders and Leadership in Canada*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 266.

<sup>48</sup> Interim leaders were excluded from the analysis because their very title suggests that this sort of leader, empowered only for a short term, is supposed to exit his or her office once the party selects another "regular" leader through its internal processes.

The leaders were divided into two sub-groups: those who became leaders of their party before this date and those who became leaders after January 1, 1934. Each leader's total years in his or her position were added and then the sum total was divided by the number of leaders in the particular subgroup under study. The results indicate the average number of years that a subgroup leader held office. The results allow us to compare the two groups of leaders to determine whether leaders' longevity in office is increasing or decreasing over time.

The results, presented in Table 1, communicate two salient pieces of information. First, notice that while twelve party leaders sat in the Commons during the first sixty-seven years of its existence, in the last sixty-seven years a total of twenty-seven leaders have been present. There has been a more than a two-fold increase in the number of cases since 1934. Clearly the increasingly crowded party environment is reflected in the inflated absolute numbers of party leaders in the Chamber over the last half of its life. Second, from 1867 to December of 1933, average leadership tenure was 10.12 years. However, from January of 1934 to November of 2001, this figure declines to an average of 9.09 years. This suggests that leaders' longevity since 1934 is somewhat reduced as compared to leaders in the 1867-1933 period.

**Table 1**  
Leaders' Average Longevity, 1934 Cut Point

	Number of Cases	Average Number of Years
Group #1: Before 1934	12	10.12
Group #2: After 1934	27	9.09

N=39

However, simply dividing the history of the House of Commons into two equal periods is a rather crude test that ignores important factors such as the changing party system. To address this concern, two more cut points were selected and used to compare subgroup longevity. Interestingly, both confirmed the trend identified in Table 1: modern leaders hold their leadership offices for a much shorter period of time than their predecessors. One cut point was selected in view of a widely employed perspective on the evolution of Canada's party system. Here the history of the party system is divided into four periods. During the first two periods, from 1867 to 1957, the political landscape changed from a situation of Conservative one-party domination to a classic two-party system in which Liberals and Conservatives competed on equal terms.<sup>49</sup> The 1957 election marked another sea change, characterized by the formation of majority and minority governments in a three-party competitive system. In the fourth period, from 1993 to the present, five competitive parties in the House seem to signal the arrival of a multi-party system. To account for the emergence of the third and fourth party systems, 1957 was selected as another cut point. As in the first test, the group of thirty-nine leaders were sorted into two groups based on whether they became leader before this date. Then the sub-groups' average longevity was calculated and compared.

As the results presented in Table 2 suggest, the 1957 cut point suggests a greater disparity in tenure between the two groups. Here the group selected before 1957 has an average tenure of 10.3 years, while the political longevity of the post-1957 group declines to 8.36 years, about a 9 % average decrease in longevity. One more cut point was selected: 1979. This date represents the midway point between 1957 and 2001. While there are

<sup>49</sup> For an overview of these divisions see R.K. Carty, "Three Party Systems: An Interpretation of the Development of National Politics," in Hugh G. Thorburn (ed.) *Party Politics in Canada*, seventh edition (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1996), 128-145.

relatively few cases in the post-1979 period as compared to those leaders in office before 1979, this cut point serves to confirm the overall trend. As the results presented in Table 3 suggest, the 1867-1979 sub-group of thirty-four leaders averaged 10.1 years as leader. In stark contrast, the 1979-2001 subgroup averaged a mere 4.7 years in office. All three comparisons of leaders' average longevity in the office of leader confirm that this measure has been declining steadily over time, and has declined sharply since 1979.

**Table 2**  
Leaders' Average Longevity, 1957 Cut Point

	Number of Cases	Average Number of Years
Group #1: Before 1957	21	10.30
Group #2: After 1957	18	8.36

N=39

**Table 3**  
Leaders' Average Longevity, 1979 Cut Point

	Number of Cases	Average Number of Years
Group #1: Before 1979	34	10.10
Group #2: After 1979	5	4.70

N=39

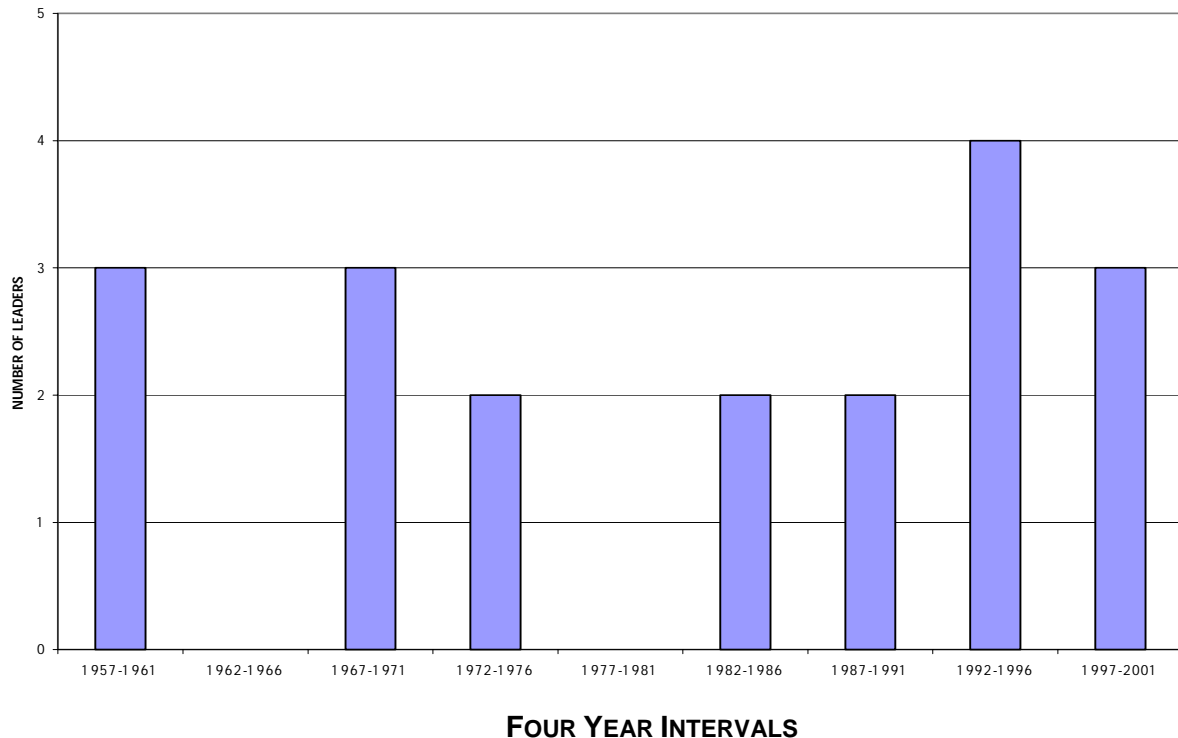
Another way to examine how long leaders stay in office and how quickly they leave is to probe the volume of leadership resignations. The rate of leadership resignations is depicted in Figure 1, which summarizes the overall exit rate of Commons party leaders since 1957.<sup>50</sup> In total, eighteen leaders of major political parties vacated their offices during the period under study. Here four leaders have left the headship of the CCF/NDP, five leaders departed the PC's, and three exited from the ranks of the Liberals.<sup>51</sup> Considering the two newer parties founded in the late 1980s, the first leader of the Bloc Québécois resigned while the Reform/Alliance party's first two leaders have left or declared an intention to resign.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> The time intervals on the "X" axis have been collapsed into four-year intervals for the purpose of clarifying the trend.

<sup>51</sup> There is some debate about whether Hazen Argue, CCF leader from 1960-1961, should be considered an interim leader. Here I have adopted John Courtney's position and chosen to exclude Argue from the analysis on grounds that he served mainly as the interim House leader for an expiring party that was about to be reborn with a radically different form and substance. See John C. Courtney, *The Selection of National Party Leaders in Canada*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1973), 176.

<sup>52</sup> Stockwell Day has been included here because at the time of writing he has announced his intentions to resign his current position as Leader of the Alliance Party.

**FIGURE 1**  
**LEADERS LEAVING LEADERSHIP POSITIONS, FOUR YEAR INTERVALS**



On the one hand, some scholars have pointed out that Canada's party system has moved sharply toward a true multiparty system over the last decade. In this case, the increase in the number of parties represented in the House may account for some portion of the high turnover rate, since it is reasonable to expect that the total volume of leaders leaving their offices will increase simply owing to the larger number of political parties represented in the Chamber. On the other hand, the Figure suggests that there is an increase in the number of leaders leaving their positions, particularly after 1992. In fact, seven of these eighteen leaders, or 39%, have left their positions in the last ten years. Since 1957 and especially over the last ten years there has been a fairly high turnover in party leadership. Among all the parties only the Liberal's leader has remained in place over the last decade. This latter fact is not at all unusual since the Liberals have formed the government since 1993 and it is an often-repeated truism that leaders in power tend to stay in power. In summary, this examination of leaders' official longevity and exit rates suggests that modern party leaders in the Commons are much less entrenched in power than they have been historically.

#### What Factors Explain Declining Leadership Longevity?

If modern leaders actually are less successful than their historical counterparts, we may ask what has changed to produce this situation? Certainly there are a number of institutional elements that have changed dramatically since 1867. Some of these are reviewed in the first section of this study, such as increasing importance of leadership entourages. In this section our attention turns to a specific set of factors that may account for declining leadership longevity. Here we test if leaders who are in power are more successful than those out of power, whether leaders are less successful today because the leadership cohort has changed, and whether leaders with much more prior parliamentary experience enjoy more success. In

the case of the first query, as mentioned in the preceding section it is commonly thought that leaders who win government are able to stay in power for much longer than usual. A leader's proximity to power, then, is important in explaining her or his success (or failure). In the case of the second question, many analysts have argued that a politician's parliamentary experience is a critical requisite in qualifying him or her to be leader.<sup>53</sup> John Turner's parliamentary experience, for example, is cited widely as the main reason why he was invited to return to politics and lead the Liberals in the 1980s.<sup>54</sup> In turn, a lack of service in parliament may stall the ambitions of would-be leaders. John Diefenbaker's speech to the assembled 1976 Tory leadership convention quashed Brian Mulroney's chances at being leader when the Chief reminded delegates that Mulroney lacked parliamentary experience of any sort.<sup>55</sup>

Concerning the third proposition, as discussed in the first part of this study, the Chamber's rules and tradition shape leaders' behaviour in specific ways. It is reasonable then to assume that leaders who fulfil their institutionally prescribed role will necessarily be more at least somewhat more successful than individuals who either eschew such strictures or who are unable to act in certain ways. One factor that has clearly changed over time is the method by which leaders are selected to lead parties. As John Courtney notes, prior to 1919 a small circle controlled the selection of leaders.<sup>56</sup> A reflection of borrowed British practice, party leaders were chosen by their parliamentary caucuses. While the retiring leader and the Governor General occasionally contributed to the decision, a small circle of parliamentarians comprised the selectorate. Because the candidates were selected from among the parliamentary representatives, new leaders had already been exposed to the strictures of parliamentary protocol and process. However, in 1919 the process by which leaders were selected changed profoundly. The Liberal party introduced the delegated convention as a means for generating a leadership choice. The innovation brought the extra-parliamentary party into the decision-making process while terminating the parliamentary caucus's dominance in this area.<sup>57</sup>

Adopted by other parties, the delegated convention mechanism became more and more democratic and representative over time. The numbers of candidates and delegates increased greatly after 1960 while television came to play an integral role in creating mediated drama.<sup>58</sup> However in the 1990s there was a clear shift away from delegated conventions and toward leadership selection by means of a universal membership vote (UMV). This method of leadership selection has been adopted by many provincial parties as well as some federal parties.

So, the method of selecting national party leaders has become much more democratic over time. The new UMV method offers every party member the opportunity to contribute

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<sup>53</sup> For example see Groth, 222-223.

<sup>54</sup> See for example Jack Cahill, *John Turner: The Long Run*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1984), 206.

<sup>55</sup> John Sawatsky, *Mulroney: The Politics of Ambition*, (Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter & Ross, 1991), 294.

<sup>56</sup> Courtney, Chapter 3.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>58</sup> John C. Courtney, *Do Conventions Matter? Choosing National Party Leaders in Canada*, (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995) 8.

directly to the selection of a new leader. However, change in the mechanism of leadership selection has produced change in how candidates seek support. For example, UMV systems create large incentives for leadership candidates to invest heavily in sophisticated mass mobilization techniques and to use the media to seek support from a relatively large electorate spread across much territory. The democratization of the leadership selection process may have changed the sort of leaders that are selected to lead parties. Whereas the caucus selection method ensured that a party leader was similar to his peers in a great many areas, by de-emphasizing leaders' parliamentary credentials the democratization of leadership selection may produce leaders who do not have the experience or ability to operate effectively in Parliament. Courtney raises this issue when he suggests that UMV methods may work to the benefit of candidates who ordinarily would not receive much intra-party support, such as anti-establishment or single-issue candidates.<sup>59</sup>

Clearly, in the House of Commons there are specific incentives for certain sorts of leadership behaviours. In such a "hot house" environment it is rational to expect that leaders whose personality or approach conforms to the institutional rules will be successful as a parliamentary leader. However, if the parties' leadership selection method enables them to choose individuals lacking in particular talents that are necessary to parliamentary life, it is logical to assume that these leaders will be, as a group, less successful than their counterparts. To test this proposition and the other mentioned in the beginning of this section, a linear regression model was employed. There are three independent explanatory variables and one control variable. First, to operationalize the concept of selectoral method, the specific means by which every leader of a Canadian leader represented in the Commons was selected were reviewed. There are three basic methods: selection by caucus, selection by delegate convention and selection by a universal membership vote. A categorical variable, METHOD, was created and each case of leadership selection was associated with a value ranging one through three.

A second variable, EXPERIENCE, was created. This variable represents the number of years that a leader served in the House of Commons or Senate prior to his or her selection as Leader. This variable is included to test whether leaders with more parliamentary experience generally are more likely to stay in power. Third, an axiom found in the literature on leadership proposes that leaders in power retain their positions longer than leaders who do not manage to secure power. Examination of this principle is useful for our purposes, since it might help to explain the relatively high turnover rate among opposition leaders recently, and the lengthy careers of many Canadian prime ministers. A dichotomous variable, IN\_or\_OUT, was created on the basis of whether the majority of each leader's tenure was spent in power. Finally, a categorical control variable, PARTY, was included.

The results of the OLS regression appear in Table 4, and the findings are intriguing for several reasons. First, the analysis suggests that a leader's proximity to power, represented in the variable IN\_or\_Out, is a good predictor of leadership longevity and is significant at the 0.01 level. In other words, these findings suggest that leaders who are in power enjoy longer tenures, and hence more success, than leaders confined to the opposition benches. Second, the results indicate that the variable representing METHOD of selection is negatively related to LONGEVITY, and this is significant at the 0.05 level. These findings point to an inverse relationship: leaders selected by more democratic mechanisms remain in office for shorter periods. Because there are relatively few cases under study here, this result should be treated as a preliminary finding only that merits much more investigation.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 250.

Third, while some scholars suggest that parliamentary experience is a good indicator of leadership success, this analysis fails to support this position. MP's experience in the House prior to accepting the leader's mantle is not significantly related to longevity. Finally, one's partisan identity, captured in the control variable PARTY, is not related to the length of time that a leader remains at the apex of the organization.

**Table 4**  
The dependent variable is LONGEVITY

<u>Explanatory Variables</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>T value</u>
In_or_Out	0.665	3.214 **
METHODselection	-0.309	-2.04 *
EXPERience	0.044	0.201
PARTY	0.107	0.767
Durbin-Watson test	1.50	
F statistic	5.62**	
Adjusted R Square	0.345	
Number of cases:	43	

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01

SUMMARY

In the first section of this study attention focused on examining what sort of leaders are most likely to be successful in the modern House of Commons. By studying how some institutional rules shape the exercise of leadership in the House, one central conclusion is that leaders must adapt to the rules to be successful, since these create the bases upon which they are evaluated. Reviewing the incentive structure briefly in four areas, it is clear that skill in verbal communication remains in demand generally and in Question Period specifically. Ministers must defend and explain; those leading opposition parties must attack and expose. As well, the Chamber's process clearly defines specific leadership roles for the government and the opposition. The terrain may shift though: in some cases competition may carry the day while in other circumstances collaboration helps to achieve certain objectives. So, while these roles initially appear to be rather lifeless and one-dimensional, leaders must demonstrate flexibility and co-operation when the institutional context rewards these approaches.

Focusing on how party discipline influences leaders, it seems that a legislative environment where dissent is treated as weakness effectively forces leaders to be highly responsive to their caucus members. Therefore loyalty is a valuable commodity that is sought consistently by the leadership. While much of the extant analysis focuses on why coercion helps leaders to dominate their caucuses, the review above suggests that the imposition of punishments for disobedience is not a mark of leadership; it is a sign that leaders have failed to secure the group's unity. The institutional norm concerning strong party discipline ensures that leaders must consistently mobilize their followers toward group goals. So, leaders are expected to exercise leadership on a regular basis. Moreover, the norm of party solidarity magnifies the effects of dissent. Mavericks in the modern Commons enjoy inordinate influence in shaping public perceptions of leaders' competence. As well, the development of another norm – the expectation of faultless behaviour – creates unrealistic expectations among caucus members. Leaders in this context face much criticism for relatively small errors.

Having probed some of the institutional strictures and incentives, the focus turns to evaluate the success of modern parliamentary leaders. Specifically, the question under discussion here asks whether modern party leaders in parliament truly are less successful than their historical counterparts. To answer this query information about parliamentary leaders in office from 1867 to 2001 was collected and their longevity, or total time in office as leader, was calculated and compared. Overall there seems to be a clear trend: modern party leaders spend much less time in this office. As well, while there are more leaders in absolute terms in the House in its current multiparty phase, there is some reason to believe that the turnover rate is fairly high. On the basis of these measures it appears that modern parliamentary leaders clearly are not as entrenched in power as their predecessors.

In view of this finding, the last part of the analysis probes why leaders' longevity has been declining. The findings generated from an OLS regression model suggest that prior parliamentary experience and party attachment do not account significantly for declining longevity. At the same time, there is some evidence that leaders selected by more democratic party mechanisms have diminished tenures. While it is too soon to say definitively that this relationship is clear concerning UMV methods, this finding lends some support to the proposition that a more representative selectorate may choose leaders who have difficulty fulfilling the leadership requisites of the House of Commons. More attention must be directed to this preliminary finding in future studies, particularly because if this disjuncture exists, it is difficult to say how it might be remedied. More democratic methods of leadership selection are appealing *prima facie* in modern democratic states precisely because they aim to empower the grassroots party members over the elites. However, if the leaders empowered by this process are unable to function in the House, which institution must change? It is unclear which of these two institutions has the greater claim to democratic process and the right to remain in its current form. Finally, the findings presented in the third part of this study support the axiom that "nothing succeeds like success": one's proximity to the power of government is a significant indicator of success in the office of party leader.

APPENDIX A

Party Leaders in the House of Commons, 1867-2001,  
(Interim Leaders Excluded)<sup>f</sup>

1. John A. Macdonald
  2. John J.C. Abbott
  3. John Thompson
  4. Mackenzie Bowell
  5. Charles Tupper
  6. Robert Borden
  7. Arthur Meighen
  8. R.B. Bennett
  9. R.J. Manion
  10. Arthur Meighen
  11. John Bracken
  12. George A. Drew
  14. John G. Diefenbaker
  15. Robert L. Stanfield
  16. Joe Clark
  17. Brian Mulroney
  18. Kim Campbell
  19. Jean Charest
  20. Joe Clark \*
  21. Alexander Mackenzie
  22. Edward Blake
  23. Wilfrid Laurier
  24. William Lyon Mackenzie King
  25. Louis St. Laurent
  26. Lester B. Pearson
  27. Pierre Elliot Trudeau
  28. John Turner
  29. Jean Chrétien \*
  30. Preston Manning
  31. Stockwell Day
  32. J.S. Woodsworth
  33. M.J. Coldwell
  34. Hazen Argue
  35. Tommy Douglas
  36. David Lewis
  37. Ed Broadbent
  38. Audrey McLaughlin
  39. Alexa McDonough \*
  40. Lucien Bouchard
  41. Gilles Duceppe \*
  42. Réal Caoutte
  43. C.A. Crerar
  44. Robert Thompson
- \* = currently in office.

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<sup>f</sup> A couple of minor outlier cases have been excluded.

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