

Leadership succession project

Research methodology

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In this memo we outline the methodology and research design of our study, beginning with the research questions driving the project, and then showing how these questions have been tackled in a design combining quantitative and qualitative research components.

THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

The quantitative study is aimed to 'get at' at least the most elementary descriptive statistics of these questions in a large n, cross-national, cross-party context. We have developed a codebook that we have used to obtain analytically relevant yet relatively parsimonious quantitative data regarding leadership succession episodes (see Appendixes for variables and coded successions). With the help of the databank that has thus been constructed, a relatively large number of leadership successions in different countries and systems have been studied comparatively and systematically. Analysis drawing on the databank helps to: a. get a grip on the basic characteristics of the universe of political leadership successions in 4 Western democracies in the post-war period; b. inductively assess patterns and trends regarding the most obvious descriptive questions and variables concerning the course and outcomes of leadership succession episodes; c. preliminary test hypotheses derived from the existing literature; d. identify critical cases worthy of in-depth study; e. compare leadership succession in government and politics to leadership succession in private corporations (which has already been captured in large n research, at least in the United States). **Paul: are we doing this? Keep for last chapter?**

The techniques we use are straight forward, mainly simple measures of correlation and graphical illustrations of the distributions of variables across our cases. Our exploratory/descriptive ambitions does not require statistical techniques with causal validity, nor do they warrant us to create categories simply for statistical use – we wish to maintain the complexity of our theoretical framework, and we do so at the expense of statistical sophistication. However, the uncompromised data bank we have built still proved useful for establishing a small number of meaningful statistical relationships.

Here, we first specify the key concepts used to describe the phenomena we seek to capture in this data bank. Then we delimit the scope of the initial data gathering effort. Next we provide an insight into the sources that are used. Finally we present the actual databank.

Definitions

Success of transition This key (dependent) variable is notoriously difficult to get at empirically. The trade-off between theoretical validity and methodological reliability is at its greatest here. We have decided to err on the side of reliability and adopt a relatively simple yet reliably measurable two-dimensional operationalisation: 1) the differences between a party's election results in the two last elections before and first election after succession, 2) the longevity in office of the new leader. We emphasize these party-external factors partly because the party-internal factors are very close to potential explanatory variables, such as a succession candidate's legitimacy within the party, or the impact of the outgoing leader's preferences on the successor's future standing. At this time, we have decided to refrain from measuring and evaluating the organizational and policy impact of the new leaders. This is a complicated subject that requires a separate study (see e.g. Bunce 1982).

Incumbent leader = person holding the national party leadership position (this might be combined with a head of government or leader of the opposition position).

Succession candidate / successor = person (thought likely or desirable to be) aspiring to the leader position / ...who eventually ends up succeeding the incumbent leader.

Succession trigger = event or factor that puts succession on top of the public/party/political agenda

Succession regime = the bundle of written and unwritten rules (including established practices leading to generalised expectations and norms) governing the appointment/departure process of the leader of a political party or government.

Succession modes = observable acts by which incumbent leader ends office and/or successor acquires office. These range from institutionalised ceremonies to ad-hoc actions.

Decisional forums = locus of decision making regarding the continuation/termination of incumbent leader's occupation of the office, and/or the selection of a successor to a departed leader. Here existing typologies of decisional forums, such as those proposed by Hermann and Hermann (1978, 1982) and/or Brecher (1979, 1980) could be used.

Scope

The data gathering effort has been concentrated on:

- A. *The period of 1945 to the present.* The period examined needs to be long enough to have had numerous succession episodes for each of the two key offices studied. The choice of 1945 as starting date is relatively arbitrary, although for obvious reasons it was a time when many European nations faced a new start to their governments or political systems. In principle, barring the complexities of coding wartime and non-democratic epochs in the various national histories, it would be possible to extend the data gathering effort backwards, so as to gain more observations for the data bank as a whole and for the individual countries in particular. An intermediate option would be to only collect pre 1945 data for a more limited number of countries selected for further study on theoretical grounds at a later stage in the project.

- B. *Established parliamentary Western democracies*, controlling for consensual versus majoritarian systems. The delimitation to established Western democracies is made simply to avoid the problems of including in the data set countries and/or individual episodes where the written and informal rules of the political game diverge from the range of established (western liberal) democratic practices. Hence we seek to eliminate autocratic regime contexts and (pre)revolutionary turmoil situations that contain or generate succession logics and modalities that are highly atypical, and considered highly undesirable, in democratic political systems. Highly transitional democracies, too, are problematic as lack of institutionalisation and remnants of the authoritarian legacy tend to distort the leadership evaluation and succession process, especially within parties that are the successors of the former State bearing party. We have selected countries using the Lijphart inventory of democracies (Lijphart, 1999). The control variables have been chosen to enable structured, focused comparison of the possible impact of institutional (structural, cultural) context features on the course and outcome of succession episodes (George & McKeown, 1985).
- C. *The two major political parties* for each country (e.g. sometimes the party involved is in government, and its leader may or may not be Prime Minister; in those cases party leadership succession may coincide with head of government succession).

Sources

For basic legal and factual data concerning institutional features of the countries selected plus inventory of all the relevant succession cases per country:

- a. Existing comparative politics data banks
- b. National government almanacs and head of government websites
- c. Political party websites
- d. Secondary literature

For succession episode, public opinion, electoral, and actor behaviour data:

- a. Index search in archives of two leading broadsheet newspapers per country
- b. Personal websites of key actors
- c. Memoirs and (auto)biographies of key actors
- d. Secondary literature
- e. Opinion poll surveys
- f. Election surveys

When data gaps remain, direct consultation of key actors or knowledgeable experts can be used. Those variables that frequently generate missing data, and values that do not exist in the material have been removed from the data bank. Intercoder reliability tests will be performed.

QUALITATIVE STUDY

The qualitative study entails an in-depth examination of a more limited number of cases described in the data bank, focused on studying those (aspects of the) research questions that require penetration into the 'black box' of the succession process. The qualitative study will be more fully developed after the quantitative study results have been obtained and analysed, and will be targeted to investigate the most intriguing questions, correlations and ideas that will emerge from that exercise. The case studies will be performed following the focused

comparison method pioneered and developed by Alexander George (1979), with which the authors both have extensive experience from prior work.

COUNTRY AND CASE SELECTION CRITERIA

Country selection criteria

We have used six criteria to identify the countries we study. These are the following:

- a. parliamentary democracies only, since the institutional logic of leadership selection and removal is completely different in presidential democracies;
- b. established, western democracies only to control for degree of institutionalisation and macro-societal culture factors;
- c. availability of distinct duo of 2 major political parties (many multiparty democracies have more fluid party landscapes);
- d. reasonable variation on the consensual-majoritarian dimension
- e. authors' prior country expertise and language skills
- f. quality and quantity of readily available internet data, secondary literature and archival data

This has resulted in the following country selection: United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, Netherlands.

This means that:

- a. It is these four countries that we will concentrate on in the initial stage of the databank construction. With 4 countries, 2 leading parties examined per country and an average of 7 leadership successions per party the study period (1945-present), that makes for 70 cases to be coded. When case coding is completed and intercoder reliability checks have been performed, we shall consider expanding the number of countries/successions covered in the databank depending upon the availability of time and resources.
- b. It is these 4 countries that we shall concentrate upon in the qualitative, in-depth study of a subset of potentially interesting cases (see further below) but we will also include cases of special interest for certain theoretical categories of successions.

Case selection for quantitative study (data bank)

We have coded the entire universe of completed leadership successions in the 2 main parties of each of the 4 countries in the period 1945-present.

I. Netherlands

I.1 Social democrats: 7

I.2 Christian democrats (until 1980 KVP, after 1980 CDA): 9

II. UK

II.1 Labour: 7

II.2 Conservatives: 9

III. Australia

III.1 Labor: 10

III.2 Liberal: 11

IV. Sweden

IV.1 Social democrats: 4

IV.2 Moderates: 8

=> Total universe of cases for databank = 65

Case selection for qualitative study

For the qualitative study, a much more rigorous selection have been made of cases from the available universe in the 4 countries/8 parties we selected. We have followed a 2-step process. First we have narrowed down the range of potentially interesting cases for further study, using the following criteria:

- a. Concentrate upon the not directly electorally induced successions;
- b. Availability of in-depth, reliable data;
- c. Substantive interest, i.e. ability of the case to examine as large as possible a number of research questions (as formulated above); these are also the cases that offer the highest comparative potential.

In sum, these criteria lead us to retain in this first scan a subset of cases that qualify as: a. `thickly described`, b. `substantively rich`, c. `non-electorally induced` succession episodes.

In the second step of the case selection procedure, a first scan of the case evidence in each of the preselected cases have given us a better insight into which ones are ultimately best suited for in-depth study.

In this ultimate selection step, some additional marginal criteria have played a role:

- a. Even spread among the 5 countries/10 parties studied
- b. Maximum number of cases to be studied in depth given researchers' capacities and time budget.
- c. Diachronic potential: i.e. avoid recency or other temporal biases.

A scan of the available documentation suggests that the choice of cases to be selected for in-depth study should be narrowed down to the following (see 'Chapter 5-10 outline' for a comprehensive case distribution – at this point we have not excluded the other cases below).

Figure 1: Selecting cases for in-depth study: preselection scan results

I. The Netherlands

Christian democrats:

- I.1.1 Dismissal of incumbent prime-minister Piet de Jong as party leader in 1971
- I. 1.2 Sudden post-election resignation of incumbent prime minister Dries van Agt, 1982
- I. 1.3 Interpersonal and electoral fiasco of the managed transition from Ruud Lubbers to Elco Brinkman, 1994 followed by the latter's resignation from politics
- I. 1.4 Party-induced replacement of incumbent party leader De Hoop Scheffer and appointment of J-P Balkenende, 2001

Social democrats:

- I.2.1 Party-induced replacement of initially popular party leader Anne Vondeling by former minister Joop den Uyl, 1966
- I.2.2 Successful managed transition of 20-year incumbent party leader and prime minister Joop den Uyl in favor Wim Kok, 1986 after 4-year period of widespread speculation and implicit competition among various `crown princes`

- I.2.3 Electoral fiasco of the managed transition from incumbent prime minister Wim Kok to Ad Melkert, 2002, followed by the latter's resignation from politics and a subsequent change of the party's leadership selection rules in favor of direct member voting

II. UK (partly based on Stark, 1996; Punnett, 1992; Watkins, 2002)

Labour:

- II.1.1 Former prime minister Clement Attlee's voluntary but belated departure, succeeded by Hugh Gaitskell in 1955
- II.1.2 Incumbent opposition leader's Hugh Gaitskell's sudden death and succession by Harold Wilson, 1963
- II.1.3 Incumbent prime minister Harold Wilson's voluntary resignation by shock announcement, succeeded by James Callaghan after struggle in party, 1976
- II.1.4 Incumbent opposition leader John Smith's sudden death in 1994, replaced by Tony Blair

Conservative:

- II.2.1 Voluntary resignation of incumbent prime minister Winston Churchill in the face of increasing pressure from within the party following his deepening incapacity to govern as a result of old age and ill health, succeeded by Anthony Eden, in 1955
- II.2.2 Voluntary resignation of Anthony Eden after Suez crisis foreign policy fiasco, succeeded by Harold MacMillan in 1957 after bitter contest
- II.2.3 Voluntary resignation of incumbent prime minister Harold MacMillan due to ill health, replaced by surprise candidate Alec Douglas Home in 1963
- II.2.4 Intraparty rebellion forcing resignation of incumbent prime minister Margaret Thatcher, succeeded by John Major, in 1990
- II.2.5 Intraparty rebellion forcing resignation of incumbent opposition leader Iain Duncan Smith, in 2003

III. Australia

Labor:

- III.1.1 Death in office of opposition leader Ben Chifley, succeeded by Herbert Evatt, 1951
- III.1.2 Opposition leader Bill Hayden's voluntary decision to step down in the face of mounting intraparty pressure to make way for his successor, Bob Hawke, in 1983
- III.1.3 Intraparty vote inducing replacement of incumbent prime minister Bob Hawke by former finance minister and long-time rival Paul Keating, 1993

Liberal:

- III.2.1 Incumbent prime minister Robert Menzies's voluntary retirement decision, and managed transition to deputy PM Harold Holt, 1966
- III.2.2 Incumbent prime minister's Harold Holt's sudden death in a swimming incident, unleashing power struggle in his cabinet, leading to appointment of caretaker PM John McEwen and subsequent appointment of John Gorton as PM by the Governor General, 1967
- III.2.3 Intraparty vote inducing replacement of incumbent prime minister John Gorton by William McMahon, 1971

IV. Sweden

Labor:

- IV.1.1 Managed transition from long-time prime minister Tage Erlander to Olof Palme, in 1969
- IV.1.2 Assassination of incumbent prime minister Olof Palme, succeeded by Ingvar Carlsson, in 1986

Moderates:

- IV.2.1 Incumbent opposition leader Bohmann's voluntary decision to retire, succeeded by Ulf Adelson, in 1981
- IV.2.2 Internal party decision to replace Ulf Adelson as opposition leader by Carl Bildt, in 1986
- IV.2.3 Incumbent opposition leader and former prime minister Carl Bildt's 'voluntary' decision to step down as party leader, succeeded by Bo Lundgren, in 1999

This first scan leaves us with 27 cases. A way of then moving from this preselection to a more definitive selection is to group the remaining cases in terms of one or several analytically salient categories. Below, this has been done for the variable 'succession trigger', and a preliminary assessment of the variable 'succession success' has been added. When looked at in this way, perhaps a final selection logic emerges that places less emphasis on distributing cases more or less evenly across institutional context variables (country, party), and more emphasis on selecting cases on the bases of theoretically relevant independent (situational context) and/or dependent (succession success) variables. Following the latter logic might imply that some countries/parties will be strongly over-represented in the final sample: whether one deplors that or is indifferent to it is, ultimately, simply a matter of analytical judgment and selective emphasis on some subset of the research questions formulated above as opposed to another.

Figure 2. Towards a definitive case selection

Exit context type:

Probable succession evaluation (in terms of electoral success of successor at first ballot / longevity in office of successor):

A. Voluntary exits:

- Erlander (SW, SD, 1969) – Palme +/+
- Bohmann (SW, MO, 1981) – Adelson -/-
- Bildt (SW, MO), 1999) – Lundgren * -/-
- Van Agt (NL, CD, 1982) – Lubbers ++
- Den Uyl (NL, SD, 1986) – Kok ++
- Lubbers (NL, CD, 1994) – Brinkman -/-
- Kok (NL, SD, 2001) – Melkert -/-
- Menzies (AU, LI, 1966) – Holt n.a. (died before first election)
- Hayden (AU, LA, 1983) – Hawke +/+
- Attlee (UK, LA, 1955) – Gaitskell * +/-
- Wilson (UK, LA, 1976) – Callaghan +/-

* = 'voluntary' exits, i.e. after internal pressure/advice

B. Intraparty rebellion/decision exits:

- De Jong (NL, CD, 1971) – Veringa ??/?
- De Hoop Scheffer (NL, CD, 2001) – Balkenende +/?
- Thatcher (UK, CO, 1990) – Major +/+
- Hawke (AU, LA, 1991) – Keating +/+
- Gorton (AU, LI, 1971) – McMahon ?/?
- Duncan Smith (UK, CO, 2003) – Howard ?/?

C. Scandal/fiasco induced exits:

- Adelson (SW, MO, 1986) – Bildt +/+
- Eden (UK, CO, 1957) – MacMillan +/+

D. Death/disease-induced exits:

- Palme (SW, SD, 1986) – Carlsson +/+
- Gaitskell (UK, LA, 1963) – Wilson +/+
- Smith (UK, LA, 1994) – Blair +/+
- Churchill (UK, CO, 1955) – Eden n.a. (died before first election)
- MacMillan (UK, CO, 1963) – Douglas-Home -/-
- Chifley (AU, LA, 1951) – Evatt ?/?
- Holt (AU, LI, 1967) – McEwen/Gorton ?/?

These issues and choices will be elaborated in the course of the following months, producing what we hope will be methodologically sound and practically feasible case selection. Each case will be summarised and described using the focused comparison method developed by Alexander George (1979).

Variables

Variable name	Values
Name of incumbent?	
Name of successor	
Name of party (incumbent)	Sweden: Social Democrats; Sweden: Moderate; Australia: Labor; Australia: Liberal; Germany: Social Democrats; Germany: Christian Democrats; UK: Conservative; UK: Labour; Netherlands: Social Democrats; Netherlands: Christian Democrats
Party hold national office?	Yes/No
Incumbent hold premiership?	Yes/No
Successor become pm during term	Yes/No
Party join government during term	Yes/No
Mode of exit incumbent	Voluntary: own advice; Voluntary: advice/pressure; Institutionalized end of term; Forced: intraparty decision; Force majeure: incapacitation/death; Other
Year of succession episode	
Date of incumbent departure	
Date of succ assumption of office	
Incumbency length	
Years in office during incumbency	
Months past last election	
Incumbents age at exit	
Successor's age at assuming office	
Maximum number of succession candidates	0; 1; 2; 3; more than 3
Natural death of incumbent?	Yes/No
Death by accident or assassination?	Yes/No
Disease of incumbent a factor?	Yes/No
Old age of incumbent a factor?	Yes/No
Instigation of term limit	Yes/No
Longevity in office	Yes/No
Incumbent lost election	Yes/No
Bad electoral prospects for incumbent	Yes/No
Intraparty rivalry	Yes/No
Mismanaged crisis	Yes/No
Scandal	Yes/No
Predominant nature of trigger	Natural death of incumbent; Death by accident or assassination; Disease of incumbent; Old age of incumbent; Instigation of term limit; Longevity in office; Incumbent lost election; Bad electoral prospects for incumbent; Intraparty rivalry; Mismanaged crisis; Scandal
Early pre-succession posture incumbent	Denial of succession context; Resistance; Adaptation; Acquiescence; Management; Surprise; Other

Late pre-succession posture incumbent	Denial of succession context; Resistance; Adaptation; Acquiescence; Management; Surprise; Other
Attitude of former leader next election	Critical; Neutral; Supportive; Unknown
Continued leadership aspirations	Yes/No
Continued national political activities	Yes/No
Most recent election results	
Difference of results penultimate election, most recent	
Party win government?	Yes/No
Post-succession election results	
Difference between elections pre/post	
Party win government ps?	Yes/No
Duration of incumbent's tenure (months)	<6; 6-24; 25-48; 49-96; >96
Duration of sucesor's tenure (months)	<6; 6-24; 25-48; 49-96; >96
Clear succession regime in place?	Yes/No
Succession regime applied?	Yes/No
Importance of succession regime	Symbolic; Unknown; Substantive
Decisional forum for exit	Incumbent: own initiative; Incumbent: after pressure; Informal group including incumbent; Informal group not including incumbent; Formal vote: elite group; Formal vote: rank and file party members; Formal vote: national electorate; Institutionalized choice, legal obligation; Other
Decisional forum for successor	Incumbent: own initiative; Incumbent: after pressure; Informal group including incumbent; Informal group not including incumbent; Formal vote: elite group; Formal vote: rank and file party members; Formal vote: national electorate; Institutionalized choice, legal obligation; Other
Status of decision by forum	Codification of informal arrangement; Unknown; Substantive, tie-breaking decision
Country	
Electoral system	
Country executive/legislative system	
Number of parliamentary parties	
Government structure at time	
Number of leadership turnovers	
Number of years	
Average tenure length	
Standard deviation for variable 5	
Coder identification	
Date of Coding	

Coded Successions

Incumbent	Successor	Year
Sweden: Social democrats		
Hansson, Per Albin	Erlander, Tage	1946
Erlander, Tage	Palme, Olof	1969
Palme, Olof	Carlson, Ingvar	1986
Carlson, Ingvar	Persson, Göran	1996
Sweden: Moderates		
Domö, Fritiof	Hjalmarsson, Jarl	1950
Hjalmarsson, Jarl	Heckscher, Gunnar	1961
Heckscher, Gunnar	Holmberg, Yngve	1965
Holmberg, Yngve	Bohman, Gösta	1970
Bohman, Gösta	Adelsohn, Ulf	1981
Adelsohn, Ulf	Bildt, Carl	1986
Bildt, Carl	Lundgren, Bo	1999
Lundgren, Bo	Reinfeldt, Fredrik	2003
UK: Labour		
Attlee, Clement	Gaitskell, Hugh	1955
Gaitskell, Hugh	Wilson, Harold	1963
Wilson, Harold	Callaghan, James	1976
Callaghan, James	Foot, Michael	1980
Foot, Michael	Kinnock, Neil	1983
Kinnock, Neil	Smith, John	1992
Smith, John	Blair, Tony	1994
UK: Conservatives		
Churchill, Winston	Eden, Anthony	1955
Eden, Anthony	MacMillan, Harold	1957
MacMillan, Harold	Douglas-Home, Alec	1963
Douglas-Home, Alec	Heath, Edward	1965
Heath, Edward	Thatcher, Margret	1975
Thatcher, Margret	Major, John	1990
Major, John	Hague, William	1997
Hague, William	Duncan-Smith, Iain	2001
Duncan-Smith, Iain	Howard, Michael	2003
Australia: Labour		
Curtin, John	Chifley, Ben	1945
Chifley, Ben	Evatt, Herbert	1951
Evatt, Herbert	Calwell, Arthur	1960
Calwell, Arthur	Whitlam, Gough	1967
Whitlam, Gough	Hayden, William	1977
Hayden, William	Hawke, Robert	1983
Hawke, Robert	Keating, Paul	1991

Keating, Paul	Beazley, Kim	1996
Beazley, Kim	Crean, Simon	2001
Crean, Simon	Latham, Mark	2003
Australia: Liberal		
Menzies, Robert Gordon	Holt, Harold	1966
Holt, Harold	Gorton, John	1967
Gorton, John	McMahon, William	1971
McMahon, William	Snedden, Billy	1972
Snedden, Billy	Fraser, Malcolm	1975
Fraser, Malcolm	Peacock, Andrew	1983
Peacock, Andrew	Howard, John	1985
Howard, John	Peacock, Andrew	1989
Peacock, Andrew	Hewson, John	1990
Hewson, John	Downer, Alexander	1994
Downer, Alexander	Howard, John	1995
The Netherlands: Christian democrats		
Romme, Carl	de Kort, Wim	1961
de Kort, Wim	Schmelzer, Norbert	1963
Schmelzer, Norbert	Veringa, Gerard	1971
Veringa, Gerard	Andriessen, Frans	1971
van Agt, Dries	Lubbers, Ruud	1982
Lubbers, Ruud	Brinkman, Elco	1994
Brinkman, Elco	Heerma, Enneus	1994
Heerma, Enneus	de Hoop Scheffer, Jaap	1997
de Hoop Scheffer, Jaap	Balkenende, Jan Pieter	2001
The Netherlands: Social democrats		
Drees, Willem	Burger, Jaap	1958
Burger, Jaap	Vondeling, Anne	1962
Vondeling, Anne	den Uyl, Joop	1966
den Uyl, Joop	Kok, Wim	1986
Kok, Wim	Melkert, Ad	2001
Melkert, Ad	van Nieuwenhoven, Jeltje	2002
van Nieuwenhoven, Jeltje	Bos, Wouter	2002

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