

## RESEARCH NOTE

THE ADOPTION OF MEMBERSHIP  
VOTES FOR CHOOSING PARTY LEADERS

The Experience of Canadian Parties

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## ABSTRACT

This research note uses the Canadian case to explore the growing phenomenon of universal membership ballots of party members being used to choose party leaders. The special leadership selection conventions long used in Canada are rapidly giving way to processes in which all members are given a vote. After elaborating a typology by which we might conceptualize distinct every-member vote mechanisms, the note examines four cases to illustrate the typology's utility in assessing the comparative impact of different systems on party growth and membership participation.

KEY WORDS ■ Canadian parties ■ leadership selection ■ party democracy ■ party members

In an overview of changing party organizations in western democracies Peter Mair (1994: 15) observes a trend towards the 'enhanced democratization' of parties which finds them 'empowering rather than marginalizing' their members by giving them 'more say rather than less say'. This development has spilled into some of the most important sites of internal party decision-making so that 'more and more now seem willing to allow the ordinary members a voice in the selection of party leaders'. This development challenges us to reconsider old notions of internal party democracy and the role members play in such critical internal party decisions-making as the selection of a new leader.

Though democratizing leadership selection has hardly become universal, it has occurred in a variety of different parties and political systems. Bille (1994: 143) and Sundberg (1994: 170) indicate a growing influence of party members in Denmark and Finland, respectively. In a number of other cases that include the British Liberal, Social Democratic (and now Liberal Democratic) parties (Punnett, 1992), the Irish Labour party (Farrell, 1994: 232), the Australian Democrats (Ward, 1997), Israel's Labor and Likud parties, and several Belgian parties (Deschouwer, 1994: 93), individual party members have been given a vote as part of the process of choosing a new leader. Perhaps nowhere has this new development been as enthusiastically embraced as in Canada, where most parties have now adopted the principle of every-member leadership votes.

In this research note we use the Canadian experience to explore this new institutional development. There has been a good deal of experimentation with every-member leadership votes by a fairly large number of Canadian (provincial) parties<sup>1</sup> (Cross, 1996) and, on the basis of their experience, we identify two key dimensions of variation and suggest a typology that might be applied in further research on this subject. In the second section, we use this typology as a framework for an initial exploration of the extent to which different types of selection processes have an effect on opening up the party to membership growth and enhanced participation.

### Every-member Leadership Votes

Canadian parties have long involved regular members in the selection of their leaders. In the years after the first world war they adopted delegate conventions to choose leaders with the delegates being chosen by local partisans at constituency association meetings. This was done to ensure leaders were representative of all party interests, for the plurality electoral system was producing regionally unbalanced parliamentary caucuses which could not be relied on to choose a widely acceptable leader in a country where geography outweighed history. Conventions were also portrayed as more democratic in a period when the adoption of universal suffrage appeared to mark the arrival of more participatory politics. In recent decades, leadership contests in Canadian parties have often spilled beyond the bounds of the party organization as candidates have worked to mobilize large numbers of new members in an attempt to capture the leadership and reshape the party in their own image (Blake et al., 1996). The excesses of many of these campaigns undermined support for the traditional convention process (Perlin, 1991a).

Growing criticism of the parties' leadership politics turned on two, inter-related, dimensions of the process (Perlin, 1991b: 60–5). First, there was a widespread belief among party members, stimulated in part by adverse media coverage, that the pre-convention delegate selection process is subject to too many abuses. Plural voting, instant members, the mobilization of

groups with questionable party ties, the establishment of phoney party units, and high-pressure tactics of all sorts had become regular features of serious leadership campaigns. The second problem was the money this process consumed. The need to raise and spend millions of dollars to wage a competitive national party leadership campaign began to keep good candidates out of the contests; and campaign costs averaging thousands of dollars per delegate vote threatened to corrupt the parties and their central democratic processes. As a result the convention selection process lost its capacity to legitimate new leadership and the parties' own local organizational elites, who had been at the centre of much of this activity, came to believe it had to be changed (Carty, 1991: 132–3).

Several decades of mobilizing activists in internal party contests, often in the name of party democracy, suggested that a reformed process would necessarily be a participatory one in which all party members would have a direct vote for a new leader. The impetus to transform party leadership politics in this fashion was given a considerable boost when the Parti québécois suddenly decided to experiment with just such a system in the mid-1980s, and it was subsequently reinforced by a number of similar exercises (Latouche, 1992; Woolstencroft, 1992; Blake and Carty, 1994). Despite a growing acceptance of the idea of every-member votes for leadership selection, there is little consensus on how such systems ought to be organized and operated and there has been considerable variety in the processes used to date (Cross, 1996). However, beyond the fine details, we can discern two important dimensions on which these leadership selection processes have varied. Taken together they define a framework governing the place of party members in internal party decision-making.

The first dimension is openness. It identifies how open the party is to full participation by its members, and perhaps even to supporters and other members of the political community. It requires a party to define what, if any, restrictions will be placed on those entitled to participate. Canadian parties have adopted increasingly inclusive notions of membership as leadership and local nomination contestants have worked to open those contests to as many of their supporters as possible. This has led to the phenomenon of 'instant members' which sees individuals recruited into the party solely for the purpose of voting at a candidate or delegate selection meeting (Carty, 1988). While parties are loath to increase the power of such members, they are equally afraid of appearing to discourage any who seek to participate. Their dilemma is how far to take the principle of inclusiveness. What restrictions on participation in their internal affairs do parties want to impose? These are difficult issues in practice (as well as principle) for Canadian parties' memberships typically rise and fall with the electoral cycle (Carty, 1996: 192–4) so that it is often difficult to distinguish between activists, members, supporters or even just interested citizens.

The second dimension relates to the problem of recognizing, and preserving, distinct organizational interests in the party. Most parties have

significant groups or units that want to have a distinctive role in party decision-making, especially in something as important as choosing a leader. In the Canadian case the most obvious are the local constituency associations which are responsible for nominating candidates and contesting elections, and which have long had the right to send delegates to party conventions. Those organizational units are suspicious of a system that ignores their individual interests or allows them to be overridden by a majority vote. The party must choose between processes that provide for majoritarianism versus those that somehow mediate between a raw popular vote and the final decision. Electoral systems typically provide for such mediation, with the number of seats rather than votes determining electoral winners. Taken together, these two dimensions suggest a very simple four-fold typology for considering party members' participation in the decision-making processes of political parties. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

The first type of every-member vote process combines limits on participation with some form of mediation between the vote and the decision: it might best be described as an indirect party vote. Participation limits can be of any sort, though in Canada they have typically involved requiring those voting to have been members for some time (though rarely longer than a month), but they can also include financial barriers in the form of extra fees. Votes are mediated by being weighted in some way, for example with the results in each constituency association counted equally so that electoral districts with large party memberships cannot overwhelm areas where party membership is sparse.<sup>2</sup> For parties in single-member plurality electoral regimes, the advantage of this type of decision-making is that it mimics the logic of the electoral system and so helps balance its diverse electoral interests. For those committed to every-member voting the objection to such mediated, indirect vote systems is precisely that they are mediated and some other factor is deliberately inserted between the individual members' voted preferences and the outcome. This is the type of system the British Liberals first used in 1976 (Punnett, 1992: 137–8) and, working through a highly mediating electoral college, that the British Labour Party now uses (Punnett, 1992: 105–29).

The second type of every-member decision-making removes the constraint of a mediation rule and provides for decisions to be taken by a simple direct party vote of all the members. Beyond temporal membership restrictions,

	Mediated	Unmediated
Restricted participation	I Indirect party vote	II Direct party vote
Unrestricted participation	III Structured primary	IV Open primary

Figure 1. Membership participation in internal party decision-making

participation in these indirect vote arrangements is often limited by the peculiarities of the system adopted. Parties using traditional ballot boxes may require members to take time to travel to a voting site, while others using mail or new technologies such as 'televoting' may require members to pre-register and bear some of the costs of the vote (Blake and Carty, 1994; Cross, 1996). Whatever the limitations on participation, the obvious attraction of these systems is the direct and transparent relationship between party members' preferences and the choice of their new leader. Thus it is perhaps not surprising that this type appears to have been most widely used, with variants having been adopted by the British Social and Liberal Democrats, the Australian Democrats, and Israel's two major parties, Labor and Likud.

The third type of party decision-making is akin to a structured primary. In it a party would provide for universal accessibility to any who wished to participate but modify the popular result by some structuring of the vote. If a political party were to define inclusiveness this broadly, one might expect the structured primary to be a framework of choice, for it is precisely this combination that governs the holding of general elections in systems with territorially defined electoral districts.

The final type of party decision-making process can best be described as an open primary, not too unlike those provided by some American states to name party candidates. In this type of arrangement there is no significant limit on participation and the candidate who wins a majority of the votes cast becomes the party leader. Though democratic populist rhetoric might be used to justify such a process, it seems clear that party elites and activists have the least control in such a system while party membership becomes little more than a nominal concept. Given that both type-III and type-IV models would be more congruent with American notions of party than those in most western parliamentary democracies, one would expect to see few, if any, parties adopt such leadership selection processes.

The delegate conventions used to select Canadian party leaders over most of this century can be seen as a weak version of type-I decision-making. All individual party members had a vote but it was doubly mediated, once by the principle of equal representation for all electoral districts and once by the personal decisions of the electoral district's delegates who cast a secret ballot at the leadership convention itself.<sup>3</sup> In their piecemeal abandonment of this common process in search of a more transparent every-member vote selection process, Canadian parties have not settled on any one model but have experimented with three of the four possible types.

Type-I processes involve the least change from the familiar delegate convention method, and for those uncertain of change it is even possible to marry an indirect party vote to a traditional convention (with instructed delegates free to vote a personal choice on a second or subsequent ballot). The Ontario Liberal Party has now twice used such a compromise system and the national Liberal Party plans to use it to replace their current leader (and prime minister) when the time comes. Of all the parties that have moved to

an every-member vote to choose a new party leader, only the Ontario Conservatives have adopted a type-I process. That it should be the major parties in the largest and most diverse of the provinces that have felt the need to mediate their every-member vote suggests that they still believe that such direct majority rule selection processes sit uneasily with the organizational and political realities of single-member electoral systems.

The most popular of the new leadership selection processes have been type-II systems in which the party maintains control over who may participate but then accepts a majoritarian outcome. About a dozen different parties have used such systems in the 1990s though few have used identical mechanisms. There have been experiments using local, regional and centralized polling places as well as with mail-in and telephone (both computerized and operator-assisted) voting. Though some parties have been strongly divided over reforming their processes, and while several of the contests have been beset with troubles to the extent of actually breaking down during the balloting process, no party that has adopted a direct party vote has gone back to a delegate convention in a subsequent leadership selection.

For all their congruence with the electoral system, parties would gain little in adopting a type-III system for they would lose control of who participates in their internal decision-making without gaining the legitimacy that might be conferred on a new leader by a direct popular vote. It is not surprising, then, that no Canadian political party has replaced their leadership selection process with such a system. By contrast, Alberta's governing Conservatives adopted an open primary (type IV) to choose a new leader (and provincial premier) in 1992. Any Albertan who wished to participate could easily do so by showing up at local party polling place.<sup>4</sup> So permeable was the process that some 25,000 individuals actually joined the party in the week between its two ballots in order to participate in the final run-off vote (Stewart, 1994). The party believed that maximizing participation in its 'premier primary' was the surest route to legitimating its new leadership and so was prepared to completely dilute the responsibilities and privileges of membership to achieve it. Alberta has long been the heartland of populist politics in Canada, which perhaps accounts for why one of its parties was the first to make the most radical change in its leadership selection processes.

### **Party Growth and Membership Participation**

That more than a dozen parties from all parts of the Canadian political spectrum have adopted some form of every-member vote process in the past decade testifies to a remarkably rapid acceptance of the idea that party leadership is to be legitimated in this way. That no two parties have organized their contests in quite the same fashion suggests that this consensus on the every-member principle has yet to be translated into any widely shared operating norm.<sup>5</sup> In good part this is because the parties, while they are

concerned to stimulate membership growth and increase participation, have little sense of the consequences of using these different types of systems. In this note we review the experience of four parties to begin an assessment of the differences, if any, among the types we have identified.

Of course, party leaderships are not all equally desirable. Some carry with them the immediate prize of government leadership. When a party is in office, leadership contests are likely to be both higher profile and more vigorously fought. Given the experimental cast to every-member vote systems, it is perhaps not too surprising that they have been more widely adopted by opposition parties, but several governing parties have used such systems, including the Parti québécois, which was the first party to do so (Latouche, 1992).

Of the eight possible instances (our four types in each of governing and opposition contexts) only four have yet occurred. Data from cases illustrating each of these four situations are available and allow a preliminary comparative analysis.<sup>6</sup> These cases (Table 1) come from the country's four most populous provinces and involve parties with diverse social bases and political perspectives. Though no one party can be said to be perfectly representative of all Canadian parties, the experiences of these four reveal something of the workings of the new leadership politics. All were using an every-member vote for the first time and all four leaderships were contested.

In recent decades, leadership contests in Canada have been associated with party growth. Indeed parties have seen these contests as ideal opportunities to reactivate the interests, energies and often memberships of partisans who have let their organizational ties lapse or to mobilize new groups into the party. Though leadership selection processes define the incentives and set the rules governing membership recruitment activity, candidate self-interest drives party growth, for it is the campaigns of competing candidates that mobilize supporters and bring them into the party. As a consequence, highly competitive contests typically see more signing-up of new members; those in which the outcome is in little doubt generate less growth. It has been candidates playing the mobilization game to their (not necessarily their party's) advantage that has contributed to the growing abandonment of

Table 1. Four every-member vote leadership selection cases

Type	<i>I. Indirect party vote</i>	<i>II. Direct party vote</i>	<i>III. Structured primary</i>	<i>IV. Open primary</i>
Governing	–	Parti québécois (1985)	–	Alberta Conservatives (1992)
Opposition	Ontario Conservatives (1990)	BC Liberals (1993)	–	–

conventions as suitable leadership selection devices. But in doing so parties are concerned that any system that replaces them does not imperil their membership recruitment functions. Thus every-member vote processes are subject to two tests – increasing party numbers as well as increasing the numbers of members casting a leadership ballot.

The size of Canadian party memberships varies greatly, depending on the size of the electorate, the competitive position of the party, the point in the electoral cycle, and a party's own unique history. To assess the impact of leadership contests on party growth it is necessary to examine the absolute growth in numbers of individuals recruited and participating (the crucial figure as far as the competing politicians are concerned). For comparative purposes we also need to measure these values in terms of the size of the electorate that the parties face.

Table 2 provides party membership data for the four parties over the course of their leadership contests. It includes three different measures of membership size. The first is the number of members at the time the leadership contest started, the second is the number of members on the books at the time of the leadership vote, and the third is the number of members who actually took part in the leadership vote.<sup>7</sup> It also provides a comparative measure of the relative size of these parties by reporting what proportion of the respective provincial electorates these members represented.

These figures confirm a commonplace about Canadian parties that reflects their largely cadre-style electoral orientation; namely that governing parties typically have larger memberships than do parties in opposition. That said, the membership figures for all the parties, especially in the non-leadership campaign period (the start columns in Table 2), are very low. Even by the comparatively low membership levels of national parties in Canada,<sup>8</sup> these provincial parties have few members. The strongest of them, Alberta's governing Conservatives, had only 1.4 percent of the electorate as members.

By the end of the leadership contests the two governing parties were considerably larger, evidence that the premiership was a valuable prize that had given contestants an incentive to mobilize large numbers of supporters. It also appears that the type of leadership contest had some impact on a party's final size. The Ontario Conservatives, who had used an indirect party vote

Table 2. Party membership in every-member vote contests

<i>Type</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Party membership size</i>			<i>Members/electorate (%)</i>		
		<i>Start</i>	<i>Final</i>	<i>Voting</i>	<i>Start</i>	<i>Final</i>	<i>Voting</i>
I (O)	Ontario Conservatives	10,000	33,188	15,853	0.16	0.53	0.25
II (O)	BC Liberals	3,648	13,466	6,540	0.19	0.69	0.33
II (G)	Parti québécois	55,198	152,170	97,389	1.16	3.21	2.10
IV (G)	Alberta Conservatives	22,500	104,894	78,251	1.44	6.73	5.00

process, ended up with just 0.5 percent of the electorate as members, while at the other extreme the Alberta Conservatives, who had adopted an open primary system, finally counted 6.7 percent of the electorate as members.

As we noted, the first test for Canadian parties of a successful leadership contest is not the absolute size of the participating membership but the growth stimulated by it. There are two ways to measure this. The first is a simple calculation of the percentage increase in the membership from the start of the contest to the closing of the membership roles for the vote. That figure is inevitably misleading, however, for in their campaigns leadership contestants will sign-up almost anyone willing to allow their name to be put to paper. It turns out that many individuals do so because they are too polite to say no, feel peer-pressured when asked (often in group settings), or have only the most marginal commitment to political activity. When the leadership election vote arrives, these individuals, who ostensibly joined in order to participate in that vote, simply do not participate. In an important sense, then, they can hardly be said to have joined. Thus we might estimate the real growth of the party as the difference between its membership at the start of the contest and the number actually voting in the contest. Table 3 compares the four parties in terms of both the formal and the real growth in membership.

In terms of the formal growth in their memberships, all the parties saw marked jumps – from a low of 176 percent in the Parti québécois to a high of 365 percent in the Alberta Conservatives. Considering that this change occurred in a relatively short period (only a few months), it is clear that these contests do stimulate considerable mobilization activity. However, with the exception of the open primary system of the Alberta Conservatives, there was not much difference among the four cases. The Parti québécois actually had a smaller membership growth rate than did either the British Columbia Liberals or the Ontario Conservatives, despite the fact it was in power and had a more accessible and transparent process than did either of those two parties.<sup>9</sup>

The patterns of real membership growth are rather more as might be expected. The Ontario Conservatives, using an indirect party vote designed to mediate the results of the raw popular vote totals, attracted the smallest membership growth of any of these four parties. At the other end of the

Table 3. Membership growth and leadership vote participation

<i>Type</i>		<i>Formal growth</i> (%)	<i>Real growth</i> (%)	<i>Participation</i> (%)
I (O)	Ontario Conservatives	232	58	48
II (O)	BC Liberals	265	78	49
II (G)	Parti québécois	176	76	64
IV (G)	Alberta Conservatives	365	248	75

continuum stands the open primary system of the Alberta Conservatives. Its real leadership contest growth was more than three times that of any of the other cases, including the Parti québécois, also in office. This rough comparison suggests that the expected value of winning the leadership may not be as great a spur to party membership growth as the openness to direct and easy participation offered by the selection process itself. This point, and the whole distinction between formal and real membership we have used here, leads us to consider the question of participation in these leadership votes.

Allowing, even stimulating, greater direct participation by all party members in one of a party's most important internal decisions provided the rationale for shifting from delegate conventions to every-member vote systems. Partisans argue that the latter are simply more democratic. Beyond that, participation is expected to stimulate interest in the party and its activity in the short term while, over the longer term, building solidarity and increasing the new leaders' legitimacy. Though we have no systematic data indicating how many party members participated in the autonomous, local delegate selection contests that preceded conventions,<sup>10</sup> the figures in Table 3 do allow us to compare our four every-member vote cases.

The participation rates in the leadership votes of the four parties implies that there is a relationship between the openness and transparency of the differing types of leadership selection and the participation rate as measured by the proportion of (formal) party members casting a ballot. The indirect party vote of the Ontario Conservatives had the lowest turnout (48 percent), the open primary of their Alberta cousins had the highest (76 percent). As between the two parties using a direct party vote, turnout was higher in the governing Parti québécois than it was in British Columbia's opposition Liberals. Of the BC Liberals, 57 percent actually preregistered to vote (by telephone) but then only 49 percent of them did so, confirming that a two-step process is more costly (less open) to individual party members and so reduces turnout.

The overall popular, as opposed to simply partisan, participation rate reflects both the openness of a leadership selection system to the involvement of any interested citizen and the rate at which those who signal an interest (by joining the party) then actually take the opportunity to cast a vote. By this very inclusive notion of participation in party leadership selection, there are significant differences amongst the four parties being considered here (see the last column of Table 2). In the most participatory case, 5 percent of the Alberta electorate participated in the choice of a new Conservative party leader (and provincial premier) while, in the contest invoking the least participation, just 0.25 percent of the Ontario electorate voted for the new Conservative leader in that province. Though mass involvement rates were much greater in the two cases where a new provincial premier was effectively also being chosen, none of these are high figures.

These new party leadership selection processes have yet to sweep in a revolution in participatory leadership politics. Whatever their form, direct

leadership votes in Canadian parties have yet to mimic the mass politics of American primary contests. Modest turnout rates among members for a leadership vote suggests many members of Canadian parties have only the most minimal commitments to their party. It is a reminder that much of the (formal) membership growth may be relatively artificial, the product of the determined efforts of candidates' leadership campaigns to sign-up new members. In some cases these leadership campaign members soon melt away. It is also true, however, that parties can use leadership contests as springboards to continuing membership growth. The BC Liberals continued to recruit members and by 1996 had grown their membership by another 600 percent to reach 100,000.

### Conclusion

Canadian parties' rush to embrace every-member vote leadership selection processes appears to mark as fundamental a transformation in their internal life as did the adoption of delegate conventions earlier in this century. Unlike that change, however, there is no obvious consensus across or within the parties on what this new institution should look like. The result has been a good deal of variety as individual parties have experimented with three distinct types of leadership elections with differing results. The variety of mechanisms used reflects differences in the values and priorities held by individual parties with respect to issues of inclusiveness and transparency.

The typology we have proposed focuses on these two dimensions and stimulates comparison across them. That said, it is striking that the majority of parties, in Canada and in a growing number of other political systems, to have adopted every-member leadership votes have used type-II (direct party vote) processes. The smaller number of parties that have succumbed to the concept but have feared making a full commitment (e.g. British Labour or the Ontario Conservatives) have settled for type-I (indirect party vote) mechanisms. Only the Alberta Conservatives appear to have taken the decisive step towards complete inclusiveness by opening participation to all citizens in a primary like contest (type IV). In doing so they have transformed the notion of party membership and moved towards American-style party organizational forms.

The next stage in research on every-member votes might well be to begin to map variations within each of the distinctive types in order to discover what leads particular parties to adopt particular systems and with what consequence. Clearly these developments put the patterns of leader-party relationships in western democracies in flux. They in turn open a series of important questions central to issues of party democracy. After all, it is one thing to use every-member votes to choose new leaders but perhaps another to use them to remove leaders who have overstayed their welcome. Will the membership now have regular opportunities to review the leadership? Will

the processes for selecting and removing leaders be symmetrical? If not, how will the parties deal with the inevitable conflicts that arise when there are different constituencies in the party responsible for those two tasks? Until the parties find acceptable answers to these questions they are going to be especially vulnerable to internal conflict. Members who are invited to vote for a leader may soon demand to vote on a good number of other things as well.

## Notes

- 1 Provincial parties in Canada are organizationally distinct from their national counterparts and other provincial parties of the same name. As a result they are free to select leaders as they choose and practices vary from one party to the next, both across parties and within provinces.
- 2 In most internal party decision-making a majority decision rule is in effect (though constitutional changes may require extraordinary majorities) necessitating the use of either preferential or sequential ballots if more than two options or candidates are present. This is true no matter which of the four types of decision-making regimes described here is used.
- 3 Besides being doubly mediated, members' votes were diluted by the considerable number of ex-officio delegates present at the conventions. The numbers of such delegates varied from 20 to 45% of all voting delegates and they appear to have voted in significantly different ways than elected constituency delegates (Stewart, 1992: 74–6).
- 4 Individuals formally joined the party but anyone could do so at the time of voting, making the very modest membership fee little more than a party poll tax.
- 5 By contrast, when party conventions were adopted for leadership selections a common basic pattern was quickly set. The difference may be that leadership selection conventions were pioneered by national parties and then emulated in the provinces, whereas every-member votes have been pioneered by provincial parties whose experiences and are not always widely observed or understood by partisans in other parts of the country.
- 6 The principal sources of data are as follows. PQ: Latouche (1992); Alberta Conservatives: Stewart (1993, 1994); Ontario Conservatives: Woolstencroft (1992); BC Liberals: Blake and Carty (1994). This material was supplemented by private inquiries of party officials and academic observers.
- 7 In the case of the Ontario and Alberta Conservatives these are the best estimates of informed party observers and officials. With memberships being kept by local associations, neither party had a full and accurate central membership list.
- 8 For a comparison of Canadian parties' membership levels with those in other countries see Carty (1991: ch. 3). Note that the provincial parties considered here are all organizationally separate and distinct from national parties, even those of the same name. While some individuals may belong to both provincial and national parties, there is a good deal of competition between the organizations for the attention and energies of activists.
- 9 As Latouche (1992: 182) notes, the PQ failed to meet even its own new membership targets, though given that theirs was the first every-member leadership

selection process, few (in the party or out) really knew what to expect of it. The PQ process was more accessible than the BC Liberal one for the latter required new members to go through an additional step of registering for a televote after joining but some weeks in advance of the actual balloting.

- 10 Local party associations held their own meetings and there is no comprehensive record of participation in them. For some estimates of numbers involved in delegate selection contests preceding two national party leadership selection conventions in the mid-1980s see Carty (1988). That evidence suggests enormous variation depending on the nature of the local contest to choose delegates. Unpublished survey evidence suggests that the numbers may have been quite different in the national leadership contests of the 1990s.

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