From Party Leader to Prime Minister?
Gender and Leadership Contests in West Europe

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the pattern of women’s success in becoming leaders of major parties in West Europe, as a conventional step to becoming prime ministers. Research on female prime ministers has focused on sitting prime ministers, their individual credentials, and the types of political systems in which they are most likely to emerge (Jalalzai 2013; Murray 2010), but there are few studies of party leadership contests involving women (Beckwith 2010) or of patterns of women’s access to party leader (O’Brien 2013). In a cross-national study of party leaders of 37 parties in 10 parliamentary democracies, O’Brien (2013) found that female party leaders are increasing in number but still relatively rare; moreover, women have been most likely to ascend to party leadership in parties where the position has relatively little power. This paper focuses on party leadership contests where women contest for leadership and where no women are contenders, and investigates the conditions under which women are likely to compete or defer standing for leadership. Four factors are examined to identify propitious and hostile conditions for female leadership: 1) party ideology receptive to women, 2) rules of leader competition and selection, 3) party leader eligibility pools, and 4) low-competition opportunity structures. The paper traces party leadership selection procedures for major parties in three countries: for Britain, the Conservative and Labour Parties; for Germany, the Christian Democratic Union and Social Democratic Party; and for Spain, the Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) and the Partido Popular. The paper examines the impact of (and changes in) party leader selection processes on women’s party leadership opportunities, within countries across parties and within parties of left and right across countries. The paper concludes with an analysis of women’s party leadership opportunities and contest outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Gender, Party Leaders, Political Leadership, Women and Political Executives, Party Leadership Challenge, Low-Competition Opening

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Introduction

Given that most national executives have been men, it is a commonplace to observe that access to executive power is gendered. Institutional arrangements, both formal and informal, intersect with gendered power arrangements to shape women’s chances for executive political power. For women in West European countries, and in parliamentary political systems generally, the Prime Minister is the formal position of the national executive, and hence how women become prime minister is likely to be a gendered process. A party’s access to the prime ministership is generally through the mechanism of winning a parliamentary election, with the result that the party’s Leader is invited to form a government, of which the Leader is Prime Minister. If the process of women’s access to Prime Ministerships is gendered, the initial starting point for examining that process is at the level of Party Leader.

This paper investigates the pattern of women’s success in becoming leaders of major parties in West Europe, as a first, often necessary, step toward women becoming prime ministers. Research on female prime ministers has focused on sitting prime ministers, their individual credentials, and the types of political systems in which they are most likely to emerge (Jalalzai 2013; Murray 2010), but there are few studies of party leadership contests involving women (Beckwith 2010) or of patterns of women’s access to party leader (O’Brien 2013). In a cross-national study of party leaders of 37 parties in 10 parliamentary democracies, O’Brien (2013) found that female party leaders are increasing in number but still relatively rare; moreover, women have been most likely to ascend to party leadership in parties where the position has relatively little power.

Focusing on party leadership outcomes in major parties of government and opposition in three European countries, this paper investigates the conditions under which women are likely to emerge as party leaders. Four factors are examined to identify propitious and hostile conditions for female leadership: 1) party ideology receptive to women, 2) rules of leader competition and selection, 3) party leader eligibility pools by party by country, to identify the availability of leader-eligible men and women, and 4) low-competition opportunity structures. The paper traces party leadership selection procedures for major parties in three countries: for Britain, the Conservative and Labour Parties; for Germany, the Christian Democratic Union and Social Democratic Party; and for Spain, the Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) and the Partido Popular. The paper examines the impact of (and changes in) party leader selection processes on women’s party leadership opportunities, within countries across parties and within parties of left and right across countries. The paper concludes with an analysis of women’s party leadership opportunities and leadership outcomes.

2 In this paper, I identify eligibility pools as the number and percentage of women in parliament by party, and in cabinet, by party. In a more developed but unpublished manuscript, I operationalize eligibility at the individual level, where men and women, within party, are identified as eligible for party leader if: 1) they have served in parliament for ten years or more, and 2) if they have held a cabinet or shadow cabinet post (Beckwith 2010).
Distinctive Nature of Prime Ministerships and Opportunities for Women

In principle, the path to Prime Minister is the path to Party Leader. In cases where the party is in opposition, the party leader, once chosen, selects a Shadow Cabinet; makes internal party appointments; prepares to lead the party into the next parliamentary elections; and, if successful, governs. In cases where the party is already in power, the party leader, as Prime Minister, leads the government as *primus inter pares*. Party leadership contests are the prelude to women’s access to prime ministerships, and the structures of such contests shape the extent to which party leadership competition is gendered. Party leadership selection rules differ from electoral system rules, and hence specific consideration of selection rules and their impact upon women’s leadership opportunities may require a different analytical logic than, for example, women’s access to parliamentary candidacies.

Although party leader is an individual position, party leaders head a party team. Prime ministerships in cabinet governments involve a power-sharing arrangement of government. The Party Leader shares power with those who chose her, both in terms of leading the Parliamentary party, but also in terms of bringing into her cabinet (or shadow cabinet) those who supported her bid for Party Leader. In a power-sharing arrangement, although only one person can be Prime Minister, not all power accrues to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is selected in an intra-party contest, involving negotiation, explicit support, and strategic voting. As a result, in the process of choosing the Party Leader, possibilities (and actual positions) are anticipated in terms of explicit powers and positions to be allocated among multiple actors. Under such conditions, women are more likely to be considered and selected as party leader in a selection process that involves power-sharing than in other selection processes, and hence positioned in a process that can lead to the Prime Ministership.

Prime ministerships, located in parliamentary and cabinet governments, are also located in power-removing arrangements. “[U]npopular prime ministers can be replaced without destabilizing the whole administration through the impeachment process or through calling fresh elections;” cabinet government arrangements “[facilitate] leadership turnover” (Norris 2008: 34-35). Cabinet governments involve two points of potential removal. First, a party leader can be challenged internally in a leadership contest, and, if the challenge succeeds, replaced by a new party leader. There are risks attendant to such a challenge, however: bringing down the party leader (and perhaps Prime Minister) can also mean that those currently in the cabinet may be replaced as a new leader comes into power. Second, a prime minister can be removed as the result of a failed confidence vote

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3 Party leaders do not always become Prime Minister. For example, Sonia Gandhi led the Congress Party into electoral victory in India in 2004 (having been party president since 1998), but declined to serve as Prime Minister, and hence Manmohan Singh was chosen in her place. Gandhi continues as Congress Party leader.

4 Power-sharing can include members of the same party (e.g. Margaret Thatcher leading the Conservative Party as the British Prime Minister), of the same ethnic group, or of the same family (e.g. Indira Gandhi, following her father and preceding her son, leading the Congress Party).
in parliament. Removal of a Prime Minister through a vote of no confidence would, in principle, invoke the resignation of the cabinet and require new parliamentary elections, removing not just the leader but her supporters and, presumably, her opponents as well; this is a drastic step that most parties would avoid.

In short, a female party leader heads a team who not only share power, but can remove her from power as well. Despite the potential risks, these removal mechanisms are likely to permit male political elites, with ambitions of their own, to support a woman as party leader, because they know they retain the power to remove her in the future. The “risk” of selecting a female party leader and a potential prime minister is moderated by the removal mechanism. Under power-removing arrangements, male political elites should be less reluctant (or more willing) to support a woman for party leader than under other executive systems.

Where multiple actors can share in political power, women’s chances for inclusion are heightened. This principle is demonstrated in the substantial body of research on women’s candidacies in multi-member proportional representational electoral systems with party lists. Where candidacies for numbers of seats can be shared among many contenders – or, in this case, a team, women are more likely to be included on party lists (Darcy, Welch and Clark 1994; Kittilson 2006). In single-member plurality districts, where only one seat can be won and hence only one candidate nominated by any single party, women are less likely to be nominated.

Where a single winner wins everything, a woman is unlikely to be chosen. The assumption here is that men, or men in closed circles of power, do not include women; have no “taste” for sharing power with women (Bhavnani 2009: 34); and keep competition confined among themselves. Where an individual wins in a structure of power-sharing, however, women are not likely to be so disadvantaged. Where an individual wins in a structure of power-removal, men may be more willing to support (or to tolerate) female candidates for leader and Prime Minister.

Indeed, party elites may identify strategic advantages in selecting a woman as party leader. For example, the electoral balance between competing political parties may be disrupted by the selection of a female leader, positioning the party more favorably for parliamentary elections than might otherwise have been the case. An internal party struggle might be postponed by selecting a woman from outside the normal party leadership cadre, providing time for male political elites to negotiate for future leadership and averting what might otherwise have been a bloodbath. Finally, men in the party might anticipate a looming electoral defeat for the party, and decide to defer their own

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5 See Denham and O’Hara, writing about the British Conservative Party: “the Conservative leader ‘achieves office and retains power only with the consent of his followers; and there is ample precedent for the withdrawal of that consent’ (2008: 11, quoting McKenzie).
6 For a discussion in regard to female executives, see Jalalzai and Krook (2010).
7 See, for example, the Andean group of male political elites in the German Christian Democratic Union, discussed below, as well as the description of the Blair political elite in the governing British Labour Party as “a tiny group of alpha males” and “a tight little group taking over a party” (Marr 2010).
candidacies until a more propitious time, selecting a woman as party leader and hoping to replace her when circumstances improve (see Ryan and Haslam 2005). Although the underlying assumption of this paper is that men will advance male rather than female candidates for party leader and prime minister, there are nonetheless a range of identifiable strategic advantages, for a party overall and for individual political actors, in advancing a woman’s candidacy.

As Norris writes, “Cabinet governments are collegial bodies where the classical notion suggests that the prime minister is ‘first among equals’” (2008: 34). In presidential systems, the principle is first, only and supreme. A president holds all executive power; a president can dismiss cabinet members; and a president cannot be removed from power by the parliament. Women are less likely to be nominated and to win office in a presidential system (Jalalzai 2008). In a presidential system, an individual woman would preclude any man (or any other person) from sharing the office with her; she would control her cabinet (with the sole power to dismiss cabinet members); and she would hold extraordinary power. In short, in a presidential system, when a woman wins, she wins all the power. In a prime ministerial system, when a woman wins, she wins all the power for the party.

In this regard, parliamentary systems with prime ministerial arrangements are gendered differently than are presidential systems. Although both systems consist of gendered institutions that structure male predominance in positions of power and are arranged to advantage male candidates for executive positions, parliamentary systems offer more, if limited, political opportunities for women in the party elite to compete for party leadership and hence prime minister. In sum, the power-sharing and power-removal aspects of party leadership may create a context that can facilitate the selection of a woman as party leader. At the level of the selection process, selection rules may work against the favorable aspects of the party leadership context. In the leader candidate competition, the contest is a zero-sum game; the outcome is a single leader, even with shared powers. A party leader contest is a zero-sum game among party leader candidates, in the context of an internal party selection process where the partisan advantages that might accrue for women in left parties are not applicable. Hence, although the structural relationship between the party selectorate and the leader may facilitate the selection of a woman as leader, the zero-sum nature of the leader contest may be unfavorable to the selection of a female leader. This suggests that the selection context and the candidate context are

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8 See also the claim that, in consideration of potential rearrangements in the French government, “Some of [Nicolas Sarkozy’s] closest advisers have argued that he should appoint a woman” to replace current Prime Minister François Fillon (Hollinger 2010).

9 Note that O’Brien (2013: 20) finds that even in parliamentary systems, “[p]arties that concentrate authority in their leaders are less likely to be led by a woman.”

10 There is a lengthy and detailed scholarship confirming that leftwing parties are generally more favorable to women’s political inclusion than are rightwing parties. O’Brien (2013: 18) found that, for party leadership contests, where partisan competition is absent, “accounting for other factors, right leaning parties are more likely to be female led.”
differently gendered, and that the two processes need to be considered separately in studies of the mechanisms that bring women into party leadership (or that fail to do so).

**Challenges to Analyzing Gendered Structures of Party Leadership Selection**

At least four challenges confront scholars analyzing the gendered nature of party leadership selection: 1) the distinctive zero-sum nature of party leadership contests; 2) small numbers of cases; 3) variations in leadership selection rules, some of which may be selected specifically to deter leadership challenges; and 4) the limited applicability of gendered research on parliamentary candidates and cabinet appointments to party leader candidates and the need to theorize gender specifically to conditions of party leadership selection.

First, for leader candidates, *leader selection contests are distinctively zero-sum*. As I argue, above, party leadership contests, which may ultimately produce a prime minister, may be more conducive to women’s party leadership opportunities because of the position’s power-sharing nature and the party’s leader-removal capacity. Nonetheless, the actual selection of party leader is a zero-sum contest. In understanding women’s party leadership opportunities, therefore, we have to distinguish between the logic of the selectorate (of party elites or party membership choosing a leader) and the logic of the leader candidates, for whom the contest is zero-sum. Only one position is available, and only one person can win it. The stakes are high for those contesting for leadership, since loss is real,\(^\text{11}\) and, moreover, may be permanently costly for the loser(s).\(^\text{12}\) Moreover, in most parliamentary systems, the position of party leader is a required prelude to becoming prime minister, and hence the stakes are also high in terms of political and governing power. As a result, ambitious politicians will strategize to compete for their party’s leadership, often far in advance of a likely leadership contest, and will promote or defer their candidacy in response to a range of contextual conditions.\(^\text{13}\)

*The small numbers of cases* also make party leadership selection potentially differently gendered from parliamentary elections and cabinet appointments. The number of major parties, with a chance of governing in a political system, will be small; in the cases under consideration in this paper, no more than two parties in any system have any meaningful possibility of governing. To discern patterns of women’s access to party leadership requires aggregation of parties, minor as well as major, across time, to provide a sufficient number of cases for statistical analysis. As a result, aggregate

\(^{11}\) Although a cabinet position may be available for the loser, this also may not be the case, as the new party leader prefers to exclude opponents from his or her governing team.

\(^{12}\) There is little scholarship on the fate of unsuccessful challengers for party leadership positions. There is, however, some evidence to suggest that second tries are not successful; hence, a single loss means permanent loss.

\(^{13}\) See the current and continuing positioning of Boris Johnson regarding a possible bid for Conservative Party leadership. Contextual conditions include who the additional competitors are likely to be and the likelihood of prevailing; whether the party is likely to succeed to government or to be defeated by a vote of no confidence or in a looming election; and whether better, future opportunities are likely to be available for winning the leader position and leading the party to government.
analyses encompass periods of time where the presence and strength of feminist movements vary, and where international norms about women’s political presence had not yet developed or were in force.\footnote{For example, O’Brien (2013: 12) aggregates leader cases across nearly a half-century (1965-2012) for 37 parties in ten countries to achieve “246 instances of transitions in party leadership;” Andrews and Jackman (2008: 659) examine six countries, for sixteen major parties or minor parties in coalition government, “those parties with an appreciable legislative presence,” from 1945 to 2000, for 124 cases.} Aggregate analysis also can reveal little about the process of party leader selection. In regard to process, small numbers may have positive research consequences: small numbers facilitate identification of party leader contests where women are candidates and the possibility of tracing the process by which women become candidates and ultimately party leaders (or not).

Third, variations in leadership selection rules may have different gendered impacts on women’s candidacy decisions in party leadership contests. Political parties change their leadership contest rules over time, often in response to specific leadership outcomes. The Conservative Party in the UK changed its leadership contest rules in 1965 and in 1998,\footnote{Changes included raising the threshold for a challenge to a sitting leader, enfranchising the party membership in the leadership vote, excluding a leader who resigned from running for immediate re-selection, and requiring leader candidates to run on the first ballot (Kelly and Lester 2005: 14).} and considered (but rejected) additional changes in 2005. Rules changes in 1965 made the leadership selection process more transparent and presumably more accessible to challengers, including women. Rules changes in 1998 (which endure) extended leader selection beyond the party elite to the party membership; and required all candidates to stand on the first ballot (eliminating strategic, late-round contenders).\footnote{“No new nominations will be accepted after the first ballot (Rule 28). The latter rule represents a significant departure from the previous system” (Kelly and Lester 2005: 8).} It is not clear how the 1998 changes might be gendered, and no women have appeared on a party ballot since Margaret Thatcher (in 1990, for her final leadership contest, which she lost).

Finally, conditions of party leadership selection and competition necessitate theory development in regard to gender and women’s party leadership. The zero-sum nature of party leadership candidacies, the numbers of party leaders and the (in)frequency of within-party leadership contests, and the variation across time, and across and within parties, present challenges to analyses of gendered structures of party leadership selection. Identifying the specific gendered nature of party leadership competition requires considerations that differ from those of parliamentary elections and cabinet appointments.

The scholarship on women’s access to parliamentary seats is unlikely to be helpful in understanding gendered components of party leader selection. In parliamentary systems, party candidacies are not generally zero-sum. Many seats are available for nomination,\footnote{For the cases examined in this paper, the n of seats is large. There are 631 seats in the German Bundestag, 650 in the UK House of Commons, and 350 in the Spanish Congreso.} and even in single-member electoral districts, where parties nominate candidates and there are many districts, there may be multiple party nomination opportunities for individual candidates, who are therefore not necessarily pitted against
each other.\textsuperscript{18} In addition, parliamentary power is shared; no single legislator holds distinctive political or governing power or authority. In addition, the numbers of women and men serving in parliaments is large, and the scholarship on women’s access to parliaments emphasizes eligibility pool criteria and supply-side factors, where large numbers of female candidates are necessary for electing large numbers of women to parliament. And, of course, parliamentary contests are, ultimately, partisan. Neither large numbers of potential candidates nor partisan competitiveness characterize party leadership contests.

Women’s access to cabinet appointments also relies on a competitive logic different than that of party leadership contests. For cabinet appointments, although the number of ministerships is small compared to parliamentary seats,\textsuperscript{19} the same general claims have been made in the relevant scholarship: the larger the number of women in parliament (where parliament is generally but not universally the minister eligibility pool), the more likely women are to be appointed to cabinet positions (see, however, Annesley, Beckwith, Engeli and Franceschet 2012 on this issue). The number of women necessary to fill cabinet positions is smaller, obviously, than that for parliamentary seats.

The appointment of female cabinet ministers is neither as competitive as party leadership contests nor as unpredictable as parliamentary candidate nominations. This is amply demonstrated by the apparent ease with which several left governments have produced inaugural parity cabinets (e.g. Hollande in France in 2012; e.g. Zapatero in Spain in 2004, 2008; and Renzi 2014 in Italy).\textsuperscript{20}

For cabinet appointments, multiple ministerships are available and hence cabinet appointments are not zero-sum contests in the same way that party leadership contests are. Cabinet appointments can also constitute a positive-sum outcome, when prime ministers (or shadow PMs) are able to increase the size of the cabinet, creating additional new cabinet positions that are then available to those who otherwise would not be in the cabinet (see Annesley et al. 2012).

In sum, the competitive logics of women’s access to nomination to parliaments and appointments to cabinets are substantially different from the logics of party leadership contests; the scholarly literature on women and parliaments is likely to be unhelpful for our understanding of women becoming party leaders (or not).

Party leader selection differs from candidate nomination selection and cabinet appointments, on several criteria. The numbers necessary, and the nature of competition, for party leadership differ. The numbers of party leaders are small (and equal to the number of parties in a party system); the numbers of major party leaders are smaller still.

\textsuperscript{18} For example, in the UK, candidates need not be resident in the districts for the seats for which they have been nominated; in France, parties can parachute candidates into districts. In other political systems, multiple nominations of the same candidate, in different districts, are permissible.
\textsuperscript{19} The current number of cabinet seats is 14, in Germany; 13 in Spain; and 20 in the UK; see Table 2.
\textsuperscript{20} Nicolas Sarkozy, on the right, made an initial effort at a French parity cabinet in 2007; see Murray 2013: 208.
The logics of party leadership competition, however, suggest that small numbers of party leader positions mean little for women’s party leadership chances. A large pool of women eligible for party leadership is unnecessary,\(^{21}\) because the logic of competition is different. Party leadership competition routinely involves only a few contestants (e.g. fewer than half a dozen); the candidacy of a lone woman (or a lone man) does not require a critical mass in a parliament\(^{22}\) or even in a cabinet; and some parties anticipate, in party rules, such limited competition.\(^{23}\)

Party leadership contests are also distinctive zero-sum games insofar as they are internal party contests and do not involve partisan competition. Although the scholarship on women’s gendered parliamentary and cabinet representation evidences a strong, persistent advantage for women in parties of the left, the nonpartisan nature of party leadership contests removes any potential advantage of leftwing parties in the selection of women as party leaders. Moreover, Andrews and Jackman (2008: 675) found “no evidence that the office-seeking motivation varies by ideological type.”

### Theorizing Gendered Leadership Selection: Low-Competition Openings

Table 1 provides a summary classification of the competitive logics of competition for parliamentary seats, cabinet posts, and party leadership. Zero-sum and positive-sum logics will shape choices and behaviors of political elites. It is more likely that the high-stakes zero-sum nature of party leadership competition, with its potentially permanent negative impact on the loser, will suppress the number of leader candidates, and will cause ambitious political elites to be strategic about their candidacy, either entering when circumstances look most propitious or deferring until more favorable circumstances present themselves.

Andrews and Jackman (2008: 675) argue that “party leaders live or die on the basis of their office-seeking prowess” in maximizing parliamentary seat share. Where a party leader has been successful in increasing seat share, no opportunity for challenge will present itself. In general, party leaders remove themselves or are removed when their party loses seats, a relationship that holds, Andrews and Jackman claim, for minor as well as for major parties.

As I have argued elsewhere (Beckwith 2010), women are most likely to contest for party leadership under conditions where intraparty leadership competition is relatively low and specifically gendered. I refer to these as low-competition openings. Low-competition openings are created when electoral prospects look bleak, a party leader has been removed, and quality leader candidates decide to defer from leadership competition.

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\(^{21}\) Although I would consider it to be delightful.

\(^{22}\) For example, because the UK requires ministers to hold parliamentary office, the competitive logic of cabinet appointments suggests that the larger the number of female MPs within the Prime Minister’s party, the more scope for appointing women as cabinet ministers.

\(^{23}\) Conservative party rules currently permit immediate selection of a leader candidate who has no opponents, without a vote (Kelly and Lester 2005: 8).
Low-competition openings may occur in any political system or any party; they are not defined by the position itself, but by the *competition for the position*, which is affected by who the likely contestants are, the immediate electoral prospects for the party, and anticipated future (and better) opportunities for potential leader candidates. As Randall (1987: 146) claims, “women do best where competition is least;” as Bashevkin argues, “applied to leadership selection contests, competitiveness arguments predict that parties holding power, or in a strong position to win it, would be less inviting to women participants than those is a weaker political position.”

Low-competition openings often follow from actual electoral disasters (e.g. UK Conservative Party 1974), predicted electoral defeat (e.g. Canada’s Conservative Party 1993; Australian Labor Party 2010), or scandal that removes otherwise competitive candidates from leadership consideration (e.g. German CDU 2000). Low-competition openings are likely to be gendered under the following conditions:

1) experienced male political elites are blamed for disastrous party electoral performance or future performance prospects;

2) negative electoral results are “public and unambiguous” (Andrews and Jackman 2008: 662); and

3) less experienced male political elites defer their leader candidacies, believing that they can wait until party fortunes improve.

Where a male party leader and his team have literally crashed their own party, and where fewer experienced and otherwise qualified men are available to contest for leadership, and less qualified men are unlikely to contest for leadership, an low-competition opening is created. I argue that these openings are specifically gendered and offer opportunities for women to contest for party leader.

**Methodology and Data Challenges**

This paper employs a comparative case-study methodology, as well as statistical analysis of aggregated, cross-case, longitudinal data. Focusing on three country cases, the paper examines the pattern of women’s parliamentary and cabinet representation for the major left and right parties,24 from 1997 to the most recent parliamentary election, within country across time, and across countries. The selection of the time frame is in part pragmatic: pre-1997 electoral data are not easily accessible. However, this time frame provides a range of nearly two decades, across which time the political and party systems within each country have been stable and established; and government and opposition have alternated between the major parties of the left and right. Furthermore, these years encompass a period during which issues of women’s representation in parliaments and...

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24 See Andrews and Jackman (2008: 663) for justification of a focus on major parties.
cabinets have been heightened in international discourse, and women’s inclusion in parliaments and cabinets has been widely normative for democracies.

The country cases – Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom – provide a range of similarities and differences for a preliminary understanding of how party leadership selection might be gendered within and across political parties (see Table 2). All countries are parliamentary political systems, with two major parties, of left and right, dominating the party system. A general predictor of women’s political inclusion, level of education, is similar across countries, as well as relatively equal within countries. Nonetheless, women’s political presence varies by country: Spain and Germany currently have higher percentages of women’s representation within the lower chambers of their national legislatures (39.7% and 36.5%, respectively) than does the UK (22.6%), even as all countries currently are governed by right (Spain) or center-right coalitions (Germany, UK). A similar pattern obtains for women’s inclusion in cabinets: 35.7% in Germany and 30.8% in Spain, compared to 20.0% for the UK. A range of constants and variables, identified in Table 2, provide the context for evaluating women’s opportunities for access to party leadership.

As is the case for many research questions, there is no extant database of party leaders, leadership elections by date and contestants, or cross-party leadership selection rules. This is not surprising, given the challenges specific to the study of party leadership.

**First, party leadership rules vary across party within political systems.** Within a single political system, individual parties will have party-specific leader selection rules. Unlike the case of the study of prime ministers, where the rules for prime ministerial confirmation are uniform across parties within a single political system and apply to all, party leadership rules are established by the individual parties themselves, and vary considerably by formal and informal eligibility criteria and by selection and removal processes. Hence, comparative party leadership analysis requires the identification of party leadership rules for each individual party, within the same political system, and for every political system in the analysis.

**Second, party leadership rules, within any individual party, vary across time.** Party leadership rules vary across time, and hence must be identified, by party, to map specific rules to specific party leadership contests and selection (and/or removal/replacement). Unlike an election schedule, which is public, regular, and uniform for all contestants, changes in party leadership rules and criteria may vary considerably across time, by party. This is particularly likely to be the case for informal criteria.

**Third, variation in individual party leadership rules is unpredictable.** That is, one political party may change its leadership selection rules in response to a specific

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25 The legislative election schedule is set by the Basic Law (Art. 39) in the FRG, by the Spanish Constitution (Art. 68 (4); and by the Fixed Term Parliaments Act (2011) in the UK.
26 On informal institutions, see Banaszak and Weldon 2011; Bjarnegård 2013; and Mackay, Kenny, and Chappell 2010.
leadership outcome. Another, in the same system, may maintain the same selection rules for several years; this may be especially likely when the party has been the governing party, without serious electoral threat (Andrews and Jackman 2008). There is no evidence that party leadership selection is congruent with annual party conferences. It is also possible that a party will change its leadership selection rules where no external political event might suggest such change would be likely. Because a party can, theoretically, change its rules at any time, there is no consistent external signal, across parties, for such changes.

As a result, research may under-identify changes in party leadership rules and assume continuity of rules across elections. This is particularly likely to be the case where a change in party rules does not result in (or issue from) a leadership challenge or a change in the party leader. As a result, a party-specific analysis, party-by-party, across time, is necessary to identify such changes. Some of these changes, if any, may be identifiable after the fact; some may remain hidden.

These challenges to the study of party leadership make it difficult to discern the process of women’s party leadership and the means by which party leadership contests are gendered. The consequences for the study of women and party leadership are threefold: First, scholars may miss gendered opportunities for leadership challenges that may result from party rules changes, where women do not contest for leader. Second, and conversely, scholars may fail to recognize rules changes that make women’s party leadership challenges more difficult or unlikely. Finally, scholars will find it difficult to identify cases in which women consider challenging for party leadership and decide not to do so; invisible and informal selection factors may serve to promote male party leader candidates and to deter or to discourage potential leader candidacies among women, independently of rules changes or electoral context. “Hidden” or “invisible” contests, where potential challengers decide not to compete, need to be identified and taken into account in research designs.

27 See, e.g., the 1995 rules changes in the Conservative Party (UK).
28 Leadership selection at party conferences varies by party within, e.g., the UK, where the Labour Party convenes a party conference to vote on the leader. For the Conservatives, a party conference is not required; see the Conservative Party leadership selection process in 2005, which began with Michael Howards’ resignation and a membership vote, held several months following the party conference (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative_Party_%28UK%29_leadership_election_%2005#Timeline_of_events).
29 Aside from massive electoral defeat, which almost always results in the party leader resigning or being removed.
30 See, e.g., Sawyers and Meyer 1999.
31 “Stanley Johnson fuelled speculation about a leadership bid by calling for a change in the party's rules to allow contenders from outside Parliament to throw their hats into the ring” (http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/03/19/boris-johnson-conservative-party-leadership_n_4991346.html; http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26628842).
**Hypotheses, Cases, and Case Justification**

Conventional hypotheses concerning women’s access to political executive positions begin with women’s shares of parliamentary seats, sometimes stratified by party. Where the leader eligibility pool is parliament or the cabinet, the number of women in each may be employed to predict the likelihood of a female party leader (the greater the number of women in the lower house, the higher the probability of a woman being selected; the greater the number of women in the cabinet, the higher the probability of a woman being selected). Because these hypotheses rely on eligibility pool explanations, however, they are unlikely to explain women’s party leader candidacies or the process by which women enter leadership. The conventional hypotheses are summarized as follows:

H1: the greater the number of women in the lower house, the higher the probability of a woman being selected.

H2: the greater the number of women in the cabinet, the higher the probability of a woman being selected.  

H3: parties with a parity cabinet/shadow cabinet are more likely to have a female party leader.

Following the scholarship on women’s cabinet appointments and parliamentary seats, two additional hypotheses address party ideology:

H4: women are more likely to contest for party leader in left parties than in right parties.

H5: left parties are more likely to select a woman as party leader than are right parties.

I argue instead that low-competition openings offer the best opportunities for women’s party leader candidacies, and offer four counter-hypotheses, as follow:

H6: women are more likely to contest for party leader in low-competition contests created by electoral defeat (or looming electoral defeat).

H7: women are more likely to contest for party leader in low-competition contests created by unanticipated scandal or crisis.

H8: women are more likely to be selected as party leader in low-competition contests created by electoral defeat (or looming electoral defeat).

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33 This is an hypothesis about absolute numbers, given that a high percentage in a low-n cabinet is less likely to produce a female party leader.

34 See, e.g., Margaret Thatcher (Britain, 1975).

35 Individual case examples include those of Kim Campbell (Canada, 1993) and Julia Gillard (Australia, 2010).
H9: women are more likely to be selected for party leader in low-competition contests created by unanticipated scandal or crisis.\textsuperscript{36}

For purposes of space and focus, this paper examines only two major parties for each of three political systems, for those parties that have consistently been electorally competitive, and that have constituted the government across time. These are:

**Federal Republic of Germany:** Christian Democratic Union (CDU)  
Social Democratic Party (SPD)

**Spain:** Partido Popular (PP)  
Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)

**United Kingdom:** Conservative Party  
Labour Party

Following Bashevkin (2009), I address these hypotheses by presenting a tables showing data relevant to each, in the following section. Table 3 presents the evidence concerning eligibility pool explanations. The first obvious conclusion is that in these countries, for the major parties, no women contest publicly for party leadership. In the past decade and a half, in six parties, only three women have contested for party leader: Angela Merkel in the CDU, Diane Abbott in the Labour Party,\textsuperscript{37} and Carme Chacon in the PSOE. Women’s party leadership challenges are a constant rather than a variable.

Second, none of the first five hypotheses receive any support from the evidence concerning these six parties across more than 15 years. Despite variation in women’s cabinet\textsuperscript{38} and parliamentary presence, women’s party leadership challenges have been constant: a pattern of no challenge.\textsuperscript{39} As women have increased their share of parliamentary seats and cabinet posts, they have not concomitantly contested party leadership.

Third, party ideology has no impact on encouraging or discouraging women’s challenges for party leadership and, of course, no impact on their success, or lack thereof.\textsuperscript{40} Of the three actual leadership challenges, one was in a rightwing party and two

\textsuperscript{36} Examples include Gro Bruntland (Norway, 1981; Bruntland was Prime Minister and also, for various dates, Norway’s Labor Party Leader) and Angela Merkel Germany, 2000).

\textsuperscript{37} Diane Abbott was on the first leadership ballot, and dropped thereafter (Kelly, Lester and Durkin 2010: 12).

\textsuperscript{38} Only one party, the PSOE, had a parity cabinet, in 2004 and 2011. Parity governments have no impact on the likelihood of women’s leadership challenge.

\textsuperscript{39} With only three exceptions. Moreover, Merkel’s leadership and challenges by Abbott and Chacon are separated in time by more than a decade; the prior leadership challenge by a woman was Margaret Beckett’s challenge in the Labour Party in 1994.

\textsuperscript{40} See, however, O’Brien (2013) on women’s party leadership across a longer time frame that includes minor as well as major parties, for a larger number of country cases. She concludes that party ideology
was in a leftwing party, suggesting (on the basis of only three cases) that party ideology does not have the impact on party leadership contestation nor outcome for women than it has for cabinet appointments, and for candidate selection and election to parliaments, where leftwing parties hold the clear advantage.

Table 4 presents the data for the hypotheses concerned with the context of intraparty competition for leadership. The evidence where women did challenge for leadership suggests that electoral defeat may be insufficient to constitute a low-competition opening. After the massive Labour Party victory in the Commons in 1997, there were multiple contenders across two of three ballots for Conservative Party Leader (Kelly and Lester 2005: 17). In 2001, five men contested for leadership on the first ballot; and in 2005, four men were on the first ballot for Conservative Party leader. Only the 2003 leadership contest in the Conservative Party was uncontested. Nonetheless, following electoral defeat in 2000 (CDU), 2010 (Labour), and 2011 (PSOE), women contested for party leadership. Angela Merkel, with some difficulty and complication, won the leader position on a second try; Carme Chacon lost the leadership contest by a close vote in the PSOE. Diane Abbott was eliminated in the first round of voting for Labour leader in 2010.

Three of the four hypotheses concerning low-competition openings have no support in the evidence. Given that virtually no women compete for party leader, low-competition contests created by electoral defeat (or looming electoral defeat) appear to make no difference. With only three women contesting for party leader, scandal or crisis that might create a low-competition context appears to have no impact. Finally, the three limited cases under consideration in this paper do not support a claim that women are more likely to be selected as party leader in low-competition contests created by electoral defeat (or looming electoral defeat). Although Merkel eventually won leadership of her party, Abbott and Chacon were unsuccessful in their leadership bids.

There are multiple cases of leadership elections after electoral defeats that do not prompt a woman to enter her party’s leadership contest. Given the range and magnitude of some electoral defeats, all other things being equal, we might expect a woman to contest for party leadership in the Partido Popular in 2000, and in the Conservative Party in every contest since (and including) 1997 – even if she were not successful. For the cases of the Conservative and Labour Parties in the UK, for example, even in electoral defeat, multiple candidates, and only men (with the sole exception of Abbott), contend at every opportunity. Electoral defeat may be sufficient to provoke a party leadership challenge or contest (Andrew and Jackman 2008); electoral defeat alone may not be sufficient to create a gendered low-competition opening for a female leader candidate.41

Fourth, on the basis of only one case (but see Beckwith 2010), what appears to make a difference in creating a low-competition opening that leads to a woman becoming

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41 Although this paper does not consider the outcomes, for parties, of the European Parliament elections, loss of party seats in these elections also can have serious consequences for party leaders.
leader and, eventually, prime minister, is a scandal that removes potential male contenders for party leader. It may that the comprehensive removal of male incumbents, not just a single party leader and Prime Minister who failed to lead his party to electoral victory, that opens a door wide enough for a woman to become leader of her party. Political scandal that encompasses a team of incumbents is more likely to create the low-competition opening that offers an opportunity for a woman not just to contest for party leadership, but to win.

**Conclusion: Theory, Research Design, and Opportunity**

The scholarship on women’s access to political office has generally conflated office requirements of parliamentary seats, cabinet appointments, and access to national executive positions, such as prime ministers and presidents. Because there is still so little research on women and party leadership, this scholarship has yet to develop its own theorizing in regard to gender. At the same time, it appears less reliant on the parliamentary scholarship, with emphasis on eligibility requirements (such as level of education, prior occupation, etc.) and on the structural features specific to parliamentary candidacies and elections (with particular emphasis on supply and demand models). This paper underscores the need to map competition, access structures, and eligibility requirements to specific offices.

Although men are still over-represented in parliaments and cabinets, and among party leaders, prime ministers and presidents, their over-representation has not been the result of the same structures or forces. It is likely that gender works differently in different institutions, even in the same political system, and even when the aggregate result is women’s political marginalization and men’s over-representation. This paper also emphasizes the need to theorize gender to specific institutions and institutional arrangements, and contributes to that project.

Absences and silences in regard to women’s party leadership – where women do not contest, even in circumstances where a low-competition opening may appear – requires research design and data collection sensitivity. Research designs need to take into account when women consider contending for party leadership, when women contest (on a party ballot) for party leadership, and when they decided not to do so, again, even in contexts where opportunities appear most propitious. This paper also suggests that differences across parties in terms of leadership selection rules, and differences within parties in terms of rules changes, may be gendered or have gendered consequences. Evidence presented in this paper is hardly conclusive; there are only three cases of women’s explicit challenge for party leadership, and the virtual absence of female leader candidates suggests on its face that rules make no difference. Nonetheless, rules can make a difference; for example, hypothetically, a party that has a rule requiring alternation between a male and a female party leader will have female party leaders. Again, although this paper does not explicitly address how leadership selection rules vary,

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42 For example, the requirement in the UK that cabinet ministers be drawn from parliament.
selection rules shape political competition, and can raise the competitive threshold for leadership selection in ways that could function to disadvantage women.

Finally, the difference between party leaders who might become prime ministers (e.g. major party leaders) and those who are unlikely ever to become prime minister (e.g. minor party leaders) requires further examination. O’Brien’s work (2013) shows that women are more likely to be party leaders in parties that will not govern. This may suggest that the future for female party leaders in major parties is bleak. What remains to be analyzed are the numbers of women who serve as Deputy Party Leaders, party General Secretaries (who are not party leaders), and Presidents or Speakers of legislatures. These numbers appear to be increasing; the extent to which they may be portals, in low-opportunity openings, to party leadership remains to be examined.

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43 The current presiding officer of the Italian Chamber of Deputies is Laura Boldrini (Left Ecology Freedom Party), the third woman to hold this position.
REFERENCES


Table 1. Competitive Logics for Parliamentary Seats, Cabinet Posts, and Party Leader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Office</th>
<th>N of Positions Available</th>
<th>Nature of Competition</th>
<th>Nature of Final Selection</th>
<th>Conditions for Women’s Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seat in Parliament</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Individually but not collectively zero-sum.</td>
<td>Partisan contest</td>
<td>Large pool of female eligibles; large pool of female candidates; party gender quotas; left party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>advantage in nominations, and election, of women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Post</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Individually but not collectively zero-sum; potentially positive-sum.</td>
<td>Nonpartisan, with considerations</td>
<td>Small pool of female eligibles, norm of women’s cabinet inclusion; left party advantage in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of partisan competition; internal party</td>
<td>appointments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Leader</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Zero-sum, permanent, high stakes.</td>
<td>Nonpartisan; internal party</td>
<td>Smallest pool of female eligibles; no senior male elites eligible; no junior men willing to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>compete.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For political systems, like the UK, that require cabinet ministers to be Members of Parliament, the eligibility pool of women will be dependent upon their parliamentary eligibility pool.
Table 2. Case Selection Table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables and Constants</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political System</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parliamentary republic; federal system.</td>
<td>Parliamentary monarchy; unitary state with some regional autonomy.</td>
<td>Parliamentary monarchy; unitary state with some devolved powers to Scotland and Wales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Party System</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dominated by two major parties; minor parties included in government.</td>
<td>Dominated by two major parties.</td>
<td>Dominated by two major parties; third minor party is regionally competitive and participates in coalition government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of Women in Lower Chamber</strong>$^{45}$</td>
<td>9.22.2013</td>
<td>11.20.2011</td>
<td>5.6.2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CDU 25.0% (20.6%?) 64/311</td>
<td>Partido Popular$^{46}$ 41.6%</td>
<td>Conservatives 15.9% 48/XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPD 42.0% 81/193</td>
<td>PSOE 40.0%</td>
<td>Labour 33.7% 86/XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>230/631 MPs</td>
<td>139/350 MPs</td>
<td>143/650 MPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women in Parliaments Rank</strong>$^{47}$</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12$^{48}$</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


$^{46}$ Congreso parliamentary groups for PP (77/185), PSOE 44/110 ([http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/Congreso/GruPar](http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/Congreso/GruPar)); numbers and percentages calculated by author.

$^{47}$ [http://ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm](http://ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm).

$^{48}$ Tied with Iceland.
| Women in European Parliament ⁴⁹ | 37.4%  
(37/99) | 36.0%  
(18/50) | 33.3%  
(24/72) |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Percentage of Women in Cabinet ⁵⁰ | 35.7%  
^5¹ | 30.8%  
^5² | 20.0%  
^5³ |
| Date of Women’s Equal Suffrage ⁵⁴ | 1918 | 1931 | 1928 |
| Female Literacy Rate; Female Tertiary Education ⁵⁵ | School life expectancy is same for women and men (16 years); literacy rates are the same (99%) | School life expectancy is 18 years for women, 17 years for men; literacy rates are 98.5% (men) and 97% (women). | School life expectancy is 17 years for women, 16 years for men; literacy rates are the same (99%). |
| 2012 Gender Inequality Index Value and Rank ⁵⁶ | .075  
6ᵗʰ | .103  
15ᵗʰ | .205  
34ᵗʰ |

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⁴⁹ [http://ipu.org/wmn-e/regions.htm](http://ipu.org/wmn-e/regions.htm).
⁵⁰ By party, most recent cabinet; https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/SP.html.
⁵¹ 5/14; includes Ursula von der Leyen, Minister of Defense; Johanna Wanka, Education and Research; Barbara Hendricks, Environment; Manuela Schwesig, Family, Youth, etc.; and Andrea Nahles, Labor and Social Affairs.
⁵² 4/13; none are defense, finance/treasury, or foreign affairs.
⁵³ 4/20; none are defense, finance/treasury, or foreign affairs; most important cabinet posts in the UK are exchequer, foreign secretary, and home secretary; Theresa May is currently Home Secretary (since 2010); Justine Greening, International Development; Maria Miller, Culture, etc.; Theresa Villiers, Northern Ireland (https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers).
⁵⁶ [https://data.undp.org/dataset/Table-4-Gender-Inequality-Index/pq34-nwq7](https://data.undp.org/dataset/Table-4-Gender-Inequality-Index/pq34-nwq7).
### Table 3. Eligibility Pool, Party Ideology, and Women’s Party Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>% Women in Party in Lower House</th>
<th>% Women in Cabinet</th>
<th>Party Leader Contest Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CDU</strong>57</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>Helmet Kohl, party leader 1973-1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Angela Merkel (no outright challenge)</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>LOST Wolfgang Schäuble becomes party leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Angela Merkel</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>WON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPD</strong>58</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>5 (31.3%)</td>
<td>Gerhard Schröder (1999-2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>Sigmar Gabriel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>Coalition government 3 (21.4%)</td>
<td>Sigmar Gabriel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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57 [http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Christian_Democratic_Union_%28Germany%29.html](http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Christian_Democratic_Union_%28Germany%29.html). Sarah Wiliarty also provided these data, and I am very grateful for her generous assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gender of Challengers</th>
<th>Percentage (Votes/Total)</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>No female challengers</td>
<td>14.29% (22/154)</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>José María Aznar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>No female challengers</td>
<td>25.14% (46/183)</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>José María Aznar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No female challengers</td>
<td>28.38% (42/148)</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>Mariano Rajoy Brey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>No female challengers</td>
<td>29.87% (46/154)</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>Mariano Rajoy Brey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>No female challengers</td>
<td>36.22% (67/185)</td>
<td>4/13 (30.8%)</td>
<td>Mariano Rajoy Brey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>No female challengers</td>
<td>36.8% (46/125)</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No female challengers</td>
<td>46.3% (75/162)</td>
<td>7/16 (43.8%)</td>
<td>José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>No female challengers</td>
<td>43.2% (90/169)</td>
<td>9/17 (52.9%)</td>
<td>José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

60 [http://www.inmujer.gob.es/estadisticas/consulta.do?area=8](http://www.inmujer.gob.es/estadisticas/consulta.do?area=8); many thanks to Susan Franceschet for providing this source and these data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Vote (in %)</th>
<th>Government Status</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Carme Chacon</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>39.1% (43/110)</td>
<td>LOST Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba becomes party leader.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Conservatives</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>13/165 (7.9%)</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>William Hague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>14/166 (8.4%)</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>Iain Duncan Smith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>14/166 (8.4%)</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>Michael Howard (only leader candidate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>17/197 (8.6%)</td>
<td>Not in government</td>
<td>David Cameron</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>101/419 (24.1%)</td>
<td>4/16 (25.0%)</td>
<td>Tony Blair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>95/413 (23.0%)</td>
<td>6/15 (40.0%)</td>
<td>Tony Blair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>95/413 (23.0%)</td>
<td>3/15 (20.0%)</td>
<td>Tony Blair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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63 No challenge for Conservative Party leadership by a woman since Margaret Thatcher (1975).
65 Margaret Beckett contested for Labour Party leadership in 1994 (Kelly, Lester and Durkin 2010).
Margaret Beckett, Patricia Hewlitt, Tessa Jowell, Clare Short, Estelle Morris, Helen Liddell.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>98/356 (27.5%)</td>
<td>4/15&lt;sup&gt;68&lt;/sup&gt; (26.7%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tony Blair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership&lt;sup&gt;69&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>98/356 (27.5%)</td>
<td>4/20&lt;sup&gt;69&lt;/sup&gt; (20.0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gordon Brown (only formal nominee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010&lt;sup&gt;71&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Diane Abbott&lt;sup&gt;72&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>81/258 (31.4%)</td>
<td>Not in government.</td>
<td>LOST</td>
<td>Ed Miliband</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<sup>69</sup> Hazel Blears, Harriet Harman, and four men stood for Deputy Leader in 2007; Harman was elected. (Kelly, Lester and Durkin 2010).
<sup>72</sup> Three woman declined to run (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labour_Party_%28UK%29_leadership_election,_2010#Noteworthy_MPs_who_declined_to_stand).
Table 4. Low-Competition Openings and Women’s Party Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Low-Competition Context?</th>
<th>Scandal?</th>
<th>Vote Won by Party in Parliamentary Election</th>
<th>Party Leader Contest Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDU\textsuperscript{73}</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>Helmet Kohl, party leader 1973-1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Angela Merkel (no outright challenge)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>35.1\textsuperscript{74}</td>
<td>LOST Wolfgang Schäuble becomes party leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Angela Merkel</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>WON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD\textsuperscript{75}</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>40.9\textsuperscript{76}</td>
<td>Gerhard Schröder (1999-2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>Sigmar Gabriel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{73} http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Christian_Democratic_Union_%28Germany%29.html.
\textsuperscript{74} http://www.electoralgeography.com/new/en/countries/g/germany/germany-legislative-election-1998.html
\textsuperscript{76} Highest percentage vote won by SPD since 1980.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>No female</th>
<th>Challengers</th>
<th>Voting</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>Sigmar Gabriel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No female</th>
<th>Challengers</th>
<th>Voting</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>José María Aznar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>José María Aznar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>Mariano Rajoy B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>40.12%</td>
<td>Mariano Rajoy B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>44.62%</td>
<td>Mariano Rajoy B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PSOE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No female</th>
<th>Challengers</th>
<th>Voting</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>José Luis Rodríguez Zapater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>José Luis Rodríguez Zapater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>43.64%</td>
<td>José Luis Rodríguez Zapater</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Carme Chacon (challenges in 2012, post election)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>28.63%</td>
<td>LOST Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba become party leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>William Hague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>Iain Duncan Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>Michael Howard (only leader candidate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>David Cameron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>Tony Blair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>Tony Blair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>Tony Blair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>Tony Blair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

80 No challenge for Conservative Party leadership by a woman since Margaret Thatcher (1975).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Women Challenging</th>
<th>Men Challenging</th>
<th>Women %</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>No female challengers for party leadership&lt;sup&gt;81&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>Gordon Brown (only formal nominee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Diane Abbott&lt;sup&gt;82&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>LOST Ed Miliband</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<sup>81</sup> Hazel Blears, Harriet Harman, and four men stood for Deputy Leader in 2007; Harman was elected. (Kelly, Lester and Durkin 2010).

<sup>82</sup> Three women declined to run (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labour_Party_%28UK%29_%28leadership_election,_2010%23Noteworthy_MPs_who_declined_to_stand).