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Worthy, Benjamin (2016) Ending in failure? The performance of 'Takeover' Prime Ministers 1916–2016. *Political Quarterly* 87 (4), pp. 509-517. ISSN 1467-923X.

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## Changing in Mid-Stream: the Performance of 'Takeover' Prime Ministers 1916-2016

*When Theresa May became Prime Minister in July 2016 she joined 12 previous takeover leaders in the last 100 years. While the popular image is of Prime Ministers arriving in power after a General Election victory, more than half of the Prime Ministers who governed since 1916 have arrived as 'takeover' leaders through an internal party process. This article analyses how takeovers perform, concluding that May is likely to face greater obstacles and fewer advantages than if she was elected. Takeovers have less time in power, less chance of winning elections and are generally rated as worse performing.*

There are two ways to become Prime Minister in the UK: by winning a General Election with a majority or by winning an internal party leadership battle to become head of the majority party when a Prime Minister steps down. There may be some nuances around this rule as Prime Ministers can govern in minority (as did Ramsey MacDonald in 1924 and 1929 and James Callaghan in 1976), cobble together a coalition (David Cameron in 2010) or create some informal working arrangement (James Callaghan in 1976-79). They can even (temporarily) not be head of the party, as occurred briefly with John Major in 1995. However, the person who occupies 10 Downing Street as Prime Minister is almost always leader of the majority party.

To get to be Prime Minister through a leadership election is relatively simple. As the UK Cabinet Manual states:

Where a Prime Minister chooses to resign from his or her individual position at a time when his or her administration has an overall majority in the House of Commons, it is for the party or parties in government to identify who can be chosen as the successor.<sup>1</sup>

Exactly how a party elects their leader has varied over time. Before 1965 the leader of the Conservatives simply emerged following discussions with senior Tories. The rules changed so leaders were elected by MPs in 1965 and then by MPs and associations in 2001. Labour reformed its own system in 1981 and 1993, moving away from bloc votes towards One Member One Vote, and again in 2014 towards the current system where not only party members but also registered supporters can vote. These supposedly democratising reforms have increased who can participate in electing a leader. Leaders are increasingly autonomous, protected in both parties by stronger party rules against challengers and removal introduced in the 1990s and 2000s, while MPs are becoming increasingly rebellious and less obedient. Such changes may bring greater polarisation and conflict within parties. Nor have the reforms always worked to create any clear or wide choice. Both Gordon Brown in 2007 and Theresa May in 2016 effectively had coronations when their challengers were respectively shut out or dropped out.

While the popular image of Prime Ministers arriving in power is of a welcoming dawn crowd after an overnight election victory, a significant number of Prime Ministers have arrived as 'takeover' leaders. Out of the 20 Prime Ministers from Lloyd George in 1916 to Theresa May in 2016, 13 have been takeover leaders (some of whom, such as Stanley Baldwin, Harold Wilson served more than once and not always concurrently). The 8 elected Prime Ministers between 1916 and 2016 were in office for a total of 62 years of the last century while the 12 takeovers (excluding May) took up 39. So how do takeovers perform? Table 1 looks at the 13 Prime Ministers who took over, who they replaced and their previous position before becoming Prime Minister.

**Table 1: Takeovers and Previous Position 1916-2016**

<b>Prime Minister</b>	<b>Took Over From</b>	<b>Previous Position</b>
Theresa May	David Cameron in 2016	<i>Home Secretary</i>
Gordon Brown	Tony Blair in 1997	<i>Chancellor</i>
John Major	Margaret Thatcher in 1990	<i>Chancellor</i>
James Callaghan	Harold Wilson in 1976	<i>Foreign Secretary</i>
Alec Douglas-Home	Harold Macmillan in 1963	<i>Foreign Secretary</i>
Harold Macmillan	Anthony Eden in 1957	<i>Chancellor</i>
Anthony Eden	Winston Churchill in 1955	<i>Foreign Secretary</i>
Winston Churchill	Neville Chamberlain in 1940	<i>First Lord of the Admiralty</i>
Neville Chamberlain	Stanley Baldwin in 1937	<i>Chancellor</i>
Stanley Baldwin	Ramsey MacDonald in 1935	<i>Lord President of the Council</i>
Stanley Baldwin	Andrew Bonar Law in 1923	<i>Chancellor</i>
Andrew Bonar Law	Lloyd George in 1922	<i>None</i>
David Lloyd George	Herbert Asquith in 1916	<i>Secretary of State For War</i>

Not included here is the rather complicated case of Ramsay MacDonald who took over as Prime Minister of a national coalition government in 1931 but, rather controversially, took over from himself as head of the previous Labour government.

May's ascendancy follows a set pattern as most takeover leaders enter power due to the resignation of their predecessor. Why leaders step down can vary: Harold Wilson left of his own accord in 1976 while Winston Churchill's second term ended in 1955 following pressure from doctors. Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan 'left office partly...because they had manifestly lost the confidence of large parts of the Conservative Party' and Thatcher stepped down after winning, but not winning by enough, in round one of a Tory leadership election. This fits with wider patterns in other Parliamentary democracies where party leadership is 'seldom a safe possession' and leaders

commonly leave in one of three ways: electoral defeat, internal challenges or scandal. A wider study of leaders across four countries found '65% of all [prime ministerial departures] are more or less voluntary' and though it is 'exceedingly difficult to draw a firm line' between genuine and forced resignations.<sup>ii</sup>

May's exact route, however, is rather unusual. Much has been made of her experience as the longest serving Home Secretary since Attlee's James Chute Ede in the 1940s. No other takeover Prime Minister in the last century came to Downing Street directly from the Home Office, though two of them, Churchill and Callaghan, had served as Home Secretaries in the past. The tendency is for takeovers to come from 'great offices of state' with 5 serving as Chancellor before becoming Prime Minister and 3 as Foreign Secretary. Lloyd George and Churchill moved from important war ministries while Andrew Bonar Law stands as the exception who took over from outside the Cabinet, but as Conservative party leader, when the national coalition collapsed in 1922.

The table also glosses the difficulty of getting to be Prime Minister. Most takeover leaders fight to get to the top and are not always the 'anointed' or expected candidate. John Major in 1990 and Alec Douglas-Home in 1963 were not favourites. May in 2016 was by no means the heir apparent, though her chances were seen as good.

### **Prime Ministers: Their Role and Power**

Anthony King explained how 'the person who walks for the first time through the door of Number 10 as prime minister does not create or re-create the prime ministership: the job, to a considerable extent, already exists'. A set of tasks present themselves, of which the ability to hire and fire Ministers, and create and recreate Ministries, is central. A 1947 assessment listed 12 core Prime Ministerial tasks, though Peter Hennessy distilled 33 set tasks in the 1990s and 47 recently, covering new roles from national security to the 'post-Armageddon' instructions to Trident submarines.<sup>iii</sup>

Heffernan and Webb characterise the premiership as having three 'faces': the executive, the party and the electoral. The executive face refers to the Prime Minister's role in heading the government that gives them 'significant conditional power' with organisational power, resources and dominance of the media. The party face concerns managing the party as 'in the final instance, the prime minister's dependence on party within both executive and legislature is everything'. The electoral face highlights that leaders play a central role in election campaigns and can have an effect on the result as the personal focus of the party<sup>iv</sup>. This article uses Heffernan and Webb's three faces to review the experience of the three most recent takeovers: James Callaghan, John Major and Gordon Brown. I discuss in turn the performance of takeovers in winning an election, keeping their party together and effectiveness in running the government as Prime Minister.

### **Winning a General Election**

Perhaps the most basic measure of Prime Ministerial performance is election winning. Prime Ministers are the centre of their party's campaign. Research points to leader effects on election campaigns. In close elections in 1950, 1964, and February 1974, and perhaps more recently in 2015, leadership influenced the results. Leaders are used by voters as a short cut to evaluate the party, though their effect and significance is disputed.

### **Table 2: Takeovers: Elections, Longevity and Ranking 1916-2016**

<b>Prime Minister</b>	<b>Won or Lost next GE (and size of victory/loss)</b>	<b>Time in power<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>How left office</b>	<b>Ranking (out of 20)</b>
Gordon Brown 2007	Lost 2010 (narrow loss?)	3 years	Defeated	n/a (PM after survey)
John Major	Won 1992 (narrow win)	7 years	Defeated	15
James Callaghan 1976	Lost 1979 (medium loss)	3 years	Defeated	12
Alec Douglas-Home 1963	Lost 1964 (narrow loss)	1 year	Defeated	19
Harold Macmillan 1957	Won 1959 (increased majority)	6 years	Resigned (health/lost confidence of party)	5
Anthony Eden 1955	Won 1955 (increased majority)	2 years	Resigned (health/lost confidence of party)	20
Winston Churchill 1940	Lost 1945 (landslide)	5 years	Defeated	2
Neville Chamberlain 1937	Never fought an election	3 years	Resigned (lost confidence of party)	17
Stanley Baldwin	Won 1935 (lesser majority for coalition)	2 years	Resigned (health)	8
Stanley Baldwin	Lost 1923 (hung)	1 year (8 months)	Defeated	8
Andrew Bonar Law	Never fought an election	1 year (7 months)	Resigned (health)	16
David Lloyd George	Won 1918 <sup>2</sup>	6 years	Resigned (ejected by coalition)	3

One of the reasons leaders leave office or are pushed is because a rival offers a better chance of electoral success. In the past century 5 takeovers have won and 5 lost the subsequent election (two

<sup>1</sup> These are rounded to the nearest year

<sup>2</sup> This election was for the unique war time coalition that had not faced election before.

never fought them). Both Eden in 1955 and Macmillan in 1959 managed to increase their majority substantially. However, the bad news for May is that all but one of the takeover winners were more than fifty years ago. Since 1959 only one takeover, John Major, has won a General Election, and his victory in 1992 did not lead to political success (see below). No takeover has won more than one General Election, compared with 2 elected leaders who won 3 (Blair and Thatcher) and one who won four (Wilson). May appears to have an even chance of leaving office by electoral defeat or resignation: six takeovers lost General Elections and six resigned.

Winning an election gives a Prime Minister a powerful boost of authority or ‘leadership capital’. All Prime Ministers experience a polling bounce on arrival in power that tails off over time. Takeovers can also benefit. Only Macmillan failed to have a bounce, perhaps due to the shock of Eden’s departure. The bounce of a takeover is often short-lived and small, but May’s 10 point lift in the month after her arrival in power was a far higher bounce than for Callaghan, Major or Brown.

**Table 3: Leadership Polling ‘Bounce’ for Callaghan, Major, Brown and May<sup>v</sup>**

<b>Prime Minister</b>	<b>Average Bounce size (+)</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Callaghan	3.5	April-May 1976
Major	5	December 1990
Brown	5	July-Aug 2007
May	10	July-Aug 2016

Takeover leaders should, presumably, suffer from not having election win behind them and would be minded to secure their own. However, the last takeover to quickly call an election, a mere nine days after becoming Prime Minister, was Anthony Eden in 1955. Macmillan waited four years from 1955 until 1959. All the other modern takeovers from Home to Callaghan, Major and Brown sought to hang on to the end of their term limit and to, as Churchill put it, ‘stay in the pub until closing time’. Both Callaghan in 1978 and Brown in 2007 backed down from calling an early election, with Brown losing his reputation for competence and decisiveness in doing so. This hanging on appears in part simple indecisiveness and also based on a hope that something will change when faced with poor polling numbers. May seems to be following this pattern and ruled out an early election with the slightly ambiguous statement that ‘there should be no general election until 2020’. Allies have spoken of how she intended to govern to the end of her inherited mandate.

How the lack of electoral legitimacy weakens a takeover is unclear. On a personal level John Major famously admitted to ‘a sneaking feeling that I was living in sin with the electorate’ before winning his own mandate<sup>vi</sup>. Politically the media and opponents may use the lack of legitimacy against a leader. The focus on Gordon Brown’s supposed illegitimacy from 2007 onwards, given he was ‘crowned’ in an unopposed Labour leadership contest, helped undermine his authority amid an increasingly beleaguered premiership.

Like Gordon Brown before her, May faces the charge of not only being unelected by the populace but also of being ‘crowned’ unopposed by the party. Despite May’s apparent ruling out of an election, opposition parties have complained that May was elected only via 199 Conservative MPs and had no mandate. There has also been some pressure for an early poll from Conservative MPs and right-wing tabloids, though this has been for reasons of opportunity rather than legitimacy. If May were to call an early election it would make her the first in more than half a century to do so. She also faces a slight harder task in ‘calling’ an election than her predecessors, as technically an election would need to meet the terms of the Fixed Term Parliament Act 2011, requiring a vote of no

confidence or a supermajority This can, however, be got round by pushing a simple ‘reset’ law through Parliament.<sup>vii</sup>

It is because of the loss of elections that takeovers’ time in office is, on average, is relatively brief. UK Prime Ministers on average have lasted five years, one maximum Parliamentary term. Takeover tenure was considerably shorter at just over three years, compared with an average of 7.8 years for election winners.

**Table 4: Prime Ministerial Tenure 1916-2016 (Years)**

Prime Minister	Average tenure (years)
UK All	5
UK Election winners	7.8
UK Takeover	3.3

The longest takeover was John Major at seven years (1990-1997) with Lloyd George (1916-1922) and Harold MacMillan (1957-1963) each surviving six years. The shortest premiership was Andrew Bonar Law’s 7 months (1922-1923), followed by Stanley Baldwin at eight months (1923-1924) and Douglas-Home at two days short of a year (1963-1964).

Longevity is linked to achievement. On Theakston and Gill’s ratings, reviewed below, ‘the top-rated post-war prime ministers all served at least six years in Downing Street [...]six years in office— requiring re-election at least once— seems to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for having an impact, leaving a policy legacy and enhancing a prime-ministerial reputation’.<sup>viii</sup>

A further difficulty for May’s longevity stems from the so-called ‘glass cliff’ that affects female leaders. O’Brien’s<sup>ix</sup> study of 10 parliamentary democracies between 1965 and 2013 identified 45 female leaders out of 328, a figure that had been rising steadily over the past few decades. Women leaders, as in May’s case may serve as a symbol of change and are ‘often associated with renewal and...offer a visible break from the past’. However the study, built upon previous research into female FTSE 100 company leaders and MPs, found that ‘women’s initial access to power increases when the post is least attractive’ and once in office ‘female leaders are also more likely than men to leave the position when facing an unfavourable electoral trajectory’. Female leaders are ‘doubly disadvantaged with respect to the party leadership’ as they are ‘more likely to initially come to power when the post is least desirable’ and then ‘have a greater likelihood of leaving the post when their parties lose seat share’. Female leaders are held to higher expectations and different standards. The mean duration in office of prime ministers, over 50 years in four countries is 6.38 years for male leaders and 4.97 years for women.<sup>x</sup>

### **Holding their party together**

The fate of a Prime Minister in the UK is tied to their party. As King explained: ‘to an extent that is sometimes overlooked by outsiders, the prime ministership is a party job before it is a governmental or national job’<sup>xi</sup>. British politics is less one of formal government and opposition but ‘over the shoulder politics’ with leaders looking backwards at the potential threat from their own party benches. Leaders are now more secure in their post but govern more fractious and rebellious parties.<sup>xii</sup>

Since the 1970s, but more continuously since the 1990s, government MPs are increasingly prone to rebel Labour MPs rebelled to varying degrees in 30% of all government whipped votes under New

Labour and each Parliament since has been more rebellious than the last. One of the key weaknesses of Callaghan, Major and Brown is that they all headed fractured parties. Callaghan faced the toughest test, as he lost his majority the day he entered office and was able to survive only by agreement with the Liberals until 1978 and then with the support of minor parties. John Major won a majority of 21 in his 1992 election that soon became 'cursedly small' as he faced rebellion and eroding numbers through lost by-elections. By 1997 his effective majority had eroded to zero. Though Major's level of party rebellion did not come near Callaghan's, the deep divisions in the Conservative party around the Maastricht agreement and media focus magnified the effect, especially when Major complained of 'bastards' and removed the whip from four sitting MPs. Brown's majority of 66 seemed secure but he faced 235 separate rebellions across his three years. His authority was eroded through a series of rebellions, U-turns and compromises on high profile issues from the Lisbon Treaty to terrorism and welfare. For all three, the rebellions not only disrupted tight legislative timetables but severely damaged the image of the leaders.

For Major and Brown the over the shoulder politics worsened from rebellion to outright leadership challenge. Removing a sitting party leader Prime Minister is increasingly difficult, as changes to institutional rules have strengthened their position vis a vis MPs. Nevertheless, Major had to fight and win a leadership election in 1995 and Brown faced three abortive challenges between 2007 and 2010. Major's margin of victory in 1995 was 'less than I had hoped for and more than I had feared...it was not really enough'. Like most leaders who are challenged, Major and Brown never recovered their authority and become trapped 'in a downward spiral of post-challenge recriminations...bad publicity, sliding polls...and continued leadership speculation'.<sup>xiii</sup>

May has a more potentially rebellious party than her predecessors. May has a smaller majority than Major, with just 17 seats, a number that will magnify the influence of unhappy MPs and the effect of any rebellion. This number now includes 11 former Ministers, 'dispossessed' by her dismissals, including ex-Chancellor George Osborne. Her party is also riven with a spectrum of opinion from hard-line and soft Leavers to Remainers. So far, despite predictions of a Conservative split, it is Labour that suffered more deeply in the aftermath of Brexit. It remains to be seen if May's appointment of prominent Leavers to Cabinet and her promise that 'Brexit means Brexit' can unite her party or will just temporarily paper over the divisions while giving potential rivals such as Boris Johnson bases to undermine her.

### **Performance in government**

Beyond winning, how are Prime Ministers judged? The danger for any takeover is that they become, like Callaghan, Major and Brown, what Roy Jenkins called 'suffix' Prime Ministers, acting as 'historical codas to an era'.<sup>xiv</sup>

Any takeover inherits the same office, resources and structural advantages of being Prime Minister, placing them at the centre of executive power and the media's attention. The polling 'bounce' provided by their arrival may even empower them against other powerful actors temporarily, as does the sense of difference with their predecessor and symbolism of change.

There are few systematic measures or analyses of Prime Ministerial performance of the sort developed for US Presidents. Rankings of Prime Ministers also have a bias towards those leading during crises or great events. The rankings in Table 2 come from Theakston's 2004 survey of 139 politics and history academics; it took in 20 Prime Ministers from Lord Salisbury to Tony Blair. The results fitted broadly with similar polls of the public and journalists.

Rankings can, of course, only take us so far. A Prime Minister must be assessed on whether they had the skills in a particular environment and context. Stability, crisis, war or peace and can all determine

success or failure. This combines with the equally difficult problem of personality and agency. Prime Ministers themselves disagreed on what personality traits make for a good Prime Minister: Harold Wilson said it was the ability to sleep well, Edward Heath felt it was calm in a crisis and Clement Attlee argued it was a lack of ego.

Based on this ranking, takeovers performed less well than General Election winners. The two highest ranking takeovers, Lloyd George, who came third in the survey, and Winston Churchill, who came second, would be regarded as high performing if not 'great', leading Britain in the First and Second World War respectively amid deepest national crisis. In fifth place is another takeover, Harold Macmillan, who was highly rated not only for winning a 99 seat majority but for his influential actions on, for example, de-colonisation and Europe.

More worrying for Prime Minister May, the bottom 5 of the rankings are all takeovers. The nether reaches of Theakston's survey contains names such as Anthony Eden and Neville Chamberlain, who failed in crises partly of their own making, and the very briefly serving Alec Douglas-Home and Andrew Bonar Law. John Major, ranked 15, became the worst polling Prime Minister in history and went down to one of the largest electoral defeats in modern political history in 1997. Though Brown is not included, later assessments tend towards failure.

Judged on the mixture of context and personal skills, the last three takeovers come out differently. Callaghan, Major and Brown all had to govern in challenging contexts, facing economic crises and leading divided parties and a strong opposition. Callaghan displayed considerable skills, perhaps accounting for his higher rating in the rankings, whereas Major is widely viewed as a poor and inadequate leader who was out of his depth. Brown too appeared to lack skills or luck and Theakston and Gill pointed out that his reaction to the 2007 financial crisis was widely praised but bought little political benefit.

May inherits one of the biggest peacetime political challenges ever faced by a Prime Minister and her premiership will stand or fall on Brexit. As well as pursuing complex negotiations, the Prime Minister must also hold together a divided party and divided country, with the future unity of the UK in doubt. She is not just taking on the task with a working machine but is restructuring it substantially, creating two new whole departments to lead on Brexit, the Department of Exiting the European Union (DEXEU) and the Department for International Trade (DIT) that are already the subject of Whitehall turf wars. Responsibility and control will, however, ultimately reside with Downing Street. Much will depend on her skills. May has been praised for her determined and principled leadership at the Home Office by some, but others have highlighted her similarities to Gordon Brown, pointing to a tendency to blame avoidance (especially in the 2011 Border Agency controversy), obsession with detail and secrecy. Under May Downing Street has sought increasing control over policy and presentation. Neither number 10 nor DEXEU has formulated any clear solutions, instead offering a mixture of vague promises ('Brexit means Brexit' or controlling immigration) and hostages to fortune over Northern Ireland's border and Scotland's influence.

## **Conclusion**

Takeovers face greater obstacles and fewer advantages than elected Prime Ministers. On average they have less time in power, less chance of winning elections and are rated as worse performing. If leadership is seen as using 'skills in context' or 'structuring the world so that you can win' then takeover Prime Ministers face tougher environments and fewer opportunities, often being greeted with divided parties, deep crises and less room for manoeuvre.<sup>xv</sup> So what are the lessons for Theresa May's Premiership? First, May can't expect great longevity though a victory on or before 2020 would

still put her above the average takeover tenure. In terms of exit, she appears to have exactly even chances of leaving office by election defeat or resignation. Second, party unity will be key. Callaghan, Major and Brown all inherited an unhappy and rebellious Parliamentary party: the question is whether Brexit provides an opportunity for May to persuade or force the party to cohere or makes her an over the shoulder Prime Minister who must compromise at every step. Third, May must demonstrate skills in a very difficult context, as she faces a huge and complex strategic task for which she carries personal responsibility. The record of takeovers, whatever their experience, tends towards failure. Eden over Suez, Chamberlain at Munich or Major and Maastricht are all now by-words for political failure. Even when there is success it goes unrewarded or unrecognised, as with Brown in 2007. May will need a large amount of skill, luck and support if she is to avoid the short unhappy fate of the takeover Prime Minister.

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<sup>i</sup> see Cabinet Office (2011). *The Cabinet Manual*. TSO; London, p11.

<sup>ii</sup> King (1991), p.29 on reasons for stepping down and see Bynander, F. and 't Hart, P. (2007) "The Politics of Party Leader Survival and Succession: Australia in Comparative Perspective," *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 42 (1), 47-72 especially page 56

<sup>iii</sup> See King (1991), p25 and Hennessy, P. (2001) *Prime Minister: The Office and Its Holder Since 1945* Basingstoke: Palgrave and Hennessy, P. (2014) 'What are Prime Ministers for?' *Journal of the British Academy*, 2, 213–230

<sup>iv</sup> See Heffernan, Richard and Webb, Paul (2005) 'The British Prime Minister: much more than 'first among equals' in Poguntke, Thomas and Webb, Paul (eds.) *The Presidentialization of Politics: A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies*. Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, pp. 26-62, especially p30:43

<sup>v</sup> Wells, A 'Leadership honeymoons and ICMs latest poll' <http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/blog/archives/9740> , 28 July 2016

<sup>vi</sup> See Major, John (1999) *John Major: The Autobiography* London: Harper Collins on 'living in sin', p.291

<sup>vii</sup> Theakston, K., & Gill, M. (2011). The postwar premiership league. *The Political Quarterly*, 82(1), 67-80. For more on Fixed Terms see Prescott, C. (2016) 'A "Snap" General Election? It's Far from a Certainty', U.K. Const. L. Blog (13th Jul 2016) available at <https://ukconstitutionallaw.org/>

<sup>x</sup> O'Brien, D. Z. (2015). Rising to the top: gender, political performance, and party leadership in parliamentary democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(4), 1022-1039. On tenure see Byander and Hart 2007 esp. page 51 and Theakston and Gill (2011) on longevity and success.

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<sup>xi</sup> See King (1991) p.25

<sup>xii</sup> See Major's reflections in Major 1999 p. 626. 'Over the Shoulder' politics is discussed in King, A. (1993). 'The implications of one-party government' in King et al (eds) *Britain at the Polls 1992*, Chatham House, NJ, pp223-48.

<sup>xiii</sup> Rebellion is discussed in Cowley, P., & Stuart, M. (2014). In the brown stuff?: Labour backbench dissent under Gordon Brown, 2007–10. *Contemporary British History*, 28(1), 1-23 and historically in Cowley, P. (2005). *The Rebels: how Blair mislaid his majority*. London: Politico's Publishing Limited. Major's own experience is discussed in his memoirs at p.645 and the 'spiral' in Byander and Hart and p.61

<sup>xiv</sup> See the surveys at Theakston, K., & Gill, M. (2011). The postwar premiership league. *The Political Quarterly*, 82(1), 67-80. and Theakston, K. (2007) 'What Makes for an Effective British Prime Minister?' *Quaderni di scienza politica*, 14: 227-249.

<sup>xv</sup> See on 'skills in context' see Hargrove, E. C., & Owens, J. E. (2003). *Leadership in context*. Rowman & Littlefield and Hargrove (2003) and 'structuring situations so you can win' see Riker, W. H. (1986). *The Art of Political Manipulation*. New York and London: Yale University Press.