PhD Politics

The more the merrier? An exploration of inclusive party leadership selection reform

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Abstract

Party leaders in parliamentary democracies not only compete for the top office in the country, but are immensely influential to their parties, the wider system and political attitudes more generally. This thesis analyses the causes and consequences of the trend of recent decades where parties are democratising their leadership selection process, to explore how parties' internal decisions affect democracy at the system level and vice versa.

I first explore the connection between elite polarisation and inclusive leadership selection reform. I analyse 28 cases of parties democratising their leadership selectorates to members across 7 Western parliamentary democracies. I find that elite polarisation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for inclusive leadership selection reform, for parties competing in a bipolar party system specifically.

I then explore the relationship between party outcomes and voters' feelings of representation by the current leader of the party they support to further understand the importance of the party in leaders' connections with voters. Using a representative survey from the UK, the results of binary logistic regression analysis show that perceptions of the party do matter for fostering feelings of representation by the party leader, but not all elements of party outputs. Moreover, in an evaluation of the importance of this specific representation for satisfaction with democracy, the results demonstrate a positive association between the two variables, the effect of which is stronger for those who support the party of government.

Finally, I explore the trade-off between normative perceptions of democracy and the negative party consequences that come with inclusive leadership selection reform. Results of a survey experiment demonstrate that voters' attitudes towards democracy at the party level do not translate to the

system level. Voters hold conflicting attitudes that present specific barriers for parties to overcome in their role as a representative mechanism.

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

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Chapter 1: Introduction

More than an internal party matter: the relevance of leadership selection reform to representative democracy

In 2014, the UK Labour party reformed its internal rules for selecting their party leader. The party subsequently held its first one member one vote (OMOV) leadership contest the following year. This new selection procedure replaced the party's electoral college method where the parliamentary group, trade unions and members' preferences each counted for a third of the vote. The reform then, was publicly presented as a means of overcoming undue trade union influence (Quinn, 2016). While OMOV leadership selections had already been held in other UK parties prior to Labour's venture, that supporters could register to participate for a relatively small fee of £3, set this contest apart from a typical membership affair (Garland, 2016). Instead, the contest more closely resembled an open primary, whereby the entire electorate has voting rights in the selection of a party leader (or electoral candidate).

While trade union influence may have been stifled (Whickham-Jones, 2015), an influx of registered supporters helped to tip the balance of power in favour of a relatively new left-wing online activist group. Resultingly, Jeremy Corbyn, once the underdog of the contest, became the next leader of the Labour Party (Quinn, 2016). Yet, the division that underlined the contest (Pemberton and Whickham-Jones, 2015) did not cease with the final result. During his tenure, MPs publicly declared their differences with Corbyn and refused shadow cabinet roles (Blick and Kippin, 2016). Beyond the party, doubt surfaced over his ability to control the party and by extension his competency to fulfil the duties of the Leader of the Opposition (Harris, 2016). In the end, Labour's

message was notoriously unclear (Ford *et al*., 2021) and Jeremy Corbyn did not lead the party back to government.

This specific reform is simply one, perhaps more extreme example that represents an unfolding pattern of recent decades across Western democracies. No longer is the status quo of party leaders being chosen behind closed doors in smoke-filled rooms. Increasingly, party elites are allowing ordinary party members the privilege of voting for their leader (Cross and Blais, 2012a; Pilet and Cross, 2014) by OMOV where all votes cast hold equal weight. Party leaders enjoy considerable status. In parliamentary democracies, leaders of governing parties enter the office of the Prime Minister, or perhaps a cabinet minister as leader of a junior coalition partner, while leaders of opposition parties hold prominent parliamentary roles (Kenig, 2009c). Selecting party leaders is therefore no small task. Thus, who wields the power to do so is of crucial consequence to representative democracy.

This pattern of reform represents a choice by party elites from all party types, across countries, who are opting to diffuse the internal balance of power within the party away from the top. From themselves. This thesis will examine the rationale for this decision across 7 Western parliamentary democracies, and the implications thereof via an assessment of voters' perceptions in the UK. Together, this research seeks to further our understanding of parties' internal decision-making structures.

In discussing the process of inclusive leadership selection reform, this thesis will refer to the concept of the 'selectorate' which describes the body empowered to vote in parties' electoral candidate or leadership selections. Figure 1.1 demonstrates the span across which a party's leadership selectorate can range, from a single individual at the most exclusive end of the scale, to the wider electorate at the most inclusive end of the scale (known as an open primary).

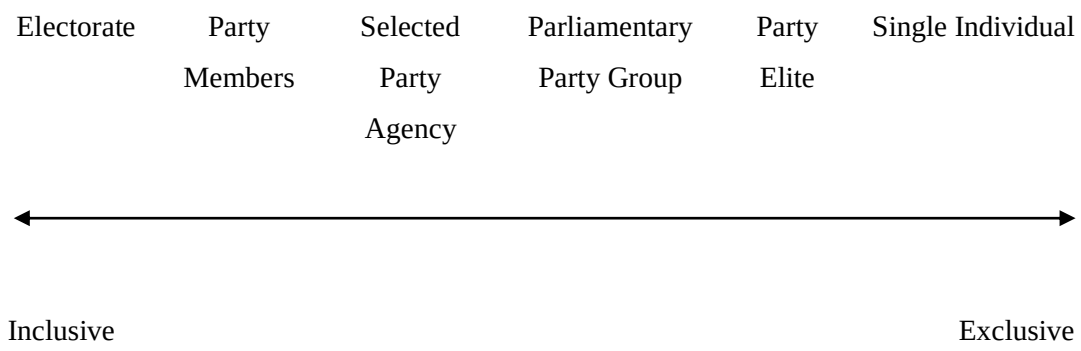

Figure 1. 1 Party Selectorates (Kenig, 2009b)

While this thesis does not empirically examine the results of inclusive leadership contests (who was selected), the 2015 UK Labour example perfectly highlights the trade-offs that accompany these inclusive reforms. With that, comes consideration of why party elites choose to make such a consequential reform in the first instance, and what aim/s they hope to achieve in doing so. Moreover, are these reforms the optimal mechanism to achieve these aims, and do voters support these reforms at all costs? This thesis explores each of these questions by first examining the link between the party system environment and the decision to introduce OMOV leadership votes. Here, I explore the association between elite polarisation and inclusive leadership selection reform. Second, I examine the link between perceptions of the party and perceptions of leadership representation, and the link between perceptions of leadership representation and satisfaction with democracy. This enables a discussion of how these reforms might affect representation more widely. Finally, I assess voter perceptions of these reforms at both the party level and the system level to determine whether normative perceptions of democracy outweigh the negative outcomes that can be associated with inclusive leadership selections.

Before exploring these questions, it is prudent to first consider how leadership selection reform carries important implications for politics more widely than the confines of the party walls. Though theoretically, representative democracy might be sustained in their absence, parties are the key mechanism that have contributed to its endurance (Kölln, 2015a). The collective action problem articulates that the interest of the greater good alone is insufficient to motivate the collective's contribution to achieving shared goals (Olson, 1965). Political parties solve collective action problems pertaining to the functioning of society and democratic governance. They do so through internal monitoring and providing actors with personal incentives to carry out the tasks necessary for the survival of an efficient democratic state, that is connected with citizens therein (Aldrich, 1995; Cox and McCubbins, 1993). For this, and other reasons such as political socialisation (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000), parties have become the cornerstone of representative democracy. Indeed, Schattschneider's (1942) assertion that contemporary democracy cannot be sustained without parties has thus far stood the test of time.

Broadly then, parties are considered to have three main functions. Crudely, the party in the electorate ensures parties are an information source for citizens pertaining to the important issues of the day. This arm of the party connects with voters on the ground and is the element responsible for encouraging party loyalty via identity. The party in the legislature sees parties participate in government, or opposition and accountability, to ensure enduring representation of citizens' interests. The party organisation then orchestrates each of these functions. This is the apparatus responsible for producing and shaping political elites and candidates for office, and for establishing and coordinating political interests (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Key, 1964). How the organisation does this is a direct reflection of the power structure therein, thus ultimately, the party organisation is the decision-making organ (Borz and Janda, 2020).

Logically, these elements are interconnected with changes to one having the potential to influence the others and in turn, the parties' ability to effectively act as a representative mechanism within the system. Changes to leadership selection rules therefore come as an adjustment to the party organisation. The example of inclusive leadership selection reform outlined above highlights how giving ordinary members, and even party supporters, equal voting rights in choosing the party leader has far-reaching consequences.

Parties encourage participation by offering selective benefits. These are outcomes only afforded to those who engage in party proceedings and can be sub-categorised into three types: material, social and purposive benefits (Clark and Wilson, 1961). Examples of material benefits include the salary that comes with elected office, career advancement, or any personal advantage from implemented policies. Social benefits of party involvement include feelings of belonging and identity, and the act of participating in a group itself provides increased social opportunities. Purposive benefits are those such as the positive feelings of contributing to a cause (Scarrow, 2014).

Voting rights in leadership selections are an example of such selective benefits. When these are granted at less cost to individuals, for example, if one simply must be an ordinary member without engaging in any forms of activism, then other party goals might not be achieved in return for this benefit. Moreover, when leadership selection voting rights are extended to ordinary members, or even to the wider electorate, parties can then become subject to electoral whims. Their ability to implement policies for the longer-term can then be hindered and stability threatened. To add to this, internal division challenges a party leader to bargain (Ceron, 2019). As such, more inclusive selectorates could theoretically see parties abandon long-term goals. Moreover, inclusivity complicates the leader's accountability mechanism whereby they must continue to seek approval from a larger base with perhaps controversial priorities to ensure their survival (Rahat and Shapira, 2017).

Therefore, not only can OMOV leadership selection processes depreciate the value of selective benefits, they can also interfere with the party's ability to organise interests in the longer term. Collective action problems may therefore persist. How parties organise influences party outcomes. Inclusive party leadership selection reform then represents a salient shift in the evolution of democracy where parties' value in solving collective action problems and efficiently acting as a representative mechanism can be challenged. This thesis explores the causes and consequences of inclusive leadership selection reform and further demonstrates that parties are both endogenous and exogenous entities that are responsible for influencing the wider democratic system while being shaped by it. In this vein, this research offers reinforcement for the view that scholars, citizens and political actors alike should continue to observe and be cognisant of the dynamics of intra-party politics to fully understand political events in their entirety.

This perspective, and therefore this research, will likely grow in relevance together with the importance of party leaders to representative democracy. As society has evolved, so too have political parties. In short, thanks to the advances in multimedia that drew the electorate's attention towards a leader's personal characteristics (Blais, 2013), party politics shifted from community fuelled organisations based on shared values to a more individual focus (Farrell, 1996). Resultingly, in addition to party leaders competing for the top office in the country and the considerable power that comes with this, party leaders as individuals are key players in shaping the party's perception. They are in and of themselves, becoming increasingly important symbols in the electorate (McAllister, 1996). Parties are leader-centric entities, more so than ever, (Schumacher and Giger, 2017) that are often indeed defined by their leaders (McAllister, 1996, 2007; Rahat and Shaefer, 2007). As such, party leaders are of growing importance to voters' political attitudes (Mughan, 2000; Garzia, 2017) and the popularity of a leader factors into voters' electoral

decisions (Holmberg and Oscarsson, 2013). That parties must maintain their representative utility among an electorate with evolving political attitudes that centre an individual actor, parties' role in connecting citizens with the state is arguably then more complex now than it once was. This thesis therefore seeks to contextualise inclusive leadership selection reform in this political reality.

Research questions

The challenges faced by the Labour Party's 2015 leadership selection highlight the risks parties take in introducing OMOV reform. Unsurprisingly, parties' leadership selection processes, and changes thereto, has inspired a plethora of research. In one of the very few articles that seeks to capture the relationship between parties' internal levels of democracy and voters' attitudes towards system level democracy, Close, Kelbel and van Haute (2017) recommend that parties introduce open primaries to encourage disaffected citizens back into the political process. They do so based on their findings that those who feel alienated from politics and have less democratic satisfaction, hold a preference for open candidate selection procedures by voters. The logic follows that voters poorly understand how institutions function and therefore do not trust internal party actors to make these decisions on their behalf.

On the other hand, those with higher levels of democratic satisfaction prefer smaller selectorates by members or delegates. Moreover, those who trust that the system is responsive, prefer candidate selection by either delegates or elites only. Indeed, Shomer, Put and Gedalya-Lavy also show that inclusive candidate selection procedures are associated with higher levels of democratic satisfaction (2016) and higher levels of trust in the party (Shomer, Put and Gedalya-Lavy (2018). Together, these findings present important implications that speak to the significance of intra-party democracy in the context of sustaining wider representative democracy. They also offer a basis for a

fascinating and timely research agenda that explores other, extremely pertinent aspects of intra-party democracy such as leadership selection, particularly in an era of leader dominated politics (McAllister, 2007, 2013).

Though the nature of candidate selection contests will logically differ from that of leadership selections, scholars note the overwhelming similarities for both the motivation for introducing inclusive reform and the consequences for the party following inclusive reform of either type (Kenig, Rahat and Hazan, 2016). The widespread introduction of primaries, open or closed, would undeniably alter the course of representative democracy were it to become reality. Given the pervasive introduction of more inclusive leadership electorates in recent decades (Cross and Blais, 2012a; Pilet and Cross, 2014) coupled with the increasing importance of the party leader to representative democracy (McAllister, 2007, 2013), I found myself considering whether internal direct democracy in the form of inclusive leadership selection is indeed the optimal avenue for redressing political disaffection.

In this vein, I first consider the reasons why parties are introducing this reform of their own accord. Given the notoriety of party leaders, it is logical to assume that leadership selection mechanisms, and the consequences thereof, likely do play an important role in attitudes at the party level, and towards the wider democratic system. Perhaps party elites recognise this? Against a backdrop of decreasing significance of parties in citizen's lives (Dalton, 2000) and declining membership numbers (van Biezen *et al*., 2012), oftentimes wider leadership selectorates are explained by a want to revive the party membership (Cross, 1996; Scarrow, 2015). While on the surface this aligns with Close et al's (2017) theory, the empirical evidence implies that parties do not seek a bottom-up revival so to speak. Instead, elites trust that members will follow their cues and act/vote in line with their wishes (Lisi, 2010: Wauters, 2013). Parties democratise to give the leader a stronger mandate over the party (Drucker, 1984). Though there is often an "official story" that parties advertise,

emphasising greater openness, there is likely also a more nuanced, hidden reality that parties seek to achieve (Katz and Mair, 1992, 6-8). Moreover, inclusive leadership selection does not meet democratic aims in the entire sense of the concept (Ignazi, 2020). A thorough examination of the literature of the causes and consequences of introducing inclusive leadership selection leads me to conclude that among a slew of potential negative consequences, the only tangible benefit that parties gain through this particular reform is increased legitimacy (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021). I therefore consider in what circumstances increased legitimacy might be required.

The UK Labour Party's pivotal decision was justified by then leader, Ed Miliband, as a means of quelling trade union influence. Yet, Barnea and Rahat (2007) explain that internal democratisation is likely the combined result of stimuli occurring at all three levels of the political system; the political level (the environment), the party level (inter-party competition) and the intra-party level (individual/group dynamics within the party). Internal reform is a complex, multifaceted decision (Harmel and Janda, 1994). Yet inclusive leadership selection reform is not constrained to any party type or country (Aylott and Bolin, 2021; Pilet and Cross, 2014). For example, the Netherlands' Christian Democratic Appeal towards the right democratised in 2012, as did Spain's PSOE on the left in 2014. This speaks to the contribution of a wider phenomenon to this reform. At the time of Labour's reform, the wider UK political environment had shifted from a period of convergence to one of increased polarisation. Indeed, the literature on elite polarisation demonstrates a multitude of influences on party behaviour and the effects on party competition. I therefore posit that the party reached a crossroads that required increased legitimacy to overcome. The introduction of austerity by the Conservative Party led coalition government in 2010 increased the policy space between parties and shifted the country's attention back to issue-based politics, prompting Labour to adapt (Quinn, 2016). As scholars continue to uncover the

drivers of this phenomenon, a deeper understanding is gained pertaining to where party elites' interests lie. Do they truly widen selectorates to reinvigorate the party membership at all costs, or do inclusive selectorates serve other aims such as solving problems that party elites alone cannot? I examine this process in further detail in Chapter 3.

In recognition that rule changes elicit multiple consequences (Hall and Taylor, 1996), I seek to contextualise this type of organisational change, by also considering that the increasing influence of party leaders on political attitudes (McAllister, 1996; Mughan, 2000; Garzia, 2017) likely has implications for voters' perceptions of representation. Whether elites' risk of introducing OMOV will offer the highest payoff, will depend on how voters respond. Thus, whether these reforms are capable of minimising disaffection logically rests on such perceptions. In modern political environments, party leaders often transcend the party (McAllister, 2007; Rahat and Shaefer, 2007) and the public nature of OMOV contests feeds into the notion of leaders as party symbols before selection even takes place. Coupled with the increasing power of party leaders (McAllister, 2007), understanding what drives voters to feel represented specifically by the leader of the party they support is a crucial step in understanding the effect of inclusive leadership selection contests. Scholarship points to a dual influence of party leaders on political attitudes; directly via their personality and indirectly via their influence on the party programme (King, 2002). If party outcomes have any influence over voters' feelings of being represented by the party leader, the organisational consequences of OMOV selections – the hurdles to solving collective action problems – will likely affect parties' abilities to reduce disaffection. Indeed, Jeremy Corbyn oversaw Labour's worst electoral result since 1935 thanks to his ambivalence towards crucial policy areas (Goes, 2020). His leadership of the party therefore had representational consequences for voters.

Previous literature pertaining to the representational effects of blurring parties' organisational boundaries is mainly focused on whether doing so encourages party memberships to become more descriptively representative of the electorate (Gauja and Jackson, 2015; Gomez and Ramiro, 2019; Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010; Webb *et al*., 2017). What remains unclear from current scholarship is if party outcomes have any effect on whether one feels represented by the current leader of the party they support. That parties are opening leadership selection to their ordinary members, and indeed the wider electorate at the more extreme end of the scale, it is therefore pertinent to understand if and how perceptions of the party influence feelings of representation by the leader, particularly against a backdrop of leaders' rising profiles. I develop this topic further through a theoretical discussion and empirical analysis in Chapter 4.

Finally, I consider the aftermath of the contests. Corbyn's selection was clouded by the reality of MP rebellion (Blick and Kippin, 2016). Party cohesion is important for functioning in the legislature and signalling competence to voters (Ceron, 2013; Greene and Haber, 2015; Laver, 2003). Thus, leadership contests heightening division would reasonably impact voters' evaluations of the party and its ability to fulfil its proper functions. Whether voters might place limitations on their support for participation in selecting a party leader then, would go some way in determining whether primaries of this kind can indeed play some role in reducing disaffection.

Scholarship demonstrates the propensity for inclusive leadership selection contests to result in fallout with those on the losing side being less likely to accept the outcome (Lingier, Kern and Wauters, 2022). Though empirical research does not always validate the notion of ideological differences between intra-party actors at different levels of commitment (van Holsteyn *et al*., 2017) convention assumes that differences exist within these intra-party groups (Faucher, 2015b). The portrayal of activists being more extreme and

committed to ideological purism than party leaders, who are in turn more extreme than voters (May, 1973) is prevalent in the literature and political commentary. Yet to my knowledge, resulting disagreement between the leader and specific groups of party actors has not yet been addressed by current research. Particularly in the context of leadership selection. Research exploring voter attitudes towards these reforms is limited and does not address whether voters would continue to support inclusive leadership contests under these specific divisive conditions. Despite the literature warning of the many negative consequences that can accompany OMOV leadership contests (Ignazi, 2020), parties continue to experiment with these reforms that hold consequences for who wields power within the party and beyond. As organisational boundaries become increasingly vague, that questions remain unanswered by existing scholarship in its entirety is clear. As such, the central research questions of this thesis are as follows:

- Do parties make their leadership selection more inclusive in response to elite polarisation?

- What elements of party outcomes are associated with party supporters feeling represented by the party leader?

- Do voters place limits on their support for inclusive leadership selection reform?

Thesis overview and findings

As a foundation for exploring these questions, Chapter 2 offers a literature review that explains the significance of OMOV leadership selection reform. The chapter is separated into eight sections which enables me to provide a

comprehensive overview of political parties' organisational evolution and the importance of their members thereto. This provides the reader with a basis to fully understand inclusive leadership selection in the proper context. I then discuss the literature pertaining to the importance of leadership selection, and the causes and consequences of introducing inclusive contests. The final sections address the cost-benefit analysis of this type of reform to parties' overall goals in an assessment of the rationality of such reforms. It then discusses how intra-party democracy might influence voter attitudes towards the wider system.

In Chapter 3, I explore the relationship between system level polarisation and parties' decision to introduce OMOV leadership selection contests. When ideological differences become more apparent, parties specifically address the issues at hand (Spoon and Klüver, 2015). This is opposed to simply projecting competence, which may be sufficient in converged systems (Green and Hobolt, 2008). I present a theoretical framework outlining how widening the leadership selectorate to the members (and beyond) provides a solution for parties struggling to optimally position themselves within an increasingly polarised system. Doing so enables elites to understand how their voter pool is reacting to the changing environment, while providing increased legitimacy for any backlash that more targeted policies might receive. Moreover, the public nature of these contests allows for the newly elected leader to determine and set the appropriate political temperature (Sartori, 1976) according to the electoral terrain ahead of the next election. Importantly, I posit that differences will be observed between parties that operate in bipolar party systems and multipolar party systems owing to the varying nature of party competition. I argue that inclusive leadership selection reform will have a higher pay-off in bipolar party systems. I therefore posit that parties in such systems will be more likely to democratise their leadership selection processes in response to elite polarisation, than parties in multipolar systems.

In an initial exploratory test of this theory, I analyse 28 cases of parties democratising their leadership selectorates to the members across 7 countries. Using Comparative Manifesto data, I compare the difference in levels of elite polarisation from the parliamentary term in which the decision to reform the leadership selection process was made, and the one prior, to determine whether an increase in elite polarisation might contribute to the rationale for reform. I also use secondary data (scholarly articles) to provide further context to the reform in terms of the independent variable. In the same vein as Cross and Blais' (2012a) prominent study of party level motivators (electoral loss and governing status) in Westminster systems, I propose that elite polarisation is a necessary but not sufficient condition of inclusive leadership selection reform, in bipolar party systems specifically. The data demonstrates weaker support for the effect of increased elite polarisation on the introduction of inclusive leadership selectorates where party system type is not considered.

In Chapter 4, I explore how perceptions of party outcomes influence voters' perceptions of leadership representation. If perceptions of the party leader influence perceptions of the party, for example influencing voting behaviour or perceptions of party closeness (McAllister, 2007; Garzia, 2017), it is logical that perceptions of party outcomes influence perceptions of the leader, and how well they represent party supporters. Party outputs – how a party is perceived – are evidence of a leader's influence, or lack thereof, on the party. Leaders influence party perceptions directly through their personality, and indirectly through their influence on party policy (King, 2002). It follows that leaders will ultimately influence the party in alternative ways and to varying extents, from their predecessors, depending on their own specific vision and priorities for the party (Blais, 2013). Indeed, how a leader approaches these goals will depend on their unique skill set (King, 2002). Leader performance matters for party outcomes. It is logical then that party outcomes – evidence of

a leader's performance – influences voters' perceptions of how well the current leader represents them.

Here I focus on three different elements of party messaging: valence politics, ideological congruence and perceptions of party cohesion. All three elements speak to a leader's ability to conduct the party in a way that represents its voters. Voters are typically not exposed to the process in which parties navigate these outcomes but nonetheless hold leaders responsible for. I therefore expect that voters assess how well a leader represents them based on these outcomes. Because perceptions of parties increasingly revolve around their leader (McAllister, 1996, 2013), and leaders are more important than ever in forming political attitudes (McAllister, 1996; Mughan, 2000; Garzia, 2017), understanding what drives feelings of leader representation is crucial. If party outputs are associated with perceptions of representation by the leader, then this speaks to the sustained importance of the organisation of the party in fostering representation.

I argue that those who perceive the party to be competent will be more likely to feel represented by the party leader, as will those who perceive the party to be ideologically congruent with their own preferences. These assumptions stem from the positive evaluations associated with deliverance and the expectation that the party one votes for aligns with our policy preferences. If voters perceive that the party achieves both of these things, I posit they will be more likely to feel represented by the party leader in the assumption that the leader is responsible for the outcome. Concerning party cohesion, I posit a competing set of hypotheses that highlight both the positive and negative connotations of internal division for representation. For example, parliamentarians who contradict the party line can be perceived positively by constituents who appreciate that MPs are willing to fight for a specific cause (Bowler, 2010; Campbell *et al*., 2019; Carey, 2007; Carey and Shugart, 1995). On the other hand, perceptions of intra-party division encourage voters to

perceive parties as less competent policy makers (Greene and Haber, 2015), carry negative electoral consequences (Lehrer and Lin, 2020; Lin and Lehrer, 2021) and wield tangible hurdles to parties' ability to effectively legislate and govern (Ceron, 2013; Laver, 2003). As perceptions of intra-party division are likely dependent on the context in which it is perceived, I posit that either directional relationship may be a possibility.

Furthermore, I then explore the relationship between feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports and wider democratic satisfaction. I argue that a positive relationship exists between these two variables on the basis of the winners and losers' thesis (Anderson and Guillory, 1997) whereby one reaps the rewards of democracy (feeling represented by the leader) and therefore elicits a more positive attitude towards the system. I argue that this effect is moderated by whether one intends to vote for the current party of government.

Using a representative sample of UK citizens, I used pooled data from surveys conducted in September 2021 and December 2021 which together comprised of 3297 participants. Results of binary logistic regression models show that perceptions of party competence are positively associated with feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports. There is no statistically significant relationship between ideological congruence with the party, or perceptions of party unity with feeling represented by the party leader. Concerning the influence of feeling represented by the party leader on democratic satisfaction, the results indicate a positive association, the effect of which is stronger when one supports the current party of government.

In Chapter 5, I explore voters' attitudes towards leadership selection reform and its influence on satisfaction with wider democracy. Scholarship warns of the danger of inclusivity to party unity (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021; DeWinter, 1988; Ramiro, 2013; Scarrow, 2021). I therefore seek to determine whether voters hold normative perceptions of democracy despite the detriment to the party's ability to achieve consensus. To test this, I designed and used a

survey experiment that enables me to separate out these effects from one another. I test whether participation levels within the party, and whether agreement levels between the party leader and different integral party groups, directly affect support for leadership selection reform and wider democratic satisfaction. The survey was fielded in the UK in December 2021 shortly after a bout of leadership selection reforms in the UK Labour Party were reported in the media.

I find that those who were exposed to the increased participation treatment were more likely to support leadership selection reform, as were those who were exposed to the treatment that specified increased agreement between the party leader and party supporters, and increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs. Agreement between the party leader and party activists had no effect on support for party leadership selection reform.

Contrary to expectation however, participation levels in the leadership selection process had no significant effect on voters' democratic satisfaction, neither did agreement levels between a party leader and their voters, or activists. Decreased agreement between a party leader and their MPs, however, is associated with increased democratic satisfaction. These results hold important implications for both intra-party politics and wider democratic vitality.

In Chapter 6, I discuss the findings and explore leadership primaries' ability to quell political disaffection in the context of solving collective action problems. I also discuss my recommendations for future works on the subject and highlight the theoretical and empirical contributions of this thesis to leadership selection scholarship and intra-party democracy research more widely. This thesis offers a novel theoretical framework that contributes to the literature demonstrating the drivers of inclusive leadership selection reform. It provides further support for the notion that parties change their organisation when they deem it helpful for achieving their wider goals (Harmel and Janda, 1994). Moreover, to my knowledge, this thesis explores a new measure of

representation in that of the leader of the party one supports. That some party outcomes are associated with this perception of representation and some not, speaks to the consequences of leadership selection reform given that voters do not solely rely on leaders' personal characteristics in their evaluations of representation. It follows that the consequences of leadership selection reform on the party, can have further representational consequences. Furthering our understanding of this is crucial in a time where party leaders are central to politics (McAllister, 2007; 2013).

Finally, the results indicate that scholarship should not assume that voters' attitudes towards intra-party democracy translate to attitudes at the system level, perhaps providing some clarification to limited but mixed conclusions from current research (Close, Kelbel and van Haute, 2017; Shomer, Put and Gedalya-Lavy, 2016; Webb, Scarrow and Poguntke, 2022). Taken together, the findings lead me to a discussion of a potential impasse between calculated party elites and a somewhat fickle electorate, whereby organisational change might never fully satisfy voter expectations. Not only does this thesis then contribute to the relevant scholarship, it also contributes to political discussions regarding normative perceptions of party functioning and democracy more widely. These themes are explored more in-depth in the final chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Inside the party: why should we care?

Political parties are of dwindling significance in citizens' lives (Dalton, 2000). Coupled with a decreasing trust in political actors and institutions (Dalton, 2004), younger generations are being drawn to alternative forms of participation more than ever before (Norris, 2002). Whilst the heyday of political parties in the post WWII era may be exaggerated in some scholarship (Scarrow, 2000), widespread discontent with the status quo is indeed indicative of a tangible societal shift. Yet, parties endure by virtue of their ability to solve collective action problems (Aldrich, 1995) and socialising actors into politics (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000). Through varying levels of citizen approval and engagement, parties' role as the interface between the public and the state persists. Parties create and parties adapt. Party decision making, changes therein or lack thereof, speaks directly to the outcome they seek to achieve such as control of government to name one example. For this reason, scholars would be remiss in not seeking to further our understanding of party evolution and how it shapes the wider political environment.

Political parties are the means via which modern representative democracy is sustained. While electoral and legislative mechanisms differ across and within states, broadly, parties provide candidates for office to enact and/or defend their pre-determined policy programme. Citizens are therefore directly responsible for electing representatives and are offered the opportunity to hold them to account in the following election. All other aspects of the political process are filtered via political parties and thus, what decisions they make and how they react to other actors in the arena, be it interest groups, other parties, or the electorate, is out of the hands of the regular citizen. Political parties wield immense power. Shedding light on the black-box of intra party

politics is therefore crucial to our understanding of political outcomes within the wider democratic system.

As the central element of representative democracy, parties are multifaceted institutions that serve three vital functions from one election day to the next (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Key, 1964). Parties are nothing without an audience. They require public support to secure a legislative position that enables them to enact their policy programme. Their first function is then to engage with the electorate. Parties must convince the electorate of their vision and therefore they serve an educational purpose by calling attention to the political issues of the day. Kölln's (2015a) detailed depiction of how representative democracy might evolve in the absence of parties highlights the value of parties' ability to condense and clarify options for voters. Party programmes limit the number of differences between actors and therefore negotiation and government formation are much simpler processes. Moreover, options for voting are less overwhelming for citizens. The party symbol also evokes an association with the electorate that ensures democratic vitality. Theoretically, loyalty to a party means voters are less likely to be influenced by the sway of individual whims and extremism, voters can count on preferences being represented from one election to the next and democratic satisfaction is likely to endure as outrage can more easily be directed at parties, not the state as a whole. Finally, parties encourage participation from the electorate be it via direct engagement or by simplifying the political process.

Of course, all of this culminates in election day and government formation to which parties are central. In representative democracies, parties are responsible for assembling government, be it a single or multi-party effort, and political portfolios are allocated. Opposition parties then play their role in holding the government to account and voicing dissent. This again signals clear policy alternatives to voters and partisan differences enables voters to assign

blame or credit to hold parties more easily to account. And so, parties facilitate democracy for the citizens of the system in which they compete.

To achieve all this however, parties must endure. Parties are comprised of a vast number of actors who commit to different roles and exhibit varying preferences to some extent (Faucher, 2015; Kitschelt, 1989; May, 1973). Structures must then be in place to enable parties to achieve their functions in the electorate and in government for the party to be successful in its aims. This is the party organisation. It is responsible for recruiting candidates for electoral office and internal leadership positions, securing and distributing resources, and aggregating and articulating preferences. This mechanism is what enables the party to solve collective action problems by distributing resources in a way that ensures all party actors play their part in achieving the end goal (Müller, 2000). The party organisation can make or break a party. Why then, do parties organise in different ways?

2.2 The evolution of the party organisation

Defining the party organisation

Just as parties are central to representative democracy, the party organisation is central to the party. How parties organise influences all other party functioning and therefore party outputs. Yet for a concept so integral to political outcomes, Borz and Janda (2020) draw attention to the notable lack of a mutual comprehensive definition of the party organisation within the relevant literature. They do recognise, however, that party organisation is generally discussed in terms of the inner workings of the party. That is, how each internal unit operates, to what end and with what resources, and the decision-making structure therein. This broadly defines the concept, though other scholarly definitions assist in exploring what this means in practice and just how far reaching the organisation is throughout the party structure and beyond.

Based on organisational theory, Janda's (1983), depiction of the party organisation highlights four distinct elements; Firstly, 'organisational complexity' or 'the degree of organisation' refers to the presence of internal structures, how prescribed their behaviour is in arranging mobilisation efforts and how far this extends. The more rules prescribed or abided by, the more complex the organisation. Second, is the 'centralisation of power', meaning who or what bodies within the party are responsible for decision-making. Thirdly, 'involvement' refers to the extent in which activists participate in achieving the party's goals and to what payoff, or what benefits they receive. And finally, 'coherence' refers to the degree of heterogeneity of preferences within the party. In other words, to what extent can those within agree on issues. This depiction of party organisation incorporates not only decision-making structures and resources, but also the traits of those who belong to the party.

Definitions thereafter tend to be modelled on this framework. For example, Kölln (2015b: 712) demarcates the organisation as including "at least, the dimensions of complexity, finances, professionalism and centralisation" within the party, with 'at least' serving as an indicator of how elaborate and varied party organisations can be. Here complexity refers to the party's local offices, the means via which active party members engage with the party. Finance refers to the party's means of income, from membership fees or the state to name a few examples. Professionalism and centralisation refer to party employees and which groups are responsible for decision-making. This definition highlights the financial resources at the organisation's disposal as well as the balance of power therein. Webb, Farrell and Holliday (2002) extend the concept again by measuring a party's organisation in terms of finance, party staffing, party membership and the party's relationship with the media. The latter element is reflective of what Sartori (2005) calls a party's organisational network, where parties permeate influential societal groups.

Party members and their ascribed role is a principal element of the organisation. Indeed, Kölln's (2015b) research assesses how membership size affects other elements of the organisation, highlighting that while it is simply one component of the organisation, a lacking membership means that other elements of the organisation must expand to enable party functioning. Organisational strength however, is determined by the financial, bureaucratic and professional assets available, the ability to sustain these and channel them for means of achieving party goals (Gibson et al., 1983; Webb, Farrell and Holliday, 2002). In a nutshell then, the roles assigned to each actor therein and how they interact not only with each other but also external actors, from where resources come from and to what extent these processes are institutionalised, sufficiently determines the nature of the party organisation.

If one were to be crude in their definition, all of these elements are influential variables in the decision-making process and that therefore epitomises the function of the party organisation. How the party is organised determines the rules of the game, or how the party is enabled to act. Therefore, the distribution of power therein, from where, or who, these rules come from, is of primary importance to external outputs. Organisational decisions are the result of calculations that anticipate others' behaviour within the institutional norms, thus, while those not in charge of creating or changing the rules may also benefit (Hall and Taylor, 1996), the calculation itself is ever important in understanding organisational change.

While the (somewhat varying) definitions speak to the multi-faceted nature of the concept, at its core, Borz and Janda (2020) are prudent in specifically highlighting the internal decision-making structure, a common theme throughout the literature. Essentially, all elements discussed in relevant research are, in essence, decisions about party functioning. For example, from where or who the party obtains its funds will determine which actors elites must appease in order to ensure steady income. Or, how accessible the party makes

themselves speaks to which actors' views are valued and how well connected the party is to members on the ground. The party organisation is the nucleus of the party in that how each part is constructed enables the party to function in a specific way. All things considered then, the party organisation comes down to centrality. Who makes the decisions and thus, where their interests or preferences lie, determines how the party organisation operates which in turn determines how the party functions in the electorate and in governance. For instance, the parliamentary group are responsible for legislating, yet the organisation is responsible for recruiting electoral candidates. How centralised this process is, for example who is responsible for allocating candidacy, determines what characteristics the parliamentary group may exhibit and how coherent the party's legislative representation may be (Hazan and Rahat, 2006). The party organisation is also responsible for determining party policy, therefore which intra-party actors are involved in the process undoubtedly influences levels of support and electoral success. Understanding the internal distribution of power is therefore crucial for predicting outcomes.

Today, the concept of the party organisation is vast and can take on many forms. As the political environment has evolved, so too has party organisational models. Janda (1983:319) characterises the party organisation as "the leprechauns of the political forest, legendary creatures with special powers who avoid being seen". In this vein, the models outlined below vary in terms of criteria and many elements of party's organisations are not advertised. They are thus somewhat difficult to analyse and conceptualise. The models that dominate the literature, however, nicely illustrate why parties organise differently and therefore why parties might seek to change their organisational structure.

Organisational types

The organisational types discussed below do not comprise all conceptualised organisational variations within the literature. Instead, the below discussion of

party evolution utilises the most prominent to explain how parties adapt their internal balance of power in answer to the wider political environment. Party members are prominent fixtures of the organisation, only when utilising them is necessary for the party to compete in a changing environment[1].

The literature depicts the thin organisational structure of the elite, or the cadre party, as the earliest model of party decision-making (Duverger, 1954). Having emerged before the era of universal suffrage, the goal of such parties was rooted in the distribution (or hoarding) of entitlement and access to the party. Involvement therein, was therefore typically gained via social and economic connections. The cadre party was characterised by elite control where power was distributed in a top-down manner. Since MPs and other party elites volunteered their own resources, no pressing need for a large membership as such emanated. Thus, the extra-parliamentary party was lacking compared to other models of party organisation. The cadre party is then a clear example of parties choosing not to entertain a complex organisational structure that includes

[1] For an in-depth, comprehensive overview of the conceptualisation of party organisations, see Gunther and Diamond (2003). Their theoretical framework focuses largely on the membership (or lack thereof) and reimagines the classic party organisational types into five categories based on member recruitment, affiliations and levels of activity within the community. The elite based party, the mass-based party, the ethnicity-based party, the electoralist based party and movement parties are the genera into which sub-types are identified on the basis of their programmatic nature\ideological commitment and whether they adhere to democratic norms within the system. This leads them to define fifteen party types. They argue that these two sub-categories cannot be deterministically tied to an organisational type in defining a party as not all parties of certain organisational styles pursue similar programmatic styles or adhere to the same norms. I would posit that these differences speak to the unseen elements of party organisation, though this framework highlights more specifically how not all parties fit into neat organisational boxes and how party organisations develop based on their external environments. Moreover, it demonstrates how the presence of members does not necessarily equate to ideologically targeted policies, or democratic outlooks and vice versa.

facilitating party members as the environment of the time enabled elites to operate in their interests, unconstrained.

Mass parties, however, are understood to have materialised and evolved in response to the industrial revolution and increased suffrage. Parties of this type actively recruited members, by and large from the working classes with the overall goal of social change and rights for the working class rooted in the needs of the parties' base. Membership was characterised by activism both in times of elections and beyond, and affiliated groups such as trade unions etc., permeated the party's message throughout the wider community (Duverger, 1954; Neumann, 1956). The mass party is therefore oftentimes idealised as an instrument of internal deliberation (Allern and Pedersen, 2007), though in reality it operated with a tight bureaucracy and internal hierarchy predicted by Michels' (1911) classic iron law of oligarchy. Thus, the influence of members may have been more illusionary than meaningful (Duverger, 1954; Katz, 2001; Katz and Mair, 1995). The homogeneous nature of the party should theoretically result in an organisation where the rank-and-file's goals aligned with that of the leadership (Katz and Mair, 2002). Therefore, membership involvement per se was not necessarily threatening to the leadership. The mass party's modus operandi was based more in mobilising those who already resonated with the party's message rather than convincing across sections of society of their appeal (Katz and Mair, 1995). Thus, a network of local branches was established, and members benefited from the social aspects that emanate from the comradery of identity-based politics (Barnes, 1967; Neumann, 1956).

Kircheimer's (1966) catch-all party model derived from a broader societal change that saw traditional cleavages decline in significance. With social class no longer the dominant political divide, parties recognised not only the need to modify their aims, but also the opportunity to increase electoral success by appealing beyond their traditional support base. Instead of policies aimed to suit specific cleavages, catch-all parties compete on the basis of

competence (Fiorina, 1981) and they organise accordingly. Instead of electioneering via activists, political leaders now easily appealed to the whole electorate thanks to the dominance of mass media (Ohr, 2013). In line with this, the expectation of labour that came with the mass party model was reduced. Though membership still maintained some status over party supporters in the catch-all model, members now represented society across the board. Elite control then becomes about abating strife and thus, a more obvious top-down relationship evolves (Bolleyer, 2009).

The catch-all party is synonymous with the thawing out of ideology and a resulting shift in electoral focus. Panebianco's (1988) electoral professional party model seeks to describe the same phenomenon but in more pointed organisational terms (Wolinetz, 2002). To support a prominent parliamentary group, political professionals with specialist knowledge tend to hold more value, or even replace the internally elected executives of the mass party model. Staff specifically employed by the party to adjust party messaging guided by polling data, distinctly differs from the membership orientated model of the mass party. This signifies a distinct shift in policy priority and representational concerns. Where the mass party was financed primarily through membership fees and affiliated groups, the electoral professional party (and the catch-all party) relies on interest groups and funding via government. Accountability of leadership is therefore found outside party boundaries in contrast to both the cadre and mass parties.

Not only did the relevance of members diminish in such party models, but such operations offer a reminder that members serve a specific function to party elites. Only in necessary circumstances will the upper echelons allow themselves to be held accountable to the rank-and-file, even where member-orientated goals were previously portrayed to be the case. Members are introduced and replaced as and when doing so serves parties' goals. Moreover, this evolution from the cadre and mass party models to the catch-all model

demonstrates on an elemental level that parties' relationship with their members has evolved in line with the environment. An electorate devoid of clear-cut ideological lines meant MPs no longer needed members and affiliated groups to foster such tight relationships with a specific community. Instead, technology enabled them to access the entire electorate directly and they could rely on a smaller group of professionals to aid in crafting a message that appealed cross community. Thus, parties need not even entertain the premise of internal democracy and accountability should the environment not encourage it.

Also, highlighting the prominence of the professional actor, Katz and Mair's (1995) cartel party refers more to an evolution of the party system as a whole than an individual party model. Though they also outline how parties can be singled out as exhibiting cartel characteristics. At the system level, their account depicts how parties' changing relationship with the state meant that competition was no longer necessary in some systems. With parties now actively attempting to breach ideological lines making political competition less exaggerated, theoretically, most (main) party combinations are expected to function well as coalitions in office, and so the party system is somewhat stabilised. Parties become the state and distribute state resources in a way that ensures party survival and thus, a cartel is formed. This development in turn hinders voters' power by reducing the accountability mechanism. Instead of parties competing on the basis of policy, and voters being able to effectively change the governing agenda via elections, Katz and Mair (1995) argued that parties became professional machines focused more on portraying efficiency in office. At the party level, cartel parties place less importance on labour from activists again and rely on professionals who are unhindered by ideology, making them more susceptible to the whims of elites. To do this, financial (state) resources must be centralised and so activists must be subdued. Costs to entry are then lowered and members are given increased involvement in intra-party processes as means of enticing members from across the electorate (Katz, 2022).

Even though members are enabled to participate, membership no longer holds the same status as the boundary between members and supporters is diminished (Bolleyer, 2009). In a bid to ensure cohesion within the parliamentary group chosen by a heterogenous membership, elites again rely on use the state to distribute selective benefits (Katz, 1995).

A further shift in the political environment however, made room for new parties and new organisational structures. The emergence of new value priorities stemming from widespread increased financial security (Ignazi, 1996), encouraged the emergence of new politics parties. These do not aim to be ideologically unambiguous in a shift from the organisations depicted in the catch-all or electoral professional, and cartel models. Resultingly, their organisation represents a shift from prior structures. Advocating for post-materialist values such as the environment, immigration and gender equality, new politics parties were found on the left of the traditional ideological continuum (Poguntke, 1993). As proponents of reformed, greater system level democracy, their internal decision-making structures reflect this ideal. In harmony with their willingness to also participate in extra-party grassroot protest activity, new politics parties prioritise inclusive intra-party democratic decision-making and transparency that prioritises member involvement. Resultingly, their party organisation typically features participatory mechanisms that result in a bottom-up power structure, rejecting the fixed bureaucracy of more traditional parties. Such parties tend to appeal to a specific demographic, with the youngest in society and those in higher education or service industry most likely to be primarily concerned with post-materialist values (Ignazi, 1996). Such a party organisation most closely represents the ideal of true intra-party democracy. Though that such parties are still yet to become dominant players in governments across systems, may speak to the electoral advantage of dominant leaders.

Carty's (2004) discussion of the stratarchical organisation reflects this distribution of power where he argues that modern parties contain different sub-groups that are autonomous from each other, opposed to the unequal power distribution prevalent in other depictions of party models. He acknowledges that the rise of internal democracy and leaders, who with extra-party resources can, and do, co-exist in a model where power is evenly distributed, and party level outputs are the result of some form of compromise. He does not discuss however, who compromises what, and the extent of the compromise. As parties enter the age of internal democracy, whether such compromise is genuinely necessary for parties to meet their goals in line with the environment of the day will be discussed throughout the thesis.

Early depictions of party types such as Duverger's (1954) and Kircheimer's (1966) expected that the evolution of party organisations would see new party types supersede the old. In reality though, party evolution has certainly not been uniform, or linear, and many variations of party organisations continue to operate simultaneously (Koole, 1996). Indeed, party types expected to have become obsolete continue to hold space in the literature. For example, van Kessel and Albertazzi's (2021) work highlights the tendency of right-wing populist parties to adopt elements of the mass party organisation and suggest it may be hasty to assume that such a model is obsolete. Another model previously expected to become antiquated, Koole (1994) describes parties in the Dutch system as being 'modern cadre parties'. Unlike the depiction of the cartel party that also rely on state resources, these parties rely mostly on mobilisation and organise with elements of intra-party democracy and bottom-up accountability, where membership remains low compared to the party's support and autonomous leaders prevail.

Parties are complex groups. This is particularly true of the internal workings of the organisation. Parties' goals differ and therefore so too do their organisations. The availability of resources and who controls them will vary

from party to party. To paraphrase Ignazi (2001), ultimately, the party organisation is where power is determined. Who is in control of decision-making and where their interests lie has direct consequences for how the party functions. From where the party's resources are obtained will therefore also be pertinent in this equation. If and how a party utilises its members, and what they bring to the table, are therefore central to the party organisation and therefore party functioning. By extension then, parties' relationships with their members are also an incredibly important mechanism in the wider democratic system.

2.3 Relevance of party membership to party organisation

Party members are a fundamental variable in the party organisation. Whether or not they are actively sought, and their subsequent role in party proceedings, speaks to the internal distribution of power. Though, the decline in membership numbers across Europe has prompted concern that a party's membership can no longer be used as a useful indicator of the party organisation (Van Biezen *et al*., 2012). Moreover, involvement in party activity is on the decline (Dalton, McAllister and Wattenberg, 2000). Yet if party systems are yet to collapse in the wake of their departure, is a party membership's contribution to the organisation something still worthy of scholarly concern?

Party members bring a great deal to the table. While the role of members will vary from party to party, members provide a stable income via recurring membership fees, and activists provide labour by way of campaigning and conveying the party's message in between elections in a bid to increase connection with voters on the ground throughout the election cycle (Van Haute and Gauja, 2015). Depending on the party's policy process, members might also partake in shaping the party's programme (Van Haute, 2015). In any case, a healthy membership is a show of strength for a party and affords the party in

office to boast not only popularity, but legitimacy for party decisions. Even if party members are not directly involved, support is implied by membership alone (Scarrow, 1996). On the surface then, it seems members are invaluable to party success, and therefore to party elites if the party is to be successful in the electorate. Thus, the current trend of parties attempting to recruit new members, and appease existing ones, by opening their leadership selectorate (using the language of increasing intra-party democracy) is logical against a backdrop of declining membership and an electorate disengaged from politics.

Yet, research demonstrates that parties adapt other organisational resources to accommodate for a reduced membership (Kölln, 2015b). Parties compensate by increasing their staff but paying them less, they spend more elsewhere and rely on other sources of income other than member dues such as state funding. Indeed, organisational budgets have significantly increased in the past several decades (van Biezen and Kopecky, 2017). Parties also reduce their local infrastructure. Overall, a sustained reduction in membership results in the party focusing their efforts more towards electioneering instead of fulfilling their more traditional role of linking with citizens (Kölln, 2015b). Thus, parties adapt and evolve, and with an increase in professionalism and a decrease in complexity, party elites enjoy less accountability. The balance of power is tipped in their favour and elections are fought with professional campaigns. All of this in the context of a less partisan electorate means parties have little incentive to bring members back in. Parties can adapt their appeal to a varied group of voters (Somer-Topcu, 2015) without being held accountable to a membership that may be tied to specific ideals. Indeed, as demonstrated above, there are many organisational models (and variations thereof) that allow parties to compete in the electoral arena. Moreover, a disinterested electorate with lessening partisan ties (Dalton, 2000) likely means parties' connections on the ground are of less importance than they once were. There is rarely a set blueprint for how parties should organise (exceptions include a limited number of countries where

internal democratic standards are set out in law (Detterbeck and Rohlfing, 2014)). In the context of increasingly professional party politics (Panebianco, 1988, Scarrow, 2000), why are members still at all relevant?

Party members are not equal across parties or even within. Whilst membership numbers are important for leaders' boasting capabilities, arguably, membership type and demographics thereof are what matters for party outputs. In her dissection of the cartel party model, Bolleyer (2009) highlights that party membership characteristics and the role members play in party processes can be at odds with each other in achieving particular outcomes. In essence, whether a party chooses to actively recruit a membership or not, is a strategic decision in and of itself and carries implications for party cohesion. She explains that if a party has strict barriers to entry, if numerous and firm qualifying requirements are in place for example, the result will be a staunch membership with homogeneous preferences. Appeasing the party base is then an easier task and members experience purposive benefits enhanced by exclusivity. Less selective benefits are then required to retain the rank-and-file. Conditions attached to the membership also gives the leadership increased disciplinary abilities and overall, corralling the membership is less challenging. On the other hand, a party without such strict entry requirements, allows members with less piety to filter through and therefore risks creating a membership with heterogeneous preferences. Increased selective benefits are then required to appease such a group while discipline and cohesion becomes a more arduous task for the leadership.

Although, the preferences of the membership only matter if elites benefit from their presence and therefore actively involve them in internal affairs. If all party decisions are made by a tightly controlled leadership team, then the party on the ground only matters for reasons of signalling strength, or labour, if at all. Parties can, and do, function with decreasing members (Kölln, 2015b). However, if selective benefits are offered to the membership by way of

participation in party decisions to retain members, their preferences are therefore pivotal to party outcomes. If members are attracted to join the party simply to influence party outcomes, as was the case with the British Labour 2015 leadership selection (Page, 2021), the profile of the rank-and-file may be divergent from what leaders might otherwise prefer had these benefits not been offered. This scenario increases the probability of varying preferences between the party's elite and rank-and-file. While discord in the membership doesn't always filter up to the parliamentary group thanks to other means of elite control (Bolleyer, 2009; Katz, 2001), if members can participate in intra-party decisions such as leadership selections, the party's direction, and even the party's elite themselves may experience turnover, and so cohesion and continuity within the parliamentary group, and the party at large, cannot then be guaranteed (Scarrow, 2021). Who, or which group, is responsible for determining such decisions then, is responsible for party outcomes and therefore decides who and what the party represents. Party members then, can benefit or hinder the party elite. Of course, it is the elites that decide whether these members receive such benefits and therefore the extent of the power they hold. The following section explores the significance of membership voting power in party leadership selections.

2.4 Importance of expanding the leadership selectorate

Changes to the party organisation that effects party outputs, risks party's ability to endure and therefore the nature of representative democracy (Yanai, 1999). Despite the trend of recent decades (Cross and Blais, 2012a; Pilet and Cross, 2014), organisational reform by way of widening the leadership selectorate is still a relatively rare occurrence, all parties and countries considered (Cross and Pilet, 2015). Though a very limited number of countries have legislated for parties' leadership selection processes (Aylott and Bolin, 2021; Cross and Pilet,

2014), the vast majority of parties across democratic systems control the process internally. Thus, democratisation usually represents a willingness of party elites to redistribute power. Changes of this nature should therefore be deemed significant.

While there are many different rules involved in the leadership selection process such as the weighting of votes, candidacy requirements etc., this thesis focuses specifically on the phenomenon of widening the selectorate (see Figure 1.1). Research by (Chiru *et al.*, 2015) demonstrates that selectorate reform is the most common change that occurs in a myriad of potential reform and that subsequent changes of any kind is less likely where parties operate with more exclusive leadership selectorates. The authors note that inclusive reforms may inherently demand additional changes such as voting requirements and length of membership for example, and where selectorates are restricted to smaller groups, for instance, party elites, parliamentarians, or activists to a lesser extent, are likely more resistant to reforming that process. Leadership selection reform by way of expanding the voting pool specifically has the potential to be extremely far reaching and wield multiple consequences both for the selection process and beyond. The increased scholarly attention on this specific reform thus seems entirely appropriate and timely. Organisational stability can and does endure despite external change (McCarty and Schickler, 2018). Moreover, that organisational change is a complex venture embarked upon when elites deem it necessary for achieving a particular party objective (Harmel, 2002; Harmel and Janda, 1994), speaks to the existence of a pressing, widespread phenomenon being faced by parties across systems given that the trend of inclusive leadership selectorates is not contained to one party or system (Aylott and Bolin, 2021; Kenig, 2009c; Pilet and Cross, 2014). The following section discusses the known motivations for party elites deciding to make selectorates more inclusive and why changes to leadership selection are entirely salient to party outcomes.

Candidate and leadership selection: where do the differences lie?

Leadership rules are not becoming more inclusive in isolation. Parties in democracies over are also taking the decision to make their electoral candidate selection process more inclusive (Gallagher and Marsh, 1988) and this reality is reflected in party politics literature. Kenig, Rahat and Hazan (2016) offer a comprehensive overview of the differences and similarities of these processes and concludes that both processes and changes thereto, each command their own literature owing to the different consequences of each position. For example, party leader is a position in its own right and is not simply reflective of the top electoral candidate. Even in minor parties, the leader is widely accepted as the most important position in the party and carries significant responsibilities that ordinary members of the party parliamentary group are not tasked with. Leaders embody the party (McAllister, 2007; Rahat and Shaefer, 2007). More consequentially, the party leader may become the Prime Minister, Deputy or hold another cabinet portfolio as party leader of a junior coalition partner (Kenig, Rahat and Hazan 2016). A marked number of leadership elections result in Prime Ministers taking office without the additional hurdle of a general election (ibid.). Thus, while the parliamentary group must go through both the candidate selection and the electoral processes, party leaders in parliamentary democracies, do not always require the public's seal of approval before assuming office and so the selectorate are the ultimate principles (and questions of legitimacy may be more pertinent when discussing leadership selection).

In addition to differences relevant to outcomes of these contests, Kenig, Rahat an Hazan (2016) also outline the differences that can be found in these processes themselves. In particular, parties may have varying candidacy requirements for their leader compared to their electoral candidates. Options for the selectorate itself is slightly more expansive for leadership selection than for candidate selection as the party parliamentary group cannot solely choose

themselves (yet they can hold sole responsibility for selecting the party leader). Moreover, leadership contests tend to be inherently more centralised than candidate selection processes which can be more pragmatically decentralised. Additionally, leaders are more easily deselected than those in the parliamentary group as it is unlikely for members of the parliamentary group to be challenged during the parliamentary term and deselection would instead occur prior to the next election. Party leaders however, depending on party statutes, can potentially be challenged at any time during the electoral cycle triggering a contest. Finally, the voting method between candidate and leadership elections may differ in the same party depending on the number of legislative candidates in any one boundary that is required. Thus, while party leaders and members of the parliamentary group play fundamentally different roles within the party and because of this, the process for selecting each actor portray some intrinsic differences, those outlined are mainly where the variation ends. Many of the motivations and party outcomes of making both of these selections more inclusive are similar (Kenig, Rahat and Hazan, 2016) which is apparent in the similar discussions playing out in both sets of literature. I therefore also draw on some (limited) candidate selection literature below in the discussion of why parties are choosing to reform their leadership selection rules by way of including their entire membership base, and in some limited cases, party supporters.

2.5 Choosing the party leader: why parties widen the selectorate

A happy, healthy membership?

Early models of intra-party decision making state that party members take cues from trusted leaders who possess additional skills and resources to them (Michels, 1911). Indeed, decision by party leaders was seen to be the norm post

WWII (Przeworski and Sprague, 1986). Yet, later scholarship highlights how party members can constrain party leaders in the decision-making process (Budge, Ezrow and McDonald, 2010; Ceron, 2019; Harmel and Tan, 2003). Party members, for the most part, are not homogenously passive (Rohrschneider, 1994) and generally can no longer be widely depicted to impulsively follow their leaders at all costs. Literature explaining the move to increased intra-party democracy by way of more inclusive selectorates sometimes also follows this narrative. Members are often illustrated as the protagonist, who demand more transparency in party proceedings (Alderman, 1999; Cross and Blais, 2012a; 2012b; Drucker, 1984; Panebianco, 1988; Quinn, 2004) from elites who inevitably concede.

Against a backdrop of declining party membership across Western democracies (Scarrow and Gregor, 2010; Van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke, 2012) following a trend of party dealignment and a pervasive lack of trust in political institutions (Dalton 2000; Dalton, 2004), much of the literature claims the move towards inclusive leadership selectorates is a novel means of bolstering parties by way of enticing new members to join and offering a sense of control to a discouraged rank-and-file who might otherwise terminate their membership (Cross, 1996; Scarrow, 2014). It is hoped that policy becomes more representative of the newly revitalised group (Blake et al., 1996; Rafter, 2003). A healthy, appeased membership reverses the risk of financial and political damage that declining membership numbers poses (Daalder, 1992; Scarrow, 1996) and a boost to the membership sends a signal of strength both to the electorate and opposition parties (Scarrow, 2000). In this vein, it is hoped that party's legitimacy is bolstered by membership selectorates that allow party elites to connect with voters on the ground (Ignazi, 2020).

Yet, parties can and do endure despite operating in a top-down manner (Schumacher and Giger, 2017). Intra-party democracy is not a requirement of system level democracy (Allern and Kosiara-Pedersen, 2007). Thus, the

literature also explores these decisions through a broader lens and considers what advantages might come from elites losing significant power vis a vis party members. Cross and Pilet (2014) argue that the emergence of inclusive leadership selectorates is thanks a culmination of increased significance of party leaders in the electoral arena, democratic norms permeating society, and the desire of parties to re-establish themselves therein. So, while empowering members will likely indeed be part of the decision to widen the selectorate, these decisions often have an "official story" that is accompanied by a more nuanced, perhaps hidden reality (Katz and Mair, 1992: 6-8). The consequences of these reforms are so far-reaching that it could be considered credulous to accept a one-dimensional view of intra-party change and consider that the idea of a bottom-up revolution so to speak may simply be one part of a multi-faceted decision. Often these reforms seek to serve multiple ends (Barnea and Rahat, 2007). Accordingly, the literature also points to both internal and external party dynamics that serve as explanatory variables beyond the idea of a happy, healthy membership.

Internal party motivators

Though it is advantageous to retain members in higher volumes, doing so might also present significant challenges for party elites. Not all-party members aspire to identical goals (Kitschelt, 1989). Intra-party preferences are commonly represented as the curvilinear structure outlined by May's Law (Faucher, 2015; May, 1973) whereby party activists hold more extreme preferences than the leadership, who in turn will be ideologically more extreme than ordinary members. This notion comes from the assumption that actors at different levels are restricted to certain benefits in return for their service. Party leaders seek to enter office, an opportunity not available to all members of the party. This offers material, social and purposive benefits and requires electoral success to achieve. Thus, leaders must always seek to appease the electorate who are portrayed as

typically more ideologically diluted in their preferences than those involved in party politics. Party activists on the other hand, can only receive purposive benefits in return for the time and labour-intensive activities required at this level, most likely at the expense of other meaningful experiences. Logic follows that strong ideological motivation is what drives such effort (Whitely and Seyd, 2002). If party leaders are unconstrained by activists, the party message can then suitably cater to more moderate voters (Schofield and Sened, 2006).

In this vein, contrary to the bottom-up revolution that is sometimes associated with normative ideas of intra-party democracy, research also suggests that the notion of inclusivity can emanate from party leaders and elites themselves (Wauters, 2013). Scholars argue that elites radically democratise their leadership selection processes as means of stripping activists of any power. Involving ordinary members can deliver elites' preferred result as members who are otherwise not privy to intra-party proceedings will take cues directly from elites whose preference will then have enough support to outweigh extremists in the party (Katz and Mair, 1995; Katz, 2001, 2022; Kenig, 2009b; Mair, 1997). Empirical evidence shows that this is indeed a motivator for party elites granting leadership selection voting rights to the membership (Lisi, 2010; Wauters, 2013).

The dynamics of intra-party composition varies however, and research shows that heterogeneous preferences can exist at every level (Kitschelt, 1989). Activists are not always guaranteed to be more extreme than the leadership (van Holsteyn *et al*., 2017). So, while intra-party disputes can be much more nuanced and are not always the result of divergent preferences of activists and elites as the curvilinear model suggests, studies also indicate that the salience of the division is important in determining the likelihood of parties widening their selectorate. Indeed, introducing more inclusive selection processes then, beyond that of a selected party agency, is an effective method solving inter-party conflict (Marsh, 1993). Evidence from Latin America demonstrates that parties are more

likely to introduce presidential primaries as intra-party disputes intensify (Kemahlioglu *et al.*, 2009). They suggest that membership involvement becomes a beneficial way to resolve disputes in scenarios where groups of elites disagree. Similarly, European parties have also been shown to democratise leadership selection to the members when elites themselves cannot agree on the next leader (Austudillo and Detterbeck, 2020). Members become useful to elites in providing direction for the party when the path ahead is unclear to those in charge.

Thus far, the literature dedicated to detailing the intra-party motivators for inclusive leadership selectorates points to parties undertaking such reform to allow the party to compete effectively within the system. Attempting to diminish discord between different party groups via widening the selectorate, gives increased assurance that the faction that prevails can proceed with majority support. Parties democratise to give the leader a stronger mandate over the party (Drucker, 1984).

External party motivators

Research also offers system explanations for parties introducing more inclusive leadership selection processes based on external factors. Exogenous shocks such as electoral loss have been shown to be an indicator of party leader change (Andrews and Jackman, 2008) and parties are more likely to update their policy, opting for a fresh perspective and new party message in such circumstances (Somer-Topcu, 2009). In the aftermath of a disappointing electoral performance, the rhetoric that preferences of party members were not adequately addressed tends to surface, sparking calls for them to be more involved in party proceedings (Panebianco, 1988). Indeed, research demonstrates that electoral defeat also encourages parties to widen the selectorate for the leadership selection process (Cross and Blais, 2012a; LeDuc, 2001). Chiru *et al.* (2015) demonstrate that this reform is typically introduced in the years following the

defeat to portray a positive image of re-birth and avoid the perception of a sour reaction to defeat. Further, Wauters (2013) demonstrates that even the threat of electoral defeat by way of poor performance in opinion polls also plays a factor in the decision to open selection procedures. He shows that scandals involving the party and unwanted press attention also contribute to this decision. This further speaks to the notion of elites entertaining intra-party democracy when the consequences of not doing so are damaging, or potentially so, to the party's ability to compete, not necessarily in the true spirit of democratisation. Yet, parties are more likely to shift position in response to the mean voter and losing office when they are leader dominated and not constrained by activist veto power, whereas activist dominated parties respond to shifts in their voter base (Schumacher, de Vries and Vis, 2013). Thus, parties democratising their leadership selection in response to electoral shock might also be perceived as diluting activist veto-power to enable them to respond to electoral loss in a way in a way that maximises future success instead of appeasing existing voters.

In a similar vein to electoral loss being an indicator of inclusive leadership selectorates, Cross and Blais (2012a) also find in their study of parties in Westminster systems that a party's position in the system can also influence leadership selection methods. They find that parties in opposition are more likely to introduce inclusive measures. Here, the stakes are lower and therefore the risk is lessened should the membership opt for an unfavourable candidate. They also find that newer parties who seek to differentiate themselves from more traditional parties and tend to reject the oligarch model of party governance, and further demonstrate that a contagion effect exists within party systems. Parties are more likely to widen their selectorate in response to other parties in the system doing so. Moreover, contagion is moderated by electoral loss (see also Alderman, 1999) further highlighting the importance of party competition to these decisions. The rationality in these choices is apparent.

Parties widen the leadership selectorate when the benefit of such has first been demonstrated and when they have less to lose.

In this view, parties are vote maximisers (Downs, 1957) and will therefore only widen the selectorate when it is deemed optimal for enabling effective competition within the system. For example, parties introduce primaries for electoral candidate selection when preferences of party elites and voters are more congruent (Serra, 2011). This likely minimises animosity and fallout. Further, candidate primaries in Latin America are positively associated with an increase in partisan support (Aragón, 2014). This is argued on the basis that a wider selectorate fosters greater commitment from candidates in the general election. Parties then, are more likely involve their members in consequential decisions in scenarios where elites' loss of power is cushioned by a more predictable membership.

In sum, ample literature demonstrates that parties respond to system level events by making their leadership selectorate more inclusive. A common theme emerges where parties are more likely to democratise when potential negative consequences are minimised, for example, in opposition, when other parties in the system have successfully done so, and when party support is higher. On balance then, diffusing power appears to be less of a risk than failing to navigate the party system/respond to other parties. Taken together with research that highlights intra-party motivators such as keeping members appeased and solving internal strife, the literature overall demonstrates that parties diffuse the power for leadership selection where it is deemed beneficial to party goals such as electoral viability.

2.6 Consequences of widening the selectorate

That leadership selection by membership has not fully institutionalised in that following inclusive reform, future inclusive contests with the same rules are not guaranteed, makes it a challenging task to study the consequences thereof (Sandri, Seddone and Venturino, 2016). Nonetheless, scholarship to date has demonstrated particular consequences of parties widening the leadership selectorate to ordinary members for the party organisation and perceptions of the party as a whole.

First, regarding internal dynamics, inclusive selectorates impact the nature of the contest and the types of candidates that emerge. If, as some of the literature gives the benefit of the doubt, elites do indeed choose to widen leadership selectorates as means of enticing supporters to become members, research shows that their efforts are largely in vain. Scholarship discusses the phenomenon of 'instant membership' whereby citizens will join a party for the sole purposes of voting in the leadership contest and parties can boast of a boost in membership. In the period following the contest however, the party sees its membership dwindle (Rahat and Hazan, 2006; Sandri, Seddone and Venturino, 2016). It is therefore questionable whether the appeal of inclusive leadership contests attracts voters that will enhance the value of the membership's sustained contribution towards party goals. On a more sinister note, Kenig's (2009a) depiction of Israeli inclusive leadership contests speaks to the less than democratic ideals of party elites who recruit services to sell vast quantities of memberships to those who will support them in their leadership bid, and also allow registration of the same individual more than once. Kenig (2009a) offers that this may explain why in some instances, voting in leadership contests has been higher than overall party support in the following election. To be clear, it is doubtful that buying votes is a phenomenon occurring in most parties in most systems. Moreover, the opportunity for overtly acting in bad faith is indeed smaller in leadership contests than candidate selection contests given that the former involves a much larger selectorate than the latter and is therefore more

difficult to control (Kenig, Rahat and Hazan, 2016). Yet that these breaches of the rules happen at all is certainly motivation to look passed the contention that the implementation of inclusive reforms is reflective of normative democratic ideals. Certainly, by nature of increasing the voting pool, participation in more inclusive contests increases (Kenig, 2009a; Sandri, Seddone and Venturino, 2016), though it would appear that this alone cannot automatically achieve the heights of democratic standards, nor does it seem to be a failsafe means of enriching the membership in the longer term.

With regards to the percentage of those who are eligible to participate showing up to do so, Kenig's (2009a) assessment of Israeli leadership contests demonstrates that turnout rates are significantly lower among more inclusive selectorates. He demonstrates the turnout rate of primaries to be 30 points lower than contests with more exclusive party groups. Similar sentiments are taken from research in Canada and the UK where turnout continues to fall the wider the selectorate, leading scholars to posit whether members of larger selectorates are aware that their vote carries less weight than it would in a more exclusive selectorate and whether ordinary members offer the same level of interest in the party as traditional activists (Kenig, Rahat and Hazan, 2016). Moreover, Wauters (2010) finds that the first contest including members that takes place tends to boast the highest turnout than subsequent selections. It then appears that any membership reinvigoration via inclusive leadership selectorates has a short shelf life, even when the contest is not characterised by foul play as Kenig (2009a) demonstrates.

In terms of whether leadership contests with inclusive selectorates increase competitiveness, current research offers mixed conclusions. Kenig (2009b) demonstrates that more inclusive leadership selectorates foster less competitive races whereby a 'front-runner effect' (p242) takes hold and ordinary members unsure of who to vote for in the beginning stages of the contest, rely on party information such as polling. They then offer their backing to the

candidate that emerges as the early likely winner. This likely speaks to the advantage granted to party elites when the selectorate is widened to include ordinary members, as smaller selectorates such as the party parliamentary group or even those in a delegate setting would be less likely to be persuaded by such information as early in the race (Kenig, 2009b). Party elites in control of resources and communication can therefore more readily encourage the rank-and-file to support their favoured candidate in place of activists led campaigning and deliberation within these ranks when activists are empowered (Carty, 2013; Katz, 2022). Therefore, the scope for elite control is greater with wider selectorates. On the other hand, Cozza and Somer-Topcu (2021) demonstrate increased competitiveness with member leadership selectorates and posit that public contests allow factions to better organise and split the vote.

While increased competitiveness might be seen as a democratic virtue and may encourage candidates to exert more effort, resulting in a more committed leader for the party (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021), the literature warns of an increased risk of factions with inclusive selectorates (Scarrow, 2021) and party division has been shown to lead to destabilisation (Close and Gherghina, 2019) poor public perception of parties (Greene and Haber, 2015) and threatens electoral success (Lehrer and Lin, 2020). Indeed, Cozza and Somer-Topcu (2021) find that the increased competitiveness dampens the positive polling boost that immediately follows inclusive leadership contests. Thus, even if the leader were to use formal or informal punishment/reward mechanisms on the parliamentary group and member conduct rules to keep the rank-and-file in line long term, the party perceptions are damaged in the eye of the electorate from the public nature of the contest (Scarrow, 2021). Impressions matter.

In these terms, parties can either avoid increased competitiveness and fall victim to the claim that arguments from within are unfairly represented, or they can face the consequences of division. Indeed, it is possible that a more

competitive contest may signal division within the elite ranks themselves. If heterogeneity exists at all levels (Kitschelt, 1989) and members do act on elite cues during inclusive leadership contests (Katz, 2022), then such a possibility is reasonable.

Should the 'front-runner' effect take hold however, in addition to negative perceptions of division, it simultaneously hinders the democratic element of choice and therefore representation in such inclusive contests. For example, Kenig (2009b) notes that potential candidates may be aware of the phenomenon and be deterred from entering the race in the first place, despite his, and others' observations that leadership primaries tend to encourage an increased number of candidates standing for selection (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021; Kenig, 2009b). Thus, while some races can offer a competitive flair, this mechanism might be minimised if candidates choose not to seek nomination thanks to persuasion from others or themselves. Indeed, from those eligible that do compete for selection, inclusive selectorates have not been shown to increase descriptive representation. Astudillo and Paneque's (2022) study of female candidates in primary leadership contests show that the effect lies in the size of the selectorate and not that women candidates are somewhat inferior to their male counterparts. They argue that candidates' message of party loyalty means that selectors are less able to rely on partisan cues and therefore tend to revert to other means of bias to inform their decision. Wauters and Pilet (2015) find it is not the selection rules that matter for electing a woman as leader and instead argue that it is the party's openness to doing so that is the relevant marker for change. Rahat et al. (2008) argue that a smaller group of party elites are better equipped to choose from candidates that will enable better representation of the party's membership and indeed the electorate. The exception to this rule however, seems to be younger candidates. Research from Israel shows that an increased number of younger candidates tend to include themselves in leadership races with member votes (Kenig, 2009b), and the same study shows

no real effect of selectorate size on candidates' level of parliamentary experience. Thus, intra-party democracy does not necessarily increase competition or even descriptive representation as one might expect.

In terms of inclusive selectorates meeting democratic standards in terms of fairness then, false entries, elite cues and bias mechanisms are not the only concerns. A wider selectorate commands a larger campaign and thus, additional media and considerable funds are typically required to compete (Carty and Blake, 1999; Pederson and Schumacher, 2015). Candidates may opt to trade policy ideas for money with interest groups and corporations with interests not aligned with those of the overall party (Rahat, 2008). The risk then lies in the party programme veering away from the interests of those it seeks to represent. Moreover, the increased media attention that accompanies inclusive contests can see candidates focused more on being personable and attractive to the wider electorate than being accountable to party organs, which in turn may have negative consequences for party cohesion (Rahat and Shapira, 2017). The expectation is then that campaigns will change depending on the larger electoral mood than on party specific matters, and campaigns of this type must contend with media portrayal of messages. Candidates must therefore grapple with not only any internal party strife that may be afoot, but also third sector and private executives, as well as media influence, all of which may alter both the substance and methods of campaigns. Leadership selection is increasingly a public matter, and open selections tend to dominate the news cycle which in turn invites opinions outside the party that candidates will likely want to appease when thinking ahead to their potential premiership as leader.

Despite the negative consequences of outside influence, membership selectorates are also thought to have a positive impact on the calibre of proceedings. Hopkin (2001) argues that members may be more effective in holding party elites to account than other party organs that may be more concentrated with elites. The logic follows that members are therefore less

likely to vote for a candidate previously shown to have engaged in corruption. Fellow party politicians may be more easily swayed to look the other way. While it may appear that Rahat's (2008) view, and that of Hopkins (2001), are at odds with each other regarding the optimal size of the selectorate, instead, it is entirely possible that elites accept more from candidates in the name of party goals. The difference likely lies in the balance of the trade-off between a leader's behaviour and their ability to steer the party as a representative agent. Though to my knowledge such claims regarding accountability have yet to be empirically tested, this of course was not the case for the US Republican party where Donald Trump was re-selected as Presidential candidate via primaries, and therefore the party's de facto leader, following multiple corruption scandals.

In this vein, Rahat and Hazan (2001), in their analysis of inclusive candidate selection procedures, broach the idea that not all memberships of all parties will think and act formulaic. They posit that if the rank-and-file is unimpressive in number and preferences are uniform, such a group may be more inclined to vote akin to how party elites would. Applying this logic to leadership selection, a larger party with broader preferences may produce a selectorate that may choose a leader contrary to the wishes of the party elite. Yet, conventional thinking in the literature offers that party elites are more capable of thinking pragmatically in terms of producing a leader that is not so ideologically rigid that they cannot compromise and is therefore more palatable to the general public (Katz, 2022). On one hand, data from Mexico shows that more inclusive selectorates choose more moderate electoral candidates as logistically, it is more difficult for candidates to bargain with a larger group and therefore candidates must be palatable to those who hold a range of views to win (Bruhn, 2012). On the other hand, research from the US show that primaries produce candidates that veer towards the extremes due to differences in selector preferences and those in the general electorate (Brady, Han and Pope, 2007). Outcomes then, depend on the makeup of the selectorate and the objectives they seek to achieve.

Assumedly, parties make such vast organisational change to increase party success, yet this largely has not manifested in a way that reflects the literature outlining the motivations for introducing inclusive selectorates. Despite the lack of democratic principles then, it is reasonable that party elites would continue the trend of making the leadership selectorate more inclusive with the aim of making the party more attractive to the electorate. Though, empirical evidence shows they are falling short. For example, though parties enjoy a small immediate, but temporary surge in opinion polls, leaders chosen by their entire membership are not shown to be more likely to lead their party to victory in the next election (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021), except in cases where a new leader enters office. Though yet again, this effect is not present long-term (Pedersen and Schumacher, 2015). While Cozza and Somer-Topcu (2021) show that inclusive selectorates encourage voters to consider voting for the party, research by Wauters and Kern (2021) find that inclusive leadership selectorates do not foster increased trust in the party, increased likelihood to vote for the party in an election nor increased encouragement to join the party as a member. The latter findings are in line with the consensus within literature on primaries, that voters like the idea of primaries but they do not necessarily bring them back into the party ranks (Ignazi, 2020; Sandri, Seddone and Venturino, 2016). A few reasons for this seem plausible: First, the immediate small boost from inclusive leadership selectorates may fail to imprint strongly enough to sustain a lasting effect that motivates action on part of the electorate. Second the normative ideals of intra-party democracy may simply not represent the most prominent drivers of voting behaviour, political involvement and attitudes in current electoral climates. And finally, the aftermath of the contest and any of the potential negative outcomes may override any initial positive reaction to the ideal of inclusive voting.

While the research conducted thus far indicates that parties do not reap lasting rewards by any means from inclusive leadership selectorates, Cozza and

Somer-Topcu (2021) find that the new leader does enjoy increased legitimacy as does the party overall in displaying its willingness to consider multiple preferences. This positive perception of parties and their leaders however has not led to widespread mass participation or the rejuvenation of parties (Scarrow, 1996). Evidence from Canada shows that while more inclusive leadership contests have been shown to encourage new party membership in the immediate term, a much smaller percentage actually participate in the vote (Carty and Blake, 1999). Thus, if revitalising the party is indeed the aim of parties that undertake this reform, the research would suggest they take a different approach. If however, perceptions of legitimacy alone is the key to these reforms, it would appear that inclusive leadership selectorates afford party leaders an air of approval they may not otherwise receive.

2.7 Giving members a voice, despite the cost?

Parties continue to be leader-centric (Schumacher and Giger, 2017), often transcending the party (McAllister, 2007; Rahat and Shaefer, 2007), party life is of decreasing relevance to the public (Dalton, McAllister and Wattenberg, 2000) and organisational change is the result of a complex, considered calculation (Harmel and Janda, 1994; Panebianco, 1988). Yet parties have made considerable institutional reform by way of introducing inclusive leadership selecotrates despite the myriads of negative consequences that this elicits. Party members are important. Thus, one may then take a sympathetic view and assume that party elites introduce leadership reform in the name of democratic ideals and/or membership rejuvenation despite unfavourable outcomes for party functioning and success. This section explores the rationality of this sentiment and concludes that even these aims are not met by inclusive leadership selectorates.

Though the concept of suffrage is crucial to our understanding of representative democracy (Dahl, 2005), relevant intra-party politics literature highlights how inclusion alone is insufficient to constitute true internal democracy (Ignazi, 2020; Urbinati, 2014). Much like how system level democracy is multi-faceted and requires the existence of multiple elements to meet the golden standard (Dahl, 2005), a party must extend further than simply inclusion of its members in one or multiple selection procedures for it to reach true levels of intra-party democracy. Ignazi (2020:14) dictates that in order for exact internal democracy to be achieved, parties must exhibit what he calls "a quadrille for intra-party democracy". He argues that in addition to inclusion, parties must also strive for pluralism, deliberation and diffusion. This means that not only should parties allow members to participate in the process of leadership and candidate selection, and the policy making process, but these must reflect democratic values to counteract the power imbalance that can and does occur where inclusion alone is prioritised.

First, parties must introduce mechanisms that allow all faction's preferences to be heard. For example, minority groups must be able to hold, and lobby for, an opposing view to what might be considered mainstream or established within the party. While party cohesiveness may be threatened, Ignazi (2020) argues that pluralism is required to inhibit an all-powerful party leader that seeks to impede alternative views from gaining traction within the party, somewhat akin to a system level dictator, so that internal democracy can thrive. Second, parties must foster an environment that is conducive to discussion between internal actors at all levels (militants and ordinary members, as well as elites). The inclusion of all party members in selection or policy processes, he argues, does not automatically ensure members' protection from disproportionate influence from the party's leadership due to emphasis being placed on participation of the individual actor. Instead, Ignazi suggests that parties develop apparatus that enables deliberation between actors at all levels

to establish the consideration of ideas from different perspectives within the party as the norm if they are to counteract this. Finally, a stratarchical structure whereby a horizontal distribution of power flows between strata (Carty, 2004) diminishes the centralisation of power at the leadership that might otherwise occur without formal recognition of internal bodies (Michels, 1911). In such an organisation, layers of accountability keep the local party protected from undue impositions of an oligarch. Influence, or lack thereof from the centre then impacts procedures in more ways than controlling voting rights. In his assessment of candidate selection decentralisation, Bille (2001) outlines that when local structures are empowered to control candidate selection instead of party elites dictating all candidates for the party, more actors are involved in the process which is therefore inherently more democratic in nature. The level of centralisation can differ, however. Both Bille (2001) and Lundell (2004) offer five variations of internal influence on a scale of decentralised to a wholly centralised procedure that recognises the nomination process and veto power therein. Leadership selection is intrinsically a more centralised procedure than candidate selection might be given that candidates for the former must be organised nationally (Kenig, Rahat and Hazan, 2016). Though these measurements outline the different ways in which party elites might seek to centralise decisions without restricting voting rights and highlights the utility of diffusion for democratic decision-making. Ignazi (2020) recognises that these additional 'quadrilles' will not wholly prevent organisational problems or conflicts, however, this framework effectively highlights how inclusion alone is not sufficient for parties to boast internal democracy in its truest essence. So why then, are we witness to this new flavour of democratisation in inclusive leadership selection processes if it does not fully achieve its so-called objective?

The onus on the individual to participate that comes with OMOV leadership selections, cuts members off from one another where other methods of intra-party democratisation such as deliberating forums would bring party

actors together (Ignazi, 2020; Katz, 2022). The latter fosters debate and collective discussion that allows party actors to contemplate all aspects of a potential outcome and enables them to make a more informed decision having properly debated ideas. Whereas only allowing members to simply vote on an outcome (be it the selection of an actor or a policy), members are focused only on messages/cues from party elites as their only source of relevant information (Carty, 2013; Katz, 2022). Thus, in extending voting power to the membership, party leadership can effectively secure their dominance over the party by virtue of their position (Michels, 1911; Rohrschneider, 1994). Indeed, Invernizzi-Accetti and Wolkenstein (2017) discuss exactly this in their argument for why deliberation is the ultimate form of intra-party democracy.

As well as increasing the internal imbalance of power between party actors, they argue that inclusion alone is not appealing enough to the public to encourage involvement in parties. Some literature on the topic takes a normative view that parties are now giving members a vote in crucial party processes likely in a bid for membership reinvigoration (Cross, 1996; Scarrow, 2014). However, this wave of democratisation has yet to transform us back to the mass-party era. Indeed, intra-party democracy has not been shown to encourage other forms of activism within the party (So, 2020). Rather than simply voting, Invernizzi-Accetti and Wolkenstein (2017) argue that fostering deliberation in turn offers purposive benefits to members as they can more meaningfully shape the party's message. They continue that deliberation would allow parties to fulfil their function as political educators by providing an environment where members can learn through discussion and debate and thus construct or even change their preferences. Thus, if it is the true intent of party elites to increase intra-party democratisation in the true sense of the meaning, logic follows that more parties would focus any reorganisation efforts on deliberation (and/or pluralism and the diffusion of power between strata as suggested by Ignazi (2020)). Instead, the extension of voting rights to members, or even the electorate, is the extent of

the pervasive trend (ibid.). While it then appears that party leaders seem willing to relinquish ultimate control of the party, the reality of this act in isolation means this sentiment is somewhat limited.

While party members are being granted privileges previously held exclusively by elites, research shows that members do not quite hold that much power overall. Scholars demonstrate that democratisation can take place in a highly centralised context whereby elites control the decisions that lead to the final ballot presented to the selectorate (Aylott and Bolin, 2021; Carty, 2013; Cross and Pilet, 2015; Pilet and Wauters, 2014). Aylott and Bolin (2017: 55) refer to this phenomenon as a "process of managed intra-party democracy" whereby a group or actor makes precursory decisions prior to the vote being opened to the final selectorate. Essentially, even in scenarios where members are included in the selection of their leader, there is a possibility that either internal or external actors have influenced, or even determined, the nominees the final selectorate is faced with. This influence can be so strong that even candidates who meet formal party requirements, may not find themselves on the final ballot. Furthermore, these precursory decisions can be carried out by an internal party actor by virtue of party statues, or at the other end of the scale, private discussions and/or deals can take place out of sight. For example, they discuss the case of Latvian parties whose selectorates typically choose the champion of the parties' funders. In somewhat of a less sinister scenario, parties also may have formal requirements for candidacy eligibility. Whilst parties can justify such rules with claims of ensuring the party leader is equipped with suitable experience, party leadership can manipulate these rules to ensure their preferred candidate gains a place on the ballot, or more importantly, that an undesirable candidate does not (Aylott and Bolin, 2017). In a similar vein, coronations are not uncommon in parties with inclusive selection processes (Kenig *et al.,* 2015). And so, members have the voting power in theory to choose their leader, yet it is commonplace for the membership to confirm the choice of

the party elite. All in all, the trend of increased intra-party democratisation in Western democracies cannot be denied (Cross and Blais, 2012a), but whether this means that party elites are truly ceding real democratic power to their members cannot definitively be concluded. While it is beyond the scope of this research to argue whether all parties that initiate inclusive selectorates manage the selection via formal or informal pre-selection processes, it is reasonable to assume that this can be the case should elites choose (Aylott and Bolin, 2017). Indeed, research shows that candidates are more likely to stay the course of the contest if they enjoy the backing of party elites (Hassell, 2016). Elite preferences then, whether in the public domain or not, continues to be extremely consequential to outcomes in these open, inclusive selections. Even in lieu of such planning, party leadership has the advantage of being able to communicate directly with ordinary members *en masse* in such inclusive scenarios. Elites can in turn hinder effective activist organisation and become the prime source of information to more easily persuade a selectorate of isolated members of their choice (Carty, 2013; Katz, 2022). Whereas delegate structures tend to be formed by activists (Ignazi, 2020) who are more likely to hold pre-determined, less mailable ideas (May, 1973). All in all then, though a voting process may be at the most inclusive end of the scale (see Figure 1.1), it is not always enough to counteract the imbalance of power in favour of party elites who can still retain elements of control, either overtly through formal rules, or hidden via backroom settlements.

If parties, or more specifically, their leadership, were committed to the essence of intra-party democracy, it would be logical that additional measures than just that of inclusive selectorates be introduced. On the whole though, the 'trend' of intra-party democracy as it is, is limited to member voting rights for candidate and leader selection (Ignazi, 2020). It is therefore logical to conclude that the spirit of democracy may not be at the centre of these decisions.

If one were still looking to give benefit of the doubt to party elites, it may then be more reasonable to assume that parties introduce such measures as an advert for party membership, in the context of increasing involvement in other political organisations. Members are an important resource after all (Van Haute and Gauja, 2015; Scarrow, 2014). Yet, if retaining a healthy membership was indeed integral to this decision, the potential for fallout renders such a reform counterproductive. Anderson and Guillory's (1997) 'winners and losers' thesis dictates that satisfaction with democracy is associated with having voted for the party of government. Thus, in the context of internal decisions, logic follows that those members who voted for a losing candidate be less satisfied with the party. Indeed**,** Cross and Pruysers (2019) find that members on the losing side of intra-party competition become less involved in party affairs than before and are also more likely to resign their membership. This differs to the phenomenon of 'instant' membership or vote buying producing a decline in membership following the vote. Instead, those previously attached to the party may no longer feel that sentiment towards the party under new leadership that they did not vote for. Understandably, if inclusivity in the initial decision is the only avenue for members to impact party decisions, once the decision is made, losing members may feel dissonant from the new direction of the party and therefore feel like the only option is to leave. However, if other democratic measures were afforded to members either in the selection process, or thereafter, the feeling of loss may potentially be minimised. Moreover, research shows that members are oftentimes reluctant to vote in inclusive selections in the first instance without confidence that their vote is likely to be effectual (Wauters, 2010). Indeed, the sentiment of impact is more likely to occur in smaller, more exclusive selectorates. Thus, if one were to take a sympathetic view of these reforms and dismissed any malice associated with encouraged 'instant membership' or worse, the results of inclusive leadership contests have the potential to ultimately disenchant a significant portion of the membership so much so that

the party loses essential functions from them (Cross and Pruysers, 2019). True rejuvenation is therefore likely never achieved through inclusion alone.

In a similar vein, Ignazi (2020) argues that the same frustration causes widespread dissatisfaction with party politics to which party elites are not immune, causing them to break party ties which further bolsters dissatisfaction and enables anti-system far right parties to emerge and (successfully) compete. Of course, the entrance of such parties into the system is for a separate debate on normative perceptions of democracy at the system level. However, it speaks to the effect of sub-system events on the wider democratic system and inevitably resulting attitudes towards public satisfaction thereof, which I tackle throughout this thesis.

It seems entirely logical then, that additional processes be included in selection processes, and potentially beyond that specific context, to reduce the winner/loser effect, diminish the negative outcomes that emanate from factions and minimise widespread discontentment with perceived wasted votes that comes with non-competitive contests. We are yet to witness however, a similar wave of intra-party democracy by way of Ignazi's (2020) other quadrilles that would go some way in solving such problems. Moreover, with ordinary members now holding rights previously saved for activists, the latter group's value to the party diminishes (Saglie and Heidar, 2004) and they therefore likely lose incentive to continue their efforts within the party (Seyd, 1999). The value of the membership then further decreases in these scenarios if previous activists no longer provide the same labour and fees. Rejuvenation efforts through inclusion then would appear to be in vain.

In spite of all of this, a leader that is popularly elected by members of their own party enjoys legitimacy that an imposed leader does not (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021). Thus, even in the event of a membership exodus post leadership selection, it is rational for party elites seeking legitimacy to widen the leadership selectorate. Of course, this is not to argue that all party elites

maintain entire control over every inclusive leadership contest in all parties that offers them. Instead, this discussion of the literature simply aims to explore the rationality of such reforms and concludes that if these changes to the leadership selection process were introduced in the spirit of intra-party democracy and/or membership rejuvenation despite a multitude of negative consequences, so far, inclusive selectorates alone fall short of the mark. Yet, the party leadership does set to benefit by way of the ability to boast legitimacy. This then raises the question of what has changed in recent decades that party leaders might require increased legitimacy against a backdrop of individualisation and presidentialisation (McAllister, 2007; Poguntke and Webb, 2005; Rahat and Shaefer, 2007) where leaders are gaining stature in their own right. Following from this, in the final section, I discuss the influence of parties and intra-party democracy on wider political system to contextualise these internal party reforms within the wider political environment.

2.8 Satisfaction with democracy

Democratic endurance relies on a level of satisfaction from its citizens pertaining to the functioning thereof. Yet, these systems are increasingly characterised by distrust in institutions and political actors, and feelings of alienation from the system (Dalton, 2004). Indeed, anti-establishment rhetoric within parties is on the rise across Europe, thanks to the recent success of populist parties (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2024). Moreover, the violent events that took place in the US Capitol Building on 6th January 2021 is a recent example of dissatisfaction with democracy fuelled by the intentional undermining of the legitimacy of elections. Indeed, Gift (2022) argues that the potential for future such electoral disputes in the US remains. This example aptly illustrates the importance of democratic satisfaction for democratic health.

With good reason then, a burgeoning literature seeks to understand the determinants of voters' attitudes towards satisfaction with democracy.

Democratic satisfaction is measured not by one's support for a democratic regime in principle, but how such a regime functions in practice (Linde and Ekman, 2003). While a healthy democracy does not require intra-party democracy (Allern and Kosiara-Pedersen, 2007) and indeed, some scholars argue against its utility in fostering democratic health (Cross and Katz, 2013), parties play a significant role in voters' democratic satisfaction. Voters tend to be more satisfied with democracy when party policy positions are more congruent with their own, for example, when the policy distance between the party closest to oneself decreases (van Egmond, Johns and Brandenburg, 2020) or the party operating in the median policy space across the legislature (Kim, 2009). Moreover, Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011) show that average citizen satisfaction is more likely achieved when party positions are closer to the mean voter. Brandenburg and Johns (2014) study of parties and voters in the United Kingdom warn that too much convergence between the main two main parties is detrimental to democratic satisfaction. This study demonstrated that voters were less satisfied the further away they perceived their own policy preferences to be from that of one of the main parties. Parties' place in the system relevant to other parties is therefore also important for perceptions of democratic functioning. Party positions in relation to voters and other parties in the system are influential for citizens' attitudes. The perception of representation is important and therefore parties' choices matter.

Beyond party positions within the system, voters' democratic satisfaction tends to increase when they perceive party elites prioritise issues in a similar manner to them (Reher, 2016). Thus, parties must consider not only their policy stance but when each policy should be emphasised. Additionally, party identification is also relevant for democratic satisfaction. Scholars show that feeling close to a political party fosters democratic satisfaction (Aldrich *et al*.,

2020). To foster democratic satisfaction in this way, parties should seek to remain connected to their historical voters.

In summary, parties contribute widely to citizens' perceptions of democratic satisfaction. Voters determine that democracy functions better when parties accurately represent their policy preferences and when parties connect with voters to foster shared identity, when parties prioritise their preferences and when parties can compromise to achieve goals. The link between parties and democratic satisfaction is logical and critical to our understanding of such attitudes. Parties' role in fostering democratic satisfaction is multi-faceted. Each of these determinants of democratic satisfaction stem from the party organisation and thus, parties' abilities to achieve these outcomes will therefore be impacted by any changes thereto. It is therefore important for scholarship to consider how changes to the party organisation might affect voters' perceptions of democratic satisfaction.

The limited scholarship that addresses the relationship between the party organisation and democratic satisfaction thus far provides mixed results. Shomer, Put and Gedalya-Lavy (2016) show that those who vote for parties with inclusive candidate selection mechanisms are more likely to be satisfied with democracy. Determining the causal mechanism here is difficult however, given the multitude of circumstances a party might introduce such rules and the myriads of consequences that inclusive selection procedures have on the party (see relevant sections above). Thus, any number of variables could be responsible for this association than member inclusion itself. Conversely, Webb, Scarrow and Poguntke (2022) find no statistically significant relationship between the level of intra-party democracy in a party and voter democratic satisfaction. Indeed, their measure of intra-party democracy includes multiple manifestations of membership inclusion such as candidate selection, leadership selection and voting on policy proposals. Thus, to my knowledge, the effect of

inclusive leadership selection itself on satisfaction with democracy has yet to be assessed in the relevant literature.

Existing research then demonstrates that both how party decisions are made, and the outcomes of these decisions can be influential in voters' perceptions of satisfaction with democracy. Despite the abundance of negative consequences that inclusive leadership selection processes can have on the party, the trend of democratisation has prevailed. This thesis seeks to add to this literature by exploring voter attitudes towards both the leadership selection process itself and the outcomes thereof.

2.9 Conclusion

Parties are the institutions via which citizens connect with the state in representative democracies (Katz, 1990). The organisation is the parties' internal organ that when crudely defined, encompasses the party's internal balance of power. Thus, how a party organises, determines party outputs. Against a backdrop of an increasingly non-partisan electorate with widespread distrust in parties (Dalton, 2004) where strong party leaders increasingly dominate political perceptions (Mughan, 2000; Garzia, 2017), we are witness to a wave of internal democratic reforms whereby parties are opening their leadership selection processes to their members and beyond (Cross and Blais, 2012a; Kenig, 2009c; Pilet and Cross, 2014).

Reform by way of inclusive selectorates is relatively rare however, all parties considered (Cross and Pilet, 2015). So that parties are specifically making their selectorate more inclusive is significant (Chiru *et al*., 2015). Of course, one might argue that party elites are seeing the value of a well-integrated membership and are seeking to build an environment where their voices are heard. Indeed, choosing the party's leader is arguably the most consequential

decision a party can make (Ennser-Jedenastik and Müller, 2015). This discussion of the literature leads me to take the opposite view. Parties introduce inclusive leadership selectorates to overcome internal and external hurdles that may inhibit electoral success. Moreover, the literature demonstrates that parties experience a myriad of negative consequences barring the one positive consequence that sees leaders of inclusive selectorates enjoy increased legitimacy (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021). Thus, not only are inclusive selectorates shown not to guarantee electoral viability (Pedersen and Schumacher, 2015) but if one were to give party elites the benefit of the doubt and argue that parties widen leadership selectorates by means of reflecting the democratic ideals at the system level that voters have become accustomed to despite the negative consequences, the final discussion of the literature shows this effort is also in vain. Inclusivity is not enough to meet democratic standards (Ignazi, 2020; Urbinati, 2014). In an effort to further understand why elites make this decision, the following chapter explores a scenario where increased legitimacy would be required and offers a theoretical framework outlining how insuch a circumstance, inclusive leadership selectorates will aid the party.

Chapter 3: Exploring the relationship between elite polarisation and inclusive leadership selection reform

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlines how the trend of expanding party leadership selectorates has prevailed, despite a plethora of negative consequences these contests bestow on party functioning and success. In its entirety, the research demonstrates that party elites introduce OMOV reforms when it is deemed beneficial to achieving a party goal, though thus far, the only empirically demonstrated benefit apparent for parties in the literature is the legitimacy that comes with the membership's participation in deciding the party leader (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021). Barnea and Rahat (2007) explain that internal democratisation is likely the combined result of stimuli occurring at all three levels of the political system; the political level (the environment), the party level (inter-party competition) and the intra-party level (individual/group dynamics within the party). Internal reform is a complex, multifaceted decision (Harmel and Janda, 1994). As discussed in the previous chapter, at face value, democratising leadership voting rights to ordinary members appears to be an irrational decision taken by party elites at their own expense.

In this chapter, I explore a further circumstance where inaction might be just as harmful to party outcomes. Instead, diffusing power becomes a calculated strategy that provides legitimacy when it is most required. I therefore take the approach in this chapter that this reform is not introduced in a normative sense, is it is instead a tool for political survival. Turning attention to the nature of political competition that wields consequences for both the party and intra-party level, I theorise how changes thereto likely encourage parties to consider

leadership selection reform. In an initial exploratory framework, I explore a potential relationship between elite polarisation and inclusive leadership selectorate reform.

Polarisation demands action. Party competition is characterised along a spectrum between convergence and polarisation (Sartori, 1976). As differences between parties become more evident – as parties become increasingly polarised – the nature of electoral competition changes and becomes increasingly focused on issue-based policy (Dalton, 2008; Lachat, 2008, 2011). In systems characterised by convergence on the other hand, parties focus on projecting competence (Green, 2007, Green and Hobolt, 2008). As such, elite cues, and therefore party behaviour, changes between these two states of competition. Scholars demonstrate the importance of electoral outcomes in the decision to widen party leadership selectorates (Cross and Blais, 2012a; LeDuc, 2001), though to my knowledge, existing research has yet to explore the connection between elite polarisation and this widespread reform.

Here, I present a theory outlining how the democratisation of power to the members (and beyond) provides a solution for parties struggling to optimally position themselves within an increasingly polarised system. When the difference in party positions becomes clearer, parties must assess how their base is reacting in order to effectively compete in the new electoral landscape and retain legitimacy. Democratising the leadership selectorate allows parties to more robustly assess how their base has responded before determining their position. This enables parties to represent their base more accurately in a changing environment. Moreover, the reform provides increased legitimacy for any unanticipated criticism that more targeted messages might receive. Similarly, the public nature of these contests allows for the newly elected leader to determine and set the appropriate temperature (Sartori, 1976) for the electoral terrain ahead of the next campaign. I further posit that that differences will be

observed between parties that operate in bipolar party systems and multipolar party systems owing to the varying nature of party and voter behaviour.

In an initial exploratory test of this theory, I analyse 28 cases of parties that have introduced OMOV leadership selections across 7 Western parliamentary democracies. Using Comparative Manifesto Project data, I compare the difference in levels of elite polarisation from the parliamentary term in which the decision was made, and the term prior, to determine whether an increase in elite polarisation contributes to the rationale for reform. I also use secondary data (scholarly and media articles) to provide further context to the political environment in which these reforms were made. I find that 90% of cases in bipolar systems occurred following an increase in elite polarisation. Thus, in the same vein as Cross and Blais' (2012a) conclusion regarding the influence of electoral loss on leadership democratisation in Westminster systems, I propose that elite polarisation is also a necessary but not sufficient condition, in bipolar party systems specifically. The data demonstrates weaker support for the effect of increased elite polarisation on the introduction of inclusive leadership selectorates across party systems.

The chapter proceeds as follows: First, I discuss the importance of legitimacy for the proper functioning of political parties to illustrate why parties might take such organisational risks in a bid to retain it. I introduce the concept of elite polarisation and offer a discussion of the literature that outlines its effect on party and voting behaviour, and the challenges it presents for effective party representation. Following this, I set out my theoretical framework outlining how widening the leadership selectorate to party members is an effective solution for parties struggling to navigate an increase in elite polarisation, and I discuss the rationale for the expectation of variation between different party systems. I present my data and methodological choices before presenting the main results. I analyse the data through the lens of previous research on party-level motivators in widening the leadership selectorate to present a further basis

demonstrating the need of research to consider additional independent variables. Accordingly, the results firstly show the electoral context and governing status of parties at the time of democratisation (Cross and Blais, 2012a). The main results are presented pertaining to the influence of polarisation levels across party systems in the decision to democratise. I then offer a more in-depth discussion of the three cases in the analysis that chose to democratise beyond their membership to supporters. These represent extreme cases of the theory to which I offer further context of each parties' decision. Finally, I conclude the chapter by discussing how this research agenda might be extended.

3.2 Theory

Parties and crisis of legitimacy

The 'golden age' of parties is gone. While such a state ever existing may be somewhat overstated (Scarrow, 2000), trust in parties is indeed declining (Dalton, 2004), prompting speculation regarding their ability to properly function as the link between citizens and the state (Ignazi, 2020). Should concern be warranted, significant and far-reaching consequences for representative democracy as we know it are afoot. Parties have largely evolved in tandem with the political environment that saw partisan identities become less relevant (Kircheimer 1966) and party organisations then became less membership dominant. Accordingly, parties then compensated by pulling resources from the state (Katz and Mair, 1995). Consequently, the party in office grew in strength at the expense of the party on the ground and so, while governance by party continues to be taken for granted (Mair, 2006), parties' legitimacy to accurately represent their base, and the electorate at large, became

subject to question (Farrell, 2014; Ignazi, 2014; Ignazi, 2020; Mair, 2006; 2013).

Relevant literature credits this perception for parties changing their organisational boundaries and widening party leadership electorates (Gauja, 2015; Ignazi, 2020). Indeed, this rationale accounts for both the intra-party level and party level drivers of inclusive leadership selectorates discussed in the literature. On account of the former, parties introduce these reforms as means of solving internal strife at all levels. On one hand, rebellion within the parliamentary ranks can signal a willingness to address constituency specific issues which may assist the party gain ground in a particular area, or among a particular group (Bowler, 2010; Campbell *et al*., 2019; Carey, 2007; Carey and Shugart, 1995). On the other, public displays of division can trigger perceptions of incompetence among voters more broadly on the other (Greene and Haber, 2015; Lehrer and Lin, 2020; Lin and Lehrer, 2021). Parties' desire to quell any disputes that are likely to spill into the public domain and prevent electoral damage is therefore unsurprising in the context of declining legitimacy.

At the party level, parties are most likely to widen their leadership selectorates following a disappointing electoral result, and in circumstances that ensures any potential negative consequences are reduced. Rarely do parties in government introduce such measures (Cross and Blais, 2012a). It is therefore evident that these reforms are largely centred on how parties perceive their current ability to compete in the electoral environment (Wauters, 2013). Parties widening their leadership selectorates to the membership, and sometimes beyond, allows them to reconnect with the party on the ground, or merely create the illusion thereof (Ignazi, 2020). In short, parties widen their leadership selectorate when they perceive increased legitimacy will increase their electoral odds.

Of course, parties have competed amidst declining legitimacy for some time and in certain environments, increased legitimacy is not required for

government turnover (Mair, 2006). Yet, while partisan identification is certainly not as important for voters as it once was (Dalton, 2000), it is not obsolete (Dalton and Weldon, 2017). Scholarship highlights the marked presence of polarisation throughout Western Europe of late (Green-Pederson and Otes, 2019; DeVries, 2018; Walter, 2021), though voter preferences do not always line up with party positions in real time (Fiorina and Abrams, 2008; Oosterwaal and Torenvlied, 2010). Issue positions are impacted by parties' reactions to voters (Adams et al., 2004; 2009) and voters take cues from parties (Dalton, 2017) in somewhat of a political dance. Political environments are everchanging. New issues enter the arena, old issues increase and decrease in salience, and parties shape the framing thereof (Sniderman, 2000). Moreover, wedge issues, those that induce division within established political boundaries, challenge mainstream parties (DeVries and Hobolt, 2020). Issues, and any division they elicit, affect how parties and voters interact with one another. Below I present a theoretical framework that outlines the logic of this changing nature of political competition featuring in parties' decision to expand the leadership selectorate, and how doing so in these circumstances specifically, offers parties a higher pay off in terms of increased legitimacy.

What is polarisation?

Ideological polarisation within a polity is either characterised by elite and/or mass polarisation. Elite polarisation depicts the scenario where parties' positions move away from each other in a centrifugal fashion (Dalton, 2008; Sartrori, 1976), whereas mass polarisation refers to the degree of divergence within the electorate's preferences (Spoon and Klüver, 2015). Though the two phenomena tend not to exist in isolation from one another. Research demonstrates that mass polarisation can be a consequence of elite polarisation (Abramowitz and Saunders, 1988; Cox, 1990; Ezrow, 2007; Layman and

Carsey, 2002 a, b; Putz, 2002). As parties move away from the centre, so too does the electorate. However, the opposite causal direction where mass polarisation encourages parties to move closer to the extreme end of their ideological poll is also theorised in the literature (Layman, Carsey and Horowitz, 2006). In any case, parties and voters respond to one another. The following argument will be centred on the phenomenon of elite polarisation[2] i.e., party dispersion, and in line with consensus within the literature, assumes the electorate are not immune to this development. As such, I posit that parties will seek to determine if their support base, those that are typically inclined to support the party or might be persuaded to so do, has indeed moved in response to elite polarisation, and to what extent. To outline this, I therefore rely on literature concerning both mass and elite polarisation. Determining the origin of the polarisation, however, is beyond the scope of this research.

Having mass appeal becomes more difficult in times of ideological polarisation where focus turns to issue-based policy (Dalton, 2008; Lachat, 2008, 2011) and the difference in preferences becomes clearer (Carmines & Stimson, 1989, Layman et al., 2006). The electoral arena then becomes a different landscape for parties to conquer. In the following sections, I outline how polarisation presents significant challenges to parties' ability to navigate the electoral environment and act as agents of representation.

Polarisation: a change of terrain

As it is often difficult to separate elite polarisation from mass polarisation, the phenomenon of elite polarisation generally involves parties reacting to (either

[2] While this research assesses the effect of elite polarisation specifically, the notion that mass polarisation has a similar effect on the party organisation is logical. I chose for this chapter to emphasise elite polarisation to capture the uncertainty aspect that comes with assessing voters' reaction to a stimulus that I posit encourages elites to change their leadership selection rules. If mass polarisation is known to party elites, then they simply may adjust their message accordingly without the need to change intra-party rules. That being said, an assessment of any potential effect of mass polarisation would make an interesting research agenda and certainly contribute to the field of intra-party politics.

real or perceived) voter reactions to the increase in party differences. For example, research by Gallop and Greene (2020) show that parties of government are more likely to take policy risks as elite polarisation increases thanks to the minimised electoral accountability mechanism. As the distance between the main parties widens, voting for another party than that with which one is aligned, is no longer a viable option for many voters (Dalton, 2008). Perceptions of political parties in terms of both policy and valence also become more reliant on partisan cues (Vegetti, 2014). Resultingly, elite polarisation likely encourages voters to tolerate policies that they might not otherwise in a converged environment. Gallop and Greene's (2020) study then speaks to an awareness on part of party elites, that polarisation offers mitigation against other decisions that would normally be far riskier. Thus, to what extent voters follow suit is likely an important variable in the elite decision-making process.

Research by Spoon and Klüver (2015) also speaks to parties' analysis of voter behaviour as the political environment changes. They show that parties choose to directly address issue/s of contention the more polarised the electorate becomes, rather than avoid controversial issues. This further highlights how the electoral environment shifts with polarisation. Research shows that in these circumstances, voters use the most polarising issue between parties when deciding who to vote for as doing so provides the clearest choice (Orriols and Balcells, 2016). Further, directional voting over proximal voting best explains voters' decision-making under polarised conditions (Leimgruber *et al*., 2010; Pardos-Prado and Dinas, 2010). Emotional responses to policy are then important in such contexts (Pardos-Prado and Dinas, 2010).

Moreover, elite polarisation can change the party system via somewhat distinct voting behaviour. Parties' policy stances compared to others can play a larger role in voter determinations. When parties are polarised, voters gravitate towards parties that advertise acute positions along the same direction as their preferences to ensure their vote to have the highest pay off (Hopkin, 2020).

Thus, voters do not necessarily choose the party that is closest to their true preference. Research from Spain, based on this sentiment, demonstrates that voters who identified as right on the left-right spectrum, but identified as proximally most distant from any party, were most likely to vote for Vox, the most extreme option in that direction (Rodríguez-Teruel, 2020). Additionally, they indicate that elite polarisation confuses voters' perceptions of parties along the left-right dimension as parties respond to other party positions. As polarisation becomes more apparent, voters find it increasingly difficult to decipher between the positions of moderate and extreme parties. This further explains why voters may therefore lend their vote to extreme parties, despite not sharing the same extreme views. How parties address the issues of contention, and therefore assessing how their base has responded to elite polarisation, is likely to be electorally consequential.

Accordingly, parties must set what Sartori (1976) refers to as the temperature, or the intensity, of the polarisation. This is how elites deal with the ideological distance that stands between them and opposing parties. A low temperature would be characterised by parties' willingness to work together in a way that limits the polarity despite diverging ideological preferences. A high temperature on the other hand, is characterised by parties' aversion to compromise, and at the extreme end of the scale, an in-group and out-group mentality ensues (Ignazi, 2017). Deciding how to do this will logically depend on how voters have responded to the increase in ideological distance and therefore at what temperature, so to speak, elites will be most likely to set.

Indeed, the temperature will also determine the scope of parties' potential voters. The literature is divided as to whether the more pointed environment motivates voters to become more involved in political activity, logically an important variable in how parties position themselves. On the hand, research shows that elite polarisation is associated with increased levels of democracy (Wang, 2014), centred on the argument that voter choice is clearer and thus

distinct preferences can be better represented. Subsequently, parties in the electorate become more relevant (Jacobson, 2000). Unsurprisingly then, research also shows that voters are more likely to be engaged with politics and actively participate in polarised conditions (Abramowitz and Saunders, 2008; Dalton, 2008; Hetherington, 2007).

Conversely, polarisation can also cause voters to disengage. The narrative of polarised politics being perceived as nothing more than ideological point scoring rather than a concerted attempt to govern effectively results in declining competence ratings of political actors that elicits a negative effect on participation (Fiorina and Abrams, 2008). Subsequently, perceptions of politics can potentially become less about the policies themselves and more about political actors' behaviour. Research demonstrates that voters tolerate discourteous retort that deviates from social norms during political debates, less than the disagreements themselves (Mutz and Reeves, 2005). When elite polarisation increases then, parties must first decipher if voters are generally becoming more, or less, engaged to determine how to market themselves, and where their efforts are best placed such an environment. Thus, parties must strike the right tone not only in relation to how their base has responded, but whether their potential voter pool is likely to expand or reduce in response. Parties must consider how to encourage an optimal proportion of the electorate to engage with their message. Appealing to undecided, floating voters becomes a more difficult task when this group is diminished and sides are chosen (Smidt, 2017). Once this occurs, it is theorised that vote switching across ideological divides is less likely in polarised climates (Hazan, 2017). Parties must then assess the extent of polarisation carefully, and respond accordingly, in a way that encourages optimal support from a less malleable electorate.

In addition to addressing the polarising issues, parties (and voters) are likely also required to navigate the phenomenon of affective polarisation that tends to prosper where differences are perceived. Sara Hobolt (2023) describes

affective polarisation as the personal, emotional aspect of the in-group/out-group mindset, where bonds are developed between those in the in-group based on likeness, respect and understanding, and animosity and hostility is projected towards those in the out-group. In-out sentiments have been likened to 'sports fan mentality' in the literature (Mason, 2018a, Miller and Conover, 2015) and at the extreme, negative feelings towards the opposition have been shown to result in discriminatory behaviour (Gift and Gift, 2015). Affective polarisation emanates from perceptions, and it conditions whether we are likely to engage with opposing views, or even those who hold them (Hobolt, 2023). This is entirely relevant to party politics where citizens' party identification can easily foster this tribal/inimical dichotomy by way of navigating the political environment (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Evidence suggests a positive correlation between ideological and affective polarisation (Wagner, 2021; Webster and Abramowitz, 2017), however research by Iyengar, Snood and Lelkes, 2012 shows no significant relationship. In any case, as directional voting involves emotional responses (Pardos-Prado and Dinas, 2010), this is likely a phenomenon elites should consider when navigating ideological polarisation.

Elite and media polarisation, the tendency to cultivate relationships with those who share our values and are educated to similar levels, (the sometimes resulting) partisan echo chambers, and political campaigns have all been shown to be determinants of affective polarisation (Iyengar et al., 2019; Mason, 2018b). In short, daily modern life carries the risk of becoming part of an affectively polarised electorate where the ability to empathise with opposing points of view diminishes. Similarly, and in addition to ideological polarisation, parties are responsible for both navigating an affected electorate whilst also acting as one of the multiple possible catalysts. Preliminary research shows that exposure to opposing points of view reduces affective polarisation by encouraging voters to find perspective (Hobolt, 2023). Thus, how parties talk about opposing parties matters. If parties talk negatively, this reinforces

animosity towards the out-group. If they recognise the differences of the opposition with compassion, or even just an understanding of their rationale, this will likely contribute towards a reduction in affective polarisation. The manner in which parties market their messaging, how they interact with, and speak of opposition parties, will also play an important role in determining the electoral terrain and pose representational consequences.

To summarise, elite polarisation causes a change in behaviour from both parties and voters. The latter can respond in a multitude of ways. Voters prefer that parties take acute positions, though perceptions of ideological positions in the same direction can become confused. Voters may be reinvigorated by parties addressing issues and thus, encouraged to become more involved in the political process. Or, they may be discouraged by politicians engaging in behaviour they deem to be less than socially acceptable. Should affective polarisation take hold, echo chambers are more likely to form, and stances become entrenched. How parties address polarising issues then is of ultimate importance to voter engagement and increased representation. Party elites are inclined to address such polarising issues head on, though they are calculated in their policy stances when elite polarisation is evident and take risks where they deem the accountability mechanism to be diminished. The following section will outline how determining voter tolerance is a less simple calculation in polarised climates and therefore how adequately fostering representation and claiming legitimacy might be a more arduous task, with a larger pay-off however, than in converged environments.

Polarisation and legitimacy

Competing perspectives exist concerning whether elite polarisation is favourable for improved representation. Sartori (1976) argued from the

perspective that elite polarisation is a destructive force to democracy by exacerbating disputes past the point of democratic functioning. Indeed, democratic satisfaction increases when parties cater to the median voter (Ezrow and Xezonakis, 2011). Brandenburg and Johns (2014) however, demonstrate that convergence can also be inimical to representation and therefore some level of polarisation is required for satisfaction among a heterogenous electorate. In any case, research shows that citizens' satisfaction with democracy increases with the perception that elites share our ideological and policy preferences (Aarts and Thomassen, 2008; Dahlberg and Holmberg 2014; Ezrow and Xexonakis, 2011; Kim, 2009; Reher, 2014, 2015) and priorities (Reher, 2016). The optimum is therefore likely found in voter dispersion and engagement. Parties therefore must respond to changing dynamics accordingly to maintain legitimacy.

Party competition is characterised along a spectrum between convergence and polarisation (Sartori, 1976). When parties gather around the median voter (Downs, 1957), the system is characterised as converged and parties and voters adapt their behaviour accordingly. In times of convergence, voters tend to pay more attention to parties' non-policy valence characteristics, such as general competence, and mainstream party policies cater to this, targeting their policies towards the centre ground (Green, 2007). It therefore becomes a lesser task to appeal to voters who have previously voted for an opposing party or parties when the political arena is not characterised by disagreement (Smidt, 2017). Here, projecting competence is sufficient and what largely attracts votes (Green and Hobolt, 2008). Vote switching is then more likely in less polarised systems (Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017). The difference then lies in voters' perceptions of which party can better implement agreed upon goals, versus disagreement on goals/issues. Thus, voters respond to different cues and parties behave accordingly. Stimson *et al*'s., (1995) concept of dynamic representation outlines how parties strategically formulate policy in

line with public opinion. Competing within a polarised environment or not, parties anticipate voter behaviour in the context of the following election and make changes in their best interests accordingly. Indeed, research shows that mainstream parties generally respond to a shift on part of the electorate by moving in the same direction as their base (Adams et al., 2004, 2009; Tavits, 2007). Parties set the agenda, but they are also responsive. Whether or not a state of convergence or polarisation is optimal to representation is beyond the scope of this research. Instead, this research focuses on how parties respond to changes in the electoral environment. To effectively act as agents of representation, parties must keep abreast of voter expectations or risk being perceived by voters as uninterested (Sides, 2007). This will involve elites projecting different cues.

Based on previous literature, I argue that should the electoral landscape be defined by one or more positional issues, parties must firstly determine if voters are becoming more passionate, or if the nature of the division is causing voters to become disenchanted with party politics. How voters rationalise the motivation for the division is important. Having some assessment of this will allow parties to determine the proportion of possible voters they will likely have to work harder to convince of their message. Then, they must assess where ideological lines are being strengthened, or re-drawn, and how entrenched they are becoming. Parties must determine how voters are evolving and to what extent in order to effectively represent their base as the agenda may change. Moreover, emotional responses are crucial for party determinations. If ideological lines become so entrenched that it becomes too difficult for a party to appeal to a wide enough group to reach their electoral goals, then attempting to minimise affective polarisation through the sentiment of their messaging may help in overcoming the ideological barrier. As affective polarisation decreases, the chances of engaging, convincing debate increases. In turn, the potential for those with different preferences even entertaining an opposing parties' point of

view, or rationale therefor, becomes larger, even minimally. On the other hand, should ideological polarisation benefit a party's goals, they may seek to increase affective polarisation via their messaging and inter-party conflict such that they are even less likely to lose the grip on their base. Parties must gauge both how the electorate is responding to elite polarisation in terms of both their preferences and their emotions. Such a scenario then, presents a unique, complex set of challenges for parties to overcome. I posit it is therefore necessary to consider intra-party change in this context. The following section outlines my argument stating that widening the leadership selectorate allows parties to more effectively navigate this.

Widening the selectorate and legitimacy

If polarisation encourages parties to take a different route to achieve legitimacy, then parties' electoral strategies will likely be more calculated than they would be in times when projecting competence is enough to reach electoral goals. Elite polarisation means that parties must re-consider the size of their base and the proportion of those who may become disenchanted. Additionally, they must then consider how far their base has, or is willing to move, and the extent to which voters' emotions may be salient in their preferences which likely also determines their tolerance. With polarisation comes increased homogeneity within groups. For example, a party's potential voters (Schmitt, 2016). Yet this does not manifest to the same exact extent within groups and elites can more readily count on partisans for dedicated support in any case (Tilley and Hobolt, 2011). Parties must act wisely however, when appealing to those voters who were previously happy to float to prevent disengagement (Fiorina and Abrams, 2008) and confusion over policy distance from parties on the same side resulting in perhaps unexpected vote choices (Rodríguez-Teruel, 2020). Electoral politics likely then remains a numbers game, though based on different variables than

an electoral landscape defined by convergence might be. Thus, becoming more acquainted with their base will help party elites decide how to move forward in a perhaps more complicated environment.

The literature demonstrates that party elites reform their leadership selection rules by way of granting ordinary members voting rights when they are aware that their standing in the electorate is vulnerable, either following poor electoral performance, or mid cycle when the threat of this being the case becomes apparent (Cross and Blais, 2012a; LeDuc, 2001; Wauters, 2013). I posit that the point in the polarisation cycle where parties must determine voters' reaction to an increase in elite differences mimics this conundrum. Where division becomes salient, positive party evaluations from partisans increase (Vegetti, 2014), though unlimited tolerance can likely never be guaranteed for a large enough proportion of the electorate for a party to reach their electoral goals. Presenting their base with different policy options in the form of a leadership contest is then a constructive way of determining how and where ideological lines are forming, or reforming. Moreover, the public nature of these contests in the age of mass media and live leadership debates makes inclusive leadership contests a practical way for parties to take the temperature of the likely/potential voters ahead of the next election. These public contests will also allow parties to control the narrative which may minimise any confusion in the electorate over the parties' stance in relation to other parties. Membership selectorates help parties to navigate difficult electoral terrain.

Office-seeking parties craft policy in a way that captures the preferences of as large a portion of the electorate as possible (Downs, 1957). Inclusive selectorates encourage more candidates to take part in the selections (Kenig, 2009b) and thus, a range of directions the party could proceed in, will likely be presented from different candidates. Allowing members to vote on this, enables elites to note how the base is responding to the current electoral environment. Moreover, while addressing the issue of contention is appropriate in times of

polarisation, moving direction invites the potential for backlash from both opponents and otherwise supporters that might prefer either a more, or less extreme message. Political extremism can also undermine legitimacy (Sartori, 1976). Therefore, determining how polarised voters are will inform how extreme the message should be, and therefore how any new direction/policies will be interpreted at large. The legitimacy of new policies and the party's ability to represent voters hinges on how palatable the policy will be. If voters are fully polarised, policies at the extreme end of a party's ideological poll will be deemed less controversial than if the same policy was introduced to a slightly polarised electorate. The electoral terrain therefore matters for legitimacy.

Furthermore, engaging voters in a leadership selection also enables the new leader to set the temperature however they see fit, knowing that they have the legitimacy of being selected by the membership (or beyond). Inclusive leadership selections are as much about communication and personality as they are about policy (Rahat and Shapira, 2017). Voters are therefore offered a preview of candidates' communicative styles and how they speak of opposing parties before opting for their preferred leader. Thus, the winner of the contest will have majority backing for their policy and also their communicative style. They leader can therefore set the temperature according to the party's needs. Inclusive selectorates, and the associated public debates from which leaders are selected, gives them the legitimacy to do this with minimised risk of appearing either too weak and soft, or too aggressive and hostile for the current political environment.

Finally, the elite control that comes with inclusive membership selectorates over other forms of intra-party democracy thanks to the emphasis on individualisation (Katz, 2022; Ignazi, 2020) is likely heightened in a polarised context. The tendency for partisans (or in this case, members) to view parties as both more competent and ideologically congruent to them as mass polarisation takes hold (Vegetti, 2014), likely works in the upper echelon's

favour in the context of inclusive leadership selections. Logic therefore follows that by demonstrating these public debates, elites can not only assess the tolerance of their base, but they can also have a hand in shaping it. In such a scenario, it stands to reason that party leaders claim legitimacy for any subsequent policy risks. Moreover, these otherwise risky policies may indeed actually come to be representative of their bases' preferences following direct exposure to targeted partisan cues.

To conclude, the only benefit offered to a party leader chosen by its members is increased legitimacy (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021), a concept that becomes more relevant to party credibility in a polarised environment. Widening the leadership selectorate to include party members allows elites an opportunity to navigate the different electoral terrain that comes with elite polarisation. In voting for their preferred candidate, members are signalling their preference for the direction in which they wish the party to venture, and elites gain a more accurate reading of their base's tolerance. Furthermore, the direct influence elites have over members during this process may even allow elites to shape or stretch this tolerance in line with their preference. The legitimacy that comes with a membership vote then gives the new leader a level of protection from any negative perception of their party's engagement with the polarised environment. Such inclusive contests also provide leaders with legitimacy to set the temperature how they see fit, something that wouldn't otherwise be tested with other forms of intra-party deliberation.

Polarisation as a process

Reading a polarised electorate is complex. Polarisation is both a current reality and an unfolding development (DiMaggio *et al.*, 1996) for many parties. Systems can be highly polarised, or anywhere in-between that and a state of convergence (Sartori, 1976). This thesis depicts party elites as rational actors

that allow members increased involvement in party decisions, specifically leadership selection, as a means of assessing how voters respond to a change in elite polarisation. Of course, this is a cyclical process, and parties and voters are continually reacting to each other in turn. This theory then focuses on the specific point in the cycle when parties must determine how voters react to increased elite polarisation in order to adequately reposition themselves when necessary.

Perceptions of polarisation can also be exaggerated (Levendusky and Malhotra, 2016; Moore-Berg *et al*., 2020) which further complicates the process and parties must also contend with variations in trends. For example, Fiorina and Abrams (2008) highlight that voters' response to elite polarisation can be disrupted by parties entertaining more moderate electoral candidates. So, while an increase in elite polarisation may have taken place, voter response may not always be instantaneous (Fiorina and Abrams, 2008; Oosterwaal and Torenvlied, 2010). Thus, the party should not assume that reverting to the extreme ideological end of the party's poll is the optimum solution for responding to any increase in elite polarisation. Assessing voter reaction to elite polarisation involves accurately gauging many moving parts. It is therefore logical, and precedented in the literature, that parties make structural changes when struggling to make important decisions of their own accord when assessing the electoral terrain (Harmel and Janda, 1994; Detterbeck and Austillo, 2020).

Viewing polarisation as a process then, elite polarisation is not always a state of all parties in a system reverting to the extreme end of their ideological polls, or the classic polarisation scenario of two pain parties organised around left of centre and right of centre ideological blocks centrifugally. An increase in elite polarisation can look different at each stage of the process. For example, one party may make a shift (however large or small) along a certain cleavage, increasing the ideological dispersion of the system, or multiple parties may have

shifted. In such an instance, all parties would likely be required to respond to this political change should the shift permeate the political agenda. In any such scenario, parties would be required to take stock of how their base is reacting to the shift, be it the party/parties that caused the change, or other parties in the system attempting to respond. Therefore, the party/parties responsible for the change in dispersion is likely irrelevant in the decision to democratise in response to an increase in elite polarisation. I posit that it is likely the change in dispersion itself that acts as the catalyst. It is logical for a party having already moved along a cleavage axis to check in with their base before making any further decisions, or potentially reverting the decision. Similarly, it is prudent for a party reacting to such a scenario to make similar assessments before deciding how to respond.

Indeed, levels of elite polarisation fluctuate. Reforming the leadership selection rules to include party members does not have to be a long-term solution to a potentially short-term problem. Research shows that parties can be inconsistent with enforcing such reforms over time (Sandri, Seddone and Venturino, 2016). Moreover, party elites can continue to control the process, should they wish, despite inclusive selectorates (Cross and Pilet, 2015; Pilet and Wauters, 2013). As such, parties can use inclusive reform for their specific needs at a given time and manipulate it as deemed necessary. It is therefore reasonable to assume that party elites have relied on membership leadership selectorates to solve a specific problem, at a certain point in time.

In summary, I have argued that an increase in elite polarisation encourages parties to democratise their leadership selection processes to the rank-and-file. When the difference in party positions becomes clearer, parties must assess how their base is reacting in order to effectively compete in the new electoral landscape. Democratising the leadership selectorate allows parties to do this before determining a responsive, or follow-up action and enables parties to represent their base more accurately in a different environment. Such reform

also provides increased legitimacy for any backlash that such policies might receive from either side. Similarly, the public nature of these contests allows for the party to minimise confusion associated with polarised policy and the newly elected leader to determine and set the appropriate temperature ahead of the next election. This logic leads me to my first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Elite polarisation encourages parties to democratise their leadership selection processes to the party membership.

Party system polarity

Scholars organise party systems according to the framework of party competition. Sartori's (1976) formative typology proposes that party system types are formed from both party fragmentation and polarisation. In essence, the number of relevant parties and their ideological dispersion shape the party system, or in other words, determine the electoral battleground. Of course, how each system evolves is influenced by a multitude of factors including institutions, influences on alignment and a party's internal structures (Mair, 1997).

Research demonstrating parties' propensity to widen the leadership selectorate following electoral setback and when in opposition (Cross and Blais, 2012a), indicates that party elites consider the electoral landscape when making these internal decisions. The literature also points to increased legitimacy being the only positive outcomes for parties that include members in the leadership selectorate (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021). Logic follows that party elites also consider the structure of party competition, particularly when the essence of competition is changing and therefore provokes electoral and representational ramifications. The relevance of elite polarisation within a party system to parties' internal decision-making structures then, will likely depend on both how

parties are ideologically organised and how competition is structured. Mair (1997) argued that the structure of government competition is the most salient aspect of a party system and is truly what defines one from another. Here, I focus on government alteration and whether it conforms to a bipolar structure of competition, or not. I rely on Enyedi and Bértoa's (2022:246) summary of multiple descriptions in the literature. They define a bipolar system with three characteristics: Firstly:

> "[Systems] that are dominated by two alternating parties or by two alternating alliances (or blocs) of parties. The bipolar configuration is possible and unequivocal if the boundaries of the competing alliances are well established and if there are no relevant political parties moving between the alliances."

Secondly:

> "Such a pattern is more likely to materialise if all the parties that are present in the system can play a role in government-building. The existence of significant pariah parties, or parties that refuse to participate in governing, leads to a shrinkage of the pool of 'coalitionable' actors, decreasing the likelihood of any bloc reaching the threshold needed to form a government."

And finally:

> "the lack of cleavages crosscutting the government opposition divide. As a result, the opposition parties do not see themselves to be closer to any of the government parties than to their fellow opposition parties."

Whether a system is bipolar then, defines the scope of representation. If competition in a bipolar system is characterised by oscillating government between a two-bloc party structure, and systems that take on a more manifold configuration, tend to be marked by parties attached to specific groups in society (Mair, 2006), then as elite polarisation takes hold, resulting party strategies to navigate the electoral terrain will likely differ along these lines. Given that

parties in the latter party system's raison detre is typically to represent specific interests, and parties in bipolar systems tend to prioritise government office (Mair, 2006), I posit that parties in multipolar systems will be less inclined to seek any additional measures in order to increase legitimacy as they already represent distinct interests and maintain legitimacy accordingly. Parties in such systems also tend to be more cooperative in nature (Karvonen, 2014; Kawecki, 2022). Thus, setting the temperature will likely be less of a conundrum for party elites who are well versed in dealing with party differences in a cognisant manner. Moreover, voters in multipolar systems are typically loyal to multiple parties in that they can more easily transfer their vote (Van der Meer *et al*., 2015). I therefore posit that instead of investing more in one party such as contributing to internal processes, citizens may choose the less costly option and simply vote for another party that they closely align with.

Parties in bipolar structures, however, must be more adaptable to avoid voter alienation (Brandenburg and Johns, 2014). Research shows that voters in bipolar systems are more likely to identify with either ideological bloc than with a specific party (Hagevi, 2015). When parties of these systems must determine if, or how to shape their message, then making the leadership vote more easily accessible to members and the electorate, is a prudent way for parties to determine where voters are congregating within the bloc. Parties situated more toward the centre can assess to what extreme their base is willing to extend, and parties on the outward polls can assess what policies their base might be willing to temper. Assessing the tolerance as such is beneficial in bipolar systems characterised by competition between two main parties who likely wish to appeal to both moderates and extremists, and where bipolarity is defined by two groups of parties, for coalition purposes. Moreover, assessing tolerance via an inclusive leadership selectorate gives the new leader the required legitimacy to introduce the policies and the temperament the party needs to navigate the increasingly polarised terrain, all whilst attempting to ensure majority support

by minimising alienation, and therefore voter abstention. Parties in bipolar systems have more to gain from taking the many risks associated with inclusive selectorates. I propose the costs of inclusive selectorates for legitimacy purposes are therefore likely too high and not required of parties in multipolar systems. This logic leads me to my second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Parties in bipolar systems will be more likely to democratise their leadership selection processes to the party membership than parties in multipolar systems following an increase in elite polarisation.

To be clear, this is all not to argue that parties will democratise their leadership selection processes simply because their environment has become more polarised. Whilst the trend of democratisation is becoming more common, parties are not obliged to take this step. Indeed, many have not (Cross and Pilet, 2015). Just as Cross and Blais (2012a) demonstrate that parties widen their leadership selectorates following electoral set back, many parties lose elections without resorting to internal reform. However, elite polarisation and its impact on the electoral landscape, I argue, is a major factor to evaluate among others that party elites must consider when deciding whether to restructure the internal organisation.

3.3 Data and method

Dependent variable

To measure the dependent variable, this chapter focuses on a set of cases that have democratised their leadership selection process to the membership. Dion (1988) argues that selecting within the dependent variable is the

methodologically appropriate approach to assess whether a condition is necessary. This is based on the observation that including outcomes that did not produce the outcome of interest will misinterpret the nature of the relationship if the independent variable is also not sufficient. On this basis, I therefore only include instances of leadership selection democratisation where participation is awarded to the membership in some variation of one member one vote (OMOV) being the main dependent variable. Parties that continue to choose not to democratise are of no consequence to this particular research as they represent the status-quo, and the literature demonstrates a multitude of negative consequences that parties endure following democratisation. It is this decision that is of interest. Therefore, I focus only on the parties that choose to democratise to enable the detection of general patterns relating to such a decision. Chiru *et al's.* (2015) analysis of leadership selection reform demonstrates that the majority of changes to the selection rules across parties took place between 1990 and 2000s. This is true of 25/28 cases of democratisation to the members analysed here across 7 Western parliamentary democracies. In keeping with Enyedi and Bértoa's (2022) analysis that spans this time period, the following countries are classified as bipolar party systems: United Kingdom, Denmark, Spain, Portugal. Conversely, the Netherlands, Belgium and Canada[3] are classified as multipolar (or non-bipolar) systems. Countries were chosen based on their stability i.e., party systems that have either been bipolar or multipolar for the time period of the analysis to allow for a clearer comparison. With this, and that democratic leadership selection methods are not practised in many countries, in line with similar research, a larger N study is not realistic at this time. 10 cases of democratisation to the members occurred in bipolar systems and 18 cases occurred in multipolar systems.

[3] Enyedi and Bértoa's (2022) analysis includes European countries only. Canada is classed as a multipolar country here given its history of "domination by a party of the centre" (Johnson, 2017:4).

Independent variable

I measure the difference in elite polarisation of parties in parliament at the time of parties' reform to include the members in the leadership selectorate, compared with the previous parliament. This will allow me to assess whether party positions have changed, and therefore whether any such difference might have played a role in the party's decision to democratise their leadership selectorate to the membership. I use RILE scores from the Comparative Manifesto Project to measure elite polarisation. They provide ideological measurements of party policy positions at the time of elections and therefore provide a suitable comparison of ideological polarisation of parliaments from one term to the next. All main policy areas are included meaning manifestations of polarisation beyond that on the economic left-right dimension is captured. This allows for polarisation on an issue that may not fall on that dimension but may be of enough salience that parties wish to readjust. I calculate the polarisation level of parliaments using party dispersion calculation from Ezrow (2007) (based on Alvarez and Nagler's (2004) measure). In line with this, I also recalibrate the RILE scores from a scale of -100 – +100 to a scale ranging from 1 – 10 so that these findings can be more easily compared with prior and future research of this nature. Unfortunately, this measure does not allow for an assessment of individual issues and the salience thereof. While it is likely that the salience of the polarising issue/s plays an important role in parties' decision to democratise their leadership selection, this research design allows for an appropriate initial, exploratory examination of a novel theory. I include only parties with representation in parliament at the time of democratisation and the parliament prior as the theoretical framework is based on parties responding,

and reforming, in line with political debate in this arena[4]. The equation is as follows:

Weighted Party System Dispersion

$$= \sqrt{\sum_{j=1} VS_j\left(P_{jk} - \overline{P}_k\right)^2}$$

Where,

Pk = the weighted mean of all the parties' left-right ideological positions in country k.

Pjk = the ideological position of party j in country k.

VSj = Vote share for party j.

In an analysis of the theoretical framework at the most extreme, I also conduct a qualitative analysis of the three instances in the dataset where parties have democratised their selectorates beyond the membership to party supporters, reflecting somewhat of an open primary. These being, the UK's Labour Party in 2014, Spain's PSOE in 2014 and Canada's Liberal Party in 2011. I rely on secondary data such as media interviews, news sources and academic articles to explore the theory in more depth and analyse the role of elite polarisation in the decision to reform. Due to the insufficient variation within the dependent

[4] The Bloc Québécois in Canada is also included as whilst technically a new party, created in 1991, they were formed from MPs defected from other parliamentary parties and therefore had a presence in Parliament in the term prior.

variable, I take this approach to introduce a slightly "different measure of the same unit" meaning that I can assess the effect of polarisation on leadership selection rules more in depth (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994: 201). To further demonstrate the importance of research that considers new party level explanations, I first explore the data in terms of the primary independent variables demonstrated by previous research as discussed in the previous chapter. I then explore the main independent variable of this research, elite polarisation, across the entire dataset, before exploring the three extreme cases of the independent variable more in depth.

3.4 Results

A recap of the literature

To explore whether current party level variables relating to electoral competition are sufficient alone in explaining party's decisions to democratise their leadership selectorate to the members, I map whether the cases used in this analysis meet the expectations of the literature. Table 3.1 shows the governing status and electoral performance of each party at the time of reform as per standard explanations of system level motivators for widening the leadership selectorate (Cross and Blais, 2012a)

Table 3. 1 System level contextual variables at time of party's introduction of members in their leadership selectorate

Leadership selection reform	**Governing Status**	**Electoral Difference (%)**
Bipolar systems		
United Kingdom		

Liberal Party (1976)	Opposition	10.84
Conservative Party (1998)	Opposition	-11.23
Labour Party (2014)	Opposition	-6.19
Denmark		
Socialist People's Party (2005)	Opposition	-0.37
Social Democrats (2005)	Opposition	-3.24
Portugal		
Socialist Party (1998)	Government	15.03
Democratic and Social Centre-People's Party (2005)	Opposition	-1.44
Social Democratic Party (2006)	Opposition	-11.37
Spain		
PSOE (2014)	Opposition	-15.01
People's Party (2017)	Government	4.31
Multipolar systems		
Canada		
Liberal Party (1990)	Opposition	3.89
Conservative Party (1995)	Opposition	-27.02
New Democrats (1995)	Opposition	13.51
Bloc Québécois (1996)	Opposition	n/a
Conservative Party (2003)	Opposition	-6.65
New Democrats (2003)	Opposition	-2.54
Liberal Party (2009)	Opposition	-4.03
Liberal Party (2011)	Opposition	-7.34
Netherlands		
Democrats 66 (1982)	Opposition	-6.79
PvdA (2002)	Opposition	-13.87
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (2006)	Government	2.51

Christian Democratic Appeal (2012)	Government	-12.89
Belgium		
MR/PRL (1989)	Opposition	-0.8
Open VLD (1993)	Opposition	0.45
CD & V (1993)	Government	-0.65
SP.A (1995)	Government	0.6
PS (1997)	Government	-1.53
VU (1999)	Opposition	2.04

The data in Table 3.1 highlights the propensity of parties to democratise their leadership selection processes when in opposition with 75 percent of the cases doing so. A closer look reveals a somewhat similar pattern between the parties operating in bipolar systems and those in multipolar systems. 80 percent of parties that democratised to the membership in bipolar systems were in opposition at the time of the reform compared with 72.2 percent in multipolar systems. Such patterns are not detected when analysed country by country. For example, only 50 percent of the cases of democratisation to the members in Belgium occurred in opposition, equivalent to the Netherlands and Spain. Of course, the latter has only two observations to draw from and indeed none of these countries operate in Westminster systems as per Cross and Blais' (2012a) original analysis. Thus, cultural factors may be important here (Wauters, 2013).

Regarding electoral loss, 18 of 27 of parties that had a presence in parliament for the two terms analysed had suffered electoral setbacks, equating to 66 percent of cases. Broken down by party system type, 70 percent of the parties that introduced democratisation to the members in bipolar systems did so following a decrease in vote percentage, as did 11 of 17, or 64.7 percent of cases analysed in multipolar systems. For example, in the UK, a bipolar system, 2/3 parties introduced OMOV leadership selection following electoral loss

compared to 3/4 of the cases in the Netherlands. Contrary to evidence presented from Westminster systems then (Cross and Blais, 2012a), even after the first instance of democratisation, electoral loss and opposition status appear not to be a necessary condition for explaining this type of expansion of the selectorate. At least beyond Westminster systems. This aligns with Wauters' (2013) analysis of Belgian parties that concludes electoral loss does not explain their leadership democratisation. This could also speak to the significance of membership selectorates specifically. Where current evidence (Cross and Blais, 2012a) includes other methods of democratisation such as the introduction of selection via delegates etc. It stands to reason that additional factors than that of the current explanatory variables disused in the literature feature in the decision to introduce member leadership selectorates specifically. Likely, a multitude of variables.

A standout case that clearly defies the expectations of the literature and exemplifies the complexity of these decisions is The Socialist Party of Portugal's reform of 1998. The party only introduced membership voting for the leader following not only a successful legislative result that instilled confidence in the party, but also attractive policy outcomes that fostered confidence in the leader from both in and outside the party. This helped elites to overcome internal resistance to such reform. Members could then be more easily guided thanks to the increased availability of selective benefits, the tightening of control around other internal processes would now be more palatable, and the party could use the publicity of inclusive contests to connect with voters before the end of the election cycle and use voters to assess whether new party messages were agreeable (Lisi, 2010). Thus, it is logical to assume that other system level variables factor in elite's decision to utilise members in the leadership selection process and that elites use the involvement of party members for future planning and navigating the electoral terrain, not necessarily in the spirit of membership revival. This was the first time a Portuguese party

had introduced OMOV for their leadership selection. Indeed, Cross and Blais (2012a) concede that the first instance of democratisation within a party system is thus far unexplainable via system level factors, though instances of widening the selectorate thereafter are generally predictable where change does occur. Yet, the patterns they identify do not hold when applied beyond Westminster countries as outlined in Table 3.1. This could be again, due to the significance of empowering the entire membership that causes elites' considerations to be somewhat different than when democratising more conservatively. Thus, further exploratory research is prudent to fully understand the impact of party competition on leadership selection processes.

Polarisation and democratisation of party leadership selectorates

Moving on to analysis of the theoretical framework set out in this chapter, Hypothesis 1 states that elite polarisation encourages parties to democratise their leadership selection processes to the party membership. Table 3.2 shows the difference in parliament polarisation levels from the time of parties' democratisation of leadership selection and the previous parliamentary session.

Table 3. 2 Difference in elite polarisation between the time of member leadership selctorate introduction and the previous parliamentary term

Party introduced OMOV LS Rules (Year)	**Elite polarisation difference**
Bipolar systems	
United Kingdom	
Liberal Party (1976)	0.59
Conservative Party (1998)	-0.72
Labour Party (2014)	0.03
Denmark	

Socialist People's Party (2005)	0.04
Social Democrats (2005)	0.04
Portugal	
Socialist Party (1998)	0.23
Democratic and Social Centre-People's Party (2005)	0.03
Social Democratic Party (2006)	0.03
Spain	
PSOE (2014)	0.14
People's Party (2017)	0.07
Multipolar systems	
Canada	
Liberal Party (1990)	0.27
Conservative Party (1995)	-0.31
Bloc Québécois (1996)	-0.31
New Democrats (1995)	-0.31
Conservative Party (2003)	-0.27
New Democrats (2003)	-0.27
Liberal Party (2009)	-0.15
Liberal Party (2011)	0.51
Netherlands	
Democrats 66 (1982)	0.17
PvdA (2002)	-0.14
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (2006)	0.08
Christian Democratic Appeal (2012)	-0.19
Belgium	
MR/PRL (1989)	-0.15
Open VLD (1993)	-0.26

CD & V (1993)	-0.26
SP.A (1995)	0.05
PS (1997)	0.05
VU (1999)	0

The results show that 53.6 percent of the instances of democratisation to the membership analysed were introduced following an increase in elite polarisation from the previous parliament[5]. Overall, these findings demonstrate weak support for the first hypothesis. Divergent patterns relating to the influence of elite polarisation on the decision to democratise leadership selection to the members between parties in bipolar systems and those in multipolar systems are analysed below.

Party system Polarity

Hypothesis 2 states that parties in bipolar systems will be more likely to democratise their leadership selection processes to the party membership than parties in multipolar systems following an increase in elite polarisation. The results provide support for this prediction. Table 3.2 shows that 90 percent of the instances of democratisation to the members in bipolar systems did follow an increase in elite polarisation from the parliament prior, compared with 33.3 percent of the cases in multipolar systems. While the N for the multipolar countries is almost double that of the cases in bipolar systems, this imbalance does not appear to contribute to the explanation for the different patterns between systems. That more instances of democratisation to the members is

[5] In the case of the Liberal party's reform of 1976, the polarisation difference is calculated here from the October election in 1974 and the general election of 1970. An election was held in February of 1974 though this term lasted only 10 months and so a comparison of the term prior was deemed more suitable. A comparison between the two elections of 1974 however, still demonstrate an increase in elite polarisation. This time by 0.03. A steady increase in elite polarisation over the time period from 1970 to the time of reform is evident.

evident in parties in multipolar systems is an interesting observation in and of itself. This type of reform challenges the status quo and so any case is significant and subsequently as is the timing these reforms are introduced in each party. While elite polarisation does not seem to be a driver of inclusive leadership selectorates in multipolar systems, it's likely that a contagion effect is a more fitting explanation for the introduction of these reforms as demonstrated in existing research (Cross and Blais, 2012a; Sandri and Sedone, 2016). The following sections further explore the context relating to the independent variable at the time three parties in the analysis not only democratised to the members, but also included supporters in the vote.

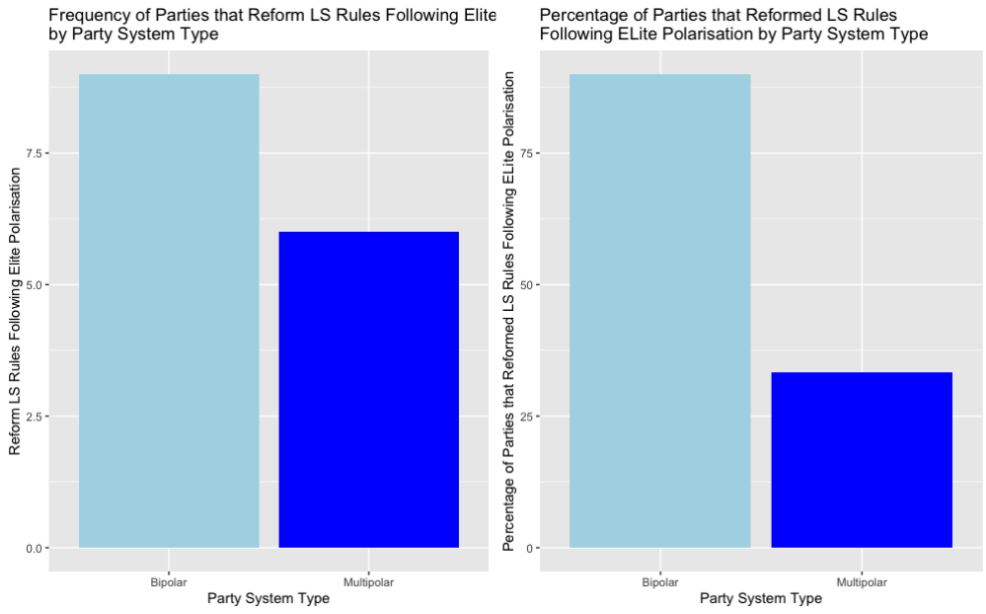

Figure 3. 1 Of the parties that reformed, frequency (left) of those that introduced OMOV LS rules following an increase in elite polarisation by party system type and percentage (right) of parties in each party system that introduced OMOV LS rules following an increase in elite polarisation

The decision of the UK Labour Party to democratise the leadership selection process to supporters was touted as a solution to the problems of the electoral college method that the party had practised since 1983 (Quinn, 2016). For a much-reduced fee of £3 and an agreement to support the party, the standard social and economic barriers that might normally hinder engagement with party activity were largely diminished. The following several leadership contests within the party were then more akin to an open primary. In tandem with the wider selectorate, candidates were now required to secure support from 15% of the parliamentary party (PLP) before they could appear on the ballot meaning the PLP retained some control over the process. While in practice Corbyn's success proved elites' bid to keep some semblance of control ineffective, any the outcome of the contests is beyond the scope of this chapter. Elites make these reforms in the knowledge that they can attempt to wield control, but open contests are risky by nature. The act of implementing such a safeguarding mechanism, however, reinforces the rationality of party elites in that the party was not willing to democratise at all costs.

In 2013, leader of the time, Ed Miliband, called for a review of internal participation following dispute over the selection of a parliamentary candidate that sparked rumours of trade union malpractice. The OMOV (including supporters) process laid out in the subsequent Collins Review was adopted by the party with the intention of potential negative perceptions of trade union influence (whose vote also accounted for one third under the previous electoral college system) being dispelled (Dorey and Denham, 2016). Ironically then, in a bid to offset any damage to the party's image from the control of external actors, power was diffused further outside the party. It is logical to assume then, that other variables also factored into the decision.

At the time, the party had spent four years in opposition to the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition and thus, the party was reeling from electoral loss and control of government. This was likely instrumental in the rationale for reform. When considering the wider political context however, it is reasonable to infer that the party may also have considered that opening the leadership selectorate would be of value in helping them compete effectively in the newly polarised environment. The 2000s were a decade characterised by moderate politics, on the economic spectrum at least. Policies were generally catered towards the median voter that largely converged around the centre (Green, 2007). While Labour Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Browns' premierships were not void of controversy with the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, and the cash for honours and MPs' expenses scandals for example, these issues did not redefine the landscape. It was the 2010 election centred on the 2009 recession (Quinn, 2010) that marked a turning point for the British politics where division on the economic cleavage and the prevalence of social class became much more prominent than the decade prior (Sayer, 2013; Whiteley, 2023; Wiedermann, 2024).

With austerity now firmly on the agenda, not only where the parties more polarised entering parliament than the term prior, the public were now engaged with the reality of public spending cuts. While many were able to rationalise the government's logic via their 'personal spending' analogy (Stanley, 2014), the cuts affected those on lower incomes more harshly. Lines then began to appear more visible around the historic cleavages that the parties represented (Fetzer, 2019). The choices then available to Labour were either to also promote a programme of austerity (though presumably less drastic than that of the Conservatives) and gain ground from those previously in the centre that had rationalised the concept or move further back to the left than the more centrist policies of the Blair/Brown era by increasing taxes and spending. Both options available in response to the recession represented more extreme economic

policy than that of the past ten years and thus, posed some element of risk either way.

Miliband's agenda at the time of the leadership selection reforms used the language of change, yet resistance from within the party resulted in compromise and Miliband's response to austerity appeared shrouded in vagueness and uncertainty. Indeed, Labour's 2015 manifesto one year later was reflective of this (Goes, 2016) and that the party was struggling to respond to the new electoral landscape was evident. This is suggestive that the leadership was presumably struggling to discern the optimum position in the new political climate at the time of reform. Thus, involving members and supporters in the leadership selection process would guide the leadership in deciding how such issues should be tackled going forward if they failed to gain the support they required for their chosen stance at the ballot box the following year.

Spain PSOE 2014[6]

Early 2014 saw the Spanish PSOE widen their leadership selectorate beyond the members in similar circumstances to those of the UK Labour Party. While in government during the 2006 – 2011 parliamentary term, the PSOE attempted to increase spending on public services when in government, in response to the 2008 economic downturn. A growing deficit proved to be largely unpopular and so towards the end of the term, the party introduced several spending cuts and departed from their original plan of social investment. Thus ensued a series of strikes and widespread protests from the Indignados movement (Botti, 2013; Martín and Urquizu-Sancho, 2012).

[6] Spain's PSOE democratised their leadership selection to the members in 2014 as well as their top candidate (Prime Ministerial candidate) to the wider electorate. Historically the leader and the Prime Ministerial candidate is the same person (Barberà *et al*., 2014) and thus this coding allows me to provide the electoral context of the time of both of these decisions.

Following significant electoral defeat in 2011, the PSOE now found themselves in opposition to the People's Party (PP) majority government. The PP continued on a committed austerity agenda (Perez and Matsaganis, 2018) and protest movements gained more momentum (Medina, 2015). Given that attitudes along Spain's territorial cleavage and the economic cleavage are correlated, polarisation along these lines were most apparent (Bosco and Verney, 2022). Further, gains for smaller parties in parliament on the left made for a difficult political landscape for the PSOE to navigate a revival in an evolving environment. It is therefore logical to assume that PSOE elites would have found it difficult to accurately position themselves, particularly on the economic dimension, having left government tainted with the perception of being unable to manage the economy and losing voters to both sides of the spectrum (Martín and Urquizu-Sancho, 2012). Changes were likely required to best place the PSOE for a hopeful return to power at the following election, thus it is not beyond the scope of possibility that PSOE elites would have thought it prudent to reform the leadership selection process to realign with potential/lost voters who clearly rejected their previous policies. Allowing supporters to vote in the next leadership contest then, would give the party a more accurate idea of the most palatable response to austerity from the left. Again, while electoral setback and losing government was an obvious, identifiable driver (Barberá, Lisi and Teruel, 2016), the wider political context allows for speculation as to whether the increasingly polarised nature of parliament factored in the decision also.

Indeed, this sentiment was signalled by Pedro Sánchez's promise to deliver a party that was "as far left as its grassroots**"** (Díez and Garea, 2014) after winning the party leadership in 2014. By allowing the party's supporters to participate in choosing the new leader, the chosen leader's platform is thereby a signal of the preference of the party's voters ahead of the general election. With the backing of wider supporters, the party would then be more able to more

accurately position themselves on the left in a more optimum position to prevent losing more votes from to both sides and credibly rival the PP for government at the next election.

Canada Liberal Party 2011

2011 saw the Canada's Liberal Party reform their leadership selection rules from one member one vote to include a 'supporter' category where anyone who registered their support for the party's principles could participate. This move was depicted by elites as an attempt to make the party more welcoming (Montigny and Tessier, 2017), despite having democratised to ordinary members just a few years prior (Cross and Blais, 2012a). However, after occupying government or official opposition status throughout the history of the Canadian parliament, the 2011 election served as a seismic shock. Here, I explore how the increasingly polarised nature of the 2011 parliament might also have contributed to this decision.

With the New Democratic Party (NDP) holding the official opposition for the first time, the ideological composition of parliament had been notably altered. The NDP gained significant ground in Quebec from the Bloc Québécois and the most obvious division in parliament was now along the left-right dimension (Johnson, 2014). Research by Fournier, *et al*. (2013) outlining the moving levers that brought about the 'orange wave' demonstrates that that a number of ideological changes account for the NDP disrupting the status quo. In Quebec, they became the dominant force in the left by identifying with issues associated with the Bloc but also drawing in voters from both sides of the nationalist cleavage. They further show that economic policy also aided in the NDP's performance in Quebec. Their plans to increase spending on health, the environment and raise corporate taxes appealed to previous Bloc voters in Quebec (as well as voters throughout the rest of Canada). This may speak to the

propensity for directional voting on part of the electorate as the polarisation process takes hold (Leimgruber *et al*., 2010).

The left-right divide between the Conservative government and the NDP was then more evident than if the Liberals held official opposition status. As the focus turned to Quebec, where the Liberal party was normally a strong contender (Bodet, 2013), the Liberal Party were faced with a new political landscape to position themselves in optimally for an effective comeback. Thus, not only did the Liberal Party suffer considerable electoral shock, the context in which this occurred likely also mattered for their decision to reform internally.

Summary

All three of the selected instances of parties choosing to democratise their leadership selection process to the supporters happened in the context of an apparent increase in elite polarisation that required parties to reposition themselves in a new competition environment. While the data points to a propensity for parties in bipolar systems to introduce member leadership selectorates as per the UK Labour Party and Spain's PSOE, the case of the Liberal Party in Canada almost mimics a very short-lived bipolar nature of competition. Coupled with the NDP taking official opposition status for the first time in history, logic follows that such a seismic change to the electoral landscape disquieted Liberal Party elites. In these cases of membership voting taken to the extreme, all parties had lost control of government following electoral setback in line with expectations of the literature (Cross and Blais, 2012a). I argue however, that the context of competition is also important in these cases and that these parties were required to reposition themselves in response to increased elite polarisation. Many factors contribute to party change beyond electoral setback or governing status (Harmel and Janda, 1994). Leadership selection reform is likely more complex than it is simple then, and

thus, research efforts should continue to seek variables that might factor in the decision. While the outcome of the selection is beyond the scope of this chapter, research assessing whether more extreme party policy is associated with party primaries is mixed (Bruhn, 2012; Brady, Han and Pope, 2017). Again, this likely speaks to the context of competition and whether more extreme policy is required, among other system, party and intra-party level variables.

3.5 Conclusion

Elite polarisation offers a different electoral terrain to that of convergence and thus, elites must strategize accordingly. As differences between parties become clearer, parties must assess how voters react to this evolution to position themselves optimally. Research demonstrates that parties benefit only from increased legitimacy of the leader following democratisation of their leadership selectorate to the members (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021). I therefore posit that as elite polarisation takes hold and legitimacy may be harder to achieve for parties, such change to party competition might also factor in elites' decision to reform in this manner. Not only does this allow parties to more accurately determine how their target voters have responded, but the increasingly public nature of these inclusive contests likely allows elites to shape and stretch voter tolerance.

Further to this, I explore the possibility that this effect is more prominent in bipolar party systems than in multipolar party systems. I argued that that the nature of bipolar competition means that parties in such systems will be more likely to require additional mechanisms to reposition themselves, compared to parties in multipolar systems that typically represent more specific preferences.

I explored these assumptions using 28 observations of parties reforming their leadership selection process to include members (and beyond) across 7

counties. The findings demonstrate that parties are marginally more likely to democratise party leadership selection to their members (or beyond) following an increase in elite polarisation. This was demonstrated in 53.6 percent of cases.

The results concerning party system polarity are more robust, with 90 percent of such cases analysed democratising following an increase in elite polarisation compared to 33.3 percent of cases that did so in multipolar systems. It appears that elite polarisation is a necessary but not sufficient condition in bipolar systems. Many parties in such systems continue to compete in the absence of internal reform despite an increase in elite polarisation. The aim of this chapter was simply to begin exploring how changes to the plane of competition might encourage parties to democratise their leadership selection to the members. It is likely that elite polarisation, as well as electoral setback and opposition status, in addition to a multitude of intra-party factors are considered when parties choose to reform their processes or choose not to.

Though further research is required, these findings offer a preliminary basis on which the link between elite polarisation and inclusive leadership selection reform can be established. Parties react to the system via their supporters. This research seeks to extend the conversation surrounding various forms of intra-party democracy by proposing that an increasingly polarised system is likely also one of the many variables considered by party elites when deciding to change the party structure. The analysis offered here measures polarisation across all issues, and in order to understand this relationship more fully, I expand on the contextual analysis of the three instances of democratisation beyond the electorate.

To extend this research agenda, future research might consider researching the effect of specific polarising issues and the salience thereof. Though likely accompanied by different limitations, complementary qualitative research such as interviews that allows for party elites who have democratised their leadership selectorates to further explain the context in which their choice

was made would be beneficial. Additionally, there are likely further variables of importance at all levels within the political system that would be prudent for research to explore. For example, the effect polarisation has on factionalism within parties may differ across electoral systems and therefore, pressure to democratise from within may be a more relevant factor in some party systems than in others following fluctuations in polarisation. Such a project likely comes with its own challenges and limitations, and potentially also requires the consideration of parties' candidate selection methods and the existence of other established internal groups to account for the representation of factions. Future research might also consider all of the above through the lens of mass and/or affective polarisation. Given additional time and resources, the introduction of polarisation to the discussion of leadership selection reform opens the door to a potentially compelling and varied research agenda.

In terms of the research at hand, and for any future projects of this nature, I caution against the over reliance on comparative research that explores the rationale for membership participation in the selection of party leaders. This endeavour has been extremely useful in identifying a new variable to be added to the discussion/explored further. However, the complex nature of these decisions offers an opportunity for more in-depth case studies that identify the nature of the differences and to what extent this was relevant in the decision to reform amidst the potential intra-party, other party and system level combination that Barnea and Rahat (2007) identify. For example, Wauters (2013) observes differences in parties in Westminster systems where oftentimes the Parliamentary groups formally held leadership selection power, and Belgian parties where selectorates typically began in a delegate format. He notes that electoral results have varying consequences for party leaders in these different systems. Electoral defeat in Westminster parties gives rise to diffusing internal power away from weakened parliamentarians to the members, while electoral success for elites in Belgium instils the confidence necessary to allow them to

make their desired changes. Thus, wider organisational arrangements of the party are important, as is the context/culture that influenced this. Nonetheless, this chapter has contributed to a vast literature. Adding to the possible explanations for what, on the surface, appears to be an irrational decision across the board on part of party elites, yet entirely rational as research exploring the context of these reforms continues.

This chapter has focused on the drivers of the party elites' decision party to reform their leadership selection process by democratising to the members. In the following chapter, I seek to place leadership selection reform in the wider political context by offering a theoretical framework that focuses on the influence of the party leader on the party, and assessing what elements of party outputs are important for voters feeling represented by the leader of the party they support. Moreover, it assesses whether this type of representation is important for voters' democratic satisfaction. This provides additional context to the potential consequences of democratic leadership selection.

Chapter 4: Party drivers of party leadership representation and its effect on satisfaction with democracy

4.1 Introduction

Party leaders are becoming more influential to their political environment than ever before (McAllister, 1996; Mughan, 2000; Garzia, 2017). The evolution of the personalisation of politics, whereby individual actors have grown in relevance to the political process, characterises modern politics (McAllister, 2007; Rahat and Shaefer, 2007). Noting the consequences on representative democracy, McAllister (2007) highlights that party organisations have concomitantly become less robust. In other words, the trend of party elites extending voting rights to members for decisions such as leadership selection is occurring while party leaders grow in prominence.

Moreover, in what is referred to as the Presidentialisation of politics (Poguntke and Webb, 2005), the role of political leaders' and by extension, the people who occupy the top offices in parliamentary systems are gaining increased traction in political discourse, aided by institutional mechanisms. Thus, no longer are party symbols representative of an idea or ideology bigger than any one person. Parties are becoming increasingly leader-centric (Schumacher and Giger, 2017) and leaders can no longer simply rely on the strength of shared values alone to guarantee party support (Farrell, 1996). The political influence of leaders now extends to their personality and individual characteristics, both in a way that is separate from party values and messaging, and in ways that feed into party outputs (King, 2002).

In this chapter, I explore how voters' perceptions of the party influence their perceptions of leadership representation. Party leaders' personalities,

priorities and preferences differ from leader to leader (Blais, 2013; King, 2002). How well voters deem a party to be performing, is then evidence of a specific leader's influence, or lack thereof, on the party. Party politics literature highlights the importance of perceptions of the party for voters' political attitudes. Yet, these perceptions also represent party choices that a leader is ultimately responsible for and likely impacts attitudes towards a leader's popularity. To my knowledge, this has yet to be reflected in the literature. With party leaders enjoying more power and attention than ever before, and their influence and performance changing from leader to leader, supporters' attitudes towards the extent to which a leader is aligned with their political objectives is increasingly pertinent to representative democracy.

Here I focus on three different elements of party outputs: valence politics, ideological congruence and perceptions of party cohesion. All three elements speak to a leader's ability to conduct the party in a way that it acts as a representative mechanism for its supporters. I argue that those who perceive the party to be more competent will be more likely to feel represented by the party leader, as will those who perceive that the party is ideologically congruent with their own preferences. Concerning party cohesion, I posit a competing set of hypotheses that highlights both the positive and negative connotations of internal division for perceptions of representation.

I then explore the relationship between feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports and attitudes towards wider democratic satisfaction. Voters of a party that feel unrepresented by the party leader likely evokes negative feelings towards the wider system given the increasing importance of party leaders to representative democracy (McAllister, 2007; Rahat and Shaefer, 2007). For example, before the 2024 primaries, just over half of Republican voters in the US reported their support for Donald Trump (Abramowitz, 2023). At the same time, American voters' dissatisfaction with democracy continues to rise (Wike *et al.*, 2024). Abramowitz (2023) hypothesises that negative

partisanship plays a defining role in the continued support for the Republican party despite negative perceptions of Trump. Voters would still rather vote for a party, and by extension, a leader that does not represent them, than vote for a different party that diametrically opposes their values. Logically, a scenario such as this, impacts voters' evaluation of the system. Another recent example of a divisive leader is Jeremy Corbyn's premiership of UK Labour party. This resulted in a decreasing vote share in his last general election as leader with 35% of those who defected mentioning his leadership as the reason (Curtis, 2019). It then follows that representation by a specific leader influences voters' democratic satisfaction.

Considering the growing importance of party leaders in forming political attitudes (Mughan, 2000; Garzia, 2017), it is crucial to understand how important representation, by the leader specifically, is for fostering attitudes towards wider system functioning. I argue that a positive relationship exists between these two variables on the basis of the winners and losers' thesis (Anderson and Guillory, 1997). Where one reaps the rewards feeling represented by the leader, they will be more likely to elicit positive attitudes towards the system. Furthermore, I argue that this effect is moderated by whether one supports the party of government.

I identified the UK as suitable test of the theoretical framework. The parliamentary system should theoretically downplay the influence of the leader compared to a Presidential system. Yet, features of the Westminster model likely encourage voters to be more acquainted with party leaders perhaps than in other parliamentary democracies, making evaluations of leader representation more reliable. Therefore, whether elements of party outputs contribute to one's propensity to feel represented by the leader specifically, will speak to whether perceptions of the leader are still intrinsically connected to party functioning. In other words, this research will help to determine if party leaders are truly a political force in and of themselves, or whether party values are still important.

Using a representative sample of UK citizens, I used pooled data from surveys conducted in September 2021 and December 2021 which together comprised of 3297 participants. Results of binary logistic regression models show that perceptions of party competence are positively associated with feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports. There is no statistically significant relationship between ideological congruence with the party, or perceptions of party unity and feeling represented by the party leader. Feeling represented by the party leader is however, positively associated with wider democratic satisfaction and this effect is stronger with support for the party of government.

It is worthy of note that this research was conducted during the UK national lockdowns of the Covid-19 pandemic. I therefore expect that the survey of political attitudes may have been coloured by this context. Thus, that ideological congruence and party unity are not shown to be drivers of feeling represented by the party leader in this model, might speak to the 'rally round the flag' effect where the specifics of policies become less influential to political attitudes when a national emergency strikes (Kritzinger et al., 2021). However, during this time, party leaders of major parties enjoyed increased media exposure. Thus, while attitudes may differ somewhat in this context than in times of status quo, respondents were likely more familiar with party leaders at the time of responding to the survey questions. As such, drivers of feeling represented by the party leader reported during this time, which as such may be more considered, should not be discounted.

The results wield important implications for intra-party democracy and wider system stability more generally. Specifically of interest to this research, these results also have important implications for leadership selection reform by means of inclusivity. I discuss these impacts in the conclusion of this chapter.

4.2 Theory

The personalisation of politics

Rarely does political discourse occur without reference to the party leader. For example, commentators of politics even take to allocating eras to parties based on the leader of the time. Thatcher's Conservative Party and Blair's Labour Party being prominent UK examples (McAllister, 1996, 2013). The personality traits of party leaders (and politicians more generally) are now a central feature of contemporary politics to the extent that discussions of leaders' personality and behaviour are crossing over into popular culture and entertainment media (Devine, 2023). Moreover, politicians now seek to publicise elements of their personal lives, deliberately showcasing their personality on television and social media (Dunin-Wasowicz, 2017; Manning et al., 2017). Unsurprisingly then, despite the complexity of party organisations (see Chapter 1), the average voter is increasingly equating the leader with the party, and the party with its leader. Leaders' individual personality traits have thus become an influential element to voters' political attitudes (Mughan, 2000; Garzia, 2017). Indeed, it is now commonplace for parties' electoral campaigns to centre the party leader's image over traditional party logos (McAllister, 1996).

However, politics has not always been perceived through this lens. This political reality comes as the result of a gradual process of environmental change referred to the 'personalisation of politics', whereby the leader of a party has become more dominant than the party itself over time (McAllister, 2007; Rahat and Shaefer, 2007). Relevant literature credits the advent of television as the catalyst for this phenomenon (Blais, 2013). Television offered visuals to political campaigns and allowed for new such perceptions that centred people over institutions (Ohr, 2013). Party leaders now take centre stage as the party spokesperson/point of interest and are resultingly the most prominent party

symbol for an electorate who increasingly consume political news via this medium than more traditional outlets (Farrell, 1996; Mughan, 2000; Ohr, 2013). Moreover, the more personal nature of television in comparison to other media platforms of the time of widespread distribution, saw citizens become acquainted with party leaders' individual personalities which would then become important for political campaigns (Blais, 2013; Mughan, 2000). Television allowed voters to view party leaders as people, as well as the party spokesperson which encouraged voters to consider both the issues the party represents, and the character of the person in charge of advancing these issues in the legislative process. Indeed, televised leader debates are now common features of electoral campaigns (Semetko, 1996).

This evolution occurred in tandem with the phenomenon of the catch-all party (Kircheimer, 1966). This refers to the hallowing out of party organisations and elites then relied more on the media, over party activists in the community, to communicate a more general message to a much wider audience amidst partisan dealignment. Class-based cleavages, where party identification sorted the electorate into distinct voting pools based on feeling of attachment to a party based on shared identity, was now diminished (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000). Thus, party leaders could no longer rely on shared values alone for party support and emphasised their personal appeal (Farrell, 1996). With party leaders now at the centre of intrigue in representative politics, it is important to understand the role party leaders play for voters in the democratic process.

How leaders influence perceptions

King (2002) differentiates between the direct and indirect influence of a leader on their party's success. Direct influence pertains to how voters perceive leaders' personal traits, or perhaps a lack thereof. Indirectly, leaders influence voters in terms of their determined ability to influence outcomes and policy

within the party. Much like partisan identification enables voters to make shortcuts when forming attitudes about both individuals and policy (Dalton, 2000), research shows that voters also use a limited number of reference points from which to judge leaders' abilities. These are generally categorised as 'competence' and 'trustworthiness' (Kinder *et al*, 1980). Though these traits do not represent the party programme, Miller et al. (1986) argue that judging on this basis is a proxy for determining how such an individual would deal with issues of the day in office. Indeed, such cues are helpful when confusion arises pertaining to a party's stance on an issue. Knowledge of a leader's personal life may act as an indicator of how they might approach an issue (Cutler, 2002). Perceptions of the personal may then not be entirely non-political.

Perhaps on a more personal basis, leaders are also judged in terms of their general likeability and charisma. Related literature highlights four scenarios where a charismatic leader may be preferable, or more influential in some circumstances than others. McAllister (2013) argues that in Westminster systems where party leaders potentially become the Prime Minister, a charismatic leader will be preferred where tackling issues in government is perceived to be more difficult. In such a scenario, the leader, capable of interacting with different actors whilst wielding power, is preferable to seeking agreement. Thus, not only are these personal attributes important for connecting with voters, but also for stability within both the party and government. Moreover, Garzia (2011) brings attention to the final three. He highlights the importance of the electoral context that can influence the votes' appetite for a leader of a specific nature (see Barisione, 2009), and the possibility of the personality of leaders being the tipping point in an extremely competitive election (see King, 2002). Finally, a crisis scenario whereby a leader is required to take bold action will logically boost the profile of said actor (see Weber, 1922).

While perceptions of personality perhaps reflect a more widespread shift away from predominantly issue-based politics to an increased consideration of valence politics (Green and Hobolt, 2008), voters are also concerned with a leaders' indirect influence in how they modify the party programme, ideology, or the party's brand more broadly. Indeed, this is likely influenced by the leader's personality, or direct influence, which undoubtedly shapes their ambitions for the party and therefore what type of leader they set out to be (King, 2002). Ultimately, a leader influences political attitudes directly through their personality – how they appeal outwardly – and indirectly through their influence on party policy – how they influence internal proceedings.

Here, I explore how perceptions of party outputs influence voters' perceptions of leadership representation. If a leader influences perceptions of the party, it is logical that party outcomes influence perceptions of the leader. How a leader uses their personality and skills, will determine how well a leader can accurately represent the supporters of their party. Essentially, how a party functions is evidence of a leader's influence, or in other words, their strength, power and their ability to conduct the party in a way that it acts as a representative mechanism for its supporters. Leaders serve as one of the most prominent symbols of a party (McAllister, 1996) and given differing personalities and characteristics from leader to leader, this symbol is perhaps less stable than it once was. Different leaders will ultimately influence the party in alternative ways and to varying extents, depending on their specific vision and priorities for the party compared to previous leaders (Blais, 2013). For example, one leader may more, or less, passionately advocate for a certain issue compared to other party actors. In such instances, voters look to the leader when calculating how the party might approach said issue (ibid.).

Moreover, differences are perceivable from one leader to the next not only in terms of their policy agenda, but in terms of how they seek to achieve their goals. For instance, one leader might choose to emphasise charisma to

bring factions together while another might emphasise strength to prioritise a controversial issue despite pushback. Accordingly, their ability to follow through rests on their unique skill set and personality (King, 2002). Politics has been leader dominated for some time (McAllister, 2007; Rahat and Shaefer, 2007). Yet, to my knowledge, research has yet to explore the effect of voters' perceptions of party outcomes (a result of a leader's influence) on the extent to which supporters feel represented by the party leader.

I focus on three perceptions of party outputs, each one highlights a leader's influence over the party; First, party competence at dealing with important issues will determine if voters feel represented by the leader with a focus on effective governance. Second, ideological congruence between the party and its voters will determine if voters feel represented by the leader with a focus on representing their stances on issues, and third, perceptions of intra-party division will determine if voters feel represented by their party leader when they can effectively control the party to impose a streamlined message, or whether a leader allows a variety of views to be publicly associated with the party.

Party politics literature highlights the importance of each of these outputs for voters' political attitudes. Yet, each of these party outputs also represent party choices that a leader is ultimately responsible for and likely impacts perceptions of the leader's popularity. To my knowledge, this has yet to be reflected in the literature. Considering the prominence of political leaders in today's political culture (Blais, 2013; McAllister, 2007), logic follows that these same party outputs also play a role in forming perceptions of a leader's individual preferences and priorities, and therefore how well the present leader can represent voters of the party. Because the black-box of intra-party politics is often unobserved, perceptions of party outcomes is often the information voters are armed with to fill in the gaps pertaining to how well a leader influences the party. Understanding this relationship is vital in an era of leader

dominated politics. If party outcomes are indeed associated with supporters feeling represented by the leader of parties they support, then leaders must not only talk the talk in how they present themselves and their personality to the electorate, but they must also walk the walk and direct/influence their party accordingly.

Competence

Valence issues refer to a general agreement on a goal/outcome/scenario, not how it is achieved per se (Stokes, 1963, 1992). Competence is central to valence politics (Clarke et al., 2004) and generally refers to a party's overall reputation in office and speaks to whether the party is perceived as being capable of executing the requirements of governing (Green and Jennings, 2017). This phenomenon is becoming increasingly important in British politics, for example, economic competence can shape elections (Green and Prosser, 2016). Perceptions of competence generally do not refer to issue *positions*, but instead encapsulates evaluations of a party's *ability* to deal with issues as they arise (Walgrave, Lefevere and Tresch, 2019).

However, issue positions have been shown to *influence* voter's evaluations of party competence. Johns and Kölln's (2020) experimental research design yields results to support the notion that positional extremism encourages voters to perceive parties as less competent, whereas parties that span from left of centre to right of centre enjoy perceptions of competence among British citizens. They find that this this is due to the perception that such parties are willing to compromise to achieve a goal, are more pragmatic in their objectives and do not have the tendency to over-simplify impactful issues. Given that this is a known driver of perceptions of competence, it is likely that a voter who perceives a party as competent, will expect that party to meet their general political expectations, for example, on issues such as economic growth,

where voters likely agree. As the face of such a party, and the actor responsible for meeting these expectations, the party leader will likely be perceived as steering the party in a way that achieves these outcomes. For example, a party leader may have to bargain with internal party groups or simply convince them to take a less partisan approach where required to effectively deliver a necessary outcome. Logic follows that voters of the party would view such a leader as capable in doing what it takes to effectively deal with the day-to-day issues. This logic forms the first hypothesis:

H1: Respondents who perceive the party they support to be more competent are more likely to feel represented by the leader of that party.

Ideological congruence

An alternate logic derived from the literature relates to respondents' ideological congruence with the party. Spatial models of voting hold that voters support the party perceived to be ideologically closest to them (Downs, 1957). While the dominance of competence vs positional voting will likely depend on the electoral environment of the time (Green, 2007), issue positions remain central to electoral politics and the representational process (Merrill and Grofman, 1999). Indeed, Walgrave, Lefevere and Tresch (2019) demonstrate that both competence and positional voting (as well as issue commitment) contribute to voting behaviour. The responsible party thesis contends that parties must offer an alternative to the current government which assures effective competition and differences discernible to the electorate (APSA, 1950). Voters expect that parties address their preferences and indeed parties shift their position in response to the electorate (Adams *et al*., 2004). Yet, party leaders often evoke evaluations that focus on their personality (King, 2002), distinct from traditional political metrics such as political values. Current research, however, cannot

definitively conclude that the importance of leaders' personalities overshadows the importance of party identification in forming political attitudes. Evidence from Bellucci, Garzia and Lewis-Beck (2015) shows that estimations of the party leader's personality may not always be more important for voting behaviour than representation of issues. Specifically addressing the endogeneity problem through the case of Italy, they conclude that while leader effects certainly do impact the vote choice, issues were more important for voters in the election 2006 Italian election. Still, Silvio Berlusconi is also depicted in the literature as strong leader who embodied not only his party, but the ideological bloc (Campus and Pasquino, 2006). Though this research also highlights the clear influence of leader evaluations, the dominance of issues in determining voting behaviour found here is then surely compelling.

Dalton (2017) warns of the shortcut that the traditional left-right scale, on which issues are typically measured, provides. He argues that one may rely on this scale for cues to inform their behaviour without being knowledgeable about the specifics of individual issues that fall under the 'left' or 'right' umbrella. Indeed, the role of heuristics in making political evaluations is well established (Lupia and McCubbins, 1998). Thus, if one perceives the party as representing their preferences on one issue, logic follows they are likely to perceive alignment on other issues. As such, whether the party leader is more or less passionate on an issue than other party actors, voters may still perceive these cues as a leader representing their own policy preferences. Moreover, Dalton, (2017) also notes the tendency of elite preferences to be somewhat more extreme than their demographic. Thus, if a voter already deems themselves to align ideologically with the party, logic follows that if they are subject to more extreme messages from a leader, they will likely perceive this as passion. Indeed, Tilley and Hobolt (2011) show that elites enjoy support from partisans in most circumstances. This logic forms the second hypothesis:

H2: Those who perceive themselves to be more ideologically congruent with the party they support, are more likely to feel represented by the leader of the party.

Party cohesion

Party leaders have developed tactics aimed at lessening any negative repercussions of incongruence with voters. Research shows that leaders purposely obscure their message so that it is palatable to whichever group they are engaging with (Somer-Topcu, 2015). Indeed, Jeremy Corbyn's premiership of UK Labour following his 2015 selection was characterised by a "constructive ambiguity" over the dominating issue of Brexit. Not committing to a clear position enabled him to maintain power while allowing the issue to play out (O'Hara, 2019). Yet, voter recognition of the presence of internal conflict negates parties' ability to hide their true policy position and any electoral benefits that comes with ambiguity (Leher and Lin, 2020; Lin and Lehrer, 2021). Party factions can limit a leader's ability to act according to their true preferences (Ceron, 2012) and policy outputs are often a result of a bargaining process that results in compromise between these groups (Harmel and Tan, 2003). The very existence of heterogeneity of preferences, or division within the party (e.g Greene and Haber, 2016), therefore holds consequences for the leader's authority over the party and for party outputs.

Individuals belonging to political parties hold varying policy goals to some extent (Esaiasson, 2000; Narud & Valen, 2000; Norton, 1999; Thomassen and Andeweg, 2004). Whether differences are found in relation to goals themselves, or the means in which these are pursued, parties contain intra-party factions that compete for the leader's support (Harmel et al., 1995). This balance of factional power is flexible and shifts in response to external factors such as electoral defeat (Harmel and Janda, 1994). Organisational structures also

influence a leaders' success in abating factions (Ceron, 2012) and so the presence of division may be more prominent in some parties and contexts, than others.

Where it is evident, research demonstrates the propensity for voters to negatively evaluate parties' policy-making abilities with an increase in perceived intra-party division (Greene and Haber, 2015). It is logical then that parties seek to conceal divisions among their supporters (van de Wardt, 2014). In government, divided parties are less efficient in passing legislation in a timely manner (Haber, 2015) and the presence of intra-party division can be detrimental to coalition governments (Laver, 2003). A divided party may then signal to voters that the leader is unwilling to compromise in order to implement change where required. This logic leads me to the following hypothesis:

H3a: Respondents perceiving the party they support to be more united are more likely to feel represented by the leader of the party.

However, the effects of division, or varying preferences lie in how it is perceived, and parties often utilise specific differences from within to their advantage. Indeed, electorally motivated politicians will often appear as responsive to constituency specific issues and thus, their electorate if they deviate from the party message which ignores or runs contrary to these concerns, they appear trustworthy (Bowler, 2010; Campbell *et al*., 2019; Carey, 2007; Carey and Shugart, 1995). This is often exhibited though parliamentary dissent or absence (Ceron, 2013) which can send messages of solidarity to constituents. Moreover, research shows that intra-party division varies according to governing status (Greene and Haber, 2016). Thus, perceptions of intra-party division are also likely context specific. A leader that presides over a party that frequently publicises differences may assure voters that the leader seeks to encompass a variety of views and perceive the leader as willing to

engage with feedback. Based on this literature, I offer a competing hypothesis to that of H3a as I deem both directional relationships to be plausible:

H3b: Respondents perceiving the party they support to be less united are more likely to feel represented by the leader of the party.

Democratic Satisfaction

Democratic endurance requires that citizens buy into the concept of democracy and behave/participate accordingly (Dalton, McAllister and Wattenberg, 2000). Democratic sustenance and longevity therefore rests on citizens' satisfaction therewith. As does the stability of regimes (Powell, 1982). In an age of increasing political scepticism (Dalton, 2004) it is therefore crucial that we evolve our understanding of democratic satisfaction. The literature measures democratic satisfaction in terms of understanding attitudes towards regime effectiveness (Linde and Ekman, 2003). If voters' attitudes surrounding representation are extending to the leader, it is important to understand how this impacts attitudes towards wider system effectiveness.

The classic literature on democratic satisfaction focuses on the role of institutions. For example, those who voted for the winning party of elections are known to be more satisfied with democracy than those who voted for a party not represented in government (Anderson and Guillory, 1997; Anderson et *al*., 2005; Nadeau and Blais, 1993). Citizens are more satisfied with democratic functioning when they see a positive outcome of participating in the system and are rewarded with their preferences being actioned. It is on this basis I propose that feeling represented by the party leader will also encourage democratic satisfaction. If one feels confident that party outcomes will reflect their preferences, though at the party level and not necessarily the system level, I expect the same mechanism to be present in fostering attitudes towards the

wider system. Moreover, each element of representation explored above, valence, issues and unity may likely also provide a basis for this potential relationship.

At the system level, government outcomes have also shown to be important for evaluations of democracy. Prominently, economic growth is associated with higher citizen democratic satisfaction (Quaranta and Martini, 2016), as well as investment in the welfare system (Sirovátka *et al*. (2018) and low corruption levels (Anderson and Tverdova, 2003; Dahlberg and Holmberg, 2014) all foster democratic satisfaction. These factors contribute to citizens' needs being met and thus, government output and efficiency plays a large role in democratic satisfaction. Or, in short, government competence plays a significant role in attitude formation towards democratic functioning. Empirical evidence demonstrates this to be the case. Leiter and Clark (2015) show that higher levels of government character-valence, including competence, compared to opposition parties, is associated with increased democratic satisfaction. Therefore, democratic satisfaction is found in leader competence. Should party competence be a significant driver of feeling represented by the party leader as outlined in H1, then the already established relationship at the system level in what citizens expect from their governments provides a further basis on which to expect leadership representation will foster democratic satisfaction.

Concerning ideological congruence, research demonstrates that democratic satisfaction increases when parties hold preferences that closely resemble our own (Brandenburg and Johns, 2014; van Egmond, Johns and Brandenburg, 2020). As does political trust (Hooge and Kern, 2015) and voter turnout (Reher, 2014). Similarly, feelings of closeness to a party have also been shown to increase democratic satisfaction (Aldrich *et al*., 2020). Should ideological congruence with the party be a significant driver of feeling represented by the party leader as outlined in H2, then the already established

relationship at the system level provides a further basis on which to expect leadership representation will foster democratic satisfaction.

Concerning division, or heterogeneity of preferences, policy in line with the preferences of the median voter has been shown to increase democratic satisfaction (Ezrow and Xezonakis, 2011), though some differences must be recognisable (Brandenburg and Johns, 2014). Research from Hoerner and Hobolt (2019) corroborates that extreme division at the system level is not conducive to democratic satisfaction, though this is moderated by issue diversity in that as the number of important issues on the agenda decreases, the negative effect is strengthened. Additionally, increased party choice itself, does not foster positive attitudes towards system functioning (Dassonneville and McAllister, 2020). Voters are satisfied with democracy when choices are clear, but perhaps not incompatible. Translating this to the party level, if either party unity, or division, is a significant driver of feeling represented by the party leader as outlined in Hypothesis 3a, then the already established relationship at the system level provides a further basis on which to expect leadership representation will foster democratic satisfaction. Should party unity be negatively associated with feeling represented by the leader as per Hypothesis 3b, or indeed if representation by the party leader is not associated with any of the party outcomes as hypothesised, it stands to reason that feeling represented by the party leader still be positively associated with democratic satisfaction wherever that representation stems from. I argue this on the fundamental basis of democracy fostering representation, and leaders playing an increasingly prevalent role in this. The three elements of party outputs features in this argument simply imply the importance of different types of representation for democratic satisfaction, and I therefore hypothesise that party leadership representation is also important. All the above literature leads me to the following hypothesis:

H4: Those who feel represented by the leader of the party they voted for will be more likely to be satisfied with democracy.

Moderating effect of the winner/loser gap

Given the importance of the winner effect in the literature (Anderson and Guillory, 1997), I expect whether one voted for the party of government or not; to have a moderating effect of feeling represented by the leader of the party you support on satisfaction with democracy. Citizens who reap the benefits of democracy by being represented by the parties they voted for are likely to display positive attitudes towards the system as the payoff is clearer for these voters. The leader of the winning party claims the top office in the country and is therefore the most important actor in the system (Kenig, 2009c). Resultingly they are also responsible for all government outputs and therefore enjoy credit for well received outcomes (McAllister, 2013). I thus, expect the payoff off feeling represented by that leader to be higher in this circumstance. This logic leads me to my final hypothesis:

H5: The effect of feeling represented by the leader will be stronger for those who voted for the party of government than those who did not.

4.3 Data and methods

Institutional differences (The UK as a case study)

Features of the UK political system specifically provide for an appropriate initial test of the theoretical framework. McAllister (1996) highlights that in Presidential systems where a separation of power exists between the executive

and the legislature, and therefore separate elections are conducted for each institution, the influence of the leader on voters tends to be much stronger. He notes that the nature of elections for the executive tend to highlight candidates' personalities to a greater extent than legislative elections in parliamentary systems which reflect that the office of the former is vested in one person alone. The effect of this is demonstrated in the literature where the propensity for leadership-based voting is more evident in Presidential systems than parliamentary systems (Curtice and Hunjan, 2013).

In parliamentary systems on the other hand, where the executive is formed from the legislature, an increased focus on party politics occurs which relies on cohesion for sustained functioning government (Ceron, 2013; Laver, 2003). In the Westminster model specifically, the notion of collective responsibility constrains government actors from stepping beyond the boundary of the party programme. Therefore, members of the government do not act as individuals, but as representatives of the government and thus, personal leadership qualities are theoretically played down as opposed to Presidents who represent the office on their own and hold individual authority in this right (McAllister, 2013).

Furthermore, the electoral rules may also impact the influence of the leader. In majoritarian elections, single member districts mean that voters are required to vote for an individual candidate, albeit (most often) one with a party label attached, and so the individual, the local campaign they run, and therefore their personality will more likely be at the forefront of the voters' mind. More so than in electoral formats such as party lists for example (McAllister, 2007). Moreover, majoritarian electoral systems tend to foster single party governments, allowing the leader to enjoy a more consistent, stable platform, opposed to the oftentimes changing nature of coalition governments whereby the formation of actors, and even parties, typically tends to change more frequently. In scenarios such as the latter, the prominence of the Prime Minister

and the opportunity for their personality to wield influence may become lost in the shadow of overall government affairs (McAllister, 2013).

I therefore determined the UK as an appropriate first test in which to assess the determinants of party leader representation specifically and how important this is for perceptions of wider system functioning for two reasons; First, the Westminster model, being a parliamentary system, should theoretically diminish the prominence of leaders in relation to the party overall given the focus on parties (Ohr and Oscarsson, 2013). Yet, Mughan's (2000) assessment of the British electoral environment determines that Prime Ministers are indeed becoming more visible, akin to that of Presidents and candidates are indeed becoming an increasingly important aspect in voting behaviour compared to issues. Therefore, coupled with the majoritarian nature of UK elections, respondents from the UK should theoretically be more acquainted with party leaders, perhaps more than in other parliamentary democracies. Evaluations of leader representation specifically, should then be more reliable. Indeed, Ohr and Oscarsson (2013) show that voters evaluate leaders similarly in parliamentary systems and Presidential systems and thus, the results determined here should be generalisable.

Data

To my knowledge, there is no readily available dataset that easily enables testing for feeling represented specifically by the leader of the party one votes for. Most available surveys ask respondents whether they feel represented by a political party generally. This does not allow for the effects of the leader to be adequately assessed, separate from the party as a whole. I therefore conducted a survey of a representative sample of the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom was selected as an appropriate case study being a parliamentary democracy that operates on majoritarian electoral rules. This data collection was conducted as

part of a wider survey experiment for a Carnegie Project in which I am a collaborator (see next chapter), and thus restrictions were imposed on the number of questions asked for the purpose of this specific research and the manner in which questions were posed due to resource availability. Participants that comprised a representative UK sample were recruited by Prolific. The data was pooled from two survey runs which wielded 3297 respondents, the first of which was conducted in non-electoral periods of September 2021, and the second in December 2021.

Dependent variables

Feeling represented by the leader is assessed via the question, 'Do you feel represented by the leadership of the party you are most likely to vote for?', to which respondents answered from the following options, definitely yes, probably yes, might or might not, probably not or definitely not. This question specifically distinguishes the leadership from other aspects of the party, or the party overall and therefore prompts respondents to specifically think about the current leader of the party (and by extension, their influence therein).

Democratic satisfaction was measured according to the five-scale item, 'How satisfied are you with the state of democracy in the UK?' where respondents chose from completely satisfied, somewhat satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied. The wording of this question represents the standard perceptions of democratic functioning in the literature (Linde and Ekman, 2003).

Independent variables

Perceptions of competence for the party one would vote for was measured from the following two questions; 'If there was an election held tomorrow, which

political party would you be most likely to vote for?' and 'How competent do you perceive the [Conservative Party/Labour Party/Liberal Democratic Party/Scottish National Party/Plaid Cymru/Green Party] is/would be at handling the major issues of the day in government?' to which respondents chose from 'extremely competent, somewhat competent, neither competent or incompetent, somewhat incompetent, extremely incompetent'. The final variable was constructed on a scale of 1 (extremely incompetent) – 5 (extremely competent).

At the individual level, Golder and Stramski (2010) conceptualise egocentric congruence as harmony between a voter and one or more political elites. Perceptions of ideological congruence with the party one would be most likely to vote for was then measured from the following three questions, 'If there was an election held tomorrow, which political party would you be most likely to vote for?', in politics, people often talk about ideology as being on a left-right scale. Where do you place yourself?' measured on a 0 (left) – 10 (right) scale. And the final question posed, 'Where on the left-right scale do you place the largest political parties in the UK? [Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats, Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru, Green Party]', measured on a 0 (left) – 10 (right) scale. The difference in ideological perception of one's' self and the party one would vote for was then calculated to construct the ideological congruence variable scaled from 0 – 10.

Perceptions of unity/division among the party one would be most likely to vote for was measured from the following two questions, ''If there was an election held tomorrow, which political party would you be most likely to vote for?' and 'Do you perceive the [Conservative Party/Labour Party/Liberal Democrats/Scottish National Party/Plaid Cymru/Green Party] as more unified or divided on the following issues? [The Covid-19 pandemic, Trade negotiations with the European Union, Scottish Independence, Economic Growth, Unemployment, Climate Change]'. This was rated on a scale of 0 (unified) – 10 (divided). To create a measure of perceptions of unity among the

party one supported, I used the mean of unity/division scores that were given across the six issues of the party respondents supported. This allowed for a measurement of overall perception of unity/division within the party across a range of issues, again on a scale from 0 (united) – 10 (divided).

Moderating variable

Whether one intended to vote for the party of government was measured from the following question, 'If there was an election held tomorrow, which political party would you be most likely to vote for?', coded as a binary variable in the form, 1 = Conservative, 0 = Not Conservative.

Control variables

I include standard sociodemographic controls in the analysis. Age, gender, whether one identified as disabled, ethnicity and income were also included. The coding off all control variables is included in Appendix A. Given that those on the left are less likely than those on the right to be satisfied with democracy (Anderson and Singer, 2008), this measure was included on a 0 (left) – 10 (right) scale in answer to the following question, 'In politics, people often talk about ideology as being on a left-right scale. Where do you place yourself?'. Finally, in light of the political context in which the study was conducted, I also controlled for perceptions of the most important political issue in the UK coded as 1 = those that determined Covid-19 was the most important issue of the day, 0 = those that determined another issue to be of most importance.

Model

Given the ordered levelling of the dependent variables, I first deployed ordinal logistic regression analysis to test the hypotheses. These results are shown in Appendix A. Diagnostic tests (Brant tests) revealed that this model was inappropriate for this data set as proportional odds assumption was violated for multiple independent variables. This means that the effect of the independent variable is not equivalent across the cut points of the dependent variable. I therefore collapsed the dependent variables into binary form as follows: Represented by party leadership, 1 = definitely yes and probably yes; 0 = might or might not, probably not and definitely not. Similarly, satisfaction with democracy takes the form, 1 = completely satisfied and somewhat satisfied; 0 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied and completely dissatisfied. Due to the limited nature of the dependent variables, I then tested the hypotheses using binary logistic regression which takes the following form:

$$\log\left(\frac{\pi}{1-\pi}\right) = \alpha + \beta X$$

Where the left-hand side of the equation represents the log odds of the odds ratio that Y = 1. The right-hand side represents the typical linear regression line where α = the intercept, β = the slope and X = the independent variables. The model then estimates linear relationships between the log odds of Y based on the independent variables X*n*.

4.4 Results

Descriptive statistics for both dependent variables are reported in Appendix A. Table 4.1 reports the binary logistic regression model coefficients of feeling represented by the party leader based on perceptions of party competence, ideological congruence with the party and perceptions of party unity in log-odds.

Table 4. 1 Effect of competence, ideological congruence and unity on party leader representation

	Dependent variable:
	Party Leader Representation
	Model 1
	Log-odds
	(SE)
Competence	1.542***
	(0.082)
Ideological congruence	-0.040
	(0.027)
Average Division	-0.033
	(0.024)
Age	0.063
	(0.035)
Female	-0.060
	(0.095)
Income	-0.024
	(0.029)
Disability	-0.349*

	(0.153)
Ethnicity	-0.061
	(0.115)
Left-right values	0.023
	(0.029)
Vote_Conservative	0.111
	(0.137)
Important issue_Covid-19	0.272**
	(0.097)
Constant	-5.908***
	(0.395)
Observations	2,362
Log Likelihood	-1,339.562
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,703.123
Note:	*p<0.5; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

H1 predicted that respondents who perceive the party they support to be more competent are more likely to feel represented by the leader of that party. The results in Table 4.1 lend support to this hypothesis (1.54, $p < 0.001$) in that the odds of feeling represented by the party leader that one supports are 367% greater when competence of the party rating is increased by one, with all other variables held constant at their means. The predicted probabilities are plotted in Figure 4.1 using the Observed Values approach. This was chosen over the Average Case approach which may not be present in the population and so though the latter holds all other variables constant at their means, the Observed

Values approach enables the predicted probabilities to be based on the wider sample and therefore can be more credibly generalised to the wider population (Hanmer & Kalkan, 2012). The Observed Values approach calculates the predicted probability for each observation based on their actual values on the covariates and takes the average of these probabilities. From Figure 4.1, it can be inferred that those who rate the party they support at maximum levels of competence feel represented by the party leader is ~ 90% compared to < 5% for those who rate the party they support at minimum levels of competence.

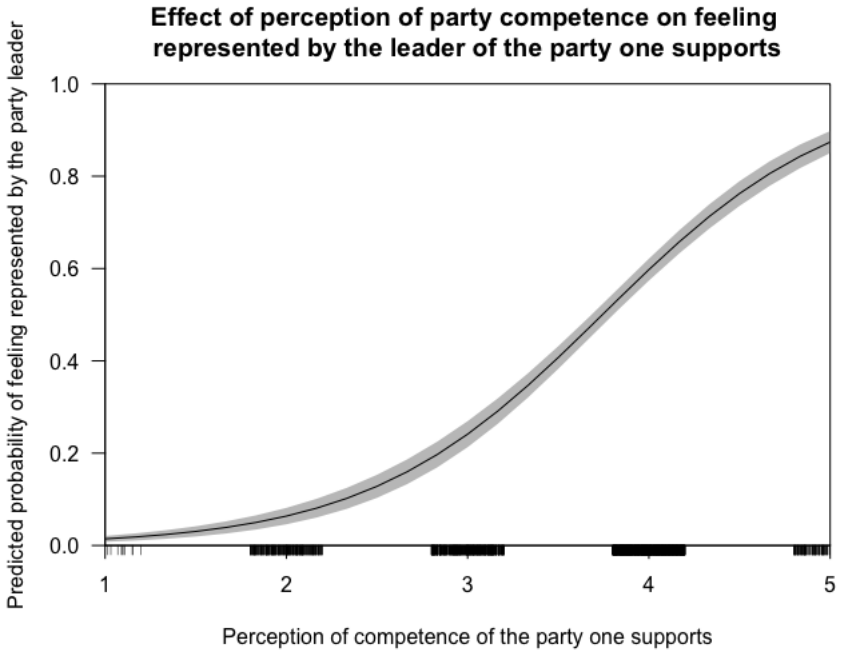

Figure 4. 1 Predicted probability of feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports at each level of perceived party competence

H2 predicted that those who perceive themselves to be more ideologically congruent with the party they support, are more likely to feel represented by the leader of the party. Table 4.1 shows no statistically significant relationship

between ideological congruence and feeling represented by the party leader one supports and thus, no support is found for this hypothesis.

Concerning party cohesion, H3a stated that respondents perceiving the party they support to be more united are more likely to feel represented by the leader of the party. This was based on previous literature that demonstrates negative voter perceptions of the party elicited by division. Alternatively, based on literature research demonstrating that parties highlight differences to increase perceptions of representation, H3b stated that respondents perceiving the party they support to be less united are more likely to feel represented by the leader of the party. Instead, Table 4.1 shows no statistically significant relationship between one's perception of party unity and feeling represented by the party leader one supports, therefore no support was found for either hypothesis.

Concerning the control variables, disability had a negative effect on feeling represented by the party leader one supports (-0.35, $p < 0.05$) whereby the odds of feeling represented by the party leader are 30% less for those who identify as disabled than those who do not when all other variables are held constant at their means. Lastly, attitudes towards the importance of Covid-19 had a positive effect of feeling represented by the party leader one supports (0.27, $p < 0.01$), whereby the odds of feeling represented by the party leader were 31% greater for those who thought Covid-19 was the most important issue of the day, than those who did not.

Satisfaction with democracy

Table 4.2 reports the binary logistic regression model coefficients of feeling satisfied with democracy based on perceptions of party leader representation in log-odds.

Table 4. 2 Effect of party leadership representation on satisfaction with democracy

	Dependent variable:	
	Satisfaction with democracy	
	Model 2	Model 3
	Log-odds	Log-odds
	(SE)	(SE)
Party leader representation	0.305***	0.162*
	(0.056)	(0.065)
Competence	0.302***	0.286***
	(0.074)	(0.074)
Ideological congruence	-0.003	-0.002
	(0.029)	(0.029)
Average division	0.030	0.027
	(0.025)	(0.025)
Age	0.029	0.025
	(0.037)	(0.037)
Female	0.119	0.107
	(0.100)	(0.101)
Income	0.029	0.028
	(0.031)	(0.031)
Disability	-0.117	-0.126
	(0.165)	(0.166)
Ethnicity	0.322**	0.295*
	(0.118)	(0.119)

Left-right values	0.184***	0.172***
	(0.030)	(0.031)
Vote_Conservative	1.307***	-0.123
	(0.133)	(0.367)
Important issue_Covid-19	0.327**	0.340**
	(0.104)	(0.105)
Party leader representation x Vote_Conservative		0.447***
		(0.107)
Constant	-4.683***	-4.067***
	(0.370)	(0.393)
Observations	2,358	2,358
Log Likelihood	-1,247.563	-1,238.594
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,521.127	2,505.187
Note:		*p<0.5; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

H4 predicted that those who feel represented by the leader of the party they voted for will be more likely to be satisfied with democracy. The results in Table 4.2 lend support to this hypothesis (0.31, $p < 0.001$) in that the odds of feeling satisfied with democracy are 36% greater when the representation rating is increased by one with all other variables held constant at their means. The predicted probabilities are plotted in Figure 4.2, again using the Observed Values approach. From this, it can be inferred that the predicted probability of who report definitively feeling represented by the party leader they support

feeling satisfied with democracy is ~ 40% compared to < 20% for those who report a definitive lack of representation by the leader of the party they support.

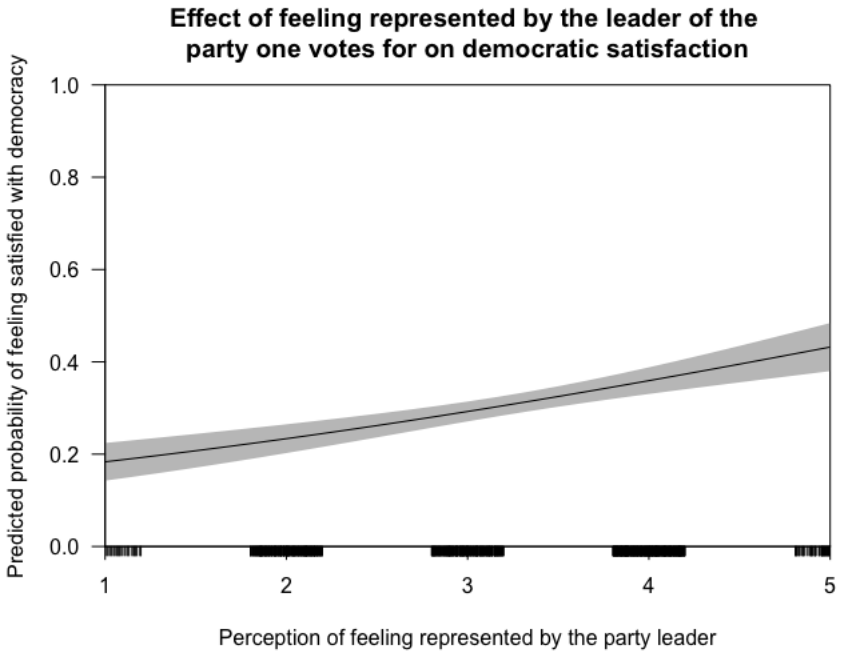

Figure 4. 2 Predicted probability of democratic satisfaction at each level of party leader representation

Model 2 shows a positive effect of perceived competence of the party one supports on satisfaction with democracy (0.30, $p < 0.001$), whereby the odds of feeling satisfied with democracy are 35% greater rating of competence for the party you support is increased by one on the scale. Ideological congruence and perceptions of unity among the party one supports had no significant effect on democratic satisfaction, however. This runs contrary to expectations.

Placed in the political context in which this survey was conducted though, the results are logical for this model based on the specific cross-sectional data employed here. The survey was conducted in 2021 during which citizens of the UK were subject to national lockdowns during the Covid-19

pandemic. Given that this issue dominated the political agenda, I expect respondent's political attitudes at the time may be based on their perceptions of how leaders responded to the pandemic in line with their own personal circumstances which would have shaped their preferences.

Finally, H5 predicts that the effect of feeling represented by the leader will be stronger for those who voted for the party of government. The coefficient for the interaction term in Model 3 shown in Table 4.3 is positive (0.45, $p < 0.001$) implying support for H5. In Figure 4.3, I explore this relationship further by plotting the predicted probabilities of satisfaction with democracy based on party leadership representation by party support. The plot demonstrates the steady increase in differences of predicted probabilities of one feeling satisfied with democracy based on feeling represented by the leader of the party they support depending on whether they support the party of government or not. Those who did and felt definitive representation by the leader of the party they voted for, were ~ 50% more likely to feel satisfied with democracy than those who did not vote for the party of government but also declared definitive representation by the leader of the party they voted for.

Concerning the political and sociodemographic controls, ethnicity had a positive effect on democratic satisfaction (0.322, $p < 0.01$) whereby the odds of feeling satisfied with democracy are 38% greater for those who identify as an ethnic minority than those who do not, with all other variables held constant at their means. Left-right values had a positive effect on democratic satisfaction (0.18, $p < 0.001$) whereby the odds of feeling satisfied with democracy are 20% greater with an increase of one along the left-right scale, with all other variables held constant at their means. Voting for the party of government had a positive effect on democratic satisfaction (1.31, $p < 0.001$) whereby the odds of feeling satisfied with democracy are 270% greater for those who voted for the party of government than those who did not, with all other variables held constant at their means. Finally, perceiving the most important issue to be Covid-19 had a

positive effect on democratic satisfaction (0.33, $p < 0.01$) whereby the odds of feeling satisfied with democracy are 39% greater for those who perceived Covid-19 to be the most important issue of the day than those who did not.

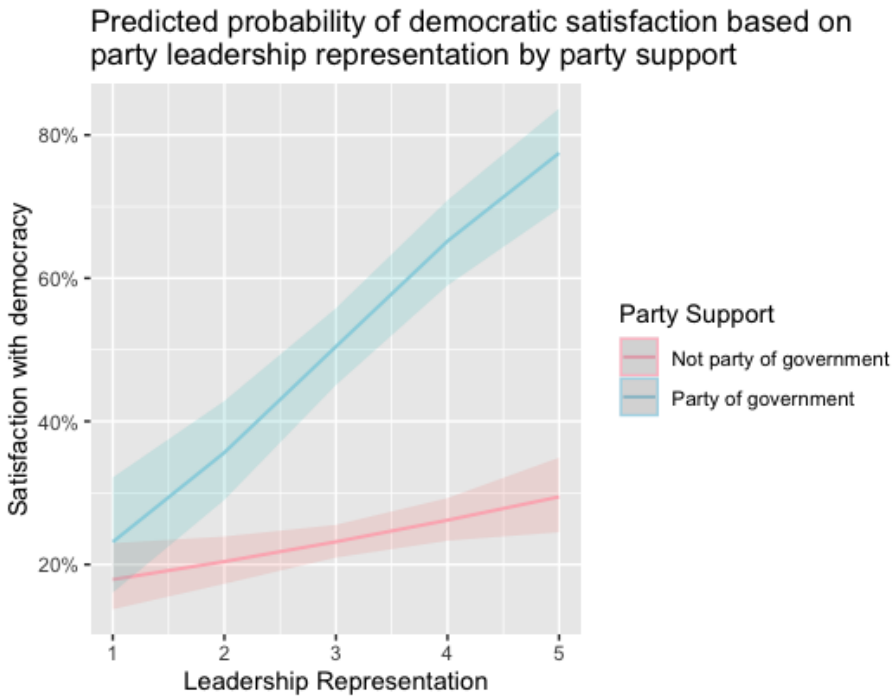

Figure 4. 3Predicted probability of democratic satisfaction based on party leadership representation by party support

Finally, given that the party of government in this instance is the main party on the right in the UK, it is logical to posit whether the role of ideology might also act as a moderator. That vote choice is associated with left-right values, it was also important to include the interaction of left-right values x feeling represented by the leader in the same model to prevent spurious results. The full results of this model can be found in Appendix A. In short, significance remains on the voting for party of government x feeling represented by the party leader on

satisfaction with democracy when controlling for the left-right values x feeling represented by the leader of the party interaction term. Statistical significance is not observed on the latter interaction term.

Moreover, the argument presented here does not pertain to the mediating effect of leadership representation on party influences on satisfaction with democracy and instead outlines the logic of feeling represented on satisfaction with democracy as already determined on these bases. The results show that perceptions of party competence are associated with both feeling represented by the party leader one votes for and democratic satisfaction. While, not necessary to test the main argument, I thought it interesting to also test whether leadership representation mediates the effect of competence on democratic satisfaction. The results can be found in Appendix A.

4.5 Conclusion

The trend of inclusive leadership selection reform that is apparent in Western democracies has occurred in tandem with the personalisation of politics (McAllister, 2007). Party leaders are increasingly important for forming political attitudes (McAllister, 1996, 2007; Mughan, 2000; Garzia, 2017) while party organisations, and therefore party functioning, are fundamentally altered by such reforms. If leadership selection is becoming more inclusive in the hope of increased representation, then what elements of party outputs determine representation by increasingly prominent leaders will have important implications for whether inclusive leadership selection is truly capable of increasing representation. If elements of party outputs are shown not to influence perceptions of leader representation, then it can be concluded that voters look to other information such as leader personality traits in line with the

personalisation of politics, and therefore the negative consequences that come with a wider leadership selectorate may be somewhat overstated.

As such, this chapter has explored the relationship between perceptions of party functioning and leadership representation. To do this, I explore the effect of valence politics, the direction of policies and party cohesion. As leadership selection reform is often discussed in the framework of normative perceptions of democracy, and logic follows that perceptions of the leader influence perceptions of the system, I also explore the relationship between feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports and wider satisfaction with democracy. Binary logistic regression analysis demonstrates that whilst perceptions of party competence are positively correlated to feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports, ideological congruence with the party and perceptions of party unity are not. Moreover, feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports is positively correlated with wider democratic satisfaction, moderated by whether one supports the party of government. These results hold implications for both intra-party democracy and representative democracy more widely.

Scholarship recommends other forms of intra-party democracy over inclusive leadership selection, such as deliberation for parties to be more responsive to preferences (Ignazi, 2020). Against the backdrop of increasing importance of the leader, if parties are looking to increase representation by the leader specifically, then inclusive leadership selections may not be as detrimental as the literature warns and deliberation may not be as useful. If ideological congruence and internal cohesion do not influence one's perception of representation by the leader, then should leaders chosen by more inclusive selectorates indeed introduce more extreme policies or become more divided as the literature warns (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021, Scarrow, 2021), then perceptions of leadership representation could remain unaffected.

Conversely, if deliberation is more successful in achieving policy representation and reducing factional lines, feeling represented by the leader will also remain unaffected by this process[7]. Based on these results, a party simply must project competence for inclusive reforms to have been successful, if leadership representation is the only goal. However, competence can also be influenced by inclusive leadership contests, and perceptions thereof lie in party positions (Johns and Kölln, 2020). Contestants' propensity to publicly speak negatively of past party performance under another leader (So, 2021), or highlighting perceived inability of other candidates (Faucher, 2015a; Seddone *et al.,* 2020) might also influence voter perceptions.

Yet parties must be electorally successful to implement their aims and thus, representation by the leader specifically perhaps should not be a parties' only focus. While ideological cohesion and party cohesion are not deemed important for leadership representation, issues still contribute to voter behaviour (Bellucci, Garzia and Lewis-Beck, 2015) and responsiveness is important to perceptions (Sides, 2007). Thus, should parties still wish to implement inclusive leadership selection with the aims of competing effectively, they should do so with caution.

For its contributions to the field, this research comes with multiple limitations. First, given the political context in which the survey was conducted, future research might seek to study party leadership representation over a longer period. While I controlled for whether respondent's thought Covid-19 was the most important issue facing the UK at the time, it is entirely possible that the dominance of the issue on the political agenda, whether respondents thought it was the most important issue or not, subconsciously swayed attitudes towards leadership representation and therefore the results with regards to ideological congruence and intra-party division might be different in the context of national

[7] Ordered logistic regression reveals statistical significance for both ideological congruence and perceptions of division, though the proportional odds assumption was violated for ideological congruence meaning that the effect is not equivalent across the levels of the dependent variable.

emergencies. A longitudinal design would enable more robust conclusions to be made regardless of a changing political agenda. This would further our understanding of party leadership representation, perhaps in relation to other parties and in different electoral environments where competence may be more, or less relevant[8].

The research design utilised in this chapter also cannot fully address the direction of causality, for example, voters could determine the party they vote for to be more competent because they feel represented by the leader. As such, future works that employ panel data, or an experimental design would be better suited to address this issue. Given the limited resources available to me at the time of this PhD, I am unable to address these issues in this project. However, this should be considered for future contributions of the field of intra-party politics and democratic satisfaction. Moreover, future work might explore how different intra-party rules influence party leader representation directly.

Nonetheless, to my knowledge, this chapter is the first research of its kind to explore the connection between party outputs and feelings of representation specifically by the leader of the party one supports. As party leaders continue to become more prevalent for political attitudes and political discourse becomes increasingly concerned with the individual (McAllister, 1996), it is pertinent to remember that party competence has a strong, positive effect on feelings of representation by the leader. Therefore, a leader cannot solely rely on their personality and projection of personal competence, trustworthiness, and morality alone. They must also ensure that their party functions in such a way that ensures effective outputs.

In the following chapter, I extend this framework further using an experimental approach to assess voters' attitudes of leadership selection reform

[8] To explore these findings further, I conducted simpler tests that allowed for the typical influence on political attitudes to factor in the analysis in an attempt to minimise the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the results. These tests and the results are shown in Appendix A.

and the impact of these rules on voters' perceptions of satisfaction with democracy.

Chapter 5: Democracy at all costs? Exploring voters' attitudes towards inclusive leadership selection processes

5.1 Introduction

2015 saw the first UK party leadership contest that most closely resembled an open primary. Reforming the electoral college process, for a fee of £3, citizens could vote in Labour's leadership contest. Traditional membership of the party was thus re-imagined with few constraints on who could participate (Garland, 2016). In September 2021 however, delegates at the UK Labour Party conference voted for a leadership selection rule change proposed by leader, Keir Starmer that saw increased barriers for candidates to secure nominations, abolished the opportunity for non-members to cast a vote for a one-time cost of £25 and saw voting requirements for members increased. The reform was surrounded in controversy and received backlash from party grassroots movements and trade unions. Though reform was accepted by a narrow majority at the party conference, it did not reflect the full extent of changes that Starmer originally wished to introduce, and due to mounting pressure from the ground, he was forced to drop his proposal to roll back the one member one vote process introduced in 2014 (Parkinson and Scott, 2021). To help ascertain why a leader might be constrained when attempting to concentrate power, I carried out a factorial survey experiment to explore the effect of inclusive reforms on voter attitudes and assess if voters do in fact place limits on this type of intra-party democracy.

Whether or not parties should be internally democratic generally, and whether members should be granted voting rights in the selection of their leader continues to attract scholarly attention (Cross and Katz, 2013). These reforms elicit far reaching consequences for parties' ability to succeed (Pilet and Cross,

2015). Parties function to connect voters with the state (Katz, 1990; Dalton, Farrell and McAllister, 2011) and these reforms offer the opportunity for increased involvement in the party that might strengthen this relationship (Gauja, 2015; Ignazi, 2020; Webb, Farrell and Holliday, 2002). Thus, understanding voters' attitudes towards these reforms are crucial in assessing the success of representative democracy.

Despite some notable exceptions, voter attitudes towards intra-party democracy remains under researched. Findings from the few studies that do explore the impact on voter attitudes are somewhat mixed. Shomer, Put and Gedalya-Lavy (2016) demonstrate that those who vote for parties that offer inclusive electoral candidate selection tend to be more satisfied with system level democracy. Additionally, Close, Kelbel and van Haute (2017) argue that to attract disaffected citizens back into the political process, parties should consider open primaries, based on their findings that those with low political efficacy hold a preference for open candidate selections. Shomer, Put and Gedalya-Lavy (2018) also find that inclusive candidate selection processes are associated with increased trust in parties.

Yet, experimental research that more carefully establishes causal relationships and focuses on the consequences of leadership selection specifically, tells a different story. Wauters and Kern's (2021) explored the relationship between inclusive leadership selection reforms and voter trust, propensity to join the party and party support. They found that inclusive leadership electorates did not encourage any such positive attitudes. This concurs with findings that intra-party democracy more generally (including candidate selection, leadership selection and involvement in policy making) does not influence voters' satisfaction with democracy overall (Webb, Scarrow and Poguntke, 2022). Thus, it may be that either inclusive candidate selection specifically, a phenomenon that has occurred in these parties that encourages inclusive candidate selection, or an outcome thereof, is associated with

increased democratic satisfaction. Indeed, Shomer, Put and Gedalya-Levy (2016) state their intention to further explore the effect of candidate selection on political attitudes experimentally. Together, the literature suggests that voters may simply place limits on the extent of intra-party democracy they are willing to accept. In this chapter, I seek to explore what limits exist with regards to leadership selection.

Scholars warn of the danger of inclusive party leadership selections to party unity (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021; DeWinter, 1988; Ramiro, 2013; Scarrow, 2021). I therefore focus on the right to participate in the process versus such organisational consequences to determine whether voters hold normative perceptions of democracy despite its detriment to the party's ability to achieve consensus. Party unity is central to party functioning. In parliamentary systems, cohesion among the parliamentary group allows for the completion of a legislative agenda and coalition agreement (Ceron, 2013; Laver, 2003). Beyond the context of governing, a united party fosters a clear, distinct party symbol in the electorate that allows for effective representation (Greene and Haber, 2015). Perceptions of intra-party division matter. Research shows that voters deem such parties as less competent policy makers (Green and Haber, 2015) and the perception of internal conflict reduces the likelihood of voting for said party (Lehrer and Lin, 2020; Lin and Lehrer, 2021). I therefore expect that intra-party division may be a limitation that voters place on internal inclusivity.

To test this, I develop a survey experiment that enables me to separate out these effects from one another. I test whether participation levels, and subsequent agreement levels between the party leader and different integral party groups directly affect support for leadership selection reform and wider democratic satisfaction. The survey was fielded in the UK in December of 2021 shortly after the Labour leadership selection reforms were reported in the media.

I find that those who were exposed to the increased participation treatment were more likely to support leadership selection reform, as were those

who were exposed to the treatment that specified increased agreement between the party leader and party supporters, and increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs. Agreement between the party leader and party activists had no effect on support for party leadership selection reform.

Contrary to expectation however, treatments varying participation levels in the leadership selection process had no significant effect on voters' democratic satisfaction, nor did treatments indicating agreement levels between a party leader and their voters, or activists. Decreased agreement between a party leader and their MPs, however, is associated with increased democratic satisfaction. These results hold important implications for both intra-party politics and wider democratic vitality.

Though intra-party democracy is not essential to a healthy democratic system (Allern and Kosiara-Pedersen, 2007), perceptions of political institutions are important for attitudes towards democratic functioning. Concerning parties in particular, attitudes towards the party leader are increasingly important in forming political attitudes (McAllister, 1996; Mughan, 2000; Garzia, 2017). Therefore, who has the right to participate in choosing the party leader, and the consequences this elicits for the party, are likely important for voters' attitudes towards parties as institutions and therefore impactful for democratic satisfaction. Indeed, Labour's leadership selection reform of 2014 resulting in Jeremy Corbyn's premiership is a prime example of how changes to intra-party rules can substantially impact party stability and perceptions of the party. How parties make their decisions are substantive to our understanding of wider political attitudes. This research therefore assesses both support for reform and attitudes towards democratic satisfaction.

5.2 Theory

Democracy as an ideal

Though the individualised nature of one member one vote leadership contests causes scholars to cast doubt on the democratic quality of the process (Ignazi, 2020), at the system level at least, elections are inherently central to the concept of democracy (Dahl, 1971). The opportunity to participate is required for a system's democratic status (Dahl, 2005). Research suggests that voters' preferences for decision-making at the state level reflect their intra-party preferences, for example, those in favour of direct democracy, are more likely to support open candidate selection procedures (Close, Kelbel and Haute, 2017). I therefore expect that the normative preference for democracy that prioritises accessibility and inclusion in the political process for the many, will transfer to the intra-party level.

Findings by Kostelka and Blais (2018) demonstrate that participation is indeed the driving force in its relationship with democratic satisfaction. Voters experience increased levels of democratic satisfaction when they vote in elections, regardless of the outcome. Voters value their right to change the status quo and hold their government to account via the act of voting. I expect that the opportunity to do this at the party level, and by extension hold party leaders to account, would then also increase democratic satisfaction. Moreover, research shows the propensity for party members who are dissatisfied with the nature of their party's internal democracy to be more likely to participate than those who are satisfied (Koo, 2020). The argument is based on the premise that those who are satisfied may not involve themselves at every turn because they recognise there will be further opportunities to do so, whereas if one viewed such occasions as scarce, they may value current opportunities more and participate whenever the party allows them to do so. Thus, at the very least, I expect the novelty of inclusive leadership selectorates to prompt a positive reaction from voters when the prospect of reform by way of increased participation is introduced. Participation is inherent to the democratic process and voter

satisfaction therewith. Logic follows that increased participation at any level will carry positive connotations in the eyes of voters.

Parties themselves have also reinforced a similar rhetoric of increased participation as an ideal democratic standard when introducing more inclusive leadership selection reforms. This trend coincides with concerns that parties were no longer suitably carrying out their role in connecting the state and its citizens, contributing to decreasing trust among the electorate (Farrell, 2014; Ignazi, 2014; Mair, 2006; 2013). Such reforms are oftentimes received in the spirit of rekindling the party by encouraging mobilisation and reconnection (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000). Thus, not only is it logical that increased participation be inherently perceived by voters as a normatively good concept, but some parties also emphasise the requirement for involvement of ordinary members (and even the electorate at large) for the functioning of the party and therefore the sustenance of wider democracy (Gomez and Ramiro, 2019).

To further restore their image as responsive mechanisms, parties often concede that internal change is required following electoral defeat (Cross and Blais, 2012a). This perhaps signals an air of humility to voters whose trust in politicians is insecure (Whiteley *et al*., 2016) and improving attitudes towards elites may in turn boost perceptions of the party and politics more generally. In line with the widely held assumption that ordinary party members are best suited to choose a leader of quality (Pederson and Schumacher, 2015), voters will likely welcome the opportunity for people that think and prioritise more like them to be involved in leadership selection proceedings, opposed to just elites whom voters perceive to be out of touch (Krouwel and Abts, 2007). Thus, increased participation might also be valued based on the assumption that members (or the electorate) provide a safeguard against continued electoral defeat or party decline should the public not respond to elites and their priorities. Voters may appreciate that people with lives that reflect theirs are involved in

decisions such as leadership selection that wields consequences for all party decisions, and thus system level democracy thereafter.

In a democratically ideal scenario then, members participating in an inclusive leadership selection would elect a leader that represented the membership base, and by extension, the party's wider supporters. Theoretically, inclusive membership selectorates should give way to improved substantive representation. Of course, descriptive representation (Pitkin, 1967) is also important to democratic vigour, though perhaps an unreasonable expectation that one person (the leader) represent every social group present in their party. Subsequently, in a phenomenon called multi-speed membership, parties have reduced barriers to membership by lowering monetary costs and other societal barriers in a bid to diversify their membership so that it might reflect their wider support (Scarrow, 2014).

Making leadership selection more accessible by reducing costs is just one of multiple reforms of this kind, yet empirical evidence shows that the success of these ventures has been somewhat limited. Scarrow and Gezgor (2010) find that during the trend of membership reform in the 1990s, the socio-demographic member-voter gap did indeed decrease. Moreover, Gauja and Jackson (2015) find there to be few differences concerning age and levels of education, though members of the Australian Green party were more likely to be male than their average supporter. Gomez and Ramiro (2019) on the other hand find that despite Spain's Podemos' complete rejection of the notion of traditional party membership, their membership still fails to represent their voter base. Podemos' base includes a larger proportion of males and more highly educated present in the membership than Podemos voters. Finally, Webb *et al*. (2017) find that members of UK parties following reforms are still more likely than their supporters to be male and more highly educated. That participation is more of a reality for a larger group of people than before however, should elicit positive reaction from voters with the recognition that for outcomes to reflect voters'

wishes, ordinary voters should be able to access these decisions should they wish. The concept of parties creating avenues that allows them to be held accountable by their base and increase responsiveness to them, speaks to the basic function of parties in representative democracies (Dalton, Farrell and McAllister, 2011). If more voters become involved in intra-party decisions, normative logic follows that party decisions will more accurately reflect the preferences of those they represent. Moreover, that a larger proportion of the base is involved, adds another mechanism whereby parties are linked with their voters. Thus, the perception that parties are implementing reforms to improve this to deepen the connection with voters and build trust likely elicits positive attitudes towards the reform itself and wider democratic functioning. For these reasons, I argue that voters will deem increased participation as a positive development in party organisational evolution. I outline this expectation as per the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1a: Citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership election reform in the future where the reform enables an increased/decreased number of voters.

Hypothesis 1b: Citizens will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where the reform enables an increased/decreased number of voters.

Inclusive leadership selection and intra-party division

While increased intra-party democracy likely elicits positive perceptions, party reforms of most kinds carry the potential for additional consequences of a destructive nature, despite (proclaimed) positive intentions. Increasing the number of actors in any decision-making process invites additional opinions that become more difficult to mediate thanks to the nature of collective action

via large groups through convoluting proceedings (Aldrich, 2011; Kölln, 2015a). Widening the leadership selectorate is then a prime example of how intra-party democracy can counterintuitively atrophy the party organisation. Here, I explore how the cost of increased participation to leadership selection might limit the circumstances under which voters will tolerate inclusive reforms.

Rules for leadership selection are typically only discussed in the public domain briefly at the time of the contest, and even less so after the first contest under the reformed rules. Therefore, while voters are likely typically only exposed to the positive depictions of participation. I expect that when prompted to evaluate the possibility of negative consequences, voters may not tolerate increased participation under all circumstances.

The previous chapter touched on party division and how it can influence party perceptions, and the literature review briefly articulated that inclusive leadership contests can be responsible for the creation of such division within the party or intensify already existing factions. Here, I explore this phenomenon in more depth, outlining the ways in which this occurs and the consequences thereof, to argue that voters may not accept the introduction of inclusivity at the cost of intensifying factional divides. While on the other side of the contest, the party can claim their leader was chosen via democratic means and boast legitimacy and organisational strength (Scarrow, Webb and Poguntke, 2022), the selection process itself opens the party to negative consequences capable of lasting far beyond the beginning of a new leadership tenure. This likely negates the former positive perceptions.

The growing popularity of inclusive selection contests has attracted the attention of mainstream media, typically welcomed by parties (Faucher, 2015; Hazan and Rahat, 2010; Kenig, 2009b; Pederson and Schumacher, 2015; Wauters, 2014). Frequent news coverage of the race, public candidate interviews and even dedicated live candidate debates are now commonplace. It

also now seems habitual for politicians to campaign via their social media platforms (Pederson, 2024) which are accessible to the entire public, not limited to party member viewership in the way that party channels are. Indeed, candidates view popularity therewith as a requirement for winning (Cross and Blais, 2012c). These procedures are no longer strictly internal affairs. While it is possible that candidates tailor their targeted messages to members specifically via email or closed events, the largely public nature of inclusive leadership contests mean that both rank-and-file party members, party supporters, and also the general public comprised of potential supporters and supporters of other parties, become privy to the (varying) opinions and agendas of the upper echelons of the party that they otherwise would not be. As do the decision-makers in opposing parties.

Though advertising the varying preferences that exist within parties can exemplify wider representation (Campbell *et al*., 2019), the public nature of the contests can negate party unity party in a multitude of ways. Just as parties seek to differentiate themselves from their opponents during elections, so too must candidates in internal competitions which at extremes can be characterised as "infighting" (Djupe and Peterson, 2002: 847). As candidates promote their intended vision for the party and identify their perceived weaknesses in their opponents, they run the risk that the audience perceives a party in turmoil lacking a clear path forward (Faucher, 2015a). Moreover, candidates can expose existing intra-party disagreements that threaten unity (Close and Gherghina, 2019). This can range from disagreement over policies themselves, to differences in how agreed upon goals should be achieved, to disagreement over policy priorities (Kitschelt, 1989; Rohrschneider, 1994). The potential for division to be publicly displayed in inclusive leadership contests is vast and it may be subsequently difficult for the audience to discern the party's core aims and representational reach. Moreover, candidates that choose to publicly undermine the choices of the incumbent displays discord over the parties' recent

record (So, 2021). Given that the public follow elite cues, even more so in contexts of division (Vegetti, 2014), elites' portrayed lack of confidence in the party leadership and direction holds the potential to permeate the public consciousness. Moreover, that potential leaders are given a prominent public platform, in line with the personalisation of politics (see previous chapter), candidate's rhetoric likely exceeds policy discussion and will speak to their perceived competence, or lack thereof, or the personality traits more generally of their party colleagues turned opponents (Faucher, 2015a; Seddone *et al*., 2020). The personal nature of such division tends to intensify negative perceptions (Mutz and Reeves, 2005).

Beyond the contest itself, the potential for intra-party division continues once the winner is chosen. During the contest where candidates champion their preferred policies and priorities, existing factions within the party that may have gone under the radar of public discourse can be pushed to the forefront (Somer-Topcu and Cozza, 2021; Scarrow, 2021). In this scenario, internal conflicts become important to the political agenda and voters are reminded of party division beyond the context of the contests. Party members and those voters with keen political interest may be aware of divisive factions through dissent in parliament or even at conferences, despite party leaders' tendencies to conceal conflicts from public perception (van de Wardt, 2014). Public leadership debates make the average voter aware of internal issues, however, that the leader must manage which may have a lasting effect on voters' perceptions of the party's ideological message, now having an insight into the bargaining process that likely occurred. Even in the event of a strong leader capable of reigning in factions (Ceron, 2012), the public are now aware of alternative policy directions that exist under the party umbrella which may lead them to reconsider their own preferences. Thus, disputes that were under the radar become intensified thanks to inclusive public selection contests where candidates speak directly to the

public. Below, I explore how division in different contexts might reduce support for leadership selection reform.

Agreement within groups

Party leaders are becoming increasingly public though the role leaders play in crafting the party message varies in each organisation (Ceron, 2012; Ceron and Greene, 2019; Schumacher, de Vries, and Vis, 2013). The existence of intra-party factions signifies that leaders must bargain with intra-party actors to appease multiple groups with varying preferences (Harmel and Janda 1994). No longer is the depiction of parties as unitary actors comprised of followers who uncritically obey their leaders an accurate depiction of modern representative democracy (Bowler e*t al*., 1999; Greene and Haber 2016; Kam, 2009). In this vein, scholarship suggests that the success of factions constraining their leader lies in the strength of the faction (Budge, Ezrow and McDonald, 2010; Ceron, 2019; Harmel and Tan, 2003).

Moreover, research shows that these heterogenous views can exist at all levels within the party (Kitschelt, 1989; Kölln and Polk, 2023). According to this perspective, distinctions between ideologically rigid or pragmatist approaches to politics exist throughout. This opposes the conventional wisdom of May's Law (1973) that contends that a specific pattern of preferences is displayed between intra-party groups whereby activists hold more extreme views than their leaders, and leaders hold more extreme views than rank-and file members and supporters who lie at the least extreme end of the scale. Historically, some studies express support for this configuration of preferences (Kennedy *et al*., 2006; Widfeldt, 1999) and this structure of party opinion is generally assumed by many scholars to be the status quo (Faucher, 2015b). However, research casts doubt on May's thesis, finding that party activists and members do not tend to hold more extreme preferences than other party

supporters (Herrera and Taylor, 1994; Scarrow, 2007). Focusing on Dutch parties, for example, van Holsteyn et al. (2017) find no support for the existence of extreme mid-level party actors, going so far as to suggest that 'May's Law appears to be May's Myth' (2017: 479). I explore why the potential for disagreement between the leader and party supporters, activists and the parliamentary group may inhibit support for leadership selection reform below:

Leader and party supporters

Following the theme of democracy as a normatively good concept outlined in the argument pertaining to participation in leadership selection, I expect voters to display a similar sentiment concerning the dynamic between the newly elected leader and party supporters. Here, I use the word supporters to encompass ordinary rank and file members and voters of the party without such formal ties given the little variation in their policy preferences (Pederson and Schumacher, 2015). If voters prefer that leadership selection be more inclusive so that the party leader, and therefore the party message, reflects the preferences of party supporters (Lehrer, 2012), then I expect disagreement between them and the newly elected leader, will elicit negative attitudes. Disagreement likely reduces support for leadership selection reform with that aim not being achieved. Should such reforms increase division between the newly selected party leader and party supporters then, the perception of a self-interested political elite, not concerned with representation but instead with egocentric goals, may prevail (Krouwel and Abts, 2007). This perception will likely compete with any positive effects of increased participation. I further expect that such a manifestation of division would foster more widespread feelings of misrepresentation among party supporters, which decreases democratic satisfaction (Brandenburg and Johns, 2014). Party members do not always vote for the most congruent candidate in practice (Vandeleene, Moens and Wauters,

2024) and thus, disagreement between the leader and supporters are likely to be far reaching in that members are also willing to compromise for wider party goals to be achieved. Or, in cases where they do not vote for the most congruent candidate because they have been susceptible to elite party cues, any subsequent disagreement between the newly elected leader and supporters would likely intensify the mechanics of public leadership contests and may encourage feelings of alienation among ordinary voters. This leads me to the following hypotheses:

H2a: Citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership selection reform where it encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party supporters

H2b: Citizens will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where leadership selection reform encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party supporters

Leader and activists

Distinct from the rank-and-file members and party supporters, party activists are members dedicated to involvement in internal party proceedings beyond paying their membership, such as campaign activity and holding local office bearer positions (Koo, 2020; Moens, 2022). Party actors at these levels face different incentives to stay involved and therefore hold differing political motivations. For example, party leaders are faced with the possibility of holding office which offers material, social and purposive benefits. Since these benefits require electoral success, party leaders are required to appease moderate supporters. Party activists on the other hand, only face purposive benefits in response to the time and labour intensive activities required at this level, thus

activists are thought to be purely ideologically motivated in order to give such effort (Whitely and Seyd 2002). Indeed, activists often also form the pool of those seeking to become politicians which may also play into their motivations to commit to the party's internal life (Schofield and Sened, 2006).

Should widespread disagreement between activists and leaders then occur, activists' ideological motivation might diminish and theoretically so would the vital work that activists do to make parties successful. Indeed, Cross and Pruysers (2019) show that those on the losing side of leadership selection tend to roll back their activity within the party. Ordinary voters may not be privy to the extent of work that party activists undertake. The more astute voter, however, may notice a diminished party presence on the ground as activists no longer seek to engage with local communities and engage the public. Indeed, activists play a vital role in ensuring the party acts as the link between citizens and the state (Koo, 2020; Whitely and Seyd, 2002). More obvious signs of incompetence may come from public disagreements via televised party conferences/congresses where a leader may face resistance to policy proposals from these activists who are more inclined to participate in these events (Ceron and Greene, 2019). Indeed, Faucher-Kind and Trielle's (2003) depiction of the French Parti Socialiste's 1990 conference outlines the turmoil captured by the media when agreement between the leadership and grassroots could not be reached. I expect that a leader who cannot convince those who are deemed to be the most dedicated members of a party of their position, will pique the interest of voters and cast doubt in their minds of the wider electorate over the credibility of the leader's message. This logic forms the following hypotheses:

H3a: Citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership selection reform where it encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party activists

H3b: Citizens will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where leadership selection reform encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party activists

Leader and parliamentarians

Disagreement between the leader and MPs following reform of leadership selection rules can have specific and far-reaching consequences. Intensified party factions possibly with increased public support owing to a consciousness of opposing views among party members and supporters, can embolden parliamentarians to display dissent further than what might have occurred throughout the duration of the contest. Parliamentarians that belong to opposing factions of that of the winning candidate may feel emboldened to voice messages that contradict party policy or the leader's message in the media and in parliament. In more extreme cases, they may even resort to voting against the party whip. Indeed, research shows a positive relationship between internal democracy and MPs holding opposing preferences from the party's message (Close, Gherghuna and Sierens, 2019). Party leaders go to great lengths to ensure unity via the threat, or imposition of disciplinary measures on members of the parliamentary group (Andeweg and Thomassen, 2011). However, when a leader does not have the support of the wider parliamentary group, dissent can extent to no confidence votes or leadership challenges from disloyal elites, and perceptions of an incompetent leader, incapable of controlling the parliamentary group becomes public perception, as was the case with Jeremy Corbyn's premiership (Whiteley *et al*., 2019). In such a scenario, parliamentarians find success in supporting dissent, rather than supporting the leader and their goals. I therefore argue that the context of leadership selection leading to a

dysfunctional parliamentary group might negate the effect of individualised representation and I posit the following hypotheses:

H4a: Citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership selection reform where it encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party MPs

H4b: Citizens will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where leadership selection reform encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party MPs

Owing to the rationale outlined above, I expect division between the party leader and each of these groups to purport a negative effect on both support for party leader reform and satisfaction with democracy. Each group plays an important role in the functioning of democracy and therefore disagreement with the leader may imply that inclusive reforms have failed to invigorate the party. Some groups are more visible to the public than others, or perhaps are more present in their consciousness. I therefore expect disagreement between the leader and some groups to have a larger effect on support for reform and democratic satisfaction than others. Parties must be engaged to elicit positive attitudes (Sides, 2007) and given respondents themselves would likely expect that parties respond to their preferences, I expect positive effect of agreement between the party leader and party supporters to have the greatest effect on support for reform and democratic satisfaction of all three variations of disagreement. I then posit that this will be followed by the effect of agreement between the leader and the parliamentary group given that MPs are a highly visible cohort (Bengtsson, 2011) and likely more present in voter consciousness than are party activists. Finally, I expect disagreement between the leader and activists to have

the smallest effect of the three, given that many of their efforts are recognised inside the party. This is outlined in the following hypothesis:

H5a: The positive effect of increased agreement between the party leader and supporters on support for leadership selection reform will be greater than the positive effect of increased between the leader and the parliamentary group which will be greater than the positive effect of increased agreement between the party leader and party activists

H5b: The positive effect of increased agreement between the party leader and supporters on democratic satisfaction will be greater than the positive effect of increased between the leader and the parliamentary group which will be greater than the positive effect of increased agreement between the party leader and party activists

5.3 Data and methods

To examine the impact of leadership selection reforms on voter perceptions in a causal framework[9], I designed an experiment where we varied the levels of the main independent variables across randomly assigned groups. Experimental designs allow for a high degree of internal validity (Mutz, 2011; Kittel *et al.,* 2012) and external validity in the framing of vignettes to mimic real-world scenarios (Hainmuller, Hangartner and Yamamoto, 2015). The vignettes were

[9] This research design was conducted as part of a joint research venture with Dr Zachary Greene funded by the Carnegie Trust for Scotland where we examine attitudes towards various party organisational reforms, one of them being leadership selection. The research design was therefore a collaborative effort and jointly agreed upon.

constructed in a way that highlighted major political parties as the only party descriptor, to more easily generalise our results. I constructed a 2x2x3 factorial design where participants were presented with one of twelve possible vignettes. Participants that comprised a representative UK sample recruited by Prolific were randomly assigned to the twelve groups. The survey was fielded in the UK in December 2021. The UK was chosen as a suitable case study given that all major political parties have a history of changing their leadership selection rules over the past several decades. Moreover, I posit that the prominence of leaders in UK political culture (Mughan, 2000) would encourage voters to form attitudes regarding their selection when prompted.

Each vignette contained three treatments with varying levels. The first treatment, participation, refers to the number of actors enfranchised with a vote in the party leader selection. Participants were shown a vignette that referred to either increased participation, or decreased participation. The second treatment, agreement, refers to the presence of harmony within the party. Participants were shown a vignette that referred to either increased agreement, or decreased agreement. Finally, the third treatment refers to different groups of actors within the party between whom increased, or decreased agreement with the party leader might occur. Participants were shown a vignette that referred to either party supporters, MPs, or party activists.

The vignette with all variations of the treatments outlined in brackets is shown in Table 5.1. Immediately following presentation of the vignette, participants were asked the question, 'Political parties in the UK are considering reforming their rules for selecting the party's leadership. Do you support reforms for future party leadership elections?' and were asked to choose from the following options, 'definitely yes, probably yes, might or might not, probably not, definitely not'. Participants were then asked, 'How satisfied are you with the state of democracy in the UK?' where respondents chose from completely satisfied, somewhat satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied,

somewhat dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied. I also included a manipulation check by asking the question, 'Which reform was described in the previous question?' where participants chose from the following set of options, 'A virtual surgery', 'Abolish membership fees', 'Privatise the NHS', 'Selecting the party leader'. Those that chose selecting the party leader were included in the final analysis[10].

Table 5. 1: Sample vignette

"The major political parties in the United Kingdom are considering reforms to their rules for selecting the party's leadership. The proposed reforms would **[increase/decrease]** the number of people that participate in the final vote for the leadership. These reforms are predicted to **[increase/decrease]** leaders' policy agreements with the party's **[supporters/MPs/activists]**."

Qualtrics was used to develop the survey and upon receiving the data, an error in Qualtrics' code was uncovered during the analysis whereby four out of the twelve treatment groups were shown the treatment but were not shown the follow up question, 'Political parties in the UK are considering reforming their rules for selecting the party's leadership. Do you support reforms for future party leadership elections?'. Participants in those groups could therefore not answer this question and provide the relevant data for that dependent variable. The affected vignettes are outlined in Appendix B. Normally, t-tests would be an appropriate method of analysis for experimental data given that treatments are randomly assigned, however, in light of the Qualtrics error, I identified regression analysis as most reliable as it controls for all other variables.

[10] All hypotheses and the research design were pre-registered at: https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/PSQOGX

Additional variables

Random assignment in experimental designs ensures that participants in each treatment group are similar to one another and thus the same outcomes would be expected from each group (Gerber, 2011; Mutz, 2011). Causality can more accurately be determined with random assignment as researchers can be more confident that the observed effect is not due to any other cause than the treated independent variable (Gerber and Green, 2008; Holbrook, 2011). Yet, true random assignment likely means that differences can be observed pertaining to relevant variables (Brader and Tucker, 2012). I therefore include standard sociodemographic controls such as age, gender, whether one identified as disabled, ethnicity and income in the analysis. The coding off all variables is included in Appendix B. I also controlled for ideological congruence with the party one voted for and perceptions of party competence given their established positive relationships with democratic satisfaction (Brandenburg and Johns, 2014; Leiter and Clark, 2015; Reher, 2014). Finally, I controlled for one's ideological self-placement and perceptions of party unity of the party one voted for to prevent one's evaluation of their own party influencing results for the hypothetical party. The coding of these variables is identical to that depicted in Chapter 4.

Model

Owing to the hierarchical nature of the dependent variable, I utilised ordinal logistic regression analysis to test the relationship between the treatments and both support for leadership selection reform and democratic satisfaction. Ordinal logistic regression is constructed on the notion of a latent continuous variable:

$$Y^*i = xi\,\beta + ei$$

where Y* represents the latent variable, i represents the observation, x represents the vector of independent variables, β represents the observed coefficients and ei represents the error term. The latent continuous variable (Y*) determines the values of the observed ordered variable (Y) based on whether it has crossed a given threshold (or cutpoints) as follows:

Yi = Category 1 if Y*i is ≤ κ1
Yi = Category 2 if κ1 is ≤ Y*i ≤ κ2
Yi = Category 3 if κ2 is ≤ Y*i ≤ κ3
Yi = Category 4 if κ3 is ≤ Y*i ≤ κ4
Yi = Category 5 if Y*i ≥ κ4

Ordinal logistic regression models carry a proportional odds assumption that expects the probability of belonging to one category of the dependent variable in accordance with a change to the independent variable is equivalent across all categories of the dependent variable (Williams, 2006). I therefore conducted Brant tests to ensure the models met the proportional odds assumption for all variables of interest before proceeding.

5.4 Results

Based on the previous literature, I have argued in this chapter that voters may place limits on their support for inclusive leadership selection reform based on

the resulting dynamics between intra-party actors. I argue that increased participation in leadership selection will elicit a normative preference for democracy and therefore voters exposed to the treatment that increases participation in leadership selection will be more likely to support reform of leadership selection rules. Inclusive leadership selection processes have been shown to elicit negative consequences for parties, however, a multitude of them stemming from the possibility of increased party division. I therefore posit that voters will be more likely to support leadership selection reform when it results in increased agreement between the leader and the party's supporters, activists and parliamentarians. Moreover, I expect that the effect size for agreement levels is largest for party supporters, then parliamentarians and then activists. Based on research that shows voters' attitudes towards internal democracy reflects their attitudes towards system level democracy (Close, Kelbel and van Haute, 2017), I hypothesise that increased participation in leadership selection reform will increase voters' satisfaction with democracy. I also hypothesise that increased levels of agreement between the party leader and the party's supporters, activists and parliamentarians will increase voters' satisfaction with democracy. The following section outlines the related results for support for reform, followed by satisfaction with democracy.

Support for leadership selection reform

Table 5.2 shows the ordinal logit regression results predicting support for leadership selection reform based on the experimental treatments.

Table 5. 2 Effect of treatments on support for party leader selection reform

	Dependent variable:
	Support for leadership selection reform

	Model 1 Log-odds (SE)	Model 2 Log-odds (SE)	Model 3 Log-odds (SE)
Participation	1.635***	1.635***	1.635***
	(0.233)	(0.233)	(0.233)
Agree.Activists	0.607*	0.198	0.444
	(0.290)	(0.306)	(0.289)
Agree.MPs	0.920**	0.511	0.757**
	(0.293)	(0.308)	(0.291)
Agree.Voters	1.108***	0.700*	0.945**
	(0.308)	(0.325)	(0.306)
Disagree.Activists	0.409		0.245
	(0.318)		(0.318)
Disagree.Voters		-0.409	-0.163
		(0.318)	(0.299)
Disagree.MPs	0.163	-0.245	
	(0.299)	(0.318)	
Age	-0.058	-0.058	-0.058
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.064)
Female	-0.094	-0.094	-0.094
	(0.164)	(0.164)	(0.164)
Ethnicity	0.075	0.075	0.075
	(0.199)	(0.199)	(0.199)
Disability	-0.027	-0.027	-0.027

	(0.261)	(0.261)	(0.261)
Income	0.067	0.067	0.067
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)
Left-right values	0.023	0.023	0.023
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)
Last vote Conservative	0.264	0.264	0.264
	(0.237)	(0.237)	(0.237)
Left-right congruence	0.060	0.060	0.060
	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.047)
Average division	0.047	0.047	0.047
	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)
Competence	0.054	0.054	0.054
	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.098)
Observations	580	580	580
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1492.11	1492.11	1492.11
McFadden R2	0.054	0.054	0.054
Note:			*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

The treatment variables are all coded in binary form to allow for comparison between levels of agreement between the leader and each actor. Three models are required to demonstrate this. The reference category for Model 1 is decreased agreement among the party leader and supporters. The reference

category for Model 2 is decreased agreement among the party leader and party activists and the reference category for Model 3 is decreased agreement between the party leader and the party's MPs.

Hypothesis 1a stated that citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership election reform in the future where the reform enables an increased/decreased number of voters. The regression results show that when controlling for all other variables, those who were exposed to the increased participation treatment were more likely to support leadership selection reform than those who received the decreased participation treatment (1.64, $p < 0.001$). This was the largest coefficient of all treatments in the model, indicating the increased importance of participation over agreement levels in support for leadership selection reform. These results provide support for the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2a stated that citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership selection reform where it encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party supporters. Model 1 assesses this relationship and demonstrates that when all other variables are held constant at their means, those who were exposed to the increased agreement between the party leader and party supporters were more likely to support reform than those who were exposed to the decreased agreement between the party leader and party supporters treatment (1.11, $p < 0.001$). This result lend support for hypothesis 2a.

Hypothesis 3a stated that citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership selection reform where it encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party activists. Model 2 assesses this relationship and demonstrates that when all other variables are held constant at their means, no statistically significant relationship between those who received the increased and decreased agreement between the party leader and party

activists treatments and support for leadership selection reform. Thus, hypothesis 3a is not supported.

Hypothesis 4a stated that citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership selection reform where it encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party MPs. Model 3 assesses this relationship and demonstrates that when all other variables are held constant at their means, those who were exposed to the increased agreement between the party leader and MPs were more likely to support reforms for leadership selection than those who were exposed to the decreased agreement between the leader and MPs treatment (0.76, $p < 0.01$). This lends support to hypothesis 4a.

To explore the strength of these relationships, the predicted probabilities for supporting leadership selection reform based on increased participation and increased agreement between the party leader and party supporters, and increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs are plotted below:

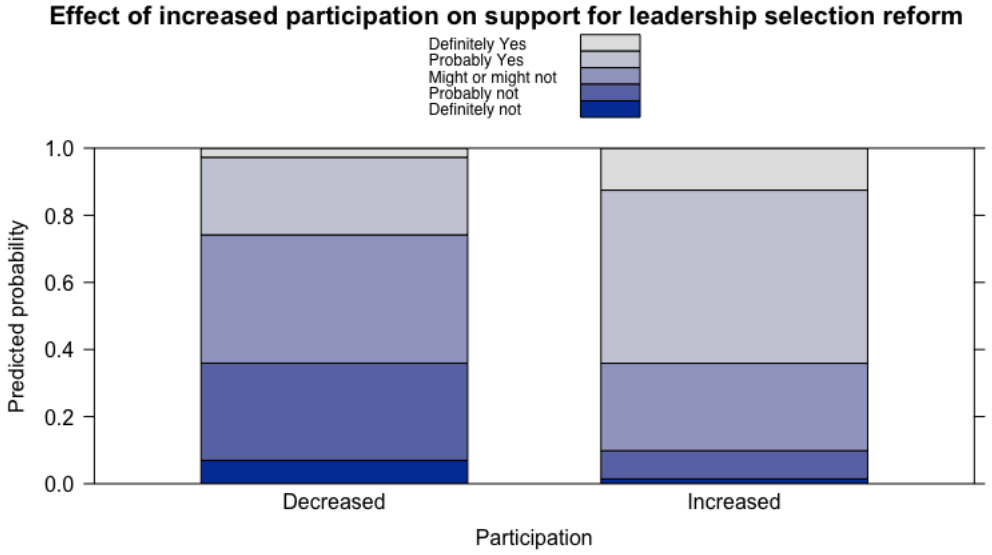

Figure 5. 1 Predicted probability of supporting leadership selection reform based on increased participation in the process

Figure 5.1 demonstrates that the predicted probability of definitely supporting leadership selection reform based on increased participation in the process is ~ 15% compared to only ~2 % based on decreased participation. The predicted probability of probably supporting leadership selection reform based on increased participation is ~ 56% compared to only ~12% based on decreased participation.

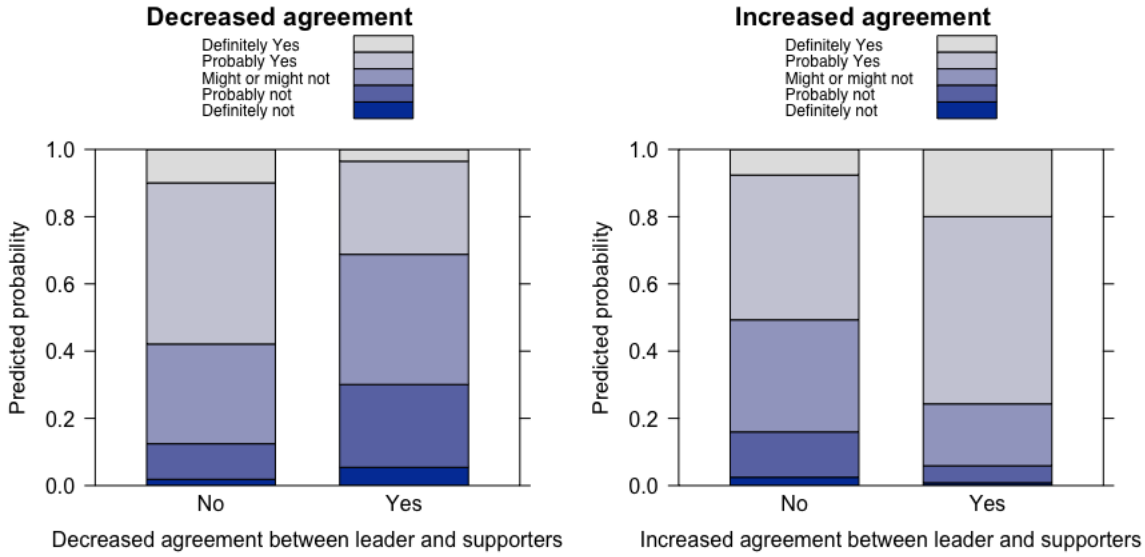

Figure 5. 2 Predicted probability of supporting leadership selection reform based on increased agreement between party leader and party supporters compared with decreased agreement between the party leader and party supporters

Figure 5.2 demonstrates that the predicted probability of definitely supporting leadership selection reform based on increased agreement between the party leader and party supporters is ~ 20% compared to on ~ 4% when agreement levels are decreased. Moreover, the predicted probability of probably supporting leadership selection reform when agreement between the party leader and

supporters is ~ 65% compared to only ~ 18% when agreement levels between these groups are decreased.

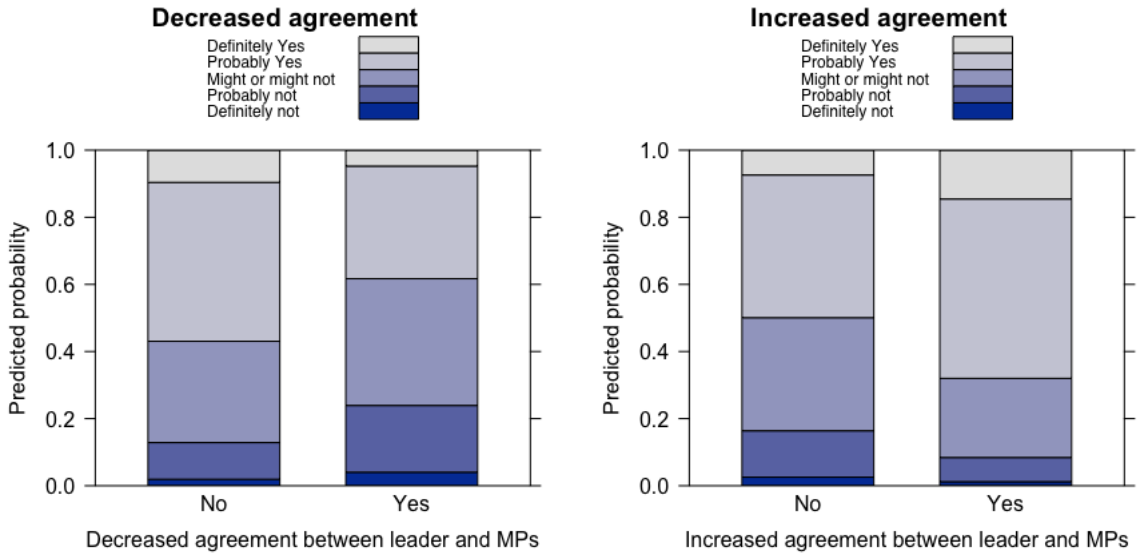

Figure 5. 3 Predicted probability of supporting leadership selection reform based on increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs compared with decreased agreement between the party leader and party MPs

Figure 5.3 demonstrates that the predicted probability of definitely supporting leadership selection reform based on increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs is ~ 17% compared to only ~ 4 % when agreement levels between these groups are decreased. Moreover, the predicted probability of probably supporting leadership selection reform based on increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs is ~ 48% compared to ~ 36% when agreement between these groups is decreased. No significant effect of any of the control variables on support for leadership selection reform was found.

Lastly concerning support for leadership selection reform, hypothesis 5a stated that the positive effect of increased agreement between the party leader

and supporters on support for leadership selection reform will be greater than the positive effect of increased between the leader and the parliamentary group which will be greater than the positive effect of increased agreement between the party leader and party activists. The results shown in Table 5.2 somewhat support the hypothesis. While the coefficient for agreement levels between the party leader and supporters is greater than that concerning agreement between the leader and both MPs and activists, no significance for agreement levels concerning activists was found.

Satisfaction with democracy

I conducted t-tests to determine if the process, or the outcome of leadership selection processes specifically, had any effect on citizens' democratic satisfaction. T-tests were determined appropriate here as an initial analysis as participants were randomly assigned to each treatment. The results are shown in Table 5.3. The results from this analysis reveal a more complicated relationship between internal reform and satisfaction with democracy than the previous literature suggests.

Table 5. 3 Comparison of participation, and agreement level between the party leader and party groups

	Dependent variable: Satisfaction with democracy		
	Increased	Decreased	Difference
Participation	-0.40	-0.46	0.06
Agreement level between party leader and party supporters	-0.33	-0.34	0.01
Agreement level between party leader and party activists	-0.57	-0.47	-0.1
Agreement level between party leader and party MPs	-0.54	-0.35	-0.19

$p < 0.05$*, $p < 0.01$**, $p < 0.001$***

Concerning participation in the selection process, the results show no statistically significant difference between respondents who received the increased participation treatment and those who received the decreased participation treatment ($t(1184.7) = 0.796$, $p = 0.4$). Citizens' democratic satisfaction does not seem to depend on inclusive leadership selection processes, thus hypothesis 1b is not supported. A similar pattern unfolds

regarding the outcome of the contest and attitudes towards to satisfaction with democracy. Concerning agreement between the party leader and party supporters, the results show no statistical difference between respondents who received the increased agreement treatment and those who received the decreased agreement treatment (t (405.73) = 0.08, p = 0.93). Concerning agreement levels between party leaders and their MPs, the results show no statistical difference between those who received the increased agreement treatment and the decreased agreement treatment (t (391.33) = -1.65, p = 0.1). Finally, concerning agreement between the party leader and party activists, the results of the t-tests show no statistically significant difference between those who received the increased agreement treatment and those who received the decreased agreement treatment (t (381.27) = -0.84, p = 0.4). For each variable, the average response between each treatment group did not significantly differ.

The results of the ordinal regression which assesses the probability of belonging to each response category based on the treatment levels are shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5. 4 Effects of treatments on satisfaction with democracy

	Dependent variable:		
	Satisfaction with democracy		
	Model 4 Log-odds (SE)	Model 5 Log-odds (SE)	Model 6 Log-odds (SE)
Particiation	0.006	0.006	0.006
	(0.128)	(0.128)	(0.128)
Agree.Activists	-0.339	-0.247	-0.311
	(0.218)	(0.224)	(0.220)

Agree.MPs	-0.517*	-0.424	-0.488*
	(0.223)	(0.229)	(0.225)
Agree.Voters	-0.030	0.062	-0.002
	(0.216)	(0.223)	(0.218)
Disagree.Activists	-0.092		-0.064
	(0.219)		(0.221)
Disagree.Voters		0.092	0.028
		(0.219)	(0.215)
Disagree.MPs	-0.028	0.064	
	(0.215)	(0.221)	
Age	0.038	0.038	0.038
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)
Female	0.243	0.243*	0.243*
	(0.131)	(0.131)	(0.131)
Ethnicity	0.258	0.258	0.258
	(0.157)	(0.157)	(0.157)
Disability	-0.455*	-0.455*	-0.455*
	(0.231)	(0.231)	(0.231)
Income	0.028	0.028	0.028
	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Left-right ID	0.275***	0.275***	0.275***
	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)
Last vote Conservative	1.440***	1.440***	1.440***

	(0.194)	(0.194)	(0.194)
Left-right congruence	-0.010	-0.010	-0.010
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Average division	0.065*	0.065*	0.065*
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Competence	0.331***	0.331***	0.331***
	(0.081)	(0.081)	(0.081)
Observations	893	893	893
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2230.04	2230.04	2230.04
McFadden R2	0.12	0.12	0.12
Note:			*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

The treatment variables are all coded in binary form to allow for comparison between levels of agreement between the leader and each actor. Three models are required to demonstrate this. The reference category for Model 4 is decreased agreement among the party leader and supporters. The reference category for Model 5 is decreased agreement among the party leader and party activists and the reference category for Model 6 is decreased agreement between the party leader and the party's MPs.

Hypothesis 1b stated that respondents will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where the reform enables an increased/decreased number of voters. The regression analysis outlined in Table 5.4 shows no significant effect between levels of participation in leadership selection

processes and satisfaction with democracy. Combined with the result of the relevant t-test, no support was found for Hypothesis 1b.

Hypothesis 2b stated that citizens will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where leadership selection reform encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party supporters. Model 4 assesses this relationship and demonstrates that when all other variables are held constant at their means, no statistically significant relationship was found between levels of agreement between the party leader and party supporters and satisfaction with democracy Accordingly, with the results of the relevant t-test, hypothesis 2b is not supported by this analysis.

Hypothesis 3b stated that citizens will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where leadership selection reform encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party activists. Model 5 assesses this relationship and demonstrates that when all other variables are held constant at their means, no statistically significant relationship between those who received the increased and decreased agreement between the party leader and party activists treatments and democratic satisfaction. Thus, together with the relevant t-test, these results do not support hypothesis 3b.

Hypothesis 4b stated citizens will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where leadership selection reform encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party MPs. Model 6 assesses this relationship and demonstrates that when all other variables are held constant at their means, those who were exposed to the increased agreement between the party leader and MPs were less likely to be satisfied with democracy than those who were exposed to the decreased agreement between the party leader and party MPs treatment (-0.49, $p < 0.05$). This runs contrary to the direction of the expected relationship outlined in hypothesis 4b.

While I argued based on previous literature that citizens would report increased democratic satisfaction with increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs since legislative unity enables the party to fulfil their legislative functions. Contrary to this however, this data seems to support the notion that citizens appreciate displays of individual representation and politicians that are not afraid to represent constituent matters (Bowler, 2010; Campbell *et al*., 2019; Carey, 2007; Carey and Shugart, 1995). To explore the strength of this relationship, the predicted probabilities of democratic satisfaction based on based on increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs compared with decreased agreement between the party leader and party MPs is plotted below:

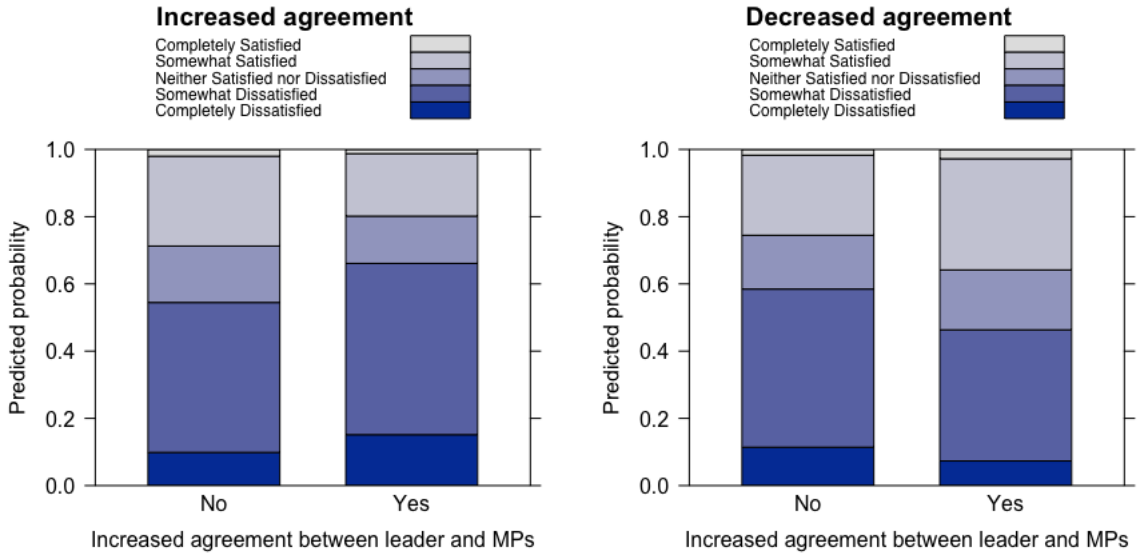

Figure 5. 4 Predicted probabilities of democratic satisfaction based on based on increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs compared with decreased agreement between the party leader and party MPs

Figure 5.4 demonstrates that the predicted probability of being somewhat satisfied with democracy based on increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs is only ~ 20% compared to ~ 30% based on decreased agreement between these groups. Moreover, the predicted probability of being somewhat dissatisfied with democracy based on increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs is ~ 51% compared to only ~ 38% based on decreased agreement between these groups.

Hypothesis 5b stated that the positive effect of increased agreement between the party leader and supporters on democratic satisfaction will be greater than the positive effect of increased between the leader and the parliamentary group which will be greater than the positive effect of increased agreement between the party leader and party activists. The results shown in Table 5.4 do not support this hypothesis. The negative effect of agreement between the party leader and MPs was indeed contrary to the direction expected, and no significance was found for agreement levels between the party leader and both party supporters and activists and democratic satisfaction.

Finally, the control variables also wielded interesting results. In line with the literature, those that reported a disability were less satisfied with the state of democracy than those who did not (0.46, $p < 0.05$). Where political identity is concerned, the further right on the left-right scale one places themselves increases the likelihood of being satisfied with democracy (0.28, $p < 0.001$) and those that voted for the party of government were more likely to be satisfied with the state of democracy than those who did not (1.44, $p < 0.001$). As per findings in the previous Chapter, perceptions of competence of the party one votes for is also positively associated with democratic satisfaction (0.33, $p < 0.001$). Perceptions of division among the party one votes for is positively correlated with democratic satisfaction (0.07, $p < 0.05$). Though the results outlined in Chapter 2 show no significant effect of perceptions of party division on satisfaction with democracy, the previous model was a binary regression

model whereby the data from an ordered dependent variable was collapsed as the proportional odds assumption was violated for some of the main independent variables on an ordinal regression model. The results of the ordinal regression model can be found in Appendix A and shows significance for the average division coefficient (the proportional odds assumption was not violated for this specific coefficient). The discrepancy in the two models may be a result of the coding of the binary dependent variable whereby important information was lost that does not assess for the effect of division at the more specific levels of satisfaction with democracy. Given that the ordinal model does allow for this, my conclusion with regards to the effect of perceptions of division of the party one votes for discussed in the concluding Chapter are drawn based on these results.

Table 5.5 below summarises all the results for support for reform and satisfaction with democracy.

Table 5. 5 Results summary

Hypothesis	**Result**
Support for reform	
H1a: Citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership election reform in the future where the reform enables an increased/decreased number of voters.	Supported
H2a: Citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership selection reform where it encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party supporters.	Supported

H3a: Citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership selection reform where it encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party activists.	Not supported
H4a: Citizens will be more/less likely to support leadership selection reform where it encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party MPs.	Supported
H5a: The positive effect of agreement between the party leader and supporters on support for leadership selection reform will be greater than the negative effect of division between the leader and the parliamentary group which will be greater than the negative effect of division between the party leader and party activists.	Not wholly supported
Satisfaction with democracy	
H1b: Citizens will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where the reform enables an increased/decreased number of voters.	Not supported
H2b: Citizens will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where leadership selection reform encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party supporters.	Not supported

H3b: Citizens will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where leadership selection reform encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party activists.	Not supported
H4b: Citizens will report higher/lower levels of satisfaction with democracy where leadership selection reform encourages increased/decreased levels of agreement between the party leader and party MPs.	Not supported
H5b: The positive effect of agreement between the party leader and supporters on satisfaction with democracy will be greater than the negative effect of division between the leader and the parliamentary group which will be greater than the negative effect of division between the party leader and party activists	Not supported

5.5 Conclusion

Despite a slew of negative consequences, parties continue to introduce inclusive leadership selection reform. Given the associated trade-offs, I explore voter attitudes towards leadership selection reform to examine whether voters accept intra-party democracy at the cost of intra-party division, which undermines parties' basic functions and threatens electoral success (Scarrow, 2021; Lehrer and Lin, 2020; Lin and Lehrer, 2021). In particular, I consider the impact of participation levels in the selection process itself and resulting agreement levels between actors within the party following leadership selection.

I employ a factorial experimental design that varies treatments for participation levels and levels of agreement between the leader and different party groups; supporters, activists and MPs. Given that each of these groups contributes to party success in different ways, disagreement at each of these levels have tangible consequences. I find that increased participation has a positive effect on support for leadership selection reform, as does increased agreement between the leader and party supporters and the leader and party MPs. Agreement levels between the party leader and activists had no significant effect on support for reform.

Prior research concerning parties' internal rules and satisfaction with democracy offers mixed results. Inclusive candidate selection is positively associated with democratic satisfaction (Shomer, Put and Gedalya-Lavy, 2016) whereas when a wider array of forms of intra-party democracy are considered, no relationship is found (Webb, Scarrow and Poguntke, 2022). I therefore investigated the effect of the treatment levels on satisfaction with democracy to examine the effects of leadership selection reform specifically. I find that increased agreement between the party leader and the parties' MPs was negatively associated with democratic satisfaction. However, participation levels have no statistically significant relationship with democratic satisfaction. Nor does agreement levels between the party leader and party supporters or the party leader and party activists.

Are parties suffering for the democratic cause? In short, not really. While voters support reforms based on increased participation, this type of reform has no impact on wider democratic satisfaction. While leaders may indeed face internal pressure from party actors to introduce wider selectorates, voters' democratic satisfaction comes from other party outputs which are risked by inclusion. Parties are suffering as a consequence of these reforms, but for some other agenda than democracy as an ideal.

Indeed, the results concerning agreement levels between the leader and different groups in the party also speak to the possibility that leadership selection reform in the name of normative perceptions of democracy is misguided. Increased participation in leadership selections is not associated with increased democratic satisfaction and will therefore alone, likely not be effective in minimising disaffection. This runs contrary to Close, Kelbel and van Haute's (2017) research regarding electoral candidate selection. Indeed, further research might consider including measures of political efficacy to determine if leadership selection reforms effect those that feel alienated from the system differently to those who engage with politics. If parties are looking to gain legitimacy however as the literature suggests (Cozza and Somer-Topcu. 2021), voters support the reform, and this aim will likely be achieved.

While agreement with party supporters increases support for leadership selection reform, it is not associated with democratic satisfaction, whereas agreement with MPs is negatively associated with democratic satisfaction. From this, I surmise that voters appreciate the representation of a wider range of views within the party for democratic vitality but perhaps only in a limited range of circumstances. According to voters, parties should conduct themselves in ways that promote agreement, whereas positive perceptions of system level functioning are found in voters' appreciation of heterogeneous views within parties. With the risk of fallout that accompanies increased participation then (Scarrow, 2021), the evidence presented in this chapter suggests that parties can either increase participation and improve democratic satisfaction from displaying division, or they can benefit at the party level, where increased agreement is preferred. Empirical evidence is yet to demonstrate the effectiveness of inclusive leadership electorates in achieving this goal. Instead, to achieve the best of both worlds, broadly, parties might instead focus their efforts on displaying a range of views and accountability mechanisms at the legislative level. Showcasing a wider range of views at party conferences or

allowing a degree of dissent in the legislature where appropriate and where it would not be seen to impact party efficiency or competence, are examples where parties could potentially increase democratic satisfaction without risking the destabilising consequences of inclusive leadership reform. This will be a difficult task for party elites as dissent also negatively impacts voters' perceptions of party competence (Greene and Haber, 2015; Lehrer and Lin, 2020; Lin and Lehrer, 2021). These results provide competing conditions which parties must balance to appease a somewhat fickle UK voter. I discuss the implications of this for inclusive leadership selectorate reform further in the following chapter.

For these conclusions and contributions to the literature, this research comes with its limitations, however. The randomisation error in Qualtrics' coding means that the results concerning support for leadership selection reform likely produces larger standard errors than if all treatment groups were equally balanced which a proportion was not. All treatment groups were shown to participants however and the results concerning satisfaction with democracy remain unaffected. It is on the basis of attitudes towards democratic satisfaction that the larger conclusions of this chapter are drawn. Even with this limitation, the results carry important implications for intra-party politics and an intriguing research agenda.

Moreover, this research only assessed voters' attitudes towards leadership selection reform in the UK. The Westminster notion of collective responsibility whereby Ministers cannot question government policy (McAllister, 2004) might influence attitudes towards MPs' views more generally. It is possible that voters view disagreement between the leader and this group as a more brave and noble gesture. Additionally, logic follows that voters in more consensual systems may view internal participation differently to voters in majoritarian systems (Close et al., 2017). Thus, research depicting the influence of inclusive leadership selection rules on attitudes towards

democratic satisfaction in other systems would likely be a helpful next step in fully understanding the effect of these reforms on voter attitudes more widely.

To conclude, contrary to Close, Kelbel and van Haute's (2017) argument that inclusive electorates would lure disaffected voters and increase democratic satisfaction, the experimental results outlined here imply that this would not be the case concerning leadership selection. These findings would suggest that parties consider introducing inclusive leadership selection reform with caution. While increased participation would likely be positively received at the time of reform, parties might consider other measures that allow for a variety of views and internal accountability in ways that do not risk party effectiveness. I develop this discussion in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Overview of findings

Choosing a leader is among the most consequential of choices a party can make (Ennser-Jedenastik and Müller, 2015). This thesis has explored the causes and consequences of inclusive party leadership selection reform whereby party elites choose to democratise leadership selection power to their members. The comprehensive literature review provided an overview of the importance of the party organisation to party functioning, highlighting the role of ordinary members. A discussion of the literature pertaining to the known motivators for parties introducing OMOV leadership selections, and the consequences thereof, emphasised that, on the surface, the monumental risks that party elites take when implementing these reforms rarely pay off. Indeed, inclusive leadership contests can damage the party in a multitude of ways. Considering this, I contemplated the possibility that elites make this decision purely in the spirit of democratisation, despite a myriad of potential negative consequences for the party. This discussion concludes that the introduction of OMOV leadership selections alone, fails to meet the benchmark of true intra-party democracy. If this were elites' main goal, other reforms of democratisation are less risky to obvious party goals, with higher democratic payoff. I concluded that increased legitimacy for the chosen leader (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021) is the only consistent demonstrated benefit that parties enjoy following the introduction of this type of inclusive reform. I then conclude with a discussion of how attitudes towards intra-party democracy influence attitudes towards the wider democratic system to fully contextualise the extent of party's internal reforms. Building on this, I ventured to explore a situation where increased legitimacy might be so vital for party success that elites make such a monumental change to the party organisation.

When ideological differences between parties become more apparent, political focus turns to issues (Dalton, 2008; Lachat, 2008, 2011), which parties then directly tackle (Spoon and Klüver, 2015). This is opposed to simply projecting competence that is sufficient of parties in converged political environments (Green and Hobolt, 2008). Party elites must then assess how their base is reacting to this environmental change to effectively compete in the new electoral landscape. I argue that democratising the leadership selectorate to the members offers parties a solution to assess how their base has moved before making policy decisions. OMOV leadership contests enables parties to represent their base more accurately in a more difficult environment. Perhaps more importantly, inclusion provides increased legitimacy for any backlash that more targeted policies might receive. Similarly, the public nature of these contests allows for the newly elected leader to determine and set the appropriate political temperature (Sartori, 1976) according to the electoral terrain ahead of the next election. Specifically, I posit that differences will be observed between parties that operate in bipolar party systems and multipolar party systems, owing to the varying nature of party competition. I argue that inclusive leadership selection reform will have a higher pay-off in bipolar party systems, and the effect will therefore be stronger here, than in multipolar systems. An initial exploratory test provides support for this theory.

These initial findings exploring the link between elite polarisation and inclusive leadership selection reform, support the idea that for bipolar party systems specifically, a move towards elite polarisation appears to be a necessary but not sufficient condition. Despite a growing trend (Cross and Blais, 2012a; Pilet and Cross, 2014), OMOV leadership selections do not represent a clear standard (Cross and Pilet, 2015). Thus, many parties in bipolar systems have competed in increasingly polarised environments without taking this measure. I therefore posit that only when elites require assistance in gauging supporter

movement and navigating a changed electoral terrain, might they turn to granting members the right to vote in upcoming leadership selections.

Moreover, that the results are not consistent across party system types, speaks to the notion that elites implement OMOV leadership selection procedures as a tool to their advantage, not entirely in the spirit of diffusing power (though they certainly claim so as a by-product). Or even to enable bottom-up party change. As parties in multipolar systems tend to already represent distinct interests and maintain legitimacy via this, I posit that elites will be less likely to require such a drastic change to the party's organisation to determine how their base is responding to a polarised climate. Should the results have been consistent across bipolar and multipolar systems, the possibility that elites could be responding to system level polarisation by way of truly seeking to represent their base would be more logical, regardless of whether it likely leads to increased votes or not. However, that a clear difference is observed, that parties in multipolar systems do not tend to turn to introducing OMOV leadership selections in response to an increase in system level polarisation, supports the idea that party elites introduce these reforms when they seek to benefit from it. In this case, the hope is electoral gain, or at the very least, damage control. This in turn adds to the argument that party elites do not tend to introduce this specific reform to increase intra-party democracy despite the risk of negative consequences. They do so, when they deem that not reacting to a stimulus presents a more immediate risk.

While party leadership selection reform may (or may not) solve issues faced by the party, selecting a leader marks a new chapter for a party, their supporters and the wider democratic system. In the following chapter, I explore how perceptions of party outcomes influence voters' perceptions of leadership representation. That parties are becoming increasingly leader-centric (Schumacher and Giger, 2017), combined with the leadership position wielding mounting considerable influence over political attitudes (McAllister, 1996;

Mughan, 2000; Garzia, 2017), understanding what contributes to one feeling represented specifically by the current leader of the party they vote for, is crucial to fully understanding representative democracy in today's age. Leaders influence the party in different ways from their predecessor depending on their goals, priorities and their individual skill sets (Blais, 2013; King, 2002). It is therefore logical that party outcomes, as a measure of the leader's performance, influence perceptions of the leader and how well they represent party supporters. I therefore focus on three different elements of party outputs to assess if they are indeed associated with feeling represented by the party leader: valence politics, ideological congruence and perceptions of party cohesion. All three elements speak to a leader's ability to conduct the party in a way that it acts as a representative mechanism for its supporters. I argued that those who perceive the party to be competent will be more likely to feel represented by the party leader, as will those who perceive that the party is ideologically congruent with their own preferences. Concerning party cohesion, I presented competing hypotheses that highlights both the positive and negative connotations of internal division for representation. I then explored the relationship between feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports and wider democratic satisfaction to enable a fuller understanding of the importance of this phenomenon to representative democracy. I argued that a positive relationship exists between these two variables based on the winners and losers' thesis (Anderson and Guillory, 1997) whereby one reaps the rewards of voting for the party (feeling represented by the leader) and therefore elicits a more positive attitude towards the system. I also argued that this effect is moderated by whether one supports the party of government.

The results indicate that perceptions of party competence in dealing with the issues of the day in government are positively associated with feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports. Ideological congruence with the party and perceptions of party division, however, are not. On the surface,

this would indicate that a leader might contain their efforts to ensuring competence and effectiveness on issues relevant to the political agenda to fulfil their representative function. Yet the results of the ordinal regression and binary regression without controls found in appendix A, provides indicative evidence of the influence of these variables, though not robust to all model specifications[11]. Nonetheless, that party competence is associated with leadership representation, speaks to the importance of leadership influence over the party. This effect will then be subject to the effects of OMOV leadership selection reform. I discuss this further in the implications section of this chapter.

Leadership selection then, and the rules therefor, do not exist in a vacuum. Given these consequences, it follows that voters form attitudes towards not only the rules for leadership selection, but also the aftermath of the contests. In Chapter 5, I explore voters' attitudes towards leadership selection reform and its influence on satisfaction with wider democracy. I focus on the trade-off that comes with the right to participate in the process versus the consequences for party unity. This allows me to determine whether voters hold normative perceptions of democracy despite any detriment to party cohesion. Using a survey experiment, I test whether participation levels within the party, and whether agreement levels between the party leader and different integral party groups, directly affect support for leadership selection reform and wider democratic satisfaction. The survey was fielded in the UK in December of 2021 shortly after a bout of leadership selection reforms in the UK Labour Party were reported in the media.

I find that those who were exposed to the increased participation treatment were more likely to support leadership selection reform, as were those who were exposed to the treatment that specified increased agreement between

[11] Significance was likely not found in the binary model as the hierarchal levels of the dependent variable accounted for in the ordinal model is lost as the binary model simply predicts the probability of definitively feeling represented by the party leader, or not, not the probability of falling into the more detailed categories as per the ordinal model.

the party leader and party supporters, and increased agreement between the party leader and party MPs. Agreement between the party leader and party activists had no effect on support for party leadership selection reform. Contrary to expectation however, participation levels in the leadership selection process had no significant effect on voters' democratic satisfaction, neither did agreement levels between a party leader and their voters, or activists. Decreased agreement between a party leader and their MPs, however, is associated with increased democratic satisfaction.

These findings are important for several reasons. First, that increased participation in the leadership selection process encourages support for selection reform but not satisfaction with democracy, indicates that the terms of the procedure itself do not influence attitudes towards wider system functioning. While voters may appreciate the notion that increased voting rights for leadership selection is a positive reform and therefore something they would support, the mechanics of how the leader is chosen does not appear to be important for perceptions of politics beyond the party. This finding is more in line with Kern and Wauters (2021) who find that inclusive reforms do not increase trust in the party, or propensity to join or vote for the party. The findings concerning participation that increased participation in leadership selection is perhaps a cherry on top of the cake, but not a consequential ingredient for wider democratic satisfaction.

Instead, it is the outcome of these contests that matter for voters' democratic satisfaction. While increased agreement between the party leader and party supporters increased support for leadership selection reform, this did not translate to voters' democratic satisfaction. These findings are important for understanding the consequences of inclusive leadership selections more fully and how they influence the political environment outside of the party. Where voters support reform that encourages agreement between the leader and party supporters, this relationship is not important for forming attitudes towards

system level democracy. Theoretically then, voters may simply not see the value in changing leadership selection rules unless they result in positive outcomes for them, but when it comes to matters of democratic health, voters may instead be more satisfied that clear alternative options are available from other parties (Brandenburg and Johns, 2014). This perhaps provides further context to the finding in Chapter 4 that ideological congruence with the party one supports, is not associated with feeling represented by the leader.

Moreover, that agreement levels between the party leader and party activists were not important for either support for leadership selection reform, or democratic satisfaction, prompts reflection on voters' attitudes towards party activists more generally. I hypothesised that increased agreement between the party leader and activists would encourage support for leadership selection reform and democratic satisfaction on the logic of the work of party activists playing an important role in connecting the party with voters. Therefore, if disagreements occur, their incentive to carry out this role might be diminished. That significance was not achieved for either dependent variable, however, prompts me to consider that ordinary citizens might not be fully aware of the importance of activists to the party. Particularly with increasingly professional campaigns and party activity on social media, the work of activists may not be as public as it once was.

Agreement levels between the party leader and party MPs do however influence support for reform and democratic satisfaction. This highlights the importance of MPs in the eyes of the voter. Interestingly though, the direction of the relationship differs for each dependent variable. Citizens are more likely to support leadership selection reform where it encourages increased levels of agreement between the party leader and MPs. This may signal that citizens look to MPs following a selection process as a cue for whether the new leader is the optimal choice. However, where democratic satisfaction is concerned, voters appreciate decreased agreement between the leader and MPs. This finding

aligns with existing literature that shows MPs diverge from the party message to appease specific groups (Bowler, 2010; Campbell *et al*., 2019; Carey, 2007; Carey and Shugart, 1995). All in all, these results hold important implications for theories of intra-party politics and representative democracy more widely.

Limitations and future works

Before discussing the contributions and implications of this research to the field, it is appropriate to highlight the limitations of this study once more. The first empirical chapter offers an initial exploratory analysis of a theoretical framework that seeks to explain the reasons why elite polarisation might influence party elites to introduce OMOV leadership selection processes. Though the results offer a clear indication of the influence of elite polarisation in bipolar systems, further analysis is required to more confidently confirm this relationship for several reasons. First, the research in its current capacity does not assess the saliency of the issues to the political agenda. For example, in some cases, elite polarisation had increased by smaller amounts in relation to other cases. Therefore, understanding the saliency of the issues that contributed to the increased polarisation would be helpful in more fully explaining this connection.

Second, while entirely appropriate for exploring the research question at hand (Dion, 1998), selecting within the dependent variable limits the nature of quantitative methods that can be utilised. For example, regression analysis was not appropriate here as insufficient variation in the dependent variable exists. To account for this, I explored the circumstances surrounding the three more extreme cases of the dependent variable in more depth which acted as a slightly "different measure of the same unit" (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994: 201). This analysis was therefore more descriptive in nature. Future research may then focus on enhancing the internal validity of these findings. A more in-depth

qualitative analysis such as elite interviews to further explore the causal mechanism, for example, how elites themselves connected elite polarisation to reforming the leadership selection process would be helpful in further understanding the relationship between these two variables. This approach might also allow for a refinement of the theoretical framework in understanding whether this act of reform is driven by one particularly polarising issue, or a more generally divisive electoral environment. Moreover, this method would enable questions pertaining to the importance of polarisation in relation to the already known drivers of inclusive leadership reform and offer a fuller understanding of the phenomenon more generally. While further research is indeed required, the method utilised in this thesis mostly aligns with the state of the art that explains the drivers for inclusive leadership selection in Westminster systems (see Cross and Blais, 2012a). The findings presented here certainly offer the foundations of an impactful research agenda.

As well as further research that addresses these limitations, scholarship pertaining to the influence of other types of polarisation might yield interesting results. For example, specifically assessing the role of mass (or affective) polarisation would likely further explain if parties sought to respond to voters as well as parties, and indeed, which is more influential. To my knowledge, the current availability of data on mass polarisation might limit a large N research endeavour. However, a more qualitative approach with a more limited number of cases may also be helpful here (Dion, 1998). Moreover, researching the effects of elite polarisation on candidate selection will also be useful in adding to the literature that speaks to the differences, or more appropriately, the lack thereof, pertaining to the causes and consequences of reforming candidate and leadership selection processes (Kenig, Rahat and Hazan, 2016).

The second empirical chapter outlines the relationship between party outcomes and feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports. While the methods used represent an appropriate analysis of the research

question/hypotheses, the context of the survey causes me to reflect on the individual results. The surveys were conducted while the Covid-19 pandemic continued to dominate the political agenda. It is therefore logical to assume that this may have swayed citizens' attitudes towards party leaders. It would be remiss not to acknowledge the potential for a 'rally round the flag effect' (Kritzinger et al., 2021) to be present in these results, in that competence in dealing with the issues of the day in government might have been of prime importance in feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports. Thus, ideological congruence and party division may not have been as important to voters during a state of national emergency. In short, voters may have cared less about how issues were approached than the need for it to be effectively dealt with in a timely manner. Further research assessing leadership representation over a longer period would account for any such outliers in cross-sectional data, while also helping to address the direction of causality.

In addition to mechanisms that might address these issues, further research might also consider exploring additional influences on feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports. Whilst they may share particular traits, personality variations, and therefore influence on the party will vary from leader to leader (Blais, 2013; King, 2002). Thus, exploring whether the direct effect of the leader's personality fosters feelings of representation will enable an understanding of the effects of the leader on voters. Moreover, analysing whether this, or party outcomes is more important for perceptions of leadership representation will be useful for more fully understanding the role of party leaders in representative democracy. As would assessing how important specifically feeling represented by a particular leader is for one's vote choice.

The third empirical chapter offers a survey experiment that explores the trade-off between normative perception of leadership selection rules and the outcomes of the process. Debate exists around the external validity of experimental research designs as the settings of experiments might not mimic

real-life circumstances (McDermott, 2011). To avoid this however, the vignettes were designed in a way that prompted the reader to consider real-world politics and participants experienced the stimuli in a similar setting to which they would likely ordinarily consume political news (via the internet). I therefore expect the experimental stimuli and real-world political stimuli to have the same effect on political attitudes. Indeed, Mutz's (2011) argues that this is the most important aspect when considering experimental research. Moreover, this research adds to the generalisability of wider research concerning the transfer of attitudes from the intra-party level to the system level and thus the external validity of this particular design is less concerning considering the wider goal at hand.

Considering this, further research exploring the additional trade-offs of leadership selection reform would be useful for understanding the benefit of inclusive processes to parties. For example, if the main benefit parties receive from including the membership is legitimacy, even for a limited time (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021), then understanding if certain outcomes such as intra-party division or drastic policy change might limit the legitimacy offered by more open procedures, will significantly further leadership selection scholarship. Moreover, this type of research might also help to further explain Wauters and Kern's (2021) findings that voters are not encouraged to join or vote for the party with inclusive reforms, nor do they increase trust in the party. Finally, Close, Kelbell and van Haute's (2017) conclusions concerning preferences for candidate selection hold that disaffected and critical citizens prefer different methods of selection. Thus, future research concerning the trade-offs of inclusive leadership selection might also follow this pattern and include measures of internal and external efficacy to determine if differences in attitudes towards democratic satisfaction are detected. This would offer a more holistic view of preferences for intra-party democracy. All in all, fully understanding the effects of the trade-offs that come with inclusive leadership

selections will surely contribute to intra-party politics and party politics literature more widely.

Contributions and implications

Even with these limitations, this research makes novel, interesting contributions that I propose further the party leadership selection literature. First, the data set constructed for use in the first empirical chapter is the first to my knowledge that organises parties' introduction of OMOV leadership selection by party system type. This will enable scholars of party leadership selection to study numerous unexplored variables that will add to our understanding of this phenomenon, particularly in the context of party competition. Moreover, this research is the first to my knowledge that specifically assesses voters' perceptions of representation specifically by the current leader of the party they support. Additionally, the experimental research design of the third chapter allows for a more definitive answer on whether a direct approach to internal democracy might reduce political disaffection, specifically where leadership selection is concerned.

In its entirety, this thesis holds important implications for party behaviour. Parties benefit from manipulating the party organisational structure by introducing OMOV leadership contests via increased legitimacy (Cozza and Somer-Topcu, 2021). This research explores an additional scenario not yet explored by current scholarship where elites might seek this and is corroborated by the findings. This thesis therefore supports the notion that the introduction of this type of inclusivity is largely a top-down reform (Wauters, 2013). I hereby contribute to the academic discussion on why party elites willingly redistribute their power despite the evidence pointing to the likelihood of negative consequences for the party.

Moreover, this thesis shows that party outcomes do influence one's perception of feeling represented specifically by the leader of their party. This carries implications for both party leadership selection reform and for representative democracy more widely. OMOV leadership contests complicate the internal accountability mechanism (Ennser-Jedenastik and Müller, 2015). Where leaders were once only accountable to a small group of party elites, they are now accountable to a much larger group that likely encompasses all levels of party actors (Katz, 2022). While this group may share an overall goal for the party that may represent a different or competing goal from other intra-party groups, they may differ themselves regarding other preferences. Preference priorities then become important. Research shows that principles affect actors' behaviour according to which principal is more influential in the re-election process (Carey, 2007). According to this logic, how difficult it is for a leader to remain focused on competence, and therefore representation of the parties' supporters, will become more difficult with an increased number of principles whose preferences may not align. This is then further convoluted by the potential outside influences that come with inclusive selection procedures (Rahat and Shapira, 2017). While membership selectorates may be easier to manipulate due to the individualistic nature of voting, it is easier for a leader to provide more immediate benefits to an exclusive selectorate in return for their support. Leaders can also more likely decide who holds the positions of power in an exclusive selectorate (Ennser-Jedenastik and Müller, 2015). Conversely, it is unreasonable for them to personally vet every single member that joins the party. Thus, representing party supporters through competence may be a more challenging task for a leader chosen by a more inclusive selectorate, should the majority faction prioritise different goals. The dynamics of OMOV leadership selections then have the potential to impact a leader representing their supporters.

As parties become increasingly leader-centric (Schumacher and Giger, 2017) and leaders themselves hold great influence (McAllister, 1996; Mughan, 2000; Garzia, 2017), this research is certainly timely. The representational connotations that come with OMOV leadership selections complicating the internal accountability mechanism (Ennser-Jedenastik and Müller, 2015) will grow in significance in tandem with the power of party leaders. For example, ordinary members may have a different view on how the party might tackle issues, or how to prioritise than perhaps a professional bureaucrat or pollster with more political experience would. A leader elected under OMOV rules would then be required to confront their motivations for their decision-making. Do they seek to contribute to long-term representation, or do they seek to appease their base for continued support in their tenure in the shorter term?

The party organisation enables parties to solve collective action problems (Cox and McCubbins, 1993). Changing the organisational boundaries of the party – such as reforming the leadership selectorate – can then enhance or interfere with parties' ability to overcome this dilemma. Without selective benefits, it becomes more difficult for a larger group to maintain organised towards achieving the shared goal as individual interests become more attractive (Olsen, 1965). When parties reduce the value of voting rights in leadership elections by minimising the requirements (ordinary members can participate), a larger selectorate is produced without the payoff of a selective benefit and thus, it becomes easier for longer term goals to be overshadowed or lost by those therein focusing on immediate payoffs. While parties may use OMOV leadership selections as means of solving issues in the present term, the mechanics of this type of reform can ultimately sacrifice the parties' representational abilities in the long-term, in favour of short-lived legitimacy. Parties might then be prudent in conducting a cost-benefit analysis when attempting to solve an issue by introducing this type of reform. Is the issue at hand more detrimental to their ability to solve collective action problems, and

therefore properly function as a representative mechanism, than the risk that OMOV leadership selections pose to those same abilities? While voters hold positive perceptions of inclusivity at the party level and agree that this reflects how leadership selection should work, the chances of these reforms alone increasing satisfaction with democracy are unlikely.

Thus, affording ordinary members the power of participating in leadership selections can potentially hold negative consequences for perceptions of feeling represented by the party leader. With increasing power and influence, it is not illogical to assume leaders be motivated to act in ways that protects their tenure (Downs, 1957). Reform in the name of increased representation then, is not guaranteed to achieve its aims and may not contribute to increased disaffection in the longer term. Moreover, that feeling represented by the leader of the party one votes for is positively associated with increased democratic satisfaction further suggests that for these reasons, inclusive leadership selection reform alone, may not be the most appropriate solution for political disaffection.

Finally, the findings of this research prompt me to offer the view scholarship should not assume that voter attitudes towards the intra-party level translate to the system level and vice versa. Voters support the notion that leaders should be chosen in a way that aligns with democratic norms. This kind of reform is not associated with democratic satisfaction, however. This runs contrary to current scholarship pertaining to candidate selection (Close *et al*., 2017; Shomer *et al*., 2016). I therefore suggest that attitudes towards different types of intra-party democracy should be treated differently in the relevant research. In this vein, though not an explicit aim of this project, this research demonstrates that overall perceptions of intra-party division are positively associated with satisfaction with democracy. To my knowledge, scholarship has

not yet explicitly tested this[12]. This is surprising considering the importance of cohesion for party functioning and the abundant research that explores intra-party division and the manifold consequences it holds for political attitudes, governing and party success (Greene and Haber, 2015; Haber, 2015; Laver, 2003; Lehrer and Lin, 2020; Lin and Lehrer, 2021). This further implies that attitudes at the party level should not automatically be generalised to the system level.

Concerning the outcomes of leadership selection specifically, in line with expectation, this research shows that increased agreement between the leader and party supporters and MPs encourages support for leadership selection reform. Whether or not the new leader agrees with party activists or not does not appear to be important for voters. These findings suggest that should the party seek a positive public image from implementing these reforms beyond the immediate term, the leader should focus on seeking the support of supporters and MPs. Indeed, the party's ability to competently deal with the issues of the day will in turn be influenced by any bargaining that may be necessary here. On the other hand, where democratic satisfaction with the wider system is concerned, voters seek heterogeneity in the views of MPs compared to the leader. While significance is not achieved for agreement levels between the party leader and party supporters and activists, the direction of these coefficients is also negative. Taken together with previous literature on the topic, it appears that intra-party cohesion encourages positive attitudes at the party level, whereas disagreement encourages democratic satisfaction. It is therefore unlikely that introducing more inclusive leadership selection reforms alone will fully appease voters of a party. Normative perceptions of internal democracy conflict with outcomes that influence democratic satisfaction. Indeed,

[12] Leiter and Clark (2015) include intra-party division in a cumulative character-valence measure, together with issues of competence and scandal. Their results show that lower levels of government character-valence compared to opposition parties are associated with decreased satisfaction with democracy.

considering this inference, parties may struggle to ever appease voters fully, despite the crucial addition of their proper functioning to representative democracy.

This is not to say that parties should never introduce OMOV leadership selection processes, however. The outcomes of the contest also matter. Indeed, a wider selectorate is an example of an (albeit complex) accountability mechanism that ensures the leader acts in the best interest of the party and can therefore be an important factor in parties' role in solving collective action problems. This research demonstrates that democratic satisfaction is associated with decreased agreement between the leader and MPs, and thus, a selection mechanism that decreases the power of MPs may indeed be helpful for voters' perceptions of parties as representative mechanisms. Yet, disagreement overall elicits negative perceptions of competence (Greene and Haber, Lehrer and Lin, 2020: Lin and Lehrer, 2021). Moreover, this thesis also shows that competence is associated with feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports. This in turn, conflicts with the findings here that division overall increases democratic satisfaction and is further evidence that parties walk a fine line between appeasing voters' perception of them as an organisation, and their perceptions of parties as representative mechanisms within the wider system. Taken together, these findings present a high bar for parties to achieve to reduce disaffection. Indeed, not achieving these goals played a significant role in Jeremy Corbyn's downfall where division between him and the party MPs was present (Pemberton and Whickham-Jones, 2015), but competence was also not achieved on his part (Goes, 2020).

Thus, parties should implement inclusive leadership selection rules with caution, and perhaps ensure other internal mechanisms that increases the parties' ability to act competently are in place. For example, selective benefits for MPs will play a role in a leader's negotiations when differences must be set aside. Moreover, additional organisational groups that acts as checks and balances to

the leader's power, may aid in prompting a leader to compromise other goals where competence is necessary. Thus, though inclusive selectorates can hinder parties' ability to solve collective action problems, the logic of collective action might also help the party balance the positive image of inclusive leadership selection rules, the additional representation that comes with disagreement between a leader and MPs, and the resulting perception of incompetence at the party level. If the party organisation allows for disagreement to be set aside when competence is required, the negative consequences of inclusive leadership selection for the party could be minimised. Without additional support from the party organisation, however, inclusive leadership selections alone may hinder perceptions of competence. Voters normatively think leadership selection should foster increased participation despite the consequences. Yet, democratic satisfaction is not associated with increased internal participation. These competing preferences mean parties must tread carefully if they use reform as a tool in fulfilling their representative function within the system and reducing disaffection.

Whether it is possible for parties to find this balance amid a political environment so heavily focused on party leaders is beyond the scope of this research. It is evident however, that this is a contemporary problem that parties face. For example, Kier Starmer's Labour party, Jeremy Corbyn's successor, has been shrouded in the same ambiguity but has also focused on projecting competence, while also bridging factions (McDaniel, 2023). The party under different leadership has not found the aforementioned balance. Perhaps this is too arduous a task for parties to achieve.

This research clarifies that party outcomes are associated with one feeling represented by the party leader, and that this type of representation is important for democratic satisfaction. Thus, while party symbols are more enduring, how well these are represented will change from one leader to the next (Blais, 2013). Parties must be careful not to become too leader-centric amid

a leader orientated political environment, unless that leader can achieve these competing perceptions simultaneously. Inclusive leadership selection should therefore be supplemented by mechanisms that allows for competence amid division when attempting to solve problems such as elite polarisation for example. The party still matters, and it should not be compromised at the whims of an all-powerful leader, abandoning the bigger picture to appease fickle voters in the short-term.

Appendix A

Table A 1 Coding of control variables

Variable name	**Survey Question**	**Coding**
Age	How old are you?	1 = 20 years or younger 2 = 21 – 31 years 3 = 31 – 40 years 4 = 41 – 50 years 5 = 51 – 60 years 6 = 61 years and older
Gender	What is your gender?	1 = Female 0 = Not Female
Ethnicity	Do you identify with any ethnic minority group?	1 = Yes 0 = No
Disability	Do you consider yourself to have a disability, sensory impairment, chronic health condition or learning disability/difficulty which has a substantial and long-term impact on your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?	1 = Yes 0 = No
Income	Which of the following best represents the total income of your household from all sources before tax – including benefits, savings and so on?	0 = under £5,200 1 = £5,200 - £15,999 2 = £15,600 - £25,999 3 = £26,000 - £36,399 4 = £36,400 - £46,799 5 = £46,800 - $74,999 6 = £75,000 - £149,999 7 = £150,000 or more

Table A 2 Ordinal logistic regression results for effects on feeling represented by the party leader

	Dependent variable:
	Party leader representation
Competence	1.500***
	(0.057)
Ideological congruence	-0.077***
	(0.023)
Average division	-0.059**
	(0.020)
Age	0.072*
	(0.029)
Female	-0.046
	(0.078)
Income	-0.017
	(0.024)
Disability	-0.245
	(0.126)
Ethnicity	-0.006
	(0.094)
Left-right values	0.057*
	(0.024)
Vote_Conservative	0.086
	(0.113)
Most important issue_Covid-19	0.235**
	(0.080)
Observations	2,362
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table A 3 Ordinal logistic regression results for satisfaction with democracy

	Dependent variable:
	Satisfaction with democracy
Party leader representation	0.325***
	(0.044)
Competence	0.217***
	(0.057)
Ideological congruence	-0.011
	(0.023)
Average division	0.066***
	(0.020)
Age	-0.033
	(0.029)
Female	0.138*
	(0.079)
Income	0.008
	(0.024)
Disability	-0.309**
	(0.129)
Ethnicity	0.232**
	(0.095)
Left-right values	0.223***
	(0.024)
Vote_Conservative	1.323***
	(0.115)
Most important issue_Covid-19	0.331***
	(0.081)
Observations	2,358
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

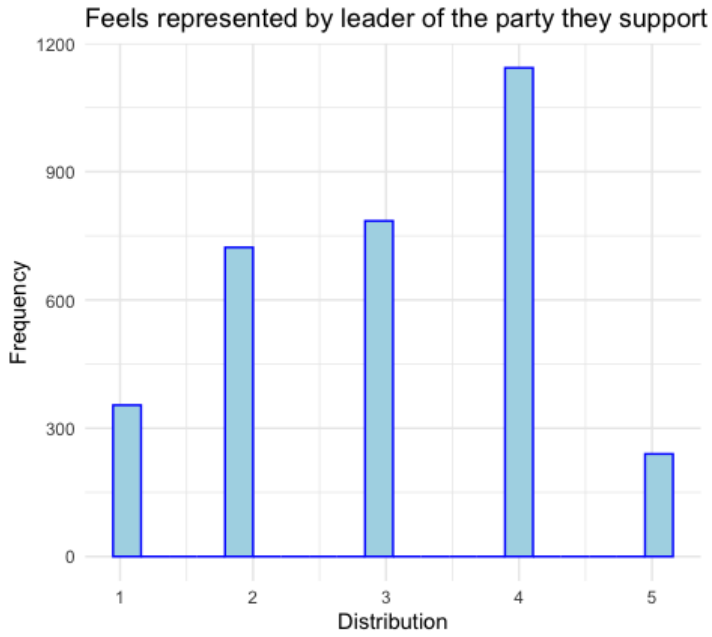

Figure A 1 Distribution of attitudes towards feeling represented by the leader (1 = Definitely not, 5 = Definitely yes)

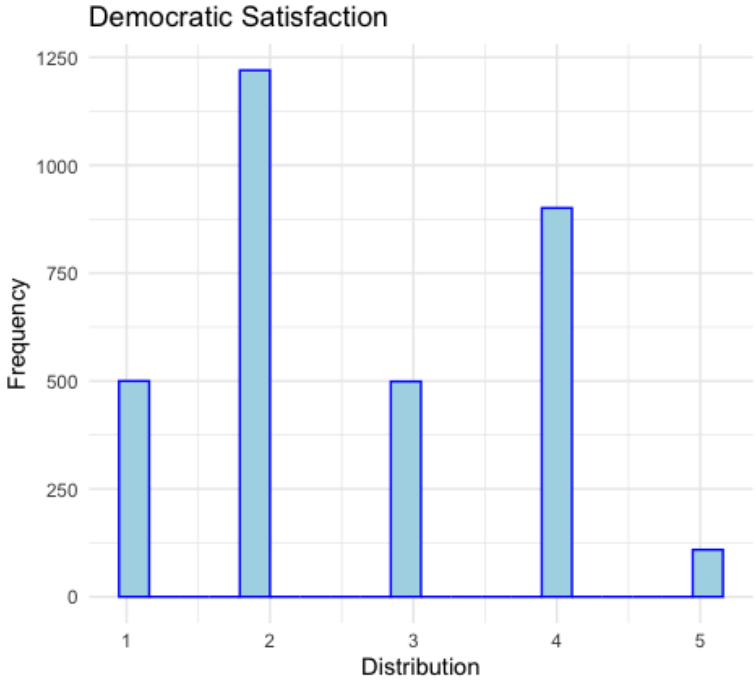

Figure A 2 Distibution of attitudes towards democratic satisfaction (1 = Completely dissatisfied, 5 = Completely satisfied)

Figures A.1 and A.2 shows the distribution of the dependent variables, feeling represented by the leader of the party one supports and democratic satisfaction, respectively. The distribution of feeling represented by the leader is skewed slightly to the right with the category of ‘probably yes’ to the question of ‘Do you feel represented by the leadership of the party you are most likely to vote for? being the most frequent answer. Regarding democratic satisfaction, most respondents were either somewhat dissatisfied or somewhat satisfied.

Table A 4 Interaction of vote choice and left-right values with effect of leadership representation on satisfaction with democracy

	Dependent variable:
	Satisfaction with democracy
Party leader representation	-0.012
	(0.116)
Competence	0.284***
	(0.074)
Ideological congruence	-0.003
	(0.030)
Average division	0.025
	(0.025)
Age	0.027
	(0.037)
Female	0.112
	(0.101)
Income	0.030
	(0.031)
Disability	-0.130
	(0.166)
Ethnicity	0.297*
	(0.119)
Left-right values	0.003
	(0.099)
Vote_Conservative	0.304
	(0.441)
Most important issue_Covid-19	0.335**
	(0.105)
Party leader representation x Vote_Conservaitve	0.315*
	(0.130)
Party leader representation x Left-right values	0.050

	(0.028)
Constant	-3.473***
	(0.509)
Observations	2,358
Log Likelihood	-1,236.999
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,503.998
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.01

Table A 5 Effect of competence, ideological congruence and unity on party leader representation without control variables

	Dependent variable:
	Leadership representation
Competence	1.521***
	(0.075)
Ideological congruence	-0.056*
	(0.025)
Average division	-0.031
	(0.022)
Constant	-5.478***
	(0.304)
Observations	2,716
Log Likelihood	-1,556.988
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,121.975
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Due to the circumstances in which the study was conducted and the likely prevalence of competence on political attitudes during this time compared to non-emergent times, I include simplified models for each dependent variable containing only the main independent variables as an easier test of the hypotheses. For example, it is possible that the Covid-19 pandemic reduced the importance of left-right congruence with parties compared to competence, particularly where they perceived the pandemic to be the most important issue of the day. Thus, it's possible that the importance of ideological congruence and intra-party division were masked in the model in 4.1. For those whom ideological congruence was still important for perceptions of representation during this time, likely depended on sociodemographic factors. For example, if one was older, or had a pre-existing condition that heightened their probability

of complications from Covid-19, the debate surrounding how the issue be best tackled was likely of importance in forming their political attitudes. Details of this debate such as mandatory vaccinations or the extent of lockdowns typically formed round left-right divides. Therefore, in removing the control variables that typically influence political attitudes, the results shown here also allow for the traditional influences of ideological congruence and division to be detected more easily, while still holding competence constant. In the above model, the effect of ideological congruence on feeling represented by the leader is statistically significant (-0.056, $p < 0.05$) with less perceived difference between oneself and the party making one more likely to feel represented by the party leader. No statistically significant relationship is found between intra-party division and feeling represented by the party leader.

To simplify the tests further, I conducted Pearson's r correlation tests between each independent variable and the dependent variable. Competence (0.53, $p < 0.001$), ideological congruence (-0.08, $p < 0.001$), average division (-0.05, $p < 0.05$). Here, a negative correlation is demonstrated between perceptions of division in the party and feeling represented by the party leader whereby less division in the party is associated with being more likely to feel represented by the leader of the party one intends to vote for.

Table A 6 Effect of party leader representation, competence, ideological congruence and unity on satisfaction with democracy without control variables

	Dependent variable:
	Satisfaction with democracy
Party leader representation	0.344***
	(0.049)
Competence	0.211**
	(0.064)
Ideological congruence	-0.051*
	(0.024)
Average division	0.083***
	(0.021)
Constant	-2.927***
	(0.244)
Observations	2,711
Log Likelihood	-1,649.001
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,308.002
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

With the control variables removed, the results shown in Table A6 demonstrate that ideological congruence is associated with satisfaction with democracy (-0.051, $p < 0.05$) meaning that the less ideological difference one perceives between themselves and the party they intend to vote for, the more satisfied with democracy they are likely to be. The results show that perceptions of intra-party division are also associated with democratic satisfaction (0.083, $p < 0.001$) meaning that when one perceives the party they intend to vote for as more internally divided across issues, they are more likely to be satisfied with democracy. Leadership representation and competence remain statistically significant as per the main models in Table 4.2.

Table A 7 Effect of competence on SWD without leadership representation

	Dependent variable:
	Satisfaction with democracy Log-odds (SE)
Competence	0.507***
	(0.064)
Ideological congruence	-0.012
	(0.029)
Average division	0.023
	(0.025)
Age	0.038
	(0.037)
Female	0.107
	(0.099)
Income	0.024
	(0.031)
Disability	-0.150
	(0.164)
Ethnicity	0.319**
	(0.117)
Left-right values	0.189***
	(0.030)
Vote_Conservative	1.297***
	(0.131)
Most important issue_Covid-19	0.353***
	(0.103)
Constant	-4.423***
	(0.363)
Observations	2,358

Log Likelihood	-1,262.551
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,549.101
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Taken together, the results in Table A7 and those presented in Model 2 in Table 4.2 show that feeling represented by the party leader mediates the effect of competence on democratic satisfaction. The coefficient for competence is smaller in Model 2 (Table 4.2) where leadership representation is included than it is in Table A7 where leadership representation is not included. By holding the effect of leadership representation constant, Model 2 (Table 4.2) shows the independent direct effect of competence on satisfaction with democracy. That the coefficient is larger when leadership representation is not included (Table A7) suggests that some of the effect of competence on satisfaction with democracy occurs via the effect of leadership representation. In other words, competence influences feeling represented by the party leader which in turn influences attitudes towards satisfaction with democracy.

Appendix B

Table B 1 Vignette 213

"The major political parties in the United Kingdom are considering reforms to their rules for selecting the party's leadership. The proposed reforms would **decrease** the number of people that participate in the final vote for the leadership. These reforms are predicted to **increase** leaders' policy agreements with the party's **supporters**."

Table B 2 Vignette 221

"The major political parties in the United Kingdom are considering reforms to their rules for selecting the party's leadership. The proposed reforms would **decrease** the number of people that participate in the final vote for the leadership. These reforms are predicted to **decrease** leaders' policy agreements with the party's **activists**."

Table B 3 Vignette 222

"The major political parties in the United Kingdom are considering reforms to their rules for selecting the party's leadership. The proposed reforms would **decrease** number of people that participate in the final vote for the leadership. These reforms are predicted to **decrease** leaders' policy agreements with the party's **MPs**."

Table B 4 Vignette 223

"The major political parties in the United Kingdom are considering reforms to their rules for selecting the party's leadership. The proposed reforms would **decrease** number of people that participate in the final vote for the leadership. These reforms are predicted to **decrease** leaders' policy agreements with the party's **supporters**."

Table B 5 Coding of sociodemographic control variables

Variable name	**Survey Question**	**Coding**
Age	How old are you?	1 = 20 years or younger 2 = 21 – 31 years 3 = 31 – 40 years 4 = 41 – 50 years 5 = 51 – 60 years 6 = 61 years and older
Gender	What is your gender?	1 = Female 0 = Not Female
Ethnicity	Do you identify with any ethnic minority group?	1 = Yes 0 = No
Disability	Do you consider yourself to have a disability, sensory impairment, chronic health condition or learning disability/difficulty which has a substantial and long-term impact on your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?	1 = Yes 0 = No
Income	Which of the following best represents the total income of your household from all sources before tax – including benefits, savings and so on?	0 = under £5,200 1 = £5,200 - £15,999 2 = £15,600 - £25,999 3 = £26,000 - £36,399 4 = £36,400 - £46,799 5 = £46,800 - $74,999 6 = £75,000 - £149,999 7 = £150,000 or more

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