

Why do parties open their leader
selection rules? Evidence from Western
Europe between party change and
personalisation of politics (1985-2015)

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Chapter 1 – Why studying party leaders and their selection rules?

'Leadership is a necessary phenomenon in every form of social life' (Michels, 1915, p. 240). If I had to synthetically answer the question reported in the chapter's title, I would probably rely on this quote by Robert Michels. Moreover, not only is (political) leadership important from a general viewpoint, but several crucial transformations have been also taking place in Western Europe in the last 30 years or so: from the increasing individualisation of society to the emergence and consolidation of post-materialist values, to the increasing pervasiveness of media in societal and political matter (see the discussion in Inglehart, 1977; Flinders, 2012, pp. 1–36; Bardi, Bartolini and Trechsel, 2014, p. 243; Tormey, 2015, pp. 59–82). While this is not the place to in-depth analyse these processes, one of their possible consequences might be related to another important phenomenon of contemporary politics: the rise of what has been wittily called 'personality politics' (Costa Lobo and Curtice, 2015). In other words, a growing importance of single persons at the expenses of the structures they might lead or to which they might be connected. One of the most major arenas where such phenomenon has taken place is the political party.

In this dissertation, I deal with a specific aspect of the growing importance of 'personalities': the determinants behind the openings of party leader selection rules in Western Europe between the mid-1980s and the mid-2010s. Before describing the plan of this dissertation, it might be useful to extensively answer the two-fold question in the chapter's title: why is it relevant to study party leaders and their selection rules? Section 1.1 directly tackles the importance of party leaders for contemporary politics. Then, Section 1.2 deals with the rules to select them, while Section 1.3 is devoted to the exploration of the plan of the dissertation.

1.1 The decline of parties and the centrality of leaders

As already argued in the introductory paragraphs, party leaders are more and more crucial from several viewpoints. This process is even more important if it is analysed vis-à-vis another vis-à-vis another phenomenon: the decline of political parties. Given the extremely high number of contributions dealing with a (real or alleged) decline of parties especially in Western Europe, in this subsection, I deal with just a handful of aspects of this second important process, and then I turn to party leaders.

To begin with, some critical readers might point out that parties have not been experiencing a real decline. At best, they would continue, it is mass parties that have been crumbling. Indeed,

as I extensively discuss in this dissertation, but especially in Section 4.2, Western European political parties have been losing members for some decades, both from an absolute and a relative viewpoint, as shown in a very recent – and rich – dataset released by Van Haute, Paulis and Serens (Van Haute and Paulis, 2016; Van Haute, Paulis and Sierens, 2017). Yet, this constitutes a sign of decline only if we assume that mass parties are the ‘reference point’ for contemporary political organisations. Indeed, a numerous membership constitutes one of the classical features of mass political parties, which have (had) a ‘thicker’ organisational extent (borrowing the categorisation by Gunther and Diamond 2003, p. 173). Therefore, our critical reader might continue, why should we argue that there is a decline for parties at large? It is not the party which is dying, but just the mass party (see also Tormey, 2015, p. 90).

Even if we consider a second possible aspect, the decline in parties’ responsiveness, only would mass parties be affected by this phenomenon. More specifically, the account by Mair (2009, 2013) argues that political parties are less and less prone to take into consideration members’, voters’, or citizens’ preferences¹. So, our sceptical reader would say, why should we be worried about this ‘responsiveness crisis’? If (some) parties are less and less responsive, then citizens, as ‘absolute sovereign’ in general elections (Manin, 1997, pp. 135–138), could take this element into account when casting the ballot. And, in any case, maybe we are just witnessing a new phase of the historical evolution of parties, especially with regards to responsiveness and responsibility (Bardi, Bartolini and Trechsel, 2014, pp. 237–243). So, there should be nothing to worry.

Nonetheless, I do believe this is a very optimistic account of the current state of the art of political parties in Western Europe. Even if I could share the ‘skeptical’ or ‘critical’ view sketched above, there are two final elements of party decline that should be considered with great attention: the decreasing autonomy of the party government, and the declining legitimacy of political parties. The former is a well-known issue for political scientists, for instance with regards to the increasing supranational constraints, like those imposed by EU institutions for Eurozone countries (Laffan, 2014; Rose, 2014). All in all, parties have less and less grip over the set of policies to choose from and over the precise policies to implement. And this is a crucial point to understand the decline of the party government (see considerations in Mair, 2013).

¹ Mair argues that a clear distinction should be made between parties in government and those outside the government: there are ‘parties which claim to represent but don’t govern and those which govern but no longer represent’ (Mair, 2009, p. 17). Nonetheless, it might be even possible that also parties who mainly (only) represent and do not govern might be affected by this ‘responsiveness’ crisis. Future empirical research might further explore this road.

Then, the latter phenomenon, the waning of parties' legitimacy is more interesting for this dissertation. Dealing with declining and dying roots with the society around them, showing less and less responsiveness towards (sectors of) such society, and less and less able to properly structure a (much) autonomous party government, political parties are also, maybe not surprising, less and less legitimate at the eyes of citizens².

What is of interest here is that if a specific *structure* is declining (in our case, the party in Western Europe), there is *someone* at the intra-party level who has, at the same time, particular prominence: the party leader. Clearly, the presence of central figures within political parties is not a new phenomenon for comparative politics: let us just think about Michels' (1915) classical account of intra-party oligarchies, or Duverger's partially similar discussion about the oligarchical tendencies of party leadership (1964, pp. 151–182).

What marks a clear difference with the past is that the structures which somewhat could balance the power of party leaders in the past (i.e., party organisations themselves) have become more and more similar to 'empty vessels', following the argument by Katz and Kolodny (1994). This is just a part of the discussion: party leaders have been left with a weaker and weaker organisation around them. The other side of the coin is understanding whether party leaders themselves have become more and more central to democratic politics. Enter the personalisation of politics, a crucial theme in this dissertation.

This phenomenon is extensively analysed and discussed in different parts of this work (e.g., see Sections 2.3, 4.3, 4.4, and 5.4), but some crucial points can be already anticipated here: first, the personalisation of politics is a very complex phenomenon, made of several transformations. For instance, the increasing centrality of leaders in electoral campaigns and general elections, the growing power of leaders within political parties, the stronger and stronger grip of Prime Ministers within governments, and the like.

Second, being a very complex phenomenon, the personalisation of politics has been analysed from various points of view³, and some authors have even coined a new – and also contested – concept, the presidentialisation of politics, to describe the rise of leaders in contemporary democratic politics (Poguntke and Webb, 2005a). One of the consequences of this theoretical – and also empirical – fragmentation has been the absence of a cross-country and diachronic study

² See, for instance, Eurobarometer's data available at <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFronOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Archive/index>.

³ E.g., see the different accounts in Blondel and Thiébault (2010), Balmas *et al.* (2014), and Musella (2018)

tackling the personalisation of politics at the party level – which is one of the areas where alleged transformations reinforcing the role and the power of leaders should have happened.

Maybe, the renewed interest towards the personalisation of politics happening in the past few years has also been caused by this lack of comparable data in a crucial field of research like intra-party politics. Let us just briefly mention the works quoted in a review article by Costa Lobo (2017), the analyses, based on the existence of ‘leadership-dominated’ parties, by Schumacher, De Vries and Vis (2013) and Schumacher and Giger (2017), and the book by Musella (2018) on the personalisation of political parties itself⁴. Last, but not least, to have in-depth and comparable data on the personalisation of politics in Western Europe in the past three decades, I have devised, along with Nicola Martocchia Diodati and Luca Verzichelli, the Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017). In this expert survey, we have asked country experts questions related to several aspects of the personalisation of politics, including the party-related one. Starting from Chapter 4, I discuss the importance of this expert survey for this dissertation.

All in all, I would like to draw the reader’s attention on a crucial point: despite time- and country-related differences, in the past few years, party leaders have become more and more central objects of study. This does not necessarily mean that party structures have become *entirely* irrelevant⁵, but that party leaders have transformed into powerful and central actors for the comparative political scholarship.

This section has provided a – necessarily – short but hopefully convincing answer to the first sub-question of this chapter: why should we focus on party leaders? Then, the second sub-question awaits: why should we study party leader selection rules? The next section tries answering it.

⁴ From a partially different viewpoint, even data collected for the Political Party Database Project (PPDB) (Poguntke, Scarrow and Webb, 2016a, 2016b) and presented in a recently published book (Scarrow, Webb and Poguntke, 2017) include some questions on party leaders’ power in drafting party manifestos and the level of intra-party leader accountability.

⁵ Some authors would even argue that *some* parts of the party have become *more* powerful (e.g., see data collected by the PPDB project in Poguntke, Scarrow and Webb, 2016), albeit parties themselves are less and less legitimate (Ignazi, 2014).

1.2 The importance of party leader selection rules

Addressing the question on why devoting some attention to party leader selection rules requires a multi-faceted answer. A first reason is connected to the increasing centrality of party leaders, possibly at the expenses of parties themselves. Indeed, the previous section has shown that two crucial processes have been intertwined in the past few decades. On the one hand, the demise of political parties and, on the other hand, the growing importance of party leaders. The first process is evident even if we do not see the process from a mass-party viewpoint: in other words, even assuming that contemporary political parties are very different from mass parties, there are some evident signs of decline that affect political formations at large (like their shrinking policy-making and governmental autonomy, the decrease in their legitimacy, and so forth).

These are signs of decline that constitute severe problems for political formations even if we accept that contemporary political parties are less strong and with fewer roots within society than mass parties of the past. The second process briefly touched in the previous section is the rise in the importance of party leaders. So, understanding the rules (and their determinants) governing the selection of more and more crucial actors (party leaders), who also operate in less and less central organisations (parties) is a task worth performing. *Mutatis mutandis*, we can draw a comparison with candidate selection rules. One of the reasons why several scholars investigate the modes of selection of parties' candidates for general elections⁶ is that these people, once elected and having become MPs, are crucial actors in the parliamentary arena. Similarly, party leaders, as pivotal actors from many viewpoints, bring about the necessity to study the way in which they are selected, and also the determinants of these modes of selection.

A second reason why it is important to study party leader selection rules is that, while we have certain knowledge on the precise rules presiding over party leader selection, we have a substantially less clear picture of the determinants of openings of these rules⁷. At this point, a counterargument would be that maybe openings of party leader selection rules are not a very diffuse phenomenon. Why should we study them? The answers to this critique are simple: first of all, in the past few decades, more and more parties have opened the rules to select their leaders, allowing a potentially wider set of people to have a say in the selection of this organ (e.g.,

⁶ Two excellent pieces of research serving as an introduction to this field of research are surely the books by Gallagher and Marsh (1988) and by Hazan and Rahat (2010).

⁷ This is extensively analysed in Chapter 2.

see Cross and Pilet, 2014). Several reasons might be connected to the decisions to intervene in the party leader selection area. I would argue, partly in line with Gauja (2016), that there might be the necessity to show to members and the electorate at large that some messages (or shocks⁸), be them internal or external, have been 'heard' within the party, thus showing party organisations are not completely impermeable and unreformable institutions. Secondly, a substantial number of openings of party leader selection rules has involved the empowerment of party members or even of party sympathisers or voters (as shown in Chapters 2 and 3). So, we are dealing with an important intra-party phenomenon.

A third reason behind the focus on party leader selection rules directly tackles the alleged determinants behind their opening. This dissertation revolves around the idea that two areas of research are of great importance to understand why parties open the rules to select their leaders. I am referring to party change and the personalisation of politics. Concerning the latter one, I argue that the personalisation of politics – for instance concerning the influence of party leaders in general elections or the control of party organisations by their leaders – are important elements one should consider to properly tackle the determinants of openings of party leader selection rules. Moreover, I also put forward a series of hypotheses, related to the party change framework, connecting some alleged determinants of changes within parties (e.g., electoral defeats or the organisational contagion) to the openings of party leader selection rules. In other words, studying the rules to select the top party heads – and their determinants – is also useful to bring together two important frameworks, like the party change and the personalisation of politics ones, and allow for potentially fertile contaminations between them.

A fourth and final reason is connected to the consequences that more open party leader selection rules might have within and outside political parties. According to Marsh (1993a), more open selection rules might have consequences for the features of the elected leaders, for parties' cohesion, and for parties' electoral fortunes. But the possible influence of more open party leader selection rules goes beyond these three areas. To begin with, Kenig (2009b) and Kenig, Rahat and Tuttnauer (2015) discuss the proposition that more open party leader selection rules might bring about a higher competition in party leadership races. Then, Bernardi, Sandri and Seddone (2017) analyse members' view on their membership and intra-party activism within the Italian Democratic Party (which is one of the Western European parties with the widest party leader selectorate⁹). More on membership, Carty and Blake (1999) analyse the possible effect of more open leader selection rules on Canadian parties' membership figures, and Wauters (2015),

⁸ On this specific point, see Section 3.1.

⁹ On party leaders' selectorate, see the discussion in Section 3.2.

analysing the selection by members of party leaders in Belgium, Israel, and Canada, focuses on participation rates. From a more general viewpoint, Lisi (2010), in his analysis of the openings of leader selection rules of Portuguese parties, tackles the effect that such processes might have on – say – the change in the internal distribution of power within parties, modifications in parties’ policy proposals, and so forth.

Despite this rich and thriving literature, there are three consequences of the adoption of more open party leader selection rules that have been (partially or totally) overlooked: the representation styles of party leaders, the change in the responsiveness and responsibility of party leaders, and, finally, the legitimacy of political parties. In the concluding chapter of this dissertation, I expand the discussion on these three consequences, which could be interesting from several viewpoints.

So, the importance of studying party leader selection rules goes well beyond the mere understanding of an important intra-party process (despite being a respectable aim in itself). Several consequences, both internal and external to political parties, are brought about by the adoption of more open party leader selection rules. Now, before delving deeper into the dissertation, the final section of this chapter briefly discusses the contents of each chapter of this work.

1.3 Plan of the dissertation

In this final section, I present the central theme and arguments around which each chapter of this work revolves, to give the reader a possibly useful reading guide. In Chapter 2, I deal with the presentation of what the scientific literature has produced so far on party leader selection rules and its determinants, by focusing, among other things, on the possible importance of the personalisation of politics and the party change framework.

Chapter 3 focuses on the presentation of the research design. In this chapter, I put forward the research question and the general framework of analysis. I investigate why parties open their leader selectorate from a more general viewpoint (thus considering all openings as equal), and why parties adopt a specific selectorate for the party leader selection. While most comparative analyses have merely focused on the former, this dissertation also focuses on the latter, thus allowing for a more detailed explanation of this phenomenon. Furthermore, the general framework of analysis of this work is based on a combination of insights coming from the party change literature, from the party leader selection literature, on an original implementation of factors related to the personalisation of politics, and, when necessary, on the original devising of

specific factors and specific variables' operationalization. Then, in Chapter 3, I also deal with my dependent variable: I analyse the existing operationalizations of the selectorate, discuss their strengths and weaknesses, and present my operationalization of the concept. Finally, I put forward the original dataset I have built by collecting data on party leader selectorates between 1985 and 2015 for the most important parties in ten Western European countries: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to the analysis of the possible factors behind the openings of party leader selectorates, and also to the related hypotheses and variables' operationalization. Chapter 4 focuses on intra-party factors, while Chapter 5 tackles the external determinants. More specifically, Chapter 4 deals with leadership changes, decline in parties' membership levels, and with two factors related to an original expert survey on the personalisation of politics in Western Europe I have contributed devising (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017). More specifically, given the possible importance of the personalisation of politics in fostering openings of party leader selectorates, and also given the lack of comparative and diachronic data on the topic, the expert survey has allowed me to test the impact of two personalisation-related factors: leaders' effect in general elections, and the control of party organisations by their leaders. Finally, Chapter 4 also investigates the possible impact of parties' ideological family on the openings of their leaders' selectorates.

While internal factors are at the centre of Chapter 4, Chapter 5 focuses on the external determinants of the phenomenon under study. More into detail, I deal with electoral setbacks (also including a novel hypothesis connecting party size and the effect of electoral setbacks on the openings of party leader selectorates); with the possible opposition status of political parties; with the 'contagion' effect (that is, an imitative pattern of opening of party leader selectorates triggered by a previous opening by another party in the same system); and, finally, with a general effect of the personalisation of politics. By recurring to the already-mentioned expert survey on the personalisation of politics, Chapter 5 includes a discussion about the possible influence on the openings of leader selectorates of an increase in the impact of the personalisation of politics in a given party system.

After having presented the possible determinants behind the openings of party leader selectorates in Western Europe, Chapter 6 is devoted to the empirical analysis. More into detail, I analyse the determinants of general openings of party leader selectorates (where all openings are treated as equal); then, I put forward the analysis of the determinants of the adoption of specific selectorates (where openings are ordered on an inclusiveness/exclusiveness continuum). Dealing

with a time-series cross-sectional analysis, a random-intercept logistic regression and a random-intercept ordered logistic regression are implemented.

Finally, Chapter 7 connects the findings emerging in Chapter 6 with the three broader consequences of the adoption of more open party leader selection rules discussed in the previous section of this chapter: possible changes in leaders' representation styles, then the imaginable modification of the responsiveness and responsibility of party leaders, and, finally, the effect on the legitimacy of political parties.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical starting points

Despite the growing academic interest towards party leader selection rules, the number of contributions directly focusing on their determinants is quite limited. Maybe, to have a more encompassing view of these factors – and also of the process of openings of party leader selection rules – we need to widen our scope of analysis, by including other strands of research, like the ones dealing with party change, or with the personalisation of politics. In this chapter, I set out the theoretical background of this dissertation. In other words, in this chapter, I aim at answering the following question: what do we already know about the changes, and the openings¹⁰, in party leader selection rules in Western European countries? The answers to this question pave the ground for the subsequent chapters, where I present the dependent variable, my hypotheses, the data I work with, and the empirical analysis.

This chapter is organised as follows: in the first section, I tackle a mostly neglected but necessary starting point to analyse changes in party leader selection rules: the party change framework. Then, in the second section, the analysis of early and more recent works more connected to party leader selection rules is put forward. The third section, instead, deals with even more systematic and focused analyses of the changes (openings) in party leader selection rules. Finally, in the fourth section, I take into consideration a supposedly significant but somewhat widely speculative determinant of changes (openings) in party leader selection rules: the personalisation of politics.

2.1 Party change and party leader selection rules

Party change (in the broadest sense) is any variation, alteration or modification in how parties are organized, what human and material resources they draw upon, what they stand for and what they do [...] Our interest is in explaining party change that comes directly from a group decision or from action taken by a person authorized to act for the party in that sphere. Examples are changes in party rules, structures, policies' (Harmel and Janda, 1994a, p. 275).

¹⁰ In this chapter, I use the concepts of 'changes in party leader selection rules', 'openings' of such rules, and 'democratisation' of such rules as done in the pieces of work I comment. All of them are supposed to have a similar meaning, although it is possible to trace some fundamental differences among them, as shown in the subsequent Chapter 3. For this chapter, these three concepts can be considered as synonymous.

This definition of party change fits well with the topic of this dissertation. Indeed, changes, and openings, in how party leaders are selected deal with some of the most important party rules, namely, those concerning the selection of the top official of a party.

As a consequence, because the theoretical and empirical party change framework constitutes the starting point from which the analysis in this dissertation departs, this section has started with a quotation from the seminal contribution by Robert Harmel and Kenneth Janda.

The party change framework is the result of an effort encompassing more than ten years of academic production. The book *Political Parties: A Cross-National Survey* (Janda, 1980) directly deals with party leader selection rules in a broad number of political parties all over the world in the 1950s, early 1960s, and in 1978. Interestingly, these rules are not studied as a stand-alone concept or framework. On the contrary, the selection of the national leader is just one of the 8 'basic' variables included in the broader 'cluster' of the centralisation of power in political parties (Janda, 1980, pp. 108–117). Moreover, the book by Janda comprises eleven other 'clusters', and therefore we might ask ourselves why leader selection rules are not considered as a primary topic to investigate. In my view, the book by Janda, but also the party change framework in general, have a sort of 'holistic' view of political parties: party organisations are seen as complex structures, and a deep, complex, and fine-grained analysis is needed to analyse such structures. Therefore, party leader selection rules are just one of the elements to be considered from a broader viewpoint. This seems confirmed by Janda himself, in the introductory part of the book, which directly deals with party leader selection rules (Janda, 1980, p. xii):

[t]his work was intended to impose intellectual order upon the mass of facts about political parties [...] Thus, the conceptual framework offered herein is as important as the facts amassed under it. Indeed, the data that issue from this study are the joint products of the conceptual framework and the factual information that it interprets. For example, the specific procedure used by a party for selecting its national leader is simply a fact until it is interpreted in the context of a continuum of variation in party practice that suggests the centralisation of power within the party. Thus, we assign quantitative scores to each party for many "basic" variables (e.g., "selecting the national leader") that serve as indicators of a smaller number of broader concepts (e.g., "centralization of power") that are crucial to evaluating the character of political parties.' (text in italics in the original version).

A follow-up conundrum would, therefore, be related to understanding why party leader selection rules were not considered as important as today. My proposal to solve this puzzle has already been given in Chapter 1: just to reiterate it, the point is that, up to recent years, party

leaders (and political leaders in general) were not as important as today for democratic politics and, therefore, for comparative political analysis.

In a subsequent book, Harmel and Janda (1982) directly deal with party change, and also with the 'centralisation of power' cluster, where party leader selection rules are located. In this contribution, the two authors underline that the ideology, cohesion, organisation, and decentralisation of the political parties included in their study can be explained by three sets of factors: individual-level ones (e.g. the features and the actions of political leaders), party-level ones (e.g. a party's ideology), and, finally, system-level factors. These latter factors can, in turn, be physical (like the size of a country), socioeconomic (i.e. the degree of urbanisation of a polity), and, more crucially for this dissertation, political ones (e.g. the structure of party competition).

Two chapters of the Harmel and Janda's book are of interest here: firstly, the one where party organisational structure (also called 'party complexity') is causally connected to a series of factors (more noticeably, the electoral system and the degree of party competition). Secondly, the chapter linked to party decentralisation, which is thought to be influenced by some factors, such as the size of a country, the federal-unitary institutional setting or the federal-unitary nature of the system. Despite the presence of factors which are not (or are seldom) considered as drivers of changes in party leader selection rules (e.g. the degree of party competition or the electoral system), Harmel and Janda's book is extremely interesting because it is one of the first major contributions where the determinants of party change are extensively analysed.

A second valuable, albeit largely neglected, pioneering contribution for the party change framework is the paper by Janda (1990), which anticipates some of the themes later subsequently analysed by many scholars: the idea is that 'defeat is the mother of party change' (Janda, 1990, p. 6). This is not entirely new, Janda himself acknowledges the importance of previous works in this regard, like the ones by Mair (1983) and Panebianco (1988). Nonetheless, this paper is extremely relevant because it sets out some crucial elements that will become classical in later analyses of party change and of party leader selection rules. For instance, the idea that party change is 'asymmetrically' related to electoral changes: electorally successful parties rarely change, while the harder the electoral setback (either in terms of loss of votes or seats, or in terms of lack of control/participation in government), the more likely a change; furthermore, parties, possibly after an electoral setback, may imitate what other parties do in the same system. Apart from these propositions, Janda sets out some other possible independent variables, along with electoral setbacks and 'imitation strategies', that may explain party change: shifts in the political system (e.g. electoral systems), a party's institutionalisation, changes in party leadership. This is just the start of the development of a more complex framework of analysis, put forward in two

popular subsequent journal articles: the one by Harmel and Janda (1994a) and the one by Harmel *et al.* (1995).

Let us start with the article by Harmel and Janda published in 1994. Here, the two authors lengthily describe the architecture of their party change framework. The main argument is that party change can be driven by external or internal factors. Then, three general premises are put forward (Harmel and Janda, 1994a, pp. 265–266). Firstly, each party has a primary goal: maximising the votes; maximising the offices; advocating specific policies and (or) ideologies; fostering intra-party democracy¹¹. Secondly, a party experiences the strongest changes when an external shock hits it. This does not mean that *only* external shocks trigger party changes, but that the deepest changes are driven by something happening outside of the party. Thirdly, an external shock is a stimulus impacting the primary goal of a party. Different external shocks are related to different primary goals.

Moreover, two additional main points of their theory must be recalled: first, parties are conservative organisations, that do not change just for the sake of it and, second, party change is imposed on the party by its dominant coalition (Harmel and Janda, 1994a, pp. 261–262). Before delving deeper into the discussion, the reader may have noticed that there are clear resemblances with Panebianco's framework of analysis (1988). This is not an accident: Harmel and Janda themselves recognise such similarities (1994a, pp. 262–265), and one of the reasons they put forward to justify their systematisation of party change vis-à-vis Panebianco's scheme is convincing: external stimuli must be adequately and carefully devised (and analysed, I would add). Given they devote quite some space to this topic, this is why their framework of analysis is carefully considered in this chapter.

It has just been underlined that, in Harmel and Janda's framework, different party goals are related to different external stimuli. In other words, not all parties have the same aims, and even the stimuli to which they strongly respond to are different. In particular, Harmel and Janda connect the four 'ideal-types' of parties to four different kinds of external stimuli (1994a, pp. 269–271). Firstly, for parties mainly interested in obtaining votes in general elections, the clear external shock is an electoral failure, albeit the authors do not set precise thresholds to define a loss of votes as a 'failure'. Secondly, for those parties whose primary goal is obtaining seats in general elections, an external shock is losing executive positions, measured in the number of ministries or the percentage of cabinet positions lost. Thirdly, if a party wants to put forward specific policies or ideologies, a different type of external shock must be considered; specifically,

¹¹ This is also in line with other approaches in political science and comparative politics (e.g. see Riker, 1962; Strøm, 1990).

one that makes party members, activists and elites questioning the possibility to put forward the same policies or ideologies in the future. The authors make explicit reference to the fall of the Soviet Union for Communist parties or the reduction in nuclear weapons for Green parties. Finally, if the primary goal of a party is representing members' views (and therefore, they argue, fostering intra-party democracy), then an external shock is a profound societal change that brings members' view to be modified, or a sharp decline in party membership figures.

Nevertheless, in Harmel and Janda's framework, there are also non-external stimuli. In particular, two 'internal stimuli', or intra-party independent variables, are added: leadership change and the age of a party (1994a, pp. 266–267). This theory is quite complex, and it is carefully developed by the authors¹². It is tested in a subsequent contribution (Harmel *et al.*, 1995), which analyses party changes in six parties, three British ones¹³ and three German ones¹⁴, between 1950 and 1990. Here I am specifically interested in the hypotheses put forward by the authors. They are related to three distinct areas of research: electoral performance, leadership change, and shifts in a party's dominant faction. Specifically, the authors posit that party change is 'proximally preceded by poor electoral performance' (Harmel *et al.*, 1995, p. 3)¹⁵, and that a poor electoral performance has a wider impact on larger parties than on smaller ones – thus assuming, following Harmel and Janda (1994a), that bigger parties are more leaning towards the 'vote-seeking' primary goal category. Moreover, a change in a party's leader 'is proximally followed by party change' (Harmel *et al.*, 1995, p. 5), and this effect is stronger for more centralised parties, i.e. where party leaders have more power (Harmel *et al.*, 1995, p. 7), while, concerning the changes in a party's dominant faction, they are associated with party change (Harmel *et al.*, 1995, p. 8).

Surprisingly, the results of the empirical analysis seem not to confirm the fundamental role played by external factors, as previously argued by Harmel and Janda (1994a): electoral performance does indeed play a role, but the influence of changes in party leaders and a party's dominant faction should be carefully considered as well (Harmel *et al.*, 1995, p. 18). Similar conclusions are reached by Müller (1997) in his analysis of the Austrian SPÖ between the mid-

¹² More than 20 specific propositions are reported by the authors, here I have just reported the bulk of Harmel and Janda's theory.

¹³ The Conservative party, the Labour party, and the Liberal Party.

¹⁴ The German Christian Democratic Union (the CDU), the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (the SPD), and the Free Democratic Party (the FDP).

¹⁵ Where 'proximally' means two years before the year of the party change (Harmel *et al.*, 1995, pp. 20–21).

1940s and 1970: leadership change is a crucial factor to understand party change, while the role of electoral setbacks should be downplayed. On the contrary, a more reductionist approach concerning the effect of leadership change is put forward by Bille (1997) in his analysis of the Danish Social-Democratic Party. All in all, this matter clearly requires further empirical investigation.

There are a series of considerations that can be drawn from this analysis of the party change framework. This scheme is of paramount importance to analyse party leader selection rules, because it sets a clear, logical and coherent path through which empirical tests of the determinants of party change (and therefore of openings of party leader selection rules) can be performed¹⁶. Many subsequent works, dealing with party leader selection rules, widely use of this framework of analysis, either in an explicit or in an implicit way, as seen later on.

Nonetheless, the party change framework presents some issues that require further discussion as well: for instance, one crucial problem is how to understand which specific primary aim a party has. This is an important task to be performed if someone wants to empirically employ this section of the party change theory¹⁷. A second, albeit minor, problem is related to the identification of the dominant faction within a specific party in a particular period. A third issue is the 'balance of power' between internal and external factors: in the 1994 contribution,

¹⁶ A small digression is needed: the reader may have noticed the absence of references to another strand of the party change framework, the one connected to the study and the devising of existing and new party models (or party families). The classical references here are the works by Duverger (1964), Kirchheimer (1969), Panebianco (1988), Katz and Mair (1995, 2009), Carty (2004), and so forth. Useful rejoinders and more recent theorisations can be found in Krouwel (2012) and Lisi (2015). The reason for this lack of discussion is that these works analyse general models of party organisations, where the (lack of) changes in party leader selection rules – or, more generally speaking, these rules *per se* – are only a part of a more general framework of analysis. The presence, or the dominance, of a particular party model, instead of another one, is simply thought to bring about (or to be associated with) the existence of specific configurations of party leader selection rules. In other words, the general aim of these works is understanding why *some party organisational models* are more or less successful in specific countries or historical periods; on the contrary, the purpose of this dissertation is understanding *why the openings of party leader selection rules happen or not*. This is why the models mentioned in this footnote are not lengthily discussed in this work.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the strategies of the so-called 'niche parties', see Meguid (2008) and Adams, Ezrow and Leiter (2012).

Harmel and Janda seem to give more importance to the latter ones while, conversely, the 1995 article by Harmel *et al.* appears to attribute a higher rank to internal factors. In this section, but more importantly in the subsequent ones, the matter of the importance of internal vs external factors in driving changes in party leader selection rules is a central one. Moreover, another confirmation of the centrality of this debate is given by the fact that this is one of the starting points of a significant contribution: the recently published book by Anika Gauja on organisational reforms in Australia and the UK (2016).

The book of Gauja represents a very stimulating approach to party change: she analyses the reforms in four intra-party areas (membership, candidate selection, leader selection, policy-making) in six Australian and British parties¹⁸. Her analysis, relying on the framework by Barnea and Rahat (2007) is divided into two main steps: identifying the main drivers of the reform at different levels, and the alignment or de-alignment of such drivers, which can facilitate or hinder the reforms. Finally, she also considers the role of actors within the party in ‘manipulating’ the alignment/de-alignment of factors.

Focusing on the first step, three levels of analysis must be considered: firstly, the intra-party one, where the more important factors explaining party reform are the willingness to increase or give more power to party members, the necessity to take away power from intra-party groups, and the respect of the ideology and organisational tradition of the party. The second level of analysis is the ‘competitive’ one, namely the party system one: here, for Gauja, the most important drivers for reform are the possibility to obtain electoral benefits, the organisational contagion¹⁹, and the reaction to political scandals. The final level of analysis is the systemic one: reforms are made to cope with general societal trends, such as the decline in political ideologies or parties' membership, and the changes in political participation.

The book by Gauja is extremely helpful to consider for many reasons. To begin with, she puts forward the internal and external drivers for party reform (party change), in some cases with

¹⁸ In some specific parts of the book, a slightly wider comparison – which also includes the Social-Democratic parties of Germany and New Zealand – is put forward.

¹⁹ The ‘contagion effect’ is a well-known concept in party politics: according to Duverger (1964), left parties’ organisational structures would have been eventually imitated by other parties coming from different parts of the political spectrum; from the exactly opposite viewpoint, Epstein (1967) writes about a contagion from the right concerning the right parties’ renewed organisational and electoral structures. The concept is subsequently used and expanded by other authors, more noticeably Panebianco (1988) and, with a perspective which is closer to the one adopted in this dissertation, by Janda (1990), Cross and Blais (2012), and Pilet and Cross (2014b).

very compelling intuitions or operationalizations, that somewhat include the most important determinants the scholarship has devised so far (and are extensively analysed in this chapter). Secondly, she shows – either from an exclusively theoretical or also relying on her analysis – that some alleged crucial determinants of party change (and of changes in party leader selection rules), like party age, the personalisation of politics, or the ‘Americanization’ of politics, have a quite modest – if any – impact on the party reforms she analyses. This is a quite surprising result, and is extensively discussed in the fourth section of this chapter and in Chapters 4 and 5 as well. Moreover, Gauja's considerations must also be read in light of the facts that she does not exclusively analyse changes in party leader selection rules, and that she performs a qualitative, in-depth analysis on a small number of parties. Whether these conclusions also hold for party leader selection rules in a bigger number of Western European parties is something that requires a careful empirical analysis.

The party change framework is a valuable starting point for the analysis of party leader selection rules. Nonetheless, it is not the only strand of research that this dissertation considers: many works have more directly dealt with party leader selection rules. Given their non-systematic nature (most of such works analyse just one country, or more than one country but without a truly comparative perspective), I have decided to tackle them after having presented the more coherent and encompassing party change framework. Therefore, these works constitute the bulk of the next section.

2.2 The origins of the species: non-systematic studies on party leader selection rules

In this section, I deal with both earlier and more recent non-systematic works on party leader selection rules. In some cases, party leader selection rules only constitute a small portion of a wider framework of analysis. In other situations, just a single case or a limited number of cases of party leader selection rules are considered, often without a comparative or a diachronic perspective. Yet, it is worthy to devote some space to such studies, both because they have influenced more systematic analyses on party leader selection rules (that constitute the core of Section 2.3), and also because such non-systematic studies are related to my hypotheses and empirical analysis.

Tracing the roots of the scholarship devoted to the study of party leader selection rules is not an easy task. A good starting point could be an excerpt from Duverger's book on parties and party systems (1964, p. 135): ‘Officially the party leaders are almost always elected by the

members and given a fairly short period of office, in accordance with democratic rules'. Duverger himself recognises this is not always true, especially for Fascist parties and for those parties whose internal organisation resembles a 'disguised autocracy', like the Gaullist party at that time. Nonetheless, this signals that the selection of party leaders by the congress (assuming Duverger is not referring to direct leadership election by party members, which appears in Europe only in the early 1970s) is thought to be a sort of 'standard' procedure, notwithstanding all the possible exceptions. Duverger does not devote much space in his book to the analysis of party leader selection rules, and that is why we have to travel forward in time to find more substantial and organic analyses.

Indeed, I have already lengthily analysed the framework devised by Janda (1980, 1990), Harmel and Janda (1982, 1994a), and by Harmel *et al.* (1995): in those cases, party leadership selection rules constitute just one variable within a cluster of analysis (parties' centralisation of power). No specific hypotheses or assumptions on party leader selection rules are brought about in these contributions, but the data collected for these works signal a slight increase in scholars' interest towards party leader selection rules.

Going forward in this quest, two important events shape the analysis of the selection of party leaders at the end of 1980s and the beginning of 1990s: the publication of series of stand-alone contributions stemming from a Workshop held at the 1989 ECPR Joint Sessions in Paris, and the appearance of the books edited by Katz and Mair (1992, 1994) on party organisations in Europe between 1960 and 1990.

More specifically, after the above-mentioned ECPR Workshop, a series of journal articles are published between 1991 and 1993. In these contributions, the authors analyse the existing rules, the possible changes in such rules, the characteristics of the leadership races and the party leaders, and, finally, the consequences of rules' changes. Following a chronological order, the first contribution is the article by Müller and Meth-Cohn (1991) on party leader selection in Austria: the analysis focuses on leader selection rules in the three most important Austrian parties at that time: the Socialist Party of Austria (SPÖ), the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), and the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) between the end of the Second World War and the late 1980s. The authors start by analysing the 'democratisation' of party leader's 'selectorate'²⁰ in the SPÖ in 1967: in that year, a reform empowered the party congress with the power to ratify the choice of the party leadership made by the party executive, allegedly with the aim of giving more power to the regional branches of the party (Müller and Meth-Cohn, 1991, p. 42). It is also

²⁰ The selectorate is the group of people that elects the party leader. Its operationalization is extensively discussed in the next chapter.

worth noticing that in this article there is one of the first discussions of the ‘democratisation’ of party leadership selection rules, which the authors connect to the degree of inclusion of party members and activists in the selection of the party leader (Müller and Meth-Cohn, 1991, p. 55)²¹.

After this stand-alone contribution, the other articles from the ECPR Workshop are published in a special issue of the *European Journal of Political Research* in 1993. While some contributions do not directly tackle the reasons behind the (lack of) changes in party leader selection rules (Colomé and Lopez Nieto, 1993; Strøm, 1993; Thiebault, 1993), the remaining articles are of interest for this dissertation. To begin with, De Winter (1993) deals with party leader selection in Belgian parties: some of the conclusions of his work are that factional struggles and country-specific features (i.e. the necessity to manage post-electoral coalitions in ‘smoke-filled rooms’ without the possible disruptions caused by leaders elected by a wider electorate) may help to explain the (lack of) openings of party leader selection rules.

A different road is taken by Punnett (1993) who, analysing party leaders in the United Kingdom, concludes that three main reasons are behind the openings of the rules to select the party leader in the Labour party: an ideological conflict between more democracy-leaning activists and more ‘conservative’ cadres, a factional conflict between the more leftist and the more rightist factions within the party, and, finally, a modification in the composition of the parliamentary party; finally, Marsh’s analysis (1993b) considers other possible causes for the changes in party leader selection rules in the Irish Labour party: the dislike of the coalition governments by party activists and the example set by the British Labour party (which changed – and opened – its leader selection rules in 1981). It is very engaging to notice that a broad range of possible causes for the openings of party leader selection rules is considered by different authors, and that different weight is given to external and to internal factors: basically, up to now, there is not a single study that includes the same determinants (and that gives them the same importance) to explain the opening of the rules to select party leaders. This might be clearly

²¹ Interestingly, Müller and Meth-Cohn explicitly posit that the democratisation of the party leader’s electorate excludes the expansion of the right to select the party leader to party voters. In authors’ own words, ‘[t]urning to the actual practice of leadership selection, it is clear that the observation Duverger made almost forty years ago is still valid today [...] This is so even in the narrow definition of intra-party democracy in which the leadership selection process is deemed to be the more democratic the more it encourages the participation of members and activists (i.e., excluding the electorate as a whole), and to be the more oligarchical, the more party members and activists are excluded from leadership selection’ (Müller and Meth-Cohn, 1991, p. 55).

related to the fact that the analysis of party leader selection rules is a quite recent topic in comparative politics and political science.

A very partial exception, and only limited to a theoretical discussion, is the introductory part of the book by Punnett (1992) on the selection of party leaders in the United Kingdom. According to the author, the 'leader-selection method that a party uses at any particular time will be a product of broad historical, constitutional, organizational and ideological factors that have been modified by immediate practical considerations' (Punnett, 1992, p. 20): more specifically, younger parties, parties in a presidential system (US or France), parties in opposition²², parties with many members, and parties more linked to 'new politics' may have more open selection procedures. Unfortunately, the book does not further discuss the role of these determinants in a comparative perspective – and we should not be surprised, given Punnett's analysis focuses on British parties.

A further step towards a comparative analysis of Western European parties' leader selection rules – and, more generally speaking, of Western European party organisations – is the project led by Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, which results in two seminal contributions. The first one is the 1992 book (Katz and Mair, 1992) which collects data on party organisations in a wide number of Western European democracies between 1960 and 1990. This book deserves a brief mention because, for the first time, three decades of data on party leader selection rules for many Western European parties are collected and made available to researchers²³. This remarkable effort leads to the subsequent book, edited by Katz and Mair themselves (1994), which analyses the data presented in the previous contribution. The 1994 book is relevant for the aims of this dissertation for a number of reasons: not only does it include many country-specific analyses on

²² In a similar vein, Davis (1998, pp. 92-93-100), analysing the openings of party leader selection rules in the UK, posits that a factional struggle is at the base of the openings of the Labour party in the 1980s and in the Conservative party in 1990s, but such conflict is crucially fostered by electoral setbacks; conversely, in the German case a series of electoral setbacks alone are considered as important to trigger the short-lived change in party leader selection rules within the SPD in 1993 (Davis, 1998, pp. 120–121).

²³ Notice that Janda's data are available only for a more limited number of countries and years, and party leader selection rules only constitute a variable within a quite wider 'cluster' – as seen before. On the contrary, not only are Katz and Mair's data available for more countries and parties, but there is also more information available to researchers (in most cases information on who can put himself/herself as a candidate is available, along with the more common information on who can select the party leader).

who the party leader is and how he/she is selected, but the introductory chapter by Mair (1994) also prepares the ground for many subsequent contributions on party organizations and party leader selection rules. Indeed, this chapter starts by recalling and summarising the discussion by Katz and Mair (1993) on the three faces of party organizations (the Party on the Ground, or POG, the Party in Public Office, or PPO, and the Party in Central Office – PCO)²⁴: the first signs of shrinking membership figures for Western European parties, and the fact that party activists are increasingly ‘atypical’, non-representative of the party at large²⁵, may foster a reduced legitimacy for the PCO, and therefore also of the party leader (Katz and Mair, 1993, p. 615).

Alongside this trend, Mair explores the expanding selection power given to party members in the party leader selection process: ‘more and more parties now seem willing to allow the ordinary members a voice in the selection of party leaders’ (1994, p. 15). It is the first time that a significant contribution in comparative politics posits a ‘trend’ towards more open party leader selection rules can be detected in Western Europe. Such proposition is subsequently confirmed by Hazan (2002) and by Pilet and Cross (2014b). Mair also puts forward a tentative explanation for this trend: the necessity to take away power from ‘troublesome’ activists in favour of more docile and less organised rank-and-file: a ‘façade’ democratisation, in order to let the PPO and the PCO have more room for manoeuvre (Mair, 1994, p. 16)²⁶. Unfortunately, Mair does not further develop this point, and neither does he devote a lot of space to a wider analysis, for instance by tackling the role of declining party membership figures in fostering the opening of party leader selection rules²⁷.

²⁴ Unnecessary though it sounds, the Party on the Ground is made by party members – for parties with formal ‘mass’ membership (Katz and Mair, 1993, p. 597) - while the Party in Public Office consist of MPs and members of a government (Katz and Mair, 1993, p. 594), and, finally, the Party in Central Office corresponds to the ‘national executive committee or committees, and the central party staff or secretariat’ (Katz and Mair, 1993, pp. 598–599).

²⁵ On the differences one can expect to find among party activists, party members, and party voters, between party elites and party’s lower strata, and between party selectors and party voters, see Key (1956), Butler (1960), May (1972), Carey and Polga-Hecimovich (2006) and Martocchia Diodati and Marino (2017).

²⁶ A similar line of reasoning is subsequently put forward by Faucher and Treille (2003) in their analysis of the patterns of leadership selection in the British Labour party and in the French Socialist party between the early 1990s and early 2000s.

²⁷ It is Tan (1997) who directly analyses the relationship between changes in membership figures and parties’ changes in their organisational complexity and centralisation of power; let us recall

Nonetheless, Mair's analysis must be carefully considered for another reason: the attention devoted to the different faces of party organisations underlines that different party faces can have different fates. In other words, not only should we carefully consider the role of the party faces in analysing intra-party phenomena, including the modifications of party leader selection rules, but we should also bear in mind that a declining party membership (that is, a declining Party on the Ground) can go hand in hand with a rising Party in Public Office or, more importantly for this work, with an increasingly powerful Party in Central Office (viz. more powerful party leaders). The point here is not that parties are non-unitary actors: this has been a well-known proposition in comparative politics for many decades (Belloni and Beller, 1976; Laver and Benoit, 2003; Ceron, 2012). Rather, it is possible to separately consider the role of different party faces in trying to explain the openings of party leader selection rules. Indeed, while Katz and Mair's thesis (1993, 1995) is that of a more and more powerful PPO and a substantially declining PCO, in more recent years, many scholars have underlined that party leaders have become more and more central from the electoral, governmental, and party-related viewpoint, and this may be connected to party leader selection rules, as I show in Section 2.4 later in this chapter.

Going forward, one does not find substantial works on party leader selection rules for some years, with some notable exceptions. For instance, in the book by Davis (1998) on leadership selection in six Western countries (US, Canada, the UK, Germany, France, and Australia), the discussion on the determinants of changes in party leader selection rules is quite limited (see footnote 13); then, the articles by Carty and Blake (1999), Kenig (2009b), and Seddone and

Tan follows the framework devised by Robert Harmel and Kenneth Janda, and therefore party leader selection rules constitute a variable within the 'centralisation of power'. Nonetheless, to find an explicit link between changes in membership figures and party leader selection rules we have to travel towards the 2010s. Indeed, the well-known contribution by Van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke (2012, pp. 39–40), devoted to the analysis of the then-evident decline in party membership figures, underlines that the spread of more open procedures to select party leaders and candidates for general elections may be related to the changing membership patterns in Western European parties in the 1980s and 1990s and to the necessity to have more chances to get votes coming from a less encapsulated electorate. Then, Scarrow (2014) explicitly posits that declining membership figures may push parties to open their leader selection rules to make party membership more appealing for foreseeable future members or for existing ones. On the relationship between party membership decline and openings of leader selection rules, see also Wauters (2014) in the upcoming Section 2.3 and, for a detailed analysis, Section 4.2.

Venturino (2013) are totally devoted to the consequences of openings of party leader selection rules, while in the contribution by LeDuc (2001) only a brief point on the importance of electoral setbacks in fostering openings of party leader selection rules is brought about.

Nonetheless, in 2010, Marco Lisi publishes an article on the determinants of the ‘democratisation’ of party leader selection rules in Portuguese parties. This contribution is stimulating because it sets out a partly new framework of analysis²⁸. Three levels (or arenas) are thought to be crucial to analyse the openings of these rules: the political system one, the party system one, and the party organisation one (Lisi, 2010, pp. 129–132). More specifically, at the political system level, three determinants are considered: firstly, the necessity to increase a party’s legitimacy and to introduce collective incentives, so as to increase satisfaction with political parties and to raise participation in intra-party decision-making processes; then, the presidentialisation of politics (Poguntke and Webb, 2005a), in the sense that the aim is to foster leader-oriented electoral campaigns; finally, the need for increase intra-party democracy so as to give more power to party members.

Going downwards, at the party system level, two factors are included: firstly, the necessity to reshuffle party policies towards party voters and members, to: bring about a policy change, make governments more efficient, and increase party leaders' responsiveness. Secondly, the willingness to fight an electoral setback to have more chances of a future electoral success.

Finally, at the party organizational level, we find, firstly, the necessity both to increase leaders’ autonomy, especially in a cartel party framework (Katz and Mair, 1995), and to reduce the power of middle-level activists, so as to foster power centralisation and the de-mobilisation of such activists, as previously seen in Mair (1994); secondly, Lisi considers the necessity to decrease party fragmentation, thus limiting intra-party conflicts. Some considerations can be easily drawn. First of all, it is very hard to test the influence of some specific factors (e.g. the necessity to increase intra-party democracy by empowering party members) in a more-than-small number of parties, given the very in-depth analyses that would be needed. Secondly, some determinants seem to work in opposite direction: how to reconcile the presidentialisation of politics (which shall include an increase in leaders' power and/or autonomy) with both the factor aiming at increasing the leader's autonomy and reducing the power of middle level activists, and also with the factor according to which the openings of party leader selection rules may

²⁸ The framework partly resembles that of Barnea and Rahat (2007), which I have decided not to extensively analyse here because it specifically deals with changes (openings) in *candidate selection* rules. Nonetheless, when specific reference is made to some determinants of openings of party leader selection rules that resemble those in Barnea and Rahat, it is clearly acknowledged.

empower party members? Are we sure that both the party leaders and the party members can be empowered, also given the increasing importance of leaders in contemporary parties? Despite these issues, the article by Lisi (2010) is extremely helpful, also considering his findings: the 'direct' leadership selection (that is, the selection of the party leader by party members – or even by party voters) is driven by a strategic calculus of party elites and by imitative patterns (contagion), mainly to increase parties' electoral fortunes.

Along with the contributions analysed in this section, the study of party leader selection rules (and of their determinants) has also significantly benefitted from three books published in the early- and mid-2010s. Indeed, the works by Cross and Blais (2012), Pilet and Cross (2014b), and Cross and Pilet (2015) constitutes the 'final wave' of studies concerning party leaders and their selection rules. Given the importance of these contributions, and their more systematic nature, they are the core of the next subsection.

2.3 The 'final wave' of studies on party leader selection rules

'What is missing [from the existing literature] is a systematic, cross-national examination of the ways in which parties select and remove their leaders' (Cross & Blais, 2012, p. 5). This quote from the book *Politics at the Centre* by André Blais and William P. Cross explains why in a three-year span, from 2012 until 2015, three books on party leader selection rules are published. Apart from the 2012 book, two subsequent works are published: a book edited by Jean-Benoit Pilet and William P. Cross on country-specific analyses of party leader selection rules in a wide number of Western democracies (Pilet and Cross, 2014b), and a book edited by William P. Cross and Jean-Benoit Pilet, particularly focusing on the causes and consequences of different party leader selection rules (Cross & Pilet, 2015). Let us start with the 2012 book.

The work by Blais and Cross (2012) deals with party leader selection rules in the most important parties of five Anglo-Saxon democracies (the UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) between 1965 and 2008. This book is of interest for some reasons, some of which are evident in subsequent chapters of this dissertation, but primarily because an extremely wide variety of data is collected, and some tentative explanations for long-term (lack of) openings of party leader selection rules are put forward. Concerning the first point, the book provides data on a wide array of rules: who selects the party leader, on the determinants of the changes in party leader selectorate, on the requisites for putting forward a candidacy for this chair, on the features and rules of party leadership races, on the ending of party leaderships (thanks to retirements, resignations, or removals). Unfortunately, such information is scattered throughout the book,

and no online or printed appendix is available, but this is just a small problem, given the noticeable amount of data available: for the first time, the Katz and Mair's dataset (1992) is extended towards present days, at least concerning party leader selection rules in two Western European countries, the UK and Ireland. Secondly, the book provides some descriptive evidence as an attempt to explain why parties expand their leader selectorate: parties in the five above-mentioned countries open their selectorate after an electoral setback and while being in opposition, while limited evidence is available for the hypothesis according to which there is a 'contagion effect' at work; conversely, no evidence is found in support of another hypothesis, according to which newer parties are more likely to adopt a wider selectorate than older parties.

The conclusions by Cross and Blais (2012) are tested by Meyer and Odom (2016), whose article focuses on the five countries included in the book by Cross and Blais, and by Wauters (2014) who analyses the party leader elections in Belgium where party members are allowed to select the party leader. Starting from the former article, the analysis on the most important parties in the UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, brings about the conclusion that the expansion of the selectorate for the party leadership is mainly driven by the levels of electoral regionalisation of a party (given this would signal a reduction in the national appeal and scope of a party, and so it could be easily related to a strong electoral setback, in turn fostering an intra-party process of change), while a 'normal' electoral setback and opposition periods play a smaller role.

Passing to Wauters' article, he interestingly recalls a point made by Scarrow, Webb and Wattenberg (2000): when party elites are pushed to give away the power to select the party leader, they tend to do so by avoiding party conferences (i.e. party congresses) and directly empowering party members, thus avoiding the middle-level activists (recalling the now-well-known argument by Mair (1994)). Whether this is true or not is a question left to the subsequent chapters of this work. The point here is that Wauters tests whether the empowering of party members follows the framework devised by Cross and Blais (2012). The author, therefore, studies the role of the opposition status of a party, of its age, of the contagion effect, and, interestingly, of electoral setbacks, connecting them to a logical but hitherto neglected argument: the importance and the size of the parliamentary party may be deeply affected by an electoral setback (thus updating the argument set out in the party change framework). As a consequence, the power of the parliamentary party in retaining its (possible) power in selecting the party leader may be shrunk by unsatisfactory electoral setbacks. Finally, Wauters adds a fifth determinant: the decline in party membership figures, which may affect party leader selectorate given that the party may want to fight such decline or keep old members in by giving them more power in an

allegedly crucial intra-party arena. The main results of his analysis are somewhat surprising: while electoral setbacks seem not to play a role, in some cases electoral victories may be important in fostering the openings of party leader selection rules towards party membership's selection of leaders. On the contrary, the contagion effect seems to be a strong determinant of these openings, while this cannot be said with regards to declining membership figures, which only have a secondary role. Wauters conclude by positing that such allegedly deviating results may be related to specific features of Belgium (namely, its consensual framework and the already-weak power of parliamentary parties). These two articles, that somewhat 'stem' from Cross and Blais' work, remind us of the importance of considering both internal and external factors in explaining party leader selection rules.

After the analysis of party leader selection rules in the five Anglo-Saxon countries performed by Cross and Blais (2012), a step forward towards an encompassing collection of data on these rules in Western Europe is represented by the book edited by Jean-Benoit Pilet and William P. Cross (2014b), *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies*. It analyses party leaders' features and the rules for their selection and deselection in 13 democracies (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and the UK) between 1965 and 2012. This marks a discontinuity with the preceding work by Cross and Blais (2012): indeed, in Pilet and Cross' book, each chapter follows a similar structure, with a description of who the party leader is²⁹, followed by a description of the party leader selectorate and of its changes over time, the features and the dynamics of party leadership races, and the demographics and tenure of party leaders. The book also has a very detailed online appendix, which provides a lot of information on party leadership selection rules and races. These data confirm two pieces of evidence already put forward in preceding contributions: there is surely a trend towards more open party leader selection rules in Western countries, but the scope of this trend and number of parties involved greatly varies³⁰.

Nonetheless, the importance of this book is not limited to the richness of data; on the contrary, in the final chapter of the book, Pilet and Cross put forward some tentative explanations to understand why parties adopt more open party leader selection rules (2014a): political parties in the 13 countries considered seem to open their leader selection rules when they are in opposition, or after an electoral setback, while a minor and less decisive role seems to be that of the age of parties, their political orientation, and the 'contagion effect'. Nonetheless,

²⁹ This issue is far from being trivial in some Western European parties, as seen in the next chapter.

³⁰ In some countries, like Norway, no change at all can be detected in the period under study.

these explanations are simply put forward via a descriptive analysis. Therefore, clear causal patterns cannot be detected. This issue is dealt with in the subsequent book edited by the two scholars.

Indeed, in the book edited by Cross and Pilet (2015), *The Politics of Party Leadership: A Cross-National Perspective*, some authors try to propose detailed analyses to understand why parties have (or have changed) their leader selection rules.

To begin with, Lisi, Freire and Barberà (2015) try to understand the relationship between, on the one hand, changes in party leader selectorate and, on the other hand, some organisational and ideological party characteristics. They bring about six hypotheses to be tested via bivariate correlations: first, starting from previous studies (e.g. see Astudillo Ruiz, 2012; Krouwel, 2012), ‘radical left/libertarian parties are more likely to adopt more inclusive rules of leadership selection, while communist, conservatives/ Christian democrats, and radical right parties have more centralized and restricted methods’ (Lisi, Freire and Barberà, 2015, p. 15); second, being a regionalist party does not affect the type of selection method used; third, from the mid-1950s until 2012, parties tend to have more inclusive party leader selection rules, apart from the communists and those on the radical right which, on the contrary, tend to have less inclusive rules (even in this case the insights come from Krouwel, 2012); their fourth hypothesis is slightly more complicated than the first three, arguing that left-leaning and centre-leaning parties should be more likely to give their congresses, members, or voters the power to select the party leader, while right-leaning parties should be more likely to have more exclusive rules to select this organ (this insight comes from Astudillo Ruiz, 2012); the fifth hypothesis argues that left-leaning parties should be more likely to change their leader selection rules than right-leaning ones; finally, and this is the sixth hypothesis, parties in newer democracies should present more exclusive rules to select the party leader.

The empirical analysis, performed on the data already presented in the book edited by Pilet and Cross (2014b), finds empirical confirmation for the first three hypotheses, only partial confirmation for the fourth and fifth ones, and no confirmation at all for the last hypothesis. For the first time, there is a test of a very detailed set of hypotheses related to parties’ ideological positioning, albeit the sixth hypothesis and, at least partly, the second one, seem not very in line with a study focusing on the ideological standing of a political formation. There is surely much food for thought here: the relationship between a party’s ideological family and its rules to select the party leader is a road worthy exploring, as I show in Chapter 4. Nonetheless, the use of bivariate correlations to empirically test the six hypotheses only allows for a preliminary confirmation/disconfirmation: to reach a more detailed and solid explanation, a multivariate

regression would be needed.

The second chapter of the book edited by Cross and Pilet (2015) does implement such methodological tool; nonetheless, there are other issues to deal with. Going into detail, the chapter by Chiru *et al.* (2015) aims at explaining a wide number of changes in party leader selection rules: changes in the composition of the body that selects the party leader, in the rules to allow someone to put forward his/her candidacy, in the voting method, in the party leader removal procedures, in the term length, and in the maximum number of terms allowed for a specific leader.

All these different changes are thought to be explained by six hypotheses. Firstly, parties in opposition, left-leaning ones, younger parties, those that have experienced a leadership change, parties coming from an electoral setback, and parties with a more inclusive body that selects the party leader should be more likely to change their leader selection rules.

The reader may have recognised the influence of several strands of research and several contributions hitherto analysed. It should not be surprising: one of the pros of the article by Chiru *et al.* (2015) is that, being published in a very recent book, can benefit from the now-encompassing existing literature and scholarship on the topic. A logistic regression finds empirical confirmation for all the hypotheses, apart from that related to the ideological positioning of parties. These results are quite noticeable, for a number of reasons: to begin with, it is the first time, to the best of my knowledge, that patterns of party leader selection rules are empirically analysed with a multivariate regression model; moreover, the results show that investigating the opening of party leader selection rules by adapting the framework devised in several contributions by Janda, Harmel, and other scholars can be very fruitful: a number of hypotheses in the book chapter by Chiru *et al.* (2015) are indeed related to the party change framework.

Nonetheless, some issues rise some questions as well: why jointly considering very different rules concerning party leadership? Are we sure we can put together in a single analysis not simply the body that selects the party leader and the requisites for being a party leader candidate³¹, but also the rules to *deselect* the party leader and the *regulations* on party leaders' terms in office? Most importantly, are we sure that we can put them *all* together³² and analyse them by using exactly the *same* variables? All these different components of rules to select and deselect the party leader

³¹ As already, and very convincingly, done by Rahat and Hazan (2001), Hazan (2002) and many subsequent contributions on candidate and on leader selection.

³² The empirical analysis is a classical logistic regression, therefore all changes in party leader selection rules contribute with the same value – 1 – to the dependent variable.

have an equal weight in the dependent variable. It follows the influence of the independent variables on what can be defined as the party leader selection rules³³ or on what can be safely defined as the party leader de-selection rules³⁴ may have been hidden (or, on the contrary, inflated) by the presence of many different elements within the same dependent variable. Finally, some other allegedly valuable explanations of the changes (openings) in party leader selection rules are ruled out: I am not simply referring to party membership decline, or to the contagion effect, but to another factor that deserves to be carefully analysed: the influence of the personalisation of politics. This phenomenon is examined in the next, and final, section of this chapter.

2.4 A foggy connection: the personalisation of politics and party leader selection rules

Tackling the concept of the personalisation of politics is not an undemanding task. Indeed, many different definitions have been proposed. Here, I depart from the Karvonen's one (2010, p. 4), according to which '[t]he core of the personalisation hypothesis is the notion that individual political actors have become more prominent at the expense of parties and collective identities'. Obviously, a first difficulty is understanding what precisely 'being more prominent' mean. For the moment being, let us assume this means that political leaders – for this dissertation, leaders of political parties³⁵ – have acquired more power, or autonomy³⁶. This being said, a second problem requires a lengthier discussion: in which fields have individual political actors allegedly become more prominent, whatever meaning the word 'prominent' has?

A first distinction can be drawn between an electoral-related personalisation and a party-related one. A classical definition of the former can be found in Stokes, Campbell, and Miller

³³ Which can include, at best, only the body that selects the party leader, the rules to allow someone to put forward his/her candidacy, the voting method and maybe, albeit this might be disputable, the rules on party leaders' terms.

³⁴ Which can only include the party leader's removal procedures and, again with a disputable reasoning, term-related rules.

³⁵ In this work, I am only interested in the political leadership that finds expression either in parties, or in general elections. That is why the main focus is on leaders of political parties.

³⁶ A more detailed discussion of what I precisely mean by using the concept of 'personalisation of politics' can be found in Sections 4.3, 4.4, and 5.4.

(1957, p. 378) who, referring to the second successful presidential campaign by Dwight Eisenhower, state that '[i]t was the response to personal qualities—to his sincerity, his integrity and sense of duty, his virtue as a family man, his religious devotion, and his sheer likeableness—which rose sharply in the second campaign'. This underlines a key concept of the electoral-related personalisation of politics: the ability of party leaders to rally popular support around them. On the other hand, Duverger (1964, p. 168) writes about 'two essential facts [that] seem to have dominated the evolution of political parties since the beginning of the century: the increase in the authority of the leaders and the tendency towards personal forms of authority'. This does not mean that nowadays party leaders are as powerful as they were in the 1950s and 1960s: on the contrary, these quotes simply show the long-standing importance and growth of this phenomenon in Western democracies. Indeed, Duverger writes about the increasing power of leaders within political parties (1964, pp. 168–182), a topic which will become increasingly important in the comparative political scholarship in the subsequent decades.

Up to now, the connection between the personalisation of politics and party leader selection rules may seem, at best, blurred. Nonetheless, already in early 1980s, Harmel and Janda (1982, pp. 10–12) in the preliminary theorisation of the party change framework, write about the influence of the features and the decisions by party leaders on political parties' ideology, organisation, decentralisation and cohesion (therefore, following their framework, on party leader selection rules as well). Unfortunately, they do not further develop this interesting hint, but this signals that the connection between party leaders and party change is far from being trivial, as also shown in Janda (1990), Harmel and Janda (1994a), and in Harmel *et al.* (1995), where leadership change, as also seen before, is thought to be a powerful drive for party change (and, therefore, for party leader selection rules as well). A further connection can also be drawn with a more rational-choice-related strand of research (e.g. see the discussion in (Strøm, 1990) on the importance of party leaders in driving changes in parties' behaviour).

The study of the personalisation of politics is clearly influenced by the publication of a book edited by Thomas Poguntke and Paul D. Webb (2005a): *The Presidentialization of Politics*. In this widely cited – and widely criticised³⁷ – book, the authors collect a series of contributions by country experts on the alleged rise of the so-called presidentialisation of politics, which is thought to be composed by three 'faces': the executive one, the party one, and the electoral one. The central idea of the book is that party leaders have become more powerful and autonomous in these three areas. Here the authors introduce the study of the autonomy and power of leaders

³⁷ For instance, see the article by Dowding (2013b), the reply by Webb and Poguntke (2013) and the rejoinder by Dowding (2013a).

within governments, and it is probably the main difference with respect to the hitherto studies on the personalisation of parties and elections (being the other two faces of presidentialisation, the party one and the electoral one, partly or even totally compatible with the concepts of personalisation within parties and elections).

Regardless of the specific operationalization and analysis, a fair conclusion would be that, in the past few decades, there has been a trend towards an increase in the presidentialisation of parties, elections, and governments. Nonetheless, this trend has been neither homogeneous nor unidirectional, both concerning the presidentialisation of politics itself and even partly regarding the influence of leaders on voting behaviour (Karvonen, 2010, pp. 10–14, 101–107)³⁸. A partially different conclusion is reached in the book edited by Passarelli (2015): where some party features that favour it are present, the presidentialisation of politics is a phenomenon that can be empirically verifiable, albeit constitutional-related (that is, institutional-related) differences can be easily noticed.

Despite this blurred picture, the analysis of the personalisation of politics has not stopped. On the contrary, many studies have recently been published. For instance, the remarkably rich study edited by Dowding and Dumont (2009) is a useful starting point for the analysis of the increased power of party leaders in the selection and deselection of ministers in Western Europe³⁹. On the voting behaviour side, one should certainly quote the ‘reductionist’ view put forward in the volume edited by King (2002), the personalisation-pushing book by Garzia (2014) and, finally, the recently published book edited by Marina Costa Lobo and John Curtice (2015) in which the chapter by Curtice and Lisi (2015), even if it is recognised that leaders’ traits have an impact on individual voting behaviour, underlines that there are still relevant differences between the explanatory capacity of leadership effect in presidential and in parliamentary elections, and therefore this stresses the limits of the ‘Presidentialisation hypothesis’.

Finally, from a hitherto partly neglected viewpoint, the book by Renwick and Pilet (2016) explores the personalisation of electoral systems, which is thought to be composed of two dimensions, namely the extent to which electoral systems allow voters to express preferences and the degree of influence of voters’ decisions on who will be elected. This last work signals the interest towards the personalisation of politics – however we define it – is far from experiencing a sharp decline.

Going closer towards the topic of this dissertation, Blondel *et al.* (2010) argue that a general

³⁸ For a direct reply to Karvonen’s statements, see Webb, Poguntke and Kolodny (2012).

³⁹ See also the analysis by Poguntke and Webb (2015) on the increment in the power of party leaders in German and British executives.

trend towards an increase in the personalisation of politics and party leadership can be detected in some Western European countries. From a broader and comparative viewpoint, Musella (2015) posits that ‘personal leaders’ have become more and more important in Western Europe from the late 1980s until the early 2010s, thanks to three transformations: more direct selection of party leaders by party members or even by party voters, an increase in the centralisation of power within parties, and a stronger role of party leaders in the legislatures and in governments⁴⁰. It is quite interesting to notice that the here the opening of party leader selection rules is thought to be a component – and not a consequence – of the personalisation of politics: the scholarship is quite divided on this topic, as it has been already seen and as we also notice in this concluding section. As shown in the following chapters, I follow the strand according to which the opening of party leader selection rules cannot be seen as an element of the personalisation of party leadership; rather, it should be considered as a possible consequence of it.

After having taken into consideration all these works, a logical question arises: has someone explicitly linked the personalisation of politics to the changes (or the openings) of party leader selection rules? Despite the rise in the interest towards the increased power of leaders in parties, electoral campaigns, and governments, this issue has seldom been addressed in the existing literature. A first important reference is surely the already quoted article by Lisi (2010), where one the political-system level variables that are considered as pushes for the ‘democratisation’ of party leader selection rules in Portugal is the personalisation of party leadership, given that such ‘democratisation’ should foster leader-oriented electoral campaigns⁴¹. Unfortunately, the author does not devote much attention to this element – also given the richness of his framework of analysis.

A second contribution worth mentioning is again an already-quoted one: the article by Wauters (2014), where an explicit and carefully-explained link between the personalisation of politics and the opening of party leader selection rules is put forward. Specifically, according to

⁴⁰ A partly different framework is put forward by Musella in a recently published book (2018), where three dimensions of analysis concerning the personalisation of political parties: the direct elections of party leaders, the intra-party leaders’ personal power, and the features of leaders’ careers.

⁴¹ This line of reasoning, as already seen in the discussion of the contribution by Gauja (2016), resembles that of Barnea and Rahat (2007), who argue that one of the relevant factors explaining the changes in the body of people that selects a party’s candidates for general elections is the ‘personalisation’ [of politics, probably]. Even in this case, the authors do not devote much space to a discussion of the alleged influence of this factor.

the author, such opening might be influenced by the necessity to increase the legitimacy and the position of the party leader, and given the increasing role of party leaders in elections and in shaping parties' policy stances, it could be reasonable to hold him/her more accountable by means of party primaries⁴² (Wauters, 2014, p. 73). Alongside this internal reason, an external reason is put forward as well: 'a legitimised and strong party leader can take tough decisions quite autonomously, because he or she is backed by the rank and file' (Wauters, 2014, p. 73). These two reasons are interesting, because they connect the personalisation of politics and the openings of party leader selection rules in an explicit and testable way. On the other hand, they seem to contrast a bit with one another: on the one hand, more open rules seem to be implemented in order to cope with an already-existing phenomenon (the increasing power of party leaders); on the other hand, it seems that to foster an increasing power of party leaders, it is necessary to implement more open rules. A careful empirical testing of the role of the personalisation of politics in influencing the adoption of more open party leader selection rules may help solve this conundrum.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have tackled the existing literature on party leader selection rules and its alleged determinants. After having analysed the importance of the party change framework for this dissertation, I have assessed the importance of early or non-systematic studies on party leader selection rules and their determinants. Then, the chapter has focused on the three books published in early- and mid-2010s on party leader selection rules: the one by Cross and Blais (2012), then the contribution by Pilet and Cross (2014b), and finally the book by Cross and Pilet (2015). Finally, a seldom addressed but crucial issue for party leader selection rules has been considered: the personalisation of politics.

After this review, I can delve deeper into the analysis which is put forward in this work. To begin with, two tasks shall be dealt with: first, it is necessary to precisely define the research question at the centre of this study; second, it is necessary to carefully tackle the object of study, that is, operationalise the dependent variables. Chapter 3 is devoted to these tasks.

⁴² Let us recall Wauters' main interest lies in explaining the adoption of 'one-member-one-vote' systems in party leader selection rules.

Chapter 3 – The research design

A fundamental problem of empirical research is defining the phenomenon under examination. Another task, which usually is thought to be easier but actually requires a careful crafting, is related to devising the research question and the related general framework of analysis. In other words, it is necessary not simply to define *what* I am going to study in the next chapters, but also the precise *question* I deal with, to be as scientifically clear as possible and give the reader a useful reading guide.

In this chapter, I indeed deal with the research question and with the general framework within which my work moves (section 3.1). After having set the ground and presented these fundamental elements, I turn my attention to the definition of the dependent variables, party leader selectorates: in Section 3.2, I first present existing operationalisations of this concept and, after having discussed their strengths and weaknesses, put forward my operationalisation. Section 3.3 is devoted to a comparison between party leader selection rules and the Dahl's box for the different roads to polyarchy; such comparison is made to draw a clear line between *openings of party leader selection rules* (selectorates) and their alleged *democratisation*. Finally, Section 3.4 deals with the selection of the cases at the centre of my attention and with the precise features of leader selectorates for the parties included in the empirical analysis.

3.1 The research question and the general framework of analysis

The research question at the base of this work is the following: *why do parties open their leader selection rules?* More specifically, in line with the operationalisation of the dependent variables I present in Section 3.2, it can be reformulated as follows: *why do parties open their leader selectorate?* Indeed, the focus of my work is on the party leader selectorate (i.e., on the body of people that selects the party leader). This research question can also be seen from two different viewpoints: the first one is related to why parties open their selectorate from a general standpoint; the second is, instead, connected to understanding why parties adopt (move towards) a specific party leader selectorate.

The difference between these two perspectives is not a trivial one: in the first case, the focus is on the simple presence/absence of an opening of party leader selectorates, while the second one differentiates among different party leader selectorates. The classical concern in the scholarship for the past few years has been that of explaining the simple presence/absence of openings of party leader selection rules. Indeed, basically all of the authors studying this matter

with a quantitative methodology have focused on this task. The decision to focus on the first perspective has been therefore driven by the idea of empirically testing the propositions put forward by many authors (in different fashions, as seen in Chapter 2) and also adding some possible original crucial determinants to the discussion. Let us for a moment postpone the definition of ‘opening’ (which is done in Section 3.2), and let us focus on its presence (or absence). If an opening can simply be present or absent, it follows all openings shall be treated as equal. And this consideration is of paramount importance not simply for building the related dependent variable, which will evidently be a dichotomous one (1 meaning opening and 0 otherwise) but also for the analysis that is required to tackle it. This discourse is expanded in the empirical Section 6.1.

On the other hand, the second perspective focuses on the fact that parties move towards (adopt) a *specific* selectorate. Even in this case, the precise operationalization of the party leader selectorate is put forward in the next section, but let us anticipate that *different* party leader selectorates can be identified in Western European parties. Moreover, it is possible to study the passage from one specific selectorate to the next one (usually, the most contiguous one). In this case, all openings are *not* treated as equal. Only are openings moving towards the same selectorate considered as equal. For instance, if two parties move towards a leader selection by the party congress (meaning this organ is the party leader selectorate), these two parties will receive the same value for the dependent variable related to the second perspective to tackle the research question. Conversely, if they move towards different selectorates for party leader, they will have different values for this second dependent variable. In this sense, this standpoint to analyse openings of party leader selection rules is remarkably different from the first one, and, to the best of my knowledge, has never been the subject of an empirical testing with a quantitative methodology. In other words, scholars analysing party leader selection rules have solely focused on the simple presence/absence of openings, while little if none attention has been devoted to the fact that parties move towards *specific* selectorates, as I have extensively shown in Chapter 2. This is extremely surprising, given that addressing the latter point can be quite interesting, in that it can reveal peculiar patterns followed by parties adopting different party leader selectorates. Therefore, performing this task can bring about interesting innovations and findings for the literature on party leader selection rules.

How to tackle the two standpoints to analyse openings of party leader selectorates? More specifically, how to analyse the two dependent variables stemming from them? In this study, I adopt a framework which partly builds on the party change framework, in the sense that both external and internal party-related factors (or, possibly, ‘shocks’) are considered. By internal

factors I consider those possible determinants related to an ‘intra-party’ matters (or shocks), widely understood: a leadership change, a change in membership figures, leaders' features and autonomy. Conversely, external factors are those alleged determinants related to external events, shocks, or changes: poor electoral performance, participation in a government, and so forth.

Figure 3.1 General framework of analysis

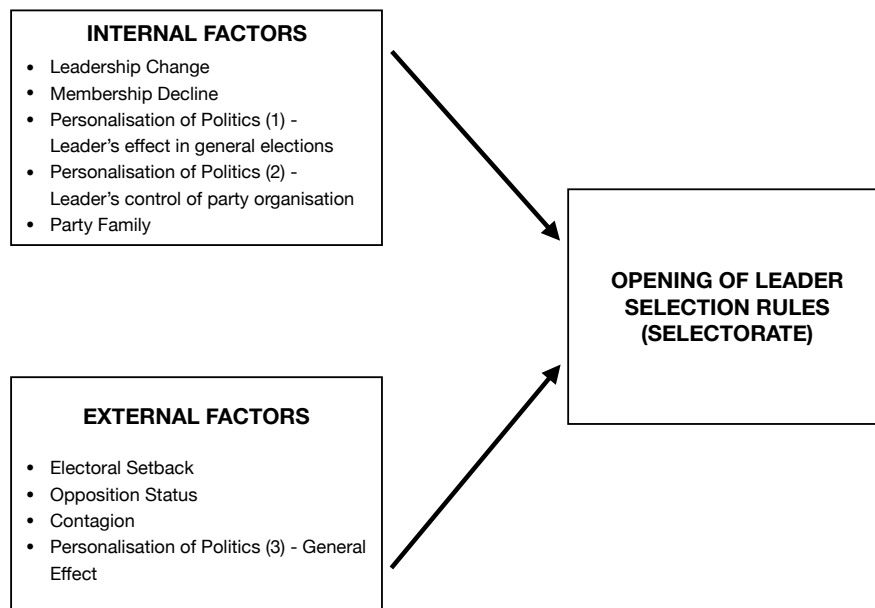


Figure 3.1 above shows the general framework of analysis of this dissertation. As already explained in this section, I focus on two sets of factors, an internal one and an external one. Within the former, one might find some ‘classical’ determinants of party change and, more importantly, for this work, for openings of party leader selection rules: changes in a party’s leadership, membership decline, party family. Moreover, two factors, related to the personalisation of politics, a possible yet hitherto neglected *explanans*, are also put forward. These two latter factors are related to two aspects of the multi-faceted concept we call ‘personalisation of politics’: the effect of party leaders in general elections, and the control by leaders themselves of their parties. All these internal determinants are in-depth analysed in Chapter 4.

Yet, we also know that changes in party organisations, and also openings of party leader selection rules, might also be influenced by external factors. Among these, I focus on three determinants already tackled by the existing literature: an electoral setback, the opposition status of a political formation, and the contagion effect. Finally, a general effect of the personalisation of politics at the party system level is also included within the external factors. Such factors are extensively analysed in Chapter 5.

It shall be underlined that the determinants already considered by the existing literature (say, membership decline or electoral setback) do not always receive a fair amount of space in the theoretical part of many pieces of work. In other words, the fact that some determinants have been already put forward in the literature does not mean that such factors have been thoroughly explored. One of the aims of Chapters 4 and 5 is also that of expanding and systematising the discussion on the existing determinants of openings (changes) in party leader selection rules included in this dissertation.

Figure 3.1 shows that both internal and external factors are considered and analysed in this work. While certain discussion⁴³ has been going on in the literature concerning the primacy of internal or of external determinants in explaining party change, here I would take a more agnostic position. In other words, I do not have expectations concerning the greater importance of internal or, conversely, of external factors in driving openings of party leader selection rules. On the contrary, I do believe some words shall be spent on the fact that parties shall be considered as conservative organisations: this idea has been already put forward by many scholars (Michels, 1915; Panebianco, 1988; Janda, 1990), but an interesting addendum might be that parties open their leader selection rules only when they have a compelling reason to do so. I am not simply referring to (external) ‘shocks’ theorised by Harmel and Janda (1994a), but also to a series of events, which might have, for different reasons, an effect on the fact that parties open (or not) their leader selection rules. These events shall have a certain impact on parties given they do not resort to opening their leader selection rules for the sake of it: as shown in Sections 1.2 and 3.3, opening party leader selection rules (or selectorates) is not a decision that can be light-heartedly taken, for the consequences it might bring about for political parties. There must be a good reason to do so, and exploring these ‘good reasons’ is exactly one of the tasks of this study.

After having set the ground of the empirical framework at the basis of my work, the next section directly focuses on the object of study: the dependent variables, namely, the selectorate of party leaders.

3.2 The dependent variables: the selectorate of party leaders

I now turn to the operationalization of the dependent variables. As we have already seen, the focus of this dissertation is on *party leader selection rules*. Before going into detail, two

⁴³ See for instance Mair (1994), Harmel and Janda (1994a), Harmel *et al.* (1995), Katz and Mair (2002), Gauja (2016).

preliminary questions should be answered: who is the party leader? And which rules are we discussing?

Starting from the former one, understanding who is the party leader might seem trivial, but it can actually be extremely important in some parties or countries. Among other cases, Punnett (1992, pp. 4–8) underlines that such problem exists for Green parties (where, at best, just a collective of people can be identified) and for Dutch parties (where a difference can be drawn between the leader of the extra-parliamentary organisation and the electoral/parliamentary leader). This suggests to distinguish between two different issues: on the one hand, there are parties that, mostly during their early years, do not have a clear leadership position. On the other hand, the second issue is that there are parties where more than one position can be deemed to be the most important one. In both cases, it might not be clear *who* the leader *is* (or *who* the leaders *are*).

The first matter usually concerns extreme left and green parties: for instance, the Austrian Greens did not have a party leader position until the early 1990s (Ennser-Jedenastik and Müller, 2014, p. 64), and this ambivalent, if not hostile, position towards (monocratic) party leadership positions can also be detected in other Green parties (Faucher, 1999; Van Haute, 2016) and in some ‘new left’ parties (e.g. see Lisi, 2015, p. 106) in Western Europe. Nonetheless, in basically all left and green Western European parties under scrutiny here, it is possible to identify a clear position of party leadership⁴⁴.

The second issue is trickier: it involves parties that have *more than one* position that can be deemed as overlapping with that of party leader. For instance, Dutch parties normally have two positions: the leader of the extra-parliamentary party (a sort of ‘party chairman’) and the so-called ‘political leader’ (*Lijsttrekker*), who is the top-candidate in his/her party’s list and whose role can also be thought of as compatible with that of leader of the parliamentary party. Nonetheless, both Koole (1994) and Van Holsteyn, Koole and Den Ridder (2014) show that the most important position in Dutch parties is that of the political leader, and therefore, for Dutch parties, this figure is the one considered in this dissertation. In all the other countries or parties, the situation is much clearer, in that a clear apical political figure can be easily identified. Moreover, it has been shown the top candidates for general elections outside the Netherlands (e.g. in Spain, Germany, or Italy) cannot be considered as equally powerful as the party chairmen

⁴⁴ With the sole exception of the already-mentioned Austrian Greens up to 1994. So, this party appears in the analysis only from 1994 onwards.

(Barberà *et al.*, 2014; Detterbeck and Rohlfing, 2014; Sandri, Seddone and Venturino, 2014)⁴⁵. Despite the fact that, in some cases, the party's top candidate (or the candidate for the head of the government) and the party leader might be the same person, for theoretical and clarity-related reasons, I focus on the party chairman for Spanish, German, and Italian parties⁴⁶.

After having addressed the definition of the party leader, the second preliminary question is ahead of us: tackling the rules to select the party leader. In the literature, a clear distinction can be drawn between two groups. Scholars belonging to the first group consider several dimensions to operationalize party leader selection rules. Conversely, the second group is made by scholars who deal with a specific dimension: the selectorate. The operationalization of the dependent variables in this work is done by following the second group of scholars. The next subsection (3.2.1) starts with the first group of scholars, that is, with those operationalising party leader selection rules by taking into consideration more than one dimension of analysis. Moreover, the next subsection also shows the problems related to this 'multidimensional' approach. In this way, it is possible to more clearly move, in Subsection 3.2.2, to the presentation of the selectorate as the dimension operationalising party leader selection rules.

3.2.1 The multidimensional approach to party leader selection rules and its problems

Let us then start with the group of scholars having a multidimensional approach to the operationalization of party leader selection rules. Punnett (1992, pp. 13–24) considers three aspects of the party leader selection: 'the ease and frequency with which a contest can be initiated' (Punnett, 1992, p. 13); the 'candidature', intended as the understanding of who can stand as a candidate for the party leadership and whether there are additional requirements that perspective candidates must satisfy (e.g. reaching a certain number of signatures or the support by a certain percentage of party members or party MPs); the selectorate, operationalized via four categories, each having two possible means of selection, for a total of eight different ways of operationalizing the selectorate. The four categories correspond to four possible selectorates,

⁴⁵ On the more general topic of primary elections to select either the party chairman or the party's top candidate for general elections, see Sandri, Seddone and Venturino (2015).

⁴⁶ A similar problem involves French parties. In this case, it is difficult to precisely identify a party leader without *ad hoc* distinguishing among Presidential candidates, heads of the extra-parliamentary organisation, Presidents of the Republic and the like. It is interesting to notice that also French scholars have differentiated views on the matter (Thiebault, 1993; Knapp and Wright, 2006; Ivaldi, 2007). This problem is further analysed in Section 3.4 below.

ranked according to a 'participation' order: the least participatory selectorate is made by party notables (who can, in turn, decide via an informal discussion, in the famous 'smoke-filled rooms', or via a ballot); by party MPs (who, again, can either select the party leader in an informal discussion or with the means of a ballot); by party activists (either in a party conference or in a special party convention); or, finally, by party members (who can select their leader with a postal ballot or with a 'turn-out' election).

We see later why this operationalization is problematic, but the point to underline here is that Punnett's framework is useful because it stresses two relevant aspects: firstly, several selectorates can be found in a diachronic or in a synchronic perspective, and, secondly, an order among such selectorate can be identified. These two elements are also recurrent in all the ways of operationalizing the selectorate we consider. Indeed, already does Marsh (1993a) recognize that several dimensions are important in understanding the selection of party leaders: the inclusiveness of the selectorate (which ranges from a low-inclusiveness extreme made by a party elite to a high-inclusiveness made by party members or supporters), the competitiveness of the party leadership race, and the frequency of this race.

A further step towards a clearer definition of the different rules involved in party leader selection is taken by Kenig (2009a) who, building on the framework devised by Rahat and Hazan (2001) for the selection of candidates for general elections, proposes a classification of party leader selection rules in parliamentary democracies based on four dimensions. They are: the selectorate, the candidacy, the voting method, and, finally, the de-selection rules (i.e. the rules to remove a party leader from his/her office).

The selectorate, the candidacy, and the de-selection are thought to compose an openness/closeness classification. Let us focus on each of these four dimensions: the selectorate for party leaders can be made by a single individual (as in cases of self-appointed leaders who also coronate their successors), a party elite (e.g. the central committee in communist parties), party MPs, a selected party agency (e.g. a party congress), party members, and, finally, the electorate⁴⁷. Moving to the second dimension, the candidacy is interestingly divided into two components: who can put forward himself/herself as a candidate for party leadership, and whether there are additional requirements to comply with (a clear echo of Punnett's 'candidature' classification is detectable). Therefore, on a closeness/openness continuum, we find

⁴⁷ This continuum is partly modified by Kenig *et al.* (2015), according to whom the three most inclusive categories - party members, the new category of supporters (which is not present in the original Kenig's classification) and party voters - can be categorised under the encompassing umbrella of *primary zone*.

parliamentarians (with or without additional requirements), party members (with or without additional requirements), and citizens (with or without additional requirements). The voting method can instead be: a majority runoff, an 'exhaustive/eliminative ballot', or a preferential vote (also called alternative vote for its resemblance to the Alternative Vote's method). Finally, de-selecting mechanisms, on the now-familiar closeness/openness continuum, can be: absent (in the sense that there are no formal mechanisms to remove a party leader); related to a 'direct challenge' at the end of a long fixed term; connected to a 'direct challenge' at the end of a short fixed term; can be a leadership review at the end of a leader's term (where the party can 'evaluate its leader by a formal vote, without requiring a specific challenger to step forward' (Kenig, 2009a, p. 443); or, finally, they can be a no-confidence vote that can be cast even during the leader's term. The latter mechanisms are evidently more open (in the sense that fewer requirements are required to be put forward), while the former ones are less open.

Finally, let us deal with two contributions, already encountered in this dissertation, that focus on several dimensions of analysis concerning party leader selection rules: the book by Cross and Blais (2012) and the edited book by Pilet and Cross (2014b). The former contribution tackles some aspects of party leader selection rules, including the candidacy (called 'eligibility'), the selectorate, the electoral rules, and leaders' de-selection rules. Starting from the candidacy (Cross and Blais, 2012, pp. 77–83), the authors focus on the necessity of being an MP to run for party leadership and on the possible presence of additional requirements (which are normally either the support of some MPs, or of some party members, or of a combination of both groups of people). It shall be noticed that a clear continuum of the candidacy dimension is not presented, unlike Kenig's presentation of his framework of analysis. Passing to the selectorate, Cross and Blais do not present a clear continuum of inclusiveness/exclusiveness⁴⁸, but put forward a scheme of the selectorates involved in picking the party leader in the parties under consideration (Cross and Blais, 2012, pp. 17–33): party MPs, party members, the party conference (i.e., the party congress), the 'central party board', trade unions, subnational elected party officials, and affiliated groups. Cross and Blais devote some attention to a crucial problem that is also dealt with in the final section of this chapter: the mixed selectorates, whose typical example is the electoral college that was the selectorate for the British Labour Party's leader from early 1980s until 2014. Then, they focus on the electoral rules to select the party leader (both tackling the specific electoral formula and the body of people that is allowed to change such

⁴⁸ Apart from stating that the two poles of the continuum are represented by voters and by a single person (Cross and Blais, 2012, pp. 16–17).

rules) (Cross and Blais, 2012, pp. 61–77), and on the de-selection rules to remove a leader from his/her office (Cross and Blais, 2012, pp. 100–111).

This quadripartite scheme (candidacy, selectorate, electoral rules, de-selection norms) is substantially similar to that followed by the authors contributing to the edited book by Pilet and Cross (2014b). The introduction by the two editors underlines that each chapter – devoted to a specific country in a specific period – focuses on the candidacy, the selectorate, the voting procedures, and the de-selection of party leaders. Interestingly, and again partly following Cross and Blais (2012), only is the selectorate dimension linked to a specific scheme of analysis, which is an exclusiveness/inclusiveness continuum. Indeed, according to the authors, party leaders can be selected by a single person, by a party council, by party MPs, by delegates to a party convention, by party members or, finally, by voters. Notice that the electoral college cases (the already mentioned British Labour party case and the British Conservative Party case from the late 1990s onwards⁴⁹) are categorised under the label ‘party members’.

After this excursion of the pieces of research where several dimensions of analysis are considered to tackle party leader selection rules, it is useful to recap the most important points of these studies. First, apart from the very recent contributions by Cross and Blais and by Pilet and Cross, different authors focus on distinct dimensions; second, even if the same dimension of analysis is considered, the selectorate is the sole dimension whose operationalization is shared with little or no differences by several authors.

From these two points, a more encompassing discussion can be started. To begin with, the fact that different authors focus on different aspects of party leader (de-)selection rules is extremely problematic, given that this poses a serious problem. Let us say that author A focuses on the selectorate, the candidacy, and leaders’ term length and author B on the selectorate, the de-selecting mechanisms and the voting method. How can the scholarship put forward progressive innovation, especially from a cross-country and diachronic perspective, if there is not an agreement on the dimension(s) one should investigate?

Moreover, a second issue relates to the fact that some authors put together some dimensions that can be hardly considered as equivalent (or as possibly overlapping). For instance, the selectorate dimension by Punnett (1992) is related both to the body of people that selects the party leader and to the possible existence of a formal vote: it is unclear why these two aspects should be put together, since the presence (or the absence) of an explicit vote to select the party leader can hardly be considered as so important to require a further differentiation.

⁴⁹ In Section 3.4 I show why I do not consider the British Conservative Party’s case from 1997 onwards as an ‘electoral college’ case.

Indeed, in Austria and Norway, it is common to find parties that coronate their future leader (for instance via a party congress election by acclamation) (Allern and Karlsen, 2014; Ennsner-Jedenastik and Müller, 2014): why should we consider such elections different from the contested party congress leadership selections in other Western European countries? Would it not be more useful to separate the selectorate and the voting method, as convincingly done by other authors?

A third problem concerns the importance of these different dimensions of analysis. Even if the indicating portion of these dimensions is similar for all the authors (e.g. for almost all authors the selectorate dimension operationalizes the body of people that selects the party leader), are we sure that they should have the same importance from a comparative viewpoint? For instance, shall we devote the same space and attention to – say – the selectorate and to the voting method? Shall we equally focus on the rules related to the *selection* and on those connected to the *deselection* of party leaders? Finally, shall we use the same framework of analysis to tackle the *rules* governing party leader selection and the *consequences* of such rules (regarding competitiveness, leaders' gender, participation, and the like)? The comparative scholarship on party leader selection rules has given a convincing answer, which is shared by a noticeable number of scholars (who focus on a single dimension): it is the selectorate for party leadership that shall be considered as a crucial dimension of analysis. These scholars form the second group of researchers of party leader selection rules, and are also at the centre of the second subsection, where I also present the operationalization of the dependent variables.

3.2.2 *The operationalization of the selectorate for party leaders*

A good starting point to tackle the analyses of scholars focusing only on party leaders' selectorate is surely LeDuc's work (2001) on the US Democratic Party, the British Labour Party, and the Canadian Progressive-Conservative Party. He proposes an exclusiveness/inclusiveness continuum made by: party MPs, an electoral college, party conventions, 'local caucuses', closed primaries (where only people 'registered' for a party can vote), and open primaries (where any voter can select the party leader). This is one of the earlier attempts to create an explicit and, more importantly, encompassing party leader selectorate continuum. The importance of this point should not be underestimated, if one considers that a contribution (Scarow, Webb and Farrell, 2000), which is just one year older than that by LeDuc, has a very different four-point exclusiveness/inclusiveness continuum that considers party MPs, party elite, party congress (that also includes the electoral college), and party members/party primaries.

A similar road is taken by Kenig (2009b), who presents a four-point exclusiveness/inclusiveness continuum, made by four 'pure' types: party MPs, a 'selected party agency' (e.g. a party congress or a convention), party members, or the electorate. The reader should have noticed the differences with the other operationalization of the selectorate by the same author presented above. Some points are of interest here: Kenig correctly underlines that mixed selectorates (like the electoral colleges) should be considered as more exclusive than those granting the power to select the party leader to party members with the formula 'one member one vote' (OMOV); moreover, and this is more disputable, even the procedure for the selection of the leader of the British Conservative Party (a first selection by party MPs is followed by a run-off race where party members select the future leader) should be considered as a 'non-pure' selectorate, and therefore more exclusive than an OMOV procedure.

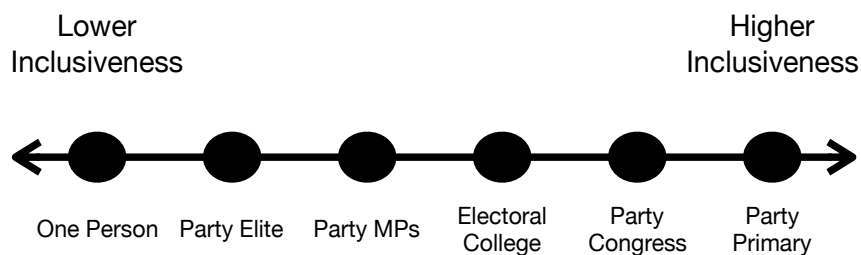
A more convincing road is the one taken by Lisi, Freire and Barberà (2015), whose selectorate variable takes five values on the exclusiveness/inclusiveness continuum: party organs, party MPs, mixed methods (which are in this specific position given the authors claim such methods are often a combination of the two most exclusive selectorates with the two most inclusive ones), party conference, and, finally, voters/party members⁵⁰. Finally, a six-point continuum is presented by Kenig, Rahat and Hazan (2015): the most exclusive selectorate is represented by the party leader, followed by the party elite, party MPs, party delegates, party members, and voters.

This small excursion in the operationalization of party leaders' selectorate is useful for two reasons: first, to underline the non-negligible differences among scholars regarding the number of categories of the selectorate and/or the precise position of some categories (especially party MPs vs. the party elite, and the electoral colleges); second, because many of the above-mentioned authors underline a crucial point: it is the selectorate a fundamental dimension of analysis to tackle party leader selection rules. This is a viewpoint shared by most scholars dealing with party leader selection rules (LeDuc, 2001; Kenig, 2009a; Cross and Blais, 2012, p. 7; Pilet and Cross, 2014b; Kenig, Rahat and Hazan, 2015; Lisi, Freire and Barberà, 2015), and by eminent scholars dealing with candidate selection (e.g. see Barnea and Rahat, 2007). This is also the road followed by this dissertation.

⁵⁰ This operationalization is also very similar to the one by Chiru *et al.* (2015), given the only difference is these latter present a six-point continuum, where the most exclusive point is not represented by party organs, but by an 'other' category (which includes self-appointed leaders).

In other words, *my focus is on the selectorate for party leaders*. More specifically, I put forward a six-point scale, where lower values correspond to more exclusive selectorates, and vice versa. Figure 3.2 below graphically presents it.

Figure 3.2 Party leader selectorates



Source: author's elaboration

As it can be seen by looking at Figure 3.2, some points of the scale are directly taken from the literature: obviously, the most exclusive selectorate is represented by a single person (be it the party leader or someone else). Passing to the second most exclusive position, it is represented by a party's elite, e.g. the central committee of the Portuguese Communist Party, who selects the leader of these political formations. Then, we find party MPs (for example, this was the selectorate for the leader of the British Conservative Party until 1998).

It shall be noticed that some authors invert the position of the party elite and of the party MPs (therefore considering MPs as a more exclusive selectorate than the party elite). Nonetheless, I have taken the opposite decision, following the compelling twofold argument by Kenig, Rahat, and Hazan (2015): first, party MPs are directly elected by party voters, while the party elites are usually not (let us think about central committees or national executive organs, which are mainly selected by party congress delegates, who are, in turn, normally selected by party members); second, this mimics the procedures in parliamentary democracies, where MPs select (delegate) the Prime Minister.

The fourth position in my continuum is occupied by the electoral college. This point requires some discussion. From a general standpoint, the electoral college is nothing more than a combination of different selectorates. For instance, for the British Labour Party until 2014, we find party members, party parliamentarians, and members of collateral organisations, like trade

unions; for the Irish *Fine Gael* from 2004 onwards, party members, party parliamentarians, and local holders of public offices are considered.

Moreover, in all of the cases considered in this dissertation (the British Labour Party, *Fine Gael*, the Irish *Fianna Fáil* in 2015 and the Greek *Nea Dimokratia* between 1985 and 1997), MPs always occupy a noticeable position in this combination (ranging from twice the number of the local party delegates in the *Nea Dimokratia*, to the 65% of the *Fine Gael*, to 40-55% of the *Fianna Fáil*, to the 33% of the British Labour Party from 1993 until 2014⁵¹). This signals that the electoral college is surely more inclusive than the selectorate solely made by party MPs because the percentage of final votes of the college given to party members or other groups of people should not be underestimated. At the same time, the electoral college is not that inclusive to be positioned after the party congress (party convention) delegates, since the role of party MPs shall be taken into account as well. Instead, congress delegates occupy the fifth most exclusive position (or the second most inclusive one), and this selectorate constitutes by far the most common way to select the party leader in Western Europe (Pilet and Cross, 2014a).

Then, the final position (the most inclusive one) is occupied by the category I call ‘party primary’, given it includes the selectorates made by either members or by party voters. In the literature, some authors present the two bodies of people as forming two different selectorates (e.g., Kenig, Rahat and Hazan (2015). Nonetheless, following Kenig *et al.* (2015), I have decided to classify the selectorates made by members or by voters as falling into the ‘party primary’ category, given that I argue a fundamental passage is not that between members and voters, but from less inclusive categories (party delegates, party MPs, and the like) to party primaries, be them ‘closed’ (i.e. open just to members) or ‘open’ (also open to voters). It shall also be considered that it is more and more common for people to enrol as ‘flash members’, that is, just a few days before or even on the leadership selection day (Elgot, 2016; Van Bruggen, 2016)⁵², and this is another reason why I have put together party members and party voters⁵³.

⁵¹ From 1981 until 1993, the share of the electoral college’s votes given to British Labour Party’s MPs was equal to 30%.

⁵² On the related matter of multi-speed membership, see also Gomez and Ramiro (2017).

⁵³ Another reason that could have pushed for collapsing the ‘party members’ and the ‘party voters’ categories into the ‘party primary’ one is the fact that the latter would have included an extremely small number of cases. In any case, all the analyses performed in Chapter 6 have been replicated by considering a 7-point scale, and the results are identical to those presented in this dissertation.

Up to now, I have presented the 6-point scale by ordering it from the most exclusive selectorate to the most inclusive one. It is evident that if we follow the exclusiveness/inclusiveness logic, this signals that there is an order in the values that the scale can take. For instance, value 3 is more inclusive than 2 and less inclusive than 4. This has noticeable consequences for a part of the empirical analysis performed in this dissertation (which is presented in Chapter 6). For now, suffice it to say that a clear order can be detected. Nonetheless, given the aim of this dissertation is on the *openings* of party leader selection rules, it is necessary to *define* an opening: it is a movement of a party leader' selectorate from a lower point to a higher point on the exclusiveness/inclusiveness continuum. For instance, the opening of the Belgian AGALEV in 1995, which results in a change in party leader' selectorate from 2 to 6, that is, from the party elite to party primary.

A logical consequence of this differentiation is that party leader selectorates' openings can be seen from two viewpoints, as already argued in Section 3.1. First, openings can be analysed by simply considering the movement from one selectorate to another one. In this case, any change from a lower to a higher value on the DV' selectorate continuum is equally treated, and therefore the DV can only assume two values: either 1, when an opening is present, and 0, when an opening is absent. Second, openings can be tackled from a more detailed viewpoint, when the precise movements from – say – 4 to 5 or from 5 to 6 on the selectorate continuum are analysed. Thus, in this latter case, the DV can have a number of values equal to the number of points of the exclusiveness/inclusiveness continuum.

Therefore, there are two different operationalisations of the selectorate: a dichotomous DV address the question why parties generally open their leader selection rules; conversely, an ordinal DV deals with parties' adoption of a specific selectorate. Let us reiterate a point raised some pages above: these are two different – yet complementary – matters. In the first case, all openings are treated as equal, and the focus is on extremely general and encompassing arguments that might shed some light on this phenomenon. It is also the road taken basically by all scholars analysing party leader selection rules with a quantitative methodology. The second case, where openings are differentiated according to the position where a party falls after having opened its selectorate, is related to a less general and more in-depth question: why parties adopt *a specific* selectorate? And therefore, as related questions: are there different determinants at work in the 'general' analysis and the more detailed one? Are there *different* determinants at work when parties adopt *different* selectorates? All these questions, to the best of my knowledge, have been

left unanswered by the literature on the topic. This discourse is extensively taken into consideration in Chapter 6⁵⁴.

Before turning our attention to a more precise description of my dataset and of the cases of openings that I consider in the empirical analysis, a task that is performed in Section 3.4, there is a fundamental yet neglected topic that requires an in-depth discussion: why have I written about *openings* of party leader selection rules and not about the *democratisation* of such rules? Section 3.3 below tackles this point, whose importance goes well beyond a mere denomination problem.

3.3 The openings of party leader selection rules: a comparison with Dahl's paths to polyarchy

Many authors dealing with party leader selection rules have written about their 'democratisation'. For instance, Müller and Meth-Cohn write about 'more democratic' party leader selections that more strongly involve party members⁵⁵, while LeDuc (2001), already from the title of his article, writes about the democratisation of party leader selection rules intended as an opening of these rules, as seen in the preceding Section. Interestingly, Kenig himself writes that '[t]he phenomenon of "democratization of party leadership selection" almost always refers to the process of opening up the selectorate to a wider range of voters' (2009a, p. 434).

Conversely, other scholars draw a clear distinction between openings and democratisation of the rules to select the party leader: for instance, Hazan (2002, p. 117) explicitly writes about the necessity to open the selectorate and the candidacy (for candidate selection, but the argument might be applied to leader selection as well) to talk about a 'democratisation' of these processes; Kenig, Hazan and Rahat (2015, pp. 39–40) posit a 'democratisation' of candidate and leader selection involves an increased 'participation' of party members or even of party supporters;

⁵⁴ From a slightly more general viewpoint, I do not use the term 'more competitive' party leader selection rules as a synonymous of 'more open' party leader selection rules. The reasons behind this choice are both theoretical (a race, be it electoral or related to party leader selection, can be extremely open but not as much competitive) and empirical, since more open party leader selection rules either do not seem to produce more competitive races (Kenig, 2009b), or, at best, have a very mixed and not very clear effect on them (Kenig, Rahat and Tuttnauer, 2015). On the more general topic of the relationship between selection rules and competitiveness, see the discussion in Hazan and Rahat (2010).

⁵⁵ See also fn. 12 in Section 1.2.

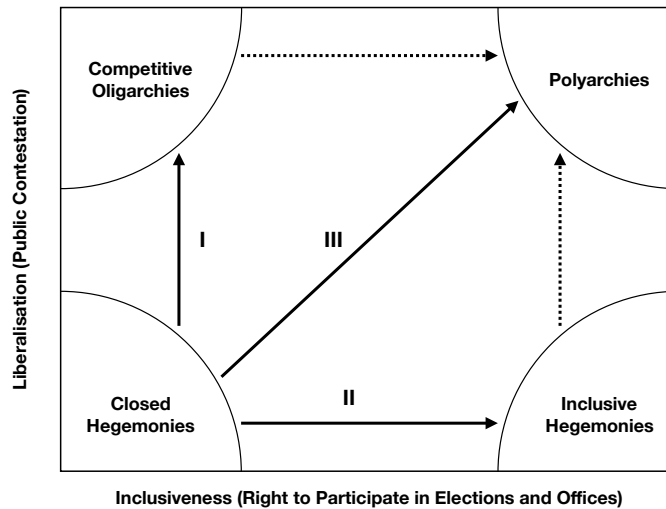
Aylott and Bolin (2017) go further in discussing the overall importance of solely focusing on the selectorate in order to understand what ‘democratisation’ means; as an overall sum-up of this strand of the literature, Cross and Blais argue (2012, p. 15): ‘[a] more expansive selectorate for internal decision-making does not necessarily make one party more democratic than another’.

Why should it be important to distinguish between the *opening* and the *democratisation* of party leader selection rules? For many reasons: first, the two words carry with them a very different meaning, and using one instead of another, if this change is misplaced, might generate confusions among scholars and even among citizens; second, not only do the two concepts have a different meaning, but I would argue that they represent two quite different things – and processes – in line with the authors mentioned in the previous paragraph. In this sense, after having briefly accounted for the confusion that the overlapping of these two concepts might generate in the related literature, in this section, I tackle the issue starting by the well-known Dahl’s box (Dahl, 1971) and then proceeding by proposing an original ‘Party Leader General Inclusiveness’ framework that should help clarifying why using ‘openings’ of party leader selection rules might be a more suitable choice than ‘democratisation’ of such rules.

The fact that an *opening of* party leader selectorates does not necessarily mean a *democratisation* might seem, for some readers, an intuitively reasonable conclusion. We must still understand *the reasoning* behind such conclusion. Here the framework devised by Dahl might be of some use. According to Dahl (1971), there are different roads to polyarchy⁵⁶, starting from closed hegemonies, where there is a low possibility to take part in elections and to have a public office, and where there is also a low possibility to publicly ‘contest’ the regime (contestation meaning, among other things, the possibility to express dissent and freely associate with other citizens). Such roads are depicted in Figure 3.2 below.

⁵⁶ Polyarchy ‘is a political order distinguished by the presence of seven institutions [...] 1. Elected officials. 2. Free and fair elections. 3. Inclusive suffrage. 4. Right to run for office. 5. Freedom of expression. 6. Alternative information. 7. Associational autonomy.’ (Dahl, 1989, p. 221).

Figure 3.2 The three paths to polyarchy according to Dahl



Source: author's elaboration based on Dahl's Figures 2.1 and 3.1 (1971, p. 7; 34)

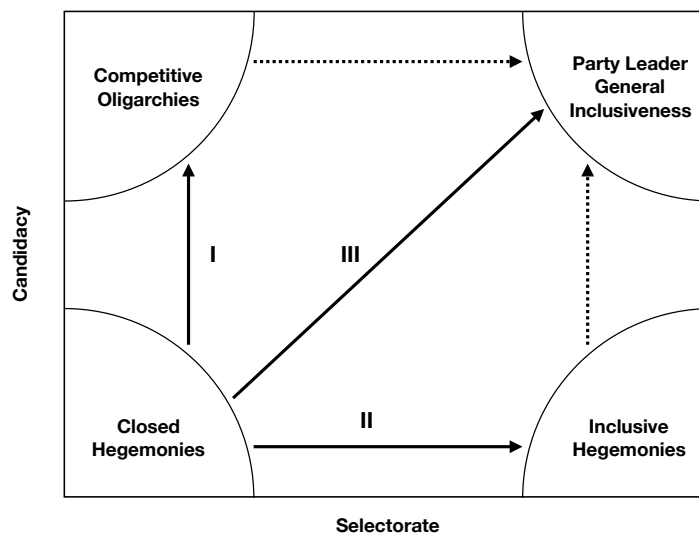
The first path is the most common one from the historical viewpoint, and it is characterised by an opening of the liberalisation sector (i.e. in the possibility to freely associate and freely express dissent towards the regime) (path I in the figure). This gives birth to regimes called competitive oligarchies, possibly followed by an increase in the rights to participate in free and fair elections (the dashed line in the upper part of the figure). It is the road followed by the United Kingdom in its historical democratic development (Dahl, 1971, p. 34). Conversely, the second path is reversed: there is a first increase in the 'inclusiveness' dimension (path II in the figure), creating inclusive hegemonies, followed by an opening of the 'liberalisation' dimension (the dashed line in the right part of the figure), and it is the path followed by Germany between the end of the First World War and the demise of the Weimar Republic (Dahl, 1971, p. 34). Finally, the third road (path III in the figure) is the contemporary opening of both dimensions, and it is the road taken by Italy, Germany, and Japan at the end of the Second World War⁵⁷.

Now, there are some things of interest here. To begin with, the movement on the X and the Y axes might vary: some countries might be (have been) very inclusive but not very liberalised, or vice versa. Moreover, there are different roads bringing to the same destination (polyarchy), and this is shown by the fact that different countries might follow different paths towards the upper right part of Figure 3.2. Finally, Dahl underlines that democracy 'might be conceived of as lying at the upper right corner [of Figure 3.2]. But since democracy may involve more

⁵⁷ Albeit Dahl himself (1971, pp. 37–38) recognizes these cases might be too ambiguous to be put in this category.

dimensions than the two [...] and since (in my view) no large system in the real world is fully democratized, I prefer to call real world systems that are closest to the upper right corner polyarchies', and therefore, from a slightly more general viewpoint, '[p]olyarchies, then, may be thought of as relatively (but incompletely) democratized regimes' (Dahl, 1971, p. 8). Let us keep these three points in mind for a moment and present Figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3.3 The three paths to Party Leader General Inclusiveness



Source: author's elaboration

Figure 3.3 above tries to draw a comparison between, on the one hand, the polyarchy-leaning evolution of political regimes depicted by Dahl and the opening of party leader selection rules, which is the centre of this dissertation. The Candidacy axis represents the Liberalisation dimension in Dahl's framework, while the Selectorate axis represents the Inclusiveness dimension put forward by Dahl. Finally, the upper-right corner of Figure 3.3 is occupied by Party Leader General Inclusiveness in lieu of Polyarchy.

As a preliminary starting point, some might argue that this comparison cannot be made, given that evident differences would exist between a political regime and a political party. Nonetheless, Rahat (2013) and Rahat and Shapira (2016) convincingly show how it is possible to compare state-level democracy with candidate selection or even with Intra-Party Democracy. I would not go that far in the comparison, limiting to try to draw an analogy between the Dahl's paths to polyarchy and the party leader selection paths to an outcome I call Party Leader General Inclusiveness. When parties reach such end, there is both a high inclusiveness (in the selectorate dimension) and a high liberalisation (in the candidacy dimension). In party leader selection, high

inclusiveness (in Dahl's words) means that a wide selectorate (a very open selectorate) has the right to pick the leader, while high liberalisation (again, in Dahl's words) means a wide group of people can put forward their candidacy for this post (i.e. candidacy is very open).

Turning our attention to Figure 3.3, it depicts three possible paths to Party Leader General Inclusiveness. More specifically, the outcome is reached when parties allow at least all of their members to select the party leader, and when at least all party members can put forward their candidacy for the party leadership. Starting from Duverger's consideration (1964), according to which members constitute the *demos* of a political party, it descends that a political party reaches a very high level of Party Leader General Inclusiveness when both the selectorate and the candidacy dimension are very inclusive (when they both reach sufficiently high levels of openness). Obviously, parties can also get to other outcomes, from where they can travel towards the destination in the upper right corner of the figure. For instance, they can stop in the lower right corner or the upper left corner, or in some intermediate position.

Up to now, the comparison between Figure 3.2 and 3.3 seems weak. Yet, let us recall the three points underlined by Dahl that we have discussed some page above. Starting from first one, as in the historical evolution of political regimes, parties can differently move on the X and the Y axes: in other words, they can have different levels of openness on the selectorate and the candidacy dimensions. The chapters in the book by Pilet and Cross (2014b) are very telling in this regard.

Second, again as state-level regimes, and as a consequence of the first point, there are different ways to reach (or approach) the Party Leader General Inclusiveness position: parties may decide to open both the selectorate and the candidacy dimension, or just the candidacy, or just the selectorate. The first path is surely not very frequent (Cross and Pilet, 2014), as well as the second one. The most numerous openings solely deal with the selectorate dimension. In other words, parties, unlike states in their historical evolution, have mainly moved on the X axis (the Selectorate) and, more importantly, almost all movements on this axis have been *openings* (i.e., the selectorate for party leaders has generally been made more inclusive than before), while movements, and *openings*, on the Y axis (the Candidacy) are definitely rarer (Cross and Pilet, 2014). Reiterating an argument already made in the previous section, it is crucial to focus on the selectorate, because analysing its openings and the determinants behind them can tell us very important about political parties.

Nonetheless, following Figure 3.3 and comparing it with Figure 3.2, can we talk about 'democratised' party leader selection rules when just one dimension of analysis (be it the candidacy or the selectorate) is open, or very inclusive, while the other one is not as much open

as the first one? Let us give a couple of examples: let us imagine party A, which allows all its members to put forward their candidacy for party leadership, while only the party elite (e.g. the national executive) can select the leader. Conversely, let us imagine party B, where all members have the right to select the leader, but where just MPs supported by the 20% of the parliamentary party can put forward their candidacy. Would we call party A or B ‘democratised’ concerning the selection of their leaders? Probably not⁵⁸.

In these two cases, there is, alternatively, a possibility for high ‘contestation’ or for high ‘participation’ (using Dahl’s concepts), but that there is not a chance to have high contestation *and* high participation. This means that intra-party power-holders would be more likely to have more control over the party leader selection process. Indeed, if the candidacy dimension is very open, but the selectorate is not, intra-party power-holders would have great power in the *selection* of the party leader. Conversely, if the dimension which is extremely open is the selectorate, but the candidacy is not, such power-holders would have a great influence over the *candidates* for the position of party leader.

Such control would tend to be reduced in case *both* the candidacy and the selectorate dimension were very inclusive. From a theoretical viewpoint, a party might be indeed extremely inclusive on both the Selectorate (Inclusiveness) and the Candidacy (Liberalisation) axes. What does it mean for the reasoning put forward in this section? In my view, even when both the candidacy and the selectorate dimension are very inclusive, it would be better not to use the term ‘democratisation’ of party leader selection rules. Such choice is not simply driven by the fact that Intra-Party Democracy is an essentially contested concept, as argued by Cross and Katz (2013), but also by the consideration that Intra-Party Democracy and the democratisation of political parties have a more complex meaning (e.g., see Marino and Martocchia Diodati, 2017). As argued by Dahl concerning the differences between polyarchy and democracy, even if the candidacy and the selectorate dimensions are very open, I prefer to talk about a General Inclusiveness that can be reached under certain circumstances⁵⁹.

⁵⁸ This reasoning expands Mair’s point about the fact that ‘intra-party democratisation is often meaningless and/or illusory. Thus, for example, while ordinary members may be given the right to vote in the leadership selection process, they are nevertheless often offered only a limited or constrained choice’ (Mair, 1994, pp. 16–17). It is surprising how such words have received such insufficient attention in the comparative scholarship on party leader selection.

⁵⁹ On a side note, this discussion has been useful also to mark a distinction between Figure 3.3 presented in this Section and the figure put forward by Pasquino and Valbruzzi (2016). Indeed, the two authors present a figure which is also based on Dahl’s box, and whose X and Y axes are,

After having seen that the selectorate is at the centre of party changes in leader selection, and at the centre of comparative political scholarship, what does it tell us about political parties from a general standpoint? In other words, why do party leader selection rules become a feasible area to tackle? Moreover, does this signal that there is not a real willingness by party elites to open their political formations, given that the candidacy dimension is seldom opened?

I do not think so: indeed, opening the selectorate means that party elites lose a certain amount of control concerning the selection of party leaders, as also argued by some scholars (Marsh, 1993a; LeDuc, 2001). Shall we then conclude that this means that a wider selectorate of the party leader has an 'absolute' power? Again, this might be a hasty conclusion: Mair (1994) recalls that openings of party leader selection rules might simply be a way to take away power from middle-level troublesome activists and to empower more 'docile' and less extreme groups of people, like the rank-and-file. This point is also further discussed in Katz and Mair (2002) and Scarrow, Webb and Farrell (2000), and shows that even the second 'extreme' conclusion might be misplaced. A middle-of-the-road interpretation of the openings of the selectorate of party leaders is that intra-party power-holders might want to signal something both inside and outside the party. In other words, and already recalling the general argument made in Chapter 1, party leader selectorate becomes an area where it is useful to intervene in order to underline that internal or external 'messages' (i.e. shocks) or pressures do have an effect on political parties, and have an effect on the selection of party leaders, who have been allegedly become more and more important from several viewpoints. A possible addendum to this point is that by reforming (opening) party leader selection rules, parties might appear as more flexible and more able to efficiently cope with internal or external challenges⁶⁰.

respectively, inclusiveness and competition, while the upper right corner is labelled 'Intra-Party Democracy'. My conception of the application of Dahl's box with respect to party leader selection rules differs from that by Pasquino and Valbruzzi in two fundamental points: first, I do not have a competition-like (or contestation, as explained by the authors) Y axis, given my Y axis is related to the candidacy dimension of party leader selection rules. Second, and more importantly, the authors have Intra-Party Democracy as a final outcome when both the selectorate is expanded (X axis) and when the decisions of the leader can be 'widely' contested (Y axis), while I argue that even if the X and Y axes (in my framework, the selectorate and the candidacy dimensions) are extremely inclusive, we cannot talk about Intra-Party Democracy, but simply about Party Leader General Inclusiveness.

⁶⁰ Some very interesting considerations on the reasons why parties might decide to focus on specific areas to reform can be found in Gauja's book (2016, pp. 106–111).

At this point some clarification is needed: Section 3.1 has been devoted to underline the general framework within which my hypotheses are formulated, and Chapters 4 and 5 specifically deal with such hypotheses. In other words, these two chapters answer the question: why do parties open their leader selection rules (their selectorates)? Here I have focused on different questions: why do party leadership rules become a suitable area where intra-party power holders may decide to intervene? What makes party leader selection rules so attractive? It is clear that the latter questions are different from the first one, and this is why I have dealt with these latter questions in this section.

All in all, in this section, I have drawn a comparison between, on the one hand, Dahl's box and his conceptualisation of the different paths towards polyarchy, and, on the other hand, the various openings that might happen within political parties on leaders' selectorate or candidacy dimensions. I have also put forward an original way to understand the difference between openings either on the candidacy *or* the selectorate and openings involving *both* dimensions. In this latter case, if some specific thresholds are reached, we might talk about a Party Leader General Inclusiveness. After this discussion, it is time to go back to explaining the openings of party leader selectorates. Which countries are included in the empirical analysis? Which parties are considered? Which are the features of the DVs? The next section answers these questions.

3.4 Time and space: the case selection and the features of the party leader selectorates

It is time to clarify the temporal and the spatial span of this dissertation. I analyse the determinants of the openings of party leader selection rules in Western Europe. The focus on Western Europe has been driven by the fact that studies on party leader selection rules have this area as a crucial focus. Moreover, Western Europe has been at the centre of political research for many decades, and this means it is possible to have at one's disposal an extremely rich amount of data, which are fundamental, as I show in the next two chapters, to proficiently analyse the openings of party leader selection rules.

More specifically, I focus on 10 Western European countries: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom⁶¹. These 10

⁶¹ The reason behind the selection of these countries also lies in the results of the Personalisation of Party Politics expert survey I have devised along with Nicola Martocchia Diodati and Luca Verzichelli (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017) and whose data are used in the

countries show a good institutional, social, and political variability, therefore allowing for a potentially useful explanation for the openings of the selectorate for many Western European parties. France has been instead excluded. Indeed, a central political and party-related moment in France is surely the election of the President of the Republic. Who would be the party leader for French political formations⁶²? For some parties, it might be easy to posit the presidential candidate is the leader, but what about other parties? And, more crucially for this work, what happens if a party loses the presidential election? Would the defeated candidate be the leader, despite having lost the presidential race? Or, conversely, would the head of the extra-parliamentary organisation be the organ to focus on? It is evident answering these questions risks introducing a serious bias. Considering that also French scholars do not have a clear or encompassing answer to these questions⁶³, I have decided to exclude France from this analysis.

The time-span considered in this study is the 1985-2015 period. In this way, societal and party organisational changes occurred in Western Europe in the past few decades can be accounted for: in other words, a long-term and encompassing perspective can be adopted, and this can be very fruitful from the explanation and also from the comparative viewpoints⁶⁴. Moreover, the mid-1980s is a good starting point also to allow some time to pass between the democratic transition and at least the inception of the democratic consolidation in three Southern European countries (Portugal, Spain, and Greece, which are indeed included in the analysis), thus allowing for comparing more homogeneous countries from the democracy viewpoint.

Turning our attention to the selection of parties, the aim has been that of selecting relevant actors in each country. Which criteria can be used to reach this target? The literature has proposed several cutting points: for instance, having obtained at least 3% of the votes in a given election (Ware, 1996), or at least 5% of seats in at least two consecutive elections (Janda, 1980), or having reached 10% of the seats in at least one election (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). Such

empirical analysis of this dissertation. For some Western European countries (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden), it has been impossible to obtain answers to some specific questions of the survey. Therefore, these countries have been excluded from the empirical analysis and they are also not considered in this section.

⁶² See also fn. 45 in Section 3.2.

⁶³ Personal communication of the author with Florence Faucher and with Christophe Roux.

⁶⁴ On a side note, data on the Personalisation of Party Politics survey are only available from the mid-1980s onwards, and this might be another reason to consider concerning the time-span of the empirical analysis.

criteria, albeit being either too restrictive or too loose, pave the way for devising a good middle-of-the-road solution. I have adopted a two-fold criterion: having obtained at least 5% of the votes in one election between the mid-1980s and the mid-2010s, and having reached at least 1% of the votes in a single election for the party to be included for that specific election. This solution has been driven by a series of considerations: while a threshold is needed (and that is why the 5% of the votes is applied), it is also useful to consider the possibility that once-important parties have completely or almost completely disappeared from the political scene due to a slow decay or to an abrupt drop in their share of votes (e.g. the Italian PSI in 1994). In these latter cases, such parties are not relevant actors of the system anymore, and this must be taken into account when selecting the parties for the empirical analysis. Moreover, the same threshold is useful in the decision concerning when to start considering a party that has (slowly or abruptly) increased its presence in the electorate and the political system (e.g. the Dutch SP in 1994). Following the same reasoning applied to 'crumbling' parties, even in this case, these parties start being relevant actors of the political system, and this must be considered in the case selection.

The following step has been that of obtaining data for the leader selectorates of the parties that reach the above-mentioned two-fold threshold. In some cases, data have been collected thanks to the 2015 version of the Comparative Study of Party Leaders (COSPAL) dataset created for the books edited by Pilet and Cross (2014b) and by Cross and Pilet (2015) while, in some other cases, personal communication with country experts has been used⁶⁵. I have also performed additional research to fill gaps concerning parties and/or countries⁶⁶. Data have been aggregated at the legislature level, given some crucial factors, that should allegedly favour the openings of party leader selection rules (of the selectorate), and that have been presented in Section 3.1, only vary at the legislature level, like electoral setbacks and those related to the

⁶⁵ E.g. data for Austrian parties from 2013 to 2015 have been provided by Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik, Belgian parties from 2013 to 2014 have been obtained thanks to personal communication with Emilie Van Haute, data on Greek parties have been provided by Costas Eleftheriou, data for Portuguese parties from 2013 up to 2015 have been given by Isabella Razzuoli.

⁶⁶ E.g. data for Irish parties have been retrieved from several different sources (Farrell, 1992; Marsh, 1993b; Cross and Blais, 2012; Poguntke, Scarrow and Webb, 2016b; Rafter, 2016; Bolleyer and Weeks, 2017), as well as data on Dutch parties, where both pieces of research (Van Holsteyn, Koole and Den Ridder, 2014; Voerman, 2014) and personal communication with scholars (specifically, with Martijin van Nijnanten) have been used.

personalisation of politics⁶⁷, and also given some others substantially vary only in each legislature (like the opposition status of a party, which can vary if the majority supporting a government changes, but such changes are not very frequent in my dataset)⁶⁸. In order to have logically organised data, aggregating data at the legislature level means that a change in a party leader' selectorate is only reported if such change lasts at least until the end of a legislature (or the end of a given period). Otherwise, given this party would have the same score on the selectorate continuum both at the beginning and at the end of a legislature, this very short-term movement cannot be categorised as a change. As shown in a moment, this only applies to a specific case for a German party in 1993: it follows that almost all cases considered in the analysis involve parties that have opened party leader' selectorates and have maintained such opening for a reasonable amount of time. All in all, I have obtained data for more than 50 parties from the mid-1980s until the mid-2010s⁶⁹. Appendix A reports the parties, their acronyms, and the period for which they have been considered⁷⁰.

⁶⁷ For further information, see Chapters 4 and 5.

⁶⁸ Further notice this choice has also been taken in other analyses on party leader selection rules, like the one by Meyer and Odom (2016).

⁶⁹ Legislatures starting in 2014 or 2015 have been excluded from the analysis. Also, parties contesting just one election in the period under examination have been excluded as well. Moreover, two parties have been omitted from the analysis for two different reasons. On the one hand, I have excluded the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) because of its peculiar membership structure. The founder and party leader, Geert Wilders, is the sole member of the party (and he also has the power to select the political leader of the party). This means that the membership-decline-related factor I discuss in Chapter 4 might be at odds with a party whose membership is only made by the party leader. On the other hand, I have excluded the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) since I have obtained information on its leader selectorate only for the 2005-2010 and 2010-2015 legislatures. Since I did not want to include only partial information for a party (given the first entry of the UKIP in my dataset should have been in 1997, and I was, therefore, risking biasing the analysis by not inserting possible openings of the selectorate between 1997 and 2010), I have decided to exclude the UKIP from the analysis. Nonetheless, I have replicated all the empirical analyses performed in Chapter 6 – by attributing 0 on the membership-decline-related variable for the PVV and only using 2005-2010 and 2010-2015 entries for the UKIP – and the results are similar to those shown in Chapter 6. Finally, also the Portuguese Left Bloc (BE) has been excluded, given that it has been impossible to detect a

It is useful to turn our attention to a more precise description of data related to the selectorate for party leadership selection. A first striking piece of evidence, albeit confirmed by earlier studies focusing on single countries (Detterbeck and Rohlfing, 2014; Ennser-Jedenastik and Müller, 2014), is that, for some countries, there is not a single opening of party leader selection rules (Austria and Germany). Detterbeck and Rohlfing (2014, pp. 80–81) report the quickly reversed opening of the selectorate by the SPD in 1993, which was followed by a closing the following year. Nonetheless, this means that the SPD' value on the selectorate continuum at the beginning and the end of the legislature (1990-1994) was the same, equal to a selection by the party congress.

In some other countries, a certain number of openings can be detected. For instance, almost all Belgian parties have opened their leader selectorate in the period under examination: some parties passed from a congress-based selection of the party leader to a party primary selection: the Walloon Socialist party (PS) in 1997, the Flemish Socialist party (SP/SPA) in 1995, the Flemish Christian Democratic party (CVP/CDV) in 1993, as well as the Walloon Liberal party (PRL/MR) in 1989 and the Flemish Liberal party (PVV/VLD/OVLD) in 1993. Moreover, some Belgian parties opened their selectorate in an even stronger way, passing from a party-elite-based selection to a party primary: the Flemish Green party (AGALEV) in 1995 and the Flemish VU/NVA in 1999. Finally, the Flemish VB also opened its selectorate for the party leadership in 2004, passing from a leadership-based selection to a party-elite one. Interestingly, some other Belgian parties – the Walloon Christian-Democratic one (PSC/CDH) and the Walloon Green party (ECOLO) have not open their leader selection in the period under study because, in the former case, an opening was performed in 1970, and, in the latter case, the party was born already 'endowed' with a membership-based leadership selection.

Turning our attention to Greece, there are parties that never opened their leaders' selectorate from mid-1980s until mid-2010s (the KKE and, for the most recent years, DIMAR), while there are political formations that opened just once (SYNASPISMOS in 1993, passing from party elite to party congress; PASOK in 2004, moving from party congress to a party primary), and even a party that opened for even three times its selectorate (ND, which made its selectorate more inclusive in 1985, from MPs to an electoral college, in 1997, from the electoral college to the party congress, and, finally, in 2009, from the congress to the party primary).

clear leadership organ within the party for the period under examination, also following the considerations by Lisi and Freire (2014).

⁷⁰ In the empirical analysis, whose results are shown in Chapter 6, some parties have been excluded, given that data for some independent variables were not available.

Irish parties have also been at the centre of an expansion of the leader' selectorate. While the Labour party was the 'early bird' in this regard, having opened its selectorate in 1989 (from party MPs to party primary), the FG opened in 2004 (from MPs to an electoral college), as well as the PD in 2004 (again, from MPs to an electoral college), and, finally, the FF in 2015 (from MPs to an electoral college).

Also, some Italian parties opened their leader' selectorate in the 1985-2015 period. For instance, the FI opened its selectorate in 1997, passing from a party-elite-based selection of the leader to a congress-based one, while the post-communist DS opened twice in about two years: in 1998, passing, again, from a party-elite-based to a congress-based selection of the party leader, and in 2000, when a party primary was implemented. Finally, the LN opened its selectorate in 2013, passing from a congress-based leader selection to a party-primary-based one. The other Italian parties considered in the analysis did not open their leaders' selectorates (PRC, UDC, and the like)⁷¹.

Turning our attention to the Netherlands, apart from the GL that opened its selectorate in 1993, passing from the congress to the members⁷² (coded as party primary in my dataset), all the openings occurred between 2002 (the PVDA passed from congress to members, i.e. party primary) and in 2003 (both the CDA and the VVD moved from a congress-based to a membership-based, or primary-based, selection), while the SP and the D66 never opened their party leader selectorate in the period under study.

Let us move to the Iberian Peninsula. Starting from Portugal, the main openings happened in 1986 (the PSD passed from a party-elite-based to a congress-based selection of the leader), 1998 (the PS leader' selectorate passed from party elite to a party primary) and between 2005 and 2006 (respectively, the CDS opened the leader' selectorate from the congress to the party

⁷¹ Appendix B shows that the PD, born after the merging of the post-communist DS and the post-Christian democratic DL, has received a new party ID in my dataset. This means that the adoption of an open primary to select the leader of the party in 2007 cannot be deemed as an opening, given that the PD is considered as a newly-born party, and therefore, from my perspective, it *adopted* a certain party leader selectorate in 2007, while it did not *open* it – being the party non-existent before the decision to adopt the open primary as way of selecting the party leader.

⁷² For this dissertation, the selection of the leader by a Dutch 'membership congress' is considered as equivalent to a selection by party members in other Western European countries. Therefore, such selectorate falls into the 'party primary' category of the 6-point ordinal scale presented in Section 3.2.

primary, and the PSD followed the same path the next year)⁷³. As in all cases of communist parties hitherto analysed, no openings are detectable for the PCP.

Moving to Spain, only did the PSOE change their leader selectorate in 2014 (from congress to a party primary)⁷⁴. The AP/PP and the PCE/IU did not open their selectorate between the mid-1980s and mid-2010s.

Finally, two British parties out of the three included in the case selection opened their leaders' selectorate between 1985 and 2015: in 1998, the Conservative Party passed from a parliamentary-party-based to a party primary⁷⁵, while the Labour Party abandoned the electoral college in 2014 for a selection of the leader by means of a party primary⁷⁶.

⁷³ Notice that Portuguese parties are among the few political formations where a closing in the leader selectorate is detectable. In 1986, the PS leader's selectorate passed from party congress to the party elite, while in 2011 the CDS closed the selectorate for its leader (passing from a party primary to the party congress).

⁷⁴ Following the reasoning according to which only a movement towards a higher value on the selectorate continuum presented in Section 3.2 constitutes an opening, I do not consider as such the modification in the way of counting votes for the PSOE's congress in 1994 (from a territory-based counting of delegates votes to a 'one delegate one vote' system).

⁷⁵ The Conservative Party's selection of the party leader consists of a first selection by party MPs, who reduce the number of contenders to two people, followed by a membership selection between these two people. How to categorise such selection? The first phase of reducing the number of candidates does not necessarily lead to a parliamentary-party-based selection of the leader. Notice Theresa May's direct selection in 2016 by the parliamentary party was triggered by the fact that the alleged opponent in the soon-to-be membership selection, Andrea Leadsom, retired from the competition, leaving May the sole candidate for party leadership. Therefore, party members' role in the selection of the Conservative Party's leader can be extremely important. From a slightly speculative viewpoint, the first elimination phase by party MPs can be thought of as a sort of 'candidacy requirement' for prospective party leaders: in order to be an 'effective' candidate (i.e. a candidate that reaches the decisive stage of membership vote), a person needs to secure the support of a sufficiently high number of MPs so that he/she finishes either first or second in the parliamentary party's elimination ballot. Then, if this person reaches such candidacy requirement, he/she will run against his/her opponent in the membership vote. This is the reasoning behind my choice of considering the Conservative Party's leader selectorate as equivalent to a membership-based one. Therefore, even in this case, the party's selectorate falls into the 'party primary' category.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have presented the general framework within which my analysis moves. Then, I turned the attention to the operationalization of the focus of my study - the openings of the party leader selectorates – comparing my operationalization with that of other scholars. I have underlined that the two different viewpoints from which leader selectorates can be seen shall be related to two different dependent variables: a dichotomous one and an ordinal one. Before moving to a more detailed analysis of the party leader selectorates under examination (the time-span of the analysis, the countries and the parties included in this work), I have drawn a comparison between, on the one hand, Dahl's account of the historical movement towards polyarchy and, on the other hand, the analysis of the openings of the selectorate of party leaders (which could eventually lead to a Party Leader General Opening if both the candidacy and the selectorate dimensions are sufficiently open). Such comparison has also had the aim of understanding whether we can talk about a democratisation of party leader selection rules when only one dimension of analysis (in this case, the selectorate) is made more inclusive, and my answer has been a negative one.

At this point, the reader should have a sufficiently clear idea of the party leader selectorates and the cases under consideration in this dissertation. What remains to be fully explored is the precise way in which internal and external factors contribute favouring the opening of party leader selectorates. I begin with the internal factors, explored in Chapter 4, before moving to the external ones, tackled in the subsequent Chapter 5.

⁷⁶ Following, again, the reasoning according to which an opening on the selectorate is represented by a movement towards a higher value on the selectorate continuum presented in Section 3.2, the 1993 modification of the share of votes attributed to party members, party MPs and members of collateral organisations within the Labour Party has not been considered as an opening.

Chapter 4 – The internal factors behind the openings of party leader selectorates

‘[W]e think that it is important to explicitly state [...] that some party change can be explained by internal factors alone’ (Harmel and Janda, 1994a, p. 265). This interesting quote might serve as a starting point for this chapter: without being so clear-cut, I would argue that internal factors might be of great help to start shedding some light on the openings of party leader selection rules (more specifically, in party leader selectorates).

This chapter focuses on internal determinants of party leader selectorates' openings. Five factors are considered: two more classical internal factors, leadership changes (Section 4.1), a decline in party membership (Section 4.2). Then, two factors related to the personalisation of politics are tackled: the party leader's ability to drive consensus towards the party in a general election (Section 4.3), and the control of the party organisation by the party leader (Section 4.4). Finally, I deal with the ideological family to which each party belongs (Section 4.5).

If the first two factors can be deemed as closer to classical analyses of party change and of changes (openings) in party leader selection rules, the discussion about the third and fourth factor constitutes the first attempt, to the best of my knowledge, to in-depth connect the personalisation of politics at the intra-party level and party leader selection rules. For each of the first four factors, I discuss the main findings and limitations of existing research, then put forward a formal hypothesis, and carefully explain the operationalisation. In the final section, I then explain why I control for parties' ideological family in the empirical analysis.

As a final notice, starting from this chapter, I use expressions like ‘probability to open the selectorate’, ‘likelihood to open the selectorate’, ‘more chances to open the selectorate’. They have been chosen for a precise reason. The two DVs under examination (the dichotomous one and the ordinal one) are analysed by means of generalised linear models, and therefore the independent variables' effect on the DVs shall be interpreted as an increase (decrease) in the probability that the DVs have a certain value (be it 1 for the dichotomous DV or a specific value on the 6-point ordinal scale for the ordinal DV). Therefore, for readability and consistency reasons, from this chapter onwards, precise reference is made to probabilities related to the effect of the independent variables on the dependent ones.

4.1 The leadership change

The first internal factor potentially affecting the probability that a party leader's selectorate becomes more inclusive is related to a change in the party leader himself/herself. We can intuitively connect a change in the party leadership to an intra-party crisis and, possibly, to a successive opening of party leader selectorates. For instance, when the leader of a party resigns (or dies, or is replaced), especially if the party is a relevant one, this becomes a piece of news to be discussed in newspapers, on TV, on the Internet. Which are the theoretical and, if any, empirical grounds behind the intuition connecting party leaders' change and party leader' selection rules (selectorates)?

Starting from the pioneering contribution by Janda (1990), Harmel and Janda (1994a, p. 266) argue that a change in the party leadership, either brought about by the 'natural' exit of the leader (illness or death) or by his/he removal, is likely to bring about party change. The reasons behind this link are related, according to Harmel and Janda (1994a), to the necessity to deal with the wishes of the winning internal factions. To this reasoning, I would add that it might be necessary to mark a strong discontinuity with the old leadership, which has either 'naturally' come to an end or has been abruptly interrupted. To be fair, Harmel and Janda themselves argue that a leadership change might not have such a strong effect on the likelihood of party change (especially if compared with external shocks), but their fifth proposition states that '*[a] change in the person who leads the party is likely to produce party change [...] simply to consolidate the new leader's power base within the party [...] or] to impose new methods for achieving party goals'* (Harmel and Janda, 1994a, p. 280).

The proposition is slightly problematic in that it deals with *a person* leading the party (therefore possibly contrasting with the existence of a collective body that leads it), but a more substantial point to recall is that already one year later do Harmel *et al.* (1995) recognise that leadership change might be important in fostering party change, for a series of reasons, ranging from the possible relevant differences between outgoing and ingoing leaders to the willingness of new leaders to bring about innovations to consolidate their hold on the party, to the generally destabilising nature of leadership changes. Their analysis shows there is empirical confirmation for a certain effect of leadership changes on party changes.

So, a theoretical, and partly empirically tested, connection between a leadership change and party change exists. Yet, as we have already seen in Chapter 2, many analyses on party change have had a qualitative focus, therefore tackling a few or even just one party. Hence, unsurprisingly, as already briefly seen in Chapter 2, the subsequent analyses by Müller (1997) and Bille (1997) come to partly different conclusions: in the former analysis, devoted to the Austrian

SPÖ between the mid-1940s and 1970, leadership change is a crucial source for party change. Conversely, in the latter study, focusing on the Danish Social Democratic party between 1960 and 1995, it is argued that the party manifesto and the party rules related to the internal distribution of power are not affected by a change in the leadership, and only a limited change in the coalition-related party behaviour is detectable. All in all, the findings related to leadership changes are partial and contradictory.

Yet, it would be wrong to dismiss the role of leadership change in fostering party change (and therefore, in supporting an opening of party leader selection selectorates). If we slightly widen the scope of analysis, it can be noticed that another area of research not so distant from party leader selection rules is thought to be affected by leader change: candidate selection rules. Indeed, in their seminal contribution on the determinants of candidate selection reforms, Barnea and Rahat (2007, p. 387), argue that a leadership contest, or a leadership succession, can trigger change of candidate selection rules, because ‘[l]eadership succession, and even a serious leadership contest, may intensify pressures for reform because this can serve the interest of a strong contender, or of a new leader, to reshuffle the former power balance’. Despite the fact that their reasoning (strongly) resembles the one put forward in the party change literature, this is the first contribution where explicit reference is made not simply to the wide topic of party change, but to a narrower area of research (which is definitely closer to leader selection rules), i.e. candidate selection.

After this first step, Chiru *et al.* (2015) hypothesise that leadership change should influence changes in party leader selection rules⁷⁷, and the empirical analysis does indeed find empirical confirmation for this hypothesis. Finally, it is Gauja (2016, pp. 148–154) who points out at some important elements to consider when weighting the role of party leaders in driving party change, and her considerations might be extremely interesting from a party leader selection rules viewpoint. According to Gauja, party leaders can ‘establish agency’, meaning that they can publicly affirm their role as drivers of change, endowed with a certain amount of power to do so; second, they can present reforms to the wide public, having the possibility to speak to the people as ‘the most important figure in a party’; third, they can carefully craft changes as having positive and modernising aims and consequences for the party. Finally, Gauja (2016, pp. 105–114) also argues that many relevant reforms are implemented by the parties she includes in the empirical analysis within a short period (approximately a year) after the selection of a new leader, and this

⁷⁷ Let us recall their analysis includes several dimensions of analysis, including de-selection rules, party leaders’ term length and the maximum number of terms allowed for a person to be a party leader.

should allegedly bring about some evidence on the strong impact that a leadership change might have on party changes.

Therefore, it might be reasonable to expect a change in a party's leadership might have a certain effect on the likelihood the party changes something at the intra-party level. Going more into detail, there might also be an effect on the probability that parties open party leader selection rules, given the great importance these rules have at the intra-party level. Therefore, I test the theoretical and empirical arguments put forward in the party change literature, in the candidate selection one, and in the party leader selection and de-selection literature. All in all, my first hypothesis is as follows:

H1. Leadership change increases the probability for a party to open the selectorate of its leader.

How to operationalize leadership change to create a variable for the empirical analysis? Despite its apparent simplicity, different researchers have come to different conclusions: for instance, Chiru *et al.* (2015) tackle the problem according to which a leadership change can happen in the same year as the changes in party leader selection rules. They solve the problem by arguing that it is likely what comes first is the selection of the leader, followed by the change in the rules. Yet, this might be a non-totally satisfactory solution. I have created a dichotomous variable, called *Leadership Change*, operationalizing whether in a certain legislature there is at least one leadership change *before* an opening of the selectorate.

This choice has been driven by the logical consideration that a leadership change cannot affect the opening of the selectorate if the latter happens before the former. Moreover, if the leadership change occurs in the same year of an opening of the selectorate, I have checked which of the two events comes first. In other words, I have investigated which selectorate elected the leader: if the former has not changed concerning past leadership selections, it logically follows that what comes first is the leadership change, followed by an opening of the selectorate.

Furthermore, if a new party comes to life (e.g. the Irish Progressive Democrats in 1987, or the Italian FI in 1994), the 'selection' of the first leader for this new party has not been considered as a leadership change, given that such person has not replaced another party leader. Let us take FI's example: the fact that Silvio Berlusconi became the leader of the party when the party was founded cannot be considered as a leadership change: before him, there was nobody leading the party, for the logical reason the party did not exist before his leadership. Therefore, he was the first leader, and also the founder, of the party.

Data for this variable have mainly been obtained from the 2015 version of the COSPAL dataset used in the Pilet and Cross' (2014b) and Cross and Pilet's (2015) books. For Irish parties, data have been retrieved from Marsh (1993b), Rafter (2016) and O'Malley and Murphy (2017), while data on leadership change in Dutch parties have been taken from the Dutch Documentation Centre for Political Parties (DNPP)⁷⁸. Appendix B reports further details related to party- or country-specific issues concerning the operationalization of *Leadership Change*.

Table 4.1 Percentage of party-cases having changed their leadership by country, Western Europe (1985-2015)

Country	Percentage
Austria	46.5
Belgium	58.7
Germany	66.7
Greece	18.6
Ireland	48.1
Italy	34.7
Netherlands	39.2
Portugal	47.2
Spain	31.2
United Kingdom	50

Source: author's elaboration

Table 4.1 above reports, for each country, the percentage of party-cases (that is, of each party in each legislature) having had at least one leadership change in the considered period. For instance, almost 50% of Austrian party-cases from 1986 until 2015 changed their leader. As it can be seen, data for this variable show interesting differences: some countries where openings of party leader selection rules have been rarer (Spain, and Italy) show a lower percentage of changes in party leadership. Conversely, Belgium and Portugal, where more openings of party leader selection rules are detectable, also show high values of leadership changes. Yet, German party-cases, where no change at all is detectable from 1987 until 2015, show extremely high values of party leadership changes. German parties, in proportion, are the ones who changed more easily their leadership in the period under consideration. This is not surprising, given that German party leaders, from the 1980s onwards, have had a very short average tenure (Detterbeck and Rohlfing, 2014, p. 88). Another outlier is represented by Greek parties, which show the lowest percentage of party-cases where a change in party leadership is detectable from the mid-1980s until mid-2010s. Again, this should not come as a surprise, given the tenure of some Greek party leaders (especially of the two parties which were main actors of the system

⁷⁸ <http://dnpp.ub.rug.nl/dnpp/>.

until recent years, the ND and the PASOK) is surely longer than the one of their German colleagues.

All in all, Table 4.1 shows that there seems to be a specific pattern concerning the possible relationship between the changes in party leadership and the openings of party leader selection rules, albeit the existence of outlying countries shall be noticed. In this sense, the empirical analysis performed in Chapter 6 might help us understand this puzzle.

4.2 The membership decline

The second internal factor I deal with is the decline in party membership. This is one of the most important elements to consider when analysing party organisations, and its evolution over time is at the centre of many analyses: from the mere study of membership figures (Katz *et al.*, 1992; Mair and Van Biezen, 2001; Van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke, 2012; Van Biezen and Poguntke, 2014; Van Haute, Paulis and Sierens, 2017); to research focusing on party members via surveys tackling the reasons behind the decision to join the party, their motivations, and so forth (Van Haute and Gauja, 2015), also in connection with the adoption of the direct election of the party leader by party members or voters (Sandri and Seddone, 2015b; Bernardi, Sandri and Seddone, 2017); to analyses related to the determinants of the changes in party membership figures (Kölln, 2016; Peters, 2016) or to the changes on party organisations themselves driven by party membership diverse trends (Kölln, 2015).

Yet, why is a change in a party's membership figures important to understand, and possibly contributing explaining, openings of the leader selectorate? Because members are crucial for giving a democratic legitimacy to political parties, and their decline is a phenomenon that cannot be underestimated. Indeed, between the late 1980s and early 1990s, more and more scholars underline the fact that a first decline in membership figures of Western European parties is detectable. With the alleged demise of the 'golden age' (Janda and Colman, 1998) of mass parties, societal and organisational changes (Panebianco, 1988; Katz and Mair, 1995) are driving parties increasingly towards the electorate and away from party members. Already in 1990 is Richard S. Katz writing about the fact that party members, not necessarily contributing with a very substantial amount of money to party finances, and increasingly less crucial for communicating with voters, are less and less central for party organisations, so much so that parties risk partly losing their role of connectors between the state and society (Katz, 1990). This argument is enlarged in subsequent contributions (Mair, 1994; Katz and Mair, 1995), but what is of interest

here is the fact that party members seem to be considered, already in the early 1990s, as less and less important for political parties. Nonetheless, this is not the end of the story.

Indeed, a crucial word has not entered the discussion yet: legitimacy. One of the most important functions performed by party members is giving political formations a strong democratic legitimacy (Scarrow, Webb and Farrell, 2000; Ignazi, 2014; Scarrow, 2014; Gauja, 2015). To the previous two points (the increasing distancing between parties and the society, and the legitimacy that party members continue giving parties) we shall add the fact that party membership in Western Europe has been declining for the past few decades (Mair and Van Biezen, 2001; Van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke, 2012; Van Biezen and Poguntke, 2014)⁷⁹. As a consequence, a decline in party membership is not something parties might light-heartedly accept without doing nothing. In other words, membership decline is a relevant phenomenon that might have deep reverberations within political parties.

Indeed, Tan (1997) argues that political parties might react to a decline in membership figures by implementing party change – and specifically, by reducing the centralisation of power and the complexity in political parties⁸⁰. The author has actually a very nuanced position, underlining there is also the possibility that parties react to such decline by simply not changing the centralisation of power and the complexity. The results of Tan's analysis (1997) show that party membership decline *might* affect party change, thus without pointing at a clear relationship between the two phenomena. Nonetheless, what is crucial to underline is that a first seed connecting the decline in party membership figures to modifications in parties' organisational structures is planted. As already seen with regards to leadership changes, even in this case, the incremental nature of political research makes it necessary to wait for some years before an explicit link is made between membership figures and party leader selection rules. The well-known article by Van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke (2012, pp. 39–40) argues that:

‘The increasingly frequent adoption of broadly based primaries and membership ballots to select party leaders and candidates may also reflect recognition by the parties themselves that their active memberships are no longer representative [...], if primaries are intended to broaden the base of leadership support, it makes much more sense to extend the opportunity for

⁷⁹ For a partly different yet very stimulating account of the changes in party membership figures in Western Europe, see Scarrow (2000).

⁸⁰ Let us recall that Tan starts from a party-change-like perspective, and in this framework party leader selection rules are included in the centralization of power cluster of data. For more information, see Section 2.1

participation in these primaries beyond the party itself, and certainly beyond the narrow reach of the active members'.

This argument might mean two different things: there is the necessity to open party leader selection rules either to account for the now-non-representativeness of party members or to give a certain democratic legitimacy to party leaders.

The line of reasoning by Van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke (2012), which unfortunately is not further developed in their contribution, is expanded by Scarrow (2014), and, more importantly for the purposes of this section, by Wauters (2014) in his analysis of the adoption of OMOV leader selection rules in Belgian parties. According to Wauters, Belgian parties might have opened their leader selection rules to either fight a membership decline by attracting new members and also to keep old members within the party. The results of his empirical analysis underline that membership figures might play a role, albeit not a very central one.

Up to now, we have seen that the connection between party membership figures and openings of party leader selection rules does exist, but seems a bit blurred. It is useful to turn to Gauja's book (2016, p. 31), where she interestingly argues that 'shrinking party memberships provide a strong motivation for organisational reform, whether it is to secure more members for functional reasons, or simply to demonstrate the party's legitimacy'.

I do believe the crucial word in the discussion is legitimacy. Political parties need to be legitimised, or at least to have a sufficient level of legitimisation to operate. Nonetheless, it is well known that political formations have been undergone terrible problems of illegitimacy, especially in the Western world and in Western Europe (see for instance the discussion in Ignazi, 2014). Therefore, a suitable solution to deal with these problems might be opening the party leader selectorate, to signal a certain predisposition towards democracy and other democratic values like inclusiveness or participation. In other words, a 'democratic' legitimacy problem, brought about by a decline in party membership, might be fought with the means of an allegedly 'democracy-enhancing' reform, i.e., opening the selectorate of party leaders. All in all, my second hypothesis is as follows:

H2. The stronger the decline in a party's membership, the higher the probability for a party to open the selectorate of its leader.

The operationalization of the membership decline of a party is obviously strictly connected to the general discussion on the operationalization of parties' membership figures. As already partially argued by Duverger (1964, pp. 79–101) and, in a more complete way, by Bartolini (1983,

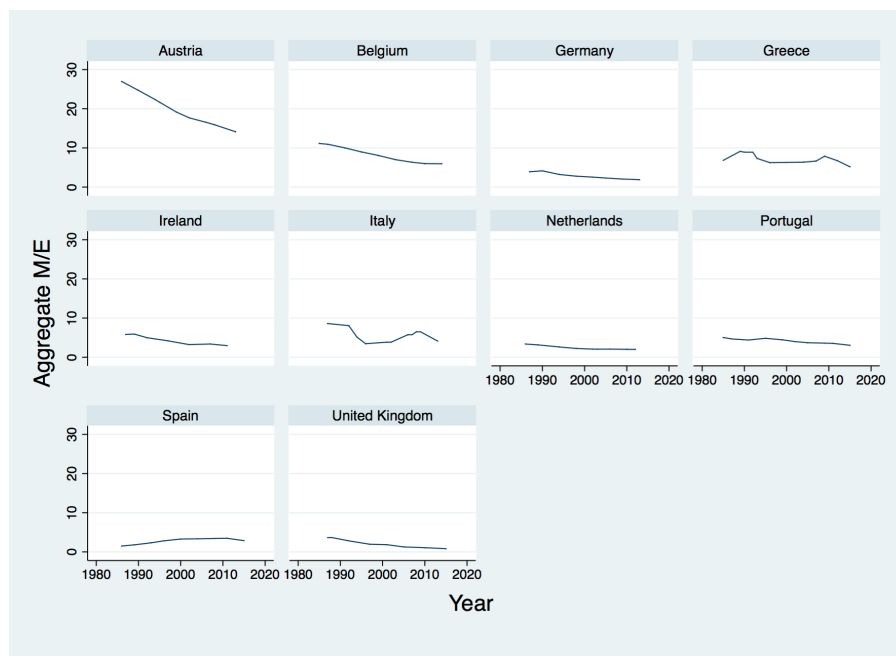
pp. 182–189), there are three different ways to calculate the membership figures of a party: the raw number of members (M), the membership/party voters ratio (M/V) and the membership/electorate ratio (M/E). The problems with the first two measures are discussed by Bartolini (1983, p. 186) and by Katz *et al.* (1992, pp. 330–331): to begin with, M is strongly related to a country's population (the bigger the country, the bigger the party membership figures, all other things being equal). Conversely, the problems related to the M/V ratio are twofold: on the one hand, a variation in its value might be related to a parallel increase (or decrease) in both the party's membership figures and the party's number of voters, or to a divergent change (an increase in the former and a decrease in the latter, or vice versa). In this second scenario, many problems of interpretation might arise: for instance, 'does M/V rise because the party has managed to encapsulate a higher proportion of its voters, or because the party loses voters while not losing members?' (Katz *et al.*, 1992, p. 331). Moreover, and from a more general viewpoint, even the broad meaning behind the M/V ratio is debated among scholars (Duverger, 1964, p. 92; Bartolini, 1983, p. 186; Scarrow, 2000; Bosco and Morlino, 2006). On the other hand, the M/E ratio does not suffer from the above-mentioned issues, given that denominator of the fraction is a relatively stable number, the electorate of a country, and also that the M/E ratio easily allows for cross-party (cross-country) comparisons (Bartolini, 1983, p. 189; Katz *et al.*, 1992, p. 331).

Therefore, also following scholars dealing with cross-country and cross-party membership comparisons (e.g. see Weldon, 2006; Kölln, 2015, 2016), in this work I focus on the M/E ratio at the party level. To calculate the (possible) decline in party membership figures (i.e., in the M/E ratio), I have calculated the inter-legislature change for each party in each legislature under consideration. In other words, I have calculated the difference between two five-year moving averages: one taken at T and one at T-1. The decision to focus on moving averages has been taken to efficiently tackle not simply short-lived fluctuations in the parties' membership trends, but to include a (possible) longer more profound decline in membership figures. Given that I work at the legislature level, the two periods (T and T-1) correspond to a legislature at T and to a legislature at T-1. Finally, to avoid endogeneity problems, I have calculated the M/E five-year moving average in the first year of each legislature. The resulting variable has been called *Membership Decline*.

Data for *Membership Decline* have been obtained, concerning party members, mainly from the MAPP dataset (version 2.0) (Van Haute and Paulis, 2016) and, for the electorate, either from Nohlen and Stover (2010) or from each country's electoral authority (for the more recent

elections)⁸¹. When possible, data have been completed via linear interpolation⁸². More details on the variable and its operationalization can be found in Appendix B.

Figure 4.1 Aggregate M/E ratio per country over time, Western Europe (1985-2015)



Source: author's elaboration

Figure 4.2 above reports the aggregate M/E ratio for each country between the mid-1980s and mid-2010s. The general take from a quick look is that, as widely shown by other pieces of work, the M/E ratio – considered at the aggregate level, i.e. for each country – has been declining for the past few decades in the Western European countries under examination. The most significant decline is visible for Austria, which is also the country which started from the highest aggregate M/E ratio in the mid-1980s. Moreover, slightly less abrupt decreases in the

⁸¹ The only exception is related to Greek parties' membership data, which are not available in the MAPP dataset. In this case, I have resorted to additional sources of information (Charalambis, Maratou-Alipranti and Hadjiyanni, 2004, p. 375; Eleftheriou, 2009; Vernardakis, 2011, p. 222; Eleftheriou and Tassis, 2014, p. 202; Nea Dimokratia, 2015; Pasok, 2015), and also to personal communication with Costas Eleftheriou for data on SYNASPISMOS/SYRIZA most recent years' membership figures. Concerning the more recent elections' data sources, information can be found in Appendix B when discussing the operationalization of the *Electoral setback* variable (see Chapter 5 for more information).

⁸² Moreover, when I had just data for a part of a legislature, I have attributed those data also to the first or the last years of the legislature.

M/E ratio can be detected in Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, the United Kingdom. On the other hand, declining but more erratic trends are depicted in the quadrants of Greece and Italy. It is interesting to notice that countries experiencing the sharpest decline in the country-level M/E ratio are Austria and Belgium and, for more recent years, Italy and Greece. Except for Austria, in all the other countries, there have also been a significant number of openings of party leader selection rules. Chapter 6 might help us understanding whether this impressionistic hint finds empirical confirmation in a multivariate regression model.

4.3 The personalisation of politics (1): leaders' effects in general elections

Up to now, I have dealt with two intra-party determinants that have already been connected – in various fashions and with a variable coherence - with party change, and especially with the openings of party leader selection rules: leadership change and membership decline.

Yet, there are other intra-party factors, which have not been at the centre of empirical studies on party leader selection rules, which might have an impact on the DVs. I am referring to variables related to the personalisation of politics. This section is devoted to the study of the ability of party leaders to drive consensus towards their parties in general elections. I argue that when leaders are more able to foster electoral consensus towards their parties, there are more chances to make the rules to select them more open, for a series of reasons. Then, the next section is related to the exploration of a further personalisation-related variable, the control of party organisations by their leaders. Finally, in Chapter 5, I explore the possible influence of a third variable, namely, the general impact of the personalisation of politics in a given election.

These three variables (the two presented in this chapter and the one put forward in Chapter 5) are related to the two areas of the personalisation of politics discussed in Section 2.4, namely, the general-elections-related one and the intra-party-related one. In this dissertation, there is the first attempt to connect the personalisation of politics and the openings of party leader selection rules from a quantitative perspective. In other words, this is the first time that the personalisation of politics is extensively linked to the analysis of party leader selection rules from a comparative, cross-country and diachronic, viewpoint. So, including some variables related to the personalisation of politics might be useful to fully grasp the potential effect of this long-term and pervasive phenomenon on the openings of party leader selection rules.

Let us now focus on the first variable related to the personalisation of politics: the ability of party leaders to drive consensus towards their parties in general elections. Such determinant is at the centre of many studies analysing the personalisation of politics. As already argued elsewhere

(Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017), a good example is the well-known analysis by King (2002), where the central research question is devoted to the understanding of whether leaders' (and candidates') role is important in shaping the outcomes of general elections. Then, in the same co-authored contribution, the authors underline that many pieces of research are focused on this quest: the book by Karvonen has at least one entire chapter devoted to the analysis of the influence of leaders in general elections' outcomes (2010, pp. 65–84); the framework of analysis devised by Rahat and Sheafer (2007) and subsequently expanded in Balmas *et al.* (2014) allocates some space to the fact that 'people vote more on the basis of their evaluations of leaders and less on the basis of evaluations of parties and identification with them' (Balmas *et al.*, 2014, p. 40); Blondel and Thiébault straightforwardly argue that it is necessary to focus on the analysis of the leaders' personalisation on the electorates of the countries under examination and, even more specifically, to focus on the 'ability of party leaders to boost support' (towards their parties in general elections) (2010, p. 72); Aarts, Blais and Schmitt (2011) devote an entire book the analysis of leaders' effects in general elections in a number of Western European countries between 1970 and 2000, a road subsequently followed by Costa Lobo and Curtice (2015); even those who focus on the more contested concept of 'presidentialisation of politics' are interested in the effect of party leaders in affecting the results of their parties in general elections (Poguntke and Webb, 2005a).

Before delving deeper into the discussion on the role of party leaders in a general election, a slightly more general point must be addressed. Some authors (Balmas *et al.*, 2014; Musella, 2015, 2018; Passarelli, 2015) believe more open leader selection rules are an aspect of the personalisation of politics, not a possible consequence of it, given that the openings of the abovementioned rules should bring about, among other things, a higher legitimacy for party leaders and also a higher disintermediation between leaders themselves with wider strata of the party and/or of the electorate.

I do not share this view, for a series of reasons. First, many authors have shown, as I report in this section and Section 4.4, that the two phenomena are different and indeed one (the personalisation of politics) might cause the other (more open leader selection rules). Second, the idea that more open party leader selection rules are a part of the wider phenomenon of the personalisation of politics contrasts with two important points.

On the one hand, we know that more open party leader selection rules might bring about more legitimisation for party leaders (Poguntke and Webb, 2005b; Lisi, 2010; Sandri and Seddone, 2015a; Pasquino, 2016). Yet, this cannot be said with regards to the personalisation of politics. How can a phenomenon (more open party leader selection rules) which is thought to be

part of a wider process (the personalisation of politics) bring about such contrasting results in such a crucial area of democratic politics, that is, the legitimacy of political actors?

On the other hand, the second relevant point on why it would be better to separately treat the two phenomena is related to Wauters' piece of work (2014), which has already been analysed in Section 2.4. Without entirely re-quoting the points already raised in that section, Wauters' piece of work is interesting because it seems to point out that the personalisation of politics might influence more open party leader selection rules, but also that the latter can have an effect on the former. In other words, not only is the relationship between the two phenomena quite blurred, because one brings about consequences (more legitimised politics) that the other does not, but also because the causal relationship between them might also be reversed. More specifically, more open party leader selection rules can also cause an increase in the personalisation of politics. In this dissertation, I lengthily show why I believe it is indeed the personalisation of politics to affect the probability parties open their rules to select the leader and not the other way around. Nonetheless, what is of interest here is the fact that overlapping the two concepts might be extremely problematic. From a more conservative viewpoint, it is better to treat them as two phenomena, and not as one.

After this brief digression, let us go back to the effect of leaders' role in general elections. Is it possible to connect this phenomenon with the openings of party leader selection rules (party leader selectorate)? Here a consistent effort is required, given that, as briefly mentioned in Section 2.4, just a handful of researchers have dealt with this topic and, in most of the cases, just in a very general way. The necessary starting point is made by those studies focusing on the opening of candidate selection rules. The reason is straightforward: not only do systematic analyses of the opening of candidate selection rules precede those related to leader selection, but the framework used in these candidate-related studies is also widely implemented in the subsequent works dealing with leader selection rules. To begin with, Barnea and Rahat (2007), in their analysis of the determinants of the 'democratisation' of candidate selection rules, hint at a possible role, at the party system level, of the personalisation of politics. This hint is not expanded, but it is adapted into the party leader selection rules studies by Lisi (2010), who argues about the role of the 'presidentialisation of politics' in the sense that more open party leader selection rules might increase party leaders' autonomy.

Despite some problematic points (already analysed in Section 2.3), this intuition about the connection between the personalisation of politics and more open party leader selection rules is more lengthily discussed by Wauters (2014). In this dissertation, it is the first time that the personalisation of politics is explicitly and lengthily linked to more open party leader selection

rules. This means that, despite being a phenomenon that has been studied for a certain number of years, just in very recent years have scholars connected the personalisation of politics and the openings of party leader selection rules. It also follows there is room for manoeuvre to build a comprehensive framework of analysis to link these two important phenomena.

Some attention shall be finally devoted to the analysis by Gauja (2016) who, also building on Wauters' analysis, inserts into her party change framework (that includes openings of party leader selection rules) the role of the personalisation of politics at the political system level. Yet, she somewhat surprisingly argues that the personalisation of politics, along with the 'Americanization' (already briefly mentioned in Barnea and Rahat, 2007), are 'concepts [that] have been used both in scholarship and party rhetoric to describe both the causes and effects of organizational change, [but] they have limited analytical utility in assisting comparative party scholars to analyse the nature and trajectory of reform due to the 'fuzziness' of the concepts involved' (Gauja, 2016, p. 79).

This final critique does not seem to be further developed in Gauja's book, but it is a good excuse to understand a more general point concerning the relationship between the personalisation of politics and the openings of party leader selectorate. Many contributions focus on the alleged effect of the former phenomenon on the latter *at the political system level*. In other words, most of the above-mentioned authors seem to be at odds with a concept – the personalisation of politics – which might indeed be quite fuzzy if understood solely at the political system level. This does not mean that a political-system-level effect of the personalisation of politics on party leader selection rules (selectorates) cannot be detected. In Section 5.4, I try to show that such general effect might indeed exist. Nonetheless, it is understandable that many authors have only considered the political-system-level effect of the personalisation of politics on party leader selection rules.

One reason behind this 'generalization-related' choice might be that a true synchronic and diachronic comparative study of the *different faces* of the personalisation of politics in Western Europe in the past few decades is not available (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017). Indeed, this has been one of the reasons behind our decision to devise the Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey. More specifically, as I explain in the final part of this section, the survey allows researchers to precisely tackle the different 'faces' of the personalisation of politics, going downwards to the party level. So, one of the possible consequences of the above-mentioned lack of encompassing comparative studies on the different party-level aspects of the personalisation of politics is that this concept might be seen as 'too fuzzy' in empirical analyses. This might also be one of the reasons behind Gauja's critical account.

In order to be less unclear and bring about a more encompassing and precise account of the possible relationship between the personalisation of politics and the opening of party leader selectorate, I argue that if party leaders have an effect on general elections - more specifically if they can obtain consensus towards their party in a general election - this should increase the probability that the party opens its leader selectorate. Why should it be so? 'Successful' party leaders – i.e. those who have been able to drive consensus towards their parties in a general election – might be seen as profitable assets by party elites or even by party cadres or members. Therefore, there might be pressure to open the selectorate that elects the leader to capitalise on this success and transmit the image of a successful 'more democratic' party to the external environment, and possibly to party members or sympathisers as well. In other words, a 'successful' leader who might receive a wider legitimisation in future intra-party competitions might serve as a good advertisement for the party itself.

Let us recall, one more time, that a more open selectorate does not necessarily imply that a party is more democratic (as I have lengthily discussed in Section 3.3). What counts is the *image* transmitted either within the party or towards the party environment. Moreover, the party leader himself/herself might be tempted to negotiate an opening of the leader selectorate in order to curb intra-party opposition, in line with the well-known reasoning put forward by Mair (1994), and subsequently developed by Scarrow, Webb and Farrell (2000), Barnea and Rahat (2007), and by Gauja (2016, pp. 42–46), who, very wittily, talks about the 'battle for organisational control'. My adding to this line of reasoning is the role that the ability of a party leader to get consensus during general elections might have in triggering this process. More formally, the third hypothesis states:

H3. The higher the ability of a party leader to obtain consensus during a general election, the higher the probability for a party to open the selectorate of its leader.

At this point, let us turn our attention to the operationalization of the related independent variable. Thus, it might be useful to give some information about the Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey. It includes data on 117 parties, obtained thanks to the collaboration of more than 150 country experts (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017). More specifically, the survey was made by three sections: a first general one, a second one related to Elections and Elites, and a third one connected to Intra-Party politics (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017). Furthermore, while the first section is extensively dealt with in Section 5.3, let us focus on the second section. In the Elections and Elites section, there was a question asking

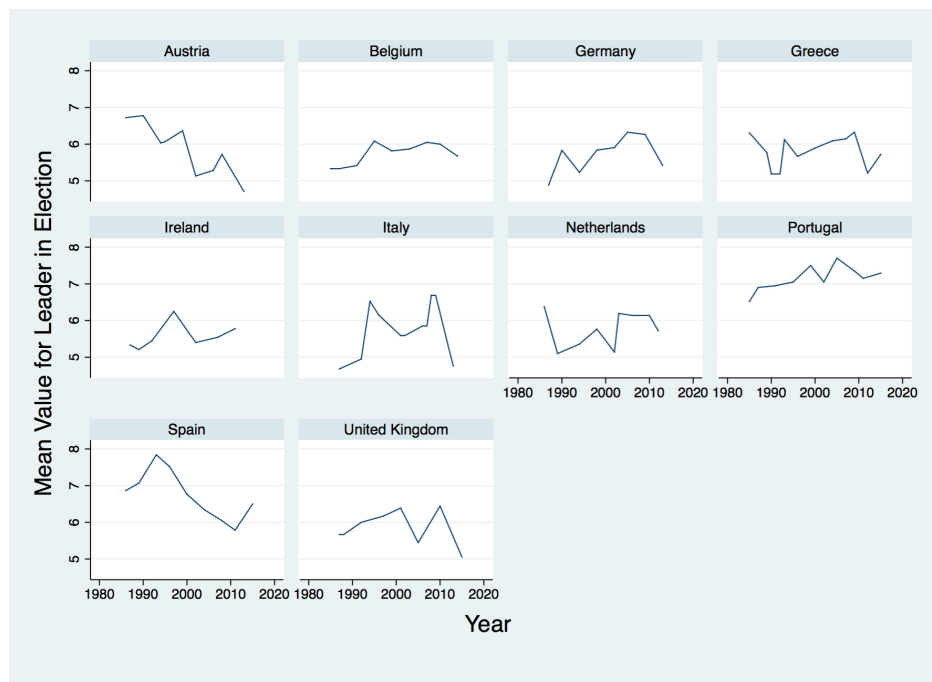
experts to rate the ability of party leaders to obtain consensus during each general election under consideration. Respondents were asked to rate leaders on a 1-10 scale (where 1 means very low ability, and 10 very high ability). For the operationalization of this variable, I have decided to focus on this question⁸³. Then, the resulting variable, called *Leader in Election*, operationalizes the ability of each party leader under consideration to shape a general election by obtaining consensus for his/her party. The extremely positive results of several reliability tests we have performed for the related question in the Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey further confirm the goodness of question and the fact that different experts have attributed highly reliable scores to the party leaders under examination (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017).

Figure 4.3 below reports the mean value, over time, of *Leader in Election* in each Western European country included in this dissertation. Apart from Austria, Greece, and Netherlands, in all the countries included in the analysis, there is a first phase of growth in the average value of the ability of party leaders to drive consensus towards their parties, which lasts approximately until the mid-1990s. It shall be underlined that the three countries which instead show an initial decreasing trend also have initial average values which are extremely high, especially if compared with those of the other countries. This might help to explain the diverse trend of these three countries compared to the other seven ones.

Then, after this initial phase, a decreasing trend is detectable, followed by a third phase of increase in the average value of the variable related to the ability of leaders to obtain consensus. It is also interesting to notice that, at least in some countries, there are periods where average values of *Leader in Election* are higher also correspond to periods of openings of party leader selectorates (e.g., mid-to-late 2000s and early 2010s for Ireland; early-to-mid-2010s for Spain, 1990-2010 for Greece, and so forth).

⁸³ The precise formulation of the question is as follows: ‘How would you evaluate the ability of party leaders to obtain consensus during electoral campaigns? For each of the following parties and general elections, please rate such ability on a 1-10 scale, where 1 means “very low ability” and 10 means “very high ability”’.

Figure 4.2 Average values of Leader in Election per country over time, Western Europe (1985-2015)



Source: author's elaboration

As I have previously argued, the personalisation of politics is a multi-faceted concept. This also means that it might have a multi-faceted effect on the openings of party leader selection rules (selectorates). For instance, a connection might be imagined between the intra-party face of this concept and the leader's selectorate. The subsequent section directly tackles this face and its possible effect on the DVs under study.

4.4 The personalisation of politics (2): leaders' control of party organisations

In the previous section, we have seen that many authors have connected party leaders' role in general elections to the encompassing concept of the personalisation of politics. Turning our attention to party leaders' control of the party organisations – the fourth internal factor I deal with in this chapter – it can be noticed that the situation is surely more complex.

Indeed, the existence of an 'intra-party personalisation face', even just loosely related to what leaders can do within party organisations, requires some discussion. As posited in Section 2.4, it is Duverger himself (1964) who writes about the increasing authority of leaders within political parties. Then, this intuition is left underdeveloped for many years, until more recent contributions are published. For instance, Poguntke and Webb (2005a) put forward their analysis of the presidentialisation of politics framework by also focusing on the 'party-related'

presidentialisation, intended as ‘a *shift in intra-party power to the benefit of the leader*. Were this to be the case, we would expect to find evidence of growing leadership autonomy from the dominant coalitions of power within the party’ (Poguntke and Webb, 2005b, p. 9). Then, a further step towards a connection between the personalisation of politics and leaders’ roles in intra-party matters is surely the already-mentioned framework by Rahat and Sheafer (2007) and Balmas *et al.* (2014): in the latter contribution, some reference is made to the fact the position of party leaders within their parties has become stronger.

Then, more specific points are raised in the book by Blondel and Thiébault (2010), where there is an explicit recognition of the fact that one of the aspects of the personalisation of politics is related to the power of party leaders within political parties and also that leaders’ personal power within the party constitutes a very important dimension of analysis. Finally, albeit no explicit reference is made to the concept of the personalisation of politics, let us recall the works by Schumacher, De Vries and Vis (2013) and Schumacher and Giger (2017), where an analysis based on the fact that parties are ‘leadership-dominated’ or ‘activist-dominated’ is put forward.

These last works come back later in the section during the discussion of the operationalization of the variable related to the power of party leaders within party organisations, but, for now, a clear point is that, in contrast with the wide literature focusing on party leaders in general elections, the attention towards the intra-party leaders’ control has received substantially less attention. This also means that, as already seen in the previous section, this is the first attempt to connect the power of leaders within political parties with the openings of leaders’ selection rules.

Indeed, we can focus on the possible connection between, on the one hand, the control of party organisations by their leaders and, on the other hand, the openings of party leader selectorates by starting from the intuition in Schumacher, De Vries and Vis (2013). They argue that parties can be leader- or activist-dominated. Without entering the discussion whether this is a feasible dichotomisation or not, the crucial point is that the domination of a political party can be in different hands. If we assume that the party leader has *more* domination – or control – over the party, we can also safely expect that other groups of people – be them the activists, the MPs, the rank-and-file, and so forth – have *less* domination or control over the party. In other words, a party leader with more domination (or control) over the party might also have less internal opposition to cope with - to be more precise, less *effective* or *influencing* opposition. Therefore, he/she might be freer to act, as if he/she has less internal constraints. In this sense, the necessity to ‘take away’ influence from the hands of middle-level activists raised by Mair (1994) and by all

the following contributions, already analysed in the previous section, might be less strong. Why curbing internal opposition by means of alleged ‘more democratic’ party leader selection rules if such opposition has already been constrained? The fact that openings of leader selection rules can be put forward to win the ‘battle for the organisational control’ (Gauja, 2016, pp. 42–46) has been already analysed in the previous section when discussing the first personalisation-related variable.

Here, by making a step forward, I would argue that if the party leader has a certain control over the party, he/she does not need to fight the above-mentioned battle: he/she has already won it. Therefore, following this line of reasoning, the chances that it would be ‘necessary’ to opening the party leader’ selectorate are lower. This does not obviously mean that the leader’s ‘victory’ will be total or necessarily a long-term one: things can obviously change, and the control might be reduced (or, obviously, increased as well), and this can have substantial consequences on the ‘organisational battlefield’. More specifically, and from a more formal viewpoint, my fourth hypothesis states:

H4. The higher the leader’s control of the party organisation, the lower the probability for a party to open the selectorate of its leader.

Even in this case, I have operationalized the control of party organisations by their leaders thanks to the data collected by the Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017). More specifically, the Intra-Party Politics section of the survey included a question on the level of control of the party organisations by the party leader, and asked respondents to rate such control on a 1-10 scale, 1 meaning very low control and 10 very high control⁸⁴. I have therefore created a variable, called *Leader in Party*, which reports results of the expert survey for each party and each election. Even in this case, there have been very positive results concerning the reliability of the experts’ answers concerning this question (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017). Therefore, even for this question – and for the related answers – we can be fairly confident about the fact that different experts have given highly reliable scores to each country’s party leader involved in the questions.

⁸⁴ The precise formulation of the question is as follows: ‘Finally, how would you rate the control that party leaders have on party organisation? For each of the following party leaders, please rate leaders’ control on a 1-10 scale, where 1 means “very low control” and 10 means “very high control”’.

The reasons why I have relied on the Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey to operationalize the control of the parties by their leaders are that existing accounts of the ‘intra-party’ personalisation of politics – i.e. of the power of party leaders within their organisations – suffer from some problematic issues. To begin with, the single chapters – each focusing on a single country’s party leaders – in the book edited by Poguntke and Webb (2005a) do not present clear and comparative data either from the synchronic or the diachronic viewpoints. The same issue is related to the chapters in the contribution by Blondel and Thiébaud (2010). In other words, in these contributions, there is a very rich account of the evolution of the phenomenon, but a clear-cut and replicable operationalization of this concept is not put forward, and also comparisons are extremely challenging, if not impossible. This obviously does not mean that these studies are of a limited utility: on the contrary, they have served as a valid starting point from which our survey was devised (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017).

Let us turn our attention to the two contributions by Schumacher and other colleagues. The two works can be overlapped when one deals with the operationalization of the ‘leadership-dominated’ parties. The important thing to notice is that both contributions state the importance of expert surveys in dealing with specific issues related to the dominance of parties by leaders or, conversely, by activists: ‘a major advantage of using this expert survey for our measure of party organization is that it taps precisely into the theoretical element we are interested in’ (Schumacher, de Vries and Vis, 2013, p. 470). I would argue the same is true when one deals with the control of party organisations by party leaders: having a survey expert *exactly* related to the dominance of party organisations by their leaders allows us to precisely operationalize this concept.

Moreover, the advantage of recurring to the data presented in Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli (2017) is that, unlike the data put forward in other contributions⁸⁵, the measure of the control of the party organisation by its leader varies across time. Therefore, using the data from the Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey allows for a more precise evaluation of the impact of leaders’ control on parties on the probability to open party leader selectorates, also

⁸⁵ In the article by Schumacher, De Vries and Vis (2013), the authors use the expert survey presented in Laver and Hunt (1992), and use this time-invariant data for the 1977-2003 period; this issue is partly solved in a subsequent article by Schumacher and Giger (2017), which uses the data by Laver and Hunt, along with those by Janda (1980), Harmel and Janda (1994b), and Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2012), for the 1955-2008 period. Nonetheless, partly different measures are put forward. Moreover, different countries and parties are included in these different contributions.

given the fact that the same question is asked for the entire period under study, thus greatly increasing the overall reliability of the measure implemented for the analysis. To give a more precise snapshot of the results of the expert survey for leaders' control of parties, Figure 4.4 below reports the average value, over time and for each country included in this dissertation, of the variable *Leader in Party*.

Figure 4.3 Average values of *Leader in Party* per country over time, Western Europe (1985-2015)



Source: author's elaboration

A first glance at Figure 4.4 above reveals some interesting trends. While some countries only experience limited changes in the average control of parties by their leaders (Ireland and, to a lesser extent, Portugal and the United Kingdom), in some other polities, more evident variations are detectable. For instance, in Belgium and, more importantly, in Greece, an initial phase of decline is followed by an increase in the average values of *Leader in Party*. In Spain and Italy, an initial upwards trend is detectable, while a subsequent decrease follows.

Moreover, it might be useful to briefly compare the country trends related to this variable with the country trends for the variable *Leader in Election*, analysed in the previous section. Interestingly, some countries show comparable trends for the two variables related to the personalisation of politics: Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Portugal. Interestingly, in this set, there are countries where no openings of party leader selection rules are detectable (Austria and Germany), and also countries where such openings can, in fact, be found (Italy, the Netherlands, and Portugal).

Furthermore, there are some other polities where only a partial overlapping between *Leader in Election* and *Leader in Party* can be found (Ireland, and Spain), and, finally, a small group of countries having erratic trends for the two personalisation-related variables (Belgium, Greece, and the United Kingdom). In all the countries belonging to the last two groups (partial overlapping and no overlapping), there was at least one opening of party leader selection rules.

Concluding, a final element to underline is that the country trends related to the personalisation of politics at the intra-party level (*Leader in Party*) seem smoother and more homogeneous than those of the variable connected to the personalisation in general elections (i.e. *Leader in Election*). This shows that the two variables might be indeed related to two sides of the personalisation of politics: one (the control of parties by their leaders) with a lower intra-country variability, another (the ability of party leaders to drive consensus towards their parties in general elections) with more diverse trends in each polity under consideration.

In this section, I have presented the last hypothesis related to intra-party factors and their impact on the probability to open the selectorate for party leadership. Before turning our attention to the possible impact of external factors on the DV, a task performed in Chapter 5, it is necessary to focus on a control I implement in the empirical analysis. More precisely, the next section tackles the possible role of a party's family on the openings of party leader selection rules (party leader selectorates).

4.5 An intra-party variable: party family

Why should there be a connection between a party's ideological family and the likelihood it changes its leader selection rules (selectorate)? The question is far from being trivial, given that just a handful of researchers have extensively dealt with this question. A first account of this alleged relationship can be found in Punnett (1992, pp. 22–23), according to whom '[a] traditionalist party, that embraces elitist and non-participatory values, is likely to favour the selection of the leader by a relatively small number of party notables through discreet consultations rather than a formal election'.

This proposition has not received a wide scholarly attention, and there might be many reasons behind this pattern: to begin with, Punnett himself recognises that many contemporary parties understand that democratic procedures are something attractive (1992, p. 23). So, the 'democracy-enhancing' rhetoric I have briefly underlined in this chapter and Chapter 3 might undermine the positioning of party elites towards having the complete control of the party leader selectorate, as far as this choice is feasible. In other words, party elites like to publicly define their

political formation as 'democratic' – or at least they do not like it to be defined as undemocratic. As a consequence, understanding whether party elites, cadres, MPs, and so forth *really* follow elitist and non-participatory values is a very complicated and possibly very frustrating task, especially if one needs data on the 10 Western European countries included in this dissertation between the mid-1980s and mid-2010s.

A more fruitful road to understand the possible effect of parties' ideology on the probability to open their leaders' selectorate might be that of asking ourselves whether belonging to a specific party family affects such probability. It is the road taken by Lisi, Freire and Barberà (2015) who, in their study (already analysed in Section 2.3), building on the existing research by other scholars (Astudillo Ruiz, 2012; Krouwel, 2012) put forward a series of hypotheses on the connection between party families (or party ideologies) and leadership selection methods (more specifically, the party leader selectorate). The results of their bivariate correlation analysis shows that parties belonging to the radical left or the libertarian family are more likely to adopt more inclusive selectorates for party leadership, 'while communist, conservatives/ Christian democrats, and radical right parties have more centralized and restricted methods' (Lisi, Freire and Barberà, 2015, p. 15); moreover, no clear patterns can be detected in regionalist parties, while across time, with the noticeable exception of communist and radical right parties, there should be a convergence towards more inclusive leadership selection methods; to add more, just partial confirmation is brought for two hypotheses: centre and left-wing parties should be more likely to have selectorates ranging from party congress to party voters (while right-wing political formations should have less inclusive selectorates); moreover, left-wing parties, compared to right-wing ones, should be more likely to change.

Partly departing from the road taken by these three scholars, Chiru *et al.* (2015) test whether left parties are more likely to change their leader selection rules. Let us briefly recall, as already done in Section 2.3, that their work includes a lot of different dimensions of analysis, related to both the selection and the de-selection of party leaders, and that their study focuses on *changes* and not on *openings of* leader selection rules. Bearing in mind these caveats, their analysis shows that there is no empirical support for the above-mentioned hypothesis.

These partial and also contrasting findings in the literature bring me to control for the party family of each party included in the empirical analysis. I do not have precise expectations concerning the effect of party families on the probability for political formations to open their leaders' selectorate, but it might be useful to control for the possible effect of the former on the latter. I have decided to operationalize the related variable, called *Party Family*, by recurring to the 'Family ID' categorical variable put forward in the ParlGov dataset (Döring and Manow, 2016).

‘Family ID’ is composed by eight categories (Communist/Socialist; Green/Ecologist; Social Democratic; Christian Democratic; Liberal; Conservative; Right-Wing; Agrarian) which have been transformed into a 7-value categorical variable: *Party Family*⁸⁶. The reason why eight categories have been transformed into a 7-value variable lies in the fact that no Agrarian party exists in my dataset. Therefore, the *Party Family* variable can only assume 7 values.

Figure 4.4 Descriptive statistics of parliamentary seats by party family per country, Western Europe (1985-2015)



Source: author's elaboration. Note: ‘Comm’ denotes the Communist/Socialist party family; ‘Eco’ the Green/Ecologist one; ‘SD’ the Social Democratic one; ‘CD’ the Christian Democratic one; ‘Lib’ the Liberal one; ‘Con’ the Conservative one; finally, ‘RW’ denotes the Right-Wing party family.

Figure 4.4 above reports some descriptive statistics, via box-and-whisker plots, for the different party families in each country under consideration. First of all, one can easily notice that, in some countries, the inter-party variability in terms of percentage of seats is very low (Belgium, Austria), while all the other countries show a very different pattern (let us for example

⁸⁶ The decision to recur to the variable created by ParlGov has been driven by a series of considerations; for instance, the variable ‘Party Family’ devised by the scholars working on the Comparative Manifesto Project (Volkens *et al.*, 2016) suffers from some issues, such as the strange and counterintuitive categorisation of some parties (e.g. the Portuguese SPD has been categorised as a Social Democratic party).

look at the Greek and the Irish cases). Interestingly, in the former set of countries, one finds both polities where no openings of party leader selection rules can be detected between the mid-1980s and the mid-2010s (Austria) and also polities where such openings did happen (Belgium). Nonetheless, Figure 4.4 also seems to underline there is not a perfect relationship between the intra-country party family variability (in terms of average percentage of seats obtained in general elections) and the number of openings of leader selectorate. Indeed, some countries with such a lower variability did have some openings of their party leaders' selectorate in the period under consideration (e.g., the Netherlands), but also some countries with a higher variability have parties which opened, with certain frequency, their leader selectorate (e.g., Ireland).

A second fascinating element is that more extreme party families (the Communist/Socialist one and the Right-Wing one) show a lower average percentage of seats compared to more centre-leaning party families. This could be connected to another point: between the mid-1980s and the mid-2010s, only have a handful of parties belonging to these extreme party families opened their leader selectorate, while parties belonging to other party families have done so with a higher frequency. All in all, Chapter 6 might be of great help also concerning the possible effect of belonging to a specific party family on the likelihood that a political formation opens its leader selectorate.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have tackled the intra-party factors that should influence the openings of party leader selectorates. More specifically, I have dealt with the leadership change, the party membership decline, and with two factors related to the personalisation of politics, that is, the ability of party leaders to drive consensus toward their party in a general election, and the control of party organisations by their leaders. These four factors have been translated into four variables used in the empirical analyses performed in Chapter 6. Moreover, I have also introduced a fifth variable, party family, whose effect on party leader selectorates' openings is also controlled for in the empirical analysis.

Nonetheless, there is still an important part of the explanatory factors that needs to be in-depth explored. I am referring to the external factors that have been considered by the party change literature and also by those scholars focusing on party leader selection rules as crucial explanatory elements to fully understand both party change and, more crucially for this analysis, the openings of party leader selection rules. Chapter 5 is indeed devoted to the exploration of these external factors.

Chapter 5 - The external factors behind the openings of party leader selectorates

Let us imagine two different situations. A political party suffers from an electoral setback; another one, instead, obtains a very successful result in a general election. Is it possible to argue that the former has undergone an external 'shock' which shall be accounted for when analysing party changes (and also openings of party leader selectorates)?

The relationship between intra-party matters and what happens outside political formations is an important issue to consider when one analyses party changes and, more generally speaking what happens within political formations. Indeed, parties do not live 'by themselves': they act in an environment from which positive or negative influences might arrive at them. Therefore, analysing the possible impact of external factors on parties' decisions to open their leader selectorates is of paramount importance.

This chapter is devoted to precisely analysing four external factors that might be related to the DVs under examination: having suffered from an electoral setback; being in opposition; being influenced by an increased impact of the personalisation of politics at the party system level; being at the centre of an organisational 'contagion' brought about by other political formations. These four factors are dealt with in the four sections of this chapter.

5.1 The electoral setback

Let us turn our attention to a possible determinant of the opening of party leader selectorates that has received a lot of attention by scholars: the electoral setback. Such phenomenon has been widely studied, especially within the party change framework. Already in 1990, Janda writes that 'defeat is the mother of party change' (Janda, 1990, p. 6) and that '*[t]he poorer the party's performance, the greater the pressure for party change.*' (Janda, 1990, p. 9; italics in original). Janda explicitly quotes an extremely interesting consideration by Mair (1983, p. 408), according to whom 'the party interprets its [electoral] losses as the rejection of its politics or its representativeness. There are many cases in the literature of parties seeking to renew their organizational effectiveness in the wake of electoral setback?.'

Therefore, an electoral setback is considered as a dire event that can trigger deep modifications within political parties, and this is partly in line, as Janda himself recognises, with Panebianco's account of a crisis within party organisations that can be substantially influenced by a 'strong environmental pressure', like an electoral defeat (Panebianco, 1988, p. 243). The

argument is further developed in the subsequent seminal article by Harmel and Janda (1994a), where an ‘electoral failure’ is thought to be a powerful external driver of party change⁸⁷. Such proposition is empirically tested by Harmel *et al.* (1995, p. 3), where one hypothesis states that ‘[p]arty change is proximally preceded by poor electoral performance’⁸⁸.

After some years, the relationship between electoral setbacks and party change is then moved into the party leadership selection area: LeDuc (2001, p. 323) explicitly posits ‘parties which have suffered a serious electoral setback may embark on a process of party ‘renewal’ in order to lay the foundations for an eventual return to power. [A]n important component of the argument can be the need for greater ‘democratization’ [arguably, of leader selection rules]’. This view of the importance of electoral setbacks for changing (opening) party leader selection rules can also be found in Faucher and Treille (2003). Also Lisi (2010), building on a similar logic put forward by Barnea and Rahat (2007) on candidate selection rules, argues that ‘democratising’ party leadership selection rules might be a move in order to cope with a poor electoral performance and have more chances to have a more successful electoral result in the (near) future. This point is briefly touched by Gauja (2016) in her account of party reforms (also from the leadership selection rules viewpoint): Gauja argues that electoral setbacks can be one of the ‘party-system level’ or competitive pushes for reforming political parties, also in light of future electoral competitions⁸⁹.

Now, the crucial point of Lisi’s and Gauja’s frameworks is that they do not limit themselves to deal with a *reaction* to an event (in this case, an external event, like an electoral setback), but they also put forward the (more or less explicit) argument according to which political parties act

⁸⁷ As already seen in Section 2.1, I am well aware of the differentiation that the party change framework and especially Harmel and Janda (1994a) make concerning the different effect that an electoral setback can have on different parties according to parties’ main goal. This is explicitly taken into account later in this chapter, where I present a specific hypothesis related to these issues. Yet, given a noticeable number of scholars have focused on the ‘simple’ or unconditional effect of electoral setbacks on the openings of party leader selection rules, I have preferred to start treating electoral setbacks from a very general viewpoint, and then passing to a more specific account of the differentiating effect that this phenomenon can have in different parties.

⁸⁸ For an account of the issue of the proximity of the events triggering party change, see Section 3.4.

⁸⁹ Interestingly, she also argues that the payoffs of these changes might be more limited than one might think (Gauja, 2016, pp. 51–57).

prospectively, trying to cope with foreseeable future events to increase their future chances of success. This might seem a straightforward procedure to analyse political matters, given that a reaction to an unfavourable event is driven by the willingness to reduce the likelihood such phenomenon happens in the future, all other things being equal⁹⁰. Nonetheless, by putting forward such prospective viewpoint, a certain discontinuity with the party change framework is marked, insofar Janda (1990, p. 14) argues that '[t]he logic of the performance theory of change limits it to explaining reactive rather than anticipatory change'. In other words, and going back to electoral setbacks, adapting a *reactive* perspective means that only electoral setbacks shall be considered, while, conversely, following a *prospective* viewpoint, one should also at least carefully consider whether to include successful electoral performance into the analysis⁹¹.

The relationship between electoral setbacks and the openings of party leader selection rules is also explicitly discussed in the book by Cross and Blais (2012), where some descriptive statistics of the openings of Ireland, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada seem to confirm the relationship between the two phenomena, and in the concluding chapter of the edited book by Pilet and Cross (2014a), in this case by means of cross-tabulations. While more nuanced conclusions are reached on this point by Wauters (2014), Chiru *et al.* (2015) find that an electoral setback increases the chances to *change* a number of dimensions, maybe including, but not limiting to, leaders' selectorates⁹². Finally, an intriguing result is the one brought about in the analysis by Meyer and Odom (2016), who show that the opening of the selectorate in Ireland, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada seems to be affected, among other things, by electoral setbacks, especially by the most catastrophic ones (in their framework, when a party is shrunk into its regional strongholds).

⁹⁰ 'All other things being equal' is related many possible intervening factors that limit the ability to proficiently change political parties: from party ideological family, to party's internal struggle for power, to organisational characteristics, to party-system features, and so forth.

⁹¹ On the relationship between successful electoral performance and the opening of party leader selection rules, see Wauters (2014).

⁹² To be more precise, the analysis by Chiru *et al.* (2015) does not have a separate section for party leader selection rules (or for party leader selectorates) vs other rules they include in the analysis (e.g. term limits or de-selection mechanisms). Therefore, it is not possible to precisely disentangle the effect of electoral setbacks on the probability to change party leader selection rules or party leaders' selectorate.

Wrapping up this discussion, and following most of the authors analysing party change and party leader selection rules, I would argue that an electoral setback does not simply increase the likelihood for a party to open its leader selectorate, but that stronger electoral setbacks should have a stronger effect on party leader selectorates' openings. In other words, and going back to the concept of defeat as a trigger for party change, and subsequently, for party leader selection rules, not all defeats are equal. Some of them might have a stronger impact than others. This relationship can give birth to different hypotheses, but let us start from the most straightforward one. If an electoral setback is brought about, an external crisis might reach the party, and this might trigger an opening of party leader selection rules. This effect should be more powerful for bigger electoral setbacks. Therefore, my fifth hypothesis is as follows:

H5. The stronger the electoral setback, the higher the probability for a party to open the selectorate of its leader.

At this point, a fair question would be related to the operationalization of the concept of 'electoral setback'. Several solutions have been proposed in the literature. Harmel *et al.* (1995, pp. 26–33) present an operationalization based on parties' perceptions of their performance in the last general election and, alternatively, an operationalization based on journalists' accounts and scholars' analyses: election results are categorised as poor, neutral, good. It is evident such classification can lead to dire problems related to researchers' biases or to different evaluations by different scholars of the same election.

A more suitable solution would be that of recurring to electoral results regarding changes in seats or votes. Cross and Blais (2012, pp. 40–42) use an absolute measure of the variation in the seats won by a party in the last general election compared to the previous one (in other words, they only analyse whether a party has lost or gained seats, without considering the *scope* of this variation). On the other hand, Wauters (2014) relies on the variation regarding votes, as well as Chiru *et al.* (2015). Finally, Meyer and Odom (2016) do have a measure on the percentage of seats gained or lost by each party in their analysis, and also several other seat-related measures to test different hypotheses.

All in all, it seems there is a bit of discrepancy in the literature concerning the operationalization of an electoral setback. I operationalize the concept via the percentage of seats lost (or gained) by each party in the last general election compared to the previous one. This decision has been driven by two main considerations: on the one hand, it is necessary to control for the disproportionality between votes and seats brought about by some electoral systems (most noticeably, the British one, and the Spanish one). I would argue it is not a chance that

many studies where the United Kingdom is included operationalize the electoral setback by recurring to the percentage of seats lost (gained) instead of the percentage of votes lost (gained). Moreover, there is another reason why recurring to the percentage of seats might be a feasible solution: the percentage of seats a party has obtained in a general election (compared to the one it had received in the previous one) gives us a clear snapshot of the power relationships in the Lower House among parties. A party can increase its share of votes, but can also maintain or even decrease its share of seats. Vice versa, a party can have a successful result regarding gained seats compared to T-1 but also lose a percentage of the votes compared to the previous election. Therefore, a more precise measure is the one related to the percentage of seats obtained in a general election.

Therefore, I have created a variable, called *Seat Share Loss*, operationalizing the change in the percentage of the Lower House' seats obtained by a party in a given election compared to the previous one. More specifically, from the percentage of Lower House' seats held by a party at T, I have subtracted the percentage of Lower House' seats obtained by that party at T-1. Data on this variable have been collected by a series of sources. Up to 2009, data have been obtained from Nohlen and Stover (2010), while from 2010 onwards, I have referred to each country's national official source⁹³.

Table 5.1 Descriptive statistics for party-cases having lost seats in a general election, Western Europe (1985-2015)

Country	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Austria	-5.206	4.606	-18.579	-0.546
Belgium	-2.306	1.661	-6	-0.472
Germany	-4.489	4.080	-15	-3
Greece	-4.270	5.219	-20.333	-0.333
Ireland	-7.785	9.213	-35.5	-0.7
Italy	-5.220	7.255	-27.778	-0.794
Netherlands	-4.960	4.097	-14.667	-0.667
Portugal	-5.864	5.829	-20.435	-0.422
Spain	-3.810	4.516	-16.857	-0.286
United Kingdom	-6.914	8.827	-26.6	-0.31

Source: author's elaboration

⁹³ The sole exception has been Italy, given the well-known discrepancy between Nohlen and Stover's data and the one released by the Italian Ministry of Interior. More details on the operationalization of this variable and specific party- or country-related issues can be found in Appendix B.

Table 5.1 above reports some descriptive statistics for the parties having lost seats in a general election compared to the previous one. The table, where party-cases (that is, each party in each legislature) are considered, shows, first of all, that there is a certain variability in the 10 Western European countries according to the mean seat loss experienced by political parties between the mid-1980s and the mid-2010s. The lowest average seat loss is that of Belgian parties, while the highest one belongs to the Irish ones.

Let us notice that some countries where no openings of leader selection rules can be detected (Austria and Germany) have not very low mean values of parties' seat loss. Yet, what is of interest here is that the SD values of these two countries are among the lowest ones. It means that Austrian and German parties experiencing an electoral setback in the time period under examination did not lose, on average, an extremely high percentage of seats. Conversely, very high SD values (and also very high minimum values) can be detected in some countries having had a series of openings of party leader selection rules: Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. All in all, it seems there might be certain connection between electoral setbacks – measured in seat losses – and the openings of party leader selection rules.

At this point, those who have a certain knowledge of the party change framework and the specific hypotheses on electoral setbacks and party change would argue that something is missing. More specifically, Harmel and Janda (1994a) contend that parties might have different aims: maximising their votes, their offices, being policy or ideology advocates, being intra-party democracy advocates⁹⁴. Having different aims means that different external 'shocks' should have dissimilar effects for different parties. Let us focus on the vote-maximising parties: Harmel and Janda argue that, for these parties, the electoral setback is the most powerful shock they can experience. Then, Harmel *et al.* (1995, p. 3) explicitly posit that the 'relationship between poor electoral performance and party change is stronger for large, competitive parties than for small parties'. This should be related to the fact that larger parties are thought to be more vote-maximising ones than smaller parties⁹⁵.

Yet, despite the logical coherence of these propositions, no author, to the best of my knowledge, has ever tried to connect these hypotheses to party leader selection rules, and, more specifically, to the opening of party leader selectorates. In other words, no author has considered whether electoral setbacks have a more powerful effect on larger parties concerning the likelihood they open their leader selection rules.

⁹⁴ See also the related discussion in Section 2.1.

⁹⁵ Another implementation of Harmel and Janda's framework concerning the different aims that different parties might have can be found in Müller (1997).

This means there is room for putting forward a hypothesis connecting these insights from the party change framework and the opening of party leader selectorates. Indeed, it might be argued that the mechanism put forward within the party change framework can be applied to the openings of party leader selectorates as well. In other words, when an electoral setback severely affects the primary aim of a party, this can have a stronger effect on the likelihood this party opens its leader selectorate compared to parties which do not have such goal, or have it to a lesser extent. So, the sixth hypothesis to be tested in the empirical analysis is:

H6. The larger the party, the stronger the effect of an electoral setback on the probability to open the selectorate of its leader.

Even in this case, what matters is the increase/decrease in the percentage of seats obtained by a party compared to T-1. To test this hypothesis, apart from the variable *Seat Share Loss*, it is necessary to operationalise the size of a party. I would again recur to the parliamentary representation of political formations, but consider such representation at T-1. Indeed, whether to categorise a party as bigger or smaller is a matter that cannot be left to a calculus based on its parliamentary representation at T. In this case, an endogeneity problem would arise, because the calculation of whether a party is more or less large would depend on the electoral performance in the last general election. Yet, this performance would also be included in the calculus of *Seat Share Loss*, the variable related to the electoral setback. So, using a party's result at T to operationalize its size is a misleading solution.

For this reason, I have decided to use the percentage of seats held by each party at T-1 to calculate the variable *Party Size*. The specific country- and party-related matters related to *Seat Share Loss* and discussed in Appendix B obviously apply here as well, with the only addendum that if a party contests the first election at T, it receives a 0 as a value for *Party Size*. This decision has been driven by the consideration that if a party contests the first general election of its life, it could be very difficult to imagine that such party has already internally defined its primary aim. Indeed, such political formation should have a foreseeable very low institutionalisation, and therefore the intra-party environment might be extremely fluid.

This section has been devoted to presenting two hypotheses related to a 'classical' determinant of party change (and of party leader selection rules): electoral setbacks, albeit the second hypothesis has never been in a quantitative empirical analysis of openings of party leader selection rules before. The analysis of determinants already encountered in the literature does not stop here. Indeed, the next section is related to another factor that the party leader selection

literature has widely considered in several contributions: whether a party governs or, conversely, is in opposition.

5.2 The opposition status

A factor which is related to the electoral setback is surely the opposition status of a party. The two things evidently do not perfectly coincide, also at the party-change-framework level (Harmel and Janda, 1994a, p. 270), and it might be useful to separately consider the effect of an electoral setback and, more crucially for this section, of the opposition status on a party's likelihood to open its leader selectorate.

The connection between being in opposition and party change is not new: to begin with, Janda (1990, p. 9), when discussing the usefulness of analysing the impact of the last electoral cycle on parties' changes, underlines that a distinction shall be drawn between an unsatisfactory electoral performance and the ability to control/influence the government. Then, it is the seminal article by Harmel and Janda (1994a, p. 270) that draws a more systematic distinction between the two concepts: going back to the already-mentioned differentiation among different parties with diverse aims, apart from the vote-maximizer parties (which we have encountered in the previous section), the two authors also deal with office-maximizer parties, for whom not being in government is substantially the strongest shock they can experience. The literature on party change has not further developed these interesting insights, while the same is not true for the literature on party leader selection rules⁹⁶.

Indeed, Punnett (1992, pp. 21–22) argues that a party which is in government and expresses the Prime Minister should have closer party leader selection procedures, given that if choosing a leader also means choosing a Prime Minister, a quicker and less 'problematic' selection should be more likely to be implemented. Let us recall that Punnett's analysis has a specific focus on the United Kingdom, where, from the end of the Second World War onwards, almost only one-party governments have been in place. A slightly more systematic study of the effect of the opposition status of a party is performed by Cross and Blais (2012, pp. 39–41), who argue that parties in opposition should be less cohesive and more prone to change, also given an alleged shift of power from the parliamentary branch to the extra-parliamentary one. Cross and Blais show, via some descriptive statistics, that many parties – in the five Anglo-Saxon countries

⁹⁶ Concerning candidate selection rules, Barnea and Rahat (2007) argue there might be a connection between 'government turnover' and the reforms in candidate selection rules.

included in their analysis –have opened their party leader’ selectorate when in opposition. This alleged influence of the opposition status of a party is also tested by Pilet and Cross (2014a) who argue, in this case, thanks to cross-tabulations, that many parties, among those who have opened their leader selection rules, have done so while in opposition.

Then, moving the analysis a step forward, and loosely following the same path taken in Section 5.1, I now turn to the chapter by Chiru *et al.* (2015): their hypothesis concerning a positive effect on the likelihood to change party leader selection rules finds empirical confirmation, albeit one must remember, also already done in Section 5.1, that their decision to put together many different aspects concerning leader’ selection and de-selection does not allow to precisely grasp the effect of the opposition status of a party on the probability it opens its leader’ selectorate. This issue is dealt with by Meyer and Odom (2016), at least concerning the five Anglo-Saxon countries included in their empirical analysis: they show that the opposition status of a country does not seem to exert any effect on the likelihood to open party leader selectorates.

Briefly wrapping up this discussion, it seems that the effect of the opposition status is a bit blurred. Yet, I do believe that this factor shall be taken into consideration, not simply for the compelling reasons put forward by Cross and Blais (2012), but also following another viewpoint. More specifically, and slightly broadening the horizon of the discussion, Mair (1994), and Katz and Mair (1995, 2002) show that, in the last decades, the Party in Public Office (i.e. MPs and government’s members) (Katz and Mair, 1993) has been acquiring an increased relevance in Western European party organisations.

If this is true, it might be argued that a powerful ‘face’ of the party, who is out of the government – therefore being ‘shrunk’ to the parliamentary representation of a party – might be tempted to push for intra-party reforms (including an opening of party leader selection rules), to (re-)gain prominence within the government. And given the increased leverage the Party in Public Office should have within Western European political parties, such temptation might find fertile ground within the party organisation.

This brief discussion expands Cross and Blais’ general argument about the reasons why parties in opposition should open their leaders’ selectorate: they argue that, when in opposition, the internal balance of power within parties shifts towards the extra-parliamentary branch (Cross and Blais, 2012, p. 39). This could be true. Yet, I would argue that we might consider another viewpoint. More specifically, another reason why parties in opposition could open their leaders’ selectorate is precisely related to the fact that, *despite* the opposition status, the party in parliament *still* retains a certain amount of leverage, and it might be used to push for openings of the party

leadership selectorate, also given that this could be a way to show to the external public a positive, ‘receptive’ and ‘more democratic’ image of the party (as generally argued in Sections 3.1 and 3.3). All in all, my seventh hypothesis states that:

H7. When in opposition, the probability for a party to open its leader’s selectorate is higher.

To empirically test *H7*, I have created *Opposition Status*, a dichotomous variable having value 1 if a specific party in a legislature has never been in government, a 0 otherwise. For instance, if a party has spent a certain period of a legislature in opposition and then in government, it receives a 0; if it has only been in opposition, it gets a 1; if, finally, if it has always been in government, it gets a 0⁹⁷. Finally, given the specific nature of caretaker governments, I have decided not to include them into the calculus of this variable⁹⁸. Data for this variable have been obtained from ParlGov (Döring and Manow, 2016).

Table 5.2 below reports the percentage of party-cases (that is, of each party in each legislature under consideration) that has been in opposition (i.e. has had value 1 on the variable *Opposition Status*) for each of the 10 Western European countries taken into account in this dissertation. A brief look at the table reveals that some countries with a very high percentage of party-cases having spent a legislature in opposition, like Spain, Greece, Portugal, are also

⁹⁷ As a side note, if a government is appointed the year after the general election, the variable is calculated *as if* the government is appointed in the same year of the general election, thus the short passage period between the general election and the appointment of a government does not enter the calculus of the variable. This decision has been driven by the idea that a short vacancy period – like the one happening between a general election and the appointment of a new government – should not affect the value that a party receives for the variable *Opposition Status*.

⁹⁸ According to ParlGov’s codebook for cabinets, caretaker governments are those ‘with a limited legislative mandate’. I have decided not to distinguish among different types of caretaker governments, or of governments with a limited mandate from the parliament. Distinguishing among different types of ‘non-full’ cabinets would inevitably introduce a strong personal bias, given the different definitions put forward in the literature to categorise caretaker governments (McDonnell and Valbruzzi, 2014, pp. 661–662). Therefore, a more objective way of dealing with caretaker governments is just considering them as a different type of government, not included in the calculus of the variable *Opposition Status*. For further information, see <http://www.parl.gov.org/documentation/codebook/#cabinet>.

countries where some openings of party leader selection rules have happened. Yet, Table 5.2 also shows that some other countries where no such openings have occurred (Austria, and Germany) also have a medium-to-high percentage of opposition party-cases.

Table 5.2 Percentage of party-cases having been in opposition by country, Western Europe (1985-2015)

Country	Percentage
Austria	58.1
Belgium	51.3
Germany	58.9
Greece	69.8
Ireland	44.4
Italy	51
Netherlands	58.8
Portugal	69.4
Spain	75
United Kingdom	61

Source: author's elaboration

Obviously, being an aggregate measure, its values depend on a series of factors, like the number of parties included in each government, and that is why, to precisely grasp the effect of *Opposition Status* on the probability parties open their leader selectorate, we have to recur to a more complete multivariate analysis, performed in Chapter 6. Nonetheless, we have not arrived there yet. Indeed, there are two other external factors that shall be taken into account before moving to the empirical analysis. I am referring to the contagion effect and to a possible general influence of the personalisation of politics at the country level. These two factors are respectively tackled in Sections 5.3 and 5.4 below.

5.3 The contagion effect

When someone analysing party organisations finds the word ‘contagion’, two scholars immediately come to mind: Maurice Duverger and Leon Epstein. They differently deal with this important concept, which is of crucial importance not only for party organisational changes, but also, from a more specific viewpoint, for party leader selection rules.

Duverger (1964, pp. 24–27) discusses the adoption of the Socialist mass party structure by other parties, with the former acting as a ‘contagious’ organisations towards the latter. Even if the effective scope and width of this contagion are discussed by Duverger himself, what is of interest here is the fact that parties might follow a sort of imitative pattern, following the example set forth by a sort of ‘pioneering’ party organisation within a system. In the case of

Duverger, it is the Socialist party who acts as the vanguard, and therefore a commonly used expression, coined by Duverger himself, to denote this phenomenon is ‘contagion from the left’ (1964, p. xxvii). Then, the concept of contagion is used again, with a similar fortune, by Epstein (1967, pp. 257–260), whose ‘contagion from the right’ is the phenomenon by which the new means of mass communication and new financing systems for more right-leaning parties could foster an imitative pattern by left-wing political formations. All in all, the crucial element of both accounts of contagion is that a party’s actions, conformation, or strategies might be imitated by other political formations in the same system. This is the crucial concept around which this Section revolves.

The concept of contagion in the party change framework has not received a lot of attention. Yet, Janda (1990, pp. 9–10), explicitly quoting Panebianco’s analysis of the SPD and the CDU (1988, pp. 253–255), argues that ‘political parties tend to operate in environmental “niches” and [...] they are particularly sensitive to sharing the marketplace with other parties, [therefore] the electoral experience of “comparable organizations” often determines how the party judges its own performance’. Notice that, in this account, the argument is not that a party will imitate what other parties do, under certain conditions, but simply that performance’s evaluation is done in a *comparative* perspective. A step forward is done by Harmel and Janda (1994a, pp. 263–264), who posit that parties might follow imitative patterns in order to more efficiently compete with other political formations. Unfortunately, this intuition is not further developed, but these are the first seeds of a long-lasting discussion, especially in the field of party leader selection rules.

Indeed, Lisi (2010) writes that the contagion effect has played a role in the ‘democratisation’ of Portuguese parties’ leadership selection rules under study. Interestingly, this determinant is not included in Lisi’s framework of analysis, but it is briefly discussed in the conclusions of his contribution. Subsequent works devote more attention to the contagion effect in patterns of openings of party leader selection rules. For instance, Cross and Blais (2012, pp. 40–42) argue that a contagion concerning the opening of party leadership selectorates might be successful for two reasons: first, because ‘intra-party democracy’ is positively judged by electors (thus, they assume that a more open party leadership selectorate can be considered as more democratic by party members or even by voters⁹⁹); second, because if a party ‘does something’ in line with the expectations of voters, other parties will feel pressured to do the same. Thanks to an analysis of descriptive statistics, Cross and Blais (2012) argue there is a certain effect of a ‘contagion effect’

⁹⁹ On the relationship among party leader selection rules, openings of party leader’ selectorate, and intra-party democracy, see the discussion in Section 3.3 and Marino and Martocchia Diodati (2017)

concerning the opening of party leader selectorates in the five countries they take into consideration. This conclusion is similar to that reached by Wauters (2014) in his analysis of the adoption of OMOV leadership selection mechanisms in some Belgian parties. Moreover, also the concluding chapter by Pilet and Cross (2014a) of their edited book argues that the contagion effect for the adoption of OMOV leader selection mechanisms might be at work in some specific contexts. This is partly similar from the findings by Gauja (2016), who argues that a contagion effect does play a role in fostering party change, but does not constitute the most important 'competitive' driver for reform.

Despite these useful insights, no quantitative empirical analysis has ever tested the effect of a contagion related to the openings of party leader selection rules. This is extremely surprising, given the number of contributions considering this factor. Indeed, the fact that parties do not operate in an empty environment, already pointed out in the introductory paragraphs, also mean that political formations could pay attention to what happens in other parties around them. This can be even truer when it comes to party leader selection rules. All in all, it might be worthy to precisely analyse the effect of the contagion effect in party leadership selectorates' openings. To account for this factor, the eighth hypothesis to be tested in the empirical analysis is as follows:

H8. If party opens its leader' selectorate, the probability that a party in the same system opens its leader' selectorate increases.

Turning to the operationalization of the contagion effect, it is useful to briefly account for Gauja's discussion of contagion in party change. Indeed, Gauja (2016, pp. 64-66-113) argues that, despite the contagion effect might be a party-system-related driver for party reforms, it is extremely difficult to operationalise such concept. More specifically, there is 'no systematic way within the field of party scholarship to accurately identify instances of contagion' (Gauja, 2016, p. 64), because, in her view, some proposed solutions are flawed: inferring contagion from the simple timing of reforms (i.e., a party changes at T, and then another party changes at T+1) is wrong, given that it does not allow researchers to distinguish contagion from two events that casually happened in a temporal order (Gauja, 2016, p. 64). Moreover, we do not have a clear understanding of the period during which a contagion effect might be at work: how long should such period be (Gauja, 2016, p. 64)? Two possible alternatives suggested by Gauja are either related to the analysis of party documents, interviews, communiqués, statements, and the like, or to the analysis of the movement of people from one party to another (Gauja, 2016, p. 64). Yet, the author herself recognises these two strategies are more suitable for small-N studies and that

inferential analyses might shed some light on the effect of contagion on party reforms (Gauja, 2016, pp. 107–108).

How to take into account these reasonable arguments by Gauja? First of all, it is necessary to devise a variable taking into consideration casual patterns of openings of party leader selectorates: in other words, it is necessary to create a certain temporal separation between the party having opened at $T-1$, which should have acted as a ‘contagious organisation’, and the subsequent changes by other parties at T . Given the structure of my dataset – organised at the legislature level – a feasible solution is that of considering only changes happening in the previous legislature as contagious events, happened at $T-1$, which might potentially trigger imitative patterns by other parties at T . Notice this is a quite conservative solution, because it does not consider as events happening because of a contagion the openings of the same legislature. In other words, if – say - two openings by two different parties happen in the same legislature in the same party system, both parties receive a 0 on the contagion-related variable. The idea is avoiding idiosyncratic events which, given they ‘casually’ happen in the same legislature, might potentially inflate the effect of the contagion-related variable on the DV.

Yet, this is just the first step to build the contagion-related variable. The second reason why I have considered only openings of the selectorate happening at $T-1$ (i.e., given the structure of my dataset, in the previous legislature), is related to another above-mentioned problem to be solved: the temporal stretch of the variable. How long should a contagion effect last? There is not an obvious answer to such question, apart from the logical consideration that the longer the time between two openings of the same system, the less likely the probability that the second event has been triggered by the first one. So, only considering openings of the previous legislature is a reasonable solution to account both for the necessity to avoid casual openings happening together in a very short period of time, and also for the idea not to let too much time pass between a contagious event and its potential contagious effects.

To sum up, I have created a variable, called *Contagion*, which considers as contagious events the openings happening in a certain party system at $T-1$ – i.e., in the previous legislature. More specifically, all the parties present in my dataset in a certain legislature have received a 1 for this variable if, in the same party system, a party has opened its party leader selectorate in the previous legislature (this latter party has obviously been given a 0). Given data for this variable are those used to build the dependent variable, more information on the specific data used in the construction of *Contagion* is available in Section 3.4. Furthermore, country- or party-specific information concerning this variable can be found in the related section of Appendix B.

Table 5.3 Percentage of party-cases where at least another party has opened its leader selectorate in the previous legislature, Western Europe (1985-2015)

Country	Percentage
Austria	0
Belgium	40
Germany	0
Greece	51.2
Ireland	29.6
Italy	24.5
Netherlands	23.6
Portugal	33.3
Spain	0
United Kingdom	16.7

Source: author's elaboration

Table 5.3 above reports the percentage of party-cases, for each country, having value 1 on the variable *Contagion*. Starting from Austria and Germany, since no opening happened in those countries between the 1980s and mid-2010s, it follows no party in these two polities might have been influenced by the contagion of another political formation. Conversely, the very high percentage for Greece is related to a series of factors, like the number of leader selectorates' openings happened in this polity and the temporal diffusion of such openings. In other words, if in a country there is a noticeable number of openings, and such events are also distributed in the time-period under consideration, it follows the number of party-cases potentially affected by *Contagion* is high. On the contrary, the very low value for Dutch and Irish parties is related to two factors: the lower number of openings and the temporal concentration of these reforms. All in all, it seems there are potentially interesting patterns to explore concerning the effect of *Contagion* on the probability parties open their leader selectorate. Before turning our attention to Chapter 6 and the empirical analysis, a final factor shall be carefully analysed: the personalisation of politics at the country level. Section 5.4 below is devoted to this task.

5.4 The personalisation of politics (3): a general effect

Another relevant factor that can influence the opening of party leader selectorates is the personalisation of politics understood as a wider phenomenon happening at the party-system level. Section 4.3 and 4.4 have been already devoted to the possible effect of, respectively, leaders' effects in general elections and leaders' control of their parties on the DVs. Here, I would widen the scope of the analysis and consider the possible effect of a more general increase in the impact of personalisation of politics in a certain party system.

The first thing one notices when dealing with a broad view on the personalisation of politics is that different authors, despite diverse definitions, focus on the same underlying idea: for Rahat and Sheafer (2007, p. 65, italics in original), '[p]olitical personalization should be seen as a *process* (Brettschneider & Gabriel, 2002; Kaase, 1994) in which the political weight of the individual actor in the political process increases over time, while the centrality of the political group (i.e., political party) declines'; the quote by Karvonen (2010, p. 4), already mentioned in Section 2.4, underlines that '[t]he core of the personalisation hypothesis is the notion that individual political actors have become more prominent at the expense of parties and collective identities'; Balmas *et al.* (2014, p. 37) bring about the idea that personalisation could be seen as a 'mutual process of growing centrality of the individual together with a decrease in the power of political groupings such as political parties, parliaments and cabinets'. Without further exploring all the definitions given by all authors on the topic, the above-mentioned quotes underline the growing importance of individuals and the declining role of parties, collective identities, and so forth. I argue that such phenomenon, and the underlying general concept, are of great importance to tackle the openings of party leader selection rules.

One of the reasons behind my standpoint is that the personalisation of politics is not a phenomenon that should be seen as disconnected from political and social life. On the contrary, its inception and development are linked to several crucial transformations in Western European politics, as we have also seen in Chapter 1. As argued, for instance, by Karvonen (2010, p. 4), many possible different phenomena can explain the alleged rise in the personalisation of politics: from the modernization of societies, to the decline of traditional social cleavages, from the increasing role of (new) media in political communication, to the declining power of party identifications. In other words, these are fundamental changes happened in our societies in the last decades. Shedding some light on the consequences of the personalisation of politics on an important intra-party area, like leader selection, might be framed in the account of wider social and political transformations happening in Western Europe.

At this point, a logical question might arise: why should there be an influence of the personalisation of politics at the party system level on the likelihood that a party opens its leader' selectorate? The answer to this question is simple: Sections 4.3 and 4.4 have been devoted to the task of tackling the possible influence of two specific aspects of the personalisation of politics on the dependent variables. These two faces of the personalisation of politics were related to political parties. From a broader viewpoint, it might also be interesting to analyse the influence of the personalisation of politics at the systemic level, to control for the possible presence of specific patterns that shall be accounted for in the empirical analysis.

All in all, following the reasoning put forward both in Sections 4.3 and 4.4 and in Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli (2017), if we assume that the personalisation of politics is at least partly (if not widely) related to the political changes happened at the electoral and the inter-party levels, it might be interesting to understand the effects on the DVs not only of specific aspects of the personalisation of politics (as done in Sections 4.3 and 4.4), but also of its more general, encompassing, and underlying transformations.

In this sense, an increase in the impact of the personalisation of politics – broadly intended – might act as a push for opening party leadership selectorates: assuming that the personalisation of politics means an increasing role of ‘people’ at the expenses of other ‘groups’ allegiances, or determinants, of party support, it follows that if intra-party power-holders realise that ‘people’ are more important than ‘structures’ – in this case, leaders are more central than their parties – there might be the incentive to open the leader’ selectorate in order to transmit a more ‘democratic’ image of the party to its members, supporters, and to the external environment.

More specifically, we know that the adoption of more open party leader selection rules might increase the legitimacy of party leaders (Lisi, 2010, 2015, pp. 110–111; Sandri and Seddone, 2015a; Pasquino, 2016). I do not want to dispute whether this alleged relationship holds; on the contrary, I might, more modestly, argue that, at the intra-party level, there is some knowledge of the foreseeable effects that an opening of party leader selection rules might have on the legitimacy of a party leader selected by a wider selectorate. Moreover, there might also be a certain knowledge of the general transformations concerning the personalisation of politics happening in a certain party system.

One possible logical consequence of these two phenomena is that, at the intra-party level, there might be certain incentives to open the selectorate for the leadership selection if this decision is thought to be good for the future perspective of the party leader’s legitimacy. And given that an increasing impact of the personalisation of politics is, above all, an increased importance of *the person*, if such person – the party leader – is selected by a wider selectorate, he/she might have the chance to see his/her legitimacy increased, exactly because the personalisation of politics has made him/her, and also his/her mode of selection, more interesting to consider by the public – and ultimately, by voters. Therefore, this reasoning has brought me to devise a ninth, and final, hypothesis:

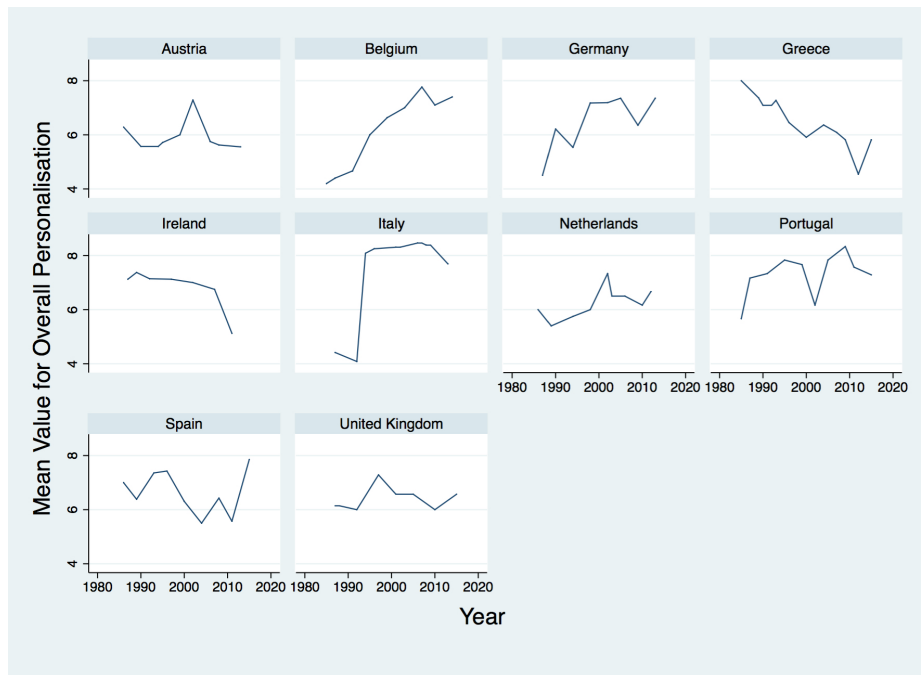
H9. If the impact of the personalisation of politics in a given general election increases, the probability that a party opens its leader’ selectorate increases.

To operationalize the variable necessary to test *H9*, I have relied on the data collected for the Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017). More specifically, the survey included a question aimed at tackling the personalisation in a given country in each election. We asked respondents to rate the overall impact of the personalisation of politics on a 1-10 scale, where 1 means ‘very low impact’ and 10 ‘very high impact’. Starting from the data derived from answers to this question, I have created a variable called *Overall Personalisation*.

At this point, a counterargument would point out that asking such general question could have meant obtaining unreliable results, given the more general nature of the question compared to the other questions of the Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey. Yet, a reply to this argument would be twofold. First, we wanted to obtain a sort of ‘snapshot’ of the personalisation of politics in each election in each country, without introducing any bias potentially influencing respondents, and assuming that experts had a general idea of the level of personalisation in each party system under consideration and its impact (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017). Second, even if the first reply was not convincing yet, we have run a series of reliability tests that, in line with the results obtained for the other questions of the expert survey¹⁰⁰, show that the inter-expert reliability for this question – and therefore for the data obtained from the responses to the question – is extremely encouraging (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017).

¹⁰⁰ See Sections 4.3 and 4.4.

Figure 5.1 Average values of Overall Personalisation over time per country, Western Europe (1985-2015)



Source: author's elaboration

Figure 5.1 reports the mean values, over time, attributed by experts to the overall impact of the personalisation of politics in the 10 Western European countries under examination. Some cases stand out: for instance, the abrupt rise in the values of *Overall Personalisation* in Italy in the mid-1990s is attributable to the rise to power of Berlusconi's party, FI, whose alleged importance for the personalisation of politics in Italy has been widely analysed (see for instance Calise, 2015). Also, the increase in the mean values in the United Kingdom in mid-to-late-1990s might also be related to the rise to the political scene of Tony Blair (Heffernan and Webb, 2005), albeit there was a declining trend up to 2010, showing that, at least according to the experts we have surveyed, the impact of the personalisation of politics in the British case would require a careful investigation.

Figure 5.1 also shows some – more or less constant – declining trends, like those of Ireland and Greece, whereas some other countries, namely, Belgium and Germany, experienced an increase in the overall impact of the personalisation of politics between the mid-1980s and the mid-2010s. Concerning the possible impact of *Overall Personalisation* on the probability that parties open their leaders' selectorate, it seems there is not a clear pattern at work: in some countries, there is a declining trend but there are selectorate openings (Ireland, and Greece), while in others there is an increasing trend but there are no openings (Germany), and there are also openings of countries experiencing more erratic trends of increase or decrease in the impact of the

personalisation of politics (the United Kingdom, and Portugal). Even in this case, the empirical analysis might help us properly understand the influence of *Overall Personalisation* on the DVs.

Conclusions

At the end of this chapter, a brief recap might be of help: after having presented the internal factors allegedly influencing the openings of party leader selectorates in Chapter 4, this chapter has been devoted to putting forward the reasoning behind the presentation of four external factors that should impact on parties' openings of their leaders' selectorate. These external factors are electoral setbacks, the opposition status, the contagion by other parties, and the overall impact of the personalisation of politics.

The two-fold presentation of internal and external factors in Chapters 4 and 5 has followed the logic put forward in Section 3.1 on the general framework of analysis at the basis of this dissertation. Now, what remains to be explored is whether all these factors, or only some of them, have an impact on parties' probability to open their leaders' selectorates. Chapter 6 is devoted to this task and therefore focuses on the empirical analyses for the two dependent variables of this study, the dichotomous one and the ordinal one.

Chapter 6 – The empirical analysis

As shown in Chapter 3, there are two questions that need to be addressed: first, why do parties open their leader selectorate? Second, why do parties adopt a specific selectorate? This is related to the fact that the openings of party leader selectorates can be seen – and therefore analysed – from two different viewpoints: by considering all openings as equal (and thus using in the empirical analysis a dichotomous dependent variable) or, conversely, by separately considering the different selectorates (meaning, adopting an ordinal dependent variable). The two DVs are necessary to deal with the two abovementioned standpoints and must be analysed using two different regression models. More specifically, Section 6.1 deals with the analysis of the dichotomous DV, while Section 6.2 tackles the ordinal DV. Finally, Section 6.3 compares the determinants of the two dependent variables and also puts forward a tentative research agenda for future comparative pieces of research on party leader selection.

6.1 The analysis of the dichotomous dependent variable

In this section, I answer the question why parties open their leader selectorate (from a general viewpoint). Chapters 4 and 5 have put forward nine hypotheses to try answering this question. Before delving deeper into the empirical analysis, Table 6.1 below reports some descriptive statistics for the DV and the independent variables. Moreover, the sign of *Membership Decline* and *Seat Share Loss* has been inverted to facilitate readability and the interpretation of the empirical analysis: *positive* values of these two variables respectively mean a *decline* in a party's average M/E ratio (compared to T-1) and a *decline* in a party's percentage of seats obtained (compared to T-1).

Table 6.1 Descriptive Statistics for the dichotomous Dependent Variable

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Selectorate Dichotomous	0.076	0.265	0	1	355
Leadership Change	0.437	0.497	0	1	355
Membership Decline	0.707	0.379	-2.654	1.901	355
Leader in Election	6.001	1.462	2.3	9.182	355
Leader in Party	6.739	1.688	2.5	10	355
Seat Share Loss	0.102	7.120	-24	35.5	355
Party Size	20.829	16.878	0	63.6	355
Opposition Status	0.589	0.493	0	1	355
Overall Personalisation	6.631	1.042	4.083	8.461	355
Contagion	0.239	0.427	0	1	355
Party Family	-	-	-	-	355
<i>Communist/Socialist</i>					49
<i>Ecologist/Green</i>					31
<i>Social Democratic</i>					81
<i>Christian Democratic</i>					66
<i>Liberal</i>					54
<i>Conservative</i>					43
<i>Right-Wing</i>					31

Source: author's elaboration

Since the DV under examination (*Selectorate Dichotomous*) is a dichotomous one (where 1 means an opening and 0 otherwise), it follows a logistic regression shall be performed. Moreover, it would be useful to control for the fact that, given my observation (the party-case) is the party in the legislature, party-legislature observations are clustered in party-level observations. This specific structure of the dataset must be taken into account; otherwise the standard errors calculated by the logistic regression might be not correct (and this is also related to the probability that type-I errors might be more likely generated) (Steenbergen *et al.*, 2002). Moreover, the dataset includes repeated observations over time (party-legislature) of the same individual (party), and this must also be considered when devising the regression, to control for errors' autocorrelation.

All in all, I have decided to test the impact of the independent variables presented in Chapters 4 and 5 on the dichotomous DV by using a time-series-cross-section (TSCS) analysis, and specifically, a random-intercept logistic regression¹⁰¹. Before using this model, I have declared the dataset to be time-series, and have specified a panel variable and a time variable: the former is the variable *Party ID*, while the latter is the variable *Legislature*. The N of the two variables is, respectively, 52 and 10. Notice that the panel variable's numerosity follows the argument put forward by Stegmueller (2013) about the fact that at least 15 or 20 cases are

¹⁰¹ All the analyses in this chapter have been performed by using Stata13.

necessary for the second-level variable in order not to have biased results¹⁰². More details on the operationalisation of the two variables are available in Appendix B.

Table 6.2 Random-intercept logistic regression on Selectorate (Dichotomous), Western Europe (1985-2015)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Leadership Change		-2.091*** (0.457)	-2.128*** (0.452)
Membership Decline		-0.676** (0.241)	-0.719** (0.232)
Leader in Election		-0.102 (0.203)	-0.107 (0.199)
Leader in Party		-0.223 (0.172)	-0.294 (0.163)
Seat Share Loss		0.095** (0.033)	-0.041 (0.067)
Party Size		0.009 (0.016)	-0.003 (0.017)
Seat Share Loss Party Size		.	0.004* (0.002)
Opposition Status		0.600 (0.583)	0.495 (0.578)
Contagion		0.413 (0.484)	0.435 (0.484)
Overall Personalisation		0.129 (0.173)	0.171 (0.172)
Party Family (Communist/Socialist)		-1.845* (0.921)	-1.959* (0.894)
Party Family (Ecologist/Green)		-0.441 (0.690)	-0.794 (0.703)
Party Family (Social-Democratic)		0.307 (0.481)	0.305 (0.484)
Party Family (Christian-Democratic) [Ref. Category]		.	.
Party Family (Liberal)		-0.050 (0.721)	-0.259 (0.713)
Party Family (Conservative)		-0.302 (0.742)	-0.554 (0.790)
Party Family (Right-Wing)		-0.376 (0.795)	-0.357 (0.802)
Constant	-2.497*** (0.200)	-1.360 (1.342)	-0.857 (1.433)
Observations	355	355	355
Observations (Panel-level)	52	52	52
<i>AIC</i>	195	186.8	184.8
<i>BIC</i>	202.8	248.7	250.6
<i>Log Pseudo-Likelihood</i>	-95.5	-77.4	-75.4
<i>Wald Chi-Square</i>		27.1*	28.4*

Log-Odds reported. Cluster-Robust Standard errors in parentheses

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

It is now time to move to the empirical analysis. Table 6.2 above reports the results of the logistic regression analysis performed on the dichotomous dependent variable¹⁰³. Model 1 is an

¹⁰² For further considerations, see also Bryan and Jenkins (2016). I have also decided to cluster errors according to *Party ID*, to control for heteroskedasticity-related and autocorrelation-related problems, following Cameron and Trivedi (2009).

empty model, while Model 2 includes all the variables presented in Chapters 4 and 5, minus the interaction between *Seat Share Loss* and *Party Size* (which is necessary to test *H6*). Finally, Model 3 includes all the variables presented in this dissertation, including the interaction¹⁰⁴. Both the constitutive terms of the interaction (that is, *Seat Share Loss* and *Party Size*) and the interaction itself are reported (Brambor, Clark and Golder, 2006).

Looking at Table 6.2 above, there are some interesting preliminary considerations to make. First of all, the fact that just a handful of variables have a statistically significant impact on the DV is reflected in the goodness of fit measures. Concerning the comparison between Model 1 and Model 2, only does the AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) (Akaike, 1974) show that there is an increase in the goodness of fit, albeit it is not a very strong one. On the other hand, the BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion) (see, for instance, Raftery, 1995), being more sensible to the number of variables used in a model (and therefore more penalising), shows that there is not an increase in the goodness of fit. Yet, these considerations might be tempered by looking at the significance level of the Chi2.

Let us start analysing the results of Table 6.2. The first four variables appearing in the table are those related to the hypotheses on the intra-party factors presented in Chapter 4: *H1* (*Leadership Change*), *H2* (*Membership Decline*), *H3* (*Leader in Election*), and *H4* (*Leader in Party*). Then, we find the variables related to the external factors having a possible influence on the DV, analysed in Chapter 5: *Seat Share Loss* is related to *H5*, while *Party Size* and also the interaction between the *Seats Share Decline* and *Party Size* are related to *H6*; then, *Opposition Status* is related to *H7*, *Contagion* is necessary to test *H8*, and, finally, *Overall Personalisation* is connected to *H9*. The table also includes the different categories of the variable *Party Family*, which controls for parties' ideological families.

Turning our attention to the empirical test of the hypotheses, we first notice that some alleged relevant intra-party factors to explain the opening of party leader selectorates do exert a certain influence on the DV, but the sign of the coefficient is the opposite of the one I was expecting.

More specifically, the significant ($p < 0.001$) coefficient for *Leadership Change* has a negative sign, both in Models 2 and 3: it means that if parties change a leader in a legislature, the

¹⁰³ I have run a multicollinearity test that reports no problems of multicollinearity: the VIF/TOL test reports no VIF values above 2, and a mean VIF value below 1.4.

¹⁰⁴ I have decided, for this Table and also for the Table related to the regression analysis concerning the ordinal dependent variable, to rely on log-odds instead of odds-ratios for readability reasons.

probability that they will open the leader's selectorate is lower compared to those parties that have not changed the leader, all other things being equal. This means not only that *H1* does not find empirical confirmation concerning the dichotomous DV, but also that, when dealing with general openings of party leader selectorates, a change in party leadership is not a push, but a brake for such openings. I discuss this result – and also the other results of Table 6.2 – later in this section. For the moment, let us turn our attention to the other variables presented in the table.

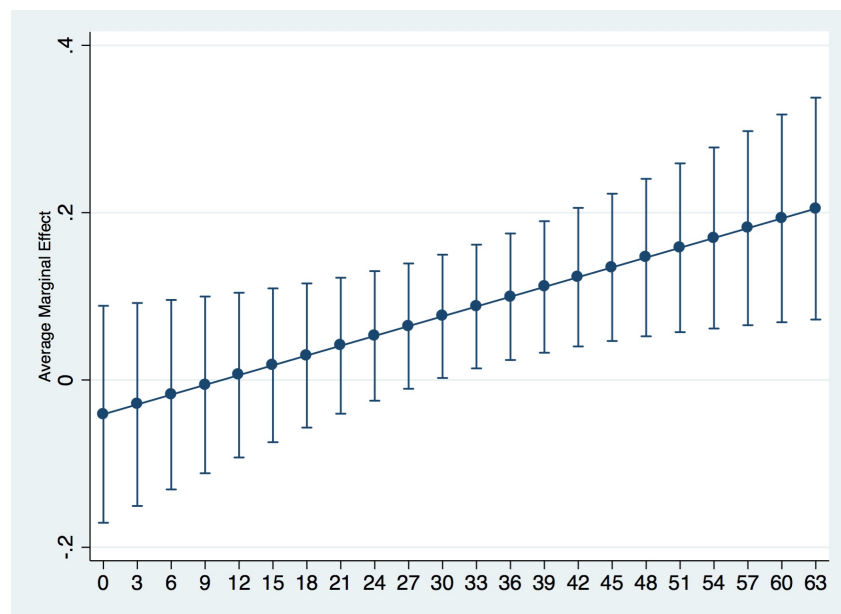
The same logic of *Leadership Change* can be applied to the analysis of the sign of *Membership Decline*: being negative (and significant, $p < 0.01$), both in Models 2 and 3, it means that when parties lose members – with respect to the previous legislature – their chances of opening their leader's selectorate are lower, and when they instead gain members, they have more chances to open such selectorate. So, *H2* does not find empirical confirmation, but this means that when a party's M/E ratio increases compared to the past legislature, this acts as a positive drive for party leader selectorates' openings.

The other hypotheses do not find empirical confirmation, given the non-significance of the coefficients: so, the fact that a party is in opposition (*H6*), or that it acts in a more personalised party system (*H7*), or having a leader either able to drive consensus towards the party during a general election (*H3*) or with a greater control of the party organisation (*H4*), or even the fact that other parties in the same system opened their leader's selectorate in the previous legislature (*H9*) do not have a statistically significant impact on the probability that parties open the selectorate that chooses their leader.

A different discourse shall be made concerning *H5*, and therefore to *Seat Share Loss*: this variable has indeed a significant ($p < 0.01$) and positive coefficient in Model 2, meaning that there is a statistically significant relationship between such variable and the DV. Moreover, according to the results of Model 2, as hypothesised in *H5*, a decrease in the percentage of seats held by a party increases the probability for this political formation to open the selectorate for its leader. Nonetheless, when passing from Model 2 to Model 3 (that is, when the interaction between *Seat Share Loss* and *Party Size* is also included), the coefficient for *Seat Share Loss* becomes non-significant. It seems that what matters, in analysing the influence of electoral setbacks on the probability parties open their leaders' selectorate, is controlling for party size. Therefore, it might be more worthy investigating *H6* (the hypothesis related to the influence of party size on the effect of electoral setbacks) than *H5* (which is the hypothesis directly connecting such setbacks to the DV).

Let us, therefore, turn our attention to *H6* and the interaction between *Seat Share Loss* and *Party Size*. By briefly recalling *H6*, the hypothesis stated that, for larger parties, the effects of an electoral setback on their probability to open leaders' selectorate would have been stronger. Table 6.2 shows that the conditioned effect of *Party Size* on the influence of *Seat Share Loss* on the DV is significant and positive. Thus, it seems that, when controlling for the size of parties (in terms of seats held in Parliament at T-1), an electoral setback does have a positive effect on the likelihood to open leader selectorates. More specifically, it seems that the effects of an electoral setback for bigger parties are that they should have a higher probability to open their leaders' selectorates.

Figure 6.1 Average Marginal Effect of Seat Share Loss on Selectorate (Dichotomous) conditioned to Party Size



To fully grasp the effects of the interaction, following again Brambor, Clark and Golder (2006), Figure 6.1 above reports the Average Marginal Effect of the interaction between *Seat Share Loss* and *Party Size*. There are two substantial reasons to recur to this post-estimation tool: on the one hand, Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) greatly facilitate the interpretation of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent one (also when an interaction is taken into consideration), given they measure the change in the expected value of the dependent variable when an independent variable changes by an extremely small value (Mood, 2010).

Figure 6.1 does reveal an interesting pattern. From Table 6.2, we know the coefficient of the interaction between *Seat Share Loss* and *Party Size* is significant ($p < 0.05$). Yet, Figure 6.1 tells us that only when the party size at T-1 (X axis) is sufficiently big – around 33% of the seats in the

Lower House – does the average marginal effect on the probability to open the leader' selectorate increase. In other words, for bigger parties, the stronger the electoral setback, the higher the probability they will change their leader' selectorate. Moreover, the lower confidence interval of the marginal effects' line reaches the zero on the Y axis starting from party size at T-1 equal to circa 30% of the seats of the Lower House¹⁰⁵. In other words, for smaller parties, it is not possible to consider *H6* as empirically supported, while there is indeed empirical confirmation for bigger parties.

Let us wrap up the results of Table 6.2 and Figure 6.1. A first take is that both internal and external factors seem to exert a statistically significant influence on the probability a party opens its leader' selectorate. On the one hand, both the lack of changes in the leadership and an increase in the M/E ratio increase the likelihood a party makes the selectorate for its leader more inclusive. Moreover, along with these two internal factors, also an electoral setback has an impact on the DV, albeit its effect is more blurred. More specifically, if, on the one hand, we do not include in the analysis the interaction between *Seat Share Loss* and *Party Size*, Model 2 shows that an electoral setback is indeed a push for fostering an opening of party leaders' selectorate, but when the interaction is taken into consideration (Model 3), this unconditioned effect disappears, and only the conditioning effect of parties' size on the impact of electoral setbacks is statistically significant. These results show that, at least concerning the dichotomous DV, the discussion raised in Section 3.1 on the importance of external or of internal factors, where I have adopted an 'agnostic' view, might have been a good solution: including both sets of factors has allowed us to discover interesting paths of analysis.

A second consideration is that the Western European political parties included in the analysis seem to be quite conservative organisations: if a party changes its leader during a legislature, or if its M/E ratio declines compared to the previous legislature, such party is less likely to open its leader selectorate. In other words, when faced with two dire internal phenomena – the fact that the leader of the party changes or the lower ability of the party either to attract new members or to keep existing ones in – parties react by not opening their leader selection rules. One possible reason is that the two above-mentioned phenomena can reduce the ability of political parties to control and have a grasp of the environment around them¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁵ For more information on the interpretation of the marginal effects' plots and on issues related to the problems when the confidence intervals touch the zero line, see Brambor, Golder and Clark (2006)

¹⁰⁶ For a detailed account of the importance of the external environment for political parties, see, for instance, Panebianco (1988).

Indeed, a change in a party's leadership means that the person (the organ) who (which) is theoretically the one who (which) should lead the party is a new one. The old leadership, with its knowledge of the external environment (be it limited or extended), is gone. Moreover, a decline in party membership substantially means a party is less and less able to be attractive to citizens. It follows the function of connecting the state with the society, already thought to be in decline by Katz (1990), Mair (1994), and Katz and Mair (1995), might be extremely precarious. Indeed, all other things being equal, a declining M/E ratio also means – with all the possible caveats one should remember¹⁰⁷ – that less ‘fresh blood’ is entering the party organisation. Therefore, again, all other things being equal, there is also a lower knowledge of the external environment, especially of the one closer to political parties, that is, of those citizens who might be interested in joining them. All in all, both phenomena seem to me as pointing towards the same direction: more uncertainty and less knowledge of what is happening outside the party. And the consequence of this situation seems to be clear: a lower probability to open party leader selection rules.

Obviously, this consideration might be tempered by two further points. The first one is that Table 6.2 and Figure 6.1 show that, for bigger political parties, a dire event, like an electoral setback, increases the probability of an opening of party leader selection rules. Despite nothing substantial can be said for smaller parties, the interaction suggests us that the party change framework might have hinted at a possible important element only for larger parties: they are mostly interested in being electorally successful. And therefore, an electoral setback might bring about the necessity to change something at the intra-party level. More specifically, the party leader selectorate. As extensively argued in Section 5.1, this might be because electorally unsuccessful parties might want to renew themselves (or their image transmitted to the electorate) by fostering reforms that might appear as ‘popular’.

The second, and final, point is related to the ‘other side of the coin’ of *Membership Decline*. Indeed, the negative sign of the coefficient reported in Table 6.2 means not only that a decline in the M/E with respect to T-1 reduces the probability for a party to open its leader selection rules, but also that an *increase* in the M/E ratio (compared to T-1) *increases* the probability to open the selectorate for party leaders. In this sense, a useful insight might come from Gauja and Van Haute (2015) who, discussing the results of the analyses performed by country experts on party membership in a number of Western countries and presented in their edited volume (Van Haute and Gauja, 2015), bring about two interesting points of discussion: first, there is a certain desire

¹⁰⁷ For instance, concerning the percentage of old members renewing their membership, a kind of data which is extremely difficult to obtain, especially for large-N comparative analyses.

for (more) Intra-Party Democracy by party members, and, second, policy- and political-values-related reasons are the most important motivations why people join political parties.

So, when the M/E ratio of a party increases, it means that a political party has a higher number of people than before who have decided either to renew their membership or to join that political formation¹⁰⁸. Moreover, it also means that older party members, who might be extremely interested in Intra-Party Democracy, are joined by newly-enrolled members, who might have become party members predominantly for the desire to have an impact on policy-making and to follow the party's political values. Therefore, party members might have a certain willingness to push for 'democracy-enhancing' reforms, like the opening of the party leadership selectorate, and sometimes be also successful in such requests. Obviously, this is a speculation, albeit it is based on many empirical pieces of evidence, and might seem more or less convincing¹⁰⁹. A good way to verify its adherence to reality is testing it in future empirical research.

What, instead, can be immediately done is understanding whether the determinants for some *specific* openings of party leader selectorates – i. e. for the passages from one specific value of the ordinal dependent variable to the next one – are similar or different from the ones for the dichotomous DV. In the next section, I deal with the analysis of the ordinal DV before moving, in Section 6.3, to a general recap of the findings of this chapter.

6.2 The analysis of the ordinal dependent variable

This section tackles the following question: why do parties adopt specific leader selectorates? To answer this question, an analysis of the ordinal dependent variable presented in Section 3.2 is put forward. Given the DV is ordinal, I show the results of an analysis based on an

¹⁰⁸ Obviously, another possibility is that the electorate of a country – that is, the denominator of the M/E ratio – has declined while the number of members of a party has either remained stable or has declined at a lower rate than the electorate. Yet, with the sole exception of Italy for the last three elections (after a reform giving Italians abroad the power to directly elect some MPs), in all the countries included in the empirical analysis, the electorate has expanded through time.

¹⁰⁹ On a small side note, Tormey (2015, pp. 19–20) argues that a decline in parties' membership should mean that such parties' leaders are less and less influenced by members, and more and more pressured by party funders, interest groups, or even the media. By inverting this argument, an increase in parties' membership might signal a higher influence by members on party leaders.

ordered logistic regression. Indeed, an ordered logistic regression computes the probability for an individual to pass to a higher value of the DV's distribution compared to the probability that the individual remains at lower levels. (e.g. passing to value 4 vs the probability to remain at a value lower than 4). This seems a feasible way to tackle the second question and understanding, in a fine-grained and detailed way, the precise movements of parties on the selectorate's exclusiveness/inclusiveness continuum presented in Section 3.2. More specifically, the regression considers the – possibly – different probabilities that might be at play for parties to have a specific more open selectorate for party leaders (i.e., a higher value of the DV) vs the probability they have a less open selectorate (i.e., lower values of the DV). Even for the ordinal DV, I deal with a TSCS analysis thanks to a random-intercept ordered logistic regression. Moreover, before running the regression, I have followed the procedure seen in the previous section and declared the data to be time-series (panel variable: *Party ID*, time variable: *Legislature*)¹¹⁰.

Table 6.3 Descriptive statistics for the ordinal dependent variable

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Selectorate (Ordinal)	-	-	-	-	355
<i>One Person</i>					5
<i>Party Elite</i>					41
<i>Party MPs</i>					16
<i>Electoral College</i>					15
<i>Party Congress</i>					180
<i>Party Primary</i>					98
Leadership Change	0.437	0.497	0	1	355
Membership Decline	0.707	0.379	-2.654	1.901	355
Leader in Election	6.001	1.462	2.3	9.182	355
Leader in Party	6.739	1.688	2.5	10	355
Seat Share Loss	0.102	7.120	-24	35.5	355
Party Size	20.829	16.878	0	63.6	355
Opposition Status	0.589	0.493	0	1	355
Contagion	0.239	0.427	0	1	355
Overall Personalisation	6.631	1.042	4.083	8.461	355
Party Family	-	-	-	-	350
<i>Communist/Socialist</i>					49
<i>Ecologist/Green</i>					31
<i>Social Democratic</i>					81
<i>Christian Democratic</i>					66
<i>Liberal</i>					54
<i>Conservative</i>					43
<i>Right-Wing</i>					31

¹¹⁰ Even in this case, in order to control for heteroskedasticity-related and autocorrelation-related problems, I have clustered errors according to the variable *Party ID*.

Table 6.3 above presents the descriptive statistics for the empirical analysis. Then, Table 6.4 below reports the results of the empirical analysis on the ordinal DV.

Table 6.4 Random-intercept ordered logistic regression on Selectorate (Ordinal), Western Europe (1985-2015)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Leadership Change		-0.152 (0.261)	-0.156 (0.261)
Membership Decline		-0.398 (0.570)	-0.361 (0.553)
Leader in Election		0.406** (0.158)	0.394* (0.158)
Leader in Party		-0.455* (0.185)	-0.483** (0.184)
Seat Share Loss		0.044* (0.019)	-0.004 (0.051)
Party Size		-0.046 (0.031)	-0.046 (0.032)
Seat Share Loss Party Size			0.001 (0.001)
Opposition Status		-0.016 (0.264)	-0.063 (0.278)
Contagion		0.985** (0.322)	1.005** (0.325)
Overall Personalisation		0.197 (0.271)	0.216 (0.268)
Party Family (Communist/Socialist)		-5.609** (2.055)	-5.587** (2.053)
Party Family (Ecologist/Green)		-0.030 (1.834)	-0.004 (1.852)
Party Family (Social Democratic)		1.941 (1.067)	1.929 (1.071)
Party Family (Christian-Democratic) [Ref. Category]		.	.
Party Family (Liberal)		1.495 (1.486)	1.495 (1.494)
Party Family (Conservative)		-0.537 (1.289)	-0.491 (1.303)
Party Family (Right-Wing)		-2.532 (1.635)	-2.444 (1.645)
Constant	13.52*** (3.916)	7.884* (3.556)	7.870* (3.571)
Cut-Off 1	-11.001*** (1.642)	-12.000** (3.709)	-12.150** (3.762)
Cut-Off 2	-4.322*** (0.641)	-5.902 (2.940)	-5.206 (2.980)
Cut-Off 3	-3.365*** (0.604)	-4.046 (2.594)	-4.155 (2.640)
Cut-Off 4	-2.611*** (0.579)	-3.253 (2.379)	-3.359 (2.416)
Cut-Off 5	1.909*** (0.557)	1.599 (2.122)	1.500 (2.168)
Observations	355	355	355
Observations (Panel-level)	52	52	52
<i>AIC</i>	665.6	637.9	638.7
<i>BIC</i>	688.9	719.62	723.9
<i>Log-Likelihood</i>	-326.8	-297.9	-297.4
<i>Wald Chi-Square</i>		82.47***	74.64***

Log-Odds Coefficients reported; Cluster-Robust Standard errors in parentheses

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

As done for Table 6.2 presented in the previous section, even Table 6.4 above reports the null model (Model 1), the model with all the variables minus the interaction (Model 2) and, finally, the complete model where also the interaction between *Seat Share Loss* and *Party Size* is present (Model 3)¹¹¹. Following the scheme for the analysis of the dichotomous DV, the upper part of Table 6.4 reports the variables related to the four ‘internal’ hypotheses: *Leadership Change* (H1), *Membership Decline* (H2), *Leader in Election* (H3), and *Leader in Party* (H4). Then, the table also includes the variables for the five ‘external’ hypotheses: *Seat Share Loss* (H5), *Party Size* (which, along with *Seat Share Loss*, is needed to test H6), *Opposition Status* (H7), *Contagion* (H8), and, finally, *Overall Personalisation* (H9). An evident difference with the table related to the analysis of the dichotomous DV is that Table 6.4 above also reports the values of some cut-off points. They are the estimated points of an unobserved latent variable separating different levels of the DV when the independent variables are zero (see, for instance, Cameron and Trivedi, 2005, p. 682).

The first piece of evidence one notices by looking at Table 6.4 is that the variables explaining the adoption of a specific selectorate are different than the ones generally influencing the opening of a party leader selectorate. Indeed, Table 6.4 shows that, contrarily to Table 6.2, *Membership Decline* and *Leadership Change* are non-significant. It follows that, for the ordinal DV, H1 and H2 do not find empirical confirmation. In other words, changing a leader or losing members do not drive parties to adopt specific leader selectorates. Moreover, *Seat Share Loss* is significant in the second model of the regression for the dichotomous DV, and this is also true for the second model of the ordinal DV’s regression. Let us recall that both Model 2 in Table 6.2 (the one related to the dichotomous DV) and also Model 2 in Table 6.4 above (the one analysing the ordinal DV) do not include the interaction between *Seat Share Loss* and *Party Size*. Therefore, the effect of electoral setbacks of parties’ probability to open their leaders’ selectorate seem to be at least partly compatible when controlling for the *specific* selectorates’ openings and when one considers *all* selectorates’ openings as equal. Later in this section, we see whether this first hint is also confirmed when it comes to the interaction between an electoral setback and the size of parties possibly affected by such event.

All in all, these first pieces of evidence show that the picture emerging from the analysis of the ordinal DV seems different than the one rising from the regression related to the dichotomous DV. Let us precisely analyse what emerges from Table 6.4 above.

To begin with, *Leader in Election* has a statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and positive impact on the probability that parties adopt a more open party leader selectorate, both in Models 2 and 3.

¹¹¹ The results of the multicollinearity test also apply to this analysis and therefore report no problems of multicollinearity.

Therefore, *H3* finds empirical confirmation: when party leaders have a higher ability to drive consensus towards their parties, the chances to open such parties' leader selectorate increase. Moreover, this is a first piece of evidence confirming the goodness of verifying whether the personalisation of politics has an impact on party leader selection rules (i.e., the selectorate). This last consideration seems to find further support when analysing *Leader in Party*: also in this case, the variable has a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and negative impact (in both Models 2 and 3) on the probability for a political party to adopt a more open selectorate to choose its leader. Therefore, *H4* finds empirical confirmation as well: more powerful party leaders decrease the probability for their parties to adopt more open leader selectorates. Interestingly, the variable analysing the encompassing effect of the personalisation of politics – *Overall Personalisation* – is not significant: in other words, it seems that the personalisation of politics is more relevant in explaining the openings of party leader selectorates when one considers the *specific* 'faces' of personalised politics, while a more general and encompassing effect of this phenomenon does not appear to be a relevant factor. This might also be a further confirmation of the fact that it is the party leader who has a strong impact on parties – for instance, concerning the decision to open the leader selectorate – while a more general phenomenon, like the increase in the impact of the personalisation of politics, does not exert any significant influence.

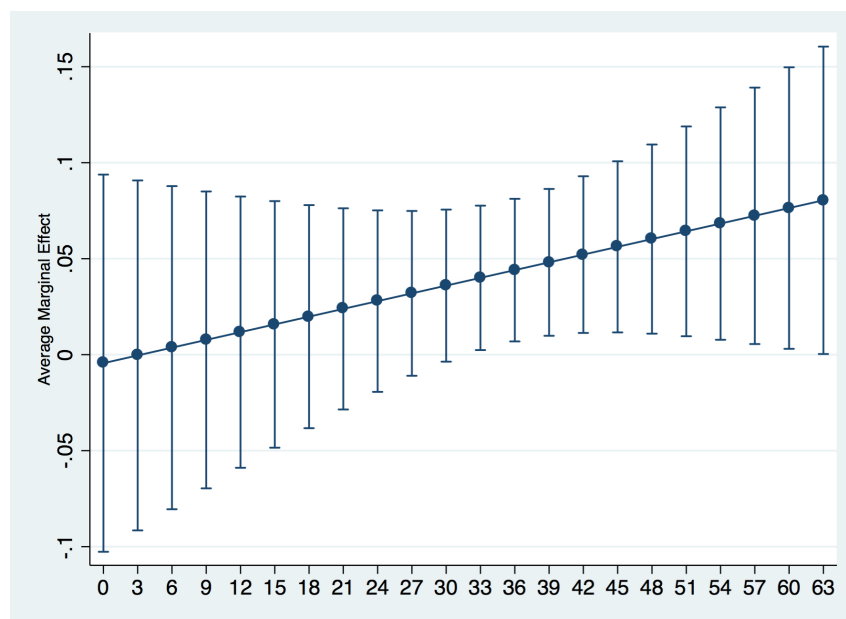
Moreover, the fact that *Leader in Election* and *Leader in Party* are both statistically significant seems to point out at an alleged total importance of the internal party factors in fostering openings on the ordinal DV. Nonetheless, this would be a hasty conclusion. On the one hand, a closer look at Table 6.4 reveals that *Contagion* has a significant ($p < 0.01$) and positive effect on the likelihood that parties open their leader selectorate. It follows that *H8* finds empirical confirmation: if at least one party opens its leader selectorate, other parties in the same system are more likely to follow its path and do the same thing compared to a situation where no party opens its selectorate. This last point underlines that, as also seen with regards to the dichotomous DV, even for the ordinal dependent variable, both internal and external factors are at play in fostering openings of party leader selectorates.

Nonetheless, we still need to verify the effect, on the ordinal DV, of the interaction between *Seat Share Loss* and *Party Size* (*H6*). Are bigger political formations more affected by an electoral setback when deciding whether to adopt specific more open leader selectorates? By following the same procedure put forward in the previous section, even in this case, a graph representing the Average Marginal Effect (AME) of *Seat Share Loss* at different levels of *Party Size* is needed.

Figure 6.2 below reports an interesting effect of the interaction between the electoral setback and the party size on the probability that a party adopts a specific more open leader

selectorate. Indeed, similarly to what we have seen in Figure 6.1 (the one related to the dichotomous DV), *H6* does not find empirical confirmation for smaller parties (those who have had, at T-1, a percentage of seats in the Lower House equal to or lower than approximately 31%). On the contrary, there is an average increasing positive impact of an electoral setback when *Party Size* is equal to or bigger than around 31%. Therefore, the hypothesis finds only partial empirical confirmation. Moreover, a small difference with Figure 6.1 is that, in Figure 6.2 below, the lower confidence intervals for very large parties (approximately, those that have had more than 43% of the seats at T-1) start to be flatter and show slightly less positive values for extremely large parties (those that have had more than 50% of the seats at T-1), up to reaching the zero for a party size equal to 63%. The marginal effect of *Seat Share Loss* remains positive and continues increasing, but this might tell us we need to interpret the results of the interaction for the ordinal DV with a grain of salt compared to the interaction for the dichotomous DV.

Figure 6.2 Average Marginal Effect of Seat Share Loss on Selectorate (Ordinal) conditioned to Party Size



Up to now, we have seen the effects of the independent variables on the ordinal DV. So, at this point, a logical question might arise: is the adoption of *specific* selectorates influenced by the *same* factors? In other words, is there any difference between the probability that parties adopt – say – a congress-based leadership selection and the probability that they adopt a primary election for selecting their leaders? Are *different* levels of the ordinal DV influenced by the *same* independent variables? These questions might be extremely interesting to address, given they

could give us an even more precise insight into the phenomenon of openings of party leader selection rules.

So, I now turn to the analysis of the Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) at two different values of the ordinal DV: congress vs less inclusive selectorates and primary election vs less inclusive selectorates. There are two reasons to explore these specific values: on the one hand, the party congress and the party primary are, by far, the two most common means of leadership selection in the Western European parties under consideration (see Table 6.3 and, for a comparison, Pilet and Cross, 2014a). On the other hand, the passage from – say – party MPs or the electoral college to the party congress, and also the passage from – say – the party congress to the party primary represent two crucial moments in parties' lives. Indeed, in the first case, party elites cede a non-marginal power of leader selection by allowing the party congress to choose the party leader. Reiterating a point already made in Section 3.3, when the leader selectorate is opened, party elites do experience a decrease in their selection power, all other things being equal. This does not mean that such power disappears completely, but that other organs – say, the party congress – or other groups of people within the party – say, activists or congress delegates – see an increase in their leader selection power. Moreover, when a party primary is implemented as the way of selecting the leader, it represents another fundamental turning point for a political formation, given that either just party members, or even party voters are allowed to select the head of the party. Moreover, the adoption of party primaries has consequences going far beyond the mere empowerment of a wider selectorate (e.g., see Wauters, 2015; Bernardi, Sandri and Seddone, 2017).

So, Table 6.5 below reports the AMEs at the congress-level and at the party-primary-level of the ordinal dependent variable¹¹². In this case, AMEs' implementation is necessary because when one deals with generalised linear models (like a logistic regression, or an ordered logistic regression), the analyses using these models suffer from some issues, and especially unobserved heterogeneity (Allison, 1999; Mood, 2010), that make it extremely problematic (if not impossible) to compare the coefficients (be them log-odds or odds-ratios) across groups or samples or even models, under certain circumstances. Therefore, AMEs analysis gives an easily interpretable and

¹¹² As the reader might notice, Table 6.5 does not report the AMEs for the interaction between *Seat Share Loss* and *Party Size*, given that marginal effects for interactions have not been computed. For a compelling explanation, see Williams (2012). Moreover, the marginal effects of Table 6.5 are related to the probability of being at a certain specific level (e.g. congress) vs the probability to be in lower levels (e.g., the electoral college, or party MPs). For a longer discussion on this specific point, see Greene (2007, pp. 736–740).

comparable snapshot of the effects of the independent variables on the probability that parties adopt two specific leader selectorates: the party congress and the party primary.

Table 6.5 Average Marginal Effects for two levels of Selectorate (Ordinal): Party Congress and Party Primary

	Model Alpha	Model Beta
	DV=Party Congress vs.	DV= Party Primary
	DV<Party Congress	vs. DV<Party Primary
Leadership Change	0.010 (0.018)	-0.020 (0.035)
Membership Decline	0.024 (0.038)	-0.047 (0.073)
Leader in Election	-0.026* (0.013)	0.051** (0.021)
Leader in Party	0.031* (0.015)	-0.063** (0.024)
Seat Share Loss	-0.002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.003)
Party Size	0.003 (0.002)	-0.006 (0.004)
Opposition Status	0.004 (0.018)	-0.008 (0.036)
Overall Personalisation	-0.014 (0.017)	0.028 (0.036)
Contagion	-0.066* (0.033)	0.132** (0.045)
Party Family (Communist/Socialist)	-0.632*** (0.179)	-0.190 (0.113)
Party Family (Greens)	0.001 (0.137)	-0.001 (0.244)
Party Family (Social-Democratic)	-0.288 (0.160)	0.344 (0.177)
Party Family (Christian-Democratic) – [Ref. Category]	.	.
Party Family (Liberal)	-0.207 (0.248)	0.257 (0.278)
Party Family (Conservative)	0.023 (0.058)	-0.057 (0.143)
Party Family (Right-Wing)	-0.137 (0.243)	-0.166 (0.112)
Observations	355	355

Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) reported; Cluster-Robust Standard errors in parentheses

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

A striking piece of evidence emerging from Table 6.5 is that passing to a congress-based party leader selectorate (Model Alpha) is statistically significantly influenced by having had a *more autonomous* leader in the intra-party matters (AME of *Leader in Party* positive and equal to 0.031) and, to a lesser extent, by having a *less influential* leader in general elections (AME of *Leader in Election* negative and equal to 0.026). Moreover, adopting the congress selectorate is also negatively and significantly influenced by the fact that other parties in the system opened their leader' selectorate at T-1 (*Contagion's* AME negative and equal to 0.066), and the contagion effect is the most powerful one, even more powerful than the two personalisation-related variables.

Also, Model Beta, which considers the probability of having a party primary as a leader selectorate, shows that the same variables mentioned above, the one for the contagion effect and

the two related to the leader-related personalisation, have a statistically significant effect. Even in this case, it is the contagion effect to be the most powerful drive for the opening of parties' leader selectorate (AME equal to 0.132), while *Leader in Election* and *Leader in Party* have a less vigorous effect (their AME is, respectively, 0.051 and 0.063). Yet, in Model Beta, these three variables have an inverted sign compared to Model Alpha. In other words, the variables in Model Beta have the same sign of those related to the general analysis of the ordinal dependent variable, presented in Table 6.4.

What can we draw from this comparison? Model Alpha and Model Beta tell us two different stories. Both are related to the 'battle for organisational control' (Gauja, 2016, pp. 42–46) already presented in Sections 4.3 and 4.4. Nonetheless, different phases of the battle might be detected by looking at the possible reasons behind the different signs of the coefficients in the two models of Table 6.5.

Indeed, starting from Model Alpha, leaders who are more autonomous in intra-party matters (positive sign of *Leader in Party*), but are less influential and with less leverage in general elections (negative sign of *Leader in Election*), might want to reduce the power of the Party in Public Office (PPO). We indeed know that this 'face' of party organisations (Katz and Mair, 1993) has been acquiring increasing relevance in Western countries, and in Western Europe as well, from several viewpoints (Mair, 1994; Katz and Mair, 2002).

Let us remember that Model Alpha focuses on parties who have an ordinal DV's value lower than 5 (e.g., party elite or party MPs) vs those who have a value equal to 5 (party congress). Therefore, those parties who have a selectorate which is less inclusive than the party congress have indeed a selectorate who might be (more or less) strongly influenced by the PPO, like the electoral college, the party MPs, or even the party elite¹¹³. So, party leaders – or even intra-party power-holders with the willingness to shrink PPO's influence and autonomy – might push forward alleged 'democracy-enhancing' openings of the selectorate to take the power to select the leader away from the PPO.

Indeed, even if endowed with an increased intra-party autonomy (let us recall the positive sign of *Leader in Party*), party leaders might nonetheless have a formidable internal opponent – the PPO – which has not only allegedly increased its relevance from a general and comparative

¹¹³ When the selectorate for party leaders is equal to party elites, the alleged power of MPs shall not be underestimated, given that party MPs are usually *de iure* members of parties' national executive organs, which generally are, in turn, exactly the organs endowed with the power to select the leader when parties' leader selectorate corresponds to the party elite value on the inclusiveness/exclusiveness continuum shown in Section 3.2.

viewpoint in Western Europe, but which has also a particular influence in selecting the party leader himself/herself. Moreover, the electoral influence of the party leader, which might act as a powerful counter-balancing force, is allegedly not the best card in leaders' sleeves (negative sign of *Leader in Election*), and therefore, there might be the right conditions to take the power of selecting the leader away from the PPO's hands.

Another hint of the fact that we might be tempted of looking inside parties to understand this specific opening of party leaders' selectorate is related to the negative sign of *Contagion*: when other parties in a system open their leader selection rules at T-1, this reduces the probability that other parties in the system do the same. In this sense, a 'reverse contagion' effect is at work, and shows that what matters in fostering this specific opening of the selectorate is intra-party politics. It might be the case that, since we are dealing with openings of the leader selectorate that empower the party congress, the 'democracy-enhancing' rhetoric already encountered in this work might be not so much strong as in the case of openings towards primary elections. In other words, Model Alpha deals with openings towards the party congress. From a propaganda or a rhetoric-based viewpoint, empowering the party congress is not as much 'democratic' as empowering party members or party voters, because the rank-and-file or 'the people' of a party do not have the power to directly select the party leader. This argument is expanded in Section 7.2, where I argue that what could matter, for parties, is mimicking a general election thanks to a primary election – especially when people do not vote via a postal ballot but get out of their places and vote in some physical place. All in all, it might be not convenient for parties to imitate other parties in the system concerning openings of the leader selectorate when such selectorate is made more inclusive only up to the point of the party congress.

On the other hand, something different is at work when analysing Model Beta, which shows the AMEs for parties adopting a party primary for their leader selection. Indeed, compared to less inclusive selectorates, having a party-primary-based selectorate of the leader is significantly influenced by having *more influential* leaders in general elections (positive sign of *Leader in Election*), *less autonomous* leaders in the internal party organisations (negative sign of *Leader in Party*), and, turning to external environment's factors, by having had, at T-1, political organisations in the same system which opened their selectorate (positive sign of *Contagion*). Moreover, as briefly underlined above, Model Beta's determinants have the same sign and almost the same significance level of the final model for the ordinal DV presented in Table 6.4 (Model 3). So, it seems that the cases of the passage from values lower than 6 to 6 on the ordinal DV (that is, from less inclusive selectorates to party primaries) exert a significant leverage on the overall statistical analysis for the ordinal DV.

What can we say by looking at Model Beta? As I have previously argued, the metaphor of the organisational battle (Gauja, 2016, pp. 42–46) might be again of help. Indeed, in this specific case, a different phase of this battle could be ongoing. Party leaders with a certain ‘electoral’ legitimisation, given by their influence in driving consensus towards their party, face a possibly problematic intra-party situation. More into detail, they have, on average, a lower autonomy concerning party organisational matters (negative sign of *Leader in Party*). It might be in their best interest to reduce the power of other party organs (again, of the PPO, but even of the party congress) by taking away from them a very important function – the selection of the party leader.

Interestingly, the other side of the coin of *Leader in Party* is that when party leaders are more autonomous in party organisational matters, they have fewer incentives to open the selectorate. Why so? I would argue that, when party leaders have more power within their organisation, the ‘organisational battle’ might be in its final phases and that internal opposition has already started retreating and abandoning its fighting positions. Obviously, there might also be something else at work, not necessarily related to the organisational battle. As already argued in Section 4.3, it might surely be the case that intra-party power-holders themselves might deem the ‘final’ opening of the selectorate (towards party primaries) as feasible, given that they might want to capitalise on the recent electoral ‘fortunes’ of the party leader (positive sign of *Leader in Election*), so as to transmit a positive and ‘more democratic’ image of the party, also towards its lower strata (which will be endowed with the power to select the head of the party).

Finally, in Model Beta, *Contagion* has a positive and significant AME coefficient, meaning that the selectorate opening of at least another political formation acts as a contagious decision for other political parties in the system. So, when one deals with the adoption of party primaries, the imitation of external organisations (namely, other parties) is also crucial in positively shaping parties’ decisions. This marks a clear difference with Model Alpha – where the openings of other parties’ leader selectorate acted as a brake for a party’s decision – and further confirms the usefulness of separately considering the adoption of a party-congress-based leader selection vs a party-primary-based one.

All in all, the interpretation of the different ‘stories’ behind Models Alpha and Beta presented in Table 6.5 is necessarily a speculative one, albeit it is grounded in solid findings. A series of data which might be useful to empirically test such interpretation is missing. For instance, it would have been extremely helpful to have (or find) diachronic data on the power of the PPO within party organisations. The usual phrase ‘more research is needed’ is therefore surely appropriate to deal with the arguments put forward in this section: in the (hopefully near) future, if suitable comparative data are released, or comparative research efforts are put forward,

it will be possible to expand the discussion I have sketched in this section. A preliminary step is made in the next section, where the most important points emerged in this section and the previous one are systematised and further developed.

6.3 Discussion: insights from the analysis

After having presented the results of the empirical analysis for the dichotomous and the ordinal dependent variables, let us briefly recap the main findings emerged in this chapter. First, there are some alleged important determinants of party change (and of the opening of party leader selectorates) that do not exert any influence in the Western European parties included in the analysis. For instance, being in opposition is a variable considered as a powerful drive both by scholars dealing with intra-party changes (Harmel and Janda, 1994a), or by those focusing on many different changes in party leader selection and de-selection rules (Chiru *et al.*, 2015), or, finally, by researchers dealing specifically with openings of party leader selectorates (Cross and Blais, 2012; Pilet and Cross, 2014a). Nonetheless, the results of the analyses presented in Tables 6.2 and 6.4 have shown that being in opposition does not have a statistically significant influence on party leader selectorates' openings.

Second, some other determinants only find partial empirical confirmation from the analysis: I am referring to electoral setbacks, that affect the DVs only when the size of the party is taken into consideration, and only for larger parties. In this sense, in this dissertation, it was the first time that the intuition by Harmel and Janda (1994a) - according to whom the effects of an electoral setback in fostering party change are stronger for bigger parties – has been applied to the analysis of party leader selection rules. The results of the analyses (and especially those presented in Figures 6.1 and 6.2) bring about the conclusion that electoral setbacks do have a greater impact on larger parties' probability to open their leader selectorates, but the (inverse) relationship does not hold for smaller political formations.

Third, there are also some factors that have an impact on the DVs, but their influence is different whether we consider a dichotomous DV or an ordinal one (in other words, whether our research question is related to *general* openings of party leader selectorates or, conversely, is linked to the adoption of *specific* selectorates). More specifically, changes in a party's leadership and an increase in a party's M/E ratio have a positive impact on the likelihood of opening the selectorates for party leaders from a general viewpoint. The results of the analysis related to the leadership changes are at odds with the literature on party change and party reform (Harmel and Janda, 1994a; Gauja, 2016) and with the research on general leader selection and de-selection

rules (Chiru *et al.*, 2015). Indeed, while the classical effect of a leadership change was considered to be a *positive* drive for changing something within parties, Table 6.2 (presenting the results of the empirical analysis for the dichotomous DV) has shown that leadership changes have a *braking* effect on the probability to open party leader selectorates, possibly due to increasing conservative character of political parties, due to the destabilising effect of a leadership change.

Turning our attention to parties' M/E ratio, even in this case, while the literature on party reform and party change (Gauja, 2016) and on membership decline (Van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke, 2012) has underlined a possible pushing effect of declining M/E figures on parties' probability to change (open) their leader selection rules, the empirical analysis for the dichotomous DV has shown that a *decline* in a party's M/E ratio actually *decreases* the probability for the party to open its rules. Even in this case, in Section 6.1, I have put forward an explanation for this result. The crucial point to discuss here is the fact that something different with regards to other pieces of research might be at play.

Then, an important external factor, i.e. the so-called contagion effect, brought about by other parties having opened their leader' selectorate in the same party system, has an effect on the DV, but only when specific openings are taken into consideration (i.e., when the ordinal dependent variable is analysed). Even in this case, while the literature on the topic underlines a possible *general* effect of this event on parties' openings (or changes) in their leader selection rules (Cross and Blais, 2012; Pilet and Cross, 2014a; Wauters, 2014), the differentiated analysis performed in this chapter has shown that to grasp an effect of *Contagion* it is necessary to take into consideration *specific* openings. In other words, the contagion effect is at work only when openings towards *specific* selectorates are considered.

Fourth, one of the tentative innovations this work has brought about is related to the influence of factors related to the personalisation of politics on openings of party leaders' selectorates. Tables 6.4 and 6.5 have shown that two personalisation variables - the ability of party leaders to drive consensus towards their parties in general elections and the control of party organisations by their leaders - do foster openings towards *specific* selectorates for party leaders. On the contrary, a factor related to the overall impact of the personalisation in general elections does not seem to be a factor at play for an opening of party leader selectorates. This differentiated effect is extremely fascinating and underlines that, concerning the personalisation of politics, intra-party and leader-related factors seem to be more important than external, more general, ones. It seems that, when weighting the effects of the personalisation of politics, political parties give more importance to what happens *within* them compared to what happens in the

party system *around* them. So, a careful consideration of the several aspects related to this multi-faceted concept is needed, also in future empirical pieces of research.

Furthermore, a more general consideration might be related to the partially different factors at play when different dependent variables are considered. On the one hand, there are some variables which exert an influence (with the same sign) in both analyses (i.e., for the dichotomous and for the ordinal DV): the interaction between an electoral setback and party size, belonging to the extreme left/communist family, and, accepting as satisfactory a p-value lower than 0.10, the control of parties by leaders¹¹⁴. On the other hand, there are variables which have a differentiated effect for the two DVs: the two ‘intra-party’ personalisation-related variables and the factor connected to the contagion effect. This shows that the two dependent variables seem to be related to *two different faces* of the main research question, as argued both in Chapter 1 and in Section 3.1.

At this point, a logical – and final – question might be related to what it can be envisaged for future comparative pieces of research aiming at tackling party leader selection rules (and party leader selectorates). A first road would be that of expanding the different hints of the analysis, especially concerning the alleged importance of the Party in Public Office, by putting forward an extensive research programme aiming at collecting data on such important ‘face’ of party organisations. For instance, a diachronic and synchronic dataset on the finances and other resources (staff, and so forth) available for the party in Public Office in Western Europe in the last decades might be something quite interesting to expand the results of this empirical analysis. Indeed, the theory according to which we have been witnessing a rise in the importance of the Party in Public Office in Western Europe (Katz and Mair, 2002; Bardi, Calossi and Pizzimenti, 2017) could be paired with the intuition, already raised in several fashions in this chapter, that this face of party organisations might have had a non-negligible say in the evolution of party leader selection rules. So, should specific and in-depth comparative data on the Party in Public

¹¹⁴ The variable *Leader in Party* is significant only at the lowest possible level of confidence ($p < 0.10$) for the analysis related to the dichotomous DV. We have also just seen that the same variable has a significant ($p < 0.01$) effect in the analysis of the ordinal DV. Therefore, from a general and comparative viewpoint, the fact that the variable is significant (albeit only with p-values lower than 0.10) in both the ordinal-variable-related and the dichotomous-variable-related analyses is something to consider.

Office in Western Europe between the early 1990s and the early 2010s be available in the future¹¹⁵, a fascinating research agenda could be put forward.

A second path could be related to more in-depth and qualitative analyses of specific cases of openings of party leader selection rules (selectorates). This road has been already followed by many scholars (as shown in Chapter 2). Yet, adopting a partially different perspective instead of the classical ones, possibly following the explanations put forward in this chapter, might be of help to understand something that in the past was overlooked or ignored.

A third, and final, possibility would be that of exploring what these results can tell us for our more general understanding of party politics and party leaders. The concluding chapter of this dissertation is indeed devoted to this task.

Conclusions

The empirical analysis performed in this chapter on the two dependent variables (the dichotomous one and the ordinal one) has brought about the idea that not only are different faces of the research question related to different DVs, but also that such different dependent variables are shaped by (partly or totally) different independent variables.

Despite these differences, the analyses of this chapter might also be considered from a more general viewpoint. Indeed, at the end of this long but fascinating journey into party leader selectorates and their determinants, it is possible to widen the scope of the discussion and consider what this study can tell us about intra-party politics, leadership's autonomy and scope, and party decline. The final chapter directly tackles these points, whose importance goes well beyond intra-party politics.

¹¹⁵ Indeed, the data collected for the early-1990s' book edited by Katz and Mair (1992) and those made available by the Political Party Database Project in a recently published book (Scarow, Webb and Poguntke, 2017) do not cover the 1991-2010 period.

Chapter 7 – Wrap-up discussion and concluding remarks

In the past few decades, leaders have become more and more central to democratic politics and also, from a narrower viewpoint, for political parties. Moreover, political parties have been increasingly recurring to more inclusive methods of selecting their leaders. In a number of cases, party members or even party voters have been given this selection power.

Despite the increasing academic interest towards party leaders, a conundrum was still existing: why do parties make the rules to select their leader more inclusive? In other words, and quoting the title of this dissertation, why do parties open their leader selection rules? Most contributions left much room for an encompassing analysis aiming at answering these questions. This is why this dissertation has been devoted to find the determinants behind the openings of the selection rules of the main political parties in 10 Western European countries between the mid-1980s and the mid-2010s. At the end of this dissertation, it might be useful to summarise its main themes and findings, and also illuminate three very general topics of research which could benefit from the insights derived from the work put forward in the previous chapters.

Therefore, the following section focuses on a brief recap of what I have done in the preceding chapters, while Section 7.2 is devoted to a wider and encompassing discussion focusing on three research topics: the responsiveness and responsibility of party leaders; their representation styles; the (re) legitimisation of political parties.

7.1 Openings of party leader selection rules between personalisation of politics and party change

In this dissertation, I have in-depth investigated the determinants of openings of party leader selection rules. After the introductory Chapter 1, where I have discussed the relevance of party leaders and party leader selection rules for comparative politics, Chapter 2 has been devoted to understanding the state of the art of the literature on the matter. More specifically, I have identified some main points of discussion: the lack of a cross-country and diachronic analysis on the factors influencing the openings of party leader selection rules; then, the possible – yet hitherto neglected – role of the personalisation of politics in this process; and the recognition of explicitly incorporating the party change framework within the analysis.

In Chapter 3, I have discussed the research question at the base of this work: why do parties open their leader selection rules? More precisely, following the operationalization of the DVs, why do parties open their leader selectorate? This research question could be seen from two

different standpoints: a first one is related to understanding why parties open their selectorate (without distinguishing among the *types* of selectorate), while the second one deals with the adoption by political parties of *specific* selectorates for their leaders' selection. While the literature analysing from a comparative perspective openings of party leader selection rules has substantially just focused on the first viewpoint, in this dissertation, there is the first explicit attempt to also deal with the second perspective.

Then, in Chapter 3, I have also lengthily discussed the existing operationalizations of party leader selection rules, and have shown why it is better to deal with the selectorate. Afterwards, I have explicitly put forward the operationalization of the selectorate, which has been used as the blueprint to build two dependent variables: a dichotomous one, necessary to deal with the general adoption of more open leader selectorates (where all openings are treated as equal), and an ordinal one, which has served to verify whether the opening towards *different* selectorates can be explained by the same or, conversely, by *different* factors. Finally, in Chapter 3 I have also presented my case selection: 10 Western European countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom) and more than 50 parties have been included in the empirical analysis. As a side note, it is the first time that systematic data on the selectorate of party leaders in Greece, Ireland, and the Netherlands have been collected. When possible, I have also expanded existing comparative datasets on party leader selectorates in the other Western European countries under examination.

Chapters 4 and 5 have presented of the independent variables and their related hypotheses. In the former, internal factors potentially explaining the openings of party leader selectorates have been put forward, while the latter has been devoted to the external factors. Some of these factors directly come from the party change literature or from that related to party leader selection, while some other have been originally devised for this dissertation.

More specifically, in Chapter 4, I have discussed the role of leadership changes, the decline membership figures, parties' belonging to different ideological families, and, last but not least, of two variables related to the personalisation of politics. More into detail, I have discussed the impact of the ability of party leaders to drive consensus towards their parties and, secondly, the control of party organisations by their leaders. Thanks to the data coming from the first Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017), which has allowed to collect systematic data on several faces of the personalisation of politics in Western Europe in the past few decades, it has been possible to deal, for the first time, with the two abovementioned factors related to personalised politics.

Turning to external factors, in Chapter 5, I have analysed their possible influence on the openings of party leader selectorates. First of all, I have tackled electoral setbacks, parties' opposition status, the contagion effect, and, finally, a third personalisation-related variable: the general impact of the personalisation of politics in a given party system. Even in this case, data coming from the Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey have allowed me to discuss and test the influence of this third variable related to personalised politics.

Finally, Chapter 6 has been devoted to the empirical analysis. Two different analyses for the two DVs (the dichotomous one and the ordinal one) have been devised. The results of such analyses have been extremely fascinating: not only have they confirmed that both internal and external factors have been at play in pushing for openings of the leader selectorates of the Western European parties under consideration. More specifically, and starting from the dichotomous DV (which deals with openings of party leader selectorates from a general viewpoint), not having changed the party leader, having increased its M/E ratio, and, for bigger parties, having undergone an electoral setback positively influence parties' probabilities to open their leaders' selectorate. Conversely, turning our attention to the ordinal DV, its analysis has been split into two parts.

In the first one, following what I have done for the dichotomous DV, I have analysed the determinants of the ordinal DV itself. I have found that different determinants are at work when one deals with *specific* party leader selectorates. Indeed, in this case, only do electoral setbacks for bigger parties affect openings of leader selectorates, as in the case of the dichotomous DV. Conversely, other variables do only impact on the DV when an inclusiveness/exclusiveness selectorate continuum is considered (i.e., when the ordinal DV is tackled). I am referring to the contagion effect and two variables related to the personalisation of politics. These latter variables are leaders' ability to drive consensus towards their parties during general elections and leaders' control of their party organisations.

The second part of the analysis for the ordinal DV has dealt with the analysis of the determinants behind the adoption of *two specific* party leader selectorates: the party congress and the party primary. Surprisingly, the independent variables at play are the same ones, but with inverted signs. I have argued that this might be caused by the fact that opening a party leader selectorate by empowering either the party congress or the party primary could signal the existence of two phases of intra-party power battles, building on the concept of 'battle for organisational control' by Gauja (2016).

After having summarised the contents of the main chapters, their innovations and their peculiarities, before concluding this research, it is possible to widen the scope and ask ourselves

whether what has been found in this dissertation might be useful not simply for party leader selection, but for other themes which might be of interest for comparative politics. I would argue this is possible, and three areas of research might benefit from an integration with that of party leader selection, also and (hopefully) especially, in light of what has been put forward in this research until now. The upcoming section is devoted to drawing such connection.

7.2 The responsiveness and responsibility of party leaders, their representation style, and the (re)legitimisation of political parties

In this final section, I argue that the insights coming from the party leader selection literature and this dissertation might be fruitfully connected to other strands of research in the comparative political scholarship. Three themes seem to me particularly relevant: the evolution in the responsiveness and responsibility of party leaders, the possible modification of their representation styles, and, finally, the (re)legitimisation of political parties. Let us start with the first two matters.

In Chapter 1, but also throughout this work, I have been discussing the fact that there have been noticeable changes in voters and political elites, in the sense of a progressive ‘distancing’ of one another (Mair, 2013). From the progressive individualisation of societies, to the declining importance of party identification for voters, from the growing indifference or hate towards democratic politics to the retreatment of politicians in their institutional strongholds, this increasing detachment is a well-known issue for the comparative political scholarship¹¹⁶.

One of the consequences of these long-term processes has been the declining capacity of parties to represent and govern (Mair, 2009). On the other hand, data coming from the Personalisation of Politics Expert Survey (Marino, Martocchia Diodati and Verzichelli, 2017) tell us that, notwithstanding country- and time-related differences, party leaders are non-secondary actors of party democracy. So, using a theatre-related metaphor, party leaders are left as the main actors of the play, while parties, once central actors as well, have undergone a demise, so much so that they just survive as supporting characters. They have not disappeared from the stage, they simply appear less often – or with less important roles. At this point, two crucial processes deserve to be analysed: the changing responsiveness and responsibility of party leaders and the modification in leaders' representation style. Let us start with the former.

¹¹⁶ Apart from Chapter 1, on these points, several other pieces of research might serve as useful guidelines (Manin, 1997; Mair, 2009, 2013; Tormey, 2015).

Following Bardi, Bartolini and Trechsel (2014, p. 237), responsiveness means that ‘parties and leaders [...] sympathetically respond to the short-term demands of voters, public opinion, interest groups, and the media’, while responsibility is ‘the necessity for those same parties and leaders to take into account (a) the long-term needs of their people and countries [...] and] (b) the claims of audiences other than the national electoral audience’. The long-term transformations we were discussing above have contributed widening the gap between responsibility and responsiveness (Mair, 2009), in the sense that having both becomes increasingly difficult, and also widening the fracture between citizens’ (or, more generally speaking, the external environment’s) expectations and parties’ ability to proficiently deal with such expectations (Flinders, 2012). Is there a way to deal with this situation, or at least to reduce this gap?

I would argue the answer to the latter question is positive once we account for the personalisation of politics and the openings of party leader selection rules. Indeed, leaders who are, for instance, more able to drive consensus towards their parties, or who are in control of the organisation they lead, or who are selected by a wider selectorate, have some powerful weapons at their disposal. Starting from the responsiveness standpoint, leaders elected by a wider selectorate, possibly endowed with some sort of personalised power, might appear as more able to take into account the party rank-and-file’s or even the party voters’ demands and wishes, exactly because they have been chosen by a wider set of people and/or because they possess some personalisation-of-politics-related characteristics that make them suitable to connect to wider and wider parts of the citizenry.

Turning to the responsibility issue, even in this case, leaders with the abovementioned features might be deemed as pretty responsible. Indeed, we know that leadership is more and more important in several strands of democratic politics, and this is also true for personal (leaders’) characteristics, like honesty, competence, and the like (Bittner, 2011; Garzia, 2014). This means that leaders might be perceived as men/women of their words, able not simply to drive consensus towards their parties or control their party organisation, but also as people able to think about the medium-to-long-term best interest of citizens. This might be magnified by means of more open party leader selection rules, given they might add a sort of ‘electoral boost’ (especially if leaders have been selected in a primary election), which increases leaders’ legitimacy¹¹⁷. Summing up, a first possible research agenda might be that of investigating whether more open party leader selection rules – possibly in connection with some of the factors

¹¹⁷ The connection between more open party leader selection rules and increased leaders’ legitimacy has already been made in this dissertation (e.g., see Section 5.4).

behind them discussed in this dissertation, like the personalisation of politics – might be connected to leaders’ responsiveness and responsibility.

Let us move to the problem of leaders’ representation styles. As I have argued at the beginning of the section, even in this case, we should start by considering the long-term societal and political transformations that have characterised the past few decades of democratic politics. Which connection can be drawn with the themes of this dissertation? Let us go back to a point already raised in this work: parties’ ability to represent has been sharply declining. This has been allegedly caused not simply by the now-well-known processes discussed in Chapter 1 and in this chapter, but also by various other processes, as also argued by Manin (1997, p. 193), like the increase in electoral volatility, especially in Western Europe (Chiaramonte and Emanuele, 2017). This is an important process to consider. Not only are parties less and less able to represent a social class or their members (Katz, 2014), but are also increasingly worse and worse in representing their voters, exactly because each party’s voters increasingly differ from one election to another. If we also add the process, already seen in different fashions in this dissertation, of the retreat of parties within the state (Mair, 1994, 2013, Katz and Mair, 1995, 2009), we can safely conclude that, regardless of the precise role of parties or citizens in this evolution, it is more and more difficult for parties to represent citizens (see, for instance, Tormey, 2015, pp. 59–82).

At this point, the logical question is why more open party leader selection rules, possibly influenced by some of the factors seen in this dissertation, should change something in this representation crisis. While, in the past, parties were central terminals of the link between ‘makers’ and ‘audience’ of representation, quoting the terminology by Saward (2010), this has been increasingly put into question¹¹⁸. We also know that party leaders have been acquiring centrality in democratic politics. One of the possible consequences of this twofold process is, using Weberian terms, the rise of the ‘charismatic’ aspect of leadership at the expenses of the ‘legal-rational’ one (Musella, 2018, pp. 31–32)¹¹⁹.

The general contrast between a ‘Weberian’ and a ‘Schmittian’ concept of representation has also been extensively discussed in the literature (e.g., see Vieira and Runciman, 2008, pp. 53–58), but this clash can also be proficiently linked to another possible transformation in leaders’

¹¹⁸ See, for instance, the discussion by Manin (1997, pp. 206–219) and, for a partly different standpoint, the view by Tormey (2015, pp. 83–104).

¹¹⁹ Musella argues this is also caused by more open party leader selection rules, which should constitute an aspect of party leaders’ personalised power. I have extensively discussed my standpoint on this issue in Section 4.3.

representative style. Party leaders, more legitimised having been selected by a wider electorate, and possibly endowed with personalised-politics-related features (again, the control of their organisation or the ability to drive consensus towards their parties), might have a style of representation closer to the trustee style than the delegation or the identification ones. The underlying logic is simple: more and more powerful party leaders, less and less constrained by dying mass political organisations, elected by a wider electorate, and surrounded by a world that requires faster and also more responsive and responsible decisions, could be seen as agents of representation who need extreme freedom of action to operate. And therefore, they could try to be less constrained by the requests and demands provided by those represented (e.g., party members, party voters, and so forth). From the other viewpoint, those represented (again, members, voters, and the like) might also see this higher freedom of action by the party leader as something necessary in a faster and less certain environment. Whether this new possible representation bond is something detectable in Western European politics is something that could be investigated in future empirical analyses¹²⁰.

Last, but not least, a third area of research which might benefit from what has emerged in this dissertation is surely that related to the analysis of parties' legitimacy. The first two points of this section have been devoted to party leaders seen in connection with the demise of (mass) political parties. Conversely, in this final part of the section, I would like to invert the viewpoint and start from political parties' perspective. Indeed, while they are surely in decline, political parties still constitute an important element of democratic politics, for instance concerning the recruitment of candidates for general elections¹²¹.

In Section 1.1, we have seen that Western political parties' legitimacy has been declining for many years now. Moreover, party elites have been retreating from society, not simply because their membership figures have been shrinking for the past few decades (as shown in Section 4.2), but also because of a more general 'retreat' into their state fortresses. As a consequence, (re)gaining legitimacy from their societal roots has become more and more difficult. So, as also argued by many authors (e.g., Saward, 2010, p. 143; Tormey, 2015, pp. 125–149), parties are less

¹²⁰ Unnecessary thought it sounds, the matter of representative roles has been much explored concerning Members of Parliaments. A good summary of the debate within the related literature can be found in Andeweg (2014).

¹²¹ This is discussed by Mair (2013), who nonetheless also recognises the difficulties of parties to perform a 'full' party government. Notice that the recruitment and the presentation of candidates for general elections is the fundamental criterion for the definition of a party, according to the well-known definition by Sartori (1976)

and less *loci* of political representation other than the electoral one, which is surely important, but evidently not sufficient for giving them a reasonable legitimacy.

The importance of legitimacy for political parties has been a well-known (and widely-debated) issue, and I would argue that, within parties, this problem is acknowledged. One of the ways in which parties might get back some of their past legitimacy might be related to the opening of party leader selection rules. Indeed, a wider selectorate for the party leader (more so if it corresponds to a party primary) can be seen as a way to reduce the existing gap between party elites (party leadership) and citizens. More specifically, by mimicking what happens in a general election¹²², political parties can use the most powerful democratic rhetorical weapon, the election, to show a ‘more democratic’ (and therefore more legitimised) face at the eyes of citizens. So, the increasing legitimacy for party leaders, discussed in Section 5.4, might also mean an increasing legitimacy for their parties themselves. From a partially different angle, notice that this ‘equivalence’ is more and more reasonable once party leaders acquire relevance thanks to the now-well-known processes of personalisation of politics. Indeed, the passage of legitimacy from party leaders selected by a wider selectorate to their parties can happen once party leaders are recognised as pivotal actors for parties themselves, for instance, thanks to their power within the party organisation or their ability to drive consensus toward the party during general elections. Even in this case, the connection between party leader selection rules and the personalisation of politics might be stronger than one could expect.

Obviously, this does not mean that democratic appearance corresponds to democratic reality. Despite all the accounts overlapping (either partially or totally) intra-party democracy with more open party leader selectorates, the situation is more complex. As I have already argued in Section 3.3, when parties open their selection rules it does not mean they are ‘democratising’ themselves, but simply that there is the *possibility* for parties to put forward a ‘cleaner’ and more ‘democratic’ face to citizens and electors. Whether this is a successful move for parties and, more generally speaking, for democratic politics is a matter that I would leave to future pieces of research.

¹²² This is especially true for non-postal ballots, i.e., for those primary elections where party members or sympathisers *physically* queue and cast a ballot for a candidate. A good example of this type of event is the party leader selection in the Italian PD, which has been performed exactly in this way since 2007.

Appendix A - List of countries and parties

Country	Original party name	English translation and acronym	Time-span
Austria	Bündnis Zukunft Österreich	Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ)	2006-2015
	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)	1986-2015
	Die Grünen – Die Grüne Alternative	The Greens – The Green Alternative	1994-2015
	Liberales Forum	Liberal Forum (LIF) *	1994-2015
	Österreichische Volkspartei	Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)	1986-2015
	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs	Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ)	1986-2015
Belgium	Parti Socialiste	Socialist Party (Wallonia) (PS) *	1985-2014
	Socialistische Partij / Socialistische Partij Anders	Socialist Party (Flanders) (SP/SPA)	1985-2014
	Christelijke Volkspartij / Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams	Christian People's Party / Christian Democratic and Flemish (CVP/CD&V)	1985-2014
	Parti Social Chrétien / Centre démocrate humaniste	Social Christian Party / Humanist and Democratic Centre (PSC/CDH) *	1985-2014
	Parti Réformateur Libéral / Mouvement Réformateur	Liberal Reformist Party / Reformist Movement (PRL/MR) *	1985-2014
	Partij voor Vrijheid en Vooruitgang / Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten / Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten	Party for Freedom and Progress / Flemish Liberals and Democrats / Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats (PVV/VLD/OVLD)	1985-2014
	Anders Gaan Leven / Groen! / Groen	Agalev/Greens	1985-2014
	Écologiste	Ecologists (ECOLO) *	1985-2014
	Vlaams Blok / Vlaams Belang	Flemish Bloc / Flemish Interest (VB)	1985-2014
	Volkswij / Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie	People's Union / New Flemish Alliance (VU/NVA)	1985-2014
Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU)	1987-2015
	Freie Demokratische Partei	Free Democratic Party (FDP)	1987-2015
	Die Grünen / Bündnis 90/Die Grünen	The Greens	1987-2015
	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus / Die Linke	Party of Democratic Socialism / The Left (PDS/DL)	1990-2015
	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD)	1987-2015
Greece	Dimokratiki Aristera	Democratic Left (DIMAR) *	2012-2015
	Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas	Communist Party of Greece (KKE)	1985-2015
	Laikós Orthódoxos Synagermós	Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS)	2004-2015
	Laikós Síndesmos – Chrysí Avgí	Golden Dawn (XA) *	2012-2015
	Nea Dimokratia	New Democracy (ND)	1985-2015
	Panellínio Sosialistikó Kínima	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	1985-2015
Ireland	Synaspismós / Syriza	SYNASPISMOS/SYRIZA	1992-2015
	Fianna Fáil	Soldiers of Destiny (FF)	1987-2015
	Fine Gael	Family of the Irish (FG)	1987-2015
	Labour Party	Irish Labour Party (LP)	1987-2015
	Progressive Democrats	Progressive Democrats (PD)	1987-2009
Italy	Democrazia Cristiana / Partito Popolare Italiano / La Margherita – Democrazia é Libertà	Christian Democracy / Italian Popular Party / Democracy is Freedom (DC/PPI/DL)	1987-2015
	Forza Italia / Popolo della Libertà / Forza Italia	Forza Italia / People of Freedom/ Forza Italia (FI/PDL/FI)	1994-2015
	Lega Nord	Northern League (LN)	1992-2015
	Movimento Sociale Italiano / Alleanza Nazionale	Italian Social Movement /	1987-2009

	Partito Comunista Italiano / Partito Democratico della Sinistra / Democratici di Sinistra	National Alliance (MSI/AN) Italian Communist Party / Democratic Party of the Left / Left Democrats / Democratic Party (PCI/PDS/DS)	1987-2007
	Partito Democratico	Democratic Party (PD)	2007-2015
	Partito Socialista Italiano	Italian Socialist Party (PSI)	1987-1993
	Partito della Rifondazione Comunista	Party of the Communist Refoundation (PRC)	1992-2015
	Unione di Centro	Union of the Centre (UDC)	2002-2015
Netherlands	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA)	1986-2015
	Democraten 66	Democrats 66 (D66)	1986-2015
	GroenLinks	GreenLeft (GL)	1989-2015
	Partij van de Arbeid	Labour Party (PVDA)	1986-2015
	Socialistische Partij	Socialist Party (PS)	1994-2015
	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)	1986-2015
Portugal	Centro Democrático e Social / Centro Democrático e Social –Partido Popular	Democratic and Social Centre / Democratic and Social Centre- Popular Party (CDS/CDS-PP)	1985-2015
	Partido Comunista Português	Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)	1985-2015
	Partido Socialista	Socialist Party (PS)	1985-2015
	Partido Social Democrata	Social-Democratic Party (PSD)	1985-2015
Spain	Alianza Popular / Partido Popular	Popular Alliance / People's Party (AP/PP)	1986-2015
	Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya	Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC)	1986-2015
	Partido Comunista de España / Izquierda Unida	Spanish Communist Party / United Left (PCE/IU)	1986-2015
	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)	1986-2015
United Kingdom	Conservative Party	Conservative Party	1987-2015
	Labour Party	Labour Party	1987-2015
	Liberal Democrats	Liberal Democrats	1988-2015

Note: * denotes parties excluded from the empirical analysis because of lack of data on some independent variables.

Appendix B – Specifications on the operationalizations of the variables

Chapter 4

4.1 Leadership Change

Data up to 2012 have been generally obtained thanks to the 2015 version of the Comparative Study of Party Leaders (COSPAL) dataset used in the Pilet and Cross' (2014b) and Cross and Pilet's (2015) books or from additional sources concerning Irish and Dutch parties (see Section 4.1 in this work). For subsequent data, a first source of information has been a series of Internet searches, which, quoting Aylott and Bolin (2017, n. 10), 'often led to Wikipedia entries'. Then, a subsequent search was performed either via a second Internet search focusing on each new leaders' name. If a newspaper or a party-related source confirmed the Wikipedia entry, the year of the leadership change was inputted into my dataset. Alternatively, I have used WayBack Machine, a tool of analysis that allows retrieving past versions of webpages, to have a precise confirmation in political parties' websites about the leadership change. More information about each leadership change is available upon request.

As explained in Section 4.1, if a new party comes to life, its first leadership selection has not been considered as a leadership change, and therefore has received, on the *Leadership Change* variable, a 0. More specifically, this decision has affected the following parties in the following countries: for Austria, the BZO in 2006, the LIF in 1994, and the STRONACH in 2013; for Germany, the PDS in 1990; for Greece, the SYNASPIMSOS in 1992, the LAOS in 2004, and the DIMAR in 2012; for Ireland, the PD in 1987; for Italy, the FI in 1994 and the PRC in 1992.

Turning to more country-specific issues, for Austrian Greens, I have inputted a 1 by default during the period in which the party had a collective leadership (up to 1992), also following the reasoning put forward by Dolezal (2016, p. 28), according to which the party congress meets at least once a year to select the new party executive.

Passing to Belgium, for the CVP/CD&V, in 1993 there was both a leadership change and a change in party leadership. According to Wauters, Rahat and Kenig (2015), the 'party primaries' of 1993 were organised to select the new leader, and given that the party changed just one leader in 1993, it follows the new leader was selected after having opened the leader selectorate, and therefore the party for the 1991-1995 legislature has a 0 for this variable.

Turning our attention to Greece, for the ND cases of 1997 and 2009 and of the PASOK in 2004, when there was both a leadership change and an opening of party leader selectorate. Rori (2012) shows that in all the three cases, the opening of the selectorate preceded the leadership change, and therefore, for these cases, *Leadership Change* has been given a 0. Moreover, even for the SYNASPISMOS case of 1993, when there was a leadership change and an opening of the selectorate, Eleftheriou (2009) states that the new leader was selected by the party congress, and given that the party congress was the resulting more open selectorate (being the previous one the central political committee of the party), even in this case the party has received, for that case, 0 on *Leadership Change*.

Concerning Italy, for the LN, in 2013, there was a change in the leadership and an opening of the selectorate for his/her selection. The opening of the selectorate preceded such change in the leadership, given that the just-empowered party members selected the new party leader in the party primary election organised in late 2013. So, in this specific occurrence, the LN received a 0 for *Leadership Change*.

Passing to the Netherlands, for the PVDA, in 2002, there was both a change in leadership and an opening of his/her selectorate. The Dutch Documentation Centre on Political Parties (DNPP) 2002 report on the PVDA shows that the opening of the selectorate preceded the change in the leadership (Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen, 2017b), and this is why the PVDA has received a 0 for *Leadership Change* for the 2002 legislature. Furthermore, the DNPP also helped solve the 1993 GL problem (even in this case, a change in leadership happened in the same year as the opening of the selectorate): the yearly report on that party shows that what came first was the decision to open the selectorate, followed by the party leader selection (Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen, 2017a).

Finally, on Portugal, a small note on the CDS-PP is needed: in 2005, there was both the opening of the selectorate and a leadership change. Barberà, Lisi and Rodríguez-Teruel (2015) show that new mode of party leader selection, the primary election, were organized in 2005, and given that just a leader was elected in that legislature, in 2005, I assume that the change in the rules happened before the change in the leadership. Therefore, the party has received a 0 for *Leadership Change* in that legislature.

4.2 Membership Decline

Regarding the operationalization of this variable, some clarification is needed concerning new parties or parties appearing as a merge of two or more existing parties. In the first case, I have decided not to compute the difference between the two five-year moving averages at T and

at T-1 for the logical reason that if a party appears on the political scene in a specific year, no earlier data on its membership are available, and therefore the above-mentioned subtraction cannot be performed. Therefore, for these parties, I have decided to assign the values of the M/E ratio of the first year of the first legislature to operationalize *Membership Decline*. This has involved a small number of parties (the ones reported in this Appendix when discussing the operationalization of *Leadership Change*).

A second a somewhat easier problem concerns the parties appearing as the fusion of two or more parties. If earlier data for these merger parties are available, I have considered such data for the calculus of the variable. For instance, the Dutch GL contested the first general election in 1989, and it is a merge of a number of existing parties (the Pacifist Socialist Party, the Communist party of the Netherlands, and so forth). In order to compute the value of *Membership Decline* for GL in the 1989-1994 legislature, I have subtracted from the five-year moving average of the merger parties and of GL in 1989 the five-year moving average of the merger parties in 1986 (which is the first year of the 1986-1989 legislature). This choice has been applied to the following parties in the following countries: for Italy, the PDL in 2009, the PD in 2007, the UDC in 2002; for the Netherlands, the already-mentioned GL in 1989; for the United Kingdom, the Liberal Democrats in 1988.

Chapter 5

5.1 Seat Share Loss

As explained in Section 5.1, data for this variable for elections held until 2009 (included) are taken from Nohlen and Stover (2010), while for subsequent elections I have used the following national official sources: for the 2010 Belgian general election, http://polling2010.belgium.be/en/cha/results/results_start.html ; for the 2013 German general election, <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2013/ergebnisse.html> ; for the first 2012 Greek general election, <http://ekloges-prev.singularlogic.eu/v2012a/public/index.html?lang=en#%7B%22cls%22:%22main%22,%22params%22:%7B%7D%7D> ; for the second 2012 Greek general election, <http://ekloges-prev.singularlogic.eu/v2012b/public/index.html?lang=en#%7B%22cls%22:%22main%22,%22params%22:%7B%7D%7D> ; for the first 2015 Greek general election, <http://ekloges-prev.singularlogic.eu/v2015a/v/public/index.html?lang=en#%7B%22cls%22:%22main%22,%22params%22:%7B%7D%7D> ; for the second 2015 Greek general election,

<http://ekloges.ypes.gr/current/v/public/index.html?lang=en#%7B%22cls%22:%22main%22,%22params%22:%22%7B%7D%7D> ; for the 2011 Irish general election, http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/publications/2011_Electoral_Handbookrev.pdf ; for the 2013 Italian general election, <http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=24/02/2013&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S> ; for the 2010 and 2012 Dutch general election, <http://www.verkiezingsuitslagen.nl/Na1918/Verkiezingsuitslagen.aspx?VerkiezingsTypeId=1> ; for the 2011 Portuguese general election, <http://eleicoes.cne.pt/cne2005/raster/index.cfm?dia=05&mes=06&ano=2011&eleicao=ar> ; for the 2011 Spanish general election, <http://www.infoelectoral.mir.es/min/busquedaAvanzadaAction.html;jsessionid=639B422ED792D71158F5F85AAA7EB88?codTipoEleccion=2&vuelta=1&isHome=1&codPeriodo=201111> ; for the 2010 UK general election, <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/RP10-36> .

Moreover, in case two (or more) parties compete in different parts of the country but nonetheless form a unitary bloc in Parliament, I only consider the bigger one in the empirical analysis. Then, to calculate the number of seats attributed to the bigger party, I have summed the percentages of seats attributed to all parties of the parliamentary coalition. This solution has been implemented for the following parties: the German CDU and CSU; the Western and Eastern German Greens in the 1990 German general election; the Spanish PSOE and PSC; the Spanish IU and PSUC, IC and other smaller political formations (e.g., IC/UIA, EUIA, and so forth); the Spanish PP and other smaller political formations (PDP, UPN, CG, and so forth).

Passing to another issue, if a party forms an electoral coalition at T (excluding the above-mentioned cases), when possible I have reported the percentage of seats obtained by each member of the coalition and separately calculated the increase/decrease in the percentage of seats obtained at T with respect to $T-1$. Moreover, if a party contests for the first time an election at T , I have decided to give this party the value corresponding to the percentage of seats obtained by that party in the first general election it has contested. E.g., the Italian FI has, for the 1994-1996 legislature, a value corresponding to the percentage of seats it has obtained in the 1994 Italian general election. The reason behind this choice is that if a new party appears in the electoral and, more crucially for this reasoning, the parliamentary environments, it follows whichever percentage of votes/seats it has obtained in the first general election it has contested is surely a positive electoral result. Indeed, at $T-1$ the party was non-existing, thus not having a

single vote or a single seat in Parliament. Therefore, it would have been wrong to give a value of 0 to this party for the legislature following the first contested election.

Turning to more specific calculations, for 2001 Italian general election, the percentage of seats for each party has been calculated by putting at the denominator 619 instead of 630, given the number of Italian MPs in the Lower House after the 2001 election was equal to 619; for Portuguese PCP, I have separately reported the number of seats obtained by the PCP and by the other small members of the Democratic Unity Coalition (within which the PCP has contested a number of general elections); furthermore, for the Portuguese PS, I have calculated the number of seats obtained by the party alone, thus excluding the small political formations that sometimes run with the party.

5.3 Contagion

To build this variable, I have decided to separately treat Walloon and Flemish parties. This decision has been driven by the consideration that the Belgian party system is split into two separate parts, relatively similar with one another: in both cases, there is a Christian-Democratic party, a Socialist one, a Liberal one, a Green one, and so forth. It would have been risky to jointly consider all the Belgian parties for the contagion variable (given that the assumptions regarding the imitative patterns between Walloon and Flemish parties would have been too strong) and therefore, in order not to build an inflated variable for Belgian parties, I have decided to separately treat them, by splitting into Walloon and Flemish ones.

Chapter 6

6.1/6.2 The analysis of the dichotomous and the ordinal dependent variables

As argued in Section 6.1, I have created two variables in order to declare my dataset to be time-series. More specifically, the two variables are *Party ID* and *Legislature*.

The first variable groups party-legislature observations according to their organisational continuity. In other words, party-legislature observations which can be traced back to the same party organisation have received the same numerical ID. Let us give an example to make this concept more understandable: the Belgian PVV, VLD, and OVLD have received the same value for the variable *Party ID*, given that the second one can be safely considered as the heir of the first one, and, in turn, the third one is the heir of the second one. Moreover, a second criterion

has been that if there has been a split, the splinter party has received a new value for this variable, while the other party has received the same one of the ancestor party. For example, in 1992 the PCI split into two parties: the smaller extreme-left-wing PRC and the leftist (but more moderate) PDS. The former has received a new ID, while the PDS has received the same ID of the PCI, following the logical – and empirically supported – idea that during party fissions, the resulting bigger party receives the lion’ share of the old party in terms of party membership, party branches, possibly also political personnel, and so forth. Obviously, if the smaller party has not reached the 5% threshold, has not been put into the dataset. Moreover, if there has been a merge, two possible situations might arise: the merge is between a party already existing in the dataset and an ‘external’ one; or the merge might involve two parties already present in my dataset. In the former case, it can be safely argued that if one of the two merging parties has never appeared in my dataset, it means that it has not reached the 5% threshold. Therefore, given the other party has indeed reached it – given it is present in the dataset – the party which is absent from the dataset can be considered as the smaller one among the two, and therefore the party resulting from the merge between these two political formations shall receive the ID of the bigger ancestor. The second case – a merge between two parties already existing in the dataset – is a trickier one. Given both parties have reached at least the 5% of votes – otherwise they would have not been included in the dataset – it can surely be argued that one of the two merging parties was bigger – more important – than the other one, but the evaluation would have been inevitably more driven by my personal interpretation. In order to play on the safe side and reduce possible bias-related problems, I have decided to give a new ID to these exceptional cases of parties resulting from a merging of two parties already present in my dataset (the PD in 2007, and the PDL in 2009).

The second variable groups party-legislature observations in different time periods. More specifically, it is called *Legislature* and operationalises the legislature in which the specific party-observation is related to. The variable ranges from 1 to N, where N is the progressive number attributed to the most recent legislature considered for each country (see more info in Appendix A). It has been necessary to create this variable in order to properly declare the dataset as a time-series one. As a small final addendum, if a party comes into existence during a legislature, it has received the related value of the variable *Legislature*.

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