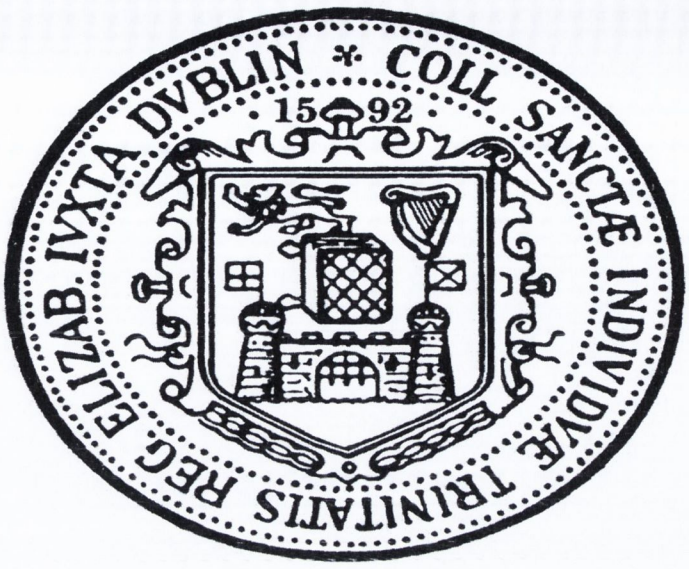


PhD in Political Science

The role and electoral influence of party leaders in parliamentary systems

Candidate

Laura Maria Schwirz

Supervisors

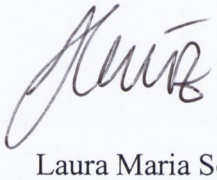
Michael Marsh

Gail McElroy

February 2015

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

I agree to deposit this thesis in the University's open access institutional repository or allow the library to do so on my behalf, subject to Irish Copyright Legislation and Trinity College Library conditions of use and acknowledgement.



Laura Maria Schwirz

February 2015

Summary

This project investigates the role and electoral influence of party leaders in parliamentary systems and addresses three research questions: what is the relative importance of leaders *vis-à-vis* political parties and how can their close causal relationship be disentangled? How are leader traits structured in voters' minds? Can leader images determine the outcome of parliamentary elections?

The first paper sets out to review behavioural theories and performance models of electoral choice, developing an argument that party and leader evaluations are tied by a link of reciprocal causation where the latter can be viewed as cause as well as consequence of the former. Not only does it point to such a possibility that has been widely ignored in the literature, it also seeks to address this matter empirically and provides a tentative answer using panel data and instrumental variable estimation. The second paper provides a novel solution to disentangle the close causal relationship between party and leader evaluations using cross-sectional data. Entering the debate on the presidentialisation thesis, it sets out to test the assumption that voting under majoritarian and closed-list electoral rules in parliamentary systems has become more presidential. It also examines the possibility that party size determines the extent to which voters choose on the basis of leader evaluations, and investigates whether those with weak partisan loyalties are more likely to do so. The third paper is concerned with leaders' personality traits. Proposed within a framework of social cognition and people perception theory, it is argued that overall leader likeability can be modelled as a function of traits, thereby challenging existing findings of a two-dimensional structure of trait items. It also highlights the need to account for the measurement of trait variables and employs two different variable reduction techniques whose results point to a strong unidimensional scale. The fact that political candidates invest considerable time and effort in conveying the right impression hints at their expectation that image matters to vote choice. If this were the case, common sense would suggest that this is in large part due to their personal qualities. The final paper explores this question

using counterfactuals to determine whether leader images can decide over victory and defeat in parliamentary elections.

The significance of this dissertation lies in a theoretical as well as an empirical contribution. Each paper draws from a different strand of literature, thereby providing a variety of theoretical perspectives on the role and electoral influence of party leaders. Reviewing theories of electoral choice points to leader evaluations as cause as well as consequence of party evaluations while a discussion of the presidentialisation thesis defends a rising electoral importance of party leaders. Social cognition and people perception theory provides valuable insights into how voters arrive at an overall evaluation of political candidates based on their personality traits and characteristics. Finally, political marketing and impression management theory are vitally important to understand the relationship between leader images and the vote. The study's empirical contribution lies in providing exploratory and innovative solutions to disentangling the causal relationship between party and leader evaluations. Data on leader traits allows for a more comparative cross-national analysis of the structure of trait items. Finally, the paper on counterfactuals employs the same data to assess the impact of leader images on the outcome of parliamentary elections and expands on similar work in the area.

A burgeoning literature on a personalisation of politics and presidentialisation of parliamentary systems argues that party leaders have gained in importance at the expense of collective identities. As a result, voters are more likely to base their vote choice on leader rather than partisan considerations. What sounds like a logical conclusion has been subject of much academic debate, and little consensus has been reached regarding the importance of party leaders to electoral decision-making. This dissertation remains sceptical towards the presidentialisation thesis and does not find empirical support for the expectation that presidentialism can be observed at the electoral level and leadership-based voting has not come to be more be more important than party-based voting in parliamentary systems. With this in mind, this project seeks to contribute to a conflicting literature and aims to provide novel insights into the role and electoral influence of party leaders.

Acknowledgements

At the end of this four-year journey, I would like to take the opportunity and express my gratitude to colleagues, friends and family members who have helped and supported me along the way, making it a highly memorable and enjoyable experience.

First of all, I would like to thank my two supervisors Michael Marsh and Gail McElroy for their invaluable comments and feedback on my work throughout the years. Not only am I indebted to their time and effort they invested in accompanying this project, I am also thankful for their encouragement to attend conferences and summer schools, to publish papers and to become involved in various survey design projects to make me realise where my strong points are and how to develop them further.

This project was only possible thanks to the financial support by the Irish Research Council (IRC) and the kind sponsorship provided by the Department of Political Science at Trinity College Dublin.

Over the past four years, I have been introduced to a warm and welcoming research community at Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin. I greatly benefitted from Friday seminar presentations and lively debates with faculty members. In particular, I would like to thank Michael Gallagher, Koji Kagotani and Peter Stone for their comments and feedback on draft papers. Also, many thanks to William Phelan for a superb course on Research Design and to Ken Benoit and Jos Elkink for their introduction to Advanced Quantitative Methods. I am grateful to Jacqueline Hayden and Tom Louwerse for always believing in my teaching skills and to the department for providing such a great variety of teaching opportunities.

Friends and colleagues have certainly made this journey a more enjoyable one. In particular, I would like to mention Stuart Scott and Mirjam Allik who have introduced me to hill running. For countless Wednesday night runs and Wicklow Way relays, thanks for keeping my sanity. Also, I would like to thank

Adriana Bunea for her sound advice on staying calm during the final months. I am grateful for having such wonderful flatmates with Una Lally, Eimear Holohan, Niamh Hartnett and Caroline Mullen who had to endure my mood swings over the past four years.

A special thanks goes to my family and friends in Germany who have always believed in me and supported my decision to study and live in Ireland. To my dad Werner and my two sisters Rebecca and Nicole, and for all those care packages, postcards and emails: many thanks for always making me feel at home here. I know my mum has been with me every step of the way.

A final thanks goes to my boyfriend Brian Flannelly. Without your patience, encouragement and unconditional support, this project would have been difficult to complete.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Introduction

"Standing beside Merkel, her success here [home constituency] is less as a politician than as a political attraction with an impressive aura. The powerful visitor from Berlin exudes an apparent ordinariness that elicits gazes of adoring servility from her voters. And so, after running a campaign where issues were secondary to personality, tomorrow's poll [2013 general election] is less a decision about Germany's political direction but whether voters hand Angela I back her crown" Scally (2013).

Following Angela Merkel on the campaign trail in the run-up to the 2013 general election, Scally (2013) takes note of a key change in the way politics is presented in parliamentary systems: electoral decisions appear to no longer revolve around a country's "political direction" but whether (and how much) a popular leader will contribute to their party's success at the polls. In fact, many journalists had reported on Merkel having won the election, a misleading statement considering that voters in parliamentary systems do not directly vote for the head of the executive. This certainly holds for political leaders in presidential systems, where ample *prima facie* evidence exists that presidential candidates are a vital component in voters' decision-making process. Yet, recent changes in the ways politics is presented and motivations that bring voters to the polls have arguably resulted in a post-war operation of parliamentary systems that is very similar to its presidential counterpart. A presidentialisation of parliamentary systems is accompanied by a personalisation of politics and party leaders have become the centre of attention in electoral contests. This has led to the proposition that voters are more likely to base their vote on leader rather than partisan considerations (Poguntke & Webb, 2005). Furthermore, it is commonly argued that voting under majoritarian rule encourages leader-based voting because vote choice is supposedly structured around prime ministerial rather than party considerations, and this holds in particular for those exhibiting weak partisan loyalties (Dalton, McAllister, & Wattenberg, 2000). This dissertation seeks to determine whether there is any systematic evidence in support of these propositions, using survey data from a variety of parliamentary systems across Western Europe as well as from Canada, Australia and New Zealand. More precisely, this dissertation tests

the assumption that a presidentialisation of parliamentary systems is evident in increased leadership voting at the expense of party-based voting (Foley, 1993, 2000; Poguntke & Webb, 2005). Defined as "the development of (a) increasing leadership power resources and autonomy within the party and the political executive respectively, and (b) *increasingly leadership centred electoral processes*" (Poguntke & Webb, 2005, p. 5; emphasis added), this project seeks to investigate whether and to what extent such changes can be observed at the electoral level in parliamentary systems. Do leader evaluations really account for increasingly more explanatory power as suggested by scholars advocating a valence model of electoral choice (Clarke, Sanders, Stewart, & Whiteley, 2011; Clarke, Sanders, Stewart, & Whiteley, 2004; Sanders, Clarke, Stewart, & Whiteley, 2011; P. Whiteley, Clarke, Sanders, & Stewart, 2013)? Do voters base their voting decisions on the leader they like best rather than the party they prefer? Are voters smart enough to separate trait items into distinct dimensions? And can leader traits be decisive for overall election outcomes as argued by Bean and Mughan (1989) and Garzia (2013a)?

This research project is organised as a four-paper thesis and each paper sets out to tackle a different empirical matter that has thus far either been ignored or not sufficiently addressed in the literature on party leaders. The first paper will investigate the causal dynamics between leader and party evaluations, arguing that the two are tied by a link of reciprocal causation. More specifically, it is suggested firstly that the former can be viewed as cause as well as consequence of the latter and secondly, single-equation methods and cross-sectional data are inadequate to resolving the issue. Using panel data and instrumental variable estimation, it is shown that when the leader variable is properly exogenised, party evaluation clearly emerges as the stronger predictor. The second paper acknowledges such a finding and provides a novel solution to disentangling the close causal relationship using cross-sectional data. This allows for a more comparative assessment of such a relationship considering that questions on party and leader sympathies are most consistently included in election surveys. This paper examines cases where voters think the best party does not have the best leader or the best leader does not come from the best party. Data from eight parliamentary systems where vote choice most closely resembles that of a

presidential one is analysed to investigate whether voters in such situations follow the party or the leader. Results demonstrate that party considerations are more important regardless of electoral system, party size or strength of partisan loyalties, thereby disproving central arguments put forward by the presidentialisation thesis. The third paper embarks upon the question of how to unpack the notion of leader popularity. The literature on the structure of leader traits and candidate images is ambiguous about the number and content of underlying dimensions and is often silent on the measurement of trait items. Based on a social cognitive account of information processing, it is argued that voters simply take cues from individual traits and overall leader evaluations are viewed as a function of such traits. Results strongly point to a unidimensional structure, which would contradict empirical findings that have often neglected the measurement of trait variables and have failed to provide a theoretical framework that would explain a two- or four-dimensional structure. The fourth paper investigates whether a leader's personality profile as perceived by the electorate can decide over victory and defeat in parliamentary elections. Viewed from a political marketing perspective, leaders are assumed to engage in image crafting techniques and it is the aim of this paper to examine whether (and to what extent) such efforts affect election outcomes. Counterfactual thought experiments on post-election survey data from nine parliamentary systems demonstrate that when public opinion is sufficiently skewed towards a given leader, political candidates can attract electoral support – and may even win elections – due to their perceived character profiles.

This dissertation seeks to make several contributions to a growing, yet contentious literature on party leaders. Firstly, it highlights the reciprocal causal relationship between party and leader evaluations and provides a tentative solution to the problem in the form of panel data and instrumental variable estimation. Furthermore, it puts the presidentialisation thesis to the test by providing a novel solution to disentangle the close causal relationship between the two variables of interest. It offers a simple yet powerful acid test of the 'leaders matter' argument by looking at the non-alignment of party and leader sympathies in countries where vote choice more closely resembles that of a presidential one and so voters are expected to choose the leader they like best

rather than the party they prefer. In addition, the research challenges empirical findings on trait dimensions, arguing that the existing literature lacks a theoretical justification as to why to expect multiple dimensions. Finally, this project takes an interest in the nature of leadership effects in parliamentary systems and the extent to which a leader's perceived personality profile can affect the distribution of votes and electoral outcomes.

Empirical evidence presented in this dissertation shows very little support for the expectation that presidentialism can be observed at the electoral level in parliamentary systems. Rather, it is found that party evaluations are the more dominant factor in the decision-making process of the electorate. Moreover, voters are much more likely to follow their party preference when sympathies towards parties and leaders are not aligned. Voters in parliamentary systems always cast a party choice because the head of the executive is not directly elected and so voters are not expected to differentiate between competence and character as is often suggested in the literature (Bean, 1993; Bittner, 2007a, 2008; Johnston, 2002; Kinder, Abelson, & Fiske, 1979). It essentially revolves around the question whether a leader is seen as likeable and so overall leader sympathy is seen as a function of their traits. Finally, leader images are only in very rare instances found to be decisive for the overall outcome of parliamentary elections, namely mostly in cases where the electoral outcome was very close and so anything could have been the decisive factor (King, 2002).

Motivated by different theoretical strands and drawing inspiration from a diverse selection of narratives, this dissertation also makes a number of theoretical contributions to the study of party leaders. Not only does it review well established theories of electoral choice to develop an argument regarding a reciprocal causal relationship between party and leader evaluations, it also contributes to the presidentialisation thesis by offering novel insights into personalised voting behaviour under different electoral rules. Moreover, political candidate appraisal is viewed from a social-cognitive perspective and also borrows from people perception theory to understand why traits are expected to be structured as a single likeability dimension in voters' minds,

especially when considering their low levels of conceptualisation and cognitive skills. Finally, political marketing and impression management theory combined with insights from consumer behaviour research provides a strong theoretical framework to understand image crafting and its effect on voter choice and electoral outcomes.

The study of party leaders presents a puzzle. On the one hand, scholars have pointed to ample reasons for leaders to matter. For example, a decline in social anchors and a weakening in party affiliations have resulted in individuals assuming a greater role at the expense of collective identities (Bartels, 2000; Dalton et al., 2000). Advanced media technologies and modern marketing techniques further facilitate a personalisation of politics (Campus, 2010; Hayes, 2004; Ohr, 2011; Swanson & Mancini, 1996). As a result, vote choice in parliamentary systems is arguably similar to that in presidential ones where electoral competition ultimately revolves around who will become the next head of the executive (Foley, 1993, 2000; Poguntke & Webb, 2005). However, empirical evidence does not uniformly support the claim that leadership effects have a direct and important impact on how voters choose in an election. A central aim of this research is to explain the presence of this puzzle as well as contribute to its solution. Not only does it point to gaps in the literature that may explain inconsistent findings, it also offers innovative empirical solutions to the problem of reciprocal causation. In addition, it draws inspiration from different theoretical strands to provide a more comprehensive study of party leaders and their role and electoral effect in parliamentary systems.

The electoral influence of party and leader evaluations: Towards a reassessment

Abstract

Early studies of vote choice argue that leader evaluations are a *consequence* of party evaluations whereas a valence models contend that leader evaluations are a *cause* of party evaluations. This suggests that the two variables are tied by a link of reciprocal causation, which casts doubt on the exogenous status of leader evaluations, and single-equation models are likely to produce biased results. Using a more appropriate econometric model (estimation via instrumental variables) and the right data to tackle causality questions (panel data), this paper seeks to test the assumption underlying a personalisation of politics of whether party leaders are the more powerful explanatory factor in explaining vote choice. This paper finds that once the issue of causality is correctly taken into account, the effect of party evaluations emerges much stronger than recent theories would suggest.

1.1. Introduction

Theories of electoral choice have approached the study of party leaders from different perspectives, varying in their degree to which parties and leaders can be (causally) separated in voters' minds. Traditionally, parties as collective organisations were seen as the main driving force behind vote choice and so early studies of voting behaviour explained leader evaluations as the outcome of how voters viewed the party more generally. In other words, the way voters approached political candidates was strongly influenced by what they thought of the party more generally and leader evaluations were seen as mere consequences of causally prior and long-held predispositions such as partisan loyalties and location within the social structure (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960). However, a revisionist view contends that as a result of a personalisation of politics, party leaders nowadays assume a much more important role in the decision-making process of the electorate and leader evaluations are not only a consequence of but more and more so a cause of party evaluations (Garzia, 2011b, 2012). The validity of such an explanation depends on the exogeneity of leader evaluations and several studies have shown that party and leader assessments are tied by a link of reciprocal causation where leaders can have direct as well as indirect effects on how voters view political parties (Garzia, 2013b; Garzia & De Angelis, 2011; Garzia & Viotti, 2012; P. F. Whiteley, 1988). Under these circumstances, single-equation models are likely to produce biased estimates and so it remains difficult to comment on the causal impact of each variable on vote choice more generally. Moreover, most of the comparative work on leader effects uses cross-sectional data which further rules out making any valid statements about the causal dynamics between party and leader evaluations. This paper recognises the need to control for a potentially endogenous status of leader evaluations in voting models and seeks to exogenise such a variable through the use of instrumental variables in a two-stage estimation process. If advocates of a personalisation of politics were right in assuming that party evaluations are nowadays more likely to be a consequence rather than a cause of leader evaluations, considering that voters might like a party simply because they can identify with or feel sympathetic towards that party's leader, then leaders should turn out to be the

more influential factor in models of vote choice, especially when their endogenous status is properly accounted for.

This paper seeks to provide a theoretical as well as an empirical contribution to a conflicting literature on the impact of party leaders on vote choice. With respect to the first point, it sets out to study the role of party leaders from a traditional and revisionist perspective with a particular emphasis on how such theories view the role of leaders *vis-à-vis* political parties while also examining the extent to which parties and leaders are regarded as separate factors in voters' minds. With regard to the empirical contribution, the paper will employ more suitable econometric models using appropriate data sources to tackle potentially reciprocal causal ties between party and leader evaluations. Panel data from the UK and Canada is used to test the assumption that leaders are the stronger explanatory factors in today's highly personalised voting environment. If regarded as both cause and consequence, then its endogenous status needs to be acknowledged and dealt with using more suitable statistical testing (instrumental variable estimation) and appropriate data (panel data). Failing to account for the endogenous status of leader evaluations may have resulted in a severe overestimation of the impact of leaders *vis-à-vis* their parties. This paper essentially remains sceptical towards the argument that leader evaluations may explain as well as result from party evaluations because empirical studies so far have relied predominantly on cross-sectional data with all variables measured contemporaneously. It is argued that once the endogenous status of leader evaluations is properly accounted for, the party will emerge as the stronger predictor.

The paper will be structured as follows. First, traditional and valence models of electoral choice will be discussed with a particular emphasis on the role and location of parties and leaders in the decision-making process of the electorate. The following will then in more detail look at a personalisation of politics and investigate the extent to which leaders can be regarded as cause as well as consequence of party evaluations which points to a possibly endogenous status of party leaders in models of vote choice. Next, empirical measures will be discussed along with data sources and the operationalisation of key variables.

Preliminary panel data evidence from the UK and Canada will be presented thereafter, followed by results from an instrumental variable approach. The paper will conclude with a discussion of implications for further research as well as some limitations of the approach taken in this paper.

1.2. Theories of electoral choice: role and (causal) status of parties and leaders

The literature on party leaders is conflicting and diverse with varying levels of agreement regarding the importance of party leaders in influencing vote choice. While some argue in favour of strong leader effects (Bean, 1993; Bean & Mughan, 1989; Bittner, 2011; Clarke, Ho, & Stewart, 2000; Costa Lobo, 2008; Graetz & McAllister, 1987; Holmberg & Oscarsson, 2011; Stewart & Clarke, 1992), others suggest that their effects are marginal at best (Bartle & Crewe, 2002; Brettschneider & Gabriel, 2002; Curtice, 2003; Curtice & Blais, 2001; Gidengil, Blais, Nadeau, & Nevitte, 2000; Kaase, 1994). One reason for such disagreement lies in the fact that academic work on leadership effects often lacks a clear theoretical base as to *why* and *when* one would expect leaders to matter, and more importantly fails to link such questions to the role played by parties. In fact, much of the literature often criticises traditional accounts of voting behaviour and their failure to account for short-term factors in influencing vote choice in today's highly personalised political environment (Garzia, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Mughan, 1993, 2000). The main reason for the rising importance of party leaders is attributed to the decline of partisan loyalties and how voters as a result turn to more short-term factors to aid in their decision-making (Dalton et al., 2000). However, very little work has specifically looked at the location of party leaders in a causal chain of events and the extent to which they can be influential *relative to* other factors/forces proposed by various theories of electoral choice. The following will demonstrate how traditional theories and valence models of electoral choice vary considerably in their degree to which parties and leaders are treated as separate entities within voters' minds. Whereas traditionally, leaders have been viewed as part of an overall party package, they are nowadays treated as

individuals 'detached' from the parties that they represent, making a direct impact via their perceived personality traits a real possibility, and so the lines between party and leader sympathies become much more vague (Bean, 1993; Bean & Mughan, 1989; Ohr & Oscarsson, 2003).

1.2.1. Behavioural theories: sociological factors and partisan loyalties

Early research on electoral behaviour in the US pointed to sociological factors and interpersonal influences as key determinants of vote choice which was seen as being driven by the location within the social structure (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944). Vote choice was primarily explained through sociodemographic variables such as a person's occupation, social class and religious orientation. Meanwhile, a research team at the University of Michigan suggested that vote choice was based on long-term partisan loyalties and once acquired, was regarded as stable in direction (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960, 1966). Sociological and psychological accounts of electoral choice consider voting to be rooted in long-term and stable predispositions, and as a result, voters view their political surroundings through a partisan lens suggesting that economic evaluations, policy and leader preferences are strongly coloured by what voters think of the party more generally. According to the 'funnel of causality' proposed by Campbell et al. (1960), more proximate influences such as party leaders, which were regarded as ephemeral and relatively short-lived, are explained in terms of temporally and thus causally prior and more stable factors (see also: Bartle, 1998; W. E. Miller & Shanks, 1992). Leader effects are largely mediated via partisan loyalties and leaders enter into the voting calculus at a very late (if not last) stage. Early electoral research in Britain and other parliamentary systems found that the way voters view party leaders was greatly associated with the popular impression of parties more generally, up to a point where they became nearly indistinguishable (Bean, 1993; Butler & Stokes, 1974; Graetz & McAllister, 1987; Milne & Mackenzie, 1954). This strongly suggests that parties and leaders are clearly treated as one unit and the way voters evaluate

the latter depends heavily on what they think about the former. In general, behavioural studies of voting behaviour leave very little room for political candidates to matter, and this holds especially in parliamentary systems where vote choice is structured around a *party choice*. The location within the social structure and partisan loyalties are considered to be the main driving forces of vote choice and party leaders are simply treated as part of an overall party package, taking very little interest in rising above the party machinery in attracting electoral support based on their own personality profile. The cross-sectional link between party identification and vote choice has always been rather strong, even in parliamentary systems, although its stability over time remains a contentious issue among researchers in the field (Fiorina, 2002; Green & Palmquist, 1990; Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002; Marks, 1993). For instance, its conceptualisation remains difficult to apply outside the context of two-party systems (Budge & Farlie, 1983) while others have identified a progressive decline of partisan loyalties in the US (Nie, Verba, & Petrocik, 1979) as well as in Western European democracies (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995; Wattenberg, 1998), casting doubt on the stability of partisanship as conceived by the Michigan model. Garzia (2013) further argues for a changing nature of partisan loyalties which is no longer believed to be based on long-term predispositions but rather influenced by individual attitudes towards party leaders. Put differently, party leaders are seen as structuring (i.e. causal) forces in their own right. A revisionist account of electoral choice no longer views partisanship as a group identity but argues that it serves the function of a cognitive shortcut (Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1993). Moreover, it is argued that partisan loyalties are not set in stone but malleable and responsive to short-term forces such as retrospective evaluations of the economy and political candidates (Brody & Rothenberg, 1988; Fiorina, 1981; Green & Palmquist, 1990) as well as issue positions (Franklin, 1984, 1992; Franklin & Jackson, 1983).

An ensuing interest in issue voting saw the emergence of rational choice theory and spatial voting models which sought to remedy theoretical shortcomings of traditional models of electoral choice (Downs, 1957; Rabinowitz & Macdonald, 1989; Stokes, 1963). However, such accounts were quickly met with

widespread criticism considering their rather strong and often untenable assumptions. As a result, several critics have proposed alternative theories that no longer assume voters to be entirely rational in their decision-making but rather allow for the fact that their cost-benefit considerations can often be vague and emotionally driven. In response to such developments, subsequent theories began to pay closer attention to the concept of valence issues, incorporating heuristics and emotional cues in the form of affective attachments towards political objects such as party leaders (Key, 1966; Lupia, 1994; S. L. Popkin, 1991; Stokes, 1992). This line of reasoning assumes that voting decisions are strongly influenced by a party's perceived competence in dealing with issues that voters deem most important and voters arrive at such judgments through the use of leader evaluations as an essential shortcut (Clarke, Sanders, Stewart, & Whiteley, 2009; Denver, 2005; Sanders et al., 2011; P. Whiteley et al., 2013).. Such an observation essentially challenges the traditional view that leader evaluations are a consequence of how voters view parties more generally: a revisionist argument proposes the former to be a cause of the latter.

1.2.2. Performance models: retrospective evaluations and heuristic devices

Stokes (1992) finds fault with all assumptions on which spatial models are based and instead argues that party competition generally involves 'valence issues' on which the electorate has almost homogenous preferences. Voters make judgements about rival parties' abilities to deliver salient and commonly agreed upon policy goals and parties are then assessed with regard to their ability to deliver solutions to and deal with the most important problem facing the country. Valence models of electoral choice maintain that parties are differentiated on competence grounds, and party leaders are essentially aiding voters in making these decisions. Valence models pay considerably less attention to distance calculations because there is very little variation in attitudes regarding valence issues, bearing in mind that parties do not differ on policy goals when it comes to salient political matters such as the economy because voters overwhelmingly settle on economic prosperity. Furthermore,

decisions made under valence models significantly lower costs involved in information processing because focus is on retrospective performance rather than prospective evaluations as suggested by proximity models (Clarke, Sanders, Stewart, & Whiteley, 2009). Following on from this, political manipulation is greatly reduced because focus is on delivering concrete policy outcomes (*retrospective*) rather than insincere election promises (*prospective*). Manipulation via agenda-setting and priming effects during an election campaign thus becomes much more difficult to achieve considering that voters are believed to choose parties on the basis of 'what have they *done* for us' rather than 'what *will* they do for us'. Likewise, Fiorina (1981, p. 5) incorporates such ideas into his concept of retrospective voting, arguing that even the most uninformed voter "typically [has] one comparatively hard bit of data: they know what life has been like during the incumbent's administration". In a similar vein, Key (1966) famously argues that 'voters are not fools', thereby rescuing the notion of an uninformed electorate by demonstrating that people can make reasoned choices and even swing voters change their minds in ways consistent with their preferences. In response to their work, Lupia and others have published extensively on the importance of information shortcuts to help voters make reasoned choices in absence of complete information about a party's policy platform (Lupia, 1994; Lupia & Johnston, 2001; Lupia & McCubbins, 1998). When immediate information is difficult to obtain, voters will look for proxies, or shortcuts, to arrive at their electoral decision. Combining theoretical insights from retrospective voting models and the literature on information shortcuts, the valence politics model expands on Stokes' concept of valence issues and essentially argues that

> "what matters are comparative assessments of parties' managerial capabilities and their potential *performance* when attempting to deal with these problems. Voters maximize their utilities by choosing the party that they think is best able to deliver policy success in areas that concern them most" (Sanders, Clarke, Stewart, & Whiteley, 2011, p. 289).

A key contribution of valence models to the study of voting behaviour is its thorough discussion of sources of valence judgements (Clarke et al., 2009; Zakharova & Warwick, 2014), and party leaders are treated as an important, *independent* factor in the voting calculus (Clarke et al., 2004). According to this theory, valence is the single most important factor driving vote choice. Defined as "people's judgements of the overall competence of the rival political parties" (Clarke, Sanders, Stewart, & Whiteley, 2004, p. 9), performance models of vote choice propose two principal sources of how voters arrive at such judgements: leader evaluations and party ID. Regarding the former, party platforms nowadays are often too ambiguous and complex for voters to comprehend. Moreover, the party as a mass organisation has been in decline, and in order to be electorally successful, they have to become more catch-all (Kirchheimer, 1966) or electoral-professional (Panebianco, 1988). Moreover, a process of decentralisation has taken place where political messages are delivered at local as well as national levels but may not always be as unified as originally intended (McAllister, 1996; Mughan, 2000; Scarrow, 2000; Swanson & Mancini, 1996; Wattenberg, 1991). Parties have reverted to much more sophisticated channels of political communication and impression management tactics to convey their political agenda in an attempt to satisfy presentational demands imposed by the media in general, and television in particular (McAllister, 2007; Newman, 1994, 1999a, 1999b). As a result, valence models propose that evaluations of a leader's competence and character is a much more efficient and economical way of arriving at electoral choices because it is a simple cost-saving device used under conditions of uncertainty. Leaders are assumed to be more tangible and certainly highly visible entities and voters find it much easier to hold individuals rather than collective identities accountable for executive decision-making (Bean & Mughan, 1989; McAllister, 2007). For the uninformed, leaders essentially provide a simple shortcut to evaluate a party's performance in office. And so if voters have confidence in a leader's competence, they subsequently use that impression as a cognitive shortcut to assess a party's problem-solving capabilities. A second heuristic device comes in the form of partisan loyalties and provides an important contributing factor to assessing a party's potential governing skills. Based on Fiorina's (1981) revisionist model of party identification which is understood to be a summary

evaluation of political parties that is continuously updated as new information is encountered, party ID is defined as a "running tally of retrospective evaluations of party promises and performance" (Fiorina, 1981, p. 84) and such evaluations are subsequently used to inform voters' electoral decision-making processes.

Valence models rest on the assumption that voters are rational actors who make political choices based on limited information under conditions of uncertainty. Its key advantage over proximity models is that it demands much less cognitive effort from voters and only expects them to evaluate qualities of prominent political figures (i.e. party leaders) in addition to passing judgement on a party's relative performance skills on issues that voters deem most salient to them. Valence models of vote choice most clearly separate parties and leaders in voters' minds and treat them as distinctly different units, suggesting that assessments of the latter are used to judge the former's governing capabilities. Considering that voters often lack firm and consistent belief systems (Converse, 1964), they still know and can easily decide whom they like and dislike, similar to decision-making strategies employed on a daily basis (Rahn, Aldrich, Borgida, & Sullivan, 1990). From this perspective, leaders are viewed as carriers of ideology and political reasoning (Lobo, 2011) which help voters make sense of a highly complex and abstract political environment. More specifically, it helps them assess a party's potential governing abilities using the judgment of a leader's competence as an effective shortcut while party identification is still regarded as serving the vital role of a perceptual screen influencing voters' attitudes towards issues and political candidates alike. Leader evaluations and partisan loyalties take centre stage in the valence model, allowing voters who "are 'smart enough to know they are not smart enough'" to act in accordance with models of rational choice (Clarke et al., 2011, p. 238). Focus is not so much on what issue matters the most to individual voters and what party is most proximate to them on an ideological continuum but rather on *who gets to deliver* on most salient issues.

It seems that on the one hand, leader evaluations have a direct impact on how voters assess a party's competence to deal with important valence issues while on the other hand, they are assumed to be affected by 'valenced partisanship'

based on judgements about a party's competence (Denver, 2005). Denver (2005) points out that party leaders are perhaps the most controversial part of the valence model considering that a long tradition of electoral research in the UK had initially downplayed the role of leaders (Butler & Stokes, 1969). If party choice is indeed a product of party competence and leader evaluations, then the exogenous status of the latter assumed in cross-sectional models of vote choice can be called into question. Leader evaluations not only serve as information shortcut to assess a party's competence (causal factor), they are also highly influenced by 'valenced partisanship' which is "continually updated as voters acquire new information, react to events and continuously make *judgements about the competence of parties*" (Denver, 2005, p. 295; emphasis added). In other words, valence models of electoral choice disregard the possibility that party and leader evaluations are tied by a link of reciprocal causation and disentangling the close causal relationship between the two requires different econometric procedures and data sources than those currently employed.

There are essentially two issues that cast doubt on the validity of valence models. One such problem is the subject of a paper by Evans and Chzhen (2013). The valence model essentially assumes that party and leader evaluations have a direct causal impact on electoral decisions. They, however, argue for the opposite causal sequence, proposing that performance evaluations are in fact a *consequence* of such decisions. Seeking to empirically validate the valence model, they conclude that party preferences have stronger (causal) effects on performance evaluations than vice versa which would challenge the core assumption of valence politics which argues that party and leader performance cause vote choice. This paper expands on their findings by further disentangling the causal relationship between party and leader evaluations. *It does so by properly exogenising the leader variable to investigate whether the personalisation theory of politics is correct in arguing that voters nowadays more strongly base their vote choice on leader rather than partisan considerations.*

1.3. Leader evaluations as *cause* and *consequence* of party evaluations

Leader evaluations are an essential component of the valence model and yet its exogenous status can be called into question as it can be regarded as both cause and consequence of partisan evaluations. On the hand, traditional accounts of vote choice argue that leader evaluations are a direct consequence of what voters think about political parties and partisan evaluations are considered enduring and relatively stable in long-established parliamentary democracies such as Canada and the UK. Here, parties are firmly embedded within the political structure and so a leader's short-term and often ephemeral existence is weighed against the endurance of political parties and voters will have a much more precise knowledge of and opinion about the latter. On the other hand, a decline of parties as mass organisations and a weakening of partisan loyalties more generally has led some scholars to suggest that the relationship between party and leader evaluations needs to be reassessed in light of an increasing personalisation of politics where individuals have gained in importance at the expense of collective identities (Dalton et al., 2000; Karvonen, 2010). From this perspective, it is believed that how voters view political parties is strongly affected by what they think of prospective heads of the executive and "party images bear the imprint of their leaders" (Bartle & Crewe, 2002, p. 81). This also echoes the view of McAllister (2007, p. 574; emphasis added) on the personalisation of politics that "political leaders have become electorally important *in their own right*, by personifying platforms of their respective parties". Innovative and more far-reaching channels of communication, often seen as the result of a modernisation of electoral campaigning (Swanson & Mancini, 1996), grant individuals a leading and highly visible role in the political arena with television acting as the main catalyst for a leader's prominence in voters' minds (McAllister, 1996). A recent spike in the interest on political marketing and impression management theories that analyses strategies and tactics of survival in the political market best captures such developments. No longer are parties solely concerned with selling policy ideas to voters but rather they have learned how to sell themselves through the presentation of prominent political figures (McAllister, 2002; B. Newman,

1994, 1999a, 1999b). From this point of view, party evaluations are much more strongly influenced by what voters think about their leaders and the latter are seen as a cause of the former. In other words, a revisionist argument challenges the traditional view that the way voters evaluate leaders is strongly coloured by partisan considerations.

While behavioural theories often downsize the importance of party leaders, arguing that voters like a leader because they are leading the party that they usually vote for (*consequence*), the literature on the personalisation of politics places greater emphasis on party leaders in influencing vote choice, suggesting that voters like a party simply because they can identify with its leader and subsequently consider them to be the most capable person to run the country (*cause*). Party effects are effectively reduced in their electoral impact while leader effects are shown to be highly significant predictors of vote choice. This paper remains sceptical towards such findings and argues that leader effects have been overemphasised because they are treated as exogenous to the electoral decision-making process. More recent studies that address the importance of party leaders from a perspective of personalised politics disregard the endogenous status of leader evaluations which may have substantially *downsized* the importance of party effects *vis-à-vis* that of their leaders. To put this into perspective, consider the 2010 UK general election. Assume that voters considered a vote for the Conservative Party. If leaders are indeed a cause of how voters view political parties, those liking (or identifying with) its leader David Cameron will tend to support his party (scenario 1). Conversely, those liking David Cameron probably think much more highly of the Conservative Party because they have done a better job on the most important issue facing the country (scenario 2). Clearly, leader evaluations can be a cause (scenario 1) as well as a consequence (scenario 2) of party evaluations and it is this problem that will be investigated further using appropriate econometric models and suitable panel data from the UK and Canada.

1.4. Model specifications, data sources and operationalisation of variables

Very few studies have empirically addressed the problem of reciprocal causation in models of vote choice (Archer, 1987; Marks, 1993; Markus & Converse, 1979; Page & Jones, 1979). Bartle and Crewe (2002) argue that party and leader assessments are possibly caused by the same factors but they do not in turn cause each other. Although they acknowledge the problem, they fail to address it appropriately considering the availability of limited (i.e. cross-sectional) data. More recently, Garzia (2011b, p. 4; emphasis in original) has argued that partisanship is strongly influenced by leader assessments and that partisan loyalties "should be brought back to the party *in the form of its leader*" (see also: Blondel, 1987; Blondel & Thiebault, 2013). This paper will pursue this matter further and improve on the exogeneity argument by properly exogenising the leader variable using a more suitable data structure and relevant econometric models.

Regarding the first matter, most empirical studies on leadership effects rely on the use of cross-sectional survey data which does not allow for valid statements about structural or causal effects between variables. To address this issue, panel data is required which allows for a more rigorous testing of causal relationships and is available for the three most recent British general elections. Moreover, replicating the analysis on Canadian panel data serves as an additional robustness check and shows that results are not just a British artefact. Johnston (2002) has made the case for two features of Canadian parties and elections that makes it an interesting country for inclusion. First, access to the top position in a political party is much more detached from the parliamentary body, allowing for leaders to be judged independently. And second, parties take centrist positions on the most fundamental issue for many Canadians – Québec and French Canada – which arguably create a vacuum for leaders to fill. Both countries employ majoritarian electoral systems with single-member districts which makes leader effects more pronounced as vote choice is similar to voting for the next Prime Minister, a position often reserved to the leader of a party. With respect to model specification, empirical studies on the personalisation of

politics suggest that controlling for leader evaluations will result in party effects being underestimated whereas failing to do so will possibly overestimate the importance of party effects (Holmberg & Oscarsson, 2011). If the personalisation of politics was correct in assuming that leader evaluations are more strongly related to vote choice than partisan evaluations, then it is necessary to control for the leader factor within models of vote choice in an appropriate way. In other words, the reciprocal link between party and leader evaluations needs to be taken into consideration which requires the use of instrumental variables to effectively exogenise the status of leader evaluations. Accurately exogenised in the sense that it is purged from the influence of party evaluations, it can then be included in voting models without running the risk of producing biased estimates (Gujarati, 2009; Kmenta, 1971). The basic model that will be estimated across British and Canadian panel data is as follows:

$$\text{Vote} = f(\text{Party evaluations, Leader evaluations, SES controls})$$

Vote choice is a nominal variable, coded so that -1 reflects a vote for the opposition party and +1 a vote for the government party while 0 means a vote for other parties.[1] Regarding the UK, the category 'Others' combines information on those that voted for the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National Party (SNP), Plaid Cymru, the Green Party, United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and the British National Party (BNP). Regarding Canada, the category 'Others' combines information on the National Democratic Party (NDP) and Bloc Québécois. Party and leader evaluations are simple synoptic evaluation measures for the main two parties and leaders at each election based on standard zero to ten sympathy scales.[2] In line with the dependent variable, these variables have been recoded to range from -1 to +1 where the former indicates the best score to the opposition leader/party and worst score for the incumbent whereas an upper bound of one means the incumbent leader/party is

1 The coding of main variables follows that of Garzia (2012) who has taken a similar approach in assessing the role of party and leaders effects in parliamentary systems. Likewise, Lewis-Beck, Nadeau, and Elias (2008) assess the causal dynamics between the economy, party ID and the vote, and in particular are concerned about the endogenous status of key variables in the system.

2 Canadian thermometer scores have been rescaled so as to also range from zero to ten.

scored best and the opposition leader/party the worst. These variables have been constructed by subtracting the losing leader's sympathy score from that of the winning leader's and subsequently divided by ten to yield a leader sympathy variable that ranges from -1 to +1. The same calculations are done to create a party sympathy variable. These calculations result in a total of four variables: two leader sympathy variables (one measured pre- and one post-election) and two party sympathy variables (one measured pre- and one post-election). Control variables are age, gender, union membership and income and the coding of these variables is discussed in Appendix A. Table 1.1 summarises the coding of main variables and provides an overview of parties and leaders for each country and election year.

Table 1.1: Coding of main variables, by country and election year

Opposition *(-1)*	*Others* *(0)*	*Government* *(+1)*
William Hague, CON, 2001 Michael Howard, CON, 2005 Gordon Brown, LAB, 2010	LibDems, SNP, Plaid Cymru, Greens, UKIP, BNP	Tony Blair, LAB, 2001 Tony Blair, LAB, 2005 David Cameron, CON, 2010
Stephen Harper, CON, 2004 Paul Martin, LIB, 2006	NDP, Bloc Québécois	Paul Martin, LIB, 2004 Stephen Harper, CON, 2006

Operationalising vote choice as a nominal variable suggests the use of a discrete choice model such as that of multinomial logistic. Vote for the government party stands as the reference category and for ease of interpretation, only the contrast between vote for the main opposition party and the reference category are shown in Tables 1.2 and 1.3. Several models are specified, each tackling a different aspect of the causal dynamics between party and leader evaluations. A static baseline model (Equation 1) where all variables are measured at the same time (post-electoral wave) is followed by a more dynamic model (Equation 2) where the dependent variable is measured post-election and independent variables are taken from pre-electoral waves, thereby taking full advantage of the panel data structure. Equation 1 is thus a simple cross-sectional model whereas Equation 2 takes into account the causal

dynamics among variables. All models are estimated separately for each election year.

$$Vote_t = a + bParty_t + cLeader_t + SES\ controls + u_1 \quad \text{(Eq. 1)}$$

$$Vote_t = a + bParty_{t-1} + cLeader_{t-1} + SES\ controls + u_2 \quad \text{(Eq. 2)}$$

$$Vote_t = a + bParty_t + cLeader_{t-1} + SES\ controls + u_3 \quad \text{(Eq. 3)}$$

$$Vote_t = a + bParty_{t-1} + cLeader_t + SES\ controls + u_4 \quad \text{(Eq. 4)}$$

Where: *t-1* = pre-election wave and *t* = post-election wave

Estimates from Equations 2, 3 and 4 provide different insights into the causal dynamics between party and leader evaluations. For instance, comparing coefficients on the lagged party variable in Equation 2 with their non-lagged equivalent in Equation 3 sheds light on the validity of the revisionist argument which considers party evaluations to be a consequence of how voters view political leaders. And secondly, comparing coefficients on the lagged leader variable in Equation 3 with those on the lagged party variable in Equation 4 gauges the actual point of departure in the causal link between leader and party evaluations. If the former is to be interpreted as cause of the latter (revisionist view), there should be a stronger statistical relationship between leader evaluations at *t-1* and party evaluations at time *t* (L → P). Conversely, if leader evaluations are a consequence of party evaluations (traditional view), this should be reflected in a stronger effect of party evaluations at *t-1* and leader evaluations at time *t* (P → L).

1.5. Party and leader evaluations: initial panel evidence for BES and CES panel data

Multinomial logistic estimates based on UK panel data for the static baseline model (Equation 1) are shown in column 1, Table 1.2. All variables are measured at the same point in time (post-election) and so the model is similar to a conventional cross-sectional model. All coefficients are highly significant and correctly signed. Both party and leader evaluations exert statistically significant effects on vote choice with the former showing a substantially larger effect than

the latter.[3] This of course highlights the potential exaggeration that advocates of strong leadership effects complain about; they maintain that effects exerted by party evaluations are larger than they should be. Considering that both dependent and independent variables are all measured at the same time, causal dynamics between party and leader evaluations remain unresolved. To address this issue further and to take full advantage of the panel data structure, dynamic models as proposed in Equation 2 are estimated next. The dependent variable is measured post-election whereas party and leader evaluations are taken from pre-electoral waves, thereby meeting an important criterion of causal inference, namely that of temporality. Models are estimated again through multinomial logistic regressions and results are shown in column 2, Table 1.2. Except for the leader effect in 2001, all coefficients are reduced in size. A problem arising from having both variables 'lagged' is that leader evaluations can still contaminate that of parties' because both are essentially measured at the same time (pre-election). Therefore, only the leader variable needs to be lagged (pre-election) so that contemporary party assessments are freed from any interference of leader evaluations (Equation 3). If the revisionist view on party leaders, which argues that party evaluations are the result of how voters view leaders, was true, then the coefficient on party should *decrease* in size from column 2 to column 3 in Table 1.2. This is, however, not the case. The party coefficient *increases* in all instances whereas the corresponding leader coefficient drops in magnitude. From this more plausible dynamic model, leader effects are found to decline more so than party effects which would suggest that party effects appear to have a stronger effect than suggested by static models estimated earlier. A final lag structure considers a lagged party evaluation variable and a non-lagged leader variable (Equation 4), thus freeing contemporary leader evaluations from the distorting influence of party evaluations. Comparing the magnitude of coefficients on both lagged variables in Equations 3 and 4 sheds additional light on the causal dynamics between leader and party evaluations. If the coefficient on the former is larger than the one on the latter, then leader evaluations exerts a stronger effect on party

[3] Since both party and leader evaluations have the same metric, the magnitude of their coefficients can be directly compared.

evaluations. If the opposite holds, party is considered to more strongly influence leader evaluations. The lagged party coefficient from Equation 4 is in all instances larger than the lagged leader coefficient from Equation 3, thereby casting doubt on the validity of the revisionist view which would argue for the opposite effect. In other words, party evaluations are more strongly (causally) related to leader evaluations and this holds across the three most recent British elections.

Table 1.2: Leader Evaluations, Party Evaluations and the Vote: Initial panel evidence (Multinomial Logistic Estimates; BES 2001-2010)

	(1) Static	(2) Dynamic	(3) L_{t-1}/P_t	(4) P_{t-1}/L_t
		2001		
A. Preliminary Estimates				
Party (post)	8.37 (0.83)*		9.48 (0.76)*	
Party (pre)		5.37 (0.43)*		4.73 (0.41)*
Leader (post)	2.02 (0.63)*			4.52 (0.44)*
Leader (pre)		2.39 (0.49)*	1.04 (0.58)*	
Pseudo R^2	0.43	0.33	0.43	0.38
N	1,163	1,144	1,147	1,138
		2005		
B. Preliminary Estimates				
Party (post)	10.56 (0.83)*		10.91 (0.81)*	
Party (pre)		7.62 (0.62)*		6.55 (0.54)*
Leader (post)	2.02 (0.59)*			4.76 (0.51)*
Leader (pre)		1.89 (0.53)*	1.87 (0.50)*	
Pseudo R^2	0.42	0.36	0.43	0.40
N	1,193	1,182	1,184	1,187
		2010		
C. Preliminary Estimates				
Party (post)	8.92 (0.79)*		9.69 (0.69)*	
Party (pre)		6.92 (0.73)*		5.58 (0.61)*
Leader (post)	2.03 (0.68)*			5.27 (0.53)*
Leader (pre)		1.91 (0.51)*	1.60 (0.52)*	
Pseudo R^2	0.42	0.33	0.42	0.39
N	958	938	939	946

Notes: multinomial logistic coefficients shown with robust standard errors in parentheses; * = p <0.001; *Dependent variable*: +1= Government, 0 = Other parties, -1 = Opposition; *Leader* = synoptic evaluation of two main party leaders recoded to range from +1 to -1; *Party* = synoptic evaluation of two main parties recoded to range from +1 to -1; *Controls*: Age, Gender, Union and Income. Controls and constant not shown.

While results from the BES panel data have clearly reinforced the importance of parties *vis-à-vis* their leaders, it remains to be seen whether such findings hold for other countries as well. The literature on party leaders in Canada is well established but empirical studies have failed to reach consensus as to whether leaders matter to vote choice or not. Bittner (2008, 2011) for instance argues for a strong direct impact of leaders' personalities on vote choice whereas Johnston (2002) finds that net effects are small even when differences between leaders are sharp. Furthermore, Gidengil, Blais, Nadeau, and Nevitte (2000) maintain that while leader evaluations have a significant impact on vote choice at the individual level, such effects have not increased over time. More importantly, they find that the role of party evaluations has not been weakened in recent years. The goal is again to compare party and leader coefficients after estimating the same models as for the British case. The dependent variable is coded so that -1 refers to the opposition party (Conservative Party in 2004, Liberal Party in 2006) and +1 to the party in government (Liberal Party in 2004, Conservative Party in 2006). The coding of these variables is identical to that of the leader and party sympathy variables as discussed for the British case. Control variables included are also the same and their coding is discussed in Appendix A. First, a simple static model is estimated as shown in Equation 1 (Table 1.3, column 1) before taking full advantage of the panel structure by estimating a dynamic model as per Equation 2 (Table 1.3, column 2). It is worth noting that in both election years and equivalent to BES findings, the party coefficient has *increased* in size from column 2 to 3 in Table 1.3, which would be contrary to the revisionist argument that leaders are now more a cause than a consequence of party evaluations. Finally, comparing the coefficient on the lagged leader variable in Equation 3 with that on the lagged party variable in Equation 4 again shows that the former is smaller than the latter, further adding to findings from BES data regarding the causal dynamics between the two variables; it appears to be the case that lagged party evaluations have stronger effects on leader evaluations measured post-election, and this holds across the two countries and election years.

Table 1.3: Leader Evaluations, Party Evaluations and the Vote: Initial panel evidence (Multinomial Logistic Estimates; CES 2004-2006)

	(1) Static	(2) Dynamic	(3) L_{t-1}/P_t	(4) P_{t-1}/L_t
		2004		
D. Preliminary Estimates				
Party (post)	7.46 (0.72)*		7.43 (0.61)*	
Party (pre)		6.54 (0.73)*		3.28 (0.46)*
Leader (post)	1.90 (0.74)*			3.02 (0.49)*
Leader (pre)		1.93 (0.58)*	2.02 (0.49)*	
Pseudo R^2	0.28	0.24	0.28	0.16
N	1,045	910	913	1,222
		2006		
E. Preliminary Estimates				
Party (post)	5.81 (0.67)*		4.91 (0.53)*	
Party (pre)		3.24 (0.67)*		5.58 (0.58)*
Leader (post)	0.79 (0.64)			4.65 (0.60)*
Leader (pre)		2.25 (0.69)*	2.14 (0.50)*	
Pseudo R^2	0.18	0.15	0.19	0.27
N	1,245	1,119	1,194	1,000

Notes: multinomial logistic coefficients shown with robust standard errors in parentheses; * = p<0.001; *Dependent variable*: +1= Government, 0 = Other parties, -1 = Opposition; *Leader* = synoptic evaluation of two main party leaders recoded to range from +1 to -1; *Party* = synoptic evaluation of two main parties recoded to range from +1 to -1; *Controls*: Age, Gender, Union and Income. Controls and constant not shown.

1.6. Party and leader evaluations: exogenising panel evidence for BES and CES panel data

The preceding panel analysis has shown that when taking into account the temporality requisite in order to establish causal inference, party evaluations emerge as the stronger predictor variable across countries and election years. However, several issues remain to be resolved. First of all, if leader evaluations are indeed cause and consequence of party assessments, then single-equation models cannot reveal the true extent of the impact of leader evaluations on vote choice. In other words, so far, leader evaluations are assumed to be exogenous and its estimated effects are as a result likely to be biased. A second concern is that of error terms being correlated with each other. The problem with panel data is that whatever affects a variable at time *t-1* could still have an effect at a later time *t*. Assume that a factor affecting leader evaluations before the election is related to the error term at time *t-1* (u_{t-1}), while other factors affecting vote

choice at time t are related to the error term at time t (u_t). As a result, both error terms are also likely to be correlated. Addressing the issue of simultaneous equation bias and correlated error terms necessitates the use of instrumental variables in a two-stage estimation process (Kmenta, 1971).

The challenge lies in finding fully exogenous variables to construct instruments. Such variables need to be determined, i.e. caused, outside the system and must not be correlated with the error term. Although it is quite difficult to find variables that affect leader evaluations but do not in turn exert any influence on party evaluations, several studies addressing the dynamic relationship between partisanship, ideology and candidate evaluations have successfully used candidate traits to exogenise candidate assessments (Archer, 1987; Bellucci, Garzia, & Lewis-Beck, 2013; Marks, 1993). There are three reasons for using trait variables to exogenise leader evaluations. First of all, it is argued that traits are effectively exogenous to leader evaluations because they are inherent characteristics of individuals that tend to be enduring over time (for a similar argument, see: Bellucci et al., 2013). Drawing inspiration from psychology studies, the literature on personality and performance with its focus on organising traits in terms of five essential dimensions provides additional insights into the use of leadership traits as exogenous variables. The general relationship between personality traits and (leader) performance has been a commonly studied research area in business psychology for many years. A Five Factor Model (FFM), also known as the 'Big Five', is the most frequently used classification in studying such a relationship (McCrae & Costa, 1997; McCrae & John, 1992). Despite some disagreement regarding names and content of dimensions, they can generally be summarised as follows: *Conscientiousness* (reliability, organisational talent, and integrity), *Agreeableness* (cooperation, sympathetic), *Neuroticism* (insecurity, anxious), *Openness* (creativity, imaginative) and *Extraversion* (sociability, energetic). Assuming traits as basic units of someone's overall personality, research has shown that personal characteristics can be summarised to form distinct personality dimensions. Studies also demonstrate how such dimensions are important for achieving essential tasks in particular job sectors. A comprehensive, yet parsimonious framework, the Five Factor Model lends itself quite nicely to the study of

leadership traits and, more importantly, helps justify the choice of leader traits as exogenous variables. FFM has been studied extensively with regard to job performance and *Conscientiousness* has been found to be most strongly correlated with job performance across all types of jobs (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Barrick, Mount, & Strauss, 1993; Sackett & Wanek, 1996; Salgado, 1997). There are two reasons for settling on this dimension when choosing variables to exogenise leader evaluations. A theoretical reason is based on the idea that if leaders are viewed as honest and reliable individuals, voters are then assumed to trust them with important executive decision-making. In other words, knowing they can trust a leader, they are more likely to have confidence in their performance once elected into higher office. Job performance as captured by leader evaluations is thus viewed as a function of traits, of which trust and honesty are strong predictors.[4] In addition, *Conscientiousness*, and to a lesser extent *Emotional Stability* (opposite of *Neuroticism*), are shown to be related to a specific aspect of performance: both dimensions are found to influence how successful individuals are when it comes to teamwork and social interactions more generally (Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, & Mount, 1998; Hough, 1992). Such a finding is particularly valid when taking into account the role of leaders in today's highly personalised political environment. Party leaders enjoy far greater autonomy and executive powers within the party organisation, seeking to convince party colleagues of their new presidential logic of governance (Poguntke & Webb, 2005). Meanwhile, fostering strong ties with media outlets to reach out to potential voters has become an invaluable strategy pursued by many political leaders. Social interactions with voters in the form of televised leadership debates, campaign rallies, interviews and social media outlets are part and parcel of a leader's campaign toolkit. A second, more practical, reason for settling on traits that tap into a leader's conscientiousness and integrity is based on the fact that they are both available in BES and CES questionnaires. Research on candidate traits has flourished in recent years but unfortunately, voter surveys often lack an extensive question bank on party leaders. Although studies on candidate behaviour and political ambitions have

[4] Unfortunately, neither BES nor CES election surveys included performance evaluation questions that are most frequently asked in monthly opinion polls: "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way X is doing his/her job as Prime Minister".

recently started to include questions on self-perceptions (Fox & Lawless, 2004, 2005, 2010), voter surveys still lack extensive trait questions on party leaders that would cover the 'Big Five'. Therefore, the choice of exogenous trait variables is rather limited. For comparative reasons, 'keeps promises', 'honesty' and 'trustworthy' have been chosen as exogenous trait variables.[5] Table 1.4 provides an overview of traits included by country and election year. These traits are most strongly associated with a leader's conscientiousness and the benefits of scoring high on that dimension are obvious. If voters see such traits in a leader, they will also trust them with making important executive decisions and showing sound political judgement. Conscientious leaders are successful in their jobs because of careful planning and determination and they are generally regarded as reliable and dependable individuals whom people can trust. A second reason for using trait variables to exogenise leader evaluations is based on findings by Funk and others who have shown that individual traits are strongly related to candidate evaluations more generally and that the causal arrow runs from the former to the latter (Funk, 1994, 1999; Greene, 2001; Markus & Converse, 1979; Rahn, Aldrich, & Borgida, 1994). And thirdly, traits are taken from the pre-election wave and therefore meet the important criteria of occurring prior in time.

Table 1.4: List of exogenous variables to construct instruments

BES 2001	*BES 2005*	*BES 2010*	*CES 2004*	*CES 2006*
Keeps promises	Trustworthy	Trustworthy	Honesty	Honesty

The coding of trait variables follows that of the party and leader sympathy variables so that a lower bound of -1 means a trait describes the opposition leader best/government leader worst and an upper bound of +1 indicates that a trait describes the government leader best/opposition leader worst. It is constructed by subtracting the losing leader's score on the trait scale from that of the winning leader's and dividing the variable thus created by ten to yield a *ConscientiousLeader* variable that range from -1 to +1. *ConscientiousLeader* is

[5] Ideally, several variables would be included to construct additive scores and estimate models based on broad and strict exogeneity criteria (Bélanger, Lewis-Beck, Chiche, & Tiberj, 2006). Unfortunately, the number of traits included in pre-electoral waves makes such an approach impossible.

thus a simple measure regarding a leader's level of conscientiousness as expressed in terms of their honesty or trust. Descriptive statistics for all variables are shown in Table A1 in Appendix A. Equation 5 is estimated using ordinary least squares and predicted values (Leader′) are then saved to serve as instrumental variables when estimating Equation 6.

$$\text{Leader}_{t-1} = a + b\text{ConscientiousLeader}_{t-1} + u_5 \quad \text{(Eq. 5)}$$

$$\text{Vote}_t = a + b\text{Leader}' + c\text{Party}_{t-1} + d\text{SES controls} + u_6 \quad \text{(Eq. 6)}$$

The instruments thus created are 'good' in the sense that they correlate well with the endogenous leader variable. Correlation coefficients range from 0.62 in 2001 to a strong 0.87 in 2010 ($r_{2001} = 0.62$, $r_{2005} = 0.86$, $r_{2010} = 0.87$). Additional reassurance of the quality of instruments comes from a Hausman test of exogeneity which suggests that they are uncorrelated with the error term (Durbin, 1954; Hausman, 1978; Wu, 1973). A regression-based Hausman test investigates whether the error term *u*, after predicting the endogenous independent variable from selected exogenous ones, is a statistically significant explanatory factor in the original model when included as an additional variable. Of course, this test of endogeneity is only valid if the instruments are indeed exogenous. Considering the strong correlation between the instruments and the original variable and the fact that several studies have established causality that runs from traits to overall evaluations, it is reasonable to suggest that the exogeneity criterion is satisfied. First, the equation is estimated in its original form before being reduced so that all exogenous variables are regressed on the endogenous leader variable. Having saved the residuals from the reduced form, in a third step, the equation in its original form including the saved residuals is estimated.

Original form: $\text{Vote}_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1\text{Leader}_{t-1} + \alpha_2\text{Party}_{t-1} + \alpha_3\text{Class} + \alpha_4\text{Income} + \alpha_5\text{Age} + \alpha_6\text{Union} + u$

Reduced form: $\text{Leader}_{t-1} = \pi_0 + \pi_1\text{Class} + \pi_2\text{Income} + \pi_3\text{Age} + \pi_4\text{Union} + \pi_5\text{Party}_{t-1} + \pi_6\text{Trait} + \upsilon$

Include residuals: $Vote_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Leader_{t-1} + \alpha_2 Party_{t-1} + \alpha_3 Class + \alpha_4 Income + \alpha_5 Age + \alpha_6 Union + \delta_1 residual + u$

H_0: $\delta_1 = 0$ (leader evaluations is exogenous, no need for IV estimation)

H_A: $\delta_1 \neq 0$ (leader evaluations is endogenous, IV estimation needed)

The null hypothesis states that the leader variable is exogenous and thus no instrumental variable (IV) estimation would be necessary. If residuals are found to be significantly different from zero, then IV estimation is required. This can be tested with an *F*-test and results are shown in Table 1.5. Applying such a test to equations of Tables 1.2 and 1.3, residual coefficients fail to reach statistical significance at the 0.1 significance level in almost all instances, except in the case of the 2010 British election. This would suggest that instrumental variable estimation is needed to produce unbiased estimates.

Table 1.5: Results for Hausman tests of exogeneity

BES	$F_{2001} = 3.99, p = 0.05$	$F_{2005} = 8.91, p = 0.01$	$F_{2010} = 1.57, p = 0.21$
CES	$F_{2004} = 3.76, p = 0.05$	$F_{2006} = 7.66, p = 0.01$	

A final diagnostic check is to confirm the relevance of instruments by testing whether the correlation between the endogenous regressor and the instruments is not equal to zero. The relevance of instruments is tested in the first-stage regression where the endogenous variable is regressed on all exogenous regressors. In the case of a single endogenous regressor, the *F*-statistic of a joint test of whether all excluded instruments are significant should be larger than 10 (Staiger & Stock, 1997). For single instruments and a single endogenous regressor, the *t*-value for the instrument should be larger than 3.2. Results are shown in Table 1.6 where it is shown that first-stage *F*-statistics for all models are above the threshold of 10.

Table 1.6: First-stage regression results to test for relevance of instrumental variables

BES	$F_{2001} = 527.4$, $t = 14.8$	$F_{2005} = 995.4$, $t = 27.3$	$F_{2010} = 760.8$, $t = 23.1$
CES	$F_{2004} = 356.9$, $t = 13.8$	$F_{2006} = 695.9$, $t = 15.8$	

Estimation results for BES panel data from Equation 6 are shown in Table 1.7. Findings suggest that when leader evaluations are properly measured in the sense that its endogenous status is taking into consideration, its impact on the vote is much smaller than that of party evaluations. This would contradict findings from recent studies of leadership effects which argue for a strong independent effect on vote choice. However, using cross-sectional data cannot get to the core of the debate as to whether leader evaluations are a cause or a consequence of partisan assessments. Only when respondents are interviewed at two points in time can the variation between variables be causal rather than merely correlational (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000). This paper has pursued this issue further by first providing initial evidence based on simple panel considerations before proceeding to a more complex model specification that sought to exogenise leader evaluations and hence purify party from leader evaluations and to investigate which one is the stronger predictor of vote choice.

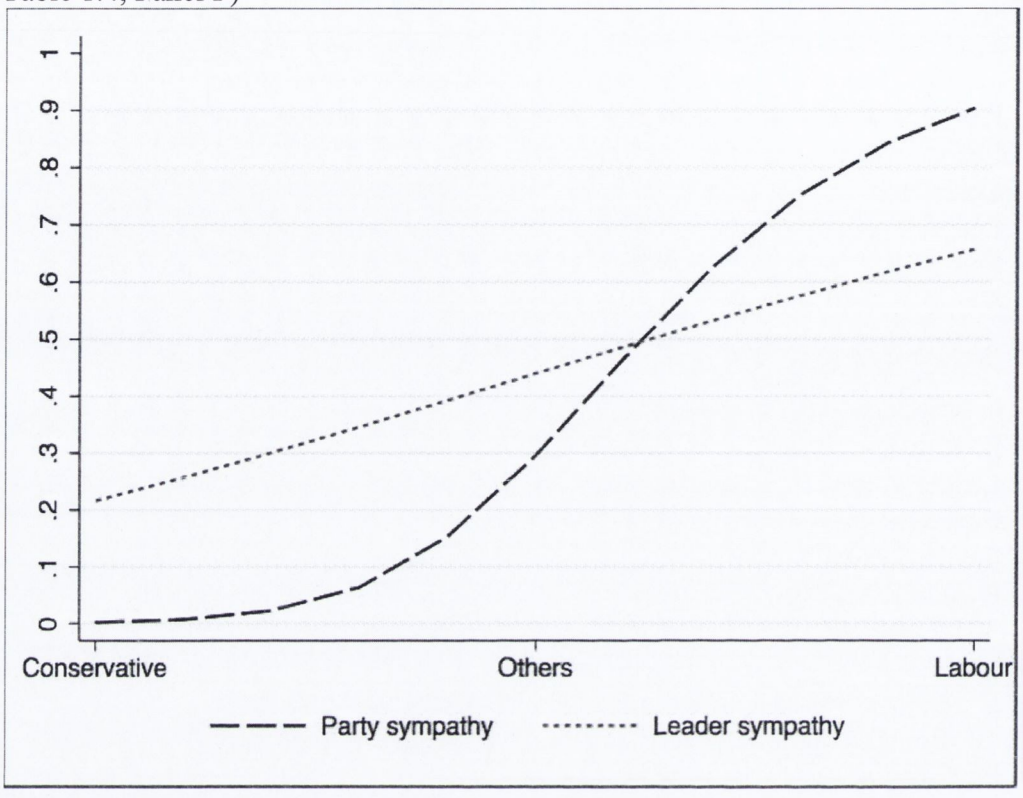
Table 1.7: Exogenous Leader Evaluations, Party Evaluations and the Vote: Panel Tests (IV estimation; BES 2001-2010)

	2001
F. Exogenous leader evaluations, party evaluations and the vote: Two-Stage Multinomial Logistic Estimates (IV estimation)	
Party (pre)	6.34 (0.40)*
Leader′ (pre)	1.71 (0.55)*
Correlation Leader/Leader′	0.62
Pseudo R^2	0.33
N	1,152
	2005
G. Exogenous leader evaluations, party evaluations and the vote: Two-Stage Multinomial Logistic Estimates (IV estimation)	
Party (pre)	7.45 (0.60)*
Leader′ (pre)	3.20 (0.70)*
Correlation Leader/Leader′	0.86
Pseudo R^2	0.37
N	1,204
	2010
H. Exogenous leader evaluations, party evaluations and the vote: Two-Stage Multinomial Logistic Estimates (IV estimation)	
Party (pre)	6.82 (0.72)*
Leader′ (pre)	2.62 (0.76)*
Correlation Leader/Leader′	0.87
Pseudo R^2	0.33
N	941

Notes: multinomial logistic coefficients shown with robust standard errors in parentheses; * = $p < 0.001$. Controls and constant not shown.

The net effect of exogenised leader evaluations on vote choice for the 2001 British election is graphically presented in Figure 1.1 and shows the predicted probability of voting for the Labour Party based on respondents' evaluations of the two main parties and their leaders while other variables are held at their mean. Graphs for the remaining two years are almost identical and convey a clear message: when the endogenous status of leader evaluations is taken into consideration, the effect of parties noticeably exceeds that of leaders.

Figure 1.1: Predicted probability of Labour vote, BES 2001 (estimates from Table 1.4, Panel F)



Moving on to discussing results from Canadian panel data, Table 1.8 reports the Canadian two-stage multinomial logistic estimates when leader evaluations are fully exogenised. Instruments created are again 'good' in the sense that they correlate well with the endogenous leader variable and additional reassurance of the quality of instruments comes from a Hausman test of exogeneity which suggests that they are uncorrelated with the error term. Instrument relevance has been tested by obtaining the *F*-statistic for the reduced form equations. Results for these diagnostic checks can be found in Table 1.5 and 1.6, respectively.

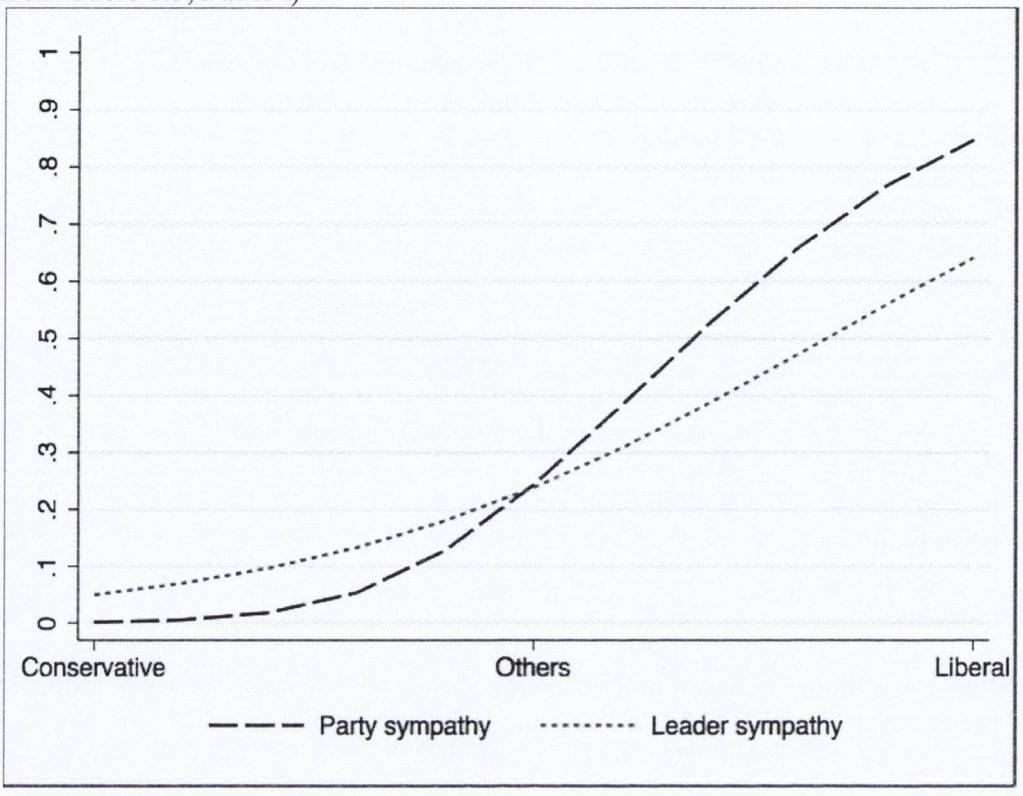
Table 1.8: Exogenous Leader Evaluations, Party Evaluations and the Vote: Panel Tests (IV estimation; CES 2004-2006)

	2004
I. Exogenous leader evaluations, party evaluations and the vote: Two-Stage Multinomial Logistic Estimates (IV estimation)	
Party (pre)	6.78 (0.65)*
Leader′ (pre)	2.12 (0.69)*
Correlation Leader/Leader′	0.75
Pseudo R^2	0.23
N	850
	2006
J. Exogenous leader evaluations, party evaluations and the vote: Two-Stage Multinomial Logistic Estimates (IV estimation)	
Party (pre)	4.03 (0.48)*
Leader′ (pre)	2.40 (0.65)*
Correlation Leader/Leader′	0.75
Pseudo R^2	0.15
N	1,141

Notes: multinomial logistic coefficients shown with robust standard errors in parentheses; * = p <0.001. Controls and constant not shown.

Finally, net effects of exogenised leader evaluations on vote choice in the 2004 Canadian election are graphically shown in Figure 1.2 which presents the predicted probability of the Liberal Party's vote based on party and leader evaluations while other variables are kept at their mean. Again, the message conveyed is clear: when the endogenous status of leader evaluations is taken into consideration, party evaluations trump those of leaders, as is the case for the 2006 Canadian election and was also found for all three British elections. Panel evidence from Canada thus seems to echo findings from Gidengil et al. (2000) that leader effects do not exceed those of parties.

Figure 1.2: Predicted probability of Conservative vote, CES 2004 (estimates from Table 1.5, Panel I)



1.7. Conclusion

A traditional view on parties and leaders argues that evaluations about the latter are a mere consequence of the former. A revisionist argument however contends firstly that party leaders assume an important role in shaping voters' attitudes towards parties and secondly that leader evaluations have become an electoral force in their own right, thus exerting strong causal effects on party evaluations. Considering that leaders can be viewed as both cause and consequence of party evaluations, single-equation models are no longer suitable to modelling vote choice. More specifically, leaders are an endogenous variable in a system of equations and for estimates to be unbiased, such a variable needs to be exogenised using an instrumental variable approach. Conventional cross-sectional models of vote choice often exaggerate the effects of leader evaluations but because all variables are measured contemporaneously, valid statements about the causal dynamics among key predictor variables cannot be made. Panel data to some extent alleviates the problem because one can explore

temporal dynamics between variables. Preliminary panel evidence from static and dynamic models does not support a revisionist view on leader evaluations. Party coefficients increase in magnitude, suggesting that party evaluations actually emerge with stronger direct effects than static models have indicated. Moreover, initial panel evidence has revealed that party evaluations measured before the election has a stronger effect on leader evaluations measured after the election. Additional results from two-stage multinomial logistic models demonstrate that when the problem of endogeneity is taken into consideration by fully exogenising leader evaluations, party evaluations emerge as the stronger predictor across countries and election years. Note though that such findings do not dismiss a leader effect on vote choice as such coefficients are found to be statistically significant in both countries. However, considering their electoral effect *vis-à-vis* that of parties suggests parties are the stronger factor, and this holds regardless of model specification.

There are a few cautionary points associated with the analysis pursued here. Restricting the analysis to the UK and Canada might be rather narrow in focus because they lend themselves quite nicely to the personalisation hypothesis. A well-established, yet conflicting literature has thus far not provided a definite answer regarding the electoral importance of party leaders which is in large part due to the fact that empirical work often lacks a sound theoretical framework that identifies the location of parties *vis-à-vis* their leaders in the (causal) decision-making process of the electorate. Limiting the analysis to Canada and the UK is also due to the fact that panel data is very difficult to come by as in most instances, respondents are only interviewed post-election and so does not allow for any causal inferences. Another concern is related to the fact that the analysis is restricted to the two main parties and their leaders in each country, essentially over-emphasising the electoral effect of those parties who are *also* most likely to provide a candidate for the head of the executive. Therefore, much more research on a wider selection of countries is necessary to further strengthen results presented in this paper. Finally, when designing survey questionnaires in the future, researchers may consider including additional questions on party and leader traits that are more strongly related to the 'Big Five'. Not only would it allow for a more extensive exogeneity testing in the

sense that additive scores could be computed on several trait items, it may also be interesting to investigate how parties and their leaders match in terms of their overall image as perceived by the electorate (for a similar approach, see: Wagner & Weßels, 2012).

Performance models of electoral choice emphasise the importance of party leaders in structuring vote choice but fail to account for its potentially endogenous status. This paper has sought to address this matter by investigating how evaluations of leaders are connected to behavioural theories and performance models of voting behaviour and by providing some discussion on how voters' assessments of party leaders are linked to central concepts of such theories. It was argued that recognising the role and location of leaders as well as the extent to which they are treated as separate factors (or electoral forces) in voters' minds is an important step in understanding the importance of party leaders to political choices. And secondly, it has sought to address the problem of leader endogeneity by estimating suitable econometric models (instrumental variable estimation) using appropriate data (two-wave panel data).

Revisiting the presidentialisation thesis: Do voters follow the party or the leader?

Abstract

The presidentialisation thesis argues that voting in parliamentary systems has come to resemble that in presidential ones. However, the literature on the impact of party leaders provides no consensus in support of this claim and is silent on institutional factors that may further influence their effects. Using data on leader and party sympathies from countries where vote choice most closely resembles that of a presidential vote, this paper examines instances in which a voter thinks the party with the best leader is not the best party, or the best party does not have the best leader, investigating whether voters in such situations follow the leader or the party. It is shown that voters follow the party rather than the leader and this holds across countries and election years. Party size is also found to matter while party effects are weaker when taking into account the strength of partisan loyalties.

2.1. Introduction

Has voting in parliamentary systems become more presidential in a sense that vote choice is now firmly structured around prime ministerial rather than partisan considerations? In other words, when choosing government officials, are voters opting for the best person for the job or simply for the one that looks the part? Party leaders are at the centre of attention in today's highly personalised campaign environment and so the argument goes that voters nowadays are more likely to cast their vote for the leader they like best rather than for the party they prefer. This paper seeks to investigate this matter further, examining whether voting behaviour in parliamentary systems has become presidentialised and the extent to which this is conditioned by institutional (electoral system) and individual-level (partisan loyalties) factors.

As a result of changes in presenting politics and motivations that bring voters to the polls, a significant amount of research has been dedicated to investigating causes and consequences of a potential presidentialisation of parliamentary systems (Foley, 2012; Mughan, 1993, 2000; Wattenberg, 1991). The core argument of such a theory contends that political leadership in such systems has become more presidential without changing formal or institutional structures (Poguntke & Webb, 2005). An observable implication holds that vote choice must be similar to that in presidential systems where voters are ultimately confronted with a choice of who will become the next head of the executive. However, there are additional factors that may impact on such an argument. The type of electoral system in place is important here as it has an impact on the extent to which vote choice resembles that of a presidential one. Thus, the focus of this paper remains on parliamentary systems with majoritarian rules and those employing closed-list PR electoral systems because voters only have a single choice to make and may not rank individual candidates (transferable vote), change the order of a list (open- or flexible lists) nor are they given two votes (mixed-member systems). The argument regarding varying effects of electoral systems needs to be separated from that of party size, which is expected to matter regardless of the type of electoral system in place because voting for large parties is more firmly structured and so this should hold in

majoritarian and PR systems alike. Finally, the end of traditional cleavage politics is regarded as a major cause of a presidentialisation of politics and a decline in partisanship will have consequences on how voters approach political parties and their leaders (Dalton et al., 2000; Mughan, 2009). Therefore, it is also examined whether voters exhibiting weak affiliations with political parties are more susceptible to casting their vote based on prime ministerial considerations in absence of strong partisan ties.

A major difficulty in assessing the relative importance of parties and leaders in voters' decision-making process lies in the fact that there are strong reasons to believe that the relationship between the two is reciprocal and the cross-sectional designs of many studies have seemed inadequate to the task of resolving this issue. This paper proposes a novel solution. Taking advantage of the predictive power of leader and party evaluations, voters are expected to support the best party, or the party of the best leader. These usually suggest the same party choice, but not always allowing the researcher to explore the behaviour of voters whose expected choice, based on either the assessment of leaders or that of parties, is *inconsistent*. Exploring such cases will shed light on whether voters are more likely to follow the party or the leader.

The contribution of this paper is thus twofold. It will put the main arguments of the presidentialisation thesis to the test by analysing post-election survey data on eight parliamentary systems, thereby providing a more comparative and empirically powerful testing of whether the thesis is correct in assuming that voting in such systems has become presidentialised. Not only does it take into account the conditional role of electoral systems, it also considers the possibility that party size matters regardless of the electoral system in place. A theoretical contribution thus lies in deriving observable implications regarding a personalised vote choice under different electoral systems whereas an empirical contribution comes in the form of a novel solution to address the inherent problem of a reciprocal causal relationship between party and leader evaluations using cross-sectional data.

The paper will be structured as follows. It will start with a discussion of how executive behaviour in parliamentary systems has gradually assumed a more presidential logic of governance. Entering the debate on the presidentialisation thesis, a summary is then provided of the main arguments that are relevant in the context of this paper. Observable implications regarding a personalised vote choice under different electoral rules will be derived next before moving on to a discussion of the methodology and the novel solution that addresses the reciprocal relationship between party and leader evaluations using cross-sectional data. Results are shown in both graphical and tabular form and will be discussed next before concluding with some final remarks.

2.2. The changing nature of executive behaviour and political presentation in parliamentary systems

Traditional, partisan-based accounts of voting are no longer applicable in an era where complex issues are often reduced to simple sound bites and most popular personalities are pushed to the forefront of election campaigns, thereby satisfying the visual preferences of a televised era of political campaigning (Swanson & Mancini, 1996). Such a personalisation of politics has taken place across Western Europe and has received considerable scholarly attention (Bennett, 2012; Garzia, 2011a; Holtz-Bacha, Langer, & Merkle, 2014; Karvonen, 2010; Kriesi, 2012; McAllister, 2007, 2013; Rahat & Sheafer, 2007). If individuals have indeed gained in importance at the expense of collective organisations, an observable implication would be that more and more voters will base their vote choice on leader rather than partisan considerations. However, institutional factors such as the type of government have obvious consequences for the nature and style of political leadership and thus the extent to which party leaders can be influential. Presidential systems place much more emphasis on the individual because the head of the executive is directly elected and the electoral landscape is thus entirely different from that of parliamentary ones. Here, heads of the executive are evaluated and assessed (often retrospectively) whereas they are objects of a genuine choice in presidential systems. Parliamentary systems differ markedly from their presidential

counterpart on several accounts. First of all, collective responsibility and party discipline are key characteristics of parliamentary systems because the survival of the executive strongly centres on retaining confidence of the legislature while at the same time being accountable to them, rather than to the electorate (Verney, 1998). The political survival of governments is thus strongly dependent on ensuring loyalty and continued support of elected party members as well as encouraging a strong partisan order (Bowler, Farrell, & Katz, 1999). And as a result, the length of term in office is determined by making sure those ties are well maintained and heads of the executive take a strong interest in retaining confidence of their party members and refining their performance in office (McAllister, 2007). It follows then that prime ministers enjoy fewer executive authorities and are much less autonomous and flexible in their political decisions when compared to their presidential counterparts.

The strength of key characteristics associated with executive behaviour in parliamentary systems such as collective responsibility and party discipline have been challenged on the grounds of a modernisation of electoral campaigning and changing motivations that cause voters to support one party over another (Swanson & Mancini, 1996). Prime ministers nowadays benefit from enhanced executive powers and are able to shape and influence ministerial careers to ensure discipline as well as to centralise authority in the hands of party elites (Foley, 1993, 2000). Traditional, party-centred theories of voting behaviour no longer sufficiently explain vote choice and party politics in parliamentary systems has witnessed a change towards perception politics where focus is on individual politicians, and party leaders in particular, at the expense of collective organisations (De Landtsheer & De Vries, 2013; De Landtsheer, De Vries, & Vertessen, 2005). Partisan loyalties are no longer regarded as structuring the interests of particular segments of society and collective identities no longer dominate people's preference formation and political behaviour. Instead, individual candidates, and party leaders in particular, now serve the vital function of influencing how people view and approach their political surroundings as well as how they develop political preferences (Bittner, 2008, 2014; Clarke et al., 2009; Clarke et al., 2011).

There is little doubt that a personalisation of politics has taken place in recent years, accompanied by changes in terms of political communication, election campaigning and the motivations that bring voters to the polls. Advanced media technologies and modern marketing techniques have resulted in a highly visualised (and personalised) campaign environment. A rise in the number of parliamentary systems incorporating televised leadership debates during national election campaigns is evidence for the profound impact that the media has had on the presentation of politics (Barr, 1991; Bernier & Moniere, 1991; Campus, 2010; Ohr, 2011). Television conveniently conveys political information through visual images such as familiar personalities that people can easily relate to. It also assumes the crucial role of framing certain issues and priming voters to attach different weights to such issues. Primed by intense television coverage and newspaper reporting of the election campaign, a leader's performance on delivering the party's message is essential to how voters evaluate them and such assessments, aggregated over time, come to affect election outcomes in the long run (Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). In essence,

> "the role of the media has [...] moved increasingly from being merely a channel of communication to being a major actor in the campaigning process, as it selects the persons and issues to be covered and as it shapes its *portrayal of leaders*" (Butler & Ranney, 1992, p. 283; emphasis added).

Yet, television and media coverage of politics more generally should not be regarded as the main mover behind a personalisation of politics because parties themselves also feature strongly in such a process. For instance, they actively make use of leaders to market political choices more effectively because conveying political messages via familiar personalities is much easier than doing so via abstract documents such as party manifestos (Ranney, 1983). Due to the end of party-controlled media and the emergence of independent, often privately owned media outlets where parties are no longer in full control over content and delivery of their political messages, parties were forced to respond to such changes accordingly. It must be taken into consideration that the end of traditional cleavage politics saw them lose their role as a collective organisation where a shift has occurred from class-based to catch-all party models (Dalton et

al., 2000; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Kirchheimer, 1966). Ideology appears to no longer play an important role but rather sees itself replaced by features that are more appealing to the electorate, of which party leaders and their personal appeal to the electorate are an important one (Farrell, 1996). Slowly but surely, party leaders have moved from being the product of party attachment to being one of its structuring forces (Garzia, 2011b; Mughan, 2000, 2009) while voters perceive electoral contests to be between prime ministerial contenders rather than organised collective interests and as a result may base their vote choice on leader rather than partisan evaluations.

Taking all this into consideration, vote choice no longer appears to be rooted in long-term predispositions and partisan loyalties but is seen as to be based on more short-term forces as a direct consequence of a personalisation of politics. Once considered the main driving force behind political choices, party ID has lost its power in structuring vote choice and its decline across Western democracies is well documented (Crewe, Sarlvik, & Alt, 1977; Dalton et al., 2000; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Mughan, 2009; Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995). Originally conceived as a basis for evaluating and understanding political information, a strong voting cue and an essential driving force behind voters getting engaged in democratic processes such as political participation, partisanship seems to have lost its role in structuring all of the above. McAllister (2007) notes that if party ID is in decline, the way voters think about political leaders is also likely to change as a result. With weaker attachments to political parties, the role of leaders in mobilising and converting voters has become enhanced. Generally speaking, there are three motives for voters to fall back on leader rather than party cues when making political choices in an era of personalised politics. First, leaders play an important role in shaping voters' attitudes towards parties (Page & Jones, 1979) and are shown to be main drivers of partisanship (Garzia, 2011b). Second, advanced media technologies and new channels of political communication have resulted in parties projecting their policies via leaders (Ohr, 2011). And thirdly, party ID no longer serves as a heuristic device when making political choices under conditions of uncertainty, and leaders arguably function as a new orientation point considering their strong presence during election campaigns. With this in mind,

it is often argued that voters with weak partisan loyalties are more likely to base their vote choice on leader evaluations because they lack cues that used to be based on strong partisan loyalties but are nowadays replaced by what voters think about political leaders (Brettschneider & Gabriel, 2002; Campbell et al., 1960; Dalton et al., 2000; Franklin, Mackie, & Valen, 1992; King, 2002; Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995). Put simply, motivations that bring voters to the polls have changed and partisan dealignment has resulted in more and more voters basing their vote choice on leader evaluations. Voters are exposed to a much wider range of political messages and therefore leaders are viewed as an important factor in the decision-making calculus of voters while party ID has lost its role in structuring political choices.

It seems to be the case that a personalisation of politics nicely satisfies the interests of all the main actors in the political arena (McAllister, 2013). *Political parties* are content with and sometimes even encourage such changes by engaging in political branding and impression management tactics to enhance their electoral appeal. Reverting to individual personalities as the messenger rather than relying on complex policy programs best achieves delivering a party's political message to the electorate. Reporting on the 2008 Canadian election, McLean (2008, p. 17) notes that "when the messenger became the message, [...], it channelled control of all other messages into his [Stephen Harper's] hands." In other words, when party leaders assume the role of a perceptual screen, they strongly influence how a party's policy agenda is communicated to and perceived by the electorate. *Party leaders* in turn have enjoyed much greater authority in the political process and have successfully adjusted to positioning themselves at the centre of intense media interest to serve as vital information shortcuts in absence of strong partisan loyalties that had traditionally assumed such a role. Thirdly, *the electorate* finds it much easier to hold an individual, rather than collective identities responsible for government actions (Bean & Mughan, 1989; McAllister, 2007). And finally, *the media* obviously provides necessary visual images on personalities that parties and leaders take to for their delivery of political messages.

2.3. The three faces of presidentialisation

If parties have lost their ability to aggregate political interests and are no longer in control of shaping political communication, then this will have serious implications for how politics is conducted and how voters respond to such changes. In an attempt to more formally theorise such transformations in parliamentary systems, Poguntke and Webb (2005) have developed a theoretical account of how such systems have gradually become presidential in their logic of governance without changing their formal institutional structures. They propose three faces of presidentialisation that revolve around the tension between parties and political leaders. The *executive face* suggests that heads of the executive in parliamentary systems nowadays enjoy more formal powers in the form of a strongly personalised mandate which grants them significant political clout such as the power to shape ministerial careers. The *party face* involves a shift in intra-party influence to the advantage of party leaders, evident in increasing leadership autonomy and the tendency towards accumulating power resources in the hands of the leader. As regards the *electoral face*, leaders rather than parties dominate during election campaigns and media coverage of politics is now more strongly focused on individuals and leaders in turn have become highly visible shortcuts, evident in a growing significance of leader effects on vote choice (Garzia, 2013b). All three faces of presidentialisation thus point to a reallocation of political power and autonomy to the advantage of party leaders accompanied by a loss of power of political parties. As a result, vote choice in parliamentary systems has arguably become much more personalised, based on prime ministerial considerations rather than policy platforms or ideological concerns considering that leaders assume "their positions by virtue of a personalized mandate, rather than because of a support base within the party" (McAllister, 2007, p. 11). A personalisation of politics has altered the *presentation* of politics but whether a shift in focus on party leaders has resulted in their having an *impact* on the vote in parliamentary systems has been subject to much academic debate (Bartle, 2003, 2005; Bartle & Crewe, 2002; Crewe & King, 1994; Mughan, 1993; Stewart & Clarke, 1992). This often revolves around the electoral face in the UK without investigating further institutional constraints such as the strategic incentives of electoral

systems whereby ballot structure, vote pooling and the type of vote cast have consequences on how election campaigns are conducted and the extent to which vote choice can be considered a personalised (i.e. presidentialised) one. In other words, identifying electoral systems that create incentives to base voting decisions on individual rather than collective considerations is important and has so far not been addressed in the literature on the presidentialisation thesis. This paper seeks to fill this gap by moving beyond majoritarian systems and identifying additional PR list systems where vote choice resembles that of a presidential one.

2.4. Personalised vote choice under different electoral rules: observable implications

The presidentialisation thesis and the concept of a personalisation of politics share the view that vote choice in parliamentary systems has become more personalised where leaders have assumed a more important role at the expense of parties and ideological considerations. However, vote choice in parliamentary systems is strictly speaking not structured around prime ministerial considerations but rather based on what party (or coalition) will form the next government because voters do not directly cast a vote for the head of the executive.[6] The central belief that vote choice is nowadays more firmly associated with leader rather than party preferences is highly contingent on additional institutional factors that have received very little attention in the debate surrounding the presidentialisation thesis. In fact, much of the controversy revolves around a comparison between the UK and the US and how vote choice in the former has become more akin to that in the latter (Heffernan & Webb, 2007; Mughan, 1993, 1995, 2000). If the presidentialisation thesis was correct, then elections held under majoritarian systems should display higher levels of leader-centred voting considering that vote choice is most similar to that in presidential systems. Here, only the two largest parties have real prospects of winning a simple majority support from

[6] For a critique on this point of the presidentialisation thesis, see Dowding (2013a, 2013c).

the electorate (Duverger, 1964), and under these circumstances, voters are faced with a simple either/or choice and so voters choose parties on the basis of what they think of potential candidates for the prime ministerial post rather than considering the merits and policy platforms of their respective parties (Bean & Mughan, 1989; Clarke, Sanders, Stewart, & Whiteley, 1979; Graetz & McAllister, 1987; Lijphart, 1999; Mughan, 2000; Stewart & Clarke, 1992). Intense media focus on party leaders, their personalities and political conduct and the party's increasing projection of their policies through leaders further exacerbates such a trend.

But a personalisation of politics has affected parliamentary systems across Western Europe and beyond and is not confined to those using majoritarian electoral rules and yet, much of the literature on party leader effects deals with alternative prime ministerial candidates where voters are asked to make a simple either/or decision. In those cases, much depends on the question of whether one leader is *liked more than the other* (Marsh, 2008). The question essentially revolves around who voters think will make the best Prime Minister. The answer to this is however much more complex under rules of proportional representation (PR). In multi-party systems, leader considerations become much more complicated because there are usually more than two to take into account but it still comes down to the question of who is most favoured and by how much. Televised leadership debates are still between contenders for the prime ministerial post so one would expect party leaders to feature just as heavily in media coverage of election campaigns. Therefore, leaders might just be as important in countries where a PR system is in place because the choice is often among more than two rival parties so voters fall back on their respective leaders when choosing whom to vote for.[7]

The argument that elections in PR systems are more about post-electoral coalition bargaining, and thus voters would have fewer incentives to vote on the basis of who will be the next head of the executive, can be challenged on the

[7] If parliamentary elections are indeed about a choice of who will become Prime Minister, it is quite surprising that in recent elections, more and more voters have decided to give their vote to smaller parties (e.g. the UK, Germany) or independent candidates (e.g. Ireland).

grounds that not all PR systems are the same and that some types encourage more leader-centred voting than others. Therefore, the crude distinction between majoritarian and PR systems is not satisfactory given the large range of variation among the latter. For instance, PR systems can be further divided into open, closed and flexible list systems, and it is reasonable to expect leader-centred voting to vary with the type of list system in place. In general, seat allocation formulas shape individual candidates' incentives to campaign on a personal rather than a partisan reputation. Not only are electoral formulas responsible for allocating seats to parties but equally important is the fact that they allocate seats to candidates *within* parties (Sartori & Mair, 1976; Taagepera & Shugart, 1989). In other words, the extent to which a list system allows for intra-party competition is expected to influence how much vote choice emulates that of a presidential one in parliamentary systems. Generally speaking, electoral systems offer strategic incentives for parties, leaders as well as the electorate where the ballot structure is likely to affect their behaviour and calculated decision-making. Ballot papers are distinguished along the lines of how voters get to cast their vote: are they given a single choice (categorical ballot paper) or are they for instance allowed to rank candidates in order of their preferences (ordinal ballot paper). The type of ballot structure has important consequences not only for how candidates behave as representatives but also how they structure their campaign tactics at election time (Rae, 1971). In the case of open- or flexible list systems, intra-party competition is expected to be much higher considering that candidates from the *same* party have to compete against each other in their effort to attract electoral support. Therefore, personal vote seeking incentives are much stronger in open- or flexible list systems where candidates are expected to invest considerable time and effort in promoting their candidacy at the local level rather than campaigning on a more leader-centred platform at the national level (Grofman, 2005; Shugart, Valdini, & Suominen, 2005; Valdini, 2006).[8] Closed-list systems, however, provide an either/or choice similar to that found in majoritarian systems. Whereas

[8] Note though that intra-party competition is still taking place when candidates seek to gain access to the ballot paper. They will have to convince party elites to be included on the list, which is beyond the control of voters in closed-list systems where top-level party officials are involved in deciding the order of names to be included.

incentives to cultivate a personal vote are much higher among open-list systems, a party's campaign strategies in closed-list systems is likely to be much more focused on conveying information at the national level rather than fostering individual ties with voters at the district level. In absence of intra-party competition, campaign strategies are geared towards persuading voters to support a party list rather than individual candidates and in today's highly personalised campaign environment, concerted efforts are made to convey that information via party leaders at the national level. Three variables decrease incentives to cultivate a personal vote and as a result, election campaigning is primarily focused on the new face of the party, i.e. the party leader: *leadership control* over access to and order on ballot papers, *absence of vote pooling* and *presence of casting a single vote*. In their seminal paper, Carey and Shugart (1995) provide a rank ordering of electoral formulas based on these variables. Personal vote-seeking incentives are arguably at their lowest when (a) leaders are in control of the nomination process, determine the list order and present a fixed, i.e. closed list, that voters may not disturb, (b) vote pooling occurs across the entire party and (c) voters cast a single vote for a (closed) party list. They also contend that as district magnitude in closed-list systems increases, the value of campaigning on a personal vote decreases.[9] If these conditions are satisfied, vote choice is perhaps most similar to that in majoritarian systems where voters also face a simple either/or choice and have no influence on the candidate running in that district (fixed ballot), a vote for a candidate equals a vote for that candidate's party (cross-party pooling) and voters simply cast a single ballot (single choice). If the presidentialisation thesis is correct in arguing that party leaders have accumulated greater decision-making powers and assumed more leadership autonomy within the executive, then this should be reflected not only in a more leader-centred vote choice in parliamentary elections held under majoritarian rules such as the UK, Australia, Canada or

[9] Carey and Shugart's (1995) paper has been criticised on several accounts, for instance for placing PR-STV systems as relatively low on the continuum of electoral system classifications. Grofman (2005) also notes that *E*, the size of the legislator's electoral constituency, should replace their measure of district magnitude. Those challenges to their rank ordering of electoral systems however does not affect the argument put forward here as this paper is only interested in closed-list systems where personal vote-seeking incentives are at their lowest, regardless of how open-list systems are classified in terms of their vote-seeking motives.

New Zealand (pre-1996), but also in countries that employ closed-list PR systems such as the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Spain. Majoritarian and closed-list PR systems are similar in the sense that voters are confronted with a simple either/or choice, and it is under such conditions that leadership effects are assumed to be at their greatest considering that there are very little incentives for individual candidates to cultivate a personal vote at constituency level and campaigning is concentrated at the national level (Bowler & Farrell, 1992; McAllister, 1996; Swanson & Mancini, 1996; Wattenberg, 1991). Put simply, when given a simple either/or choice, electoral campaigning is much more leader-centred as party leaders take on the dual role of being the message and the messenger (Clark, 2012; McAllister, 1996, 2007; McLean, 2008; Ohr, 2011). Electoral campaigning is much more centralised at the national level where parties convey political messages via party leaders who will then take on the task of promoting and defending the party's policy proposals, for instance in televised leadership debates (Hellweg, Pfau, & Brydon, 1992; LeDuc, Niemi, & Norris, 1996; Pfau & Rang, 1991). And this should apply to majoritarian and closed-list PR systems alike because in both cases, voters are left with a simple either/or choice in which case they are more likely to take into account leader rather than party evaluations according to the presidentialisation thesis (Foley, 1993, 2000; Poguntke & Webb, 2005).

The argument that elections held under majoritarian rule can in many respects resemble that of presidential contests lies at the heart of the presidentialisation thesis. Having extended such an argument to other electoral systems where vote choice is akin to that in majoritarian ones, there is one final perspective to be considered. So far, it has been assumed that leader evaluations in such systems matter regardless of party size. But it may well be the character of the competition, rather than the type of electoral system, that determines the importance of leader assessments (Curtice & Blais, 2001). In fact, Curtice (2003) argues that vote choice is more firmly structured for bigger parties and hence leadership effects are more closely linked to the vote for such parties, and this should hold regardless of the type of electoral system. Where two (large) parties dominate an election campaign, vying for electoral support and campaigning on a personalised rather than policy-focused platform with

elections ultimately being a choice between two major parties, then leaders will matter *regardless of the electoral system in place.* Leaders of large parties generally receive more media attention as they are more likely to provide the next head of the executive but this should hold in PR and majoritarian systems alike, and despite the type of list system in use. Conversely, leaders of minor parties have a much smaller chance of assuming the role of head of the executive and therefore voters might consider qualities of leaders of big parties to be more important than those of smaller ones. Indeed, leaders of smaller parties may find it more difficult to translate personal popularity into votes considering that they often stand small chances of winning a significant vote share and voters in return have fewer incentives to vote for such parties (Curtice, 2003; Marsh, 2008).

This paper sets out to assess the widely held belief that electoral choice under majoritarian rules is most susceptible to leadership-based voting. Such systems encourage the dominance of electoral representation by the two largest parties and in absence of coalition bargaining, the question is one of who will hold executive office, and more importantly who will assume the top position, i.e. that of the Prime Minister. However, the argument that leaders matter more where voters only have a single vote to cast not only applies to majoritarian systems but also to closed-list PR systems where voters are also faced with a simple either/or choice.[10] A second perspective which argues that leaders matter more for larger parties and that this should hold regardless of the electoral system in place will also be considered. Finally, partisanship has lost its importance in organising political information and structuring political choices and so voters with weak partisan loyalties should more strongly focus on leader considerations.

[10] Note also that in mixed-member systems where voters have a second vote to cast (e.g. Germany), the existence of a party/leader trade-off is doubtful because voters indulge in both preferences and strategic considerations (e.g. split-ticket voting) are much more likely to occur. I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out on an earlier draft of this paper.

2.5. Support for and against the presidentialisation thesis

The literature on leadership effects has thus far produced little comparative work as focus is often on single-country studies that lend themselves readily to the analysis of party leaders *vis-à-vis* their parties (e.g. the UK). Moreover, there are methodological issues in comparative electoral studies regarding the isolation of the respective importance of party and leader evaluations where analyses of their effects are often assessed using multivariate regressions, thereby disregarding any temporal and thus causal ordering between variables. A typical solution to such causal complexity is to use panel data in the hope of separating cause from effect. However, relevant panel data are not easily available for the required time period and party leaders are often quickly replaced if the party becomes dissatisfied with their performance. And studies that have taken such an approach have produced mixed empirical findings (Garzia & De Angelis, 2011; Harrison & Marsh, 1994; Jenssen & Aalberg, 2006; Midtbø, 1997). Some scholars find fault with the theoretical framework on which the presidentialisation thesis is based, arguing for a more nuanced analytical account (Hermansson & Persson, 2014) or discarding their concept of a presidentialisation of parliamentary systems altogether (Dowding, 2013a, 2013b; Heffernan, 2013). Moreover, Karvonen (2010) does not agree with Poguntke and Webb's concluding remarks that "this review suggests that the overwhelming evidence lies in favour of the presidentialization thesis" (2005, p. 346). He further states that their approach lacks systematic evidence and is not comparable in scope, focus or time. Using data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Studies, Curtice and his co-authors most vocally reject claims made by the presidentialisation, for instance arguing that even in two-party systems, electoral effects of party leaders are modest at best (Curtice & Holmberg, 2005). They do find that leader effects are more strongly linked to vote choice for the two largest parties but this is explained by the fact that vote choice for such parties is more firmly structured (Curtice & Blais, 2001). Moreover, he contends that in parliamentary systems, vote choice is still firmly structured around collective party merits rather than individual party leaders (Curtice, 2003). A lack of support for the presidentialisation thesis is in large part due to its failure to consider a leader's ability in parliamentary systems to shape the

policy and influence the appeal of the parties that they represent (Curtice & Blais, 2001). However, a small set of studies using a variety of methods argues for an important effect of party leaders, but not necessarily framing their argument within the context of a presidentialisation of parliamentary systems (Bean, 1993; Evans & Andersen, 2005; Jenssen & Aalberg, 2006; Lobo, 2006; Mughan, 2009, 2012; Stewart & Clarke, 1992). In fact, apart from the collection of papers in Poguntke and Webb's book (2005), there appears to be rather little empirical evidence that would further support their claim of parliamentary systems having become more presidentialised.

This paper seeks to contribute to this contentious literature in several ways. First of all, it will test the assumption that in countries where there is only one parliamentary vote to be cast and only a single choice available (i.e. single-member districts and closed-list systems), vote choice revolves around leader rather than party considerations. Secondly, it will investigate whether this varies for voters with different degrees of partisan loyalties, considering that weak identifiers in absence of strong partisan cues are arguably more susceptible to leadership-based voting. It will also entertain the proposition that leader evaluations matter more for bigger parties and whether this holds for elections held under both PR and majoritarian systems where voters are given a simple either/or choice.

Assessing the relative importance of party and leader evaluations is inherently difficult because of a possibly reciprocal causal relationship between the two and cross-sectional design studies have been inadequate to solving the issue. This paper proposes a novel solution to address this matter by taking advantage of the predictive power of party and leader evaluations most frequently asked in election studies. By and large, voters are expected to support the best party or the party of the best leader, which in most instances results in the same party choice. But what happens when the two are inconsistent? The presidentialisation thesis suggests that a leader's increasing autonomy, their centralised power resources and their increasing prominence during election campaigns has resulted in them being a distinguishable feature and thus voters

are expected to hold distinctly different views towards them. In other words, party and leader sympathies are no longer aligned which leads to the interesting question of whether people are more inclined to vote for a party if the party or the leader is most highly rated. If the former that would suggest that party mattered more; if the latter, it would suggest that the leader was the more important factor. This allows for the evaluation of an implicit assumption put forward by the presidentialisation thesis which postulates that voters inform themselves by reverting to party leaders as vital information shortcuts. Analysing such voting patterns between strong and weak party identifiers will shed additional light on the causal process thought to be partially responsible for the presidentialisation of parliamentary systems. This leads to the following research questions: *when sympathies towards parties and leaders are not aligned, do voters follow the party or the leader in parliamentary systems where vote choice emulates that of a presidential one? Furthermore, does this vary by the degree of partisan loyalties and to what extent does party size matter?*

2.6. Data sources and preliminary analysis

Four countries that employ majoritarian electoral systems (Australia, Canada, New Zealand (pre-1996) and the UK) and four countries that strictly use closed-list systems (Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Spain) are included in the empirical analysis for this paper. Data comes from individual country studies (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK) as well as from collaborative projects such as the European Voter project (Norway, Netherlands) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (Spain, Portugal), and in many instances spans across several election years.[11] These countries have also received considerable scholarly attention regarding leadership effects, albeit producing rather mixed findings (Aarts, 2001; Bean, 1993; Bean & Mughan, 1989; Garzia, 2011b; Gidengil et al., 2000; Holmberg & Oscarsson, 2011; Jenssen & Aalberg, 2006; Johnston, 2002; Lobo, 2006; Midtbø, 1997; Senior & van Onselen, 2008; D. Stevens, Karp, & Hodgson, 2011; Stewart & Clarke,

[11] For a full overview of all election years, see Table B1 in Appendix B.

1992). Before analysing patterns of voting behaviour as a result of inconsistent party and leader evaluations, it is an interesting exercise to explore survey questions on what respondents deem most important in deciding how to vote which may be regarded as an initial test to investigate what factor predominantly features in voters' decision-making and whether this varies by strength of partisan loyalties. Australian election studies consistently included the following question: "In deciding how you would vote in the election, which was most important to you?". And respondents were given a choice of four answers: party leaders, parties, issues[12] or candidates.

Figure 2.1: Importance of leaders, parties, candidates and issues to the vote

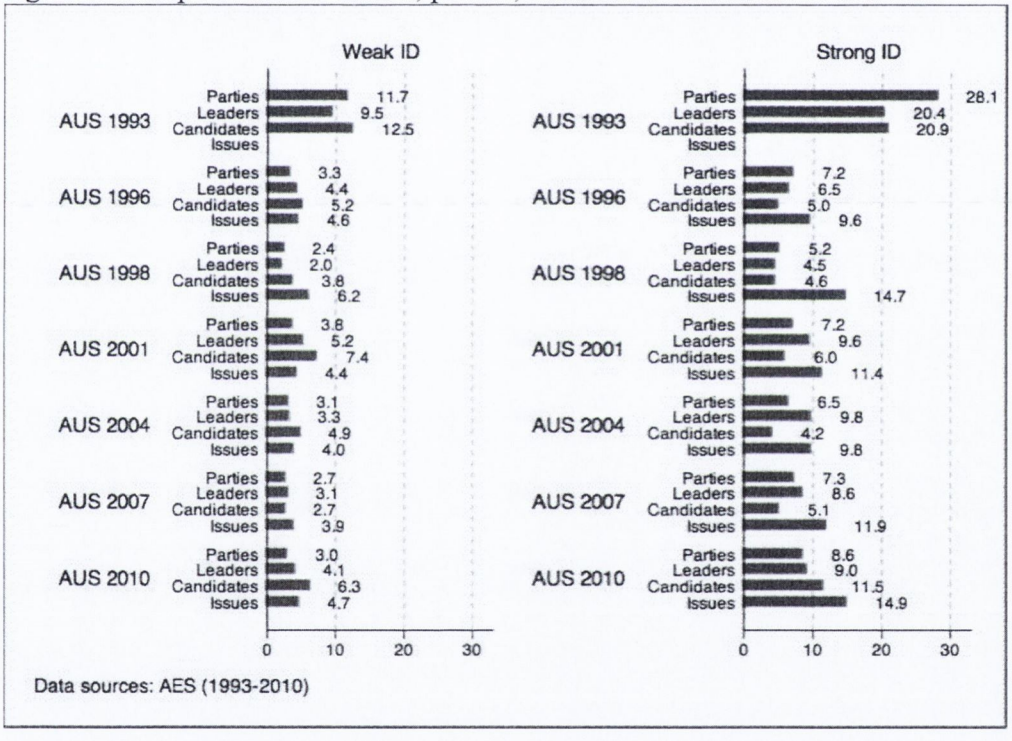


Figure 2.1 includes these four response categories and reports the relative importance (in percentages) of each, sorted by strength of party attachment for the seven most recent Australian elections. First of all, candidates and issues appear to be quite important for both strong and weak identifiers. Issues in particular seem to be more important to vote choice for strong identifiers in all

[12] Not asked in 1993.

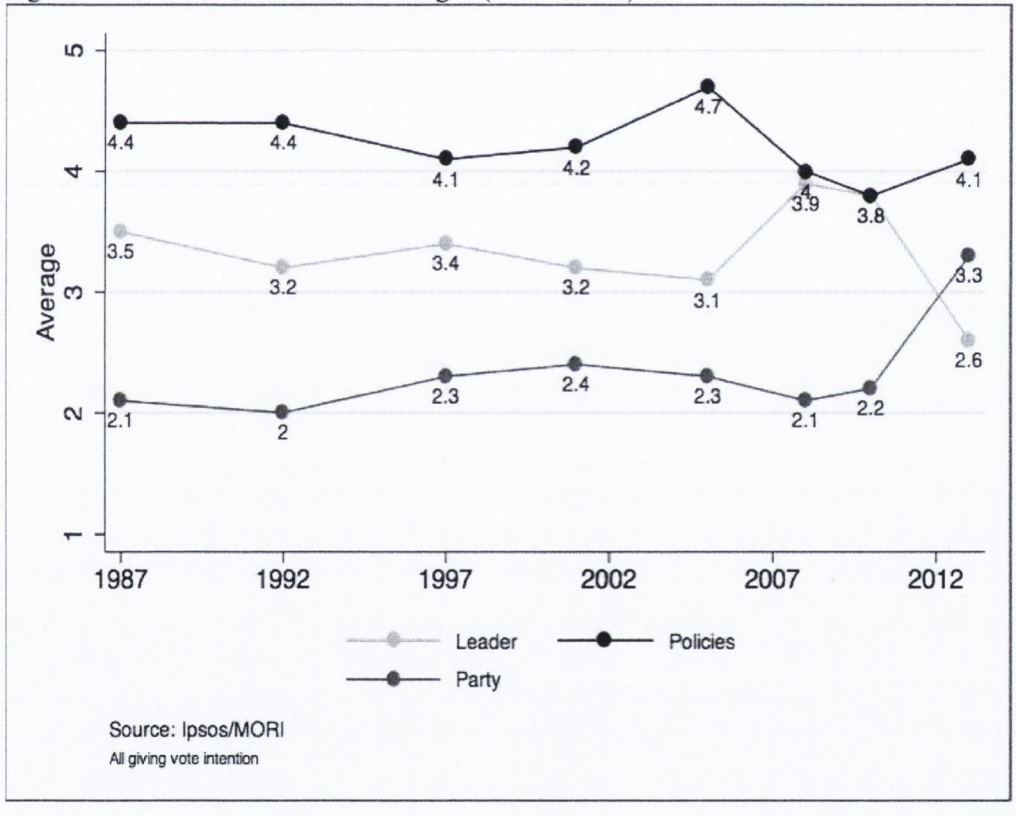
instances.[13] When concentrating only on parties and leaders, voters that do not think of themselves as very strong supporters of a political party consider leaders to be most important except in 1993 and 1998. As regards strong identifiers, parties were the more dominant factor up until 2001 whereas the three most recent elections saw leaders as the more predominant reason in deciding how to vote. Note though that in most instances, differences are rather small. It is interesting to note that when comparing the importance of leaders across strengths of partisan loyalties, strong identifiers consistently deem leaders more important for their decision of how to vote when compared to weak identifiers. One would expect that parties should matter more for strong identifiers but in a highly personalised campaign environment, leaders are seen as both the message and the messenger, conveying crucial information to the electorate and in some sense act as a perceptual screen (Macdonald, Rabinowitz, & Listhaug, 1998; Merrill, Grofman, & Adams, 2001). Besides, issues are still the most important factor, even for strong identifiers, so maybe they learn about the issues (i.e. message) from party leaders (i.e. messenger). Additional support for this explanation stems from the concept of projection effects which suggests that strong identifiers view party leaders as the embodiment of the party that they represent. In other words, strong identifiers simply view their political surroundings through a partisan lens and political choices are strongly coloured by how voters view the party overall. As a result, a voter with strong partisan loyalties will perceive that party's leader as more likeable, and possibly more important to vote choice because of their intense media presence. Overall, this data indicates a rising importance of party leaders in the last two decades of Australian elections when deciding whom to vote for and this holds for both strong and weak identifiers.

Recent research by Ipsos/MORI in the UK has found that responses to this Political Triangle question for the first time in 2010 saw the importance of leaders on an even par with that of policies. Figure 2.2 summarises information on the Political Triangle question which asks voters to think about what it is

[13] The consistently high importance attached to issues may also point to the fact that the electoral context should also be taken into consideration, as Anderson and Brettschneider (2003) have pointed out.

that most attracts them to a given party (mean scores across three main parties are shown). Overall, there appears to be some trendless fluctuations with interesting changes after the 2001 general election. More specifically, policies appear to have dominated up until the 2005 election which saw a peak at 4.7%, possibly explained by the issue of the Iraq war at the time. Although 2010 saw policies and leaders attract voters to a given party to the same degree (3.8%), most recent figures (December 2013) show that a party's policies (4.1%) and its image as a whole (3.3%) were deemed most important while those seeing leaders as most important dropped to 2.6%.

Figure 2.2: The UK Political Triangle (1987-2013)



But this is hardly strong evidence in support of the presidentialisation thesis, given that this is only data on two countries. In fact, the main problem is twofold. Directly asking voters the research question of whether they deem parties or leaders more important for their vote choice obviously results in a rather subjective reporting as regards motivations of how voters will decide in an election. And secondly, it is far from obvious that vote choice is quite as self-conscious as this question implies. How/whether such a decision ultimately

translates into vote choice needs to be explored further and requires data that is more indirect. Most election surveys nowadays invite respondents to rate each party and leader in terms of overall sympathies towards them. The problem of reciprocal causation makes it difficult to assess the relative predictive power of party and leader evaluations as it remains uncertain whether voters support a party because they like the party or whether they opt for a party because they like its leader. One typical solution to such complexity is to use panel data in the hope of separating cause from effect. However, such data are not available for the countries covered here. A significant advantage of a novel approach is that it does not require panel data but instead relies on simple cross-sectional post-election survey data. All election studies (43 in total) provide information on party and leader evaluations, asking respondents how they feel about them, usually on a scale from zero to ten. Of course, such assessments are expected to be highly correlated, and indeed they are, but this correlation is silent on the causal process underlying the association: which precedes which. One way to assess which direction receives greater empirical support is to look at what happens when party and leader sympathies are not aligned. Are people more inclined to vote for a party if the party or the leader is most highly rated?

2.6.1. Methodology: operationalisation and model assumptions

Respondents are invited to separately rate parties and leaders according to how much they like them, using either sympathy scales or thermometer ratings. Based on those ratings, rankings are constructed and then checked which one is ranked most highly. Voters for whom the party matters most are expected to vote for a party if they also deem that party best. Conversely, voters who consider the leader to be more important would vote for a party if the leader were ranked most highly. In most instances, party and leader rankings point to the same party as the obvious option. However, when party and leader evaluations coincide, the relative importance of each remains uncertain – that is, whether party evaluations influence those of leaders or the other way around. Note that this is also the case when neither is rated most highly. But what happens when ratings between party and leader evaluations *diverge*? If the presidentialisation thesis was correct in arguing that leaders have become more

important in deciding whom to vote for, voters should follow the leader. Conversely, if parties are still the dominant driving force behind vote choice, then voters should follow the party. The basic idea behind this is to use those cases where sympathies towards the two are not aligned to determine the separate influence of each. Table 2.1 summarises these four possible alternatives.

Table 2.1: Party and leader evaluations: four possible combinations

	Not best leader	*Best leader*
Not best party	No reason to support party (A)	Support for party not because of party: leader-centred voter (B)
Best party	Support for party because of party: party-centred voter (C)	Every reason to support party (D)

The measures used here are simple ones and are based on a similar analysis conducted by Marsh (2008). Eleven point sympathy scales ranging from 'strongly dislike' to 'strongly like' at the minimum of (0) and maximum (10) scale points respectively are used to measure party and leader evaluations.[14] First, variables for maximum leader liking scores are created for each respondent on the basis of like-dislike scales. This provides the basis for comparison between party and leader evaluations. In other words, we need to establish how highly each leader is rated, i.e. what score they have been given on a zero to ten scale. This procedure creates a single *TopLeader* variable that contains the maximum score out of all leaders included in a given election year. In a second step, we need to establish *which one* is rated most highly. This variable is equal to 1 if a leader's rating is the highest among all according to the *TopLeader* variable. This yields as many *WhichLeader* dummy variables as there are leaders to be rated where 1 means that leader was rated highest and 0 otherwise. Finally, the number of ties where more than one leader is rated most highly needs to be calculated: some respondents rated more than one leader at the same point on the scale, and rated no other leader more highly. This is done by summing all *WhichLeader* scores where a score of 1 means that there were no ties recorded (only one leader rated top). The same calculations are done for

[14] Thermometer scales (0-100) as used in Norway have been rescaled to correspond to the 0-10 sympathy scales.

party evaluations. Vote choice is understood as that between a number of alternative electoral options, and may be seen as a series of binary variables, taking on a value of one where voters supported a party and zero otherwise. When prompted to indicate their strength of partisan loyalties, those reporting a 'strong' or 'fairly strong' attachment were coded as one, and those saying they did not think of themselves as close to a political party were coded as zero. Respondents who did not cast a ballot are excluded from the analysis. The data is then stacked by party. This means instead of the respondent being the unit of analysis, it is the respondent/party combination that is the unit. This way, vote choice can be more easily modelled as a consequence of party (and in the case of partisan loyalties, voter) characteristics. As shown in Table 2.1, the dataset thus obtained allows for an interesting investigation into the voting patterns of those who voted for a party when neither party nor their leader was rated best; who did so when the leader was rated best, but not that leader's party (leader-centred voter); who did so when that leader was not rated best but the party of that leader was deemed the best one, (party-centred voter); and who did so when both party and leader are considered best.

There are some implicit assumptions underpinning the empirical analysis. First, it is assumed that there are only two variables that are different in the off diagonal, namely those of party and leader evaluations. All else is considered equal. Second, and most important, results from the off diagonal cells can be used to make predictions about those in the bottom right of Table 2.1 (Cell D). It also needs to be made clear that Table 2.1 is three-dimensional and thus percentages across the four cells will not add up to a hundred percent. The conversion of rating scales into ordinal rankings to test the effects of inconsistent evaluations may be open to discussion. However, it is reasonable to suggest that the logic of vote choice is simply to settle on the most preferred choice (i.e. the one that is most highly ranked), especially in absence of strategic considerations such as split-ticket voting or the order of preferences as focus is on countries where voters only have a single vote to cast and so it would be reasonable to assume that voters will opt for the most highly ranked party or leader. According to the presidentialisation thesis, voters nowadays choose parties with prime ministerial considerations in mind and so the

question comes down to who will be the best (i.e. the most highly ranked) Prime Minister. Finally, calculating distance functions to measure the relative effect for parties as opposed to leaders would not quite capture the intrinsic *choice* that voters are confronted with. Distance measures cannot summarise a single choice scenario where voters have to pick the best one.[15] This is also the key reason for stacking the data by party vote so choice can be modelled as choosing the most preferred option.

2.7. Results

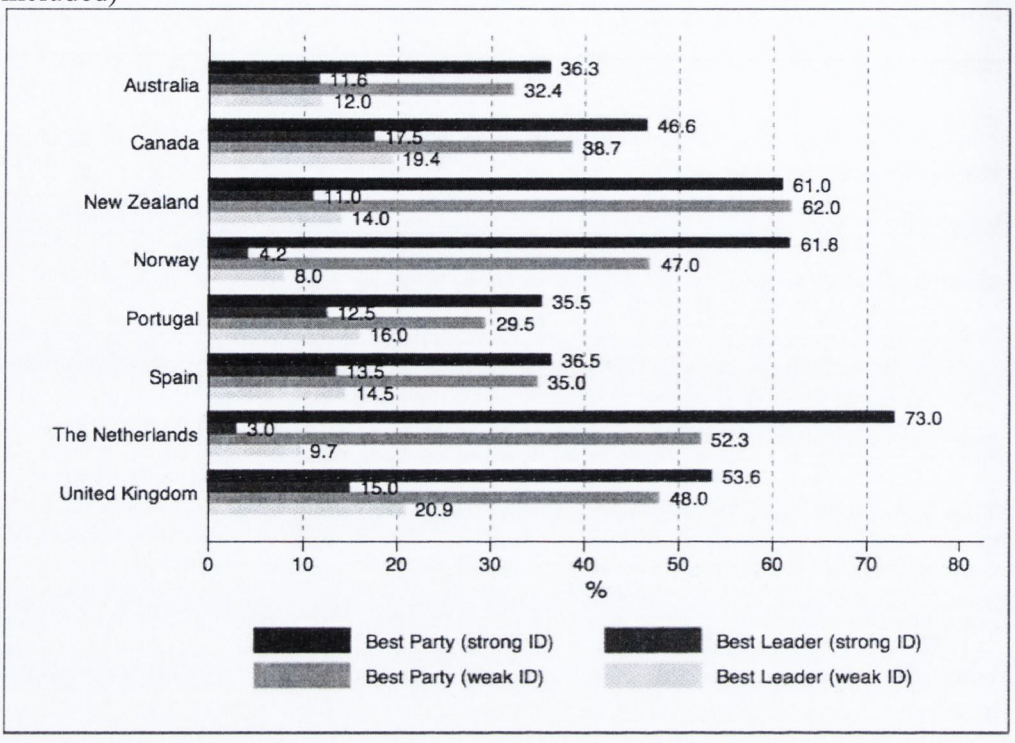
The following will present results in the form of graphs where each bar corresponds to the percentage of voters choosing a party when the best leader does not come from the best party (Table 2.1, Cell B, leader-driven voter) and when the leader's party is best, but not that leader (Table 2.1, Cell C, party-driven voter).[16] The analysis is done separately for strong and weak identifiers. Figure 2.3 graphically displays the impact on voting for a party when party and leader evaluations do not coincide. In other words, are voters more likely to follow the party or the leader when sympathies towards them are not aligned? Thus, percentages of voters following the party and the leader are shown. Graphs will be analysed in two ways. Firstly, by comparing best party and best leader percentages and secondly, by investigating whether this varies between strong and weak identifiers. Results have been aggregated from individual election results for each country. Graphing results by separate election years does not substantially change those findings and full results can be found in Table B1 in Appendix B.

---

[15] I would like to thank anonymous reviewers for providing valuable comments and feedback on an earlier draft of this paper.

[16] Percentages corresponding to Cells A and D, Table 2.1, are not shown here because they are as expected quite small in the former (between one and three percent) and substantially larger in the latter case (well beyond 80% in most instances).

Figure 2.3: Impact on voting for party when evaluations are not aligned (ties included)



Examining voters with strong partisan affiliations first, the top two bars for each country coloured in black and dark-grey correspond to voters choosing a party when the best party does not have the best leader (black) and when the party with the best leader is not the best party (dark-grey), respectively. The most striking feature is that the percentage of those following the party is about three times higher than those following the leader in Australia ($t(6) = 8.54$, $p = 0.000$), Canada ($t(11) = 10.74$, $p = 0.00$), Portugal ($t(1) = 7.66$, $p = 0.08$) and Spain ($t(1) = 7.66$, $p = 0.08$) and to a lesser extent in the UK ($t(9) = 7.87$, $p = 0.000$). Three out of five of these countries (Australia, Canada and the UK) also employ majoritarian electoral systems and the presidentialisation thesis contends that elections revolve around a choice between alternative governments and so prime ministerial considerations should feature more strongly in the decision-making process of the electorate. Moreover, most of those countries have incorporated televised leadership debates as an integral part of their election campaigns and so party leaders are arguably more visible. However, results shown in Figure 2.3 clearly do not support the argument of a presidentialisation of vote choice in systems where voting most closely

resembles that of presidential systems because in all instances, more voters are following the party rather than the leader, and so party rather than leader considerations clearly dominate how voters choose when sympathies towards them two are not aligned. More specifically, empirical evidence would suggest that leadership-based voting is not more important than party-based voting and so the expectation that presidentialisation can be observed at the electoral level in parliamentary systems is not supported.

Regarding the Netherlands ($t(2) = 8.407$, $p = 0.01$), New Zealand ($t(1) = 50.00$, $p = 0.01$) and Norway ($t(4) = 15.36$, $p = 0.00$), the difference between those following the party and those following the leader is substantially larger. While New Zealand appears to be somewhat of an outlier here, the lower percentages of voters voting for the best leader rather than the best party in Norway and the Netherlands might be partially due to a higher effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) in those systems. ENEP is a measure to count the number of parties in a political system and to weigh that count by their relative strength, i.e. by a party's vote share.[17] Used to gauge a party system's level of fragmentation, it is also of particular use here because a higher effective number of parties at the electoral level might explain why Norway and the Netherlands show a more party-centred voting pattern. Taking the average ENEP across elections years for the two countries yields an ENEP of 4.40 and 4.88, respectively (Gallagher, 2014; Gallagher & Mitchell, 2005). By comparison, the average ENEP for Australia and Canada, for instance, is considerably lower at 3.29 and 3.47, respectively.

[17] The relative strength may also refer to a party's strength in terms of their vote share in parliament. The measure is then referred to as the effective number of *parliamentary* parties (ENPP).

Table 2.2: Effective number of electoral parties and type of electoral system

Country	*Effective number of electoral parties (ENEP)*	*Type of electoral system*
Australia	3.29	Majoritarian
Canada	3.47	Majoritarian
Netherlands	4.88	Closed-list PR
New Zealand	3.14	Majoritarian (pre-1996)
Norway	4.40	Closed-list PR
Portugal	3.43	Closed-list PR
Spain	3.17	Closed-list PR
UK	3.04	Majoritarian

Notes: average ENEP across election years shown; calculated from (Gallagher, 2014).

It might be the case then that the number of effective parties and by extension the number of party leaders largely affects whether voters choose parties on the basis of party or leader considerations. Put differently, the more parties there are on the electoral menu, the more difficult it gets for voters to become sufficiently primed by and informed on all of them during election campaigns. Moreover, consensus politics often prevails in these countries and to reach a political compromise requires the inclusion of as broad a range of policy perspectives as possible (Lijphart, 1975, 1999; Torgersen, 1962). As a result, campaigning in a consensual electoral context is perhaps generally more focused on alternative policy options and post-election coalition formation rather than on individual personalities and prime ministerial considerations (Curtice & Hunjan, 2006; Lijphart, 1999).

The bottom two bars for each country highlighted in grey and light-grey relate to voters with weak partisan affiliations. In other words, they correspond to weak partisan voters who followed the party (grey) and the leader (light-grey), respectively. The picture regarding party- and leader-driven voters is similar. Voters in Australia ($t(6) = 9.06$, $p = 0.00$), Canada ($t(11) = 6.39$, $p = 0.00$), Spain ($t(1) = 13.67$, $p = 0.04$), Portugal ($t(1) = 5.40$, $p = 0.12$) and the UK ($t(9) = 6.30$, $p = 0.00$) follow the party about three times more often than they follow the leader whereas New Zealand ($t(1) = 12.00$, $p = 0.05$), Norway ($t(4) = 10.24$, $p = 0.00$) and the Netherlands ($t(2) = 7.34$, $p = 0.01$) display greater differences in the percentage of voters for the two cohorts. But there is something else that deserves further attention. In six out of eight countries with New Zealand and

Spain being small outliers, the percentage of voters thinking the best party does not have the best leader has *dropped* whereas as the percentage of those thinking that the party with the best leader is not the best party has *increased*. On average, the percentage of the former has dropped by about eight percent whereas the latter has increased by about four percent. This would support evidence found by Curtice and Hunjan (2006) who suggests that leader effects are more prominent where the electorate is dealigned, that is where relatively few voters exhibit strong partisan affiliations. Yet, the most obvious conclusion to be drawn from Figure 2.3 is that for all countries and election years, regardless of the degree of partisan loyalties or the type of electoral system in place, a higher percentage of voters opts for a party when the party does not have the best leader and fewer choose a party when the best leader does not come from the best party. Put simply, when party and leader evaluations do not coincide, party trumps leader across countries as well as over time. This would challenge the argument proposed by the presidentialisation thesis that a shift of political authority from collective organisations to individual leaders has witnessed a rise in leader-centred voting in countries where vote choice resembles that of a presidential vote. In other words, the impact dimension of the presidentialisation thesis which concerns itself with the electoral effect of party leaders, and thus on the distribution of a party's vote share, is clearly not supported by empirical evidence presented here. However, one of the main driving forces of presidentialism, namely a decline in partisan loyalties, is found to reduce, but certainly not overwhelm, party effects when comparing voting patterns between strong and weak identifiers.

A different way of looking at the results is to take the difference between the percentage of voters who rate the party best but not its leader and the percentage of those who think the best leader does not come from the best party. In other words, percentages of Cell B are subtracted from those of Cell C from the off diagonal in Table 2.1 and results are then graphed. Viewed this way, the difference between party- and leader-driven voters emerges more clearly: larger differences suggest that substantially more voters opted for a party when the party was deemed best and differences are shown in descending order in Figure 2.4. The top bar for each country corresponds to the difference

between those that voted for a party when the party was rated top but not its leader and those that did so when the best leader did not come from the best party for strong identifiers. The biggest difference is found in The Netherlands ($t(2) = 5.13$, $p = 0.04$) suggesting that substantially more voters followed the party rather than the leader and thus supporting evidence found by Aarts (2001) and van der Pas, Vries, and Brug (2011) regarding the relative importance (and causal direction) between party and leader evaluations. The differences are somewhat smaller for Norway ($t(4) = 14.47$, $p = 0.00$) and New Zealand ($t(1) = 0.67$, $p=0.63$) but still above fifty percent in both cases. However, the difference between strong and weak identifiers fails to reach statistical significance at the 0.1 level in New Zealand. The lowest difference between voters following the party and those following the leader is found in Australia ($t(6) = 3.54$, $p = 0.01$) at around 25% of voters. In relation to voters that exhibit weak partisan attachments (lower bars), the gap between the two groups is much narrower. Whereas the mean difference across countries for strong identifiers is 37%, it is much smaller for weak identifiers at 26% ($t(43) = 8.15$, $p = 0.00$).

Figure 2.4: Mean differences

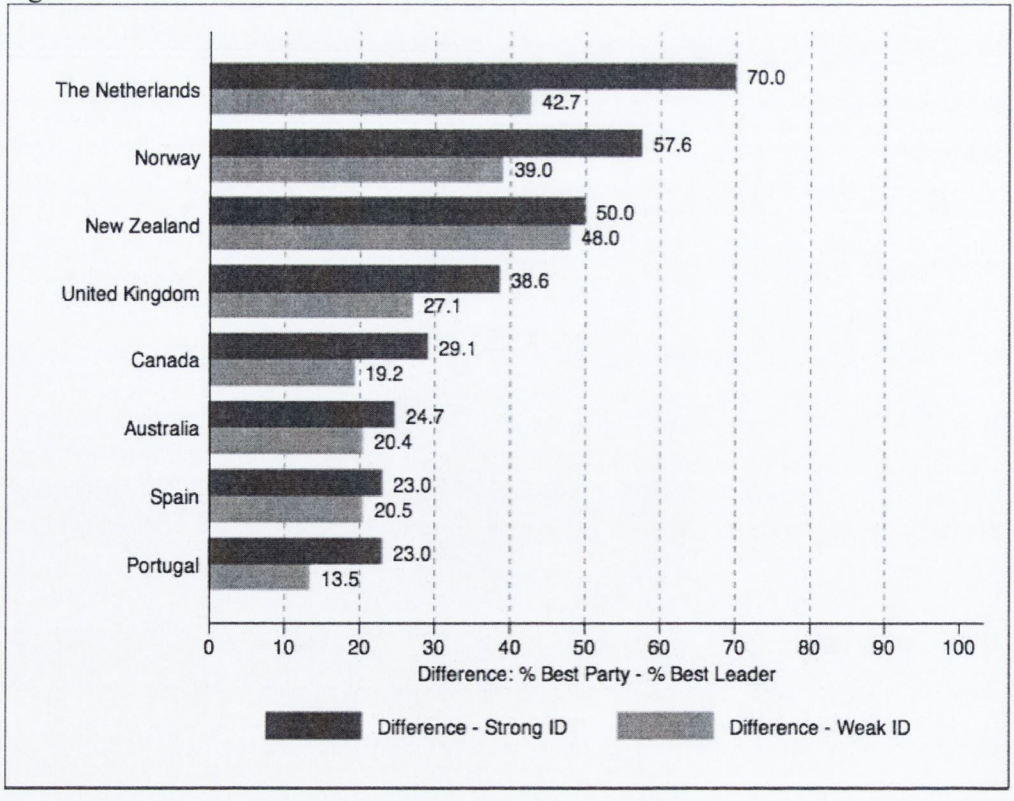
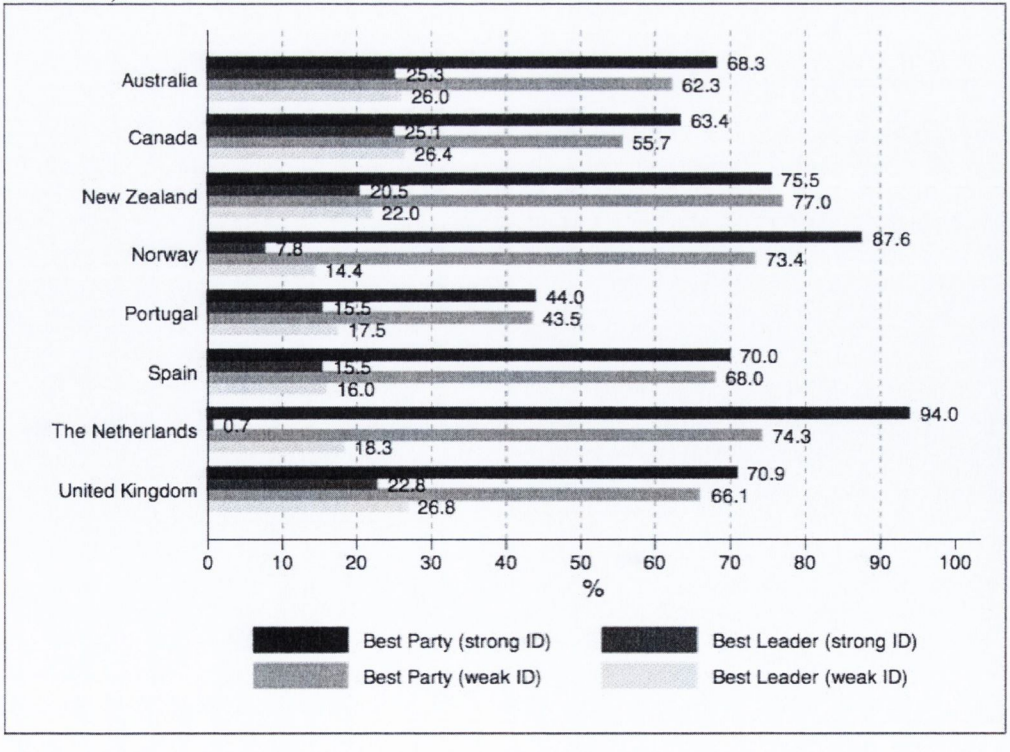


Figure 2.3 and 2.4 include cases where there are ties in party or leader ratings, which means that more than one party or leader was rated best. By restricting the analysis only to those cases where there are no ties, findings do not change and results when ties in leader and party evaluations are excluded are shown in Figure 2.5. Overall, mean differences across countries in the percentage of voters voting for a party when the party is deemed best compared to those opting for a party whose leader does not come from the best party are much more pronounced. In other words, when excluding ties, more voters are found to vote for a party when the party is deemed best but not its leader. Again, this applies to both strong and weak identifiers, although the difference in percentages for those voting for a party that has the best leader is much smaller when comparing the two groups. Overall, patterns are much more consistent across countries where on average almost three times as many voters vote for a party that is deemed best even though it does not also have the best leader when compared to those voting for a party with the best leader but is not considered the best party.

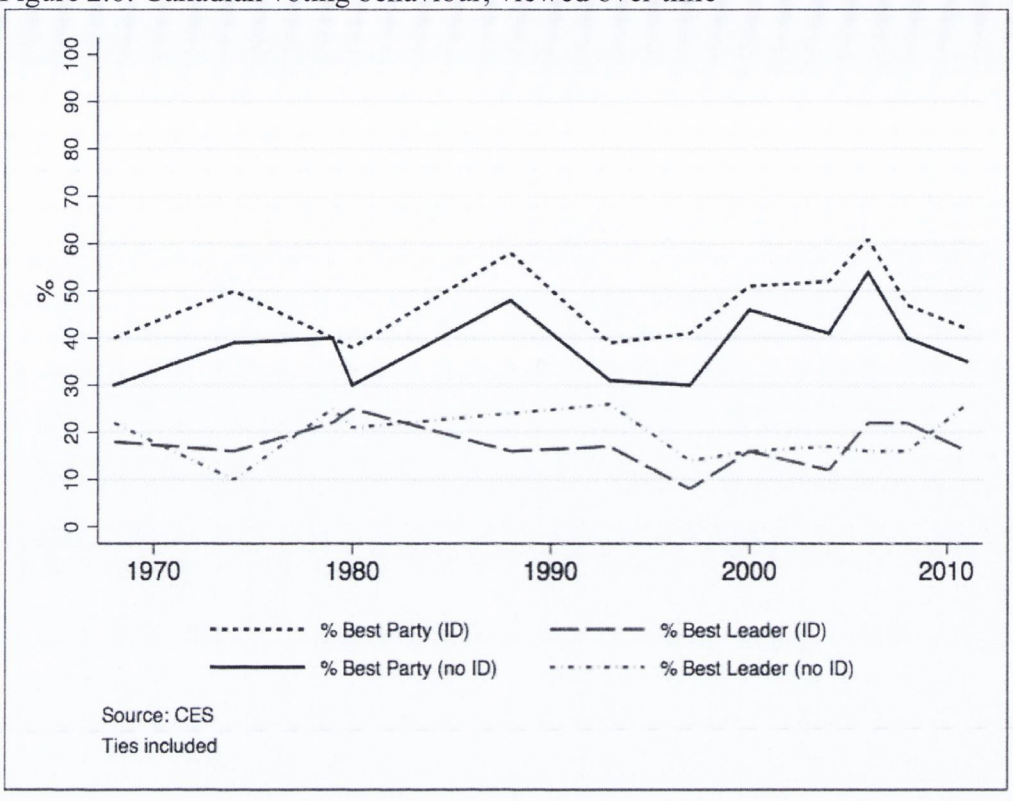
Figure 2.5: Impact on voting for party when evaluations are not aligned (ties excluded)



So far, several conclusions can be drawn from these graphs. Firstly, the difference between those voting for a party when the party is deemed best but not its leader and those opting for a party whose best leader does not come from the best party varies substantially across countries. And second, the gap is much larger for strong identifiers when compared to weak identifiers. Moreover, closed-list PR systems with moderate, or limited, multi-party systems such as Norway and the Netherlands show a higher percentage of party followers when compared to more traditional majoritarian systems such as Canada and Australia with a considerably lower number of effective electoral parties. It is also interesting to note that the differences between strong and weak identifiers are smallest in Spain and Portugal which would suggest that in younger democracies, the concept of party identification is not as well developed as in other parts of Western Europe where voters in stable, long-established party systems have had the chance to develop partisan ties over a more prolonged period of time. Klingemann and Wattenberg (1992) support such an assumption, arguing that in newer democracies, parties often build around charismatic leaders while Lisi (2013) further contends that having strong feelings towards party leaders increases the chances of developing partisan attachments in Spain and Portugal.

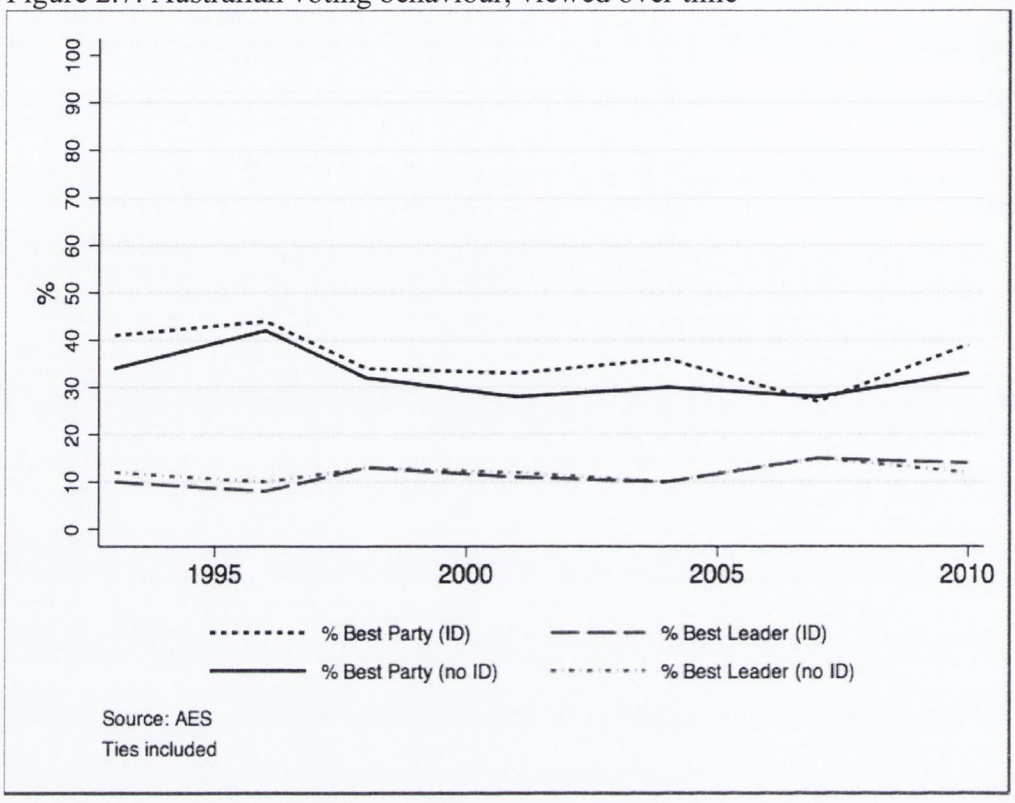
Describing the process whereby parliamentary systems are becoming presidential without changing their formal institutional structures as a 'presidentialisation' implies a gradual change over time. Survey data from Canadian and Australian elections provide sufficient data points to test for an increasingly personalised voting behaviour over time. The results from a total of twelve Canadian elections are shown in Figure 2.6. Rather than identifying an increasingly leader-follower pattern over time, there seem to be trendless fluctuations at best. Several scholars have emphasised the importance of the electoral context when it comes to assessing leadership effects (Anderson & Brettschneider, 2003; Ohr & Oscarsson, 2003) which might to some extent explain the peaks and falls over time. Again, the graph provides strong evidence against a presidentialisation of parliamentary systems because vote choice has not become increasingly personalised in Canadian elections (see also: Gidengil et al., 2000).

Figure 2.6: Canadian voting behaviour, viewed over time



The literature on a personalisation of politics is also well established in the context of Australian elections (Bean, 1993; Bean & Mughan, 1989; Denemark, Ward, & Bean, 2012; McAllister, 2013). Looking at voting patterns when sympathies towards parties and leaders are not aligned, there seems to be hardly any change at all when viewed over time and the difference between strong and weak identifiers is almost indiscernible. Vote choice has neither become more focused on party nor leader evaluations. Rather, the trend over the past two decades has remained remarkably stable in favour of partisan considerations, a fact that enjoys additional empirical support from McAllister (2013, p. 1) who argues "that party-related activities deliver more votes than personal ones" as well as from Senior and van Onselen (2008). Therefore, similar to the Canadian picture, voting behaviour does not seem to have gradually become more personalised but rather follows some trendless fluctuations that might be attributable to the electoral context and the issues at stake in a given election.

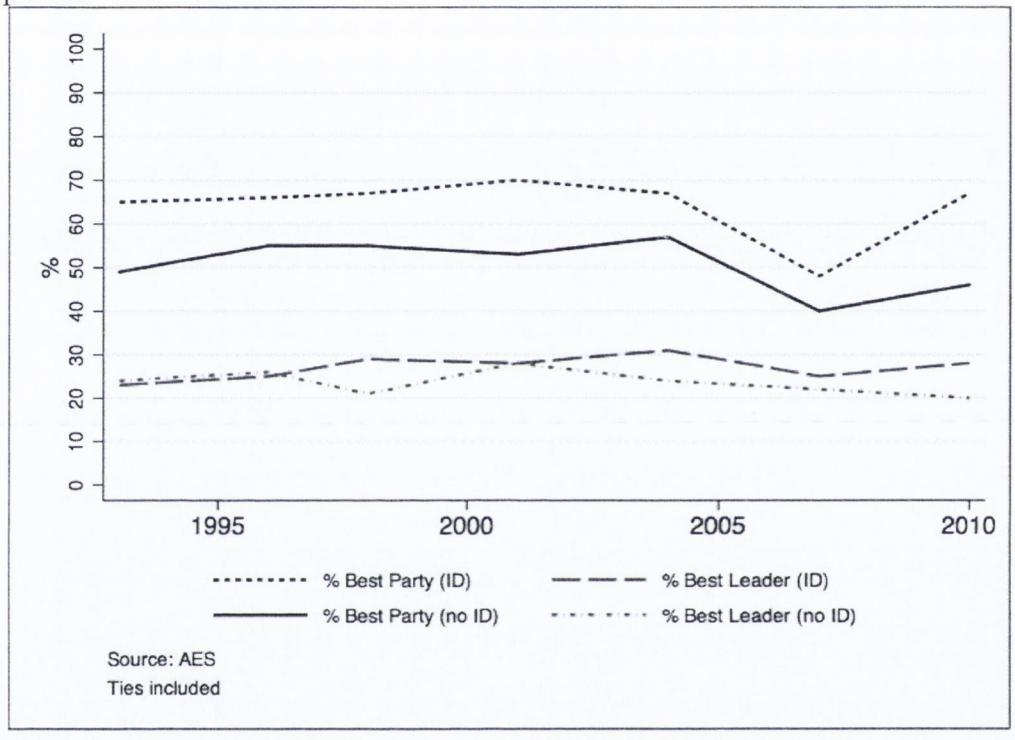
Figure 2.7: Australian voting behaviour, viewed over time



So far, very limited evidence has been found in support of the presidentialisation thesis. Moreover, the question as to whether more voters base their vote choice on leader evaluations when viewed over time can also be answered in the negative as examples from Canada (Figure 2.6) and Australia (Figure 2.7) have shown. However, majoritarian systems such as these are usually thought to keep party system fragmentation at bay and so the reason why leader evaluations are found to matter somewhat more in systems with a low ENEP is that parties in majoritarian systems are simply bigger. Big parties are 'bigger' for several reasons. For instance, large parties may attract votes from voters who do not even like their leader but think the party is doing a good job. Meanwhile, smaller parties tend to get much fewer votes when their leaders are not well liked (Curtice & Blais, 2001; Marsh, 2008). And so perhaps once party size is taken into consideration, such effects will disappear. Figure 2.8 displays patterns of voting behaviour in Australia when viewed over time but only for the two largest parties in each election (Labor and Liberal/National coalition). Results are similar to those shown in Figure 2.7 but differ in that percentages are somewhat higher for both strong and weak identifiers. It was

suggested that leader evaluations of large parties matter more than those of smaller ones, and that this should hold regardless of the type of electoral system considering that only the two largest parties will have real prospects of providing the next head of the executive.

Figure 2.8: Australian voting behaviour, viewed over time for two largest parties



Results shown in Table 2.3 have been aggregated for each country and breaks down the analysis by party size (for an overview of parties by size, see Table B3 in Appendix B). Except for the Netherlands and New Zealand, the percentage of voters following the party when the best party does not have the best leader increases when moving from a vote for small (column 2) to one for large parties (column 4). Looking at the average across countries, the percentage of voters supporting smaller parties when the best leader does not come from the best party increases from 11% (column 1) to about 14% (column 3) when considering a vote for larger parties. In cases where the best party does not have the best leader, the average increases by ten percentage points to 49% when comparing a vote for smaller parties (column 2) to one for larger ones (column 4). There are hardly any changes in the number of voters following the

leader for Norway and the Netherlands when breaking down the analysis by party size (highlighted in grey). Such an observation would support earlier findings for these countries. The argument that leader evaluations should matter more for large parties is only partially supported. In other words, they matter more than for smaller parties but they still do not matter more than party evaluations.[18]

Table 2.3: Impact on voting for party, by party size (ties included)

	Small parties only		*Large parties only*		*All parties*	
	Best L	*Best P*	*Best L*	*Best P*	*Best L*	*Best P*
Australia	12	31	13	34	13	32
Canada	12	29	19	46	18	42
Netherlands	10	51	9	47	10	51
New Zealand	17	58	10	52	16	51
Norway	6	44	5	74	4	62
Portugal	9	28	19	42	11	35
Spain	10	32	15	43	14	37
UK	10	37	18	54	15	51

Note: figures shown are percentages and have been aggregated across election years.

Although results in Table 2.3 show that leader evaluations are somewhat more important for larger parties, such an observation warrants a second look. It seems that among large parties themselves, leader evaluations do not necessarily matter more where a majoritarian system is in place. Percentages for Australia, Canada and the UK (majoritarian systems) are just as high as the ones found in Portugal and Spain (closed-list PR system). Thus, it would appear that leader evaluations are somewhat more important as regards voters' decisions to vote for large parties, and this is true regardless of the type of electoral system. Such a finding receives further support from Curtice and Blais (2001, p. 19) who note that "leader evaluations are more closely related to vote choice for big parties only because vote choice in general is more firmly structured for such parties." In other words, the institutional design of

[18] There are two out of forty-three analysed elections where leader evaluations do seem to matter more than party assessments. The 1979 and 1980 Canadian elections show such a pattern. For full results, see Table B2 in Appendix B.

parliamentary systems strongly conditions the extent to which voters are likely to base their vote choice on leader evaluations (see also: Dalton et al., 2000).

2.8. Conclusion

The presidentialisation thesis argues that vote choice in parliamentary systems has increasingly become more presidential because of an internationalisation of politics, changing structures of mass communication, an end of traditional cleavage politics and its ensuing dealignment of the electorate. A presidentialisation of politics arguably manifests itself in three faces and changes relating to all three are believed to influence vote choice. Consequently, voters are believed to focus more on individuals rather than collective identities when deciding whom to vote for, and this particularly applies to those systems where vote choice is most similar to that in presidential systems, i.e. majoritarian and closed-list PR systems, where voters are ultimately faced with a simple either/or choice and in making such a decision, they revert to prime ministerial considerations rather than contemplating policy platforms and other merits of political parties. This paper has set out to test this assumption by examining instances where a voter thinks the party with the best leader is not the best party or the best party does not have the best leader. It has also sought to explore whether this varies by strength of partisan affiliation, considering that a dealigned electorate is viewed as a major cause of presidentialisation and thus voters with weak partisan loyalties should be more susceptible to leadership effects as they lack party ID as an essential voting cue, a role that has since been assumed by party leaders instead.

Objectives of this paper are twofold. First, it offers a novel way of tackling the reciprocal causation that obscures the relative importance of parties and leaders in parliamentary systems with single-member districts and closed-list systems in place, whilst comparing results for strong versus weak identifiers to see if changes are in line with expectations. The approach is not only novel in the sense that it uses cross-sectional data to address the causal direction between the two, it also provides a simple yet powerful 'acid test' of the leaders matter argument by looking at the non-alignment of party and leader evaluations to

clearly separate the impact of each. A second objective is to contribute to a contentious literature on the presidentialisation thesis which argues that leaders have assumed a greater role in the decision-making process of the electorate due to a shift of power resources away from mass political organisations and into the hands of party leaders. Variations in the amount of voters following the party when sympathies towards parties and leaders are not aligned are due to different levels of consensus within party systems where more consensual systems such as Norway show a much higher percentage of voters following the party when the best party does not have the best leader. Moreover, a multi-party and more polarised system such as the Netherlands shows a similar pattern. In countries with two-party majoritarian systems such as Australia, Canada and the UK, the difference between those voting for the best party and those opting for the best leader is remarkably smaller which would suggest that vote choice in such systems is more closely structured around leader rather than party considerations even though the latter still trumps the former. Finally, in young democracies such as Spain and Portugal where the concept of partisan loyalties is not as well established yet, the difference between strong and weak identifiers is considerably smaller. Future research might include additional cases such as Eastern European countries to investigate whether patterns are comparable to those in Spain and Portugal considering that voters in newer party systems might be more susceptible to leadership considerations where parties often build around charismatic leaders and partisan loyalties are highly contingent on how voters view party leaders more generally.

The dimensionality of trait items: Leader sympathy as a function of traits

Abstract

This paper seeks to contribute to a growing literature on the dimensionality of leader traits. A social-cognitive account of information processing assumes voters to be "pragmatic cognitive misers" considering their limited time and effort invested in processing information about political candidates. It is argued that voters simply take cues from individual traits and leader sympathy is viewed as a function of such traits. Results from an exploratory factor analysis on polychoric and tetrachoric correlation matrices point to the presence of single-factor solutions while a nonparametric approach to scaling known as Mokken Scale Procedure further corroborates such findings. The paper challenges established findings on trait dimensionality traits, which argues for a two- or four-factor solution, and finds that trait items form a strong unidimensional scale.

3.1. Introduction

Studies on the performance of leader traits are based on an implicit assumption that traits influence vote choice, albeit to different degrees. Yet, it remains questionable whether different trait questions actually ask about different aspects, or features, of a leader, or whether they address the same underlying concept such as overall sympathy, considering that trait batteries are often included to investigate the degree of likeability of a particular leader. After all, do voters really distinguish between a tough and a determined leader? And what is the difference between caring and compassionate? Early studies of voting behaviour have cast serious doubts on voter sophistication and their ability to provide stable answers to complex survey items. Moreover, voter knowledge of and their interest in politics is frequently shown to be modest at best. There is a strong possibility then that traits may in fact measure the same underlying or latent variable and this paper sets out to test this possibility based on the assumption that voters are cognitive misers who seek to simplify their political environment.

The literature on leader traits in parliamentary systems is somewhat scarce and sustained empirical work even more so. Conventional wisdom would suggest that personal qualities and competencies are important for how people perceive party leaders more generally but the empirical basis for such claims in parliamentary systems is rather weak and often conflicting. A key problem is certainly the nature and availability of suitable data on leader traits. Moreover, empirical work is silent on the measurement level of variables and seems to ignore the ordinal, and sometimes categorical, nature of such variables when validating the underlying structure of trait items. Finally, a voter's lack of high cognitive skills casts doubt on their ability to think in multiple dimensions and thus challenges empirical findings on a two-dimensional structure most frequently identified in the literature. This paper seeks to address these issues by providing a more comprehensive theoretical framework on candidate appraisal based on social cognition and person perception theories. It is argued that voters perceive personality traits in an act of categorical thinking, while cognitive psychology further suggests that people store information in the form

of schema which then affects how they view others when new information about them is encountered. Secondly, many scholars have argued that traits are often intrinsically linked to an individual leader ('trait ownership') which makes it difficult to analyse traits in a more comparative context (Hayes, 2005). Therefore, a stacked data matrix where the unit of analysis is respondent*leader allows for an assessment of the structure of traits *independent* of party leaders. Thirdly, the empirical analysis takes into account the measurement level of trait variables. Finally, data on nine countries from 1983-2011 significantly expands the comparative scope of the empirical analysis, as previous studies are often limited to single-country cases or cover only a few points in time. Assuming that voters are 'pragmatic cognitive misers' using every day processes of impression formation to decide whether they like a given leader or not, this paper tests for a one-dimensional structure of trait items which can be summarised as a simple likeability factor.

The paper will be structured as follows. First, a review of the literature will locate key areas that require methodological refinements. Having identified shortcomings and discussed contributions to the study of leader traits, challenges and limitations will be outlined briefly. The next section will provide a detailed account of social cognition theory and how voters engage in cost- and timesaving devices to compensate for their lack of cognitive abilities and low levels of conceptualisations. Following on from this, information will be presented on data sources and the coding of variables as well as advantages of analysing a stacked data matrix before providing a comprehensive account of the methodology used in this paper. Results will be presented thereafter followed by concluding remarks.

3.2. Empirical studies on the structure of trait items: number of dimensions and factor analytic methods

The literature on the structure of candidate traits is well established in the context of US presidential elections. Kinder's (1980) pioneering work analyses the dimensionality of closed-ended questions on presidential candidate images, suggesting that voters generally agree on specific traits that an ideal president should possess ('presidential prototype'). He puts forward four distinct categories into which such traits may fall: *leadership*, *competence*, *integrity* and *empathy*. Funk (1999) takes a slightly different angle, assessing the relationship between Kinder's trait dimensions and examining their impact on overall candidate evaluations as measured by thermometer scores. Using confirmatory factor analysis, she reduces his categories to three, suggesting that competence and leadership should be treated as one (*leadership effectiveness*) which can then be viewed alongside the remaining two (*integrity* and *empathy*). Meanwhile, Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk (1986) maintain that voters do not respond to presidential candidates as idiosyncratic figures but approach them schematically. Voters with higher levels of education are more likely to use pre-determined candidate clusters and are able to consider dispositional qualities of candidates while the less educated are more likely to concentrate on readily available characteristics such as physical appearance. Using factor analysis on open-ended trait questions, they argue in favour of five distinct dimensions: *competence*, *integrity*, *charisma*, *reliability* and *personal attributes*. Likewise, Aldrich, Gronke, and Grynaviski (1999) use different measures to assess the effect of cognitive appraisals of presidential candidates. They set out to assess the performance and structure of presidential trait images and their role in evaluating candidates. Building on the works of Kinder and others (1978, 1983; 1979; Rahn et al., 1994; Rahn, Aldrich, Borgida, & Sullivan, 1990), they perform a two-stage analysis: first, they establish *personality* and *performance* as two latent variables that define the structure in answers to trait battery questions and evaluate its persistence over consecutive elections. In a second step, they assess the structure of those dimensions and investigate how well they serve the function as predictors of candidate evaluations, controlling for socio-demographic factors. Using confirmatory

factor analysis, they find support for a four-dimensional structure of traits (*competence*, *strong leader*, *character*, *empathy*) with the first two being associated with how well candidates will perform their job as President and the last two related to their individual personalities. This structure holds across four presidential elections (1984-1996). Funk (1994) argues that part of the problem in identifying a set of core dimensions that underlie trait judgements is that no dimension is fully orthogonal to the other (i.e. they are all highly correlated with each other). She tests three models separately for each presidential candidate. Two-factor (*leadership*, *integrity*) and four-factor (*leadership*, *competence*, *integrity*, *empathy*) models are then compared to a benchmark model to determine whether they are distinguishable from a more general valence model. For all cases, a four-factor model is found to fit the data the best.

Empirical work on the structure of trait items in parliamentary systems is less well established considering that fewer trait questions are usually included in election studies. However, the inclusion of trait batteries coincides with an increasing scholarly interest in a personalisation of politics which highlights the role of image at the expense of (political) content. Established research findings in the context of US presidential elections have inspired scholars to investigate how traits are organised in the voters' minds beyond presidential contests. Using confirmatory factor analysis on the 1987 British election study, Stewart and Clarke (1992) identify two dimensions (*competence* and *responsiveness*), and further maintain that these dimensions are more closely associated with the leader of the opposition. Bittner has also published extensively on the structure of leader traits and argues for a two-dimensional structure, distinguishing between *competence* and *character* (2007a, 2007b, 2011).[19] Brettschneider and Gabriel (2002) address two questions in their analysis of the 1998 German

[19] Although an ambitious project, her classification of trait dimensions is based on the use of Cronbach's Alpha, a measure which is a function of internal consistency and interrelatedness. Its usage has however been widely criticised. For instance, a high value does not necessarily imply homogeneity or unidimensionality and Green et al. (1977) have shown that a high value of Alpha can be found even if underlying items are in fact multidimensional. Moreover, if the number of items increases, so does Alpha but technically should not do so if items are supposed to measure the same construct (van der Heijden, van Buuren, Fekkes, Radder, & Verrips, 2003).

election: first, do trait images form distinct dimensions in the assessment of chancellor candidates? And second, how do partisan affiliation and trait evaluations affect the overall assessment of candidates? Acknowledging the ordinal nature of the data, they specify four dimensions: *issues*, *leadership*, *personal appeal* and *integrity*. Ohr and Oscarsson (2003) conclude that *competence*, *leadership*, *trustworthiness* and *empathy* are most likely to measure underlying dimensions of leader evaluations.

Analytical approaches to make inferences about the structure of trait images are quite diverse, resulting in rather different trait classifications. While some scholars have reverted to different types of factor analysis to clarify how trait images load onto specific factors, others have based their typology on their own intuition and face validity of trait batteries. Those opting for the former method have found support for a two- (Bean, 1993; Johnston, 2002; Kinder et al., 1979; McCurley & Mondak, 1995; Stewart & Clarke, 1992), three- (Funk, 1999; Glass, 1985; Lavine & Gschwend, 2007), four- (Kinder, 1983; Nimmo & Savage, 1976) or five-dimensional structure of traits (Miller et al., 1986; A. H. Miller & Miller, 1976). Those following their own intuition have often come up with a much higher number of trait dimensions (twelve: Brown, Lambert, Kay, & Curtis, 1988; six: Shabad & Andersen, 1979; eight: Winham & Cunningham, 1970). Yet, upon closer inspection, some common patterns have emerged and dimensions are largely similar to those identified by Kinder (1983; 1979). Bittner (2011) outlines nicely the diversity of trait typologies and finds that at least twenty-eight different ones have been established. It seems that empirical findings have converged on a two- or four-dimensional structure of traits, combining information on traits regarding *competence*, *leadership*, *integrity* and *empathy*, or incorporating the first and last two sets into two separate dimensions (*competence* and *character*).

Implicit in such findings is the assumption that voters are in fact capable of thinking in multiple dimensions. However, research into survey response patterns speak to the contrary, highlighting the fact that complex survey items are often too difficult for respondents to fully comprehend and thus they might become overwhelmed and simply decide off the top of their head rather than

providing meaningful and well thought through answers (Taylor & Fiske, 1978). Moreover, response effects are pertinent in the context of trait item analysis. Zaller and Feldman (1992) argue that survey questions should not be regarded as measures of public opinion but rather they influence it. This is due to framing issues, ordering response categories or otherwise setting the context of a particular question. Meanwhile, political impression formation theory argues that the way people form impressions about political objects is similar to everyday inferential strategies. In other words, voters quickly make up their mind about whether they like a given leader or not based on their actions and political conduct. Voters may simply take cues from personality traits and other characteristics, just as they do to decide about merits of people they engage with on a regular basis (Rahn et al., 1990). It is thus questionable whether a multi-dimensional structure holds in light of such strong reasons to believe that voters do not possess sufficient cognitive skills to think in multiple dimensions and it is therefore hypothesised *that voters infer from a leader's personality profile whether they like them or not. Viewed this way, leader traits are simple heuristic devices to facilitate voters in their decision-making of how a given leader will perform in office and overall sympathy towards leaders is simply a function of their individual traits and personal characteristics.* By evaluating a leader's personality profile, voters conclude whether a given leader is fit for office (Funk, 1997; Kinder & Abelson, 1981; S. Popkin, Gorman, Phillips, & Smith, 1976). Person perception theory considers trait inferences to be an inherent element in how people arrive at an overall impression of others. And once formed, such impressions often last well beyond the event or piece of information on which they were based initially (Funk, 1994). The proposition that leader sympathy is a function of their individual traits is further supported by Funk's (1996) experimental study which evidently shows that the causal arrow runs from trait qualities to global evaluations of candidates (see also: Funk, 1994; Greene, 2001).

3.3. Data challenges and contributions to the literature

Data availability and consistent measurement pose two major obstacles in the assessment of the structure of trait items in a comparative fashion. Regarding the former, trait batteries have not been consistently included within as well as across election studies in parliamentary systems. While Australia has included up to eleven different traits, other countries such as Ireland and New Zealand have only included three or four items, respectively. Apart from Ireland, no other country included in the analysis here has successively used the same number and type of traits in its election study making a comparative analysis a rather difficult undertaking.[20] The issue of inconsistent measurement magnifies this problem. Even where traits are asked in consecutive election studies, question format and measurement vary significantly and a consistent operationalisation of trait items becomes quite challenging. British election studies have probably used all types of question formats. For instance, studies in the 1980s asked respondents whether a particular leader is seen as being 'caring', scoring a one if yes and zero otherwise. Later studies invited respondents to rate leaders on a scale, often from one to three, indicating whether a particular trait fits a leader 'not well at all', 'quite well' or 'very well'. Trait opposites have also been included asking respondents whether they would describe a leader as 'moderate/extreme' or 'caring/uncaring', while the 1997 election study only included traits about Tony Blair. The two most recent British election studies have used the same scale as those used for sympathy scores inviting respondents to rate leaders on a scale from zero to ten on a given trait. Other countries have almost always used a scale to rate a particular trait for a given leader which sees some convergence in the inclusion and measurement of traits. A final point worth noting is that traits are in most cases only asked of the two main party leaders. Canada and New Zealand are to some extent an exception to that rule as they ask trait questions on all leaders while Australia also included questions on those leaders that are of particular interest

[20] For an overview of trait items, see Table C1 in Appendix C.

at a given election.[21] A second problem entails the lack of a theoretical framework that would explain the expectation of finding multiple trait dimensions and empirical work rarely discusses *why* to expect the presence of such a structure. Drawing insights from person perception and social cognition theories will shed light on how people process information and form impressions about others as well as how it is structured in their minds, thereby providing a more comprehensive explanation as to why traits are hypothesised to form a single dimension.

This paper acknowledges such limitations and seeks to contribute to the literature on the structure of trait images in several ways. First of all, based on a range of different countries with varying electoral and political contexts analysed over a time period of about thirty years, the paper sets out to provide a comprehensive picture on the structure of leader traits in parliamentary systems and to investigate whether they indeed form distinct dimensions when using more appropriate data-reduction techniques that take account of their level of measurement. Viewed from a social cognitive perspective on candidate appraisal, voters are unlikely to think in multiple dimensions considering their low cognitive skills and the high information costs involved in such a process. Rather, they follow inferential strategies used on a daily basis to help them decide whether they like somebody or not. Therefore, it is hypothesised that traits form a single dimension and that overall leader assessments are a function of individual trait items. Secondly, the use of a stacked data matrix allows for a classification of underlying trait dimensions that are independent of a particular leader. Although exploratory factor analysis has been frequently used in the classification of trait dimensions, the use of polychoric correlation matrices (and tetrachoric correlations in the case of dichotomous items) is regarded as a more appropriate statistical method as this will adequately account for the measurement level of trait variables. Moreover, the use of a nonparametric approach to scaling known as Mokken Scale Procedure seeks to further corroborate results from a preliminary exploratory factor analysis. Using such

[21] For example, Australia has consistently asked about leaders from the Labor Party and the Liberal/National Coalition. However, in 1998 they also included party leaders from the One Nation Party and in 2001 added the leader from the Australian Democratic Party to its list.

methods, this paper sets out to provide a more conclusive answer to the question as to whether individual traits form a single or multiple dimensions. The principal aim is to unpack the notion of leader popularity and investigate how traits are structured in voters' minds when their measurement and other data issues such as non-normality are taken into account.

3.4. Theory of political candidate appraisal: a social-cognitive account of information processing

Many theories of electoral behaviour have highlighted the important role of information in voters' decision-making process (Bartels, 1996; Key, 1966; Lupia, 1994; S. L. Popkin, 1991; Zaller, 1992). Information on leader images is widely available during today's highly personalised election campaigns where focus is much more on individual candidates, their personalities and competencies rather than collective identities. Theories on contemporary political communication and information-processing look at how political parties conduct themselves in election campaigns in an attempt to get their message across to the electorate and also how voters in turn process such information given their low cognitive skills, based on the assumption that both are rational actors seeking to maximise their benefits at minimum costs. Drawing upon social-cognitive models of political candidate appraisal, the following will discuss how voters process political information before developing an argument that outlines how individual leader traits are used as cognitive shortcuts to arrive at an overall summary judgement of political candidates. Essentially, it will be argued that voters are unlikely to think in multiple dimensions when responding to survey items that tap into a leader's overall sympathy. Several studies have demonstrated an independent impact of trait items on candidate assessments, suggesting that voters use traits to inform themselves about whether they like a particular candidate or not (Funk, 1999; Ohr & Oscarsson, 2003). Viewed this way, traits are not assumed to form multiple dimensions but rather overall leader sympathies are modelled as a function of such traits.

According to social cognition theory, voters are assumed to take an interest in simplifying their political environment by collapsing the complexities of their political surroundings into more readily available chunks of information (Taylor & Fiske, 1978). From this follows that voters engage in minimising strategies to make competent vote choices on election day. In line with rational choice theory, voters and political parties act in line with their own interests, seeking to maximise their own benefits at minimum cost and effort. For voters to achieve this, they do not need to attend to all the information being presented to them but by using mental shortcuts and other heuristic devices, they are still capable of making competent electoral decisions (Lupia & McCubbins, 1998). Voters are assisted in this task by features of political campaigning (Bowler & Farrell, 1992; Farrell, 1996; Farrell & Schmitt-Beck, 2000). Media-intense coverage of election campaigns results in the priming of voters to revert to the use of personality and character traits in their assessment of political leaders (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Kinder & Abelson, 1981; Kinder & Gronke, 1985; Kinder et al., 1980). The campaign environment is rich with both explicit and implicit cues,[22] and it is argued that leader traits and characteristics are an important heuristic device that voters use in their decision of whether they like a given leader or not, and hence consider them fit for office (Funk, 1997; S. Popkin et al., 1976). Thirdly, voters engage in political candidate appraisal which is similar to that of everyday impression formation. In other words, processes involved in deciding whether to like or dislike a particular candidate are not dissimilar to those employed in daily decision-making processes when people make such choices on an *ad-hoc* basis (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Rahn et al., 1990). The different stages involved in information processing to impression formation to reaching a decision on a leader's overall sympathy will be of primary concern in this paper and it is argued that voters take cues from a leader's political conduct to decide whether they like them or not. Thus, opinions expressed in electoral surveys on leader's competence or

[22] Implicit cues refer to those that are most likely to be communicated non-verbally. Such cues may include for instance a leader's physical appearance (dress code, etc.) or their behaviour and gestures (shaking hands at campaign rallies). Explicit cues refer to those that are more overt, such as when giving a speech and directly responding to voter concerns during televised leadership debates.

trustworthiness serve the valuable function of aiding voters in making that decision. Voters are unlikely to think in multiple dimensions and when it comes to processing a myriad of information to which they are exposed to during election campaigns, they will simply engage in minimising strategies to break down information into more manageable chunks. Traits such as 'knowledgeable' and 'responsive' are simply used as shortcuts and voters are assumed to infer from specific traits how they feel about leaders more generally.

3.4.1. 'Non-attitudes' versus voter competence: the role of information

The question remains whether voters are indeed capable of accurately expressing their views when prompted to do so. Research on mass political attitudes and survey response patterns often show that answers are highly changeable and strongly contingent on the context in which they are asked. In his well-known paper *The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics*, Converse (1964) famously argues that voters essentially do not hold particular views on political issues but when asked to express their opinion in mass surveys, they will do so anyway. Such 'non-attitudes' are considered spontaneous reactions to survey questions where voters do not want to appear ignorant or poorly informed about current political affairs. He found that when respondents were asked the same questions in repeated surveys, their answers, and thus arguably their attitudes, varied significantly from one survey to the next. Political parties and candidates alike often take ambiguous positions on issues and according to Converse (1964), voters have no choice but to decide by flipping a coin as to whether they agree with them or not. His view that voters have too few ideas and lack clear attitudes regarding their political surroundings has however been challenged by others on numerous grounds. For instance, Zaller (1992) sets out to identify individuals who are most and least likely to hold 'non-attitudes' while Judd and Milburn (1980) minimise the problem to measurement error inherent in survey questions. Furthermore, Zaller and Feldman (1992) have rightly pointed to the difficulty in mapping someone's opinion onto an often

ambiguous language of individual survey questions. Voter uncertainty is not uncommon but all responses are considered meaningful, albeit a little cautious at times. Blais, Nevitte, Gidengil, and Nadeau (2000) argue in a similar fashion. Addressing the question of whether voters have feelings towards leaders about whom they know nothing about, they find that most people do have feelings about them even though they might not know a great deal about them. In other words, they did express 'real' feelings towards a given leader and such feelings were deemed meaningful considering that they had an independent effect on vote choice.

The question of whether voters are capable of expressing their true attitudes towards political candidates and subsequently translate their preferences into competent vote choices lies at the heart of this debate. Based on the assumption that the political world is characterised as being uncertain, voters are faced with substantial information costs involved in becoming sufficiently informed and high cognitive skills are required to do so. Put simply, it remains questionable whether voters are in fact capable of making competent choices in the presence of sometimes highly conflicting and complex information. Very few voters generally revert to a party's manifesto as a reliable source of information and facts and figures discussed during televised leadership debates can often be misleading considering that politicians take considerable interest in their public appearance and correct delivery of their speech. Thus, vote choice is essentially based on uncertainty considering that available information is either too rich for voters to comprehend (e.g. party manifestos and detailed policy proposals) or too costly to acquire in the first place. In the context of high uncertainty and low levels of cognitive skills, voters are assumed to take a shortcut that will help them arrive at competent decisions in absence of complete information, and traits quite possibly will serve that function.

Traditional research on electoral behaviour found little evidence in support of the argument that voters are sufficiently informed to make competent decision about policy issues (Campbell et al., 1960). Voters were viewed as having low levels of conceptualisation and thus unable to think in abstract terms about the

political world. They were also found to lack factual knowledge about politics. Thus, Converse's logic of 'non-attitudes' nicely matched the notion of a non-ideological, poorly-informed electorate. Evidence from earlier studies that portrayed an ill-informed electorate was gradually being challenged and the notion of a non-ideological voter with limited abilities to conceptualise their political surroundings was no longer being upheld. Key (1966) most forcefully argued that 'voters are not fools' but take advantage of cognitive shortcuts which allows them to make rational choices. Even though voting is grounded in substantial uncertainty, voters are still able to compensate for this by using shortcuts to simplify their choices. In this view, voters are regarded as rational actors who invest limited time and effort in becoming informed because obtaining such information would simply be too costly and time-consuming. Popkin's (1991) concept of low-information rationality or 'gut-reasoning' suggests that voters seek to minimise costs involved in making decisions and forming opinions. As a result, many do not invest considerable time or effort in becoming informed but rather rely on as little information as they deem necessary to make competent choices. In simple terms, voters are seen as 'investors' and the vote itself is regarded as a "*reasoned investment* in collective goods, made with *costly and imperfect information* under conditions of *uncertainty*" (S. L. Popkin, 1991, p. 10, emphasis added). Implicit in this statement is the fact that voting on the basis of limited information is not necessarily irrational or superficial. Quite to the contrary, it is still regarded as a "reasoned investment". Voters draw on a variety of information sources in order to simplify the act of choosing between candidates. And once collected, such information needs to be filtered, processed and then stored for later purposes.

3.4.2. On-line versus memory-based models of information-processing

Cognitive models of candidate appraisal offer two explanations as to how voters form and update evaluations about candidates when new information is encountered during election campaigns. The difference between the two lies in whether voters process information directly when confronted with it (*on-line model*) or whether they store it to be used at a later time (*memory-based model*). The on-line, or impression-driven, model of decision-making assumes that voters make up their mind about political candidates at the time of acquiring information about them. Opinions about them are formed and as new information is encountered, voters update and store this image (overall evaluation) in memory rather than the information (individual trait) on which it was originally based (Milton, McGraw, & Stroh, 1989). More specifically, when asked to make a decision about evaluating a leader's overall sympathy or likeability, voters simply revert to this overall image without having to revert back to the information on which it was based initially. Voters basically use individual traits such as 'competence' or 'trustworthiness' to update their overall evaluation of a political leader. Voters using memory-based models of decision-making do not rely on a running tally but rather recover information stored in memory and incorporate them into an overall judgement when being prompted to make such a judgement (Brody & Page, 1972; Enelow & Hinich, 1984; Zaller, 1992). Both models share a memory-based element in common but what distinguishes the two is that on-line processing already presupposes an overall judgement which is then updated as new information is acquired whereas memory-based processing requires voters to retrieve specific items first before arriving at an overall judgement, which would require much higher cognitive skills and involve more efforts than voters as rational actors are willing to invest. An on-line model is thus much more pertinent for understanding processes involved in candidate appraisal as it assumes that newly acquired facts about political objects informs an overall image already stored in memory. This is supported by several studies regarding the causal flow between candidate traits and overall evaluations which show that the arrow runs from the former to the latter (Funk, 1994, 1996; Greene, 2001).

Likewise, Rahn et al. (1990) show that voters' assessments of candidates' competencies and qualities have strong effects on how they feel about them more generally. This suggests that voters are much more likely to engage in on-line information processing where voters simply update overall evaluations based on how competent, trustworthy and knowledgeable they consider a given leader to be. When prompted to assess a leader's likeability, they simply retrieve that previously stored running tally as a basis for their overall evaluation. Interestingly, recollection of specific information on candidates such as their individual traits and characteristics quickly deteriorates whereas memory of an overall assessment remains relatively stable over time (Milton, Steenbergen, & Brau, 1995). Even though voters are most likely to forget individual campaign events and the media's meticulous portrayal of and intense reporting on party leaders, they are nonetheless able to recollect their affective summary judgement as a valuable tool to inform their political preferences and electoral choices. Based on the assumption that voters engage in political candidate appraisal which is similar to that of everyday impression formation, Taylor and Fiske (1978) further contend that voters often decide 'off the top of their head'. People make new, *ad-hoc* acquaintances on a daily basis and they often make up their mind in an instant on whether they like that person or not, quickly forgetting the incident that shaped the overall image to begin with. What remains is an overall summary judgement. Likewise, Kelley (1983) finds that voters choose presidential candidates by adding up all of their positive and negative aspects and opt for the one with the maximum net total, i.e. the candidate they like the most. When engaging in on-line information processing, voters still need to make sense of the information that is available to them. Thus, they adjust their overall evaluation of a given leader in response to new information presented to them during election campaigns. Assuming that voters revert to minimising strategies in an attempt to simplify their political environment and to make competent choices, voters have been described as 'pragmatic cognitive misers' (Stroh, 1995) considering their limited cognitive capabilities to process large quantities of political information. Political schema, mental shortcuts and other heuristic devices are valuable tools that help account for a voter's cognitive limitation, making a competent vote choice possible in absence of complete information.

3.4.3. Schematic thinking about political candidates

Social cognitive theory posits that people cope with information overload by reverting to cognitive shortcuts (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Based on the assumption that voters are cognitive misers, it suggests that humans seek to simplify complex information due to their limited cognitive abilities. To form an overall impression of political candidates, voters have to learn ways that will help them deal with a flood of information presented to them during election campaigns. It will be argued that taking cues from a leader's public conduct and leadership style will allow them to structure that information and as a result voters will be able to evaluate them more generally on the basis of their personal qualities and competencies. Political cognition theory is concerned with how voters process information about political objects. Thinking about them does not place high cognitive demands upon voters considering that they engage in inferential strategies that they are well used to using for assessing someone's likeability on a day-to-day basis (Rahn et al., 1990; Sullivan, Aldrich, Borgida, & Rahn, 1990). Evaluating political candidates based on their individual traits is thus considered an effective cost- and time-saving device because voters no longer need to acquire costly new information. Such cues also signal a leader's underlying behavioural disposition allowing voters to easily decide whether they like a particular leader or not.

Different mechanisms have been proposed to facilitate the management and organisation of information on political objects, of which schema theory is an important one. Such a theory contends that people have limited information-processing capacities and that schemata are useful tools to model such cognitive limitations. People organise their thoughts and feelings about political objects into predefined categories which they then revert to when only limited information is available. Lau (1986) argues that political schemata provides a novel and cognitively more realistic view on information processing considering that more conventional models of vote choice often ignore a voter's limited cognitive abilities. For schematic-based thinking to happen, Fiske (1986) proposes three criteria. First, voters must have a chance to develop a schema based on an affect-laden label. Next, available facts during election

campaigns for instance need to strongly prime such a label. And most importantly, voters are then asked to arrive at an overall judgement. Assuming that voters operate in a political environment over which they have very little influence, new information will have to be fitted into predefined political schema. If information is deemed important and compatible with an already existing candidate schema, it is much more likely to be stored in memory. Therefore, the current impression that a voter holds regarding a particular leader is a function of newly acquired information as well as their person schema stored in memory which is then updated once new details have been gathered. What schema theory implies for this paper is that voters do not randomly assess political candidates but do so in accordance with some predefined schema which reduces "the complexity of our impressions by enabling us to categorise and label an individual politician according to certain abstract or representative features" (Miller et al., 1986, p. 524). In other words, voters are believed to evaluate a leader's overall impression based on some predefined mental structure of what an ideal candidate should look like, similar to Kinder's (1980) concept of a 'presidential prototype'. Confronted with information on a leader's personal qualities and competencies during election campaigns, they then take cues from their public conduct to form an overall impression of them. Viewed as reasonably stable mental structures, a person schema is thus assumed to impact on the processing and management of information on party leaders over consecutive elections (Lau, 1986; Lau & Sears, 1986).[23] Even though many voters lack sophisticated cognitive skills to grasp complex policy issues, they still know who they like and dislike, and such feelings function as a calculus to help voters decide what issue positions political groups are likely to take. Voting on the basis of heuristics and person schemata should not be regarded as superficial or irrational because leaders are viewed as carriers of ideology and political reasoning (Lobo, 2011). By focusing on a candidate's personal qualities and competencies, voters may gain valuable information about traits that are considered vital in evaluating how individuals might perform once elected to higher office (Funk, 1997; Kinder &

[23] Note that there are other schemata besides the one discussed here, with 'issue schema' for instance being another one.

Abelson, 1981; S. Popkin et al., 1976). Such information comes at a relatively low price, especially during election campaigns when voters are presented with ample facts and figures about political candidates, their public behaviour and political conduct in the public eye.

Survey items are arguably cognitively too demanding, vague and often multi-dimensional for it to be feasible to provide sophisticated and well-informed answers (Zaller & Feldman, 1992). The literature on the structure of traits strongly favours a multi-dimensional structure of trait items, most commonly a two-factor solution tapping into a candidate's character and competence. However, there are strong reasons to believe that voters do not think in multiple dimensions but rather employ likeability heuristics as a function of individual traits. For instance, voters in parliamentary systems may place less emphasis on the distinction of two dimensions because vote choice revolves around a party choice and so they might be more concerned with the party's rather than the leaders competency levels. Moreover, if party leaders are influential for how voters decide, then this comes down to the simple question of whether they like them or not. Such a decision is further considered to be strongly rooted in how they view individual leaders more specifically. Thus, a highly competent leader with strong leadership skills and a responsive nature is much more likeable (and thus worthy of a vote for their party) than someone who lacks those skills. And thirdly, research into the question of how individual traits and overall evaluations are causally related has shown that the causal flow runs from the former to the latter (Funk, 1994, 1996; Greene, 2001; Markus & Converse, 1979; Rahn et al., 1994). In other words, individual leader attributes inform a more global evaluation of party leaders which can be summarised in a simple overall affective summary judgement of party leaders. And in line with the on-line model of information processing, it is much more important that voters' overall judgements of political leaders reflects their *evaluation* of campaign information, for instance a leader's overall personality profile, rather than whether they can recall all of the facts they are presented with during election campaigns (Milton et al., 1995). This implies that when prompted to express an opinion – to a survey interviewer or at the polls – it is this overall evaluation,

not recollections of individual leader traits, which will influence their political preferences and electoral choices.

If voters are cognitive misers who lack highly sophisticated cognitive skills and are therefore highly dependent on cost-saving heuristic devices, they are unlikely to think in multiple dimensions but instead base their decision on whether they like a given leader or not on individual traits and images as portrayed in various media outlets during election campaigns. Put simply, they consider traits to be cues for whether they consider someone likeable and thus worthy of their electoral support and overall evaluations are simply a function of such traits.

3.5. Data preparation, variable coding and methodology

The comparative study of leader traits has been described as "diverse and non-cumulative" as well as "conflicted in almost all areas" (Bittner, 2007a, p. 2). One of the challenges to address this problem stems from the nature of the data where respondents are invited to evaluate different traits in different surveys over time, and even in those cases of a continuous inclusion of trait questions, the question format may change from one survey to the next or substantially varies across countries making comparative research into the matter a difficult endeavour. Following the works of Kinder and others on presidential candidate images (Kinder, 1983; Kinder et al., 1979), the inclusion of trait batteries in parliamentary systems has seen a steady incline in recent years to provide for a more extensive analytical scope. Data on leader traits in parliamentary systems is indeed quite diverse in terms of question type, format and frequency of use over time but data on nine countries covering a total of up to thirty years has been successfully collected. Coding trait variables in a common format as well as working with a stacked data matrix allows for a more comparative assessment of leader traits because it not only accounts for the variety of different survey questions but also investigates the structure of traits independent of party leaders. The data has been transformed from a wide to a long format. In such a 'stacked data matrix', each leader trait will be viewed as a separate case to be explained. Thus, rather than identifying underlying trait

dimensions for each leader separately, the data has been stacked to yield respondent*leader combinations as the unit of analysis. In such a data structure, the number of cases in the data represents respondents, which is equal to the number of leaders they were asked to rate on different trait items (for an overview on this method, see: Brug, Eijk, & Franklin, 2007; Eijk, Brug, Kroh, & Franklin, 2006). This way, trait dimensions can be analysed more generally rather than by individual leaders because identified dimensions will be independent of a particular leader and does not conform to a specific one at a given election. The goal is essentially to identify a latent variable that summarises a leader's overall sympathy, and this is expected to apply to all leaders irrespective of other characteristics. When it comes to choosing experts for the executive post, voters will look for somebody they like and they can identify with, and the process at which to arrive at such a decision is similar to that frequently made in everyday situations. This process is not confined to specific leaders but is assumed to apply to evaluating political candidates more generally.

Regarding the coding of trait variables, all trait items have been recoded so that a lower bound of zero either means that a specific trait is absent in a particular leader or does not describe him or her at all whereas an upper bound either means that a leader is viewed as possessing a specific trait or some trait describes him or her particularly well. Three examples shall suffice to explain how trait items have been coded. The 1983 UK survey uses dichotomous trait items. Here, respondents were asked whether Margaret Thatcher and Michael Foot were, amongst other traits, regarded as 'shrewd'. If answered in the positive, they were scored a 1 and if replied in the negative, a score of 0 was awarded. In the 1990 New Zealand election survey, respondents were asked when thinking about Jim Bolger and Mike Moore, on a scale from 1 (very much) to 5 (not at all) would they rate them as 'competent'. This scale has then been reversed so that a low score of 0 indicates 'no competence at all' whereas a high score of 4 would suggest 'high competence'. The 2009 German election study employed a five-point scale that ranges from -2 ('not true at all') to +2 ('definitely true). Asked whether Angela Merkel and Frank-Walter Steinmeier were regarded as 'likeable', this was subsequently rescaled so that -2 became a

0, -1 recoded as a 1, and all the way through to 4 which meant that a given leader was definitely seen as being 'likeable'. Scales which ranged from 1 ('does not describe him/her at all) to 5 ('describes him/her very well') are most often used and are simply rescaled to range from 0 to 4. Although very infrequently used, negative traits such 'aggressive' and 'arrogant' have not been rescaled so that a low score still indicates low aggressiveness/arrogance and a high score would indicate high levels of aggressiveness/arrogance. Such traits are expected to negatively load onto factors and be dropped from a Mokken scale as they do not tap into the hypothesised dimension of leader sympathy. In some cases, considering a leader as aggressive or arrogant may even load positively onto the same factor where respondents think that an arrogant and aggressive person is more likely to be efficient at getting things done, and so contributes to that person being perceived as likeable.

A central aim of this paper is to apply appropriate data-reduction techniques in the presence of non-interval and non-normal data. The ordinal, or in some cases categorical, nature of trait variables has not been taken into consideration when assessing the structure of trait items which may to some extent explain the diversity of empirical findings regarding the number and content of dimensions. The empirical analysis has thus two key objectives. First, it seeks to account for the level of measurement when running an exploratory factor analysis. It will be argued that ordinal and dichotomous trait items require the specification of polychoric and tetrachoric correlation matrices, respectively. Moreover, when dealing with non-normal data, a nonparametric approach to scaling known as Mokken Scale Procedure is regarded as a more robust method. Both methods should not be regarded as mutually exclusive but rather as complimenting each other and similar results are expected. If a multiple factor solution of trait items cannot be confirmed, then it cannot be conclusively deduced that trait items measure two distinct concepts, i.e. competence and character. Taking all this into consideration, it will be investigated whether, when taking into account the level of measurement and non-normality of trait items, empirical results will reveal a more consistent structure of such items. *More specifically, it is hypothesised that overall leader evaluations are a function of their individual traits and characteristics summarised in a unidimensional scale.*

3.5.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis: polychoric and tetrachoric correlations

The basic idea behind factor analytic methods is to explain complex relations between different trait items by relating them to some underlying construct. Whereas traits are considered manifest variables, the identified dimension is essentially unobservable. Dealing with a hypothetical construct, Loevinger (1957, p. 642) contends that "[t]raits exist in people; constructs (here usually about traits) exist in the minds and magazines of psychologists." In other words, observed variables represent respondents' opinion on those items, be they explicit through verbal expressions or implicit through non-verbal communication, and constructs such as the underlying dimension of a leader's overall sympathy can only be extracted via factor analytic methods and are ultimately unobservable. *Exploratory factor analysis* (EFA) is one such technique often used in areas where basic measurement issues have not yet been resolved (Kline, 2013).[24] A variable reduction technique, it reduces a large number of interrelated items to a smaller number of common factors that account for the co-variation in the data. It is commonly used to explore latent constructs of a set of interrelated items without imposing any predetermined structure on the outcome. Its primary goal is to identify common factors, or latent variables, and explain their association with the observed items. On the basis of Eigenvalues, measuring the proportion of variance in items explained by a particular factor, it is up to the researcher to decide which factors to retain.

---

[24] Two other methods exist. *Principal component analysis* (PCA) is not quite relevant for the purpose of this paper as it is solely focused on analysing the shared variances (covariance) of items rather than analysing all of the observed variance.
A second method is that of *confirmatory factor analysis* (CFA) which is used to verify a predetermined structure. It draws from theory and empirical research, puts forward a relationship *a priori* and then continues to find statistical support in favour of the proposed pattern. Several statistical tests are then computed to evaluate how well the model fits the data. Scholarly work on the structure of candidate traits in the US has mostly reverted to the second option, where researchers hypothesise a specific grouping of traits into dimensions, often based on their own intuition or face value of trait items, and then seek to verify that structure using CFA (Funk, 1999; Kinder, 1978, 1983; Kinder & Abelson, 1981; Miller et al., 1986; Stewart & Clarke, 1992). If opting for this method, a single-factor solution would be posited and subsequently tested for. However, the low number of traits included in most studies analysed in this paper makes this method impossible to use.

EFA is particularly useful for the purpose of identifying common factors in areas where measurement issues are still cause for concern. Although simple in its applicability, it is based on rather strong assumptions which are often not tenable. For it to produce reliable factor loadings variables have to be measured on an interval level and the relationship between observed trait items is supposed to be linear. Observed variables are assumed to be normally distributed and a bivariate normal distribution is required for each set of observed variables. Multivariate normality is a further prerequisite. However, trait items are in all instances not measured on an interval scale but rather constitute ordinal non-normal data and the linear association between the latent construct and observed item scores is also cause for concern. The assumption that items have the same frequency distribution is also violated in a cumulative scale of items as they do vary (Schuur, 2011). Dichotomous trait items as used in the UK for example are thus clearly problematic while trait items based on Likert scales are often just as difficult to deal with, if not even more so (Bernstein, Garbin, & Teng, 1989). Considering the nature of the data which typically determines the type of factor analytic method to be used in assessing the underlying structure of survey items (De Ayala, 2013), empirical work on the dimensionality of candidate and leader traits has ignored the nature of the data, and as a result has opted for statistical methods that are unsuitable to settle on the number and type of dimensions in the presence of non-interval, and thus non-normal, trait items.

Factor analysis is in most cases performed on a correlation matrix based on Pearson's *r* to produce factor solutions, where variables are assumed to be interval-level and normally distributed. However, trait items often follow a Likert scale or a binary-response pattern, in which case the calculation of Pearson's *r* is likely to produce biased estimates (Kline, 2013). The controversy surrounding the treatment of ordinal scales as interval scales dates back to Stevens (1946). His witty rejoinder on the theory of measurement scales crucially notes that "the statistical manipulation that can legitimately be applied to empirical data depend upon the type of scale against which the data are ordered" (1946, p. 677). He even suggests that personality traits are a classic example of an ordinal scale. Although both hardliners and more progressively

minded scholars both consent to a variable being ordinal, the debate revolves around analysing data generated by such a variable. More conservative scholars argue in line with Stevens, providing rather strange findings when calculating descriptive or inferential statistics (Marcus-Roberts & Roberts, 1987). The more liberal camp maintains that differences between categories can be considered as equally spaced and suggest that the scale type is not assumption for the validity of *t*- or *F* tests (Baker, Hardyck, & Petrinovich, 1966; Labovitz, 1967). Stevens (1946, p. 679) puts it in a nutshell when he states that

> "ordinary statistics involving means and standard deviations ought not to be used with these scales, for these statistics imply a knowledge of something more than a relative rank-order of data."

If this applies to descriptive statistics, it will most likely affect inferential statistics as well. Therefore, the analysis sides with the conservative side of the debate and treats trait variables as strictly ordinal. Anderson and Gerbing (1988) have found that when using Pearson's *r* with non-interval data, standard errors and several test statistics will be incorrect. Factor solutions derived from polychoric correlation matrices are found to produce a much more precise reproduction of the measurement model used to generate the data (Holgado–Tello, Chacón–Moscoso, Barbero–García, & Vila–Abad, 2010). Thus, for items based on a Likert scale, polychoric correlation matrices will be estimated first before running a factor analysis on such data (Panter, Swygert, Dahlstrom, & Tanaka, 1997). In the presence of dichotomous items, tetrachoric inter-item correlations will be calculated first before obtaining factor loadings.[25] When computing polychoric and tetrachoric correlations, it is assumed that all variables dissect continuous latent variables that are bivariate normally distributed. Such variables are truncated versions of continuous variables and the idea is that each variable is determined by a continuous, normal process (Flora & Curran, 2004), suggesting that behind ordinal categories used to

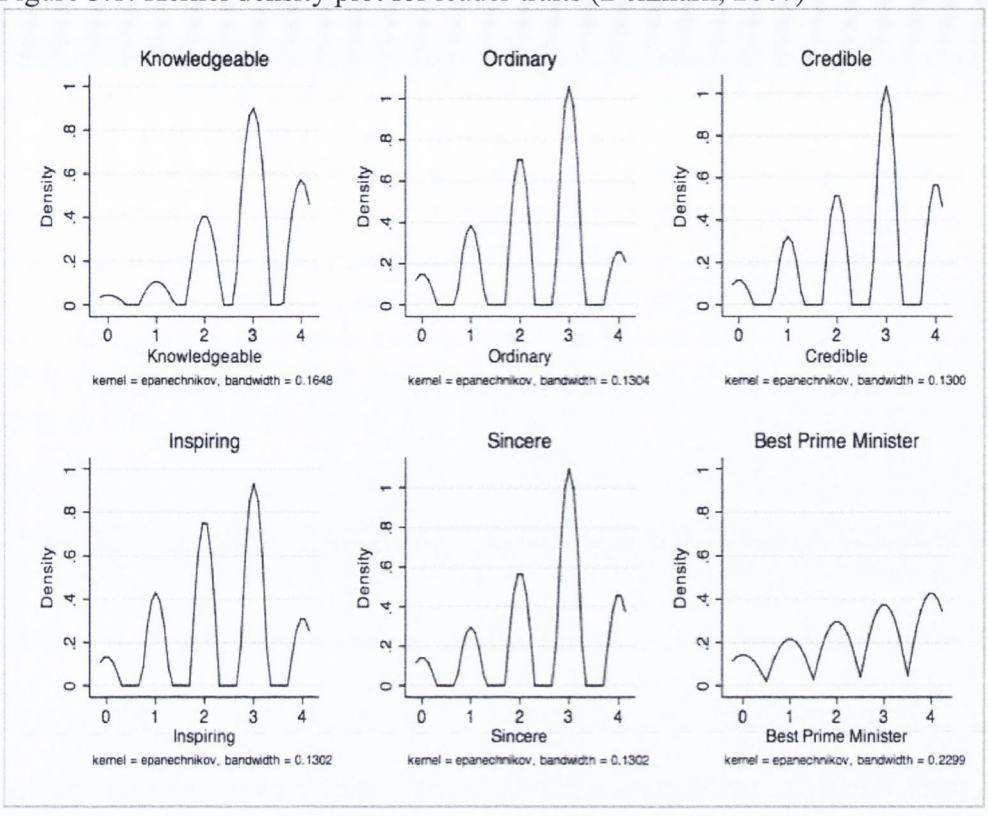
[25] Conceptually, this is a two-stage process. Based on responses to ordinal or categorical items, I first estimate polychoric and tetrachoric correlations respectively. The correlation matrix thus obtained is then used to run our familiar EFA. Unlike standard factor analysis, these statistics will provide the data for a factor analysis and are not directly computed from the data. This way, factors summarise relations among latent variables rather than among directly observed ones (Panter et al., 1997).

measure a particular phenomenon, for example sympathy towards a party leader, lies a continuous and normally distributed phenomenon. The estimated correlation coefficient thus refers to the degree of association between two latent, normally distributed continuous variables, from which the two ordinal or binary observed variables are simple manifestations. A second, related problem is that of data normality where trait items are found to be non-normally distributed. I tested for data normality using both numerical and graphical methods and in all cases, neither bivariate nor multivariate normality could be established. Illustrative results from normality tests of leader traits in the 2007 Danish election show that the assumption of multivariate normality is clearly violated (Table 3.1) with further evidence shown graphically in Figure 3.1 Normally distributed data by default requires continuous data but trait items are discrete variables and hence a normal distribution can no longer be assumed, which would justify the use of a nonparametric approach to scaling.

Table 3.1: Test for multivariate normality of leader traits (Denmark, 2007)

Test	*Test-statistic*	*Chi-square*	*Significance*
Mardia Skewness	2.89	1661.67	$p < 0.000$
Mardia Kurtosis	58.99	1082. 86	$p < 0.000$
Henze-Zirkler	21.62	15163.18	$p < 0.000$
Doornik-Hansen		1026.80	$p < 0.000$

Figure 3.1: Kernel density plot for leader traits (Denmark, 2007)



3.5.2. Mokken Scale Analysis: a nonparametric approach to scaling

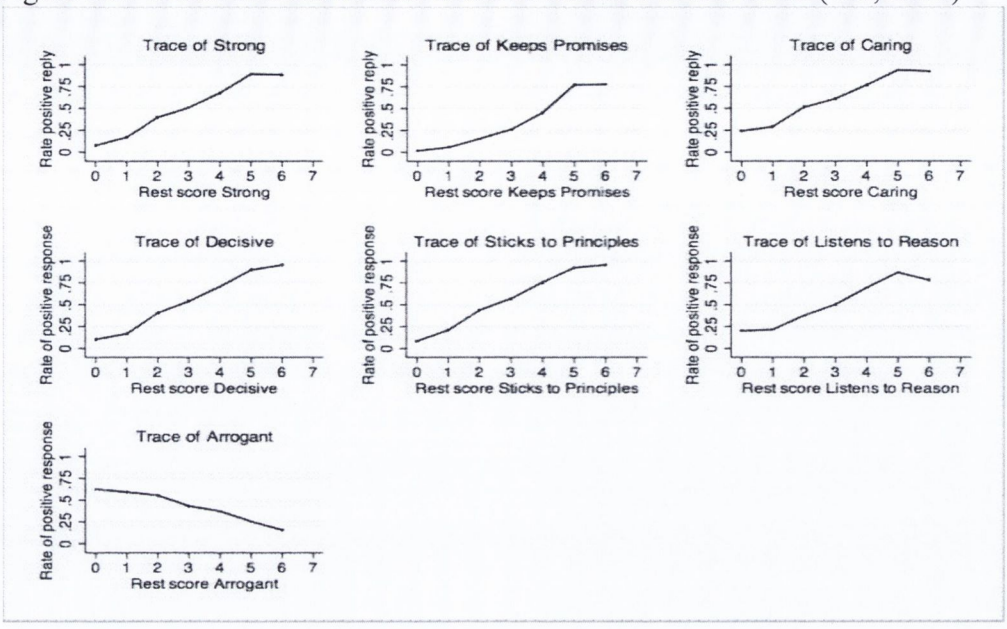
Item-response theory has potential advantages over factor analysis and will provide even more compelling evidence in favour of a unidimensional structure of trait items. A nonparametric approach to scaling imposes less stringent assumptions on the data. Its substantial advantage over factor analysis is that it discards fewer items, keeps the item pool larger and thereby saves valuable work. Nonparametric item response models no longer require interval level measurement, allow for a monotone increasing function and keep the item pool as large as possible as it may keep items considered not to be unidimensional under a parametric model (van der Heijden et al., 2003). One such nonparametric method is the Mokken model, which was first developed for dichotomous items by Mokken (1982; 1971, 1997) and later extended to cover polytomous items (Molenaar, 1991, 1997). It has been quite frequently applied in its country of origin (The Netherlands) and has the key advantage of being

applicable to categorical as well as ordinal data. Its purpose is to validate the measurement of a latent variable by applying a bottom-up hierarchical clustering procedure, known as Mokken Scale Procedure (MSP). In the search to construct a *scale*, defined as a set of items that measures the same latent trait, it seeks to verify the so-called monotone homogenous model of Mokken (MHMM).[26] Mokken scales are composed of items that satisfy three assumptions. The response to items is explained only by the common latent trait and items measure only one latent trait (*unidimensionality*). Second, item responses are independent conditional on the unidimensional latent variable (*local independence*). And third, expected item scores are monotone non-decreasing functions of the latent concept which can be checked by inspecting traces (*monotonicity*) (Mokken, 1971, 1997; Molenaar, 1991, 1997).[27] For the last assumption to be valid, individual trait items are supposed to be increasing functions of the hypothesised latent construct and traces should increase if the assumption is met. Considering that this paper seeks to verify the presence of an underlying construct of leader sympathy, a respondent is expected to score higher on a given trait question which would indicate higher favourability as all trait items are coded so that a lower bound corresponds to the absence of a given trait while a higher bound of one indicates the presence or highest possible rating on a given trait. For dichotomous items, it is more common to use the rest score (score compared to all other items) as shown for the 2001 UK data in Figure 3.2. In most instances, there is a monotone increase in traces for individual trait items. Of course, this does not hold for the negative trait 'arrogant' which is expected to show a decrease in trace lines considering that a respondent scoring high on that scale is expected to score lower on the latent likeability trait and hence a decrease in the trace line for 'arrogant'.

[26] For a more detailed discussion of this approach, please refer to Appendix C.

[27] The model of double monotonicity is a more restrictive approach. It also assumes that item response functions do not intersect. This implies that a set of items can be interpreted similarly for all respondents, regardless of their level on the latent trait. When inspecting traces, lines should not intersect for the model to be doubly monotone.

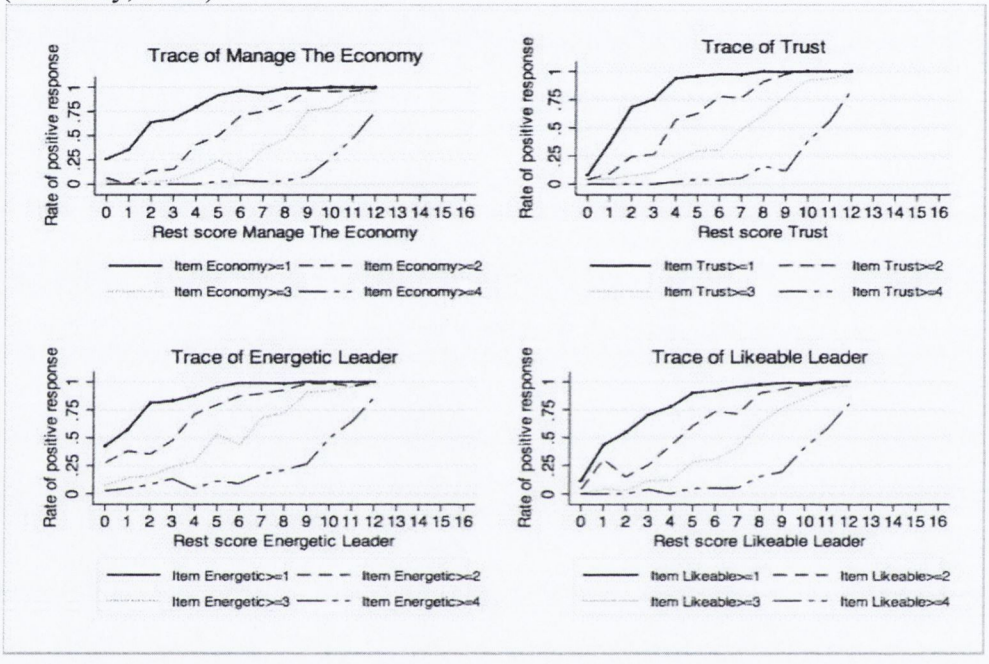
Figure 3.2: Traces of dichotomous items as function of rest score (UK, 2001)



Originally, the Mokken model was developed for dichotomous data but the analysis has been generalised to polytomous items with three or more ordered response categories (Molenaar, 1991, 1997). The notion of an item step is crucial in a multicategory approach. Each item is assumed to have m+1 ordered response categories and an item step is defined as a step between two adjacent categories of an item and within each item, item steps are dependent. From this item step characteristic curves (ISCC) are derived that describe the relationship between the latent construct of leader likeability and the likelihood that an item step is made, namely moving from the lower bound of zero, indicating a trait does not fit a leader at all up to a higher score, suggesting a leader is rated more highly on that trait. A set of polytomous items is called monotone homogenous (MH) if such curves are monotone non-decreasing functions. Figure 3.3 presents cumulative traces as a function of the rest scores. Again, it is shown that traces are monotone increasing functions of the underlying construct of leader likeability. An important implication of meeting the MH criterion is that the latent construct is a monotone function of the sum score. The scalability coefficient developed for dichotomous items can thus be easily generalised to multicategory items. In the context of multiple response categories, Guttman errors refer to the level of item steps: an error is found when a respondent

succeeds on a comparatively difficult item step but fails to succeed on an easier step regarding another item. The multicategory scalability coefficient thus states the presence of such errors in comparison to the null hypothesis of statistical independence among the remaining items (Sijtsma, Debets, & Molenaar, 1990; Sijtsma & Verweij, 1992).

Figure 3.3: Cumulative traces of polytomous items as function of rest score (Germany, 1998)



Using a nonparametric Mokken model is appropriate here given that parametric models rely on rather strong assumptions such as data normality and interval-level measurement. Moreover, trait variables are assumed to be linearly related to the obtained factors which is likely to be violated if items have binary response scales. Using Mokken Scale Analysis is regarded as a complementary method to that of factor analysis as it imposes fewer restrictions on the data. Moreover, it has the key advantage of being applicable to both dichotomous and polytomous items. For the analysis of dichotomous item scores, first, tetrachoric correlation matrices were calculated from the stacked data matrix. For the analysis of polytomous items, polychoric correlations were calculated. These matrices were then analysed using an exploratory factor analysis. Orthogonal rotation simplifies the factor structure and thus makes interpretation

easier and more reliable.[28] In a second testing, the structure of trait items was evaluated using Mokken Scale Analysis.

3.6. Results from EFA and MSP

Results from an exploratory factor analysis when taking into account the measurement level of trait items suggests a rather different number of dimensions than often proposed in the literature. Individual factor loadings are shown in Table C2 in Appendix C while Table 3.2 provides Eigenvalues and coefficients of scalability for EFA and MSP results, respectively. The left panel of Table 3.2 summarises results from an exploratory factor analysis on tetrachoric and polychoric correlation matrices.

Looking at EFA results first shows that in almost all cases, traits load strongly onto a single factor which would contradict empirical findings so far that do not take into account the measurement level of trait items. However, there are a few exceptions to this rule. For instance, there are two distinct dimensions for the 1993 and 1996 Australian elections, the 1993 Canadian election, the 2002 New Zealand election and the 1983 British election. Except for the 1993 Australian elections, all of these cases include a negative trait such as 'arrogant' or 'aggressive' which either load negatively onto a factor (Australia 1996, New Zealand 199, UK 2001) or together load onto a separate factor altogether (Canada 1993). The 1993 and 1996 Australian elections appear to be the only ones that would support existing empirical findings as two distinct dimensions emerge, one tapping into competence ('strong', 'knowledgeable', 'intelligent' and 'inspiring') and a second one tapping into character and personality ('moral', 'compassionate', 'decent' (1993 only), 'dependable', 'reliable', 'sensible' and 'honest' (1996 only)). 'Arrogant' loads negatively onto the latter dimension in 1996 (factor loading = -0.63). Canada is a more unusual case. In 1993, 'trustworthy' and 'strong' load onto one dimension whereas 'arrogant' and 'aggressive' form a separate dimension. In 1997, all traits, including 'arrogant', albeit negatively and rather weakly (factor loading = -0.48), load

[28] Using oblique rotation does not substantially alter the results.

onto the same factor. Likewise for the 2002 New Zealand election, 'strong' and 'trustworthy' load onto a first factor whereas 'arrogant' strongly loads onto a second one. Dichotomous trait items in the 1983 British election load onto two dimensions which might be summarised as personal- ('caring', 'likeable', 'listens to reason') and performance-related ('determined', 'shrewd', 'tough', 'decisive', 'principled'). Finally, 'arrogant' loads negatively onto the sympathy factor in 2001 (factor loading = -0.58). As for the remaining countries and election years, it is shown that when running an exploratory factor analysis on tetrachoric and polychoric correlation matrices, the structure of traits appears to be unidimensional. Such a finding would challenge existing empirical results on the structure of traits which, in most instances, argues for at least a two-dimensional structure of items. However, taken into account the level of measurement, leader images all load onto one single factor which may be summarised as a simple likeability factor. Equally important is such a finding when viewed comparatively. The stacked data matrix allows for an analysis of trait items irrespective of individual leader characteristics such as incumbency status or length of time in office. Since the principal goal of this paper is to determine the structure of trait items more generally, it would be justified to analyse traits independent of party leader characteristics. This way, it is shown that when acknowledging the level of measurement and except for a few cases, leader traits strongly load onto a single factor. This holds across countries and election years. Such a finding is also interesting in light of a social-cognitive approach to candidate appraisal which assumes that the way voters evaluate candidates is similar to that of everyday impression formation (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Political leaders are simply treated as 'normal people' and the way voters assess their overall likeability mimics that of forming an opinion about others on a daily basis.

Table 3.2: Eigenvalues (EFA) and coefficients of scalability (MSP)

	Exploratory Factor Analysis		*Mokken Scale Procedure*	
	Factor1	*Factor2*	*Scale 1*	*Scale 2*
Australia				
1993	4.61	3.20	0.63	
1996	4.93	3.37	0.58	
1998	7.71		0.72	
2001	6.16		0.72	
2004	5.63		0.66	
2007	6.34		0.66	
2010	6.59		0.70	
Canada				
1988	2.68		0.54	
1993	1.72	1.51	0.47	0.39
1997	2.59		0.43	
2006	1.61		0.62	
Denmark				
2007	4.25		0.64	
Germany				
1998	3.06		0.66	
2002	3.14		0.69	
2005	5.07		0.57	
2009	3.15		0.69	
Ireland				
2002	2.30		0.66	
2007	2.20		0.61	
2011	2.23		0.63	
New Zealand				
1990	4.61		0.55	
1999	3.04		0.69	
2002	1.58	1.15	0.59	
2005	1.87		0.66	
Spain				
1993	3.05		0.59	
2004	4.95		0.65	
Sweden				
1991	2.49		0.48	
1998	3.03		0.49	
2002	4.18		0.53	
2006	3.59		0.44	
UK				
1983	3.38	2.41	0.48	0.49
1992	2.62		0.42	
2001	4.44		0.50	
2005	2.43		0.73	
2010	1.83		0.84	

Notes: Eigenvalues shown for EFA, coefficients of scalability (H^S) shown for MSP.

In a second step, trait items were reanalysed using Mokken Scale Procedure. If the structure of traits is truly unidimensional, tapping into the likeability of a given leader, there should be additional support for this hypothesis when using a nonparametric approach to item response theory. Coefficients of scalability H^S were computed from the stacked data matrix and are shown in the right panel of Table 3.2.[29] In general, MSP findings provide even more compelling evidence in favour of a strong single dimension. Leaving aside cases where negative traits are included, all trait items form a strong unidimensional scale, confirming results obtained from EFA earlier. The strength of a Mokken scale is measured by the coefficient of scalability H^S. A coefficient smaller than 0.3 means a Mokken scale has poor scalability properties. If it ranges between 0.3 and 0.4, it is considered weak while a score between 0.4 and 0.5 would suggest medium scalability properties. If it exceeds 0.5, it is viewed as a strong scale (Loevinger, 1948, 1957; Mokken, 1971; Sijtsma et al., 1990). All coefficients of scalability show reasonably strong scaling properties, ranging from a medium 0.43 in some cases to a strong 0.84 in others. If only one negative trait is included it is usually dropped from the scale, when no pair of items among the remaining ones reaches the critical value of 0.3 (Canada 1997, New Zealand 1999, 2002, 2005, Australia 1996, UK 2001).[30] This is to be expected considering that arrogance and aggressiveness are traits much less likely to be associated with a person's overall likeability. Where more than two negative traits are included, for example in the 1993 Canadian election study, such traits form a separate scale ($H^S = 0.39$). This would suggest that including positive and negative traits might not be useful if the goal is to identify underlying trait

[29] I have first checked for MHMM and DMHMM assumptions. The monotonicity assumption is confirmed in all of the cases. All three assumptions of IRT (unidimensionality, local independence and monotonicity) have been verified. However, an inspection of the non-intersection of P matrices curves has shown that several criteria are well above the critical value of 80. The model followed by the data is therefore more likely to be monotone rather than double monotone.

[30] Rescaling such traits so that a lower score means it describes a leader very well and a higher score indicates that such a trait does not fit them very well yields the following results. For the UK and New Zealand, all traits now form a uniform scale and load onto the same factor. In the case of Canada, 'arrogant' loads positively, albeit weakly, onto the sympathy factor (factor loading = 0.49) in 1997 but is still dropped from the Mokken Scale after rescaling. In 1993, 'aggressive' and 'arrogance' still load onto a separate factor. As regards Australia, 'arrogant' is dropped from the Mokken Scale but now loads positively onto a character factor (factor loading = 0.63). Full results after rescaling 'negative' traits can be found in Table C3 in Appendix C.

dimensions. Kinder (1980) also points to this problem, while a later study suggests that such traits often load onto distinct factors (Abelson, Kinder, Peters, & Fiske, 1982). They also show that positive and negative traits are relatively independent of each other, arguing that "feeling good things about a political leader does not imply the absence of bad feelings" (1982, p. 623). The 1983 British election appears to be the only outlier here. Similar to the EFA, MSP has produced two separate scales. The character Mokken scale has an H^S coefficient of 0.49, and the competence scale of 0.48. The average coefficient of scalability across elections and countries is a strong 0.6, which would suggest that trait items form a strong unidimensional scale. Such a finding would further contradict the wider literature on candidate and leader images which for the most part favours the presence of a two-, three- or four-dimensional structure of trait items.

3.7. Conclusion

Taking into consideration that party leaders have arguably assumed a greater role in the decision-making process of the electorate, researchers have sought to explain not just how they matter but also what it is that makes them more or less likeable. Investigating the performance of traits in explaining vote choice is one interesting avenue to explore. Yet, the structure of traits and how voters try to organise images into meaningful dimensions is of equal importance and no agreement has been reached regarding the number and content of such underlying trait structures. The dimensionality of candidate traits has received substantial attention in the American literature but little empirical work has been done on comparative leader traits beyond that. This paper set out to challenge the notion that images form two-, three- or even four dimensions based on the fact that these works have ignored the level of measurement as well as violated fundamental assumptions associated with data-reduction techniques. Moreover, existing research on the structure of traits has failed to provide a comprehensive theoretical discussion of why voters are expected to organise information about political candidates into multiple categories. Insights from social cognitive and person perception theories have resulted in rather different expectations regarding voters' capabilities to think in multiple

dimensions. Voters are rational actors who seek to minimise costs and efforts in becoming informed while maximising their expected utilities. From this perspective, becoming fully informed is regarded as too costly and time-consuming and voters simply use traits to learn about whether they like a given leader or not. Empirical studies suggest that traits serve as heuristic devices to help voters make up their mind about political candidates (Sniderman et al., 1993). This paper set out to explore this further by investigating the structure of leader traits with the expectation of finding a single factor-solution that taps into a leader's overall likeability.

Running an exploratory factor analysis and a Mokken model on a stacked data matrix of leader images has resulted in several interesting findings. First, given the contentious issue of how trait images load onto different factors or form underlying dimensions, both data-reduction techniques have demonstrated that aside from a few exceptions, which in most cases include negative traits, trait items strongly load onto one factor and form a strong single dimension. It was suggested that empirical works have disregarded the level of measurement and have violated basic assumptions such as data normality and therefore a conclusive result regarding the number and content of trait dimensions has not been reached. Moreover, the use of a stacked data matrix where each trait assessment is viewed as a separate case to be explained has made it possible to analyse trait dimensions independent of other leader characteristics. Such an approach is believed to be justified here because the main focus was on settling on the number of trait dimensions more generally rather than looking at a particular trait intrinsic to a given leader. It also allows for a more comparative assessment of trait images considering that the same data structure has been used for all countries and election years. Although findings presented here contradict conventional wisdom that different traits tap into distinctly different dimensions, such as character and competence, such a finding is not necessarily surprising. Funk (1996, p. 70) maintains "that the distinctive aspects of candidate images in a specific electoral context influence how overall evaluations are formed". She gathers further evidence on the causal direction, arguing that the arrow runs from trait judgements to global evaluations. If trait images inform overall evaluations, it does not come as much of a surprise that

leader traits load strongly onto a single factor which reflects a simple likeability dynamic. Whether that sympathy refers to a notion of competence or character, after all, voters vote for a party whose leader they like rather than for one they dislike. And they arrive at such a decision by summing up all of their positive and negative aspects and opt for the one with the maximum net total, i.e. the leader they like the most.

Future research into the structure of leader traits and candidate images should take into consideration the level of measurement of survey items. Moreover, nonparametric approaches to investigating dimensionality should be used as a robustness check on factor analytic results to provide more compelling evidence in favour of a proposed data structure. This paper has shown that when taking into account the nature of trait items and situating the logic of candidate appraisal within a more comprehensive theoretical framework to provide a more consistent argument as to why to expect a single dimension, trait items strongly form a unidimensional structure. This challenges existing studies that either fail to theoretically reinforce their argument of expecting multiple dimensions or opt for the wrong factor analytic method given the measurement level of trait items.

Can leader images decide over victory and defeat in parliamentary elections? Counterfactual thought experiments of leader effects in nine countries

Abstract

Party leaders have arguably become an increasingly important electoral influence in their own right and common sense suggests that this is in large part due to their personal qualities. The paper draws from political marketing and impression management theory and links it with the knowledge of leader effects. It sets out to test the assumption that leaders' personality profiles can make a difference in electoral contests by running counterfactual thought experiments on how an election would have turned out if an unsuccessful leader had been perceived to possess individual traits in the same proportions as the winning one in that election. Post-election survey data from nine parliamentary systems show that when personality profiles are highly polarised between two competing leaders, aggregate direct leader effects are much stronger but very rarely decisive for the overall outcome of the election.

4.1. Introduction

Almost every informal conversation during election campaigns makes reference to personality traits and characteristics of individual politicians in one way or another. Tony Blair was seen to be a dynamic and vibrant party leader when he took office as Prime Minister in 1997. In Germany, many who had become weary of an old and tired Chancellor Kohl at the end of his third electoral term were looking for a more charismatic leader in his then challenger Gerhard Schröder. Some twenty years later, Kohl's protégé Angela Merkel is today referred to as the 'mother of the nation' cultivating the image of a "prudent, pragmatic and down-to-earth leader" (Hewitt, 2013). Meanwhile in Canada, likeability has been identified as a significant asset in politics where recently elected leader of the Liberal Party Justin Trudeau turns out to be the most likeable of all which is nicely reflected in his party's renewed popularity (G. Stevens, 2014). Such observations beg the vital question of whether parliamentary elections have turned into beauty contests considering that party leaders have virtually become the face of election campaigns. Has the question of 'which party will win' turned into 'which leader will win'? Discussing election results in personality terms would certainly speak to parliamentary elections having turned into highly personalised battlefields where a leader's public image can arguably decide over victory and defeat in narrowly contested elections. This paper sets out to test this assumption framed within a theory of impression management and political marketing as well as drawing insights from consumer research behaviour. Media consultants, opinion poll companies, campaign officials and even politicians themselves agree on the importance of personal characteristics and their possible effect on voting behaviour and thus much time and money is invested in running candidate-centred campaigns. Taking a market-oriented approach to understanding contemporary political campaigning and its effect on voting behaviour seems almost inevitable as more and more countries have witnessed a professionalisation of election campaigns where market research in the form of public opinion polling and focus groups have become instrumental in informing parties about the type of leadership voters are looking for.

This paper aims to investigate the extent to which voters base their vote choice on a leader's personality profile, with a particular focus on how this may affect the overall outcome of an election. It will do so by employing counterfactual thought experiments on post-election survey data from nine parliamentary countries, covering a total of thirty-three elections. This strategy follows the logic of 'What if?' questions, shedding light on how an election would have turned out if the losing leader had been perceived to possess individual traits in the same proportions as the winning leader in a given election. If party leaders are believed to affect vote choice to a much greater extent than previously believed, this should be in large part due to their perceived personality profiles (Blondel, 1987). This paper will investigate whether this is indeed the case and whether having the 'right' leader can enhance a party's electoral fortune at the polls. Considering the fact that this dissertation so far has found very little empirical support for the proposition that presidentialisation can be observed at the electoral level in parliamentary systems, it therefore remains to be seen whether leadership-based voting has any bearing on the aggregate level.

The paper proceeds as follows. Drawing from political marketing and impression management theory, it is argued that a change from party to 'perception politics' has resulted in an intensified focus on traits and individual characteristics at the expense of collective identities where style and image, rather than (political) content have come to play a more important role. The next section will discuss empirical evidence on candidate images and leader traits thus far, followed by an outline of the analytical strategy employed in this paper. Empirical findings will be presented next and the paper will conclude with a discussion of the results along with some limitations.

4.2. 'Perception politics' and contemporary political campaigning

Traditional theories of voting behaviour contend that vote choice is firmly structured alongside long-term predispositions and the location of the voter within social structures was regarded as a key predictor of vote choice (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Campbell et al., 1960). Affiliations with political parties were arguably the single most important factor in

explaining people's voting behaviour over time. For so long as political parties were regarded as fulfilling the role of structuring people's electoral decision-making processes, little explanatory credit was granted to individual candidates and their perceived personality profile. In times of strong partisan loyalties, political campaigning was centred on the party as a collective identity and its role in aggregating interests of distinct societal groups. Media coverage of election campaigns was not as extensive as it is today and so grass roots, door-to-door canvassing was considered vital in getting the party's message across. Campaigning was thus less focused on voter conversion, on trying to get people out to vote or even on convincing swing voters to reconsider their vote choice, but rather on mobilising and reinforcing those that already held strong partisan views (McAllister, 2007). However, traditional party models have been challenged in recent years and the rise of candidate-centred politics has coincided with the advent of a change in how politics is presented to the electorate (Swanson & Mancini, 1996; Wattenberg, 1991). Modernisation, technological advancements and an increasingly visual culture have resulted in novel ways of political communication where style and image have grown in importance at the expense of political content (B. Newman, 1999a, 1999b). Voters are encouraged to form impressions based on a leader's physical appearance and political conduct, resulting in rather different ways of voter persuasion in an era of 'perception politics' (De Landtsheer & De Vries, 2013; De Landtsheer et al., 2005; B. Newman, 1999a).

4.2.1. Decision-making under 'perception politics': peripheral cue-taking

No longer are voters assumed to take the more *central* route, caring about and carefully deliberating the issues at stake but rather follow a *peripheral* course of action, taking cues from campaign events and the image it portrays of key political figures (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b). Attitude changes based on the former are arguably more enduring and predictive of individual behaviour whereas persuasion via the peripheral route is considered temporary and less predictive (Petty & Cacioppo, 1980). Choosing which route to take is in large

part determined by an individual's underlying motivation, their interest to engage in politics as well as their cognitive abilities to efficiently process political information that is considered personally relevant to them. Voters have often been shown to demonstrate low cognitive skills when it comes to processing political information (Converse, 1964) and are in need of novel ways to make up for their lack of detailed information (Lupia, 1994; Lupia & McCubbins, 1998). Therefore, voters are nowadays much less likely to follow the central route to persuasion, which was traditionally based on careful, often partisan-oriented considerations, but follow the peripheral way based on simple cues from and attitudes towards political objects without having to extensively think about issue- or party-related arguments. However, neither the central nor the peripheral route alone can explain the variety of observed opinion changes considering that some voters are genuinely interested in becoming informed and engage in political debates whereas others are best described as 'pragmatic cognitive misers' (Stroh, 1995) who take very little interest in their political surroundings (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). What distinguishes these groups is their *level of involvement*, which is regarded as a "moderator of the amount and type of information processing elicited by a persuasive communication" (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983, p. 136). In other words, the question of whether voters follow a central or peripheral route to persuasion depends on their level of involvement and interest in politics more generally. Under *high* involvement, voters are much more likely to make an effort in evaluating issue-based arguments during election campaigns and their attitudes towards political objects are a direct consequence of how they process such information. If involvement is *low*, then political views are much more likely to be based on simple cues such as someone's physical appearance or political conduct rather than being influenced by the quality of a party's political message. In studying the moderating role of involvement in their impact on central and peripheral cue taking, Petty et al. (1983) demonstrate that the physical appearance of product endorsers provides convincing evidence for the product's effectiveness as well as a peripheral cue under low involvement conditions. Applied to the context of voting behaviour, this means that a leader's degree of likeability or credibility might be more important to voters that lack sufficient motivation and interest to engage in political debates and deliberations and hence voters are

much more likely to follow peripheral cues as a more economical way of becoming informed. They engage in more practical thinking about politics summarised nicely by Popkin's (1991) concept of low information rationality, or 'gut reasoning'. As a result of intense media coverage of election campaigns, voters are constantly exposed to political information about issues, parties and individual candidates, and it arguably saves them valuable time and energy to rely on simple cues rather than carefully deliberate and think about every little detail contained in political messages. And in light of an ever more personalised style of politics, personality features and character traits of party leaders rather than the performance of parties arguably functions quite well as such a shortcut (Bartels, 1996; Bittner, 2011; Lupia & McCubbins, 1998).

4.3. Political marketing and impression management: creating the 'right' leader image

No longer can parties rely on their strong voter base but they now have to enhance their prospects of winning electoral support on something (or somebody?) else. They have responded to the consequences of 'perception politics' in several ways, most noticeably by taking into account that information is best conveyed via their party leaders in order to market political choices most effectively (Mughan, 2000; Swanson & Mancini, 1996). Traditional forms of party political campaigning such as volunteer-based rallying at constituency levels have been replaced by taking on advice from professional spin-doctors, advertising experts and those specialising in political communication more generally to appeal to as wide an electoral base as possible. Televised leadership debates and party political broadcasts reach a much wider audience than simple door-to-door canvassing while party websites and social media outlets such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* have recently witnessed a steady increase in usage.

The content of political messages alongside its effects on vote choice has also undergone significant transformations (Norris, 2000). Political ideas and ideologies are no longer conveyed via party manifestos; neither are they

discussed at local campaign rallies. Rather, they are carefully crafted and circulated to reach as many potential voters as possible. The cue that seemed to have been in a party's name, much like the brand of a product, has lost its power in anchoring the electorate, and parties are much more concerned about ways in which political messages are delivered and *who gets to deliver them* in the first place. Proposed in the context of celebrity endorsement effects, source credibility models theorise that a person's trustworthiness, charisma and (political) expertise strongly affects how a message is transferred and thus perceived by its target audience (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Sternthal, Phillips, & Ruby, 1978). As a result, a leader's popularity ideally translates into increased electoral chances for their party, as can be seen for instance in the Conservative Party's enhanced public standing shortly after David Cameron assumed the role as party leader (Smith & French, 2009). If traits are found to affect the delivery and subsequent reception of a political message, then this should also have an impact on how the ultimate source of that message (i.e. the party) is perceived.

A change in political communications strategies has coincided with an increased interest in the importance of impression management (D. Newman, 2014). Forced to adapt to such changes, political parties have quickly become experts in employing impression management strategies and have identified numerous avenues to carefully craft and promote a leader's overall impression. Control over the flow of political information (both over the content and carrier of the message) and a variety of symbolic devices are important tools at the disposal of political parties to help position themselves in the political market (Hall, 1990). B. Newman (1999a) has identified several image-crafting tools and analysed the way in which they are assumed to enhance a leader's impression as perceived by the electorate. For instance, it is essential to convey a single and clear message to the electorate, and political parties go to great lengths when it comes to presenting their political message in the correct light.[31] Moreover, a theory of trait ownership as proposed by Hayes (2005)

[31] For instance, former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown hired a former BBC producer to join his already extensive PR advisers' team in 2008. Ed Miliband, current leader of the Labour Party in the UK, hired political strategist and ex-Obama adviser David Axelrod to join his team of political experts.

argues that candidates may gain an electoral advantage if they successfully trespass on their challenger's trait territory, a particularly effective strategy when pursued during election campaigns. Appealing to voters' emotions and reasoning in the form of relational communication to develop strong emotional ties with specific voter segments is also considered a key component of crafting successful images. For instance, Pfau and Rang (1991) find that relational messages conveyed during election campaigns enhance a candidate's appeal and in particular may contribute to their persuasiveness in political debates. And in light of the fact that strong partisan loyalties have waned, political parties, much like advertising for a new product, take a strong interest in (politically) marketing their leaders' image in the hope of translating it into electoral support.

Having adopted far more sophisticated political marketing techniques, parties and individual politicians alike have firmly entered a new era of campaigning and electioneering, relying on knowledge and expertise from brand managers to advance their overall image as perceived by the electorate. Political branding is often seen as a calculated strategy pursued by many political actors with the aim of delivering a clear and concise message to the voter (Scammell, 1995, 1999). In a media-intense and highly personalised campaign environment, a leader's image is much easier to identify and communicate than a party's complex policy programme (Semetko, 1996). Elections can quickly turn into complex political landscapes but voters still need shortcuts to help them simplify their political surroundings. Originally developed by Campbell et al. (1960, p. 133), party identification "raises a perceptual screen through which the individual tends to see what is favorable to his partisan orientation." Traditionally, party labels were regarded as affective tags, evoking certain reactions upon encountering them and causing voters to express their support for them at the polls. Partisan loyalties have an impact on how voters evaluate candidates, what they think of the government's performance and how they perceive political events more generally. However, Garzia (2013b) has shown that partisan loyalties are nowadays strongly influenced by voters' attitudes towards party leaders. Thus, the concept of a perceptual screen translates well to how voters view their political surroundings, strongly influenced by what

they think of individuals rather than collective identities. As a result, a leader's overall image and how it is perceived in the voter's mind may serve as a vital source of political information, a role traditionally assumed by political parties.

Political leaders have taken an interest in various impression management tactics with the aim of creating 'marketable images' by gaining control over what kinds of conclusions people draw from their public appearance and political conduct, and seeking to convey the message of being the best electoral choice on the political menu. This suggests that party leaders are well aware of their self-presentation and thus actively engage in political impression management tactics to improve their public standing. Constantly working on and making use of their rhetorical powers as well as attaching great importance to their overall public appearance and political conduct (by keeping a close eye on results from public opinion research) are seen as essential components in ensuring their viability in the political market.

The fact that individual politicians have actively sought professional insights into political marketing strategies by spending considerable time and effort in conveying the 'right' impression hints at their expectation that their image may matter to how people cast their ballot, suggesting that winning without setting political candidates in the correct light is nowadays almost unimaginable. Landtsheer, De Vries, and Vertessen (2008, p. 229) put it bluntly when they state that "politics is run by the rules of business and marketing. [...] Political candidates who do not play by these rules will almost certainly be defeated." This begs the vital question of whether political impression management is an imminent threat to democracy as political content and substance is replaced by style and marketable images. Sabato (1981) for instance argues that an increasing focus on (leader) images trivialises the political debate and narrows its agenda as it promotes those with the right public appearance and those media-savvy enough to modify it to their advantage. Likewise, Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) warn of a "mediatization" as a challenge to democracy, arguing that as a result ordinary citizens will turn into political consumers. However, they conclude that although political institutions are increasingly influenced by mass media, they still retain the upper hand in managing key political

processes. There appears to be a mismatch between some basic tenets of democracy and the tools used for political impression management but at the end of the day, parties and their leaders will have to deliver concrete policy outcomes, regardless of their image perceptions. Catering to voter demands after all involves a combination of efficient performance, successful organisation and mastering the art of rhetoric. If voters become dissatisfied with how political candidates are struggling to strike such a balance, they can simply opt for ejection. Besides, many researchers studying the impact of traits on vote choice have come to the conclusion that voting on the basis of a candidate's or a leader's image is far from being irrational or superficial and should not be regarded as a threat to democracy (Bean & Mughan, 1989; Garzia, 2013a; Miller et al., 1986). It is also worth noting that traits such as 'compassionate' and 'caring' are certainly not leader qualities without political implications. Voters might reasonably think of such traits in terms of whether leaders are willing to provide kinder, gentler government in the sense that they are concerned for the less well off. Personal, non-political traits are still politically relevant qualities and it is not irrational for voters to take them into consideration when deciding how to vote in the same way as it would be irrational to consider how well a leader is dressed.[32]

Not set in stone, a leader's image is malleable and responsive to those taking an interest in carefully crafting the image of an 'ideal party leader'. Trait inferences serve the vital role of allowing voters to make sense of the complexities of their political surroundings while also helping them to calculate future events. This begs the vital question of whether all this time and effort invested in creating the right image is paying off. Put differently, do personality profiles as perceived by the electorate matter to individual choice and overall election outcomes? In today's highly personalised campaign environment where party leaders predominantly set the tone to get their party's political message across, voters are more and more inclined to take cues from their personality traits and individual characteristics to learn about how they will

[32] I would like to thank Professor Michael Gallagher for making this observation on an earlier draft of this paper.

perform in office (Funk, 1997; Kinder & Abelson, 1981; S. Popkin et al., 1976). The fact that political candidates invest such considerable time and effort in conveying the right impression hints at their expectation that their image matters to vote choice. If this is indeed the case, common sense would suggest that this is in large part due to their personal qualities (Blondel, 1987). With this in mind, the following will review empirical studies with a particular focus on answering the question of whether leader traits matter to vote choice and overall election outcomes.

4.4. Leader traits and their impact on vote choice: empirical evidence

Bean and Mughan's (1989) seminal paper on leadership effects in parliamentary elections was one of the earliest studies that addresses the performance of leader traits in explaining vote choice outside the context of presidential elections. In their analysis of the 1983 Australian and 1987 British elections, they identify 'listening to reason', 'effective', 'caring' and 'sticking to principles' as having the most substantive importance across leaders in the UK and Australia. They follow what King (2002) describes as a counterfactual experiment, exploring simple 'What if?' questions: what if leaders were regarded as a blank sheet or viewed by neutral observers purged of partisan preferences and ideological predispositions? Using such questions, they seek to investigate how

> "elections would have turned out had the unsuccessful leaders (Howard and Foot respectively) been perceived to possess the range of leadership qualities in the same proportions as their more successful counterparts, Hawke and Thatcher" (Bean & Mughan, 1989, p. 1174).

They find that even in parliamentary elections, having the "right" leader can result in substantial vote gains and that the variation in the distribution of characteristics may even explain the difference between victory and defeat in the 1987 Australian election. In a similar vein, Garzia (2013a) finds that an analysis of Italian elections shows that political candidates may gain votes –

and at times win elections – due to the way in which their personality profile is perceived by the electorate. Ohr and Oscarsson (2003, p. 23; emphasis in original) study the content of leader traits and their possible influence on voters' judgements of overall leader evaluations. Analysing traits from the US, Australia, Sweden and Germany, they find that "*politically relevant and performance related leader traits are important criteria for voters' political judgements and decisions*" and that non-political traits such as physical attractiveness exert rather weak effects on leaders' overall evaluations and vote choice. Dinas (2008) analyses the 2004 Greek election which makes for an interesting case study because of a change in the governing party leadership a few months prior to the election. Despite a most favourable environment for leaders to matter, their impact was only marginal. Even though leader evaluations were found to be strong predictors of vote choice at the individual level, they did not impact on the overall election result. Likewise, Bartels (2002, p. 65) in his analysis of the impact of American candidates' traits in US presidential elections finds that "net effects of candidate trait assessments are generally quite modest in magnitude". Also, Bartle and Crewe (2002, p. 93) demonstrate in their analysis of the 1997 UK election, one where one would expect trait images to play a crucial role considering Tony Blair's charismatic appearance as leader of New Labour, that "effects of the party leaders' perceived personal traits were small" and that leaders do not exert a strong influence on election outcomes when accounting for the impact of causally prior variables. Anderson and Brettschneider (2003) also consider Germany as an interesting case study, highlighting the fact that leader effects vary by election and also depend on specific traits as well as the context in which elections are held. They find no increased influence of candidate orientation over time and elections certainly do not appear to have turned into beauty contests. Likewise, Brettschneider, Neller, and Anderson (2006) argue that candidate assessments only had a small impact on shaping voter preferences and effects were largest among weak identifiers. Finally, Wagner and Wessels (2012) discuss the difference between global evaluations and specific leader traits, analysing German election data from 1998-2009. They hypothesise that voters generalise from specific to more general leader judgements, and hence, specific traits have less impact on vote choice than more general views

expressed in overall evaluations. They show that the chancellor preference is more strongly influenced by evaluations than party ID, that party ID indirectly influences overall evaluations via traits with policy-related traits mattering the most. To summarise briefly, leader images can be important to vote choice at the individual level but very rarely have a bearing on the overall outcome of elections. In fact, only research carried out by Bean and Mughan (1989) and Garzia (2013a) demonstrates clear effects at the aggregate level. Therefore, more work is required to determine whether leader images can be decisive in parliamentary systems beyond Australia, the UK and Italy.

The literature on the performance of traits in influencing vote choice in parliamentary systems is flourishing and makes for some promising avenues for further research. Due to the fact that more and more election studies are now incorporating leader (and sometimes party) trait batteries in their questionnaires, data has become much more widely available, albeit at the price of cross-country comparability where frequency, number and type of questions still varies significantly (Bittner, 2007a, 2007b). As a result, little comparative work has been published. This paper seeks to address this issue by analysing the performance of leader traits across nine parliamentary countries using a common coding scheme to provide a more comprehensive answer to the question of whether leader traits can have an effect on overall election outcomes in parliamentary systems. Most empirical studies focus their attention on the individual level, investigating how overall leader evaluations (Clarke et al., 2009; Clarke et al., 2011; Clarke et al., 2004; Lobo, 2006) or individual trait items (Brettschneider et al., 2006; Gidengil et al., 2000; Kinder, 1983; Ohr & Oscarsson, 2003; Schoen & Schumann, 2007; Shephard & Johns, 2008; Stewart & Clarke, 1992) affect vote choice. Surprisingly little research has been dedicated to the impact of leader images at the aggregate level. And those that have are often focused on a single election (Bean & Mughan, 1989; Dinas, 2005, 2008; Garzia, 2013a).

This paper is less concerned with how leaders can indirectly influence a party's political standing, by for instance encouraging a party's ideological reorientation, but rather, it is focused on the impact of leaders' personality

profiles on voters' motivation to support them and consequently on the outcome of elections more generally. The idea is as follows: (a) voters have feelings towards leaders and (b) subsequently form overall evaluations which in turn (c) may influence their individual vote choice. And because such evaluations affect voting behaviour at the individual level, (d) they are also expected to influence entire election outcomes. Assertions (a) and (b) are usually not disputed but when it comes to propositions (c) and (d), academic research has yet to produce consistent findings that would uniformly support or disprove such claims. This paper takes advantage of a rising number of electoral studies that have included questions on leaders' personalities and other personal characteristics and analyses such data using counterfactual thought experiments, thereby assessing how such traits impact on the overall election outcome and expanding on King's (2002) collection of papers published more than ten years ago.[33] The dissertation so far has found very little empirical support for the proposition that presidentialism can be observed at the electoral level in parliamentary systems. The focus thus far has been on the individual level; whether leadership-based voting has any bearing on the aggregate level therefore remains to be tested.

4.5. Choosing the right analytical strategy: improved-prediction strategy or counterfactuals?

It is a simple task to ascertain which leader is most popular. Likewise, it is easy to determine traits that are most highly valued by the electorate. The difficulty however lies in isolating the effect of leader traits from other potentially confounding factors. There are two main methods that address this issue:

[33] Also note the possibility that party's success at the polls is not a consequence of voters' sympathies towards its leader but they owe their success to the weakness of the opposition at the time of the election. For instance, the Christian Democrats in Germany won two consecutive elections despite unfavourable electoral views of its leader Helmut Kohl. Klingemann and Wattenberg (1992) attribute this to a rather weak opposition by the Social Democrats at the time and not necessarily to Kohl's personal appeal as a leader. Moreover, King (2002) maintains that the strength of the German economy during his time in office perhaps also contributed to his apparent success. However, it is argued that approval ratings and trait evaluations are two separate issues to be considered, with the former being subject to economic evaluations and government performance and the latter being less susceptible to such factors.

improved-prediction strategy and *counterfactuals*.[34] The former follows the works of Miller and Shanks (1992, 1996) and proceeds along the following lines. Suppose one already knows a great deal about voters' socio-economic backgrounds, their partisan loyalties, their ideological as well as issue preferences. When taken all these factors into consideration, what does it add to the ability to predict vote choice if additional information is available on what voters think about a particular leader? Put differently, controlling for all (causally) prior factors, how much does the inclusion of leader traits contribute to explaining vote choice? This method then weighs the predictive power of voters' opinions about leader traits against that of their social background and other predispositions and political views (for an example of this approach, see: Bartels, 2002; Dinas, 2005). Alternatively, *counterfactuals* tackle the problem from a different perspective: the image of a given leader is assessed not in light of other features of their party's electoral appeal but rather in light of the appeal they would have had if somebody different had led it, be it an idealised leader, someone from the same party or, even the leader of the opposition, the question being pursued here (for an example of this approach, see: Garzia & Viotti, 2012; Rosema, 2004). While the improved-prediction method is more firmly based on empirical data because it simply explains that voters who hold a leader in high regard are more likely to support their party than those that do not, counterfactuals are considered "analytically riskier" (Crewe & King, 1974, p. 186) despite directly addressing questions that so often form the basis of many political speculations. This analytical strategy is also implicit in typical horse race questions frequently asked in pre-election polls that are targeted at the political forecasting of election outcomes. They usually ask respondents how they would vote if, for instance, the two main parties had not been led by their actual leaders but rather by the leader of the opposition. Trial heat questions often include hypothetical matchups such as the one most recently asked by the UK polling company ComRes (2014), thereby exacerbating the often horse-race like media coverage of election campaigns (Asher, 2012).[35] However, most

[34] A third strategy would be an experimental research design as carried out by Rosenberg, Bohan, McCafferty, and Harris (1986).

[35] The statement was as follows: "I would be more likely to vote for Labour at the next General Election if Tony Blair were party leader".

surveys do not ask questions about different personality profiles of party leaders and so they are 'artificially' constructed along the lines of what would have happened if personalities of the two main party leaders had been swapped. The pioneering work by Bean and Mughan (1989) employs this simple yet powerful analytical method to investigate whether leader images can decide over victory or defeat in parliamentary elections. Their strategy employs counterfactuals and addresses the following research question: *How many votes did a leader win/lose thanks to their personality profile as perceived by the electorate? In other words, what are the net electoral effects of leader traits?*

A note of caution is worth considering before proceeding with the analysis. The idea pursued here essentially suggests that it is possible to separate an incumbent leader's traits from their government performance. This obviously applies to most studies that address the relationship between prime ministerial approval and governing party support (see, for example: Clarke & Stewart, 1995). Lanoue and Headrick (1994) find that how the public evaluates prime ministerial contenders strongly influences their assessment of the government and its performance and that such a relationship is unidirectional in causality (from prime ministerial popularity to government performance). An extreme example, which will be discussed in more detail when looking at electoral consequences of leaders' personality profiles, would be the 2011 Irish general election where the image of Fianna Fáil leader Brian Cowen was abysmal to say the least. But of course, had Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny been leader of that party (which is the central idea behind the counterfactual experiment), his profile would likewise have been as awful. In other words, an incumbent leader's personality profile is somewhat tainted by the performance of their government, and this is especially true given that voters find it much easier to blame individuals rather than collective identities for executive performance because they focus their attention on prime ministers accountable for the government's *collective* delivery in office (Bean & Mughan, 1989; McAllister, 2007). Generally, the correlation between prime ministerial approval and governing party support is found to be rather strong, "thereby perhaps suggesting that the measures of *prime ministerial satisfaction* and *party support* are tapping the *same thing*" (Clarke & Stewart, 1995, p. 156; emphasis added).

However, this paper is not so much concerned with a leader's global evaluation which is often tapped by using prime ministerial satisfaction ratings[36] or overall sympathy questions more generally, but rather takes an interest in their distinct personality profile as captured by individual trait questions. Looking at individual traits rather than global approval evaluations allows for a clearer separation of an incumbent leader's traits from government performance. Of course, this certainly depends on the type of trait being asked: the closer they come to tapping a leader's performance in office (e.g. 'being able to run the country'), rather than their personality (e.g. 'compassionate' or 'caring'), the more strongly they are related to, and possibly tainted by, evaluations of their government's performance in office. Moreover, a unidirectional causal link between approval ratings (Lanoue & Headrick, 1994) and traits more generally (Funk, 1994, 1996; Greene, 2001) has been established which would further allow for the use of counterfactuals as employed here. Finally, the way voters view leaders will be strongly coloured by what they think of the party and its performance in office thus far, which gives reason for including party ID as a control variable to isolate the independent effect of a leader traits vote choice at individual and aggregate levels.

4.6. Data sources, variable coding and methodology

Data comes from nine parliamentary systems that include questions on leader traits and personal characteristics in their post-election surveys. In general, there are two types of question formats. In most instances, respondents are invited to rate leaders of the two largest parties in terms of their perceived qualities, such as competence, trust or knowledge. Such questions typically employ a scale that ranges from zero to five, with a lower bound meaning a trait does not describe a leader at all and an upper bound suggesting that a given trait describes a leader very well. In other cases, respondents are asked whether a given trait describes a leader or not, the choice being a simple dichotomy. To ensure comparability across countries and election years, and to comply with

[36] UK Gallup usually asks the following: "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with X as Prime Minister?"

Bean and Mughan's analytical strategy, all trait items have been recoded to range from zero (= absence of trait in a given leader) to one (= presence of trait in a given leader). For example, the 1991 Swedish election study asked respondents to rate Carl Bildt and Ingvar Carlsson on a four-point scale in terms of how appropriate they consider the term 'inspiring' when thinking about the two leaders. Those saying 'very appropriate' or 'fairly appropriate' are scored a 1 whereas those saying 'not very appropriate' and 'very inappropriate' are scored a 0. Minor cases where response categories include middle, or neutral, options have been coded as 0.5 so as to not lose valuable information.[37] The 1998 German election study provides an illustrative example. Respondents were asked how well a given trait fits a particular leader. Those opting for 'does not apply at all' or 'rather does not apply' are scored a 0 whereas those saying 'more or less applies' or 'completely applies' are scored a 1. However, they also had the possibility of answering 'partly applies/partly does not apply'. Those cases are subsequently given a 0.5 so as to not lose valuable information. The dependent variable vote choice is coded as 1 if respondents voted for the winning party at a given election and 0 otherwise. Those voting for minor parties or opting for 'don't know'/'no answer' alternatives are excluded from the analysis. Considering that leader perceptions are almost certainly a function of voters' partisan loyalties and because identifiers are more likely to view their party's leader in a more positive light, binary control variables in order to isolate the independent effect of a leader's image is also included. They have been coded the same way as the dependent variable so that a score of 1 indicates a respondent's identification with a given party and 0 otherwise. Models are estimated using OLS and all trait variables as well as party ID are entered into the regression models simultaneously.

$$\text{Vote} = f(\text{winning leader's traits, losing leader's traits, PID})$$

[37] Bean and Mughan (1989) face a similar situation. The Leadership Effectiveness Question asked in the 1987 Australian Election Study includes a middle category of 'it depends' which attracted many respondents. They decided to score such cases 0.5 rather than eliminating them from the analysis.

There are two cautionary notes worth considering before proceeding to the analysis. First, the choice of using OLS considering that the dependent variable is dichotomous may be called into question. Logistic regressions would be more appropriate but estimates from both models do not differ substantially. Therefore, equations have been estimated using OLS due to a more straightforward interpretability of regression coefficients which is of particular importance for this exercise because individual trait estimates when obtained using OLS can be interpreted as a percentage change in the probability of voting for the winning leader's party between voters attributing that trait to a given leader and those that do not. OLS as it is used here is a simple linear probability model (LPM) where linear regression is applied to a binary dependent variable. Although such an approach can be criticised on several grounds considering the real chance that probabilities can fall outside the defined zero-one range and the presence of heteroscedastic and non-normal disturbances (Long & Freese, 2005; Wooldridge, 2013), it may still be reasonable to suggest that a dichotomous outcome variable is non-linearly related to predictor variables when increments in the probability of the outcome become marginal at both ends of the distribution. Mood (2010, p. 78; emphasis added) argues that LPM can be chosen over logistic regression "if substantive effects are reported only *at a certain point* of the distribution". This further justifies the use of LPM considering that effects are only reported at the higher end of the distribution, i.e. where vote choice equals one. Because the counterfactual method applied here is solely interested in the sign and magnitude of the effect of leader traits rather than in the non-linearity of their relationship to vote choice *per se*, LPM is certainly suitable for this type of analysis. In addition, results are found to be robust to the choice of estimator where the correlation of predicted values vectors from OLS and logistic regressions are found to be very strong ($r > 0.95$).

The second point is concerned with the effect of the analytical strategy adopted here. A zero-sum methodology as used by Dinas (2005, 2008) and Bartels (2002) follows a different coding scheme where each variable is coded so that a score of one is given to the winning leader if he or she is perceived as being honest or competent whereas a score of minus one is awarded if the losing

leader is perceived in such a way. A score of zero is given if both or neither is perceived as being honest or competent. When estimating OLS models, the intercept then reflects relative leaders' ratings by voters who score zero on all remaining variables, i.e. those that take a neutral stance on a given leader. The coding scheme in this paper follows that of Bean and Mughan (1989, p. 1177) who rightly argue that such a method "allows us to focus on individual leaders as well as countries", making for "firmer and more confident conclusions about the nature of leadership effects more generally". The decision to opt for Bean and Mughan's approach is also based on an investigation of correlations between winning and losing leaders on each leadership quality. Such correlations indicate that attitudes towards party leaders are not zero-sum as they are found not to be perfectly negatively associated. In fact, there are a few instances where respondents perceive both leaders to possess the same quality, resulting in positive inter-item correlations. Finally, statistical controls for respondents' affiliation with a political party are also included as a possible conditioning factor regarding the relationship between leadership characteristics and vote choice. When taking this into consideration, coefficients become significantly reduced in magnitude because the inclusion of partisan loyalties as a control accounts for a substantial amount of variation of how voters view a given leader and hence perceive them to possess certain traits.

Before investigating possible electoral consequences of leaders' images, the following will take a closer look at the content of their personality profiles as perceived by the electorate. The distribution of trait qualities across leaders at each election provides an overview of the different personality profiles. This will also reveal whether there are certain traits that can be seen as either winning or losing ones. In other words, are winners generally viewed as having more leadership qualities than their counterparts and thus show a better public profile? It is also worth investigating to what extent profiles between two leaders are polarised among voters because King (2002) argues that for leaders to matter, public opinion needs to be sufficiently skewed towards one of them. This will be achieved by simply calculating the percentage of respondents ascribing a particular quality to a given leader. Subtracting the percentage of voters crediting each trait to the losing leader from that of the winning one will

yield the distributional advantage of the winning leader on each trait (or disadvantage in the case of a negative difference).

4.7. The content of leaders' personality profiles

Table 4.1 shows the percentage of voters perceiving a given trait to be possessed by a given leader presented separately by country and election year. The winning leader at each election is underlined so as to facilitate the interpretation of results. Overall, it is noticeable that winning leaders are generally credited with more leadership qualities, which in turn means they are viewed as having a distinctly more positive personality profile. However, it needs to be emphasised that this is post-election survey data and respondents' views on leaders may have been tainted by the outcome of the election. But generally speaking, and except for a few noticeable cases which will be discussed shortly, the winning leader is perceived to have a better public standing. 'Competence', 'strong leadership', 'compassionate', 'arrogance' and 'honest' have the strongest polarising effects across countries and election years. In other words, differences in the distribution of those leadership qualities are most striking. A prime example for this is the 1983 UK election when Margaret Thatcher won a second term as leader of the Conservative Party. More than three quarters of respondents saw her as a determined and tough leader who sticks to her principles while a majority of respondents also considered her as shrewd. Meanwhile, her opponent Michael Foot was perceived as more caring and likeable and as someone who listens to reason. In this example, leader profiles are certainly more different than similar which can also be seen in the mean value for all traits, giving an idea of the overall perception of the two leaders (see last column of Table 4.1). Overall, Thatcher's public profile is almost twice above that of Foot (50% versus 26%) and it will be interesting to see how this translates into electoral effects later on in the analysis. The 2001 British election shows a similar pattern in terms of polarisation. Labour leader Tony Blair led on each trait item, and the difference in percentages when compared to his opponent William Hague is most prominent on being perceived as a strong leader (52 percentage points in favour of Blair) while still considerable on traits such as decisive (+30), listens to

reason (+21), keeps promises (+20) and caring (+19). Again, this is reflected in the overall perceptions of the two leaders when looking at the mean value in the last column. Blair's profile stands 21% higher than Hague's public image.

Other countries show a similar polarisation of profiles. For instance, the 2002 Irish election sees the winning leader Bertie Ahern well ahead of his opponent Michael Noonan. More than three quarters of respondents view the Fianna Fáil leader as being able to run the country (85%) and in touch with ordinary people (79%) while approximately two thirds regard him as honest (68%). Overall, he is on average credited with more leadership qualities (77%) than the Fine Gael leader Michael Noonan (45%). It is worth noting here that Ahern is no longer viewed as more honest among voters in the subsequent 2007 general election when then Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny scored much higher on that trait (70% versus 52%, respectively). It should come as no surprise that the profile is most polarised at the most recent general election in Ireland. Not only were respondents asked to rate the newly elected Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin on those traits, but also to rate the recently resigned leader Brian Cowen in terms of leadership qualities. When looking at Cowen (FF) and Kenny (FG), the latter's distributional advantage on each trait is substantially higher, ranging between 53% and 60%. Even though Brian Cowen had stepped down as party leader only weeks before the general election, it will be interesting to see how much of an effect this may have had on the outcome of the election. In other words, by how much would an already dismal election result under Micheál Martin have been worse, if Brian Cowen had still been leader of the party?

The Spanish election of 2004 also presents an interesting polarisation of profiles. Held only days after the Madrid bombings, it surprisingly saw a rather popular incumbent People's Party (PP) led by Mariano Rajoy being replaced by the Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) under the leadership of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. The personality profiles as perceived by the electorate could not have been more polarised. Zapatero's overall profile stood more than twenty percent higher than his opponent, and this is mostly due to the difference between the two in terms of being perceived as charming (+37%), charismatic (+27%), honest (+25%) and determined (+21%). Within days after

the official start of the election campaign, Zapatero managed to steer his party away from being perceived as corrupt and inefficient, and successfully managed to gear the campaign towards presenting innovative ideas for the future of Spain (Chari, 2004). This is a great example of how a leader can indirectly influence a party's electoral standing by taking control over the type of political message that is conveyed, and the way in which it is presented.

The distribution of leadership qualities is also worth looking at in New Zealand as respondents were invited to rate leaders on whether they perceive them as arrogant. One would expect this to be a 'negative' trait which is more likely to be seen in an unsuccessful leader but New Zealand shows an interesting pattern. Helen Clark led the Labour Party to three successive elections in 1999, 2002 and 2005. Initially, only every fifth respondent perceived her to be arrogant (17%) while more than eighty percent considered her to be a strong and trustworthy leader (89% and 84% respectively). However, this changed in the 2002 and 2005 elections when more than half of voters perceived her as arrogant (56% and 65% respectively). Even though she enjoyed considerable distributional advantages on being a strong and trustworthy leader, especially in 2002, she was progressively seen as more arrogant.

Table 4.1: Distribution of leadership qualities by country and election year

	AUS	*STR*	*KN*	*INT*	*INS*	*ML*	*CPA*	*DC*	*DP*	*REL*	*SEN*	*ARR*	*HO*	*TRU*	*CP*	***AVG***
1993	Hewson	53	79	88	39	67	52	74	53	57	66					**63**
	Keating	80	82	87	44	55	39	59	42	45	64					60
1996	Howard	56	80	84	38	84	71		69	71	82	24	76			67
	Keating	83	84	90	47	58	32		43	47	63	74	41			60
1998	Howard	51	76	82	27	76	56		54	56	71		60			61
	Beazley	67	82	88	48	82	78		64	68	75		70			**72**
2001	Howard	74	79	83	38		57				76		58	53		65
	Beazley	48	78	85	40		79				70		65	59		**66**
2004	Howard	87	84	90	45		58				78		48	49		67
	Latham	46	59	74	35		65				53		53	44		54
2007	Howard	81	81	90	38		50				73		45	41	80	64
	Rudd	77	82	92	60		83				82		73	67	78	77
2010	Abbott	55	62	74	31		50				52		49	42	58	53
	Gillard	61	82	92	45		60				74		53	43	72	65
	CAN	*INT*	*TRU*	*STR*	*CAR*	*ARR*	*AG*	*CPA*	*TO*	*TR-*						
1988	Turner	79	61	42	53											59
	Mulroney	92	67	89	60											77
1993	Chretien		26	37		14	27									29
	Manning		21	28		19	29									20
1997	Chretien		23	32		25		22	24							25
	Manning		30	16		24		17	27							23
2006	Martin	53			28	36				36						**38**
	Harper	39			26	34				34						33
	DK	*KN*	*OR*	*CRE*	*INS*	*SIN*	*PM*									
2007	Rasmussen	85	45	61	48	56	71									61
	Schmidt	60	58	64	49	65	39									56
	GER	*EC*	*LIK*	*TRU*	*ENE*	*STR*	*REP*	*PAR*	*TEA*	*CO*	*TO*					
1998	Kohl	47	55	64	62											57
	Schroder	61	63	57	76											64

2002	Stoiber	55	36	47	59							49
	Schroder	44	67	48	59							55
2005	Merkel		40	50		49	45	72	60	46	51	52
	Schroder		62	48		82	82	65	55	49	69	**64**
2009	Merkel	57	59	66		74						64
	Steinmeier	37	53	48		39						44
	IRE	*ABL*	*HO*	*TC*								
2002	Ahern	85	68	79								77
	Noonan	36	58	41								45
2007	Ahern	78	52	68								66
	Kenny	59	70	62								64
2011	Martin	45	47	48								47
	Kenny	72	73	71								72
2011	Cowen	12	23	18								18
	Kenny	72	73	71								72
	NZL	*CPT*	*TG*	*TO*	*CAR*	*SIN*	*HO*	*LIK*	*STR*	*ARR*	*TRU*	
1990	Moore	66	73	73	63	55	49	62				**63**
	Bolger	60	54	61	63	59	58	61				59
1999	Clark	83							89	17	84	68
	Shipley	48							75	52	56	58
2002	Clark								96	56	77	76
	English								38	38	64	47
2005	Clark								93	65	66	75
	Brash								60	44	62	55
	ESP	*SIN*	*HO*	*ATT*	*ABL*	*INT*	*CH*	*MO*	*DET*	*CH*	*CU*	
1993	Gonzalez	53	62	53	73							60
	Aszin	40	54	30	50							44
2004	Zapatero		84			89	62	79	74	62	89	77
	Rajoy		59			77	35	59	53	25	80	55
	SWE	*KN*	*OR*	*TRU*	*INS*	*FRI*	*STR*	*SPK*				
1991	Carlsson	93	65	69	35							66

	Bildt	91	38	61	46										59
1998	Persson	85	49	57	25	43									52
	Bildt	97	35	77	62	55									**65**
2002	Persson	94	66	80	45	70	90	88							76
	Lundgren	88	26	56	26	43	35	53							47
2006	Persson	94	60	71	40	55	91	87							71
	Reinfeldt	95	53	79	77	79	92	83							**80**
	UK	*CAR*	*DET*	*SHR*	*LIK*	*TG*	*REA*	*DC*	*PRI*	*MO*	*CLA*	*STR*	*CAR*	*PR*	*AR*	
1983	Thatcher	18	84	54	15	79	20	61	73							51
	Foot	47	21	19	34	9	40	8	26							26
1992	Major	75								79	56	72				71
	Kinnock	78								52	46	46				56
2001	Hague	53					45	45	52			29		30	40	42
	Blair	72					65	65	65			81		50	41	63
2005		*CPT*	*TRU*	*RES*												
	Howard	43	38	49												43
	Blair	69	48	51												56
2010	Cameron	44	43													44
	Brown	60	52													56

Notes: Cell entries are percentage of respondents crediting leader with given trait; leaders of winning party are underlined.
Abbreviations: ABL=able to run country; AG=aggressive; ARR=arrogant; ATT=attractive; CAR=caring; CH= charming; CHA=charismatic; CLA=looks after one/all classes; CO=right concepts; CP=competent; CPA=compassionate; CRE=credible; CUL=cultured; DC=decent; DET=determined; DP=dependable; E=manage economy; ENE=energetic; FRI =friendly; HO=honest; INS=inspiring; INT=intelligent; KN=knowledgeable; LIK=likeable; ML=moral; MO= moderate/extreme; OR=knows what ordinary people think/say; PAR=party support; PM=best PM; PR=keeps promises; PRI=sticks to principles; REA=listens to reason; REL= reliable; REP=representative abroad; RES= responsive; SEN=sensible; SHR=shrewd; SINC=sincere; SPK=speaks so ordinary people can understand; STR=strong leader; TE=works well in a team; TO=in touch (with ordinary people); TG=tough; TR-=not to be trusted; TRU= trustworthy)

Before looking at electoral consequences of leaders' personality profiles as perceived by the electorate and discussing results from hypothetical election result projections, a brief look at the last column of Table 4.1 makes for an interesting insight into the overall perception of leaders. One would expect the winning leader to have a higher public standing than their unsuccessful counterparts. They were after all the more successful leader in attracting votes, or were they? In eight out of thirty-three elections, the public profile of the winning leader was *lower* than that of their opponent (cases are printed in bold). In most instances, the difference is rather small and ranges between two and five percent; but in other cases, it is considerably larger, ranging between nine (2006 Swedish election) and eleven percentage points (1998 Australian election). It will be interesting to investigate further how this translates into hypothetical vote gains and losses. In other words, is a winning leader's overall distributional *disadvantage* in perceived public profile reflected in it being an electoral asset for the opposing candidate?

The distribution of leadership qualities should not be regarded as a minor consideration in elections because a leader who was not credited with a more electorally decisive trait can have just as detrimental an effect on their party's vote share as widely seeing that trait in a given leader would be influential (Bean & Mughan, 1989). In other words, the variation in the distribution of leadership qualities can be consequential for the overall election outcome when considering its effect on the overall balance of party votes. Although traits may have small effects on individual vote choice,

> "variation in the extent to which opposing party leaders are seen to possess them can make their combined impact the difference between victory and defeat in a close election" (Bean & Mughan, 1989, p. 1174).

However, the distribution of personal qualities does not tell us much about their effect on vote choice. Put differently, it is of little importance if a given leader is generally seen as knowledgeable if that trait does not move voters on election day. Therefore, it remains to be investigated how such traits affect vote choice at individual, and more importantly, at aggregate levels. The following will present results from counterfactual thought experiments of how each election

would have turned out had unsuccessful leaders been credited with the sort of traits to the same extent as their winning counterparts. Applying the logic to a more concrete example, that would have happened in the 2010 British election had Gordon Brown been perceived as competent and trustworthy by the same amount of respondents as was David Cameron.

4.8. Electoral consequences of leader personality profiles

Assessing the electoral effect of leadership qualities on the overall outcome of elections necessitates shifting the focus from the individual to the aggregate level. To obtain estimates for direct leader effects for each election year and country, the following calculations have been made. First, the proportion of voters crediting each quality to the losing leader has been subtracted from that of the winning leader as shown in Table 4.1. In a second step, this figure is then multiplied by the corresponding losing leader regression coefficient taken from the individual vote choice models with the sign reversed (see Table 4.2). This yields an approximation of the number of percentage points by which the losing party's vote share would have increased had the same amount of voters credited the losing leader with a given trait as credited the winning leader with it. Put differently, it is simply a measure of the winning leader's net value (relative to the losing leader) in votes, to the winning leader's party.[38] Table 4.2 provides information on which these calculations are based. The first row for each election year, marked by the delta sign, provides an indication of the winning leader's distributional (dis-)advantage. The second row refers to the losing leader's regression coefficient taken form individual OLS regression models. Coefficients printed in bold are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The third row combines information from rows one and two by multiplying the distributional (dis-)advantage (row one) by the matching losing leader regression coefficient with the sign reversed (row two). Note though that, contrary to Bean and Mughan's methodology, only statistically significant coefficients are used for these calculations.

[38] This gives further reason for the use of OLS as results would not be as readily interpretable had logistic models been estimated.

Table 4.2: Overall personality profiles, losing leaders' regression coefficients and resulting vote gain and loss

	AUS	*STR*	*KN*	*INT*	*INS*	*ML*	*CPA*	*DC*	*DP*	*REL*	*SEN*	*ARR*	*HO*	*TRU*	*CP*
1993	Δ	27	3	-1	5	-12	-13	-15	-11	-12	-2				
	Beta	0.00	0.00	-0.02	**-0.05**	**-0.05**	**-0.03**	0.01	**-0.07**	**-0.07**	**-0.07**				
	Gain/loss				0.23	-0.60	-0.39		-0.78	-0.80	-0.13				
1996	Δ	-27	-4	-6	-9	26	39		26	24	19	-50	35		
	Beta	-0.01	0.01	0.06	**-0.06**	**-0.08**	**-0.05**		-0.05	**-0.10**	**-0.08**	0.00	-0.08		
	Gain/loss				-0.57	2.05	1.87		1.27	2.47	1.56				
1998	Δ	-16	-6	-6	-21	-6	-22		-10	-12	-4		-10		
	Beta	-0.03	0.02	-0.02	-0.04	0.02	**-0.07**		-0.05	-0.05	-0.04		-0.03		
	Gain/loss						-1.47								
2001	Δ	26	1	-2	-2		-22				6		-7	-6	
	Beta	**-0.06**	0.02	-0.03	-0.03		-0.01				-0.09		-0.03	**-0.08**	
	Gain/loss	1.51									0.53			-0.47	
2004	Δ	41	25	16	10		-7				25		-5	5	
	Beta	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	**-0.04**		-0.03				-0.03		-0.01	**-0.07**	
	Gain/loss				0.44									0.35	
2007	Δ	-4	1	2	22		33				9		28	26	-2
	Beta	**-0.05**	-0.03	0.04	**-0.05**		**-0.08**				-0.03		-0.08	**-0.17**	**-0.03**
	Gain/loss	-0.19			1.17		2.71							4.45	-0.06
2010	Δ	6	20	18	14		10				22		4	1	14
	Beta	0.00	-0.04	0.01	-0.03		**-0.06**				**-0.06**		**-0.08**	**-0.05**	**-0.05**
	Gain/loss						0.59				1.34		0.30	0.05	0.71
	CAN	*INT*	*TRU*	*STR*	*CAR*	*ARR*	*AG*	*CPA*	*TO*	*TR-*					
1988	Δ	13	6	47	7										
	Beta	-0.01	**-0.14**	**-0.15**	**-0.08**										
	Gain/loss		0.81	7.14	0.59										
1993	Δ		5	9		-5	-2								
	Beta		**-0.05**	**-0.08**		0.01	0.05								
	Gain/loss		0.27	0.69											

1997	Δ		-7	16		1		5	-3								
	Beta		-0.10	-0.16		0.35		-0.07	-0.10								
	Gain/loss																
2006	Δ	-14			-2					-2							
	Beta	**-0.10**			**-0.13**					**0.33**							
	Gain/loss	-1.33			-0.25					0.65							
	DK	*KN*	*OR*	*CRE*	*INS*	*SIN*	*PM*										
2007	Δ	25	-13	-3	-1	-9	32										
	Beta	-0.03	-0.03	-0.04	-0.02	-0.03	**-0.25**										
	Gain/loss						7.94										
	GER	*EC*	*LIK*	*TRU*	*ENE*	*STR*	*REP*	*PAR*	*TEA*	*CO*	*TO*						
1998	Δ	14	8	-7	14												
	Beta	-0.02	0.00	-0.02	-0.03												
	Gain/loss																
2002	Δ	-11	31	1	0												
	Beta	-0.02	-0.01	-0.04	0.01												
	Gain/loss																
2005	Δ		-22	2		-33	-37	7	5	-3	-18						
	Beta		0.03	**-0.05**		0.02	-0.04	-0.02	0.01	**-0.07**	0.03						
	Gain/loss			0.10						-0.20							
2009	Δ	20	6	18		35											
	Beta	**-0.21**	0.03	**-0.24**		**-0.02**											
	Gain/loss	4.14		4.23		0.70											
	IRE	*ABL*	*HO*	*TC*	*ABL*	*HO*	*TC*	*ABL*	*HO*	*TC*	*ABL*	*HO*	*TC*				
		2002			2007			2011 (Martin-Kenny)			2011 (Cowen-Kenny)						
	Δ	49	10	38	19	-18	6	27	26	23	60	50	53				
	Beta	**-0.15**	**-0.16**	**-0.01**	**-0.32**	0.00	**-0.12**	**-0.19**	**-0.20**	0.00	**-0.16**	**-0.28**	-0.04				
	Gain/loss	7.15	1.58	0.38	5.99		0.73	5.21	5.10		9.48	13.75					
	NZL	*CPT*	*TG*	*TO*	*CAR*	*SIN*	*HO*	*LIK*	*STR*	*ARR*	*TRU*						

1990	Δ	-6	-19	-12	0	4	9	-1			
	Beta	-0.05	-0.04	**-0.10**	-0.04	-0.04	-0.06	**-0.08**			
	Gain/loss			-1.21				-0.08			
1999	Δ	83							89	17	84
	Beta	**-0.17**							**-0.11**	0.08	**-0.17**
	Gain/loss	5.78							1.54		4.62
2002	Δ								58	18	13
	Beta								**-0.13**	**0.07**	**-0.15**
	Gain/loss								7.54	-1.17	1.90
2005	Δ								33	21	4
	Beta								-0.10	0.06	-0.31
	Gain/loss										
	ESP	*SIN*	*HO*	*ATT*	*ABL*	*INT*	*CH*	*MO*	*DET*	*CH*	*CU*
1993	Δ	13	8	23	23						
	Beta	**-0.22**	**-0.07**	0.01	**-0.21**						
	Gain/loss	2.95	0.61		4.78						
2004	Δ		25			12	27	20	21	37	9
	Beta		**-0.18**			0.04	**-0.11**	**-0.08**	**-0.06**	**-0.13**	0.02
	Gain/loss		4.45				3.05	1.52	1.26	4.88	
	SWE	*KN*	*OR*	*TRU*	*INS*	*FRI*	*STR*	*SPK*			
1991	Δ	2	27	8	-11						
	Beta	-0.09	-0.09	**-0.07**	-0.02						
	Gain/loss			0.57							
1998	Δ	-12	14	-20	-37	-12					
	Beta	**0.11**	**-0.10**	**-0.10**	-0.05	**-0.10**					
	Gain/loss	1.32	1.44	-2.00		-1.25					
2002	Δ	6	40	24	19	27	55	35			
	Beta	**-0.12**	**-0.18**	0.00	-0.01	0.02	-0.03	-0.03			
	Gain/loss	0.70	7.08								

2006	Δ	-1	7	-8	-37	-24	-1	4							
	Beta	-0.08	**-0.10**	**-0.08**	-0.05	0.00	-0.04	-0.07							
	Gain/loss		0.68	-0.66											
	UK	*CAR*	*DET*	*SHR*	*LIK*	*TG*	*REA*	*DC*	*PRI*	*MO*	*CLA*	*STR*	*CAR*	*PR*	*AR*
1983	Δ	-29	63	35	-19	70	-20	53	47						
	Beta	**-0.08**	**-0.06**	0.01	**-0.05**	-0.02	**-0.10**	**-0.09**	**-0.06**						
	Gain/loss	-2.26	3.91		-0.97		-2.02	4.77	2.91						
1992	Δ									27	10	26	-3		
	Beta									**-0.01**	**-0.08**	**-0.05**	**-0.05**		
	Gain/loss									0.27	0.77	1.20	-0.14		
2001	Δ						21		13			52	19	20	30
	Beta						**-0.05**		**-0.03**			**-0.04**	**-0.04**	**-0.06**	
	Gain/loss						0.99		0.36			2.18	0.76	1.26	0.30
2005		*CPT*	*TRU*	*RES*											
	Δ	26	2	10											
	Beta	**-0.04**	**-0.11**	**-0.30**											
	Gain/loss	0.94	0.22	2.98											
2010	Δ	16		9											
	Beta	**-0.10**		-0.21											
	Gain/loss	1.60													

Notes: Difference (Δ) calculated from Table 4.1; beta coefficients for the losing leader based on OLS regression from individual vote models are shown; vote gain/loss calculated by multiplying the difference (Δ) by the coefficient with the sign reversed. Discrepancies due to rounding; actual calculations based on regression coefficients before rounding. A positive sign points to a given trait being an electoral advantage for the successful leader whereas a negative sign indicates it being advantageous for the losing leader. Coefficients in bold are statistically significant at 0.05.

The results of this procedure calculated for each country and election year after summing statistically significant regression coefficients are shown in Table 4.3. To reiterate, figures referring to the column labelled hypothetical vote gains or losses refer to what would have happened (i.e. by how much would the losing party's vote share have changed) had the losing leader possessed the winning leader's personality profile. To understand what this means in more substantial terms and to allow for a comparison between a hypothetical projection and the real election outcome, actual election results are shown in the adjacent column. Comparing estimated counterfactuals and actual election results allows for a reasonable guess as to whether leadership qualities were a decisive force at a given election.

So far, we have seen that voters have feelings towards leaders and subsequently form overall evaluations which in turn may influence individual choice, evident in statistically significant results shown in Table 4.2. But the question remains whether such evaluations have the possibility to also influence entire election outcomes. The empirical analysis presented in the following would answer this question in the negative. Even in cases where personality profiles are highly polarised between competing party leaders, and thus leader effects should be at their most likeliest (King, 2002), they very rarely have an impact on the outcome of elections in parliamentary systems in a sense that they can be considered the tipping point for one party over another. And where leader images have been decisive, the election was a close call and so anything could have been the deciding factor. Only in eight out of a total of 35 elections analysed may leader images have had a crucial role to play. But upon closer inspection, four out of these eight elections were tight races and the 2011 Irish election where Brian Cowen is pitted against Enda Kenny is one of the more extreme cases.[39] The remaining three elections (Spain 1993 and 2004, New Zealand 1994) appear to be the only cases that would speak in favour of leader images being decisive. The following will look at a few examples in more detail to explore hypothetical vote gains and losses attributable to leader traits across parliamentary elections.

[39] Note that Brian Cowen stepped down as Taoiseach just before the election.

Table 4.3: Hypothetical vote gains and losses attributable to leader traits

Year	*Winning leader v. losing leader*	*Overall view*	*Hypothetical vote gain/loss*	*Actual Vote*	*Decisive*
		Australia			
1993	Keating – Hewson	60 – 63	-2.5	44.9 – 43.9	Yes
1996	Howard – Keating	67 – 60	7.4	46.9 – 38.8	No
1998	Howard – Beazley	61 – 72	-1.5	42.3 – 40.1	No
2001	Howard – Beazley	65 – 66	1.5	42.7 – 37.8	No
2004	Howard – Latham	67 – 54	0.4	46.4 – 37.6	No
2007	Rudd – Howard	64 – 77	8.1	43.4 – 42.1	Yes
2010	Gillard – Abbott	65 – 53	3.0	38.0 – 43.7	No
		Canada			
1988	Mulroney – Turner	77 – 59	8.5	43.0 – 31.9	No
1993	Chrétien – Campbell	29 – 20	0.96	41.3 – 18.7	No
1997	Chrétien – Manning	25 – 23	0	38.5 – 19.4	No
2006	Harper – Martin	33 – 38	-0.9	36.3 – 30.2	No
		Denmark			
2007	Rasmussen – Th.-Schmidt	61 – 56	7.9	26.2 – 25.5	Yes
		Germany			
1998	Schröder – Kohl	64 – 57	0	40.9 – 35.1	No
2002	Schröder – Stoiber	55 – 49	0	38.5 – 38.5	No
2005	Merkel – Schröder	52 – 64	-0.1	35.2 – 34.2	No
2009	Merkel – Steinmeier	64 – 44	9.1	33.8 – 23.0	No
		Ireland			
2002	Ahern – Noonan	77 – 45	9.1	41.5 – 22.4	No
2007	Ahern – Kenny	66 – 64	6.7	42.0 – 27.4	No
2001	Kenny – Martin	72 – 47	10.3	36.1 – 17.4	No
2011	Kenny – Cowen	72 – 18	23.2	36.1 – 17.4	Yes
		New Zealand			
1990	Bolger – Moore	59 – 63	-1.3	47.8 – 35.1	No
1999	Clark – Shipley	68 – 58	11.9	38.7 – 30.5	Yes
2002	Clark – English	76 – 47	8.3	41.4 – 21.1	No
2005	Clark – Brash	75 – 55	0	41.1 – 39.1	No
		Spain			
1993	Gonzalez – Azsin	60 – 44	8.3	38.8 – 34.8	Yes
2004	Zapatero – Rajoy	77 – 55	15.2	42.6 – 37.6	Yes
		Sweden			
1991	Carlsson – Bildt	66 – 59	0.6	37.7 – 21.9	No
1998	Persson – Bildt	52 – 65	-0.5	36.6 – 22.7	No
2002	Persson – Lundgren	76 – 47	7.8	39.8 – 15.2	No
2006	Persson – Reinfeldt	71 – 80	0.1	35.0 – 26.2	No
		UK			
1983	Thatcher – Foot	51 – 26	6.3	42.4 – 27.6	No
1992	Major – Kinnock	71 – 56	2.1	41.9 – 34.4	No
2001	Blair – Hague	63 – 42	5.5	40.7 – 31.7	No
2005	Blair – Howard	56 – 43	4.1	35.2 – 32.3	Yes
2010	Cameron – Brown	56 – 44	1.6	36.1 – 29.0	No

Note: figures shown are percentages.

Looking at hypothetical vote gains and losses based on leadership qualities shows that party leaders can be of electoral advantage to their party, but only in very rare instances are they decisive for the overall outcome of an election. Ireland's most recent general election in 2011 saw Fianna Fáil's vote plunge from 78 seats down to 20. If Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin had been perceived to be as honest, able to run the country and in touch with ordinary people as his counterpart Enda Kenny, Fianna Fáil's vote would, other things being equal, have been about ten percentage points higher than it actually was. The result would have been even more remarkable had Brian Cowen still been party leader. In other words, if Cowen had possessed Kenny's personality profile, Fianna Fáil's vote would have been a whopping 23% higher, and certainly would have resulted in a rather different election outcome as indicated in the final column. Of course, Cowen's profile as perceived by the electorate strongly reflects the dismal performance of his government at the time, given that his standing among the public was at its lowest shortly before the election. A Red C (2010) poll conducted in November 2010 revealed that only one in ten wanted him to be running the country after the 2011 general election, down seven percentage points compared to four months earlier. In other words, if Kenny had been leader of a Fianna Fáil government, his personality profile would certainly also have been as poor.[40] But this election is certainly one of the more extreme cases. The 2002 German election for instance offers a counter example. At the concluding vote count, both Social Democrats and CDU/CSU had each reached 38.5% of the vote, but the former eventually secured enough surplus votes to go into a coalition with the Greens. Being able to manage the economy was clearly an electoral asset for the CSU chancellor candidate Edmund Stoiber, as can be seen in the negative sign on the hypothetical vote gain in Table 4.2. However, being a likeable, energetic and trustworthy leader

[40] Note though that evaluations on traits such as 'able to run the country' and 'honesty' may have been strongly influenced by how voters assessed the previous government's performance more generally. Separating traits from government performance plagues all such analyses and the example of the 2011 Irish election is a particularly extreme case considering how closely government officials were involved in trying to salvage the downturn of the economy. Asking respondents about the responsibility for the economic and financial climate at the time of the 2011 election, one in four blamed the previous Government (80%), the Department of Finance (80%) or Bankers (93%) while only less than half considered the EU (44%) or Ireland's membership of the Eurozone responsible (35%) for such bleak conditions.

was more strongly associated with Gerhard Schröder, leader of the Social Democrats. However, none of the estimated coefficients showed statistical significance and so leader images cannot be regarded as the decisive factor in this election. The 2007 Danish election might have turned out in favour of Helle Thorning-Schmidt's Social Democratic Party had she possessed the same personality profile as her more successful counterpart Anders Fogh Rasmussen (Venstre). Being seen as the most suitable Prime Minister clearly emerges as the strongest electoral asset for Rasmussen. 71% of voters saw this quality in him while only 39% thought so of his challenger. In fact, the coefficient on this trait item was the only statistically significant one in the model and it alone generated an approximate 8% vote advantage for Rasmussen's Venstre party. Even though the traits such as credible, inspiring and sincere are all found to have worked in favour of Thorning-Schmidt, their small combined, yet statistically insignificant, effect of 0.43 was not sufficient to offset Rasmussen's clear lead due to being perceived as the most suitable candidate for the post as Prime Minister. Again, a narrow 0.7% win could have ended up in favour of the Social Democrats had Thorning-Schmidt possessed Rasmussen's personality profile. Finally, the polarised public opinion on the two Spanish party leaders in 2004 seems to have had quite a substantial effect on the hypothetical vote gain for PSOE. All else being equal, if Rajoy had possessed Zapatero's personality profile, the PP's vote share would have been almost 15% higher than it actually was.

But what happens if voters perceived an *unsuccessful* leader *more positively*? How does this translate into hypothetical vote gains and losses? One such example comes from the 1998 Australian election. Labor leader Kim Beazley's overall personality profile was more than ten percentage points higher than that of his counterpart John Howard (Liberal/National coalition), and yet the latter won the election by a margin of just 2.1%. Their personality profiles was also quite polarised and Beazley was perceived more positively on all traits. His lead was most substantial on being perceived as compassionate (22%), inspiring (21%) and capable of being a strong leader (16%) while still having a commanding lead on being reliable (12%), honest (10%) and dependable (10%). Summing statistically significant regression coefficients however shows

that this had no effect on the overall outcome of the election. Similar results can be found for Canada 2006, New Zealand 1990 and Sweden 1998. In other words, even if the opposition leader is perceived as having a more positive personality profile, this does not translate into having an impact on the overall outcome of an election. Yet, except for the case of Sweden 2006, results indicate that when a losing leader is more well-liked, their party can benefit from additional votes due to their leader's perceived personality profile when compared to that of the winning leader. In other words, this turns into a net electoral *disadvantage* (in votes) to the winning leader's party. But, as suggested earlier such a result remains indecisive for the actual outcome due to their small magnitude and the considerable electoral margin of the winning leader's party vote share.

To sum up, the results from counterfactual thought experiments on 35 parliamentary elections have shown that leader images may have an important effect at the individual level but this very rarely translates into having an impact at the aggregate level. Even in cases where personality profiles are highly polarised, leader images cannot be viewed as the decisive factor and so it can be concluded that leader images do not have a significant bearing on overall election outcomes. Such findings receive additional empirical support from Bartle and Crewe (2002), Bartels (2002) and others who have contributed to King's collection of papers that sought to ascertain the electoral importance of leaders' personalities. King (2002, p. 220) notes in his concluding chapter that "personality factors determine election outcome far less often than is usually, indeed almost universally, supposed". Such characteristics may have swayed individual voters but they did not sway enough to be pivotal for the election outcome. This is not to say that leaders can never be the deciding factor; they very well can be, but they are in competition with so many other factors that may decide over a party's victory and defeat at the polls.

4.9. Conclusion

The political arena provides very little room for factors to be manipulated for practical purposes. However, how political leaders are perceived among the public is definitely one such 'malleable' factor which may potentially have consequences for electoral results. Even if the overall influence of leader traits is marginal and in most cases not strong enough to substantially impact on election outcomes, the study of trait performance in influencing vote choice at individual and aggregate levels warrants attention from campaign managers, parties and political scientists alike. Political marketing theory offers valuable insights into how politics has moved from being party-centred to perception-focused and to what extent a leader's image and style has now come to play a more important role at the expense of (political) content. Whether we have firmly entered an era of packaged politics, where image is just as (if not more) important than political content, also has important implications for our understanding of a well-functioning democracy. Critics maintain that a personalisation of politics may trivialise democracy and ultimately lead to a demise of political parties as vital organs of democracy (Landtsheer et al., 2008; Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999). Is vote choice nowadays really based on idiosyncratic personality traits of political leaders rather than on issue stands and political orientations? Yet, political images should be viewed as valuable tools to mobilise support for political candidates, parties and issues alike as they help voters rationalise and explain their relationship with political elites. Put simply, impression management and its focus on images should not be regarded as having negative effects on democracy but rather as assisting voters in orienting themselves and helping them make sense of their political surroundings.

The main conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that a leader's personality profile can have an impact on vote choice at the individual level but only in very rare instances on overall election outcomes. Political candidates can gain as well as lose votes due to their images as perceived by the electorate separately from those effects exerted by partisan loyalties. And in very few cases, leader effects can even decide victory and defeat but in closely fought

electoral contests – such as the 2007 Danish election – almost any factor can be pivotal for the outcome of an election. Findings from this exercise are pertinent in two respects. First, they show that when public opinion is highly polarised on the personality profile of two competing leaders, that is two leaders are perceived to possess substantially higher or lower scores respectively on a given trait, aggregate direct leader effects are much stronger (Australia 2007, Canada 1988, Irish elections, Germany 2009, Spain 2004 and Sweden 2002). Secondly, in very rare instances, aggregate effects can have negative consequences for a party's vote share, albeit rather small and indecisive for the overall outcome of the election (Canada 2006, New Zealand 1990 and Sweden 1998 and 2006). The effects of a polarisation of political profiles among voters are also worth highlighting and are clear evidence of successful impression management tactics. Leader images are malleable and not set in stone, and are thus subject to being manipulated by campaign managers and political consultants. However, this should be treated with caution: whereas voters prefer different sides of an issue, for instance either opting for public or private ownership of businesses and large industries, nearly *all* voters prefer political candidates with appealing images (Kilburn, 2005). As a result, a leader's perceived personality profile must overcome that of their counterpart if it is to have an impact on vote choice. In other words, public opinion must be sufficiently skewed towards a particular leader if one is to find discernible effects of image consideration. It is shown that aggregate leader effects are strongest when political leaders are perceived to be substantially different on a given trait. This strongly hints at the importance of public impression management in managing to 'trespass' on the contender's image profile (Hayes, 2005). Political consultants and campaign managers are thus well advised to keep a close eye on public opinion prior to an election to gauge the public's perception of leaders on different traits. Campaign consultants may learn a great deal by studying the importance of trait ownership and how to most effectively encroach upon another leader's image territory, thereby making full use of their impression management tactics.

In conclusion, the question posed at the outset of this paper as to whether leader images can decide over victory and defeat in parliamentary elections and whether elections have turned into beauty contests where focus is on what leader rather than what party will win can be answered in the negative. The strength of partisan loyalties still exerts the strongest influence on electoral choice and enjoys a considerable mitigating effect. In other words, once partisan loyalties are controlled for, the effect of leader traits on vote choice decreases significantly and so partisan-based considerations still trump those of leaders, an important finding which is supported by empirical evidence shown in the paper on the non-alignment of party and leader evaluations. The degree of polarisation of personality profiles might also hinge on the context of a given election and so future research should take into account the saliency of an election and political issues of importance at the time to investigate whether the impact of traits on election outcomes is more pronounced under conditions of electoral uncertainty and/or high political saliency.

Conclusion

One of the key debates in recent scholarship on the electoral role of party leaders revolves around the assumption that a presidentialisation of parliamentary systems has taken place where focus is on leaders rather than partisan considerations. For some researchers, party leaders have moved to the centre of electoral decision-making as a result of a decline in partisan loyalties and a weakening of social structures (Aarts, 2011; Dalton et al., 2000; Garzia, 2011b, 2013b; Mughan, 1993; Poguntke & Webb, 2005; Stewart & Clarke, 1992). Indeed, there are ample reasons to believe that leaders have gained in (electoral) importance. For instance, partisan loyalties have lost their role in structuring vote choice while advanced media technologies have resulted in novel ways of political communication (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Mughan, 2000, 2009; B. Newman, 1999a; Scammell, 1999; Scarrow, 2000; Swanson & Mancini, 1996). Televised leadership debates have become an integral part of many election campaigns, governments are often remembered by the head of the executive and electoral wins are attributed to party leaders rather than the political organisation that they represent (Barr, 1991; Bernier & Moniere, 1991; LeDuc et al., 1996; Senior, 2008). As a consequence of changes in motivations that bring voters to the polls and ways in which politics is presented to the electorate, voters are assumed to be more inclined to vote for the leader they like rather than the party they prefer (Clarke et al., 1979; Graetz & McAllister, 1987; Mughan, 2000; Wattenberg, 1991). For others, leaders do not play a significantly different role than political parties, especially in systems where vote choice revolves around a party choice, and neither have they gained in importance over time (Bartels, 2002; Bartle & Crewe, 2002; Dinas, 2008; Gidengil et al., 2000; Kaase, 1994; King, 2002; W. E. Miller & Shanks, 1982; Shanks & Miller, 1990). Although in most instances agreeing with the fact that leaders are important to electoral choice, they contend that they are in competition with so many other factors and are hardly ever decisive for the overall outcome of parliamentary elections (King, 2002).

Further to this theoretical debate, empirical research provides conflicting messages where overall findings regarding the electoral impact of party leaders are mixed at best. Studies dedicated to the role and electoral influence of party leaders in parliamentary systems are scarce and often limited to single-country studies (Germany: Brettschneider & Gabriel, 2002; Italy: Garzia & Viotti, 2012; Canada: Gidengil et al., 2000; Great Britain: Graetz & McAllister, 1987; Portugal: Lobo, 2006). Moreover, there is little research on the causal relationship between parties and leaders while questions regarding the structure and performance of leader traits in parliamentary systems remain underexplored.

A central argument of this dissertation is that empirical studies to date have offered a narrow interpretation of what constitutes a leadership effect in parliamentary systems and has largely ignored a possibly reciprocal causal link between party and leader evaluations. Several important research questions such as how the causal link between parties and leaders can be separated empirically as well as how leader traits are structured in voters' minds have not been sufficiently addressed. This project set out to address these questions empirically and to systematically test the assumption that a presidentialisation of parliamentary systems is evident in increased leadership voting at the expense of party-based voting (Foley, 1993, 2000; Poguntke & Webb, 2005). The current empirical literature does not adequately contribute to understanding the puzzle which lies at the heart of this project: despite ample reasons for leaders to matter, empirical findings are mixed at best and do not provide consistent support for the assumption that leadership-based voting has become more important than party-based voting. A key contribution of this project is its rigorous testing of the assumption that a presidentialisation of parliamentary systems can be observed at the electoral level.

The core conclusion to be drawn from this dissertation is that there is only very limited empirical support for the expectation that voting in parliamentary systems has become more akin to that in presidential ones. Because voting in such systems still revolves around a party choice, and so voters do not directly cast their ballot for the head of the executive, party-based considerations still

feature predominantly in the decision-making process of the electorate. In addition, the dissertation places emphasis on providing a more nuanced theoretical framework as to why one can expect party and leader considerations to be tied by a link of reciprocal causation. For instance, the paper on the reassessment of the electoral influence of party and leader evaluations tests a mixed set of expectations derived from behavioural and performance models of electoral choice. It also expands the argument that leaders are assumed to matter more where voters are only given a single choice, which arguably revolves around prime ministerial considerations, beyond majoritarian systems to also include closed-list PR systems (Glaser & Salmon, 1991; Lijphart, 1999; Mughan, 1993, 1995; Swanson & Mancini, 1996).

5.1. Summary of main findings and limitations of research

The main objective of this dissertation was to systematically test the assumption that a presidentialisation of parliamentary systems is evident in heightened leadership-based voting at the expense of party-based voting. It set out to challenge such claims, arguing that by conducting analyses that take into consideration the reciprocal causal relationship between party and leader evaluations and by providing a more nuanced account of the structure and performance of leader traits in parliamentary systems, the literature can arrive at a more definite answer as to whether presidentialism can be observed at an electoral level in such systems.

The paper on the causal relationship between party and leader evaluations demonstrates that when using a more appropriate econometric model (estimation via instrumental variables) and the right data to tackle causality questions (panel data), the effect of party evaluations emerges much stronger than recent theories of electoral choice would suggest. More specifically, it tests the assumption underlying a personalisation of politics of whether party leaders are the more powerful explanatory factor in explaining vote choice. Thus, this paper confirms expectations of behavioural theories where voters are assumed to view the world through a partisan lens and so leader evaluations, government performance and political events are heavily 'tainted' by party labels seen as

'affective tags' (Campbell et al., 1960). Initial results in this paper are promising in that they imply consistency with behavioural theories of vote choice which emphasise the importance of 'projection effects' (Adams, Merrill, & Grofman, 2005; Macdonald et al., 1998; Merrill et al., 2001). Projection (or rationalisation) occurs when a prior held disposition such as party ID causes voters to evaluate various political objects more positively and in line with their partisan preferences. And so the way voters view political candidates for the executive post is heavily influenced by what they think about the party more generally. As regards improving the analysis, more exogenous trait indicators are needed to construct additive scores and estimate models based on broad and strict exogeneity criteria (on this approach, see for example: Bélanger et al., 2006). Despite the fact that results hold up across election years and countries which provides confidence in their robustness, to strengthen the conclusions drawn from this paper, a broader set of cases needs to be analysed. The analysis presented here only focuses on Britain and Canada which lend themselves quite nicely to the personalisation hypothesis. As more quality panel data becomes available, a more rigorous testing of the causal dynamics between party and leader evaluations will hopefully reinforce the results presented here.

The second paper gets to the core of testing the argument that presidentialism is evident in voters choosing the leader they like best rather than the party they prefer. Results indicate that when sympathies towards parties and leaders are not aligned, voters follow the party rather than the leader which is considered strong empirical evidence *against* the electoral face of the presidentialisation thesis (see also: Kefford, 2013) Notwithstanding the fact that weak identifiers display somewhat higher leader-based considerations, among a total of 43 elections, voters always followed the party rather than the leader. Further, party size is found to matter. Curtice and Blais (2001) have argued that vote choice is more firmly structured for bigger parties and so one would expect a vote for larger parties to be more leadership-based because they have real chances of providing the head of the executive so prime ministerial considerations should weigh more heavily in the minds of voters who express their support for larger parties. Crucially, this paper not only finds that party size matters but also that it does so *regardless* of the electoral system in place. Put differently, although

results show that leader evaluations are somewhat more important for larger parties, among large parties themselves, leader evaluations do not necessarily matter more where a majoritarian system is in place. The analysis used in this paper can easily be extended to similar situations, for instance where one is interested in party and candidate evaluations (e.g. Ireland). More and more studies are including questions on party, leader and respondents left-right placement which opens up avenues for further research in terms of how voters, parties and their leaders match in terms of ideological placement (for a similar approach, see: Wagner & Weßels, 2012).

The two papers on the structure and performance of trait items seek to unpack the notion of popularity and establish how traits are structured in voters' minds and whether they can be decisive for the outcome of parliamentary elections as suggested, for instance, by Bean and Mughan (1989) and Garzia (2013a). The structure of trait items is found to be unidimensional where overall leader likeability is viewed as a function of individual traits. This essentially challenges a two-dimensional structure most often proposed in the literature (Kinder, 1983; Kinder et al., 1979; Nimmo & Savage, 1976). It might be argued that voters in parliamentary systems do not think in two dimensions because vote choice is not a personal but rather a party choice. More specifically, voters in parliamentary systems do not separate between competence and character because they are more concerned with choosing competent parties. Using survey data on party characteristics would allow for the testing of such an assumption. This paper also agrees with Kinder et al. (1980) in that negative traits such as 'arrogant' and 'aggressive' might not be useful if the goal is to identify underlying trait dimensions while a later study suggests that such traits often load onto distinct factors (Abelson et al., 1982). This paper set out to highlight the importance of measurement and appropriate data-reduction techniques in light of non-interval items. A non-parametric approach to scaling is considered more suitable for such data and it is hoped that Mokken Scale Procedure will enjoy a more widespread usage among researchers.

The final paper seeks to empirically assess the question whether leader images can decide over victory and defeat in parliamentary systems. Findings show

that when public opinion is highly polarised on the personality profile of two competing leaders, aggregate direct leader effects are much stronger. Secondly, in very rare instances, aggregate effects can have negative consequences for a party's vote share, albeit rather small and indecisive for the overall outcome of the election. Taking everything into account, there is very little evidence to suggest that leader images can be pivotal for election outcomes. And in cases where they are found to be critical, the overall election result was a close call and so anything could have been the decisive factor (King, 2002). This paper ultimately challenges the idea that if voters choose on the basis of leader rather than party considerations, then this should be in large part due to their personal qualities and individual traits (Blondel, 1987; Blondel & Thiebault, 2013). Including a more extensive list of control variables could advance the statistical analysis although it is argued that for comparative reasons, only party identification and socio-demographics are included as they are most frequently available across countries and years.

5.2. Outlook

On the question of whether we have firmly entered an era of packaged politics where voters vote for the leader they like rather than the party they prefer, the findings of this project are promising. Elections in parliamentary systems appear to not have turned into beauty contests and vote choice is still firmly structured around a *party* choice. Overall, this project provides more consistent empirical evidence that would speak against the assumption that leadership-based voting has become more important than party-based voting. In other words, the expectation that presidentialism can be observed at the electoral level in parliamentary systems is not borne out by the evidence presented here. Of course, the preceding papers neither provide nor do they claim to provide a complete analysis of leadership effects in parliamentary systems from all possible perspectives. For instance, this dissertation is mainly focused on testing the validity of the presidentialisation at the electoral level. Consequently, a point of departure for future research should be to assess the validity at the party and executive level. In other words, more research is needed to systematically analyse whether greater power resources and

leadership autonomy have resulted in parliamentary systems becoming more akin to presidential ones. An ongoing academic debate between Poguntke and Webb (2005) and their critics (Dowding, 2012, 2013a; Heffernan, 2005, 2013; Karvonen, 2010) would suggest that a more nuanced conceptualisation is needed to allow for more consistent theoretical and empirical work. Dowding (2013c, p. 617) suggests that "[the] presidentialisation of the prime minister thesis should be expunged from political science vocabulary" The scope of such a debate should therefore be extended beyond the British case so as to include a wider range of cases to which the concept may be applied. Tentative work has already been published on Australia (Kefford, 2013), Sweden (Sundström, 2009) and Norway (Kolltveit, 2012, 2013) but more work is needed to improve upon the theoretical framework and test the empirical validity of the presidentialisation thesis.

Additional avenues for further research may lie in different conceptualisations and empirical tests. For example, an alternative way of testing the influence of party and leader effects on the vote would be to calculate distance functions by simply subtracting party and leader sympathy scores. Ties would still be accounted for, as a value of zero would be obtained where the two received the same rating. Quadratic or absolute differences between measures are additional possibilities. Meanwhile, Goren (2005) and Thomasson and Rosema (2009) investigate the (causal) relationship between party ID and party evaluations, finding that the former more strongly influences the latter rather than vice versa. Working with electoral utilities in the form of probability-to-vote questions and replacing party evaluations by strength of partisan loyalties might yield further insights into voting behaviour in today's highly personalised electoral context. More sophisticated statistical models such as structural equation modelling may be employed to get to the core of the causal dynamics between the two variables of interest, thereby providing additional robustness checks on similar work done by Evans and Chzhen (2013). Finally, logistic regression models might be useful to calculate predicted probabilities which will reinforce findings from OLS models.

A recurring issue that emerged throughout the course of the analysis in this dissertation is that it was often difficult to directly address research questions due to limitations in available data. Quality panel data is necessary to address causality questions and yet very few countries provide and pre- and post-election survey data to solve these issues. A second concern is related to the comparability of survey items, in particular trait batteries. Although most countries now include questions on overall party and leader likeability, very few studies also include questions on specific traits, and where they do, question wording and use of scaling vary substantially within and across countries as well as over time. Comparability has been achieved by following a common coding scheme but future research projects relating to electoral behaviour should consider including more consistent trait batteries, including questions on the Big Five (Fox & Lawless, 2004, 2005, 2010), to allow for a more robust testing of the structure and performance of leader traits.

Finally, considering that this project concludes that vote choice is not increasingly based on leader considerations, it would be useful for future studies to continue monitoring such trends across countries once more robust and comparative data becomes available. For example, the main aim of the *True European Voter* project is to build an inventory of comparable indicators that can be utilised to analyse variations in the effectiveness of electoral democracy across Europe. The dataset thus produced can be invaluable in providing the most comparative analysis of leader effects so far.

The question of whether electoral contests in parliamentary systems have turned into beauty contests between party leaders has important implications for our understanding of a well-functioning democracy. If elections have turned into beauty contests where leaders have become the face of election campaigns, the idea that party politics is an integral part of democracy may be seriously at stake. This research, however, remains sceptical towards such arguments. The electoral importance of party leaders can be questioned on the grounds that they face substantial competition from a range of other influential factors. They are relatively short-lived whereas political parties are well-established institutions in advanced parliamentary systems. More importantly, vote choice is structured

around a party choice and so partisan considerations should feature just as strongly in voters' decision-making processes. This is not to say that leaders are not important to vote choice; they are, but they are only one factor among so many others that decide over a party's victory and defeat at the polls.

Appendix A

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Table A1: Descriptive statistics of independent and exogenous variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
BES 2001					
Party (pre)	2051	-1.0	1.0	0.151	0.410
Party (post)	2097	-1.0	1.0	0.162	0.434
Leader (pre)	2035	-1.0	1.0	0.169	0.481
Leader (post)	2114	-1.0	1.0	0.207	0.455
Promise_Leader	2159	-1.0	1.0	0.166	0.571
BES 2005					
Party (pre)	2229	-1.0	1.0	0.041	0.408
Party (post)	2280	-1.0	1.0	0.037	0.390
Leader (pre)	2303	-1.0	1.0	0.051	0.404
Leader (post)	2313	-1.0	1.0	0.056	0.381
Trust_Leader	2203	-1.0	1.0	-0.006	0.367
BES 2010					
Party (pre)	1414	-1.0	1.0	0.085	0.417
Party (post)	1457	-1.0	1.0	0.101	0.421
Leader (pre)	1439	-1.0	1.0	0.044	0.402
Leader (post)	1466	-1.0	1.0	0.045	0.421
Trust_Leader	1424	-1.0	1.0	0.053	0.383
CES 2004					
Party (pre)	1285	-1.0	1.0	-0.015	0.326
Party (post)	1344	-1.0	1.0	0.032	0.360
Leader (pre)	1105	-1.0	1.0	-0.012	0.343
Leader (post)	1258	-1.0	1.0	0.039	0.336
Honest_Leader	1020	-1.0	1.0	-0.087	0.293
CES 2006					
Party (pre)	1449	-1.0	1.0	0.012	0.385
Party (post)	1487	-1.0	1.0	0.074	0.361
Leader (pre)	1412	-1.0	1.0	-0.017	0.386
Leader (post)	1459	-1.0	1.0	0.091	0.361
Honest_Leader	1339	-1.0	1.0	0.105	0.333

Information on datasets

Table A2: Information on datasets from the UK and Canada

	BES 2001	*BES 2005*	*BES 2010*
Date of election	07/06/2001	05/05/2005	06/05/2010
Type of survey	pre/post panel	pre/post panel	pre/post panel
Pre-election fieldwork	03/06-14/05	February-12/04	23/01-18/04
Post-election fieldwork	23/07-30/09	06/05-04/07	07/05-05/09
Weight variable	bpanwgt	pscwtbr	panwgt
Filter variable	prepost	wave2	prepost
N	2,159	2,343	1,498
	CES 2004	*CES 2006*	
Date of election	28/06/2004	23/01/2006	
Type of survey	pre/post panel*	pre/post panel*	
Pre-election fieldwork	23/05-27/06	30/11-22/06	
Post-election fieldwork	05/07-19/09	24/01-27/03	
Weight variable	cesnwgt	cesnwgt	
Filter variable	wave, rlink	wave, rlink	
N	1,196	1,196	

* Same panel of respondents for pre- and post-election interviews in 2004 and 2006

Parties and their leaders

Table A3: Party and leader names

Country	*Year*	*Party*	*Leader*
UK	2001	Labour Party	Tony Blair
		Conservative Party	William Hague
	2005	Labour Party	Tony Blair
		Conservative Party	Michael Howard
	2010	Labour Party	Gordon Brown
		Conservative Party	David Cameron
Canada	2004	Liberal Party	Paul Martin
		Conservative Party	Stephen Harper
	2006	Liberal Party	Paul Martin
		Conservative Party	Stephen Harper

Question wording and coding of variables

Sources: BES 2001, 2005 and 2010 and CES 2004 and 2006. These are sample question wordings from the BES. Questions in the CES are almost identical. Discrepancies are duly noted in the following.

Vote choice

- Which party did you vote for in the general election?

Party sympathy

- On a scale that runs from 0 to 10, where 0 means strongly dislike and 10 means strongly like, how do you feel about party X?

Leader sympathy

- Using a scale that runs from 0 to 10, where 0 means strongly dislike and 10 means strongly like, how do you feel about leader X?

Leader traits

BES

- Now, some questions about the party leaders. On the whole, would you describe leader X as someone who keeps his promises/breaks his promises? (2001)
- Now, please use the 0 to 10 scale to indicate how much trust you have for each of the party leaders, where 0 means no trust and 10 means a great deal of trust. How much do you trust leader X? (2005 and 2010)

CES

- On a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 means very honest and 0 means very dishonest, where would you rate leader X? (2004 and 2006)

- Age — in years
- Male — dummy variable: 1=male, 0=female
- Sector — dummy variable; 0=public sector, 1= private sector
- Income — 0 for lowest third, 0.5 for middle third and 1 for highest third

Appendix B

Full results of voting behaviour under non-alignment of party and leader evaluations

Table B1: Impact on voting for party when evaluations are not aligned (all parties included)

Country	*Year*	*Weak ID* *Ties included*		*Strong ID*		*Weak ID* *Ties excluded*		*Strong ID*	
		Best L	*Best P*	*Best L*	*Best P*	*Best L*	*Best P*	*Best L*	*Best P*
AUS	1993	12	34	10	41	31	56	23	74
	1996	10	42	8	44	16	84	17	73
	1998	13	32	13	34	25	63	29	63
	2001	12	28	11	33	32	52	30	63
	2004	10	30	10	36	23	50	14	79
	2007	15	28	15	27	28	68	34	63
	2010	12	33	14	39	27	63	30	63
CAN	1968	22	30	18	40	36	53	28	65
	1974	10	39	16	50	13	66	25	70
	1979	25	40	22	40	27	61	31	54
	1980	21	30	25	38	25	62	32	50
	1988	24	48	16	58	28	64	23	70
	1993	26	31	17	39	38	43	28	60
	1997	14	30	8	41	20	30	8	64
	2000	16	46	16	51	27	55	19	71
	2004	17	41	12	52	31	60	27	65
	2006	16	54	22	61	21	69	30	70
	2008	16	40	22	47	33	58	28	61
	2011	26	35	16	42	18	47	22	61
NL	1986	13	57	1	83	24	71	0	97
	1994	4	56	2	76	13	82	0	94
	1998	12	44	6	60	18	70	2	91
NZL	1990	12	64	12	63	14	85	16	76
	1993	16	60	10	59	30	69	25	75
NOR	1981	10	45	4	54	27	58	9	87
	1985	6	54	3	67	8	84	3	94
	1989	7	46	4	63	12	72	6	89
	1993	10	37	6	54	15	78	12	81
	1997	7	53	4	71	10	75	9	87
POR	2002	22	33	17	37	16	45	23	54
	2009	10	26	8	34	19	42	8	34
ESP	1996	18	37	16	36	19	76	17	70
	2000	11	33	11	37	13	60	14	70
UK	1964	29	41	17	51	43	56	22	77
	1966	22	48	23	47	33	66	30	69
	1970	38	45	28	37	44	55	42	57
	19741	20	46	14	55	21	65	25	71
	19742	14	56	8	60	17	76	13	81

	1979	17	55	8	72	18	78	7	89
	1997	12	44	9	47	24	67	27	62
	2001	12	59	12	63	11	78	19	76
	2005	29	40	19	50	29	48	23	51
	2010	16	46	12	54	28	72	20	76
Mean		15	42	12	49	23	63	19	70

Note: figures shown are percentages.

Table B2: Impact on voting for party when evaluations are not aligned (only two largest parties included; ties included)

Country	*Year*	*Weak ID*		*Strong ID*	
		Best L	*Best P*	*Best L*	*Best P*
Australia	1993	24	49	23	65
	1996	26	55	25	66
	1998	21	55	29	67
	2001	28	53	28	70
	2004	24	57	31	67
	2007	22	40	25	48
	2010	20	46	28	67
Canada	1968	36	37	28	45
	1974	18	56	28	59
	1979	63	46	42	46
	1980	80	36	48	44
	1988	38	55	25	60
	1993	22	34	18	35
	1997	10	50	9	49
	2000	30	51	25	55
	2004	19	44	14	57
	2006	23	57	28	64
	2008	13	40	29	51
	2011	26	45	25	46
Netherlands	1986	10	50	0	45
	1994	3	34	4	41
	1998	11	40	5	41
New Zealand	1990	12	64	12	63
	1993	9	61	2	60
Norway	1981	10	61	12	73
	1985	5	69	6	82
	1989	13	72	9	74
	1993	10	56	8	61
	1997	6	59	6	61
Portugal	2002	50	48	34	64
	2009	30	35	22	62
Spain	1996	25	40	22	77
	2000	13	51	19	58
UK	1964	29	41	17	51
	1966	22	48	23	47
	1970	38	45	28	37
	19741	11	45	12	59
	19742	6	54	6	63
	1979	22	57	7	74
	1997	15	47	12	55
	2001	10	64	22	73
	2005	52	52	60	63
	2010	12	50	13	63
Mean		22	49	20	58

Note: figures shown are percentages.

Table B3: Overview of large and small parties

Country	*Large parties*	*Small parties*
Australia	Labor, Liberal/National	Democratic, National
*Canada**	Liberal, Conservative	New Democratic
Netherlands	People's Party, Labour	Christian Democratic Appeal, Democrats 66
New Zealand	National, Labour	Alliance, New Labour
Norway	Conservative, Centre, Labour, Christian Democratic	Socialist Left, Venstre, Progress
Portugal	Social Democratic, Socialist	Popular Party, Unitary Democratic Coalition, Left Bloc, Portuguese Communist Party (2002 only)
Spain	Socialist Workers' Party, People's Party	United Left, Convergence and Union, Basque Nationalist Party
UK	Labour, Conservative	Liberal Democrats

Note: *depending on vote share at given election.

Appendix C

Overview of election studies and traits by country

Table C1: Overview of traits by country and year

Country	*Election year*	*Leader traits*
Australia	1993, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010	Strong leadership, knowledgeable, intelligent, inspiring, moral, compassionate, decent, reliable, dependable, sensible, trustworthy, honest
Canada	1988, 1993, 1997, 2006	Strong leadership, intelligent, trustworthy cares about people like me, aggressive, arrogant, compassionate, in touch with times, new ideas, weak leader, caring, competent, cares about people, honest
Denmark	2007	Fit to be Prime Minister, great knowledge, credible, believes what he says, knows what ordinary people think/say, inspiring
Germany	1998, 2002, 2005, 2009	Knows how to manage economy, likeable, trustworthy, active/energetic, strong leader, representation abroad, team-work, party support, in touch, right concepts to manage economy
Ireland	2002, 2007, 2011	Able to run country, honest, in touch with ordinary people
New Zealand	1990, 1999, 2002, 2005	Competent, tough, in touch, caring, sincere, honest, likeable, strong leadership, trustworthy arrogant, compassionate
Spain	1993, 2004	Sincere, honest, attractive, able, intelligent, charismatic, moderate, determined, charming, cultured
Sweden	1991, 1998, 2002, 2006	Knowledgeable, knows thoughts/feelings of ordinary people, trustworthy, inspiring, friendly, speaks so that ordinary people can understand, strong leader
UK	1983, 1992, 2001, 2005, 2010	Caring, determined, shrewd, likeable, tough, strong leader or not, looks after one/all classes, best Prime Minister, caring/uncaring, extreme/moderate, sticks to principles, keep/break promises, listening to reason, decisive, arrogant, competent, responsive

Additional information on Mokken Scale Procedure

Based on the deterministic cumulative scale where respondents who give a positive response to a difficult item also do so for all easier items (Guttman, 1950), Mokken developed a probabilistic version of the Guttman scale. Based on Guttman's work, Loevinger has developed three indices defined as a function of Guttman errors between a set of items (Loevinger, 1948).[41] A Loevinger's H_{ij} coefficient *between two items* i and j close to 1 indicates few Guttman errors and thus items measure the same latent trait. It is based on the frequencies of answers in a cross-classification of answers to two trait items. These coefficients are then weighted by responses that do not follow Guttman's model (i.e. Guttman errors). To measure the consistency of an *item within a scale*, a Loevinger's H^S_j coefficient close to 1 indicates that item j is consistent within a scale S. Thirdly, Loevinger's H^S coefficient of scalability is used to check whether *scale properties* are sufficiently good. MSP follows a bottom-up item selection method, selecting items that satisfy a Mokken scale from a larger pool of items. An automated item selection procedure (AISP) proceeds in two stages: in a first step, it selects items that satisfy a Mokken scale from a larger pool of items and finds item pairs with the greatest H_{ij}. It then adds the next item with the highest H_j value that exceeds the critical value of $c = 0.3$.

[41] Guttman error = the number of respondents which give a positive response to the more difficult items and a negative one to the easier items.

Table C2: Individual factor loadings and coefficients of scalability

Country & Year	*Item*	*F1*	*F2*	*Item*	*Avg.*	*H*
AUS	Intelligent	0.35	0.82	Compassionate	1.34	0.63
1993	Knowledgeable	0.34	0.83	Dependable	1.76	0.67
	Strong	0.24	0.82	Honest	1.46	0.69
	Compassionate	0.86	0.24	Inspiring	1.29	0.64
	Decent	0.83	0.36	Intelligent	2.11	0.60
	Dependable	0.84	0.37	Knowledgeable	2.27	0.60
	Inspiring	0.63	0.54	Moral	1.64	0.63
	Moral	0.84	0.25	Reliable	1.39	0.69
	Reliable	0.84	0.37	Sensible	1.73	0.67
	Sensible	0.63	0.59	Strong	1.85	0.52
1996	Inspiring	0.44	0.7	(Arrogant)		
	Intelligent	0.29	0.81	Compassionate	1.48	0.57
	Knowledgeable	0.32	0.8	Dependable	1.58	0.64
	Strong	0.11	0.87	Honest	1.62	0.61
	Arrogant	-0.63	0.48	Inspiring	1.35	0.57
	Compassionate	0.87	0.15	Intelligent	2.23	0.54
	Dependable	0.81	0.36	Knowledgeable	2.11	0.54
	Honest	0.90	0.2	Moral	1.84	0.58
	Moral	0.84	0.21	Reliable	1.64	0.66
	Reliable	0.83	0.38	Sensible	1.85	0.63
	Sensible	0.72	0.47	Strong	1.90	0.43
1998	Compassionate	0.87		Compassionate	1.47	0.70
	Dependable	0.92		Dependable	1.30	0.77
	Honest	0.85		Honest	1.54	0.68
	Inspiring	0.84		Inspiring	1.04	0.71
	Intelligent	0.88		Intelligent	1.59	0.73
	Knowledgeable	0.88		Knowledgeable	1.47	0.72
	Moral	0.88		Moral	1.65	0.74
	Reliable	0.92		Reliable	1.38	0.76
	Sensible	0.92		Sensible	1.44	0.76
	Strong	0.83		Strong	1.33	0.67
2001	Compassionate	0.86		Compassionate	1.51	0.69
	Honest	0.87		Honest	1.54	0.70
	Inspiring	0.86		Sensible	1.53	0.75
	Intelligent	0.89		Intelligent	1.76	0.75
	Knowledgeable	0.90		Knowledgeable	1.59	0.74
	Sensible	0.92		Trust	1.37	0.74
	Strong	0.83		Strong	1.38	0.67
	Trust	0.89		Inspiring	1.10	0.73
2004	Compassionate	0.83		Compassionate	1.65	0.65
	Honest	0.85		Honest	1.44	0.67
	Inspiring	0.87		Inspiring	1.26	0.69
	Intelligent	0.79		Intelligent	2.09	0.62
	Knowledgeable	0.82		Knowledgeable	1.90	0.64
	Sensible	0.88		Sensible	1.76	0.69
	Strong	0.80		Strong	1.88	0.61
	Trust	0.88		Trust	1.35	0.70

2007	Compassionate	0.80		Compassionate	1.74	0.65
	Competent	0.85		Competent	2.03	0.66
	Honest	0.86		Honest	1.60	0.69
	Inspiring	0.84		Inspiring	1.47	0.67
	Intelligent	0.80		Intelligent	2.34	0.65
	Knowledgeable	0.84		Knowledgeable	2.11	0.64
	Sensible	0.89		Sensible	2.00	0.70
	Strong	0.80		Strong	2.11	0.60
	Trust	0.88		Trust	1.51	0.71
2010	Compassionate	0.84		Compassionate	1.53	0.68
	Competent	0.88		Competent	1.72	0.72
	Honest	0.87		Honest	1.46	0.71
	Inspiring	0.87		Inspiring	1.23	0.71
	Intelligent	0.79		Intelligent	2.09	0.66
	Knowledgeable	0.83		Knowledgeable	1.86	0.68
	Sensible	0.88		Sensible	1.69	0.71
	Strong	0.84		Strong	1.62	0.68
	Trust	0.89		Trust	1.28	0.73
CAN	Caring	0.84		Caring	2.30	0.55
1988	Intelligent	0.79		Strong	2.50	0.48
	Strong	0.77		Intelligent	3.05	0.56
	Trustworthy	0.87		Trustworthy	2.44	0.58
1993	Arrogant	-0.46	0.76	Aggressive	1.87	0.39
	Aggressive	0.26	0.87	Arrogant	1.41	0.39
	Strong	0.85	0.33	Strong	1.74	0.47
	Trustworthy	0.85	-0.25	Trustworthy	1.80	0.47
1997	Arrogant	-0.48		(Arrogant)		
	Compassionate	0.81		Compassionate	1.78	0.44
	In touch	0.78		In touch	1.81	0.45
	Strong	0.66		Strong	1.86	0.39
	Trustworthy	0.82		Trustworthy	1.77	0.46
2006	Compassionate	0.90		Compassionate	5.70	0.62
	Honest	0.90		Honest	5.70	0.62
DK	Best PM	0.86		Best PM	2.52	0.65
2007	Credible	0.91		Credible	2.64	0.70
	Inspiring	0.86		Inspiring	2.34	0.66
	Knowledgeable	0.76		Knowledgeable	2.91	0.56
	Ordinary	0.80		Ordinary	2.35	0.60
	Sincere	0.86		Sincere	2.56	0.65
GER	Economy	0.89		Economy	2.44	0.68
1998	Energy	0.84		Energy	2.80	0.64
	Likeable	0.87		Likeable	2.55	0.66
	Trustworthy	0.90		Trustworthy	2.60	0.68
2002	Economy	0.84		Economy	2.34	0.68
	Energy	0.89		Energy	2.58	0.71
	Likeable	0.92		Likeable	2.34	0.65
	Trustworthy	0.87		Trustworthy	2.26	0.73
2005	Concept	0.83		Concept	3.35	0.59
	Likeable	0.89		Likeable	3.45	0.64
	Party	0.60		Party	4.10	0.41

	Representative	0.81		Party	4.10	0.41
	Strong	0.81		Representative	4.00	0.58
	Strong	0.81		Strong	4.06	0.56
	Team	0.78		Team	3.62	0.55
	Touch	0.78		Touch	3.80	0.55
	Trustworthy	0.85		Trustworthy	3.34	0.61
2009	Assertive	0.85		Assertive	2.59	0.64
	Economy	0.90		Economy	2.36	0.72
	Likeable	0.87		Likeable	2.55	0.66
	Trustworthy	0.93		Trustworthy	2.58	0.74
IRE	Able	0.90		Able	6.14	0.60
2002	Honest	0.82		Honest	6.08	0.69
	Touch	0.90		Touch	6.02	0.69
2007	Able	0.85		Able	6.07	0.60
	Honest	0.84		Touch	6.65	0.61
	Touch	0.88		Honest	6.41	0.63
2011	Able	0.90		Able	5.84	0.51
	Honest	0.74		Touch	4.90	0.67
	Touch	0.92		Honest	5.12	0.69
NZL	Caring	0.86		Caring	1.91	0.59
1990	Competent	0.79		Competent	1.87	0.54
	Honest	0.83		Honest	1.80	0.58
	Likeable	0.83		Likeable	1.84	0.56
	Sincere	0.88		Sincere	1.83	0.61
	Touch	0.82		Touch	1.91	0.56
	Tough	0.62		Tough	1.81	0.39
1999	Arrogant	-0.85		(Arrogant)		
	Competent	0.88		Competent	1.50	0.67
	Strong	0.81		Strong	1.79	0.67
	Trust	0.93		Trust	1.49	0.73
2002	Arrogant	0.04	0.98	(Arrogant)		
	Strong	0.83	0.42	Strong	1.97	0.59
	Trust	0.94	-0.12	Trust	1.87	0.59
2005	Arrogant	0.62		(Arrogant)		
	Strong	0.93		Strong	2.08	0.66
	Trust	0.77		Trust	1.69	0.66
ESP	Able	0.89		Able	0.56	0.63
1993	Attractive	0.77		Attractive	0.34	0.50
	Honest	0.90		Honest	0.50	0.61
	Sincere	0.92		Sincere	0.39	0.64
2004	Charismatic	0.84		Charismatic	1.38	0.67
	Charming	0.83		Charming	1.26	0.66
	Cultured	0.82		Cultured	1.94	0.64
	Determined	0.83		Determined	1.65	0.64
	Honest	0.86		Honest	1.71	0.67
	Intelligent	0.83		Intelligent	1.94	0.66
	Moderate	0.84		Moderate	1.7	0.65
SWE	Inspiring	0.66		Inspiring	1.33	0.38
1991	Knowledgeable	0.82		Knowledgeable	1.95	0.52
	Ordinary	0.77		Ordinary	1.36	0.46

	Trustworthy	0.87		Trustworthy	1.45	0.55
1998	Friendly	0.83		Friendly	1.38	0.53
	Inspiring	0.80		Inspiring	1.39	0.50
	Knowledgeable	0.75		Knowledgeable	2.36	0.47
	Ordinary	0.63		Ordinary	1.26	0.40
	Trustworthy	0.85		Trustworthy	1.73	0.59
2002	Friendly	0.77		Friendly	1.59	0.52
	Inspiring	0.76		Inspiring	1.28	0.53
	Knowledgeable	0.72		Knowledgeable	2.29	0.50
	Ordinary	0.83		Ordinary	1.68	0.58
	Speak	0.77		Speak	1.88	0.54
	Strong	0.79		Strong	1.93	0.54
	Trustworthy	0.76		Trustworthy	1.81	0.52
2006	Friendly	0.78		Friendly	1.69	0.49
	Inspiring	0.76		Inspiring	1.54	0.47
	Knowledgeable	0.72		Knowledgeable	2.29	0.46
	Ordinary	0.73		Ordinary	1.51	0.45
	Speak	0.61		Speak	2.03	0.36
	Strong	0.56		Strong	2.32	0.32
	Trustworthy	0.80		Trustworthy	1.82	0.50
UK	Decisive	0.88	-0.07	Caring	0.32	0.51
1983	Determined	0.87	-0.13	Decisive	0.34	0.55
	Principled	0.79	0.19	Determined	0.52	0.55
	Shrewd	0.67	-0.05	Likeable	0.24	0.49
	Tough	0.86	-0.28	Principled	0.49	0.42
	Caring	-0.15	0.89	Reason	0.29	0.46
	Likeable	-0.09	0.86	Shrewd	0.36	0.37
	Reason	0.00	0.87	Tough	0.44	0.53
1992	Caring	0.90		Caring	0.85	0.57
	Class	0.89		Class	0.65	0.47
	Moderate	0.65		Moderate	0.75	0.30
	Strong	0.76		Strong	0.67	0.36
2001	Arrogant	-0.58		(Arrogant)		
	Caring	0.84		Caring	0.64	0.51
	Decisive	0.79		Decisive	0.57	0.47
	Principles	0.85		Principles	0.60	0.51
	Promises	0.88		Promises	0.41	0.64
	Reason	0.80		Reason	0.56	0.45
	Strong	0.80		Strong	0.56	0.47
2005	Competent	0.88		Competent	5.67	0.71
	Responsive	0.90		Responsive	5.43	0.74
	Trust	0.91		Trust	4.97	0.74
2010	Competent	0.95		Competent	5.23	0.84
	Trust	0.95		Trust	4.85	0.84
				Average *H* coefficient		0.60

Notes: items in brackets were not included in item-selection procedure for the Mokken Scale Analysis ($c < 0.3$); for EFA, factor loadings are shown; for MSP, Loevinger's H coefficient shows how each item fares in scale with respect to all other items in that scale. Mean scores are also shown for each item.

Table C3: Individual factor loadings and coefficients of scalability after rescaling negative traits (aggressiveness and arrogance)

Country & Year	*Item*	*F1*	*F2*	*Item*	*Avg.*	*H*
AUS	Inspiring	0.44	0.70	(Arrogant)		
1996	Intelligent	0.29	0.81	Compassionate	1.48	0.57
	Knowledgeable	0.32	0.80	Dependable	1.58	0.64
	Strong	0.11	0.87	Honest	1.62	0.61
	Arrogant	0.63	-0.48	Inspiring	1.35	0.57
	Compassionate	0.87	0.15	Intelligent	2.23	0.54
	Dependable	0.81	0.36	Knowledgeable	2.11	0.54
	Honest	0.91	0.20	Moral	1.84	0.58
	Moral	0.84	0.21	Reliable	1.64	0.66
	Reliable	0.83	0.38	Sensible	1.85	0.63
	Sensible	0.72	0.47	Strong	1.90	0.43
CAN	Aggressive	-0.26	0.87	Aggressive	1.13	0.39
1993	Arrogant	0.45	0.75	Arrogant	1.59	0.39
	Strong	0.84	-0.33	Strong	1.74	0.47
	Trustworthy	0.85	0.25	Trustworthy	1.80	0.47
1997	Arrogant	0.48		(Arrogant)		
	Compassionate	0.81		Compassionate	1.78	0.44
	In touch	0.78		In touch	1.81	0.45
	Strong	0.66		Strong	1.86	0.39
	Trustworthy	0.82		Trustworthy	1.77	0.46
NZL	Arrogant	0.85		Arrogant	1.43	0.64
1999	Competent	0.88		Competent	1.50	0.67
	Strong	0.81		Strong	1.79	0.67
	Trust	0.93		Trust	1.49	0.73
2002	Arrogant	0.85		Arrogant	1.38	0.61
	Strong	0.85		Strong	1.97	0.57
	Trust	0.87		Trust	1.87	0.59
2005	Arrogant	0.80		Arrogant	1.39	0.50
	Strong	0.83		Strong	2.08	0.53
	Trust	0.90		Trust	1.69	0.61
UK	Arrogant	0.68		Arrogant	0.52	0.36
2001	Caring	0.84		Caring	0.64	0.51
	Decisive	0.79		Decisive	0.57	0.43
	Principles	0.85		Principles	0.60	0.48
	Promises	0.88		Promises	0.41	0.60
	Reason	0.80		Reason	0.56	0.43
	Strong	0.80		Strong	0.56	0.43

List of main electronic data sources

Australia

http://aes.anu.edu.au/aes

Canada

http://www.queensu.ca/cora/ces.html

Denmark

http://samfund.dda.dk/dda/default-en.asp

http://www.gesis.org/en/services/data-analysis/survey-data/international-election-studies/the-european-voter-project/

Germany

http://www.gesis.org/en/elections-home/gles/

http://www.gesis.org/en/services/data-analysis/survey-data/international-election-studies/the-european-voter-project/

Ireland

http://www.tcd.ie/ines/

Netherlands

http://www.gesis.org/en/services/data-analysis/survey-data/international-election-studies/the-european-voter-project/

New Zealand

http://www.nzes.org/exec/show/data

Norway

http://www.nsd.uib.no/nsd/english/index.html

Portugal

http://www.cses.org/datacenter/module2/module2.htm

http://www.cses.org/datacenter/module3/module3.htm

Spain

http://www.cses.org/datacenter/module1/module1.htm

http://www.gesis.org/en/services/data-analysis/survey-data/international-election-studies/the-european-voter-project/

Sweden

http://snd.gu.se/en/start

http://www.gesis.org/en/services/data-analysis/survey-data/international-election-studies/the-european-voter-project/

UK

http://bes2009-10.org/

http://www.gesis.org/en/services/data-analysis/survey-data/international-election-studies/the-european-voter-project/

References

Aarts, K. (2001). The impact of leaders on electoral choice in the Netherlands revisited. *Acta politica, 36*(4), 380-401.

Aarts, K. (2011). *Political leaders and democratic elections*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Abelson, R. P., Kinder, D. R., Peters, M. D., & Fiske, S. T. (1982). Affective and semantic components in political person perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 42*(4), 619-630.

Adams, J., Merrill, S., & Grofman, B. (2005). *A unified theory of party competition: A cross-national analysis of integrating spatial and behavioral factors*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aldrich, J. H., Gronke, P., & Grynaviski, J. (1999). *Policy, personality, and presidential performance*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

Anderson, C. J., & Brettschneider, F. (2003). The likeable winner versus the competent loser. *German Politics and Society, 21*(1), 95-118.

Anderson, C. J., & Gerbing, D. (1988). Structural Equation Modelling in Practice: A Review and Recommended Two-Step Approach. *Psychological Bulletin, 103*(3), 411-423.

Archer, K. (1987). A Simultaneous Equation Model of Canadian Voting Behaviour. *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique, 20*(3), 553-572.

Asher, H. B. (2012). *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know* (8 ed.). London: SAGE.

Baker, B. O., Hardyck, C. D., & Petrinovich, L. F. (1966). Weak Measurements vs. Strong Statistics: An Empirical Critique of S. S. Stevens' Proscriptions in Statistics. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 26*(2), 291-309.

Barr, C. W. (1991). The Importance and Potential of Leaders Debates. In F. F. Fletcher (Ed.), *Media and Voters in Canadian Election Campaigns* (Vol. 18, pp. 107-157). Toronto: Dundurn Press Limited.

Barrick, M. R., & Mount, M. K. (1991). The Big Five Personality Dimensions and Job Performance: A Meta-Analysis. *Personnel Psychology, 44*(1), 1-26.

Barrick, M. R., Mount, M. K., & Strauss, J. P. (1993). Conscientiousness and Performance of Sales Representatives: Test of the Mediating Effects of Goal Setting. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*(5), 715-722.

Barrick, M. R., Stewart, G. L., Neubert, M. J., & Mount, M. K. (1998). Relating Member Ability and Personality to Work-Team Processes and Team Effectiveness. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 83*(3), 377-391.

Bartels, L. M. (1996). Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections. *American Journal of Political Science, 40*(1), 194-230.

Bartels, L. M. (2000). Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996. *American Journal of Political Science, 44*(1), 35-50.

Bartels, L. M. (2002). The impact of candidate traits in American Presidential Elections. In A. King (Ed.), *Leaders' personalities and the outcomes of democratic elections* (pp. 44-70). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bartle, J. (1998). Left-Right Position Matters, but Does Social Class? Causal Models of the 1992 British General Election. *British Journal of Political Science, 28*(3), 501-529.

Bartle, J. (2003). Partisanship, Performance and Personality: Competing and Complementary Characterizations of the 2001 British General Election. *Party Politics, 9*(3), 317-345.

Bartle, J. (2005). Homogeneous Models and Heterogeneous Voters. *Political Studies, 53*(4), 653-675.

Bartle, J., & Crewe, I. (2002). The Impact of Party Leaders in Britain: Strong Assumptions, Weak Evidence. In A. S. King (Ed.), *Leaders' personalities and the outcome of democratic elections* (pp. 70-96). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bean, C. (1993). The Electoral Influence of Party Leader Images in Australia and New Zealand. *Comparative Political Studies, 26*(1), 111-132.

Bean, C., & Mughan, A. (1989). Leadership Effects in Parliamentary Elections in Australia and Britain. *The American Political Science Review, 83*(4), 1165-1179.

Bélanger, É., Lewis-Beck, M. S., Chiche, J., & Tiberj, V. (2006). Party, Ideology, and Vote Intentions: Dynamics from the 2002 French Electoral Panel. *Political Research Quarterly, 59*(4), 503-515.

Bellucci, P., Garzia, D., & Lewis-Beck, M. S. (2013). Issues and leaders as vote determinants: The case of Italy. *Party Politics*.

Bennett, W. L. (2012). The Personalization of Politics: Political Identity, Social Media, and Changing Patterns of Participation. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 644*(1), 20-39.

Berelson, B., Lazarsfeld, P. F., & McPhee, W. N. (1954). *Voting: a study of opinion formation in a presidential campaign* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bernier, R., & Moniere, D. (1991). The organization of televised leaders debates in the United States, Europe, Australia and Canada. In F. F. Fletcher (Ed.), *Media and Voters in Canadian Election Campaigns* (Vol. 18, pp. 157-213). Toronto: Dundurn.

Bernstein, I. H., Garbin, C., & Teng, G. (1989). Factoring items and factoring scales are different: Spurious evidence for multidimensionality due to item categorization. *Psychological Bulletin, 105*, 467-477.

Bittner, A. (2007a). *Competence or Charisma? The effects of measurement on why some leaders' traits matter more than others*. Paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Annual Meeting, University of Saskatchewan.

Bittner, A. (2007b). *Survey structure, measurement effects, and the evaluation of Party Leaders*. Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois.

Bittner, A. (2008). *Platform or Personality? Understanding the Role of Leaders in Election Outcomes.* (Doctorate), University of British Columbia, Canada.

Bittner, A. (2011). *Platform or Personality? The Role of Party Leaders in Elections*. Oxford: Oxord University Press.

Bittner, A. (2014). Leader Evaluations and Partisan Stereotypes - A Comparative Analysis. In M. C. Lobo & J. Curtice (Eds.), *Personality*

Politics?: The Role of leader Evaluations in Democratic Elections (pp. 38-63). Oxford Oxford University Press.

Blais, A., Nevitte, N., Gidengil, E., & Nadeau, R. (2000). Do People Have Feelings toward Leaders about Whom They Say They Know Nothing? *Public Opinion Quarterly, 64*, 452-463.

Blondel, J. (1987). *Political Leadership: Towards a General Analysis*: SAGE.

Blondel, J., & Thiebault, J. L. (2013). *Political Leadership, Parties and Citizens: The Personalisation of Leadership*: Routledge.

Bowler, S., & Farrell, D. M. (1992). *Electoral Strategies and Political Marketing*: Macmillan Press.

Bowler, S., Farrell, D. M., & Katz, R. S. (1999). *Party discipline and parliamentary government*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Brettschneider, F., & Gabriel, O. W. (2002). The Nonpersonalization of Voting Behaviour in Germany. In A. King (Ed.), *Leaders' Personalities and the Outcomes of Democratic Elections* (pp. 127-158). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brettschneider, F., Neller, K., & Anderson, C. J. (2006). Candidate images in the 2005 German National Election. *German Politics, 15*(4), 481-499.

Brody, R. A., & Page, B. I. (1972). Comment: The Assessment of Policy Voting. *The American Political Science Review, 66*(2), 450-458.

Brown, S. D., Lambert, R. D., Kay, B. J., & Curtis, J. E. (1988). In the Eye of the Beholder: Leader Images in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique, 21*(4), 729-755.

Brug, W. v. d., Eijk, C. v. d., & Franklin, M. (2007). *The Economy and the Vote*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Butler, D., & Ranney, A. (1992). *Electioneering: A Comparative Study of Continuity and Change*: Clarendon Press.

C, R. (2010). Public Opinion Poll - November 2010 [Press release]

Cacioppo, J., & Petty, R. (1982). The Need for Cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 42*(1), 116-131.

Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E., & Stokes, D. E. (1960). *The American voter*. New York: Wiley.

Campus, D. (2010). Mediatization and Personalization of Politics in Italy and France: The Cases of Berlusconi and Sarkozy. *The International Journal of Press/Politics, 15*(2), 219-235.

Carey, J. M., & Shugart, M. S. (1995). Incentives to cultivate a personal vote: A rank ordering of electoral formulas. *Electoral Studies, 14*(4), 417-439.

Chari, R. (2004). The 2004 Spanish Election: Terrorism as a Catalyst for Change? *West European Politics, 27*(5), 954-963.

Clark, A. (2012). Party organization and concurrent multi-level local campaigning: The 2007 Scottish elections under MMP and STV. *Party Politics, 18*(4), 603-622.

Clarke, H. D., Sanders, D., Stewart, M., & Whiteley, P. (2009). *Performance politics and the British voter*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clarke, H. D., Sanders, D., Stewart, M., & Whiteley, P. (2011). Valence Politics and Electoral Choice in Britain, 2010. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties, 21*(2), 237-253.

Clarke, H. D., Sanders, D., Stewart, M. C., & Whiteley, P. (1979). *Political Choice in Canada* Toronto; New York: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Clarke, H. D., Sanders, D., Stewart, M. C., & Whiteley, P. (2004). *Political Choice in Britain* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Clarke, H. D., & Stewart, M. C. (1995). Economic Evaluations, Prime Ministerial Approval and Governing Party Support: Rival Models Reconsidered. *British Journal of Political Science, 25*(2), 145-170.

ComRes. (2014). ComRes Published Voting Intention Figures [Press release]

Converse, P. E. (1964). The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics. In D. Apter (Ed.), *Ideology and Discontent* (pp. 206-261). Glencoe: Collier-Macmillan.

Crewe, I., & King, A. (1974). Are British Elections Becoming More 'Presidential'? In D. Butler & D. Stokes (Eds.), *Political Change in Britain: The Evolution of Electoral Choice* (pp. 192-204). London: Macmillan.

Crewe, I., & King, A. (1994). Did Major Win? Did Kinnock Lose? Leadership Effects in the 1992 Election. In A. Heath, R. Jowell & J. Curtice (Eds.), *Labour's Last Chance? The 1992 Election and Beyond*. Dartsmouth: Aldershot.

Crewe, I., Sarlvik, B., & Alt, J. (1977). Partisan dealignment in Britain 1964-1974. *British Journal of Political Science, 7*(2), 129-190.

Curtice, J. (2003). *Elections as Beauty Contests: Do the rules matter?* Paper presented at the International Conference on Portugal at the Polls, Lisbon.

Curtice, J., & Blais, A. (2001). Follow my leader? A cross-national analysis of leadership effects in parliamentary democracies. *CREST Working Paper, Number 91*.

Curtice, J., & Holmberg, S. (2005). Leaders In J. Thomassen (Ed.), *The European Voter. A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies* (pp. 125-166.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Curtice, J., & Hunjan, S. (2006). *The impact of leadership evaluations on voting behaviour: do the rules matter?* Paper presented at the Centre for Resesarch Into Elections and Social Trends, University of Oxford.

Dalton, R. J., McAllister, I., & Wattenberg, M. P. (2000). The Consequences of Partisan Dealignment In R. J. Dalton & M. P. Wattenberg (Eds.), *Parties without Partisans. Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (pp. 37-64). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dalton, R. J., & Wattenberg, M. P. (2000). *Parties without partisans: political change in advanced industrial democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

De Ayala, R. J. (2013). Factor Analysis with Categorical Indicators: Item Response Theory. In Y. Petscher & C. Schatschneider (Eds.), *Applied quantitative analysis in the social sciences* (pp. 208-243). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

De Landtsheer, C., & De Vries, P. (2013). Crafting the Political Image: A Belgian Case in Perception Politics. In K. Gouliamos, A. Theocharous & B. Newman (Eds.), *Political Marketing: Strategic Campaign Culture* (pp. 169-188). New York: Routledge.

De Landtsheer, C., De Vries, P., & Vertessen, D. (2005). *Political Impression Management and Perception Politics in Belgium: The Way of Sound Bites, Personality Profiles, and Appearance Effectiveness of Politicians*.

Paper presented at the International Political Marketing Conference, Kastoria, Greece.
Denemark, D., Ward, I., & Bean, C. (2012). Gender and Leader Effects in the 2010 Australian Election. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 47*(4), 563-578.
Denver, D. (2005). 'Valence Politics': How Britain Votes Now. *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations, 7*(2), 292-299.
Dinas, E. (2005). *Was it Karamanlis who won it or Papandreou who lost it? The impact of leaders' image in the 2004 election*. Paper presented at the 2nd Hellenic Observatory Symposium, London School of Economics.
Dinas, E. (2008). Big expectations, small outcomes: The impact of leaders' personal appeal in the 2004 Greek election. *Electoral Studies, 27*(3), 505-517.
Dowding, K. (2012). The Prime Ministerialisation of the British Prime Minister. *Parliamentary Affairs, 66*(3), 617-635.
Dowding, K. (2013a). Beneath the Surface: Replies to Three Critics. *Parliamentary Affairs, 66*(3), 663-672.
Dowding, K. (2013b). Presidentialisation Again: A Comment on Kefford. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 48*(2), 147-149.
Dowding, K. (2013c). The Prime Ministerialisation of the British Prime Minister. *Parliamentary Affairs, 66*(3), 617-635.
Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. New York: HarperCollins.
Durbin, J. (1954). Errors in Variables. *Revue de l'Institut International de Statistique / Review of the International Statistical Institute, 22*(1/3), 23-32.
Duverger, M. (1964). *Political parties : their organization and activity in the modern state / Maurice Duverger ; translated by Barbara and Robert North ; with a foreword by D.W. Brogan*. London: Methuen.
Eijk, C. v. d., Brug, W. v. d., Kroh, M., & Franklin, M. (2006). Rethinking the dependent variable in voting behavior: On the measurement and analysis of electoral utilities. *Electoral Studies, 25*(3), 424-447.
Enelow, J., & Hinich, M. (1984). *The Spatial Theory of Voting*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Evans, G., & Andersen, R. (2005). The Impact of Party Leaders: How Blair Lost Labour Votes. *Parliamentary Affairs, 58*(4), 818-836.
Evans, G., & Chzhen, K. (2013). Re-evaluating the Valence Model of Political Choice. *Political Science Research and Methods, 00*(0), 1-22.
Farrell, D. M. (1996). Campaign Strategies and Tactics. In L. LeDuc, R. Niemi & P. Norris (Eds.), *Comparing Democracies*. Thousands Oaks: SAGE.
Farrell, D. M., & Schmitt-Beck, R. (2000). *Do Political Campaigns Matter? Campaign effects in elections and referendums*. London: Routledge.
Fiorina, M. P. (1981). *Retrospective voting in American national elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Fiske, S. T. (1986). Schema-Based versus Piecemeal Politics: A Patchwork Quilt, Bot not a Blanket, of Evidence. In R. R. Lau & D. O. Sears (Eds.), *Political Cognition*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
Flora, D. B., & Curran, P. J. (2004). An empirical evaluation of alternative methods of estimation for confirmatory factor analysis. *Psychological Methods, 9*(4), 466-491.

Foley, M. (1993). *The rise of the British presidency*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Foley, M. (2000). *The British Presidency: Tony Blair and the Politics of Public Leadership*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Foley, M. (2012). Prime Ministerialisation and Presidential Analogies: A Certain Difference in Interpretive Evolution. *Parliamentary Affairs*.

Fox, R. L., & Lawless, J. L. (2004). Entering the arena? Gender and the decision to run for office. *American Journal of Political Science, 48*(2), 264-280.

Fox, R. L., & Lawless, J. L. (2005). To Run or Not to Run for Office: Explaining Nascent Political Ambition. *American Journal of Political Science, 49*(3), 642-659. doi: 10.2307/3647737

Fox, R. L., & Lawless, J. L. (2010). If only they'd ask: Gender, recruitment, and political ambition. *The Journal of Politics, 72*(02), 310-326.

Franklin, M., Mackie, T., & Valen, H. (1992). *Electoral change: Responses to evolving social and attitudinal structures in western countries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Funk, C. (1994). *Understanding the Importance and Structure of Trait Inferences in Candidate Images*. Paper presented at the Conference on Candidate Evaluation, Berkeley, CA.

Funk, C. (1996). The Impact of Scandal on Candidate Evaluations: An Experimental Test of the Role of Candidate Traits. *Political Behavior, 18*(1), 1-24.

Funk, C. (1997). Implications of Political Expertise in Candidate Trait Evaluations. *Political Research Quarterly, 50*(3), 675-697.

Funk, C. (1999). Bringing the Candidate into Models of Candidate Evaluation. *The Journal of Politics, 61*(3), 700-720.

Gallagher, M. (2014). *Election indices dataset*. Retrieved from: http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/staff/michael_gallagher/ElSystems/index.php

Gallagher, M., & Mitchell, P. (2005). *The politics of electoral systems / edited by Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Garzia, D. (2011a). The personalization of politics in Western democracies: Causes and consequences on leader–follower relationships. *The Leadership Quarterly, 22*(4), 697-709.

Garzia, D. (2011b). *The Rise of Party/Leader Identification in Western Europe*. Paper presented at the 1st European Conference on Comparative Electoral Research, Sofia.

Garzia, D. (2012). Party and Leader Effects in Parliamentary Elections: Towards a Reassessment. *Politics, 32*(3), 175-185.

Garzia, D. (2013a). Can Candidates' Image Win Elections? A Counterfactual Assessment of Leader Effects in the Second Italian Republic. *Journal of Political Marketing, 12*(4), 348-361.

Garzia, D. (2013b). Changing Parties, Changing Partisans: The Personalization of Partisan Attachments in Western Europe. *Political Psychology, 34*(1), 67-89.

Garzia, D., & De Angelis, A. (2011). *Partisanship, leader evaluations, and the vote: Breaking the new iron triangle in electoral research*. Paper

presented at the 1st European Conference on Comparative Electoral Research, Sofia.
Garzia, D., & Viotti, F. (2012). Party Identification, Leader Effects and Vote Choice in Italy, 1990-2008 *World Political Science Review* (Vol. 8).
Gidengil, E., Blais, A., Nadeau, R., & Nevitte, N. (2000). *Are Party Leaders Becoming More Important To Vote Choice in Canada?* Paper presented at the Annual APSA meeting, Washington DC.
Glaser, T., & Salmon, C. (1991). *Public opinion and the communication of consent*. New York: Guilford.
Glass, D. P. (1985). Evaluating Presidential Candidates: Who Focuses on Their Personal Attributes? *The Public Opinion Quarterly, 49*(4), 517-534.
Goren, P. (2005). Party Identification and Core Political Values. *American Journal of Political Science, 49*(4), 881-896.
Graetz, B., & McAllister, I. (1987). Party Leaders and Election Outcomes in Britain, 1974-1983. *Comparative Political Studies, 19*(4), 484-507.
Green, S. B., Lissitz, R. W., & Mulaik, S. A. (1977). Limitations of Coefficient Alpha as an Index of Test Unidimensionality1. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 37*(4), 827-838.
Greene, S. (2001). The Role of Character Assessments in Presidential Approval. *American Politics Research, 29*(2), 196-210.
Grofman, B. (2005). Comparisons among electoral systems: Distinguishing between localism and candidate-centered politics. *Electoral Studies, 24*(4), 735-740.
Guttman, L. (1950). The utility of scalogram analysis. In S. A. Stouffer, L. Guttman, E. A. Suchman, P. F. Lazarsfeld, S. A. Star & J. A. Clausen (Eds.), *Measurement and prediction: Studies in Social Psychology in World War II* (Vol. 4, pp. 122-171). New York: Wiley.
Hall, P. M. (1990). The presidency and impression management. In D. Brissett & C. Edgley (Eds.), *Life as theater: a dramaturgical textbook* (2nd ed., pp. 365-378). New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
Harrison, M. J., & Marsh, M. (1994). What can he do for us? Leader effects on party fortunes in Ireland. *Electoral Studies, 13*(4), 289-312.
Hausman, J. A. (1978). Specification Tests in Econometrics. *Econometrica, 46*(6), 1251-1271.
Hayes, D. (2004). Accentuating the Personal: Media Exposure, Political Sophistication and Evaluations of Presidential Candidate Traits. *LBJ Journal of Public Affairs, 16*(2), 86-97.
Hayes, D. (2005). Candidate Qualities through a Partisan Lens: A Theory of Trait Ownership. *American Journal of Political Science, 49*(4), 908-923.
Heffernan, R. (2005). Why the Prime Minister cannot be a President: Comparing Institutional Imperatives in Britain and America. *Parliamentary Affairs, 58*(1), 53-70.
Heffernan, R. (2013). There's No Need for the '-isation': The Prime Minister Is Merely Prime Ministerial. *Parliamentary Affairs, 66*(3), 636-645.
Heffernan, R., & Webb, P. (2007). The British Prime Minister: Much More Than 'First Among Equals'. In T. Poguntke & P. Webb (Eds.), *The Presidentialization of Politics: A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies* (pp. 26-63). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hellweg, S. A., Pfau, M., & Brydon, S. R. (1992). *Televised presidential debates: advocacy in contemporary America*: Praeger.

Hermansson, J., & Persson, T. (2014). *The 'Presidentialisation' Thesis Revisited: Lessons from the Swedish Case*. Paper presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops Salamanca.

Hewitt, G. (2013). Profile: Angela Merkel. Retrieved 04.02.2014

Holgado–Tello, F., Chacón–Moscoso, S., Barbero–García, I., & Vila–Abad, E. (2010). Polychoric versus Pearson correlations in exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis of ordinal variables. *Quality and Quantity, 44*(1), 153-166.

Holmberg, S., & Oscarsson, H. (2011). Party Leader Effects on the Vote. In K. Aarts, A. Blais & H. Schmitt (Eds.), *Political leaders and democratic elections* (pp. 35-52). Oxford: ECPR/OUP.

Holtz-Bacha, C., Langer, A. I., & Merkle, S. (2014). The personalization of politics in comparative perspective: Campaign coverage in Germany and the United Kingdom. *European Journal of Communication, 29*(2), 153-170.

Hough, L. M. (1992). The 'Big Five' Personality Variables--Construct Confusion: Description Versus Prediction. *Human Performance, 5*(1-2), 139-155.

Hovland, C. I., & Weiss, W. (1951). The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication Effectiveness. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 15*(4), 635-650.

Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. (1987). *News that matters: television and American Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jenssen, A. T., & Aalberg, T. (2006). Party-leader effects in Norway: A multi-methods approach. *Electoral Studies, 25*(2), 248-269.

Johnston, R. (2002). Prime Ministerial Contenders in Canada. In A. S. King (Ed.), *Leaders' personalities and the outcomes of democratic elections* (pp. 158-184). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Judd, C. M., & Milburn, M. A. (1980). The Structure of Attitude Systems in the General Public: Comparisons of a Structural Equation Model. *American Sociological Review, 45*(4), 627-643.

Kaase, M. (1994). Is There Personalization in Politics? Candidates and Voting Behavior in Germany. *International Political Science Review, 15*(3), 211-230.

Karvonen, L. (2010). *The personalisation of politics: a study of parliamentary systems*. Colchester: ECPR Press.

Kefford, G. (2013). The Presidentialisation of Australian Politics: Kevin Rudd's Leadership auf the Australian Labor Party. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 48*, 135-146.

Kelley, S. (1983). *Interpreting Elections*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Key, V. O. (1966). *The responsible electorate: rationality in presidential voting, 1936-1960*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Kilburn, H. W. (2005). Does the Candidate Really Matter? *American Politics Research, 33*(3), 335-356.

Kinder, D. R. (1978). Political Person Perception: The Asymmetrical Influence of Sentiment and Choice on Perceptions of Presidential Candidates. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 36*(8), 859-871.

Kinder, D. R. (1983). *Presidential Traits: Pilot Study Reports to the 1984 NES Planning Committee*. Ann Arbor: MI: Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan.

Kinder, D. R., & Abelson, R. P. (1981). *Appraising Presidential Candidates: Personality and Affect in the 1980 Campaign*. Paper presented at the 1981 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York.

Kinder, D. R., Abelson, R. P., & Fiske, S. T. (1979). *Developmental Research on Candidate Instrumentation: Results and Recommendation. Report Submitted to the NES Board of Overseers*. Ann Arbor: MI: Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan.

Kinder, D. R., & Gronke, P. (1985). *Character and Affect in the 1984 Presidential Election*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

Kinder, D. R., Peters, M. D., Abelson, R. P., & Fiske, S. T. (1980). Presidential prototypes. *Political Behavior, 2*(4), 315-337.

King, A. S. (2002). *Leaders' personalities and the outcomes of democratic elections*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kirchheimer, O. (1966). The Transformation of the Western European Party System. In M. Weiner & J. LaPalombara (Eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kline, R. (2013). Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. In Y. Petscher & C. Schatschneider (Eds.), *Applied quantitative analysis in education and the social sciences* (pp. 171-208). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Klingemann, H.-D., & Wattenberg, M. P. (1992). Decaying Versus Developing Party Systems: A Comparison of Party Images in the United States and West Germany. *British Journal of Political Science, 22*(02), 131-149.

Kmenta, J. (1971). *Elements of econometrics*. New York: Macmillan.

Kolltveit, K. (2012). Presidentialisation in the Executive Sphere? Evidence from Norwegian Cabinets. *Scandinavian Political Studies, 35*(4), 372-392.

Kolltveit, K. (2013). There is little evidence that Norway has undergone a process of 'presidentialisation', but power has become more concentrated in Norwegian cabinets.

Kriesi, H. (2012). Personalization of national election campaigns. *Party Politics, 18*(6), 825-844.

Krosnick, J. A., & Kinder, D. R. (1990). Altering the Foundations of Support for the President Through Priming. *The American Political Science Review, 84*(2), 497-512.

Labovitz, S. (1967). Some Observations on Measurement and Statistics. *Social Forces, 46*(2), 151-160.

Landtsheer, C. l. D., De Vries, P., & Vertessen, D. (2008). Political Impression Management: How Metaphors, Sound Bites, Appearance Effectiveness, and Personality Traits Can Win Elections. *Journal of Political Marketing, 7*(3-4), 217-238.

Lanoue, D. J., & Headrick, B. (1994). Prime Ministers, Parties, and the Public: The Dynamics of Government Popularity in Great Britain. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 58*(2), 191-209.

Lau, R. R. (1986). Political Schemata, Candidate Evaluations, and Voting Behaviour. In R. R. Lau & D. O. Sears (Eds.), *Political Cognition: The 19th Annual Carnegie Symposium on Cognition* (pp. 95-127). Hillsdale: Erlbaum.

Lau, R. R., & Sears, D. O. (1986). *Political cognition: the 19th annual Carnegie symposium on cognition*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Lavine, H., & Gschwend, T. (2007). Issues, Party and Character: The Moderating Role of Ideological Thinking on Candidate Evaluation. *British Journal of Political Science, 37*(01), 139-163.

LeDuc, L., Niemi, R. G., & Norris, P. (1996). Introduction: the present and future of democratic elections. In L. LeDuc, R. G. Niemi & P. Norris (Eds.), *Comparing Demcoracies*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Lewis-Beck, M. S., & Stegmaier, M. (2000). Economic Determinants of Electoral Outcomes. *Annual Review of Political Science, 3*(1), 183-219.

Lijphart, A. (1975). *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (2nd ed.). California: University of California Press.

Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of democracy: government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press.

Lisi, M. (2013). The sources of mass partisanship in newer democracies: Social identities or performance evaluations? Southern Europe in comparative perspective. *International Political Science Review, 0*(0), 1-18.

Lobo, M. C. (2006). Short-term voting determinants in a young democracy: Leader effects in Portugal in the 2002 legislative elections. *Electoral Studies, 25*(2), 270-286.

Loevinger, J. (1948). The technic of homogeneous tests compared with some aspects of "scale analysis" and factor analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 45*, 507-530.

Loevinger, J. (1957). Objective tests as instruments of psychological theory *Psychological Reports, 3*(3), 635-694.

Long, J. S., & Freese, J. (2005). Regression Models for Categorical Outcomes Using Stata. College Station, Texas: Stata Press.

Lupia, A. (1994). Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections. *The American Political Science Review, 88*(1), 63-76.

Lupia, A., & McCubbins, M. D. (1998). *The democratic dilemma: can citizens learn what they need to know?* Cambridge Cambridge University Press.

Macdonald, S. E., Rabinowitz, G., & Listhaug, O. (1998). On Attempting to Rehabilitate the Proximity Model: Sometimes the Patient Just Can't Be Helped. *The Journal of Politics, 60*(3), 653-690.

Marcus-Roberts, H. M., & Roberts, F. S. (1987). Meaningless Statistics. *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics, 12*(4), 383-394.

Marks, G. N. (1993). Partisanship and the vote in Australia: Changes over time 1967–1990. *Political Behavior, 15*(2), 137-166.

Markus, G. B., & Converse, P. E. (1979). A Dynamic Simultaneous Equation Model of Electoral Choice. *The American Political Science Review, 73*(4), 1055-1070.

Marsh, M. (2008). Leaders and their parties. In M. Marsh, R. Sinnott, J. Garry & F. Kennedy (Eds.), *The Irish Voter: The nature of electoral*

competition in the Republic of Ireland (pp. 109-128). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Mazzoleni, G., & Schulz, W. (1999). "Mediatization" of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy? *Political Communication, 16*(3), 247-261.
McAllister, I. (1996). Leaders. In L. LeDuc, R. Niemi & P. Norris (Eds.), *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
McAllister, I. (2002). Calculating or Capricious? The new politics of late deciders. In D. M. Farrell & R. Schmitt-Beck (Eds.), *Do Political Campaigns Matter?* (pp. 22-41). London: Routledge.
McAllister, I. (2007). The Personalization of Politics. In R. J. Dalton & H.-D. Klingemann (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political behaviour* (pp. 571-589). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
McAllister, I. (2013). The personalization of politics in Australia. *Party Politics*.
McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T., Jr. (1997). Personality trait structure as a human universal. *American Psychologist, 52*(5), 509-516.
McCrae, R. R., & John, O. P. (1992). An Introduction to the Five-Factor Model and Its Applications. *Journal of Personality, 60*(2), 175-215.
McCurley, C., & Mondak, J. J. (1995). The Influence of Incumbents' Competence and Integrity in U.S. House Elections. *American Journal of Political Science, 39*(4), 864-885.
McLean, J. (2008). The messenger is the message. *Options Politique, November*.
Merrill, S., Grofman, B., & Adams, J. (2001). Assimilation and contrast effects in voter projections of party locations: Evidence from Norway, France, and the USA. *European Journal of Political Research, 40*(2), 199-221.
Midtbø, T. (1997). The Electoral Effect of Party Leader Approval in Norway. *Scandinavian Political Studies, 20*(2), 135-158.
Miller, Wattenberg, M. P., & Malanchuk, O. (1986). Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates. *American Political Science Review, 80*(2), 521-540.
Miller, A. H., & Miller, W. E. (1976). Ideology in the 1972 election: Myth or reality--A rejoinder. *American Political Science Review, 70*(3), 832-849.
Miller, W. E., & Shanks, J. M. (1982). Policy Directions and Presidential Leadership: Alternative Interpretations of the 1980 Presidential Election. *British Journal of Political Science, 12*(3), 299-356.
Miller, W. E., & Shanks, J. M. (1992). Multiple-Stage Explanation of Political Preferences. In R. G. Niemij & H. F. Weisberg (Eds.), *Controversies in voting behavior* (pp. 221-240). Washington: CQ Press.
Miller, W. E., & Shanks, J. M. (1996). *The New American Voter*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Milton, L., McGraw, K. M., & Stroh, P. (1989). An Impression-Driven Model of Candidate Evaluation. *The American Political Science Review, 83*(2), 399-419.
Milton, L., Steenbergen, M. R., & Brau, S. (1995). The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation. *The American Political Science Review, 89*(2), 309-326.

Mokkan, R. J., & Lewis, C. (1982). A Nonparametric Approach to the Analysis of Dichotomous Item Responses. *Applied Psychological Measurement, 6*(4), 417-430.

Mokken, R. J. (1971). *Theory and procedure of scale analysis*. Den Haag: De Gruijter.

Mokken, R. J. (1997). Nonparametric models for dichotomous responses. In W. v. d. Linden & R. Hambleton (Eds.), *Handboof of Modern Item Response Theory* (pp. 351-367). New York: Springer.

Molenaar, I. W. (1991). A weighted Loevinger H coefficient extending Mokken scaling to mulitcategory items. *Kwantitatieve Methoden, 37*, 97-118.

Molenaar, I. W. (1997). Nonparametric models for polytomous responses In W. v. d. Linden & R. Hambleton (Eds.), *Handbook of Modern Item Response Theory* (pp. 369-380). New York: Springer.

Mood, C. (2010). Logistic Regression: Why We Cannot Do What We Think We Can Do, and What We Can Do About It. *European Sociological Review, 26*(1), 67-82.

Mughan, A. (1993). Party leaders and presidentialism in the 1992 election: a post-war perspective. In D. Denver, P. Norris, D. Broughton & C. Rallings (Eds.), *British Elections and Parties Yearbook 1993*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Mughan, A. (1995). Television and presidentialism: Australian and U.S. legislative elections compared. *Political Communication, 12*(3), 327-342.

Mughan, A. (2000). *Media and the presidentialisation of parliamentary elections*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Mughan, A. (2009). Partisan Dealignment, Party Attachments and Leader Effects. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties, 19*(4), 413-431.

Mughan, A. (2012). Parties, conditionality and leader effects in parliamentary elections. *Party Politics*, 1-20.

Newman, B. (1994). *The marketing of the President: Political Marketing as Campaign Strategy*. California: SAGE.

Newman, B. (1999a). *The Mass Marketing of Politics: Democracy in an Age of Manufactured Images*. California: SAGE.

Newman, B. (1999b). Politics in an age of manufactured images *Journal of Mental Changes, 5*, 7-26.

Newman, D. (2014). *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life* (10 ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Nimmo, D. D., & Savage, R. L. (1976). Candidates and Their Images: Concepts, Methods, and Findings. California: Goodyear Publishing Company.

Nisbett, R., & Ross, L. (1980). *Human inference: strategies and shortcomings of social judgement*. London: Prentice-Hall.

Norris, P. (2000). *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies*: Cambridge University Press.

Ohr, D. (2011). Changing Patterns of Political Communication. In K. Aarts, A. Blais & H. Schmitt (Eds.), *Political Leaders and Democratic Elections* (pp. 11-35). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ohr, D., & Oscarsson, H. (2003). *Leader traits, leader image and vote choice*. Paper presented at the ECPR, Marburg, Germany.

Page, B. I., & Jones, C. C. (1979). *Reciprocal Effects of Policy Preferences, Party Loyalties and the Vote.*

Panebianco, A. (1988). *Political Parties: Organization and Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Panter, A. T., Swygert, K. A., Dahlstrom, W. G., & Tanaka, J. S. (1997). Factor analytic approaches to personality item-level data. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 68*, 561-589.

Petty, R., & Cacioppo, J. (1980). Effects of Issue Involvement on Attitudes in an Advertising Context. In G. G. Gorn & M. E. Goldberg (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Division 23 Program* (pp. 75-79). Montreal: American Psychological Association.

Petty, R., & Cacioppo, J. (1986a). *Communication and persuasion: central and peripheral routes to attitude change* New York: Springer.

Petty, R., & Cacioppo, J. (1986b). *The Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion*. New York: Academic Press.

Petty, R., Cacioppo, J., & Schumann, D. (1983). Central and Peripheral Routes to Advertising Effectiveness: The Moderating Role of Involvement. *The Journal of Consumer Research, 10*(2), 135-146.

Pfau, M., & Rang, J. G. (1991). The impact of relational messages on candidate influence in televised political debates. *Communication Studies, 42*(2), 114-128.

Poguntke, T., & Webb, P. (2005). *The presidentialization of politics : a comparative study of modern democracies*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Popkin, S., Gorman, J., Phillips, C., & Smith, J. (1976). What Have You Done for Me Lately? Towards an Investment Theory of Voting.". *American Political Science Review, 70*, 7790805.

Popkin, S. L. (1991). *The reasoning voter: communication and persuasion in presidential campaigns*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Rabinowitz, G., & Macdonald, S. E. (1989). A Directional Theory of Issue Voting. *The American Political Science Review, 83*(1), 93-121.

Rae, D. W. (1971). *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws* (2nd ed.). New Haveb: Yale University Presss.

Rahat, G., & Sheafer, T. (2007). The Personalization(s) of Politics: Israel, 1949–2003. *Political Communication, 24*(1), 65-80.

Rahn, W. M., Aldrich, J. H., & Borgida, E. (1994). Individual and Contextual Variations in Political Candidate Appraisal. *The American Political Science Review, 88*(1), 193-199.

Rahn, W. M., Aldrich, J. H., Borgida, E., & Sullivan, J. L. (1990). A Social-Cognitive Model of Candidate Appraisal. In J. A. Ferejohn & J. H. Kuklinski (Eds.), *Information and Democratic Processes*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Ranney, A. (1983). *Channels of power: the impact of television on American politics*. New York: Basic Books.

Rosema, M. (2004). *The Sincere Vote: A Psychological Study of Voting*: Universiteit Leiden.

Rosenberg, S. W., Bohan, L., McCafferty, P., & Harris, K. (1986). The Image and the Vote: The Effect of Candidate Presentation on Voter Preference. *American Journal of Political Science, 30*(1), 108-127.

Sabato, L. (1981). *The rise of political consultants - new ways of winning elections*. New York: Basic Books.

Sackett, P. R., & Wanek, J. E. (1996). New Developments in the use of measures of honesty, integrity, conscientiousness, dependability, trustworthiness, and reliability for personnel selection. *Personnel Psychology, 49*(4), 787-829.

Salgado, J. F. (1997). The Five Factor Model of Personality and Job Performance in the European Community. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 82*(1), 30-43.

Sanders, D., Clarke, H. D., Stewart, M. C., & Whiteley, P. (2011). Downs, Stokes and the Dynamics of Electoral Choice. *British Journal of Political Science, 41*(02), 287-314.

Sartori, G., & Mair, P. (1976). *Parties and party systems: a framework for analysis*. Colchester: ECPR.

Scally, D. (2013, 21.09.2013). Mammy Merkel keeps it personal: Tomorrow's poll is less a test of the German leader's polices than a referendum on her personality. *The Irish Times,* p. 9.

Scammell, M. (1995). *Designer politics: How elections are won*. London: Macmillan.

Scammell, M. (1999). Political Marketing: Lessons for Political Science. *Political Studies, 47*(4), 718-739.

Scarrow, S. E. (2000). Parties without members? Party organization in a changing electoral environment. In R. J. Dalton & M. P. Wattenberg (Eds.), *Parties without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (pp. 79-102). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schmitt, H., & Holmberg, S. (1995). *Political parties in decline?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schoen, H., & Schumann, S. (2007). Personality Traits, Partisan Attitudes, and Voting Behavior. Evidence from Germany. *Political Psychology, 28*(4), 471-498.

Schuur, W. H. v. (2011). *Ordinal item response theory: Mokken scale analysis*. California: SAGE.

Semetko, H. A. (1996). Political Balance on Television: Campaigns in the United States, Britain, and Germany. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 1*(1), 51-71.

Senior, P. (2008). Electoral Impact of Televised Leaders' Debates on Australian Federal Elections. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 43*(3), 443-464.

Senior, P., & van Onselen, P. (2008). Re-examining Leader Effects: Have Leader Effects Grown in Australian Federal Elections 1990–2004? *Australian Journal of Political Science, 43*(2), 225-242.

Shabad, G., & Andersen, K. (1979). Candidate Evaluations by Men and Women. *The Public Opinion Quarterly, 43*(1), 18-35.

Shanks, J. M., & Miller, W. E. (1990). Policy Direction and Performance Evaluation: Complementary Explanations of the Reagan Elections. *British Journal of Political Science, 20*(02), 143-235.

Shephard, M., & Johns, R. (2008). Candidate Image and Electoral Preference in Britain. *British Politics, 3*(3), 324-349.

Shugart, M. S., Valdini, M. E., & Suominen, K. (2005). Looking for Locals: Voter Information Demands and Personal Vote-Earning Attributes of

Legislators under Proportional Representation. *American Journal of Political Science, 49*(2), 437-449.
Sijtsma, K., Debets, P., & Molenaar, I. W. (1990). Mokken scale analysis for polychotomous items: theory, a computer program and an empirical application. *Quality and Quantity, 24*, 173-188.
Sijtsma, K., & Verweij, A. C. (1992). Mokken Scale Analysis: Theoretical Considerations and an Application to Transitivity Tasks. *Applied Measurement in Education, 5*(4), 355-373.
Smith, G., & French, A. (2009). The political brand: A consumer perspective. *Marketing Theory, 9*(2), 209-226.
Sniderman, P. M., Brody, R. A., & Tetlock, P. E. (1993). *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology*: Cambridge University Press.
Staiger, D., & Stock, J. H. (1997). Instrumental Variables Regression with Weak Instruments. *Econometrica, 65*(3), 557-586.
Sternthal, B., Phillips, L. W., & Ruby, D. (1978). The Persuasive Effect of Source Credibility: A Situational Analysis. *The Public Opinion Quarterly, 42*(3), 285-314.
Stevens, D., Karp, J. A., & Hodgson, R. (2011). Party Leaders as Movers and Shakers in British Campaigns? Results from the 2010 Election. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties, 21*(2), 125-145.
Stevens, G. (2014). Likeability is a significant asset in politics. Retrieved 5 June 2014
Stevens, S. S. (1946). On the Theory of Scales of Measurement. *Science, 103*(2684), 677-680.
Stewart, M. C., & Clarke, H. D. (1992). The (Un)Importance of Party Leaders: Leader Images and Party Choice in the 1987 British Election. *The Journal of Politics, 54*(02), 447-470.
Stokes, D. (1963). Spatial Models of Party Competition. *American Political Science Review, 57*(2), 368-377.
Stokes, D. (1992). Valence Politics. In D. Kavanagh (Ed.), *Electoral Politics* (pp. 141-165). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Stroh, P. (1995). Voters as Pragmatic Cognitive Misers: The Accuracy-Effort Trade-off in the Candidate Evaluation Process. In M. Lodge & K. McGraw (Eds.), *Political Judgement: Structure and Process* (pp. 207-229). Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
Sullivan, J. L., Aldrich, J. H., Borgida, E., & Rahn, W. (1990). Candidate Appraisal and Human Nature: Man and Superman in the 1984 Election. *Political Psychology, 11*(3), 459-484.
Sundström, G. (2009). 'He Who Decides': Swedish Social Democratic Governments from a Presidentialisation Perspective. *Scandinavian Political Studies, 32*(2), 143-170.
Swanson, D. L., & Mancini, P. (1996). *Politics, Media, and Modern Democracy: An International Study of Innovations in Electoral Campaigning and Their Consequences*: Praeger.
Taagepera, R., & Shugart, M. S. (1989). *Seats and votes: the effects and determinants of electoral systems*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Taylor, S., & Fiske, S. (1978). Salience, attention, and attribution: top of the head phenomena. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 11, pp. 249-288).

Thomasson, J., & Rosema, M. (2009). Party identification revisited. In J. Bartle & P. Bellucci (Eds.), *Political Parties and Partisanship: Social Identity and Individual Attitudes* (pp. 42-60). New York: Routledge/ECPR Studies.

Torgersen, U. (1962). The Trend Towards Political Consensus: The Case of Norway. *Acta Sociologica, 6*(1/2), 159-172.

Valdini, M. E. (2006). *Electoral Institutions and information shortcuts: the effect of decisive intra-party competition on the behaviour of voters and party elites.* UC San Diego.

van der Heijden, P. G. M., van Buuren, S., Fekkes, M., Radder, J., & Verrips, E. (2003). Unidimensionality and reliability under Mokken scaling of the Dutch language version of the SF-36. *Quality of Life Research, 12*(2), 189-198.

van der Pas, D., Vries, C. d., & Brug, W. v. d. (2011). A leader without a party: Exploring the relationship between Geert Wilders' leadership performance in the media and his electoral success. *Party Politics.*

Verney, D. V. (1998). *The analysis of political systems.* London: Routledge.

Wagner, A., & Weßels, B. (2012). Parties and their Leaders. Does it matter how they match? The German General Elections 2009 in comparison. *Electoral Studies, 31*(1), 72-82.

Wagner, A., & Wessels, B. (2012). Kanzlerkandidaten - Wie beeinflussen sie die Wahlentscheidung? *Waehlen in Deutschland, 1.*

Wattenberg, M. P. (1991). *The rise of candidate-centered politics: presidential elections of the 1980s.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Whiteley, P., Clarke, H. D., Sanders, D., & Stewart, M. C. (2013). *Affluence, Austerity and Electoral Change in Britain*: Cambridge University Press.

Whiteley, P. F. (1988). The Causal Relationships between Issues, Candidate Evaluations, Party Identification, and Vote Choice--the View From "Rolling Thunder". *The Journal of Politics, 50*(4), 961-984.

Winham, G. R., & Cunningham, R. B. (1970). Party Leader Images in the 1968 Federal Election. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique, 3*(1), 37-55.

Wooldridge, J. (2013). *Introductory Econometrics: A modern approach* (5th ed.). Ohio: South-Western Cengage Learning.

Wu, D.-M. (1973). Alternative Tests of Independence between Stochastic Regressors and Disturbances. *Econometrica, 41*(4), 733-750.

Zakharova, M., & Warwick, P. V. (2014). The Sources of Valence Judgments: The Role of Policy Distance and the Structure of the Left–Right Spectrum. *Comparative Political Studies.*

Zaller, J. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zaller, J., & Feldman, S. (1992). A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences. *American Journal of Political Science, 36*(3), 579-616.