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Partisan Dealignment and the Personalization of Politics in West European Parliamentary Democracies, 1961-2016

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Introduction

The personalization of politics thesis has been sustained by an increasing amount of research. Accumulated evidence in favour of the personalization thesis can be grouped into three main strands of literature. From an institutional point of view, research documents a transformation in the structure and organization of modern political parties in favour of the leadership position. From the rise of catch-all parties to the emergence of personal parties, contemporary party scholars ascribe a more prominent role to party leaders both within party organization and as executives in government. This describes a trend towards the *presidentialization* of party structures (Poguntke and Webb, 2005). Political communication studies put the emphasis on the centrality of leaders in contemporary election campaigns, as a result of the increased visibility of these actors in a television-based *mediatization* of politics (Esser and Strömbäck, 2014). Finally, a voting behaviour perspective investigates the electoral impact of political leaders as a function of increased voters' consideration of candidate evaluations in their vote choice or turnout decisions (Garzia, 2017).

Theories about the origins of a trend towards increasing personalization of politics commonly refer to several explanatory factors (McAllister, 2007). The social transformations that occurred in the second half of the last century paved the way for a shift from long-term to short-term determinants of voting behaviour. The development of the Welfare State, rising levels of education, political interest and sophistication, contributed to emancipate individuals from the partisan cues on which they used to rely, as their political skills increased and information seeking costs diminished. With voters autonomous from these decisional cues, the functional utility of party identification decreased, as voting decisions became increasingly individualized (Dalton *et al.*, 2000).

In turn, partisan dealignment forced political parties to adapt to the new social configuration. In a setting where socio-ideological cleavages lost their importance, parties went catch-all in an attempt at broadening their appeal beyond the traditional electoral bases (Mair et al., 2004; Gunther and Diamond, 2003; Poguntke and Webb, 2005). The resulting organizational changes have been further exacerbated by technological innovations in mass communications. With television becoming voters' preferred source of political information, parties adapted by using this media as main channel of political communication (Hayes, 2009). By prioritizing personality at the expense of substantive programmatic goals (Sartori, 1989) television forced campaigns to adapt to this "personality-based" medium (Mughan, 2000). In doing do, television not only altered parties' political communication strategies, it also transformed voters' patterns of consumption of political information, reinforcing the demand for more personalized political competition (Gilens *et al.*, 2007; Takens *et al.*, 2015).

In a context of progressive dealignment and pervasive mediatization of politics, researchers argue that voters give more consideration to short-term factors such as the evaluation of leaders in their voting decisions. Despite the theoretical advances and the

substantial amount of research on this topic, two core points of the personalization of politics thesis remain to be properly addressed, namely the dynamic interplay of party and leader effects, and its temporal dimension.

We depart from the notion that the increasing influence of leaders can only be conceived as a function of the weakening electoral role of parties and party cues. Such theoretical stance, in coherence with dealignment premises, posits that leaders did not come to matter more *per se*. Rather, they matter more because parties came to matter less, leaving room for other (short-term) factors to intervene in voting decisions. These dynamics of electoral change can only be untangled adopting a long-term and comparative perspective. On the one hand, neither the synchronic nor the short-to-medium term would offer the inter-generational 'historic' breadth that our argument demands. On the other hand, only considering a large sample of heterogeneous party systems would satisfy its generality. To test this expectation, we compiled a unique pooled dataset featuring 90 post-election studies conducted in 14 Western European parliamentary democracies over the last 60 years. Our dataset overcomes the limitations of existing comparative projects, i.e., unavailability of simultaneous measures of leader evaluations and party identification, intra-generational perspective and limited contextual variation. This allows to tackle the main limitations identified in previous studies, which have either investigated a larger number of countries without a longitudinal dimension (Bittner, 2011; Curtice and Lisi, 2014; Gunther *et al.*, 2016) or adopted a longitudinal approach but focusing on a smaller number of cases restricted to a shorter time span (King, 2002; Curtice and Holmberg, 2005; Karvonen, 2010; Holmberg and Oscarsson, 2011; Garzia, 2014).

Literature Review

Over the last decades, the trajectory of voting behaviour in Western democracies has undergone the loosening of social encapsulation. The development of advanced industrialism in the mid-twentieth century, the expansion of educational opportunities, the evolution of mass media bolstering access to information also beyond partisan channels and a changing social structure and concomitant value change, they all contributed to a shift from *partisan* to *cognitive* forms of mobilization (Dalton, 2007). This process carries important theoretical implications for the study of voting behaviour insofar as it challenges the dominant paradigm in electoral research. In the social-psychological model of voting, political issues, events, and candidates, are presented to voters and interpreted by them in partisan terms (Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Lewis-Beck *et al.*, 2008). Because these factors come towards the end of the Michigan's funnel of causality, they are allegedly filtered by long-term partisan predispositions, and as such they are not important *per se* but only *through* partisan lens. However, in the sense that mobilization becomes independent of political parties and moves from being partisan to being cognitive, voters too become self-sufficient in formulating their assessments of political candidates, and in reflecting about political issues or events. Hence, in a context of cognitive mobilization, the functional utility of partisan cues decreases substantially, as skilled voters are capable of independently interpret political information at relatively low-cost.

In a context of erosion of cleavage voting and partisan dealignment, where voters no longer rely exclusively on partisan cues to interpret political information, short-term cognitive factors have been gaining importance within the voting calculus too. Political issues, economic evaluations and, most notably, candidate and party leader evaluations have been demonstrated to play an increasingly important role in voting behaviour (for a review, see: Garzia, 2017). However, the empirical evidence gathered so far is yet unable to provide conclusive evidence in favour of the personalization thesis when it comes to voting behaviour. The main charge to the personalization thesis has been the inexistence of a clear trend towards a greater electoral

importance of leaders across time (King, 2002). In fact, this is a fundamental proposition because the personalization of politics does not only postulate that *leaders matter* but that their importance *has been growing* over time (Karvonen, 2010). An early longitudinal analysis of election study data collected in six established European democracies between 1961 and 2001 concluded that voters' evaluations of party leaders were "as important or unimportant now as they were when they were first measured" (Curtice and Holmberg, 2005: 250). Taking into account a wider number of countries and more recent election studies, Holmberg and Oscarsson's (2011) comparative study eventually unfolded "minor" upward trends in half of the countries included in their analysis.

However, a key point of these studies is that they have longitudinally analyzed leader effects *disconnected from the role of partisan dealignment*. In doing so, they provide little information about how one of the most structural transformations in party politics in the last century may have played a role in favoring leaders at the expenses of parties. This is an important caveat, since partisan dealignment is deemed to play a central role in the personalization of politics. If, as the theory suggests, leader effects increase as a function of dealignment, the former must be analysed in relationship to an eventual decline in partisan voting. The few studies investigating this association in less than a handful of countries show some evidence of a stronger impact of leaders for dealigned voters but fail to do so in a longitudinal perspective (Mughan, 2009; Gidengil, 2011; Holian and Prysby, 2014; Lobo, 2014).

In line with the social-psychological model of voting, a unidirectional flow of causation from party identification to leader evaluations is assumed in virtually all available studies. In this approach, the predictive capacity of leadership effects is weighed against that of socio-demographics, political predispositions and attitudes. In other words, leaders are treated as a residual category within the so-called "improved-prediction strategy" (Crewe and King, 1994: 185-186; King, 2002: 17-19). While this may be an appropriate framework in a context of diffuse partisanship, we argue that such setting is inadequate to model vote choice in a context of marked dealignment, where parties lost primacy and short-term factors are claimed to affect vote choice independently of partisan attachments. Dealignment and growing cognitive mobilization increased the amount of apartisan self-sufficient voters, who take into further consideration candidates or issues in voting decisions, instead of long-term partisan attachments. Works in the "revisionist" tradition of party identification have already showed that the relationship between partisanship and attitudes towards the candidates is actually bidirectional (Page and Jones, 1979). Some studies have even gone as far as contending that leaders may now play a role in personalizing party identifications (Rapoport, 1997; Garzia, 2013). In other words, not only leaders have a direct effect on voting behaviour as has been demonstrated by several studies, they also seem to exert an indirect effect through partisanship. Hence, partisan dealignment led to less people identifying with parties, and even those that identify might increasingly do so because they develop a sort of attachment *through* the leader. The fundamental premises of the improved-prediction strategy are also challenged by the occurred transformations in political parties and the mediatization of politics. On the one hand, with the erosion of cleavage-based voting and the decline of class-mass parties, the building block of the improved-prediction strategy (i.e., the predictive power of socio-demographics and political predispositions) crumbled. On the other hand, catch-all parties' electoral strategy is less reliant on long-term attachments anchored in ideological grounds. Instead, they have adapted to a context of dealignment and mediatization of politics, by using television to prime leaders' characteristics instead of substantial programmatic goals.

For these reasons, we sustain that studying why leaders have become more important across time must not be dissociated from the study of how parties became less important for voting decisions. If partisan dealignment is at the origin of the personalization of politics, as

the theory indicates, leaders can only have become more relevant as much as parties have lost relevance. Hence, since theoretically these trends develop in parallel, a longitudinal analysis of leader effects across time should be carried in connection with partisan dealignment. To be sure, if dealigned voters have increased across time, the overall impact of partisanship on voting should have decreased accordingly. Consequently, leader effects should emerge as increasingly relevant, as a function of the relative impact of leaders *versus* partisanship in the voting calculus.

Data and Descriptive Evidence

We will address the gaps and limitations in the existing literature through an original pooled dataset including 90 national election studies from 14 Western European democracies conducted in the period 1961-2016. This will allow us to test the importance of party leader evaluations on voters' behaviour across the longest time-span investigated so far. Country selection applied the following criteria. First, we restricted our sample to parliamentary democracies, as this is where a trend towards an increase in importance of party leaders is expected to occur – in presidential systems, candidates have always been pivotal. Second, we focus on Western European countries, as they have a longer experience with democratic elections (and national election study projects). Finally, amongst these countries, we only included the studies featuring party leader evaluations and party identification as these are our key independent variables. Table 1 summarizes the number studies included for each of the countries under analysis (detailed list is presented in Appendix A).

**Table 1.** National election studies included in the analysis

Country	Period	Time Points
Austria	2013	1
Denmark	1973-2011	7
Finland	2003-2011	3
Germany	1961-2013	13
Greece	1996-2012	3
Ireland	2002-2016	3
Italy	1990-2013	6
Netherlands	1986-2010	7
Norway	1981-2013	9
Portugal	2002-2015	5
Spain	2000-2016	5
Sweden	1982-2010	9
Switzerland	1999-2015	5
United Kingdom	1964-2015	14

As exposed in the previous sections, a fundamental proposition of the personalization of politics, and a theoretical cornerstone of the present study relates to the existence of a trend towards partisan dealignment common to modern Western democracies. Although this is not an unstudied topic, most of the academic works on partisan dealignment only take into account

a reduced number of countries and are little informative with regard to the 21st century (Schmitt and Holmberg, 1995; Dalton, 2000; Berglund *et al.*, 2005). An important exception is a recent study by Dalton (2013), including data until 2010 for ten Western European parliamentary democracies. More comprehensive data on partisan dealignment is, nonetheless, necessary to get a full picture of its relationship with the personalization of politics. Given the large comparative scope of our analysis, we are confronted with issues of item consistency. Inevitably, our partisanship measure relies on the different questions that each national election study project felt adequate to capture the political identities of the respondents in a given nation. However, we still operate in conditions of conceptual homogeneity, since all the national election studies included in our dataset tackled respondents' *feelings of closeness* to a political party -- a widely available indicator signaling a long-term affective relationship, which can be meaningfully distinguished from vote choice. In the large majority of countries under analysis, respondents were offered the possibility to signal the strength of their closeness to a specific party on a three-point scale, ranging from (1) only a sympathizer; (2) close to the party; (3) very close to the party.[1]

Based on our novel dataset, Figure 1 plots the proportion of respondents declaring themselves close or very close to a political party in each of the 90 studies under analysis. The figure provides evidence of a steady partisan dealignment over the last decades in West European parliamentary democracies. It reveals a decrease of about 40 percentage points in the share of people reporting to feel close/very close to a political party over the last five decades. This depicts a rather clear trend towards partisan dealignment, confirming previous results.

Figure 1. Percentage of party identifiers in Western Europe, 1961-2016
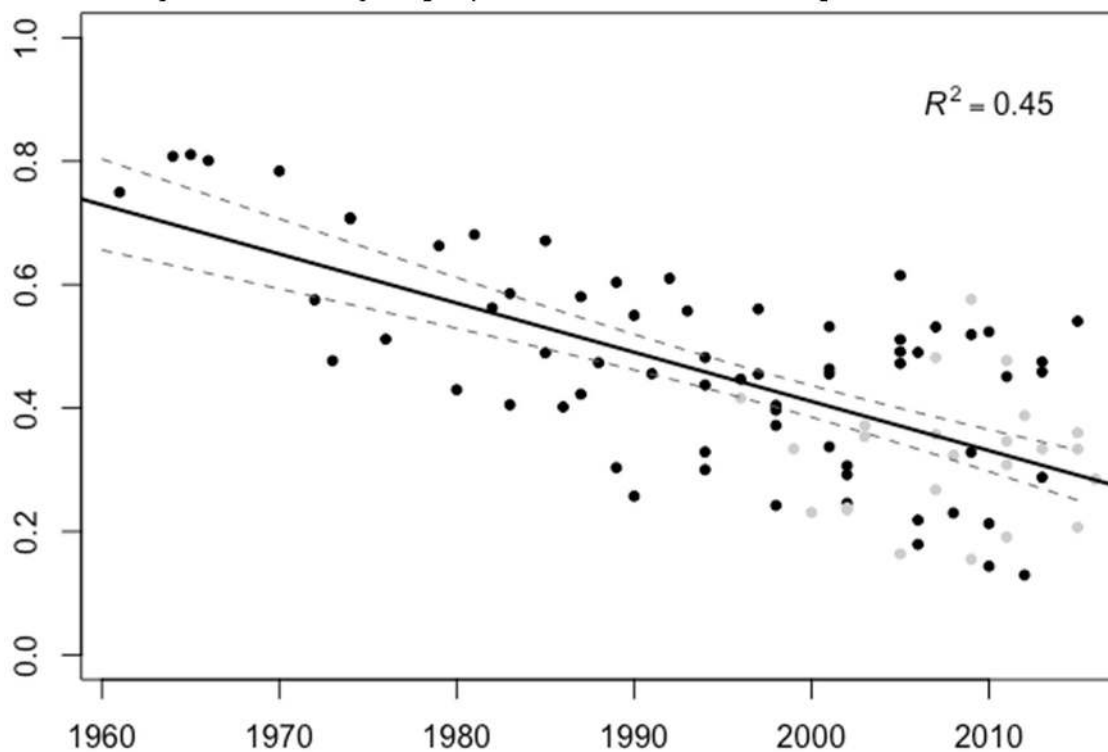
Note: Entries in grey are for all those countries with short time-series, that is, those spanning less than twenty years and/or a minimum of six elections (i.e., Austria, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland).

It could be argued that such trend is but a product of different lengths of the time-series across countries. The inclusion of more recent studies at the end of the time-series, from especially dealigned countries such as the Southern European, could be artificially pulling down the trend. To rule out this possibility, we distinguish between the countries with longer and shorter time series. As it becomes clear, the trend holds the same even if only considering the countries featuring a collection of studies covering at least a one-generation time-span of 25 years, i.e., Denmark, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (black dots in Figure 1). Indeed, the downwards trend line is only very slightly affected as a result. Once Austria, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland are excluded, R-squared only slightly diminishes (from .45 to .42).

Our results would seem to concur with the idea that "[w]hen so many nations follow a similar trend, one must discount claims that dealignment is a function of question wording, hidden partisans, or the unique political history of any one nation" (Dalton, 2013: 179). Yet, such a clear trend does not prove that partisan attachments became less important regarding vote choice nor that leaders came to matter more. To do so, we must introduce vote choice into the picture and look at how much it is influenced by parties and leaders.

To measure the importance of leader evaluations on vote choice, we choose thermometer scores over leaders' personality traits as they have now become "the most frequently included type of question about leaders in election studies" (Bittner, 2011: 16). Despite inevitable differences in question wording across countries, most of the studies allowed respondents to probe their feelings towards major parties' leaders on a 0 (dislike) to 10 (like) thermometer scale.[2] Figure 2 shows the proportion of voters casting a vote for the party of the leader they like the most (solid line) and for the party they feel close or very close to (dashed line). Note that the bivariate configuration of this analysis allows respondents to be included in both categories (i.e., voting for the leader they like the most *and* the party they feel close to). Overall, our claim of a decrease in the relative importance of partisan alignments in structuring voting behavior seems to be confirmed. Over these five decades, the percentage of individuals who voted in line with their party identification decreased around 40 percentage points. This decline is of the same magnitude of that previously observed regarding partisanship in Figure 1, suggesting that this is not a consequence of increased volatility from partisans but rather the result of a mere decrease in the number of partisans (see Appendix B). Decisively, partisanship is much less of an important factor for vote choice today.

Moreover, Figure 2 also presents initial evidence for the relationship between leader evaluations and party choice. A first glance, it would seem to suggest that leaders have always mattered – even in the golden age of partisan alignment – considering that the proportion of votes for the top-rated leader was always larger than the proportion of partisan votes, and that this proportion is fairly stable at a very high level.

At this point, based on the descriptive evidence presented so far, two critiques can be posed to the personalization of politics and our argument. First, as leaders always mattered, this challenges the theory's claim that leaders came to matter *more*. Second, to the extent to which leader evaluations are colored by partisan lenses, then these should have accompanied the decreasing trend of partisanship as a determinant of voting behavior over time. However, the percentage of voters who voted for their top-rated leader has remained virtually the same over this period. Therefore, we argue that Figure 2 provides evidence to sustain a hypothesis that the declining impact of partisanship on voting corresponds to a growing *independent* effect of leaders on voting. In other words, whereas in the 1960s people may have voted for their party *and* its leader – in the lines of the funnel of causality –, nowadays more and more individuals seem to vote in favor of the leader they like the most, regardless of whether he/she is the leader of their party. This statement deserves a rigorous and multivariate assessment, which is the focus of the next sections.

Figure 2. Partisanship and leaders as determinants of voting, 1961-2016
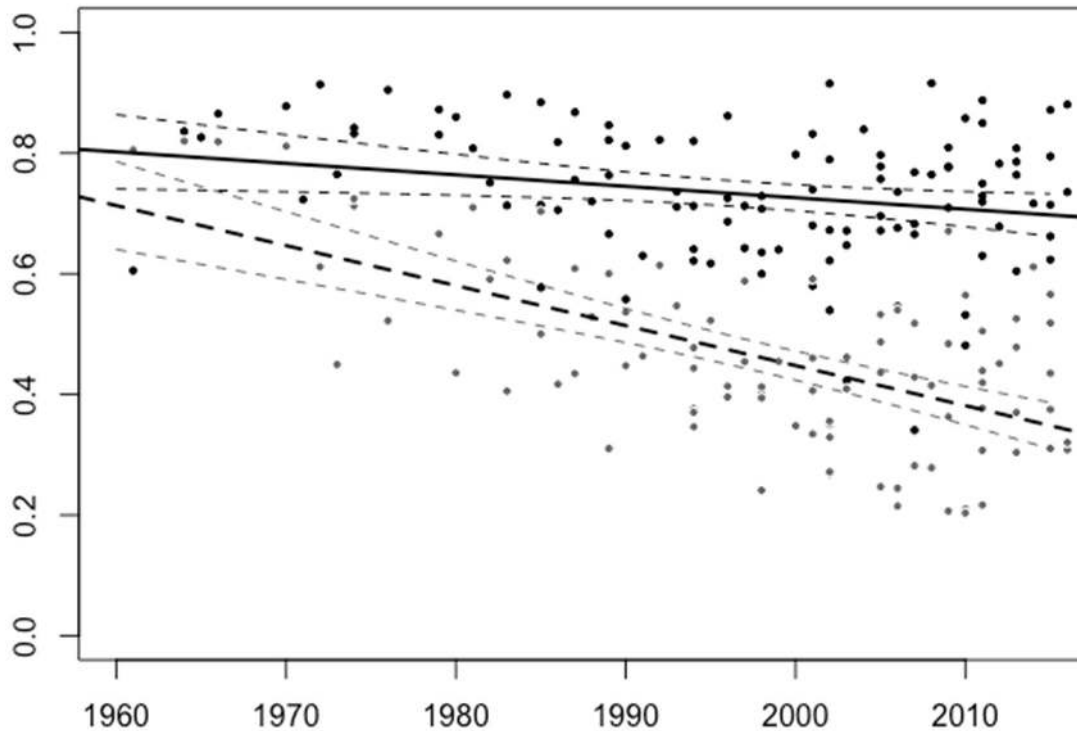
Note: the **solid** line indicates the trend in proportions of votes for the top-rated leader and **dashed** line the trend of the votes for the closest party. Both lines lie within 95% confidence intervals.

The Personalization of Electoral Politics in Western Europe: Multivariate Analysis

To further pursue the idea that parliamentary elections in Western Europe are increasingly resembling presidential "candidate-centered" contests, we proceed by modeling the relative importance of leader evaluations and party identification for party choice via conditional logit models. Next, we test the robustness of these results by investigating party-specific and country-specific factors.

We estimate conditional logit models considering the multiple options available to voters in European contexts by taking into account the major four party families generally available in practically every country at any point in time: Post-Communists/Greens, Social-Democrats, Conservatives/Christian-democrats, and Liberals (full list of parties included for each country is presented in Appendix E).[3] The party families were coded according to the Comparative Manifesto Project classification. We acknowledge the existence of differences and transformations in the composition of these party families over the last century. For this reason, we have analyzed each party family independently with regard to its consistency across time and countries.[4] We found no reason for major concerns, except for the Extreme-Right party family, whose parties' patterns appear very much scattered across time and countries. Extreme-Right parties are in fact present in only 6 out of the 14 countries analyzed and only in 41 out of the 90 elections included. Therefore, we did not consider this party family in our analysis, as it would be worth of a more in-depth analysis of its own.

Because we aim at modeling vote choice, we do not include abstainers (about 25% of all respondents) in any of our models. In order to fit our conditional logit model, the key covariates are measured at the party*alternative level. Partisanship is measured on a scale from 0 (not at all close with the party) to 3 (very close to the party), while the scale of leaders' feeling thermometer ranges from 0 (dislike) to 10 (like). Another variable of interest included at this level of analysis is ideological proximity. We share Inglehart and Klingemann's (1976: 244) conception of the left-right dimension "as a super-issue which summarizes the programmes of opposing groups".[5] Our ideological proximity measure is calculated as the distance in absolute value between the voter's self-placement on the left-right continuum and the position assigned to each of the parties on the same 10-point scale.[6]

The three attitudinal variables presented so far have been standardized as to facilitate straightforward comparison of estimates. Respondent-specific control variables (unstandardized) include standard socio-demographics (age, gender and educational level as measured by ISCED 1997 categories) and respondents' interest in politics (3-point scale ranging from "not interested at all" to "very interested"). The latter is known to relate with partisan dealignment (Dalton, 2000), as well as to affect the role of leader evaluations in the voting calculus (Lenz and Lawson, 2011).

Admittedly, our model specification is parsimonious, which results from the constraints of aggregating large amounts of data from diverse sources. The possible inclusion of further controls, such as religiosity or union membership, would imply a substantial reduction in the number of studies/cases considered, since these variables are not systematically available across countries and time. Hence, since the effects of these variables can be claimed to be indirectly accounted in the sense that they are largely subsumed into party identification and ideological self-positioning, we have privileged a maximization of the studies/cases included, as to enrich the geographical and temporal scope of our sample. Other controls besides religiosity and union membership would even more dramatically reduce the sample size.

Table 2. Conditional logit estimates

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Alternative-specific covariates			
Partisanship	1.205	-	0.988
	(117.94)		(97.38)
Leader Evaluation	-	1.717	1.280
		(125.88)	(87.67)
Ideological Proximity	-1.168	-1.187	-0.907
	(-115.63)	(-114.26)	(-78.42)
Respondent-specific covariates: Communist/Green			
Age	-0.010	-0.013	-0.008
	(-8.02)	(-12.14)	(-5.70)
Gender	0.007	0.030	-0.037
	(0.20)	(0.96)	(-0.88)
Education	0.263	0.303	0.204
	(10.05)	(13.69)	(7.03)
Interest in Politics	0.212	0.072	0.136
	(4.61)	(1.98)	(2.69)

Respondent-specific covariates:			
Christian/Conservative			
Age	0.006	0.004	0.004
	(7.39)	(5.72)	(4.69)
Gender	-0.031	0.032	-0.001
	(-1.18)	(1.30)	(-0.05)
Education	0.111	0.212	0.120
	(5.96)	(12.34)	(5.75)
Interest in Politics	-0.000	-0.014	0.019
	(-0.01)	(-0.50)	(0.53)
Respondent-specific covariates:			
Liberal			
Age	0.003	0.002	0.004
	(3.88)	(2.60)	(4.75)
Gender	-0.033	0.109	0.041
	(-1.12)	(3.97)	(1.25)
Education	0.319	0.371	0.276
	(15.43)	(19.56)	(12.00)
Interest in Politics	0.040	0.020	0.019
	(1.15)	(0.66)	(0.50)
Log-likelihood	43927.07	52203.99	35286.03
Wald chi-2	29663.94	35952.94	27334.82
N (respondents)	94451	105868	91909
N (observations)	332422	364270	317487

Note: Reference category: Social-Democrats. t-statistics in parentheses. All models include year and country fixed-effects.

Table 2 presents the results of our conditional logit models. At a first stage, partisanship and leader evaluations are included separately, in models (1) and (2). A straightforward comparison of coefficients suggests that leaders matter more than partisanship. Nonetheless, strong patterns of covariation between these variables are likely to occur, in line with the reasoning of the Michigan theory. In fact, once we include both measures simultaneously in model (3) the coefficient of leader evaluations decreases the most, but remains larger than partisanship and ideological proximity coefficients. This supports the claim that over the wide amount of countries and elections under analysis, on average, leader evaluations matter more than partisanship for vote choice. As per the impact of ideological proximity on voting decisions, although it holds a considerable influence, it is also inferior to the effects of leader evaluations (and partisanship) on the vote. Such findings pose a challenge to the overwhelmingly predominant claim that partisanship and ideological proximity are the most important predictors of vote choice in Western democracies (Thomassen, 2005).

For as informative as the conditional logit models can be, they provide only a rough estimate of the average relative impact of parties and leaders across countries and time. However, the conditional logit framework can hardly take into account the varying choice sets of parties across, and even within, countries.[7] Moreover, a conditional logit framework would not account for the increasing number of votes cast in favor of parties in the "other" category -- something we cannot model within the overreaching party families necessary to specify our conditional logit models (see Appendix C).

Against this background, we move to a more fine-grained understanding of the role of party and leader effects, and how they change across time, by analyzing party families separately. Through binomial regression models we model the importance of feelings of party and leader closeness for each of the parties under analysis *vis-a-vis* all other parties available during that election, so as to take into account the increasingly relevant category of "other" party voters. We also use interaction terms to test the extent to which each factor's explanatory power has changed across time.

<p align="center">Table 3. Party families and the determinants of vote choice: HLM estimation</p>

	Communist/ Green	Social- Democrat	Christian/ Conservative	Liberal
Age	-0.015	-0.005	-0.001	-0.006
	(-14.31)	(-9.81)	(-2.59)	(-8.27)
Gender	-0.013	0.020	0.021	0.036
	(-0.39)	(1.08)	(1.01)	(1.53)
Education	0.218	-0.191	0.019	0.233
	(9.51)	(-14.60)	(1.34)	(13.94)
Interest in Politics	-0.273	-0.336	-0.365	-0.328
	(-7.23)	(-15.63)	(-15.09)	(-11.90)
Ideological Proximity	-1.186	-0.928	-1.129	-0.988
	(-41.18)	(-66.77)	(-66.58)	(-51.68)
Partisanship	0.711	1.633	1.410	1.018
	(61.38)	(118.62)	(99.10)	(78.85)
Leader Evaluation	1.060	0.960	1.111	0.876
	(41.55)	(71.20)	(66.69)	(50.80)
Year	0.010	-0.001	-0.011	0.020
	(1.26)	(-0.48)	(-1.45)	(2.24)
Constant	-23.09	4.00	20.79	-44.06
	(-1.45)	(0.49)	(1.36)	(-2.37)
Log-likelihood	13620.90	38892.01	31283.76	24644-73
Wald chi-2	8943.59	26608.49	22354.83	13022.18
N (elections)	59	79	77	68
N (observations)	83615	125261	120603	103065

Note: Table entries are Hierarchical Logit Model (HLM) coefficients with a random intercept for each election study in our sample. t-statistics in parentheses.

Our modeling strategy relies on Hierarchical Logistic Modeling (HLM) with a random-intercept at the election study level that allows to control for unobserved heterogeneity across countries and across time within countries.[8] The results of these models are presented in Table 3. The results confirm the existence of differences across party families, but overall partisanship appears more important for the traditional party families than party leader evaluations. Only for the parties on the left (Post-Communist and Greens) do leader evaluations matter more than partisanship. These are arguably less cleavage-centered parties, for whom party identification is arguably less relevant *a priori*.

The actual role of the dealignment process in the personalization of politics at the electoral level can only be properly addressed, however, by analyzing the evolution of these predictors across time. For this purpose, we use the four models from Table 3 adding interactions with a continuous year indicator to test whether partisanship and/or leader evaluations significantly changed their effect across time.[9] The results, presented in Table 4, largely confirm the scenario of dealignment. The role of partisanship in explaining vote choice has significantly decreased across time for every party family. Conversely, evaluations of political leaders became a more relevant predictor for the Social-Democrats and the Christian/Conservatives party families – arguably, those that contain older parties.

In order to test the robustness of these findings we resort to Leave-One-Out Cross Validation (LOOCV). First, election studies were alternatively excluded one by one from the sample, to inspect if an outlier could be driving the trend. No differences were found. Second, we carried a more demanding test, by repeating the same procedure for countries, excluding them one at the time from the sample and re-estimating the interaction models. The results, as presented in Figure 3, show that the upward trend for leader evaluations was being driven by an outlier.[10] After the robustness tests, leader effects seem to be stable across time for all party families. The declining impact of partisanship, however, is very robust. Regardless of country or party family partisanship's impact on vote choice has systematically decreased.

Over the six decades of analysis, there is a substantial trend of partisan dealignment in Western democracies, as proved by the negative interaction between party identification and time (interactions are plotted in Figure 4). The weight of party attachments as determinants of vote choice has been clearly decreasing over the period of analysis. On the contrary, the effects of leader evaluations on the vote have neither increased nor decreased over time, again corroborating the descriptive evidence presented before. Hence, these results point once again to the idea that partisan dealignment does not necessarily reflect an increase in the electoral weight of leaders *per se* but rather a relative increase in the electoral impact of leaders *vis-à-vis* parties. This confirms our initial expectations regarding the necessity of analyzing leader effects interconnected with partisan dealignment.

Given these findings, it would be pertinent to understand if the decline of the effect of party identification over time was such that nowadays leaders have become more important than parties for voting decisions. To do so, we estimate the marginal effects for party identification, leader evaluations and ideological proximity only for the last election in each country. Figure 5 presents the comparison of key the estimates of interest (full estimation is presented in Appendix D).

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Table 4. Interaction effect models

|	Communist/Green		Social-Democrat		Christian/Conservative		Liberal	
Age	-0.015	-0.015	-0.005	-0.005	-0.001	-0.001	-0.006	-0.006
	(-14.19)	(-14.31)	(-9.70)	(-9.81)	(-2.41)	(-2.57)	(-8.19)	(-8.26)
Gender	-0.013	-0.012	0.020	0.019	0.020	0.020	0.035	0.037
	(-0.41)	(-0.38)	(1.08)	(1.03)	(0.97)	(0.99)	(1.48)	(1.54)
Education	0.216	0.218	-0.190	-0.192	0.017	0.020	0.232	0.232
	(9.39)	(9.51)	(-14.54)	(-14.66)	(1.17)	(1.39)	(13.86)	(13.92)
Interest in Politics	-0.274	-0.273	-0.334	-0.336	-0.363	-0.366	-0.326	-0.328
	(-7.26)	(-7.23)	(-15.58)	(-15.65)	(-15.01)	(-15.12)	(-11.82)	(-11.90)
Ideological Proximity	-1.180	-1.186	-0.929	-0.928	-1.134	-1.126	-0.992	-0.987
	(-40.88)	(-41.17)	(-66.72)	(-66.79)	(-66.56)	(-66.36)	(-51.76)	(-51.62)
Partisanship	1.064	0.711	1.775	1.636	1.833	1.412	1.287	1.019
	(17.24)	(61.38)	(35.50)	(118.61)	(34.85)	(99.18)	(25.67)	(78.82)
Leader Evaluation	1.064	1.044	0.959	0.758	1.110	0.850	0.873	0.752
	(41.67)	(8.55)	(71.13)	(13.59)	(66.58)	(14.21)	(50.68)	(10.25)
Year	0.012	0.009	-0.001	-0.003	-0.010	-0.013	0.021	0.019
	(1.63)	(1.17)	(-0.49)	(-0.87)	(-1.43)	(-1.81)	(2.35)	(2.07)
Partisanship *Year	**-0.008**	-	**-0.003**	-	**-0.010**	-	**-0.006**	-
	(-5.86)		**(-2.94)**		**(-8.48)**		**(-5.49)**	
Leader Eval. *Year	-	**0.000**	-	**0.004**	-	**0.006**	-	**0.002**
		(0.13)		**(3.72)**		**(4.49)**		**(1.72)**
Constant	-28.86	-22.48	4.06	7.31	20.41	26.50	-46.09	-40.95
	(-1.82)	(-1.35)	(0.50)	(0.89)	(1.34)	(1.73)	(-2.48)	(-2.19)
Log-likelihood	-13602.40	-13620.89	-38887.59	-38885.10	-31245.81	-31273.73	-24628.26	-24643.25
Wald chi-2	8862.42	8943.57	26588.94	26667.38	22316.33	22398.44	13087.95	13019.78
N (elections)	59	59	79	79	77	77	68	68
N (observations)	83615	83615	125261	125261	120603	120603	103065	103065

Note: Table entries are Hierarchical Logit Model (HLM) coefficients with a random intercept for each election study in our sample. t-statistics in parentheses.

Figure 3. Leave-One-Out Cross Validation (LOOCV) for interaction effect models
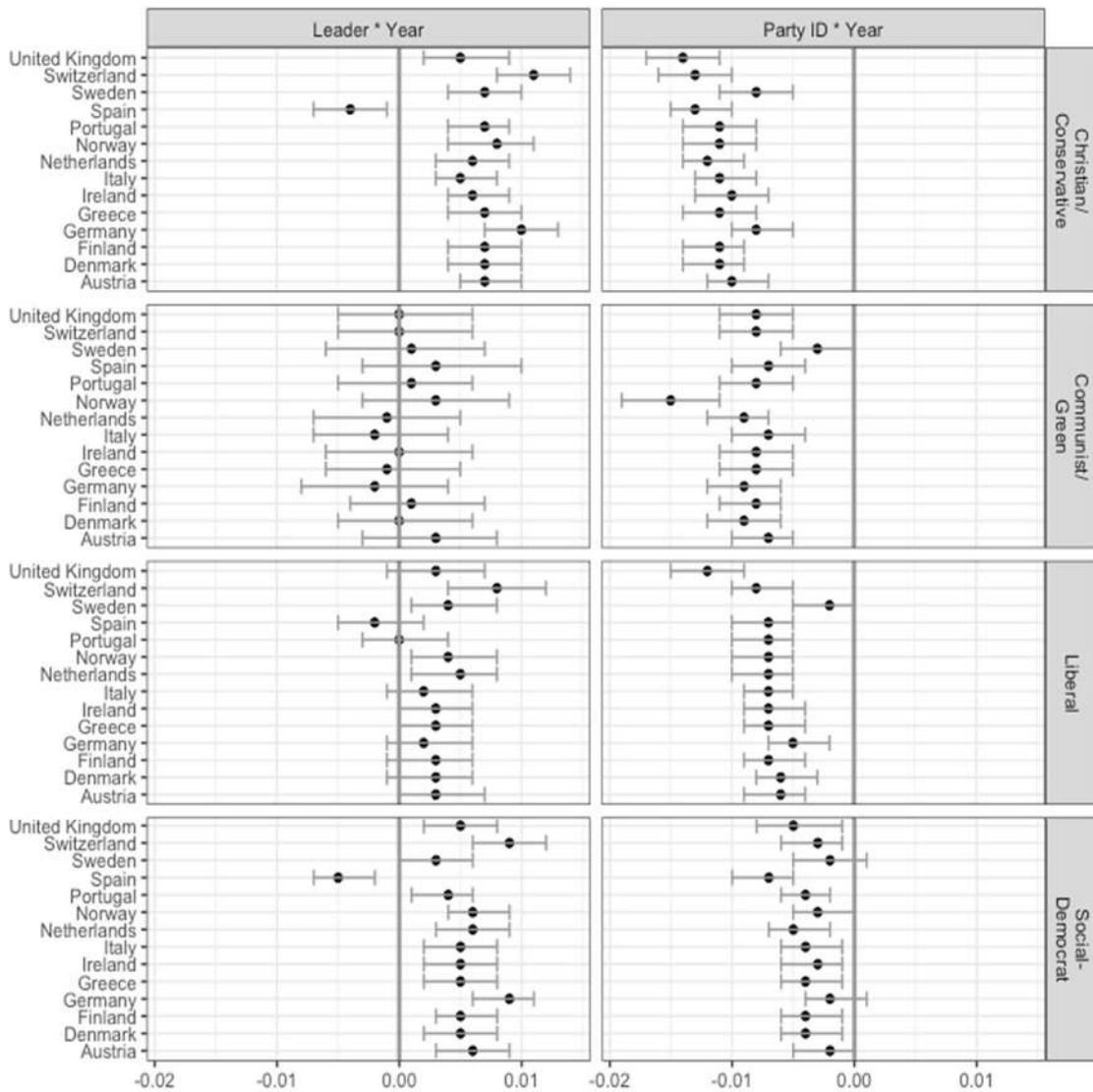
Figure 4. The declining impact of partisanship on vote choice, 1964-2016
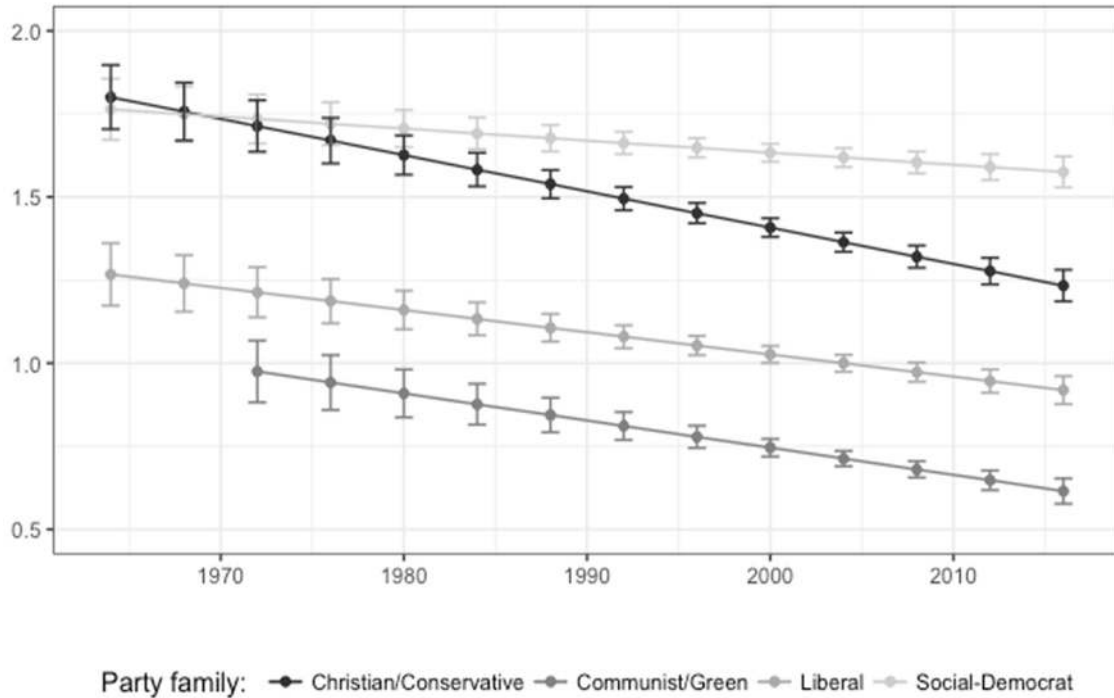
The results show that for voters of Social-Democratic parties, party identification still remains today a more important predictor of vote choice than the evaluations of party leaders. Despite the decline in the importance of partisan attachments observed in Figure 4 also applying to Social-Democratic parties, such decline was yet insufficient to bring partisanship's effect below leader evaluations'. In fact, this was the party family were the decrease in the effect of partisanship was the lowest. Nevertheless, if the trend holds, an approximation between the effect of both variables is foreseeable in the future. Also the impact of ideological proximity on the vote is still slightly higher than the evaluations of party leaders in this party family.

For Christian/Conservative parties, the decline in the importance of party identification has already reached a point where its effect has been surpassed by leader evaluations. Moreover, evaluations of party leaders became the most important predictor of vote choice in the model, overcoming also the effects of ideological proximity. Importantly, in the HLM models of Table 3, which average the effects across the whole time-trend, party identification still had a slightly higher effect. However, we now observe that nowadays the effects of party identification and leader evaluations are virtually the same. This is the result of the time trends in the decline of partisanship identified in Figure 4. Indeed, these party families are amongst those where partisanship's decline is more pronounced.

Figure 5. Estimated party and leader effects on vote choice (last election in each country)
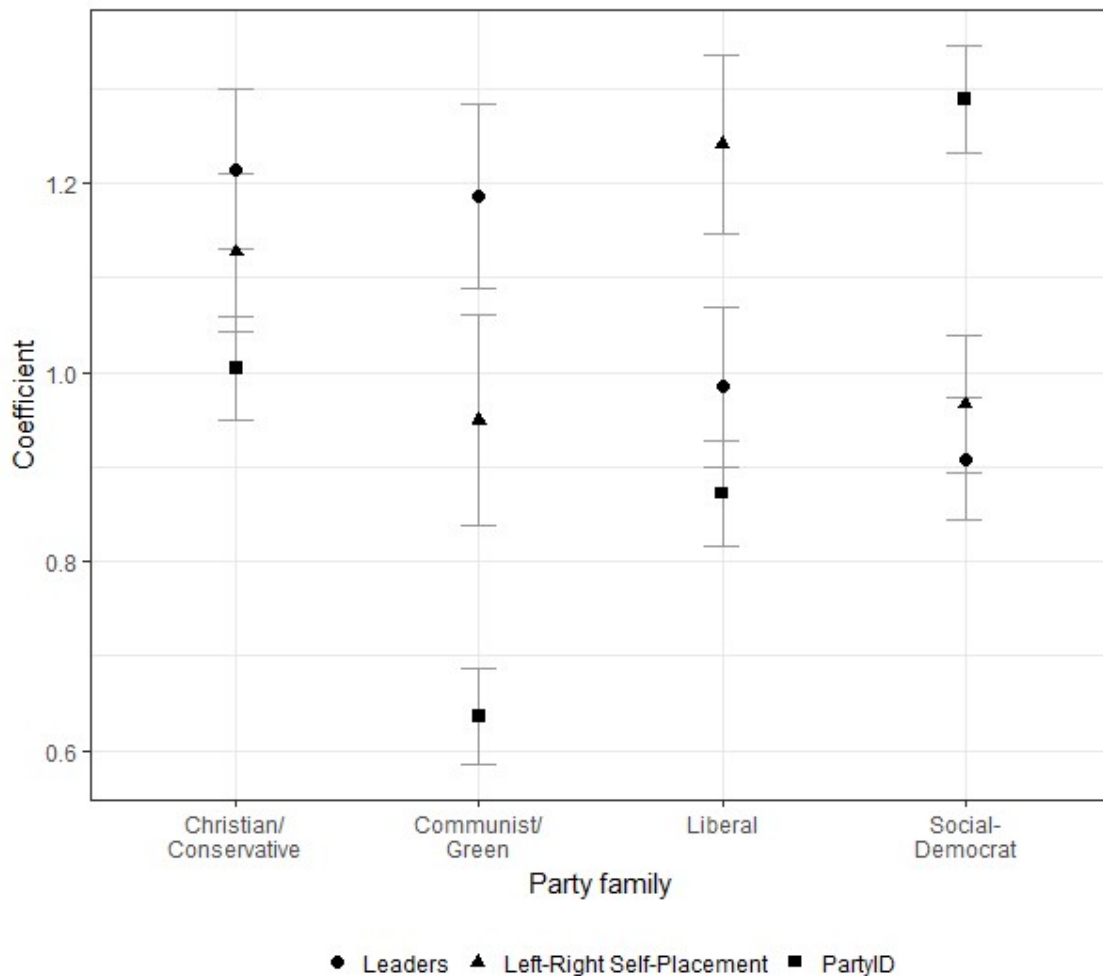
The effect of voters' evaluations of leaders has also overcome that of party identification and ideological proximity for voters of the Post-Communists/Greens. This only corroborates the previous findings, as already in the HLM models of Table 3 we had registered that leader effect were stronger than party identification. Leaders have always mattered more for these party families – the dealignment trend only made them even more relevant than party identification. That was not the case with regard to ideological proximity, however. The dealignment process seems to have further favored leader evaluations instead of assessments based on ideological proximity.

For Liberal parties too, the impact of leader evaluations on the vote is superior to partisanship effects. Nonetheless, concerning this party family, ideological proximity stands out as the strongest predictor of vote choice.

Overall, these results support the overwhelming importance of party leader evaluations in contemporary democratic elections. Assessments of the leading candidates running for election are, today, a crucial determinant of vote choice. Moreover, only regarding Social-Democratic parties, is the importance of party identification superior to the effect of leader evaluations and only in the Liberal and Social-Democratic party families, does ideological proximity plays a more important role than leaders in voting decisions.

Conclusions

This article addressed two fundamental gaps in the study of personalization of electoral politics. One the one hand, it proposed to investigate if the theoretical link between dealignment and leader effects is empirically observable. On the other hand, it aimed at providing definitive evidence on the longitudinal dimension of the personalization of politics at the electoral level. The analysis was carried using an unprecedentedly large comparative dataset, compiled for the purpose of this study and providing longitudinal data spanning over six decades across 14 established parliamentary democracies.

The results confirm the importance of party leader assessments as determinants of vote choice in contemporary Western democracies, as a backdrop of the dealignment process. The number of individuals identifying with a political party has decreased substantially over the last half century. As such, partisan attachments have lost much of their influence as vote choice predictors, in a trend transversal to all party families. Because of that, and although leader evaluations have always been an important factor for individual vote choice, they have become an increasingly important predictor over time. Therefore, leaders came to matter more for voting decisions not because their effects have grown over time, but at the expenses of the decline in the explanatory role of partisanship. Today, only with regard to Social-Democratic parties can partisanship be claimed to matter more than leader evaluations. Considering the increasing electoral relevance of new party families in recent Western elections, particularly at the expenses of mainstream Social-Democratic parties, it can be argued that the personalization of politics at the electoral level has substantial empirical support.

Noticeably, our results are on the conservative side. With leaders increasingly responsible for shaping partisan identifications, as previous studies have demonstrated, it is likely that leaders matter even more overall. However, we are unable to capture the effects of leaders on partisan identifications due to the cross-sectional nature of our pooled dataset. Further research can address this point through long panels, which have been increasingly fielded over the last years.

The findings of this article carry some important implications to the existing literature on the personalization of politics. Curtice and Holmberg (2005: 235) had noted in one of the few attempts at longitudinally analyze leader effects that "party leaders appear to be as important or unimportant now as they were when they were first measured". While such conclusion is somewhat in line with our results, it missed the other side of the coin, as it does not account for the dynamic interplay between party and leader effects in a context of dealignment. Most importantly, by taking the latter into account, our results refine the temporal dimension argument subjacent to the personalization of politics. By demonstrating that leader effects have not grown over time in absolute but in relative terms, at the expenses of the role of political parties, our analysis contributes to the most contested aspect of the personalization of politics debate. Interestingly, our nuanced results provide partial support for the claims of both nay-sayers and followers of this thesis.

Furthermore, such results shed light on a crucial aspect of the connection between partisan dealignment and the personalization of politics. Dealignment seems indeed the key factor driving leader evaluations to become independent of partisan attachments. While at the beginning of the time trend, partisanship and leader evaluations were both highly important, in a framework compatible with the funnel of causality approach, dealignment progressively caused partisanship to lose predictive power, as leaders retained their electoral relevance. All this evidence suggests that voters are today looking at political leaders through their own eyes rather than through partisan lenses. Although the specific mechanism of this emancipation of leader assessments from partisan support remains confined to the temporal trend in our empirical set up, we conjecture that it is likely to depend on the coupling of voters' greater

ability to independently experience and evaluate politics, and the growing importance of visibility and image in contemporary political communication.

Endnotes

[1] Three-point closeness scales are available in 71 out of our 90 election studies. Exceptions are represented by the studies from Denmark and Norway, the early Dutch studies (1986-1998) and the first German study (1961). In all these instances, only the degree of closeness was investigated. Respondents in those studies were unable to declare themselves "only a sympathizer".

[2] A 10-point feeling thermometer scale is available in 81 out of our 90 studies. In a few instances, respondents were not allowed to select the mid-point of the scale (Greece 1996 and Italy 1990-2008). The British studies conducted between 1983 and 1992 did not feature thermometer evalutions of party leaders. In this case, we resorted to the recoding strategy employed in *The European Voter* project (Thomassen, 2005).

[3] Post-Communists and Greens are effectively two distinct party families. However, we decide to pool them together as a pragmatic solution to the relatively scattered simultaneous presence of both categories. Moreover, similar to the case of Conservatives and Christian Democratic families, which are also pooled together, the two parties are on the same side of the class cleavage, and generally do not perform well, or even exist, in the same election for a certain country. Finally, additional robustness (LOO) tests excluding this party family do not affect our results.

[4] Social-Democratic and Christian/Conservatives parties are available in each and every election study. In 13 out of 14 countries they are always the same party – the only exception is Italy. Liberal parties are consistent in 11 out of 14 countries. They vary across time in Italy and Spain and are systematically missing in Greece. Overall, they are present in 78 elections out of 90. Post-Communist/Greens are consistent in 11 countries out of 14, with cross-time variation in Italy and Greece. They are systematically missing in Switzerland. In total they are present in 69 out of 90 elections.

[5] We acknowledge that this approach is not without caveats, but it has the undeniable merit of offering a feasible measure of ideological proximity across electoral studies spanning over six decades in multiple countries.

[6] Due to the lack of relevant questions -- either self- or party- placement -- it was impossible to compute ideological proximity for the respondents featured in the following studies: Denmark 1973; Germany 1961, 1972, 1980 and 1994; Portugal 2011; United Kingdom 1970 and 2010. All these studies are thus excluded from the multivariate analyses that follow.

[7] In particular, varying choice sets threaten the Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives assumption that is invoked in conditional logit models (including our application). Relaxing this assumption required modeling the variations in the choice sets. Therefore, we experimented with versions of CLM that allow for variation in voters' choice sets by interacting a choice-set indicator with each alternative-specific covariate (i.e. leader evaluations, partisanship, ideological proximity). This produces estimates that are choice set specific, but this comes at the cost of misleading generalizations. For instance, the choice set configurations usually involve one or two specific countries and therefore convey the effect of idiosyncratic context rather than the absence or presence of certain party families. Moreover, these models involve unbearable complexity. In fact, our argument of the diachronic increase in the relative importance of leaders and parties would also demand a triple interaction to model the change of the coefficients of interest over time. While this would represent a feasible option for scholars interesting in the dynamics of a single party

system, or in the synchronic variation across party systems, in our long-term comparative setting a more pragmatic approach that dissects the change within party families is preferable. Readers interested in modeling choices with varying choice set can refer to Alvarez and Nagler (1995).

[8] These include contextual differences as well as inconsistencies in question wordings across countries and elections.

[9] We are aware of the methodological discussion around the interaction by product and by compression in logit models. A synthesis of all methodological advices is provided in Rainey (2016: 624). The main reason why we opt for introducing the product term is that the mechanisms underlying the dealignment framework can be understood as a conditional mechanism.

[10] This outlier (Spain) had three elections in the last five years. This is not unimportant, since if the personalization of politics is progressive, as argued by the literature, the most recent cases should also be those where leader effects are supposed to be the strongest. Hence, the higher observed leader effects for Spain may actually be signaling a growing trend, given the higher number of recent data points.

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APPENDIX A. Detailed list of election studies included

Country	Year	Country	Year	Country	Year	Country	Year
Austria	2013	Germany	2013	Norway	1993	Sweden	2006
Denmark	1973	Greece	1996	Norway	1997	Sweden	2010
Denmark	1994	Greece	2009	Norway	2001	Switzerland	1999
Denmark	1998	Greece	2012	Norway	2005	Switzerland	2003
Denmark	2001	Ireland	2002	Norway	2009	Switzerland	2007
Denmark	2005	Ireland	2007	Norway	2013	Switzerland	2011
Denmark	2007	Ireland	2016	Portugal	2002	Switzerland	2015
Denmark	2011	Italy	1990	Portugal	2005	UK	1964
Finland	2003	Italy	1996	Portugal	2009	UK	1966
Finland	2007	Italy	2001	Portugal	2011	UK	1970
Finland	2011	Italy	2006	Portugal	2015	UK	1974(f)
Germany	1961	Italy	2008	Spain	2000	UK	1974(o)
Germany	1972	Italy	2013	Spain	2008	UK	1979
Germany	1976	Netherlands	1986	Spain	2011	UK	1983
Germany	1980	Netherlands	1989	Spain	2015	UK	1987
Germany	1983	Netherlands	1994	Spain	2016	UK	1992
Germany	1987	Netherlands	1998	Sweden	1982	UK	1997
Germany	1990	Netherlands	2002	Sweden	1985	UK	2001
Germany	1994	Netherlands	2006	Sweden	1988	UK	2005
Germany	1998	Netherlands	2010	Sweden	1991	UK	2010
Germany	2002	Norway	1981	Sweden	1994	UK	2015
Germany	2005	Norway	1985	Sweden	1998		
Germany	2009	Norway	1989	Sweden	2002		

APPENDIX B. Percentage of partisans voting along partisan lines
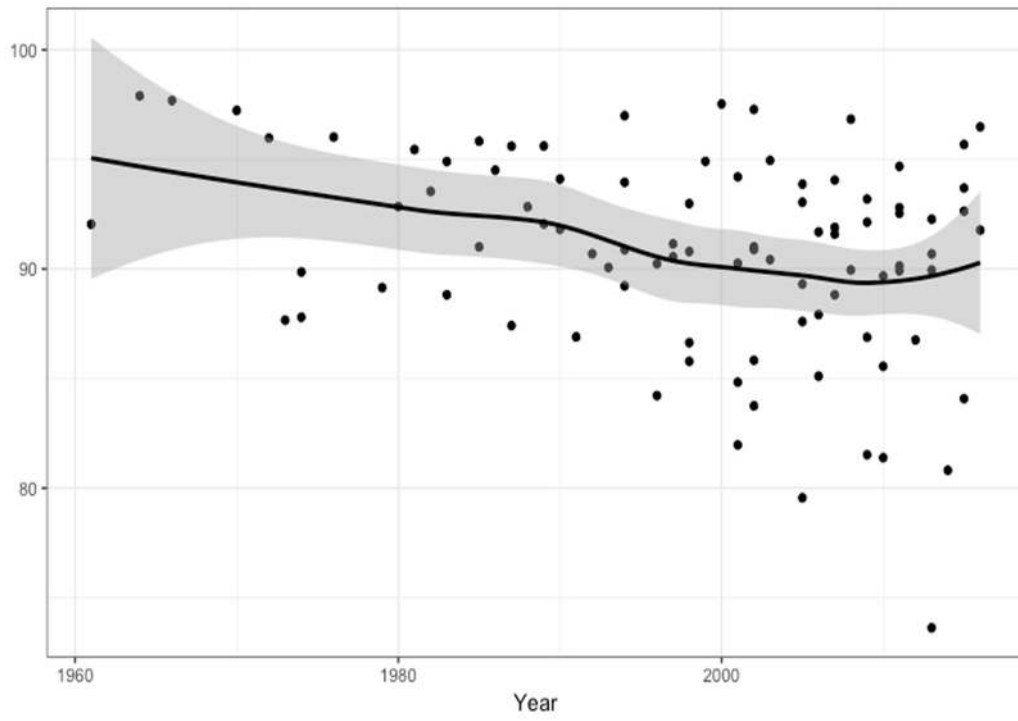
APPENDIX C. Vote choice for main party families

	Communist/ Green	Social- Democrat	Christian Conservative	Liberal	Other Parties	TOTAL	(N)
1960s	0,0	35,7	36,6	3,2	5,4	80,9	(3)
1970s	2,4	31,5	22,4	7,3	15,4	79,0	(7)
1980s	4,9	31,9	22,9	7,5	11,5	78,7	(13)
1990s	4,7	27,0	17,7	9,3	16,9	75,6	(18)
2000s	4,7	24,6	19,3	9,6	18,5	76,7	(30)
2010s	4,9	18,5	17,5	10,1	21,0	71,9	(19)

APPENDIX D. Estimated party and leader effects (last election in each country)

	Communist/ Green	Social- Democrat	Christian/ Conservative	Liberal
Age	-0.015	-0.000	0.001	-0.005
	(-6.73)	(-0.22)	(1.12)	(-3.03)
Gender	-0.003	-0.018	-0.039	0.086
	(-0.05)	(-0.39)	(-0.74)	(1.46)
Education	0.196	-0.206	-0.039	0.301
	(3.92)	(-5.95)	(-1.00)	(7.00)
Interest in Politics	-0.141	-0.304	-0.377	-0.273
	(-1.95)	(-5.76)	(-6.29)	(-4.19)
Ideological Proximity	-0.949	-0.966	-1.127	-1.241
	(-16.55)	(-26.31)	(-25.91)	(-25.87)
Partisanship	0.636	1.289	1.004	0.872
	(24.61)	(44.39)	(35.25)	(31.45)
Leader Evaluation	1.186	0.908	1.215	0.985
	(23.72)	(27.22)	(28.05)	(22.97)
Year	0.081	0.044	0.200	0.134
	(0.87)	(0.93)	(1.92)	(0.92)
Constant	-167.3	-89.5	-404.9	-273.3
	(-0.88)	(-0.94)	(-1.93)	(-0.93)
Log-likelihood	-3014.90	-6008.24	-4912.87	-4136.85
Wald chi-2	1982.74	3900.86	3402.68	2460.13
N (elections)	13	14	13	12
N (observations)	15124	19587	18667	17593

Note: Table entries are Hierarchical Logit Model (HLM) coefficients with a random intercept for each election study in our sub-sample. t-statistics in parentheses.

APPENDIX E. List of parties included in the conditional logit analysis, by party family

Country	Year	Communist/Green	Social-Democrat	Christian/Conservative	Liberal
Austria	2013	Die Grünen	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs	Österreichische Volkspartei	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs
Denmark	1973	Socialistisk Folkeparti	Socialdemokraterne	Det Konservative Folkeparti	Venstre
Denmark	1994	Socialistisk Folkeparti	Socialdemokraterne	Det Konservative Folkeparti	Venstre
Denmark	1998	Socialistisk Folkeparti	Socialdemokraterne	Det Konservative Folkeparti	Venstre
Denmark	2001	Socialistisk Folkeparti	Socialdemokraterne	Det Konservative Folkeparti	Venstre
Denmark	2005	Socialistisk Folkeparti	Socialdemokraterne	Det Konservative Folkeparti	Venstre
Denmark	2007	Socialistisk Folkeparti	Socialdemokraterne	Det Konservative Folkeparti	Venstre
Denmark	2011	Socialistisk Folkeparti	Socialdemokraterne	Det Konservative Folkeparti	Venstre
Finland	2003	Vasemmistoliitto	Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue	Suomen Keskusta	Kansallinen Kokoomus
Finland	2007	Vasemmistoliitto	Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue	Suomen Keskusta	Kansallinen Kokoomus
Finland	2011	Vasemmistoliitto	Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue	Suomen Keskusta	Kansallinen Kokoomus
Germany	1961	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei
Germany	1972	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei
Germany	1976	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei
Germany	1980	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei
Germany	1983	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei
Germany	1987	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei
Germany	1990	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei
Germany	1994	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei
Germany	1998	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei
Germany	2002	-	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	-
Germany	2005	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei

Country	Year	Communist/Green	Social-Democrat	Christian/Conservative	Liberal
Germany	2009	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei
Germany	2013	Die Linke	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Freie Demokratische Partei
Greece	1996	Synaspismos	PASOK	Nea Dimokratia	-
Greece	2009	SYRIZA	PASOK	Nea Dimokratia	-
Greece	2012	SYRIZA	PASOK	Nea Dimokratia	-
Ireland	2002	Green Party	Labour Party	Fianna Fail	Progressive Democrats
Ireland	2007	Green Party	Labour Party	Fianna Fail	Progressive Democrats
Ireland	2016	Green Party	Labour Party	Fianna Fail	-
Italy	1990	Partito Comunista Italiano	Partito Socialista Italiano	Democrazia Cristiana	Partito Liberale Italiano
Italy	1996	Rifondazione Comunista	Partito Democratico della Sinistra	Forza Italia	-
Italy	2001	Rifondazione Comunista	Democratici di Sinistra	Forza Italia	Italia dei Valori
Italy	2006	Rifondazione Comunista	Democratici di Sinistra	Forza Italia	-
Italy	2008	Sinistra Arcobaleno	Partito Democratico	Popolo delle Libertà	Italia dei Valori
Italy	2013	Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà	Partito Democratico	Popolo delle Libertà	Scelta Civica
Netherlands	1986	-	Partij van de Arbeid	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
Netherlands	1989	-	Partij van de Arbeid	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
Netherlands	1994	Groenlinks	Partij van de Arbeid	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
Netherlands	1998	Groenlinks	Partij van de Arbeid	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
Netherlands	2002	Groenlinks	Partij van de Arbeid	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
Netherlands	2006	Groenlinks	Partij van de Arbeid	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
Netherlands	2010	Groenlinks	Partij van de Arbeid	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
Norway	1981	Sosialistisk Venstreparti	Arbeiderpartiet	Høyre	Venstre
Norway	1985	Sosialistisk Venstreparti	Arbeiderpartiet	Høyre	Venstre
Norway	1989	Sosialistisk Venstreparti	Arbeiderpartiet	Høyre	Venstre
Norway	1993	Sosialistisk Venstreparti	Arbeiderpartiet	Høyre	Venstre
Norway	1997	Sosialistisk Venstreparti	Arbeiderpartiet	Høyre	Venstre

Country	Year	Communist/Green	Social-Democrat	Christian/Conservative	Liberal
Norway	2001	Sosialistisk Venstreparti	Arbeiderpartiet	Høyre	Venstre
Norway	2005	Sosialistisk Venstreparti	Arbeiderpartiet	Høyre	Venstre
Norway	2009	Sosialistisk Venstreparti	Arbeiderpartiet	Høyre	Venstre
Norway	2013	Sosialistisk Venstreparti	Arbeiderpartiet	Høyre	Venstre
Portugal	2002	Coligação Democrática Unitária	Partido Socialista	CDS – Partido Popular	Partido Social Democrata
Portugal	2005	Coligação Democrática Unitária	Partido Socialista	CDS – Partido Popular	Partido Social Democrata
Portugal	2009	Coligação Democrática Unitária	Partido Socialista	CDS – Partido Popular	Partido Social Democrata
Portugal	2011	Coligação Democrática Unitária	Partido Socialista	CDS – Partido Popular	Partido Social Democrata
Portugal	2015	Coligação Democrática Unitária	Partido Socialista	-	Partido Social Democrata
Spain	2000	Izquierda Unida	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	Partido Popular	-
Spain	2008	Izquierda Unida	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	Partido Popular	-
Spain	2011	Izquierda Unida	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	Partido Popular	Unión Progreso y Democracia
Spain	2015	Izquierda Unida	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	Partido Popular	Ciudadanos
Spain	2016	Podemos	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	Partido Popular	Ciudadanos
Sweden	1982	Vänsterpartiet	Socialdemokraterna	Moderaterna	Liberalerna
Country	**Year**	**Communist/Green**	**Social-Democrat**	**Christian/Conservative**	**Liberal**
Sweden	1985	Vänsterpartiet	Socialdemokraterna	Moderaterna	Liberalerna
Sweden	1988	Vänsterpartiet	Socialdemokraterna	Moderaterna	Liberalerna
Sweden	1991	Vänsterpartiet	Socialdemokraterna	Moderaterna	Liberalerna
Sweden	1994	Vänsterpartiet	Socialdemokraterna	Moderaterna	Liberalerna
Sweden	1998	Vänsterpartiet	Socialdemokraterna	Moderaterna	Liberalerna
Sweden	2002	Vänsterpartiet	Socialdemokraterna	Moderaterna	Liberalerna
Sweden	2006	Vänsterpartiet	Socialdemokraterna	Moderaterna	Liberalerna
Sweden	2010	Vänsterpartiet	Socialdemokraterna	Moderaterna	Liberalerna
Switzerland	1999	-	Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz	Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei der Schweiz	Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei
Switzerland	2003	-	Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz	Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei der Schweiz	Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei
Switzerland	2007	-	Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz	Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei der Schweiz	Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei
Switzerland	2011	-	Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz	Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei der Schweiz	Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei

Switzerland	2015	-	Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz	Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei der Schweiz	Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei
UK	1964	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	-
UK	1966	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	-
UK	1970	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	-
UK	1974 f	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	Liberal Democrats
UK	1974 o	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	Liberal Democrats
UK	1979	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	Liberal Democrats
UK	1983	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	Liberal Democrats
UK	1987	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	Liberal Democrats
UK	1992	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	Liberal Democrats
UK	1997	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	Liberal Democrats
UK	2001	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	Liberal Democrats
UK	2005	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	Liberal Democrats
UK	2010	-	Labour Party	Conservative Party	Liberal Democrats
UK	2015	Greens	Labour Party	Conservative Party	Liberal Democrats