

**Intra-Party Democracy and Party Unity:
Varied Rules, Varied Consequences¹**

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This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published online by Taylor & Francis in *Representation* on June 25, 2020, available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00344893.2020.1785537>.

¹ The author wishes to thank William P. Cross for his advice on an earlier draft. All faults remain the author's own.

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Abstract

Do parties' internal dynamics change when they adopt party-wide ballots for important policy and personnel decisions? Parties in parliamentary democracies are increasingly using such procedures, but researchers still disagree about their impact on partisan politics. This article argues that in order to pin down such effects, researchers should more systematically account for how such ballots are conducted. The argument is developed with respect to party unity. Intra-party ballots are described as multi-stage procedures with key rules at each stage whose attributes can exacerbate or mitigate the tensions unleashed by contestation over party decisions. It demonstrates the feasibility of such an approach by proposing measures taken from the Political Party Database (PPDB). It then uses examples from PPDB data to show that these procedures do vary in practice. Having demonstrated how rule differences can be measured using existing or easily gathered data, the paper concludes by calling on future research on intra-party democracy to accept the challenge of studying party ballots in their full procedural diversity.

Key Words

Political parties, Intra-party democracy, Party cohesion, Leadership Selection, Party primaries

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I. Introduction

In recent years, parties in parliamentary democracies increasingly have turned to party-wide ballots for making important decisions about policies and personnel. These ballots, which replace or supplement decision-making by party conferences or national party executives, can raise the visibility of party decision events. Recent examples include the German Social Democratic Party balloting its members to ratify coalition agreements in 2018 and 2013; the British Labour Party's 2015 and 2016 leadership selection ballots involving members and registered supporters; the French Socialist's 2011 and 2017 ballots of registered members and supporters to select the party's presidential candidate. These contests were not isolated examples. From 1990-2012 parties in 15 established and new parliamentary democracies used membership ballots at least 107 times as part of their leadership selection process (Scarrow, 2015, p. 184; see also Hazan & Rahat, 2010; Cross & Blais, 2012; Krouwel, 2012; Kenig, Cross, Pruyssers, & Rahat, 2015; Sandri, Seddone, & Venturino, 2015, p. 10). This trend increases the urgency of identifying the political consequences of intra-party ballots. However, attempts to identify such effects have produced inconclusive answers.

This paper argues that a promising way to gain leverage on these questions is by taking more account of how ballots are conducted. Parties themselves certainly pay attention to such matters: they frequently adjust their procedures, and often these rules are objects of intra-party struggles. Because procedural differences alter incentive structures, they can affect ballot results as well as competitors' behavior. Disaggregating intra-party ballots into

procedural sub-components should thus produce more clarity about how intra-party ballots shape various political outcomes.

This argument is developed below with respect to one kind of outcome: party unity. Building on van Vonna et al. (2014), unity is viewed here as a property at both the elite and grassroots level that results from shared values, norms of loyalty, and mechanisms that regulate dissent. The extent of party unity is central to relationships between party leaders, party legislators, and those who select and elect them. Unity is a dynamic property that can be altered by many factors, including how parties make decisions. Using party-wide ballots to make decisions can potentially threaten unity in many ways, including by publicizing and escalating internal conflicts. Yet the extent of the threat may depend on how such ballots are conducted, with some rule configurations being riskier than others. Paying attention to how parties organize their ballots can thus help identify the implications of specific rules.

This call to pay attention to ballot rules is not new, going back at least to the stages mentioned by Hazan and Rahat (2001) in their ground-breaking article. The specific rules highlighted below echo some factors identified in other work (cf. Kenig, Cross, Pruyers, & Rahat, 2015; Kenig & Pruyers, 2018; Cross & Gauja, 2019). Yet despite past efforts to highlight rule variations, much past and current research continues to treat intra-party ballots as essentially similar events, for instance by contrasting all decisions which involve inclusive ballots with all those that do not. This article responds to that neglect by offering a roadmap for implementing a more differentiated approach. It proposes specific measures to capture variation in the attributes of key rules. Data for many of these measures are already available

in an existing data source, the Political Party Database (PPDB). The article then analyses the PPDB cases to show that such rules vary in practice, not just in theory. These examples demonstrate both the advisability and feasibility of using a differentiated approach to studying intra-party ballots, rather than lumping them together under broad labels such as “party primaries”.

II. Party-wide Ballots and Party Unity: Impacts on Multiple Levels

Party-wide ballots are sometimes touted as effective and democratic ways for parties to be responsive and transparent. Yet even if such benefits are realized, they may come at a cost, particularly if the contests surrounding party ballots intensify and publicize divisions within the parties that employ them. Such injuries to party unity may be slow to heal after the votes. Thus, one recurrent question about intra-party ballots concerns their effects on party cohesion, and on the associated trait of legislative party unity.¹

Unity among party officeholders is essential in parliamentary democracies, where legislative delegations must vote together in order to govern, whether alone or in coalitions. Loss of legislative unity, even if it involves only verbal dissent and not vote defection, can erode the electoral value of a party’s label, leaving voters less sure about what a given party represents. Cohesion at the party grassroots is equally important, where shared preferences and norms of loyalty can encourage activists or prior voters to stick with “their” party even if they disagree with some of its choices. Declining grassroots cohesion can threaten a party’s electoral prospects; writ large, this can undermine the stable electoral bases which are associated with institutionalized party systems (Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006; Dalton & Weldon, 2007; on

party cohesion and party discipline, see Close & Gerghina, 2019; on candidate selection methods and party unity, see Hazan, 2014).

Intra-party ballots potentially affect multiple forces that sustain party unity. They can diminish shared values by producing less homogenous candidate slates, and by intensifying disputes over party priorities. They can erode loyalty by encouraging supporters to participate in intra-party contests in which choices necessarily are made without the guidance of a party label. They can encourage dissent by requiring would be candidates and party leaders to differentiate themselves from their party colleagues. Indeed, given this potential for undermining unity, one early scholar of US presidential primaries named impact on party cohesion as a main criterion for evaluating primaries (Wildavsky, 1962, p. 308).² Yet despite much subsequent research concerning the political effects of primaries and other intra-party ballots, whether or to what extent these ballots actually undermine party unity remain open questions.

One strand of this research has tested whether levels of legislative unity are affected by parties' methods for selecting candidates and party leaders. The usual expectation is that legislative parties will experience more public dissent when they select their candidates using intra-party ballots, in part because legislators' personal mandates make them less vulnerable to pressure from party leaders (Bowler, Farrell, & Katz, 1999). Some research has borne this out (Sieberer, 2006; DePauw & Martin, 2008; Katz, 2014; Coman, 2015), but other research suggests it does not always occur (Cordero & Coller, 2015; Hortalla-Vallve & Mueller, 2015). Another hypothesis is that party leaders selected by membership ballots have more

autonomy from their parties. Some research supports this, but also suggests that leaders selected by membership ballots can lose this autonomy under certain circumstances (Enns-Jedenastik & Schumacher, 2015).

Reduced unity sometimes manifests itself in party defections. Because intra-party ballots publicize losers as well as winners, they may encourage losing candidates to join another party, to form their own party, or to drop out of political life altogether. Examples include the British Labour Party's David Miliband, who removed himself from British politics after narrowly losing the 2010 leadership contest, or the Canadian Conservative Party's Maxime Bernier, who started his own party after losing a tightly contested leadership race in 2017.³ There is some evidence that intra-party ballots do encourage defections, though their occurrence may be mediated by electoral systems (O'Brien & Shomer, 2013; Shomer, 2017; Itzkovitch-Malka & Hazan, 2017; Kerevel, 2017; Close, Gherghina, & Sierens, 2018; Vandeleene & Sandri, 2019).

Other research has investigated how intra-party ballots affect grassroots party cohesion. Contested intra-party ballots encourage supporters to take sides in intra-party debates. Internal contests can accentuate pre-existing divisions, sometimes to the point of promoting intra-party violence (MacGiollabhui, 2018; Reeder & Seeberg, 2018). Supporters of losing sides may feel alienated from the party. Among grassroots activists, this disaffection could manifest itself as a failure to renew party memberships, or in reduced willingness to campaign for the party (Cross & Pruyers, 2019; conversely, being on the winning side may spur new activists: Buell, 1986; Fridkin, Kenney, Wintersieck, & Carle, 2017). Among

voters who favored candidates who lost in primary elections, this could lead to abstention or party-switching in the general election (Southwell, 1986; Henderson, Hillygus, & Tompson 2010; Southwell, 2010; Pedersen & Schumacher, 2015; Fridkin et al., 2017). Research has found some evidence of party-wide ballots undermining grassroots party cohesion and parties' congruence with their voters (Spies & Kaiser, 2014; Kernell, 2015; De Luca & Venturino, 2017; Polk & Kölln, 2018), but they do not always have these effects (Lehrer, 2012; Lehrer, Ezrow, Ward, & Böhmelt, 2017).

This review certainly does not exhaust the literature in this area, but it makes clear that there are ample theoretical and empirical reasons to expect that using intra-party ballots places added strains on party cohesion. It also shows that such effects have been found in both parliamentary and presidential systems, but the results are inconsistent, leaving open questions about when these effects are likely to occur. Clearly, more research is needed. The following discussion takes up the challenge, arguing that a promising way forward is to take a more differentiated view of these ballots. One likely reason for the contradictory findings is that decisions studied under labels such as “primary” or “intra-party democracy” actually encompass widely varied sets of procedures, ones which offer differing incentives in regards to party unity. Surprisingly, while many studies take account of the institutional and electoral rules for *inter*-party competition, relatively few take account of the rules for *intra*-party contests.

The rest of this paper amplifies the argument by suggesting ways of disaggregating ballot events to take account of potentially-consequential procedural differences. As it explains, at

each stage in intra-party ballots, key rules can strengthen or weaken the incentives for party unity. Focussing on variations in these rules (their “attributes”) may thus contribute to more nuanced explanations of the impacts of intra-party ballots. The discussion then demonstrates the feasibility of this approach by proposing measures of these attributes based on information and coding schemes already available in the Political Party Database (PPDB), or which could be retrospectively gathered from news accounts. (For more details on the PPDB, see Poguntke, Scarrow, Webb, et al., 2016 and Appendix A. PPDB data is available at Poguntke, Scarrow, Webb 2018). The PPDB Round 1a dataset provides details on formal organizational practices of parties in 19 countries circa 2010-14. The paper evaluates the rule variation among the 42 parties in this set which selected a party leader under rules that provided for a membership ballot; these examples come from 11 countries. This assessment makes clear that there is ample real-world variance in many of the highlighted ballot rules. These examples strengthen the case for taking ballot rules into account when investigating the impacts of intra-party ballots.

III. Ballot Stages and Rule Choices

The casting and counting of votes are the most visible aspects of intra-party ballots, but all such decisions are multi-stage events that extend over months or even years. These stages can be roughly divided into five components: Preparation; Nomination; Campaign; Voting; Ratification. As is shown below, rules associated with each stage can affect party unity by shaping the incentives of party elites and the experiences of party supporters. Because this argument is developed with respect to leadership ballots, the focus here is on ways that ballots may erode value homogeneity and undermine loyalty, forces that van Vonno et al.

(2014) identify as components of party cohesion; it is less concerned with unity-producing mechanisms that compel behavior or stifle dissent.

1. Preparation Stage

In the Preparation stage, parties choose the overall rules for specific personnel or policy decisions. Even when party statutes mandate using a party-wide ballot, they generally leave open details about how such ballots are to be conducted, such as the method for casting ballots (e.g., postal ballots or on-line voting), or precisely who is voting-eligible. Party choices on these matters may be shaped by precedents, but also by constraints on time and party resources (financial and organizational), and in some cases by party laws. These initial procedural decisions can affect the perceived fairness of the entire process, and by extension, the likelihood that losers will accept the result.

Attribute 1.1 Rule Stability The extent of procedural stability is an important rule attribute that is determined during the preparation stage. If procedures are agreed long before the contestants emerge – and especially if they replicate prior rules – these decisions are insulated from the immediate contest. They are therefore more likely to be regarded as neutral. Conversely, if procedures are adopted or altered in close proximity to the vote, ballot losers and their supporters have more reasons to claim unfairness, and thus to dispute the results.

Table 1 shows two binary measures for rule stability in leadership elections, drawn from the PPDB and from news accounts. The first reports whether the party used a party-wide ballot for its previous leadership selection; the second reports whether the ballot was conducted

according to existing rules in party statutes. Column 3, coding the experiences of the 42 PPDB parties, shows overall high stability in regards to both measures. All but three of these decisions were conducted under existing rules in party statutes, rather than under ad hoc procedures devised for the event. Moreover, at least 29 of the parties had used a member ballot to select their previous leader.⁴ Yet even when there was a stable decision about *whether* to use a party-wide ballot, decisions regarding the details of *how* to conduct the ballot may have been more changeable.

2. Nomination Stage

Rules associated with the Nomination stage dictate the minimal and sufficient criteria for getting names onto party ballots.

Attribute 2.1 Eligibility Strictness Parties generally set minimum eligibility criteria for would-be candidates. For instance, they may require them to demonstrate intra-party support by collecting endorsements from party officeholders, or signatures from party members. Some parties require candidates to pay a fee to defray the costs of the internal contests. Having non-trivial barriers may protect party unity by deterring fringe candidates and others who lack a core of intra-party support. On the other hand, if entry barriers are set very high, would-be office-seekers may have more incentive to build personal support networks to help them meet the financial or signature requirements; highly personalized competition among party elites may come at a cost to party unity.

The strictness of eligibility rules can be measured by asking what types of intra-party support candidates must provide: party member signatures, officeholder endorsements, and/or monetary sureties? The PPDB cases vary greatly in this regard. As Table 1 shows, more than half required leadership candidates to present signatures from party members, but only seven required candidates to demonstrate support from party office-holders (e.g., national legislators). Only eight required candidates to pay a fee to the party; however, among those that did, these fees could be substantial. For instance, the Canadian Liberal party set a Can\$75,000 entrance fee for candidates for its 2013 leadership contest.⁵

Attribute 2.2 Elite Gatekeeping In addition to setting minimal eligibility rules, some parties give elected representatives or top party organs a formal say in which eligible candidates proceed to the party-wide voting stage. For instance, rules may provide that MPs winnow contenders to a “top two” slate before the member vote (e.g., the UK Conservatives), or at least require the support of a significant proportion of MPs. Other parties have bodies that make leadership nominations after considering all minimally-qualified candidates (Aylott & Bolin, 2017).⁶ Sometimes such gatekeepers nominate only a single candidate, but their parties still hold a party-wide ratification vote.⁷ Of course, informal gatekeeping probably occurs in all party contests, but the focus here is on the impact of formal rules. From this perspective, the mechanisms that matter are ones that give elites a formal vote or veto prior to the party-wide ballot; this is different than just requiring endorsements from a minimal number of party officeholders. Elite gatekeeping procedures should enhance unity by ensuring that winners have significant support from multiple party levels.

The PPDB Round 1 questionnaire did not ask specifically about elite gatekeeping procedures (though the next round of PPDB data will include this). However, it requested procedural synopses, which provide some information about this.⁸ Based on these, Table 1 shows that this type of formal vetting was rare, with only four parties clearly using gate-keeping votes prior to their party-wide ballots.

3. Campaign Stage

The Campaign stage is the most public phase of intra-party contests. Rules associated with this stage may affect post-ballot dynamics by amplifying or publicizing internal disagreements.

Attribute 3.1 Contest Length Parties set the time between a ballot's formal announcement and when votes are cast. They might opt for longer official campaigns to maximize media coverage, or to allow more time for the contest to mobilize supporters and recruit voting-eligible members. On the other hand, one risk of longer campaigns is that this same publicity and mobilization will intensify and publicize intra-party divisions.

While the PPDB does not provide direct information about campaign length, one of its measures may serve as an indirect indicator, namely, a question about why the contest was held. Contests which are held according to a regular schedule presumably give candidates more time to campaign, either formally or informally. When a party suffers the unscheduled loss of a leader there may be some urgency to rapidly install a permanent replacement; under these circumstances, campaigns are likely to be shorter. According to the PPDB measure,

there was much variation in why parties held their leadership ballots, with 13 of the ballots in Table 1 being held under party rules requiring ballots to be held at regular intervals, and an equal number held when leaders resigned due to electoral defeat or ill health. These differences suggest that campaign lengths also varied widely.

Attribute 3.2 Candidate Spending Level Campaigns for party-wide ballots potentially personalize intra-party conflicts, thus increasing strains on party unity. Party practices can exacerbate these effects by encouraging contestants to fundraise for their own intra-party campaigns rather than for the party (Hofnung, 2008). Conversely, party rules or national laws may limit such effects by restricting candidate fundraising or spending for intra-party contests. For example, there are such spending restrictions in Icelandic and Israeli candidate primaries (Indriðason & Kristinsson, 2015; Hoffman, 2018; Kenig & Atmor 2019). Legislative candidates who build personal donor networks may be less beholden to their parties (Bøggild & Pedersen, 2018; von Nostitz & Sandri, 2018). Similarly, leadership candidates who fundraise for personalized contests may cultivate networks of advisors and supporters from outside the party. Such reliance on external support could erode party cohesion at the elite-level.

The only PPDB variable that measures campaign costs for leadership candidates is the aforementioned question about campaign deposits. This showed that few parties require deposits, but for some that did, the amounts were substantial (e.g. the Canadian parties). It would be possible to get more specific information about levels of candidate spending or fundraising for intra-party campaigns for countries where such funds fall under national

political finance reporting requirements. Where such measures exist, they likely would show wide variations in the extent to which party rules permit or encourage candidates to fundraise for intra-party campaigns.

4. Voting Stage

Potentially consequential rules associated with the Voting stage affect voting eligibility and vote-counting.

Attribute 4.1 Inclusiveness Voting rules for intra-party ballots govern both *inclusion* and *access*. Inclusion rules dictate who may participate in a party decision. Hazan and Rahat’s inclusion continuum runs from decisions made by a single leader to those in which all eligible voters may participate (2010, pp. 39-47). By definition, party-wide ballots are located towards the inclusive end of this continuum, but they are not equally inclusive. For instance, parties may restrict their votes to party members only (“closed”), or may include other supporters (“open”). Some researchers have argued that opening party decisions to non-members will erode members’ loyalty, thus fraying grassroots party cohesion (Cross, Kenig, Rahat, & Pruyzers, 2016, pp. 132-33). So far, however, such rules have been relatively rare in parliamentary democracies, allowing few opportunities to test these relationships. In keeping with this pattern, all but four of the 42 leadership ballots described in Table 1 were restricted to party members. However, even ballots restricted to party members can potentially create strains between long-term loyalists and new member “tourists”. That may be particularly likely where party membership is easily acquired.

Attribute 4.2 Accessibility Access rules mediate the effects of inclusion rules by determining how easy it is to attain included status. Variations in access rules may affect party unity by altering incentives for campaigners to recruit their personal supporters. Where access is easy to attain, rival candidates will have stronger reasons to invest in recruiting their own supporters; such recruiting is likely to dilute the preference homogeneity of party members. PPDB measures of the accessibility of the selectorate include the length of the probationary period before a new member enjoys voting rights, and whether membership applications can be completed on the party web page in a single step (in other words, without more complicated procedures such as visiting a party office or mailing a form). As Table 1 shows, party practices vary widely in both regards. Of the 30 member-only ballots with available information, 18 required probationary periods of at least three months (with the highest being 18 months for the Portuguese Socialists). In contrast, two parties allowed members to enlist and vote on the same day (the Belgian Reform Movement and the UK Greens). In regards to the second access measure, 17 parties allowed applicants to obtain membership with a single website visit; some of the others had much steeper requirements, such as requiring prospective members to submit endorsements from existing members. Another way to think about accessibility is by asking whether the probationary period is shorter than the length of the official campaign: can interested supporters enroll and take part in the vote after the intra-party contest is officially announced?

Two recent leadership contests in the British Labour Party illustrate the importance of taking account of both inclusion and access rules. 2015 was the first time the Labour Party allowed registered supporters to vote in its leadership ballot. To participate, supporters needed to

register on-line and pay a £3 fee, which they could do up to two days before ballots were mailed.⁹ In line with expectations about the effects of broad access, the contest attracted many new members and supporters, and their perceived impact generated considerable intra-party tension (Watts & Bale, 2019). The party tightened access rules for the 2016 leadership contest: to be voting-eligible, supporters now had to pay a £25 fee and enlist during a two-day period immediately prior to the ballot mailing; members had to join at least eight months in advance¹⁰. In terms of inclusion, these two ballots were very similar (both were open to members and registered supporters); however, the earlier ballot was much more accessible.

Attribute 4.3 Decisive Counting Rules Other crucial rules at the Voting stage define how much support is required to win. Rules producing decisive winners should reduce post-ballot dissent by giving winners an undisputed mandate, and by quickly resolving the outcome of the contest. For instance, personnel ballots can use voting rules that deliver an absolute majority winner, such as ranked preference voting or run-off elections. For party referendums, party rules may stipulate that a ballot is void unless turnout reaches a certain level.

While the PPDB R1 did not gather this information about party rules, it does shed some light on the frequency of inconclusive results. Of the 36 contests for which vote shares were reported, 22 had two or fewer first-round candidates: by definition, these contests produced absolute majority winners¹¹. Of the 14 contests with more than two candidates, eight produced absolute majority winners with one round of balloting. In the 6 others (one sixth of

the total), different kinds of counting rules might have produced more immediately decisive results.

Attribute 4.4 Federative Counting Rules Counting rules also may promote party unity by requiring winners to receive mandates from multiple party levels. This can be done by using an electoral college that includes constituencies such as geographic regions, or different party faces (e.g., MPs and grassroots members), or even non-party groups. It can also be done with the aforementioned pre-ballot gatekeeping, with a vote of party elites preceding the more inclusive vote. Federative rules encourage contestants to cultivate support across multiple party faces; this should reward consensus-building campaigns and candidates (Hazan & Rahat, 2001). Whatever the potential advantages of such rules, in practice only eight of the PPDB ballots using some type of federative rules.

5. Ratification Stage

Intra-party votes involving real competition necessarily aggravate intra-party divisions. What parties do after the party-wide vote may affect whether these divisions heal or fester.

Attribute 5.1 Ratification Requirement Some parties treat party-wide ballots as advisory, requiring them to be subsequently ratified by a party convention or other party assembly. As with the federative voting rules and elite gatekeeping devices, a winner's mandate may be strengthened if an additional party level must ratify the results of the party-wide ballot. Such procedures also allow the party to symbolically coalesce behind the chosen leader, capping a contested campaign with a party-wide endorsement. Even when parties do not require a

ratification vote, they may still employ a party conference to endorse the results. For example, after its uncontested primary election in 2007 the French UMP held an “investiture” convention to officially nominate Nicholas Sarkozy as its presidential candidate. The French Socialists held a similar event in 2011, after the party selected its presidential candidate in a bitterly divided primary. This nominating rally featured brief appearances by all the defeated candidates, and a longer speech by the contest winner. Such procedures, even if ritualistic, may help a party de-emphasize policy differences and personal antipathies that surface during the internal contest.

One measure of such rules is whether party statutes require the party conference to ratify the results of party-wide ballots. The PPDB R1 did not ask this specific question (the information will be available from the Round 2 coding), but based on the Round 1 descriptions it is clear that at least one party had this requirement (the Spanish Socialist Party).

IV. Taking Account of Intra-Party Ballot Rules: An Example

This article has argued that the political effects of intra-party ballots may depend at least as much on *how* they are conducted as on *whether* an intra-party ballot is used. Efforts to study ballot impacts should thus take account of parties’ differing ballot procedures. Whereas much previous discussion of party decision-making focusses exclusively on one rule attribute -- the inclusiveness of the selectorate – other rule variations may be equally consequential. Moreover, different combinations of rules may interact to amplify or offset such effects. For instance, the decisiveness of a party’s electoral rules probably does not matter if pre-ballot

gatekeeping winnows the field to two leadership candidates. Similarly, the consequences of an intra-party ballot being “closed” or “open” may depend on how easy it is to join the party, and on whether the probationary period for new members is longer or shorter than the official campaign.

Because such rules can affect candidates’ incentives and ballots’ outcomes, this paper has argued in favor of studying intra-party ballots as procedures conducted under multiple, variable, rules, rather than as a single phenomenon. To demonstrate the feasibility of this approach it has proposed a set of measures for studying rule attributes that are posited to affect party unity. These are summarized in the Table 1. The expectation is that ballots conducted under procedures with multiple discord-promoting attributes are most likely to erode party unity at both the elite and grassroots levels. For instance, party unity may be most at risk in a party which has low barriers to candidate entry, which has a very inclusive selectorate, and which encourages candidates to conduct high-spending campaigns.

Figure 1 gives a sense of how the PPDB leadership selection ballots differed in their combinations of these supposed risk factors. It presents party unity risk scores calculated with simple binary coding of the 10 measures summarized in Table 1 (see Table 2 for coding details). Parties score lower if they used the rules seen as more likely to defuse strains on party loyalty, and higher if they used rules that potentially escalated these strains. This figure shows most parties favoring the lower-risk rules, but it also shows significant variation. Even with missing data coded as zero, and thus skewing the scores towards the lower end, almost 40% (16) of the parties made 5 or more of the “riskier” rule choices.

This scale provides an example of how measures could be combined to study the impact of sets of rules for intra-party ballots. The appropriate components and weighting of any specific scale would vary based on which particular hypotheses a researcher wants to test, and on the posited interactions. However, this example underscores the message that variation in party ballot rules is real, and is measurable. Research can and should take account of differences in the conduct of intraparty ballots in order to more clearly determine the extent of their political consequences.

V. Intra-Party Ballots and Representation by Parties: Details with Consequences

This paper has focused on the connection between leadership selection ballots and party unity, but its argument is a more general one. If parties' ballot procedures matter because they change incentives for party elites, their effects should show up in multiple arenas, whether for leadership selection, candidate selection, or for resolving party policy debates. Thus, taking account of ballot rules could help in diagnosing the ballots' impact on participants' attitudes (Wuttke, Jungherr, & Schoen, 2019; Webb, Scarrow & Poguntke, 2019), on voters' perceptions of the parties that use them (Greene & Haber, 2015; Shomer, Put & Gedalya-Lavy, 2016; So, 2020), or on the types of candidates that get selected (Pruysers, Cross, Gauja & Rahat, 2017). They also might resolve whether or to what extent procedural decisions inevitably involve tradeoffs between protecting a party's cohesiveness and growing its electoral base (Wolkenstein, 2019). Some rule differences are distinctive to different genres of decisions, and studies would need to be tailored accordingly. For instance, while this article has focused on studying the impact of ballots for leadership selection, when

studying intra-party policy ballots, it might be important to ask about who has standing for calling these, and what the participation quorum is. But the overall message is the same: ballot rules matter, and they differ. As a result, it makes no sense to study intra-party ballots as if they are all the same kind of event.

Another reason to pay attention to ballot rules is because parties themselves continually revisit them. Even in highly regulated democracies, parties control many of the specific rules affecting their internal decisions, and most of these rules are easily changed. Thus, even within a single party the consequences of holding a ballot may vary as the party's rules evolve. Of course, the procedural choices for any specific decision may be shaped by the very conflicts they are supposed to arbitrate. Such endogeneity undoubtedly complicates efforts to disentangle the impact of various rule combinations. Yet just as debates about electoral systems and party systems have benefitted from recognizing the endogeneity of rule choices (cf. Benoit, 2007; Birch, 2011), studies of party ballots are likely to benefit from viewing the rules governing these ballots as both arbiters and results of intra-party struggles.

In sum, the next generation of research on intra-party ballots and intra-party democracy should accept the challenge of studying party votes in their full procedural diversity. Past and ongoing data collection demonstrates the feasibility of more nuanced analysis, and offers several possible measures for implementing such a research strategy. Whatever measures are used, taking a more differentiated approach to intra-party ballots should yield more consistent, and more useful, answers to questions about the political impact of these increasingly common decision methods.

Table 1
Measuring Rule Attributes for Leadership Selection Ballots: Examples from the PPDB Round 1

Stage/Rule Attribute	Sample Measures	Cases with		Source: PPDB R1
		Yes	known info.	Variable or other
<u>1. Preparation</u>				
1.1 Rule stability	Was a member ballot used for previous leadership change?	29	37	News accounts
	Did procedure follow existing statutory rules?	39	42	C24PLRULE
<u>2. Nomination</u>				
2.1 Eligibility Strictness	Did candidates need endorsements from the party's elected officials (e.g. MPs)?	7	42	C31PLNOM1
	Did candidates need endorsements from party members?	23	42	C32PLNOM2
	Did candidates need to pay a monetary fee or deposit to the party?	8	42	C33PLNOM3
2.2 Elite Gatekeeping	Must gatekeepers approve otherwise eligible candidates (MPs, National Executive, Party Conference, etc.)?	4	40	C28PLNATTXT
<u>3. Campaign</u>				
3.1 Contest Length	Days between official announcement and start of voting	?	0	Not available
	Reason ballot was held: pre-scheduled?	13	42	C37PLWHY
3.2 Candidate Spending Level	Amount spent by winning candidate per total votes cast	?	0	Not available
<u>4. Voting (Most Inclusive Stage)</u>				
4.1 Inclusiveness	Eligibility for Members + non-member supporters?	4	38	C48PLVT9
4.2 Accessibility	Minimum time for new member/supporter to become voting-eligible:			
	--Registration cutoff: same day?	2	30	C49PLVT10
	--Registration cutoff: 3 months or more?	19	30	C49PLVT10
	--Registration cutoff: after start of official campaign?	?	0	Not available
	Can members join on party web-site in one step?	17	42	A98WEBMBR1
4.3 Decisive Counting Rules	Counting rules ensure majority winner? (Preference voting = 6 cases; run-off = 4 cases; maximum of 2 candidates admitted to party-wide ballot = 3 cases)	13*	42*	C25PLMBRTXT C28PLNATTXT
4.4 Federative Counting Rules	Nominating and/or vote counting rules require winner to secure significant support at multiple party levels (Elite gatekeeping = 4 cases; electoral college = 4 cases)	8*	42*	C25PLMBRTXT C27PLREGTXT C28PLNATTXT C30PLAFFLTXT C31PLNOM1
<u>5. Ratification</u>				
5.1 Ratification vote	Party conference must ratify results of party-wide vote?	1*	42*	C28PLNATTXT

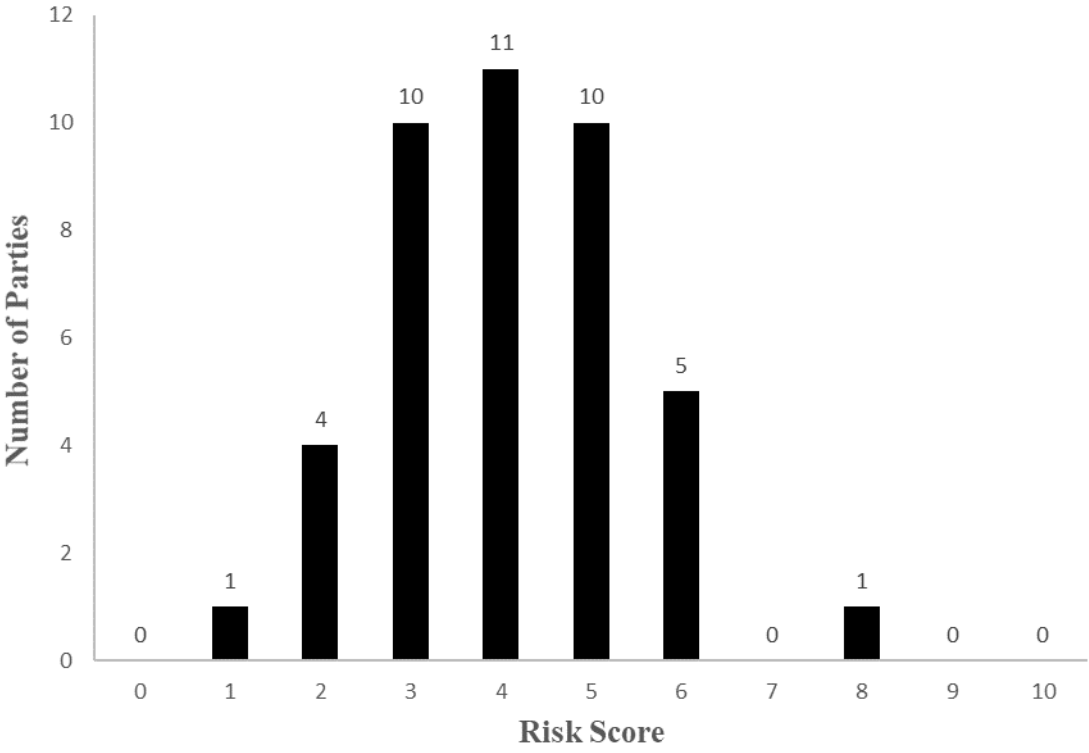
* Values represent minimum number of occurrences. Maximum N = 42. Information is missing in PPDB for some cases.

Table 2
Ballot Rule Attributes as Party Unity Risk Factors: A Sample Index

	Values more detrimental to party unity	Measures	Coding
1.1 Rule stability	Low	Was a member ballot used for previous leadership change?	No = 1; else 0
		Did procedure follow existing statutory rules?	No = 1; else 0
2.1 Eligibility Strictness	Very low or very high	Did candidates need endorsements from elected officials and/or party members?	Both or neither = 1; else 0
	High	Did candidates need to pay a monetary fee or deposit?	Yes = 1; else 0
2.2 Elite Gatekeeping	Low	Must gatekeepers approve otherwise eligible candidates?	Yes = 1; else 0
3.1 Contest Length	High	Days between official announcement and start of voting?	Not available
3.2 Candidate Spending	High	Amount spent by winning candidate per total votes cast?	Not available
4.1 Inclusiveness	High	Eligibility for Members + non-member supporters?	Yes = 1; else 0
4.2 Accessibility	High	Registration cut-off 4 weeks or less?	Yes = 1; else 0
	High	Can join on party web-site in one step?	Yes = 1; else 0
4.3 Decisive Counting Rules	Low	Counting rules ensure majority winner?	Yes = 0; else 1
4.4 Federative Counting Rules	Low	Winner must secure support at multiple party levels?	Yes = 0; else 1
5.1 Ratification vote	Low	Party conference must ratify party-wide ballot vote?	Not available

Values for Figure 1 coded from PPDB Round1a&b using variables described in Table 1.

Figure 1
Party Unity Risk Factors in Intra-Party Ballots



Source: see Table 2

Appendix Table 1
Leadership Selection Events with Membership Ballots Provisions*
PPDB Round 1

Country	Party	Year	Leadership Position: Party Title
Australia	Labor Party	2013	Leader
Belgium	Christian-Democrat and Flemish	2013	General President
Belgium	Democrat Humanist Centre	2011	President
Belgium	Ecolo	2012	Co-President
Belgium	Federalists, Democrats, Francophone	2009	President
Belgium	Flemish Interest	2012	President
Belgium	Green	2010	National President
Belgium	Libertarian, Direct, Democratic	2010	President
Belgium	New Flemish Alliance	2011	General President
Belgium	Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats	2012	President
Belgium	Reform Movement	2011	President
Belgium	Socialist Party	2011	President
Belgium	Socialist Party Alternative	2011	President
Canada	Bloc Québécois	2011	Leader
Canada	Conservative Party	2011	Leader
Canada	Green Party	2010	Leader
Canada	Liberal Party	2013	Leader
Canada	New Democratic Party	2012	Leader
Denmark	Socialist People's Party	2014	Chair
Ireland	Labour Party	2014	Leader
Israel	Kadima	2012	Chair
Israel	Labor Party	2013	Chair
Israel	Likud	2012	Chair
Israel	National Religious Party	2012	Chair
Japan	Liberal Democratic Party	2012	President
Japan	Democratic Party	2012	President
Netherlands	Christian Democratic Appeal	2012	Fraktions leader
Netherlands	Democrats 66	2012	Leader
Netherlands	GreenLeft	2010	Leader
Netherlands	Labour Party	2012	Leader
Netherlands	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	2010	Leader
Portugal	People's Party	2011	President
Portugal	Social Democratic Party	2010	President, Natl. Political Committee
Portugal	Socialist Party	2011	Secretary-General
Spain	Socialist Party	2013	Secretary-General
United Kingdom	Conservative Party	2005	Leader
United Kingdom	Green Party	2012	Leader
United Kingdom	Labour Party	2010	Leader
United Kingdom	Liberal Democrats	2007	Leader

United Kingdom	Plaid Cymru	2012	Leader, Party's Group in National Assembly
United Kingdom	Scottish National Party	2014	Leader
United Kingdom	UK Independence Party	2010	Leader

*Includes contests where ballots were provided for but not used due to having only one candidate

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¹ For a more detailed discussion of the differences between party cohesion, party discipline and party unity see van Vonno et al. (2014). This article follows their logic in using the term “party cohesion” to refer to voluntary aspects that unite a party, and “party discipline” to refer to more coercive mechanisms.

² The other criteria were: “1. aid in preserving the two-party system; 2. help secure vigorous competition between the parties; 4. produce candidates who have some likelihood of winning voter support; 5. lead to the choice of good men; 6. result in the acceptance of candidates as legitimate” (p. 308).

³ Thanks to William P. Cross for the latter example.

⁴ One that did not was a new party, which was holding its first formal leadership selection.

⁵ In the 2017 Canadian Conservative Party competition, would-be candidates were required to pay a \$100,000 deposit, half of which was refunded if the candidate complied with party rules during the contest.

⁶ For selecting legislative candidates, a vetting board appointed by the national party can play a similar role of limiting choices at the most inclusive party voting stage.

⁷ These are sometimes dubbed “coronation” ballots (Kenig, O., 2009; Cross, W.P. & Blais, A., 2012). Given the lack of competition, they seem unlikely to heighten discord, but there could be some counter-campaigning (or organized abstention) if rules require winners to secure the votes of a minimal percentage of members (Aylott, N. & Bolin, N., 2017).

⁸ The PPDB Round 2 questionnaire does ask about gatekeeping for both candidate and leadership selection, so future PPDB data will include such information. See the PPDB Round 2 codebook at www.politicalpartydb.org for more details.

⁹ For logistical reasons, parties must stop registration prior to the polling date unless members/supporters cast ballots in person, for instance at local polling stations or national party meetings.

¹⁰ Non-eligible members could vote if they also signed up as registered supporters.

¹¹ Vote share of top candidate in first round comes from PPDB variable C54PLVOT1A. Number of candidates comes from variable C53PLCAN1.