

Personalization of Representation:  
A New Relationship between  
Legislators and Political Parties?



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Personalization of Representation:  
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Marie Kaldahl Nielsen  
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# Preface

This report summarizes my PhD dissertation ‘Personalization of Representation: A New Relationship between Legislators and Political Parties?’ written at the Department of Political Science, Aarhus University, Denmark. The dissertation consists of this summary report and four articles that are published or prepared for publication in international peer-reviewed journals. The purpose of the summary report is to motivate and present the theoretical framework that ties the articles together, provide an overview of the research designs and main results, discuss the implications and limitations of the findings and suggest future research avenues for studies conducted within the personalization literature. This also implies a broader discussion that goes beyond the individual articles. Detailed discussions of theoretical arguments, methods and measurements can be found in the articles. The following articles are included in the dissertation:

- A. Nielsen, M. K., Andersen, A. M., & Pedersen, H. H. (2019). Balancing Costs of Legislative Party Switching in the Danish Parliament 1953-2015. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 72(1), 42-58.
- B. Nielsen, M. K. (2020). Tracking Personalized Representation in Parliament: Investigating Personalization in British Maiden Speeches from 1945 to 2015. *Under review*.
- C. Binderkrantz, A. S., Nielsen, M. K., Pedersen, H. H., & Tromborg, M. W. (2020). Pre-parliamentary party career and political representation. *West European Politics*, 43(6), 1315-1338.
- D. Bøggild, T., Campbell, R., Nielsen, M. K., Pedersen, H. H., & vanHeerde-Hudson, J. A. (2019). Which personality fits personalized representation? *Party Politics*. DOI: 10.1177/1354068819855703



# Chapter 1.

## Introduction

Political parties are the foundation of a functioning democracy. They organize decision-making, aggregate interests and structure politicians' careers. As Schattschneider puts it in his famous quote: 'modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties' (1942: 1). He saw political parties as the umbilical cord that links citizens to their government, but in recent years, scholars have pointed to a crisis for party democracy because of different societal trends. Parties have lost their ties to voters and their membership base (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000a; Van Biezen et al., 2012). Voters no longer vote solely based on their class or party identification, but switch more between parties from one election to the next (Drummond, 2006; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000a; Dassonville, 2018). Politics are no longer portrayed through a partisan lens, as the mass media have taken over the role as voters' main source of political information (Mancini & Swanson, 1996: 12; Blumler and Kavanagh 1999: 211; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000b). Cultural modernization has changed citizens' values, priorities and interests from group-related survival values as the basis for social and political life to individual self-expression values. More and more people in Western countries therefore look at the world around them from the perspective of individuals rather than collectives (Inglehart, 1997; Putnam, 2000). From these empirical observations, several scholars have claimed that politics have become personalized (e.g. McAllister, 2007; Rahat & Kenig, 2018, Cross et al. 2018)). A development that entails that individual politicians carry more weight in the political process at the expense of collectives such as political parties (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007: 65).

Personalization of politics attracts attention because it may harm democracy if this development enhances trends of populism by putting more emphasis on personal charisma rather than the impersonal rule of law (e.g. Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000b; Pedersen & Rahat, 2019; Poguntke & Webb, 2018). Personalization can also lead to less predictable and stable policymaking if legislators act more as individual trustees instead of party agents or to a more trivial political debate if details from politicians' private lives take up room in media coverage of politics or in political communication in general (Van Aelst et al., 2012). On the other hand, personalization could strengthen the ties between voters and their representative agents, especially in times when representative democracy is under pressure (Adam & Maier, 2010; Van Aelst et al., 2012; Kruikemeier et al., 2013). In both cases, personalization is perceived to

be consequential for democracy in general and for party democracy in particular (Cross et al., 2018, Rahat & Kenig, 2018, Pedersen & Rahat, 2019).

The personalization hypothesis has been investigated in different arenas such as in media coverage (e.g. Langer, 2010; Kriš, 2012), in reforms of the election system (Renwick & Pilet, 2016) and in voters' behavior (Karvonen, 2010; Wauters et al., 2018; Bittner, 2018). However, what may especially challenge party democracy is if legislators personalize their parliamentary behavior. This area of personalization has only been studied to a limited extent (e.g. Louwerse & Otjes, 2016; Papp, 2018; Chiru, 2018), and only few studies apply a longitudinal design, which is a prerequisite for capturing developments over time such as personalization (Rahat & Sheaffer 2007; Wauters et al., 2019; Balmás et al., 2014; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Soroka et al., 2015). I apply the notion of personalization of representation from Pedersen and Rahat (2019) to investigate whether there is a trend towards personalization of representation and which factors can explain personalized representation across time, politicians and political institutions. I focus on the following research question:

*How do societal developments, legislator characteristics and the political institutions influence the relationship between legislator and party?*

My theoretical point of departure is that personalized representation depends on the incentives and opportunities legislators face. I propose that this cost-benefit calculation is affected by societal developments, legislators' personal electoral situation and capacities, intra-party control and the electoral institutions. Hereby, this dissertation adds broadly to our understanding of personalized representation by building a theoretical framework for understanding why and when we should expect legislators to personalize their representation. The main claim advanced in the dissertation is that personalized representation is a representational strategy for legislators to highlight *different* personal aspects *more* than their party. Hereby, following through on the notion that personalized representation is contrasted to party representation in the literature (Rahat & Kenig 2018). I take the position that personalized representation is all representation away from the party. I therefore include the well-established aspect of individualization and suggest another non-partisan aspect of representation: localization, to form a more comprehensive concept of personalization allowing us to grasp all aspects of non-party representation. Individualization entails that legislators highlight their own personal qualities or private life more than the party, and localization entails that legislators highlight their personal ties to the constituency more than their ties to the party.

The dissertation examines the research question in Denmark and the United Kingdom by studying legislative party switching, parliamentary speech, individual position taking and perceptions of representation. As claims of personalization trends have not always been accompanied by empirical evidence and research on personalization of parliamentary behavior is scarce, this dissertation makes an important contribution by collecting original data across time to build valuable data sets for investigating personalization of representation and by conducting two extensive longitudinal studies of personalized parliamentary behavior. Furthermore, the dissertation proposes and tests two new explanations of personalized representation regarding legislators' individual characteristics: pre-parliamentary party career and personality traits.

Contrary to the main claim in the literature, this summary report demonstrates that there is no clear-cut trend over time towards personalization of representation. Rather, my results show that changes in politics have led to changes in representation: more party switching, more localized focus, but not a general trend of personalization in the sense that politicians act as independent representatives in parliament or emphasize themselves more than their party in parliamentary speeches. Personalization is not simply an automatic process driven by gradual societal development that eventually will happen everywhere. Instead, personalized representation is explained by situational variation, and legislators' representational style is to a large degree a product of both their own electoral situation and characteristics and of the institutional setting in which they operate. An important implication of my findings is therefore that electoral and intra-party reforms might weaken these institutional constraints, which could lead to more personalized representation in the future.

My conceptual work and empirical findings regarding different aspects of personalization are important contributions to the discussion of potential democratic implications of personalized representation. Van Aelst et al. (2012) noted that individualization has different implications than privatization. I add that localization has different implications than individualization. Thus, it seems that personalized representation in the form of localization can lead to more district-level representation and hereby strengthen legislators' ties to their district voters. Furthermore, my main finding that personalized representation is rather explained by legislators' individual characteristics and the political institutions than simply an automatic process driven by gradual societal development implies that there are strong institutions that hold legislators' opportunities and incentives to personalize their representation in check. Hence, party democracy still seems to be intact – at least when it comes to 'the party in public office' (Katz & Mair, 1993).

In the next chapter, I review and systemize existing literature on political personalization to lay the ground for developing the conceptual and theoretical framework for the dissertation. In Chapter 3, I clarify my understanding of personalized representation, present my conceptual contributions and present a theoretical model explaining variation in personalized representation across time, political systems, parties and politicians. Chapter 4 discusses the operationalization of indicators of personalized representation and explanatory factors used in the four articles of this dissertation. Furthermore, I discuss some general methodological challenges related to studying personalization, and how I have addressed them in this project. Chapter 5 presents the main findings of my work, and Chapter 6 discusses the contributions and implications of the findings.



## Chapter 2.

# State-of-the-art: situating the project in a blooming research agenda

This chapter provides an overview of the current state of the political personalization literature to lay the ground for developing the conceptual and theoretical framework for the dissertation in chapter 3. The literature is only a few decades old, but it has expanded quickly and come a long way in a short period. However, as this systematic literature review will show, there are still important dimensions of personalization that need more scrutiny. I will therefore conduct a review on each dimension of the broad phenomenon ‘political personalization’, I will show how many have studied the different types of personalization, what kind of studies they conduct, and what the general tendency is in studies of political personalization. I will structure the review according to three conceptual distinctions that the literature has highlighted over the years. I will present the distinctions before I conduct the actual review. Furthermore, I will use the review to argue for the focus of this dissertation, namely that there is a need for further attention to personalization of politicians’ behavior, a crucial dimension of personalization that has attracted relatively limited attention.

### Three conceptual distinctions

Early work on personalization discusses the phenomenon in general terms, although different authors focus on different aspects. For example, in his seminal book, ‘The rise of candidate-centered politics’ (1991), Wattenberg investigates how political parties’ declining relevance has affected presidential politics to the point where individual candidates have to fill the power vacuum. Many scholars refer to Wattenberg’s book as a starting point for the personalization literature, even though Wattenberg did not use the term personalization. Many subsequent studies in the first wave aimed to either confirm or reject the personalization hypothesis but reached different and conflicting conclusions, sometimes even when studying the same countries and periods. For instance, Reinemann and Wilke (2007) described the election coverage of 1990 as one of the most personalized in the history of post-war Germany, whereas Kaase concluded that personalization was not a widespread phenomenon in the German media in 1990 (1994: 220). Wattenberg (1991) found increased personalization in press coverage in US presidential campaigns in the

1980s, but Sigelman and Bullock (1991) did not. The reason for these contrasting findings could be that Wattenberg focused on individualization, i.e., the relative mentioning of candidates versus party, and Sigelman and Bullock examined the number of references to candidate traits and thus investigated another aspect of media personalization: privatization. In other words, they were not using the same conceptualization. Contradictory findings like these led scholars to the conclusion that the literature lacked a common conceptualization of personalization, and the growing literature has approached the problem with a general aim to define the concept clearer (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007; Karvonen, 2010; Adam & Maier, 2010: 226; van Holsteyn & Andeweg, 2010: 628-629; Van Aelst et al., 2012; Balmas et al., 2014; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Pedersen & Rahat, 2019).

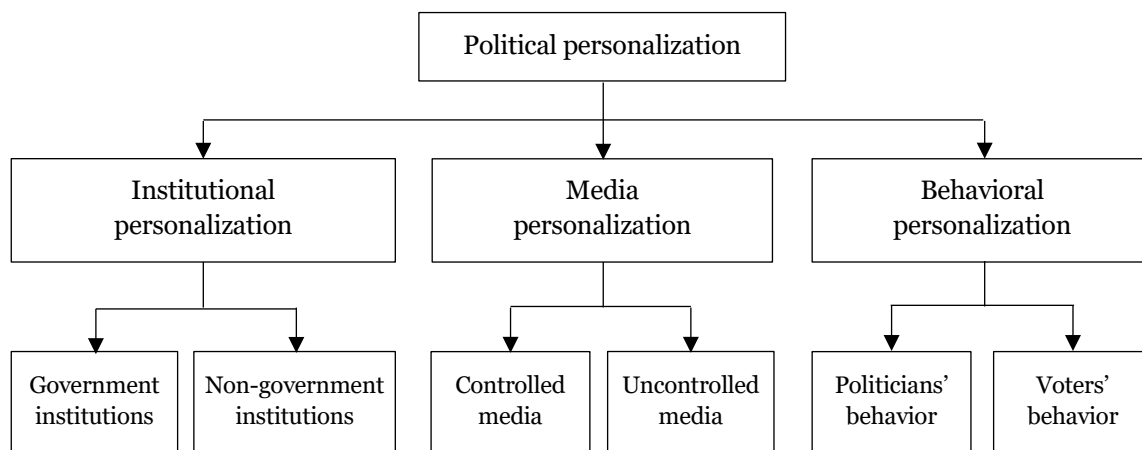
First, scholars have clarified the difference between investigating personalization and personalized politics. Most studies under the label of political personalization use the formal definition from Rahat and Sheafer: ‘a process in which the political weight of the individual actor in the political process increases over time, while the centrality of the political group (i.e. the political party) declines’ (2007: 65). However, many studies ignore the ‘process’ in the formal definition (Rahat & Kenig, 2018: 124-125) and mainly examine the phenomenon at one point in time instead of its development over time. Recently, scholars have clarified the distinction between personalization and personalized politics (Rahat & Kenig, 2018: 124-125; Pruysers et al., 2018: 5; Pedersen & Rahat, 2019). The former studies a change or a process, and the other a specific point in time, i.e., a situation where political individuals are more important relative to political groups (Pedersen & Rahat, 2019: 3). Even though they differ in terms of research design, studies of personalized politics can help us study personalization. Comparing levels of personalized politics across different types of media or electoral systems will provide valuable insights for understanding under which conditions individuals are prominent in the political process (Pedersen & Rahat, 2019: 3). The two paths of research can enrich each other, but for empirical reasons, it is important to keep the two concepts separate. Therefore, I will also include this distinction between personalization and personalized politics in the literature review.

Second, scholars have made it evident that political personalization must be studied as a multidimensional phenomenon by dividing it into different types (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007). Rahat and Sheafer (2007) were the first to set up a formal typology and suggest three types of personalization: institutional personalization, media personalization and behavioral personalization. It was used by Karvonen (2010) in his highly influential study and is now widespread in the literature. Over time, different subtypes have been added to the typology

(Rahat & Kenig, 2018: 118), and when we compare findings, it is important to consider which type and even subtypes of personalization we are studying.

The typology is depicted in Figure 1, which shows that political personalization is a broad phenomenon that consists of three types: institutional personalization, media personalization and behavioral personalization. Institutional personalization implies ‘the adoption of rules, mechanisms and institutions that put more emphasis on the individual politician and less on political groups and parties’ (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007: 207). Media personalization entails that the coverage and presentation of politics focus more on individuals. For behavioral personalization, it is the political behavior and the perception of politics that have become more individualized. Each type can be divided into two subtypes, which for institutional personalization is government and non-government institutions, referring to the kind of institutions where personalization takes place. Media personalization can be divided into controlled and uncontrolled media, i.e., whether politicians have control over the content, e.g., political advertisement or content on social media platforms, compared to media coverage in, e.g., newspapers. Behavioral personalization applies to either politicians’ or voters’ behavior. I will use this typology with the different types and subtypes of personalization to structure the literature review of the broad phenomenon of political personalization.

Figure 1. Political personalization: types and subtypes



Source: Based on Rahat & Kenig (2018: 118).

Finally, the third conceptual distinction is between *centralized* and *decentralized* personalization. In studies of political personalization – in institutional reforms, media coverage and behavior – it is important to distinguish between which actors one focuses on, i.e., whether the shift in political weight to individuals covers all politicians or only political leaders. This is an important dis-

tion because we have to be clear about what we are comparing. For example, many earlier studies focused on political leaders and not on politicians in general, but it was not made explicit when other scholars compared different findings (Van Aelst et al., 2012; 209; Balmas et al., 2014: 38). As a response, Balmas et al. (2014) suggested that personalization can take different routes and introduced the distinction<sup>1</sup> between centralized and decentralized personalization. They define centralized personalization as power flowing upwards from the group (e.g., political party or cabinet) to a single leader (e.g., party leader, prime minister) (Balmas et al., 2014: 37). In other words, centralized personalization is a process in which a single individual becomes increasingly prominent while her ‘team’s’ prominence declines (e.g., party leader vis-à-vis party). Whereas decentralized personalization is defined ‘as a process where individuals – e.g. candidates or members of parliament – who are not party or executive leaders, increasingly engage in individual activities and step back from involvement as team players in their group (political party, cabinet)’ (ibid.: 40). In other words, decentralized personalization is a process in which several individuals are becoming more prominent, but their “team” is waning. I will also include this distinction between centralized and decentralized personalization in the literature review.

To sum up, I will use these three important conceptual distinctions in the literature review. First, I will use the different types and subtypes of personalization of politics to structure the review. Second, I will discuss the studies labeled under each subtype based on whether they investigate 1) personalization or personalized politics and 2) centralized or decentralized personalization. The goal of the literature review is twofold. First, to provide a missing overview of the current state of the personalization literature. Existing reviews of this literature (e.g. Karvonen, 2010, Adam & Maier, 2010; Balmas et al., 2014) do not include all three conceptual distinctions. Second, I will use the review to argue for the focus of this dissertation by showing that there is a gap in the literature regarding personalization of politicians’ behavior. The majority of studies focus on individualized campaign behavior in single elections using self-reported measures. There are only few longitudinal studies of this subtype of personalization and only few studies of behavior inside parliament. This area is highly important since personalized political behavior among in-

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<sup>1</sup> Van Aelst et al. (2012) include the same distinction in their conceptualization of media personalization in news coverage, but they call it ‘concentrated visibility’ and ‘general visibility’. Kriesi (2012) uses the term ‘concentration of personalization’ in his study of media coverage.

dividual politicians may cause decreasing party discipline, uncertainty regarding party positions and difficulties establishing and maintaining legislative majorities needed for effective governance.

## Literature review of political personalization

The literature review was conducted by searching for ‘personalization of politics’ and ‘personalized AND politics’ in the title, abstract and keywords in two databases: Scopus and Web of Science. The search only included English references and was limited to ‘Social Science’ (Scopus) and ‘Political Science’ and ‘Communication’ (Web of Science). This is still a quite broad search, and including both the American and British spelling of personalization and the term personalized politics opens up for other literatures using these labels as well. For example, using the British spelling *personalised* includes other strains of literatures such as *personalised politics* in regard to clientelism and patrimonial leaders in autocratic regimes. However, this allowed me to identify important articles that were not included if I limited the search terms. As a second step to make sure that all relevant articles and book chapters are included, I identified six key conceptual or empirical articles<sup>2</sup> and included all references citing them. Lastly, I included all citations from the most recently published conceptual contribution.<sup>3</sup> This three-step process gives me confidence that most, if not all relevant articles are included to conduct a comprehensive literature review. Afterwards, I removed all duplicates and non-relevant references belonging to other strains of literature. I only include references with an empirical contribution because I am mainly interested in showing the types of empirical studies that have been conducted. This left me with 160 references in total, which I reviewed systematically and labeled using the three conceptual criteria presented above. I will elaborate on the literature of different types and subtypes of personalization before I sum up the general trends in the conclusion. Table 1 provides an overview based on the three conceptual distinctions I used to structure the review. I ended up reviewing 160 references, but since some studies investigate more than one type of political personalization, the sum in the table does not add up to the total number of references I included in my review. A similar table in the appendix includes all references to maximize transparency.

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<sup>2</sup> Rahat & Sheafer, 2007; Balmas et al., 2014; Kriesi, 2012; Van Aelst et al., 2012; Adam & Maier, 2010; Rahat & Kenig, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Pedersen & Rahat, 2019.

Table 1. Overview of the literature investigating the different types and subtypes of political personalization

|               |                       | Institutional (40)                           |                          | Media (80)                        |                     | Behavior (72)           |                            |
|---------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
|               |                       | Government (15)                              | Non-government (25)      | Controlled (44)                   | Uncontrolled (36)   | Voters (41)             | Politicians (32)           |
| Centralized   | Personalization       | Expansion of the prime minister's power (10) | Leadership selection (6) | Party advertisements (1)          | Media coverage (22) | Leader effects (15)     | Parliamentary behavior (2) |
|               |                       |  | Presidentialization (9)  |                                   |                     | Preferential voting (3) |                            |
|               | Personalized politics | The prime minister's power (2)               | Leadership selection (3) | Personalized behavior online (14) | Media coverage (4)  | Leader effects (9)      |                            |
|               |                       |  | Presidentialization (3)  | Party advertisement (5)           |                     | Comparative studies (7) |                            |
| Decentralized | Personalization       | Electoral reforms (3)                        | Candidate selection (4)  | Party advertisement (4)           | Media coverage (6)  | Preferential voting (4) | Campaign behavior (5)      |
|               |                       |  |                          |                                   |                     |                         | Parliamentary behavior (5) |
|               | Personalized politics |  |                          | Personalized behavior online (20) | Media coverage (4)  | Preferential voting (3) | Campaign behavior (17)     |
|               |                       |  |                          |                                   |                     |                         | Parliamentary behavior (3) |

## Institutional personalization

Institutional personalization entails ‘the adoption of rules, mechanisms and institutions that put more emphasis on the individual politician and less on political groups and parties’ (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007: 207). It may be expressed in a change that enhances the power of the person who heads the institution (the prime minister, the party leader etc.) vis-à-vis the power of the institution itself or the political groupings (the cabinet or party institutions). Rahat and Kenig divide this type of personalization into two subtypes: government institutions and non-government institutions (2018: 119). Institutional reforms adopted in the various institutions of government, such as the electoral systems or the executive branch of power, are part of the first subtype. Reforms of candidate-selection methods, such as implementing party primaries or giving the party leader more power over candidate selection, are examples of the second subtype. This division may seem clear, but a range of studies fall between the two subdimensions, namely studies of the concept of presidentialization of politics (first introduced by Poguntke & Webb, 2005), which scholars have argued overlaps with personalization (Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Poguntke & Webb, 2018). As far as presidentialization of politics, Poguntke and Webb distinguish between three faces: 1) the executive face, 2) the party face and 3) the electoral face (2005: 5). The first relates to increasing leadership power and autonomy within the political executive and is therefore part of changes in the government institutions. The second face relates to increasing leadership power and autonomy in political parties and clearly belongs under non-government institutions. The third face concerns the fact that election campaigns increasingly center around political leaders. It could thus be considered part of government institutions if it is caused by electoral reforms, or it could relate to controlled media personalization if the argument is that parties emphasize their party leader more than the party in their election campaigns (Rahat & Kenig, 2018: 145). I will label the different studies according to which face they focus on and make it clear when there are studies that could fall into more than one category.

## Government institutions

Studies focusing on this subtype of institutional personalization can be divided into 1) studies that per definition investigate centralized personalization using indicators that focus on the power and authority of the executive power, and 2) studies of electoral reforms that grant voters more influence on which candidates are elected (decentralized personalization). However, a common

feature for most studies of institutional personalization is that they focus on change over time (personalization) and do not limit their focus to a single point in time (personalized politics). One reason is probably that the data needed to investigate this type of personalization is more accessible than for example an observation for each legislator covering a long period.

The first strain of studies examine the expansion of the prime minister's power, e.g., the power to appoint or dismiss ministers, call elections or decide the government's or the parliament's agenda. According to Table 1, this is the most frequent type of studies under this subtype. These studies use the label institutional personalization (Allum & Clinto, 2001; Balmas et al., 2014; Karvonen, 2010; Fabbri, 2013; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Selcuk et al., 2019; Diodati et al., 2018; Musella, 2017) or the term presidentialization focusing on the executive face (Poguntke & Webb, 2005; Poguntke & Webb, 2015; Dowding, 2013; Bowles et al., 2007). The most comprehensive account of this indicator is Poguntke and Webb's (2005) edited volume of presidentialization of politics, which includes several country studies. In their comparative summary of the country cases, they note a 'shift in intra-executive power to benefit the leader' in all cases except Israel and the US. Israel is a special case because the country introduced a major constitutional reform – direct election of the prime minister – in 1992 and abolished it again effective 2003. Moreover, for Denmark and Portugal, Poguntke and Webb note that the increase in prime ministerial power started from a low level (2005: 338-340). Overall, the country chapters in Poguntke and Webb's book show a reasonably clear picture of the development of executive power in parliamentary democracies. In eight cases, the position of the prime minister has been strengthened over time; in two other cases, an increase over time cannot be identified, but instead the prime ministers have been strong throughout the period of investigation.

As a follow-up study, Karvonen uses O'Mally's (2007) dataset on prime ministerial power and a reanalysis of the data from Poguntke and Webb (2005) to assess whether the position of the prime minister in parliamentary democracies has been elevated in recent decades (2010: 25). In a comparison of the cases that are included in both sources, Karvonen concludes that there are small differences between the two analyses. However, he seems skeptical about the conclusions in the country chapters from Poguntke and Webb's volume because they were written with an assumed presidentialization of politics in view (2010: 34). O'Mally's dataset was based on a questionnaire to country experts, and the standardization therefore seems much higher. However, Karvonen concludes that 'considerable expertise seems to believe that there has been a growth over time in influence of the prime minister in the institutional setting of parliamentary democracy. Systematic empirical evidence suggests that this has indeed occurred in a large number of countries, but it would be



exaggerated to speak of a pervasive and linear development across the universe of parliamentary democracy' (ibid.: 34-35).

Instead of relying on country experts, Diodati et al. (2018) develop a formal measure of Prime Minister Policy Autonomy (PMPA) based on a textual similarity of prime ministers' and MPs' parliamentary speeches. They employ the measure in a study of Italy and Germany between 1994 and 2014 and find that a coalition's features (i.e., type of governing coalition or its polarization) have a crucial impact on PMPA, whereas political party-related determinants have much less impact, and the leader-related determinant (his/her electorate) has no significant impact on his/her autonomy (Diodati et al., 2018). Thus, they show that PMPA is a complex phenomenon that requires multi-sided approaches and explanations. Furthermore, a few studies discuss the limitations of personalization in terms of institutional personalization. Even though political leaders enjoy personalization in the electoral arena, they face challenges from supranational institutions, their party and the parliamentary majority that limit personalization at the governmental level (Allum & Clinto, 2001; Fabbri, 2013).

## Personalization of electoral reforms

There are only three studies (cf. Table 1) that focus on electoral reforms, but they are all quite comprehensive. Renwick and Pilet (2016) conduct the most comprehensive and systematic analysis of personalization of electoral reforms. In their seminal book, they develop a detailed typology that identifies eight dimensions of electoral personalization and investigate electoral reforms in 32 countries from 1945 (or after their democratization) until 2009. They find that there have been 74 reforms that significantly changed one of the dimensions of electoral personalization. However, reforms were rare before the 1980s, and there is a significant rise in electoral reforms in the 1990s and 2000s, which is not just driven by few cases or only by the new democracies in Europe. Therefore, they conclude that there is a trend towards personalizing electoral reforms since the 1990s. They are able to draw a more firm conclusion because of their comprehensive data and period, whereas Karvonen (2010) draws a more cautious conclusion in his analysis of only the most recent reforms in ten countries. Still, he concludes that these reforms are evidence of 'a development towards a compromise between party and candidate-centeredness. Several party-centered systems have become somewhat more candidate-centered, while some candidate-centered systems have become more party-centered' (Karvonen, 2010: 40). Finally, Rahat and Kenig (2018) update Renwick and Pilet's (2016) analyses for the reforms after 2009 to 2015 and add data for non-European countries based on other studies. In general,

they confirm the trend towards personalization of the electoral systems that Renwick and Pilet (2016) found. Hence, there seems to be quite persuasive evidence of this type of personalization.

## Non-government institutions

This subtype can be divided into two strains of studies with focus on: 1) leadership or candidate selection and 2) the party face of presidentialization without always using the term presidentialization. The majority of studies in the first strain focus on leadership selection (centralized personalization), and only a few focus on selection of individual candidates (decentralized personalization) (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007; Balmas et al., 2014; Sandri et al., 2015; Musella, 2017). For the case of Israel, there is evidence of both kinds of institutional personalization with reforms of both leadership and candidate selection methods and adoption of more inclusive selectorates (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007; Balmas et al., 2014). These changes could be seen as a way to bypass a party-centered electoral system and still making it an intra-party competition between individual politicians (*ibid.*: 41). There are several studies of leadership selection in single countries like Korea (Jhee & Shin, 2018), Australia (Kefford, 2016), Italy (Pasquino, 2016; Fasano & Seddone, 2016), comparative studies using a longitudinal design (Pilet & Cross, 2014; Sandri et al., 2015; Musella, 2017) or focusing on a single point in time to investigate how leadership selection affects the way political leaders influence vote choice (da Silva, 2019). The most comprehensive analysis is the edited volume by Pilet and Cross (2014), in which they investigate changes of leadership selection in 79 parties across 13 countries from 1965 until 2012. Pilet and Cross conclude that there has been ‘a significant though not universal trend towards more inclusive methods and towards more systematic participation of party members (2014: 226).

Stewart (2018) discusses the consequences of introducing reforms of leadership selection such as party primaries for the personalization of politics. He suggests that the move from party conventions to primaries has contributed to increased personalization because, in general, party primaries contribute to personalization ‘by emphasizing individual over group participation, by hollowing out the party and personalizing membership around the winning candidate and by allowing leaders to claim a personal mandate from thousands (sometimes millions) of voters’ (Stewart, 2018: 99). However, Stewart also underlines that the personalization of politics was becoming a more prominent part of conventions. Therefore, it is almost certain that the personalization of parties would have continued to grow even without primaries, and Stewart

therefore concludes that primaries have hastened the process of personalization, but did not create personalization (2018: 99). Likewise, Ware argues that party primaries can be seen as having a catalytic effect in the personalization of American presidential elections by pushing personality politics to the forefront of presidential selections (2015: 43). However, because candidates in most European countries are restricted from buying advertisements on television, 'the full-blown American style of institutional electoral competition is less likely to develop' (ibid.: 55). Nevertheless, he further argues that 'when there are no such restrictions, primaries can act as a catalyst in speeding up the effects of other factors in freeing candidates from some of the ties of the party' (ibid.: 55). Hence, introducing party primaries in leadership races can speed up the process of personalization, but it is clear that contextual factors might limit candidates' ability to use their own resources and hereby limit the consequences party primaries have introduced in the American context.

## The party face of presidentialization

In the other strain of studies, some only focus on the party face of presidentialization (Campus, 2010; Clemens, 2011; Cabada & Tomsic, 2016; Passarelli, 2015), while others discuss presidentialization and touch upon all three faces (Poguntke & Webb, 2005; Bucur & Elgie, 2012, Foley, 2008; Wasbourne, 2013; Hlousek, 2015; Poguntke & Webb, 2015). Poguntke and Webb conclude for the party face that there is a 'clear-cut trend towards the growth of leaders' power within, and autonomy from, their parties' (2005: 343). Here 'power within' means the capacity of party leaders to get the party to do as they want, and 'autonomy from' means that party leaders have the ability to ignore or bypass the party altogether. In their summary of the country studies, the development in terms of the party face is very clear. The country experts believe that leaders of potential government parties have experienced a growth in or kept their high degree of intra-party power and autonomy (ibid.: 343). Hence, it seems that they find compelling evidence of this indicator of institutional personalization. With the aim of developing the original presidential thesis, Gianluca Passarelli's edited book puts party genetics center-stage in explaining the degree of party presidentialization. The book's aim is to understand why party presidentialization varies between countries. Presidentialization of parties here means 'greater autonomy to the leader, with great independence on crucial political topics, namely the electoral campaign, ministerial appointments and public policies', and the book thus overlaps with the subtype government institutions. Passarelli argues that the degree of party presidentialization, which depends on a country's constitutional structure, will also depend on the party's genetics, namely the original organizational characteristics of a

party's construction and development, the presence or absence of an external sponsor at the party's origin, and the role of charisma in the party's formation (2015: 11). The results tend to confirm the initial hypotheses that the presidentialization of political parties is a phenomenon that must inevitably arise in presidential regimes but has also occurred in semi-presidential regimes. Furthermore, the characteristics of political parties' organization function as an intervening variable capable of accentuating the opportunities offered by the institutions from a presidentialization perspective (ibid.: 236). Specifically, Passarelli highlights the direct election of party leaders as the most important party trait determining the level of personalization of parties. A sign not only 'of an attempt to partially overcome the growing lack of democratic legitimacy, but also a deliberate initiative for a greater centralization of power in the hands of the central party office and the party leader' (ibid.: 246). Lastly, Salvati (2016) focuses mainly on the electoral face, and one could therefore argue that it belongs in the controlled media subtype, but because it focuses on the consequences for the party organization, I decided to label it under this subtype. Salvati investigates the personalized leadership style of Matteo Renzi in Italy, which he argues is challenging the Democratic Party's (Partito Democratico, PD) organizational model. He argues that 'a more direct relationship between leader and citizens seems the best way to reduce the distance between people and politics, but this kind of reconciliation can take place only at the expense of political institutions and of intermediate bodies like parties ...' (Salvati, 2016: 17). Hence, also this study points out that increased electoral focus on political leaders has severe consequences for the power relation between leaders and their party.

## Media personalization

Media personalization is defined as 'a process in which the presentation (controlled) and coverage (uncontrolled) of politics focuses less and less on collective entities and more and more on individual politicians' (Rahat & Kenig, 2018: 120). Thus, controlled media is communication that political actors have control over, whereas uncontrolled media is coverage in e.g., newspapers or television. According to Table 1, this is the most studied type of personalization with 81 references in total. I will start by reviewing the first subtype: controlled media.

## Controlled media

Controlled media personalization occurs when messages sent by political actors increasingly originate from and are preoccupied with individuals at the

expense of political groups such as the party (Rahat & *ibid.*: 120). For example, election campaigns where political advertisements highlight the individual politicians, the party leader (centralization) or candidates on the constituency level (decentralized), rather than the party. Rahat and Kenig also include personalization online, e.g., if individual politicians only highlight themselves on their websites or other social media like Facebook or Twitter (*ibid.*: 120). In contrast, Pedersen and Rahat argue that the three types of personalization somehow overlap in terms of empirical indicators and especially in the case of controlled media, which is situated in between the media and the behavioral arena (2019: 4-5). For example, politicians' social media activities per definition belong to the media arena, but one could also argue that politicians' communication is part of their representative behavior, because in modern democracies, contacts between representatives and citizens are commonly established through social media platforms. How politicians behave on these platforms is therefore an important part of their representative behavior, and controlled media should therefore be part of the behavioral arena. Hence, they argue for including social media behavior as an indicator of personalized behavior (*ibid.*). I am inclined to agree, and I will get back to this in the next chapter when I define and conceptualize personalized representation, which is the focus of this dissertation. For this literature review, I will follow the existing typology from the literature.

After reviewing 40 studies labeled under this subtype, the most significant discovery was that only few study change over time, i.e., personalization. These four studies focus on parties' newspaper advertisement (Balmas et al., 2014) and personalization of election posters (Vliegenthart, 2012; Gattermann & Vliegenthart, 2019, Steffan & Venema, 2019). Balmas and colleagues find a clear trend towards centralized personalization where more party advertisements in Israel focus on the party leaders, and the number of party ads are declining (2014: 44). Likewise, the results regarding election posters show a trend towards more visual personalization. Party leaders increasingly feature on election posters in Germany (Steffan & Venema, 2019), The Netherlands (Vliegenthart, 2012) and on Italian and Dutch election posters for the European Parliament (Gattermann & Vliegenthart, 2019).

However, as Table 1 shows, the overwhelming majority of studies of this subtype of personalization investigate personalized behavior online. They are not able to go back in time because social media are a recent invention. Hence, these studies investigate personalized politics. The majority focuses on personalized media online and studies the behavior of leaders (centralized personalization) during election campaigns on Facebook (Bronstein et al., 2018; Ceccobelli, 2017; Rogstad, 2015; Yaniv et al., 2016, except for Metz et al., 2019, who investigate Facebook outside election times), Twitter (López-Meri et al.,

2017) or Instagram (Larsson, 2019; Mohamed, 2019). In addition, a few studies focus on more than one type of social media platform (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Jacobs & Spierings, 2016; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Rahat & Zamir, 2018). Others study the behavior of political leaders on their personal webpage (Kruikemeier et al., 2015) and what parties highlight in press releases (Lengauer & Winder, 2013) or in party advertisements (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2012; Pruysers & Cross, 2016, 2018). The remaining studies focus on decentralization, i.e., the individual politicians, and all except Lengauer and Winder (2013) focus on online behavior: Facebook (Gerber & Scherer, 2015; Brunnerová, 2019), Twitter (Graham et al., 2017; Karlsen & Enjolras, 2016; Meeks, 2016), Youtube (Vásquez-Sande et al., 2017), political blogs (Åstrøm & Karlsson, 2013), MPs' personal websites (Hermans & Vergeer, 2013; Livak et al., 2011; Campbell & Cowley, 2018; Pedersen & vanHeerde-Hudson, 2019) or both Facebook and Twitter (Jacobs & Spierings, 2016; Lawrence et al., 2016).

A striking thing that most of these social media-studies have in common is that they do not follow the requirement of the overall definition and investigate personalization relative to the party. Only a few operationalize personalization as something that happens at the expense of the party (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2012; Lengauer & Winder, 2013; Pruysers & Cross, 2016; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Rahat & Zamir, 2018; Pedersen & vanHeerde-Hudson, 2019). Thus, even though the rest of the studies give an indication of the extent to which personalized politics exists online, we do not know if it has crowded out party communication. In other words, without comparing parties to individual politicians and without measuring the ratio of their prominence, we cannot be sure if politicians are indeed more prominent than political parties. Hence, we cannot talk about personalized politics online (Rahat & Zamir, 2018: 107).

Lastly, another strain of studies focus on the consequences of personalized online behavior and not on detecting the existence of controlled media personalization. They investigate, e.g., voters' reactions to politicians' self-personalization on Twitter (Colliander et al., 2017), or how voters perceive personalized communication such as parental status (Campbell & Cowley, 2018) and personal messages containing details from politicians' private life (Lee et al., 2018), and whether the politician's gender makes a difference. Other studies focus on the connection between personalized communication on Twitter and electoral support (Kruikemeier, 2014; McGregor, 2018; Meeks, 2017), or personalized communication (and interactivity), and citizens' political involvement on MPs' personal webpages (Kruikemeier et al., 2013) and on MPs' tweets (Kruikemeier et al., 2016).

## Uncontrolled media

The other subtype, uncontrolled media personalization, occurs when the coverage of politics concentrates progressively on individual actors and incrementally less on political groupings (Rahat & Kenig, 2018: 120). In other words, the news stories are not about competing parties or ideological markers such as ‘left’ or ‘right’, or ‘red’ or ‘blue’, but about individual politicians. For example, the government is only branded by the name of the prime minister rather than by the party (in Denmark, e.g., the ‘Løkke-government’ or the ‘Thorning-government’). Such coverage is a sign of centralized media personalization, but if the media starts to identify specific issues with specific members of parliament, that could be seen as a form of decentralized media personalization (ibid.: 120). Furthermore, two dimensions of personalization, *individualization* and *privatization*, have been suggested in this area of personalization (Van Aelst et al., 2012). The former entails that the media focus more on individual politicians in their coverage of politics; the latter entails increased media focus on politicians’ private lives.

Table 1 shows that a significant number of studies have investigated personalization of media coverage especially in the printed media. Contrary to studies of controlled media personalization, most of these studies utilize a longitudinal design and investigate personalization focusing on the coverage of political leaders. Either in single case studies focusing on Israel (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007; Balmas et al., 2014), United Kingdom (Langer 2007; Deacon & Harmer, 2019), Germany (Reinemann & Wilke, 2007) and The Netherlands (Takens et al., 2013) or comparing personalization of the news coverage in several countries (Boumans et al., 2013; Kriesi, 2012; Simunjak, 2017; 2018). These studies mainly operationalize personalization as individualization, i.e., how much are the leaders mentioned in the coverage relative to the collective actor. The comparative studies yield rather mixed evidence. Boumans et al. (2013) find that ministers increase their visibility vis-à-vis parties in their study of the UK and the Netherlands from 1992 to 2007, but also find country differences. The increase in the UK is significantly larger for the great offices and the Prime Minister, whereas the largest gains in the Dutch case are reached by other offices and not only concentrated on the Prime Minister. Hanspeter Kriesi (2012) concludes in his study of media coverage of national elections in six Western European countries that there is no general trend towards increasing personalization or concentration of media coverage except for the case of the Netherlands. For the post-communistic countries, Yugoslavia and Croatia, Maja Simunjak (2017; 2018) finds a trend of depersonalization where the media attention in this transitional context has shifted significantly from leaders to parties as collectives. This finding runs counter to the

evidence of personalization in the media coverage found in some established democracies.

More recent studies investigate other actor configurations, e.g., newspaper coverage of individual EU Commissioners or the Commission President relative to the Commission as an institution (Gattermann, 2018), or whether newspaper coverage changes when a government shifts from single-party to multi-party (Langer & Sargarzazu, 2018). Lastly, some studies focus on personalization of foreign news coverage of national leaders (Balmas, 2017, Balmas & Sheafer, 2013; Balmas & Sheafer, 2014), and one study investigates election coverage on television of prime minister candidates in Germany and Denmark (Zeh & Hopmann, 2013).

Another strain of studies focus on the other aspect of media personalization, namely privatization (Langer 2010; Stanyer, 2012; den Harder, 2013; Sörensen, 2016, Trimble et al., 2013, Trimble et al., 2019). These studies show significant variations in media attention to political leaders' private lives and personal qualities. James Stanyer (2013) conducted one of the first, and most comprehensive, comparative studies of the visibility of political leaders' private lives. He concentrated on the number of press references to the leaders' birthdays, spouses and holidays and tracked the number of books published about the leaders' private lives in the 1990s and 2000s. He concluded that there was an increase in media visibility of leaders' private lives in the US, the UK and France, and to some extent in Australia. Similar trends were visible but very weak in Italy and Spain, while there was a decline in such coverage in Germany. Interestingly, a comparative study by den Herder (2013) of how and whether leaders' private lives appear in news media did not find that French politicians' private lives have become significantly more visible in the last few decades. He found that British and Dutch newspapers mentioned their leaders' private lives in around 24 percent more interviews in 2010 than in 1990, while the increase in the French press was only 3 percent. Thus, even though they study the same dimension of personalization, different operationalizations of privatization lead to opposite conclusions for the same country.

Four studies with focus on centralization and a single point in time, i.e., personalized politics, investigate newspaper coverage of a single election campaign (Pruysers & Cross, 2018; Lengauer & Winder, 2013; Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014; Schulze 2016). Holtz-Bacha and colleagues (2014) compare newspaper coverage in Germany and the UK focusing on two dimensions: 1) the relative visibility of individual actors, in particular leaders/top candidates, and 2) emphasis on personal characteristics and private lives. They include photographs to get a broader impression of visibility. It seems that for some studies there is a tradeoff between how many dimensions of personalization you can investigate and how long a period you can cover.



Furthermore, ten studies include individual politicians without leader responsibilities (decentralized politics), investigating newspaper coverage of election campaigns in a single country (Balmas et al., 2014; Takens et al., 2013; Porath et al. 2014; Porath et al., 2015; Lengauer & Winder, 2013) or comparing several countries (Kriesi, 2012). Others focus on the other dimension of privatization, examining the coverage of Dutch male and female politicians in gossip magazines over a twenty-year period (Van Zoonen, 1998), or compare how personalized German and Dutch talk shows are (Van Zoonen & Holtz-Bacha, 2000). Two of these studies investigate the effects of personalized media coverage. Nael Jebril et al.'s (2013) study, which relied on data gathered from a panel survey of respondents from the UK, Spain and Denmark, concluded that exposure to information about politicians' private lives increased cynicism among citizens in the three countries. Their research indicates that it is not personalized media coverage per se, but first and foremost privatized media contents that could harm political trust (Jebril et al., 2013). Similarly, Otto and Maier (2016) analyzed the relationship between exposure to personalized media contents and trust in politicians using an online experiment in Germany and found that only privatized media coverage causes negative effects on trust in politicians. However, the effect is conditional on the recipients' level of general trust. Recipients with low levels of general trust are not affected by either treatment, while subjects with high general trust levels lose trust in politicians when exposed to privatized contents. This effect was only observable immediately after participants had read the stimulus material.

## Behavioral personalization

In terms of behavioral personalization, Rahat and Sheafer distinguish between personalization in the political behavior of politicians and of the public (i.e., the voters) (2007: 68). The process in the case of politicians is defined as 'an increase in individual political behavior and a decline in party activity' (ibid.); the latter is expressed as 'replacement of the perception of politics as competition among groups (parties) with a perception of politics as a struggle among individuals' (ibid.). I will first review the studies on personalization of voters' behavior and then end this chapter with the actors who are the focus of this dissertation, namely politicians.

## Voters

Behavioral personalization among voters means that voters increasingly perceive politics as a game between competing individuals rather than between

competing teams (Rahat & Kenig, 2018: 121). This could change voting behavior towards more emphasis on evaluations of leaders (centralized personalization) and candidates (decentralized personalization) and less on party identity, loyalty and ideology.

The studies of this subtype of personalization can be divided into two main groups according to what indicator they investigate: 1) voters' use of leader evaluations in their vote calculus, or 2) voters' use of preferential voting. The former per definition investigates centralized personalization because it focuses on political leaders. It is the most studied indicator (cf. Table 1) in either longitudinal studies of a single country such as Canada (Bittner, 2018), Japan (Jou & Endo, 2015), Norway (Midtbø, 1997), Germany (Wagner & Wessels, 2012), Israel (Balmas et al., 2014), New Zealand (Liu, 2018), and Portugal (Costa Lobo & da Silva, 2018) and in extensive comparative studies (Karvonen, 2010; Bittner, 2011; Garzia et al., 2019; Garzia, 2013; Lobo & Curtice, 2015). The use of leader evaluation has spurred a lot of debate about whether voters can distinguish the political leader from the party, and whether researchers are able to separate the two methodologically. This debate is also reflected in the conflicting conclusions these studies draw. For example, Karvonen concludes that nothing in the evidence he surveyed suggests that the importance of party leaders has grown, and that his analysis strongly suggests that 'the party leader factor is, by and large, a function of the party factor' (2010: 84). Bittner (2011) reaches the opposite conclusion in her impressive book that compiles data from 35 election studies across seven countries. She concludes that leaders do play an important role in the individual vote calculus, they have a discernible effect on the distribution of votes in an election, and there are consistent differences in the perception of party leaders according to voters' political sophistication. While all voters evaluate party leaders and consider leaders in their vote calculus, the more sophisticated do so the most. Furthermore, as Table 1 shows, a range of studies investigate leader effects at a single point in time. Either in country-specific studies of Italy (Bellucci et al., 2015; Camatarri & Cavataio, 2016; Garzia, 2017a; Garzia, 2017b), India (Shastri, 2019), The Netherlands (Aaldering, 2018; Aaldering et al., 2018; Takens et al., 2015; Van Holsteyn & Andeweg, 2010) or comparatively (Berz, 2019; Costa & da Silva, 2015; Gatterman & De Vreese, 2017; Garzia & De Angelis, 2016; Tverdova, 2011).

Other studies also investigate leadership effects, but instead of focusing on their impact on vote choice, they study the effect on turnout in a longitudinal study (da Silva et al., 2019) and at a single point in time (da Silva, 2018; da Silva & Costa, 2019). da Silva et al. (2019) use a novel data set pooling 52 national election surveys from 13 Western European parliamentary democracies between 1974 and 2016 to investigate the importance of voters' evaluations of

party leaders for their likelihood of voting in parliamentary elections. The results confirm the increasing relevance of leaders in explaining turnout decisions and the declining mobilizing ability of partisanship. This process is further accentuated among individuals with a television-dominated media diet, which shows that the media change plays a driving role in this process (da Silva et al., 2019). Along the same lines, da Silva (2018) finds a positive effect of voters' evaluations of candidates on turnout, especially for dealigned voters among whom he finds the strongest effect.

## The use of preferential voting

There are generally fewer studies of the use of preferential voting, the other main indicator of personalization of voters' behavior (see Table 1). Two studies utilize the distinction between centralization and decentralization focusing on Belgium (Wauters et al., 2018) or on several countries (Dodeigne & Pilet, 2019). Elmelund-Præstekær and Kjaer (2013) only focus on top-candidates' share of personal votes relative to the total number of votes when they investigate the use of preferential voting for three Danish local elections from 2001, 2005 and 2009. In the Belgian case, Wauters et al. (2018) find that the decline in preferential voting since 2007 is only related to a decline in decentralized personalization. Yet, while political leaders still attract preference votes, other candidates seem to have growing difficulties attracting votes. This negative relationship even holds after control for electoral reform and the newness of parties. Instead of a trend towards centralization, Dodeigne and Pilet (2019) find a trend of 'elitization', meaning a concentration of most votes on a medium-sized group of candidates. Their study examines electoral intra-party competition in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland and Luxembourg covering all preferential votes for candidates and party lists from 1994 to 2017. They suggest a move beyond the distinction between centralized and decentralized personalization, but again they show that it is important to use the conceptual distinctions when investigating preferential voting. Karvonen (2010) does not distinguish between which candidates get the votes. Karvonen collects an impressive range of indicators – including the percentage of preferential votes – in nine countries covering almost half a century. He is cautious about generalizing from only nine cases, but his overall conclusion is that for countries where the possibility of choosing between individual candidates has existed for a long time, the relative importance of individual candidates seems to have increased (2010: 63). However, Denmark is a partial exception. Preferential voting has not become more popular among Danish voters although parties today overwhelmingly opt for the open list format in their nominations (ibid).

A few studies of single countries investigate this indicator on the decentralized level. Thijssen (2013) investigates voting behavior in the Belgian district council elections of 2000 and 2006 and finds an increase in the number of preferential votes of 8.2 percentage points. Wauters et al. (2012), in their study of local election in Flanders (Belgium), investigate in what kind of municipalities voters are most likely to cast a preferential vote and whether an electoral reform granting voters more power has had an effect and in what kind of municipalities that is the case. They find that the most important effects come from the use of an electronic voting system and from population density. More specifically, the percentages of preferential voting tend to be higher in rural municipalities and in municipalities using electronic voting. Their comparison between 1994 and 2006 yields the reverse picture: characteristics of municipalities that have a positive effect on the percentage of preferential votes have a negative impact on the evolution of preferential voting between 1994 and 2006 and vice versa. In other words, they find a positive effect in the evolution of preferential voting in municipalities where there is still room for improvement; other municipalities see a kind of ceiling effect. Thus, the effects of the electoral reform could only be noted in urban municipalities because elsewhere local politics is already to a large extent personalized by locally known politicians. Apparently, in rural areas there was no problem in the relationship between citizens and politicians, and maybe no need for an electoral reform.

Along the same lines, a few studies focus on personalized politics studying preferential voting in a single country, and include the determinants of preferential voting (Andre et al., 2012; Elmelund-Præstekær & Hopmann, 2012; Pedrazzani & Pinto, 2018). In an analysis of the 2009 Belgian regional elections, Andre et al. (2012) find that mainly the most politically active voters cast preferences votes, and that voters are more likely to support candidates when they know one or several specific candidates directly or via the media. Furthermore, Andre et al. (2012) find that the more influence a preference vote has on the process of intra-party seat allocation, the more likely voters are to make the effort. Elmelund-Præstekær and Hopmann (2012) find that institutional and individual characteristics are far better predictors of preferential voting than individual media consumption. In a study of the 2009 Danish local elections, they test whether voters' media consumption, which they assume to be personalized, affects their tendency to cast a preferential vote, but they cannot confirm that personalized media coverage personalizes voters' behavior in terms of preferential voting.

## Politicians

In their short literature review, Rahat and Sheaffer concluded that there were no studies that focus directly on personalization of politicians' behavior (2007: 69). Balmas and colleagues reached the same conclusion seven years later: 'empirical evidence of decentralized behavioral personalization is hard to find. In fact we have none, save for the case of Israel' (2014: 40), and in terms of centralized behavioral personalization, they concluded that 'only minimal evidence was available to date' (*ibid.*). Thus, behavioral personalization in terms of politicians' behavior is one of the least studied subtypes, and most of the studies are conducted in recent years. These studies can be divided into two categories either focusing on extra-parliamentary behavior and more specifically personalized election campaigns, or focusing on legislators' parliamentary behavior. According to Table 1, the former is the more extensively studied and covers 22 of the 32 references of this subtype included in this review.

### Campaign behavior

In terms of campaign behavior, all studies focus on decentralized personalization and include all candidates or MPs instead of just focusing on political leaders. Only a few studies utilize a longitudinal design to capture personalization, and those that do only investigate a few election campaigns (Bukow & Angenendt, 2019; McAllister, 2015, Pruyers & Cross, 2018, Papp & Zorigt, 2016; 2018). One reason that no long time series studies of this indicator exist could be that most of these studies rely on self-reported survey data, which might not be available back in time. Actually, Fiorelli (2017) and Milazzo and Hammond (2018) are the only studies that use observational data. Fiorelli investigates personalization of campaign finances in Italy covering both national and European elections from 1987 to 2014. She finds that, over the years, parties as organizations have lost ground in private financing, which increasingly seems to be directed to individual candidates (Fiorelli, 2017: 56). Milazzo and Hammond (2018) study election leaflets from the 2015 general election in the UK. They rely on a new dataset with more than 3300 local leaflets, and they explore under which conditions party leaders feature in campaign communications. They find that national popularity is the most significant determinant of whether party leaders feature in election communications, but the local context also drives variation in the personalization of campaign materials.

Finally, we see a whole range of single country studies, using survey data, of Germany (Zittel & Geschwend, 2008; Bukow & Angenendt 2019; Gschwend & Zittel, 2015, Tenscher, 2014), Canada (Cross & Young, 2015; Pruyers & Cross, 2018), Belgium (De Winter & Baudewyns, 2015; Van Erkel et al., 2017),

Switzerland (Selb & Lutz, 2015), Hungary (Papp & Zorigt, 2016; 2018), Norway (Karlsen & Skogerbø, 2015), Austria (Eder et al., 2015), Wales (Trumm, 2016) and Estonia (Trumm, 2018). Many of these studies follow the conceptualization from Zittel and Geschwend (2008), who suggest that there are three dimensions of personalized constituency campaigns: candidates' subjective goals, their campaign agenda and their campaign organization. Some only use the first dimension and operationalize personalized campaigns using a survey question that captures the norm of the campaign. Others assess all three dimensions. Some studies utilize a slimmer operationalization of personalized campaigns. For example, Tenscher (2014), who tests the assumption that regional campaigns during the 16th legislative period in Germany are time-influenced by the national election using a survey of campaign managers. To capture personalized campaigning, campaign managers were asked to answer the following statement: 'Front-runners – instead of issues – came to the fore in the last election campaign.' Yet, this operationalization does not capture a relative change from political parties to individuals like Rahat and Sheaffer's (2007) definition suggests, but instead a change from issues to individuals.

Generally, the studies find that candidates conduct personalized constituency campaigns to a varying degree, and that it is highly dependent on the incentives provided by the electoral system in the specific country. In Canada, there is clear evidence of personalized campaigns. Cross and Young conclude in their study of the 2008 general election that 'there is considerable personalized campaigning in Canada, as would be expected given its SMP electoral system, where a majority of constituency candidates raise issues that are not part of the national campaign and produce and place local advertising independent of their national party' (2015: 313). Likewise, Pruyers and Cross find considerable personalism in their study of the 2015 election in Canada. The vast majority of candidates produced their own campaign material, a majority of volunteers offered their labor because of their connection to the candidate rather than to the party, and eight out of ten candidates reported raising issues not covered by the national party campaign (2018: 75). Furthermore, Pruyers and Cross find that the levels of decentralized personalization have increased since the 2008 federal election (*ibid.*). In more party-centered systems like Norway (Karlsen & Skogerbø, 2015) and Austria (Eder et al., 2015), the authors find that most candidates employ a party-focused campaign. However, other party factors like candidate selection and source of campaign funding also influence whether candidates employ a personalized campaign. In their study of the Hungarian general elections in 2010 and 2014, Papp and Zorigt (2016) find that centralization and exclusiveness in candidate selection are important in shaping how candidates approach campaign personalization.

Investigating these contextual factors is also the aim of the few studies that utilize comparative candidates surveys to compare the use of personalized campaigns at the 2009 and 2014 European elections (Giebler & Wessels, 2013; Bøggild & Pedersen, 2018), across Greece and Portugal (Lisi & Santana-Pereira, 2014), and across nine multilevel West European countries (Chan, 2018). Based on the 2009 European Election Candidate Study, Giebler and Wessels (2013) show that the dominant feature is party-centered campaigning, but close to one-fifth of the candidates prefer candidate-centered campaigning. Furthermore, candidates react to electoral and institutional incentives, which highlights that it is a strategic choice to utilize a more personalized campaign. Bøggild and Pedersen (2018) also investigate the determinants of a personalized election campaign in the context of the 2009 EP election campaign. Their main finding is that candidates from parties in which party officials have greater control over the nomination process and campaign finances were less likely to engage in personalized campaigning at the expense of the party program. Yet, parties hold important control mechanisms for counteracting personalization. To explore political parties' influence on candidates' incentives to personalize their campaign further, Chan (2018) investigates to what extent the varying 'territoriality' of a party can explain varying degrees of personalized campaigns. Meaning that the 'party' in the definition of personalization is never a single analytical object; it refers to the relative importance of quite different party organizations at different territorial levels of analysis (2018: 109). Hence, in multilevel systems, 'the party' can also refer to the regional party, which implies that what others have called 'localized' campaigns might merely be national campaigns adapting to constituency-specific concerns that have nothing to do with personalization. Furthermore, as regional governments differ in authority across countries, some regional party organizations may operate as if they are a national party organization in their procedure to select candidates and apply party discipline. Chan's findings confirm this expectation, because MPs from stronger regions have more or less the same degree of personalization as their national-level counterparts, while the same cannot be said for MPs from weaker regions (Chan, 2018: 114). Similarly, Karlsen and Skogerbo (2015) argue that election campaigns can be localized but still party-centered. Overall, they find low levels of individualized campaigning in Norway, but they find that some candidates highlight the importance of localizing the campaign. However, this is mostly about 'translating' the national campaign strategy to the regional or local level, and not about independent local strategies.

## Parliamentary behavior

According to Table 1, the literature on personalized behavior inside the parliamentary arena is scarce. A few studies investigate personalization utilizing a longitudinal design, but only four have long time series that cover enough ground to say something about a personalization trend over time (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007; Balmas et al., 2014; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Soroka et al., 2015). Soroka et al. (2015) examine whether the introduction of cameras in the Canadian House of Commons has had an impact on personalization in terms party leaders' participation in oral questions. The other three studies investigate several indicators of parliamentary behavior. The most extensive studies have been undertaken in the Israeli context (Balmas et al., 2014; Rahat & Sheafer, 2007). They investigate a range of indicators over a long time span, including decentralized and centralized personalization. For example, the ratio between the number of governmental positions and the total number of MPs, the number of (adopted) private members' bills, the use of roll-call voting, the number of petitions submitted by members of Knesset to the High Court of Justice, the number of interjections in prime ministers' speeches and the use of the first person singular in prime ministers' speeches. They find a trend of personalization in the Israeli case for most of them, but they do not give any theoretical justification for why they investigate exactly these indicators.

Recently, Rahat and Kenig (2018) followed up with their book, which covers all three types of political personalization in a cross-country, longitudinal study. They put forward two indicators measuring behavioral personalization for politicians: 1) the ratio of initiated private member bills by MPs versus government bills, and 2) the change in the number of coalition members per ministers. They find that most countries exhibit a personalization trend for the first indicator, and a trend just tipping towards personalization for the second indicator. They do not justify the use of their indicators, but they dismiss two obvious indicators – perceptions of legislators and a content analysis of parliamentary speeches – because the relevant data was not available. However, Wauters et al. (2019) have taken up the task and conceptualize personalized parliamentary behavior. They posit that personalization in parliament can manifest itself in four different forms: by a change in the type of activities an MP undertakes; by a rise in the number of individually initiated parliamentary activities; by a concentration of activities in the hands of some MPs; and by an increase in MPs' dissent from their parties. They develop four indicators that can be used to measure parliamentary personalization over time and across countries: a rise in the use of individual parliamentary instruments; an increase in single-authored initiatives for activities that could also be conducted



collectively; a larger concentration of visible parliamentary activities; and an increase in party switching. However, based on an original data set of parliamentary activity in the Belgian House of Representatives (1995–2014), they do not find a trend of personalization for any of these indicators.

A number of studies focus on one or more elements of parliamentary behavior as Wauters et al. (2019) defined them, but as they do not necessarily adopt a personalization framework, they are not included in this review. One study that does incorporate the personalization thesis is Louwerse and Otjes (2016), but they only look at the general activity rate of Dutch MPs (without analyzing shifts in the kind of activities or the number of initiators of activities). Focusing on personalized politics and investigating the behavior at one point in time, Papp (2018) tests whether more personalized campaigns culminate in increased willingness to desert the party line in roll-call votes and a greater likelihood of representing constituency interests in parliament. Combining survey data from the Comparative Candidate Study from 2010 of Hungarian MPs' perceptions of representation and constituency-related parliamentary questions from the 2010-2014 parliament, she finds that campaign personalization only has a moderate effect on legislators' attitudes and behavior. Similarly, Chiru (2018) investigates how personalized campaigning affects constituency-related questions in parliament in a comparative study of Romania and Hungary. He finds that personalized campaigns have behavioral consequences for legislators in terms of engaging in more constituency work and, more specifically, asking more constituency-related questions in parliament. Lastly, Friedman and Friedberg (2019) conduct an in-depth analysis of the way Israeli legislators use private member bills in the 20th Knesset to investigate whether the use of such a tool actually weakens the party, as others have argued. Contrary to the expectation in the literature, they find intraparty support in the use of private member bills and conclude that the use of such a personalized tool does not always weaken the party.

## Conclusion

I will end this chapter by summing up the general trends of the three types of political personalization, and what conclusions I will build on to develop the conceptual and theoretical framework of the dissertation in the next chapter.

The literature review showed that some types of personalization, especially media personalization, are more studied than others. Table 1 shows that 80 studies covering both subtypes are identified. Most studies of controlled media focus on online behavior on social media platforms. A general problem with these studies is that most of them do not follow the requirement from the general definition of personalization that I accounted for in the beginning, i.e.,

they do not investigate personalized behavior relative to the party. Even though these studies give an indication of the extent to which personalized politics exists online, we do not know if it has crowded out party communication. Most of the studies of uncontrolled media focus on individualization, but some investigate if media coverage focuses more on the private life of politicians. According to Table 1, 72 studies focus on behavioral personalization. However, 41, i.e., the majority of these studies focus on voter behavior and the literature on political elites – except campaign behavior – is scarce. With 40 studies, institutional personalization is the least studied type of personalization. However, the types of studies in this area include several comprehensive books that cover the different indicators extensively. Likewise, several comprehensive books cover indicators of voter behavior.

Another interesting discovery from the review is that for controlled media personalization and politicians' behavior, we almost exclusively see studies at a single point in time, whereas the majority of studies of personalization of media coverage and institutional personalization are longitudinal. This can be ascribed to data availability, which seems to have guided the focus of the studies of the different subtypes. For example indicators of institutional personalization are less extensive to collect over time, because institutional reforms do not happen in each legislature and there are only one per country, whereas collecting data on each legislator's behavior is much more resource demanding. However, data collection for institutional personalization and media coverage can also be demanding, and many studies of these subtypes have therefore restricted their focus to political leaders (centralized personalization).

Most studies of behavioral personalization among politicians focus on extra-parliamentary behavior, and more specifically on campaign behavior, and rely on self-reported survey data. In contrast, there are very few studies of personalization of parliamentary behavior. Furthermore, the review showed a lack of longitudinal studies using a time frame that makes them able to track possible changes in the behavior of legislators from the heyday of the mass party until recent years. In light of this review, I will therefore focus on behavioral personalization and more specifically on personalization of legislators' parliamentary behavior, which is still the least studied subtype of personalization. First, I will investigate if there are other relevant dimensions of personalization in this sub-arena to make sure that all pivotal elements are included. Second, I will make an effort to study personalization as a process that develops over time. Third, I will develop a theory that can explain why this process of personalization varies among the individual politicians.

## Chapter 3.

# Theoretical framework

This chapter provides the conceptual and theoretical framework of this dissertation. In the first part of the chapter, I clarify my understanding of personalized representation. As discussed in chapter 2, personalization implies increased emphasis on personal characteristics or details from politicians' private lives rather than the party. In this chapter, I build on this insight to argue that personalized representation entails that legislators highlight either their personal characteristics and skills or their constituency more than their party's position. When communicating for example with voters or constituents, they promote issues that are important to them personally or to their constituency more than the party program, and they vote according to their own or their constituents' preferences more than the party position. I argue that personalized representation can take place both inside and outside parliament and concern both the perception of the legislator and different types of individualized actions, which do not necessarily break the cohesion of the parliamentary party group. Hereby, I make two conceptual contributions. First, I outline how personalization may or may not conflict with party cohesion. Second, I integrate constituency representation more carefully into the understanding of personalization, including localization as another aspect of personalized representation.

In the second part of the chapter, I build a theoretical model explaining variation in personalized representation across time, political systems, parties and politicians. My theoretical point of departure is that personalized representation depends on the incentives and opportunities legislators face. I propose that this cost-benefit calculation depends on the societal development, legislators' personal electoral situation and capacities, intra-party control and the electoral institutions. In this thesis summary, I bring these explanations together more carefully than is possible in individual articles to present the coherent theoretical model guiding my understanding and empirical investigation of personalized representation. In the third part of the chapter, I explain how this overall theoretical model relates to the theoretical arguments in my articles.

## Defining personalized representation

Many studies of politicians' behavioral personalization refer to the original definition from Rahat and Sheafer: 'The process in the case of politicians is

expressed in an increase in individual political behavior and a decline in party activity' (2007: 68), which is largely just a paraphrasing of the overall definition of political personalization that I discussed in chapter two. In a more recent contribution, Rahat and Kenig argue that personalization among politicians 'reflects a change in their patterns of behavior, from team players who act together and coordinate their moves to separate individuals with uncoordinated actions' (2018: 121), and that 'it can be both perceptions, issue positions, attitudes and actual behavior' (Rahat & Kenig, 2018; 160). Building on this definition, Pedersen and Rahat (2019) elaborate on the concept of behavioral personalization by drawing on insights from the literature on political representation. Pedersen and Rahat argue that personalization of politicians' behavior entails: 'that the representative behavior of politicians – inside or outside parliament – is increasingly motivated by personal preferences and ambitions and enacted independently rather than being motivated by party programs and enacted through party cohesion, and we therefore call this sub-dimension the personalization of representation' (2019: 4).

The focus of my dissertation is the extent to which legislators have adopted a more individual style of representation rather than being a party agent. Therefore, I adopt the term 'personalization of representation' from Pedersen and Rahat (2019). As I stated in the previous chapter the difference between 'personalization' and 'personalized politics' is that personalization describes a change or a process and personalized politics describes a specific point in time where individual politicians are more important than political groupings (Pedersen & Rahat, 2019: 3). I will therefore use the term 'personalized representation' when I conceptualize and define the concept, as well as when I explain variation at one point in time. Personalized representation can happen both inside and outside of parliament and has to be identified relative to party representation. In situations of personalized representation, legislators will highlight their personal characteristics and skills more than the position of their party when communicating with voters or constituents, they will promote issues that are important to them personally more often than the party program, and they will vote according to their own preferences rather than the party position. The definition includes both the representational style, i.e., how politicians carry out their representation, and the focus of their representation, i.e., politicians' perception of whom they represent.

Different kinds of personalized representation can be distinguished depending on their consequences for party cohesion on which there are conflicting views in the personalization literature. Rahat and Sheafer clearly argue that 'changes were expressed in a decline in the *cohesion* of the parties' parliamentary group' (2007: 69). Likewise, Rahat and Kenig argue that a clear sign of personalization is the weakening of a group's unity of action, which can

take many forms – from voting against the party line in parliament to rejecting party policies in public (2018: 160). Pruyssers, Cross and Katz, on the other hand, argue that some manifestations of personalization clearly undermine party cohesion, which may represent an important challenge for political parties as they are traditionally perceived (2018: 4). However, personalization may also represent an opportunity for the party to change its organization, strategy and internal power distribution. Pruyssers et al. see it as a strategic decision of the political party and not something that just happens to the party (2018: 4). Defining personalization and its consequences for the party may therefore not be an ‘either-or’ issue but rather ‘more-or-less’ dependent on where personalization takes place (Katz, 2018: 230).

In the case of personalized representation, I argue that personalized behavior does not necessarily contradict the party. For example, Friedmann and Friedberg show that this is not always the case in their study of use of private member bills in the 20<sup>th</sup> Israeli Knesset. They find that an individualized tool like a private member bill rather is a supplement to the party. Similarly, regarding election campaigns, Zittel (2015) argues that individualized constituency campaigns can be adversarial, neutral or a supplement to the national party campaign. In other words, we are not just looking for conflict or dissent when we investigate personalized representation. Actually, several studies of specific election campaigns across countries have found a non-adversarial relationship between national partisan campaigns and personalized constituency campaigns (Zittel, 2015: 292). Likewise, Pedersen and Rahat argue that parties may not always suffer from personalized representation, but instead personalization can be a deliberate party strategy used to boost party influence (2019: 3). In other words, personalized representation does not always harm party cohesion in the parliamentary party group.

My position is that we can distinguish different indicators of personalized representation based on their consequences for party cohesion by looking at 1) where the behavior takes places, i.e., how observable it is, and 2) whether it has consequences for legislative decision-making. Figure 2 displays examples of personalized behavior based on their consequences for party cohesion. Communication outside the official institution, i.e., the parliament, is least harmful for party cohesion. Extra-parliamentary behavior such as individualized communication, for example in election campaigns or at constituency meetings, may affect or confuse voters’ idea of the party’s opinion or reputation on a specific issue, but it does not affect the party cohesion of the parliamentary group. Instead, it can be a supplement and may attract votes the party would not otherwise have gotten (Tromborg, 2020, but for the opposite view see Greene & Harper, 2015). As I accounted for in chapter 2, Pedersen and

Rahat (2019) suggest including legislators' social media activities in the behavioral arena because contacts between representatives and citizens in modern democracies are commonly established through social media platforms. I therefore include personalized behavior online as examples of personalized representation.

Figure 2. Indicators of personalized representation and their consequence for party cohesion

| Party cohesion of the parliamentary group    |                         |                        |                             |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Extra-parliamentary behavior                 |                         | Parliamentary behavior |                             |
| Individualized activities or position-taking |                         |                        | Dissent from the party      |
| Constituency meetings                        | Parliamentary speeches  | Private member bills   | Voting against the party    |
| Individualized campaigns                     | Parliamentary questions |                        | Legislative party switching |
| Personalized behavior online                 |                         |                        |                             |

Inside parliament, we can also distinguish between different kinds of parliamentary behavior and their consequences for party cohesion, because as long as the legislative behavior does not have direct consequences for voting behavior, it does not break party unity. For example, individualized position-taking in parliamentary speeches or questions threatens party cohesion, but it does not break the party unity of the parliamentary party group. Finally, at the other end of the continuum, voting against your party does indeed break party cohesion in that particular vote, but here party cohesion can be reestablished, and the legislator is still part of the parliamentary party group. In contrast, legislative party switching can be seen as an irreversible and therefore ultimate break of party cohesion.

Summing up, I define personalized representation as legislators highlighting their personal characteristics and skills more than their party. When communicating with voters or constituents, they will promote issues that are important to them personally instead of promoting the party program, and they will vote according to their own preferences rather than the party position. Furthermore, personalized representation takes place both inside and outside parliament and can be observed in legislators' perception of their representative task, their political attitudes and their actual representative behavior. These different expressions of personalized representation entail varying costs for the cohesion of the parliamentary party group.

## Identifying different aspects of personalization

The next conceptual challenge is to identify which kind of expressions to look for when trying to grasp personalization. As discussed in chapter two, there are already two well-established aspects of media personalization. Individualization concerns an increased focus on individual politicians including their ideas, capacities and policies in the media coverage. Privatization is defined as an increased focus on the private lives of politicians, including their hobbies, family life and personal history in the media coverage (Van Aelst et al., 2012: 201-214). These two aspects are also relevant for personalized representation because if we for instance investigate legislators' communication in campaign material, on Facebook or in a parliamentary debate, we need to know how to identify personalization. It is thus relevant if legislators justify their political position from a personal point of view highlighting maybe their expertise (individualization) or their personal experiences from private life (privatization) rather than party ideology or program. I therefore include both aspects as a first dimension of personalization – *individualization*, which refers to behavior rooted in individual experiences from professional or private life (Nielsen, 2020).

In addition to the well-established aspect of individualization, I propose another non-partisan aspect of representation *localization* (Nielsen, 2020). Specifically, I argue that personalized representation can also take a route where legislators highlight their constituency more than their party. Highlighting one's personal qualities or private life is not the only option when less weight is put on the collective, such as political parties (ibid.). The idea of localization originates in the personal vote literature. The personal vote is widely considered that portion of a candidate's electoral support that originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications, activities and record (Cain et al., 1987: 9). It is thus by definition a non-partisan vote rooted in individual candidates rather than in partisan ideologies and policies. Cain et al. (1987, 9) define the personal vote as all besides the legislators' party affiliation. Hence, the original understanding of the personal vote does indeed overlap with the concept of personalized representation. However, to cultivate a non-partisan vote includes activities that not only relates to the individual candidate, but may also relate to the candidate's electoral constituency (Grimmer et al., 2015). Building on this, I argue that personalization is all representative expressions not including references to the party, and I therefore argue in favor of including localization as a second aspect of personalized representation. It is important to note that localization entails legislators highlighting their local ties to the constituency and not addressing the local party. Legislators highlighting either their individual qualities or local ties represents two alternative routes for

building an individual support base, which make legislators less dependent on the party (Tavits, 2009: 735). In contrast, those seeking partisan votes are said to perceive themselves as representatives of their parties and related ideological beliefs and policy positions. In other words, party representation works through indirect links to the voters via ideology and collective identities, whereas personalized representation works through direct personal linkages, which I argue can be based on different aspects: including a focus on either the politician as an individual or on the politician's ties to the local constituency (see discussion in Article 2, Nielsen, 2020).

Including the notion of localization is supported by some studies of extra-parliamentary behavior (Cross & Young, 2015; Karlsen & Skogerbø, 2015; Pedersen & vanHeerde-Hudson, 2019; Bukow & Angenendt, 2019). For example, Cross and Young (2015) argue that personalized behavior in Canadian constituency campaigns in fact means an emphasis on the local. In their study of the 2008 Canadian general election, they find that candidates personalize their constituency campaigns by raising issues of local salience ignored by the national party (Cross and Young 2015). Politicians emphasize not only their personal qualities but also their status as the local candidate. In a recent cross-country study of MPs' personal websites, Pedersen and vanHeerde-Hudson (2019) argue that MPs can adopt different representative strategies: a person-oriented, a constituency-oriented or a party-oriented strategy (2019, 18), and Papp (2018) and Chiru (2018) include constituency-related questions as indicators of individualized parliamentary behavior.

Regardless which aspect of personalization is under study, the overall definition of political personalization implies a shift in the *relative* weight between individual and collective actors and should therefore be conceptualized as a relative measure taking party as well as personalized representation into account. Some indicators of personalized representation are naturally the opposite of party representation, for example, legislative party switching, where the natural point of comparison is those who stay in the party's parliamentary group (Pedersen & Rahat, 2019). However, for other indicators of personalization, it requires more conceptual work to define it in relative terms. For example, personalization of parliamentary speeches where the few studies of this phenomenon have defined it as the use of first person singular words (Balmas et al., 2014), but not contrasted it to party speech. The consequence is that we cannot evaluate whether we see a development towards personalization, because if legislators talk just as much of their party, then the relative weight has not changed. In other words, studying personalization requires a relative measure (Nielsen, 2020). I therefore conceptualize personalized representation as behavior emphasizing personal connections to the electorate either as highlighting yourself as a candidate (individualization) or your constituency



(localization) more than the party and hold that we need to identify a shift in this relative measure to capture personalized representation (ibid.). Table 2 displays what they entail. Depending on the context legislators operate in, they can choose to highlight either one or both aspects. The two dimensions do not contradict or presuppose each other.

Table 2. Personalized representation

|                          | Increased attention to/weight on  | Relative to party   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Individualization</b> | Personal qualities:<br>– Highlight educational background, previous occupational experience, previous political career, own opinion or character traits<br><br>Private life:<br>– Highlight certain characteristics from the legislator’s private life such as partner/husband/wife, children, family background or upbringing (e.g., parents, siblings, childhood) or hobbies/leisure time.  | – Highlight party background/party membership<br>– Express a feeling of belonging to the party<br>– Highlight position within the party<br>– Highlight party ideology or the party manifesto<br>– Mention political parties in general or other political parties in parliament |
| <b>Localization</b>      | Provide a feeling of belonging:<br>– Mention the constituency he or she represents<br>– Provide information about whether he or she lives in the constituency<br>– Provide information about growing up in the constituency<br><br>Constituency work:<br>– Highlight specific interests, issues and causes that the legislator seeks to promote on behalf of the constituency.<br>– Highlight political successes won for the constituency. |   |

Individualization entails politicians highlighting either their personal qualities or aspects of their private life (ibid.). Building on Van Aelst et al. (2012), who add privatization to the personalization concept regarding media coverage, the former entails highlighting, for example, educational background, occupational experience, own opinion or character traits; traits that others have called valence-traits or character-based qualities (Adams et al., 2016). The latter entails highlighting certain characteristics from the legislator’s private life and ‘refers to the rising importance of the politician as an “ordinary” person’ (Van Aelst et al., 2012: 206). The politician is no longer presented solely as a policy maker, head of government or spokesperson but rather as a dedicated father or passionate football fan (ibid.). In other words, politicians are portrayed as private individuals. In terms of personalized representation, this part includes when legislators highlight their private lives, hobbies or leisure

time, family background, and upbringing, e.g., parents, childhood and siblings. 8

Localization, on the other hand, entails legislators highlighting the constituency they represent by 1) expressing belonging to the constituency or 2) highlighting their constituency work. The former could be by providing information about whether they live in or grew up in the constituency (Tavits, 2009). The latter is legislators highlighting specific interests, issues, and causes they seek to promote on behalf of the constituency or political successes won for the constituency (Pedersen and vanHeerde-Hudson, 2019: 18). By highlighting their attachment to the constituency, legislators signal to their voters that they are ‘one of them’ and therefore know their needs (ibid.: 4).

In contrast, legislators cultivating a party vote highlight their own party background, party membership and position in the party or express a feeling of belonging to the party. It is also part of this dimension when they highlight their political party or political parties in general, because party representatives highlight their party in competition with other party representatives. Therefore, capturing party-oriented communication also entails measuring all communication about political parties, party manifesto or ideologies (Nielsen, 2020).

To sum up, personalized representation entails that legislators highlight either their personal characteristics and skills or their constituency more than their party. When communicating with voters or constituents, they promote issues that are important to them personally or to their constituency more than they promote the party program, and they vote according to their own or their constituents’ preferences more than the party position. Furthermore, personalized representation takes place both inside and outside parliament and can be both the perception of the legislator and different types of individualized actions, which do not necessarily break the cohesion of the parliamentary party group. Next, I will present my theoretical framework and argue for when and under which conditions we should expect legislators to personalize their representation.

## Theoretical framework: When do we expect personalized representation?

My main argument is that personalized representation depends on the incentives and opportunities legislators face given the societal development, their personal electoral situation and capacities, intra-party control and electoral institutions. This rests on an understanding of legislators as rational actors who prioritize different goals (Downs, 1957; Strøm, 2012) and will therefore

personalize their representation when the conditions are favorable. Personalization will help them obtain these goals. In addition to this overall strategic perspective, my dissertation incorporates theories of individual personality traits to argue that personalization may also vary across individuals with different personality traits, making personalized representation more or less natural for the legislator to engage in. With a personality that fits personalization, this strategy becomes more opportune.

For the strategic perspective on legislators' behavioral strategies, Kaare Strøm's theory of legislators' goals (2012) is a relevant point of departure. He argues that legislators have four distinct goals related to their legislative service: 1) reselection, 2) reelection, 3) policy, 4) party and legislative office (Strøm, 2012: 90). Strøm (2012) argues that these goals are interrelated and often hierarchically ordered. It therefore follows logically that reselection or nomination by the party is essential to be able to obtain the other goals. Therefore, obtaining ballot access must be politicians' first goal followed by (re)election. Once elected, politicians may to some extent be able to choose between party and legislative career objectives (Strøm, 1997: 161). With party office, Strøm (2012) refers to positions that are entirely under the control of the party, and with legislative office, he refers to positions to which a member must be elected by parliament as a whole or by some subset of the legislature. In other words, positions that typically are in the hands of some coalition of parties – at least in multiparty systems (Strøm, 1997).

Even though legislators are assumed to share the same goals, they do not face the same opportunities and constraints in terms of realizing these goals. A legislator takes the institutional and political circumstances into account when engaging in a representative strategy aimed at realizing her goals. To determine the discretion legislators have in choosing their representative strategy based on these goals, Strøm argues that the most important constraints legislators face are driven by the two masters they serve: their voters and parties (2012: 91). More specifically, Strøm argues that legislators serve as 'common agents' to their two democratic 'principals' (Strøm, 1997: 160; Strøm, 2012: 91). The relation only works under the assumptions that the agents' actions affect the principal's payoff and that the principal has capacity to impose sanctions on the agent (Strøm, 2003). The principals decide over the objectives legislators aim for and use this 'power' to control the agents. Legislators, on their side, have resources such as voting power, time, attention, media access or money under their control (Strøm, 1997: 162). According to the responsible party model, parties depend on being able to act as collective units when they negotiate in parliament (APSA, 1950). However, parties must have some division of labor because they do not have the resources (time,

voting power) to fulfill the parliamentary job alone. Therefore, the party leadership delegates tasks to the legislators, e.g., when the party leadership assigns spokespersonships, and expects the legislator to carry out this job as a loyal party agent. Likewise, the party expects the legislator to follow the party mandate when voting in parliament and to stay loyal to the party platform and manifesto in election campaigns.

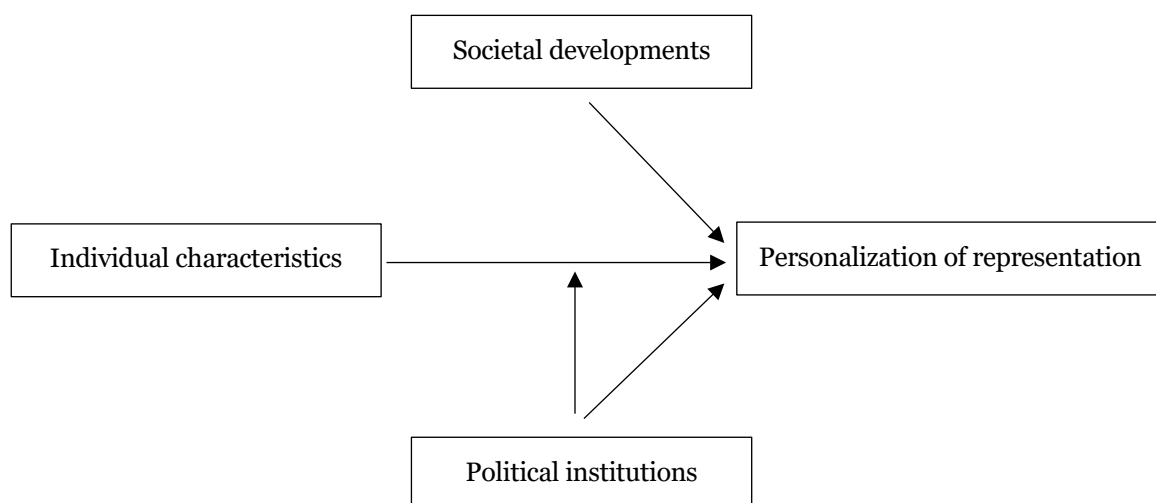
When authority is delegated, there is always a risk that the agents do not faithfully pursue the principal's interest (Strøm, 2003). If the interests and preferences are not fully aligned, delegation may create agency problems (Lupia, 2003: 36-37). Lupia argues that for agency loss to occur, there must be some minimum of preference divergence as well as asymmetric information between the principal and agent (*ibid.*). Agency problems under incomplete information can be that principals do not fully know the competences or preferences of their agents (*ibid.*), which manifest itself as hidden information or as hidden actions where the principal cannot fully observe the actions of their agents (Strøm, 2003: 61-62). The problem with hidden information may lead the principal to select the 'wrong' agents (adverse selection) who do not have the appropriate skills or preferences, in this case legislators who do not fully share the policy preferences of the party. The problem of hidden actions can cause problems of 'moral hazard'. This occurs when agents – once selected – have incentives and opportunity to take unobservable actions contrary to the principal's interests (*ibid.*). In this case personalizing their behavior instead of acting as a loyal party agent.

However, there are also costs associated with such behavior, because the party principal still controls the supply of policy and office, which the legislator wants. To grasp this tension, we can use the differentiation between different kinds of personalized behavior based on how observable they are and how important they are for the cohesion of the parliamentary party group. It is less costly for the party if the legislators only personalize their extra-parliamentary behavior, because these actions are often unobservable, e.g., at constituency meetings or in election campaigns, and in some cases, the party might benefit from legislators stretching the party platform to keep potential voters or dissatisfied party members on board. What is more important for the party principal is that the legislators stay loyal inside parliament where it is more observable and more costly if legislators do not act as loyal party agents. Here individualized behavior can harm the party's opportunities to negotiate and strike agreements in parliament where the responsible party models expects the party to be able to act as a collective unit. Therefore, the cost of personalizing for the legislator is higher in terms of parliamentary behavior where the party often will impose sanctions on individual legislators who break party

discipline (Kam, 2009: 30). This could come in the form of stripping legislators of spokespersonships and thereby of policy influence. We should therefore expect more personalized representation in situations where it is least consequential for party cohesion.

Factors at different levels can influence this cost-benefit calculation. First, societal developments including partisan dealignment, mediatization of politics and cultural changes affecting the values of citizens have changed the legislators' incentives and opportunities to choose their representational style. Second, there are individual characteristics that make some legislators more likely or able to personalize their representation. Third, the political institutions – the electoral system and the party – can moderate this relationship, because for example a party-centered electoral system provides legislators with weak opportunities or incentives to personalize their behavior. The model in Figure 3 draws up this overall theoretical model of personalization of representation. My project includes specific factors related to societal developments, individual characteristics and political institutions. In the next sections, I will elaborate on how the overall theoretical model relates to the more specific theoretical factors included in the articles of this dissertation. The aim of the discussion is thus not to provide an exhaustive discussion of all possible factors affecting personalized representation, but rather to discuss the factors I have focused on considering the methodological and empirical limitations of the project.

Figure 3. The theoretical model of personalization of representation



## Societal developments: increased personalization over time

Perhaps the most central claim in the personalization literature is that political representation has become increasingly personalized over the last decades because the circumstances for a partisan representative democracy is fundamentally different (McAllister, 2007; Deschower et al., 2014: 3-4). These empirical changes have been described as party dealignment, mediatization of politics and cultural changes that emphasize the individual (McAlister, 2007; Karvonen, 2010; Rahat & Kenig, 2018). As discussed in article 2 and 3, these factors suggest that representation becomes less party-oriented and hence more personalized (see Nielsen, 2020; Binderkrantz et al., 2020 4-5).

First, scholars emphasize the importance of partisan dealignment among voters (Karvonen 2010; Rahat & Kenig, 2018). Secularization and greater social and geographical mobility including cognitive mobilization through education have loosened the ties between political parties and society (Norton & Wood, 1993: 12-13). This results in less class-based voting, fewer party identifiers, more volatility, and declining turnout and party membership (Drummond, 2006; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000a; Van Biezen et al., 2012). As party identification weakens and these affective ties lose their grip in voting behavior, legislators can no longer be certain to enjoy a large voter base through their party. Legislators therefore have to seek new ways to secure (re)election when the role as a party agent is a less secure way for them to reach their goals. Utilizing a personalized style of representation is therefore an alternative way to attract attention and name recognition when the party label is less important for voters (Kam, 2009: 35-36; Nielsen, 2020).

Second, the expansion of mass media and the decline of newspapers affiliated with a political party have caused a shift away from political parties towards the news media as the main source of political information (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000b: 278-279). This development has been characterized as a *mediatization of politics*, which entails that ‘the media are moving towards the center of the social process’ (Blumler and Kavanagh 1999: 211). Earlier, these party newspapers were the main – if not the only – source of journalistic information for both party activists and ordinary voters, but their circulation has declined, and rising costs have nearly put them out of business (Mancini & Swanson, 1996: 12). Similarly, the introduction of television has advanced the development towards personalization because the format favors screening humans over non-human actors such as political parties (ibid.: 13). This mediatization of politics means that legislators need to adapt to the new logic of media when they develop and communicate their policy (McAllister, 2007: 584; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000b: 278-279). Therefore, legislators devote

more attention to persons and conflicts (Hjarvard, 2008; Strömback, 2008: 238). We should therefore expect legislators to personalize their representation, e.g., to take more individual legislative initiative and to dissent more in parliament in recent times compared to times when political information was distributed through party outlets.

A parallel development is the new communication technology, which also makes it possible for legislators to communicate more and directly with voters, ignoring official party channels (Enli & Skogerbo 2013; Druckman et al., 2014). Social media platforms have given legislators their own direct communication channel to their voters that allows them to communicate and campaign more independently of their party affiliation. This weakens the party-principal's ability to control the legislator, and we would expect problems of moral hazards to occur if the legislator uses these opportunities to personalize their representation or pursue own policy preferences without the knowledge of the party-principal.

Third, cultural modernization has changed citizens' values, priorities and interests. Inglehart (1997) argues that individual self-expression values have displaced group-related survival values as a basis for social and political life, and therefore more and more people in Western countries look at the world around them from the perspective of individuals rather than collectives. Therefore, it seems that post-materialistic values have become more important, and citizens emphasize the individual more (Inglehart, 1997; Putnam, 2000). For example, Karvonen has argued that 'the personalization of politics may be viewed as part of an overall process of individualization of social life' (Karvonen, 2010: 4). Similarly, Bennet has argued that 'as ideology and formal group identifications fade as mechanisms for organizing civic life, individuals increasingly code their personal politics through personal lifestyle values' (2012: 22). In other words, we should expect voters to be more individualized, which should be reflected in their voting behavior.

These general political, media and cultural developments lead me to expect – in line with others – that legislators are more likely to personalize their representation today than they were in times of tighter party alignments, less individualized cultural norms and more limited access to communication channels. In other words, if the role as party agent no longer is a secure way to reelection, legislators have incentive to use a personal or local frame instead of a party frame when appealing to their other principal: their voters (Deschouwer et al., 2014: 4).

## Individual characteristics: electoral security, pre-parliamentary party career, and personality

Even if circumstances for political representation have changed, all politicians may not be equally likely to respond by utilizing a personalized style of representation. A crucial individual characteristic, which the literature also emphasizes, is electoral security (Kam, 2009: 35). For example, studies of personalized campaigns have found that the closeness to winning or losing a seat is what seems to make candidates invest in their personal campaigns (Zittel & Geswend, 2008; Selb & Lust, 2015). In article 1, we argue that legislators with many personal votes depend less on the party for re-election (Nielsen et al., 2019). The personal vote is an indicator of popularity and visibility, so legislators who have a strong personal electoral mandate can count on these voters' support even if they switch party (see discussion in Article 1, Nielsen et al., 2019: 4). However, electoral security may not have the same impact if the behavioral expression of personalized representation entails that they stay within the same party. In article 2, I argue that if legislators risk losing their seat, they will have incentives to personalize their representation to get attention and more name recognition and hereby increase their chances of re-election. If they risk their political career, they have little incentive to stay loyal party agents and would therefore be more willing to utilize another representation away from the party. In contrast, legislators who hold very safe seats may exhibit loyalty independently of party discipline because personalization offers them so little electoral advantage (Nielsen, 2020; Kam, 2009: 35).

Electoral security is not the only individual characteristic that influences how legislators balance the demands from their two principals in realizing their political goals. In article 3, we introduce the pre-parliamentary nature of the relationship between the legislator and the party (Binderkrantz et al., 2020: 2). We argue that the route politicians take through the party organization on their way to parliament influences their dependency on the party for realizing political goals (Binderkrantz et al., 2020: 2). We argue that legislators' affiliation with the party influences their need for party assistance in gathering information and taking a position, and their responsiveness to district voter preferences. More specifically, we argue that the link between parties and legislators varies at the individual level in terms of how old the legislators were when they first got involved with party politics, where in the party organization they were mainly active and the duration of this activity. We expect that legislators who got involved with the party at a younger age and who worked in the national party organization before winning national office tend to have stronger links to the national party leadership and therefore will be more likely to adhere to the party principal. Legislators who spend significant



time in local politics are more likely to build personal connections to their constituency, be knowledgeable about the preferences of their constituents and therefore more likely to personalize their representation (see discussion in Article 3, Binderkrantz et al., 2020: 2-7).

Independently of electoral or party-political situation, some legislators may find it more attractive or comfortable to personalize their representation. In article 4 (Bøggild et al., 2019), we argue that personality traits of legislators can make some legislators more prone to personalize their representation because legislators face conflicting pressures in terms of disagreements with their party (see discussion in Article 4, Bøggild et al., 2019). On the one hand, legislators face clear expectations from voters and the media to display independence and stand their ground when disagreement with the party arises. On the other hand, legislators face pressure from their party principal to act as loyal party agents, because in most European parliamentary systems, legislators are expected to exhibit loyalty to the party and not openly speak against the party line (Bøggild et al., 2019; Hazan, 2003; Ozbudin, 1970). Those who personalize their representation should therefore be particularly willing to display group disobedience and engage in norm-breaking behavior. Building on this premise, we argue in article 4 that legislators with different personality traits will weigh benefits and costs associated with personalized representation differently (Bøggild et al., 2019). Extraversion and agreeableness are two factors of the Big Five personality traits that are intrinsically interpersonal (ibid.: 4). Agreeableness inclines an individual to be part of a cohesive, cooperating group and preserve good group relations without conflict and dissent (ibid.). Extraversion, on the other hand, inclines legislators to seek attention and be willing to face conflict in order to promote themselves as legislators. We therefore expect legislators with higher levels of agreeableness to be more focused on adhering to the norm of party loyalty, want to avoid intra-party conflict and therefore more likely to personalize their representation. Extraverted legislators, on the other hand, are expected to be more inclined to personalize their representation (see discussion in Article 4, Bøggild et al., 2019: 3-4). The remaining three personality traits are not directly relevant for interpersonal relations, and therefore we do not expect conscientiousness and emotional stability to relate to personalized representation (ibid.). However, we argue that since party discipline is a norm-regulated behavior, openness to experience will be relevant to explain variation in the likelihood of personalizing representation because this personality trait is associated with lively imagination, willingness to try new things and deviance from rules or established ways of doing things (Mondak, 2010: 51; see discussion in Article 4, Bøggild et al., 2019: 4). We therefore expect legislators with higher levels of openness

to be more willing to personalize their representation rather than follow the party norm and adhere to party discipline (Bøggild et al. 2019).

## Political institutions: electoral incentives and party control

Political institutions influence how legislators are able to realize their goals even if circumstances for political representation changes or politicians are in more or less favorable positions to personalize. A crucial political institution determining how goals can be realized is the electoral system. It determines the electoral rules and therefore influences the way legislators in a representative democracy perceive and fulfill their tasks (Deschouwer et al., 2014). The electoral system is therefore important in shaping legislators' opportunities and incentives to cultivate either a personal or a party vote (Carey & Shughart, 1995). Likewise, we argue in article 4 that personalized representation may not be equally prevalent, controversial or risky across different political contexts and that the political context therefore has implications for the potential benefits and costs associated with personalized representation (see discussion in Article 4, Bøggild et al., 2019: 4-5). We therefore argue that legislators in contexts that encourage personalization will be more likely to personalize their representation. For example, an electoral system that emphasizes the individual candidate at the expense of the party will provide legislators with incentives and opportunities to personalize their representation, because reelection is always a goal that legislators have to keep in mind (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007: 66-67, Bøggild et al., 2019: 4-5). Legislators in a political context that induces personalized representation have fewer opportunities and incentives to personalize their representation. Instead, they should adhere to their party principal, because if voters have no influence on which candidates are elected, then legislators have no incentives to adhere to their other principal: the voters. I therefore expect that personalized representation will be more evident in electoral systems that emphasize the candidates more.

Another crucial political institution determining how goals can be reached is the party the legislator represents. Others have focused on how the party constrains personalized campaigning in terms of candidate selection and campaign finances (e.g. Papp & Zorigt, 2016; Cross & Young, 2015; De Winter & Baudewyns, 2015; Bøggild & Pedersen, 2018). There is also a whole range of studies that investigate how candidate selection affects MPs' behavior once they are in office (for an overview see Shomer, 2009: 946; Hazan & Rahat, 2010; Shomer, 2016). In article 1, we focus on the party's ability to provide policy and/or office benefits for the legislator, the legislator's position in the

party and how intra-party democracy – i.e. how power is distributed internally in the party – can affect legislators’ incentives to personalize representation.

In terms of the ability to provide the goals that legislators want, some parties can offer more office and policy to their legislators given their bargaining position in the legislature (see discussion in Article 1, Nielsen et al., 2019: 4-5). The party’s size and policy position determine its bargaining position (Roozendaal, 1990). Larger parties are more likely to move into government and enter coalitions (Laver & Schofield, 1990; Martin & Stevenson, 2001) that provide policy influence and/or office positions. For personalized representation, we argue that legislators representing parties that can provide policy influence and office positions have fewer incentives to personalize their representation because they are then more likely to achieve their goals of policy and office (Nielsen et al., 2019: 5). For this to happen, they will typically have to adhere to the party principal, and they are therefore more likely to act as party agents.

In terms of intra-party democracy, we propose that legislators who represent a party with a strong party principal will have weaker incentives and opportunities to personalize their representation. We define the party principal as either the party leadership or the central extra-parliamentary party organization (Nielsen et al., 2019). On the one hand, if the party principal has great influence on party policy, the individual legislator is more dependent on either the party organization (Pedersen, 2010) or the party leadership. On the other hand, a strong party principal can also cause intra-party conflicts because the policy influence is out of the hands of the legislators in the parliamentary group. If the legislators disagree with the party line, they have no means to influence it but have to either loyally toe the party line or go against the party. Legislators representing parties with more balanced distribution of intra-party power have the possibility to shape party policy and strike compromises that are more in line with their own or with their constituents’ attitudes. Therefore, we expect that legislators representing parties with either a strong central party organization or party leadership will be more likely to personalize their representation (Nielsen et al., 2019: 4-5).

The opportunities to influence the party position may also depend on legislators’ own position in the party. In article 1, we argue that in cases of intra-party conflict, rational legislators have to weigh the cost of personalizing their behavior against the cost of following the party line (ibid.: 3-4). From an office-perspective, the cost is higher if the legislator holds a powerful party position and needs to give this leadership position up. From a policy-seeking perspective, legislators in powerful positions might be less likely to end up in conflicts in the first place because they can influence party decisions. Therefore, we expect legislators who hold a powerful party position to be less likely

to personalize their representation (see discussion in Article 1, Nielsen et al., 2019: 3-4).

## Conclusion

This chapter has provided the conceptual and theoretical framework for the dissertation. First, I have clarified my understanding of personalized representation and argued that personalized representation entails that legislators highlight either their personal characteristics and skills or their constituency more than their party. I contribute to the conceptual understanding by adding another non-partisan aspect of localization and by arguing that personalized behavior happens at the expense of the party but does not always break the cohesion of the parliamentary party group. Second, I have presented my theoretical point of departure: that personalized representation depends on legislators' incentives and opportunities, and that this cost-benefit calculation depends on the societal development, legislators' personal electoral situation and capacities, intra-party control and electoral institutions. Hereby, I contribute to the literature with a general theoretical model that explains variation in personalized representation across time, political systems, parties and politicians. Lastly, I have elaborated on how this overall theoretical model of personalized representation relates to the specific theoretical arguments in the articles of this dissertation.

In the next chapter, I will argue for the operationalization of indicators of personalized representation and explanatory factors used in the four articles of this dissertation. Furthermore, I will discuss some of the general methodological challenges related to investigating personalization and how I addressed them in this project.

## Chapter 4.

# Research design and data

This chapter discusses the operationalization of indicators of personalized representation and explanatory factors used in the four articles of this dissertation. For further details on the research design, I refer to the articles. Furthermore, I will discuss some of the general methodological challenges related to investigating personalization. While the individual articles do not always allow room for such discussions, I will use this chapter to discuss how I have addressed them in this project. The chapter proceeds in two parts. First, utilizing the conceptual argument from chapter 3 about how costly personalization is for party cohesion, I discuss my choice of indicators for personalized representation and account for the data sources I use and their strengths and limitations. Second, I provide an overview of the operationalization of the three theoretical factors from the model in chapter 3. I discuss the validity of the different measures that I use to explain personalized representation in the four articles. Lastly, I discuss my case selection and the derived strengths and weaknesses concerning the external validity of the project.

## Selecting indicators of personalized representation

A general challenge related to investigating personalization is that it requires indicators that cover a long period, because the claim is that the development from party politics to personalized politics has happened since the heyday of the mass party in the 1950s and 1960s (Karvonen, 2010; Adam & Maier, 2010; Nielsen, 2020). This constrains researchers in terms of choosing indicators of personalization because of data availability. For instance, social media behavior cannot be traced back to the 1960s. Furthermore, as I argue in chapter 3, personalization within parliament has more severe consequences for the party in terms of cohesion of the parliamentary group. Therefore, I have tried to select indicators that are consequential for the party under considerations of what data sources were available for a long time span. Across articles, I use four different indicators of personalized representation. Furthermore, as I accounted for in chapter 2, personalization within parliament is the least studied part of the subtype related to politicians' behavior. In this project, I therefore focus on indicators tapping into parliamentary behavior. Table 3 provides an overview of the indicators of personalized representation. They vary in terms

of data sources and their consequences for party cohesion. I will develop this argument further when I discuss my choice of indicators.

Table 3. Overview of the project's indicators of personalized representation, data sources and cases

| Article | Indicator                     | Data   | Case                       |
|---------|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 1       | Legislative party switching   | Original dataset of all Danish MPs from 1953-2015 including party switching, status of reelection etc.   | Denmark                    |
| 2       | Parliamentary speech          | Original dataset with all maiden speeches from the UK House of Commons from 1945-2015.   | United Kingdom             |
| 3       | Individual position taking    | Combined with data from a voting advice application (VAA) for candidates at the 2015 Danish National election and a mass voter survey from 2015. | Denmark                    |
| 4       | Perceptions of representation | Original elite surveys collected in 2017 among Danish and British MPs  | Denmark and United Kingdom |

In article 1 (Nielsen et al., 2019), we focus on legislative party switching, which is defined as legislators who switch to an existing party, start a new party, or become party independent (Desposato, 2006; Heller & Mershon, 2009). More frequent party switching can be perceived as a sign of more individualized behavior (Wauters et al., 2019). As I argued in chapter 3, legislative party switching has the most severe consequences in terms of party cohesion of the parliamentary group. It leads to the ultimate break that cannot be repaired and is therefore extremely costly for both the legislator and the party. This makes it a strong indicator of personalized representation. In the article, we only include instances of switching that happen inside parliament. However, politicians who are not elected also switch parties, but leaving the party outside parliament implies only minor costs in terms of losing office, policy, and votes for the legislator and for the party. Only including instances of party switching that happen within parliament therefore makes legislative party switching a hard case for identifying personalization of representation.

Specifically, we investigate legislative party switching in Denmark from 1953 to 2015 with the individual politician in each election period as unit of analysis. To study legislative party switching, we first had to create a database including all Danish MPs elected since the latest constitutional change in 1953. This database needed to include not only the name of the MPs, but also if their party affiliation had changed during the election period. After each election, 175 MPs enter parliament, summing up to 3850 MPs representing 18 different political parties in 22 legislatures in the period of investigation. By collecting data on all MPs instead of just a sample of specific legislatures or legislators, we avoid sampling biases regarding legislatures or legislators that usually

haunt the study of party switching (for more information about data collection, see Article 1, Nielsen et al., 2019: 6-7). While time-consuming, the creation of a comprehensive database is necessary to overcome sampling bias.

At the other extreme in terms of consequences for party cohesion is personalization in parliamentary speeches. Specifically, I use references to private, individual or local matters in parliamentary speeches as an indicator of personalized representation. Personalized behavior in parliamentary speeches is not as severe in terms of party cohesion compared to the other extreme, legislative party switching, but speaking in parliament is an important part of legislators' jobs where they present themselves and speak on behalf of the party. Hence, investigating whether we find a change towards legislators speaking more about themselves or their constituency than about the party is important in terms of arguing for personalization of representation. To track personalization in parliamentary speeches, I needed a comparable indicator (speech) over time, and I collected British MPs' maiden speeches (their first speech in parliament) from 1945 to 2015 (N = 2840). The maiden speech is the first opportunity for a new MP to present herself to parliament and speak to her constituency and the public from parliament. Furthermore, the speech gives the MP an opportunity to signal which type of MP she is and intends to be without the involvement or coordination from her political party. For these reasons, and because the format of the speeches is the same over a long time span, it is a highly valuable source for studying how MPs "frame" their representation across time (for more details, see Article 2, Nielsen, 2020). However, studying the many characteristics of maiden speeches is not without shortcomings as they relate to a specific context and to freshmen MPs, which may make maiden speeches a most likely case for detecting personalization in parliamentary speeches (Nielsen, 2020).

In addition to a longitudinal design, studying personalization requires a relative measure that captures change in relative terms to the party. For some indicators, it is straightforward what the partisan state is. For example, for party switching, it is those who stay in the party; for other indicators, it takes a lot of effort to operationalize personalization in relative terms. For example, when studying personalization in legislators' communication in campaigns, online, or in parliament, one needs to identify partisan communication as well and relate this to non-partisan communication. Capturing personalization in speeches is challenging, and only one study conducts such an analysis (Balmas et al., 2014). Balmas et al. (2014) use self-references as a proxy for personalization. More specifically, they count the use of first-person singular words in Israeli prime ministers' presentations of their new governments from 1949 to 2009. Even though their study was an innovative first step, we need a more comprehensive operationalization and a relative measure, which, as I argued

in chapter 3, is a prerequisite for capturing personalization. For example, if the Israeli prime ministers say ‘I’ much more over the years but also mention their party affiliation more, then we do not have a case of personalization. Rahat and Kenig have suggested a relative measure, i.e., measuring personalization in speeches as ‘a perceptible shift from we and us to I and me’, but they have not investigated it empirically (2018: 121). However, focusing only on a shift from ‘we’ and ‘us’ to ‘I’ and ‘me’ is also problematic because the use of ‘we’ could also be a reference to the constituency or the MP’s family. To overcome these problems, I build a dictionary and conduct automatic content analyses. This allows me to measure personalization in maiden speeches in the UK House of Commons from 1945 to 2015 (for more details on the dictionary construction, see Article 2, Nielsen, 2020).

Additionally, I use survey data for the remaining two indicators, which allows me to capture legislators’ positions that are not expressed in their voting behavior. Survey data has the strength that it captures individual preferences and perceptions, which can be difficult to infer from behavioral data. Unfortunately, such data do not exist over time. In article 3 (Binderkrantz et al., 2020), we use MPs’ individual position taking as an indicator of personalized representation. This indicator measures the distance between the individual legislator’s and the party’s position. If legislators take positions that are more congruent with the preferences of their constituents than with their party, we interpret this as a sign of personalized representation. Individual position taking is not as costly as actual dissent in, e.g., roll call voting, but it gives an indication of how reliant legislators are on their party.

Specifically, we utilize a unique data source from a Voting Advice Application (VAA) conducted in Denmark in 2015. VAAs are candidate surveys in which candidates communicate their issue positions directly to voters before an election to aid them in making an informed choice at the ballot box (for more information on the composition of the VAA, see Online Appendix C in Article 3, Binderkrantz et al., 2020). The VAA data are useful to measure position taking for two main reasons. First, they have a very high response rate of 96 % (especially compared to other elite surveys), which means that we can use the candidate statements to identify MP positions for nearly the full population of the 175 Danish MPs. Second, the responses to the VAA questions are actual cases of MPs communicating their positions openly to the electorate. With the VAA data, we therefore obtain a direct measure of public position taking as opposed to an indirect measure of intrinsic preferences, which are more likely to be revealed in anonymous surveys (ibid. 13-14; Willumsen and Öhberg 2017). Furthermore, we include a measure for the party’s position by calculating the party’s modal candidate response (for the exact calculation, see Article 3, Binderkrantz et al., 2020: 14), and data from a mass voter survey



also collected in 2015 to get a measure of district preferences (Binderkrantz et al., 2020: 15). For this analysis, we only include all MPs elected in 2015. A downside of this measure is that VAAs are not utilized retrospectively, and we are therefore confined to investigate variation in personalized representation. On the other hand, this is also important for me to be able to investigate the effect of the explaining factors from the theoretical model.

In article 4 (Bøggild et al., 2019), the dependent variable is legislators' perception of whom they represent. To measure personalized representation, we use a common measure applied and validated in previous research from other contexts. Specifically, we asked the MPs how they thought an MP should vote in a situation with disagreement between the party's and the MP's position. Response options: 1) the MP should vote according to the position of the party; 2) the MP should vote according to his or her own opinion (Bøggild, 2019: 6-7). In line with my definition, the latter is taken as a preference for personalized representation. There are many studies that investigate legislators' role perception of whether they perceive themselves as party delegates or personal trustees (e.g., Thomassen & Esaisson, 2006; Converse & Pierce, 1986), but there is only one study conducted within the personalization framework that uses this indicator (Papp, 2018, who also includes the representative focus of being a voter delegate). This indicator does not have direct consequences for party cohesion, but it gives an indication of how MPs think they should behave in situations of disagreement. Hence, it gives an indication of whether we should expect more dissent in parliament.

Again, as indicated above, survey data is often not available or not comparable over time. For this indicator, we do not have longitudinal survey data. To be able to investigate variation in personalized representation, we collected original survey data simultaneously in Denmark and the United Kingdom. The Danish survey was distributed via email including links as well as via paper mail in March 2017. We closed the survey period in September 2017. Overall, 89 Danish MPs (49.7 %) provided some answers, and 74 (41.3 %) answered the full survey. In the United Kingdom, we launched the survey including electronic and paper versions simultaneously with the Danish data collection but had to extend the survey period due to the unexpected election in spring 2017. When we closed the survey period in November 2017, 89 British MPs (13.7 %) had answered some questions, and 68 of these MPs (10.5 %) had answered all questions relevant for this analysis (Bøggild et al., 2019: 6). While the Danish response rate is comparatively high, the British is low but comparable to other elite surveys (for more information on data collection, see Article 4, Bøggild et al., 2019: 6).

Summing up, personalized representation is measured as legislators taking an individualized position, as legislators perceiving themselves as independent representatives, as legislators leaving their party, or as legislators speaking about private, individual and local matters in parliamentary speeches. I have tried to place the different indicators in Figure 4 based on their consequences for party cohesion, on what seems most sensible and logical, but of course, it is a matter of interpretation.

Figure 4. The indicators of personalized representation in terms of their consequences for party cohesion

| Party cohesion of the parliamentary group    |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| Parliamentary behavior                       |   |  |  |
| Individualized activities or position taking |   |  | Dissent from the party                       |
| Article 2:<br>Parliamentary<br>speeches      | Article 3:<br>Individual<br>position taking | Article 4:<br>Perceptions of<br>representation | Article 1:<br>Legislative party<br>switching |

I argue that legislators speaking as individual representatives rather than party representatives in parliament are the least consequential indicator. Speaking more about your personal qualities is not as consequential as taking an individualized position. Furthermore, I use the maiden speech as indicator, which makes it less severe, because the party could potentially discipline the legislator later. After parliamentary speeches, I have placed legislators' individualized position taking. Even though it is harmful for the party if candidates express positions that are incongruent with the party position, this measure is captured during election times using VAAs. It does not disrupt party cohesion in the parliamentary group, but it could be damaging if it is an expression of the legislators' position in parliament. Moreover, legislators' perception of representation does not break party unity either because it is not actual behavior. One could question if it is more consequential than individualized position taking. However, this indicator specifically asks about parliamentary behavior, and if the legislators who answer that they prefer personalized representation follow their own opinion when it comes to actual voting behavior, this indicator is potentially damaging for party cohesion. Lastly, legislators leaving their party is without doubt the most consequential indicator and represents the ultimate break of party cohesion. In other words, I have selected indicators that are consequential for the party, under considerations of what data sources were available, making me able to either investigate personalization over a long time span or explain variation in personalized representation.

This leads me to the second part of this chapter, where I will present the indicators capturing the theoretical factors used to explain personalized representation.

## Operationalization of the three sets of theoretical explanatory factors

Finding indicators capturing the theoretical factors used to explain personalized representation is also challenging if one relies on a longitudinal design. This has limited me in my case selection and operationalization of some of the theoretical factors that I use to explain personalized representation. Table 4 displays indicators related to the three general factors from the theoretical model presented in chapter 3. In the following, I will discuss the strength and weakness of my choice of operationalization and round off with a discussion of my case selection.

Table 4. Indicators capturing the theoretical factors used to explain personalization of representation

| Theoretical factors        | Specific theoretical factor                             | Operationalization   |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Societal development       | Partisan dealignment                                    | Article 1 and 3: Time  |
|                            | Mediatization of politics                               | Article 2: Time and voter dealignment  |
|                            | Cultural changes  |  |
| Individual characteristics | Electoral security                                      | Article 1: Number of personal votes<br>Article 2: Electoral marginality  |
|                            | Pre-parliamentary party career                          | Article 3: Party locals, party functionaries, party civilians.   |
|                            | Personality traits                                      | Article 4: The big five personality traits   |
| Political institutions     | The party's size and policy position in the legislature | Article 1: Sized-based bargaining power using the Shapley-Shubik index<br>The left-right position from the Manifesto Project                 |
|                            | The party's intra-party democracy                       | Article 1: The intra-party balance of power-index (BOBLA)  |
|                            | The legislators' position in the party                  | Article 1: Own coding of the legislators' position in the party using the parliamentary handbook   |
|                            | Electoral incentives                                    | Article 4: The electoral system as country dummies. Country comparison between Denmark and the UK utilizing the different electoral contexts |

## Societal developments

The first set of factors expected to affect personalization is partisan dealignment, mediatization of politics and cultural changes leading to a more individualized society. Common for these is that they postulate a development over time where politics have become personalized. This raises not only the challenge of finding available longitudinal indicators, but also the causal challenge of separating the different theoretical factors related to the societal development. As I accounted for in chapter 3, the societal causes of personalization is one of the most well-established claims in the personalization literature. However, capturing societal mega trends over time is difficult as is operationalizing specific measures of dealignment, mediatization, and cultural changes that are comparable across countries and exist over time. I have come some way by collecting most of my indicators of personalized representation over time (articles 1, 2 and 3). I use time as a proxy for the societal development, and besides time, I apply survey data in article 2 to capture partisan dealignment among British voters over time. Specifically, I use the percentage of strong party identifiers from the British Election Study (for more details of the operationalization, see Article 2, Nielsen, 2020). One could argue that a district-level measure of partisan alignment, which does not exist, comes closer to the individual MPs' reasoning, but the theoretical argument in the literature rests on a systemic development, and I therefore argue in favor of using this national measure of partisan alignment. I acknowledge that this measure has to be interpreted with caution, but I still maintain the theoretical idea that the societal explanation is related to megatrends in the way citizens and politicians perceive politics and engage as political actors. Therefore, the overall development of voter dealignment is theoretically meaningful and relevant. In other words, it is a causal challenge to separate the different factors over time, and I acknowledge that I do not show a causal relationship between these societal factors and personalization. However, I still argue that finding trends over time that match these societal mega trends allows me to draw general conclusions about the development but not to determine which of these societal changes is decisive for the development

## Individual characteristics

A number of individual characteristics may also affect how MPs balance different costs and gains associated with personalized representation. As discussed in chapter 3, I investigate three main individual characteristics in the articles: electoral security, pre-parliamentary party career, and personality traits. I take the electoral situation of legislators into account in two ways by

using the absolute number of personal votes (article 1) and the seat marginality (article 2). I use two different measures because we develop two different arguments regarding the different indicators of personalized representation. First, electoral security is operationalized as the number of personal votes of each legislator in article 1. The Danish electoral system is proportional and organizes the country into multi-member districts. Almost all parties use open lists, allowing voters to vote for the party or for individual candidates (for more details, see Article 1, Nielsen et al., 2019). We choose this operationalization rather than a measure that utilizes the relative distance to the first candidate not elected because the argument regarding party switching is that MPs who are vote-getters have their own personal platform. Having many personal votes reduces the cost of leaving the party because MPs are then more likely to be reelected for another party. The measure is obtained using the official election results from Statistic Denmark (Nielsen et al., 2019). A different operationalization of electoral security is used in article 2 where I investigate the impact of electoral security on personalization of parliamentary speeches in the United Kingdom. The British electoral system is majoritarian with single member constituencies. I therefore use an existing operationalization of electoral marginality that measures the difference between the percentage of votes received by first- and second-place candidates. The measure is obtained from existing data sources (Norris 2005; vanHeerde-Hudson and Campbell 2015), but for elections prior to 1979 and missing values in the existing dataset, I use the ‘British Parliamentary Election Result’ (Craig, 1983a; Craig, 1983b; Rallings & Thrasher, 1999). Afterwards, an ordinal measure on a five-point scale is constructed using Norris and Crewe’s classification (Norris & Crewe, 1994; for more information, see Article 2, Nielsen, 2020).

Legislators’ pre-parliamentary party career is used as an independent variable to explain differences in legislators’ congruence with the party and their constituents in article 3. To create a measure for legislators’ pre-parliamentary party career, we use sequence analysis to reduce the variation in these party career trajectories into analytically useful clusters of similar careers. This requires two steps: (1) collecting and coding information about party-career positions, and (2) preparing the data to perform the clustering analysis. For the first step, we have coded the pre-parliamentary party career of each MP from the age of 18 until the year before they entered parliament for the first time. In our coding scheme, we distinguish between three types of positions: (1) internal party positions (persons are either elected by party members or employed by the party); (2) legislative positions (the voters elect the person); and (3) executive positions (the voters elect the person indirectly). Furthermore, we rank these positions according to three levels of governance: (a) local/regional, (b) European, and (c) national. When a politician receives the code 10

(MP), the coding process ends for that person (Binderkrantz et al., 2020: 7-8). The second step is to create measures that allow us to compare the various MP career sequences (for information on how the sequence and clustering analysis is performed, see Article 3, Binderkrantz et al., 2020: 8-10). We end up with three clusters. The first is *party civilians* because they are legislators with a pre-parliamentary career formed outside party politics in a ‘civil’ job. The second is *party locals* who have strong roots in the local party and have represented it in local legislatures and in local executives as mayors or heads of the regional council. The third cluster is *party functionaries* who predominantly have a pre-parliamentary career in the national party (for more details on the three types, see Article 3, Binderkrantz et al., 2020: 9-11).

To measure the personality traits of MPs in article 4, we use comprehensive survey batteries to measure Big Five personality structures. Specifically, we use one of the most validated and accepted measurements tools, the 60-item NEO-FFI-3, which includes 12 questions to measure each of the five personality traits. Recent research has demonstrated that short personality measures are associated with significant shortcomings in terms of measurement validity and reliability. However, comprehensive measures are particularly difficult to obtain in elite surveys where the response rates are typically low and the survey length is key to limiting this problem (Bøggild et al., 2019: 5). Thus, we had to balance considerations of response rate and measurement accuracy when designing the survey. More specifically, we applied the full battery in the Danish survey because Danish MPs are generally more willing to participate in research surveys. This is not the case for British MPs, and we therefore chose to conduct a representative survey among British voters and analyze which items had the strongest loading on the five personality items. Afterwards, we applied this reduced battery of 22 items in the British survey (see discussion in Article 4, Bøggild et al., 2019: 5-6). To measure the reliability of the measures, we provide the Cronbach’s alpha scores for each personality (see table 2 in Article 4, Bøggild et al., 2019: 6). The reliability of the different measures is generally acceptable, but the alpha score is slightly lower in the UK due to the smaller number of items.

## Political institutions

In terms of political institutions, I want to measure the general constraints these institutions can put on the legislator and either strengthen or reduce incentives and opportunities for legislators to personalize their representation. A crucial institutional factor is the party, which the legislator represents in

parliament, and to capture party factors, we employ different measures in article 1. However, it is important to note that these specific indicators do not cover all possible operationalizations of party factors in the literature.

A constraint the party can put on the legislators is determined by the party's ability to provide the goals legislators want. To measure the party's ability to provide policy and/or office, I need measures of the party's size and policy position. In article 1, we therefore use the Shapley-Shubik index value to calculate the size-based bargaining power for each party (Shapley and Shubik, 1954). This index shows how many of the total number of possible winning coalitions a party participates in. The more coalitions a party is able to turn into winning, the more size-based bargaining power it holds (Nielsen et al., 2019: 7). A party's policy position is operationalized using the left-right position from the Manifesto Project (Budge, 2001; Volkens et al., 2016). The left-right policy dimension is the most relevant for coalition formation in Danish politics (Skjæveland, 2005), and the manifesto data uniquely provides measures of party positions of all parties, except The Schleswig Party, which was only represented by one MP in the period of investigation (Nielsen, et al., 2019: 7).

In the previous chapter, I argued that the opportunities to influence the party position depend not only on the party's size and position in the legislature but may also depend on the legislator's own position in the party. We define party positions as leader, vice leader, head of the parliamentary party group, party spokesperson, or minister since they all offer special privileges and power to influence party decisions. We coded if the MP held one of these positions during the election period using the Parliamentary Handbook (for more details, see Article 1, Nielsen et al., 2019).

In chapter 3, I propose that legislators who represent a party with a strong party principal will have weaker incentives and opportunities to personalize their representation. To measure the intra-party decision-making power, we use the IPOD-dataset made available by Giger and Schumacher (2015). They have integrated all existing data sets on intra-party characteristics and created a measure of intra-party balance of power (BOPLA) that combines data collected by Janda (1980), Laver and Hunt (1992), and Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2012). This measure captures the balance of power between activists and party leadership, which fit our definition of the party principal as either the central extra-parliamentarian party organization or the party leadership (Nielsen et al., 2019: 4-5). Two concerns are related to the use of this measure. First, the data from the early years is collected with considerable distance between data points. Second, the measures used to construct BOPLA are not exactly the same; especially the measure based on Janda's data diverges from the two other measures. We would therefore be reluctant to use this

measure to describe developments in intra-party power of balance across time. However, we avoid this issue by including dummies for each legislature to investigate differences across parties and legislators within legislatures where the measure comes from the same data source (for more information on the measure, see discussion in Article 1, Nielsen et al., 2019: 7-8).

Another crucial political institution is the electoral system, which I also accounted for in chapter 3. To measure how the electoral incentives affect legislators' ability to personalize their representation, I utilize the different electoral context in the United Kingdom and Denmark in article 4. Institutionally, the British political system is a first-past-the-post majoritarian system with single-member constituencies providing favorable conditions for candidate-centered behavior and personalized politics (Bøggild et al., 2019: 5; Cain et al., 1987). In a parliamentary system with a majoritarian election system, such as the British, parties may give individual candidates more freedom to personalize, because the party depends on candidates individually securing the support of voters in their districts in a way not comparable to systems with party lists. Cohesive parties are the main mechanism for holding politicians accountable in a proportional multi-member system such as the Danish, and political parties therefore are less likely to allow personalized representation within parliament (for more discussion of these contexts, see Article 4, Bøggild et al., 2019: 5). I therefore expect more personalized representation in the British context. On the other hand, scholars have argued that multi-member systems with preferential voting as the Danish system encourage intra-party competition between candidates (Carey & Shugart, 1995; Karvonen, 2010; Colomer, 2013). Hence, we should also expect personalized representation in the Danish case.

By limiting my focus to these two cases, I only get a crude measure of the relation between the electoral system and personalized representation because other factors correlate within the two countries. However, I have prioritized collecting original data over a long time span and coming up with innovative indicators of the main variables explaining this phenomenon at the expense of investigating indicators across many countries. Focusing on Denmark and the United Kingdom does limit the generalizability of my findings in relation to the project's overall research question, but it allows me to provide detailed and rich insights into personalization of parliamentary representation in the two countries. Furthermore, if personalization takes place in these two very different electoral contexts, it is likely to happen across very different political contexts. I could have chosen countries like Israel and Italy where we know the level of personalization is relatively high (Rahat & Kenig,



2018), and investigating most likely cases may make it more likely to find personalization inside parliament, but the generalizability of the findings would still be context-specific.

## Conclusion

Studying personalization requires longitudinal indicators, which is challenging for two reasons. First, in terms of data availability and data collection. For example, survey data is often not available or not comparable over time. Many indicators require extensive resources in terms of data collection or scholars being able to utilize new tools in terms of web scraping and automated content analysis to gather and analyze the data needed to investigate personalization. Although it is challenging, I have been able to collect indicators that are consequential to different degrees for the cohesion of the party's parliamentary group, and I have prioritized obtaining a good and accurate measurement of personalization to ensure the validity of my measures. Second, it is a causal challenge to separate the different theoretical factors related to the societal development. I acknowledge that I do not show a causal relationship between the societal factors and personalization, but I still argue that finding trends over time that match these societal mega trends enables me to speculate if the development can be ascribed to these societal changes.

Prioritizing collecting original data over a long time span to get a good and accurate measure of personalization of representation has come at the expense of investigating indicators across many countries. My case selection limits the generalizability of the findings in relation to the overall research question to other political contexts with similar developments. However, only focusing on Denmark and the United Kingdom allows me to provide detailed and rich insights into personalization of parliamentary representation in the two countries, and if personalization takes place in these two very different electoral contexts, it is likely to happen across very different political contexts. Furthermore, I present valuable evidence of personalization in the parliamentary arena and suggest new ways of tackling some of the general methodological challenges. In terms of investigating personalization in legislators' communication, I propose a more extensive and relative measure of personalization than the literature has previously suggested. Furthermore, my suggestion on how to utilize a dictionary approach can overcome the general challenge of extensive data processing when scholars want to investigate personalization.

The next chapter will review the main findings of this dissertation. Recall that the research question includes three types of explanatory factors. I will first discuss how the societal development, which is mainly operationalized as change over time, affects the relation between legislators and their party. In

other words, based on my findings, I will discuss if there is a trend of personalization in terms of legislators parliamentary behavior. Second, I will turn to the other two factors: individual characteristics and political institutions and present my findings in relation to explaining variation in personalized representation.

## Chapter 5.

# Overview of main findings

This chapter provides an overview of the main findings of the dissertation. Recall from chapter 1 that the research question is: How do societal developments, legislator characteristics and the political institutions influence the relationship between legislator and party? I will use the research question to structure this chapter. As discussed in chapter 4, finding indicators of the theoretical factors related to the societal development is difficult, and it is a causal challenge to separate them over time. However, as I also argued in the previous chapter, finding trends over time that match these societal mega trends enables me to draw general conclusions about the development but not to determine which of these societal changes is decisive for the development. Based on my findings, I will first answer the question whether the societal development has led to a personalization of politics in legislators' parliamentary behavior and discuss the specific theoretical factors related to time with caution. In the remaining part of this chapter, I present findings related to the two other explanatory factors from the research question and account for how variation in legislators' characteristics and political institutions can explain personalized representation. Lastly, I answer the research question based on the empirical patterns I illuminate in my two cases.

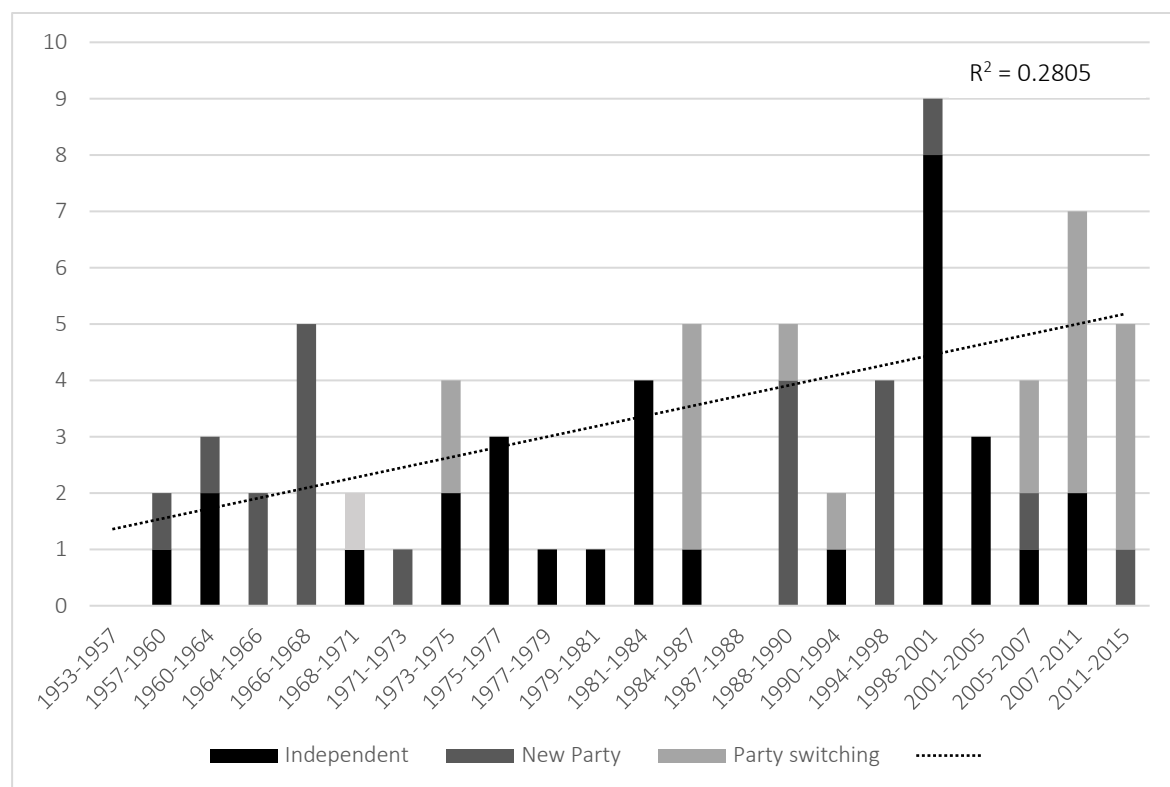
### How do societal developments influence the relationship between legislator and party?

For the first part of the research question, I present two types of evidence: 1) data on party switching in Denmark from 1953 to 2015 (Nielsen et al., 2019; Nielsen & Pedersen, 2017), and 2) developments in maiden speeches in the House of Commons from 1945 to 2015 (Nielsen, 2020). These findings suggest that personalization of representation is present but limited and mainly comes in the so far less acknowledged form of localization.

Figure 5 displays the number of party switches per election period in the Danish parliament. In general, we find that Danish MPs only rarely switch party (Nielsen et al., 2019: 43). Of the 3850 possible MPs who have had a seat in each of the 22 electoral periods between 1953 to 2015, only 72 changed party affiliation during the relevant electoral period. This equals 2 percent of all MPs and on average three instances of switching per election period (Nielsen & Pedersen, 2017: 54). However, key to this dissertation, party switching is increasing and was most frequent in the periods 1998-2001 (nine) and 2007-

2011 (seven). As Figure 5 shows, there is an increase over time with an R-squared value of 0.2805. There is also a significant effect of including dummies for each legislature in the regression model used to explain party switching in Article 1 (see result in Nielsen et al., 2019: 53). However, specific contextual factors create bumps in the number of party switches and previous periods in which there are relatively many switches. This applies, for example, to the period 1966-1968 when five members of the Socialist People's Party left to establish the Left Socialists. If we take a more detailed look, it is especially instances of MPs switching from one party to another that has risen. The tendency to start a new party or to become independent is slightly declining.

Figure 5. The number of party switches in the Danish parliament per election period from 1953 to 2015



Note: This figure is based on a Danish article published by the author (see Nielsen & Pedersen, 2017).

Overall, the increasing number of MPs leaving their party in the Danish parliament indicates that personalization of representation does happen more frequently, but the trend is not unequivocal, and we see great variation across election periods. The two latest periods after 2015 also confirm that there is no clear trend towards more party switching with only one switch in 2015-2019 and so far six instances of party switching in the current election period. Even though party switching happens more frequently, the numbers are still

small, and the vast majority of Danish MPs represent the same party throughout the period (Nielsen & Pedersen, 2017: 54-55).

## Personalization in British maiden speeches

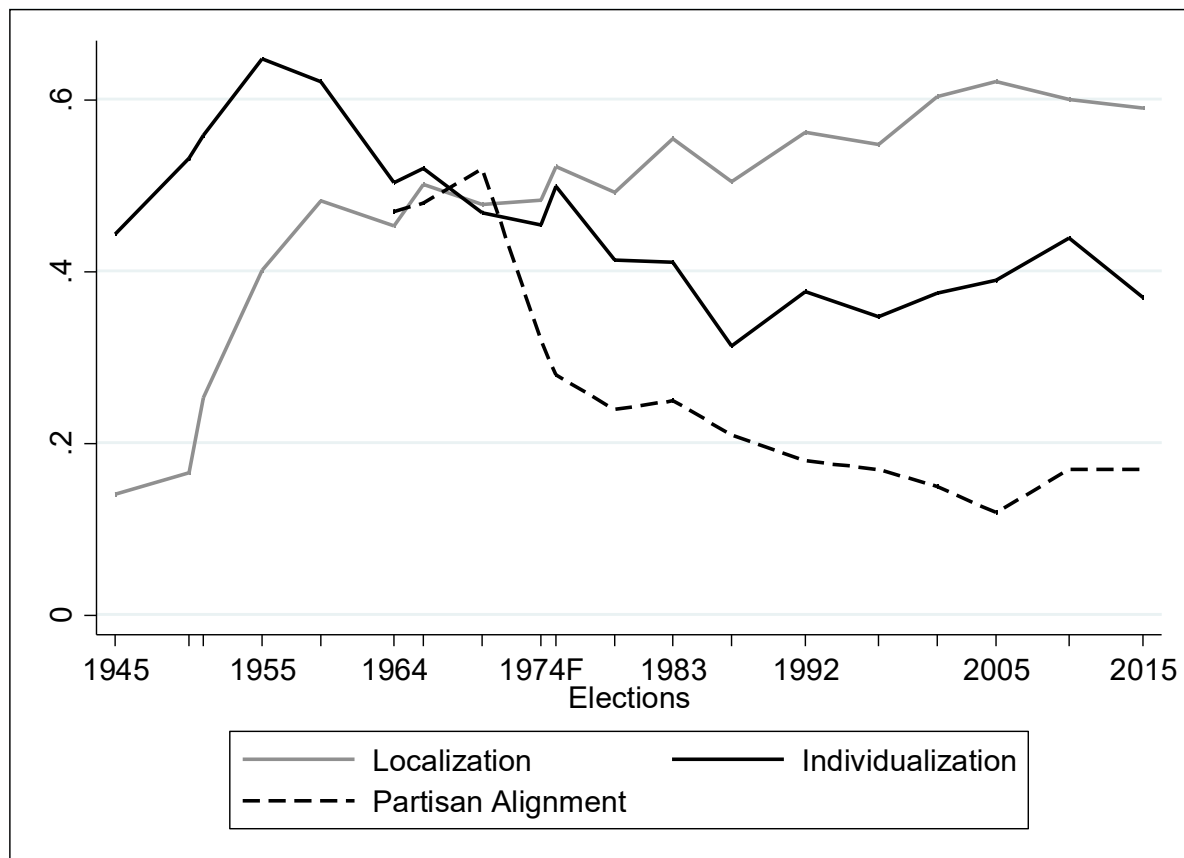
Next, I present findings from article 2, in which I investigate personalization in British maiden speeches from 1945 to 2015 (Nielsen, 2020). Here I have contrasted individualized and localized speech with party-oriented speech to build two relative measures that capture individualization and localization. Figure 6 displays the two dimensions of personalization of representation and a measure of partisan alignment for each election period. The dotted line in Figure 6 shows that the UK – as many other countries – has experienced a partisan dealignment among voters. On average 49 percent of the voters answered that they strongly identified with a party at the three elections before 1970 (1964, 1966 and 1970). At the five elections in the 1970s and 1980s, the percentage of strong party identifiers dropped to 26 percent on average, and at the seven elections after 1990, it drops even more to only 13.7 percent on average. In other words, there has been substantial electoral dealignment over the years in British politics, which is argued to be one of the main incentives for politicians to personalize their representation.

Recall that the dependent variables are operationalized on a 0-1-scale, where 0 means that MPs only speak about their party, and 1 means that MPs only speak about themselves (individualization) or their constituency (localization). The measure of individualization provides no indication of personalization of representation. Actually, individualized representation is on the rise in the years following the Second World War. From 1955, representation becomes gradually less individualized until 1987 when maiden speeches become slightly more individualized again. However, it never crosses the 0.5 mark indicating that MPs use more words related to themselves than their party. There is thus no linear relationship between time and individualization or between dealignment and individualization, which goes against the expectation in the literature, and there does not seem to be strong evidence for a development towards individualization in the UK.

Furthermore, I estimate the two measures of personalization using a Tobit model where the dependent variable is censored from below (0) and above (1) (Tobin, 1958, see regression table in Article 2, Nielsen, 2020). Here I find a negative statistically significant correlation between the year of the speech and individualization. As we saw from the plot in Figure 6 and contrary to expectations, MPs speak more about themselves in the beginning of the period of investigation. The regression model also shows a positive significant correla-

tion between electoral dealignment and individualization, and that relationship holds when the year of the speech is included. Again contrary to expectations, increased dealignment among voters is associated with lower rather than higher levels of individualization. In other words, at times when fewer voters identify with a party, MPs speak more about their party rather than present themselves in their maiden speech.

Figure 6. Personalization of representation in British maiden speeches, 1945-2015



Note:  $n = 2707$ .

Localization, on the other hand, is on the rise throughout the period, and after 1974, where the line crosses 0.5, there seems to be a consistent shift towards highlighting the constituency more than the party in the maiden speeches (Nielsen, 2020). I also find a positive significant relationship between the year of the speech and localization: MPs speak more about their constituency relative to their party over time. However, the regression model shows a negative significant correlation between electoral dealignment and localization. At times when the percentage of strong party identifiers is high, MPs speak more about their party. This confirms the expected relationship between electoral dealignment and localization. However, this relationship disappears when both year and electoral dealignment are included. It seems that other factors

related to time affect this dimension of personalization. For example, mediatization of politics or cultural changes of individualization, which I am not able to test for because measures of societal individualization or mediatization over time are lacking. However, I have to be cautious when I interpret this finding in relation to electoral dealignment, because when analyzing mediating variables it is not possible to eliminate the effect of dealignment.

Before I move on to the two remaining explanatory factors, I will sum up my results regarding the first part of the research question. As I discussed in chapter 3, the changes in politics related to parties losing their roots in society, mediatization and culture, gave rise to an expectation that politics has become personalized. I acknowledge that I do not show a causal relationship between the specific societal factors and personalization because it is very difficult to determine which of these factors – if any – are at play. However, they all point in the same direction. My results show that changes in politics have also led to changes in representation: more party switching, more localized focus, but not to a general trend of personalization in the sense that politicians act as independent representatives in parliament or emphasize themselves more than their party in parliamentary speeches. The results therefore do not support that personalization of representation is a general trend driven by the development in the media and among voters.

## How do legislator characteristics influence the relationship between legislator and party?

As I just showed, personalization does not seem to be an automatic process resulting from the societal development. The reason may be that legislators have different incentives and opportunities to react to societal changes. Legislators' style of representation may thus depend on their individual characteristics and contextual situation as indicated by the research question. I will present the main results for the three specific factors: legislators' electoral security, pre-parliamentary party career and personality trait (see chapter 3).

### Electoral security

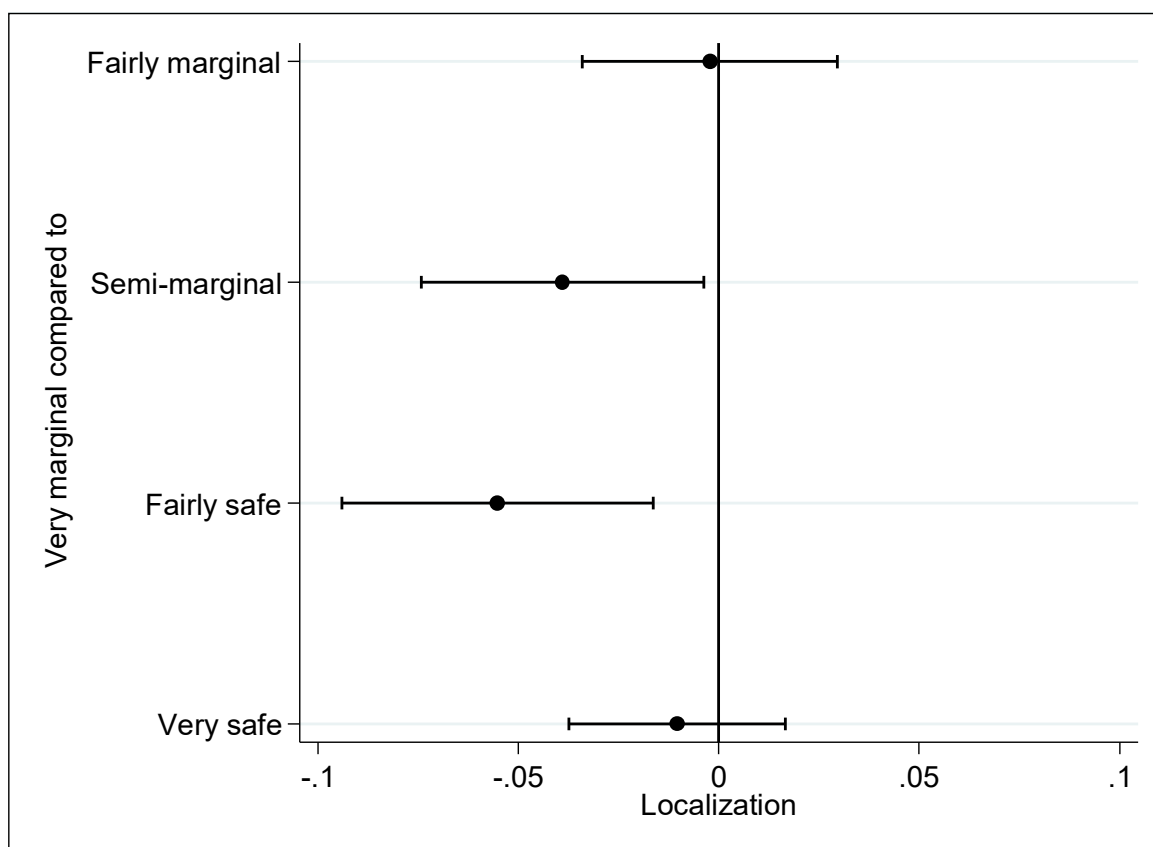
Legislators' electoral security is the first individual characteristic that I hypothesized can affect legislators' incentives and opportunities to personalize their representation. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, I use two different operationalizations for electoral security depending on the indicator of personalized representation. In terms of legislative party switching, we utilize the absolute number of personal votes (Nielsen et al., 2019). Higher numbers

of personal votes are expected to increase the likelihood of a switch since politicians with many personal votes have a personal electoral platform that increases their chance of re-election running for a different party. The results support this expectation. Moving one standard deviation on personal votes increases the likelihood of a switch by 34 % (ibid.: 51). However, when we exclude position from the model, the coefficient of personal votes is still positive but clearly insignificant. This indicates that popular legislators who are not able to convert their popularity to strong positions in the party are more likely to switch because they are already deprived of positions in the party and can anticipate electoral success in other parties (ibid.).

In article 2, I utilize another measure of electoral security that measures the difference between the percentage of votes received by first- and second-place candidates on an ordinal five-point scale (Nielsen, 2020). I expected MPs in very or semi-marginal seats to be more likely to personalize their maiden speech. For the first dimension of personalized representation in British maiden speeches, I do not find any significant correlation between electoral marginality and individualized representation. However, for the other dimension, localization, I do find a significant correlation between electoral marginality and localized representation. Figure 7 shows that MPs in very marginal seats speak more about their constituency relative to their party compared to MPs in a semi-marginal or fairly safe seat. There are no significant differences between MPs in a very safe seat compared to those in a very marginal seat. These findings only partially confirm my expectations, and MPs in marginal seats only use the less acknowledged local dimension of personalized representation to personalize their maiden speech (Nielsen, 2020).



Figure 7. Marginal effects of MPs electoral marginality on localization

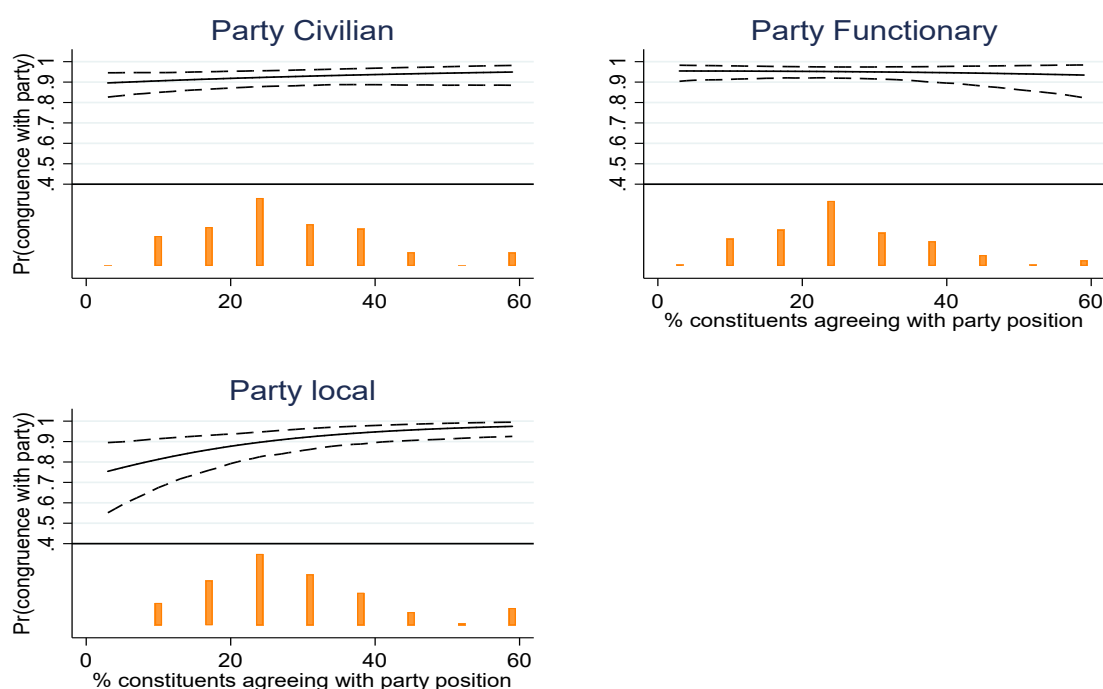


Note: Estimates with 95 % confidence intervals. The marginal effects is obtained from the coefficients from model 4 in Article 2 (Nielsen, 2020).

## Pre-parliamentary party career

Next, I will show that legislators' pre-parliamentary career matters for personalized representation (Binderkrantz et al., 2020). In article 3, we combine the career data of the three typical career paths that I described in chapter 4 with a vote-advice application for candidates from the 2015-election and a mass voter survey collected in 2015. These data allow us to investigate if legislators' pre-parliamentary party career makes them more likely to take the same position as their party or to be closer to the constituents in their district. Figure 8 illustrates this substantive relationship between MPs' position taking, district voter positions and pre-parliamentary careers. The X-axis displays the percentages of constituents agreeing with the party position, and the Y-axis displays the probability that the legislator is congruent with the party position.

Figure 8. MP and district positions



Note: Dashed lines represent 95 % confidence intervals. The histograms show the pre-parliamentary career distribution of the data.

If we look at the two upper figures, we see that party civilians and party functionaries usually take a position in line with their party's position independently of the support for the position in their constituency – the lines are almost flat. As expected, party functionaries who are most dependent on their party for their future career take the party's position almost every time. Even in situations where almost no voters in the constituency agree with the party's position, party functionaries take the party's position roughly 95 % pct. of the time. Party civilians without a long party career take the party's position approx. 90 % of the time when almost no voters agree. They are less congruent with the party than party functionaries are, but the difference is smaller than we might expect. Party locals are congruent with their party's position more often than not, but they have a relatively higher probability of diverging from it when it is not congruent with their constituents' preferences. Only when at least 25 % of the voters in the constituency prefer the party's position do party locals take positions that are congruent with those of their party at the same rate as party civilians. Furthermore, the probability of the party locals taking the same position as their party becomes equal to that of party functionaries (95 % congruence) when 43 % of the district voters agree with the party's position (ibid.: 17). Hence, MPs' dependency on the party operationalized as their pre-parliamentary party career matters for their position taking: The less

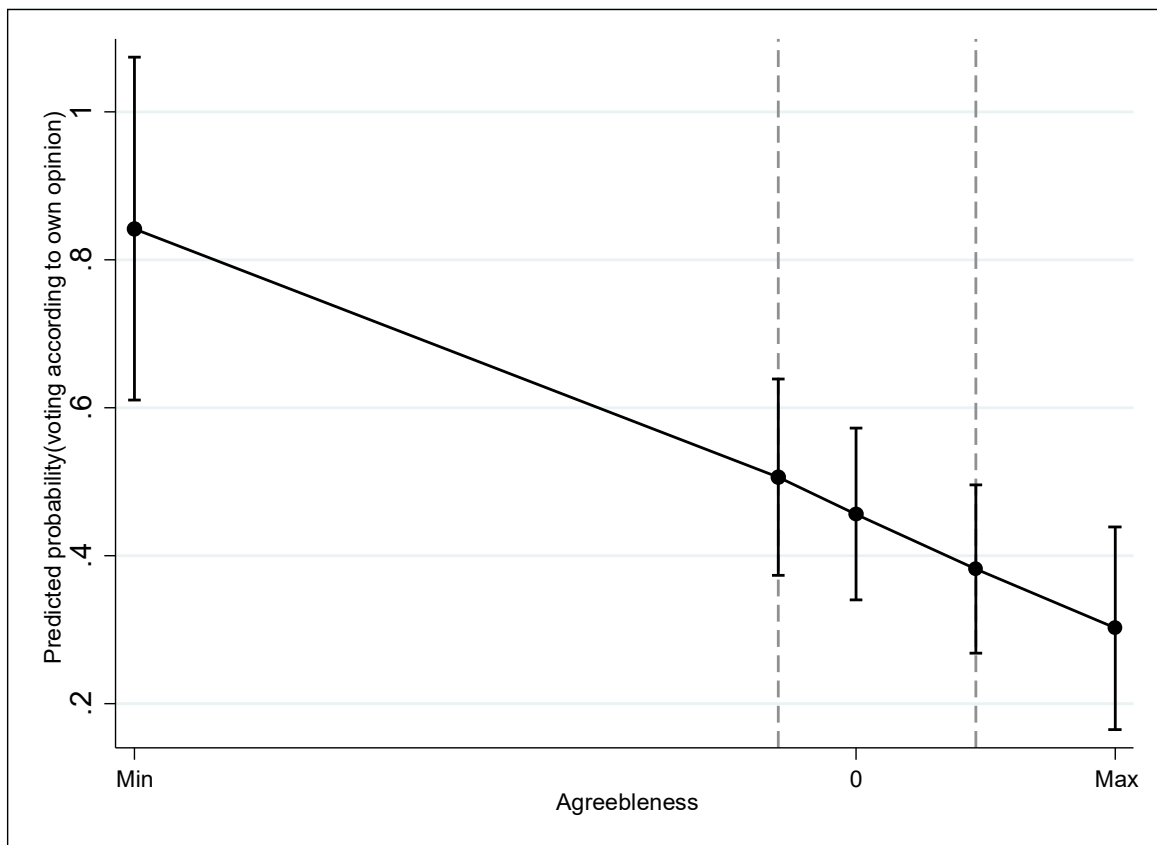
dependent MPs are on the national party, the more personalized their representation is.

## Personality traits

In article 4, we investigate if some legislators find it more attractive or comfortable to personalize their representation, or more specifically, if legislators' personality traits make them more prone to prefer personalized representation. Recall from chapter 4 that the indicator used for personalized representation is legislators' perception of whom they should represent. We asked the MPs how they thought an MP should vote in a situation with disagreement between the party's and the MP's positions. Response options were vote according to the party or to their own opinion.

First, we expected that legislators with higher levels of agreeableness are less likely to prefer personalized representation, and the results show this expected negative effect of agreeableness (Bøggild et al., 2019: 7-8). Figure 9 displays the predicted probability of an MP preferring to vote according to his/her own opinion and hereby dissent from the party across different levels of agreeableness. From the minimum to the maximum score of agreeableness, the predicted probability decreases by 54 percentage points. Between the first and the third quartile, the effect is still substantial, amounting to 13 percentage points. The correlation between agreeableness and preference for personalized representation is thus not only statistically significant but also substantially large (ibid.).

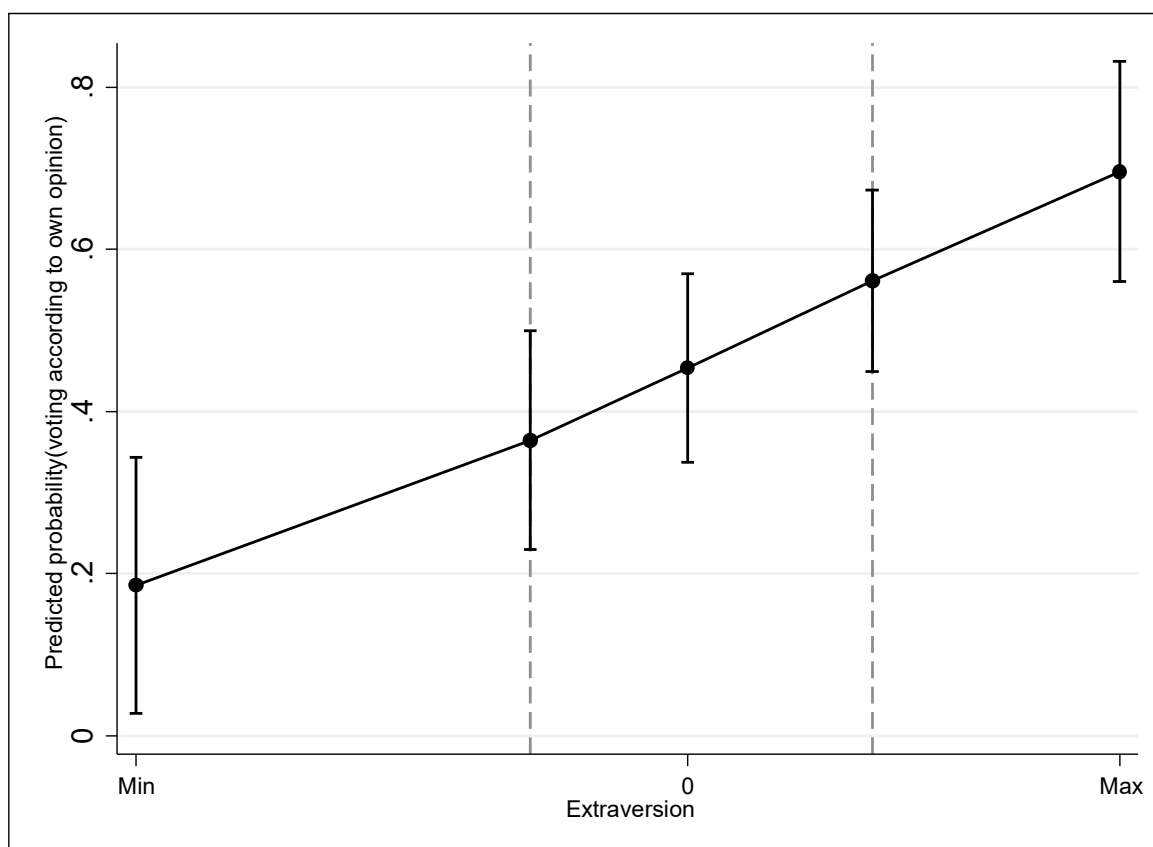
Figure 9. Effect of agreeableness on personalized representation



Notes: Estimates based on Model 1 in Table 3 from Article 4 (Bøggild et al., 2019). 90 % confidence intervals. Reference lines indicate the first and third quartile.

Second, we expected that legislators with higher levels of extraversion are more likely to prefer personalized representation, and this is also supported. Figure 10 shows that the predicted probability that the least extraverted politicians prefer personalized representation is only 18.5 % compared to 69.6 % for the most extraverted politicians in our sample. The difference between the first and third quartile is 20 percentage points.

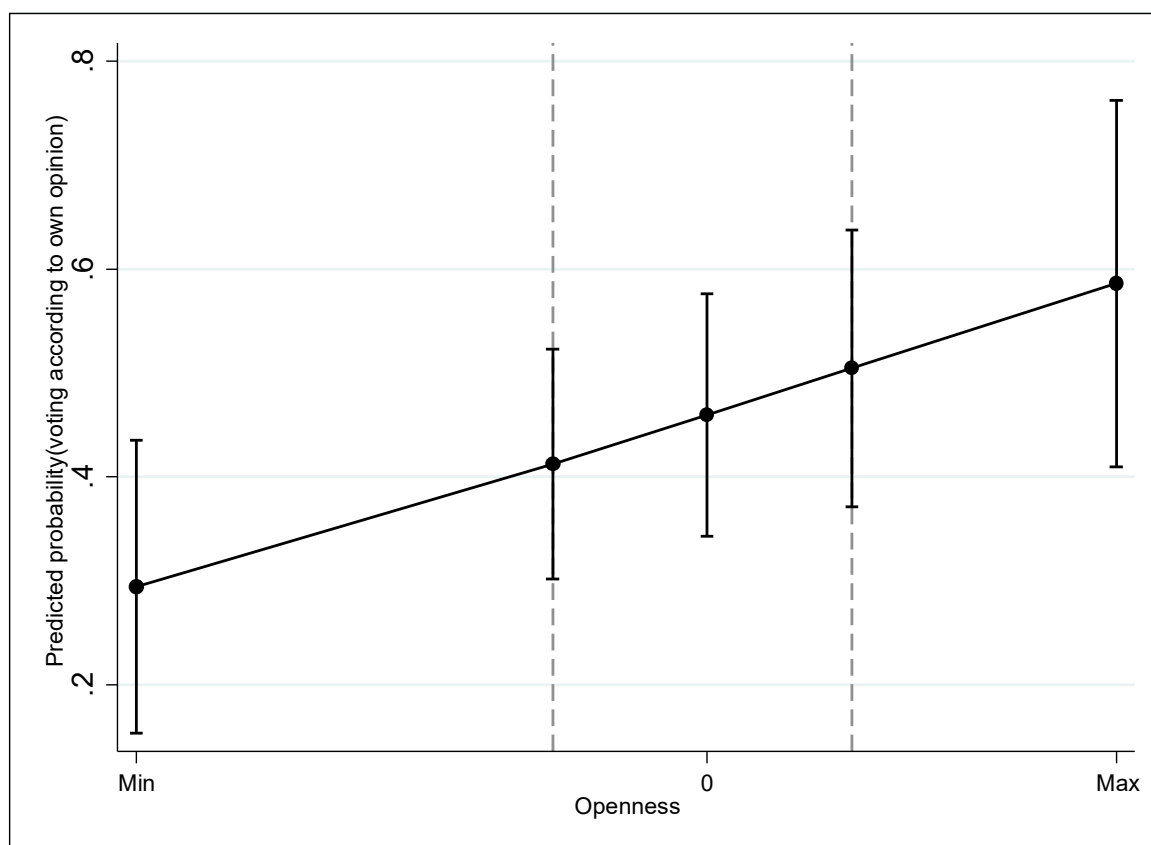
Figure 10. Effect of extraversion on personalized representation



Notes: Estimates based on Model 1 in Table 3 from Article 4 (Bøggild et al., 2019). 90 % confidence intervals. Reference lines indicate the first and third quartile.

Our third hypothesis regarding the positive association between openness for new experience and preference for personalized representation is also supported. Figure 11 shows that the difference in the predicted probability of a legislator indicating to vote according to his/her own opinion between the lowest and highest level of openness amounts to 30 percentage points, whereas the difference between the first and third quartile amounts to 9 percentage points.

Figure 11. Effect of openness on personalized representation



Notes: Estimates based on Model 1 in Table 3 from Article 4 (Bøggild et al., 2019). 90 % confidence intervals. Reference lines indicate the first and third quartile.

Summing up, legislators' individual characteristics do seem to matter for personalized representation. They do take the electoral circumstances into account, and having more personal votes makes Danish MPs more likely to leave their party. Likewise, marginal MPs in the UK are more inclined to talk about their constituency than the party in their maiden speech, but there is no correlation between electoral marginality and individualization. It does matter how politicians depend on their party for future political careers, and we find that Danish MPs who do not have a long career in the party before their election are slightly less congruent with the party's position than party functionaries who have been employed in the party before their election. These party civilians do not have their own political network or political experience and are dependent on the party for these resources. In comparison, party locals with a long career in local politics before their election to parliament diverge more from their party than party functionaries and party civilians when the party's position is unpopular with the constituents. These MPs have knowledge from the local legislature and a well-developed network in their constituency that make them less dependent on the party. Personalized representation is also a matter of personality, and the results show that MPs who

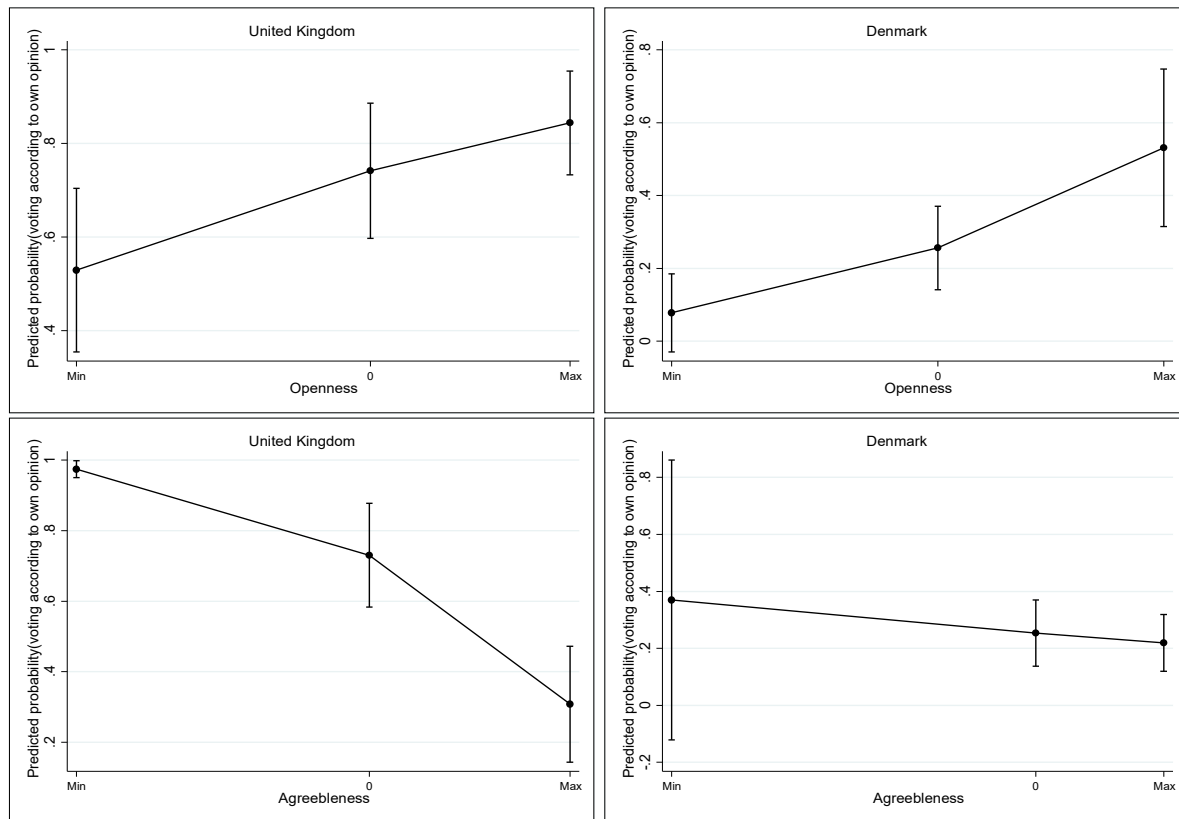
are open to new experiences and extraverted prefer to follow their own opinion in times of disagreement with the party. Legislators who possess the personality trait agreeableness – resulting in a personal need for group loyalty and cohesion – are less likely to prefer personalized representation.

## How do the political institutions influence the relationship between legislator and party?

As I accounted for in chapter 3, a crucial political institution is the electoral system. To measure how electoral incentives affect legislators' ability to personalize their representation, I utilize the different electoral contexts in the United Kingdom and Denmark in article 4. The first interesting finding is that preferences for personalized representation are more pronounced among British MPs (Bøggild et al., 2019: 7). The predicted probability of a British MP answering that MPs should vote according to their own opinion when in conflict with the party is 67 %, holding other independent variables at their mean. The probability of a Danish MP answering the same is only 25 %. This confirms my theoretical expectation that preferences for personalized representation are more pronounced among British than among Danish MPs (*ibid.*).

Turning to the findings concerning how the impact of personality is moderated by political context, the data partly support the expectations. Only the interaction term including agreeableness reaches the conventional level of statistical significance in two-sided tests; the term including openness only barely ( $p = 0.101$ ). While the interaction term including extraversion points in the expected direction, the coefficient is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.600$ ). Therefore, the four plots in Figure 12 only show the effect of agreeableness and openness on personalized representation across UK and Denmark. The implications of the hypotheses are that the positive effects of openness and extraversion should be especially pronounced in Denmark (i.e. negative coefficients for the interaction terms), whereas the negative effect of agreeableness should be especially pronounced in the United Kingdom (i.e. negative coefficient for the interaction term) (*ibid.*: 8-9).

Figure 12. The marginal effect of agreeableness and openness on voting norms across UK and Denmark



Note: 90 % confidence interval

The upper left- and right-hand panels of Figure 12 show the effects of openness on preferences for personalized representation in the United Kingdom and Denmark, respectively. In the United Kingdom, the difference in predicted probability amounts to 31 percentage points as we compare the lowest and highest level of openness. In Denmark, the probability of a politician indicating a preference for voting according to his/her own opinion when it conflicts with the party position increases from 8 % to 53 % when we compare politicians with the lowest level of openness to those with the highest level. The difference amounts to 45 percentage points. In both countries, the effect is positive as expected, but the association is stronger in Denmark, although the interaction effect falls just short of reaching statistical significance at conventional levels (*ibid.*: 9).

Turning to agreeableness, the lower right- and left-hand panels in Figure 12 display the effects across MPs in the two countries. Among Danish MPs, we see that the difference between those with the lowest and highest levels of agreeableness is 15 percentage points compared to 66 percentage points among British MPs. As expected, the impact of agreeableness on preferences for personalized representation is negative in both countries but significantly

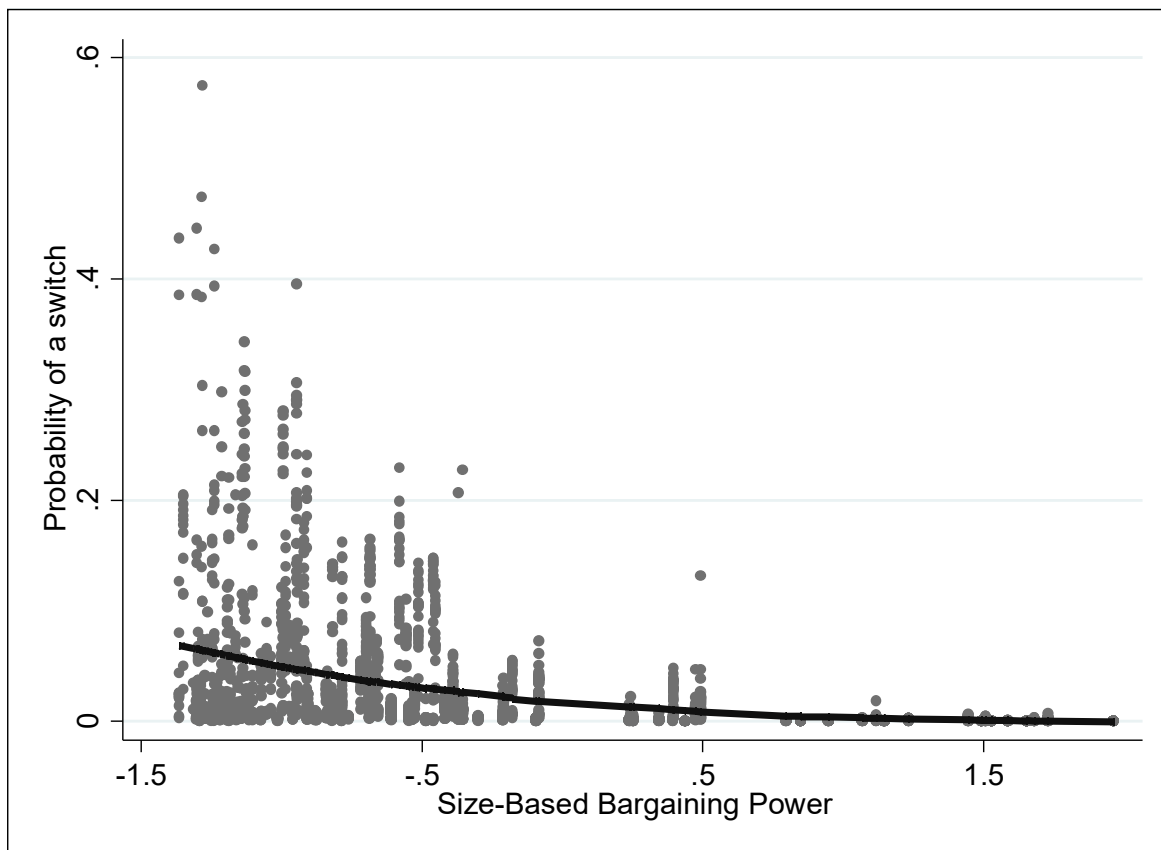


stronger in the United Kingdom. In sum, the results demonstrate that the impact of personality trait on personalized representation is moderated by the political context. As expected, high levels of agreeableness – resulting in a personal drive for group loyalty and cohesion – discourage politicians from holding preferences for personalized representation but mostly in a context where personalized representation is more prevalent. There is also a tendency for high levels of openness to experience – resulting in a personal drive to explore new, alternative ways of behaving – to be more positively associated with preferences for personalized representation in contexts where party loyalty is strong, and personalized representation does in fact constitute an alternative way of doing things (ibid.).

## The political party

In terms of political institutions, I want to measure the general constraints these institutions can put on the legislator and hereby either strengthen or reduce incentives and opportunities for legislators to personalize their representation. Another crucial institutional factor is therefore the party the legislator represents in parliament. The party can constrain the legislators by controlling the goals that legislators want. This power relation is therefore determined by the party's ability to provide these goals. Specifically, we argued that MPs representing powerful parties are less likely to switch party and that parties' legislative power depends on their size-based bargaining position and their position on the left-right policy dimension. To measure the party's size-based bargaining position, we used the Shapley-Shubik index and expected that the more potential coalitions the party belongs to, the less likely MPs representing this party are to switch. Figure 13 depicts the likelihood of switch and the size-based bargaining power of the party. It shows that the probability of a switch decreases from 7 percent for the parties with the weakest size-based bargaining power to around zero for the strongest parties. The more potentially winning coalitions a party belongs to, the less likely its MPs are to switch (Nielsen et al., 2019: 51).

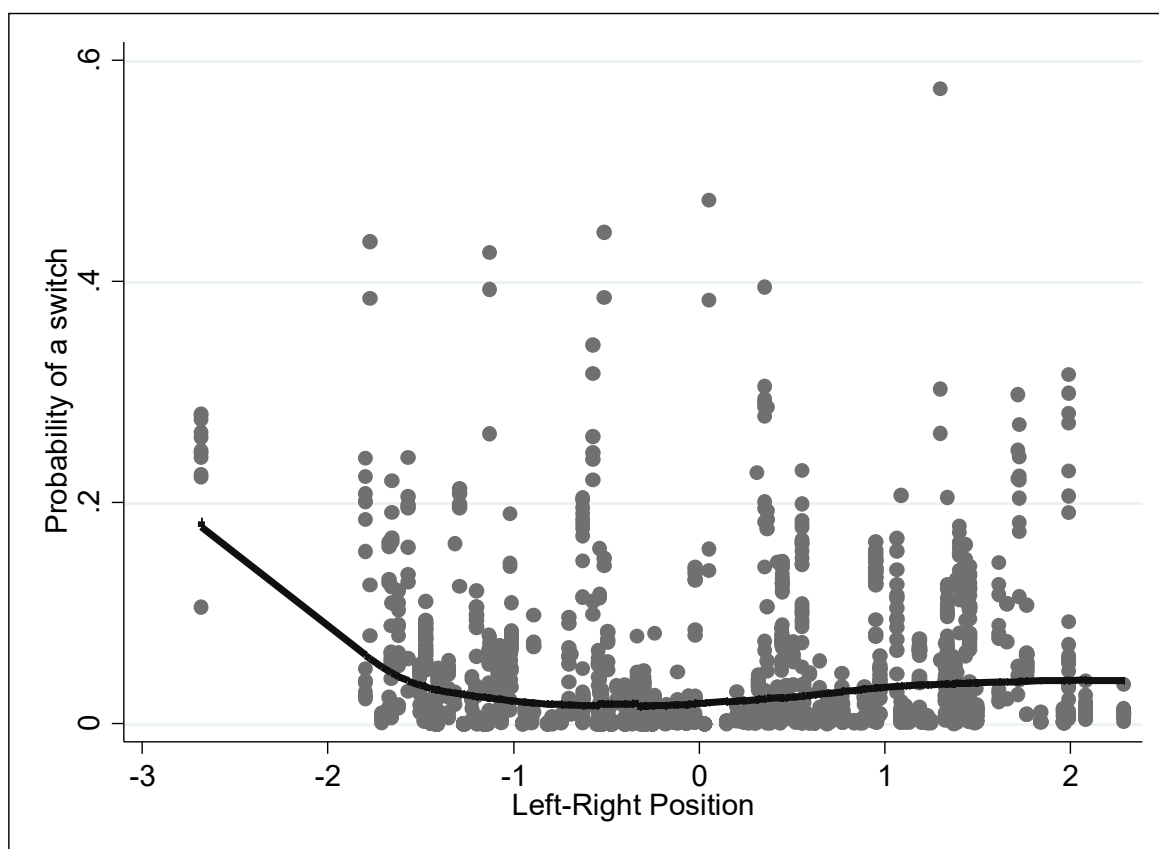
Figure 13. Likelihood of a switch and the size based bargaining power of the party



Notes: Predicted probabilities are estimated using locally weighted regression (lowess). The dots are observations for each party per election period.

Second, we expected that MPs representing parties further away from the center of the political spectrum are more likely to switch party. To test this hypothesis, we include the square of the left–right position, expecting a positive coefficient, which indicates a convex relationship, and the results support this expectation. Figure 14 shows the predicted probability of a switch depending on the party’s position on the left-right dimension. For legislators representing parties furthest to the left (right), it is about 17 (5) %. For legislators representing parties in the center, it is close to zero. There is thus evidence of legislators representing more extreme parties to be more likely to switch (ibid.: 51-52).

Figure 14. Likelihood of a switch and the party position on the left-right dimension

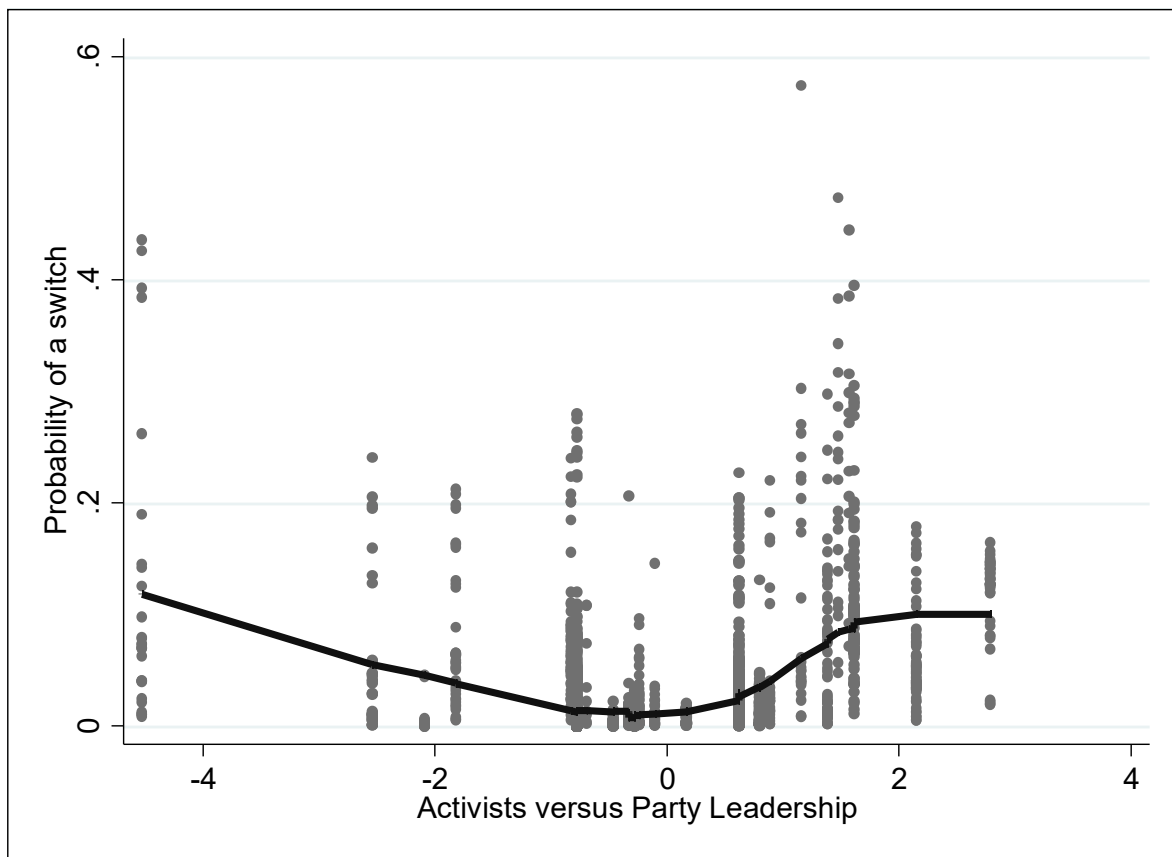


Notes: Predicted probabilities are estimated using locally weighted regression (lowess). The dots are observations for each party per election period.

In chapter 3, I argued that the opportunities to influence the party position not only depend on the party's size and position in the legislature but may also depend on the legislator's own position in the party. The results in article 1 confirm that MPs who hold a party position are less likely to switch party. In total, 831 MPs held a position, and only six switched party (1 %). Of the 2775 MPs not holding a position, 66 switched (2.4 %). We argued that holding a position increases the cost of switching and decreases the likelihood of severe disagreement since MPs in powerful positions are able to influence party decisions.

Lastly, we expected that MPs representing parties with either dominant party activists or leaders are more likely to switch. To test this expectation, we include the square of the BOPLA measure, expecting a convex relationship that increases the likelihood of a switch at the extremes of the measure. The positive and statistically significant effect of this squared term supports the hypothesis. Figure 15 displays the predicted probability of a switch and the measure of intra-party decision-making power.

Figure 15. Likelihood of a switch and intra-party decision-making power



Notes: Predicted probabilities are estimated using locally weighted regression (lowess). The dots are observations for each party per election period.

For legislators representing parties dominated by activists (lowest value), the probability of a switch is 12 %. For legislators representing parties dominated by the party leadership (highest value), the predicted probability is 10 %. However, for legislators representing parties with more balanced relations, the probability of a switch is almost zero. Supporting the importance of this factor, the most common reason stated by party switchers in the news coverage is dissatisfaction with the party leader (23 instances) and unwillingness to accept decisions reached by decisive extra-parliamentary bodies (15 instances). For instance, in 1967, five MPs left the Socialist People's Party and formed a new party (Left Socialists) as a protest against a decision by the executive committee and party congress to extend cooperation with the Social Democrats. This is in line with our argumentation that strong activist influence will induce MPs to leave in situations of severe disagreement. At the other end of the spectrum, quite a few MPs leave the Danish People's Party and the Progress Party, both of which are known for having very powerful party leaders (ibid.: 11).

To sum up, the electoral context does shape MPs' incentives and opportunities to personalize their representation, and the results show that the preference for personalized representation is more pronounced among British MPs. However, we only find partial support for our expectation that the impact of personality is moderated by political context. For agreeableness and openness there is a significant difference between how MPs perceive personalized representation in the two countries. High levels of agreeableness discourage politicians from holding preferences for personalized representation, but mostly in a context like the British where personalized representation is more prevalent. There is also a tendency for high levels of openness to experience to be more positively associated with preferences for personalized representation in contexts like the Danish where party loyalty is strong and personalized representation constitutes an alternative way of doing things. The other important political institution, the political party, also seems to shape MPs' opportunities to personalize their representation, and we find that Danish MPs are more likely to leave parties that are less likely to provide them their goals of policy and office because of their size or position in the legislature. Furthermore, legislators are more likely to leave parties where they have little or no influence on the political decision-making process, but they will stay if they have a position in the party that allows them to influence party decisions.

## Conclusion

Returning to the research question, which was the starting point of this chapter, a few findings support the first part of the research question – does personalized representation increase over time – but most of them do not. I do find indications of more party switching in Denmark and increased district focus (localization) in the British House of Commons, which affirms my expectation and research question. However, party switching varies substantially over time, and British MPs do not seem to highlight themselves increasingly in parliamentary speeches. This runs counter to my expectations and suggests a negative answer to my research question. Personalization of representation in parliament does not seem to be a universal phenomenon resulting automatically from the societal development. Rather, MPs' reactions to these changes seem to be moderated by the specific contextual situation.

The results support the argument that personalization requires a more complex explanation than 'societal development'. In terms of personalized representation, the findings point to the two other factors in the research question: legislators' individual characteristics and the political institutions. These factors provide incentives and opportunities that the legislators take

into account when choosing their representation. Legislators' individual characteristics vary considerably and cannot be lumped together. They consider their own electoral situation and their dependency on their party for their future political career when choosing their representation. Some legislators – independently of their electoral or party political situation – find it more attractive or comfortable to personalize their representation, and the results show that personalized representation is also a matter of personality. Furthermore, when evaluating their situation, legislators take the relevant political institutions into account. The more opportunities parties provide for MPs to realize their goals, the less likely they are to leave and personalize their representation. Moreover, MPs in single-member district systems are more likely to enact a personalized style of representation, particularly in the form of localized representation. Societal developments do not translate automatically into personalized representation. Personalized representation is a strategy MPs may use if their electoral circumstances, personal inclinations and party political relations are favorable in terms of exchanging personalized representation for goods they find attractive, such as votes, policy influence or office.

In the next and final chapter, I will discuss the limitations and implications of the findings for future research and the implications for democracy. In other words, whether the different aspects of personalized representation have different consequences for democracy.

## Chapter 6. Conclusion

This chapter concludes the summary report by discussing the contributions of the thesis, the implications of the findings and suggestions for future research. The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate if there is a trend towards personalization of representation, and which factors can explain personalized representation, based on the following research question: How do societal developments, legislator characteristics and political institutions influence the relationship between legislator and party? I have investigated this research question in Denmark and the United Kingdom by looking at legislative party switching, parliamentary speeches, individual position taking and perceptions of representation. A crucial finding is that there is no clear-cut trend over time towards personalization of representation. Personalization does not seem to be an automatic process that eventually will happen everywhere because of gradual societal changes. Instead, personalized representation is to a large degree explained by situational variation. Legislators' representational style is a product of their own electoral situation and characteristics and of the institutional setting in which they operate. This indicates the presence of strong institutions that hold legislators' opportunities and incentives to personalize their representation in check. In the following, I will discuss my theoretical and empirical contributions and their implications in relation to the research question and for democracy. Based on this discussion, I will suggest a number of potential questions for future research.

### Theoretical contributions and their implications

Theoretically, this dissertation contributes by clarifying the concept of personalized representation by arguing that 1) personalized representation is a representational strategy for legislators to highlight *different* personal aspects *more* than highlighting their party, and 2) personalized representation has different consequences for party cohesion depending on the arena in which the representation is carried out and the degree to which it affects legislative decision-making. I take the position that personalized representation is all representative expressions that do not include references to the party, following through on the notion that personalized representation is contrasted to party representation in the literature (Rahat & Kenig 2018). I therefore include the well-established aspect of individualization and suggest another

non-partisan aspect of representation: localization, to form a more comprehensive concept of personalization allowing us to grasp these aspects of non-party representation. I stress that the overall definition of personalization implies a relative measure, and I therefore contrast these two aspects of non-party representation to partisan representation. I acknowledge that these three types of representation can also be seen as three distinct types and thus present results across aspects (Nielsen 2020). However, as localization and individualization are different images of non-partisan representation and activities, I find it reasonable to include both aspects into a comprehensive study of personalized representation. The analysis in Article 2 also supports this decision since the two dimensions of personalized representation show distinct developments over time (*ibid.*).

Turning to my second theoretical contribution, I argue that personalized behavior has different consequences dependent on the arena and effect for legislative voting. Personalized parliamentary behavior is therefore more consequential for the party than if legislators for instance personalize their election campaign or their social media communication. An implication of this is that even though personalized representation by definition highlights other aspects than the party, all manifestations of personalized representation do not necessarily happen at the expense of the party. Instead, personalized extra-parliamentary behavior – for example personalized campaigning – might be in the interest of the party because political parties want to appeal broadly to voters in a more fragmented electoral situation (Greene & Haber, 2015: 17). This is especially true in situations where voters no longer vote solely based on party identity or group identification. Having candidates covering different political positions and with different personal images could therefore be a strategy for a party to maximize their votes. The problem for the party is if legislators take this independent campaign behavior into parliament and behave more as individual trustees than as party agents, because the party will then be less able to act as a credible and unitary negotiator. As Zittel puts it: ‘Legislators elected on the basis of a personal vote might be less inclined to be team players in legislative and party organizational contexts’ (2015: 293). If that is the case, it would be a problematic electoral strategy for the party.

This dissertation does not explore the link between personalized campaign behavior and parliamentary behavior, but the results regarding parliamentary behavior show that there are legislators who are more likely to personalize their representation dependent on their individual characteristics and who take advantage of the opportunities and incentives provided by the political institutions. It therefore seems to matter which candidates parties recruit and who is elected. Is it party agents or individual trustees? Only few have investi-



gated if these legislators take a different angle on (local) interest representation in a causal manner (Papp, 2018; Chiru, 2018). Future research must therefore explore this link between legislators' extra-parliamentary representation and their subsequent representation inside parliament further to be able to advise political parties whether this electoral strategy comes with the cost of less party loyal legislators.

## (The lack of) evidence for personalization of representation

My theoretical point of departure is that personalization of representation depends on the incentives and opportunities legislators face. I propose that this cost-benefit calculation depends on societal development, legislators' personal electoral situation and capacities, intra-party control and the electoral institutions. Regarding the first factor in the research question, societal development, several scholars have claimed that politics have become personalized because of political changes related to the societal development. These claims of personalization trends have been accompanied by limited empirical evidence. Studies of personalized parliamentary behavior either lack data over a long period (e.g. Wauters et al., 2019) or only rely on two data points (e.g. Rahat & Kenig, 2018). In comparison, this dissertation covers a long period and has multiple data points. First, this allows me to investigate the impact of the societal development because I cover the full period where changes in politics in terms of party, media, and culture are argued to have taken place. Second, utilizing several data points over time allows me to capture fluctuations and not just show the development between two points in time. Contrary to the main claim in the literature, I do not find an unequivocal trend over time towards personalization of representation. Personalization does not seem to be an automatic process that eventually will happen everywhere. The many fluctuations that I find, both in terms of how legislators speak in parliament and their tendency to leave their party, support the conclusion that personalization is not simply an automatic process driven by gradual societal developments.

In light of my findings, which only show limited support for personalization of legislators' parliamentary behavior, it is interesting to discuss these results. First, it raises the question how much the results depend on the specific indicators of personalized representation that I investigate. In terms of party switching, we limit our focus to examples from the legislature (legislative party switching). However, not all instances of party switching happen while the politician is elected. I would therefore have more instances of party switching if I also included cases that happen outside parliament. My choice of indicator

therefore influences how likely it is to find instances of personalization because it is more costly for legislators to leave their party while they are elected to parliament. Nevertheless, with my operationalization, I have a more accurate measure of personalization of parliamentary behavior because it only includes party switching inside parliament. For the other indicator I investigate over time, personalization in parliamentary speeches, I utilize maiden speeches from the British House of Commons. This is a unique data source that is comparable over time, but the fact that it is the first speech MPs hold in parliament limits the results to freshman MPs. These newly elected MPs might be more likely to personalize their representation, because they have not yet adapted their behavior to the party discipline in parliament. I would therefore be more cautious with the results if I had found ample evidence of personalization in the maiden speeches. The limited evidence of the aspect of individualization therefore indicates that when MPs do not utilize this aspect in their first speech, they might not utilize individualization in parliamentary speeches in general. Thus, the results show that MPs do not talk as private persons referring to their family or job experiences when they speak in parliament; they talk more as party representatives, but over time also more about their ties to the local constituency (Nielsen, 2020).

Second, how important is the arena I investigate? As I argued earlier, personalized parliamentary behavior is more consequential for the party than if legislators personalize their election campaign or their communication on social media. It is therefore a hard case for personalization to investigate personalized parliamentary behavior. Even though the different indicators I investigate vary in terms of how consequential they are for party cohesion, I have been able to collect indicators that do or may affect the cohesion of the parliamentary party group and hereby impede the party's ability to act and negotiate as a collective actor in parliament. For example, in parliamentary systems where elections are often close, losing one vote or, in the case of party switching: a mandate, can swing the balance of power in the legislative assembly without a democratic election. This was the political situation for the former Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen's coalition government from 2016 to 2019, which had to take precautionary measures to avoid losing the majority in parliament (Nielsen & Pedersen, 2017: 62). The choice of arena therefore seems to be important, and my results indicate that the 'party in public office' (Katz & Mair, 1993: 594) is in control of the goals of office, policy and votes that legislators want. Whether this control is ensured through a high level of party discipline or through a process of socialization is an open question (Zittel, 2012), but it seems that legislators in general act more as party agents than as individual trustees. An important implication of my findings is therefore that 'the party in public office' continues to be an important actor

even though ‘the party on the ground’ to some extent has deteriorated and lost its connection to citizens.

The findings also raise the question whether the starting point of the longitudinal analysis is important for the results. Scholars have used the term *partyness* in contrast to personalization. Partyness refers to a situation in which political parties organize the linkage between state and society (Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Pruysers et al., 2018, Pedersen & Rahat, 2019). The concept of partyness helps us understand what the societal changes mean for party politics. The stronger the partyness of society and the more parties represent distinct social groups, the more dependent politicians are on their party (Strøm, 2003). This implies that the political system revolves around parties, and political parties are therefore the natural focus of representation for candidates and legislators, who are partisan team players that support their political party and vote along partisan lines (Rahat & Kenig, 2018: 121). If this is the ideal type we use for comparison, a comparatively high starting point in terms of partyness can therefore lead to more extreme results because it reflects the strength of political parties at the time of investigation. Some scholars have even argued that the claim for a process of personalization ‘is based on a comparison with the heyday of class-based, collective political organization’ (Karvonen, 2010: 3). I avoid this by utilizing several data points over time and by using a starting point before the period of party democracy. An implication of my findings is therefore that scholars need to keep in mind what they are comparing the present situation to and that there can be fluctuations over time, which we need to consider in the research design before conducting studies of personalization. Furthermore, choosing an earlier starting point also allows me to investigate if changes in legislators’ behavior compared to the heyday of the mass party reflect a change back to representation before the era of party democracy (Manin, 1997; Adam & Maier, 2010: 234). An implication of my limited evidence of personalization of representation could therefore be that personalization of representation is an old phenomenon, which occurs at variable degrees at different times – and not that people or their personal traits and characteristics are irrelevant.

As I argued earlier, this dissertation makes progress compared to previous studies in investigating the claims about the relationship between societal development and personalization. Both by investigating personalization of representation in two extensive longitudinal studies over a long period and by including several data points, which allows me to track fluctuations over time and paint a more complete picture of the development. However, to capture the effect of the different societal mega trends related to societal development, I mainly rely on time as an operationalization of these societal trends. To come

closer and distinguish which of these societal developments affect personalization, future studies should replace these time points with variables that have explanatory power regarding changes of the party and media systems to be able to explain further under which conditions personalized politics evolves.

## The role of individual characteristics and political institutions

Turning to the two other factors in the research question, legislators' individual characteristics and the political institutions, I expected that some legislators are more likely or able to personalize their representation due to their individual characteristics. In addition to the strategic perspective, this dissertation incorporates theories of individual personality traits to argue that personalized representation may also vary across individuals with different personality traits, making personalization more or less natural for the legislator to engage in. However, the political institutions – the electoral system and the party – can moderate this relationship. For example, a party-centered electoral system provides legislators with weak opportunities or incentives to personalize their behavior. Moreover, if the party is in a favorable position to provide the goals of office, policy and votes that legislators want, then legislators have less incentive to personalize their representation. For this to happen, legislators will typically have to adhere to the party principal, and they are therefore more likely to act as party agents.

This dissertation finds that legislators' representational style is a product of both their own electoral situation and characteristics as well as the institutional setting in which they operate. Personalized representation is therefore explained by situational variation. The findings indicate that there are strong institutions that hold legislators' opportunities and incentives to personalize their representation in check. More specifically, this dissertation contributes with two new explanations of personalized representation regarding legislators' individual characteristics by including pre-parliamentary party career and personality traits, which both affect personalized representation. To investigate these two new explanations of personalized representation, I rely on original survey data, which unfortunately do not exist retrospectively and therefore limit my investigation to a single point in time, i.e. a case of personalized politics. On the other hand, these unique data sources give me an opportunity to test the explanations. To capture legislators' position taking, we utilize the Voting Advice Applications (VVA) in article 3 (Binderkrantz et al., 2020). They constitute a strong measure because VVAs have a very high response rate compared to other elite surveys, and the responses are actual cases of MPs' communicating their positions to the electorate. However, VVAs

measure position taking in a campaign situation and the results are therefore only a proxy for legislators' position taking in parliament. To capture legislators' perceptions of personalized representation, we use original survey data collected in both Denmark and United Kingdom. These are self-reported measures, but we use both a common measure applied and validated in previous research from other contexts to capture personalized representation and one of the most validated and accepted measurement tools to capture personality traits. Furthermore, the dissertation contributes by confirming the existing explanation of electoral marginality as important for legislators' choice to personalize their representation.

The dissertation contributes with explanations concerning the party's ability to provide policy and/or office benefits for legislators, the legislators' position in the party and how intra-party democracy – i.e. how power is distributed internally in the party – affects legislators' incentives to personalize representation. Furthermore, the dissertation tests the effect of the electoral system across the Danish and the British cases. By limiting the focus to these two cases, I only get a crude measure of the relation between the electoral system and personalization because other factors correlate within the two countries. I therefore only have evidence for the effect of the electoral incentive across two cases. Moreover, my case selection limits the generalizability of the findings in relation to the overall research question to other political contexts with similar developments. However, only focusing on Denmark and the United Kingdom allows me to provide detailed and rich insights into personalization of parliamentary representation in the two countries. Given the significant differences between them, my finding that a general trend towards personalization of representation cannot be identified in either country suggests that this is not due to the specific characteristics of one political system but may apply across modern parliamentary democracies.

My conceptual and empirical contribution of the different aspects of personalized representation leaves an open question of how the aspect of localization in legislators' parliamentary behavior travels across different electoral systems. In this dissertation, I mainly show evidence of localization from a British context with single-member constituencies, where others have shown that constituency focus is a dimension in, for example, parliamentary questions (Kellermann, 2015). Kellermann's findings suggest that British members use questions to signal effort to their constituents rather than attention to constituency issues. It is therefore indeed a personal strategy for electorally vulnerable MPs to enhance the chance of re-election, and I therefore have reason to expect that the local aspect is important. Another study shows that British MPs utilize a more localized style of representation on their personal website than Danish MPs (Pedersen & vanHeerde-Hudson, 2019). However, Danish

MPs on average utilize a constituency-oriented just as much as a person-oriented style, and it thus also seems to be a behavioral strategy – at least in the extra-parliamentary setting – for MPs in a context with multi-member constituencies (Pedersen & vanHeerde-Hudson, 2019). The finding regarding Danish MPs' pre-parliamentary party careers and position taking in the VAA is only an indication of their position taking in parliament. Even though party locals seem to be less congruent with the party position when voters in their constituency disagree with the party line, we still need more evidence whether this is the case when it comes to actual position taking in parliament or other types of parliamentary activities. Future studies should therefore include the aspect of localization when they investigate personalization in parliamentary behavior across different electoral contexts.

## Implications of findings

In many countries, the party response to partisan dealignment among voters has been to democratize candidate selection methods and use a more inclusive selectorate (Pilet & Cross, 2014). A related wave of change has been a general trend of personalized electoral reforms, which grants voters more influence over which candidates win a seat (Renwick & Pilet, 2016). An example is the recent electoral reform in the Danish context that allows parties to distribute their seats entirely based on candidates' personal votes and disregard the party district vote. An implication of my findings is that this institutional personalization could further enhance legislators' incentives and opportunities to personalize their representation because the strong political institutions that seem to keep personalization in check would loosen their grip on the legislators. Utilizing more inclusive candidate selection methods such as party primaries or membership ballots may therefore lead to more personalized representation because political parties have less control over which candidates are selected. Likewise, giving voters a larger say in who gets elected also takes away some of the control from the party and gives legislators enhanced electoral incentives to personalize their representation. Such reforms of intra-party politics and the electoral system may have important side effects. Weakening electoral and party constraints can have unintended and not necessarily beneficial consequences for democracy (Bøggild & Pedersen, 2018: 895; Renwick & Pilet, 2016). I do not propose that political parties should avoid making internal decision-making processes more transparent and involving party members and citizens, but I find it crucial to call attention to the potential consequences of such reforms for party democracy.

This leads me to the implications for democracy. There are different ideas of the democratic implications of personalization, and it is ambiguous whether

personalized representation is a problem for democracy. On the one hand, personalization weakens party democracy if politicians become increasingly independent and parties less cohesive. It challenges not only the parties' ability to govern efficiently but also the voters' ability to assign responsibility and hold parties accountable (Rahat & Kenig 2018; Pedersen & Rahat, 2019: 2). On the other hand, personalized representation could potentially strengthen the individual ties between voters and their representative agents, especially in times when representative democracy is under pressure (Adam & Maier 2010, Kruikemeier et al., 2013).

My conceptual work and empirical findings regarding different aspects of personalization are important contributions to the discussion of potential democratic implications of personalized representation. I theorized that when the party brand deteriorates as a representative frame of reference, MPs shift to other references. However, it has different democratic implications depending on which aspect of personalized representation legislators highlight. Van Aelst et al. (2012) noted that individualization has different implications than privatization. I add that localization has different implications than individualization. In the case of localization, constituency representation increases when the ties between political parties and voters are weakened. The fact that party locals are more likely to diverge from party positions in favor of local constituents may indicate that this aspect of personalized representation might strengthen district-level representation but also potentially weaken the responsible party model at the national level if it leads to more dissent in parliament (Binderkrantz et al., 2020: 19). This development can be problematic if legislators become too constituency-oriented and parochial because it can lead to suboptimal policy outcomes where special interests are favored in certain constituencies and the more rational or economically reasonable outcome that serves national interest best is overlooked. Nevertheless, it seems that personalized representation in the form of localization can lead to more district-level representation and hereby strengthen legislators' ties to their district voters. Personalized representation could therefore have positive consequences for a district-oriented democracy by strengthening district-level representation, but it might be at the expense of party democracy at the national level.

The different implications for democracy also depend on how the consequences of personalization for a party are perceived. Is it the consequences for the individual parties or for party democracy on a systemic level? 'Personal parties' like Berlusconi's Forza Italia or Marcon's En Marche do not suffer from their respective leaders' carrying them on their back; their existence hinges on the personal success of their leaders. Also in less extreme cases, parties can gain electoral success and win additional seats by nominating media

personalities or celebrity candidates (Pedersen & Rahat, 2019: 2). As I argued earlier, personalization does not always harm parties, and rather than a zero-sum game, it may sometimes be a deliberate party strategy. Thus, even if one party does not have strong linkages to society, the polity may still have a comparatively high level of partyness (ibid.: 3). Thus, taking the perspective of the polity rather than the individual political group, personalization might be a threat to party democracy if it challenges parties' ability to govern efficiently. However, my results show that changes in politics have led to changes in representation: more party switching, more localized focus, but not to a general trend of personalization in the sense that politicians act as independent representatives in parliament or emphasize themselves more than their party in parliamentary speeches. In other words, I do not provide evidence of a situation where legislators act as individual representatives more than as party agents. Hence, party democracy still seems to be intact – at least when it comes to 'the party in public office'.



# Appendix

Table 5. Overview of the literature investigating the different types of political personalization

|                 | Institutional   |  | Media                                      |   | Behavior   |   |
|-----------------|---|--|--|---|--|---|
|                 | Government  | Non-Government   | Controlled                                 | Uncontrolled  | Voters   | Politicians   |
| Centralized     | Expansion of the prime ministers power (Balmas et al. 2014; Karvonen, 2010, Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Poguntke & Webb, 2005; Poguntke & Webb, 2015; Diodati et al, 2018; Allum & Ciento, 2001; Fabbrini, 2013; Dowding, 2013; Musella, 2017) | Leadership selection (Balmas et al. 2014; Pilet & Cross, 2014; Jhee & Shin, 2018; Kefford, 2016; Pasquino, 2016; Sandri et al. 2015; Musella, 2017) Presidentialization (Campus, 2010; Bucur & Elgie, 2012; Cabada & Tomsic, 2016; Foley, 2008; Hlousek, 2015; Poguntke & Webb, 2005; Poguntke & Webb, 2015; Passarelli, 2015) | Party advertisements (Balmas et al. 2014). | Media coverage (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007; Balmas et al. 2014; Deacon & Harner, 2019; Reinemann & Wilke, 2007; Takens et al. 2013; Langer, 2007; Langer 2010; Sörensen, 2016; Trimble et al. 2013; den Harder, 2013; Langer & Sagarzazu, 2018; Bouman et al. 2013; Kriesi et al 2012; Simunjak, 2017; 2018, den Harder, 2013; Trimble et al. 2019; Stanyer, 2012; Gattermann, 2018; Balmas, 2017; Balmas & Sheaffer, 2013; Balmas & Sheaffer, 2014; Zeh & Hopmann, 2013) | Leader effects (Balmas et al. 2014; Bittner, 2018; Jou & Endo, 2015; Midtbø, 1997; Wagner & Wessels, 2012); Costa Lobo & da Silva, 2018; Liu, 2018; Karvonen, 2010; Bittner, 2011; Garzia et al. 2019; da Silva et al. 2019; Garzia, 2013; Lobo & Curtice, 2015) Preferential voting (Wauters et al. 2018; Elmelund-Præstekær & Kjaer, 2013; Dodeigne & Pilet, 2019; | Parliamentary behavior (Balmas et al. 2014; Soroka et al. 2015) |
| Personalization |   |  |  |   |  |   |

|  |                       |   |  |  |  |  |
|--|-----------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
|  |                       |   |  |  |  |  |
|  | Personalized politics | The prime ministers power<br>Bowles et al. 2007;<br>Selcuk et al. 2019) | Leadership selection<br>(Fasano & Seddone, 2016; da Silva, 2019; Stewart, 2018)<br>Presidentialization<br>(Clemens, 2011; Washbourne, 2013; Salvati, 2016) | Personalized behavior online<br>(Bronstein et al. 2018; Ceccobelli, 2017; Rogstad, 2015; Yaniv et al. 2016, Rahat & Zamir, 2018; Metz et al. 2019; López-Meri et al., 2017; Enli & Skogerbo, 2013; Jacobs & Spierings, 2016; Larsson, 2019; Mohamed, 2019; Kruikemeier et al. 2015; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Rahat & Zamir, 2018)<br><br>Party advertisement<br>(Holtz-Bacha et al. 2012; Pruyssers & Cross, 2016, 2018; Lengauer & Winder, 2013; Seawright, 2013) | Media coverage<br>(Pruysers & Cross, 2018; Lengauer & Winder, 2013; Holtz-Bacha et al. 2014; Schulze 2016) | Leader effects<br>(Bellucci et al. 2015; Camatarri & Cavataio, 2016; Garzia, 2017a; Garzia 2017b; Shastri, 2019; Aaldering, 2018; Aaldering et al. 2018; Takens et al. 2015; Van Holsteyn & Andeweg, 2010; Berz, 2019; Costa & da Silva, 2015; da Silva, 2018; da Silva & Costa, 2019; Gatterman & De Vreese, 2017; Garzia & De Angelis, 2016; Tverdova, 2011) |

| Decentralized         |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| Personalized politics | Electoral reforms<br>(Karvonen, 2010;<br>Renwick & Pilet, 2016;<br>Rahat & Kenig, 2018) | Candidate selection<br>(Rahat & Sheaffer<br>2007; Balmas et al.<br>2014; Sandri et al,<br>2015; Musella, 2017) | Party advertisement<br>(Vlagenthart, 2012;<br>Balmas et al. 2014;<br>Gattermann &<br>Vliegthart, 2019;<br>Steffan & Venema,<br>2019).   | Media coverage<br>(Balmas et al. 2014;<br>Takens et al. 2013;<br>Porath et al, 2014;<br>Porath et al, 2015;<br>Kriesi 2012; Van<br>Zoonen, 1998).  | Preferential voting<br>(Wauters et al. 2018;<br>Thijssen, 2013;<br>Wauters et al. 2012;<br>Karvonen 2010)            | Campaign behavior<br>McAllister 2015;<br>Pruyters & Cross,<br>2018; Fiorelli, 2017;<br>Papp & Zorigt, 2016,<br>2018; Bukow &<br>Angenendt 2019)<br><br>Parliamentary<br>behavior<br>(Rahat & Sheaffer,<br>2007; Balmas et al.<br>2014; Rahat & Kenig,<br>2018 Wauters et al.<br>2019; Louwerse &<br>Otjes 2016)  |
|                       |   |  | Personalized behavior<br>online<br>(Brunnerová, 2019;<br>Gerber & Scherer 2015;<br>Åström and Karlsson,<br>2013; Jacobs &<br>Spierings, 2016;<br>Lawrence et al. 2016;<br>Graham et al, 2017;<br>Karlsen & Enjolras,<br>2016; Meeks, 2016;<br>Vásquez-Sande et al.<br>2017; Hermans &<br>Vergeer, 2013; Livak et<br>al. 2011; Campbell &<br>Cowley, 2018; | Media coverage<br>(Lengauer & Winder,<br>2013; Van Zoonen &<br>Holtz-Bacha, 2000).<br><br>Effects of personalized<br>media coverage<br>(Nael Jebril et al.'s<br>2013; Otto & Maier,<br>2016) | Preferential voting<br>(Andre et al. 2012;<br>Elmelund-Præstekær<br>& Hopmann, 2012;<br>Pedrazzani & Pinto,<br>2018) | Campaign behavior<br>(Zittel & Geschwend,<br>2008; Gschwend &<br>Zittel, 2015; Cross &<br>Young, 2015; De<br>Winter & Baudewyns,<br>2015; Selb & Lutz,<br>2015; Eder et al. 2015;<br>Trumm, 2016; Trumm,<br>2018, Karlsen &<br>Skogerbo, 2015;<br>Tenschler, 2014; Van<br>Erkel et al. 2017;<br>Milazzo & Hammond,<br>2018; Giebler &<br>Wessels, 2013; Lisi & |

|  |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|
|  |  |  |  | <p>Pedersen &amp; vanHeerde-Hudson, 2019; Colliander et al. 2017; Lee et al., 2018; Kruikemeier, 2014; McGregor, 2018; Meeks, 2017; Kruikemeier et al, 2013; Kruikemeier et al. 2016.</p> |  |  |  | <p>Santana-Pereira, 2014; Bøggild &amp; Pedersen, 2018; Chan, 2018)</p> <p>Parliamentary behavior (Papp, 2018; Chiru, 2018; Friedman &amp; Friedberg, 2019)</p> |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|

## English summary

In a representative democracy, citizens appoint politicians to represent their views in parliament. However, in most modern democracies, political parties are the foundation of a functioning democracy. Individual legislators therefore act as agents for their respective parties, but what if this relationship has changed? The starting point of this dissertation is the observation that changes in the foundation for politics related to culture, media and party changes have led scholars to claim that politics has become personalized (McAllister, 2007; Rahat & Kenig, 2018). A development that entails that individual politicians carry more weight in the political process at the expense of collective groups such as political parties (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007: 65). This claim has been investigated in different areas such as institutional reforms, media coverage and voters' behavior, but there are only few studies of the most important actors – the legislators. Using Pedersen and Rahat's (2019) notion of personalization of representation, the dissertation investigates whether there is a trend towards personalization of representation and which factors can explain personalized representation.

The dissertation's theoretical point of departure is that personalized representation depends on the incentives and opportunities legislators face. I propose that this cost-benefit calculation depends on societal development, legislators' personal electoral situation and capacities, intra-party control and the electoral institutions. Hereby, the dissertation adds to our understanding of personalized representation by building a theoretical framework for understanding why and when we should expect legislators to personalize their representation.

The main claim advanced in the dissertation is that personalized representation is a representational strategy for legislators to highlight *different* personal aspects *more* than their party. I take the position that personalized representation is all representative expressions that do not include references to the party, following through on the notion that personalized representation is contrasted to party representation in the literature (Rahat & Kenig 2018). To form a more comprehensive concept of personalization allowing us to grasp these facets of non-party representation, I include both the well-established aspect of individualization and suggest another non-partisan aspect of representation: localization. Individualization entails politicians highlighting either their personal qualities or aspects of their private life, and localization entails legislators highlighting the constituency they represent by expressing belonging to the constituency or highlighting their constituency work.

In this dissertation, I examine personalized representation in Denmark and the United Kingdom by looking at legislative party switching, parliamentary speech, individual position taking and perceptions of representation. Claims of personalization trends have not always been accompanied by empirical evidence, and research on personalization of parliamentary behavior is scarce. This dissertation therefore makes an important empirical contribution by collecting original data across time to build valuable data sets for investigating personalization of representation, which is used to conduct two extensive longitudinal studies of personalization. Furthermore, the dissertation proposes and tests two new explanations of personalized representation regarding legislators' individual characteristics: pre-parliamentary party career and personality traits.

Contrary to the main claim in the literature, this summary report demonstrates that there is no clear-cut trend over time towards personalization of representation. Instead, my results show that changes in politics have led to changes in representation: more party switching, more localized focus, but not a general trend of personalization in the sense that politicians act as independent representatives in parliament or emphasize themselves more than their party in parliamentary speeches. Rather, personalized representation is explained by situational variation. Legislators' representational style is a product of both their own electoral situation and characteristics and the institutional setting in which they operate. This indicates that there are strong institutions that hold legislators' opportunities and incentives to personalize their representation in check. An important implication of my findings is therefore that electoral and intra-party reforms might weaken these institutional constraints, which could lead to more personalized representation in the future (Bøggild & Pedersen, 2018). Institutional personalization might have unintended side effects for democracy that we should be aware of when we discuss the future of party democracy.

My conceptual work and empirical findings regarding the different aspects of personalization are important contributions to the discussion of potential democratic implications of personalized representation. Van Aelst et al. (2012) noted that individualization has different implications than privatization. I add that localization has different implications than individualization. Thus, it seems that personalized representation in the form of localization can lead to more district-level representation and hereby strengthen legislators' ties to their district voters. Personalized representation could therefore have positive consequences for democracy by strengthening district-level representation, but it might be at the expense of party democracy at the national level. My results do not show a general trend of personalization in the sense that politicians act as independent representatives in parliament or emphasize

themselves more than their party in parliamentary speeches. In other words, I do not find evidence that legislators act as individual representatives more than as party agents. Hence, party democracy still seems to be intact – at least when it comes to ‘the party in public office’ (Katz & Mair, 1993: 594).

The dissertation consists of four papers that have been published or are under review in international peer-reviewed journals, as well as this report summarizing the project.





## Dansk resumé

I et repræsentativt demokrati udpeger borgerne politikere til at repræsentere deres synspunkter i parlamentet, men i de fleste moderne demokratier er det imidlertid de politiske partier, som danner grundlaget for et fungerende demokrati. De enkelte politikere fungerer derfor som agenter for deres respektive partier, men hvad hvis det forhold har ændret sig? Udgangspunktet for denne afhandling er, at der er sket ændringer i grundlaget for den politiske proces. Disse ændringer er relateret til borgernes værdier, medierne og partierne og har medført, at forskere hævder, at politik er blevet personaliseret (McAllister, 2007). Personalisering af politik indebærer, at der bliver lagt større vægt på individuelle politikere i den politiske proces på bekostning af kollektive grupper såsom politiske partier (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007: 65). Denne påstand er blevet undersøgt i forhold til institutionelle reformer, i mediedækningen og vælgeres adfærd, men når det kommer til en af de vigtigste aktører - parlamentsmedlemmerne - er der kun få undersøgelser. Denne afhandling benytter begrebet personaliseret repræsentation fra Pedersen og Rahat (2019). Formålet med afhandlingen er at undersøge, om der er sket en udvikling imod, at parlamentsmedlemmer personaliserer deres repræsentation, samt hvilke faktorer der kan forklare personaliseret repræsentation.

Det teoretiske udgangspunkt for afhandlingen er, at personaliseret repræsentation afhænger af de incitamenter og muligheder, som politikere har. Afhandlingen argumenterer for, at denne cost-benefit kalkule afhænger af den samfundsmæssige udvikling, parlamentsmedlemmers egne karakteristika og deres elektorale sikkerhed, valgsystemet og partiets kontrol over de mål, som politikerne ønsker at opnå. Herved bidrager denne afhandling til vores forståelse af personaliseret repræsentation ved at opbygge en teoretisk forståelsesramme for, hvorfor og hvornår vi bør forvente, at parlamentsmedlemmer personaliserer deres repræsentation.

Det centrale argument i afhandlingen er, at personaliseret repræsentation er en strategi, hvor lovgivere fremhæver personlige aspekter mere end de fremhæver deres parti. Min position er, at personaliseret repræsentation omfatter opfattelser, adfærd og udsagn, der ikke inkluderer referencer til partiet. Dermed følger jeg linjen i litteraturen om, at personaliseret repræsentation står i modsætning til partirepræsentation (Rahat & Kenig 2018). For at opbygge et mere omfattende personaliseringsbegreb der indbefatter de forskellige aspekter af repræsentation, som ikke relaterer sig til partiet, inkluderer jeg både det veletablerede aspekt *individualisering* og foreslår et andet personligt aspekt af repræsentation: *lokalisering*. Individualisering indebærer, at politikere fremhæver deres personlige egenskaber eller information om deres

privatliv, hvor lokalisering indebærer, at politikere fremhæver den valgkreds, de repræsenterer ved enten at beskrive deres tilhørsforhold til valgkredsen eller fremhæve deres parlamentariske arbejde for valgkredsen.

I denne afhandling undersøger jeg personaliseret repræsentation i Danmark og Storbritannien ved at se på partiskift, parlamentstaler, politikernes individuelle holdninger og deres opfattelse af repræsentation. Påstanden om, at politik er blevet personaliseret, er ikke altid underbygget af empiriske resultater, og forskning i personaliseret parlamentarisk repræsentation er i særdeleshed mangelfuld. Denne afhandling yder derfor et vigtigt empirisk bidrag ved at indsamle nye data over tid for at opbygge værdifulde datasæt til at undersøge personaliseret repræsentation, samt gennemføre to omfattende undersøgelser af personalisering over tid. Desuden foreslår og undersøger denne afhandling to nye forklaringer på personaliseret repræsentation, som relaterer sig til parlamentsmedlemmers individuelle karakteristika: deres præ-parlamentariske partikarriere og personlighedstræk.

I modsætning til hovedpåstanden i litteraturen, finder denne sammenfatning, at der ikke er nogen klar tendens til personaliseret repræsentation over tid. I stedet viser resultaterne, at forandringer i grundlaget for den politiske proces har ført til ændringer i repræsentationen i form af flere partiskift og mere lokaliseret fokus. Dog finder jeg ikke en generel tendens til personalisering i den forstand, at politikere fungerer som uafhængige repræsentanter i parlamentet eller fremhæver sig selv mere end deres parti i deres parlamentstaler. Tværtimod er personaliseret repræsentation mere situationsbestemt, hvilket betyder, at parlamentsmedlemmers repræsentationsstil er et produkt af både deres egen elektorale situation og karakteristika, såvel som de politiske institutioner der omgiver dem. Dette indikerer, at der er stærke institutioner, der holder parlamentsmedlemmernes muligheder for og incitament til at personalisere deres repræsentation i skak. En vigtig implikation af mine fund er derfor, at reformer af valgsystemet og den interne partiorganisering kan svække de begrænsninger, som disse institutioner lægger på politikernes adfærd, hvilket kan føre til mere personaliseret repræsentation i fremtiden (Bøggild & Pedersen, 2018). Således kan denne personalisering muligvis have utilsigtede sideeffekter for demokratiet, som vi skal være opmærksomme på, når vi diskuterer partidemokratiets fremtid.

Denne afhandlings konceptuelle arbejde og empiriske fund vedrørende de forskellige aspekter af personalisering er et vigtigt bidrag til diskussionen af potentielle demokratiske implikationer af personaliseret repræsentation. Van Aelst et al. (2012) fremhæver, at individualisering har andre konsekvenser end privatisering. Afhandlingen her tilføjer, at lokalisering har andre konsekvenser end individualisering. Således ser det ud til, at personaliseret repræsenta-

tion i form af lokalisering kan føre til mere valgkredsrepræsentation og hermed styrke parlamentsmedlemmernes bånd til deres vælgere i kredsen. Modsat kan det også føre til, at flere parlamentsmedlemmer går imod partiet, såfremt deres vælgere i kredsen er uenige i partiets linje. Personaliseret repræsentation kan derfor have positive konsekvenser for demokratiet ved at styrke repræsentationen på valgkredsniveau, men det kan være på bekostning af partidemokratiet på nationalt niveau. Mine resultater viser imidlertid ikke en generel tendens til personalisering i den forstand, at politikere fungerer som uafhængige repræsentanter i parlamentet eller fremhæver sig selv mere end deres parti i deres parlamentstaler. Med andre ord påviser jeg ikke en situation, hvor parlamentsmedlemmerne i højere grad agerer som individuelle repræsentanter end som agenter for deres parti. Derfor ser partidemokratiet stadig ud til at være intakt - i det mindste når det drejer sig om 'partiet i de lovgivende institutioner' (Katz & Mair, 1993: 594).

Afhandlingen består af denne sammenfatning, samt fire artikler der enten er publiceret i eller er under review i internationale videnskabelige tidsskrifter.



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