

THE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION CYCLE AND
CITIZEN SATISFACTION WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

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To my family, especially Kristina,
without whose support this would not be possible.

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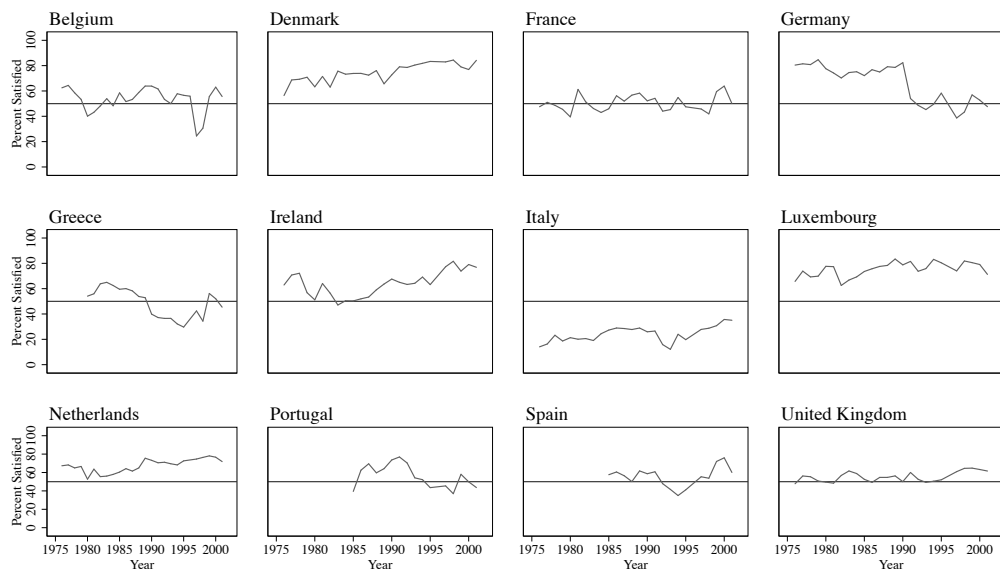
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Puzzle

For the past several decades, political scientists have alternated between feelings of democratic “malaise” and democratic exuberance (Norris 1999), and for good reason. In old and new democracies alike, the feelings of citizens toward their democracies and the political institutions on which they are built have waxed and waned over the course of several decades. Figure 1.1 displays satisfaction data taken from the Eurobarometer Trend Study, which asked citizens in 17 countries from 1976-2002 how they feel about their democracy. As the figure shows, even constraining the analysis to well established industrialized democracies, the level of political support has fluctuated greatly since the late 1970s, from lows that dip well below fifty percent of the electorate being satisfied with their democracy to highs of nearly ninety percent.

Figure 1.1. Percent Satisfied by Country



Note: Data taken from the Eurobarometer Trend Study question: On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]? The survey response is ordinal, with individuals responding Not at all satisfied as 1, Not very satisfied as 2, Fairly Satisfied as 3, and Very Satisfied as 4. The figure presents the percentage in each country that responds at least Fairly Satisfied.

Explanations of satisfaction with democracy have been almost as varied as the trend they seek to explain, and can be broken down into two general categories. The first is a literature that place a premium on the demographic and other individual level characteristics of the voters. For example, when evaluating their government, citizens are influenced by their perception of the government's economic performance (Listhaug and Wiberg 1995; Monroe and Erickson 1986), their own level of political interest (Almond and Verba 1965; Anderson and Guillory 1997), their perception of government accountability and general performance (Aarts and Thomassen 2008), whether their preferred party won or lost (Anderson and Guillory 1997), or even whether elites share their policy priorities (Reher 2015).

These individual characteristics are generally strong predictors and help us to understand variations in satisfaction among individuals. Certainly we expect citizens to react more positively to good economic performance than they would to poor performance. Similarly, it would be surprising to find that those who vote for losing political parties were more satisfied than those who vote for winners. However, these individual characteristics are limited as an explanation of why electorates in some countries are systematically more or less satisfied than electorates in other countries. In Figure 1.1 for example, there is little reason to think that the individual characteristics discussed above would be any less important in Italy than in Denmark. Yet, the level of satisfaction in the former is markedly lower than in the latter. In an attempt to square this circle, another line of research has argued that levels of citizen satisfaction with democracy are also highly influenced by the institutional structure of the system,

generally operationalized as whether the system is consensual or majoritarian (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Lijphart 1999; Aarts and Thomassen 2008), and how well the system produces outputs that closely approximate the position of the median voter (Miller and Listhaug 1998; Paskeviciute 2006; Kim 2009).

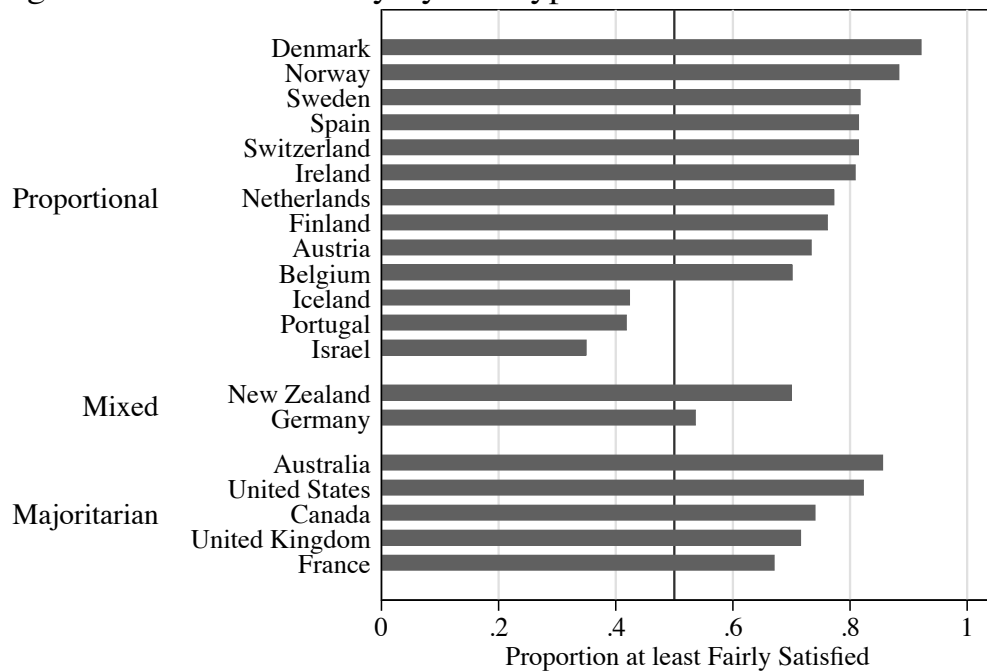
This literature has come to the generally well-accepted conclusion that consensual political systems are much “kinder and gentler” than majoritarian systems, and thus produce higher levels of satisfaction with the democratic process (Lijphart 1999). This gentleness is present on two different levels. On the one hand, consensual systems tend to be associated with much more generous welfare states and tend to produce social policies that are thought to make life easier for the citizens who live in these systems (Birchfield and Crepaz 1998; Crepaz 1998; Tavits 2004). However, the gentleness also extends to the political system itself, where political losers are much better off than losers in majoritarian systems. Characteristics of consensual systems include broad power sharing both in parliament, by using proportional representation electoral rules to include as many parties as possible, and in government, where the usual lack of a single party majority frequently demands coalition governments incorporating multiple parties.

The effect of these consensual systems has been shown to narrow the satisfaction gap between winners and losers (Anderson and Guillory 1997). Anderson and Guillory’s (1997) important work has demonstrated that, as the importance winning elections become greater (i.e. in majoritarian systems), the difference in satisfaction between winners and losers also becomes greater. In majoritarian systems, the winners of the election almost always become the only party in government, and thus hold much of the

control over policy. Consensual systems, however, frequently rely on post-election negotiation not only over who will be included in government, but also what policies that government will pursue.

These institutional arguments do a good job of explaining the systematic differences in levels of satisfaction between system types. However, like the individual characteristics arguments, the institutional arguments are still an incomplete picture of the determinants of satisfaction with the democratic process, as Figure 1.2 shows. Even controlling for system type, there is still substantial variation within each system type, indicating that there is still some unexplained structural differences between countries that is driving levels of satisfaction. Additionally, as Figure 1.1 displays, the static nature of political institutions cannot explain the dynamic nature of political support within each country.

Figure 1.2. Satisfaction by System type



I argue here that, while both the individual and country-level explanations of political support have given us important insights into how political support is determined, neither group of explanations relies on a sufficient theoretical explanation of the source political support. The individual characteristics literature, on the one hand, are fairly ad hoc in nature and cannot explain variations in levels of satisfaction among otherwise similar individuals who live under different political structures. On the other hand, while the institutional explanations purport to account for these varying political structures, they tend to suffer from a lack of theoretical nuance that may explain the variance in satisfaction even among political systems of the same type. In an attempt to reconcile these deficiencies in the literature, I make an argument that relies on a fundamental component of democratic government as the primary driver of citizen satisfaction with the democratic process — political representation.

The Political Representation Cycle

The remaining chapters in this dissertation examine various pieces of what I term the political representation cycle. The political representation cycle is fundamentally about the formation and termination of connections between citizens and those who govern them. Political parties serve as this connective tissue, and one of the primary roles is to serve as spokesmen for the citizens who support them and to attempt to implement their policy program when in government (Gunther and Diamond 2001). These connections are fundamental to the functioning of democracy; without them, the channels of communication from citizen to government and government to citizen begin to break

down. In the remaining chapters, I argue that, while the characteristics of individuals mentioned above remain important in any examination of political support, the fundamental driver of satisfaction with democracy is how well these political representation connections are maintained by political institutions.

The Formation of Connections

The representative function is carried out through two ideological connections made between individual citizens and the representatives they select. The first of these connections is between the individual and the political party that best represents her interests — the citizen-party connection. As Sartori (1976) states, parties are “channels of expression” through which individuals make their preferences known. If a democracy is to carry out its function — to elucidate policy preferences and produce outcomes accordingly — voters must use political parties as a connection through which to transmit their ideological preferences to the elites making decisions. The quality of this connection is thus of utmost importance. A poor connection between voter and party prevents the preferences of that voter from being heard, and over time reduces her confidence in how the democratic process works for her.

Similarly, a second connection is formed between citizens and the government that is selected during an election. While arguably not as important as the connection to a political party, this citizen-government connection is nonetheless crucial to the

maintenance of political support among the electorate¹. Keeping the ultimate purpose of democratic governance in mind, it is clearly preferable to have a government producing policies acceptable to at least a majority of voters. The stronger the connection is between a citizen's preferences and the government's position, the more that citizen is likely to support the functioning of their democratic institutions.

The volume of literature examining the citizen-government connection is quite large both theoretically and empirically. Since Downs' seminal treatment of the importance of the median position for political competition, scholars have emphasized not only the practical importance of the median, but the normative importance as well (Powell 2000; McDonald and Budge 2005). Government policy located at the median position provides the electorate with the only policy that is majority-preferred to any other possible policy outcome, and thus is the only policy that can be said to reflect the will of the majority. Because democratic systems are based on this belief that at least a majority should rule, the median thus provides an important normative anchor point through which we would evaluate the representational performance of democratic governments. Indeed, several studies have examined how the structure of political institutions induces the system to produce governments that approximate this median position. Huber and Powell (1994) and Powell (2000) find that consensual systems tend to do better at maintaining this connection than majoritarian systems. Not surprisingly,

¹ While both are crucial, it can be argued that citizen-party connections are more important than citizen-government connections. On the one hand, the citizen-government connection may vary in quality over time as majorities shift, and a given individual can expect the government to approximate their preferences more closely sometime in the future even if they are some distance apart presently. On the other hand, the quality of the citizen-party connection is the direct line transmitting an individual's preferences directly into the system. If this connection is of low quality, or perhaps even nonexistent, that individual cannot effectively have their preferences represented anywhere in the system.

Kim (2009) and Paskeviciute (2006) also find that the level of satisfaction with the democratic process also increases as the congruence between government and electorate improves.

The Termination of Connections

Inherent in any cyclical process is not only the beginning of a cycle, but also an end. While in most cases the citizen-party connection is never broken when it is established (though its quality may certainly vary over time), the citizen-government cycle is designed to be broken. No democratic government formed during elections lasts forever. Whether it is after a term fixed by a constitution, or by a prime minister dissolving the parliament and calling new elections, each government must end. How, and how often, this citizen-government connection ends is important for our understanding citizen satisfaction with democracy. Scholars have shown that how a government ends can have an impact on subsequent governments (Tavits 2008), and on the electoral fortunes of political parties (Narud and Valen 2008). Moreover, systems that exhibit high rates of government turnover have been shown to be associated with less satisfied electorates (Schmitt 1983; Harmel and Robertson 1986; Weil 1989).

What has been left largely undone in the literature, however, is a systematic examination of whether different types of government terminations have consequences for political support. In other words, is satisfaction with democracy influenced by the mode of termination of the citizen-government connection? On its face, the answer to this question should be yes. Certainly, the termination of a government due to a corruption

scandal will produce more negative effects than a termination caused by regular parliamentary elections. Moreover, the citizen-party connection may even be affected if the government falls because of action taken by a party that is viewed negatively by that party's supporters.

Dissertation Roadmap

While the literature on the citizen-government connection is quite strong (in terms of examining how well the government represents the median voter), the literature examining the citizen-party connection is relatively weak in terms of the effect of that connection on satisfaction with democracy, and the literature examining the consequences of the termination of these connections is nearly non-existent. The remainder of the dissertation is designed to utilize the concept of the political representation cycle address these holes in the literature on satisfaction with the democratic process.

The Citizen-Party Connection

The citizen-party connection is perhaps the most important characteristic of a democracy, and the degree to which the system produces accurate representation influences the likelihood that an individual will be satisfied with the democratic process in their country. The next chapter will focus on this representation provided by parties and party systems in elections. Elections are perhaps the most visible and widely followed political event in a democratic state, and they are important for a key reason - elections are contested by parties, which are the primary vehicles for the aggregation of

individual citizen preferences and thus the primary vehicles for attempting to translate those preferences into the government (Sartori 1976). Chapter Two examines how well this representative function is carried out by measuring the distance between voters and their nearest political party. I argue that as this distance decreases — as the quality of the citizen-party connection improves — the likelihood of that individual being satisfied with the democratic process should increase accordingly. Using survey and country-level data on twenty democracies from 2006-2011, I find that this is the case.

Chapter Two also presents a new test for the well-known axiom that political institutions should represent the median voter as closely as possible (Powell 2000; McDonald and Budge 2005). The median is the only position on the ideological continuum at which net social loss of utility is minimized. That is, only a policy or government located at the median position can be assured of majority support. Accordingly, the median is the measure against which we assess the quality of representation provided by political institutions. As Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011) argue, the same logic extends to the analysis of the quality of representation provided by the party system.

However, as I argue in Chapter Two, countries that have very centralized party systems — i.e. they closely approximate the position of the median voter — tend to have larger distances on average between voters and their nearest political party. In other words, the citizen-party connection tends to break down as the party system converges on the median. The question is thus raised whether or not party system congruence with median is the appropriate measure of adequate political representation provided by party

systems. Given that parties are tools used by voters to express ideological preferences, and that convergence to the median breaks down this link, I argue that the ideal party system distribution is not one that is highly centrist, nor is it one that is too extreme. Rather, moderate levels of system extremism should produce the greatest chances for satisfaction with the democratic process. Using the data mentioned above, this contention is supported by the analyses in Chapter Two.

The Winner Effect

Chapter Three re-examines one of the well established findings in the literature on satisfaction with the democratic process — that political winners are more satisfied with democracy than political losers (Lijphart 1999; Anderson and Guillory 1997). It is not difficult to imagine why this result is so stable. There are measurable psychological effects associated with winning and losing (Wilson and Kerr 1999), and attachments to political parties tend to be both strong and rooted in an individual's identity (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Yet, voters value more than simply being associated with a victorious party. Kim (2009) finds that the ideological difference between a voter and the government position can be as important as that voter being a political winner. Similarly, Curini, Jou, and Memoli (2011) find that a voter's ideological proximity to the government can boost their level of satisfaction even if they are already political winners.

Chapter Three combines the literature on this “winner” effect with the concept of the representational connections between citizen-party and citizen-government. I argue that the quality of these connections conditions the effect of being a political winner, and

that it is quite possible for well represented political losers to be as satisfied with the democratic process as poorly represented winners. I examine this effect for both the citizen-party connection and the citizen-government connection and find that there is no conditioning effect of the quality of the citizen-government connection on being a winner. However, there is a significant negative effect for the citizen-party connection. That is, the better the quality of the connection, the greater effect being a winner has on an individual's satisfaction with the democratic process.

The Termination of the Citizen-Government Connection

Chapters Two and Three deal with the quality of the citizen-party and citizen-government connection and the effect of that quality on satisfaction with the democratic process. The final empirical chapter will examine what happens when those connections — specifically, the citizen-government connection — break down. All governments in every democracy eventually fall, whether by political choice or constitutional mandate. There is a large literature on government stability and duration in which the primary objective is to examine what causes one government to last longer than another (e.g. Strom 1985; Browne, Frensdreis, and Gleiber 1986; King et al. 1990; Diermeier and Stevenson 1999, 2000; Diermeier and Merlo 2000; Laver 2003). Less frequent are studies that examine the consequences of this government stability on citizen evaluations of their democratic institutions (Harmel and Robertson 1986). In this chapter, I investigate how the frequency and type of government terminations affect citizen evaluations of their democratic institutions.

First, I argue that unstable governments — those with very short durations and frequent terminations — signal a “chaos at the top” that indicates the inability or unwillingness of governing elites to produce policy without bringing the government to crisis severe enough to terminate the government. Citizens value stability in their government because it adds meaning to the selection of that government in elections. If the purpose of an election is to select a government to implement a particular set of policies, then the termination of a government quickly after an election muddles the meaning of the election. As this happens more frequently, citizens become less confident in their elections and their government, and thus should be less satisfied with the democratic process.

Additionally, I argue that different termination mechanisms have different effects on citizen evaluations of their institutions. Not every termination of the government is under the control of political actors. The rules of the game dictate when, how, and whether a government can be terminated early (Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2009). Premature termination of the government is outlawed in some countries, such as Norway, and is the prerogative of the executive in others, with a wide variety in between. In Chapter Four, I argue that terminations made discretionarily will be more damaging to the citizen-government connection than those that are dictated by constitutional or other technical rules. Moreover, a subset of discretionary terminations should be the most harmful of all to the citizen-government connection — those involving conflict between or within one or more of the governing parties, or between the government and the opposition in parliament.

Using data on government terminations in twelve countries between 1976-2002, I find that the number of government terminations in a given year has no effect the level of citizen satisfaction with the democratic process. Moreover, I find no effect attributable to discretionary terminations generally. However, examining the subset of conflictual terminations, I find a large substantive negative effect on the level of satisfaction equivalent to the positive effect of a 4% increase in GDP growth.

Summary

The results presented in the remaining chapters make it clear that the connections formed between citizens and their party on the one hand, and their government on the other, are vital for understanding what drives citizen satisfaction with the democratic process. While Chapter Two sheds light on how party systems influence the citizen-party connection, it also questions the long-held belief that the median is the appropriate focal point of quality representation provided by the party system. Chapter Three cracks open the black box of political winners and examines how the quality of the citizen-party and citizen-government connection conditions how winners (and losers) feel about their democracy. Finally, Chapter Four examines the effects of the break down of these representational connections, finding that most most conflictual mechanisms of termination lead to substantial decreases in levels of satisfaction among the electorate.

CHAPTER TWO

The Citizen-Party Connection: The Effect of Party System Distribution

Leftist parties did not fare well electorally during the 1980s and early 1990s. Riding on the backs of leaders like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, conservatism began to dominate political thinking in democracies across Europe. As a consequence, during the 1990s many social democratic parties (including the British Labour and the American Democratic parties) began discarding the old structure of leftist ideas of equality of outcome and an extensive welfare state, and began talking more about a “third way” of politics. Prominent leaders such as British Labour’s Tony Blair and the German Social Democratic Party’s Gerhard Schröder began describing markets as needing to be “complemented and improved by political action, not hampered by it” (Blair and Schröder 1999, 1). Such a strategy worked wonders electorally. Tony Blair’s more moderate “New Labour” party won in a landslide in 1997, gaining more seats in parliament than they had ever achieved, and ending almost two decades of being the opposition party. However, this strategy was not without its down sides. Leftist voters, who had formed the backbone of the Labour Party for decades, saw this ideological shift — particularly the modification of Clause IV — as a violation of Labour’s basic principles, or what Giddens (2000) calls, “...essentially right-wing philosophy in a somewhat more attractive light — Mrs. Thatcher without a handbag” (8). For decades, leftist voters in Britain had a clear electoral choice between the rightist Conservative Party and the leftist Labour Party, and while their preferred party may not have always been successful electorally, it provided them with a level of representation that approximated their ideological preferences reasonably well. It is unlikely that the turn of events in the late 1990s, which saw a blending of the lines between Conservative and

Labour, endeared these leftist voters to the new norm that characterized the democratic process in Britain.

It is this sort of political representation that this chapter is concerned with. The quality of political representation is debated not only in academic circles, but in the media and among the citizenry in democratic countries across the globe. Countries that are considered to be democratic share many characteristics that form the center of these debates — political parties, governments that produce policy, individual politicians. Perhaps the most widely studied and arguably the most important of these democratic characteristics is the election. In the example above, the quality of representation enjoyed leftist voters in Great Britain decreased during the 1990s. With Labour's shift to the center, these voters were left without a party that they felt accurately channeled their ideological viewpoints. What are the reactions of voters when presented with a similar situation in which they are faced with few viable electoral options? I find that, in contrast to the previous literature, voters in centrist party systems such as Great Britain's in 1997 are less likely to be satisfied with the democratic process than voters in systems with a greater range of electoral choice. This finding is striking given the widely accepted axiom in social choice theory that the median position minimizes the net social loss created by the distance between voters and policy outcomes, and thus is the most desirable ideological position for governments. The remainder of this chapter explains this outcome by arguing that, when it comes to electoral choice, it is indeed the ability to choose that matters rather than guaranteeing policy outcomes at the median by maintaining a very centrist party system.

Political Representation and Citizen Satisfaction

Elections are tools for selecting governments (Schumpeter 1943), and are the mechanisms through which parties are able to connect citizens to their governments. In the literature on elections, one of the most influential concepts is the position of the median voter, and with good reason. Since the primary function of democratic institutions is to produce a government that accurately reflects the preferences of as many citizens as possible, it is reasonable to expect that citizens evaluate their democratic institutions at least in part by how well the institutions carry out this representational function. When the government is located at the median position, it is more likely to produce policies that meet this criteria since the median position is the only one that is acceptable to a majority of voters. When grounded in social choice and normative democratic theory, we expect a government selected by voters to produce policies that are acceptable to a majority of those citizens. Normatively we expect this because a majority-backed government producing policy outputs supported only by a minority is a perversion of the majoritarian vision of democratic governance. Even governments that control less than a majority of seats in parliament must rely on the informal support of other parties in order to pass policy. Minority control of the policymaking process in contrast to the preferences of the majority is thus anathema to democratic ideals. The median is the one position that assures majority support for one policy over all others.

In addition to these normative considerations, theoretical approaches to elections have long emphasized the role of the median position as an important equilibrium

structuring political competition (Downs 1957; Hotelling 1929; Black 1958). As parties compete as vote maximizers, Downs (1957) predicts party convergence to the median because gaining the support of the median voter ensures electoral victory (or at least ensures the prevention of a loss). Moreover, the median is important for more than just party competition. Its function as a representational mechanism is enhanced as electoral votes are translated into seats in the legislature and as the government begins to formulate policy (Huber and Powell 1994; McDonald, Mendes, and Budge 2004; McDonald and Budge 2005; Powell 2000). Only policy located at the median minimizes the utility loss of voters seeking policies near their ideological ideal points. Thus, if voters evaluate their democracy by the quality of representation it provides, and the median position provides the highest possible level of representation, we should expect to find an empirical effect of greater or lesser representation of the median on citizen satisfaction with the democratic process. That is, citizen satisfaction with the democratic process should increase as the congruence between government output and median voter preference increases.

Many studies have taken this theoretical work and applied it empirically in investigations of how well governments represent their constituents. Typically, these studies operationalize their research by comparing the ideological position of the government to the position of the median voter, a concept variously referred to as representational congruence, ideological congruence, or some other similar term. While the largest group of studies in this literature focus on this representational congruence as the dependent variable, focusing on the role of institutions in providing more or less

congruence (Blais and Bodet 2006; Budge 2007; Huber and Powell 1994; Powell 2008, 2009; Golder and Stramski 2008), the comparatively fewer studies that examine the consequences of ideological congruence (Paskeviciute 2006; Kim 2009) support the expectation that greater government/citizen congruence leads to increases in citizen satisfaction with democracy.

Although the theoretical and empirical research on government/citizen congruence is rich, there has been comparatively little research that looks at how this distribution of the party system affects citizen satisfaction. Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011) build on the logic of representation of the median by extending the analysis to the effect of party offerings in elections on citizen satisfaction with democracy. More specifically, they argue that citizen satisfaction with the democratic process should increase not only as government policy approximates the median position, but also as the party system converges on the median. In shifting their focus from policy outputs to party offerings, Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011) retain the assumption taken from analyses of satisfaction with government outputs that the mechanism that provides the greatest representation — and the greatest satisfaction — is convergence to the median position. Thus, the more congruent the party system is to the preferences of the median voter, the more representative the party system becomes. This increased level of representation should lead to increased level of satisfaction with democracy. They construct a measure of average party extremity by calculating how far on average a party in a given party system is from the position of the median voter. As this distance becomes small, satisfaction with the democratic process increases.

However, in contrast to the assumptions of Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011), there is an important distinction between what we should expect when examining government behavior post-election and the behavior of parties offering platforms during the election. While convergence on the median by a single government is preferable for the reasons mentioned above, party system convergence on the median is not. The government produced by an election is the end result of a process designed to elicit the preferences of the majority of the electorate, and that government is tasked with following through on the electoral promises that garnered the majority vote. The election process itself, however, is a forum for the expression of the multiple ideological views that exist within the electorate (Sartori 1976). Each party offering a platform during an election has a responsibility not to the median voter, but to those supporters who adhere to that particular ideological viewpoint. Given the power of the median position in electoral competition, parties are driven toward the median by the desire to assure victory (particularly mainstream parties, who are typically more concerned with winning office than are niche parties; see Adams, et al. 2006), but by doing so potentially alienate some of their more ideological supporters (e.g. the British Labour Party in 1997). This creates a tension in the system between the desire to achieve office and the need to provide ideological representation to their supporters. Thus, a convergence to the median by all parties in the system would indicate that either the supporters for each party are located at the median (and the parties are attempting to represent their voters), or that the party system is failing to provide representation to an electorate that has a more diverse distribution across the ideological spectrum. In the latter case, the closer the party system

gets to congruence with the median voter, the lower the quality of representation it provides the electorate. Thus, although it is normatively desirable for *governments* to produce political outcomes preferred by a majority, *party systems* that ensure this outcome by being highly centrist should actually reduce levels of citizen satisfaction.

This tension between seeking office and representing their supporters by pursuing policy is empirically evident by the lack of any real world examples of a party system where all parties are located at the median. Contrary to Downsian predictions of party convergence, even among centrist mainstream parties there is an effort to maintain ideological differences that appeal to the parties' respective supporters. However, while parties attempt to maintain some balance between office and policy goals, there is no reason to assume that voters are anything other than primarily policy seekers. If voters were office seeking (in the sense that they cared only about supporting a party who could gain office), we would observe all voters supporting the parties with the greatest chance of obtaining office. Instead, we think of voters as supporting parties based on the ideological compatibility of the voter's ideal point and their favored party's position. Both the proximity (e.g. Downs 1957, Enelow and Hinich 1984, etc.) and directional (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989) spatial models of voting rely on this assumption of voters as policy seekers.

When a party is behaving primarily as an office seeker, vis-a-vis a policy seeker, and is moving toward the median, they provide progressively less accurate representation to the voters who supported that party based on its original ideology, leading to a decreased level of satisfaction with the democratic process for those voters. The more

widespread this behavior is within a party system, the more centrist the system becomes, and voters become less likely to be satisfied. Thus, rather than improving the level of citizen satisfaction with democracy when the party system becomes more centrist, it produces less. The clearest examples of this are niche party supporters. Work by Adams et al. (2006) and others (Meguid 2005; Ezrow 2008, 2010) show that niche parties must carefully consider their prioritization of office over policy. Adams et al. (2006) show that niche parties are systematically punished by their supporters when they move toward more centrist positions in order to gain votes. Niche party supporters are clearly not motivated primarily by office considerations since most niche parties rarely participate in government. Additionally, niche parties themselves are likely not office seeking since they rarely moderate their policies to gain more votes. It is therefore not surprising when these niche parties are punished when they shift priorities from policy motivations toward winning office.

In their ideal world, each party (and party supporter) would like to see their own policy program enacted without having to worry about votes or negotiating with potential coalition partners. Indeed, one of the core functions of parties is to propose and formulate policies that are in accordance with the ideology they offered to the electorate (Sartori 1976). It would be a surprise indeed for a socialist party to propose a policy program that more closely resembled the position of the median voter than the position of its core supporters. Instead, moderate policies produced by governments are normally achieved by way of post-election negotiations (or pre-electoral arrangements) of government policy objectives. In other words, not only is party convergence to the median not a

necessary condition for government outputs to be located at the median, but it is questionable whether it is even normatively desirable (Ezrow 2007). Thus, if parties are performing their representation function well, we should only hope for their position to be at the median if their core constituency is located there.

It is in this ideological representation function that representation in the electoral sense differs from representation provided by government outputs. Voters cast their votes for particular parties with the expectation that the party will represent their views if they are awarded seats in the legislature or government. Additionally, it is not enough to ensure meaningful representation for parties simply to propose policies in accordance with the views of their supporters. Voters must also perceive the party system as offering them a real choice between parties — the median mandate theory of representation is itself predicated on the condition that there are at least two distinct parties, and that voters be able to perceive the differences between them (McDonald, Mendes, and Budge 2005). The representativeness of the party system, then, is not enhanced as the parties converge toward the median. In fact, this would constitute *less* representation of differing ideological views rather than more. As a result, although *government output* located at the position of the median voter is enough to ensure that at least a majority of voters support that policy versus any other, a convergence to the median of *party offerings* in elections robs voters of the conduits through which their ideological views are represented in the governing coalition itself.

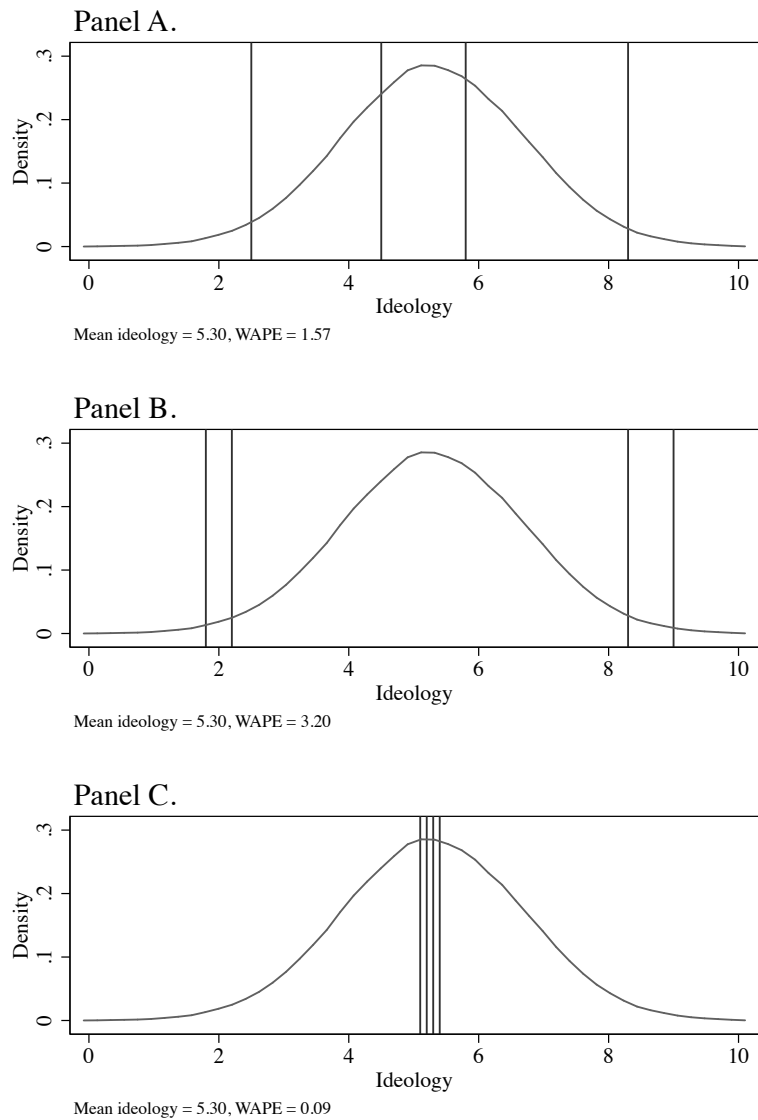
Party System Representation and Citizen Satisfaction

As a tangible example of the theory, consider Figures 2.1, which presents three hypothetical four-party systems with identical voter distributions, but different distributions of parties leading to different levels of average party extremity. Panel A represents what we might expect from a typical Western European party system, with two relatively centrist parties flanked by distinctive leftist and rightist parties. According to the median mandate theory, we should expect Party C to hold considerable influence over policymaking because of its position nearest to the median voter. Voters in this system have four distinct choices of party offerings ranging from center-right/center-left to distinctively right/left. Additionally, the level of weighted average party extremism is 1.57, meaning the average party (weighted by party vote share) is about 1.57 units away from the median ideological point in the voter distribution¹.

The party system represented in Panel B is a system that most political observers would argue is not particularly desirable. Party C remains the party closest to the median, yet is located much further from the median voter position. Additionally, voters in Panel A have significantly less choice among parties than in Panel B. There is no centrist party - all four parties are located relatively far from the median voter position. Additionally, the differences between parties A and B and parties C and D are modest at best, leaving voters with two real choices - an extreme left or extreme right party. Under both the median mandate theory, and the theory proposed by Ezrow and Xezonakis, we should

¹ $WAPE = \sqrt{\sum VS_{jk}(P_{jk} - M_k)^2}$, where VS_{jk} is the vote share for party j in country k , P_{jk} is the ideological position of party j in country k , and M_k is the mean voter position in country k . For Panel A, the ideological position of each party is $A=2.5$, $B=4.5$, $C=5.8$, $D=8.3$. For Panel B, the positions are $A=1.8$, $B=2.2$, $C=8.3$, $D=9.0$. For Panel C, the positions are $A=5.1$, $B=5.2$, $C=5.3$, $D=5.4$. For each figure the vote shares for each party are $A=.09$, $B=.35$, $C=.40$, $D=.16$.

Fig. 2.1. Hypothetical Voter Distributions



expect citizen satisfaction to be lower in this system relative to Panel A because the average party extremism is much higher at 3.20, and achieving government policy at located at the median would be much more challenging than in Panel A.

Taken to the other extreme, Panel C presents a highly centralized system. All four parties in this system are located nearly on top of the position of the median voter. In this system we are all but assured of government policy being at the position of the median.

Additionally, the level of weighted average party extremity (WAPE) is much lower in this system compared to both Panel A and Panel B. Consequently, we should expect this type of system to produce the highest level of citizen satisfaction of the three.

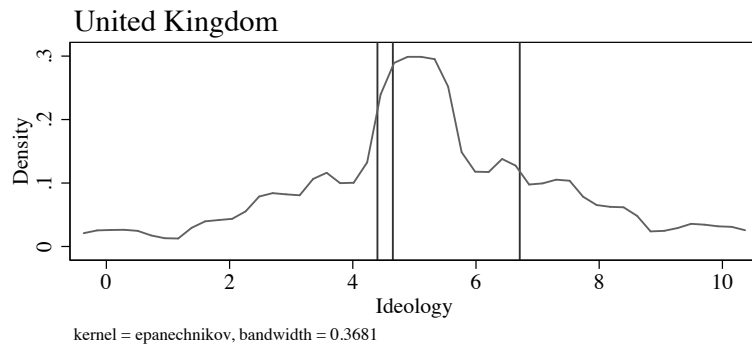
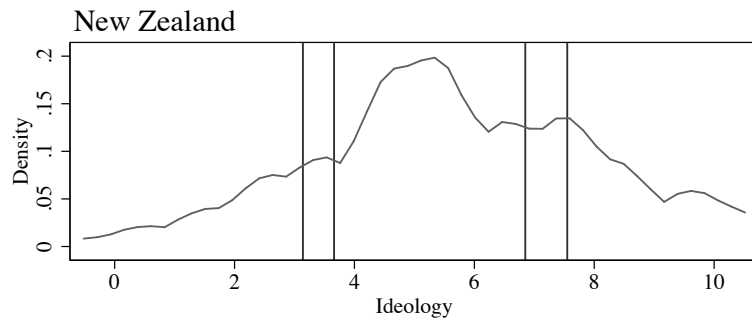
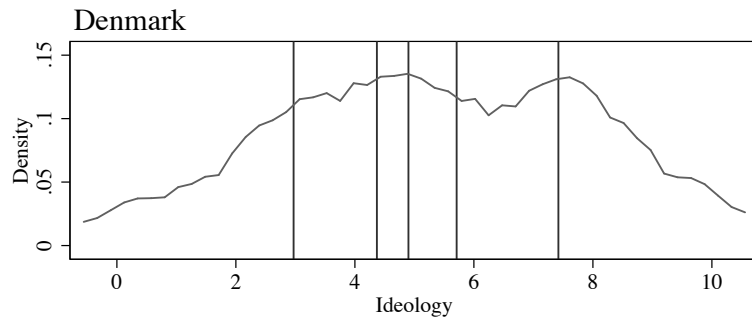
It is not a difficult argument to say that Panel B represents the least desirable of the three hypothetical party systems. Not only is there no party located near the median voter position, but there is relatively little choice between the parties that do exist. On the other hand, this paper argues that Panel C is also not the ideal party system. Although it nearly ensures government policies located at the median, it completely removes all choice from the electoral arena. Rather than fostering satisfaction, this type of system should decrease satisfaction not only for all voters on the flanks of the most extreme parties in the system, but also for relatively moderate voters near the median that can distinguish no difference between the available parties. Thus, although it may be normatively desirable to ensure policy outcomes at the median by maintaining a very centrist party system, doing so should inherently produce greater dissatisfaction at the individual level.

The most desirable party system (in terms of producing the greatest likelihood for individual citizen satisfaction) is Panel A. It provides multiple relatively centrist, yet ideologically distinct parties along with smaller parties located closer to the ends of the ideological spectrum. Such a party system reduces the amount of ideological space between voters and their nearest political party. Since a primary function of political parties is to provide ideological representation to their supporters, decreasing the distance between voters and a political party ought to engender greater levels of satisfaction with

democracy. In order to evaluate this proposition, I will test the following hypothesis, which I will call the Party Distance Hypothesis:

Party Distance Hypothesis: As the distance between a voter's ideological ideal point and the nearest political party decreases, satisfaction with the democratic process should increase.

Fig. 2.2. Three Party Systems



This logic also implies that the effect of party system extremism is not straightforward. Clearly, the level of party extremism in Panel B of Figure 2.1 is likely to produce a high level of dissatisfaction. However, if the theory posited above is correct, reducing party extremism to levels found in Figure Panel C should not maximize individual citizen satisfaction. Instead, the party system should be diverse enough to provide adequate representation for as many voters as possible, yet not so polarized as to produce a system such as Panel B, nor so centrist as to produce a system such as Panel C. Consider Figure 2.2, which displays the party systems of Denmark, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Denmark closely approximates the system represented in Panel A of Figure 2.1, while New Zealand and the United Kingdom approximate Panels B and C, respectively. According to the theory argued by Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011), in which satisfaction is produced by increasingly centrist party systems, we should expect to see citizen satisfaction with democracy at its highest in the United Kingdom (WAPE = 1.02), followed by New Zealand (WAPE = 1.69) and Denmark (WAPE = 1.89). If the theory argued here is correct, however, we should expect lower levels of satisfaction in the United Kingdom than in a country like Denmark, which has higher levels of party extremism, but arguable provides better representation to a wider range of voters. To evaluate this proposition, I will test the following hypothesis, which I will call the Party Extremism Hypothesis:

System Extremism Hypothesis: Individual citizen satisfaction with democracy should decrease at low and high levels of weighted average party extremism.

Statistical Analyses

The data used to evaluate these hypotheses are from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), a survey which includes both individual level indicators as well as country level data, and covers the 20 countries examined in this study². The survey instruments were administered between 2003-2011. The dependent variable in the analysis is individual level satisfaction with the democratic process, which is acquired using the following question: “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?” The survey response is ordinal, with individuals responding “Not at all satisfied” as 1, “Not very satisfied” as 2, “Fairly Satisfied” as 3, and “Very Satisfied” as 4. Figure 2.3 provides visual presentation of the data, and indicates a fair amount of variation in the number of respondents selecting the four levels of satisfaction. Shown another way, Figure 2.4 displays the proportion of respondents that are at least “Fairly Satisfied” with the democratic process in their country.

There has been some controversy in the literature about the use of the “satisfaction with the way democracy works” question over what exactly the item actually measures. Scholars such as Easton (1965, 1975) and Norris (1999) have expanded the concept of political support to be a multidimensional concept composed of support for democratic principles as well as for the functioning of democracy, and the

² The countries include Australia (2007), Austria (2008), Belgium (2003), Canada (2008), Denmark (2007), Finland (2011), France (2007), Germany (2009), Iceland (2009), Ireland (2007), Israel (2006), Netherlands (2010), New Zealand (2008), Norway (2009), Portugal (2009), Spain (2008), Sweden (2006), Switzerland (2007), the United Kingdom (2005), and the United States (2008).

Figure 2.3. Satisfaction by Country

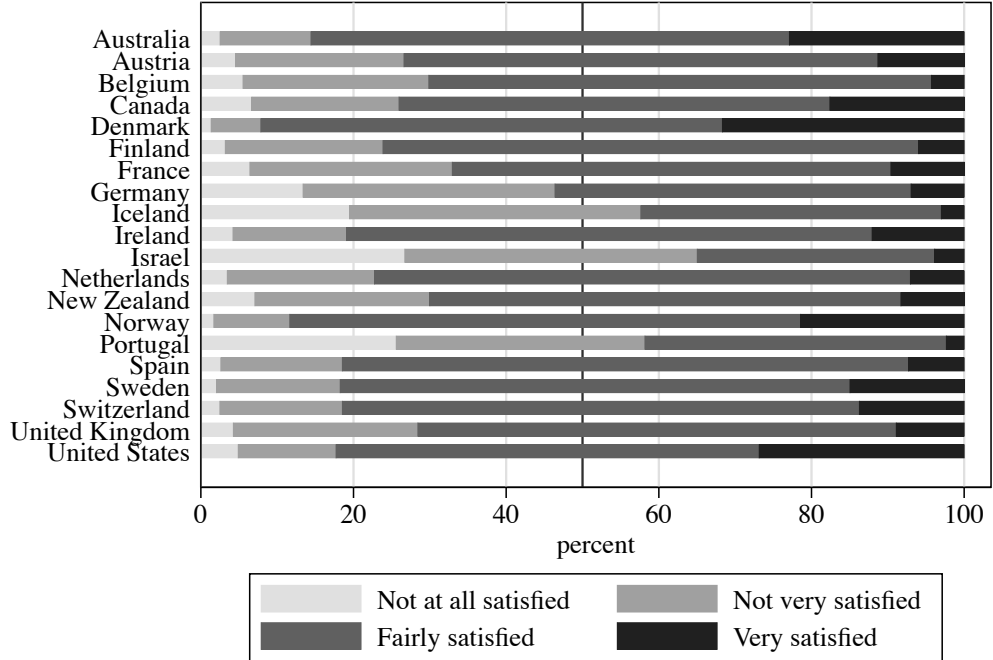
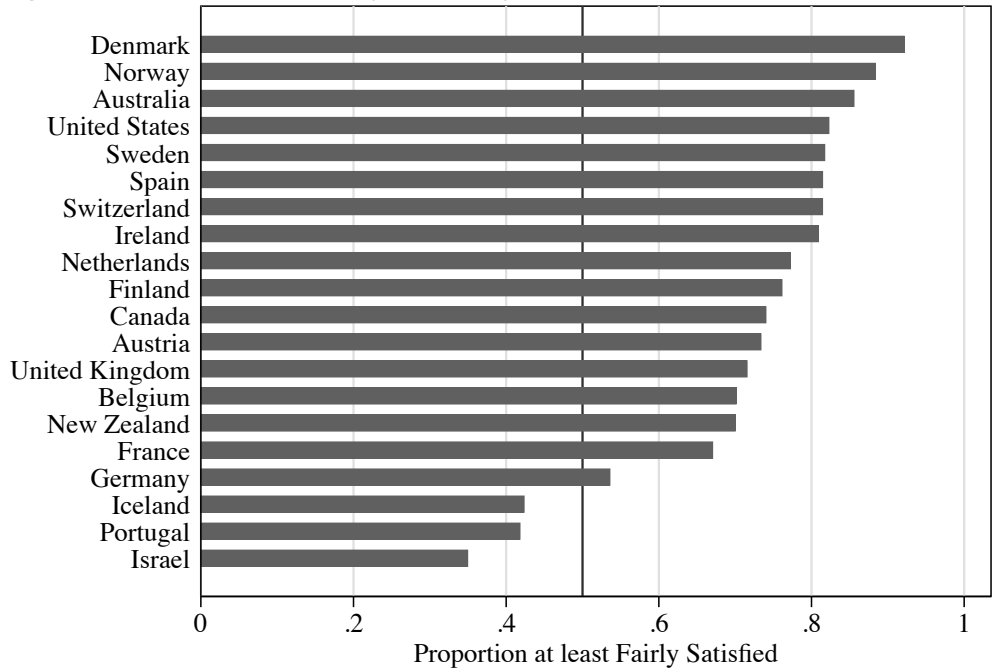


Figure 2.4. Satisfaction by Country



performance of institutions and actors. They argue that no single indicator can accurately capture all of these dimensions, and they are almost certainly correct. The countries

examined here, however, allow me to disregard some of the problems created by this argument. Because all of the countries are well-established, industrialized democracies, there is little need to worry about capturing support for democratic principles. This study is primarily concerned with explaining why some citizens are happier with how their democracy works in practice than others, and there is evidence to show that the best way to operationalize this concept is the “satisfaction with the way democracy works” question (Linde and Ekman 2003).

Here, I am primarily interested in two predictors of the level of satisfaction with democracy. The first is the ideological distance between a respondent’s ideal point and the location of the nearest political party. To test the Party Distance Hypothesis, the former independent variable will be constructed by calculating the distance between each individual voter’s ideal point and the ideological position of the nearest political party using the ideological self-placement scale administered by the CSES, which ranges from 0-Left to 10-Right. The positions of each political party will be measured using the same scale, on which respondents are asked to place each party. For each country, a party’s position is calculated by taking the mean of the respondent placements of that party. The individual-party distance variable, then, is measured in the following way:

$$distance_i = \min\{|p_{ik} - q_{jk}|\}, j=1, \dots, J \text{ where}$$

p_i = the ideological position of respondent i in country k ,

q_j = the ideological position of party j in country k ,

$\{|p_{ik} - q_{jk}|\}$ = the set of ideological distances between respondent i and each party j in country k .

In order to support the Party Distance Hypothesis, the coefficient for the *distance* variable should be negative and significant, indicating that as the distance between an individual and the nearest political party increases, that the probability of an individual being satisfied with democracy should decrease.

The second predictor of satisfaction with democracy is the ideological extremity of the party system. To test the System Extremism Hypothesis, I will use the measure introduced by Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011), which they term weighted average party extremism (WAPE). WAPE measures party system extremism by calculating for each country the average distance between a party and the mean voter position, weighted by vote share. Following the argument of Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011), the coefficient of the WAPE variable should be negative and significant, indicating that as a party system becomes more centrist, voters should be more satisfied with the democratic process. Following the theory argued here, however, I expect party system extremism to be non-linear in its impact on the probability of satisfaction with democracy. I expect the effect to be a concave curve, with low levels of satisfaction at both low and high levels of WAPE. To test for this non-linear effect, I include both a linear and squared WAPE term. To reduce collinearity, I de-meant the WAPE variable prior to squaring it.

To account for other influences on satisfaction with the democratic process, the analysis will also include several individual level/demographic controls, as well as additional country-level controls. First, if the Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011) theory holds, one expects that citizen satisfaction with democracy may be influenced by how far an individual is from the median voter. Because centrist party offerings are what drive

citizen satisfaction, the farther a voter is from the center, the less satisfied they should be. If the theory argued here holds, however, we should expect this effect to be washed out once an individual's distance from a party is controlled for. That is, under the Party Distance Hypothesis, voters far from the median have no reason to be less satisfied with the democratic process than do centrist voters unless there is no party offering in their ideological neighborhood. I therefore calculate for each respondent the distance between their ideal point and the position of the mean voter. I expect the effect of this variable to be negligible. On the other hand, supporters of niche parties, which tend to lie further from the median voter than supporters of mainstream parties, should systematically be less satisfied with the democratic process than supporters of more mainstream parties. Niche parties, such as communist or nationalist parties, rarely participate in governments, and their supporters tend to gravitate to these parties precisely because of their dissatisfaction with the standard offerings in the party system. Therefore, I include a variable that indicates whether the respondent is a supporter of a niche party³. Finally, I include demographic controls for age, gender, education, and religiosity.

The analysis also controls for five additional country-level factors that could influence citizen satisfaction. Following previous literature outlining the importance of the economy for individual evaluation of government performance (Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002), I will control for several economic variables, including GDP growth, inflation, and unemployment. Because I expect better economic performance to be more

³ The definition of a niche party utilized here follows Meguid (2005, 2008), Adams, et al. (2006), and others, which define a niche party as one which takes extreme stances on traditional issues (e.g. communist parties), or focuses on non-traditional issues which cross-cut traditional cleavages.

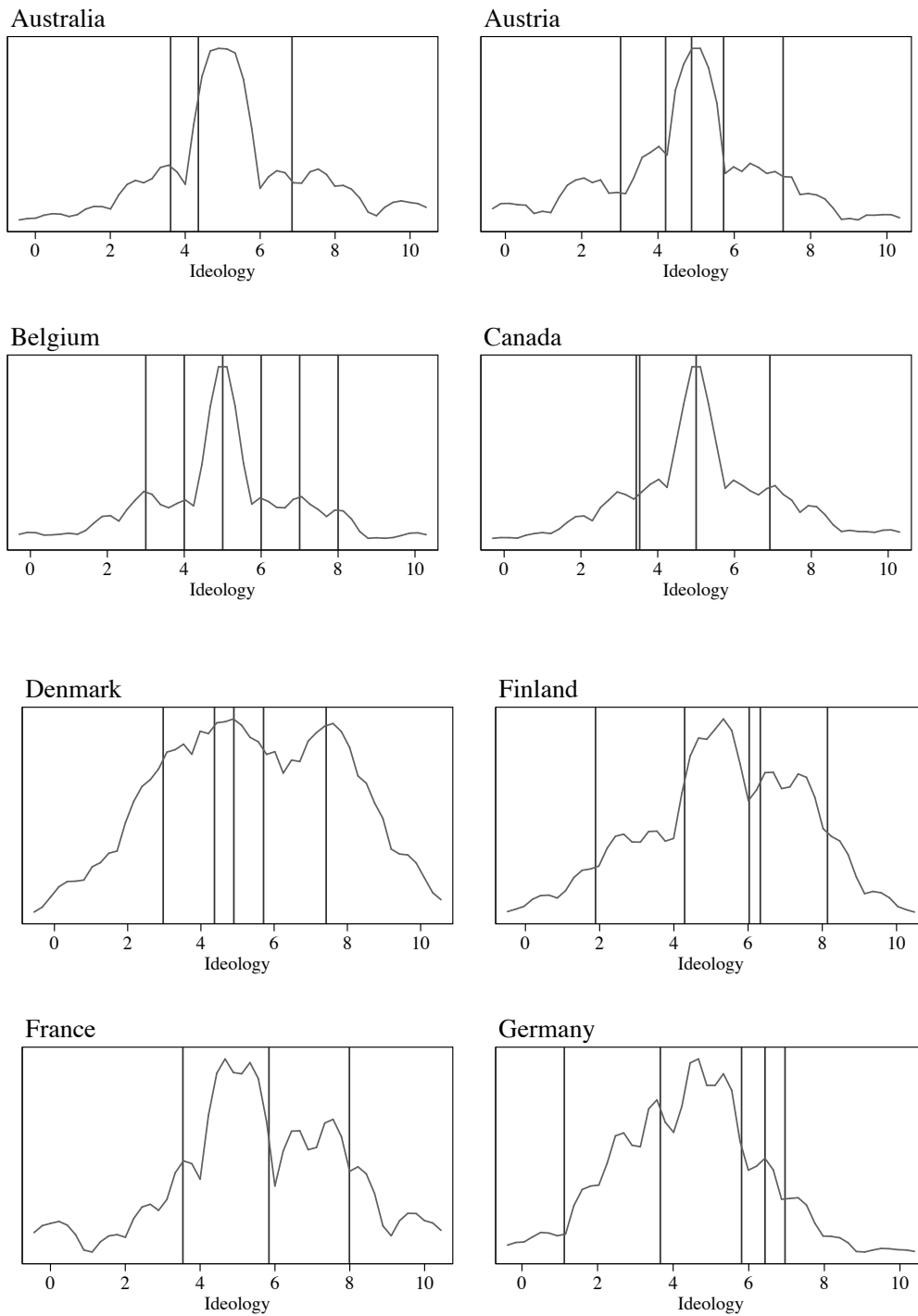
likely to lead to greater satisfaction, I expect the coefficients for GDP growth to be positive, while inflation and unemployment should both be negative.

Additionally, Lijphart (1999) and others have noted the ability of proportional systems to provide representation to broader sectors of the electorate because of the (relative) ease with which parties may be awarded seats in the legislature in proportion to the votes they receive. To account for this possibility, I include a dummy variable indicating whether or not a country uses a proportional electoral system. Since the nature of proportional systems is to be inclusive rather than exclusive, I expect satisfaction to be more likely in proportional systems. Finally, I will include a measure of the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) in order to capture the number of electoral options available to voters⁴. On the one hand, a greater number of parties is indicative of greater choice on the part of voters, which could lead to greater satisfaction. On the other hand, the party distance theory suggests that voter satisfaction depends the distribution of those parties, as well as on how close the nearest party is to their location. Therefore, I have no preexisting expectations as to the direction of the relationship between ENEP and satisfaction.

Figure 2.5 presents the voter distributions of each country included in the analysis along with the positions of the top vote-getting mainstream parties. As expected, most of the systems in the data set have fairly centrist voter distributions, with a few countries — Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden — having rather more widely

⁴ ENEP is measured using the Laakso and Taagepera (1979) equation: $ENEP = 1/\sum(v_i)^2$, where v_i is the proportion of votes for party i .

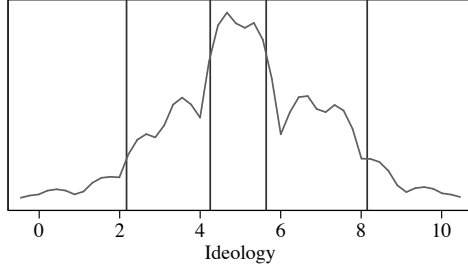
Fig. 2.5. Voter and Party System Distributions



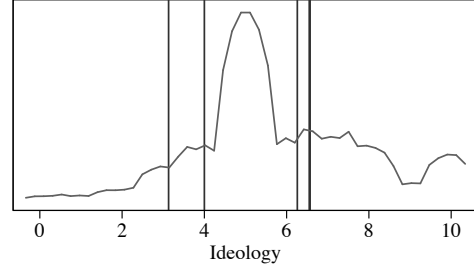
distributed voters. Also evident from the figures is the tendency of the party systems in countries with majoritarian type electoral systems to have fewer parties, and to cluster

Fig. 2.5 cont.

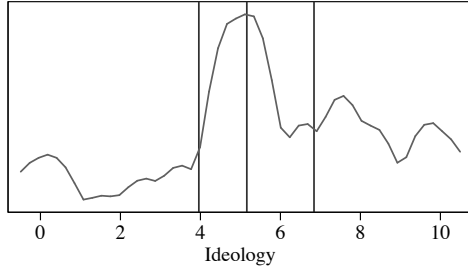
Iceland



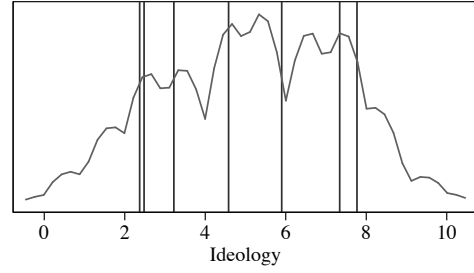
Ireland



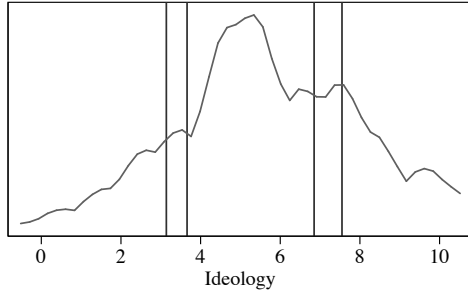
Israel



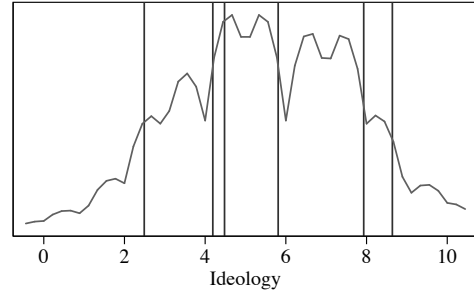
Netherlands



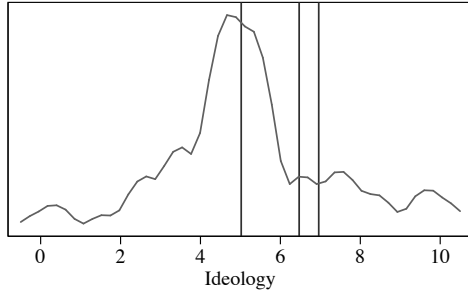
New Zealand



Norway



Portugal



Spain

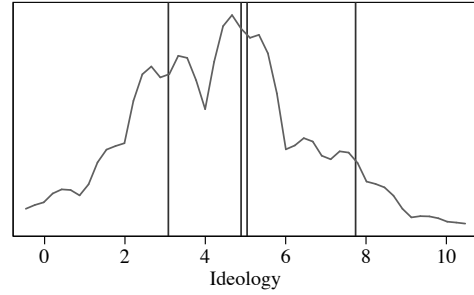
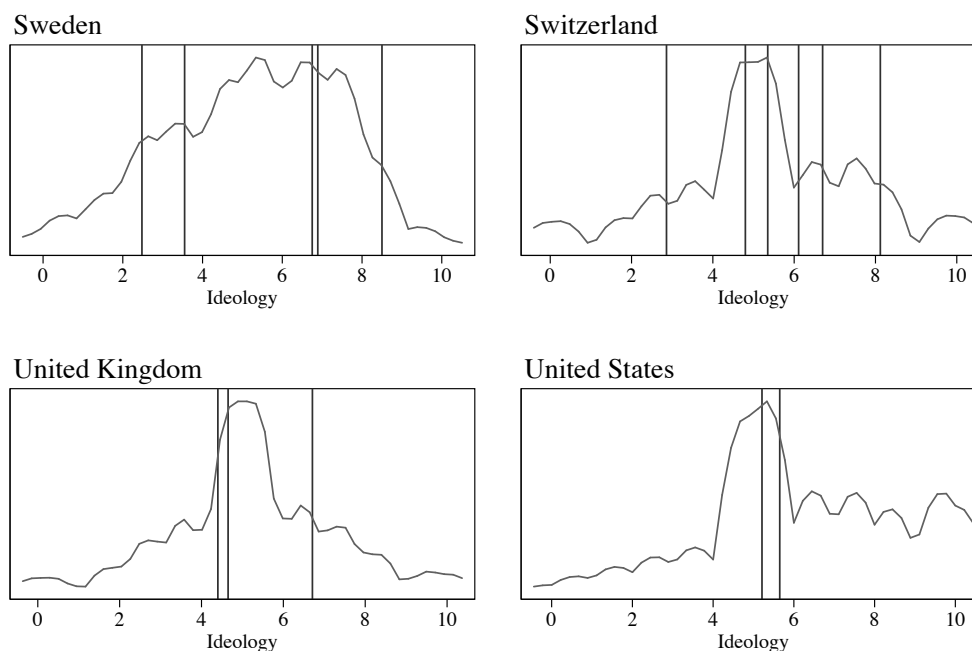


Fig. 2.5 cont.

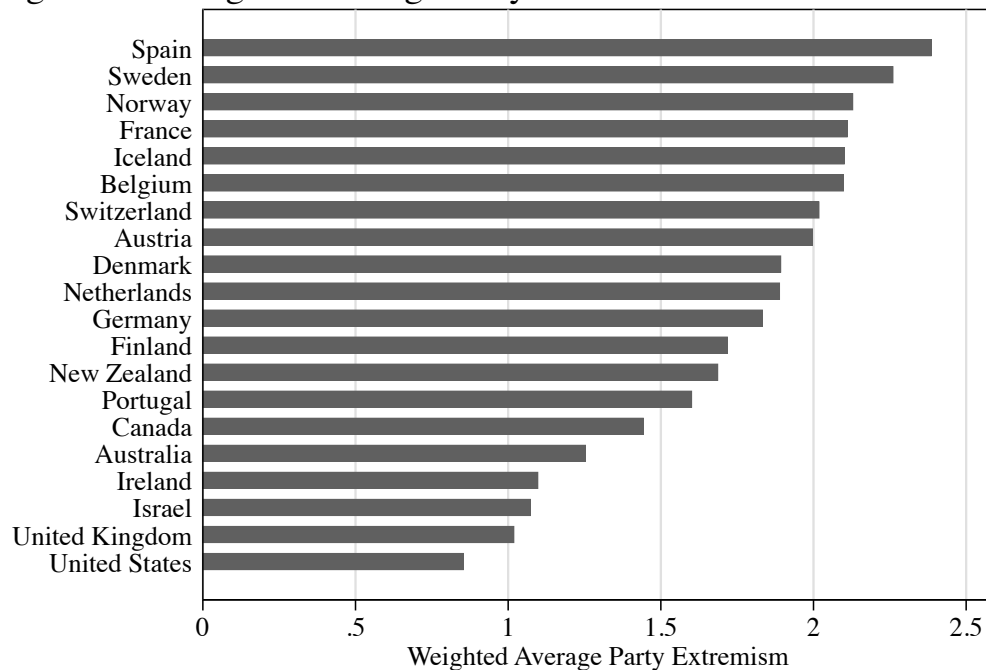


those parties closer to the center of the distribution than is the case in the proportional systems. Looking at Denmark, the most satisfied country in the analysis, we can see that the party system provides a wide variety of party offerings, and there is a political party located near each major location of voter preferences. In contrast, Portugal, which is near the bottom in satisfaction, has relatively few choices, and of those choices the majority lie well to the right of the median voter position. Thus, both centrist and leftist voters have little to no choice of party during the election.

One particular case of interest is the United States. Like the other majoritarian systems, the voter distribution in the United States is highly centrist, and the party system is characterized by few parties located very near the median. However, unlike the other majoritarian systems, which are at best near the middle of the pack in terms of satisfaction, the United States maintains a fairly high level of satisfaction with the democratic process.

Another strange case is that of Israel. Along with the Netherlands, Israel is one of only two countries in the data set to have a single national district elected using proportional representation. While highly proportional conditions normally lead to larger numbers of parties representing a wide variety of ideologies, as in the Netherlands, Israel more closely resembles the majoritarian countries with a fairly centrist party system, and also the least satisfied country in the data set.

Figure 2.6. Weighted Average Party Extremism



Looking at Figure 2.6, we can also see that the majoritarian systems maintain some of the lowest levels of party system extremism in the dataset. Policy outputs in these countries are likely to be near the median voter since the distance between the median and the average party is relatively small. Previous research suggests this should produce higher levels of satisfaction. However, if the theory here is correct, these centrist party systems pay for their low average party extremism by increasing the average

Table 2.1. Effect of Citizen-Party Connection on Satisfaction

Variable	Coefficient
Level 1 Variables	
Distance from Party	-.12*** (.01)
Distance from Mean	-.04*** (.01)
Niche Party Supporter	-.33*** (.05)
Age	.00 (.00)
Female	-.11*** (.02)
Education	.08*** (.01)
Religiosity	.08*** (.00)
Level 2 Variables	
WAPE	.79*** (.04)
WAPE ²	.09 (.10)
ENEP	-.19*** (.01)
Majoritarian System	.51*** (.04)
Mixed System	.07 (.05)
GDP Growth	.06*** (.01)
Inflation	-.04*** (.01)
Unemployment	-.04*** (.01)
Level 2 Variance	0.32
Cut 1	-3.27
Cut 2	-1.42
Cut 3	1.84
-2 Log Likelihood	53,157.72
Respondent N	26,765
Country N	20

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Omitted system type category is proportional.

distance between an individual and a party⁵. If centrist party systems drive satisfaction with democracy, we should see higher probabilities of citizen satisfaction in those countries with more centrist systems.

A more rigorous empirical analysis tests these visual suggestions. Table 2.1 reports the results of a multilevel ordered logistic regression. It is clear from the Level 1 variables that the Distance from Party Hypothesis has strong support. Increasing the distance between an individual’s ideal point and the nearest political party significantly decreases the probability that the individual will be satisfied with the democratic process. Given the importance of representation in democratic theory, this should not be surprising. Parties are “channels of expression” of the ideological viewpoints of the electorate. The more difficult it is for an individual to express those viewpoints, the more they become dissatisfied. The substantive impact of this result can be seen in Table 2.2. Take, for example, an otherwise average individual who places themselves at a 6.0 on the ideological continuum, and that supports a center-right party also located at 6.0. The

Table 2.2. Effect of Ideological Distance on Probability of Satisfaction

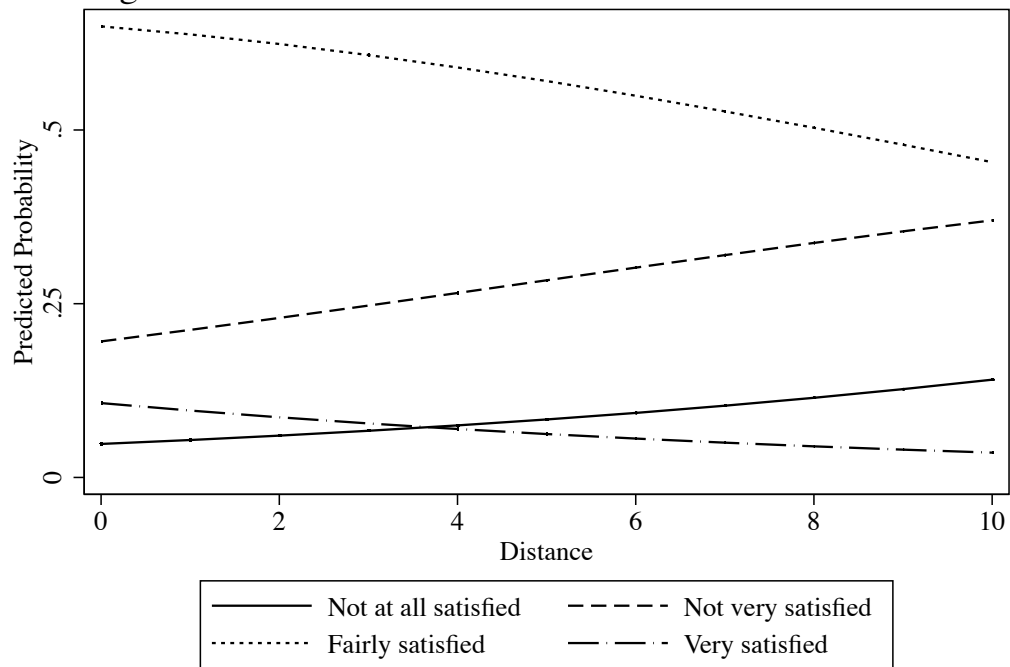
Satisfaction	Distance = 0	Distance = 1	Distance = 3
pr(Not at all)	0.05	0.05	0.07
pr(Not very)	0.20	0.21	0.25
	0.25	0.26	0.32
pr(Fairly)	0.65	0.64	0.61
pr(Very)	0.11	0.10	0.08
	0.76	0.74	0.69

Note: Entries are predicted probabilities.

⁵ The correlation coefficient is $-.75$, $p < .001$, indicating that an decrease in average party extremism (i.e. a more centrist system) leads to an increase in the distance between an individual and a party.

probability of that individual being at least fairly satisfied with the democratic process, *ceteris paribus*, is about .76. If that center-right party move to the right to 7.0 on the ideological continuum, that individual's probability of being satisfied drops by .02 to about .74. If that center-right party becomes a far-right party located at 9.0 ideologically,

Figure 2.7. Effect of Distance on Satisfaction



the individual's probability of being satisfied drops a further .05 to about .69. Thus, a distance of three ideological points between voter and party — not an unlikely occurrence, particularly in majoritarian systems — leads to a substantial drop in the probability of satisfaction of about 7%. This result holds even controlling for where the individual lies compared to the mean voter, and for whether or not the individual is a niche party supporter.

The results for the System Extremism Hypothesis are more mixed. While the two WAPE coefficients — the linear and the squared — are somewhat difficult to interpret, a negative and significant coefficient on the squared WAPE coefficient would indicate that there is a nonlinear concave relationship in the data. However, inconsistent with the System Extremism Hypothesis, which stated that both high and low levels of party system extremism would lead to a lower probability of satisfaction with democracy, Figure 2.8 does not support the hypothesis. However, the figure also does not support the hypothesis of Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011), which posited that more centrist party systems increase citizen satisfaction with the democratic process. Rather, the figure shows a somewhat linear increase in satisfaction as the level of party system extremism increases, with a flattening out of the curve around the maximum level of extremism.

Figure 2.8. Effect of WAPE on Satisfaction

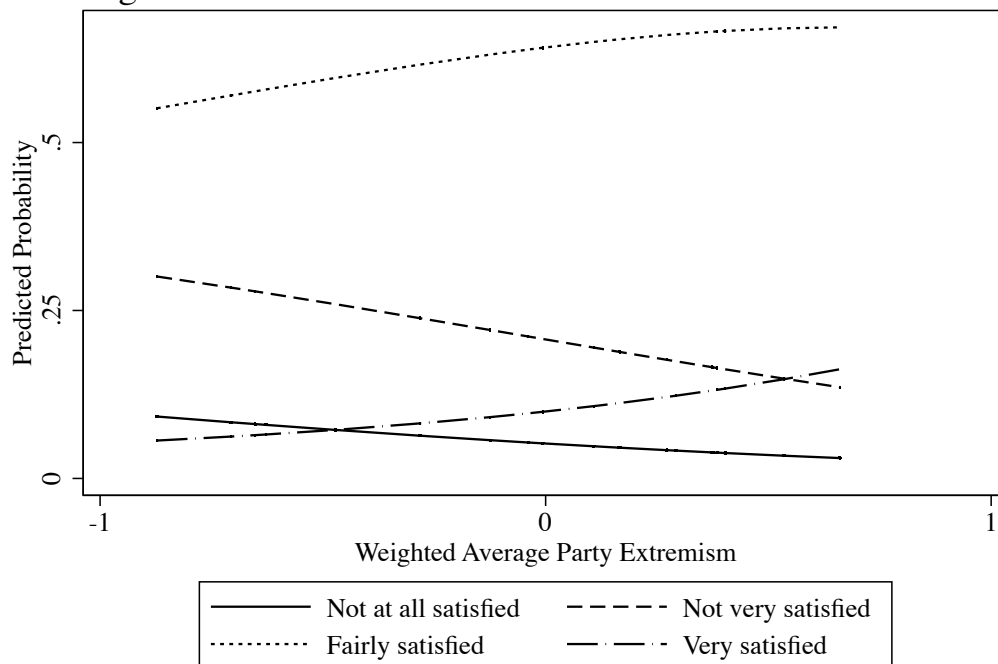


Table 2.3. Effect of Average Party Extremism on Probability of Satisfaction

Satisfaction	All Countries		
	Avg. Party Extremism = min	Avg. Party Extremism = mean	Avg. Party Extremism = max
pr(Not at all)	0.09	0.05	0.03
pr(Not very)	0.30	0.20	0.14
	0.39	0.25	0.17
pr(Fairly)	0.55	0.64	0.67
pr(Very)	0.06	0.10	0.16
	0.61	0.74	0.83

Note: Entries are predicted probabilities.

Table 2.3 shows that when average party extremism is at its minimum — i.e. the party system is most centrist — the probability of being at least fairly satisfied with democracy is .61. When party extremism is at its mean, and the party system is fairly well distributed, the probability of being at least fairly satisfied with democracy remains about level, increasing to .74. Finally, when the party system is at its most extreme, the probability of being at least fairly satisfied with democracy increases significantly to .83.

Although the data examined here do not fully support the System Extremism Hypothesis, this could simply be a function of the limited number of countries in the sample and the lack of a truly extreme party system. The maximum value for the average party extremism variable is 2.39, indicating that the most extreme party system in the sample is just over two ideological points from the mean voter. Moreover, the distribution of the party system in the countries with the highest values of WAPE more closely resemble Panel A of Figure 2.1 than they do Panel B. That is, the most extreme values of WAPE in the sample used here approximate the most desirable party system distribution according to the theory.

Finally, most of the control variables perform as expected. For the individual level variables, those respondents who are further from the mean and who are niche party supporters are less likely to be satisfied with the democratic process. This is not terribly surprising, given that many niche parties exist as a protest of the current state of the political system and of the parties that represent it. For example, niche parties such as communist parties have a much more leftist view of economics than any of the mainstream parties, and in some countries are even prohibited from being included in the government. Similarly, parties such as green parties run on a policy platform that they feel is neglected by the primary left-right ideological dimension. With a few exceptions (e.g. the German Alliance '90/The Greens), most of these parties also tend not to be included in government. Finally, it also appears that women tend to be less likely to be satisfied with the democratic process than men, while more educated and more religious respondents tend to be more satisfied than their less educated and less religious counterparts.

At the institutional level, all of the economic variables perform as expected, with high GDP growth, low inflation, and low unemployment leading to greater probabilities of satisfaction. A further interesting finding that runs contrary to expectations is that living in a majoritarian system is positively related to citizen satisfaction in comparison with proportional systems. While proportional representation is an important component to consensus democracies, which are known for being “kindler and gentler” than majoritarian democracies, the results of this study indicate that this does not have the anticipated effect of increasing satisfaction. Other scholars have found similar results

(Aarts and Thomassen 2008; Criado and Herreros 2007). Criado and Herreros (2007) attribute this finding to the ability of majoritarian systems to provide greater levels of accountability to the electorate.

To test the robustness of this finding, I ran the model excluding the United States and Australia, which are outliers among majoritarian systems in terms of their extremely high levels of satisfaction. While the substantive effects on the primary variables went unchanged, the results for the majoritarian indicator became negative and dropped out of statistical significance, indicating no statistical difference between majoritarian and proportional systems. Additionally, the coefficient for the squared WAPE term became negative and significant, indicating the negative concave relationship predicted by the System Extremism Hypothesis, though the decrease in satisfaction at the highest levels of party system extremism remain modest.

Finally, also contrary to expectation, the effect of the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) also negatively related to the likelihood of being satisfied with the democratic process. Similar to Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011), who find a negative (but statistically insignificant) effect of ENEP on satisfaction, I find that more electoral choice in the form of more parties leads to a lower likelihood of being satisfied with the democratic process. Given these results, it is clear that there is more to generating satisfaction with democracy than simply increasing the number of parties. Other factors such as the distribution of those choices is also important to generating higher levels of satisfaction.

Conclusion

The literature on government representation of the median voter is well established. Relying on the results from social choice theory that establish the median position as the only position that minimizes the loss of utility produced by public policy, this literature has found that electorates tend to be most satisfied when the position of the government closely resembles that of the median voter. Scholars interested in party systems have extended this analysis to examine whether centrist party systems also produce the same effect on satisfaction with democracy by retaining the assumption underlying the median voter literature — that the median is the ideal point for the average party. In other words, the more the party system converges to the median the better (Ezrow and Xezonakis 2011).

However, in important ways, we expect representation provided by political parties to function in a fundamentally different way than the representation provided by government outputs. Governments, although composed of parties responsible to their individual voters, have a responsibility to produce policy applicable to society as a whole. As a result, the best normative outcome is one in which government produces policy that resembles as closely as possible the wishes of as many voters as possible — the median. Political parties, on the other hand, are individually responsible to the voters who support them. As Sartori (1976) notes, they are “channels of expression” through which individuals can make their policy preferences known to the elites that govern them. Because we do not expect voter preferences to align nicely at the median, we should not expect parties to do so. Such a convergence reduces the choices available to voters

looking for representation. If the electorate values the quality of representation — one of the primary functions of a republican democracy — then the reduction in the quality of representation should have substantive impacts on how the electorate evaluates the democratic process in their country.

The results presented here confirm this notion that individuals evaluate their democracies at least in part by how well they are represented in the party system. Voters without a party in their ideological neighborhood are significantly less likely to be satisfied with the democratic process in their country than are voters who are represented well. Additionally, the relationship between a centralized party system and individual satisfaction with democracy is unclear. While Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011) examine this relationship at the aggregate level and find a strong negative relationship (i.e. more extreme party systems lead to less satisfaction), the results presented here examining satisfaction on the individual level are much more muddled. Inconsistent with the System Extremism Hypothesis, which posited that average party extremism would lead to higher levels of satisfaction at moderate values rather than at either extreme, the effect on average party extremism leads to the highest probability of satisfaction at the highest levels of party system extremism.

The institutionalized incentives for party convergence on the median that allow for greater societal policy representation apparently comes at the cost of both the decreased capacity of parties to represent voters in elections and the decreased satisfaction of citizens with their democracy.

Chapter Two Appendix

Table 2.4. Satisfaction by Country

Country	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	N
Australia	2.5	11.9	62.7	22.9	1857
Austria	4.6	22.1	62.1	11.3	1142
Belgium	5.5	24.3	65.9	4.3	2133
Canada	6.7	19.3	56.4	17.6	4367
Denmark	1.4	6.5	60.5	31.7	1399
Finland	3.2	20.7	70.2	5.9	1278
France	6.4	26.5	57.5	9.6	1991
Germany	13.4	33.0	46.7	6.9	2030
Iceland	19.5	38.1	39.4	3.0	1308
Ireland	4.2	14.9	68.8	12.0	1162
Israel	26.7	38.3	31.1	3.9	1190
Netherlands	3.5	19.3	70.2	7.0	2132
New Zealand	7.1	22.9	61.7	8.3	1087
Norway	1.7	9.9	66.9	21.4	1759
Portugal	25.6	32.6	39.5	2.3	1289
Spain	2.6	15.9	74.2	7.3	1030
Sweden	2.1	16.2	66.8	15.0	1117
Switzerland	2.5	16.1	67.7	13.7	3127
United Kingdom	4.3	24.2	62.7	8.9	844
United States	4.9	12.8	55.4	26.8	2060

Note: Cell entries are percentages.

CHAPTER THREE

The Quality of Political Representation and the Winner Effect

It is often said that winning is everything in politics, and to some extent this is true. For office-seeking political parties interested in the perks and prestige that comes with governing, winning really is everything. Parties in government get to control the apparatus of that government; they control offices, they have the power to initiate legislation, have some control over committees, etc. Indeed, if determining winners and losers among political parties did not have these consequences, elections would be far less interesting and important. But to what extent does the “winning is everything” axiom apply to voters, and does it apply to all voters equally? The answer to this question is not as clear. Are “winning” voters — those who vote for a winning political party — more satisfied than “losing” voters, and do they derive their satisfaction solely from winning? Like office-seeking parties, surely voters also put a premium on winning. In their groundbreaking work, Anderson and Guillory (1997) show that winners are indeed much more likely to be satisfied with the democratic process than are political losers. Moreover, the constellation of institutional structures conditions the difference between the two types of voters. Using Lijphart’s (1999) consensus-majoritarian index, Anderson and Guillory (1997) argue that the “kinder and gentler” characteristics of consensus democracies ought to reduce the negative effects of losing by compensating these voters with some voice in the governing process. Conversely, the winner-take-all form of majoritarian democracy leaves political losers with little but the hope of winning in the next election. Additionally, Anderson and Guillory (1997) find that not only are the differences between winner and loser within a country conditioned by institutions, but that the differences among winners (losers) across countries is also affected by

institutions. Because winners in majoritarian countries are awarded with a greater slice of the pie (often the whole pie), they tend to be more satisfied than winners in consensual systems.

Clearly, then, winning and losing matters to voters, and institutions are important for determining exactly how. The second part of the question — whether the satisfaction among winners is derived solely from the act of choosing a winning party — is the concern here. I argue here that, instead of winning being everything for voters as it is for political parties, voting for a winning political party is only part of the story. While Anderson and Guillory (1997) show us that winning matters to voters, it is clear that they also value ideological representation (Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2011; Kedar 2009; Kim 2009; Paskeviciute 2006; Singh 2014). *Ceteris paribus*, the literature has found that voter satisfaction increases as the quality of political representation improves. In other words, a voter located at the same point as the government on an ideological continuum will be more satisfied than a voter who is some distance away. If both sets of studies are correct, and voter satisfaction is a function of both winning/losing *and* ideological representation, the effect of winning on a voter's satisfaction with democracy may not be constant across all voters.

While Anderson and Guillory's (1997) study helped us to understand the role of institutions in differentiating between political majorities and minorities, here I aim to examine how the quality of the citizen-party and citizen-government connections produced by institutions condition the effect of being in the political majority on satisfaction with the democratic process. Using data on twenty industrialized democracies

from 2003-2011, I argue that these connections are vital to voters when evaluating their democratic institutions, and that the effect of being a political winner is conditioned by this representation. Being a political winner is much more important to a voter who identifies strongly with the party they vote for than it is for a winner who is not particularly close to their party. Not only do I find support for this hypothesis, I also find that, in some cases, inadequate political representation for winning voters can lead to relatively equal levels of satisfaction compared to political losers whose citizen-party and citizen-government connections are of much higher quality. These findings add to our understanding of the dynamics of institutional performance and citizen evaluation of their democracies. While Anderson and Guillory (1997) showed us that institutions are vital for conditioning how political majorities and minorities respond to their institutions, I argue that we also need to pay attention to how the quality of representation within these types of voters conditions how important it is for their satisfaction that they select a winning party.

Political Representation, Winners, and Citizen Satisfaction with Democracy

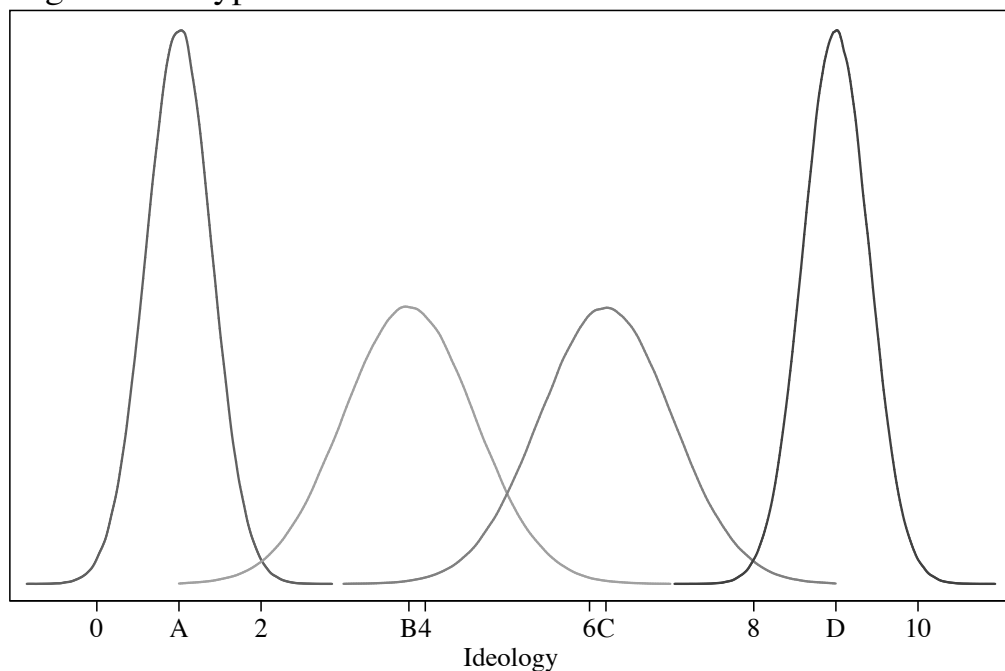
The study of how governments represent their constituents is a rich literature. From theoretical perspectives on what constitutes representation (e.g. Pitkin 1967), to empirical studies of how often and how well governments actually perform this most important of democratic functions (Huber and Powell 1994; Powell 2000; McDonald and Budge 2005), the literature is generally accepting of the notion that poor representation by governments generally leads to poor outcomes - whether that outcome is system

legitimacy and stability (Kim 2009; Paskeviciute 2006) or electoral ramifications for individual parties (Tavits 2007). Most of these studies have as their centerpiece two important actors: the citizenry being represented and the governments elected to represent them (although see Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011) for the effect of party systems on citizen evaluation of democracy). Powell (2000) argues that elections are the instrument of democracy that allows voters to connect to their governments. Representation is simply the translation of citizen preferences into a government using this electoral instrument. As Powell (2000) argues, different constellations of institutions affect the quality of this translation.

While the literature on the notion of representation and the institutional processes that produce it is rich (see Urbinati and Warren (2008) for a thorough review of this literature), this chapter is interested in examining the consequences of the quality of this representation on citizen satisfaction with democracy. Studies investigating how citizens feel about how democracy works in their country are numerous, and generally come to the conclusion that more representative and responsive governments produce constituents that feel better about their democracies. In an important study, Anderson and Guillory (1997) argue and find that political winners tend to be more satisfied than political losers, and that “kinder and gentler” (Lijphart 1999) consensual systems are better at minimizing these differences than majoritarian systems. Given the psychological effects winning and losing has on individuals (Wilson and Kerr 1999), it is not surprising that winning produces greater levels of satisfaction with democracy, particularly in majoritarian systems where winning control of the government usually means single-party control.

However, the psychological effect is not the only source of satisfaction that comes with selecting a victorious political party. A fundamental assumption in the theoretical voting literature is that voters select the party that will give them the highest payoff, given their underlying ideological preferences (Downs 1957). Kim (2009) finds that the ideological difference between voters and the government can be as important to voters — if not more important — than being a political winner. If ideological representation is indeed important to voters (Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2011; also see Kedar (2009) for the importance of ideology in voting), and if political winners are more satisfied with the democratic process than political losers (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Kim 2009), surely the quality of the former has some relevance to the effect of the latter. In other words, although being a political winner is important, the effect of being a winner should matter much more to voters who enjoy higher quality political representation than it does to

Figure 3.1. Hypothetical Voter Distribution



others who, although they are winners, may not be (or feel) particularly close to their preferred party.

Consider Figure 3.1, which represents a hypothetical system containing four political parties. The density curves represent the ideological distribution of each party's supporters. On the flanks of the system are two extremist parties (located at 1 and 9, respectively, on the ideological scale), both of which maintain relatively homogenous bases of support. In the center are two mainstream, catch-all type parties with somewhat more heterogenous supporters (located at 3.8 and 6.2, respectively). Assume that in the most recent election the center-left party, Party B, was able to secure a single-party majority government, and the ideological position of that government was located on Party B's ideal point. The current literature would argue that a voter's level of satisfaction would be determined by 1) whether the voter voted for Party B, and 2) whether the system in Figure 3.1 was majoritarian or consensual. Given our current understanding of the institutional determinants of satisfaction with the democratic process, all supporters of Party B would be more likely to be satisfied with the democratic process than the supporters of parties A, C, and D due to the independent effect of being a political winner. Moreover, if this hypothetical system were a majoritarian system, supporters of Party B would get an additional boost to satisfaction due to the winner-take-all nature of majoritarian systems compared to if it were a consensual system.

However, this argument, and the literature generally, assumes that the supporters of a winning political party all derive the same amount of satisfaction from their vote, given the various institutional structures. This implies that the voters in the tails of Party

B's voter distribution would get equal amounts of satisfaction from their party being in government as a voter located directly on Party B's ideal point. Moreover, because the distribution of the supporters of the various parties overlap, some supporters in the tails of Party A and C's distributions are closer to the government's ideological position than voters in the left tail of Party B's distribution. Although these "overlapped" supporters of parties A and C would not get the psychological boost to satisfaction of identifying with the winning party, the quality of their citizen-government connection is stronger than both the citizen-party and citizen-government connections of the voters in the tail of Party B. As Table 3.1 shows, there is indeed significant variation in the level of satisfaction among both winners and losers. Almost 20% of winning voters are not at all or not very satisfied with the way their democracy works, certainly a non-trivial amount. While the overall difference in satisfaction between winners and losers remains, I argue here that, if ideological representation matters to voters, the quality of this representation is a significant part of the explanation of the variation seen in Table 3.1. As the quality of the citizen-party and citizen-government connections decreases, the effect of selecting the winning party ought to decrease accordingly.

Table 3.1. Distribution of Satisfaction among Winners and Losers

Satisfaction	Winners	Losers
Not at all satisfied	3.92	8.26
Not very satisfied	15.99	22.78
	19.91	31.04
Fairly satisfied	63.45	57.72
Very satisfied	16.65	11.24
	80.09	68.96

Note: Cell entries are percentages.

In the remainder of this chapter, I examine the direct individual effect of the quality of the citizen-party and citizen-government connections on citizen satisfaction with the democratic process, the direct effect of being a political winner, and how the former conditions the effect of the latter. But what is political representation? The most common specification of this concept in the empirical literature is the ideological distance between the government and the median voter. While I control for this factor in the analyses, I am primarily concerned here with individual representation. There are three primary ways to specify the citizen-government and citizen-party connections. First, voters are interested in the ideological representation they receive from the government. Not only do they wish to be winners, but voters also desire governments who produce policies that approximate their ideological ideal point. This is especially the case for voters who select the winning party and expect that party to implement the electoral promises made during the election. Following Kim (2009), I argue that as the ideological distance between a voter and the government position increases, satisfaction with the democratic process should decrease.

Citizen-Government Distance Hypothesis: *As the distance between a voter's ideal point and the position of the government decreases, satisfaction with the democratic process increases.*

Additionally, given the arguments presented above, the satisfaction derived by voters who select a party that forms the government (either in part or as a single party) ought to be conditional on how far away they are from that government. Assuming that voters have ideological preferences for the policies the government produces, the satisfaction derived

from voting for the government should be greater to a voter that is closer ideologically to the policies produced by that government than a voter who is ideologically distant.

Citizen-Government Winner Hypothesis: *The positive effect of being a winner on satisfaction with democracy decreases as the distance between a voter's ideal point and the position of the government increases.*

While voters prefer government policy that approximates their ideal points, they also realize that governments must make compromises, especially in systems in which the government is composed of two or more parties. However, voters still expect their preferred party to at least pursue goals while they are in the government that their voters find important. Parties' ability to provide this representation to voters is dependent not only on how many parties they must negotiate with in the government, but also on how closely the party and voter resemble each other ideologically. The greater the ideological distance between a voter and their preferred party, the more difficult it is for the party to represent that voter, and the less likely it is that the voter will be satisfied with the democratic process. The following hypothesis tests this direct effect of the citizen-party connection on satisfaction with the democratic process.

Citizen-Party Distance Hypothesis: *As the distance between a voter's ideal point and the position of their preferred party decreases, satisfaction with the democratic process increases.*

Additionally, similar to the arguments above, the effect of supporting a winning party means less to voters who are not ideologically similar to that party. Thus, the effect of that party winning should decrease as the quality of the citizen-party connection decreases.

Citizen-Party Winner Hypothesis: *The positive effect of being a winner on satisfaction with democracy decreases as the distance between a voter's ideal point and the position of their preferred party increases.*

Finally, political representation is not entirely cold mathematical computations of differences on an imposed ideological scale. A great deal of literature, particularly in American Politics, treats party identification as a psychological attachment (Campbell et al. 1960). In this view, voters see elections as something more than the utility they may gain from one party winning versus another. Their preferred party is part of their identity, and to the extent that this is true about a voter, winning may be viewed as “us” defeating “them”, and the more important winning an election is likely to be. Additionally, given what we know about the psychological effects of winning versus losing (Wilson and Kerr 1999), it is possible that the strongest effects of winning on satisfaction may be felt by those who have a very strong affective feeling toward their party. For these voters, the “us” versus “them” psychological effect is compounded by the psychological effect of winning, producing a strong positive impact on satisfaction with the democratic process. Conversely, the satisfaction of a voter who is not strongly attached psychologically to their preferred party is less likely to be affected by being a winner than that of a voter who maintains a closely held attachment.

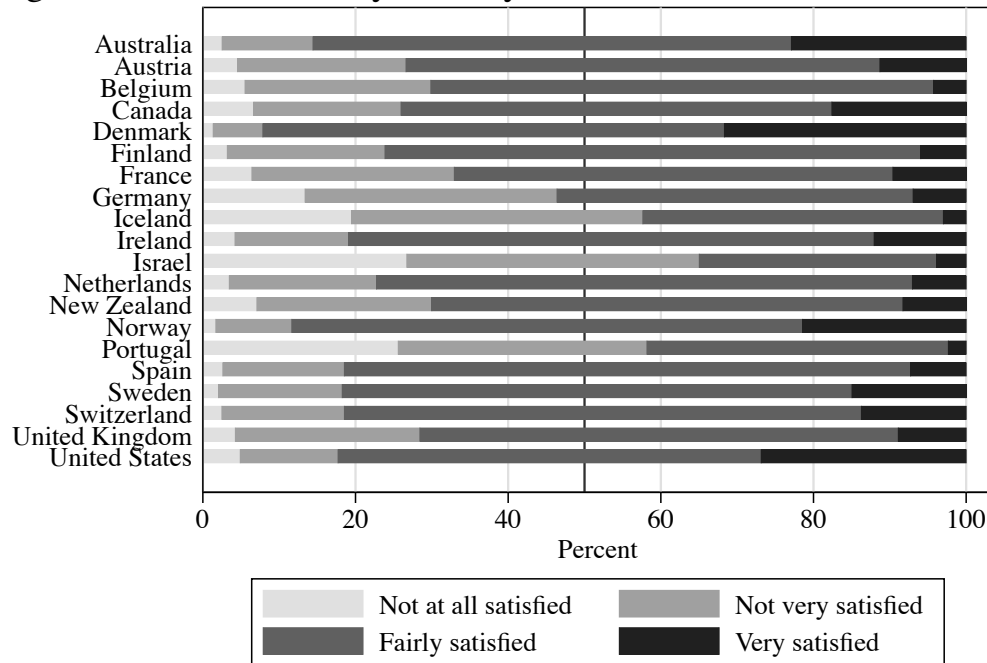
Citizen-Party Affective Distance Hypothesis: *As a voter's feeling of affective distance from their preferred party decreases, satisfaction with the democratic process increases.*

Citizen-Party Affective Winner Hypothesis: *The positive effect of being a winner on satisfaction with democracy increases as a voter's feeling of affective closeness to their preferred party increases.*

Statistical Analyses

The data used to evaluate these hypotheses are taken from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), a survey which includes both individual level indicators as well as country level data, and covers the 20 countries examined in this study¹. The survey instruments were administered between 2003-2011. The dependent variable in the analysis is individual level satisfaction with the democratic process, which is acquired using the following question: “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?” The survey response is ordinal, with individuals responding “Not at all satisfied” as 1, “Not very satisfied” as 2, “Fairly Satisfied” as 3, and “Very Satisfied” as 4. Figure 3.2 provides

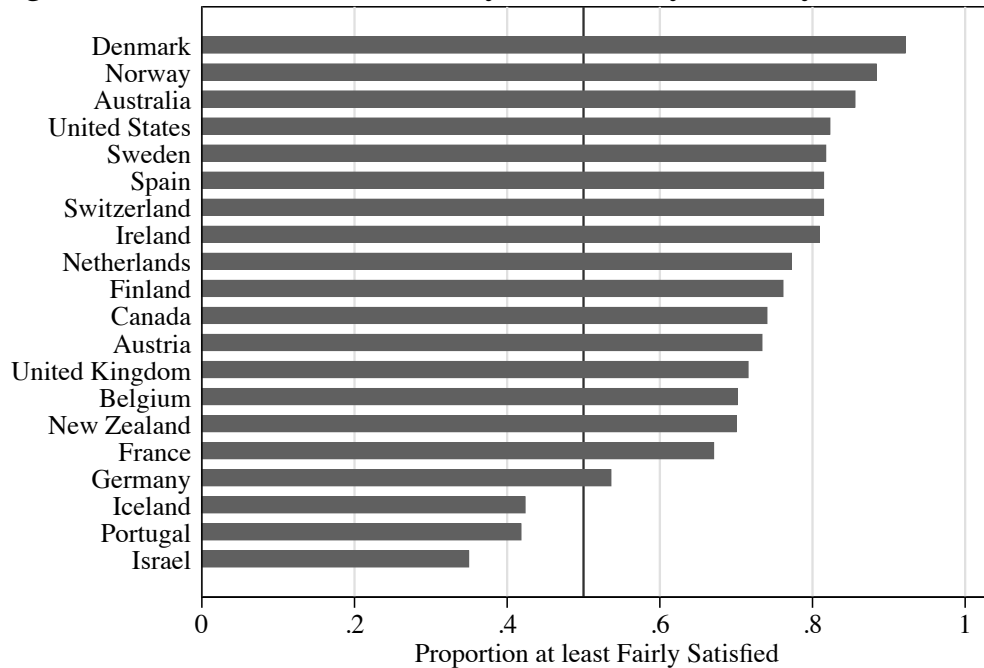
Figure 3.2. Satisfaction by Country



¹ The countries include Australia (2007), Austria (2008), Belgium (2003), Canada (2008), Denmark (2007), Finland (2011), France (2007), Germany (2009), Iceland (2009), Ireland (2007), Israel (2006), Netherlands (2010), New Zealand (2008), Norway (2009), Portugal (2009), Spain (2008), Sweden (2006), Switzerland (2007), the United Kingdom (2005), and the United States (2008).

visual presentation of the data, and indicates a fair amount of variation in the number of respondents selecting the four levels of satisfaction. Shown another way, Figure 3.3 displays the proportion of respondents that are at least “Fairly Satisfied” with the democratic process in their country.

Figure 3.3. Percent at Least Fairly Satisfied by Country



In this paper, I am primarily interested in three predictors of the level of satisfaction with democracy. The first is the ideological distance between a respondent’s ideal point and the location of the government. To test the Citizen-Government Distance and Citizen-Government Winner hypotheses, this independent variable will be constructed by calculating the distance between each individual voter’s ideal point and the ideological position of the government using the ideological self-placement scale

administered by the CSES, which ranges from 0-Left to 10-Right. The position of the government will be measured using the same scale, on which respondents are asked to place each party. For each country, a party's position is calculated by taking the mean of the respondent placements of that party. The government position is calculated by taking the mean position of each party included in the government, weighted by cabinet portfolio shares:

Government position = $\sum CS_{jk}(P_{jk})$, where

CS_{jk} is the share of cabinet portfolios for party j in country k

P_{jk} is the ideological position of party j in country k

The position of a two-party government in which one party is located at position 4 and the other is located at position 5.5, with both parties having equal shares of cabinet portfolios, would be calculated as $.5(4) + .5(5.5) = 4.75$. The citizen-government distance variable, then, is measured taking the absolute value of the distance between an individual ideal point and that of the government. In order to support the Citizen-Government Distance and Citizen-Government Winner hypotheses, the coefficient for the *Distance from Government* variable should be negative and significant, indicating that as the distance between an individual and the nearest political party increases, that the probability of an individual being satisfied with democracy should decrease. To test the hypothesis that this effect conditions the effect of being in the political majority, this variable is interacted with a dummy variable indicating whether or not a voter's preferred

party is in government². To support the Citizen-Government Winner Hypothesis, the coefficient of this interaction variable should be negative and statistically significant.

The second predictor of satisfaction with democracy is the the ideological distance between a respondent's ideal point and the location of the nearest political party. To test the Citizen-Party Distance and Citizen-Party Winner hypotheses, the independent variable will be constructed by calculating the distance between each individual voter's ideal point and the ideological position of the voter's preferred party. The positions of each political party will again be measured using the same ideological scale used for voter self-placement, with a party's position calculated by taking the mean of the respondent placements of that party. The citizen-party distance variable, then, is measured in the following way:

$distance_i = \min \{|P_{ik} - Q_{jk}|\}, j=1, \dots, J$ where

P_i = the ideological position of respondent i in country k ,

Q_j = the ideological position of party j in country k ,

In order to support the Citizen-Party Distance Hypothesis, the coefficient for the *Distance from Party* variable should be negative and significant, indicating that as the distance between an individual and the nearest political party increases, that the probability of an individual being satisfied with democracy should decrease. To test the Citizen-Party Winner hypothesis, this variable is interacted with the winner indicator variable. To support the hypothesis, the coefficient of this interaction should also be

² The CSES asks respondents a series of questions about their closeness to a political party. In this analysis, a respondent's preferred political party is determined by a first question that screens respondents who say they feel close to a particular party, followed by a question asking which party they feel closest to. Question wording: 1. "Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular party?" 2. "Which party do you feel closest to?" The *winner* indicator is determined by whether the party in a respondent's answer to Question 2 participated in the government formed after the election survey was administered.

negative, indicating the effect of being a winner decreases as a voter's distance from their preferred party increases.

Finally, to test the Citizen-Party Affective Distance and Citizen-Party Affective Winner hypotheses, the analysis requires some measure of the affective orientations of a respondent to their preferred political party. In addition to the CSES questions asking voters which party they feel closest to, the survey also asks respondents to qualify the degree of that closeness, with responses ranging from 1-“Not Very Close” to 3-“Very Close”. I use this question as a measure of affective closeness to a political party. To maintain consistency, the variable used in the analysis reverses the coding, with 1 indicating “Very Close”, 2 indicating “Somewhat Close”, and 3 indicating “Not Very Close”. Because I argue that voters who feel closer to their parties will be more satisfied than those who are less enamored, the Citizen-Party Affective Distance Hypothesis will be supported if the coefficient for the *Affective Distance* variable is negative and significant. Additionally, I argue that being a political winner is more important to those who consider themselves close to their party. Therefore, the Citizen-Party Affective Winner Hypothesis is tested by interacting the *Affective Distance* variable with the winner indicator, and will be supported if the coefficient for the interaction variable is negative and significant.

To account for other influences on satisfaction with the democratic process, the analysis will also include several country and individual-level controls. At the country-level, the analysis includes several economic variables that have become standard in the literature, including GDP growth, inflation, and unemployment. Because I expect better

economic performance to be more likely to lead to greater satisfaction, I expect the coefficient for GDP growth to be positive, while those for inflation and unemployment should both be negative.

Much of the work on political representation uses the median voter as an anchor point to evaluate how well the political system is representing the electorate. The implication, and in some work the explicit claim, is that governments that are closer to the center of the voter distribution provide greater levels of representation, and this higher quality representation leads to greater satisfaction with the democratic process. While this result may hold at the aggregate level due to the number of voters located near the median, my expectations for the effect in this analysis are not as straight forward. When examining what drives an individual's satisfaction with the democratic process, it is not clear that more moderate governments lead to greater satisfaction. On the contrary, for those voters who support non-centrist parties — whether center-left, center-right, or particularly niche parties — I would expect satisfaction to decrease as the government position moves away from their ideal point and becomes more moderate. To control for this possibility, I control for the distance between the government position and the position of the mean voter.

Additionally, Lijphart (1999) and others have noted the ability of consensual systems to provide representation to broader sectors of the electorate because of the (relative) ease with which parties may be awarded seats in the legislature in proportion to the votes they receive. To account for this possibility, I include a dummy variable indicating whether or not a country uses a proportional electoral system. Since the nature

of proportional systems is to be inclusive rather than exclusive, I expect satisfaction to be more likely in proportional systems. Finally, I will include a measure of the number of parties in government. Aarts and Thomassen (2008) show that voters' perceptions of government accountability influences their satisfaction with democracy. As clarity of responsibility is a major component of being able to hold governments accountable, a measure of the number of parties in government ought to give some indication of how easy voters can make this judgement. I expect that more parties in government clouds the ability of voters to assign responsibility for government outcomes; thus, the coefficient on this variable should be negative and significant.

At the individual level, the analysis controls for whether a respondent is a supporter of a niche party, who tend to lie further from the median voter than supporters of mainstream parties. Additionally, niche parties, such as communist or nationalist parties, rarely participate in governments, and their supporters tend to gravitate to these parties precisely because of their dissatisfaction with the standard offerings in the party system. Therefore, I include a variable that indicates whether the respondent is a supporter of a niche party³. I also include standard demographic controls for age, gender, education, and religiosity.

Table 3.2 presents the results of the the multilevel analysis. The first column displays the result of the model testing the Citizen-Government Distance and Citizen-Government Winner hypotheses, which state that satisfaction is a function of a voter's

³ The definition of a niche party utilized here follows Meguid (2005, 2008), Adams, et al. (2006), and others, which define a niche party as one which takes extreme stances on traditional issues (e.g. communist parties), or focuses on non-traditional issues which cross-cut traditional cleavages.

Table 3.2. The Conditioning Effect of Representation on the Winner Effect

Variable	Model 1: Distance from Govt	Model 2: Distance from Party	Model 3: Affective Distance
Level 1 Variables			
Winner	.56*** (.04)	.61*** (.04)	.91*** (.09)
Distance from Govt	-.08*** (.01)		
Distance from Party		-.05** (.02)	
Affective Distance			-.25*** (.03)
Winner * Govt Distance	-.01 (.02)		
Winner* Party Distance		-.04 (.02)	
Winner * Affective Closeness			-.17*** (.04)
Niche Party Supporter	-.10* (.05)	-.11* (.05)	-.39*** (.05)
Age	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)
Female	-.11*** (.02)	-.10** (.03)	-.11*** (.03)
Education	.08*** (.01)	.06*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)
Religiosity	.11*** (.00)	.10*** (.01)	.09*** (.01)
Level 2 Variables			
Govt Distance from Mean	.15*** (.02)	.24*** (.03)	.13*** (.03)
# Parties in Govt	-.25*** (.01)	-.31*** (.02)	-.14*** (.02)
Proportional System	.02 (.03)	.04 (.04)	-.22*** (.04)
GDP Growth	.01*** (.00)	.02*** (.00)	.01*** (.00)
Inflation	-.02*** (.00)	-.03*** (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Unemployment	-.15*** (.01)	-.17*** (.01)	-.14*** (.01)
Level 2 Variance	0.66	0.61	0.70
Cut 1	-3.39	-3.64	-3.62
Cut 2	-1.52	-1.76	-1.77
Cut 3	1.77	1.48	1.47
-2 Log Likelihood	54,523.17	32,394.19	36,599.63
Respondent N	27,632	17,238	18,476
Country N	20	20	20

Note: Entries are maximum likelihood coefficients.

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

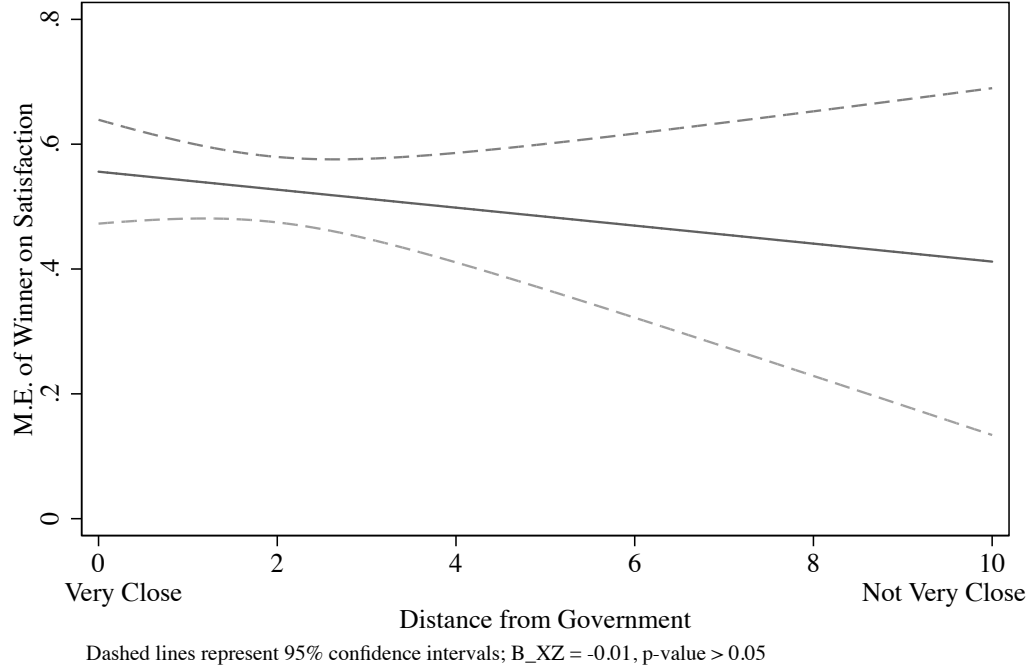
ideological distance from the government position, and that this distance conditions the effect of being in the political majority. The results are similar to previous literature in that there is a strong positive effect of being a winner on satisfaction with democracy. For an otherwise average voter, the increase in the likelihood of being at least fairly satisfied with the democratic process due to being a political winner relative to a political loser is 10%, going from .73 to .83.

The results also strongly support the Citizen-Government Distance Hypothesis — a voter is much less likely to be satisfied with the democratic process as the distance between the voter and the government increases. The results of previous research are confirmed by this result, indicating that the connection between citizens and their government are important for how they evaluate their institutions.

While the Citizen-Government Distance Hypothesis appears to be supported, the results do not support the Citizen-Government Winner Hypothesis. Although the interaction effect is negative - which would indicate the effect of being a winner decreases as a voter's distance from the government becomes large - it does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. It does not appear that the quality of representation provided by the government conditions the effect of being a political winner. Figure 3.4 portrays the marginal effects graphically. The essentially flat line bears out the insignificant conditioning effect of ideology on the effect of being a political winner.

The results from Model 2 test the hypothesis that the quality of the citizen-party connection has an independent effect on satisfaction, and also conditions the effect of

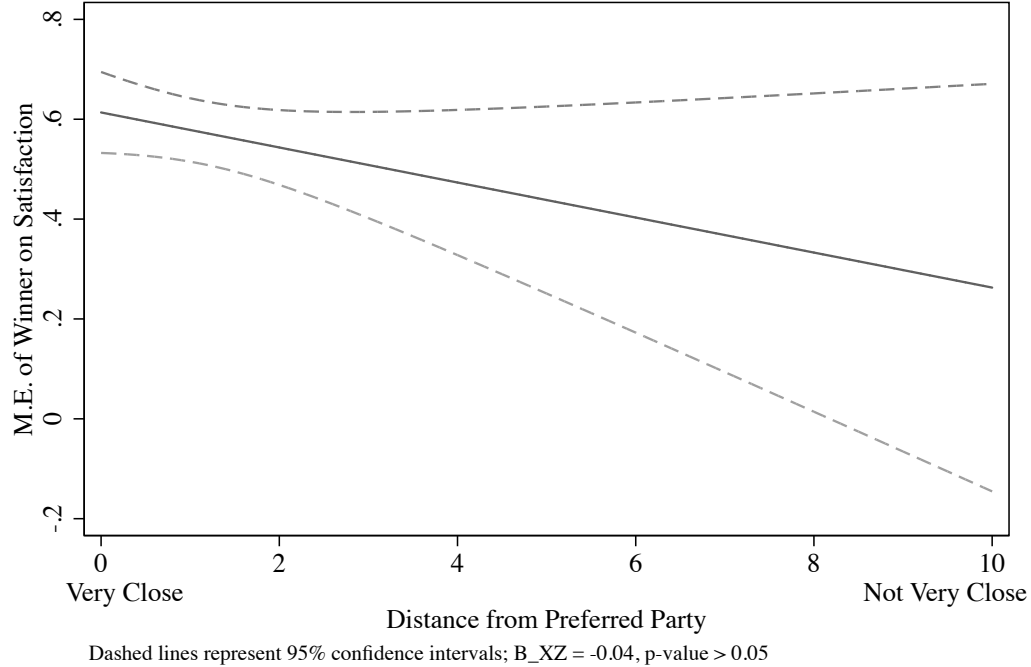
Figure 3.4. Effect of Government Distance on Winner Effect



being in the political majority. However, while the Citizen-Party Distance Hypothesis is supported by the results, they do not suggest that the quality of representation provided by a voter’s preferred political party conditions the winner effect. The ideological distance between a voter and their preferred party has an independent effect on satisfaction in the predicted direction, decreasing satisfaction as the quality of the citizen-party connection decreases. In partial support of the Citizen-Party Winner Hypothesis, the coefficient on the interaction variable is negative, but does not reach conventional levels of significance. Again, the marginal effects presented in Figure 3.5 display this relationship.

Finally, the third column in Table 3.2 displays the results for Model 3, which strongly support both the Citizen-Party Affective Distance and Citizen-Party Winner hypotheses. The coefficient on the *Affective Distance* variable suggests that the direct

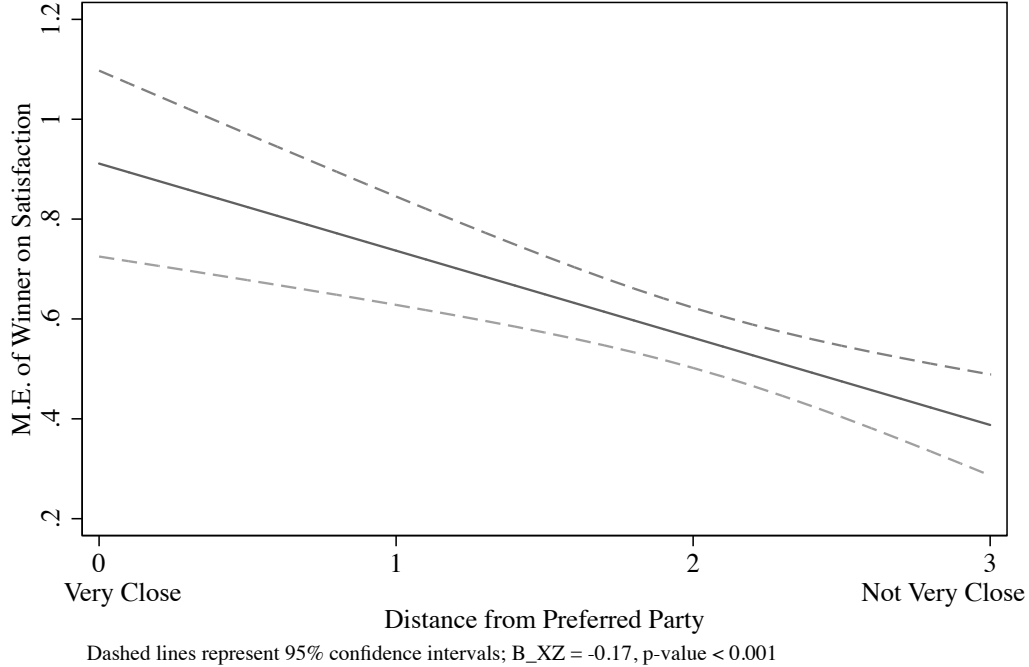
Figure 3.5. Effect of Party Distance on Winner Effect



effect of an increase in affective distance between a voter and their preferred political party from the minimum value to the maximum is a decrease from .82 to .69 in the probability of being satisfied with the democratic process. Additionally, the coefficient on the interaction term suggests that the effect of being a winner on citizen satisfaction with democracy is significantly conditioned by how close a voter feels to their party in an affective way. Not only are voters who feel closer to their party more satisfied with the way democracy works in their country, but political winners who are close to their party are more satisfied than fellow winners who do not feel so close. Figure 6 displays this significant negative relationship.

Although the results of this model support Hypotheses 3a and 3b, the results are more substantively important than the model coefficients and marginal effects are able to show. Table 3.3 presents the predicted probabilities of being in any of the four response

Figure 3.6. Effect of Affective Distance on Winner Effect



categories of satisfaction for the average voter. The table allows two factors to vary - whether the voter is a winner, and the level of affective closeness that voter feels toward their preferred party. The first column shows the predictions for a political winner who does not feel particularly close to their party; the second column shows the predictions for winners who feel very close to their party, etc. Not surprisingly, holding the winner variable constant and varying the affective closeness variable (i.e. moving from column 1 to column 2, and from column 3 to column 4), we see that moving from the lowest to highest levels of closeness results in an increase in the probability of being either fairly or very satisfied with democracy - an increase of 8% for winners and 9% for losers. Of more interest is the comparison between winners and losers. For those that are not close to their party, being a winner increases your probability of being fairly or very satisfied by 9%, going from .65 to .74, while for those who are very close to their party, being a winner

Table 3.3. The Winner Effect and Probabilities of Satisfaction

Satisfaction	Winner = 1	Winner = 1	Winner = 0	Winner = 0
	Distance = High	Distance = Low	Distance = High	Distance = Low
pr(Not at all)	0.05	0.03	0.08	0.05
pr(Not very)	0.21	0.12	0.28	0.20
	0.26	0.15	0.36	0.25
pr(Fairly)	0.64	0.67	0.58	0.64
pr(Very)	0.10	0.19	0.07	0.10
	0.74	0.86	0.65	0.74

Note: Entries are predicted probabilities.

increases the probability of satisfaction by 12%, going from .74 to .86. The largest difference in the probability of being satisfied is, not surprisingly, between winners close to their party (.86) and losers who are not close to their party (.65), a difference of 21%. The most striking finding in these results, however, is the difference in the probability of being satisfied between winners who are disconnected from their party and losers who are very attached. For the both groups of respondents, the probability of being fairly or very satisfied is .74. In contrast to the “winning is everything” maxim, these results show that in some cases, losers may actually be as satisfied with the democratic process as winners.

The control variables also perform largely as expected. At the individual level, the expectation that niche party supporters will be less satisfied with the democratic process is borne out in the results. For an otherwise average voter, the decrease in the probability of being satisfied with the democratic process going from a mainstream party supporter to a niche party supporter is 5% (from .80 to .75) in Model 1, 2% (from .76 to .74) in Model 2, and 8% (from .74 to .66) in Model 3. This is not surprising given that niche parties are rarely included in the government. This effect is on top of the effect of being

in the political minority controlled for by the *Winner* variable. It is possible that this result is capturing more than simply voting for a party that rarely wins, such as the frequent anti-system sentiment present in many niche parties.

Also at the individual level, females appear to be less likely to be satisfied with the democratic process than males, more educated respondents are more satisfied than their less educated counterparts, and those with higher religiosity are more likely to be satisfied with the democratic process.

At the country level, the controls also perform largely as expected. Contrary to previous literature. The results of each of the models indicate that the probability of an individual voter being satisfied with the democratic process increases as the distance between the government and the mean voter increases. This result is consistent with the findings of Chapter Two, which indicated that party system representation of the mean voter was also negatively related to levels of satisfaction. It appears that when examined at the individual level rather than at the aggregate, voters prefer governments that are less centrist. The models also support the notion that higher numbers of parties included in the government decrease the clarity of responsibility for government outputs. In each of the models, an increase in the number of parties in government decreased the probability that an individual would be satisfied with the democratic process. It could also be that larger numbers of parties in government produce outputs based on much more compromise than each party would prefer were it in government alone. The adage that a good compromise leaves both parties dissatisfied appears to be supported by these findings. Finally, for the economic controls, the models suggest that higher GDP growth and lower unemployment

and inflation lead to a greater likelihood of an individual being satisfied with the performance of their democracy.

Conclusion

Our knowledge of what influences levels of citizen satisfaction with democracy has been greatly enhanced by taking into account the effect of different constellations of institutional structures. Using data on twenty democracies between 2003-2011, this chapter adds to this knowledge by examining the effect of the quality of the representational connections between citizens and their party on the one hand, and their government on the other. In both cases, controlling for whether or not an individual voted for a winning political party, the increased quality of these connections enhanced the likelihood that a voter would indicate that they are satisfied with the way their democracy is functioning. Moreover, the findings reported here shed light on the variable effect selecting a winning party has on satisfaction. While previous research has treated winners within systems as more or less equal in terms of the satisfaction they get from being in the political majority, the findings here indicate that, when measured as the affective feelings toward their preferred party, individuals who vote for a winning party are much more satisfied when the congruence between their ideal point and the position of their preferred party are close, and this effect decreases as the distance between the ideological points increases.

These findings are significant in that they tease out what type of representation is driving differences in satisfaction among winners. Based on the results of the first two

models, the boost in satisfaction that a voter receives from being a political winner does not vary significantly among winners based on differences in the quality of individual political representation. While the direct effect of both being a winner and having quality citizen-government and citizen-party connections are in the expected directions, the latter does not appear to have a conditioning effect on the former. That is, those winners who are poorly represented by their parties or by the government do not appear to get less out of their victory than other winners who get higher quality representation from the winning government they helped select.

Although this result is surprising, an even more striking result is the effect that the affective feelings toward their party have on a voters level of satisfaction. Not only are winners who feel very close to their party more satisfied than winners who hold cooler feelings, but political losers who are strongly attached to their party are as likely to be satisfied with the democratic process as political winners who are only loosely attached to their party. The findings in this paper thus shed new light on what it really means to voters to be a political winner. These findings indicate that sometimes winning is not necessarily winning, and that strong feelings of closeness toward a party may help boost satisfaction levels at least as well as making the political system more loser-friendly.

CHAPTER FOUR

Breaking the Connection: Government Terminations and Satisfaction with Democracy

Much of the literature to date on coalition governance has been focused on the formation and durability of cabinets. The research in the former field stresses the importance of factors such as coalition size and ideology, among many others, and is rich both theoretically and empirically (von Neumann and Morgenstern 1953; Gamson 1961; Riker 1962; Laver and Schofield 1990; Diermeier and Merlo 2000; Martin and Stevenson 2001). The classic research in the latter field is also extensive. Building on the deterministic models of Taylor and Hermann (1971), Dodd (1974, 1976), Warwick (1979), and others, which argue that cabinet durability is a function of structural attributes such as the minority/majority status of the government, Browne, Frendreis, and Gleiber (1984, 1986) incorporated the occurrence of critical events into their models of cabinet durability. However, this model of critical events was essentially non-strategic in nature — events, when they occurred, led directly to the termination of a government. Later scholars improved on the critical events model by incorporating both the deterministic arguments of the early scholars and the strategic element missing from the models of Browne, Frendreis, and Gleiber (King et al. 1990; Lupia and Strøm 1995; Diermeier and Stevenson 1999, 2000; Laver 2003; Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2009). These studies argue generally that events that occur during the lifespan of a cabinet are only critical when they affect the bargaining environment in a way that one or more of the parties finds it beneficial to terminate the coalition. Additionally, these results indicate that the likelihood of a cabinet termination is non-constant both across the period the government is in office and across government types. In sum, the results of this research have left us with extensive knowledge of why governments terminate when they do across not only

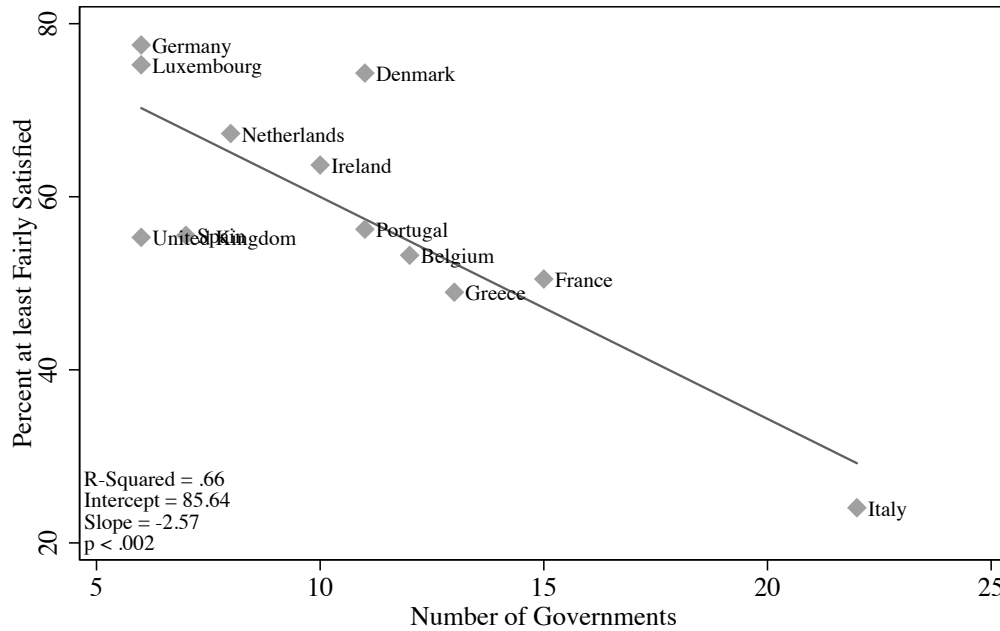
the old democracies of Western Europe, but in the newer postcommunist states as well (Somer-Topcu and Williams 2008).

Yet, while much time and effort has gone into both sides of this research, the reason we care about cabinet durability is frequently left unmentioned by these scholars. Modeling the process of cabinet formation and duration is important, but modeling that process would simply be an academic exercise if the termination itself had no meaning. That is, while the causes of cabinet stability and termination are important, they also have equally important *consequences* beyond those that have been explored in the literature (e.g. their effect on electoral performance, the direction of policy, etc). Here, I argue that cabinet terminations have an substantive impact on a particularly important characteristic of any democracy: citizen evaluation of the government.

Political support of the government is important beyond the obvious reason that any democracy that does not enjoy the support of its people will become unstable. More pragmatically, it is also important for the governing elites to take citizen response into account when gauging whether or not a premature termination of the government might produce positive results for the governing coalition (Lupia and Strøm 1995; Diermeier and Merlo 2000). A glance at Figure 1 shows why scholars should take a much closer look at this dynamic. The figure displays the mean percentage of survey respondents between 1980-2001 who indicated that they were at least “fairly satisfied” with the way democracy works in their country, plotted against the number of governments that

country formed during the same time period¹. Clearly, those countries who cycled through many governments during the time period had significantly lower levels of citizen satisfaction with the democratic process than their counterparts in countries with more stable governments, even when excluding the anomalous case of Italy².

Figure 4.1. Scatterplot of Satisfaction with Democracy by the Number of Governments, 1980-2001



Moreover, scholars and governing elites should not only be concerned with the frequency of terminations, but also with the type of government termination. While the frequency of government termination is important for reasons discussed in more detail below, how often a government terminates could be the consequence of something as simple as the rules governing parliamentary dissolution power (Schleiter and Morgan-

¹ The question asks respondents to place themselves on a four-point scale of satisfaction with 1 = “Not at all Satisfied”, 2 = “Not Very Satisfied”, 3 = “Fairly Satisfied”, and 4 = “Very Satisfied”. The survey data was taken from the Eurobarometer.

² When excluding Italy, R²: .33, Intercept: 79.90, Slope: -1.92, p = .064

Jones 2009). For example, if one compares two hypothetical countries — one where governments were prevented from terminating early either by law or in practice, such as in Norway, and one where there is little constraint on the prime minister from using dissolution powers, such as in Denmark — the frequency of termination may be determined simply by the length of the constitutional inter-election period (CIEP) in the former country, while it may be determined by the political desires of the prime minister in the latter country. Additionally, if one holds parliamentary dissolution power constant, if one country has a longer CIEP than the another, they will by definition have less frequent government terminations than the country with the shorter CIEP. Given that the governing party/parties have no control over this outcome, it is unclear why the electorate would change their evaluations of the government based on this variable. Thus, while the frequency of government termination is at least partially dependent on the rules governing dissolution power (Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2009), it is not immediately clear what the effect of this frequency is in isolation of the type of government termination. Once you give parties control over the termination mechanism by allowing them to terminate the government before the end of the CIEP, it becomes another criteria the electorate can use to evaluate that government. How governing parties utilize this power of government termination may lead to either positive or negative reactions by the electorate.

This question of the consequences of government termination has not gone completely unexplored. Harmel and Robertson (1986) examine this question and also find such a relationship in their set of countries and time period. They make an explicit

attempt to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between cabinet instability and political support by constructing a measure of governmental change that takes into account both the frequency of change and the amount of “visibility” and “attention” inherent in each type of change. They argue that high frequency of very visible change is tied to the highest levels of anxiety in the electorate, inducing lower levels of political support for the regime. They indeed find support for their hypothesis, though they concede that their bivariate correlations do not allow them to draw conclusions about the causal mechanism.

Indeed, an indicator as crude as a simple correlation between satisfaction and the number of governments aggregated across long periods of time only allows an inference of correlation rather than causation. That is, rather than instability in government causing dissatisfaction, it is equally plausible that the dissatisfaction in the electorate is being caused by some other factor (e.g. poor economic conditions), which then leads to frequent government turnover. In this paper, I fill this portion of the gap in the cabinet duration literature by proposing a theory of the causal mechanism linking government instability and termination with dissatisfaction with the democratic process, and using data on twelve OECD democracies, provide a direct empirical test of the proposition. Moreover, the theory proposed here looks more deeply at the question of causation by examining individual government terminations, and by determining whether citizen satisfaction with the democratic process is not influenced by government stability *per se* (i.e. how long it lasts or how frequently it terminates), but rather by *how* a government terminates. I find that governments that end for conflictual reasons, such as policy

conflict within or between members of the governing coalition, are more likely to decrease citizen satisfaction than governments that terminate for other, more technical reasons. I also find that cabinet duration has an effect on citizen satisfaction with democracy in particular circumstances, indicating that it is not necessarily how long a government lasts that is important, but how it ends.

Cabinet Stability and Termination

A properly functioning democracy allows for the citizenry to both select the elites that govern them, and to periodically have an opportunity to replace those elites through elections. Between these elections, the government is expected to produce outputs that more or less conform to the promises it made in the previous election cycle. This democratic governing process has been extensively studied from many angles. Primary among these angles are the study of the elections themselves — their quality, the various effects of elections on public opinion, the effect of various institutional arrangements on the functioning of elections, etc., and the study of governments produced by elections — their formation, their duration and termination, their capacity to provide representation, etc.

This description of the democratic process implies a natural beginning and end that allows for analytical traction. We can begin an analysis of the democratic process with the selection of a government in an election, continue it by examining how that government performs in office, and end with some evaluation of the termination of that government. Certainly, many studies have focused on one or another of these steps in

isolation as if it were the only piece in a finite puzzle, yet there is usually an acknowledgement — either explicit or implied — that the larger process of democratic representation is continuous. Certainly, how a party performs in government has some influence on its performance in subsequent elections. However, the difficulty in modeling one step in the democratic process while controlling for the influence of the continuous process leading up to that step has understandably led most researchers to treat the process as finite in order to gain insights on their problem within the real limitations on time and data. Yet this understandable solution to the problem has led to the atomization of the literature, where some pieces of the democratic process enjoy much more attention than others. Inarguably the electoral process has received more scrutiny than any other. Cabinet stability and duration has also received a fair amount of attention. However, with a few exceptions (Schmitt 1983; Harmel and Robertson 1986; Weil 1989; Narud and Valen 2008), the focus of these latter studies is on the *causes* of variance in government stability and duration. As Dodd (1984) notes, there has been strikingly little discussion of the *consequences* of government stability and duration.

Both Narud and Valen (2008) and Harmel and Robertson (1986) acknowledge this deficiency in the literature. Narud and Valen (2008) investigate the effect of various factors on the electoral performance of incumbent parties, several of which are related to how the government ended. Schmitt (1983) also includes cabinet stability as a predictor of political support, though he focuses more specifically on support for party government. Rather than focus on the frequency or type of termination, Schmitt (1983) measures cabinet stability as an index of the standard measure of cabinet durability (the number of

days in office relative to the maximum possible number of days) combined with the percentage of government terminations caused by regular parliamentary elections.

Schmitt (1983) argues that longer-lived governments terminated by regular parliamentary elections leads to greater citizen confidence that the system of party government does not “ignore the electorate through frequent ‘cabinet crises’ and governmental change between elections...” (Schmitt 1983, p. 371). Like Harmel and Robertson (1986), Schmitt (1983) finds support for his hypothesis.

Weil (1989) makes perhaps the most comprehensive argument of the small number of studies that explicitly include government stability as a predictor of political support rather than as the final outcome of the political process. He argues that previous work on political support has focused almost exclusively on government performance as the primary predictor, mostly in terms of economic outcomes like GDP growth or unemployment. Instead, Weil (1989) argues that the “structure of opposition” may have as much or more of an effect on political support. Among the components of this structure of opposition, Weil (1989) includes a measure of government stability, arguing that government instability “interferes with the representative functions of elections and encourages antisystem sentiment” (Weil 1989, p. 685), yet finds only weak evidence that this hypothesis is supported.

These studies argue that previous literature has simply assumed that high instability leads to decreased political support, and thus explicitly acknowledge the importance of empirically testing the consequences of government stability, yet they under-develop their explanation of the causal mechanism by simply asserting that the

relationship exists, and their tests use a similarly broad stroke to essentially determine that there is indeed a correlation of high instability with decreased political support. Indeed, Harmel and Robertson (1986) acknowledge that they are unable to determine causality within the structure of their analysis. Moreover, with the exception of Harmel and Robertson (1986), these studies take *cabinet durability* as the primary mechanism lowering political support within a country. That is, they assume that it is *how long* a government lasts that matters rather than *how* that government ends.

In contrast, here I argue that government terminations have two primary consequences, the explanations of which can be directly tested empirically. First, similar to the argument of Harmel and Robertson (1986), I argue that frequent changes in the government indicate a level of “chaos at the top” (Harmel and Robertson 1986, p. 1029). Whatever the cause of the instability — whether it is an inability of the governing parties to agree on policy, or whether it is an effort by the ruling parties to capitalize on potential gains by calling early elections (Lupia and Strøm 1995) — this argument presumes that frequent termination in and of itself is sufficient to increase uncertainty among the electorate about the meaning of the election, leading directly to a decline in levels of satisfaction with democracy. In addition government terminations result in a period of time where there is no direction to policy-making because there is no government (most countries require the outgoing government to remain as a caretaker government, but it loses the ability to make any policy of consequence other than “keeping the lights on”). In the Netherlands, for example, elections must be announced 81 days in advance (Louwerse and Van Aelst 2013). Since the purpose of government is to govern, this

uncertainty in the political environment is certainly less preferable than a stable government.

Not only does frequent government termination lead to uncertainty, it also leads to more frequent elections. There is evidence that frequent demands on voters to cast their choice for government leads to a variety of negative effects, including voter turnout, voter apathy, and voter fatigue (Boyd 1981, 1989; Jackman and Miller 1995; Rallings, Thrasher, and Borisjuk 2003). While voters in countries like the United States choose whether or not to participate in these elections, many countries have mandatory voting laws, requiring them to participate. Thus, while frequent government terminations lead to uncertainty, it may also lead to fatigue associated with higher demands on voters.

While this argument is similar to that of Harmel and Robertson (1986), the analysis carried out below is a more appropriate test than that performed by the latter scholars. For this argument to be supported, it must be shown that an instance of government termination in one time period leads to lower levels of political support in a subsequent time period. Thus, I will test the following hypothesis:

Termination Frequency Hypothesis: *A government termination in a given year leads to a decrease in citizen satisfaction with the democratic process in the subsequent year.*

The second consequence of government instability is related to the first. If the purpose of elections is to produce a government that is preferred by and representative of a majority of the electorate, that electorate must have some assurance that the government they select will carry out their wishes once in office if that election is to have any meaning. Typically, we argue that a government which is similar ideologically to the

electorate that selected it will produce policies preferred by that electorate, thus fulfilling the representative function of elections and increasing the satisfaction of the society (McDonald and Budge 2005; Kim 2009). However, frequent premature termination of the government prevents the execution of this democratic function. Regardless of how closely election results translate into who controls government, if the government produced by an election rarely stays in office long enough to carry out their electoral promises, the meaning of the election is reduced along with the electorate's satisfaction with the functioning of their democracy³.

In a similar vein, Anderson and Tverdova (2003), argue that government corruption is a significant predictor of both trust in civil servants and in the evaluation of regime performance. Like corruption, frequent government turnover introduces into the electorate a measure of cynicism derived from the proposition that a government that does not work cannot work for the people who selected it, producing lower levels of satisfaction with the democratic process. If a citizen cannot trust a corrupt government to carry out its electoral promises, there is no reason for that citizen to take an election, or their democracy, seriously. Similarly, if a citizen cannot trust that a government will be in office long enough to carry out their electoral promises, there is no reason for that citizen to take that election seriously. The degree to which a country experiences this frequent

³ The outcomes of elections are far less clear to voters in consensual systems than in majoritarian systems due to the frequent post-election need to bargain over who is included in government, whereas majoritarian systems usually produce clear winners. The assumption here, however, is that the meaning of the election is derived at least partly from the policies produced by the government. Thus, while the clarity of the process leading from votes to seats has meaning to voters, the meaning of the election is also reduced if the government produced by either type of election lacks the ability to function for any length of time.

turnover should at least in part determine the level of satisfaction with the democratic process in that country.

The implication of this argument is that not only does the frequency of government termination matter, but the type of termination should also play a role in how negatively the electorate views the functioning of their democracy. If the consequence of a government termination is to produce a cynical feeling in the electorate, surely governments that end for technical reasons out of the control of the governing coalition should not produce the same negative feelings as a government that terminates at the discretion of the governing coalition, such as a policy conflict between governing parties or intra-party bickering. Thus, while the effect of a termination in general produces a feeling of uncertainty among the electorate, it is terminations produced by the decisions of the governing elites that produce the cynicism that leads to decreased satisfaction with democracy.

There is some theoretical and empirical evidence that voters react to early terminations, and that parties attempt to anticipate the costs of such terminations in advance. Grofman and Roozendaal (1994), for example, incorporate electoral costs into their model of premature cabinet terminations. They argue that a party will not precipitate a cabinet crisis unless the electoral costs (among other costs) are outweighed by the benefits. Similarly, Lupia and Strøm (1995) incorporate the anticipated feelings of the electorate in their model of strategic government termination.

The effects of early terminations are empirical as well. The friction between the German Free Democratic Party (FDP) and Social Democrats (SPD) in 1982 put their

decade-plus long coalition in danger. Polls showed that supporters of the FDP did not want to change coalition partners, yet when austerity measures brought by the FDP finance minister earned the scorn of the SPD, all of the FDP cabinet members resigned. In place of this terminated coalition was a new CDU/CSU-FDP coalition. In the next election, many prominent leaders and activists left the FDP in protest (Lupia and Strøm 1995). Similarly, the tension between Labour and Fine Gael in Ireland in 1987 led to Labour stating they would not participate in the government formed after the next elections. In 1987 Labour formally withdrew from the coalition, setting up an election in which both Labour and Fine Gael suffered, leading to Fianna Fail capturing the government (Lupia and Strøm 1995).

Finally, in 1987 the voters in Norway showed that they were willing to punish even the failed attempt at terminating the government prematurely. The leader of the Conservative Party, Rolf Presthus, attempted to oust the minority Labor government installed in 1986 by coming to an agreement with two other non-socialist parties that together formed a majority that could bring down the government. After several failed attempts at bringing no-confidence motions throughout the first half of 1987, the final attempt failed in June and left the non-socialist majority reeling. In regional elections that fall, Presthus and the Conservatives suffered heavily, and Presthus died shortly thereafter (Strøm 1994).

These theoretical and empirical findings suggest that discretionary terminations can have significant effects on how the electorate views the participating parties, and the

subsequent analysis will test whether these discretionary terminations also reduce satisfaction with the democratic process:

Discretionary Termination Hypothesis: *Government terminations caused by discretionary reasons will have a greater negative effect on citizen satisfaction with democracy than terminations caused by technical reasons.*

Moreover, not all discretionary terminations will necessarily produce the type of cynicism that will reduce the level of satisfaction in the electorate. Of all termination types, terminations resulting from conflict within or among the coalition members ought to produce the highest levels of cynicism, and thus the lowest levels of satisfaction⁴. Additionally, these are the terminations that are most likely to be visible to the electorate (with the exception, perhaps of discretionary early elections). The parties to conflict are each likely to go to the press to argue their case to their supporters and the rest of the electorate, and the following hypothesis will test whether this bickering leads to lower levels of satisfaction with the democratic process:

Conflictual Termination Hypothesis: *Government terminations caused by conflicts between coalition members, within a coalition party, or by successful no-confidence motions will decrease the level of satisfaction with democracy.*

Statistical Analyses

In this paper I attempt to move beyond previous attempts at answering the question of whether or not government stability and terminations have consequences for citizen satisfaction with democracy. Rather than collapse the data for each country into a

⁴ Some mechanisms of conflict afflicting coalitions may not even need to succeed in bringing down the government. Unsuccessful no-confidence motions have been shown to decrease the electoral support of governing parties while boosting the fortunes of the opposition bringing the motion (Williams 2011).

single time period and correlate it with a measure of government stability for that time period (e.g. Harmel and Robertson 1986), I examine each country year and determine whether a government termination in a given year decreases the level of citizen satisfaction in the subsequent year. The data are thus structured as time-series cross-sectional data.

In order to execute the analysis, I require yearly satisfaction data along with information on government terminations. Fortunately, the Eurobarometer survey has been asking respondents how they feel about the democratic process in their country for several decades. Unfortunately, the question has been asked somewhat inconsistently across space and time. Thus, while the dataset used here is wider in scope both in time and space than that used by Harmel and Robertson (1986), the number of observations is limited to the yearly survey responses for twelve OECD countries between 1976-2001, aggregated to country-level⁵.

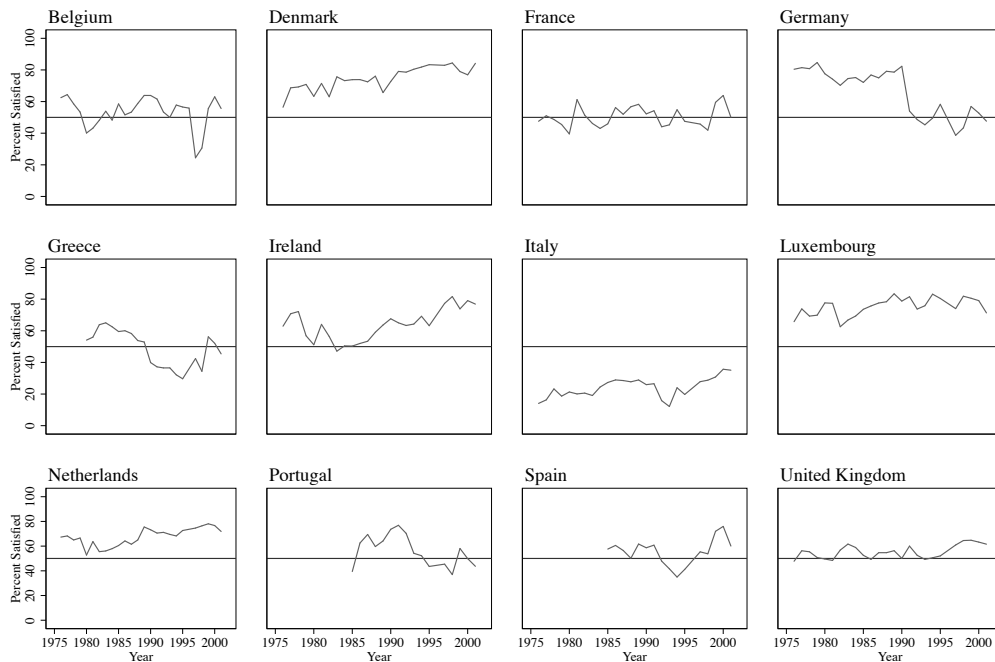
The survey question asks respondents, “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?” The survey response is ordinal, with individuals responding “Not at all satisfied” as 1, “Not very satisfied” as 2, “Fairly Satisfied” as 3, and “Very Satisfied” as 4. The dependent variable in all the models will be coded as the percentage of respondents that indicated that they were either “Fairly Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied”

⁵ The countries included are Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Because of data limitations, the time period covered for Portugal and Spain is 1985-2001, and 1980-2001 for Greece.

with the way democracy works in their country. Figure 2 displays the level of satisfaction for each country over time.

It is clear from Figure 2 that there is significant cross-national variation in the mean level of satisfied respondents. Only about 20-40% of Italian respondents are at least fairly satisfied with their democratic process across the time period, while the number of respondents in Denmark, Luxembourg, and Germany (prior to reunification) who indicate they are satisfied remains above 60% for the majority of the time period. It is also clear, however, that there is significant within-country variation in the level of satisfaction across time. Even in the most satisfied countries, there are noticeable declines and increases in satisfaction at various points. In Denmark and Ireland, for example, while there is year-to-year variation, there is a general trend of increasing satisfaction with the

Figure 4.2. Percent Satisfied by Country



democratic process over time. A possible explanation for this trend could be long periods of sustained economic growth, especially in Ireland, where GDP growth reached double figures in several years during the 1990s.

Another interesting trend is the relatively flat rate of change in satisfaction in Germany other than the marked decline between 1990 and 1991. This, of course, is due to the inclusion of Eastern Germany into the dataset beginning after reunification in 1990. Less than 40% of East Germans indicated that they were at least fairly satisfied with their democracy prior to reunification⁶. This merge in the data was significant enough to lower the overall level of satisfaction from near 80% in West Germany prior to 1990 to around 50% from 1991 onward.

The arguments presented by Harmel and Robertson (1986) attempt to explain the trend that some countries have lower levels of satisfaction than others because of their tendency to terminate governments at frequent intervals. As Harmel and Robertson (1986) show, and as Figure 1 indicates, there is some support for this notion without, albeit without any rigorous control for other factors. The arguments presented here attempt to explain the latter trend — that short term fluctuations in the level of satisfaction within countries are at least in part caused by the number and type of government terminations in a given year.

To measure these independent variables, the data on government terminations is taken from the Comparative Parliamentary Democracy Data Archive (Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2008), which contains data on 424 cabinets in 17 countries since 1945. While

⁶ Source: Eurobarometer Trend File, 1970-2002

seemingly straightforward, exactly when a government begins and ends is a question that has been debated in the literature. Here I follow Strøm, Müller, and Bergman's (2008, p.

12) definition of government change, which is a common one in the literature:

1. Any change in the set of parties holding cabinet membership
2. Any change in the identity of the prime minister
3. Any general election

In addition to government terminations generally, I am also interested in the type of government termination. Not all government terminations are created equal; some are characterized by the simple addition of a party to the coalition, which may be relatively uninteresting to the citizenry. Others may be characterized by rather volatile policy disputes that lead to one party or another withdrawing from the coalition. Table 1 displays the categories of government terminations used in the analysis, along with their

Table 4.1. Types and Frequencies of Government Terminations

Type of Change	Frequency	Percentage
Discretionary		
Cabinet defeat in parliament	19	16
Inter-party conflict between coalition parties	27	22
Intra-party conflict within a coalition party	13	11
Early parliamentary election	28	23
Voluntary enlargement	2	2
Total	89	73
Technical		
Regular parliamentary election	23	19
Other constitutional reason/Death of PM	10	8
Total	33	27

frequencies in the dataset. The termination types can be broken down into two general categories — technical and discretionary. Technical terminations occur through no willful decision of any party either within or outside of the government. The most common type of technical termination is a regular parliamentary election that takes place after the end of the constitutional inter-election period (CIEP) (King et al. 1990), accounting for about 19% of termination in the data set. Other examples of technical terminations are the death or illness of the prime minister, or any other constitutional reason for a cabinet resigning, such as when the cabinet of Jacques Santer resigned in 1995 after Santer was selected to become the president of the European Commission (Dumont and de Winter 2000).

Discretionary terminations are more common in the countries under consideration, and are much more varied in type than technical terminations. These include events such as conflicts between coalition partners that lead to a member party withdrawing from the coalition, as well as early parliamentary elections called for reasons other than conflict between or within parties. For example, in 1989 the center-right coalition in the Netherlands between the Christian Democrats (CDA) and the right wing People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), led by CDA prime minister Ruud Lubbers, collapsed after the parties' inability to compromise on an environmental plan proposed by the CDA. The VVD threatened to hold a no confidence vote, and Prime Minister Lubbers subsequently submitted his government's resignation to the queen (*The Times* (London) 1989).

While this policy conflict (and simple threat of a no confidence vote) was enough to bring down the Lubbers government, it was a successful no confidence vote that

brought down another European government in 1998. In Italy in 1998, the center-left coalition led by Romano Prodi fell when Prodi resigned the cabinet after a faction of the Communist Refounding Party split from Prodi and a no-confidence motion passed the Chamber of Deputies by a single vote (*New York Times* 1998).

Finally, and somewhat less conflictual, some governments terminate early due to decisions made by government actors to call early elections hoping to take advantage of favorable electoral conditions, or to potentially head off unfavorable conditions that might prevail in the future (e.g. see Lupia and Strøm 1995). This type of termination is frequent in some countries, including Denmark. In 1987, the Danish Conservative Party's prime minister Poul Schluter surprised the Folketing by calling elections four months before the government's term in office was scheduled to end. This call for elections came at a time of mounting economic problems in Denmark, and while there was no specific policy conflict severe enough to bring down the government, Schluter nevertheless decided to call for early elections, setting up the possibility of maintaining the minority coalition (*The Times* (London) 1987).

While these latter terminations vary in their degree of contentiousness, they are all caused by choices made by political actors. These discretionary termination types are coded in two different ways in the analysis. The first measure is designed to test the Type of Termination Hypothesis, and is coded 1 if the termination mechanism is any of the discretionary types, and 0 if the termination mechanism is technical in nature. The second termination measurement is designed to determine whether it is discretionary terminations in general that matter for citizen satisfaction, or whether it is conflictual

terminations specifically that signal “chaos at the top”. Accordingly, the second measure is a conflict indicator variable that is coded 1 if the termination mechanism was a cabinet defeat in parliament or if the termination was caused by policy or personnel conflict either within or between coalition members. Otherwise, the variable is coded 0.

The analysis also controls for other possible influences on the level of satisfaction in a given year. First, as discussed above, several scholars have found that cabinet stability is related positively to political support (Schmitt 1983; Weil 1989). That is, longer lived governments tend to be related to happier citizens. To account for this, I include a variable capturing the number of days a government has been in office as a proportion of the maximum possible number of days. Thus, this relative cabinet duration ranges from 0 to 1, with one indicating a government that lasted the maximum possible amount of time in office (i.e. they reached the end of the CIEP). To support the findings of studies such as Schmitt (1983) and Weil (1989), this variable should be positive and statistically significant.

Additionally, the analysis controls for the amount of political choice available to the electorate. This variable is measured as the effective number of parliamentary parties⁷. More parties in parliament is indicative of a greater range of choice for the electorate, which may have a positive affect on citizen satisfaction with democracy. However, more parties in parliament may also be indicative of a more difficult bargaining environment and a greater political divide among the electorate, as in Belgium, which has many parties but is also racked with linguistic, regional, and religious divisions that make

⁷ Effective number of parliamentary parties is measured using the Laakso and Taagepera (1979) index: $ENPP = 1/\sum(s_i)^2$, where s_i is the proportion of seats held by party i .

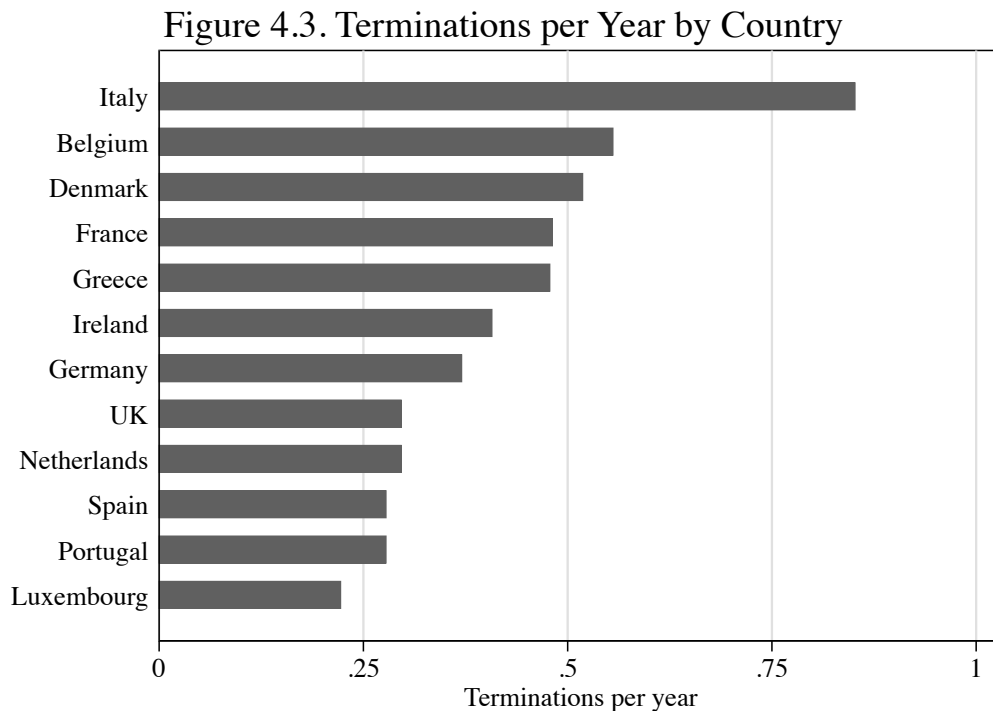
government formation incredibly difficult. Such a difficult political environment may have a negative effect on satisfaction with democracy.

The final variables in the analysis attempt to account for the performance of government and the structure of the government itself. Government performance is measured using the growth rate of a country's gross domestic product (GDP). This variable ranges in the dataset from -2.3% to 11.3%, with a mean of 2.96%. Thus, on average, most countries in the dataset enjoyed about 3% economic growth across the time period. I expect that, in line with previous research, positive economic growth rates should lead to greater satisfaction with the democratic process.

The variables intended to capture the structure of the government are a series of binary variables indicating whether the government is a minority government (whether a coalition or single party), a minimum winning coalition (where the withdrawal of any single party in the coalition is sufficient to bring down the government), a single party majority, or a surplus majority (in which the removal of a party does not necessarily lead to the end of the majority). The type of government varies significantly across countries, with some seeing only minority governments, such as Denmark, and others seeing nothing but single party majorities, such as Portugal. Still others see a mixture of government types across the time period. These variables are included to capture any potential effect government structure might have on satisfaction with democracy. The baseline category in the analysis is surplus majority coalition; thus, the coefficient on the three other variables should be interpreted as a comparison to the effect of a surplus majority.

Termination Frequency Hypothesis

Model 1 is a direct test of previous work hinting at a relationship between government instability and decreased satisfaction with democracy. To test the hypothesis that more government terminations in a given year directly leads to a decrease in satisfaction, the primary independent variable in this model is the number of government terminations in a given country-year. While in most countries government terminations occur only once every few years, some countries, such as Italy, see a termination almost every year, and in some cases see multiple terminations in a single year. Figure 3 displays the average number of terminations per year for each country. While Italy anchors the high end of the figure, the low end includes countries like the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Luxembourg, who terminate a government about once



every four years. According to the theory, if one government termination in a year signals chaos at the top, multiple terminations in a single year would compound that image.

The first column of Table 2 displays the results of the model examining this hypothesis. Included in the model is a lagged dependent variable to account for the relative “stickiness” of satisfaction across time. That is, it is highly likely that the level of satisfaction in a country across time will remain relatively stable, with one time period dependent on the previous time period. Additionally, for statistical purposes, including a lagged dependent variable accounts for the possibility of correlation among the errors within countries. Although the results of the Wooldridge test of autocorrelation (Drukker 2003) did not indicate a presence of autocorrelation, because of the theoretical necessity of the variable, I included a lagged dependent variable in each model as a more appropriate test of the hypothesis.

The first finding to note in the first column of Table 2 is the lack of support for the Termination Frequency Hypothesis. The results of the model indicate that for each government termination in a given year, the level of satisfaction decreases by about .05 percentage points, but does not approach statistical significance. This finding is somewhat surprising, given the expectation that government terminations create uncertainty. However, given the expectations predicted by the Type of Termination hypothesis — that some terminations are much more visible and contentious than others (e.g. a voluntary enlargement is not nearly as visible as a no confidence vote) — it could be that the effect of some of terminations simply don’t register with the electorate, and thus don’t affect satisfaction with democracy. Thus, while the insignificant findings in

Model 1 would seem to refute the general finding of Harmel and Robertson (1986) that higher frequencies of government termination leads to lower levels of political support, further testing on the type of termination is necessary. Models 2 and 3 test this possibility.

Table 4.2. Effect of Government Termination and Stability on Satisfaction with Democracy

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
# of Terminations	-.05 (1.06)		
Discretionary Termination		-.30 (.90)	
Conflictual Termination			-2.20** (.78)
Relative Cabinet Duration	1.68 (1.60)	1.81 (1.21)	2.32** (.96)
Effective Number of Parties	.58* (.31)	.58* (.33)	.60* (.34)
GDP Growth (%)	.46** (.17)	.46** (.16)	.45** (.17)
Minority Government	3.47** (1.50)	3.45** (1.51)	3.14** (1.52)
Minimum Winning Coalition	3.88** (1.58)	3.80** (1.45)	3.13** (1.39)
Single Party Majority	3.35* (1.78)	3.29** (1.60)	2.63* (1.56)
Satisfaction (t-1)	.89*** (.03)	.89*** (.03)	.88*** (.03)
Constant	-.50 (2.46)	-.40 (2.41)	.53 (2.60)
R ²	0.48	0.48	0.49
N	210	210	210

Note: Entries are time series OLS coefficients. Standard errors clustered on country. Omitted category for type of government is Surplus Majority.

* p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Type of Termination Hypotheses

The second and third columns of Table 2 display the results of Models 2 and 3, which test the Discretionary and Conflictual Termination Hypotheses. Recall that the Discretionary Termination hypothesis states that discretionary terminations should cause greater dissatisfaction among the electorate than technical terminations, while the

Conflictual Termination Hypothesis states that a subset of discretionary terminations — those of a conflictual nature, i.e. caused by policy or personnel conflict within or among parties, or a vote of no confidence in parliament — should cause more dissatisfaction than non-conflictual terminations. The results in columns 2 and 3 show mixed results for these hypotheses. The negative coefficient for the *Discretionary Termination* variable in Model 2 indicates that a discretionary termination decreases citizen satisfaction with the democratic process by almost by about .30%, compared to technical terminations, but the large standard error prevents us from having any confidence in this result. Similar to the results of the Termination Frequency Hypothesis, discretionary terminations is a rather broad category, and includes highly visible terminations as well as less visible, more benign terminations.

However, Model 3 tests a very specific, highly visible subset of terminations, and the results in Table 2 provide strong support for the Conflictual Termination Hypothesis. This model tests whether conflictual terminations have a greater negative effect on satisfaction with democracy than non-conflictual terminations. If terminations generally, and discretionary terminations more specifically cause greater anxiety and cynicism in the population — and thus less satisfaction — it would not be surprising to find that conflictual terminations characterized by the inability for the governing parties to cooperate would only enhance this effect. The results in Model 3 provide strong support for this claim. All else equal, conflictual terminations decrease citizen satisfaction with democracy by over 2 percentage points, which is enough to cancel out the effect of a 4% GDP growth rate. For example, based on the results from Model 3, in a year with a 0%

GDP growth rate and no conflictual government termination, the percentage of people who are satisfied with the democratic process is expected to be about 56.44% +/- 1.49%, *ceteris paribus*. If we increase the GDP growth rate to 4%, but also include a conflictual government termination, the percentage of satisfied citizens drops to 56.09% +/- 1.27%, *ceteris paribus*.

Moreover, the long-term effects of a conflictual termination also have strong effects on satisfaction with the democratic process. While the short term effect of a conflictual termination is about a 2% reduction in satisfaction, the long term effect further reduces satisfaction by about 19%⁸. This value is much higher than is likely to ever occur. However, the standard error of this estimate is 6.41, making the 95% confidence interval for this estimate [-31.57, -6.45]. Given these results, the long-run decrease in satisfaction with the democratic process due to a conflictual termination is at least 6.45%, with about 88% of that decrease (or about 5.68%) occurring in the year following the termination. Given this finding and the frequency of their government terminations, it is not surprising that a country like Italy maintains persistently low levels of satisfaction with democracy.

Control Variables

These findings are bolstered by the significant results for the control variables. The findings for lagged dependent variable indicate that, unsurprisingly, the level of satisfaction in time period t is strongly related to the level of satisfaction in the previous period. That is, if a country is highly satisfied in one year, it is quite likely that they will be highly satisfied in the next year.

⁸ The long-run effect is calculated as $\beta_{\text{Conflict}} / (1 - \beta_{\text{Satisfaction}(t-1)})$ (de Boef and Keele 2008).

While the effect of the lagged dependent variable is not particularly interesting, the effect of ENPP and GDP Growth are consistently positive and significant across models. While the primary independent variable in Models 1 and 2 are insignificant, the Conflictual Termination Hypothesis is supported even controlling for GDP growth, a strong standard economic measure of government performance. The coefficient for the GDP Growth variable indicates that for every percentage point that GDP increases, the corresponding change in satisfaction with the democratic process is an increase of .45%. Thus, combining a conflictual termination with poor economic performance could lead to substantial decreases in satisfaction. Even stronger than this effect is the effect of ENPP. The results in all three models indicate that the addition of a single party in parliament increases satisfaction in the electorate by about .6%.

The effect of cabinet duration is less consistent than both GDP Growth and ENPP. Although the sign of the coefficient is positive in all three models, supporting the reasonable expectation that longer-lasting governments produce more satisfaction, the variable only reach statistical significance in Model 3, indicating that how long a cabinet survives only matters when that cabinet dissolves because of conflict within or between coalition members, or between the government and the opposition.

Finally, the binary indicators of government structure indicate that minority governments, minimum winning coalitions, and single party majorities all produce higher levels of satisfaction than surplus majority coalitions. While this result is interesting, it is significantly influenced by the fact that Italy accounts for almost half of the surplus majority coalitions. Thus, these variables may simply be capturing the fact that Italy has

the lowest level of satisfaction compared to the other countries in the dataset. When removed from the analysis, the effect of these governmental structure variables is reduced.

Conclusion

The analysis of the correlates of political support have shown that we should consider several factors when evaluating what causes changes in levels of support. Primary among these are the quality of representation provided by elections, and by the governments produced by elections. Yet, while researchers have put much effort into exploring these questions, including those of government durability, few have examined the consequences of government terminations. The findings presented here show that scholars should look at these consequences more seriously. The inability of governing elites to maintain stability in the government have real consequences not only for the electoral prospects of their parties, but also for the amount of political support of performance of their democracy held by the citizens they govern.

It is clear from these results that the instability caused by government termination has a substantive impact on the levels of political support among the population, particularly when that instability is caused by conflict. These results have important implications for both scholars and the politicians wielding the levers of power. For the elites making these decisions, it is clear that when calculating whether or not to terminate a government to achieve electoral advantage, or when debating whether a policy conflict with a fellow governing party is worth withdrawing from the coalition, more needs to be

accounted for than future electoral fortunes or policy initiatives. Support for the performance of the democracy itself is affected as well. The uncertainty and cynicism caused by high levels of instability in government is manifested in part in the level of support the electorate holds for their political system.

For scholars, these results indicate that scholars need to take a longer look at the consequences of government stability, as well as rethink the importance of the length of cabinet durability in terms of time. Much effort has gone into predicting how long a government will last, and rightfully so. These results show that frequency occurrence of short-lived governments will decrease citizen satisfaction. Yet, these results also indicate that what we should be predicting is not length of time until termination. Instead, we should look at what constellation of predictors leads to certain types of terminations (e.g. Damgaard 2008). Conflictual terminations, whenever they happen, have a substantial negative effect on citizen satisfaction, and predicting these types of terminations should be of interest to scholars.

Additionally, future research should consider whether different types of citizens are affected by these terminations in different ways. Previous research has indicated the importance of accounting for winner/loser status on levels of political support. Whether or not this and other characteristics have the same impact on evaluations of government terminations is also an interesting question that needs to be explored.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

The response of citizens to the performance of their political institutions is vital to the health of all democratic countries, ranging from new democracies looking for stability to established democracies seeking to maintain trust in the system (Lipset 1959; Powell 1982). The literature examining the determinants of citizen satisfaction with the democratic process is relatively well developed. Models of political support have hypothesized that the individual characteristics of voters, such as their level of political interest (Almond and Verba 1965; Anderson and Guillory 1997), their economic situation (Listhaug and Wiberg 1995; Monroe and Erickson 1986), and whether or not they support a winning political party (Anderson and Guillory 1997), are important for determining their level of satisfaction with the democratic process.

While these models are useful, they cannot account for why some countries are systematically more or less satisfied than others. Consequently, still other models place an emphasis on institutional explanations of political support. These models argue that the structure of political institutions can systematically generate higher or lower levels of satisfaction by softening the disadvantages of being in the political minority (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Lijhpart 1999), by increasing the level of accountability of governing elites (Aarts and Thomassen 2008), or by inducing better or worse policy representation of the median voter (Huber and Powell 1994; Powell 2000; Paskeviciute 2006; Kim 2009)

Yet, these models also fall short of proving a full explanation of support for political institutions. The dynamic nature of political support in industrialized democracies within countries across time is clear support for the notion that these citizen

evaluations are being driven by something more than an explanation based on relatively static institutions can provide. The arguments put forth in this project rely on what I call the political representation cycle — the making and breaking of political connections between citizens and their party on the one hand, and with their government on the other. I argue that these connections are fundamental to representation in a representative democracy, and that the quality of the connections has important consequences for how citizens view their governments. The connection between citizen and party is the primary channel through which voters present their ideological preferences to the governing elites. Without this connection, voters are likely to become disengaged and cynical about the political system that is supposed to represent their views. Additionally, I argue that the quality of this connection conditions the well-known positive effect of supporting a winning political party. As a voter becomes more alienated from their preferred party, the importance of that party's victory diminished accordingly.

Moreover, the breaking of these connections is just as important as the quality of the connection itself. Although the connection between citizen and government is designed to break periodically in a democracy, the mechanism of that break has important implications for citizen support of political institutions. When governments are terminated for non-political reasons — e.g. a regular parliamentary election — the electorate is unlikely to view that termination in a negative light because it is completely out of the hands of the parties in government. However, when governments terminate prematurely because of conflict among the governing elites, the electorate is more likely to look less favorably upon their institutions.

Summary of Findings

The research questions presented in this project were an attempt to examine the effect the quality of these citizen-party and citizen-government connections have on citizen satisfaction with the democratic process. The first research question, whether or not the quality of the citizen-party connection influences how citizens evaluate their institutions, and whether party systems' representation of the median voter is the optimal arrangement to produce greater satisfaction, was addressed in Chapter Two. In this chapter, I argued that parties are instruments to channel citizen preferences into the political system (Sartori 1976). At this individual level, this argument states that the better an individual is represented by a political party — i.e. the nearer a party is to their ideological neighborhood — the more likely it is that they will be satisfied with the democratic process. In the United Kingdom in 1997, Tony Blair's New Labour shifted to the center, leaving their leftist supporters with more ideological distance between themselves and their party. The findings of Chapter Two suggest that as this ideological distance increases, the likelihood that an individual will be satisfied with their democracy decreases by about 2% for every standard deviation increase in ideological distance.

Chapter Two also addressed the work of Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011), which also examines the effect of party system distribution on the levels of satisfaction. The argument presented by Ezrow and Xezonakis relies on the assumption used heavily in theoretical and empirical studies of government/citizen congruence that the median voter is normatively the appropriate position for the party system to represent. Moreover, they find this to be the case empirically. Using their measurement of the average party

extremism, they find that the farther a party is on average from the median voter, the lower the levels of satisfaction. However, the systemic implication of this argument is that party system convergence on the median voter position makes it much more difficult for parties to serve as these communication channels for voters. As the party system converges to the median, and the value of the average party extremism shrinks, the more likely it is to have a situation such as faced Labour voters in the United Kingdom in 1997.

Instead, Chapter Two argued that, when it comes to the role of party systems, neither excessively low nor excessively high levels of party system extremism are desirable. Rather, only at moderate levels of extremism is it likely that most voters will have a party in their ideological neighborhood. The findings presented in Chapter Two suggested tentative support for this hypothesis. The lowest levels of satisfaction were found at low levels of party system extremism (i.e. very centrist systems). As the level of system extremism increases, so does the likelihood of satisfaction. The results presented in Chapter Two do not support the hypothesis that high levels of extremism are also associated with low satisfaction. However, this finding is likely due to the lack of a truly extreme party system in the sample of countries examined. More research is warranted to find more reliable results on this hypothesis.

Chapter Three addressed the research question examining whether the quality of the citizen-party and citizen-government connections conditions the positive effect of selecting a winning political party. It is well established in the literature that voters in the political majority are more satisfied with the functioning of their democracy than those who are in the political minority (Anderson and Guillory 1997). Anderson and Guillory

(1997) also show us that the structure of political institutions conditions this effect, with consensual systems lowering the overall level of satisfaction among winners and minimizing the gap in satisfaction between the political majority and minority. What the literature has so far failed to address sufficiently, however, is the extent to which political representation conditions the winner effect within a country. In other words, holding the degree of consensus-majoritarian institutions constant, does the quality of political representation condition the amount of satisfaction voters get from selecting a winning political party?

In Chapter Three, I argued that it should. The literature has shown us that voters value representation of their ideological preferences even controlling for their winner/loser status (Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2011). Indeed, almost all of the literature on voting behavior either assumes or explicitly states that voters make their decisions based on some underlying ideological preference. Chapter Three argued, then, that the degree to which a voter is provided political representation influences the stake they have in the success of the party they vote for. Taking two otherwise identical voters who support the same party, with the only difference being the ideological distance between the voter and the party, Chapter Three argued that the satisfaction derived from their party being included in the government should be greater for the voter nearer the location of the political party.

The findings of Chapter Three only partially support this hypothesis. Testing three models — one examining the citizen-government connection, and two examining the citizen-party connection — this chapter finds that the direct effect of the ideological

distance between the voter and the government and their party, respectively, is negatively related to the probability that the voter will be satisfied with the democratic process. That is, as the ideological distance between the voter and their institutions increases, their likelihood of satisfaction decreases. There is also a positive winner effect in each of the three models, consistent with previous research. However, there is no conditioning effect of the distance between citizen and government on the positive impact of selecting a winning party. In other words, the positive effect of selecting a winning party does not decrease as the distance between that winning voter and the position of the government decreases. Similarly, there is no conditioning effect of the distance between the voter and the political party they support measured as the number of ideological units of distance on a 10-point ideological scale. However, the third model tested the effect of the psychological distance between a voter and their party, and found a significant negative conditioning effect. As one feels less and less close to the party they support, the positive effect of that party winning an election decreases. While the positive boost of winning for those who feel very close to their party increases the likelihood of being satisfied with the democratic process by 12%, for those that do not feel very close to their party the winner effect only increases their probability of satisfaction by 9%, a difference significant at $p < .05$.

Finally, Chapter Four examined the effect of the breaking of the citizen-government connection on the level of satisfaction within a country. While much research has examined the causes of the durability of governments, only a handful of studies examine the consequences of this durability for political support in the electorate

(Schmitt 1983; Harmel and Robertson 1986; Weil 1989; Narud and Valen 2008). Most important to this project, Harmel and Robertson (1986) directly examine the effect of the number of government terminations on satisfaction with democracy, while the other studies focus on the average length of cabinet durability. Chapter Four argues that frequent termination leads to instability in government and the sense in the electorate that there is “chaos at the top” (Harmel and Robertson 1986). Moreover, I argue that not only does the frequency of termination matter for satisfaction, but that the type of termination matters as well.

Chapter Four presents a more appropriate test of these hypotheses than the test used by Harmel and Robertson (1986) who aggregate and average both the number of governments and the level of satisfaction across time in nine countries. This project extends both the time period (1976-2001) and the sample of countries (twelve), and examines the level of satisfaction in a yearly time series rather than aggregating across the time in the sample. In this way, I was able to ascertain the direct effect of a government termination in one time period on the level of satisfaction in the next.

The analyses in Chapter Four tested three hypotheses related to government terminations. The first was a test of the Harmel and Robertson (1986) hypothesis that government termination indicates chaos at the top, and thus reduces the level of political support. Model 1 thus tested the effect of the number of government terminations in a given year on the level of satisfaction with the democratic process. However, the results of this model did not support the hypothesis. The effect of the number of terminations on

satisfaction is a decrease of about .05%, but failure to reach statistical significance suggests this effect is mere chance.

The other two models presented in Chapter Four relied primarily on the different hypothesized effects of different mechanisms of government termination. The first model tested the hypothesis that voters were more likely to view their democracy negatively when the government is terminated for discretionary reasons. Unlike technical terminations, which are out of the control of the parties in power (e.g. death of the prime minister, regular parliamentary election, etc.), discretionary terminations are directly caused by decisions made by governing elites. Whether this is due to a no-confidence motion in parliament, an early election caused by the prime minister, or a policy conflict between governing parties, the voters are more likely to see these discretionary terminations as the unwillingness or inability of the government to govern. However, the model testing this hypothesis again did not provide adequate support. Although the effect of discretionary terminations was larger than in Model 1 described above (-.30), the large standard error again makes any inference problematic.

The final model tested in Chapter Four tested the hypothesis that, among discretionary terminations, terminations that end in conflict are the most likely to cause negative reactions among the electorate. While these conflictual terminations are a subset of the discretionary terminations discussed above, that category also included terminations such as early elections called by the prime minister, which might be strategically called in times that could benefit the governing parties electorally (Lupia and Strom 1995). However, the terminations included in the conflictual category are all

indicators of the inability of the governing parties to get along (or the inability of the governing parties to maintain unity in parliament). If voters were to react negatively to any termination mechanism, the most likely candidates are the conflictual terminations. The results of Model 3 confirm this suggestion. A conflictual termination in a given year leads directly to a decrease in satisfaction of over 2% in the next year. Moreover, the long-term effect of that conflictual termination is at least a 6% decrease in satisfaction distributed over future time periods.

Implications and Future Research

The implications of the findings of this project suggest several avenues for future research. Of primary interest is expanding the scope of the analyses to include longer time series (particularly in the case of Chapter Four) and more countries. Not only is this important for deepening our understanding of how the citizen-party and citizen-government connections work in industrialized democracies, but expanding on the types of countries analyzed can shed light on the dynamics of the relationships between citizens and institutions in states where the institutions are less established.

While Chapters Two and Three examine the effects of the quality of political representation on satisfaction with democracy, another way to examine this relationship is dynamically. That is, if citizens' satisfaction is in part derived from how far away they are ideologically from the government or their preferred party, how do they respond as parties shift their position over time? Adams and Ezrow (2009) find that European parties respond to changes in the preferences of "opinion leaders" (i.e. the most engaged

citizens), and Adams et al. (2004) find that parties are highly responsive to shifts in public opinion. Clearly, then parties shift positions over time in response to voters. It is less clear what the reactions of voters are to those shifts. While we know that mainstream parties are more likely to respond to shifts in the mean voter position rather than their supporters (Ezrow et al. 2011), by examining the relationship of parties' policy position with respect to position of their supporters, we can infer whether shifts in this relationship over time influence the level of satisfaction among those party supporters.

A second avenue of research should look into the consequences of government terminations for political outcomes other than citizen evaluations of their institutions. Chapter Four found that termination mechanisms can have a substantive impact on the level of satisfaction in a country. Other research has shown that specific types of terminations, such as no-confidence motions, can have impacts on party position-taking (Somer-Topcu and Williams 2014). Research has also found that the formation of governments is influenced by the behavior of parties in past governments (Tavits 2008). The implications of this research is clear — how governments end can have significant impacts on multiple types of political outcomes. An obvious expansion on this research is to investigate the impact of other types of terminations on party position-taking, as well as how different termination mechanisms influence the forming of subsequent governments.

Additionally, further research on individuals' reactions to government terminations is warranted. The data utilized in Chapter Four were satisfaction data aggregated to country level for analysis across time. This data structure does not allow for

analysis of individual reactions. Given the findings in Chapter Three that the effect of being a winner on satisfaction with the democratic process is conditional on representation, it is also of interest whether the reactions of individual voters to government terminations is conditional on their loyalty to the parties involved. If opposition parties respond to no-confidence motions by distancing themselves from the governing parties (Sommer-Topcu and Williams 2014), it is plausible that the voters of these parties will have different reactions to that no-confidence motion.

In sum, the arguments and findings of this project have helped to shed new light on the dynamics of political representation and citizen satisfaction with the democratic process. They have shown that, in addition to government performance as measured by economic outputs and general institutional explanations, it is important to consider the quality of the connections that voters hold between their parties and the government. This project has also illuminated further avenues of research that should add to our knowledge of the role of institutions in the evaluations of the electorates ruled by them.

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In his free time, Josh enjoys spending entirely too much energy rooting for his hometown (and five-time NBA champion) San Antonio Spurs, as well as the much less successful University of Missouri sports teams. Josh's second academic love is the political and military history of the early 20th Century, particularly the Second World War. He enjoys collecting and reading historical accounts of the countless battles that helped shape the world we live in today. Finally, Josh's favorite get-away is to spend time outdoors hiking in the beautiful Missouri woods.