The dilemmas of intra-party democracy: Lessons from Italy, Japan and elsewhere

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Abstract: Drawing on evidence from comparative research on intra-party factionalism in established democracies (notably Italy, Japan, Britain and Canada) my paper argues that party organisational changes designed to respond to demands for greater intra-party democracy can have unintended consequences. Striking the right balance of incentives isn’t easy. In the long run procedural changes to redress internal democratic deficiencies can be counter-productive and damaging for parties and democracy.

Political parties in ‘third wave democracies’ can learn lessons from non-majoritarian democracies such as Italy and Japan where factionalised parties ruled continuously for the first 50 years of these countries’ democratisation after WW2. The proportional rules and procedures adopted by Japan’s Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Italy’s Christian Democratic Party (DC) to give intra-party factions representation and organisational stakes produced the wrong kind of incentives. Self-serving behavior by faction leaders created factions of patronage and the multiplication of veto points produced internal gridlock and obstacles to democratic reform.

However, the implementation of intra-party democracy in majoritarian systems is also tricky. The heavy burden of discipline falling on the party leader restricts debate and can be a source of instability as illustrated by reforms of party leadership selection in Britain and Canada.
Introduction

One of the first steps in my comparative survey of the internal politics of dominant parties was to investigate how political institutions shape intra-party behaviour and parties’ internal relations. This involved examining the relationship between interparty and intraparty institutions. Both affect incentives and disincentives to factionalism and shape the way parties manage internal conflict. I had an opportunity to explore the nature of this relationship since two of my four cases were political parties operating in majoritarian democracies (the British Conservative Party and the Liberal Party of Canada) and two in non-majoritarian democracies (Italy’s former Christian Democrats and Japan’s Liberal Democrats).

I had a hunch that party organisational arrangements - that counteract rather than reinforce the effects of systemic institutions - ought to be more conducive to conflict resolution, party unity and good governance. Hence, I expected that parties operating in concentrated executive-dominant majoritarian systems like the UK and Canada (where party unity is at a premium and party competition is centripetal) ought to adopt inclusive rules to represent intra-party preferences and generate consensus inside the organisation such as proportionality, power-sharing, decentralisation etc. Conversely, parties operating in non-majoritarian pluralist systems such as Italy and Japan (where power is fragmented and diffused) ought to adopt centripetal arrangements to generate unity and counteract the fragmentary pressures of political pluralism and the centrifugal pull of factions.

The party literature has become wary of the assumption of political parties as unitary actors. However, it hasn’t had that much to say so far about the interaction between interparty and intraparty institutions. In their book A Centripetal Theory of Democratic Governance (2008) Gerring and Thacker argue that centripetal political institutions - Unitarism, Parliamentarism and Closed-list PR - explain why some countries are better governed than others. They defend strong and united parties arguing that ‘intra- and interparty competition are inversely related’ and that this ‘fundamental fact of politics’ means ‘one must make a choice about which sort of competition to privilege’ - between parties or within parties. (Gerring and Thacker, 2008:35) They agree with Schattschneider (1942) that the first is more conducive to good governance than the latter and that parties must act as unitary agents.

Gerring and Thacker do not examine intraparty democracy despite claiming that ‘factionalism by definition impairs the ability of a party to coordinate its members’ activities’ and that ‘organizational weakness thus loosens bonds of accountability’ (2008: 36-7). I would argue that the first statement needs to be qualified. Factionalism is not a priori an
obstacle to intra-party coordination. It can be cooperative and consensus building as I explained in a 2009 article on ‘Rethinking Factions’...’ published in Party Politics (15(4) 1-31)¹. A factional structure can increase the aggregate capacity of political parties especially during party formation and, later on, facilitate intra-party cooperation by regulating internal competition, but only as long as internal incentives continue to align with overall party interests.

Is it possible to apply a similar logic of enquiry to the study of intra-party democracy as Gerring and Thacker apply to world democracies? Are there certain party-specific institutions that can explain why some parties are better governed than others? If so, is the nature of the relationship between inter-party and intraparty institutions relevant to this enquiry?

So far my case study research suggests there is nothing pre-determined about these institutional patterns². Firstly, political parties use a variety of different rules and procedures to carry out separate activities such as the selection of candidates, party leaders and policies that determine internal power distribution and leader-follower relationships in different ways. Secondly, rules and procedures are prone to elite manipulation particularly when the incumbent is in power for a long time. Hence, linkages between inter-party and intraparty institutions can be unstable over time.

Of course, a much broader set of cases including from newly established democracies would be necessary to fully test these propositions and build a general theory of intra-party governance. In addition, we need to develop methods for measuring intra-party democracy. But if, internal democracy is, like democracy, made up of different components then it might be possible to measure these components individually and aggregate them into an additive variable.

Political parties do not pursue intra-party democracy for its own sake. Instead, decisions to democratise party’s internal activities are usually instrumental: to aggregate disparate groups under a single umbrella; to stabilise a party after a crisis prompted by regime change, party system realignment, party split, election defeats etc; to resolve a particular problem

¹ Factionalism is a multifaceted phenomenon that can transform itself over time in response to incentives. I identify three main faces of factionalism: cooperative, competitive and degenerative and suggest that the process of change may occur in a cycle that contributes to party disintegration, as illustrated by the Christian Democratic Party in Italy (DC), which imploded in the mid-1990s under the centrifugal pulls of its factions. (Boucek, 2009)

² Of course, institutions are only one set of factors shaping factional behaviour inside parties. The state of the electoral market is also important because it determines factions’ bargaining leverage and dissidents’ voice-exit trade-offs which in turn shapes the strategies of party leaders.
such as the under-representation of women or other minorities; to increase the democratic base of elite selection in the face of declining party memberships and so on.

My book’s case studies demonstrate that attempts to increase internal democracy can have unintended consequences. In this paper I briefly summarise how organisational changes inside the DC and LDP to accommodate intraparty factions aggravated the pluralism and fragmentation of political power generated by non-majoritarian institutions especially permissive electoral systems. However, in majoritarian Britain and Canada, parties’ institutional changes to stabilise the party leadership have also been problematic.

**Faction representation and consequences in non-majoritarian Italy and Japan**

The DC and LDP, two of the most long-lasting dominant parties in established democracies, are also known as the most notoriously factionalised parties. They started off as aggregates of factions after WW2 when multiple movements, parties and groups merged. Under the first generation of party leaders a process of ‘cooperative factionalism’ (Boucek, 2009) eased democratic transitions and enable dominant party systems to develop in Italy and Japan.

However, in the long run, organisational changes to increase intra-party democracy generated incentives for ‘competitive factionalism’. This transformation was partly due to institutional changes adopted by the DC and LDP to accommodate factions. The lack of centripetal institutions at system level was aggravated by the ruling parties’ adoption of non-centripetal arrangements. In Italy factional capture produced ‘degenerative factionalism’ which contributed to the implosion of the dominant party ending Italy’s ‘first republic’.

The DC’s original four factions represented the various political groups that coalesced in 1945 around Alcide de Gasperi, former leader of the pre-war Popular Party of Italy (PPI). De Gasperi, Prime Minister in eight consecutive governments in 1945-54, eased Italy’s delicate transition from fascism to democracy by creating a broadly based interclass centrist mass party with strong Catholic roots (Leonardi and Wertman, 1989: 21-46). While his faction dominated the DC executive, there was no articulate vision of society, neither capitalist nor anti-capitalist to provide ideological ballast. Italians were seen ‘not merely as the faithful but as the sum of various cultural groups’ (McCarthy, 1997: 34).

The LDP’s factions grew out of the 1955 merger of Liberals and Democrats which brought together eight different leadership groups with clearly separate memberships in the
aftermath of party realignment. After the Liberals lost their parliamentary majority in 1953, prolonged bargaining between all post-war Japanese parties was suddenly transformed by the reunification of left- and right-wing Socialists, prompting the Liberals and Democrats to merge (Cox and Rosenbluth, 1995 and Kohno, 1992 and 1997). The catch-all nature of the LDP reflects the amalgamation of components from the Liberal and Democratic parties and pre-war bureaucrats like Hayato Ikeda and Eisaku Satō who went on to become LDP faction leaders and even Japanese prime ministers into the early 1970s. The 1955 merger significantly reduced the number of parties, skewing party competition in favour of the LDP which created disincentives to exit for careerist politicians until the 1980s.

In both countries dominant party systems became established because there was no viable alternative that could defeat the dominant party whose factional structure was no impediment to hegemony. On the contrary, in Japan the early LDP factions (habatsu) helped blur the lines between the pre-merger cleavages and regulate the competition for the party leadership. Complemented by the köenka LDP factions provided ready-made structures for electoral coordination under the single transferable vote (SNTV) and for elite circulation internally. In Italy factional bargaining inside the DC enabled the party to maintain a centrist position in a system of ‘polarised pluralism’ (Sartori, 1976) and to dominate every coalition government in 1945-1993 through a strategy of Communist deligitimation (Boucek, 2012: Section 1.5).

Systemic incentives to factionalism

Non-majoritarian political institutions – notably permissive electoral systems, complex multiparty governments and inter-factional coalitions, and dysfunctional parliamentary discipline - provided the right conditions for factions to become institutionalised and embedded in the DC and LDP.

I am constrained by reasons of space to a very brief treatment of systemic institutions. Fortunately the effects of majoritarian and non-majoritarian political institutions on

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3 For the conceptualisation of dominant parties and measurement of one-party dominance, see Bogaards and Boucek, (2010) and chapter 1 in Boucek (2012).

4 There were four leaders from each camp: former Democrats Nobusuke Kishi, Ichiro Kohno, Takeo Miki, and Tanzan Ishibashi and former Liberals Hayato Ikeda, Eisaku Sato, Banboku Kohno, and Mitsujiro Ishii.

5 köenka which predated the LDP were purely instrumental vote-gathering networks (corresponding to exact district lines) that mobilised committed voters for individual politicians by providing services to constituents.
factionalism are analysed in detail in my book’s chapters 3 and 6 (Boucek, 2012) available at a 50% discount at the ECPR conference 6.

Suffice it to say that the different mechanical and psychological effects of the old preference voting system in pre-1992 Italy and the single non-transferable vote in multi-member districts (SNTV) in pre-1994 Japan were instrumental in transforming the original DC and LDP leadership groups into power-oriented factions.

In a nutshell, under multi-seat voting systems co-partisan competition takes place at district level which promotes the fractionalisation of parties that allow multiple district nominations. Hence, the partisan competition for electoral stakes generated by these permissive voting systems provided the right conditions for factions to become major players in the mobilisation of the personal vote and distribution of partisan advantages to candidates for political office. By channelling funds directly to DC and LDP factions and kōenkai instead of the central party organisation and interest groups, clientele networks developed around faction leaders who were able to build local power bases and staked claims in the party organisation.

Faction leaders acted as brokers on behalf of individual candidates or slates of candidates between local interests and supporters. In the DC candidate selection was dominated by faction leaders working through the different tiers of the party organisation: provincial, regional and national. In the National Executive Committee (NEC), faction leaders controlled the selection of candidates through the powerful provincial party organisations responsible for blocking the Zaccagini 1976 and Di Mita 1983 reforms to de-select long-term incumbents (Boucek 2012: ch 7). In 1953-86, more than 90 per cent of DC incumbents were re-nominated, except for two elections. (Wertman, 1988) 7 In Italy, sponsors even provided organisational endorsements, funds and newspaper support beyond those available from the party 8 (Katz and Bardi, 1980:109). Preference vote accumulation by DC senior politicians became a symbol of virility and a harbinger of personal power similar to LDP faction leaders building large campaign war chests (Cox and Rosenbluth 1994).

6 To order your copy at the special price of £30.00 visit www.palgrave.com and quote discount code WFACPOL2013a

7 The average of newly elected DC deputies for all post-war elections after 1953 was 28 per cent, compared to 36.1 per cent for the Socialists and 41.3 per cent for the Communists (Guadagnini, 1984: 138) and half the DC’s turnover was due to losses in intra-party battles for preference votes (Wertman, 1988: 151).

8 According to Katz access to and support by the press was ‘controlled by a limited number of leaders with direct partisan interests’. Many DC factions had their own newspapers and press agencies and DC leaders controlled periodicals or press agencies such as Politico, Forze Libere, or RADAR while interest or business groups controlled such dailies as Il Giorno or the Vatican’s Osservatore Romano.
In sum, all else being equal, permissive voting systems provide good conditions for intra-party competition, weak partisanship, faction entrenchment and machine politics. Although these patterns aren’t intrinsic properties of voting systems, electoral reform in Italy and Japan came to be seen as the solution to eradicate them. However, factions weren’t simply a product of the electoral system. LDP factions have survived (albeit in a different form) in Japan after SNTV was replaced in 1994 by a majoritarian mixed-member system (Krauss and Pekkanen, 2011). In Italy, despite several reforms of the electoral system, factions still exist within left parties (Giannetti and Laver, 2009).

Second, in Italy the making of multiparty government coalitions provided further incentives for DC factions to wield their veto power. Factions provided bargaining leverage to the DC in constructing broad multiparty cabinets in exchange for a stake in the division of the spoils. The *lottizzazione* attributed ministerial posts to each coalition party and each DC faction according to their parliamentary and intra-party strength which contributed to the transformation of the DC into a federation of independently organised fiefdoms. In addition, pivotal DC factions didn’t hesitate to use their blackmail potential to bring down the government in the hope of increasing their stakes in the next government. (For factions’ pivotal power in making and breaking coalitions see Boucek 2012)

In Japan there was no coalition government during the first 38 years of LDP rule from 1955-93. The party ruled alone under the '55 system' but coalition building took place internally. There was intense competition between LDP factions for the selection of the LDP leadership. My survey of the LDP’s factional politics shows that defection threats by pivotal dissident factions to form coalitions with rival parties were a constant danger (Boucek, 2012: ch 8).

Third, in Italy and Japan, bicameral legislative institutions failed to build party cohesion and dampen factionalism. The Italian and Japanese prime ministers lacked policy-making authority and statutory powers to bind cabinets or discipline parliamentary representatives. Their careers depended on factional affiliation rather than loyalty to the party leader unlike in majoritarian democracies where the party leader and prime minister hold most of the carrots and sticks. In Italy’s bicameral legislature, parliamentary procedures allowed dissenting MPs to escape the consequences of their actions. In the Japanese non-partisan Diet there was no whipping system to administer legislative discipline. Members toed the party line without

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9 The '55 system' is a catch-all label used to describe Japanese politics and policy under LDP single-party rule prior to the 1994 electoral reform.
compulsion since legislative careers and appointments were determined by extra-parliamentary organisations such as the Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC) and the factions who played the role of socialising their members. Furthermore, staggered elections in the Diet’s upper house made cabinets vulnerable and increased the frequency of elections (Takayasu, 2011) and potentially increased factions’ veto power.

**Party incentives and faction institutionalisation**

Non-centripetal systemic incentives were compounded by the proportional rules and procedures adopted by the DC and LDP to improve intra-party democracy giving factions stakes in the organization. DC and LDP faction leaders became major players not only in the selection of candidates (as mentioned above) but also of the party leadership and the internal distribution of career benefits and partisan resources. Party arrangements and reforms changed the structure of intra-party competition and internal bargaining as illustrated below for the DC.

In my book I adapt existing indices to develop two new intra-party measures - the effective number of factions \((N_f)\) and the pivotal power of individual factions \((NBP)\) – in order to analyse the DC and LDP factional politics in times series.

- The effective number of factions \((N_f)\) is a weighted measures which takes into account each faction’s relative size providing information about the structure of internal competition at different points in time in the DC and LDP.

- The pivotal power of individual factions \((NBP)\) uses the normalized Banzhaf power index to examine the structure of bargaining inside the DC and LDP at different points in time. (These methods are explained in Boucek, 2012: ch 2)

**Italy’s Christian Democrats (DC)**

In 1964, the DC introduced some measures of intra-party democracy to pacify left factions who were grossly underrepresented in the party organisation. The party decided to allocate internal power by proportional representation giving factions representation in various party organs in proportion to their size. Delegates to various deliberative assemblies were selected by PR among contending lists of candidates sponsored by factions in a bottom-up process. The sectional assemblies selected delegates to attend the provincial assemblies which, in turn, selected delegates to the regional pre-congresses who elected the delegates
to the National Congress who then selected the members of the National Council who in turn
selected the members of the NEC - the key decision-making organ setting the broad policy
outline and strategy of the DC along with the Party Secretary.

However, before 1964, the members of the National Council were selected according to a
disproportional majority system resulting from a leadership decision in 1952 to award the
dominant faction of Prime Minister De Gasperi four-fifths of the seats on the National Council
(NC). In 1956, this seat quota was reduced to two-thirds by Fanfani who simultaneously
increased the total number of executive seats from 40 to 60 (Leonardi and Wertman, 1989).
This still penalised minority factions and failed to conceal the dominant faction’s decreasing
pivotality. The majority seat quota was awarded to the faction receiving a plurality of
preference votes in a final round of voting at the party’s biennial national congress. The
remaining seats were split according to the number of preference votes received by all the
minority candidates10 (Leonardi and Wertman, 1989).

This reinforced majority rule was unfair to minority factions on the left of the party who
wanted to have a say over the formulation of DC strategy and government programme. So,
after two failed attempts, the DC leadership agreed to their demands. At the 1964 national
congress, proportionalism was introduced as a general principle of internal representation
shortly after the formation of a centre-left coalition government that included the Socialists
(Boucek, 2012: ch 1). This procedural change effectively forced all delegates in local,
regional and national DC congresses to affiliate with rival factions from the ground up.

Under the new rules, only motion-lists (factional motions with lists of supporting candidates
attached) could be submitted to the Central Directorate. National Council nominees had to
attach their names to one of the motions submitted by the regional assemblies to the Central
Directorate and presented to the National Congress. But motions had to be submitted to the
Central Directorate prior to the convening of provincial assemblies, which institutionalised
factionalism in the grassroots. Factions were forced to decentralise their operations in order
to compete against other factions to recruit local delegates and run election campaigns.

Factional motion-lists regulated the choice of the DC majority platform, the National Council
leaders and the Party Secretary (except for 1976-82). At all the provincial congresses, each
faction presented a national programme covering its thoughts on government and party
policies. The number of provincial delegates from each faction was determined by the

10 Panachage allowed small quota of seats to be shared among members of several small factions (Leonardi and
percentage of votes received by each programme. These factional programmes were then presented by an official spokesman for each faction to the delegates at the National Congress who debated the motions before voting.

For individual National Congress votes, DC factions behaved as unitary actors. However, between votes, there was much behind-the-scene bargaining among faction leaders who struck inter-factional alliances. The leader of the faction winning the factional bargaining game usually became the Political Secretary of the DC (although not Prime Minister except rarely and temporarily) subject to approval by the NEC where all the top factional leaders were represented.

Table 1 illustrates the effect of party institutional changes on the structure of intra-party competition and bargaining in the DC using the effective number of factions \((N_f)\) and the pivotal power of individual factions \((NBP)\). It shows how changes in party fractionalisation affect the pivotal power and bargaining leverage of individual factions by looking at three different institutional scenarios in 1949, 1969, and 1982.

1. In 1949, the DC was relatively concentrated with a 2.2 effective number of factions \((N_f)\) and one dominant faction (de Gasperi) that had a majority of National Council seats and thus held all the pivotal power \((NBP)\). Hence, in coalition terms, all the other factions were dummies and this faction had the capacity to dictate the party agenda.

2. In 1969, the situation changes significantly as a result of institutional incentives. The DC was moderately fragmented \((N_f = 5)\) even though seven observable factions competed for the support of congressional delegates. No faction held majority control over the congress although the plurality faction (Faction 3: *Impegno Democratico*) enjoyed bargaining power disproportional to its strength. Its 38 per cent share of delegate support translated into a 57 per cent share of voting power. In other words, it was pivotal in 57 per cent of all possible internal winning coalitions.

3. Finally in 1982, the DC had become an extremely fractionalized party. There were 10 effective factions \((N_f = 10)\) although 12 different factions actually competed for delegate support and no faction enjoyed more than a 15 per cent share of support (see Figure 1). Under this fragmented configuration, factional shares of normalized Banzhaf power are almost proportional to factional strength (columns 8 and 9). This
was an unstable situation that offered strategic opportunities for minority factions to create mischief and destabilize the DC.

### Table 1

**Factions Shares of Delegate Votes and of Normalised Banzhaf Power**

DC National Congresses of 1949, 1969, and 1982

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>.102</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>.574</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>.037</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>.0213</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<td>14.0</td>
<td>.147</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>.0213</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>.019</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimated strength on the National Council.
¶ NBP: factional share of total normalised Banzhaf power


The effect of this procedural change on intra-party incentives was significant. Figure 1 reveals two separate scenarios of intra-party competition: a) before 1964 when the system of ‘reinforced majority’ prevailed and the effective number of DC factions ($N_f$) was relatively moderate (and intra-party competition low) and b) after 1964 when the adoption of a proportional system of internal representation triggered a significant growth in the number of factions. As expected, a more fragmented party causes the most powerful faction ($NBP_{f_1}$) to lose coalition power since it is less pivotal in making or breaking intra-party coalitions.

Unsurprisingly, the frequency of party congresses and expanding number of factions created a lot of churn at the top of the DC organisation resulting in majority failures and decisional stalemate examined in detail in my book’s ch 7. Senior politicians were incentivised to set up new factions and split existing ones to strengthen their personal position within the party. By 1982, no less than 12 separate intra-party factions competed for the support of congress delegates. The appointments of career administrators in the DC central party bureaucracy and in the regional and provincial bodies were also allocated along factional lines.
Moreover, inter-factional bargaining dominated the selection of DC candidates for President of the Republic. These contests were notorious for degenerating into protracted factional battles when factions would deploy their blackmail potential to block the candidates of rival factions. It took 21 ballots to elect Saragat as President of the Republic in 1964, 23 ballots (and 16 days) to elect Leone in 1971 and 16 ballots to elect Scalfaro in 1992.

**Japan’s Liberal Democrats (LDP)**

To study internal democracy in the LDP requires differentiating between the political norms and party procedures that prevailed under the ‘55 system’ and under the new institutional regime after the 1994 electoral reform ditched SNTV in favour of a mixed member majoritarian electoral system.

Under the '55 system', LDP leadership selection, controlled by factions, determined the internal division of office spoils creating incentives for factions to become institutionalised. Like the DC, the LDP started out as a heterogeneous group of separate political alignments.
following the 1955 party merger. The factions were fluid, looser, more informal and internally diverse before the adoption of competitive elections for the party presidency (Krauss and Pekkanen; 2011: 110).

However, the selection of the LDP president through elections (1958) and membership primaries (1978) made the factions the main players in these biennial contests transforming them into competitive factions of patronage. ‘Habatsu politics does not correspond to any form of pluralism. It is a power game, entirely bereft of meaningful political discussion, and one over which the voters exercise no influence at all.’ (van Wolferen, 1990:139)

LDP presidential elections were high stake games since they determined which faction leader would become Japanese prime minister and which faction or factional alliance would receive the lion’s share of cabinet posts: the ‘mainstream’ factions. The factions backing presidential losers (‘anti-mainstream’) were originally excluded from cabinet. In 1956-1978, the leadership winner was the candidate gaining a majority of votes, cast by all members of both houses of the Diet plus one representative from each of the 47 prefectural chapters of the party. However, until Sato’s retirement in 1972, prime ministers tended to pick their own successors without recourse to elections although the largest faction’s leader was usually chosen.

In 1978 against the background of the Lockheed bribery scandal, the LDP tried to introduce more intra-party democracy. It adopted membership primaries hoping to weaken the factions’ power and mitigate voters’ disenchantment with their corrupt leaders. Any registered party member could vote in the primaries although LDP Diet members retained the final vote in the runoff race between the top two contenders. In 1981, following a battle for party control and yet more corruption, presidential election rules were amended again to deter intra-elite conflicts (for a detailed analysis of the dynamics of LDP’s internal politics see Boucek, 2012: ch 8). At least four candidatures were required for primaries to be held and each candidate needed the endorsement of at least 50 Diet members.

However, presidential primaries didn’t dampen factional rivalries. On the contrary, this well-intended reform by Takeo Miki to counter the fallout from the Tanaka scandal provided more scope for manipulation through membership ‘padding’ by self-serving leaders and for the

11 In 2002, the LDP president’s term of office was increased from two to three years.

12 Kishi handed the job to Ikeda, who in turn passed it to Sato. But Sato didn’t appoint anyone on retirement (van Wolferen, 1989:139).
decentralisation of factional activities. Presidential races remained dominated by backroom negotiations between party bosses (Cox and Rosenbluth, 1993).

Like the DC motion-lists system, LDP presidential primaries forced factions to become active in local districts where large sums of money were channelled to recruit supporters expected to back the faction’s favourite contender during the primaries. The search for votes intensified so much that in 1978 membership numbers tripled from half a million to 1.5 million and hit 3 million in 1980 when Kakuei Tanaka engaged in an aggressive recruitment drive to increase the power of his own faction.

In 1998 (once the LDP had regained office after 10 months in opposition) election rules for the party presidency were changed again to give more voting power to the LDP prefectural chapters. Although Diet members still had the most votes, they would now know the results of prefectural votes before casting their own votes. Hence, ‘they could be swayed if a candidate won the prefectures instead of faction leaders completely controlling the process.’ (Kabashima and Steel, 2007:101)

In 2011, Koizumi took advantage of this change to bypass the party elite and appeal directly to the rank-and-file (Boucek, 2012: ch 8). With his win of 90 per cent of the prefectural votes in the local primaries, the party leadership couldn’t reject the rank-and-file preferences. Afterwards, ‘factions still counted in influencing who becomes prime minister, but they were no longer the whole game.’ (Krauss and Pekkanen 2011: 141)

As in Italy, the allocation of cabinet, non-cabinet and top party posts was controlled by LDP faction leaders. Factions received office payoffs in proportion to their size (the number of MPs belonging to each faction) and status (mainstream or non-mainstream). Nominees for top positions such as Party President, Secretary General, Chairman of the Executive Council, and Chairman of PARC were customarily chosen from the four main factions. And the Director of the party’s Treasury Bureau was usually nominated from a faction other than that of the President or the Secretary General (Kohn: 1992 and 1997). Non-mainstream factions weren’t totally excluded since their support might be required to form a winning coalition during the next presidential race. The LDP president allocated appointments to factions according to their future coalition potential and reshuffled cabinets regularly. Ministers rarely spent more than a year in a particular ministry leaving civil servants to provide continuity.
Table 2
The LDP Seniority System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ladder of Public Roles</th>
<th>No. of Re-elections Required for Advancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House Committee Member or Vice-Chair of a PARC committee</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-Minister</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair of a PARC Committee</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Committee Chair</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>6 or more</td>
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Source: Kohno; 1997: 95.

Factional promotion determined by rank and seniority raised barriers to exit. The number of portfolios and party posts was limited, making career advancement slow and frustrating. Khono (1997) calculated that, on average, an LDP Diet member needed to be re-elected at least six times to be considered for a cabinet post and four times for a non-cabinet post in PARC for instance (Table 2) and promotional barriers were raised over time\textsuperscript{13}.

Consequently, dissidents were loath to leave their faction for fear of starting at the bottom of a new faction’s career ladder.

Careerist politicians responded to incentives by joining factions with presidential potential and abandoning those without. In 1972-1988, the number of MPs not affiliated with factions decreased from 25 per cent to less than 5 per cent. Presidential primaries consolidated factions rather than multiplied them. Factions decreased in number but increased in size (see Figure 2).

Since SNTV was abandoned in 1994, the electoral incentives for faction affiliation have declined as indicated in Figure 2. Under Koizumi who vowed to destroy factions, a quarter of Diet members were unattached to factions and by 2009 that number had climbed to 40 per cent (Figure 2 shows that from 2003 the largest block of LDP MPs were unaffiliated to factions). However, until the LDP lost power in 2009\textsuperscript{14}, factions were still important in post allocation and career advancement. However, at cabinet level the factional proportionality norm across all post-reform prime ministers have consistently weakened (Reed and Thies, 2001, Cox, Rosenbluth and Thies, 1999, Krauss and Pekkanen 2011).

\textsuperscript{13} Percentage figures of ‘leap-frog’ promotions to all first-time-ministerial promotions indicate that there were no ‘leap-frog’ promotions during the 1980s. However, this ratio was as high as 31 per cent during the 1950s (Khono, 1997: 98-9).

\textsuperscript{14} The LDP regained power with a majority in the House of Representatives in December 2012 and in the House of Councillors in July 2013.
From 2003 the largest block of LDP MPs were not faction members

In sum, organisational changes to increase internal democracy in the DC and LDP had negative consequences. Despite containing competitive pressures and internalising conflict they generated incentives damaging to overall party interests and democratic governance.

As DC and LDP faction leaders rather than the party leadership controlled office-seekers’ campaign benefits and office-holders’ career benefits, politicians switched their loyalty from the party and towards factions, thus weakening partisanship and cohesion, characteristics of ‘strong’ parties. To maximise their organisational clout, DC power-brokers were incentivised to split from existing factions and set up new ones. As factions became veto players, collective action dilemmas, decisional stalemate and majority failures emerged regularly in the DC. Faction leaders used their veto power in the national organisation to block much-needed party reforms under Zaccagnini in the 1970s and De Mita in the 1980s. As Figure 2 show fragmentation of the LDP was less acute than in the DC. It was moderated by district magnitude under SNTV and the seniority system regulating career advancement. However, faction institutionalization also encouraged self-serving behavior resulting in many scandals of political corruption under LDP rule.
DC and LDP leadership was weak and unstable because leadership selection resulted from factional bargaining in fragile ad-hoc factional alliances generated by the DC’s congressional motion-lists system and the LDP’s presidential primaries. Apart from pushing factions to decentralise their operations and become embedded in the party grassroots, these factionalised contests produced party leaders without clear mandates and revolving-door prime ministers.

**Disincentives to Factionalism in Majoritarian Britain and Canada**

Incentives to democratise parties operating in majoritarian democracies such as Britain and Canada are constrained by the concentration of power in the centre of the political system. Centripetal forces lead the voting public to expect political parties to be strong and cohesive to deliver efficient government. This puts a heavy burden of discipline on the party leader (and the prime minister for governing parties) forcing parties to design organisational incentives that promote unity. This premium on unity makes the representation of intra-party preferences and interests problematic. After a brief summary of systemic incentives I use a couple of examples of party institutional changes in leadership selection by British and Canadian parties to illustrate my point.

**Systemic constraints on factional behaviour**

The majoritarian prerequisites of single-member plurality rule (SMP) incentivise electoral and legislative parties to behave as unitary actors shaping voters’ expectations of ‘strong’ parties and perceptions of disunited parties as unfit to govern. This discourages faction mobilisation and raises exit barriers for intra-party dissidents since there are high start-up costs for new parties.

Second, bipolar competition reinforced by a top-down ‘responsible’ party model of government directs MPs’ loyalty towards the party leader who controls career advancement. This explains why parliamentary parties are highly disciplined and legislative rebellions rare but meaningful in Westminster systems.

Third, prime ministers also have a mighty but blunt weapon to enforce legislative cohesion: the confidence vote. However, this is a dangerous way to restore order since deterrent force involves unilateral threat but bilateral punishment. In my book’s chapter 4 I demonstrate this by using game-theory to analyse John Major’s battles to discipline a faction of Conservative
eurosceptic MPs in key House of Commons votes on EU legislation including the Maastricht Treaty ratification.

Even in hybrid systems like Canada where power-sharing and federalism dampen partisanship and relax the constraints of bipolar competition the pressures for party unity remain strong. Despite more multiparty competition in Canada than in Britain due to regional parties, single-party rule and minority governments persist. In fact federalism (which normally facilitates the representation of minority interests) in Canada is linked to national unity which has been a source of factional division inside the Liberal Party, the dominant Canadian party during the 20th century. In addition, ‘prime ministerial government’ gives the Canadian prime minister even more disciplinary control over MPs’ careers than in Britain explaining the absence of legislative factions in Canada’s federal parliament and party leaders’ capacity to withhold selective benefits from disloyal MPs in leadership selection (Boucek, 2012: Ch 5).

The British Conservative Party

In 1997, following the Conservatives’ defeat under John Major by Tony Blair’s landslide – their worst popular vote since 1832 and lowest seat share since 1906 – the party under William Hague introduced a new procedure for electing the party leader. Party members were given a vote in the runoff race between the two front runners previously selected by MPs.

However, this reform of leadership selection failed to stabilise the party and restore it to power. It was meant to protect future leaders and sitting prime ministers from any messy coups like the one suffered by Thatcher in 1990 and by her successor John Major whose term in office (1990-97) was wrecked by factional rebellions and attempts to unseat him.

Historically, in the British Conservative Party, leadership selection used to be very informal - the sounding of party opinion by a ‘magic circle’ of senior politicians in consultation with the outgoing leader. However, in 1965, backbench MPs gained exclusive responsibility for electing the leader in runoff elections under the single transferable vote involving a minimum threshold (15%) of votes on the first ballot. This can act as a kind of plebiscite on the incumbent leader but can also encourage ‘stalking horse’ candidates to enter the race as Thatcher did in 1975 to unseat Edward Heath.

By 1990 (after 15 years as Conservative leader and 11 years as prime minister) Thatcher was considered by many as an electoral liability for Conservatives. She was ousted by her
own backbenchers despite grassroots support, a 100-seat majority in the House of Commons, and being the first British prime minister to have won three consecutive general elections since 1827.

Thatcher’s ousting prompted a 24 per cent jump in prime ministerial approval ratings for her successor John Major and an 11 per cent increase in voting intentions for the Conservatives. They were re-elected against the odds in April 1992 in the midst of a recession. However, the government’s majority was reduced to only 21 seats which enhanced the bargaining leverage of dissidents in a parliamentary party with a nascent but growing element of euroscepticism that mobilised during the Maastricht Treaty ratification.

Despite the change of leader the Conservative party remained unstable. By the summer of 1993, a survey of Conservative constituency association chairmen had revealed that a third wished Major would resign. Voting intentions for Conservatives had plummeted to 27%, giving Labour a 17% lead and handing the Conservatives a string of by-election losses. Contentious European legislation gave dissidents the opportunity to undermine Major’s authority on numerous occasions.

By the summer of 1995 rumours of a leadership challenge circulated ahead of the autumn leadership review’s deadline. Already in June, Major had made a pre-emptive blunder after a disastrous meeting with the ‘Fresh Start’ group of Conservative eurosceptic MPs. Demanding that his opponents ‘put up or shut up’ and daring them to find someone better to fight the general election, Major took the unprecedented step of resigning as Conservative Leader and putting his name forward as a candidate in the race for his own job. He won the contest but it was a fragile victory which failed to reassert his authority over his parliamentary party.

The procedural change introduced by William Hague in 1997 to elect the Conservative leader was counterproductive. Empowering party members produced majority failure as demonstrated by the election of Ian Duncan Smith (IDS) as Conservative Leader in 2001. This followed Hague’s resignation after a second Conservative election defeat. IDS, a eurosceptic MP, came second in a near perfect three-way split of the parliamentary vote ahead of Michael Portillo by a single vote. IDS had the support of 54 MPs. Kenneth Clarke (a pro-European and Chancellor of the Exchequer under John Major) won 59 MPs. However, IDS won the membership runoff race even though Clarke was more popular with the public.

This majority failure cost the Conservatives dearly. Without a strong party mandate, IDS failed to make a mark as opposition leader and, within two years, he resigned after losing a vote of confidence called by the backbench Conservative 1922 Committee. His successor
Michael Howard initiated a partial Conservative recovery at the 2005 general election (a 31-seat gain) before stepping down in favour of a younger and modernising leader. By adopting a moderate centrist approach, media-savvy Cameron made the Conservatives electable again but it took four leadership changes to achieve this and 13 years in opposition. Moreover, the party must now rule in a coalition with the Liberal Democrats.

The British Labour Party

The British Labour Party offers an interesting contrast in leadership selection/deselection. Its high nomination barriers protect leaders against challengers. However, these tough eviction rules can also have unintended consequences (Quinn, 2005). The lack of regular leadership reviews means the incumbent must be challenged directly. In 2007, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown, a divisive figure in the Labour Party, even managed to become Labour leader and prime minister without any contest whatsoever since no senior Labour figure dared challenge him.

In 2010, his successor Ed Miliband narrowly won the leadership against his older brother David, former Foreign Affairs Secretary, by winning a majority of the trade union vote even though his more experienced brother David had majority backbench support. Presently the Labour leader remains under pressure to sever Labour’s financial links with trade unions and their sponsorships of individual candidates in some constituencies. This prospect represents a real management dilemma for Ed Miliband who owes his nomination as Labour leader to the same unions.

Nevertheless, Labour’s institutional division of power bolstered by the party’s 1993 reforms deters leadership challenges. It explains why Labour leaders have faced fewer plots than Conservative leaders\textsuperscript{15}. Very high eviction costs in the electoral college greatly reduce the probability of a challenge (Quinn, 2005) even when the party is deeply divided. Tony Blair was unchallenged after joining the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 despite a huge backbench revolt and cabinet resignations. The expense and length of a contest ensures that only credible contenders are likely to come forward. Quinn argues that had Labour used the system that deposed Thatcher, it is conceivable that Blair could have faced a middle-ranking challenger, possibly opening the way for Gordon Brown to enter a Blair-less second ballot. Since leaders generally depart when they lose the confidence of senior colleagues (as

\textsuperscript{15} Reforms in 1993 divided the college vote equally between Labour MPs, party members and trade unions, each controlling one third of the vote. But when college was created in 1981 70 per cent of the vote was controlled by those annual conference delegates representing local party branches and corporately affiliated organisations such as trade unions and socialist societies (Webb, 1995).
Thatcher did in 1990), it is possible that Blair too may have yielded. Thatcher lost the confidence of her cabinet only after she had been challenged by Heseltine and had failed to win convincingly on the first ballot. ‘Blair was never put in that position, because the electoral college impeded stalking horses and did not permit serious candidates to wait for later ballots’ (Quinn, 2005: 808).

The Liberal Party of Canada

Canadian parties’ attempts to democratise their organisation have also been unpredictable and messy. This is illustrated by the Liberal Party of Canada’s reforms of leadership selection and review which, due to manipulation, have been democratically weak and a source of instability.

Canadian party leaders used to be selected by conventions of party delegates chosen by activists in the constituency associations. This was a costly and corrupt process which pushed leadership rivals to develop highly personalised networks within local organisations and encouraged the development of personal factions (Carty and Blake, 1999). Moreover, for a long time, the Liberal Party of Canada lacked a formal mechanism for removing the incumbent leader.

Recently, Canadian parties have opted for more participatory systems based on one-member one-vote with different types of membership-selection rules reflecting the different values and priorities that individual parties attach to inclusiveness and openness (Carty and Blake, 1999). However, membership selection is too recent to have produced observable patterns of eviction.

Liberal leadership races used to be very protracted affairs. When Pierre Trudeau was elected leader of the Liberal Party of Canada in 1968, only three years after joining the party, he beat out nine other candidates to win on the fourth ballot with a slim 51% majority of delegate votes. The extended voting process and narrow majority were partly due to John Turner’s refusal to release his delegates to speed up Trudeau’s march to victory. The result was far from a clear-cut mandate for Trudeau compared to the two previous leadership contests although it was still more decisive than that of most Conservative leaders.

16 Trudeau’s predecessor Lester B. Pearson won the leadership in 1958 on the first ballot with 87.5 per cent of the vote and in 1948 Louis St. Laurent won on the first ballot with 61.4 of delegate votes. In contrast, at the Conservative leadership elections of 1967 and 1976 when Robert Stanfield and Joe Clark were elected they each had to face eleven contenders at the first round. After resigning and re-submitting his candidature in 1983, Clark faced eight challengers in a four-ballot race which he lost to Brian Mulroney.
However, it set the stage for future internal divisions and party factionalisation. (Boucek, 2012: ch 3)

After Trudeau resigned as Canadian prime minister in 1984 the Liberal Party’s tradition of alternating between francophone and anglophone leaders put the odds against Jean Chrétien, an unsophisticated Quebecker but Trudeau’s protégé, and in favour of someone appealing to the interests that Trudeau had alienated. That was John Turner, Trudeau’s former leadership rival and cabinet defector who had spent the previous eight years in political exile. Turner didn’t even have a seat in parliament when he became Liberal leader and Canadian Prime Minister by beating Chrétien on the convention’s second ballot.

However, the instability produced by Turner’s hapless performance as opposition leader following the Liberals’ crushing election defeat in 1984 and his policies opposed by his own MPs and party members led the Liberal Party to adopt constitutional amendments in 1990 to make leadership reviews mandatory following each general election even if the incumbent leader led the party to victory.

Chrétien replaced Turner as Liberal leader by winning the leadership race in 1990 despite having been out of parliament since 1984. However, his bitter leadership battle against Paul Martin which had many parallels with the Trudeau-Turner battles produced a factional schism that defined the Liberals’ internal relations for the next 15 years.

Chrétien used the new leadership review procedure to call snap elections and pre-empt challenges by grassroots revolts engineered by Martin who served as Chretien’s finance minister from 1993 when the Liberals regained power after the conservatives’ implosion, until his dismissal from cabinet in 2002. This dismissal prompted Martin’s aggressive campaign to unseat Chrétien.

By taking over the extra-parliamentary organisation and manipulating the nomination process in the grassroots Martin succeeded in making a leadership bid in 2003. Liberal leadership selection rules requiring votes by women and youth delegates were open to manipulation by Liberal provincial party executives who controlled the distribution of membership forms to local associations and can change the rules for recruiting new party members. This was how Martin ousted Chrétien from office in 2002 (Jeffrey, 2010: 331-335). However, the dramatic removal of a popular sitting prime minister after nine years in power generated bad blood in the Liberal Party of Canada. Martin’s government became the victim
of a sponsorship scandal and was thrown out of office in 2006. The party lost three consecutive elections to the Conservatives and changed its leader three times.

Conclusion

The design of intra-party democracy is a careful balancing act as demonstrated by my case study research of the internal politics of dominant political parties in majoritarian and non-majoritarian democracies. Building a general theory of intra-party governance is tricky because there is no blueprint for how to align party organisational incentives with political institutions in different types of democracy.

The proportional rules and procedures adopted by Japan’s Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Italy’s Christian Democratic Party (DC) to give factions representation in the party organisation prevented exit thus prolonging these parties’ office tenure. However, by creating incentives for factions to multiply and become veto players, internal reforms produced weak leadership, decisional dilemmas, party gridlock and government instability. In the long run, self-serving faction leaders devalued the party brand and contributed to breakdowns in party dominance in Italy and Japan in the early 1990s.

However, in majoritarian democracies such as Britain and Canada parties’ tinkering with leadership selection rules to pre-empt intra-party conflict can also be counterproductive and destabilising. By putting a premium on party unity and a heavy burden of discipline on party leaders, majoritarian institutions constrain intra-party debate and create management dilemmas and instability for leaders of divided parties.

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