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# The Influence of Candidate Selection Methods on Legislatures and Legislators: Theoretical Propositions, Methodological Suggestions and Empirical Evidence

REUVEN Y. HAZAN and GIDEON RAHAT

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This article focuses on an external institution that moulds the internal composition of legislatures and influences the behaviour of its members – the candidate selection method. More specifically, different candidate selection methods place different institutional constraints on legislators. Legislative performance is, therefore, directly influenced by particular factors in the candidate selection method. The first section of this article explains what candidate selection methods are, and why this institution is important for the study of politics in general and legislative politics in particular. The second section presents the main distinctive factor in candidate selection methods, the selectorate. The third section suggests hypotheses regarding the impact of this central element in candidate selection methods on the makeup of legislatures and the behaviour of legislators. The fourth section proposes a methodology for implementing the new perspective suggested here by offering various measurements for assessing the legislative consequences of candidate selection methods. The final section presents the empirical data that are available.

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The neo-institutional approach focuses on the political consequences of institutions and, in our case, how institutional constraints and norms influence the behaviour of legislators and legislatures.<sup>1</sup> Thus, if one attempts to compare and classify legislatures based on the behaviour of legislators, one needs to discuss the institutions that condition this behaviour. Strøm, for example, argues that ‘institutions are the rules that constrain reason, and they do so to a greater or lesser extent’.<sup>2</sup> He suggests four legislative goals – re-selection, re-election, party office and legislative office. These goals are institutionally conditioned, or institutionally generated, based on the institution’s ability to enable or to constrain certain behaviour. Strøm’s major contribution is that

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he brings in external institutions beyond the legislature itself, such as candidate selection, as factors or variables that can influence legislative behaviour.

The focus of this article is on an external institution that moulds the internal composition of legislatures and influences the behaviour of its members – the candidate selection method. It is argued that candidate selection methods influence the behaviour of legislators, and can thus help in the comparison and classification of legislatures. More specifically, different candidate selection methods place different institutional constraints on legislators. Legislative performance is, therefore, directly influenced by particular factors in the candidate selection method. Moreover, the key aspects of the candidate selection method will influence the kind of legislators elected and the dynamics of legislative performance. Institutions (such as legislatures) are, indeed, driven by the individuals who inhabit them. But an external institution (such as candidate selection methods) can also drive the legislators, alter their makeup, influence their turnover rate, affect and modify their collective behaviour.

The first section of this article explains what candidate selection methods are, and why they are important for the study of politics in general and legislative politics in particular. The second section presents the main distinctive factor in candidate selection methods, the selectorate. The third section suggests hypotheses regarding the impact of this central element in candidate selection methods on the makeup of legislatures and the behaviour of legislators. The fourth section proposes a methodology for implementing the new perspective suggested here by offering various measurements for assessing the legislative consequences of candidate selection methods. The final section presents the empirical data that are available.

#### THE RELEVANCE OF CANDIDATE SELECTION FOR COMPARING AND CLASSIFYING LEGISLATURES

Candidate selection methods are the mechanisms by which political parties choose their candidates for general elections. Selecting candidates is one of the first things that political parties must do prior to elections. Those who are elected to office will be the successful candidates and they are the ones who will determine much of how the party looks and what it does. The outcome of the candidate selection process – like the results of the general elections – will affect the legislators, the party and the legislature for a long time after the (s)election itself is over.

Candidate selection takes place almost wholly within particular parties. In most countries – the United States is the foremost exception – the parties themselves are allowed to determine the rules for the selection of candidates. This article is, therefore, about a particular and important aspect of legislative

recruitment that takes place inside the party arena and is predominantly not regulated by law.

Candidate selection is one of the defining functions of a political party in a pluralist democracy. Indeed, the selection of candidates to compete in elections is one of the functions that separate parties from other organisations. Moreover, a party's candidates will help define its characteristics – demographically, geographically and ideologically – more than its organisation or even its manifesto.

Candidate selection determines not only the choices before voters – while influencing how this choice is perceived and made – but also the composition of the parties in the legislature, and, through them, the government and the opposition. It thus influences the interests most likely to be addressed and the resulting policy decisions that will be enacted. In short, candidate selection affects the essence of modern democratic governance.

The importance of candidate selection methods for understanding the behaviour of political actors stems from a combination of three elements. First, candidate selection defines the character of a party and its internal power struggle. Second, it is relatively easy for parties to alter their candidate selection methods. Third, a change in candidate selection methods will affect legislative politics. In other words, candidate selection is an institutional arrangement that can be altered relatively easily compared to the electoral system, and can cause a transformation of behavioural patterns inside the parliamentary party and its parent institution, the legislature, in both expected and unexpected ways.

The central thrust of this article is that candidate selection, beyond being an essential function of political parties, influences the kind of legislators chosen and their behaviour once elected. Different candidate selection methods have different political consequences. They produce different candidates and encourage different types of behaviour. Candidate selection shapes the composition of the legislature in relation to the representation of women and minorities, for example. It may also influence the rate of turnover and, by extension, the conduct of legislators since their re-selection will be dependent upon different forces.

This study builds on the important work of Gallagher and Marsh,<sup>3</sup> who have argued that 'the candidate selection process might have consequences in three main areas: the composition of parliaments, the behaviour of parliamentarians, and the cohesion of parties'.<sup>4</sup> The relevance of candidate selection for legislators and legislatures should thus be obvious. At the same time, though, Gallagher argues that 'Establishing cause and effect between candidate selection and the composition of parliaments is not easy'.<sup>5</sup> When it comes to legislative behaviour, he claims that on the question of 'the impact of the selectors' values on the way deputies spend their

working hours, there is not enough information to reach any precise conclusions'.<sup>6</sup> Only when it comes to the impact of candidate selection on party cohesion did he find enough data to substantiate the claim that 'it plays a major role here'.<sup>7</sup> But, he points out, 'it is clear that, for almost all Western parliaments, there are no significant variations to be explained'.<sup>8</sup> The present article seeks to validate Gallagher and Marsh's claim that candidate selection influences legislative politics, but it attempts to go further by providing evidence that candidate selection affects the composition of legislatures, the behaviour of legislators, and the cohesion of parties.

#### CLASSIFYING CANDIDATE SELECTION METHODS: INCLUSIVENESS VERSUS EXCLUSIVENESS

The process of classifying candidate selection methods can be based on several criteria, such as the selectorate, candidacy, decentralisation and voting versus appointment.<sup>9</sup> However, it is possible to focus on a single criterion, or dimension, because there is a clear hierarchy of criteria when one assesses the legislative consequences of candidate selection. While each criterion used in the classification of candidate selection methods has a distinct influence on politics, it is the selectorate that exhibits the most significant and far-reaching consequences in general, and it is the inclusiveness versus exclusiveness of the selectorate that does so in particular.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the focus here is on the selectorate as the main criterion for classifying candidate selection methods and assessing their legislative consequences.

The selectorate is the body that selects the candidates. It is, as Best and Cotta argue, 'an important intermediary actor in the process of recruitment'.<sup>11</sup> The selectorate can be composed of one person, several or many – indeed, as many as the entire electorate of a given nation. On a continuum of inclusiveness to exclusiveness, the selectorate is the most inclusive when the entire electorate has the right to participate in intra-party candidate selection. The selectorate is the most exclusive when there is a nominating entity of one leader.

Between these two extremes, the selectorate of an individual party may be classified according to the degree of its inclusiveness. For example, American 'open primaries', in which registered voters can vote for candidates from any party, are located near the inclusive end of the continuum.<sup>12</sup> This end of the continuum will also include examples from Iceland, where several parties have adopted open primaries,<sup>13</sup> and Spain, where the Catalan party has opened parts of its candidate selection to non-members who can register as party supporters without paying any membership fee.<sup>14</sup> European party

primaries, in which the selectors are dues-paying party members, are located further away from the inclusive end.<sup>15</sup>

While more and more parties in pluralist democracies give their members a significant role in candidate selection,<sup>16</sup> it is important to distinguish between cases where the party members' vote alone decides the composition and rank of the candidates, and the less 'pure' cases. For example, a party can allow members to select its candidates from a short-list that was determined either by exclusive party agencies or by a highly exclusive selection committee. The party headquarters may also be able to veto certain candidates.

When the selectorate is an agency of the party or an ad hoc convention of delegates chosen for the purpose of selecting the party candidates, we are at the centre of the continuum. Inside the party the relative size of each agency is an indicator of its inclusiveness. Conventions are usually larger than central committees, which in turn are usually larger than executive bodies, such as bureaus. As the size of the particular party agency gets smaller, we move closer to the exclusive pole of the continuum.

An example of an exclusive selectorate might be a special nomination committee composed of a few party leaders or their representatives, whose composition and decisions are usually ratified *en bloc*. Other exclusive selectorates would be a gathering of the party founders in a new party, or an informal group of factional leaders in older parties.

In any analysis of candidate selection methods, the unit of analysis is an individual party in a particular legislature at a particular time. Only in cases where several parties in a legislature use similar candidate selection methods can one make generalisations about the candidate selection 'system'. Nonetheless, while it is unlikely that all the parties in the parliament will use an identical candidate selection method, there are at least two reasons to expect most parties to use similar methods most of the time. First, every political system and political culture will generate norms that are likely to restrict the parties' choice of candidate selection to a more limited variety of 'legitimate' or acceptable methods. Second, parties tend to imitate one another.

The difficulty encountered in any attempt to assess candidate selection methods for an entire legislature, even in those cases where there is substantial variation among the parties, can be addressed in two stages. First, there should be a separate analysis of each selectorate(s) within the parties in the legislature. Second, toward the goal of 'summing up' the system, the relative impact of each should be weighted by calculating the ratio of seats filled by each particular party. However, if the differences between parties are substantial, the level of analysis should remain at the single party. Herein lies one of the main obstacles to conducting research on the legislative consequences of candidate selection methods.

THE IMPACT OF CANDIDATE SELECTION METHODS FOR  
LEGISLATORS AND LEGISLATURES

This section suggests several hypotheses pertaining to the legislative consequences of candidate selection methods and, in particular, the adoption of a more or less inclusive selectorate. The hypotheses derive from questions regarding three democratic dimensions and how these are reflected in legislative behaviour and the composition of legislatures.

First, there is the question of *representativeness*. What impact does the degree of inclusiveness of the selectorate have on the overall characteristics of single-member district candidacies or the composition of a list of party candidates? Second, there is the issue of *competition*. How does the level of inclusiveness influence the competition for safe positions on a party list (or party candidacy in single-member districts) and the fortunes of incumbents in particular?

These two dimensions help us determine what kind of legislators will be elected. The composition of the legislature, beyond having a symbolic importance, also affects legislative behaviour. Who you are affects what you do.<sup>17</sup> The presence of women, for example, significantly influences the working of the legislature.<sup>18</sup> The rate of turnover is also likely to affect the behaviour of legislators. High turnover may mean, for example, that the legislature is composed of too many inexperienced legislators. Low turnover may result in more experienced and knowledgeable legislators<sup>19</sup> but less energetic ones. It is, however, unclear what affects legislative behaviour more – the actual rate of turnover, or the legislators' subjective estimation of their chances of re-(s)election.<sup>20</sup> What is clear is that 'changes in nomination methods and turnover patterns of MPs are closely linked'.<sup>21</sup>

A third question relates to the degree of *responsiveness*. How do different selectorates affect the responsiveness of MPs? While modern democracy is largely about representatives who are responsive to the people, this responsiveness is mediated by either party or non-party actors. Legislative performance is likely to be influenced by the way legislators respond to different selectorates. Party cohesion is likely to be greater when legislators respond to party actors and lower when non-party mediators are involved.

The role of the legislature in the legislative process is influenced by the kind of legislators elected and the dynamics of legislative performance, two factors that are directly influenced by candidate selection methods. Hence, the ability to compare and classify legislatures can be improved if we identify the main ramifications of variations in the inclusiveness of the selectorate on the composition of legislatures and on legislative behaviour. Using the three democratic dimensions discussed, we seek to explain how candidate

selection methods can offer an additional element in the study of legislatures. Three hypotheses provide the conceptual framework.

Hypothesis 1 focuses on representativeness: *The more inclusive the selectorate, the less representative the selected candidates, and vice versa.*

Smaller selectorates are able to balance the composition of the candidate list (or candidacies in single-member districts) better than larger selectorates. In the latter, candidates from the dominant group can win most of the safe positions on the list (or candidacies for the party's safe seats). Women, minorities and candidates from territorial and other social peripheries will find it more difficult.

Hypothesis 2 relates to the degree of competition: *Medium-sized selectorates (such as party institutions) will be the most competitive selectorates, followed by the more inclusive selectorates (such as primaries), and finally the least inclusive (such as nominating committees).*

Incumbency is an advantage in all democratic systems; the differences relate to the extent of the advantage.<sup>22</sup> The inclusiveness of the selectorate is likely to affect the success rate of incumbents in their efforts to be re-selected. This is because smaller selectorates will give candidates who are not parliamentarians a chance to become known and personally to contact their selectors. When the selectorate is inclusive and composed of all party members, support cannot be based on personal affiliations and incumbency is likely to supply a greater advantage. This is mainly because, as public officials, incumbents enjoy media attention and the ability to demonstrate responsiveness to the demands of both interest groups and financial donors. They in turn can help sitting MPs reach a large and amorphous selectorate.

A different and separate explanation is needed for the hypothesis that nomination committees will be the least competitive of the three kinds of selectorate. If we accept the claim that selection by party agencies is likely to be more competitive than primaries because of the shorter 'distance' between the candidates and selectors, then nominations committees are likely to be more competitive than the two other kinds of selectorate. It is easier for each candidate to present himself or herself to individual members of the committee than to do so in the more inclusive type of selectorate. Moreover, all positions, other than those at the top, which will be taken by members of the nomination committee and their close allies, can be seen as open for competition. However, these two expectations miss an important part of the picture. The nomination committee suffers – because of its small size and informal, non-transparent working procedures – from a problem of popular democratic legitimacy. The best strategy for the nomination committee to legitimise its decisions in the

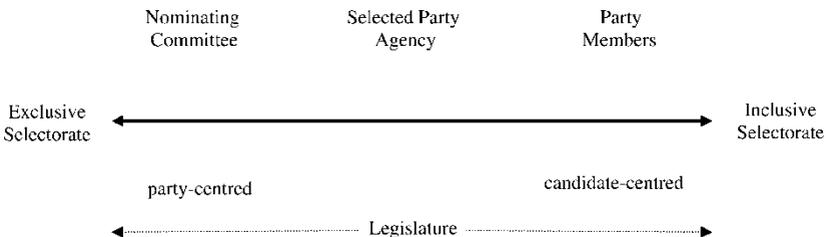
eyes of party agencies, party members and even the general public, is to present a list that will be composed largely of incumbents, that is, a list that reflects the existing balance of power and will thus not raise many eyebrows. Changes are likely to be minimal, designed to demonstrate that the nomination committee is not simply a rubber stamp.

To sum up on the two hypotheses bearing on the composition of the candidate list in relation to the inclusiveness of the selectorate, we would make the following observations. First, a very inclusive selectorate will be the least representative and moderately competitive. Next, a selectorate with a medium level of inclusiveness will be moderately representative and highly competitive. Finally, a very exclusive selectorate will be highly representative with a low level of competition.

Hypothesis 3 relates to the foci of responsiveness: *In the more inclusive candidate selection methods, the legislators will respond mainly to non-party mediators; in the less inclusive candidate selection methods, the legislators will respond mainly to party actors.*

Bowler argues that the best explanation of the collective action of legislators lies in the nomination procedures in general, and who does the nominating in particular.<sup>23</sup> Since a basic motive in the behaviour of legislators is their desire to be re-selected, they will be responsive to the demands of their selectorates. When selected by small selectorates – the party leader, a few local leaders or a small party agency – legislators will display a rather high level of party cohesion. The aim will be to satisfy the small oligarchies that have the power to re-select them or at least play a dominant role in their re-selection. When selected by a very inclusive selectorate – such as the entire electorate or all party members – legislators will be exposed to various and sometimes conflicting pressures. Seeking to respond to the range of such cross-pressures could lead legislators to deviate from the party programme or act in a way that reduces party cohesion. As Figure 1 suggests, the

FIGURE 1  
CANDIDATE SELECTION AND LEGISLATIVE BEHAVIOUR



inclusiveness of the selectorate is thus a major explanatory variable in differentiating candidate-centred and party-centred legislatures.

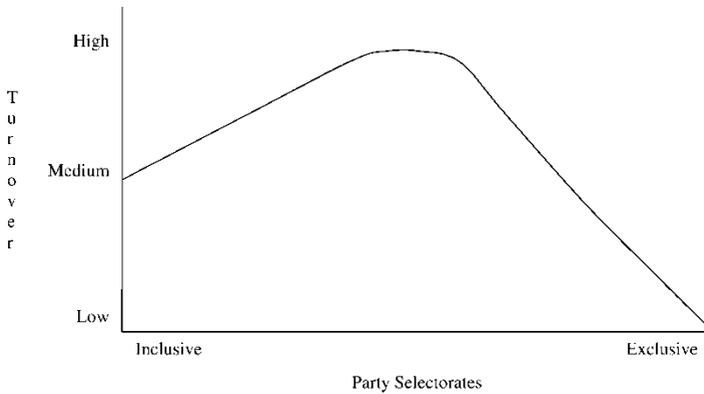
The more inclusive the candidate selection method, the less cohesive the party will be, because legislators will face effective, non-party cross-pressures. Facing a large and fluid selectorate, legislators will be responsive to those who can supply the resources, votes and access to such a selectorate. Responsiveness cannot be to the individual members per se, because it is too costly to invest in direct contact with members of a large, unstable and amorphous selectorate. Legislators will, therefore, be responsive to at least three kinds of mediators that can facilitate their link with such a wide selectorate. They are the capital holders, who supply the finances necessary to enable a candidate to identify him/herself to the selectorate through a personalised campaign. Then there are leaders of interest groups of various kinds (unions, clans) who can supply them with loyal voters. Last, there are the mass media, which boast an immediate and wide audience, notwithstanding the special requirements for newsworthiness. These mediators could promote different interests or even interests that are at odds with those of the party, its ideology or its leaders. As Narud, Pedersen and Valen argue, 'the opening up of the nomination process gives other actors, most importantly the mass media, potential influence on the question of candidate selection'.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the third hypothesis concerning the behaviour of legislators leads us to expect that a more inclusive selectorate will produce a less cohesive party.

The main claim suggested by our three hypotheses is that candidate selection methods make a difference. Different candidate selection methods produce differences in the composition of legislatures and in the behaviour of the legislators, largely due to the inclusiveness of the selectorates involved.

The composition of a legislature whose members are selected by exclusive selectorates will reflect the demographic composition of society more than a legislature whose members are selected by inclusive selectorates. This means that such a legislature is likely to perform its symbolic function of representing society better and is likely also to address the demands and grievances of larger parts of society.

The composition of a legislature is also affected by the level of competition in the candidate selection process, which is lower at both ends of the inclusive–exclusive continuum than in the middle. Turnover, which influences the functioning of legislatures, is the result not only of the number of seats that a party wins in a general election, but also of candidate selection – which, in an election with low volatility, may be the central source of renewal in the composition of legislatures. As Figure 2 shows, we expect to find the highest level of turnover in the middle of the inclusive–exclusive continuum, the lowest turnover at the exclusive end and a medium level of turnover at the inclusive end.

FIGURE 2  
PARTY SELECTORATES AND LEGISLATIVE TURNOVER



The more exclusive a candidate selection method, the more central will be the role of the party vis-à-vis other possible actors. The role of non-party actors in candidate selection increases with an expansion of the inclusiveness of the selectorate, as does their importance as an object for responsiveness. Legislators who were selected by small nominating committees owe their positions to the party leadership and are therefore likely to be first and foremost party players. Legislators who were selected by party agencies are likely to be party players at most times, but may nevertheless be pre-disposed to promote the demands and interests of certain groups within the party – that is, the groups that serve as their power base. Legislators who were selected in primaries need the help of non-party actors in order to be re-selected and are therefore more likely to act as individuals than team players. Facing a plethora of pressures that characterise the more inclusive selectorates, the cohesion of the parties is likely to decrease.

#### MEASURING THE CONSEQUENCES OF CANDIDATE SELECTION METHODS

It is very simple to establish whether a sitting MP was re-selected in a single-member district. It is equally straightforward to calculate the number of women that a party selected as candidates in a single-member district electoral system. But how does one define victory, or the number of women, when candidates compete for positions on a list, or when it is apparent that some positions are safe while others are not? How can we compare or weigh the selection of a list of candidates of a large party to that of a small party?

The indices suggested here are designed to measure representation and competition in party list electoral systems. They are sensitive to differences in party size, provide reasonable operational definitions for representation and competition in list systems and allow adding data in a weighted manner so as to address parties of different sizes. They can also be used in the case of single-member districts, and are thus potentially useful tools for cross-national comparisons. The existing literature already provides measures of responsiveness, which can be used in assessing its extent.

### *Representation*

Two indices of representativeness are suggested. Both take female representation as an indicator of the representativeness of the candidate list. The first index relates to the proportion of women in safe positions on the party list. This is done by measuring the share of women out of the total number of the party's 'real' candidates, not those who appear on the list as a whole. The second measure also relates only to safe positions, but unlike the first it takes into account the relative position of women on the list, giving a higher value to higher positions on the party list.

*The Index of Representativeness (IR).* This index simply calculates the percentage of women in safe positions on the party list by counting the number of women in safe positions divided by the number of safe positions, multiplied by 100. The formula is:

$$IR = \frac{\sum W_{sp}}{\sum Sp} \times 100$$

$W_{sp}$  is the number of women in positions equal or higher in rank to the number of safe positions.  $Sp$  is the number of safe positions, defined as the number of seats the party won in the previous elections.

*The Weighted Index of Representation (WIR).* Like the previous index, this one counts the number of women in safe positions, but this time it takes into consideration their relative positioning. Higher values are given to higher positions on the list. Thus, each position on the list, up to the number of safe positions, is given a value in descending order – the last position is given one point and each higher one merits an additional point.

The formula is:

$$\text{WIR} = \frac{\sum [(W_p/V_{pi}) \times Sp]}{\sum Sp} \times 100$$

$W_p$  stands for the value of the positions won by women in each selection event.  $V_{pi}$  stands for the total value of the positions in the specific selection event.  $Sp$  stands for the number of safe positions available in each selection event.

### *Competition*

Each of the four proposed indices of competition measures a different aspect. The first three distinguish between incumbents and non-incumbents. Indices 1 and 2 measure the success rate of non-incumbents compared with that of incumbents. A high share of top positions for non-incumbents, along with a high ranking, indicates a high level of competition. Index 3 focuses on the supply side, assessing the ratio of competing incumbents to non-incumbents as an indicator of competition. A higher score indicates that competition is more appealing to ‘outsiders’ – that is, to non-incumbents – and suggests that they believe they have a chance of winning a safe position. Unlike the first three, the fourth index of competition is not based on incumbency but on the concentration of votes at the top. The more votes are concentrated, the less competition there is. Taken together, these measures provide a comprehensive overview of competition.

*Non-Incumbent Winning Index (NIWI)*. This index measures the success of new candidates on the basis of whether they win ‘an incumbent’s position’. Thus, if 20 incumbent MPs compete for positions on the party list, the placement of a new candidate in a position of 20 or above would be considered a success. The definition of an incumbent is any candidate who was elected to the previous legislature. The formula is:

$$\text{NIWI} = \frac{\sum W_{ni}}{\sum C_i}$$

$W_{ni}$  is the number of non-incumbents who win a position on the list that is equal or higher in rank to the number of competing incumbents in each selection event.  $C_i$  is the number of competing incumbents in each selection event.

In the case of selection by a party agency or by party members, those incumbents who appear on the ballots – from which either of the two aforementioned choose their candidates – are deemed to be trying to win a safe

position. In the case of nomination committees, there are usually no ballots or formal lists of candidates. The task of distinguishing losers from those who simply retire requires compiling a biographical profile of each MP that no longer appears on the official candidate list or does so in an unsafe position. Newspaper accounts from the time, biographies, autobiographies, internal party material and historical studies can all assist in this complex task.

*Non-Incumbent Weighted Winning Index (NIWWI)*. Like the previous index, this one calculates the number of non-incumbents that won ‘an incumbent’s position’. Unlike the previous index, however, it takes into account the relative position they won by giving higher values to higher positions on the list. Each position on the list, up to the position that is equal to the number of competing incumbents, is given a value in descending order – the last position rates one point and each higher position merits an additional point. The formula is:

$$NIWWI = \frac{\sum[(V_{pni}/V_{pi}) \times Ci]}{\sum Ci}$$

$V_{pni}$  represents the value of the positions won by non-incumbents in each selection event.  $V_{pi}$  represents the total value of the positions in the specific selection event. The value of the victory in each selection event ( $V_{pni}/V_{pi}$ ) is then multiplied by the number of competing incumbents in each selection event ( $Ci$ ). The sum of the values for all selection events is calculated and then divided by the sum of the number of competing incumbents in all selection events.

*Aspirant Index (AI)*. This index examines the number of non-incumbents that were motivated to challenge incumbents. It does so by measuring the ratio between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ competing for safe positions. The higher the index, the greater the number of newcomers challenging sitting MPs. The formula is:

$$AI = \frac{\sum Cni}{\sum Ci}$$

$Cni$  stands for the number of competing non-incumbents challenging for safe positions.  $Ci$  denotes the number of competing incumbents running for safe positions on the party list. A higher value for this index reflects stiffer competition in that the number of non-incumbents challenging sitting MPs is relatively high. The sensitivity of this index to the relative size of the

party (the number of its incumbents) enables us to calculate the values on both sides of the equation for the entire population.

*Vote Concentration Index (VCI)*. This index examines the number of votes concentrated on the candidates at the top of the list. The more that votes are dispersed among the candidates, the more competitive the selection event. The formula is:

$$VCI = \frac{\sum[(V_{nv}/V_t) \times N_v]}{\sum N_v}$$

$V_{nv}$  stands for the number of votes won by the candidates in the top positions on the party list that is equal to the number of votes allocated to each selector in each selection event.  $V_t$  stands for the total number of votes cast.  $N_v$  stands for the number of votes allocated to each selector. The formula weights each selection event according to the number of votes that were cast. The higher the value of the Vote Concentration Index, the less competition there is, because the votes are concentrated on fewer candidates.<sup>25</sup>

### *Responsiveness*

If parties adopt a more inclusive selectorate, we would expect to see an ensuing shift towards more individualistic forms of behaviour on the part of legislators. This might involve an increase in the number of private members' bills proposed and in the proportion of them enacted. In seeking to assess such a development, no new indices are necessary. A table showing the index of inclusiveness of the party selectorate for each election – or the weighted average of inclusiveness if there are variations between the parties – and the number of private members' bills proposed and enacted in each legislature is an option. Additional measures available for the study of legislatures, such as the Rice Index of party cohesion, can be added. The control that parties exercise over their representatives can also be gauged by counting the incidents of legislators who change their party affiliation.<sup>26</sup>

## THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

When it comes to representation, the democratisation of candidate selection procedures seems to have a negative effect on the extent of female representation. In so far as this is the case, intra-party elections are as important in determining the gender balance in the legislature as inter-party elections. As Narud, Pedersen and Valen claim, 'the system of open primaries, however, has profoundly affected the status of women, as it does not assume any

responsibility for placing more women in safe seats. While the convention method appears to secure some share of top seats for women'.<sup>27</sup> It is apparent from the behaviour of the parties themselves that they anticipated the problem of representativeness that would result from a list selected by an inclusive electorate. The democratisation of candidate selection procedures in Western Europe occurred at the same time as an increase in the use of various correction mechanisms.<sup>28</sup> Norris has reported that parties increasingly tend to restrict the choices of their more inclusive selectorates in order to ensure the representation of women.<sup>29</sup>

Data from Israel corroborate the negative relationship between inclusiveness and representativeness.<sup>30</sup> Female representation in Israel's large parties was high in comparison with other democracies between the 1950s and the 1970s. Since then, it has been relatively low. Earlier, nomination committees were mostly used; more recently, it has been the practice of party agencies and party members to choose the candidates. In other words, as the Israeli parties moved towards a more inclusive electorate, their lists of candidates became less representative. The largest discrepancy between the extent of female representation on the electoral lists of Israel's largest parties and that in other democracies with list PR systems was in the 1996 election. This was the peak of the inclusiveness era in Israel.<sup>31</sup> The two most recent elections (1999 and 2003) witnessed a significant narrowing in the gap between Israel and other comparable systems, precisely when the extent of inclusiveness declined.

As to competition, the American experience provides evidence of the advantage incumbents gain in primaries. Between 1978 and 1992, in only 47 cases out of 3,166 (1.5 per cent) were incumbents seeking re-election to the House of Representatives defeated in party primaries, and in only 13 cases out of 236 (5.5 per cent) were incumbents seeking re-election to the Senate defeated in party primaries.<sup>32</sup> As Maisel and Stone claim, 'it is clear that primary elections do not serve to stimulate more competition and, to the extent that competition is an essential ingredient of democracy, it is not clear that they accomplish their intended purpose of enhancing U.S. democracy'.<sup>33</sup> Data from Israel, based on the candidate lists submitted to the Central Election Committee, demonstrate that nomination committees have the lowest level of competition.<sup>34</sup> An examination of 'cleaner' data – the positions of candidates *before* the activation of any correction mechanisms – demonstrates that selection by party agencies is more competitive than selection by party members.

Unfortunately, there are no cross-national comparisons that test the claim that party agencies are more competitive (and nomination committees less so) than the party members. However, recent cross-national analysis of legislative turnover in 25 countries over two decades provides evidence that openness leads to less, rather than more, turnover. According to Matland and Studlar,

‘the logical conclusion is that sitting legislators face at least as great, and possibly greater, threats from party caucuses and party commissions that tend to be the party gatekeepers in PR-party list systems than they do from a more open system’.<sup>35</sup>

On the matter of responsiveness, the opening up of the selectorate appears to have been a major cause of a decline in party cohesion. Put another way, it has been a development that has promoted ‘personalised politics’ over and above party politics.<sup>36</sup> A comparison of the levels of party cohesion in different countries illustrates the impact of the inclusiveness of selectorates on the behaviour of legislators. Members of the US Congress, which is known for its low levels of party cohesion, are selected through highly inclusive primaries. In contrast, British, Irish and Norwegian legislators (as well as most other West European legislators), who are selected by more exclusive selectorates,<sup>37</sup> exhibit higher levels of cohesion. The major institutional difference between the cases is the level of inclusiveness of the selectorates in the candidate selection process, rather than the nature of the electoral system, the political culture or the level of decentralisation of the candidate selection method.<sup>38</sup> As Gallagher argued, ‘it may not matter much, in this sense which party agency selects candidates, but it does matter that some party agency selects them’.<sup>39</sup>

In their study of the voting behaviour of MEPs (Members of the European Parliament), both Faas and Hix find that the candidate selection method influences party cohesion, and that the more exclusive methods give the national parties more influence over the behaviour of their representatives.<sup>40</sup> Data from Israel support this claim. The overall tendency to open up candidate selection methods has been paralleled by the overall trend towards an increase in the adoption of private members’ bills.<sup>41</sup>

The attempt to study and uncover the influence of candidate selection methods could, therefore, lead to the delineation of both the intended and the unintended consequences of adopting a more inclusive selectorate for legislators and legislatures.<sup>42</sup> Kristjánsson claims that widening participation in the selection process proved to be a successful strategy in the electoral survival of the Icelandic parties. This fits the party evolution model’s claim of adaptability. At the same time, though, he explains that the unintended price was a decrease in party cohesion.<sup>43</sup> Taiwan’s experience with primaries points to a similar conclusion. The primaries adopted during democratisation eroded party cohesion even in the once-Leninist and disciplined Kuomintang (KMT) party.<sup>44</sup>

Europe’s larger polities, on the other hand, which are based on older political traditions, have yet to exhibit the expected impact of more inclusive candidate selection methods. It might be that while candidate selection reforms immediately influenced Israel’s still developing and fluid political system, Iceland’s small and intimate polity and Taiwan’s young democracy,

in Europe the consequences are simply delayed. Thus, while we may find only preliminary signs of increasingly independent behaviour on the part of parliamentarians, as indicated by Whiteley and Seyd in their study of the British Conservative Party,<sup>45</sup> the potential is there and the structure of reward and punishment will in all likelihood reduce cohesion in the future.

Moreover, the relationship between the inclusiveness of the candidate selection method and party cohesion might not be linear. It may be that party cohesion declines significantly only when the level of inclusiveness passes a certain threshold, rather than running parallel to the degree of inclusiveness. Hopkin's study of the impact of widening party selectorates in Britain and Spain supports this perspective.<sup>46</sup> In the British Labour Party, when members were given the right to vote, the party elite still maintained and even enhanced its control over both candidacy and selection,<sup>47</sup> and no significant changes in levels of cohesion were evident.

## CONCLUSION

Candidate selection has consequences for politics in general, and for legislative politics in particular. Accordingly, the present article has employed a key variable – the degree of inclusiveness of the selectorate – to distinguish between candidate selection methods and has generated a number of hypotheses based on this distinction. The consequence of differential inclusiveness for both legislators and legislatures are summarised in Table 1. Importantly,

TABLE 1  
CANDIDATE SELECTION, DEMOCRATIC DIMENSIONS AND LEGISLATIVE INFLUENCE

<b>Selectorate</b>	<b>Representation</b>	<b>Competition</b>	<b>Responsiveness</b>	<b>Legislative impact</b>
Nominating committee	High	Low	Party	Less turnover, more cohesive parties, heterogeneous legislature, strictly party-centred
Selected party agency	Medium	High	Mainly party	More turnover, moderately cohesive parties, semi-heterogeneous legislature, largely party-centred
Party members	Low	Medium	Party and non-party	Medium turnover, less cohesive parties, homogeneous legislature, candidate-centred

this article does not argue that the candidate selection method is the sole determinant of legislative composition or legislative behaviour. Rather, it claims that legislative studies cannot afford to ignore or discount it.

Further cross-national research on what Gallagher and Marsh have described as ‘the secret garden of politics’ is needed in general,<sup>48</sup> and in order to examine the validity of our hypotheses. For a long time, scholars of electoral systems argued that PR closed list systems were conducive to more cohesive parties than personal preferential methods, such as those used in Ireland and Malta. Yet, empirically, there is little divergence in levels of legislative cohesion between the democracies employing these different systems.<sup>49</sup> This does not necessarily counter the theoretical claim; rather, it prompts us to study how cohesion is maintained in spite of the electoral system incentive.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps the answer lies in expanding our research framework and agenda beyond inter-party elections to investigate the incentives, constraints and dynamics of intra-party elections.<sup>51</sup> Institutions such as candidate selection methods matter, not as the exclusive determinants of behaviour, but as relatively uncharted waters that could help us understand more about the type of legislators elected, the dynamics within the legislature, and the legislative power and performance of legislatures. All this would, of course, improve our ability to compare and classify legislatures.

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