



STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD

**POLITICAL PARTIES' CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION
IN THE TRANSATLANTIC WORLD**

**By the International Republican Institute
Edited by Thibault Muzergues and Dan Scaduto**



Standing Out from the Crowd
Political Parties' Candidate (S)election in the Transatlantic World

Copyright © 2022 International Republican Institute. All rights reserved.

Permission Statement: No part of this work may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without the written permission of the International Republican Institute.

Requests for permission should include the following information:

- The title of the document for which permission to copy material is desired.
- A description of the material for which permission to copy is desired.
- The purpose for which the copied material will be used and the manner in which it will be used.
- Your name, title, company or organization name, telephone number, fax number, email address and mailing address.

Please send all requests for permission to:

Attn: Department of External Affairs
International Republican Institute
1225 Eye Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
info@iri.org

CONTENTS

Main Findings. 1

Introduction. 2

Candidate (S)election and Open Primaries in Lithuania 6

Behind Closed Doors: Candidate (S)election in Poland. 22

**Candidate (S)election in France: The Long Road Toward
(and Away from) Open Primaries 32**

Candidate (S)election in Germany 43

**Candidate (S)election in the United Kingdom: A Dynamic
Approach for the Conservative Party 55**

**Candidate (S)election in Greece: A New, Professional
Approach for New Democracy 62**

**The (S)election of Legislators in Romania in the Aftermath
of the Parliamentary Elections of December 2020 71**

The Candidate (S)election Process in Italian Parties 78

**Political Party (S)election of Candidates for Public Office in
Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. 86**

**Candidate (S)election in the United States: From Backroom
Deals to Public Forums 94**

Conclusion: Standing Out from the Crowd. 104

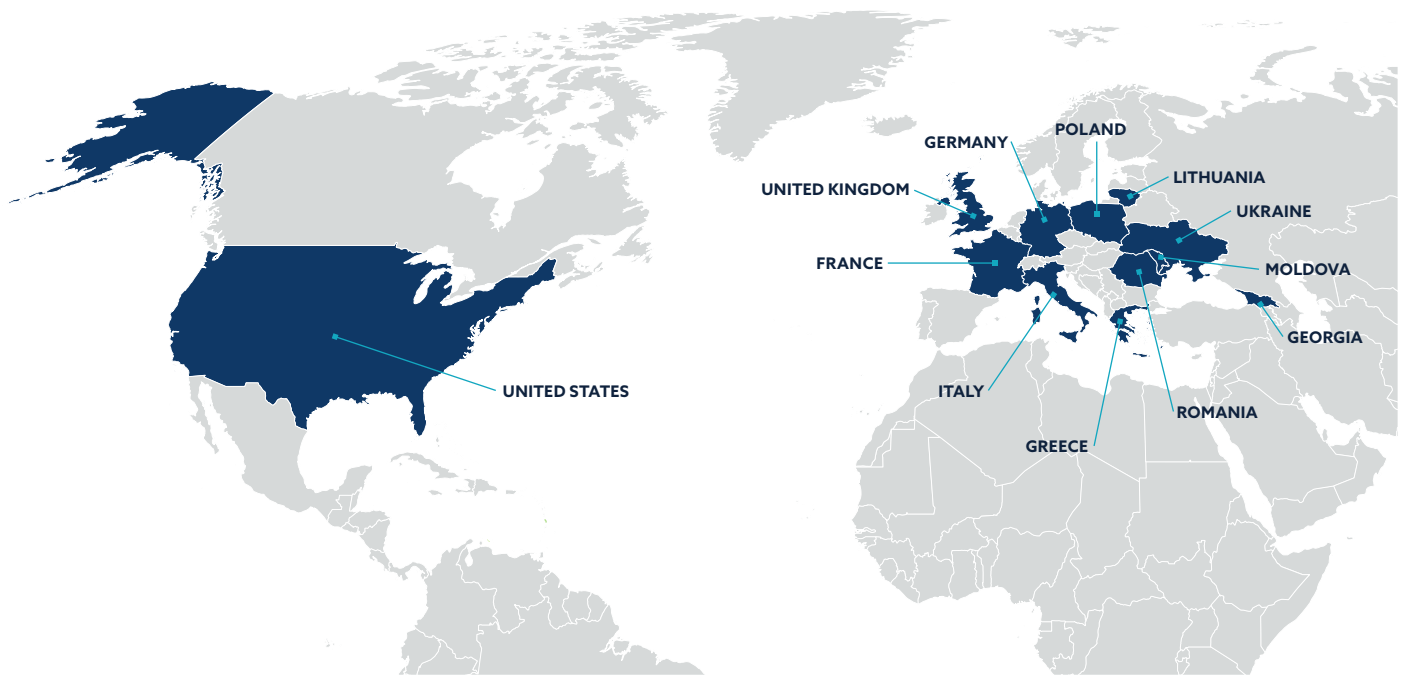
FOREWORD

"Standing Out from the Crowd: Political Parties' Candidate (S)election in the Transatlantic World" explores candidate selection processes and practices across a dozen countries in Europe, as well as the United States to better understand how political parties navigate the challenges and opportunities of promoting democratic representation and supporting strong contenders to win elected offices.

Commissioned by the International Republican Institute (IRI), with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the publication reflects the insights of a diverse group of political operatives and experts, elected officials, academics, and professionals with experiences in working with political parties.

Each chapter considers the candidate (s)election practices of national political parties and dissects the political and social contexts in which they unfold. Each case study offers unique perspectives into the varied candidate (s)election processes ranging across the Transatlantic world.

The concluding summary was developed by IRI staff following a gathering of the full publication's case study authors in Rome, Italy in July 2021.



MAIN FINDINGS

- Political parties cannot rely on one-size-fits-all or silver bullet solutions to improve candidate (s)election processes. Parties must explore context-specific options to determine the best solutions for each circumstance.
- While the past 30 years have witnessed the democratization of candidate (s)election processes across the Transatlantic space, a new trend is now developing towards more technocratic solutions that view candidate (s)election processes as a technical issue that necessitates a professional, HR-based approach.
- Centralized processes of party candidate (s)election allow greater control, but often leave parties vulnerable to dynamic outside contenders. Voters may grow disinterested in parties that exercise opaque candidate (s)election processes.
- Increasing competition for voters in congested fields of political parties necessitates candidate (s)election innovations, leveraging both technological applications and new technocratic recruitment processes.
- Candidate (s)election methods reflect historical experiences and can be difficult to reform. Knowledge of other parties' reform experiences in comparable countries empowers party leaders with clearer perspectives in devising successful reform plans. This includes the timing of reforms, which are usually most successful following an electoral defeat.

INTRODUCTION

The line is a classic of post-election defeat talks in party headquarters (and often within party membership): “if only we had chosen another candidate, things may have turned out differently.” The answer often is: certainly, the campaign may indeed have turned out differently – but would the outcome necessarily have been different?

In our democratic political systems, where personalities have come to matter as much as, if not more so, than ideologies and manifestos, candidate selection, or in some cases election, has become a crucial part of our democratic life. Indeed, in countries such as the United States, or to a lesser extent, Italy and France, one could argue that candidate selection may now be the main *raison d'être* for political parties. Of course, the reality of an individual candidate's impact on a campaign can differ depending on a number of factors. Structurally, candidates running in a constituency on their own name (usually with a party affiliation, if only for branding purposes) will carry more responsibility for an electoral result than candidates who run as part of a proportional list. And even in a direct constituency election, different qualifications or skills may be required of a candidate. For example, a candidate running in a one-round, first-past-the-post system where mobilization of sympathizers is often key, necessitates different personalities and competencies, in comparison to a candidate running in a two-round system where the election depends to a much larger extent on convincing a wider crowd (50%+1 at least) to cast their ballot for the candidate.

When it comes to elections, timing is also of the essence: one profile of candidates – for example veterans in the military, or specialists with strong views on economics – might be ideal in a time where the country is soul-searching and longing for a lost unity, or in search of a new economic model. But if the public debate involves questions of law and order or international issues, then the veteran or the economist might retrospectively be described as a “casting mistake” by commentators and party activists after defeat – and sometimes even before. In the same way, a candidate who might seem ideal in a certain contest may lose credibility if the main issue of the day falls beyond their experience or favors their opponent's background.

For many US Republicans, the 2008 presidential race is a perfect example of this: during the primary process, it appeared Senator John McCain was the perfect Republican candidate to embody the “change” that was then requested by much of the American electorate. And there was a compelling case that, as the “Maverick” Senator, he was the most capable of carrying the promise of change for a party that had been in power for the past eight years. Indeed, many campaign strategists gave McCain an advantage in facing off against Hillary Clinton, who was the initial favorite for the Democrats' nomination. Fate, and Democrat voters (two factors well beyond the power of influence for Republican strategists), decided otherwise.

In the context of the economic meltdown of Fall 2008, the Republicans' incumbent position became the most salient point of McCain's campaign, while the Democrats' choice of Senator Barack Obama as presidential candidate completely changed the paradigm of the campaign narratives. As a relatively young senator with little previous experience, idealistic positions and an African-American background, Obama incarnated the idea of a “change.” Would this incarnation have been the same had Hillary Clinton been the Democrats' candidate? We will never know for sure, but we can imagine that the terms of the debate in 2008 might have been very different if the Democrats chose the New York Senator over the future President of the United States, or if Wall Street had not suffered a historic meltdown a few weeks before the election.

These considerations lead to the question of contingency in politics; with so many uncertain variables defining who is a good candidate at a given time, should we accept that it is impossible for a party to select the right candidate for elections? After all, if political parties are still working on finding a more perfect solution to solve this problem after more than 200 years of experimenting with modern democracy, it may be that the equation is simply impossible to resolve. And if there is no perfect way to (s)elect the right candidate, then what would be the purpose of wasting time and energy in trying to “modernize” or “democratize” party life by introducing new rules?

An answer to this perfectly reasonable question might be found in the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli, who may have distrusted democracy but certainly understood much about political leaders’ qualities. The Florentine thinker’s argument that a “prince” needs both fortune and virtue to be politically successful reminds us of what many political operatives instinctively know - in electoral politics as in golf, luck is primordial – but the more one practices, the luckier one gets. Thus finding “good,” or at least better ways to identify a candidate for office has utility in contemporary politics. And although it does not guarantee victory on election day (if only because the other parties are also experimenting with their own candidate selection), then it can certainly help the party by democratizing its rules, imposing long-awaited change in its structure or by transforming its wider public image. Though the (s)election of candidates is most often thought of as a way to help parties win elections, its actual impact on a race is so unpredictable that its benefits should rather be thought of in the longer-term, may it be in terms of party membership, pacification of the party’s internal disagreements, and even sometimes its very survival.

In light of the complex factors contributing to candidate (s)election and electoral outcomes, this publication should not be considered as a definitive handbook with a recipe to follow in order to get to the perfect candidate for any election. Rather, it is an index that will study how parties across the Transatlantic space have devised their candidate (s)election methods and determined, when, why and how they have decided to implement changes, as well as explore the consequences that ensued. From these case studies, we have derived a synthetic final chapter to make sense of these processes and rationalize them, explaining why certain methods can be useful for a party under given conditions or harmful in other situations, and importantly how effective they can be in reaching the party’s strategic objectives, understanding of course that electoral victory remains conditioned by many other factors.

Like many other collective publications, this work aims to make best use of the common knowledge of a group of authors that all have experience in political party life and candidate (s)election in their home countries. The individual country chapters were written by people with direct, hands-on experience of these processes, either as party operatives, consultants, or candidates themselves. In other, rarer instances, they will be authored by scholars and intellectuals in order to provide a solid conceptual framework to this study. For its part, the final chapter is a synthesis of exchanges between authors and IRI staff during a seminar on candidate (s)election that took place in Rome in July 2022.

Our objective is to have a healthy mix of practitioners and theoreticians so that this study can be useful to party leaders and operatives who see a change in candidate (s)election as an important part of any internal party reforms they may plan.

To make sense of the candidate (s)election processes for political parties, this publication suggests a conceptual framework that may over-simplify the options available to political parties but may nevertheless be useful in understanding possible objectives. The following taxonomy encompasses some debates occurring about selection processes (top-down vs. bottom up, keeping control over the process, candidate type wished vs. obtained, etc.), and as we shall see it is possible to mix these

methods to multiply advantages and mitigate risks. For the purpose of this study, we will divide candidate (s)election processes into four broad categories:

Closed party-decision: the first method for a party to choose its candidate(s) is also the oldest. It usually involves a small group of people inside party headquarters (or the parliamentary group, or sometimes the party leader) who build a more or less complex internal selection method aimed at maintaining ultimate control over who can become a candidate. In many countries, this might seem the least democratic way of selecting candidates, and as we will see in the coming case studies, it has also carried its share of electoral catastrophes, but it can also have merit in imposing changes and enlarging the profile of candidates so that the party's face more faithfully resembles the constituency they aim to represent.

Election or selection in a closed ballot: another method, which emerged early in democratic party systems as part of parliamentary rules of agreeing on a leadership, is to ask members of the party to conduct the selection. The typical example of this selection strategy is the "closed primary," which appeals to party members. But as the American caucus system shows us, the voting can also be deliberately limited to attendants of a specific caucus. All these methods have the merits of collegiality, and closed primaries have the added benefit of empowering the party base and giving value to party membership, something increasingly important in an age where more and more citizens are reluctant to get involved in a political party. But they can also reduce the party's electoral appeal; being elected by a relatively small group of people that are particularly active in politics (and often have very clear-cut ideas about what policy-options should be taken) is not the same exercise as being elected by a much larger group of people. This method risks party entrenchment or stagnation as party membership choose candidates that may stick to party orthodoxy but are not suitable to expand the party's appeal to those always elusive "independent" or "centrist" voters.

Election in an open ballot (open primaries): a more recent phenomenon, the open primaries system originated in the US and has, since the early 2000s, spread to parts of Europe, such as Italy and France, as well as Lithuania. The open primary system has the merit of enlarging the pool of voters and thereby seems to circumvent the most common criticism of the closed primaries system – more voters should ensure that the candidate can start with a larger base of support before facing the electorate as a whole. However, this more democratic system has faced harsh criticism since its introduction, ranging from vulnerability to manipulation and dilution (via the participation of activists of other parties who would try to push an unelectable candidate) to the idea that open primaries do little to enhance a candidate's credibility.

The technocratic approach: finally, one relatively new approach consists of outsourcing the candidate selection process to an independent, sometimes professional structure so as to adopt recruitment tactics similar to those found in the private sector. This approach was the one chosen by New Democracy in Greece as it re-organized to regain power in 2019, and a similar – though not as professional – approach was taken by Emmanuel Macron's *La République En Marche* to select parliamentary candidates in 2017 in the wake of his election as President of France. This selection method has the merit of introducing a meritocratic approach to politics but is also less democratic and runs the risk of de-politicizing a process that is itself highly political by nature.

This presentation of the different types of candidate (s)election shows us that no solution is perfect for every party at all times – each has its advantages and disadvantages, and it is up to party leadership to try and find which candidate selection method is most adapted to its needs of the moment, even if that means constant reform needs to be made to make the process more effective, or at least less imperfect.

In this sense, methods of candidate selection are by no means a menu that one can simply choose from, but rather a never-ending process in which each (s)election must be analyzed rationally after each election so as to correct shortcomings and consolidate successes.

Finally, practitioners of electoral politics will already have understood that such a taxonomy hides an extreme diversity of actual processes. For example, in the United Kingdom, the leadership of the Conservative Party (which is basically a prospective selection of the party's candidate for Prime Minister) is now decided by a two-tier system in which the parliamentary faction vets the list of candidates to a maximum of two contenders before a vote by the party membership under a one-man-one-vote system. When it comes to the selection of candidates for parliamentary office, a complex interaction takes place between individual party branches and Conservative Central Headquarters (CCHQ), in which a mix of scouting by experienced operatives, internal party democracy and decisions sometimes imposed by CCHQ (such as de-selection, or imposition of "A-list"-type candidates) defines who will be the party's candidate in a certain constituency at a certain time. This interaction is codified in the party's constitution, but its complexity shows the extent to which selection processes can pick from different models and vary depending on the type of election.

This superficial look at one example of party (s)election naturally calls for a more detailed investigation that will allow us to make more sense of the candidate process. This is exactly what the case studies presented in the next pages intend to do.

CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION AND OPEN PRIMARIES IN LITHUANIA

Mantas Adomėnas & Vytenis Fuks

GENERAL BACKGROUND AND PERSONAE AGENTES

The discussion on methods and ways of selecting candidates in Lithuania goes back to the first decade of the 21st century. In order to conceptualize the *Sitz im Leben*, the actual political living environment of such discussions, it is necessary to elaborate on the transformation of the political party landscape that emerged in the first two decades of the independent democratic Lithuanian state, from the year 1990 onwards.

The dominant view of the political party system in the 1990s was predicated on the ‘inevitability’ of the emergence of a two-party system as the political community matured and democracy consolidated. The two-party system was imagined as being dominated by the (Conservative) center-right and (Social-Democratic) center-left, in the Anglo-Saxon mold. The political processes in the 1990s tended to confirm such a reading, insofar as the two principal players in the Lithuanian political field were, on the center-right, the Homeland Union (the Lithuanian Conservatives, in government 1996-2000), and, on the left, the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (in power 1992-1996).¹ Together, these two political movements accounted for an absolute majority of parliamentary seats throughout the 1990s (73 percent of seats in 1992-1996 and 58 percent in 1996-2000).

The concept of the two-party system as a fundamental political paradigm was shattered by the rise of a series of populist, anti-systemic political forces in the early 2000s. The New Union, a vaguely left-wing populist political party, won 19.64 percent of votes and 29 seats in 2000. It formed a center-left coalition government with the Social Democrats in 2001.² Nationalist-populist and authoritarian-inclined President Rolandas Paksas was elected in 2003. However, Paksas was suspected of being manipulated by Russian intelligence, prompting the Seimas, Lithuania’s parliament, to successfully impeach him in 2004. He was survived by the right-wing populist Order and Justice Party he founded. The left-wing populist Labour Party, founded by Russian-born oligarch Viktor Uspaskikh, came to power in 2003 and gathered 28.44 percent of votes and 39 parliamentary seats in the 2004 national election.

Each of these parties faded after short-lived political success, but none disappeared entirely from the political scene. They tended to become embedded in, and further splintered from, the already fragmented political party landscape. The rather disorderly fragmentation of the political field became the norm of the political game.

The political narrative, at that time, lagged behind the country’s events. The pundits still eagerly awaited the emergence of a two-party system. The dominant political dichotomy of the 2000s became ‘populist’ vs. ‘systemic’ parties, which superimposed upon, and to an extent superseded, the older dichotomy of (anti-Communist) Right vs. (ex-Communist) Left.

¹ Mostly ex-Communist in the 1990s, it was formed after the majority of the Lithuanian Communist Party split off from the Soviet Union Communist Party to form an autonomous organization in 1989. It was known as the Lithuanian Communist Party in 1989-90, renamed itself Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party in 1990, and became Lithuanian Social Democratic Party in 2001 after a merger with a minor eponymous party.

² Lithuania has a unicameral Parliament of 141 seats, 71 seats are filled through single-member majoritarian constituencies, and 70 through proportional representation, drawn from nation-wide party lists, with a 5 percent entry barrier.

Another important conceptual divide was between those parties that had a well-articulated political ideology and those that did not. Traditional parties, such as the center-right Conservatives, their minor comrades-in-arms the Christian Democrats, and the center-left Social Democrats, were believed to possess predictable ideological identities (though an adherence to declared ideological principles was, in practice, always problematic, and strongly questioned in the case of the Social Democrats). The new populist parties, on the other hand, were considered non-ideological, opportunistic, and (as the often-used phrase at the time described) merely 'PR products'. The popular narrative among observers of Lithuanian politics in the 2000s maintained that the emergence of populist parties (such as the New Union, Order and Justice, and the Labour parties) was a sign of immaturity in Lithuanian democracy. As democracy matured and became more established, according to the narrative, scales would fall off voters' eyes, and the political party model would revert to the stable two-party system.

This trajectory, however, was belied by the appearance of the third 'ideological' political force: the Liberals. The Liberal Union – which in the coming years would have many names, changes of identities, splintering, and a rather checkered history in general – had a respectable political turnout as early as 2000, winning 17.25 percent of the popular vote and 34 seats. Thus, by 2000, even the 'traditional' section of the political party spectrum was morphing into a tripartite system: Conservatives, Liberals, and Social Democrats. This 'three-body problem' was further complicated by the gravitational force of ever-exploding populist supernovas. This phenomenon, however, would not percolate into the consciousness of either the mainstream parties or political analysts until much later.

While the Liberals were perceived as being on the center-right of the political spectrum, their more pragmatic attitude – and a certain resentment towards the Conservatives from whom they were keen to distance and differentiate themselves – meant that they were ready to enter coalitions with center-left Social Democrats and various populist parties.

The old ex-Communist left, the Social Democrats, were much more adept at hashing out workable political alliances with the new entrants into the political arena: under the guise of various political coalitions, Social Democrats retained control of the government from 2001 to 2008.

THE CONSERVATIVES IN 2008: VORSPRUNG DURCH TECHNIK

For the principal center-right party, the Homeland Union, also known as the Conservatives,³ the national election in 2008 was a make-or-break event. After eight years in opposition, the 2008 parliamentary election presented the party with the options of either fading into political irrelevance as a party (which was never in the government) and becoming a sort of Boston Red Sox of Lithuanian politics or of proving once again that it is fit to govern, and capable of winning to start with.

To that end, considerable energy was directed by the Conservative leader Andrius Kubilius, an intellectually adventurous ex-physicist who had already once been the prime minister for a short term in 1999-2000, when he emerged as a bold and visionary reformer. This was a chance for a comeback, and no effort was spared to ensure Conservative victory in the parliamentary election of 2008.

³ The Homeland Union, which started off in 1993 under the official title of "Homeland Union (Lithuanian Conservatives)", by then absorbed, albeit failing entirely to digest, three minor parties: the Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees (2004), the Lithuanian Christian Democrats, and the Lithuanian Nationalist Party (both in 2007). It thus acquired its grand, if unwieldy, official name of Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats, its *full* official title. being Homeland Union (Conservatives, Political Prisoners and Deportees, Nationalists)-Lithuanian Christian Democrats. Mercifully, it is still popularly referred to, simply, as the Conservatives.

Thus the 2008 Conservative campaign inaugurated a series of political and campaign innovations which started a decade of a 'campaigning arms-race.' Internet and social network campaigning were a novelty in Europe at the time, and this greatly appealed to the younger generation, which was just starting to use Facebook, search for videos on YouTube, and master the very first iPhones. Cutting-edge polling and geographical micro-targeting were likewise a total first in Lithuania. Conversely, a serious election manifesto with a comprehensive reform agenda jarred with the universally accepted trend towards 'sound-bite politics' and proved hugely successful as a means of attracting serious-minded, policy-oriented voters. The younger generation, which often could not be bothered to read through detailed policy prescriptions, nevertheless saw it as a progressive move insofar as it brought Lithuanian politics more in line with serious and responsible political parties in the old Western democracies. In 2008, four years into EU membership, the dominant narrative was still very much about – catching up with the West.

Thus, in October 2008, the Conservatives swept into power on the crest of a victorious election campaign – and at the head of a fractious, fragile, febrile four-party coalition, but that is a part of another story.⁴ What is important is that the 2008 election inaugurated a period of political innovation whereby the center-right would look to new political and campaign practices for a resolution of its increasingly obdurate electoral dilemmas.

THE SPIRIT OF INNOVATION IN LITHUANIAN POLITICS

While the center-right has always been the principal vehicle of political, cultural, societal, economic innovations, fundamental reforms, and Westernizing tendencies in Lithuania, it would be erroneous to suppose that innovation totally passed by other political actors. After all, when each of the populist parties first appeared, they were perceived as a *new* phenomenon.

The Labour Party is an illustrative case in point. It was founded in 2003 by Russian-born businessman Viktor Uspaskikh, who made his career distributing Russian gas and producing canned vegetables, financed by murky capital and even murkier connections. The Labour Party sailed into first place in the 2004 election with 28.44 percent of votes and 39 seats. The Labour Party's snappy, colloquially phrased election manifesto, which promised to take care of all major national problems in 1, 11, 111 or 1111 days, captured the imagination of large swathes of moderately educated, small-town and rural voters.

However, the Labour Party suffered an electoral reversal of fortunes in the subsequent 2008 election (winning merely 8.99 percent of votes with 10 seats) following a major corruption scandal during which the party itself was charged in court. In 2012, Labour tried to recapture its fortunes with a well-prepared, extremely expensive, and innovative campaign that tried, once again, to appeal to the magic of numbers – and to outbid its competitors on populist promise. It was centered around the intentionally vague slogan 'We Know How' and, in contrast, the all-too-concrete promise to raise minimum wage to 1509 litas – an oddly accurate number which had no relation to any economic realities (minimum wage at the time being 850 litas, or 246 euros). It was supposed to capture voters' imagination – and, to an extent, it did: the Labour Party received 19.82 percent of votes and 29 seats. But there was no going back to the halcyon days of 2004.

⁴ The Conservatives garnered 19.72 percent of the popular vote and won 45 seats. They formed a coalition with the Liberal Movement (5.73 percent of votes, 11 seats), Liberal and Centre Union (5.34 percent of votes, 8 seats), as well as National Resurrection Party (15.09 percent of votes, 16 seats). The latter was a political party tailor-made for the 2008 election; it consisted chiefly of show-business people (TV personalities, actors, singers, and comedians) and was extremely short-lived (it splintered in 2009 and completely disintegrated in 2011).

This leads us to a curious phenomenon which we would like to introduce *en passant* before proceeding to discuss the candidate selection procedures and their evolution. What the Labour Party leadership failed to recognize when they tried to replicate the success of the party's virgin run in 2004 was the fact that Lithuanian voters generally tend to favor newcomers. Of course, in every election there have been scores of political first timers, and the majority of political start-ups have gone belly-up. However, but there was (at least) one newcomer, in each election, which drew the voters' fancy. Particular political messages, campaign stunts or electoral target groups were comparatively incidental to that sort of success. Thus, we propose to formulate what we call the New Guys on the Block law (or NGOB law, for shorter) of Lithuanian politics:

In every single Lithuanian national election after 1992 there has been a considerable surge of electoral support for a totally new and untried political party, regardless of its political orientation, character, or message, with support drastically diminishing after its first national campaign.

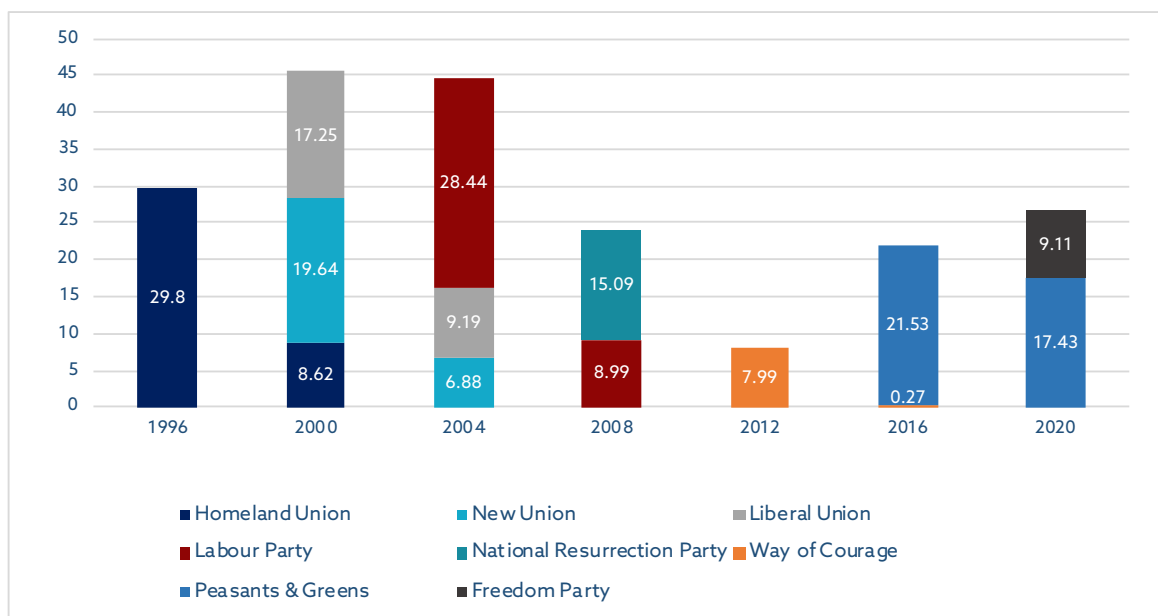
Curiously, the political parties that fall under the NGOB law range all over the political landscape. The only persistent factor is the novelty and a slight whiff of a maverick challenger to the establishment which clings to the NGOB law beneficiaries.

Thus, in the 1996 election, the newly-established Homeland Union, the Conservatives, won just short of an absolute majority in the Parliament – only to be reduced to nine seats at the next election. In 2000, the beneficiaries of this law were the New Union, a center-left populist party, and the Liberal Union, a liberal party built along more traditional lines. In 2004 it was the left-populist Labour Party discussed above. In 2008, the showbiz National Resurrection Party collected the second largest number of popular votes, only to sink without a trace even before the next national election was called.

The 2012 election saw the rise of the maverick Way of Courage political party. This was probably the only Lithuanian political party based entirely on a conspiracy theory. Created to combat an imaginary pedophile ring supposedly entrenched in the highest echelons of the state, it was shrouded with the atmosphere of swivel-eyed fanaticism and sordidness. (All that it left in its wake were several unexplained violent deaths and a series of obscene, cringe-making, and falsified YouTube testimonies on the existence of the 'pedophile ring.')

In 2016, it was the socially conservative, unabashedly populist Farmers and Greens Union that rather unexpectedly rose to national prominence – it had been out of the political arena for so long that its emergence as a front-runner was tinged with a sense of novelty. Finally, in 2020, the newly founded left-liberal Freedom Party sailed 'from zero to hero,' capturing the imagination of, primarily, the young urban electorate with its twin election promise of gay marriage and cannabis legalisation, as well as zingy, carefree, euphoric communication.

The following graph illustrates the workings of the NGOB law. It shows the proportion of vote that NGOB parties received in their first and subsequent election.



It is not hard to come up with preconditions for the NGOB law. In Lithuania, the levels of popular dissatisfaction with the current government, Parliament, and political parties are consistently and permanently high.⁵ Lithuania enjoys (if that's the right word) historically high and fairly stable levels of voter volatility: 'in terms of elections, Lithuania is one of the most unstable countries both in Europe and among the post-Communist countries.'⁶

The phenomenon of hyper-accountability in Central and Eastern Europe was brought into scholarly purview by Andrew Roberts, who describes it as a 'high degree of electoral accountability for unemployment combined with near universal punishment of incumbents.'⁷ 'The universal punishment of the incumbents' could be a phrase coined specifically with Lithuania in mind: in 31 years of independence, not a single time has the incumbent government been returned through an election.

Roberts's conclusions are confirmed, with modifications, by Mažvydas Jastramskis, Vytautas Kuokštis, and Matas Baltruškevičius in their 2019 publication on 'Retrospective Voting in Central and Eastern Europe': "[O]ur findings do not support the claim that voters learn over time and are better able to hold politicians accountable for their performance. Moreover, our analysis shows that hyper-accountability is still prevalent in the region. Post-communist voters consistently punish their governments, although with a slight tendency toward decreasing hyper-accountability over time."⁸

All these factors combined create a political ecosystem favorable to new entrants. It is as though in the Lithuanian political narrative there exists a constant niche for novelty, for ever-changing challengers to the incumbent political arrangement as well as to the existing political parties. The nature and character

5 V. Gaidys, 'Politinio aktyvumo rodikliai visuomenės nuomonės apklausose [Indicators of political activity in public opinion polls]', *Filosofija. Sociologija*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2020, p. 363.

6 M. Jastramskis, 'Kaip blaškosi Lietuvos rinkėjas? Kaitumas, protestas ir viltis politikoje [How does the Lithuanian voter wobble? Fluidity, protest, and hope in politics]', in M. Jastramskis (ed.), *Ar galime prognozuoti Seimo rinkimus? Trijų kūnų problema Lietuvos politikoje [Can We Forecast Parliamentary Elections? Three-Body Problem in the Lithuanian Politics]*, Vilnius, Vilniaus Universiteto leidykla, 2018, p. 42.

7 A. Roberts, 'Hyperaccountability: Economic Voting in Central and Eastern Europe', *Electoral Studies*, vol. 27, 2008, p. 542.

8 M. Jastramskis, V. Kuokštis, and M. Baltruškevičius, 'Retrospective voting in Central and Eastern Europe: Hyper-accountability, corruption or socio-economic inequality?', *Party Politics*, vol. 20, 2019, p. 11.

of the NGOB challengers mutates from election to election, as we have seen from the short overview above. What remains constant, however, is the fact that a new challenger emerges at every single election and receives, at a gradually diminishing level over time, a significant portion of the popular vote, only for their support to be dashed to the ground (or thereabouts) at the subsequent election.

In this atmosphere of betting on novelty, older parties were faced with a dilemma: now that they are no longer the New Guys on the Block, how can they retain or recapture political support? Their responses tended to vary. Populist parties tended to up the ante, to raise the stakes either in terms of the level of promise (as exemplified by the Labour Party example discussed above), or by sharpening their rhetoric, making it more drastic (as the Order and Justice party did during the 2012 national election). Social Democrats bet on being a haven of stability amid a sea of change – for several elections between 2008 and 2015 they used a virtually unchanged campaign message. On the contrary, some parties, such as the Liberal and Centre Union, sought to rebrand themselves *ab ovo* for every new election.

None of these strategies led to significant electoral success. However, they are important in order to understand that atmosphere of demand for innovation which shaped the Lithuanian political party landscape.

CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION: BACKGROUND PICTURE

Before we proceed to analyze Homeland Union's response to this demand, however, let us briefly look at what was – and, to a large extent, remains – the common practice for candidate selection among principal Lithuanian political parties. The standard practice is candidate confirmation by party governing institutions – either board, council, or conference – with varying degrees of involvement by ordinary party members.

Social Democrats For the 2014 presidential election, party chapters proposed prospective candidates, and the party conference chose the candidate.⁹ In the 2016 national election, the party council drafted a candidate list, which was then confirmed at the party conference. For the 2019 European Parliament election, all party members could take part in ranking the prospective candidate list, which was then confirmed at the party conference.¹⁰ For the 2019 presidential election, which took place at the same time as the EP election, candidates were put forward, just as in 2014, by the party chapters, and the party conference elected Vytenis Andriukaitis, an EU Commissioner, as the candidate.¹¹

Peasants and Greens In the 2014 presidential election, the candidate was proposed at the party conference and confirmed by the party council. For 2016, as well as for the 2020 national election, the parliamentary candidate list was ranked by the party council and confirmed by the party board. For the 2019 European Parliament election, the candidate list was drafted by the party council and confirmed at the party conference, which also confirmed the front-running 'leader of the list' through a motion by the party chairman.¹² For the 2019 presidential election, party chapters proposed perspective candidates, and the party conference selected and confirmed the chosen one.¹³

9 ELTA, 'Socialdemokratai patvirtino savo kandidatą prezidento rinkimuose', *Lrt.lt*, 2015, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/34236/socialdemokratai-patvirtino-savo-kandidata-prezidento-rinkimuose>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

10 LSDP, 'Į Europos Parlamentą socialdemokratus veda V. Blinkevičiūtė', *Lsdp.lt*, 2019, <https://www.lsdp.lt/i-europos-parlamenta-socialdemokratus-veda-v-blinkeviciute/>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

11 G. Pankūnas, 'Paaiškėjo dar vienas kandidatas į prezidentus: socialdemokratai iškėlė Vytenį Povilą Andriukaitį', *Delfi.lt*, 2018, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/paaiskejo-dar-vienas-kandidatas-i-prezidentus-socialdemokratai-iskele-vyteni-povila-andriukaiti.d?id=79678925>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

12 A. Karaliūnas, 'Valstiečiai susiruošė į Europos Parlamentą: jų legionieriumi tapo Šarūnas Marčiulionis, Mindaugas Puidokas išmestas', *Lrytas.lt*, 2019, <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvsodiena/aktualijos/2019/02/22/news/valstieciai-susiruose-i-europos-parlamenta-ju-legionieriumi-tapo-sarunas-marciulionis-9336982/>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

13 BNS / Verslo žinios, 'V. Pranckietis sieks tapti „valstiečių“ kandidatų prezidento rinkimuose', *Verslo žinios*, 2019, <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2019/01/23/v-pranckietis-sieks-tapti-valstieciu-kandidatu-prezidento-rinkimuose>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

Liberal Movement During the 2014 presidential election, the party council adopted the decision to support the incumbent president, Dalia Grybauskaitė. For the 2016 national election, the parliamentary candidate list was ranked by the party council, and the party chairman could introduce further correctives before submitting the final list. Beginning with the 2019 European Parliament election however, the Liberal Movement launched an innovative practice of using digital ranking – basically, using a voting app for its ranking procedures. In 2018, the procedure of drafting a candidate list for the EP election was confirmed by the party council.¹⁴ It was envisaged as a four-stage process: (i) taking into account party chapters and individual members' proposals, the party board drafts the prospective candidate list; (ii) the party council finalizes an alphabetic list, which is then (iii) passed to all party members for digital ranking; each party member has up to 5 preference votes; (iv) ranking results are confirmed by the party council. For the 2019 presidential election, a different procedure was adopted: candidates proposed themselves, and the party conference chose between two prospective candidates, electing Petras Auštrevičius, MEP, as the candidate. For the 2020 national (parliamentary) election, the same procedure was used for the 2019 European Parliament election: all party members could take part digitally ranking the alphabetic candidate list (each member had up to 30 preference votes); the ranked list was then formally approved, without any interference by the party leadership, by the party council.¹⁵

The Freedom Party, founded in 2019, followed in the steps of its mother party, the Liberal Movement, in adopting a digital ranking of the candidate list for the 2020 national election. However, it expanded the franchise in that not only party members, but also registered supporters could participate in ranking the list. Each of the members or supporters could assign up to 10 preference votes to rank 81 candidates on the alphabetic lists, and digital ranking lasted for a week. The ranking results could be 'corrected' by the party chairwoman and the final list was confirmed by the digitally convened party conference.¹⁶ In principle, it was an open primary. However, the Freedom Party's official announcement is extremely reticent about the involvement of non-party members in the ranking process, which leads one to believe that it must have been scant, or even non-existent.

OPEN PRIMARIES: CONSERVATIVES' UNCONSERVATIVE APPROACH

In Homeland Union, the practice of candidate selection was initially fairly similar to that of other parties discussed above. For the 2014 presidential election, the party council merely decided to support the incumbent president's re-election campaign, whereas all party members could participate in the ranking of the candidate list before the 2016 national election. Each party member could use up to 30 preference votes to rank the alphabetic list, and around 40 percent of the party's 15,000 members took part. The ranked list then could be adjusted by the party chairman and was finally confirmed by the party council. The same procedure also applied in the 2019 European Parliament election.

For the 2019 presidential election, open primaries were adopted as the method for choosing the most suitable candidate. Before the method for the primaries were adopted, they were widely discussed not only among the party elite and ordinary party members, but also across social media and the press. This was seen as a highly innovative and controversial step at the time.

¹⁴ Liberalų Sąjūdis, *Kandidatų į Europos Parlamentą rinkimų sąrašo reitingavimo ir reitingavimo rezultatų keitimo tvarkos aprašas*, *Liberalai.lt*, 2018, <https://liberalai.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Kandidatu-i-EP-reitingavimo-tvarka.doc>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

¹⁵ Liberalai.lt, 'Liberalų Sąjūdis sureitingavo kandidatų į Seimą sąrašą', *Liberalai.lt*, 2020, <https://liberalai.lt/naujienos/liberalu-sajudis-sureitingavo-kandidatu-i-seima-sarasa-2/>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

¹⁶ Lrt.lt, 'Laisvės partija išreitingavo kandidatų sąrašą rinkimuose, tarp jų – Armonaitė, Raskevičius, Meizelytė', *Lrt.lt*, 2020, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1186371/laisves-partija-isreitingavo-kandidatu-sarasa-rinkimuose-tarp-ju-armonaite-raskevicius-meizelyte>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

In all fairness, it bears pointing out that 2019 was not the first time that the open primary appeared on the Conservative agenda. Before the 2011 municipal elections, Mantas Adomėnas, who was the Chairman of Homeland Union Vilnius Caucus, the biggest Conservative party organization in the country at the time, proposed an open primary election as the way of selecting the candidate for the important and prominent position of Vilnius' mayor. It was, however, voted down by the delegates as too unusual and risky. The common argument against open primaries ran as follows: "Our political opponents may turn up to vote in order to propel the weaker, easier to defeat candidate forward." The idea was seen as premature even among those who favored it in principle.

Thus, it required a change of party leadership and a regrettable electoral defeat for the idea of open primaries to be floated once again.

In 2015 Andrius Kubilius, twice prime minister and the chairman of the Homeland Union for the past 12 years, stepped down. Gabrielius Landsbergis, an energetic young MEP and a scion of an iconic political family, was elected in his stead. He led the party in the 2016 parliamentary election where the Conservatives won by a narrow margin in the national (proportional) vote but were roundly defeated in the run-offs in single-member constituencies, remaining in second place overall – and in opposition.¹⁷

In 2017, Landsbergis was re-elected as the Homeland Union Chairman in the wake of this defeat. He ran on a platform of reforming and rejuvenating the party. One of the pillars of the proposed reform was to open up the candidate selection procedure to the broader society, through open primaries. The requisite amendments of the party statutes were drafted and adopted in the spring of 2018, and the path was cleared for the first open primary election in Lithuania.¹⁸ The presidential election of 2019 was chosen as the object of this novel electoral experiment. The open primary would take place in the second half of 2018 to give the chosen candidate sufficient time to campaign before the election scheduled in May of the following year.¹⁹

Considering our earlier analysis, it would not be inaccurate to see the Homeland Union's experiment with the candidate selection procedure in terms of the party's response to the constant demand for novelty, which is endemic to the Lithuanian political climate. In this regard, it would be considered on par with other electoral and political innovations that the Homeland Union adopted in its quest for re-election, such as in-depth polling, social network and digital campaigning, micro-targeting, as well as an array of other innovative approaches to campaigning and political communication.

However, one should also understand the other factors which led the Conservatives to consider changes in the candidate selection procedure. The Conservatives' Pyrrhic victory in the first round of the 2016 parliamentary election, followed by a total rout in the second, revealed its Achilles' heel: second-choice voters. Their role becomes crucial in the run-offs, where candidates seek to enlarge their core electorate with sympathetic second-choice voters– those who would consider voting for it if, for any reason, they could not vote for their primary choice. While Homeland Union enjoyed a respectable (in Lithuanian terms) circle of staunch supporters, the percentage of second-choice voters was the second lowest among the parliamentary parties. The Conservatives, according to their own pre-election polling, were

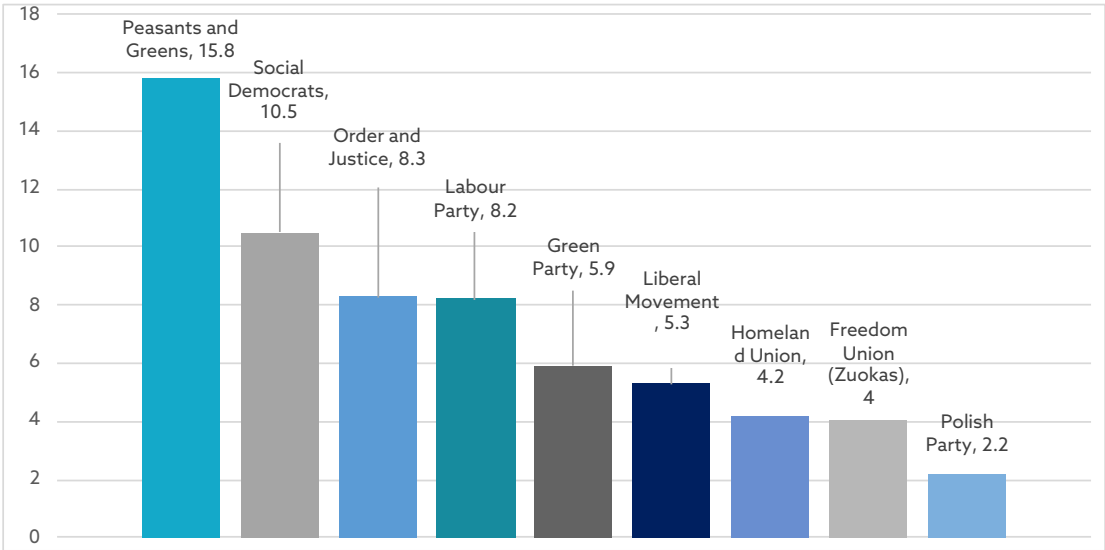
17 In 2016 the Homeland Union won 276275 votes, or 21,7 percent of popular vote in the first round, narrowly defeating the Peasants and Greens Union (274108 votes, or 21,53 percent). In the second round, however, Peasants and Greens scored 35 victories compared to the Conservatives' 10, despite fielding a similar number of candidates in the run-offs (Conservatives 42, Peasants and Greens 40). The latter, with their 54 total seats (out of 141 total), went on to form a governing coalition with the Social Democrats. The Conservatives with 31 parliamentary seats remained in opposition for four more years.

18 One should mention here the paramount role that the International Republican Institute played in this process, its speakers showcasing other countries' experience with open primary elections to the party elite, providing consultations regarding the implementation of open primaries and generally assisting in the process of party reform.

19 BNS, 'TS-LKD ruošiasi rinkimams – kandidatais galės būti siūlomi ir nepartiniai', *Lrt.lt*, 2018, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/210828/ts-lkd-ruosia-si-rinkimams-kandidatais-gales-buti-siulomi-ir-nepartiniai>, (accessed 5 February 2021). The open primary procedure itself is described in the following Homeland Union document: Tėvynės Sąjungos-Lietuvos krikščionių demokratų Taryba, *TS-LKD paramos kandidatui Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidento rinkimuose suteikimo tvarka*, *Tsajunga.lt*, 2018, <https://tsajunga.lt/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Prezidento-tvarka.pdf>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

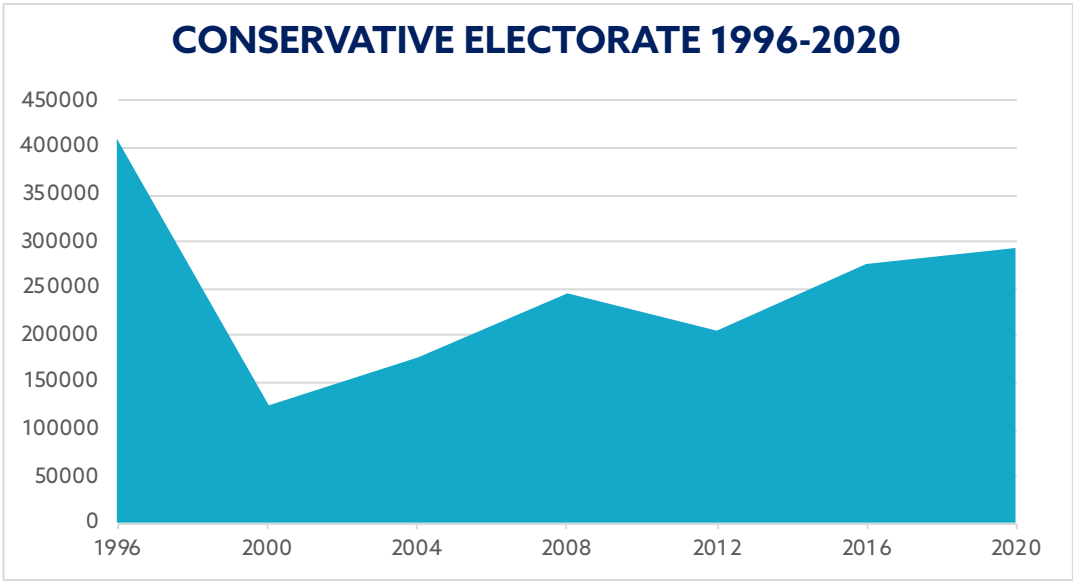
'surpassed' in this regard by the only parliamentary party – the cumbersomely-named Electoral Action of the Lithuanian Poles-Union of Christian Families, or, in short, the Polish ethnic minority party.

SECOND-CHOICE VOTERS, 2016



Source: Homeland Union

Thus, while the Conservatives enjoyed a stable, staunch, and very disciplined circle of voters, their numbers were not sufficient to guarantee parliamentary majority – or even grant a victory in the run-offs with most of the other parties' candidates, given the paucity of second-choice voters. And while the voters' numbers may have been growing over the years, they were not growing nearly enough to change the picture dramatically.



These problems were predicated on image. The Conservatives were seen, according to their own focus-group data, as (i) a party associated with intrigues, deception, machinations; as (ii) negative, merely criticizing; (iii) angry and quarrelsome; (iv) arrogant, distant from the people; (v) self-enclosed and unapproachable; (vi) senescent, mildewed, obsolete; (vii) preachy and moralistic; (viii) harboring radical nationalist and reactionary elements, nicknamed ‘the Taliban.’

While all of these challenges could not be resolved in one stroke, the new party leadership elected after the electoral fiasco of 2016 set about addressing them through a set of reforms laid out in Gabrielius Landsbergis’ 2017 leadership manifesto.

The open primaries were one of the pillars in the set. They were meant to open up the party structures to supporters who were wary of joining its membership, as well as to rejuvenate its voting base through a novel practice, appealing to experiment-prone first-time voters.

One should emphasize the crucial role that the International Republican Institute (IRI) played in the adoption of open primaries by the Lithuanian Conservatives. Over a number of years, the idea was popularized through seminars to party membership, presentations on existing open primary models to party governing bodies, and consulting on various aspects of implementation.

The implementation of open primaries faced a series of hurdles – legal, mental, and social. **Legal:** party statutes had to be adapted, sparking a search for a compromise between the highly detailed, to the point of micro-management, regulations of the Lithuanian Law on Political Parties, and the stipulations of the novel practice of open primaries. **Mental:** the old fears that other parties’ supporters may flock into the Conservatives’ primaries to skew the results maliciously needed to be addressed. To that end, voter registration was introduced for open primaries. Non-party members who wished to participate needed to register so they could be checked against the electoral roll that they were not members of other political parties. Though cumbersome, this procedure provided peace of mind to the apprehensive party old-timers. Another counterargument – that outsiders thereby acquired the same rights as the old and faithful party members who had paid their dues and rallied to party calls for years – was more difficult to address.

However, the argument that many more people voted than were party members, as well as the appeal of the powerful example of the United States’ open primaries usually did the trick of assuaging this particular concern. **Social:** would this new practice of open primaries succeed in creating a new pattern of political behavior? In a society where only half of eligible voters routinely turned out to vote and where the youngest cohort was the least likely to participate in the elections, such innovation was fraught with risk. If outside voters, unattached to the Homeland Union, failed to turn up, it would be a major flop, highly damaging to the party’s reputation and electoral prospects. However, it was considered a risk worth taking, and an advertising campaign was designed to promote the Homeland Union’s open primary election.

By mid-September of 2018, Homeland Union local chapters put forth 12 prospective presidential candidates. Most were courtesy nominations: respected party colleagues, locally influential political figures, but not credible contenders. It is important that the rules allowed for nominations of non-party members. Nine out of 12 withdrew their nominations, and of the three that remained, two were not members of the Homeland Union. The remaining three were Gitanas Nausėda, the SEB bank’s chief economist, and a principal commentator on the state of Lithuanian economy for the last 20 years, Ingrida Šimonytė, former Minister of Finance in Andrius Kubilius’ Conservative government of 2008-12, and the only card-carrying party member, Vygaudas Ušackas, a diplomat and former Minister of Foreign Affairs in the same government.²⁰

20 S. Gudavičius, ‘Konservatorių pirminiams prezidento rinkimams liko trys kandidatai’, *Verslo žinios*, 2018, <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2018/09/19/konservatorių-pirminiams-prezidento-rinkimams-liko-trys-kandidatai>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

The nominees then had to indicate their consent to be entered as candidates in the open primaries. At this stage, Gitanas Nausėda withdrew, perhaps reckoning that his prospects of winning the primaries were not great and that he stood better chance on his own.

What followed was a short but intense open primary campaign that captured national attention and mirrored the sheer ferocity of the American primaries.

In addition to 15,000-strong party membership, more than 18,000 independent supporters registered to vote in the Conservative open primaries. Although the numbers do not look impressive (Lithuanian electoral roll contains close to 2.5 million voters), the hype it generated was out of proportion with actual figures. The new genre of political competition proved to be extraordinarily intriguing; for more than two months it was the principal political story in the media.

The competition brought out the contrast between the candidates. Fifty-five-year-old Vygaudas Ušackas, the gray-haired former Lithuanian ambassador to the U.S. and U.K., and subsequent EU envoy to Afghanistan and Moscow, sought to look experienced, presidential and to appeal to traditional Conservative values; he frequently came off as stiff and generic. He was no match for the vivacious 44-year-old Ingrida Šimonytė, exuding energy and competence, famous for her sparkling humour and propensity to quote Good Soldier Švejk.²¹

While the candidates themselves abstained from voicing mutual criticism in the public, the campaign was quite vicious on the ground level, where supporters of each candidate attacked the rival with few holds barred. Šimonytė was attacked as a crypto-Liberal, bent on perverting authentic Conservative values. Her unmarried status was also grounds for insinuations born of fevered imagination. Ušackas was fiercely criticized as pro-Russian (he continued to advocate 'constructive dialogue' and 'pragmatic relations' with Moscow) or even as the 'Trojan horse' of a putative Kremlin takeover plot.

Basically, the voters in the primary election had to answer two questions: (1) Which candidate is more appealing, convincing, and more likely to win the presidential election next spring? (2) What is worse – a crypto-Liberal or pro-Russian candidate? Even though there was no polling on this score, the general impression was that the first question was more relevant to independent supporters, while party membership bitterly agonized over the second one.

When the vote came in November 2018, the result was not hard to surmise. Ingrida Šimonytė won hands down, receiving 78.71 percent of votes cast against Vygaudas Ušackas' 21.29 percent.

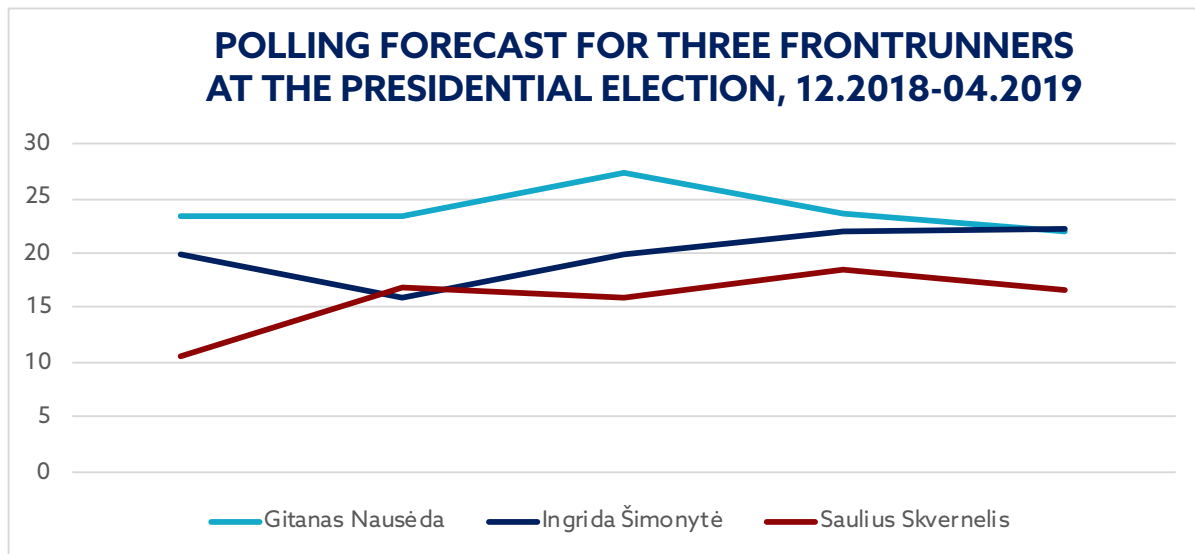
Twenty-thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine voters out of total 33,339 registered turned up to vote in the voting precincts located in 60 cities and towns of Lithuania (as well as in Washington D.C. and London). The turnout was 55 percent among party members and 69 percent among independent supporters. The two biggest cities, Vilnius and Kaunas, accounted for more than half (50.57 percent) of votes cast, while they account for only 27.5 percent of all voters. This figure is important, as it points to the type of electorate that this novel genre of open primaries attracted: mostly young, urban, educated, socially mobile voters. While Šimonytė also clearly won among party members (albeit no such separate statistics exists), it was obvious to outside observers that it was the registered independent supporters that made her victory a landslide.

The path was open for Ingrida Šimonytė to get to the presidential election.

²¹ A farcical WWI sage, creation of a bohemian anarchist Czech writer Jaroslav Hašek (1883-1923), Švejk is better known in Eastern Europe.

AFTERMATH: 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

It would be otiose to analyse the 2019 presidential election in depth. It will suffice to say that Ingrida Šimonytė faced very stiff competition: not only Gitanas Nausėda, the SEB bank economist, who decided to run as an independent candidate, but also Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis, fielded by the governing Peasants and Greens Union. Albeit Skvernelis trailed third in the polls for the last few months before the election, and there were widespread speculations about 'Skvernelis' silent voters' who were not adequately reflected in the polls but would turn up at the voting precincts.



Source: *Vilmorus*²²

Another poll – admittedly historically less accurate – suggested almost equal distribution of votes among the three front-runners: 21.1 percent for Nausėda, 19.5 percent for Šimonytė, and 18.4 percent for Skvernelis.²³

Ingrida Šimonytė ran a youthful, trendy and energetic campaign, which appealed to the young educated aspiring urban middle-class, hipster and non-hipster alike.²⁴ She attracted quite a few Liberal voters who were frankly bored with the unprepossessing, underwhelming Liberal candidate.

When the sun set on election day, it became clear that Šimonytė had managed to attract a volume of support unwitnessed by the Conservatives since the '90s. She received 446,719 votes; last time the Homeland Union or a Conservative candidate collected a remotely similar number of votes was in 1996 (parliamentary election, 409,585 votes). Šimonytė was ahead of Nausėda by a fraction (some 5323 votes, or 1.2 percent of the total). This surge in electoral support was clearly due to attracting new voters and overcoming narrow barriers of party allegiance. Clearly a new phenomenon must be afoot... Ingrida Šimonytė danced a festive jig alongside her team members to a Metallica tune at the election night party.

²² BNS, 'Reitingų lentelėje į pirmą vietą pakilo I. Šimonytė', *Verslo žinios*, 2019, <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2019/04/20/reitingu-lenteleje-i-pirma-vieta-pakilo-i-simonyte>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

²³ ELTA, 'Už ką Lietuvos gyventojai ketina balsuoti prezidento rinkimuose: kandidatų galimybes kiek pasikeitė', *Delfi.lt*, 2019, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/uz-ka-lietuvos-gyventojai-ketina-balsuoti-prezidento-rinkimuose-kandidatu-galimybes-kiek-pasikeite.d?id=81121553>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

²⁴ The polka dot pattern became her campaign's visual signature, while at one point she confessed that in her youth she had always dreamed of being a drummer in the band Metallica.

And then the 2016 story repeated itself all over again. In the run-off two weeks later, Šimonytė not only failed to increase her basket of votes; she lost some (receiving 443,394 votes) while Nausėda very nearly doubled his support (881,495 votes compared to 441,396 in the first round). Šimonytė was a very strong first-round candidate, it appeared, but the second-choice voter curse was still there.

CONSEQUENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED AND OTHERWISE

As we look at the impact and consequences of the first-ever open primaries in Lithuania, let's address it through a short Q&A session.

Q. Did the primary election resolve the second-choice voter problem for the Conservatives, or at least for Ingrida Šimonytė's campaign?

A. No, it did not, but it was a step in the right direction. The problem would no longer be so acute for the Conservatives in 2020. And at least in part that was because the exercise at openness in the 2018 open primaries paid its dividends. (The other half of the explanation is that the Conservatives were pushed out of the niche they occupied as the most arrogant, divisive, and antagonizing political force by, surprisingly, the Freedom Party.)

Q. Were open primaries of any use at all?

A. What the open primaries certainly did was to cobble together the impressive Conservative-Liberal voter coalition that stood Ingrida Šimonytė in such a good stead in the first round of the presidential election. More importantly, in the course of the primaries the lasting bond of political sympathies between the Conservatives and the two Liberal forces – the Liberal Movement and the Freedom Party – was also forged at the voter, grass-root level. It served as the template for the 'girls-only coalition' following the 2020 parliamentary election, with Ingrida Šimonytė as the Prime Minister, chess-player Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen, the leader of the Liberal Movement, as the Speaker of Parliament, and Aušrinė Armonaitė, the leader of the Freedom Party, as the Minister of Economy and Innovations. So, on those terms, having open primaries was definitely a success, albeit its actual outcome was not quite the one which was intended.

Q. Will open primaries become a constant feature of the Lithuanian political landscape?

A. It is hard to say yet. Social Democrats tried to emulate the 2018 Conservative primaries for the 2020 parliamentary election, but their effort did not have the same public resonance as the original attempt. This only goes to illustrate that political innovations pay greatest rewards the first time they are adopted, while later repetitions do not have the same impact. After all, it should be noted that not even the Homeland Union dared repeating the expensive, time- and energy-consuming exercise of open primaries to rank its parliamentary candidates in 2020.

However, this fatigue is unlikely to persist. In 2024, Lithuania will live through triple-election year: citizens will vote at the European Parliament, presidential, and parliamentary elections. This will be an extremely suitable occasion to bring back open primaries: synergy between many parallel political processes will create a demand for broadening the scope of political parties' appeal, and odds are that open primaries will once again be back on the agenda.

Q. What is the impact of the open primaries likely to be in the long run?

A. Well, let's start by pointing out that the ranking of the Conservative parliamentary list in preparation to the 2020 election highlighted a problem which took many years to grow but which hove into view only recently: the growing divergence between the party membership and the party electorate. Paradoxically – but perhaps understandably – while Conservative party organizations were growing increasingly

isolated and becoming more and more traditionalist, strident, and radicalized, the Homeland Union electorate increasingly included a growing number of younger, more liberal voters. Things came to head in the summer of 2020: the Homeland Union parliamentary candidates' list, as it was ranked by the party membership, contained unusually high number of divisive, radical, nationalist political figures in the top 20 slots. When, however, the list was submitted to actual voters' ranking preferences, it transpired that the Homeland Union electorate tended to favor more moderate and liberal figures.

This divergence did not turn into a major political problem for the party in 2020 but may well do so in the future. The underlying problem lurks in the trend whereby party membership is becoming more radical and self-enclosed even as its electorate expands in a liberal direction. This is happening at least partly because the rigid institutionalized party structures are not suitable for the networked and fluid 21st century social reality.

An open primary election mechanism points a way out of the dilemma. By bringing external stakeholders into party-political processes and decisions, it bridges the gap between the party members' and the outside supporters' perspectives. It replaces the rigidly delineated and circumscribed model of political party community with an open-ended, fuzzy, and flexible one which is in considerably less danger of becoming isolated from the life and trends of the surrounding society. Needless to say, insofar as the public can and will participate in a party's decision-making and selection procedure, discrepancy of perspectives is less likely to arise between card-carrying party members and the public on the outside.

Thus, we may interpret the Homeland Union 2018 open primaries as an unintentional experiment at creating a model for a novel, open ended, flexible, and networked type of political organization, suited to 21st century social realities. And is in this direction that open primaries could be considered likely to exercise the most profound and longest-lasting influence on Lithuanian politics.

REFERENCE LIST

- BNS, 'TS-LKD ruošiasi rinkimams – kandidatais galės būti siūlomi ir nepartiniai', *Lrt.lt*, 2018, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/210828/ts-lkd-ruosiasi-rinkimams-kandidatais-gales-buti-siulomi-ir-nepartiniai>, (accessed 5 February 2021).
- BNS, 'Reitingų lentelėje į pirmą vietą pakilo I. Šimonytė', *Verslo žinios*, 2019, <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2019/04/20/reitingu-lenteleje-i-pirma-vieta-pakilo-i-simonyte>, (accessed 5 February 2021).
- BNS / Verslo žinios, 'V. Pranckietis sieks tapti „valstiečių“ kandidatų prezidento rinkimuose', *Verslo žinios*, 2019, <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2019/01/23/v-pranckietis-sieks-tapti-valstieciu-kandidatu-prezidento-rinkimuose>, (accessed 5 February 2021).
- ELTA, 'Socialdemokratai patvirtino savo kandidatą prezidento rinkimuose', *Lrt.lt*, 2015, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/34236/socialdemokratai-patvirtino-savo-kandidata-prezidento-rinkimuose>, (accessed 5 February 2021).
- ELTA, 'Už ką Lietuvos gyventojai ketina balsuoti prezidento rinkimuose: kandidatų galimybės kiek pasikeitė', *Delfi.lt*, 2019, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/uz-ka-lietuvos-gyventojai-ketina-balsuoti-prezidento-rinkimuose-kandidatu-galimybes-kiek-pasikeite.d?id=81121553>, (accessed 5 February 2021).
- Gaidys, V., 'Politinio aktyvumo rodikliai visuomenės nuomonės apklausose [Indicators of political activity in public opinion polls]', *Filosofija. Sociologija*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2020.
- Gudavičius, S., 'Konservatorių pirminiams prezidento rinkimams liko trys kandidatai', *Verslo žinios*, 2018, <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2018/09/19/konservatoriu-pirminiams-prezidento-rinkimams-liko-trys-kandidatai>, (accessed 5 February 2021).
- Jastramskis, M., 'Kaip blaškosi Lietuvos rinkėjas? Kaitumas, protestas ir viltis politikoje [How does the Lithuanian voter wobble? Fluidity, protest, and hope in politics]', in Jastramskis, M. (ed.), *Ar galime prognozuoti Seimo rinkimus? Trijų kūnų problema Lietuvos politikoje [Can We Forecast Parliamentary Elections? Three-Body Problem in the Lithuanian Politics]*. Vilnius, Vilniaus Universiteto leidykla, 2018.
- Jastramskis, M., Kuokštis, V., and Baltrukevičius, M., 'Retrospective voting in Central and Eastern Europe: Hyper-accountability, corruption or socio-economic inequality?', *Party Politics*, vol. 20, 2019.
- Karaliūnas, A., 'Valstiečiai susiruošė į Europos Parlamentą: jų legionieriumi tapo Šarūnas Marčiulionis, Mindaugas Puidokas išmestas', *Lrytas.lt*, 2019, <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2019/02/22/news/valstieciai-susiruose-i-europos-parlamenta-ju-legionieriumi-tapo-sarunas-marciulionis-9336982/>, (accessed 5 February 2021).
- Liberalai.lt, 'Liberalų Sąjūdis sureitingavo kandidatų į Seimą sąrašą', *Liberalai.lt*, 2020, <https://liberalai.lt/naujienos/liberalu-sajudis-sureitingavo-kandidatu-i-seima-sarasa-2/>, (accessed 5 February 2021).
- Liberalų Sąjūdis, *Kandidatų į Europos Parlamentą rinkimų sąrašo reitingavimo ir reitingavimo rezultatų keitimo tvarkos aprašas*, *Liberalai.lt*, 2018, <https://liberalai.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Kandidatu-i-EP-reitingavimo-tvarka.doc>, (accessed 5 February 2021).
- Lrt.lt, 'Laisvės partija išreitingavo kandidatų sąrašą rinkimuose, tarp jų – Armonaitė, Raskevičius, Meiželytė', *Lrt.lt*, 2020, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1186371/laisves-partija>

[isreitingavo-kandidatu-sarasa-rinkimuose-tarp-ju-armonaite-raskevicius-meizelyte](#), (accessed 5 February 2021).

LSDP, 'Į Europos Parlamentą socialdemokratus veda V. Blinkevičiūtė', *Lsdp.lt*, 2019, <https://www.lsdp.lt/i-europos-parlamenta-socialdemokratus-veda-v-blinkeviciute/>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

Pankūnas, G., 'Paaiškėjo dar vienas kandidatas į prezidentus: socialdemokratui išklė Vytenį Povilą Andriukaitį', *Delfi.lt*, 2018, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/paaiskejo-dar-vienas-kandidatas-i-prezidentus-socialdemokratui-iskele-vyteni-povila-andriukaiti.d?id=79678925>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

Roberts, A., 'Hyperaccountability: Economic Voting in Central and Eastern Europe', *Electoral Studies*, vol. 27, 2008.

Tėvynės Sąjungos-Lietuvos krikščionių demokratų Taryba, *TS-LKD paramos kandidatui Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidento rinkimuose suteikimo tvarka*, *Tsajunga.lt*, 2018, <https://tsajunga.lt/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Prezidento-tvarka.pdf>, (accessed 5 February 2021).

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION IN POLAND

Miłosz Hodun

The year 2015 was a landmark time for Polish democracy. For the first time since 1989, one party, namely Law and Justice (PiS), won a clear majority in both chambers of Parliament. It was also a very refreshing year for the directly elected lower chamber, the Sejm, since out of 460 deputies, 203 won their seats for the very first time, and two new groups (Kukiz'15 and Nowoczesna) were composed only of rookies.¹ Four years earlier and four years later, in 2011² and 2019,³ the number of debuts in the Sejm reached 137 and 142, respectively.⁴ Why was 2015 so special and why did it lead to a significant replacement of political elites? Is it connected to the way of selecting candidates in Poland? Does this selection follow any institutional scheme? Or was there something more that happened in party politics those years that could help us understand how MPs are elected in Poland?

In this article we will look at the Polish system of political parties and their methods of candidate selection. We will focus primarily on parliamentary elections, but occasionally this discussion will be placed in the context of lower-level Polish elections. To characterize the candidate selection process, this article will start by addressing the general features of the Polish system, as well as outlining the legal framework for Polish elections. Later, we will analyze the current practices of key political players and comment on how two significant phenomena within the Polish political landscape, namely the appearance of start-up parties and pre-election coalitions, have modified these practices in recent years.

THE PARTY SYSTEM IN POLAND

The development of the political party system in Poland after 1989 involved an adoption of the Western tradition of political competition. The transition was not easy, though. Just after the democratic revolution, the party system was immature and turbulent. The transition from single-party rule to pluralism resulted in a flood of new political units. As a result, in 1991, 29 parties entered the Sejm (out of 111 that ran) and 22 in the Senate, with no party holding a decisive majority. The biggest of them all, the Democratic Union, won only 62 seats in the Sejm, compared to 16 won by the Polish Beer-Lovers' Party. This fragmentation resulted in extreme instability. As a result, Jan Olszewski's premiership lasted only 6 months, while his successor Waldemar Pawlak's tenure was even shorter, lasting just 33 days. The last prime minister of that term was Hanna Suchocka, whose mandate was interrupted by early elections in 1993.

The instability of these early years forced extensive modifications to Poland's new electoral system. The proportional representation formula was still effective, but the method for converting votes into seats changed, and electoral thresholds were established. The new rules led to a radical change of the government. The 1993 elections were won by two parties with roots in the communist regime, the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and the Polish People's Party (PSL), who formed a coalition. Their 20.4 and 15.4 percent of the vote, respectively, guaranteed them over 300 mandates. These elections ended

1 59 deputies served one term before, 65 served two terms, 89- three terms, 44 served four and more terms. Sejm of the Republic of Poland, 'Data on deputies as of the election day' [VIII term], https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm8.nsf/page.xsp/poslowie_poczatek_kad.

2 Sejm of the Republic of Poland, 'Data on deputies as of the election day' [VII term], http://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm7.nsf/page.xsp/poslowie_poczatek_kad.

3 Sejm of the Republic of Poland, 'Data on deputies as of the election day' [IX term], https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm9.nsf/page.xsp/poslowie_poczatek_kad.

4 It can be also stressed that with the newcomers, the average age of an MP went down in 2015 from 50 to 49, and then up again to 50 in 2019.

up with the highest over-representation of two election committees of all the elections held in the 1990s.⁵ Post-Solidarity parties on the right lost a significant number of seats due to their fragmentation and because of the advent of new small-sized constituencies and rules. Even though the Catholic Electoral Committee "Homeland" won 6.4 percent of the vote, it did not pass the 8 percent threshold for a coalition, which translated into no representation.

Right-wing parties learned their lesson and presented a common list in the next elections. Over 30 parties created a conservative block named Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) and won the next elections in 1997. Together they created a government with the Liberal Freedom Union (UW), led by Jerzy Buzek. It seemed that from now on Polish politics would be a bi-polar game between the right (AWS) and the left (SLD), with two smaller coalition partners in the background (PSL and UW). But before the 2001 election, the right-wing camp disintegrated. From the ruins of the forces behind the Buzek administration two new parties formed, the Civic Platform (PO) and Law and Justice, thereby initiating the modern era of Polish politics.⁶ These two parties declared their intention to form a common government after successful elections in 2005. However, as PiS attracted more popular support than PO, Jarosław Kaczyński decided to build a coalition with smaller, radical parties.⁷

This is when the radical breakdown started. Two former coalition partners became sworn enemies. With each passing year, the division between PiS and PO became deeper and deeper. This chasm was exacerbated by policies, assessments of the past and divergent visions of European and external relations, as well as by differing styles of politics and aggressive language. Political conflict was accelerated by personal animosities, and psychology became a better tool to understand the Polish electoral processes than law and political science. The Smoleńsk catastrophe, in which President Lech Kaczyński and 95 other members of the Polish elite died, elevated that conflict to a new level, giving dangerous weapons to cynical leaders. This division has fueled all campaigns in the 21st century, and polarization has become the main term defining political dynamics in Poland, with both camps contributing to, and benefiting from, tribalism.

For over ten years, Poles have been divided politically and socially. This polarization results in the sealing of the political scene, that is a de facto two-party system where only PO and PiS are seen as capable of forming a government. The war between these two main parties overshadows all important social challenges and marginalizes all other competing visions of the future. In such a context of obdurate political division, Polish parties have become more like armies waging battles over each election cycle. Party leaders know that their main task is to get their most faithful knights elected. They in turn will perpetuate the status quo, which is the electoral duopoly of Polish politics.

5 J. Jaskiernia, 'The Development of the Polish Party System: A Perspective of the Parliamentary Elections Results', *Polish Political Science Yearbook*, vol. 46, no. 2, pp. 227-246.

6 AWS won only 5.6 percent and UW- 3.1 percent. Both were eliminated from the Sejm and never came back. UW managed to cross the required 5 percent threshold in the 2004 European Parliament elections, receiving 7 percent of votes and 4 of 54 seats. In 2005, it was rebranded to the Democratic Party.

7 PiS announced a minority government headed by Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, which depended on the support of the agrarian populist Samoobrona (Self-Defense) and the ultra-conservative League of Polish Families (LPR).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

To understand the way candidates for Sejm elections are selected, it is necessary to comprehend not only the general dynamic between the two main camps but also their legal framework. According to the Constitution, elections to the Sejm are universal, equal, direct and are conducted by secret ballot. Polish citizens of at least 18 years old on the day of election have the right to vote. And anyone having the right to vote and having attained the age of 21 is eligible to be elected to the Sejm. The division of the country into constituencies, their boundaries, and the number of deputies to be elected in each constituency are specified by statute.

Candidates for MP positions may be nominated by the election committees of political parties and by voters. The principle of proportionality requests that lists of candidates are submitted in each of the 41 constituencies. A constituency list must be supported by the signatures of at least 5,000 voters who reside permanently in each constituency.⁸ This requirement limits the number of entities capable of presenting lists to a narrow number of well-established parties and some of the popular movements.⁹ In other words, in theory, any group of at least 15 voters may present a list of candidates. But in practice only well-organized and well-financed organizations can succeed in getting their candidates elected. Therefore, the role of existing parties, and their leaders cannot be underestimated. To a large extent, political parties decide who will run and who has a chance to get elected. The electoral system is fully open only on paper. In reality, it is largely inaccessible, except to those who already are in and benefit from parties. This consolidation process, known in Poland as *concreting*, is encouraged by law on party financing and other elements of the electoral code.¹⁰

All 460 members of the Sejm are elected by open list through proportional representation in 41 multi-member districts. Each district has between 7 and 19 seats. Seats are allocated using the d'Hondt method,¹¹ with a 5 percent threshold for single parties and an 8 percent threshold for coalitions.¹² The combination of small constituencies and the use of the d'Hondt method results in a high electoral threshold, which ultimately favors the ability of larger parties to consolidate seat allocation. Conversely, this high threshold restricts smaller parties from gaining seats in the Sejm. For example, in 2019 there was one list, the Confederation, that passed the threshold by receiving 6.81 percent of the votes, but this translated only into 11 MPs, less than the number required to form a group in the Sejm, which is necessary to participate fully in the legislative process.¹³

Every committee aiming to gain representation in the Sejm must gather between 460 and 920 names on its lists. To further a committee's chances of earning representation, these names should be strategically distributed and represent various cities and towns.¹⁴ Most importantly, since the quota law of 2011, each list must contain at least 35 percent women and at least 35 percent men (on a constituency level). A

8 This requirement does not apply to an election committee which has registered constituency lists in at least half of all constituencies.

9 In 2019, only five committees competed in all constituencies, and another five competed in less than 50 percent of constituencies; two of them only in one constituency.

10 A political party has the right to receive subsidies from the state budget for its statutory activities during the term of office of the Sejm if an electoral committee of the party participated in Sejm elections and received at least three percent of valid votes on its district lists of candidates for deputies, or in election to the Sejm, the party became part of an electoral coalition, whose district lists of candidates for deputies were awarded with at least six percent of the valid votes cast.

11 The d'Hondt method is a mathematical formula used widely in proportional representation systems. Under the d'Hondt method, each party's total number of votes is repeatedly divided, until all seats are filled, by the divisor 1 + the number of seats already allocated (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). It tends to increase the advantage for the electoral lists which gain the most votes, to the detriment of those with fewer votes.

12 Thresholds are waived for national minorities. As a result, representatives of German minority have been always, since 1991, presented in the Sejm.

13 Deputies and senators in Poland create two types of factions: clubs (minimum 15 members) and circles (*koło*; minimum three members). Clubs enjoy more rights in the parliament, e.g., traditionally can appoint deputy speakers, standing committee heads, have more time in debates, and more funds for the secretariat.

14 Especially important in geographically large constituencies with no center but with many middle size towns instead.

non-compliant list cannot be registered, and if it remains non-compliant for more than three days, it will be rejected in full by the electoral commission. This makes the entire process even more complicated.

Practice

The above-mentioned factors determine the current process of candidate selection in Poland. The fact that the political party system has hardened, along with the strong polarization of the electorate, results in a landscape where existing parties and their leaders hold immense amounts of power. Wielding ultimate authority in deciding which names are included on party candidate lists, party leaders and elites exercise significant control over the selection process.

In all well-established Polish parties, the process of selecting candidates is very centralized. Of course, in their own opinion it is very decentralized and democratic, but their statutes, and above all, well-known practices prove otherwise. For example, in PiS it is the district board which proposes a list of candidates, and the district council which evaluates it. But the final decisions are taken by the central authorities: the political committee approves the lists submitted by the chairman.¹⁵ In the case of PO, regional councils draft the lists, and the National Council approves them. The National Board can change the lists, and the chairman can suspend the decision.¹⁶ It is similar in the cases of PSL¹⁷ (lists approved by the National Electoral Convention upon request of Chief Executive Committee) and SLD¹⁸ (final lists are prepared by the National Board and approved by the National Council).

The process of candidate selection and the shaping of lists are not transparent, with much of the activities conducted behind closed doors. This results from tensions not only between different factions within the party but also between regional and national leaders. In some parties, regional leaders may be very strong and essential for final results.¹⁹ There are no general criteria for candidates, no minimum requirements are announced, no expectations are voiced. The only criterion is usefulness for the party. Consequently, no reason is given once the lists are announced. Perhaps with exception of PiS, parties do not use algorithms or formulas based on data to select their candidates and put them in a specific order. The final decision is purely political and based on subjective analysis, or the gut feelings of the leaders in charge.

Well-established Polish parties are very suspicious of (and therefore avoid) primaries. The format of the primaries (*prawybory*) proposed by the PO before the presidential elections of 2010 and 2019 was more of a PR trick than a real offer of civic participation in a democratic process. Well-organized despite small internal conflicts,²⁰ the outcome of these primaries was determined by party leaders well before citizens cast their votes. Fearful of losing control over the selection process and risking final election results, party leaders are willing to restrict democratic engagement.

This lack of transparency and clear rules applies not only to the selection of names on the lists but also, more importantly, to their order. Open-list elections, in theory, give equal chances to all candidates on a list, with candidates receiving the highest scores winning seats. However, in practice, the order of a candidate on a list is essential. First, party practices show that campaign spending quotas are unequally distributed. Sums big enough to finance a successful campaign are reserved only for those on the top of the list (and often for the last person on the list). While not overtly intuitive, holding the bottom position

¹⁵ Available at <http://pis.org.pl/document/archive/download/122>

¹⁶ Available at <https://platforma.org/dokumenty/statut-po>

¹⁷ Available at <http://pslpowiatkrakowski.cba.pl/statut-psl>

¹⁸ Available at <https://sld.org.pl/partia/statut>

¹⁹ In SLD they were especially strong and called barons.

²⁰ Some clashes between local branches have happened, though. See R. Grochal, 'PO: Prawybory na plus', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, https://wyborcza.pl/1,75398,7628293,PO_Prawybory_na_plus.html.

on the list often yields better outcomes for the specific candidate in a preferential voting system; often voters will choose the name at the bottom of the list as their number one choice. Advertising and free airtime,²¹ access to allied celebrities, among other perks, are similarly unequally distributed. Secondly, 30 years of experience shows that some positions on a list have a better chance of being elected than others.

Obviously, leading a list at the top spot is the best possible situation for a candidate. For some candidates, leading a list implies an almost certainty of winning a seat (e.g., a PiS list leader in the party's Subcarpathian stronghold). For others, being a list leader is their only hope of becoming an MP from a certain list (e.g., a PO list leader in the Subcarpathian region, where PO competes for one single seat). Party leaders often award these positions to their most faithful political associates or to the strongest regional figures. Losing such a position can be a sign of losing one's status in the party. But leading a party list is not the only avenue for candidates to win a seat. In big constituencies, like Warsaw with its 20 seats, some spots further down can offer big prizes. Internal competition between candidates to occupy the second and third spot on a party list is also rife. Candidates also see occupying the last position on the list or being the first woman on the list as significantly increasing their chances of success.

Many people agree to appear on lists even though, realistically, they will not succeed in getting elected. These candidates' only role is to attract some additional votes (especially if they are local politicians, opinion makers, or celebrities). Some people agree to take these hopeless numbers on a list to prove their usefulness to the party, eventually fighting for their spot on lists in future elections. Sometimes candidates (especially in local elections) run only because they have been asked to, in order to fulfill the 35 percent gender quota requirement. This is especially true in the case of male-dominated parties such as PSL. In extreme cases, mothers, daughters, and female neighbors of local activists are convinced to run to meet these quotas.

The final shape of a list is a result of many internal processes, alliances, and conflicts. As last-minute changes are not unusual, list publication tends to bring surprises and spark internal conflicts. Disappointed and frustrated politicians who find their names lower on a list than expected, or in some cases not at all, may start criticizing their parties and their systems of candidate selection. Obviously, when politicians who were fully involved in those obscure processes and benefited from them, words of criticism were hard to find.

POLITICAL START-UPS

This centralized pattern of candidate selection is sometimes disturbed by political newcomers. Polish election cycles are characterized by the addition of at least one new political movement entering the Sejm every election. A "movement" is a proper word here, as these newcomers tend to present themselves not as parties but as new social movements. They claim they are different and that they represent new politics, often telling stories about change and promising to represent those who are not traditionally represented by bigger parties. In that sense, they place themselves outside of the mainstream political system, willing to break old arrangements and serve as an alternative to the old parties. In fact, they represent different shades of an anti-establishment tide in Poland. These movements ebb throughout time, in 2011 it was the progressive Palikot's Movement. In 2015, it was the populist Kukiz'15, the liberal Nowoczesna, and the far-left Razem, and in the 2019 EP elections it was the

²¹ During a general election, parties have the right to broadcast their election programs at no cost on both state television and radio.

center-left Wiosna (Spring) and the far-right Konfederacja (Confederation) in the general elections. The most recent example is the center-right Poland 2050.²²

From this perspective, 2015 was an especially interesting year as three start-up movements took their chances in general elections, ultimately winning over 3 million votes. Two of them, Kukiz'15 and Nowoczesna, entered the parliament. Razem had a successful and unexpected debut and gained entitlement to state subsidies.

All newly elected MPs of Kukiz'15 and Nowoczesna, as mentioned earlier, had never been elected before. Candidates on both lists were selected in a partially open process. Both leaders looked for new faces who were not associated with old-school party politics. Nowoczesna established a candidate selection committee responsible for the composition of its lists and the selection of list leaders. In most cases, they were suggested by local clubs, which were created by sympathizers of the movement. The crucial criterion for endorsement was professionalism. All list leaders were successful entrepreneurs, NGO activists, experts, artists, and local politicians, to stress the professional and metropolitan image of the movement.

None of the candidates, besides leader Ryszard Petru, were known to the public, but they were all introduced in their campaign as the Nowoczesna team (with football t-shirts, etc.), and they were supposed to act as one. This group was supposed to be strong, diverse, and coherent. Forty-one percent of list leaders were women, which was more than any other committee that was expected to succeed in these elections. Consequently, Nowoczesna's parliamentary group was one of the youngest in the Sejm, as well as the most gender-balanced of all groups in that term. In the case of Kukiz'15, the lists were the result of the compromise between many groups forming the movement, from libertarians to extreme-right nationalists. But Kukiz'15 also stressed its openness by launching a special online form for all people willing to run on their lists. All potential candidates had to answer a few questions about Kukiz'15's manifesto and their public engagement.²³ Palikot's Movement did almost the same thing in 2011.

In 2020, Konfederacja organized primaries to select its presidential candidate. These were the first primaries in Poland with an advanced format, featuring an American-style delegate system. Electors were chosen in 16 regional conventions. All nine potential candidates had to campaign in regions to win their support. Multiple debates and meetings were organized. This innovative and inclusive form of candidate selection attracted the attention of voters and the media. The results were not known until the very last part of voting at the national convention, when young radical nationalist Krzysztof Bosak defeated ultra-Catholic monarchist Grzegorz Braun by a slight majority of 163 to 146. This long and visible candidate selection process helped far-right Bosak win a shocking 1.3 million votes in the first round of presidential elections.

Start-up parties offer more open candidate selection processes than well-established parties, which to some extent makes them more attractive to political newcomers. These open selection processes can be a political start for those who want to try their chances. While it is difficult to conclude that the methods used by start-up movements are fully transparent, they are more inclusive and clearer than those used by larger traditional parties. These movements deliver new faces and new ideas to the Sejm. Nevertheless, the fact that most of these movements are created only weeks before elections, in an attempt to remain fresh, has negative consequences. The selection process is quick and chaotic. The necessity of submitting hundreds of names in such a short period of time creates an opportunity for some shameless self-promoters and people with less than pure intentions to run. With a list made in

22 Szymon Hołownia, former TV celebrity, leader of the Poland 2050 civic movement and an independent candidate who garnered nearly 14 percent support in the first round of the presidential elections, registered a party. The party is pro-European, environmentalist and centrist.

23 'Každy może ubiegać się o kandydowanie do Sejmu z list Kukiza', Interia.pl, 30 July 2015, <https://wydarzenia.interia.pl/polska/news-kazdy-moze-ubiegac-sie-o-kandydowanie-do-sejmu-z-list-kukiza,nld,1860822>.

a less rushed amount of time, any corruption or past problems with candidates would be discovered earlier in the campaign, making it easier to remove controversial and corrupt candidates. With lists being generated so quickly, the likelihood of a proverbial bad apple being elected is much higher. To further complicate things, many MPs elected this way are in fact not ideologically or personally linked to their movements, and often leave politics to gain personal benefits elsewhere.

These problems were most visible in the case of Kukiz'15. Originally, there were 42 MPs elected from its lists, and four years later there were only 16. The political choices and decisions of ex-Kukiz'15 MPs are beyond the scope of this article, but it is worth stressing that they ended up in various parties, from PiS to Nowoczesna, and created a number of small groups with names that are not remembered.

History shows that these political start-ups, also known as "10% parties," are ephemeral and often disappear after one term. This was true in respect to Palikot's Movement and, as shown above, to Kukiz'15, whose 5 MPs were elected in 2019 from lists created with PSL.²⁴ Wiosna survived independently only in elections to the European Parliament. A few months later it lost one of its three Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and started to integrate with the old-school SLD. Despite high turbulence, Nowoczesna seems to be the only one of the start-ups that has some relevance in Polish politics. It remains an independent party within the Civic Coalition, with its name and logo visible in the biggest opposition group in the parliament. Its eight MPs were re-elected, and three politicians linked to Nowoczesna became senators. It is worth noting that the liberals are present and visible in dozens of local governments, especially in big cities, unlike the politicians of Kukiz'15 who were defeated in 2018 municipal and regional elections.

Even if "10% parties" cannot repeat their electoral success, they open a window of opportunity for many talented legislators who later stay in politics. These movements are like a pass to parliament and help promote activists whose career paths in old parties would be much slower, or even impossible, due to existing agreements and connections. In the long term they can join a reservoir of potential candidates for both well-established and newly created parties to field, by rebranding or merger. Without Palikot's Movement, the Robert Biedroń phenomenon would not have happened, and Wiosna would not have been created. Without Wiosna and Razem, voices on the left would not be heard again in the Sejm. In Kukiz'15, some leaders of Konfederacja gained their first parliamentary experience and some Nowoczesna MPs became new local leaders of Civic Platform.

PRE-ELECTION COALITIONS

There is one more factor in recent years that has influenced the candidate selection process, and which should be mentioned here: the creation of electoral coalitions. Deep polarization in Polish politics with the clear dominance of PiS, combined with the electoral code (in particular, its thresholds and use of d'Hondt method), resulted in the creation of diverse electoral alliances. The party mathematics are simple: The only way for the opposition parties to win a majority in the Sejm is to form strategic blocks. The d'Hondt system promotes the biggest parties and discourages smaller ones. In other words, it is not enough to win more votes than PiS to form a new government; to remove PiS from power, the opposition needs more seats in the Sejm - something much easier said than done for many small parties.²⁵ Opposition leaders realize this and work to form coalitions before elections. To be fair, this is something that PiS understands, as well. Jarosław Kaczyński's victory in 2015 was only possible because PiS formed a tripartite alliance called the United Right.

²⁴ In December 2020 they left the common group and four of them created a separate group. See 'Rock man's political eviction', PolandIn, 26 November 2020, <https://polandin.com/51047797/rock-mans-political- eviction>.

²⁵ See P. Wroński, 'System d'Hondta bezwzględny dla ambicji polityków. Dlaczego PiS wygrał tam, gdzie więcej głosów zdobyła opozycja', *Gazeta Wyborcza* [interview with W. Sokała], 25 October 2018, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,24093092,system-d-honta-bezwzledny-dla-ambicji-politykow-dlaczego-pis.html>.

At first glance, it seems like there are only five forces in the Polish parliament, as only five committees passed the threshold and participated in distribution of mandates. But a deeper look allows us to understand the complexity of the situation. PiS/United Right is in fact a coalition of three parties (PiS, United Poland and Accord, plus one MP from a marginal Republican Party). Civic Coalition, by definition, actually represents four parties (PO, Nowoczesna, Greens and Polish Initiative). The Left was created by three parties (SLD, Wiosna, Razem). The Polish Coalition is (or was, until December 2020) three parties (PSL, Kukiz'15, Union of European Democrats) and Konfederacja is actually four parties (Konfederacja, National Movement, KORWiN, Korona). With one representative of the German minority, at least 18 parties are represented in the Sejm, giving Poland's parliament a great diversity of parties.

The necessity of coalition building influences the way electoral lists are made. To form a coalition, not only must the internal interests of all parties be considered, but also a balance between coalition members – derived from their strength – be formed. The final shape of the lists of candidates in coalitions are negotiated between parties, and again the process is not transparent. It happens in the privacy of leaders' offices, but at least some discussion happens, and more voices and arguments are considered. For example, because opposition leaders know that beating PiS is the defining moment for their personal careers, they also know they need to be flexible and opt for the whole coalition's interest and support a candidate who has the strongest chance of winning a seat. This was most evident during the latest senate race, where in most of the 100 single-member constituencies (simple majority rule), all mainstream opposition parties agreed to support one candidate against PiS. These coalitions forced all parties to look for candidates with best profiles to win. This strategy paid off, as the opposition took control of the upper chamber²⁶.

The leftist wave of 2019 forced Civic Platform, the biggest opposition party, to be more open for new candidates on its lists. Both Civic Coalition and the Left competed for the same centric electorate. Civic Platform understood that it must reach for fresh, active, and progressive candidates. Its leaders agreed, often facing backlash from regional structures of the party, to promote progressive candidates on their lists (e.g., from Nowoczesna or the Greens). What's more, both Civic Coalition and the Left tried to attract independent candidates from various NGOs popular in their constituencies. By doing that, Civic Coalition (PO) and the Left (SLD) benefited from best practices of political start-ups.

The diversity of candidates from different parties, the presence of political debutants on all the lists, and the urgency of the 2019 elections resulted in competition within the lists. Leaders of different coalitions knew that their appointees would have to compete against other candidates on the same list and were forced to pick the best candidate for the race. The consequences of that are apparent. In the current term, there are 50 MPs who are not members of any party. Nineteen of them are in the Civic Coalition group and their presence changes not only the image, but also the narrative, of the entire group. In the future, they may have to determine the general direction of the biggest opposition force.

²⁶ PiS- 48 senators, Civic Coalition- 43, PSL- 3, Left- 2, independents- 4.

CONCLUSIONS

The Polish party system has been constantly changing since 1989. At the beginning of the 21st century, it reached relative stabilization. For around 20 years it has been characterized by the existence of four main actors and the regular emergence of anti-establishment start-up parties. The former feature, especially the dominance of the two big parties/blocs and related polarization, has resulted in the cementing of the system and strengthening the role of party leaders in shaping the composition of the parliament. The latter feature results in the regular influx of fresh blood into politics. Even if these start-ups are only temporary, they create long-term opportunities for talented newcomers who later find their way within the existing system.

Long-lasting conflicts between two major political forces accelerates tribalism. It is perpetuated, purposefully, by party leaders and the electoral system. The process of candidate selection in Poland is as obscure as Polish politics, and in the case of well-established parties, this process happens entirely out of public sight. Voters do not participate in the candidate selection process in any way, though they can, at least, follow leaks from internal conflicts in the media. Primaries are foreign, and even open discussions about the final shape of the lists are unknown. The lists are simply announced, without much explanation. And if there are some additional comments, they come from PR experts and have nothing to do with transparency.

In the current circumstances, the only feeble attempts to open the candidate selection process relate to start-up parties, which sometimes experiment with innovative, democratic methods to stress how different they are from the establishment, and with pre-election coalition building that demands more competition on the lists. But these practices are not enough. For a more transparent candidate selection system, the election code must be amended. Only easier access to parliament for smaller parties can unblock the stiff structure and provoke positive transformations among the biggest players. Three changes are key to accomplish that: abandonment of the d'Hondt method, lowering the election threshold, and lowering the state subsidy threshold. Such reform would make real competition between visions, ideas, and personalities easier. It would contribute to ending tribalism in Polish politics and focusing on crucial challenges of the modern world, instead of destructive political warfare. Unfortunately, it does not seem that there is much interest in change.

REFERENCE LIST

Grochal, R., 'PO: Prawybory na plus', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, https://wyborcza.pl/1,75398,7628293,PO_Prawybyry_na_plus.html.

Jaskiernia, J., 'The Development of the Polish Party System: A Perspective of the Parliamentary Elections Results', *Polish Political Science Yearbook*, vol. 46, no. 2, pp. 227-246.

'Każdy może ubiegać się o kandydowanie do Sejmu z list Kukiza', *Interia.pl*, 30 July 2015, <https://wydarzenia.interia.pl/polska/news-kazdy-moze-ubiegac-sie-o-kandydowanie-do-sejmu-z-list-kukiza,nld,1860822>.

'Rock man's political eviction', *PolandIn*, 26 November 2020, <https://polandin.com/51047797/rock-mans-political- eviction>.

Sejm of the Republic of Poland, 'Data on deputies as of the election day' [VII term], http://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm7.nsf/page.xsp/poslowie_poczatek_kad.

Sejm of the Republic of Poland, 'Data on deputies as of the election day' [VIII term], https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm8.nsf/page.xsp/poslowie_poczatek_kad.

Sejm of the Republic of Poland, "Data on deputies as of the election day" [IX term], https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm9.nsf/page.xsp/poslowie_poczatek_kad.

Wroński, P. 'System d'Hondta bezwzględny dla ambicji polityków. Dlaczego PiS wygrał tam, gdzie więcej głosów zdobyła opozycja', *Gazeta Wyborcza* [interview with W. Sokała], 25 October 2018, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,24093092,system-d-honta-bezwzglydny-dla-ambicji-politykow-dlaczego-pis.html>.

CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION IN FRANCE: THE LONG ROAD TOWARD (AND AWAY FROM) OPEN PRIMARIES

Thibault Muzergues

If, in the words of Charles de Gaulle, it is difficult to rule a country with 365 varieties of cheese, it is equally difficult for political parties to field candidates in a country where every one of the 47 million French voters holds a different opinion and are all too ready to have them heard. This might be why the question of candidate selection has always been a tricky one for French political parties, even after the republican system of government started to admit that strong political parties could consolidate rather than dilute French democracy. In a Latin country historically prone to its own version of *caudillismo*, and with the question of leadership the subject of eternal debate within the *Res publica*, one might assume that political parties would have found a reasonably institutionalized process to field their candidates for elections.

Indeed, beginning in the 1930s, parties became strong enough to choose and field their candidates, and they did so in a very top-down manner. However, as the party system started to follow the transatlantic route toward bipartisan politics, the crystallization of the French party system, along with the changing aspirations of the French electorate, pushed both parties on the left and right to adopt more democratic methods in their governance. As central headquarters lost their grip on candidate selection in the 1990s, further pressure built from the bottom to democratize candidate selection. By the 2000s France's major parties had adopted a closed primary system to let their members decide who would be their champion.

The process continued to open up as the left, followed by the right, adopted a system of open primaries for a number of major contests (including the ultimate prize of French politics: the presidential elections). But just as the French electoral cycle seemed to have acclimated to a system in which the two major parties would select their presidential candidates (and, further down the road, many of their major candidates) in an open primary, the whole French political party system crumbled in 2017, with the election of Emmanuel Macron as President of France.

Why and how the democratization of the French political party selection process rose and fell, and whether the principle of primaries has a future in a now-fluid political environment is the subject of this chapter. It will be tackled in a chronological way, so as to allow the reader to see the full logic behind the events that led to the rise (and ultimate fall) of the open primaries experiment, before some thoughts on how the system might rebuild itself after the momentous changes brought about by the 2017 presidential elections.

CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION IN FRENCH POLITICAL PARTIES – A LONG (AND TOP-DOWN) STORY

To talk about candidate selection in general necessarily involves talking about political parties. And one of the reasons why candidate (s)election has always been a thorn in the side of political leaders in France is that the French democratic system has been historically designed for political parties to be weak or even non-existent. Indeed, at the origins of the French Republic, parties or any movement that trended towards the collective were actually forbidden by law. One of the founding acts of French democracy, the Le Chapelier law of 1791, forbade any association of professionals. This not only slowed down the formation of the trade union movement in France, but also that of civil society and political parties. Surprisingly enough, French liberal republicans proved to be radical individualists who viewed any political groupings with suspicion, which they interpreted as remnants of *Ancien Régime* corporatism.

This did not prevent de facto parties from forming, but these loose parliamentary groupings of elected representatives were informal “clubs,” rather than solidified political associations. Indeed, elections during this period were held on a constituency basis, which encouraged influential individuals to run on their own, primarily relying on their personal resources and reputations to get elected. Only in 1901, under the Third Republic, did the ruling Radicals form France’s first official party, just a few days before the passing of a law recognizing (and regulating) freedom of association in the French parliament. As parties became tolerated (though still not constitutionally recognized), they started structuring, but the process was much slower than in countries like Germany or the UK, where political culture and the election system favored party organization over individual talent.

As in other Western European countries, the left usually led the way in terms of party structuring and left-of-center parties were thus trailblazers in imposing processes to select and field party candidates, rather than co-opt local leaders as before. While the much-decentralized French Section of Workers’ International (SFIO) did opt for internal party democracy in their candidate selection methods at local and constituency levels, the parties that opted for structuration usually did so with a very top-down, Jacobine approach. This was certainly the case of the French Communist party (PCF), but also of the French Social Party (PSF), the first right-of-center mass party in France. In the latter case, authority was built around one charismatic leader, WWI veteran François de la Roque, while in the former, following the model of the Bolshevik revolution, the political bureau was all powerful. In both cases, party-driven candidate selection processes began to emerge, but they remained in the hands of the national leadership¹.

After the Second World War, as the Communist Party became the dominant force on the left and the Gaullist “movements” emerged on the right (De Gaulle himself did not like the term “parties.”²) candidate selection remained a top-down exercise with decisions made in Paris, including for centrist, non-communist and non-Gaullist political parties. A high level of organization became key for success as centralization allowed parties to field candidates that could either look like the constituency they represented (that was clearly the case of the communists), or like the model type of the ultra-competent bureaucrat that represented the future of state administration. In 1967, the Gaullist Union for a New Republic (UNR) led an ambitious program of fielding of young and talented administrators freshly graduated from the National School of Administration in rural and semi-rural constituencies for the

¹ See, for the French communist party structure, S. Courtois and M. Lazar, *Histoire du Parti communiste français*, 2nd edn., Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2000., and for the PSF, J.P. Thomas, ‘Le Parti social français (1936-1945) Une expérience de parti de masses et la préparation d’une relève’, *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l’Ouest*, vol. 109, no. 3, 2002.

² See G. Richard, *Histoire des Droites en France: de 1815 à nos jours*, Paris, Perrin, 2017.

legislative elections. Many of them got elected and pursued eminent careers in French politics, including future French President Jacques Chirac, elected in a very rural district in Corrèze³.

Despite the rise of the Socialist Party as an alternative for government on the left and the relative dominance of the Gaullist, then liberal, right until 1981, candidate selection processes in France evolved little until the end of the century. Often the left took the lead in experimenting with internal democracy. In the Socialist Party, which had taken the leadership of the French left, the real selection remained in the hands of local and – importantly – national party elites. These elites utilized processes that were anything but transparent, leading to expectations in faraway constituencies that “Paris” (understand: central headquarters) would send a savior to solve constituency problems. For all its faults, this top-down approach often used well-choreographed electoral processes to give the perception of genuine collective decision-making. As the saying went in the French center-right UMP during the crises of the 2010s, the “good old days” of top-down decision processes “were not so bad: we knew the results of the elections before they actually took place, so you could actually have a clear winner.”

Knowing the individualistic approach most French politicians had to their trade, the personal dimension of most debates and political parties’ historical weakness, it should come as no surprise that once they managed to structure a top-down candidate process, political parties did their best to stick to it. The top-down selection model, even when sugar-coated around a semblance of internal democracy or an appeal to talented candidates, was in the interest of parties’ apparatuses. It gave them some sort of control over their membership, so it was not questioned until the model ran out of steam. And this took a particularly long time, as the political system encouraged party leadership to keep control over their flock. The atomization of the party system for much of French history prior to the 1990s, with at least four poles of attraction for voters (communists and socialists on the left, Gaullists and different shades of liberal centrists on the right) and a myriad of other smaller parties helped keep that pressure.

Most importantly the two-round system in almost all elections meant that primaries were thought to be useless: the election’s first round pretty much served as a primary election inside the left and right, before a second round where the opposition between two voting blocs would be clearer. In many ways, this is how the French presidential election structured itself, with the first-round contests involving a myriad of different candidates with specific agendas and the best two candidates going for a run-off that very often did respect the traditional left-right divide of French politics. The only exception to this pattern before 2002 was the very special 1969 election, which came just after the resignation of regime-builder Charles De Gaulle.

FROM TOP-DOWN SELECTION TO ELECTION – WHY AND HOW PRIMARIES MADE THEIR WAY TO FRENCH POLITICS

The situation started to evolve rapidly in the 1990s. With the progressive disappearance of the French Communist Party on the left and the pro-European turn of the Gaullists on the right, France started to move toward a party system dominated by two blocs, led by the Socialist Party on the left, and by what was to become the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP, now *Les Républicains*) on the right. While the nationalist Front National remained unable to insert itself as a government force and other parties on the left were now too weak to contest the supremacy of the Socialist Party, politics started to crystallize, for the first time, into an imperfect two-party system.

With mounting pressure from party membership to have a say in the selection of the candidates, they were called to support by their activism or financial support. The Socialist Party, which already had a

³ See J. Pozzi, ‘Investitures, parachutages et communication politique des candidats gaullistes lors de la campagne des élections législatives de 1967’, in F. Dubasque and E. Korcher-Marboeuf (eds.), *Terres d’élections: les dynamiques de l’ancrage politique (1750-2009)*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2014.

tradition of internal party democracy, understood these developments more quickly and was the first to run a primary in 1995 to nominate its candidate for the presidential election. In the context of *fin de règne*, with the end of the dominance of François Mitterrand's inner circle over the French Socialist Party and no apparent heir in sight, contenders needed an internal primary to sort out their rivalry. The principle of the primary itself had been debated since the party's formation in 1969,⁴ but Mitterrand's dominance over socialist internal politics made any calls to open up party candidate selection irrelevant. Interestingly enough, in an otherwise jacobine political system, it was actually a vacuum of power at the center (and not a well-thought leadership decision) which led the Socialist Party to adopt an internal primary system.

The road to the primaries was much longer on the right, where the question of leadership has always been trickier. Due to the Napoleonic/monarchist dominant tradition on the French right,⁵ the leadership issue has always been treated as a more symbiotic, natural affair than on the left. This Gallic version of *caudillismo* has made potential leaders of the right suspicious of the idea of internal party democracy. For them, the term "political party" was a dirty word, and its main function was to win elections, not waste time on internal democracy. Furthermore, the right was stuck in battles between different, still relatively young personalities that were fighting for the leadership of the entire right, and they certainly did not envisage that anything other than an election first round could stop their ambitions for office. In 1995 as in 1988, the French right did field different candidates in the first round, and this bitter contest divided their political families.

It took several factors to finally unify the right in the early 2000s: the pressure of the National Front on the far-right of the political spectrum, a string of defeats because of internal divisions and bitter personal rivalries in 1997-2002 (not least of which was the municipal election of 2001 in Paris, in which the right lost control of a city which it had held since the 1970s) were all important in getting the French right to unite. Perhaps even more important was the fact that Jacques Chirac ended up the last leader standing after three decades of bitter political fights between the hopeful inheritors of Charles de Gaulle's legacy. In any case, the French right did end up uniting in 2002, forming the Union for a Popular Movement, with common rules of the game that included an agreement on party democracy, internal elections for leadership at all levels, and primaries to select future candidates for elections, not least of which for the biggest prize of all, the presidential elections.

The 2007 presidential contest was a great milestone in the history of French political party life. As French politics coalesced into a system clearly dominated by two parties, both adopted very similar systems of electing their presidential candidates, with Ségolène Royal (on the left) and Nicolas Sarkozy (on the right) going through a similar internal vote of party members to get their parties' nomination (or support) in the contest. With the election of 2002 and the elimination of Lionel Jospin in everyone's minds, it was easier to argue for unity to avoid a humiliating defeat in the first round. As both primaries produced a clear winner with a legitimacy that could not be openly contested by other party grandees, the primaries became an important moment in French political life. They also further institutionalized the Socialist Party and the UMP as the two main parties, with primary results becoming a key moment in the campaign. Indeed, the UMP's congress of January 2007, which announced the winner of the primary contest, was such a momentous event in the media that it set Nicolas Sarkozy on his way to the Elysée, giving him an advantage in the polls that he would not lose at any time during the campaign. At the end of the year 2007, with French politics finally normalized into a near perfect two-party system, it would have seemed legitimate to dismiss the idea of candidate selection as an issue of the past. With both parties claiming legitimacy for their candidates through closed primaries, surely the process would now continue to become institutionalized from top to bottom, further enhancing internal party democracy.

4 B. Pietrapiana and C. Rouquette, 'Pour comprendre les primaires de 2017 il faut revivre celle de 1995', *Slate.Fr*, 2017, <http://www.slate.fr/story/135077/prime-a-gauche>.

5 See R. Rémond, *Les Droites en France*, Paris, Aubier, 1992.

THE 2012 GAMBLE OF OPEN PRIMARIES

Such a consolidation, however, was not to happen. Although the leadership on the center-right had been solved by Nicolas Sarkozy's victory in the 2007 presidential election, the question of who was to lead the left remained open as the party went through one of its worst identity crises since the 1920s. Ségolène Royal, the Socialist candidate of 2007, failed to transform her presidential bid into the consolidated leadership of her party, losing an internal contest to become Secretary General to old-time gatekeeper Martine Aubry. Thinkers on the left acknowledged their party's double deficit in thought and physical leadership and decided to take matters into their own hands. In May 2008, the birth of a new left-of-center think-tank with a new progressive agenda immediately made waves inside the Socialist establishment.

Terra Nova's founder Olivier Ferrand, a well-connected civil servant, quickly made a name for himself by advocating ideas of renovation that were very often inspired by developments in the United States, where the Obama wave seemed to be irresistible. The first *faits d'armes* of Terra Nova was its report on candidate selection, published in August 2008. Authored by Ferrand himself with constitutional law expert Olivier Duhamel, the paper claimed that the crisis of the left was "above all a crisis of leadership. It is certainly not easy to follow in the steps of François Mitterrand and Lionel Jospin. But the problem is first and foremost structural: the left [...] does not have a procedure to arbitrate the concurrence between talents."⁶ Faced with never-ending divisions and a right that was at least nominally united under Nicolas Sarkozy, the left needed to find a new way to select its leaders. After 88 pages of discussing different experiences in France and in Europe (notably the open primaries of the Italian left, which solved a similar problem of leadership in the late 1990s), the report recommended an Americanization of the leadership contests, with a primary as a tool to nominate the candidate for the presidential election. What was new was the recommendation of opening up the electorate not only to party members, but also to a large a section of the electorate. This, according to Ferrand, would give the chosen candidate a legitimacy beyond any contest.

The report was not originally received kindly by the leadership of the Socialist Party, but as the party's difficulties and leadership crisis continued to worsen (and with the election of Barack Obama in 2008 inspiring much of the European left), the Socialists ended up embracing the idea of a presidential primary and nominated a special commission, led by Olivier Ferrand and the young wolf Arnaud Montebourg, to prepare the ground for this major innovation in French political life. The two ambitious commissioners didn't lose time, and in 2010, they presented a ready-made plan for the Socialist Party to hold an open primary the next year, with the objective of attracting 2 to 4 million voters.⁷

Organized in the autumn of 2011, just six months before the presidential elections, the "Citizen's Primary" (the term "Socialist" was purposefully avoided) took place. The election was open to all citizens registered on the French electoral lists before December 21, 2010. To participate, all they had to do was to give a minimum of one euro to finance the election organization and sign a declaration that they shared the values of left: "freedom, equality, fraternity, secularism, justice, solidarity and progress." - the bar was set pretty low on purpose⁸. Overall, it was an unmitigated success that went beyond the organizers' dreams. Not only did it attract 2.6 million voters in the first round (and 2.8 million in the second round), but it also enlarged the Socialist Party's database while providing a new source

⁶ O. Duhamel and O. Ferrand, *Pour une primaire à la française*, Paris, Terra Nova, 2008, p. 10.

⁷ B. Jeanbart, 'Sondage : Primaire socialiste : un potentiel électoral de deux à quatre millions d'électeurs', *Terra Nova*, 2010, <https://tnova.fr/sondages/primaire-socialiste-un-potentiel-electoral-de-deux-a-quatre-millions-d-electeurs>.

⁸ The declaration has been archived on the web and is still available online at <https://web.archive.org/web/20111010023214/http://www.lesprimairesci-toyennes.fr/article/la-charte-dengagement-de-reconnaissance-dans-les-valeurs-de-la-gauche>.

of revenue for the party despite huge organization costs⁹. But most importantly, it also solved the leadership problem of the socialists, giving François Hollande a leadership that was beyond contestation not only in the Socialist Party, but also on the left.

After all, no other candidate could boast of having already gathered the support of so many individuals before the election actually took place. More importantly, the primary process gave the socialists a decisive advantage during the crucial months of October and November 2011, as their televised debates, their courteous but strong opposition, and the image of the candidates coming together to support the winner monopolized the attention of the media during three months of the campaign, leaving the governing right no breathing room to control the agenda. The competitive advantage gained by François Hollande during the primary would certainly erode over the following months, but never to the point where his leadership in the polls would be threatened. In the end, his ultimate victory in the May 2012 presidential contest against Nicolas Sarkozy owed much to the huge success of the open primaries six months earlier.

A political operation's success is often measured by its adoption by competing parties, rather than by its immediate popularity. In 2012, many of the right's recipes for success (video storytelling, online fundraising, major donors' policy) had been adopted by the left, with remarkable professionalism. Following the right's defeat in 2012, many in the UMP started to advocate for their party to adopt a similar open primary process ahead of the 2017 presidential election. Circumstances were on their side: the defeat of Nicolas Sarkozy and his retreat from politics in the autumn of 2012 had opened a leadership crisis not dissimilar to that of the Socialist Party in the 2000s. The time was ripe for the candidate selection process on the right to follow, once again, the example of the left and open up its primary.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE OPEN PRIMARY (2012-2017)

To be fair, the idea of an open primary organized by the main center-right party was not new. As a young direct marketing consultant hired by *Mobilisation Directe* to help prepare the 2007 elections for the UMP, I was part of the team (outside of the party but inside the system) that prepared memo after memo to push for establishing this strategy of candidate selection at the top, with the hope that its use would once again be generalized following its success. The attempt ahead of the 2007 election failed (partly because Sarkozy had adopted a new strategy of membership extension of the party, which reached 370,000 members that year¹⁰), and any debate over primaries during the Sarkozy presidency was chipped away by the party leadership: now that the party had found its "natural" leadership, it could not be contested, even in the context of closed primaries.

The party's defeat in 2012 and its subsequent leadership crisis, however, re-opened the debate. In the aftermath of the presidential election, a new election for the party presidency took place, involving the 325,000 remaining members of the party. It turned out to be an unmitigated disaster. The very personalized and polarized debates did not produce a clear winner, and the closeness of the election, coupled with the sometimes opaque organizational practices of the local federations in charge of organizing the contest, led the way to mutual accusations of fraud that destroyed the UMP's reputation as a professional organization, condemning it to a cycle of scandals and decay.¹¹

⁹ The primary itself cost four million euros. Over the two rounds of the elections, the Socialist Party had raised 5.2 million euros, excluding emailing and mailed fundraising campaigns. See J.C. Catalon, 'Fillon commence sa campagne avec les millions de la primaire', *La Tribune*, 2016, <https://www.latribune.fr/economie/france/fillon-commence-sa-campagne-avec-les-millions-de-la-primaire-620336.html>.

¹⁰ S. Laurent, 'Des Républicains au PS, la désertion des militants', *Le Monde*, 2015, https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2015/09/22/des-republicains-au-ps-la-desertion-des-militants_4766932_4355770.html.

¹¹ L. Latrous, *Bal tragique à l'UMP: coups bas, fraudes et trahisons*, Paris, Flammarion, 2013.

With its legitimacy in tatters, financial difficulties accumulating and a contested leadership, the party had to react and provide a more open and transparent mode of candidate selection. And the model offered by the Socialist Party seemed to provide a perfect answer. Tested in 2013 in Paris ahead of the municipal elections, the system of an open primary seemed to resolve many problems, as it had the potential to produce clear winners with an increased political legitimacy. And even if it did not guarantee victory on election day (it certainly did not in 2014 for Paris mayoral candidate Nathalie Kosciuzsko-Morizet), it did provide stability and some form of credibility to a party that had seen its membership in freefall over the previous years. As mass party membership became a thing of the past, the only way to compete with the Socialist system of an open primary was for the right to organize its own open primaries. Despite harsh opposition (including for comeback kid Nicolas Sarkozy, who still hung to past recipes that were no longer practical), the UMP, now renamed *Les Républicains*, adopted the principle of an open primary to designate their presidential candidate in 2015.¹²

If the 2011 open primary of the center-left had been a great popular and media success, the *primaire de la droite et du centre* that took place in the autumn of 2016 was a blockbuster. Open to all registered French voters ready to give two euros and sign a charter certifying that they shared the values of the center-right (and just like in the primaries of the left, with a pretty low bar in terms of what these values were, so as to appeal to a broad electorate), the election had everything to captivate the attention of the media, with its carefully choreographed debates, its flawless organization, and – most importantly – its candidates: on election day, seven of them had qualified to run, including two former prime ministers and former president Nicolas Sarkozy, who in the end had to bow to the logic of the primary.

The four televised debates, watched by up to 5.6 million people,¹³ were followed by a record participation that dwarfed the Socialist primary, with each round attracting more than four million voters, while the operation brought no less than 17 million euros through the two euros participation fee and additional donations.¹⁴ Even more dramatically, the spectacular elimination in the first round of party president Nicolas Sarkozy and the undisputable victory of François Fillon in the second round, with almost 3 million votes (66.49 percent of the total), seemed to give the official candidate of the center-right the legitimacy he needed to cruise through the presidential campaign. With more than 30 percent support registered in the polls in the aftermath of the primary, Fillon seemed on track for a victory that would have consolidated the principle of the open primary in France's political system. The lesser, but still impressive, popular success of the socialist primary in January 2017, which gathered two million voters to select the candidate of a party that had been going through a string of catastrophic defeats and crises ever since the triumph of François Hollande in 2012, seemed to confirm that the open primary was fast becoming the default mode of candidate selection among mainstream parties in France.

However, the success of the open primaries was quickly overshadowed by the twists and turns of the presidential campaign, which resulted in none of the two mainstream party's candidates making it to the second round. In the context of insurgencies right, left, and center against the establishment, Marine Le Pen's presence in the second round, taken as a given since at least 2014 and her party's victory in the European election, was anything but a surprise. More unexpected, though, was the first position of centrist candidate Emmanuel Macron, who came out of nowhere to win the election. Macron had sensed the exasperation of the French people against established political parties and mounted a political start-up that blew the whole system apart.

12 A. Lemarie and M. Goar, 'Présidentielle de 2017 : l'UMP fixe les règles du jeu de la primaire à droite', *Le Monde*, 2015, https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2015/04/02/presidentielle-de-2017-l-ump-fixe-les-regles-du-jeu-de-sa-primaire_4607796_823448.html.

13 B. Lopes, 'La primaire à droite : TF 1 en tête des audiences avec 5.6 millions de téléspectateurs', *Toutelatele*, 2016, <https://www.toutelatele.com/la-primaire-a-droite-tf1-en-tete-des-audiences-avec-5-6-millions-de-telespectateurs-85694>.

14 More precisely 4.3 million in the first round, and 4.4 million in the second round. Source: official results published by the High Authority of the Primary, archived and published on Wikipedia: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primaire_fran%C3%A7aise_de_la_droite_et_du_centre_de_2016#cite_ref-108

Macron benefited from a particularly inspirational campaign, and with it an incredibly favorable succession of circumstances (including many faux pas and scandals from the favorite François Fillon), but his election marked the collapse of the two-party system, and with it a candidate selection method that everyone thought had been consolidated by the success of the 2016-17 primary cycle. Candidates selected by the open primary system not only failed to reach the second round, but the whole party system had collapsed. The Socialist Party had all but been wiped from the political landscape after its dismal results in the presidential and legislative elections, and the right had suffered a knock-out blow it is still trying to recover from, despite managing to survive thanks to its remaining strong local network. With a new, fluctuating political party landscape dominated by four ideological poles¹⁵ but very few structured parties (and party membership at a historically low level), the candidate (s)election system in France returned to square one.

AFTER ARMAGEDDON: CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION AFTER 2017

As the primary system failed to produce victory for the two mainstream parties, it became an easy scapegoat for leaders in both parties to explain their abysmal defeat. After all, the primary function of a candidate (s)election method is to produce a future winner, and despite its appeal among the electorate at the time, the primary system had clearly failed to do that. Critics (rightly) pointed out that competing in a primary with 4 million voters was nothing compared to a campaign with 47 million voters. By pushing candidates to court the militant cores of each party's electorate, a vacuum had been created which a centrist candidate like Emmanuel Macron had been able to exploit to bring down the whole French party system. With no party institutionalization like Northern European or North American parties, such a development could happen once again, and for many on the left and right the primary system was bankrupt.

But if primaries had been buried, the question of candidate (s)election remained. And while the open primaries clearly had shown their limits in terms of getting to the right candidate for the election and keeping challengers away, the question of how to provide sufficient legitimacy to launch a candidate's campaign remained. In the very fluid political party environment that followed President Macron's election, parties and political entrepreneurs still needed to find ways to field and select candidates for office. Not unsurprisingly, as the primary model lost ground, French politicians' instinct was to revert to the top-down process of selection from party apparatuses that the country had known before the 1990s. After all, Marine Le Pen's National Rally seemed to be the only organized mass party remaining in France, and its approach to candidate selection followed the Bonapartist tradition, with a decision made by the party leader with the occasional plebiscite to consolidate legitimacy.

The model offered by *La République En Marche*, the party built by and around Emmanuel Macron, followed a similar top-down strategy, minus the plebiscite but with a twist that added to the narrative of the party as the champion of the creative class.¹⁶ The party was reshaping politics by bringing new, fresh faces from civil society, and to do that, *En Marche* appealed to citizens outside politics to apply online for office, with a selection committee literally casting the candidates, much in the same way as judges in a season of *The Voice* would do. The model worked splendidly for the legislative elections of 2017, which followed Macron's victory. As the French people looked for new faces to represent them in a new era of French politics, the casting worked perfectly and delivered a much-renewed National Assembly. Macron's *La République En Marche* used the same casting strategy (at least on paper) during its pre-campaign for the European election, although interest in the process from the media was much lower - a product is only new once, and it is difficult to renew it at each election.

¹⁵ See T. Muzergues, *The Great Class Shift: How New Social Class Structures are Redefining Western Politics*, London, Routledge, 2019.

¹⁶ See Muzergues, *The Great Class Shift*.

Much as the concept looked new, it was hiding a much more prosaic reality: the candidate (s)election process remained very much top-down, with a group of party grandees (and, increasingly after Macron was elected, the president and his close entourage) selecting candidates as they pleased. The casting operation had worked in 2017 for legislative elections that took place in the immediate aftermath of the presidential election, but it was less successful in 2019 for the European election. The selection of Nathalie Loiseau as *spitzenkandidat* of *En Marche* quickly turned out to be an electoral faux pas, as the candidate did not manage to mobilize voters in the way she was expected to by the President's team.

In the end, President Macron had to step in, in the last few days of the campaign, to avoid a major personal defeat that would have resonated beyond France. Interestingly, Loiseau confirmed doubts that she may not have been the best candidate when, immediately after the election and while she was poised to take the leadership of the Renew Europe parliamentary group, she committed political suicide in front of a group of French journalists as she insulted pretty much everyone who counted in Brussels, including her allies, who were all branded as embittered losers who had done nothing in their life (some, like Guy Verhofstadt, had actually been prime minister of their country).¹⁷

If the choice of Loiseau as leader of the European list of *En Marche* failed to produce the desired effect, President Macron's choice of candidate for the mayorship of Paris proved an unmitigated disaster. Not that the candidate himself was not talented – in government, Benjamin Griveaux had shown himself to be a good politician with excellent communication skills. But he was not alone in the race. Another candidate, famous mathematician and MP Cédric Villani was at least as well-known as Griveaux, with the difference that he did not owe his public name to President Macron. The choice of Griveaux by the leadership of *En Marche*, after an opaque process that everybody understood was actually a one-man decision, had pretty much the same effect as it had in the past, when backroom deals were the norm for candidate selection in France.

Deprived of what he thought belonged to him, Villani decided to go his own way and presented his own list for the election. His dissidence marked the beginning of a nightmare campaign for Griveaux, who resigned after a long series of faux pas. It seemed that the top-down approach for candidate selection did not guarantee victory, either. The electoral disaster that represented the Paris mayoral race (in a city that had voted for Macron at 90 percent in the presidential election two years earlier¹⁸) followed a similar pattern in most of France's cities, where *En Marche* candidates who had been enthroned by the party grandees in Paris were beaten following dissidence and basic campaign errors. The political revolution delivered by Emmanuel Macron had not resolved the dilemmas of French political life, including candidate selection.

17 C. Ducourtieux and J.P. Stroobants, 'Comment Nathalie Loiseau s'est sabordée à Bruxelles', *Le Monde*, 2019, https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/06/13/le-recit-du-crash-de-nathalie-loiseau-au-parlement-europeen_5475931_3210.html.

18 L'Internaute, Résultat de la présidentielle à Paris (75000), <http://election-presidentielle.linternaute.com/resultats/paris/ville-75056>.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FRENCH EXPERIENCE IN CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION

As France approaches another defining presidential election in 2022, political parties are pretty much lost in the wilderness, and most observers are expecting them to take a back seat in the run-up to the presidential contest, especially if the debate ends up revolving around two poles dominated by Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen – by no means a sure thing at the time of writing this article. Both candidates can boast a legitimacy of their own, Macron being the current president and Le Pen leading the best organized (and on occasion, the most successful) party in France. But French politics are always full of surprises, and the election of 2022 may very well produce unexpected results. The potential breakthrough of a candidate coming out of nowhere – like Macron in 2017 – would further de-structure the French political system, leaving very little space for political parties to breathe.

Further, it would challenge the notion that political parties should have any say in who ends up a candidate at the presidential (or, for that matter, any) election, which is still fantasized about by many in France as a direct communion between a candidate and his people. But it may also give an opportunity for *Les Républicains*, or what remains of the Socialists, to justify their existence by resuscitating a renovated form of primaries, the only way for these two parties to weigh in the presidential debate. Whether they are successful in fielding the right candidate to challenge the duopoly of Le Pen-Macron politics is too uncertain to tell, but it may well be their chance to show their worth and enact a spectacular comeback toward the center of the French political scene.

The rise of *En Marche* in 2017 certainly changed the conundrum of party politics in France, but it has not solved the dilemmas party leaders continue to face, among them the ever-problematic fielding of candidates in a country where egos and individualism are defining features of national politics. In many ways, the system has not moved forward with *En Marche*, but rather, back to where it was 30 years ago, with a top-down approach that has clearly shown its limits in the last two intermediary elections. As the French political system will eventually consolidate, it will need political parties to develop an organized way to manage rivalries and produce legitimate candidates to win elections. This is what parties are for, in the end, and their revival in the French mainstream will ultimately depend on their capacity to deliver these candidates. In this context, a return to a primary system (closed or open) may be the only solution available to guarantee not only an ordered election process, but also the parties' (and candidates') legitimacy in the eyes of voters.

REFERENCE LIST

- Catalon, J.C., 'Fillon commence sa campagne avec les millions de la primaire', *La Tribune*, 2016, <https://www.latribune.fr/economie/france/fillon-commence-sa-campagne-avec-les-millions-de-la-primaire-620336.html>.
- Courtois, S. and Lazar, M., *Histoire du Parti communiste français*, 2nd edn., Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2000.
- Ducourtieux, C. and Stroobants, J.P., 'Comment Nathalie Loiseau s'est sabordée à Bruxelles', *Le Monde*, 2019, https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/06/13/le-recit-du-crash-de-nathalie-loiseau-au-parlement-europeen_5475931_3210.html.
- Duhamel, O. and Ferrand, O., *Pour une primaire à la française*, Paris, Terra Nova, 2008.
- Jeanbart, B., 'Sondage : Primaire socialiste : un potentiel électoral de deux à quatre millions d'électeurs', *Terra Nova*, 2010, <https://tnova.fr/sondages/primaire-socialiste-un-potentiel-electoral-de-deux-a-quatre-millions-d-electeurs>.
- Latrous, L., *Bal tragique à l'UMP : coups bas, fraudes et trahisons*, Paris, Flammarion, 2013.
- Laurent, S., 'Des Républicains au PS, la désertion des militants', *Le Monde*, 2015, https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2015/09/22/des-republicains-au-ps-la-desertion-des-militants_4766932_4355770.html.
- Lemarie, A. and Goar, M., 'Présidentielle de 2017 : l'UMP fixe les règles du jeu de la primaire à droite', *Le Monde*, 2015, https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2015/04/02/presidentielle-de-2017-l-ump-fixe-les-regles-du-jeu-de-sa-primaire_4607796_823448.html.
- L'internaute, Résultat de la présidentielle à Paris (75000), <http://election-presidentielle.linternaute.com/resultats/paris/ville-75056>.
- Lopes, B., 'La primaire à droite : TF 1 en tête des audiences avec 5.6 millions de téléspectateurs', *Toutelatele*, 2016, <https://www.toutelatele.com/la-primaire-a-droite-tf1-en-tete-des-audiences-avec-5-6-millions-de-telespectateurs-85694>.
- Muzergues, T., *The Great Class Shift: How New Social Class Structures are Redefining Western Politics*, London, Routledge, 2019.
- Pietrapiana, B. and Rouquette, C., 'Pour comprendre les primaires de 2017 il faut revivre celle de 1995', *Slate.Fr*, 2017, <http://www.slate.fr/story/135077/primaire-a-gauche>.
- Pozzi, J., 'Investitures, parachutages et communication politique des candidats gaullistes lors de la campagne des élections législatives de 1967', in Dubasque, F. and Korcher-Marboeuf, E. (eds.), *Terres d'élections : les dynamiques de l'ancrage politique (1750-2009)*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2014.
- Rémond, R., *Les Droites en France*, Paris, Aubier, 1992.
- Richard, G. *Histoire des Droites en France : de 1815 à nos jours*, Paris, Perrin, 2017.
- Thomas, J.P., 'Le Parti social français (1936-1945) Une expérience de parti de masses et la préparation d'une relève', *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest*, vol. 109, no. 3, 2002.

CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION IN GERMANY

Dr. Benjamin Höhne

GERMAN PARTIES AS GATEKEEPERS FOR THE *BUNDESTAG*¹

Candidate selection as a key stage in the recruitment process of MPs, in any representative democracy, traditionally takes place in political parties.² However, comparative studies show that the national level plays a major role in recruitment patterns, often more so than the parameters set by single party organizations.³ The “partyiness” of candidate selection is dependent especially on a state’s legal and electoral system. In any case, party external frameworks have consequences for democracy in candidate selection, such as participation and competition, and its outcomes, such as representation and responsiveness.⁴

With regard to Germany, its legal system and federalism have a strong impact on parties and their processes of candidate selection. First, Germany is one of the few countries in which the legal system specifies criteria for candidate selection; parties must comply with requirements to adopt intra-party democracy. Compared to other Western party systems, German parties created a unique system of candidate selection that exhibits less variance between them and their internal decision-making procedures.⁵ Second, German parties have structured their organizations similarly to the federal state structure, with 16 parliamentary systems of government at the state level and one at the national level. Apart from the Christian Democratic parties CDU and CSU, each party has 16 state associations (*Landesverband*), which in turn are divided into local party branches and, in the case of the larger parties, regional party branches above (*Bezirk*).

Since the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany, parties have offered voters candidates for election every four or five years at the municipal, federal state (*Bundesländer*), federal parliament (*Deutscher Bundestag*) and European Parliamentary level. Formally, voters are free to elect candidates without party affiliation, but they typically decide in favor of candidates nominated by the parties. Although established parties are under pressure by new “movement parties,”⁶ the German party system is still relatively stable compared to other countries, such as France with Emmanuel Macron’s *La République en Marche!*⁷ Since the federal election of 2017, seven parties have been represented in the Bundestag: the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Social Democrats (SPD), the Alternative for Germany (AfD), the Liberals (FDP), the Left Party (DIE LINKE), the Greens (BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN), and the Christian Social Union (CSU) (enumeration by election result).

1 I am grateful for Irene Brown’s assistance in writing this article.

2 P. Norris, ‘Recruitment’, in R.S. Katz and W.J. Crotty (eds.), *Handbook of Party Politics*, London, SAGE Publications, 2006, pp. 89–108.

3 M. Gallagher, ‘Introduction’, in M. Gallagher and M. Marsh (eds.), *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*, London, SAGE Publications, 1988, pp. 1–19; P. Norris (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997; G. Cordero and X. Coller (eds.), *Democratizing Candidate Selection: New Methods, Old Receipts?*, Cham, Springer International Publishing, 2018.

4 R.Y. Hazan and G. Rahat, ‘Candidate selection: Methods and consequences’, in Katz and Crotty (eds.), pp. 109–21.

5 K. Detterbeck, ‘Candidate Selection in Germany: Local and Regional Party Elites Still in Control?’, *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 60, no. 7, 2016, pp. 837–52.

6 D. della Porta et al., *Movement Parties Against Austerity*, New York, John Wiley & Sons, 2017.

7 R. Elgie, ‘The election of Emmanuel Macron and the new French party system: a return to the éternel marais?’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2018, pp. 15–29.

In terms of electoral success and the duration of its participation in government at the federal and state level, the center-right CDU is the most successful party in Germany. Together with its Bavarian sister party, the CSU, it forms a joint parliamentary group in the *Bundestag* (*CDU/CSU-Fraktion*). Conservative, liberal and Christian social positions characterize their manifestos. Another traditional major party in Germany is the center-left SPD, which has been part of various government coalitions. It has held fast to its fundamental values of social justice and solidarity. Since the mid-2000s, the SPD has been in a crisis. Its *Agenda 2010* policies to liberalize the German welfare system and labor market have brought it the worst election results in its history. These three parties are typologized as *Volkspartei*, which is the German variant of the catch-all party, maximizing votes at elections on a mass membership base.⁸ Indeed, these three parties have by far the most members, but their base has tended to shrink over the past year, as in much of Europe (see Table 1).

Table 1: Member Numbers and Share of Women in the German parties, 2019⁹

	SPD	CDU	CSU	Greens	Liberals	The Left	AfD
Members	419,340	405,816	139,130	96,487	65,479	60,862	34,751
Women in %	32.8	26.5	21.3	41.0	21.6	36.4	17.8

The AfD was founded in 2013 in response to the German government's policy toward tackling the Eurozone crisis – which its members considered too generous toward other countries and not Germany-centered enough. With restrictive positions on immigration, a conservative social policy, and an anti-establishment orientation, it gladly joined the family of right-wing populist parties after the departure of its founder in 2015. It has been successful in all multi-level elections, jumping the five percent-hurdle since 2014, and has been represented in the *Bundestag* since 2017. The FDP demands liberal economic positions. For decades it was the only small parliamentary party holding a key position between the ancestral governmental parties and it was represented in numerous federal governments. From 2013 to 2017, it was excluded from the *Bundestag* for the first time, but managed a comeback with a new party leader, a freshened up corporate identity, a partly modernized organization, and an opening of its manifesto to social-liberal and internet issues.¹⁰

Since 2005, the Left Party has firmly established itself as a parliamentary force in the German party system. In the western part of Germany, it has its roots both in the trade unions and in a social protest movement (*WASG*) against the reform policy of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's SPD in the 2000s. In East Germany, it has been a regional, post-communist party formed in 1990 as the successor to the GDR state party, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*SED*). The Greens emerged from social movements at the end of the 1970s, in line with protests against environmental destruction and the use of nuclear energy and nuclear armament. They started as an "anti-party-party" but soon professionalized and became fully integrated into the party system. Between 1998 and 2005, the Greens were a junior partner in the federal government led by the SPD. At the time of writing this chapter, polls showed that the Greens were the second strongest party in Germany, benefiting from public sentiment for climate issues pushed along by movements such as Fridays for Future. Its member numbers increased by 100 percent over the last decade to almost 100,000 (See Table 1).

Bundestag elections are conducted under a mixed-member proportional system. The first vote is used to elect a candidate in the constituency, while the second vote is used to elect a closed list of a party. In the general election of 2017, 299 MPs were elected via a single-member constituency under the first-

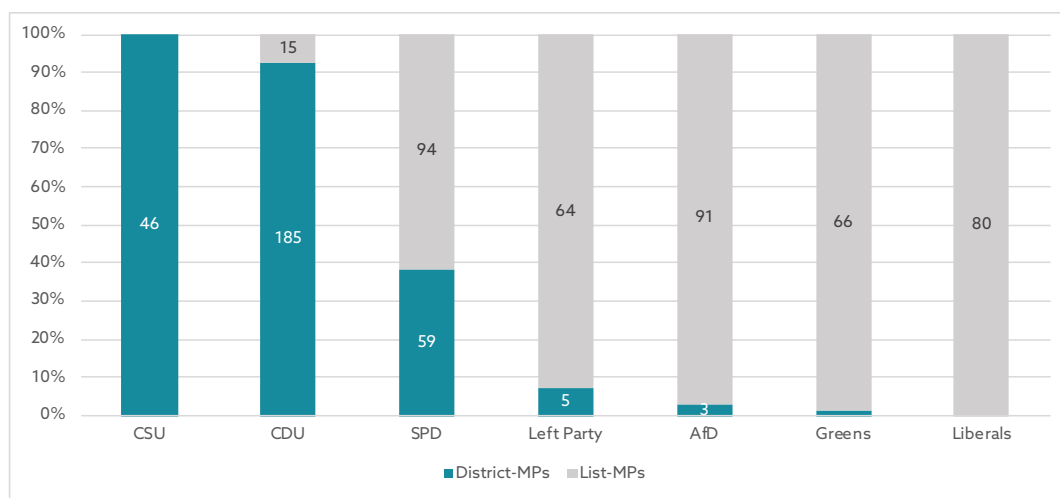
8 O. Kirchheimer, 'Der Wandel des westeuropäischen Parteiensystems', *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1965, pp. 20–41.

9 Table based on information in: O. Niedermayer, 'Parteimitgliedschaften im Jahre 2019', *ZParl*, vol. 51, no. 2, 2020, pp. 419–48, 425, 429; information as of 31 December 2019.

10 B. Höhne and U. Jun, 'Die FDP zwischen Wahlerfolgen, Regierungsfucht und Stagnation', in U. Jun and O. Niedermayer (eds.), *Die Parteien nach der Bundestagswahl 2017. Aktuelle Entwicklungen des Parteienwettbewerbs in Deutschland*, Wiesbaden, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2020, pp. 133–57.

past-the-post system, and 410 via lists in the 16 *Länder* by proportional vote. The smaller Left Party, AfD, Greens, and Liberals send almost all of their MPs via lists (See Figure 1). In contrast, CDU, CSU and SPD win almost all constituencies. Hence, for the smaller parties, in terms of candidate selection the lists are most important, whereas the districts are crucial for the larger parties. However, both nomination types are interrelated. Finally, most of the candidates went through similar recruiting procedures.¹¹ Double candidatures – those nominated at a constituency and a list – make up 75 percent for the CDU and 65.2 percent for the CSU. In other parties this value is even higher: Liberals: 100 percent, Greens: 98.5, SPD: 98, Left Party: 91.3, and AfD: 81.9 percent.

Figure 1: District- and List-MPs in the German Bundestag, Federal Election in 2017



Source: Bundeswahlleiter; at the inaugural assembly of the German *Bundestag* in October 2017

CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION METHODS

Legal and party specific rules

The important role of political parties in Germany's party democracy (*Parteiendemokratie*) is underscored by Article 21 of the constitution (*Grundgesetz*). It imposes duties on parties like the imperative of intra-party democracy. Constitutional requirements for parties are specified by the Political Parties Act (*Parteiengesetz*) which regulates financial accountability, the structure of the parties, the course of decision-making processes, and the rights of members. *De jure*, the decision-making within the parties follows a vertical bottom-up direction. Party boards are responsible to party gatherings.¹²

Connected with the strong role of parties in Germany (rather than personalities), there are no primaries for candidate selection like there are in the U.S., especially for nominating presidential candidates.¹³ Only party members are authorized to select candidates, although occasionally some party branches try to involve civil society. Formally, as in most countries, there are minimal legal restrictions on who may run for legislative office. Rather conveniently for them, party members are the only ones eligible to become a candidate, and thus an MP. Independent candidates are faced with the problem of running without the

11 B. Höhne, 'Wie stellen Parteien ihre Parlamentsbewerber auf?', in C. Koschmieder (ed.), *Parteien, Parteiensysteme und politische Orientierungen. Aktuelle Beiträge aus der Parteienforschung*, Wiesbaden, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2017, pp. 227–53.

12 U. von Alemann, *Das Parteiensystem der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Opladen, Leske+Budrich, 2000.

13 R.H. Pildes, 'The Historical Development of the U.S. Presidential Nomination Process', in E.D. Mazo and M. Dimino (eds.), *The Best Candidate. Presidential Nomination in Polarized Times*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 36–54.

backing of a party, e.g., “the official endorsement, financial assistance, and organized resources” that parties provide.¹⁴ Even though voting behavior is changing dramatically, party affiliation is still considered the most influential factor for voters.¹⁵

In recent years, a public debate has emerged calling for more women in parliaments. In the federal election of 2017, the percentage of elected female MPs had dropped to 30.9 percent. Given these numbers, there were several attempts to pass parity laws in state parliaments, allowing only parties with quota lists to participate in state elections. But in 2020, these attempts were declared unconstitutional (in Brandenburg and Thuringia). Nonetheless, most of the *Bundestag* parties – with the exception of the AfD, the CSU, and the FDP – have adopted voluntary internal quotas for their lists in elections. They range from one third for women in the CDU¹⁶ at the lower end of the spectrum, to over 40 percent in the SPD and 50 percent in the Left Party and the Green Party. They do not apply to constituency candidacies, where one can only win “the election before the election.”¹⁷ Here, all parties face the challenge of getting more women involved in party politics. This is not an easy undertaking, given the low proportion of women in party membership (See Table 1).

Party specific rules concern not only the gender of candidates, but also other aspects like their regional affiliation. Parties have developed complex internal selection procedures for selecting their candidates for parliaments in order to realize a bundle of divergent goals. Conceptually, they are differentiated and summarized either by party-external or -internal selection criteria.¹⁸ These general selection premises were academically elaborated for analyzing the candidate selection for districts as well as for lists. For the former, only one candidate per party can be nominated, while for the latter several selection criteria can be implemented. There, so called “ticket-balancing”¹⁹ is applied, which means balancing internal representation demands.

With the exception of the parties mentioned above, gender quotas are anchored in most of the party statutes. Regional mechanisms (*Regionalproporz*), while implemented informally, are just as important as formal gender quotas. Sometimes they are based on mathematical formulas including member numbers or past election results of party branches. Sometimes they are the result of negotiations. But the “rule” is almost always that a district nomination is a necessary prerequisite for a promising place in the list, while further selection criteria are subordinated. These can be an affiliation with a party wing, in case of the wing-parties the Greens, The Left, and the AfD, or affiliation with an organized sociodemographic group such as profession or age, as in the CDU, the CSU and the SPD. For example, youth organizations like the Christian Democratic *Junge Union* or the Social-Democrat *Jusos* are influential actors – most recently demonstrated in the elections of the new party leaders of CDU and SPD, where they played a crucial role in forming the election result.

14 Norris, ‘Recruitment’, in Katz and Crotty (eds.), pp. 89–108.

15 T. Faas and T. Klingelhöfer, ‘The more things change, the more they stay the same? The German federal election of 2017 and its consequences’, *WEP*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2019, pp. 914–26.

16 In 2020, a high party committee decided to introduce a parity quota for women in 2025, which still requires a majority of the delegates at a federal party conference.

17 B. Höhne, ‘Frauen in Parteien und Parlamenten. Innerparteiliche Hürden und Ansätze für Gleichstellungspolitik’, *APuZ*, vol. 70, no. 38, 2020, pp. 32–40.

18 B. Höhne, *Rekrutierung von Abgeordneten des Europäischen Parlaments: Organisation, Akteure und Entscheidungen in Parteien*, Opladen, Budrich, 2013.

19 A. Hennl and A. Kaiser, ‘Repräsentationschancen in interaktiven Nominierungsverfahren. Ein Vergleich der Aufstellung von Parteilisten bei deutschen Landtagswahlen’, *ZPol*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2008, pp. 325–52.

DECENTRALIZED PROCESSES BETWEEN PARTICIPATION DEMANDS AND PARTY ELITE CONTROL

Research indicates that some party members (“selectors”) are more influential in the candidate selection process than enfranchised party members (“electors”).²⁰ This power imbalance corresponds to the understanding of candidate selection as a two-stage process.²¹ At the first stage, which can be called preliminary decision arena, negotiations of influential party actors in their area of responsibility take place. It is the domain of the selectors or, in other words, the “steering agents.”²² They sound out the aspirants’ demands for candidacies. The second stage is the final decision arena. There, the candidates are legally nominated by the electors.

The pre-selection can allow for a less controversial selection process because it eliminates aspirants with low support within the party. At the same time, the converting of preliminary decisions (first stage) into official nominations (second stage) restricts intra-party democracy. Normally, selectors’ suggestions have a binding effect on electors; their decision-making corridor tends to be small. Intense competition between aspirants for a nomination in the final decision arena may indicate a lack of consensus among the selectors beforehand. Intervening variables of the intra-party democracy at candidate selection are a party’s organizational culture and self-image, including a tendency of party elites to disengage themselves from the grassroots or the ideal of their undisturbed participation.²³

For the list nominations, the steering agent either appears informally as single party elites on state level or formally as party board (*Landesvorstand*) or steering committee (e.g., *Findungskommission*). In the districts, important selectors are the leaders of the local party branches (e.g., *Kreisvorsitzende*). Germany’s decentralized candidate selections do not include a link to the national board as is the case with British parties, which are well known for the selection of their constituency candidates.²⁴ In Germany, there is very little external party influence on candidate selection. The “collateral organizations”²⁵ of a party, like trade unions, organizations from a party’s social fringes such as movements or churches have no significant influence (anymore), either on direct candidates or the lists.

Typically, candidate selection in Germany is non-competitive. In the selection dimension, electors formally have the last say, but in reality, the nomination decision was made earlier. In the candidate selection for the 2017 *Bundestag* election, analyzed by the large-scale research project *BuKa2017* of the *Institute for Parliamentary Research (IParl)*, the less competitive nominations on lists were to be found in the parties with larger membership, CDU, CSU, and SPD, the more competitive ones in the smaller parties beginning with the AfD (Figure 2). AfD’s outlying competition is difficult to explain. On the one hand, there is the argument of its newness and only beginning institutionalization, as well as its lack of political experience. On the other hand, the AfD had eight years of existence at the beginning of 2021, and it is represented in all parliaments at the state, federal and European Union level. This pushes forward another explanation, namely the party’s willingness to demand direct democracy not only externally, as is typical for populist parties, but also internally, for its own decision-making in order to distinguish from the established parties.

20 Norris, ‘Recruitment’, in Katz and Crotty (eds.), pp. 89-108.

21 B. Höhne, *Rekrutierung von Abgeordneten des Europäischen Parlaments*.

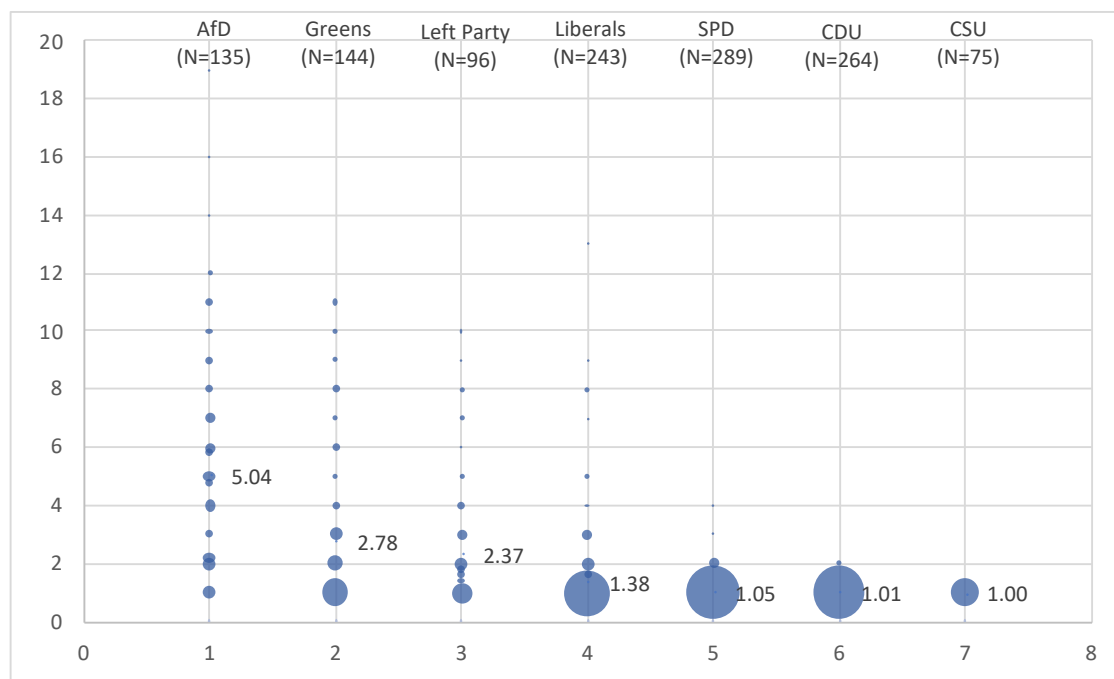
22 N. Aylott and N. Bolin, ‘Managed intra-party democracy: Precursory delegation and party leader selection’, *Party Politics*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2017, pp. 55-65.

23 G. Rahat and A. Shapira, ‘An Intra-Party Democracy Index. Theory, Design and A Demonstration’, *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 70, no.1, 2017, pp. 84-110.

24 J. Ashe, *Political Candidate Selection: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Under-Representation in the UK*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2020.

25 T. Poguntke, ‘Political parties and other organizations’, in Katz and Crotty (eds.), *Handbook of Party Politics*, pp. 396-406.

Figure 2: Competing Party Members per List Place at State Level, Federal Election in 2017



Source: IParl/BuKa2017; N = list places; for further information about the research project see www.iparl.de

Under the Election Act, parties are free to nominate their candidates for the *Bundestag* at a general meeting (*Mitgliederversammlung*) or a delegate gathering (*Delegiertenversammlung*). At a general meeting, all party members of the respective territorial unit are entitled to vote if they have the right to vote in the upcoming federal election. Delegates are elected from among the party members on the ground, i.e., at the lowest level of the party, months before the candidates are nominated. In terms of candidate selection research,²⁶ normally a general meeting is more inclusive than a delegates' gathering. The latter can be seen as a restriction on participation, whereas a general meeting allows all eligible party members to join. Following an ongoing international trend,²⁷ German candidate selections are becoming more and more inclusive.²⁸

In the district candidate selections for the 2017 *Bundestag* election, the AfD achieved the highest level of inclusion; ultimately, its candidates were nominated in a general meeting. It was followed by the Liberals, the Left Party, and the Greens. These smaller parties in terms of membership numbers hold general meetings, too, nearly without exception. In the larger parties, *CSU* candidates are proposed exclusively and *SPD* candidates predominantly by delegates, while in the *CDU*, general meetings were increasingly held.²⁹ Although logical, it is worth mentioning that fewer members prove to be an advantage over parties with more members when it comes to organizing a general meeting. This is also an advantage for smaller parties and their candidate selections on the state level (See Figure 3). Only in the city states

26 R.Y. Hazan and G. Rahat, *Democracy within Parties: Candidate Selection Methods and Their Political Consequences*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.

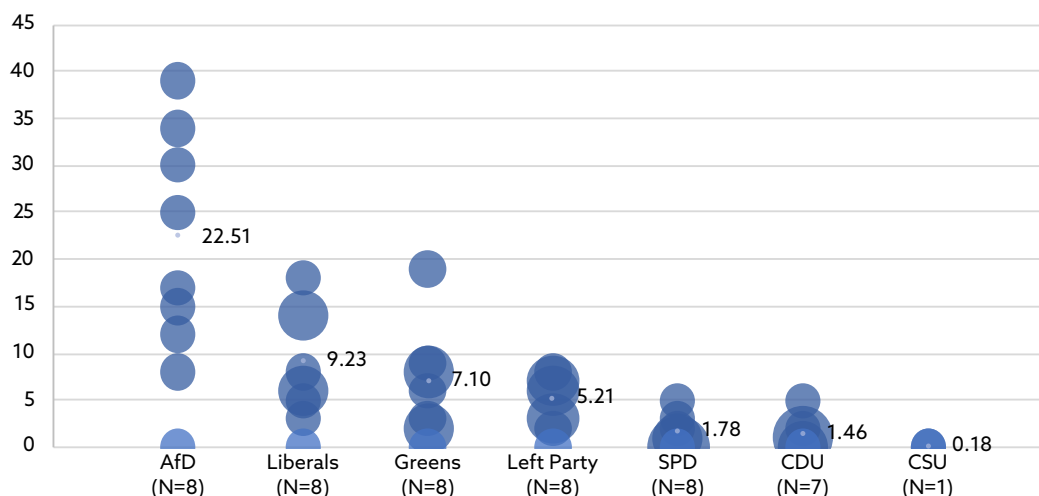
27 J. Hopkin, 'Bringing the Members Back in? Democratizing Candidate Selection in Britain and Spain', *Party Politics*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2001, pp. 343–61; A. Vandeleene, L. de Winter, and P. Baudewyns, *Candidates, Parties and Voters in the Belgian Partitocracy*, Cham, Springer International Publishing, 2019.

28 D. Schindler, 'More free-floating, less outward-looking: How more inclusive candidate selection procedures (could) matter', *Party Politics*, online first, 2020.

29 Höhne, 'Wie stellen Parteien ihre Parlamentsbewerber auf?', in Koschmieder (ed.), *Parteien, Parteiensysteme und politische Orientierungen*, pp. 227–53.

of Berlin, Bremen, and Hamburg parties held general meetings. Once again, the AfD is turning the picture around: In 14 of 16 state level associations, a general meeting was held. Of all parties examined, the right-wing populists demonstrated the highest member inclusion, with around 23 percent, on average (in Figure 3, the average values are given numerically) – but less than 35,000 members (See Table 1).

Figure 3: Inclusion of Party Members at State Level, Federal Election in 2017



Source: IParl/BuKa2017; N = randomly selected gatherings at state level; N all cases per state party = 16 (CDU = 15; CSU = 1)

POLITICAL CAPITAL AS A NECESSARY RECRUITMENT CONDITION AND ITS DOWNSIDES

The availability of parliamentary mandates depends largely on the incumbency of MPs, although its effects are more analyzed for voting behavior.³⁰ Usually, only the smaller portion of seats in parliament turn over after an election. Mandates repeatedly claimed by incumbent deputies are not actually present in the parties' staffing. Thus, a high turnover rate of MPs suggests in candidate selection a restricted access to mandates. Incumbents enjoy publicity and have demonstrated the ability to respond to the demands of the party's base, the voters, interest groups, and financial supporters.³¹

MPs of the German *Bundestag* are only rarely challenged and if so, then only under special conditions like alienation from one's own party.³² MPs have political capital, which is the necessary condition for starting a parliamentary career in Germany. Potential competitors have yet to accumulate it. Parties like the *CDU* have their own process for party-specific socialization and professionalization called the "ox tour" (*Ochsentour*), focused on career-oriented commitment and year-long intra-party learning.³³ Even

30 F. Ade, R. Freier, and C. Odendahl, 'Incumbency effects in government and opposition: Evidence from Germany', *European Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 36, 2014, pp. 117-34..

31 Hazan and Rahat, 'Candidate selection: Methods and consequences', in Katz and Crotty (eds.), pp. 109-21.

32 Dettnerbeck, 'Candidate Selection in Germany', *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 60, no. 7, 2016, pp. 837-52.

33 D. Hellmann, B. Höhne, S.S. Schüttemeyer, *Factors of Success in Candidate Selection. Political Capital, Political Attitudes and Non-Political Resources of Candidates for the German Bundestag in 2017*, ECPN General Conference, Hamburg.

if only a side note in the recruitment process, it is remarkable that the party-affiliated foundations are providing long-term candidate nurturing via seminars and training. Sufficient conditions for becoming an MP depend on specific circumstances and subjective dynamics between aspirants to parliamentary candidacy on the one hand, and perceptions, evaluations and interests of selectors as well as electors, on the other.³⁴ Furthermore, whether an ambitious and intensely engaged party member will one day become a member of the *Bundestag*, a member of a state parliament, or – increasingly popular – a member of the European Parliament often depends on an opening window of opportunity.

With regard to the social effects of the “ox tour,” in principle every party member has a chance of a *Bundestag* mandate, unlike, for example, in the U.S., where financial resources are a decisive prerequisite for candidacy,³⁵ or in France, where institutionalized cultural capital in particular, i.e., educational qualifications and titles, represent traditional recruitment criteria.³⁶ In Germany, the accumulation of political capital begins at the local level, in a youth organization of a party, often accompanied by professional training of the party-affiliated foundations. Later, more important positions are awarded, like on the staff of an MP or at the headquarters of a party. But as in many Western party systems, the German parties’ member base is generally shrinking.³⁷ Thus, the pool of eligible party members is also diminishing. Academics (not only with a degree in political science) and professions close to politics are on the rise.³⁸ This professionalization of politics is an open flank for populist criticism of the supposed aloofness of politicians, which aims to destroy liberal democracy and its political parties as its crucial pluralist intermediary institutions.³⁹

SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

To summarize, German candidate selection is the exclusive task of the political parties. Even if they had to accept a lot of functional losses, such as shaping public opinion, due to their alienation from society, their recruiting function is so far not threatened. But in view of the low proportion of women in parliaments, there is increasing public pressure to hold them more accountable for their internal gender policy. If adopted at all, their voluntary gender quotas are ineffective for district nominations. This leads to the more general question of where the main focus at the German candidate selection actually lies: is it on complying with external challenges or on internal demands, such as the representation of internal subgroups, especially the most influential local or regional party branches? Studies have shown that German parties are strongly self-referential, which makes their adaptability to a dynamic environment questionable.⁴⁰

34 Hühne, *Rekrutierung von Abgeordneten des Europäischen Parlaments*.

35 P. Herrnsen, ‘United States’, in Norris (ed.), *Passages to Power*, pp. 187–208.

36 R. Murray, *Parties, Gender Quotas and Candidate Selection in France*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

37 S.E. Scarrow and B. Gezgor, ‘Declining memberships, changing members? European political party members in a new era’, *Party Politics*, vol. 16, no. 6, 2010, pp. 823–43.

38 M. Kintz, ‘Die Berufsstruktur des Deutschen Bundestages - 18. Wahlperiode’, *ZParl*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2014, 582–95.

39 J.W. Müller, *What Is Populism?*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.

40 Hühne, *Rekrutierung von Abgeordneten des Europäischen Parlaments*.

If one takes a reference publication on the lists of candidates for the *Bundestag* from one of the past five decades and compares the core research results, one can observe the surprising stability of the recruitment system and its inherent mechanisms.⁴¹ Although the parties' environment has changed profoundly, the candidate selection for parliament seems to be untouched from the outside. Innovation is widely sought, in vain, except for the e-democracy of the departing Pirate Party (*Piratenpartei*). Electronic decision-making has gained relevance in the parties due to the COVID-19 pandemic: virtual party gatherings took the place of traditional gatherings.⁴² For example, in the beginning of the year 2021, the CDU and the Left elected their new leaders at virtual delegate gatherings. Virtual candidate selections became also legally allowed. However, openings for candidate selection on the demand side (e.g., aspirants of immigrant origin⁴³) as well as on the selection side (civil society allowed to select candidates) are only tentatively present, if at all.⁴⁴

For parties, human resources management in candidate selection is the key to shaping the organizational-environmental relationship. But can candidate selection procedures, in its main features developed after World War II, adequately address current challenges? These challenges manifest themselves as increasing demands for transparency, participation, and representation of an ever more pluralizing society, the continuing personalization of politics reinforced by social media, and populism divorced from political common sense. Skepticism seems appropriate. Movement parties have not yet emerged in Germany, but that may only be a matter of time. A first, unsuccessful attempt was undertaken in 2018 with the leftist initiative *Aufstehen*. New actors like the non-partisan initiative *Brand New Bundestag*, which cast candidates outside the parties, are unlikely to stand a chance in the 2021 federal election, but they show how candidate selection could be reformed. The established parties are supposed to make greater efforts to integrate their social environment into candidate selections with primaries. The federal party system offers approaches for regionally limited experiments with more inclusive procedures, as well as for more intra-party democracy.

41 B. Zeuner, *Kandidatenaufstellung zur Bundestagswahl 1965: Untersuchungen zur innerparteilichen Willensbildung und zur politischen Führungsauslese*, Dordrecht, Springer Netherlands, 1970; G.K. Roberts, 'The German Federal Republic: the two lane route to Bonn', in Gallagher and Marsh (eds.), *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective*, pp. 94–118; B. Weßels, 'Germany', in Norris (ed.), *Passages to Power*, pp. 76–97; S.S. Schüttemeyer and R. Sturm, 'Der Kandidat – das (fast) unbekannte Wesen. Befunde und Überlegungen zur Aufstellung der Bewerber zum Deutschen Bundestag', *ZParl*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2005, pp. 539–53; B. Höhne, 'Strukturmuster, Selektionsprämissen und Resultate von Kandidatenaufstellungen zu Bundestags- und Europawahlen in Deutschland', in U. Jun and B. Höhne (eds.), *Parteien als fragmentierte Organisationen. Erfolgsbedingungen und Veränderungsprozesse*, Opladen, Barbara Budrich, 2010, pp. 85–121; S.S. Schüttemeyer and A. Pyschny, 'Kandidatenaufstellung zur Bundestagswahl 2017. Untersuchungen zu personellen und partizipatorischen Grundlagen demokratischer Ordnung', *ZParl*, vol. 51, no.1, 2020, pp. 189–211.

42 D. Michels, 'Das Corona-Virus als Katalysator digitaler Demokratie: Politische Willensbildung in Parlament, Parteien und Zivilgesellschaft', in M. Florack, K.R. Korte, and J. Schwanholz (eds.), *Coronakratie. Demokratisches Regieren in Ausnahmezeiten*, Frankfurt, Campus Verlag, 2021, pp. 111–21.

43 S. Ceyhan, *How German Parties Select Candidates of Immigrant Origin: Neutrality, Opening or Closure?*, Cham, Springer, 2021.

44 D. Schindler and B. Höhne, 'No Need for Wider Selectorates? Party Members' Preferences for Reforming the Nomination of District and List Candidates for the German Bundestag', in S. Bukow and U. Jun (eds.), *Continuity and Change of Party Democracies in Europe*, Wiesbaden, Springer VS, 2020, pp. 283–308.

REFERENCE LIST

- Ade, F., Freier, R., and Odendahl, C., 'Incumbency effects in government and opposition: Evidence from Germany', *European Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 36, 2014, pp. 117–34.
- Alemann, U. von, *Das Parteiensystem der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Opladen, Leske+Budrich, 2000.
- Ashe, J., *Political Candidate Selection: Who wins, Who Loses, and Under-Representation in the UK*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2020.
- Aylott, N. and Bolin, N., 'Managed intra-party democracy: Precursory delegation and party leader selection', *Party Politics*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2017, pp. 55–65.
- Ceyhan, S., *How German Parties Select Candidates of Immigrant Origin: Neutrality, Opening or Closure?*, Cham, Springer, 2021.
- Cordero, G. and Collier, X. (eds.), *Democratizing Candidate Selection: New Methods, Old Receipts?*, Cham, Springer International Publishing, 2018.
- Della Porta, D., Joseba, F., Kouki, H., Mosca, L., *Movement Parties Against Austerity*, New York, John Wiley & Sons, 2017.
- Detterbeck, K., 'Candidate Selection in Germany: Local and Regional Party Elites Still in Control?', *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 60, no. 7, 2016, pp. 837–52.
- Elgie, R., 'The election of Emmanuel Macron and the new French party system: a return to the éternel marais?', *Modern & Contemporary France*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2018, pp. 15–29.
- Faas, T. and Klingelhöfer, T., 'The more things change, the more they stay the same? The German federal election of 2017 and its consequences', *WEP*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2019, pp. 914–26.
- Gallagher, M., 'Introduction', in Gallagher, M. and Marsh, M. (eds.), *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*, London, SAGE Publications, 1988, 1–19.
- Hazan, R.Y. and Rahat, G., 'Candidate selection: Methods and consequences', in Katz, R.S. and Crotty, W.J. (eds.), *Handbook of Party Politics*, London, SAGE Publications, 2006, pp. 109–21.
- Hazan, R.Y. and Rahat, G., *Democracy within Parties: Candidate Selection Methods and Their Political Consequences*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Hellmann, D., Höhne, B., Schüttemeyer, S.S., *Factors of Success. Political Capital, Political Attitudes and Non-Political Resources of Candidates for the German Bundestag in 2017*, ECPR General Conference, Hamburg.
- Hennl, A. and Kaiser, A., 'Repräsentationschancen in interaktiven Nominierungsverfahren. Ein Vergleich der Aufstellung von Parteilisten bei deutschen Landtagswahlen', *ZPol*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2008, pp. 325–52.
- Herrnson, P., 'United States', in Norris, P. (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 187–208.
- Höhne, B., 'Strukturmuster, Selektionsprämissen und Resultate von Kandidatenaufstellungen zu Bundestags- und Europawahlen in Deutschland', in Jun, U. and Höhne, B. (eds.), *Parteien als fragmentierte Organisationen. Erfolgsbedingungen und Veränderungsprozesse*, Opladen, Barbara Budrich, 2010, pp. 85–121.
- Höhne, B., *Rekrutierung von Abgeordneten des Europäischen Parlaments: Organisation, Akteure und Entscheidungen in Parteien*, Opladen, Budrich, 2013.

- Höhne, B., 'Wie stellen Parteien ihre Parlamentsbewerber auf?', in Koschmieder, C. (ed.), *Parteien, Parteiensysteme und politische Orientierungen. Aktuelle Beiträge aus der Parteienforschung*, Wiesbaden, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2017, pp. 227–53.
- Höhne, B., 'Frauen in Parteien und Parlamenten. Innerparteiliche Hürden und Ansätze für Gleichstellungspolitik', *APuZ*, vol. 70, no. 38, 2020, pp. 32–40.
- Höhne, B. and Jun, U., 'Die FDP zwischen Wahlerfolgen, Regierungsflucht und Stagnation', in Jun, U. and Niedermayer, O. (eds.), *Die Parteien nach der Bundestagswahl 2017. Aktuelle Entwicklungen des Parteienwettbewerbs in Deutschland*, Wiesbaden, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2020, pp. 133–57.
- Hopkin, J., 'Bringing the Members Back in? Democratizing Candidate Selection in Britain and Spain', *Party Politics*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2001, pp. 343–61.
- Kintz, M., 'Die Berufsstruktur des Deutschen Bundestages - 18. Wahlperiode', *ZParl*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2014, pp. 582–95.
- Kirchheimer, O., 'Der Wandel des westeuropäischen Parteiensystems', *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1965, pp. 20–41.
- Michels, D., 'Das Corona-Virus als Katalysator digitaler Demokratie: Politische Willensbildung in Parlament, Parteien und Zivilgesellschaft', in Florack, M., Korte, K.R., and Schwanholz, J. (eds.), *Coronakratie. Demokratisches Regieren in Ausnahmenzeiten*, Frankfurt, Campus Verlag, 2021, pp. 111–21.
- Müller, J.W., *What Is Populism?*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.
- Murray, R., *Parties, Gender Quotas and Candidate Selection in France*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Niedermayer, O., 'Parteimitgliedschaften im Jahre 2019', *ZParl*, vol. 51, no. 2, 2020, pp. 419–48.
- Norris, P. (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Norris, P., 'Recruitment', in Katz, R.S. and Crotty, W.J. (eds.), *Handbook of Party Politics*, London, SAGE Publications, 2006, pp. 89–108.
- Pildes, R.H., 'The Historical Development of the U.S. Presidential Nomination Process', in Mazo, E.D. and Dimino, M. (eds.), *The Best Candidate. Presidential Nomination in Polarized Times*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 36–54.
- Poguntke, T., 'Political parties and other organizations', in Katz, R.S. and Crotty, W.J. (eds.), *Handbook of Party Politics*, London, SAGE Publications, 2006, pp. 396–406.
- Rahat, G. and Shapira, A., 'An Intra-Party Democracy Index. Theory, Design and A Demonstration', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 1, 2017, pp. 84–110.
- Roberts, G.K., 'The German Federal Republic: the two lane route to Bonn', in Gallagher, M. and Marsh, M. (eds.), *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*, London, SAGE Publications, 1988, pp. 94–118.
- Scarrow, S.E. and Gezgor, B., 'Declining memberships, changing members? European political party members in a new era', *Party Politics*, vol. 16, no. 6, 2010, pp. 823–43.
- Schindler, D., 'More free-floating, less outward-looking: How more inclusive candidate selection procedures (could) matter', *Party Politics*, online first, 2020.

Schindler, D. and Höhne, B., 'No Need for Wider Selectorates? Party Members' Preferences for Reforming the Nomination of District and List Candidates for the German Bundestag', in Bukow, S. and Jun, U. (eds.), *Continuity and Change of Party Democracies in Europe*, Wiesbaden, Springer VS, 2020, pp. 283–308.

Schüttemeyer, S.S. and Pyschny, A., 'Kandidatenaufstellung zur Bundestagswahl 2017. Untersuchungen zu personellen und partizipatorischen Grundlagen demokratischer Ordnung', *ZParl*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2020, pp. 189–211.

Schüttemeyer, S.S. and Sturm, R., 'Der Kandidat – das (fast) unbekannte Wesen. Befunde und Überlegungen zur Aufstellung der Bewerber zum Deutschen Bundestag', *ZParl*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2005, pp. 539–53.

Vandeleene, A., Winter, L. de, and Baudewyns, P., *Candidates, Parties and Voters in the Belgian Partitocracy*, Cham, Springer International Publishing, 2019.

Weßels, B., 'Germany', in Norris, P. (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 76–97.

Zeuner, B., *Kandidatenaufstellung zur Bundestagswahl 1965: Untersuchungen zur innerparteilichen Willensbildung und zur politischen Führungsauslese*, Dordrecht, Springer Netherlands, 1970.

CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: A DYNAMIC APPROACH FOR THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Andrew Bowie

Whether taken from a purely electoral or political perspective (in terms of the number of prime ministers provided or effective years in power), the Conservative and Unionist Party is the most successful political party not only in British, but more generally in modern political history. It is in many ways the epitome of a party of government.

Its roots, through the Tory Party, can be traced as far back as the creation of parliamentary government and the development of constitutional monarchy in England: in particular, after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

It adopted its modern form from a 'hodgepodge' amalgamation of independent Whigs under Sir Robert Peel in 1834, officially becoming the Conservative Party. It was then further developed by Benjamin Disraeli in the 1860s, becoming the Conservative and Unionist Party after its alliance with the anti-Irish Home Rule Liberal Unionists in 1886.

In the 20th century, 12 out of 20 prime ministers were Conservatives, leading either majority Conservative governments or coalitions in which the Conservative Party was dominant. Although the first decade of the 21st century saw Labour rule, Conservatives have now been in power for 11 years, in either coalition or majority governments. After victory in the general election of 2019, they have begun another five-year term with an 80-seat majority in the House of Commons, meaning that for at least 15 out of 25 years in the 21st century, the Conservative Party will have led the government.

The purpose of this essay is neither an exploration as to why the Conservatives keep winning nor an examination of the party's ideology. However, a successful party is shaped by its leadership. Success at the ballot box is determined as much by – if not more, some might argue – the qualities of a leader as it is by the policies outlined in a party manifesto. And it is certainly the leadership of an individual and his or her style of Government that determines the success or failure of any party in power.

It is the over-arching aim of the Conservative Party to be in power. Historically, this objective endeavored to stop and defeat liberalism, as it did in the early 20th century and from the 1920s onwards to stop and defeat socialism. Therefore, the process of getting the right people into Parliament and identifying the right person to lead the party has been refined and adapted over the years, allowing the Conservative Party to retain power and restrict the influence of ideological rivals.

No party in history has so ruthlessly discarded its leaders in times of desperation as the Conservatives have. If a leader is seen as risking the party's power in government, then its members swiftly remove them. The history of Margaret Thatcher's ousting from power and Theresa May's loss of her own party's confidence are well known.

Less well known (or understood) is how the Conservative Party chooses its leaders, the process through which prospective prime ministers undertake within the party to make it to the top job. In fact, it is in the nature of British politics and its very stable party system that a political party is the first gateway toward prime ministership. Although this has not always been true in the 19th century (think of the relationship between Robert Peel and Wellington), the reality of modern British politics is that, without becoming the

leader of the party, no British politician can seriously pretend to become prime minister. Conversely, for a party of power like the Conservative Party, the selection of a leader means selection of a prospective prime minister, which makes this selection process especially important, not only for the party but for the nation at large.

This essay explains the history and changing nature of that selection process. It will illuminate how, in 2019, a little under 200,000 people came to choose the next head of government of a country of more than 60 million inhabitants, and why this strengthened democracy in the party and in British institutions.

The selecting process for candidates to become members of parliament will be explained first. For before aspiring to become the leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party, one must first get elected to the House of Commons. And that means getting selected as a candidate.

CANDIDATE SELECTION

The process of becoming a candidate for election to the House of Commons in the Conservative Party is fairly simple, yet it requires commitment and endurance.

The first step for any individual is to join the Party. That is easy, it can be done online or by visiting the local Conservative Party office, of which there is usually one in every parliamentary constituency or, at least in every county.

Once an individual has joined the party and demonstrated commitment to the party by attending events, campaigning, or supporting the organization, that individual can express an interest in becoming a candidate by filling out a simple online form on the Conservative Party's website.

On receipt of that expression of interest, the Conservative Campaign Headquarters (CCHQ), based in London, will send to the individual an application form which will ask the applicants questions about their personality, career history, values and commitment to the Conservative Party and its ideology. Ensuring suitability is an important part of the process – being a member of the party is not the same as being a volunteer representative of the party (as a canvasser, for example), which is itself not the same as being an official candidate of the party, who logically comes under much scrutiny.

When the applicants have returned their application, and if deemed to be of suitable quality, the Party will invite them to sit in a 'Parliamentary Assessment Board' (PAB). This day-long assessment, consisting of a one-on-one interview, a speech, two essays, a simulation exercise, and a group exercise, is designed to judge individuals on their ability to carry out the different and conflicting aspects of an MP's job.

Individuals are judged by a panel of three-party appointees made up of members of the voluntary Conservative Party (i.e., people holding volunteer office, such as association chairs, area and regional officers and specialized groups such as the Young Conservatives or the Conservative Women's Organization), and occasionally, an elected Member of Parliament.

If an individual demonstrates he or she possesses the ability to deal with the situations presented to them and adequately acquit themselves in the exercises, they are deemed to have passed the PAB and become an approved candidate for the party. There is no appeals process, but an individual can re-apply and sit the board again after a certain period of time.

Once an individual has been placed on the 'Approved Candidates List,' they are at liberty to apply to become a candidate for any constituency in the United Kingdom¹.

One important aspect of the Conservative Party, which is often overlooked, is its composition of associations and branches which link members of parliament, including the prime minister, to local members and their local constituencies. The party is not one homogenous organization run from the center. It is an amalgamation of Conservative clubs, associations, and branches across the whole country. The local link is incredibly important to the party. Localism is a core part of British conservatism and this direct connection from local communities to their member of parliament is very important.

The importance of local associations is never more evident than in the next stage of selecting candidates for parliament.

Constituencies are very often ranked in order of importance/likelihood of becoming or remaining a Conservative constituency (target seats). They are then announced as open for applications roughly two years before a general election, so as to give candidates and local parties time to select and campaign.

The timing of the opening for applications depends on a candidate's position vis-a-vis the list of target seats. The more a constituency is considered a target for the next election, the earlier a candidate will be allowed to advertise. Once the seat is declared open, approved candidates may apply in writing, sending a CV/formal application to be a candidate to the local Conservative Association in that constituency to become its candidate for the next general election.

The local associations will have formed a sifting committee made up of the chairman of association, who will be chairman of the committee and who should remain impartial, two deputy chairmen of the association, and two additional members of the association, as well as a minimum of one woman and one person under the age of 30. These people constitute the sifting committee.

This committee will sift through the paper applications, determining which of the candidates will be put forward to the next stage of the process: the executive council interview. At this stage, senior members of the local association will interview each of the people they have deemed qualified to be their candidate.

The executive council can then choose to put a minimum of two candidates up for selection at a selection meeting of the entire association. At this meeting, the candidates will be asked to make a speech to local membership and take questions. After the last candidate has spoken, those attending the meeting will be asked to vote for their preferred candidate.

It is a simple, first past-the-post election and the candidate with the most votes becomes the candidate for that constituency. The chairman of that association will then ask the membership to affirm that they will work for and support the candidate in his or her efforts to become their member of parliament. And with that, the winning candidate is an official Conservative Party candidate.

All that stands between the selected candidate and parliament is the small matter of winning the constituency in a general election.

Once elected to parliament, however, the minds of some soon turn towards bigger things. Some may even consider trying to become leader of the Conservative Party.

¹ There are slightly different processes for selection in Scotland due to it being a semi-autonomous region, however, in theory, any candidate that passes either the Scottish or the rest of UK Parliamentary Assessment Board can apply for selection in any constituency in the UK.

SELECTING A LEADER

The Conservative Party selects leaders. Not just party leaders – although by definition they are leaders of a party – but national leaders. If you are elected leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party, you will be expected to lead it into government and serve as prime minister. If you fail to do that, by either losing office or losing the confidence of the party while in office, the party will not hesitate to remove you and elect a leader to replace you.

Generally speaking, every major party in Britain has adopted a system whereby its leader is either chosen by party elites (informally), by the parliamentary party, by an electoral college comprised of sections of the party, or by a ballot of party members.

In the case of the Conservative Party, it has moved between these systems. Prior to 1965, new leaders were usually selected by the retiring or resigning incumbent.

While the leader would naturally need to be confident that his or her chosen successor would find widespread support in the rest of the parliamentary party, it was generally accepted that owing to experience the leader, along with his or her senior colleagues, is best placed to make such a decision. For instance, in 1902 when the outgoing Lord Salisbury predictably appointed his nephew Arthur Balfour as his successor, the members of his party unanimously endorsed the new leader. After all, it was widely accepted that Salisbury, with 21 years of experience as Conservative Party leader, had sufficient time to identify a suitable successor and had given that person the necessary positions within government to qualify for the role. This was also the case for Neville Chamberlain, who long before succeeding Stanley Baldwin in 1937 had been considered his ‘long pre-ordained successor.’² It was not until 1964, when for health reasons Harold Macmillan was forced to resign as prime minister, that a change of approach in selecting Conservative Party leaders was adopted.

Macmillan, in typical style, devised his own method for gauging the mood in the party with regard to who should succeed him, appointing trusted colleagues to solicit the views of cabinet ministers, junior ministers, Conservative MPs and Conservative peers. However, there was general discontent with the way his chosen successor, Sir Alec Douglas Home, who renounced his title of Lord Dunglass in order to be prime minister, became leader. It was deemed out of step with the times to allow the party establishment to anoint a leader, so following his defeat in the 1964 general election, he himself created a committee tasked with establishing a formal process for selecting a leader.

It was decided that the leader would be elected by a ballot of Conservative MPs and that there would be provisions for more than one round. The parameters were as follows: if there was no clear winner on the first ballot, by which a candidate would have to gain over fifty percent of the vote and be fifteen percent clear of the second-place candidate, a second ballot would take place. In this second ballot, a candidate could win with an overall majority alone. If no overall majority was reached on the second ballot, a third ballot would be held between the three top candidates, with the first candidate past the post becoming leader. This third ballot idea was ultimately changed in 1991, when the number of candidates on the ballot went from the top three to the top two.

The first instance of a change of leadership following this process had to wait for 1975. That year, following an election defeat in 1974, sitting leader Edward Heath won the initial ballot, yet he was ultimately forced to resign when Margaret Thatcher received more votes without receiving a 50 percent majority. In the case of Edward Heath, he was the first to be elected leader on one ballot, while Margaret Thatcher, although not gaining over 50 percent on the first ballot gained the most votes, leading Heath to resign as leader.

Margaret Thatcher was to face a similar challenge to her leadership in 1990, which also led to her resignation. Although she gathered more votes than her challenger, Michael Heseltine, in the first round, she fell short (by four votes) of the fifteen percent advance over her rival, leading to a second ballot, which further challenged her authority and led her to stand down.

It wasn't until 1997, following the Conservative Party's worst ever electoral defeat (falling to 165 seats out of 659, a loss of 161 seats) that William Hague, elected by the existing system following the resignation of John Major, determined the party needed to make itself more accessible and responsive to its members, and therefore changed the system by which leaders are elected. It is this system that is currently used by the party to select its leader. It has been used to elect five leaders, two of whom have been elected leader while the party was in Government and who therefore became prime minister without the necessity for a general election.

The system consists of two stages, the periods of which are decided by the executive of the 1922 Committee, the parliamentary group of the Conservative Party. To begin with, Conservative members of parliament put their own names forward. MPs then select two candidates of their choice who they would like to see presented to the party membership as a whole. Following this, party members vote for their preferred candidate from a shortlist of two; this is done on a "one member, one vote" basis.

If there is only one valid nomination, that person is elected leader. This was the case in 2016, when Andrea Leadsom withdrew from the election leaving Theresa May as the only candidate for leader. If two nominations are received, both are presented to the party membership.

In a case where more than two nominations are received, an exhaustive ballot system is used to select two candidates to go forward to the party membership. An exhaustive ballot system allows electors to submit a single vote for their preferred candidate in a series of run-off rounds. Once the votes are tallied, the individual receiving the least number of votes is eliminated from consideration and further rounds follow until only the top two candidates remain.

This system is a *fait accompli* that allows members of parliament to have control over the process until the list is narrowed to two candidates, both of which will have demonstrated, by reaching this stage, that they have the confidence of a substantial enough number of MPs to command control of the party in the House of Commons. This is a critical juncture in the legitimization of the candidate.

A leadership contest can be triggered in one of two ways. That is, if either the current leader resigns, or if fifteen percent of Conservative MPs write to the chairman of the 1922 Committee stating that they no longer have confidence in the current leader. If the resigning leader is the prime minister, then he or she would continue carrying out their usual duties until a new leader is elected, unless he or she chose to resign in favor of another Conservative MP, who would resume prime ministerial duties temporarily, although this would be an unusual situation. If, however, a vote of no confidence is initiated, it is up to individual MPs to vote either in support of or against their leader. This can happen in very quick succession, as was the case for Theresa May in 2018, when the no confidence vote was held only the day after she was informed that the fifteen percent threshold had been reached.

Under the current regulations, if more than half of all Conservative MPs vote in support of their leader, the leader is able to remain as prime minister and party leader and cannot be subject to a new vote for another twelve months. In contrast, if the prime minister loses a confidence vote amongst his/her MPs, he or she is not able to stand for leader again, making way for other Conservative MPs to stand for the party leadership.

While there are several ways in which the rest of the party may express a lack of confidence in the leader, these are the only formal means of initiating a leadership challenge.

The decisions relating to votes of no confidence and the first stage of any Conservative leadership election are made by the 1922 Committee and can be altered at any time by the 1922's executive committee along with the Conservative Party board.

The second stage of the contest is directed by the Conservative Party constitution, and any changes to this must be determined by the Constitutional College of the Conservative Party. This is an electoral college comprising of representatives from the National Conservative Convention (the most senior body of the Conservative Party's voluntary wing), MPs and representatives of Conservative peers.

In the case of the 2019 Conservative Party leadership contest, amendments to the rules were put forward and accepted. Party members would still vote for their preferred candidate from a shortlist of two, however, each candidate was required to have the support of eight MPs to be nominated. Following this, a candidate needed at least five percent of the parliamentary party's support on the first ballot, and ten percent on the second ballot. As such, each candidate needed the support of 17 MPs in the first ballot and 33 in the second. In the first ballot, which took place on 13 June, Andrea Leadsom, Mark Harper, and Esther McVey were eliminated after failing to gain enough votes. Boris Johnson came out in the top position, having guaranteed over a third of MPs' support. There were a further three ballots, following which just Johnson and Jeremy Hunt remained. These two candidates were thus put to a final round, in which the 160,000 Conservative Party members chose their party leader.

As one might expect, the complete change between the electorate in the first round (the parliamentary party) and that in the final round (party membership as a whole) means that a completely different campaign begins once the number of candidates is reduced to two and put to the membership. At that time, a month-long process then begins, during which the candidates hold hustings across the country with Conservative Party members, speaking and taking questions. During this period, ballots are sent to every member to choose which candidate they wish to be leader of the Conservative Party.

The ballot papers are collated and verified by the 1922 Committee and CCHQ before an announcement. After an agreed-upon period of time, in the case of 2019 one month, the votes are counted, and a winner declared.

In the case of a leadership election taking place while the Conservatives are in government, it is important to note that this election only determines the leader of the party, not who is prime minister - a position only Her Majesty the Queen can appoint. However, it is inconceivable, in the 21st century, that the leader of the largest party in Westminster would not also be the prime minister. The last time the leader of the Conservative Party in government was not also the prime minister was in 1940, following the resignation of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, who remained leader of the party while Winston Churchill led the national (coalition) government. But even this arrangement ended within a year, with Churchill ultimately taking both roles.

These days, upon the announcement of the results of a leadership election, it is expected that the serving leader and prime minister will offer his or her resignation to the Queen.

For example, in 2019, the announcement of the leadership election, in which Boris Johnson was declared victorious, took place 24 hours before the serving Prime Minister, Theresa May, offered her resignation to the Queen. But this was an agreed upon timetable and there was no question that she would remain prime minister following the election of Boris Johnson.

CONCLUSION

The Conservative Party has been the governing party of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for more years than any other party. Many argue the party's longevity can be attributed to its chameleon-like ability to change policies and positions to remain on the side of the majority of the British people. To that point, it is true that the periods in which the party had been in opposition have indeed coincided with times when the party was at odds with the opinion of the majority.

However, its ability to remain popular and in power is also a result of its ability to choose and dispose of leaders in a brutally efficient manner. The process of becoming a candidate for the Conservative Party is designed to weed out weaker candidates who will not support the efforts of the party to achieve its overarching aim – remaining in power.

If the Conservative Party maintains these processes, there is no reason to suggest it will not continue to reap the rewards of efficient management and selection processes in the years ahead.

CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION IN GREECE: A NEW, PROFESSIONAL APPROACH FOR NEW DEMOCRACY

Rebecca Pitsika

New Democracy (ND), the main liberal-conservative political party in Greece, is a historic pillar of modern Greek democracy. Created in 1974, it has ruled the country alternately for 19 years, most recently returning to power in 2019 under the leadership of Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

ND's 2019 legislative election victory is a story of hard work during the four and a half years that the party spent in opposition to the far-left government led by SYRIZA. Mitsotakis was elected leader of the party in January 2016, after an intense and exhausting period in Greek politics, marked by the euro crisis and drastic austerity measures that the ND government felt were necessary to save the country from financial and political collapse. Unsurprisingly, while these substantial efforts produced the desired effect on Greece's long-term economic outlook, they were also significantly disruptive both politically and socially. After an electoral defeat in 2014, ND had to return to the drawing board and re-invent itself to be competitive again in elections.

New Democracy was under pressure. Greece had seen the socialists of PASOK wiped off the map on the left, and though the risk seemed much lower on the center-right, the "revolutionary" atmosphere that was taking a grip on Greek politics at the time pointed in a clear direction: if ND was to survive, thrive, and win the next elections, it had to show the Greek public that it was changing.

The objective was ambitious: to win, ND needed to at least double its seats in parliament. This was certainly a challenge, but it also opened new horizons for the party. Fielding a large number of new candidates was to be the symbol of the party's renaissance, and its vision of a new Greece.

But while fielding new candidates is not necessarily a difficult task by itself, fielding the *right* new candidates was much more of a challenge. The idea was not to simply expand the pool of candidates with new faces, but to attract a fresh cohort of new talent to a party that had retained the image of a traditional political actor.

Attracting this new blood became a priority for Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who rightly saw this task as a clear testament to his nature as a modern politician who would reform the country. He had to prove to a skeptical populace that he would apply a meritocratic process to achieve his party's transformation. Further, he had to prove that he had a team committed to this vision and to collective success.

As a savvy political leader and experienced administrator, Mitsotakis recognized that he would have to rely on teams of experts to make these changes in the manner required - tech people to take on tech issues, social media experts to drive the party's web strategy, and human resources professionals to steer the candidate selection process.

This top-down, technocratic approach was seen as the best way to transform, modernize and renew the party efficiently. In many ways, it was also a response to the rise of SYRIZA - a new party that, by nature, fielded promising new candidates who did not possess long track records in government. Recognizing that citizens were prioritizing "new" over "competent," the driving idea was that, by using this approach, ND could deliver "new" and "competent" at the same time.

How ND accomplished this challenging task is the subject of this chapter. We'll look in greater detail at how the strategy was conceived and applied in a rational, step-by-step approach.

THE RATIONALE

First, it is important to examine the rationale behind ND's approach, as it informs us why ND was ultimately successful. In a traditional party, targeting new and fresh candidates in a structured way has always proved difficult, as established politicians benefit from the legitimacy of their experience, and new talents are often perceived as being discouraged by their elders and by an entrenched party bureaucracy. Kyriakos Mitsotakis's election changed that dynamic. He knew that the party had to change its face to win elections, which would, in turn, require cultivating a meritocratic culture inside the party. Mitsotakis' image made him well qualified to lead this cultural shift, combining his experience as a politician and expertise drawn from years at multinational companies in the finance sector. Mitsotakis emphasized this shift from the outset – pledging to bring ND “oxygen,” as he stated in his inauguration speech as leader of the party.

But the impact of expanding ND's candidate pool went beyond a basic focus on electoral competitiveness. Developing new candidates from different backgrounds meant targeting new groups to test innovative growth, development, and publicity strategies for the party. As visible signs of a new direction for the party, these innovative strategies could be key driving factors to increase party membership. In turn, attracting new members would not only rejuvenate the face of the party but also provide a financial boost. As the financial crisis had also affected political parties' finances in Greece, it was seen as especially important to diversify the party's resources - following Mitsotakis' motto “more from less.”

Finally, this renewal and expansion was motivated by two image factors – showing that ND was nurturing a new generation of national leaders and that the party's new blood indicated strong growth, development, and a renewed focus on connecting to Greek society.

FINDING THE RIGHT PROFILE

It was not enough to renew the candidate pool with simply *any* candidate, ND's human resources approach placed a premium on identifying candidates with high impact who could act as the party's ambassadors in Greek society, increasing its appeal.

To do that, several factors needed to be taken in consideration. The first was the age of potential candidates. Priority was given to candidates aged 25-50, as this age group was the most productive in society, and active in the economy. Of course, this alone would not be enough, as ND needed to go beyond traditional political fault lines and identify candidates who shared ND's values from segments of society that had previously been intimidated by the party's institutional nature. Smaller parties that tried and failed to get into parliament in the previous election were obvious targets – the reputation candidates from these non-traditional parties brought with was one of renewal. But much work was needed to convince these candidates that their identity was compatible with ND and that working with the party would allow them to keep their autonomy.

So were “high impact” profiles, people known in their community for competence, who could attract voters and did not correspond to the typical profile of a ND politician – their presence was proof that the party was truly expanding, both politically and culturally. It was important to party leadership that ND prove itself capable of embracing intellectuals, scientists, technocrats – people with high impact based on their knowledge and expertise. Attracting this kind of talent proved that New Democracy was a broad

alliance reflecting the priorities of a large range of people, and that it put its confidence in people who had a proven track record in managing issues, not just traditional politicians.

Under these guidelines, the team established a clear procedure to allow the right profiles to rise through the candidate selection process, with the idea that many of them should not only be candidates but be elected and become the future leaders of ND.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

As we've established, attracting new candidates and expertise to the party was never a standalone action. Rather, it was a component of a larger strategy to expand ND's support base by overcoming three specific sets of challenges.

The first dealt with how the candidate selection process would fit into the party's strategy to build a winning electoral coalition. To guide its recruitment efforts for the ideal candidate, ND had to know which groups of voters it would target in future elections.

With those voters identified and the direction of the party's recruitment strategy set, it was time to draw up more specifics for the candidate profile. What were the competencies, experience, and academic qualifications required? Did ND need all of these qualifications for all candidates? If it were to target high profile candidates, what were the risks of the party being accused of being out of touch with society and everyday issues? How diverse did the profiles need to be? Answers to these questions were not easy. While some were quite technical – like what large companies would be facing in a big recruitment drive – others were quite political. In addition, special consideration had to be given to regional diversity, basing the candidate selection drive on local culture, economics, and social characteristics. Expertise was not enough; proximity was also an asset.

Finally, while identification is all well and good, the right profiles had to agree to be candidates for the party. This is where integration into the wider party strategy was essential. To attract new talents into the party, potential candidates had to be convinced that it had a place for them, and that it was sincerely interested in nominating new leaders. In this manner, these essential human resources questions were intrinsically linked to the more general question of the party's identity. So, ND approached the issue in this way: what if the party was a startup, or a private sector organization entering a transformational stage to meet the new challenges of a new era?

TARGETING GROUPS

The first stage of the process, internal to the party, was to get a better understanding of where to find new voters and party members. This, of course, means that the party would no longer look the same after its transformation. But this was not a problem, as the movement was driven from the top and part of a drive to change the face of the party (including by enlarging its membership).

The first step was to understand how New Democracy looked to people outside its traditional base of support, as this would provide leadership a clear picture of a profile of future ND voters. This meant targeting, and therefore research – demographic and geographic, and bearing in mind the limited resources at the party's disposal in terms of time, money, and people. The idea was to identify and then target specific groups or geographic areas in which people were most likely be attracted to ND's political offer, rather than trying to reach out to the entire population. Whether we like it or not, society is made up of many different groups (youth, pensioners, women, etc.), and all these groups are looking for someone to represent them. Eventually, many of them are interested in participating, themselves, as active party members but do not get the chance. The idea was to offer these groups, as a whole, the

possibility of representation, and to offer individuals within these groups the possibility to represent their group. Party recruitment was, therefore, seen as a path to identifying new candidates.

And at the heart of this was data, public data, internal party data, and importantly, election data. We did a deep dive into returns from the last national elections, returns from the last local, regional, or municipal elections, reports from university think tanks and surveys. We looked at where the party was doing well and where it was underperforming compared to expectations, etc. From there, we could work out the socio-geographical portrait of a potential party member.

A serious sociological study allowed us to identify the party target groups along several metrics. For example, we identified groups of women/mothers/men, urban/rural, young/middle aged/old, university students, homeowners/renters, professional/labors, educated/less educated, doctors/lawyers/academics, first-time voters, minorities, disabled, pensioners, poor/middle class/wealthy, and entrepreneurs/public servants/private sector servants and, within those groups, their electoral and membership potential. This led to clear, numerical membership targets, which were also meant to reinforce the party's image as modern, healthy, and basing its policies on facts. Demographic information would thus be analyzed, leading to complete tables that would look like the following (per area):

Group	Percentage of the total population in the area	Number of people from this group to target	Percentage of this group likely to join ND	Number of people to engage in this group to activate.
Women age 30-45	25%	150.000	45%	67.500

Within each group, the idea was to then to recruit those individuals identified as Most Important Supporters (MIS). As not everyone was going to become member of ND, it was important to find where the MIS lived and spent time. This led to other tables, more individualized:

Name of Group	Number of members	Places they live/ visit often	Best time to meet	Social media use and best time to post (when applicable)
---------------	-------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	--

The idea here was to go well beyond the general information and to understand specific groups' habits and concerns, to be close to these people and get up-to-date information on how they lived and perceived particular issues. This made personal interaction a factor, as party people had to be present to collect the information and spread ND's message to key opinion leaders in each group/area.

CANDIDATE PROFILE DEVELOPMENT

The next step was to develop the appropriate candidate profile using proven human resources techniques and methods from the private sector. We had to define clearly what we were looking for, and match with the party's culture and needs. Based on this approach, we focused on three pillars:

Skills Set	Competence Framework	Political Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Prerequisites:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • criminal record • financial record etc. • <u>Optional:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • university degrees • experience • expertise etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity • Social empathy • Impact and Influence • Team and Collaboration • Resilience and Self Control • Communication • Creative Thinking • Achievement orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winning local elections • Network development • Social Impact • Recognized for their achievements

With this matrix set, we have a better idea about the kind of candidates ND should be looking for. The remaining question was how to balance these qualities with other factors, like diversity, and how to ultimately move these new prospective candidates from new recruits, to stakeholders, to formal candidates.

The influx of new members certainly helped increase the pool of potential voters from which candidates could be recruited. But this was not enough, as the party also needed an incubator for people who wanted to have an impact on society in accordance with their values. This was the case for select community projects, which needed to be promoted at the national level, in order to send a message to those who think politics is disconnected from society. The party also pushed create open calls and discussions based on strategic goals for critical social issues. The goal of these moves was to get the party, and future candidates, more focused on issues that were close to ordinary Greeks, such as immigration. The party opened discussions, asking people's opinions and points of view, under appointed party teams, so as to start interaction and, through this process, to generate new leaders. These actions were really the core instruments to attract new people, some of whom would be identified as candidates.

FROM A POOL OF VOTERS TO A POOL OF REGISTERED CANDIDATES

ND used two different but complementary approaches to attract its candidates: one was active and another passive. The first consisted of an active search for the new candidates, primarily based on networking. The second was to wait for people to respond to an open call, in a structured and transparent process. Thus, in October 2016, ND launched a new process: "Pool of Registered Candidates." One of the major advantages of an early launch was that it provided enough time to properly assess the candidates' worth: *errare humanum est*, and time allowed the party to give a second chance to some potential candidates and to suspend those whose competence and behavior in the field proved to be inadequate to New Democracy's culture.

The open call strategy proved to have major advantages, as it was in line with the desire for party renewal, as expressed by Kyriakos Mitsotakis, and could be applied across the country at relatively low cost thanks to a central platform. But, most importantly, it opened the door for people and candidates who had no other way to enter the party. They now had the chance to apply for a position through an open, structured, and transparent process. The platform was the answer to complaints about the party structure being disconnected from the people. The innovative new process extinguished the commonly held perception that to become a party candidate one must have connections with individuals already integrated within the party establishment.

In a special conference, the party leader presented the process to the press and public, along with the webpage *Mitróo Stelechòn Nea Demokratia*, part of the main website of New Democracy,¹ from which every citizen could apply to be a candidate.

The innovative nature of the call garnered enough publicity to raise interest from potential candidates. The press office of the party aimed to ensure maximum publicity for the process in the long-term (here again, showing the importance of an integrated approach).

THE SELECTION PROCESS, STEP BY STEP

The selection process was done in a transparent way:

- Step 1: Submissions of applications to the webpage
- Step 2: Assessment of applicant CVs
- Step 3: First round interviews
- Step 4: Second round interviews
- Step 5: Candidate recommendations to the party leader
- Step 6: Ongoing training, assessment, and final approval

The process necessitated an organized team led by a project coordinator, as it had to handle a massive response to this open call.

¹ <https://nd.gr/mitroo-stelexon>

Step 1 called for application on the webpage; this may have looked like the easiest step for party headquarters, as it was up to each candidate to fill the application form out. In reality, the team worked hard before the launch to provide an ergonomic (and useful) application module divided in three parts:

Part One	Part Two	Part Three
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal data • Academic • Experience • Other activities • Fields of expertise • Fields of interest • Objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific questions for the candidate to answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video (optional)

Each candidate was asked to fill in all personal data, with a particular emphasis on academic background, experience, and expertise. The candidate could also list specific areas of interest, along with personal goals. This was an open call, so the candidate could show interest in parliament, a role in the party's organization, or in a political role in state administration after the elections.

The second part of the application consisted of three targeted questions on social issues in order to examine ideology and gain feedback. These were open questions, so the idea here was to see how well the candidate could articulate their thoughts.

Finally, the candidate had the option to upload a video. This was not compulsory, but was nevertheless crucial in the selection process, especially for the candidates who were aiming for positions with public exposure – such as Member of Parliament. The ability to present oneself to the public was a crucial requirement, and the videos were a quick and easy way to evaluate that skill.

Step 2 required assessment of applicants' CVs once interested individuals completed the applications on the webpage. The project coordinator and her assigned team sorted and assessed each candidacy, based on completion.

Step 3 involved the first round interview – Those were large-scale interviews where the number of applicants was really skimmed down. Organizers formed 12 assessors' teams tasked with running 50 interviews per month, each comprised of three experts: an HR expert from the market (usually an HR director from a big company), an academic high-level expert (usually a university professor) and a politician (usually an acting member of parliament).

The methodology applied for these interviews was based on a competence and evidence-based interview (CEBI), based on specific competences. The model is based on examples, to prove the experience of the candidates in specific situations – with a particular focus on impact, influence, and resilience. An important factor for potential candidates for parliament was previous election experience at the local level.

The most important step was to ensure that all assessors used the same methodology. Training was therefore of the utmost importance, with trainers being provided a specific toolset for a standardized approach to the assessment: the same questions, same competence model, same rating. At the end of the training, each assessor got a toolkit, within a competence framework, with a set of questions, an interview form, and an assessment form. The first training was attended by Kyriakos Mitsotakis to underline the importance of the process.

When interviews were completed, each assessor team had to forward the comments and results to the project coordinator and the assigned team by filling out a specific file, as well as the forms. Those who made the cut based on the four ratings then proceeded to Step 4.

Step 4 consisted of the second-round interview, the project coordinator proceeded to personally interview candidates with the highest score (2 and above on a 4-scale rating). The purpose was to go deeper in competence assessment and to clarify gray areas.

The candidates who did not proceed to the second round were not out of the process though. The project coordinator assigned them to working teams in the party for further on-going assessment, based on projects, ideas generated, and interest in participating in working groups.

Step 5 consisted in finalizing a proposal for the party leader. In order to present a complete record for each proposed candidate, the teams completed a vetting of the proposed candidate which included examination of their social media, financial records, criminal records, and a reputation assessment in local society.

It is important to note here that the proposal was not a list. All proposed candidates had to be justified, with a profile and a description of why the candidate had been pre-selected. The party leader, however, had the final power of decision about the finalists. Once he approved them, the candidates were pre-announced publicly, so that they could start working in the field as candidates.

This was not the end for the candidates though, as they went to one final step for “ongoing training, assessment and final approval.” The prospective candidates were followed closely and, most importantly, trained in the various skills that would be required of them as candidates and (hopefully) after their election: communication, policy, and current affairs.

Finally, just before the election, party leader Mitsotakis approved the list of candidates for the parliament, based on the overall review established since the candidates’ pre-announcement.

SOME STATISTICS: EVOLUTION OF THE CANDIDATE PROFILE

This operation was not only a huge logistical endeavor, it also allowed ND to know the profile of the potential candidates. In the end, the pool corresponded to what the party was aiming for, nationally: based on statistics, the average applicant was 42 years old, with 10 years of professional experience and at least a university degree. Half of them were from the two largest cities (Athens and Salonica). On the negative side, 8 out of 10 candidates were male. This was a target ND missed, as it wanted more women to diversify lists and access the parliament. This last statistic prioritized interviews with women, since the actual number was relatively low.

What was impressive was the sheer volume of high-quality candidates who did apply. It was clear that they were enticed by this innovative method of candidate selection, as well as the by the personality of the party leader. “We are here for Kyriakos” was a common phrase heard during interviews, which fulfilled our task to rejuvenate the party, bring it closer to society and show it as an equal opportunity organization for potential candidates. The initial objectives, to refresh, renew and enrich the pool of candidates, had been accomplished.

THE DAY AFTER

Of course, a selection process is never ending. As soon as an election cycle finishes, the next one is already around the corner. As such, parties are continuously faced with the challenge of renewing their candidate pool. A very experienced politician once said that the pre-election period starts the day following the elections, and this is essentially how New Democracy started to work the day after the elections, just as it has approached the process - in a professional manner. The selection process worked well, but ND learned lessons from applying its methods, and there was room for improvement.

Lesson number one was the necessity of managing great expectations. Perception is not always reality, and we were confronted with very high expectations from candidates - for example, "if I apply, I will be a candidate for sure, or I will have a role in the government." Managing these expectations, which were more widespread than we initially thought, was a challenge. It involved emphasizing the multifaceted purpose of the process. Allocating new candidates to the right positions was the primary goal of this whole affair, but this was not a one-way street, as candidates contributed with their ideas and commitment. Recognizing that commitment, whatever the result of their candidacy, was a challenge, and we are learning with each case how to deal with this challenge.

Lesson number two was the importance of local presence. In the first stages of the process, everything was dealt with from the central office. Was that enough? Not always. We missed local contact points that could have resolved issues and received feedback more quickly. We addressed this problem immediately after the elections by allocating coordinators to each area in the country. The coordinators who run interviews were in touch with local communities through both traditional (trade unions, traditional associations) and non-traditional (internet activism networks for example) organizational functions. They search for new candidates, organize webinars and other events with social, scientific, and economic interest. They keep the local candidates' commitment intact, and they act as the links between the area and the central office.

Lesson number three is the need to constantly upgrade the digital platform, so that it remains modern and user-friendly. It is necessary to review it and update its basic elements, like creating user profiles for each candidate, allowing for better sorting and better use in the future.

Candidate selection is a never-ending process, where we apply lessons learned from the past, and are open to learn and apply best practices to this need. The foundations are already in place for the next elections.

THE (S)ELECTION OF LEGISLATORS IN ROMANIA IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS OF DECEMBER 2020

Laurențiu Ștefan

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Romania held parliamentary elections on December 6, 2020, as previously scheduled. Elections were organized for the two chambers of the Romanian Parliament: The Senate (136 seats) and the Chamber of Deputies (330 seats). In Romania, electoral constituencies overlap with the 41 counties. There is also one constituency for Bucharest, the capital city, and another for the Romanian diaspora. This electoral system is based on proportional representation with a threshold of five percent.

The Social-Democratic Party (PSD) won the legislative elections of December 2020 with 29 percent. The National Liberal Party (PNL) came second with 25 percent, followed by an electoral alliance between the Save Romania Union (USR) and the Liberty, Unity and Solidarity Party (PLUS) that garnered 15 percent of the vote. The surprise of these elections was the party called Alliance for the Unity of Romanians (AUR) that earned 9 percent of the vote. The last party that made the threshold was the party of the Hungarian minority, the Democratic Union of Hungarians from Romania (UDMR), which garnered 6 percent of the vote.

A CROSS-PARTY PATTERN: INCUMBENCY IS NOT SO IMPORTANT

Any discussion about the selection of the candidates for the Romanian Parliament should consider that, every four years, the proportion of newcomers in the parliament is significant: around or more than 50 percent. In the current Chamber of Deputies, out of 348 members only 141 (40 percent) have previously served in the parliament -- which is a good indicator of the importance (or, better, lack of importance) placed by the mainstream parties on incumbency. The party composition of the parliament changed slightly, with two small parties (Popular Movement Party (PMP) and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats Party (ALDE) failing to pass the electoral threshold of 5 percent, while two new parties (AUR and PLUS) got parliamentary seats after the December 2020 elections.

If we take the parties that continue to have parliamentary representation one by one (PSD, PNL, USR, UDMR), we note that the rate of incumbents re-elected is around 50 percent. In other words, half of their current MPs have already served in the parliament for at least one term, while the other half is made up of newcomers. This is certainly not a new development, but rather a constant feature of Romanian politics. As I have shown elsewhere,¹ the percentage of newcomers in the first five legislatures after the December 1989 revolution ranged between 58 and 68 percent.

We may be tempted to label the group of MPs that have been reelected as “professional” legislators, or legislators with “static ambitions”² (i.e., they want to have a long parliamentary career), but more often

1 L. Ștefan and R. Grecu, ‘The ‘Waiting Room’: Romanian Parliament after 1989’, in E. Semenova, M. Edinger and H. Best (eds.), *Parliamentary Elites in Central and Eastern Europe: Recruitment and Representation*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2014, p. 208

2 Ștefan and Grecu, ‘The ‘Waiting Room’, in Semenova, Edinger, and Best (eds.), p. 207.; L. Ștefan, ‘Political Careers between Local and National Offices: the Example of Romania’, in M. Edinger and S. Jahr (eds.), *Political Careers in Europe: Career Patterns in Multi-Level Systems*, Baden, Nomos Verlag, London, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2015, p. 131.

than not that is not the case. Very few MPs continue in parliament after their second term. Most of them are kicked out by the new party leaders – at both the local and the national level. There is a “clientelistic” filter of parliamentary candidates as each party boss comes with his/her group of followers. The group of “senior” MPs (of MPs who have previously served in the parliament) is heavily dominated by those who have been elected for the first time in 2016.

For example, the current group of PSD deputies (110 in total) has 53 legislators with at least one mandate in the parliament (either in the Chamber of Deputies or in the Senate). Twenty-nine of them started their parliamentary career in the previous legislature (2016-2020), another six had already served a term before 2016, and only 18 had at least two previous terms (including four with four previous terms). The pattern is almost identical in the PNL: out of 93 deputies, 48 had already served at least one mandate. Twenty-five of them continue in parliament after being initially elected in 2016, with another four serving their first term before 2016. Only 19 have two, three, or four previous mandates.

Save Romania Union (USR) was established in 2016 and immediately acquired parliamentary representation. Today, 17 out of its current 38 deputies serve a second term – which puts the party in line with PSD and PNL in terms of the ratio between “senior” MPs and newcomers.

This mix of new- and “old”-comers seem to be one of the most recurrent patterns of selection of candidates for parliament. This pattern is visible across the political spectrum, in new and old parties alike, on the left and on the right of the political spectrum, and it has been that way for a while. Two major developments seem to be responsible for the resilience of these patterns across party lines. First is the chronic instability of party leadership – at both the local and the national level – in all the mainstream parties. There is a change in the national party leadership every three to-four years, if not more often (PSD: 2001, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2019, 2020, PNL: 2001, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2014, 2015, 2017). Every party leader purges, to a greater or lesser extent, the party structures and puts in command party people from their own group of followers. These purges sometimes affect local party leadership – which has gradually aligned politically with the national party leadership. Given the key role of local party leadership in the process of selection of candidates for parliament and other elected offices, these changes have repercussions on the composition of lists for parliament.

PARLIAMENT AS A “WAITING ROOM”

The second major factor that leads to so many reshuffles in the group of parliamentary representatives is the prevalent preference of politicians for executive offices and their perception that parliament is only a waiting room on the path to much more rewarding offices.³ In fact, politicians are not necessarily interested in a parliamentary mandate – which they generally find boring and unrewarding – but understand the need to stay relevant and be on the radar of top decision-makers. Parliament remains the best political venue where one can get a proper apprenticeship or confirm one’s political credentials. This perspective helps us better understand not only the patterns of selection of candidates for parliament and also the reasons behind so many resignations from the parliament.

A discussion about the career preferences of Romanian politicians has, as a prerequisite, a distinction between two different (ideal) types of politicians. In a complex and multi-layered political system such as the Romanian one, one can distinguish between local politicians and national politicians. Local politicians have their roots in and develop most of their occupational and public careers in one specific constituency. National politicians are traditionally based in Bucharest and have built up a political career in the party’s national headquarters or in ministries and agencies located in the capital city. A detailed discussion about career preferences in Romania can be found in the study I authored in

3 L. Ștefan, *Patterns of Political Elite Recruitment in Post-Communist Romania*, Bucharest, Ziua Publishing House, 2004.; Ștefan and Grecu, ‘The ‘Waiting Room’, in Semenova, Edinger, and Best (eds), pp. 194-215.

2015.⁴ In summary, with very few exceptions of people that are indeed committed to a parliamentary career, politicians prefer executive positions and keep the parliament as a second (or even third) option. National politicians prefer national executive positions (to sit in the cabinet or on the board of major national agencies), while local politicians tend to prefer positions at the local level (mayor of major cities or presidents of county councils).

In sum, politicians run for parliament in two different situations: 1) they have lost or are about to lose their desired executive position, or 2) they are still at the beginning of their political careers and are hopeful that new political opportunities at the local or national level will open during or at the end of the legislative term.

LOCAL POLITICIANS PREFER LOCAL OFFICES

A discussion about career preferences and political opportunities provides the proper backdrop for an analysis of the selection of candidates for parliament. It is important to find out who is on these lists and at which positions, but equally important is to know who is not on these lists and why. Given the prevailing pattern of political preferences that was described above, it becomes obvious that holders of top political offices at the local level (mayors or presidents of county councils) will not run for parliament because they are generally happy with their incumbency. Holders of ministerial portfolios face a different situation, as new legislative elections mean that a new government will be put in place and that there are high odds for incumbent ministers to lose their seat after the elections.

One also must consider that party hierarchies are a determinant factor in the selection mechanisms. Clearly, party leaders at the local and national levels have an edge over other party members. In many cases, they are the selectors of the candidates and/or have the final say inside the selection bodies. It is not a surprise that in most of the cases they select themselves for the available positions – as ministers, deputy ministers, candidates for mayor, for the presidency of the county councils or for parliament.

One corollary to these considerations is that in order to understand the process of candidate selection, one needs an integrated approach that takes into account European, local, and parliamentary elections. Their timing and the electoral outcomes have a significant impact on the respective pools of candidates. The structure of opportunities for local and national politicians must be seen in this dynamic perspective.

This integrated approach explains the absence of top local politicians from the candidate lists for parliament. Local party leaders must be in (elected) office, but they have more than one option. Parliament is not the only institution that provides public offices, and most of them favor an executive career at the local level. They run for parliament only if they lost the competition to win or retain a more desired local office (mayor or president of the county council). This can be attributed, in part, to the fact that since 1992, local elections have been organized a few months (usually five to six) before the legislative election. Another reason that needs to be considered is the outcome of European elections.

Romania, along with other EU member states, organized elections for the European Parliament in May 2019. The most recent presidential elections were held in November 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed the local elections from June to September 2020 and at last the legislative elections were held on December 6, 2020.

An assessment of the election of candidates for parliament must take into account that successive elections (especially over a very short span of time) provide for a moving and changing structure of opportunities.

⁴ Ștefan, 'Political Careers between Local and National Offices', in Edinger and Jahr (eds.).

RESIGNATIONS AS AN INDICATOR FOR CAREER PREFERENCES

As I have discovered over more than 15 years of research into parliamentary careers and political preferences, a governmental position (a non-elected office) is probably the most coveted office. It is followed by a seat in the European Parliament, then by an executive position at the local level (mayor or chair of the county council), and then by a seat in the national parliament.

This hierarchy of preferences was unveiled in the interviews with Members of the Parliament carried out in 2003. They are confirmed, however, by the actual behavior of top politicians.⁵

There was a recent case of a Romanian MEP resigning his European responsibilities to join the new Romanian government: Cristian Ghinea, on December 22, 2020. Before that, Ghinea resigned from the Romanian Parliament in June 2019 to take a seat in the European Parliament. His career is probably the best illustration of the hierarchy of political career preferences of Romanian politicians. The chair of the Popular Movement Party (PMP), Eugen Tomac, also chose the European Parliament over the national parliament after the European elections of May 2019. Dacian Ciolos, the chair of PLUS alliance, is currently the head of the RENEW Europe group in the European Parliament and this explains why he (along with Tomac, Ghinea and other PNL and USR leaders) did not run for parliament. Many national or local leaders from the main Romanian parties have successfully competed for a seat in the European Parliament and they were not inclined to abandon their European responsibilities (and material advantages) to compete in the recent legislative elections.

The same pattern was visible during the recent local elections. Local offices are the main target of local party leaders. In many counties, the local leaders of the main Romanian political parties have competed for the presidency of the county council or for the office of the mayor of the major city in the county. Only if they lose and miss these opportunities will they seriously consider a parliamentary seat. In case they succeed, they usually send their proxies (deputy chairs, assistants, advisers) to the parliament. This is a recurrent pattern in all the parties. Most of the Romanian mainstream parties have an explicit policy of pushing the chairs of the local branches to run in local elections for the most important positions, whether they want to or not. Election inside party structures, at the helm of the local branch, comes with an embedded duty. Most local politicians take leadership positions in the party in order to self-select for top local offices, but others – more reluctant – accept that this is something they cannot avoid.

Therefore, to understand the profile of the candidates for legislative elections, one has to consider the local and the legislative elections *together* and through the viewpoint of the local party branch, its leaders and the – rather limited – pool of candidates. For both elections, the pool of candidates is unsurprisingly quasi-similar, with maybe some exceptions for national leaders parachuted in from Bucharest for parliament or some career parliamentarians (as I have discussed earlier).

The same battery of people is thrown in the battle during local elections, which, in Romania, take place a few months before the legislative elections. If they win the desired positions they continue in local office, if not, they run for parliament. Some of them simply test the waters (and their eligibility) in the local elections, get a basic office at the local level (local or county councilor), and then run again for parliament and continue as an MP, if successful.

Candidates that successfully ran for mayor of big cities or are elected presidents of county councils (a very important position at the local level, directly elected by the voters living in a specific county) never give up their office for a parliamentary seat. However, mayors of smaller cities are willing to move up, but in most of the cases only to make sure that the voice of a group of smaller communities in a specific county is heard in parliament.

⁵ See 'Public Careers, Career Preferences and Strategic Candidacies', in Ștefan, *Patterns of Political Elite Recruitment in Post-Communist Romania*, pp. 190-216.

If we examine the leaders of local party branches, we find that they are either incumbents in highly desired local offices or run in elections to get these offices. If they lose their offices, their natural career step is to run for parliament. This is how parliament shelters the losers of the local elections.

Local elections, at least in Romania, if not elsewhere, function as a filter. There are indeed professional legislators who would like to continue their career in the parliament, as discussed above. The drive and ambitions of most local politicians is to get a position at the local level. Only if they fail are they ready to run for parliament, but they still keep an eye on the next opportunity that opens at the local level. For them, more than for others, parliament is nothing but a “waiting room”.

PARTY LEADERS (AND THEIR ADVISORS) HAVE TO TAKE SHELTER FIRST

National party leaders, their staff, and close collaborators do not usually have an interest in local positions. In the absence of opportunities at the European level, they direct their ambitions toward positions in the government and other Bucharest-based agencies. If their party is in the government they can be found in the cabinet, in the office of the prime minister, or in other more or less visible governmental positions. If their party is in the opposition, they assume leading positions in parliament and/or staff party headquarters. This is why they run for parliament at the first opportunity to reduce their political risk.

The top party leaders have, of course, placed themselves in the first positions on the list of candidates in the county of their residence (PNL's Ludovic Orban in Bucharest, PSD's Marcel Ciolacu in Buzau, USR's Dan Barna in Sibiu, UDMR's Kelemen Hunor in Harghita). National party leaders are usually surrounded by a significant group of advisers, most of them based in Bucharest and with no other leadership position in the party. They can only capitalize on their close relationship with the party leader. Few find a place in Bucharest, and the race to find themselves an eligible seat somewhere in the country starts a couple of months before the electoral campaign. The former head of PM's Ludovic Orban chancery, Ionel Danca, for example, ran in the second-place spot for the Chamber of Deputies in Vrancea after the head of the local branch, Ion Stefan, who lost the September election for mayor of Focsani, the capital city of Vrancea.

FORMER AND OUTGOING MINISTERS

Former or incumbent ministers enjoy a special position inside their own parties as they have been at the helm of national politics, with great public exposure and a significant level of popularity. They are the “stars” of the party and must be politically preserved and protected. The best way to do this at the end of an electoral cycle is to find them an eligible slot on the lists of candidates. For ministers who are local party leaders at the same time, this is clearly not an issue. This is a challenge, however, for those who lack a proper constituency or have not been in elected office before. The outgoing defense minister Nicolae Ciuca joined the governing party (PNL) before running for the Senate in the constituency of his birthplace.

The Minister of Justice, Catalin Predoiu, was “taken on board” by a powerful president of the county council and placed on top of the candidate list for the Senate in Prahova. In the previous legislature, Predoiu represented a different constituency (Calarasi) in the Chamber of Deputies. The same pattern was visible in the case of members of the PSD led cabinets between 2017 and 2019. Most of them had significant local roots and had previous careers as local politicians. Others are genuine national politicians and had to find a good spot on the candidate lists in constituencies outside of Bucharest. One good indicator is the change in their constituency from one legislature to another (as in the case of

Predoiu, mentioned above). The former PSD Minister of Culture, Ioan Vulpescu, for example, migrated with his parliamentary mandate from Bucharest in 2012-2020 to Dâmbovița in the current legislature (2020-2024), while the former Minister of Justice and former Speaker of the Senate, Robert Cazanciuc, switched from the constituency of Bucharest (2016-2020) to the constituency of Giurgiu (2020-2024).

CANDIDATES FROM OUTSIDE THE PARTY STRUCTURES

Last, but not least, there is a sizeable group of legislators who had no previous political engagements whatsoever. Legislative elections are an excellent opportunity for mainstream parties to open up to the broader, non-political civil society, and to invite or recruit public personalities without any previous political commitments. This is also a pattern of selection that is visible in all parties. These newcomers join a party days before the lists for parliament are officially submitted to the electoral offices. For them, a parliamentary seat is a boost of their public profile and sometimes a culmination of their involvement in public affairs. In many cases, this is the beginning of a long political career that may bring some of them to the helm of their parties or to the highest public offices. Mircea Geoana, the current NATO Deputy General Secretary, used to be a non-affiliated Minister of Foreign Affairs when he ran for the Senate in 2004. A year later, he was elected chair of the-then biggest Romanian party, the PSD, and ran for the presidency in 2009.

In 2020, given the political and social context dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not a surprise that, across all parties, a great number of doctors and hospital managers have been selected and placed on top of the lists for candidates. Two of the doctors who have been at the forefront of the fight to contain the COVID-19 pandemic have joined the PSD and eventually ran on top of the party's lists for the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, respectively, in Bucharest.

Rectors of major universities enjoy significant local reputations and influence and have been placed in eligible slots of the candidate lists of the two mainstream parties (PNL and PSD). The two center-right parties that ran together as an alliance (USR and PLUS) made room on their lists for many entrepreneurs with no previous experience in politics whatsoever. And there are many examples of journalists, civic activists, writers, and even athletes who are now members of parliament.

CONCLUSION

In this very short paper, I have tried to illustrate the three major patterns of selection of candidates for parliament and shed light on the factors that have the greatest impact on them. All parties find an almost perfect balance between former members of parliament who run for reelection and newcomers to parliamentary life. In the second group, we can identify two distinct groups. Those who are new to parliament -- but are not new to politics -- on the one hand, and those who had no political background in either parties or public institutions until they decided to run for parliament on the other. A parliamentary seat is not necessarily the first option of many career politicians -- and this explains why influential local leaders are not in parliament, but in executive positions at the local level (as mayors of big cities or as presidents of county councils). Some national party leaders took advantage of the opportunity provided by the European elections and preferred a career in the European parliament, to the detriment of the national parliament; others, however, eyeing a position in the government remained in national politics and topped the lists for parliament.

REFERENCE LIST

Ștefan, L., *Patterns of Political Elite Recruitment in Post-Communist Romania*, Bucharest, Ziu Publishing House, 2004.

Ștefan, L. and Grecu, R., 'The 'Waiting Room': Romanian Parliament after 1989', in Semenova, E., Edinger, M. and Best, H. (eds.), *Parliamentary Elites in Central and Eastern Europe. Recruitment and Representation*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2014, pp. 194-215.

Ștefan, L., 'Political Careers between Local and National Offices: the Example of Romania', in Edinger, M. and Jahr, S. (eds.), *Political Careers in Europe: Career Patterns in Multi-Level Systems*, Baden, Nomos Verlag, London, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2015, pp. 131-158.

THE CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION PROCESS IN ITALIAN PARTIES

Gian Marco Bovenzi

In Italy, the legitimacy of political parties to freely form and organize themselves is established under several articles of the Italian Constitution. These provisions set forth the constitutional principles and rules serving as a cornerstone in the Italian democratic system, within the broader principle of a citizens' sovereignty (Art. 1). The rules provide that Italian citizens have the right to choose their representatives, to actively participate in the *res publica* and in national policies through a democratic process. Moreover, the democratic process is further enshrined through the principles of freedom of opinion (Art. 2), and association (Art. 18, also including the right to form parties). Finally, article 48 states the right to universal suffrage.

Although the Constitution is extremely clear that citizens are free to form political parties, the provisions establishing how such a formation should work are few and very broad. The rules set forth by the Constitution only show a "double connotation" of Italian citizens' right to democratic participation: on the one hand, it internally ensures a dialogue within the relationships between parties and their members; on the other hand, such a system externally complies with democratic tools of action and propaganda in political competition, in a way that does not undermine democratic principles and institutions, further ensuring the safeguard to the principle of full and public transparency by excluding the possibility that parties and power can be privatized.

However, the lack of specific provisions on the parties' functioning does not represent a legislative vacuum, rather it voluntarily expresses citizens' freedom of expression to form and organize themselves.

This also implies that no pre-set ways to select the parties' candidates are established, and historically the choice of candidates has been based on traditional practices, rather than on written regulations. Each party can choose and/or modify its own selection criteria based on its specific needs. And these needs have varied with the evolution of the Italian party system since the Second World War.

The so-called "First Republic" (1948-1994) was characterized by a top-down system, more linked to the right-wing or left-wing ideologies behind the parties rather than the "personal" election of their leader. The "personalization" process of the parties started during the oil crisis and the economic and social crises of the 1970s: this emerged either from citizens' need of a guide to face the crisis, and from the presence of particular charismatic leaders who stood out among others. However, the choice of candidates was still the prerogative of the parties themselves.

After the "Mani Pulite" investigations of 1992-1993, a series of scandals that highlighted corruption practices involving all parties on the Italian political scene, citizens' distrust in the party system accelerated changes in political focus from "the parties" to "the people who work in the parties," leading to further personalization in Italian politics. Nevertheless, there never was a formal change in the method selection of candidates in any side of the political wings.

At the beginning of the 21st century, along with the increasing use of IT devices, social media, and networks, a faster spread of information started to present the baseline of a new process: individuals' ability to do political activities on their own, coupled with a new feeling of being able to affect political life in other ways than getting in parties. This allowed for the formation of a participation system not yet seen in Italy at that time, which could absorb new demands for citizen participation in politics.

It is worth noting that until now this method has been particularly used by left-wing or populist parties. In fact, such political orientations share with their traditional voters the ideology of an internal bottom-up decision-making process.

So, the current party system in Italy is the result of several combined factors: the legal background and Constitutional principles; the historical tradition and historic contextual needs; and, finally, the product of political ideology behind each party. These aspects will be deepened in the next sections.

THE CANDIDATES' (S)ELECTION PROCESS

Ever since parties began experimenting with primaries in 1998, the candidate selection processes within Italian political parties has tried several formulas of open candidate election, starting with the Alleanza Nazionale, the first party to launch primaries to elect its frontrunner as president of the province of Rome. In practice, Italy lacks a legislative framework (aside from the Constitutional boundaries examined above) regulating the candidate selection processes in political parties, in virtue of an alleged political autonomy that would otherwise be constrained by strict legal provisions. For this reason, several heterogeneous, innovative solutions have been adopted throughout the years, without reaching a definitive pattern of selection processes common to every party.

To make things more complex, and to increase the unlikelihood of regulation within precise legal frameworks, is the difficulty of defining the "primaries process." According to the definition by Carlo Fusaro (2005), primary processes are "those processes finalized at influencing and/or determining the selection of candidates for future elections, [...] processes to which participates the same electoral body eventually voting for the future elections themselves and [...] processes promoted by those who intend to present candidates for the election of monocratic public offices or for the election to representative charges in assemblies at any governmental level."¹

Such terminology is surely influenced by the American experience of primaries, a mechanism which, when transposed to Italy, suffers from the complexity of the Italian public administration at different governmental levels. Despite these difficulties, primary processes bring more democracy and transparency, as they allow citizens' direct participation in selecting their candidates for elections and allow single citizens to run for an election. In this sense, as constitutional law scholar Umberto Ronga puts it, the choice of selecting candidates for public office by means of a more participative mechanism "may represent a chance to try to reduce shortcomings in democratic legitimacy of political parties."²

The lack of a uniform regulation for the selection of candidates in political parties has historically resulted in the absence of a uniform model among these parties. In the context of the Italian experience, three models may be distinguished:

- The *open* model
- The *closed* model
- The *semi-closed* model

The open model is a selection process based on the possibility that every citizen, without distinction, may participate in the election of a political party's representative, including in the absence of a legal relationship between the citizen and the party. This implies that the active electorate in the primaries perfectly (or largely) matches the active electorate in national political elections.

¹ C. Fusaro, 'Elezioni primarie: prime esperienze e profili costituzionali', *Quaderni dell'osservatorio elettorale-Regione Toscana*, vol. 55, 2006, p. 41.

² U. Ronga, 'La selezione delle candidature', *Convengo del Gruppo di Pisa: Rapporti Politici e Dinamiche della forma di Governo. Università degli Studi Federico II di Napoli*, 2019, available at Umberto_Ronga_-_La_selezione_delle_candidature.pdf (gruppodipisa.it).

On the contrary, the closed model refuses the hypothesis that every citizen can participate in the selection process. Voting for a party's representative is, in fact, allowed only to those who have some kind of legal relationship with the party. Those relationships include party membership or enrollment in the party's local registers or rolls. In addition, sometimes voting can be reserved only for those who have been enrolled for years in the registers, or those who have been party members for a number of years (electorate restriction through seniority, to avoid membership manipulation).

In between the open and the closed models, the semi-closed model provides the possibility to vote for those citizens who clearly manifest their intention to vote in the party's primary process. This could be, for instance, paying a fee, or temporarily enrolling or associating with a register or a roll; or, more easily, any form of expression of interest. This model is different from the open model because without such expression of interest, a citizen is not allowed to participate in the selection process; at the same time, it is not fully closed since any citizens may potentially participate simply by showing their willingness to do so.

Historically, local entities have tried different models of selection over time, following a bottom-up process where experimentation first happens at a regional level, before being adopted at the national level, following the decentralized nature of Italian politics. In 1998, the right-wing party Alleanza Nazionale implemented for the first time a primary selection process during an election for the province of Rome. Soon after, the center-left coalition L'Ulivo did the same to nominate their party's candidate for mayor of the city of Bologna. In 2004, such processes were adopted for the first time in the regional elections in Calabria and in the following two years in the regions of Puglia and Tuscany. In Puglia, an *open* model was adopted, where every citizen paying a symbolic contribution of 1 euro could vote, according to the party's statute. In Tuscany, regional laws were enforced that required the primary process to be implemented through a semi-closed model, where every citizen could vote upon condition of their enrollment in the local registers or party rolls. In 2005, the primary process was implemented for the first time at the national level. The center-left party L'Unione organized open primaries to elect its candidate for the upcoming national political elections.

The open model led to the victory of former Prime Minister Romano Prodi. In fact, Prodi was at the time one of the most popular representatives of the party. Moreover, he was well-known for being one of the most important promoters – also at an international level – of Italian adhesion to the European Monetary Union. Therefore, Prodi was very publicly exposed back then, and such exposure led voters to personalize and shape L'Unione under his figure. Whereas “formally” the election was carried out following an open model, the election was “substantially” similar to a closed model, in which normally one figure is considered as leader and party representative (as we will see below for Lega and Movimento 5 Stelle). This is the reason why it is highly likely that Prodi had a substantial advantage over his opponents at the primaries.

As a case study, and given such tortuous background and experience, it is interesting to analyze how three major parties of the current Italian political scene have experimented with primary processes, the left-of-center Patriot Democratico (Democratic Party), the right-wing Lega party, and the left-populist Movimento 5 Stelle (Five Star Movement).

THE PRIMARY PROCESS IN THE PARTITO DEMOCRATICO

When circumscribing the meaning of the primary process, for the purposes of this work let us refer to the elections for the position of National Secretary. That is, in the case of the Partito Democratico (PD), the leading figure of the party – and not the official candidate to national-level political election.³

The first primary elections of the PD were held in 2007. The primary process of 2007 was organized to elect candidates for the National Assembly and the National Secretary of the PD. The elections were held on October 14th, 2007, and coincided with the official foundation of the PD party. In this case, an open model of election was adopted. Every citizen resident in Italy, or every non-Italian citizen with a regular residence permit in Italy, aged at least 16 who paid a symbolic quota of 1 euro minimum could participate in the process, which consisted of one single round of election. Such typology of the *open* model has been – probably improperly – renamed as the “PD primary process.”

In fact, the primaries did not aim at electing a candidate to run for public office (as the definition of “primaries” suggests). Instead, the process aimed at electing the leader/main representative of the party, not the official candidate for a round of national or local elections.⁴ A further peculiarity of the PD primary process is that it allows every citizen to potentially join, including those with different political opinions. For instance, a right-wing party supporter could participate in the election of the PD National Secretary, even though the PD is clearly a left-of-center party. In that year, among the almost 3.2 million voters, Walter Veltroni won the primaries with almost 2.700.000 votes (around 75 percent).

A peculiarity of this primary process is the fact that the method for the elections was not regulated by a national, regional, or local law, but instead by the party’s statute. This suggests a high degree of autonomy and independence of Italian political parties.

Another primary selection was held on October 25th, 2009, adopting the same open model (Italian citizens residing in Italy, non-Italian citizens possessing a regular residence permit, those aged above 16 years old, the symbolic payment of at least 1 euro, only one round of election with no ballot). This time, Pier Luigi Bersani won, winning 53 percent of the votes (1.6 million votes on a total amount of 3.1 million voters) and, accordingly, the highest number of delegates to the National Assembly.

Here, another peculiarity was that the three candidates running in the primaries were selected after a closed round of votes: in fact, the three frontrunners were those who obtained more votes in a first election reserved only for PD party members. The PD Statute⁵ itself provided that a candidate could run in the primaries only if he or she was among the three top-vote candidates. The PD primaries therefore followed a two-step process:

1. Firstly, a closed pre-election during which PD party members voted – on a local level, that is, based on PD “districting” throughout the country – for the candidate they would support in the forthcoming primaries.
2. Second, as the result of the closed pre-election, the three candidates who obtained the largest number of votes ran in the open primary election to elect the National Secretary.

3 M. Rubechi, ‘Le primarie dell’Unione: spunti di riflessione, *federalismi.it*, 2005, pp. 2-3.; ‘Primaria 2005: la struttura e le regole di svolgimento’, *www.forumco-stituzionale.it*, 15 September 2005.; F. Venturino, ‘Le primarie nazionali dell’Unione: un’analisi della partecipazione con dati aggregati’, *Rivista italiana di scienza politica*, 2007, p. 440.

4 S. Ceccanti, ‘Primarie: le ragioni italiane (e non solo)’, *Percorsi Costituzionali*, Jovene Editore, 2017, p. 155.

5 Article 12 of the Statute of the Partito Democratico, available at [Statuto del PD - Partito Democratico](#)

The same two-step process was adopted for the subsequent primaries that were held in 2013 (almost 3 million voters), 2017 (almost 2 million) and 2019 (around 1.5 million voters), that saw the victories of Matteo Renzi (both in 2013 and 2017) and Nicola Zingaretti (2019) respectively. These elections allowed for party members to get a sense of control over their party's destiny.

As observed, the key points of the PD primary process are the following:

- The adoption of an open model (in fact, the payment of the symbolic amount of at least 1 euro should not be assimilated as an expression of interest to vote, as in semi-closed models).
- The primary process is carried out to elect the National Assembly and the National Secretary of the party, a political figure that is not necessarily the party's official candidate to run for future national political elections – although it happened that these two capacities often matched.
- The active electorate is composed by (cumulatively): Italian citizens resident in Italy, non-Italian citizens possessing a regular residence permit, those aged above 16, the payment of a symbolic offer of at least 1 euro.

It is worth looking at the second point in more detail. Recalling the aforementioned definition, primary processes are ordinarily intended to be promoted by those who intend to present candidates for the election of monocratic public offices or for the election to representative charges in assemblies at any governmental level. This definition, especially when compared to a different political system, such as the United States of America – where the candidate winning the primaries is eventually the party's candidate for the presidency – shows how the PD primary process differs. In fact, the result of the primaries does not lead to the nomination of a candidate for political election, but, instead, for the National Secretary of the party. This is a charge that, although monocratic and public, is merely representative, and aims at naming the party's leader.⁶ As also defined by Antonio Floridaia⁷, the PD primaries' model of elections is internal, that is, a bottom-up and open model, because the goal of the primaries is the "construction of the leadership, and not the choice of the institutional office" of the candidates. In other words, the primaries decide who will be the leader of the party going into elections, but not necessarily the future prime minister or mayor.

One exception to this common practice was the 2012 primaries, which were held to elect the leader of the left-wing coalition "Italia. Bene Comune" (led by the PD, along with the other parties Sinistra, Ecologia e Libertà and Partito Socialista Italiano). As distinct from the 2007, 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2019 primaries, the 2012 primaries aimed at the election of a representative that would eventually participate in secondary national-level elections. This implied that, in case of the coalition's victory in the national political elections, the primaries' winner would become President of the Council of Ministers (that is, the Prime Minister).

It is uncertain if the 2012 primaries process can be named as a fully *open* or rather, a semi-closed model. Although the potential active electorate was represented by the ordinary active electorate for political elections (aged above 18 years old), those willing to vote had to express their interest through subscribing to an explicit declaration of support for the coalition. As a result, among the more than 3 million voters for the first round of elections and 2.8 million for the second round (ballot), Pier Luigi Bersani won (winning almost 70 percent of the votes) and officially became the left-of-center coalition's candidate for the 2013 national elections.

6 L. Fasano and A. Seddone, 'Selecting the leader, Italian style', *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 2016, p. 85.

7 A. Floridaia, 'Scendere in campo: l'accesso alla competizione elettorale tra barriere formali ed incentivi politici', in R. D'Alimonte and C. Fusaro (eds.), *La legislazione elettorale italiana*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2008, p. 103.

Conclusively, let us stress again how PD primaries present what one could call a “double scheme.” In fact, the party’s statute provides that first, only PD party members may vote for the candidates in the parties’ primaries. Then, the candidates ranking in the top three positions eventually run for the party’s primaries (or, according to the statute’s modifications: the first two positions or passing an electoral threshold.) Finally, only at this stage does the *open* primary takes place, where every citizen possessing requirements pre-determined by the statute are allowed to vote for the PD National Secretary.

THE PRIMARY PROCESS IN LEGA AND MOVIMENTO 5 STELLE

In contrast with the PD’s open primaries, two other major Italian parties adopt different candidate selection methods.

The Lega adopted a closed model for both its primary elections for the position of federal secretary, held in 2013 and 2017⁸. In both years, according to the Lega party statute, the active electorate for the primaries was limited only to Lega party members with at least one year of membership. The requirement for candidacy was 10 years of membership and each candidate had to support his or her candidacy with at least 1,000 subscriptions from party members. Both Lega primaries ended with the victory of Matteo Salvini in 2013 with almost 82 percent among a total of 10,000 votes, and in 2017 with 83 percent of the vote among a total of 8,000 votes.

As in the PD primaries, the process in the Lega primaries aims at the election of the party’s leading figure and not at pointing out the candidates for national-level political elections.

The Five Star Movement party introduced several elements of innovation. It was the first party in Italy to organize primary elections through the Internet (via the party’s online platform Rousseau). Second, it first implemented the so-called parliamentarian primaries, through which the active electorate could point out candidates for the party’s lists to run as Members of Parliament (more on this in a few paragraphs).

The first Five Star Movement primaries were held in September 2017, with the objective of selecting the figure that would cover both the positions of political leader and be the candidate for president of the Council of Ministers in the forthcoming elections; thus, the primaries were basically held for a double position. A closed model was adopted, where only party members (regularly subscribed to the Rousseau platform), above 18 years old⁹, could participate. Moreover, the passive electorate was extended, allegedly so as to foster the candidacies of those possessing more political experience.¹⁰

The peculiarity of the Five Star Movement in the Italian system resides in the fact that it also covers parliamentary seats, as “the mechanism of the selections does not concern the choice of one candidate to a monocratic office or a leading position, but instead it is a consultation aimed at selecting the political offer and the composition of the lists of candidates to be elected as Members of Parliament.”¹¹ As in the party leadership primaries, the parliamentarian primaries were organized with a closed model, in which only party members could vote. On the other hand, the passive electorate (that is, those who could run for the primaries) was reserved for those who had been candidates (without being elected) and had run for previous local public offices – for instance, as mayors or at a regional level.

That only those who previously ran for other local offices could run in the primaries represents a unique example in the context of the Italian panorama. On one hand, it is apparently democratic and

8 Ronga, ‘La selezione delle candidature’.

9 See <https://rousseau.movimento5stelle.it/main.php>.

10 Ronga, ‘La selezione delle candidature’.

11 Ronga, ‘La selezione delle candidature’.

transparency-compliant; on the other hand, such limitation of the passive electorate might reveal an indirect strategy to consolidate political consensus around a defined group of representatives linked to party elites, thus “neutralizing alternative forms to the Movement’s leadership.”¹²

In conclusion, on a holistic level the Five Star Movement’s selection processes represents an element of novelty in Italy. Not only because it adopts a *closed* model of selecting candidates (which is also used by Lega), but also considering the introduction of the parliamentary primaries (a method adopted by the PD as well), and in consideration of the fact that *all* votes are expressed via an online platform.

CONCLUSION

Summing up the key points highlighted in the present contribution, Italy possesses a strong legal and constitutional framework enshrining the principles of democracy, free thought and association, as well as the free establishment of parties to contribute to the political process. Such provisions ensure a strong autonomy and independence of political parties that are free to organize their statutes, their structure, and their functioning, provided they do not infringe upon constitutional limitations.

This broad organizational freedom – and given the absence of other laws regulating party organization – implied a historical lack of uniform regulation. Accordingly, Italian political parties possess wide freedom in establishing their own rules and methods to regulate their processes of candidate selection, and election, both on the local and national level (for example, with primaries).

Within the many solutions adopted by different parties, three have adopted a top-down primary system, with the PD opting for open primaries, while Lega and the Five Star Movement went for closed primaries. However, in the case of the PD, the primary was partially closed, with only party members entitled to take part in a first, eliminatory round, through their votes counted on the local level, according to the placement of the party’s different branches throughout the Italian territory.

The Italian panorama of candidate (s)election methods is extremely fragmented. There is uncertainty on selection models, as well as on the active and passive electorate (and how it is determined), on how to carry out the elections (online? In person?), on transparency in the selection procedures, and so on. It is desirable, therefore, that in accordance with the constitutional principles a uniform legislation will be implemented, at least highlighting and defining common regulation for the major issues within the candidate selection process.¹³

¹² See S. Ceccanti and S. Curreri, ‘I partiti antisistema nell’esperienza italiana: il Movimento 5 Stelle come partito personale autoescluso’, *Diritto pubblico comparato ed europeo*, 2015, p. 818.

¹³ This is what Tommaso Edoardo Frosini argues in an article already almost twenty years old. See T.E. Frosini, ‘È giunta l’ora di una legge sui partiti politici?’, *Diritto e Storia*, 2003, par. 2.

REFERENCE LIST

- Article 12 of the Statute of the Partito Democratico, available at [Statuto del PD - Partito Democratico](#).
- Ceccanti, S. and S. Curreri, S., 'I partiti antisistema nell'esperienza italiana: il MoVimento 5 Stelle come partito personale autoescluso', in *Diritto pubblico comparato ed europeo*, 2015.
- Ceccanti, S., 'Primarie: le ragioni italiane (e non solo)', *Percorsi Costituzionali*, Jovene Editore, 2017.
- Fasano, L., and Seddone, A., 'Selecting the leader, Italian style', *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 2016.
- Florida, A., 'Scendere in campo: l'accesso alla competizione elettorale tra barriere formali ed incentivi politici', in D'Alimonte, R. and Fusaro, C. (eds.), *La legislazione elettorale italiana*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2008.
- Frosini, T.E., 'È giunta l'ora di una legge sui partiti politici?', *Diritto e Storia*, 2003.
- Fusaro, C., 'Elezioni primarie: prime esperienze e profili costituzionali', *Quaderni dell'osservatorio elettorale-Regione Toscana*, vol. 55, 2006.
- Ronga, U., 'La selezione delle candidature', *Convegno del Gruppo di Pisa: Rapporti Politici e Dinamiche della forma di Governo. Università degli Studi Federico II di Napoli*, 2019, available at [Umberto Ronga - La selezione delle candidature.pdf \(gruppodipisa.it\)](#).
- Rubechi, M., 'Le primarie dell'Unione: spunti di riflessione', *federalismi.it*, 2005.
- 'Primaria 2005: la struttura e le regole di svolgimento', [www.forumcostituzionale.it](#), 15 September 2005.
- Venturino, F., 'Le primarie nazionali dell'Unione: un'analisi della partecipazione con dati aggregati', *Rivista italiana di scienza politica*, 2007.

POLITICAL PARTY (S)ELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE IN UKRAINE, MOLDOVA, AND GEORGIA¹

Andrea Keerbs, Alisa Muzergues & Chris Holzen

Although Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia share a Soviet heritage, which is still heavily present in political organization and party structures, each country has taken a different path forward since regaining independence in 1991. Common challenges, though, have been numerous: as elsewhere in post-communist democracies, modern parties in the three countries have not yet found fully transparent ways of operating and selecting their candidates. For the most part, the process remains a decision taken by a few people within the parties behind closed doors – habits, it could be argued, that come from the Soviet past.

On all levels, including party development, the paths taken by Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia since the breakup of the Soviet Union include similarities and differences. For the purpose of candidate selection, we have found that the most similarities are between Ukraine and Moldova. In both cases, the law prescribes general procedures for party nominations, but the details are left to parties through their statutes. Therefore, we will look at Moldova and Ukraine first, followed by Georgia, examining the nomination process at the national level for president and parliament, as well as the nomination by parties of candidates for local offices.

RECRUITMENT FOR NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICE, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Candidates for president in Ukraine and Moldova are usually nominated by their respective parties, although legislation allows candidates to run without a party nomination. Though not necessarily required, parties usually nominate those who chair the party if they field a candidate for the presidency. This is because most parties continue to be entrepreneurial parties, i.e., electoral projects owned and financed by the person they will eventually nominate. The law dictates that the party stamp is needed on documents submitted with names of candidates and these stamps are in the possession of national party leaders. Thus, the national parties maintain control over candidate selection at all levels, whether they be national, regional, or local.

Party building processes in Moldova are top down. When someone buys a party, paying money for possession of the stamp and for re-registration of a party in their name, that often means that the new buyer receives not only the party but also the loyalty of that party's membership. Some parties have attempted over the years to build from the bottom up, but in both Moldova and Ukraine none of these national parties have any significant national power. However, there have been various efforts in recent years to form grassroots, bottom-up parties. While these efforts have seen varying degrees of success at regional levels, none have yet become national forces in their respective countries.

¹ The authors would like to thank Alexandru Manoli, Senior Program Officer at IRI's Chisinau office who shared his expertise on the resident diaspora vote in Moldova, as well as Nino Dolidze, Senior Program Officer at IRI's Tbilisi office, and Viktoriya Shylyuk, Program Assistant at IRI's Kyiv office, who provided valuable insights on the effect that gender quotas have on political parties' candidate recruitment strategies.

While Ukraine and Moldova both adopted unified electoral codes in 2019, the previous practices in these countries had been to change the election law just before each election, which gave an advantage to the governing party which made the change. This often meant that candidate recruitment and selection for opposition parties would take place with little time between the passage of the election law and the deadline for providing candidate names to the relevant electoral authorities. This put opposition parties at a disadvantage when it came to the candidate selection process, as the governing party would know in advance what the legal parameters of that selection process would be. With unified electoral codes, the process is now more transparent and has had the effect of creating a more level playing field around candidate selection.

Presidential elections in Georgia are a thing of the past. The last presidential election was held in 2018, for a six-year term. Starting in 2024, the president will be appointed by parliament with majority vote. But let's take a look at the past candidate selection of Georgian presidential candidates. Like Moldova and Ukraine, Georgian political parties have used their leaders as presidential candidates. However, in the 2008 snap presidential elections, nine opposition parties agreed to field one single candidate (Levan Gachechiladze) to run against United National Movement (UNM) party leader and incumbent Mikhail Saakashvili. Generally, in Georgia, parties are not readily bought and sold, but they are largely personality-based, and this plays a major role in candidate selection at all levels.

After the snap elections of 2008, candidate selection for president took a different turn. In 2013, another coalition candidate was put forward, this time from the ruling Georgian Dream Coalition. The candidate, Giorgi Margvelashvili, was not a leader of any of the Coalition parties and had only briefly dabbled in politics years before. He was not a publicly visible figure during the 2012 parliamentary campaign. He had twice been the rector at a very respected university in Tbilisi and was thought to be named a minister due to his technical expertise. During this time, he rose to the rank of deputy prime minister, and there was speculation he was close to Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili. Whether that is true or not, one can say the process of GDC's choosing Margvelashvili as its presidential candidate was not clear to the public. Margvelashvili ultimately won the election, gaining over 60 percent of the vote to become Georgia's fourth president.

A term limit law prohibited Saakashvili from running again. In fact, in 2013 UNM held a nationwide 'primary' of sorts. These were not the traditional primaries one thinks of when looking at the U.S. In this case, hopeful presidential candidates competed in a series of six issue-based debates in regional congresses around the country. Party members were invited to the debates and voted on whom they thought won. Four candidates took part in the debates, and the eventual winner and presidential candidate Davit Bakradze won all six debates. Bakradze had been speaker of parliament and a popular UNM official. To date, this is the most transparent presidential candidate nomination process in Georgia.

Georgia continued to divert from the usual path that Moldova and Ukraine took. Parties continued to nominate candidates that were not party heads. In Georgia, parties and/or coalitions used a sort of brand approach to their campaigns. Parties that had enough financing sometimes used polling data to help select their candidates. But polls are expensive, and few parties have the funds to use this resource.

These parties/brands are still largely dependent on political leaders (past and present) but allowed lesser-known politicians to be candidates and, in some cases, get elected. In 2018, Independent candidate Salome Zurabishvili relied on the Georgian Dream name to get elected. Zurabishvili, a former member of Saakashvili's government turned hardcore opposition, won a seat in parliament in 2016 in a district where Georgian Dream did not run a candidate. Although she was technically an Independent MP and was not in the ruling majority, her voting record and public statements aligned closely with the ruling party. Speculation began in the summer of 2018 that Georgian Dream would not name a candidate and

would back an independent. However, it was not announced until September that GD would officially back Zurabishvili. It is unlikely she could have won without the support of the GD name and its leaders' support.

CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

In parliamentary races, both Moldova and Ukraine have experimented with multiple electoral systems. Some called for all parliamentary candidates to be chosen from a proportional system, where lists are developed by the parties and put forth to compete against lists from other parties. The alternatives were mixed systems, from which some candidates are chosen from lists and others are selected based on a majoritarian process where some candidates run in single mandate districts. In both cases, the candidates are selected by party leaders. In the proportional system, party headquarters exert much more control in determining who ends up on the list. In the case of majoritarian districts, when the law allows for it, the practice has been one of parties attempting to recruit candidates from the constituency who have local appeal or the capacity to finance his / her own campaign. The exception to this might be instances when a party would nominate someone not from the district, but who nonetheless is well known, like a famous singer or athlete.

Over the years, various aspects of the law in Ukraine have also allowed for independent candidates to self-nominate. And while the independents do not represent a party, what often happens in parliamentary races with all or some majoritarian districts is that independent candidates will join a party or faction in the parliament after the election, choosing whichever party provides the most power or protection to that candidate. One example is the parliamentary race in 2002 in Ukraine, conducted under a 50/50 parliamentary/majoritarian system. On the party list half of the ballot, the pro-reform "Our Ukraine" coalition of parties won a plurality of the seats in parliament. However, the Party of Regions, associated with former President Victor Yanukovich, which won far fewer seats, was nonetheless able to use coercion and enticements to bring most of the independent candidates from the majoritarian side to join them. Together, they were able to form a government. So even though this authoritarian party, which favored closer ties with Moscow, did not recruit particularly popular candidates for their list, they were able to use other means to pressure candidates after the election to their advantage.

Due to the weakness of political parties' structures, Ukrainian and Moldovan parties often do not have enough people to field candidates for all local offices. This can lead to local leaders offering themselves up to the highest bidder. National parties then compete informally for popular local leaders to be candidates for their party, targeting those who have higher chances of victory. While they are legally forbidden from offering financial rewards in exchange for these potential candidates, there have been instances in the past, in both countries, where this has been reported to have taken place.

The legislation-driven evolution of party candidate selection, caused by mutual pressure from local civil society and international partners for democratic development, brought positive changes to the qualitative composition of the Ukrainian parliament. Until recent legislative changes, the absence of state party financing and existence of immunity for Members of Parliament attracted a high number of business leaders and even oligarchs to the halls of the national legislative body. They were elected on the ticket of the party they were financing, in exchange for immunity from prosecution.

The situation changed after the Euromaidan revolution of 2013-2014. Then, most mainstream parties put new young faces representing civil society on top of their lists during the first post-revolution parliamentary elections, so as to meet societal demands for change. Following the failure of numerous efforts to create a common list of all the leading civil society actors of the Revolution to run together, newly elected politicians, who had just left the same side of the barricade on Maidan, found themselves on opposite sides of the parliamentary barricade. Once elected, however, the MPs representing four

different political parties managed to nominally coordinate their efforts via a “Euro-optimists” multi-partisan caucus.

In the long run, attempts to field new candidates from outside the political world and garner fresh energy didn’t lead to the renewal of these parties. Too often, the mix between institutionalized parties with specific procedures and candidates from civil society, with little notion of how political parties work, led to mutual frustration in which the system usually won. The elected representatives felt they did not fit in their political group and even joined the opposition to the party which had brought them to Parliament. While parties had immediately gained by fielding new candidates, those candidates’ early departures meant that the promise of internal party change could not be fulfilled. In some cases, internal party life went back to business as usual, as the party structure remained the same.

Former comedian and actor Volodymyr Zelensky, whose previous political experience consisted mainly of playing the role of Ukraine’s president in a television series called “Servant of the People,” won the presidential election of 2019 in a surprising landslide victory. His party set another precedent in Ukraine’s political system, “crowdsourcing” candidates for the early parliamentary elections, which were to be held two months after his inauguration. Following the same tech-savvy style, the newly formed presidential party, Servant of the People, announced an open call for applications to select potential candidates. According to the party’s campaign manager, it used a tripartite verification of candidates: documentary verification, voluntary verification, professional personnel evaluation and “post-primaries,” i.e., final changes on the list after their official announcement in the party congress (either exclusion from the list after additional checks or withdrawal by individuals).

This opened the opportunity for people to comment on each of the candidates. Party cadres finalized the selection process and made sure the candidates passed a compliance test, to ensure their views align with the president’s. The process was very quick and top-down, as the party was new and, at the same time, successful early on. Team Zelensky made it no secret that this was inspired by the experience of similar Western European parties, such as *En Marche* in France. While the open call process brought a lot of political outsiders with broad expertise and experience into Parliament, the resulting heterogeneity of the group, much like in France, has made the management of the parliamentary group complicated.

Moldova is unique to the other countries in that the parliament gives three seats to the diaspora. These seats follow districts, just like other single constituency MPs. These electoral districts include Western Europe (the biggest in terms of voter turnout), North and South America, and Eastern Europe and Asia. There were no legal requirements for the candidates in diaspora districts to reside (past or present) in the regions where they were competing.

For the 2019 parliamentary elections, there were two clear contenders for those three diaspora seats: the electoral bloc of the Party of Action & Solidarity (PAS), and the Dignity & Truth Platform (DA) Platform (known as the ACUM Bloc), and the Party of Socialists. The strategy for the selection of candidates were different. The ACUM bloc bet on their candidates’ name recognition and maximization of voter turnout in Western Europe (important for the proportional list). For the Western Europe district, they selected the 2016 presidential candidate Maia Sandu. For North America, the same applied. They went with the better-known candidate in that region, Dumitru Alaiba (who came from a civil society organization). In the Eastern Europe and Asia district, they selected a lesser-known candidate, betting more on the ACUM bloc’s ‘brand.’ It also was a district with smaller chances of success.

The Party of Socialists bet on their name brand and put forth lesser-known candidates in these districts. Also, historical results pointed toward a distribution of 2 to 1, with real chances only in Eastern Europe and Asia. Other parties that participated in the elections for the diaspora districts selected candidates mostly to fill the lists, acknowledging that the chances of winning those districts were insignificant, so there were no major candidates, with one exception that is worth mentioning.

No party had primaries or similar democratic selections for the diaspora districts.

Georgia has always been a bit of an outlier, and in Soviet times it had a reputation for being one of the most corrupt republics. However, since independence, Georgia has been a model for other countries on how to effectively combat corruption, with the notable exception of electoral politics. For example, the legitimacy of the 2020 parliamentary election was protested by opposition parties, many of whom refused to accept their elected mandates in parliament.

The 2020 Georgian parliamentary elections were the last to be held under the mixed system of proportional list and single constituency seats (called majoritarian). Going forward, seats in the Georgian Parliament will be chosen solely through a proportional list system. This will focus on past election candidate selection methods. Like Moldova and Ukraine, the process for selecting candidates is a top-down process within the parties. Unlike in Ukraine, there cannot be independent candidates for the majoritarian seats. Parties usually put their most popular party members at the top of proportional lists. Voters tend to look at the top ten names of the party lists, showing that party branding continues to be an important part of the campaign process. In parliamentary elections especially, party identities become associated with numbers. Ballots for both party list and majoritarian candidates contain numbers, as well as party/candidate names. These numbers are drawn by lot and are not simply in numerical order. Through various scenarios, parties can keep their numbers from year to year. For example, the United National Movement has had the number 5 since 2004, and Georgian Dream has had 41 since 2012. These numbers are now branding tools used by the parties, and lesser-known candidates depend on the backing/support of the brand. Of course, there are always exceptions.

In some electoral districts, there are factors beyond just a number or a brand. In the minority areas of Georgia, it is important to choose a candidate who is local and from a minority population. All parties scout the Armenian and Azeri regions of the country for local candidates, where it would not be politically popular to bring in a candidate from an outside region. In the mountainous region of Svaneti, it would also be unpopular to bring in a majoritarian candidate who is not local. There are other regions of Georgia where parties will look for candidates that have ties and/or surnames that are historically tied to that region (Svaneti, Racha, Samegrelo, and Guria, for example).

When looking at how parties chose majoritarian candidates in the past, it's likely they have used personal wealth and finances available to support the campaign as a factor. If a party can find a candidate that can help support his/her own campaign, all the better. This has, by and large, put women at a disadvantage, as historically women don't have their own money and would be forced to use family money. Another aspect of candidate selection that is ever changing is the recruitment and selection of female candidates. According to new amendments for the 2020 Georgian parliamentary elections, an electoral subject (a registered political party or an electoral bloc) is required to nominate at least one representative of the opposite sex out of every four on the proportional list (this applies to both sexes). If the electoral subject does not meet the required gender proportion at the time of submission, the list will be returned for a correction.

If, after entering parliament, any of the MPs resign from their mandate that member will be replaced by the next representative of the same sex. The main purpose of this is to eliminate the reduction in the representation of women provided by the gender quota, in case of the voluntary or forced resignation of female candidates. There is no such mechanism for the majoritarian system which, for reasons stated above, is historically low in having women candidates. In parallel with the mandatory gender quota, there is also a financial incentive, which has been in effect in Georgia since 2011. The law states that if a parliamentary party or list is composed of at least 30 percent women (more specifically 3 out of every 10 on the list), and if it also crosses the electoral threshold for representation, it will receive additional funding from the state budget.

HOW GENDER QUOTAS HAVE AFFECTED CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

In Georgia, since the quota was mandatory in 2020, parties had to look for more women candidates. The recruitment process was not transparent, and parties mostly tried to find some successful women from the public/private sectors. They primarily looked at those who were already well known. In many cases, political parties prefer to recruit someone new, who can attract more votes, rather than promoting current party members on the list.

The only exception was the Girchi Party, which took an innovative approach. The party held online voting, where party members/activists voted for the candidates they wanted to see on the list. Girchi's proportional list for female candidates was based on party members' selection, not party leadership selection.

A gender quota was first introduced in local elections in Ukraine in 2015, but without any sanctions for non-compliance. A gender quota was included in the unified electoral code passed in 2019 with enforceable sanctions against parties by the central election commission if parties failed to include the requisite number of women candidates on their party lists. In towns with less than 10,000 residents, the gender quota for women on party lists during campaigns must now be 30 percent. In towns with over 10,000 residents, 40 percent of the candidates on any party list must be women.

There have been cases of violations of the quota by parties. Lists have been submitted to the Territorial Election Commissions (TEC) where the quota has been violated, mainly among the top five candidates and in favor of men. Some TECs, despite their obligation to comply with the Electoral Code of Ukraine, ignored violations and registered such electoral lists. One could easily find parties that failed to meet the quotas yet were still allowed to put forth their list of candidates. For example, the For the Future party in the Bakhmut city council of the Donetsk region, the Voice party in the Lutsk city council elections, and the Strength and Honor party in the Kamin-Kashira district council of the Volyn region. In these cases, the parties failed to meet the gender quota and yet remained on the ballot. Among the possible reasons for this is the insufficient involvement of women in decision making. According to the results of election monitoring by the International Republican Institute (IRI) in 2019, only 19 percent of regional party branches were headed by women. The disproportionate placement of women and men at the top of the voter lists led to fewer women being selected as candidates.

There are sometimes questions about the quality and professionalism of candidates in general. Sometimes party affiliation reaches down into small communities (of about 10,000 voters), where no one has worked on party building at all. In those cases, the list may include candidates without valuable professional competencies but who want access to community resources.

One must ask, when considering the impact of the quota on candidate selection, did parties find it difficult to locate enough women who expressed interest in being candidates? There must be at least two candidates of each sex in each of the five party electoral lists. That is, the gender minimum for women and men is 40 percent. This is stated in the Electoral Code of Ukraine.

Another aspect that affects candidate recruitment, and which can make it more of a challenge for political parties, is that in the 2015 elections it was possible to run the same candidates in parallel in elections different elections at different levels. For example, a same candidate could be put on a list running for a municipal council, a subregional council, and a regional council. Nowadays, these elections have been decoupled and candidates are limited by law to appearing on only one ballot. What this means, in practice, is that previously, the same candidates could supplement the gender quota but now parties have to look harder for more female candidates to submit the list to different councils. As political parties did not spend a lot of time on preparing women as candidates, and some of them attempted

to fill the quota slots through ways that rewarded large party donors but did not always lead to quality councils, they have found it difficult to transition to the new system.

There is one legislative loophole that allows parties to circumvent the gender quota. The gender quota only matters at the stage of candidates' nomination at the party conference and when the list is submitted to the TECs. This leads to some cases where the party registers the list in compliance with the quota, and then the candidate(s) drop out and the quota is violated. In such cases one might expect that a female candidate would be replaced by another female candidate so the quota would remain, however, that is not always the case.

According to the Election Code when, for whatever reason, a woman running on a party list has her candidacy rejected by the central election commission (for some disqualifying factor), that candidate need not be replaced by another woman. The next person, regardless of their gender, assumes that newly vacant, next-highest slot. In other cases, at the candidate registration stage, we also saw that parties submitted low-quality documents, so that no applications were submitted for the consent of individual candidates to run. And under such conditions, registration was denied to an individual candidate, but not to the entire electoral list. The possibility of such abuses has led to the fact that, in Ukraine, more than 1,300 lists were registered in violation of the gender quota.

CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

In Ukraine, local party branches select candidates, then send the list of candidates to their oblast (the next highest level) party offices for approval. But when examining the internal party procedures for candidate selection, many of the rules and procedures have changed little since the days when the Communist Party was the only legal party. There are some exceptions, of course, like the Servant of the People party of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and even younger parties like Syla Lyudei, Holos, and DemAlliance, which are also seeking to involve younger people not associated with the old system. Their candidate selection procedures can include more transparent processes like soliciting potential candidates via social media. But regardless of the initial solicitation procedures, local branches still require their candidate lists to be stamped and approved by their central party offices. Therefore, the candidate selection process is still highly centralized and differs greatly from the U.S.'s local candidate selection, which does not require such a centralized approval process.

This sometimes has the intended effect of selecting candidates who are loyal to a particular oligarch, and not to a party. It is not uncommon at the local level to meet an elected official who has been participating in politics for twenty years and who may have been a candidate for five or six different parties. Party loyalty is not high on the list of criteria for candidate selection by individual parties, with some exceptions among the few parties which have their basis in an ideology. But those parties are generally regional or small in Ukraine and Moldova.

At the same time, recent local elections in Ukraine have once again revealed the weakness of national parties' structures, as local personalities and their political forces proved to be much more successful in many major cities across the country.

In Georgia, being a much smaller country, this usually means the parties don't have an extra layer of party leadership (for example, oblasts in Ukraine). As Georgia holds municipal elections in the autumn of 2021, it remains to be seen if any party will present a new or innovative recruiting process. In the past, parties have looked for influential local leaders. By and large, in the past, parties have relied on strong community leaders as candidates. Unfortunately, as Georgia hasn't gotten very far in the decentralization process, municipal councils have little power or access to discretionary funds. This leads to more candidate decision making at the regional level, but ultimately the central party office will weigh in.

CONCLUSION

The cases of Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine serve as interesting examples illustrating how the general democratic transformation in each country influences the electoral systems and the candidate selection process.

While sharing a common Soviet heritage, these three countries also share common Euro-Atlantic aspirations and have signed their respective Association Agreements with the European Union. Undergoing a complex process of reforms, they also became the objects of constant progress monitoring by their international partners, including on the reform of electoral legislation. And while there is no perfect electoral system, close monitoring has exposed a broader set of governance challenges which ought to be addressed, including efforts to ensure the rule of law, enhance institutional development, and bolster public trust.

And while the legislation led to an evolution of the countries' electoral systems and some subsequent changes in their candidate selection processes, bringing positive changes to their respective legislative bodies, the continuing top-down, closed process of candidate selection, along with weak and less than democratic internal party structures, undermines public trust in political parties and the political process in general.

CANDIDATE (S)ELECTION IN THE UNITED STATES: FROM BACKROOM DEALS TO PUBLIC FORUMS

Dan Scaduto

Few modern countries can claim a longer history of institutionalized representative democracy than that of the United States of America. Once an anomaly of national governance, American-style democracy spread rapidly after World War II, pervading distant capitals more accustomed to despotism and autocracy than to rule by the people. But the destiny of American democracy has never been linear, nor its success guaranteed. From revolution to globalization, the mechanics of American democracy have changed through the centuries to more closely reflect the fabric and will of its people. Perhaps more so than any other driver of change, political parties have played a foundational role in outlining the parameters of American democracy, particularly in defining the candidate selection process. Every president save George Washington has claimed party affiliation. From John Adams to Joe Biden, each American president has used political parties, whether by necessity or deliberate design, to attain the country's highest office. The same can be said of most American politicians, from local and state officials to senators and representatives in the U.S. Congress.

For more than a century, American political parties dominated the process of candidate selection, often determining nominees for high office years before the date of a popular election. But through reform and popular calls for change, political parties democratized the candidate selection process, ceding more power to citizens in choosing their political leaders. No longer the primary conductors of selecting candidates, parties became vehicles for new candidates who reflect the values and backgrounds of American voters. Rather than hand-selecting candidates through an undemocratic top-down approach, modern political parties in the U.S. work to empower and recruit candidates in tandem with the ever-changing fabric of the American experience.

THE ACCIDENTAL BIRTH OF AMERICA'S FIRST PARTY SYSTEM

Having committed treason and incited revolution to throw off the repressive rule of Great Britain, the drafters of the U.S. Constitution consciously omitted any formal role for political parties, factions, or groupings in the governance of their fledgling democracy. Many early American politicians pointed to party politicians in Westminster as culpable as King George III for the injustices inflicted upon them under colonial rule. While some British detractors advocated for the representation of American subjects, the majority held no such good will. Having experienced the ills of party politics and confronted the indifference of party politicians, the drafters of the Constitution endeavored to create a republic centered on equal representation for citizens across all 13 liberated states, regardless of political or personal affiliation. Perceived as usurpers of a people's right to self-government, many American politicians abhorred political parties. Rather than curating the people's interests, many revolutionaries-turned-politicians characterized parties as greedy, governing only in self-interest to the detriment of those they purported to represent.

President George Washington, the inaugural U.S. executive, made no secret of his distaste for political parties. Throughout his presidency, Washington tirelessly squashed any notion of party politics within his own administration. In delivering his now-famous Farewell Address, Washington cautioned his nascent country against the perils of political groupings, warning his compatriots that political parties

“serve to organize factions,” and amass power “in the place of the delegated will of the nation.”¹ He further contended that political parties may “become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government...”² However, despite Washington’s best intentions, the demarcations of party lines had already begun forming within the confines of his very own cabinet of secretaries.

To be sure, not every American founder echoed Washington’s disdain for political parties. Chief among them stood Thomas Jefferson, who believed ideological associations to be a natural inclination of human experience, and therefore an inevitability of representative democracy.³ Unsurprisingly, Jefferson began organizing one of the nation’s first two political parties. The Democratic-Republicans, as Jefferson’s supporters were known, advocated for closer relations with the French *révolutionnaires*, supported states’ rights and a minimally invasive decentralized government. In opposition rose The Federalists, under the prudent leadership of Alexander Hamilton. The erstwhile Treasury Secretary to President Washington, Hamilton urged closer economic relations with Great Britain, the absorption of state debts by the federal government, and more centralized institutions. The Democratic-Republicans and The Federalists formed the first two party political system of the United States. This accidental birth of the American party system, born of disagreement among American founders and in conflict with the Constitution, would prove immeasurably consequential for the history of the United States.

HOW PARTIES SHAPED THE CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCESS

Article II of the Constitution outlines the method for choosing American presidents. The framers, in debating whether the people could be fully entrusted to elect qualified men, created the Electoral College. Comprising a number of electors from each state, equal to the corresponding number of state delegates in Congress, members of the Electoral College cast votes for candidates on behalf of the people. In early elections, state legislatures or popular contests appointed these electors to capture the sense of the people. The candidate receiving the most votes from the Electoral College became president, while the runner-up became vice-president. But the rapid rise of political parties as the main mechanisms for identifying and consolidating support for would-be candidates complicated this process. For one, the election of 1796 established an administration of two opposing parties, with John Adams holding the presidency for the Federalists and Thomas Jefferson holding the vice-presidency for the Democratic-Republicans – hardly a recipe for efficient governance.

After a series of changes and Constitutional amendments, the modern practice of candidate selection by parties through the nomination of party tickets (inclusive of a presidential and vice-presidential nominee) began to take form. The widespread adoption of national party nominating conventions, which came at the impetus of President Andrew Jackson in the lead-up to the election of 1832, marked a shift in the candidate selection process. Candidates aiming to clench a party nomination carried favor within their respective political parties through correspondence with elected officials in each state. In turn, state party officials appointed delegates to the national party convention where a presidential and vice-presidential nominee would be elected. Party tickets would then vie for state electors in the national election.

1 ‘Washington’s Farewell Address 1796’, *Yale Law School: The Avalon Project*, 2008.

2 ‘Washington’s Farewell Address 1796’, *Yale Law School: The Avalon Project*, 2008.

3 ‘From Thomas Jefferson to Henry Lee, 10 August 1824’, *Founders Online*, National Archives.

This process of identifying candidates and selecting party nominees firmly cemented the indomitable power of political parties in determining who runs for office, both at the state and national levels. For more than a century, political parties would use national nominating conventions as the near-exclusive tool of choosing nominees to stand for all federal elected offices, as well as elected offices in state legislatures.

PARTY BOSSES AND BACKROOM DEALS

From the Jacksonian Era through the 1960s, the process of selecting candidates and determining party nominees remained firmly in the grasp of state political parties controlled by notorious party bosses – usually a local party official or a coalition of elected leaders. While both the Republican and Democratic parties held some state primaries during this period, few paid them any attention. The real process of candidate selection occurred in exclusive “smoke-filled rooms,” infamously described by William Safire as “place[s] of political intrigue and chicanery, where candidates were selected by party bosses in cigar-chewing sessions.”⁴ Candidate selection thus stood as a private matter reserved for party elites. Everyday Americans had little say in who represented their party on national tickets. Encapsulating the mystery of the candidate selection process leading up to the election of 1952, Thomas L. Stoker of the *New York Times* lamented: “This uncertainty arises largely because our nominating process is a devious one – a yawning gap in our democratic order which is revealed sharply to us every four years.”⁵

The indifference of political parties to state primaries and the voice of the people can be seen in several examples from the mid-twentieth century. Consider the ill-fated outcome of Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver’s run for the Democratic Party nomination of 1952 that so perplexed Mr. Stoker. A political outsider, Kefauver rose to prominence by defeating the powerful political machine run by Memphis mayor and state party boss Edward Crump. Kefauver gained notoriety in American households by hosting a series of televised hearings on organized crime, introducing “Americans to the Italian mafia and a world of violent gangsters,” often implicating state political parties in the process.⁶ Empowered by his newfound national acclaim, he won twelve of the fifteen primaries held that cycle, earning 3 million popular votes to the 78,000 gained by his chief opponent Adlai Stevenson.⁷ But Kefauver failed to ingratiate himself with Democratic Party bosses and ultimately fell short of gaining the party’s nomination, despite clear support from primary voters. Instead, Adlai Stevenson carried the Democratic Party banner and suffered a resounding defeat by Republican nominee and World War II veteran General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Notably, Eisenhower himself refrained from participating in any Republican primary contests in the run-up to his party’s nomination. He returned from Europe only a month before July’s Republican National Convention to garner support from influential party officials. Primary elections offered virtually no value for hopeful nominees – the true power of selection emanated from those wielding power in state parties.

But the apparent ease with which Stevenson and Eisenhower, and the many who preceded them, won their respective party’s nominations starkly contrasts with the months-long series of endless primary campaigning and state contests now waged during the Republican and Democratic Party selection processes. By the late-1960s, as Americans protested the Vietnam War and grew restless with the lackluster performance of party politicians, some establishment voices pushed to democratize party nominations. From a long era of backroom dealings and party boss strong arming, the process by which the Republican and Democratic parties chose candidates soon became a task for the people.

4 M. Fabry, ‘Now You Know: Where Was the Original ‘Smoke-Filled Room’’, *Time*, 17 May 2016.

5 T.L. Stoker, ‘Getting Nominated Is an Intricate Business’, *The New York Times*, 20 April 1952.

6 E.C. Kamarck, *Primary Politics: Everything You Need to Know About How America Nominates Its Presidential Candidates*, 2nd edition, Washington DC, Brookings Institution Press, pp. 9-10.

7 Kamarck, *Primary Politics*, pp. 9-10.

THE MODERN AMERICAN PRIMARY SYSTEM

The Democratic National Convention of 1968 witnessed one of the last nominees of either party to be selected using the hazy backroom method of awarding candidates the top position on party tickets. As crowds of anti-war protestors clashed outside the meeting halls in Chicago, the Democratic National Convention nominated then-Vice President Hubert Humphrey, despite the clear popularity of anti-war Senators Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern. Humphrey, who abstained from all primary elections, succumbed easily to Republican nominee Richard Nixon in the general election. Humphrey's dismal performance, coupled with popular unrest stemming from the Vietnam War and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., led to a remarkable shift in the Democratic Party's candidate selection process.

The Republican Party quickly followed suit, eager to gain the expanded media coverage afforded by the increasingly transparent process employed by the Democrats. Throughout the 1960s and 70s, both parties introduced reforms that closely mirrored each other and greatly expanded the role of state primary contests in determining how delegates could cast their votes at national conventions. Primary elections sprung up across all 50 states and U.S. territories, often compelled by state law, establishing a more open candidate selection process. Additional rules, though varying in detail between the Republican and Democratic parties, mandated that most state delegates at the national convention must support a nominee reflective of their state's primary result. As such, a candidate's quest to achieve a party nomination moved from closed-door back rooms to the open forum of a long and increasingly visible public campaign.

In initiating reform, political parties not only transformed how candidates were selected, but also expanded the pool of candidates who could launch viable bids for a party nomination. No longer hostage to the political machinery of state parties and unsavory party bosses, candidates began shifting their attention toward garnering popular support in respective primary races. If Kefauver ran today with the same popular support he amassed in 1952, we would likely see his name atop a party ticket. As a result, the U.S. has witnessed several presidential nominees who likely would never have gained party nominations in the old system. Consider, for example, the nomination of then-Illinois Senator Barack Obama to headline the ticket for the 2008 Democratic bid. That a freshman senator under the age of fifty bested a field of veteran Democratic leaders, including his future running mate Joe Biden and soon-to-be Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, reveals the extent to which candidate selection in the U.S. has become a process of popular momentum rather than internal political support. In a similar vein, then-businessman Donald Trump viscerally displayed the ability of a political outsider to gain a party's nomination and achieve high office during his bid for the Republican Party's 2016 nomination. Initially dismissed by nearly all members of the Republican Party establishment, Trump amassed a broad coalition of popular supporters during his primary campaign and defeated a large pool of well-known and well-respected competitors. He went on to become president, despite fierce opposition from some within the Republican Party leadership.

From the election of John Adams to the recent election of Joe Biden, the process by which political parties choose candidates has changed dramatically at both state and national levels. For much of American political history, political parties stood as the undisputed gatekeepers to electoral success. But for the last fifty years, parties have learned to adapt to meet the new reality of candidate selection – a process of their very own making. Today, political parties must not only navigate the rigors of a nationwide contest, but they must also actively engage with and promote candidates who meet the demands of an increasingly well-informed and diverse American public.

NAVIGATING STATE PRIMARIES AND CAUCUSES

Modern American primary elections are unlike anything else in the world of global politics. In fact, many argue that the real intrigue of any U.S. election cycle comes from primary season, where members of the same party battle and trade jabs for months on end to win a nomination. Billions of dollars spent, many months invested, and heaps of collective energy expended, an American primary campaign is an all-consuming test of political effort unrivaled by any other democratic process in the world. Where American candidates might have once scoffed at the idea of open politicking (Presidents Garfield, Harrison, and McKinley ran successful campaigns largely from the comfort of their front porches), the reforms of the mid-twentieth century laid bare a new playing field for elected office hopefuls.⁸

About half-way through a presidential term, following mid-term elections, primary contestants at the national and state levels begin announcing their intention to run. Some, like now-President Biden, are election veterans. Others, like former President Trump, are relative newcomers. Some spend years waiting in the wings for the perfect opportunity to jump into the fray, saving their political clout for the best possible opportunity. Others emerge from near-complete obscurity, offering a fresh face in a field typically dominated by long-time standbys. With everyday Americans now holding more influence over who emerges as a party's nominee, any candidate who can muster enough popular and financial support has a fair shot at vaulting to the top of the ticket.

Hosting the first primary contest of the season in February (nine months before the election), Iowa retains an outsized role in shaping the strategies and trajectories of hopeful nominees in both parties. And despite quadrennial challenges to the first-in-the-nation caucuses, Iowa has remained the first primary battlefield, reaping influence in the nomination processes, not to mention the millions of dollars generated by national campaigns. Following closely behind Iowa, the successive primaries of New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina often set the tone of each primary season. While these states account for less than four percent of the country's total population, they carry tremendous influence in dictating the viability of political campaigns.

In recent years, South Carolina's contest has become increasingly prominent as an indicator of which candidates will fare well in earning the support of Black voters. Of the four early voting states, South Carolina stands as the only one where the population of Black residents outpaces that of the U.S. average. As such, establishment party leaders and media observers, as well as candidates themselves, view the contest as a measuring post of support among a key demographic voting bloc. During the 2020 campaign, many viewed the South Carolina primary as the reviving breath for Joe Biden's campaign, which won the state due to the widespread support of Black voters. Similar demographic dynamics across primary states impact candidate strategies. During the 2008 Republican primaries, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani opted to forego actively campaigning in Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina, instead placing all his hopes on a win in the more liberal and urban Florida. A former Democrat from a liberal Northeast city, Giuliani hoped for a primary pathway outside the first few states. However, despite Giuliani's calculated gamble, he ultimately came up short. Despite holding a lead of 20 points over his competitors in Florida weeks earlier, by the time the primary happened, Mitt Romney and others had already siphoned much of the race's momentum, leaving Giuliani to finish in a disappointing fourth place in the state.⁹

As demonstrated, the sequence of state primaries and caucuses weighs heavily on a candidate's campaign strategy. Some opt to amass delegates early, hoping to carry momentum through to the end. Others temper themselves, aiming to stay relevant while reserving resources for later contests. And

⁸ M. Dolan, 'Porch Politics: Candidates Stayed Home to Campaign', *History Net*.

⁹ E. MacAskill, 'Giuliani's disastrous strategy', *The Guardian*, 30 January 2008.

while the Republican and Democratic Parties refrain from selecting candidates, they do retain a say in laying the battlefield upon which the primary contests will be waged. Rules from the Republican National Committee (RNC) and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) stipulate parameters for the timing of individual state primaries and caucuses. In 2008, both Florida and Michigan moved up the date of their Democratic primary contests – an attempt to gain a greater say in who would become the party's nominee. In doing so, both states violated the sequencing rules of the DNC and both were stripped of nearly half their delegates during the summer's national convention, much to the dismay of Hillary Clinton's campaign.¹⁰

To be sure, the sequence of primaries remains a point of contentious debate within the American candidate selection process. But the ingrained system of primary elections and the party rules governing them are difficult to change. For better or worse, Iowa still maintains the first-in-the-nation vote, and candidates still devise plans to capture support based on primary sequence.

THE ROLE OF PARTY COORDINATION IN CANDIDATE SELECTION

Although the reforms of the last five decades have eroded the ability of political parties to control the candidate selection process, members of the party can still play an important role in lending credibility to a candidate through political endorsements. The day before the 2015 Iowa caucuses, only 30 percent of Republican leaders issued endorsements, the lion's share of 9.4 percent being enjoyed by former Florida Governor Jeb Bush – eventual nominee Donald Trump had, notably, received none.¹¹ The dearth of endorsements pointed to uncertainty among establishment members of the Republican Party. The crowded field of 17 candidates offered no clear frontrunner, though many viewed Bush as the most obvious establishment choice. In sharp contrast, Democratic Party leaders threw their full-throated support behind one name. The party's eventual nominee, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, enjoyed the endorsement of more than 80 percent of the party's leadership by the time of the Iowa caucus – her nearest party competitor Joe Biden, who had decided against running in 2016, received a meager 1.2 percent.¹²

To an extent, political party endorsements in the U.S. represent political capital, a resource that can be deployed to motivate funders, garner valuable broadcast airtime, or mobilize ground teams in critical primary states. Endorsements from state governors, senators, and representatives, as well as former presidents, are highly sought-after commodities during primary races, particularly when given by an individual of notable popularity among the electorate. Candidates often tout such endorsements to deepen their credibility by associating themselves with individuals already familiar with specific segments of the electorate. The same can be said about endorsements from reputable newspapers, trade unions, and leaders of civil society groups.

Party coordination also occurs more subtly. During both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions, observers glean a sense of who both parties view as potential candidates for future runs at high office, planting seeds in the minds of the electorate. During the 2020 Democratic National Convention, the party showcased a slew of young and diverse party members from around the country, including many people of color, members of the LGBT community, and civil rights activists. The Republican National Convention answered in kind, offering its own medley of diverse individuals and potential contenders for high office, including Nikki Haley, South Carolina Senator Tim Scott, and Florida

10 K.Q. Seelye and J. Zeleny, 'Democrats Approve Deal on Michigan and Florida', *The New York Times*, 1 June 2008.

11 J. Sides, M. Tesler, and L. Vavreck, 'Voter Choice in Presidential Primaries', in J. Bernstein and C. B. K. Dominguez (eds.), *The Making of the Presidential Candidates: 2020*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2019, p. 63.

12 Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck, 'Voter Choice in Presidential Primaries', in Bernstein and Dominguez (eds.), p. 63.

Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez. Though not overtly profound in its influence, a particularly well-delivered speech can garner significant airtime for a rising party star.

To be sure, party coordination, particularly when party unity stands shaky, can be a cumbersome avenue towards candidate selection. As evident, despite receiving no endorsements ahead of the Iowa caucuses, Donald Trump outperformed his competitors and ultimately attained the presidency. In some cases of public skepticism against the party establishment, political endorsements may inadvertently harm a candidate who aims to portray him or herself as a party outsider. Either way, coordination is one tool a party can readily deploy to signify a frontrunner to the media and the electorate, or to debase a candidate as ill-suited for office.

SUB-NATIONAL CANDIDATE SELECTION

Unlike national contests, political parties at the state level retain a high degree of influence in selecting candidates, though the process has become similarly democratized and opened to public engagement. Far from garnering the national media attention devoted to presidential races, most federal and state elections at the sub-national level attract fewer eyes, leaving more space for party members to negotiate and compromise with one another. The composition of state legislatures and executive offices varies from state to state, but the processes for selecting and nominating candidates closely mirror one another. In states that lean heavily Republican or Democratic, local primaries tend to attract more attention, as these contests will likely determine the ultimate winner. In purple states – or states with a more balanced Republican-Democrat split – local primaries attract less attention, with the electorate more vested in voting for the ultimate outcome. Unsurprisingly, elections for the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate garner more attention when held in the same election cycle as presidential contests. The same can be said of local elections for state legislatures or governorships.

However, despite the comparatively small national focus on state and local elections, political parties have recently invested more effort in identifying viable candidates and supporting their campaigns. State elections provide political parties with discrete arenas to test how well certain candidates perform with a given subset of the American population. Each state race encapsulates a microcosm of the wider U.S. In theory, the knowledge acquired in state races can be employed across the party apparatus to inform the strategies of party candidates throughout the country. Though a handful of exceptions exist, most state governors emerge from prior posts in their respective statehouses. Several have served as lieutenant governors, attorneys general, treasurers, or state legislators. Some have also served the federal government in the U.S. House or as secretaries and ambassadors. Together, these individuals form a pool of potential candidates who can run for higher office.

Party control in statehouses can have major consequences on the national stage. As noted by Harvard political scientist Theda Skocpol, “The state legislatures are probably just as important as the presidency...in a lot of ways, they’re the whole ballgame.”¹³ As of the 2020 elections, Republicans control 31 statehouses across the country, unsurprising to observers who see a stronger effort by the party to recruit and fund local candidates. This advantage enables the Republican Party to execute ground games more readily for federal elections and pilot policy items at the state-level before bringing them to Congress. Perhaps most importantly, many state laws give legislatures primary authority in redrawing congressional districts at the turn of each decade.

While direct candidate selection at the national level falls well outside the purview of political parties, their work in building a body of qualified and credible candidates at the sub-national level can pay off in the long run. Statehouse control lends parties substantial influence in setting policy agendas and

¹³ E. Nilsen, “Republicans dominate state legislatures. That decides political power in America”, *Vox*, 5 July 2019.

shaping the future of the country from the bottom-up. Therefore, the real battle in the candidate selection process between political parties emerges at the state level. And both the Republican and Democratic Parties are defining strategies to recruit candidates more effectively as the U.S. undergoes profound changes in the make-up of its electorate.

ADAPTING CANDIDATE SELECTION TO MEET A CHANGING AMERICA

Several shifts in the composition, beliefs, and attitudes of the U.S. population are quickly changing the political landscape of candidate selection, and political parties must adapt to remain relevant. Emerging generations of young voters, increasing demographic diversity, and mounting inequalities enumerate some of the trends transforming the political field of play. If political parties fail to evolve with the electorate, then American voters will surely seek to lend their support elsewhere, if at all.

Two emerging generations are beginning to come of age within the American electorate: Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, and Gen Z, born from 1997 onward. These younger Americans generally hold more liberal views than their parents or grandparents. They are more diverse and accept individuals of diverse backgrounds more readily. And they are more connected to information than any generation in history. In recent elections, young people have turned out in surprisingly high numbers, an anomaly few saw coming, as evidence shows young people vote far less than older generations. When they vote, more vote Democratic or seek alternatives not aligned with party establishment such as Bernie Sanders. Burdened by the weight of economic crises, student debt, and a tightening job market, many young people, however, remain disillusioned with political parties. Despite most young Americans feeling they understand political parties, the majority are skeptical of them and are therefore much more likely to retain their Independent status than older Americans.¹⁴ Only one-third of young Americans believe participation in political parties strengthens their voice.¹⁵

Interestingly, polls indicate that Republicans could garner more votes from younger people if the party nominated more people of diverse backgrounds for office. Of Republican or Republican-leaning young adults (aged 18-39), 68 percent believe nominating “racial & ethnic minorities” would bolster the Republican Party’s chances of winning elections.¹⁶ This figure stands in stark contrast to older Republicans, who were more evenly split on the question. This sentiment among young people is unsurprising. More young people than previous generations consider themselves of mixed-ethnic identity. Many are children of first or second-generation immigrants and many come from racially and ethnically diverse households.

In recent years, Republicans have made efforts to recruit a more diverse field of candidates for local, state, and federal elections. Across the country, Republican state parties have launched initiatives to bring more Latino, Black, and women candidates into the party fold. For example, leading up to the 2020 election, the Indiana Republic Diversity Leadership Series launched a string of programs on the topics of civic engagement, campaign management, and networking and communication to train potential party candidates for future elections.¹⁷ In 2020, the Republican Party made notable gains in Congress with the elections of Representatives Mike Garcia of California, Nancy Mace of South Carolina, Tony Gonzales of Texas, and Ashley Hinson of Iowa, proving that bringing in young and diverse newcomers

14 “Young People’s Ambivalent Relationship with Political Parties”, *Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement*, Tufts University, 24 October 2018.

15 “Young People’s Ambivalent Relationship with Political Parties”.

16 M. Dost and S. Motel, “Younger Republicans think more diverse nominees would help GOP win”, *Pew Research Center*, 23 August 2013.

17 C. Sikich, “Indiana Republicans to launch initiative to recruit Blacks and Latinos”, *Indy Star*, 7 July 2020.

reflects a winning strategy.¹⁸ As the dust of the 2020 election settled, House Republican Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy proudly announced that “Every Democrat incumbent who lost, either lost to a woman, a minority, or a veteran Republican.”¹⁹ Success with diverse candidates will likely drive Republican strategy in identifying candidates for future elections. As predicted by Princeton political scientist Omar Wasow, a shift in the Republican Party’s platforms and candidate recruitment tactics could allow the party to capture a majority of minority voters in the coming decades.²⁰

Concerning recent military veterans, the Republican Party has proved adept at recruiting and successfully supporting such individuals for office. While veterans once occupied as much as half of all seats in Congress, recent years have seen their numbers dwindle. But as more military veterans from the 2000s reach their 30s and 40s, they have become highly viable recruits for down-ballot Republican Party candidate selection. Of the 91 total veterans in the 117th Congress, 63 are Republicans and the vast majority completed their service after 2000.²¹ Inspired by the success of fellow veterans in the 2018 midterm elections, Republican veterans in the House of Representatives including Dan Crenshaw of Texas, Mike Gallagher of Wisconsin, and Michael Waltz of Florida launched a new political action committee to recruit, train, and prepare potential military veteran candidates for the 2020 race and future elections.²²

As both the Republican and Democratic Parties grapple with the shifting demographic landscape of the U.S., leaders in both parties would do well to encourage targeted recruitment efforts to reflect more accurately the composition of the American public. As discussed previously, the era of candidate recruitment established in the 1960s and ‘70s has changed the game for political party candidate selection. For parties hoping to retain control of the White House, Congress, or individual statehouses, they must evolve to meet the shifting landscape of political campaigns and to capture the support of an increasingly diverse and varied American electorate.

THE DESTINY OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

As explored throughout this chapter, the U.S. maintains a varied history of candidate selection processes. From the accidental birth of political parties in the nascent days of the republic, through the unscrupulous era of political party bosses and backroom deals, to the modern field of primary races and party recruitment, the processes of candidate selection have changed markedly throughout the American experiment. But the end goal has remained the same: to create a *more* perfect union, where the voice of every citizen is worthy of being heard and every shortcoming provides an opportunity to improve. The practice of U.S. candidate selection provides a uniquely people-driven process – one that empowers citizens not only to vote for party nominees but entrusts them to judge and determine those nominees for themselves. In doing so, the last fifty years has seen political parties and leaders more reflective of the varied and diverse people they represent. Thus, American political parties now find motivation in a new mission – to train and support candidates who not only bolster a party’s values, but also earn the trust and respect of the people. The destiny of American democracy remains uncertain, but its unyielding capacity to evolve for the better stands resolute.

18 C. Edmonson, “Emulating Democrats, G.O.P. Ties House Hopes to Diverse Recruits”, *The New York Times*, 19 May 2020.

19 W. Roberts, “U.S. Republicans grow more diverse in newly won House seats”, *Aljazeera*, 18 November 2020.

20 “Princeton political scientist foresees a more diverse Republican party,” *The Hill*, 28 August 2020.

21 L. Shane III, “Veterans in the 117th Congress, by the numbers”, *Military Times*, 28 December 2020.

22 G. Connolly, “Reps. Crenshaw, Gallagher, Waltz, urge more GOP veterans to run for Congress”, *Roll Call*, 23 May 2019.

REFERENCE LIST

- Connolly, G., 'Reps. Crenshaw, Gallagher, Waltz, urge more GOP veterans to run for Congress,' *Roll Call*, 23 May 2019.
- Dolan, M., 'Porch Politics: Candidates Stayed Home to Campaign,' *History Net*.
- Dost, M., and Motel, S., 'Younger Republicans think more diverse nominees would help GOP win,' *Pew Research Center*, 23 August 2013.
- Edmonson, C., 'Emulating Democrats, G.O.P. Ties House Hopes to Diverse Recruits,' *The New York Times*, 19 May 2020.
- Fabry, M., 'Now You Know: Where Was the Original 'Smoke-Filled Room',' *Time*, 17 May 2016.
- Kamarck, E.C. *Primary Politics: Everything You Need to Know About How America Nominates Its Presidential Candidates*, 2nd edition, Washington DC, Brookings Institution Press, 2016.
- MacAskill, E., 'Giuliani's disastrous strategy,' *The Guardian*, 30 January 2008.
- Nilsen, E., 'Republicans dominate state legislatures. That decides political power in America,' *Vox*, 5 July 2019.
- Roberts, W., 'U.S. Republicans grow more diverse in newly won House seats,' *Aljazeera*, 18 November 2020.
- Seelye, K.Q. and Zeleny, J., 'Democrats Approve Deal on Michigan and Florida,' *The New York Times*, 1 June 2008.
- Shane III, L., 'Veterans in the 117th Congress, by the numbers,' *Military Times*, 28 December 2020.
- Sides, J., Tesler, M., and Vavreck, L., 'Voter Choice in Presidential Primaries,' in Bernstein, J. and Dominguez, C.B.K. (eds.), *The Making of the Presidential Candidates: 2020*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2019, pp. 61-78.
- Sikich, C., 'Indiana Republicans to launch initiative to recruit Blacks and Latinos,' *Indy Star*, 7 July 2020.
- Stoker, T.L., 'Getting Nominated Is an Intricate Business,' *The New York Times*, 20 April 1952.
- 'Princeton political scientist foresees a more diverse Republican party,' *The Hill*, 28 August 2020.
- 'From Thomas Jefferson to Henry Lee, 10 August 1824,' *Founders Online*, National Archives.
- 'Washington's Farwell Address 1796,' *Yale Law School: The Avalon Project*, 2008.
- 'Young People's Ambivalent Relationship with Political Parties,' *Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement*, Tufts University, 24 October 2018.

CONCLUSION: STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD

When it comes to selecting candidates for elections, political parties generally follow the David Bowie principle: “All you’ve got to do is win.” That is to say, the primary goal in any candidate (s)election process is to choose a candidate who has the best chance of winning the election, perhaps regardless of their connection and dedication to party values. The truth, however, is that despite that intrinsic reality of “to the winner goes the spoils,” there are other factors at play beyond picking the most popular candidate(s).

PARTY OBJECTIVES

The candidate (s)election process is often shaped as much by intra-party politics as by a party’s long-term objectives. This could mean selecting the candidate who has the best chance of winning, but it could also mean selecting candidates who better represent the party and the values for which it stands. Parties may choose the most democratic process for selecting candidates, or they may choose to exercise greater control. Some parties may opt for a bottom-up approach, allowing everyday citizens a greater voice in determining candidates, while others may prefer a top-down, technocratic approach, sacrificing party democracy in the name of ideological stability. In all cases, however, the candidate (s)election process and the objectives of the party – both ideologically and representationally – are inherently connected, for better or worse.

As the case studies included in this publication show, the diversity of party systems throughout Europe reveals both the varied objectives of parties as well as the very different histories that European countries have experienced. In Europe, a multitude of different candidate (s)election processes are practiced, representing the full range of the relationship between party objectives and the commitment to true democratic candidate (s)election. While Western Europe has enjoyed a relatively long history of democratic order, much of Eastern and Central Europe has only recently begun to develop democratic institutions.

It has become clear in recent years that within the Western European political sphere, traditional parties seeking a larger voter base have been losing power and influence to smaller parties that are more restrictive in their appeal and more ideologically coherent. In Germany, power has seeped from the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD) to smaller parties like The Greens and Alternative for Germany (AfD). In France, the parties that made up France’s pseudo-two-party system have weakened. At first, this permitted the victory of someone outside the two-party system, like Emmanuel Macron, but that in turn has opened the door for anti-systemic parties to emerge and gain fluidity in terms of their appeal.

The objective of Western European democracies is to uphold an election process that (even at the primary level) is as democratic as possible. Yet in systems that feature large parties – and to an extent, parties that are drained of their ideological content and no longer inspire loyalty – the democratic process takes control away from party leadership, leaving it in the hands of the people to pick a candidate who better suits their personal interests, not necessarily the interests of the party (at least as seen from the perspective of party leadership).

In Central and Eastern Europe, many countries and their parties are dealing with an entirely different problem, but one that is nevertheless directly tied to their candidate (s)election processes. These countries are typically less attached to the practice of open primaries. As much younger democracies,

they tend to have weaker democratic institutions and party structures tend to use a top-down approach to candidate (s)election. This approach is more closely aligned with the 'just win' strategy. For example, in case of local elections in Ukraine, where parties often cannot field enough candidates to fill local positions, parties in the past have chosen candidates who are most popular in a local area, regardless of their political agenda.

The New Democracy (ND) party in Greece, however, used a different top-down candidate (s)election process to meet its own unique set of objectives. The party had great visions of a rebirth, one that would bring new, youthful perspectives to the forefront of the Greek legislature. Naturally they chose to handpick these candidates so they could ensure a similar vision for a new Greece. The technocratic approach that was used by the party to scout its new young candidates was seen as the most efficient way to successfully rebrand the party. It was an in-house undertaking, one that required strong oversight from the head of the party. This surely brought a breath of fresh air, but at the time of writing there is not yet enough hindsight to confirm whether this addition will translate into a consolidation of new electorates or if voters attracted by the new candidates will ultimately disappear.

In any democratic system, choosing between the ideological coherence of a party or appealing to the broadest possible constituency has always been a difficult balance for parties to navigate. It is certainly the case that having a strong party base doesn't necessarily yield strong democratic institutions, but it is also true that, at the party level, more democracy often limits the strength or the cohesion (sometimes both) of the party. The goal in any election is to win, but the question that remains is: what is the party willing to give up in order to achieve a victory that may remain elusive, if not for the many external factors that come in the campaign? As the case studies presented in this publication show, the candidate (s)election process for any given democracy does much to explain and exemplify a given party's true objectives.

SCENARIOS AND METRICS: TAXONOMY OF (S)ELECTION METHODS

To fully grasp the impact of candidate (s)election processes on various countries and political systems, we must first delve into the typology of different (s)election methods. There are four methods to elaborate on: open primaries, closed primaries, closed party decisions and the technocratic method. This section will explain each type in its pure form and use examples from the larger country chapters to explore various scenarios of candidate (s)election. Additionally, evidence shows that many of these systems cannot, in fact, be categorized purely into one specific taxonomy. The examples presented in this section reveal that most parties adopt an amalgam of practices that lead to a wide variety of mixed (s)election systems.

The various pros and cons of each system of candidate (s)election will be discussed further in this section, as there are many benefits and drawbacks for each method. The first scenario for candidate (s)election is an open primary, where in most cases the candidate is chosen through registered party supporters. This method can be seen in certain instances in Italy, Lithuania, and France. For example, primaries have been instituted in Italy on a national scale since 2005, leading to the victory of Prime Minister Romano Prodi (Bovenzi) in 2006.

The method for registering citizens for participation in a primary is similar in Italy and France and is used to garner support, which then leads to candidate (s)election at the party level. In 2011 in France, the Socialist party implemented the "Citizens' Primary," open to all registered citizens on the electoral list who were ready to pay at least one euro of participation fee (legally, a gift/donation). This led to the participation of 2.6 million voters in the first round and 2.8 million in the second (Muzergues 6). On the surface, this huge increase in voter participation appears to lean towards a more inclusionary system,

therefore making the country's system appear more democratic. But just a few years later, the primary cycle failed. The candidates selected for the first round did not even make it past the second round in the 2016-17 election cycle, and the party system collapsed with the election of Emmanuel Macron (Muzergues).

Before moving on to the pros and cons of each candidate (s)election method, we move to the stand-alone U.S. example. It should be noted that what are called "open primaries" in the U.S. differ from those in the rest of the world. Outside the U.S., open primaries are a candidate (s)election method in which non-members can participate. In American open primaries, however, voters in a limited number of states can participate without publicly exposing their party affiliation.

On the axis of inclusivity/exclusivity, the U.S. appears extremely open, as nearly every voter can stand in as party candidate. "This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that state laws, rather than party rules, regulate the candidate selection process."¹ Moreover, politics in the U.S. could be described as candidate-centered, with strong personalities sometimes disconnected from the party doxa or elites gaining the nomination, which is what occurred in the 2016 Republican Party primary, but also in the 2008 Democratic Party primary.² The 'openness' in the U.S. example is perhaps just an appearance, because without an incredible amount of campaign finance and at least some semblance of name recognition, a candidate cannot go very far. This raises an important question: who is the typical candidate? What do they look like, and how does it differ across the Atlantic? These questions will be explored at greater length in the conclusion of this chapter.

The caucus system that takes place in states like Iowa is a peculiar example of (s)election through a closed primary. This process, defined as a type of direct primary, is limited to registered primary members (who must declare their affiliation before voting). The caucus is closed to the public until the (s)election has been made, making the process very closed, at least until the choice of candidate has been made. In this case, the caucus serves to encourage party unity and prevent members of other parties from infiltrating and voting to nominate weak candidates (compared to an open primary). Dan Scaduto, author of "Candidate (S)election in the United States: From Backroom Deals to Public Forums" writes that "Iowans retain an outsized role in shaping the strategies and trajectories of nominee-hopefuls in both parties." And yet the closed (s)election process proves difficult to change so it continues, for better or for worse.

Sliding onto the side of the 'exclusivity' scale is the closed party decision. This type of (s)election is fairly rule-bound and constitutes the stereotypical 'shady backroom' decisions made by American political parties until the process became more transparent in the middle of the 20th century. Though the U.S. example has largely moved past this (s)election method, many countries maintain similar practices in one way or another.

In Germany, for example, selectors handle candidate selection in the first round, and electors weigh in in the second round. This allows for a mix between party decisions in the first round and internal democracy in the second round, but reality is generally skewed in favor of selection, rather than election. Electors follow selectors' judgment and outside influence is uncommon, leaving the selectors as the most influential bodies (Höhne). For the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom, there is also a clear set of rules and a structure in place for candidates to stand for a constituency. First, one must join the party and remain an active member before applying to be considered as a candidate. Then the potential candidate must go through an application and interview process for constituency candidacy (Bowie).

Another interesting and emerging (s)election type that must be discussed is the technocratic method, where the candidate (s)election process is delegated to an external professional. One remarkable

¹ Hazan and Rahat, "Candidate Selection, Political Parties, and Democracy." 2010.

² Wattenberg, Martin P. "The Rise of Candidate Centered Politics." 1991. Harvard University Press.

example of success through the technocratic method is provided by ND in Greece. This party, a pillar of Greek democracy since 1974, had become static and antiquated in a country gripped by an intense and exhausting economic crisis after 2011. Following a change in party leadership a new strategy was developed, with an ambitious target: to win, ND had to at least double the number of its elected members to parliament. Party leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis hired a human resources professional, Rebecca Pitsika of People for Business, to 'breathe oxygen' into the ND party. After a rigorous candidate search conducted like a private sector recruitment drive, ND succeeded in targeting new and fresh candidates. The result was an increase in party membership and, ultimately, the electoral success of the party in the 2019 elections.

Another example of the technocratic method for candidate (s)election could be found in the Brand New Bundestag group, a copy of the Brand New Congress movement born in the U.S. The Brand New Bundestag is a grassroots organization with progressive political goals and seeks to support candidates with platforms similar to those of various mainstream German political parties, typically the SPD or the Greens. The Brand New Bundestag has specific criteria that it is searching for in all its potential candidates. This is a more experimental method of choosing candidates than any other used in Germany. Most importantly, it pushes externalization even further, as it proposes *in fine* to take candidate selection out of the hands of political parties, who only remain as vehicles of legitimization for candidates pre-selected by outside organizations such as the Brand New Bundestag. Some (at least in Europe) might associate this process with lobbying, and might also see this as dangerous, as it further weakens political parties.

Trying to categorize parties' (s)election processes and make them fit into neat boxes proves challenging and raises an important question: is there such a thing as a pure open primary? Many countries, for example Poland, may believe that they have an open primary system with constituency lists, full transparency, and proportional representation. But in fact, Poland's method for choosing candidates is extremely centralized, and the decision on candidate (s)election lies with the party leadership. Milosz Hodun writes in his chapter "Behind Closed Doors: Candidate (s)election in Poland" that well-established Polish parties are very suspicious of primaries and therefore avoid them. "The electoral system is fully open only on paper. In reality, it is largely inaccessible except to those who already are in and benefit from parties" (Hodun). Since the majority of countries described in this publication use mixed methods, it's important to tease out the benefits and drawbacks of each method, using the primary experience in each country.

GOOD PRACTICES AND BENEFITS

Now that we have detailed our taxonomy of (s)election methods, we can review the benefits and drawbacks of each method.

Open Primaries

The open primary described in the previous section has many benefits, as it falls the furthest on the inclusionary scale and appears to be the most democratic. Examples can be seen in Lithuania, France, and Poland. In Lithuania, the Homeland Union Party used open primaries as a revolutionary and controversial approach to candidate (s)election starting with the 2019 presidential election (Adomenas and Fuks). In an open primary more people can be involved in decision making. In the example of primaries, this (s)election can be done far in advance of an election, making the process seem more open and transparent. As we have seen in the Polish example, this is not always the case. But this tension will be described more in the section on drawbacks.

In Italy, the first use of primaries was quite exciting. Open primaries have shown that, when the rules of the game are known, this process can expand the electoral base, bringing in first time voters and recruiting new and exciting candidates. For example, the Partito Democratico open primaries in 2007 garnered a lot of attention for being the first of their kind (Bovenzi). They were peculiar, however, in that the process aimed at selecting the party leader and not the official candidate for that round of local or national elections. Moreover, every citizen on any side of the political spectrum was able to join. This was also an occasion to expand the party's database, although European data protection rules, being much stronger than those in America rather restricted the potential bonus that parties could take from this expanded database.

On one final positive note, nationwide elections like this one can also garner more media attention and foster greater public engagement in the democratic process - the adoption of an open primary process in France by the Socialist Party in 2011 undoubtedly gave a sizeable media advantage to its candidate François Hollande, setting the stage for his eventual victory in the presidential election a year later (Muzergues).

Closed Primaries

For political parties, the benefits of closed primaries are largely internal. The experience in Italy, Lithuania, and Germany shows that they make party members feel like they have more of a stake in the outcome. In Germany, candidates are elected either by general meetings or delegate assemblies. The parties with the larger membership prefer delegate assemblies, while the smaller parties almost invariably prefer general meetings. The trend is toward the more inclusive general meetings, which allow all members eligible to vote in the Bundestag election to participate in the party's internal selection process. The right-wing populist AfD, founded in 2013, goes particularly far in its intra-party democracy. Compared to the other parties in the Bundestag, it is characterized by the most inclusive and intensive internal competition. Its high level of "competitive-oriented intra-party democracy"³ functions internally as a mechanism to counter its members' high level of dissatisfaction with representative democracy. Externally, it helps distinguish it from the other parties, which populists refer to as "old parties" or "cartel parties."

The Italian closed model includes party members or local party enrollment. These party members register candidates, and this process is sometimes reserved for specific members who have been in the

3 Höhne, B, "How Democracy Works within a Populist Party: Candidate Selection in the Alternative for Germany," first view, 2021, pp. 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2021.33>.

party for a certain number of years, so it can be dependent on seniority (Bovenzi). In Lithuania, closed primaries for candidate (s)election typically include party conferences and party leaders choosing their preferred candidates and who are later confirmed at the party's conference (Adomenas and Fuks). Through these methods, candidate (s)election remains a private affair and allows parties to "wash their dirty laundry inside." Ultimately though, the major benefit of this system is that internal compromise between members can mean better representation in the end.

Closed Party Decision

While this method can have many benefits for those in charge of pulling strings within the party, its exclusionary aspect can befuddle the electorate and make it feel out of touch with the process. Despite these drawbacks, this method is still very popular among parties in Europe. It is used by the UK Conservative Party in the first round of election of its party leaders, with voting limited to the parliamentary fraction. The second round is in a closed primary. The system was designed to leave the parliamentary party as a gatekeeper for leadership selection. This model is also used in Germany, where the CDU leader is elected in a convention of party representatives. Lists are also made through closed party decisions in Poland, allowing coalitions to manage their internal, intra-party jockeying far from the press. A closed party decision does not preclude voting, guaranteeing at least some form of collegiality, and limiting the franchise means that the chosen candidate will ultimately come out of party ranks – thus ensuring some elite continuity.

For more collective candidate (s)election, for example for parliamentary candidates, hand-selecting candidates with a certain profile in mind can be highly strategic and can help retarget or reorient the candidate pool, which is ultimately a benefit. This, however, requires a high level of organization inside party headquarters and a clear sense of direction of where the party's electoral appeal should be headed in the long-term, which has become an exception rather than a norm in the past decade.

Technocratic Model

The technocratic model shares some of the same benefits of the closed party decision method. At least on the surface, it is efficient, standardized, transparent, and includes specific criteria that can be targeted in potential candidates. This process can be less political and mitigates political jockeying, which is both a pro and a con. Ultimately, the technocratic (s)election method is also controlled from the top down. Take the Greek example: HR specialist Rebecca Pitsika delivered results for the ND party, which ultimately won the 2019 elections. But these tactics had, in the end, to be confirmed by the leader of the party - a big responsibility that needs to be performed by one person at the top. This, of course, raises questions about whether this process is more democratic, although the end result (a more diverse representation in parliament, for example) can be a better overall representation of the country's diversity.

CAVEATS AND DANGERS

Despite clear individual advantages, each mode of candidate (s)election also carries challenges for any party leadership. There is no such thing as a 'free lunch,' and so there is a price attached to each (s)election method.

To a large extent, holding primary elections offers the opportunity to democratize internal party processes by using more open, participatory, and inclusive forms of candidate (s)election. However, the degree of political organization and the involvement of multiple stakeholders required to hold successful primaries may bring logistical challenges for parties, particularly for the first primary.

While turning political competition toward a more inclusive process, primaries can inadvertently contribute to the creation of conflicts within political parties, allowing intra-party strife to spill over into public.

Open Primaries

Opening the candidate (s)election process to multiple actors is not without its advantages – but one should also be aware of its drawbacks, in particular for party leaders who may be losing a lot of power in the process. As the electorate has a bigger say in the (s)election process, candidates could feel more loyalty to the voters than to party elites. Furthermore, once the effect of novelty has passed, primaries can quickly lose their leverage. This could be seen most spectacularly in France in 2017, just five years after the first open primary took place in the country: the two main center-right and center-left primaries relied on this method to select their candidates, and yet none of them made it to the second round during the 2017 presidential elections (Muzergues).

One of the main reasons for holding open primaries is to allow political parties to reach out to non-affiliated voters. In this situation, however, turnout and the participation of the electorate is a key criterion for success. If the electorate does not show support for the primaries, low turnout may open the risk for public criticism as well as manipulation, as the party elite will have the opportunity to make an impact on the outcome of the vote.⁴ Furthermore, even with mass participation (4 million voters during the 2016 primaries of the center-right in France, for example), an open primary remains restrictive compared to the whole electorate (47 million voters, in the case of France). An open primary system may mitigate the risk of narrowing a party's appeal to an activist base, but uncertainties over participation can produce unexpected results, which can in turn be detrimental to party unity.

In some extreme cases, suspicions that members of another party may participate en masse in a primary, hoping to contribute to the (s)election of the weakest candidate, can fuel a climate of suspicion around the candidate. Whether this has ever happened is subject to controversy among scholars, - but the fact that the suspicion continues to exist, even in countries where the open primary system is well-established, shows the limits of the process in terms of trust.

Visibility and campaigning are additional crucial aspects to consider. Although competitive primaries can attract the media, this attention might decrease after a couple of primary cycles, particularly if real competition or intra-party pluralism is missing. In the opposite case, where the party leadership is directly challenged, the absence of formalities or preparedness can prove deadly for some parties, as the party's associational capacity and the transparency of its nomination process may be directly challenged.⁵ This situation of unpredictability could create internal tensions in the party.

⁴ Wattenberg, Martin P. "The Rise of Candidate Centered Politics." 1991.

⁵ Close, C., Kelbel, C., "Whose primaries? Grassroots' views on candidate selection procedures," no 54, 2019, pp. 268-294.

Closed Primaries

Closed primaries require a voter to be formally affiliated with a party to be able to cast a vote. This type of primary offers an opportunity for party elites to keep some control over the process, as the franchise is often much smaller. In addition, closed primaries are more likely to produce candidates who feel responsible to their party base, rather than to the broader electorate. This can be a double-edged sword, preserving the party's cohesion but limiting its appeal to the electorate.

The limited number of participants can also lead to accusations of a non-transparent process or even fraud in the event of competitive contests, especially if the result is either too close or too wide to be true. This is what happened in France for the then center-right party UMP's leadership elections in 2012, and the party never really recovered (Muzergues).

More generally, it should be noted that to work, the closed primary process must offer genuine opportunities for competition and must appear to be fair and open to party members and the general public. Failing to provide this fair competition framework means party leaders expose themselves to criticism for manipulating a narrow loyal membership and stunting intra-party competition.⁶ In some cases, party leadership may end up supporting a candidate who is less able to motivate the electorate.

This unbalanced competition creates a situation of winners and losers within the party, which can turn into a zero-sum game, negatively impacting members' attitudes toward the leadership or the organization. This provides an opportunity for the elite to use this competition as a tool to legitimize their leadership (which often backfires on election day). The fact that they decide when primaries are to be organized and how to allocate party resources further increases the elites' control over the process. Therefore, primaries may not necessarily guarantee the improvement of electoral processes but may actually deepen the conflicts between leaders and other members while calcifying the incumbent party elites' power.

Closed Party Decision

In the case of closed party decision, rule bound (s)election processes play a major role, when specified committees or the party leadership manage the (s)election. This also means that "ordinary party members" may not feel they have a say in selecting future candidates. Furthermore, the backroom deals that sometimes arise from this method of candidate (s)election often means that it will be attacked for being non-transparent, even corrupt in some instances, and certainly not democratic. This is why, to be successful, closed party decisions are often bound by very clear rules. For example, in the first round of the party leader (s)election process in the UK's Conservative Party, the franchise is limited to MPs who are members of the parliamentary faction, and there are clear public rules of the game.

In this type of system, and when it comes to making party lists when there is proportional representation, the leader's role is key and more pronounced. If the leader has a solid legitimacy to make decisions and bargain with party elites, the system may work just fine. If, on the other hand, the leadership suffers from a deficit of legitimacy, this can lead to chaos and accusations of fraud. Closed and sometimes non-transparent (s)election encourages the reproduction of party elites and can entrench internal patronage and clientelist structures. Asymmetric intra-party relations may have a strong impact in deciding who is included on the party list.⁷

6 Guillermo Cordero & Xavier Coller, "Lights and shadows of democratizing candidate selection", in *Democratizing candidate selection*, London, 2018, pp. 3-24.

7 Bernard Grofman, Orestis Troumpounis, and Dimitrios Xeferis, "Electoral Competition with Primaries and Quality Asymmetries," vol 81, no 1, November 2018.

Technocratic Model

The technocratic model offers an opportunity for parties to outsource the (s)election process to a specific and more or less professional structure or committee. This type of system combines various forms of nomination systems. The main question is who decides in the end and at which level other actors can be involved. If the decision is made by a smaller group, or perhaps unrelated party “technocrats,” professionalization prohibits the democratic participation of members (Pitsika). Decentralization of candidate (s)election methods or combining nominations with a vote to choose from a pool of pre-selected candidates can allow parties to overcome the democratic deficit, but these may in turn go against the professionalization of the (s)election mechanisms.

Mixed, or Hybrid forms of candidate (s)election

These models try to reconcile the positive and negative outputs by combining the different methods of candidate (s)election, usually by providing several steps in the candidate (s)election method. Thus, the UK Conservative Party leadership contest starts with a first round of closed party decisions (with MPs and Lords making up the parliamentary group taking the contest down to two individuals) before a closed primary decides who will be the party leader. These systems can mitigate the democratic deficit while still capitalizing on innovative and inclusive formulas. The separation of different processes into smaller actions eventually favors a multiple-step (s)election process. Party leaders can keep some control over the (s)election, but this flexibility also provides an opportunity to nurture and train more competent candidates. The price to pay, however, is managing a more complex process, which can make it less comprehensible and sometimes less attractive to the voters at large.

It is important to keep in mind that a non-expected outcome in a primary can impact a party’s discipline and cohesion. A possible solution is to remain open to new and more inclusive ideas and to make additional efforts to involve the electorate so the legitimacy of the (s)election would not be questioned. In this respect, e-voting and other technologies may provide useful tools for the future.⁸

The existing dissimilarities and practices in holding primaries in European countries and the U.S. suggest that it is essential to take into consideration different aspects of organizational procedures. Primaries differ from each other not only in terms of the voting system used but in other elements such as the party’s electorate, candidacy requirements, or decisions over party-list composition.⁹ When analyzing primary systems, one must consider the importance of historical factors that led to a system’s adoption, as well as specific circumstances resulting from compromises within a party. Over time, such compromises that seemed reasonable at the time may no longer be relevant and so a particular primary system may not be responding to the current needs of a party.

⁸ , Cordero G., Coller X.

Type	Actors		
	Input	Positive Output (outcome)	Negative Output (outcome)
Open primaries	Open to public Participation/turnout is a key factor for legitimacy	Transparent process Democratic Provides opportunities for publicity, giving an advantage in the campaign	Candidate more loyal towards the electorate than the party leadership Voting base remains much smaller than the electorate Possible non-desired outcomes, unpredictability
Closed primaries	The electoral outcome may be influenced by the party leader's control Participation is linked to a formal party affiliation	Makes party members stakeholders in the process	Candidates more loyal to their party base than the electorate Entrenches the base Possible non-desired outcome
Closed party decision	Leadership, or a closed committee's role is key in the (s)election Personalization of politics	Keeps the process under control of the leadership	Elite reproduction Political patronage / clientelist structures
Technocratic	Outsourcing of the process to a professional structure, with recruitment rules taken from the private sector (HR, show-business)	Transparent Introduces some predictability	Undemocratic Membership is completely absent
Hybrid / Mixed	Involvement of multiple actors (professionals, party, electorate), with a (s)election in different stages	When done well, mitigates negative outputs while enhancing positive outputs	Elimination (or watering down) of democratic processes Complexity can make the process unreadable and, ultimately, suspicious

THE IMPACTS OF LOCATION, SCALE AND TIMING ON PRIMARY CONTESTS

When thinking through the implementation of a new candidate (s)election process, party leadership needs to ask itself some basic questions: some may be logistical, particularly in the case of open primaries, where the scale of the operation necessitates major organizational capacities. For example, how to welcome a massive influx of voters on election day? In many places such as France or the US, this requires agreement with local or state authorities to use public buildings such as schools or other municipal buildings for the party to use on polling day. But the most important question is probably that of timing, for two different purposes: when should reform to the (s)election process take place, and when should the (s)election occur?

The answer to the first question is very much dependent on timing. Typically, debates about candidate (s)election reform come either in the early stages of party building (for emerging parties) or after a heavy defeat, in the case of established parties. Debates and decision making over candidate (s)election reform will be much easier and carry more legitimacy, if they take place early, while the salt of defeat and/or enthusiasm for innovation is still there. The more delayed the reform process is, the more difficult it will be to implement change, as opposition will crystallize and ossification in the party structure will take place.

Parties must also consider the impact of timing within the (s)election process. This is especially the case in an open primary, where dates should reasonably accommodate an electorate's ability to participate. Timing will also often reflect which issues come to the forefront in a primary contest.

Furthermore, parties must also consider the length of time between a primary and the eventual election. Early primaries, particularly those with a long duration, often allow space for more extreme political candidates to infiltrate the system by sowing division among the electorate and capturing media attention through inflammatory rhetoric. They may also lead to a degree of party in-fighting if personalities clash or candidates differ on key policy issues – even though the long time between the primary and the election itself can help heal some wounds and divisions. Extensively long primaries come with the added burden of incurring greater monetary cost. This not only mandates high spending for political parties but may also limit the field of contenders to those with deep pockets or lucrative relationships with wealthy fundraisers.

Finally, an early primary may produce an electoral outcome that might seem inspirational at the time of the election but look like a mistake after months of campaigning where other, less glorious aspects of the candidate's personality will have appeared (or simply, when the electorate's attention has shifted to other issues, making the candidacy of a certain individual look much less potent).

Late primaries, occurring closer to election, can allow successful candidates to carry momentum through to election day and are often less costly to the political party. But a late primary may also encourage more contenders to join the field and form factions among voters, leaving some of the electorate disillusioned if their preferred candidate loses – and this can in turn make them less likely to support the party's candidate on election day.

The scale at which primaries occur varies based on the intentions of a given political party, as well as the office for which a primary is undertaken. Participation in open primaries at a regional level ebb from cycle to cycle depending on a variety of factors which may include the breadth of offices included on the ballot and the relevance of timely issues to the electorate. For example, in the U.S., state-level primaries have poor participation during non-general election years or when a popular incumbent is deemed likely to win the eventual election. Furthermore, if no pressing issue is capturing the engagement of the

electorate, citizens may feel less inclined to cast a vote, leading to a candidate who may be less than representative of the wider party.

Throughout the 2000s and 2010s the Italian Democratic Party, and later a center-right coalition, held primary contests predominantly at the regional level, particularly for the presidencies of regions or the mayorship of cities. Evidence indicates that implementing primaries at this scale not only engendered high voter turnout, but also allowed space for new politicians to break into the field of being candidates previously dominated by long-standing party politicians. While embattled inter-party conflict between contenders often manifest in these open primary contests, parties frequently enjoyed a refreshed pool of candidates, which invigorated the electorate.

The location of primaries can also be an important factor in how parties select candidates. In the U.S. general elections, a cadence of state primaries over the course of several months maintains significant influence in determining the eventual nominees, who must navigate a host of different issues and demographics varying across geographies. Contenders who fail to win primaries in early states may find their political aspirations dashed well before most American citizens have a say in the candidate (s)election process. While this is a process unique to the American system, other political parties looking for a means of expanding their voter base and gaining more support from regions outside of densely populated urban areas may be interested in exploring such an option.

The timing, scale, and location of candidate (s)election processes vary across nations and requires parties to consider a vast breadth of factors when determining their approach. While they may seem like basic considerations, these decisions can have wide-reaching impacts on who might emerge as a party's nominee and what issues may rise to the forefront of an election debate.

NEW TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

Candidate (s)election does not imply uniform practices. Political parties across the Transatlantic space have been using very different methods and tools to select their candidates for elections, thus illustrating different approaches to fulfill a common political objective: achieve the best possible electoral result. At the same time, after experiencing both successes and failures, candidate (s)election processes tend to evolve over time. Generally, the past few decades have been characterized by a trend of democratization in intra-party politics, which has affected the functioning of the candidate (s)election process. Whether this trend will start to get reversed by the introduction of more technocratic means of party management, sometimes favored by new technological options, remains to be seen.

Emerging technological developments have greatly influenced politics. Technology is one of the most important aspects of modern politics and will remain so in the coming years, leading the academic sphere to debate the implications and the perspectives of "technopolitics."¹⁰ Seen initially as unmissable opportunities to revive democracy, technological innovations are now viewed much more cautiously, as they can obviously produce downsides in addition to benefits.¹¹ As such, in order to make gains from technology applications, politicians and political parties must understand not only the opportunities presented by technology, but also the emerging evolution of how technology can be applied to the candidate (s)election process.

In contemporary politics, there is still hope that new tools and technological innovations will help tackle current challenges. Among these challenges, two stand out as particularly dangerous for political parties. The first is citizens' growing skepticism, if not disinterest, toward politics – and, in particular,

¹⁰ Can Kurban, Ismael Pena-Lopez & Maria Haberer, "What is technopolitics? A conceptual schema for understanding politics on the digital age," no 24, 2017, pp. 3-20.

¹¹ European Parliamentary Research Service, "Polarisation and the use of technology in political campaigns and communication," 2019, p-1.

distrust toward political parties. And the second is the polarization of both inter and intra-party political systems.

In the past two decades, Western liberal democracies have experienced a period of serious turbulence with the development of anti-establishment and populist political movements. These new political actors – which have proven successful several times – symbolize the growing disaffection of many citizens toward traditional politics. More than disaffection, citizens seem more and more disinterested in politics and, as a direct consequence, political participation has sharply declined in numerous countries. Due to these developments, political parties are suffering from both a decline in party membership as well as lower turnouts during elections.¹²

To answer this specific challenge, technology and, in particular, the use of the internet and digitalization processes have been identified as potential solutions. When it comes specifically to candidate (s)election processes, no matter which specific method a political party uses, one of its main objectives is to attract the attention of its (perceived) target voters to legitimize its internal (s)election process. Here, digital tools have often been used with the hope of boosting the success of such processes. On one hand, technology aims to make a candidate (s)election process more participative and – at least on paper – more transparent. Undeniably, the internet allows parties to reach out more easily to a larger number of potentially interested citizens and, at the same time, can reduce organizational costs.¹³

One illustrative example comes from Italy's Five Star Movement (M5S), which organized online primaries as early as 2012 (for the 2013 general elections). On this occasion, more than 30,000 members of M5S (membership was the only condition of participation) cast their ballots to select candidates among a pool of almost 1,500 individuals. Another example comes from the New Austria and Liberal Forum (NEOS) party, which organized the first open and online-based primaries in Austria ahead of the 2013 national legislative elections. NEOS implemented a three-stage primary, based on participative and transparent characteristics, increasing its visibility as a newly established and non-traditional party. Its process included multi-step (s)election using three different electorates: citizens (1,355 ordinary citizens), party executives (11 individuals) and party members (236 party members) With some updates, NEOS repeated this in 2017, increasing participation from ordinary citizens by 160 percent.

If the success of elections is to be relativized, such initiatives represent considerable innovation in candidate (s)election processes. On the other hand, a good use of internet and digital tools may help a party increase the visibility – and hopefully – the popularity of a candidate (s)election process. The ability to develop communication skills in online media and social networks has proved particularly important in the past two years, as COVID-19 pandemic-era restrictions placed limitations on physical political campaigning.

A second major challenge for political parties today is polarization. If polarization within national political systems seems obvious, given the multitude of examples that could be mentioned, intra-party polarization has also been an issue for several parties in recent years. Indeed, in the case of a leadership crisis or of a lack of ideological cohesion, candidate (s)election might be disastrous. In France, the 2017 open primaries from both traditional mainstream parties were an occasion to open these divisions very wide, and it paved the way for Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen (among others) to pick up the parts of the parties they needed in their respective coalitions as the party system exploded in (and after) the presidential elections.¹⁴

¹² Alain Siaroff, "The decline of political participation: an empirical overview of voter turnout and party membership," in J DeBardeleben & J.H. Pammett, *Activating the Citizen*, London, 2009, pp. 41-59.

¹³ , Cordero G., Collier X.

¹⁴ Jennifer Stromer-Galley, "Amid pandemic, campaigning turns to the internet," , 2020.

Could new technologies or simple techniques reduce the perils of polarization and internal fracture during a candidate (s)election process? Reducing the politicization of candidate (s)election processes can lead to more professional (but less democratic) approaches. Again, it's worthwhile to note the aforementioned Greek example of the ND party, which itself echoed the methodology used by *En Marche* in France to select its candidates for the legislative elections. Using this method, rivalries between political candidates from the same party were mostly muted, and candidates were selected through a technical process which aimed at finding the best possible candidates for the party's electoral objectives. With the rapid development of data science and the possibility of using more accurate computerized data to match citizens' expectations and politicians' profiles, technocratic experiences will likely develop and may even become an ascendent form of candidate (s)election in the future.¹⁵ On the other hand, other solutions have been more specifically developed to reduce polarization - specifically by attacking plurality voting, also known as 'winner-takes-all' voting, which is perceived as more and more problematic.¹⁶ Such possibilities have already been theorized under the names of "ranked choice voting" and through a more detailed methodology called "majority judgement," developed by the French researchers Balinski and Laraki.¹⁷ Such methods are believed to increase representativeness towards the center (rather than polarizing fringes) as the party elects candidates who are the most consensual and are supposed to decrease intra-party tensions during the campaign.

Like other tools, technology should not be taken as a silver bullet as it carries its own risks. Using predominantly technological tools in a candidate (s)election process exposes a political party to a number of risks, and they do not necessarily bring more transparency or participation. First, using technology and digital tools may make a political party more vulnerable, as they automatically reduce its capacity to control the process itself. A communications strategy based on communication through media and social networks might produce a significant backlash if it is not sufficiently coordinated by the party itself. For example, one problem might be caused by the development of conflicting internal communications strategies from different candidates - and rivals - from the party. A second important issue is the fight against disinformation, which can occur both in media and on social networks and which comes from political adversaries, whether national or international (i.e., state-sponsored disinformation).

Secondly, using technology as a central tool of candidate (s)election raises security questions in two different ways. On the one hand, such processes can affect the security of citizens and the protection of their personal data - in Europe, the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is now a central issue. In this context, are the controversial operations led by the data analysis company Cambridge Analytica.¹⁸ On the other hand, there are important cybersecurity challenges for the parties and their data. Since the mid-2000s, several events across the Transatlantic space have exemplified the notable risk of cyberattacks and outside election meddling. In this regard, candidate (s)election processes are an easy target as political parties might not pay sufficient attention, nor devote sufficient resources, to the security of their processes. Moreover, the more tech-dependent processes are, the more vulnerabilities exist, particularly in an environment where party operatives are seldom aware of data security. Their inclination to arbitrate budgetary decisions between voter outreach and security investments that have little impact on turnout typically means weak cybersecurity.

15 Katharine Dommett, "Data-driven political campaigns in practice: understanding and regulating diverse data-driven campaigns," vol 8, no 4, 2019.

16 Anne-Marie Slaughter, "How to fix polarization? Ranked choice voting," 2020.

17 Michel Balinski & Rida Laraki, "Jugement majoritaire versus vote majoritaire," vol 27, no 4, 2012, pp. 11-44.

18 *Op. Cit.*, Katharine Dommett, 2019.

LEGISLATING THE POLITICAL ECOSYSTEM AND PROTECTING DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION

Whether one likes it or deplors it, political parties remain at the center of political life in our representative democracies, and ultimately set the rules for candidate (s)election. But their options are often constrained by legal parameters within constitutions or other laws that set the rules for participation in an institutionalized democratic system.

Prior to the mid-twentieth century, political parties operated largely beyond the scope of state regulation (which was mostly absent) and often without internal self-governance rules. Unchecked by regulation, common practice allowed parties to conduct candidate (s)election completely removed from citizens. Instead, parties often brokered backroom deals, which frequently led to corrupt practices aimed at amassing political and financial power, thereby tightening control over institutions and limiting representative governance. Without legislation as a precondition to ensuring a fair and equitable political ecosystem, many bad actors continue to impede democratic progress. These hurdles remain acutely present across some emerging and transitioning democracies particularly in Central and Eastern Europe.

We know from practices in other democracies that the transition from backroom deals to a more open, transparent, and/or professional model of candidate selection is not easy. Experience also shows that a sound legislative environment favors this type of transition. The question, therefore, is how can parliaments legislate to favor a more transparent environment? The initial step could include reinforcing existing legislation to protect freedom of participation and association for all citizens, particularly as they relate to political parties or groups. Such laws provide guarantees for citizens to exercise their political autonomy in supporting the individuals and/or parties that best reflect their personal beliefs and motivations. This protection is fundamental for ensuring that all people retain the capacity to express themselves politically without fear of reprisal. Furthermore, such legislation should also eliminate barriers that inhibit the ability of individuals to stand for election. For example, legislation should curtail or restrict practices that aim to exclude certain individuals from running for office or parties from breaking into the electoral theater, such as unfair district drawing (gerrymandering in the U.S.) and high electoral thresholds for party participation (several examples in Central and East Europe).

Next, across nearly all democracies, issues with campaign and party financing consistently emerge during election cycles. Undoubtedly, capital resources play an essential role in empowering an individual or political party to gain public visibility and broaden the reach of their messaging. These funds can enable parties to compete in contentious districts, embolden a candidate's policy platforms, and help encourage more voters to participate. However, unregulated campaign financing can have detrimental impacts on the internal functioning of individual parties, as well as the collective political ecosystem of a given country. Without internal self-governance, parties run the risk of corruption within their own ranks, particularly if one or a handful of individuals amass power over the party's capital resources. A lack of legal parameters at the party- and state-level also leaves the door open for wealthy individuals or corporations to ingratiate themselves with party leaders and, in severe cases, affect policy agendas.

While less discussed and infrequently implemented in Europe, legislation outlining how political parties may select candidates remains undefined. These processes are often left to the discretion of political parties. However, at the very least, political parties should adopt formal internal rules, agreed upon by party members, to clearly define the processes of candidate (s)election in order to avoid corruption and ensure transparency for party members and the public. In addition, internal party rules and state laws should adopt prescriptions mandating rules about party transparency. These laws may require that political parties share sources of public and private funding and spending – subject to an audit by third-party organizations from civil society, as well as independent regulatory bodies. For parties that choose

to engage closed primary systems, the opportunity to legislate more transparent processes may, in turn, promote the party's commitment to democratic processes within the electorate.

As core components of democracies, political parties must actively advocate for framing legislation both at the state and internal levels to address a variety of obstacles debasing democracy. Understandably, some parties may oppose the notion of state regulation as an infringement on their ability to freely conduct affairs such as candidate (s)election. However, predictable frameworks for transparency and accountability can provide a mutually acceptable foundation for parties to enhance democracy, without encroaching on parties' rights to organize freely. This can sometimes be achieved through benchmarking and the adoption of best practices from rival or outside parties.

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PARTY STRUCTURE

Every party experience is unique – and as a result, each party has developed a unique way of (s)electing its own candidates and suiting its own needs and identity. In this regard, this publication cannot be seen as a guidebook for the ideal candidate (s)election process – such a process does not exist. But circumstances change, and political parties often find themselves in crisis, or rather a need to re-invent themselves, and candidate (s)election is often at the heart of it. Thus, while the comparative method used in this publication may not deliver an absolute answer to a party's needs, examples from across the Transatlantic space may provide party leaders with the inspiration they need to reform their candidate (s)election process in a way that suits them.

Of course, the primary purpose of candidate (s)election in a party is to get the candidate (or set of candidates) that will help win the next election, but we learned from case studies that multiple other aspects need to be considered when reforming the candidate (s)election process. The party's long-term objectives definitely matter, and options might be constrained by timing, location, capacity, and the choice of political goals for the party. Candidate (s)election is a highly strategic matter and can sometimes even mean the life or death of a party. The importance of candidate (s)election cannot be overstated.

Over the past twenty years, primaries – and especially open primaries – have often been presented as the ideal mode of candidate (s)election that all parties should aspire to. And yet, the examples provided by the countries studied in this project also show that primaries have their own dangers. To mitigate the risks and amplify the benefits, parties need to rely on existing best practices, but they should also remain open to new ideas, especially in a rapidly evolving political system which is evermore influenced by technological tools.

Success in candidate (s)election depends on multiple factors. Those factors can be internal and come from the party itself, depending on its structure and statutes, on ideological cohesion and intra-party relations, or on the potential evolutions of targeted constituencies. Factors can also be external and emerge from the political environment. Parties must constantly contend with shifting legislative requirements, political competition with other parties (that also take decisions in real time), and the evolution of voter demands. On top of that, it is also important to remember why certain primary systems are used, and we must consider the historical factors at the time the system was adopted (and how the selected systems are often the result of some form of compromise within a party).

Considering this variety of factors, political parties should avoid the trap of focusing only on the next election and base their choices to build their candidate (s)election processes for the long-term. Very often, events spark reform, and political leaders have very little choice but to “catch” the moment for reform rather than just create a movement for it. But at the same time, those reforms need to be thought out, because they will carry long-term consequences for the future of the party.

Candidate (s)election processes are an important feature of political party life. Choosing a specific system may affect the identity of a party and its internal structures. However, the evolution of party structures is a long-term process, and therefore depends not only on the outcome of a single election but must also be considered as a culmination of electoral experiences gathered over multiple voting cycles. In many cases, as demonstrated, primaries do not offer a definitive solution for candidate (s)election, rather they open the possibility to wider political debates. This, in turn, offers a lesson in differences and similarities experienced by various parties in the Transatlantic space.

International Republican Institute

IRI.org
@IRIglobal

P: (202) 408-9450
E: info@iri.org

