

# Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective

The Secret Garden of Politics

edited by  
Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh

SAGE Modern Politics Series Volume 18  
Sponsored by the European Consortium for  
Political Research/ECPR

 SAGE Publications

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First published 1988

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SAGE Publications Ltd  
 28 Banner Street  
 London EC1Y 8QE

SAGE Publications Inc  
 2111 West Hillcrest Street  
 Newbury Park, California 91320

SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd  
 C-236 Defence Colony  
 New Delhi 110 024

SAGE Publications Inc  
 275 South Beverly Drive  
 Beverly Hills, California 90212

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Candidate selection in comparative perspective: the secret garden of politics. — (Sage modern politics series; 18)  
 1. Nominations for office  
 I. Gallagher, Michael, 1951– II. Marsh, Michael  
 324.5 JF2081

ISBN 0-8039-8124-4

Library of Congress catalog card number 87-062227

Printed in Great Britain by J. W. Arrowsmith Ltd, Bristol

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merits a book in its own right. She argued that the nature of candidate selection in Sweden was conducive to the selection of a relatively high proportion of women, whereas selection procedures in Britain and the USA made it harder for women to win nomination.

Our thanks must go first of all to the contributors to the book, most of whom managed to keep reasonably close to the agreed schedule, and all of whom displayed considerable patience and co-operation in dealing with what may have seemed an interminable series of questions, suggestions and comments. In addition, Sage's editorial director, David Hill, and the series editor, Michael Laver, made some helpful suggestions on the text, and responded speedily to all our questions. We are also grateful to Ken Newton, Michael Laver's predecessor, who helped to get the project under way. Last, but certainly not least, we should like to thank Miriam Nestor, who typed more than one version of five of the chapters in this book, and has played a large part in creating the finished product.

## 1

### Introduction

*Michael Gallagher*

This book is about ways in which political parties select their candidates for elections to national parliaments. The significance of candidate selection is easy to underestimate. It may seem at first sight to be one of the more obscure functions performed by political parties, a mere administrative procedure carried out in a back room, of concern only to those directly involved. In fact it has far wider implications. The quality of candidates selected determines the quality of the deputies elected, of the resultant parliament, often of the members of the government and, to some extent, of a country's politics. A change in parties' selection procedures in any given country might thus have direct consequences for the way politics operate there. Moreover, the way in which political parties select their candidates may be used as an acid test of how democratically they conduct their internal affairs.

In this introductory chapter we shall outline the main lines of inquiry the book will follow, and review the existing literature on the subject. First, the chapter will elaborate on the reasons why candidate selection is widely seen as important. Second, it will identify the main questions to be asked when trying to build up a descriptive picture of the way candidates are picked. Third, it will discuss the theories advanced as to the factors which influence the selection of candidates. Finally, it will discuss the ways in which different selection processes might have distinct consequences. The validity of the hypotheses discussed in this chapter will be considered, in the light of the available evidence, in the concluding chapter.

#### **The importance of candidate selection**

Candidate selection has often been identified as a crucial part of the political process, but it has received comparatively little attention. For only a few countries do detailed studies of selection practices exist; for most countries the subject is dealt with in rather cursory fashion by textbooks giving a general introduction to the government and politics of the country. Attempts to study the subject

candidate selection may be an intervening variable rather than an independent one. Even in these cases, of course, candidate selection would still be important, as the mechanism through which the membership stamps its mark on the parliamentary group. The material contained in this book should enable us to draw conclusions as to whether candidate selection is more cause or consequence; it is a vital process with an independent effect of its own, does it merely reflect other factors in the social and political environment, or might it play both roles on different occasions?

### The country studies

Chapters 2 to 10 of the book will explore these ideas in each of nine countries. The countries covered are sufficiently similar to permit meaningful comparisons to be drawn, and the fact that governments in each need the support of a majority in the legislature justifies the concentration on selection at parliamentary elections. But, at the same time, they encompass a wide range of characteristics. Their electoral systems fall into four broad categories. Britain has single-member constituencies (as has France except in 1986); Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway and France (in 1986) have list systems which provide little or no opportunity for voters to overturn the party's ranking of candidates; Ireland, Italy and Japan have preferential systems in which the voters' wishes are very important. West Germany is a particularly interesting case, since its electoral system combines two forms (single-member and non-preferential list), enabling comparisons to be drawn between the process and outcome of candidate selection under the two forms.

In other ways too the countries provide useful contrasts. Powerful factions are a feature of parties in Italy and Japan. Interest groups play important roles in parties in Britain, Belgium and Italy. France, Ireland and Japan are often regarded as countries where localism is exceptionally strong, and Britain as a country where it is exceptionally weak. In Norway and West Germany candidate selection is affected by legal provisions. In Belgium, Britain, Ireland and the Netherlands there have been changes in candidate selection in recent years. Overall, the range of countries covered ensures that the conclusions reached should be soundly grounded, and avoids the danger noted by Marvick (cited earlier in the chapter) of extrapolating from a very limited data set.

The fact that all nine countries belong to the developed world and have competitive party systems makes it easier to use a common framework for each chapter. We have not covered the United States of America partly because the legislature must contend with the

president for authority, but mainly because parties do not play the central role in candidate selection which they enjoy in Europe and Japan. We are interested not primarily in the factors which motivate individuals to seek candidacies but in the process by which parties allocate the rewards of nomination. We are asking not *whether* parties select candidates but *how* they select them.

The fact that none of our chapters is about an uncompetitive system or a less developed country does not imply that we do not regard the topic as a worthwhile area of research in such contexts. On the contrary, when elections do not enable voters to exercise a choice between parties or even between candidates, the candidate selection stage may be the only place where genuine competition takes place. As Hermet (1978: 12) has put it:

Analysing the candidate-selection machinery offers a much wider and more useful base for understanding rivalries, compromises and manoeuvres for seduction or intimidation, which frequently constitute the real purpose of non-competitive elections. The composition of the list of candidates offered to the voter reflects an infinite number of ideological nuances, even within nominally single-party systems.

Of course, a difficulty in studying candidate selection in such systems is that the process is usually carried out far from the public eye, especially when genuine rivalry is involved. For less developed countries, the problem, as so often, is a simple lack of basic information. Even so, there have been valuable studies of candidate selection both in the uncompetitive systems of Eastern Europe and in some less developed countries, especially in Africa and Asia. Their findings, along with those from studies of candidate selection in competitive party systems not covered in this book, will be drawn on in the concluding chapter, which will examine the propositions put forward above in the light of the available evidence.

### Notes

I should like to thank Michael Laver and Michael Marsh for comments on an earlier draft.

1. Throughout this book we use 'aspirant' to denote a person seeking a candidacy, and 'deselection' to denote the refusal of the selectors to reselect an outgoing deputy as a candidate.

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2

## Belgium: democracy or oligarchy?

*Lieven De Winter*

The Belgian 'poll system', a type of intraparty primary in which dues-paying members could vote and select their parliamentary candidates, has for a long time been considered a rare exception to Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy (Obler, 1974: 164). Most scholars of Belgian politics have focused on selection methods used in the 1960s (Ranney, 1981; Epstein, 1980; Irving, 1979; Dewachter, 1967; Debuyst, 1967). However, since then, dramatic changes in the actual selection processes have taken place in most parties, making the Belgian case more complex, and less of an example of intraparty democracy (De Winter, 1980).

The first part of this chapter describes the main features of the Belgian electoral and party system. Next, the major parties' selection rules and actual selection procedures are examined. The third part deals with selectors' preferences and their role expectations. Finally, the impact of candidate selection on the nature of the parliamentary party and the behaviour of parliamentarians is illustrated.

### **The impact of the electoral and party system**

#### *The electoral system*

Intraparty selection procedures in Belgium are adapted to procedures governing general elections. The 212 members of the Chamber of Representatives are elected through a proportional representation system from thirty multi-member constituencies. Parties in each constituency normally draw up lists which include a number of candidates equal to the number of representatives to be elected. They vary from two representatives in the Ieper constituency to thirty-three in Brussels-Hal-Vilvoorde.

The ordering of candidates on the electoral lists is of particular importance because in practice voters decide only on the number of seats a party will receive, not on who will fill them. There are two ways of casting a vote: a list vote and a preference vote.<sup>1</sup> Every

candidate whose number of preference votes reaches the eligibility figure (calculated by dividing the party's total vote by the number of seats it won, plus one) is seated. Usually, only the head of a list manages to reach such a high number. If the head of the list has received fewer preference votes than this figure, list votes are added to his or her preference votes until the required figure is reached. This procedure is repeated for the candidate situated in the second place on the list and so on until all the party's seats have been allocated. However, if the list votes are used up before all the seats have been assigned, the remaining seats are accorded to the candidates with the most preference votes.

With large numbers of voters casting list rather than preference votes this seat-allocating procedure makes the ordering of candidates by the parties crucial in the election process. Belgian voters have rarely managed to alter the ordered list. Following the establishment of universal male suffrage in 1919 and until the last election of 1985, only twenty-six of the 4295 seats in the Chamber (0.61 percent) were accorded to candidates who had been elected 'out of order,' i.e. elected while a candidate placed higher on the list was not. The proportion of preference votes in the total vote has increased steadily (from 16.4 percent in 1919 to 51.9 percent in 1978, and has since stabilized itself slightly below that level). Although this has increased the likelihood that candidates will be elected in a different order from that of their appearance on the list, the number of candidates elected 'out of order' has not increased at all.

So the Belgian voters decide only on the number of seats a party gets; the parties themselves decide who will receive them. Hence party officials have come to think in terms of safe, combative and hopeless list positions. In choosing candidates they are naturally most concerned about who occupies the safe and combative positions, and they often fill the hopeless spots with well-known personalities who may attract voters but who have no serious intention of pursuing a parliamentary career.

The level of competition and the relevance of the intraparty selection process is determined by the number of safe party seats in each constituency. In constituency parties which have no hope of electing even one representative the designation of candidates engenders little interest. Often local party leaders must search for party members willing to be nominated. Only when a constituency party expects to elect at least several representatives if there is sufficient competition among aspirants and concern among the rank-and-file to warrant the expense, time and energy required to involve the different levels of the party organization in the selection

able time-consuming activity (on the average six hours per week), it is not included in Table 2.5 since corresponding selectors' preferences are nearly absent.

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## Britain: centralized parties with decentralized selection

*David Denver*

From 1945 to 1970 the British party system was widely regarded as the archetypal class-based two-party system. The Conservative and Labour parties, loyally supported by the middle and working classes respectively, alternated in government and opposition, won the support of the overwhelming majority of voters in general elections and held all but a tiny minority of seats in the House of Commons. During the 1970s and 1980s, however, this duopoly began to break down. Single-party government remained the norm (although in the late 1970s Labour had to rely on Liberal support to stay in office) but nationalist parties established a permanent presence in Scotland and Wales, the Northern Ireland parties detached themselves from the major British parties and fragmented and, most important of all, the Liberals together with the Social Democratic Party (SDP), which was founded in 1981, made spectacular electoral advances. After the 1983 general election ten parties had representatives in the House of Commons – Conservative, Labour, Liberal, SDP, Scottish National Party (SNP), Welsh Nationalist Party (Plaid Cymru) and four Northern Ireland parties.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, however, partly for reasons of space but mainly because they alone put forward candidates across the whole country, the focus is on selection in the four major British parties.<sup>2</sup>

### The importance of candidate selection

In Britain, as in most democratic political systems, the selection of party candidates to contest national elections is a process which is purely private and internal to the political parties themselves. Each party in its constitution or set of 'model rules' for local branches prescribes the procedures to be followed, defines who may participate and sets out rules governing the process. The four parties considered here differ in various ways in how they select candidates but in one fundamental respect they are the same. Although British parties have the reputation of being highly centralized and the rules

governing selection are in all cases centrally determined, the process itself is decentralized. In theory and in practice all British parliamentary candidates are selected by relatively small groups of party members in each parliamentary constituency.<sup>3</sup> All aspiring Members of Parliament (MPs), from the humblest backbencher to a potential Prime Minister, must first be selected as a candidate by a local party. In normal circumstances there is no mechanism whereby the national party organization can directly nominate a candidate for a local constituency.<sup>4</sup> Although it predates mass parties, constituency-level selection is a concomitant of the organizational structure of the parties and of the electoral system. Each constituency elects a single MP by the simple plurality method and constituency associations or parties form the bases of party organization.<sup>5</sup>

In part, the importance of local selection derives from the fact that most constituencies are 'safe' for one party or another. Between 1955 and 1970, a period in which there were five general elections, three quarters of the seats in Britain never changed hands and a further 13 percent were held by one party in four out of the five elections. Even in the electorally more turbulent 1970s this pattern persisted. In the three elections between February 1974 and 1979, 88 percent of constituencies were won by the same party on all three occasions.<sup>6</sup>

Clearly, then, when a local party selects a candidate for a seat which it holds, the person chosen is in most cases assured of election. It is not the voters but small groups of selectors who effectively determine who shall be MPs; it is local selectors who determine the distribution of social characteristics, abilities and ideological viewpoints in the House of Commons. In addition, since ministers and opposition spokesmen are almost invariably recruited from among MPs, local selectors are responsible for providing a pool of talent that can be called upon when a government or shadow cabinet is to be formed. In a real if indirect way selectors have influence upon the recruitment of political leaders and the personnel of governments.

The electoral status of constituencies has marked effects upon the selection process. In the first place, selections in safe seats are much less frequent than in others. Up to 1979 the selection procedures in all parties were weighted in favour of a simple readoption of incumbent MPs and, although mechanisms existed for removing an incumbent, they were rarely employed (see below). Normally only death, retirement, resignation or elevation to the House of Lords gave rise to selections in safe seats. This is illustrated in Table 3.1, which shows for six elections the number of cases in which

incumbents were readopted, those in which new candidates were chosen in seats held by the party concerned and the number of candidates selected in seats not held by their party.

Table 3.1 *Selections in the Conservative and Labour parties*

|  | Oct  |      |      |      |      |      |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|  | 1959 | 1964 | 1966 | 1970 | 1974 | 1979 |
| Incumbent readopted                          | 546  | 554  | 571  | 553  | 585  | 537  |
| New candidate selected in seat held by party | 66   | 57   | 38   | 77   | 13   | 59   |
| Candidate selected in seat not held by party | 619  | 625  | 626  | 604  | 647  | 649  |

The table does not show figures for 1955, February 1974 and 1983 because these elections followed constituency boundary revisions and incumbency is difficult to define in such circumstances. Northern Ireland is excluded from the figures.

Source: Appropriate volumes of *The Times Guide to the House of Commons*

It is clear that relatively few 'good' seats come up for newly aspiring Conservative or Labour MPs at any one election, the maximum number of incumbents making way for new candidates in the period covered being only seventy-seven in 1970. The overwhelming majority of selections, as opposed to readoptions, occur in marginal and hopeless seats, especially the latter, where selections need to be undertaken before every election. In other parties, which have few MPs and even fewer safe seats, almost all constituencies go through the full selection process for each general election.

The electoral status of constituencies also affects candidate selection in more indirect ways. Local party members and aspiring candidates know whether the selected candidate is certain to win, bound to lose or in with a chance of victory. This affects the number of aspirants who seek the candidacy: safe seats attract many more applicants than marginals and these, in turn, more than hopeless seats. In all parties selections in hopeless seats more often consist of searching for a candidate than of choosing from a number of hopefuls. This was, for instance, the case in the vast majority of selections in the Liberal Party until the 1970s (see Ranney, 1965: 248-68).

The winnability of a constituency also affects the seriousness with which selectors perceive and undertake their task. When the person selected is certain or likely to become an MP, the whole business of selection is approached in a more serious vein and any intraparty conflict is more acute. It is possible, too, that selectors in different categories of seat have different concerns and apply different criteria in choosing candidates.



## France: the impact of electoral system change

*Jean-Louis Thiébault*

Examining candidate selection in France offers a valuable opportunity to assess the influence of the electoral system on the selection process. From the beginning of the Fifth Republic up to 1986, France practised the two-ballot system in single-member constituencies (Georgel, 1979). But a new electoral system was adopted for the legislative elections of 1986, namely proportional representation (PR) using the 'highest average' rule. PR had been part of the ruling Socialist Party's platform since 1971, but the immediate motivation for introducing it was to limit the party's anticipated losses at the forthcoming elections. The new system was based on rigid party lists (voters were not able to alter the order of candidates' names). Each territorial department was made a separate constituency, which meant that there were relatively few seats in each constituency: in metropolitan France there were 555 seats and 96 constituencies. Moreover, no party could qualify for a seat in any department unless it had won at least 5 percent of the votes there (Knapp, 1985). One of the first acts of the new right-wing government upon coming to power after the election was to abandon PR and revert to the two-ballot single-member constituency system.

This chapter will concentrate particularly on the impact of the change in the electoral system, but of course this is not the only factor to take into consideration. The evolution of the French party system is also important. Its main feature has been the emergence of two distinct blocs: a left-wing coalition comprising primarily the Parti Socialiste (PS) and the Parti Communiste (PC), and a right-wing coalition composed chiefly of the Gaullist Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) and the Giscardian Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF).

The existence of these two big coalitions has profoundly influenced the selection of candidates for legislative elections. Once they emerged, the parties' national organizations had to start controlling the nomination of candidates and reserving the right to

intervene actively to impose their decisions. This tendency was in a way paradoxical because the two-ballot single-member constituency system seems to favour both local establishment of deputies and a strengthening of the parties' local and department organizations vis-à-vis the central organizations. Candidate selection was thus the result of a complex balance of national and local influences.

### The candidate selection process

There are no laws in France regulating candidate selection. It is considered to be the internal affair of the parties and is provided for in their statutes. We shall examine the selection process within each party, dealing with the topics of centralization and participation.

#### *The Rassemblement pour la République*

In the RPR, the candidate selection process shows the domination of the national organization, which wields most of the decision-making power in this area (article 24 of the RPR statutes). During the period in which the two-round majority voting system was used, a nomination commission, composed of the general secretary, the presidents of the parliamentary groups and some electoral experts of the central organization first solicited proposals from the departmental organizations. Then, after studying and perhaps eventually modifying these proposals, the commission presented the candidates' names for nomination to the Central Committee. The RPR could thus be classified as a case of selection by the national organization after taking into account the proposals of the departmental organizations.

However, the national organization constantly had to take into account the demands of its parliamentary group, its local leaders and even, in some cases, party activists (Schonfeld, 1985). The parliamentary group wanted to obtain an assurance of renomination for all outgoing deputies who wanted it. Local leaders, who were very powerful in the department or in one electoral constituency, intervened in order to obtain a nomination for themselves or for a protégé. There was, therefore, a complex system under which the power of the centre was less absolute than it might at first seem (Lacorne, 1980).

This same complex system appeared during the period of preparation for the legislative elections of 1986. The introduction of PR gave the national party organization the opportunity to try to secure a better hold.

The national organization's greater power to intervene first showed itself in the creation, during the congress of 1 June 1985, of

## The German Federal Republic: the two-lane route to Bonn

*Geoffrey Roberts*

There are only four significant parties in the German Federal Republic, each now represented in the Bundestag.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD) has nearly one million members, and obtains about 37–45 percent of the votes at federal elections. Like the Labour Party in Britain, the SPD embraces a wide range of orientations, from marxist socialism to the more centrist and pragmatic social democracy of former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. The SPD has close links to the trade unions; however, since under the Party Law of 1967 only individuals can be members of political parties, unions cannot formally affiliate to it.

The Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and its Bavarian sister-party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), together form a single parliamentary and electoral party: the CDU does not present candidates in Bavaria, nor the CSU outside Bavaria. The Christian Democrats are the conservative party of the German Federal Republic; they have affinities to the Christian churches, and the Catholic church in particular has retained considerable influence in the party. There are about 90,000 members of the CDU-CSU, and the Christian Democrats poll about 45–48 percent of the vote at federal elections.

The Free Democratic Party (FDP) is the liberal party of the German Federal Republic, with about 70,000 members. It occupies a central position in the party system, but is oriented towards the left or the right at different times, and thus usually determines whether the SPD or the CDU-CSU will, in coalition with the FDP, form the government in Bonn. This crucial role in forming governments contrasts with the marginal electoral position of the FDP: it polls usually between 6 and 8 percent of the vote at federal elections, and is thus often dangerously close to falling below the 5 percent level that qualifies it for seats in the Bundestag.

The Green Party is a new addition to the party system, which obtained representation in the Bundestag for the first time in 1983, polling 5½ percent of the votes in that federal election. The Green Party represents especially the ecology, peace and feminist move-

ments in the Federal Republic, and is basically a left-wing party, though on several issues differs markedly from the SPD. It is difficult to estimate its membership, since many of its supporters do not acquire formal party membership. No other party has even 1 percent of the vote at federal elections, and none has seats in the Bundestag or in Land legislatures.

The process for the selection of candidates for the Bundestag – the elected chamber of the bicameral West German legislature – is characterized by three significant features.

It is, first, a very democratic process, in formal terms at least, because of the strict minimum legal requirements imposed by the Party Law and Electoral Law. Second, it possesses an unusual duality because of the ‘hybrid’ nature of the electoral system. It is, thirdly, often tantamount to election because of the numbers of safe seats which normally exist. This third feature has provoked much criticism since it is regarded as derogating from the democratic influence of the electorate and transferring undue power to the party ‘selectorates’. Though increased electoral volatility has kept the number of such safe seats within bounds, estimates still suggest that well over half the members of the next Bundestag will be known at the selection stage, irrespective of the swings of electoral opinion revealed by the election itself (Kaack, 1969: 16; Rapp, 1976).

To appreciate the procedures, motivations and consequences involved in candidate selection in the Federal Republic of Germany, it is essential first to understand the way in which the electoral system operates.

Although some minor amendments and adjustments of procedure have been adopted since 1949, the basic features of the West German electoral system have remained unchanged since the ‘Founding Fathers’ drafted the Basic Law and designed an electoral system to elect the first Bundestag in 1949.

At present the Bundestag normally consists of 496 *MdBs* (*Mitglieder des Bundestages*, i.e. members of the Bundestag). On occasion, as explained below, that number may be exceeded very slightly. Of the 496 seats, 248 are filled from single-member constituencies, where each voter has one vote, and the candidate with the largest number of valid votes (irrespective of whether that candidate’s votes constitute an absolute or a relative majority) is declared elected. The remaining seats are filled from party lists. Each voter, in addition to the ‘first’ vote for a constituency candidate, also has a ‘second’ (‘list’) vote for a party list. The voter is free to ‘split’ the two votes by voting for a constituency candidate of one party (or even a non-party candidate, though these are

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Note: Any translations from German are by the author of this chapter.

## Ireland: the increasing role of the centre

Michael Gallagher

There are no legal provisions relating to the selection of candidates at elections to Dáil Eireann (the lower house of parliament in Ireland). The existence of parties is neither mentioned in the constitution nor assumed by the electoral system, and only since 1963 have candidates' party affiliations even appeared on the ballot paper at elections. Parties or other groups are thus free to select parliamentary candidates in whatever fashion they wish.

### The selection process

#### *The main parties*

The mechanics of candidate selection in the main parties differ in details but are similar in essentials.<sup>1</sup> Candidates are selected at constituency level, by a selection conference or convention consisting of delegates from all the party branches in the constituency. The party's national executive has the right to veto the candidate(s) selected and/or to add a name to the panel selected locally; it also has, in most cases, the power to determine the number of candidates the convention may select.

Fianna Fáil is the largest party in Ireland, with an average electoral strength of around 47 percent of the votes. It is a party of the centre-right, allied in the European Parliament with the French Gaullists (RPR) in the European Democratic Alliance. Its support is cross-class, though strongest among small farmers. It differs from Fine Gael in that it takes a more traditional nationalist line on Northern Ireland, and, in recent years, has emerged as more conservative on issues like the liberalization of laws on contraception and divorce and on the general question of the role of the Catholic Church in society (for details of the Irish parties see Gallagher, 1985a). Fine Gael is Ireland's second largest party. It draws its strength mainly from the middle class and large farmers, but has reasonable support from all social groups. Its electoral strength has been around 35-40 percent at recent elections, dropping to 27 percent in February 1987. It too is a centre-right

party, which belongs to the Christian Democratic group in the European Parliament. The Progressive Democrats (PDs), founded in 1985, have a generally similar outlook to Fine Gael, and won 12 percent of the votes on their electoral debut in 1987. The Irish Labour Party is a trade-union-backed party of the moderate left. Its support has declined in recent years and it won only 6 percent of the votes in 1987, mainly from the working class. Since 1970 Labour has been deeply divided over whether or not to join coalitions, the left generally being anti-coalition.

We shall look at the selection process in these four parties, examining how they deal with five questions: how many candidates to select; who attends the convention; the eligibility requirements of candidature; how the convention selects the candidates; and the powers of the national executive. We shall then discuss some informal features of the reality of the processes.

In the three centre-right parties the candidate selection procedure is prescribed in the party constitution, so that changes cannot be made without the approval of members voting at an annual conference, but in Labour it is decided by the national executive. Candidates used until recently to be picked only on the eve of elections, but since the start of the 1980s parties have increasingly selected them up to two years in advance of an election, partly to give new candidates more time to get themselves known in the constituency. One disadvantage is that a TD (member of the Dáil) deselected some time before an election has no incentive to remain loyal to the party line.

The number of candidates to be nominated needs some thought because of Ireland's electoral system (see the discussion below); there are both advantages and disadvantages in a party picking more candidates than it expects to win seats. The national executive in Fianna Fáil appoints the convention chairman, and recommends the number of candidates to be selected, though the convention sometimes disregards its recommendation. Fine Gael's national executive lays down the minimum and maximum number (which are almost always the same) of candidates the convention may select; so does the PD's national executive, 'in consultation with' the party leader. In Labour the convention itself decides how many candidates to select. In Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the PDs the national executive may stipulate that one or more candidates must come from a particular part of the constituency, as it sometimes does where a constituency is composed of readily distinguishable geographic units. In all parties the number of aspirants putting their names before the convention is rarely more than four more than the number of candidates to be selected.

Fianna Fáil conventions are attended by three delegates from each branch in the constituency (for details of the parties' organizational structures see Gallagher, 1985a: 121-30), and the youth organization also sends delegates. This gives the average convention about 220 delegates, the largest (in Clare) having about 440 delegates, and the smallest (in Dublin South-East) only about forty. Labour conventions, too, are attended by a fixed number (four) of delegates per branch; the average convention would be attended by about 50 delegates, the range being from twenty or fewer to about 200. PD conventions are attended by one delegate per ten branch members. Candidate selection in Fine Gael is unique in that a branch's representation at the convention is related, under a 'model system' introduced in 1978, to the size of the electorate in its 'functional area' rather than being fixed. This removes the incentive for aspirants to create a plethora of inactive 'paper branches', packed with their own supporters, around their home base. Each branch, outside Dublin, sends a mean of five members to the convention, which on average has about 320 delegates, the range nationally being from approximately 120 to 450. In all parties, delegates may be given instructions by their branches as to how to vote, but these are unenforceable since voting is by secret ballot, and moreover the full range of aspirants may not be known until the convention actually meets.

There are few restrictions on eligibility in the major parties. In neither Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael nor the PDs is any minimum period of party membership prescribed. Each party demands a 'pledge' from aspirants. In Fianna Fáil they must undertake that, if elected to parliament, they will resign their seat if the National Executive, by a majority of two-thirds of its members, calls on them to do so. Aspirants may not be convention delegates, nor – a curious stipulation – may they even attend the convention until the selection has been completed. Fine Gael and PD aspirants must promise that, if elected, they will 'contribute to the Party such sums as the Parliamentary Party shall have determined or may from time to time determine'. Labour aspirants must have been party members for at least six months (on one occasion in 1977, when a centrally favoured aspirant's eligibility was challenged on the ground that she had been a member for only five and a half months, the national executive ruled that this was enough as it amounted to six lunar months).

Voting at Fine Gael, PD and Labour conventions is by the same electoral system as that used at national elections, i.e. the single transferable vote (which becomes the alternative vote if only one candidate is to be picked). Fianna Fáil, though, uses elimination

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## Italy: local involvement, central control

*Douglas A. Wertman*

In the 1983 parliamentary elections about 10,000 candidates were selected by Italy's political parties to compete for the 945 seats available in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Candidate selection always receives a great deal of publicity during Italian parliamentary election campaigns. This has been particularly true since 1976 because of its direct use by the major parties as part of their national political and electoral strategy in trying to project a certain image, or to create a new one.

Two aspects of candidate selection have attracted special attention. First, there is the inclusion by some parties, especially the Italian Communist Party (PCI) since 1976 and the Christian Democratic Party (DC) in 1983, of prestigious independents in their lists. Second, there is the effort made in 1976 and 1983 by the DC, whose parliamentary personnel had changed little in the 1960s and early 1970s, to increase the rate of turnover among its parliamentary delegation. In the case of the Communists this was part of their effort to project the image of a party with broad support and one fully committed to pluralist democracy. In the case of the DC, which had been continuously in power since 1945, this was part of a campaign strategy in the 1976 and 1983 elections to overcome a negative image by projecting one of a 'new DC'.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, despite the importance given to candidate selection by the parties themselves and the press, it has received little systematic attention by researchers.

### The political environment

#### *The electoral system*

This chapter differs somewhat from most others in this book in that candidate selection for both the lower house of parliament, the Chamber of Deputies, and the upper house, the Senate, will be examined. This is because in Italy, unlike in most other West European parliamentary systems, the two houses have identical legislative powers and a new government must receive a vote of

confidence from both houses. Furthermore, the two electoral systems, while somewhat different, are both highly proportional and therefore produce houses with similar political compositions.<sup>2</sup> Both houses have always been elected at the same time, even though this is not legally necessary, because the government parties have wanted to ensure roughly the same majority in both houses. Therefore, the selection of candidates for the two houses should be considered one process rather than two.

The electoral systems determine, first, how many seats each party wins and, second, which individual candidates are awarded the seats their party has won. The imperiali largest remainder system is used to allocate Chamber seats to the parties. It is one of the most precise of proportional representation electoral systems, particularly because of the national pool of remainders which allows parties reaching the quota for a seat in even one of the thirty-one multi-member constituencies (varying in size from three seats to fifty-four seats) to qualify for their full national share of seats.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, parties with as little as 1 or 2 percent of the national votes can get seats in the Chamber. Because of the smaller number of seats for the Senate (315 compared to 630 for the Chamber), which creates a higher quota for a single seat, and the lack of a national pool of remainders under the d'Hondt highest average system used for the Senate, some of the smallest parties represented in the Chamber may not gain seats in the Senate. Nevertheless, the different electoral systems create only minor differences in the political composition of the two houses.

There are, however, greater differences in the second stage, the allocation of each party's seats to individual candidates, which have important implications for candidate selection. In particular, when voting for the Chamber of Deputies, the individual voter may, after choosing his or her party, cast up to three or four preference votes for candidates on the party's lists. It is these preference votes (which only about 30 percent of the voters – varying greatly between north and south and among the parties – bother to cast) rather than the order of the list presented by the party which determine who will win each party's seats in a Chamber district. Consequently, at Chamber elections there is an open battle for preference votes among the individual candidates within each party's lists, except in the Communist Party, where the preference votes are more controlled. This has a significant impact on the style of Chamber elections, in that candidates, except in the PCI, must build personal election machines to mobilize the votes necessary to win one of their party's seats.<sup>4</sup>

By contrast, candidate selection for the Senate elections

resembles that for a non-preferential party list system, since the parties, when selecting Senate candidates, largely determine who the winners, marginals and losers will be. There is no intraparty competition for Senate seats during the election campaign, since each Senate constituency has only one candidate per party. Determination of which individuals win each party's seats is done within each region (except for tiny Val d'Aosta, each of Italy's twenty regions elects two or more senators) in the order of the percentage vote the party receives in each Senate district.<sup>5</sup> As a result of this system a kind of positioning on lists clearly does take place for the Senate because each party has a good idea, from past elections, about which constituencies in each region are safe, which are marginal and which are hopeless.

#### *The post-war political system*

Italy's economy and society have undergone substantial change in the period since Second World War, while the party system and political institutions have seen little change. There has been no alternation of power as there has been in other West European democracies, primarily because the major opposition force has been the Communist Party, rather than a socialist or social democratic party. The largest party, the Christian Democratic Party (34.3 percent in the 1987 Chamber elections), has, through a series of different multi-party coalition formulae, been in every post-war government since December 1945 (forty-six up to September 1987), while the second largest party, the Communist Party (26.6 percent in the 1987 Chamber elections), has not had ministers in any government since 1947.

Furthermore, the basic choices facing voters have been pretty much the same in all elections throughout the post-war period. Italy has had a multi-party system since 1945, with at least eight parties represented in Parliament at any one time, and the changes in the party system have been very limited. Only a few small parties have gone out of existence in the post-war period, and a few small regionalist and leftist parties have been formed in the last ten to fifteen years.

There has also been very little change in Italy's political institutions, with the limited exception of the setting up of regional governments. Since the mid-1970s this lack of change, accompanied by the inability of multi-party coalitions to take strong decisions to deal with Italy's economic and social problems and the permanence in power of the DC, has sparked a widely publicized, broad-ranging debate among political elites and scholars about Italy's governability and the need for institutional reform. However, little

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## Japan: localism, factionalism and personalism

*Rei Shiratori*

According to the Japanese Constitution, which was promulgated on 3 November 1946 and enacted on 3 May 1947, Japan's National Diet is defined as 'the highest organ of state power, and shall be the sole law-making organ of the state' (article 41). This Diet is bicameral and consists of the House of Representatives (Shuugi In) and the House of Councillors (Sangi In).

The term of office of the members of the House of Representatives is four years, although the term can be terminated before the full term has expired if the House of Representatives is dissolved by the Cabinet through the Emperor. The term of office of members of the House of Councillors is six years, with half the members elected every three years.

Public Office Election Law (Koshoku Senkyo Ho) fixes the number of members of the House of Representatives at present at 511, elected from 130 constituencies, each returning between three and five members according to population, using a single non-transferable vote and simple majority system. The number of members of the House of Councillors is 252, of whom 100 members are elected in one nationwide national constituency under a proportional representation system with lists of candidates ranked by parties. A further 152 members are elected in forty-seven prefectural constituencies, each of which returns between one to four members through a single non-transferable ballot with a simple majority system.

The House of Representatives has a superior position to the House of Councillors in decision-making, for example in passing bills (article 59), passing the budget (article 60), ratifying treaties (article 61) and designating the Prime Minister (article 67).

The electoral system which elects 3-5 members per constituency to the House of Representatives is usually called a middle-sized constituency system (Chu-Senkyoku Sei) in Japan, in contrast with the single-member constituency system and nationwide constituency system. In the case of the election of the members of the House of Representatives, forty-seven constituencies are three-

seated, forty-one are four-seated, forty-one are five-seated and there is one single-member constituency.

### **The selection process**

#### *The Liberal Democratic Party*

Although some analysts of Japanese politics regard the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) as more of a coalition of parties than as a single party composed of a number of factions, because the existence of factions and the competition among factions are so apparent, this evaluation exaggerates the reality of the LDP. In spite of the fact that each faction tries hard to increase its own financial resources, the total amount of political funds collected by various factions in the LDP has never exceeded 45 percent of the political funds officially collected by the LDP headquarters. Moreover, the LDP as a party has its own party organization. Two incidents from the 1979–80 period throw light on the fragmented yet unitary nature of the LDP.

In September 1979 Mr Ohira, who became Prime Minister in November 1978, dissolved the House of Representatives in order to consolidate his premiership by re-establishing an absolute majority of LDP seats in the House. However, the number of LDP seats decreased by one from 249 to 248 in the election held on 7 October. Fukuda, Miki and Nakasone blamed Ohira for this and asked him to resign. When the extraordinary session of the Diet to designate the Prime Minister began on 6 November, the LDP put up two candidates, Ohira and Fukuda. In the first vote Ohira acquired 135 votes and Fukuda 125, and neither of them gained an absolute majority due to the opposition parties' votes for their own leaders. In the second vote, when only the top two candidates from the first vote stood for election, Ohira received 138 votes against Fukuda's 121 and was designated Prime Minister. In spite of the fact that the LDP had put up two candidates for Prime Minister, none of the LDP members left the party after the designation of the Prime Minister.

The second incident occurred the following May, when an opposition motion of no confidence in the Ohira government was passed due to the deliberate absence from the vote of sixty-nine LDP Diet members who belonged to the anti-Ohira factions. Even though this brought the government down, Ohira did not exercise his right as party president to expel these Diet members from the LDP, and he ratified their nominations as LDP candidates at the ensuing election, at which the LDP won an overall majority of seats.

These two incidents showed both the strength and the limits of the powers of factions in the LDP. Factions can act independently

and overthrow the incumbent, but they cannot split the party in normal circumstances.

Factions play a key role when the LDP selects its President, important party officials and even cabinet ministers. Originally the President of the LDP was elected by the party congress, composed of the members of the National Diet and one representative elected from each of the forty-seven prefectures ('Kens', equivalent to counties in the UK). Even after the introduction of a primary election which selects two candidates for the presidency by direct voting of all the members of the LDP, the members of the two houses of the National Diet vote to decide on the President of the LDP. The factions which support the incumbent President form the main current while the defeated group of factions are called anti-main-current factions.

Beside the President, the LDP has several significant offices which exercise powerful control over party administration; Vice-President, Secretary-General, Director of the Executive Committee and Director of the Policy Research Affairs Council. Because the President of the LDP is inevitably elected as the Prime Minister in the National Diet, the Vice-President is de facto leader of the party. The Secretary-General controls all the administrative staff and party funds. The thirty-member Executive Committee is the most important party organ which takes decisions on daily matters, and the Director of the Executive Committee chairs its meetings. The Policy Affairs Research Council recommends legislative policy decisions and the Director of the Policy Affairs Research Council chairs meetings. All these important offices are usually distributed among the various factions in order to retain the balance inside the party.

The Election Steering Committee, which directly controls the selection of candidates in national elections, consists of the President, the Vice-President and twelve members who are appointed by the President. In the nomination of the twelve members, however, the leadership of the President is limited because here again he must consider the balance among factions. As Prime Minister he is constrained in his nomination of ministers. In the past decade the allocation of twenty ministers of the LDP cabinet has mostly taken place in this way: to the Tanaka faction three or four ministers, to the Ohira–Suzuki faction three, to the Fukuda faction three, to the Nakasone faction two, to the Miki–Komoto faction two, to the Upper House members three, to independent LDP Lower House members three or four. Therefore he can only allocate the number of members to each faction inside the Election Steering Committee after taking into account the



## The Netherlands: the predominance of regionalism

*Ruud Koole and Monique Leijenaar*

Since its very beginning in 1848 the system of parliamentary democracy in the Netherlands has met with criticism. For some citizens democracy went too far, for others not far enough. Fear of too much democracy was felt by opponents of universal suffrage (introduced for men in 1917 and for women in 1919) and by critics of the allegedly weak, chaotic or even immoral effects of democracy in the interwar period. Demands for more democracy were formulated by, for example, the movements of emancipation of workers around 1900, and by the post-war generation in the 1960s. Notwithstanding all this criticism, parliamentary democracy survived, proving its strength and flexibility.

Recently the discussion has shifted from the call for more participation by and influence of the 'grassroots' towards a call for a better quality of governmental policy. And since it is Parliament that is supposed to control government, it is criticized as well for failing to do this properly. Hence, the quality of the members of Parliament becomes an issue. This evokes an interest in the background of parliamentarians, in their recruitment and more specifically in the changes in selection processes.

During the 1970s the composition of Parliament changed drastically. For example, the average age of members of Parliament decreased and the number of women parliamentarians rapidly increased. In this chapter we describe the selection process, the changes this process has undergone due to recent social and political developments in Dutch society and the impact of these changes on the nature of Parliament. We pay special attention to the role of women in these processes since the rise of the number of women has been one of the most remarkable changes in the composition of parliamentary parties.

### *The electoral system*

Elections for the Second Chamber (Tweede Kamer), the national representative body in the Netherlands, are held at least every four years. The Dutch system is characterized by extreme proportional

representation. There is no threshold as in West Germany; some parliamentary parties consist of only one member, to elect whom 61,147 votes (0.67 percent), possibly scattered all over the country, were sufficient in 1986. The voter casts a single preferential vote for any candidate on one of the lists presented by the parties. The entire country is one constituency, but is divided into nineteen administrative electoral sub-districts in which the parties, if they want, can put forward different candidate lists.<sup>1</sup> The totals in the sub-districts are added up nationally and the number of seats awarded to each party is based on this national sum. If the party uses different lists, as most parties do, a very complex procedure is applied to assign the seats to specific individuals. Of course the parties understand this method and distribute the names of the candidates over the nineteen lists in such a way that, in the end, it is almost always the favoured candidates who get the seats.

Since compulsory attendance at the polls was abolished in 1970, the average turnout for parliamentary elections has been around 83 percent (Schmidt, 1983: 139). The political parties are central to the parliamentary system, even though they are not recognized by Dutch electoral law. A sum of Dfl.1000 (about \$400 in 1986) and twenty-five signatures of persons entitled to vote are sufficient to submit a list with a maximum of forty names in one of the nineteen sub-districts. Since 1956 the Electoral Law (article G13) has allowed the name or symbol of the political grouping to be printed on the ballot paper above of the list of candidates. This provision is one of the few concessions to political reality whereby it is political parties rather than twenty-five individuals who nominate candidates.

Although voters may vote for any candidate on the ballot, about 90 percent cast their vote for the first person on a party list and thereby effectively vote for a party rather than for a specific candidate. This behaviour can be explained in two ways. First, preference votes are unlikely to affect the outcome, since a candidate needs a very large number of preference votes (about 50 percent of the votes needed to obtain one seat) to get elected ahead of candidates placed higher on the list. Only three times since 1945 has a candidate placed at a low position on the list been elected to the Second Chamber because of preference votes.<sup>2</sup> Preference votes (i.e. votes not cast for the number one candidate) can be interpreted as signals given by the voters to the parties, to express for instance, a relative preference for women or regional candidates (Koole, 1984a: 21), or disagreement with the order of the list. A second explanation for the large number of votes for the head of the list is that this person is well known to the electorate. The media pay little attention to the other candidates.

## Norway: decentralization and group representation

*Henry Valen*

Some years ago a passionate discussion occurred in a political science seminar at the University of Oslo concerning nominations at parliamentary (Storting) elections. One of the students presented a well-documented paper on the electoral system, but on nominations he only said that electoral lists are determined by the national leaders of the respective parties. I had attended a nomination convention a few weeks earlier, and I found this statement inconsistent with my experience. My impression was that decisions were made at the constituency level. I did not obtain much support, however, because everybody in the seminar took it for granted that the central leaders of political parties do select the candidates. The young political scientists were acquainted – superficially at least – with Robert Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy, and they perceived the strong party discipline in the Storting as an indication of the oligarchic character of Norwegian parties. The overwhelming majority of the participants contended that national party leaders simply had to control nominations in order to keep a grip on party policies.

This incident triggered my curiosity about the nomination process, and particularly about the role of national leaders in it. The discussion revealed misconceptions and lack of knowledge concerning internal processes in political parties, a phenomenon which is not peculiar to Norwegian political scientists. Strangely enough, nobody in the seminar was aware that a separate Act of Nominations, dating back to 1921, prescribes the procedures for nominations, and that Norway is one of the very few nations in which candidate selection is regulated by law.

In 1920 the Norwegian electoral system was changed from majority elections to proportional representation. The legislators included in the reform rules for nominations because they expected that the introduction of proportional representation would affect the choice of electoral candidates. Inside the parties the conditions for selection would change, since the new system entailed multi-member constituencies. Each constituency in this sparsely pop-

ulated country would cover a relatively large area, involving in almost every instance a number of small communities geographically separated by fjords and mountains. The new system was also bound to affect the electorate in the sense that voters would be faced with lists of candidates rather than single candidates as hitherto.

The parliamentary commission which created the new electoral system was also asked to frame nomination procedures.<sup>1</sup> The latter task was not an easy one because of the dearth of information about nominations in other nations. The notable exception was the United States, concerning which the commission found both relevant literature and a substantial body of legislation on nominations. The result was that the Norwegian Act of Nominations set up a system which resembled the American convention model.

The following examination of this system attempts to explain nominations from a political as well as an institutional perspective. I will start by describing briefly the party system and a few aspects of the electoral system which form the essential institutional context of the nominations.

The Norwegian system consists of seven parties, which are, from left to right: the Socialist Left Party (Socialistisk Venstreparti), the Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet), the Liberals (Venstre), the Christian People's Party (Kristelig Folkeparti), the Centre Party (Senterpartiet), the Conservative Party (Høyre) and the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet). The two oldest parties are the Liberals and the Conservatives, which were both formed in 1884. Next came the Labour Party (1887), while all other parties emerged in the present century. It is a polarized system with the two major parties, Labour and the Conservatives, obtaining (in recent years) electoral support of some 40 and 30 percent of the votes respectively. All other parties are small (Valen and Katz, 1964; Svaasand, 1985).

The electoral law requires that the parties present lists of candidates, and the candidates on each list are ranked in the order in which the party wishes to see them elected. The voters are permitted to change the list by crossing out the name of one or more of the nominated candidates. In practice, such deletions by individual voters have no impact on the final result, since an overwhelming percentage of the voters must make the same change in order to overrule the ranking on the lists.<sup>2</sup> In fact the voters have never successfully changed the parties' rank ordering at Storting elections.

There are nineteen constituencies, one for each of the eighteen provinces (*fylker*) and one for the city of Oslo. The number of seats varies with size of population from four to fifteen.<sup>3</sup> The

# 11 Conclusion

*Michael Gallagher*

In this concluding chapter we shall attempt to identify patterns in the large amount of information we now possess on the subject of candidate selection. First, we shall examine, on a comparative basis, the extent to which candidate selection is centralized, and the degree of member and voter involvement in the process. Second, we shall review the evidence as to the qualities for which the selectors seem to be looking. Third, we shall evaluate explanations for the wide variations that exist between parties, concentrating on the factors discussed in the introductory chapter. Fourth, we shall ask whether and under what circumstances the selection process has a discernible effect on parliamentarians' backgrounds and behaviour. Finally, we shall return to the question: How important is candidate selection?

### The selection process: centralization and participation

In this section we shall review the evidence relating to the degree of centralization of candidate selection, and to the extent of members' and voters' involvement in the process.

Attempting to identify the precise place in the party where the key decisions are made is not always easy since, as was observed in Chapter 1, many actors, individual or collective, at different levels of the party may play a role. Also, in some federal countries, such as the USA and Australia, the parties nationally do not prescribe a method of selecting candidates, so that practice varies from state to state. Nonetheless, it is possible, for most parties, to single out one actor as the decisive one. The parties in the countries covered in earlier chapters are categorized in Table 11.1.

#### *Party voters*

Only a few parties widen the process to the maximum extent, allowing all voters to participate in choosing the candidate. The most prominent cases in this category, of course, are the American parties, where selection processes are governed by state law.

Table 11.1 *Who picks candidates: the pattern in nine countries*

|              | Locus of greatest influence over candidate selection |   |  |   |                                      |                          |              |
|--------------|--|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|              | Party voters   | Party primaries   | Subset of constituency party members                                     | National executive                                      | Interest groups                      | National faction leaders | Party leader |
| Belgium      |  | CVP <sup>a</sup><br>SP <sup>a</sup><br>PS<br>PRL <sup>a</sup> | CVP <sup>a</sup><br>SP <sup>a</sup><br>PVV<br>PRL <sup>a</sup><br>PSC    |   | CVP <sup>a</sup>                     |                          |              |
| Britain      |  | Liberal<br>SDP  | Conservative<br>Labour   |   |                                      |                          |              |
| France       |  |   | PS<br>PC   | RPR<br>UDF  |                                      |                          |              |
| West Germany |  |   | All parties <sup>b</sup>   |   |                                      |                          |              |
| Ireland      |  |   | FF <sup>a</sup><br>FG <sup>a</sup><br>PD <sup>a</sup>                    | FF <sup>a</sup><br>FG <sup>a</sup><br>PD <sup>a</sup>   |                                      |                          |              |
|              |  |   | Labour<br>WP   |   |                                      |                          |              |
| Italy        |  |   | DC <sup>a</sup><br>PCI <sup>a</sup><br>PSI <sup>a</sup><br>Small parties | DC <sup>a</sup><br>PCI <sup>a</sup><br>PSI <sup>a</sup> | DC <sup>a</sup>                      | DC <sup>a</sup>          |              |
| Japan        |  |   | JSP <sup>a</sup><br>DSP <sup>a</sup>                                     | JCP   | JSP <sup>a</sup><br>DSP <sup>a</sup> | LDP                      | Komei        |
| Netherlands  |  | D'66  | CDA <sup>c</sup><br>PvdA <sup>c</sup>                                    | VVD   |                                      |                          |              |
| Norway       |  |   | All parties  |   |                                      |                          |              |

<sup>a</sup> Denotes that more than one actor is significant.

<sup>b</sup> The West German parties select candidates for single-member constituencies and for multi-member (Land) constituencies. Each selection is made at the level of the relevant constituency.

<sup>c</sup> On the categorization of the Dutch CDA and PvdA as having constituency-level selection, see note 2.

Procedures vary across the country, but most states prescribe the use of 'direct primaries', allowing any elector to participate in the selection of the nominee of any one party. Variations between states are, for the most part, relatively minor, and concern details like whether the elector must register in advance as a 'member' of a party in order to qualify for a vote in its primary, and whether the elector must declare publicly which party's primary he or she wishes to vote in (for details see Ranney, 1981: 85-6; Scott and Hrebener, 1979: 124-7). One important distinction is between states where

Its importance in the political recruitment process is borne out by each of our country chapters. The selectors' values influence, and in many cases determine, the backgrounds of legislators and to some extent their behaviour. Although many factors can be seen as influences upon the selection process, none is entitled to be regarded as a deterministic cause of the type of candidates it produces. In any study of political recruitment, candidate selection has to be seen as a key variable, not a peripheral factor whose nature can be largely taken for granted once we know enough about other variables such as the electoral system.

The importance of the selection of candidates for elections to a parliament might be seen as directly related to the importance of the parliament itself. The 'decline of parliaments' thesis raises the question of whether parliaments count for much in the late twentieth century. If political decisions are made by governments, after consultation with the civil service and major interest groups, with parliaments reduced to the status of a minor actor in the policy-making process, then does it really matter what kind of people enter parliament and how they spend their time?

This line of argument cannot be disregarded, but neither need it be accepted entirely. First, even where parliaments are not initiators of policy they may still be able, often through a committee system, to make significant adjustments to the shape of legislation. Second, where parliaments are weak this may be partly due to the nature of the deputies produced by the candidate selection process. We have already seen that the absence of interest group representatives from the ruling party's candidates has been cited as a cause of the secondary nature of Zambia's parliament, and the point may have wider application. Third, not all parliaments are in decline; it has been argued that Communist legislatures, often seen in the West as mere rubber stamps, are in fact becoming increasingly significant (White, 1982: 195). The reform of the Westminster committee system since 1979 has increased the role of the House of Commons (Drewry, 1985).

Fourth, and perhaps most important, being in parliament is often an essential step on the road to entering government, in which case the pool of potential ministers is determined by the candidate selectors. Ministers are generally drawn from parliament, whether or not this is constitutionally essential, and even in some countries where being a minister is incompatible with being a member of parliament, as in France and the Netherlands, most ministers in recent governments have previously been deputies. Of the countries covered in this book, only in Norway, where about a half of

ministers have never belonged to parliament, is there a significant extra-parliamentary route to government.

Candidate selection has also been regarded as a crucial battleground in internal party conflict, as was noted in Chapter 1. Perhaps surprisingly, this is not really borne out by the evidence in this book, once account has been taken of the fundamental distinction between parties which do not control their nomination process (the USA) and parties which do (everywhere else). Outside America, only in countries employing single-member constituencies does candidate selection seem to be important in this respect. The British Labour Party constitutes one of the clearest examples, with the left and centre-right using the selection process to try to boost their strengths in the parliamentary party.

But in countries using PR electoral systems the pervasive notion of ticket-balancing removes much of the factional, as opposed to personal, conflict, since the various groups generally come to an arrangement, either at constituency level or at national level, on how many candidacies each is to receive. The basis of the division is usually something like the strength of each faction at the most recent party congress or the number of members each group has in the local party. In these cases, the factions do not fight each other bitterly for as many places as possible on the ticket in each constituency; they operate within a framework devised precisely to minimize inter-group conflict at the nomination stage. They accept, contrary to the statements of Schattschneider and Ranney quoted at the start of Chapter 1, that no one group or faction 'owns' the party or will ever have complete control of it. The ethos of parties operating under PR electoral systems prevents candidate selection becoming the 'crucial process' in this sense. Only in parties operating under 'winner takes all' systems do notions like ownership and complete control seem to be applicable. Schattschneider is right to say that to study candidate selection is to discover where power lies within a party, but in most cases it *signifies* how power is distributed rather than *deciding* it. His dictum needs to be rewritten: the nature of the nominating procedure reflects the nature of the party more than it determines it.

## Notes

I should like to thank Michael Marsh for extensive comments on previous drafts.

1. In this chapter the source for all statements about one of the countries covered in this book is the relevant chapter, unless otherwise stated.
2. Technically, under the Dutch electoral system the whole of the Netherlands

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