

Candidate Selection and the Illusion of Grass-Roots Democracy

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INTRODUCTION

Speculation about the date of the 2016 election began to build after the 2014 local and European elections (see Chapters 1 and 4). All of the parties initiated preparations for their campaign strategies and a number of new parties and alliances were formally announced. For much of 2015 the possibility of an autumn election was in the air but in the end the government saw out its full term. While the 2011 election occurred in the midst of an economic and political crisis, the 2016 contest had been long anticipated and took place over a short and relatively uneventful campaign. However, the election followed a turbulent Dáil term that brought substantive movement in opinion polls (see Chapter 1). As the

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