Incumbent Renomination

Accountability and Gender Bias

MICHAL SMREK
Abstract


Party recruiters in proportional-representation (PR) systems are forced to do what their majoritarian counterparts are not: they need to rank-order all their candidates on the party ballots based on whom they most wish to get elected. Consequently, new candidates and incumbents alike compete for a limited number of electable ballot slots. This means that incumbent legislators in PR settings are far from guaranteed an electable spot on the party ballot, but instead need to go through a new selection round ahead of every election. This dissertation offers a pioneering study of incumbent renomination in flexible-list PR settings. The aim is to investigate whether incumbents’ electoral and legislative performance forms the basis of the selection criteria used by party recruiters when renomination decisions are made. The dissertation relies on a wide array of unique data, including a panel dataset of all Czech legislators elected in seven consecutive elections between 1996 and 2017 as well as rich elite-interview and participant-observation data collected in the Slovak parliament.

The three essays that comprise this dissertation broadly focus on two dimensions of incumbent renomination: accountability and gender bias. Essay I critically examines the potential role incumbent renomination plays in fostering individual accountability in PR systems where party accountability looms large. Empirical tests show that the candidates placed in non-electable ballot spots who succeed in attracting a large number of votes are indeed rewarded with a more electable ballot spot in the next election. Essays II and III examine whether incumbent renomination can provide the cure for the chronic underrepresentation of women in politics by offering an avenue where party selectors’ stereotypical views of women’s unsuitability for a political career can be challenged. The results disprove this expectation and show that female incumbents in both established and new parties get different returns on their electoral and legislative performance when renomination decisions are made. It is further shown that female incumbents continue to face structural constraints that limit their ability to excel in tasks that form the backbone of incumbents’ evaluation at renomination.

Taken together, this dissertation demonstrates that the study of incumbent renomination can offer an indispensable contribution to the debates on accountability, delegation and representation in democratic systems.

Keywords: political recruitment, party politics, proportional representation, gender, incumbency, re-selection, accountability, representation, delegation, preference voting, flexible lists, Czech Republic, Slovakia.

Michal Smrek, Department of Government, Box 514, Uppsala University, SE-75120 Uppsala, Sweden. Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Box 5514, Uppsala University, SE-751 20 Uppsala, Sweden.

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List of essays

This dissertation is based on the following essays, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

I  Incumbent Renomination in Flexible-List PR Systems: Does Individual Popularity Matter?

II  Are Parties Biased Against Female Incumbents? Gender and Incumbent Renomination in a Flexible-List PR System.

III  Gender Dynamics of Incumbent Renomination in an Entrepreneurial Party: A Site-Intensive Study.
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Uppsala, a Monday before the big deadline.
Contents

Introduction essay .......................................................... 13
You eat what you are served! ........................................... 13
Party politics research: why to study how political parties go
about their business? .................................................... 17
From candidate recruitment to renomination: did we get the right
(wo-)man for the job? .................................................... 20
   Impact of selection procedures on legislators’ behaviour ...... 24
   Who gets left out in candidate selection? From supply-demand
to feminist institutionalism ......................................... 26
Renomination as the new ‘secret garden’ of party politics: what
can we learn? ............................................................ 29
Methodology of renomination-related inquiries: when
epistemologies join forces ............................................ 34
   Case for studying renomination in flexible-list PR systems ...... 37
   Methodological approaches pursued in this dissertation ...... 38
Summary of the findings: does one’s electoral and legislative
performance matter? .................................................... 41
   Study 1: Is electoral popularity rewarded? A contingent yes. . 42
   Study 2: Are female and male incumbents rewarded for the
   same performance? A problematic no. .......................... 44
   Study 3: Are entrepreneurial parties the much sough-after cure
   for women’s underrepresentation in politics? Nope. ........... 45
Conclusions and avenues for future research ..................... 46
References ........................................................................ 50
You eat what you are served!

When voters in proportional-representation (PR) systems reach the ballot box on the election day, they are presented with a list of candidates who are their party’s designated legislators in the case the party secures parliamentary representation (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988). In most cases, the candidates are rank-ordered and elected in the order in which they appear on the party list: a clear manifestation of how powerful political parties are in determining who gets elected in PR systems. This dynamic manifests itself most strikingly in closed-list PR systems, where the voters have no formal means of expressing their preference for individual candidates. Even in flexible- and open-list PR systems which are, at least formally, better at catering to voters’ individual preferences, the impact of the voter feedback is limited. In the former case, the rank-ordered party ballot is only reshuffled if a sufficient number of voters cast their preference vote for a specific candidate. The voters are most empowered in open-list PR systems, where the candidates who secure the highest numbers of preference votes are elected first regardless of their position on the ballot or whether the ballot is rank-ordered or not. Even in these systems, however, the voters’ choice is limited to those names which are included on the ballot. One of the notable students of political-party recruitment, Gideon Rahat, famously compares the process of party list creation by political parties to devising a restaurant menu. The voters can only choose from what their favourite party is ‘serving’ on the election day. Yet, the comparison is not entirely fair because it creates an unrealistic illusion that the voters are as free in picking from the ‘electoral menu’ as restaurant guests are when they order their favourite dishes. In reality, this is not the case and the menu the voters in PR systems are presented with is rather oppressive. In case of open lists, those dishes that are picked by the largest number of guests are served first and those which are not in a high demand might not be served at all. In flexible-list systems, the dishes are brought to the tables in the order in which they appear on the menu unless a given number of guests express their preference for a dish that lies lower down on the list. In the closed-list case, the dishes are served in the order in which they appear on the menu and if your preferred option is too low on the list, you might not get that dish at all. In all cases, one’s choice is bound by
what the restaurant happens to be serving on that particular day. Are you used to asking: ‘Can I get fried broccoli instead of steamed broccoli?’ when you place your order? No such adjustments are permitted as far as party ballots are concerned. You eat what you are served.

This collection of essays focusses on the flexible-list family of PR systems (FLPR) which is also one of the most prevalent electoral systems in Europe and further afield. FLPR systems can be found in Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, and other countries. All empirical investigations in this dissertation are conducted in two typical representatives of the FLPR family - Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Here, we are served the dishes from the top of the party-ballot ‘menu’ unless enough guests order a particular dish which is featured lower down on the list. In that case, this dish is served, too. This, however, does not mean that we do not have to eat the dishes highest on the menu as well. These will likely always be served no matter what. Now imagine that you really dislike the dish that appears second on the menu. You have had it before; in fact, it has been on the menu for quite some time but the last few times you visited the restaurant, it was quite undercooked and has clearly exceeded its expiration date by an intolerable margin. You know that to avoid this dish, you can always choose another restaurant (i.e. choosing another party), but you like this place! The restaurant thus has the power to make you eat this dish even if you would prefer that it was no longer featured on the menu. Even if you ignore the particular dish, it will still be on the table.

All these metaphors illustrate the immense power political parties in PR systems hold in determining who people’s representatives will be (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Rahat & Hazan, 2001; Rahat, 2007; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Hazan & Rahat, 2010). As political parties become ever more centralised and leader-dominated in response to the growing personalisation and mediatization of politics, the responsibility over candidate selection rests on the shoulders of an increasingly more narrow group of party elites (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Katz & Mair, 1995; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Hazan & Rahat, 2010; Hloušek & Kopeček, 2017). The voters’ choice is limited to the candidates selected by these elite selectors. The voters are most constrained in closed-list systems, where the only way to prevent a particular legislator from being elected is to strategically choose another party and hope that a sufficient number of voters will do the same (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988). This, however, is a difficult decision to make for many partisan voters who are unwilling to consider switching their long-term allegiances (Carey, 2007). The constraints are lifted, to some extent, in the FLPR system where the party-determined order in which the legislators are elected can be reshuffled by the voters (Beblavý & Veselková, 2014). Three practical issues
arise in this system, too, for those who object to the election of particular candidates. First, preference voting is usually not very popular among voters as it requires more action on their part than merely choosing a political party (Däubler, Bräuninger, & Brunner, 2016; Nagtzaam & van Erkel, 2017; André & Depauw, 2017). This means that the critical mass of votes needed to move someone to the top of the ballot from a less electable ballot spot is seldom attained. Second, even if some candidates placed lower down on the list do manage to accumulate the required share of preference votes, this does not mean that those who are placed in the top by the party do not get elected (Beblavý & Veselková, 2014). In practice, the top-ranked candidates always get elected even if they are pushed lower down on the ballot by electorally popular ballot jumpers (Däubler et al., 2016; Nagtzaam & van Erkel, 2017).

Why is this important? The fact that political parties, in general, and party elites, in particular, have a large say in determining how our parliaments look like influences citizens’ ability to hold individual legislators accountable (Ashworth, 2012; Bernecker, 2014; Rudolph & Däubler, 2016; Papp & Russo, 2018)\(^1\); to perceive the political system as legitimate (Rahat & Hazan, 2001; Matland & Studlar, 2004); and to be represented by parliamentarians who are of a similar identity (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008; Murray, 2010; Kenny, 2013; Bjarnegård, 2013, 2018). Despite their importance for our understanding of legislative turnover (Katz & Bardi, 1980; Samuels, 2000; Matland & Studlar, 2004; Altman & Chasquetti, 2005), legislator accountability (Bernecker, 2014; Papp & Russo, 2018), representation (Bhavnani, 2009; Shair-Rosenfield & Hinojosa, 2014), but also corruption (Asquer, 2015; Eggers, Vivyan, & Wagner, 2018), or intra-party democracy (Rahat, 2007; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Bräuninger, Brunner, & Däubler, 2012), the processes of ballot creation and rank-ordering in PR systems have to date only received limited scrutiny. While some studies have shed light on the criteria used for the recruitment of new political candidates (see, for instance, Norris, 1997), little is known about the criteria applied for incumbent renomination and ballot placement. As a result, we know little about which incumbent profiles are retained and which kind of incumbent behaviour is rewarded at renomination. This dissertation takes up the challenge to fill up some of the gaps we have in our understanding of incumbent renomination.

Broadly speaking, three types of candidates tend to appear on multi-candidate ballots in PR systems: newcomers who have been placed on the ballot for the first time; returnees who have been placed on the bal-

\(^1\)Political parties can insulate some of their incumbents from voter feedback by placing them in safe ballot positions, which affects voters’ ability to hold individual incumbents accountable for their conduct.
lot in at least one election before but did not get elected in the previous election and incumbent legislators who have been elected in the previous election and are standing for re-election. When designing the party ballot, the selectors are shown to look for candidates who are most likely to advance their own as well as the party’s goals (Strom, 1990; Harmel & Janda, 1994; Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010; Helboe Pedersen, 2012; Papp & Russo, 2018; Dodeigne, Meulewaeter, & Lesschaeve, 2019). It is in many ways easiest to do this assessment for incumbent legislators as they already have a proven track record of serving as legislators which can be readily used, which is probably why incumbent legislators usually take up the majority of the topmost ballot positions (Bräuninger et al., 2012; Crisp, Olivella, Malecki, & Sher, 2013; André, Depauw, Shugart, & Chytilek, 2017; Papp & Russo, 2018; Adams & Smrek, 2018). Given this electoral advantage, it is important to find out which aspects of legislators’ performance, if any, are taken into account when renomination decisions are taken. The multi-candidate nature of PR ballots allows us to get an insight into the minds of party elites who are tasked with designing the ballots. Incumbents can be renominated or excluded from the ballot. Once renominated, they can be moved upwards on the party ballot, retain the same position or be moved downwards into a less electable slot. This dissertation builds on the available information on legislators’ renomination, to improve our understanding of renomination processes in PR settings.

Politics often do not operate on the basis meritocracy where one’s observable qualities, hard work and output are rewarded. In politics, loyalty, belonging to a particular power circle, or one’s willingness to engage in and cover up illicit practices often weigh stronger than other considerations (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006; Hasecke & Mycoff, 2007; Bjarnegård, 2013; Pemstein, Meserve, & Bernhard, 2015; Golden & Picci, 2015; Frech, 2016; Baumann, Debus, & Klingelhöfer, 2017; Yildirim, Kocapinar, & Ecevit, 2017; Eggers et al., 2018). I am confident that the reader, no matter his/her country of origin, can recall a number of cases when incumbents who were not very active or visible in the legislature or those who were involved in a corruption scandal of some sort were retained on the party ballot or even promoted to a more electable position. Yet, I am also confident that most of us intuitively believe that such cases should not happen in the public sector where equality of opportunity and accountability for misconduct are expected to prevail. The problem is that political parties are not part of the state administration and are, in most cases, free to carry out their affairs in any way which they deem fit. The growing centralisation of power within political parties might deepen

\[^2\text{In this dissertation, the party elites who are responsible for designing the party ballots are interchangeably referred to as ‘party selectors’ and ‘party recruiters’.}\]
this problem by narrowing down the circle of party selectors and allowing for more arbitrariness in decision-making. To get an understanding of whether the process of incumbent renomination contains a meritocratic element despite its largely informal and exclusive character, a systematic inquiry into the renomination process is needed. Therefore, this dissertation explores in how far renomination is governed by meritocratic forces. I examine whether individual legislators’ electoral popularity or legislative activity shape their chances for renomination and whether all kinds of incumbents, including women or other underrepresented identities, receive equal consideration when renomination decisions are made. This way, I uncover whether observable competences are rewarded in the political realm which is often assumed to be plagued by informality and arbitrariness. By doing so, this dissertation addresses some questions pertaining the representativeness and accountability of FLPR systems.

This introduction essay is organised as follows. First, political party types are briefly introduced. Then, theories related to candidate recruitment in general and renomination in particular are presented. Here, the theoretical contribution of the dissertation which centres around the theoretical description of incumbent renomination process in PR settings is presented. Second, methodological approaches taken in this dissertation as well as methodological challenges that surround the study of renomination are elaborated upon. Third, the three empirical studies that form the backbone of this dissertation are briefly summarised. This section highlights the theoretical and empirical links between the three studies and outlines their joint as well as individual contributions to the fields of party politics as well as gender and politics. Finally, the essay concludes with a brief overview of the remaining gaps in renomination research and suggestions for future contributions to this field.

Party politics research: why to study how political parties go about their business?

Political parties and their functioning have been on the forefront of scientific interest since the onset of political science as an academic discipline. This is in part due to the purportedly essential role political parties play in maintaining legitimacy and safeguarding the proper functioning of a democratic system (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988). In Duverger’s ‘mass party’ model (1954), each political party is firmly embedded in a clearly delineated social group (i.e. social cleavage) that comprises similarly positioned individuals who share a set of common interests. A mass party is a bottom-up organisation that provides the cleavage with a platform for participating in political debates and affecting political change. The cleavage, in turn, provides the party with organically loyal party cadres
and political candidates, who are recruited from among the members by local party chapters, sports- and interest clubs (Duverger, 1954). A mass party was heralded as the end product of political party development due to its internal democracy, in-built legitimacy, state-civil society linkage function and a stable electorate the interests and loyalties of which were expected to remain constant over time (Duverger, 1954). Duverger himself believed that the mass party model would become the gold standard of party organisation and the parties failing to embrace the model would gradually be swept away (Katz & Mair, 1995).

Duverger’s linear and closed-ended vision of political-party development was first challenged in the late 1960s when the seeming stability of the West-European party systems suddenly collapsed (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). The erosion of social cleavages fuelled by decades of economic prosperity, on the one hand, and improvements in mass media technologies which enabled party leaders to appeal directly to the electorate, on the other, paved the way for the emergence of new party types (Katz & Mair, 1995). Kirchheimer’s ‘catch-all’ party (1967) is characterised by a top-down party organisation (Koole, 1996; Krouwel, 2003). No longer embedded in any social group, the catch-all parties rely on a combination of charismatic leadership and capital-intensive campaigns to battle and win elections (Katz & Mair, 1995, 2009; Bolleyer, 2009). In a catch-all party - as well as its cartel party successor, the wide membership and internal democracy that were so integral to the mass party model, are seen as a hinder rather than an electoral advantage (Panebianco, 1988; Katz & Mair, 1995; Krouwel, 2003; Bolleyer, 2009). The need to appeal to a heterogeneous group of voters calls for a strong centralisation of decision-making power, fluid party programmes written by a handful of party strategists and regular ideological manoeuvring (Koole, 1996). As a result, elections become battles of personalities rather than battles of policies and programmes (Katz & Mair, 1995). Party members, now drawn from all social strata, serve the purpose of party legitimisation rather than that of channeling voter preferences or providing the party with loyal cadres (Cirhan & Kopecký, 2017).

Catch-all and cartel parties become ever more reliant on state resources to accommodate the rising costs of mass-media-based political campaigning (Katz & Mair, 1995; Bolleyer, 2009; Kopeček, 2016). There is no place for internal democracy, which is seen as limiting the party leadership’s flexibility to swiftly respond to shifts in public opinion and voter preferences, in this party model. In the absence of internal democracy, new ways of maintaining internal party cohesion, which can no longer be taken for granted, need to be found (Mazzoleni & Voerman, 2017). One such strategy identified in the literature is candidate selection (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Hazan & Rahat, 2010). Because membership is now open to all social strata and
party ideologies become susceptible to change, parties need to come up with comprehensive candidate selection practices for cadre and candidate recruitment (van Biezen & Poguntke, 2014). These aim to ensure that the party cadres and/or candidate are loyal to the party and advance the party’s interests even at times when the party’s programme or ideology need to be updated to accommodate the often swift changes in public opinion (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008). This means that candidate selection practices shape who gets (s)elected, in the first place, but also how those who get selected behave once in office.

The transformation of political parties from mass bottom-up organisations advocating the interests of a clearly delineated social group to top-down electoral machines that consider grassroots structures and internal democracy as detrimental to its electoral fortunes bears consequences for a number of crucial systemic attributes. Accountability and legitimacy are “no longer [...] ensured prospectively, on the basis of clearly defined alternatives, but rather retrospectively, on the basis of experience and record” (Katz & Mair, 1995, p. 8) Representation and delegation become more abstract as the link between the represented and the representative is transformed into one that is less organic. Since elections now revolve around party leaders and their personal traits rather than programmes and ideologies, it can easily happen that the representative and the represented have very little in common in terms of their social identities, ideologies or perspectives (Katz & Mair, 1995, 2009).

PR systems are particularly susceptible to the emergence of cartel parties due to their fragmented nature (Katz & Mair, 1995, 2009; Bolleyer & Bytzek, 2017). Competition for a limited number of voters puts demands on parties to come up with organisational structures that enable them to swiftly respond to shifts in voter preferences (Kefford & McDonnell, 2018). These conditions are a natural breeding ground for the newest party type - entrepreneurial party (Calise, 2015; Arter, 2016; Hloušek & Kopeček, 2017; Schumacher & Giger, 2017). Entrepreneurial parties, which are characterised by extreme centralisation of power in the hands of the party leader, skilful use of the media and unprecedented professionalisation of the party cadres, represent an extreme case of the cartel party model (Kefford & McDonnell, 2018). These parties are commonly compared to business enterprises and their leaders to CEOs (Kopeček & Švačinová, 2015). Just like cartel parties, entrepreneurial parties also consider wide and inclusive party membership as a hinder that could limit the leader’s monopoly on political power. This is why, party membership is either restricted to a handful of core party associates (Cirhan & Stauber, 2018) or the rights and privileges of party members are severely limited (Katz & Mair, 1995; Hloušek & Kopeček, 2017; Kopeček, 2016). Party candidates are ‘manhunted’ and recruited for their managerial competences rather than common political views.
In entrepreneurial parties, candidate selection practices and the control over political promotions provide one of the most essential tools at the party leader’s disposal that can be used to influence the behaviour of the legislators and ensure their unwavering loyalty to the party.

Candidate selection, which becomes increasingly centralised and focused on finding personalities that can aid the party to broaden its electoral appeal and project an image of managerial competence (see, for instance, Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Cirhan & Kopecký, 2017), stands at the centre of the discussions related to accountability, delegation, legitimacy and representation of political systems where parties are the dominant players. If accountability-related concerns are now assessed a posteriori, can voters really punish incumbents whose conduct they disapprove of? And can the voters punish individual incumbents without having to vote for another party? Is individual accountability still a meaningful concept if political parties become increasingly centralised, less ideologically cohesive and more exclusive in their candidate selection practices? Moreover, if the representatives and the represented no longer share the same (socio-economic) identity, what happens when the increasingly multicultural societies actively press for the inclusion of politically marginalised social groups? The study of candidate selection practices, in general, and incumbent renomination, in particular, can shed light on these important questions. This dissertation thus broadens our understanding of how contemporary political parties function in times of ever-increasing demands for ideological flexibility and centralised decision-making.

From candidate recruitment to renomination: did we get the right (wo-)man for the job?

Imagine that you are an HR manager tasked with recruiting new salespersons. The aspirants you meet have not worked at your company before: some have just finished college, some have pursued different professions and others have worked as salespersons before but at a different company. What selection system are you likely to use? When it comes to the aspirants who lack professional experience, you might look at their college grades and through an interview assess their interpersonal communication skills. You might also check whether these aspirants did some relevant internships while in college and call their references for further information. Contacting the references will also be a big part of the selection process for evaluating those with previous experience as salespersons. The mechanism of selecting new individuals for a job of any kind usually follows similar patterns: those in charge of selecting need to find a way of
using indirect proxies related to aspirants’ educational and professional experience and scrutinise their personal traits and ambitions in order to judge whether the aspirants are suitable for the job at hand. Every such decision resembles a gamble, as one can never be absolutely sure that the selectee will excel in his/her duties. Now imagine that you decide to accept six candidates and offer them the job pending a 10-month trial period after which only three most successful salespersons will be kept. When the 10-month period is over, you will again evaluate which individual is best suited for the job at hand. Yet, the criteria you will apply will probably differ from those you used 10 months ago because all six aspirants now have a proven track record of working as salespersons at your company. You no longer need to use indirect proxies as relevant job-related characteristics are now available.

This basic mechanism of selection easily travels to the process of selecting political candidates. When a political aspirant wishes to be selected for the very first time as political candidate, only indirect proxies can be used by party selectors to evaluate whether s/he would make a good legislator, from party selectors’ point of view, if elected (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Norris, 1997; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Hazan & Rahat, 2010). These can be quite crude proxies if the aspirant in question lacks any experience of working for the party or representing the party at the local level (Norris, 1997). Past research shows that these crude proxies centre around one’s educational and professional background but also include an assessment of one’s public speaking skills, local networks, campaign funding potential and the like (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Norris, 1997; Bjarnegård, 2013; Culhane, 2017; Pruysers & Blais, 2017). The point, just like in the scenario above, is to be able to choose people who will not turn out to be a disappointment once they become legislators, without having direct information on their possible performance. The selectors do not know if the selectee will turn out to be a good agent of the party, but they try to maximise the likelihood that this will be the case by choosing evaluating proxies that worked well in the past (Bjarnegård, 2013; Dodeigne et al., 2019). Even if the aspirants have a proven track record of working as local-level legislators, the recruiters have limited ways of knowing for sure that their behaviour will not change once they enter the national arena where the stakes are considerably higher. The situation is different in cases when the pool from which the selection is to be made comprises incumbent legislators who are up for renomination. Since all these individuals have already served as legislators, the selectors can now judge whether the aspirants under evaluation lived up to their expectations and whether they should be offered a chance to continue in office (Adams & Smrek, 2018). So rather than asking: ‘will this particular aspirant be the kind of legislator we want?’ the se-
lectors can now ask: ‘has this particular aspirant turned out to be the kind legislator we wanted?’ The mechanism of political selections is the same: a larger aspirant pool is reduced to a smaller candidate pool with the help of selection criteria. These criteria can, however, differ substantially depending on which aspirant pool one happens to be dealing with. While first-time selection of political candidates enjoys growing scholarly attention, the study of incumbent renomination is limited in size. To bridge this gap, this section revisits the existing literature on candidate recruitment and demonstrates how the insights generated by political-recruitment literature can be used in the study of incumbent renomination owing to the inherent similarity between these two kinds of political selections.

Recruitment of political candidates by political parties has for long been considered a ‘secret garden’ of party politics (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988). Hidden from the public eye, candidate selections are shrouded in a cloud of mystery. Political parties seldom reveal which exact selection criteria they use in candidate recruitment (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Norris, 1997; Helmke & Levitsky, 2006; Hazan & Rahat, 2010). Even in the most institutionalised of parties, informality and partiality characterise political selections, as the process is seldom regulated by national rules (expect for required age and nationality) that tell the parties how the selection of candidates ought to be conducted (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006; Bjarneård & Kenny, 2016; Butler & Preece, 2016; Verge & Claveria, 2017; Bjarneård, 2018). As long as political parties remain gatekeepers to elected office, the way they carry out candidate selection will continue to attract the attention of scholars, practitioners as well as the general public. Today, we can broadly distinguish two different fields of inquiry that focus on political selections. One focuses on the impact of candidate selection on the behaviour of political aspirants and elected representatives, while the other maps out which social groups are disadvantaged in political selections and critically examines the sources of the overrepresentation of certain social groups in politics.

Why should we care about how political selectors go about candidate recruitment? The voters bestow the power over political decision-making onto their elected representatives. Once in office, these delegates are expected to represent the interests of their voters and make decisions that are in voters’ interest. But if all elected representatives need to be selected by a political party before they can be voted in by the people, it becomes crucial to investigate who gets selected and what impact the selection process might have on those who become legislators. The essential issue at stake is that the goals of political parties do not always match those of the voters, which is especially the case in leader-driven and internally non-democratic parties that are not anchored in any particular social cleavage (Strom, 1990; Harmel & Janda, 1994; Green-Pedersen &
Mortensen, 2010; Helboe Pedersen, 2012; Baumann et al., 2017; Papp & Russo, 2018). While legislators are expected to serve as voters’ delegates, they also owe their positions to their party bosses who selected them in the first place (Rahat, 2007; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Hazan & Rahat, 2010; Däubler, Christensen, & Linek, 2018; Dodeigne et al., 2019). Whose interests should they be expected to advance if the goals of these two principals clash (Dodeigne et al., 2019)? This brings the issue of delegation to the fore (Rahat, 2007; Papp & Russo, 2018). The voters delegate their power to make political decisions onto their elected representatives. Yet if these promote the interests of their party bosses rather than those of the voters, the delegation link is broken. This can alienate the voters from the system and lead to a decline in voter turnout or increased support for anti-systemic parties (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988). Moreover, if legislators who are disloyal to their voters yet loyal to their superiors are kept in prominent positions by their party bosses, the voters have a limited possibility to punish them for their conduct, which can make the political system appear as lacking in accountability (Rahat & Hazan, 2001; Ashworth, 2012; Gauja, 2015; André et al., 2017; Papp & Russo, 2018; Borghetto & Lisi, 2018). Furthermore, if political parties stick to the same individuals for an extended period of time and neglect the need for a regular cadre renewal, such a dynamic can have a negative effect on talented individuals’ willingness to step forward and be considered for political office (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Norris, 1997; Kenny & Verge, 2016; Brands & Fernandez-Mateo, 2017). This, in turn, can limit the talent pool within the system. Along the same line, excessively dynamic renewal of political elites can also adversely affect the political system by depriving the legislators of the possibility to accumulate and capitalise on their experience (Katz & Bardi, 1980; Samuels, 2000; Matland & Studlar, 2004; Altman & Chasquetti, 2005). Finally, if certain social groups are overrepresented in the political arena, some segments of the population might feel that they are insufficiently represented which can also lead to alienation from the system and low electoral turnout (Murray, 2010; Bjarnegård, 2013; Kenny, 2013). Overrepresentation of some social groups might also undermine the notion that all citizens are equal and deprive underprivileged groups of potential public role models (Bagues & Esteve-Volart, 2010). This brief overview clearly shows the extent to which candidate selection is closely tied to a number of essential democratic elements, such as accountability, elite renewal or representation.
Impact of selection procedures on legislators’ behaviour

Any individual who aspires for political office will likely begin by trying to find out what it is that the selectors will look for. If one lacks some relevant professional expertise that is considered particularly valuable, one is likely to wait and acquire this expertise before one steps forward (Pruysers & Blais, 2017). Anzia and Berry (2011) show that female political aspirants tend to wait longer before they express their interest in running for office to make sure that their merits exceed those of an average male political aspirant. The situation can, yet again, be compared to the labour market. Imagine that you want to pursue a career as a data analyst but are not acquainted with a particular statistical software the knowledge of which is required by most companies you are interested in. If you are serious about getting the job, you are likely to try to acquire this particular expertise before you apply. What this case illustrates is that the criteria used in the selection of political candidates influence the behaviour of political aspirants before they decide to seek office. To be considered, you need to have that which is required.

The bulk of existing literature shows that various types of selection procedures have an impact on legislators’ behaviour (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Sheaffer & Tzionit, 2006; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Tavits, 2010; Hazan & Rahat, 2010; Preece, 2014; Golden & Picci, 2015; Selb & Lutz, 2015; Kellermann, 2016). On the systemic level, the type of the electoral system is shown to affect how political candidates are selected and how they behave once in office (Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Tavits, 2010). In majoritarian electoral systems, political parties are usually expected to choose one candidate in every electoral district. This has a decentralising effect on candidate selection and places the bulk of responsibility over candidate selection into the hands of district party chapters (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Kenny, 2013; Culhane, 2017). Majoritarian systems are consequentially shown to give rise to legislators who are best described as ‘constituency servants’ because they owe their positions to their districts (Preece, 2014; Culhane, 2017). Since the link between majoritarian legislators and their voters is much clearer than in proportional systems where several candidates get elected from the same party ballot, these legislators tend to put the interests of their local party chapters and district constituents first once in office in order to maximise their re-selection and re-election chances (Bowler, 2010; Kellermann, 2016; Papp, 2018). Proportional-representation systems are shown to nurture ‘party loyalists’. Here, the multimember character of electoral districts incentivises the parties to prepare rank-ordered lists of candidates (Rahat, 2007). While the voters in some PR systems can reshuffle the pre-ordered ballots, one’s pre-election ballot spot still by-and-large determines one’s chances of being
elected (Carey & Shugart, 1995). This dynamic puts considerable pressure on legislators to try to please their superiors to secure the best possible electable position on the ballot, if they desire to be re-elected (Heidar, 2006; Carey, 2007; Tavits, 2010; Helboe Pedersen, 2012; Crisp et al., 2013; Louwerse & Otjes, 2016; Baumann et al., 2017; Dodeigne et al., 2019). The link between individual legislators and voters is indirect in such systems as voters vote primarily for parties rather than specific legislators (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Crisp, Jensen, & Shomer, 2007; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Beblavý & Veselková, 2014; Däubler et al., 2016; Gauja, 2015; Nagtzaam & van Erkel, 2017; André & Depauw, 2017). It is in these systems where legislators’ loyalty and party unity are of particular importance. Existing studies have examined whether the above-described behavioural dynamics can indeed be found in respective electoral systems. However, only a few examine whether the behaviour which candidate selection practices induce also gets rewarded at renomination (Papp & Russo, 2018). This is a crucial gap in our knowledge because any selection carries with it a degree of informality and uncertainty. This means that even if the selection rules are written down and widely known, one can never be absolutely sure what criteria one will be judged on. This holds especially true given that the criteria used in the re-nomination of incumbents are likely to differ from those used in first-time recruitment as already argued above. This means that incumbents’ experience with first-time recruitment is unlikely to prepare them for what awaits them at renomination. It is vital to investigate whether the behavioural path triggered by legislators’ experience with first-time recruitment is truly rewarded by party elites when renomination decisions are made. This dissertation bridges this gap by investigating the link between incumbent legislators’ ability to attract preference votes, among other characteristics of their political activity, and their renomination chances.

Party-specific characteristics are also shown to shape the dynamics of candidate selections and behaviour of those who get selected (Rahat, 2007; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008; Hazan & Rahat, 2010). The degree of centralisation of candidate recruitment affects the diversity of the candidate pool (Rahat & Hazan, 2001; Kopeček, 2016; Mazzoleni & Voerman, 2017; Baumann et al., 2017). If the selection is done by national party elites rather than local party chapters spread all over the country, the selectors naturally have a better overview of the entire candidate pool and face greater pressures to ensure that various social identities are represented (Hazan & Rahat, 2010; Kopeček, 2016). If the selection is done by district selectorates, the need to select candidates who have the necessary skills to advance the interests of their districts is shown to triumph over other considerations (Kenny, 2013; Culhane, 2017). The number of selectors is also shown to play a significant part.
Small selectorates are more likely to rely on arbitrary recruitment criteria and select candidates through nepotistic or clientelistic channels (Katz & Mair, 1995; Rahat, 2007; Hloušek & Kopeček, 2017). More inclusive selectorates downplay the importance of individual selectors’ opinions in favour of a less biased application of the selection criteria (Kenny, 2013). In some parties, the question of who the selectors actually are also needs to be investigated. As parties’ campaign spending increases over time, some choose to turn towards donations from private companies. These might demand that some of ‘their people’ get an electable position on the party ballot in order to make sure that, once in power, the party will ‘repay the debt’ in the form of an improved access to public procurement or state contracts (Norris, 1997). In such a case, it is not the party elites who select these candidates and they cannot reasonably be thought of as these candidates’ principals. Left-wing parties often rely on trade unions to mobilise their voter base (Kenny, 2013; Preece, 2014). These, in turn, might also press for their candidates to make sure that the party does not turn its back on the unions once in power. Finally, political parties can sometimes offer ballot positions to notable personalities or representatives of political parties without parliamentary representation and yet a stable electorate (Norris, 1997; Crisp et al., 2013; Beblavý & Veselková, 2014; Hloušek & Kopeček, 2017). Because these come with their own electorate, they do not need to go through the same selection process as the other candidates and the dynamics of the selection process might not affect their behaviour to a large extent.

While existing research links various types of candidate selection to legislators’ behaviour, the issue of whether this behaviour is indeed rewarded remains understudied. In theory, the process of delegating power is a straight-forward one: the voters are principals who transfer their power to settle political issues onto their agents - elected representatives. Yet, in reality, the gatekeeping power of political parties complicates the picture by inserting another principal into the equation. If the party principals can effectively thwart candidates’ chances to get (re-)elected, their expectations will have an impact on candidates’ behaviour. If party principals’ interests diverge from those of the voters, acting upon their expectations might adversely affect the delegation link and bring about a crisis of accountability and legitimacy.

Who gets left out in candidate selection? From supply-demand to feminist institutionalism

A growing volume of existing literature studies political selections through the lens of underrepresentation (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Norris, 1997; Murray, 2008; Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008; Murray, 2010; Mackay,
Kenny, & Chappell, 2010; Bjarnegård, 2013; Kenny, 2013; Mackay & Waylen, 2014; Casas-Arce & Saiz, 2015; Kenny & Verge, 2015; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2016; Kenny & Verge, 2016; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2017; Lindgren, Oskarsson, & Dawes, 2017; Thomson, 2018). Despite staggering advances in voter enfranchisement throughout the twentieth century, the world’s parliaments continue to underrepresent a great number of social groups (IPU, 2019). At the turn of the century, women still constituted a stark minority in most elected bodies and white-collar workers’ majority continued to overshadow the steadily declining blue-collar minority (Norris, 1997). Sexual and ethnic minorities, young people and pensioners are all underrepresented (Dancygier, Lindgren, Oskarsson, & Vernby, 2015; Lindgren et al., 2017). World’s parliaments continue to be dominated by majority-race, well-educated, middle-aged men having previous professional experience in a narrow number of professional fields (Bjarnegård, 2013). Starting in the 1990s, scholars have gradually turned their attention to political parties and their recruitment practices to examine the reasons behind this unbalanced representation.

The much acclaimed supply-demand theory was penned by Norris and Lovenduski in 1995. Their in-depth study of the British political system led Norris and Lovenduski to conclude that the overrepresentation of men in British politics can potentially be attributed to two major factors: insufficient demand for underrepresented candidates on the part of political parties and/or insufficient supply of such aspirants for political office (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). Political parties desire to recruit candidates who are most likely to advance their party’s goals. Since political aspirants have never been national legislators before, party recruiters need to resort to proxies which help them to estimate the likelihood of recruiting the ‘best wo-man for the job’. The proxies might include a plethora of characteristics, such as one’s professional track record, education, local politics experience, party service, financial resources, marital status, number of under-aged children, age, speaking abilities, connections, name recognition, group networks, organisational skills or ambition (Norris, 1997). The supply side is defined by the willingness and/or ability of the prospective aspirant to come forward. This broadly includes aspirants’ resources (financial endowment, type of employment and career flexibility, politically relevant skills) and motivation (one’s willingness to sacrifice one’s time and resources for campaigning while facing an uncertain outcome). Both supply and demand interact in order to produce an outcome of interest - political candidates. In her study of British political candidates, Norris (1997) concludes that the low number of female recruits could primarily be explained by insufficient supply, meaning that too few women decide to step forward. The supply-demand model has provided a structure for ensuing scholarly debate on political-recruitment rules and their consequences for (under-)representation (for
other iterations of the supply-demand model, see Fox & Lawless, 2004, 2010, 2011), but has also become subject of fierce criticism.

A growing number of scholars challenge Norris and Lovenduski (1995)’s argument that male overrepresentation in politics mainly boils down to insufficient supply of female aspirants. Krook (2010), for instance, argues that both supply and demand are distorted by gendered norms and stereotypes that dominate the political arena (see also Murray, 2010; Kenny, 2013). When wondering why too few women come forward, Krook emphasises traditional socialisation patterns which define family rather than politics as an appropriate realm for women. Women are widely believed to have stereotypical traits and values, which are deemed to be incompatible with a political career (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b, 1993a; Koch, 2000; King & Matland, 2003; Sanbonmatsu & Dolan, 2009; Dolan, 2014; Kerevel & Atkeson, 2015; Dolan & Lynch, 2016; Pruysers & Blais, 2017; Bauer, 2018; Devroe & Wauters, 2018). Stereotypical views about women’s suitability for a career in politics distort both the demand for and supply of female political hopefuls. As a result, party recruiters consider female aspirants as lacking the essential traits and values that every successful politician needs to have. At the same time, potential female aspirants undervalue their own merits even if these might be on par with or exceed those of male aspirants. Bjarnegård (2013) shows that male party recruiters tend to overvalue those characteristics which male aspirants are more likely to possess when recruiting new candidates. A part of the explanation lies in the aforementioned uncertainty surrounding political selections: party recruiters want to maximise the chances of selecting reliable subordinates who will not challenge their positions of power and will act as loyal agents of the party. This is why, the proxies they use in the recruitment of new candidates tend to mirror their own characteristics from the time when they entered politics and which men are more likely to have.

Similar findings are reported by a rapidly growing field of feminist institutionalism (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008; Murray, 2010; Mackay et al., 2010; Mackay & Waylen, 2014; Gains & Lowndes, 2014; Johnson, 2016; Verge & Claveria, 2017; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2017; Erikson & Josefsson, 2018). This approach to studying women’s underrepresentation shows the path dependency of male domination in politics, demonstrating that most formal and informal rules, norms, rituals and practices reflect men’s dominance (Kenny & Verge, 2016). Masculine norms and rules shape the idea of who is qualified and who is desirable for political office (Bjarnegård, 2013; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2016; Verge & Claveria, 2017). Thanks to the recent advances within the field of feminist institutionalism we know that first-time recruitment proves to be a more challenging hurdle for female aspirants to clear than it is for their male counterparts. But some women do make it through
the initial stage of recruitment and do become legislators. Proponents of affirmative action believe that if a sufficient number of women make it into national legislatures, their presence might challenge the prevailing assumptions that women are less suitable for a political career than men (Beaman, Chattopadhyay, Duflo, Pande, & Topalova, 2009; Bhavnani, 2009; De Paola, Scoppa, & Lombardo, 2010; Shair-Rosenfield, 2012; Shair-Rosenfield & Hinojosa, 2014; Johnson, 2016). While there is some evidence supporting this hypothesis, there are also findings that question whether being exposed to female politicians can potentially lead to a more inclusive candidate selection. Past research indicates that, once elected, female legislators face new hurdles that stem from the masculinised nature of the political arena. Women and other traditionally excluded social groups have a harder time to access the networks that one needs if one is to lead a successful campaign or succeed in one's legislative duties (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008; Murray, 2010; Mackay et al., 2010; Mackay & Waylen, 2014; Kenny & Verge, 2016; Verge & Claveria, 2017; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2017; Thomson, 2018; Erikson & Joseffson, 2018). Women are less likely to be peer-mentored by more experienced legislators, less likely to be appointed to influential legislative committees and have much more limited access to agenda setting (Swers, 2005; Verge & Claveria, 2017; Erikson & Joseffson, 2018). Female legislators are often offered labour-intensive positions within the legislature with limited possibilities to accumulate political capital (Verge & Claveria, 2017). They are also far less likely to be invited to informal meetings organised by the elite circle where many crucial political decisions are made (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2017).

This dissertation uses renomination as a testing ground for assessing whether those women who make it through the initial recruitment stage can challenge the stereotypical views party recruiters are shown to have on women's suitability for a political career, especially in parties where candidate selection is exclusive and centralised. This is done by focusing both on established political parties and new parties that might lack the informal sexist structures that prevent female incumbents from performing on par with their male counterparts. The analyses are informed by the theoretical and empirical advances made in the field of feminist institutionalism.

Renomination as the new ‘secret garden’ of party politics: what can we learn?

A party selector is charged with putting together a party ballot ahead of an election. He knows that his party will most probably only secure one mandate in this particular electoral district. He needs to decide which of
the two incumbent legislators will get this spot. One of the incumbents was ranked first in the previous election and is a close acquaintance of the selector. In the legislature, this incumbent is rather unproductive. He seldom attends the sessions, never proposes any bills or bill amendments but is an astound supporter of the party line in his parliamentary voting. The other incumbent was ranked quite low on the ballot in the last election but moved to the top as a result of preference voting and pushed the other incumbent to the second spot. The legislator sporadically votes against the party line when she believes that her support for a particular bill proposal could alienate her individual electorate. She is, however, aware that her party belonging carries with it a number of obligations, too. Voting along the party line one too many times cost this legislator a part of her electorate. Her re-election now hinges on her ability to secure an electable spot on the party ballot. She is one of the most hard-working legislators and never missed a single session of the parliament, co-sponsored a number of bills and took an active part in several debates. A tough call, would you not agree?

Voters have no way of influencing this party selector’s decision. A common intuition is that the hardworking and electorally popular incumbent should be given the first spot over her unproductive, corruption-prone counterpart. The former incumbent is responsive to voters’ demands and is bound by the mandate that they have bestowed upon her. She, moreover, guards voters’ interests which cannot be said about her counterpart who does not shy away from plundering public assets. But her promotion is not self-evident. Past research shows that electorally popular legislators might endanger party unity and might thus be seen as a liability in fragmented PR systems where governments tend to rely on paper thin majorities (Carey, 2007; Tavits, 2010; Crisp et al., 2013; Louwerse & Otjes, 2016; Frech, 2016; Baumann et al., 2017; Dodeigne et al., 2019). Moreover, some studies have shown that party selectors are more likely to promote their ‘partners in crime’ out of fear of being exposed or fear of having one’s tap on state resources severed by legislators who are more genuinely committed to serving their voters’ interests (Katz & Bardi, 1980; Golden & Picci, 2015; Marangoni & Russo, 2018). The study of renomination can help us to uncover these dynamics. What is it that party selectors look for when they make their renomination decisions? Are they responsive to voter preferences or do they use renomination strategically to pursue their own political goals and entrench their own positions of power? Despite the bulk of research on the recruitment of political candidates, the study of incumbent renomination in PR systems is limited in size, even if the scholarly interest in the subject has grown in the final years of this dissertation project. This dissertation tackles some of the remaining gaps in our knowledge of incumbent renomination by
looking at whether party recruiters do at all take incumbent legislators’ electoral and legislative performance into account when they make their renomination decisions.

Incumbent renomination (or re-selection) can be defined as a process of securing the right to seek re-election under the banner of one’s mother party. Just as with political recruitment, a number of systemic and party-specific factors largely influence the nature, dynamics and salience of renomination as a selection round. In majoritarian systems where political parties only present one candidate in every electoral district, renomination is most often just a formality. Since incumbents in majoritarian systems are shown to enjoy what is often referred to as ‘incumbency advantage’ in electoral battles, they are usually retained by their parties until they are defeated or until they retire voluntarily. It is in proportional systems where renomination tends to be a challenging hurdle to clear. The multimember nature of the electoral districts allows party recruiters to promote those incumbents whose conduct they approve of and demote those who have not fulfilled their expectations (Bräuninger et al., 2012; Crisp et al., 2013; Preece, 2014; Baumann et al., 2017; André et al., 2017; Däubler et al., 2018; Papp & Russo, 2018). Moreover, the need to recruit new cadres and ensure a degree of legislator renewal makes it possible for party selectors to deselect some of the incumbents or reduce their re-election prospects by moving them to the bottom of the ballot (Schwindt-Bayer, 2005; McElroy & Marsh, 2010).

The salience of renomination is the strongest in closed-list PR systems where one’s ballot spot profoundly influences one’s chances of re-election because the voters have no means of reshuffling the ballots (Galasso & Nannicini, 2011; Carey, 2007; Yildirim et al., 2017; Marangoni & Russo, 2018; Borghetto & Lisi, 2018). One’s ballot placement is important in flexible-list systems, too, yet its importance fades for those candidates who have a sufficiently large electorate of their own and can get re-elected from any ballot spot (Carey & Shugart, 1995; Crisp & Desposato, 2004; Crisp et al., 2007; Tavits, 2010; Bräuninger et al., 2012; Crisp et al., 2013; Preece, 2014; Beblavý & Veselková, 2014; André, Depauw, & Martín, 2015; Selb & Lutz, 2015; Däubler et al., 2016; Baumann et al., 2017; André et al., 2017; Nagtzaam & van Erkel, 2017; André & Depauw, 2017; Däubler et al., 2018; Dodeigne et al., 2019). Finally, the salience of renomination wanes in open-list systems where having an individual electorate is much more decisive for one’s re-election chances than being well-placed on the ballot (Samuels, 2000; Golden & Picci, 2015; Rudolph & Däubler, 2016). In both latter cases, however, the party still retains the right not to include the incumbent on the ballots at all.

The key element that makes renomination so important is that it can be thought of as a gateway to re-election. Re-election, in turn, is a gateway to political seniority (Rahat, 2007).
individual gets elected, the more time s/he spends in the legislature and the more substantial her/his influence over political decision-making becomes. Research shows that the number of re-elections is positively associated with one’s ability to affect political decisions and get access to agenda setting (Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008). Moreover, political seniority is also considered a significant asset if an aspirant wishes to be considered for senior positions in the legislature or the executive which, too, come with considerable power (Ibid.). While first-time recruitment catapults a contender into political office, renomination can be thought of as enabling her/him to get closer to meaningful political power. This is the prime reason for why the process should be studied in a great detail, especially in those systems where renomination is a challenging hurdle to clear.

Despite of its salience in a number of political systems, the concept renomination often causes conceptual confusion. The essential problem seems to be the simultaneity of first-time recruitment of new candidates and renomination of incumbents (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). In PR systems, incumbents, newcomers as well as unsuccessful candidates from previous elections are simultaneously placed on a multi-candidate ballot. This is why, some scholars study the process of ballot creation as one uniform process of political recruitment and use one’s incumbency status as one of the factors that might influence candidates’ ballot placement (Shair-Rosenfield & Hinojosa, 2014). Yet, the two processes are sufficiently different to warrant conceptual separation. The most obvious difference between renomination and political recruitment is the outcome of the two selections: first-time election or re-election. Another important conceptual difference are the criteria used in each of the two selection rounds which are likely to differ substantially. In first-time recruitment, party selectors need to establish every aspirant’s suitability for office indirectly by examining their educational and professional profiles. At renomination, this is no longer necessary. Because the incumbents walk the corridors of power together with their party superiors, the latter must have a solid idea about their subordinates’ competences and political potential (Adams & Smrek, 2018). To understand which aspects of incumbents’ political performance are rewarded at renomination, this important selection round should ideally be studied separately from its political-recruitment cousin.

The review of recruitment-related literature above identified two distinct research areas that are relevant for the study of renomination. The first field of inquiry links the selection process to the behaviour of those who wish to be selected. Here, the study of renomination has a potential to offer some valuable insights. First-time recruitment is shown to affect the behaviour of both the aspirants who seek office and those who are elected. Renomination should have a similar effect on the behaviour
of incumbent legislators who wish to be re-elected and amass political seniority. Most existing literature on renomination that sprang in recent years is concentrated in this field. A number of studies examine the extent to which renomination dynamics affect incumbents’ behaviour in office. Sieberer (2010) shows that the members of the German Bundestag who are dependent on their personal reputation for re-election are less likely to uphold party unity than those who are relatively more dependent on the party’s shared reputation. Däubler et al. (2016) show that Belgian MPs who want to maximise their re-election chances are more likely to single-author bill proposals. Furthermore, Francois and Navarro (2017) show that bill-making activity improves French MPs’ renomination prospects while Bräuninger et al. (2012) find similar dynamics in Germany. Däubler et al. (2018) argue that party elites use the threat of non-reselection rather than a promise of a safe ballot spot to control the behaviour of rank-and-file incumbents. Frech (2016) shows that being a member of an influential committee in the European Parliament improve MEPs’ chances of being renominated by their mother parties. Baumann et al. (2017) demonstrate that publicly disagreeing with the official party line is associated with ballot demotion in German opposition parties. Marangoni and Russo (2018) show that working on new legislation improved the re-nomination prospects of those Italian MPs who were elected from a district where the style of representation was personalised.

A large section of the existing literature within this field examines how party elites perceive individual electoral popularity of their rank-and-file incumbents and maps out the sources of their individual popularity. A number of studies show that incumbents’ ability to harness preference votes is rewarded at renomination with a more electable ballot spot (Crisp et al., 2013; Folke, Persson, & Rickne, 2016; André et al., 2017; Däubler et al., 2018; Dodeigne et al., 2019). Disloyalty to the party line (Tavits, 2010; Crisp et al., 2013; Frecee, 2014; Baumann et al., 2017), bill initiation (Bräuninger et al., 2012; Däubler et al., 2016) and local-level political experience (Tavits, 2010) are shown to affect individual MPs’ ability to attract preference votes. It is here where one of the studies that comprise this dissertation offers a contribution. This is done by examining whether the ability of incumbents placed in electorally vulnerable ballot slots to attract preference votes is rewarded at renomination, regardless of whether the eventual promotion of electorally popular incumbents puts party unity at risk.

The research on marginalised social groups in politics does an excellent job documenting the structural difficulties that politically underprivileged aspirants face on their way to elected office (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008; Murray, 2010; Mackay et al., 2010; Fox & Lawless, 2011; Mackay & Waylen, 2014; Gains & Lowndes, 2014;
Johnson, 2016; Verge & Claveria, 2017; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2017; Eriksson & Josefsson, 2018). Given the challenges these groups face on their path to power, it is crucial to examine whether some of them travel to the subsequent rounds of political selections in general and renomination in particular. This is interesting not least for what has been said here about the link between re-election and substantive representation. If re-election is a gateway to agenda-setting power, it needs to be established whether some social groups have an easier access to re-election than others. Over the years, scholars and practitioners alike have proposed various forms of affirmative action to bring marginalised social groups into the corridors of power. The assumption behind affirmative action is that once such groups reach substantial numbers, their presence will contribute to transforming the political arena and make it more inclusionary so that the affirmative policies can gradually be removed (Krook & Zetterberg, 2017). Once those in power learn that the previously politically marginalised social groups can succeed in their legislative careers, it is expected that there will be no more need to discriminate against such aspirants in recruitment (Beaman et al., 2009; Bhavnani, 2009; Shair-Rosenfield, 2012; Folke & Rickne, 2016; Shair-Rosenfield & Hinojosa, 2014). Renomination offers a fruitful testing ground for evaluating the validity of these claims and testing the effectiveness of affirmative actions. If the criteria used in renomination are heavily based on each incumbent’s legislative track record, we can perhaps expect that the bias marginalised social groups are subjected to in initial recruitment will abate to an extent at renomination. Studies 2 and 3 focus on this dynamic, paying particular attention to the hurdles female incumbents face at renomination.

Methodology of renomination-related inquiries: when epistemologies join forces

Imagine that you are the head of a state department and that you wish to recruit a new employee. You have already firmly selected the man for the job - the son of your cousin. Yet, under the provisions the equal opportunities bill which all state departments are bound by, you need to publicly announce the position, test all eligible aspirants and invite all those who pass the test to an interview. Now, the law stipulates a number of qualifications which all aspirants have to have which means that your pre-selected candidate needs to have these qualifications, too, so that it does not become all too obvious that he has received preferential treatment. The whole process is a sham. It costs the state resources to organise the test as well as the interviews. More than one hundred hopeful aspirants sit the test and twenty individuals are invited to the interview. Yet the outcome was fixed well before the whole process began.
It was a waste of time for all the candidates and a waste of resources for the state.

An ambitious political scientist wishes to investigate whether the equal opportunities bill is adhered to and whether it is only those contenders who possess the required qualifications who get selected for state administration positions. He first obtains data on how many vacancies there have been in the last five years, how many people have been hired and how many interviews were held. By simple comparison of relevant numbers, he finds that for each vacancy a corresponding interview round was held. Encouraged by this finding, he now investigates whether all those selected possess the required skills as stipulated by the equal opportunities bill and finds that this is the case. He concludes that the bill is well adhered to and everything works as it should. It is concluded that the nepotistic recruitment practices that used to plague the civil service are now eradicated. The hypothetical scenario above, however, sheds doubt upon this conclusion. While the recruit in question indeed possess the required qualifications as stipulated by the law and has gone through a two-stage selection process, he was selected thanks to his familial ties and not because his merits stood out in the selection process.

This illustrative story, which is fictionalised but not in the least implausible, highlights the methodological difficulty of studying any selection process that takes place behind closed doors. Since one cannot get a ‘window into the selectors’ minds’, one can never be sure that the data one uses, be it qualitative or quantitative, can facilitate an objective analysis of social reality. Studying political selections only adds to the challenge since the criteria on which the aspirants are evaluated are seldom known or communicated outside the selectorate circles. Yet another methodological challenge for the study of renomination is its inherent context-specificity. The nature, salience and form of renomination are determined by a particular combination of systemic and party-specific factors which means that renomination practices do not only vary among countries but also within them. As a result, the vast majority of existing scholarship on political recruitment is confined to one or more in-depth case studies. Finally, renomination practices are also likely to vary within political parties, especially if the country is subdivided into multiple electoral districts and the power to select candidates is decentralised to the district level.

A comprehensive mapping out of renomination thus requires research across epistemological boundaries (Della Porta & Keating, 2008; Furlong & Marsh, 2010). The localised and covert nature of the renomination process together with its inherent context-specificity naturally invites for an interpretivist approach (Wedeen, 2004; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Such an approach would be particularly useful for mapping out
the meanings both party selectors and incumbent aspirants attach to the renomination process and could help to generate analytically generalisable mechanisms (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). An interpretivist approach is most useful if one wishes to understand the informal and socially undesirable aspects of renomination, such as the role of clientelism, nepotism and corruption (Wedeen, 2004). The natural shortcoming of the approach is its rather limited external validity. If the ambition is to draw out mechanisms that are likely to hold across cases, an interpretivist approach that requires one to fully immerse oneself in the local context might be ill-suited and too time-consuming (Furlong & Marsh, 2010). A positivist approach to the study of renomination also needs to be sensitive to its context-specific nature to be meaningful (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). This means that being rooted in the social context under study is the pre-condition for any systematic study of the renomination process. If this condition is satisfied, however, a systemic and comprehensive positivist approach can help mapping out whether incumbents’ political performance (be it electoral or legislative) is in any way connected to their renomination outcomes. In such cases, a positivist approach is to be preferred as it allows the researcher to take a longer time perspective into account and generate mechanisms that are likely to hold over time and for all political players within the chosen system. These might, in turn, be applicable to other similar electoral contexts. As the example presented above illustrates, however, one should be cautious as many observable candidate-specific characteristics might be mere manifestations of some underlying informal factors.

This dissertation takes the latter approach, leaving the former approach to future research. If the research question is the extent to which politics rewards observable characteristics of one’s work, a systematic and hypothesis-driven positivist approach is very suitable. This does not mean, however, that the dissertation solely focuses on formalistic aspects of incumbent renomination. The results are often interpreted through the lenses of informal mechanisms that might be at play. For instance, the dissertation shows that female and male incumbents in the Czech and Slovak cases are not equally rewarded for the same observable characteristics of their legislative performance. This opens up for hypothesising which informal norms and practices might be responsible for this dynamic. While the hypotheses were further tested in a qualitative study, there remains room for further scholarly testing. It is my hope that the studies presented in this dissertation will draw scholars’ attention to the study of renomination so that the remaining gaps can be satisfactorily filled, both from interpretivist and positivist perspectives.
Case for studying renomination in flexible-list PR systems

This dissertation focuses on flexible-list PR systems which is a a distinct subtype of PR systems. The choice of the case is not coincidental. Given that the ambition of the dissertation is to explore the formalistic aspects of the renomination process, FLPR systems offer a perfect testing ground for several reasons: First, unlike in open-list (OL) systems, party leaders in FL systems retain considerable control over rank-and-file re-election prospects since the institution of preference voting is not equally influential in determining candidates’ election chances than it is in OL systems. This makes the process of renomination and ballot placement a more important hurdle to clear than it is in OL systems. Second, the institution of preference voting sets FLPR systems apart from their closed-list (CL) counterparts where party elites cannot use the election process to test how electorally popular their individual legislators are. Most existing FLPR systems are in fact reformed CL systems reacting to the critique that pure CL systems do not sufficiently promote individual accountability. This dissertation uses renomination as a way of assessing whether the introduction of preference-voting does indeed improve accountability of politicians in FL systems. This is done by examining whether party recruiters do take the individual popularity of their incumbent legislators into account when they make their renomination decisions. Third, FLPR systems are among the most prevalent proportional systems currently in use, which makes the results presented in this dissertation potentially relevant for a considerable number of countries. Finally, FLPR systems are assumed to facilitate greater inclusion of women and other marginalised communities in politics (Devroe & Wauters, 2018). The combination of preference voting, relatively large district magnitudes and centralised candidate selection are all shown to benefit women and other underrepresented social groups. Studying renomination in FLPR systems allows us to assess whether this advantage travels to subsequent selection rounds.

Two representatives of the FLPR family, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, are examined in this dissertation. These two cases are typical representatives of FLPR systems in many respects. They are characterised by a large number of parties that are increasingly more leader-dominated, increasingly less internally democratic and which make use of increasingly more centralised and exclusive methods of candidate selection and ballot creation (Outlý & Prouza, 2013; Crisp et al., 2013; Beblavý & Veselková, 2014; Kopeček, 2016; André et al., 2017; Papp & Russo, 2018). This makes for a reasonable expectation that loyalty will play an important role in incumbent renomination (Crisp et al., 2013; Kopeček & Svačinová, 2015; Cirhan & Kopecký, 2017). What makes the two cases stand out, however, is the functional institution of preference voting (Mansfeldová, 2011; Crisp et al., 2013; Stegmaier, Tosun, &
Vlachová, 2014; Marcinkiewicz & Stegmaier, 2015; André et al., 2017; Däubler et al., 2018). In many FLPR systems, preference voting does not affect the composition of the legislative cohort to a large extent (Nagtzaam & van Erkel, 2017; André & Depauw, 2017; Dodeigne et al., 2019). The voters either do not indicate their preference for particular candidates at all or they confirm the rank-ordering suggested by their party of choice by voting for topmost candidates (Beblavý & Veselková, 2014; Golden & Picci, 2015). In the case of Slovakia and the Czech Republic, preference voting is popular among voters, which means that a considerable share of legislators are elected from ballot positions that would otherwise be non-electable (Beblavý & Veselková, 2014). The Slovak and Czech Republics can thus be seen as one of the few representatives of a fully functioning FLPR systems which allows me to probe the renomination dynamics in nearly ideal-case settings. As a result, I can genuinely investigate the tension between incumbents’ individual popularity and party unity that is assumed to be at the heart of incumbent renomination in FLPR systems (in line with Crisp et al., 2013; Dodeigne et al., 2019). Moreover, since preference-voting is a good indicator of incumbents’ individual popularity, I can effectively probe its effect on female and male legislators’ renomination success (Stegmaier et al., 2014). All in all, investigating the cases of Slovak and Czech Republics promises to deliver a solid understanding of how renomination dynamics play out in a functional FLPR system dominated by leader-driven political parties.

Methodological approaches pursued in this dissertation

This dissertation aims to meticulously unpack the renomination process in FLPR systems where, as already argued, it is a challenging and important hurdle to clear (Carey, 2007). The renomination dynamics are probed both quantitatively and qualitatively in this dissertation, using self-collected data in both cases. The multi-candidate nature of party ballots in PR systems provides us with a unique insights into party elites’ strategic decision-making. While in majoritarian systems incumbent legislators either return to the electoral race or they do not, incumbent renomination in PR systems is far more multifaceted. In the first stage, incumbents who wish to be placed on the ballot again can be denied this opportunity and simply not be renominated (Shair-Rosenfield & Hinojosa, 2014; Golden & Picci, 2015; Marangoni & Russo, 2018; Borghetto & Lisi, 2018). It is challenging, however, to estimate the extent to which this is actually the case. Since renomination usually happens behind closed doors, we do not know whether some of the incumbents who publicly announce their decision to retire from office were not encouraged or
compelled to do so by their party bosses under the threat of not being allowed back onto the ballot (for an attempt to go around this problem, see Borghetto & Lisi, 2018). Luckily, there is a methodologically sound way to get around this problem which is drawn upon in this dissertation. Once incumbents do get renominated, the position on the ballot they will be given is chosen. Three outcomes are possible. One, they might retain the same position which they held in the previous election. Two, they might be moved upward on the ballot into a better position or, three, they might be moved downward into a less electable position. The chance of election depends on the length of the ballot and on how many seats the party is likely to secure in a given district. As a consequence, ‘renomination outcome’ or ‘renomination success’ is operationalised as the change of each incumbent’s position on the ballot in-between two elections. As a result, we do not only know the direction in which the position of an incumbent changes on the ballot, but also its magnitude. For example, an incumbent can move two spots upwards or twenty-one spots downwards (see, for instance Crisp et al., 2013; Baumann et al., 2017; André et al., 2017). I utilise this information to get an understanding of whether one’s performance in election and/or office influences the position a contender gets allocated on the ballot.

To get a comprehensive picture of renomination dynamics, a longitudinal quantitative approach is used. Such an approach allowed me to simultaneously compare a large number of individual renomination decisions and capture internal renomination mechanisms that hold for the whole political system (across parties and over time), thus ensuring considerable internal validity of the findings. For the purposes of this dissertation I collected data on all incumbents elected to the Czech parliament between 1996 and 2017, which are organised into a panel dataset. The dataset thus spans seven general elections. Each incumbent is followed over time and her/his ballot position in each election is recorded. This dataset further contains essential information related to each incumbent for each electoral period, including their electoral performance (preference-vote share), voting records (from which party-line loyalty is derived), legislative experience, committee membership and chairmanship, senior legislative and executive positions, bill-making activity and many more. The dataset also includes a number of background characteristics on each incumbent such as age, sex or education as well as relevant party- and district-level characteristics. All in all, more than 30 variables for every legislator and each electoral period are included in the dataset, collected from the database of the Czech parliament as well as individual websites of Czech parliamentarians. This makes the dataset used in this dissertation one of the most detailed legislator-level panel dataset currently available.
The nature of the dataset allows for a detailed analysis of potential associations between the observable characteristics of one’s electoral- and legislative performance and one’s renomination outcomes. One can, for instance, probe the association between one’s popularity among voters, operationalised as one’s preference-vote share, and one’s renomination success and thus investigate whether party elites take incumbents’ electoral popularity into account when making their renomination decisions. This is the empirical strategy pursued in the first study. One can also map out whether female and male legislators get different returns on the same observable characteristics of their electoral- and legislative performance in order to examine whether the structural impediments that female aspirants face when they enter politics abate to an extent once their party bosses are exposed to female legislators and their capabilities. This empirical puzzle lies at the heart of the second study. In sum, the quality of statistical data collected for this dissertation allows for a careful scrutiny of various aspects of renomination which, in many ways, go beyond existing research by taking a wider time perspective into account and accounting for a wider array of observable legislator characteristics.

In this dissertation, I also rely on qualitative approaches which allow me to embark on a more detailed analysis of the renomination dynamics in one Slovak political party. The existing literature on political recruitment shows that political selections are often ruled by informal norms, practices and rituals that dominate recruitment processes (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Mackay et al., 2010; Murray, 2010; Bjarnegård, 2013; Kenny, 2013; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2016; Kenny & Verge, 2016; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2017). This means that some of the observable characteristics of incumbents’ electoral and legislative performance that we can measure or ‘get our hands on’ can simply just be manifestations of more underlying informal causes, which cannot be systematically measured using statistical data (Gains & Lowndes, 2014; Kenny & Verge, 2016; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2017; Bjarnegård, 2018). If it is, for instance, shown that some groups of incumbents sponsor fewer bills or ask questions less frequently, this might not necessarily be a reflection of limited abilities or a lack of initiative on their part but rather a lack of opportunities. To strengthen the internal validity of the results obtained through statistical analyses but also get a more comprehensive picture of renomination dynamics in one political party, this dissertation also features an in-depth study where a multitude of qualitative methods are employed. The third study combines on-site observation with in-depth semi-structured interviews and document analysis to mitigate the high risk of falling into the social-desirability bias trap which often plagues elite-interview-based research on social phenomena that involve informal ways of doing (Fenno, 1986; van Hulst, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Alvesson, 2009; Harvey, 2011; Bucerius, 2013; Kapiszewski, MacLean, & Read, 2013).
2015). In an attempt to remedy this problem, I worked for a period of more than a month as an assistant to an MP in the Slovak parliament and collected 26 in-depth interviews with Slovak legislators and party leaders. This allowed me to get a unique understanding of the internal working of a political party and study how this party’s legislators go about fulfilling that which is expected of them in order to secure a good spot on the ballot at the next election. Since I am Slovak by origin, speak the language fluently and was of similar age as other legislative assistants, I quickly blended into the environment and could study it without being perceived as an alien element that was not to be trusted.

The context-specificity of renomination together with the fact that this selection round is by and large understudied influenced the decision to zoom onto one country in studies 1 and 2 and a single political party in study 3. This, however, does not mean that the dissertation is not comparative in its nature. On the contrary, to be able to map out renomination trends in a country, one ideally needs to take time into account. As a result, this dissertation features two studies that map renomination trends which span a period of over 20 years, allowing for cross-party as well as cross-time comparisons. The external validity of the dissertation as a whole is strengthened by the third, qualitative study, which identifies very similar mechanisms as one of the quantitative studies despite being conducted in a different country. The potential for making generalisations based on the results found in this dissertation is limited, which is, however, to be expected from a pioneering study in an emerging field. I hope that the dynamics of renomination this dissertation maps out can be used as a base for future cross-case studies that can further enhance the external validity of the results.

Summary of the findings: does one’s electoral and legislative performance matter?

In this section, the three studies that follow this introductory essay will be briefly presented. The focus is primarily on how each study enriches our understanding of renomination as a selection process and how the findings relate to broader debates on accountability and representation.

The first of the studies presented below looks at the association between incumbents’ individual popularity and their renomination outcomes with an aim to investigate the degree to which voters’ feedback is taken into account when renomination decisions are made. This paper thus connects incumbent renomination to broader debates on individual accountability in FLPR systems. The second study examines whether female and male incumbent legislators are assessed equally on the same observable characteristics of their electoral- and legislative performance
when party ballots are put together. The aim is to examine whether male and female legislators have the same opportunities to succeed in office, which is related to debates on representation and gender equality. Finally, the third study looks at ‘entrepreneurial’ political parties which, in their own words, function as businesses rewarding legislators’ productivity, visibility and managerial skills. The study examines whether female and male incumbents have the same chances to secure renomination in parties that are vocal about putting emphasis on output and productivity, thus contributing to debates on new parties, representation and gender equality in politics.

Study 1: Is electoral popularity rewarded? A contingent yes.

The first study takes up the tentative connection between legislators’ individual electoral popularity and renomination outcomes (Carey, 2007; Tavits, 2010; Bräuninger et al., 2012; Crisp et al., 2013; Preece, 2014; Baumann et al., 2017; André et al., 2017; Däubler et al., 2018; Dodeigne et al., 2019). The institution of preference voting is intended to give the voters a greater say in shaping the composition of the legislative cohort and strengthening the link between individual legislators and the electorate (Carey & Shugart, 1995). Though originally conceived of as FLPR systems, it took nearly a decade for party elites in the Czech Republic and Slovakia to make the institution of preference voting functional by lowering the threshold needed to move to the top of the ballot from 7 to 5 percent in the Czech case and 10 to 3 percent in the Slovak case (Beblavý & Veselková, 2014). This study focuses on the Czech case where the reform of preference voting is particularly successful. In the 2010 election, the first one held after the reform was introduced, 25 percent of the legislators were elected from non-electable positions thanks to preference voting. At the same time, 13 election leaders from 5 parties were pushed down to non-electable positions by successful ballot jumpers (Beblavý & Veselková, 2014). Overall, approximately half of all Czech legislators manage to accumulate more than 5 percent of their parties’ preference votes. The Czech case thus provides a perfect testing ground for investigating whether this new channel of expressing voters’ opinion has an effect on parties’ internal promotion processes and whether FLPR systems can truly facilitate individual accountability (for other studies that examine the Czech case, see Marcinkiewicz & Stegmaier, 2015; André et al., 2017; Däubler et al., 2018). The study investigates whether party recruiters are willing to promote electorally popular incumbents to a more electable ballot spot even if these might derive some of their individual popularity from openly challenging their leadership on some issues as previous literature indicates. To effectively study this dynamic,
it is crucial to focus on those incumbents who are not natural recipients of preference voting. Natural recipients of preference voting are those placed in prominent positions on the ballot who are shown to receive considerable shares of preference votes from loyal party supporters who wish to confirm the rank-ordering suggested by the party. Since these incumbents are likely to retain their prominent positions on the ballot on next election, any potential association between one’s preference-vote share and renomination outcomes among these incumbents is likely to be erroneous and a mere reflection of one’s previous position on the party ballot.

The study thus focuses on those incumbents who got elected from non-safe or outright non-electable ballot positions (Selb & Lutz, 2015). Since these incumbents cannot be sure that they will get elected, they often turn to personalised campaigns to boost their visibility and attract preference votes to maximise their chances of getting elected. The study examines whether the ability of these incumbents to attract preference votes is taken into account and rewarded when renomination decisions are made. Statistical examination shows that there is a strong association between one’s ability to amass more than 5 percent of preference votes and an improved ballot position but this association only holds for those incumbents who have managed to get elected from an outright non-electable ballot slot in the previous election. Those who found themselves in the unsafe section of the ballot in the previous election do not get similarly rewarded for crossing the 5 percent threshold. So what does this tell us about the potential of preference voting to make FLPR systems more receptive to voters’ feedback?

On the one hand, the paper shows that the party elites are willing to promote those who have been elected from non-electable positions to the more electable section of the ballot which can be interpreted as an indication that they take voters’ feedback to heart and are willing to promote those who the voters want to see in the legislature. One should however be cautious when interpreting this finding as a sign of a growing potential of FLPR systems to facilitate individual accountability. First, the effect only applies to a small subgroup of incumbents and does not travel to other subgroups. Second, further analyses show that these incumbents, once elected, turn out to be most astound supporters of the party line in their parliamentary voting. This means that despite their popular mandate, these incumbents are no more likely to challenge party unity when the interests of their individual electorates are at stake than their colleagues who lack a popular mandate and owe their positions solely to the party elites. Their promotion is thus cost-free. On a more general level, this paper shows one of the ways in which renomination can be used as a testing ground for assessing the extent to which voter
preferences are taken into account by party elites when they decide on the composition of future legislator cohorts.

Study 2: Are female and male incumbents rewarded for the same performance? A problematic no.

The second study examines the potentially gendered nature of renomination by looking at whether the same observable characteristics of female and male incumbents’ political performance are assessed in the same way when renomination decisions are made. This study is inspired by inquiries into first-time recruitment which shows that female aspirants face profound structural impediments when they step forward to be considered for political office (Murray, 2008; Bjarnegård, 2013; Kenny, 2013; Casas-Arce & Saiz, 2015; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2016; Devroe & Wauters, 2018). These stereotypical views make female aspirants appear ill-suited for a career in politics in the eyes of political parties (Black & Erickson, 2003; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005; Bjarnegård, 2013; Kenny & Verge, 2016; Verge & Claveria, 2017). On the one hand, they are subjected to stereotypical views that subscribe them traits and values which are deemed incompatible with a career in politics (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b, 1993a; Koch, 2000; King & Matland, 2003; Sanbonmatsu & Dolan, 2009; Dolan, 2014; Kerevel & Atkeson, 2015; Dolan & Lynch, 2016; Pruysers & Blais, 2017; Bauer, 2018; Devroe & Wauters, 2018). On the other hand, they are perceived to be an electoral liability because they are stereotypically viewed as being disliked by voters despite growing evidence that they are actually more popular among voters than their male counterparts (Black & Erickson, 2003; Murray, 2008; Beaman et al., 2009; De Paola et al., 2010; McElroy & Marsh, 2010; Shair-Rosenfield, 2012; Casas-Arce & Saiz, 2015; Eymoud & Vertier, 2017). Finally, women are considered to be less predictable since party elites, who tend to be predominantly men, are not used to working with female legislators (Niven, 1998; Hasecke & Mycoff, 2007; Murray, 2010; Kenny, 2013; Bjarnegård, 2013; Pyeatt & Yanus, 2016). This study attempts to investigate whether male party elites can change their stereotypical views of women’s suitability for a career in politics once they are exposed to their performance (Beaman et al., 2009; Bhavnani, 2009; De Paola et al., 2010; Shair-Rosenfield, 2012; Shair-Rosenfield & Hinojosa, 2014; Greene & O’Brien, 2016).

As the first step in the study, I show that Czech female incumbents outperform their male counterparts on a number of indicators related to their performance. They are more electorally popular which is in line with previous research. They are more dependable, too, and vote along the party line more frequently than their male colleagues. Finally, female legislators are as productive as their male counterparts in terms of their
legislative activity. The study thus shows that Czech party recruiters, who are nearly exclusively male, have no reason to think that women constitute an electoral or legislative liability. Nevertheless, a careful study of the renomination dynamics show that while all three indicators of incumbents’ electoral and legislative performance - electability, dependability and legislative activity, are linked to their renomination outcomes, female and male incumbents do not get the same returns on the same performance when renomination decisions are made. The most striking finding concerns dependability. While being an astound supporter of the party line wins an average male incumbent a better pre-election ballot spot at next election, the association runs in the opposite direction for female incumbents. Those female incumbents who are less loyal get promoted while the opposite holds for their male counterparts. The fact that female and male incumbents are evaluated differently when renomination decisions are made is an indicator that the gendered nature of the political arena, which is shown to negatively impact female political hopefuls wishing to enter politics, continues to affect the political success of female incumbents.

This study demonstrates the ways in which renomination can be used as an empirical tool for studying representation-related issues. Proponents of affirmative action along with a number of scholars anticipate that once a sufficient number of women get elected, their presence in politics will help to transform the gendered nature of the political arena and challenge the stereotypical views of women’s unsuitability for a career in politics. The results presented in this study provide mixed support for this hypothesis. Despite female incumbents’ superior performance, they continue to be treated differentially when renomination decisions are made. Female incumbency might not thus be the much sought-after cure to women’s underrepresentation in politics as some assume.

Study 3: Are entrepreneurial parties the much sough-after cure for women’s underrepresentation in politics? Nope.

The final study in this dissertation uses renomination as an empirical tool to study the potentially gendered nature of entrepreneurial parties, a new breed of parties which began to pop up on the world’s political map from the late 1980s onwards (Hopkin & Paolucci, 1999; McDonnell, 2013; Gauja, 2015; Calise, 2015; Kopeček, 2016; Bolleyer & Bytzek, 2017; Hloušek & Kopeček, 2017; Mazzoleni & Voerman, 2017; Kefford & McDonnell, 2018). Commonly known as business-firm, personal or personalistic parties, these parties might have what it takes to make one’s gender an insignificant factor for one’s political career. These new parties are unprecedentedly leader-dominated with the party leader doing
most of the ballot creation and rank-ordering him/herself (Panebianco, 1988; Schumacher & Giger, 2017). They are also new, which means that gendered norms, habits, rituals that characterise established parties and which have their roots in the times when politics were nearly exclusively dominated by men might simply not take root. Finally, entrepreneurial parties build their appeal on presenting themselves as an alternative to the clientelism- and corruption-ridden political establishment. To present a convincing alternative, entrepreneurial parties openly compare themselves to how business firms are run and reward productivity, legislative activity and competence of their rank-and-file legislators. A combination of these factors makes up for a reasonable expectation that entrepreneurial parties might offer a more gender-neutral working environment to their female incumbents (Kopeček, 2016; Hloušek & Kopeček, 2017; Mazzoleni & Voerman, 2017; Kefford & McDonnell, 2018).

An observational study of Slovakia’s oldest entrepreneurial party founded in 2008, which coincidentally features the highest share of female MPs in the current parliament and a female deputy leader, reveals that the expectation of entrepreneurial parties potentially providing a more gender-neutral working conditions is flawed. Despite the newness of these parties, women seem to be subjected to very similar gendered constraints to those found in established political parties, which make them underperform in essential tasks expected of them and on which they are evaluated on. The study thus shows that the potential of new entrepreneurial parties in offering a more inclusive environment for female legislators is limited. Women continue to fall prey to the same structural impediments that characterise established political parties hampering their chances to perform on par with their male colleagues and jeopardise their renomination chances.

Conclusions and avenues for future research

This dissertation offers one of the most comprehensive studies of renomination dynamics in FLPR systems available thus far. It demonstrates that the study of renomination is intrinsically interesting as a means of deepening our knowledge about contemporary political parties, mapping out the candidate-selection and ballot-creation strategies they employ and shedding light on issues related to accountability and representation in modern PR systems. The dissertation examines whether incumbents’ political performance shapes their renomination chances despite the growing centralisation of decision-making power within contemporary political parties. The essential research question that binds all three studies comprised in this dissertation reads as follows. In a po-
political party where power is centralised and where party unity is strictly enforced, are rank-and-file legislators rewarded for their legislative efforts and electoral successes? The answer to this question is yes. The studies that follow clearly demonstrate that incumbents’ electoral popularity and legislative performance affect their renomination outcomes in a significant way. This is a finding that is of relevance to both the academic world and the general public.

Today’s political parties do not resemble the ‘mass party’ ideal coined half a century ago in any way. The de-alignment of political parties from social cleavages made them less dependent on the support of a relatively rigid electorate but has also deprived them of the source of organically loyal cadres from which political candidates used to be drafted. The drive to appeal to as wide an electorate as possible makes the wide-membership bottom-up model of party organisation obsolete and paves the way for an ever-growing centralisation of power in the hands of the party leadership, capital-intensive political campaigning, growing personalisation of politics and a declining role of ideological confrontation. All these changes have an impact on how political parties go about selecting their candidates and which candidate profiles they are likely to select. On the legislator level, the growing centralisation of decision-making power and declining internal democracy call for strategies aimed at minimising dissent and safeguarding party unity. Which incumbent qualities, traits and behaviour are rewarded in such settings? This dissertation has provided some of the much-needed answers to this question.

The three studies uncovered various mechanisms that characterise incumbent renomination in FLPR systems of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Both these countries feature fragmented multiparty systems and are dominated by leader-driven political parties. Two broad findings deserve to be highlighted. First, the dissertation examined how the party leaders, who grow ever more powerful, respond to individual popularity of their rank-and-file legislators which, while an inevitable consequence of the growing personalisation of party politics, might put party unity at risk. The dissertation shows that the party selectors do reward some of the electorally popular incumbents with better pre-election ballot spots, supporting the notion that preference voting in FLPR systems facilitates greater individual accountability. The finding is of relevance to voters who are unsure about the importance of indicating their preference for individual candidates. It turns out that if a candidate who is placed on the bottom of the party list receives a considerable share of preference votes and gets elected as a result, s/he is very likely to be awarded a much more electable ballot spot on the ballot at next election. This means that party elites do not dare to disregard voters’ preferences when deciding which of their incumbents should be given the most electable ballot positions. While this is a piece of good news for those who believe
that the voters should exercise more direct power in shaping the political fortunes of individual legislators, the significance of this finding should be assessed with caution. This is because the dissertation also showed that those incumbents who got elected as a result of preference voting also turn out to be among the most astounding party loyalists who do not use their seemingly independent mandates to challenge their party superiors. Second, the dissertation cast doubt on the expectation that female incumbency can help to de-gender political parties and facilitate women’s inclusion in politics. Using renomination as a testing ground, this dissertation found limited support for the hypothesis that if women are given a chance to show their electoral potential and legislative competence, the stereotypical views of their unsuitability for a career in politics will no longer shape their political fortunes. The dissertation shows that female incumbents in both established and new entrepreneurial parties continue to face structural obstacles that only affect them and not their male colleagues.

Taken together, the dissertation advances our knowledge of the internal functioning of political parties in FLPR systems and contributes to a number of fields in political science, most notably party politics and politics and gender.

Despite offering a significant contribution to the study of renomination, this study leaves a number of important questions unanswered and paves the way for future scholarly inquiries into the dynamics of renomination. This final section offers a limited selection of unexplored avenues for future research. First, renomination inquiries into closed-list PR systems are much needed. To my knowledge, only four studies exist to date that offer insights into the dynamics of renomination in these systems. Galasso and Nannicini (2011), for instance, confirm the common expectation that party recruiters in CL systems place party loyalists into safe positions on the party ballots. Yildirim et al. (2017), however, show that even though loyalty is often assumed to be the most crucial determinant of incumbents’ renomination chances in CL systems, Turkish party recruiters do seem to reward legislative activity of those incumbents who have been elected from unsafe ballot slots. Incumbents elected from safe spots are, however, penalised for proposing bills as this is seen as an unwanted cultivation of personal popularity. In a similar vein, Borghetto and Lisi (2018) show that Portuguese incumbents elected from unsafe seats are more active in the legislature as a way of proving their value to the party elites. Finally, Marangoni and Russo (2018) show that being active in the legislature, and more specifically asking questions, does not improve the probability of getting renominated and might even hamper one’s renomination prospects. But if legislators’ activity is seldom rewarded with better re-election prospects, why have legislators at all? If loyalty is the single most decisive factor behind one’s renomination
chances, would it not be more cost-efficient if only the party leaders were elected to the parliament and the weight of their respective votes would be determined by the vote share their party secured in the election? Future studies into accountability of CL systems are in order with a special focus on legislators’ misconduct. If some incumbents get involved in corrupt activities yet remain loyal to the party line, do they still get renominated? Another potential avenue for future research are gendered dynamics of renomination in CL systems with a special focus on loyalty. Can the gendered dynamics described in this dissertation be also found in CL systems? And if so, what effect do they have on descriptive representation of women in these systems?

Another broad avenue for future research is gendered dynamics of renomination under various quota regimes. The two case countries probed in this dissertation are completely quota-free, which was deemed methodologically desirable since the aim was to investigate party selectors’ undiluted attitudes towards female incumbents. There are types of gender quotas that require party selectors to place a pre-defined share of candidates of both sexes on the ballots across a number of elections. Such quotas do not only affect first-time recruitment of candidates but also renomination. It is vital to investigate what impact gender quotas have on renomination patterns of female incumbents. Which incumbent profiles are retained and which are de-selected? This is an especially important question given that past research shows that one of the unintended consequences of affirmative action is a clear deterioration of female incumbents’ electoral competitiveness (Górecki & Kukołowicz, 2014).

Research into the informal aspects of incumbent renomination is also necessary. Past research shows that candidate selections are more often than not plagued by informal decision-making and poor adherence to formal rules (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2016; Butler & Preece, 2016; Verge & Claveria, 2017, among others). More detailed inquiries into how informal norms, practices and rituals shape party selectors’ evaluation of incumbents are necessary. Such research ideally requires an ethnographic or interpretivist approach aimed at mapping out meanings that both incumbents and party selectors attach to the process of renomination. A detailed study of the role of familial, nepotistic or clientelistic ties in the renomination process would complement the findings presented in this dissertation and pave the way for a more holistic understanding of the process.
References


56


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