

Looking for a Healthy Mix?

The Relation between Selection Methods and Candidates' Characteristics:

The Case of Political Experience

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Starting points

The freedom of political parties

Political parties enjoy nearly absolute freedom so as to determine how their political organisations will select individuals that will run for elections in their behalf. The rules of the game are up to the political parties to a greater or lesser extent on two dimensions: (1) how to select candidates and how to draft electoral lists – i.e. the selection method and (2) who to select and which position to attribute to which candidate – i.e. the choice of candidates.

The parties are first allowed to define their own rules, and to respect them or not. They are in that sense both ‘judge and party’; “the rule maker and the rule addressee largely coincide” (Sartori 1976, 84). The rules of the game could be written in official party documents or nowhere. Besides, some candidates could be selected out of the rules while some others would have followed the official path. In brief, when it goes about candidate selection methods, political parties do want they like. Candidate selection is largely unregulated.

In addition, political parties are more or less free, depending on polities, regarding candidates and their characteristics, i.e. what issues the selection process. In most cases, attributes of candidates are regulated to at least a minimal extent by the electoral law. States regulate who is entitled to be a candidate for elections, and hence who is entitled to sit in the Parliament. Criteria can be divided into two categories: those that apply to each candidate individually and those that have to be respected at an upper level (mainly the list level). The most obvious criterion for the first category refers to the civil and political rights. Related to the latter, electoral rules often fix a minimum age for prospective candidates, that does not necessarily correspond to the minimum age to vote. Other potential criteria applying to every candidate on its own encompass citizenship, place of birth or residence, party membership, and even the payment of a fee or the collection of signatures within and/or outside the party (Krook 2009). The second category of criteria parties have to comply with concern candidates as a group, be it on a list or in a given territorial area, or the party’s candidates as a whole. Gender is the most notable criterion fitting in this category. For an increasing number of elections, electoral rules encourage or even constrain political parties to present balanced candidates’ lists. Measures vary from target figures to strict quotas regulating lists as a whole or even some key positions on the lists (e.g. the eligible, “realistic”, positions). Electoral quotas may also concern for instance candidates’ age or ethnicity.

Yet, even though electoral rules stipulate some criteria candidates have to comply with either individually or as a group, political parties keep some degree of freedom when electoral rules are less constraining on those aspects, and more importantly, for all these criteria not mentioned in the law – informal criteria (Krook 2009). Political parties have free hands when selecting, among the pool of aspirants, candidates with all professional and educational backgrounds, all physical characteristics, having had the most various political experience and expertise, defending various ideological visions, and so on and so forth. The most varied aspects of society may be reflected in the party’s selection, or not. A political party is indeed also able and legally permitted to present fully homogeneous lists, of course, within the limits of existing legal quotas.

The paradox of this freedom of political parties is that these organisations play a critical role in the process of political representation in our representative democracies. To represent means to be there for the representative, but also to act in the representative’s name, substantively but also symbolically. The act of representation is a contract. It places representatives within the so-called democratic chain of delegation. The focus of this paper, i.e. the candidates, might be situated in this chain between the voters and the MPs. What makes democracy is notably the fact that some principals act on behalf of the people, i.e. the

citizens. The citizens might then select and control these representatives. It is via this relationship that the political parties play a key role. They perform a linkage function by placing candidates for public office. Political parties represent but also convey the citizens' ideas in the political arena. They are at the same time representative and expressing agencies. In this respect, they might be charged with the responsibility of the non-representativeness of Parliaments.

This incrimination addressed to political parties is caused by the fact that political parties are responsible for the selection of candidates who will run for office. Research on candidate selection has widely evolved in particular since the early 2000's. Candidate selection in list systems may be defined as a process taking place within political parties and resulting in a given set of candidates listed on the election ballot under the party's name. It is a multidimensional concept, which involves several stages, several actors and various types of regulations. The study of candidate selection falls within the broader frame of political recruitment that scrutinises the trajectories and ambitions of politicians. Candidate selection is relevant because it may impact the composition of the assemblies and of the political elite at large. The electoral candidates are especially relevant in these times of personalisation of politics because they embody the party's image. Studying the mechanisms of candidate selection is finally useful for the understanding of the power relationships within political parties as organisations. Yet it is not easy to research candidate selection processes given chiefly the secrecy and the problems of comparability. Researchers might also pay attention to the informal side of candidate selection next to the formal rules.

The use of information shortcuts by voters and selectorates as heuristics

This paper's focus on the candidates' profile is not out of place nor irrelevant. It is indeed acknowledged that Belgian voters increasingly tend to vote for candidates rather than for parties (André, Wauters, and Pilet 2012; Wauters, Weekers, and Pilet 2004; Wauters and Weekers 2008). Candidates are more and more important and central to the electoral process. As part of the personalisation of politics trends (Karvonen 2010), it appears that the traits and appeals of individual candidates may nowadays "frequently enter voters' decision calculus" (André, Wauters, and Pilet 2012, 1). By contrast, ideological issues would matter less than the attributes of the candidates (Ansolabehere 2006).

If one assumes that voters tend to cast their votes on the basis of candidates' characteristics rather than party's characteristics, the central question is how do voters deem the candidates' traits. There is a growing amount of literature suggesting that voters may use 'information shortcuts' as proxies to determine their vote choice. A shortcut would be something that simplifies the voter's decision process in order to find a candidate with a specific appealing attribute to whom to give, for instance, a preference vote (Shugart, Valdini, and Suominen 2005). Shortcuts are heuristics (Cutler 2002), which would help voters resolve a problem, i.e. in this case, choosing which party or candidate to vote for. Relying on candidates' traits rather than other criteria is indeed tempting. Deciding on the basis of personal characteristics is obviously 'the least costly method' (Valdini 2006). As put by Tavits (2010), there is a general human tendency to opt for the easiest decision-making path, i.e. employing personal qualifications of candidates in one's vote choice. It would evidently be more costly to gather information on candidates' or parties' issue positions, for instance (Cutler 2002).

In this era of increasing personalised politics, politicians would also enter this game by highlighting how they differ from their contenders, from their party or from the other parties – based on their personal traits more than their opinions (Shugart, Valdini, and Suominen 2005). Voters would thus be tempted to directly rely on these traits as a shortcut indicating that this candidate would match their preferences. The objective personal characteristics of candidates like their age, their gender or their race would send a (stereotyped) signal to voters about the candidates' subjective characteristics, such as their behaviour, their managerial

capacities, their eloquence, their ideological inclinations, etc. (Put and Maddens 2013; Tavits 2010)

It has been demonstrated that voters' capacities of name recognition of candidates are rather low (Norris 2004). Instead of a deep knowledge of candidates, voters would rely on simple characteristics such as 'the Christian Democrat woman', 'the incumbent man' or 'the young carpetbagger' (Norris 2004; Tavits 2010; Valdini 2006). For instance, the fact that a candidate is originated from one place could send the message to voters "I know what you want", or the fact that he has already held a political mandate "I know how to get it" (Shugart, Valdini, and Suominen 2005). The information shortcuts could lead voters to positively or negatively assess these candidates because of stereotypes, or even more simply, because of the similarity between the voter and the candidate, based on these personal characteristics. This falls back to the concept of mirror representation, elaborated earlier (Mansbridge 1999).

The straightforward counterargument would, of course, state that only poorly informed voters might use information shortcuts to determine how to cast their vote. The low sophisticated voters would rely on personal traits because otherwise their decision would anyway be random (Cutler 2002). The shortcut would then compensate a lack of information on other domains such as the policy positions (Popkin 1991). It has been instead proved that even sophisticated voters do rely on shortcuts based on personal traits, even though they mix this information with more sophisticated information about the candidates. "They simply combine more decision criteria in a broader and deeper net than the less well informed." (Cutler 2002, 483) In sum, all voters would use information shortcuts.

Although all kinds of voters could rely on information shortcuts, voters casting their votes in some electoral systems would be more inclined to use this type of criterion. When voters have the possibility to cast a vote for individual candidates, information shortcuts will obviously play a greater role. Voters must (or can) determine which candidate they prefer among several candidates (Tavits 2010). They will therefore be keener to engage trait-based information shortcuts than voters who only have the possibility to vote for a party (Valdini 2012). There is in Belgium an intraparty preference voting system. Voters may choose among candidates and in this way they offer these candidates increased chances to enter the Parliament. Information shortcuts are thus expected to enter the voters' decision.

Valdini (2006, 2012) argues that political parties may be aware of this usage of information shortcuts and act consequently. Party elites would adapt their candidate selection strategies to meet the underlying voters' demands for candidates with given personal characteristics. The attributes of candidates may not merely be 'interesting pieces of biographical information about candidates', but may become important tools to connect with voters (Tavits 2010). "Selectorates in the electoral context of a decisive intraparty preference vote anticipate the voters' turn to personal traits as substitutes for full information, and construct their lists with this in mind." (Valdini 2012, 743)

The shortcuts associated with candidates' personal characteristics are, however, not universal. Voters may not value the characteristics the same way, i.e. some may prefer women over men, younger over older candidates, candidates with one ethnic background instead of another, and so on and so forth. Party selectorates may then prefer to strive for a balance on the lists rather than uniform personal characteristics. They would then use a selection strategy ensuring a balance between positive and negative shortcuts for a maximum of voters. This exercise is called ticket-balancing (Put and Maddens 2013), or finding the 'healthy mix' of candidates (Meier 2008). By balancing the ticket, selectorates "cheaply and easily broaden the appeal of the list to the voters" (Valdini 2012, 741). Ticket-balancing may be a rational strategy for a party, since voters may only wish to vote for a candidate who shares their

gender identity, who comes from the same region or who corresponds to their preferred political profile (André, Depauw, Shugart, and Chytilek 2015).

It is assumed in this paper that the parties wish to present candidates appealing to voters (André, Depauw, Shugart, and Chytilek 2015; Celis and Erzeel 2015), who base their vote (partly) on information shortcuts because they do not know the candidates in detail. These hints tell them that these candidates are the appropriate candidates to vote for. A particular type of information shortcut is studied in particular: the political experience of the electoral candidates.

The political experience of the candidates is a widely studied candidates' trait appealing to voters. What is called the 'incumbency effect' involves that candidates with prior political experience are more valued than candidates with no political experience (Ansolabehere, Hansen, Hirano, and Snyder 2007; Cox and Katz 1996; Gelman and King 1990; Shair-Rosenfield and Hinojosa 2014). But newcomers may also be appealing to voters, and thus wanted and needed by parties (Celis and Erzeel 2015; Indrithason and Kristinsson 2015). Voters may believe 'I trust this candidate because he knows the job and he has already proved to be good at being a parliamentarian' or conversely 'I would like some fresh blood in politics because I am not satisfied with the current political class'.

If parties do indeed value candidates' personal characteristics over or next to other candidates' attributes such as ideological preferences or competencies, the underlying question asked in this paper is whether all parties behave similarly. It is argued that the way political parties select their candidates may enhance or hinder their propensity to rely on candidates' personal traits. In particular, the paper studies whether the selection mode may favour or rather disfavour the selection of candidates with or without political experience.

Research question

This paper means to build the bridge between studies on political parties, on the one hand, and studies focusing on the sociology of political elites on the other. The political science literature has so far lot more focused only on the outcome of the selection process, i.e. the final candidates' lists, than on the process. Besides, the few studies that really tackle the process do not link this analysis to the characteristics of candidates. As Norris and Lovenduski (1995, 11) put, "[W]e need to understand *who* are members of the legislative elite, but, more importantly, *why* and *how* they got there. Just as studies of party organisation tended to neglect the outcome, so studies of the outcome have tended to neglect the process." This paper aims to understand *which* individuals obtain which spots on the list as a consequence of *how* they are selected, i.e. some dimensions of the selection processes. Both sides of the coin are therefore scrutinised and connected.

The neo-institutionalist approach paved the way for scholars studying political phenomena according to new perspectives. The selection of candidates could be examined not only as an institution that reflects politics, i.e. that is impacted by the political system and its components, but also as an institution that could affect politics, i.e. weighting on the political system and its components (Hazan and Rahat 2010). This paper adopts the neo-institutional approach with the aim of studying the composition of the political elite, and in the long run the mechanisms of representation in legislative assemblies (via the elected candidates). It takes candidate selection as an independent variable that may *affect* other variables.

The literature acknowledges the potential influence of candidate selection on candidates' profile although the works empirically testing the impact of one on the other are quite rare, at least works testing at once the impact on several candidates' characteristics. As Hazan and Rahat (2010, 12) concede, "[candidate selection] is a central aspect of the recruitment process

influencing the type of legislators elected". Michael Gallagher (1988b) indicated that the influence of candidate selection as an institution might be reflected among others in the characteristics of the candidates. Richard Katz (2001, 280) also recognized that "different procedures are likely to be to the advantages of different candidates or types of candidates". Field and Siavelis are more precise and state that the candidate selection processes may affect the types of candidates, and in particular "the degree to which they represent significant representational cleavages" (2008, 625). They detail some candidates' characteristics that could be impacted such as age, ethnicity, gender, the amount and type of prior political or professional experience, and ideological identity. Smith and Tsutsumi (2016, 1) summarize the expected pattern: "*how* a party selects its candidates, and *who* in the party decides, can have an impact on the types of candidates who are ultimately nominated, the ideological positions they take, and their behaviour as candidates and legislators." This paper aims at empirically testing the hypothesis of the relation between the process of selection and the type of candidates selected, i.e. who are the nominated candidates in terms of political experience.

The research question unfolds as follows: "**To what extent do candidate selection processes matter for the candidates' profile regarding political experience?**" A large variation is observed regarding candidate selection processes and on various aspects of the process. Quite substantial variations are also found when analysing the proportion of candidates on the electoral lists in terms of newcomers versus insiders. The puzzling question that this paper addresses is whether both are linked and, in particular, according to which patterns the selection processes are connected to the allocation of list positions among candidates.

Hypotheses: relation between political experience and candidate selection

One of the major political traits of electoral candidates is related to the experience they have in politics. Political experience means that these candidates already know 'how it works'. They have already experienced a selection process, and succeeded at least once in the past in obtaining a position on a list. They know how their party handles the list drafting procedures and are acquainted with the process. Besides, they are obviously also familiar with election campaigns. Experienced candidates may "have become more skilled at public position-taking on 'issues'" (Mayhew 1974, 312). The chances are higher that they would be better at political communication. More importantly, voters know them because they already participated in political debates, they have shaken hands on markets and have had their face on campaign posters and flyers.

Name recognition is a major advantage for experienced candidates in comparison to newcomers (Mayhew 1974). The dismantlement of the traditional cleavages of the society also concur to a situation where voters focus more and more on issues and individuals (Franklin, Mackie, and Valen 1992; Scarrow, Webb, and Farrell 2000). Voters tend to increasingly rely on individual characteristics to make their vote choice, instead of party characteristics – among which their incumbency status (Cox and Katz 1996). The fact that some candidates are well known and attractive could therefore constitute a major advantage for parties. The growing dissatisfaction towards political parties and voters dealignment would favour experienced candidates (Montero and Gunther 2002).

More experienced candidates may even have managed to access Parliament. These candidates have accumulated legislative (or even executive) experience, which may increase their legitimacy to contest for another term given their expertise for the job. They are able to rely on accomplishments and not only on promises (Gallagher 1988a). These advantages granted to incumbents are commonly labelled in the political science literature as 'the incumbency advantage'. The main effects of the incumbency advantage are related to a facilitated access to resources and to the media (Cox and Katz 1996). Incumbents could more easily rely on

human resources such as their staff in the Parliament, and incumbents' visibility in the media may indeed be more significant than the remaining aspirants. All in all, politically experienced aspirants stand for safety in the selectorates' eyes, both regarding internal and external aspects. These individuals are accustomed both with intraparty and extra-party election-related activities.

Yet, if political experience would be the panacea, electoral lists would always be drafted the same, i.e. the same candidates will run for office at every election. It is, however, far from being the case. In all political parties, there is some kind of turnover. In some parties, there are even term limits as an 'antidote' to political professionalization (MacKenzie 2014). These limitations impose hurdles that may turn the well-known 'incumbency advantage' into a handicap (Hazan 2002). The institutionalised limitation of the professional political career is often seen as a positive feature for democracy because of the greatest variety of candidates that this measure provides and the potential of weakening of the existing political elite (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). The fact that there are term limits may constitute an incentive for newcomers to dare to submit their candidacy (Fox and Lawless 2004). In sum, at each election, some experienced candidates have to cede their position to new and inexperienced candidates. These candidates are obviously not familiar with the selection process nor with the campaign and even less with the legislative work in an elected assembly or executive responsibilities in a cabinet.

Turnover does, however, exist, and this may be for good reasons. "If all incumbents are automatically reselected, then the party will appear monotonous, which is not a good image." (Hazan and Rahat 2010, 28) New candidates bring some fresh air in the team, new ideas and new ways to conduct a campaign (MacKenzie 2014). They offer to the party a privileged access to other networks. They also increase the legitimacy of the political sphere that appears to be open to the external world, i.e. to citizens (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). Political inexperience may also be the consequence of the young age of aspirants who did not have the opportunity to run yet. But the involvement of politically inexperienced candidates may also be the cause of the de-involvement of politically experienced candidates (Mayhew 1974). Selectorates may wish to "punish MPs who displayed dissident behaviour or caused damage to the party image" (Put, Gouglas, and Maddens 2015, 4). The non-selection of incumbents, also labelled deselection or incumbency defeat (Hazan and Rahat 2010), could also be the reason why non-incumbents receive a position. In sum, political experience could clearly constitute an advantage in selection and election contests, but political inexperience could all be sold to selectorates and voters and yield satisfactory results.

This paper draws on the belief that, given the multimember districts system existing in Belgium, electoral lists would be balanced, i.e. they will comprise both experienced and inexperienced candidates. "A balance is needed between incumbents and aspirants – wholesale replacement of incumbents is not good for a party, and is also not likely to happen." (Hazan and Rahat 2010, 28) The striking question now is whether some features of the selection process may encourage a greater share either of experienced candidates or of outsiders. Does the mode of selection affect the extent of reshuffling of party lists compared to previous elections?

Some scholars have already reflected on the relationship between candidate selection and political turnover. The arguments presented in the literature will help build hypotheses so as to the extent and nature of the relationship between the two variables.

Analysing the impact of candidate selection processes on the share of experienced candidates helps understanding the degree of competitiveness of the procedure, i.e. the ease with which newcomers get access to the electoral lists. The literature that perceives competitiveness as the turnover rate assesses the share of outsiders versus insiders or the fate of outgoing

representatives. There is, however, other strands of political science literature that do not consider the turnover as the measure of intraparty competition. The degree of competitiveness of a selection process could indeed be evaluated on the basis of different methods. Some scholars rely on real figures to measure the degree of competitiveness. These studies use data from the political parties' selection processes to calculate the real levels of competition that occurred during a selection process.

Regarding the literature on the effect of selection processes on turnover and competitiveness, references are quite rare. There exist studies of institutional determinants of turnover but these rarely address the question of the selection mode of candidates (Manow 2007; Matland 2005; Squire 1988). For instance, Heinsohn and Freitag (2012) test a large variety of hypotheses about the impact of institutions on legislative turnover such as the electoral system, the existence of term limits, the extent of professionalisation of the structures, the legislative power of the assembly, etc. They do, however, not tackle the intraparty decision-making resulting in electoral lists.

Research on this topic is not extensively developed, but outside the case of American primaries. This literature on the US is yet not very useful for the case studied in this research because of the major differences existing between both. First, the US case evokes selection procedures in the run-up to elections at the majoritarian rule with single-member districts. As a consequence, political experience is harder to accumulate because there is always only one candidate per constituency. There is less room for variations. What is more, American primaries usually involve a much larger group of selectors than the broadest selectorates that could exist in Belgium. The voters do indeed have a say via a so-called open primary while this situation does not exist in Belgian political parties' selection processes. The most open selection method in Belgium involves party rank-and-file members during a closed primary (i.e. the typical European primary where only registered party members are entitled, with sometimes a waiting period (Kenig, Cross, Pruyssers, and Rahat 2015)). In sum, the arguments should be inspired by what scholars have written in the primaries literature, but with the required analytical distance due to the distinctiveness of the case studied in this research. As a consequence, most arguments draw on studies of PR list systems, which best fit with the Belgian case.

Although this paper does not focus on incumbents *per se* – but well on all candidates, it seems obvious that reselection and deselection of incumbents are key elements of the discussion. Deselection refers to “the refusal of the selectors to reselect an outgoing deputy as a candidate” (Gallagher 1988b, 17), or from the incumbents' perspective, to “a situation where a sitting legislator fails to be renominated by her party” (Matland and Studlar 2004, 97). And conversely, reselection entails the choice of selectorates to select the same candidate anew for the next elections.

Candidate selection has *de facto* substantial consequences on the turnover rate of the political elite since selectorates hold this power to reselect or deselect incumbents. One may assume that the selectorates' choices are rooted in this first fundamental decision: whether or not to readopt the outgoing representatives. Selectorates may indeed start the list-drafting procedures with ‘what they have’, i.e. the list of candidates for the previous elections, or at the incumbent level, the outgoing parliamentary faction. It is not likely that selectorates always start from scratch and do not consider previous choices that may have been judicious (Hazan and Rahat 2010; Matland and Studlar 2004). The reselection also entails a diplomatic aspect because intra-party conflicts could emerge from not understood selection choices, what may be damaging for the party image (Norris and Lovenduski 1995), especially on the eve of such an important event as elections (Hazan and Rahat 2010). After the assessment of the previous decisions, i.e. which incumbents are kept, and who will be withdrawn from the list, selectorates may start looking for fresh new blood. At the list level, this means recruiting new

candidates, and at the level of realistic positions, this means moving some candidates upper in the list and accordingly giving them greater chances to enter the Parliament. The extent to which selectorates will rely on past choices to make the new lists will affect the variations in political experience on the list – what is analysed in this paper.

Deselection of incumbents seems not to be usual for political parties. Matland and Studlar (2004, 97) assert, “deselection *appears to be* a relatively rare phenomenon, the norm being that incumbents desiring to run for reelection are renominated”. Two major elements emerge from this assertion. The scholars emphasize the fact that there is no general rule as regards the reselection of incumbents. As Hazan and Rahat (2010, 29) maintain, “automatic readoption seems to be less common than it used to be”. Besides, Matland and Studlar (2004) highlight the fact that the key actors in the mechanism may not be the selectorate. Candidates also have a say in the decision-making process. They may not wish to pursue their career by running for another election. Scholars in this case may see deselection as a sign of mistrust from the selectorates’ side although it is the own desire from the incumbent not to run anymore (Put, Gouglas, and Maddens 2015). Selectorates are obviously powerful players, but so do incumbent candidates who can call on resources that are independent from the party (Cox and Katz 1996). Incumbents enjoy (electoral) popularity and can rely on a personal team. If they are not satisfied with the choices made by selectorates – and that they enjoy sufficient and loyal resources, they may well leave the party and even switch party (Power and Mochel 2008).

Being strong enough to be able to oppose the party selectorates is, of course, not feasible for all candidates and incumbents. From the perspective of most of the candidates, reselection is crucial. For non-elected candidates, reselection means that the party selectorates still trust them. They keep an importance in the intraparty arena and may represent the party towards the outside world. But reselection is in particular relevant for incumbents that ‘live off politics’ (or from politics) and do not ‘live for politics’ (Katz 2001). Weber (1958) made this distinction to reflect the process of professionalisation of politics. Professional politicians are not amateur politicians that consider politics only as a passion; they consider their political mandate as a job. Accordingly, the stakes are high for these candidates at the moment of the selection process. These candidates are not keen to lose their job, and in turn their income, their “material means of subsistence” (Mosca, 1939 in Bochel and Denver 1983). The development of their political career is highly dependent of selectorates (Dodeigne 2015).

Given the fact that most incumbents are likely to be willing to be reselected, one may thus expect the competition between candidates to be tough, but not for the same reasons. Some candidates see the selection process as a job interview, as a possibility to pursue an already started political career while some others may see the process as an opportunity to climb higher on the political ladder and reach the Parliament, or for less ambitious candidates simply to reinforce their position in the party by maintaining their presence on the list – thus in the electoral campaign. In sum, exploring the variations in political experience among candidates does not merely reflect the share of experienced candidates on a list, it mirrors the result of a potentially intense struggle between individuals with their own purposes but with the same aim: being on the list.

Intraparty competition is not intrinsically negative, even though it reflects intraparty tensions. Sartori (1976) underlines the fact that in every party, there are rivalry, disagreements and battling. Nonetheless, on the contrary to Duverger (1951) that stated that intraparty competition is positive because it may reflect pluralism – and this is in particular the case when there is no or few interparty competition, Sartori argues that what matters most is interparty competition, that could not be substituted by the other kinds of competition. Intraparty competition echoes a direct confrontation between individuals (i.e. between two candidates aiming at the same list position). This could not be valued as much as the indirect

confrontation between two candidates running for the same seat in the Parliament. In the electoral arena, “they vie with each other with an eye to the voters” (Sartori 1976, 44), although intraparty competition is short-legged, according to the scholar. Despite its low-ranking role compared to interparty competition, as underlined by Hazan and Rahat, intraparty competition remains important for democracy. “Competition – a situation when a plurality of alternatives is presented to the selectors from time to time – is expected to create responsiveness and accountability” (Hazan and Rahat 2010, 124).

Internal rivalry may yield positive results in that incumbents may feel “less secure” and accordingly be “more responsive” towards the party (Indrithason and Kristinsson 2015, 6). The fact that outsiders have their chances within the party, and in particular that they may succeed in obtaining a position on the list put the incumbents in an insecure posture. They have to prove their added value to selectorates and could not merely rely on their past success. Intraparty competition encourages responsiveness *vis-à-vis* the party but also accountability *vis-à-vis* the voters. Candidates may take into account that voters face alternatives and therefore adapt their legislative behaviour accordingly.

Nonetheless, too intense intraparty competition may be detrimental to the party. Intraparty rivalry creates factions, which “have [n]ever paved the way to a democracy” (Sartori 1976, 44). Party disunity may have damaging effects on the party electoral success. Indrithason and Kristinsson pinpoint the risk of strong conflicts within the party, taking the example of Icelandic political parties where battles for selection had consequences until the Election Day. “Wounds inflicted during the primaries have not always healed before the election.” (Indrithason and Kristinsson 2015, 10). In order to maintain party cohesion and not to hinder electoral success, political parties may then be cautious during the selection process by not stimulating too heavy struggles between candidates, in particular between insiders and outsiders. In that respect, some parties try to minimise intraparty conflict by setting rules according to which incumbents do not have to pass through the selection process (Hazan and Rahat 2010). They establish automatic reselection in order to maximise the party’s chances at elections.

Expected relationships between candidate selection processes’ features and turnover rates

This section presents the main arguments accounting for the expected relationships between the key features of the candidate selection processes and the share of experienced versus inexperienced candidates on electoral lists. The relevant characteristics of the selection process are outlined in turn, with the aim of uncovering to what extent they could affect the turnover rate on lists.

It has to be noted that one should expect generally low levels of turnover within candidates. As already outlined, the reselection of incumbents seems to be the norm, even in the Belgian PR system (Put, Gouglass, and Maddens 2015). Looking at variations in political experience in consequence equals comparing the different levels of turnover with each other and therefore taking into account the *relative* degrees of turnover. Low competition is in particular a characteristic of single-member districts where one refers to an open seat or a closed seat to describe whether the incumbent intends to run again or not (Hazan and Rahat 2010). In list systems such as Belgium, this terminology cannot be used. This does not entail that selectorates in multimember district systems are keener to deselect incumbents, but they do not face a dichotomous choice as selectorates in SMD systems do. The list system provides the opportunity to opt for an intermediate choice. The selectorates have the possibility to push some incumbent candidates down the list, rather than off the list. In this way, they soften the strict deselection, i.e. the incumbent is not on the list anymore, by merely giving the incumbent smaller chances to get elected again (Benedetto and Hix 2007). As put by Mitchell and Bradbury (2004: 289), “de-selection could effectively be achieved not just by non-

selection, but by ranking candidates so low on the list that it was impossible for them to win a seat.” This argument stresses the relevance of studying the turnover at the incumbent level, by focusing on incumbents selected in realistic positions, and not in all list positions. The study of this phenomenon could grasp the ‘virtual deselection’ of some incumbents by party selectorates.

The very first step of the selection process is the call for candidacy. At this stage already, the decisions made by parties may impact on the share of political experience within the list. Obviously, if **candidacy requirements** set rules regarding the experience of candidates, they may affect the final turnover rates. When rules do tackle the experience of candidates, it could be in favour of incumbents, i.e. of experienced candidates. In some parties, rules may be explicit, in that they stipulate that incumbents are automatically reselected. Incumbents do not have to face the same requirements as new candidates given that they do not pass through the selection process (Hazan and Rahat 2010). In these cases, turnover only occurs when an incumbent voluntarily retires and leaves her seat to a newcomer. Less strict rules may provide rigid requirements, which unintended or well favour insiders. For instance, aspirants may have to collect a certain number of signatures or supports within the party, or may have to pay a contest fee (Kenig 2008).

Rules may on the contrary be in disfavour of incumbents, i.e. they may encourage turnover and as a consequence variations in political experience across the list. The most well know rules hindering the selection of incumbents are the term limits. In this case, incumbents also face different requirements as outsiders but these impede on their chances of being reselected. Term limits may be strict, e.g. rules setting a maximum number of terms per person (Pierre and Widfeldt 1992), or more flexible, e.g. rules requiring that incumbents have to win a certain number of votes of the selectorates in order to be on the list again (Field 2006; Hazan and Rahat 2010). However, one has to bear in mind that informal rules may play a major role in that respect. Parties could indeed circumvent their own rules so as to keep a candidate in office (Poguntke 1993). As underlined, intraparty rules are specific in that political parties are the rulers and the ruled at the same time. It depends on the party only to respect its own rules.

In sum, one could expect that the lists for which candidacy is subject to requirements favouring incumbents’ reselection will show lower levels of turnover. Conversely, the lists of political parties where strict or flexible term limits are set are expected to score higher regarding turnover.

The major actors of the selection process are the selectorates. The features of the selecting bodies remain the main studied variables of candidate selection in the literature. On the basis of the literature, some expectations could be elaborated so as to the extent to which the nature of the selectorates could affect the variations in political experience on the electoral lists. The degrees of inclusiveness and of centralisation are studied in turn.

The **degree of centralisation** of the selection process is said to affect the level of intraparty competition. Decentralised mechanisms would encourage low levels of competition, i.e. low levels of turnover thus little variations in political experience. Conversely, centralised processes would ease the selection of newcomers, i.e. favouring greater variations in political experience.

Empirical studies have already found significant relationships between the degree of centralisation and of turnover. Put, Gouglass and Maddens (2015) proved on the basis of the Belgian case that national selectorates, i.e. centralised selectorates, tend to a greater extent than local selectorates to allocate incumbents to unrealistic and marginal list positions. This refers to the ‘virtual deselection’ where incumbents effectively run for office but with lower chances. “Competition is considerably higher in centralized candidate selection methods”

(Put, Gouglas, and Maddens 2015, 18). Ohman (cited in Hazan and Rahat 2010; 2004) showed that incumbent turnover in Ghana was higher in centralised selection process than in decentralised processes. Rahat, Hazan and Katz (2008) examined that in Israel the loss of incumbents was greater with centralised selectorates. In other words, more incumbents were defeated, and more “newcomers captured “their” positions” (Hazan and Rahat 2010, 140). In the German case, centralised selection at the Land level seem to provide more newcomers than selection processes organised at a lower level (Loewenberg 1966).

Decentralised selection processes refer to systems where the decision is mainly made at the local level, be it at the constituency level or even lower. Incumbents would be favoured in these processes in comparison with more centralised process, where decisions are made at a higher than constituency level, mostly at the party level (i.e. the national level). This situation is caused by several mechanisms related to the feeling of closeness between selectorates and aspirants and to strategic issues.

The distance between incumbents and local selectorates is closer than with central selectorates. This is the main reason why decentralised selection processes would favour lower levels of turnover or, in other words, would discourage the arrival of newcomers in politics and in the Parliament. Incumbents enjoy easier personal connections with local selectorates. This is caused the most obviously by the fact that numerous incumbents occupy key positions in the party hierarchy (Put, Gouglas, and Maddens 2015), and in particular at the local level where political experience may legitimise the individual aspiring for a party mandate. If incumbents are the local leaders, it is likely that they will know the selectorates in person, unless they are personally part of the selectorates. Even though some parties may provide rules preventing some aspirants to decide on their own selection, the closeness between incumbents and selectorates is self-evident. Besides this, incumbents also enjoy larger resources among which resources in terms of individuals supporting them within the party organisation. If not the incumbents themselves, their personal team (and future campaign team) and supporters could get in contact and convince the local selectorates, what is less easily feasible with national-level selectorates (Hazan and Rahat 2010).

The proximity between aspirants and selectors involves a situation where the local elite will protect the outgoing representatives, and even the candidates at previous elections (Benedetto and Hix 2007). This will be soon translated into the ‘readoption’ of the insiders at the expense of outsiders that do not enjoy the proximity with the decision-makers. Incumbents in this sense play on the aura they might have of being indispensable at the local level, in the party organisation (Put, Gouglas, and Maddens 2015).

On the contrary to decentralised selectorates, the distance between centralised selectorates and incumbents is larger. Of course one refers first to the geographical distance. Incumbents could not per definition be as close to the selectorates at the level of their own constituency as to the selectorates at the central party level, which may comprise individuals (be they leaders, delegates or members) that originate from all geographical regions covered by the party. But more importantly, the distance between centralised selectors and aspirants is broader at the psychological level as well. “National party organizations look at their MPs from a wider distance”, as highlighted by Put and his co-authors (Put, Gouglas, and Maddens 2015, 9). They may be less sensitive to the personal aura of candidates at the local level and may more easily replace them.

Next to the argument of closeness, some strategic reasons may explain why decentralised selection processes lead to lower levels of turnover. On the contrary to decentralised party organs where incumbents may occupy leading positions, centralised party bodies are constituted by individuals who may not be willing to reinforce potential challengers (Hazan and Rahat 2010). The reselection of incumbents favours the consolidation of a party elite

legitimised by the positions obtained in the campaign (and in the Parliament for incumbents). If incumbents win the party nomination election after election, they may have the feeling that their position within the party is strong and accordingly may be tempted to challenge the party establishment. As argued by Montabes and Ortega (2005) on the basis of the Spanish and Portuguese cases, centralised selectorates providing few chances for incumbents to be reselected prevent the consolidation of strong local party branches. “A conflict of interests between local and central party organizations may be one of the main reasons for the fact that, in most parties, national executives have ultimate formal powers over list composition.” (Montabes and Ortega 2005, 5) Letting the door open to newcomers may thus be strategic for centralised party selectorates not willing to lose their powerful position within the party organisation. Turnover at the candidate and parliamentary level may therefore prevent turnover at the party elite level.

Scholars describe all the relationship between selectorates’ centralisation and the levels of political experience on electoral lists in the same direction. Higher centralisation would breed higher turnover, i.e. more newcomers and fewer insiders. Regarding the **level of inclusiveness**, scholars are less homogeneous in their arguments. A majority of them contend that the more inclusive the selectorates, the lower the turnover. There are, however, scholars arguing the opposite: exclusive selectorates would favour insiders.

The literature on intraparty competition and candidate selection processes’ inclusiveness has yielded empirical results that do not corroborate each other. Obler (1974) showed that rank-and-file members of the Belgian socialist party in the 1960’s tended to vote by name recognition, i.e. they favoured incumbents. In order to counter this phenomenon, exclusive selectorates reserved some list position to other types of candidates, less known by the large public. Some decades later, other scholars proved the same (Put, Gouglas, and Maddens 2015). More inclusive selectorates, i.e. selection modes involving party members, would encourage lower levels of competition. They demonstrate for the Belgian case that incumbents have fewer chances to be deselected with larger selectorates than with smaller ones (leaders or delegates). Scholars working on Israel confirm that selectorates constituted of members breed competition but they argue that the degree of competition only reaches an average level (Rahat, Hazan, and Katz 2008). Even more competition is to be found in processes involving delegates, and lower levels of competition occur with exclusive selectorates, which favour incumbents.

The arguments supporting the negative relationship between inclusiveness and intraparty competition (and in turn, turnover) focus on the high levels of publicity granted to inclusive methods. Party primaries or polls indeed attract media attention because of the high number of individuals involved. Aspirants willing to succeed in obtaining a list position have to achieve access to the media, so as to enhance their chances and to get visibility *vis-à-vis* the selectorates. The aspirants’ personal reputation is essential since it is not feasible to get in contact with all selectors individually (Put, Gouglas, and Maddens 2015). Incumbents are therefore favoured because they already enjoy visibility and are able to mobilise a large number of decision-makers despite the difficulty to build interpersonal connections with a large group. The selection process is then “nothing more than a crude popularity contest in which the best known and liked aspirants, regardless of their factional affiliations or stands on issues, invariably secure the best places on the lists” (Obler 1974, 181). For challengers, however, it is harder to be visible and as a consequence to manage to convince selectors. As underlined by Obler (1974), politically inactive aspirants can hardly rely on the support of party members. In short, in inclusive selection processes, first, the role of the mass media is central, and second, the incumbency advantage plays indeed in favour of insiders that replace uneasy interpersonal connections by communication through the media and popularity (Hazan and Rahat 2010).

Despite their overt character that would favour visible aspirants, other scholars argue that inclusive methods could also have a limited impact on competition because political parties would anticipate on the effects of inclusiveness. According to Indrithason and Kristinsson (2015), parties organising primaries or other types of inclusive selection methods could adapt their own rules so as to offer greater chances to newcomers. Rules such as the obligation to announce which seats aspirants are aiming for would soften the impact of inclusiveness and result in a limited support for the argument that greater inclusiveness leads to higher levels of intraparty competitiveness.

While there is support for a negative relationship between turnover and inclusiveness, there is another strand in the literature that argues for a negative relationship between turnover and exclusiveness. Rahat, Hazan and Katz (2008) state that exclusive selectorates, i.e. small groups of leaders, or a appointed nominating committee, would tend to select incumbents because of the lack of legitimacy of this type of party organ. Exclusive selectorates would function according to informal procedures, or at least their rules of work would not seem to be transparent enough. In order to counter this situation, these selectorates would rely on incumbents. By doing so, they maintain the status quo as much as possible and would face fewer criticisms from the party basis. A list made of newcomers would diminish the levels of trust within the party, because the balance of power would be altered without the formal agreement of the remaining organs of the party. As a consequence, exclusive selectorates are expected to build the list that would the most satisfy the delegates and members (Matthews and Valen 1999). Minimal changes only would be implemented, what does not favour variations in the levels of political experience.

In addition, Obler (1974) explains that exclusive selectorates might also act for strategic reasons. They would select some less well-known candidates, i.e. mostly newcomers, who, despite their weak popularity, could help the party attract votes and/or be useful for the party in Parliament or in the cabinet. High potential newcomers may then be favoured by strategic selectorates. Because small groups are more suited for the implementation of a strategy, the exclusiveness of the selectorate would be to the advantage of unknown newcomers.

On the contrary to totally exclusive selectorates, selectorates composed by delegates would favour turnover, according to the study of Rahat, Hazan and Katz (2008). Party delegates would combine both the advantages of party members and of party leaders. They would as party members enjoy a sufficient degree of popular legitimacy, and as a consequence would not feel forced to rely on past selections. In addition, they would be accessible for challengers, as it is the case for exclusive selectorates. Indeed, “smaller selectorates allow aspirants a chance to become known and to contact their selectors personally” (Hazan and Rahat 2006, 372). Newcomers have a chance to build a network with these selectorates that are not too numerous. On the other hand, delegates feel legitimate enough to give a chance to less experienced candidates. According to Rahat, Hazan and Katz (2008), the selection by delegates is the mode of selection allowing for the lowest levels of intraparty competition, and consequently of turnover.

The accessibility of the process for newcomers may also be related to its **degree of formalisation and of institutionalisation**. The concept of formalisation refers to the extent to which the decisions are taken according to written rules rather than informal practices while institutionalisation refers to the degree to which procedures are entrenched in the party habits and widely known by party actors (Bjarnegård and Kenny 2015). Both concepts reflect the fact that the selection method follows to a greater or lesser extent the rules or the practices foreseen by the party. The principal argument regarding newcomers relates to the idea that if the party respects what is foreseen or usually undertaken, inexperienced politicians – who are outsiders to the process – could anticipate on the selection process. They could know where to go, what to do, whom to contact and when (Czudnowski 1975).

On the basis of a typology developed in Vandeleene (2016), it is possible to order the types of procedures according to the extent to which they would advantage experienced candidates over newcomers. The most advantageous type is the “party rules”, i.e. a formalised and institutionalised procedure. As underlined by Davidson-Schmich (2006, 220), “the more institutionalized and formalized nomination procedures are, the easier it is for outsiders to get acquainted with the procedures and to be successful in getting nominated”. Formalised and institutionalised actions are by definition transparent. In other words, what is done corresponds to what is written in the ruling documents. The process is therefore understandable to every aspirant.

“On the ground practices” could also be favourable to outsiders, if they are transparent enough. These practices are institutionalised. Hence, party actors are supposed to be aware of their existence. Notwithstanding, they are not written in the party statutes and documents, so it is less easy for inexperienced candidates to learn them. Yet the degree of institutionalisation would prevail over the degree of formalisation because the reverse type would be less favourable to newbies. Indeed, the ghost rules, i.e. the formalised but non-institutionalised rules could play against newcomers who could trust some written rules that are never implemented and respected. Obviously the backstage practices that are nor formalised nor institutionalised are expected to help experienced candidates at the expense of inexperienced candidates. These procedures are not transparent at all, what lets no possibility for outsiders to understand how the selection occurs. Only candidates with ties to the power centre could learn how candidates will be selected this time (Caul 1999).

Theoretically, the key of the problem is the degree of institutionalisation, but on the condition of transparency. If procedures are institutionalised but not transparent, i.e. taking place in ‘smoke-filled rooms’ (Katz 2001; Norris and Lovenduski 1995), despite the fact that all party actors are familiar with them, outsiders will have no chance of entering the process. In this case, formalisation is required. Formal procedures allow for a greater accessibility to the outside world. If the whole process is well detailed in party documents, newcomers are more likely to get an opportunity to participate. Transparency is crucial, as opaque procedures favour insiders that are familiar to it. In addition, formalisation provides rigidity. Accordingly, party selectorates “have less leeway to bend the rules in favour of certain candidates” (Caul 1999, 81). Well-established rules guarantee the implementation of the foreseen procedures (if institutionalised) and possibly permit the use of a system of appeal in intra-party organs in case of a lack of respect of the rules in force (Norris and Lovenduski 1995). In sum, what matters is the institutionalisation of procedures but their formalisation makes things easier for outsiders.

Table 1: Summary of the arguments related to the relationship between the selection process and the political experience of candidates

Dimensions of the selection process in favour of inexperienced candidates

H1: Candidacy requirements in favour of turnover, such as term limits

H2: Centralised selection procedures

H3: Exclusive selectorates

H4: Formal and institutionalised selection procedures

The selection process of electoral candidates could impact on the share of experienced candidates compared to less or not experienced candidates on a given slate of selected candidates. Several dimensions of the selection process could play a role. These dimensions concern various aspects of the process: the candidacy stage with candidacy requirements, the selection stage with features of the selectorates but also the rules in force and their degree of formalisation and institutionalisation.

Methods, data and case selection

This paper studies multiple cases at a specific point in time. This design allows for a deeply comparative analysis thanks to rich within-case and cross-cases comparisons, i.e. across processes for each list and across political parties. The cases comprised in the sample are all situated in the Belgian context. The eleven political parties under study evolve within the (nearly) same institutional and electoral context. The time frame is also identical in all cases and corresponds to the period preceding the European, federal and regional elections on 25 May 2014, when political parties selected their electoral candidates and drafted the electoral lists.

The choice of Belgium draws on the argument developed by William Cross (2008), according to which some factors may render the study of candidate selection more relevant to undertake. The analysis of Belgian political parties in 2014 matches almost all criteria put forward by Cross. First of all, the Belgian electoral system offers voters few opportunities to directly impact on the names of elected representatives. Voters do indeed sway over the number of seats per party, but hardly on the allocation of seats to candidates. Few candidates usually manage, and actually managed in 2014 to alter the list order, and so to bypass an upper candidate (André, Depauw, Shugart, and Chytilek 2015). Moreover, independent candidacies are not a real possibility for citizens to enter the Parliament. In Belgium, political parties remain the unique gatekeepers on the road to the Parliaments.

The party system in Belgium corresponds to Cross's recommendations for the study of candidate selection. The Belgian system provides that there is no party that claim to represent a particular group in the society. All parties do accommodate representational cleavages within their lists (e.g. in terms of age, gender, ethnicity or socio-professional occupation). However, the language cleavage is solved through inter-party accommodation, i.e. there are mainly homogeneous French-speaking, Dutch-speaking and German-speaking parties. Yet, most Belgian voters do not have the possibility to vote for parties from different languages, due to the *de facto* regionalisation of the party system (De Winter, Swyngedouw, and Dumont 2006). With the noticeable exception of the Brussels-capital city region, and its surroundings (French and Dutch), and in one constituency in Eastern Belgium (French and German), political parties do not electorally compete against parties from another language. Flemish political parties present lists in Dutch-speaking Belgium, and so do French-speaking parties in French-speaking Belgium.

Finally, the legislative branch is able to influence the policy-making process, although the strengthening of the executive power at the expense of the legislative power is visible in Belgium, as in other parliamentary democracies (Deschouwer 2012). The members of the elected assemblies may influence the policy outcomes for instance via the possibility to rewrite a government text or the control of the parliament's agenda (Saalfeld 2000). Yet, the individual impact of MPs is less straightforward. Party discipline remains strong in Belgium (André, Depauw, and Beyens 2015; Brack, Costa, and Teixeira 2012; Depauw 2002; Obler 1974), as most votes occur according to a majority/opposition scheme (De Winter, Swyngedouw, and Dumont 2006). The individual actions of MPs in the Parliament are mostly visible for the large public via the media coverage of their legislative initiatives or of their questions asked to the ministers. These actions barely have a real impact on the policymaking; it serves communicational purposes rather than policy goals (Deschouwer 2012).

Belgian citizens/voters may have to be concerned with the candidate selection processes of political parties since nearly all factors impacting on the relevance of candidate selection are met by the Belgian case. Accordingly, this means that candidate selection is central to the Belgian representative process. When selecting candidates, political parties play a major role in this process. Reasons why Belgian voters would not have to be worried about the party

selection mechanisms are related to the fact that the representation of each linguistic group is secured by the electoral system of ‘homogeneous language-constituencies’, and that given the high levels of party discipline, the individual impact of legislators remains limited.

The processes of selection of the candidates running on the electoral lists of eleven Belgian political parties constitute the main unit of analysis of this research. If variations exist mainly across political parties with regard to the main and classical lines of analysis, there are still differences to be found at lower levels – maybe because the central party grip has not been effective in all constituencies or because some constituencies deserved specific measures. All parties under study competed in 2014 for three elections’ tiers, i.e. at the regional, federal and European level, what also provides substantial variation (Vandeleene 2014a). Furthermore, selectorates’ composition may vary according to the list, even within a same party. As a consequence, it is at the list level that differences have to be examined – even though a large variance is expected in a cross cases fashion rather than in a within-case fashion.

The scope of the paper encompasses the processes having led to the presentation of 189 lists – which means a total of 4319 candidates. These lists and candidates are divided up into eleven political parties. The six Flemish parties, i.e. Groen, sp.a, CD&V, Open Vld, N-VA and VB, could each present a maximum of 14 lists, what amounts to a total of 422 candidates per party – if all lists are complete. A little more than half the candidates stood for regional elections. At the French-speaking side, the five parties, i.e. Ecolo, PS, cdH, MR, FDF could present at the maximum 21 lists and 365 candidates. Two thirds of the French-speaking candidates ran for regional elections. All parties under study presented complete lists of candidates (apart from a specific case in Brussels), what is not the case of smaller parties that could not manage to convince a sufficient number of individuals to run for office under their label – and that are not taken into account in this research.

Table 2: Number of lists under analysis

	<i>Flemish parties (x6)</i>			<i>French-speaking parties (x5)</i>		
	Per party		Total	Per party		Total
	N lists	N candidates	N candidates	N lists	N candidates	N candidates
European level						
European Parliament	1	19	114	1	14	70
Federal level						
House of Repr.	6	160 (139/146)	925	6	109 (106)	542
Regional level						
Brussels Parliament	1	33	198	1	88	440
Walloon Parliament	0	0	0	13	154	770
Flemish Parliament	6	210	1260	0	0	0
TOTAL	14	422 (401/408)	2497	21	365 (362)	1822

Note: The numbers into brackets correspond, for the Flemish parties, to Groen first and the sp.a second, and for the French-speaking parties, to Ecolo.

The paper draws on qualitative data from in-depth interviews with selectors but also from internal party documents referring to the list drafting processes and press articles. For two parties, participant observation data are added to the scheme. The analysis first relies on party statutes, i.e. the official document organising the work of political parties as political organisations. They can be employed as indicators of how the power is distributed within the party and may already provide useful information on candidate selection processes and on party actors involved in the selection processes. The most recent version of the party statutes at the time of the selection process (i.e. Fall 2013-Winter 2014) is used. In complement of the party statutes, other party documents are added to the data sources. These have been retrieved by the author from the parties’ websites or directly provided by the party after a personal contact. The most useful internal documents contain precise regulations on the selection

processes and the list drafting. Four parties transmitted this type of document (CD&V, Ecolo, Open Vld, Groen). Other internal documents refer to the notifications to attend the selection meetings (be it for the members of some committees or for the mere rank-and-file members). These documents recall the main rules in force, including some informal rules. In addition, some parties provided me internal working documents directly related to the selection procedures, e.g. the determination of the realistic positions, the composition of the selectorates, the desired profile of the future candidates, etc. I also retrieved some other less formal documents from the parties' newsletters, the parties' websites and other party documentation so as to illuminate the understanding of the selection processes.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews have been conducted during the selection processes, i.e. in the run-up to the May 2014 Belgian elections. The sample of interviewees comprises the political secretaries of each party plus some other key actors at the within-party level when necessary (see table in appendix). It seems from my own preliminary research and from past research on Belgian political parties (Meier, Rihoux, Erzeel, Lloren, and Van Ingelgom 2007) that the political secretaries occupy a crucial position in the party organisation, and in particular as regards the preparation of the elections, among which, of course, the drafting of the electoral lists. The political secretary is the party's head inside the party, next to the party president – who is the political head. Most of the time, the political secretary is responsible for the management of the party internal organisation, its remit going from a.o. contacts with all party entities, human resources management, communication management and the definition of party strategy. But above all, the political secretary is in charge of the coordination of the candidate selection process to a greater or a lesser extent, depending on parties. In some parties, they personally manage the list drafting procedures while in some other parties they share this responsibility with other persons. In few parties, they really make the decision on candidates, i.e. who is selected or not, but they rather organise the process, what places them in a crucial (because overarching) position to answer this paper's question.

Several media sources were consulted. Two Belgian national newspapers from each language community have been exhaustively examined so as to find relevant information regarding the selection processes, candidates-related issues and strategic party issues. Relevant articles from *Le Soir* and *La Libre Belgique* (French-speaking newspapers) and *De Standaard* and *De Morgen* (Dutch-speaking newspapers) have been systematically archived from May 2013 to May 2014. The period covers the launch of the selection process – which varies greatly across political parties and lists from almost one year to some months – until Election Day.

Participant observation techniques have been undertaken in two parties' settings. The French-speaking and Flemish green parties have been selected for the participant observation. These parties have rather institutionalised processes, what facilitates the determination of the place and timing of the relevant events related to candidate selection. They have, moreover, inclusive selectorates, what also eases the access – because attending a meeting with dozens or even hundreds of persons is more convenient than a meeting of an exclusive selectorate. The behaviour of individuals may not be altered since most of them were not aware that an observer was in the room.

The building of the quantitative database occurs in several steps related to different levels. The first-level database comprises the listing of all candidates for all lists under study. The names, party, list, list position, sex, age and home address of each candidate have been provided by the cell 'Elections' of the administration¹. The data on political experience was kindly provided by Dodeigne (2015) who constituted a database of all candidates for regional, federal and European elections since the nineties. On the basis of his raw data, the variables useful for this research could be created. The data had to be recoded in order to match the

¹ (General direction 'Institutions and populations', *Service Public Fédéral Intérieur*)

categories used in this paper. It is first coded whether or not the candidate has already been candidate in the past. The number of times this individual has been candidate is not taken into account in this study, for the sake of simplicity. The second dimension refers to the experience in terms of political mandates. It is coded whether or not the candidate has already held a political mandate, i.e. if they have served as political representatives in an elected assembly or been part of a government.

Variables' operationalisation

- Candidacy requirements

The literature on candidacy requirements is quite poor (Hazan and Rahat 2010, 31) even if some works do tackle the rules impeding on the candidacies (Ashiagbor 2008; Massicotte, Blais, and Yoshinaka 2004). What is of interest in this paper is the existence of term limits determined by political parties themselves.

Pérez-Mares (2012) distinguished between cases with one-term limit rule and two-term limit rule. Steen (2006) detailed even further by calculating all limitations in number of terms (from two to six terms in the case she studied). She further calculated the number of years individuals could stay in office at the maximum and categorised the cases in seven cases (from two years to unlimited). Most scholars, however, considered term limits as a binary variable, i.e. whether or not a term limit was imposed (Heinsohn and Freitag 2012; Sanbonmatsu 2006).

Table 3: Presence of absence of term limits

0	No term limit	The party rules do not impose any term limit
1	Term limit	The party rules provide term limit's provisions

In this research, the rules aiming at enhancing the turnover of the political elites are also considered as binary variables. For each party, it is determined whether or not some term limits apply. These may be strict or provide some exemptions. For instance, the selectorate or another party body could be asked to vote to allow a candidate to run for another term although s/he had reached the term limit.

- Selectorates' degree of decentralisation

Each selectorate has been attributed to one degree of decentralisation, i.e. one, two or three. Yet, the majority of candidates were selected by at least two different selectorates. As in many of the scales developed by scholars, the scale used in this research has to take into account the interactions between several selectorates. For doing so, the selection process has been analysed for each type of candidates (when applicable, the head of list, the candidates in realistic positions, the remaining candidates or the list as a whole when the process is not assorted).

The process has been split into two main phases, namely the *proposal* and the *approval* (Vandeleene, De Winter, Meulewaeter, and Baudewyns 2013; Vandeleene 2014b). The first phase concerns the selectorate holding the power to propose the names of the candidates. In some parties, this 'draft list' is called the 'model list' or the 'project list'. This selectorate is crucial because in practice, lists are hardly changes after this first stage (or marginally). In the second phase, the selectorate ratifies the final list of candidates. This selectorate has the final word. It has to be noted that, between these two phases, a third 'in-between' phase could entail the possibility to 'evoke' the list. This power of evocation can vary from a clear-cut veto right to the power to make suggestions for modifications. This possibility is not present

in all parties, and empirically it was scarcely used. The potential veto is likely to have worked as an informal ‘right of inspection’ of the list by the selectorate at stake. The ‘evocation’ stage has not been taken into account, unless the empirical analysis proved a real influence of this selectorate. Of course, many processes were far more complex than this simplistic two-phases picture. It has been, however, tried to categorise each process according to these categories.

What emerged from the data is a straight difference between processes where a centralised selectorate held the right to propose, and processes where a decentralised selectorate could propose, either alone or with the intervention of a centralised selectorate. Within these two broad categories, two-subcategories are distinguished. On the one hand, when the degree of decentralisation was similar for the proposal and approval phases. On the other hand, when the degree of decentralisation was different for the first proposal phase and the second approval phase.

Table 4: Selection process’ four-categories scale of decentralisation

	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Approval</i>
1 Centralised only	Centralised	Centralised
2 Centralised with a decentralised intervention	Centralised	(De)centralised
3 Decentralised with a centralised intervention	(De)centralised	(De)centralised
4 Decentralised only	Decentralised	Decentralised

The first category refers to a fully centralised process where only selectorates at the centralised level play a role. The second category denotes a more sophisticated process where centralised selectorates proposes the candidates’ names. For the approval phase, there are two possibilities: either only decentralised selectorates ratified the list or a combination of both centralised and decentralised selectorates. The third category also refers to a balance of power between centralised and decentralised selectorates, but with the predominance of the latter. Decentralised selectorates propose, and in some cases with the intervention of centralised selectorates. The approval phase could either be only trusted by centralised or decentralised selectorates, or by a combination of both. The fourth and last category characterises the most decentralised process where only decentralised selectorates intervene.

The process’ decentralisation scale resembles the scale developed by Bille (2001). However, this scholar distinguishes between selectorates ‘proposing’ and ‘deciding’. It is argued in this paper that proposing is actually deciding, since the approval phase is most of the time a formal stage where hardly anything is modified in comparison with what has been proposed. It was preferred in this research to assess the balance of power between centralised and decentralised actors according to the two phases developed in Vandeleeene and her co-authors (2013) and in Vandeleeene (2014b).

- Selectorates’ degree of inclusiveness

A five-points scale has been developed for the analyses of selectorates to be done in this research. There is no agreement in the literature regarding how to measure the inclusiveness of selectorates that are not ‘the party members’. It was decided for this research to distinguish between four different sizes of selectorates next to the party members. These four categories are ordered in function of the number of individuals gathered within the body that selected candidates. The nature of these individuals does not matter for this scale, as will be detailed hereafter.

Table 5: Five-point scale of inclusiveness

1	Single selector	1 person
2	Limited elite	2–15 people
3	Extended elite	16–99 people
4	Assembly of delegates	100 people and more
5	Party members	All party members

Similar to the degree of decentralisation, the analysis of the processes of selection has to take into account that several selectorates may play a role for the same candidates (the so-called multistage processes). It is indeed the case for most of the candidates. The processes have been split into the two main phases of proposal and approval (Vandeleene, De Winter, Meulewaeter, and Baudewyns 2013; Vandeleene 2014b). Six categories emerged from the data. A first group refers to processes where a single selector held the proposal role. Other categories denote processes where limited or extended elite selectorates proposed the draft lists. The last type of proposal is made directly by party members or by delegates.

Table 6: Categories of inclusiveness for the whole process

	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Approval</i>
1 Single selector proposes, elites approve	Single selector	Limited or extended elite
2 Single selector proposes, inclusive selectorates approve	Single selector	Limited or extended elite and delegates or members
3 Elite decide alone	Limited or extended elite	Limited or extended elite
4 Elite propose, delegates approve	Limited or extended elite	Assembly of delegates
5 Elite propose, members approve	Limited or extended elite	Party members (and assembly of delegates)
6 (Delegates propose), members approve	Party members (or delegates)	Party members

- Degree of institutionalisation and of formalisation

Measuring the degree of formalisation and institutionalisation is not an easy task. In order to fall back on categories, the typology developed in Vandeleene (2016) is used to assess the extent to which the selection procedures were institutionalised and formalised. Four categories were developed: party rules, on the ground practices, ghost rules and backstage practices. These categories (at least what they refer to) were also suggested by Bjarnegård and Kenny (2015) but the scholars did not formalised them in a typology.

Table 7: Scale of institutionalisation and formalisation of the selection processes

1	Non-institutionalised and informal process	Predominance of backstage practices
2	Non-institutionalised but formal process	Predominance of ghost rules
3	Institutionalised but informal process	Predominance of ‘on the ground’ practices
4	Institutionalised and formal process	Predominance of party formal rules

A four-points scale is developed. Each category refers to a selection process where a type of practice was predominant. While a process may be organised with different types of practices, it is attempted to distinguish the type of practice that mostly influence how the candidates were selected. In other words, when no pattern emerges, the degree of formalisation and of institutionalisation of the key stage is considered.

The least institutionalised and formalised processes are not foreseen in the party statutes and may differ from one list to the other. The freedom of action of the selectorates dominates. The second type is not likely. It denotes a process organised by formal rules but not institutionalised in practice. Because this research is interested in what really happens, no list should enter this theoretical category. The third category is more likely. The candidates selected according to this type of process cannot rely on written rules but if they are well acquainted with the party, they should know how the selection process works. The last category reflects an institutionalised and formal process. Most rules are written in the party statutes or documents, and are respected and understood by most actors.

- Political experience of candidates

In order to test the relation between candidate selection methods and the variations in political experience of candidates, the research proceeds in two steps. Two different kinds of political experience are distinguished. On the one hand, because this study is about candidates, the mere political experience obviously equals the experience of an individual as a candidate running for election. In that respect, experienced candidates are candidates who have already been candidate in the past. Newcomers are individuals that run for office for the very first time. On the other hand, the political experience as it is commonly accepted in the literature refers to the experience of an individual in a Parliament. Having already served as elected representative constitutes the second type of political experience analysed in this research. Newcomers in this case are non-incumbents, i.e. candidates who have never sat in an elected assembly. Although the strict definition of incumbency may refer to outgoing MPs, it is understood here more broadly by encompassing every experience even if it was not during the last legislative term. One may indeed assume that candidates do not forget how it works in a Parliament, nor voters or media forget an MP even though s/he is not properly outgoing at the moment. In addition, candidates with executive experience, even in the past, are also considered for the same reasons as ‘incumbents’. In short, political experience equals two different meanings: candidate experience and parliamentary/executive experience.

This paper is interested in the study of variations in the proportions of candidates with a certain profile at certain positions on a list. The analysis is not situated at the individual level of each candidate. Accordingly, the research is based on indexes reflecting the share of experienced versus inexperienced candidates. Based on the distinction between the experience in conducting a campaign and the experience of working in an assembly or in an executive, the first index calculates the *candidate* turnover while the second one calculates the *incumbent* turnover.

These indexes show the openness of the party system, or the accessibility of the selection process, i.e. how ‘open’ it is (Kenig 2008). Values will therefore range from 0 to 1, where 0 means that all candidates enjoy at least some experience and 1 that all candidates are new to the system. It is not expected that any party will obtain nor 0 nor 1, as there may always be a kind of balance on electoral lists. On the contrary to single-member systems where a binary answer may be possible – i.e., for the first index, the selected candidate has already been a candidate or not, and for the second index, the candidate is an (outgoing) incumbent or not – multimember district systems such as the one studied in this research allow for an analysis of the *degree* of openness. Values between 0 and 1 are expected. Variations and nuances do exist, and accordingly, political parties’ openness to newcomers may be compared with more preciseness.

As represented in the formula, the *Candidate Turnover Index* (CTI) reflects the ratio between the number of new candidates and the total number of candidates on the list. In short, this index shows the share of inexperienced candidates on the list. It reflects the real degree of openness of the political party. These new candidates have indeed never succeeded in

obtaining a list position, have never conducted a campaign (for legislative elections) before, and are probably not well known by voters (at least as politicians). Higher values on the CTI reveal the party openness to outsiders, and lower values disclose the party conservatism and reliance on the past.

$$CTI = \frac{\sum Snc}{\sum Sc}$$

S stands for the selection of candidates on any list position.

Snc [new candidates] stands for the new candidates selected by party selectorates, in all list positions.

Sc [candidates] stands for the candidates selected by party selectorates, in all list positions.

The second index, the *Incumbent Turnover Index*, reflects the ratio between the sum of candidates with no parliamentary or executive experience and the total number of candidates – in realistic list positions, i.e. in the so-called safe seats. It exposes the share of non-incumbents having obtained a list position that could be translated into a parliamentary seat. The index shows to what extent the party lets the doors of their parliamentary faction open to outsiders. Obtaining a realistic position indeed virtually guarantees to sit in the Parliament after the elections. By selecting non-incumbent candidates to these positions, party selectorates clearly aim at renewing the parliamentary faction, i.e. at incumbency turnover. Higher values on the ITI demonstrate that the party parliamentary faction in the Parliament will potentially be altered after the elections, or, in other words, that the party did not allocate these safe positions to some of the incumbents but well to outsiders, while lower values reveal that the party opted for a conservative strategy by reselecting incumbents in realistic positions.

$$ITI = \frac{\sum SRPni}{\sum SRPc}$$

SRP stands for the selection of candidates in realistic list positions.

SRPni [non incumbents] stands for the non-incumbent candidates selected by party selectorates, in realistic list positions.

SRPc [candidates] stands for the candidates selected by party selectorates, in realistic list positions.

Although the degree of intraparty competition and the turnover rates have already been studied by numerous scholars, the originality – and interest – of this study lies in the fact that the analysis is undertaken at the candidate's level, and not only at incumbents' level. In the same vein as research on candidate selection usually focuses on the candidates in realistic positions only (Hazan and Rahat 2010), most research handles the concept of competitiveness as reflecting the success of incumbents versus non-incumbents. Rahat, Hazan and Katz (Rahat, Hazan, and Katz 2008) have for instance developed the non-incumbents winning index, the non-incumbents ranking index and the aspirants index, which calculates ratios between non-incumbents and incumbents on the candidates' lists. Some scholars use other measurement tools that compute the ratio between incumbents and non-incumbents within MPs, e.g. the renewal rate, which reflects "the share of non-incumbents among new members" (Indrithason and Kristinsson 2015, 9).

In very few studies, if none, the experience of candidates is valued. This could, however, play a major role in the selection decision. As developed earlier, prior experience as a candidate, even though the individual has not been elected, constitutes an asset for the next elections, as well as for the next selection process. This paper thus emphasises the importance of taking

into account all candidates on the list, and not only candidates with parliamentary or executive experience. As a consequence, it develops, next to the more common Incumbent Turnover Index, the Candidate Turnover Index that relies on the previous experiences of aspirants in succeeding in the selection process and in conducting a campaign. Analysing candidates' experience constitutes a challenge in that few works adopt this perspective. Most arguments are developed on the basis of the experience of candidates in the Parliament or in cabinets. The interest of this research lies in the testing of the hypotheses based on incumbency experience on the candidacy experience. Does the incumbency advantage also work for candidates with campaign experience only? Does the requirement for turnover also play a role within the candidates' group?

Another specificity of the indexes used in this research is that they are situated at the aggregate level. Some works do indeed take some candidates like the incumbents as basis of analysis and investigate what happened to these individuals (Put, Gouglass, and Maddens 2015). These studies examine the individual career trajectories of candidates or incumbents, e.g. the analysis focuses on individual incumbents and examines which list position they obtained at the next elections. These works belong to the 'reselection' literature (Navarro 2010), which is centred on individuals. On the contrary, this research is based on the existing electoral lists and analyses who are the selected candidates altogether, i.e. how the lists are balanced regarding experience. These indexes focus on the *share* of experienced versus inexperienced candidates and not on the particular levels of experience of each candidate.

The detailed analysis of candidates' lists with the help of two indexes – share of inexperienced versus experienced candidates at the campaign or assembly level – will provide a relevant picture of how selectorates for each list have balanced the levels of political experience of candidates, i.e. found the healthy mix. The automatic reselection of incumbents seems to be common in many political parties (Borchert and Zeiss 2003; Ranney 1981). Selectorates play the safe card and ensure a secured – because known in advance – level of competence for the job. Nonetheless, inexperienced candidates could be promising despite the fact that they constitute a challenge for party selectorates because no prior situation could give a hint on the consequences of this selection choice. What is certain is that outsiders ensure a certain degree of renewal of electoral lists, i.e. the party's face at elections. The indexes offer the possibility to have a precise idea of the degree of openness of electoral lists, based on numeric figures. Political parties' electoral lists could thus be ordered according to the extent of renewal of the slate of candidates. These figures will then be analysed together with the modes of selection of candidates for each list.

Results

Descriptive statistics

On average, 59% of the candidates running in 2014 in Belgium had never conducted an electoral campaign at the supra-local level before. About two fifths of the candidates on each list had already an experience in campaigning. Three parties behaved differently than the others. The FDF in particular called on very few experienced candidates. Only 4% on average had an experience in terms of candidacy. Groen and the N-VA also had quite innovative lists with respectively 64 and 62% of new candidates. The VB and Ecolo were also relatively more inclined to select new candidates even though the values on the Candidate Turnover Index (CTI) do not reach very high scores. On the contrary, the PS and the MR were quite conservative in the selection criteria. On average 50% of the candidates on the PS lists had an experience before 2014 and even less than half the MR candidates on each list were in experienced (47%). This entails that most MR candidates already knew how to handle an election campaign.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for the Candidate Turnover Index (CTI)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
All lists	189	0.1786	1	0.5930	0.1822
Europ. lists	11	0.2857	0.7857	0.4956	0.1635
Reg. and fed. lists	178	0.1786	1	0.5990	0.1820
Fed. lists	66	0.1786	1	0.5938	0.1739
Reg. lists	112	0.2500	1	0.6021	0.1873
Flemish parties' lists	84	0.3158	0.8750	0.5768	0.1195
French-sp. parties' lists	105	0.1786	1	0.6060	0.2196

As displayed in table 8, the share of new candidates on the list was significantly lower for the European list than for the regional and federal lists (a 10%-difference). Less than half the candidates on the lists for the European Parliament had already an experience in the campaign. No big difference is to be noticed between the regional and federal lists. Regarding the differences between the language groups, the French-speaking parties seem to allocate on average more positions to newcomers than Flemish parties. No single list of Northern Belgium actually reached the maximum score on the CTI, which could reflect that all candidates on a list were new to the campaign. In fact, the maximum scores for the French-speaking parties have all to be attributed to the FDF that presented 18 lists (out of 21) entirely new.

The Incumbent Turnover Index (ITI) measures the newness of the lists (limited to the realistic positions for this index) in terms of elective experience. The higher the value, the lower the proportion of candidates who have already been elected in a regional, federal or European assembly. 32% of the candidates in realistic positions, on average, were not incumbents for any tier of government. As a consequence, one may expect that on the whole, one third of the elected candidates in 2014 were new to the Parliament where they sat after the elections.

Four parties drafted their lists by selecting fewer incumbents on the realistic positions, namely both green parties but also the N-VA and the VB. Groen in particular selected more non-experienced candidates than experienced candidates, on average. One certainly has to take into account that Groen had not numerous candidates in realistic positions compared to the other parties, but still, a score of 56% on the ITI reflects a relatively great level of turnover. This may be explained by the fact that this party does not have that many incumbents in its ranks in general given the past deceiving electoral results. On the opposite, three parties were quite conservative when selecting the candidates. In the PS, the Open Vld and especially the CD&V, few candidates in realistic positions were not experienced. The Flemish Christian Democrats attributed on average only 13% of the realistic positions to candidates with no parliamentary experience. The FDF also scored low but given the very limited number of realistic positions of this party, its score on the ITI has to be relativized.

Table 9: Descriptive statistics for the Incumbent Turnover Index (ITI)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
All lists	143	0	1	0.3225	0.2812
European lists	10	0	0.5	0.3117	0.1981
Reg. and fed. lists	133	0	1	0.3233	0.2870
Federal lists	49	0	1	0.3040	0.2801
Regional lists	84	0	1	0.3346	0.2920
Flemish fed. lists	26	0	1	0.2898	0.2567
French-sp. fed. lists	23	0	1	0.3200	0.3095
Flemish reg. lists	40	0	1	0.3632	0.2586
French-sp. reg. lists	44	0	1	0.3086	0.3201

Table 9 shows that the candidates in realistic positions on the European lists were on average a little more experienced than the candidates on the regional and federal lists. The greatest difference (though slight) is between the regional and the federal lists (respectively 33.4% and 30.4%). But on the whole, the most interesting differences are to be found between the candidates for French-speaking or Flemish parties. At the federal level, the Flemish lists are on average more experienced than the French-speaking lists (with a 3% difference). At the regional level, the picture is reversed. The Flemish lists comprise significantly fewer candidates in realistic positions with experience in an elected assembly than the French-speaking lists (with a 6% difference). In other words, there are more incumbents on the realistic positions on Flemish federal lists and French-speaking regional lists than on the Flemish regional lists and French-speaking federal lists. Why Flemish political parties selected fewer experienced candidates on regional than on federal lists remains a puzzle. This may be related to the fact that Flemish political parties value more and more the regional level, and may thus be tented to reselect incumbent in the regional parliaments so as to increase the level of professionalisation of Flemish regional politicians.

Binary analyses

The level of experience of politicians is a crucial variable affecting our democracies. It is indeed not beneficial to the democratic character of a polity to have always the same politicians sharing power. Some degree of balance is required, because a polity managed by fully inexperienced politicians is not likely to be considered as democratic either. Political professionalisation is seen as positive, but to a certain extent. Hence, a certain equilibrium between politicians with and without experience is what might be best for democracy.

As a reminder, the political parties are the well-know gatekeepers to the elective office. All elected representatives have to pass through the party to enter the Parliament. The first step before becoming an MP is to be selected as a candidate. By selecting the candidates for the elections, political parties control who receives a chance to pursue a political career or not. They may select an individual for the first time and by doing so giving him the opportunity to run her first campaign. They may also reselect an incumbent who already succeeded in getting elected to a Parliament in previous elections. But being selected as a candidate is not sufficient for incumbents willing to develop their career. Given the Belgian electoral system, they are more secured if they are selected in a realistic position. The selection of incumbents in non-realistic positions is often called ‘deselection’, because it almost equals not selecting them. Unless they manage to attract a sufficient number of votes, they will not be elected again.

It has been said on Belgium that there is a tendency to reselect insiders, i.e. that outsiders may not have their chance to enter the political arena. Regarding the candidates at large, it does not seem to be the case. 59% of the candidates running in 2014 were newcomers. At the incumbent level, however, the degree of turnover is weaker. Only 32% of the candidates in realistic positions were newcomers to the elected arena, i.e. they had never been elected in an assembly before 2014. The turnover rate was thus about one third, taking into account that the FDF candidates are included in these statistics (and that they were all newcomers to the elected arenas, but the candidates in Brussels). There may thus be a tendency to favour insiders, at least at the incumbent level.

The literature states that the methods of candidate selection may be related to the turnover rates in the political elite. In particular, the degree of centralisation and of inclusiveness of the selectorates, but also the degree of formalisation and institutionalisation of the selection process and the existence of term limits are expected to be linked to the turnover indexes. For each of the variables, it is analysed whether a relationship may be found between the selection variables and the turnover indexes.

The degree of centralisation

Most scholars pretend that the degree of decentralisation of the selection process is negatively related to the turnover rate. The more centralised the selection, the more newcomers. The competition is said to be higher at the centralised level because centralised selectorates are expected to be less sensitive to the personal aura of the candidates. They would act with more strategic than emotional aims in mind. They would also favour the turnover of the party political elite for the good internal functioning of the party. Some works demonstrated for instance that centralised selectorates tend to select incumbents in non-realistic positions. On the contrary, decentralised selectorates would favour insiders mainly because of the proximity between the decentralised selectors and the local politicians. It is indeed more likely that aspirants know personally the decentralised selectors rather than the centralised selectors. Local selectorates would tend to protect already in place politicians.

The results referring to the degree of decentralisation and the candidate turnover index are strongly significant ($p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis can thus be rejected. The Kruskal-Wallis H test shows that there is a statistically significant difference in CTI scores between the categories of decentralisation of the selectorates for the realistic positions ($\chi^2(3)=33,168$). The results are also significant for the selectorates for the non-realistic positions ($\chi^2(2)=21.48$). For both types of candidates, the centralised selectorates have on average higher scores on the CTI (almost 80% of renewal against slightly more than 50% for decentralised selectorates). This indicates that a great share of candidates selected by centralised selectorates had never been a candidate before 2014 and that on the contrary, decentralised selectorates tended to select fewer newcomers – what matches the theoretical expectations. The pairwise comparisons demonstrate that the main statistical differences exist between the centralised selectorates versus the two decentralised types, and between the intermediary decentralised type and the intermediary centralised type. It was thus worth differentiating between the actors playing a major and a minor role in the selection. When centralised selectorates play a major role, the turnover rate is higher than when decentralised selectorates play this role – despite the intervention of the selectorates from the other level. This confirms the hypothesis stating that centralisation favours renewal among the political elite.

Table 10: Degree of decentralisation and CTI

	N	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	Std. Dev.
Centralised only	30	0.7924	1.0000	0.2857	1	0.2637
Centralised with a decentralised intervention	26	0.6383	0.6425	0.4737	0.8750	0.1013
Decentralised with a centralised intervention	98	0.5272	0.5256	0.1786	0.8750	0.1261
Decentralised only	34	0.5602	0.5520	0.3636	0.8571	0.1294
Total	188	0.5909	0.5742	0.1786	1	0.1802

The candidates in realistic positions have a specific relevance in political science works, given that they are very likely to enter the Parliament. The ITI measures the extent to which the selectorates have selected non-incumbents in realistic positions, and by doing so favouring the legislative turnover. The Kruskal-Wallis H test proved that the differences among the four types of decentralisation of the selectorates on the score on the ITI are significant, because some groups behave differently from the others ($\chi^2(3)=16.197$, $p<0.001$). It appears that the lists drafted by centralised selectorates with a decentralised intervention have a statistically different mean from the other groups. Indeed, table 11 displays that this group of selectorates constituted lists with on average 52.2% of renewal in the realistic positions. More than half the candidates selected for the safe spots on these lists had never been elected before (and was elected thus for the first time in 2014). The other groups' means on the ITI are around 29%. Because selectorates in Belgium do not tend to over-select non-incumbents in realistic positions, the fact that this group selected a great share of inexperienced candidates makes that its closeness to the balance is comparatively more important than these of the other groups.

Table 11: Degree of decentralisation and ITI

	N	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	Std. Dev.
Centralised only	12	0.2958	0.3333	0	0.5	0.1896
Centralised with a decentralised intervention	23	0.5219	0.5000	0.1	1	0.2563
Decentralised with a centralised intervention	85	0.2800	0.2500	0	1	0.2831
Decentralised only	23	0.2942	0.2500	0	1	0.2660
Total	143	0.3225	0.3333	0	1	0.2812

By way of wrapping up, it seems that the relationship between centralisation and turnover may well exist, and in the direction expected in the literature. The degree of centralisation favours turnover, and this both at the candidate and at the incumbent level. Yet, regarding incumbents, it is in particular the combination of a centralised selectorate playing a major role and a decentralised selectorate playing a minor role that proved to attract more non-incumbents on the lists. Interestingly, the propensity of centralised selectorates to recruit a lot of newcomers leads their lists to be less balanced in terms of political experience than the lists drafted by more decentralised selectorates.

The degree of inclusiveness

The literature on the relationship between the size of the selectorates and the degree of turnover is contrasted. Some state that inclusive selectorates would favour insiders because

they would vote by name recognition and that experienced politicians enjoy the required visibility. Some other state that exclusive selectorates tend to select more insiders because they would try to counter their lack of legitimacy by relying on a choice reflecting the status quo. Interestingly, other scholars argue that middle-size selectorates would be the selectorates for the newcomers. They enjoy the legitimacy of large selectorates to dare selecting new candidates but are accessible enough for new aspirants. Newcomers may be able to build a network with middle-sized selectorates (typically, delegates) and by doing get them know by the selectors – what is not possible with very inclusive selectorates.

Table 12: Degree of inclusiveness and CTI

	N	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	Std. Dev.
1. Single selector proposes, elites approve	22	0.4639	0.4792	0.2500	0.8	0.1525
2. Single selector proposes, inclusive selectorates approve	3	0.4424	0.3684	0.3158	0.6429	0.1756
4. Elite propose, delegates approve	80	0.6553	0.5942	0.1786	1	0.2127
5. Elite propose, members approve	82	0.5695	0.5714	0.3571	0.1182	0.1183
6. (Delegates propose), members approve	1	0.4286	0.4286	0.4286	0.4286	.
Total	188	0.5909	0.5742	0.1786	1	0.1802

The analysis of the CTI delivers statistically significant results. The Kruskal-Wallis H test shows that the differences are significant between the groups of selectorates according to their inclusiveness (for the realistic positions: $\chi^2(4)=19.556$, $p<0.001$ and for the non-realistic positions $\chi^2(5)=16.458$, $p<0.05$). Some means on the CTI are different from the others. According to the pairwise comparisons, it seems that the most exclusive category (single selector proposes, elite approve) is statistically different from the more inclusive selectorates (elite propose, members/delegates approve). The comparisons for the non-realistic positions even show that the first category is significantly different from the third category ‘elite decide alone’. The analysis of the means exhibits that the mean of the ‘delegates’ category (elite propose, delegate approve) is considerably above the other means, what indicates that delegates would select more newcomers. This confirms the hypothesis formulated on the basis of Rahat, Hazan and Katz (2008).

On the contrary to the candidate index, the incumbent indexes does not yield statistically significant results. The differences between the means of the inclusiveness groups are indeed not large at all. The propensity to select more or less non-incumbent does not seem to be related to the level of inclusiveness of the selectorates.

In short, it was worth studying the level of inclusiveness of the selectorates to uncover that it may be linked with the selection of larger or smaller shares of newcomers at the expense of insiders. The analyses were significant for the Candidate Turnover Index only. This entails that the size of the selectorates does not seem to matter for the reselection or the deselection of incumbents. For candidates, however, exclusive selectorates appear to be more prone to favour newcomers. But the most interesting result lies in the fact that when delegates intervene (and elite propose a draft), the degree of turnover among the candidates is the highest.

The degree of institutionalisation

The degree of institutionalisation is expected to react positively *vis-à-vis* newcomers. The main argument put forward is that institutionalised procedures respect what is foreseen or at least what is well-known and it is thus easier to outsiders to know where to act and when to act to obtain their selection. They can learn for instance more easily when to submit their candidacy, to whom addressing it and who to lobby in order to get selected. Informal procedures favour insiders that now how it works because they are already involved in the party.

The Kruskal-Wallis H test gives significant results for the differences between the means on the CTI for the least to the most institutionalised procedures ($\chi^2(2)=4.626$, $p<0.10$). It appears that the more institutionalised and formalised processes are more open to outsiders (see table). In particular, the difference between the non-institutionalised an informal process, on the one hand, and the institutionalised and formal processes, on the other hand, is quite large, with respectively about 53% and 60% of openness.

Table 13: Degree of institutionalisation and of formalisation and CTI

	N	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	Std. Dev.
Non-institutionalised and informal process	28	0.5384	0.5445	0.3158	0.7576	0.1136
Institutionalised but informal process	113	0.5999	0.5625	0.1786	1	0.2127
Institutionalised and formal process	48	0.6088	0.6297	0.3750	0.8750	0.1242
Total	189	0.5930	0.5769	0.1786	1	0.1822

The differences between the lists resulting from processes with varying levels of institutionalisation on the Incumbent Turnover Index are strong. The Kruskal-Wallis H test is significant at $p<0.001$ ($\chi^2(2)=17.679$). The institutionalised and formal processes produce lists with a significantly different level of incumbents in realistic positions, i.e. a lower level ($p<0.001$ for the informal and institutionalised category and $p<0.05$ for the informal and non-institutionalised category). The formal character of the process seems to ease the allocation to non-incumbents of positions among the safe spots on the lists. The outcomes of the formal and institutionalised processes were on average made of 48% of non-incumbents against about one quarter for the other processes.

Table 14: Degree of institutionalisation and of formalisation and ITI

	N	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	Std. Dev.
Non-institutionalised and informal process	26	0.2526	0.2500	0	0.6667	0.1830
Institutionalised but informal process	82	0.2770	0.2303	0	1	0.2884
Institutionalised and formal process	35	0.4811	0.5000	0	1	0.2696
Total	143	0.3225	0.3333	0	1	0.2812

The candidacy requirements

The most straightforward candidacy requirements relating to the level of political experience are the term limits. These rules impede on the incumbents' capacity to pursue their political career as elected representatives. When this type of rule is in force in a party, it is expected that the lists will be more open to newcomers, and hence more balanced. The presence of term limits, however, does not erase the possibility to be reselected as incumbent. The term limits may be large, or may be loose because the party does not respect them. Yet, if term limits exist, it is anticipated that the party culture will be oriented towards a certain degree of turnover within the political elite, starting with their lists of candidates.

The Candidates Turnover index does not deliver statistically significant results with regard to term limits. Actually, the means are almost identical for lists where terms limits applied and where they did not. The analysis of the Incumbent Turnover indexes, however, yielded more interesting results, as might be expected. The Mann-Whitney U test clearly indicates that the means are statistically different between the two groups ($U=743.5$, $p<0.001$). The lists with term limits recruited on average for half the candidates in realistic positions inexperienced candidates in terms of elected mandate while the ITI amounts 28.8% for the other lists.

Table 15: Term limits and ITI

	N	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	Std. Dev.
No term limit	120	0.2878	0.2500	0	1	0.2692
Term limit	23	0.5036	0.5000	0	1	0.2781
Total	143	0.3225	0.3333	0	1	0.2812

The existence of party rules imposing term limits does not seem to affect the degree of renewal on the lists in general. It strongly affects, however, the level of renewal among the incumbents. The differences between the lists with and without term limits were striking regarding the share of incumbent in realistic positions. This indicates that term limit may well function in their primary aim, i.e. to reduce the political professionalisation and to encourage the turnover within the political elite.

Concluding comments

The universe of investigation of this paper was Belgium but the cases under study were Belgian political parties. Research on candidate selection should indeed take the political parties as analytical focus since one could not generalise at the country level, nor is it actually possible to generalise at the party level. That is why this research puts the emphasis on electoral lists nested in their party. The study analyses the mechanisms of candidate selection in eleven Belgian political parties. These parties selected no less than 4319 candidates who were rank-ordered on 189 electoral lists submitted for the triple regional, federal and European election of May 2014. This embedded case study design provides the opportunity to compare contrasted and similar cases while keeping the institutional and electoral context constant. Each case can thus explain a complementary facet of the research question: does it matter?

The results indicate that candidates' feature of the degree of political experience might be related to the selection process's features. Some variables in particular proved to be significant and deliver some patterns respecting what was mainly foreseen in the literature. Outsiders would be favoured by centralised selectorates but also specifically by the delegates. An institutionalised process also encourages higher levels of openness to newcomers. Quotas

guaranteeing some difference in the level of political experience may also favour outsiders – and to balance the healthy mix on the lists. The existence of term limits clearly disfavour the reselection of incumbents, as well as a selection by centralised selectorates. The selection mode may thus matter for the turnover rate within the political elite. This may have far-reaching consequences for our democracies since very little control is exercised on the selection processes although they might impact a key feature of the democratic system, i.e. the renewal of the elites.

This paper has shown that it is worth studying candidate selection mechanisms not only for themselves but also for their larger significance for the entire political process. If there were a relationship between the types of selectorates and the types of candidates, this would mean that the modes of selection truly limit the choices that voters face in the voting booth. When political parties determine their own kind of selection process, they may also indirectly determine the type of candidates who will run for office – more or less experienced in politics, and accordingly the kind of representatives who will pass the laws – outsiders or insiders to our representative democracies' systems.

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