

Magda Hinojosa, *Selecting Women, Electing Women: Political Representation and Candidate Selection in Latin America*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012. Graphs, tables, figures, appendices, references, index, 240 pp.; hardcover \$84.50, paperback \$32.95.

Nearly four decades after the third wave of democratization swept Latin America, the underrepresentation of women persists, fueling a running debate on the causes and consequences of their political exclusion. In *Selecting Women, Electing Women*, Magda Hinojosa transforms that debate, transcending familiar but ineffective assumptions to trace the process of women's underrepresentation in Latin America. As Hinojosa demonstrates, the literature's emphasis on "supply" and "demand" side explanations has proven inadequate for identifying, let alone rectifying, the causal structure behind the dearth of women politicians in the region. With nine chapters spanning 36 penetrating case studies of local parties in eight municipalities in Mexico and Chile, Hinojosa argues that (a lack of) party recruitment of and support for female politicians best explains the region's lingering gender inequality.

Rejecting the caricatures of "apolitical" women and anti-women electorates, Hinojosa theorizes how exclusive and centralized processes of candidate selection act to impede women, with profound implications for representation. Hinojosa efficiently explains how the candidate selection procedures widely considered most democratic have undermined women's representation. First, although inclusive selectorates (i.e. those that select candidates) ostensibly open up the decision-making process and thus appear participatory, they also imply a reliance on self-nomination for candidacy. Because traditional gender socialization disincentivizes self-promotion by women, the burden of self-nomination pushes candidacy out-of-reach for most women. Exclusive selectorates, conversely, actively recruit and nominate candidates. By externalizing the decision to run, exclusive candidate selection processes mitigate the consequences of the socialized gender gap in political ambition. Second, while decentralization remains favored in "good governance" circles, in the case of candidate selection, localizing decision-making reinforces the dominance of local power monopolies. Since most women lack access to those elite networks, which are more likely to preserve their own power rather than advance national party goals, decentralized candidate selection processes pose formidable obstacles to would-be female contenders. Counterintuitively, it is exclusive and centralized mechanisms of candidate selection that help female "eligibles" overcome the problems of self-nomination and local power monopolies, respectively, and have therefore proven most fruitful for women.

Selecting Women resolutely shifts the discourse on underrepresentation from unsatisfying dichotomies of supply and demand, to the central gatekeepers of political power – parties. While extant approaches emphasize the difficulties in transitioning from the general population to "eligible for candidacy" (supply), and from candidate to officeholder (demand), Hinojosa reveals that it is the process of moving from eligible to aspirant and then to candidate that constitutes the main bottleneck deterring gender equality in political presence. Parties, "whose candidate recruitment and selection procedures routinely filter out potential aspirants and turn

aspirants into bona fide candidates,” are then the true arbiters of political power and should be central to our explanations of underrepresentation (42-43). Hinojosa employs a wealth of qualitative and quantitative evidence to assess her theoretical expectations, finding that inter- and intra-party variation in candidate selection procedures yields superior explanatory power for understanding underrepresentation than do slow-moving socioeconomic and cultural forces or (largely) invariant national institutional features.

This work proffers a strong theoretical and empirical contribution to the growing research agenda on the “secret garden” of candidate selection (e.g., Elin Bjarnegård’s 2013 *Gender, Informal Institutions and Political Recruitment*; Meryl Kenny’s 2013 *Gender and Political Recruitment*). After refuting the extant approaches (Chapter 2) and advancing her theoretical framework (Chapter 3), Hinojosa skillfully interweaves comparative analyses of candidate selection and women’s representation with her case studies to illustrate the gendered implications of candidate selection. She draws on over 130 interviews with party officials, politicians, political consultants, and academics, including 15-30 individuals from each of the nine relevant parties in Mexico and Chile, conducted over fifteen months of fieldwork. She provides fascinating insights from party officials and politicians, truly unpacking the “black box” of the causal process of becoming an officeholder. Perhaps most impressive about this study is its union of rich empirical details with consistent theoretical acumen and conceptual clarity.

Chapters 4-6 illustrate Hinojosa’s theoretical framework, with Chapter 4 chronicling the “paradox of primaries.” Although conventional wisdom dictates that such inclusive candidate selection procedures are conducive to democracy, with parties in most Latin American countries having experimented with primaries, the record has been rather mixed. Primaries are costly, internally divisive, can weaken parties, and “advantage those with personal political resources” while disadvantaging most women (58). As depicted in Hinojosa’s case studies of the four parties of the Concertación in four Chilean municipalities, and two municipal organizations of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) and one municipal organization of the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) in Mexico, by requiring self-nomination and increasing the influence of local power monopolies, inclusive-decentralized candidate selection procedures undermine the political empowerment of women. With serious challenges to the legitimacy of Latin American political parties indicated in public opinion polls, and one-third of the region’s largest parties using primaries to select their legislative candidates, often in a gesture toward internal democracy, that finding merits emphasis – the processes widely considered the most democratic are in fact bad for representativeness.

Bolstering Hinojosa’s argument, Chapters 5 and 6 depict variation across and within parties. She explores the use of inclusive-centralized procedures by Mexico’s Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) and exclusive-decentralized mechanisms by Chile’s Renovación Nacional (RN), and discusses how the PRI and PRD have deployed an array of procedures for candidate selection. An important assertion of the book, made especially clear in Chapters 5-6, is that

parties' selection procedures vary both temporally and spatially. Hinojosa illustrates how the PRI and PRD, in addition to their three municipal organizations using primaries (inclusive-decentralized) as discussed above, employ a blend of exclusive-decentralized and exclusive-centralized mechanisms in several municipalities.

Hinojosa suggests that many parties feign inclusiveness in selection only to make such decisions exclusively (Chapters 5-6). A potential challenge that emerges from this possibility concerns inter-rater reliability – how are we to know which processes a particular party really uses to select its candidates? Would other analysts, presumably without such extensive knowledge of the formal and informal processes of candidate selection, similarly characterize those mechanisms? A more thorough discussion of the criteria underlying her classifications would allow broad application of Hinojosa's typology of candidate selection, yielding a lasting contribution to the general literature on candidate selection.

Another novel finding demonstrates that women's political aspirations are not necessarily thwarted by conservative parties. This runs counter to the resilient hypothesis of the women's representation literature which maintains that leftist parties are most conducive to the empowerment of women because of their historical affinity with egalitarianism. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, Chile's conservative parties do employ exclusive and thus ostensibly less democratic candidate selection mechanisms, but when executed by a centralized selectorate, the combination actually facilitates women's political prospects. Hinojosa asserts that the finding holds even absent an explicit emphasis on gender equality, with exclusive-centralized processes mitigating the obstacles posed by self-nomination and local power monopolies regardless of selectorate intent (Chapter 6).

In Chapters 7 and 8, Hinojosa couches her framework within two eminent themes in the women's representation literature – family connections and electoral quotas. She illuminates how inherited fame and influence, socialization, and trust bestow political capital to widows, wives, and daughters of male politicians, in effect neutralizing the barriers posed by self-nomination and local power monopolies (Chapter 7). More consideration of how those factors are gendered would be helpful; for example, the constructed gender gap in political ambition renders the socialization process particularly important for women. How might trust, fame and influence manifest differently for male and female aspirants?

The discussion of the interaction of quotas with candidate selection in Chapter 8 is a solid synthesis of the successes and shortcomings of quotas in Latin America, as well as an excellent stand-alone introduction for a broad audience. Two important topics raised with contrasting implications for women's representation are how primaries have been an "escape hatch" from quotas and how quotas invoke a "newfound emphasis on external nomination" (147). Both developments augment Hinojosa's call made throughout the text for renewed attention to the role of parties in hastening or hindering women's political participation. In her concluding chapter – another accessible stand-alone reading – Hinojosa offers several practical

strategies for overcoming the hurdles posed by self-nomination and local power monopolies. Placing the onus squarely on parties, she suggests that political organizations limit spending on primaries, or abandon them all together; actively recruit, nominate, and fund women; and adopt quotas. By connecting the obstacles Hinojosa details in the text to viable means for overcoming them, the chapter makes a compelling contribution to women's empowerment.

Balancing a thoughtful theoretical discussion with rich empirical evidence, *Selecting Women* will appeal to anyone interested in women's representation, candidate selection, and Latin American politics. Signaling a returned emphasis on parties in studies of representation, the work challenges researchers and engages students and policymakers with fundamental insights on the gendered implications of candidate selection mechanisms, offering an alternate path forward in the debate on women's representation.

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