Kingdom and other nations. The final chapters use these findings to shape proposals for increasing Internet-enabled direct representation and to speculate on the likelihood that governments will adopt them.

The results were mixed regarding the proportions and representativeness of eligible citizens and public officials who participated, but in most cases majorities reported positive experiences. Participants generally viewed their involvement in citizen-initiated projects more favorably than did those who participated in projects that governmental officials initiated. Moreover, several citizen-based projects continued to operate well after their original tasks had been completed. Some even expanded their functions. The authors also cite several studies, including a nationwide survey they commissioned, in which majorities expressed their willingness or desire to become more involved in political decision making, particularly at local levels of government. Respondents to the authors' survey, however, expressed concern that public officials really were not interested in their input, and that "their participation would be inconsequential" (p. 186).

Although Coleman and Blumler caution that citizens' responses to survey questions cannot be taken at face value, they nonetheless find that the data support the idea that public policies can stimulate democratic participation. Policies will work, however, only if citizens perceive that their inputs are not restricted to a predetermined set of options and that political decision makers will acknowledge and respond to their recommendations even when they decide not to adopt them. The trick is to create a highly accessible "online civic commons [invulnerable] to the claims and tactics of vested interests seeking to buy out, shut up, drown out or override the voices of the public" (p. 170; see also pp. 9–10, 39, and 165).

How can this be done? The authors suggest that a publicly funded independent entity like the BBC be charged with creating and managing the space. The space would perform civic functions, such as informing people about pending laws and regulations and teaching them about civil discourse. It would also invite bloggers and interest groups of all stripes to link to or—better yet—congregate within the space. If national governments would not support such a public space, then peering arrangements might be made among independent public forums, underwritten by local governments or foundations.

Coleman and Blumler have produced a brave and provocative proposal for an online civic commons that could revitalize democratic citizenship. They recognize, however, that its adoption would require concerted efforts from public officeholders and grassroots activists, as well as greater commitments of time than have been customary of late. Knowing that "the short history of e-democracy is littered with failed projects . . . and thoughtful dialogues that led nowhere" (p. 195), leads to a modest conclusion: "If the civic commons is a feasible and sustainable project, it is because thus far no better way has been found to gather the public together, not as spectators, followers, or atomized egos, but as a *demos* capable of self-articulation" (p. 197).

Scholars and researchers concerned with political communication or democratic theory will find that this book addresses important theoretical and empirical questions. Its paperback price also makes it attractive as a textbook or supplement for graduate or advanced undergraduate courses in relevant disciplines.

Readers may find a few minor irritants. The authors frequently use long, passively voiced sentences to express complex ideas, and they present their statistical analyses inelegantly. Lastly, the text follows British spelling rules.

Democracy within Parties: Candidate Selection Methods and Their Political Consequences. By Reuven Y. Hazan and Gideon Rahat. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 264p. $85.
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— Nicholas Aylott, *Södertörn University,* Sweden

A big part of social science's fascination with political parties is their position in the gray zone between state and civil society. It may be that the advent of public subsidies for their operation, especially in Europe, has brought parties closer to the state. Yet they remain largely autonomous entities. Above all, parties' gatekeeping role in the supply of candidates for elected public office remains almost unchallenged and only lightly regulated.

The ways in which parties undertake this gatekeeping role ought thus to be of central concern to political science, and Reuven Y. Hazan and Gideon Rahat's book opens with a couple of plausible stories about how this filter function can make a real difference to political outcomes. Yet *Democracy within Parties* joins only a fairly small number of books that focus squarely on how parties choose their candidates for public elections.

What this new work does not do is to offer anything in the way of original empirical analysis. The material that the authors refer to has already been published, much of it by themselves. (Indeed, their command of the relevant literature is impressive. Most of their real-world examples come from Israel, Europe, and North America, but a point is often illustrated with reference to a party from, say, Africa or Latin America.) Instead, Hazan and Rahat make two distinct contributions. The first part of their book is about concepts and measurement, a "framework for analysis." The second part is mainly about sifting through and assessing the conclusions of previous research. Assumptions about the importance of political institutions underpin the discussion.

Part I is the more demanding of the reader. Four aspects of candidate selection—candidacy rules, the "selectorate," decentralization, and the distinctions between appointment and voting systems—are each pulled apart in a single chapter. Two propositions from the authors stand out.

One is a 25-point scale on which to classify the "inclusiveness" or "exclusiveness" of the selectorate—that is, those with the right to determine which would-be candidates get to claim the party's endorsement when running for public office (pp. 48–52). At one end of the continuum are the parties in which all registered electors, party sympathizers or not, can jointly make the decision. At the other end are parties in which a single leader does so. Between those extremes are another three categories: selection by party members, by party delegates, and by a smaller elite. The six points that separate each of these five clear-cut categories are to take account of the complication that arises if more than one selectorate is involved (as in the "assorted," "multistage," and "weighted-candidate" methods), plus the balance between those multiple selectorates.

The other proposition, which (as Hazan and Rahat show) has been acknowledged by some scholars but neglected by others, is that there is a distinction between, on one hand, the degree of decentralization in a selection system and, on the other, its inclusiveness; and that these variables do not necessarily covary. The book shows (pp. 59–63) that it is possible for a system to be both centralized and inclusive (if, for example, a party holds a binding, nationwide primary in which any electors could take part) and decentralized and exclusive (if the selection is made autonomously by a single person in a small, subnational electoral district).

Part II then addresses "the political consequences of candidate selection methods". Four chapters address, in turn, participation, representation, competition, and responsiveness, and how previous studies suggest that these properties are promoted or inhibited by the various methods of candidate selection.

For instance, the chapter on competition between aspiring candidates contains what amounts to an intriguing hypothesis. Generated by a study of Israeli parties, the argument is that the most and the least inclusive selection methods are most favorable to incumbents, and that moderately inclusive ones are least favorable. In other words, the relationship between exclusiveness and competition is said to be nonlinear. Gender equality also features consistently in these latter chapters, not least because that reflects the interest shown by existing scholarly work, which in turn has much to do with the relative ease with which the outcome can be observed.

This is all fine as far as it goes—and, given the authors' knowledge of the field, it goes a pretty long way. Considering, too, the dearth of robust cross-national data, Hazan and Rahat can be forgiven for barely applying their own framework to new empirical material. That is the next step for interested scholars. Some readers might wonder just a bit, though, about the increasingly normative tone of the book.

Using clearly defined concepts and logical reasoning to expose flaws in commonly received wisdom is cer-

tainly part of social science's mission. It is excellent that the authors point out, for example, that increased inclusiveness in candidate selection is not the same as increased participation, and that the ostensible "democratization" of the selectorate through the spread of intraparty primaries can "result in instant, opportunistic, and corrupt membership" (p. 97ff). They even point out how such "pathologies" might be mitigated. Indeed, the well-known debate about the link between democracy within parties and democracy across parties, a link that some eminent thinkers have doubted, is given due attention.

Especially in light of this debate, however, the authors arguably take normative reasoning a step too far with their proposal, in the final chapter, of an ideal selection method that balances optimally the political goals—"expressing norms and producing democratic outputs, the diffusion of political power, and the health of the party organization" (pp. 173–74)—that they consider to be paramount. I, for one, am not yet persuaded that the intertwining of parties with the state has gone so far that the health of any *particular* party organization, or the diffusion of power within it, is a public rather partisan concern. An optimal method of candidate selection will depend on what a party really wants to achieve (as many votes as possible, perhaps, or cabinet seats at all costs); and fundamental goal priorities will inevitably vary greatly among parties and over time. Personally, I have no problem with an individual party cheerfully submitting to the iron law of oligarchy and disregarding any sort of internal democracy, even if I may not vote for it.

If I have one final quibble, it is that too many references are a little loose. A rather precise argument or finding is often associated only with a book, without particular pages or sections being identified. Perhaps it is unfair to single out Hazan and Rahat when this sort of imprecision is so widespread in published political science, but it might be especially niggling when the subject matter involves such intricate rules and procedures.

Anyway, this minor complaint should not put anyone off. Hazan and Rahat's writing is clear and fluent, making even the more complex early chapters a thoroughly enjoyable and stimulating read. Above all, the effort to make concepts measurable, and thus to make diverse cases comparable, does a great service to the study of intraparty life.

— Jan-Werner Müller, *Princeton University*

Comparative constitutional law has recently emerged as an exciting, genuinely interdisciplinary field of inquiry