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Ambition Without Democracy: When Selection Rules Encourage the Cautious

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When Selection Rules Encourage the Cautious

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Abstract

Leader personality has a major impact on decisions made and policies chosen, yet the systematic study of political leadership using observational data is challenging. This is particularly true in closed informational settings of authoritarian regimes, where, incidentally, the effects of leader personalities are often more pronounced and less institutionally constrained. I show one way of addressing this challenge by focusing on political ambition, or self-selection into the political career, and exploring how selection rules affect an individual decision to run for office in a lab setting. I argue that certain properties of the selection process lead to self-selection based on risk attitudes. Using a series of laboratory experiments in Russia, I demonstrate that higher costs of candidacy and public accountability of the selected officials lead to an increased role of risk-seeking in the decision to pursue an office. These findings suggest, for example, that in hybrid regimes, pro-regime candidates would be more risk-averse than the opposition candidates. The study shows the directions for theory development and research within the scholarship on ambition and candidacy under imperfect democracies and non-democratic regimes.

Changes in political selection rules can attract or deter people from pursuing public office, introducing far-reaching effects for political representation and the quality of public officials. For example, while under the city manager model, Cleveland Heights (Ohio, USA) mainly considered the candidates coming from managerial positions in city governments. In the first direct elections of the mayor scheduled for 2021, the four candidates demonstrate a variety of backgrounds, including private business and community work[1]. Illustrating the transition in the opposite direction, the last popular mayoral elections in Irkutsk in Russia featured at least two serious candidates with extensive managerial and political experience. In 2015, the city switched to a council-appointed mayor, and a political nobody from an influential family with a suspect past and methods was the single candidate considered by the council[2]. Adding another dimension to the comparison, popular mayoral elections in the two cases most likely were very different in quality – yet we don't have coherent theoretical expectations regarding the effects of all these differences on the characteristics of candidates.

While the effects of leader selection institutions on behavior and characteristics of public officials have been studied extensively (Besley and Reynal-Querol 2011; Carnes and Lupu 2016), we know much less about who decides to seek a political position under different institutions, and why. As we see in the examples above, the sets of candidates

[1] For details, see: "Salary Set For New City Manager…" 2013; "Four Candidates …" 2021

[2] For details, see: "Candidates for the Position of the Mayor of Bratsk …" 2010; "Dmitry Berdnikov …" 2019; "Political scientist Shmidt …" 2019

under different selection rules in the same place with a minimal time difference can be drastically different.

I focus on a critical dimension along which the candidates may vary – how comfortable they are with taking risks – and explain how selection procedures can encourage more or less risk-seeking people to run. I select risk attitudes as a key candidate characteristic due to their potential implications for leader behavior and policy decisions: if some selection properties attract primarily risk-seeking candidates, we could expect the average selected leader to be more risk-seeking as well, which would affect their behavior in office (Kowert and Hermann 1997; Vis 2009).

To develop my theory, I draw upon scholarship on political ambition (Rohde 1979; Kam 2012; Lawless 2012) and experimental research on candidate behavior (Kanthak and Woon 2015; Bol et al. 2016). I expand this work, which has mostly focused on the democratic electoral process, by comparing the institutional traits applicable to democratic and non-democratic settings.

My main argument is that certain properties of leader selection institutions will deter risk-averse candidates from running. I posit that candidacy is always risky because the outcome is unknown, but the expected value of candidacy changes depending on the institutions. The lower the expected value of candidacy as compared to the risk-free option of not running at all, the more likely we are to see risk-seeking individuals still deciding to pursue candidacy, while the risk-averse will choose not to run. I explore three properties of the selection procedure that influence the potential candidates' decision: running costs, level of competition during selection, and the presence of accountability to the population once in office.

I rely on laboratory experiments[3] conducted in Russia (N=172) to trace this mechanism at the individual level. At the beginning of the experiment, I measure individuals' risk attitudes. I then simulate different properties of leader selection and offer individuals to participate in the selection as candidates. Using the data on their choices, I test the association between risk attitudes and the willingness to run under different conditions. Relying on the experimental approach allows me to focus on three specific institutional properties while holding other elements of a simulated political environment constant.

I find that two properties of the selection process attract more risk-seeking candidates: higher costs of running and accountability to citizens. The level of competition does not lead to any significant differences in the desire to run between risk-seeking and risk-averse individuals. These results imply, for example, that low-cost procedures (such as transparent appointments that only require the submission of a packet of documents and/or an interview) would attract more risk-averse individuals. Control over the election results through electoral manipulation or merit-based selection and reappointment (which undermine or do not involve the public accountability mechanism) would be associated with more risk-averse individuals deciding to pursue a public office as well.

This project, relying on an empirical test in Russia, complements observational studies of Russian subnational institutions (Buckley et al. 2014; Rosenberg, Kozlov, and

[3] The study received an IRB approval prior to data collection. The research design was pre-registered. An anonymized version of the preregistration page is provided in Appendix F.

Libman 2018; Vasilyeva 2010) by showing how the shift from elections to appointments of subnational leaders and the changes in the quality of subnational elections may affect citizen behavior, specifically their political ambition. That allows me to predict additional effects of institutional changes, like the ones we observe in Russia, that are hard to identify in observational studies. More broadly, this study contributes to the political economy literature that focuses on the institutional factors and policy effects of leader quality (Acemoglu, Egorov, and Sonin 2010; Besley and Reynal-Querol 2011; François, Panel, and Weill 2020). By replacing leader quality with candidate risk attitudes, I explain the mechanism connecting institutions and future leader behavior.

Furthermore, this research contributes to the studies of hybrid regimes. Elections in these regimes lack certain fundamental properties (Diamond 2002; Levitsky and Way 2002) and may put unfair costs on some participants or not hold politicians accountable. By modeling these properties separately in my experiments, I demonstrate the effects of the institutions in hybrid regimes on citizen behavior and elite characteristics.

Finally, I bridge the gap between the studies of democracy and authoritarianism by focusing on candidacy. While extensively studied for democracies (Black 1972; Fox and Lawless 2005; Schlesinger 1966), political ambition and competing for public office in authoritarian settings remain heavily under-researched (Lerner and Wood 2019). I contribute to this research area by demonstrating how the properties of authoritarian selection affect which individuals decide to enter a political career.

Towards a theory of self-selection of risk-seekers

To build a theory of self-selection based on risk attitudes, I rely on existing literature exploring the role of risk in politics and the motivations of office-seekers.

Risk and risk attitudes in politics

A situation involves risk if the outcome of a decision is unknown, and an individual makes a choice between options based on their perceived probabilities (Tversky and Fox 1995). Individual preferences regarding options of varying risk levels are known as risk attitudes and are often represented as a scale between risk-seeking and risk-aversion. The more risk-seeking an individual is, the more likely they are to reject a certain payoff for a gamble of an equal or lower expected value – because it offers some probability of a much higher payoff (Friedman and Savage 1948). Individual differences in risk attitudes have been used as both explanatory and dependent variables in numerous studies in psychology (Eckel and Grossman 2002), economics (Caliendo, Fossen, and Kritikos 2009), public administration (Nicholson-Crotty, Nicholson-Crotty, and Fernandez 2017), and management (Koudstaal, Sloof, and Van Praag 2016), as well as political science (Weyland 1996; Kam and Simas 2012; Sweet-Cushman 2016; Linde and Vis 2017; Sheffer et al. 2018). Most relevant for this study, risk-seekers appear to be more likely to participate in politics in general (Kam 2012), while risk-seeking politicians – to seek higher office (Rohde 1979).

Research in psychology offers deeper insights into the nature of risk attitudes. Specifically, scholars have noted that some elements of risk attitudes can be interpreted as relatively stable individual characteristics (Mishra and Lalumière 2011), while others depend on the context and framing of a decision (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; March

1988; Nosić and Weber 2010). I am interested in the stable elements of an individual's risk attitudes because they will consistently manifest both during the process of political selection and later on, once an individual is in office, thus making my theory's predictions especially valuable. To ensure I measure stable individual risk attitudes, I use instruments available in a lab experiment to minimize the variation of context that can affect behavior under risk.

To compare the effects of different political selection rules, we would need to measure the risks associated with each set of institutions. When discussing democratic elections, scholars often point to significant risks associated with running (Black 1972; Dietrich et al. 2012), but it is much less clear which properties of elections are associated with these risks, and therefore whether some or all of these risks will be reproducing across different selection procedures (including non-electoral ones). I address these shortcomings in my theory.

Factors and models of political ambition

I conceptualize political ambition as a decision to run for a public office or self-selection into candidacy (expressive political ambition – see (Schlesinger 1966; LeRoux and Langer 2019)[4]. Political ambition has long attracted scholarly attention because it allows us to better understand who becomes a politician and why politically ambitious individuals have certain characteristics. If certain individuals are more likely to exhibit political ambition,

[4] As opposed to nascent political ambition that may or may not actualize depending on the circumstances (Dynes, Hassell, and Miles 2019; Maestas et al. 2006).

they will constitute a larger share of the candidate pool. The nature of the candidate pool is, in turn, directly linked to the characteristics of the leaders selected from it[5].

Most studies of political ambition concentrate heavily on elected offices in democracies. One set of studies focuses on the political opportunity structure (Schlesinger 1966; Rohde 1979; Stone and Maisel 2003) and the way individuals may consider running for office encouraged by the existing political actors (Broockman 2014) or compensation schemes (Braendle and Stutzer 2017). Another line of inquiry highlights individual characteristics behind political ambition, such as extraversion and openness to new experience (Blais and Pruysers 2017; Dynes, Hassell, and Miles 2019), empathy (Clifford, Kirkland, and Simas 2019), or higher socio-economic status (Carnes 2018; Fox and Lawless 2005).

I build on this literature's findings by looking at the interaction between individual characteristics of potential candidates (their risk attitudes) and one element of context (properties of the selection procedure)[6]. This interaction can be traced most carefully in a controlled experimental setting, where it is possible to both measure individual-level traits

[5] See Besley and Reynal-Querol (2011) on military regimes selecting less educated leaders from a less educated pool

[6] A similar approach is implemented, for example, by Clifford et al. (2021), who examine nascent ambition among individuals with different levels of compassion under elections and appointments. Importantly, I do not imply that ambition is the only mechanism connecting institutions and candidate behavior. Several other factors, such as party politics (Siavelis and Morgenstern 2008) will influence candidacy.

and model particular institutional features. To build an experimentally testable theory of self-selection, I rely on the citizen candidate model (Besley and Coate 1997; Osborne and Slivinski 1996). I am particularly interested in the first stage of this model, where citizens decide whether to run based on the costs of candidacy and the desire to implement their preferred policies.

Studies applying and expanding the citizen candidate model often analyze how candidate entry is affected by the selection properties – such as net benefits of winning (Cadigan 2005), candidacy costs (Großer and Palfrey 2019), or the use of proportional representation (PR) as opposed to plurality voting (Kamm 2016). Additionally, they have demonstrated that electoral rules affect the entry of candidates with different policy preferences (Elbittar et al. 2009), and that both entry and the choice of more radical policy platforms are greater under PR than under a plurality system (Bol et al. 2019).

Extant research tends to focus on democratic elections as a method of leader selection, but this leaves a series of unanswered questions. Which elements of the selection procedures are linked to the risks of candidacy? How can we talk about candidacy and political ambition for non-elected public offices? In this study, I explore the basic properties of political selection observable across electoral and non-electoral procedures and identify the differentiated effects of these properties on the political ambition of more or less risk-seeking individuals.

Theory: the conditional effect of risk attitudes on political ambition

As the first step of my theory building, I define candidacy to make it an observable measure of political ambition that is applicable across contexts, such as ideal democratic elections,

rigged elections, competitive appointment procedures[7], and more. Candidacy or running for a political office would be an explicit willingness to be considered for a position, expressed through legally specified channels. This definition will be implied in the rest of the paper when I mention running or candidacy.

When making the decision about candidacy, an individual will manifest their risk attitudes because one of the options (running) includes a probability. Not running leads to receiving a predictable citizen payoff and is, therefore, a riskless option. That is, a candidate under any institutions should be more risk-seeking than a citizen – but how do candidates under different institutions compare to each other?

Equation 1 shows the expected value of candidacy:

$$EV_{run} = leader\ payoff * p(win) - costs_{run} \qquad (1)$$

where costs of running are paid by all candidates irrespective of the outcome.

I will explore all elements of Equation 1 in turn, starting with the costs of running, and formulate my hypotheses.

[7] An example of a situation where this definition should be applicable would be the city manager model of local government. Such a selection process starts with a call for applications from eligible candidates. These individuals can then register (become candidates, equivalent to running in an election) and will later be considered by a specialized commission.

Selection and the costs of running

Deciding to pursue a public office is associated with various costs. This is mostly explored in application to democratic elections: scholars point to time, money, personal, emotional, and even health costs (Robins and Dorn 1993). Participating in authoritarian elections, particularly as an opposition candidate, comes with an array of its own costs, such as the threat to one's well-being and life or simply just the loss of future work opportunities. For incumbents in authoritarian elections or candidates volunteering for appointed offices, costs can be minimal. For example, in a city-manager selection model, the candidates need to provide some documents and present evidence of their competence before they are voted on by a special committee and then by the local council.

All else equal, higher costs will decrease the expected value of candidacy (Equation 1). As a result, compared to all the candidates under low costs, only more risk-seeking individuals will agree to a gamble of lower expected utility and to run. By implication, the candidate pool will be more risk-seeking, on average.

> **Hypothesis 1.** Selection procedures with high costs of running will attract more risk-seeking candidates than selection procedures with low costs of running

Competition and the presence of a dominant actor

Higher competition will decrease the probability of winning (*p(win)* in Equation 1) and, therefore, the expected value of candidacy. Importantly, competition is a relevant characteristic of almost any political selection situation. For example, we can identify cases of high competition under indirect elections or appointments of city managers when there are several equally strong candidates, and the voices of the city council members in

the final vote on candidates are divided[8]. On the other hand, elections often lack even a semblance of competition, especially at the subnational level and in electoral authoritarian regimes.

One of the dimensions of competition is the relative strength of the contestants. I argue that the presence of a dominant candidate, who has administrative resources or access to public funds, is more informative for a candidate when evaluating their chances than a mere number of candidates[9], making it a better measure of competition during selection. Furthermore, this approach captures competition as a characteristic of the selection environment as opposed to competition as an outcome (Hyde and Marinov 2012).

Importantly, this approach reflects the fact that the level of competition may differ for individual candidates going for the same public office. We can think of two ideal situations: one of high competition (where all candidates have equal chances of winning) and one of low competition (where one or more dominant candidates have much higher chances). In the latter case, the probability of failure will be radically lower for the dominant candidate compared to the remaining candidates, who I will call minor candidates. Based on these considerations, I compare three values of the "candidate status" variable. The probability of winning is the lowest when one runs against a dominant

[8] That was the case in the city of Tymovsky in Russia in January 2019 (Maksimova 2019).

[9] The philosophy of this approach is similar to measuring post-factum electoral competition based on the margin of victory (see, for example, Galasso and Nanniccini (2011)), thus taking into account relative strength of the competitors

candidate and the highest when one is the dominant candidate, with the highly competitive situation in the middle. The lower the probability of winning, the lower the expected value of candidacy (all else equal) - the less likely we are to see risk-averse candidates in the pool.

Based on this logic, I formulate the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2. Less competitive selection environments with the dominant candidate(s) will attract more risk-averse individuals as dominant candidates and more risk-seeking individuals as candidates running against dominant candidates.

Hypothesis 3. Competitive selection environments will attract candidates that are more risk-seeking than dominant candidates in an environment with the dominant candidate(s) and less risk-seeking than other candidates in an environment with the dominant candidate(s).

Selection and the mechanism of accountability

The value of office is also affected by selection rules because once in office, politicians will want to retain this position, assuming that term renewal is a possibility. I call this the mechanism of accountability – based on the criteria for renewal, leaders expect different mechanisms of accountability, which will affect how potential candidates think of the value of these positions. I expand the first part of Equation 1 by making the leader payoff itself dependent on the probability of staying in office: the greater this probability, the greater the perceived value of office. This reflects the situation when a politician's rent is higher the longer they manage to stay in office.

$$EV_{run} = [leader\ payoff^{10} * p(stay)] * p(win) - costs_{run} \qquad (2)$$

The potential candidates cannot observe the probability of retaining office directly, but they are aware of the institutional factors that define how this probability is determined. We can think of several ways in which renewal can be decided. Officials can be evaluated strictly by their performance in office (meeting formal performance criteria). This is something that is most likely when selection does not involve the citizens – such as indirect electoral procedures (for example, when a council-selected mayor submits a regular performance report to the council) or appointment procedures[11]. On the other hand, if citizens are involved in selection and therefore renewal, and it is popular support that determines whether an official stays in office, high levels of popular support will translate into a longer time in office. Popular support is complex, though - it depends not only on the leader's own actions but also on the perception and the evaluation of these actions by a large number of citizens with different, often conflicting needs.

Based on these considerations, the probability of retaining office can be formulated as:

$$p(stay)_{no\ pub} = p(perform) \qquad (3a)$$

$$p(stay)_{pub} = p(perform) * p(support) \qquad (3b)$$

[10] It is important to note that I only analyze the changes in office payoff that come from the selection procedure. Obviously, there are other costs and benefits of holding a public office that are not modeled here and are outside the scope of my theory. In a laboratory setting, I can hold those constant.

[11] Such as bureaucratic appointments in China (Lee and Schuler 2020; Li and Gore 2018)

A public official described by Equation 3a needs to meet performance indicators. A public official described by Equation 3b needs not only to perform but also to make sure these efforts are perceived favorably by numerous voters. As is evident from Equations 3a and 3b, *p(stay)* is always higher for the former. As a result, the expected value of candidacy (Equation 2) will also be always higher for officials evaluated in that way. Compared to the candidate pool under these rules, only the more risk-seeking individuals will still choose to run for office when popular support is the key for political survival.

> **Hypothesis 4.** Selection procedures with renewal based on accountability to citizens will attract more risk-seeking candidates than selection procedures with renewal based on objective performance criteria.

As an additional test of this theoretical logic, I consider the situation when leader payoff is guaranteed – say, an official is appointed or elected for life and doesn't need to go either through a formal performance review or public evaluation. In this case, $p(stay)=1$, making it the highest compared to the other two models discussed. As a result, the expected value of candidacy for such office will be the highest as well, all else equal.

> **Hypothesis 5.** Selection procedures associated with guaranteed renewal will attract more risk-averse candidates than both selection procedures with renewal based on objective performance criteria and procedures with renewal based on accountability to citizens

The experimental design

I use an incentivized interactive computer-based experiment programmed in z-tree (Fischbacher 2007). The experiment consists of 12 rounds. Each of the twelve rounds of the game includes a candidacy/leader selection stage and a cognitive task stage to measure running and performance correspondingly. The experiment is framed as a decision game.

At the core of the experiment is the individual decision to run for the group leadership (the position of the "group representative"). This decision will be used as an outcome variable in subsequent analysis, and the design of the experiment allows me to model the effect of both institutional treatments and individual risk attitudes on the individual decision to run.

A participant decides whether to run (self-selects into candidacy or demonstrates political ambition) based on the pieces of information provided as treatments: the costs of running, their candidate status with the corresponding probability of winning, and the type of accountability associated with the office. Once the pool of candidates forms, the group leader is selected by the computer, using the probabilities of winning that the players were informed about.

After selection, all participants face a cognitive task that determines individual payoffs. The cognitive task consists of adding up pairs of 2-digit numbers within a time limit of 1 minute (such as tasks in Niederle and Vesterlund (2007), Kanthak and Woon (2015)). The players receive a specified sum for each correct answer and half of that for each of their representative's correct answers. The representative receives a private payoff

for performing this function in a given period. Specific rules, according to which the representative's payoff is determined, are one of the experimental treatments[12].

Treatments and sample

The experiment is based on three treatments: costs of running (two conditions), candidate status (three conditions), and accountability mechanism (three conditions). The treatments model individual properties of the selection process. As such, I do not simulate all features of specific selection institutions but the dimensions along which they may differ the most. Table 1 below summarizes the treatments.

Experimental sessions were conducted in Moscow (52 participants), Samara (60 participants), and Tomsk (60 participants) in Russia, in June and September 2019. The sample includes undergraduate and graduate students from multiple universities. Based on its educational and age profile, this sample provides an approximation of one potential population of interest: individuals who may consider running for their first local-level (municipal) political offices in Russia. This approximation is sufficiently accurate to ensure the external validity of my findings for this population as I am not studying the progressive ambition of current politicians. Instead, my theory focuses on "citizen candidates" or citizens who may (or may not) consider running for political leadership.

[12] Details of the experiment are presented in Appendices A-C

Treatment	Condition	Description
Costs of running	Low costs	RUR 10[13] out of the future round earnings[14]
	High costs	RUR 80 out of the future round earnings
Candidate status	Dominant candidate	The probability of winning is twice as high as any other candidate's
	Equal status	Everyone has an equal probability of winning
	Minor candidate	The probability of winning is half as high as any other candidate's
Leader accountability[15]	Performance	Leader payoff is dependent on task performance
	Citizen accountability	Citizens evaluate the round (knowing that their payoffs reflect their leader's efforts as well), leader payoff is based on that evaluation
	Fixed	Fixed payoff

Table 1: Treatment summaries

I used a combination of between-subject and within-subject treatment assignment. The leader accountability treatment was assigned at the group (session) level, running separate sessions with each of the three conditions. The participants were informed about the way the representative's payoffs were calculated once, at the beginning of the session.

[13] An average round payoff for a citizen was RUR 160

[14] The costs of running are subtracted from the future earnings to avoid endowment effect and due to the fact that only one of the rounds was randomly selected for payoff

[15] The size of expected leader payoff was calibrated to be the same under different conditions - only the way it was calculated was changed

Two other treatments were assigned within subjects; therefore, each subject experienced all treatment conditions of the costs of running and candidate status. Out of the twelve game rounds, six were played with low costs of running and six – with high costs of running for the leadership position. The order of this treatment assignment was determined randomly. Due to the way it was assigned, exactly one-half of the subject-round observations were under the high costs treatment condition and one-half - under the low costs treatment condition.

For every round, participants were separated into groups of 4-5 players. The level of competition for a given round was determined randomly based on the pre-defined probabilities. There was a 2/3 probability of a round being a low competition one with dominant and minor candidates, and a 1/3 chance of a round being a competitive one with all candidates having an equal chance. Each player in a low competition round was then randomly assigned a candidate status ("dominant candidate" or "minor candidate" with a 1/2 probability each). The shares of each candidate status (a dominant candidate, a minor candidate running against a dominant candidate, a candidate under equal competition) in the observed data are approximately even - 33.1%, 33.3%, and 33.5% of subject-round observations, respectively. Table 2 summarizes the treatment assignment and de facto sample structure.

Office benefits	Fixed			Performance			Citizen accountability		
Costs of running: low	DC	EQUAL	MC	DC	EQUAL	MC	DC	EQUAL	MC
Costs of running: high	DC	EQUAL	MC	DC	EQUAL	MC	DC	EQUAL	MC
N	50			59			63		

Table 2: Summary of the treatment assignment

Notes: DC means "dominant candidate" (a player is the dominant candidate), EQUAL – "equal chances" (all candidates have equal chances to win), and MC – "minor candidate" (a player is running against the dominant candidate). Within each of the two' costs of running' conditions, competition level and candidate status are assigned randomly in every round.

Measuring risk attitudes

To minimize the effect of the complex nature of risk attitudes on my study's findings, I evaluate individual risk preferences through a standard task in a controlled lab setting. That allows me to effectively compare individuals to each other in their risk attitudes.

There are various approaches to measuring individual risk attitudes (see Charness et al. (2013)). I use incentivized tasks to capture the behavioral aspect of risk attitudes and present the subjects with a series of lotteries modeled after Holt and Laury (2002). Individual risk attitudes are compared based on the number of "risky" choices made across all lotteries[16]. This measure is most relevant for the present study as the decision I am most interested in – the decision to run for a political office – is framed within the experiment in a manner similar to the risk elicitation task. This similarity further reinforces the internal validity of the measure.

The measurement is administered before the main treatments to avoid contaminating the independent variable. To prevent wealth effects due to using an

[16] The details of this lottery task are provided in Appendix D.

incentivized task with real payoffs, I use the lottery task that makes it hard to predict the outcome and put it before the treatments - but resolve the uncertainty (which lottery was selected for payoff) after the treatments, at the end of the experiment, as suggested in Crosetto and Filippin (2016).

Data analysis

172 subjects, students of several Russian universities, participated in the experiments. There were 78 women and 74 men in the sample[17]. The majority of participants were between 18 and 22 years old.

Subjects' risk attitudes were measured using a lottery task. The resulting measure varies from 0 to 1, where 0 is the most risk-averse and 1 is the most risk-seeking, with a mean of 0.48 and a median of 0.50. The distribution is shown in Figure 1. Based on the histogram, the measure is close to a normal distribution, skewed to the right (indicating a higher number of relatively risk-averse individuals, which corresponds to the existing understanding of human behavior). There is no significant correlation between gender and risk attitudes.

[17] Full demographic questionnaire is included in Appendix E. Due to software malfunction, demographic data from one of the sessions (20 participants) could not be retrieved, therefore sample size in all corresponding descriptive statistics is 152. That only affects the main analysis for Hypotheses 4 and 5, where gender is used as a control variable. Observations without demographic data were dropped in that case.

The main outcome during the experiment is the decision to run for a group representative. Summary statistics and distribution for candidacy and becoming a group representative are presented in Table 2 and Figure 2.

I also calculate willingness to run by gender, as women may be less willing to run for reasons not connected to their risk attitudes (Kanthak and Woon 2015). On average, the probability of running in any given round is 0.62 for a male player and 0.54 for a female. A Welch Two Sample t-test shows that there are significant differences between groups (p=0.02, one-tailed)[18]. Therefore, women are less likely to run, and I will control for gender when running the models for between-subject treatment.

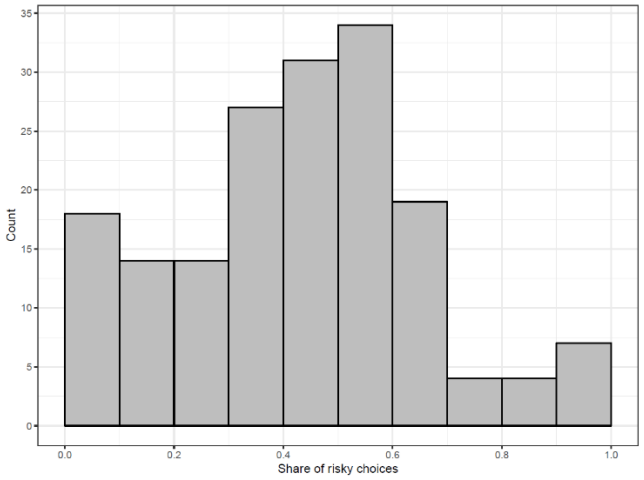
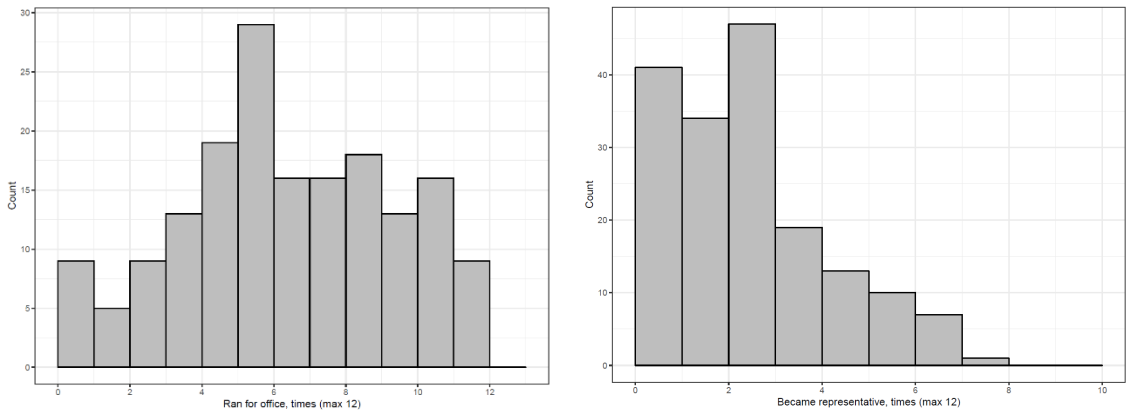


Figure 1: Lottery task (share of risky choices)

	min	max	median	mean	var	std.dev
Running for office	0.00	12.00	7.00	6.84	9.21	3.03
Becoming a representative	0.00	8.00	3.00	2.86	3.35	1.83

Table 2: Statistics of running for the position and becoming group representative, by person (rounds)

[18] I also ran a Wilcoxon rank sum test with continuity correction and got a one-tailed p-value = 0.017, so men do run for the group representative position significantly more often than women.



(a) Running for the position of a group representative

(b) Becoming a group representative

Figure 2: The number of times (out of 12) a person ran for the position/became group representative

A simple comparison of means demonstrates that candidate risk attitudes under different treatments do differ. Figure 3 below presents mean risk attitudes, measured through the lottery task, for candidates (citizens displaying political ambition) under each condition.

In the first graph, we see that on average, candidates under high costs are more risk-seeking (risk-seeking of 0.55 as opposed to 0.49 for the low costs). This corresponds to my expectations. The second graph illustrates that dominant, "equal chance", and minor candidates are almost indistinguishable in terms of their risk attitudes (0.51 for dominant and 0.52 for "equal chance" and minor candidates). Finally, the last graph shows that when the selected leader is evaluated by citizens, candidates are more risk-seeking than when the leader is evaluated and rewarded based on objective performance – 0.49 as compared to 0.45. This finding also corresponds to expectations. Guaranteed payoff does not invite more risk-averse candidates.

To statistically explore these differences, I run several regression models with selection institutions as a moderating variable (MacKinnon 2011), expecting that depending on institutional parameters, individuals with given risk attitudes should be more or less willing to run for group leadership.

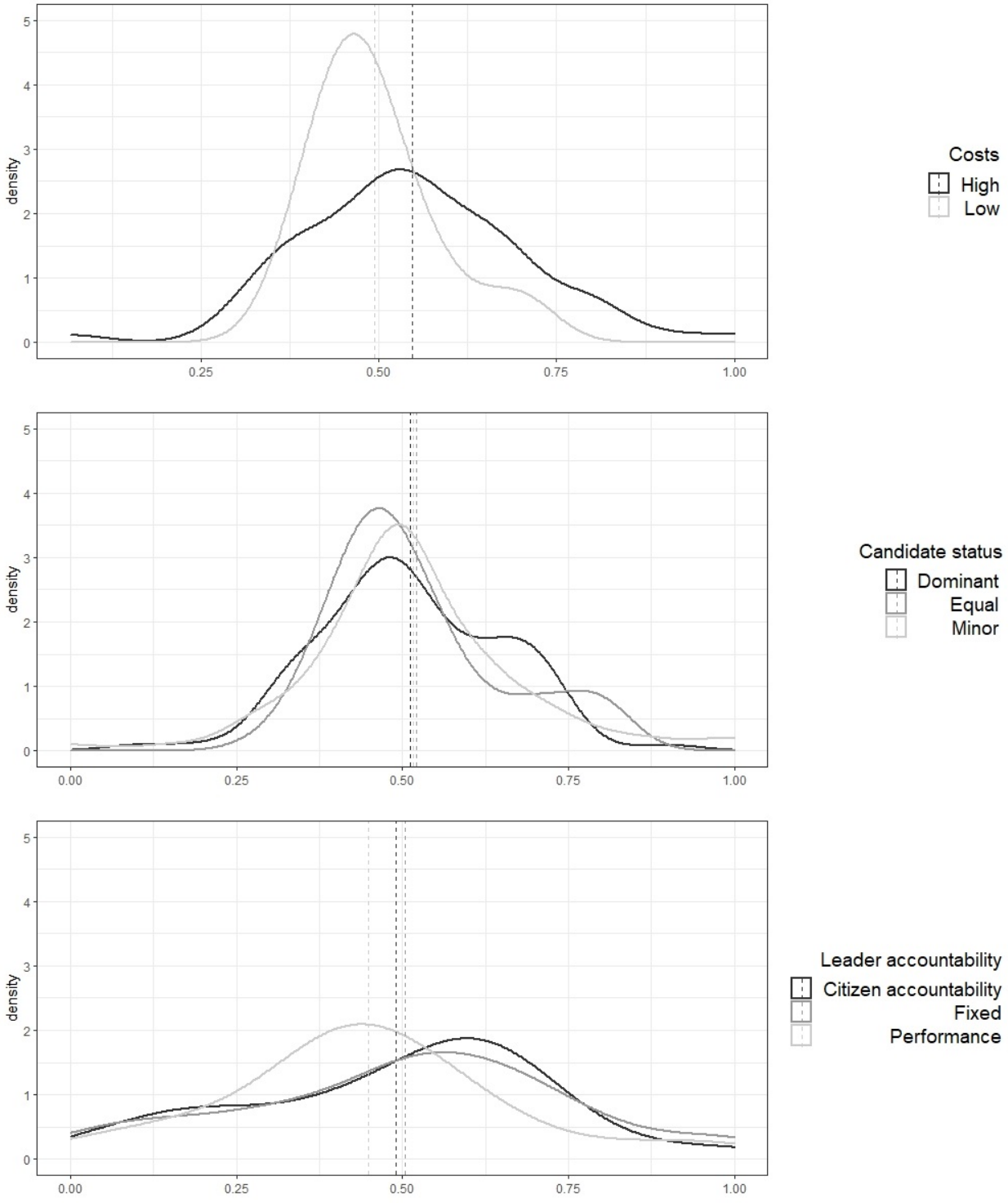


Figure 3: The distribution of risk-seeking scores among candidates under different treatments

To test hypotheses 1-3, I run a logit model with a binary outcome (running as a candidate) and two independent terms - individual risk attitudes and the relevant treatment variable. As the treatments of interests for these hypotheses are assigned on a within-subject basis, I get multiple measurements of the outcome and treatment for each individual and therefore use a mixed-effects model with random intercept.

For hypotheses 4-5, both explanatory variables are stable at the individual level (risk attitudes and accountability treatment) because the corresponding treatments are assigned on a between-subject basis. I use a Poisson regression with the number of times a person ran as a candidate being the dependent variable. Risk attitudes and the assigned leader evaluation scheme treatment are the independent variables. I also control for gender[19].

Hypothesis 1: costs of running and candidate risk attitudes

The first model shows that both risk attitudes and costs or running have significant effects on the probability of running as a candidate (Table 3). As can be seen from the table, higher risk-seeking makes running as a candidate more likely, and so does lowering the costs of running. The interaction term is also significant: the effect of risk-seeking is reversed for the low costs.

If we estimate the probabilities based on the coefficients in Table 3, the probability of running for the most risk-averse individual (risk-seeking score equals 0) under high costs is just 0.15. For the most risk-seeking person under the same conditions, the probability of running is 0.54. Risk-seeking is therefore much more important in determining

[19] A test for location/lab effects did not indicate any significant effects.

candidacy under high costs, making risk-seekers more prominent among candidates in that case. Under low costs, though, the probability of running is 0.83 for the most risk-averse and 0.88 for the most risk-seeking. The graph of predicted probabilities in Figure 4 demonstrates different slopes for the high costs treatment and the low costs treatment - risk attitudes are not an important factor of candidate self-selection when costs of running are low. This corresponds to expectations formulated in Hypothesis 1.

	P (run)
(Intercept)	-1.75***
	(0.34)
Risk seeking	1.91**
	(0.63)
Low costs	3.31***
	(0.31)
Risk seeking*Low costs	-1.43*
	(0.58)
N	2064

Notes: Logit mixed-effects model with random intercept for individual subjects; standard errors in parentheses; . p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 3: Candidacy as a function of candidate risk-seeking and running costs (N=2064)

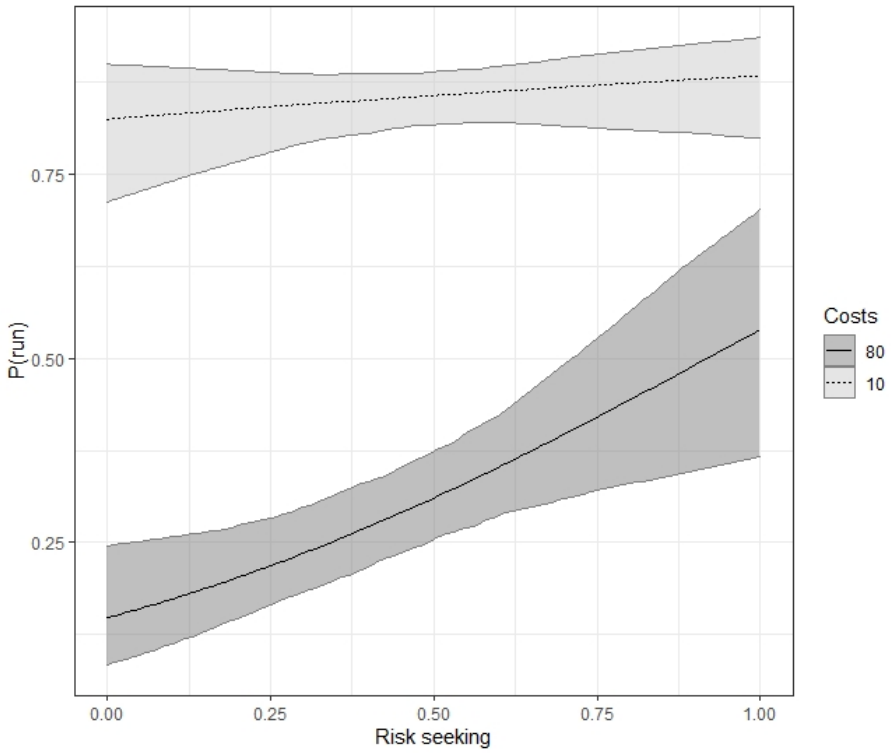


Figure 4: Running as a function of candidate risk-seeking, by running costs

Hypotheses 2 and 3: candidate status and candidate risk attitudes

As can be seen from Table 4, the effect of the candidate status on the willingness to run is not significant – not on average and not depending on the risk attitudes of potential candidates. Risk seeking itself remains a positive and significant factor contributing to an individual decision to run. That is, I do not find support for Hypotheses 2 and 3[20].

As is clear from Figure 5, the predicted probabilities of running as a candidate increase with higher risk seeking at approximately the same rate, no matter which competition environment a potential candidate is facing. For the dominant and minor candidates, the shift from the most risk-averse to the most risk-seeking (0 to 1) is associated

[20] Additional check with costs as an interaction variable does not change these results.

with a change in the probability of running from 0.53 to 0.80 and from 0.43 to 0.65 correspondingly (that is, a difference of 0.27 and 0.22). In a fully competitive environment, the most risk-seeking candidates' probability of running is 0.65 - as compared to 0.47 for the most risk-averse (a difference of 0.18).

Being a dominant candidate makes people more willing to run than any other assigned candidate status – even though the effect is not significant, it points in the expected direction. The fact that changing the probability of winning – even from the lowest for the "minor" candidate to the highest for the "dominant" candidate – does not attract more risk-averse individuals may be due to a variety of reasons, which I will bring up in the discussion section.

	P (run)
(Intercept)	0.11
	(0.29)
Risk seeking	1.25*
	(0.55)
Candidate status: equal	-0.24
	(0.29)
Candidate status: minor	-0.38
	(0.30)
Risk seeking*equal	-0.51
	(0.56)
Risk seeking*minor	-0.36
	(0.57)
N	2064

Notes: Logit mixed-effects model with random intercept for individual subjects; standard errors in parentheses; . p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 4: Candidacy as a function of candidate risk seeking and candidate status (N=2064)

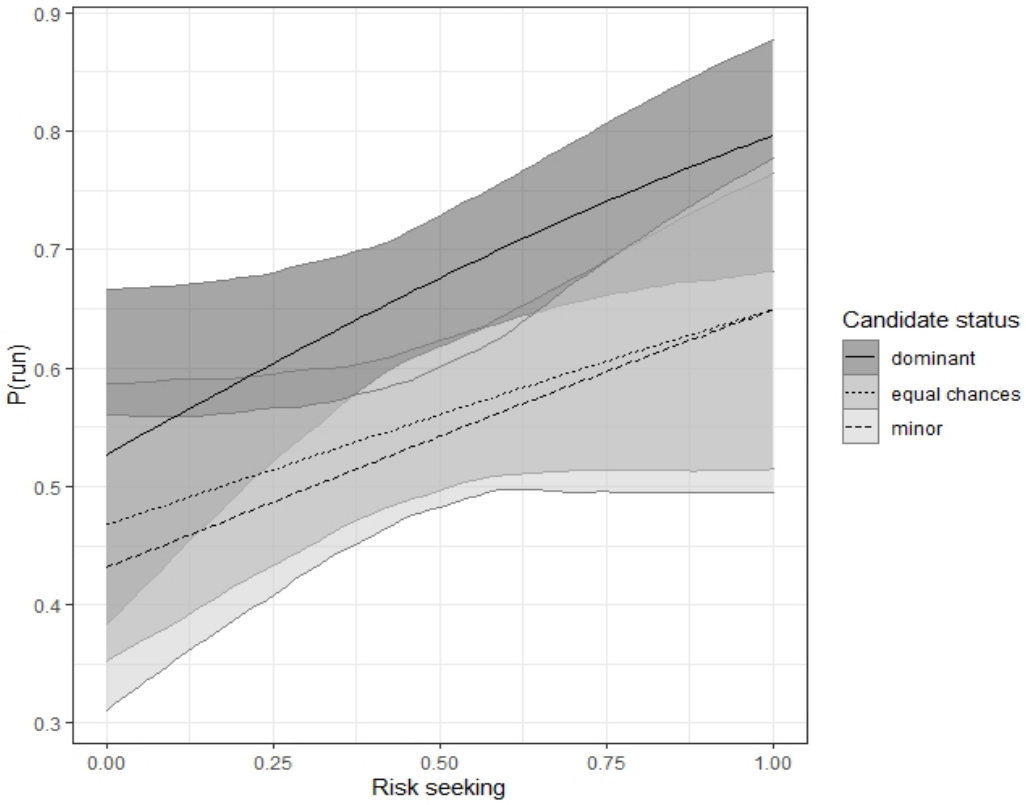


Figure 5: Running as a function of candidate risk seeking, by candidate status

Hypotheses 4 and 5: leader accountability scheme and candidate risk attitudes

Finally, I run a Poisson model[21] to test the effects of the last treatment. Table 5 presents the results of the estimation. From Hypothesis 4, we would expect that under the citizen accountability treatment condition, when group members define leader payoff, risk seekers will be more likely to run, while risk-averse individuals will shun away from running. Based on the presented results, the effects are very pronounced. A switch from the accountability system to one where leader payoff is directly proportional to objective

[21] Pearson Chi2 dispersion statistic for the Poisson model equals 1.3, indicating some overdispersion. Re-running the model as a negative binomial does not change the results.

performance leads to a drastic change in willingness to run. The risk-averse go from being much less likely to run to being much more likely to run than the risk-seekers. This is further supported by a negative coefficient on the interaction term and corresponds to the expectations regarding these two models of leader evaluation. Figure 6 illustrates the predicted frequencies of running for individuals with different risk attitudes under different treatment conditions[22].

A surprising effect is observed for the fixed leader payoff (Hypothesis 5). It is a situation of a guaranteed payoff; therefore, I expected it to attract even the most risk-averse individuals, compared to two other treatments. In fact, based on the regression results, it does not differ significantly from the accountability treatment: risk-seekers are more likely to run than risk-averse individuals. It appears that a guaranteed payoff for the leader did not attract the risk-averse, and experimental data does not provide an obvious explanation for this outcome. I therefore do not find support for Hypothesis 5[23].

[22] I find no significant correlation between risk seeking and performance in the task, which may have produced such an effect: Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.08, p-value 0.29

[23] I re-run the analysis without gender, which allows me to include observations with missing demographic data and increases sample size to the full 172. The results stay the same.

	Rounds (run)
(Intercept)	1.57***
	(0.12)
Risk seeking	0.56**
	(0.21)
Leader payoff: fixed	-0.02
	(0.17)
Leader payoff: performance	0.40*
	(0.18)
Gender (male)	0.15*
	(0.06)
Risk seeking*fixed	0.09
	(0.30)
Risk seeking*performance	-0.81*
	(0.36)
N	152

Notes: Poisson regression; standard errors in parentheses; . p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 5: Candidacy (number of rounds in which a person decided to run) as a function of candidate risk-seeking and leader accountability (N=152)

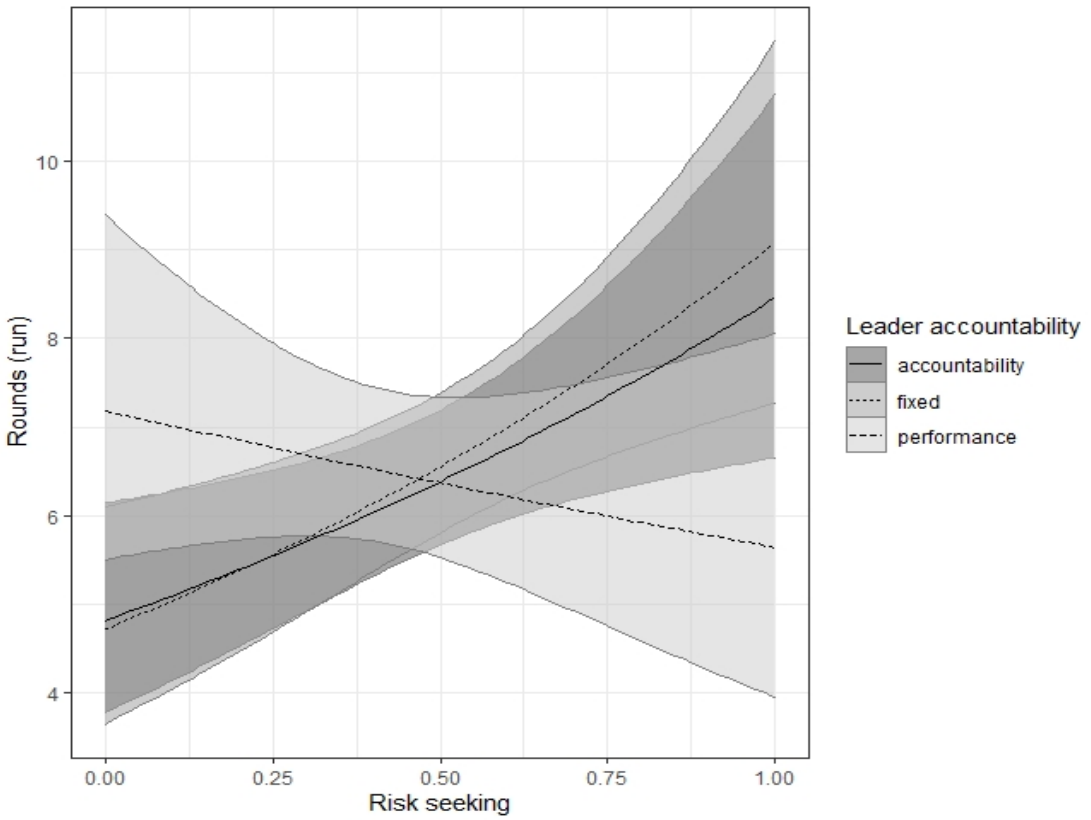


Figure 6: Running as a candidate (number of rounds) as a function of individual risk attitudes, by leader accountability scheme

Discussion

Will we see different candidates under different selection institutions? I argue that individuals use selection rules to determine the value of a political office when they decide to self-select into candidacy. I frame candidacy as a risky option compared to not running. My hypotheses further connect the expected value of candidacy with three properties of the selection procedures: costs of candidacy, competition, and accountability mechanism. These properties allow me to predict how individuals with different levels of risk seeking will perceive candidacy compared to not running. If a certain property makes the expected value of candidacy lower, risk-averse individuals will choose not to run. If, instead, a property of selection makes the expected value of candidacy higher, even risk-averse individuals will self-select into candidacy. The main implication of this theory is that the cumulative effect of individual decisions will affect the overall candidate pool, making it more or less risk-seeking.

The experimental evidence supports two of my hypotheses: Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 1 stipulates that higher costs of candidacy will be more encouraging for risk-seeking than for risk-averse candidates. In the experiment, risk-seeking increases individual willingness to run under high non-refundable running costs. Hypothesis 4 states that a leader's accountability to the citizens will encourage risk-seeking rather than risk-averse candidates. Indeed, when leaders know that at the end of term, they will be evaluated by citizens, as opposed to being judged by objective performance, risk-seeking individuals are more likely to run. These findings suggest that risk-averse individuals are more likely to self-select into political offices that do not require high upfront running costs and those that do not subject them to citizen evaluation.

The hypotheses regarding the effects of competitiveness and candidate status (Hypotheses 2 and 3) do not find empirical support: whether an individual faces a competitive or non-competitive selection, being a dominant or a minor candidate, risk-seeking and risk-averse candidates do not differ in their willingness to run. This finding requires additional exploration in further experiments. If the non-effect is due to the chosen probabilities of winning, which were all relatively high given the group size, repeating the experiments with a greater variety of group sizes and probabilities may be a useful direction of further testing. Furthermore, I don't find support for Hypothesis 5: while performance-based payoff affects risk-seeking and risk-averse individuals differently (supporting Hypothesis 4), guaranteed payoff has the same effect on candidate behavior as payoff dependent on accountability to citizens. One possible explanation is that fixed leader payoff is perceived within the loss frame: even winning the selection process under that treatment will mean losing part of the promised and guaranteed pay (without ways to affect it), and losing selection is pure loss. From existing research, we know that in the loss frame, people are more risk-averse (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Vis 2009) – and what we observe here may be that only the most risk-seeking individuals are still willing to take the risk of candidacy. Further experiments, potentially modeling renewal more explicitly or modeling framing effects, may shed light on that.

These findings allow us to explore the effects of specific institutional features on individual behavior and imagine complex scenarios that more closely model real-life situations. For example, from observation, scholars of politics know that not all candidates in one race bear comparable costs of running. Furthermore, even elected officials who bear higher costs of candidacy may be mostly unaccountable to voters if the votes are acquired

through electoral manipulation. Based on my experimental findings, we can speculate that reduced costs of running for the representatives of one party will lead to this party's candidates being more risk-averse. Similarly, manipulated elections without the core characteristic of building accountability to voters will result in a more risk-averse candidate pool compared to the "perfect" democratic elections. This interpretation is particularly useful for the studies of hybrid regimes, which feature such institutional combinations.

An example of a specific context where these findings can be usefully applied are the changes in the subnational procedures implemented in Russia in recent years. At the municipal level, most cities have experienced a switch from popularly elected mayors to those selected by the municipal council or a specialized commission, replacing accountability to voters with a technocratic evaluation. Where elections remained, widespread electoral engineering and electoral malpractice in subnational elections (Smyth and Turovsky 2018; Turchenko 2020) diminishes the influence of the popular support on staying in office, eroding accountability to the citizens. All these institutional changes are diminishing or eliminating the uncertainty associated with an elected office to make subnational selection more "manageable" for the authorities, at the same time increasing the expected value of the office for the candidates. The present findings demonstrate that they also have a direct effect on who decides to run for these positions. We should see more cautious, risk-averse candidates as a result. Returning to the opening example of Irkutsk, which transitioned to a city manager model, there is a reason to expect that candidates under the new selection scheme are not only politically inexperienced (which is easily observable in the example) but also more risk-averse (an unobservable but consequential characteristic).

I posit that these findings are generalizable beyond the Russian context, due to the use of context-free incentives in a controlled environment. Even as risk attitudes are known to be culturally specific, the relative effects of their combination with specific selection properties examined in this study will stay the same, with some selection properties attracting relatively more risk-seeking individuals from the available population. At the same time, setting the experiment in Russia was valuable because other factors that have been shown to affect political ambition – such as political party activities and recruitment strategies, politicians' remuneration schemes, or campaign funding – are either absent or do not vary in the Russian case. As a result, the importance of my findings is greater for Russia and similar cases: the identified mechanism can be assumed to play a greater role in nascent political ambition in this context.

Within its scope, the study delivers reliable and insightful findings. Using a laboratory experiment made it possible to isolate and explore a commonly ignored mechanism that connects selection institutions and the selected officials' characteristics: candidate self-selection. And recording actual subject behavior of running for office (as opposed to reported measures of political ambition or interest in a political career) reinforced the study's internal validity.

The implications of these findings deserve a separate discussion. I argue that risk-seeking as a candidate feature will affect their behavior, and the effects spill over to the selection process outcomes and the behavior of the same individuals if they become political leaders. What would be these observable effects? Earlier research has connected a variety of human behaviors to risk-seeking, and some examples relevant for public officials include preparedness (say, for natural disasters – see Donahue, Eckel, and Wilson

2014) and organizational and policy innovation (Damanpour 1991; Bernier and Hafsi 2007). This means that based on the present findings, we can predict whether, under a given set of selection institutions, public officials will be more likely to demonstrate these behaviors, many of which are highly desirable. While additional testing would be necessary to test these downstream effects, current findings can inform such expectations and push further research on this topic.

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Ambition without democracy: candidate risk attitudes under elections and appointments

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

With an exception of Appendix C, all supplementary materials are in English. Full experimental materials in Russian are available upon request

Appendix A – Details of the experiment

The experiment consists of 12 rounds. It starts with a short introduction and instructions, after which the participants signed an informed consent form. Once the session begins, the participants first answered a series of questions to elicit their risk preferences. As discussed in the corresponding section, I used an incentivized task from Holt and Laury (2002). The subjects did not know the outcomes of the lottery until after the rounds were over. They also answered a series of other questions, such as a short Big Five personality traits questionnaire, which were not included in the present analysis. After the 12 rounds of the game, the participants filled in the demographic questionnaire and received the payoffs for the incentivized risk task and a randomly selected round of the game. An experimental session lasted on average 1 hour 20 minutes including instructions, questionnaires and payments period. The participants were paid in Russian rubles. On average, they received 500 rubles for their participation, including 200 rubles of the guaranteed participation payment. For comparison, a basic lunch on campus would be about 150 rubles.

Each round of the game consisted of two main stages – leader selection and a cognitive task. In the leader selection stage, the participants were presented with information about running for the position of the group representative, determined by a combination of treatments. Based on that information, they made the decision to run for the position. Once everyone made their decision, one of those who decided to run was randomly selected for the position. This person was selected by the program, with the probability of being selected adjusted to the treatments received (i.e. twice the chance everyone else has if the individual is a dominant candidate).

There were two special cases discussed with the participants. If there was only one volunteer, they became the group representative with all the associated benefits. If there was none, one group member became the 'acting' group representative, having the social function (influencing the payoffs of the group members), but not receiving the leader payoff. As a result, the payoff of such leaders was similar to an average payoff in the group, while regular leaders normally made noticeably more. These two special cases do not bear special effects for the hypotheses of the study, which focus on the initial decision to run. They present a separate interest for the future study of leader behavior, as they allow to explore how much leader behavior is determined by voluntarily going through the selection procedures (as opposed to being "drafted") and the private as opposed to social payoffs associated with leadership.

In the second stage of each round, once the leader was selected, everyone in a group completed a simple addition task. The subjects had one minute to add up as many pairs of 2-digit numbers as they could. Each correct answer was associated with a small payoff. On average, a participant gave 12 correct answers in one minute, with a range between 9 and 20 correct answers.

The participants' payoffs were determined by several factors. The major one was whether one was a group leader or a regular group member ('citizen'). Group leader's payoff was structured based on the corresponding accountability treatment. It could be (1) fixed, (2) based on the objective performance in the task or (3) based on group evaluation of the round. The expected payoff for a leader in all these treatments was set to be the same – approximately 300 rubles. The citizens received payoffs proportional to the number of correct answers they gave, at the rate of 10 rubles per answer. In addition to that, they

received 5 rubles for every correct answer given by the group's leader. If the person ran for the position of a group leader (whether they won or not), the costs of running were deducted from their earnings in that round. High costs of running were 80 rubles, low costs of running – 10 rubles. At the end of the round the subjects saw this round's payoff. After all 12 rounds were played, one was randomly selected for payment. In addition to the randomly selected round payment, everyone received a flat participation payment and the sum they won in the risk elicitation lottery.

I expected the subjects to be interested in running for the leadership because it offered, on average, higher payoff. Furthermore, there was a certain "social" function of leadership, which consisted of the ability to influence other people's payoffs. At the same time, running for leadership was associated with risks that explain the self-selection of individuals with specific risk attitudes. That is, I expect the subjects to evaluate these higher payoffs against the risks of running – which depend on the costs of running, the probability of winning and the accountability scheme.

Costs of running treatment

The first treatment models the presence (or absence) of an electoral campaign, with high costs of running indicating an elected office and low costs of running indicating an indirectly elected/appointed office.

1. To run for the group representative for the next round, a candidate will need to pay RUR 10[24] out of the future earnings in the game[25] [low costs]

2. To run for the group representative for the next round, a candidate will need to pay RUR 80 out of the future earnings in the game [high costs]

Candidate status treatment

The second treatment has three conditions – each describing the competition a potential candidate will be facing.

1. In this round, if you decide to run for a group representative, your chances of winning will be twice as high as that of any of other candidates [dominant candidate]

2. In this round, everyone running for the group representative in this round will have an equal chance [equal status]

3. In this round, if you decide to run for a group representative, your chances of winning will be half as high as those of one of the other candidates [minor candidate]

Leader accountability treatment[26]

[24] An average round payoff for a citizen was around RUR 160

[25] The costs of running are subtracted from the future earnings to avoid endowment effect and due to the fact that only one of the rounds was randomly selected for payoff

[26] The size of expected leader payoff was calibrated to be the same under different conditions - only the way it was calculated was changed

The final treatment represents the model of leader accountability for a given office: performance-based (as for appointed officials) or based on the citizen evaluation (as for elected officials). Citizen evaluation is based on performance indirectly as the citizens' payoff depends on the leader performance. In addition, here I add a control condition of a fixed payoff (no risk situation) to use it as a reference category for the other two conditions.

1. The representative will receive a payoff that will be proportional to their performance in the task [performance]

2. The representative's payoff will depend on how group members evaluate the round. Group members will evaluate their satisfaction with the round's outcomes on a scale from 1 to 5, and a fixed sum will be multiplied by this score [citizen accountability]

3. The representative will receive a fixed payoff [fixed]

Appendix B – Screen example with treatments

This is a scheme of the screen as the participants saw it. This screen would appear at the self-selection stage. This example refers to the "accountability to the citizens" treatment, with high costs and a low competition environment (this player is the dominant candidate).

Period: 1 of 12	Time remaining (sec): 28
In this round, the costs of running for the position of the group representative is 80 rubles, which will be deducted from your payoff in this round, whether you are selected as a group representative or not. At the end of the round all group members will evaluate their satisfaction with the results of the round, on a scale from 1 to 5. The average score will be multiplied by 100 rubles, and the resulting sum will constitute the group representative's payoff. In this round, if you run for the position of the group representative, your chances of winning will be twice as high as those of any of your opponents. Do you want to run for the position of the group representative in this round? Yes No	
	OK

Appendix C – Treatments in Russian

Costs:

1. В этом раунде издержки отбора составят 10 рублей, которые мы вычтем из вашего выигрыша в данном раунде, если Вы решите участвовать в отборе.
2. В этом раунде издержки отбора составят 80 рублей, которые мы вычтем из вашего выигрыша в данном раунде, если Вы решите участвовать в отборе.

Competitiveness of selection:

1. В этом раунде, если вы выдвинете свою кандидатуру, Ваши шансы на победу будут в два раза ниже, чем у одного из Ваших оппонентов.
2. В этом раунде, если вы выдвинете свою кандидатуру, Ваши шансы на победу будут в два раза выше, чем у любого из Ваших оппонентов.
3. В этом раунде, если вы выдвинете свою кандидатуру, Ваши шансы на победу будут такими же, как у всех остальных участников.

Leader accountability:

1. Вознаграждение лидера будет зависеть от средней оценки раунда участниками группы и составит 100 рублей за каждый балл (из 5).
2. Представитель группы получает 25 рублей за каждый правильный ответ в раунде.
3. Представитель группы получает фиксированный бонус в размере 300 рублей за раунд.

Appendix D – Risk measure

The payoffs are in rubles. One line was selected randomly for payoff. Players learned about lottery outcomes after the main experiment was over.

Period: 1 of 12	Time remaining (sec): 28

In this question we will ask you to make a few choices. You can earn additional payoff.

Look at the first row – in it, you can pick either lottery A, which means getting 200 rubles in 10% of the cases and 0 rubles in 90% of the cases, or lottery B, which means getting 100 rubles in 10% of the cases and 50 rubles in 90% of the cases. Which lottery would you rather play?

Pick one lottery in every row. Pay attention to the probabilities – they change from row to row.

Once you make your choices, one row will be selected randomly, and the lottery you picked in this row will be played to determine your payoff. You will see the result in the end of today's session, and if your payoff is greater than 0 it will be added to your final payment.

Lottery A				Your choice	Lottery B			
A1	p(A1)	A2	p(A2)		B1	p(B1)	B2	p(B2)
200	0.1	0	0.9	A __ B	100	0.1	50	0.9
200	0.2	0	0.8	A __ B	100	0.2	50	0.8
200	0.3	0	0.7	A __ B	100	0.3	50	0.7
200	0.4	0	0.6	A __ B	100	0.4	50	0.6
200	0.5	0	0.5	A __ B	100	0.5	50	0.5
200	0.6	0	0.4	A __ B	100	0.6	50	0.4
200	0.7	0	0.3	A __ B	100	0.7	50	0.3
200	0.8	0	0.2	A __ B	100	0.8	50	0.2
200	0.9	0	0.1	A __ B	100	0.9	50	0.1
200	1	0	0	A __ B	100	1	50	0

Next

Appendix E – Demographic questionnaire

Please answer several questions about yourself. You can skip any question if you don't want to answer it or it does not apply to you.

1. Please indicate your age (in years)
2. Please indicate your gender
3. Are you religious?
4. If you are religious – which religion do you adhere to?
    - Catholic
    - Protestant
    - Orthodox Christian
    - Judaic
    - Muslim
    - Buddist
    - Other
5. If you selected "Other" – clarify here please
6. What is the highest level of education for which you have a diploma or certificate?
    - High school
    - Tertiary (trade school)
    - Undergraduate (baccalaureate)
    - Undergraduate (spetcialist)
    - Master's degree
    - Graduate degree (candidat/doctor)
    - Other
7. If you selected "Other" – clarify here please
8. If you have or are pursuing a university degree – please indicate the major field of your studies
9. Do you have any experience of civic or political engagement (select all that apply)?
    - Volunteer work, participating in the activities of non-governmental organizations (including human rights organizations)
    - Participating in the activities of professional organizations and labor unions
    - Participating in public gatherings, hearings and other venues created to address public issues
    - Voting in local and national elections
    - Being an observer in the elections
    - Participating in political actions and protests
    - Participating in the activities of a political party
    - Other
    - No
10. If you selected "Other" – clarify here please
11. Do you have an experience of holding an elected position (select all that apply)?

- Class or school president
- Member of student government in the university
- Club or association chairperson
- Local housing association chairperson or a similar position in your apartment home
- Other
- No

12. If you selected "Other" – clarify here please
13. Please imaging a set of stairs with 9 steps, where the poorest are on the first step, and the richest are on the ninth step. How would you evaluate your family wealth on a scale from 1 to 9?
14. You were born
    - In a city/town
    - In a small town
    - In a rural settlement
    - Other
15. If you selected "Other" – clarify here please
16. With which of those statements do you agree the most?
    - Most people can be trusted
    - One should be cautious when dealing with other people
    - It depends on the person and the situation

Appendix F – Study preregistration details

The study has been preregistered with the EGAP registry. The following is the anonymized version of the preregistration page, excluding author and study identifying information.

Timestamp of original registration
05/15/2019 - 15:36
Is this Registration Prospective or Retrospective?
Registration prior to assignment of treatment
Other
No response
Is this an experimental study? *(with random assignment of units to different conditions)*
Yes
Date of start of study *Understood as first date of treatment assignment or equivalent for observational study*
5/20/19
Gate Date *Gating is discouraged, but if necessary, EGAP policy limits the gate range to 18 months maximum.*
No response
Was this design presented at an EGAP meeting? *Indicate if the design received feedback from a EGAP design workshop or other special EGAP session prior to registration*
No
Is there a pre-analysis plan associated with this registration?
No
Registration Data
Background and explanation of rationale.
A lot of decisions political leaders face involve risks (Kowert and Hermann 1997, Weyland 1996, 2002, Vis 2009). The types of decisions that I am interested in include policy experimentation and investment decisions at subnational level as a source of both local and national-level innovation (Oates 1999, Schnyder 2011, Xu and Zhuang 1998, Heilmann 2008). Understanding why some leaders are more likely to take risks than others is important for explaining and predicting these choices. I argue that the way a political leader was selected is connected to the risk attitudes she holds – specifically, through a mechanism of self-selection, triggered by specific characteristics of the selection process. I rely on several strands of existing research to build my argument. Scholars have shown through comparative observational studies that selection procedures affect selected leaders' characteristics and incentives (Buckley et al. 2014). In addition to that, there is a demonstrated link between self-selection into candidacy or progressive ambition under elections and personality traits, as well as risk attitudes (Rhode 1979, Blais and Pruysers 2017, Dynes et al. 2018). Finally, separate studies explored the effects of risk attitudes on behavior, including the willingness to participate in political activities (Kam 2012). I expand on the existing findings by focusing on the properties of selection procedures relevant for subnational

level and non-democratic settings. I compare popular elections with non-electoral procedures (using the costs of candidacy and the presence of direct accountability to citizens as major traits that differentiate them) and explore the effects of the potential candidate's status (specifically, whether she is or faces a dominant candidate under imperfect electoral competition). I use experimental approach to explore the mechanism of self-selection on risk attitudes under different treatments in a controlled environment.

What are the hypotheses to be tested/quantities of interest to be estimated?

Based on my theory, the structure of costs, benefits and risks associated with specific selection institutions makes the procedures more or less attractive to individuals with specific risk preferences.

I therefore test five main hypotheses*:

1. Selection procedures with high costs of running (elections), as opposed to selection procedures with low costs of running (appointments), will lead to self-selection of risk-seeking individuals.
2. Leader bonus depending on subjective evaluation (elections) will lead to self-selection of more risk-seeking candidates than leader bonus based on objective performance evaluation or a fixed leader bonus (appointments).
3. Leader bonus based on objective performance evaluation will lead to self-selection of more risk-seeking candidates than a fixed leader bonus
4. Being a minor candidate in a dominant-candidate system will lead to self-selection of more risk-seeking candidates as compared to being a candidate in a competitive environment or being a dominant candidate.
5. Being a candidate in a competitive environment will lead to self-selection of more risk-seeking candidates as compared to being a dominant candidate.

My main dependent variable is the willingness to run for political office. In the experiment, I will measure the effect of a specific set of selection rules in combination with personal risk attitudes on an individual decision to become a candidate. I expect more risk-seeking individuals to be more willing to run for leadership and risk-averse individuals to be less willing to run for leadership under certain procedures and competition environments. I will use several measures of individual risk attitudes: a survey proposed by Kam and Simas (2010), a hypothetical (non-incentivized) investment task (Menkhoff and Sakha 2017) and an incentivized lottery task (Holt and Laury 2002). These measures will allow me to estimate individual risk acceptance.

How will these hypotheses be tested?

I will use a mixed between-subject and within-subject design, combining three sets of treatments: two factors with three levels and one factor with two levels. I assign the types of office benefits at the group level, running separate sessions with each of the three treatments. Within each session, 12 game rounds will be played – 6 rounds with low costs of running for leadership and 6 rounds with high costs of running for leadership. Before each set of 6 rounds, the players will be informed of the costs of running in the next 6 rounds (and reminded when making the decision to run). For every round, participants will be separated into groups of 4-5 players, and each player will be randomly assigned a candidate status ("dominant candidate", "equal competitor" and "minor candidate"). Each of the twelve rounds consists of leader selection stage and addition task stage. During leader selection, the participants see

their assigned candidate status and need to decide whether they are willing to run for the position of a group representative. Once everyone decides, one of the candidates is randomly selected for leadership using specified rules. After that, everyone performs a timed addition task, and payoffs are calculated and displayed. After all twelve rounds are played, one of them is randomly selected for payoff. This design will allow me to compare individual willingness to run for leadership under different parameters of selection institutions. Having measured individual risk attitudes at the beginning of the session, I will be able to test whether risk aversion is really a factor of self-selection into candidacy, as specified in the hypotheses. I will compare the mean risk aversion of candidates under different treatments and run a probit model, with the decision to run as the dependent variable.
Country
Russia
Sample Size (# of Units)
150
Was a power analysis conducted prior to data collection?
No
Other
No response
Has this research received Institutional Review Board (IRB) or ethics committee approval?
Other (describe in text box below)
Other
Under review
IRB Number
######
Date of IRB Approval
Under review
Will the intervention be implemented by the researcher or a third party? If a third party, please provide the name.
Researchers
Other
No response
Did any of the research team receive remuneration from the implementing agency for taking part in this research?
No response
Other
No response
If relevant, is there an advance agreement with the implementation group that all results can be published?
No response
Other
No response
JEL classification(s)
No response

Keywords and Data
Keywords for Methodology
Lab Experiments
Keywords for Policy
Elections Governance
Certification
Agree
Confirmation
Agree
Additional Documentation
No files selected
Anonymous Documentation
No files selected

*I revised the text of the hypotheses when working on the final manuscript. Below I provide the direct comparison of the texts of the hypotheses as presented in the pre-registration and the ones in the text. All changes concern phrasing and did not affect testing approach.

Pre-registered hypothesis	In-text hypothesis
1. Selection procedures with high costs of running (elections), as opposed to selection procedures with low costs of running (appointments), will lead to self-selection of risk-seeking individuals.	**Hypothesis 1.** Selection procedures with high costs of running will attract more risk-seeking candidates than selection procedures with low costs of running
2. Leader bonus depending on subjective evaluation (elections) will lead to self-selection of more risk-seeking candidates than leader bonus based on objective performance evaluation or a fixed leader bonus (appointments).	**Hypothesis 4.** Selection procedures with renewal based on accountability to citizens will attract more risk-seeking candidates than selection procedures with renewal based on objective performance criteria.
3. Leader bonus based on objective performance evaluation will lead to self-selection of more risk-seeking candidates than a fixed leader bonus	**Hypothesis 5.** Selection procedures associated with guaranteed renewal will attract more risk-averse candidates than both selection procedures with renewal based on objective performance criteria and procedures with renewal based on accountability to citizens
4. Being a minor candidate in a dominant-candidate system will lead to self-selection of more risk-seeking	**Hypothesis 2**. Less competitive selection environments with dominant candidate(s) will attract more risk-averse individuals as

candidates as compared to being a candidate in a competitive environment or being a dominant candidate.	dominant candidates and more risk-seeking individuals as candidates running against dominant candidates.
5. Being a candidate in a competitive environment will lead to self-selection of more risk-seeking candidates as compared to being a dominant candidate.	**Hypothesis 3**. Competitive selection environments will attract candidates that are more risk-seeking than dominant candidates in an environment with dominant candidate(s) and less risk-seeking than other candidates in an environment with dominant candidate(s).

ABOUT CDDRL

Since 2002, the Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (CDDRL) at Stanford University has collaborated widely with academics, policymakers and practitioners around the world to advance knowledge about the conditions for and interactions among democracy, broad-based economic development, human rights, and the rule of law.

CDDRL bridges the worlds of scholarship and practice to understand and foster the conditions for effective representative governance, promote balanced and sustainable economic growth, and establish the rule of law. Our faculty, researchers, and students analyze the ways in which democracy and development are challenged by authoritarian resurgence, misinformation, and the perils of a changing climate.

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