

The Comparative and Historical Study of Elections

by

Alfred de Grazia

306 Nassau Street  
Princeton, New Jersey  
November 1959

## The Comparative and Historical Study of Elections

The selection of public officers is a process that is sometimes detailed in the laws and sometimes not. In America, a ~~climax~~ of procedural explicitness is achieved in the election of officers. The origins of many of the devices for selecting public officials in the United States trail off into ancient and medieval history, where they lose explicitness or are inextricably combined with general, vague, or customary prescriptions for selecting officers. In most of the world's cultures, before westernization, one finds little to resemble this profuse modern detail.

Therefore, a political scientist who seeks to generalize about selective systems is confronted, on the one hand, by intricate and detailed procedures referring to the selection of officers in an American state, and, on the other hand, by many systems of selection that are unrecorded,

2

conventional, and apparently most general. Is it possible, under such circumstances, to generalize about modes of selecting public officers throughout the world? Or must there be only limited systems of generalization pertaining to the special cultural modes of providing officials?

In the United States, one is inclined to be provincial. Our richly embroidered election laws afford occupation to a certain number of political scientists. We can point out discrepancies within and among states regarding the length of residence for qualified electors, the age requirements for election to certain offices, and so on with many ~~like~~ kindred legal stipulations. We have had to be confined to historical analysis in determining the psychological and behavioral meaning of any item in the selection procedure. Thus, if conventions one hundred years ago debated the importance (and, by so debating, confirmed the importance) of a six months' as against a year's residence requirement for voting for officers, this importance is carried into our thinking about the six months' or year's requirement in the contemporary law, even though the <sup>e</sup> requirement or item may be one of a hundred items similarly and hotly debated in the past. But what significance, psychologically and behaviorally, does the item have presently, when it is part of the law of elections? Such is one of the many unanswered questions of the comparative study of election law and behavior. We are not only perplexed

at the difficulties of cross-cultural study of selection and election systems, but also of the internal analysis of election systems.

These problems stimulated the present writer to attempt an extensive and intensive analysis of modes of election and selection.\* After a historical review

---

\* I should like to express my gratitude to the Graduate Division, the University of Minnesota, for a grant in aid of those researches during the year 1949-50.

of representation and elections, I realized that laws of  
~~\*\* Public and Republic~~, New York: Alfred Knopf, 1952.  
selection frequently developed out of behaviors and that  
what passed for customary "law" in one community was  
enacted into law in another. I was also made acutely  
aware of the way in which a cluster of <sup>specific</sup> ideas (sometimes  
reflected in practice and at other times enacted into  
law) was determined by an ideology of representation,  
springing from landed interests, commercial classes,  
radical democrats, or ~~one~~ forceful political currents.  
I was impressed, too, by the fineness with which certain  
people developed their procedures for selecting officials  
and the simplicity with which others treated the same  
problem. And I was also attracted by certain analogies  
such as occur between the ideas of representation, <sup>held and observed in fact</sup> an "en-  
lightened despot", and the practices of representation,  
enforced by law, of an elected chief executive. It seemed  
to me to be scientifically naive to exclude an idea that

is practiced from the company of a law that is enforced. Both are effective behavioral directives, and should be treated as behavioral equivalencies.

Consequently, I sought to <sup>begin</sup> ~~begin~~ a comparative study of elections by ~~beginning~~ listing those detailed variables that are now or once were thought to have some significance in determining the character of representation. These variables are in every case found in one or more laws of an election or selection of a public officer. I expected that in the United States, the complex law of election would sometime and somewhere enact a viewpoint with respect to every known variable. Alternatively, if the Americans were not inventive enough, their European cousins would oblige.

This expectation <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ not ~~not~~ disappointed. Every significant item of behavior to be encountered in the struggle to elect or select an official is to be found described (as a prescriptive or sanctioned action) in the laws of election here or abroad. A prima facie study of the laws of election gives, if nothing else, a list of variable behaviors in the process of selecting public officials. In countries where this urge to define behavior legally is widespread and potent, the list of variable behaviors is much longer than in other countries; one can say that the difference is as great as exists between the detailed analysis of natural or ethical philosophies of the same countries. That is, the lawmakers of America and the empirical social scientists of America

have worked side by side, unknown to each other, breaking down human behavior into its tiniest component parts.

Because of such cultural differences, the list of variables that would compose the method of selecting any given public officer would perhaps be greater, in law and in behavior, in one country than another. My list, therefore, was based on the maximum development of important criteria of selection. How far one would find the list useful for cross-cultural study was ab initio in question. Subsequent research, as I shall describe it, showed that one could not go very far without becoming frivolous. The list that follows is easily recognized by American students to contain the framework for an exhaustive analysis of American election law, but is regarded with bewilderment, as I discovered, by oriental and even many European students. However, though the list has been derived in part from and can be used in, the analysis of election laws, it is more significant as a collection of behavioral hypotheses. Apart from several identifying items, each variable or criterion sets up a structuring of behavior and implicitly regulates behavior according to a theory of how men act and can be made to act.

One should note, also, in perusing the list, that the rubrics, though fine, are not sufficiently detailed to describe a great number of exact laws of

selecting officials. One could not apply the list to an office and emerge with a perfect description of how it is filled. For instance, the exact experience required of candidates for office could not be stated without a great amount of relatively unimportant detail; hence only descriptions of general categories of experience were called for.\* In other words, the list is

---

\* Gathering data on this type of item presents many of the same problems as coding an open-ended question in social surveys.

---

already pitched upwards in generality from the level on which every individual variation would be regarded as potentially important; the list is not, despite its length, ~~sufficient~~<sup>practical for</sup> any unique case.

Check List for the Description  
of a Method of Selecting or  
Electing Public Officers\*\*

---

\*\* This list is an abbreviation of a list that includes a number of sub-divisions under many items and that is easier to work with. I would be happy to furnish copies of this inventory form to interested scholars who may request them.

---

CHARACTER OF OFFICER

Name of position

General location of constituency

Tenure of office:

Indefinite, months or years, or others

Minimum age required

Citizenship requirement

Type of residence requirement

Political party:

Membership required

Party nomination needed

Primary election provided

~~-~~

### Education

Literacy and how tested

Formal education

Information

Ability

Fees, nominal or substantial

Sex limitations

Real property ownership

Income

Rent

Number of acres

Personal property required and amount

Tax payment, amount required

Religious qualification

Functional proficiency

Military, legal, religious, other professional, trades

Master, managerial, business entrepreneurial, or other

Experience

Seniority, private functional, private functional representative

or official, public office holding, military, legal,

Religious, other professional, trades, managerial, business

Entrepreneurial, fraternal, or other

Number of offices of the same qualification filled at the same time

\* Number of officers appointed or elected at the same time from other levels of government

Number of officers of the same grade in the same constituency.

General functions of the officer

Major or minor policy

Major or minor administrative

Judicial, including judicial policy

Primary honorary

Principally delegative

---

### CHARACTER OF CONSTITUENCY

Size of constituency in population

Approximate size of constituency in travel time at the historical point during which officer is elected

!! Manner in which constituency is grouped and derived

Historical

By survey

Existing independent jurisdiction

Sociological definition

General functions of constituency during the tenure of the officer

Occupational

Solely electoral

Public policy

Public executive

Public judicial

!! Provisions for the adjustment of constituency specifications

Periodic

Automatic

- 8 -  
**Authoritatively adjusted**  
Natural constituencies or other  
**Residence qualifications of constituents**  
Age qualifications of constituents  
**Political qualifications of constituents**  
    Party member  
    Office holder, public or private  
    Banning of outlawed party members  
    Banning of outlawed political activists  
Sex limitations on constituency  
Educational limits  
Penal or mental disqualifications  
Citizenship requirements  
Real property requirements  
Personal property requirements  
Tax paying requirements  
Religious requirements  
Functional proficiency  
Experience of constituents  
Requirement of belonging to special group such as military,  
    legal, religious, or trade  
Instructions: voluntary, compulsory, or forbidden.

---

S/  
**PROCEDURE OF SELECTION**

The type of ballot  
    None  
    Official  
    Candidate provided  
    Party-provided  
    Voter-provided  
    Printed, balls or other kinds

Mode of casting ballot  
    *Viva voce*  
    No formal vote  
    Secret  
    Public or other type of tally

Election place  
    Specified or unspecified  
    Mail or unassembled, or others  
    Assembled

Counting votes  
    One vote to one candidate  
    Weighted preferences on ballot  
    Weighted preferences in counting  
    One vote for list or slate

Election formula  
    Unspecified majority  
    Majority of electorate  
    Majority of voters  
    Majority of specified quorum  
    Unspecified plurality  
    Plurality of electorate  
    Plurality of voters

Plurality of specified quorum  
Two-thirds majority, unspecified  
Other two-thirds majority type  
Unspecified unanimity  
Unanimity of voters or electorate  
Unanimity of specified quorum  
A portion of constituents for officer selected to  
the total constituents  
Unspecified beyond "election"  
Unspecified beyond "appointment"

---

#### LIMITS ON CAMPAIGNING

Limitations of expenditures  
Amounts  
Types  
Reporting  
Limitations of propaganda  
Amounts  
Types  
Reporting  
Limitations of agitation

---

#### TIME DIMENSION

Date of initial employment of the system  
Date of latest election according to the system  
Date of position as described

---

Originally, it was planned that the description of an elections system, so analyzed, could be punched into an IBM card, one card per position or officer, and that ultimately all election systems might find their way onto comparable cards. This process, it was conjectured, would allow for the comparative study of elections in a highly efficient and economical manner. It was thought that one could then determine the variations that existed among the world's elections, how country A differed from country B, how frequent were particular kinds of requirements and practices, and how much ~~had upon~~ effect <sup>had upon</sup> election procedures ~~had upon~~ the behavior of officials or other political institutions of a society.

These thoughts were of little avail against the hard realities of political research. The foremost difficulty lay in the behavioral ~~not~~ complement of a stipulated procedure. If one reported a legal procedure at face-value, one was taking a great risk. On the other hand, if no legal procedure existed in country A that was analogous to a given law of country B, one would be compelled to go into the customs and practices of A to determine whether a behavioral equivalent existed. So, although different utilities <sup>could</sup> be asserted for this method of analyzing variables, and the weaknesses of much political discourse on elections <sup>were</sup> ~~not~~ revealed, I had to admit that the systematic analysis must be foregone. The list was better for case study and as reference than for comparative analysis on a large scale. Several hundreds of American, European, and Chinese election systems were studied before reaching this conclusion.

Two of the areas that were studied afford great contrasts and can illustrate our discussion. These were the State of Minnesota and ancient and modern China. Interesting discoveries were made in each case, and deserve to be reported, but the outstanding impression one gained from attempting to apply the same criteria to dissimilar cultures is that comparative political science needs considerable conceptual and material reorientation to cope with the universals of human behavior. Briefly, my analysis suffered in Minnesota because it inquired ~~into~~

too little and on the wrong matters, and stumbled in China because it asked too many questions of poor data. Let us examine the problem first in the case of Minnesota.

### Election Methods in Minnesota\*

Dr. G.  
\* Mr. Kenneth Olson assisted me in obtaining the materials on Minnesota election systems in the year 1950. The description has been abbreviated for this discussion.

The electoral system of Minnesota consists in the regular election of officers among a total of approximately 10,400 units of government. These offices are distributed among the following levels of government in a recent year as follows: State, 1; Congressional district, 9; legislative districts, 67; school districts, 7,687; and special districts, 2. No tabulation has been made to date of the total number of elective public offices existing in these classes of government. In addition, there exist an unknown but large number of public and quasi-public officials who represent special interest groups -- professions, civic associations, occupations, and the like.

There is a high degree of uniformity among electoral procedures and qualifications for all offices at each of the levels of Minnesota government. Provisions for the franchise, as stated in the Constitution, apparently apply uniformly in all public elections, although certain additional qualifications have been written into several municipal home-rule charters. Balloting procedures -- including legal requirements affecting voting places, types of ballots, methods of casting ballots, and methods of counting ballots -- tend to be uniform. Qualifications for candidacy are the same, by and large, for offices on the various levels, with some significant exceptions among municipalities with home-rule charters. The size and population of constituencies vary, of course, from level to level of government in Minnesota, but such variations may have interesting consequences for the way in which an election system operates. The uniformity of these electoral factors throughout the entire basic authority for the system is the Constitution, special laws, and general statutes.

#### 1. The Elective Franchise

*Minnesota election system is understandable, inasmuch as the*

The right to vote is determined for all public elections in Minnesota on the basis of three general requirements outlined in the state Constitution. A person

must be 1) twenty-one years of age or older, 2) a resident of the state for six or more months and a resident of the election district in which he proposes to vote for thirty days or more, and 3) a citizen of the United States. (1) Among those persons who qualify for the franchise in age, residence, and citizenship, however, there are some who are disqualified by the Constitution for various. Persons 1) who have been convicted of treason or of any felony, unless restored to civil rights, 2) who are under guardianship, or 3) who are non compos mentis or insane are not entitled to vote. These constitutional provisions are the basis for the right to vote in Minnesota.

These voting qualifications may be discussed in an attempt to determine the extent to which persons are legally prevented from exercising the franchise. 1) The age requirement automatically excludes from one-third to one fourth of Minnesota's total population of 2,792,300 persons (in 1940), because they are less than twenty-one years old. 2) The residence requirement excludes an indeterminate number of citizen adults who move from electoral district to district, or from state to state, each year. It would be expected that the number of disenfranchised persons would be highest in Minnesota's urban areas among tenants who move from precinct to precinct and fail to establish the minimum residence requirement. The Constitution clearly states, however, that persons shall not be considered to have lost their residence by reasons of absence "while employed in the service of the United States; nor while a student of any seminary of learning; nor while kept at any almshouse or other asylum; nor while confined in any public prison." This provision is considered applicable to Minnesota residents who are out of the state in the service of the United States army and navy. On the other hand, members of the United States armed forces are not deemed residents for purposes of voting by virtue of their being stationed in Minnesota. 3) The requirement of citizenship excludes a number of aliens from the franchise who may be resident aliens, but who have not acquired citizenship by naturalization.

There are no further qualifications for the right to vote in Minnesota such as religious requirements, tax-payment, personal or real property, literacy, ability to understand the English language, or such qualifications as exist in certain other states and countries. There is, in a special sense, the qualification applicable in certain Minnesota cities that a voter must be registered with election officials, but this may be thought of as a means by which a voter proves that he possesses the constitutional qualifications for the right to populations exceeding 7,000 and is optional, but infrequently adopted, in smaller municipalities. Outside of this variation, voting qualifications remain uniform throughout all levels of government including home-rule charter cities which generally refer directly to the Constitution and general statutes as defining such qualifications.

## 2. Electoral Constituencies

Whereas the government of Minnesota consists of more than 10,000 separate units of government, the total number of electoral constituencies is much larger than this figure owing to the widely used system of geographical representation. Single-member districts, or multiple-member districts in some municipalities and in some districts for the State Legislature, principally account for the multiplicity of constituencies at each level of government.

Individual constituencies range in population and area from the state itself, taken as a constituency for purposes of municipality which elects perhaps two aldermen to a city council. The magnitude of this population range may be illustrated by the state constituency with a population of 2,972,300 persons, on the one hand, and the constituency of the village of Mesabi, with a population of 10 persons, on the other. On each level of government there are significant differences between the largest and smallest constituencies. The populations of Minnesota counties range from 568,899 in Hennepin County to 3,030 in Cook County, with the average for all Minnesota counties being 32,095 and the median, 17,865. Townships range in population from 6,466 in Minnetonka Township to 21 in Warren Township, with a state township average of 540 and a median of 491. Incorporated places, including both villages and cities, range from 492,370 persons of Minneapolis to the 10 persons of Mesabi, with a state average of 2,366 and a median of 450.

Vast differences in geographical area also exist between constituencies. The largest contrast, of course, is between the state constituency comprising 84,286.53 square miles and a small incorporated village which may cover less than one square mile. Among Minnesota's 87 counties, this range is significant, indicating that St. Louis County is largest, with an area of 6,281 square miles and Ramsey County is smallest with 160 square miles. For all Minnesota counties, the average area is 920 square miles and the median area, 681.

When it is realized that each of these constituencies is self-governing to a varying extent, the complex network of executive, administrative, legislative, and judicial function, each with appropriate officers of which many are elected, can be understood. Vast differences in area and population between constituencies certainly could be expected to result in different government processes. In the recruitment of candidates for public office, the population-size of the

constituency may well determine the number of competitors for an office, the expectations of voters about them, as well as their skills and talents. These and other effects may well be attributed to an election system which finds a wide range between the size of its constituencies.

The redistricting or reapportionment of constituencies is another important factor. The state legislature has, for the most part, the power to alter the boundaries of Congressional districts, state legislative districts, judicial districts, and certain local and special districts. Local governmental units, on the other hand, often have power to alter their ward divisions or to consolidate school districts. The failure to redistrict or to reapportion following periods of large population shifts has effects which occasionally result in as great a malapportionment as that among state legislative districts, with their rural over-representation.

The provisions for drawing the boundaries of constituencies which are found in the statutes, have profound effects upon Minnesota's election system; their periodic reconsideration in the light of population shifts may therefore be warranted.

### 3. Balloting Methods

The procedure followed in the conduct of any particular election among the thousands of public elections held in Minnesota each year is fairly uniform. There is, by law, little variation in the types of ballots used, the operation of a polling place, the manner of voting, the counting of ballots, and the formula by which one candidate is judged winner over his competitors.

A typical pattern of election procedure is roughly as follows. Notice of an election is posted from 10 to 15 days in advance. Polling places in the several election districts of a township or municipality are chosen by the local governing body, city council, or town board. Administration of the election is handled by local authorities or by election judges chosen by them at each polling place. Certain statutes specify rules of conduct for polling places, such as that voters may not be molested, that use of intoxicating beverages is forbidden, and that local peace officers should maintain constant order. Five colored ballots may be used: white for officers elected throughout the state, pink for questions to be voted on throughout the state, red for city elections and referenda, lavender for city charter or bond elections and referendum, and india tint for all elections and votes on subjects not covered by the other four colors.

Specifications for the printing and the marking of each type of ballot, whether partisan or non-partisan, are provided in the statutes. The use of voting machines is limited to certain statutory procedures. The tallying, canvassing, and auditing of election returns is done in part by election clerks and judges and in part by regular local or county officers. Reports of returns eventually are made to the Secretary of State of Minnesota.

One significant variation among Minnesota's election procedures is sound in the Hopkins city election. Contrary to the typical formula of single-member district representation, with a simple majority sufficient for election, the Hopkins home-rule charter of 1947 provides for four councilmen, a mayor, and two municipal judges to be elected by proportional representation. The election formula, adapted from a National Municipal League model charter, is a system of preferential voting which is designed to insure majority control and minority representation. With this exception, election formulae throughout the state seek geographical representation on a simple majority basis.

#### 4. Qualifications for Candidacy

The Minnesota Constitution provides that in general any person who is eligible to vote in Minnesota also qualifies for candidacy to public office. Thus, a person who is 1) 21 years of age or older, 2) a resident of the state for six months or longer and of an election district for thirty days or more, and 3) a citizen of the United States, is eligible to run for office. Such a general qualification, while serving to indicate the minimum requirements for candidacy, does not indicate restrictions of a more narrow kind which have been applied to various elections through the accumulation of statutes and city charter provisions.

Prohibitions against insane persons, persons under guardianship, and those convicted of certain crimes, apply equally to candidacy for office as well as to the elective franchise. Further, as a result of a series of advisory opinions by the state attorney general, public office holders in general are excluded from becoming candidates for other public offices where there is any incompatability between the two. This exclusion is not usually true in the case of minor offices or where two units of government have no intercourse.

Age minimum for certain offices is set higher than the age of 21. Candidates for United States senator must be 30 years old or more, and for United States representative, 25 years old. Minimum for state governor and lieutenant governor is 25 years old. For all other offices, the age requirement is 21.

In addition to the statutory requirements thus far cited, a number of additional qualifications have been incorporated into various of the 103 charters of Minnesota cities, most of them in municipalities with home-rule.

In 13 cities, any person who is party to a contract with the city government or who is interested in business negotiations directly with the city, is excluded from candidacy. The cities are Bemidji, Blue Earth, Brainerd, Breckenridge, Crookston, Fergus Falls, Jackson, Little Falls, Minneapolis, Moorhead, St. James, Staples, and Worthington. This economic neutrality qualification is provided for in a number of other home-rule charters, not as applying to candidates, but to officers after election, when they are prohibited from entering personal agreements with the city.

It is interesting to note that of these 13 cities with charters seeking economic neutrality, 9 require qualifications in addition to those found in the Minnesota statutes. Of these same 13, all but one charter was adopted during the period from 1899 to 1922, which may indicate that the economic neutrality qualification was included as charters were copied from one city to another. Yet, 8 of these 13 cities have a present (1940) population of more than 5,000 which hints that business neutrality of officers is more difficult to attain in larger cities than in small and that this neutrality has been sought by giving it emphasis in charters.

Eight Minnesota cities require that candidates for office be able to read and write English. No provision is made for who is to judge candidate's literacy and it may be that this ~~charge~~ provision is overlooked in practice. The Constitution says nothing about a literacy qualification and indeed provides a procedure by which interpreters may aid voters who cannot speak or read English. The city of Breckenridge requires a "literacy" qualification from candidates, while Brainerd, Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, Jackson, Moorhead, St. James, Staples, and Worthington require a knowledge of the English language.

Certain skills and experience are required for offices in other cities. In Brainerd, candidates for the office of city attorney, municipal judge, and special municipal judge must have a legal proficiency. In Litchfield, a candidate for city attorney qualifies by training and experience in law, and in Morris, candidates for municipal judge must be "learned in law."

Several other atypical qualifications are provided for in other city charters. Bemidji's charter demands that a candidate for the office of assessor be an owner of real property and be a resident of that city for a minimum of five years. In Farmont, all city employees are disqualified for candidacy to any elective office within the city. In St. Charles, which has the oldest charter in the state, a one-year residence in the city is required of all candidates for public office.

With the exception of special qualifications noted for appropriate constituencies and specific offices, qualifications for candidacy are of a minimal kind throughout Minnesota, largely due to the fact that the Constitution and the general statutes provide for basic election procedures. There is some question as to whether the various special qualifications imposed by city charters are constitutional. Clearly, however, these special qualifications, if adhered to in practice, clearly restrict the potential number of candidates for public office. Moreover, such restrictions give a conservative flavor to certain local election systems which may stem from peculiar local needs or from certain prejudices of those persons who originally wrote such qualifications into local charters. These special qualifications form the chief body of legal provisions which depart from the uniform system now in effect throughout Minnesota.

## 5. Expenditures, Propaganda, and Agitation

Minnesota also has an elaborate set of laws, restricting the behavior of public office-seekers. The purposes for which a candidate may spend money to influence his election are listed: they include overhead expenses; filing fees; publicity and mass media advertising. Absolute limits to campaign expenditures are stated for the various offices. Certain institutions and public employees are protected from financial solicitation by parties or candidates. Many kinds of "undue" influences are described and banned, including threats, fraudulent promises, and force. The campaign committees of a candidate are regulated also. Campaign promises of a personal nature are enjoined. Corporations are prohibited from contributing to a campaign by money or deeds.

## 6. Conclusions

On the whole, the stated variables or criteria guiding the selection of public officers in Minnesota are numerous but meaningful as indicators of behavior. So far as they go, the laws are influential. Men are elected in conformity with them. Sanctions are regular, if not inevitable. Deviations from the directed behavior exist but they cannot become modal. The laws remain the mode.

Nevertheless, the laws are incomplete. They have pushed back some significant electoral machinations into the pre-candidacy stage, where caucuses, and other informal influence networks operate. During the election campaigns, also, the numerous legally demanded steps are complemented by numerous social variables that may be implied or suggested by laws, but are inaccurately described by laws. Nor can the law do more than hint at the character of elective officers. One may well decide after studying them that, to determine how men are elected to office in Minnesota, one ought to examine the victorious and defeated candidates themselves, and from their characteristics, move back to disentangle the variables causing victory or defeat. Most of such variables would probably be framed in very different language. One might have always to say: "first satisfy the laws so that the opposition will not cause the courts to sanction you," but one would go on to state such important principles as "avoid running in a Catholic district if you are Lutheran and vice versa." In addition, there would be numerous principles that might be suggested by the laws but ought to be framed differently; thus, if corporations are prohibited from making campaign expenditures, it is suggested that the general variable to be watched in this and other communities is the extent of corporate campaign participation or, in the present instance, the extent to which the men who compose most corporations have certain aims and attitudes that color the usual election process informally, if not formally.

It may be noted also that Minnesota has a remarkably uniform system of laws governing methods of selection. For example, qualifications for voting are uniform in the state, and, if all the thousands of elective offices are to be compared, one is relieved of the burden of variance on this one point. One need only recall how much more difficult would be the problem of analyzing the effects of other institutional variables if Minnesota constitutions varied in respect to suffrage as much as the medieval English boroughs, each with its peculiar local and special charter, each with its peculiar local and special charter provisions and customs about suffrage. Yet, in this, and many other respects, even though the Minnesota law is uniform, the different sizes of districts, the different populations, the different functions

and members of the various offices selected, and other elements pose grave problems of analysis. There has always been agitation over the size of constituencies and the differential effects of a given selection system on officers of different functions (e.g. executive vs. judicial), but even an intensive study of Minnesota election systems could hardly enable one to generalize their effects. Certainly no amount of comparative data of the sort represented by my list, no matter from how many states or countries, could go very far in answering such questions. Perhaps this thought would suggest that case studies are the most profitable way of learning and teaching about the effects of election devices, taking the cases wherever they can be found and demonstrated. Also, it may be suggested again on the basis of the Minnesota study that the comparative study of elections should be refined to fewer and more important variables and defined in behavioral terms. This would mean, again to repeat, that the general comparative theory of elections would be less applicable to specific problems, less vocational, and linguistically different from the formal legal language in terms of which elections have been comparatively treated in the past.

#### Election Methods in China\*

---

Dr.  
\* Immanuel Hsu assisted me in the preparation of these materials on China.

---

China, since the Republican revolution, has had a Western type of election law, but the China of previous centuries interests us more for being as nearly an absolute contrast to the Minnesota case as one might hope to find outside of primitive tribes. At first sight, indeed, the chance of finding parallels to Western doctrine and practice seems hopeless. During all of Chinese history before the twentieth century there seem to have been none of the election devices employed sporadically in the Western world from the ancient near Eastern and Greek states to the present time -- voting by tickets or balls, majority principles, election days, and the like. Chinese political culture, though it produced a traditional doctrine of popular consent and an intricate system of examinations for public office, never moved towards the technical devices of consultation and consent found in Western constitutional law.

Yet, granted the reservations that ought to be exercised towards remote analogies, the methods by which medieval Chinese imperial officials were selected do seem to relate partly to our frame of analysis. Early Chinese accounts contain persistent tokens of respect for the practice of selecting officials from the localities. The myth prevailed that the emperors before 1766 B.C. were

chosen by imperial commissioners, who were also provincial governors, in accord with popular opinion, and that poor men rose to the throne.

In the Han dynasty (207 B.C.-221 A.D.), and Imperial Rescript of the first ruler, Liu Pang, called for the services of wise men from the four parts of the nation. According to the order, one man from each area of 200,000 population should be "elected" each year to serve at the imperial court. Localities of less than 200,000 might elect one man every two years, and those under 100,000 one every three years. These "wise men" should possess one or more of the following qualities: great virtue and personal integrity; excellent scholarship and command of the classics; knowledge of the laws and ability to resolve doubts in legal cases; perseverance, decisiveness, and ready judgment. A minimum age of 40 years was later set for such representatives. Ultimately this system evolved into the examination-recommendation system that provided China with an elaborate bureaucratic apparatus.

Apparently Chinese thought regarding the selection of officials was concentrated upon the permanent staff of the Emperor. Before the late nineteenth century, we find little evidence of devices or proposals calculated to coordinate the several classes of society in accord with a distributive or democratic principle of power. Local governments were strong, but remained organized according to system of clans and families, with incumbent-nominated and clan-approved representatives conducting administrative negotiations with central officials. The village temple was a parallel organization, based upon a geographical division of the village and families, from each geographical area; these family heads were chosen within their districts by annual rotation. There were then elements of selection by lot according to geographic apportionment, and of selection ~~of~~ <sup>by</sup> class influence (the land-holders and literati) in Chinese local government.

The Chinese combination of gerontocracy (with national and status intrusions) on a local level with hereditary, traditional kingship (again with rational (examination) and status (literati) intrusions) on a national level is found frequently in other parts of the world. The principal foes of this form of leadership-*cheep paper* selection seem to be a strong development towards rational bureaucracy and high individual social mobility, together or singly, such as is found in the late Mediterranean city-state, the Roman Imperial administration, and the nineteenth and twentieth century Western European states. No doubt, at times the literati of China approached the Western bureaucratic model with respect to the imperial government, but the forces operating towards a progressive development of this logic of an administrative class never developed

the strength which, for example, pulled the British Civil Service of the nineteenth century, with its strong resemblances to the literati, towards an open-opportunity, logico-experimental ideology of management.

The political (as against the administrative) system of the West struck China hard at the end of the nineteenth century, and in 1912 we have the promulgation of the electoral laws of the first National Parliament. Since that time, China has had a series of constitutions, each with as elaborate a set of rules of election as any Western country. The important novelties among them are few, though one might be interested in the shifting formulae of territorial apportionment from one electoral law to another. Certain disqualifications with roots in Chinese social problems may be noted. We find that opium addicts were commonly denied the vote. Soldiers, priests, students, and all religious orders were excluded from politics at times. Counter-revolutionaries, as defined by the successive revolutionary governments, were also disqualified. Also, corrupt officials were forbidden to vote or hold office. Analogous rules are to be found in the West, including America.

More importantly, there is some indication in the laws of election of the influence of Marxist communism. Briefly, Communists, since the Paris Commune of 1870, have stressed mass participation in elections and government, and functionalism in representation (Sovietism). In China, elements of professional and interest representation may be found before World War I, and these can be attributed to indigenous Chinese beliefs and social organization. Professor Frank Goodnow, advising the Chinese government, himself suggested a disproportionate representation of the literati and gentry in a central unicameral assembly, justifying his proposals by the effective condition of Chinese society at that time (just prior to World War I). Whereas the West entered upon modern representative government at the same time as it repressed the gilds in favor of laissez-faire economic policy, China moved more directly from a society where vocational associations were strong into an age of formal representative government. There were fewer indigenous obstacles to pushing functional grouping into the national governmental apparatus.

The communist influence built upon this foundation of vocationalism, and in 1931, a new Chinese constitution was strongly sovietized. Subsequent constitutions retained the increased functional representation. A report of Mao Tse-tung, as President of the Central Executive Committee of the Chinese Soviet Republic, to the Second National Soviet Congress in 1934, resembles strikingly the Marx and Engels

commentary on the French Commune experience in the type of representative establishment it approves.

This synopsis of Chinese election forms reveals the enormous disparity in the pre-republican period between Chinese systems and Western systems of electing officers, at the same time as it exposes some interesting analogies, uncovered by the presumptuous list of variables that was used. Obviously, an impossible amount of research into the behavioral data of ancient Chinese history (so poor even in formal documentation) would be required to seek out all the precise equivalencies and dissimilarities. Yet the problem of ancient comparisons is no less great than that of modern comparisons. For the most naive student of Chinese republican history would refuse to take the many republican election laws as valid behavioral indicators. Formal comparative analysis, although it has carried us into the preliminaries of research into the comparative selection of public officials, has exhausted its merits. It should be superseded now by behavioral analysis, founded upon crucial variables, cross-culturally defined and applicable, with which one may venture into widely dissimilar cultures and extract data that has many guises to build universals of leadership-selection.

No one can dispute the need for a knowledge of the laws of Minnesota for one who wishes to run for office ~~tomorrow~~ tomorrow in Minnesota. No one can disagree that the intensive study of American political behavior requires a systematic knowledge of the shared institutional obstacles (behavioral invariants) encountered by politists in the United States. For these kinds of problems, there is a great deal to be said on behalf of an exhaustive comparative compendium of American election systems, preferably bolstered by behavioral evidence of the extent of discrepancy between the "legal" and "behavioral" laws. However, once out of the boundaries of the practical and <sup>of</sup> <sub>A</sub> the intensive domestic study, the comparative study of election law should be subordinated completely to

behavioral study of constantly defined behavioral variables, proved in existence and extent by behavioral data, subject to the rules of validity and reliability.

### III

#### Behavioral Analysis of Selection Variables

##### The Emotional and Scientific Meaning of the Variables

How long ~~is~~ <sup>should</sup> an ideal list of variables be, in the study of elections? This is not an easy question to answer. My list of variables was designed to describe an election system chiefly from a viewpoint presuming laws have behavioral effects and are the best behavioral hypotheses. If we take up the variables one by one, we are surprised at how they are energized in the light of history. Thus the first proper variable is "tenure of office." One recalls the impassioned debates ~~over~~ Political movements <sup>have been</sup> of annual rotation. <sup>about</sup> ~~whose~~ programs argued ~~for~~ shorter terms of office. And, moving away from argumentation strictly aimed at moderate terms rather than short terms, think of the outstanding philosophical discussions <sup>about</sup> the different results of hereditary, life-time and periodic rulers, <sup>Think too</sup> ~~of~~ of the wide variations among primitive tribes as to the tenure of chieftains.

Our next variable is "minimum age required." (It is a variable for holding office and for choosing officers.) Recall now the ancient Greek concern over the effects of age upon political wisdom, the different practices of "coming of age" among tribes and nations, and the hot agitation in American jurisdictions periodically over the appropriate age for voting.

The next variable is the "citizenship requirement," capable of several definitions and qualifications as well as a "yes" or "no" answer. The Greek and Italian city-states with their "problem of foreigners" could find their modern parallel in the interesting history of American state legislation on the voting rights of aliens, near-citizens, and citizens.

Residence requirements, education, property, experience, religion, balloting, apportionment, and so on suggest similar histories. Practically all of the list's items, so inert on the page, represent oceans of agitation and struggle. Unless men are quite mad, they must have had some principle of behavioral science guiding their advocacy of or antagonism towards a position on each point.

Yet what possible meaning can now be ascribed to each variable when one encounters it in the description of an election system? Is the condition of each and every one of these variables crucial to the political process in which it plays its part? Conversely, have these

variables, as individual factors, lost all measurable influence in determining the political system? Has there been a decline in their individual significance? Is it possible that so many of them support one another that the removal of no single one can possibly have a noticeable effect on the political process? If this is the case, are we to discourage any citizen from exerting himself <sup>so as</sup> to change ~~a~~ any given variable? And, also, are we to regard as futile (in a means-end rational sense) the organizations, movements, and legislative enactments designed to change one element in the selection of a public officer?

#### The Assessment of the Meaning of Variables over Time

These problems are different facets of the historiographical problem of determining the meaning of events at successive intervals after the event. They are also facets of the general problem of the psychology of institutions. The meaning of variable "a," at time period "t" may be referred to as "x". Then, the meaning of variable "a<sub>2</sub>" at time period "t<sub>2</sub>" becomes "x<sub>2</sub>". The difference between x<sub>1</sub> and x<sub>2</sub> consists of these dimensions:

1. A projection of the original meaning ~~x<sub>1</sub>~~ under the conditions of t<sub>2</sub>
2. A redefinition of the meaning of x, by an appraisal of the subjective conditions of the population that acts in terms of the behavioral function of a<sub>2</sub> at t<sub>2</sub>, with a<sub>2</sub> considered as part of an institution composed of a<sub>2</sub>, b, c, d, ...n.

3. A disclosure of the effects produced by the excision or a threat to the excision of  $a_2$  at  $t_2$ , effects which are not to be expected to equal the results of (1) or (2) above, but to have differences brought about by the total ideological investment of the population in the institution  $a_2$ , b, c, d, ...n at  $t_2$ . That is, any change in  $a_2$  is not likely to produce an agitation equal to the functional (legal and behavioral) work of  $a_2$  at  $t_2$ , but rather an agitation equal to the symbolic value of  $a_2$  vis a vis its enveloping institution.

#### Difficulty of Assessing Variable's Force at a Given Time

If we do not adopt the view that most individual variables are meaningless as behavioral determinants, at whatever time we choose to study them, then we are faced with an equally dismaying problem: how can a comparative study of elections exist? For the number of variables is great, and almost all are reputed to have significant effects on the qualities of public officers. Is it unreasonable to expect any significant relationships to emerge from the static analysis of any given variable, even granted that reliable and sufficient comparative data were to be obtained concerning the several variables in question?

#### Using the Described List of Criteria

There are, I believe, several approaches to the study of selection variables, besides using a lengthy list of mostly legal criteria ~~such as was~~ described previously. Employing <sup>long</sup> a list of criteria is an approach that is suitable to the precise case. It is nearly a vocational list: it is not only a source of behavioral hypothesis but in legalistic jurisdictions serves as a guide to how power is precisely

achieved in jurisdiction.

#### Using a More Universal and Shorter Set of Variables

Three additional approaches to the comparative study of election systems may be suggested. A second approach would be to generalize as much as possible the variables of the list, in order to work more easily with the long-range trends and different cultures, and in order also to reduce the number of variables to the point where comparisons will not be impossibly complicated. General and comparative election studies would answer the questions: How is a public officer qualified? By whom is he selected? According to what procedures? On whom does he act, with what effect, for how long, and with what justification? Each question would have appropriate sub-categories of response that may be presented in the following manner:

PUBLIC OFFICER "A"  
IS

QUALIFIED BY WHAT (Attrib- utes)	SELECTED BY WHOM (Constit- uency)	BY WHAT PRACTICE (Mode of Choice)	TO ACT ON WHOM (Domain)	IN REFER- ENCE TO WHAT (Scope)	WITH WHAT EFFECT (Impact)	FOR HOW LONG (Tenure)	BY WHAT RIGHT (Auth- oritat- ive Doc- trine)
Skill	Grouping	Test	Selectors	Power	Little	Life	Laws
Power	Group	Prom- otion	Part of Selectors	Possess- ions	Some	Indef- inite	Power
Possess- ions	Individual <u>OF WHAT KIND?</u> Functional	Prop- aganda	Other than Selectors	Functions	Great	Fixed or reg- ular term	Custom
Respect	Heterogeneous (General)	Ferce Lot, Ro- tation or Chance	Selectors & Others	Respect			Char- isma

This analytic framework probably can cope with all election systems, on a level calculated to supply data for the general principles of political behavior. The variables are not too numerous to manipulate for comparative purposes. They can, moreover, be translated into legal language in specific cases. Additional sub-categories can be added as needed to divide data more significantly. Thus, in the first column, skill may be divided into military, legal, ceremonial, and literary; power may be divided into office-holding, headship, group membership, etc; possessions may be indicated as land, movable property, or custody of public resources; and respect may be considered as hereditary (caste), ascribed, acquired, and equalitarian. The other columns could be treated similarly. The result is a general behavioral analysis better capable of transcending the limits of time, space, and culture than the earlier, more special, list.

#### Using a Single Variable

A third approach to the comparative study of election systems is to limit the problem to a single variable, and to discover the variations in groups that are and are not subjected to the variable. The problem is set up purely in behavioral terms and the total list of variables is useful merely as a background check list. The solution to the problem "What is the influence of variable x?" is as follows: there are n societies, of which a/n (or A) has x and b/n (or B) are without x. "A" have y behaviors not found in "B";

therefore x has y effects.

But the solution, hopeful though it may be in the case of a given variable, has several limitations:

- 1) It again requires appropriate data on the presence of x and the conditions of A and B.
- 2) A and B must be similar in most significant characteristics. In other words, our old problem emerges again, in that the "control" and "experimental" groups must share the same condition of many of the variables in our original list for analyzing elections.
- 3) If some of B share y with A and/or some of A lack y, we are in trouble. Moreover, if we try to take the logical step of isolating ~~groups~~ from A and B ~~that~~ have a hypothetical disturbing variable, z, we soon find our originally poor data disintegrating. If more than two or three variables like z seem to be interfering with the proper separation of y according to x, we are hopelessly involved.

There is yet a fourth approach to comparative election study which is traditional to political science, has been the cause for jeers by critics, and yet is practically necessary if the field is to survive in the face of the important problems that define it. This is the logic of deduction from the assertedly proven consequences of a behavior elsewhere. Thus: age (x) brings conservatism (y),

(y) being proved by psychological findings, case histories of politicians, etc.; society ( $A_1$ ) reduces its age requirements for holding elective office; therefore, the politics of ( $A_1$ ) will be less conservative in the future. The difficulty here is that the proof is not direct. That is, the finding  $y=f(x)$  may be valid (unfortunately, political scientists do not have many valid psychological principles and many needed principles of this type are themselves dubious or complex), but the deduction that effects of (y) character will characterize (A) is not founded upon observation. If one argues that the observation ensues when (A) is seen to undergo (y) changes, he is, of course, only arguing for the possibility of setting up the previous, empirical solution of the problem.

#### IV. Conclusions

The conclusions of this study concern the comparative study of legalistic and simple elective systems, findings of fact about the election systems of Minnesota and China, and methods appropriate to the comparative study of elections. They may be summarized under these headings:

A. The Comparative Study of Legalistic and Simple Election Systems

1. The intensive or detailed study of systems of electing public officers is culture-bound, under the present condition of semantics and behavioral theory in political science.
2. There is an unknown but probably great loss of meaning to election rules from their origins to the present time, necessitating caution in giving historical weights to the present behavioral meaning of legal variables.
3. Behavioral variables determining the manner of selecting officials are frequently not enacted into law, necessitating an acute awareness of possible analogies between non-legalistic and legalistic systems.
4. The present of extensive legal variables in selection laws probably denotes an actual complexity of behavior and an awareness of behavioral dissimilarity.

B. A Study of Minnesota Election Systems Shows:

1. An indication in specific laws of behavioral variables in selecting public officers.
2. A great uniformity of prescribed behaviors governing the thousands of election systems.

3. A large number of laws that are enforced and hence can be taken as behavioral predictions.
4. The existence of many relevant behaviors that cannot be regarded as mere complements to the lawful behaviors; examples are caucuses and unwritten religious qualifications.
5. Many laws that require re-statement to strike appropriately (directly, parsimoniously, etc.) at the important behaviors to be discussed and analyzed.
6. Great difficulty, without extensive study of relevant behaviors, in determining the effect of one or more of the variable election items, even despite great uniformity in most items.

C. A Study of Chinese Election Systems Shows:

1. A low degree of development of specificity in the laws of selecting officials after somewhat complex beginnings, except for a special class of civil servants (the literati).
2. More details in pre-republican times analogous to Western election systems than were expected.
3. Hints of behavioral equivalents of stipulated Western legal factors. Difficult and lengthy researches would be required, however, to develop these hints and the language of equivalencies would have to be devised.
4. A detailed imitation of Western election laws, with little invention, leaving out most of the behaviors required for election under the realities of Chinese politics.
5. Communist influences joined indigenous currents in marking Chinese electoral law with increasingly strong functional representation in the republican period.

D. Methods Appropriate to the Comparative Study of Elections

1. Legal studies are appropriate to manipulative and behavioral comment on specific jurisdictions, when the hypotheses one is interested in are defined by the scope

of the laws; legal studies are similarly apropos in comparing jurisdictions of very similar political conditions, providing that the laws do not diverge significantly from the behaviors included in their scope.

2. The number of variables in systems described minutely in legal-behavioral terms is great, too great for the character of most political data to lend detail to or for refined statistical analysis. A second general listing of major behavioral variables, moving away from legal formulations, is more useful to general political theory and to comparative election study.