

Is Candidate Selection Intersectional?

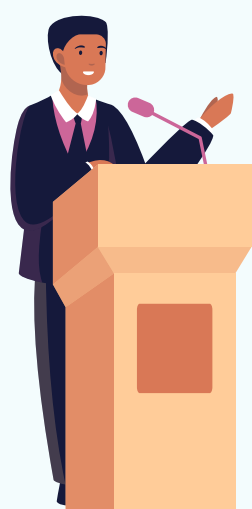
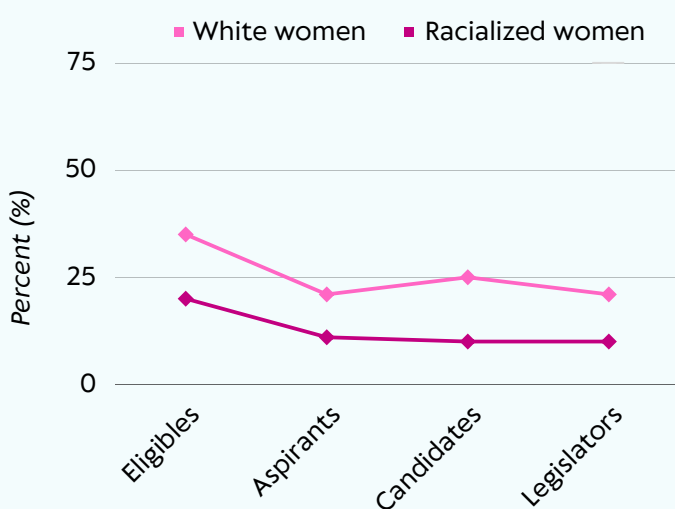
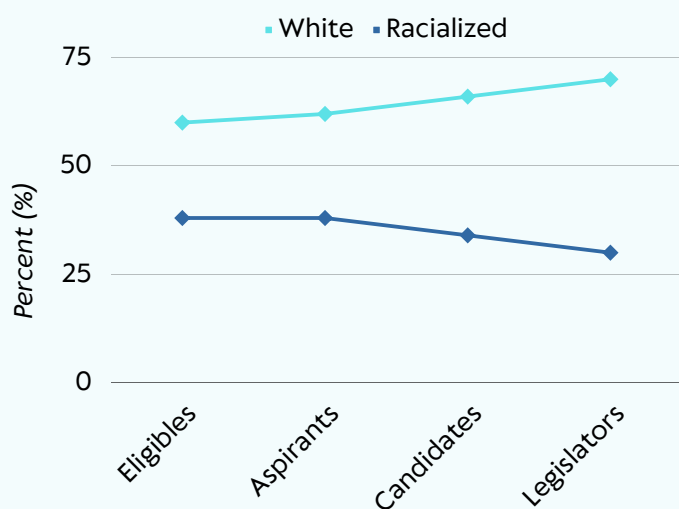
Political parties select the candidates who run for office, and these decisions shape the compositions of elected bodies. Although parties tend to consider gender when they select candidates, they often ignore race and intersectionality. As a result, when parties select candidates, opportunities **for white women widen** but **narrow for racialized minorities** and especially for racialized women. In short, efforts to diversify candidate slates and legislatures **largely benefit white women**, leaving racialized women doubly burdened by both their gender and their race.

Legislative recruitment includes four key steps:

1. Candidates must be **eligible** for office.
2. They must **aspire** to office and put themselves forward.
3. They must be nominated as their party's **candidate**.
4. They must be elected as **legislators**.



Legislative Recruitment by Relative Share of the Pool



Parties select candidates from the aspirants who have come forward; white women and men are chosen in higher proportions than their presence in the eligible population, but the opposite is true for racialized aspirants.

Racialized Canadians aspire to politics at rates that roughly match their presence in the population, suggesting the bottleneck is not at the aspirant stage, but rather when the party is choosing their candidate and when the electorate chooses their legislator.



Party selectorates seem more willing to **choose white women** as candidates, and parties' efforts to diversify politics have therefore **mostly benefitted white women**. Racialized women **do not** experience this same acceleration.

From the 408 nomination contests studied:

In 49% of all nomination slates, there were no women candidates.

In 53% of all nomination slates, there were no racialized candidates.

29% of all nomination slates included only white men as candidates.

Parties appear to prioritize gender diversity over racial diversity and therefore more actively recruit women aspirants, provide organizational support to them, or discourage competitors from coming forward. In districts with no incumbent, women aspirants are more likely than other aspirants to find themselves seeking their party's nomination.

REFERENCES

Erin Tolley. 2022. *Gender Is Not a Proxy: Race and Intersectionality in Legislative Recruitment*. *Politics and Gender*. doi:10.1017/S1743923X22000149

<https://erintolley.ca/intersectionality-and-candidate-recruitment>
Infographic by Michelle Liang.