

# Breathing Through their Noses?

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Candidate Selection and Role Adaptation  
amongst First-Term MPs in the  
New Zealand Parliament

By

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**A thesis  
submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington  
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
in Political Science**

Victoria University of Wellington

2010

Sir Keith Holyoake, New Zealand Prime Minister from 1960 to 1972, famously counselled first-term Members of Parliament to ‘breathe through their noses’, suggesting that it was in their best interests to keep their heads down and mouths shut. Perhaps this recommendation is instrumental in the low profile of first-term MPs in New Zealand and the subsequent dearth of information available about these individuals.

Within political science, scholarly attention has tended to focus on the ‘power holders’ – senior leaders and those perceived to have the most influence. In New Zealand, this has resulted in a growing field of literature about prime ministers, party leaders, and the few parliamentarians who reach cabinet. This thesis steps back from power holders to shed light on *new* MPs.

It is important to know who new MPs are. Within parliamentary systems MPs often serve long apprenticeships before being promoted to the senior positions of their party and government. Thus MPs who enter parliament today may hold significant influence in the future. However, very little is known about legislators when they enter parliament. Do all Members of Parliament wish to become ministers or prime ministers, or do they have more modest aspirations, such as being the best local MP they possibly can? By understanding the motivations of our neophyte politicians we can better understand the types of people who are likely to become significant political actors in the future.

This study aims to understand *how* and *why* individuals become MPs and how they *adapt* to the role once they have been elected.

This thesis uses information gained from two rounds of interviews conducted with first-term Members of Parliament during their first nine months in office. Thus this research presents an insight into how MPs view candidate selection and follows them through their first few months in the job as they reconcile

their pre-election expectations with the roles expected of MPs. The result is an account of how individuals become MPs and the roles they develop once elected.

## Acknowledgements

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Over the course of researching and writing this thesis, my thoughts have often turned to what I might write in the acknowledgements section. Initially, the thought was rather inviting. Acknowledgements, after all, are an opportunity to identify in print those who have inspired and supported you.

As the time to write the acknowledgements approached, however, I became more and more reluctant to put pen to paper. This is not to suggest that I lacked people to thank – on the contrary, I had countless people to include. Rather, my reluctance was on account of the finality of writing the acknowledgements and putting an end of an incredibly enjoyable and rewarding experience. But, alas, all good things must come to an end – and those who have been involved as mentors, guides, supporters, and friends must be duly recognised and thanked.

First, I thank my primary supervisor, Dr. Jon Johansson. Jon has the unusual distinction of fitting into each of the categories above: he is a mentor, guide, supporter, and friend. Some of my best ideas came from our lunchtime discussions in the Staff Club. I am particularly grateful for Jon's assistance in developing the concepts of 'proto-leadership' and 'parachute' MPs. Jon was fortunate enough to spend several months in the United States as a Fulbright scholar while he was supervising my work. I remain grateful – and amazed – that despite the potential to ignore me in favour of the sights of Washington D.C., Jon was always accessible and insightful. I thank Jon most of all for his trust that I would create a worthy thesis.

My secondary supervisor, Prof. Stephen Levine, is also deserving of enormous thanks. Stephen's probing of my arguments has strengthened not only this thesis, but also my understanding of political science. Stephen has also been kind, patient, and always ready to chat. Anyone who knows Stephen will also know that his sense of humour is unique (in a good way, of course) and makes meetings a joy. I particularly appreciate Stephen's extra attention while Jon was

abroad – it was encouraging to know that there was always a friendly ear in the building and, indeed, the hemisphere.

The primary data for this thesis was derived from interviews with 28 New Zealand Members of Parliament. Confidentiality requirements mean that I cannot name them individually, but suffice to say that they form the backbone of this work. I was astonished at the willingness of MPs talk about all aspects of their lives – professional and personal. I came away from the interviews feeling positive about the future of our parliament. I thank each and every MP for their time, openness, and honesty.

When my thesis was nearing completion, I put out a call for proof-readers and expected a deafening silence. Instead, a bevy of brave souls came forward, each of whom deserves recognition: Christine Barnes, Hugh Eldred-Grigg, Robyn Kenealy, Maire Smith, Hana Snook, and Jackson James Wood. I thank each and every one of you for not only sacrificing your time, but also for providing critiques and interpretations that have strengthened this thesis.

Thanks are also due to the Parliamentary Library and its staff for entertaining my frequent requests for information. Each and every request was answered promptly and professionally. Moreover, extra nuggets of information were often included, almost as if I was being led on a fascinating treasure hunt.

I was fortunate enough to be awarded a Victoria Master's by Thesis Scholarship. This scholarship lifted the financial burden that studying often attracts. More importantly, however, it indicated to me that my work was valued by the university. Thanks to Victoria University and the Scholarships Office.

A quirk of acknowledgement sections is that the author's partner is commonly mentioned last. This is curious because partners usually bear the greatest burden of their loved one's endeavour. My partner, Jessica Lemieux, can assuredly attest to this. Jess has been fundamental to my success, as she is to all

aspects of my life. She has provided more love and compassion than I thought possible, and for this I thank her most of all.

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## Chapter 1

### Studying First-Term MPs in New Zealand

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The study of first-term MPs has largely been overlooked in academic literature both in New Zealand and abroad. This is unsurprising, as the hierarchies apparent in Western legislatures ensure that power is usually concentrated in the hands of party leaders and senior legislators.

The dearth of information about new legislators is a significant gap in the political science literature. Given the hierarchical structure of legislatures, it is essential to have a framework with which to measure new MPs in order to understand who they are and how they are likely to progress into higher legislative offices.

This thesis addresses this issue by seeking to understand:

- *how* candidate selection processes influence the types of people who are selected as candidates
- *who* was elected for the first time in the 2008 general election, and
- *what* roles first-term MPs adopt upon their entry to parliament.

The thesis also asks the question of whether new legislators can be considered political leaders or any other type of leader and, if so, how they adapt to leadership roles.

This introductory chapter briefly sets out the study's context, outlines the research methodology, and presents the structure of the thesis.

#### 2008 General Election

New Zealand held a general election on 8 November 2008. The result saw the Labour Party, which had led minority governments since 1999, ousted in favour

of a National-led government under the leadership of John Key. Following the election, the National Party entered into confidence and supply agreements with ACT, United Future, and the Maori Party. In April 2009, five months after the election, the Green Party signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Party, pledging to work together on a selected range of issues, such as energy efficiency.<sup>1</sup>

The election returned 122 Members of Parliament,<sup>2</sup> of whom 34 (28 percent) had never served in parliament before.<sup>3</sup> Table 1.1 shows the 2008 election results and the number of new MPs in each party.

**Table 1.1 – Distribution of MPs across Parties and First-Term MPs in each Party**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Total Number of MPs</b>	<b>Total Number of First-Term MPs</b>	<b>Caucus Percentage of First-Term MPs</b>
<b>National</b>	58	15	26%
<b>Labour</b>	43	13	30%
<b>Green</b>	9	3	33%
<b>ACT</b>	5	2	40%
<b>Maori</b>	5	1	20%
<b>United Future</b>	1	0	0%
<b>Progressives</b>	1	0	0%
	<b>122</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>21%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Information about these political parties can be found at [www.labour.org.nz](http://www.labour.org.nz), [www.national.org.nz](http://www.national.org.nz), [www.act.org.nz](http://www.act.org.nz), [www.unitedfuture.org.nz](http://www.unitedfuture.org.nz), [www.maoriparty.org](http://www.maoriparty.org), and [www.greens.org.nz](http://www.greens.org.nz).

<sup>2</sup> The standard size of the New Zealand Parliament is 120 members, but the Mixed Member Proportional electoral system occasionally creates an 'overhang' when a party wins a greater number of electorate seats than their proportion of the party vote allows. The Maori Party's success in five Maori electorates coupled with its low party vote caused an overhang in 2008.

<sup>3</sup> One well-known member, the Honourable Sir Roger Douglas, was re-elected 18 years after retiring from parliament. Sir Roger was excluded from this study as he did not fit the criteria of a first-term MP. Additionally, while this study was being conducted four new MPs entered parliament because of the resignations of two other members. These new members were not included in the study because they were not first elected in the 2008 general election.

## **Research Methodology**

Two rounds of interviews were conducted with new MPs. Interviews focused on candidate selection processes, experiences as candidates in the 2008 campaign, roles of Members of Parliament, and MPs' expectations of their first term in parliament and beyond. The information gained from these interviews forms a substantial part of this thesis, providing a source of original primary material against which the existing literature on candidate selection, representation, and parliamentary roles can be assessed.

The Members of the 49<sup>th</sup> Parliament were sworn in on 8 December 2008. The parliamentary offices of all 34 first-term MPs were contacted by telephone in January-February 2009 to request an initial interview. As a matter of courtesy, the whips of the National and Labour parties were contacted before approaching their MPs. Initial contact with each MP's office was followed up by subsequent telephone calls or emails as necessary.

Of the 34 MPs contacted, 28 (82 percent) participated in the first round of interviews. In the second round, one participant declined to be re-interviewed, resulting in a sample of 27 MPs (79 percent).

The first round of interviews occurred between January and May 2009. Interviews were usually an hour in duration; some were shorter depending on the time available. Second interviews were conducted between June and August 2009. The second interviews were carried out in approximately the same order as the first to ensure that adequate time had passed between each MP's interviews. Second interviews were scheduled to last 30 minutes; some ran longer, others were truncated due to time constraints.

Table 1.2 shows the distribution of participants across parties.

**Table 1.2 – Distribution of Participants across Parties**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Number of First-Round Participants</b>	<b>Proportion of all First-Term MPs (%)</b>	<b>Number of Second-Round Participants</b>	<b>Proportion of all First-Term MPs (%)</b>
<b>National</b>	11	32	10	29
<b>Labour</b>	11	32	11	32
<b>Green</b>	3	9	3	9
<b>ACT</b>	2	6	2	6
<b>Maori</b>	1	3	1	3
	<b>28</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>79%</b>

Table 1.3, overleaf, compares key demographic information about the participating MPs against all MPs.

Immediately, differences between the parliament as a whole and the 2008 intake are apparent. The Class of 2008 were notably younger than their colleagues. The largest variation was in the 55-64 age grouping. The large cohort of MPs in this age group may suggest that politics is becoming increasingly professionalised and is considered a long-term occupation.

The new MPs were less likely to be Pakeha or Pacifica and more likely to be Asian, suggesting that Asian New Zealanders – who have typically been underrepresented – are now taking their place in the legislature. They were slightly more likely to live north of Taupo, reflecting the ongoing northward migration of people – and power – in New Zealand.

Those who stood for the first time in 2008 were likely to stand in an electorate *and* on the party list, indicating that parties generally reserve their list-only spaces for existing MPs – most likely senior MPs with significant portfolio responsibilities – with the notable exception of candidates from ethnic minorities. These demographic variations will be discussed in greater detail throughout this thesis.

**Table 1.3 – Key Demographic Information**

		<b>2008 Intake (%)<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>All MPs (%)</b>	<b>Variance (+/- %)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	68	66	(-2)
	Female	32	34	+2
<b>Age</b>	25-34	22	6	+16
	35-44	37	22	+15
	45-54	30	32	(-2)
	55-64	11	35	(-24)
	65-74	0	5	(-5)
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Pakeha	68	76	(-8)
	Maori	15	15	0
	Pacific	6	14	(-8)
	Asian	12	5	+7
<b>Geographic Location</b>	North of Taupo	61	57	+4
	Lower North Island	21	23	(-2)
	South Island	18	21	(-3)
<b>Stood as</b>	Electorate candidate only	0	0	0
	List candidate only	9	14	(-5)
	Both electorate and list candidate	91	86	+5

Table 1.4, overleaf, compares the occupational backgrounds of the 2008 intake with the parliament as a whole.

Variations in occupational backgrounds are notable, with an increase in public servants, advocates/lobbyists, and diplomats entering parliament. At the same

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<sup>4</sup> The 2008 intake includes MPs who were not interviewed for this study.

time the number of farmers and – surprisingly – professionals decreased. These occupational themes will also be explored further in this thesis.

**Table 1.4 – MPs’ Occupational Backgrounds<sup>5</sup>**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2008 Intake (%)</b>	<b>All MPs (%)</b>	<b>Variance (+/-%)</b>
<b>Manager/CEO</b>	14	13	+1
<b>Lawyer</b>	11	9	+2
<b>Professional<sup>6</sup></b>	11	16	(-5)
<b>Community Sector</b>	9	6	+3
<b>Public Service</b>	9	3	+6
<b>Self-Employed</b>	9	7	+2
<b>Advocate/ Lobbyist</b>	7	4	+3
<b>Consultant</b>	7	5	+2
<b>Education</b>	7	11	(-4)
<b>Political</b>	7	9	(-2)
<b>Diplomat</b>	5	3	+2
<b>Union</b>	5	6	(-1)
<b>Farmer</b>	0	6	(-6)
<b>Service</b>	0	2	(-2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

The specific questions asked of each MP varied between interviews, but the themes remained constant. In the first round of interviews the themes were classified as general reactions to being an MP, personal situation before election, decision to run, candidacy, campaign and election, role definition, initial parliamentary experiences, relationships with other MPs, and future perspectives. The second interview themes were general reactions to being an MP, roles, constituents, list/electorate and small/large party role differences,

<sup>5</sup> Occupational information was retrieved from MP profiles on [www.parliament.govt.nz](http://www.parliament.govt.nz).

<sup>6</sup> This category includes occupations such as accountants, economists and journalists.



psychology (such as motivations, feelings of efficacy), party, parliament, media, intra- and inter-party relationships, and future perspectives. The interview schedules used to guide each interview are included as Appendix III and Appendix IV.

It is *extremely* important to note the limitations of this thesis's data. All responses are self-reported by MPs themselves. Thus there is a serious risk that responses may be skewed towards MPs reporting that their actions fit within their normative assumptions about how MPs *ought* to behave rather than how they *actually* act.

There is also a risk that some individuals may lack the self-awareness to accurately report how they perceive a situation or act in certain circumstances. This observation is not intended to cast doubt on the intellectual capacity of MPs; rather when faced with a question about a subject to which they have devoted little thought individuals may respond flippantly, or in a manner that does not reflect their actual behaviour or, indeed, their philosophy.

Moreover, as only individuals who were successful in being elected were interviewed, responses regarding candidate selection may favour the position of successful candidates at the expense of those who either did not achieve their party's nomination or who unsuccessfully contested the election. These data limitations cannot be stressed strongly enough.

However, self-reported data, when treated with caution, can be extremely useful. Firstly, if MPs claim to behave in a manner consistent with normative assumptions about legislator roles, this provides a valuable pool of information about exactly what those assumptions are and allows exploration of why such assumptions exist. Secondly, self-reported data that is skewed towards a flattering image of MPs allows parallels to be drawn between *perceived* behaviour and *actual* behaviour. For instance, if an MP claims to behave with civility in the House but actually interjects and heckles opponents loudly and frequently, it is possible to examine why such a disparity exists.

Thus one should read this thesis with these data limitations in mind. The aim of this work is not to provide a definitive account of how individuals become MPs and the roles they adopt once elected. Rather, it seeks to build a better understanding of the types of people who enter parliament, the experiences that new MPs typically face, and the roles that are available for MPs to choose from. This thesis claims only to be a snapshot of new MPs elected in the 2008 general election.

## **Thesis Structure**

This thesis is broken into six chapters, including this first introductory chapter. The second chapter identifies arguments surrounding political leadership, candidate selection, political representation, and parliamentary roles in New Zealand and abroad. This chapter serves as a review of the existing literature, although it delves beyond this into a preliminary identification and analysis of the topics relevant to this thesis, specifically the dynamics and effects of candidate selection processes, methods of providing representation, and the variety of parliamentary roles MPs are expected to fulfil.

The third chapter discusses candidate selection in New Zealand with respect to differences between parties, the types of people selected, and MPs' perspectives on the selection process. Information collected from interviews with MPs will be analysed against the international literature about the composition of legislatures to determine how 'typical' New Zealand MPs are. Comparisons will be made between the processes used by New Zealand political parties to select candidates and the effects of party differences will be analysed.

The fourth chapter discusses differing conceptions of representation in the New Zealand parliament, including geographic, ethnic, and party representation. Moreover, the differences in representative focus between electorate and list MPs and large and small party MPs will be addressed. Chapter four also

explores the ways that new MPs go about representing their constituents and their self-perceptions of legitimacy.

The fifth chapter turns to the mechanics of parliament itself, examining the parliamentary roles of new MPs. House, select committee, party, and policy responsibilities are explored. The maiden speeches of new MPs are also studied as a means of understanding attitudes towards parliament.

The final chapter concludes by discussing the value of candidate selection mechanisms, variations in roles amongst 'types' of MPs, how representation occurs amongst new MPs, and changes in role conceptions. This chapter brings together findings from throughout this thesis to offer a better understanding of expectations of and about new MPs.

Leadership is a theme throughout this thesis. Each chapter discusses the types of leadership that new MPs demonstrate through their roles as legislators. This aims to provide a better understanding of roles that are peripheral to political leadership, such as community leadership. Moreover, this focus highlights the fact that while new MPs may not be political leaders when they enter parliament, they form an exclusive pool of future political leaders.

### **Investigating Candidate Selection and Role Adaptation amongst Legislators**

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The literature concerning candidate selection and role adaptation in the New Zealand legislature is limited. Fortunately, however, some overseas scholarship exists. This chapter sets out the arguments of the existing literature surrounding candidate selection and role adaptation in Western legislatures. In addition to performing the functions of a literature review, this chapter also identifies and offers a preliminary exploration of the key themes and topics addressed by this thesis, including leadership; candidate nomination, recruitment and selection; the decision to stand for parliament; legislator roles; representation; and parliamentary roles.

#### **Leadership within a Political Context**

All MPs provide some form of leadership. This thesis addresses how backbench MPs exercise leadership by focusing on those who are generally the lowest-ranked members in the hierarchical parliamentary environment: new MPs. In assessing the leadership functions of MPs who are typically the most obscure and constrained individuals in the entire parliament it is possible to better understand the leadership functions of all MPs.

As a concept, political leadership is exclusive. Jon Johansson defines political leadership as:

a dynamic interaction that occurs between an elected leadership (whether individual or group based) and its citizenry. It is mediated to varying degrees by situational constraints and opportunities. A leader or leaders combining power and purpose to achieve shared objectives with the citizenry characterises the leadership interaction.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jon Johansson, *Two Titans: Muldoon, Lange and Leadership* (Wellington: Dunmore Press, 2005), p. 19.

New MPs demonstrate some of the qualities required of political leaders: they are elected, they interact with the citizenry, and they are affected by situational constraints and opportunities. Arguably, new MPs have shared objectives with the citizenry and may act with purpose to see their goals achieved.

However, new MPs generally lack power and thus they face the greatest situational constraints of all legislators. The vast majority of new MPs are relatively unknown, certainly outside of their communities. Moreover, parliamentary and party hierarchies mean that new MPs generally have few significant responsibilities. Even new MPs with the greatest leadership potential are severely restricted in their ability to act; thus their ability to be political leaders is limited.

There are, however, occasionally exceptions to this rule. For instance, Steven Joyce, who was elected as a National list MP in 2008, was relatively well-known by virtue of his previous roles within the National Party. Joyce was made a minister immediately upon being elected – an unusual occurrence – and thus acquired significant formal power. The other recent notable exception is Margaret Wilson's immediate elevation into the Clark cabinet upon her election in 1999. Joyce and Wilson's cases are examples of the exception proving the rule. The majority of new MPs must progress through party and parliamentary hierarchies before achieving such roles – the fact that Joyce and Wilson overcame these institutional barriers make their cases unusual.

Despite this, all MPs have the potential to be leaders of some description. The size of the New Zealand parliament means that the pool of possible leaders is relatively small. Thus if MPs demonstrate competence in backbench roles their chances of promotion are relatively high. Therefore, new MPs can be described as 'proto-leaders': individuals whose institutional location means that they form the future pool of political leaders.

MPs' privileged positions within their communities also mean that they are uniquely placed to offer leadership to a range of citizens. Thus new MPs are not *political leaders*; rather they are *community leaders*. Community leaders are individuals who support or advocate for communities. The concept of community is inclusive and may describe geographic areas, ethnicities, genders, and so on. Communities may even describe individuals who subscribe to particular ideologies or wish particular policies to be implemented. Moreover, while it is normatively important for political leaders to be elected, this is not the case for community leaders. Community leadership may be exercised by any individual who is perceived by the community as legitimate. Thus community leaders *may* be MPs, but they may also be teachers, religious leaders, activists, and so on.

It should be stressed that MPs' individual agency is important in determining the extent to which they are leaders. While the potential to exercise leadership assuredly exists by virtue of their office, MPs who lack leadership skills will not develop leadership roles beyond their *ex-officio* positions. On the other hand, MPs who possess leadership skills may employ them to engage with broader groups within society and in turn develop the skills required of political leadership. Thus it is up to each MP to determine the type of leadership they aspire to and, if desired, to employ strategies to move from being 'proto' or community leaders to becoming political leaders.

The extent to which new MPs see themselves as leaders has not been tested in New Zealand. Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts argue that MPs' 'own convictions about their own competence and capacities' affect MPs' self-images and their approach to leadership.<sup>2</sup> Thus MPs must see themselves as leaders in order to be leaders. However, given how tightly-controlled the upper leadership positions are within parliamentary systems self-identifying as a leader may be interpreted as staking a claim to the party leadership or an expression of

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, 'Unwanted Heroes? Three Labour Leaders and Seven Campaigns', in Margaret Clark (ed.), *Three Labour Leaders: Nordmeyer, Kirk, Rowling* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2001), p. 224.

overwhelming ambition and thus be frowned upon. Such a claim may even be career-limiting as party leaders seek to protect their positions.

The assumption that all MPs have common goals is widespread, especially in small parliaments where the chances of achieving executive office are relatively high.<sup>3</sup> This thesis argues the contrary; not all MPs wish to be prime ministers or members of the cabinet. Legislators' diverse motivations and ambitions mean that desired positions will vary. Moreover, where a number of MPs share a goal, the method of achieving that goal will vary amongst them.<sup>4</sup> This is consistent with the argument that new MPs exercise community leadership – community leadership, not political leadership, is the reason they became MPs. This thesis will test the hypothesis that goals amongst first-term MPs will vary and not be exclusively centred on achieving executive office.

### **Candidate Nomination, Recruitment, and Selection**

The selection of candidates is perhaps the most important function of political parties. As Pippa Norris argues, 'in the long run *who* gets into the legislature, perhaps rising during a twenty- or thirty-year career into the highest offices of state, may have more important repercussions for the future of the country than any other electoral choice.'<sup>5</sup>

Who gets selected as political candidates is largely dependent on the legal, electoral, and party systems that determine selection practices. The rules of selection processes shape the supply of aspirants and the criteria by which selectors choose candidates. Norris describes the political recruitment process using the model shown in Figure 2.1.

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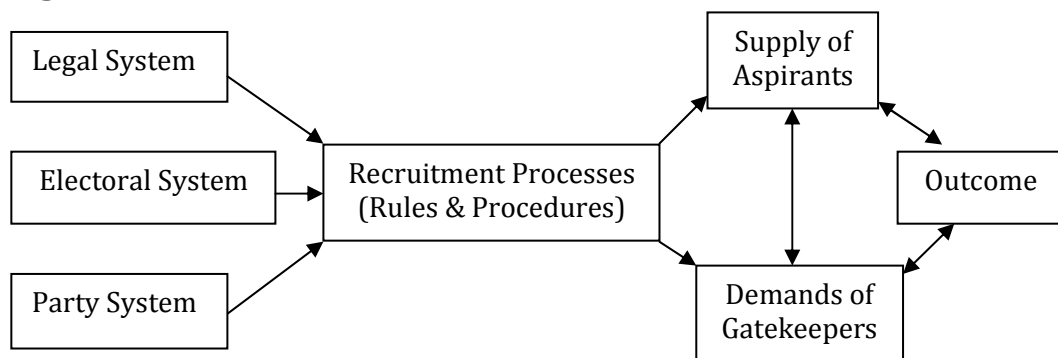
<sup>3</sup> Keith Jackson, 'Candidate Selection and the 1978 General Election', in Howard R. Penniman (ed.), *New Zealand and the Polls: The General Election in 1978* (Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Research, 1980), p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, 'Redefining Constituency Representation: The Roles of New Zealand MPs Under MMP', *Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, March 2007, p. 92.

<sup>5</sup> Pippa Norris, 'Introduction: Theories of Recruitment', in Pippa Norris (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 3.

Selecting candidates can be understood as a question of supply and demand. Supply concerns the people who put themselves forward for nomination. Potential candidates must have the motivation and political capital to enter the selection process.<sup>6</sup> As not everybody wishes to be a legislator, self-filtering occurs in determining the supply of potential candidates. There tend to be biases towards particular occupations, age groups, family situations, education levels, genders, and races.<sup>7</sup> This has consequences for how representative the legislature is of the general population.

**Figure 2.1 – Model of Political Recruitment**



Source: Pippa Norris, 'Introduction: Theories of Recruitment', p. 2.

Supply-side effects can, however, be moderated by demand. Parties determine the criteria used to select candidates in line with legal requirements. By applying criteria that seek to recruit particular types of candidates, supply-side biases can be minimised. Adjusting criteria to facilitate entry for underrepresented groups may result in a more diverse range of candidates. This occurs in Germany and Norway where some parties have self-imposed gender quotas in their candidate selection criteria.<sup>8</sup>

However, viewing candidate selection as a supply and demand model overlooks two key points. Firstly, supply-side arguments assume that all aspiring

<sup>6</sup> Pippa Norris, 'Introduction: Theories of Recruitment', p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 144.

<sup>8</sup> Miki Caul, 'Political Parties and the Adoption of Candidate Gender Quotas: A Cross-National Analysis', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 63, No. 4, November 2001, p. 1216.



candidates are rational actors seeking to achieve legislative office. However, not all potential candidates want to become legislators. Individuals may stand to raise their party's profile or to advance specific policy goals, especially in small parties.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, in larger parties individuals may offer themselves in unwinnable positions as a means of indicating that they wish to make a more serious run in the future. Where election is believed to be unlikely, candidates generally do not fit the 'typical' profile of candidates selected by their parties in safer positions.<sup>10</sup> Supply arguments do not acknowledge the diversity of reasons why individuals put themselves forward for selection.

Supply arguments also do not fully acknowledge the importance of political parties. Given the necessity of being sponsored by a party to be elected, parties themselves help to determine supply. Political parties play a role in grooming potential candidates. According to M.R. Price, potential candidates must 'emerge' from within their parties. Emergence is concerned with 'the identification or "discovery" of recruits who appear to others to be potential leaders'.<sup>11</sup> Party leaders seek potential future legislators to progress within the party and members seek to distinguish leaders from non-leaders amongst their ranks.

Within New Zealand political parties the length of membership before standing for parliament is comparatively short. The 1993 *New Zealand Election Study* showed an average length of party membership of less than four years.<sup>12</sup> In the same period membership in Australian parties was 12.3 years.<sup>13</sup> However, there are variances between parties. Larger parties generally demand longer party service – a trait that is even more common in parties on the political left.

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<sup>9</sup> Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Holland, 'Electoral Status and Candidate Selection: Data and Findings from the 1979 British Direct Election to the European Parliament', *Political Science*, Vol. 38, No. 2, December 1986, p. 170.

<sup>11</sup> M.R. Price, *The Political Vocation: A Study of the Recruitment and Selection of Parliamentary Candidates in the New Zealand National Party* (University of Auckland: Unpublished MA Thesis, March 1972), p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Helena Catt, 'New Zealand', in Pippa Norris (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> Ian McAllister, 'Australia', in Pippa Norris (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 20.

Additionally, candidates who enter parliament as electorate MPs are likely to have longer records of party membership.<sup>14</sup> Candidates who are well-known within their parties – either through long service or active participation – have stronger networks on which to build their candidacy and a greater knowledge of their party's internal workings.<sup>15</sup> Candidates with a demonstrated commitment to their party are particularly desirable.

Although it is possible to be selected without a long history of party service, one must still 'emerge' as a potential candidate. Some candidates are 'self-starters' – those who approach MPs or party officials to indicate their interest in standing.<sup>16</sup> Others are 'recruited' – individuals that parties, pressure groups, or friends identify as potential legislators and convince to stand.<sup>17</sup> Party presidents, general secretaries, regional party leaders, or notable figures within each electorate may play a particularly important role in recruiting potential candidates. Barber argues that when recruiting potential candidates, parties often highlight the favourable aspects of being a legislator while minimising the negative sides.<sup>18</sup> Thus legislators who are 'recruited' may have a lower knowledge of the role than those who are 'self-starters'. Regardless of differences in emergence, before nomination and selection individuals must become known to political parties as potential future legislators.

Demand arguments are problematic in identifying who is likely to be selected as political candidates. Although demand can be moderated so that candidates from diverse backgrounds are selected, the extent to which this occurs varies. Thus the preferences and prejudices of selectors result in particular types of candidates being selected. Discrimination may be direct, based on the attitudes of the selectors, or indirect, based on selectors' perceptions of the electorate's

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<sup>14</sup> Raymond Miller, *Party Politics in New Zealand* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 122.

<sup>15</sup> Helena Catt, 'New Zealand', p. 150; Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*, p. 162; Raymond Miller, *Party Politics in New Zealand*, p. 90; M.R. Price, *The Political Vocation*, p. 165.

<sup>16</sup> M.R. Price, *The Political Vocation*, p. 168.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Rush, *Politics and Society: An Introduction to Political Sociology* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), pp. 130-131.

<sup>18</sup> James David Barber, *The Lawmakers*, p. 241.

attitudes.<sup>19</sup> Although discrimination may sometimes be positive (for example, running a candidate from a minority group in a constituency with a significant population from that community), it is more often negative (for example, selecting fewer minority candidates in favour of majority candidates).

The extent of selector discrimination is often determined by the openness of the selection process. Open systems devolve selection powers to the public, party members, or delegates, while closed systems are characterised by high levels of central party control.<sup>20</sup> Open and closed systems create different types of prejudices. Open systems that utilise public primary elections may expose the prejudices of the electorate, while open systems that allow local party members or delegates to control candidate selection may amplify the prejudices of a small group of individuals. Closed systems may entrench the prejudices of a small group, but high levels of central control may result in a more representative pool of candidates overall. Mixed systems that allow shared local and central control over selection attempt to balance the prejudices of each side.

Many parties attempt to moderate themselves in selecting candidates, although what constitutes a desirable range of candidates varies. As David Boyd notes, the concept of a representative pool of candidates means different things to different parties – ‘to some, a representative list is one that reflects their party supporters; to others it is a mixture that takes account geography, gender, race, age and class.’<sup>21</sup> Thus some parties may structure candidate lists to appeal to supporters while others appeal to broader demographic or geographic groups.

### **Candidate Selection in New Zealand**

In New Zealand, legal and electoral rules are flexible enough to allow most individuals to stand for parliament. The Electoral Act 1993 requires only that

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<sup>19</sup> Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment*, p. 124.

<sup>20</sup> Austin Ranney, ‘Candidate Selection and Party Cohesion in Britain and the United States’, in William J. Crotty (ed.), *Approaches to the Study of Political Organization* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1968), p. 145.

<sup>21</sup> David Boyd, *Party Candidate Selection Procedures and Objectives Under MMP* (University of Auckland: Unpublished MA Thesis, July 1996), p. 3.

candidates be New Zealand citizens and be registered to vote in an electoral district.<sup>22</sup> Political parties must be registered and follow democratic selection procedures, although the latter has never been enforced by the Electoral Commission.<sup>23</sup> Arguably, New Zealand's Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system makes election to parliament easier due to the existence of list members who are not elected in a geographic constituency. However, party dominance significantly reduces the potential supply of aspirants. New Zealand does not have a tradition of electing independent MPs. Therefore, to have a reasonable chance of being elected, one must stand for a political party.

Each political party varies in how they select candidates, although most New Zealand parties use relatively closed processes. The methods employed by New Zealand's parties are outlined in Table 2.1, overleaf.

### **Decision to Stand**

The legislative career is not suited to everyone. As Levine and Roberts neatly sum up, 'it is sometimes said that in America anyone can grow up to be president, but what is not often added is that not everyone wishes to do so.'<sup>24</sup> Being a legislator is taxing on individuals. The role comes with a high public profile, long hours, and high risks. MPs are often treated with disdain by the media and the public. On the other hand, entering the legislature has many benefits, including the possibility of exercising real power and 'making a

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<sup>22</sup> Electoral Act 1993, Section 47, [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz), accessed 12 June 2009. The only memorable occasion in which these conditions were not met was following the 2002 election where Kelly Chal, a United Future candidate, was not allowed to be sworn in as a Member of Parliament because she was resident, not a citizen, of New Zealand. Chal was replaced by the next eligible candidate on the United Future party list.

<sup>23</sup> Electoral Act 1993, Section 71; Raymond Miller, *Party Politics in New Zealand*, p. 110. The only recent case where this aspect of law was formally tested occurred following the 2008 general election when an unsuccessful nominee for the National Party candidacy in the Selwyn electorate took a complaint about the party's selection procedures to the High Court. The High Court ruled that the National Party's application of democratic procedures were within the requirements set out by the Electoral Act 1993. See *PAYNE v ADAMS* (Unreported, 7 May 2009, High Court Christchurch, Randerson, Allan and French JJ).

<sup>24</sup> Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, 'From Lobby Fodder to Leadership: New Zealand Parliamentarians and Select Committees', *Political Science*, Vol. 56, No. 2, December 2004, p. 43.

difference'. In understanding *who* become MPs it is important to understand *what* appeals to them about the job and *why* they put themselves forward.

**Table 2.1 – Candidate Selection Methods in New Zealand’s Political Parties**

	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>List</b>
<b>National</b>	Locally-selected delegates vote on centrally-approved candidates	Central list-ranking committee. Some regional influence
<b>Labour</b>	Locally-selected delegates and centrally-appointed party delegates vote on centrally-approved candidates	Central list-ranking committee. Some regional influence
<b>Green</b>	Locally-selected delegates vote on centrally-approved candidates	All members vote to create indicative list from centrally-approved candidates. Final ranking determined centrally
<b>Maori</b>	Party members and electors on Maori roll in each electorate vote at local hui. Final confirmation made centrally	Local Electorate Councils send prioritised rankings to the National Council. Final ranking determined centrally
<b>ACT</b>	Local members vote on centrally-approved candidates	Party members vote to create indicative list from centrally-approved candidates. Final ranking determined centrally
<b>United Future</b>	Panel of local, regional, and central delegates seek local member feedback before endorsing candidate. Final confirmation made centrally	All members submit prioritised rankings to the Board of Management. Final ranking determined centrally
<b>Progressive</b>	Locally-selected delegates and centrally-appointed party delegates vote on centrally-approved candidates	Central list-ranking committee. Some regional influence.

### *Political Socialisation*

All MPs have at least one thing in common: an interest in politics. However, when, where, and how that interest develops differs. According to Michael Rush, political socialisation is 'the means by which individuals acquire political knowledge or information, political values or basic beliefs, and political attitudes or opinions on specific matters'.<sup>25</sup> Rush's model of political socialisation is shown in Figure 2.2, overleaf.

Political socialisation begins early in life and is shaped by the groups that individuals belong to such as families, peer groups, and other civil society groups. These groups provide sources for imitation, instruction, and motivation. Initial socialisation typically occurs in childhood and is reinforced or adapted by experiences, behaviour, and personality throughout adolescence and adulthood. Thus socialisation is a perpetual cycle – one never finishes being socialised.

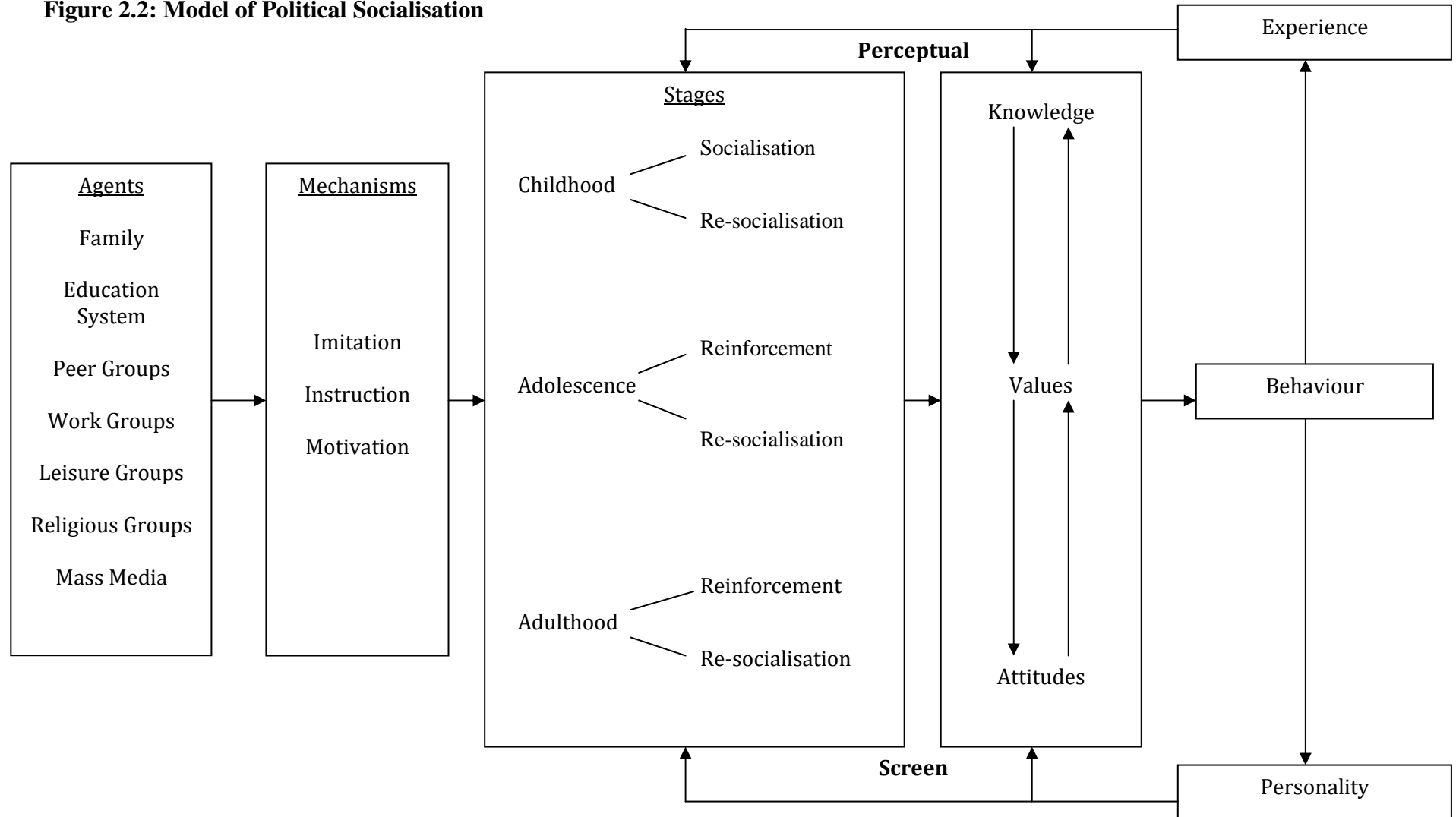
Understanding *when* political socialisation occurs allows for an understanding of how intrinsic a particular set of political beliefs are to an individual. For instance, being politically socialised as a child should result in the political beliefs of that child being a core part of their identity, if their political beliefs have stood the test of time against numerous rounds of reinforcement and re-socialisation. On the other hand, one might expect those who are politically socialised as adults to be more flexible in their political beliefs. Thus identifying the point of political socialisation exposes an individual's likely approach to politics.

Motivations to stand for public office differ greatly between individuals. Those who enter politics while young are likely to be motivated by a specific political personality or campaign; young legislators may select political personalities as

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<sup>25</sup> Michael Rush, *Politics and Society*, p. 96.

**Figure 2.2: Model of Political Socialisation**



Source: Michael Rush, *Politics and Society*, p. 97.

their ego-ideals in the same way others may select movie or rock stars.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, charismatic leadership may provide a catalyst for young people to become politically active.<sup>33</sup> Young people are less driven by specific policies or issues; while their political identity is firm they tend to drift into political activity.<sup>34</sup>

Older people, on the other hand, are likely to be motivated by specific concerns or issues. The decision to enter politics is rational and based on the desire to solve specific problems.<sup>35</sup> There is often a feeling of dissatisfaction with politicians and the political environment and the decision to stand is based partially on a sense of duty to solve these issues.<sup>36</sup> The decision is made easier by many older aspirants having grown-up children and thus possibly being particularly open to considering a new career path.<sup>37</sup> Older legislators are likely to take a pragmatic approach to political issues.<sup>38</sup>

Age is also significant when examining motivations that may be triggered by events or attitudes that are of special significance to particular generations. As Prewitt and Nowlin argue, 'a consideration of the time at which the current leadership class were children and adolescents informs us of the kind of schooling they had, the nature of the dramatic political events they experienced, and what their earliest acquired, and most persistently held, views of the political world might be.'<sup>39</sup> Generational attitudes are often shaped by crises. During times of uncertainty, individuals begin to feel the relevance of their political views. Thus understanding the crises of

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<sup>32</sup> Kenneth Prewitt, Heinz Eulau, and Betty H. Zisk, 'Political Socialization and Political Roles', *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4, Winter 1966-1967, p. 576.

<sup>33</sup> M.R. Price, *The Political Vocation*, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> James Walter, *The Acculturation to Political Work: New Members of the Federal Backbench* (Canberra: Australasian Political Studies Association, 1979), p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> James Walter, *The Acculturation to Political Work*, p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan, Leroy Ferguson, and John C. Wahlke, 'The Political Socialization of American State Legislators', *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 3, No. 2, May 1959, pp. 202-203.

<sup>37</sup> James Walter, *The Acculturation to Political Work*, p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> Kenneth Prewitt, Heinz Eulau, and Betty H. Zisk, 'Political Socialization and Political Roles', p. 576.

<sup>39</sup> Kenneth Prewitt and William Nowlin, 'Political Ambitions and the Behavior of Incumbent Politicians', *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 2, June 1969, p. 305.



politicians' lives – especially those during youth – helps us to understand motivations.

The exposure an individual has to politics throughout their life plays an important role in how they feel about the political vocation. The extent to which politics features in a child's life is a good indicator of how they will feel about politics in their adult life. Prewitt argues that children of politicians, union leaders, campaign workers, lobbyists, civic leaders, or professors are more likely to become legislators.<sup>40</sup> Price found a strong correlation between having family members who are politically active and standing for parliament.<sup>41</sup> Family members need not be activists – simply being interested in politics increases the likelihood of children becoming politically active.<sup>42</sup> This suggests that those most psychologically prepared for a political career are those exposed to politics throughout their lives.

### *Ambition*

Studying individuals' ambitions allows us to see what serves as their call to action. Stanley A. Renshon defines ambition as the 'capacity, desire and ability to invest oneself for the accomplishment of one's immediate and life purposes.'<sup>43</sup> Renshon argues that ambition sees the 'consolidation of a set of skills that can be successfully engaged in the pursuit and accomplishment of one's goals and the realization of one's values.'<sup>44</sup> Without ambition, goals cannot be formed nor achieved. Politically, ambition refers to the drive that makes political aspirants want to stand for public office.<sup>45</sup> While largely a psychological trait, ambition is also shaped by institutional constraints.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Kenneth Prewitt, 'Political Socialization and Leadership Selection', pp. 106-107.

<sup>41</sup> M.R. Price, *The Political Vocation*, p. 144.

<sup>42</sup> James Walter, *The Acculturation to Political Work*, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Stanley A. Renshon, *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1998), p. 186.

<sup>44</sup> Stanley A. Renshon, *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*, p. 186.

<sup>45</sup> Pippa Norris, 'Introduction: Theories of Recruitment', p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*, p. 21.

Ambition cannot go unabated in situations where the structure of opportunities is unfavourable.

Ambition describes the way legislators go about achieving their political goals. Essential to the role of a legislator is responding to a constituency. Ambitious legislators may respond to the constituency that controls the office to which they aspire.<sup>47</sup> Thus some legislators may respond primarily to voters and local party organisations, while others may appeal to party leaders, who act as gatekeepers to their desired offices. Prewitt and Nowlin argue that anticipatory socialisation occurs when legislators 'begin to prepare themselves for their future positions long before they actually fill those positions.'<sup>48</sup> Individuals anticipate the reactions of those who control access to their desired position and act accordingly.<sup>49</sup>

In order to achieve one's goals, significant energy must be invested in their pursuit.<sup>50</sup> This is especially true of legislators. Given that political careers are highly competitive and the structure of opportunities often unfavourable, being elected and achieving one's political goals requires extremely high levels of energy. The hours worked by legislators are long and successes are often incremental – therefore stamina is required. Thus individuals who enter the political vocation may generally have higher levels of ambition *and* energy than the broader population.

The decision to stand for parliament is likely to be heavily influenced by the fortunes of each potential candidate's political party. If the chances of success are low, even especially ambitious individuals may choose to delay

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<sup>47</sup> Joseph Schlesinger, *Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1966), p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> Kenneth Prewitt and William Nowlin, 'Political Ambitions and the Behavior of Incumbent Politicians', p. 299.

<sup>49</sup> Kenneth Prewitt, 'Political Ambitions, Volunteerism, and Electoral Accountability', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 1, March 1970, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Stanley A. Renshon, *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*, p. 186.

their run.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the opportunities available to potential legislators can be further reduced by factors well outside of their control, such as economic crises or political scandal.<sup>52</sup> Ambition itself develops in response to opportunities. Where opportunities do not exist, action is unlikely.

Ambitions to stand for parliament may not necessarily be related to politics. Because it is a high-status occupation, those with strategic ambition may enter parliament to achieve more desirable goals upon their parliamentary exit, such as a successful business or diplomatic career. These legislators are attracted to offices that have served as 'stepping-stones' for others who occupy sought-after offices. Thus behaviour in office is shaped by anticipated future consequences.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, attraction to the legislative role may not even be related to future career options; some older aspirants may be attracted by the parliamentary pension and enjoying high social status in retirement.<sup>54</sup>

Political candidates are likely to place high value on obtaining power.<sup>55</sup> This is unsurprising given the status of the legislative role. However, it is not clear whether those who stand for office are *already* attracted to power or whether the drive for office *creates* an attraction to power.<sup>56</sup> It is likely that both are true: those who stand are attracted to power and the attraction grows stronger as they get closer to powerful positions. As the institutional environment of parliament is centred on the exercise of power, it is only natural that legislators should feel an attraction to power.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Paul S. Herrnson, 'United States', in Pippa Norris (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 188.

<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth McLeay, 'Roles, Rules and Leadership', in Margaret Clark (ed.), *Three Labour Leaders: Nordmeyer, Kirk and Rowling* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2001), pp. 70-71.

<sup>53</sup> Donald R. Matthews, 'Legislative Recruitment and Legislative Careers', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 4, November 1984, p. 554.

<sup>54</sup> Elizabeth McLeay, 'The New Parliament', in Jonathan Boston, Stephen Church, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay, and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), *Left Turn: The New Zealand General Election of 1999* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2000), p. 204.

<sup>55</sup> Donald R. Matthews, *The Social Background of Political Decision-Makers*, p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> James David Barber, *The Lawmakers: Recruitment and Adaptation to Legislative Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 14.

<sup>57</sup> Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, 'From Lobby Fodder to Leadership', p. 43.

It is interesting to note, however, that few legislators cite power as a motivating factor in their decision to stand. A United States study showed that self-identified motivations amongst legislators were primarily admiration for or dissatisfaction with politicians or political situations, or a sense of obligation.<sup>58</sup> Data from the 1993 New Zealand Election Study showed that candidates' motivations were 'to have an influence' (16 percent), to 'do a good job' (8 percent), and 'to represent people' (7 percent).<sup>59</sup> Given that 'influence' is a synonym for 'power', New Zealand political candidates may be more forthright about identifying power-based motives than their US counterparts.

### **Legislator Roles**

The roles expected of legislators are complex and varied. However, there are no job descriptions and no standard qualifications for the role, nor are there any guiding laws. Thus it is up to MPs and parties to determine how legislators should act.

Despite the high profile of MPs, the public knows little about their day-to-day actions. Definitions of legislators' roles in New Zealand are deliberately ambiguous. As David McGee argues, 'the office to which members are elected has a considerable amount of legal freedom guaranteed to it so that members themselves have the capacity to carry out the duties of the office as they see fit and indeed are able largely to define what the duties of that office are.'<sup>60</sup> Speaker Jonathan Hunt defined parliamentary business as 'the undertaking of any task or function that a member could reasonably be

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<sup>58</sup> Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan, Leroy Ferguson, and John C. Wahlke, 'The Political Socialization of American State Legislators', pp. 201-203.

<sup>59</sup> Helena Catt, 'New Zealand', p. 156.

<sup>60</sup> David McGee, *Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand*, Third Edition (Wellington: Dunmore Publishing, 2005), p. 34.

expected to carry out in his or her capacity as a Member of Parliament and that complements the business of the House of Representatives.’<sup>61</sup>

At a basic level, most people know that MPs speak in parliament and act as representatives. According to McLeay, the public expects legislators to:

represent the needs of their constituents and the policies of their parties. They should debate and influence policy through the legislative process, and they should monitor and scrutinise the actions of the executive. Above all, they should be responsive to the citizens they represent.<sup>62</sup>

Beyond this, however, the role is largely unknown. Consequently, when MPs are first elected, they likely have little understanding of legislator roles. This section addresses role expectations amongst new MPs.

#### *Role Expectations amongst New MPs*

There is little scholarly work on new legislators’ role expectations, but the work that does exist shows MPs’ understanding of their job to be vague. In their study of freshman legislators in Canada, Harold D. Clarke and Richard G. Price found that legislators have reasonably accurate general conceptions of their role before incumbency in that they have ‘expectations, albeit frequently vague, of performing constituency service and related representational tasks.’<sup>63</sup> This suggests that many neophyte MPs have no better understanding of legislators’ roles than members of the public who expect an MP to ‘act as a representative’. The simplest way to do so is to find a constituency that accepts them as legitimate and as ‘their’ representative. Even so, the lack of specific knowledge of how to act as a representative may mean that the representative role is a steep learning curve for new MPs.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Jonathan Hunt, quoted in Grant Gillon and Raymond Miller, ‘Role of an MP’, in Raymond Miller (ed.), *New Zealand Government and Politics*, Fourth Edition (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 174.

<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth McLeay, ‘The New Parliament’, p. 215.

<sup>63</sup> Harold D. Clarke and Richard G. Price, ‘Freshman MPs’ Job Images: The Effects of Incumbency, Ambition and Position’, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13, No. 3, September 1980, p. 584.

<sup>64</sup> Harold D. Clarke and Richard G. Price, ‘Freshman MPs’ Job Images’, p. 584.

Constituency representation is, however, but one part of legislators' role. Kathy Stuart argues that new MPs must go through an 'admission' stage in adjusting to their role. The uncertainty inherent in running for parliament means that individuals cannot adequately prepare for becoming an MP.<sup>65</sup> Even if they are essentially guaranteed success, candidates cannot be sure of their victory until election day. Thus candidates turn their mind to the campaign rather than the specifics of the job they covet.

Moreover, job expectations are likely to be unrealistically high in the period following MPs' initial election to the legislature, especially if they were successful on their first attempt. If the political experiences of new legislators are coloured by a successful run for parliament, they are likely to view their role in grander terms than those who have more extensive political experience, particularly those who have previously failed to be elected.<sup>66</sup>

Some new MPs do, however, have reasonably good understandings of legislator roles but have low expectations about their ability to become influential. In this case legislators have adopted a 'realistic' understanding of the largely ineffectual nature of the backbench role and thus find adaptation to that role relatively easy.<sup>67</sup> These legislators understand the institutional norms of parliament and are aware that they must gain experience before they can become influential.

The ambitions of individual MPs may also affect their knowledge about the job before incumbency. Clarke and Price argue that legislators who are progressively ambitious will seek to do 'something else', above and beyond the tasks carried out by their less ambitious colleagues, in order to stand out

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<sup>65</sup> Kathy Louise Stuart, *Emotional Labour and Occupational Identity*, p. 86.

<sup>66</sup> James David Barber, *The Lawmakers*, p. 246.

<sup>67</sup> Harold D. Clarke and Richard G. Price, 'A Note on the Pre-Nomination Role Socialization of Freshmen Members of Parliament', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 10, No. 2, June 1977, p. 404.

to party leadership. Thus in addition to a constituency focus, progressively ambitious new MPs may take a special interest in a policy area or legislative business.<sup>68</sup> MPs with progressive ambitions educate themselves on a broader range of legislative tasks and thus have more complex job definitions.

## **Representation**

The representational side of legislators' roles is important to MPs and the public alike. However, there is no set way in which parliamentarians 'represent'. This section addresses the differences in representational focus between electorate and list members and discusses the concept of thematic representation.

### *Defining Political Representation*

The concept of representation is problematic. Various models have been posited to describe legislators' representative functions – for instance, delegate, trustee, politico, and partisan – although none have yet adequately described the complexity of the task.<sup>69</sup> Gerhard Loewenberg argues that:

representation, like lawmaking, is an ill-defined concept that has acquired conflicting meanings through long use. It may be employed to denote any relationship between rulers and the ruled or it may connote responsiveness, authorization, legitimation, or accountability. It may be used so broadly that

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<sup>68</sup> Harold D. Clarke and Richard G. Price, 'Freshman MPs' Job Images', p. 593.

<sup>69</sup> Delegate: Heinz Eulau, John C. Wahlke, William Buchanan, and Leroy C. Ferguson, 'The Role of the Representative', pp. 749-750; Richard S. Katz, 'Role Orientations in Parliaments', in Richard S. Katz and Bernhard Wessels (eds.), *The European Parliament, The National Parliaments, and European Integration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 62; Trustee: Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Helena Catt, Jim Lamare, and Raymond Miller, *Towards Consensus? The 1993 Election in New Zealand and the Transition to Proportional Representation* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995), p. 123; Politico: Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Helena Catt, Jim Lamare, and Raymond Miller, *Towards Consensus?*, p. 124; Partisan: Vernon Bogdanor, 'Introduction', in Vernon Bogdanor (ed.), *Representatives of the People? Parliaments and Constituents in Western Democracies* (Hants: Grover Publishing Press, 1985), p. 5.

any political institution performs representative functions or so narrowly that only an elected legislature can do so.<sup>70</sup>

Representation implies that decisions of representatives are accepted by the citizenry as legitimate and authoritative, and that representatives are accountable.<sup>71</sup> Atkinson and Thomas argue that representation occurs when 'the interests of citizens find expression in the actions of governments.'<sup>72</sup> There is an assumption of a legitimate relationship between representatives and constituencies, whether they are individuals, geographic districts, social communities, political parties, or particular points of view.

Therefore, for the purposes of this study representation is defined as:

the relationships between elected Members of Parliament and constituencies. Constituencies are identified by the legislator *and* the constituents themselves. For political representation to occur, legislators and constituents must deem the relationships to be legitimate and authoritative and the legislator must be accountable to the represented group.

The task of representation is complicated by the difficulty in discerning constituencies. Where single-member constituencies are exclusively used, constituencies are generally understood as the geographic districts that directly elect members. However, this overlooks the need for MPs to act as representatives of their broader party and its policies. When considering electoral systems such as MMP, identification of constituencies becomes even more difficult. Some members are elected in geographic districts and others are elected via party lists. However, all members must represent their parties and policies. Thus constituencies are identified by legislators and

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<sup>70</sup> Gerhard Loewenberg, 'Comparative Legislative Research', in Samuel C. Patterson and John C. Wahlke (eds.), *Comparative Legislative Behavior: Frontiers of Research* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), p. 12

<sup>71</sup> Gerhard Loewenberg, 'Comparative Legislative Research', p. 12; Heinz Eulau, John C. Wahlke, William Buchanan, and Leroy C. Ferguson, 'The Role of the Representative: Some Empirical Observations on the Theory of Edmund Burke', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 3, September 1959, p. 743.

<sup>72</sup> Michael M. Atkinson and Paul G. Thomas, 'Studying the Canadian Parliament', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 3, August 1993, p. 437.



constituents themselves; legislators do not have exclusive control over whom or what they represent.

It is commonly assumed that to be representative, a legislature must be a microcosm of society.<sup>73</sup> Descriptive representation sees legislators sharing similar backgrounds or characteristics such as occupation, gender, or ethnicity with constituents. This assumes that shared sociological traits between legislators and the general population lead to meaningful representation.<sup>74</sup> However, representation does not necessarily imply that a legislature should be a mathematical replica of society-at-large.<sup>75</sup> Simply sharing a particular sociological background does not mean that an MP necessarily represents that community. Substantive representation measures the level of active representation each social group receives. For instance, only the election of legislators who claim to represent women – regardless of the legislator's gender – guarantees substantive representation for women.<sup>76</sup>

Descriptive representation is useful, however, in assessing the access to power minority groups enjoy. MPs who share sociological backgrounds with minorities may cause minorities to feel more satisfied with the political process and thus be more likely to contact MPs.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the presence of

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<sup>73</sup> John A. Brand, 'Councillors, Activists, and Electors: Democratic Relationships in Scottish Cities', in Samuel C. Patterson and John C. Wahlke (eds.), *Comparative Legislative Behavior: Frontiers of Research* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), p. 236.

<sup>74</sup> Susan Banducci and Jeffrey Karp, 'Representation Under a Proportional System', in Jack Vowles, Aimer Peter, Susan A. Banducci, and Jeffrey A. Karp, *Voters' Victory? New Zealand's First Election Under Proportional Representation* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998), pp. 135-136.

<sup>75</sup> Heinz Eulau, John C. Wahlke, William Buchanan, and Leroy C. Ferguson, 'The Role of the Representative', p. 747.

<sup>76</sup> Manon Tremblay, 'Do Female MPs Substantively Represent Women? A Study of Legislative Behaviour in Canada's 35<sup>th</sup> Parliament', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 31, No. 3, September 1998, pp. 463-465; Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, 'Redefining Constituency Representation', pp. 87-88.

<sup>77</sup> Jack Vowles and Peter Aimer, 'Political Leadership, Representation and Trust', in Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Susan Banducci, Jeffrey Karp, and Raymond Miller (eds.), *Voters' Veto: The 2002 Election in New Zealand and the Consolidation of Minority Government* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004), p. 169; Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, 'Redefining Constituency Representation', pp. 87-88.

minority MPs increases the likelihood of minorities voting.<sup>78</sup> Thus while parliament ought not to be required to mirror society perfectly, descriptive representation is symbolically important and may provide a pathway to greater substantive representation.

### *Constituency Members*

Within New Zealand, the best-known legislator roles are the extra-parliamentary roles of electorate MPs. MPs representing specific geographic districts are expected to act as advocates for their local area.<sup>79</sup> There is a long tradition of easily-accessible local MPs in New Zealand.<sup>80</sup> Electorate members usually live in or near their constituency and hold regular constituent clinics.<sup>81</sup> MPs assist constituents with concerns primarily related to government departments and services, most commonly housing, immigration, taxation, and schooling.<sup>82</sup>

The time New Zealand MPs allocate to constituency work each week is not known. In 1987, when the first-past-the-post electoral system was used, J. Theodore Anagnoson found that MPs spent an average of 19.5 hours each week on constituency matters.<sup>83</sup> Whether this changed under MMP is not clear. The introduction of MMP saw the size of parliament rise from 99 to 120 members, although only approximately half are electorate MPs. Karp argues that the decrease in the overall number of electorate MPs has increased each electorate member's caseload.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, Vowles

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<sup>78</sup> Susan Banducci, Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp, 'Minority Representation, Empowerment, and Participation', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 66, No. 2, May 2004, p. 539.

<sup>79</sup> Donald Searing terms these roles 'welfare officers' and 'local promoters'. Donald D. Searing, *Westminster's World: Understanding Political Roles* (London: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 124-140.

<sup>80</sup> Helena Catt, 'New Zealand', p. 138.

<sup>81</sup> J. Theodore Anagnoson, 'Does Constituency Work Have an Electoral Impact? The Case of New Zealand MPs', *Political Science*, Vol. 39, No. 2, Dec 1987, p. 109.

<sup>82</sup> Miller, Raymond, *Party Politics in New Zealand*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>83</sup> J. Theodore Anagnoson, 'Home Style in New Zealand', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 2, May 1983, p. 167; J. Theodore Anagnoson, 'Does Constituency Work Have an Electoral Impact?', p. 109.

<sup>84</sup> Jeffrey A. Karp, 'Members of Parliament and Representation', in Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Jeffrey Karp, Susan Banducci, Raymond Miller, and Ann Sullivan (eds.), *Proportional*

and Aimer argue that contacts between MPs and constituents have declined since 1999.<sup>85</sup> Miller suggests that since the introduction of MMP the frequency of meetings with individual constituents has decreased, but the regularity of meetings with community groups has grown.<sup>86</sup>

It is likely that the level of constituency work undertaken varies based on each electorate's characteristics. For instance, lower socio-economic electorates are more likely to require the services of their local MP.<sup>87</sup> Geographically large electorates are less likely to utilise the services of their MP due to physical and time barriers, resulting in less contact in rural areas.<sup>88</sup> There is also evidence that less constituency work occurs in 'safe' seats.<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, the level of constituency activity varies between individual members. New MPs, for instance, tend to prioritise electorate work as they seek to consolidate their local position.<sup>90</sup> Amongst longer-serving MPs, constituency service is greater amongst those who perceive their chances of promotion to be low.<sup>91</sup> Further, younger MPs place greater emphasis on constituency work than their older colleagues, possibly to ensure that their

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*Representation on Trial: The 1999 New Zealand General Election and the Fate of MMP* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002), pp. 141-142.

<sup>85</sup> Jack Vowles and Peter Aimer, 'Political Leadership, Representation and Trust', pp. 169-170.

<sup>86</sup> Raymond Miller, 'Who Stood for Office, and Why?', in Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Susan Banducci, Jeffrey Karp, and Raymond Miller (eds.), *Voters' Veto: The 2002 Election in New Zealand and the Consolidation of Minority Government* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004), p. 100.

<sup>87</sup> Donley T. Studlar and Ian McAllister, 'Constituency Activity and Representational Roles among Australian Legislators', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 58, No. 1, February 1996, p. 77.

<sup>88</sup> J. Theodore Anagnoson, 'Does Constituency Work Have an Electoral Impact?', p. 111.

<sup>89</sup> J. Theodore Anagnoson, 'Does Constituency Work Have an Electoral Impact?', p. 106; Valerie Heitshusen, Garry Young, and David M. Wood, 'Electoral Context and MP Constituency Focus in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 49, No. 1, January 2005, p. 36; Ivor Crewe, 'MPs and the Constituents in Britain: How Strong are the Links?', in Vernon Bogdaner (ed.), *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituents in Western Democracies* (Hants: Grover Publishing Press, 1985), p. 48.

<sup>90</sup> Harold D. Clarke and Richard G. Price, 'Freshman MPs' Job Images', p. 604; James Walter, *The Acculturation to Political Work*, p. 28.

<sup>91</sup> Harold D. Clarke, Richard G. Price, and Robert Krause, 'Constituency Service among Canadian Provincial Legislators: Basic Findings and a Test of Three Hypotheses', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 8, No. 4, December 1975, p. 541.

seat is 'safe' for a long political career.<sup>92</sup> Thus there is no benchmark that all members must meet when it comes to servicing geographic constituencies.

### *List Members*

List seats were introduced in New Zealand with the change to MMP in 1996. List MPs gave parties an opportunity to reconsider members' representational roles. As list members are not directly elected by geographic constituencies, there is greater scope for them to represent demographics or groups that are not necessarily geographically connected. Fiona Barker and Stephen Levine argue that list MPs had an opportunity to:

develop a distinctive parliamentary role, freed from the constraints of constituency service. This new group of MPs could articulate the philosophy of their party; act on behalf of the interests of a particular sector of society; focus exclusively on a particular issue; or seek to exercise their judgement on behalf of the 'national interest'.<sup>93</sup>

They conclude, however, that New Zealand's political parties have largely failed to realise list MPs' potential.<sup>94</sup>

List MPs have developed a reputation in New Zealand as being 'second-class' MPs. Leigh J. Ward argues that list MPs are unfairly perceived by the media, parliamentary colleagues, and the public as illegitimate party 'hacks' who are unqualified to perform their jobs and who perform lesser tasks than electorate MPs.<sup>95</sup> Although it is correct that list MPs are accountable to their parties, to criticise them for this overlooks that electorate MPs are in the same position. Even electorate MPs in safe seats rely on their parties for nomination and re-nomination; therefore they are significantly influenced by

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<sup>92</sup> J. Theodore Anagnoson, 'Does Constituency Work Have an Electoral Impact?', p. 115.

<sup>93</sup> Fiona Barker and Stephen Levine, 'The Individual Parliamentary Member and Institutional Change: The Changing Role of the New Zealand Member of Parliament', in Lawrence D. Longley and Reuven Y. Hazan (eds.), *The Uneasy Relationships Between Parliamentary Members and Leaders* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 2000), p. 112.

<sup>94</sup> Fiona Barker and Stephen Levine, 'The Individual Parliamentary Member and Institutional Change', p. 113.

<sup>95</sup> Leigh J. Ward, "'Second-Class MPs?" New Zealand's Adaptation to Mixed-Member Parliamentary Representation', *Political Science*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Jan 1998, p. 127.

party considerations, although this influence is qualitatively different to that felt by list MPs.<sup>96</sup> Secondly, list and electorate MPs are similar in their qualifications for the job – both have similar levels of education and list MPs are more likely to come from professional backgrounds.<sup>97</sup>

In recommending MMP, the Royal Commission on the Electoral System expected that list MPs would undertake some constituency work.<sup>98</sup> However, in the larger electorate-dominated parties list MPs are largely expected to establish themselves in a constituency and act as though they had won the seat.<sup>99</sup> McLeay and Vowles argue that list MPs have shown a desire to become established at a constituency level in order to be seen as “doing something” that is known and respected as part of the proper function of an MP.<sup>100</sup> One would therefore expect that as MMP becomes more established list MPs will be less dependent on electorate roles as their role becomes more normalised and legitimate. This may already be happening,<sup>101</sup> although this thesis will further test this point by examining the constituency-based roles adopted by first-term list MPs.

Within smaller list-based parties the situation is different. Because small parties seldom win electorate seats there are fewer obligations for their members to establish themselves in constituencies.<sup>102</sup> However, this does not mean that the expectations of small party list members are well-defined. New Zealand is unusual in that small parties do occasionally win electorate seats – a useful safeguard against political oblivion should the party not reach the five percent threshold required to enter parliament.<sup>103</sup> This means

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<sup>96</sup> Leigh J. Ward, “Second-Class MPs?”, p. 139.

<sup>97</sup> Leigh J. Ward, “Second-Class MPs?”, pp. 131-132.

<sup>98</sup> Royal Commission on the Electoral System, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1986), p. 53.

<sup>99</sup> This also occurs to some extent in Germany, which also uses the MMP system. Werner J. Patzelt, ‘What Can an Individual MP Do in German Parliamentary Politics?’, in Lawrence D. Longley and Reuven Y. Hazan (eds.), *The Uneasy Relationships Between Parliamentary Members and Leaders* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 2000), pp. 38-39.

<sup>100</sup> Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, ‘Redefining Constituency Representation’, p. 81.

<sup>101</sup> Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, ‘Redefining Constituency Representation’, p. 82; Raymond Miller, ‘Who Stood for Office, and Why?’, pp. 100-102.

<sup>102</sup> Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, ‘Redefining Constituency Representation’, p. 81.

<sup>103</sup> For instance, ACT’s Rodney Hide currently holds the Epsom seat.

that even for members in list-dominated parties, there may be an expectation that they establish themselves in a constituency as a kind of electoral insurance and to confirm their legitimacy as MPs.

### *Thematic Representation*

Thematic representation is representation of groups that are not necessarily geographically grouped. Representing groups that are not geographically connected is simpler under proportional representation than plurality systems. Because parties develop lists of candidates, extra emphasis is often placed on achieving 'balanced' lists – lists that broadly represents the society at large. Ticket-balancing is a rational strategy employed by parties to ensure that all groups or factions within the party commit to the list and to broaden the party's electoral appeal. Running unbalanced tickets may result in internal disharmony and criticism of biases within parties.<sup>104</sup> When parties run balanced lists, there is a greater chance of a broader cross-section of society being represented in parliament. For instance, women and ethnic minorities are more likely to be elected by means of party lists in proportional systems than they are in single-member constituencies.<sup>105</sup> Likewise, there is a greater chance of youth representation.<sup>106</sup>

All MPs – even those representing geographic constituencies – hold more than one identity. As Eulau et al argue, 'different foci of representation need not be mutually exclusive. They may occur simultaneously, and appropriate role orientations may be held simultaneously.'<sup>107</sup> Thus thematic representation is not the exclusive domain of list MPs; electorate members

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<sup>104</sup> Michael Gallagher, 'Conclusion', in Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh (eds.), *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics* (London: Sage Publications, 1988), p. 253.

<sup>105</sup> Geoffrey Roberts, 'German Federal Republic: The Two-Lane Route to Bonn', in Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh (eds.), *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics* (London: Sage Publications, 1988), p. 109; Elizabeth McLeay, 'The New Parliament', p.213.

<sup>106</sup> Nandor Tanczos, 'Being a Green Candidate', in Jonathan Boston, Stephen Church, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay, and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), *New Zealand Votes: The General Election of 2002* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2003), p. 140.

<sup>107</sup> Heinz Eulau, John C. Wahlke, William Buchanan, and Leroy C. Ferguson, 'The Role of the Representative', p. 745.

may also identify with particular ethnicities, occupations, socio-economic strata, and so on. The identities of legislators may be disparate and appear unrelated. Multiple identifications allow thematic representation to occur across legislatures.

## **Parliamentary Roles**

Within parliament itself legislators are expected to undertake a diverse range of tasks. Some tasks, such as speaking in the House, are public and well-known. Others, like participating in caucus and caucus committees, are conducted behind closed doors. This section discusses the expectations of MPs within parliament.

### *The House*

Speaking in the House is a well-known role. This is not necessarily good, however, as MPs are often criticised for their 'childish' behaviour in the House.<sup>108</sup> How new MPs adapt to the House impacts on how their party and the public perceive them. Wahlke and Eulau argue that the nature of the legislative floor leads to unconsciously irrational behaviour.<sup>109</sup> It is therefore likely that new MPs quickly shed desires to avoid childishness, switching instead to an adversarial approach. Even the influx of new MPs following the first MMP election quickly adopted the adversarial behaviour of New Zealand's parliament.<sup>110</sup> The conflict inherent in parliament makes the transition into legislative roles difficult because it undermines any sense of broad collective identity.<sup>111</sup> MPs have little choice but to create identities

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<sup>108</sup> Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, 'From Lobby Fodder to Leadership', p. 49.

<sup>109</sup> John C. Wahlke and Heinz Eulau, 'The Historical and Institutional Context of Legislative Behavior', in John C. Wahlke and Heinz Eulau (eds.), *Legislative Behavior: A Reader in Theory and Research* (Illinois: The Free Press, 1959), p. 8.

<sup>110</sup> Fiona Barker and Stephen Levine, 'The Individual Parliamentary Member and Institutional Change', p. 116.

<sup>111</sup> Michael M. Atkinson and David C. Docherty, 'Moving Right Along: The Roots of Amateurism in the Canadian House of Commons', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 25, No. 2, June 1992, p. 303.

based around their own party and thus have few opportunities to engage with and understand the perspectives of members opposite.

This highlights the limited relevance of parliamentary debate. Major decisions are not made in the House; they are made by the leaders of political parties and those closest to them. Thus, as Boston et al argue, 'debate in the House is an opportunity for parties to state their views on particular matters which, primarily, the Government is proposing. It is not normally a means of changing members' opinions.'<sup>112</sup> Moreover, although the image of the House is the 'public face' of legislators' roles, parliamentary debate is not how MPs communicate with their constituents. Extra-parliamentary activity is the primary means of MP/constituent interactions.<sup>113</sup> While MPs' performances in the House are important to their parties and to their public image, the substance of the debate is of limited importance.

Despite this, the profile of the House in the minds of citizens means that speaking is essential for MPs to become known to the public. The most important forum for speaking is during Question Time – the hour or so of parliament's daily activity that regularly makes television news bulletins. Asking questions is a skill that members must develop, just as answering questions is a skill that ministers acquire.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, supplementary questions must be adjusted based on answers to earlier questions.

However, backbench MPs are limited in their ability to use this forum. Senior party members – who are aware of the media appeal of Question Time –

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<sup>112</sup> Jonathan Boston, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay, and Nigel S. Roberts, *New Zealand Under MMP: A New Politics?* (Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books, 1996), p. 76.

<sup>113</sup> Peter Gerlich, 'Orientations to Decision-Making in the Vienna City Council', in Samuel C. Patterson and John C. Wahlke (eds.), *Comparative Legislative Behavior: Frontiers of Research* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), pp. 103-104.

<sup>114</sup> Rob Salmond, 'Grabbing Governments by the Throat: Question Time and Leadership in New Zealand's Parliamentary Opposition', *Political Science*, Vol. 56, No. 2, December 2004, p. 80.



closely guard their allocation of questions.<sup>115</sup> This is true of larger opposition parties who wish to present their frontbench as an alternative government, leaving junior members with more mundane opportunities for pre-scripted supplementary questions. Government backbenchers ask 'patsy' questions that highlight the government's successes. Only junior MPs within smaller parties genuinely have scope to use Question Time as they are more likely to hold important spokespersonships than their larger party colleagues.

### *Select Committees*

Select committees are an essential part of considering legislation. Indeed, they are sometimes called the 'engine room' of parliament.<sup>116</sup> Select committees have become even more important in the multi-party MMP environment.<sup>117</sup> For backbench MPs, select committees are perhaps the only forum in which they can assert their own point of view, albeit along their party lines.<sup>118</sup>

Unsurprisingly, most MPs take their select committee responsibilities very seriously. Levine and Roberts constructed a nine-part typology of MPs' select committee roles: leaders, moderators, conciliators, analysts, humorists, journeymen, itinerants, novices, and oddities.<sup>119</sup> While each 'type' of MPs takes a different approach to select committee work, they all treat the committees with respect and reverence. The nature of debate in select committees is therefore quite different to that of the House. There is often an attitude that members are part of the same 'team' and thus partisanship is reduced.<sup>120</sup> Stuart argues that MPs view select committees as a part of the democratic process that is not the 'property' of the government; the open

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<sup>115</sup> Grant Gillon and Raymond Miller, 'Role of an MP', p. 178.

<sup>116</sup> Jonathan Boston, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay, and Nigel S. Roberts, *New Zealand Under MMP*, p. 79.

<sup>117</sup> Raymond Miller, 'Who Stood for Office, and Why?', p. 100.

<sup>118</sup> Grant Gillon and Raymond Miller, 'Role of an MP', p. 176.

<sup>119</sup> Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, 'From Lobby Fodder to Leadership', pp. 45-47.

<sup>120</sup> Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, 'From Lobby Fodder to Leadership', p. 44.

and participatory nature of select committees ensures contribution from all MPs regardless of party.<sup>121</sup>

The committees that MPs serve on play an important role in determining their political future. Before their promotion to cabinet, ministers generally serve on the select committees related to their portfolios. Thus it is important that MPs are appointed to either their areas of speciality or areas they wish to pursue. Each party has different processes regarding committee appointments, but it is usual for MPs to discuss their preferences with the party leadership. Appointment as a select committee chairperson is sometimes considered a precursor to a ministerial position, although even in a small parliament like New Zealand's, not every chairperson can become a minister.<sup>122</sup> Appointment as a committee chairperson can also be a role used by party leaders to placate members who are not deemed suitable for ministerial office.

### *Caucus*

Attending caucus is an important part of MPs' roles, but little is known about how caucuses operate. Parties treat caucus as a 'backroom' environment where members discuss and argue points of policy before coming to an agreed position. Thus in the name of party unity, caucus meetings are conducted away from the public eye.<sup>123</sup>

Although it is an important forum for discussion, in reality the role of the caucus is constrained. Major decisions are generally made by party leaders and their advisors. While caucus provides an opportunity for MPs to be kept informed and to debate the merits of particular approaches, the influence of

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<sup>121</sup> Kathy Louise Stuart, *Emotional Labour and Occupational Identity: Passionate Rationality in the New Zealand Parliamentary Workplace* (Palmerston North: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2008), p. 122.

<sup>122</sup> Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, 'From Lobby Fodder to Leadership', p. 41.

<sup>123</sup> The notable exception is the Green Party, which allows staff to attend caucus.

caucus should not be overstated. Despite this, it would be foolhardy for a party to ignore the views of its caucus lest dissent become public.

Caucus committees act as a branch of the caucus process in the National and Labour parties. When in government, large parties use caucus committees to stay in touch with party opinion. Government committees may be chaired by and largely composed of backbenchers, giving backbenchers opportunities to become involved in policy development. When in opposition, caucus committees draw on the support of parliamentary research units to develop policies.<sup>124</sup> Opposition committees are usually chaired by senior MPs and populated by lower-ranked MPs.

However, caucus committees may be little more than exercises in keeping MPs busy, especially government backbenchers. Barker and Levine argue that committees keep MPs occupied preparing reports while the important decisions are made in cabinet. Thus government backbenchers are 'in a sense associated with power while excluded from its exercise.'<sup>125</sup> Smaller parties generally rely on the extra-parliamentary party to engage in policy development due to the small size of their caucuses.

### *Policy*

The scope for backbench MPs to influence policy is limited. This is particularly true in government when the cabinet determines policy with the benefit of public service advice. However, this does not preclude backbenchers from taking an active interest in policy. Promotion is necessary to truly have influence over policy.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, ambitious

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<sup>124</sup> Richard Mulgan, *Politics in New Zealand*, p. 112.

<sup>125</sup> Fiona Barker and Stephen Levine, 'The Individual Parliamentary Member and Institutional Change', p. 111.

<sup>126</sup> Christopher Tam, 'Demotion and Dissent in the Canadian Liberal Party', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 36, 2006, p. 564.

backbenchers may seek to gain policy knowledge to demonstrate their suitability for higher office.<sup>127</sup>

Developing policy specialities and interests is not necessarily easy for new MPs, who are likely to be allocated select committees related to their pre-parliamentary experience. This allows backbenchers to demonstrate that they are competent in familiar areas, but prevents them from accumulating more diverse skills in new areas. This reinforces assumptions that MPs ought to possess general skills of compromise and negotiation over specialised policy details.<sup>128</sup>

In larger parties, new MPs run the risk of upsetting senior colleagues if they take a greater interest in policy areas than their status permits. Major policy decisions are the realm of party leaders.<sup>129</sup> Backbenchers are expected to focus primarily on constituency work. This is less significant in smaller parties, where backbench MPs are often allocated significant portfolios.<sup>130</sup> Given that the overwhelming majority of electorate seats are won by larger parties, backbenchers from National and Labour are likely to be generalists (regardless of whether they hold a list or constituency seat), while backbenchers from smaller parties are more likely to be specialists.<sup>131</sup> On the other hand, small party MPs may also become generalists due to the significant workloads they are expected to shoulder in the absence of a large caucus.

New MPs may also struggle to develop policy specialities due to their 'amateur' status. Given the complexity of MPs' roles, policy concerns may be sidelined until more basic functions, such as servicing electorates and speaking in the House, are mastered. For amateurs, immediate concerns

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<sup>127</sup> Kenneth Prewitt and William Nowlin, 'Political Ambitions and the Behavior of Incumbent Politicians', p. 301.

<sup>128</sup> William Buchanan, Heinz Eulau, LeRoy C. Ferguson, and John C. Wahlke, 'The Legislator as Specialist', pp. 636-637.

<sup>129</sup> Michael M. Atkinson and Paul G. Thomas, 'Studying the Canadian Parliament', p. 440.

<sup>130</sup> Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, 'Redefining Constituency Representation', p. 86.

<sup>131</sup> Raymond Miller, 'Who Stood for Office, and Why?', p. 102.

outweigh future considerations. Thus planning is limited and MPs may become reactive.<sup>132</sup> However, focusing on matters that are directly observable by the public may be beneficial. Few members of the public have clear policy interests that they measure MPs' performances against.<sup>133</sup> They are more likely to assess MPs on their representative functions, House performances, and media prominence. Thus MPs may choose to focus on these areas.

Having outlined the contributions the existing literature has made to the areas considered by this thesis, attention will now turn to candidate selection in New Zealand.

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<sup>132</sup> Michael M. Atkinson and David C. Docherty, 'Moving Right Along', pp. 299-300.

<sup>133</sup> John Wahlke, 'Policy Demands and System Support: The Role of the Represented', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 1, No. 3, July 1971, pp. 271-273.

Before legislators can exercise power, they must first be elected. In countries with strong political parties, like New Zealand, election is almost impossible without first being selected as a candidate by a political party. This chapter focuses on the selection processes individuals must go through to become candidates. It also considers supply and demand arguments and compares established theories with the experiences of political candidates in the 2008 general election.

For the sake of clarity, *nominees* are individuals who put themselves forward for selection. *Candidates* are successful nominees.

#### Supply and Demand

Candidate selection is often described in terms of supply and demand. As described in chapter two, supply concerns the individuals who put themselves forward for political office, while demand describes the types of individuals political parties seek to recruit. Understanding the *types* of people who stand for office sheds light on their approach to the legislator role and their broader world views. Understanding *who* parties seek to recruit exposes who they wish to appeal to and their intended future direction. There is no guarantee that supply will match demand.<sup>1</sup>

The supply of political candidates is mediated by a degree of self-filtering. Western political parties no longer have large memberships; the rate of party membership has been decreasing in New Zealand since the 1960s.<sup>2</sup> Thus

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<sup>1</sup> Pippa Norris, 'Introduction: Theories of Recruitment', in Pippa Norris (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Jack Vowles, *Civic Engagement in New Zealand: Decline or Demise?*, Inaugural Professorial Lecture (University of Auckland, 13 October 2004), pp. 4-7.

those who join political parties are atypical of the electorate. Moreover, even within political parties only a small proportion of members put themselves forward as nominees, making them even more atypical. Supply is thus limited to a select group of individuals.

Supply limitations are exacerbated by the qualities of the few individuals who put themselves forward for selection. Political power usually accumulates in those who exhibit the values most dominant within a society.<sup>3</sup> Potential candidates who exhibit the qualities most dominant within each party are more likely to put themselves forward for selection than those who diverge from party norms. Thus parties find their supply of potential candidates limited to a relatively homogenous group.<sup>4</sup>

On the demand side, the centralisation of power in New Zealand political parties means candidate selection may be the only time local party members feel that they hold power within their parties. However, where selection is somewhat devolved to local members, the power of the central party to screen nominees before selection and to confirm candidates after local decision-making ensures that candidates are effectively selected centrally.<sup>5</sup> In many cases, selection meetings simply ratify centrally-made decisions.<sup>6</sup>

The preferences and prejudices of the selectorate affect who eventually become MPs. Like nominees, selectors are in some ways atypical. Party members who are active enough to become a delegate, hold a central party office, or vote in a semi-open primary make up a fraction of the population as a whole. Thus the selection of candidates may be controlled and manipulated by a minority of party members.<sup>7</sup> In many cases selectors do not know nominees before selection; selection decisions are often made on the basis of

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<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Prewitt, 'Political Socialization and Leadership Selection', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September 1965, p. 98.

<sup>4</sup> David Boyd, *Party Candidate Selection Procedures and Objectives Under MMP* (University of Auckland: Unpublished MA Thesis, July 1996), p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Gallagher, 'Introduction', p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> David Boyd, *Party Candidate Selection Procedures and Objectives Under MMP*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Rush and Philip Althoff, *An Introduction to Political Sociology* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1971), pp. 149-150.

a CV, a speech or a meet-the-candidates meeting.<sup>8</sup> If nominees know selectors personally, their chances of selection are higher, demonstrating the exclusive nature of candidate selection.<sup>9</sup>

For those who do not know selectors, aspirants are best served to examine the qualities of sitting MPs. By replicating the types of people who have been successful in a legislative career aspiring MPs can make themselves attractive to selectors.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, nominees share many qualities with selectors themselves, proving that like attracts like.<sup>11</sup> While parties make efforts to recruit a diverse range of MPs, candidate selection is an inherently conservative process. Indeed, in some respects, candidate selection is a risk assessment of future potential political leaders.

Candidate selection usually appears to be a peaceful process within political parties. The importance of ticket-balancing, especially within proportional representation systems encourages parties to minimise factional infighting.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the imperative of each faction to gain maximum influence can lead to bitter selection battles. As Simon Sheppard argues, the selection process is 'the place at which future parliamentary caucus factions, and the identity and agenda of future governments, have their beginnings. Accordingly, the struggle between individuals and interests for party nomination is often exhaustive, acrimonious and bitter.'<sup>13</sup>

Factional divisions sometimes lead to compromise. Selectors are often more ideological than the voting public. John Boichel and David Denver argue that

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<sup>8</sup> Helena Catt, 'New Zealand', in Pippa Norris (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 141; Keith Jackson, 'Candidate Selection and the 1978 General Election', in Howard R. Penniman (ed.), *New Zealand and the Polls: The General Election in 1978* (Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Research, 1980), p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment*, p. 140.

<sup>10</sup> Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>11</sup> David Boyd, *Party Candidate Selection Procedures and Objectives Under MMP*, p. 72.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Gallagher, 'Conclusion', in Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh (eds.), *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics* (London: Sage Publications, 1988), p. 277.

<sup>13</sup> Simon Sheppard, 'The Struggle for the Agenda: New Zealand Labour Party Candidate Selections 1987-93', *Political Science*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Jan 1998, p. 199.



selectors are aware of this and select less ideological candidates than they would otherwise prefer to increase their party's chances of success.<sup>14</sup> Where factional fighting exists, the desire to keep the opposing faction's candidates out has the same effect.<sup>15</sup> This may prevent selection of the best candidates.

### **Key Supply and Demand Factors**

Although each MP differs, it is possible to identify key qualities selectors favour amongst nominees. This section addresses how ambition, political socialisation, occupation, ethnicity, and party service were selection factors in the 2008 general election.

For the first time, this section also presents data collected from interviews with the 2008 intake of new MPs. Quotes from MPs, which are italicised and separated from the main body of the text, are used to illustrate particular responses to supply and demand factors.

#### *Ambition*

The ambition of those who aspire to become legislators is both a supply and demand factor, albeit a somewhat intangible one. As set out in the previous chapter, Stanley A. Renshon defines ambition as 'the capacity, desire and ability to invest oneself for the accomplishment of one's immediate and life purposes'.<sup>16</sup> In determining the ambition of nominees, therefore, it is salient to examine how they articulate their goals and their strategies for achievement.

The act of putting oneself forward for selection in itself demonstrates that an individual is ambitious and has a goal that they are pursuing. Stanley A.

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<sup>14</sup> John Bochel and David Denver, 'Candidate Selection in the Labour Party: What the Selectors Seek', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 1983, p. 68.

<sup>15</sup> Keith Jackson, 'Candidate Selection and the 1978 General Election', p. 105.

<sup>16</sup> Stanley A. Renshon, *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1998), p. 186.

Renshon notes that achieving high office “requires an enormous investment of time, energy, and oneself.”<sup>17</sup> Whether goals are inwardly or outwardly focused (that is, for personal gain or public good) is irrelevant as their mere presence and paths towards achievement is sufficient evidence of ambition. Nominees have numerous goals which aid the development of other goals as they are achieved or not achieved. The outward goal of public service also satisfies the inward goal of personal advancement.

The goal of serving the public interest was the most common goal shared by the 2008 intake of MPs. This is unsurprising given normative assumptions about legislators’ roles. Indeed, this declared ambition to serve the public is likely the default answer given by MPs when they are asked about their ambitions. To appear focused on themselves over the public interest would be unseemly for MPs.

With regards to public service, some MPs articulated clear visions of areas of public policy they would like to influence and communities they would like to serve:

*By doing the right things in education we can actually turn around the tail of underachievement in a very, very short space of time – over the next five years. We don’t have to wait generations for Maori to learn and achieve.*

*Why did I do it? Simply because of an increasing concern over the plight of the global ecological system that humanity is creating for itself and for other species.*

On the other hand, some MPs focused on serving the public through ideological or partisan means:

*My goals for being here are around social justice. And it seems to me that a Member of Parliament is really in a position to fulfil some of that promise of social justice and really advocate for change and achieve that.*

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<sup>17</sup> Stanley A. Renshon, *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*, p. 186.

*It's the possibility of contributing to the [party] and everything that the party stands for – all the values and the policies that I have a long-standing commitment to.*

Individual ambitions were also articulated by many MPs. To test levels of personal ambition, MPs were asked in each of the interview rounds about their future possibilities within politics. In their first interviews, 75 percent of MPs said they aspired to become a minister; 74 percent took this position in the second interviews.

Unsurprisingly, given the importance of deferring to party leadership and moderating personal ambition within strong party systems, many MPs couched their personal ambition within higher public service goals:

*My community was really important to me. We'd never had a representative from our side of the House in our community and I saw an opportunity to try and do that.*

*It's a way of – and I know this sounds really cheesy – but it is a way of giving back, it's a way of doing something for the community.*

A smaller group were open about their ambition to progress within politics, citing the need to be in a high position in order to effect change:

*I want to be a decision-maker. I want to be in a position of having the opportunity to make courageous decisions. It used to frustrate me putting ideas out and ministers would go, 'oh, I don't think we can do that'. Well I want to be a minister that says, 'yeah, we can do that'.*

*I think it's important that you aim to be a cabinet minister. Only when you get to that level do you truly have a capacity to influence in a big way. You're subject to the Executive and the Cabinet and a whole range of other checks, but by and large you have the ability to make some very big changes.*

To meet Renshon's definition of ambition, legislators must demonstrate the 'capacity, desire and ability' to achieve their goals.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, MPs were asked about how confident they were about being able to achieve their goals.<sup>19</sup>

MPs were confident about their ability to achieve. Eighty-six percent rated their chances of success as high or medium. Some were forthright about their desirable qualities:

*I think I'm intelligent, I'm hard-working. I think I can speak well, I think I can articulate a vision and I've got a philosophy and I've got a plan for New Zealand.*

*There aren't that many people here with the sort of business background I've got... or the trading background I've got – which means the skills and competencies I've got are in shorter supply – then you say well maybe I've got a better chance of doing that.*

Others who were confident were also realistic about the challenges they faced:

*There are people in our 2008 intake who are going to make fantastic ministers one day. But not everybody's going to do that. I don't think everybody's got their head around that yet.*

*Have you seen the people that I've come into parliament with? I mean it's a very, very talented bunch. It's an incredibly talented bunch; I guess I'm acutely aware of that.*

The few MPs who rated themselves poorly tended to emphasise the changeability of politics and the difficulty in future planning:

*Politics is a tidal thing, there's always gonna be tides coming in and tides going out and at some point the people who are in the hot seat at the moment will move off and do other things.*

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<sup>18</sup> Stanley A. Renshon, *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*, p. 186.

<sup>19</sup> This, of course, puts to one side the effect of overstating ones' own ability. This is undoubtedly common, but as all participants were given the same opportunity to overstate their ability the overall impact should be nil.

*I think there are a whole lot of other factors that come into play in terms of your timing and other people that may be ahead of you on the list.*

Ambition is a supply and demand factor. Those who are ambitious are more likely to put themselves forward for selection as they believe that they have the skills required of successful legislators. Selectors in turn are attracted to nominees who have strong ambition to work within the party to secure desirable goals. Therefore it is unsurprising that a vast majority of MPs expressed strong ambition and rated their chances of success highly.

### *Political Socialisation*

Political socialisation is a supply factor as an active interest in politics is essentially a prerequisite for putting oneself forward for nomination. This sub-section will consider whether political socialisation is also a demand factor.

Seventy-six percent of MPs first elected in 2008 traced their interest in politics to their childhood. It is therefore unsurprising that the family was cited as the primary source of political awareness:

*My earliest memory is of my father listening to parliament.*

*My parents are both very interested and I daresay that's how I developed my interest.*

MPs who were politically socialised as children were equally likely to attribute their political awareness to a specific event or a more general interest. 'Trigger' events are moments when individuals become aware of the importance of the political sphere:

*I was 13 when Norman Kirk died and watched his funeral coverage avidly when most of my friends would have been outside kicking a rugby ball around or doing whatever normal people do. I was just there fascinated.*

*I took my class out on strike because we were being arbitrarily told that we couldn't read 'The Little Red Schoolbook'. I had no idea what was in it – and I still can't remember now, actually – but it offended me in principle that you should be told what you could or couldn't read in democracy like New Zealand.*

Those who became interested in politics via general events identified their interest as an innate quality:

*I was born interested in politics.*

*It was just normal for us, so I don't know how to describe it. You just got involved in what was going on.*

Interestingly, those who identified their families as a key source of political socialisation did not necessarily consider their families to be political. MPs made a clear distinction between families being *interested* and *active* in politics. Amongst those who came from 'non-political' families, politics was followed and discussed within the family:

*Neither of my parents were particularly politically involved, but my father had quite strong political views and so we used to have a lot of political debates.*

*I remember my parents talking about politics at all sorts of intervals, so I was aware of political debate.*

For those who came from activist families, politics was a primary family focus:

*I spent my entire childhood delivering leaflets and being bribed with chocolate to deliver leaflets for the Vietnam War and anti-racism stuff.*

*Politics was there in the family every day... We used to have a tradition where we would have our dinner together... At that stage there were discussions about the whole day: what's happening in business, in politics – whenever there was a hot topic, that used to be discussed.*

Thus the intensity of political activity matters less than the simple existence of some form of political dialogue in the home for the socialisation of children.

Amongst the few MPs (12 percent) who were politically socialised during their adolescence, families played a minor role. For some, specific issues led to the formation of political opinions, demonstrating that 'trigger' events may occur regardless of age:

*As a teenager I was very concerned about French nuclear testing, which was a major political issue in the 70s. I was concerned about nuclear ship visits in the 80s – I protested about them.*

*There was one turning point when I was at high school. A New Zealand Anglican priest who lived in South Africa and was a member of the ANC. He'd had both his hands blown off and he was blind – he'd lost his sight – from a parcel bomb that was sent to him from the South African security forces. This was during the apartheid years. And he came and spoke to a group of students at school. And that really changed my life.*

Others were drawn to politics by general concerns rather than specific events. One MP claimed to have only become interested in politics when they first attended a party meeting:

*I first turned up to a political meeting and was elected Women's Vice Chair for the Southern Region. And I was not active, and I didn't have any real involvement before that.*

Those who were socialised as adolescents cited the desire to 'make a difference' as a motivating factor. This suggests adolescents who become politically interested are influenced more by increasing awareness of the existing political landscape than the broader political goals that develop amongst socialised children. Individuals who are socialised as adolescents are not necessarily ignorant of politics before their socialisation; rather they

have yet to transfer their knowledge, values, and attitudes into a political form.<sup>20</sup>

A small proportion of MPs were politically socialised as adults. This group emphasised that they never aspired to be politicians. Rather than having long-standing ambitions to enter parliament, these MPs became aware of political implications as adults and responded to the opportunity to stand when it arose:

*It's not like I had any grand aspirations, but when the opportunity came along I thought, okay, jump in feet first and start swimming.*

*I realised the effect politics has on people when I was married and I had a house and a business.*

This suggests that those who are socialised as children set parliament as a career goal. The evidence to support this is mixed. Some MPs who were socialised as children found becoming an MP an appealing prospect from a young age:

*When I was four I did tell my mother that I wanted to be in Government when I grew up.*

*From an early age I've loved following parliament, so the opportunity to be in it appealed to me.*

Others did not plan a parliamentary career:

*I didn't have a life-long ambition to be a Member of Parliament – it just kind of all fell into place.*

*I never had been interested in actually coming to parliament, but I always have had an interest in politics.*

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<sup>20</sup> Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan, Leroy Ferguson, and John C. Wahlke, 'The Political Socialization of American State Legislators', p. 196.



A final group located parliament as a potential goal, but not one actively pursued:

*I never woke up one day and thought, 'right, I'm going to aspire to be an MP'. I never had a five year plan to be an MP and in fact I second guess anyone who simply aspires to the position because I think anyone who approaches this job should approach it with a lot of trepidation.*

*I'm very much a belief or philosophy driven type of person. So I might set my agenda according to what I might think is the right thing to do rather than career advancement or anything like that.*

While some MPs who were socialised as children became interested in politics as a potential vocation, others were interested in a more passive manner. Thus being socialised young does not necessarily lead to a greater possibility of children entering politics. A caveat should be added, however. Being a politician is not widely regarded as an admirable job in New Zealand society. Therefore some aspiring children may hide their ambition to conform to social norms. One MP spoke of how she was reluctant to tell people of her desired career, but how her actions were a dead giveaway:

*I told a few people. My sister jokes that she remembers back then [when] there was a politician on the news I'd be like, 'shhhh, shhhh', which I guess isn't particularly normal for that age group.*

It is interesting to note that a number of MPs had been involved in student politics prior to entering parliament. Although participants were not specifically asked about their student politics involvement, 29 percent raised it unprompted. This high rate suggests that for many aspiring legislators student unions may provide opportunities to test their political skills and to get a taste of political life.

Political socialisation is undoubtedly a supply factor as without an interest in politics nominees would not put themselves forward. However, the evidence of socialisation as a demand factor is weak. Given the preponderance of MPs who were politically socialised as children it is tempting to conclude that

selectors desire candidates with a long history of political interest and activity. However, in this case, supply masquerades as demand. Those who were socialised as children have a greater personal stake in politics and thus are more likely to put themselves forward for selection. Selectors can only choose from those presented before them.

### *Occupation*

Some occupations are consistently overrepresented in Western legislatures. Individuals from 'sheltered' occupations – occupations which are flexible in allowing individuals the time to stand for office – are consistently overrepresented. These occupations are primarily 'talking' professions: jobs requiring verbal dexterity, such as law, teaching, journalism, and public service.<sup>21</sup> Thus professional convergence occurs whereby the qualities of particular professions match the qualities desirable in legislators.<sup>22</sup>

High status occupations, therefore, are supply and demand factors. On the supply side, individuals with transferable experience feel confident of success and have more time and flexibility to pursue a nomination. Moreover, MPs' high status ensures that even if they leave one status occupation, their social status will increase as a legislator.<sup>23</sup> On the demand side, selectors are drawn to nominees who exhibit skills that have been successful in other MPs and occupational background and professional success are excellent measures of these qualities.

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<sup>21</sup> Donald R. Matthews, 'Legislative Recruitment and Legislative Careers', p. 551.

<sup>22</sup> Morgens N. Pedersen, 'Lawyers in Politics: The Danish Folketing and United States Legislatures', in Samuel C. Patterson and John C. Wahlke (eds.), *Comparative Legislative Behavior: Frontiers of Research* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), p. 39.

<sup>23</sup> James Walter, *The Acculturation to Political Work: New Members of the Federal Backbench* (Canberra: Australasian Political Studies Association, 1979), p. 42. The social status of MPs in New Zealand is a vexed issue given the widespread distrust of politicians that is demonstrated by news surveys that consistently rank MPs as one of the least trusted professions, along with used car salespeople and journalists. However, the power and influence associated with the job ensures that MPs are considered high-status, even if they are disliked.

Occupational biases are apparent in the 2008 intake of MPs. Managers, lawyers, and professionals were the largest occupational groups entering parliament. Indeed, when compared to the occupational structure of *all* MPs, the proportion of managers and lawyers increased, as did other 'status' occupations such as public servants and diplomats. Some MPs identified the legislative role as an extension of their professional experience:

*I'm a lawyer by background and I have a real interest in the way laws are made and created and written, so I have a natural love of the parliamentary process.*

*I came from the private sector but before that I actually worked in government and so I sort of felt like I've gone in a full circle.*

For many MPs their occupation was a factor that made them confident they could succeed as an MP:

*I've worked in investment banking, I've worked as a lawyer and I've also worked as a business owner. So it's a deep experience both within the public and private sectors.*

*My life outside of parliament brought me here from time-to-time which meant that I interacted with MPs, and I was doing a lot of lobbying and that sort of thing.*

The occupational breakdown of the 2008 intake shows parties value professionals over lower-skilled individuals. For instance, no farmers or service workers entered parliament in 2008.<sup>24</sup> This confirms the increasing professionalisation of legislatures. Until recently, being a legislator was

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<sup>24</sup> The absence of farmers may be explained by the National Party's success. National traditionally performs well in rural areas, to the extent that Federated Farmers is humorously referred to as 'the National Party in gumboots'. However, in 2008 few rural seats were available for new National candidates. Of the 15 new National MPs, only three stood in electorates that had a higher proportion of electors in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors than New Zealand as a whole. Thus it is logical that in a year where the National Party was especially successful in urban areas the number of farmers entering parliament should be reduced.

considered a part-time occupation.<sup>25</sup> As recently as 1983 the support available to New Zealand MPs indicated that the vocation was semi-professional.<sup>26</sup> Professionalisation of politics has resulted in MPs whose ultimate career ambition is to *become* and *remain* legislators for as long as possible. Thus the lead-up to becoming an MP may be a dress rehearsal:

*I've been quite deliberate in designing my career in working in quite a different range of industries 'cause I thought that might be beneficial when I got here in terms of understanding a whole range of different issues and having a broad approach on a range of portfolios.*

*I have a sense of how the state sector works, how policies are formed, how governments work. I've been involved at the periphery for a long time.*

Occupational background is also a supply factor when considering MPs' quality of life. While MPs earn notably more than the average wage, the professions from which MPs are frequently recruited offer a greater rate of remuneration.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the hours worked by MPs are significant. Therefore a reduction of income in return for more work is a reality for many MPs. However, this was offset by enjoyment of the job and a sense of public service:

*I'm working way longer hours than I used to work as a lawyer and getting paid considerably less to do it. It isn't something that you do for any other reason except a slightly altruistic reason. But to me the trade-off was more about the fact that I enjoy it more, so it's worth the fall in money.*

*I'm a self-employed businessman. I'm independently wealthy. I don't say that in an aggressive sense – I'm not super, super wealthy, but I didn't go out to work for a salary.*

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<sup>25</sup> See James David Barber, *The Lawmakers: Recruitment and Adaptation to Legislative Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965) for an excellent account of the semi-professional legislative role in the United States shortly before professionalisation occurred.

<sup>26</sup> For instance, many MPs' wives were expected to carry out administrative tasks, including taking phone calls at home on behalf of the MP. See J. Theodore Anagnoson, 'Home Style in New Zealand', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 2, May 1983, pp. 157-175.

<sup>27</sup> The base salary of backbench MPs is \$131,000, plus \$14,800 in expense allowances. <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/MPP/MPs/Pay/9/b/0/00FinanMPPSalary1-MPs-salary-and-allowances.htm>, accessed 23 September 2009.

The presence of professional politicians is also a demand factor as selectors must understand the ambitions of nominees and determine whether they are the kinds of MPs they wish to represent the party for years to come. Whereas in the past the semi-professional nature of the role made it transitory, professional politics reduces the ability of parties to renew ranks. Thus in proportional representation systems the ability of parties to give low rankings is a powerful tool in encouraging MPs to consider their futures.<sup>28</sup>

### *Women*

Women have long been underrepresented in Western legislatures. Although this is changing over time, women are usually the primary caregivers within families. A career that interferes with this role may be rejected.<sup>29</sup> Thus traditional gender roles may prevent women from putting themselves forward for selection until their children are old enough to care for themselves.

Family considerations were important amongst the female MPs elected in 2008. The primary family concern female MPs had was the impact their absence would have on their children:

*The kids were a little nervous about what it would mean and whether they would see me. And it has been hard on them and they make a huge sacrifice in that respect.*

*I guess [my son's] kind of split. In some ways he likes it. Whenever we go somewhere he'll be the person cheering the most for me. But also on the other side things are difficult because he doesn't see as much of me.*

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<sup>28</sup> Jack Vowles, Jeffrey Karp, Susan Banducci, Peter Aimer, and Raymond Miller, 'Reviewing MMP', in Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Jeffrey Karp, Susan Banducci, Raymond Miller, and Ann Sullivan (eds.), *Proportional Representation on Trial: The 1999 New Zealand General Election and the Fate of MMP* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002), p. 182.

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth McLeay, 'The New Parliament', in Jonathan Boston, Stephen Church, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay, and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), *Left Turn: The New Zealand General Election of 1999* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2000), p. 215.

However, while female MPs noted their family considerations, none viewed their role as entirely – or even primarily – negative in terms of the effect it had on their children:

*They get exposed to different experiences and different knowledge. I mean, I heard my nine year-old explaining to her classmate how the list system works. Not many nine year-olds know that! Not many adults know that!*

*It's not been a surprise. I think it's an adjustment, but probably not as big as what some people would have thought it would be.*

Family considerations are also an important demand consideration as selectors may invoke 'traditional family values' as a reason – explicitly or implicitly – to reject female nominees. One MP who unsuccessfully sought a nomination in 2005 cited her family situation as a reason for her previous failure to be nominated:

*I had young children, and they're still young, but I think that having a one year-old, for some people they just couldn't cope with that.*

This reinforces the research of Mark Unsworth, who examined voters' attitudes towards female candidates in New Zealand in 1980. Unsworth found that, overall, voters disapproved of women with young children entering politics.<sup>30</sup> Now, three decades later, it appears that selectors share the same sexist attitudes towards mothers in parliament.

On the other hand, gender stereotypes can be beneficial to women if parties wish to portray themselves as more 'caring' or 'honest'.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, as gender balance has become more important, parties have become much

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<sup>30</sup> Robert Mark Unsworth, *Women as Parliamentary Candidates: An Asset or Liability?* (University of Canterbury: Unpublished MA Thesis, 1980), p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment*, p. 134.

more aware of the benefits of recruiting women into their ranks and reflecting the broader electorate.<sup>32</sup>

Forty-four percent of the female MPs believed that gender was a positive factor in their selection. However, for these MPs gender was not a determining factor on its own; rather it was just one of a range of factors that appealed to selectors:

*I think it was that I was young, I think that they could see that I was passionate about it, that I am a woman, that I am a lawyer, that I knew the system – the parliamentary system – and knew how to make myself heard.*

*[My party] was looking for youth. I'm 31 so in the scheme of things, I guess in politics that's youth. We needed more women. I'm a woman.*

While agreeing that her gender was advantageous for her party to achieve a gender balance, one MP noted that it was a disadvantage in achieving a high list placing:

*I did feel resentful about some of the men who got higher than me on the list in the second round of the candidate selection because I didn't think they were competent.*

Gender is a supply and demand factor as women are less likely to put themselves forward and selectors are less likely to pick women who try for selection. While the proportion of women in New Zealand's parliament has increased under MMP, women remain descriptively and substantively under-represented.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> A good example of this is the recent efforts within the National Party to recruit women to achieve better gender balance and therefore appeal to a broader range of female voters. See Elizabeth McLeay, 'Representation, Selection, Election: The 2002 Parliament', in Jonathan Boston, Stephen Church, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay, and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), *New Zealand Votes: The General Election of 2002* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2003), pp. 300-301 for comments on National's previous inability to successfully recruit women and Maori.

<sup>33</sup> Descriptive representation is a quantitative measure that refers to the presence of a particular group in a legislature that is equal to the proportions of that group in wider society. Substantive representation, measures the level of active representation each social

## *Ethnic Minorities*

Ethnic minorities, including Maori, have traditionally been hugely under-represented in parliament. The under-representation of indigenous peoples is largely caused by their lower socio-economic status and resulting disenfranchisement. New Zealand has addressed the problem of ensuring Maori representation through the use of Maori electorate seats since 1867, although descriptive representation approximately aligned with the proportion of the population who identifies as Maori was not achieved until MMP was adopted in 1996.<sup>34</sup> Sixteen percent of the current parliament identify as Maori, compared with 18 percent of the general population.<sup>35</sup>

Representation of non-indigenous ethnic minorities has been a more recent occurrence in New Zealand. One Pacifica MP was elected in 1993, increasing to five by 2008. The first Asian MP was elected in 1996, rising to six in 2008. Thus Pacific MPs comprise four percent of Parliament versus seven percent of the New Zealand population, while Asian MPs make up five percent of parliament versus nine percent of the population.<sup>36</sup> While representation of ethnic minorities has increased in recent years, a level of descriptive representation commensurate with overall population has not been achieved, revealing the selectorate's reluctance to respond to demographic changes.

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group receives. See Manon Tremblay, 'Do Female MPs Substantively Represent Women? A Study of Legislative Behaviour in Canada's 35<sup>th</sup> Parliament', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 31, No. 3, September 1998, p. 463; and Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, 'Redefining Constituency Representation: The Roles of New Zealand MPs Under MMP', *Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, March 2007, pp. 87-88.

<sup>34</sup> Parliamentary Library, *Final Results 2002 Election and Trends in Election Outcomes 1990-2002* (Wellington: Parliamentary Library, August 2002), p. 3. Also see Susan Banducci, Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp, 'Minority Representation, Empowerment, and Participation', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 66, No. 2, May 2004, pp. 534-556 for a comparative analysis of ethnic minority representation in New Zealand and the United States.

<sup>35</sup> Parliamentary Library, *Final Results of the 2008 General Election* (Wellington: Parliamentary Library, December 2008), p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> Parliamentary Library, *Final Results of the 2008 General Election*, p. 9.



Of the new MPs who self-identified as Maori, only 40 percent cited their ethnicity as a significant factor in their decision to stand or their attractiveness to selectors. For these MPs, their Maori ethnicity made up a significant part of their identity and their goals within parliament:

*What I really want to do is make life easier for our people, to make sure that we don't have the discrimination that we're currently experiencing.*

Amongst the other Maori MPs, ethnicity was only one part of their decision to stand and their appeal to selectors. One MP recounted how she had previously been asked to stand based on her ethnicity and gender:

*He said, 'you're bright, brown, and double-breasted' [laughs]. And I'm not offended by that unless people think it's only because you're Maori or only because you're a woman. To me those are 'add values' to me having substance beyond that. I'd be offended if the only reason I was selected was because I ticked an ethnicity box.*

Ethnicity was unanimously identified as a selection factor for all MPs from other ethnic backgrounds.<sup>37</sup> Eighty percent claimed their ethnicity made them attractive for demonstrating diversity:

*In my past seven or eight years' experience and discussions with my community I realised that there was representation but not from someone who was from the community and understands all the psychology... Everyone felt that there should be someone from the [ethnic] communities.*

For the remaining 20 percent, ethnicity was a disadvantage due to difficulties dealing with the cultural dimensions of the selection process and gaining the support of their own disparate ethnic community:

*You need to present yourself to them to tell them how good you are and then you need to convince your own community again to give you a clear mandate... For the majority community members*

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<sup>37</sup> This includes MPs from Asia and the Pacific.

*– i.e. Pakeha or even Maori – things may be relatively easier, simply because you guys know the games.*

As with Maori MPs, parliamentarians from other ethnic minorities saw their ethnicity as only one factor in their selection. Thus, they felt they possessed multiple political identities:

*When you think about minorities – whether it's [National MP] Melissa Lee and Korean people [or] the Maori MPs – there's always that capture. But I temper those comments by saying these are the people that voted me in, this is the party that I represent, these are the people that live in the electorate that I represent, these are also the people that I share a lot with.*

No ethnic minority MPs believed they had faced significant discrimination on their path to parliament. However, to suggest ethnicity is not a barrier to entering parliament is incorrect – it is important to remember the participants in this study were successful in becoming MPs. One can argue, however, that selectors a) actively recruit ethnic minority candidates, or b) consider ethnicity secondary to other positive attributes. Although selection preferences vary between parties, it is likely that actively recruiting ethnic minorities is the preferred option in many cases. Thus the low descriptive representation of ethnic minorities may be a supply rather than demand issue.

### *Party Loyalty*

Typically, in strong party systems individuals with a long history of party service are more likely to be selected as candidates than those whose membership is brief. Long service allows candidates to prove their commitment to their party's values.<sup>38</sup> Norms about the value of party loyalty and partisanship in parliamentary systems are also passed to potential legislators over the course of party activity. Moreover, party service allows members to access current and former MPs, who are important sources of

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<sup>38</sup> David Boyd, *Party Candidate Selection Procedures and Objectives Under MMP*, p. 23.

knowledge and advice.<sup>39</sup> Thus party service is a supply and demand factor and minimises risk on the demand side.

The extent to which long service is important in New Zealand is debatable. David Boyd argues that the National and Labour parties demand long service as a criterion for selection.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, Helena Catt argues that New Zealand parties fast-track individuals with 'MP potential', an approach facilitated by MMP.<sup>41</sup> Small parties complicate the issue as their newness means that party experience is less important.<sup>42</sup> Minor parties also have smaller party organisations, robbing candidates of the opportunity to become deeply involved in the party. Instead, smaller parties value demonstrated commitment to their party's 'cause'.<sup>43</sup>

The 2008 intake of MPs does not entirely conform to the expectations of party service. Table 3.1 shows the average length of party service by party.

Most striking is the variation between National and Labour MPs. If the existing literature is correct, one would expect both parties to require approximately the same length of service. However, National prefers an average of almost twice the length of service expected of Labour MPs.

This can be explained by the fact that 2008 saw National form a government after nine years in opposition. When asked about the factors they considered when deciding to stand for parliament, National MPs were twice as likely as Labour MPs to cite general dissatisfaction with the country's direction:

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<sup>39</sup> Harold D. Clarke and Richard G. Price, 'A Note on the Pre-Nomination Role Socialization of Freshmen Members of Parliament', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 10, No. 2, June 1977, pp. 394-395.

<sup>40</sup> David Boyd, *Party Candidate Selection Procedures and Objectives Under MMP*, p. 23.

<sup>41</sup> Helena Catt, 'New Zealand', p. 151.

<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth McLeay, 'Representation, Selection, Election: The 2002 Parliament', p. 293; Raymond Miller, 'Who Stood for Office, and Why?', in Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Susan Banducci, Jeffrey Karp, and Raymond Miller (eds.), *Voters' Veto: The 2002 Election in New Zealand and the Consolidation of Minority Government* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004), p. 85.

<sup>43</sup> Raymond Miller, 'Who Stood for Office, and Why?', p. 92; Ariadne Vromen and Ankia Gauja, 'Protesters, Parliamentarians, Policymakers: The Experiences of Australian Green MPs', *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2009, p. 91.

*I looked at the country we were living in and thought that we weren't heading in the direction we should be.*

*I joined the party in, I think it was 2002, just because I didn't like the way the country was going.*

Thus National MPs were likely to have joined the party over the course of the Labour Government as a remedy to their dissatisfaction.

**Table 3.1 – Average Length of Party Membership amongst the 2008 Intake by Party**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Average Length of Membership (years)</b>
<b>National</b>	10.2
<b>Labour</b>	5.6
<b>Green</b>	4.7
<b>ACT</b>	6.0
<b>Maori</b>	0
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.3</b>

On the other hand, Labour MPs were more likely to have been asked to stand by their party or one of its MPs:

*I'd been told for a number of years that I'd make a good politician and that politics was my next step, but I actually hadn't seriously considered it until I was approached.*

*The [incumbent] MP decided quite late in the process to stand down. So I then I was approached to stand.*

Thus to renew, Labour reached out to individuals who did not have strong links with the party.

Unfortunately, the sample size of minor party MPs is too small to make reliable conclusions about party service. However, one cautious observation

can be made. Green MPs had considerable experience working or volunteering within organisations aligned with their party's core philosophies. The Greens emphasise community involvement, meaning that this service – or activism – may act as a surrogate for party membership.

### *Community and Volunteer Experience*

In order to connect with communities, parties may select candidates who are well-known for their community and volunteer experience. Catt argues that individuals who have been involved with community groups are more likely to become candidates.<sup>44</sup> This may be a supply and demand factor, as parties recruit individuals with proven community experience and individuals with community connections hold the political capital required to successfully seek candidacy.<sup>45</sup>

The 2008 intake named an average of 1.2 community or volunteer organisations that they had been involved with. The groups covered a diverse range of areas: family, gender, education, religion, sexuality, the environment, the Treaty of Waitangi, and so on. The most common community groups, however, were those dedicated to health and political causes.

Experience in community health is somewhat unexpected, but may be due to the prominence of particular health-related causes, such as breast cancer and HIV/AIDS. Political causes, on the other hand, are entirely predictable given the MPs' choice of vocation. It was interesting, however, that MPs considered their political parties to be community groups:

*I've found with running a business, [completing] my MBA, my family, and a heavy involvement with the party, that the party was my community development.*

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<sup>44</sup> Helena Catt, 'New Zealand', p. 151-153.

<sup>45</sup> Pippa Norris, 'Introduction', p. 13.

*Most of my local work was through the local party. I also got involved in [the party's youth wing], for instance, and was Vice President of that for a while.*

Of course, political parties have a community focus. However, they are notably different to other community groups in that their primary aims are self-interested – political parties seek to exercise political power in parliament. While many other community groups also advance political goals, they aim to *influence* – rather than *become* – decision-makers.

Small party MPs had more community experience than large party MPs, confirming the observation that a dedication to their party's causes may replace the traditional requirement of party service. Green Party MPs had significantly more community experience than other MPs, with an average of 2.6 groups reported, versus an average of only 0.8 for all other parties. This reinforces the 'grassroots' nature of green politics.

Also significant was the tendency for electorate MPs (1.5) to have greater community experience than list MPs (1.1). This confirms the primacy of a community focus amongst electorate MPs. It is also likely that community experience makes gaining an electorate seat nomination simpler on account of being known and trusted in the community. Thus gaining community experience before seeking nomination is an important strategy for aspiring electorate MPs.

### **Perceptions of the Candidate Selection Process**

Every nominee has different experiences of the selection process. For some, competing for selection is excellent preparation for the campaign-proper. For others, it may be a gruelling experience. This subsection considers how MPs regarded their candidate selection experiences.

Generally, candidate selection was a positive experience for a majority of MPs, with 71 percent of responses describing the process favourably. As one MP noted:

*Each step has been such an opportunity for personal growth where if I'd fallen away at any of the steps then I could have said, 'this has actually been a really good opportunity, I've really grown as a result of this.'*

This positive attitude is hardly surprising given that the MPs interviewed were individuals who were *successful* in gaining their party's nomination (and ultimately being elected). Unsuccessful nominees may take a more negative view of the candidate selection process.

The challenges of being selected as a candidate are not dissimilar to the challenges of running in an election. Unsurprisingly, then, candidate selection was viewed as good training for the campaign-proper and becoming an MP:

*The process of getting selected and then elected is quite a natural entrée in terms of local politics – getting round meeting people, building your network, getting out and about, being seen, finding out about the community. So that's all groundwork for being the MP.*

*It prepares you for the campaign and it's also really important in terms of understanding more about what the job is, and that's part of going into it with your eyes wide open.*

Amongst those who had a generally negative perception of the selection process the stress of having to compete for something they wanted so badly was the main reason for their negative outlook:

*The closer you get the more you want it and the more stressful it becomes, the more you live and breathe it... For the whole time I felt like my chest was constricted. I couldn't eat much, I couldn't sleep much. It's just that I wanted it so much.*

*It's a testing, vigorous process in [the party], particularly when you're going for a seat that is viewed as a highly winnable seat... You have to lobby the delegates very hard – it's a popularity contest, at the end of the day. It's a stressful, time-consuming, draining process.*

Thus negative perceptions were not due to candidate selection, *per se*. When high ambition mixes with uncertainty it is hardly surprising nominees found the process stressful.

### *Candidate Selection and 'Types' of MPs and Party Size*

As New Zealand has two types of MPs – electorate and list – how each individual MP experiences candidate selection depends on whether they stood in an electorate, on their party list, or both, and whether they expected to enter parliament as an electorate or list MP. For example, a list MP who expected to win an electorate may have a more negative view of their selection than an MP who unexpectedly won an electorate.

In New Zealand, the large parties more-or-less retain a stranglehold on electorate seats, with the notable exception of the Maori Party's success in the Maori seats.<sup>46</sup> Thus one would expect large party MPs to place greater emphasis on being selected in electorates than they do on their party list ranking, while small party MPs would prioritise the list over electorate selections.

For many large party MPs, winning an electorate was crucial to confirming their legitimacy; the list was a secondary – and less desirable – method of entry:

*It was always very clear to me from the moment that I got that [electorate seat] nomination that I would be done no favours on*

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<sup>46</sup> The Maori Party depends on the Maori seats to enter parliament due to its high popularity in these seats and low overall party vote. The ACT, United Future, and the Progressive party leaders also currently hold electorate seats which they use as safeguards against the five percent threshold necessary to enter parliament under the MMP electoral system.



*the list. And that was fine with me because that's how I wanted to get in.*

*I guess I'm old-fashioned. If I didn't win my seat I'd take a list MP position no problem at all, but fundamentally I want to be there because my electorate has chosen me to represent them.*

Small party MPs framed their selection around the qualities important to selectors and their ability to make a specific contribution to a small caucus:

*I think I impressed electorates and branches around the country. One of the things that I focused on was, 'well, we need to be more strategically inclined and more focused in the way that our parliamentary team works'.*

*Without wishing to be unkind to backbench National MPs – or let's be more specific, new National backbench MPs – the amount of potential difference I can make as opposed to them is much greater. And I'm very lucky to be in that position.*

MPs from small parties invariably had positive opinions about the candidate selection process. On the other hand, only 67 percent of large party MPs felt positive about their selection. It is therefore important to consider why the process was more agreeable in small parties.

The majority of large party candidates contested electorate seats.<sup>47</sup> Nominations for these seats were contested in 82 percent of cases, making candidate selection a high-stakes competition:

*It was a bit gruelling. There were three candidates... There were 60 people you had to convince that you were the right candidate, you were the best candidate, and you were the candidate that had the ability to win this electorate.*

*There were 30 delegates – 10 of whom you had to persuade to nominate you. When I found out that the other candidate was going round slagging me [laughs] I then got into super-competitive mode and I persuaded 21 of the 30 to nominate me,*

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<sup>47</sup> National and Labour each allow only five candidates to stand exclusively on the list. All other candidates are expected to stand in an electorate.

*which meant that there were only nine left, which meant that he was short of one to get to the bar. So he and I had to meet and I agreed to give him one.*

Small party MPs also stood in electorates, but National and Labour's virtual stranglehold on these seats meant small party candidates were released from the pressure of achieving a credible result in an electorate. Indeed, in many cases the party had to ask them to stand:

*It was a little bit of a soft push in the back to stand in the [electorate] but once I had decided to stand then it's only for the experience itself.*

*I was asked to stand in [electorate] – they just simply needed somebody to run.*

With regards to list selection, small party MPs were more relaxed about the ranking of candidates than large party MPs. Despite the party list generally being a less desirable means of entry to parliament for large party candidates, those standing in 'unwinnable' constituencies must fight for a winnable list position:

*Each spot on the list comes up and you nominate for it and then there's a vote. And you win or lose – it's completely out in the open. Everybody can see it. It's brutally competitive. And for a lot of people it's a very bruising and even crushing process.*

*I got told if I didn't get in this election, I might get in mid-term – that's the way the list-ranking things work. And then, there were three or four people ahead of me in terms of list ranking that they thought they would never win a seat ever, and they thought I will win a seat eventually.*

Small party MPs, on the other hand, had no expectation of winning electorate seats and therefore could direct their full attention to the list ranking process. This is competitive, but small party MPs felt comfortable to leave the decision in the hands of members; list ranking was approached with a degree of resignation:

*You have to acknowledge that you're going to be ranked and that's just what happens.*

*When [the list was released] they said that 'you're going to be the cliff-hanger'. And that was it, they were dead right... I am the most fragile, greenest, weakest MP you'll ever have anything to do with.*

Thus where large party MPs faced stress and competition, small party MPs embraced the will of the party. While the small party approach appears more desirable, there is little large parties can do to reduce the stress of their selections. The imperative for large parties to win electorates ensures that competition is fierce in winnable seats. It is the large parties that form governments, meaning that the stakes are arguably higher for their candidates, which may lead to less enjoyable candidate selections. Moreover, election by way of the party list will be the less desirable option as long as list MPs are perceived as less legitimate than electorate MPs.<sup>48</sup> Thus small party MPs will have more enjoyable selection experiences for the foreseeable future.

## **Temperament**

Before moving on to discuss legislator roles, it is salient to pause and consider the temperaments typical of political candidates. Temperament is an elusive quality that describes *how* individuals act, transcending the *what* or *why* of behaviour.<sup>49</sup> Examining candidates' temperaments allows a greater understanding of how legislators behave and therefore builds a broader framework with which to analyse political behaviour.

MPs were asked to describe their temperament in order to gauge how they approach their work and other aspects of their life.<sup>50</sup> Unsurprisingly, given how difficult temperament is to define, answers were diffuse and were often

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<sup>48</sup> The perceived illegitimacy of list MPs is examined extensively in chapters four and five.

<sup>49</sup> Jan Strelau, *Temperament: A Psychological Perspective* (New York: Plenum Press, 1998), p. 31.

<sup>50</sup> It is extremely important to highlight once again that this study relies on self-reported data. Therefore, results in areas such as temperament should be treated with caution as they rely on the self-insight and honesty of participants, neither of which can be guaranteed.

descriptions of personality. Therefore, responses were grouped into four categories: internal composure, relatedness, character, and internal response.

*Internal composure* measured whether MPs took a calm approach to their tasks or whether they were easily frustrated or agitated. Sixty-one percent of MPs were self-reported as primarily stable in their internal composure. Indeed, the single most common term used by MPs to describe their temperament was ‘calm’, followed closely by ‘easy-going’ and ‘even’. Women and electorate MPs had a more stable internal composure than other MPs:

*I do get stressed occasionally but I would say that I'm a reasonably easy-going character. Sometimes I feel the pressure of being overloaded and that can make me stressed... I think you have to be fairly easy-going in this job.*

*Pretty balanced, I suppose. Every now and again if something really pisses me off then I'll sort of flare up and it dies within about 10 minutes. But you have to be pretty calm.*

The 39 percent of MPs who had an agitated internal composure viewed their volatility as necessary to make progress:

*I tend to be impatient... I get irritated if things unnecessarily get in the way of doing things.*

*I know the direction I want the country to be going in, so I will fight against anything that I think is the wrong way.*

*Relatedness* was measured using Renshon's model of individuals' tendency to move either toward, away from, or against other people. Individuals who move towards people achieve psychological benefits from being close to others; those who move away see other needs as more important than

relationships; and those who move against others want contact but their methods ensure distance, not friendship.<sup>51</sup>

In the 2008 intake, 56 percent of MPs primarily moved towards others, 33 percent moved away from others, and 11 percent moved against others. Electorate MPs were more likely to move towards others than list MPs – perhaps an indication of the importance of engaging with electorates. Men and women were equally likely to move towards others, but women were significantly more likely to move away from others, whereas men moved against others.

Amongst those who moved towards others, being personable was a necessary and enjoyable aspect of their role:

*You're constantly mixing with people all the time. If you can't relate comfortably with people from a wide range of ages and interests and background, then you're going to struggle in the job.*

*I'm a grafter; I like to do the hard work. I need to understand what the issues are. I like communicating with people.*

MPs who moved away from others stressed the primacy of the task at hand over relationships:

*You can say, 'there's a great injustice here' and jump up and down or you can actually study it and think, 'how do we get out of it what I need through planning and hard work and a bit of intelligence and so on?'*

*[I'm] occasionally grumpy, usually out of impatience to get things done and moving faster than the people around me.*

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<sup>51</sup> Stanley A. Renshon, *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*, p. 193. Renshon built on the work of Karen Horney in assessing relatedness. See Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York: Norton, 1937). See also Jon Johansson, *Two Titans: Muldoon, Lange and Leadership* (Wellington: Dunmore Press, 2005), pp. 106-109 for an assessment of the connection between ambition and relatedness.

The small group of MPs who moved against others identified themselves as independently-minded, but this led to a distance between themselves and others:

*I'm a very plain-spoken person. I will tend to call a spade a fucking shovel rather than a digging implement. I use the 'f' word quite deliberately. The traditional formulation of that is 'he tends to call a spade a bloody shovel'. Well, I would tend to call it a fucking shovel.*

There was no indication from MPs that one characteristic was preferable to another. Even MPs who moved against others – the most isolating of the three categories – were content with this position. This suggests relatedness is an innate trait that individuals are unable to easily change, meaning they are comfortable with whatever method they use to relate to people. Alternatively, MPs may lack the self-insight to modify their maladaptive behaviour.

According to Renshon, *character* shapes beliefs, information processing, and styles of behaviour. Character is 'pervasive not only across time and circumstance, but *also across personality itself*'.<sup>52</sup> Character, therefore, is the underlying superstructure on which personality develops. It is an especially important element for political actors given the high importance of beliefs in their profession. Character was classed as secure or insecure based on how clearly MPs were able to articulate their beliefs and reconcile them with their behaviour.<sup>53</sup>

The 2008 intake were remarkably secure in their character, with 73 percent being self-classified as secure. Men were more secure in their character, although this could be an effect of gendered language, with men speaking in more authoritative terms. Those who were secure expressed confidence in their beliefs and were able to articulate them in a consistent manner:

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<sup>52</sup> Stanley A. Renshon, *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*, p. 184.

<sup>53</sup> Renshon termed this 'character integrity'. Stanley A. Renshon, *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*, pp. 188-194.

*I wanted to name the issues of racism, the issues around disability discrimination, and the issues of loss of power to the feminist movement. I've got some things to say and I'm good at talking, so why shouldn't I?*

*I'm pretty opinionated. I'm certainly not short of something to say most of the time – I'm not shy when expressing my opinions... I think I can get along with most people in a situation but they certainly know where I stand on things.*

On the other hand, those who demonstrated character insecurity were unable to express their beliefs in a manner that retained fidelity to them:

*I'm an idealist and pragmatist at the same time... I will always aim for something that I think is probably quite an idealised outcome in a political sense but will be pragmatic about whether or not we can reach it.*

It is unsurprising MPs should be so secure in their character. Standing for parliament requires strong beliefs. Character security (or rigidity) increases with age; MPs who were insecure in their character were on average 10 years younger than the 2008 intake as a whole. Thus character, including its flaws, is built upon with life experiences.

Finally, *internal response* measured whether MPs were primarily rational or emotional in their approaches to situations. This information was based on how MPs described their approach to life, for instance, 'logical' versus 'compassionate'. Internal responses offer an understanding of how MPs think about problems and the considerations behind their actions.

The 2008 intake was split in terms of internal response, with half being rational and half being emotional. True to form, those with rational internal responses gave concise descriptions of their thought patterns:

*I have a fairly low emotional metabolism that is akin to Buddhist detachment. There's usually a level of underlying logical analysis that's going on fairly dispassionately.*

*I'm a rational lawyer turned MP. That's how I describe myself.*

Amongst emotional MPs, passionate responses were primary means of mobilisation to advocate for their beliefs:

*I have a burning sense of justice, really. So I do get angry, I do get wound up by things that offend my sense of justice.*

*This is a hard word to use because it's so overused these days... I'm very passionate, so I take on ideas and I try to see them through to the end.*

Interestingly, the divide between rationality and emotion was most significant along gender lines. Sixty-three percent of men were rational versus only 25 percent of women. This suggests that legislatures are masculine institutions in which rationality is considered superior to emotion.<sup>54</sup> Electorate MPs were more emotional than list MPs, likely due to the empathetic nature of the electorate role and the more specialised policy role of list MPs.<sup>55</sup>

In combining the four temperamental factors, MPs elected in 2008 were stable in their internal composure, moved towards others, secure in their character, and rational if men or emotional if women. These are positive qualities. Being stable and well-rounded is important for candidate selection, both from the supply and demand side. It should be remembered, however, that temperament is just one factor in how successful an MP will be.

### **Candidate Selection and Community Leadership**

This chapter has somewhat confirmed the importance of community leadership amongst legislative aspirants. Certainly, the fact that most new

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<sup>54</sup> Kathy Louise Stuart, *Emotional Labour and Occupational Identity*, p. 142.

<sup>55</sup> When MMP was adopted it was assumed that parties would use the list to recruit MPs who had specific policy knowledge but would be unable to win an electorate seat. See Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, 'Redefining Constituency Representation', p. 86. This will be explored further in chapter five.



MPs have some experience volunteering for community organisations shows that parties are enthusiastic about candidates with pre-existing community ties. Moreover, the typical temperament of MPs suggests that selectors – quite reasonably – choose candidates who are well-placed to develop relationships with a range of groups and individuals. This suggests that political candidates are the types of people who are well suited to provide community leadership.

It is important to consider the motivations of candidates. Normatively, it is imperative for MPs to act as community leaders. However, many MPs highlighted personal attributes that were not necessarily connected with community leadership, suggesting that candidates may be inwardly-focussed. This does not necessarily preclude MPs from demonstrating community leadership once elected; indeed, self-insight may increase an individual's ability to conduct this role. On the other hand, it is possible that candidates over-emphasise their 'desirable' skills that may contribute to their ability to perform community leadership while minimising the *personal* gains they seek to achieve as a legislator. Thus the rhetoric of candidate selection may be based on community compatibility and service, but this does not guarantee that candidates will serve as community leaders once elected.

## **Conclusions**

Candidate selection is a complex process. Chances of success are determined by a variety of factors including the degree of openness of the selection process and a myriad of supply and demand factors. This chapter has confirmed that both supply and demand factors are responsible for recruiting political candidates who are highly ambitious, often politically socialised while young, come from professional and high-status occupations, with some disadvantage for women and minority ethnic groups.

The relationship between the selectorate and candidates can be characterised as one of socialisation and grooming. Both groups want the best for their parties and thus candidate selection is designed to test candidates to ensure that they are prepared to become legislators.

New MPs place great emphasis on public service. This is not surprising as MPs occupy a privileged social and professional space. Given the widespread public scepticism about MPs' intentions it is heartening to find MPs espouse such noble goals. MPs were aware of their own privilege and were grateful to selectors, their parties, and the public for placing such great faith in them.

Now the focus turns to the roles MPs adopt once they have been elected to parliament, beginning with the most well-known of all legislator roles: representation.

The roles of legislators are largely undefined. Rather than clear-cut job descriptions setting out what is expected of MPs and how performance will be monitored there exist vague assumptions about 'representation', usually of a geographic constituency or particular demographic. This chapter addresses the concept of representation – who new MPs count as their constituents, how new MPs view their representative functions, the legitimacy of new MPs in their claims to represent constituents, and representation as a demonstration of community leadership.

#### **Defining Representation**

Although a vague and diffuse term, it is important to define representation, as without understanding *who* legislators seek to represent the term is essentially meaningless. In chapter two, representation was defined as:

the relationships between elected Members of Parliament and constituencies. Constituencies may be identified by the legislator or the constituents themselves. For political representation to occur, legislators and the constituents must deem the relationships to be legitimate and authoritative and the legislator must be accountable to the represented group.

This definition captures the diverse groups legislators seek to represent and the conditions upon which the representative function is premised.

There is an assumption that legislators ought to represent not only the citizens who voted for them but also a broader cross-section of society. However, there is a wide scope for legislators to undertake this role. Edmund Burke held that representatives should act as 'delegates' and thus are bound

by the preferences of their constituents.<sup>1</sup> ‘Trustees’, on the other hand, rely on their own judgment to make decisions that are best for the community as a whole.<sup>2</sup> Both the delegate and trustee models are outdated, however, as they treat legislators as individuals who have complete agency over how to cast their votes – political parties are not considered. This is also true in the ‘politico’ model, which sees legislators switching between their own judgment and the explicit wishes of the electorate.<sup>3</sup> This assumes that political parties do not play a large role in shaping representatives’ decisions.

The reality of party influence is clear in parliamentary systems. Although MPs have no legal obligation to follow their party’s instructions, conventions see legislators defer to their party’s wishes. The ‘partisan’ role contends that MPs should represent the policies of their political parties. Doing so creates a link between citizens and government that is tightly controlled by parties.<sup>4</sup> This model, however, downplays any autonomy – perceived or actual – that legislators may hold.

It is likely that legislators fulfil different and multiple representative role orientations depending on their circumstances. As Vernon Bogdanor argues, ‘the question of the appropriate *focus* of representation is likely to be determined by the point at which the nomination takes place: to whom does the parliamentarian owe his recruitment into the legislature?’<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Heinz Eulau, John C. Wahlke, William Buchanan, and Leroy C. Ferguson, ‘The Role of the Representative’, pp. 749-750; Richard S. Katz, ‘Role Orientations in Parliaments’, in Richard S. Katz and Bernhard Wessels (eds.), *The European Parliament, The National Parliaments, and European Integration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Helena Catt, Jim Lamare and Raymond Miller, *Towards Consensus? The 1993 Election in New Zealand and the Transition to Proportional Representation* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995), p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> Donley T. Studlar and Ian McAllister, ‘Constituency Activity and Representational Roles among Australian Legislators’, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 58, No. 1, February 1996, p. 71; Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Helena Catt, Jim Lamare, and Raymond Miller, *Towards Consensus?*, p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> Donley T. Studlar and Ian McAllister, ‘Constituency Activity and Representational Roles among Australian Legislators’, p. 71; Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Helena Catt, Jim Lamare, and Raymond Miller, *Towards Consensus?*, p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> Vernon Bogdanor, ‘Introduction’, in Vernon Bogdanor (ed.), *Representatives of the People? Parliaments and Constituents in Western Democracies* (Hants: Grover Publishing Press, 1985), p. 4.

The representative function of electorate MPs is relatively well-known in New Zealand. There is an expectation that MPs have a public service focus.<sup>6</sup> In New Zealand it is the norm for constituency MPs to live in their electorate, hold constituency clinics (meetings with constituents), and attend local events and gatherings. Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles argue that MPs' roles include 'seeing individual constituents in the citizens' advice role; navigating between state and individuals; meeting delegations of local groups; and keeping in close touch with local government, paying attention to local issues and speaking on those issues in the House.'<sup>7</sup>

Given that advocating for geographic electorates is a well-known and legitimate role, new legislators place great emphasis on this aspect as a means of settling into their jobs. Studies in Canada and Australia have shown that notions of constituency service dominate pre-incumbency role expectations and consolidating their presence in an electorate is a priority for new legislators.<sup>8</sup> MPs' lack of lawmaking experience before becoming a legislator makes the comparatively simple task of constituency service appealing.<sup>9</sup>

In 1983, J. Theodore Anagnoson found that newer MPs in New Zealand placed greater emphasis on constituency work than their more experienced colleagues and were more likely to have electorate offices, send newsletters, hold constituent clinics, and have personal ties with local bureaucratic offices.<sup>10</sup> This is logical, as new MPs seek to build political capital to make

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<sup>6</sup> Morgens N. Pedersen, 'Lawyers in Politics: The Danish Folketing and United States Legislatures', in Samuel C. Patterson and John C. Wahlke (eds.), *Comparative Legislative Behavior: Frontiers of Research* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, 'Redefining Constituency Representation', p. 75.

<sup>8</sup> Harold D. Clarke and Richard G. Price, 'Freshman MPs' Job Images: The Effects of Incumbency, Ambition and Position', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13, No. 3, September 1980, p. 604; James Walter, *The Acculturation to Political Work: New Members of the Federal Backbench* (Canberra: Australasian Political Studies Association, 1979), p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> Michael M. Atkinson and Paul G. Thomas, 'Studying the Canadian Parliament', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 3, August 1993, p. 445.

<sup>10</sup> J. Theodore Anagnoson, 'Home Style in New Zealand', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 2, May 1983, p. 172.

their seat 'safe' throughout their political career.<sup>11</sup> Once this has been achieved, MPs may turn their attention to broader political issues and ambitions.

There is an attitude in New Zealand that list members are 'second-class' MPs. This is primarily linked to the idea that list MPs lack a mandate as they are elected only by virtue of their party list ranking. It is assumed that a tension exists between constituency service and party loyalty which prevents list MPs from being legitimate representatives.<sup>12</sup> This attitude is amplified by the fact that MPs may enter parliament on the party list despite having lost a contest for an electorate seat. Thus list MPs are sometimes seen as party 'hacks' who represent parties rather than the people.<sup>13</sup> This overlooks the fact that all MPs in strong party systems like New Zealand rely on a party nomination regardless of the method of election.<sup>14</sup>

In recommending MMP, the Royal Commission on the Electoral System argued that it was beneficial for some MPs to be freed from the obligations of servicing a geographic constituency. List members would be able to represent minorities and communities of interest, or have a greater policy focus.<sup>15</sup> However, in practice it has been assumed that list MPs take on lesser tasks than their electorate colleagues.<sup>16</sup> This is at least in part due to some list MPs acting like constituency MPs, thereby creating the perception that list MPs have no discernible roles other than mimicking electorate MPs.

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<sup>11</sup> Valerie Heitshusen, Garry Young, and David M. Wood, 'Electoral Context and MP Constituency Focus in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 49, No. 1, January 2005, p. 37.

<sup>12</sup> Valerie Heitshusen, Garry Young, and David M. Wood, 'Electoral Context and MP Constituency Focus in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom', p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> Leigh J. Ward, "'Second-Class MPs?' New Zealand's Adaptation to Mixed-Member Parliamentary Representation', *Political Science*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Jan 1998, p. 127; Jack Vowles, Jeffrey Karp, Susan Banducci, Peter Aimer, and Raymond Miller, 'Reviewing MMP', in Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Jeffrey Karp, Susan Banducci, Raymond Miller, and Ann Sullivan (eds.), *Proportional Representation on Trial: The 1999 New Zealand General Election and the Fate of MMP* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002), p. 182.

<sup>14</sup> Leigh J. Ward, "'Second-Class MPs?'", p. 139.

<sup>15</sup> Royal Commission on the Electoral System, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1986), p. 68.

<sup>16</sup> Leigh J. Ward, "'Second-Class MPs?'", p. 127.

Political parties, for their part, have largely failed to guide list MPs in developing new non-electorate-related roles.<sup>17</sup>

Given the dominance of the large parties in electorate seats, list MPs in National and Labour often act as ‘buddy’ constituent MPs in electorates not held by their party. Thus even though they are list MPs they work within the framework of electorate representation.<sup>18</sup> List MPs from major parties who believe they have a chance of winning an electorate are more likely to act like a constituency MP than their small party colleagues.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, having an electorate presence may increase the likelihood of list MPs being reselected by their parties – even if only on the list – as electorate work demonstrates a commitment to the community and the party.<sup>20</sup>

There may be benefits for constituents in electorates where one or more list MPs have a strong presence – the level of constituency work undertaken by electorate MPs may be related to the level of competition they face in the electorate.<sup>21</sup> However, even where list MPs have a constituency presence they have less contact with constituents than their electorate MP colleagues.<sup>22</sup> It is currently unknown whether list MPs based in opposing party ‘safe’ seats invest less time in electorate work than list MPs in marginal seats. This chapter will consider this point.

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<sup>17</sup> Fiona Barker and Stephen Levine, ‘The Individual Parliamentary Member and Institutional Change’, p. 113.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, ‘Redefining Constituency Representation: The Roles of New Zealand MPs under MMP’, *Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, March 2007, pp. 81-82.

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, ‘Redefining Constituency Representation’, p. 87; Valerie Heitshusen, Garry Young, and David M. Wood, ‘Electoral Context and MP Constituency Focus in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom’, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Valerie Heitshusen, Garry Young, and David M. Wood, ‘Electoral Context and MP Constituency Focus in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom’, pp. 37-38.

<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey A. Karp, *Candidate Effects and Spill-Over in Mixed Systems: Evidence from New Zealand*, Paper presented at the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, 20-23 April, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> New Zealand Election Study, *Electoral System Opinion and the Evolution of MMP: A Report to the Electoral Commission*, 28 July 2000, [http://www.nzes.org/docs/papers/nzes\\_2000.pdf](http://www.nzes.org/docs/papers/nzes_2000.pdf), accessed 20 May 2009, p. 4.

List MPs from smaller parties shape their roles more broadly around the party identity, reflecting the differences in constituency engagement between the large and small parties.<sup>23</sup> Perceptions that list MPs are 'second-class' MPs are particularly harmful for small parties as most of their MPs are list members. If list MPs are less legitimate than electorate MPs, then small parties are less legitimate than large parties.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, small party list MPs may be viewed differently to large party list MPs who have a greater obligation to service a geographic constituency.

One of the arguments for list MPs is their ability to represent minority communities that are typically under-represented in legislatures. Thus parties can use lists to ensure representation of particular groups, most notably women and ethnic minorities. However, given their perceived lack of legitimacy it is unclear whether minorities are adequately represented by list MPs.<sup>25</sup> It may be preferable for minorities to be represented by a mixture of electorate and list MPs. Mixed representation has occurred in areas where a concentration of Maori and Pacific voters has facilitated the election of minority community members to electorate seats.<sup>26</sup>

As a means of understanding how new legislators understand their representational roles, MPs were asked in each of the two rounds of interviews who their constituents were. Additionally, MPs were asked in each interview about their most important role. These questions were designed to test the link between constituency identification and role orientations. Moreover, they allowed role changes to be tracked over time.

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<sup>23</sup> Jack Vowles, Susan A. Banducci, and Jeffrey A. Karp, 'Forecasting and Evaluating the Consequences of Electoral Change in New Zealand', *Acta Politica*, Vol. 41, 2006, p. 276. This distinction between large and small parties also occurs in Germany, which also uses MMP: see Tony Burkett, 'The West German Deputy', in Bogdanor, Vernon (ed.), *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituents in Western Democracies* (Hants: Grover Publishing Press, 1985), pp. 129-130.

<sup>24</sup> Leigh J. Ward, "'Second-Class MPs?'" , p. 143.

<sup>25</sup> Leigh J. Ward, "'Second-Class MPs?'" , p. 135.

<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth McLeay, 'Representation, Selection, Election: The 2002 Parliament', in Jonathan Boston, Stephen Church, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay, and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), *New Zealand Votes: The General Election of 2002* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2003), p. 295; Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, 'Redefining Constituency Representation', p. 82.



## Geographic Constituency Representation

### *Electorates as Constituencies*

Geographic electorates were typically the constituencies most likely to be identified by new MPs, with 68 percent of MPs taking this position in the first interviews and 74 percent in the second. Unsurprisingly, electorate MPs were unanimous in identifying their constituency:

*For me, I'm fairly broad. It's really anyone living within my electorate, whether they are on the [electoral] roll, whether they voted for me or not.*

*People that live in the electorate – anybody that lives in the electorate.*

List MPs also emphasised the importance of representing geographic electorates, with 47 percent identifying an electorate as their constituency in the first interview and 56 percent in the second:

*Well first and foremost my constituents are the people of [electorate], because that's the electorate I live in.*

*The people of [electorate] is who I represent and that's where my heart is.*

It is significant that the proportion of list MPs who identified their constituency as a geographic electorate increased between the two rounds of interviews. List MPs may gravitate more and more towards 'traditional' electorate MP roles. This suggests that list MPs are reluctant to identify alternative constituencies or that perceptions of their subordinate position results in increased adoption of constituency roles to feel legitimate. This is also true of government backbenchers, who may come to feel that constituency work is the one area where they have control and a sense of making a contribution.

The expectation in large parties that list MPs should have an electorate presence is confirmed by the way large party MPs identify their constituencies in comparison to small party MPs. In the first round of interviews, 58 percent of large party list MPs identified a geographic electorate as a constituency. This increased to 73 percent in the second interviews. Only 20 percent of small party MPs, by contrast, identified geographic electorates in each of the interview rounds. Thus large parties clearly assume that their list MPs ought to act like electorate MPs.

### *Regions as Constituencies*

As an alternative form of geographic representation, legislators sometimes identify geographic regions as constituencies. Regions encompass a number of electorates and are often associated with provincial divisions. The most significant difference between electorate and regional representation is the informality of the latter. New Zealand does not elect regional MPs; therefore MPs who claim to represent regions self-identify this constituency regardless of whether they are electorate or list members.

The proportion of list MPs who identified a regional constituency increased significantly between the two interviews. In the first round only 12 percent of list MPs considered themselves to be regional representatives. This increased to 63 percent in the second round of interviews.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, only nine percent of electorate MPs considered themselves to be regional representatives in each interview round. Thus regional representation is considered a list MP responsibility:

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<sup>27</sup> A possible explanation for such a dramatic increase is the way in which MPs were asked to identify their constituents in each of the interview rounds. In the first interviews, MPs were asked 'are there any particular groups that you see yourself as representing in parliament?' By contrast, the question posed in the second interviews was 'who would you say are your constituents?' It is possible that the line of questioning in the second interviews encouraged broader constituency identification. Indeed, in the first interviews MPs identified an average of 2.5 constituencies. This increased to 2.7 in the second interviews. Therefore sizable variations in constituency identification should be treated cautiously.

*People in Christchurch and beyond, within the Canterbury province.*

*I wasn't selected to be [region's] direct representative, but [my party] has selected me to represent their views in those areas.*

Only eight percent of large party list MPs identified a regional constituency in the first interviews, but 73 percent did so in the second round. Regional representation is most likely a strategy used by list MPs to raise their profile across a large area to let constituents know who they are and what they are doing, thereby increasing their legitimacy, and widening the number of electorates in which they could run. This is a rational self-interested approach to increasing job security.

Amongst small party list MPs, 20 percent identified regional constituencies in the first round of interviews and 40 percent did so in the second. Small party regional focus is probably due to the obligation small parties feel to work within electorate-dominant frameworks and thus make token efforts to act like electorate MPs. The lack of MPs available, however, means that small party MPs must engage on a regional rather than electorate level.

### *Geographic Constituency Representation*

When asked about their most important role in the first round of interviews, 75 percent of MPs responded that their primary role was to represent their community, act as a community organiser, or address constituent issues. This proportion increased to 81 percent in the second round of interviews.<sup>28</sup> Thus MPs see it as imperative to advocate for their constituents:

*The single most important thing is working with people outside of parliament and the integrity of that relationship. The only thing that is really worth being here for is actually being in support of*

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<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that few MPs were able to constrain themselves to identifying only one primary role. For instance, parliamentary work was also cited as a primary role by 57 and 44 percent of MPs in each round of interviews. Regardless, community/constituency work was the single most reported role.

*those people and... to show some integrity with the issues, some understanding and respect for the issues, and some willingness to be effective and lobby with all the tools I've got for the issues they live everyday.*

*I think it is very important to be both an advocate for your electorate in parliament and also an assistant to the constituents. As I say, a huge part of the work is people contacting us to just express their concern or asking us to promote a particular viewpoint or to help them. They feel like they've been banging their heads against the system, which is usually a government department of one form or another, sometimes a local authority and they come to an MP in a state of exasperation and a 'you're my last chance' sort of attitude. And trying to help those people isn't always easy because I can't wave a magic wand – I don't have one. But where we can help, and sometimes we can, that's very rewarding.*

New MPs emphasised the importance of retaining strong connections with the electorate:

*No matter how often you've heard the issue or matter or complaint or how important or unimportant it seems, if the person comes to you it's important to them so you owe them the courtesy to listen and help where you can.*

*I think it is the role of an MP to be very clear or transparent about what you are doing and to be accountable back to people for that. It's about doing things but it's also about telling people what you're doing and finding out what people think you should be doing.*

Some MPs were more candid, however, noting that priorities change as legislators gain experience and influence:

*I think if you come into parliament you either want to be the greatest constituency MP in the world – and look, to be honest, I don't think I'm ever going to be that – or you aspire to be a minister to influence a particular area of policy, which I'd like to do sometime in the future.*

*I think as you grow into the role and if you're lucky enough to be promoted I think it probably would change quite a bit because then you really are able to effect change to the law. If you're a*

*select committee chair you have more of a role in that and that may personally become more important for you.*

This confirms that acting as an electorate representative is the default position for MPs and is based on normative beliefs about the legislator role. However, role definitions become more sophisticated with experience and MPs often branch out into more diverse areas.

MPs are expected to engage in constituency casework within the geographic areas they represent. Many MPs have a constituency office with at least one staff member – funded by Parliamentary Services – to assist with their constituency role. In 1987, Anagnoson found that MPs spent an average of 19.5 hours per week on constituent casework – approximately two and a half days.<sup>29</sup>

Amongst the 2008 intake, 54 percent reported spending three days each week on constituency matters and a further eight percent allocated four or more days.<sup>30</sup> These MPs went out of their way to make themselves accessible to their constituents:

*If people ring into the office, they'll get an appointment with me either on a Friday or a Monday when I'm down there. And then the other way we do it is every month on a Sunday I go to a suburb and what we do is write to the houses in the suburb... So all the streets and basically the suburb gets a letter from me saying, 'I'm gonna be parked up on the corner of this street and this street between this time', and do it in two or three places, and people can come and see me. So that's just to suit [working] people who it's not so easy for them to come during the week.*

Unsurprisingly, electorate MPs spent a significant amount of time on constituency casework. Seventy-eight percent of electorate MPs spent three

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<sup>29</sup> J. Theodore Anagnoson, 'Does Constituency Work Have an Electoral Impact? The Case of New Zealand MPs', *Political Science*, Vol. 39, No. 2, Dec 1987

<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that MPs were asked about constituency work generally, not casework specifically. This was intentional as it allowed each MP to determine what they considered 'constituency work' to be, reflecting the amorphous nature of the role.

days each week on constituency work. This confirms the expectation that electorate MPs must be accessible and active within their communities:

*We have a very high workload. We have, on average, 400 enquiries a month through my office, be that correspondence, telephones, or meetings. And that's not including all the visits to schools, retirement villages and so on. If you took those into account you'd probably be touching, literally, a thousand or more a month.*

*Well it's at least eight hours on a Monday, at least eight hours on Friday. And whatever else I can do during recess. And Saturdays.*

Constituency casework was also important for list MPs. Like electorate MPs, most were willing and enthusiastic about constituency work and invested significant energy in their tasks:

*In the weeks that the House sits I will have constituents' clinics on Mondays between 10 and 2:30, and on Fridays I do businesses, NGOs, schools, visits. So on the Monday they come to me; on the Friday I go out to them. Recess weeks there might be a little more than that.*

*The best thing though is the constituency work. People come into the office wanting help. It's really rewarding when you can help them. I've got a friend of mine who's one of the top social workers in New Zealand. I never really could understand why he did his job and now I do.*

Some list MPs tried to act like electorate MPs but found they were hampered by institutional restrictions:

*I've got a third of the resources that those guys have to do the job, and I think that's unfair. I stood in an electorate and lost, that's the way things are, but that means I'm still trying to cover that electorate, but with a third of the resources.*

A small group of list MPs avoided constituency casework altogether:

*I don't do any constituency work at all. If people need help from their local MP, they get sent to their local MP. That's their responsibility... I think as a list MP we can do better by working on*

*issues and working with communities and networks, like campaigning on issues rather than one-to-one constituent advocacy.*

Interestingly, electorate MPs undertake approximately the same amount of constituency work regardless of whether they hold a safe or marginal seat.<sup>31</sup> Seventy-five percent of electorate MPs in safe seats spent three days each week on constituency work versus 80 percent of electorate MPs in marginal seats. MPs in marginal seats emphasised the volatility of their position:

*MPs who represent safe seats can normally think: okay well I'll be here for another 15 or 20 years and plan accordingly. I don't know whether I'll be here in three years' time.*

*Everywhere I was going people were saying, 'oh, congratulations, you've picked up a safe [party] seat, you're away laughing'. And I said, 'no, [the previous incumbent's] first majority was 250'.*

Electorate MPs who held safe seats, on the other hand, emphasised the need for them to consolidate their win and ensure their seat remained safe. Interestingly, there was a perception amongst 'safe' MPs that their seats were somewhat marginal:

*My big ambition is just to increase my majority where I am and make it a safe as houses seat, which is why my focus is on the constituents.*

*I think for me personally as a constituency MP it is about making my seat safe, it is about getting a good reputation there because I think all of that filters through.*

The finding that safe and marginal electorate MPs spend roughly the same amount of time on constituency work is contrary to the existing literature, which suggests that 'safe' MPs devote less time to constituency service than their more marginal colleagues.<sup>32</sup> However, it is consistent with the

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<sup>31</sup> A seat was classified as 'safe' if the margin of victory in the 2008 general election was 10 percent or greater.

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, J. Theodore Anagnoson, 'Does Constituency Work Have an Electoral Impact?', p. 106; Ivor Crewe, 'MPs and the Constituents in Britain: How Strong are the

expectation that new MPs place greater emphasis on constituency work than their more senior colleagues. It is likely that once 'safe' MPs realise their fortunate position and begin to progress within their political careers they will place less emphasis on constituency work. Marginal MPs, on the other hand, may maintain their constituency focus as a means of self-preservation.

Amongst list MPs who stood – and lost – in opposing parties' safe seats, levels of constituency work were notably low: 60 percent of list MPs in this position committed less than one day each week to constituency work. Twenty percent claimed to spend two days per week on this work and a further 20 percent allocated three days per week. This is significant as it suggests these members either see their role as less constituent-focused than electorate MPs or they believe their chances of winning that seat in the future are limited and therefore having a strong electorate presence is not worthwhile.

However, a caveat is required in explaining these results. This group of list MPs includes a number of small party MPs whose electorate focus is limited for reasons other than the safety or otherwise of the seat they stood in. Limiting the sample to only large party MPs, 50 percent spend less than one day each week on constituency work, 25 percent allocate two days and a final 25 percent allocate three days. In breaking this data down further, MPs who allocated two or three days to electorate work lost their seat by an average of 6,460 votes. By contrast, those who spent less than one day each week on constituency work lost by an average of 10,441 votes. Therefore there is a correlation between perceived chances of success and constituency work amongst large party list MPs who operate in safe seats held by an opposing party.

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Links?', in Vernon Bogdaner (ed.), *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituents in Western Democracies* (Hants: Grover Publishing Press, 1985), p. 48; Valerie Heitshusen, Garry Young, and David M. Wood, 'Electoral Context and MP Constituency Focus in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom', p. 36.



Unsurprisingly, list MPs who stood in marginal seats spent a significant amount of time on constituency matters. These MPs all spent at least three days each week on constituency work. Clearly, these MPs operate on the premise that more constituency work leads to a greater chance of winning the electorate seat in the next election. This further confirms that for list MPs the level of constituency service is directly related to their chances of winning an electorate seat.

Electorate MPs were unanimous in their surprise about how much constituency work they received:

*I don't think I'd realised just how much your life gets on a treadmill and, being a constituency MP, when I'm in the electorate my focus is almost entirely on local issues, dealing with the matters that constituents bring to the office, trying to get on top of all the different ways that you can help in understanding how councils work and government departments work and all the rest of it.*

*I'd like to say that I leave my constituent work in [the electorate] and when I'm here [in parliament] I'm just dealing with the parliamentary stuff, but the reality is that I probably do a couple of hours of constituent work while I'm here, whether it's meeting with ministers and following up with issues or drafting letters or ringing constituents. So there's a lot of it.*

Forty percent of list MPs received more constituency work than they expected. In these cases the constituency workload was attributed to greater than anticipated community acceptance:

*I didn't expect to get such good buy-in from the community so early as a list MP in that area. I think some of that's due to the laziness of the existing constituency MP.*

Another forty percent of list MPs received less constituency work than they expected:

*We're just about to open an office – well, it was supposed to be 1<sup>st</sup> of August, then 1<sup>st</sup> of September, then 1<sup>st</sup> of October... And that's a*

*really high-profile office, so we'll get a lot more. But now as the brand slowly gets out there, people are beginning to come in and realise there's a presence.*

*Very little. People have come to me simply because they either know me or know of me and ask me to do things that I have done or tried to do. But a very limited amount.*

The issues MPs dealt with in their constituent casework were predictable. Thirty-two percent cited immigration concerns, 29 percent dealt with Work and Income issues, 25 percent helped with education cases, and 18 percent cited ACC or housing cases:

*We're dealing increasingly with immigration issues at the moment. There's a lot of deportation going on, people who have been here on short-term work visas, work's dried up and they're being deported. We've got a lot of Housing New Zealand, but that's pretty steady. Increasing numbers of Work and Income cases, people sort of coming and saying, 'I don't meet this particular criteria, is there some way around it, is there something you can do to help me?'*

Electorate MPs cited Work and Income issues as their primary constituent casework (45 percent), while list MPs dealt primarily with immigration issues (29 percent). This may be due to the fact that MPs from ethnic minorities are more likely to be list MPs than electorate MPs – ethnic minorities may turn to ethnic list MPs for immigration help on the assumption that they have greater knowledge of these issues.

Given the diversity and importance of the cases they deal with, MPs were asked whether they felt qualified to deal with the constituency issues presented to them. Seventy-five percent of electorate MPs felt they were qualified for constituency-related tasks:

*It's amazing the difference a phone call from an MP or even the MPs' office will make.*

Amongst the remaining 25 percent of electorate MPs, the difficulty of constituent problems made their confidence more mixed:

*It's not always easy. I think in a job where people come to you with their problems you soon realise that you can't solve all their problems.*

*You're not going to be able to help with all problems or help with all issues.*

Only 43 percent of list MPs felt qualified to deal with constituent matters. Some MPs believed the cases that came to them were largely beyond redemption. This indicates that constituents turn to list MPs only once the local electorate MP has already been unable to assist:

*We get lots of immigration enquiries and they're always urgent and they've always waited until it's almost impossible to do anything because they're being deported the next day or whatever.*

*I've had some people who have gone to the constituency MP... and got annoyed with her and come back and said, 'she can't help me. Can you?'*

Other list MPs felt that learning how to deal with constituent issues was an ongoing process where every case left them feeling more and more equipped to assist:

*I do feel like I'm learning the ropes on how to deal with casework and every new case is probably gonna demonstrate to me there's a new area that I need to learn. But I feel like I've got the tools available to me to manage them.*

*For many people the MP's office is the last port of call, they've been struggling to get things done – also to get things out into the open, to have the ability to get things into the public eye, to access senior officials or local government politicians or whatever. So I think that work is really important.*

Thus list MPs take longer to settle into constituency-based roles than their electorate colleagues. This is logical as most constituency casework goes to

electorate MPs in the first instance, leaving list MPs with the leftovers. Over time, however, list MPs with a strong electorate focus build up the skills necessary to fully service an electorate, which may increase their future chances of winning an electorate seat.

## **Ethnic Constituency Representation**

### *Ethnic Groups as Constituencies*

Some diversity in ethnic background exists among New Zealand MPs: 16 percent of current parliamentarians identify as Maori, five percent Asian and four percent Pacifica. It is often assumed that MPs from ethnic minorities act as representatives for their communities. Thirty-two percent of the MPs who participated in this study were Maori, Asian or Pacifica. If assumptions about ethnic representation are correct, the same proportion of participants should identify their ethnic group as a constituency.

Twenty-nine percent of new MPs identified an ethnic constituency in the first round of interviews, dropping slightly to 26 percent in the second interviews. Amongst these MPs there was an attitude that they were able to best represent their communities as they had a deep understanding of them:

*Because I am Pacific I can obviously empathise with where Pacifica's at more than anything else.*

The identification of ethnic constituencies was more pronounced amongst list MPs, with approximately one-third of list MPs identifying an ethnic constituency in each interview. By contrast, only 18 percent of electorate MPs claimed to represent ethnic communities. This confirms the importance of the party list to elect MPs who may not otherwise be elected. As one ethnic MP noted:

*The reasoning behind list and constituency MPs was to really increase our representation. And I think this system is much more*

*representative. Look how long it took for us to get Maori MPs into parliament, let alone ethnic ones and we still don't have people with Arabic names and Somali names yet. It'll happen. In 50 years it will happen and it will be this system that will do it.*

Some ethnic MPs noted that constituents from ethnic communities outside their own ethnicity approached them as they were seen as a broader representative of ethnic minorities, leading to greater overall legitimacy:

*I think all [the] ethnic community is turning towards me. And the way the Island people are approaching me makes me comfortable that they are accepting me. And I'm really happy if I'm able to help them when they approach me, I'll feel much better that I'm their representative also, not just my ethnic community's.*

*It's hard for me to distinguish between Maori and Pacific sometimes. We have a lot of the same issues, we share culture, we share history, we share so many things. So I do feel a sense of obligation there as well.*

Only one MP from an ethnic minority did not claim to represent their ethnic community. It should be noted, however, that this MP held an electorate seat and thus felt that their electorate must receive their full attention:

*My mandate comes from being an electorate MP.*

Thus it is not necessarily true that increasing descriptive representation for ethnic groups results in a parallel rise in substantive representation, although it should be noted that the vast majority of ethnic minority MPs did identify ethnic communities as constituents.

### *Ethnic Constituency Representation*

Representing an ethnic group does not exempt MPs from assumptions about geographic representation. In the first round of interviews, 56 percent of ethnic MPs claimed to represent a geographic constituency and a further 11 percent cited a region. By the second interviews, 63 percent claimed to

represent an electorate and 38 percent identified a region. Ethnic MPs desired the legitimacy of holding an electorate seat:

*I want to win a constituency seat because politically it's got more mana but also because I'm tangata whenua. I want to be able to say there's a specific crowd of people who expect me to represent them and to whom I have to be accountable.*

The desire to represent geographic communities is interesting as it indicates MPs from ethnic minorities believe that they are able to represent their ethnic community *and* the broader community. Ethnic MPs demonstrated some diversity in their constituencies:

*I'm actually an MP, regardless of race, who happens to be [ethnicity], who happens to be a male, who happens to be an Auckland. So there's a number of ways you can define yourself.*

*I am an MP in the first place and happen to be [ethnicity]. And of course I know my other duty is to provide service to the wider constituency.*

One MP had positioned themselves as a specialist on migrant issues:

*I'm an Auckland MP and that's pretty central in terms of where these communities live so they can come. That's my constituency. But then I have similar constituencies in the other large centres. So say in Hamilton I've got a large constituency there, and the Napier/Hastings way. Wellington is one, Hutt Valley another, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Invercargill. Now I'm progressively spending time in those.*

Unsurprisingly, ethnic MPs were more involved in immigration-related casework than their Pakeha colleagues. Forty-four percent of ethnic MPs reported dealing with immigration issues versus 26 percent of Pakeha MPs. Ethnic MPs were also more likely to deal with issues related to Work and Income; education; and Child, Youth and Family. However, these results are probably the unfortunate result of the lower socio-economic status of Maori in New Zealand. Regardless, the availability of ethnic MPs to assist

constituents with these matters is a strong endorsement for the MMP electoral system.

### **Party Representation**

Given the strength of political parties in New Zealand, it is not surprising that a number of new MPs viewed themselves as party representatives. New Zealand does not have a tradition of electing independent MPs, so endorsement by a party is essential to becoming an MP. MPs are obliged to promote their party within the community. Thus party representation is a role potentially fulfilled by all MPs, regardless of other constituencies. Moreover, the need to act as a party representative occurs in all aspects of constituency work. For instance, an electorate MP who assists a constituent with an immigration issue does so not only as the local representative but also as a party representative.

In the first round of interviews, 21 percent of MPs said one of their key roles was to represent their party, dropping slightly to 19 percent in the second interviews. Given that MPs rely on their party for their election this response is surprisingly low. However, it is likely that MPs underreport their party representation role because they are aware of normative assumptions that MPs ought to represent their communities over and above their parties and therefore choose not to specifically cite their party representative role.

Despite the fact that party representation is important for all MPs, there are variations among the MPs who identify this role. In the first round of interviews 18 percent of electorate MPs said they were party representatives, dropping to nine percent in the second interviews:

*I'm not silly to think that I wouldn't be here without the party, so I do represent the party. If I'd run as an independent I wouldn't have gotten close. And the day I forget that, the day I think I'm bigger than the party, is the day I shouldn't be here.*

List MPs were more likely to identify their party representation role. In the first round of interviews, 24 percent of list MPs said they represented their party, rising slightly to 25 percent in the second interviews:

*It's just getting out there, getting the brand out there. The [party] brand is more powerful than any MP, without a question of a doubt.*

*I place a high amount of priority on making sure I reflect the values of my party.*

The gap between electorate and list MPs is not as significant as expected if list MPs' role orientations are based on pleasing their parties, as critics of MMP argue. This is possibly explained by the short length of time between MPs' election and the first round of interviews. New MPs feel positive towards their parties when they are elected for the first time – few situations would have arisen to make new MPs doubt their parties or feel constrained by them. Moreover, MPs feel a sense of obligation to the party for getting them elected. Thus newly-elected MPs believe in the primacy of their party and their duty to serve it.

By the second interviews, however, some MPs had developed more critical attitudes towards their parties. As electorate MPs become more settled in their electorates they begin to realise that so long as they retain their party's nomination they will probably be re-elected. It is often difficult for parties to 'de-select' electorate MPs, especially where selection is largely devolved to local committees.<sup>33</sup> Therefore electorate MPs enjoy greater autonomy from their party; while promoting the party may be beneficial for ensuring a good party vote at the next election, it is not necessarily the strongest determinant of their political future. List MPs, on the other hand, retain their party representation role as they acknowledge the party's success is directly linked to their own political future.

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<sup>33</sup> Keith Jackson, 'Candidate Selection and the 1978 General Election', in Howard R Penniman (ed.), *New Zealand and the Polls: The General Election in 1978* (Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Research, 1980), p. 106; Jeffrey A. Karp, *Candidate Effects and Spill-Over in Mixed Systems*, p. 5.



However, it is notable that only a quarter of list MPs cited representing their party as a key role. Ergo, three-quarters of list MPs either do not consider party representation to be a key role or did not consider it noteworthy when compared to other roles such as electorate representation. Thus concern over list MPs' primary allegiance to political parties may be overstated.

Interestingly, party representation became less important for large party MPs while it became more important for small party MPs. In the first interviews, 23 percent of large party MPs cited representing their party as an important task while only 17 percent of small party MPs said the same. By the second interviews, 14 percent of large party MPs cited party representation versus 33 percent of small party MPs.

This is probably explained by the expectation that large party MPs have a strong electorate presence regardless of whether they are electorate or list members, meaning that their focus moves from the party to the electorate. This may be a reaction to broader feelings that they lack influence outside of their electorate roles. Small party MPs become increasingly aware of their reliance on their party for re-election due to the small caucuses in which they operate and their own ability to influence their party's chances of success at the next election, particularly in parties that hover around the five percent electoral threshold. Thus it is in small party MPs' best interests to focus their attention on the party rather than on specific electorates. Moreover, the smaller group dynamics of these parties may foster stronger team bonds around the party identity. Thus inclusive team camaraderie may develop more quickly.

### **General, Ill-Defined, and Absent Representation**

Becoming an MP is the first time many MPs have held a representative role. It is therefore unsurprising that some MPs struggle to understand who they

represent and how to act as a representative. In these situations representation is described very generally – or not at all.

The most common generally-defined constituency was the catchall group of 'New Zealanders'. Overall, 14 percent of new MPs claimed to represent New Zealanders in the first interviews, rising to 19 percent in the second. List MPs were more likely than electorate MPs to define their constituencies in this way, with 24 percent taking this position in the first interviews and 25 percent in the second:

*The people of New Zealand are our constituents as list MPs.*

*I haven't found a terribly politically correct way to describe myself but if I may I would say that I'm happy to represent all New Zealanders in general.*

Of course, 'New Zealanders' can be a legitimate constituency, but this claim is dubious amongst new MPs. To represent a constituency it is essential to be accepted as legitimate by that grouping. Therefore, representing broad constituencies like 'New Zealanders' requires widespread legitimacy. For instance, a prime minister can legitimately claim to represent New Zealanders through their mandate as the head of government. The vast majority of new MPs, however, are unknown to the wider public. Thus MPs who claim to represent the entire populace demonstrate a blurry conception of representation.

Identifying New Zealanders as constituents was most common amongst small party list MPs, with 40 percent taking this stance in each interview round. This may be due to small party MPs emphasising that their parties have stronger ideal or value bases than larger parties, and they believe these ideals are best for New Zealand and thus New Zealanders. Alternatively, small party MPs may be unclear as to who they represent. This is surprising because small parties have a niche following; one would expect constituents would be identified as party supporters. However, it is likely the tendency to

identify 'New Zealanders' as constituents is an attempt to transcend their niche. It is unsustainable for small parties to cater only to die-hard supporters. Instead, small party MPs seek to build broader support by reaching out to general constituencies and presenting themselves as 'mainstream' parties. Alternatively, smaller parties may aim to link their ideals to the widest possible constituency, for instance, the Greens and the environment.

Unsurprisingly, general constituency identification barely registered amongst electorate MPs. No electorate MPs claimed to represent 'New Zealanders' in the first round and only nine percent did so in the second. Thus MPs who believe they represent all New Zealanders are those who may lack other clear constituencies. Indeed, male list MPs were the most likely to identify their constituency as 'New Zealanders', with 36 percent doing so.

It is important to note the groups that MPs *did not* identify as their constituents in order to identify groups that may not be adequately represented. Table 4.1 shows some of the less-common constituencies.

**Table 4.1 – Uncommon Constituencies**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>First Interview (%)</b>	<b>Second Interview (%)</b>
Youth	14	4
Gender	11	8
Gay Community	7	4
Unions	7	0
Business	4	7
Rural Interests	4	7
Occupational Groups	4	0
Social Class	0	8

It is surprising that few MPs identified women as constituents. This is particularly unexpected because – as outlined in chapter three – 44 percent of female MPs noted that gender was a factor in their selection as candidates. Therefore female MPs were aware that their parties expected them to represent women. However, the majority of female MPs interpreted this simply as their party's desire to achieve greater descriptive representation for women. As a result, most female MPs do not appear to feel any obligation to represent women any more substantively than simply by being female parliamentarians. This confirms the need for parties to select candidates – male or female – who advocate for women's interests.<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, the lack of youth representation is contrary to expectations of an MMP parliament. The average age of MPs first elected in 2008 was 42 years – nine years younger than the average for parliament as a whole. The new MPs, then, were relatively young when one considers that individuals often enter politics later in life. However, youth were of minimal importance as a constituency in the first round of interviews and were mentioned by only one MP in the second. This MP took youth representation seriously and lamented its scarcity:

*I feel a real sense that there is actually a lack of voice for young people in politics, much more so than I've ever felt it before on the outside – I think it's even worse than I expected. So that's another group that I don't think I have an elected mandate necessarily to represent but I feel the obligation to build a mandate.*

Ironically, the oldest MPs were the most likely to speak of the importance of youth being elected to parliament:

*I feel a tension between the investment of learning that you get when you actually get here and learn how to do stuff and the need*

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<sup>34</sup> Manon Tremblay argues that descriptive representation of women does not lead to substantive representation; substantive representation only occurs by electing feminists, regardless of their gender, who consciously act for women. See Manon Tremblay, 'Do Female MPs Substantively Represent Women? A Study of Legislative Behaviour in Canada's 35<sup>th</sup> Parliament', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 31, No. 3, September 1998, pp. 464-465.

*to make sure our party is refreshed and has some good young women, particularly. I'd like to see some good younger women get in.*

*I can see a lot of young people around me as well and they have a fraction of my experience. But they bring something else and for them it's fascinating as well. They're motivated to achieve particular goals.*

It is interesting that organisations generically described as 'interest groups', such as unions and business, were largely overlooked as constituencies. This may be due to the assumption that representing interest groups is against the public interest. This position overlooks the fact that 'mainstream' constituencies like electorates, regions, and ethnic groups also have special interests and that interest groups are legitimate organisations within civil society.

It is also interesting that some MPs were uncomfortable with the concept of representation itself. While a small group, these MPs viewed political engagement as a continuous process requiring individual participation. In this view, one person cannot represent another:

*I don't see myself as representing anything. I see myself as somebody who has a relationship with certain groups. I know this is a Westminster system and the idea of representation is at its heart, but I have difficulty with the idea that I can represent anybody else.*

This issue is worthy of further scholarly attention. It may be unlikely that MPs maintain this rejection of representation over time, as their ability to make decisions or influence decision-makers ensures that the public expects them to act as representatives. While the concept of having 'relationships' with constituents is admirable, it may not be satisfactory for constituents who expect representation.

## Legitimacy

Being perceived as 'legitimate' is essential for legislators. In democratic nations, the power of citizens to select and deselect their legislators and governments implies legitimacy. However, legitimacy for an office does not necessarily equate to legitimacy for the individual holding an office: legislators build their own personal legitimacy.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which an individual is considered legitimate. A comprehensive assessment of legitimacy would require extensive discussions with those who to accept or reject legislators – that is, voters. Such a task is outside of the scope of this thesis. However, some indication of legitimacy can be gained from MPs' own reflections on the extent to which constituencies have accepted them as 'their' representative. Although probably skewed towards greater acceptance than reality may permit, MPs' own self-insights offer a means by which their conceptions of legitimacy can be examined.

Overall, 50 percent of new MPs said they had been accepted by their self-identified constituencies. Unsurprisingly, no MPs admitted to being rejected by their constituents, although 35 percent reported mixed feelings of acceptance. A further 15 percent stated they did not know if they had been accepted.

Electorate MPs were the most likely to feel legitimate, with 78 percent saying they had been accepted versus only 27 percent of list MPs. This is significant as it confirms the attitude that electorate MPs are more legitimate than list MPs. Eighty-nine percent of electorate MPs argued that their legitimacy was confirmed by the level of access constituents had to them. Thus regular contact with constituents was essential:

*I think one of the good things about the New Zealand political system is we are very accessible. Not many other countries you'd*

*see Members of Parliament just wandering around at the school gala where you can go up and just say hello to them.*

*I have a constituency clinic at least every week. I am literally fully available to my constituents. I think it would be pretty hard of a constituent of mine to say that they couldn't come and meet me or see me.*

Sixty-seven percent of electorate MPs regularly organised or attended local events:

*I think that's a really key, important thing – making an effort to be at significant community events, just so people can see you and come and speak to you and raise issues.*

*In the recess I had three public meetings – one in each area... [I] put an ad in the paper, put stuff over the radio, sent letters to schools and parents.*

Seventy-eight percent of electorate MPs also reported receiving positive feedback:

*Certainly the feedback I get has been reasonably good. You know, some people don't like some of the government decisions, some people do. But I think that you know you hear a lot of, 'well, we don't necessarily like the outcome, but we appreciate you coming to talk to us about it'.*

*I get told I'm making my mark – that I'm doing well. I have people saying to me that they didn't think that I'd do it and now they're very impressed. You get things like that quite often.*

List MPs felt less legitimate, with 55 percent claiming to have mixed feelings about their acceptance, versus only 11 percent of electorate MPs. List MPs emphasised that legitimacy had to be built over time:

*I think it takes some time. Especially there's a traditional view on what Pacific leaders are and young is not [the norm]. This is quite new having someone like me coming into it. So it takes some time in terms of demonstrating that I am there to serve their interests*

*and that I'm doing a good job and I think I'm gaining some traction as I'm going along.*

*That's hard for me to say because the piece of information that would confirm or otherwise refute that is how much of the [constituency] work is going to the other MPs. You know, I might be the tip of the iceberg. I don't think that's the case, I think they do see me as a legitimate avenue for having their concerns aired.*

List MPs also emphasised the importance of being accessible, although to a lesser extent than electorate MPs (55 and 89 percent respectively):

*What happens is that people pull me up in the street or in the petrol station or going to the supermarket, 'oh giddy [name], how are you doing? Can I just have a minute of your time? Blah, blah, blah.' That's really neat. My kids find it weird, but it's quite humbling.*

*I moved the office to a far more prominent premises with better access by constituents. It's on the bus route, it's ground floor access, it's got its own access and things like that. It also happens to be far more prominent, so it's very much [the party] brand in the city.*

Once again, it is important to note that MPs are likely to self-report their legitimacy as higher than others may perceive. Regardless, most MPs fit into two categories: a) those who feel immediately legitimate by virtue of their office; or b) those who believe legitimacy must be earned individually. That electorate MPs largely fall into the former category and list MPs into the latter confirms that electorate MPs have more legitimacy and greater mana as a result of their 'inherent' legitimacy when compared to list MPs.

Fifteen percent of MPs claimed to not know whether their constituents had accepted them. These MPs preferred not to speculate on their legitimacy, believing instead that the only true test is whether they were re-elected:

*I've not thought about it and nor do I care to, probably. That's for others to judge and decide. We'll see in two years' time.*



*Talk to me in October 2011 and we'll see [laughs]. I don't know, it's hard to know.*

Sixty percent of large party MPs reported that they had been accepted by their constituents compared with only 20 percent of small party MPs. This is unsurprising as the dominance of electorate-based representation means large party MPs feel more legitimate than their small party counterparts who do not undertake geographic representation tasks as enthusiastically.

As with list MPs generally, small party MPs emphasised that legitimacy must be earned:

*I would say that I'm beginning to be accepted. Some of them already knew me but were waiting to see how I would perform in this environment. Some of them, they are beginning to know me as a legitimate voice.*

Small party MPs believed that their ability to select 'non-traditional' constituencies, such as non-geographic community groupings, meant they could better understand their constituents' views, which were overlooked by larger parties:

*I think there are some groups who would see me or [my party's] MPs as being the only ones who actually 'get' what they're on about, therefore representing their perspective.*

Thus for small party MPs legitimacy was not necessarily tied to constituency service. Rather, small party MPs sought to legitimise their parties within what largely remains a two-party parliament. This reinforces the level of responsibility small party MPs take on within their parties. These MPs often make up one-fifth or one-quarter of their entire caucus. Therefore their actions have a significantly greater impact on the legitimacy of their parties than those of their Labour and National counterparts.

## Representation and Community Leadership

In carrying out representative tasks it is apparent that MPs exercise a form of leadership. MPs place great emphasis on serving their constituents and the wider public. MPs hold privileged positions within society by virtue of their office. MPs are aware of this and shape their representative roles around notions of community service. In this regard it is apparent that MPs see themselves as community leaders.

This *ex-officio* leadership role is important for both MPs and their constituents. However, in considering leadership within a broader political framework it is salient to consider how MPs exercise community leadership above and beyond what their office requires. MPs achieve a level of mana upon their election. A true test of leadership skills is the extent to which MPs *increase* their mana and, in turn, develop political capital, and what purposes that capital is then applied to.

Arguably, acting as a representative for a geographic community is the most basic expression of community leadership. The fact that many MPs aspire to be electorate MPs demonstrates the extent to which the legitimacy of their office shapes their individual legitimacy. The expectations of electorate service are reasonably well-known – holding constituency clinics, attending community events, and so on. These functions are fulfilled by whoever happens to represent each electorate – the leadership skills required are minimal.

On the other hand, MPs may fulfil representative tasks which demonstrate leadership above and beyond simple *ex-officio* roles. For instance, MPs may identify multiple or disparate constituencies that have few commonalities. MPs in this situation can apply their leadership skills to identify shared goals and facilitate the development of community bonds. Thus these MPs

demonstrate community leadership by *building*, as well as *representing*, communities.

An example of this kind of community leadership was provided by an electorate MP who sought to foster bonds within their community:

*I'm wanting to try and find ways of interacting and getting people to think about their communities a bit more... I organised a screening of the New Zealand versus Iraq soccer game, and I did that at the Confederations Cup and obviously I did it mainly for the sake of the Iraqi community, that they could have an event that they could feel was for them – and it would help link them up with football people from around [the city] and that just gives them a feeling that there's a place for them in their community. We got nearly 100 people at 6:30 on a Sunday morning. Absolute madness. And it was a nil-nil draw and both teams didn't play that well actually [laughter] but it was a really, really good event. So stuff like that's great, you feel like you're part of the community if you do that.*

MPs who use their leadership skills to build communities form the pool of future political leaders. Political leadership is qualitatively different to other types of leadership because political leaders must lead not *within* specialised domains, but *across* domains.<sup>35</sup> Thus MPs who demonstrate their ability to lead disparate community groups display their potential to become *bona fide* political leaders.

## Conclusions

Representational roles are of significant importance to New Zealand MPs. This chapter has shown that assumptions about MPs being primarily bound to serve a constituency – usually geographic – have not changed since the switch to MMP. Indeed, a hierarchy of legislators has been demonstrated throughout this chapter: list MPs mimic electorate MPs but still feel less legitimate than their electorate colleagues.

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<sup>35</sup> Jon Johansson, *Two Titans: Muldoon, Lange and Leadership* (Wellington: Dunmore Press, 2005), p. 18.

These dynamics primarily occur in the large parties, who assuredly have done a poor job of considering alternative roles for backbench list MPs and – more significantly – legitimising list MPs’ existence. Within the context of representation, this is particularly unfortunate as there are many demographics that remain under-represented in parliament. Even where some degree of descriptive representation has occurred (for instance, in the election of ethnic minority MPs) the overall illegitimacy of list MPs reduces the quality of representation. Moreover, the intra-party and intra-parliamentary MP hierarchy that sees many list MPs lost after electorate MP status further undermines minority representation and reinforces the perceived primacy of electorate-based representation.

Small parties have done a better job at fulfilling list MPs’ potential due to the fact that most small party MPs are list MPs. Small party MPs are less likely to undertake electorate-based activity, although they do simulate the electorate-type role in their regional work. This reasonable level of freedom from geographic representation allows small party MPs to develop connections with broader and more creatively-defined constituencies than electorate-focused list MPs from larger parties. Despite this, small party MPs report mixed feelings of legitimacy more than any other MPs, suggesting they struggle to operate within a role that remains dominated by old-fashioned ideas of electorate representation.

This chapter began by briefly discussing various models of representation: delegates, trustees, politicians, and partisans. It was argued that these models were outdated and that MPs likely engage different aspects of each of these representative ‘types’ based on each particular situation. This has proved to be the case for new MPs. New MPs emphasised community service and the need to remain connected with constituents – expressions of the delegate, trustee, and politician models. However, political parties were acknowledged as important factors in MPs’ future prospects, which fits within the partisan model. Therefore the diversity of constituents and representational tasks

means that these models of representation are indeed outdated. Moreover, the complexity of representation means that developing catchall models may be a futile exercise.

Of course, for MPs to succeed they must also thrive in the parliamentary environment itself. This thesis turns to parliamentary roles in chapter five.

Parliament holds a central location in popular conceptions of legislators' roles. Indeed, speaking in the House is perhaps one of the few tasks undertaken by MPs that is widely known. However, parliamentary roles extend far beyond this single task. This chapter sets out the parliamentary roles of new MPs. It discusses the arrival of new MPs at parliament, the House, select committees, political parties, policy responsibilities, and, finally, the demonstration of leadership amongst new MPs in the parliamentary environment.

#### Arriving at Parliament

Arriving at parliament for the first time is assuredly an exciting, proud, and nerve-wracking experience for new MPs. As the symbolic centre of a democracy, the legislature occupies a unique place in the public mind. New MPs generally hold parliament in high esteem upon their arrival and face the task of transforming this extraordinary symbolic institution into an ordinary workplace:

*We came down here straight after the election on the Monday – I felt like I was a tourist being shown around. I didn't actually feel like I was an MP.*

Unfortunately for new members, the support available to help them through their initial days in parliament is limited. Parliamentary Services runs a one-and-a-half day induction seminar for new MPs in the week following the election, the agenda of which is included as Appendix V.

A second seminar is held by the Office of the Clerk about a month after the election to brief new members on House procedures, lawmaking, select committees, and the parliamentary library. Finally, a series of eight dinner

sessions are hosted over the first six months of parliament's sitting which cover pecuniary interests; advertising, office signage and sponsorship; the parliamentary press gallery; staff management; research services; regulations review; estimates; and parliamentary privilege (Appendix VI).

While assuredly useful, new MPs' institutional induction is hardly exhaustive. This was reflected in the fact that few MPs mentioned the formal induction when asked about their initial days in parliament – and those who did were often less than complimentary:

*We have this formal induction that's absolutely irrelevant, what they do with Parliamentary Services. I didn't understand a word of it and it was all the formal stuff. The things you need to understand here are not formal; they're about how power works and who you can trust and all the kind of stuff. And it's about getting advice on how to behave in a select committee!*

Some parties, however, provide informal support and guidance for new MPs through relationships between new MPs and more senior colleagues:

*They've all given me advice – there's been no formal induction from them, but they've all given me advice. They have done the whakawhanaungatanga [process for getting to know each other] sort of things, which makes you feel like part of the family.*

*I chose [senior MP] as my buddy MP. So whenever something comes up that I'm not sure about I go see her and she's usually good.*

Thus induction is largely limited to abbreviated technical information and informal mentor arrangements with senior colleagues. Therefore, new MPs are largely expected to learn on the job.

Parliamentary work can be broken down into three separate – but related – areas: the House, select committees, and party responsibilities.

## The House

House speeches are prominent in public perceptions of legislators' roles. The House is viewed as a forum for MPs to articulate the wishes and concerns of their constituents.<sup>1</sup>

The House, however, is not necessarily respected by the public. MPs are often chastised for their childish behaviour – a result of the House's adversarial nature. The physical arrangement of the House encourages this type of behaviour. The government and opposition face each other in close proximity. Even the backbenches are relatively close to the frontbenches, where the most intense exchanges occur. MPs must conform to Standing Orders and Speakers' Rulings, but this does not prevent fiery exchanges – they merely mediate them. Thus the physical environment and rules of the House may lead to MPs acting passionately and, at times, irrationally.<sup>2</sup>

### *Initial Experiences in the House*

It is not surprising that new MPs approach the House for the first time with mixed feelings of excitement and trepidation. Most new MPs admitted to feeling excited the first time they sat in the House:

*I was elated. Fully elated. I got to sit in the chair and we had like mock Question Time. And I loved it. We had Lockwood [Smith] sitting in the Chair, before he had been made Speaker. And that was a blast.*

*Electric. I loved it.*

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<sup>1</sup> Grant Gillon and Raymond Miller, 'Role of an MP', in Miller, Raymond (ed.), *New Zealand Government and Politics*, Fourth Edition (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> John C. Wahlke and Heinz Eulau, 'The Historical and Institutional Context of Legislative Behavior', in John C. Wahlke and Heinz Eulau (eds.), *Legislative Behavior: A Reader in Theory and Research* (Illinois: The Free Press, 1959), p. 8.



A number of MPs noted that sitting in the House for the first time made the job seem real:

*I sat down in the seat and as soon as I sat down – after having rushed in there – I looked around and suddenly clocked my environment and I suddenly thought, ‘oh my goodness me’!*

*Certainly a bit of excitement there and it all felt very real on that date. Until then you’ve been talking about it, thinking about it, but then you’re sitting there.*

Understandably, MPs felt a sense of pride when they sat in the House:

*To be able to say, ‘I was in the Chamber when this happened’, that’s just a privilege. The whole job is a privilege, really. You should never lose sight of that. Here’s this little guy from [electorate], and still fairly young as far as MPs go.*

*It’s a very humbling experience to sit there. So pride, all of those emotions went through me.*

Some MPs were surprised by the ceremonies required to open parliament:

*Probably more formal and ceremonial than I had thought.*

*The first bits are highly ceremonial, which are just kind of arcane. Interesting – I quite enjoyed them.*

The size and layout of the House also surprised some new members:

*I sit up by the Sergeant-at-Arms, but the cross-benches are actually closer than you think. That was one of the things that surprised me.*

*I thought it was a very small House – I thought it was bigger than that. That was the physical reaction to it. You’re a backbencher so you know where you are.*

The standard of behaviour surprised many new MPs:

*Oh my God! And I still think that. What a bunch of baying morons. Like, what is going on here? I mean, I had watched them on TV but then you're sitting there with all the pomp and ceremony... They're claiming a status of 'we are here to do this serious stuff'. And we have a karakia to acknowledge that we are here for the nation and then it's pathetic – backbiting and personal attacks and time wasting and disrespect.*

*We started off with all the pomp and ceremony and everyone was being very nice to each other and the Leader of the House got up and said what he needed to say and Michael [Cullen] got up and said whatever the appropriate response was. It was all very lovely. And then we got into the real business and it was like that [snaps fingers]! It was like sharks smelling blood [laughs]. The intensity just went straight through the roof. And the bickering and all the noise up the front...*

For new MPs, sitting in the House for the first time can clearly be an overwhelming experience.

### *Maiden Speeches*

By convention, newly elected MPs deliver a 'maiden speech'. Maiden speeches are an opportunity for MPs to speak freely about matters that are important to them. Thus MPs may use their 15 minute allocation more-or-less as they see fit.

Overall, MPs viewed their maiden speeches as tremendously important.<sup>3</sup> A number of MPs noted that the importance of delivering their maiden speech made them nervous:

*I thought I was going to pass out when I stood up. I knew it was a big deal so there was some anxiety.*

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<sup>3</sup> The significance of maiden speeches is confirmed by the circumstances surrounding ACT MP John Boscawen's maiden speech. Boscawen sought to speak during the second reading of the Taxation (Urgent Measures and Annual Rates) Bill before he had delivered his maiden speech. This caused some debate in the House about whether the first time an MP spoke in the House counted as their maiden speech or whether maiden speeches only occurred during the Address in Reply debate. See *Hansard*, Vol. 651, 9 December 2008, p. 121.

*I was absolutely packing myself before I did it. And about five minutes in I actually thought, 'I'm really enjoying myself and look at who my audience is'.*

MPs believed their maiden speech was a benchmark against which their parliamentary career would be measured. A quarter of MPs commented that they expected their maiden speeches to be a referent throughout their political careers:

*I thought quite a lot about what I wanted to say... people are going to quote it back at you endlessly and when you finish they're going to say, 'well, did you achieve any of that or not?'*

*You're writing this maiden speech which is supposed to be this deep, insightful work that people are going to look back on in 20 years' time and say, 'well, that's what you set out to do in politics'.*

One MP took a particularly cautious approach to how their speech would go down in history:

*I was very aware from the advice we'd received from others in the caucus that the content of it was very important because... unlike every other speech it's recorded and can come back and bite you. So I went through it many times looking for things that I might live to regret and eliminating any that I thought were in that category.*

Many new MPs showed enthusiasm to participate in the House by choosing to speak on bills before they had delivered their maiden speech:

*Protocols are you're not supposed to speak before your maiden speech, right? But there were two bills that were going through on energy-related stuff that I have particular knowledge and expertise in that I had to speak on in the House. And that was weird, that was really weird.*

*I had a bit of a dilemma there. My maiden speech wasn't due until the second week we had the House sitting. I decided not to wait for my maiden speech and just start speaking on the bills anyway.*

Other MPs patiently waited until they had delivered their maiden speeches before participating in debates. A number of these MPs were eager to get their maiden speech out of the way as it marked the point after which they could truly begin in their new role. These MPs were less excited about their maiden speeches:

*I just viewed it as something you must do and get it out of the way. People will judge you on it or they won't. I was really keen just to get down to the work and couldn't wait for the House to get on to other business.*

*It's one of those things where once you've done it it's sort of a load off your shoulders and you can get into the other more impromptu speaking in the House, which has been more enjoyable probably than the maiden speech.*

The rush to prepare their maiden speech introduced some MPs to the frantic pace of parliament:

*It was such a whirlwind in the lead-up to that point – you didn't have much time to relish it... I felt like I wrote my speech in bits when actually given the magnitude of it as a thing I would have liked to have spent more time on it. But that's just the nature of the way things are here.*

*It would have been a hell of a lot better if I'd been allowed to do it after Christmas because that first couple of months was all a bit of a blur... In reality it turns out to be a cobbled-together mishmash of thoughts and ideas because you just don't have time to get it into a really nice coherent sort of articulation of your views on life.*

In considering the content of New Zealand MPs' maiden speeches, two methods of analysis were employed. Firstly, MPs were asked about their maiden speech in the first interview round. Secondly, the author watched recordings all new MPs' maiden speeches, read the transcripts, and tallied the subjects commonly covered in the speeches. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 5.1, overleaf. A 'word cloud' of the most common words from all MPs' maiden speeches is shown in Figure 5.1, while Table 5.2 breaks down maiden speech content by MP type, party size, gender, and ethnicity.

**Table 5.1 – Subjects included in Maiden Speeches of MPs first elected in November 2008**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Occurrence in Maiden Speeches (%)</b>
Family	96
Goals	89
Personal History – ‘Where I came from’	82
Party	71
Values	57
Geographic Constituency	54
Constituency Seat	54
Previous Career	54
Supporters	54
Educational Background	46
Party Leader	46
Political Philosophy	39
Political Opponents	25
Previous Incumbents	18
Role of MPs	14

There is a pattern most MPs follow in maiden speeches. Nearly all MPs mentioned their family, as maiden speeches are a forum to acknowledge important influences. Indeed, many MPs’ families watched from the public gallery as their family member delivered their speech:

*I was very conscious of my family being there. I had my wife and one of my children and my mother and my brother... My father had died before the 2005 election and he’d supported me for a long, long time, knowing that was what I wanted to do. So I felt – as I said in my maiden speech – I felt my father on my shoulder, and that sort of thing: ‘Come on boy, give it a go’. And that was great. That was a very memorable, wonderful day for me.*

**Figure 5.1 – Word Cloud of Most Common Words from Maiden Speeches<sup>4</sup>**



Most new MPs have specific goals they wish to achieve in parliament; setting out their objectives formally is the first step in actualising their goals:

*I wanted to identify the things that I was particularly passionate about and wanted to work on.*

*The things that I focused on... were education and the fact that if one in five of our kids fails they haven't got much of a future. The second big issue was around law and order. And the third point was really around bringing back some common sense and not letting political correctness get in the way.*

With regard to values, MPs articulated what they stood for and why. Some MPs commented that their maiden speech was their only opportunity to express their own values rather than those of their party:

<sup>4</sup> This word cloud was generated by **Occurrence in Maiden Speeches (%)** delivered by the 34 MPs who were first elected in November 2008 into tagcloud.com. The larger the word, the greater its frequency. As a matter of interest, the combined text of 34 new MPs' maiden speeches consisted of 80,910 words, or 218 pages. For a commentary on the usefulness of word clouds for content analysis, see Alexander C. Tan, Jessica Buck, and Erik Schrader, 'Portraits of New Zealand Political Science, 1980-2008: A Picture is Worth Eighty Words', *Political Science*, Vol. 61, No. 1, June 2009, pp. 81-83.

	Type		Size		Gender		Ethnicity		
Subject	Elector-ate	List	Large	Small	Male	Female	Pakeha	Maori	Other
Family	91	100	95	100	95	100	95	100	100
Goals	82	94	91	83	100	67	95	50	100
Personal History	100	71	86	67	79	89	79	75	100
Party	64	76	64	100	63	89	84	50	40
Values	55	59	55	67	53	67	63	50	40
Geographic Constituency	91	59	50	67	47	67	37	75	100
Constituency Seat	45	29	59	33	58	44	58	75	20
Previous Career	45	59	55	50	63	33	42	100	60
Supporters	45	59	59	33	58	44	58	0	80
Educational Background	45	47	59	0	37	67	37	50	80
Party Leader	36	53	45	50	37	67	47	75	20
Political Philosophy	18	53	36	50	42	33	53	25	0
Political Opponents	27	24	27	17	32	11	26	50	0
Previous Incumbents	18	18	23	0	11	33	16	25	20
Role of MPs	18	12	18	0	11	22	16	0	20

**Table 5.2 – Subjects included in Maiden Speeches of MPs elected in November 2008 by MP Type, Party Size, Gender, and Ethnicity**

*It was great saying what I wanted without having to worry too much about the party's position because that's the one speech where you nail your own personal political colours down.*

*A lot of the senior parliamentary people had made the point that you really should stake out your ground because it's probably the only time in parliament that you get to say what's really, really important to you.*

Interestingly, while 71 percent of MPs acknowledged their party in their maiden speech, none of the interview participants mentioned their party when they were asked about what they wanted to articulate in their maiden speech. This is significant, as it confirms the reluctance of MPs to appear more concerned about their party than about their constituents. Also, observations that small party MPs are more conscious of their dependence on their party are confirmed by the fact that they unanimously acknowledged their parties in their maiden speeches, compared with only 64 percent of large party MPs.

### *The House*

Even after new MPs have delivered their maiden speech they may feel nervous about speaking in the House during their first few months as a legislator. The pace of the House is intense; the content of the debate is challenging and MPs must speak through interjections and heckling from opposing members. Thus the House may be an intimidating environment for those uninitiated to its 'normal' behaviour.

Overall, 64 percent of new MPs had generally positive attitudes towards the House in the first interview round, with 16 percent disliking the House, and 20 percent holding a mixed attitude. By the second interviews 80 percent of MPs were positive, four percent negative, and 16 percent mixed. Thus, with time, MPs' perceptions of the House seem to become more positive.

MPs who were positive believed the House to be theatre and took great pleasure in participating in the performance:



*Oh, it's bizarre. It's theatre – it's just pure theatre and if you take it too seriously you'll just tie yourself up in knots. I mean, I think there are people on both sides of the House who – particularly some newbies – who just can't understand why sometimes it's a bit of a joke. Once you get your head around it, it's just there's a whole lot of enjoyment in the theatre factor.*

*I'm in the last row – we're the first to be tapped to go round and fill the empty chairs of ministers because you want a good, full bench. And that's a different experience altogether – it's quite electric. And you are in close proximity to the Opposition and you don't know what the Supplementary Questions are going to be and the ministers are on edge – you can feel it, it's palpable. And that's really great fun. Great fun.*

MPs who took a mixed or negative attitude to the House also noted the theatrical elements but took less pleasure in them:

*The House is like 122 performing seals.*

*The gladiatorial combat that passes for Question Time is not only unedifying but counterproductive to decent processes of democracy.*

MPs from small parties were more negative about the House than their large party counterparts. Small party MPs tend to distance themselves from the adversarial interactions between the two major parties. In 2007, MPs from the Green, Maori, United Future, and ACT parties signed a voluntary Code of Conduct promising to act ethically and with integrity in the House.<sup>5</sup> Thus small party MPs may perceive themselves as not participating in inappropriate behaviour.

MPs with positive attitudes towards the House generally found the behaviour typical of the House to be enjoyable:

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<sup>5</sup> Hon. Margaret Wilson, *Report of the 19<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers held in the United Kingdom*, Presented to the House of Representatives January 2008, p. 20. It should be noted that the Code of Conduct was prepared and signed by these parties in the 48<sup>th</sup> Parliament, not the current parliament. There was no specified number of parliaments that the Code was to be applied for. Therefore, the signatory parties may no longer feel bound to honour the Code's principles.

*I love it. I really enjoy being in the House. I think it's actually hugely entertaining. I must admit sometimes I sit there and think: I know that the general public could watch this and shake their heads in disbelief at the childish behaviour and all the rest of it, and yes there is some childish behaviour and I have to admit that occasionally I've made the odd interjection and thought, 'oh, that probably doesn't sound very good or look very sensible', but when you're in there, the atmosphere is terrific.*

*The more heated it gets, the more I like it.*

MPs who disliked the behaviour acted out in the House argued that childish behaviour was unnecessary and unproductive:

*The fractious kindergarten slanging between Labour and National, particularly at Question Time, is actually really hard to take... This is not actually what New Zealanders expect, want, or deserve from parliamentarians. When you talk to people from those parties they say, 'oh, you don't understand – this is part of a tradition and it's theatre', and all that sort of stuff. Well that is the most pathetic copout you could imagine.*

*Some of the behaviour can get a bit caustic and nasty and disrespectful, which I don't appreciate. And though some would say, 'it's just part of [the tradition]', well people would say that about rugby as well in the 1960s, you know, punching and kicking and gouging – it might have been par for the course. You gotta step back from that and say, 'well, it might be par for the course, but is it acceptable? Is that the way you want the affairs of our government to be run?'*

Some MPs took a more nuanced attitude, disliking the behaviour of the House but accepting it as a necessary element of parliamentary politics:

*Childish behaviour is a by-product of our adversarial system and democratic process. So without engaging in that kind of fight we really cannot go anywhere. So I quietly, but not terribly confidently, accept it as it is.*

MPs with positive attitudes emphasised the good nature of the House and claimed that conflict was purely for fun:

*There's a real collegial atmosphere... You'll be watching somebody yelling at somebody at one stage and then they're sitting next to each other and having a good laugh at the next. It really is very insightful to people's psyches.*

*There's a lot of good humour in there... You'd have gained from the fact that even though we're on opposite sides of the political fence, I still like [a particular opposing MP], we get on well, I have no problem in just having a chat with him. But he could knock me down in a debate, I could stand up and have a go at him and then we'd just sort of have a laugh afterwards and get on.*

MPs were realistic about the usefulness of the House as a forum for genuine debate:

*I'm probably still in the naïve stage where one thinks that you might just convince someone in the House. I'm rapidly learning that that's not so. But it's a place to air points of view that get covered by the media; things that are brought up can be more widely canvassed elsewhere.*

*In the House itself the debate is pretty much stylised. There isn't much opportunity for changing someone's mind.*

New MPs were surprisingly confident in their speaking abilities. In the first interviews, 63 percent of MPs claimed that they found it easy to speak in the House, versus 25 percent who found speaking difficult, and 13 percent who had mixed experiences. In the second interviews, 64 percent found speaking in the House to be easy, 14 percent claimed it was difficult, and 21 percent had mixed experiences. While the proportion who found speaking easy did not change, those who initially struggled in the House felt they were improving over time:

*I enjoy speaking. I think the number one thing is learning how to block out the noise that comes at you, which is quite hard. In fact, if you've got a wall of noise it's much easier than if you can hear individual things. But it's just about learning mechanisms to block out the noise, I guess.*

*When I speak I have some really good speeches and then I have some real shockers, too – you know, not being a natural speaker in the House, just not having the gift of the gab.*

The variety of bills that come before the House ensures that MPs must speak on subjects about which they know little. A number of MPs noted the difficulty of this task:

*Suddenly I found that I had to make a speech of around eight to 10 minutes on one particular clause which amended the former Customs and Excise Act by deleting the word 'China' and inserting the phrase 'or any party to this agreement' – and I had to write a 10 minute speech on that... Sometimes you take a deep breath and think, 'fuck, what am I going to say here and I hope not too many people are listening or watching!'*

*Last night they said, 'well, you're gonna have to speak on this bill'... I said, 'I don't know anything about it'. And they said, 'well, here are the speaking notes'... You've just gotta be thrown in the deep end, and it's pretty scary really, but you just do it.*

Eighty-eight percent of MPs believed they received adequate speaking time in the House. Interestingly, in the first round of interviews no MPs claimed to actively pursue speaking time but 24 percent did so in the second interviews:

*I get lots of opportunities. Mind you, I go hunting for them sometimes, too. I go hassle the whips and say, 'can I talk? Have you got anything that I can do?'*

*I think we've been getting a fair deal. But I am going to say something to the whips because I spoke yesterday but I think that was the first time in about three or four weeks that I've spoken. But that would have been an oversight.*

A number of MPs – all of whom were positive about the House – sat in the House even when they were not rostered to speak, drinking in the atmosphere:

*I spend a lot of time down there, probably more than most new MPs would – a lot more than most experienced MPs would do. I just enjoy being down there.*

*I often take my work there just to sit there and get in-tray stuff done while listening to the debate going on.*

Perhaps most telling about socialisation experiences in the House is new MPs' own behaviour. As the proportion of MPs who were positive about the House increased between the two interview rounds it is likely that MPs quickly become comfortable in the cut-and-thrust of the House. As they became more confident, new MPs were significantly more likely to interject and heckle their political opponents. Thirty-eight percent of MPs admitted to interjecting in the first interviews, rising to 56 percent in the second. A number of MPs stated in the first interviews that they did not wish to participate in the bickering in the House:

*I'm not really inclined to take part in the same way as some of my colleagues on both sides of the House. I'm a much bigger fan of the disapproving headshake [laughs].*

The same MP took a different approach in their second interview:

*I've always maintained that I don't want to get into the personal stuff, but the House at Question Time, I've always said to people who've come in here, 'it's like theatre'. It is where you play out a lot of what's going on, what are topical issues.*

Thus MPs' behaviour changes as they are socialised into the House. As they become more comfortable in their roles, MPs rationalise their behaviour as 'fitting in'. Therefore MPs are unaware that their behaviour is different to how they expected to behave when first entering the House.

The small parties' voluntary Code of Conduct means that one would expect their MPs to act with restraint and exhibit good behaviour in the House. In the first interviews, small party MPs unanimously criticised the behaviour of the House, compared with 83 percent of large party MPs. By the second

interviews, however, small and large party MPs were *equally* likely to enjoy the behaviour of the House (67 percent), as demonstrated by these small party MPs:

*Like every new member, I suspect I came in here planning to lead the charge away from all childish behaviour. I would like to think that I don't personally indulge in childish behaviour. Probably I'm guilty of egotistical behaviour, but then if you're not an egotist you're in the wrong game, probably. I would like to think that I don't get into petty, vindictive, nasty stuff. I've certainly tried not to.*

*Sitting in the Chamber and listening to the backwards and forwards is quite funny. And although we – as a rule but not always – we don't get pulled into it sometimes you have to laugh and have a quiet dig.*

Thus while small party MPs may take the moral high ground, their behaviour does not always reflect their rhetoric.

## **Select Committees**

Select committees are sometimes described as the 'engine room' of parliament.<sup>6</sup> Select committees examine issues more closely than in the House, meaning they are valuable fora for examining and providing advice on a range of complex issues. Most bills are referred to select committees for consideration and select committees usually hear public submissions. Select committees examine government departments' Budget Estimates, conduct financial reviews of public organisations, receive petitions, consider some international treaties, and can hold inquiries into matters related to their subject areas.<sup>7</sup> Thus the reach of select committees is extensive.

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<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Boston, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay, and Nigel S. Roberts, *New Zealand Under MMP: A New Politics?* (Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books, 1996), p. 79.

<sup>7</sup> New Zealand Parliament, *Parliamentary Brief: Select Committees*, <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/AboutParl/HowPWorks/FactSheets/3/f/a/3faad934f46f4612ad8180cb294638fd.htm>, accessed 17 November 2009.

Overall, new MPs had positive attitudes towards select committees: 60 percent were generally positive in the first interview round, rising slightly to 63 percent in the second. Seventy percent of list MPs were positive about select committees in the first interviews, rising to 73 percent in the second. List MPs enjoyed the detailed consideration they were able to give to issues:

*I enjoy the opportunity to get into some detail. I enjoy policy work.*

*You have more time to go into things in depth, so that's more germane to my predilection – I think to most people's – to understand a thing better.*

By contrast, only 53 percent of electorate MPs were initially positive, rising slightly to 56 percent in the second interviews. Given the policy focus of select committees this suggests that list MPs may engage in policy discussion more willingly than their electorate MP counterparts – a benefit of list MPs promoted by the Royal Commission on the Electoral System when recommending MMP.<sup>8</sup> List MPs may see policy work as central to their conceptions of being an effective MP, whereas electorate MPs' attention may turn to constituency work as a means of ensuring re-election in their seat. Thus electorate and list MPs may employ different means of self-preservation.

Given the importance of select committees, MPs must work well together. In their typology of select committee members Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts argue that the dynamics of select committees are qualitatively different to those of the House because all select committee members have an investment in ensuring the best possible outcome for each issue considered.<sup>9</sup> This results in a greater willingness to work across party lines.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, understanding how MPs behave in select committees gives

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<sup>8</sup> Royal Commission on the Electoral System, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1986), p. 68.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, 'From Lobby Fodder to Leadership: New Zealand Parliamentarians and Select Committees', *Political Science*, Vol. 56, No. 2, December 2004, p. 44.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, 'From Lobby Fodder to Leadership', p. 48.

an insight into overall attitudes towards parliament.<sup>11</sup> Under MMP, some committees are chaired by opposition members. This encourages all parties to aim for consensus.<sup>12</sup> Select committee proceedings are not broadcasted, receive less media coverage than the House, and have relatively small audiences. As a result, select committees are often less adversarial than the House.

The collaborative atmosphere of select committees was emphasised by new MPs in the first interviews, with 74 percent stating that members worked well together and that conflict was minimal:

*There's a sense of bipartisanship there which is important and healthy. We're not always going to agree, but you do get that sense of perhaps a little more cooperation in select committees that you don't get in the House.*

*It's okay to agree with the guys on the other side of the table and you're all working pretty much together.*

Unfortunately, MPs' feelings of collegiality were wavering by the second interviews. Overall, only 40 percent of new MPs in the second interviews claimed that their select committees worked harmoniously – almost half that of only a few months prior. However, MPs were not categorically negative about their select committee relationships – 53 percent of MPs said the collegiality of committees depended on the chairperson (versus only nine percent in the first interviews). Thus good committee leadership ensured that members worked well together while a bad chairperson caused friction:

*There's a huge variation in the quality of the chairman and the quality of how the committee operates.*

*I have a high regard for the way in which the select committees are run. A lot of it depends on the chairmanship.*

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<sup>11</sup> Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, 'From Lobby Fodder to Leadership', p. 40.

<sup>12</sup> Grant Gillon and Raymond Miller, 'Role of an MP', p. 176. As of 16 February 2010, four of the 18 committees are currently chaired by opposition members.



It is interesting to probe this issue further to determine whether new MPs genuinely believe that the chairperson is responsible for the overall tone of select committees. MPs may claim that the chairperson has great influence in order to rationalise their behaviour, which may not live up to their own expectations. Responses to questions about collegiality in select committees were categorised based on whether the committees MPs served on were chaired by their own party, another party, or – in cases where MPs served on multiple committees – both. The results are presented in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3 – Perceptions of Collegiality in Select Committees<sup>13</sup>**

		Perceptions of Collegiality (%)		
		Harmony	Conflict	Depends on Chairperson
<b>Chaired by</b>	<b>Same Party</b>	81	0	19
	<b>Different Party</b>	56	19	25
	<b>Both</b>	29	14	57

MPs who serve on committees chaired by an MP from their own party are most likely to believe the atmosphere is harmonious. This is unsurprising as MPs probably feel more respected by their own party colleagues than by opposing members, regardless of whether this is actually the case.

MPs that had experienced the chairmanship of members from their own party *and* opposing parties were significantly more likely to believe the collegiality of each committee depends on the chairperson. As MPs perceive harmony to be at its peak in committees chaired by their own party colleagues it is probable that these MPs simply prefer the committees chaired by their colleagues. This is understandable, but suggests that collegiality in select committees is determined not solely by the quality of the

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<sup>13</sup> The responses from both interview rounds were averaged to create the data presented in this table.

chairmanship. Rather, all members influence the atmospheres of select committees.

Within parliament, select committee responsibilities occupy a significant proportion of MPs' workloads. Participating in select committees often assumes a level of specialist knowledge that not all MPs possess. As one MP noted:

*We have people with lifetimes of experience coming in and giving testimony and you're expected to master this in 10 minutes.*

To keep pace with select committees MPs must complete the allocated readings before each meeting. However, the quantity of reading is enormous. In the first round of interviews 83 percent of MPs admitted that managing readings was difficult, rising to 91 percent in the second interviews:

*If someone's stupid enough to put in a 40 page submission, I'll read the front and the back page. If – as is more common – they put in a two or three page submission I'll read the whole lot and absorb it quickly. But any submitter who thinks that their 40 page submission is going to change the world is dreaming.*

*Huge amounts of reading. Often the agendas and the papers aren't available until a short period before the meeting, so it's quite hard to keep up with the reading.*

Small party MPs – who are usually on multiple select committees – find the burden of reading the most difficult. As one small party MP noted:

*When I first started, I used to read all my papers, you know, stay up until midnight reading my papers and attend diligently from the start to the finish. Now I've found myself doing what I've seen... more experienced MPs from smaller parties doing, which is simply getting up and walking out halfway through, saying you can't possibly do everything.*

Despite the intense workload, new MPs increasingly appreciated the opportunity that select committees gave them to hear the views of

submitters and the wider public. Twenty-four percent of MPs noted this in the first interviews, rising to 37 percent in the second:<sup>14</sup>

*It's an opportunity to really understand an area and to hear from people who are working on it at the front line.*

*You get to hear a bit more about what people on the outside are thinking about.*

Interestingly, in the first round of interviews small party MPs were more likely than large party MPs to stress the importance of select committees for engaging with the public (40 percent versus 20 percent). However, by the second interviews this was reversed, with 43 percent of large party MPs taking this position against only 17 percent of small party MPs. This is likely due to the intense workload of small party MPs and their need to excuse themselves from less pressing aspects of their role, as noted above. Unfortunately, listening to submitters may become a lower priority for small party MPs out of necessity.

The select committees new MPs are allocated may have implications for their political career.<sup>15</sup> Select committees allow members to build up specialist knowledge within policy areas. If they excel in a particular area their chances of promotion may be improved. However, if MPs serve on committees about which they have little knowledge or interest their likelihood of standing out amongst their peers is reduced. While it is not necessary that MPs sit on select committees that reflect their pre-parliamentary expertise, doing so may be beneficial.

In the first round of interviews, 55 percent of MPs said that their select committee assignments were aligned to their previous experience:

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<sup>14</sup> The low proportion of MPs in the first interviews who noted the benefits of select committees hearing from the public is probably due to the fact that government department financial reviews and estimates were the first order of business for most committees. Therefore at the time of the first interviews few MPs would have experienced being in committees that engaged in a full public submission phase.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, 'From Lobby Fodder to Leadership', p. 40.

*I was well-known for my health background and it made sense for me to play to my strengths so my first preference was Health.*

*I think I'm clearly seen as someone who knows about a particular area and so I've got the Law and Order and Justice and Electoral Select Committees. In a way that gives some grunt to those committees.*

MPs who were allocated select committees outside their area of expertise viewed this as an opportunity to develop diverse skills:

*The party's quite keen for me to do more in the education area, which is quite neat, even though I'm not a teacher or anything.*

*It's not my number one choice of committee. Obviously I went on it because that's where there was a spot and I had some surplus capacity. It's a fantastic opportunity to get into some issues that I'm not familiar with.*

Interestingly, by the second interviews 80 percent of MPs claimed their select committees were within their area of expertise despite few MPs changing committees between interviews. This suggests that new MPs rapidly adapt to the rigours of select committee work and quickly consider themselves experts.

Select committees are unique within parliament in their potential to bring MPs together to work cooperatively to achieve shared goals. While new MPs quickly lose their idealism regarding the collegiality of select committees, or just as quickly adapt to partisanship, they retain a positive attitude towards the committees generally.

## **Parties**

The roles MPs undertake to satisfy their party functions are extensive. This sub-section addresses caucuses, caucus committees, and policy roles.

### *Caucus*

While a major aspect of MPs' parliamentary roles, little is known about how party caucuses operate. Parties and MPs staunchly guard caucus from outside eyes – conventions dictate caucus meetings are strictly confidential.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, little is known about caucus.

Within governing parties, the role of the caucus is relatively limited as major decisions are made in cabinet. Senior government members usually brief the caucus before major policy announcements, but this generally invites discussion rather than serious policy input. When minor policies are announced, backbench members may receive the news at the same time as the public. Thus governing parties' caucuses are generally restrained.

Opposition party caucuses may provide greater opportunities for backbenchers to influence policy and party positions. As opposition parties do not have access to advice from government officials to the same extent as governing parties, the expertise of caucus members are more likely drawn upon. However, senior members may dominate discussions and thus have a greater influence in shaping caucus decisions than their backbench colleagues.

Small party caucuses are different to those of large parties due to the relative influence of each member based on caucus size. Whereas each National or Labour MP makes up only a small fraction of the caucus, each small party MP

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<sup>16</sup> There is one exception in the New Zealand parliament. The Green Party opens its caucus to party staff and parliamentary interns working for the party. The other parties in parliament allow only MPs and, in some cases, party officials to attend caucus.

comprises a comparatively larger proportion of their caucus. Moreover, small party MPs often hold significant portfolio responsibilities. Thus small party MPs are influential within their caucuses. It is poignant to note, however, that small parties tend to rely more on their extra-parliamentary parties for policy development than large parties. Therefore some influence is removed from small party MPs in the name of intra-party democracy.

New MPs largely enjoyed caucus, with 88 percent taking a positive stance:

*Caucus meetings are great. That's where you can have your brainstorming sessions with your colleagues in a very frank and candid way.*

*They are really good. That's when we get a chance to voice our views to the whole caucus. That's the time to stand up and say how we feel about what's going on, what our take is on things, what we think our strategy or way forward should be. And it's democracy in action.*

Assuming that positivity about caucus is related to the level of input afforded to MPs, the observation that small party MPs have greater influence than their larger party colleagues is confirmed. Small party MPs were unanimously positive about caucus, against 85 percent of large party MPs. Of course, that large party MPs were also very positive suggests reasons for enjoying caucus are greater than level of input. There were no significant variations between electorate and list MPs in general attitudes toward caucus.

Participating in caucus may initially be intimidating for new MPs. Given the secrecy surrounding caucus most new MPs have little knowledge of what to expect when they first enter the caucus room. Thus new MPs may take a passive role in caucus as they seek to 'find their ground'.

Overall, 64 percent of new MPs claimed to be comfortable participating in caucus, versus 14 percent who preferred to observe, and 23 percent who

took a mixed stance. MPs who participated in caucus stressed that all members were equal:

*I find caucus a very democratic place, a place where all of us can speak and are encouraged to do so. And it's free and frank. And it's the most important court we have.*

*Everybody is entitled to say whatever he or she feels okay to say.*

MPs who preferred not to contribute in caucus stressed that as new MPs it was best for them not to participate heavily until they had a better understanding of the norms and expectations of caucus:

*I've kept a very low profile in caucus, deliberately. I followed the Holyoake adage: breathe through your nose. And I follow caucus discussions with interest; I'm really impressed by the energy, the vitality, the intelligence of the vast majority of my colleagues... I'd like to think that I've had my ears open all the time, but my mouth shut most of it.*

*I tend to sort of just keep my head down and watch, because that's just the way I prefer to be.*

MPs who took a mixed approach were generally silent but occasionally spoke if they felt strongly about an issue:

*I think it would be wrong for a new MP to be standing up every couple of minutes and interjecting all the time. But certainly if there's something I felt strongly enough about I would be able to have my say.*

*Initially I was quite happy to just sit back and listen to what's going on. I still think it's important not to just talk for the sake of talking. But if I've got a burning desire to say something I don't hesitate.*

Interestingly, there were only minimal variations between electorate and list MPs in their participation in caucus (67 percent versus 60 percent respectively claimed to be active participants). This suggests that within parliament the informal hierarchy of members may be breaking down. As

caucus is a forum for parties to determine policies and positions, the more specialised policy knowledge of some list MPs may offer greater legitimacy to their positions.

There were significant variations in attitudes towards caucus between opposition and government members. Seventy-five percent of opposition members reported that they actively participated in caucus versus only 50 percent of government MPs. Opposition MPs stressed that their caucus atmosphere was geared towards full engagement:

*Obviously you hear what's going on, but there's an opportunity to also contribute to debates about how we're doing, what we should be doing, what our response should be.*

*I put an item on the agenda and spoke at caucus last time and that was the fourth time I'd put something on the agenda and spoken to it. So the agenda's open, you put your paper in and you'll get heard. So there's a fairness around that, there's no doubt about it.*

On the other hand, government members noted that caucus was a formal avenue for backbenchers to be kept informed:

*It's very formal. A lot more formal than I expected. And a lot of people are still finding their way in terms of picking what they can and can't do or can and can't say.*

*There's probably less participation than I would have thought. But then – as it's been explained to me – it's quite different when you're in government as opposed to opposition. And a lot of the 'debate', if you like, took place over the last few years when we were developing our policies and now a lot of it is churning it out. There's not so much left for discussion.*

This difference is further confirmed by comparing the level of influence government and opposition MPs claimed to hold within caucus. Ninety percent of opposition MPs believed they were influential within their caucus:

*I don't think that me being a newbie backbencher is any less listened to than someone who's been there for 20 years.*



*I've never been stopped from having my say on an issue I wanted to.*

By contrast, only 40 percent of government members felt influential:

*You learn pretty early that you pick your fights, which I guess is the same anywhere.*

*They are information-sharing meetings, mainly, because you've got such a large caucus, relatively speaking. It's difficult to listen, share, and debate policy issues at a detailed level... so caucuses aren't big 'get on the whiteboard and argue policies', essentially they're not that type of meeting. That's for another forum.*

Thus caucus roles differ greatly between government and opposition parties. While opposition members have significant opportunities to engage in debate and contribute to their party's direction, government backbenchers are constrained to more-or-less 'rubber-stamping' decisions made by senior members. Opposition MPs are in a stronger position to develop skills – such as deliberation, consultation, and debate – that are important throughout their political career. Government MPs, on the other hand, have limited scope to develop these skills and therefore may experience difficulties should they progress to roles of greater responsibility.

There are also differences in caucus roles between small and large parties. All small party MPs felt influential within their parties versus only 69 percent of large party MPs. This is logical given the few MPs that comprise small party caucuses. It is unavoidable that small party MPs will wield influence within their parties as they are expected to manage significant portfolios.

The speed at which new MPs are socialised into parliamentary norms is confirmed by the reluctance with which some MPs discussed caucus. One in five MPs said they could not comment when asked about their general feeling about caucus. Most MPs were comfortable to give general

descriptions of caucus once they were reassured that they would not be identified personally. However, the length to which MPs may go to adhere to caucus confidentiality is demonstrated in this somewhat tense exchange:

**Interviewer: How have things been going with the caucus meetings, how have you been enjoying them?**

**MP:** I'm not allowed to talk about caucus.

**Interviewer: Nothing of course to do with content, but in terms of the general atmosphere of the caucus, is it –**

**MP:** I'm not even allowed – yep. Has anyone else answered that question?

**Interviewer: Yeah, people have been giving me kind of general things about whether or not they feel comfortable speaking and –**

**MP:** But your thesis is public, eh?

**Interviewer: Yeah, but no identifying –**

**MP:** Individuals.

**Interviewer: – information, yeah nothing.**

**MP:** I think it's good, it's good.

**Interviewer: Feel free to say that you can't answer this, but do you feel like you can put up your hand and –**

**MP:** Absolutely, I do.

**Interviewer: Have you managed to get any kind of your own–**

**MP:** Yes.

**Interviewer: – personal proposals –**

**MP:** Oh hang on, I'm not going to go that far, but I feel that I provide a contribution that's listened to.

It should be noted that this exchange was not typical of the interviews, which were largely free, frank, and courteous. However, the reluctance to discuss the most secretive aspect of their role demonstrates the speed with which parliamentary norms are instilled in new MPs.

### *Caucus Committees*

Caucus committees are a branch of the caucus process used as a forum within the larger parties to discuss and develop policies. Generally caucus committee members have a particular interest or portfolio responsibility in the subject area. Caucus committees are an opportunity for caucus members to consider policies in greater detail than is possible during full caucus meetings.

Arguably, caucus committees are one of the few means by which backbench MPs can influence party policy. Committees consider policy in great detail before reporting back to the whole caucus. Thus if committee members position themselves as competent policy-makers and provide a compelling argument for a particular approach they may persuade their colleagues to take a particular course of action. Moreover, caucus committees are sometimes chaired by backbenchers, providing an opportunity for MPs to demonstrate leadership skills. On the other hand, more cynical observers would note that party leaders may use caucus committees to keep backbench MPs occupied while the real policy work is completed at higher levels. This may especially be the case in governing parties.<sup>17</sup>

It should be noted that currently only the large parties use caucus committees. The reasons for this are twofold: firstly, the few members available in smaller parties would make caucus committees unviable and – more importantly – small parties tend to place greater emphasis on their extra-parliamentary party in policy development. Therefore when small parties develop new policy, the process may be more holistic, as opposed to the parliament-centric model employed by the larger parties.

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<sup>17</sup> Fiona Barker and Stephen Levine, 'The Individual Parliamentary Member and Institutional Change: The Changing Role of the New Zealand Member of Parliament', in Lawrence D. Longley and Reuven Y. Hazan (eds.), *The Uneasy Relationships Between Parliamentary Members and Leaders* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 2000), p. 111.

Amongst the large party MPs, 63 percent had an overall positive attitude towards caucus committees:

*I'm part of the Economic Caucus and I'm leading a stream of work around productivity, which is obviously quite a key issue at the moment, so that's really exciting.*

*It certainly is a great opportunity to have discussions about direction and policy as its being developed, what it means and so on... they allow us the opportunity to talk more widely and broadly about issues and go into them more deeply.*

New MPs believed caucus committees held only limited ability to influence policy. Only 53 percent of MPs believed committees were influential, with 18 percent saying they were not influential, and 29 percent believing influence was mixed.

Interestingly, while government members (75 percent) were more positive about caucus committees than opposition MPs (55 percent), opposition MPs were marginally more likely to feel that caucus committees were influential (56 percent) than their government counterparts (50 percent). This suggests that government MPs are aware that most decisions are made higher up in the party:

*The thing I'm finding is instead of necessarily directly influencing my colleagues I'll talk to the minister or send a letter and do those sorts of things.*

*I think those caucus committees play a role in bringing ideas to the attention of the minister.*

Opposition members, on the other hand, believed caucus committees offered an opportunity for new approaches to policy to be tested:

*Caucus committees are not places where the party's position gets challenged; they are places where they get better understood or it gets adopted. So a lot of thinking goes on about how to adapt and then it goes back to caucus. It's also a place where somebody*

*might come up with an idea. We'll thrash it around and it might go nowhere or it might really become better.*

*We're in the process of beginning our policy development and there's a big role for caucus members in that – huge. In fact, if we don't drive it along, a lot of it wouldn't happen. The Strategy and Communication Committee's a really good one to be on; I do feel like I have a role in influencing that.*

Government committees operated sporadically, perhaps as an indication of their limited importance:

*Some start off with a hiss and a roar and meet every week the House is sitting. A lot of them have moved into once a sitting session, which is a bit more manageable. But then often what happens is other functions come up or you've gotta do this or you've got to go and give a speech in the House. So getting continuity with some of those is – I find – frustrating.*

*They go in fits and spurts. It depends heavily on the relationship between the minister and the committee chair.*

A number of new MPs noted caucus committees were a low priority, which once again confirms their limited importance:

*I don't think they're working as effectively [as caucus], necessarily. I struggle with the resourcing of that side of things a bit, it's a question of time and priorities and frankly I haven't made caucus committees a high priority.*

*If I can I normally attend all those caucus committees, but normally it's a bit of a tough clash. For instance, this evening we have two or three caucus committees or other meetings, but if you're scheduled to take a call in the Debating Chamber you simply cannot attend all of the meetings and again you need to prioritise your focus.*

It is notable that only one large party MP decided not to participate in caucus committees. This was not a critique of caucus committees; rather it was a reflection of the enormity of MPs' jobs:

*I wanted to get to grips with being an MP. And I do struggle to read everything, and then once I've read everything, trying to file everything. I just wanna make sure I speak well in the House, I know my stuff in select committees, I do my spokesperson role well, and obviously there's the party organisation you have to do as well as the electorate stuff.*

New MPs are realistic about the limited role of caucus committees in influencing their party policies. Even MPs who were positive about committees believed they were most useful as discussion fora. Thus while they may be removed from major policy formulation, caucus committees provide a useful 'testing ground' for new MPs to debate policies in detail – a skill that is eminently useful throughout their parliamentary career.

### *Policy*

The final area of parliamentary responsibility adopted by new MPs is the role of advocating for particular policies. This role is somewhat of a 'middle ground' between parliamentary and representational roles. MPs advocate for policies in their parties, select committees, and the House. However, they also seek policy feedback from constituents and, in turn, attempt to 'sell' policies to voters. Thus policy-related tasks vary.

Despite this, the immediate benefits of new MPs engaging in policy roles are questionable. Few members of the public have clearly defined policy interests; therefore it may be beneficial for MPs to instead focus their attention on more 'popular' aspects of their role to increase their profile and legitimacy.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the hierarchical nature of parliament ensures that MPs must demonstrate policy competence to be promoted and thus to have real influence. Therefore, MPs who aspire to high positions may emphasise policy roles.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> John Wahlke, 'Policy Demands and System Support: The Role of the Represented', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 1, No. 3, July 1971, pp. 271-273.

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Prewitt and William Nowlin, 'Political Ambitions and the Behavior of Incumbent Politicians', *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 2, June 1969, p. 301.

Policy roles were moderately important for new MPs. Overall, 32 percent of new MPs identified policy-related tasks as a key role in the first interviews, rising to 41 percent in the second interviews. MPs viewed policy advocacy as a process that started at community level and was an indicator of the issues they should highlight in all aspects of their roles:

*I think that things like [specific policy] are really positive because it shows that we're really positive and have new ideas and I think that's important. But the level at which those ideas will be enacted is only going to be as good as our relationship with the community that's already trying new things all the time anyway.*

This policy focus is most pronounced amongst MPs from small parties – the vast majority of whom are list MPs. Fifty percent of small party MPs reported policy advocacy as a key role in the first interview, rising to 67 percent in the second. By contrast, only 27 and 33 percent respectively of large party MPs claimed to be policy advocates. This confirms small parties' greater policy focus and is not surprising given the extensive portfolio workloads of small party MPs.

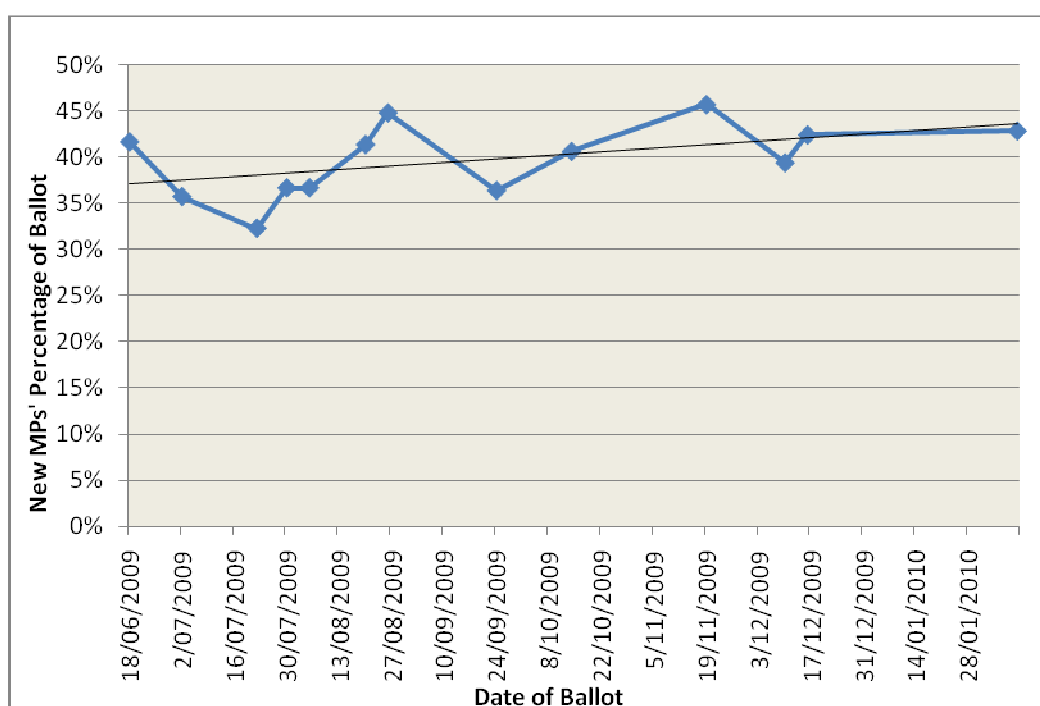
Interestingly, 29 percent of MPs stated in the first interviews that they wanted to be 'opinion leaders'. While leading public opinion is not necessarily connected with policy roles it does imply a desire to participate in setting the strategic direction for the nation – a task which is strongly related to policy direction. It is therefore significant that by the second interviews only seven percent of MPs took this position.

There are two possible reasons for this decline. Firstly, MPs may become more aware of the need for them to be engaged in policy to become 'opinion leaders' and therefore articulate their roles along policy lines rather than in more abstract terms. On the other hand, the decline may be due to new MPs realising that their junior position does not allow them to be 'opinion leaders' to the extent they desire (if at all) due to party and parliamentary hierarchies. Therefore this ambition may be abandoned until a more favourable strategic location is acquired.

One avenue for backbench MPs to gain experience in developing policy – and legislation – is through members’ bills. The House sets aside an evening every second Wednesday to debate bills prepared by individual members, as well as local and private bills.<sup>20</sup> Any MP (except ministers) may draft a bill and enter it into the ballot for one of the coveted spaces that occasionally becomes available on the Order Paper.<sup>21</sup> In preparing members’ bills, MPs create for themselves the opportunity to make legislative achievements regardless of whether they are in government or opposition.

The 2008 intake has thus far made good use of the members’ bill system. Figure 5.2 shows the occurrence of new MPs’ bills in each of the ballots held during the 49<sup>th</sup> Parliament, up until the ballot of 10 February 2010.

**Figure 5.2 – Proportion of New MPs’ Bills in Members’ Bill Ballots<sup>22</sup>**



<sup>20</sup> New Zealand Parliament, *Members’ Bills Ballot*, <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/Features/d/4/a/49NZPHomeNews180620091-Members-bill-ballot.htm>, accessed 23 November 2009.

<sup>21</sup> For a comprehensive account of the members’ bill process, see Raukura Spindler, ‘Members’ Bills in the New Zealand Parliament’, *Political Science*, Vol. 61, No. 1, June 2009, pp. 51-79.

<sup>22</sup> Ballots are held only when there are fewer than four members’ bills on the Order Paper awaiting their first reading. No spaces were available in the current parliament before 18 June 2009.



Given that new MPs comprise 28 percent of the parliament as a whole, it is clear that these MPs make greater use of the members' bill system than more experienced legislators.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, 43 percent of the members' bills picked from the ballot belonged to new MPs.

MPs who had used the members' bill process spoke of formulating strategies to ensure their bills were passed:

*I've suddenly realised what members' bills are about... I need to build a campaign rather than get it to the House and get it lost, because it will be lost straight away if I do that.*

Some MPs entered bills into the ballot with the knowledge they were unlikely to pass even their first reading. This was a strategy to promote debate:

*The purpose of the bill will be to have a debate about an issue, okay, and you're guaranteed a first reading if it gets drawn out of the ballot, so you get a debate, and then it will be voted down.*

*It's part of a campaign for us to frame the governance handling of the [policy area] as a corporatisation/privatisation exercise, and build up a constituency... who are mobilised to defend our public assets.*

One MP delighted in the absurdity of the members' bill process:

*The ballot's in a biscuit tin! I mean, who would have thought that?!*

Members' bills are an important avenue for new MPs to gain experience in the development of bills and to understand the dynamics of lobbying parliamentary colleagues. The 2008 intake actively pursued members' bills – with either the desire to have them passed or to stir debate – at a higher rate

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<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that as ministers are not entitled to enter members' bills the pool of members who may do so is reduced to 94. Using this figure, new MPs comprise 36 percent of all members entitled to prepare members' bills.

than their overall proportion in parliament would suggest. Therefore, it is possible that of all MPs, new MPs make the *best* use of this valuable system.

### **Parliamentary Roles and Community Leadership**

It is interesting to consider how community leadership is exercised within parliament as MPs' self-identified constituencies usually exist outside of parliament. Therefore the nature of engagement is significantly different to the forms of community leadership identified in the previous chapter.

Up until this point, the inclusive nature of community leadership has been stressed – any community member may be a leader, regardless of whether or not they are elected. However, only MPs can provide community leadership in parliament, meaning that this is an exclusive form of leadership. Of course, this is not to say that community members cannot provide political leadership, but the nature of parliament means that only MPs can provide leadership within this particular institution.

Given the dislocation between parliamentary activity and the general public, the extent to which MPs provide community leadership in the legislature is debatable. Certainly, MPs may speak in the House, select committees or caucus of the interests and concerns of their constituents, but this is an act of *advocacy* and does not necessarily equate to *leadership*. Moreover, the strength of political parties in New Zealand means that MPs' primary parliamentary allegiances may be to their parties rather than to their constituents.

The question of leadership in parliament is difficult to address as parliament is where major decisions are made and where political leadership is exercised. However, to say that all MPs demonstrate political leadership is not correct. The situational constraints placed upon backbenchers means that while they are part of the mechanism of power, they hold little real

influence. Therefore while backbenchers are close to power, they are largely excluded from its exercise.

Despite this, the centrality of parliament in public perceptions of MPs' roles means that legislators do engage in community leadership in parliament. While MPs' power is constrained, the fact that constituents feel that they have a voice in parliament through 'their' MP means that the community leadership interaction occurs. The fact that the public can access legislators with relative ease and feel assured that their case, if worthy, will be taken to parliament means that MPs are in a unique position to offer a particular form of community leadership. This leadership is political, but is not political leadership.

Parliament is, however, the premier location for MPs to demonstrate their skills as 'proto-leaders'. Parliamentary activities are the most visible to party leaders of all of MPs' tasks, meaning that MPs who excel in parliament may demonstrate their potential to fill more senior positions. Therefore, MPs may emphasise their parliamentary skills and dedication to their party as a means of self-promotion.

This suggests that MPs exercise two types of leadership – community and 'proto-leadership' – in different circumstances in order to appeal to different constituencies. This is a demonstration of legislators responding to the gatekeepers of the offices to which they aspire. In candidate selection and carrying out their representational tasks, MPs emphasise their community leadership skills. In their parliamentary tasks, however, MPs highlight their individual potential as 'proto-leaders' to appeal to party leaders. This is a rational strategy for self-preservation and self-promotion, and is well documented in the existing literature.<sup>24</sup> Thus MPs show some sophistication

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<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Kenneth Prewitt and William Nowlin, 'Political Ambitions and the Behavior of Incumbent Politicians', p. 300; James Walter, *The Acculturation to Political Work: New Members of the Federal Backbench* (Canberra: Australasian Political Studies Association, 1979); and Harold D. Clarke and Richard G. Price, 'Freshman MPs' Job Images: The Effects of Incumbency, Ambition and Position', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13, No. 3, September 1980, p. 592.

in tailoring their behaviour to appeal to a range of groups depending on the particular circumstances.

## **Conclusions**

For new MPs, arriving at parliament for the first time was a source of some excitement and nervousness. The traditions and symbolism of parliament may feel comfortable to some and archaic to others. Thus each member's initial experiences in parliament are unique.

Overall, new MPs adapted very quickly to their alien surroundings. Although initially overwhelming, MPs quickly learnt parliamentary norms. This is exemplified by the seriousness with which maiden speeches were delivered: all MPs delivered speeches within the norms of parliament – respectful and largely non-controversial.

Perhaps the most significant confirmation of the extent of socialisation to parliamentary norms is the speed with which new MPs altered their perceptions of the level of behaviour they aspired to. When interviewed shortly after their election new MPs believed the childish behaviour typical of the House was unnecessary. However, within a few months MPs had not only adapted their behaviour to fit within parliamentary norms, but also rationalised the change as just 'fitting into' the atmosphere of the House. Moreover, while MPs initially praised select committees for their civility and constructive atmosphere, by the second interviews party tribalism had begun. Thus the behaviour typical of parliament – often criticised by the public and sometimes by MPs themselves – is deep-rooted and in some ways intoxicating for MPs.

New MPs enjoy their parliamentary roles immensely. Enjoyment of the House grew with time and MPs became increasingly comfortable to speak on a range of subjects – including those about which they knew very little. Particularly enthusiastic MPs even took to sitting in the House when they

were not scheduled to speak. Additionally, new MPs were largely positive about their select committee and party roles.

New MPs feel significant camaraderie with their party and – to an extent – parliamentary colleagues. Given the unusual nature of their jobs, MPs view parliament as a place where other members understand the demands they face. Thus even though parliament itself can be tense and uncomfortable for MPs, the opportunity to spend time with their colleagues is a release. It is therefore not surprising that new MPs quickly adapt to parliamentary norms – for better or worse – as a means of self-preservation.

This thesis now moves to a final chapter, which brings together arguments about the individuals who become MPs and the disparate roles they undertake to offer a comprehensive account of candidate selection and role adaptation amongst New Zealand MPs.

The belief that new MPs are relatively unimportant within parliament is best summed up in Keith Holyoake's adage that they ought to 'breathe through their noses'. Indeed, the old-fashioned belief that children should not speak unless they are spoken to may be equally applicable to first-term MPs.

This final chapter brings together findings regarding candidate selection and new MPs' roles. The value of the candidate selection process, changing role conceptions, the balancing of roles, and differences between members are discussed. The chapter concludes by arguing that new MPs' roles as community and 'proto-leaders' are unique and extremely important within the New Zealand democracy.

#### **Candidate Selection**

Candidate selection processes are characterised by a myriad of supply and demand factors. Selectors seek a range of individuals with the skills required to fill all aspects of legislators' roles. Thus individuals with a variety of backgrounds or characteristics, including temperament, occupation, gender, ethnicity, and party experience, are sought. On the supply side, individuals who have qualities typical of MPs – including high levels of ambition – are most likely to stand.

Overall, there are two goals of candidate selection over and above the need to determine who stands for each party. Firstly, parties use the candidate selection process as a means of socialising and grooming potential legislators. In jurisdictions with strong and hierarchical political parties, like New Zealand, it is imperative for parties to ensure that their MPs adhere to the norms of the party hierarchy. Therefore, parties test potential candidates' loyalties through the candidate selection process.

Socialisation and grooming requires a demonstrated commitment to the party. This is usually achieved through long-term party membership and office-holding in the larger parties, or significant contributions to complementary causes in smaller parties (for example, participation in environmental or social justice organisations for the Green Party). Participation in the party or associated groups makes potential MPs familiar with the norms of their party, including the need to work their way up the ranks – an essential skill for backbench MPs.

The second aim of the candidate selection process is for parties to test potential MPs. Chapter three outlined the difficulties many MPs faced in campaigning to become candidates. This is beneficial from the parties' perspective as campaigning for a nomination provides an ideal test for how nominees handle campaigning generally. The skills required of nominees who are able to convince party delegates to select them are not substantially different to those required of candidates soliciting citizens' votes. Therefore, the skills acquired during candidate selection are transferable to the election campaign-proper.

The two aims of candidate selection meet where parties use the candidate selection process to identify individuals who operate within group norms and therefore do not pose political risks. If candidates who are ill-suited to the expectations of hierarchical parliamentary parties are selected, parties are at risk of becoming fragmented and disunited. Thus the criteria for selection – formal and informal – reinforce the need for candidates to act within party norms. Individuals who have been socialised into the party and have been tested through the selection process are arguably less risky as candidates than 'outsiders'.

The rigorous testing in candidate selection is often stressful for nominees. Paradoxically, however, selection is designed for potential candidates to test *themselves*. Even though only a small fraction of citizens ever put themselves

forward for election to parliament, assuredly many from this small pool are unsuited to the job. Thus candidate selection allows nominees to test themselves, with unsuitable nominees falling along the wayside. This is beneficial for better-suited nominees as they must devise strategies to win against all competitors, regardless of their perceived chances of success. Thus unsuccessful nominees help strengthen the campaigning skills of successful candidates.

It is interesting to note that perceptions of list MPs lacking legitimacy are evident at even the candidate selection stage. There was an attitude amongst large party MPs that gaining a nomination for a winnable electorate seat was a sign that they were valued by their parties. List MPs who stood in an electorate and lost thus entered parliament with less mana than their electorate seat counterparts. This attitude was less apparent in list MPs who had stood *only* on the list; the list was bound to be their means of entry to parliament.

The existence of negative attitudes towards list MPs so early on the road to parliament gives insights into how these types of MPs are viewed by the general public and their peers. It is reasonable to assume that political candidates have a greater knowledge of MPs' roles than the general public, even if that knowledge is not comprehensive. Thus candidates should have some understanding of list MP roles. If even candidates view winning an electorate seat as a more legitimate means of entry to parliament, it is likely that scepticism about list MPs is widespread. The party list is treated with distrust by candidates and the public alike.

### **Variations in Roles amongst 'Types' of MPs**

Throughout this thesis it has been apparent that there are particular 'types' of MPs. The most notable distinction is between electorate and list MPs, although there are also significant variations between large and small parties, government and opposition, and, in some cases, men and women.



This section addresses the way new MPs perceive these variations and examines whether preferred ‘types’ of MPs exist amongst legislators.

### *Electorate versus List MPs*

The distinctions between electorate and list MPs are most apparent in considering the representative functions of legislators. Chapter four described how list MPs often mimic the role of electorate MPs, implying that representative functions of electorate MPs were more legitimate than those of list MPs. This is especially significant in considering representation of minority groups, who are often cited as constituents of list MPs. If list MPs are not considered legitimate representatives then minority groups may remain under-represented.

In order to understand how the roles of electorate and list MPs were perceived, MPs were asked whether there were any differences between the two ‘types’ of MPs and, if so, what those differences were. Overall, 81 percent of MPs believed that differences existed in the roles of electorate and list MPs. Perceptions of difference were greatest between electorate and list MPs themselves, with all electorate MPs saying that roles differed versus only 71 percent of list MPs.

Interestingly, only 69 percent of list MPs claimed to replicate electorate MPs’ roles, most commonly by servicing a geographic constituency. Given the emphasis most MPs – electorate and list alike – placed on geographic representation this figure is lower than expected. However, this may be due to differences between large and small parties: 91 percent of large party list MPs claimed to act as though they were electorate MPs versus only 20 percent of small party MPs.

In understanding how list MPs’ roles are constructed it is important to consider whether there is an imperative – formal or informal – for list MPs to

act like electorate MPs. Electorate MPs were unanimous in their belief that list MPs *may* mimic the electorate role, but that doing so was not mandatory:

*I guess there are some small aspects that have to be done by the electorate MP, or the electorate MP will be [approached] first. But in terms of helping whoever comes through the door, there are some list MPs who run it in a very similar way. There are other list MPs who are deliberately not set up that way – it might be that their constituency is ethnically-based or sector-based or religion-based, it could be a number of different things, and they work on a different basis.*

*List MPs can play a different role depending on who they are. See, some list MPs are playing a role within a particular demographic community rather than a geographic community... Then other list MPs have a geographic electorate.*

List MPs were more divided over the imperatives of their role. Forty percent believed that it was important for list MPs to act like electorate MPs:

*[My party has] said to me, 'you've gotta be based in [electorate], we want you to work the [region]'... They haven't said it overtly, but what they're basically saying is we want a good presence in the provinces and you're our man here.*

On the other hand, 40 percent of list MPs believed that there was no compulsion for them to mimic electorate MPs:

*We don't have the responsibility of dealing with individual issues, although they do come to us because the public doesn't necessarily differentiate. But we have to be pretty clear about what we are and what we're not.*

Finally, 20 percent of list MPs believed that they *may* act as electorate MPs, if they so choose:

*I will go to some events in parts of the city. But when I am in a particular constituency MP's electorate then I will be with them.*

Thus electorate MPs are unanimous in their understanding of the general role orientations of list MPs, while list MPs themselves are split. This suggests that electorate MPs may have vague understandings of list MP roles and that list MPs may undertake a diverse range of roles depending on individual and/or party preferences.

This second point is interesting because findings up until this point have suggested that list MPs emphasise the importance of acting as a representative for a geographic electorate or region. Chapter four found that list MPs were more likely to define their constituency as an electorate or region in the second interviews than they were in the first. Thus there appears to be a contradiction amongst some list MPs. While some claim that there is no imperative to provide geographic representation, the high level of electorate and regional representation amongst list MPs suggests that many do so anyway. Thus it is possible that list MPs are no clearer about the requirements of their role than electorate MPs, parties, and even members of the public are.

Given that list MPs may be perceived as less legitimate than their electorate counterparts, it is salient to consider MPs' preferences in terms of which 'type' of MP they would prefer to be. One may reasonably hypothesise that MPs wish to be perceived as legitimate and thus aspire to become electorate MPs. MPs were asked in each of the interview rounds whether they would rather be a list or electorate MP. The results are shown in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1 – Electorate versus List Preferences**

	Wishes to be					
	Round 1 (%)			Round 2 (%)		
	Electorate	List	Undecided	Electorate	List	Undecided
<b>All MPs</b>	81	7	11	77	19	4
<b>Electorate</b>	100	0	0	100	0	0
<b>List</b>	69	13	19	60	33	7

It is unsurprising that electorate MPs were unchanged in their desire to remain electorate MPs. It is interesting, however, that amongst list MPs the list role became more desirable between the interview rounds. This suggests that list MPs adopt clearer conceptions of what their role entails in their first year in office. This does not necessarily mean that list MPs cease performing electorate-type roles; rather, list MPs may seek a balance between 'traditional' electorate-related roles and broader roles:

*There are probably two levels at which you can make a difference in this job. One's very much at a governance and policy level... You can do that as a list MP – what you do on a far less regular basis in interact and assist directly individual constituents. So I place a lot of value on that role as well and I'd like the opportunity to do both more frequently.*

Despite feeling greater comfort about their MP 'type', many list MPs believed that electorate MPs were widely considered to be more legitimate, commanded greater mana, and wielded more influence than list MPs. Moreover, the perceived disparity in resources available to the two 'types' of MPs for electorate-related work became more important over time:

*I think that we get nowhere near the respect that we deserve, because the thing is that you're doing all the electorate work without any of the respect and resources.*

*I only have one office; I have someone for 35 hours... [The electorate MP] has four offices... and I think that there's an inequity there. He's got four times what I've got – I don't think people get four times the benefit.*

Perhaps the most important factor in the continued assumption of list members being lesser MPs is their own desire to become electorate MPs. Many large party candidates have the primary goal of winning an electorate and therefore see the list only as a back-up if they are unsuccessful.<sup>1</sup> Thus

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Hekia Parata, "Out of my Comfort Zone": Campaigning in Wellington Central', in Jonathan Boston, Stephen Church, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay, and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), *New Zealand Votes: The General Election of 2002* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2003), p. 155.

many list MPs enter parliament having lost in an electorate contest. Candidates' ability to stand in electorates *and* on the party list contributes to their perceived lack of legitimacy as it is difficult for voters to hold MPs accountable if they are able to enter parliament despite losing in an electorate. Moreover, the failure of parties to articulate clear role expectations for list members has added to perceptions of illegitimacy.<sup>2</sup> Thus even within parliament there is a perception that list MPs are 'second-class' MPs.

While list MPs may develop a greater appreciation for their role over time, this does not necessarily mean that they wish to remain list MPs in future parliaments. It does suggest, however, that list MPs grasp the opportunities available to them to achieve their goals, even if their goals are simply to replicate the roles of electorate MPs.

#### *Large versus Small Party MPs*

A second key determinant of the roles MPs adopt is the size of their parties. MPs from large parties are likely to develop roles related to constituency service. This is due to the large parties' dominance in electorate seats and the relative lack of influence each large party MP holds within their caucus. Small party MPs, on the other hand, tend to have a primary focus on parliamentary and policy tasks – a reflection of the more limited resources available to small parties on account of their size and the need to promote their party to ensure their own political survival.

In the second round of interviews, MPs were asked whether there were differences between MPs' roles based on party size and, if so, which roles they would prefer – those of small or large parties. Overall, 93 percent of MPs believed that differences existed in the roles of small and large party

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<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey A Karp., 'Members of Parliament and Representation', in Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Jeffrey Karp, Susan Banducci, Raymond Miller, and Ann Sullivan (eds.), *Proportional Representation on Trial: The 1999 New Zealand General Election and the Fate of MMP* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002), p. 139.

MPs. Some of the differences identified were relatively straightforward: large party MPs have a greater constituency workload, while small party MPs must place greater emphasis on parliamentary tasks, such as select committee and speaking in the House. Moreover, 90 percent of MPs agreed that small party members have greater workloads than their large party counterparts.

However, some interesting variations in role perceptions also appeared. For instance, large party MPs believed that small party MPs were able to be specialists in their roles, while small party MPs believed the same to be true of large party MPs. This finding may be due to differences in emphasis between small and large party MPs. Large party MPs stressed that they had to cover each and every issue that arose, whereas small party MPs could be selective with their issues:

*There is perhaps more room for [small party MPs] to pick and choose issues, whereas I think there is a higher expectation that we cover everything that a government covers.*

*[Small party MPs] have one or two things that they really heavily focus on and then other stuff ticks over.*

Small party MPs, on the other hand, believed that the greater number of members in large parties meant that those MPs were able to become experts in particular areas, while small party MPs were required to cover a broad range of issues, thereby preventing them from becoming specialists:

*I'm on four select committees and because I have such a large portfolio of things I'm supposed to do – and very different, some of them, to what I'm used to – I'm having to learn a lot, so what I'm finding is that I'm learning a little bit about a lot and not much in-depth knowledge, which can be a real disadvantage, especially on select committees.*

*In a small party one is inevitably a spokesman in a number of areas. I think I've probably got a dozen spokesman areas. A Nat backbencher would have none.*

One of the key differences between large and small party MPs are their portfolio responsibilities. Generally, small party MPs are responsible for a range of portfolio areas. On the other hand, large party backbenchers tend to have few, if any, portfolio allocations – MPs from large opposition parties generally have one or two minor portfolios, while government backbenchers have none.

One would expect that, given their significant portfolio responsibilities, small party MPs would be perceived as having more influence than large party members. It is interesting, then, that 67 percent of MPs claimed that large party MPs were more influential than small party members. Seventy-one percent of large party MPs took this position, along with 50 percent of small party MPs.

In analysing this finding the centrality of parties in New Zealand becomes apparent. Despite being asked about the differences between large and small party *MPs*, most responses highlighted the differences between large and small *parties*. Thus many MPs commented on the relative influence of parties based on their size:

*Overall their [small] party portfolios are less likely to be significant in the sense that who really cares what they think at this point in the electoral cycle, because the two big parties are the ones that will largely determine the policy direction.*

*I don't know much about what the smaller parties do – I've not paid much attention to them. The people of [my electorate] didn't think they were important or significant last year, so why would I waste my time thinking about them?*

MPs were also asked whether they would rather be a member of a large or small party. Unsurprisingly, all but one MP claimed to prefer to be in a party of the same size to which they actually belonged. The sole outlier – a large party MP – stated that they had no preference one way or the other.

This suggests that MPs enter parliament with some prior knowledge about their role based on the size of their party, or that they are quickly socialised into party-specific roles. It is likely that both of these propositions are true – while MPs’ knowledge of specific legislator roles may be limited, their experience within political parties mean that they understand the general framework under which each party’s MPs operate. Once they enter parliament, strong socialisation forces ensure that their own party’s role expectations quickly become normalised.

### **Representative Roles**

New MPs place great emphasis on their representative tasks. Acting as a ‘representative’ is the best-known and most legitimate role MPs hold, even if the concept of representation is vague. It is therefore unsurprising that new MPs, who often have minimal ideas of exactly what being a legislator entails, turn to representational roles as their primary role. ‘Representation’ may become less significant over time as MPs develop more varied and sophisticated understandings of their roles, or are promoted.

In considering representational tasks, MPs primarily responded to geographic constituencies, usually electorates or particular regions. This demonstrates the primacy of the local member in New Zealand politics. Despite the fact that few citizens have significant contact with their local MP, there is an expectation that MPs are accountable and accessible to a geographically-defined population.

This attitude may be a hangover from the first-past-the-post (FPP) electoral system, where each member represented an electorate. While there is no fundamental problem with members being accountable to geographic communities, this attitude shows reluctance amongst the public, political parties, and MPs to adapt to the MMP system. Arguably, non-geographically defined communities remain substantively under-represented due to



perceptions that list MPs, who are presumed to represent minorities, are less legitimate than electorate MPs.

As an alternative explanation, the imperative of representing geographic constituencies even under MMP may suggest that geographic representation is a strong component of New Zealand's political culture and that MMP itself has adapted to fit this culture. For any electoral system to be considered legitimate, it must fit within normative assumptions about the accountability of legislators. Within the New Zealand political culture there is a tradition of electorate-based MPs being accountable, and MMP has adapted accordingly. Thus the primacy of geographic representation may be evidence of the MMP system maturing.

The fact that many list MPs placed great emphasis on representing geographic communities confirms the narrow scope with which constituencies are measured. New Zealand has held five elections using the MMP system. Given the significant variances between MMP and FPP, it was always likely that some trepidation about the roles of list MPs would occur. However, the continuing confusion over list MPs' roles amongst the public and MPs themselves suggests that this may become a permanent feature of MMP.

Arguably, small parties have been more successful than large parties in legitimising list MPs' roles. This has largely been out of necessity – the majority of small party MPs are list members. However, there also appears to be a fundamental difference in perceptions of list MPs between small and large parties. Whereas in large parties the list may be a stepping stone to becoming an electorate MP, small parties appear to attach no stigma to being a list MP.

This is likely due to the niche communities that small parties tend to serve. As defenders of minority interests, small party MPs are more likely to believe that constituencies can be constructed out of any community – not just

geographic communities. Thus what matters most for small parties is ensuring that their MPs effectively represent their minority constituencies. On the other hand, large parties must appeal to broader and more heterogeneous groupings of citizens. Therefore, having widespread appeal in geographic communities – which also tend to be reasonably heterogeneous – is an indication of their broad-based support.

Representation of ethnic minorities is one possible exception to the observation that non-geographic constituencies are considered less legitimate than geographic constituencies. MPs from ethnic minorities generally identified their own and other ethnic minorities as constituencies. More important, however, was that non-ethnic MPs considered representation of ethnic groups to be a legitimate role for MPs, with half of electorate MPs identifying ethnic representation as key list MP duty.

This is positive as it gives ethnic minorities an opportunity to achieve substantive representation in parliament. While evidence of the presence of minorities in parliament leading to greater minority participation is mixed, accepting MPs who aim to represent minorities reflects the growing pluralism of New Zealand's society.<sup>3</sup> However, it is important for the legitimacy of minority representation that *all* parties and MPs seek to broaden their representative focus. Parties generally include members of particular minority communities on their party lists. This is of limited use, however, as the presence of a minority community member does not guarantee representation of that community. It is the responsibility of all MPs to better understand minority concerns and parties must ensure they recruit candidates who substantively represent minorities.

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<sup>3</sup> For discussion on the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation for minorities in parliament, see: Elizabeth McLeay and Jack Vowles, 'Redefining Constituency Representation: The Roles of New Zealand MPs Under MMP', *Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, March 2007, pp. 87-88; Susan Banducci, Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp, 'Minority Representation, Empowerment, and Participation', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 66, No. 2, May 2004, p. 539; and Jeffrey A. Karp, 'Members of Parliament and Representation', in Jack Vowles, Peter Aimer, Jeffrey Karp, Susan Banducci, Raymond Miller, and Ann Sullivan (eds.), *Proportional Representation on Trial: The 1999 New Zealand General Election and the Fate of MMP* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002), p. 132.

## **Parliamentary Roles**

The parliamentary environment is unique. Chapter five outlined some of the responses MPs had to parliament upon their arrival and confirmed that the unusual working environment in which they find themselves is quickly normalised. Overall, new MPs treated parliament with reverence and respect.

The speed at which new MPs adapted to parliamentary norms was impressive. The attitudes MPs held about their new parliamentary responsibilities were demonstrated in their maiden speeches. The maiden speeches of the 2008 intake exemplified the sense of achievement and pride new members feel upon entering the legislature. More importantly, however, the tone of the maiden speeches shows that MPs enter parliament with a sense of reverence for the institution and an understanding of the gravity of their new roles. MPs articulated clear personal and professional goals as a means of constructing a framework by which they wish their parliamentary career to be measured.

MPs' attitudes toward the House changed notably between the two interview rounds. When first interviewed, most new MPs had spoken in the House only a handful of times. Indeed, in the first round of interviews many MPs individually listed the bills on which they had spoken. At this point in their parliamentary socialisation, many MPs were nervous about speaking in the House but enjoyed the atmosphere nonetheless. Some MPs were especially enthusiastic about engaging in the serious business of the House.

By the second interviews, new MPs were far more confident in their House abilities. Most new MPs were speaking in the House at least once a week. Moreover, they were developing their own speaking style and learning about standing orders and House norms. A number of new MPs had visited the Palace of Westminster, the United Kingdom's parliament, as a parliamentary

delegation between the first and second rounds of interviews. These MPs noted how fortunate they were to speak so frequently in the House in comparison to British legislators:

*I was part of a delegation that went to the UK to do a study tour of the Westminster system with the MPs over there. And meeting with them, the size of their parliament is 400-odd people, and they were saying that they get to speak about four or five times a year if they're lucky. And I looked at them and I said, 'I spoke four times last Wednesday'.*

*At Westminster the backbenchers over there speak three or four times a year – I'm speaking three times in one day. And I think you need to speak often to get comfortable with it. If you're only speaking occasionally it would become such a tense thing.*

This is interesting as it suggests that the roles of New Zealand backbenchers are significantly different to British backbenchers. The small size of the New Zealand parliament means that even new MPs speak frequently in the House. In larger parliaments this opportunity is denied. Thus while backbenchers in parliamentary systems may lack power, some lack more power than others.

Perhaps as a result of their extensive participation in the House, new MPs quickly learn the norms of parliamentary behaviour. Many new MPs entered parliament intending to avoid childish behaviour in the House, but quickly adopted the behaviour they wished to avoid. New MPs became more partisan even in select committees, which are less adversarial than the House. When New Zealand elected its first MMP parliament, some hoped that the especially large intake of new MPs and the new mode of politics would result in more civilised parliamentary behaviour. This did not eventuate.<sup>4</sup> Coupled with this study's findings, this suggests that the norms of parliament are strong and particular types of behaviour are institutionalised.

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<sup>4</sup> Fiona Barker and Stephen Levine, 'The Individual Parliamentary Member and Institutional Change: The Changing Role of the New Zealand Member of Parliament', in Lawrence D. Longley and Reuven Y. Hazan (eds.), *The Uneasy Relationships Between Parliamentary Members and Leaders* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 2000), p. 116.

It is interesting that new MPs' behaviour should change quickly, as it indicates not only that conflict is inherent in legislatures but also that MPs may adapt to behavioural norms as a form of anticipatory socialisation. Kenneth Prewitt and William Nowlin argue that anticipatory socialisation 'suggests that men select as a reference group a group in which they do not currently hold membership, but to which they aspire.'<sup>5</sup> Thus individuals model their behaviour on the behaviour of those who hold the positions they aspire to.

Within the parliamentary environment, therefore, new MPs model their own behaviour on the behaviour of frontbench members. Within the House the closeness of the opposing frontbenches, and the importance of the members who occupy them, mean that they are often the source of the most intense conflict. Thus aspiring backbenchers mimic the adversarial behaviour of their party seniors – intentionally or unintentionally – as a means of preparing themselves for more senior roles. Those who wish to change parliamentary behaviour, therefore, may be best served to adapt the behaviour of frontbenchers rather than rely on the good intentions of new members.

### **Changes in Role Conceptions**

It is inevitable that MPs' role perceptions change over time. While new MPs may have better role conceptions than the general public by virtue of their political interest and party activity, few could accurately predict what being a legislator truly entails. This section addresses changes in role conceptions in the first few months of office.

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<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Prewitt and William Nowlin, 'Political Ambitions and the Behavior of Incumbent Politicians', *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 2, June 1969, p. 299.

### *Ministerial Ambitions*

Perhaps the clearest way to measure how MPs view their roles as legislators is to track their political ambitions. Chapter three introduced the drive for ministerial office as a measurement of political ambition. This section further explores this question to understand how ambition for high office changes over time.

In the first round of interviews, 75 percent of MPs stated that they aspired to a ministerial role, dropping only fractionally to 74 percent in the second interviews. This is a significant majority and suggests that MPs enter parliament highly ambitious and their ambition does not waiver in their first year in office. In the first interviews, 14 percent of MPs were undecided about whether they wanted to be a minister and 11 percent refused to speculate. Significantly, no MPs said that they *did not* want to be a minister. By the second round of interviews, only 4 percent of MPs were undecided, while 11 percent refused to speculate and a further 11 percent did not want to be a minister.

Between the two interview rounds variations appeared between particular types of MPs that suggest that role conceptions change over time. In the first interviews, 93 percent of government MPs stated they aspired to become a minister versus only 57 percent of opposition MPs. By the second interviews, however, government members were less ambitious – or more realistic – with 77 percent wanting to become ministers. By contrast, 71 percent of opposition MPs wanted to become ministers. Thus by the second interviews the ambitions of government and opposition members had more-or-less aligned.

This finding is significant as it highlights the difference in work undertaken by government and opposition MPs. New government MPs quickly find that their influence is extremely limited on account of ministers monopolising

decision-making at the expense of the broader caucus. Thus government MPs are severely limited in their ability to pursue policy issues.

By contrast, opposition MPs are able to criticise the government – arguably a simpler task. Most opposition MPs hold portfolio responsibilities (although the significance of the portfolios varies), meaning that they can lead attacks on the government. It is likely that this role gives opposition MPs confidence which transfers into greater political ambition – opposition MPs, unlike government members, feel effectual. Thus it is unsurprising that ambition increases in opposition MPs while it decreases in government members.

Variations in ambition also become apparent between large and small party MPs. In the first interviews 77 percent of large party MPs wanted to become ministers, versus 67 percent of small party members. By the second interviews 81 percent of large party MPs wanted to become ministers against only 50 percent of small party MPs.

This finding suggests that small party MPs quickly become aware of the difficulties they face in becoming ministers. Even when small parties enter governing arrangements with large parties, ministerial roles are usually granted only to party leaders – a reflection of the relative influence of each party. Moreover, recent governments have seen ministers from small parties excluded from cabinet. This is a political decision to avoid cabinet collective responsibility and to facilitate political management, but this may have the effect of reducing the overall effectiveness of small party ministers.

It is interesting to note that of the small party MPs who did not aspire to be a minister, there was an attitude that achieving high office was not the reason they went into politics:

*That's not what I went in for. It's to make a contribution to meeting the global challenges that are going to confront this nation as well as every other nation, and turning the human*

*mindset around sometime so that we can pass on to our children half an opportunity to lead a decent life.*

*If I was a minister, what would I be minister of? ... I don't know if I'm going to be around long enough to be a minister because I don't intend to be here at 85... I don't think I'd be around to be a minister. And I don't care.*

Thus small party MPs may channel their ambition differently to large party MPs in order to achieve more global goals. Rather than ambition being tied to particular offices, small party MPs are more likely to define their roles in relation to achieving party objectives. This confirms the finding in chapter four that small party MPs place greater emphasis on party representation than large party MPs. For small party MPs the party is paramount.

#### *Intended Number of Terms*

Power, once acquired, is difficult to relinquish. Experienced MPs know how parliament operates better than any others, but the legislature sometimes becomes their *raison d'être* – life outside of politics is unfathomable. It is therefore interesting to consider how long new MPs intend to remain in the legislature.

In each of the interview rounds, MPs were asked how many terms they intended to serve, all going well. The results are shown in Figure 6.1.

The shift towards a longer parliamentary career is evident, suggesting that the allure of becoming a professional politician increases once MPs enter parliament. While a significant number of new MPs remain undecided about how many terms they wish to serve, over time three or more terms become desirable for many MPs.

Electorate MPs expected to serve more terms than list MPs. Indeed, in the second interviews 36 percent of electorate MPs expected to serve five terms

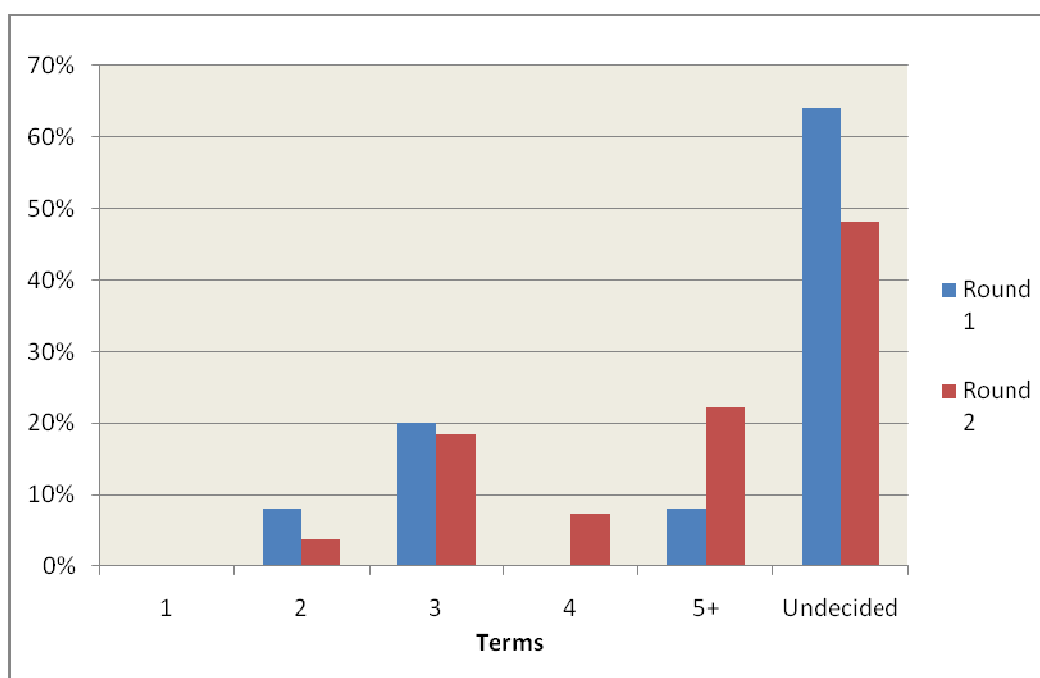


or more, versus only 13 percent of list MPs. Electorate MPs may have greater job security than list MPs and can therefore plan for a longer political career:

*For me this is my career. I've done everything I can to get to this point so this is a 20 year career for me, as long as people want me. And so that's what I'm focused on and that's why building my support base in the electorate is my priority.*

*Hard to say definitely. But I'd like to think that I'm here for a good five or six terms. Yeah, I would like to be here 15 years or so. Maybe more.*

**Figure 6.1 – Intended Number of Terms**



List MPs also intended to have reasonably long careers, with 31 percent intending to serve three terms. However, list MPs highlighted the uncertainty of their tenure as they were more dependent on the will of their parties than their electorate colleagues:

*You can get defeated because the [party] can rank you a lot lower down the list.*

*Maybe the party doesn't want me. We're entering a difficult phase and they may decide that I don't have the skills they require.*

The trend towards longer parliamentary careers was evident in both large and small party MPs, although large party MPs expected to serve more terms overall. This is likely due to the greater expectation amongst large party MPs that they may eventually become ministers. Parliamentary systems generally require long apprenticeships before MPs become ministers, meaning that a significant political career is necessary for ambitious members. Not only are small party MPs less likely to become ministers, but amongst this study's sample they were also older than the average age across the 2008 intake. Indeed, new small party MPs had an average age of 54, versus 40 for Labour and 39 for National MPs. The considerations that older MPs must make were noted by two small party MPs:

*How old are you? What's your health? What's your level of energy and commitment to the cause? Are you and your wife adapting to that life decently? Where are your children and grandchildren?*

*I have a passion for a little person, [my grandchild]. Life's so full and rich. You don't need to be living in this mad place to have a great life.*

Thus small party MPs may view parliament as their final career goal before retiring.

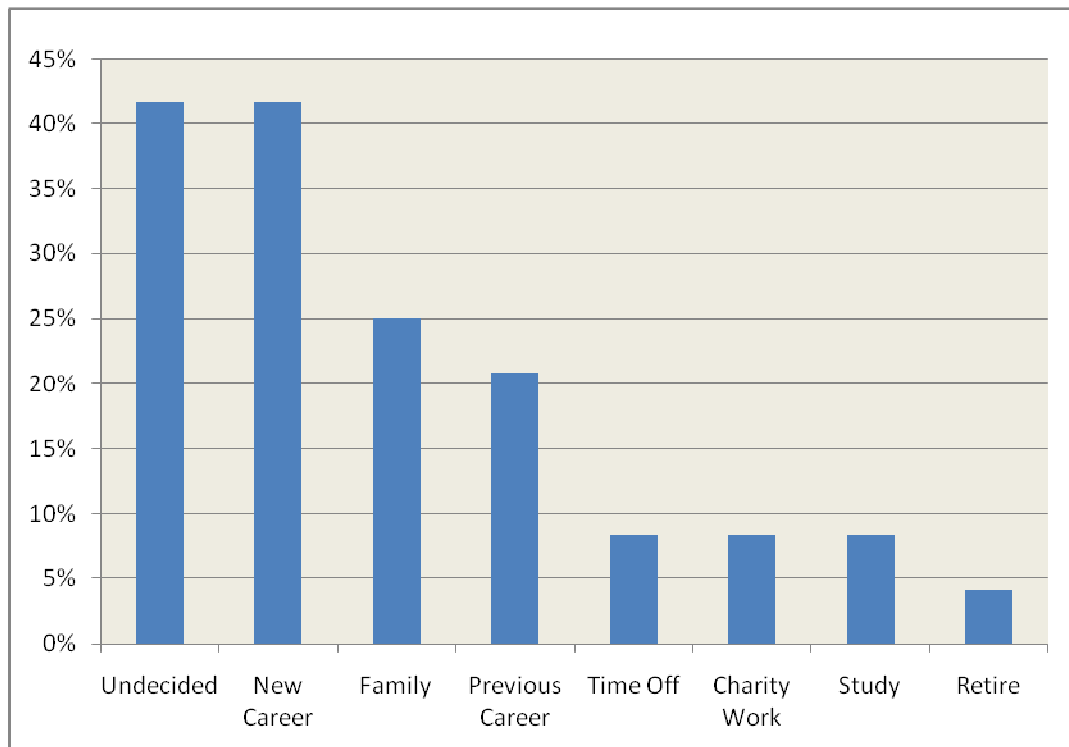
### *Post-Political Possibilities*

Being a legislator is an all-encompassing job. The hours are long and the expectations high. Indeed, the totalising nature of the role may prevent MPs from properly considering life after parliament. A study of British legislators who had left parliament, willingly or unwillingly, found a lack of preparedness for post-political life which led to a 'grieving' process and a sense of shock.<sup>6</sup> Thus new MPs were asked in the second round of interviews what they intended to do once they left parliament. The results are shown in Table 6.2.

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<sup>6</sup> Kevin Teakston, Ed Gouge, and Victoria Honeyman, *Life After Losing or Leaving: The Experience of Former Members of Parliament*, Report for the Association of Former Members of Parliament, University of Leeds, October 2007, pp. 6-7.

**Table 6.2 – Post-Political Possibilities<sup>7</sup>**



The fact that many new MPs were undecided about what they wished to do after leaving parliament is unsurprising. These MPs were less than a year into their political career; post-political considerations were not particularly salient. Some of the MPs who were undecided simply had not considered their options after parliament:

*Oh, I haven't thought about that... because I don't know when that is. I'm focusing on what I'm doing now.*

*It could be next month, it could be next year, it could be 30 years from now. I've not put any thought into that. But there's life after politics.*

Other undecided MPs chose not to think about their post-parliamentary life:

*I don't really want to think about it, actually. I'd cross that bridge when I get to it. I've never had a plan this far. I've just taken*

<sup>7</sup> Some MPs identified more than one post-political possibility, meaning that responses total more than 100 percent.

*opportunities as they have come and I'm sure there'll be opportunities out there.*

*No idea. None whatsoever... That probably reflects me. I've done some really cool things in my career but I haven't had a great deal of planning around my career. Opportunities have presented themselves and I've taken them, and I'm confident that opportunities at the end of that time will present themselves, whatever they are.*

Of MPs who were undecided about their goals after parliament, the group who choose not to consider their options may be more likely to face problems on their exit. This group took a relaxed attitude and assumed that opportunities would present themselves. Indeed, for some former MPs their high status and particular skills mean that impressive opportunities arise. For others, however, the assumption that they will be in demand outside of parliament proves to be wrong.<sup>8</sup> Although a firm post-political plan is not essential, a willingness to consider the future and to position oneself to create opportunities is important for MPs.

It is interesting that many new MPs consider beginning a new career after they leave parliament. This indicates the extent to which being an MP is considered a fundamental life change. The skills learned by MPs are unique within the labour market and thus legislators may emerge from parliament to opportunities that would be impossible without legislative experience. Some MPs mentioned entering diplomacy or international development, which are ordinarily difficult fields to enter:

*If I had a reasonably successful career over 9 or 10 years and my party was in a position to do it, I'd certainly be keen to take on perhaps even a diplomatic post.*

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<sup>8</sup> A recent example of this is the former Labour MP Georgina Beyer. Beyer left parliament mid-term in 2007 and struggled to find employment. Beyer was vocal in her disappointment that her party had not assisted her to transition to life outside of parliament. Eventually Beyer publicly pondered moving abroad to increase her employability. See Colin Espiner, 'Jobless Beyer Eyes Aussie', *The Dominion Post*, 15 August 2008, p. 2.

*If I feel like I've contributed a lot to New Zealand, [then I would consider] doing something in the international development area.*

Amongst the other possibilities cited, there was a focus on MPs doing something for themselves or their families. This is perhaps indicative of the intense workload MPs carry and the strains this puts on their personal life. Some MPs raised this subject, albeit humorously:

*Drink. Sink into a deckchair. No, that's the wrong answer. Sorry.*

*Sleep! Sleep permanently. Just sleep 18 hours a day.*

While light-hearted, these responses highlight the intensity of being an MP. It is understandable that the pace of the job means that MPs are limited in their ability to plan ahead. However, doing so is important to ensuring a smooth transition out of parliament.

## **Leadership**

The leadership offered by new MPs has been a theme of this thesis. It is apparent that the majority of new MPs are not in a position to provide political leadership. This is not necessarily a reflection of the skills of new MPs; rather their situational constraints in a hierarchical parliamentary system are so great that the exercise of political leadership is largely beyond their reach.

There is no doubt, however, that new MPs form part of the pool of 'proto-leaders' – individuals who may become political leaders in the future. It is notable that new MPs were content to wait for their opportunity to become political leaders. While some experienced minor frustrations at their impotence caused by a lack of real power, overall, MPs were satisfied to follow traditional routes through party and parliamentary hierarchies before assuming leadership positions. This indicates that MPs have a good understanding about the limited capacities of backbenchers, or that this is

learnt quickly upon induction. It is likely, in fact, that both prepositions are true.

Interestingly, some MPs do gain significant formal power more-or-less immediately upon their election. In chapter two, the unusual cases of Steven Joyce and Margaret Wilson were raised as an example of this – Joyce was first elected in 2008 and was immediately appointed to cabinet; Wilson entered cabinet immediately upon her election in 1999. This raises an issue that is related to this thesis, but which is outside of its immediate scope: the concept of ‘parachute’ MPs.

Sometimes, parties identify ‘outside’ candidates who they believe could fill important roles within their party. These individuals often have high-profiles and are recruited with the promise of speedy promotions. On the National Party side, in addition to Joyce former party leader Don Brash fits into this category. Arguably, the current Prime Minister, John Key, also followed this path. On the Labour side there is the case of Wilson and the speculation surrounding the leadership intentions of Andrew Little, the current party president, suggest that this phenomenon is not restricted only to the National Party.

Whether or not parachute MPs are becoming more common is unclear. It could be that the ability of parties to recruit talented individuals and rank them highly on party lists means that MMP offers greater possibilities for this type of MP to enter parliament.<sup>9</sup> Regardless, this method of entry into parliament should be noted as an alternative to the orthodox hierarchical and long-term grooming and socialisation processes identified in this thesis.

New MPs fulfil important roles as community leaders. These roles largely centre on representation – specifically geographic representation. Many of the community leadership roles that MPs adopted were based on the

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<sup>9</sup> Under the first-past-the-post electoral system, the equivalent option was to recruit potential leaders to stand in by-elections. The elections of David Lange and Geoffrey Palmer are examples of this.

legitimacy of their office – if they were not MPs they would not be community leaders in the same capacity.

In chapter four, community leadership above and beyond *ex-officio* roles was explored. MPs are in a unique position within their communities. Their connections with a disparate range of community groups mean that they can *build* communities in ways that other community leaders generally cannot. When MPs take these opportunities, they demonstrate skills that are essential for political leadership: the ability to articulate shared goals that can bring people together. This act shows the combination of community leadership and ‘proto-leadership’. MPs who fulfil this type of leadership may be the most likely of all MPs to become political leaders.

In chapter two, it was hypothesised that not all MPs would want to become ministers or prime ministers. Instead, some MPs would be content providing community leadership. This hypothesis ran counter to the bulk of the existing literature, which suggests that most legislators aspire to the top offices of their legislative body. This hypothesis has been partially confirmed, with government and small party MPs becoming less ambitious to hold executive office over time. By contrast, opposition MPs become more ambitious. This suggests that significant variations occur in the leadership aspirations of different types of MPs depending on their location in relation to power and their proximity to government.

Arguably, the MPs who are most isolated from exercising political leadership are government backbenchers. These MPs are connected with power, but are largely excluded from it. This may be disillusioning for new MPs and cause government backbenchers to focus on community leadership rather than aspiring to political leadership. Moreover, the close proximity of government backbenchers to ministers means that they see first-hand the toll of ministerial roles, and may reassess their willingness to pursue such a career.

With regard to small party MPs, it is unsurprising that they have less ministerial ambition than their large party counterparts. The chances of small party MPs become political leaders are relatively slim – their situational constraints are enormous. Even if small parties enter arrangements with larger governing parties there is no guarantee of ministerial roles or, indeed, real influence. Therefore the opportunity to exercise real political leadership may never eventuate.

The ambitions of new opposition MPs suggest that there are major benefits to entering parliament in opposition. Undoubtedly, new MPs from large opposition parties have greater responsibilities than their governing counterparts – it has become standard in recent years for all large party opposition MPs to hold at least one portfolio. This provides opposition MPs with opportunities to practice the skills of political leadership. These MPs are not restricted to traditional notions of constituency service (and therefore expectations of geographic community leadership), although they do often carry out these roles. Instead, opposition MPs may develop relationships with a broad range of groups connected with their portfolio and learn skills related to policy and legislative development, negotiation, and compromise – skills that are essential for political leadership. Thus large party opposition MPs may be the best-placed ‘proto-leaders’ in parliament.

It is unmistakable that MPs hold privileged institutional positions that allow them to practice leadership in ways that no other individuals or groups can replicate. Therefore, it is essential that parties recruit individuals who hold the skills necessary for community leadership and who may develop the skills of political leadership in the future. Overall, the 2008 intake of new MPs were determined, dedicated, and well-suited to their new roles.

Less than a handful of the 2008 intake will become political leaders; the overwhelming majority will not. This may appear a shame, but it should not be considered so. The enthusiasm with which many MPs described their community leadership suggests that perceptions that the only successes in



parliament come from being a political leader are wrong. One simply hopes that the MPs who are best suited to community leadership realise where their talent lies so that they might feel a sense of achievement within their political careers.

Former Prime Minister Sir Keith Holyoake famously counselled his first-term MPs to breathe through their noses. This wisdom was repeated in numerous interviews with the 2008 intake, demonstrating that it may be as true now as it was half a century ago. However, this does not do justice to new MPs' roles. New MPs are representatives, advocates, community members, and community leaders. Moreover, they form the pool of future political leaders. Perhaps it is wiser to advise new MPs to enter their jobs with reverence, respect, and an expectation that not everyone will climb the greasy pole to the top of the hierarchy. New MPs should know their position within the hierarchy, but should equally enjoy the roles afforded to them. They are, after all, roles that very few individuals ever have the pleasure of filling.

### Participant Information Sheet

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#### **Participant Information Sheet for a Study of Candidate Recruitment and Role Adaptation in the New Zealand Parliament**

**Researcher:** Steven Barnes: School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington

I am a Master's student in Political Science at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of this degree I am undertaking a research project leading to a thesis. The project I am undertaking is examining candidate recruitment and role adaptation in the New Zealand Parliament. The University requires that ethics approval be obtained for research involving human participants.

I am inviting Members of Parliament who were first elected in the November 2008 General Election to participate in this study. Participants will be asked to meet with me between January-April 2009 to discuss aspects of their experiences as a political candidate and their roles within Parliament. Each interview is expected to take 30-60 minutes and will be digitally recorded and transcribed.

Following the initial interview, participants will be invited to meet with me again approximately six months later for a second interview. There is no obligation to participate in this subsequent interview.

Should any participants feel the need to withdraw from the project, they may do so without question at any time before the data is analysed. Just let me know at the time.

Responses collected will form the basis of my research project and will be put into a written report on an anonymous basis. It will not be possible for you to be identified personally. Only grouped responses will be presented in this report. All material collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides me and my supervisors, Dr Jon Johansson and Professor Stephen Levine, will have access to the recorded interviews or transcripts. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations and deposited in the University Library. Digital recordings and transcripts will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at [steven.barnes@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:steven.barnes@vuw.ac.nz) or 027 426 3710, or my supervisors, Dr Jon Johansson (phone: 04 463-6424) or Professor

Stephen Levine (phone: 04 463-5233), at the School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations at Victoria University, P O Box 600, Wellington.

Steven Barnes

Consent to Participation in Research

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**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH**

**Title of project: Candidate Recruitment and Role Adaptation  
in the New Zealand Parliament**

- ☐ I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project (before data collection and analysis is complete) without having to give reasons.
- ☐ I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisors.
- ☐ I understand that the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me.
- ☐ I understand that the digital recordings of interviews will be securely stored and electronically wiped two years after the completion of the project unless I indicate that I would like them returned to me.
- ☐ I would like to receive a summary of the results of this research when it is completed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.

Signed:

Name of participant:

Date:

### First Interview Schedule

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#### **Section I: General Reactions**

1. What kind of experience has this been for you so far, from a personal viewpoint?  
(How have you found being an MP so far?)  
(Would you say that you have enjoyed being an MP so far?)

#### **Section II: Personal Situation before Seeking Election**

1. When did you first become interested in politics?  
(Was your family political when you were growing up?)  
(What are some of the things that interested you about politics?)
2. How would you describe your temperament?

#### **Section III: Decision to Run**

1. What was it that made you want to be an MP?  
(What would you say was the single most important factor that led to your decision to run for Parliament?)
2. How did your family feel about your decision to stand for Parliament?  
(Did your family support your decision to become an MP?)  
(How did discussions within your family about you becoming an MP go?)

#### **Section IV: Candidacy**

1. How did you find the candidate selection process?  
(Did you find it straightforward or difficult to be selected as a candidate?)
2. *Electorate MPs:* (Tell me about the competition you faced from others within your party for the \_\_\_\_ (seat) candidacy)  
(Did you face any competition for the \_\_\_\_ (seat) candidacy?)

OR

*List MPs:* Tell me about the competition you faced to gain a winnable place on your party's list.

3. What qualities do you think the selectors were looking for in a candidate?  
(Why do you think you succeeded in (winning the \_\_\_\_\_ nomination/gaining a winnable list placing?)  
(What made you stand out over the other competitors?)

### **Section V: Campaign and Election**

1. Overall, what kind of experience was the election campaign?  
(Did you enjoy campaigning?)
2. How long before the election did you begin campaigning?

### **Section VI: Role Definition**

1. How would you describe the job of being an MP?  
(What is the main duty or function of an MP?)  
(What approach should MPs take to their work?)
2. Are there any particular groups that you see yourself as representing in Parliament?

### **Section VII: Initial Parliamentary Experiences**

1. How did you feel the first time you attended the House?  
(What stands out in your mind about first taking your seat in the House?)
2. How did you find giving your maiden speech in the House?  
(How did you feel speaking in the House for the first time?)
3. How have you found Select Committee work?  
(How have things been going on the \_\_\_\_\_ (committee) so far?)

### **Section VII: Relationships**

1. How would you describe your relationships with your party's leaders and senior MPs?  
(How do you feel your party's leadership and senior MPs are performing?)
2. How would you describe your relationship with your own party's MPs?  
(Do you get along with your caucus colleagues?)
3. How would you describe your relationship with MPs from other parties?  
(Do you get along with MPs from other parties?)

### **Section VIII: Future Perspectives**

1. What is your general feeling about politics in your own future?  
(Do you see politics as a long-term career for yourself?)
2. What are some of the likely political possibilities for you in the future?  
(What kind of goals do you think you will be able to achieve while in Parliament?)
3. How many terms do you think you'll remain in Parliament for?  
(Are you planning on standing for one or more terms after this one?)

### Second Interview Schedule

---

#### Section I: General Reactions

1. How have things changed for you since we last met?
2. Is there anything that you know now that you wish you knew when you first arrived at Parliament?

#### Section II: Roles

1. What do you think is the single most important role that you have as an MP?

#### Section III: Constituents

1. Who would you say are your constituents?
2. Do you feel accountable to them?
3. Approximately how many hours per week would you spend on constituent issues?
4. Do you feel like your constituents have accepted you as 'their' representative?

#### Section IV: Electorate vs. List

1. *Electorate MPs*: Do you feel like there's any difference between your role as an MP and the roles taken up by list MPs?
  - a. Which role would you prefer?
2. *List MPs*: Do you feel like there's any difference between your role as an MP and the roles taken up by electorate MPs?
  - a. Which role would you prefer?
3. Do you think that the roles between MPs from larger parties differ greatly from the roles of MPs in smaller parties?
  - a. Putting party preferences aside, which role would you prefer?

#### Section V: Psychology

1. What drives you as a person and motivates you as a politician?



2. Do you feel like public expectations of MPs' behaviour in both a professional and personal capacity are reasonable?
3. Do you feel effective as an MP?
4. Do you feel like you belong here?

#### **Section VI: Party**

1. How have things been going within your party?
2. Do you feel accountable to your party?
3. Would you like more autonomy from your party?
4. How do you find caucus meetings?
5. How do you find caucus committees?

#### **Section VII: Parliament**

1. How have you been enjoying being in the House?
2. Do you feel like you've had enough opportunities to speak in the House, particularly at Question Time?
3. How have your Select Committees been going?

#### **Section VIII: Media**

1. Would you say that you've been in the media very often since becoming an MP?
2. How do you find dealing with the media?

#### **Section IX: Relationships**

1. Last time we met you mentioned that you get along with a number of MPs from other parties. How has that progressed?
2. Have there been any changes in your personal life since you became an MP?

#### **Section X: Future Perspectives**

1. When you look at the competition around your party and around Parliament, how do you feel about your ability to advance within Parliament?
2. Last time we met you mentioned that you would like to get into Cabinet. Have you taken any steps towards achieving that goal?

3. All going well, how many terms do you think you'll remain in Parliament for?
4. What do you think you'll do when you leave Parliament?

## Parliamentary Services Induction Seminar Agenda

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***Tuesday 11 November 2008***

***Legislative Council Chamber, Parliament House***

2:00 – 2:30 pm	<b>Welcome and introductions</b> Welcome and initial introductions to the day's agenda
2:30 – 2:45 pm	Welcome and explanation of the content of the induction by <b>Hon Margaret Wilson, Speaker of the House of Representatives for the 48th Parliament and Responsible Minister for Parliamentary Service and Office of the Clerk.</b>
2:45 – 3:00 pm	Welcome and overview of the upcoming induction provided for new members by the <b>Office of the Clerk.</b>
3:00 – 3:15 pm	Overview of the Parliamentary Service's role in supporting members by the <b>General Manager.</b>
3:15 – 3:30 pm	<b>Role of the Press Gallery</b> Brief account of the press gallery's role at Parliament by <b>Chair of the Press Gallery.</b>
3:30 – 3:45 pm	<b>At Parliament</b> Overview of the buildings and services within the parliamentary precincts.
3:45 – 5:00 pm	<b>Tour of the Parliamentary Precincts</b> Familiarisation with the parliamentary precincts with a specially tailored tour highlighting members' facilities.  A short briefing of security considerations at Parliament will be provided en route.  The Parliamentary Librarian will also provide a short introduction to the Library on the tour.
5:00 – 5:30 pm	Session wrap-up in the Grand Hall, Parliament House.

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***Wednesday 12 November 2008***

***Select Committee Rooms, Number 1 The Terrace***

9:30 – 9:45 am	<b>Introduction</b> Introduction of the day's agenda by <b>the General Manager</b> .
9:45 – 10:45 am	<b>Funding and entitlements</b> Introduction to members' funding and entitlements, including an outline of the legislative framework and a summary of how entitlements are funded, processed and reported.
10:45 – 11:00 am	Morning tea
11:00 – 11:15 am	<b>Members' salaries</b> Advice about members' salaries, basic expense allowance and superannuation.
11:15 – 11:45 am	<b>Technology</b> Information on telecommunications, computing entitlements and technology options available to members.
11:45 – 12:15 pm	<b>Out-of-Parliament offices</b> Overview of the considerations relating to a member's activities out-of-Parliament, including support allocation funding and the rules governing the establishment and operation of out-of-Parliament offices.
12:15 – 12:30 pm	<b>Protocol</b> Brief look at the types of protocol considerations that arise for members and general information about hosting a function at Parliament.
12.30 – 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 – 2:00 pm	<b>Staff</b> Overview of staff management, including recruitment of support staff and human resources.

2:00 – 2:30 pm	<b>Travel</b> Advice about the travel entitlements available to members and their families including information about making travel bookings.
2.30 – 2.40 pm	Brief afternoon tea break
2.40 – 3:30 pm	<b>Issues handling and internet pages</b> An overview of key points to consider in handling issues referred by constituents (e.g. Privacy Act) and members pages on the Parliament Internet site.
3.30 – 4:00 pm	<b>Wrap-up</b> Panel question and answer session and completion of paperwork.
4.00 – 4.05 pm	<b>Closing by the Kaiwhakarite.</b>

### Office of the Clerk Induction Workshop Programme

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#### Day One – Wednesday, 3 December

1.30pm – House Procedures (Debating Chamber)

- An introduction to basic House rules and procedures
- Practice speaking and use of microphones
- Oral questions (includes role-play).

3.15pm – Afternoon Tea

3.30pm – Making the law

- Types and progress of legislation.

#### Day Two – Thursday, 4 December

9.30am – Introduction to Select Committees

11.15am – Morning Tea

11.30am – Role-play of a select committee examination

1.00pm – Lunch

1.30pm – Parliamentary Library

- How the Library supports Members of Parliament.

3.00pm – Wrap-Up

- Opening of Parliament
- What's next (maiden speeches and Address in Reply debate).

3.30pm – Afternoon tea

## DINNERTIME SESSIONS TIMETABLE 2008/2009

The following timetable for the dinnertime sessions has been proposed by Office of the Clerk and Parliamentary Service.

	Session	Content	Date/timing (no longer than 1 hour)	Organiser
1	Pecuniary Interests	<p>This session will explain the principles members need to apply when making a return of pecuniary interests, along with related timetable and procedural issues. It is also an opportunity for members to meet senior staff who can assist during the annual return process and throughout the year.</p> <p>All returns need to be submitted by the end of February 2009.</p>	<p>December 2008</p> <p>6.15 – 7.00pm</p>	Office of the Clerk
2	Advertising, office signage and sponsorship	<p>This session will cover the pre-approval process, briefly cover the rules of publicity, and give examples of the types of publicity, signage and sponsorship that can be paid for from parliamentary funds.</p>	<p>February 2009</p> <p>6.15-7.00pm</p>	Parliamentary Service

3	Parliamentary Press Gallery	Presentation by the Parliamentary Press Gallery Hosted by the Parliamentary Service	March 2009 6.15-7.00pm	Parliamentary Service
4	Staff management	Presentation by Parliamentary Service	March 2009 6.15-7.00pm	Parliamentary Service
5	Research services available to members	Delivered by Parliamentary Service	April 2009 6.15-7.00pm	Parliamentary Service
6	Regulations review	Hosted by the Office of the Clerk The session will focus on the work of the Regulations Review Committee	May 2009 6.15-7.00pm	Office of the Clerk
7	Estimates	Delivered by the Office of the Clerk	June 2009 6.15-7.00pm	Office of the Clerk
8	Parliamentary Privilege	Delivered by the Office of the Clerk	To Be Confirmed	Office of the Clerk



### Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament

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#### Introduction

- The New Zealand electorate expects members of Parliament to act ethically and with integrity.
- An MMP Parliament demands a standard of behaviour that allows all voices to be heard.
- This Code of Conduct enables the public to be clear about the principles that define members' activities and how these principles are interpreted and upheld.

#### Purpose of the code

- The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to assist members in the discharge of their obligations to the House, to their constituents and the public.
- Nothing in the Code of Conduct derogates from Standing Orders as Speakers' Rulings or any other official code of conduct or guidelines for members. This Code of Conduct supplements and supports other requirements.

I "*name*" agree to uphold this Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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