

Semi-open list formation in Flemish municipalities with gender quotas as (non-)binding constraints

Bruno Heyndels and Colin Kuehnhanss



Department of Applied Economics

09 May 2018

Tallinn University of Technology

- Prevailing gap in women's representation in western democracies
 - Europe: 28% in legislative bodies and 27% in government cabinets female (European Commission, 2016)
 - Estonia: 28% in national parliament (current), 25.3% of municipal councillors (in 2009)
 - Flanders: 44% in regional parliament, 36% of municipal councillors elected in 2012
- Interplay of many factors at macro-, meso-, and micro-level (Wängnerud 2009)
- Possible reasons (e.g. Casas-Arce & Saiz 2015):
 - Lack of interest → less competitive pool of candidates
 - Voter discrimination
 - Party leadership discrimination

Background

Lists and Quotas

Institutional
context

Hypotheses

Results

Conclusion

- Party leaders are gatekeepers
- In party-list proportional representation parties pre-select and rank candidates
 - → standard constrained optimization problem
- Party leadership tends to be male
 - Trade-off between candidate diversity/competence and own-survival (Casas-Arce & Saiz 2015, Besley et al. 2017)
 - Gendered preferences may bias list-composition and hamper female candidates' careers

- Party-list proportional representation
 - parties pre-select pool of candidates
- Decision-power shared between party and voters
 - closed-list systems: ranking decided only by party
 - open-list systems: ranking decided only by voters
 - semi-open systems: shared power
 - preference votes
 - initial ranking
- Ranking requires
 - party: maximize seats (André et al. 2015)
 - candidates: maximize chance to be elected
- Both served by ranking candidates by expected preference votes (Crisp et al. 2013)

- Gender quotas in more than 100 countries' electoral systems (e.g. Dahlerup 2006, Krook 2009, for discussion)
- Quotas pose constraint on parties' behaviour
 - typically meant to shift power balance towards women
 - minimum presence – number of (fe)male candidates no longer a choice option
- Without global placement mandate positioning in the list remains choice to leadership
 - Expectation of positioning serving leadership's self-defined interests → preservation of male candidates power
- List-positions reflect underlying gender preferences and/or leadership power balance (see Esteve-Volart & Bagues 2012)

Gendered attitudes

- Women in parliament more leftist than men (Wängnerud 2009)
- Female voters have more leftist preferences (Edlund & Pande 2002)
- Leftist parties have more women among members and representatives (Stadelmann et al. 2014)
- Stronger preference for equal treatment of men and women on the left (Caul 1999)

- Gender-neutral vs. gender-specific quotas
- Degree to which quotas are binding not homogeneous
 - Potential *adverse* effects on parties with pro-women / gender equality culture
 - 'Male-dominated' parties may need to fundamentally reorganise
- Note: parties are filters between voters' preferences and elected candidates
 - If filter is biased, quotas may counterbalance (see e.g. Casas-Arce & Saiz 2015 for Spain, Besley et al. 2017 for Sweden)

- Local elections every 6 years in October
- 308 municipalities
- Semi-open list proportional representation system
- Choice to vote for list or allocate (multiple) preference votes within a list
- District magnitude 7 to 55 council members
 - Maximum list length equals number of available seats
- In 2012, average of 5.4 party lists per municipality
- 36,600 candidates in total

Gender quotas in Flemish local elections

Background

Lists and Quotas

**Institutional
context**

Hypotheses

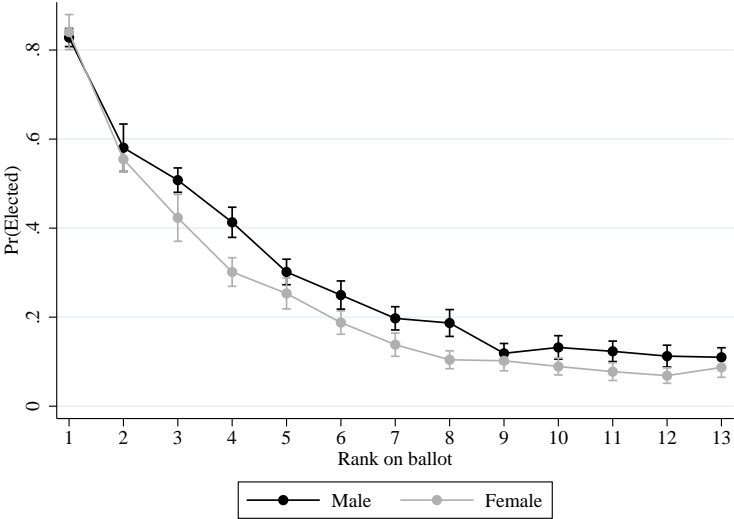
Results

Conclusion

- Gender-neutral
 - number of candidates of each gender may not differ by more than one
 - first 2 candidates may not be of same gender
- 4762 men (25% of male candidates) and 2695 women (15% of female candidates) elected

Gender quotas in Flemish local elections

- Background
- Lists and Quotas
- Institutional context
- Hypotheses
- Results
- Conclusion



Gender quotas in Flemish local elections

Background

Lists and Quotas

Institutional
context

Hypotheses

Results

Conclusion

- Due to quotas parties give women *higher* places on the list than they would without quotas
- Voters may not follow ‘upgrading’ of female candidates
 - → women receive fewer preference votes
- At top of list, men and women equally likely to be elected
 - Average number of preference votes in first position
 - men 1170
 - women 956

- Gender quotas constrain party behaviour (rather than voter choice)
- 'Successful' quotas lead to (more) women being higher ranked in the lists
 - Empirical implication: *Female* candidates obtain *fewer* preference votes, for any given position, than male candidates
- Gender quotas constrain right-wing parties more
- Due to gender-neutral quotas reverse for parties previously nominating more women
 - Empirical implication: Among parties normally promoting women (exp: leftist parties), *men* receive *fewer* preference votes, for any given position, than female candidates

- Included in analysis:
 - 20,022 candidates on 854 *complete* regional party lists
 - (25,193 candidates on 1,097 regional party lists)

	Number of lists	Average vote share	Complete lists	Ideological score
Groen!	96	9%	62	2.2
Sp.a	139	14%	119	2.6
CD&V	241	29%	240	5.5
Open VLD	181	17%	163	6.6
N-VA	259	22%	223	6.7
Vlaams Belang	181	7%	47	9.3

Background

Lists and Quotas

Institutional
context

Hypotheses

Results

Conclusion

	women on average ranked higher than men	equal average ranking	Woman in first position
Groen!	43.6%	16.1%	25.8%
Sp.a	35.3%	15.1%	16.8%
CD&V	40.0%	10.4%	23.3%
Open VLD	38.0%	14.7%	22.1%
N-VA	25.6%	10.7%	17.5%
Vlaams Belang	25.5%	4.3%	19.1%

$$\begin{aligned} \ln(v_{i,j}) = & \alpha \\ & + \beta FEMALE_i \\ & + \gamma IDEOLOGY_j \\ & + \delta FEMALE_i \times IDEOLOGY_j \\ & + \zeta RELRANK_i + Controls_i + \varepsilon_{i,j} \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

- Controls:
 - List length
 - Position dummies: First, Last, among first 10% in relative ranking
 - Age, Age²
 - Incumbency: Mayor, Alderman, Councillor, Member of Parliament, Minister
- Robustness:
 - all lists with $\ln(v_{i,j})$
 - complete lists / all lists with $\ln(v_{i,j} \times 1/\bar{v}_{i,j})$
 - non-parametric estimation with $i.RANK \times i.LISTLENGTH$

Background

Lists and Quotas

Institutional
context

Hypotheses

Results

Conclusion

	(1)	$\ln(v_{i,j})$ (2)	(3)
FEMALE	-0.019** (0.006)	-0.019** (0.006)	0.053** (0.019)
IDEOLOGY		-0.003 (0.002)	0.003 (0.003)
FEMALE # IDEOLOGY			-0.013*** (0.003)
RELATIVE RANK	-0.005*** (0.000)	-0.005*** (0.000)	-0.005*** (0.000)
LISTLENGTH	-0.038*** (0.001)	-0.038*** (0.001)	-0.038*** (0.001)
FIRST DECILE	0.393*** (0.012)	0.393*** (0.012)	0.393*** (0.012)
FIRST POSITION	0.664*** (0.020)	0.664*** (0.020)	0.665*** (0.020)
LAST POSITION	0.714*** (0.019)	0.714*** (0.019)	0.713*** (0.019)
MAYOR	0.385*** (0.033)	0.385*** (0.033)	0.385*** (0.033)
ALDERMAN	0.429*** (0.015)	0.428*** (0.015)	0.429*** (0.015)
COUNCILOR	0.285*** (0.012)	0.285*** (0.012)	0.284*** (0.012)
Constant	-2.208*** (0.037)	-2.190*** (0.042)	-2.227*** (0.042)
Full controls	yes	yes	yes
Observations	22022	22022	22022
R ²	0.688	0.688	0.688

Standard errors clustered at municipality in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

- Gender quotas may lead to higher positions, but not necessarily to *actual* political power
- Decisive where in the list advancement occurs
- Split of sample into three groups
 - list-specific critical positions identified by $[N_j - k; N_j + k]$
 - N_j : number of elected candidates; k : uncertainty-indicator
- Robustness:
 - N_j defined by seats obtained in 2006
 - $k = 0, 1, 2$
 - 'top x ' vs. 'bottom $1-x$ ' with $x = 20\%, 30\%, 40\%$
 - 'serious' vs 'non-serious' contender defined by election outcome (see Put et al., 2015)

Safe – Critical – Low-chance

Background

Lists and Quotas

Institutional
context

Hypotheses

Results

Conclusion

	Safe	$\ln(v_{i,j})$ Critical	Low-chance
FEMALE	-0.172** (0.058)	0.038 (0.044)	0.076*** (0.020)
IDEOLOGY	0.010 (0.007)	0.007 (0.006)	0.002 (0.003)
FEMALE # IDEOLOGY	0.023* (0.010)	-0.008 (0.007)	-0.016*** (0.003)
RELATIVE RANK	-0.021*** (0.001)	-0.018*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.000)
Constant	-2.219*** (0.127)	-1.991*** (0.101)	-2.152*** (0.046)
Controls		excl. first 10% dummy	
		excl. Last dummy	excl. First dummy
Observations	3260	2455	16307
R ²	0.739	0.691	0.553

Standard errors clustered at municipality in parentheses, uncertainty-indicator $k = 1$
 + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Out-performance of neighbouring candidate

Background

Lists and Quotas

Institutional
context

Hypotheses

Results

Conclusion

- Additional robustness check:
 - comparison of vote shares of candidates of different sex ranked just above (below) each other
 - dependent variable: 1 if second candidate strictly outperforms, 0 otherwise
 - 14,547 individuals
- Adjusted controls
 - relative rank and listlength remain as observed for the second ranked candidate
 - within pair age difference
 - within pair incumbency advantage
 - mayor, alderman, councillor, minister, Member of Parliament
 - -1 (1) if first (second) ranked candidate has (dis)advantage, 0 if neither or both are incumbent

Out-performance of neighbouring candidate

Background

Lists and Quotas

Institutional
context

Hypotheses

Results

Conclusion

	Second candidate in any given pair of different gender outperforms			
	Full sample	Safe	Critical	Low-chance
FEMALE	0.708*** (0.178)	-1.345 (0.904)	-0.717 (0.483)	1.026*** (0.178)
IDEOLOGY	0.040* (0.016)	-0.090 (0.075)	-0.058 (0.051)	0.054** (0.016)
FEMALE # IDEOLOGY	-0.088** (0.028)	0.122 (0.146)	0.097 (0.079)	-0.111*** (0.028)
RELATIVE RANK	0.013*** (0.001)	0.036*** (0.005)	0.021*** (0.004)	0.009*** (0.001)
Constant	-1.253*** (0.109)	-0.913+ (0.522)	-0.883* (0.391)	-1.104*** (0.117)
Controls	excl. first 10% dummy			
	excl. Last dummy			
Observations	14574	1956	1136	10414
Pseudo- R^2	0.091	0.167	0.100	0.061

Standard errors clustered at municipality in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Out-performance of neighbouring candidate
(odds)

Background

Lists and Quotas

Institutional
context

Hypotheses

Results

Conclusion

	Second candidate in any given pair of different gender outperforms			
	Full sample	Safe	Critical	Low-chance
FEMALE	2.030*** (0.361)	0.260 (0.235)	0.488 (0.236)	2.790*** (0.496)
IDEOLOGY	1.041* (0.016)	0.914 (0.068)	0.943 (0.048)	1.055** (0.017)
FEMALE # IDEOLOGY	0.916** (0.025)	1.130 (0.165)	1.102 (0.087)	0.895*** (0.025)
RELATIVE RANK	1.013*** (0.001)	1.036*** (0.005)	1.021*** (0.004)	1.009*** (0.001)
Controls	excl. first 10% dummy			
	excl. Last dummy			
Observations	14574	1956	1136	10414
Pseudo- R^2	0.091	0.167	0.100	0.061

Standard errors clustered at municipality in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

- Female candidates positioned higher on ballot than under pure consideration of (expected) number of preference votes
- May indicate 'success' of gender quotas in promoting women
- Split by electoral chances reveals more complex pattern
 - 'Upgrading' limited to positions where the outcome is relatively clear
 - left-wing parties promote women in safe positions
 - left-wing parties also place women *lower* in low-chance positions
 - right-wing parties place women *higher* only in low-chance positions
 - In critical positions female and male candidates ranked according to expected electoral success
- Less optimistic picture of gender quotas in achieving equality in political power

Thank you for your attention!

colin.kuehnhanss@vub.be

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	$\ln(v_{i,j})$	$\ln(v_{i,j} * 1/\bar{v}_{i,j})$	$\ln(v_{i,j})$	$\ln(v_{i,j} * 1/\bar{v}_{i,j})$
FEMALE	-0.009+ (0.006)	-0.011+ (0.006)	0.064*** (0.017)	0.056*** (0.016)
IDEOLOGY	0.002 (0.002)	-0.008*** (0.002)	0.008*** (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)
FEMALE # IDEOLOGY			-0.013*** (0.002)	-0.012*** (0.002)
REL RANK	-0.005*** (0.000)	-0.005*** (0.000)	-0.005*** (0.000)	-0.005*** (0.000)
Constant	-2.068*** (0.040)	0.158*** (0.042)	-2.105*** (0.041)	0.124** (0.042)
Controls	full	full	full	full
Observations	25192	25192	25192	25192
R ²	0.722	0.594	0.722	0.595

Standard errors clustered at municipality in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Safe – Critical – Low-chance, all listlengths

Background

Lists and Quotas

Institutional
context

Hypotheses

Results

Conclusion

	Safe		Critical		Low-chance	
	(1) $\ln(v_{i,j})$	(2) $\ln(v_{i,j} * 1/\bar{v}_{i,j})$	(3) $\ln(v_{i,j})$	(4) $\ln(v_{i,j} * 1/\bar{v}_{i,j})$	(5) $\ln(v_{i,j})$	(6) $\ln(v_{i,j} * 1/\bar{v}_{i,j})$
FEMALE	-0.160** (0.058)	-0.159** (0.058)	0.075* (0.037)	0.033 (0.037)	0.078*** (0.017)	0.076*** (0.017)
IDEOLOGY	0.013+ (0.007)	0.014+ (0.007)	0.021*** (0.004)	0.001 (0.005)	0.005* (0.002)	-0.004+ (0.003)
FEMALE # IDEOLOGY	0.021* (0.010)	0.021* (0.010)	-0.012* (0.006)	-0.005 (0.006)	-0.014*** (0.002)	-0.014*** (0.002)
REL RANK	-0.022*** (0.001)	-0.022*** (0.001)	-0.019*** (0.001)	-0.018*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.000)	-0.005*** (0.000)
Constant	-2.199*** (0.126)	0.162 (0.141)	-1.842*** (0.092)	0.280** (0.096)	-2.018*** (0.044)	0.202*** (0.043)
Controls	excl. Last dummy		excl. first 10% dummy		excl. First dummy	
Observations	3313	3313	2886	2886	18993	18993
R ²	0.741	0.720	0.799	0.680	0.629	0.295

Standard errors clustered at municipality in parentheses

+ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001