WOMAN'S POSITION, PREFERENCE VOTING, AND THE ELECTION OF WOMEN: Why Are Women Less Likely to Enjoy Electoral Success in List PR Systems with Preference Voting Compared to Closed List Voting?

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ABSTRACT: Previous literature suggests that women are less likely to enjoy individual electoral success and overall descriptive representation in list PR systems that employ preference voting as opposed to closed list voting. One of the main explanations to this phenomenon is that it is easier to convince party gatekeepers than voters of the importance of women's representation. This research puts this hypothesis to test relying on unique individual level data from the 2009 European Elections. I demonstrate with the 2009 European Election Study Candidate Survey and Media Content Data that (i) it is important to distinguish between open list and ordered list preference voting, (ii) women do not fare worse in all types of preference voting systems compared to closed list voting systems, and (iii) the reason why women fare worse in certain types of preference voting systems compared to closed list system is not because voters do not vote for women but because party-gatekeepers position female candidates in lower list positions in ordered list systems compared to closed list systems. This article therefore demonstrates that there are differences in 'viable' candidate selection in different voting systems, which in turn affects the likelihood of women's electoral success and descriptive representation in general.

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INTRODUCTION

There are fewer women than men in nearly all democratically elected legislative bodies around the world. As past research shows, certain institutional designs help to reduce this gender gap in descriptive representation while others facilitate the status quo (i.e. Caul 1999; Darcy et al. 1994; Norris 1996; Paxton & Kunovich 2003; Schmidt 2009; Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler 2005). This literature provides consistent empirical evidence that both women's candidacy and representation are not immune to the features of the electoral system. For example, many scholars show that women have higher levels of descriptive representation in countries that employ proportional representation with high district magnitude compared to single-member district plurality / majority systems (see for example, Caul 1999; Darcy et al. 1994; Hogan 2001; Matland & Studlar 1998; Norris 1996; Norris & Franklin 1997; Paxton & Kunovich 2003; Reynolds 1999; Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler 2005).

At the same time, some other important features of electoral system, most notably the openness of the ballot structure in list PR systems (preference or non-preference voting), has received less scholarly attention. As a result, we have little knowledge how preference voting compared to closed list voting affects the election of women in list PR systems. While several early works regarded preferential voting via open or ordered lists as a favourable factor for women's representation (Shugart 1994; Taagepera 1994), more recent research provides empirical evidence that closed lists are more advantageous for the election of women (Caul 1999; Htun 2002; Htun 2005; Matland 2005; Norris 1996; Paxton & Kunovich 2003). However, these works have relied on aggregate level data only. Therefore, the past literature has been unable to control for individual level predictors and explain the mechanisms why women fare worse in countries where the electoral system allows voters to choose not only between parties but also between individual candidates. Moreover, past literature has also not distinguished between open list and ordered list preference voting, leaving us with limited insight to how these different types of voting systems affect the election of women in list PR systems.

The main purpose of this paper is, therefore, to investigate why women fare worse in systems where voters can give preference votes compared to closed list voting. This paper's main motivation is derived from Matland's (2005) claim that the choice of the ballot structure depends on whether we believe it is easier to convince voters to actively vote for women candidates, or to convince party gatekeepers that including more women on the party lists in prominent positions is both fair, and more importantly, strategically wise. However, Matland's claim does not consider the fact that in the majority of cases in Europe preference voting is not carried out with open lists but with ordered list. These are systems in which list order set by party parallel with preference voting determines the choice of individual legislators (Karvonen 2004). Therefore, party-determined candidate viability is important in both closed and ordered list voting systems. However, it is likely that in different types of voting systems different types of candidates are awarded with highly viable list positions. This means that parties' behaviour in terms of candidate selection may vary under different electoral rules, which may result in women having greater obstacles to election in certain electoral systems compared to others. As a result, the reason why women enjoy lower levels

of descriptive representation in preferential voting systems might not be as much of the 'fault' of voters as it is of party gatekeepers who are likely to balance their ticket differently under different electoral laws.

Since this paper aims to go beyond describing differences on aggregate level data, it employs the 2009 European Election Study's Candidate Survey and Media Content Data which enable the paper to study how the voting system affects individual candidate's electoral chances dependent on their gender. All European Union member states, with the exception of Malta, Ireland, and the Northern Ireland constituency of the United Kingdom, employ list PR systems for the election of members of the European Parliament. While all countries have to use proportional electoral system, they are left with a choice of which ballot structure they apply. Therefore, the European elections provide an excellent testing ground for the main hypotheses of this research as all three main types of voting systems, open list preference voting, ordered list preference voting, and closed list non-preference voting are utilized at these elections. Moreover, the unique individual level data collected during European elections allow this research to control for other main predictors of candidate's electoral success, such as her political experience, ambition, campaign effort, amount of individual news media coverage, candidate party's electoral standing and ideology, but also for candidate quotas, district magnitude, and overall gender equality in the society.

HOW ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AFFECT THE ELECTION OF WOMEN?

Some scholars have explained the lack of women in legislative bodies by emphasising the problems in the supply side. These studies have primarily been concerned with the reasons why women are less likely to be political candidates than men (i.e. Lawless & Fox 2005; Norris & Lovenduski 1995). Another part of the literature has been investigating the role of institutional design in facilitating or hindering female candidates' chances for electoral success and representation (i.e. Caul 1999; Darcy et al. 1994; Norris 1996; Paxton & Kunovich 2003; Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler 2005). The latter literature provides consistent empirical evidence that both women's candidacy and representation are not immune to the features of the electoral system. For example, women are reported to enjoy higher levels of descriptive representation in proportional electoral systems compared to plurality-majority systems (Caul 1999; Matland & Studlar 1998; Norris 1996; Norris & Franklin 1997; Paxton & Kunovich 2003; Reynolds 1999; Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler 2005). Many studies also find that women fare better in larger electoral districts compared to single-member districts or districts where few seats are divided (Hogan 2001; Norris 1996; Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler 2005).

The level of proportionality and the district magnitudes applied in the electoral system are linked to each other because PR list systems usually employ multimember districts where more than one candidate can be elected from a particular district as opposed to plurality-majority systems that employ single-member districts. In PR list systems, parties tend to balance their ticket to attract more voters and to avoid internal party disputes between

different factions of the party (Matland 2005; Gallagher & Marsh 1988), and thus run more women in their lists. Therefore, 'the perceived electoral risk with a female candidate decreases when a female is part of a group, rather than the sole candidate' (Caul 1999: 84). In contrast, in plurality-majority systems parties are faced with zero-sum contests where they must make a choice between female and male candidates rather than being able to place both on the ticket (Kunovich & Paxton 2005).

Previous research, thus, provides consistent empirical evidence that women benefit from proportional electoral systems. However, there are large variations in the share of women elected to different legislative bodies in countries that all employ multimember district proportional electoral systems. We know that PR list systems do not only differ from each other in terms of district magnitude but also in terms of whether parties or voters decide the division of the seats awarded to a party. Several scholars claim that the particular voting system (i.e. closed list voting and preferential voting) employed in PR list systems can affect the election of women, too, as both parties and candidates are likely to behave differently in different voting systems (Katz 2007).

While several early works regarded preferential voting via open or ordered list ballot structure as a favourable factor for women's representation (Shugart 1994; Taagepera 1994), more recent research provides empirical evidence that closed lists are more advantageous for the election of women in PR lists systems (Caul 1999; Htun 2002; Htun 2005; Matland 2005; Norris 1996; Paxton & Kunovich 2003). However, these works provide limited insight to why this is the case. Schmidt (2009) argues that ballot structure itself does not explain women's representation but suggests that women fare better in closed lists voting systems due to the fact that quotas and placement mandates work more efficiently in these systems. However, all his analyses, similarly to other previous research, are based on aggregate level data, which has forced him to ignore individual level variables and other possible mechanisms explaining why women fare worse in preference voting systems compared to closed list systems.

As a result, the little research that touches upon the question of how the degree of openness of the ballot structure affects the election of women in list PR systems is (a) based on aggregate level data and/or (b) discusses this issue very briefly in a wider research setting. This has left us with insufficient explanation to why many scholars find women to enjoy lower levels of descriptive representation in PR list systems with preferential ballot structure as opposed to closed lists.

LIST PR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND THE ELECTION OF WOMEN

In all list PR systems the voters are primarily presented with a choice between parties. However, in some cases voters can also choose between individual candidates that represent the party of their choice. In other words, the difference between these systems lays in the fact whether the voting act is candidate-based or party-based (Bowler & Farrell 1993). Since this paper's main interest is to investigate why women candidates tend to enjoy greater electoral

success and thus higher levels of descriptive representation in systems with closed list ballot structure compared to systems with preference vote option, I herewith discuss different types of ballot structure employed within PR list electoral systems and how these different structures may affect women candidates' electoral chances.

This paper distinguishes between two broad types of voting systems employed in list PR electoral systems. Systems where voters can only express their preference to a party and have to accept the party's preference in regard to which candidates should represent it in the legislature are called here *closed party list voting systems or systems with closed lists ballot structure*. On the other hand, systems where voters can choose among the candidates of the same party and influence directly which candidate from their preferred party gets elected are called *preferential or preference voting systems*.

Therefore, the basic question is whether an electoral system allows voters to choose between parties, candidates, or both. In the case of *closed party list voting*, the votes pool to the level of the party and the choice of individual representatives depends on a list order determined by the party (Karvonen 2004). In the case of preferential voting, there are more varieties. Since this paper is only interested in PR list systems, I will not discuss herewith the single transferable vote system or alternative vote system, but will keep the focus on preference voting in PR list systems only.[1] Preferential voting in PR list systems can be divided into two broad categories: preference voting with *open lists* and preference voting with *ordered lists* ballot structure. These two types differ in terms of 'the degree to which electoral systems reward politicians' personal reputations' (Carey & Shugart 1995: 419). In the case of *open list preference voting*, preference votes are the sole bases on which individual representatives are chosen, while in the case of *ordered list preference voting* list order determined by party parallel with preference voting determines the choice of individual legislators (Karvonen 2004). Therefore, in the latter case the decision of which candidate gets elected is divided between parties and voters.

In this paper, I argue that past research may have missed some important mechanisms of how electoral rules affect women's representation by relying on aggregate level data only and by not distinguishing different types of preference voting systems. In many real-life cases the choice of individual representatives does not rest solely with voters or with parties but the responsibility of electing individual legislators are divided between the two. It is reasonable to expect that both parties and voters may behave differently dependent on the importance of their decision.

For example, party gatekeepers may select different types of candidates as viable candidates under different electoral rules (Hazan & Voerman 2006). This paper takes the argument further by claiming that the combination of different electoral rules and candidate selection procedures affects the election of women, too. Also past research expects that "with different electoral systems we could, and probably would, see different kinds of candidates"

[1] Only Malta, Ireland, and the Northern Ireland constituency of the United Kingdom employ STV system for the election of representatives to the European Parliament. This provides too few cases (in total 21 respondents in the 2009 EES Candidate Survey data) to include them in the analysis.

(Hazan & Voerman 2006: 148). Parties may take into consideration elements, such as electability, representation, incumbency, and cohesion, to a different degree under varying electoral rules when producing their lists. Current literature offers little insight to how the combination of certain electoral rules and candidate selection procedures affect the election of women.

Closed party lists put the responsibility on the political party to balance the representation of different demographics, interests, and groups among candidates. In such a system, different factions in the party, i.e. women's faction, are likely to put pressure on party gate-keepers not only to include enough women in electoral lists but to ensure women with viable list positions. As list position determines everything in closed lists systems, it also means that these different factions within parties can hold party gatekeepers responsible for their dismal commitment to fielding female candidates and for impeding women's descriptive representation. Moreover, in closed lists systems parties are likely not only to balance their party lists but also to balance the 'viable' part of the list in order to appeal to different subgroups of voters. Therefore, I expect women to enjoy relatively competitive ranking in electoral lists in countries that apply closed list systems. Moreover, I expect the effect to be stronger in countries with higher levels of gender equality because in these societies party gatekeepers are likely to face more pressure to support viable female candidacy.

While in open list systems parties do not determine individual candidate's viability as they do in closed list systems, in the former case too, there is an incentive to parties to balance their ticket. By doing so, a party may guarantee that different segments of voters can choose a suitable representative(s) from the given party's list and thus ensure a good overall result. In the case of open lists systems it is up to parties to field enough female candidates but ultimately it is voters' responsibility to ensure women's representation. As previous research shows little if any discrimination against female candidates by voters (Darcy & Schramm 1977), I do not expect female candidates to fare any worse in open lists systems than in closed lists systems.

Ordered lists systems lay in between closed lists and open lists systems. In ordered list systems parties affect individual candidate's electoral chances with the initial list placement but, at the same time, they cannot be held solely responsible for impeding women's representation, as voters have the opportunity to change the list order with preference votes. This means that party gatekeepers may have less incentive to include more women in viable list positions as the chain of responsibility is weaker. However, the fact that parties rank their candidates in ordered lists is likely to have consequences for the way in which candidates and their electoral campaigns are presented to the voters. Therefore, one could ask what voters can actually decide in ordered list systems and how prior ranking affects their vote choice. In the case of European parliamentary elections, large constituencies (in most cases an entire country) are defined. Past research suggest that voters are likely to identify less with candidates in large constituencies and thus they will tend to use preferential votes less (Katz 2007: 30-31). Therefore, list ranking matters a great deal at European elections also in ordered list systems. But if there is less responsibility and accountability held by party gatekeepers, women candidates could suffer from less viable positions. Moreover, if party

gatekeepers feel less incentive to rank women high on the list it means that candidates lower in the list need to make a direct appeal to the voters with their campaign in order to make up for the less-viable starting position. This means that candidates will also need money to carry out a campaign (Hazan & Voerman 2006: 159). However, literature on women's representation suggests that one reason why women are disadvantaged in politics is that they have fewer resources, including campaign funding, to secure their seat (Norris & Lovenduski 1995; Lawless & Fox 2005). Therefore, all things considered, I expect women to do worse in ordered list systems because parties feel less incentive to place them on viable positions which in turn decreases their likelihood for electoral success.

Therefore, this paper's central expectations are, (i) women are not necessarily disadvantages in all types of preference voting systems; (ii) the variance in women's electability in different voting systems is likely due to the fact that parties' viable candidate selection and ballot balancing may differ under different electoral rules.

OTHER PREDICTORS OF ELECTORAL SUCCESS

Besides party-determined viability, there are also other institutional, contextual, and individual level factors that are likely to affect the election of women. In democratic elections it is difficult to downplay the role of the voters (especially in preferential voting systems). The important role of the voters is also emphasised by previous research on women's representation which to a large extent, in the 1970s and '80s, was only concerned about whether voters punished or praised female candidates (Darcy & Schramm 1977; Kelley & McAllister 1983; Vallance 1983). The main hypothesis, in terms of female candidate's electoral success, is about possible sexist stereotyping by voters who might rather vote for a male than a female candidate just because he is a man. Despite the fact that previous studies have not always found support for such hypothesis (Darcy & Schramm 1977), this paper will nevertheless study the effects of possible sexist stereotyping among voters by controlling for overall levels of gender equality in the society. It is likely that voters are more open to support female candidacy in more gender equal societies because in such countries political office is considered as suitable for women as for men. Also, previous research supports the idea that women candidates do better in more women-friendly constituencies (Ondercin & Welch 2009; Welch & Studlar 1996).

Overall levels of gender equality may affect the election of women in other ways, too. Much of the research finds that women's access to higher education and their extensive labour market participation explain much of the cross-national variance in women's descriptive representation (Hogan 2001; Matland 2005; Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler 2005). The main argument to support this expectation is that the higher women's ranking is in the society (the more they participate in higher education and on labour market) the more likely it is that women obtain necessary skills needed in political environment. Therefore, the more gender equal the society is the higher the chances for women to (a) become candidates and also (b) to translate their candidacy into an elected seat as they possess necessary skills and

resources for electoral competition. Lastly, in a more gender equal society women candidates are also more likely to be placed on higher list positions by parties, thus, increasing their viability and likelihood of being elected further more.

Candidates with extensive political experiences are expected to be electorally more successful, too. Incumbent office holders and other party members with extensive political experiences either in party, local, and/or national level are on average more likely to be favoured in the eyes of the parties, media, and the voters (Matland & Studlar 1998; Ondercin & Welch 2009). I hypothesises that it is easier for candidates with extensive political experiences to win the support of the party, receive more media attention, and appeal to the voters because their (positive) political "track-record" is likely to assure all the aforementioned parties of their competence and suitability for the elected office. Therefore, extensive political experiences should not only help a woman to get elected, but also increase her likelihood of being ranked in a highly viable list position by a political party. Such expectation is also supported by previous literature which provides consistent evidence that incumbent office holders have an advantage in the electoral process (Kahn & Goldenberg 1991; Matland & Studlar 1998; Ondercin & Welch 2009; Welch & Studlar 1996).

This paper also hypothesises that the amounts of coverage female candidates receive in the news media is a likely and so far neglected explanatory factor of women candidates' chances of becoming elected. Previous studies report gender bias in candidate coverage with women receiving relatively less media coverage than their share among candidates would predict them to gain (Banducci et al. 2007; Bystrom et al. 2001; Heldman et al. 2000; Kahn & Goldenberg 1991; Luhiste 2011). At the same time, candidates who receive more attention in the news media are more easily recognizable to their potential voters and hence have higher chances of becoming elected. Without being visible, female candidates have little impact on the overall mass political engagement, including voter turnout among female electorate (Banducci et al. 2007). In order to become elected voters need to recognize the candidates. However, since variations in the amount of media coverage can influence recognition rates (Goldenberg & Traugott 1987), gender bias in the news media attention may result in considerable electoral consequences.

Besides the aforementioned, this research will also control for the effects of individual political ambition, campaign effort, candidate's party ideology, and the presence of legislative or voluntary party quotas. Lawless and Fox (2005) studied the impact of gender gap in political ambition on women's candidacy and reported it to be an important predictor of female candidacy. Herein I argue that political ambition may not only determine one's candidacy but is also likely to impact her chances of getting elected. Candidates who are politically more ambitious are likely to both gain more support from their political party as well as work harder on their campaign than their less-ambitious contenders, and due to that be also more successful in winning an elected seat. The current paper also controls for campaign effort.

In addition, this paper acknowledges that next to several individual level variables there are also other party-related predictors of women's candidacy and descriptive

representation (i.e. party ideology, adoption of candidate quotas) that are likely to affect their individual level electoral success. Based on empirical results from previous research, it is likely that these variables can influence not only women's candidacy (see Caul 1999; Norris & Franklin 1997; Reynolds 1999) but also in what position women candidates run in elections, and through that also their likelihood for electoral success.

DATA

This paper relies on two components of the 2009 European Election Study by utilizing simultaneously the 2009 EES Candidate Survey Data and the 2009 EES Media Content Study. The unique possibility to link the amount of individual news coverage candidates received (Media Study data) to his/her survey responses (Candidate Survey data) allows this paper to study not only how the type of voting system affects female candidates' electability but also to control for all the above mentioned predictors of candidate's electoral success cross-nationally.

For the European Parliament, all EU member states, with the exception of Malta, Ireland, and the Northern Ireland constituency of the United Kingdom, employ list PR systems. While all countries have to use proportional electoral system, they are left with a choice of which ballot structure they apply. Therefore, the European elections provide an excellent testing ground for the main hypotheses of this research. There are three main types of voting systems utilized for the election of members of the European Parliament: open list preference voting, ordered list preference voting, and closed list non-preference voting. The most popular system is that of ordered list preferential voting system, employed in eleven EU member states. Open list system is used in seven member states, including countries that employ STV. While closed list system is used in 9 member states, more than half of all the MEP seats are divided by using this rule. Table 1 summarises the type of voting system used together with the share of MEP seats female candidates gained at the latest European elections.

(Table 1 here)

The 2009 EES Candidate Survey was carried out in dual mode, i.e. mail questionnaire and web-based survey. The choice of the mode was left to the candidates. The sample only excluded totally irrelevant parties or candidates. Altogether, more than 6500 candidates were contacted (Giebler et al. 2010a). Countries with small number of candidates were over represented in the sample in order to have as much possibilities to work with countries with small N. The mean response rate was 22%, ranging from 4.4% in Bulgaria and 5.6% in Poland to 34.4% in Malta and 42.9% in Sweden (Giebler et al. 2010b). The final sample consists of 1549 candidates, 34% of whom were women

In order to control for the representativeness of the sample, the EESC team calculated Duncan indices of dissimilarity for three candidate characteristics: gender, party affiliation, and proportion of MEPs per country. In regard to gender, the deviation between the

population proportions and the sample proportions are only small or moderate. However the differences between the vote share in 2009 election and the proportion of candidates of a party in percent of all answers in the respective country (party affiliation) are significantly higher. This is primarily because candidates of smaller parties were equally or even more inclined to participate in the study than candidates of parties with higher vote share (Giebler et al. 2010b). In order to compensate for these dissimilarities, survey weights are used in the analyses. This paper utilizes a combined weight for party affiliation and the number of MEPs per country in order to increase the representativeness of the analyses.

MEASUREMENT

The central dependent variable employed in this paper is dichotomous – either a candidate was elected to the European parliament or not. The other main dependent variable is candidate's party determined viability. In order to measure how favourably party positioned a candidate in the election list, an overall measure of candidate's viability, developed by Giebler et al. (2010a) is employed in the analysis. The categorisation of the viability variable is based on the candidate's list position in relation to the potential number of seats won by her party (Hix et al. 2009). In this way, the measure will also take into account candidate's party's overall viability. For countries with open lists preference voting or STV voting (Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Northern Ireland constituency of the UK, and Poland), all candidates were set on the same list position, which is why these countries are only included in the analyses where the dependent variable is candidate's electability and not her viability. In order to incorporate uncertainty to the measure, the standard deviation of discrepancy between the predictions and the seats that were actually won was calculated for each country. As a result, candidates with a list position below the predicted seats minus one standard deviation were classified as "safe candidates". Candidates with a list position above the predicted seats plus one standard deviation were classified as "unpromising candidates", and all other candidates were classified as "doubtful" (Giebler et al. 2010a). This paper employs dummy variables for candidate's viability (determined by party), "unpromising candidate" being the reference category.

The type of election system employed for the 2009 European election is the central independent variable. Member states are classified similarly to Farrel and Scully (2005), with the exception of Poland, which according to its Electoral Law is an open list, not a closed list system (Giebler 2012; Kotnarowski 2012). For the analyses, dichotomous variables are used, closed list non-preference voting system being the baseline category. Also candidate's gender is measured as a dummy variable.

For measuring overall gender equality in society, I calculated a gender equality index (GEI) based on the modified EU Gender Equality Index developed by Plantenga and her colleagues (2009). This modified index is based on eight indicators that make up four dimensions of equality: equal sharing of paid work; equal sharing of money; equal sharing of decision making power; and equal sharing of time[i]. The values of the GEI can range from '0'

to ‘1’, where ‘0’ marks the state of complete inequality and ‘1’ – the condition of total equality between men and women in a given society. Based on the values of the GEI countries are divided into three main categories: ‘low gender equality (GEI<0.5)’, ‘moderate gender equality (0.5>GEI<0.6)’, ‘high gender equality (GEI>0.6)’, ‘low gender equality’ being the reference category. More information on the gender equality index as well as on the exact measurement of the control variables is available in Appendix 1.

The analysis utilizes logistic regression models because the dependent variables employed in this paper are dichotomous. In order to avoid inflated standard errors, robust standard errors (clustered by country) are reported since the data are hierarchical and the models include besides individual level variables also some country and party level variables.

RESULTS: WOMEN’S ELECTORAL CHANCES ACROSS COUNTRIES

In order to establish any striking cross-national differences between women candidates’ electoral success and to investigate the impact of the openness of the ballot structure employed, the paper first examines women candidates’ electoral chances on aggregate level.

The 2009 European Elections results demonstrate significant cross-national differences in the shares of women among candidates and the proportion of women among elected MEPs (see Figure 1). In countries, such as Finland, Estonia, Hungary, Sweden and the Netherlands, the share of women among elected MEPs is much higher than their share among candidates. At the same time, in countries, like Malta, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Italy, and the Czech Republic the situation is the opposite as women gain considerably less MEP seats than their proportion among candidates would expect them to achieve.

Since this paper is especially interested in how the degree of openness of the ballot structure affects women candidates’ electoral chances, the graph distinguishes open and ordered list systems from closed and blocked list voting systems. The diagonal line represents a situation where the share of women among candidates corresponds exactly to their share among elected representatives. Therefore, women’s aggregate electoral success is hindered in countries that are below the diagonal line and fostered in member states above that line. Figure 1 relieves some weak patterns. Most countries that are far below the line of equality employ either open list or ordered list preference voting for European elections, while the majority of countries that use closed list voting system are beyond or close to the diagonal line. The effect of closed list non-preferential voting system is especially strong in countries where the share of women among candidates is relatively low, while the effect flattens once the share of women among candidates increases, indicating that closed lists may be more beneficial in countries with limited pool of female politicians as opposed to countries with greater share of female candidates.

The graph also depicts some regional patterns. Women enjoy higher levels of aggregate electoral success in Northern Europe than in Southern Europe. This pattern is likely

to tap into differences in overall gender equality between EU member states, which urge this paper to pay close attention to the effects of gender equality on women's electability also in individual level analysis. In sum, this basic graph suggests that some mechanisms in electoral process led by institutions may work differently in different contexts.

(Figure 1 here)

Results of candidate level analysis

Before proceeding to test how institutional and contextual factors affect female candidates' electoral chances, the paper first examines how party-determined candidate viability impacts her likelihood of electoral success across voting systems. Table 2 shows that in no system a candidate is immune to party-determined viability. First data column in Table 2 indicates the importance of overall party viability on individual candidate's electoral success in open list systems[2]. The reason why the effects of viability are considerably smaller in open list systems compared to ordered and closed list systems is because in the former system this measure does not tap into candidate's individual prestige. However, as expected, the combination of candidate's list position and her party's general viability has the strongest effect on her electoral success in non-preference voting systems. The effect is also large in preferential voting systems with ordered lists, indicating that the power of preference votes in ordered list systems is limited and pre-determined viability, i.e. election list ranking, matters a great deal.

(Table 2 here)

As this paper is especially interested in the effects of the openness of the ballot structure and the overall gender equality on female candidate's electoral success, I first run reduced logistic regression models with clustered standard errors. Table 3 indicates that the interaction term between being a woman and running in an electoral system with an ordered list preference voting is a negative predictor of both party-determined viability and the likelihood of getting elected. Therefore, the data suggest that one of the reasons why women fare worse in PR list systems with ordered preferential voting compared to closed list voting is because parties provide women in ordered list systems with less viable starting point. At the same time, women do not seem to fare worse than men in open list voting systems compared to closed list voting systems. Table 3 also shows the effects of overall gender equality on women's likelihood for electoral success and viability. While the coefficients of overall gender equality on female candidate's electoral success fail to reach traditional levels of significance, more women-friendly context appears to make a difference whether a woman is placed on a highly viable position or not. However, in order to make sure that the results

[2] Each candidate from the same party is given the same viability score in open list systems as no 'objective' individual measure of viability, such as party list placement, is available in these systems. In ordered and closed list systems each candidate's viability score varies from her party members as the score combines candidate's individual list placement with her party's general viability.

are robust, I also run the same models with other predictors of candidate electoral success and viability.

(Table 3 here)

Table 4 highlights that the effects of the openness of ballot structure on women candidates' electoral success and viability are robust. While there do not appear any statistically significant differences in women's likelihood of being elected in non-preference closed list systems and in preference open list systems, ordered list preference voting systems seem to hinder women's chances for electoral success. As party determined viability is an especially strong predictor of electoral success for women, as compared to men, the fact that women also suffer from less viable list positions in ordered list preference voting systems may explain why scholars continue to find evidence that women fare better in closed list systems as opposed to preferential voting system.

Table 4 also indicates that women have higher likelihood for getting elected in societies where women and men are in general more equal to each other. Overall gender equality affects both women's electoral chances and viability. The only control variables that draw attention are legislative and voluntary candidate quotas for women. The strong negative effects, though not always significant, could be because the quotas do not often state the position at which women candidates run but rather regulate the number of women in the lists. Moreover, by controlling for overall gender equality in the society the coefficients of quotas may reflect the cases where female politicians are not rewarded with competitive list ranking but placed in the lists in order to fill the necessary quota.

(Table 4 here)

The results discussed above illustrate how certain characteristics of the electoral system and the overall context can have a positive or negative impact on women candidates' likelihood of getting elected. However, the two central variables of interest, the openness of the ballot structure and the overall gender equality in the society do not always go hand-in-hand. There are countries in Europe, that employ closed list ballot structure (favourable to women) but score low in regards to gender equality (unfavourable to women), such as Estonia, Greece, and the UK; or employ ordered list ballot structure (unfavourable to women) but score high in regards to gender equality (favourable to women), such as Belgium and Sweden. To estimate the full impact of the openness of the ballot structure and the context of overall gender equality, I report predicted probabilities of electoral success for women across a range of situations that correspond to 'real world' examples. These estimates, which are derived from the models in Table 4 are reported on Figures 2.1 and 2.2.

Figure 2.1 shows that the type of ballot structure does not make a big difference in societies with high or low levels of gender equality. However, in the majority of European countries that rank moderately in terms of gender equality there are substantive differences, in regards to the election of women, whether a country adopts an ordered or a closed ballot structure. Highly experienced female candidate in a country with average levels of gender equality and with a closed list ballot structure, i.e. Germany or France, has a likelihood of

being elected of 0.31; while otherwise identical candidate from a similar type of society but with an ordered list ballot structure, i.e. Latvia or Slovenia, has a likelihood of being elected of 0.11. The effects of gender equality without ballot structure remain insignificant as the predicted probabilities for otherwise identical candidates do not change substantially across societies with varying levels of gender equality. The predicted probabilities, however, also indicate that political experiences matter for female candidate's likelihood of getting elected while Table 4 suggested no significant effects for men and women together.

(Figure 2.1 here)

Figure 2.2 tells a similar story. The effect of the openness of the ballot structure on female candidate's likelihood of being a highly viable candidate is the highest in societies with average levels of gender equality. The effects vary substantially among highly experienced candidates. These predicted probabilities indicate that a politically highly experienced woman in a society with average levels of gender equality which employs closed list ballot structure has a likelihood of being a viable candidate of 0.41; while her identical colleague in a country with ordered list ballot structure has a likelihood of being a viable candidate of 0.27. This all indicates that women, regardless of their political experience, face a more difficult challenge of getting elected in preference voting systems with ordered lists than in non-preference voting systems with closed lists.

(Figure 2.2 here)

CONCLUSION

Many scholars report that the likelihood of women's electoral success and descriptive representation are lower in PR list systems that allow preference voting compared to systems that do not (Caul 1999; Htun 2002; Htun 2005; Matland 2005; Norris 1996; Paxton & Kunovich 2003). However, past literature offers little explanation to why this is the case. Matland (2005) argues that whether preference voting or closed party list voting delivers more equal gender representation depends if we believe that it is easier to convince voters or party gatekeepers of the importance of electing women.

Most importantly, this research demonstrates that women do not fare worse than men in all types of preference voting systems. The data from 25 European Union member states show that women have equal likelihood for electoral success in systems where parties decide all (closed list systems) and in systems where parties decide nothing (open list preference voting) on how votes are divided to seats within a party. However, when this decision is divided between parties and voters (ordered list preference voting) women tend to have lower chances of turning their candidacy into an elected seat.

This research also indicates that the reason why women have lower likelihood of getting elected in ordered list system compared to open or closed list systems is not necessarily because the society is not ready for the election of women. Quite contrary, these data point to the party gatekeepers. The analysis suggests that party-determined viability is a powerful predictor of individual candidate's electoral success in both ordered list and closed

list systems. However, the analysis also shows that parties position women in less viable list placement in ordered list systems compared to closed list systems. Therefore, one of the main reasons why female candidates fare worse in systems that allow preference voting could not be because voters 'punish' them but because parties do not grant women with as viable starting position as in closed list systems. Moreover, the data also show that party-determined viability is an especially strong predictor of electoral success among women as compared to men, which makes these findings even stronger.

Besides electoral rules, the overall gender equality in the society matters, too. While overall gender equality appears to affect women's electoral chances to a lesser extent than the electoral rules, this research also shows that the effect of ordered list preference voting compared to closed list voting is especially large in countries where the level of gender equality is on the European average. These results are further supported by the aggregate level results which show that closed lists may be more beneficial in countries with limited pool of female politicians as opposed to countries with greater share of female candidates. Therefore, there appears a synergic effect between overall gender equality and institutional design.

In conclusion, women candidates do better in systems where parties decide all or nothing, compared to where the responsibilities are shared between voters and parties. First, it may indicate that voters do not discriminate against women candidates. Second, it shows that party gatekeepers might employ different strategies when balancing their ticket under varying electoral rules. These results indicate that party gatekeepers may have harder time ignoring women's factions in the party and their demands in the process of electoral list making in systems where parties decide it all. In cases where the electoral list standing does not determine everything, party gatekeepers can more easily argue the importance individual campaigning and of preference votes that women candidates may gain when ranking them lower. This research also shows that if societies want to increase the share of women elected, the only option is not to wait for the society to change its gender stereotypes. Electoral rules do affect the election of women and these are often more easily changed than the overall attitudes in the society.

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APPENDIX 1: MEASUREMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY INDEX. MEASUREMENT OF CONTROL VARIABLES

The Gender Equality Index is constructed in order to measure overall level of gender equality in society. The paper takes as a starting point Platenga et al. (2010) European Union Gender Equality Index. It was necessary to amend it slightly in order to calculate a score for each EU member state (their study did not include Romania and Bulgaria); and to avoid Platenga and her colleagues' method of replacing missing cases with mean values.

The Gender Equality Index used in this study includes four major areas of life where equality between men and women varies across Europe: equal share of employment; equal share of money; equal share of (decision-making) power; and equal share of time. I use the following eight indicators to measure these different dimensions of gender equality:

- Equal share of employment: (1) gender gap in employment; (2) gender gap in unemployment.
- Equal share of money: (3) gender pay gap; (4) gender gap in risk of poverty after social transfer.
- Equal share of power: (5) gender gap in national parliament (lower chamber); (6) gender gap in ISCO 1 level occupations.
- Equal share of time: (7) gender gap in hours spent educating children and caring for them among people in full-time employment; (8) gender gap in hours spent cooking and doing house chores among people in full-time employment.

Since the indicators are measured on different scales, the actual values of the indicators are standardized in order to calculate the composite index. This paper employs the min-max methodology in order to standardize the indicators. The same method is used also for United Nations Development Programme Gender-related Development Index, for the Gender Empowerment Measure (UNDP, 2006) and for the EU Gender Equality Index (Platenga et al., 2010).

The formula is:

$$\text{Standardized value} = \frac{|\text{actual value x1}| - \text{min value x1}}{\text{max value x1} - \text{min value x1}},$$

where the actual value is a national score on the indicator (i.e., gender gap of 5% in unemployment); where a situation of absolute equality (no gender gap) refers to the maximum value and has assigned the value 0; and where the minimum value is set at a level which is a little below the actual minimum value within the sample of EU countries. Since gender equality is understood as the absence of gender gaps, both positive and negative gaps are treated the same way which means that the absolute value of the gender gap is used. As a result, the standardized values of each indicator vary between 0 and 1, where 0 corresponds to a situation of worst inequality in the EU, and 1 corresponds to a situation of absolute equality.

The composite index is calculated by summing up the standardized values of all indicators and dividing the sum by the number of indicators.

(Table 5 here)

Candidate's political ambition (2009 EES Candidate Survey): "What would you like to be ten years from now on? Please tick as many boxes as appropriate".

> Ambition for positions in the European Union = 1, if a candidate responded that "in 10 years from now I'd like to be" (a) a member of the European Parliament; (b) chair of my party group in the EP; (c) chair of an EP committee; (d) leader of an European organization; and/or (e) member of the European Commission.
>
> Ambition for positions in national political system = 1, if a candidate responded that "in 10 years from now I'd like to be" (a) a member of national parliament; (b) a chair of parliamentary group; (c) a chair of parliamentary committee; (d) a leader of national organization; and/or (e) a member of national government.

Candidate's political experiences (2009 EES Candidate Survey): "Can you tell us about your political experience? Are you now or have you ever been a member of any of the following bodies? Local representative body; Regional representative body; National representative body; Member of the European Parliament; Member of local government; Member of regional government; Member of national government".

> For each of the variables each respondent was assigned a value "1" (if she is or has been a member) and "0" (if she was never a member). The political experience index is measured as the proportion of memberships in relation to the total number of items (for more information, see Giebler et al. 2010a).

Candidate's campaign effort, TIME (2009 EES Candidate Survey): "About how much time do you devote to campaigning per week during the last month before the election? (in hours)".

Amount of individual media coverage (2009 EES Media Content Data)

2009 European Election Study's (EES) Media Content Study covers the media in 27 EU member states. The advantage of these data are that they have been collected EU wide, using the same coding rules in each country to assure comparability across countries (for more information see Schuck et al. 2010). Both newspapers and television news were coded in each country. With at least two television news outlets (public and commercial) and at least three newspapers (two "quality" and one tabloid) per country, the total sample consists

of 58 television networks and 84 different newspapers. The content analysis was conducted for news items published or broadcast within three weeks running up to the election. With regard to story selection, for television, all news items have been coded; and for newspapers, all news items on the title page and on one randomly selected page as well as all stories pertaining particularly to the EU and/or the EU election on any other page of the newspaper have been coded (Schuck et al. 2010). The unit of coding the data was individual news story. As this paper is interested in the MEP candidates' coverage, the analysis uses these news stories only where MEP candidates were coded as actors[3]. In all 27 countries in total, candidates appeared as actors in 7065 occasions; least often in Lithuania (13) and most often in Spain (526). In order to calculate an individual level measure of media coverage, the Media Content data set was transposed by transforming candidates (actors) from variables to cases. This way, it was possible to summarize the number of times a candidate was mentioned (the amount of coverage she gained) in the news media during the European Elections campaign.

However, only 60% of the candidates who received media coverage had their personal actor code in the Media Study which means that only media coverage of candidates' who had their personal actor code could be measured individually. Therefore, candidate's whose media coverage was not coded personally but as "other X party MEP candidate" and candidates who received no media coverage at all both resulted with an imputed value of "0" for individual media coverage in the final data set. Moreover, only one quarter of the candidates with individually measured media coverage appeared also in the Candidate Survey sample.

[3] One main actor and up to 5 additional actors were coded in each newspaper and TV story. To be considered an actor, the entity or person must have been mentioned by name and quoted directly at least once or indirectly at least twice.

Table 1: Share of women among elected MEPs, 2009

Preference voting				Non-preference voting	
Open lists		Ordered lists		Closed and blocked lists	
Denmark	46% (13)	Austria	41% (17)	Estonia	50% (6)
Finland	62% (13)	Belgium	36% (22)	France	46% (72)
Ireland (STV)	25% (12)	Bulgaria	35% (17)	Germany	37% (99)
Italy	22% (72)	Cyprus	33% (6)	Greece	32% (22)
Luxembourg	17% (6)	Czech Republic	18% (22)	Hungary	36% (22)
Malta (STV)	0% (5)	Latvia	36% (8)	Portugal	36% (22)
Northern Ireland (STV)	66% (3)	Lithuania	25% (12)	Romania	36% (33)
Poland	22% (50)	Netherlands	48% (25)	Spain	36% (50)
		Slovakia	38% (13)	UK (exc. N.I.)	32% (69)
		Slovenia	29% (7)		
		Sweden	56% (18)		
Mean	27% (174)	Mean	37% (167)	Mean	37% (395)

In the brackets is the total number of MEP seats available for the country.
Source: Farrell & Scully 2005; Giebler 2012.

Table 2: Party-determined candidate viability predicting candidate's electoral success

	Preference voting: open lists	Preference voting: ordered lists	Non-preference voting: closed lists
Safe candidate	3.91 (1.13)*	6.28 (1.33)*	10.23 (1.12)*
Doubtful candidate	2.12 (0.48)*	4.31 (0.97)*	3.72 (1.14)*
Female	0.37 (1.36)	-0.89 (0.65)	-0.06 (0.61)
Constant	-2.91 (0.89)	-4.06 (0.79)*	-4.21 (1.15)*
N	219	565	744
Level 2 N	5	11	9
Pearson chi2	55.98	1.92	7.06
Prob > chi2	0.000	0.384	0.029
Pseudo R2	0.27	0.59	0.75

*p<0.05; clustered standard errors in parentheses; reference categories: unpromising candidate, male candidate.
Source: 2009 European Election Study Candidate Survey

Table 3: Contextual factors predicting candidate's electability and viability

	ELECTED	SAFE CANDIDATE	VIABLE (safe/doubtful) CANDIDATE
Female candidate	0.33 (0.30)	-0.87 (0.67)	0.20 (0.24)
Preference voting: open list	-0.17 (0.51)		
Preference voting: ordered list	0.27 (0.58)	0.06 (0.53)	-0.12 (0.31)
Moderate gender equality	1.35 (0.47)*	1.21 (0.65)+	0.78 (0.35)*
High gender equality	-0.06 (0.50)	-0.01 (0.51)	0.06 (0.31)
Woman * Open list	-0.57 (1.27)		
Woman * Ordered list	-1.31 (0.61)*	-1.61 (0.75)*	-0.29 (0.32)
Woman * Moderate gender equality	-0.14 (0.52)	1.86 (0.84)*	0.25 (0.39)
Woman * High gender equality	0.92 (1.03)	0.02 (1.00)	-0.39 (0.30)
Constant	-2.25 (0.34)*	-2.57 (0.47)*	-1.43 (0.22)*
N	1528	1309	1309
Level 2 N	25	20	20
Pearson chi2	94.60	30.98	20.63
Prob > chi2	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R2	0.06	0.13	0.04

*p<0.05; +p<0.10; clustered standard errors in parentheses; reference categories: male candidate, closed list voting system, low gender equality.
Source: 2009 European Election Study Candidate Survey

Table 4: Explaining candidate's likelihood for electoral success

	ELECTED: Simple model	ELECTED: Full model	SAFE CANDIDATE (ordered/closed lists only)	VIABLE (safe/doubtful) CANDIDATE (ordered / closed lists only)
Female	0.01 (0.45)	-4.78 (1.31)*	0.08 (1.35)	0.74 (0.69)
Viability: safe candidate	5.48 (0.98)*	5.08 (1.02)*		
Viability: doubtful candidate	2.42 (0.42)*	1.49 (0.65)*		
Political experience	0.16 (0.14)	0.04 (0.14)	0.22 (0.15)	0.31 (0.07)*
Political ambition: EU	0.14 (0.30)	0.17 (0.27)	-0.32 (0.30)	-0.07 (0.16)
Political ambition: national	-0.56 (0.22)*	-0.51 (0.13)	-0.74 (0.42)+	-0.59 (0.15)*
Campaign effort: time	0.01 (0.01)*	0.01 (0.01)*		
News media coverage (std.)	0.11 (0.06)+	0.11 (0.06)+		
Preference voting: open lists	0.51 (0.58)	0.63 (0.58)		
Preference voting: ordered lists	0.27 (0.36)	0.64 (0.39)+	0.92 (0.46)*	0.25 (0.28)
Left/Liberal/Green party	0.08 (0.87)	-0.40 (0.83)	0.42 (0.61)	0.01 (0.55)
Legislative quota	0.36 (0.60)	1.00 (0.59)+	1.14 (0.82)	0.61 (0.26)*
Voluntary party quota	0.48 (0.62)	1.00 (0.64)	1.79 (0.79)*	1.19 (0.59)*
Moderate gender equality	0.31 (0.56)	0.49 (0.56)	0.54 (0.48)	0.41 (0.28)
High gender equality	0.26 (0.51)	-0.26 (0.53)	-0.34 (0.83)	-0.33 (0.53)
District magnitude	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.00)
Woman * Safe		4.44 (1.76)*		
Woman * Doubtful		6.29 (1.64)*		
Woman * Open list		-0.57 (1.35)		
Woman * Ordered list		-1.91 (0.87)*	-2.63 (1.12)*	-0.69 (0.39)+
Woman * Left/Liberal/Green party		0.87 (1.19)	0.31 (0.82)	-0.36 (0.79)
Woman * Legislative quota		-1.72 (0.92)+	-1.30 (1.23)	-1.07 (0.47)*
Woman * Party quota		-1.07 (1.16)	-2.69 (1.49)+	-1.26 (0.96)
Woman * Average gender equality		0.90 (0.83)	2.83 (0.84)*	0.98 (0.50)*
Woman * High gender equality		1.23 (0.69)*	0.42 (1.32)	0.35 (0.51)
Constant	-4.90 (0.76)*	-4.22 (0.44)*	-3.89 (0.59)*	-2.09 (0.43)*
N	1528	1528	1309	1309
Level 2 N	25	25	20	20
Pearson chi2	1896.16	2482.57	2775.85	1130.81
Prob > chi2	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R2	0.59	0.63	0.31	0.16

*p<0.05; +p<0.10; clustered standard errors in parentheses; reference categories: male candidate, unpromising candidate, closed list voting system, low gender equality.

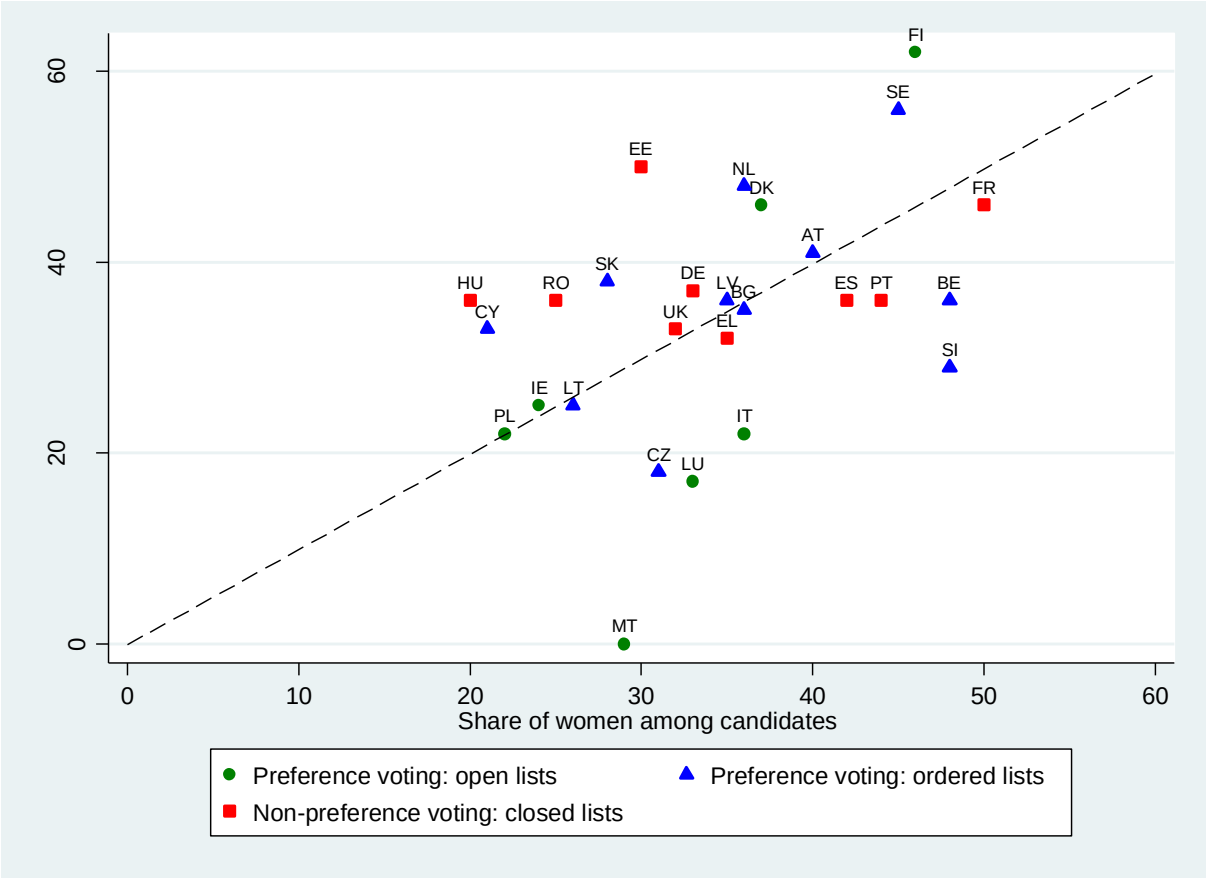
Source: 2009 European Election Study Candidate Survey

Table 5: Overall ranking of 27 EU member states on Gender Equality Index (2007-2009)

Country	Employ-ment	Unemploy-ment	Pay	Risk of poverty	Political power	Socio-economic power	Care activities	Household activities	**Composite index score**
Sweden	0.88	0.91	0.42	0.98	0.93	0.49	0.74	0.58	**0.74**
Finland	0.95	0.81	0.35	0.69	0.8	0.41	0.93	0.67	**0.7**
Denmark	0.85	0.84	0.43	0.87	0.72	0.25	0.85	0.67	**0.68**
Belgium	0.67	0.96	0.71	0.72	0.65	0.51	0.7	0.33	**0.66**
France	0.75	0.91	0.45	0.89	0.25	0.67	0.56	0.5	**0.62**
Poland	0.61	0.87	0.76	0.91	0.3	0.61	0.48	0.42	**0.62**
Bulgaria	0.75	0.94	0.6	0.62	0.33	0.49	0.74	0.42	**0.61**
Hungary	0.67	0.91	0.47	1	0.08	0.61	0.78	0.33	**0.61**
Romania	0.61	0.73	0.59	0.82	0.09	0.41	0.78	0.83	**0.61**
Slovenia	0.79	0.99	0.73	0.47	0.14	0.58	0.74	0.42	**0.61**
Portugal	0.72	0.81	0.73	0.67	0.49	0.46	0.74	0.17	**0.6**
Luxembou	0.52	0.8	0.6	0.78	0.37	n.d.	0.56	0.42	**0.58**
Spain	0.59	0.9	0.45	0.56	0.68	0.49	0.56	0.25	**0.56**
Latvia	0.99	0.08	0.5	0.38	0.29	0.75	0.78	0.58	**0.55**
Germany	0.72	0.84	0.26	0.6	0.58	0.65	0.41	0.25	**0.54**
Netherland	0.68	0.99	0.24	0.8	0.8	0.36	0.04	0.42	**0.54**
Italy	0.35	0.64	0.84	0.47	0.32	0.52	0.81	0.17	**0.52**
Slovakia	0.56	0.8	0.24	0.75	0.28	0.42	0.59	0.33	**0.5**
UK	0.71	0.69	0.32	0.58	0.28	0.56	0.41	0.42	**0.5**
Austria	0.69	0.94	0.18	0.51	0.47	0.38	0.33	0.17	**0.46**
Lithuania	0.96	0.04	0.35	0.18	0.24	0.72	0.59	0.5	**0.45**
Czech Republic	0.5	0.74	0.24	0.67	0.19	0.37	0.33	0.42	**0.43**
Ireland	0.74	0.01	0.45	0.55	0.14	0.48	0.56	0.42	**0.42**
Malta	0.01	0.86	0.75	0.8	0.03	0.07	0.59	0.17	**0.41**
Estonia	0.97	0.1	0	0.09	0.31	0.61	0.22	0.67	**0.37**
Cyprus	0.56	0.96	0.25	0.29	0.16	0.03	0.63	0.08	**0.37**
Greece	0.28	0.1	0.31	0.76	0.17	0.38	0.59	0.08	**0.33**

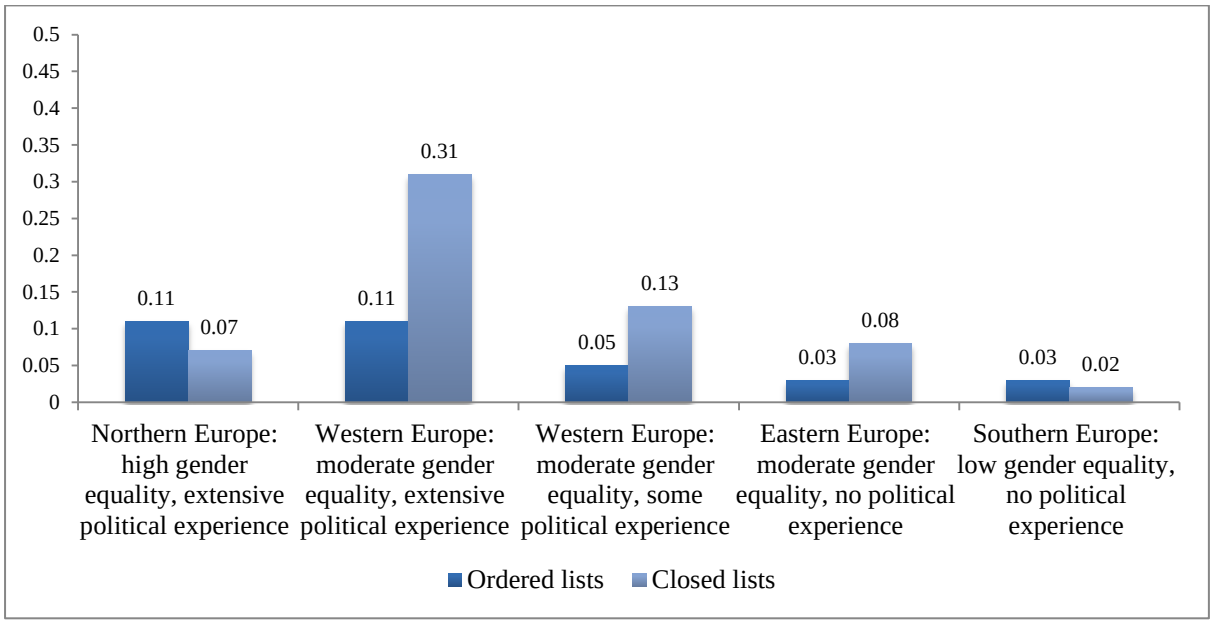
Sources: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 2009; Eurostat 2009; Eurostat 2007a; Eurostat 2007b; International Labor Organization 2008; Inter-Parliamentary Union 2008.

Figure 1: Electoral rules, women among candidates, and women among elected representatives



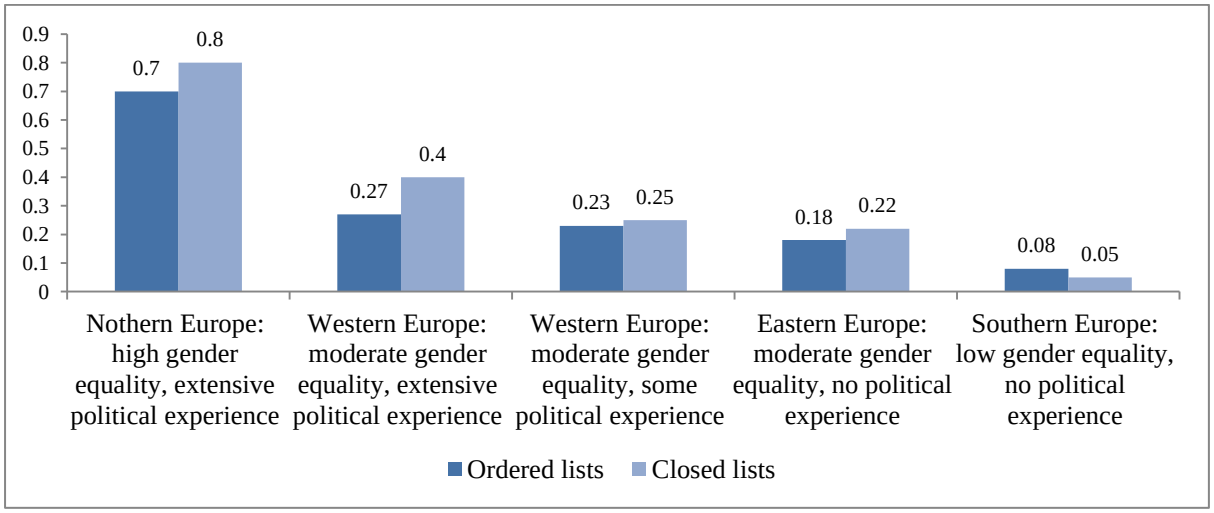
Source: European Parliament

Figure 2.1: Women candidates' likelihood of getting elected under different electoral rules



Note: Estimates derived from Table 4. Female is set to 1 (female candidate). All other variables are held constant at their mean values in the sample.

Figure 2.2: Women candidates' likelihood of being a highly viable ('safe') candidate under different electoral rules



Note: Estimates derived from Table 4. Female is set to 1 (female candidate). All other variables are held constant at their mean values in the sample.