

Candidate Gender and Party-determined Candidate Viability in PR List Systems

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Abstract

Several scholars have studied the “voter effect” on women candidates’ electoral chances in preference voting systems. However, in many countries in which preference voting system is applied, the choice of individual representatives is not only determined by preference votes but also by prior rank ordering of electoral lists (preference voting system with ordered list ballot structure). Since the past research has largely omitted the role of party gatekeepers when studying women’s descriptive representation in preference voting systems, this paper examines how party-gatekeepers in ordered list preferential voting systems rank order female candidates in electoral lists compared to party-gatekeepers in closed list non-preferential voting systems. Since the initial rank-ordering of electoral lists matters more in closed list voting systems than in ordered list voting systems, I expect party gatekeepers to endorse viable female candidacy to a different extent in these different types of voting systems. I utilise the 2009 European Election Study Candidate Survey data to study this research question. The results of the analysis suggest that women are placed lower in the electoral lists in ordered list systems compared to closed list systems. The results also show that party gatekeepers respond to the overall levels of gender equality in the society, with women enjoying more viable list rankings in more gender equal societies, only if the candidate selection within the party is centralised.

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If you would like to have the full copy of the paper, please contact Maarja Lühiste at ml325@leicester.ac.uk.