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The attractiveness of local and national list labels: the role of socio-economic inequalities on the success of electoral lists

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ABSTRACT

According to the nationalisation hypothesis, it is sometimes argued that electoral lists competing at local elections under a national party label are more likely to win. Yet, in many countries, local lists are still much present. This article seeks to assess the attractiveness of local and national list labels at local elections. Following Rokkan's hypothesis of the nationalisation of local politics, we test the role of socio-economic inequality on the success of electoral lists across local polities. Based on an original dataset distinguishing the labels of 1.012 electoral lists – be they local, mixed or national – in the 262 Walloon municipalities in Belgium, the multilevel regression demonstrates that local and mixed labels present a significant electoral advantage vis-à-vis national party labels. However, the article shows that this electoral gain decreases as economic inequalities increase: national labels, especially left-wing parties, attract more voters as inequalities rise.

KEYWORDS: [Nationalisation](#), [socio-economic inequalities](#), [list labels](#), [electoral performance](#)

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.



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