Friends and neighbours politics in Belgian candidate selection processes.

Does place matter?

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Place would matter in politics. This would hold particularly true for the relationship between voters and politicians. According to the friends and neighbours voting hypothesis (Key 1949), psychological connections between voters and candidates involve that voters would favour local candidates because 'hometown candidates' may better know what they want, but more pragmatically, since they may also directly help the voters by engaging in pork-barrel politics. This paper focuses on geographical representation on electoral lists and takes the political parties' perspective. Parties are expected to value the geographical origin of candidates primarily because voters do so. But when drafting the lists, would all types of selectorates assess the importance of localness similarly? This research tests whether the selection mode impacts the extent of territorial coverage of the constituency by all candidates from a same list. It takes Belgium as a case in point for studies on territorial representation given its multimember constituency and preferential voting systems. The processes of candidate selection in eleven Belgian political parties are investigated in the run-up to the May 2014 'mother of all elections' where European, federal and regional elections were organised on the same day. 4319 individual candidates and 189 selection processes are quantitatively examined. Preliminary results indicate that centralised selectorates prioritise friends and neighbours politics less than decentralised selectorates do.

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Panel "The Role of Localness in (Legislative) Politics"

Introduction

Does place matter? Although the geographical dimension is a central aspect of every electoral system that mainly shows through the very existence of constituencies, the importance of the origin of political elites in intraparty politics is a surprisingly understudied phenomenon. This paper seeks in particular to stress the relevance of geography in the selection of candidates who will run for office. Political representation is nowadays settled on a poly-focused base (Pedersen et al., 2007). Elected representatives simultaneously represent a varied range of the population, based on several characteristics they share with the citizens, be it gender, age, socio-economic status, ethnic background, but also standpoints on political issues. Among these features, geography may play a role, as indicated by this quote from the leaflet promoting the candidacies for Groen, the Flemish green party in Belgium.

> "*A strong Groen-list is made of candidates who are good at the most varied things. This way the candidates reinforce each other and we can form a good team: women and men, younger and older people, townspeople and country people, employees but also students, workers and business owners*."[1]

Party selectorates, "the body that selects the party's candidates for public office" (Hazan & Rahat, 2010, p. 33), are expected to strive for a balance on the lists rather than uniform personal characteristics. Among these, the geographical criterion may be more important that the attention it has attracted in the literature so far. As underlined by a party official, "*what does a list meet? It also meets the geographical equilibrium. […] These are nor legal nor statutory obligations, but we take that into account*."[2] Informal selection criteria within parties comprise the place from which the candidates originated. The balance aims to cover the full range of the territory, but not only because of the land, also because of the voters living on this land. Another interviewee stressed that the list should cover the constituency's territory, but also a maximum of citizens from the constituency at stake. "*The city of Mons represents 40% of the constituency's population so we quickly come to the conclusion that not having someone from this city among the most visible positions is difficult, but having three of them does not work either*."[3] Balancing the list in terms of geographical origins would ensure that a maximal number of voters will have candidates residing close by, and that candidates – and deputies – will originate from large cities as well as small municipalities and villages.

It is expected that the geographical linkage between the candidates and the voters will be critical in the choice of selectorates. Yet it has been proven that selection modes differ to a considerable extent between parties. One may then wonder whether the variation in the selection methods within the parties will reflect a variation regarding the coverage of the constituency's territory. A decade ago, Pedersen and his colleagues (2007) prompted this research question: "How do the formal and, in particular, the informal power structure in the party, the balance between the central and the local level of the party organization, operate in the recruitment process? Do decentralized nomination processes (always) favour the native son?" This paper purposes to tackle this question by testing the impact of the selection methods on the diversity of geographical origins on the electoral lists at the occasion of the May 2014 general elections in Belgium.

[1] Kandidatenbrochure (Groen), 2013
[2] Interview, FDF, 5 February 2014
[3] Interview, Ecolo, 16 October 2013

The paper is organised as follows. I first present the theoretical background by highlighting the relevance of the geographical dimension in politics. The next section presents the research question and the hypotheses. Then I justify the choice of studying the Belgian case to test these hypotheses and I describe the dataset and the operationalisation of the dependent and independent variables. Finally, the results are presented and discussed.

Theoretical framework

Candidates' geographical origin (i.e. the place where they live) is taken as an example of a psychological constituency. The electoral constituency constitutes the territorial basis of any election. Nevertheless, electoral candidates may feel that they represent a more specific entity than the constituency, or conversely that they belong to a larger constituency – referring thus rather to a "psychological" constituency, "the group of people who believe they are represented by the candidate and whom the candidate believes himself or herself to represent" (Katz, 2001, p. 279). For instance, candidates may wish to represent the municipality where they reside, and voters/citizens from this municipality may feel represented by the candidate who originates from this place.

The representation of spatial areas is studied in the political science literature in much less extended ways compared to other types of representation, most prominently the representation of gender or ethnicity. Yet, as underlined by Latner and McGann, geographical representation is "just another form of descriptive representation" (2005, p. 710). Just as some political elites would represent women or people with a foreign origin, some may pretend to represent people from a specific area. Representing a geographical area is although not similar to being from this area. A similar comparison with the other forms of descriptive representation reveals that while some men may represent women's interests or some white people may represent black people's interests, it will never be comparable to the representation by a person sharing the same characteristics (Mansbridge, 1999). Geographical representation in it pure form means therefore "the representation of a territory by someone from that territory" (Childs & Cowley, 2011).

Place matters (Latner & McGann, 2005). The political institutions, the political parties, the political elites and the voters, all dimensions and actors of the political system seem to grant credit to the location, the origin or the 'localness' (Childs & Cowley, 2011) of politicians. Numerous works proved that the geographical criterion plays a significant role in candidate selection and in the elections more generally (Latner & McGann, 2005; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Pedersen et al., 2007; Put, 2015; Tavits, 2010). The main reason why political parties would value the geographical origin of candidates is related to the propensity of voters to value it, as will be detailed later. Party selectorates would thus anticipate the voters' wishes and draft geographically balanced lists (Shugart et al., 2005; Tavits, 2010).

The importance granted to the geographical criterion has been recognised in SMD systems where localism plays a major role (Childs & Cowley, 2011), but it also works in PR systems where selectorates are inclined to balance their ticket by selecting a "geographically balanced group of candidates on their party lists" (Put, 2015, p. 170). Some parties would even provide some institutional guarantees to ensure a geographical balance, such a reserved seats for candidates originated from particular areas (Put, 2015). Besides, a specific terminology does exist to label candidates who are not local, e.g. the carpetbaggers or the parachutists (Childs & Cowley, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2007) – strengthening the feeling that local roots are valued.

The difference between the representation based on the geographical origin and other forms of representation lies primarily in the fact that this type of representation is usually privileged over any other type of representation (Latner & McGann, 2005). In almost all representative systems, elections are organised based on constituencies, i.e. the result of a geographical division of the territory according to which a certain number of MPs are elected in distinct spatial areas. The constituencies could actually be considered as institutional features *forcing* geographical representation (Latner & McGann, 2005). One could argue that their existence reflects a widespread and strong desire for local representation (Childs & Cowley, 2011).

However, the existence of constituencies does not always ensure the geographical representation. The residency requirement is, indeed, not universal (Hazan, 1999). When the place of residence of a candidate has not to be established on the constituency's territory, the strength of the mechanism of geographical representation of the constituencies is weakened. The residency is, however, an extrinsic characteristic of an individual, i.e. it can be modified (Vandeleene, 2016). Candidates have indeed the choice of moving to another municipality or even constituency if the rules require the residency. Pedersen et al. (2007) demonstrated that the phenomenon of 'parachuting' does not seem to be frequent. A majority of the MPs in the countries under study, among which Belgium, were local – as opposed to the 'parachutists', i.e. newcomers or outsiders to the constituency.

If the elections are organised in more than one constituency, the geographical representation becomes an institutional guarantee. The degree of institutionalisation of the geographical representation incrementally grows as the number of constituencies increases. In single-member systems, the size of the constituencies is by definition smaller and each spatial area has its own single representative (Latner & McGann, 2005). Conversely, when the number of positions per constituency increases, the number of constituencies in the whole country generally decreases – and their respective size grows. In this case, political parties are crucial. The role played by the parties is gradually intensified as the constituencies enlarge. Beyond the more global geographical representation guaranteed by constituencies, the more specific geographical representation on lists is to be guaranteed by political parties. Selectorates face indeed the possibility of choosing candidates originated from different areas of the constituency. At the within-constituency level, the parties are the only guarantors of the geographical representation.

Political parties value the geographical origin of candidates primarily because voters do so. The reasons why voters would tend to price this criterion are related to the concepts of descriptive and substantive representation. On the basis of the candidate's origin, voters infer a positive assessment of her "competence, character, and policy positions" (Gimpel et al., 2008, p. 235). Voters appreciate candidates who look like them and who will defend their interests. Basically, having this type of candidate elected could yield positive consequences for voters, what leads them to support these candidates.

It is no surprise that localism is cherished in these times of 'identity politics' where "voters see themselves as having a local identity" (Childs & Cowley, 2011, p. 14). A same geographical origin would bind two otherwise unrelated individuals based on the 'places they love' (Gimpel et al., 2008). According to these scholars, favouring locals would then not be the product of voters' ignorance but more the expression of loyalty to the spatial area they esteem. Put (2015, p. 169) considers this 'obsession with the geography criterion' to be at odds with the nationalisation thesis according to which politics is increasingly determined by aggregate and national-level determinants. This interest for the local criterion may also be paradoxical in this

'globalizing era' (Gimpel et al., 2008). Distance is not anymore considered the same as in the past, as information and individuals travel faster. In this era of instantaneous communication (Cairncross, 2001), one could forecast that the 'local' would lose its importance because we are increasingly easily able to communicate with each other no matter of the geographical distance. Yet, the 'hometown advantage' (or the "favourite-son") effect still exists (Gimpel et al., 2008, 2011; Rice & Macht, 1987). Voters remain loyal to what is most familiar to them.

Hence, voters prefer candidates who come from their own area (and not *per se* individuals who claim to represent that area) (Childs & Cowley, 2011). The localness of a candidate can be assessed for instance on the basis of the way she pronounces local names, the extent to which she speaks the local dialect or is engaged in the dominant local economic activity (Shugart et al., 2005). These signs witness familiarity and create psychological connections between the voters and the candidates (Gimpel et al., 2008). According to some scholars, candidates coming from an area and running there for office have very little work to do to convince voters, compared to outsiders (Ansolabehere et al., 2000; Desposato & Petrocik, 2003).

Coming from the same place also implicitly means for some voters that these candidates share their life experience (Childs & Cowley, 2011). In line with the arguments of the 'politics of presence', the idea is to have someone in the Parliament that "was raised or exposed to the same circumstances and situations that the voter has confronted" (Gimpel et al., 2008, p. 235 Stokes & Miller 1962). A similar origin would provide guarantees that this person is familiar with the local concerns (Tavits, 2010). As highlighted by Shugart and his co-authors (2005), the local candidate subliminally (or not) tells voters, 'I know what you want'. "'Being one of us' is assumed to promote loyalty to 'our' interests", Mansbridge (1999, p. 629) summarises. It is assumed that the candidate will sympathise with and be attached to the interests of the area because s/he lives there. Beyond the descriptive representation of voters, having locals indeed also enhances the substantive representation of the interests of the area and of its people. The assumption is that "such representatives will be a *better* representative than someone from outside" (Childs & Cowley, 2011, p. 8). For instance, a candidate from a large city would better understand and represent voters living in large cities than in small municipalities (Put, 2015).

Electing someone from the area may involve positive consequences for the voters of the area. Voters would tend to assess local candidates to be more honest than candidates originated from farther away (Faith & Tollison, 1983). The proximity between the candidates and the voters would facilitate trust, mainly because there is a higher probability that the elected candidate and the voter will meet up or get in contact if she is from the area than from elsewhere (Gimpel et al., 2011). Direct accountability mechanisms of the legislators to their constituents would then be eased by the proximity (Tavits, 2010). In addition, voters may expect from these representatives some direct return to the area, i.e. pork-barrel politics. 'Clientelist' casework for citizens may be a reason why voters prefer local candidates, by a simple calculation of a potential benefit resulting from the election like jobs, public works projects or policies favourable to the area's concerns (Gimpel et al., 2008; Latner & McGann, 2005; Shugart et al., 2005). It is indeed proved that MPs spend a reasonable amount of time outside the Parliament, in and/or for the area where they were elected (Fenno, 1978), about half their time of working (De Winter, 1997; Rosenblatt, 2006). The 'electoral connection' implies that candidates once elected will be keener to support the interests of the place and the people who elected her (Hazan, 1999; Mayhew, 1974).

Political parties do have an incentive in selecting candidates representing the geographical diversity of the electoral constituency (Put et al., 2011). The most straightforward reason is the

electoral incentive. Candidates tend to receive more support close to their home (Gallagher, 2003). Given the fact that voters are inclined to vote for local candidates, geographically balanced lists would help attract votes from the entire electorate in the constituency. Selectorates would then construct the lists based on the anticipation of the shortcuts used by voters to cast their vote (Shugart et al., 2005). Compared to selectorates in SMD, selectorates in list systems have the remarkable advantage to be able to locate the candidates strategically. In single member systems indeed, candidates cannot live close to all voters, what is more feasible in the multimember systems (Arzheimer & Evans, 2012).

The 'friends and neighbours voting hypothesis' initiated by Key (1949) seems to explain why voters would vote for candidates living nearby, or originated from the area, i.e. for friends or neighbours. The adage says that 'people who talked together voted together' (Miller, 1978; Pattie & Johnston, 2000). In other words, personal contact and social interactions foster the propensity to vote for candidates living close to one's own area (Put et al., 2015). Political parties may then use these local characteristics as strategic resources during the selection process by drafting lists with candidates from all areas of the constituency (Put, 2015).

The folk wisdom stating that localism pays off in the electoral booth seems to work in practice in a large number of cases. Apart from Put (2015) who shows that the electoral result is not affected by the geographical dispersion on the list, most works do confirm that voters tend to vote for candidates from 'their place'. In his seminal work, Key (1949) argued that the electoral fortune of a candidate was dependent on her "mere" origin. Gimpel and his co-authors (2008) studied whether the distance from a candidate's home county to the voter's county played a role in the political support for this candidate. They demonstrated that the "relationship between candidate support and distance from a candidate's hometown was non-linear, modelled as an exponential function of distance" (Gimpel et al., 2008, p. 248). Arzheimer and Evans (2012) also conclude that the distance between the candidate and the voter does matter. They found that voters evaluate distant candidates as less appealing than local candidates. Górecki and Marsh further indicate that "candidates typically win most votes in their home areas within the constituency" (2012, p. 568).

Accordingly, political parties may well bet on locals rather than on outsiders. Evidence shows that parachuting is a risky mechanism (Arzheimer & Evans, 2012). "Outsiders must prove themselves in ways that home-grown candidates do not." (Gimpel et al., 2008, p. 231) Childs and Cowley (2011) assert that it would be foolish for the selectorates in political parties to ignore the fact that the local identity matters to voters. Similarly, other scholars point that it is irrational for political parties to field lists with candidates from only one region in the constituency (Latner & McGann, 2005). Indeed, as put by Arzheimer and Evans, "not to play the local card may jeopardise their electoral fortunes" (2012, p. 309). In the same way, the candidates may play this card and put forward their localness to obtain a more prominent list position (Tavits, 2010). The 'local candidate' asset is also often used as a campaign tool (Childs & Cowley, 2011), candidates appealing for the voters' support on the basis of their relation to the area more than other arguments like their party platform or policy stances (Hazan, 1999).

Next to electoral considerations, selectorates may decide to balance the electoral lists on a geographical basis because of intraparty issues. Gathering candidates from different sub-areas in the constituency may simply be the result of a strategy aiming at satisfying a majority of local party sections. As put by Latner and McGann, it is likely that some pressure is exerted within the party "for regional list balancing as party organizations from different regions compete for a fair share of list places for 'their' candidates" (2005, p. 713). A list bringing

together candidates from a large share of local party sections would foster the willingness of party sections to collaborate in the campaign. Yet, party selectorates (too) easily accommodating with local sections' demands run the risk of undermining party unity. Indeed, a selection process putting forward candidates supported by the local sections may involve a situation where candidates respond to their local section and not to the party anymore. As shown by Hazan (1999), MPs selected at the very local level are more prone to break with their party on issues running counter their area's interests. In addition, selecting candidates on the basis of the local sections may implicate a change in the party stances in general, the 'local' MPs forcing their party to adapt their positions according to the local interests (Hazan, 1999). Tavits (2010) even stresses the risk that this would threaten the cohesiveness and responsiveness of parties, and ultimately endanger the democratic stability of the polity.

On which basis could political party selectorates balance the electoral lists in geographical terms? The answer draws on the assumption that all areas could not be covered by the list. It is indeed reasonable to assert that there will always be areas that will feel disfavoured by the geographical dispersion of the list's candidates, either because no candidate is originated from their area or because the list position is not prominent enough in their eyes. The list positions are thus used as a political resource and distributed over the constituency (Latner & McGann, 2005).

Ideally, it is best for the party to have candidates from all over the constituency to campaign in the different areas and so doing, attracting a maximum number of voters (Latner & McGann, 2005). In particular, the geographical dispersion of candidates could be guaranteed among the realistic positions so as to anticipate a geographically balanced parliamentary faction (Latner & McGann, 2005). However, choices often have to be made given the limited number of (realistic) positions. Latner and McGann demonstrated that "political parties do tend to over-represent geographies where they are strong, but not areas where they are overwhelmingly strong" (2005, p. 730). When the party is in a truly dominant position in an area, selectorates are inclined not to select too many candidates originated from there, because votes will be won anyway. It makes more sense for this party to put its resources elsewhere, where they are more likely to produce gains otherwise not earned (Latner & McGann, 2005). The same authors, however, hypothesised that, according to the intraparty logic, the list should comprise more candidates from the areas where the party is strong, because it is likely that an electorally strong region will also have a strong local party section (Latner & McGann, 2005). This section could promote its candidates more efficiently than weaker local sections.

Other areas' characteristics may impinge on the selection strategies. For instance, the smallest but relevant areas are likely to be overrepresented (Latner & McGann, 2005). If the selectorates wish this place to be represented, the minimum number of candidates is obviously one, what could already over-represent the area compared to its size and importance. Latner and McGann (2005) showed that the metropolitan were somewhat overrepresented on the lists in Israel and in the Netherlands, as well as the most peripheral areas. Besides, areas where regional identity is salient may be more represented on the list than regions with a weaker regional identity. This may be related to the greater propensity of voters residing in regions with strong regional identity to vote for candidates from their regions (Latner & McGann, 2005). As underlined by Childs and Cowley (2011), there may well be a stronger sense of the local community in some areas than in others.

Either way, the areas where the party has selected few or no candidate will have to be treated differently from the remaining areas. The party campaign strategies may be adapted in function

of geographical issues, i.e. if the party cannot afford to place a candidate from an area, the selected candidates will have to compensate and present a more intense campaign in this area than elsewhere (Gimpel et al., 2008). As emphasised by Górecki and Marsh (2012), running a campaign 'at home' may even be useless because of the endogeneity phenomenon, i.e. the fact that candidates would canvass voters who would anyway be prone to support them. Childs and Cowley (2011) highlight that there would be no injustice not to select a candidate from every area in the constituency if a competent enough candidate is not to be found in one place.

The strategies determined by political parties rest upon a trade-off between two goals, which are compatible with difficulty: the representation of the locals and the national representation. The willingness to draft electoral lists representing all areas in a constituency follows the principles of the local representation where candidates cater voters' local interests, while the selection of candidates regardless of their geographical location refers to the articulation of preferences around voters' national policy goals (Shugart et al., 2005). King (1990) assesses that these goals are 'inherently incompatible'. Pitkin (1967) also evokes the 'classic dilemma' of representation by referring to this trade-off. Shugart, Valdini and Suominen (2005) state that this constitutes a fundamental matter for democracy. On the one hand, what results from the elections is a Parliament being the 'deliberative body of one nation' in which the representatives deliberate on national objectives for the national good. On the other, it is a 'congress of hostile ambassadors' where the elected candidates compete in order to obtain benefits for the area they were elected in (Burke 1777, cited in Latner & McGann, 2005). The risk of the second option is the 'ultralocalisation of politics' (Hazan, 1999). Candidates in this case run their campaign individually without any or few concern for the party platform. "Geographically-based candidate selection does affect the significance of political divisions in the legislature and the political careers of MPs" (Hazan, 1999, p. 806), and this because of the increased focus on geographically localised interests rather than broader interests.

The presence of candidates from a large range of spatial areas may also have positive consequences for democracy. It may enhance the legitimacy of the political institutions (Childs & Cowley, 2011) via the so-called psychological benefit of the descriptive representation inducing that voters have the feeling that their interests are represented, and that everyone, including someone from 'their place' can stand for office. As summarised by Mansbridge (1999, p. 651), "this feeling of inclusion in turn makes the polity democratically more legitimate in one's eyes". In addition, the inclusion of candidates from various geographical areas may broaden the political agenda, because the candidates may well "articulate interests and concerns that are not yet formulated, articulated or legitimated" (Childs & Cowley, 2011, p. 9).

Research question and hypotheses

This paper seeks to investigate whether intraparty mechanisms might affect the representativeness of the lists in terms of geographical representation. Do political parties indirectly affect the territorial representation in the elected assembly when deciding upon their selection methods? The research question of this study can be summarised as: Do selection processes matter for the geographical representation on the lists?

Although the mechanisms of local representation are far from being underexplored, they remain considerably less studied than other kinds of representation (Childs & Cowley, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2007). Very few scholars have scrutinised the specific effects of candidate selection on territorial representation. Hence, the hypotheses derived from the literature are rather explorative. What emerges from the literature is that the degree of decentralisation of the

process would obviously be the core factor impacting the extent of territorial dispersion on the lists. The size of the selectorate could also play a role, although the findings are not always conclusive in that respect.

The **decentralisation of the selection process** refers to the position of the selecting body in the party hierarchy. Decentralisation would positively affect the territorial representation of the candidates. In short: the more local the selectorates, the more local the candidates. The main argument refers to the idea that decentralised selectorates are better suited to make decisions respecting some local equilibrium. Centralised selectorates would rather have other criteria in mind that the territorial coverage of the constituency.

As argued by Put (2016), the link between the decentralization of selection methods and the level of geographical representation on candidate lists seems to be theoretically straightforward. He demonstrates based on Belgian data (for the period 1987–2010) that "highly decentralized methods, where candidate selection takes place at the district level without any national interference, lead to the highest levels of geographical representation" (Put, 2015, p. 122). The decentralisation of the process would play a substantial role in explaining the variations in the territorial coverage of the candidates running for the party in a given constituency. Hazan and Rahat (2010) state the same when maintaining that if the national party organisation holds more power in the selection process, it is less likely that candidates representing the regional and local levels will be selected. Put, Verleden and Maddens (2011) argue that decentralised procedures give better chances for candidates from small municipalities to be represented rather than processes managed by national selectorates.

Decentralised selectorates are expected to favour a large territorial coverage of the constituency for several reasons. Harmel simply states that local organs are "better suited to making decisions concerning local issues" (1981, p. 80). Shugart, Valdini and Suominen (2005) also subscribe to this argument. They contend that decentralised procedures may increase the relative importance of local considerations. Being local would come over other selection criteria.

Centralised selectorates would be more prone to value other candidates' characteristics than their localness (Put et al., 2011). Candidates tied to the local level could put centralised selectorates in jeopardy, mostly because of the risk to impede on party cohesion. The candidates would feel accountable to the local level and not to their party (Hazan, 1999). A contradictory hypothesis states that centralised selectorates could, however, be willing to select candidates from particular places in the constituency based on previous electoral results – as a reward for good scores (Gherghina & Chiru, 2010). The geographical representation would then mirror the electoral popularity of the party, but not necessarily cover the entirety of the constituency's territory as decentralised selectorates could do.

H1: Decentralised selectorates will induce more geographical diversity on the lists.

On the contrary to the decentralisation, the second classical dimension of the selection process (Hazan & Rahat, 2010) – **the inclusiveness of the selectorates**, i.e. its size – has been largely understudied in the political science literature in regard to the impact on the territorial representation. The explorative hypothesis developed by Put (2015) states that the degree of inclusiveness of selectorates would be negatively linked to the geographical representation. More exclusive selectorates would care for an equal representation of groups. Put (2014) hypothesises that smaller selectorates would have in mind the collective good of the party, i.e. winning a maximum of votes thus covering a large part of the constituency with candidates

following to the friends-and-neighbours effect (Key, 1949). Because they would base their decision on individual preferences, inclusive selectorates like members' congresses would instead not be able to reproduce a balanced representation of the constituency territory, unless strict quotas are introduced, similar for instance to the subconstituency districts established in Israel (Hazan, 1999). Yet, the findings of Put's study (2015) do not confirm his hypothesis. Inclusive and exclusive selectorates score worse in terms of territorial representation than the middle category of delegates – a 'nor inclusive nor exclusive' selectorate. No theoretical explanation of this pattern has been found in the literature. This paper will therefore have to contribute to this explorative analysis by bringing new data and findings.

H2: Exclusive selectorates will induce more geographical diversity on the lists.

Finally, the **composition of the selectorates**, i.e. the characteristics of the selectors, is said in the literature to be related to the choice made by these selectors (Niven, 1998). The outgroup effect theory mainly explains why the literature expects gender-balanced selectorates to produce gender-balanced outcomes. "Gatekeepers are more likely to directly recruit and promote people like themselves," (Cheng & Tavits, 2011, p. 461) Because they consider themselves positively, candidates sharing their own characteristics would be better assessed. Transposing this theory to the geographical dimension, one would assert that someone originated from the selector's municipality would be more likely to be selected by this selector than someone from another municipality. However, this hypothesis has been so far mostly tested for gender and even offered contrasted results (Tremblay & Pelletier, 2001). This variable will be operationalised based on the existence of territorial quota for selectorates, since it was not feasible to know in detail the names of every selector. Yet, no selectorate had to respect a rule guaranteeing the representation of each constituency's municipality. There were, however, in 2014 a certain number of selectorates for which the territorial representation was an issue. Some party rules stated that each local section/arrondissement/province could designate one or several selectors to join the selectorate. In some selectorates, the presidents of decentralised party bodies are *de facto* involved (e.g. all arrondissement presidents are included in the party board). In these cases, the territorial representation is considered as guaranteed because of this rule.

H3: Geographically balanced selectorates will induce more geographical diversity on the lists.

In sum, the test of this hypothesis will be largely more explorative than hypothetico-deductive. As argued by Childs and Cowley (2011), although the localness has not been ignored, the territorial representation has not attracted much scholarly attention. This paper seeks to start filling this gap.

Case selection, data and operationalisation

Belgium is an appropriate case for the study of candidate selection given the semi-open nature of the electoral system (Vandeleene et al., 2016). The selection (almost) makes the election (Cross, 2008), or in other words, parties remain the main gatekeepers to the elected office since very few candidates manage to break the list order and enjoy the opportunity to be directly elected thanks to preference votes (Vandeleene, 2017). The list rank order remains dominant and so the parties have a direct impact on the composition of the future assemblies (André et al., 2015).

But Belgium is also relevant to investigate territorial representation because of its multimember constituencies system, and the existence of preferential voting. The very existence of several geographical constituencies in the country may indeed implicate that candidates, and later representatives, will be more engaged in the promotion of local interests (Hazan, 1999). Accordingly, the selectorates may also be keener to consider the geographical criterion as relevant when drafting the lists. The preferential voting system enhances the appeal of personal candidates' characteristics. Voters receive the opportunity to choose candidates among the pool of candidates selected by the party. Personal traits of candidates play therefore a role, and may be valued by selectorates. Preferential voting also stimulates candidates to look after their links with voters. Candidates may for instance be more likely to perform constituency service (Hazan, 1999), i.e. actions beneficial to a particular geographical area (Narud, 2003). These elements reinforce the propensity of selectorates to build electoral lists depending on territorial considerations.

This paper studies eleven political parties that competed for the regional, federal and European elections of May 2014 (the so-called 'mother of all elections'). Six Flemish parties, i.e. Groen, sp.a, CD&V, Open Vld, N-VA and VB are scrutinised, with each 14 lists, what amounts to a total of 422 candidates per party. At the French-speaking side, five parties, i.e. Ecolo, PS, cdH, MR, FDF fall within the scope of the paper; they introduced at the maximum 21 lists and 365 candidates. The number of lists is 189 for a total number of 4319 candidates. Regarding data collection, the first stage of the research involved disentangling how political parties selected their candidates. To do so, I draw on qualitative data from semi-structured in-depth interviews with selectors (interviewed during the selection process). The research also relies on internal party documents referring to the list drafting processes (party statutes and other party documents) and on press articles (articles from the main Belgian newspapers systematically archived from one year prior to the Election day), plus on some participant observation for the two green parties. The second stage encompasses a quantitative analysis of the electoral lists themselves. To that aim, I built a database listing all candidates' relevant descriptive information, including their municipality of residence.

The operationalization of the dependent variable was challenging. What is intriguing about the geographical characteristic is the aggregated picture. How geographically dispersed are the candidates on a list? Which part of the territory is represented in the campaign? The operationalisation of the territorial dimension has to take into account the variation present on the list regarding the geography of candidates. Yet, a conceptual puzzle arises: what does it mean to be local?

Works studying the localness of candidates are quite rare in the current academic literature (Childs & Cowley, 2011). In addition, research does not use the same tools of measures, what undermines the comparability. The spatial area attributed to a candidate may be measured according to two main dimensions, the place of birth (Field, 1997; Rush, 2001; Shugart et al., 2005; Tavits, 2010) or the place of residence (Arzheimer & Evans, 2012; Gimpel et al., 2008; Górecki & Marsh, 2012; Latner & McGann, 2005). Other scholars also use the place where the candidate holds a local office, if it were so (Shugart et al., 2005; Smith & Tsutsumi, 2016; Tavits, 2010). These dimensions may be either static (i.e. a snapshot at one point in time) or may take the time perspective into account, e.g. the longer the candidates has lived in the area, the greater the support from voters (Studlar & McAllister, 1996).

In order to determine how to operationalize the territorial representation on the lists, the dissertation proceeds in two steps. First, the proxy for localness has to be defined. Second, the

measure of the geographical balance on the list has to be established. Based on the arguments presented in the literature, it appears that the place of residence of candidates is a good proxy for the localness of candidates. Residing somewhere reflects current ties with the spatial area (Latner & McGann, 2005). The municipal level is understood as the geographical unit for this variable, similarly to Put (2015). It is indeed likely that selectorates value the municipality from where candidates are originated/where they live. Political parties in Belgium are organised from the local level onwards. Although the local sections used to be stronger, their importance within the party hierarchy remains, among others for the recruitment of potential candidates (De Winter et al., 2013).

The research question of this study refers to the relation between candidate selection and the geographical balance on the electoral lists. Very few works (apart from Put (2015)) analysed localness at the aggregated level, i.e. not whether or not a given candidate is local but to what extent is the list representing the constituency in geographical terms. The unit of analysis is situated at the list level. Two variants of the territorial representation index are developed and tested: one is based on the share of municipalities (similar to Put's municipality index (2015)) and the other on the share of voters represented on the list.

The variant of the *territorial representation index based on municipalities* (TRIm) measures the relation between the number of municipalities of the constituency having obtained at least one representative on the list and the number of list positions available in the constituency (effective and substitute lists altogether). In other words, it reflects the extent to which every candidate resides in another constituency than the other candidates on the list.

Municipalities where at least one candidate of the list resides are considered as represented on the list. If several candidates are domiciled in the same municipality, the count is the same as for a single candidate. Selectorates are considered as having cared about a given spatial area if one candidate comes from this place. The territorial coverage is not improved if two or more candidates reside in the same municipality. The candidates who do not have their primary residence in the constituency where they run do not expand the territorial coverage[4].

$$TRIm = \frac{\sum Ml}{\sum Sc}$$

TRIm stands for the territorial representation index, variant based on municipalities.
Ml [Municipalities on the list] stands for the number of municipalities represented on the list.
Sc [Selection of candidates] stands for the total number of candidates who can be selected by party selectorates on the list.

Higher values on the TRIm correspond to a more extended territorial coverage of the constituency. High values refer to lists where all of almost all candidates reside in a different constituency. The value '1' represents the maximum value possible, when all list positions are allocated to candidates from different municipalities. Lower values are obtained when several candidates live in the same municipality.

[4] A specificity of the Belgian case, unlike e.g. in Luxembourg, New Zealand or the US (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995), is that candidates do *not* have to reside in the electoral constituency to be entitled to a nomination. They have to be registered in any Belgian municipality, inside or outside the boarders of 'their' constituency, but well in the territory on which the assembly where they are running for office is competent (Banneux, 2012).

It is crucial to take the size of the list into account because shorter lists obviously offer fewer possibilities for each municipality to be represented. This measure seems to be more relevant than the 'municipality indicator' used by Put in his dissertation (2015). This indicator calculates the proportion of municipalities represented on the list related to the total number of municipalities in the constituency. Put's indicator does not take into account the demanding constraint imposed on selectorates, i.e. they cannot select candidates from a higher number of municipalities that there are positions on the list. By way of example, Put's measure would lead a French-speaking list for the European elections to score exceedingly low on the index compared to a list for the Walloon elections in the Namur constituency. Both lists have 14 positions in total, but – if the selectorates care about the territorial representation – those drafting the former do have an extremely tougher choice to make than the selectorates for the latter, given the very different sizes of the constituencies.

Table 1 represents the best-case scenario where all 14 list positions are allocated to candidates from 14 different municipalities for both lists. The European list score only 0.05 when the Walloon list would score 0.87 according to Put's indicator. The index developed in this paper better reflects the extent to which selectorates drafted the list with the geographical criterion in mind. Both lists would score 1, i.e. the maximum score, because selectorates could not do better than selecting 14 different municipalities – no matter how large the total number of municipalities in the constituency.

Table 1: Comparison between Put's municipality indicator and this dissertation's TRIm

	Put's municipality indicator	**The territorial representation index based on municipalities**
European elections, French-speaking list	$\frac{14\ municic.represented}{272\ municic.in\ the\ constituency} = 0.05$	$\frac{14\ municic.represented}{14\ list\ positions} = 1$
Walloon elections, Namur constituency	$\frac{14\ municic.represented}{16\ municic.in\ the\ constituency} = 0.87$	$\frac{14\ municic.represented}{14\ list\ positions} = 1$

Because the size of the municipalities may vary to a great extent within a same constituency, the relative importance of every municipality has to be taken into account. The territorial representation is indeed not equivalent if most candidates come from small municipalities than if candidates reside in large and small municipalities.

The *territorial representation index based on voters* (TRIv) measures the share of voters from the constituency territorially represented by the list's candidates, via one or several candidates residing in the same municipality. This variant of the index draws on the belief that municipalities may have a differentiated importance for selectorates depending on the number of voters they count. Selectorates are considered to take care of the territorial representation when they balance the lists between several municipalities, relative to their electoral size. A representative list should give larger municipalities in terms of size of the electorate more candidates on the list than smaller municipalities, according to the view that a representative list would mirror the society.

Values coming close to 1 represent lists where a large share of voters is represented, in territorial terms, by at least one candidate. Lower values reflect lists where fewer voters have one or several representatives from their constituency on the list. These lists may have been drafted with a majority of candidates from small municipalities, or with candidates from the same large municipalities.

$$TRIv = \frac{\sum Vl}{\sum Vc}$$

TRIv stands for the territorial representation index, variant based on voters.
Vl [Voters represented on the list] stands for the number of voters represented on the list, in geographical terms, i.e. based on a shared municipality of residence with at least one candidate.
Vc [Voters in the constituency] stands for the total number of voters residing in the constituency.

The territorial coverage of an electoral list is considered as a relevant variable reflecting the extent to which the party selectorates consider local representation to be important. The detailed analysis of the geographical balance of the lists based on two different dimensions will provide an interesting picture of how covered are the territories of the respective constituencies – in terms of strict political geography (the TRIm) or in terms of voters' residence (TRIv). The TRIm measures the diversity of the list regarding the candidates' municipalities of residence of. The TRIv adds the voters' perspective. The indexes are not expected to correlate. They may therefore illuminate the relationship between the features of the selection process and the territorial representation on the list on two different but complementary aspects.

Table 2: Operationalisation of the variables

Variables	Hyp.	Operationalisation	Values
Dependent variable			
TRIm (*territorial representation index based on municipalities*)		Proportion	Share of different municipalities on the list
TRIv (*territorial representation index based on voters*)		Proportion	Share of voters represented on the list by candidates from their municipality
Independent variables			
Centralisation of the selectorates	–	Dummy variable	0 = predominance of decentralised selectorates; 1 = predominance of centralised selectorates
Exclusiveness of the selectorates	+	Dummy variable	0 = predominance of inclusive selectorates; 1 = predominance of exclusive selectorates
Territorial quota for the selectorates	+	Dummy variable	0 = no quota; 1 = at least one territorial quota for one selectorate
Control variable			
Number of positions on the list		Continuous variable	

Findings: does place matter in candidate selection?

Descriptive statistics

The index of territorial representation based on the municipalities (TRIm) measures the degree to which the lists represent the whole constituency territory. It calculates the number of municipalities represented on the list, no matter their size in terms of the number of voters. For instance, one candidate from Bruges equals one candidate from Mesen on the TRIm despite the fact that on the TRIv the candidate from the small municipality of Mesen would represent only

0.7% of the candidate from the large city of Bruges on the TRIv. The TRIv computes the relation between the number of municipalities represented on the list and the number of list positions available.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for the TRI based on municipalities

TRIm	N	Minimum	Maximum	**Mean**	Std. Dev.
All lists	189	0.2045	1	**0.7756**	0.1973
European lists	11	0.8421	1	**0.9344**	0.0613
Regional and fed. lists	178	0.2045	1	**0.7658**	0.1987
Walloon lists	65	0.3571	1	**0.7919**	0.1974
Brussels lists	11	0.2045	0.5758	**0.3478**	0.1436
Flemish lists	36	0.5000	0.9722	**0.7770**	0.1292
Federal lists FR	30	0.4762	1	**0.8158**	0.1479
Federal lists NL	36	0.2500	1	**0.7936**	0.1686

On average, the share of list positions attributed to candidates from different municipalities was slightly more than three quarters. Behind this number, significant differences do exist between the different elections. All European lists score high on the TRIm while the Brussels' region lists were particularly low, as will be detailed hereafter. Letting apart the European lists, the average slightly decreased. It seems from table 3 that the Flemish parties score lower on the index than the French-speaking parties. Indeed, both the Walloon lists and the federal lists for the French-speaking constituencies score higher than the Flemish regional lists and the Flemish federal lists. Interestingly, in all elections but the Brussels and Flemish regional elections, at least one list managed to reach the maximum number of municipalities represented on the list (denoted by a score of 1). This indicated that the territorial representation of the constituency might have been a relevant selection criterion used by selectorates.

Two elections are particular regarding the TRIm, for two opposite reasons. The European lists' selectorates had too much choice to draft the lists. The number of municipalities exceeded by far the number of list positions available. French-speaking parties could select maximum 14 candidates while the number of available municipalities was much higher (281 municipalities). Flemish parties had the choice between 327 municipalities for 19 positions on the list. In sum, the means that maximum 4.9% of the municipalities belonging to the French-speaking electoral college and 5.8% of the municipalities belonging to the Dutch-speaking electoral college could be represented on the European lists. Yet, despite this overwhelming choice, only four parties presented lists with all candidates originated from different municipalities (i.e. a score of 1). The other parties selected at least two candidates from the same municipalities (mainly the big cities like Antwerp). Covering a large share of voters seems thus more important than covering a large share of municipalities.

In Brussels, the regional elections were quite peculiar regarding the relation between the number of list positions and the number of municipalities. This was particularly the case for the French-speaking parties. They had to draft lists with no less than 88 candidates while the maximal number of municipalities to be represented equals the 19 Brussels' municipalities. These parties could select on average 4.63 candidates from each municipality. The Flemish parties had a reduced choice in comparison to the French-speaking parties, with 33 list positions in total. But still, they could represent each municipality 1.74 times. The CD&V is the party

that presented the most diverse list in Brussels with almost 60% of the list constituted of candidates from different municipalities. The MR on the contrary presented a more homogeneous list (a share as little as 20% of the list positions was allocated to candidates from different areas in the region).

The index of territorial representation based on voters (TRIv) calculates the proportion of voters residing in the constituency who had at least one representative from their own municipalities on the list at stake. On average, 59% of the voters were represented on the lists by at least one candidate from their municipality. On the contrary to the TRI based on municipalities, the TRI based on voters produced lower results for the European list and higher results for the Brussels regional lists, as presented in table 4. The results are obviously contrasted because, on the one hand, only a few municipalities were represented and, on the other hand, almost all constituency's municipalities were represented. Two regional Walloon lists reached the maximum regarding the representation of voters. All voters residing in the constituency were represented. These cases denote lists where all constituency's municipalities were represented by at least one candidate on the list. *De facto*, the maximum scores on both the TRIm and the TRIv are reached. These two extreme cases are the cdH and MR lists in the constituency of Soignies. In this constituency, the lists comprised eight positions for only eight municipalities. When all candidates originated from a different municipality, the highest score on the TRIv was automatically reached.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for the TRI based on voters

TRIv	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
All lists	189	0.0986	1	0.5901	0.1961
European lists	11	0.0986	0.2107	0.1584	0.0338
Reg. and fed. lists	178	0.2045	1	0.7658	0.1987
Walloon lists	65	0.1730	1	0.6282	0.2056
Brussels lists	11	0.6760	0.9292	0.8659	0.0891
Flemish lists	36	0.3996	0.7912	0.6611	0.0968
Federal lists (French-sp. p.)	30	0.3143	0.8490	0.5120	0.1263
Federal lists (Flemish p.)	36	0.3012	0.7060	0.5629	0.0886

The TRIv also differs from the TRIm as far as the differences in terms of language groups are concerned. If the Walloon and Flemish elections, and the federal elections on the two sides of the linguistic border are compared two by two, it is clear that Flemish parties tend to score higher on the TRIv, contrarily to the TRIm for which the trend is reversed. Flemish parties are thus keener to select candidates from larger municipalities in terms of number of voters. This might be explained by the fact that there are relatively more very large municipalities in the Flemish constituencies compared to the French-speaking constituencies. Selectorates would be more incline to select larger shares of candidates from these large and attractive cities whereas in French-speaking Belgium the attractiveness of the cities would be less prominent, at least not in all constituencies such as in Flanders.

Multivariate analyses

The goal of this paper was to uncover the impact of the selection method on the geographical representation on the lists. Two models are run, for each of the indexes, with the aim of depicting differences between them, if there be so. Can the mode of selection predict the

diversity of the lists in terms of origin of the candidates? I use a linear regression to estimate the model, with the TRIm and the TRIv respectively as dependent variable. The model includes the three independent variables reflecting the variation in the selection mode as well as the number of positions of the list, so as to control for the range of possibilities that selectorates faced. Results are reported in Table 5 and 6.

Table 5: Explaining the geographical diversity in terms of municipalities represented by candidates (unstandardised coefficients)

Variables	Parameter estimate	Std. Error
Centralisation of the selectorates	-.063*	0.027
Exclusiveness of the selectorates	.073*	0.037
Territorial quota for selectorates	.047	0.044
Number of list positions	-.006***	0.001
Constant	.885***	0.043
Adjusted R^2	0.284	
N	188	

*Sign.: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

Dependent Variable: Territorial representation index based on municipalities

Table 6: Explaining the geographical diversity in terms of voters represented by candidates (unstandardised coefficients)

Variables	Parameter estimate	Std. Error
Centralisation of the selectorates	-.141***	0.027
Exclusiveness of the selectorates	-.021	0.037
Territorial quota for selectorates	-.024	0.044
Number of list positions	.005***	0.001
Constant	.537	0.043
Adjusted R^2	0.275	
N	188	

*Sign.: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

Dependent Variable: Territorial representation index based on voters

What emerges from the data is that the obvious link between the location of the selection process and the geographical balance on the list is confirmed. Decentralised selectorates would enhance the territorial representation on the lists, i.e. the fact that a large portion of the territory of the constituency is represented via the selection of candidates residing in various areas. The regression model delivers statically significant results for both the territorial representation index based on municipalities and on voters. Selectorates operating *not* at the national level would favour both the representation of a large share of municipalities on the lists, but also of more voters. This confirms the expectations from the literature that friends and neighbours politics is favoured at the local level (Hazan and Rahat 2010; Put, Verleden, Maddens, and Vanlangenakker 2011; Put 2015; Shugart, Valdini, and Suominen 2005).

The size of the selectorates, their inclusiveness, seems to matter as well, but to a moderate extent. The size of the selectorates is significant in the model based on municipalities but not on the model based on voters. This could mean that smaller selectorates value the representation

of a large share of the territory but do not take into account the representation of a maximum of voters on the lists, by candidates originated from their municipality.

The variable representing the quota for selectorates does not work in both models presented above. This could mean that the composition of the selectorates in terms of geography does not matter, or it could be linked to a misspecification of the model. Yet, the bivariate analysis between the territorial quota variable and both indexes delivers significant results. One has to dig deeper into this mechanism in later research. Finally, both models seem to explain the same share of the variation (about 28%).

Concluding comments

(to be completed)

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