Balancing Local Candidate Recruitment in Belgium

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Panel Local Parties and Political recruitment

« WALLONIA 2012 »
RESEARCH GROUP

‘Wallonia 2012’ Research Project

- ‘Local’ electoral dynamics and strategies in Wallonia
- Inter-university research project
- Dataset
  - Extensive information on the **1.012 lists** and the **19.675 candidates** in competition in the **262** Walloon municipalities (Belgium)
  - Incumbent mayor and alderman, incumbent councilor, VIPs candidates, ‘external’ candidate/’candidat d’ouverture’, etc.
  - **Demographic factors**: size of the municipality, rural vs. urban, etc.
  - **Political factors**: type of lists, independence from the national party, etc.
  - **Party competition factors**: number of competing lists, electoral alliances, etc.

Outline

- Recruitment: complex task
  - Functions: attract votes AND protect party interests
  - Diversity of strategies

1. Selection of candidates: legal and party regulation
2. A typology of lists
3. Number of candidates
4. VIPs from other political levels
5. Incumbent candidates
6. ‘Candidats d’ouverture’ / independent candidates

Selection of candidates: Legal and party regulation

- Walloon local democracy and decentralization code
  - 'Easy' access to a list: 18 y.; EU and non EU; 'zipper system'; few incompatibilities
  - Designation of the Mayor
  - Imperiali electoral system
  - Semi-open list (list vote or candidate/s vote)
- Party regulation
  - Local sections of national parties not on an equal footing when recruiting their candidates,
  - From totally independent to fairly canalised by rules decided by the party at the national level or by local sections themselves.
  - Ecolo > PS - CDH > MR
  - Note: Local sections can opt for local list (name)

A typology of lists

- Method. note: ‘subjective’ approach/political offer

- National lists
  - exact name
- Quasi-national lists
  - name variant / majority of partisan candidates
- Quasi-local lists
  - ‘VIP’ / link identified by the coder (media, web, interview)
- Local lists
- Alliances

Number of lists (per type) and electoral results

List type	N	%	Votes (in %)
National	455	45,0	58,9
Quasi-national	99	9,8	10,3
Quasi-local	113	11,2	8,0
Local	208	20,6	10,3
Alliances	137	13,5	12,6
Total	1 012	100,0	100,0

Number of candidates

- Objective: complete lists

- PS: 2,9 % incomplete
- MR: 6,3 % incomplete
- CDH: 7,3 % incomplete
- Ecolo: 19 % incomplete

- Factors (see table following slide):
  - Mayor/VIP presence
  - Smaller municipalities

Complete lists (per type)

List type	N	%
National	379	83,3
Quasi-national	87	87,9
Quasi-local	86	76,1
Local	164	78,9
Alliances	111	81,0
Total	827	81,7

VIPs from other political levels

Institutions	Mandates	Candidates	
		N	%
European Parliament	6	5	83,3
Federal Parliament	60	46	76,7
Federal Cabinet	7	7	100
Walloon Parliament	75	63	84,0
Walloon Cabinet	8	7	87,5
German-speaking Parliament	25	13	52,0
German-speaking Cabinet	4	0	0
Total	185	142	76.8

VIPs

- 68,3% are to be found on a **national list**.
- 12% on a **quasi-local list**.
- 11,3% on a **quasi-national list**.
- and 8,5% on an **electoral alliance list**.

Incumbent candidates

- Mayors: 242 out of the 262 incumbent mayors were candidates (92,4 %)
- Aldermen: 81,1 %
- Councillors: 50,6 %

Lists with incumbent local councillors (per type)

List type	N	%
National	343	75,4
Quasi-national	81	81,8
Quasi-local	69	61,1
Local	129	62,2
Alliances	128	93,4
Total	750	74,1

‘Candidats d’ouverture’ / independent candidates

- Ecolo: 46,4 %
- PS: 41,4 %
- CDH: 39,6 %
- MR: 37,2 %

- Party that has institutionalized procedures related to the presence of ‘candidats d’ouverture’ opens more its list to this type of candidates.

Lists with ‘candidats d’ouverture’ (per type)

