

Monitoring Gender Gaps in an Open List System: Does Panachage Backfire on Women? *

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Abstract

Despite the efforts to reduce gender gaps, women are still under-represented among politicians. In this paper I use a novel dataset of Canton Ticino (Switzerland) to shed light on the drivers of under-representation in open list municipal elections with panachage. First, I document a more pronounced and robust gender gap in the probability of being elected in executive local bodies than in legislative ones. I show that individual preference votes are the main drivers of gender differences in candidates' success: female candidates collect less individual votes than male candidates, after controlling for party ideology, pre-election ranking in the list, and incumbent status. Second, I draw a valuable insight by estimating gender differences in candidates' success separately for different types of preference votes. In this context of Panachage, women perform worst than men in the share of preference votes cast by voters with a clear political identity, supporting opponent parties. Conversely, no robust gender gap emerges in the share of votes cast by non-partisan voters, nor in the share of votes cast within the party. This result reveals important gender differences in candidates' ability to capture voters, on the basis of their ideology, and brings salient policy implications concerning the impact of electoral systems on female representation.

Keywords: gender gap, voters behaviour, politics, preference votes

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1 Introduction

Among the four gender gaps tracked by the World Economic Forum, Political Empowerment is the largest. According to the most data, (Global Gender Gap Index, 2021), the world has closed only 22% of the gender gap in politics. Across the 156 countries covered by the index, women represent only 26.1% of some 35,500 parliament seats and just 22.6% of over 3,400 ministers. In more than 80 countries, which include progressive economies such as Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and the United States, there has never been a female head of state. This paper focus on female under-representation in Switzerland, a well-established democratic country. Nowadays, Switzerland performance (GGI subindex of 0.494) is similar to neighbouring states' (Germany 0.509 - Austria 0.473 - Italy - 0.313 - France 0.457). However, for what concerns gender roles, Switzerland remains quite a traditional country, where women have been struggling for a long time in order to see their political rights recognized. It suffices to say that female suffrage was introduced at Federal level for the first time in 1971, and fully extended at cantonal and municipal level only in 1991. Understanding the roots of female under-representation is a key point in order to improve female political empowerment. I exploit data from Ticino, the Italian language Swiss Canton, to shed light on gender differences in politicians' popularity across different types of voters in proportional municipal elections with open lists. In particular, I exploit one characteristic feature of the Swiss electoral system, *i.e.* Panachage, which is a variation of the open list system permitting the voter to redistribute names from several party lists (and not only to vote for candidates within his/her favourite list). This peculiar setting allows me to reveal undetected gender differences in candidates' abilities to target different types of voters, which differ in their ideological view with respect to the candidate's party. To conduct my investigation, I assembled an unique dataset, by merging differ-

ent sources of information on candidates and elected politicians. The main advantages of my data are the following. First, I can track the same candidates across time in different elections, identifying incumbent politicians. Second, I know the exact pre-election candidate position within the list, which proxy the ex-ante preference of the party for a given candidate compare to the others. Third, I document individual preference votes each candidate collects, dis-aggregated by the type of voter casting the preferences (I distinguish among voters supporting candidate's party, voters supporting other parties, and non-partisan voters). In this study, I reach several conclusions. To start with, I estimate that being female is associated with a 7% lower probability of being elected in executive bodies, *Municipi* (2% in legislative bodies, *Consigli*), after controlling for incumbent advantage and party ideology. Then, by comparing candidates' individual preference votes across different categories of voters, I highlight the following pattern. In *Municipi* but not in *Consigli*, female candidates receive less individual votes than male candidates. This evidence is robust even controlling for incumbent advantage and for the candidate position within the list. Moreover, I document that gender differences in candidates' success are quite heterogeneous. Indeed, female politicians receive 2pp preference votes less than males trough the option of panachage, namely when voters having a favorite party also pick candidates from other lists. However, I do not detect any robust gender gap in the share of preference votes cast by non-partisan voters (listing preferred candidates without voting for any party list) nor in the share of preference votes cast by voters within their favorite party list. This pattern seems to suggest that women perform worst than men in targeting voters sharing a different ideology compare to their own's. Furthermore, I confirm this suspicion by focusing my analysis on panachage votes, i.e. votes cast when voters picks candidates from other lists than their favorite one. In this case, male politicians are more successful only when voters draw from lists of parties which are far away from

thier ideological position. Conversely, when voters picks candidates from party lists ideologically close to their own favorite party, the gender gap is reversed, i.e. female politicians have comparative advantage over males. This paper contribute to different streams of literature. The first stream studies the drivers of female scarcity in politics. Female under-representation in political arena is due to multiple obstacles in the process of political recruitment (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). First, women may be less prone to compete for political seats, being more time constrained (compared to men) due to child care duties (e.g., Schlozman et al., 1994). Alternatively, women may lack self-confidence (Fox and Lawless, 2004) or motivation for being politicians, given the gender gap the political market returns (Júlio and Tavares, 2017). Second, parties, may not give female candidates enough visibility, and may prevent them to advance in politics (e.g., Kunovich and Paxton, 2005; Kjaer and M. L. Krook. 2019). Third, voters may be biased against female candidates and cast more votes for male candidates (e.g., Schwindt-Bayer et al., 2010; Black and Erickson, 2004).

The paper also contribute to the literature on the relationship between electoral systems and gender gap in politics. Electoral rules are key in explaining systematic differences in women's representation (Thames, 2003): modifying those rules may be one of the most effective ways to promote women in politics (Norris and Inglehart, 2001). One important difference highlighted by the literature is the one between majoritarian and proportional electoral systems. There is a vast consensus in the literature that countries applying proportional rules have an higher number of women in their national parliaments than those with majoritarian rules (Norris, 1985; Rule, 1981, 1987, 1994; Matland and Studlar, 1996; Vengroff et al. 2003, Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012). A recent study shows that even within the same country, Italy, the introduction of proportional rules in national elections (in place of majoritarian rules) favored women representation (Profeta and Woodhouse, 2018). There are several reasons why

proportional systems are argued to promote greater female representation. The literature has concentrated on the following channels: candidates' characteristics, incumbency patterns, district magnitude and specific features of proportional systems (e.g. open/closed lists or zipper systems, single or multi-member districts). To begin with, proportional and majoritarian systems present parties with different vote-maximizing incentives. While in proportional systems parties have an incentive to present a balanced and diversified pool of candidates to appeal to a wider spectrum of voters, in majoritarian systems the optimal strategy is to choose the most appealing candidate (Norris, 1985). Moreover, under proportional rules incumbent politicians are less likely to be re-elected (Norris, 1985, 2006). As a consequence women - who are more likely to be new entrants in many political contexts - may be advantaged.

Thirdly, proportional systems are associated with larger district (and party) magnitudes, so parties can pull from deeper in their lists, which increases the chances to pick female candidates (Rule 1987, Norris, 2006).

Within proportional elections, many studies tried to assess whether the nature of party lists - open or closed - affects female representation. Early works suggested that open lists were preferable for women, as voters can express a preference for a particular candidate and move them higher/lower on the list, thus preventing parties from reserving top list seats to more established male candidates (Soberg Shugar, 1994). On the other hand, other studies point out that open lists may encourage politicians to cultivating the personal vote (Carey and Matthew Soberg Shugart, 1995), which may backfire on women in presence of cultural gender biases. Our study analyzes gender gaps in preference votes in a context of proportional open list system with panachage. There are fewer studies which focus on the effects of Panachage. In particular, by implementing a randomized experiment, () finds that a Panachage open lists system - compared to close list system and open list system without panachage -

increases preference votes for female candidates in the context of European elections. Our conclusion, though, seems not to reconcile with this message. Indeed, we find that the option of panachage can harm female candidates. In particular, when voters cast preference votes for candidates belonging to a different party than their favourite one, they tend to prefer male candidates to female ones. This gender bias seem not to arise, though, when voters cast preferences for candidates sharing their own ideology, although belonging to a different party, nor among non-partisan voters. However, it is important to stress, that differently from (cite), we analyze a context of municipal elections, hence we look at politicians who are in the early stages of their career. Indeed, I cannot exclude that, at higher levels of their political career, female politicians develop a bi-partisan tendency, and learn to attract also voters from a different ideology. Third, this paper relates to the literature on preferential votes. Preference votes may signal candidates popularity and their electability to parties (Crisp et al. 2013). Analysis among parties in Sweden's semi-open-list system and in Brazil's open-list system suggest that parties may use preference votes to test candidates' popularity and to promote the most successful ones to more powerful roles. Also, preference votes are making politicians' nomination and promotion processes more transparent, reducing the risk of strong intra-party conflict (or limiting the negative consequences of such conflicts) (Kemahlioglu et al, 2009; Ware, 2002). Other studies, however, suggest that preference votes appear to be highly ineffective in reshaping candidates order within the list, as voters continue to cast their preferences for candidates at the top of the list (Farrell, 2011; Gallagher and Mitchell 2005).

With respect to gender, empirical studies reached very different conclusions. Some studies find evidence of general voters' predisposition to vote for male over female candidates or vice versa (Black et al, 2003; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Schwindt-Bayer, 2010, Ragauskas, 2021, Dean, 2020). Moreover, by promoting within party competition,

preference votes may promote the best candidates, and improve gender equality at the top (Folke et al, 2016). In Polish open-list systems, for example, preference votes cast by the electorate shifted women higher up in the post-election ranking, compared with the original one proposed by the party, increasing the share of female elected politicians. Also, preference votes can be used as a powerful affirmative action tool. Indeed, they can be specifically used in targeting voters to express more gender-balanced preferences. In Italy, the introduction of double preference voting, which encouraged voters to express two preference votes for candidates of different genders, increased the number of female elected politicians by 19pp, and had long run effects on voter attitudes toward female candidates (Baltrunaite et al, 2019). However, some other studies did find little evidence of an independent effect of candidate gender on voter choice in preferential systems (Shair-Rosenfields, 2014; McElroy 2010). For example, preference votes in Denmark found that political candidates' gender is less important for male and female voters than other characteristics with preference voting. Our paper contributes to this literature by showing that a gender gap in preference votes emerges only when voters cast their preferences for politicians of a different ideological positions.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents the institutional setting and the details of the Swiss Electoral system. Section 3 and 4 describe the data and the identification strategy used in this study. Section 5 describes gender gaps for different categories of preference votes, and Section 6 investigates the drivers of this pattern. Section 7 concludes.

2 Institutional Setting

In Switzerland, municipal elections are in place every four years, and they are staggered, *i.e.*, they do not happen in all the municipalities at the same time. In each

municipality, people vote at the same time for the composition of two institutional bodies: the *Municipio* (the executive body), and the *Consiglio* (the legislative body).

The electoral system is a proportional one, with open lists and Panachage. Panachage is a peculiar characteristics of Swiss electoral system, and it consists in the possibility to vote for candidates belonging to different party lists.

More specifically, voters are first asked to choose the head of the *Consiglio* (the mayor), by voting for a party. Note that this choice is not mandatory, i.e. voters can decide not to vote for any party. Secondly, they can choose the members of the municipal and legislative chambers, by expressing preference votes. The maximum number of preference votes allowed coincides with the seats available. Since bigger municipalities have larger chambers, the number of preference votes allowed changes according to the population of the city. Figure 1 summaries voters' options. Voters can select candidates belonging to their favorite list (a), they can choose candidates belonging to a different list than the one they voted for (b), they can select candidates belonging to different lists (c), and finally they can support candidates even though they did not select any favorite party in the first place (d).

Once elections end, each candidate collects a total number of votes given by :

- i) the total number of party votes collected by the lists (which coincides with the number of supporters of the party),
- ii) the number of preference votes cast by voters of his/her party,
- iii) the number of preference votes of other parties' supporters, and finally the number of preference votes of non-partisan voters (those who did not vote for any party).

In line with a proportional criterium, seats in the *Municipio* and in the *Consiglio* are assigned to parties based on the number of votes collected by each list. Once seats are assigned to each party, within each list candidates elected are those with an higher number of individual votes, which are the sum of preference votes cast by party supporters, preference votes of other party 's voters, and preference votes

of non-partisan voters. As a consequence of this setting, individual votes are the key drivers of electoral competition within the party.

3 Data

I assembled an unique dataset of municipal candidates of canton Ticino municipal elections from 2000 to 2021. Data were obtained by webscraping the website of the statistical office of Canton Ticino. For elections from 2000 to 2021, the dataset includes the following information: the election status of each candidate (whether he/she was elected or not), his/her gender, the total number of preference votes collected, his/her party affiliation, party ideology, the municipality in which he/she runs. For elections from 2016 to 2021, the dataset includes additional information, *i.e.* party votes (votes for the mayor candidate), the exact composition of candidates' individual votes (divided in preference votes cast by candidate's party supporters, preference votes cast by other parties' supporters, and preference votes cast by non-partisan voters), candidate date of birth. Finally, by tracking the same candidate in different elections on the basis of the name and the date of birth, I was able to identify incumbent politicians. In Tables 1 and 2, I report descriptive statistics for *Consigli* and *Municipi* for elections 2000-2020 (Panel A) and for elections 2016-2020 (Panel B). In *Consigli* (Table 1), each candidate has a 45% probability of being elected. Concerning the demographics, the majority of candidates is male (70%), and around the age of 45. Given the local nature of elections, civic lists are highly represented (with 37% of the candidates), and incumbent politicians are 23% of the total. Values reported for elections 2016-2020 (Panel B), are very similar. For these last elections, I additionally document the different composition of votes collected by candidates. Of roughly 720 total votes, 65% are party votes (479), while the rest 35% of votes are personally collected by the can-

didates, and reflect their personal effort in the political campaign. Among individual votes, roughly half of them are preference votes cast by voters affiliated to the candidate’s party (PV: within party). Among the other half, votes cast by other party lists’ supporters (PV: other parties) are more numerous than votes cast by non-partisan voters (PV: non-partisan voters).

In *Municipi* (Table 2), being elected is less likely than in *Consigli*(36%), females are only 25% of the candidates, and the average candidate is older (47). Also, preference votes are 43% of all individual votes, so their weight is higher in *Municipi* than in *Consigli*.

As documented in Figure 2, the share of female candidates is around 30% in *Consigli*, while it fluctuates around 20% and 30% in Municipal councils. Women elected, though, only represent on average 10% of the politicians in *Consigli*, and even less in *Municipi*. Despite the shares of female politicians are quite persistent over time, both pictures show a positive trend both in *Consigli* and in *Municipi*. Finally, an important insight comes from Figure 3, showing that the share of candidates’ preference votes differ both by gender and by the type of voters. Male candidates always receive more votes than female, but the gender gap seems more pronounced in the share of preferences coming from opponent parties’ supporters. As documented in Figure 4, this patten is consistent for candidates belonging to both left-wing, right-wing and civic lists.

4 Identification Strategy

I assess the gender gaps in politics by estimating the following equation:

$$Y_{cmy} = \alpha + \beta Female_c + \eta X_c + Z_m + T_y + I_y \epsilon_i \quad (1)$$

First, I document gender gap in elected politicians. Hence, the dependent variable

is a dummy equal to one if candidate c in party p in municipality m in year y is elected, and zero otherwise. Vector X includes the age of the candidate, a dummy *Incumbent* equal to one if the candidate has been elected before and zero otherwise, and the dummies *Left* and *Civic* to control for candidate ideology. In some specifications, I add municipal fixed effects, years fixed effects, and Party fixed effects. Second, I analyze the gender gap in different categories of votes, for candidates of municipal elections from 2015. I test the previous equation in predicting several dependent variables, the number of party votes, the share of total preference votes received by the candidate, share of preference votes cast by party supporters, share of preference votes cast by other parties' voters, and share of preference votes cast by non-partisan voters. Shares are built by dividing each candidate votes over the number of votes collected by all the candidates within the same party (and in the same type of voters' category). Finally, in a more precise specification, I compare gender gaps in shares across the three categories of votes. In order to do so, I reshape the dataset in a long form, obtaining for each candidate three rows documenting the share of votes cast respectively by own party supporters, other parties' supporters, and non-partisan voters. Then I estimate the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned}
 Share_{cpmy} = & \alpha + \beta Female_c + \gamma OtherParties + \delta Non - Partisan + \\
 & \theta Female \times OtherParties + \sigma Female \times NonPartisan + \eta X_c + Z_m + T_y + I_y \epsilon_i
 \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

where $Share_{cpmy}$ is the share of preference votes collected by candidate c in party p in municipality m in year y , *OtherParties* is a dummy one if the share of votes is cast by other party supporters, and *NonPartisan* is a dummy one if the share of votes is cast by non-partisan voters. Note that the omitted variable is the dummy identifying the share of preferences cast by own party supporters. In this manner, the coefficients of this regression have an insightful interpretation. While β captures the gender

gap in preference votes cast by supporters' of the candidate's party, the coefficients *theta* and *sigma* are difference-in difference estimators. *theta* compares the share of votes collected by female politicians (to the share collected by males) which were cast by candidates' supporters compared to other parties' supporters. Similarly, *sigma* compares the share of votes collected by female politicians (to the share collected by male politicians) which were cast by candidates' supporters compared to non-partisan voters.

5 Results

In Tables 4 and 5, I document to what extent the gender of the candidate predict the likelihood of being elected, respectively for *Municipi* and *Consigli*. Although all the specifications suggest that female candidates are less likely to be elected, results are quite heterogeneous across columns. This is due to the fact that specifications of column 5-7 includes only data from 2016-2020 elections, while the first four columns include all the elections occurring from 2000. Even though observations included in the analysis drop drastically, specifications 6 and 7 are the most reliable, since they control for incumbent candidates. Importantly, in both the political bodies, being incumbent is associated with 50pp higher probability of being elected. And once the variable *Incumbent* is included in the regressions, the coefficient of *Female* reduces from 8pp to 2pp in *Consigli* to 15pp to 7pp in *Municipi*. Note that in *Consigli* the coefficient is no longer significant once party fixed effects are taken into account (column 7). In Tables 6, and 7, I analyse the effect of being *Female* on the amount of votes collected by candidates, controlling for age, incumbent status, position in the list and ideology. In odd columns, I control for municipal fixed effects and years fixed effects, while in even columns I also include party fixed effects. In *Consigli* (Table 6), the gender gap is

mainly driven by the fact that women are placed in lists which attract less party votes (columns 3 and 4). These lists get on average less seats, and, as a consequence of this, women have lower chances to be elected. However, no gender gap emerge in individual votes (columns 5-8). If anything, women have a small advantage when competing for non-partisan voters support (columns 9 and 10). In *Municipi* (Table 7), differently from *Consigli*, gender gaps emerge for different categories of individual votes, after controlling for party ideology, age, incumbent status, and candidate's position within the list. Female candidates collect 1pp lower share of preference votes cast by their own party supporters, and 2pp lower share of preference votes cast by other parties' supporters. No gender gap emerge in the number of preference votes cast by non-partisan voters. In a more precise specification, I compare the gender gaps in different types of shares, estimating equation 2, described above. Results are reported in Table 8. As suggested by the coefficient of *Female* dummy (β), the gender gap in the share of votes cast within the party is not significantly different from zero (once controlling for incumbent politician), and it is not statistically different from the gender gap in votes cast by non-partisan voters (see σ). Conversely, the gender gap in votes cast by other parties' supporters is significantly lower than the gender gap within the party. This pattern is consistent in all the specifications, and is confirmed also when candidates fixed effects are included in the regression (col.6). In conclusion, while no robust gender gap emerges within party or among non-partisan voters, the gender gap in the share of votes cast by other parties supporters is around 2pp, and it is highly statistically significant independently of the regression specification.

6 Mechanism

In this Section I investigate the potential mechanisms behind my findings. The main result of my analysis is that in Municipi i) women receive less preference votes than men from other parties' supporters, but not within the party. and ii) no robust gender gap emerges in preference votes cast by non-partisan voters. To start with, I will focus on the first finding, i.e the fact that the gender gap in preference votes is driven by preferences cast outside the party. This could be driven by the different visibility of female and male candidates. For example, female candidates may receive less coverage in the media, or, due to family constraints, they may have less time to promote themselves on top of what their parties do. Although I cannot directly test for these channels, the following considerations may give some insights. First, my results are robust even controlling for incumbent politicians, for whom the visibility issue is less of a constraint. Second, female politicians may have less time to invest in popularity campaigns, due to family related duties, and as a consequences, they may be less popular outside their parties. In line with this hypothesis, I would like to verify whether the gender gap is more pronounced for politicians with childcare duties. Since I do not have this information, I control for a dummy equal to one if the politicians is more than thirty years old, since this is the average age of mothers in Switzerland. My results are still valid when I interact the dummy *OverThirty* with *Female*. Still, the coefficient for *Female* is negative and significant in predicting both the share of preference votes within the party and outside, and the interaction term is close to zero and insignificant (results available upon request). This suggest that the gender gap is not different between politicians above and below the age of thirty. In conclusion, I don't find strong evidence that the lowest popularity of female candidates outside their party is explained by visibility or time restrictions. Next, I focus on the second results,

namely that the gender gap in preference votes vanishes for voters without any party affiliation. Exploiting survey data collected in occasion of Swiss referenda, I exclude that this heterogeneous result (the difference in gender gaps between political and non-partisan voters) is not driven by different attitudes toward women. The datasets Vox and Voto collect Swiss voters' opinions for objects voted in Federal Referenda and Popular Initiatives. Precisely, a cross-section sample of 1000 voters is interviewed for every object under scrutiny. By relying on this data, I am able to provide an identikit of non-party voters (compared to voters with a clear ideology), documenting their demographic characteristics, their ideological position, their attitudes toward gender equality and their voting behaviour in referenda concerning female rights. Figure 5 suggests that non-partisan voters are more likely to be female and they are more concentrated in ages below 30. As documented in Figure 6, non-partisan voters are normally distributed along the ideological spectrum, with a huge spike on the center of the distribution (Figure a). Moreover, when asked how much they agree on a scale from value 1 (strongly agree) to value 6 (don't agree) with gender equality being a priority, they are either in the middle of the scale (Kaine Partei), or close to the highest extreme (Nicht eine Partei) (Figure b), so they seem not particularly progressive in this respect. This suspicion is indeed confirmed by data on actual decisions in pro-female rights referenda. In table 8, I regress a dummy Yes equal to 1 if the voters i voted in favor of the proposal (supporting women's rights) and zero otherwise, on several covariates, including gender (Female), age (dummy Age65 plus), education (Educated equal to 1 for highly educated individuals), civil status (dummy Married), ideology (a continuous scale for 1 - far left - to 7 -far right), and three alternative non party voters identifiers i.e. $NonPartisan_1$, $NonPartisan_2$, and $NonPartisan_3$. Once controlling for ideology, all the coefficients of $NonPartisan$ identifiers are negative, although insignificant. In conclusion, this evidence should convince the reader that non-partisan

voters are not particularly female supportive. Hence, the absence of a gender gap in preference votes cast by non-partisan voters should not be interpreted as a reflection of some pro-female attitudes peculiar to this category of voters. Finally, I analyzed panachage votes to verify whether - within this category - gender differences emerge when candidates' ideology differ from voter's ideology. More specifically, I estimate the following equation:

$$SharePan_{cpsy} = \alpha + \beta Female_c + \gamma SameIdeology + \theta Female \times SameIdeology + \eta X_c + Z_m + T_y + I_y \epsilon_i \quad (3)$$

For a given candidate c belonging to party i , *SharePan* reports his/her preference votes cast by voters who support another party j (with j different than i), *Female* is a dummy for female candidate, and *SameIdeology* is a dummy equal to one for preferences given by voters supporting a party j , whose ideology is close to party i . Note that the coefficient of interest is β , which identify the gender gap in preference votes cast by voters supporting candidates of different ideologies. Results are reported in table 10. Consistently with the previous evidence, a negative gender gap emerge when the voter's ideology and the candidate's ideology do not coincide (β is always significantly different from zero). Conversely, the coefficient θ of the interaction term is positive and statistically significant, suggesting that female politicians have an advantage over males when preferences are cast by voters sharing candidates' ideology with respect to when preferences are cast by voters sharing a different ideology than candidates'. So far, results seem to suggest that female politicians are less effective than male politicians in capturing votes coming from voters of a different ideology than their own.

7 Conclusions

Understanding the roots of female under-representation is a key point in order to improve female political empowerment. Given the existing literature, it is not fully clear in which dimensions female and male politicians differ, particularly in their ability to collect individual preference voters in open lists electoral systems. This paper shed light on this topic, by documenting gender differences in the amount of preference votes collected, and also in the type of voters supporting female and male candidates. My conclusion is that, in a context of open list system with the option of Panachage, female politicians perform worst than males in targeting ideologically-distant voters (voters supporting other parties). On the contrary, women get the same share of preference votes then men from non-partisan voters, and by thier party's supporters. This pattern is - per se - an interesting and novel finding. However, whether this translates into a broader message, i.e. that women are less able to attract swing voters, requires additional investigation. In particular, it is important to stress that this is not a context in which voters switch, since they can use panachage to keep unchanged their preference for a party, yet being able to select a candidate from another list. However, this consideration leads to the other side of the coin. Even in a context in which voters do not have to switch their ideology in order to pick a given candidate, female candidates (compared to male) are less able to build on this institutional advantage. Only with apotical voters they don't lose in a vis-a-vis competition with male candidates. This findings may rise some skepticism regarding the neutrality of Panachage for female empowerment in politics, expecially in eraly career stages.

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Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Ballot's options

Party 1	Party 2	Party 3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Party 1		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate1a	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2a	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3a
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1b	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2b	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3b
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate1c	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2c	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3c
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1d	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2d	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3d
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1e	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2e	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3e
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1f	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2f	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3f

(Option a)

Party 1	Party 2	Party 3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Party 1		
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate2a	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3a
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1b	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate2b	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3b
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1c	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2c	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3c
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1d	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate2d	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3d
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1e	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2e	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3e
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1f	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2f	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3f

(Option b)

Party 1	Party 2	Party 3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Party 1		
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1a	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2a	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3a
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1b	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate2b	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3b
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate1c	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2c	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3c
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1d	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2d	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate3d
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate1e	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2e	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3e
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1f	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2f	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3f

(Option c)

Party 1	Party 2	Party 3
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate2a	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3a
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate1b	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2b	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3b
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1c	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2c	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3c
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate1d	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2d	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3d
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1e	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2e	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate3e
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate1f	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate2f	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate3f

(Option d)

Figure 2: Gender gap in local bodies

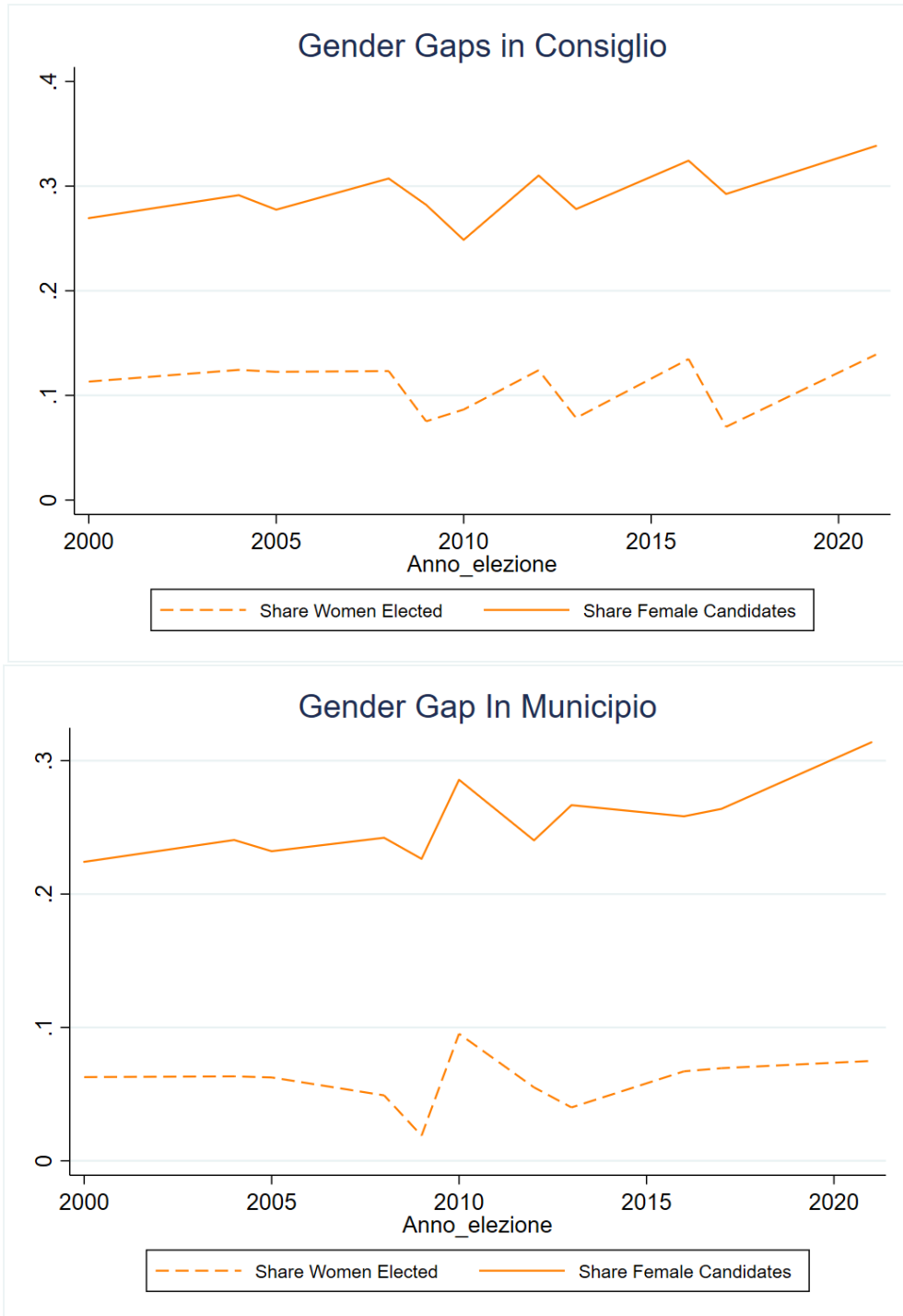


Figure 3: Gender gap in the share of individual votes, by category of voters

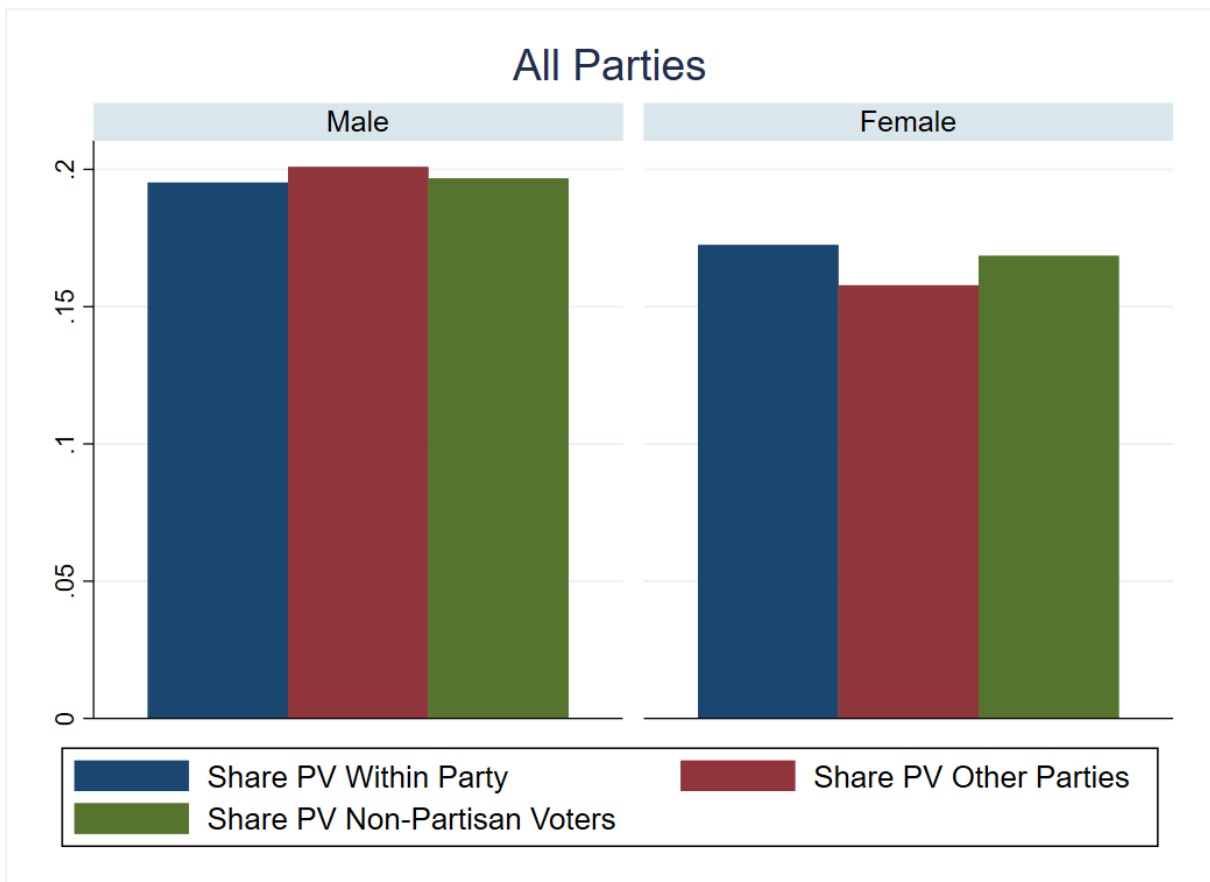


Figure 4: Gender gap in the share of individual votes, by ideology



Figure 5: Non-Partisan Voters: demographics

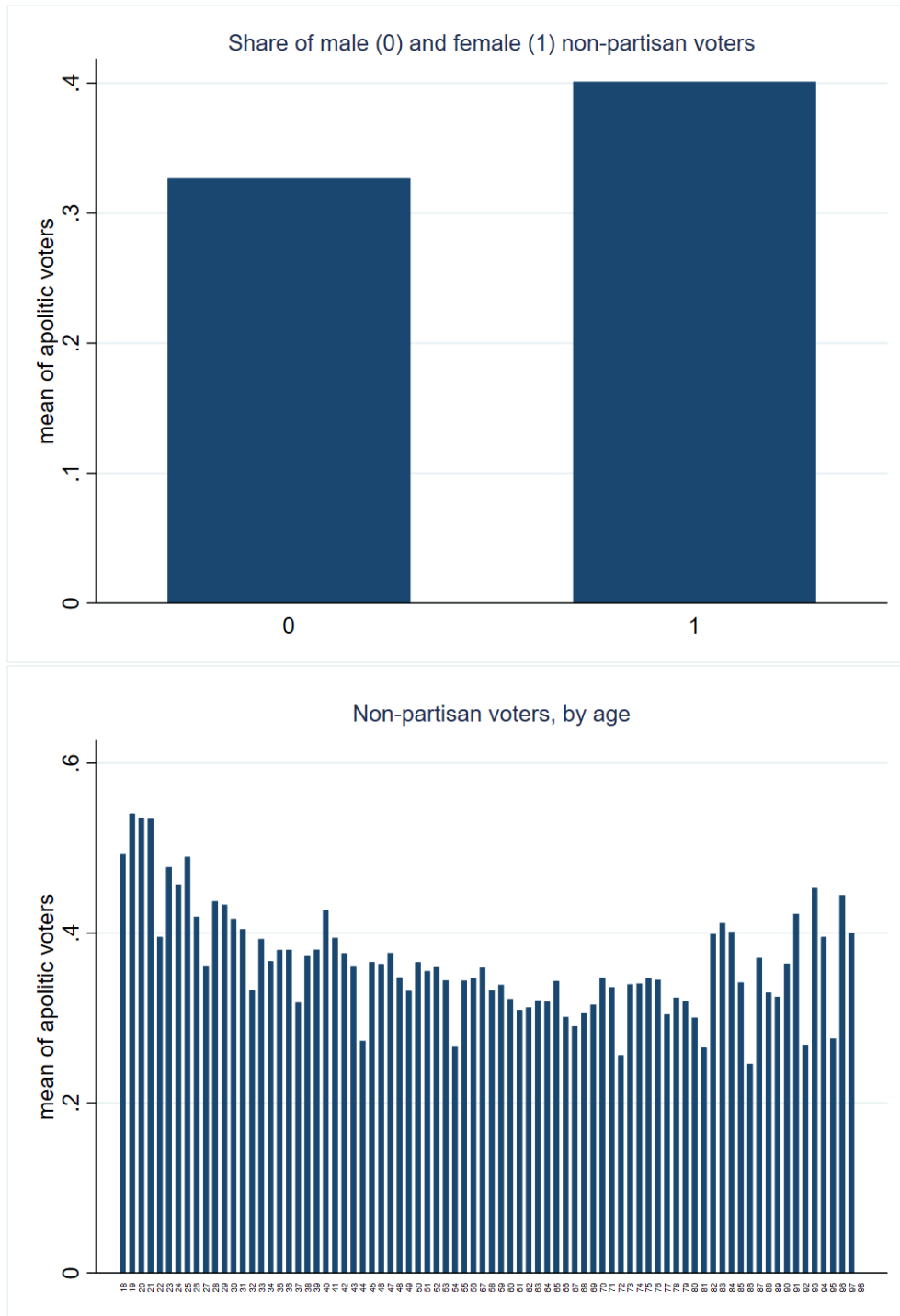


Figure 6: Gender gap in the share of individual votes, by ideology

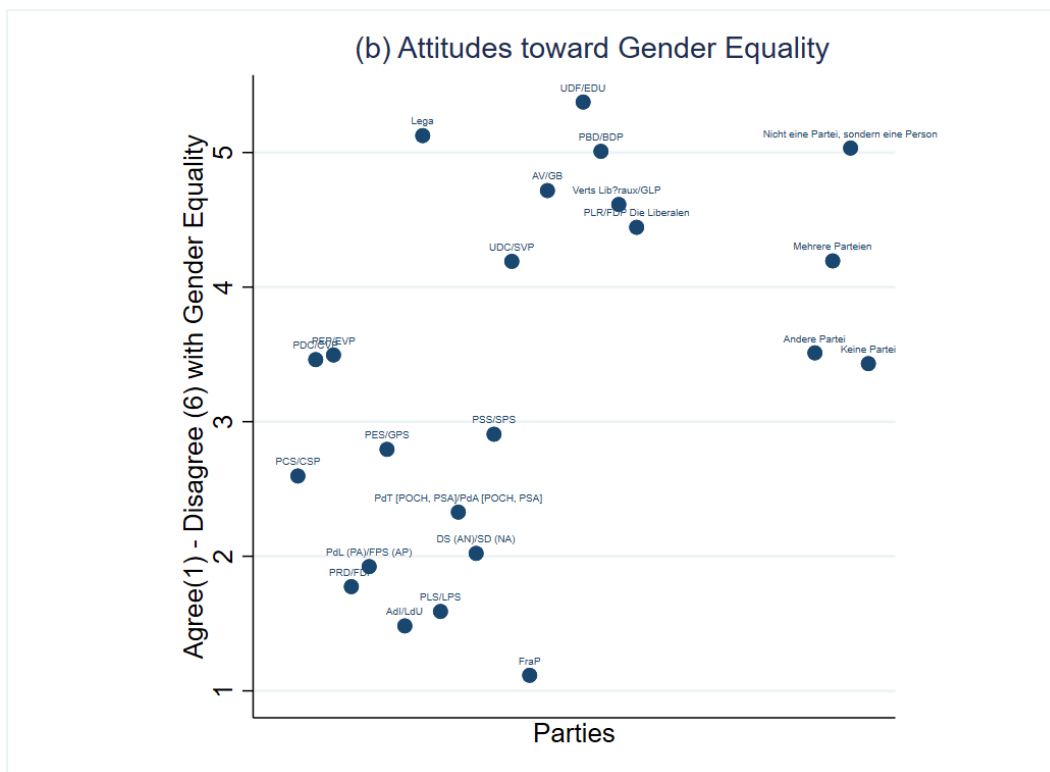
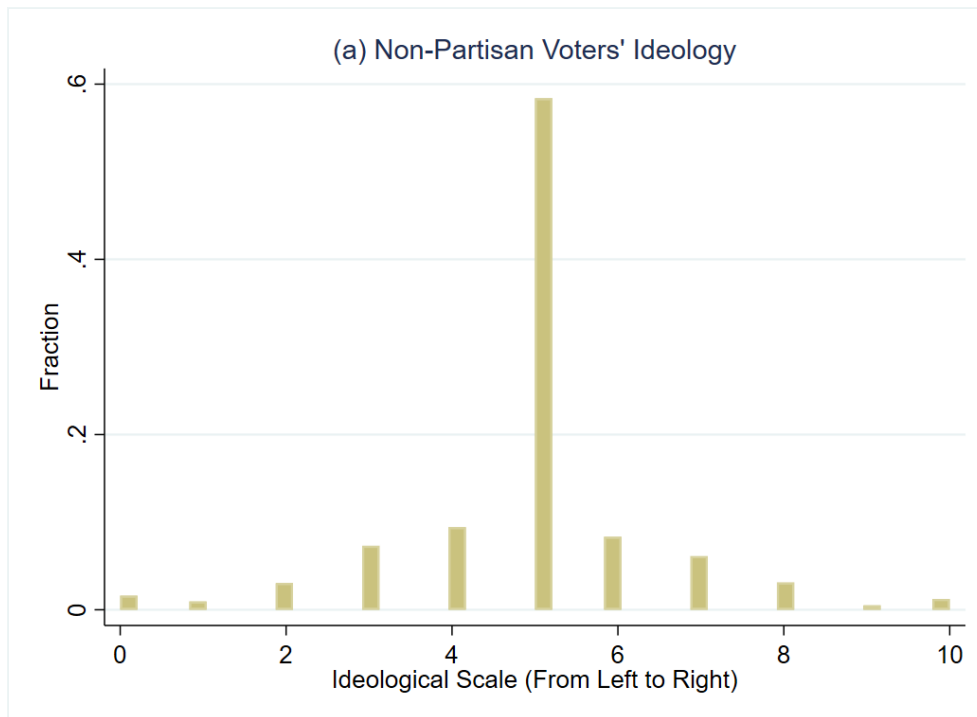


Table 1: Summary Statistics of Candidates in *Consiglio*

	No.Obs	Mean	Std.Dev	Min	Max
Panel A: 2000-2020					
Elected	35,646	.4594625	.498361	0	1
Female	35,397	.3055061	.460628	0	1
Age	22,461	45.77525	13.49619	17	108
Incumbent	15,795	.2382399	.4260201	0	1
Left	35,646	.1101105	.3130319	0	1
Right	35,646	.2969478	.4569197	0	1
Civic List	35,646	.3728609	.4835723	0	1
Tot. Votes	35,553	615.965	832.1137	18	10731
Panel B: 2016-2020					
Elected	9,904	.4307351	.4952041	0	1
Female	9,994	.3244947	.4682092	0	1
Age	9,902	46.43638	13.93803	18	92
Incumbent	9,731	.2419073	.4282604	0	1
Left	9,994	.384931	.4866033	0	1
Right	9,994	.2823694	.4501746	0	1
Civic List	9,994	.1425077	.3427668	0	1
Order in the List	9,994	11.97018	10.39455	1	60
Tot. Votes	9,999	727.8693	938.2352	36	10731
Party votes	9,994	479.0452	694.9106	8	4615
PV: within party	9,994	129.8509	164.2263	4	3334
PV: non-partisan voters	9,994	56.38063	74.36428	0	1739
PV: other parties	9,999	73.21522	160.6656	0	5017

Table 2: Summary Statistics of Candidates in *Municipio*

	No.Obs	Mean	Std.Dev	Min	Max
Panel A: 2000-2020					
Elected	10,003	.3672898	.4820905	0	1
Female	9,997	.2504751	.4333084	0	1
Age	6,118	47.94214	12.1503	18	86
Incumbent	4,295	.2062864	.4046856	0	1
Left	10,003	.1190643	.3238803	0	1
Right	10,003	.2883135	.4530004	0	1
Civic	10,003	.3859842	.4868512	0	1
Tot Votes	10,001	552.2212	878.8351	20	14212
Panel B: 2016-2020					
Elected	2,766	.3322487	.4711048	0	1
Female	2,771	.2775171	.4478546	0	1
Age	2,766	48.64895	12.68041	18	86
Incumbent	2,714	.2089167	.4066097	0	1
Left	2,780	.3125899	.4636322	0	1
Right	2,780	.1629496	.3693862	0	1
Civic List	2,780	.1329436	.3367261	0	1
Order in the list	2,780	3.229137	1.841218	1	14
Tot Votes	2,781	654.0644	1045.959	48	13862
Party votes	2,780	372.9259	601.703	6	5727
PV: within party	2,780	152.5363	276.7515	5	4660
PV: non-partisan voters	2,780	67.35683	120.8441	0	2270
PV: other parties	2,781	73.06832	232.9148	0	5584

Table 3: Summary Statistics of Candidates, by gender

Votes	Male				Female				Diff. in Means
	No.Obs	Mean	Std.Err	Std.Dev	No.Obs	Mean	Std.Err	Std.Dev	P-Value
Panel A: Consiglio									
Ranking	7,174	11.41	.12	10.05	3,418	11.65	.18	10.78	0.69
Top Two	7,174	.14	.00	.35	3,418	.14	.00	.35	0.58
Incumbent	6,750	.27	.00	.44	3,229	.18	.01	.38	0.00
Right	7,174	.54	.00	.50	3,418	.48	.09	.50	0.00
Left	7,174	.37	.00	.48	3,418	.40	.00	.49	0.00
Civic	7,174	.14	.00	.34	3,418	.1647	.00	.36	0.00
Age	7,002	47.28	.17	14.02	3,317	45.11	.23	13.36	0.00
Panel B: Municipio									
Ranking	2,085	3.20	.04	1.86	802	3.32	.07	1.81	0.14
Top Two	2,085	.43	.01	.49	802	.38	.01	.49	0.00
Incumbent	1,987	.25	.01	.43	763	.10	.01	.31	0.00
Right	2,085	.55	.01	.49	802	.46	.01	.49	0.00
Left	2,085	.31	.01	.46	802	.38	.02	.48	0.00
Civic	2,085	.12	.00	.32	802	.15	.01	.35	0.09
Age	2,052	49.74	.28	12.83	785	45.96	.41	11.61	0.00

Table 4: Elected politicians in *Consiglio*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Female	-0.094*** (0.009)	-0.092*** (0.009)	-0.100*** (0.007)	-0.100*** (0.007)	-0.086*** (0.007)	-0.020* (0.012)	-0.020 (0.012)
Left		-0.034 (0.022)	-0.012 (0.013)	-0.022** (0.011)	-0.032*** (0.011)	-0.031 (0.027)	-0.041 (0.027)
Civica		0.015 (0.018)	-0.056*** (0.010)	-0.064*** (0.011)	-0.065*** (0.012)	0.045** (0.022)	0.034 (0.023)
Age					0.000 (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Incumbent						0.575*** (0.017)	0.575*** (0.017)
R-squared	0.007	0.008	0.090	0.090	0.093	0.245	0.246
N	25557	25557	25554	25554	12485	6018	6018
Municipal FE	-	-	YES	YES	YES		-
Year FE	-	-	YES	YES	-	-	-
Party FE	-	-	-	YES	-		YES

Notes. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 5: Elected politicians in *Municipio*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Female	-0.178*** (0.011)	-0.172*** (0.011)	-0.163*** (0.011)	-0.179*** (0.011)	-0.157*** (0.015)	-0.068*** (0.022)	-0.074*** (0.024)
Left		-0.119*** (0.034)	-0.123*** (0.024)	0.783*** (0.195)	-0.123*** (0.021)	-0.088*** (0.022)	0.055** (0.025)
Civic		-0.020 (0.036)	-0.124*** (0.019)	1.186*** (0.220)	-0.107*** (0.019)	0.026 (0.032)	-0.691*** (0.027)
Age					0.003** (0.001)	0.001*** (0.000)	0.001*** (0.000)
Incumbent						0.643*** (0.022)	0.659*** (0.025)
R-squared	0.024	0.032	0.098	0.183	0.103	0.326	0.422
N	7231	7231	7231	7231	3351	1580	1580
Municipal FE	-	-	YES	YES	YES		-
Year FE	-	-	YES	YES	-	-	-
Party FE	-	-	-	YES	-		YES

Notes. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 6: Preference votes in *Consiglio*

Votes	Party Votes		Share tot. Pref Votes		Share PV within Party		Share PV other Parties		Share PV. non-partisan	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Female	-19.275 (14.034)	-4.538 (7.227)	0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)
Age	-1.848*** (0.576)	-0.968** (0.455)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Incumbent	76.308*** (14.474)	37.226*** (10.264)	0.028*** (0.003)	0.032*** (0.003)	0.017*** (0.001)	0.020*** (0.002)	0.042*** (0.005)	0.046*** (0.005)	0.037*** (0.004)	0.041*** (0.004)
Order	7.363*** (1.585)	1.392* (0.766)	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Left	-157.744*** (50.570)	-19.736 (20.820)	0.006 (0.007)	-0.017*** (0.003)	0.005 (0.007)	-0.037*** (0.003)	0.006 (0.007)	-0.027*** (0.004)	0.006 (0.007)	0.025*** (0.004)
Civic	-197.414** (84.437)	2866.220*** (423.523)	0.011 (0.007)	-0.060* (0.034)	0.011 (0.007)	-0.061* (0.035)	0.011* (0.007)	-0.057 (0.035)	0.011 (0.007)	-0.064* (0.034)
R-squared	0.729	0.872	0.289	0.697	0.290	0.759	0.257	0.556	0.266	0.600
N	9979	9979	9979	9979	9979	9979	9979	9979	9979	9979
Municipal FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Party FE	-	YES	-	YES	-	YES	-	YES	-	YES

Notes. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 7: Preference votes in *Municipio*

Votes	Party Votes		Share Tot. Pref Votes		Share PV within Party		Share PV Other Parties		Share PV non-partisan	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Female	-5.069 (12.214)	9.453 (10.874)	-0.013** (0.006)	-0.011** (0.005)	-0.011** (0.006)	-0.009** (0.004)	-0.020** (0.009)	-0.017** (0.007)	-0.010 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.005)
Age	-2.015*** (0.727)	-0.612* (0.328)	0.000** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.001*** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Incumbent	107.301*** (28.010)	35.472** (14.475)	0.084*** (0.009)	0.110*** (0.010)	0.054*** (0.007)	0.077*** (0.006)	0.132*** (0.014)	0.162*** (0.017)	0.106*** (0.011)	0.135*** (0.013)
Order	16.331*** (4.216)	5.997*** (2.113)	-0.021*** (0.003)	-0.011*** (0.002)	-0.018*** (0.002)	-0.009*** (0.002)	-0.025*** (0.003)	-0.016*** (0.002)	-0.022*** (0.003)	-0.012*** (0.002)
Left	-167.300*** (51.445)	-13.195 (43.770)	0.010 (0.016)	-0.017** (0.008)	0.008 (0.016)	-0.021*** (0.007)	0.011 (0.016)	-0.012 (0.009)	0.011 (0.016)	-0.012 (0.009)
Civic	-236.845*** (69.241)	146.196 (96.366)	0.026 (0.019)	-0.073 (0.190)	0.025 (0.019)	-0.076 (0.195)	0.028 (0.018)	-0.057 (0.185)	0.026 (0.018)	-0.085 (0.184)
R-squared	0.640	0.898	0.309	0.672	0.296	0.713	0.302	0.552	0.292	0.598
N	2705	2705	2705	2705	2705	2705	2705	2705	2705	2705
Municipal FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Party FE	-	YES	-	YES	-	YES	-	YES	-	YES

Notes. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 8: Comparison across shares of preference votes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Female	-0.022*** (0.005)	-0.005 (0.005)	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.005)	-0.005 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.004)	
Other Parties	0.005 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)	0.006 (0.004)	0.005*** (0.002)
Apolitical Voters	0.001 (0.005)	0.002 (0.005)	0.002 (0.005)	0.002 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.002 (0.003)	0.001 (0.002)
Female X Other Parties	-0.019** (0.008)	-0.020** (0.008)	-0.020** (0.008)	-0.020*** (0.008)	-0.020*** (0.008)	-0.021*** (0.006)	-0.019*** (0.003)
Female X Apolitical Voters	-0.005 (0.008)	-0.006 (0.008)	-0.006 (0.008)	-0.006 (0.008)	-0.006 (0.008)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.005 (0.003)
Incumbent		0.117*** (0.004)	0.112*** (0.005)	0.097*** (0.005)	0.097*** (0.005)	0.125*** (0.004)	
Age			0.001*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	
Order				-0.022*** (0.001)	-0.022*** (0.001)	-0.012*** (0.001)	
Left					0.010*** (0.004)		
Civic List					0.027*** (0.007)		
R-squared	0.178	0.244	0.247	0.296	0.297	0.599	0.928
N	8661	8250	8250	8250	8250	8115	8661
Municipal FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES		-
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Party FE	-	-	-	-	-	YES	-
Candidate FE	-	-	-	-	-	-	YES

Notes. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 9: Pro-Female Rights Swiss Referenda: decisions of *non-partisan voters* in referenda

Column	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Female	0.048*** (0.016)	0.009 (0.017)	0.046*** (0.016)	0.008 (0.017)	0.048*** (0.016)	0.009 (0.017)
Age65plus	-0.052*** (0.018)	-0.022 (0.019)	-0.051*** (0.018)	-0.022 (0.019)	-0.052*** (0.018)	-0.022 (0.019)
Educated	0.124*** (0.018)	0.071*** (0.018)	0.126*** (0.018)	0.072*** (0.018)	0.124*** (0.018)	0.070*** (0.018)
Married	-0.021 (0.017)	0.003 (0.018)	-0.021 (0.017)	0.003 (0.018)	-0.021 (0.017)	0.003 (0.018)
Latin Region	0.102*** (0.017)	0.095*** (0.018)	0.103*** (0.017)	0.097*** (0.018)	0.103*** (0.017)	0.096*** (0.018)
Ideology		-0.070*** (0.004)		-0.070*** (0.004)		-0.070*** (0.004)
Non-Partisan ₁	-0.026 (0.016)	-0.015 (0.019)				
Non-Partisan ₂			-0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)		
Non-Partisan ₃					-0.030* (0.016)	-0.019 (0.018)
R-squared	0.193	0.269	0.192	0.269	0.193	0.269
N	3502	2704	3502	2704	3502	2704
Municipal FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Referendum FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 10: Panashage Votes: the role of ideological spectrum

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Female	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.007*** (0.003)	-0.006** (0.002)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.008*** (0.003)	-0.006*** (0.002)	
SameIdeology	0.010** (0.004)	0.011** (0.005)	0.011** (0.005)	0.011** (0.005)	0.014*** (0.005)	0.017*** (0.005)	0.014*** (0.005)
Female X SameIdeology	0.007* (0.004)	0.007* (0.004)	0.007* (0.004)	0.008** (0.004)	0.007* (0.004)	0.005 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.005)
Incumbent		0.064*** (0.004)	0.062*** (0.004)	0.056*** (0.004)	0.059*** (0.004)	0.066*** (0.004)	
Order				-0.007*** (0.001)	-0.007*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)	
Left					0.010*** (0.003)		
Civic List					0.020*** (0.004)		
R-squared	0.202	0.284	0.286	0.308	0.314	0.420	0.604
N	9205	8779	8779	8779	8779	8779	9129
Municipal FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES		-
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Party FE	-	-	-	-	-	YES	-
Candidate FE	-	-	-	-	-	-	YES

Notes. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.