How to read an empirical paper

Why?

- large part of Research

- understand methods
- critically engage
- introduced to new topics

⤷ part of discipline

Steps:

- identify problem.
  - Research question
  - hypotheses
- variables - measurement
  independent / dependent
  control
- data
- method of analysis
- Results
- conclusions

⤷ Generally follow
      a format

Problem

Research Question

Hypotheses

Theory

How main concepts linked

Set out expectations or hypothesis

What Voters Want: Reactions to Candidate Characteristics in a Survey Experiment

Rosie Campbell

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There has been extensive research into the extent to which voters utilise short cuts based on gender and race stereotypes when evaluating candidates, but relatively little is known about how they respond to other background characteristics. We compare the impact of candidates' sex, religion, age, education, occupation and location/residence through a survey experiment in which respondents rate two candidates based on short biographies. We find small differences in the ratings of candidates in response to sex, religion, age and education cues but more sizeable effects are apparent for the candidate's occupation and place of residence. Even once we introduce a control for political party into our experimental scenarios the effect of candidate's place of residence continues to have a sizeable impact on candidate evaluations. Our research suggests that students of electoral behaviour should pay attention to a wider range of candidate cues.

Keywords: candidate evaluations; candidate traits; survey experiments

We know relatively little about what socio–demographic characteristics voters value in election candidates – and the extent to which short cuts based on stereotypes matter when it comes to the way candidates are viewed by voters. The literature on candidate effects is large, but it is also partial and geographically skewed. There is a voluminous and sophisticated literature looking at some types of candidate characteristic, of which by far the most common are biological sex and race. But other characteristics are much less studied, and the majority of the literature draws on data from one country, the United States.[1]

Traditionally, and for good reasons, electoral studies in countries such as the United Kingdom were especially dismissive about the importance of anything that occurred below the level of the national campaign. Elections were seen as national events, in which national campaigns produced nationwide vote swings. A combination of an electorate divided along class lines (Butler and Stokes, 1974) and an electoral system that did not create strong incentives to cultivate a personal vote (Carey and Shugart, 1995) led to talk of local or candidate effects being dismissed as a failure to understand psephological reality. But with the decline in partisan and class alignment (Crewe *et al.*, 1977; Mughan, 2009; Särlvik and Crewe, 1983) and increasing evidence of variations in constituency behaviour, various local or candidate characteristics are coming to be seen as more important.[2] Indeed, not only are British elections becoming increasingly localised – with the potential for candidate effects to have a greater impact than in the past – but also the issue of candidate 'representativeness' has become a politically live one, with all the major political parties making efforts to improve the diversity of their candidates (Cowley, 2013), with the potential for electoral contests to feature a greater heterogeneity of candidate types in future.

Just as in the US, however, most of the work on candidate characteristics in the UK has focused on a relatively narrow range of characteristics, with sex and race being the most

have looked at race/ethnicity and candidate preference in Britain (Fisher *et al.*, 2011; Norris *et al.*, 1992; Saggar, 1998).

One surprisingly understudied topic is that of residency. Despite a growing focus on the local campaign (Denver and Hands, 1997; Denver *et al.*, 2002; Fisher *et al.*, 2007), a widespread acknowledgement within British political parties that being a local candidate can be an asset, some evidence that the number of MPs with local roots is on the increase (Childs and Cowley, 2011; Johnson and Rosenblatt, 2007) and that voters say they value local MPs (Cowley, 2013; Johnson and Rosenblatt, 2007), there has been relatively little examination of whether this can be an electoral asset (Arzheimer and Evans, 2012).[3] Other candidate characteristics – such as their education, their occupation, their age and so on – are even more infrequently, if ever, discussed.

Moreover, even those candidate characteristics about which we have some knowledge are rarely compared to others, to measure their *relative* impact on voters. Even the highly developed literature on the influence of candidate race and sex in the US, for example, does not compare the size of its effects to other significant biographical information about candidates. The analysis in this article therefore reports findings from a survey experiment testing the impact of candidate characteristics in a low-information context in Britain. The experiments examine the relative importance of six different types of candidate cue. These include some of electoral studies' hardy perennials – such as biological sex – but we deliberately examine the effect of a wider range of cues than in extant studies.[4] The experiments appear to reveal that many of the social information variables that academics have researched are in fact relatively unimportant, while also revealing sizeable differences triggered by background factors that have previously been largely ignored by researchers.

Variables:

INDEPENDENT
explanatory factor

DEPENDENT
outcome of interest

CONTROL
(possible confounding)

IND. ⟶ DEPENDENT

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competence rather than strength or leadership ability based on the same logic. Strength is associated with masculinity and would most likely yield gender effects, but when comparing local or distant candidates or political versus 'caring' professions strength is unlikely to be a particularly effective trigger. Finally we chose effectiveness because it is a measure of competence which looks at potential outcomes that should be the most important to voters.[6]

Respondents were asked to compare the hypothetical candidates across these three traits and then to select a preferred candidate:

> Without knowing which party they stand for, which of them do you think would be:
>
> More approachable as an MP: John/Neither/George
>
> More experienced as an MP: John/Neither/George
>
> More effective as an MP: John/Neither/George
>
> Which would you prefer as your MP: John/Neither/George.

When designing the research, one of our concerns was that respondents might simply select down the line – preferring the same candidate for everything – and prove unable to distinguish between them on these different traits. The pilot study showed that this was unlikely to be the case and this was then confirmed in the main survey.[7]

Results

Table 1 shows the respondents' views when shown the initial comparison of John and George, as detailed above. John was preferred to George on all three traits (by a consistent 16 percentage points) and as the preferred candidate (by 21 points). There was also a significant minority of respondents who were unable to choose between the two profiles

Independent
(treatment)
in ou-example

- sometimes
more than one
(as with dep.v)

- experiments
sometimes use
" treatment"

studied. Women candidates in Britain generally now face little discrimination from voters, although selectorates are often not as progressive in their behaviour (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995; Shepherd-Robinson and Lovenduski, 2002). Research has shown that some of the US findings, where in some cases women do seem to be more likely to vote for women candidates, do not apply to the British case (Campbell and Cutts, 2009); and some experimental research indicates that male candidates may be more popular with Conservative voters (Johns and Shephard, 2008). There are also a number of studies that have looked at race/ethnicity and candidate preference in Britain (Fisher et al., 2011; Norris et al., 1992; Saggar, 1998).

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Keywords: candidate evaluations; candidate traits; survey experiments

We know relatively little about what socio-demographic characteristics voters value in election candidates – and the extent to which short cuts based on stereotypes matter when it comes to the way candidates are viewed by voters. The literature on candidate effects is large, but it is also partial and geographically skewed. There is a voluminous and sophisti-

DATA & METHOD OF Analys

examples:
- SURVEYS
- SECONDARY analysis
- aggregate data
- experimental
- CONTENT ANALYSIS (TEXT etc)

— Also unit of analysis

Experiment: online survey

For those who said they were voting (or leaning) Conservative we simply changed the party labels; that is, they saw a Labour candidate (John) who was local, and then either a Conservative candidate (George) who was local or who lived 120 miles away.

All the survey work was carried out online by YouGov, an online polling company, who sample from their panel of some 360,000 British adults. Members of the panel are recruited using a variety of methods including self-selection, advertising and commercial relationships with websites.[14] Waves one to seven were commissioned by the authors; wave eight utilised space on the British Election Study's Continuous Monitoring Survey (for which we are very grateful). The surveys had the following field dates and sample sizes:

Wave 1: 8.8.11–9.8.11 (N = 2,864)
Wave 2: 9.8.11–10.8.11 (N = 2,700)
Wave 3: 10.8.11–11.8.11 (N = 2,577)
Wave 4: 11.8.11–12.8.11 (N = 2,656)
Wave 5: 14.8.11–15.8.11 (N = 2,847)
Wave 6: 15.8.11–16.8.11 (N = 2,665)
Wave 7: 23.8.11–24.8.11 (N = 2,709)
Wave 8: 23.5.12–15.6.12 (N = 1,152).

The first seven surveys – which are compared to one another – were thus all carried out within a sixteen-day period; only the eighth wave – which is self-sufficient and is not compared to the earlier work – was conducted separately. As a result of these overall Ns, each split sample in the first six waves was seen by c.1,300 respondents. The split samples in

Treatments:

---

eprints.bbk.ac.uk/7471/1/7471.pdf   Google

Lib Dem sup... | Chocolate Be... | Sex, Lies an... | × 7471.pdf | What does... | An Introducti... | +

Appendix: Profile Wording and Survey Details

In wave one, half of respondents saw the John/George profiles as given in the text of the article; the other half saw the exact same profiles but with John's name changed to Sarah

('Sarah Burns is 48 years old ...'). No other changes were made, the profile staying in every other way identical.

The second wave tested attitudes to religion. Half of respondents saw the profiles given above, but with George's name changed to Daniel Goldstein ('Daniel Goldstein is 48 years old' ...). The second half of the sample saw George's name changed to Mohamed Lafi. As with wave one, only the names were changed; all other aspects of the profile stayed the same as for the original John/George comparison. We did not give any explicit indications of religious belief or religiosity, beyond the candidate's names, which were highly suggestive if not definitive indications of religious background or heritage.

Wave three tested reactions to occupation. Half of respondents saw the John/George profiles given above, but with George's occupation changed to that of a general practitioner doctor:

> George Mountford is 45 years old; he lives in the constituency and studied *medicine* at university. *He is a local GP with a special interest in elderly care.* George is passionate about education, with two children in local schools and a wife who is a primary school teacher.

The amended text is in italics. The other half of respondents saw a George who was an aspirant politico (again, with the amended text in italics):

> George Mountford is 45 years old; he lives in the constituency and studied for a degree in *politics. After university George worked for two MPs and became a local councillor.* George is passionate about education, with two children in local schools and a wife who is a primary school teacher.

Wave four tested attitudes to the age of the candidates. Half of respondents saw a George who was 32 (instead of 45 in wave one); the other half saw a George who was 60. Only the candidates' ages were changed; all other details remained constant to that in wave one.

Wave five tested whether attitudes to the candidates depended on how 'local' they were. Half the respondents saw a George who instead of 'living in the constituency' had 'moved into your consistency two years ago'. The other half saw a George who 'currently lives about 120 miles away, although has said that if elected, would move to live in your area'. As a consequential change, this second version also required us to lose the reference to George having two children in 'local schools'; instead he now had 'two children in school'.
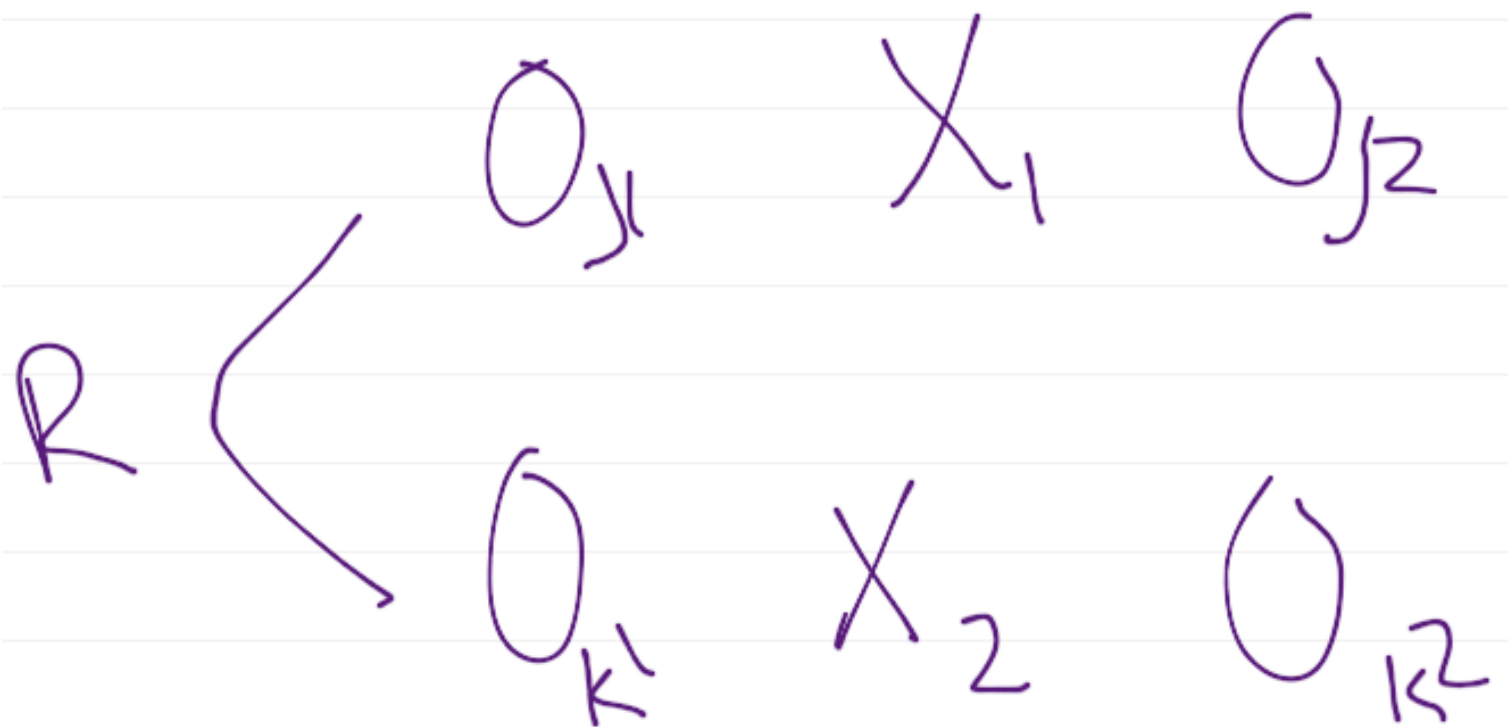

(check appendix)

Data Analysis:

- difference of differences

- difference in means

- initial baseline

Typical for experiments

$$R \left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} O_{j1} & X_1 & O_{j2} \\ O_{k1} & X_2 & O_{k2} \end{array} \right.$$

experimental
design

Baseline result

Results

Table 1 shows the respondents' views when shown the initial comparison of John and George, as detailed above. John was preferred to George on all three traits (by a consistent 16 percentage points) and as the preferred candidate (by 21 points). There was also a significant minority of respondents who were unable to choose between the two profiles

Table 1: John vs. George Initial Comparisons (row %)

	John	George	Neither	John lead over George
Approachability	44	28	28	16
Experience	39	23	38	16
Effectiveness	39	23	38	16
Preferred candidate	45	24	32	21
N = 1,444				

John Burns is 48 years old, and was born and brought up in your area, before going to university to study for a degree in physics. After university John trained as an accountant, and set up a company ten years ago; it now employs seven people. John has interests in the health service, the environment, and pensions, and is married with three children.

George Mountford is 45 years old; he lives in the constituency and studied business at university. He is a solicitor and runs a busy local practice. George is passionate about education, with two children in local schools and a wife who is a primary school teacher.

John and George are plausible election candidates in a British election; they are both middle-aged men, in professional occupations, and although we alter these profiles throughout the experiment, the biographies remain those of plausible candidates.

Wave 1 of the survey was an attempt to measure the impact of gender on the perceptions of candidates, but also served to establish our baseline comparison for the later surveys. Half of the respondents read the two profiles given above. (In this, and all other waves of the experiment, the order in which respondents received the two profiles was randomised). The other half of respondents saw the same profiles but with John's name changed to Sarah ('Sarah Burns is 48 years old ...'). No other changes were made, the profile remaining in every other way identical. In subsequent waves, we made similarly small changes to one of the profiles in order to test attitudes to other cues. Details of the profile wordings used can
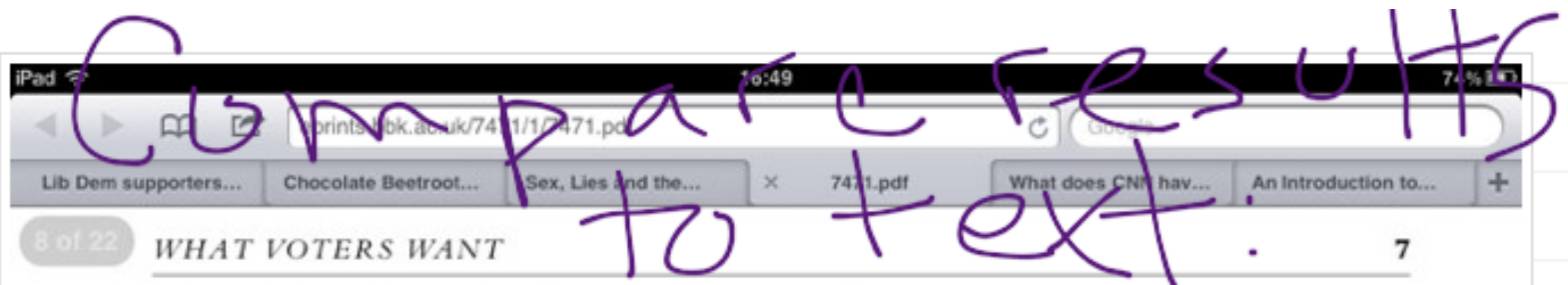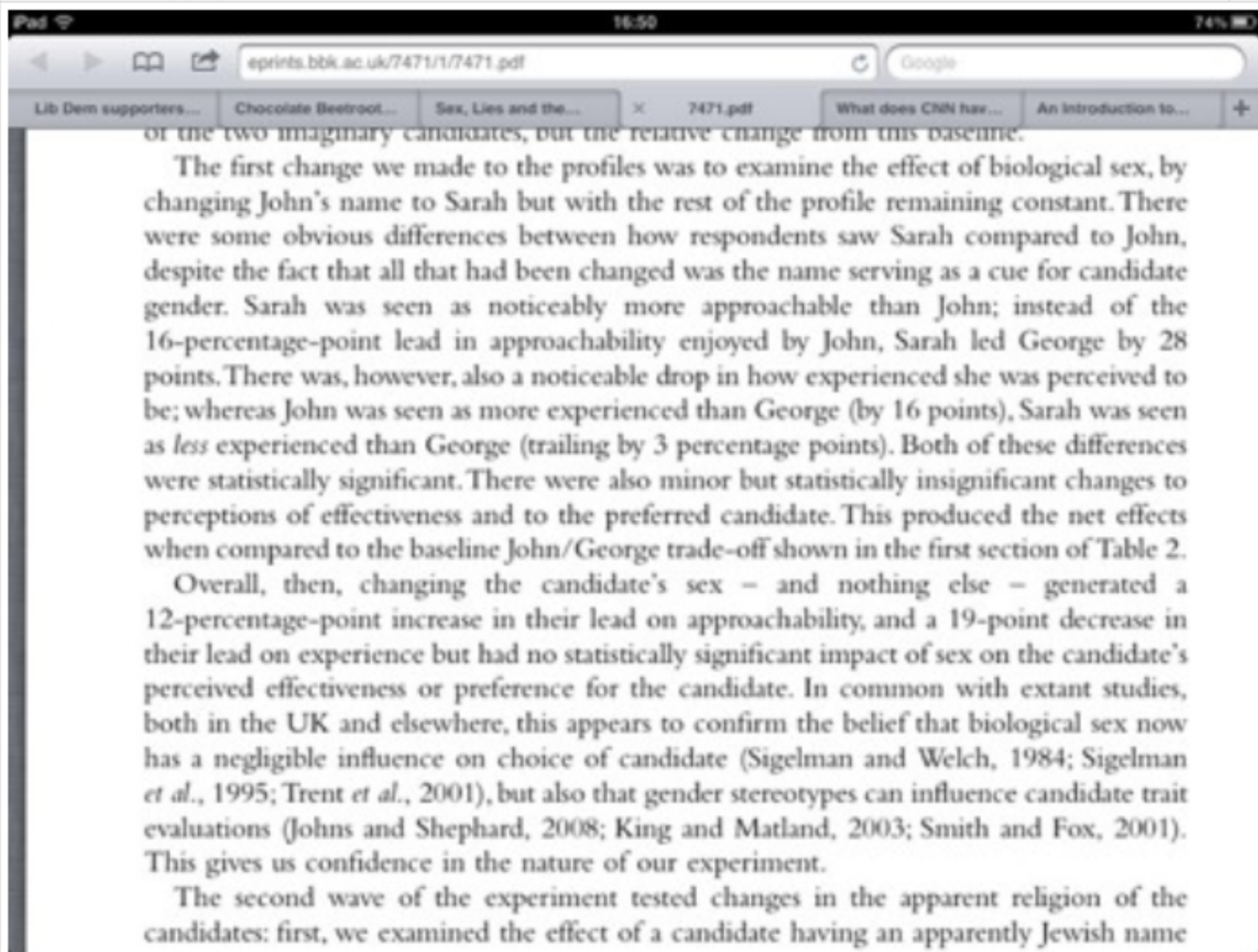
Table 2: Net Experimental Effects

Sex

John becomes Sarah	John/Sarah	George	Neither	John/Sarah lead over George
Approachability***	+6	−6	+1	+12
Experience***	−10	+9	+1	−19
Effectiveness	−2	+1	+2	−3
Preferred candidate	−2	0	+2	−2
N = 2,864				

of the two imaginary candidates, but the relative change from this baseline.

The first change we made to the profiles was to examine the effect of biological sex, by changing John's name to Sarah but with the rest of the profile remaining constant. There were some obvious differences between how respondents saw Sarah compared to John, despite the fact that all that had been changed was the name serving as a cue for candidate gender. Sarah was seen as noticeably more approachable than John; instead of the 16-percentage-point lead in approachability enjoyed by John, Sarah led George by 28 points. There was, however, also a noticeable drop in how experienced she was perceived to be; whereas John was seen as more experienced than George (by 16 points), Sarah was seen as *less* experienced than George (trailing by 3 percentage points). Both of these differences were statistically significant. There were also minor but statistically insignificant changes to perceptions of effectiveness and to the preferred candidate. This produced the net effects when compared to the baseline John/George trade-off shown in the first section of Table 2.

Overall, then, changing the candidate's sex – and nothing else – generated a 12-percentage-point increase in their lead on approachability, and a 19-point decrease in their lead on experience but had no statistically significant impact of sex on the candidate's perceived effectiveness or preference for the candidate. In common with extant studies, both in the UK and elsewhere, this appears to confirm the belief that biological sex now has a negligible influence on choice of candidate (Sigelman and Welch, 1984; Sigelman et al., 1995; Trent et al., 2001), but also that gender stereotypes can influence candidate trait evaluations (Johns and Shephard, 2008; King and Matland, 2003; Smith and Fox, 2001). This gives us confidence in the nature of our experiment.

The second wave of the experiment tested changes in the apparent religion of the candidates: first, we examined the effect of a candidate having an apparently Jewish name

Statistical Significance

★ $p < .05$

★★ $p < .01$

★★★ $p < .001$

but...

(not a scale of statistical significance)

Other results

1. Linear regression
      coefficients

2. ANOVA

3. Logit/probit

---

* direction
      -/+

* significance

* model fit

Group work:

A. Research Question
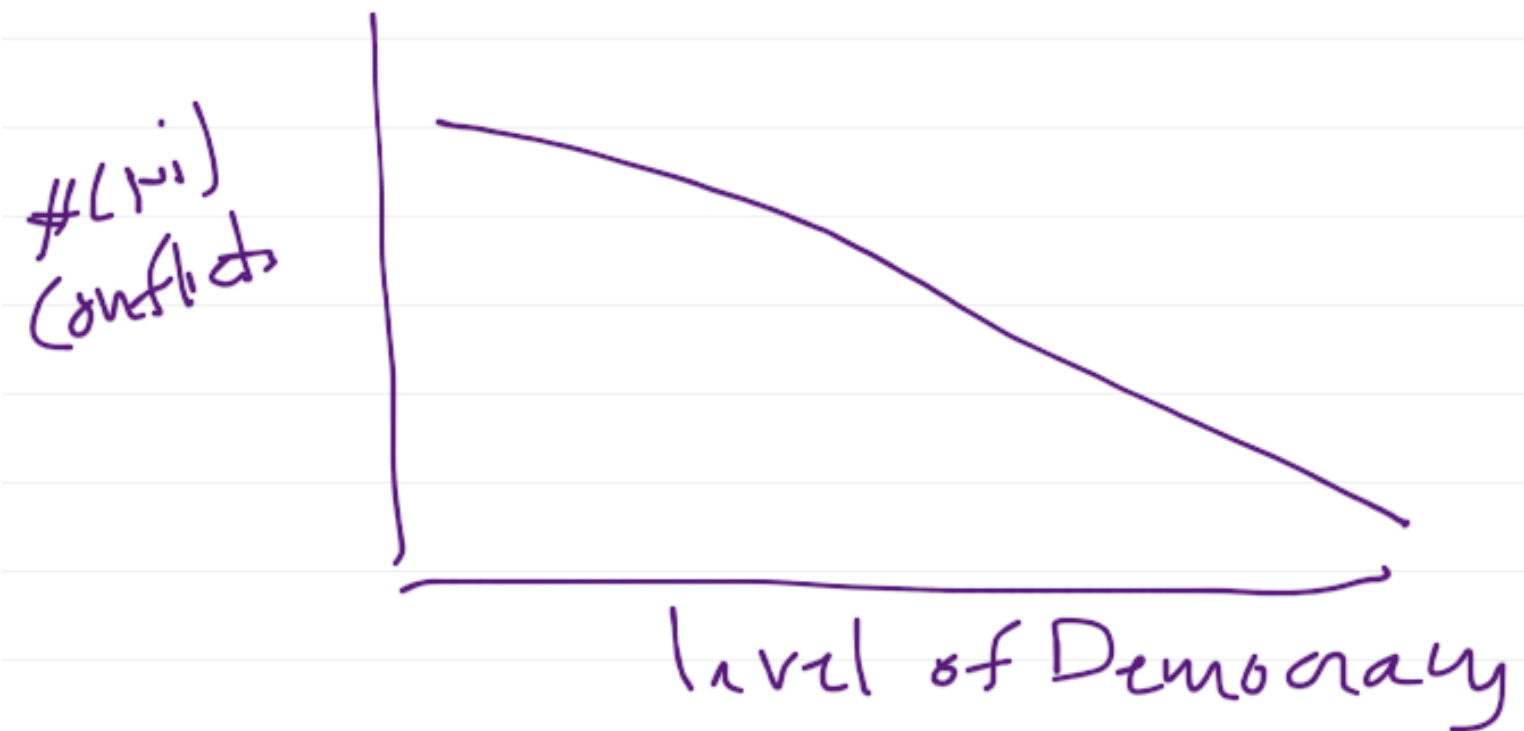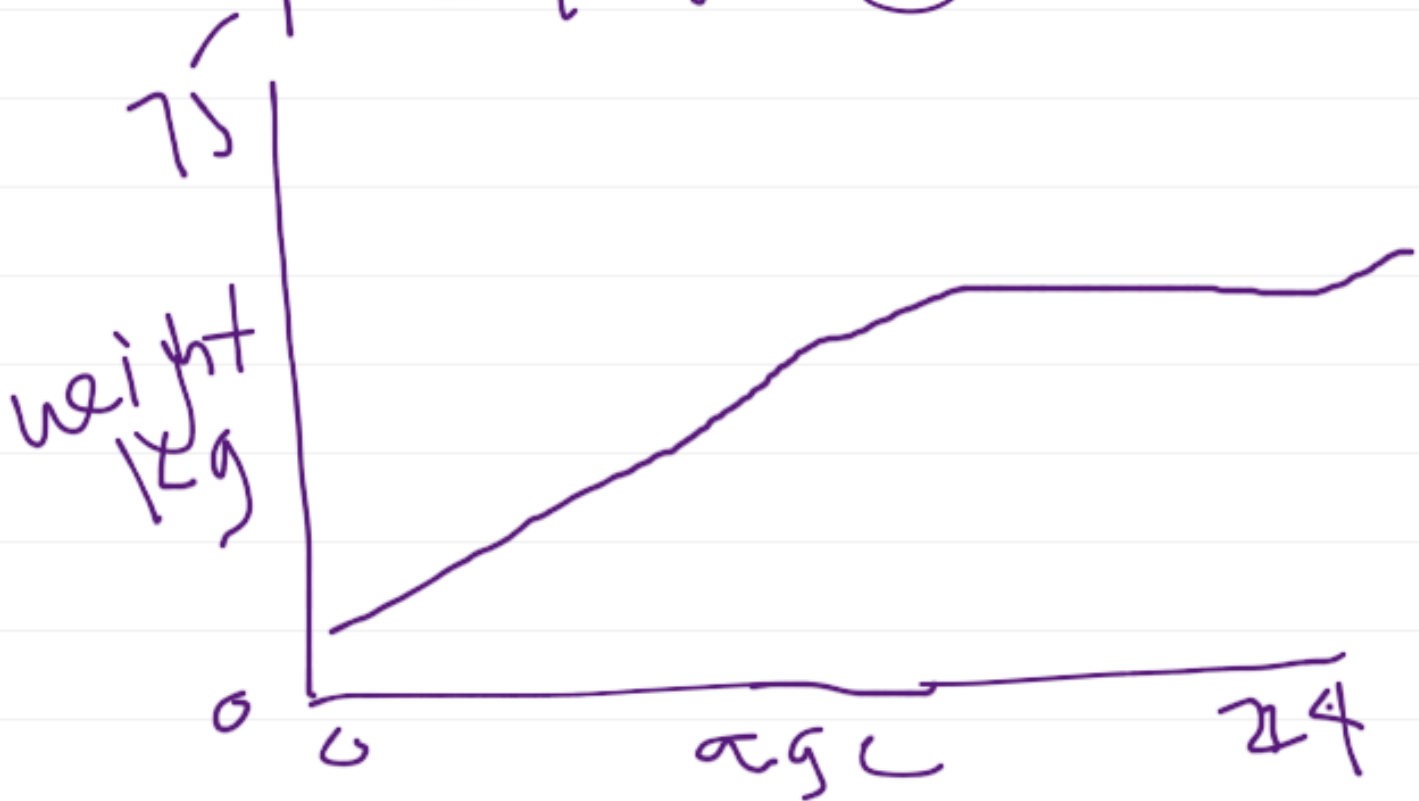   or Hypothesis

B. DVs : IVs
   :
   How Measured

C. DATA

D. Method of
   Analysis

C. Results
   - positive/negative
     relationship
   - significance

Positive

weight
kg

o

age   24

#(civil)
Conflicts

level of Democracy

Gender quotas, candidate background and the election of women: A paradox of gender quotas in open-list proportional representation systems

Maciej A. Górecki, Paula Kukołowicz

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Highlights

- We study the impact of gender quotas on women's electoral success in Poland.

- Quotas have a paradoxical effect in open-list proportional representation systems.

- Quota introduction results in a decline in female candidates' electoral performance in such systems.

- Effects of political experience on candidates' performance are greater than are gender effects.

Abstract

We study the effects of mandatory (legislated) gender quotas in Poland, a country utilising an open-list proportional representation electoral system. We use a unique data set comprising multiple characteristics of all candidates running in two consecutive elections to the lower chamber of the Polish parliament (the Sejm). The first of them (held in 2007) was the last pre-quota election and the second (held in 2011) the first post-quota one. We show that quotas have an inherently paradoxical

Table 1
Candidate background by election year and gender.

In%	2007		2011	
	Among men (N = 4759)	Among women (N = 1428)	Among men (N = 3972)	Among women (N = 3063)
Elected	7.69	6.58	8.81	3.59
Candidates at 'viable' positions	20.42	17.51	22.33	12.18
Incumbents	6.81	5.88	8.26	2.87
Ministers	0.46	0.35	0.38	0.23
Senators	0.19	0.14	0.28	0.07
Party leaders	0.17	0.07	0.13	0.00
Councillors	21.96	14.22	17.85	10.64
Local executives	2.54	0.77	1.89	0.82
Candidates in preceding election	32.19	24.44	22.63	9.79
Visible professions	17.57	24.72	16.21	23.34
Business owners	8.01	3.29	8.53	3.95
Celebrities	0.15	0.21	0.38	0.26

introduction. Furthermore, female candidates in both   the Civic Platform. At the same time, the effects of gender

Table 2
The effects of gender on the predicted probability of a candidate being ranked at a 'viable' position on a party list.

	2007		2011	
	Basic model	Full model	Basic model	Full model
Civic Platform	3.8%	4.1%	−11.7%	3.0%
	[−4.1%; 11.7%]	[−1.7%; 9.9%]	[−16.0%; −7.3%]	[−1.7%; 7.7%]
Law and Justice	−2.2%	−4.5%	−18.9%	−5.5%
	[−10.2%; 5.8%]	[−12.8%; 3.9%]	[−23.1%; −14.5%]	[−11.1%; 0.0%]
Democratic Left Alliance/Left and Democrats	−9.1%	−12.3%	−14.6%	−1.1%
	[−20.7%; 2.4%]	[−27.6%; 3.0%]	[−23.2%; −6.0%]	[−11.5%; 9.3%]
Polish People's Party	−11.5%	−1.7%	−25.9%	−13.7%
	[−24.9%; 2.0%]	[−13.5%; 10.1%]	[−34.2%; −17.7%]	[−27.0%; −0.5%]
Women's Party	−22.0%	−19.2%		
	[−64.2%; 20.1%]	[−70.7%; 32.3%]		
Palikot's Movement			−15.0%	−14.5%
			[−22.3%; −7.7%]	[−22.9%; −6.1%]
Poland Comes First			−22.8%	−20.0%
			[−31.6%; −14.0%]	[−31.7%; −8.4%]
Other Parties	−4.9%	−1.9%	−20.0%	−19.3%
	[−11.7%; 2.0%]	[−9.0%; 5.2%]	[−24.9%; −15.1%]	[−25.2%; −13.3%]

Note: Main entries are changes in predicted probabilities of a candidate being ranked at a 'viable' position on a party list when the variable 'Woman' changes from 0 to 1, calculated for respective parties. Positive values of the effects mean women's advantage over men while negative values mean a vice versa situation. The numbers in square brackets are 95 per cent confidence intervals of the main predictions. The effect of candidate gender is presented for the basic model and for the full model in which candidate background is taken into account. Fixed effect is assumed zero.

Table A1

Predictors of the probability of a candidate being ranked at a 'viable' position on a party list: conditional logistic regression estimates.

	2007		2011	
	Basic model	Full model	Basic model	Full model
Woman	−0.21	−0.09	−1.00**	−0.87**
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.15)
Woman X Civic Platform	0.37	0.33	0.50**	1.05**
	(0.23)	(0.24)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Woman X Law and Justice	0.12	−0.18	0.18	0.58**
	(0.23)	(0.31)	(0.17)	(0.19)
Woman X Democratic Left Alliance	−0.19	−0.53	0.36	0.82**
	(0.35)	(0.43)	(0.23)	(0.25)
Woman X Polish People's Party	−0.27	0.003	−0.17	0.25
	(0.32)	(0.335)	(0.25)	(0.30)
Woman X Women's Party	−0.89	−0.79		
	(1.32)	(1.32)		
Woman X Palikot's Movement			0.29	0.25
			(0.24)	(0.25)
Woman X Poland Comes First			−0.15	−0.04
			(0.33)	(0.35)
Incumbent		4.40**		4.01**
		(0.29)		(0.31)
Councillor		1.27**		0.95**
		(0.09)		(0.12)
Candidate in preceding election		0.99**		0.85**
		(0.11)		(0.09)
Minister		18.04**		17.48**
		(0.44)		(0.70)
Party leader		15.32**		14.98**

Table A1 (continued)

	2007		2011	
	Basic model	Full model	Basic model	Full model
Local executive		1.39**		0.52*
		(0.28)		(0.29)
Visible profession		0.29*		0.24**
		(0.12)		(0.08)
Business owner		0.09		0.43**
		(0.17)		(0.14)
Celebrity		1.73*		1.30
		(0.93)		(0.90)
Age	0.02**	0.01**	0.03**	0.02**
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Age squared	−0.002**	−0.001**	−0.001**	−0.001**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Average p-value for rejecting IIA assumption	0.27	0.76	0.45	0.67
Log likelihood	−2175	−1535	−2262	−1786
McFadden R^2	0.02	0.31	0.06	0.25
Number of candidates	6187	6187	7035	7035
Number of party lists	296	296	338	338

Note: *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$ (one-tailed tests). Main entries are unstandardised regression coefficients and the numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Errors are clustered at the level of electoral district (41 clusters). The IIA assumption was tested in the manner proposed by Martin and Stevenson (2001).

Table A2

Predictors of the number of votes cast for a candidate: negative binomial regression estimates.

1. dichotomous outcomes

probabilities
$(0, 1)$

logit or probit transformations