

# Inequality and women in politics

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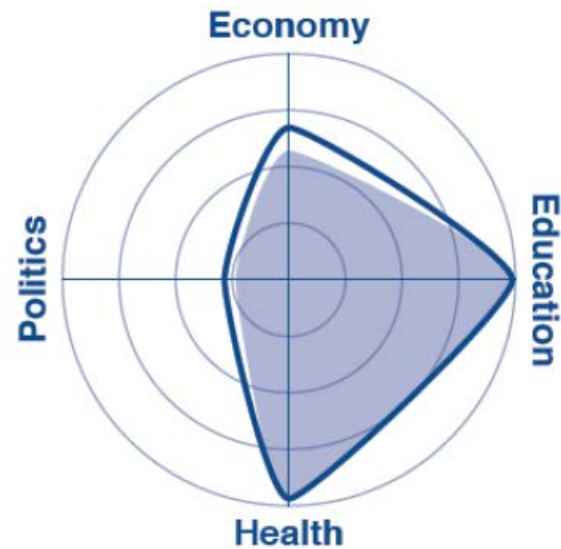
# Introduction

Different dimensions according to which we can measure the presence or absence of gender equality in rights, responsibilities and opportunities between men and women

- Economic participation and opportunities
- Educational Attainment
- Health and survival probabilities
- *Political empowerment*

# Introduction

## SCORE AT GLANCE



■ Italy score  
— average score

Index=1: equality

Source: Global Gender Gap Index, 2017

# Outline

- Why are women under-represented in the political arena?
- Why do we care about gender inequality in politics?
- Are there effective policies to promote female political empowerment?
  - Overview of affirmative action measures
  - Some lessons from Italy:
    - Baltrunaite, Bello, Casarico and Profeta (2014)
    - Baltrunaite, Casarico, Profeta and Savio (2018)

# The under-representation of women

Gender gaps are dominant in the political arena

- Globally: only 23% of the gender gap in politics is closed (WEF, 2017)
- Europe: women represent 30% of politicians in legislative bodies and 29.5% in government cabinets

# The under-representation of women European Parliament

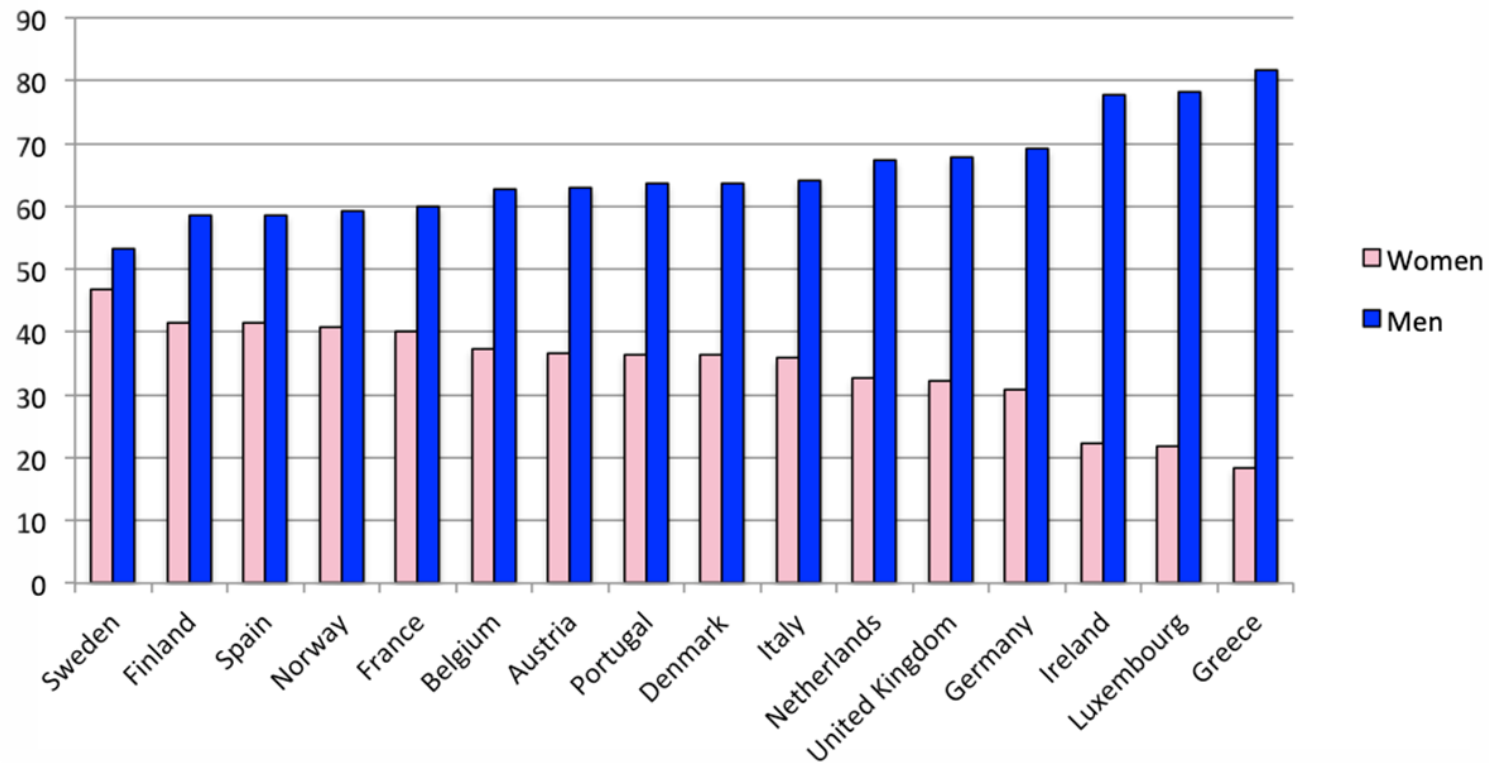
European Parliament				
	Members			
President	Women (N)	Men (N)	Women (%)	Men (%)
U	273	476	36	64

Source: EIGE, Database on women and men in decision-making

# The under-representation of women

## National Parliaments: Single/Lower House

**Members of the Single/Lower House**

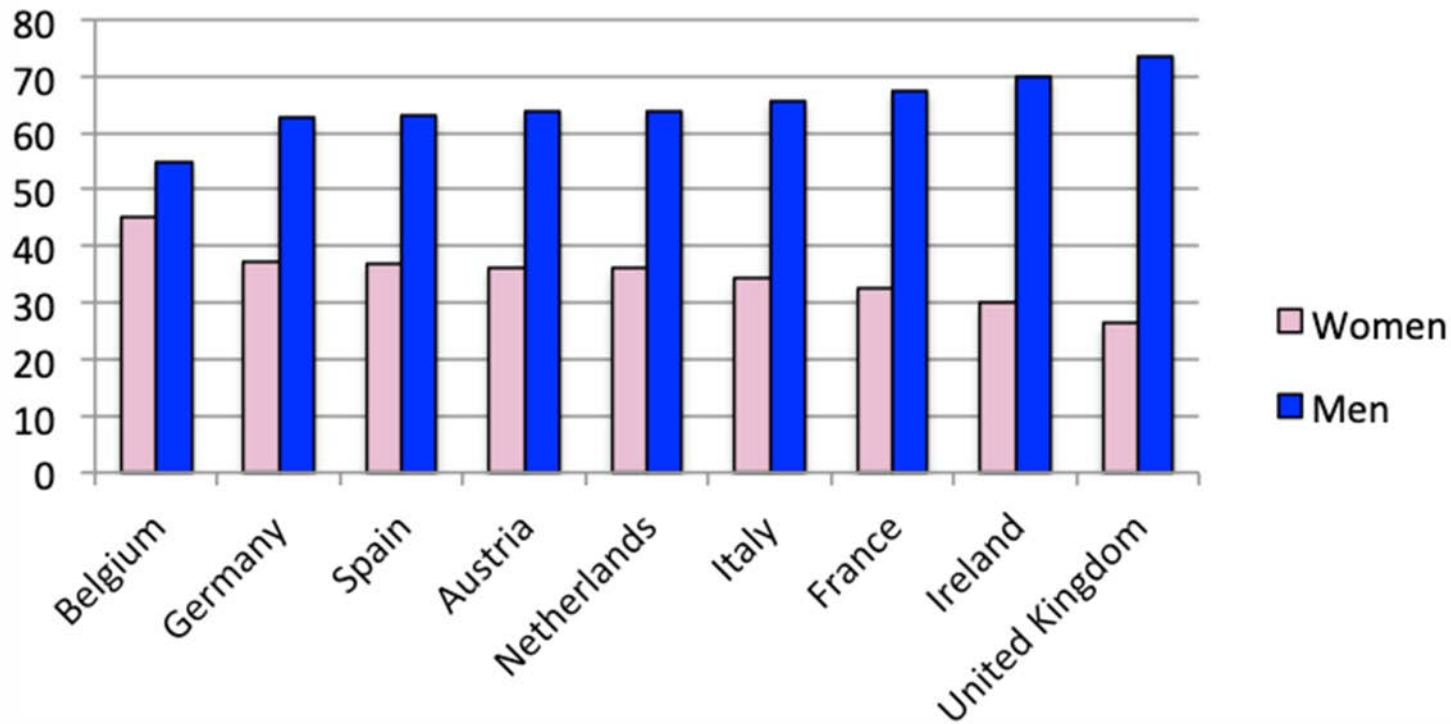


Source: EIGE, Database on women and men in decision-making

# The under-representation of women

## National Parliaments: Upper House

**Members in the Upper House**

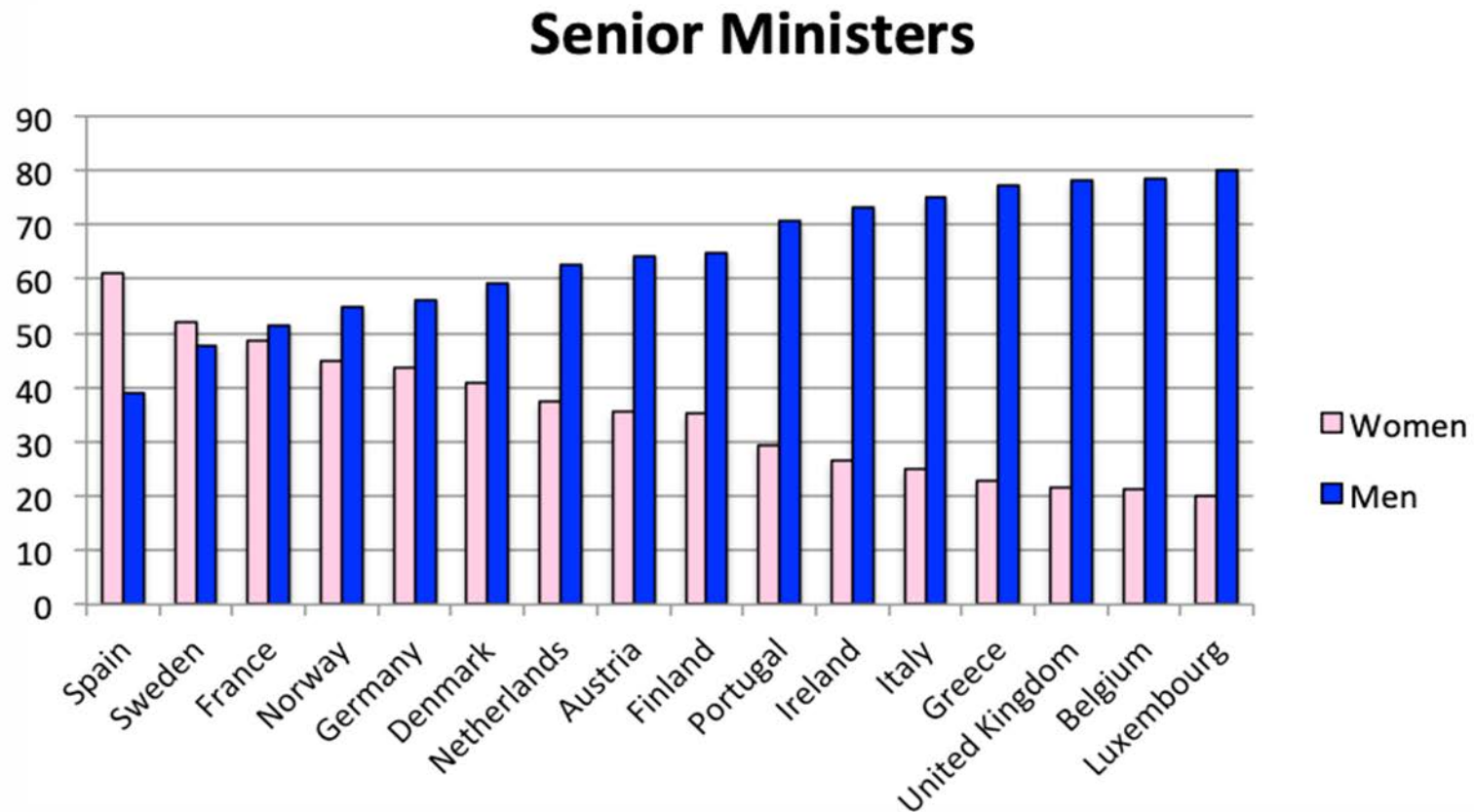


Source: EIGE, Database on women and men in decision-making



# The under-representation of women

## National Parliaments: Senior Ministers



Source: EIGE, Database on women and men in decision-making

# Why is there gender inequality in political representation?

Result from multiple obstacles in the political selection process

- Female willingness to run as candidates (e.g., Schlozman et, 1994; Fox and Lawless, 2004; Julio and Tavares, 2017)
- Party selection of candidates (e.g. Kunovich and Paxton, 2005)
- Voters' electoral preferences (e.g., Schwindt-Bayer et al., 2010; Black and Erickson, 2004)
- Electoral rules (Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2010)

# Why to reduce gender inequality in politics?

## Arguments to favour gender balance in politics

- Equity considerations (Stevens, 2007)
- Less corrupted (e.g., Brollo and Troiano, 2016)
- Role models for other women (Gilardi, 2015; Foos and Gilardi, 2018; Beaman et al., 2010)
- Impact on policy: mixed evidence (e.g. Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Duflo and Topalova, 2004; Clots-Figueras, 2011; Funk and Gathmann, 2015; Gagliarducci and Paserman, 2012; Ferreira and Gyourko, 2014; Bagues and Campa, 2017; Rehavi, 2007)

# What policies are effective in empowering women?

Gender quotas are a widespread policy tool to strengthen female political representation

The way they are implemented differs across countries

# Gender quotas in Europe

Country	Type of quotas	Rank rules	Women in Parliament	Level of application
Sweden	Voluntary at party level, % candidates in lists		47%	
Norway	Voluntary at party level, % candidates in lists		41%	
Spain	Legislated, 40% of candidates in lists	X	41%	N,S
France	Legislated, 50% of candidates in lists		40%	N,S
Austria	Voluntary at party level, % candidates in lists		37%	
Belgium	Legislated, 50% of candidates in lists	X	37%	N,S
Italy	Legislated, 40% of candidates in lists	X	36%	N,S
Portugal	Legislated, 33% of candidates in lists	X	36%	N,S
Netherlands	Voluntary at party level, % candidates in lists		33%	
United Kingdom	Voluntary at party level, % candidates in lists		32%	
Germany	Voluntary at party level, % candidates in lists		31%	
Luxembourg	Voluntary at party level, % candidates in lists		22%	
Ireland	Legislated, 30% of candidates in lists		22%	N
Greece	Legislated, 33% of candidates in lists		18%	N,S

# Gender quotas

- Gender quotas are a much debated policy tool
  - They do not obey to meritocracy, thus:
    - Less qualified individuals who will perform poorly are elected
    - Loss of efficiency (Holzer and Neumark, 2000)
- What do we know about the effects of gender quotas?
  - Effects of gender quotas on female empowerment are mixed: De Paola et al., 2010, 2014; Bagues and Esteve-Volart, 2012; Bagues and Campa, 2017; Casas-Arce and Saiz, 2015
  - Effects of gender quotas on the quality of politicians are positive: Baltrunaite et al., 2014; Besley et al., 2017

# Gender quotas and the quality of politicians

Baltrunaite, Bello, Casarico and Profeta, JPubE 2014

- We analyse the temporary adoption of gender quotas in municipal elections in Italy in 1993-1995
  - Neither sex could represent more than 2/3 of the total in candidate lists
- Quasi-experimental set-up: some municipalities voted in that period and some did not
- Methodology: Difference-in-Differences estimate
- Result: gender quotas --besides strengthening female political empowerment-- have positive effects on the *quality* of the elected politicians, measured by years of schooling or previous occupation
  - More women elected: women are on average more educated
  - Fewer low-educated men elected

# Let the voters choose women

Baltrunaite, Casarico, Profeta and Savio, 2018

Analysis of a policy bundle: gender quotas on candidate lists *and* double preference voting conditioned on gender

- Is this policy effective in empowering women?
- Can this soft policy measure, imposing no obligation on voter choices, spill-over beyond its direct target?



# The paper in a nutshell (1)

Exploit a recent Italian law for municipal elections:

- Double preference voting conditioned on gender
- Gender quotas: neither sex can represent more than  $2/3$  of the total number of candidates in candidate lists

Regression discontinuity design (RDD):

- Law applies to municipalities with more than 5,000 residents
- Local average treatment effects (LATE) around this cut-off

# The paper in a nutshell (2)

Unique dataset:

- Elected politicians in municipal elections in 2013, 2014 and 2015
- Hand-collect info on candidate lists and preference votes for 2013
- Information on preference votes for candidates in regional elections (where no affirmative action policy applies)

Study effects on:

- Female political empowerment in targeted (municipal) elections
- Spillover effect of the policy in higher level (regional) elections

# Main findings

- The new policy increases the share of female politicians in municipal councils by 18pp
- The result is mainly driven by the increase in preference votes cast for female candidates, suggesting a salient role of double preference voting in promoting female empowerment in politics
- There are positive spill-over effects on female candidate performance in *regional* elections, measured by the preference votes they receive in municipalities which were exposed to the policy at *municipal* level

# The institutional framework

- Italy: 8,100 municipalities with a mayor, municipal council (*Consiglio Comunale*), executive committee (*Giunta Comunale*)
- Focus on the municipalities with less than 15,000 residents:
  - Mayor elected according to the single-ballot system
  - Semi-open candidate lists: voters select a party and can cast a preference vote for an individual candidate by writing the name on the ballot
- Law 215/2012:
  - Double preference voting conditioned on gender
  - Gender quotas
  - Applies to municipalities with more than 5,000 residents

# Data

- Publicly available data on electoral results of the elections for 4599 Italian municipalities voting in 2013, 2014, and 2015 (3628 control and 971 treated) and of the previous election
  - Total number of elected councillors and the number of female elected councillors
- Data on candidates for 2013 elections (by contacting each voting municipality)
  - Gender composition of candidate lists; Ranking of candidates on lists; Preference votes cast by voters
- Data on regional elections held after the introduction of Law 215/2012
  - Regional elections ruled by electoral laws, which vary across regions
  - Regions voting with double preference voting are dropped
- Control variables (demography, occupation, education) from the 2011 Italian Census

# Validity of the 5,000 cut-off

Covariates continuous

- Demographic and socioeconomic covariates

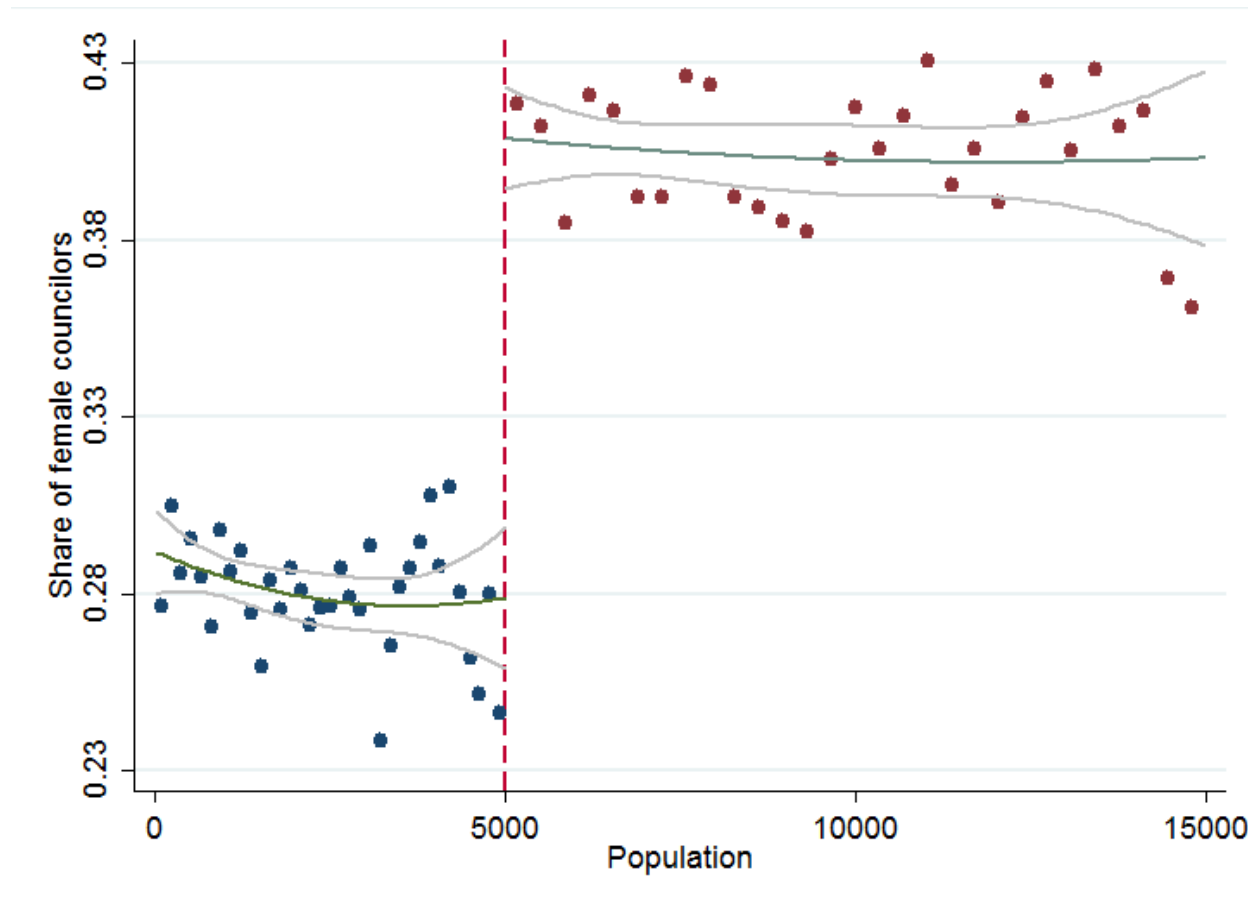
Validity of McCrary Test

- Continuous population density function

# Outcomes

- Impact of the policy on female political empowerment
- The working of the policy: parties or voters?
- Spillover effects in regional elections

# Effects on female councillors

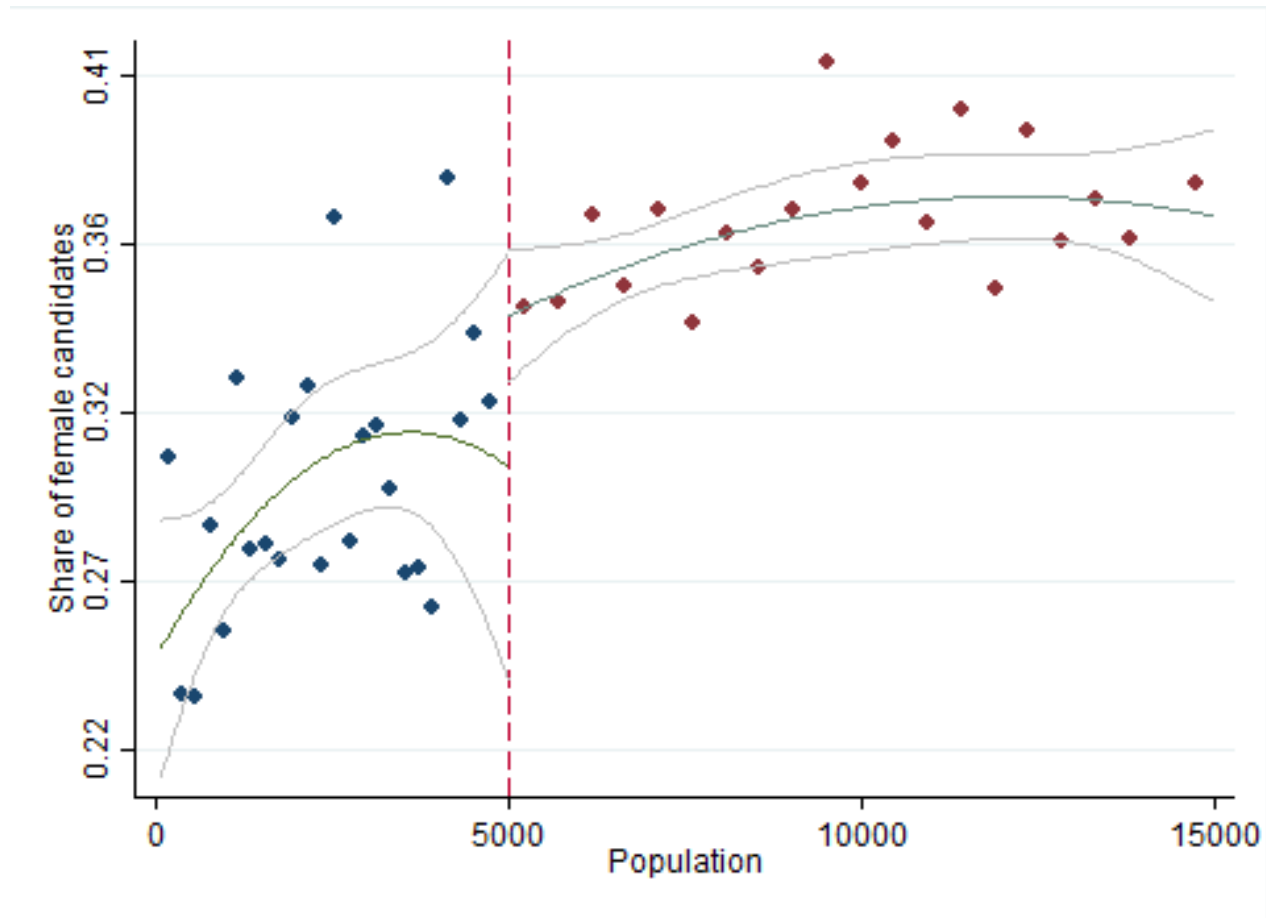


The policy leads to a 18 pp increase in the share of female councillors at the cut-off



# The working of the policy

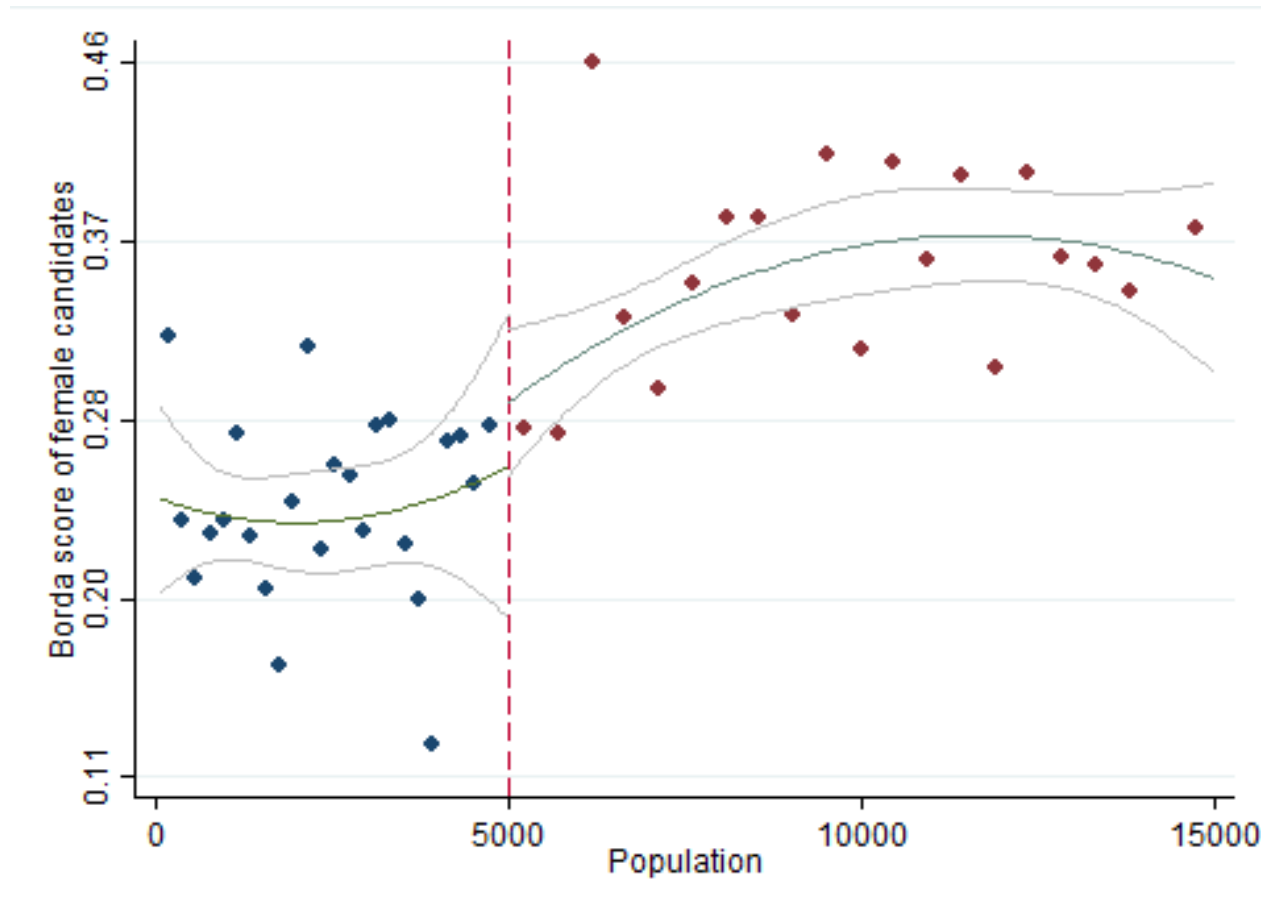
## Effects on female candidates, 2013 (1)



No robust discontinuity in the share of female candidates on party lists at the cut-off

# The working of the policy

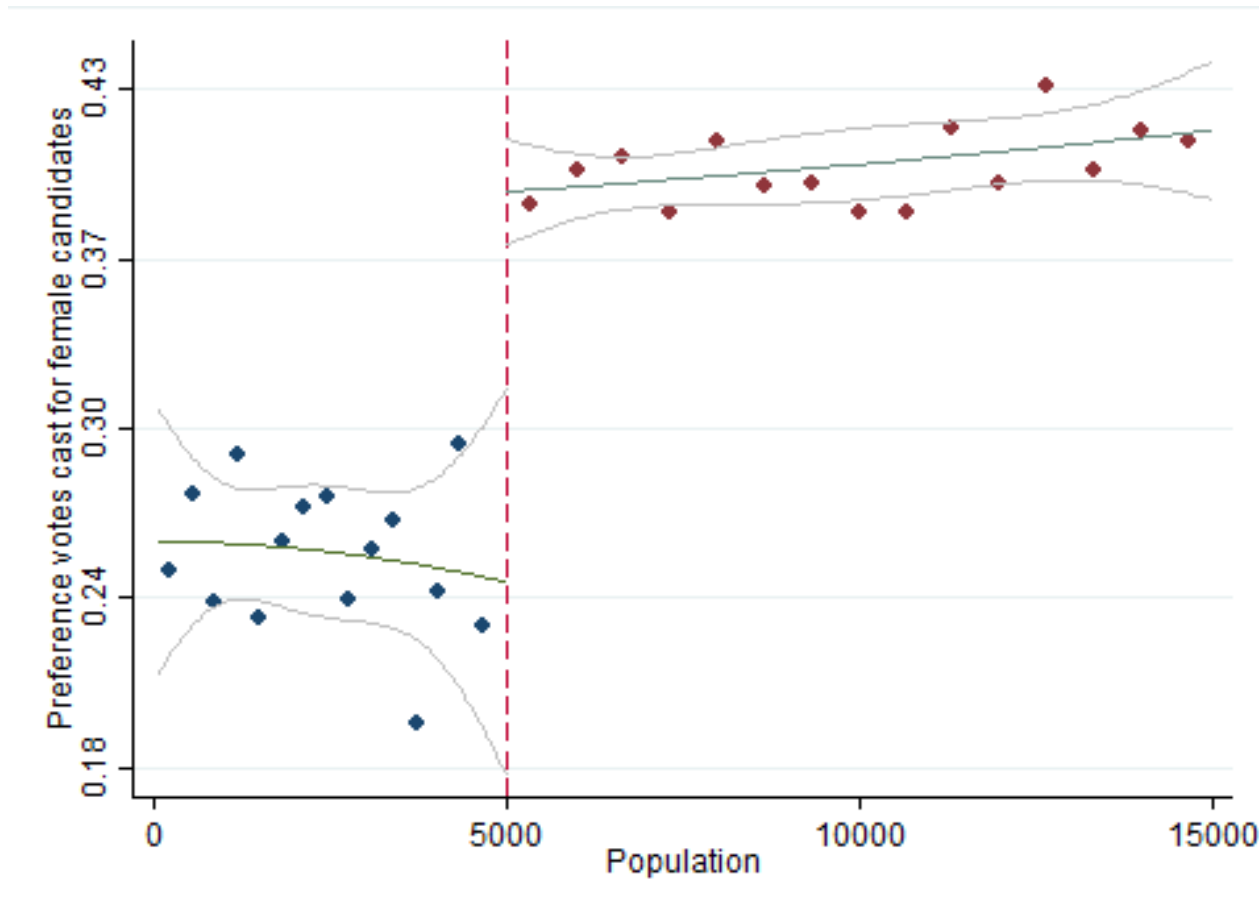
## Effects on female candidates, 2013 (2)



Placement of female candidates: no discontinuity in the ranking of female candidates by parties

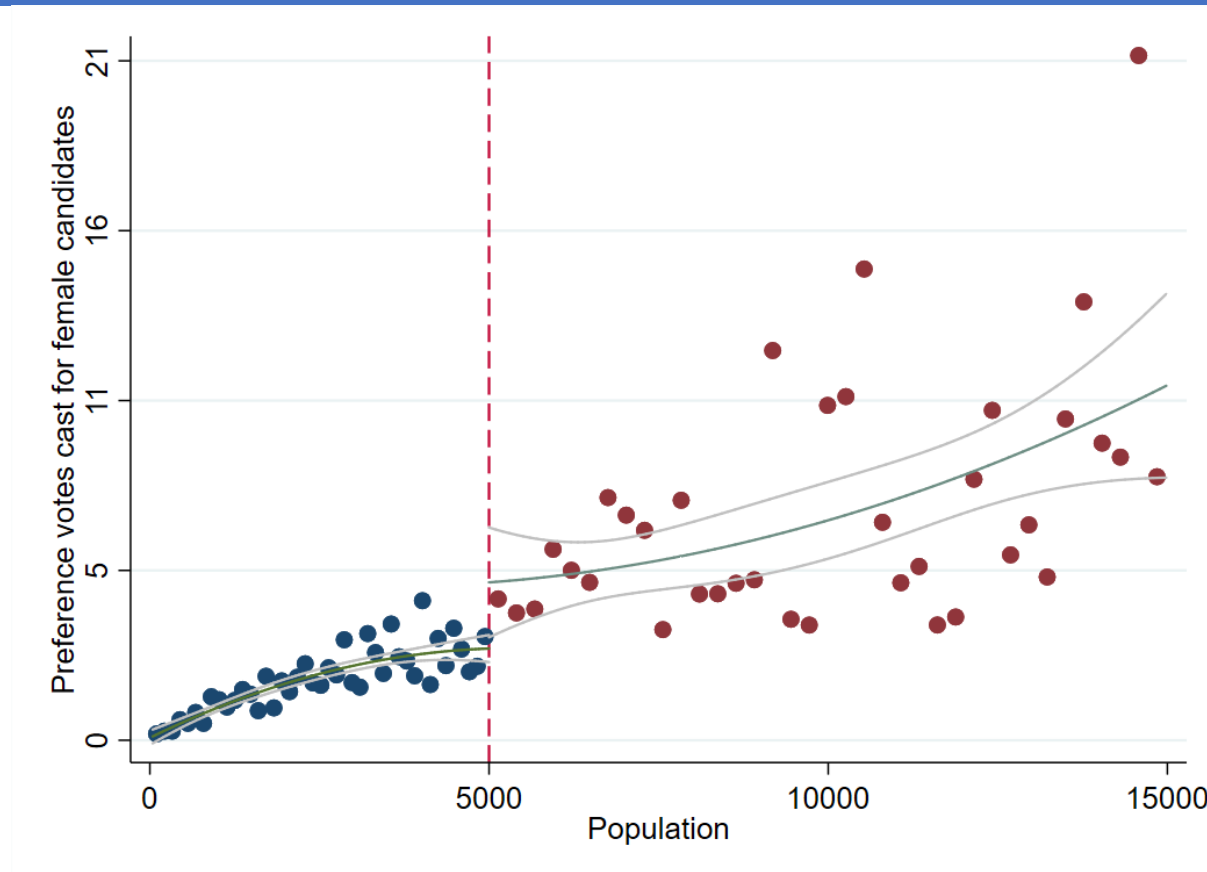
# The working of the policy

Effects on preference votes for female candidates, 2013



The share of preference votes cast for female candidates increases by 14pp

# Spillover in regional elections



Average number of preference votes cast for female candidates

Female candidates in regional elections gain three votes more in municipalities in which the Law 215/2012 applies

# Conclusions

- The policy had a large and robust impact on the presence of women in municipal councils, promoting their political empowerment
- Driving force: preference votes in favour of female candidates cast by electorate
- Even soft policy measures, like double preference voting, may spill-over beyond their direct target

# Overall conclusions

- There is still ample room to reduce gender inequality in political participation
- Reducing or closing the gap would deliver important economic and societal benefits and should be high in the policy agenda of all countries, especially those which are further away from gender equality
- There are effective policies to favour female political empowerment and they do not come to the detriment of quality of representatives
- Involving voters in “delivering the change” can be a successful strategy

# Overall conclusions

“Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right. It is also a keystone of a prosperous, modern economy that provides sustainable inclusive growth. Gender equality is essential for ensuring that men and women can contribute fully at home, at work and in public life, for the betterment of societies and economies at large.”

OECD (2017)