



Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche



ISTITUTO di RICERCA sulla CRESCITA ECONOMICA SOSTENIBILE
RESEARCH INSTITUTE on SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Gender balance in Italian electoral system: Which determinants of candidacy?

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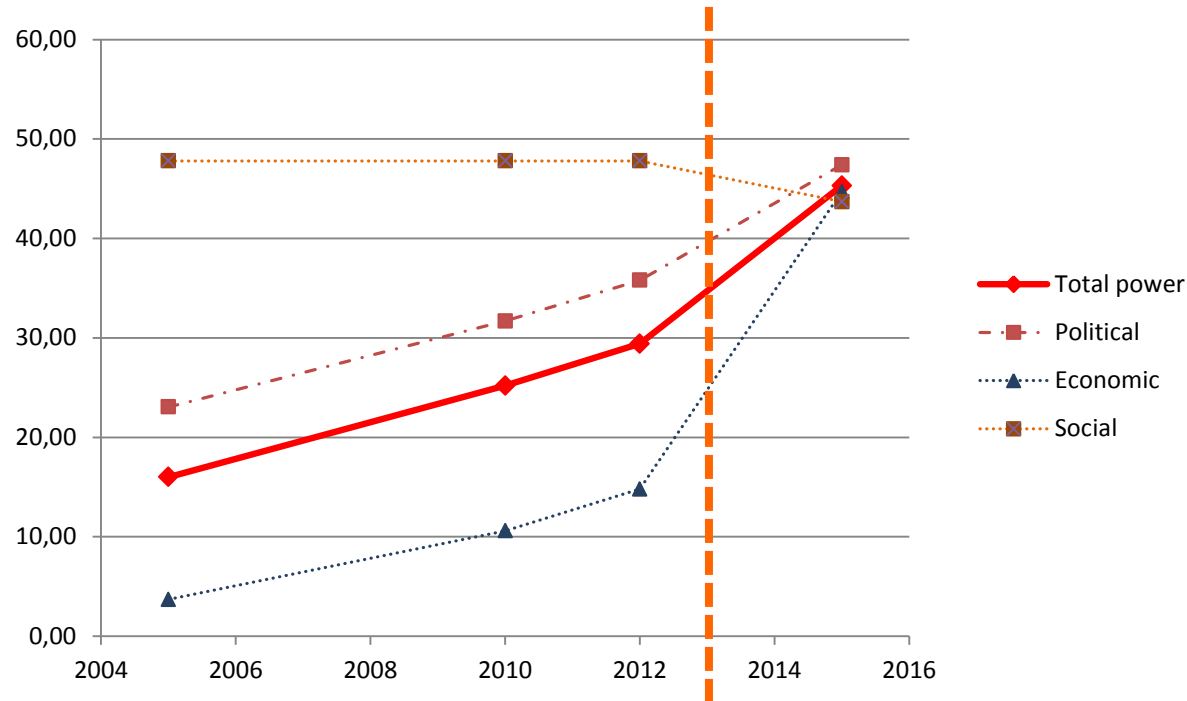
AIV 2019, 1-3 Aprile

**Sessione: La valutazione a sostegno delle pari opportunità
nelle politiche di welfare e innovazione sociale**



- ✓ Women still face many difficulties in being included in political decision-making: Participation in political competition is not a sufficient condition to cover important roles
- ✓ A seminal work on explanatory factors for gendered paths in political participations identifies three types of determinants (Welch, 1977):
 - **Structural factors**, i.e. socio-economic characteristics defining individuals (education, employment, work, income, legal and political structures, discrimination and institutional barriers)
 - **Situational factors** related to individual choices (marital status, family arrangement)
 - **Socialization factors** (childhood, adult political socialization, personal relations)
- ✓ Welch finds that social organizations as well as family, labour market and public engagement affect women behaviour **discouraging political participation**
- ✓ Many countries have introduced **electoral rules** to speed up the process of gender rebalancing in politics (Italy, too)

- ✓ In Italy, political institutions are considered as **patriarchal power** (Sartori, Tuorto and Ghigi 2017): Italian women are still **underrepresented** in political activities, most of all if compared with other Western democratic countries (Guadagnini 1993; Morales 2009)
- ✓ Sartori, Tuorto and Ghigi (2017) show that:
 - men participate more to any form of political activity (**visible political activities**)
 - women appear to be less informed and less interested to political discussions (**invisible political activities**)
 - **family situation** negatively affects both men and women w.r.t. visible political activities, whereas the effect of **domestic work** is negative only for women
 - **cultural constraints** are an additional explanation for the Italian gender gap in politics



National Law 23/11/2012, n. 215 Gender balance norms in municipal elections

If population > 5000

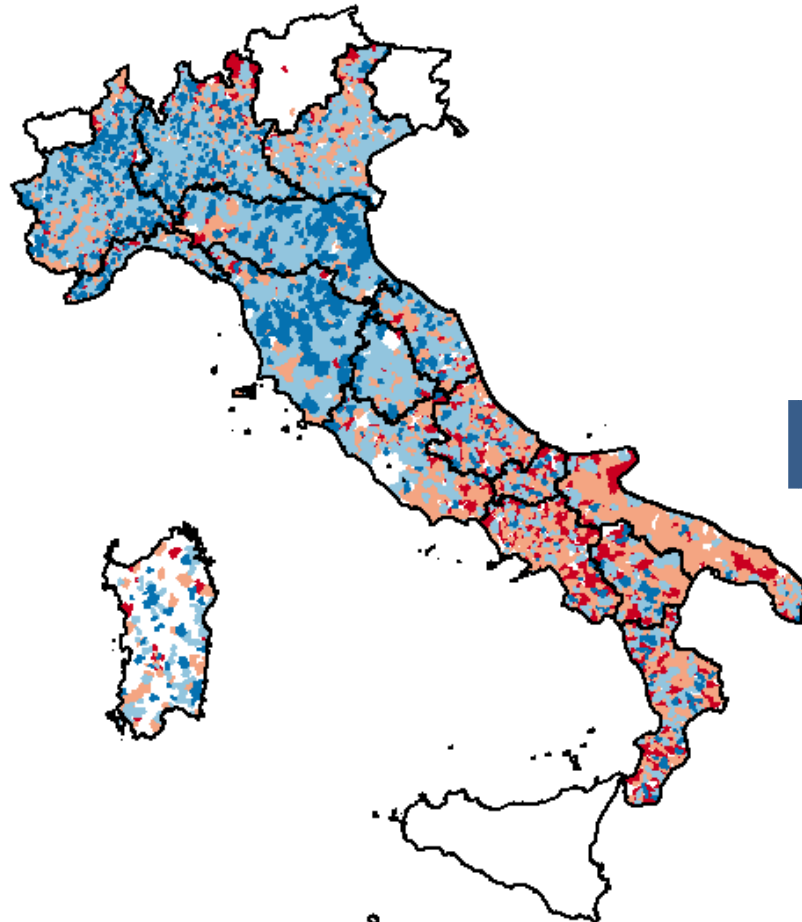
- **List quote**: no gender can be over represented (threshold 2/3)
- **Double gender preference**: electors can express two preferences if candidates have different sex

Determinants of female candidacy (municipal level)

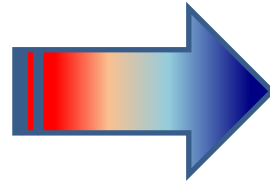
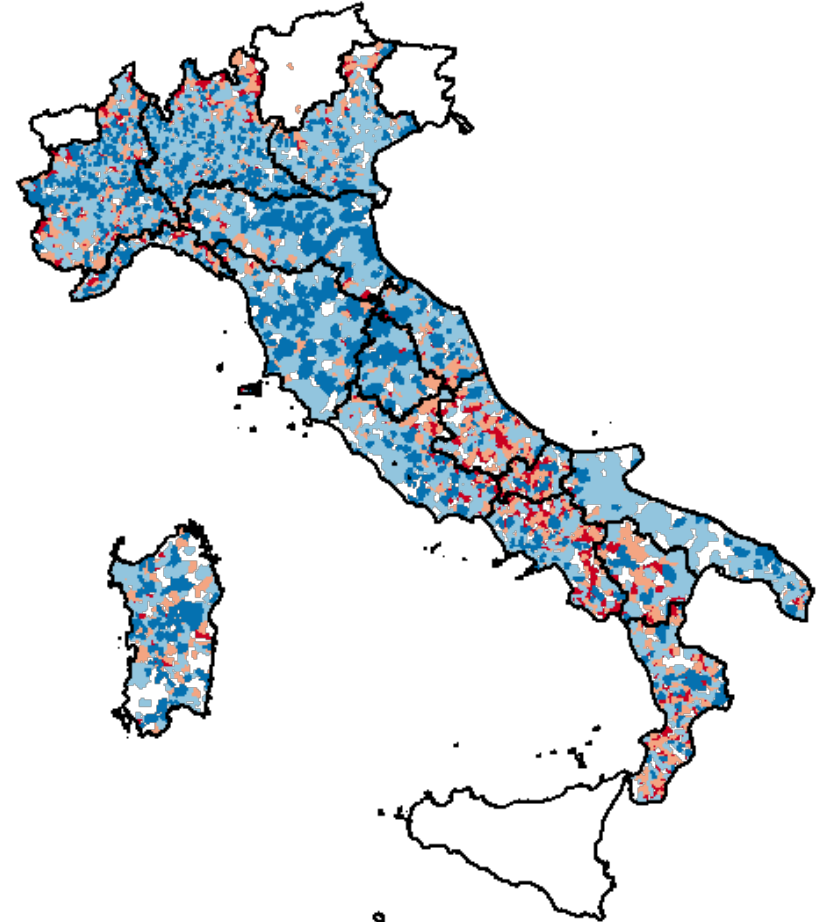
- ✓ Aim: *Empirical* verification of the main *determinants* of female participation in political competition at the local level (i.e. *share of female candidates* in municipal elections)
- ✓ *New norms* aim at fostering female participation
 - directly (electoral norms, candidates and council members)
 - indirectly (parties financing, political communication, gender-mainstreaming, work/family balance policies), but ...
- ✓ *Gender gap shows very different local paths*
- ✓ What else? *Which is the role of social and cultural confoundings?*
- ✓ The work is based on *SVEGLIE*, an evaluation project commissioned to *CNR* by the *Italian Department of Institutional Reforms*
- ✓ aiming at studying the *impact of gender rebalancing norms* at different institutional levels
- ✓ SVEGLIE guaranteed a preferential access to municipal data on electoral candidacy

Women's participation to the electoral competition

Women candidate quota (before reform)



Women candidate quota (after reform)



.3661972 - .8181808
.2701422 - .3658537
.1792929 - .2698413
1.00e-06 - .1789474

- ✓ *Dependent variable*: data on candidates (#males, #females) in Italian municipal elections , released by the Italian Ministry of Interior
 - Scarce data are available for special administrative Regions (so called Special or Autonomous Regions)
- ✓ *Regressors*: Reliable time-variant **socio-demographic and economic statistics at the municipal level are very scarce**; most variables are available for the census-year only (2011), i.e. time-invariant
- ✓ **Unbalanced panel data** in the range **2009-2016**, which includes the **gender balance electoral reform** at the municipal level (from 2013 on)
- ✓ Panel data models allow us to capture both **cross-section** and **time-series** information, **getting rid of the endogeneity bias** typical of gender studies

✓ Data on 6,953 municipalities out of 7,915

Year	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
2009	4,012	31.58	31.58
2010	458	3.60	35.18
2011	1,252	9.85	45.04
2012	761	5.99	51.03
2013	555	4.37	55.40
2014	3,797	29.89	85.28
2015	674	5.30	90.59
2016	1,196	9.41	100.00

id_comune2: 44, 45, ..., 8537
 anno: 2009, 2010, ..., 2016
 Delta(anno) = 1 unit
 Span(anno) = 8 periods
 (id_comune2*anno uniquely identifies each observation)

n = 6953
 T = 8

✓ Time span: 2009 – 2016 (8 years)

✓ Many different individual patterns

Total	12,705	100.00	Distribution of T_i:	min	5%	25%	50%	75%	95%	max
				1	1	2	2	2	2	4

Freq.	Percent	Cum.	Pattern
3577	51.45	51.45	1....1..
1000	14.38	65.83	..1....1
602	8.66	74.49	...1....
378	5.44	79.92	1...
360	5.18	85.10	.1....1.
165	2.37	87.47	1.
124	1.78	89.26	1.....
74	1.06	90.32	1...1...
64	0.92	91.24	..1.....
609	8.76	100.00	(other patterns)
6953	100.00		XXXXXXXX

CRE model on unbalanced panel data (Wooldridge, 2018)

$$s_{it}y_{it} = s_{it}g_t\theta + s_{it}z_i\delta + s_{it}w_{it}\gamma + s_{it}c_i + s_{it}u_{it}, \quad t = 1, \dots, T$$

y_{it} = share of female candidates i = municipality (fixed-effect)

G_t = aggregate time effects

Z_i = time-invariant observed variables (municipal level)

W_{it} = time-variant observed variables

$$c_i = \psi + \bar{x}_i\xi + a_i, E(a_i|\bar{x}_i) = 0$$

c_i = individual effect

X = average (time-invariant) of time-variant regressors (W and G in unbalanced framework)

a_i = individual unobserved fixed-effects

u_{it} = longitudinal residual

- ✓ Large N and small T
- ✓ Covariance between a_i (individual unobserved component) and X_{it} (regressors) allowed
- ✓ Heteroskedasticity robust estimation
- ✓ Time-invariant observables are allowed (w.r.t. fixed-effect framework)
- ✓ Hierarchical information (on time-variant and time-invariant components)

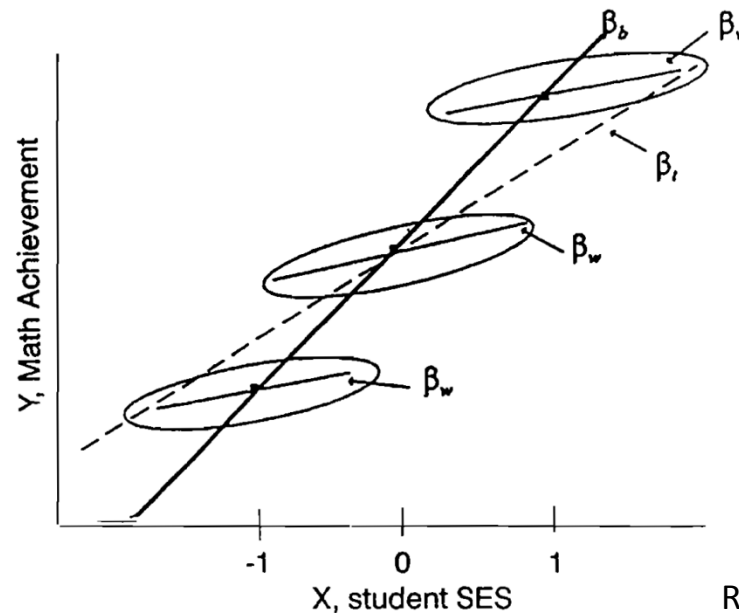
Random Effect Within Between (REWB) model (Bell and Jones, 2015, 2018)

«Modified» Mundlak (1978) approach

$$Y_{it} = \theta Gt + \delta Zi + \beta_W(X_{it} - \bar{X}_i) + \beta_B\bar{X}_i + ai + ui_t$$

β_W = fixed-effect estimator (time-series within-subject information)

β_B = between-effect estimator (cross-sectional information)



Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002

	VARIABLES	(3) %women_cand		
Norm	WE Norm	0.095*** (0.009)	Female activity rate 2011	0.001*** (0.000)
	BE Norm	0.020*** (0.002)	Per capita income 2011	0.002*** (0.001)
Time-variant vars	Time dummies	Yes	Female unemployment rate 2011	-0.000 (0.000)
	BE electoral competition	0.002*** (0.000)	Male unemployment rate 2011	0.001*** (0.000)
	BE log_population	0.008*** (0.001)	Housewife share 2011	0.024 (0.028)
	BE female share in population	0.340*** (0.081)	Female degree rate 2011	0.002*** (0.001)
	BE average family dimension	-0.023*** (0.006)	Male degree rate 2011	-0.003*** (0.001)
	FE electoral competition	0.008*** (0.001)	Urbanization, low	Benchmark
	FE log_population	0.254*** (0.032)	Urbanization, medium	-0.007*** (0.003)
	FE female share in population	0.292 (0.190)	Urbanization, high	-0.013*** (0.004)
	FE average family dimension	-0.052*** (0.016)	Mountain area, low	Benchmark
	North West	Benchmark	Mountain area, medium	-0.009*** (0.003)
	North East	-0.001 (0.003)	Mountain area, high	-0.014*** (0.002)
	Center	0.000 (0.003)	Migrant quote 2010	0.115*** (0.025)
	South & Insulae	-0.032*** (0.004)		
			R-sq (within)	0.351
			R-sq (between)	0.209
			rho	0.260

Cont.

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Summary of the main empirical results

Gender balancing norms significantly foster female participation (direct effect)

Female electoral participation is significantly supported by

Electoral competition

Gender composition of the population

Female activity rates (social capital)

Female education – degree (human capital)

Economic conditions (family-work balance and services)

Male unemployment rates (breadwinner effect?)

Multicultural context (share of resident migrants)

Female electoral participation is undermined by

Family dimension (child and family care)

Male education – degree

Urbanization degree (small-scale activities)

Closed context (mountain area)

South macroarea

Are our results supported by the literature?

- ✓ Married women participation in politics declines because they are more involved in domestic activities (Schlozman, Burns and Verba 1994; Sayer 2005; Teorell, Torcal and Montero 2007; Morales 2009; Sartori, Tuorto and Ghigi 2017)
 - ✓ Negative BE and FE coefficients for average family size
 - ✓ Find more variables describing family situation and available services
- ✓ Women prefer to get involved in small-scale activities, that can be incorporated into daily life (Stolle, Hooghe and Micheletti, 2005)
 - ✓ Negative effect of urbanization degree
- ✓ Women with higher social capital are more likely to participate to political activities (Chibber 2002; Lowndes 2004)
 - ✓ Positive effect of female activity rate
 - ✓ Positive effect of female tertiary education rate

Are our results supported by the literature?

- ✓ Quaranta (2016a, 2016b) show that overall, marriage, divorce and childcare affect political participation of women and men in different way, depending on the reference **cultural model of society**
 - ✓ Studies on participation in associations in Italy focused on **North/South differentials**, showing that the participation rate in association is lower in the South than in the North (Banfield *et al.* 1976; Putnam 1993; La Valle 2006; Almond and Verba 2015)
 - ✓ In particular, Putnam (1993) suggests that cultural background is the first cause of low association propensity in Southern Italy, whose roots date back in the 12th century
- ✓ **Negative effect of the South macroarea**

Discussion and future work

- Modellization of unobserved individual components (e.g. geographical distribution)
- Modellization of differential impact of the norm by population dimension
- Cultural (contagion) effects:
 - Introducing the effect of gender-rebalancing norms at the regional level (regional elections)
 - Investigating eventual reinforcement effect between municipality norms and regional norms
- More variables to be explained: %women elected, success rate

Thank you for your attention

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