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(Gender) balancing the books:
how did Irish political parties respond to the first 'gender quota' election in 2016?

ABSTRACT: *This study examines how Ireland's political parties responded to the implementation of legislative gender quotas for the first time at the 2016 Dáil election. Using a dataset that includes biographical and electoral information on all candidates for the 2007, 2011 and 2016 general elections, we assess whether the profile of candidates nominated in 2016 differed from previous elections. Although many parties 'balanced the books' by nominating fewer inexperienced male candidates, the evidence suggests that some parties engaged in 'sacrificial lamb' strategies when it came to* the selection of women *candidates. In 2016, women non-incumbents nominated by Fine Gael were significantly less experienced and less able to raise funds than in previous elections. In addition, women non-incumbents nominated by both Fine Gael and Labour in 2016 were significantly more likely to run non-competitive races even after controlling for party, experience, funding support and other factors. The paper concludes that political parties are not homogenous and respond differently to gender quotas depending on the available political opportunity structure (POS). In 2016, this POS was shaped by electoral context, party resources, male incumbency and resistance to gender quotas.*

Keywords: Gender quotas; candidate selection; district competitiveness; women in politics; Dáil Éireann, Ireland

Introduction

Women's political under-representation is a persistent feature of Irish politics. Since the first sitting of Dáil Éireann in 1919, just 130 (9.7%) of the 1341 people elected TD have been women. From 1992 to 2011, the percentage of women elected to the Dáil grew quite slowly, reaching a high of just 15%. To address this gender imbalance, the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) passed legislation in 2012 to introduce legally-binding gender quotas for candidate selection. The *Electoral Amendment (Political Funding) Act 2012* incentivises parties to select women in general elections by linking the State funding of political parties to the proportion of women and men they select to contest election. Parties that do not run at least 30% women and, similarly, at least 30% men, lose one-half of the funding they receive annually from the exchequer to run their operations. The quota requirement rises to 40% from 2023 onwards. Ireland's gender quota law applies only to general elections.

With the rollout of gender quotas in the 2016 general election, the number of women candidates nearly doubled and the percentage of women elected to the Dáil rose from 15.1% to 22.2% (see Table 1). While neither a critical mass of women nor gender parity, this seven-point increase in women's descriptive political representation equalled the electoral gains made by women over the previous five electoral cycles (covering a 27-year period). At the same time, the election also saw the re-emergence of a gendered differential in the success rates of candidates (see Buckley, et. al. 2016, 196).

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Between 2011 and 2016, the success rate for male candidates increased slightly, from 29.4% to 31.5%. Over that same period, the success rate for women dropped sharply, from 29.1% to 21.6%. As a result, the gender differential between men and women in success rates grew from 0.3 points to 9.9 points. The re-emergence of the gender differential in success rates raises questions about the candidate selection strategies and electoral context that shapes nomination process.

Voter backlash against women seems unlikely given previous research that indicates that the Irish electorate is not biased against women candidates (McElroy & Marsh, 2010; McElroy & Marsh, 2011), and exit polls which show that the voting public was, in fact, favourably disposed to gender quotas.[1] Moreover, in 2016 incumbent women and incumbent men were re-elected at roughly the same rate and earned the a similar proportion of the first-preference vote.[2] At the same time, there is evidence from other EU countries that political parties sometimes respond to gender quotas by selecting women as *sacrificial lambs* who have little chance of winning office (Thomas & Bodet, 2013; Murray, 2008; Esteve-Volart & Bagues, 2012; Maciej & Kukolowicz, 2014). This paper seeks to identify any evidence of this type of party behaviour in Ireland in reaction to the legislative gender quota and if so, under what conditions does such a response occur.

In this study we employ the Ireland Elections Dataset which includes biographical and electoral information on all party candidates who contested the 2007, 2011 and 2016 Dáil elections, to assess the effect of the gender quota law on the political parties' approaches to candidate selection. Our findings indicate that for most parties, the non-incumbent women candidates that were nominated in 2016 were similar to those nominated in 2007 and 2011 in terms of their political experience, their ability to raise money and the likelihood of running a non-competitive race. At the same time, we find that the non-incumbent women candidates nominated by Fine Gael in 2016 were significantly less experienced and significantly less able to raise funds than the non-incumbent women candidates nominated by their party from the previous two elections. In addition, we find that women candidates nominated in 2016 by the Fine Gael and Labour parties, respectively, as well as women added-on to the ballot that same year by a national party, were significantly more likely to run a non-competitive race, even after controlling for other factors, such as party, gender, political experience and campaign resources. Our analysis indicates that candidate selection strategy is shaped by the political opportunity structure that parties face at a given time, and in 2016, electoral context, male incumbency, resistance to gender quotas and the availability of party resources were key factors explaining parties' divergent engagement with gender quotas.

The political opportunity structure for women candidates in Ireland

Under Ireland's PR-STV electoral system, the country is divided into a number of multi-seat districts which range in size from three to five seats. Numerous studies suggest that women candidates fare better in electoral systems that feature multi-member districts rather than single-member districts (Darcy *et al.*, 1994; Lovenduski & Norris, 1993; Rule, 1987, 1994). In her study of the gendered effects of STV in Ireland, McGing (2013: 337) concluded that the system's multi-member nature and lower thresholds for electoral success enhance women's electoral prospects (see also White, 2006).[3] There is also evidence, however, that the benefit of multi-member seats is limited by the relatively small number of seats per district, and the strategies employed by parties seeking to maximise seats in a system based on single transferrable votes. Galligan (2008: 154-155) found that district magnitude had no effect on the number of women TDs elected from the three major parties, Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and

[1] An exit poll on the day of the 2016 general election conducted by RTÉ, the national public broadcaster, asked 'candidate gender quotas for political parties were introduced for these elections to the Dáil. How much do you support the use of gender quotas for national elections on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means strongly oppose and 10 means strongly support?' 17% ranked 0-3, 38% ranked 4-6, 42% ranked 7-10, and 4% indicated 'don't know'.

[2] In 2016, 67.4% of incumbent men were re-elected, compared to 64.0% of incumbent women (Chi Square, $p = .712$). On average, incumbent men won .6733 of the first-preference vote as a proportion of the quota, compared to .6512 for incumbent women (independent samples T-test, $p = .717$).

[3] McGing's findings concur with the work of Engstrom (1987) and Norris (2004), who argued that the larger the district magnitude, the more likely minority candidates (e.g women, independents, members of small parties) will win election.

Labour, between 1948 and 2002.

District magnitude in Ireland is small relative to other European nations (Council of Europe, 2009: 11) and the limited number of seats per district leads parties to constrict candidate selection to ensure votes are maximised and vote-splitting is avoided. The candidate selection process in Ireland is, for the most part, decentralised to local party leaders who place a preference and premium on localism. Party headquarters play a role in organising selection conventions and issuing directives which can be numerical, geographical, and gender-based. Directives can lead to tension between party headquarters and constituency-level parties striving to protect their selection autonomy. Prior to 2016, the majority of directives were geographical, particularly in rural constituencies. Very little emphasis was placed on achieving socially diverse tickets with gender balance 'an aspiration rather than a formal requirement' (Weeks, 2010: 60).

Though most candidates are selected through local party selection conventions, party headquarters reserve the right to add candidates to party tickets after the constituency-level selection conventions are completed. The addition of candidates may alleviate or acerbate tensions between party headquarters and the constituency-level party. Alleviation may greet the addition of a locally favoured candidate who lost out at selection convention as a result of a directive. Acerbation may result if the add-on candidate is considered an 'outsider', someone who is not from the constituency but is favoured by head office. The decision to add-on a candidate follows a detailed examination of constituency polling and vote predictions. Prior to the adoption of legislative gender quotas, geographical consideration was the main reason for additional selections (Buckley & McGing, 2011).[4]

Candidate selection often results in power struggles between party headquarters and the constituency level party, with the former more stringent in terms of candidate numbers, while the latter tends to be more conservative in terms of who they select, usually plumping for the 'tried and tested' incumbent. Most incumbents are men, which places female challengers or newcomers at a disadvantage at candidate selection conventions as they cannot take advantage of the increased name recognition, political support, and resources available to their incumbent male opponents (Galligan, 2008: 155-156; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005; Schwindt-Bayer *et al*., 2010: 707). Furthermore, incumbency is particularly advantageous when it comes to fundraising for political campaigns, with incumbents raising and spending more than challengers, (Benoit & Marsh, 2008). In Irish elections research shows more spending equates to more votes. Benoit & Marsh (2010: 159) found that 'outspending one's rival means winning more of the vote share' and 'spending more … directly increases a candidate's chance of winning a seat'.

Research by Culhane (2017) suggests that Ireland's PR-STV system interacts with political culture to privilege informal candidate recruitment and selection norms, such as incumbency and localism, which buttress and sustain male candidacy. Her argument is consistent with international research indicating that decentralised involvement in party selection processes and informal selection procedures are not always conducive to diversifying candidate lists and *gendered* candidate selection (Hazan & Rahat, 2010; Gauja & Cross, 2015; Bjarnegård &

[4] Generally, the purpose of the add-on is to shore up votes for the party's lead candidate in the constituency. The add-on therefore occupies a position of 'running mate', maximising the party vote so that when they are eliminated, their votes are transferred to the party's lead candidate. By definition add-ons are usually considered to be *sacrificial lambs*, contesting an election with little hope of election, though exceptions do apply. They may be relative unknowns, but given the predisposition to localism in Irish politics, it will usually be an individual with local profile and name recognition. Occasionally a good vote management plan coupled with a vote swing towards the party will see the election of the selected candidate(s) and the add-on. However, misjudging constituency polling, or having a maverick add-on who refuses to work with the party's vote management plan puts the party at risk of splitting its vote and losing seats in the process.

Zetterberg, 2016).

The privileging of 'the local' as described by Culhane (2017: 46) shapes 'informal candidate recruitment criteria, such that the perception of what makes an electable and therefore "good" candidate is one who is locally recognised and known by constituents'. However, as previous research shows, men dominate local councils, enabling few women the opportunity to harness localism skills, which are essential for candidate selection and election at the national level (Buckley *et al*., 2015). Therefore, localism as an informal candidate recruitment norm is highly gendered, with highly gendered outcomes (Culhane, 2017). As women have been less able than men to benefit from localism and incumbency advantages, the resultant outcome has seen women marginalised in the candidate selection process, leading to few women being nominated by the major political parties (Galligan, 2010: 272).

In the general elections of 2002, 2007 and 2011, Fianna Fáil selected just 13% women candidates while Fine Gael selected 16% (the figure for Labour was 25 %). With election surveys and analysis showing that women did not face discrimination at the hands of the electorate (McElroy & Marsh, 2010; McElroy & Marsh, 2011) it was clear that the issue of women's political under-selection and under-representation lay with political parties. To address this, legislative gender quotas were adopted as part of the political reform agenda of the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government in 2012.

The *Electoral Amendment (Political Funding) Act 2012* encourages parties to select women in general elections by linking the State funding of political parties to the proportion of women and men they select to contest general elections. Parties that do not meet their obligations under the law, lose one-half of the funding they receive annually from the exchequer to run their operations. The quota requirement rises to 40% from 2023 onwards. Ireland's gender quota law applies only to general elections and not to local elections where most TDs first 'cut their teeth' in politics (Buckley *et al*; 2016).[5]

By tying public funding of political parties to the proportion of women candidates selected, the legislative gender quota incentivises parties to provide women with expanded opportunities to seek and win election. However, by adopting reforms that focus on party nominations, the success of Ireland's gender quota law depends in large part on how parties react and whether party leaders and local selectorates pursue strategies that make it likely that women candidates are elected.

Party responses to candidate gender quotas

By design, gender quotas impose structural changes to parties or election systems in an effort to increase the number of women candidates or officeholders. Candidate-based gender quota laws incentivise parties to nominate greater numbers of women but leave it up to parties to determine where and under what circumstances women are selected (Krook, 2007). Parties that fail to nominate a sufficient number of women candidates face a range of sanctions, depending on the law, ranging from public reprimand, fines, reductions in public funding, to invalidation of the party's candidates and removal from the ballot (Dahlerup *et al*, 2013).

Whether quotas result in substantial increases in the number of women elected depends on a number of factors. Schwindt-Bayer (2009) finds that quotas with placement mandates and enforcement mechanisms are most likely to result in the election of greater numbers of women to office. The effectiveness of a gender quota is also shaped, in part, by the electoral system in which it operates. Several studies conclude that quotas implemented within closed-list PR systems with high levels of district magnitude are the most effective means of achieving

[5]Research shows that local office was a key 'springboard' for women to Dáil Éireann in 2007 and 2011 (Buckley *et al;* 2015).

increased women's descriptive representation (Jones, 1998; Krook, 2007).[6]

Another key factor is the parties themselves. Political parties are heterogeneous and may respond differently to gender quotas as a result of ideology, party culture, organisational structure and resources (Dahlerup, 2007; Krook, 2007). As observed by Kenny (2013) and Bjarnegård & Zetterberg (2016: 393 - 394) 'party factors shape political parties' responses to quota policies'. Parties can respond by embracing the quota system and seek to take advantage of the potential for the new system to create new opportunities for electoral and policy success. At the same time, parties can undermine gender quotas in a number of different ways: by outright violating the law (an option where the penalty is a nominal financial sanction - see Murray, 2008 and Verge & Troupel, 2011) and withholding funding support from women candidates.[7]

There is evidence that political parties may respond to legislative gender quotas by adopting *sacrificial lamb strategies*, selecting women to contest hopeless races where they are unlikely to win. Murray (2008) found that French parties responded to the gender quotas imposed by the Parity Law by nominating women to run in unsafe seats in the nation's 2002 elections. Esteve-Volart & Bagues (2012) study of Spain's legislative gender quota found that parties were more likely to nominate female candidates to hopeless races and low-level positions on alphabetical ballot lists. Similarly, Maciej & Kukolowicz (2014) found that Poland's parties responded to the quota requirement in that county by nominating women to lower level ballot positions that disadvantaged women's chances of being elected when voters cast ballots in the country's open-list electoral system.

In addition to being placed in difficult-to-win districts, some researchers argue that women candidates nominated under gender quotas may be less likely than other candidates to have the experience or resources required to run a credible race (Esteve-Volart & Bagues, 2012; Gorecki & Kukolowicz, 2014). However, the evidence on this account is somewhat mixed with some studies concluding that 'quota women' are less politically experienced, but others finding that such women have similar qualifications to other candidates and do as well in elections (Franceschet *et al*, 2012; Allen *et al*, 2016). Some research suggests that over time, the adoption of gender quotas is associated with increased levels of professional and personal diversity as well as competence amongst women *and* men in office (Barnes & Holman, 2020; Besley *et al*, 2017).

Scholars have also raised questions about the conventional wisdom that women nominated under a quota will – or should - look like the male candidates who would otherwise be nominated in terms of background and experience. For example, Murray's (2012) study of women elected under the French quota law found they had less political experience than men but similar levels of legislative activity and productivity (see also Allen *et al*, 2016: 144). Murray's findings suggest that the norms that define who is qualified for office are based on masculine stereotypes that do not reflect the value that women's experiences can bring to a legislature (Murray, 2012; Murray, 2014).

There are a number of reasons parties might engage in a sacrificial lamb strategy. Party leaders and local selectorates may hold traditional, masculinised views of politics that lead them to view women as less qualified or able to run successfully for office (see Murray, 2014). Sacrificial lamb strategies might also reflect the tendency for party leaders to give (mostly male) incumbents priority for favourable ballot positions and competitive districts (Baldez,

[6] In contrast, Schwindt-Bayer's (2009) study of 26 countries found that district magnitude and the type of PR system (open or closed) had no impact on the number of women elected, which may suggest that these factors do not matter at every time or in every context.

[7] Although Fréchette, *et al* (2008), Somani (2012:1460), and others note the potential for parties to provide women candidates less support under a quota, Fréchette, *et al*'s 2008 study of the French gender quota finds no evidence that parties systematically underfunded female candidates.

2004; Bruhn, 2003). Nominating women to run in hopeless situations may also serve as a means for party leaders to project an inclusive image without generating too much push-back from ambitious male politicians and party leaders at the local level (Krook, 2007: 377).

Though many scholars argue that women candidates are most heavily disadvantaged in single-member district (SMD) election systems (Taagepera & Shugart, 1989; Cox, 1997), there is evidence that parties adopt sacrificial lamb strategies across a variety of electoral structures and political contexts, including PR systems with both open- and closed-party list systems (Jones, 1998; Wuhs, 2006). In addition, the extent that parties engage in sacrificial lamb behaviour can vary over time (Gertzog & Simard, 1981; Welch & Studlar, 1996) and across parties operating within the same electoral system (Stambough & O'Regan, 2007; Ryan *et al;* 2010; Kulich *et al;* 2014). One of the most important factors, however, is party culture, as studies indicate that parties who explicitly embrace gender equality are more likely to offer a level electoral playing field to their candidates (see Davidson-Schmich, 2010; Stambough & O'Regan, 2007).

In sum there is evidence from the European experience of legislative gender quotas, that some parties respond by pursuing sacrificial lamb strategies that result in the nomination of women to hopeless races where they have little chance of winning election. There is also evidence that parties respond to gender quotas by putting forward inexperienced women, though whether this makes women candidates less electable than men is less clear. Although parties appear particularly likely to adopt sacrificial lamb strategies in SMD electoral systems, parties in PR systems have also adopted the practice, particularly when the gender quota is not accompanied by reserved seats, clear rules governing the rank-ordering of candidates, or steep financial penalties (Dahlerup, 2007).

The Irish case-study is an opportunity to examine the implementation of gender quotas under a PR-STV electoral system. As highlighted, Ireland's electoral system is district based and unlike a list system requires women to compete with men for a limited number of seats in a particular constituency. Candidates can be party and non-party, and electoral party competition features inter and intra dynamics. Coupled with this is the premium placed on localism and incumbency in candidate selection, traits that are gendered to favour men, thereby creating a challenging context for the implementation of gender quotas. However, the financial incentive for compliance is substantial meaning there are reasons for both optimism and pessimism with regard to how Irish political parties responded to the first rollout of the gender quota law in 2016.

Research design

Recent Dáil elections provide a useful point of comparison to assess how Ireland's political parties responded to the candidate gender quota law in 2016, and to isolate, if any, the existence of sacrificial lamb party behaviour. Our analysis relies on an Ireland Elections Dataset compiled by the authors. This dataset includes biographical and electoral information on all candidates to contest the 2007, 2011, and 2016 general elections. Data on electoral results and legislative service were drawn from *Nealon's Guides* (2002, 2008, 2017), the website http://electionsireland.org, and *Election Results and Transfer of Votes* reports published by the Government of Ireland (2007, 2011) and the Houses of the Oireachtas (2016). Campaign spending data was obtained from post-election reports published by the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO).[8]

From our theoretical section we identify two types of party behaviour which we collectively

[8] Campaign spending data is compiled by the Standards in Public Office Commission based on self-reporting by candidates. Though errors and omissions are a challenge to the validity of any campaign spending data, the existence of fines and other penalties for misreporting and failure to report expenses is likely to enhance the accuracy of the data.

describe as *sacrificial lamb strategies*: 1) nominating candidates who lack experience or resources required to run a successful race regardless of circumstance; and 2) candidates who have been nominated to run in a 'hopeless district' where their party has very little support or where opposing candidates are popular and unlikely to be defeated.

For this study, we are primarily concerned with the performance of non-incumbent candidates nominated by political parties. The justification for this lies in the fact that incumbents, by definition, are 'quality candidates' who have experience running for and serving in office and have already demonstrated their ability to win election. Furthermore, as incumbents, the districts in which they run cannot be described as hopeless. Accordingly, we concentrate on non-incumbent candidates in particular.

Consistent with previous research that service in local government serves as a key springboard for the election of non-incumbent candidates to the Dáil (see Buckley, *et. al*, 2015), we use prior service in local office as our chief measure of candidate experience. Our measures of candidate resources are based on candidate spending, party spending or the total of the two together, expressed as a share of the respective spending limits in their constituency.

Ireland's multi-seat, PR-STV election system poses a unique challenge for researchers seeking to identify hopeless districts. In Irish elections, the number of seats in play in a district varies between three and five; multiple parties compete for the seats; parties can put forward more than one candidate; and there are vote transfers between candidates after the first preference votes (FPV) are tabulated. A simple measure, such as 'party first-preference votes in a district' is inadequate for our purposes because party leaders could view one candidate as a sure winner and other candidates in the same district as hopeless.

A second factor complicating the ability to identify hopeless districts are the electoral boundary changes that took place between elections in response to population shifts identified by the quinquennial census. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of seats in the Dáil were reduced from 166 to 158 and the number of constituencies reduced from 43 to 40. An analysis by Kavanagh (2014: 228) found that these boundary adjustments resulted in the highest levels of constituency change for the Dáil since 1980.

Given the problems facing researchers seeking to identify 'hopeless districts,' we focus instead on 'non-competitive races'. We define non-competitive races as those in which the candidate scored in the bottom 40% of candidates in the proportion of the electoral threshold earned in the FPV. In the three Dáil elections prior to 2016, just 1 of 647 candidates who scored this low in the FPV were elected in subsequent counts.[9] As Figure 1 illustrates, for candidates below the 40% threshold of FPV, the predicted probability of winning election is close to zero.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

The gender quota implemented in the *2016 election* serves as our main independent variable. *Political party* serves as a key control variable, with nominal variables for each of the four main parties[10] – Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin, and Labour. Other parties are coded together as small parties and serve as the reference category. [11] Independent candidates are excluded from the analysis because Ireland's gender quota applies only to parties.

[9] In the lowest quintile of the quota, 0% of candidates were elected, in the 21st to 40th percentile, 0.3% of candidates were elected, in the 41st to 60th percentile, 4.2% were elected, in the 61st to 80th percentile, 54.3% were elected, and in the 81st to 100th percentile, 95.6% were elected.

[10] Across the three elections under examination, these parties finished in the top four spots in terms of first preference votes.

[11] We believe small parties provide a useful benchmark from which to assess the electoral performance of candidates from larger parties before and after the quota. The gender quota in Ireland was targets political parties generally and is frequently described as a party reform (Buckley 2013). Although small parties rarely meet the

Other control variables include *incumbent* (included in the multi-variate analysis), *party expenditure* as a proportion of the spending limit, and *add-on*, which indicates whether the candidate was nominated by the local selectors or, alternatively, added-on by party leaders after the local conventions were completed.

Our analysis proceeds as follows: first, we review the effect of the quota on the nomination of women by political parties in the 2016 election. Second, we assess whether the parties responded to the gender quota by nominating women who were unlikely to win election. Specifically, we focus on two factors strongly associated with winning election to the Dáil: prior political office-holding and candidate fundraising. Third, we employ binary logistic regression to assess whether female non-incumbent candidates put forward by the respective parties in 2016 were more likely to run a non-competitive race when controlling for other factors. Finally, we employ binary logistic regression to consider whether women added-on to the ballot by the national party were more likely to run a non-competitive race than other candidates when controlling for other factors, including candidate *gender*.

Hypotheses

If women were so-called *sacrificial lambs* as a result of the gender quota, we would expect the women non-incumbents put forward by parties in 2016 to be less experienced, less able to raise money, and less successful at winning votes than women in previous elections.

H_1 *Women candidates in 2016 will be significantly less experienced than in previous election years.*

H_2 *Women candidates in 2016 will be significantly less successful at raising money than in previous election years.*

H_3 *Women candidates in 2016 will be significantly more likely to run non-competitive races than in previous years, even when controlling for party, experience, and fundraising ability.*

Given the way that the nomination process in Ireland progresses, we would expect that women added-on by parties after the completion of selection conventions (the add-ons) would be the most likely to possess the qualities of a *sacrificial lamb*. Accordingly, we hypothesise that in comparison to women nominated through the party selection convention, women add-ons in 2016 are less experienced, less successful at raising money, and more likely to run non-competitive races.

H_4 *Women add-ons in 2016 will be significantly more likely to run non-competitive races than women nominated through the ordinary local convention/selection process.*

Results

Altogether, parties put forward 412 candidates in the 2016 general election in Ireland, 276 men

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threshold of support necessary to receive state funding, the threshold itself (2% of the total votes) is set at a level that makes it possible (if unlikely) for small parties to gain funding support. In the 2016 elections, for example, four small parties earned enough votes to qualify for state funds (Green, RENUA Ireland, Social Democrats and Solidarity/PBP). In the most recent election (2020), the newly formed party Aonte came within a few thousand votes of meeting the threshold to receive state funding. Moreover, though most small parties do not receive state funding, there is evidence they nonetheless responded to the quota by nominating more female candidates. In 2016, 8 of 13 small parties met the quota requirement by nominating women to 30% or more of their candidacies. By comparison, only 2 of 8 small parties in 2007 and just 1 in 10 in 2011 met that mark. Responding to the quota makes sense given that one of the main strategic goals of small parties is to meet the threshold necessary to receive state funding.

(67%) and 136 women (33%). This represented a nearly two-fold increase in the number of women candidates put forward by parties in the 2011 general election. As was expected given the in-built financial incentive, all political parties met the *letter* of the law and surpassed the threshold of 30% women candidates (Buckley *et al*, 2016). The effect on gendered recruitment in Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, the country's two historically dominant and long-established parties, was considerable. Both parties more than doubled their percentage of women candidates. Over the same period, Sinn Féin and Labour also increased their percentage of female candidates, bringing them over the required threshold. Ireland's smaller parties also appeared to respond to the quota, with the overall percentage of women candidates nominated by smaller parties rising from 17% to 34%.

In response to the legislative gender quota, political parties reduced the number of male candidates they put forward. Among the four main parties, the number of male candidates dropped by nearly one-third between 2011 and 2016. Consistent with arguments that parties respond to gender quotas by reducing opportunities for inexperienced male candidates, there was a substantial drop in the number of male candidates with minimal political experience (two years or fewer in elected office). The four largest parties nominated just 22 inexperienced male candidates in 2016, compared to 61 in 2011.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Did the parties put forward less experienced women candidates?

We compared the characteristics of women non-incumbents in 2016 to those in the previous two elections (pooled for 2007 and 2011) disaggregated by party. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3. In 2016, the proportion of women non-incumbents with prior political experience *increased* for Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin, and Labour. In contrast, the proportion of experienced women non-incumbent candidates dropped sharply for Fine Gael, from .88 in 2007/11 to .59 in 2016 ($p. < .05$). The proportion also dropped for small parties, from .29 to .12 ($p. < .05$). Our analysis provides partial support for our first hypothesis (H_1). The evidence indicates that Fine Gael and, collectively, small parties, put forward less experienced women non-incumbents in 2016 than in prior years. In contrast, women non-incumbents who contested election for Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin, and Labour were, for the most part, similarly experienced.

Did political parties put forward women candidates who were less able to raise funds?

Our analysis indicates that candidate spending levels increased for non-incumbent women running from Sinn Féin and decreased for the non-incumbent women put forward by the remaining parties (again, see Table 3). For Fianna Fáil, Labour and small parties, the decline in spending levels was not statistically significant. For Fine Gael, non-incumbent women saw candidate spending proportions fall significantly, from .42 of the spending limit in 2007/2011 to .29 in 2016 ($p < .05$).[12] If the respective decreases in candidate spending among women non-incumbents put forward by Fine Gael were due to changing electoral circumstances rather than gender, we would expect to see similar drops among non-incumbent men over this time period. Our analysis reveals that non-incumbent men put forward by small parties spent similar amounts over both periods. For Fianna Fáil, Labour and Sinn Féin, non-incumbent men reported lower levels of candidate spending in 2016, but the differences were not statistically significant. For Fine Gael, men non-incumbents experienced a slight decline in candidate

[12] Party spending as a proportion of the limit doubled for Fine Gael female non-incumbents over this same period (from .09 to .18) and, as a result, female non-incumbents overall spending levels in 2016 were on par with the overall spending levels for the candidates in prior elections (.51 in 2007/11 compared with .47 in 2016, difference not significant). We take this as evidence that the party recognised that inexperienced non-incumbent candidates needed help.

spending proportion, from .44 in 2007/11 to .38 2016, but the difference was not significant (p = .268).

Given that we do not see a similar drop in candidate spending among non-incumbent male candidates put forward by Fine Gael, it seems unlikely that the drop among the party's non-incumbent female candidates was the result of general (non-gendered) electoral circumstances faced by the party's non-incumbent candidates in the 2016 election. In addition, there is little evidence that the drop in candidate spending for Fine Gael's non-incumbent women is due to a drop in party support for their fundraising efforts. In fact, Fine Gael doubled direct party funding for this group of women candidates in 2016. Increased direct party spending by Fine Gael seems to reflect an intentional effort on behalf of the party to provide greater levels of funding for both male and female candidates who were less able to raise funds on their own (regression analysis for men: Adjusted R Square = .361, p value: .039; for women, adjusted R Square = .288, p value = .015). In short, the less funding nonincumbent candidates raised on their own, the more party support they received.

In sum, our analysis provides partial support for our second hypothesis (H_2), although only for one party – Fine Gael. Non-incumbent women put forward by Fianna Fáil, Labour, Sinn Féin and, collectively, smaller parties, were similarly successful at raising and spending money in 2016 as they were in prior elections. In contrast, non-incumbent women put forward by Fine Gael were significantly less able to raise funds in 2016 compared with prior elections.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Were women candidates and women add-ons more likely to run non-competitive races?
Next, we consider whether women candidates were more likely to run non-competitive races in 2016 than in previous years. A straightforward comparison indicates that non-incumbent women candidates from Sinn Féin were l*ess* likely to run non-competitive races in 2016 than prior elections (see Table 3). Non-incumbent women put forward by Fianna Fáil and smaller parties were similarly likely to run non-competitive races as previous elections. In contrast, non-incumbent women put forward by Fine Gael and Labour, were significantly *more* likely to run non-competitive races.

Among Fine Gael's non-incumbent women candidates, 47% ran non-competitive races in 2016, compared with just 4% in 2007/11 ($p < .01$). The drop in electoral performance among the party's women non-incumbents was not similarly experienced by the party's non-incumbent male candidates. By comparison, just 2% of Fine Gael's non-incumbent men ran non-competitive races in 2007/11 and 0% ran non-competitive races in 2016 (not shown). For the Labour Party, the percentage of non-incumbent women who ran non-competitive races also rose sharply from 7% in 2007/11 to 50 % in 2016 ($p <.01$).[13]

Next, we conducted a series of binomial logistic regression analyses, which allowed us to control for a variety of factors to determine whether women non-incumbents put forward by each party in 2016 ran non-competitive races *notwithstanding* candidate experience, resources, and the electoral context. In similar fashion, we were also able to control for those same factors when assessing whether women add-ons in 2016 were more likely to run non-competitive races. Because our models focus on parties and include variables for party and party spending, we again excluded independent candidates from our analysis.

The dependent variable is a nominal (dummy) variable indicating whether or not a candidate ran a non-competitive race. We control for candidate sex (female), election year (2011 and 2016, respectively), incumbency status, party (with dummy variables for Fianna

[13] Across the same period, the percentage of the party's men non-incumbents who ran non-competitive races fell from 13% in 2007/11 to 9% in 2016.

Fáil, Fine Gael, Sinn Féin, and Labour, respectively), whether the candidate was an add-on, party spending, candidate spending and local experience.[14]

The results of our analysis is presented in Table 4. The models are quite strong, with the Nagelkerke R Square meeting or exceeding .770 in all cases. In addition, the models are a good fit, and are consistent with expectations, we find that incumbency, prior local experience, party membership in Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Sinn Féin, or Labour (respectively), and candidate spending were each significantly and negatively associated with running a non-competitive race. Women candidates and add-on candidates were not, in general, significantly more likely to run a non-competitive race. Likewise, party spending appears to have no significant effect.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

We found no evidence that the non-incumbent women candidates put forward by Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin in 2016 were significantly more likely to run non-competitive races than other candidates when controlling for other factors (Models 3 and 5, respectively). In contrast, we found that the non-incumbent women candidates put forward by Fine Gael and Labour were significantly more likely to run non-competitive races (see Models 2 and 4).

Importantly, our analysis did not find any evidence that women candidates in general, or women candidates in 2016 in particular (not shown), were any more likely than other candidates to run non-competitive races. Likewise, we found no similar effect for male non-incumbent candidates put forward by the various parties in 2016. The male non-incumbent candidates put forward in 2016 by Fine Gael, Labour, Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin, respectively, were not significantly more likely to run non-competitive races when controlling for other factors (analyses not shown). Finally, separate analyses of the 2007 and 2011 elections indicate that the women non-incumbents put forward by Fine Gael and Labour (as well as other parties) were not similarly disadvantaged in those previous elections. Thus, our findings cannot be attributed to poor performances by women candidates in general, women candidates in 2016, non-incumbent candidates in 2016, or an ongoing record of under-performance by non-incumbent women put forward by Fine Gael or Labour.

To assess whether women candidates nominated through the add-on process were significantly more likely to run non-competitive races than candidates selected through party selection conventions, we ran several logistic regression analyses. We find that add-on candidates were, in general, no more likely to run non-competitive races than other candidates (once again, see Model 1). Women add-ons in 2016, however, were significantly more likely to run a non-competitive race (see Model 6). Additional analyses (not shown) indicates that this finding was largely driven by the poor performance of the Fine Gael women add-ons from 2016 rather than women add-ons in general.

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

As a final step, we assessed the relative strength of the effects of key variables in our model by calculating the change in predicted probability of running a non-competitive race when moving from the minimum to the maximum value of the independent variables in several of our binary logistic regression models (see Table 5). The results of the analysis indicate being a Fine Gael non-incumbent woman in 2016 increased a candidate's chance of running a non-competitive race by 33.1 percentage points. In comparison, being a Labour non-incumbent woman in 2016 increased the probability of running a non-competitive race by 13.9 percentage

[14] Reference category for sex is 'male'. Reference category for party is 'small party candidates'. Reference category for election year is 2007.

points. The effect was considerably smaller for candidates who were women add-ons in 2016, which the probability of running a non-competitive race increased by 6.6 points.

In partial support of our third hypothesis (H_3), the evidence indicates that women candidates put forward in 2016 by the Fine Gael and Labour parties, respectively, were more likely to run non-competitive races even after controlling for their experience, fundraising ability and party. In addition, partially consistent with our fourth hypothesis (H_4), we find that after controlling for other factors, the women add-ons put forward by Fine Gael were more likely to run non-competitive races.

Discussion

Our findings show that for the most part, Irish political parties *did not* engage in sacrificial lamb behaviour. Rather they 'balanced the books' by nominating fewer inexperienced male candidates (or male sacrificial lambs). However, this was not a generic approach, as the statistical analysis uncovers evidence of sacrificial lamb behaviour in relation to women non-incumbent candidates in Fine Gael and, to a lesser extent, in Labour. To understand the differing responses of Irish political parties to the first rollout of legislative gender quotas in 2016, we draw from contemporary media reports and interviews with party personnel. Our analysis indicates that candidate selection strategy is shaped by the political opportunity structure that parties face at a given time, and in 2016, electoral context, male incumbency, resistance to gender quotas and the availability of party resources were key factors explaining parties' divergent engagement with gender quotas.

Electoral context and incumbency

With a reduction in the overall number of Dáil seats on offer and a predicted loss in vote share following the party's successful election in 2011, Fine Gael faced into the 2016 general election aware that seat losses were inevitable. In these challenging circumstances, maximising the party vote became even more crucial. As part of the planning process for the 2016 general election, Fine Gael party officials met with all members of its parliamentary party to 'sus' out their intentions on contesting the election. When it became clear that a vast majority were intending to run, protecting and maximising the vote of incumbents, or at the very least, not 'scuppering' it, became an essential aim. In some constituencies there was no scope for applying a gender directive at candidate selection conventions due to the presence of incumbents. This whittled down the number of constituencies where women newcomers could run, posing a barrier to meaningful quota implementation. Similarly, Labour faced into a challenging election in 2016. As the minor coalition partner in an increasingly unpopular government, opinion polls indicated a significant vote swing against the party. Up to and including the 2011 general election, the Labour Party had selected and elected a higher proportion of women than any other party since the 1980s (McGing, 2014), but to maximise its vote in 2016, party resources were largely concentrated around incumbent TDs indicating the primacy and prioritisation of incumbency in candidate selection choices in challenging electoral circumstances. It should be noted that Labour women were *actually* fairly politically experienced, but in the context of a tough election campaign, which saw a significant vote swing against the party, Labour non-incumbents, both men and women, performed poorly in general.

Resistance to gender quotas

Political parties are gendered organisations in that they are historically dominated by men and reflect their interests, especially when male power is threatened (Lovenduski, 2005). Despite being one of the parties of government that legislated for the gender quota, the measure remained controversial within Fine Gael and was not yet fully normalised when candidate

recruitment begun for the 2016 general election. While no male incumbent was deselected[15] a fear had built up within the party that this would occur. When it was revealed that the Fine Gael leadership had a 'secret list' of potential women candidates for whom the party would provide training, there was much resistance from male party counterparts, 'including those particularly concerned that their Dáil seats could be at risk from the addition of some of the training course participants to their tickets' (thejournal.ie, 2015). Many of these male TDs were themselves elected for the first time in 2011 and were still solidifying their own electoral bases. Amplifying the level of resistance was the fact that four-out-of-every-five Fine Gael newcomers at the 2016 general election *had* to be women in order that the party meet its obligations under the gender quota law, meaning some male councillors and senators felt their political career paths were being stymied by the gender quota. The outcome of this resistance and lack of collegiality meant some party women did not make themselves available for selection. In some constituencies Fine Gael recruited women candidates from outside the party. These newcomers did not possess the political experience associated with seat-winning and were often labelled 'sweepers', candidates intended to 'sweep-up' votes, only for these votes to be transferred to a lead party candidate in the constituency, usually the male incumbent TD, after their elimination. Described by one party strategist as candidates willing to 'take a hit for the party', sweeper candidates are present in every election. However, given the gender quota requirement in 2016, Fine Gael looked increasingly to women candidates to fulfil this function.

Resistance to gender quotas was also evident in Fianna Fáil. Many of the high-profile resistance and challenges to quota implementation in 2016 were associated with the party (Buckley *et al*, 2016). Much of this stemmed from the constituency-level party's opposition to headquarters' candidate selection strategy.[16] However, party headquarters remained firm in its pursual of its strategy and our analysis corroborates this. Fianna Fáil did not engage in a sacrificial lamb strategy for women non-incumbents. However, electoral context may also be significant in this regard. Unlike Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil had many open constituencies across the country with no incumbent TD following the party's heavy seat loss at the 2011 general election. The availability of so-called 'greenfield sites' meant that Fianna Fáil could select women non-incumbents in a number of constituencies without posing a threat to a male incumbent, though, as the resistance to gender quotas within the party attests, overlooking men in favour of new women, exposes a masculinised party culture struggling with change.

Party resources

Given the evidence which suggests Fine Gael engaged in a 'sacrificial lamb' strategy, it may seem contradictory that Fine Gael also directed increased levels of party funding towards women newcomers in 2016. We suggest they did so to incentivise and support women newcomers to run for the party and compensate for the low levels of personal campaign financing newcomers raise. Fine Gael's funding support for candidates may also reflect the fact that the party, unlike others, could afford to do this in 2016. It suggests that wealthier parties can use their financial resources to meet their obligations in gender quota systems.

Other well-resourced parties, such as Sinn Féin, were notable for their increased spend on women candidates in 2016 too. Opinion polls between the 2011 and 2016 general elections

[15] The outgoing TD John Perry was not reselected at the Fine Gael selection convention for the Sligo-Leitrim constituency in October 2015. In December 2015 he took a High Court action against Fine Gael, challenging the outcome of the selection convention. During the course of the court case, Fine Gael announced that it was adding Perry to the ticket in the Sligo-Leitrim.

[16] A party commission, independently chaired by academic and gender politics expert Professor Yvonne Galligan, was established to develop a candidate selection strategy for the nomination of women. For more details on the Markievicz Commission Report, please see https://www.fiannafail.ie/ff-leader-launches-markievicz-commission-report-to-boost-female-participation/ (accessed 9th July 2020

showed considerable growth in support for Sinn Féin and the party registered a significant increase in the proportion of women local councillors in the 2014 local elections (Buckley & Hofman, 2015). Sinn Féin's origins lie in the ethno-nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland and the party has been conscious of the need to feminise its public image since the 2002 general election (McGing, 2014). Targeting gains in new constituencies, and with a cohort of women with strong local profiles, Sinn Féin was well positioned to embrace both the *letter* and *spirit* of the new legislative gender quota.

Gender quotas engendering change?

Even in parties where evidence of sacrificial lamb behaviour is detected, the adoption of legislative gender quotas has resulted in positive changes in how political parties approach candidate selection. Parties can no longer overlook women's candidacy as it is simply too costly to do so. Coming from a low base of 16% women's candidacy across the 2007/2011 general elections, the 30% gender quota has seen the number of women running and winning, increase. The legislative gender quota has forced parties 'to do something' to address the under-representation of women in politics, and while some women were considered 'sweepers' in 2016, party strategists speak highly of the many good women candidates who came through this process that they have earmarked to contest future elections. Whether these women would have been identified if it were not for the gender quota is impossible to answer, but the gender quota has certainly given these women a platform to be noticed.

Yet, across all political parties in 2016 the primacy of some norms of candidate selection – incumbency and localism – still applied, demonstrating that on introduction, legislative gender quotas tend to co-exist with, rather than automatically replace, traditional norms of practice. Indeed as Mackay (2014) highlights, the extent to which new formal gender equality rules can alter existing practices is 'bounded' within existing norms, limiting innovation.

Conclusion

This study focuses on the first election after the introduction of gender quotas. Further research and continued observation is required to determine whether the party nominating decisions of the 'first gender quota election' are a short- or long-term phenomenon. A further caveat of the research is its low *n* size of women non-incumbents so caution must be exercised about the claims made. However, the paper does capture the full population of candidates who contested the 2007, 2011 and 2016 general elections, facilitating an assessment of the impact of the legislative gender quota on candidate selection in 2016. Examining candidate selection and focusing on factors related to candidate electability, prior to and while gender quotas are in place, facilitates an understanding of how political parties responded to the new gender quota law.

For the most part, there was a genuine engagement with the new measure. However, where a sacrificial strategy was pursued, our findings assert that gender was an important factor in this decision. This illustrates the continued entrenchment of masculinity and male power interests in Irish political parties and suggests that legislative gender quotas are just the start of a process to dismantle this obstacle to gender equality in politics.

While the findings are consistent with the notion that women candidates in some parties were nominated as sacrificial lambs, the context of these choices indicates consideration is needed to discern whether motivations are always cynical. In 2016, the extent to which political parties embraced the spirit of legislative gender quotas was mitigated by electoral context, male resistance, party resources and male incumbency. This suggests a temporal dimension, meaning different general elections will see different strategies pursued by different political parties. While research on the 2020 general is still at an embryonic stage, it would seem that Fianna Fáil had tougher candidate strategy choices to make than in 2016, largely due to the

increased presence of male incumbents. The party relied heavily on the add-on route to shore up its female candidacy rates in 2020 (Buckley & Galligan, 2020).

As highlighted in the theoretical section and in our findings, political parties do react to legislative gender quotas by selecting women to contest hopeless races. Tightening sanctions for compliance and using placement mandates have been introduced elsewhere to overcome this issue. In Argentina the electoral code specifies the selection of women where they have 'real chances of being elected'.

As well as selecting women to run in winnable seats, we also need to question the expectation that women nominated under a quota should *look like* men. Gender quotas create opportunities for women candidates, mostly new women candidates, to access the ballot paper. It is unsurprising then, that a political experiential gap is observed between these women and men (and other women) who have contested election frequently. However, confining candidacy criteria to those that advantage existing politicians is automatically putting new women on the backfoot. Instead, valuing the varied resources and qualities that these women newcomers bring to politics will change the terms of engagement and create new pathways to political success.

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Figures and Tables

FIGURE 1: MEAN PROBABILITY OF WINNING ELECTION BY PROPORTION OF ELECTION QUOTA EARNED IN FIRST PREFERENCE VOTE

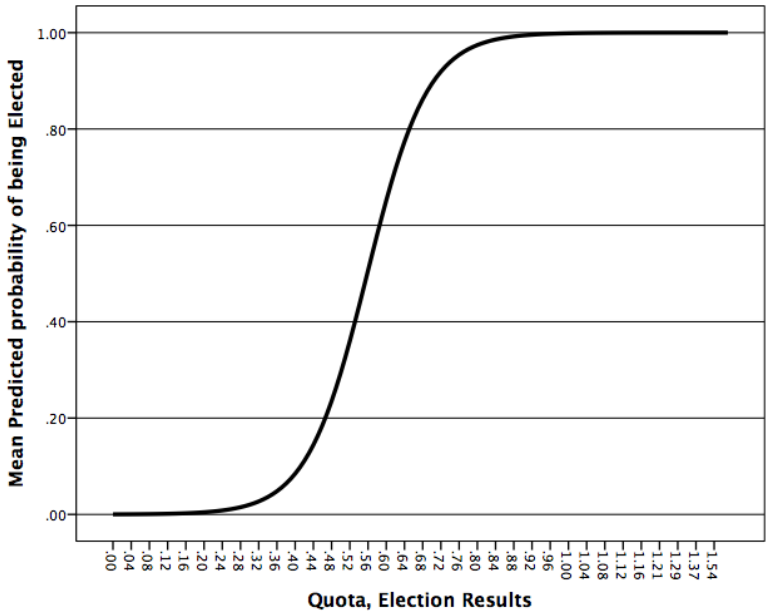


TABLE 1: WOMEN CANDIDATES AND TDs, 1973-2020

Election	Total Candidates	Female Candidates	Female Candidates Percent	Female TDs	Female TDs Percent	Success Rate Women Percent	Success Rate Men Percent
1973	334	16	4.8	4	2.7	25	44.0
1977	376	25	6.6	6	4.1	24	40.5
1981	404	41	10.1	11	6.6	26.8	42.7
Feb. 1982	366	35	9.6	8	4.8	22.9	47.7
Nov. 1982	365	31	8.5	14	8.4	45.2	45.5
1987	466	65	13.9	14	8.4	21.5	37.9
1989	371	52	14.0	13	7.8	25	48.0
1992	482	89	18.5	20	12.0	22.5	37.2
1997	484	96	19.8	20	12.0	20.8	37.6
2002	463	84	18.1	22[#]	13.3	26.2	38.0
2007	471	82	17.4	22	13.3	26.8	37.0
2011	566	86	15.2	25	15.1	29.1	29.4
2016	552	162	29.3	35	22.2	21.6	31.5

Source: Figures for 1977 to 2002 adapted from Galligan, 2005: 275; the 1973 figures were sourced from Gallagher, 2009: 283–320; figures for 2007, 2011 and 2016 are from the Ireland Elections Database compiled by the authors. Note that there were 144 total deputies in 1973 and 148 total deputies in 1977. From 1981 through 2011 elections, total number of deputies was 166. For 2016 through 2020 elections, total number of deputies was 158.

TABLE 2: GENDER BREAKDOWN OF CANDIDATES BY PARTY, 2007-2016

		2007	2011	2016
Fianna Fáil	Male	93 (87%)	65 (86%)	49 (69%)
	Female	14 (13%)	11 (15%)	22 (31%)
Fine Gael	Male	76 (84%)	88 (85%)	62 (70%)
	Female	15 (17%)	16 (15%)	27 (30%)
Sinn Féin	Male	31 (76%)	33 (81%)	32 (64%)
	Female	10 (24%)	8 (20%)	18 (36%)
Labour	Male	39 (78%)	50 (74%)	23 (64%)
	Female	11 (22%)	18 (27%)	13 (36%)
Other Parties	Male	75 (77%)	86 (84%)	110 (66%)
	Female	22 (23%)	17 (17%)	56 (34%)
Total (all parties)	Male	314 (81%)	322 (82%)	276 (66%)
	Female	72 (19%)	70 (18%)	136 (33%)

Party candidates only (includes incumbents and non-incumbents). Source: Ireland Elections Database, Compiled by Authors. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 3: CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALE NON-INCUMBENTS, PARTY CANDIDATES ONLY

	Fianna Fáil		Fine Gael		Sinn Féin		Labour		Other Parties	
	2007/ 2011	2016	2007/ 2011	2016	2007/ 2011	2016	2007/ 2011	2016	2007/ 2011	2016
Pct Won Election	.21	.27	.44	.24	.11	.29*	.24	.00	.09	.04
Mean Quota	.51	.47	.53	.34**	.29	.42	.42	.23**	.17	.13
Non-Competitive	.07	.05	.04	.47##	.44	.00##	.06	.50##	.79	.80
Candidate Spending	.44	.34	.42	.29*	.26	.29	.43	.31	.14	.11
Party Spending	.14	.14	.09	.18	.00	.01	.04	.03	.05	.01**
Total Spending	.57	.48	.51	.47	.26	.30	.47	.34	.19	.12
Prior Local Service	.64	.68	.84	.59	.22	.53	.71	.50	.74	.88
Any Prior Political Experience	.71	.73	.88	.59*	.33	.59	.77	1.00	.29	.12*
N	14	22	25	17	18	17	17	6	34	50

Female non-incumbent party candidates only Spending variables reflect proportion of spending limit. Source: Ireland Elections Database, Compiled by Authors. Independent Samples T-Test (two-tailed). *p<.05; ** p < .01; *** p <001. Pearson Chi Square (two-sided). # p<.05; ## p < .01; ### p < .001.

TABLE 4: BINARY LOGISTIC REGRESSION 1, PARTY CANDIDATES ONLY

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Election (Ref: 2007)						
2011 Election	-1.392***	-1.595***	-1.388***	-1.395***	-1.385***	-1.450***
2016 Election	-1.766***	-2.235***	-1.752***	-1.897***	-1.646***	-1.952***
Experience						
Incumbent	-2.479***	-2.551***	-2.487***	-2.446***	-2.480***	-2.500***
Local Office Experience	-1.219***	-1.230***	-1.215***	-1.218***	-1.225***	-1.246***
Spending						
Party Spending Proportion	-.182	-2.819	-.207	.004	-.210	-.893
Candidate Spend. Proportion	-7.093***	-7.056**	-7.101***	-7.171***	-6.985***	-6.938***
Party (Ref: Minor Party)						
Fianna Fáil	-3.216***	-2.978***	-3.159***	-3.294***	-3.214***	-3.298***
Fine Gael	-3.123***	-4.154***	-3.122***	-3.217***	-3.104***	-3.267***
Sinn Féin	-2.559***	-2.751***	-2.557***	-2.582***	-2.322***	-2.645***
Labour	-1.925***	-1.976***	-1.920***	-2.266***	-1.890***	-1.928***
Party Add-On	.520	.267	.528	.610	.526	.186
Sex (Female)	-.039	-.321	-.027	-.144	.053	-.175
Fine Gael Non-inc. Female 16	---	4.454***	---	---	---	---
Fianna Fáil Non-inc. Female 16	---	---	-.326	---	---	---
Labour Non-inc. Female 16	---	---	---	2.410*	---	---
Sinn Féin Non-inc. Fem. 16	---	---	---	---	-19.539	---
Female Add-On 2016	---	---	---	---	---	1.672*
Constant	4.634***	5.105***	4.623***	4.745***	4.523***	4.795***
n	1187	1187	1187	1187	1187	1187
X^2	904.936***	929.163***	905.014***	910.402***	910.169***	909.285***
Homer and Ledeshow Test	.286	.385	.359	.299	.321	.321
Cox and Snell R^2	.533	.543	.533	.536	.535	.535
Nagelkerke R^2	.770	.784	.770	.774	.773	.773

Sample: All candidates put forward by parties, 2007, 2011 & 2016 Elections (includes incumbent and non-incumbent candidates).
Dependent Variable: Non-Competitive Race; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

TABLE 5: CHANGES IN PREDICTED PROBABILITY OF RUNNING A NON-COMPETITIVE RACE

	Model 2	Model 4	Model 6
Election (Ref: 2007)			
2011 Election	-0.5	-1.2	-1.2
2016 Election	-4.6	-8.3	-8.5
Experience			
Incumbent	-0.6	-1.5	-1.5
Local Office Experience	-1.4	-3.7	-3.7
Spending			
Candidate Spend. Proportion	-6.5	-17.0	-15.2
Party (Ref: Minor Party)			
Fianna Fáil	-0.6	-8.4	-1.5
Fine Gael	-26.7	-27.5	-27.7
Sinn Féin	-0.5	-1.5	-1.4
Labour	-.0.5	-1.5	-1.3
Fine Gael Non-inc. Female 16	+33.1	---	---
Labour Non-inc. Female 16	---	+13.9	---
Female Add-On 2016	---	---	+6.2

Table 5 shows changes in predicted probabilities for statistically significant variables in Models 2, 4 and 6. Predicted probabilities were based on a male non-incumbent Fine Gael candidate running in the 2016 election, added through the ordinary nomination process, with local experience. Other variables are set to the mean or mode. Changes in predicted probabilities from the highest to lowest values of each variable are presented.