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Ethnicity, Gender and the Intersectional (Dis)Advantage in the Brussels Preferential Voting System.

Dynamic Process and Context Dependency

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Despite the increasing presence of women and ethnic minorities, elected assemblies remain largely dominated by ethnic majority men. Recent figures indicate that women make up on average 30 percent of the elected representatives in European national parliaments in 2020 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020) and the political presence of ethnic minority groups in Europe is still in its infancy after earlier waves of immigration across countries (Bird, 2005; Koopmans, 2005). The acknowledgment of the underrepresentation of these groups has led scholars to investigate the ongoing barriers hindering their (fair) political representation and the mechanisms enhancing their presence in elected bodies, notably gender quotas and reserved seats (Htun, 2004; Krook, 2003; Matland, 1998; Matland, 2005; Ruedin, 2013).

The number of women and ethnic minorities is considered as a primary indicator of political equality within institutions. According to Pitkin (1967), elected assemblies are thought to be descriptively representative when their composition mirrors or resembles the composition of the electorate. More than a question of strict proportionality, representation is inadequate when those who have been historically excluded are not recognized as being equally able to govern and are denied a voice in the deliberative process (Phillips, 1995; Young, 1990; Williams, 1998). The underrepresentation of marginalized groups therefore constitutes a democratic challenge because it undermines the legitimacy of political institutions and the quality of the deliberative process (Phillips, 1995; Williams, 1998).

However, the idea of descriptive representation as an indicator of political equality has been challenged by several researches indicating that the numerical presence of women and ethnic minorities does not necessarily translate into effective representation in terms of (positions of) power and influence in the policy-making process (Anwar, 1986; Hawkesworth, 2003; Heath, Schwindt-Bayer, and Taylor-Robinson, 2005). Besides, counting bodies of women and ethnic minorities sitting in parliaments overlooks within groups differences and the specific forms of marginalization that individuals with multiple marginalized identities undergo (Crenshaw, 1991; King, 1988; Mügge and Erzeel, 2016). Considering women and ethnic minorities as homogeneous categories ignores the presence -or absence- of individuals situated at the intersection (i.e. ethnic minority women) whose experiences of discrimination or privilege cannot be assimilated to those of their ethnic majority or male counterparts. Gender and ethnic equality in politics cannot be achieved if within groups differences are not accounted for, which

calls for considering intersectional identities when assessing the presence of descriptive representatives in elected assemblies (Celis and Erzeel, forthcoming).

As a research paradigm, intersectionality allows us to understand the complexity of the (dis)advantage experienced by individuals based on their intersectional identities. This (dis)advantage is shaped through the representational process, by a combination of mechanisms constituting the different dimensions of this process (Mügge and Erzeel, 2016; Severs et al., 2016). Crucial steps in this regard are the candidate selection and election stages because it ultimately determines who gets access to elected institutions. Marginalized groups members would not be present if they were not selected by parties then elected by voters (Norris, 2004). But incentives for parties to nominate these candidates and for voters to support them are generated by the social, cultural, political, and institutional context in which the (s)election process takes place. The context therefore needs to be accounted for in order to understand the dynamic mechanisms that define *when* and *how* marginalized identities lead to a (dis)advantage in politics (Rhode, 1998).

My research aims to highlight the role of the context in shaping the (dis)advantage experienced by individuals with (multiple) marginalized identities in the (s)election process. The objective of this research is to demonstrate how the behaviour of parties and voters towards marginalized groups members is influenced by the sociodemographic and institutional context, and how it shapes the barriers and opportunities faced by these groups to enter politics. By doing so, I provide empirical evidence of the complexity of the intersectional (dis)advantage and bring light on the importance of considering context factors to understand how the (dis)advantage is shaped and reshaped through the dynamic process of representation.

1.1. Inclusive democracy and the need for descriptive representatives

In her seminal work "The concept of representation", Pitkin (1967: 8-9) defined representation as "the making present *in some sense* of something which is nevertheless *not* present literally or in fact". This definition takes up several meanings, depending on the context and circumstances to which the definition applies. Pitkin distinguished among four views of representation: symbolic, descriptive, substantive and formalistic. The two formers consider how representatives *stand for* the represented. Symbolic representation, on the one hand, refers to what representatives symbolize or embody and whether they trigger emotions or beliefs in the mind of the represented. Descriptive representation, on the other hand, emphasizes the characteristics of representatives, how they look like, and whether their traits sufficiently mirror those of the represented. Substantive representation then relates to how representatives *act for* the represented in the policy-making process. Finally, formalistic representation refers to the process through which representatives receive their authorization to act for the represented and the mechanisms ensuring their accountability to them. While Pitkin considered these views as incomplete by themselves, she nonetheless sometimes opposed them or emphasized their exclusive nature towards one another.

According to her, what matters most is representatives' activities within parliaments and the legislative outcome. In this respect, she notably questioned the argument that shared descriptive traits are a sufficient condition to allow representatives to act for the represented they mirror since it does not determine how representatives will actually act. She considers descriptive representation as a *passive way* of representing and assimilates it to an activity only in the sense of giving (accurate) information about the represented. Pitkin further questions the information that needs to be reproduced. She asserts that "politically significant characteristics vary with time and place" and that new demands for political inclusion result from the changing conceptual relevance of these characteristics (Pitkin, 1967: 87). These questions led to many developments in the field of group representation theory regarding the importance of having descriptive representatives and the democratic deficit inherent to the underrepresentation of social groups (Phillips, 1995; Mansbridge, 1999; Williams, 1998; Young, 1990).

According to Griffiths and Wollheim (1960: 212), "representative assemblies [are] primarily the places where discussion or debate occurs". Yet, debate can only occur among individuals who hold different opinions and perspectives on how society works and how it should work, and these different views can only be carried forward by individuals living distinct experiences

of discrimination and privilege within society. The quality of the deliberative process thus relies on the capacity of various groups to equally participate and on the willingness of the dominant group to hear the voices of marginalized groups and to let these voices change their own preferences and ideas (Mansbridge, 1998). The process is considered as inclusive, not only when descriptive representatives are present, but when they are able to communicate their experiences in order to substantively influence decision making (Young, 2002).

The need for descriptive representatives comes from the acknowledgement that historically disadvantaged groups have been unjustly denied a voice in the deliberative process, which notably implies that their interests have been overlooked (Phillips, 1995; Williams, 1998; Young, 1990). As members of specific social groups, descriptive representatives are thought to be more likely to act in the interest of their own group, or to influence policies in a manner that is influenced by their own history (Mansbridge, 1999; Phillips, 1995; Phillips, 1998). Experiences of marginalization and/or privilege result from the unequal position of social groups within societies (Young, 2002). Young (2002: 90) defined social groups as "collectives of persons differentiated from others by cultural forms, practices, special needs or capacities, structures of power or privilege" emerging from "the way people interact". Social groups are perceived by others based on their difference to them, and their relations to other groups shape individuals' experience of oppression and discrimination (Young, 2002). Concretely, being a woman and/or an ethnic minority group member determines one's social position towards other gender and ethnic groups, and this position shapes their experience of marginalization and/or privilege. Women or ethnic minorities are thus not thought to better represent their gender and ethnic group because they are women or have an ethnic minority background, but because they *share the experience of being a woman or an ethnic minority* (Mansbridge, 1999; Williams, 1998).

Yet, while shared traits are a prerequisite for shared experience, it does not ensure that representatives sharing those traits will give accurate information about the position and experiences of their social group within society (Celis and Erzeel, forthcoming; Dovi, 2002; Williams, 1998). In this respect, Dovi (2002: 729) asserted that "preferable descriptive representatives have strong *mutual* relationships with *dispossessed* subgroups". Her criterion entails several aspects. First, the representative and the represented must recognize each other as members of the same group and share a sense of "linked fate" (Dovi, 2002: 736). Preferable descriptive representatives must engage with and share the aims of their community. Then, groups who need to be represented are those who have historically been unfairly and

systemically excluded from politics (Dovi, 2002; see also: Phillips, 1995; Williams, 1998; Young, 1990). Although the presence of preferable descriptive representatives does not guarantee that substantive outcomes will be met, it nonetheless symbolically attests the political and societal relevance of their representation. Phillips (1995, 2012) relies on the symbolic view of representation to argue in favor of descriptive representation when she asserts that "descriptive representation matters in and of itself", because of what it symbolizes in terms of *inclusion* (Phillips, 2012: 516). It is not only a matter of how descriptive representatives look like, but also of who gets in since this brings information about society itself. This somehow links back to the political relevance of the characteristics that should or need to be descriptively represented that Pitkin (1967) questioned. If being present symbolizes having a relevant voice of their own, the absence of specific groups suggests that their voice does not count and that they are not recognized as full members of society (Phillips, 2012: 517).

1.2. Gender, ethnicity, and the recognition of intersectional identities

Group politics have for long been conceived around gender and racial/ethnic groups without recognizing their multiple dimensions and, as such, have been inadequate in providing an accurate picture of the experience of (all) women and ethnic groups in society (Crenshaw, 1991). Indeed, essentialist categorizations of gender and ethnic groups have lead feminist and antiracist politics to be mainly thought and conceived around the intersectional identities of the dominant figures of gender and racial/ethnic groups (Crenshaw, 1991; King, 1988).

This notion of dominant figures can notably be illustrated by the competition between Barack Obama, a Black man, and Hillary Clinton, a white woman, during the US primaries of the Democratic party in 2008. Both Obama and Clinton represented the democratic challenges faced by modern Western societies: the inclusion of ethnic/racial minorities on the one hand and women on the other hand. These distinct considerations on subordinate groups result from androcentric and ethnocentric tendencies that respectively view men and ethnic majority individuals as prototypical members of societies. Based on these views, ethnic majority men represent the dominant group, as shown in Table 1.1. But these tendencies also define prototypicality within non-dominant, subordinate groups (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008). While ethnic majority women and ethnic minority men have *single* subordinate identities in relation to the dominant social group, being an ethnic majority and a man define their prototypicality within their respective gender and ethnic group (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach,

2008). Hence, as a Black *man* and a *white/ethnic majority* woman, Obama and Clinton also represent *prototypical*, dominant figures of the Black and women group respectively (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008).

Table 1.1. Dominant and subordinate identities.

Constituent group	Ethnic majority	Ethnic minority
Men	Dominant identity	Single subordinate identity
Women	Single subordinate identity	Multiple subordinate identity

Note: this conceptualization is based on the concepts developed by Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008).

Individuals with *multiple* subordinate identities, i.e. ethnic minority women, are not conceived as prototypical figures of either of their constituent groups (women and ethnic minorities), and as such experience a so called "intersectional invisibility" (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008). This intersectional invisibility is notably manifest in the strategies and actions that aim to tackle racism and sexism in the social, economic, or political spheres of society. For instance, Hughes' empirical research (2011) has shown that gender and ethnic quotas benefit more the prototypical figures of the marginalized group targeted by the quotas, i.e. *ethnic majority* women and ethnic minority *men*, than non-prototypical individuals. Because antiracist and feminist strategies are often grounded on the prototypical figures, they ignore or fail to recognize the special needs of individuals situated at the intersection (Crenshaw, 1991; King, 1988). This is problematic because the discriminations experienced by women and ethnic minority or racial groups are not alike, and they notably differ in scope and intensity (Htun, 2004; King, 1988). Hence, the assimilation of ethnic minority women to the (ethnic majority) women group or to the ethnic minority (male) group overlooks the respective ethnic and gender discriminations that ethnic minority women experience within each of their subordinate group, which reinforces their marginalization.

Black women's experience of discrimination has been described as a "double jeopardy" in early Black feminist theory (Beal, 1970; King, 1988). As women *and* Blacks, they were thought to endure the cumulative burden of gender and ethnic discriminations (King, 1988). But rather

than additive discriminations, ethnic minority women experience *intersecting* and *interdependent* patterns of subordination that are more than the sum of racism and sexism (Crenshaw, 1991; Hancock, 2007; King, 1988). Taking the sexual exploitation of Black women slaves as an example, King (1988: 47) asserted that this form of oppression could only exist *in relation to* racist (and classist) forms of oppression, which differentiates Black women's sexual exploitation to that of their white counterparts. Therefore, ethnic minority women's interests remain misrepresented when their voice is assimilated to that of their male and ethnic majority counterparts because none of these experiences translate those of ethnic minority women (Celis and Mügge, 2018).

1.3. The intersectional (dis)advantage: power, process, and context

Taking an intersectional approach to group representation allows us to understand that not all women, nor all men, get access to (positions of) power within political institutions (Celis and Lovenduski, 2018). Yet, perhaps contrary to what early Black feminist theorists suggested, ethnic minority women's double minority status does not necessarily constitute a "double jeopardy" in all representational processes at all times. Subordinate identities, either single or multiple, can also lead to an advantage, depending on the context and on the reference group (King, 1988; Mügge and Erzeel, 2016). For instance, empirical researches have shown that ethnic minority women can benefit from their double minority status in what is called a "complementarity advantage" in the selection process (Celis and Erzeel, 2017; Mügge and Erzeel, 2016). As subordinate identities do not lead to unalterable marginalized or privileged positions, intersectionality allows us to consider the (dis)advantage as being shaped and reshaped through dynamic social interactions, rather than to consider inequalities as reflecting pre-existing and stable structures of domination in societies (Severs et al., 2016).

(Positions of) power have historically been in the hands of ethnic majority men, by and for which "institutions were originally constructed" (Bjarnegård, 2018: 7). Despite the increasing inclusion of women and ethnic minorities, institutions continue to be gendered and racialized as they reinforce and maintain political hierarchies between and among gender and ethnic groups (Hawkesworth, 2003). Masculinity remains the political norm defining appropriate competences and behaviour (Bjarnegård, 2018). According to Bjarnegård (2018), the reproduction of masculine norms and practices within political institutions encompasses the reinforcement of male power and the resistance to newcomers in politics. These inherent

patterns of inclusion and exclusion rely on the gendered and racialized access to essential political resources that explicitly or implicitly benefit those who are considered as "similar" or who are already in place (i.e. resources that turn into homosocial capital), or simply benefit ethnic majority men as such (i.e. resources that turn into male capital) (Bjarnegård, 2018). This differenciated access to valuable resources among gender and ethnic groups might make it more difficult for women and ethnic minorities to access (positions of) power, e.g. to get selected on higher or eligible list positions and to get voters' support.

However, attractive political resources are defined in relation to a particular context. Social difference (in relation to the dominant group) can in this respect be considered as a valuable resource as well (Young, 2002) notably when departing from the dominant norm can benefit those already in place in some ways. This is for instance the case of the "complementarity advantage" for ethnic minority women in the (s)election process higlighted by Celis and Erzeel (2017). Their study indicates that the selection of ethnic minority women on candidate lists allows party leaders to maximize diversity on their list while limiting the inclusion of newcomers and, thus, maintaining incumbents' (more often ethnic majority men) advantage. As the authors indicate, the "complementarity advantage" depends to some extent on the political salience of social groups' identities. Cultural and societal factors are important in this regard, because they generate pressure from below for the inclusion of newcomers in politics, by influencing the saliency and politicization of specific cleavages or identities in society.

The broader cultural, social, economic, and political context therefore determines *when* and *how* intersectional identities lead to a (dis)advantage in the representational process (Hancock, 2007; Mügge and Erzeel, 2016; Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008; Rhode, 1998). The context, however, does not have a causal effect on social positions and power hierarchies (Celis and Lovenduski, 2018: 152). Instead, these positions are the result of *power struggles* that take place in a particular setting that enhances or hinders the capacity of specific groups to exert power over other groups (Celis and Lovenduski, 2018). In this perspective, the context *conditions* rather than determines newcomers' access to politics while the notion of power struggles suggests that privileved and marginalized positions are (re)defined through a dynamic process of representation that opposes actions contributing to the inclusion of specific groups and resistances to these actions (Celis and Lovenduski, 2018). The advantage (inclusion) and disadvantage (exclusion) experienced by marginalized groups members is thus shaped through dynamic power relations that cannot be understood outside the specific context in which they take place.

1.4. Aim of the research

The aim of the present research is to offer an empirical perspective on the dynamic and contextual nature of the intersectional (dis)advantage by focusing on the role of the actors involved in the representational process. I focus more specifically on the (s)election stage as it ultimately shapes descriptive representation within elected assemblies.

I take as a starting point the assumption that the behaviour of political actors involved in this process matters more than electoral rules (Norris, 2004). Electoral systems frame political actors' behaviour. They determine the number of candidates that parties can nominate, and how these candidates should look like (e.g. in the presence of gender/ethnic quotas). They also determine whether and how voters can support individual candidates and/or party lists. In this respect, some electoral systems are thought to give *more opportunities* for the inclusion of gender and ethnic minority groups than others. This is notably the case of proportional representation (PR) systems with preferential voting because they allow parties to select a larger pool of candidates and voters to cast vote(s) for individual candidates. However, parties' incentives to nominate women and ethnic minorities and voters' support for these candidates depend on a set of external factors. Hence, despite increasing the opportunities for the inclusion of diversity, PR systems never guarantee as such that women or ethnic minority groups will get included.

Empirical researches have nonetheless shown that PR systems undeniably contribute to fairer levels of women representation (Matland, 1998; Rule, 1987), but this effect is much less evident for ethnic minorities (Ruedin, 2013; Moser, 2008). Other factors, in particular the sociodemographic make-up of the electorate, appear to be more determinant for ethnic minority representation because it influences ethnic minority voters' leverage (Ruedin, 2013; Dancygier, 2014; Trounstine and Valdini, 2008). Moreover, Hughes (2016) has shown that PR systems benefit all kinds of women (ethnic majority and minority) compared to majoritarian systems, while ethnic minority men get elected across a range of electoral systems. Here again, other factors than the electoral system might explain not only which group(s), but also who within those groups get opportunities to get included. Dancygier's recent research (2017) has indeed shown that gendered outcomes of ethnic minority inclusion can be explained by the sociodemographic make-up of the electorate. Hence, not all women, nor all ethnic minorities, face equal opportunities in the (s)election process, and these opportunities depend to some extent on local demographic factors and on the possibility for the electorate to express

preferences for individual candidates. In this research, I aim to contribute to the existing literature on group representation and intersectionality by empirically showing how preferential voting systems shape intersectional inequalities through the electoral process, and how these inequalities are determined by the sociodemographic make-up of the district electorate.

The assumption that PR systems generate more opportunities for members of marginalized groups relies on the possibility for parties to nominate a larger pool of candidates. In this respect, parties are key actors in the representational process because of their gatekeeping role in the selection process (i.e. they decide who stands as candidate). Whether they nominate a diverse pool of candidates in the first place determines to some extent the degree of diversity among elected assemblies. By selecting candidates with (multiple) marginalized identities, they give them a chance to get elected to parliament but also symbolically recognize them as full members of society who can legitimately run in the election and realistically aspire to stand and act for their own group(s). Selection therefore represents the first institutional hurdle that individuals need to overcome in their pathways to power but represents also a major symbolic step for their group(s)'s political inclusion.

Parties' decision to nominate candidates with characteristics that depart from the prototypical candidate (i.e. ethnic majority/white, male) is notably influenced by electoral considerations (i.e. the expected vote gains and losses). These considerations are based on the preferences of their electorate for these (non-prototypical) candidates and on the possibility for the electorate to efficiently signal these preferences to parties through preferential voting (Valdini, 2006; Dancygier, 2017). The relationship between voters' demand and parties' supply in preferential voting systems is moderated by context factors. The process depicted in Figure 1.1 shows that the sociodemographic context (i.e. the sociodemographic make-up of the district electorate) shapes (the efficiency of) voters' demand for diversity, while incentives for parties to respond to this (efficient) demand is somehow constrained by the institutional context (i.e. electoral rules). In depth, voters' demand for diversity is manifest in their support for candidates departing from the prototypical figure, such as women and/or ethnic minorities. Whether and how voters' support for individual candidates generates vote gains or losses depends on the strength of the electorate, which relies on its sociodemographic make-up. In turn, this influences parties' inclusion strategies and electoral supply.

Figure 1.1. Contextual perspective on the interlocked roles of parties, candidates, and voters in the (s)election process.
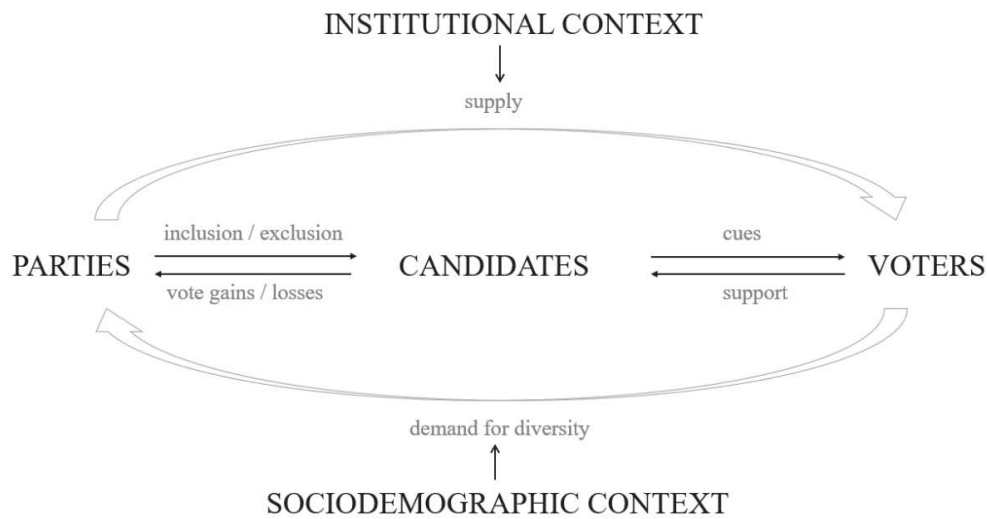
This contextual perspective on the role of parties, candidates, and voters constitutes the guiding concept through which I aim to explain what shapes intersectional outcomes in a preferential voting system. The thesis thus draws on the idea of the (s)election process as a *dynamic* process in which parties, voters, and candidates' roles are closely intertwined in shaping the intersectional (dis)advantage.

1.5. The Belgian (Brussels) local context

The role of parties and voters is the most salient in PR preferential voting systems because parties have the possibility to nominate a large pool of candidates while voters can support their most preferred candidates. Such system is therefore ideal to investigate parties and voters' behaviour towards candidates with (multiple) marginalized identities. I chose to focus on the Belgian local context, more specifically on Brussels where the preferential voting system is particularly strong (i.e. preference votes have a strong influence on electoral outcomes).

This institutional context associated with an important concentration of voters with an ethnic minority background in several municipalities contribute to the representation of ethnic minorities in politics. Ethnicity became strongly politicized in local elections from the 1990s

onwards, as citizens of immigrant origin started to increasingly enter elected assemblies (Martiniello and Hily, 1998). The ongoing politicization of ethnicity gives both left- and right-wing parties incentives to compete for the ethnic vote by nominating ethnic minority candidates (Janssen et al., 2017). At the same time, the presence of gender quotas constrains parties to find a balance between incentives to nominate ethnic minorities and obligation to nominate equal pools of male and female candidates. Existing studies suggest that such setting is likely to give ethnic minority women a "complementarity advantage" in the selection process, especially when parties have to appeal to a broad set of voters (Celis and Erzeel, 2017).

Hence, the Brussels local setting allows me to investigate how party nomination strategies generate intersectional outcomes in a context where parties are constrained by gender quotas laws but have incentives to nominate ethnic minority candidates to maximize their vote share. The preferential voting system then allows me to analyze voters' preferences when faced with a large pool of ethnic majority/minority male and female candidates among which they can cast multiple preference votes.

1.6. Structure of the research project

The project includes four papers, each of them focusing on specific aspects of the relationships depicted in Figure 1.1. The first paper considers the role of party nomination strategies in generating gendered outcomes for ethnic minority groups in the electoral process. Empirical researches have shown that the sociodemographic make-up of the district electorate (the concentration of ethnic minority groups) determines the emergence and inclusion of ethnic minority candidates (Dancygier, 2014; Ruedin, 2009; Farrer and Zingher, 2018). Parties are considered as rational actors whose aim is to maximize their vote share. The nomination of ethnic minority candidates in districts where ethnic minority groups are more concentrated can be analyzed as a vote-based strategy for parties (Dancygier, 2017). This strategy is especially relevant when the electoral system allows for ethnic minority voters to mobilize around ethnic minority candidates to generate a strong "ethnic vote", as is the case in (strong) preferential voting systems (Janssen et al., 2017; Schönwälder, 2013). In this paper, I argue that the sociodemographic make-up of the electorate not only determines parties' propensity to nominate ethnic minority candidates, but also whether they nominate ethnic minority men or women.

Parties' inclusion strategies rely on their anticipation of voters' reaction towards women and ethnic minority candidates (Valdini, 2006; Dancygier, 2017). In her recent research, Dancygier (2017) suggests that parties are likely to follow vote-based inclusion strategies in districts where the ethnic vote might be determinant for them to win seats. In that case, parties' preferred choice will be ethnic minority men, because ethnic minority voters tend to be more supportive of ethnic minority male candidates than of their female counterparts. On the contrary, parties might be more willing to nominate ethnic minority women in districts where the cost of nominating ethnic minority candidates outweigh its benefit. The symbolic inclusion of ethnic minority women then allows parties to please more cosmopolitan parts of their electorate in less diverse districts while limiting the risk of a potential backlash from more conservative parts.

Voters' attitudes towards ethnic minority candidates can indeed be influenced by candidates' gender (Citrin et al., 1990). Many researches have shown that ethnic minority candidates are often associated with negative stereotypes in Western societies (McConnaughy et al., 2010; Fisher et al., 2015). Nevertheless, ethnic minority female candidates somehow "soften" the racial bias towards ethnic minority candidates by symbolizing positive integration (Celis and Erzeel, 2017; Murray, 2016; Dancygier, 2017). Conversely, ethnic minority men are more likely to be associated with negative stereotypes related to crime and terrorism (Celis and Erzeel, 2017). How voters react to the inclusion of ethnic minority men and women on party lists depends thus on their own ideological views. Right-wing, conservative voters are more likely to hold negative views on immigration and integration, and to react negatively towards ethnic minority candidates (Besco, 2018). These attitudes could be particularly heightened in the presence of ethnic minority male candidates. I therefore also test in this paper how parties' inclusion strategies vary according to their ideology. Hence, our first research question is:

> ***RQ₁.*** *(How) Are parties' nomination strategies regarding ethnic minority candidates gendered, and (how) are they shaped by their ideological orientation and/or the composition of the district electorate?*

Since parties anticipate voters' reaction towards ethnic minority male or female candidates, the next step in this research is to directly investigate voters' preference for ethnic minority male and female candidates. Compared to majoritarian systems, preferential voting systems truly offer the choice for voters to support their preferred candidates, especially when they have the

possibility to cast several preference votes as is the case in Belgium. Voters' preference(s) for individual candidates are expected to vary according to candidates' gender and ethnicity. Previous empirical researches have notably shown that voters prefer candidates with whom they share similar traits, notably in terms of gender and ethnicity (McConnaughy et al., 2010; Teney et al., 2010; van Erkel, 2019). Building on the literature on gender and ethnic affinity voting, this second paper aims to analyze how voters' gender and ethnic background shape their preference for ethnic minority male or female candidates. This study fills an important gap in the current literature, since researches focusing on the interaction of both voters and candidates' gender and ethnicity remain scarce (but see: Bird et al., 2016), and inexistent in PR settings. Our second research question therefore asks:

> **RQ₂.** *How do voters' gender and ethnic background shape their preference for ethnic minority male and female candidates?*

Knowing about voters' preference is essential, because it allows us to know how voters cast their vote for individual candidates and when, and to what extent, candidates' personal traits constitute a (dis)advantage for them in the electoral process. In the third paper, I therefore investigate how these aggregated preferences shape candidates' electoral success in terms of preference votes. Several researches have shown that candidates' ethnicity has an important influence on their electoral success (Portmann and Stojanović, 2019; Fisher et al., 2015; Besco, 2018; Street, 2014). In particular, ethnic minority candidates proved to be more successful in districts where the minority electorate is strongly concentrated because they are more likely to attract minority voters based on shared traits (Janssen, 2020; van der Zwan et al., 2020). But to what extent does this advantage hold when we control for other factors that are known to influence candidates' electoral success in the context of intraparty competition?

Researches have notably shown that women receive less preference votes than their male counterparts, and that it is somehow linked to a systematic bias related to parties who place women on lower list positions, which influences their campaign spending and media attention (Wauters et al., 2010). Dancygier (2017) has further found a similar gender gap in preferential voting among ethnic minority candidates. Beside demographic traits, it is also largely acknowledged that incumbency and list positions are powerful determinant of candidates' electoral success (Dahlgaard, 2016; Marcinkiewicz and Stegmaier, 2015; Geys and Heyndels, 2003). I thus investigate whether these other cues moderate the effect of ethnicity on

candidates' electoral success. Building on the literature on intraparty competition, the question I ask in this paper is:

RQ3. *When and how does ethnicity contribute to candidates' (dis)advantage regarding their co-partisans?*

Finally, I consider how these different aspects taken together shape the outcome of the (s)election process for ethnic minority/majority male and female candidates. In the last paper, I show that even though PR systems with preferential voting generate more opportunities for the representation of women and ethnic minorities, not all women, nor all ethnic minorities do get elected. I highlight how our understanding of the intersectional (dis)advantage depends on our definition of social groups and on the reference category that is considered. I further question the idea of an "ideal" electoral system for the representation of marginalized groups by emphasizing the importance of the (local) context in shaping voters and parties' behaviour. The fourth research question thus finally asks:

RQ4. *What shapes the intersectional (dis)advantage under PR rules?*

To summarize, the research project aims to answer the following questions:

RQ1. *(How) Are parties' nomination strategies regarding ethnic minority candidates gendered, and (how) are they shaped by their ideological orientation and/or the composition of the district electorate?*

RQ2. *How do voters' gender and ethnic background shape their preference for ethnic minority male and female candidates?*

RQ3. *When and how does ethnicity contribute to candidates' (dis)advantage regarding their co-partisans?*

RQ4. *What shapes the intersectional (dis)advantage under PR rules?*

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6. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to provide a better understanding of the intersectional nature of group representation by investigating how the intersectional (dis)advantage is shaped through the electoral process in the Brussels preferential voting system. I focused on PR systems with preferential voting because they are thought to provide more opportunities than other electoral systems for the inclusion of diverse candidates by allowing parties to select a larger pool of candidates and voters to support their preferred candidate(s). I considered parties as rational actors whose primary goal is to maximize their vote share in order to win seats. Incentives for parties to include candidates whose identity departs from the prototypical figure of the "white"/ethnic majority male then depend on the electoral benefits or costs they expect from the inclusion of these candidates.

The effect of preferential voting systems on group representation depends much on the key gatekeeping role of parties in selecting candidates with (multiple) marginalized identities and on voters casting votes for these candidates. More than the electoral system itself, it is thus parties and voters' intertwined roles and behaviour in the (s)election process that ultimately determine who gets represented within elected assemblies. In the present research, I aimed to understand the intersectional (dis)advantage by focusing on the key role of these actors. By doing so, I moved beyond the idea that electoral systems are the main determinants of group representation to rather consider whether and how parties' supply and voters' demand for diversity are mediated by the electoral system and the sociodemographic context. This research therefore highlights the necessity to consider *relationships* between actors as well as between actors and their environment and shows how these dynamic interactions determine *when* and *how* intersectional identities lead to a (dis)advantage in the electoral process.

I considered Brussels local elections as a relevant case to study the intersectional inclusion of women and ethnic minorities because of its strong preferential voting system and its diverse sociodemographic context. Previous research has shown that the latter is particularly determinant for ethnic minority group representation because the geographical concentration of ethnic minority groups influences their electoral leverage. In this research, I built on these findings and considered ethnic minority candidates' (s)election in light of the sociodemographic context. By doing so, I assume the existence of an ethnic-based link between candidates and voters that shapes parties' electoral expectations. Yet, it should be

acknowledged that ethnic minority candidates and voters cannot be reduced to their ethnicity and that non-ethnic related factors might as well shape the link between parties and candidates and candidates and voters. Nonetheless, this research empirically shows that the sociodemographic context indeed influences whether ethnic minority groups get included in politics but that it also determines who, within those groups, gets included. In the articles constituting this volume, I focused on candidates and voters with a Maghrebian background because of their strong politicization in the Brussels political context. In the next sections, I refer to them as "ethnic minorities".

This concluding section will be organized in five parts. I start by answering the four research questions presented in the introduction and synthetize my findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the intersectional (dis)advantage is shaped through the electoral process. In the next two sections, I address three contributions I make to the existing theory and literature. In the second section, I explain how my research contributes to the literature on group representation and intersectionality by empirically showing how positions of privilege and marginalization are determined by individuals' intersectional identities and are (re)constructed through the electoral process. I first discuss the necessity to consider intersectionality in group representation studies as neither gender nor ethnicity alone explains the (dis)advantages experienced by individuals in the electoral process. Then, I further discuss the need to contextualize intersectional identities and I link these considerations to the notion of power in its empirical aspect. This contributes to the institutionalism literature by showing how competition over power, i.e. candidates competing over (higher) list positions or preference votes, is shaped by societal and cultural pressures altering existing institutional norms and practices by generating incentives and opportunities for new members to get included. In the third section, I discuss how parties and voters' behaviour and strategies are strongly intertwined in a dynamic electoral process. I put into perspective the role of parties and voters with the electoral system and the sociodemographic context and question the idea of a "best" electoral system for group representation. I then discuss how this dynamic process affects the descriptive and non-descriptive aspects of representation for intersectional identity groups. In the fourth part, I critically consider the methodology used and the limitations of this research. In the fifth and final part of the conclusion, I suggest several avenues for future research.

6.1. The interlocked roles of parties, candidates, and voters in the electoral process: towards a comprehensive understanding

This research answers four questions that zoom in on specific relationships between actors and/or between actors and the institutional and sociodemographic context. The first question relates to parties and their key role as gatekeepers in the electoral process. It zooms in on the relationship between parties and candidates by questioning the inclusion and exclusion mechanisms at play regarding ethnic minority candidates. The research question asks *whether and how parties' nomination strategies regarding ethnic minority candidates are gendered, and whether and how they are shaped by their ideological orientation and/or the composition of the district electorate*.

The second research question zooms in on the relationship between voters and candidates and investigates *how and to what extent voters' gender and ethnic background shape their preference for ethnic minority male and female candidates*. The objective here is to explain voters' behaviour towards ethnic minority candidates, and whether and how it is influenced by these candidates' gender.

The third research question then asks *when and how does ethnicity contribute to candidates' (dis)advantage regarding their co-partisans?* Through this question, I aim to investigate whether and how ethnicity as a voting cue influences candidates' electoral success and whether and how the relationship between candidates' ethnicity and their electoral score is moderated by other cues. This question zooms in on the relationship between voters and candidates as it considers how candidates' traits allow them to attract more or less preference votes. Besides, it also zooms in on the relationship between candidates and parties as it highlights the vote gains that individual candidates represent for parties.

The fourth and last question finally asks *what shapes the intersectional (dis)advantage under PR rules*. It aims to consider how the institutional and sociodemographic context influence parties' supply and voters' demand for diversity, and how this dynamic process shapes intersectional outcomes.

I answer these different research questions in the next subsections.

6.1.1. Parties and candidates: inclusion strategies

The empirical results presented in the different papers, and in the first one in particular, show that parties' nomination strategies regarding ethnic minority candidates are indeed gendered, in the sense that ethnic minority men and women do not stand the same chances to get included across party lists and across districts. More precisely, both the party ideological orientation and the sociodemographic context influence the propensity for parties to nominate a higher proportion of men or women among ethnic minority candidates. The results showed that the gender imbalance among ethnic minority candidates on socialist, Green, and liberal party lists goes in favour of women in districts with a lower concentration of ethnic minority voters, while it goes in favour of men in ethnically dense districts where the ethnic vote might be determinant for parties to maximize their vote share. However, centrist lists tend to nominate more ethnic minority men than ethnic minority women, and this regardless of the sociodemographic make-up of the district electorate.

The findings further show that, regardless the district concentration of ethnic minorities, ethnic minority women tend to experience a complementarity advantage on top list positions. These findings contribute to our understanding of the (dis)advantage experienced by ethnic minority women and men in the electoral process by highlighting its *conditionality*. Ethnic minority women's multiple subordinate identity does not generate *as such* a double disadvantage in politics. Depending on what we consider (gender imbalance among ethnic minority candidates or visible list positions), and where we consider it (on which party list and/or in which district), ethnic minority women experience an advantage and/or a disadvantage.

A potential explanation for these patterns can be found in the electoral considerations shaping parties' inclusion strategies. The findings presented in the previous paragraph indeed empirically demonstrate the existence of symbolic and vote-based inclusion strategies described by Dancygier (2017) about Muslims. Dancygier asserted that parties would be more likely to select Muslim *men* in districts where the Muslim electorate is larger because they expect male candidates to be more likely than their female counterparts to trigger votes among the Muslim community. This strategy is considered as "vote-based" because parties aim to maximize their vote share by tapping into the ethnic (Muslim) vote. Conversely, parties prefer Muslim women in districts where Muslim voters are not "pivotal voters" because Muslim women running as candidates symbolize a positive integration to Western values (Dancygier, 2017: 150). Their inclusion in these districts then aims to please more cosmopolitan voters

116

while reducing the risk of a strong backlash from more conservative voters. Variations in the gender imbalance among Maghrebian origin candidates across districts mentioned above reflect these notions of symbolic and vote-based inclusion strategies and confirm the importance of electoral considerations for parties when choosing which Maghrebian origin candidate to include in which district.

6.1.2. Voters' behaviour towards (ethnic minority) candidates

The second research question is then mainly answered through the findings presented in the second paper. These findings show that voters' gender and ethnicity alone do not explain voters' behaviour towards ethnic minority candidates, but they rather interact in specific ways to shape voters' likelihood to support ethnic minority male or female candidates. The presence of a gender affinity effect among voters is conditional upon ethnicity. Indeed, female (male) voters are more likely to support ethnic minority female (male) candidates only when they share the same ethnic background. Ethnic majority voters' support for ethnic minority candidates is less driven by gender. Ethnic majority voters are not more likely to support same-sex ethnic minority candidates, nor are they more likely to support ethnic minority men over ethnic minority women, or *vice versa*. In other words, these findings suggest that how candidates' gender plays out in voters' preference for ethnic minority candidates depends mainly on voters' ethnic background. I now build up on the argument according to which gender and ethnicity represent distinct cleavages within societies to propose an explanation for these differences.

This argument was notably mobilized in the fourth paper constituting this volume and pictured in Figure 5.1. In that paper, I differentiated between gender and ethnicity and asserted that:

> "Gender is a social construct based on sex differences that *is reproduced within social groups* (Acker, 1992) while ethnicity suggests an identity based on cultural traits that *differentiates across social groups*." (p.87)

I further relied on Htun's distinction (2004) between gender as a category and ethnicity as a community to explain how and why ethnic minority women represent *a category within a community*, and how and why this might lead to an intersectional invisibility. Yet, the findings of the second paper do not support this assumption since ethnic minority female voters are

more likely to support ethnic minority women and ethnic majority voters do not prefer ethnic minority men over ethnic minority women. This suggests two things. First, gender differences play out *within community groups*, but not necessarily *across* them. This obviously makes us wonder whether this is the case within all community groups and calls for more (comparative) researches on the gender affinity effect within different ethnic groups. Second, community differences are more salient and do not necessarily interact with gender differences to define in/outgroup distinctions.

These findings have several implications for democracy and representation in general considering the gendered nature of parties' nomination strategies regarding ethnic minority candidates. First, we saw earlier that ethnic minority women outnumber their male counterparts in districts where ethnic minority voters are less concentrated, while the reverse is observed in ethnically dense districts. Since ethnic minority male (female) voters prefer ethnic minority male (female) candidates, there is an imbalance between parties' supply and (ethnic minority) voters' demand in the sense that parties' electoral supply does not meet ethnic minority female voters' demand in terms of ethnic minority female candidates. This is particularly alarming in ethnically dense districts where ethnic minority male and female voters are more concentrated. This disequilibrium notably reflects in the empirical results of the second paper as they show that the likelihood for voters to support ethnic minority female candidates increases as the number of ethnic minority female candidates on the list increases. Hence, this questions the relevance of parties' vote-based inclusion strategies favouring ethnic minority male candidates in ethnically dense districts, since the analysis of voters' behaviour towards ethnic minority male and female candidates does not seem to support the argument that ethnic minority male candidates constitute a better choice for parties in terms of vote maximization.

Besides, the number of ethnic minority male and female candidates on lists influences the diversity of candidates' profile beyond their ethnic minority background and the relevance of candidates' ethnicity for voters to cast their vote. The more ethnic minority candidates on the list, the more likely it is that their profiles will be diverse and the less likely it is that ethnicity, *as such*, remains salient for voters to mark their preference among these candidates. Other aspects and traits then become more decisive. Conversely, ethnic minority female voters might find less diversity among ethnic minority female candidates' profiles. Furthermore, we have seen that ethnic minority female candidates experience a complementarity advantage on top list positions. These candidates might present a profile that is more in line with the type of ethnic minority female candidates included for symbolic reasons (i.e. examples of positive

inclusion and integration in Western society) and might fit less the ethnic minority female electorate of ethnically dense districts. In this regard and based on the empirical findings, ethnic minority male voters might be better served than their female counterparts in terms of electoral supply (i.e. candidates' profile) among same-sex candidates sharing the same ethnic background, which can affect the quality of these groups' descriptive representation as well. I further develop this point later in the fourth section.

6.1.3. Candidates' personal score: voting cues and parties' electoral gains

The third research question deals with the influence of candidates' ethnicity on their personal score (i.e. preference votes). The empirical results presented in the third paper of this volume show that ethnic minority candidates experience an electoral advantage compared to their ethnic majority co-partisans in Brussels as they receive higher intraparty shares of preference votes. This advantage does not benefit ethnic minority men more than it benefits their female counterparts. The fact that gender does not moderate ethnic minority candidates' success is in line with the findings presented in the second paper of this volume which indicated the absence of a gender bias in voters' preference for ethnic minority candidates. Ethnic minority candidates' success is nonetheless moderated by two factors.

The first one is ballot position: ethnic minority candidates on higher list positions receive more preference votes than their ethnic minority counterparts occupying lower list positions, and more preference votes than their ethnic majority counterparts occupying similar list positions. The ballot position effect here reinforces the effect of ethnicity on candidates' personal score. This interaction effect can be explained by a factor influencing both parties' list composition strategies and voters' choice for individual ethnic minority candidates. As I said earlier, having an ethnic minority background does not shape candidates' distinctiveness as much when there are many ethnic minority candidates on the list as when there are only a few. Hence, higher shares of ethnic minority candidates on the list could decrease the importance of ethnicity as a distinctive trait and increase the importance of other relevant information related to ethnic minority candidates' profile (e.g. their involvement in associational life or their community ties). These other traits probably also play a role in parties' decision to include ethnic minority candidates on higher or lower list positions, much as incumbent candidates are also likely to

occupy higher list positions (Van Erkel and Thijssen, 2016). Hence, the reinforcing effect of ethnicity and ballot position on ethnic minority candidates' personal score.

The second moderating factor is incumbency: the advantage generated by candidates' ethnic minority background holds when candidates do not have previous political experience in an elected council but disappears for incumbent candidates. This brings evidence of the strength of the incumbency advantage as it trumps ethnicity even in a highly diverse context where ethnicity is strongly politicized. These patterns of intraparty competition among candidates have potential implications for ethnic minorities' pathways to power as ethnic majority men are more likely than other candidates to occupy top positions (as shown in the fourth paper) and they are also more likely to be incumbent candidates.

The focus on ethnic minority candidates' personal score is interesting because it directly talks to the argument underlying vote-based inclusion strategies discussed earlier. Indeed, the vote-based argument suggests that parties are more likely to include Muslim male candidates where ethnic minority voters are "pivotal voters" because they are "the best vote mobilizers" (Dancygier, 2017, p.150, 161). Here, we see that this argument does not hold for Maghrebian origin candidates in Brussels as they do not win more preference votes than their female counterparts. This is so even in ethnically dense districts, as we can conclude from the findings of the fourth paper which showed that ethnic minority men are not significantly more likely to get elected than their female counterparts based on their preference votes in those districts. Here again, linking parties' nomination strategies and voters' behaviour towards ethnic minority candidates can help to explain patterns of intraparty competition.

In my 2020 paper entitled "Shaping the (Dis)Advantage: The Impact of Partisan and Demographic Factors on Ethnic Minority Candidates' Success in Preferential Voting Systems. Evidence from the Brussels case" (not included in this volume), I showed that Maghrebian origin candidates' success in terms of intraparty share of preference votes does not increase as the concentration of Maghrebian origin voters in the district increases, compared to Turkish origin candidates who get more successful as the concentration of Turkish origin voters in the district increases. Although Maghrebian origin candidates receive more preference votes in absolute terms than other candidates in ethnically dense districts, their intraparty share of preference votes would not rise in those districts. I then suggested that the proportion of ethnic minority candidates on lists might affect patterns of intraparty competition among these candidates. Indeed, higher shares of ethnic minority candidates on the list imply that preference

votes end up being spread out over many ethnic minority candidates which hinders their intraparty advantage (i.e. their intraparty share of preference votes). This might as well happen for ethnic minority male candidates who are represented in higher numbers than their female counterparts on candidate lists in ethnically dense districts. At the same time, ethnic minority women are more likely to occupy top list positions and higher ranked list positions in general compared to ethnic minority men (as found in the empirical analyses conducted in the fourth paper), and thus to receive higher shares of preference votes than other candidates running on similar list positions thanks to the ballot position effect.

6.1.4. Parties' supply and voters' demand: the dynamic interaction between the institutional and sociodemographic context

Finally, what shapes the intersectional (dis)advantage under PR rules is a combination of sociodemographic and institutional factors that influence parties and voters' behaviour towards subordinate identity groups. In the Brussels context specifically, these factors certainly contribute to ethnic minority male and female candidates' advantage regarding parties' nomination strategies and voters' support. Indeed, the sociodemographic context shapes parties' strategies to nominate (more) ethnic minority male and/or female candidates and to attribute them higher list positions. These strategies are also influenced by the institutional context, notably the presence of gender quota in Brussels. The quota give ethnic minority women a complementarity advantage on top list positions. Ethnic minority women's double minority status allows parties to maximize diversity while preserving the advantage of ethnic majority men on top positions. The latter are then proportionately more likely to occupy these positions compared to subordinate identity groups. The preferential voting system then allows ethnic minority candidates to jump the list order since they receive more preference votes than their ethnic majority counterparts. Ethnic minority men and women's success rates are similar across districts and higher than their respective male and female ethnic majority counterparts. Despite being lower than their ethnic minority counterparts, ethnic majority men' success rate does not vary according to the sociodemographic context. However, ethnic majority women' success rate decreases as ethnic minority voters are more concentrated in the district.

The relatively steady privileged position of ethnic majority men in Brussels local elections highlights the androcentric and ethnocentric view in politics according to which ethnic majority

men represent the dominant, prototypical figure. Despite the growing inclusion of ethnic minority candidates by parties and voters' support for these candidates, ethnic majority men continue to occupy top positions in higher proportions than subordinate identity groups which allows them to get elected and reproduces the incumbency advantage with regard to both parties and voters. The stability of their position further suggests that context factors shape the competition over scarce political resources (list positions, votes, seats) mainly among subordinate identity groups.

In this respect, the findings exposed above make sense considering the existing literature on group representation. The sociodemographic context influences the likelihood for (more) candidates departing from the figure of the dominant ethnic group to get selected (Dancygier, 2014; Farrer and Zingher, 2018; Krebs, 1999) and, combined with the preferential voting system, enhances the capacity for organized minority groups to mobilize in support of these candidates (Bergh and Bjørklund, 2003; Schönwälder, 2013; Togeby, 2008). But more interesting is how this dynamic combination probably interacts with the presence of gender quota to influence the inclusion of ethnic minority male and/or female candidates. In such context where *both* gender and ethnicity are strongly politicized, ethnic minority male *and* female candidates can experience an advantage on their male and female ethnic majority counterparts. But where one and/or the other is less politicized, it is likely that male and/or ethnic majority candidates be the preferred choice for parties and voters.

This discussion highlights the way in which intersectionality plays out in group representation and forms an interesting starting point into a wider discussion of the relevance of intersectionality in the study of elections and political representation. I elaborate on this further in the next section.

6.2. The complexity of intersectionality: The need to contextualize intersectional identities

Although the Brussels sociodemographic and institutional context generates opportunities for the inclusion of ethnic minorities and women in politics, this setting does not generate equal opportunities within ethnic and gender groups. In this section, I discuss the need to consider intersectionality in group representation studies by highlighting the necessity to account for the multiplicity of social relations stemming from social groups membership and the context in which these relations are built.

Previous studies on group representation have suggested that the sociodemographic context is more determinant than electoral rules to enhance ethnic minority representation (Dancygier, 2014; Moser, 2008; Ruedin, 2010). This research contributes to the existing literature by showing *how* and *when* the sociodemographic context is particularly conducive to the inclusion of *ethnic minority men and/or women* in politics. The relationship between parties and voters, and between these actors and their sociodemographic environment is determined by community-based incentives and resources. Community-based resources shape the link between candidates and their community and generate incentives for parties to reach out to this community by selecting appealing candidates. Among other things, the concentration of ethnic minority groups and their organizational structures influence these groups' capacity to mobilize to elect "their" candidates. However, these factors might play out differently for male and female ethnic minority candidates. Indeed, groups' organizational structures are often male dominated, especially among Muslim communities. This notably hinders ethnic minority (Muslim) women's opportunities to reach out to members of these organizations during their campaigns and narrows their potential electoral support (Dancygier, 2017). Besides, the characteristics of ethnic groups themselves determine their gendered inclusion. For instance, Akhtar and Peace (2019) found that parties often choose Pakistani candidates with strong *biraderi* connections to mobilize Pakistani voters, which marginalizes female Pakistani candidates because of direct discriminatory attitudes towards them from members of their community. Considering that Maghrebians are a group that is traditionally associated with Islam, I was expecting to find similar discriminatory behaviour among ethnic minority voters that would reflect in candidates' success, but I did not. Nevertheless, parties nominate more ethnic minority men than ethnic minority women in districts with a higher density of ethnic minority voters, which might perhaps be related to groups' organizational resources. As a

result, while ethnic minority women and men experience similar success rates across districts, parties' inclusion strategies tend to follow androcentric views and reinforce male dominance *within* ethnic groups.

Male social and political dominance is also a reason why gender quota are often needed to ensure and enhance the inclusion of women in politics. This constitutes a major difference in the mechanisms underlying the inclusion of ethnic minority and the inclusion of women in politics. While the latter is often more likely to occur when it relies on *legal* mechanisms such as gender quota, the former mainly depends on *groups'* electoral leverage. The Brussels case is interesting in highlighting how these distinctions play out for ethnic minority women's inclusion in politics. Despite the electoral leverage of their community and the incentives it generates for parties, ethnic minority women remain *a ("minority") category within a community*, and as such stand less chances to get included in politics compared to their male counterparts. However, the present research shows that gender quota have an impact on women representation *within ethnic groups*. This is not new, as Hughes (2011) found before that gender quota benefit more prototypical members of the subordinate groups targeted by the quota, i.e. ethnic majority women. But in a context that promotes the inclusion of both ethnic minorities and women in politics, ethnic minority women actually benefit from the gender quotas and are less likely to experience an intersectional invisibility compared to ethnic majority women.

Therefore, these findings suggest that how and when intersectional identities lead to a (dis)advantage in politics depends on how social positions are (re)shaped through the specific context in which power struggles take place (Severs et al., 2016). The dynamic interaction between contextual and institutional factors determines which women and which men get included and shapes the (dis)advantage for subordinate identity groups (Hancock, 2007). However, it is not clear whether and how the context challenges the position of the *dominant* group. It stems from the empirical findings presented in this volume that ethnic majority men continue to experience an intersectional advantage on higher list positions despite the presence of gender quota and that ethnic minority voters' leverage does not put them more at risk to not get elected. Therefore, the interaction between context factors shapes power hierarchies among subordinate groups while the dominant group manages to relatively hold a privileged position.

Overall, to understand intersectional inequalities, one needs to consider a variety of factors that combine to shape intersectional identity groups' experience of discrimination and privilege. As Mügge (2016) asserted, intersectional outcomes are likely to vary between and within ethnic

groups, and across time and political contexts. In this regard, conclusions cannot be drawn regarding the intersectional (dis)advantage without looking at the specific context in which power struggles take place. This assertion has important implications for the study of group representation and institutionalism by emphasizing the fact that power hierarchies are not a theoretical given but are empirically defined. In the next section, I develop how this contextual conception of power challenges the idea that some electoral rules are better than others to enhance group representation.

6.3. It all starts with parties: electoral systems and group representation

The fact that intersectional inequalities are created through the dynamic interaction between the institutional and sociodemographic context challenges the notion of PR systems as "best" vehicles for the representation of traditionally marginalized groups. This research indeed demonstrates that the effect of PR systems on group representation goes beyond the rules themselves since the sociodemographic context plays an important role in shaping the behaviour of political actors involved in the electoral process. This empirically supports Norris' assumption (2004) that the behaviour of political actors matters more than electoral rules, and hence contributes to the literature on the role of electoral systems and political actors in group representation.

The gatekeeping role of political parties in particular appears to be crucial in the representational process. As Dancygier (2017) asserted, the inclusion of intersectional identity groups by parties often results from trade-offs between electoral (vote-based) considerations to include ethnic minorities and legal and/or social considerations to include women. Yet, because the former incentives directly rely on potential tangible gains for parties and affect electoral outcomes, they might be prioritized in parties' considerations to select candidates even though they face legally binding gender quota. The quota obviously answer the question "how many women/men?", and *to some extent* the question of the list placement. But electoral considerations rather ask the question "which women/which men?". And this is primordial in the Brussels context where both gender and ethnicity are strongly politicized.

How parties prioritize among different types of considerations could explain how, in the Brussels local context, electoral and legal considerations interact to benefit ethnic minority women and (especially) men more than ethnic majority women. In this particular setting, it is

possible that the presence of gender quota generates a complementarity advantage for ethnic minority women, especially on top and visible list positions. As was said in the first article presented in this volume, this advantage might disappear in the absence of gender quota since parties prefer ethnic minority male candidates to maximize their (ethnic) vote share. However, Celis and Erzeel (2017) asserted that the complementarity advantage for ethnic minority women in Belgian federal elections is less related to the presence of gender quota than to considerations to enhance the representativeness of their list while preserving the incumbency advantage. In the context of federal elections, electoral considerations to nominate ethnic minority candidates are less salient because ethnic minority groups have less leverage in geographically larger districts. There, the interaction of electoral and legal and/or social considerations might benefit ethnic minority women more than their male counterparts, even in the absence of gender quota.

Hence, PR systems do indeed generate more opportunities for the inclusion of marginalized groups by parties, but the different trade-offs that parties face in the nomination process entails unequal opportunities for intersectional identity groups to get selected. The question we could then ask is: (how) can we enhance the "intersectionality-friendly" potential of the (s)election process in PR preferential voting systems? In the next section, I attempt to answer this question by discussing potential avenues for institutional changes.

6.4. Towards equal opportunities of inclusion in the (s)election process?

6.4.1. Ensuring the descriptive representation of intersectional identity groups on candidate lists

Changes in electoral rules are always implemented with specific societal goals in mind (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis, 2008). Legal gender and minority quota in this regard aim to enhance group representation by enforcing the presence of a specific proportion of women and ethnic minorities on party lists at the list or national level. Yet, such rules rarely (or never) consider intersectionality, and consequently generate inequalities among intersectional identity groups. As Hughes (2011) pointed out, party gender quota and ethnic quota alone or combined (i.e. "mixed quota") often benefit prototypical members of the targeted groups (i.e. ethnic majority women and ethnic minority men) more than non-prototypical ones (i.e. ethnic minority women). However, the latter are the primary beneficiaries when it comes to the combination of national gender quota and minority quota (i.e. "tandem quota") because this setting generates a complementarity advantage allowing parties to maximize the number of ethnic majority male candidates (Hughes, 2011). Obviously, none of these combinations contribute to equal opportunities of inclusion within gender and ethnic groups, nor challenge ethnic majority men's privileged position.

I see at least two issues with the abovementioned combinations. The first issue lies in the framing of gender quota as quota *for women* (Murray, 2014). As Murray (2014: 520) states, the primary goal of gender quota is often considered as redressing the underrepresentation of women rather than the overrepresentation of men. Parties are thus more concerned with the number of women they *must* nominate, rather than the number of men they *should* select. For this reason, the combination of gender and ethnic quota more often generates competition over power among subordinate groups rather than challenge ethnic majority men' privileged position (Hughes, 2011: 616). A second issue lies in the fact that such combinations do not account for the nature of gender and ethnic differences within society, i.e. women/men as categories and ethnic groups as communities. These settings therefore overlook gender differences within ethnic groups and generate intersectional inequalities. Building on these considerations, I now conduct a thought experiment in order to suggest a way to move towards equal opportunities of inclusion for marginalized groups on candidate lists using a combination of gender and minority quota.

One way to move towards this type of equality could be to introduce gender parity quota within ethnic quota on party lists. First, gender parity quota reflects men and women's share within the population in general. In this regard, mirror representation sustains the argument in favour of gender parity. Then, these quota should be introduced within ethnic quota since gender differences crosscut ethnic groups. Parties would thus have an equal amount of men and women to nominate within each ethnic group. These ethnic quota could for instance be defined based on ethnic minority voters' proportion within the *district* population. This combination would alter parties' inclusion strategies by annihilating electoral considerations to follow vote-based or symbolic inclusion strategies in Dancygier's terms (2017).

This proposal is far from being perfect. One of the first issues arising might be the lack of data on the ethnic background of the voting population, as is the case in Belgium. Moreover, difficulties arise in choosing ethnic minority groups targeted by the ethnic quota. As Bird (2014) asserts, these measures "apply most often to groups defined by ethno-national, cultural-linguistic or ethno-religious identities, or occasionally by tribal or cast membership". These deep, historical cleavages differ from immigrant groups who recently settled in modern multicultural societies. Hence, on what criteria can we define ethnic minority groups who can legitimately benefit from the quota? Here again, the inclusion of some minority groups always entails the exclusion of others. Furthermore, the role of voters should not be overlooked as they also influence electoral outcomes by supporting individual candidates. In this regard, voters with conservative and patriarchal values might directly discriminate against women. This bias might be particularly strong among ethnic minority voters whose cultural or religious background conveys opposite values to gender equality. Such discriminatory attitudes will hinder women representation despite the quota guaranteeing their equal presence to men on party lists. Hence, equal opportunities of inclusion do not guarantee equality in outcomes.

6.4.2. Implications for non-descriptive aspects of representation

Besides its impact on the descriptive representation of intersectional identity groups on party lists, such combination of gender and ethnic quota affects non-descriptive aspects of representation by influencing the type of ethnic minority women and men who get selected and their representational attitudes and role within elected assemblies. Group representation is not only about which groups get to be *present* but also about who gets to *symbolically stand* and *act* for their respective group(s). These aspects are important for the quality of the democratic link between descriptive representatives and the represented. Bird (2015) notably highlighted that non-descriptive aspects of representation somehow matter more for ethnic minority citizens than descriptive ones. In this regard, parties selecting the "best" (descriptive) candidates based on electoral considerations has potential implications for the quality of the symbolic and substantive aspects of ethnic minority groups' representation as well. In the next paragraphs, I discuss these implications and explain how and why the combination of gender and ethnic quotas suggested earlier might overcome some representational issues.

Symbolic and vote-based inclusion strategies as described by Dancygier (2017) are both guided by electoral considerations relying on the expected views of an (ethnic majority and minority) electorate that descriptive representatives do not necessarily represent in terms of interests and experiences. The symbolic inclusion of ethnic minority women relies on the assumption that they are less likely to experience a backlash from the (more conservative parts of) the ethnic majority electorate because they are more prone to be perceived as positive symbols of integration and assimilation. This notably questions the extent to which ethnic minority women are "preferable" descriptive representatives for their own gender and community groups in Dovi's terms (2002). Two conditions were suggested by Dovi (2002) for descriptive representatives to be "preferable": (1) to have mutual ties (2) with dispossessed subgroups. Yet, if the symbolic inclusion of ethnic minority women relies on the fact that these candidates are perceived as positive symbols of integration by the *majority* electorate, one might question the ties these candidates hold with their "dispossessed" community and to what extent their own life experience reflects that of more marginalized group members. Although the inclusion of ethnic minority women sends a positive signal of inclusion and diversity, their presence might not generate a feeling of trust nor carry a symbolic meaning for their own identity group(s). In the end, to whom the inclusion of ethnic majority women is symbolic depends on the interpretation of the word "symbolic".

Conversely, more prominent male figures holding strong ties in religious or organizational structures within the minority community are more likely to be included when parties follow vote-based strategies. As Dancygier (2017) asserted, these candidates might end up being more distant from parties' ideological position, for instance regarding gender equality, especially when it comes to minority groups holding conservative values diverging from more progressive Western values. One can then wonder how the specific profile of these candidates and the strong ties they hold within their community determine their pathways to (positions of) power once elected and shape their representational role within elected assemblies. As she investigated ethnic minority citizens' perspective on ethnic minority representation, Bird (2015) underlined the necessity for ethnic minority citizens to know that they are not just "an ethnic vote" and that "their" descriptive candidates do not just stand as "vote catchers" in the election process. In this respect, the strong community ties and potential ideological distance from the party of vote-based selected candidates might enhance their *nominal*[24] descriptive representation (i.e. their numerical presence) within elected assemblies, yet actually hinder their *effective* descriptive representation (i.e. their access to positions of power and influence).

The combination of gender and ethnic quota I suggested earlier would change the rules of the game for parties by making obsolete symbolic and vote-based inclusion strategies. This would enhance the quality of the symbolic and substantive representation of marginalized groups in different regards. This quota setting notably allows candidates to be recognized as members of an intersectional identity group with specific experiences and interests rather than as individuals sharing the experiences of being a woman and/or of being an ethnic minority group member as separate identities that would simply add up. Candidates might then be more in tune with their group and the relationship between candidates and voters would be strengthened. This would make more room for the substantive representation of subordinate identity groups as well. Furthermore, making intersectional differences a cornerstone for political inclusion at the selection stage implies the recognition of subordinate identity groups as full members of society in general. This broader recognition might critically alter the balance of power among intersectional identity groups once elected to parliament and facilitate subordinate identity groups' access to positions of power and influence.

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[24] See Anwar (1986) for a definition of these concepts.

6.5. Case, conceptualization, and methodology: Critical considerations and limitations

This research aimed to link the behaviour of individuals to their environment using quantitative data. I focused on one specific ethnic minority group (candidates and voters with a Maghrebian background) in one specific context (Brussels local elections). These choices allowed me to control for micro, meso, and macro-level factors that shape ethnic minority groups' political opportunity structure by determining their collective identity and capacity to mobilize and the responsiveness of the political system (see Bird (2005) for a conceptual framework). I consider that focusing on one ethnic minority group in a specific political and electoral context somehow controls for part of these factors. In this section, I critically discuss the conceptual and methodological choices I made and how they generate limitations in terms of generalizability.

One methodological aspect relates to the conceptualization of the Maghrebian origin group as an ethnic minority group. First, I consider the Maghrebian origin group as a visible, non-Western group. As other non-Western groups, the Maghrebian origin population differs from the ethnic majority group by their physical appearance. This makes it an "ethnic minority" group in contrast to an "immigrant" group that is strictly defined by its members' foreign birth and citizenship (current or at birth) (Bloemraad and Schönwälder, 2013). This distinction allows me to link the mechanisms highlighted in this research to the concepts of racial discrimination and ethnic mobilization, which is less salient when it comes to Western origin groups especially in the European context. By doing so, my arguments and empirical developments tend to be mainly driven by ethnic-based explanations. This perspective might sometimes overlook the possibility that the nomination of ethnic minority candidates and voters' support for these candidates might also be driven by non-ethnic related factors.

Then, the importance of religion for some ethnic minority groups must be acknowledged, especially when dealing with intersectional questions related to both gender and ethnicity. Islam for one is known to be strongly associated with conservative and patriarchal values towards gender roles and gender equality (Alexander and Welzel, 2011; Inglehart and Norris, 2003), and several researches have focused on this particular group to explain the gendered representation of (Muslim) ethnic minority groups (Dancygier, 2017; Hughes, 2016). Religion then becomes "racialized" as it comes into play in the conceptualization of Muslims as an ethnic minority group (Bloemraad and Schönwälder, 2013). However, I see an "intersectionality issue" with quantitative researches focusing on Muslim groups. On the one

hand, this approach is in line with Zibouh's assertion (2010) that Islam becomes more important than ethnicity in shaping Muslim groups' identity, which might be especially so as the length of settlement of ethnic minority groups increases and more recent generations of ethnic minority immigrants have weaker ties with the home country. On the other hand, the focus on "Muslims" as a group overlooks differences related to group-based resources and social capital. When comparing Turks and Moroccans -two groups that are traditionally considered as Muslims-, Jacobs et al. (2004) have highlighted how the differential ties that Moroccans and Turks hold with the Belgian society contribute to differential political opportunity structures affecting their political involvement. In a similar vein, Michon and Vermeulen (2013) have stressed the importance of these groups' organizational structure in shaping their political trajectories. Hence, my own findings could have been different had I looked at the Turkish origin group in this research. The focus on the Maghrebian origin group thus allowed me to control for these aspects of groups' political opportunity structure while nonetheless acknowledging the potential effect of their religious identity on their inclusion in politics.

The focus on this group within the Brussels context then allowed me to hold constant several other factors shaping their political opportunity structure. I analysed more specifically the concentration of the Maghrebian origin population within the district population as the main micro-level factor of inclusion because it varies across districts in Brussels. I did not discuss other micro-level features of this group that can affect their capacity to mobilize (e.g. their organizational structure or their trajectory of immigration and settlement) because I believe that these aspects are inherent to the group in question *within the Brussels context*. I might have had to analyze these factors had I compared the political inclusion of the Maghrebian origin group across countries or even across (Belgian) cities, or the political inclusion of different ethnic minority groups (for instance, Turks and sub-Saharan Africans). Furthermore, the focus on Brussels local elections allows me to control for meso and macro-level factors such as electoral rules, access to the citizenship regime for foreigners, history of immigration and integration and its political and social consequences. In this perspective, an important limitation of my research lies in the fact that I do not account for changes in the political opportunity structure of the Maghrebian origin group during the period considered (2006 – 2018). Surely variations in time would be observed, but it might not be possible to find strong explanations for these in such a short period of time and so few elections.

All in all, these multiple considerations question the generalizability of these findings. Yet, I believe that this limitation actually constitutes an empirical consequence of the use of intersectionality as a research paradigm considering the emphasis on the mutual relationship between context factors and gender and ethnicity as interacting categories (Hancock, 2007). In the last section, I build on these limitations to rethink the concepts mobilized in gender and ethnic studies and I suggest avenues for future research.

6.6. Avenues for future research

The conceptual and methodological considerations discussed in the previous section strongly suggest that similar researches might generate different findings across ethnic minority groups, cities, countries, and time. However, the need to account for the setting in which power struggles take place, which implies considering a large set of factors, should drive scholars away from conducting large, cross-countries researches and rather calls for local case studies.

The focus on local cases might challenge our conceptualization of identity groups. During my research, I came to realize how the conceptual choices I made and the scientific concepts I mobilized (e.g. "low information cues") are strongly anchored in a Western ethnocentric view as it builds on the differences between a dominant, ethnic majority group and ethnic minority groups based on cultural and physical traits. Yet, the sociodemographic dynamics at the local level made me question the construction and relevance of some concepts used in political sciences and ethnic studies. This is particularly salient in Brussels where the ethnic density of some municipalities reaches important levels and challenges the Western ethnocentric conception of social differences. For instance, the arguments developed in the first paper of this volume regarding parties' gendered inclusion strategies relied on the assumption that prototypical figures are defined in accordance with a specific context. In ethnically dense districts, having an ethnic minority background defines candidates' prototypicality regarding the district electorate even though these candidates might not represent prototypical figures at a broader (regional or national) scale. On a theoretical level, it could be interesting to rethink our conception of prototypicality in light of the developments of ethnic studies in order to grasp its contextual aspect.

The present study then highlighted the importance of looking at the role and behaviour of political actors involved in the representational process. If quantitative studies as this one offer

interesting insights in voters and parties' role in the electoral process, they nonetheless lack perspectives on the candidate side. This notably requires qualitative interviews to understand candidates' experience of privilege and discrimination and their perception of the "(dis)advantage". It would also be interesting to understand how candidates perceive their intersectional identity, notably how ethnic minority women deal with their double political minority status, and how it shapes their attitudes and representational role and behaviour once elected. This has important implications for the democratic linkage between candidates and voters and could also bring light on the democratic consequences of parties' nomination strategies regarding non-descriptive aspects of representation. In this perspective, it could also be relevant to investigate voters' perception of their descriptive representatives, for example through focus groups as Bird (2015) notably did.

More quantitative researches can also be conducted in order to deepen our understanding of parties' and voters' role. Most researches, including this one, focused on voters' direct discrimination or support towards ethnic minority (male or female) candidates. This argument was central in the theoretical framework of this research as it underlies the hypothesis behind parties' vote-based inclusion strategies. I investigated this question in the second and third papers of this volume, which dealt respectively with voters' behaviour towards candidates and ethnic minority male and female candidates' success in terms of preference votes. Taken together, these two perspectives question the relevance of parties' gendered inclusion strategies regarding ethnic minority candidates since, all things being equal, ethnic minority men do not receive more preference votes than ethnic minority women. But the present research focused exclusively on the vote gains side. Indeed, I investigated whether voters *who supported ethnic minority candidates* had supported ethnic minority male and/or female candidates, which leaves aside voters who did not choose ethnic minority candidates at all. Then, I focused on preference votes received by ethnic minority candidates. This approach contributes only partly to our understanding of parties' inclusion strategies. I suggest two potential avenues to complement the findings of this research.

First, symbolic inclusion strategies do not (solely) rely on the direct gains that ethnic minority male or female candidates represent for parties (as opposed to *vote-based* strategies), but probably more on the losses they do *not* represent. In this regard, it might be particularly interesting to understand the attitudes of voters who do *not* support individual ethnic minority male or female candidates but still choose to support (or not) the party list. An experimental research design could be relevant to investigate voters' attitudes towards ethnic minority male

and female candidates, not based on the preference votes they cast or not for these candidates, but based on whether they (still) choose to support a party list even though a certain number of ethnic minority male and/or female candidates run on that list. Second, it might be interesting to focus on groups' organizational structures in their functioning and/or the extent to which they are dominated by men in order to understand why, despite equal success rates, ethnic minority male candidates face more chances to get included than their female counterparts. The latter requires to focus on the profile of ethnic minority candidates to investigate whether and how candidates' organizational ties play a role in the recruitment process. Such information on candidates could also allow us to understand the factors driving voters' choice for ethnic minority candidates. Researchers studying ethnic minority representation focus mainly on ethnicity, which somehow essentializes communities. Future researches should look beyond ethnicity in order to understand whether and how ethnic minority candidates' profile plays a role for voters, and whether and how voters' behaviour on that regard varies across ethnic groups. This would allow us to highlight the importance of community ties and to investigate deeper the representational link between candidates and voters.

Another finding of this research regarded the gender affinity effect. I have already questioned earlier the fact that the gender affinity effect would be conditional upon ethnicity for different ethnic groups. More researches could indeed focus on the gender affinity effect accounting for ethnic differences. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate whether and how individuals perceive gender differences across community groups and whether they somehow prioritize among different cues (e.g. ethnicity over gender). This might contribute to our understand of the "intersectional invisibility" and the intersectional (dis)advantage.

Finally, this research has highlighted the dominant position of ethnic majority men in politics despite the increasing inclusion of diversity. So far, most of the research on group representation has focused on the underrepresentation of women and ethnic minorities and paid less attention to the other side of the same coin: the overrepresentation of ethnic majority men (Bjarnegård, 2013). The focus on that other side of the coin implies paying attention not only to the resistance to feminism and anti-racism of the dominant group, but also to the sexist and racist strategies implemented to keep their privileged access to (positions of) power. As said before, the inclusion of some groups entails the exclusion of others. In Brussels, the presence of gender quotas has for consequence that an increase in the number of ethnic minority male candidates running on candidate lists decreases the number of ethnic majority male candidates. At the same time, the latter hold the more power over party elites and party selectorates, which

is determinant for the inclusion of women and ethnic minorities in politics (Celis and Lovenduski, 2018). In this regard, the selection stage and list composition process might be crucial to understand why ethnic majority men's electoral success rate remains steady across districts despite ethnic minority candidates' advantage in terms of selection and electoral support in ethnically dense districts. This can be explained by parties selecting ethnic majority male candidates on top list positions (as they are decisive for candidates' electoral score) and aiming for candidates with outstanding profile (e.g. well-known individuals or incumbents) who might be able to receive support from a broad electorate. The latter candidates might be more competitive (electorally) regarding their ethnic minority co-partisans, much as we found that incumbent candidates with an ethnic minority background do not get more preference votes than other incumbent candidates. It could thus be interesting to look at ethnic majority male candidates' profile in order to understand who makes the cut in the selection process when parties include more ethnic minority candidates who are likely to attract a significant number of votes among the district electorate. Overall, future research should not only focus on the determinants of the (intersectional) inclusion of subordinate identity groups, but also on the mechanisms favouring the reproduction of ethnic majority male dominance in contexts where many factors call for their position to be challenged.

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