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Intellectual Discourse

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Transliteration Table: Consonants

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	ẓ
ث	th		ع	‘
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ء	’
ض	ḍ		ي	y

Transliteration Table: Vowels and Diphthongs

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
اَ	a		اَ، اِيَّ	an
اُ	u		اُو	un
اِ	i		اِي	in
اَ، اِ، اِيَّ	ā		اَو	aw
اُو	ū		اَي	ay
اِي	ī		اُو	uww, ū (in final position)
			اَي	iyy, ī (in final position)

Source: ROTAS Transliteration Kit: <http://rotas.iium.edu.my>

Paradoxical and Insufficient? Gender Quotas and Placement Mandates in Bosnia and Herzegovina's 2020 Local Elections

Mirsad Karić*

Šejma Aydin**

Huseyin Korkut***

Muhidin Mulalić****

Abstract: Bosnia and Herzegovina is ranked 73rd in the *Global Gender Gap Index 2022*. A questionable democratisation process, ethnonationalism, and changes in the political culture strongly affected gender equality, participation, and representation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This article tackles the impact of preferential voting on the representation of women in the local councils following the last Local Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The effect of gender quotas and placement mandates are examined across the following determinants: electoral unit magnitude, local community urbanisation rate, ethnic composition of municipalities, and ideological foundation of political parties. To test the main objectives and research questions, this paper examines the impact of preferential voting on gender political representation. A complete dataset for all candidates and municipalities of the 2020 Local

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Elections, officially released by the State Election Commission, was used. The descriptive analysis indicates that 19.86% of women candidates have been elected to the local councils. With regards to the residence, female candidates from rural areas have a lower tendency of being elected than candidates from highly urban municipalities. Regarding ethnicity, the number of seats won by female candidates was the largest for candidates with a Serb majority, followed by the Bosniak and the Croat ones. When considering political orientation, female candidates from parties with centrist political orientation have a higher tendency of being elected, closely followed by female candidates from parties with a leftist orientation.

Keywords: Gender Quotas, Placement Mandates, Preferential Voting, Electoral Systems, 2020 Local Election, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Abstrak: Proses pendemokrasian yang rencat, ethno-nasionalisme dan perubahan-perubahan yang terangkum dalam wahana budaya politik telah memberi kesan yang signifikan kepada isu kesaksamaan gender, partisipasi dan representasi di Bosnia Herzegovina. Ini, antara lain, telah menyebabkan Bosnia-Herzegovina berada di tangga ke-73 dalam Indeks Jurang Gender Global 2022. Kajian ini menganalisa sejauh mana kaedah pengundian keutamaan memberikan impak kepada representasi wanita sebagai ahli majlis daerah berikutan pilihanraya tempatan Bosnia-Herzegovina yang terkini. Dampak kepada kuota gender dan mandat perlantikan telah dianalisa bersandarkan kepada agen penentu berikut: magnitud unit elektoral, kadar urbanisasi komuniti lokal, komposisi etnik daerah dan asas ideologi parti politik. Kajian ini seterusnya meninjau impak sistem pengundian keutamaan ke atas representasi politik berasaskan gender dalam usaha untuk menguji objektif-objektif utama dan persoalan-persoalan kajian. Bagi tujuan ini, satu dataset lengkap calon dan majlis daerah dalam Pilihanraya Kerajaan Tempatan 2020 yang dikeluarkan oleh Suruhanjaya Pilihanraya Bosnia-Herzegovina telah digunakan. Analisa deskriptif menunjukkan 19.86% calon-calon wanita yang memenangi pilihanraya kerajaan tempatan telah dilantik sebagai ahli majlis daerah. Tersinggung aspek residen atau lokaliti, calon-calon wanita daripada luar bandar memiliki peluang yang lebih rendah untuk memenangi pilihanraya kerajaan tempatan berbanding calon daripada kawasan bandar. Merujuk kepada etnisiti pula, jumlah kerusi yang terbesar telah dimenangi oleh calon-calon wanita di kawasan majoriti Serb, diikuti oleh calon-calon wanita di kawasan majoriti Bosniak dan Croat. Ketimbang orientasi politik, calon-calon wanita daripada parti-parti politik berhaluan tengah berpotensi lebih tinggi untuk menang pilihanraya, diikuti dengan rapat oleh calon-calon daripada parti-parti politik berhaluan kiri.

Kata Kunci: Kuota Berasaskan Gender, Mandat Perlantikan, Pengundian Keutamaan, Sistem Elektoral, Pilihanraya Kerajaan tempatan 2020, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Introduction

The concept of equal political participation and descriptive representation of both genders in political life is the cornerstone of modern democracy as they imply the extent to which the law-making bodies reflect in their membership the distribution of gender in society. Holding free, fair, regular, and competitive elections is one of the primary tools to achieve this goal. Apart from a gradual narrowing of the gender voting gap, almost a century-long female suffrage has not resulted in an equal election and representation of women in the main bodies of governance. Thus, the type of political system—being democratic or non-democratic—might be relevant, but not a determining factor for the representation of gender in the state bodies. Even full democracies do not necessarily have a more satisfactory number of women in the legislative and executive branches of government than the less democratic states (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003).

Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) is not an exception to this global phenomenon. Although equal representation and gender equality are constitutional and legal requirements in B&H, women are still underrepresented in representative bodies at the state and local levels. This has not changed after the 2020 local elections as only 19.86% of female candidates were elected to the local councils even though the Law on Gender Equality in B&H and the Election Law ensure and promote gender equality in management, decision-making process, and political representation. Equal gender representation implies the presence of at least 40% of the less represented gender in the administrative bodies, executive authorities, and legislative bodies. The state election commission is authorised to ban political parties' participation in the electoral process if they do not comply with this legal requirement. Despite political parties' compliance with this requirement, the election results still returned local councils dominated by men.

As political underrepresentation of women in democratic states has not been reduced exclusively with the equal right to cast votes (Pitkin, 1967), its success is further conditioned by the type of the political

system, the electoral system, and the recruitment process (Phillips, 2007). In this process, the political institutions and electoral bodies have a role in creating the link between the voters and democratic processes, and are “factors that help shape and give meaning to political attitudes” (Anderson et al., 2005). The electoral system in B&H uses the proportional representation (PR) method, which considers equal participation of both genders (Lijphart, 1999), whereby the electoral model enables more female candidates to get elected compared to a single-member district (SMD) plurality/majority system (Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler, 2005). Although the model itself is a necessary condition for more representation of women in the state bodies, its success is largely conditioned by some other factors such as gender quotas, placement mandates, and the level of in-party thresholds.

As of September 2022, 134 countries have introduced various ways to increase gender balance in representative bodies. Political parties in 61 countries have adopted voluntary quotas, while quotas at the sub-national levels and for the single-lower house have been legislated in 114 and 97 countries respectively (Gender Quotas Database). The number of women in the legislative assemblies more than doubled over the last twenty-five years. Today, women make up at least one-third of legislators in 54 countries worldwide: eleven countries in Africa, four countries in Asia, two states in Australia, twenty-five countries in Europe, two countries in North America, and ten countries in South America (<http://www.ipu.org>).

This article contributes to the current discussion on the influence of gender quotas and placement mandates on women’s political representation in open-list PR electoral systems by examining the results of the last local elections held in B&H in 2020. The study is based on the complete dataset for all 143 municipalities in B&H and 30,445 candidates who were on the lists of various political subjects for the 2020 local elections. The reason why local councils are selected as a unit of analysis is because B&H consists of quite a large number of municipalities and local elections involve substantial number of candidates. This enables us to examine the difference between male and female candidates elected to the local assemblies and the possible impact of placement mandates in this process. This would not be possible by studying and analysing general elections as the total number of elected

officials to the Parliamentary Assembly of B&H is only 42, and they are elected from only five electoral units.

Literature review

The democratisation process and changes in political culture resulted in a gradual decline in the gender voting gap and gender representation, especially in full democracies. Today, the gender voting gap stands at around 8% on average, and is slightly higher for left-oriented voters than for more conservative ones. According to some studies, the main reasons for the underrepresentation of women in the legislative and executive bodies are due to men's greater masculine political sophistication (Campbell, 1960), men's greater aggressiveness and aptitude for conflict (Verba et al., 1997), women are generally less knowledgeable than men about politics (Fraile, 2014), less likely to feel politically efficacious (Rinehart, 1992), and have less interest in politics than men (Verba et al., 1995). Another reason could be due to prejudice by voters or party leaders (Randall, 1987) as women are less selected and nominated than men by the gatekeepers (Phillips, 2021). Even though the gender gap in descriptive representation is reduced by certain institutional designs, a significant gender gap prevails in the legislature (Bjarnegård and Kenny, 2015).

Researchers in the UK and the US have found only slight differences between multi-member and SMD in gender representation, although the latter is nowhere in favour of women (Schmidt & Saunders, 2004). Some studies have found a direct positive relationship between district magnitudes and the election of women even if they are placed further down on the party list (Norris, 1996). However, the PR system might become very competitive too as it tends to favour fluid party systems with an oversized number of parties, and with newly established parties contesting an election and striving for power. In such political circumstances, a "policy of diffusion" of the issues related to the promotion and support of gender equality has been one among several strategies and tools used in electoral campaigns (Kittilson, 2006).

One of the most stable findings concerning the electoral process is that the election of female candidates is favoured by factors such as PR electoral systems, which are less competitive than the SMD systems, particularly in those electoral systems which apply closed lists and placement mandates preferential voting with a low in-party threshold,

competitive party lists, and large constituency magnitudes (Laserud & Taphorn, 2007). A closed-list electoral system with placement mandates fosters the election of women to the representative bodies. This is so-called a mechanical impact because it is solely a result of the electoral rule. On the other hand, if placement mandates were implemented in an open-list electoral system, then the impact is psychological and twofold. Firstly, it might be a natural tendency of voters to select a few top candidates on the lists (Koppell & Steen, 2004), and secondly, it impacts voters' propensity to get some useful information about the candidates and to make choices that correspond to their interests (Kittilson & Schwindt-Bayer, 2012).

Studies have shown that even full democracies do not elect more women in the representative bodies than the less democratic states (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). The type of electoral system has been one of the often-discussed factors as a prospective cause of gender discrimination in political representation (Fortin-Rittberger & Rittberger, 2014; Roberts, Seawright & Cyr, 2013).

Scholars found that electoral arrangements such as an open-list PR which enables voters to give preferential votes to one or more candidates on the list affect the political representation of women (Allik, 2015; Golder et al., 2017; Gorecki & Kuklowicz, 2014). Still, various findings about the effects of the open-list PR electoral system on the election of women to the representative bodies have remained unclear. Findings vary from those concluding that women are disadvantaged by this type of electoral system (Gorecki & Kuklowicz, 2014; Millard, 2014) to those who found that the open-list PR system did not impede the electoral success of female candidates (Gail & Marsh, 2010). Others such as Golder et al., (2017) and Kunovich (2012) even concluded that in specific scenarios, the open-list PR system has a positive effect on female candidates at the ballot boxes.

Quotas may take three different types: political party voluntary quotas, party list legislative quotas, and legislative or constitutionally reserved seats. Each of these three types of quotas may exist on its own or simultaneously with other types of quotas. Legislated party list quotas and reserved seat quotas may exist for the single/lower house, upper house, and at the sub-national levels such as states, entities, cantons, departments, or municipalities. All three types of quotas simultaneously

exist in 27 countries, while 80 countries practice the combination of quotas at the sub-national levels and for the single/lower house (Gender Quotas Database). Htun (2004) makes it clear that gender quotas are regular tools to boost gender equality, while reserved seats ensure and secure the political representation of religious, linguistic, ethnic, and national minorities.

Initial studies which advocated the adoption of gender quotas argued that they are a vital tool to increase the number of female legislators and executive officers and the most practical way to bring quantitative gender equality to politics (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005; Krook, 2009). However, empirical studies which evaluated the effects of gender quotas on political representation at various state institutions and especially in legislative bodies have shown different results, and more often, electoral gender quotas come closer to providing real equality of opportunity than equality of result, which is contrary to what was commonly believed (Dahlerup, 2007). According to Stockemer & Sundström (2021), PR electoral system normally suits female candidates better than majority SMD or plurality systems but, nonetheless, legislative quotas and voluntary party quotas do not significantly increase the share of female representatives. Sacchet (2018) found that despite implementing a gender quotas policy for almost 20 years in Brazil, the inappropriate electoral fund management and considerable differences in campaign revenues allocated for male and female candidates did not reduce the gap between them. Empirical findings show that gender quotas have a larger impact on women's representation in candidate-oriented systems than in programmatically oriented ones (Forman-Rabinovici & Nir, 2021; Migheli, 2022). Finally, it is doubtful that even if the electoral lists of political parties apply a full gender equality quota or even positive discrimination in favour of female candidates, the ratio of elected representatives would be equivalent to that found in open-list PR electoral systems.

Studies covering the issue of gender and legislative representation claim that the voters are not biased against the candidates based on their gender. They argue that candidates of both genders are equally successful in state and local legislative elections (Dancy, et. al., 1994; Seltzer et al., 1997). The second group of scholars argue that the voters make a preference based on gender stereotypes about men and women. More recent research results are inconsistent, some findings indicate a

shift in conventional gender stereotyping (Duehr & Bono, 2006), others indicate the expansion of female representation in the legislature but at a slow pace (Swers & Rouse, 2011), while other longitudinal studies indicate that the traditional stereotyping about commonality is equally prevalent for men and women (Haines, et. al., 2016).

Earlier studies show that voters exercise ethnically-biased voting (Johnston, et. al., 1992; Popkin, 1994) and that political elites often manipulate ethnic cleavages to get support and win elections (Norris & Mattes, 2003). However, more recent literature shows that there are mixed findings on the voters' preference when supporting candidates of the same ethnic background and the same gender. While Heath, et. al. (2015) and Van Erkel (2019) found that voters prefer candidates who share the same socio-demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, race, and gender, Bird, et. al. (2016) assert that it is implicit whether a candidate's partisanship, ethnicity, or gender is a reason for voters to vote for him/her. Mixed results also were found concerning the fact that ethnic affinity and gender-biased effects are overruled by partisanship, as a vote for a candidate is a vote for a party (Badas & Stauffer, 2019), and that personal reputation is important to gain votes (Barreto, 2007; Teney, et. al., 2010). Research in the US shows a link between the race/ethnicity of voters and their inclination to support female candidates. Thus, black female voters are the strongest supporters of black female candidates, and black female candidates with significant experience in politics can attract both black and white voters, regardless of gender (Tasha & Hanes, 2007).

Scholars, experts, and policy-makers frequently express concerns about growing polarisation between urban and rural areas (Rodden 2019), as there is a strong and significant divide between the political behaviour and attitudes of citizens from urban and rural places (Kenny & Luca, 2020). However, relatively few studies have explored whether the increasing political divide between rural and urban recorded in some countries is evident universally.

Recent political events such as the US Presidential Election in 2016, the UK's 2016 Brexit vote, Austria's national elections in December 2018, the 2018 protests in France, the 2021 local elections in Italy, the support for France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen in the Presidential Election last year, all proved the emergence of a spatially-divided

electoral landscape and support for political differences between rural and urban areas, which became stronger in recent decades (Becker, et, al., 2017; Vassallo, 2022).

The B&H's electoral context

The multiparty system in B&H was (re)introduced before the dissolution of the Former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. This enabled the Bosnian people to establish political parties and elect their representatives in free and fair elections for the first time after decades of the abolition of representative democracy. According to the Constitution, B&H is a highly decentralised state which consists of two entities, namely the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H) and Republika Srpska (RS) and the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina. With a population of 2.2 million people, FB&H consists of ten cantons which are further divided into 79 cities or municipalities containing Bosniaks (70%), Croats (22%), and a small number of Serbs (4%). On the other hand, RS with 1.2 million people is largely populated by Serbs (81%), Bosniaks (14%), and Croats (2%). A total of 62 cities/municipalities are located in RS. (Mulalic & Karić, 2020).

The Constitution of B&H does not contain any explicit provision on the local government and holding the local elections per se. In this context, the Constitution demands that those serving in the state authority offices observe the basic democratic principles that B&H “shall be a democratic state, which shall operate under the rule of law and free and democratic elections” (Constitution of B&H, article 1.2). This implies organisation of the legislative and presidential elections at the state and entity levels and, if feasible, for cantonal legislatures and municipal governing authorities to be held on a regular basis. Since 1996, seven municipal elections have been held in B&H. Initially, the first and second local elections in 1997 and 2002 respectively, were held under the full auspices of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the rules and regulations adopted by the provisional Election Commission. Local elections held in 2004 were the first elections after the war held in accordance with the Election Law adopted by the State Parliament in 2001, fully locally-financed elections and observed by the international community.

According to the Election Law, political subjects such as independent candidates, political parties, a coalition of political parties, and the list

of independent candidates have the right to participate in the elections. For the municipal election in B&H, every candidate list must include male and female candidates. As illustrated in Table 1, each party list consists of at least 40% of a less-represented gender

Table 1. Placement of a less represented gender in a party list

Total number of candidates in a party list	Total number of candidates of a less represented gender
1	0
2	1
3	1
4	2
5	2
6	3
7	3
8	3
9*	4
11*	5
13*	6
16*	7
18*	8
21*	9
23*	10
26*	11
28*	12
31*	13
33*	14
36*	15

Source: Central Election Commission B&H.

*Position on the list where the candidate of a less-represented gender must be placed

The number of seats in the local councils is distributed according to the total number of eligible voters in a municipality. Hence, small municipalities are the ones with less than 8,000 eligible voters and their councils are composed of 11-17 representatives. Medium municipalities are composed of 18-25 representatives and the total number of eligible voters in these municipalities ranges between 8,000 and 20,000. Finally, large municipality councils consist of 26-31 representatives and the total number of eligible voters in these local communities exceeds 20,000 (See the diagram below). This description is the base for the classification of municipalities into small, medium, and large ones in Table 4.

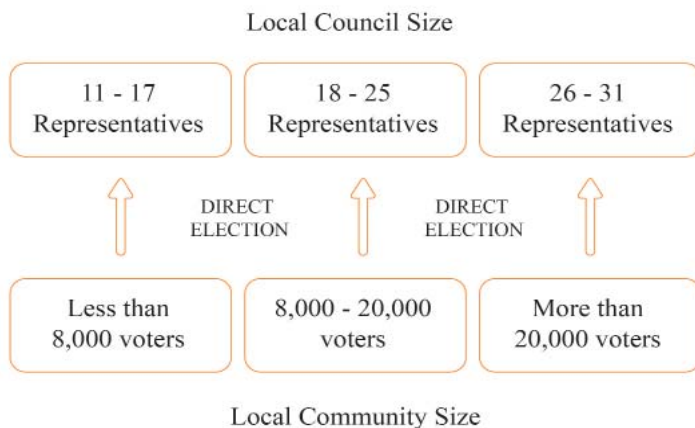


Diagram 1. Relationship between the community size and council size in the local election in B&H.

Each political subject list might have up to 5 candidates more than the allocated number of mandates in the city/municipality council. Election Law stipulates that the mandate of the elected municipal and city council members and mayors lasts for four years. The proportional system is used to allocate the mandates for municipal and city councils with the condition for all political subjects that contest the election pass the electoral threshold of 3% of the total valid votes cast in the local community.

Mandates won by a political subject are distributed according to the Saint-League formula. The candidates who individually got at least 10% of the preferential votes of the total number of valid votes

received by his/her political subject are assigned the mandate in the municipal council in the order from the highest to the lowest number of preferential votes. Then, if the remaining candidates received less than 10% of the valid votes obtained by his/her political subject and if there are still mandates to be distributed to a list, then the allocation of the remaining candidates from the political subject is done according to their placement on the list, i.e., the preference will be given to the candidate with the higher placement. It is important to stress that a mandate won in the elections belongs to the elected candidate and not to a political party, coalition, or a list of independent candidates.

Findings from electoral ballot data

The impact of preferential voting system may depend on the quota, the placement mandates, the size of the electoral unit, and the type of residential area. Therefore, we conducted a register-based study from the electoral ballot data. In doing so, a complete dataset for all candidates and municipalities of the 2020 local elections was used for the analysis of the local elections held in November 2020. Local elections in B&H are held every four years and the results are systematically collected and stored by the Central Election Commission. The data included information on the total number of votes and (non)elected individuals per municipality concerning gender, municipality size, two entities (FB&H and RS) and the BD, municipality urbanisation level, primary voter ethnicity in the municipality, and the political orientation of the candidates. A total of 30,236 candidates (57.7% male and 42.3% female) from 143 municipalities are included in the database. The data analysis is mainly focused on the gender of the candidates and it does not include the tests of statistical significance given that the data encompasses the entire population of candidates and not a sample.

A total of 3,330,213 voters were registered for the 2020 local elections. Out of this number, 3,266,488 or 98.1% were voters who could cast votes within the country and the remaining 63,765 or 1.9% voters were Bosnian voters from abroad. A total of 3,177 mandates were contested in 141 municipalities, of which 1,845 mandates were in the FB&H, 1,301 in RS, and 31 in the Brcko District (See Table 2). Voting was conducted on November 15, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at 5,221 polling stations within the country and five polling stations in diplomatic and consular missions abroad.

Table 2: Contested mandates, eligible voters, and turnout

	Regular Mandates	Eligible Voters	Valid Votes	Turnout
FBH	1,845	1,970,831	1,030,920	52.3%
RS	1,301	1,269,884	778,219	61.3%
Brcko District	31	89,498	45,966	51.4%
Total	3,177	3,330,213	1,855,105	55.7%

Source: www.izbori.ba (Authors' Compilation)

In the 2020 local elections, a total of 30,455 candidates were registered on the lists of 574 political subjects, including 151 political parties, 76 coalitions, 266 independent candidates, 17 lists of independent candidates, and 64 independent candidates.

Table 3: 2020 Local Election Candidates by Gender

	Candidates	Elected
Male	17,903 (58.8%)	2,546 (80.1%)
Female	12,542 (41.2%)	631 (19.9%)
Total	30,445 (100.0%)	3,177 (100.0%)

Source: www.izbori.ba (Authors' Compilation)

Table 3 shows that political subjects met the legal requirement of having at least 40% of less represented gender candidates on the lists. However, of the total 3,177 elected officials, 2,546 (80.14%) were male candidates and only 631 (19.86%) were female candidates. To evaluate the effect the preferential voting system has on gender, the so-called *inversions* were estimated (Gendźwiłł & Żółtak, 2020; Seggaard & Saglie, 2021). Namely, the projected composition of the municipal councils using the closed-list ballot structure was estimated. Further, this projected seat allocation was compared to the actual results. Given that the closed-list ballot structure does not allow voters to alter the candidate ranking assigned by the political parties, the comparison of the projected and real election results will demonstrate the power the voters have over the election of local representatives.

The main assessment is aimed at gender and how a projected closed-list system would impact gender distribution among elected individuals. Here, the study merely projects and identifies the actual candidates who could have been elected if there was a closed-list election system, i.e., without preferential voting. In a closed-list system, candidates would have been elected only based on their ranking in a party list according to the total number of seats of a particular party. Since the place of each candidate in every party list is already known, it is quite straightforward to figure out who would have been elected in such a scenario. The results of the projected closed-list scenario are also compared with the actual results in the tables below. Positive differences indicate that the group in question benefits from the preferential voting system. The results indicate that male candidates benefit from the preferential voting system.

Table 4: Comparison of voting systems by municipality size

		Preferential Vote System				Closed List System					
		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		Net Gain for Female Candidates	
		Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Seat	%
Municipality Size	Small	516	78.2	144	21.8	426	64.5	234	35.5	+90	62.5
	Medium	1,042	80.4	254	19.6	815	62.9	481	37.1	+227	89.4
	Large	988	80.9	233	19.1	744	60.9	477	39.1	+244	104.7
Total		2,546	80.1	631	19.9	1,985	62.5	1,192	37.5	+561	88.9

Source: www.izbori.ba (Authors' Compilation)

As Table 4 shows, the preferential voting system benefits male candidates irrespective of the municipality size. The gap is most pronounced in municipalities that are large in size where the net gain in the number of seats allocated to female candidates would have been 104.7%. The net gain is also significant in medium- (89.4%) and small- (62.5%) sized municipalities. However, it is important to consider the

base effect here. For example, the net gain would have been the highest in the case of the candidates from municipalities which are large in size, but those are also the municipalities that had the lowest share of seats for female candidates under the preferential vote system.

Table 5: Comparison of voting systems by urbanisation rate

		Preferential Vote System				Closed List System				Net Gain for Female Candidates	
		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE			
		Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Seat	%
Urbanisation Rate	Less than 20%	598	78.5	164	21.5	481	63.1	281	36.9	+117	71.3
	20% to 39.9%	905	80.2	224	19.8	699	61.9	430	38.1	+206	92.0
	40% to 59.9%	599	83.4	119	16.6	442	61.6	276	38.4	+157	131.9
	60% to 79.9%	252	81.0	59	19.0	209	67.2	102	32.8	+43	72.9
	80% and over	192	74.7	65	25.3	154	59.9	103	40.1	+38	58.5
	Total	2,546	80.1	631	19.9	1,985	62.5	1,192	37.5	+561	88.9

Source: www.izbori.ba (Authors' Compilation)

Table 5 provides details on the question of whether the gender effect of preferential voting varies with the urbanisation level in the municipality. The level of urbanisation rate is used from the data collected in the last census in 2013. As can be seen in the table, female candidates from rural areas suffer somewhat more from the preferential voting systems than candidates from highly urban municipalities. More precisely, the net gain from a closed-list system increases with urbanisation until it reaches 131.9% (at an urbanisation rate of 40% to 59.9%), which is when the net gain starts shrinking down to 72.9% (at an urbanisation rate of 60% to 79.9%) and 58.5% (at urbanisation rate of 80% and more).

Table 6: Comparison of voting behaviour across municipalities

		Preferential Vote System				Closed List System					
		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		Net Gain for Female Candidates	
		Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Seat	%
Ethnicity	Bosniak Majority	983	79.9	247	20.1	760	61.8	470	38.2	+223	90.3
	Serb Majority	1083	82.4	231	17.6	829	63.1	485	36.9	+254	110.0
	Croat Majority	345	74.0	121	26.0	288	61.8	178	38.2	+57	47.1
	No Ethnic Majority	135	80.8	32	19.2	108	64.7	59	35.3	+27	84.4
Total		2,546	80.1	631	19.9	1,985	62.5	1,192	37.5	+561	88.9

Source: www.izbori.ba (Authors' Compilation)

According to results provided in Table 6, the net gain in seats for female candidates, had the closed-list system been implemented in terms of ethnicity, would have been the largest for candidates with the Serb majority population (110%) followed by Bosniak majority municipalities (90.3%) and municipalities with no single major ethnic group (84.4%), while the net gain would have been the smallest for candidates from Croat majority municipalities (47%). Considering the base effect, these results are not surprising.

Table 7: Comparison of voting systems by political orientation

		Preferential Vote System				Closed List System					
		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		Net Gain for Female Candidates	
		Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Number of Seats	%	Seat	%
Political Orientation	Right	1284	79.3	335	20.7	1005	62.1	613	37.9	+278	83.0
	Left	664	79.8	168	20.2	499	60.0	333	40.0	+165	98.2
	Centre	179	81.7	40	18.3	137	63.1	80	36.9	+40	100.0
	Others	419	82.6	88	17.4	344	67.5	166	32.5	+78	88.6
Total		2,546	80.1	631	19.9	1,985	62.5	1,192	37.5	+561	88.9

Source: www.izbori.ba (Authors' Compilation)

Table 7 shows the distribution of seats among political parties coming from different political spectrums, i.e., from the left-inclined political parties to the right-oriented political parties. Parties' political programmes and available party documents were used to classify political parties on the right and left political spectrum. When considering the political orientation of the candidates, it is once again evident that the preferential voting system benefits male candidates irrespective of the party's political ideology background. Table 7 shows that if the closed-list system was implemented in the 2020 local elections in B&H, the net gain for female candidates from parties with centrist political orientation would have been the highest (100%), closely followed by candidates from parties with leftist orientation (98.2%). The benefits would also be obvious in parties with other political ideologies (88.6%) as well as those right-oriented (83%). These results show that the base effect is once again evident.

Table 8: Comparison of gender preference and list placement

List Placement	MALE			FEMALE		
	Frequency	Male %	Overall %	Frequency	Female %	Overall %
1 to 5	227	21.6	18.6	37	21.5	3.0
6 to 10	279	26.6	22.8	42	24.4	3.4
11 to 15	204	19.4	16.7	32	18.6	2.6
16 to 20	136	13.0	11.1	23	13.4	1.9
21 to 25	93	8.9	7.6	20	11.6	1.6
26 to 30	74	7.0	6.1	11	6.4	1.0
31 to 36	37	3.5	3.0	7	4.1	0.6
TOTAL	1,050	100.0	85.9	172	100.0	14.1

Source: www.izbori.ba (Authors' Compilation)

The projected analysis revealed that 1,222 candidates would not have been elected if the closed-list voting system had been used in the 2020 B&H local election. Table 8 presents the list placement of the candidates in intervals of five and shows how many and what percentage of the candidates were elected due to the preferential voting system even though their original list placement could not have allowed them to be elected since their party had won fewer mandates. In other words, Table 8 presents the comparison of the gender of the candidates who

won the mandates with the help of the preferential voting system and their placement in their party list. Male candidates enjoyed the benefits of the preferential voting system vastly as 1,050 men would not have been elected in a traditional closed-list election system compared to only 172 female candidates. The distribution of this benefit does not differ significantly between males and females in terms of their original list placement.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper offers a detailed analysis of the effects of a gender quota and placement mandates in the open-list PR electoral system for the B&H local elections in 2020. Law on Gender Equality in B&H, in accordance with international standards, stipulates the obligation of all public bodies to ensure and promote equal gender representation. This implies a minimum threshold for equal participation of a minimum of 40% of less represented gender and obligations to adopt special measures in a situation when either gender is represented with less than 40%. In addition to this, Election Law in B&H introduced the gender quota and placement mandates. Analysing data from almost 600 political subjects and more than 30,000 candidates in the last 2020 local elections in B&H, this paper finds that all political subjects fully complied with the legal requirement concerning the gender quota and placement mandates.

Having in mind the fact of full compliance with the law and the open-list electoral system, we might have expected the possibility of a slight increase in women's success on electoral ballots. However, post-election results indicate considerable underrepresentation of women in all but seven municipality councils, which met the legal requirement of having at least 40% representatives of a less represented gender. Some municipalities have got no female representatives at all and almost half (62 municipalities) of all 143 municipalities are represented by less than 20% of women. The study shows that in the case of the B&H electoral context, the size of the electoral district does not have a positive impact on the possibility to elect more women to the representative local councils. Irrespective of the size of the municipality, the rate of elected women to the local councils is around 20%.

The scenario is only slightly different with the type of residential area and its impact on the rate of elected women. Namely, only those municipalities with an urbanisation rate of over 80% have been able

to elect slightly over 25% of women to their local councils. This is an indicator that the voters in the most urban places such as the capital city and a few big cities in B&H tend to give more preferential votes to female candidates compared to the voters in less urban areas or predominantly rural municipalities. However, elected representatives in these municipalities make up only 8% of all elected local councillors in B&H.

The study shows that an ethnic composition of local communities provides a more significant difference in the election result of female candidates among the three main ethnic groups in B&H. Thus, the Croat majority communities have a stronger support for female candidates than the other two ethnic groups. This indicates a more liberal approach in the politics of Croat political leaders who give much more chances to women to lead the processes and occupy even the most important positions in the legislative and executive bodies in the state institutions such as the current Chair of the Council of Ministers of B&H, and the president of the entity of the FB&H. Both these positions are occupied by women coming from the leading Croat political party. On the other hand, the results of this study show that the Serb and Bosniak majority communities are lagging in terms of supporting female candidates through the preferential votes on election day. For these two ethnic groups, politics is still exclusively a “man’s business.”

Finally, this study illustrates that there is no difference in the success of political parties that subscribe to different ideologies as their voters almost identically vote for the female candidates on the list regardless of their ideological background. This tells us that the participant political culture of the B&H peoples is still immature. Therefore, taking into consideration the essential principles and programmes of at least leading political parties in B&H, it is not possible to make a clear distinction among the political parties and classify them into left, centre, or right-positioned political subjects.

Considering the fact that the current political situation in B&H would not allow the introduction of a closed-list system which will enable added presence of the less represented gender in the representative bodies, the following recommendations may improve women’s political representation in B&H’s political institutions:

- Harmonisation of the Law on Gender Equality in B&H and the Election Law with regards to the obligatory minimum representation of less represented gender in the state bodies.
- Support for political parties that place female candidates on the top of candidate lists and demonstrate balanced gender representation in elected representative bodies.
- Enacting a clear procedure in favour of less represented gender for those who are elected but decide to join the executive bodies with the candidate of the less represented gender from the list of same political subject.
- Increasing the in-party threshold from the current 10 percent to 30 percent so that ranking order would enable more women to be elected in the representative bodies using the formula of placement mandates.
- Introducing a vertical parity or zebra system which requires that parties nominate equal number of both genders on the party list.
- Changing and transforming patriarchal political culture so that voters develop greater sensitivity towards casting more preferential votes for the female candidates on the list.

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In This Issue

Note from the Editor

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