Second-order electoral personalization. Intra-party preference voting in Belgium and the Netherlands

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5 The consequences: what's in it for a candidate?

5.1 Introduction

In the run-up to the Dutch parliamentary elections of 2006 the VVD organized an internal election to choose a new party leader. The main contenders were Mark Rutte and Rita Verdonk. According to opinion polls Mrs Verdonk, who was the minister for immigration and integration at the time, was very popular amongst the (potential) electorate of the VVD. However, within the party, and especially the top of the party, Rutte was most popular. Rutte won the election by a small margin (51 versus 46 per cent) and became the new party leader and the list-puller for the VVD in the 2006 elections. Rita Verdonk was put on the second place on the party list (Van Holsteyn, 2007, p. 1141).

The battle seemed over, but both Verdonk and the voters decided differently. Verdonk led a personal campaign, thereby dividing the party. But her campaign, at least from a personal point of a view, was a success. Rita Verdonk received more votes than Mark Rutte. This was a first in the Netherlands for elections at the national level. Never before did a candidate lower on the list receive more votes than the list-puller.

A long internal power struggle followed. The leadership position of Rutte, who had the support of the parliamentary party group, was challenged by Verdonk. Verdonk felt backed by the massive support she had received from voters. Verdonk claimed she earned the right to become the party leader and was in constant disagreement with the rest of the party. Eventually, after yet another criticism of Verdonk of the party line, Rutte and the rest of the party felt that Verdonk could no longer be a member of the parliamentary party group and she was expelled from the parliamentary group. Dutch constitutional rules state that she could keep her seat in the Second Chamber and Verdonk became an independent MP. She started her own movement / party, and while briefly very successful in opinion polls, in the elections of 2010 she failed to reach the electoral threshold and was not elected. Mark Rutte, who remained the leader of the VVD, led his party to a victory in the elections and became prime minister.

An impressive number of preference votes do not guarantee a success in the long run, as the Verdonk story shows, but she definitely tried to play the 'mandate by preference votes' card. In this regard the story of the Christian Democratic politician Pieter Omtzigt was more successful. For the elections of 2012 he initially was not placed on the draft list of candidates of his party, after having been an MP for that party since 2003. This was not only to his own regret but also to that of his followers. When the congress had to approve the final list of candidates, after a campaign from local and prominent party members, Omtzigt was put on the 39th place. Despite now being on the list, this was still not a good perspective, since according to opinion polls his party would only receive around 12 seats (Louwerse, 2014). However, Omtzigt received 36,750 preference votes, more than enough to be elected out of list order. Five years later, when the Christian Democratic Party presented the list of

candidates for the 2017 elections, Omtzigt held the fourth position. Here, preference votes likely played a major role in his career.

While rather anecdotal, and somewhat extreme, Verdonk and Omtzigt show that preference votes may matter for a candidate's legislative behaviour and political career. In the previous three chapters I looked at factors *affecting* preference votes. This chapter will look in a more systematic manner at the *consequences* of preference votes for both the legislative behaviour and political career of a candidate. With regard to the political career of a candidate, in the context of this chapter I focus on political functions at the national level performed by a candidate after the elections.

Studies focusing on the consequences of the number of preference votes in flexible list systems are rare. A single quote from De Winter referring to the Belgian electoral system (2005, p. 423) was, for a long time, one of the few comments in the academic literature on the consequences: "Preference votes are not entirely irrelevant to a candidate's political career. Selectors do take into account a candidate's previous electoral performance."

The few studies that focus on the consequences of preference votes are related to the political career of candidates. Ackaert (1996) found that in Flanders (Belgium) political parties take the number of preference votes candidates received into account for the composition of the government and the reselection of candidates at the local level. Another study looked at the effect of preference votes on the career of ministers and junior minsters in Belgium (Weekers, 2003). The conclusion of her comprehensive study was that between 1981 and 1999 preference votes did not play a decisive role in the career of ministers. But since only ministers and junior ministers were analysed in that study, it is not possible to say how the number of preference votes for a candidate influences his or her actual chances of obtaining a government post. Karvonen (2004) also studied the effects of preference voting, but he focussed on effects of preference votes on the political system and, more specific, on the party system. Some more recent studies deal with the question of whether there is an effect of preference votes on the political career of a candidate (André, Depauw, Shugart, et al., 2017; Crisp et al., 2013; Folke et al., 2016), showing that there is an effect (these studies will be discussed in more detail below).

Thus, while we know something about the impact of the number of preference votes for a candidate, there is much we do *not* know. For countries as Belgium and the Netherlands, where only a few candidates are elected solely on the basis of preference votes (see section 5.2), this question is especially relevant both for voters and candidates. If the number of preference votes for a candidate has consequences, this could lead to an increased incentive for candidates to seek preference votes. For voters, the value of casting a preference vote could increase if they know it will have consequences. These potential consequences could also (at least partly) answer the puzzling finding why so many voters would vote for candidates who would have been elected anyway.

In terms of consequences of preference votes, at least three aspects are relevant. The first and most direct effect is whether candidates are elected based on preference votes. In

section 5.2 an overview is given of the number of candidates who receive enough votes to be elected based on preference votes, and how many of these candidates are elected out of list order. The second and third aspects are indirect consequences of preference votes. The number of preference votes may have an effect on the parliamentary behaviour of the candidates (see section 5.3). Finally, if parties value the number of preference votes a candidate receives, this potentially influences the political career of the candidate, i.e. whether candidates with more preference votes for example have a higher chance to be 'promoted' to (junior) minister or obtain a better list position in the next election (see section 5.4).

5.2 Candidates elected based on preference votes

In Belgium and the Netherlands only a small proportion of the elected candidates receive enough votes to be elected independent of their list position. At the same time, most of the candidates who are elected based on preference votes, would also have been elected based on their list position.

In Belgium, between 1919 and 1999, 30 candidates were elected out of list order: only 0.6 per cent of the total number of elected candidates in that period (Deschouwer, 2009, p. 117). But since the weight of preference votes was increased in 2003, by reducing the number of list votes that are transferred to the candidates (see section 1.4.1), the number of candidates elected out of list order increased dramatically.

First of all, in the four elections between 2003 and 2014 respectively 35, 33, 35 and 30 of the 150 elected candidates received enough votes to be elected on their own. Approximately 40 per cent of these candidates were elected out of list order. Both in 2003 and 2007 17 candidates (11.3 per cent of the elected candidates) were elected out of list order. In 2010 and 2014 respectively 12 (8.0 per cent) and 7 candidates (4.7 per cent) were elected out of list order. At first sight this seems an impressive effect. However, there is a downside. A large part of these elected candidates did not accept their seat. Out of the candidates elected out of list order six (35.2 per cent) did not enter parliament after the elections in 2003, seven (50.0 per cent) did not do so in 2007 and six (41.2 per cent) of them refused in 2010. Most of these candidates were list-pushers, and at the same time already held a position either in a regional parliament or government. The drop in elected candidates out of list order (and the fact that in 2014 all candidates who were elected out of list order accepted their seat), can likely be explained by the newly introduced rule that it was no longer allowed to be a candidate for multiple elections held at the same day if the mandates for the elected bodies are incompatible.

In the Netherlands, between 1946 and 1994, three candidates were elected out of list order: only 0.1 per cent of all candidates elected in that period. Political parties do not really encourage candidates to try to be elected out of list order: some parties even ask their candidates to state that they would not accept their seat if they would be elected out of list

order (Andeweg, 2005, p. 494; Van Holsteyn & Andeweg, 2012, p. 169).

The number of candidates elected out of order increased, after changing the formal weight of preference votes, although not as dramatically as in Belgium. Since the election of 1998 a candidate only needs 25 per cent of the electoral threshold to be elected based on preference votes (this was 50 per cent). In the seven parliamentary elections between 1998 and 2017 only 145 of the 979 elected candidates (excluding list-pullers) received enough votes to be elected on their own. However, also in the Netherlands most of these candidates would have been elected anyway. In most elections only one or two of the 150 elected candidates were elected out of order (14 candidates in a total of 7 elections). In the elections of 2017 a 'record' of four candidates were elected out of list order. An important difference with Belgium is that all these candidates accepted their seat after the elections.

5.3 Consequences for legislative behaviour

5.3.1 Expectations

Preference votes may influence the legislative behaviour of candidates. In general, according to André et al. (2014, p. 231) "[e]lectoral institutions shape the behaviour of (would-be) legislators between elections". More specifically, electoral institutions influence the "relative value to legislators (…) of personal reputations versus party reputations for advancing political careers" (Carey & Shugart, 1995). Systems that allow intra-party preference voting encourage behaviour of politicians that is focused on their personal reputations, since, in these systems legislators do not solely depend on their party in order to be re-elected, but also on the voter.

Research suggests that both the weight given to preference votes and the use of preference votes by voters influence the level of personal vote-seeking incentives (Bräuninger et al., 2012). This is where the competing principals theory comes into play (Carey, 2007). Members of parliament normally have at least one principal: the legislative party leadership. However, the institutional context might influence whether MPs also have other principals. If competing principals exist, this might reduce party unity, since voters do not only depend on the party leadership (Carey, 2007). So, if an electoral systems allows intraparty competition, party unity might be reduced because MP's try to distinguish themselves from party colleagues in order to attract voters.

MPs have two options to attract these voters: via constituency service and by voting against the party in parliament (Kam, 2009, p. 24). However, candidates in Belgium and the Netherlands partly depend on voters, but both countries should be classified as party-centered systems (Shugart, 2001). In the Netherlands and Belgium, but also in other countries, MPs to a large extent indeed vote according to party lines (see for example Van Vonno, 2016, p. 62). And that is not only a result of MPs being forced by the party leadership, but mainly because MPs simply are in agreement with the party, rely on cue-taking or voluntarily decide to vote according to party lines (Van Vonno, 2016). Yet, there

are other, to some extent more subtle, ways for an MP to distinguish him- or herself from co-partisans than voting against the party. Still, members of parliament who do not reach the individual threshold are not more active in parliament, in terms of sponsorship of amendments and motions and the submission of written question, to boost their chances of being re-elected (Louwerse & Otjes, 2016).

In this section, the starting point is that a candidate seeks re-election. The assumption is that what an MP does in parliament is driven by future elections: the behaviour is motivated by vote-seeking arguments. In terms of preference votes one might also turn the argument around. What if it is not the behaviour of a member that influences his or her preference votes at the next election, but the preference votes that influence the behaviour of an MP in the subsequent legislative term? Candidates with many preference votes could feel they were given a stronger personal mandate and therefore either perceive a responsibility (to the voter) or a right (for themselves) to act less in accordance with the party line.

One way an MP could do this, is by delivering speeches in parliament and therein deviate from the party line. According to Proksch and Slapin (2015) MPs do not use their speeches given in parliament with the goal to persuade their colleagues to change their opinion. Their main goal is to communicate with their voters and show them their policy positions. Therefore, if an MP feels he or she has a stronger personal mandate, and therefore has the opportunity to more strongly deviate from the party, speeches in parliament could be a way to show that to the voters. I will therefore test the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 5.1**: Candidates who receive more preference votes are more likely to deviate from the parliamentary party group line.

5.3.2 Data and methods

To test the effect of preference votes on the legislative behaviour of members of parliament in both Belgium and the Netherlands, two multilevel regression models will be conducted for each country. One model tests the effects of preference votes on the behaviour of MPs during plenary sessions and one model tests the effects of preference votes on the positions MPs take in the written questions they submit to (junior) ministers. These models contain random intercepts for parties and elections and districts (only for Belgium). The period of analysis is 1998 until 2017 for the Netherlands (6 legislative periods) and 2003 until 2014 for Belgium (3 legislative periods).

5.3.2.1 Deviating from the average party score

For the two analyses two different dependent variables will be used. One estimates the deviation of an MP from the average party score based on text analysis of speeches made during plenary sessions. The other dependent variable measures the deviation of MPs from the average party score based on text analysis of the written questions they submitted. These variables are discussed in section 4.3.3.

5.3.2.2 Independent variables

The most important independent variable should be an indicator of the number of preference votes for the members of parliament. However, it is not possible to simply use the votes a candidate received, since the size of both the party and the district (in Belgium) have an influence on the absolute number of votes. For Belgium a solution is to use the ratio of the number of received preference votes and the number of preference votes for a candidate necessary to be elected (which is calculated by dividing the number of votes of a party by the number of seats the party won in a district + 1). This last figure depends on the size of the party and (indirectly) on the size of the district. Therefore, this ratio is comparable between parties and districts. The higher the ratio the better the candidate performed. In the Netherlands the ratio between the number of votes for a candidate and the threshold for individual candidates will be used as the indicator for the number of preference votes. So, for both Belgium and the Netherlands this independent variable measures how close a candidate was to winning a seat on his or her own. A score of '1' means that the candidate received the exact number of preference votes necessary to be elected independent of his or her list position. To make sure the analysis is not influenced by only a few outliers (i.e. candidates who passed the threshold by a large margin), the maximum value this variable can take is one[84]. The data necessary for this variable were taken from official sources containing the elections results (for Belgium: Belgium.be, 2003, 2007, 2010, for the Netherlands: Kiesraad, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2010, 2012).

Next to the indicator for preference votes three other variables will be included. First whether a candidate was a member of a party that was in government at that time, since governing parties are more unified than opposition parties in parliamentary systems (Carey, 2007). If agreements were made between governing parties, the pressure on individual members to stick to the party (or government) line might be larger. Second, the position on the list of a candidate (relative to the number of elected members of the party) is included as a control variable. Third, as an additional control variable incumbency is included. Descriptive statistics for all variables can be found in appendix E.2 (for the Netherlands in table e.3 (part I and II), on page 193 and for Belgium in table e.4 (part I and II), on page 194).

5.3.3 Results

Table 5.1 and table 5.2 show the results of the multilevel regression analyses for the effect of preference votes in the Netherlands and Belgium. The results are mixed, but in general they are not in line with the first hypothesis of this chapter. In figure 5.1 the effects the

[84] There might be a downside to this choice. If the effect would only manifest itself once the threshold is reached by a candidate, the analysis would not find any effect. Therefore the analyses presented in section 5.3.3 were also conducted for only those candidates who passed the threshold (with the preference votes variable not set at a maximum of 1). The results of these analyses did not show any different pattern than those presented in section 5.3.3 (the magnitude of the effect changed slightly, but if the effects were significant, they were in the same direction).

Table 5.1 Effect of preference votes on legislative behaviour (the Netherlands)

	Plenary sessions	**Written questions**
(Constant)	0.029***	0.059***
	(0.007)	(0.012)
Preference votes	0.006*	0.007
	(0.003)	(0.006)
List position	0.000	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.005)
Government party	0.003	0.004
	(0.002)	(0.004)
Member of parliament t-1	-0.004*	-0.001
	(0.002)	(0.004)
AIC	-4317.5	-2683.1
BIC	-4278.9	-2645.2
Log likelihood	2166.7	1349.6
Observations	923	839
Groups(Parties)	8	8
Groups(Election)	6	6
Variance: Party (intercept)	0.000	0.001
Variance: Election (intercept)	0.000	0.000

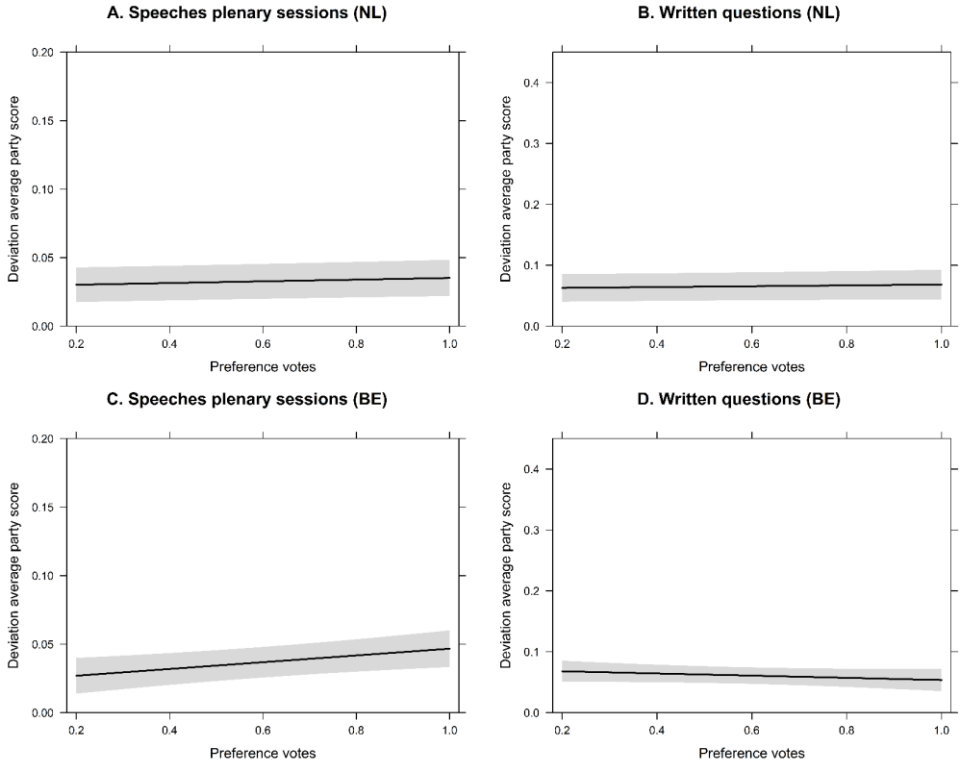
Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001. Regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Source: Own dataset.

Table 5.2 Effect of preference votes on legislative behaviour (Belgium)

	Plenary sessions	**Written questions**
(Constant)	0.030**	0.080***
	(0.008)	(0.011)
Preference votes	0.025**	-0.018
	(0.009)	(0.142)
List position	-0.001	-0.002
	(0.002)	(0.003)
Government party	-0.009	-0.019
	(0.008)	(0.010)
Member of parliament t-1	-0.002	0.006
	(0.004)	(0.007)
AIC	-945.1	-901.1
BIC	-914.1	-867.0
Log likelihood	481.5	459.6
Observations	231	328
Groups(Parties)	11	12
Groups(Districts)	11	11
Groups(Election)	2	3
Variance: Party (intercept)	0.000	0.000
Variance: District (intercept)	0.000	0.000
Variance: Election (intercept)	0.000	0.000

Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001. Regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Source: Own dataset.

Figure 5.1 Effects of preference votes on parliamentary behaviour



preference votes have in the different models are plotted. The Y-axis in these plots show the entire range of the relevant deviation variable, to help the interpretation of the coefficients presented in the tables. In both countries the model with the behaviour of MPs in plenary sessions as the dependent variable, show that the preference votes variable has a statistically significant and positive influence. However, both in the Netherlands and Belgium the effects are very limited in substantial terms. Moving from the minimum at the preference votes scale (0 per cent of the individual threshold) to the maximum (100 per cent of the individual threshold) a candidate only makes a small step on the deviation scale. In the Netherlands that step would be 0.006, while the deviation scale has a minimum score of 0.0 and a maximum of 0.19. Therefore, the maximum effect only equals 1/30 of the entire range of the deviation scale. While statistically significant, in substantial terms that effect is almost negligible. In Belgium the effect is somewhat stronger, but the maximum effect still only equals 1/7 of the entire deviation scale.

When the deviation of an MP from the average party score is measured based on his or her written question, a positive effect is only found in the Netherlands and it is very small. While moving through the entire range of the preference votes scale, an MP would only move 1/63 of the range of the deviation scale. In Belgium the effect is even negative, but also small. Moving through the entire range of the preference vote scale leads to a decrease on the dependent variable of 0.018, which is only 1/25 of the range of that scale. These effects are controlled for by list position and incumbency, which both have no major influence on deviating from the party line. In addition, the model controls for being a member of a government party. One might expect that this has a negative influence on deviating from the party line. This holds for Belgium, but not for the Netherlands. However, these effects are not statistically significant[85]. Hypothesis 5.1 therefore has to be rejected.

5.4 Consequences for the political career of a candidate

5.4.1 Expectations

For the Netherlands Andeweg and Irwin (2009, p. 93) observe a pattern in which "the possibility for a career in politics is now almost completely under the control of parties". Before the 1960s Dutch ministers were recruited from outside parliament more often and sometimes ministers without any party affiliation entered government (Secker, 1991). With the near disappearance of this type of politician, a development towards 'career politicians' has taken place, not only in the Netherlands (King, 1981). In addition, the selection of candidates is one of the most important functions of a political party (Hazan, 2014). Selectors take into account characteristics of candidates such as incumbency, gender,

[85] Additional analyses were conducted to test whether interaction effects between these control variables and preference votes exist. In none of the models the inclusion of interaction effects had a result on the conclusion presented here.

ethnicity and region (Gallagher, 1988), and the assumption is that they strive for 'ticket-balancing', i.e. a mix of candidates with different characteristics (Matthews & Valen, 1999). Of course, this task is simpler if the district magnitude and the length of the list increase (Matland & Studlar, 1996; in the context of geographical representattion, see also Put, 2016, p. 192). So, especially for the Netherlands, but also for the larger districts in Belgium there is at least the possibility of drafting balanced lists[86].

Recent studies have shown that preference votes could also influence the selection process. The study of André et al. (2017) is especially relevant, since it looks at the influence of preference votes on party nomination strategies in three countries where flexible-list systems are used. The study shows that in Belgium, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia preference votes do influence the list position of a returning candidate for the next election. Returning candidates who are ranked higher by the voters (in terms of votes) than by the party (in terms of their original list position) are moved up the list by the party in the next election[87]. Crisp et al. (2013) come to similar conclusions for Slovakia, but they included only incumbents in their analysis: once elected, those who received more preference votes are more likely to move up the list for the next election. Since this mechanism seems to work both in nationwide (single district) and district proportional representation systems, I expect the same to be true for the Netherlands.

> **Hypothesis 5.2**: Candidates who receive more preference votes have a better chance of getting a higher place on the list in the next elections.

However, I do not expect that this effect necessarily is the same for both female and male candidates. For most parties there is a difference in the distribution between female and male candidates on the list. In the Netherlands, most parties not only have more male candidates on the list, but they also have more male candidates towards the top of the list. In Belgium rules dictate that there should be an equal number of male and female candidates on the list, however, the rules further only stipulate that the first two candidates may not have the same gender[88]. As a result, despite the fact that parties have an equal number of male and female candidates on their list, there are still more male candidates towards the top of the list in Belgian parties[89]. It is not immediately clear if and how this would influence the effect of preference votes on the list position for the next election. On

[86] These balanced lists can (partly) be a deception, since arguably what matters most is which candidates have a realistic chance to be elected. The order of the list still has a large influence on which candidates are elected (see section 5.2) and selectors favour for example incumbents or ministers on more 'realistic positions' (i.e. positions more towards the top of the list) (Put & Maddens, 2012). This means that a balanced list can still lead to the group of elected candidates with highly similar characteristics.

[87] This result is based on an analysis of all parties (that won seats in the period under analysis), so it is not clear whether there is a difference between different parties.

[88] As a transition-rule, in 2003, the first election under these gender rules the first three candidates could not have the same gender.

[89] For example, in the 2014 elections, if we only look at the first 6 candidates on all lists, 46.9 per cent of the candidates were female. From the first three candidates on all lists, only 41.6 per cent was a female candidate.

the one hand, it is possible to argue that political parties still prefer (for whatever reason) to have male candidates towards the top of the list and the effect of preference votes on the list position would therefore also be stronger for male candidates. On the other hand, it is possible to argue that since political parties prefer male candidates, a good electoral performance is less important for them to gain a better list position for the next election. In that case, we could expect that the effect is stronger for female candidates, since they need something extra in order to be promoted to better list positions. The argument could also be reversed: because of overrepresentation of male candidates towards the top of the list, a better electoral performance is more important for them to distinguish themselves from their (male) co-partisans. Under that logic the effect would be stronger for male candidates and less important for female candidates because they have less (female) competition. In any way, it is difficult to theorize that the effect will be in a specific direction. Therefore the following, and rivalling, hypotheses are formulated:

> **Hypothesis 5.3**: The effect of preference votes on the list position in the next election is stronger for male candidates than for female candidates.
> **Hypothesis 5.4**: The effect of preference votes on the list position in the next election is stronger for female candidates than for male candidates.

Another aspect of the political career which is relevant in this context is the ministerial career. For many ministers the 'parliamentary pathway' to become a minister is important (De Winter, 1991). In both Belgium and the Netherlands the government is often formed by ministers and junior ministers who were elected as an MP first. In the Netherlands 69 per cent of the ministers between 1967 and 2013 had parliamentary experience (Andeweg & Irwin, 2014, p. 159) and in Belgium nearly all ministers are recruited from parliament (De Winter, 1991; Dumont et al., 2009).

From the perspective of a party, selecting popular candidates as ministers could strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the government. In the Netherlands for example a critique of the system is that voters do not have influence on the government that is formed (e.g. Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, pp. 132–134; Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 2018). A political party could choose to partly address this critique by taking the number of preference votes into consideration when allocating government positions. Promoting popular candidates to minister or junior minister could at least give voters the feeling they have some influence on the composition of government. Research has shown that political parties indeed take preference votes into account when 'promoting' politicians. Winning more preference votes in local elections in the Swedish semi-open list system and the Brazilian open list systems, for example, increases the chances of becoming a local party leader (Folke et al., 2016). Therefore, I expect that:

> **Hypothesis 5.5**: Candidates who receive more preference votes have a higher chance of obtaining a post in the government installed after the elections (if their party participates in the governmental coalition).

Of course, it should be kept in mind that there are various constraints which influence which individuals enter government (Dowding & Dumont, 2009). A constitutional constraint is the pool from which ministers can be recruited, e.g. whether they should come from parliament or not. The 'linguistic parity' rule in Belgium, stating that there should be an equal number of Dutch-speaking and French-speaking ministers (Deschouwer, 2009, p. 140), also complicates the portfolio allocation. Constraints may also be 'political': how the different ministerial positions are filled may reflect power balances and policy interests. Furthermore, because of strategic considerations a junior minister may be linked to a minister from a different party. Therefore it is unlikely to expect a strong effect of preference votes on the appointment of ministers.

5.4.2 Data and method

5.4.2.1 Effects of preference votes on list position at the next election

The effects of preference votes on the list position of candidates in the next election in Belgium is comprehensively studied by André et al. (2017). To a large extent I will replicate their research design to test whether the same effects hold for the Netherlands. However, I add some independent variables to the model, mainly to test for a gender effect. I will therefore also replicate their analyses for Belgium.

To test the effect of preference votes (t-1) on the list position in the next election (t), a multilevel regression model was constructed with random intercepts for both Belgium and the Netherlands. For both countries random intercepts were included for the election and parties. For Belgium a third random intercept for districts was included. The dependent variable used for the analysis is the decimal logarithm of a candidate's list position at t. With this logarithmic transformation the analysis accounts for the fact that it is more difficult to gain positions for a candidate who already occupies a high list position at t-1 than it is for a candidate more towards the bottom of the list.

As André et al. (2017, p. 593) point out, an important - but not easy - decision that has to be made, is how to measure a candidate's preference vote-earning, i.e. the most important independent variable for this analysis. If I would use the absolute number of votes a candidate receives, candidates could not be compared across parties, because it may depend on the size of the party and (for Belgium) the district. The solution that André et al. propose is to compare the ranking of candidates by the party (i.e. the order in which candidates appear on the list) with the ranking of candidates by the voter (i.e. by ordering the candidates based on the votes they received). The list position and the position on the voter ranking are used to calculate the *rank difference*[90]. A positive rank difference means

[90] The rank difference is a deviant operationalization of a candidate's electoral performance compared to how it is operationalized in the rest of this study (i.e. a more absolute measurement of the number of preference votes a candidate received, either by looking at the percentage of preference votes within a party or by looking at the percentage of preference votes related to the individual threshold). This is a result of the fact that in the other parts

that a candidate performed better in terms of votes than in terms of party support: the candidate has a better voter rank than list position. The expectation is that if preference votes matter, a candidate's rank difference has a negative effect in the regression analyses. This would mean that a higher rank difference (i.e. voters rank a candidate higher than the party) leads to a position more towards the top of the list.

Figure 5.2 and figure 5.3 show the distribution of the rank difference variable for respectively the Netherlands and Belgium for all candidates at t-1. These histograms thus include both candidates who did and who did not return in the next election. Both histograms are distributed relatively normally, although they are both slightly positively skewed. The distribution of the rank difference variable for those candidates included in the analysis looks relatively similar. At least they (almost) have the same range. The rank difference variable ranges from -15 to 23 in Belgium, both for candidates participating again at t and for all candidates participating at t-1. For the Netherlands the distributions ranges from -43 to 59 (all candidates at t-1) and -43 to 45 (all returning candidates at t). There is thus considerable variation in the rank difference of the candidates included in the analysis, to test the effect of rank difference at t-1 on the list position at t. It is not the case that all candidates with a low rank difference do not even participate in the next election, which would have created a selection bias.

Figure 5.2 Distribution rank difference (the Netherlands)

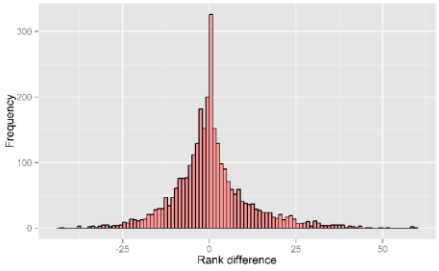
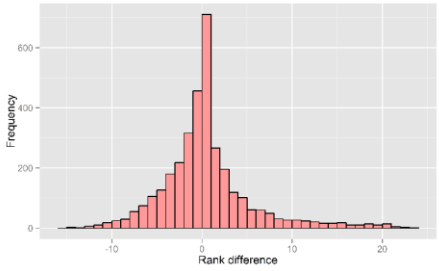


Figure 5.3 Distribution rank difference (Belgium)



In addition, and in line with the study of André et al. (2017), two other independent variables will be included: 1) a candidate's list position at t-1 to account for general qualities of the candidate and 2) incumbency. Previous literature has shown that parties are more likely to put incumbent candidates on positions more towards the top of the list (Put & Maddens, 2013), so we should control for this.

Next to these independent variables used by André et al. (2017), I include some other variables. First, a variable is included that measures whether the candidate was a minister or

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of this study we are interested in the electoral performance of a candidate relative to all other (co-partisan) candidates, but in this analysis we are mainly interested in a candidate's electoral performance in relation to co-partisan candidates close to his or her own list position.

junior minister in the previous legislative period. It is reasonable to expect that if a minister or junior minister would like to return on the party list in the next election, he or she is given a position towards the top of the list; we should control for this. Furthermore, I include gender and an interaction between gender and rank difference in the analysis, to test whether there is a gender difference in the effects of rank difference. Descriptive statistics for all variables can be found in appendix E.2 (for the Netherlands in table e.3 (part III) and for Belgium in table e.4 (part III)).

Data on individual election results were obtained from official documents containing the election results, both for Belgium (Belgium.be, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2014) and the Netherlands (Kiesraad, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2010, 2012, 2017c). From these documents all candidates, their gender, their list position and the absolute number of preference votes at the national (for the Netherlands) or district (for Belgium) level were obtained. In the Netherlands, for most candidates the candidate's gender is given on the ballot. However, not all parties have the gender on the list. Missing data was completed as much as possible by hand coding the gender[91]. Data about which candidates were also a minister or junior minister was obtained from the website *Parlement & Politiek* (Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 2017a) for the Netherlands and the Political Data Yearbook (Political Data Yearbook, 2017; Rihoux et al., 2013) for Belgium. To determine whether a candidate was a member of parliament in the period before the election I used information given on the website of *Parlement & Politiek* (Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 2017b) for the Netherlands and the Belgian Chamber of Representatives (Belgische Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers, 2017a) for Belgium. Based on these sources a dataset was created in which each case represents a candidate in a single election.

For the Netherlands, only candidates from parties that received at least one seat in parliament between 1998 and 2017 are included. Next, for all candidates it was determined whether they also participated (for the same party) in the next election. Only these candidates are included in the analysis. Candidates at the first position in t-1 were also excluded from the analysis.

A problem occurs due to the fact that political parties in the Netherlands may present different electoral lists in each district. These districts normally do not influence the electoral outcome (Andeweg, 2005, p. 497), but complicate the comparison between candidates. Usually a large part of the list is the same in each district, but some parties have variations at the end of the list in each district. This gives them the opportunity to present more candidates nationwide than the maximum number of candidates on one list would allow them to do and to add some regional candidates in each district. Therefore, some candidates are not on the ballot in all districts. Moreover, some candidates are on the ballot

[91] This was done by checking whether the gender of the candidate was mentioned in another election or by looking at the first name of a candidate, which is also given on the ballot for candidates of most parties. If the first name was not given or it was not a typical male or female name, the gender of a candidate was coded based on an internet search.

in all districts, but do not always have the same list position in all districts. This is problematic for the analysis. First, if candidates do not participate in an equal number of districts their votes cannot be compared. Second, if a candidate participates in all districts but at varying positions, it is not straightforward which positions at two consecutive elections should be compared. Therefore, only candidates who in two subsequent elections have the same position on the party-list in all districts are included in the analysis (to be clear: the position can be different in the first and second election)[92].

For Belgium all effective candidates from parties that won at least one seat in the elections between 2003 and 2014 are included in the analysis. For each of them it was determined whether they participated in the next election, again as an effective candidate, for the same party and in the same district. Candidates who fulfil all these criteria are included in the multilevel regression model.

5.4.2.2 Effects of preference votes on chances of becoming a (junior) minister

To test hypothesis 5.5 three multilevel logistic regression analyses will be conducted, all with a different dependent variable. The first model predicts the chances of becoming a member of government, the second one predicts the chances of becoming a minister and the third model predicts the chances of becoming a junior minister. Included in the analyses are all candidates of parties that entered government in a certain legislative period. The models will contain random intercepts for parties, elections and (for Belgium) districts.

For the Netherlands the analysis is conducted for the period 1998 until 2017; the results of six elections are included[93]. For Belgium the analysis is conducted for the period 2003 until 2017[94]. In addition to the data containing the electoral results described in the previous section, data about which candidates became a (junior) minister after the election was collected. The data required for the Netherlands was obtained from the *Parlement & Politiek website* (Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 2017a) and for Belgium data was obtained from the Political Data Yearbook website (Political Data Yearbook, 2017; Rihoux

[92] Within a party the voter rank order is based on all candidates who participate at the same position and in all districts. So for example, if a party presents lists with 50 candidates, but varies the last 5 positions in each district, the rank order runs from 1 to 45. A candidate who does not participate in all districts, but receives more votes than candidates who participate in all districts, would thus not influence the rank order of the candidates who participate in all districts. This solution is chosen because in the example mentioned before a party would present in total 45 + (5 * 20) = 145 candidates. If the rank order was based on all these candidates a candidate included in the analysis could have a potential rank difference of -105 (if the candidate running from position 40 receives for example only a few votes and therefore ends up at the end of the rank order). This would create a problem for the distribution of the independent variable and would increase the chances of finding invalid results.

[93] While in other parts of this book the election of 2017 is also included, the election results of candidates in this election are not considered in this chapter, since at the time of writing the formation process was still underway.

[94] The Verhofdstadt III government was in office between December 2007 and March 2008 and took office after the elections of 2007. However, it was clear from the start that this was an interim government (Sinardet, 2008, p. 1029). The allocation of (junior) ministers may have followed a different process because of the interim nature of this cabinet. To ensure that this does not have an influence on the results of the analyses, this cabinet is excluded from the analyses.

et al., 2013). Based on these sources a dataset was created with all candidates of the parties that entered the government after the elections.

The dependent variable measures whether a candidate obtained a specific function in the period between two elections (i.e. depending on the model, whether the candidate became a minister, a junior minister, or both). Thus, for the analysis no distinction is made between government members who obtained their position the day the government took office, or whether they obtained their position later, for example after a reshuffle of the cabinet.

Four independent variables are included in each model. First, an indicator of the electoral performance of the candidate is included. This indicator is calculated by dividing the number of preference votes of the candidate by the threshold for an individual candidate to be elected on his or her own[95]. For the Dutch candidates this is 25 per cent of the electoral threshold for a political party (i.e. 0.17 per cent of the total votes casted). For Belgian candidates this is the number of votes cast for the party of the candidate divided by the number of seats won by the party + 1. This variable is set at a maximum of 1 to prevent that the results are influenced by a few candidates who passed the threshold with a large margin.

Second, to account for general qualities of the candidate his or her list position (as a log(10) transformation) is included in the model. If we do not control for this, we may find a positive effect between preference votes and the chances of becoming a minister, while actually both are influenced by the list position of the candidate.

Third, a variable is included which measures whether the candidate performed the same function in the previous legislative period (i.e. depending on the model, whether the candidate was a minister, junior minister or both in the previous legislative period).

Fourth, an indicator with the gender of the candidate is included together with an interaction effect between the preference vote indicator and gender to test whether there is a different effect for male and female candidates. Descriptive statistics for all variables can be found in appendix E.2 (for the Netherlands in table e.3 (part IV) and for Belgium in table e.4 (part IV)).

5.4.3 Results

5.4.3.1 Effects of preference votes on list position in the next election

In table 5.3 the number of returning candidates in the Dutch elections are shown. In most elections around 40 per cent of the candidates who participate in an election can also be found on the ballot for the next election. Only in 2002 the percentage of returning candidates is much higher: 70 per cent. This does not come as a surprise, since the next election was held only eight months later, when the government formed after the election of

[95] See also footnote 90 (on page 112) with respect to the different operationalization for the electoral performance variable used in this study.

2002 fell after being in office for only three months. Therefore, many parties presented (almost) identical or only slightly changed lists for the 2003 election. The candidates for whom figures are presented in the table are those candidates who were on the ballot in all districts at the same position in election t-1. Whether they participated for the same party or in all districts at t is not considered here.

Table 5.3 Rank difference and returning candidates (the Netherlands)

Election	Category	N	%	Mean RD	SE	T-test
1998	Not running in 2002	146	41.8	0.49	0.89	t(334.5)=0.654
	Running in 2002	203	58.2	-0.33	0.87	
2002	Not running in 2003	102	29.8	0.22	1.27	t(167.3)=0.131
	Running in 2003	240	70.2	0.03	0.71	
2003	Not running in 2006	210	57.9	0.71	0.64	t(262.9)=1.213
	Running in 2006	153	42.1	-0.76	1.03	
2006	Not running in 2010	244	60.2	1.41	0.82	t(365.4)=2.741**
	Running in 2010	161	39.8	-1.96	0.91	
2010	Not running in 2012	265	53.8	0.46	0.79	t(490.9)=0.866
	Running in 2012	228	46.2	-0.47	0.74	
2012	Not running in 2017	336	63.2	0.30	0.66	t(446.2)=0.758
	Running in 2017	196	36.8	-0.47	0.78	

Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001
Source: Own dataset. Included are all candidates who participated in election t in all districts and at the same position in each district, and who run for parties that won at least one seat in the elections between 1998-2017.

The table also shows a comparison between the average rank difference of those candidates not running again and those who did run again. When looking at the effect of rank difference at t-1 on the list position at t, logic dictates that only candidates who participate in two subsequent elections can be included. However, if we only look at the effect for returning candidates, a part of the effect of the electoral performance might be overlooked. The electoral performance at t-1 might also affect which candidates are given a place on the list at election t. For example, a candidate who performs very badly in electoral term at t-1 might not even be re-selected. Therefore, before considering the effect rank difference has on the list position for returning candidates, I first compare the rank difference of candidates who did not return with the rank difference of candidates who did return.

Based on the logic of hypothesis 5.2, we expect that candidates with a higher rank difference are more likely to be selected for the next election. With the exception of the 2006 election, comparisons of the rank difference between candidates running again and not running again are not significant. However, since these averages are for the entire population one might argue that statistical significance is less important. What therefore is most striking about the t-test presented in table 5.3 is the direction of the effect. Candidates running again on average have a lower rank difference than candidates who did not run again. This seems to contradict the expectation, because what this means is that candidates who performed better in terms of votes than based on party ranking are less likely to return.

If parties would benefit those candidates who perform well in elections, we would have expected that this would have been the other way around.

The comparison is not very thorough subtle, however, and it is therefore difficult to draw strong conclusions. For example, it is not considered what the reasons are for (not) running again. Some candidates might not have the ambition to run again in the next election and in these cases rank difference does not have an influence on the selection process within the party[96]. Furthermore, the results might be influenced by the differences between candidates who served as an MP in the legislative terms between the two election and those candidates who did not. Therefore table 5.3 is replicated in appendix E.1 (table e.1 on page 191), but now includes an additional distinction between incumbent and non-incumbent candidates at the time of election t[97]. This table shows that, with the exception of 2006, incumbents who return on average have higher rank differences than (incumbent) candidates who do not return. For most years the same is true for non-incumbents as well; they too are more likely to return when there rank difference is higher. These effects are not statistically significant, but nevertheless telling, since the averages are based on the entire population. The effect is not large, but there seems to be a positive effect of rank difference on the chances of reselection.

Table 5.4 shows the average rank difference for returning and not returning candidates in Belgium. In 2003, 2007 and 2010 respectively 32, 44 and 21 per cent of the effective candidates at t-1 were also on the ballot in the elections at t. Contrary to the Netherlands, in all three years the ranking difference of returning candidates is higher than it is for non-returning candidates. In two of these years the difference is also statistically significant. There is a difference between incumbents and non-incumbents, however, as can be seen in appendix E.1 (table e.2, on page 192). Incumbent candidates who return have a lower rank difference than incumbent candidates who do not return. For non-incumbent candidates this is the other way around: if they have a higher rank difference they are more likely to return on the ballot in the next election. Rank difference in Belgium thus seems to be of less importance for members of parliament than it is for candidates who were not an MP between two subsequent elections.

Table 5.5 shows the results of the multilevel regression models testing the influence of rank difference at t-1 on the list position at t for the Netherlands. In the most basic model (model 1), which only controls for the list position at t-1, the electoral performance of a candidate has no statistical significant influence on the list position in the next election. List position t-1 is highly significant and with a regression coefficient of almost one it is an important predictor of list position at t. Returning candidates normally run at a position at t

[96] This does not hold if a relatively bad electoral performance would be the reason for a candidate not to run again. But even then it is a personal decision and in this chapter we are interested in if and how the party considers electoral performance in the selection process.

[97] This does not necessarily mean that the candidate was elected at t-1. The incumbent candidate may have entered parliament at a later time, as a replacement for another MP.

Table 5.4 Rank difference and returning candidates (Belgium)

Year	Category	N	%	Mean RD	SE	T-test
2003	Not running in 2007	740	67.9	-0.36	0.20	t(774.5)=-3.671***
	Running in 2007	350	32.1	0.80	0.25	
2007	Not running in 2010	613	56.2	-0.31	0.20	t(990.0)=-2.334**
	Running in 2010	477	43.8	0.42	0.24	
2010	Not running in 2014	960	78.7	-0.09	0.16	t(459.6)=-1.455
	Running in 2014	259	21.3	0.37	0.27	

Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001
Source: Own dataset. Included are all effective candidates of parties that won at least one seat in the elections between 2003-2014.

similar to the one at which they ran at t-1. In the second model the influence of political functions in the previous period is shown as well. Serving as a minister, junior minister or being an incumbent leads to a position more towards the top of the list in the next election if the candidate runs again, although the effect of being a junior minister is not significant. The third model also includes the gender of a candidate, together with an interaction between gender and rank difference. Although women are placed relatively more towards the bottom of the list, for them rank difference at t-1 has a significant influence on their list position at t. Women who are ranked higher by voters than by the party at t-1 are rewarded with a list position more towards the top of the list at t. For example, all other things being equal, women around position 40 at t-1 need a rank difference of three to move up one position. This required rank difference to move up one position increases if the candidate already had a better position at t-1. Women around position 25 at t-1, for example, need a rank difference of 5 to move up one position. For women in the top 10 at t-1, a positive rank difference alone is not sufficient to gain a better list position at t. The interaction effect is also graphically shown in figure 5.4. The figure shows the effect of rank difference for men and women, when all other variables stay at their mean or mode value. What is visible is that for men rank difference does not influence the list position, but for women there is quite a substantial range of list positions at t possible based on the electoral performance at t-1[98].

The fourth model also tests whether there is an interaction between rank difference and the election of 2003. Since this election was held so closely after the previous election, and many parties presented a list similar to the list in 2002, this possibly reduces the effects that are presented in the other models. However, the interaction effect is not significant and the other effects do not change after the inclusion of the interaction effect. All models have random intercepts for each election and each party. However, they have almost no variance.

[98] The candidate selection process in the Netherlands has changed drastically at the beginning of the 21st century for some major parties. The elections of 2002 can be seen as a turning point: since then most parties give their members more influence on the selection process (Voerman, 2014). Since the first election included in the analysis is the election of 2002 (with the rank difference of 1998), the entire period of analysis is after this turning point. However, it might be that it took some time for the changes to have an effect. Therefore, the analysis was also conducted based on the elections since 2006. This had no effect on the results.

Table 5.5 Effect of preference votes on list position next election (the Netherlands)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
(Constant)	0.104***	0.182***	0.182***	0.182***
	(0.027)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)
Rank difference t-1	-0.001	-0.001	0.000	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
List position t-1	0.852***	0.826***	0.826***	0.826***
	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Member of parliament		-0.070***	-0.071***	-0.071***
		(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Minister		-0.144*	-0.143*	-0.142*
		(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.057)
Junior Minister		-0.062	-0.060	-0.054
		(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.054)
Woman			0.004	0.004
			(0.017)	(0.017)
Rank difference t-1 * woman			-0.004*	-0.004*
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Rank difference t-1 * 2003				0.001
				(0.002)
AIC	81.0	67.4	65.2	66.8
BIC	110.6	111.9	119.6	126.1
Log likelihood	-34.5	-24.7	-21.6	-21.4
Observations	1040	1040	1040	1040
Groups(Parties)	11	11	11	11
Groups(Elections)	6	6	6	6
Variance: Party (intercept)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Variance: Election (intercept)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001. Regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Source: Own dataset. Included are all candidates who run at two subsequent elections (t-1 and t) for the same party and in both elections run in all districts and at the same position in each district. In addition, list-pullers at t-1 are excluded from the analysis.

Figure 5.4 Effect of rank difference t0 at list position t+1 (the Netherlands)

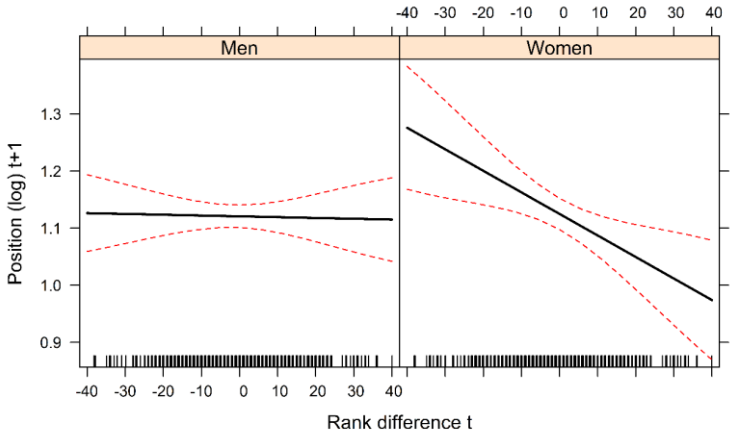
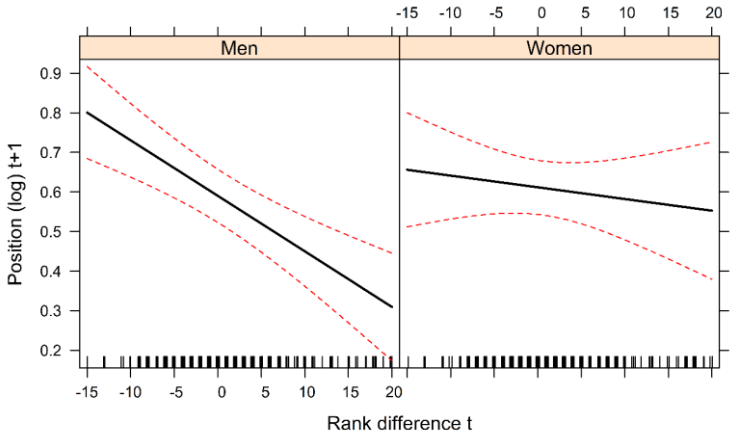


Table 5.6 Effect of preference votes on list position next election (Belgium)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Constant)	0.167***	0.287***	0.274***
	(0.030)	(0.041)	(0.042)
Rank difference t-1	-0.013***	-0.010***	-0.014***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
List position t-1	0.674***	0.548***	0.548***
	(0.028)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Member of parliament		-0.148***	-0.142***
		(0.029)	(0.029)
Minister		-0.242***	-0.235**
		(0.072)	(0.072)
Junior Minister		-0.187	0.160
		(0.120)	(0.120)
Woman			0.020
			(0.021)
Rank difference t-1 * woman			0.011*
			(0.005)
AIC	530.4	507.2	505.0
BIC	564.3	555.6	563.0
Log likelihood	-258.2	-243.6	-240.5
Observations	931	931	931
Groups(Parties)	18	18	18
Groups(Districts)	12	12	12
Groups(Elections)	3	3	3
Variance: Party (intercept)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Variance: District (intercept)	0.004	0.007	0.007
Variance: Election (intercept)	0.000	0.001	0.001

Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001. Regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Source: Own dataset. Included are all effective candidates at t who also ran as an effective candidate in the same district and for the same party in the previous election (t-1).

Figure 5.5 Effect of rank difference t at list position t+1 (Belgium)



The multilevel regression models for Belgium are shown in table 5.6. The first model shows a negative and significant influence of rank difference. For Belgium candidates' rank difference thus matters if we only control for list position. Candidates who return at the next election can expect a list position similar to the list position they held in the previous election, but candidates who performed better in the previous election move up some places. As is the case in the Netherlands, the political functions performed in the legislative term between the two elections all lead to a list position more towards the top of the list in the next election. The effect for junior ministers was not significant (see model 2). Model 3 also includes the gender interaction, for which the results are graphically shown in figure 5.5. What is clear from this figure is that the effect gender has in Belgium is the opposite of the effect it has in the Netherlands. In Belgium the effect is much stronger for male candidates than it is for female candidates[99].

In both countries the electoral performance at t-1 measured as the rank difference thus has an influence on the list positions of candidates at t[100]. However, the effect is much stronger in Belgium and whereas the effect mainly applies to female candidates in the Netherlands, in Belgium it mainly applies to male candidates. In the conclusion I will reflect upon these differences.

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[99] In addition, a model was ran with an interaction term between gender, incumbency and rank difference as well. The general conclusion presented based on the models presented in the text did not change, although the results of this three-way interaction showed that the effect for male candidates is mostly caused by candidates who were not a member of parliament before election t. For women there was no difference between incumbents and non-incumbents. The same interaction was also ran for the Dutch case, but the results did not change with the inclusion of this interaction.

[100] The length of list of candidates varies between parties and districts in Belgium, which could potentially influence the results. Therefore, another operationalization for the variables list position and rank difference was used in additional checks. In the analysis presented here absolute numbers were used for rank difference and a logarithmic transformation for list position. The length of a party list does not only have a direct influence on the variable list position, but also on the rank difference. For larger parties the (theoretical) range of rank difference is larger. Therefore the analysis was also conducted where list positions were transformed in a way that the first candidate on the list was at position 0 and the last candidate on the list at position 1. In this way for each candidate the list position was a measurement of the relative position on that list. For rank difference the same was done: the relative position on the list was compared to the relative position in the order based on the number of preference votes received. This decreased the range difference between political parties. When these variables were used, results did not change. Another option to deal with the variation in the length of party lists is to use a relative position, in which not the last candidate on the list is assigned position 1, but the last elected candidate. This however creates a different problem, since the variation between elected candidates and non-elected candidates varies considerably from party to party as well. For a party with 30 candidates and 2 elected members, the position of the number 30 on the list would be transformed to 15. For a party with 60 candidates and 30 elected members, the position of the number 60 on the list would be transformed to 2. This would not solve the problem that lists are hard to compare. Since the first solution did not have an effect on the results, and the second one has other problems, the logarithmic transformation of list position and the absolute rank difference are used, because they have the advantage of having a slightly more intuitive interpretation compared to the relative list positions described above.

5.4.3.2 Effects of preference votes on chances of becoming (junior) minister

Hypothesis 5.5 states that candidates who receive more preference votes have a higher chance of obtaining a government post if their party enters government. Table 5.7 and table 5.8 show for both the Netherlands and Belgium respectively three logistic multilevel regression models predicting the chances of a candidate to become a minister, junior minister or both in the legislative period after the elections. These models control for list position, gender and whether the candidate performed the same function in the previous legislative period. In addition an interaction effect between preference votes and gender is included.

In the Netherlands there is no significant effect of preference votes on the chances of obtaining a government post (see table 5.7). Both for male and female candidates the chances of becoming a minister or junior minister do not significantly change when the candidate receives more preference votes. For junior ministers there is even a negative effect, although in substantive terms there is no effect. List position and performing the same function in the previous period are far better predictors of the chances of obtaining a government post for Dutch candidates. Candidates more towards the top of the list have a higher probability of becoming minister or junior minister and candidates who performed the same function in the previous legislative period have a higher chance as well. The fact that candidates near the top of the list have a higher chance is not surprising: a party puts their political heavyweights near the top of the list.

In Belgium the effects are different. Preference votes have a significant influence in all three models. For incumbent ministers there is a relatively strong positive effect of preference votes on the chances of obtaining a government post, but there is a positive effect for junior ministers as well. Research in the Dutch context has shown that when ministers are appointed they have relatively more political experience, while junior ministers have relatively more technical experience (Elfferich, 2017). Such a difference could explain why the effect is stronger for ministers than it is for junior ministers. These effects remain when we control for list position (as a measure of the general qualities of the candidate[101]) and whether the candidate performed the same function in the previous legislative term (which also has a positive effect, but this effect is not as strong as it is in the Netherlands). The gender effect is different in Belgium as well. For female candidates the effect of preference votes on the chance of becoming a minister is larger than it is for male candidates. For female candidates who reach the individual threshold the chance of becoming a minister is 30 per cent, while for male candidates it is 15 per cent. For junior ministers the effect is the other way around, but the difference is smaller. Male candidates who reach the individual threshold have a 10 per cent chance of becoming a junior minister; for female candidates this chance is 5 per cent.

[101] Given the districts in Belgium, this indicator is mostly a measure of the qualities of a candidate within a district / party and only to a lesser extent a general measure of the qualities of a candidate (within a party), particularly compared to the Netherlands. However, it remains a workable proxy for the qualities of a candidate.

Table 5.7 Effects of preference votes on entering government (the Netherlands)

	Minister	**Junior minister**	**Government**
(Constant)	0.895	1.203	2.483*
	(1.024)	(1.003)	(0.999)
Preference votes	0.084	-1.146	-0.685
	(0.820)	(0.867)	(0.708)
List position	-3.693***	-3.510***	-4.770***
	(0.772)	(0.776)	(0.708)
Woman	-1.442	-1.040	-1.063
	(1.025)	(0.681)	(0.617)
Same function t-1	1.600**	2.117***	1.384***
	(0.505)	(0.454)	(0.398)
Preference votes * woman	1.254	1.257	0.829
	(1.273)	(1.031)	(0.967)
AIC	205.5	258.9	313.4
BIC	244.0	297.5	351.9
Log likelihood	-94.7	-121.5	-148.7
Observations	915	915	915
Groups(Parties)	6	6	6
Groups(Elections)	6	6	6
Variance: Party (intercept)	0.000	0.134	1.305
Variance: Election (intercept)	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001. Regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Source: Own dataset. Included are all candidates who participated in all districts, at the same position in each district and who come from the parties that entered government after the election. In addition, list-pullers at t-1 are excluded from the analysis.

Table 5.8 Effects of preference votes on entering government (Belgium)

	Minister	**Junior minister**	**Government**
(Constant)	-6.951***	-6.410***	-6.650***
	(1.252)	(1.130)	(0.965)
Preference votes	5.896***	3.996***	5.839***
	(1.287)	(1.130)	(0.984)
List position	-0.893	0.148	-0.343
	(0.610)	(0.690)	(0.480)
Woman	-0.145	0.502	0.340
	(1.449)	(1.005)	(1.012)
Same function t-1	1.566***	1.259	1.335**
	(0.433)	(0.860)	(0.426)
Preference votes * woman	0.970	-1.413	0.222
	(1.693)	(1.615)	(1.248)
AIC	252.7	208.1	327.3
BIC	301.3	256.7	375.9
Log likelihood	-117.3	-95.1	-154.6
Observations	1639	1639	1639
Groups(Districts)	13	13	13
Groups(Parties)	9	9	9
Groups(Elections)	4	4	4
Variance: District (intercept)	0.053	0.000	0.000
Variance: Party (intercept)	0.000	0.116	0.011
Variance: Election (intercept)	0.124	0.000	0.070

Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001. Regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Source: Own dataset. Included are all effective candidates of parties that entered government after the election.

5.5 Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to explore whether preference votes have an influence on the political career and parliamentary behaviour of candidates. These votes influence which candidates are elected (although as shown in section 5.2 the effects are limit both in Belgium and the Netherlands), but are there other consequences?

First, I looked at whether preference votes influence the parliamentary behaviour of elected candidates. The results suggest that preference votes do not have an influence on the ideological positions MPs in Belgium and the Netherlands take either in speeches made in parliament or in the written questions they submit to ministers. This fits the observation of Bäck and Debus (2016) for the German Bundestag that directly elected MPs did not deviate more from the party line than MPs elected on a party list. I will reflect further on this finding in the concluding chapter of this book, thereby also taking into account the causal link between preference voting and an MP's position. Based on the textual data collected for the analysis presented in this chapter, it would be possible to investigate other factors which did not receive attention in this dissertation. For example, further research could focus on whether MP's actually refer to regions in their speeches. It seems plausible to expect that in district systems MP's would refer to their own region more often. However, as we saw in chapter 4, also in the Netherlands candidates receive relatively more votes in their own district. Therefore, it might be that also in systems where the election result is determined by the national vote, candidates still refer to their own region. Further research, based on text analysis, could look to more detail at the speeches of MP's to see whether those with higher number of preference votes behave differently than those with lower number of preference votes. For example, do candidates with a strong local support refer more to their own region, or do female candidates who received a lot of votes more often refer to gender-equality? While the analysis presented in this chapter showed that preference votes do not affect whether candidates deviate more from the party line, it might be that preference votes affect candidates in a more specific way, which is not actually captured by a general ideological position.

I also looked at whether preference votes have an influence on the political career of a candidate. The influence of preference votes on the ministerial career differs in Belgium and the Netherlands. In Belgium an effect of preference votes on the selection of ministers was found. In the Netherlands such an effect does not exist. Since all sorts of constraints exist (Dowding & Dumont, 2009) which complicate the allocation process of ministers this might not come as a surprise. This raises the questions how the effect in Belgium can be explained. It might be that the fact that in Belgium it is unusual to recruit a (junior) mister from outside parliament (Deschouwer, 2009, p. 145), can explain the result. While in the Netherlands most ministers are also recruited from parliament, there are more ministers recruited from outside the parliament. This stronger link between parliament and recruitment in Belgium might explain a stronger effect of preference votes. If the electoral

success of candidates indeed influences the recruitment of ministers, this could strengthen the chain of delegation (Strøm, 2000).

However, a limitation to the analysis is that it might also be that there is a simpler explanation and that the effect is not so much an effect of preference votes at all. Political parties normally place their top candidates towards the top of the list, and these candidates also receive most preference votes (partly because of an pure position effect (see for example Van Erkel & Thijssen, 2016)). Since Belgium has 11 districts, there are thus more candidates with a high list position. Belgian parties, when recruiting ministers, also strive to achieve a regional balance: ministers should be recruited evenly from these districts (Deschouwer, 2009, p. 143). It is likely that parties choose their top candidates for ministerial posts. Therefore, the selected (junior) ministers may all be candidates who had a list position towards the top of the list (at least with less variation than the list positions of Dutch ministers). In this case, preference votes might show up as highly significant in the Belgian models, but these effects might in reality be of less importance.

The strongest effects of preference votes can be found on the list position for the next elections. Both in the Netherlands and in Belgium there is an effect of preference votes on the list position of a candidate for the next election. Candidates who perform better in terms of votes than in terms of the list-position assigned by the party move up the list for the next election. For Belgium André et al. (2017) already found that preference votes influenced a candidate's list position for the next election. They also found that the same effect can be found in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Thus, the effect of preference vote on list-position for the next election is demonstrated in two flexible list systems which have districts (Belgium and the Czech Republic) and two flexible list systems with a single nationwide constituency (the Netherlands and Slovakia). The same mechanism might also be present in other countries using flexible list systems. In other types of list systems it is less likely that we find this pattern. By definition, in closed list systems no such effect is possible, since voters do not have the option to cast a candidate vote. However, in open list system it is also unlikely that there will be a similar effect, since in an open system the voters directly determine the ranking of candidates. In addition, parties do not always provide a ranking themselves. For example in Finland, most parties rank candidates in alphabetical order (von Schoultz, 2017, p. 609). In such instances looking at ranking difference does not make sense. Therefore, in these systems it makes more sense to look at how the number of preference votes influence whether candidates are running again in the next election.

Turning back to the Netherlands and Belgium, an important distinction has to be made about the candidates to which the effect applies in both countries. In the Netherlands the effect only exists for female candidates. If they perform better than might be expected based on their list position, they can expect a better list position in the next election. For male candidates this effect is not present. In Belgium, it is the other way around. For male candidates there is a much stronger effect of the electoral performance on the list position for the next election than there is for female candidates.

How could these differences be explained? The fact that in the Netherlands the effect for female candidates is stronger might be a result of how male and female candidates are distributed on the list. Since in most parties more male candidates can be found near the top of the list, it might be that for women it is easier to benefit from a good electoral performance: since they are in lower positions to begin with, there is more room for improvement. This conclusion is supported by the fact that for female candidates towards the top of the list the electoral performance alone does not suffice to move up one position on the list for the next election. At the same time it might be a result of the fact that because most parties have fewer female candidates on their list, they promote women who perform well to better list positions. This could either be to reward those women for their good electoral performance or to have more influence over which candidates are elected in the next election. Having candidates who are able to be elected out of list order on lower positions, might disturb the balance between the candidates a party puts on eligible positions. Therefore, a party might choose to put these electorally successful candidates towards the top of the list. If the party still tries to keep a balanced list, it might help to end up with a balanced parliamentary group as well. The results for Belgium are more difficult to explain. Based on the gender rules, which stipulate that lists in Belgium contain an equal number of male and female candidates, one would expect the effects to be smaller, since parties have relatively limited options to change the balance between male and female candidates. However, many parties have relatively more male candidates on the first half of their list than on the lower half, which would suggest that there is still more room for female candidates to improve their position than there is for male candidates. If indeed the effect in Belgium is less strong because of the gender-quota, this would not be the first negative effect of quota's on women's success. Research has shown that quota to ensure female representation in different contexts have a negative influence on the electoral success of female candidates (Górecki & Kukołowicz, 2014; Miguel, 2008). I argued there are different mechanisms which could explain differences between male and female candidates. Based on the results it is difficult to state which explanation works best. We do know for which candidates the effect is stronger, but we do not know what drives this mechanism. Future research should focus on this mechanism.

Although it is not yet entirely clear how the mechanism exactly works, the results show that preference votes might be important for some candidates, depending on country and gender, to increase their chances of being elected, however, indirectly. If a candidate on a non-electable list position fails to cross the threshold but still performs relatively well in terms of preference votes, he or she might be moved up the list for the next election, thereby increasing his or her chances of becoming an MP after that election. These findings have important implications for the literature on candidate selection methods as well. Traditional studies on candidate selection mainly focus on individual characteristics of candidates to explain the process of candidate selection. The results in this chapter show that adding the electoral performance of re-running candidates to models which explain the process is

important, in order to get a better understanding of the selection process. But is also relates to a highly salient discussion surrounding candidate selection: the democratization of candidate selection processes (Pennings & Hazan, 2001). In times of weakening bonds between parties and voters, the democratization of candidate selection is one of the methods parties try to use to strengthen the link with their members and/or voters. Democratization of the selection process occurs when the selectorate (i.e. those who may select the candidates) becomes more inclusive (i.e. an increase in the number of individuals who have a say in the selection process) (Hazan & Rahat, 2010, p. 54). The findings in this chapter relate to this democratization process. If the selectorate indeed takes the electoral performance of candidates into account, this can also be seen as an (indirect) form of democratization since voters of the party influence the candidate selection. Therefore these findings also have implications for the literature on the democratization of parties.