Gender Imbalance in Representative Democracy: Women and Local Government in London and Birmingham 1918 – 2003

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Introduction: Women and Local Elections

Women remain under-represented in virtually all democratic institutions in the UK. Although the representation of women at the local government level has improved in recent decades, only slightly more than 25% of councillors are women and approximately 22% of council cabinet positions held by women. These proportions vary between different types of authority and between the same types of authority (Borisyuk and Thrasher 2003: 1). The aim of this paper is to throw some light on why the proportions of women candidates and councillors should vary both temporally and spatially. An understanding of the determinants of women’s under-representation at the local electoral level is also crucial to any explanation of women’s representation at the UK parliamentary electoral level as there is a “fairly uniform vertical ladder of recruitment from party to local government office, to Westminster” (Norris and Lovenduski 1995: 23). Clearly, a greater understanding of the nature of the causes of gender imbalance at the level of local government representation would be a significant step towards our understanding of the representative gender imbalance balance at the UK parliamentary level.

The Local Government Chronicle Elections Centre, University of Plymouth, has a unique collection of machine-readable local electoral data covering the 1900 to 2003 period, which includes data for two of Britain’s major cities, Birmingham and London. Thus an analysis of different aspects of changes over time and space in the proportions of women candidates and female representation at borough elections in the last century is now possible. It allows us to address a range of research questions in a longitudinal analysis concerning the impact of a candidate’s gender upon levels of contestation, representation, to test for electoral system effects on the performance of women and to reveal any differences between the major parties. Firstly, we will briefly review some of the existing literature and consider the key questions posed and explanations posited by previous researchers concerning women’s under-representation at local elections and then we will address these questions in relation to women’s representation at over a century of borough elections in London and Birmingham.

Previous research has largely focussed upon women’s under-representation at the national legislative level and a number of political,
socio-economic and cultural factors have been revealed as having significance in the explanation for the level of women’s parliamentary representation. International comparative analyses and national case studies evidence the effects of inter alia: gender discrimination in the candidate selection process, gender discrimination in the selection of seats to contest, gender discrimination on the part of the voter, electoral system effects, party incumbency, male incumbency and the paucity of women candidates (Kelley and McCallister 1984; Rule 1987, 1994; Bledsoe and Herring 1990; Matland and Brown 1992; Darcy 1992, 1994; Norris and Lovenduski 1993; Darcy, Welch and Clark 1994; Matland and Studlar 1996; Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Caul 2001; Banducci, Everitt and Gidengil 2002; Black and Erickson, 2003).

Women’s representation at more recent English local government elections is well documented, albeit limited to short time periods (see Fletcher 1967; Bristow 1980; Hills 1983; Rallings and Thrasher 1997; Rallings, Thrasher and Gunter 1998; Briggs 2000; Morgan 2003). However, a study by Borisyuk and Thrasher (2003) widened this scope and looked at gender imbalance in English local government elections at a variety of authority levels, in which authorities employ a diversity of electoral cycles and parties contest in both single-member and multi-member seats. Using a comprehensive data set containing data on more than half a million candidates, including gender, party, vote and incumbency, derived from London Borough, Metropolitan Borough, Shire District and Shire County elections in the period from 1972 to 2002, they reached a number of significant conclusions about the factors that affect female representation. Their study and findings provide the foundation and framework for the longitudinal comparative analysis of the two case study locations undertaken here.

That study found that since 1973, the number of women candidates contesting seats at local elections in England had doubled, with a particularly rapid increase in the second half of the 1980s, and that all parties recruited an increasing number of women candidates in the period. The Liberal Party recruited more women than the two main parties and the Labour Party, “which had lagged behind the Conservatives, gradually narrowed the gap and on a small number of occasions ... fielded more women than their main rival” (Borisyuk and Thrasher 2003:16). In relation to the proposition that under plurality elections, the proportion of women candidates rises with district magnitude (see discussion of electoral system effects in Borisyuk and Thrasher 2003:2), they concluded that the proportion of women candidates was unrelated to increases in district magnitude at least to a maximum of three seats. In respect of the issue as to
whether women are less likely than men to be elected because they are more likely to be selected to contest seats which they have little or no hope of winning, Borisyuk and Thrasher found that female candidates were selected to fight more difficult seats and that in some authorities, women were “not only trying to remove a relatively secure incumbent party but also more often than not attempting to unseat an incumbent” (Borisyuk and Thrasher 2003:16). Furthermore, that in multi-member districts, women receive more votes than do men on the same party slate and that the electorate “far from discriminating against women candidates, appears to be drawn towards them” (Borisyuk and Thrasher 2003:17).

Data
Without recourse to survey data on voters’ attitudes and reported behaviour at local elections over the period of interest of this paper, our analysis of female contestation and representation at inner-London and Birmingham borough elections will be informed by local electoral returns. A prerequisite of comparative analysis is comparison of like with like, and thus our electoral units of analysis, i.e. inner-London and Birmingham, each need to remain coextensive over the period of the study. They must be clearly defined as their spatial integrity has implications for interpretations of change in women’s representation across time. However, the structure of English local government is dynamic and complex. During the period reviewed here, there have been major structural changes that have altered local government organisation in both London and Birmingham. In order to ensure an acceptable level of co-extensiveness over time in the case of London, only data relating to borough council elections in the inner-London area was used, i.e. ward level data from boroughs that comprised the London County Council area at elections 1900-1962 and ward level data from the twelve inner-London boroughs at post-reorganisation elections 1964-2002. Although there have been alterations to ward boundaries over our period of interest, the 1963 Local Government of London Act reorganised the 28 boroughs of the LCC into the twelve new boroughs of inner-London without any transfer of electors to or from the outer-London boroughs, thus our unit of analysis, inner-London, remained co-extensive over the 1900 to 2002 period.

In the case of Birmingham, major ward boundary alterations and the addition of the former County Borough of Sutton Coldfield to create the Birmingham District Council area was carried out by virtue of the Local Government Act of 1972. There have also been major and minor alterations to ward boundaries throughout the period of interest. However, over the years 1911-2003, the three new Sutton Coldfield wards excluded, our main
unit of analysis, Birmingham County Borough/Birmingham District Council remains remarkably coextensive. Furthermore, the inclusion of the wards of the former County Borough of Sutton Coldfield at post-1972 borough elections into our analysis had no adverse effect on the results of our initial analyses.

In addition, the electoral arrangements in our two units of analysis differ – London boroughs employ an all out quadrennial electoral cycle where parties contest multi-member ward seats and Birmingham employs an annual partial electoral cycle (thirds) where parties contest single member seats. However, this is to the advantage of our comparative analytical purpose as it allows us to contrast electoral system effects on the relative levels of female candidates and representation and to identify any significant differences electoral system effects may cause.


Outline
Firstly we will consider if there is evidence of geographical variability in the level of women’s representation at borough elections over the 1900-2003 period in a sample of county boroughs from across England (plus Cardiff). The mean percentage of female candidates of all candidates at borough elections in: Bath, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Bradford, Brighton, Bristol, Cardiff, Carlisle and London, over three time periods, 1900-1939, 1945-1980 and 1980-2003, will be contrasted. This will enable us to identify any geographical differences in the level of female recruitment, any change over time in these levels (pre-war, post-war and especially post-1980 when the level of female representation has generally increased). It will also allow us to identify if geographical differences in female candidacy levels persist over time, an indication perhaps of the influence of local political culture. The focus of the paper will then turn to consideration of women as candidates for elected office in our two case study locations of Birmingham and inner-London. The crucial role of local parties in encouraging or
discouraging female candidates will be examined. Trends over time in the percentage of female candidates from the three main parties will be examined and electoral system effects on the proportion of women’s participation will be examined to see whether the proportion of female candidates rises with increases in district magnitude at plurality elections. We will then consider whether the chances of female candidates succeeding are influenced by the electoral marginality of the seat they are selected to contest.

The role of the voter in relation to women’s success at these borough elections will be examined for evidence of voter hostility towards female candidates in terms of differences in the mean percentage vote for female candidates in contrast with the mean male share of the vote. Other indicators of voter hostility towards female candidates can be revealed by contrasting the mean level of turnout in seats which female candidates contest with those contested solely by males, and by examining whether the electorate take into account an incumbent’s gender when participating or not in a borough election. A further indicator of any voter hostility towards female candidates can be discerned if we examine their finishing position at the top or the lower end of their particular party slate in a multi-member contest.

The relative success of female candidates generally and by party in our two locations will be measured and contrasted by use of two simple indices. CANDINDEX, which shows the number of women candidates as a percentage of the total number of candidates at that year’s borough elections, and ELECTINDEX, which shows the number of women elected as a percentage of the total number of candidates elected. If the value of ELECTINDEX is greater than CANDINDEX, then female candidates were more successful than male candidates in that year. Trends over time in the percentage of female candidates (of all candidates and controlling for party) elected as councillors will be contrasted. Then finally, we will contrast the percentage councillors elected controlling for party and then for district magnitude to see if female success increases as district magnitude rises.

In summary this paper will examine trends in female contestation, representation and relative success by party. It will test for any effects upon the progress of women in terms of seats they are selected to contest, electoral system effects and voter hostility. In order to do this we will test a number of hypotheses.

Hypotheses:
H 1. There is no significant difference in the marginality of the seats contested by male and female candidates.
H 2. There is no significant difference in the mean percentage share of the vote gained by male candidates and female candidates.

H 3. There is no difference between the success rates of female candidates by party.

H 4. There is no significant difference in mean turnout between elections where female candidates contest and those contested solely by males.

H 5. There is no significant difference in mean turnout between elections where women are incumbent and those where men are incumbent.

H 6. There is no significant association between a candidate’s gender and that candidate’s finishing position on his/her party slate at multi-member seat ward elections.

H 7. There is no significant relationship between district magnitude and the proportion of female candidates.

H 8. There is no significant difference between the success rate of female candidates elected to council at different levels of district magnitude.

Geographical variability in female representation
Figure 1 plots the mean percentage of female candidates of all candidates at borough elections in a sample of county boroughs over three time periods, 1918-1939, 1945-1980 and 1980-2003. Although in the period from 1980 to 2003, the mean percentage of female candidates who contested in our sample locations increased, as the plot line evidences, there is a significant geographical variation in the progress of women’s contestation. Clearly, geographical variance in the number of women candidates is an enduring phenomenon at these borough elections, as the plot lines for the 1945-1980 and the 1918-1939 periods testify. For example, while around only one in twelve of all candidates at inner-London borough elections in the 1918-1939 period were female, in Bradford and Bristol around a fifth of all candidates were female (see Table 1).

However, while the progress of women’s recruitment to contest at borough elections continued to rise in London and Bristol, the recruitment of women declined in Bradford in the 1945-1980 period and, along with Cardiff, lags around 7% behind that of the inner-London boroughs for the 1980-2003 period. Although this level of aggregate analysis provides a useful broad brush indicator of variation in change over time and space, a more focussed analysis of ward level data and comparison of our two case study locations may throw some light upon the determinants of this variance in female recruitment.

1 All tables and figures are collected together at the end in the Appendix.
Women candidates in Birmingham and inner-London, 1900-2003

Figure 2 below evidences that the recruitment of female candidates at Birmingham borough elections from the mid 1950s to the late 1980s was much lower than at inner-London borough elections. The recruitment of women candidates, however, steadily increased in the 1980s and surpassed inner-London at the 1990 elections, but began a gradual decline in the 1990s to settle at a difference of around 8% in 2002. Clearly, the level of female contestation in two of England’s major cities was considerably different. Indeed, in the 1919-1938 period, the mean percentage female candidates of all candidates was 9.9 at Birmingham borough elections and 14.6 for inner-London, 16.6 and 24.6 respectively for the 1945-1980 period, 22.8 and 31.9 respectively for the 1980-2002 period. A possible explanation for this variance is that “women candidates are not selected in single member electoral districts (as used at Birmingham borough elections) because local parties, fearing reluctance amongst the electorate to support women, prefer male candidates” (Borisyuk and Thrasher 2003:5).

We will in due course test this hypothesis by attempting to find evidence of any voter hostility towards female candidates. Firstly, we will examine the trends in the proportion of women candidates challenging for seats by party.

It is clear from Figure 3, that there was a steady improvement by all three parties over the last century in the recruitment of women candidates at inner-London borough elections. Although the Labour Party attracted proportionally more women than the Conservative and Liberal parties in the inter-war period, the Labour Party was the poorest performer of the three parties at elections from 1945 until the 1980s, thereafter it matched its main rival the Conservative Party in its recruitment of women. Notwithstanding the Liberal Party’s much lower contestation rate, where the Liberal Party did contest wards at inner-London borough elections the proportion of female candidates fielded has approximated that of the two major parties and indeed, surpassed them from the late 1960s.

At the Birmingham borough elections, see Figure 4, the difference in the level of recruitment of female candidates between the Labour and Conservative parties was for much of the period greater than that at the inner-London elections. The Labour Party from the mid 1920s through to the debacle of the 1968 borough election, when the party did not return a single candidate, had a much higher level of female recruitment than its major rival. The demise of the Birmingham Liberals at post-1918 elections had been rapid and it was not until the early 1960s that the party returned to the local electoral fray. Nevertheless, during ensuing periods of resurgence
in support, the proportion of female candidates fielded by the Liberals surpassed that of the two major parties.

In both inner-London and Birmingham in the inter-war period, the Labour Party recruited more female candidates than the Conservative Party. However, at Birmingham borough elections, the mean percentage of female candidates recruited by the Labour Party was 11.3 in the 1919-1939 period, 23.0 in the 1945-1967 period and 19.6 in the 1968-2000 period. It would appear that despite a general increase in female recruitment at borough elections in the later decades of the century in inner-London and our sample boroughs, the proportion of female candidates at Birmingham borough elections has generally declined. In both locations however, the Liberal Party, when contesting wards, maintained its tradition for recruiting female candidates. There is then evidence of both inter-party variance over time in the recruitment of women and intra-party variance in the level of female recruitment between our case study locations.

The variation in the level of female recruitment between Birmingham and the inner-London boroughs may in part be caused by the difference in electoral systems. At inner-London’s multi-member plurality elections, as one party increasingly includes female candidates on its party slate so their rivals may also follow suit for fear of alienating a substantial section of the electorate, and indeed there is some evidence that as district magnitude increases so does the proportion of female candidates (see Matland and Studlar 1996; discussion in Borisyuk and Thrasher 2003). We put this proposition to the test and contrasted the mean percentage of female candidates recruited at inner-London borough elections in wards where the district magnitude equalled 3, 6 and 9. As can be seen in Figure 5, there is clear evidence that the size of district magnitude may matter when it comes to female recruitment and thus electoral systems may be critical in determining the numbers of females elected. Although at DM6 and DM9 there is little difference in the numbers of females participating at these elections, there is a clear difference in magnitude between DM3 and DM6.

Another aspect of the potential of party to affect both the recruitment and representation of females is the type of seat candidates are selected to contest. It may be that the general perception that women are selected for ‘no hope seats’ has a corrosive effect upon women’s willingness to stand and upon their chances of success once selected. The first proposition cannot be tested without survey research but the second can and any bias in the selection process revealed. In Table 2, the mean marginality (i.e. the mean difference in percentage share of the vote between first and second placed candidates) at Birmingham borough elections 1911-2003 is outlined (single member ward contests). The mean
marginality in the ward elections where no females contested was 24.5, in wards where only one female candidate contested the mean marginality was 24.4, where two females contested 24.3, and where three females contested 24.5. Clearly we cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the marginality of the seats contested by male and female candidates at Birmingham Borough elections 1911-2003. There is no evidence of any systemic bias in the seats selected for women to contest at Birmingham Borough elections 1911-2003 in terms of marginality.

Similarly, as Table 3 testifies, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the marginality of the seats contested by male and female candidates at inner-London borough elections 1900-2002. Clearly, there was little variation in the marginality of the seats candidates were selected to contest when controlling for gender. Like Birmingham, there is no evidence of any systemic bias in the seats selected for women to contest at inner-London borough elections 1900-2002 in terms of marginality.

To check for any voter hostility towards female candidates, we tested the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean percentage share of the vote gained by male candidates and female candidates. In Figures 6 below the mean percentage share of the vote for female and male candidates are contrasted at Birmingham borough elections respectively.

We are able to reject the null hypothesis in respect of Birmingham borough elections. As Figure 6 evidences (inter-war period apart) there is little difference in the mean share of the vote between male and female candidates. Indeed, at post-1945 borough elections in Birmingham, women have equalled or even surpassed their male counterparts in terms of mean share of the vote. There are of course methodological problems concerning the calculation of the percentage share of the vote each candidate receives in multi-member seats. In order to avoid this issue, in the case of inner-London the mean finishing position of women candidates on their party slate will be examined. It is also possible to differentiate between the two major parties in terms of any gender-based voter hostility by contrasting the mean finishing position of female candidates on their party slates with those of their male counterparts. In the vast majority of cases, the inner-London borough elections have been contested in multimember wards with district magnitudes of 3, 6 and 9. Controlling for party (Liberal Party excluded), and district magnitude the mean finishing position of candidates over the 1900-2002 period is contrasted by gender at inner-London borough elections in Figures 7 – 12.
It is immediately obvious from Figure 8, that at three-member ward contests in inner-London boroughs there is no evidence of voter-based hostility towards Labour Party female candidates and that their electoral fortunes have virtually mirrored those of their male counterparts in terms of finishing position. In contrast, Figure 7 reveals that there is a gender-gap in the finishing positions of Conservative candidates. Apart from the 1968 borough elections, which were a disaster for the London Labour Party, and the post-1990 period, female Conservative Party candidates have invariably finished in a lower position than their male counterparts. The same relationships between party, candidate gender and finishing position are exhibited by the trend lines in Figures 11 and 12 at nine-member ward elections. At six-member ward elections there is a gender-gap in the finishing positions for both parties’ candidates, albeit to a lesser degree for the Labour Party. The evidence suggests that in multi-member ward contests, Conservative female candidates at all levels of district magnitude have experienced gender-based voter hostility at inner-London borough elections. However, as Figure 7 evidences, since 1990 the gender gap in the finishing position of Conservative candidates has disappeared. In stark contrast there is little evidence of gender-based voter hostility towards female Labour candidates at these elections over the whole period.

Electors may show their approval or disapproval by failing to participate in an election and thus, a further test for the presence of any gender-based voter hostility is to contrast mean turnout at solely male contested ward elections with mean turnout in those wards contested by females. However, no significant association could be found between turnout and gender over the period of interest at borough elections in either Birmingham or inner-London. Nor could any significant association be found between the levels of turnout in wards contested by incumbent males and those contested by incumbent females.

As important as all the above is to women’s representation at the borough level in Birmingham and inner-London, the litmus-paper test for the parties, and also for the voice of women to be heard, is how many women have been elected to council. The relative success of females can be ascertained by comparison of the trends in our two indices (CANDINDEX which shows the number of women candidates as a percentage of the total number of candidates at that year’s borough elections and ELECTINDEX which shows the number of women elected as a percentage of the total number of candidates elected). If the value of ELECTINDEX is greater than CANDINDEX, then female candidates were more successful than male candidates in that year.
At inner-London borough elections, from the early 1920s through to the present (the 1945 elections apart) there has been a persistent gender gap between the relative success of female and male candidates to the disadvantage of female representation as evidenced in Figure 13. In contrast, Figure 14 illustrates that the almost opposite is true of the relative success of female candidates at Birmingham borough elections, where the trends in our two indices virtually mirror one another and at some elections ELECTINDEX exceeds CANINDEX evidencing that female candidates were relatively more successful than males in that particular year. Despite a higher proportion of female candidates contesting borough elections in inner-London the relative success of female candidates is not only much lower than at Birmingham borough elections but is also an enduring characteristic of local voting behaviour over almost a century. When the trends in the performance of the two major parties in terms of the electoral success of female candidates relative to male candidates at Birmingham borough elections is contrasted, it is clear that the Labour Party’s female success rate surpassed that of the Conservative Party from the early 1920s through to the late 1960s. However, the success rate of Conservative female candidates revived in the mid 1960s and surpassed that of Labour until the 1990s when there appears to be a convergence in party trends.

For inner-London, a comparison of the success rates of the two major parties in terms of the number of women elected as a percentage of the total number of candidates each respective party had elected is complicated by differences in district magnitude. However, by controlling for both party and district magnitude, we are able to discern not only the performance of the parties but also if the success rate in the election of female candidates rises with increases in district magnitude. Figures 16, 17 and 18 reveal that at all three levels of district magnitude the Labour Party have outperformed the Conservative Party in terms of the number of female candidates elected to inner-London boroughs over the last century. In ward elections with a district magnitude of three, only at the 1968 and 1990 borough elections have the Conservative party surpassed their main rival in the number of women elected to council. In wards with a district magnitude of 6, the Conservative Party only surpassed the Labour Party at elections in the late 1940s to mid 1950s and at district magnitude 9 ward contests surpassed Labour at the 1949, 1959 and 1962 elections.

Finally we can consider if the success rate of female candidates increases with rises in district magnitude. In Figures 21 and 22 the trends in ELECTINDEX, for the Conservative Party and the Labour Party respectively, controlling for district magnitude, are presented. The trends for
both parties evidence that the success rate of female candidates increases with increases in district magnitude.

Conclusions
Clearly women’s participation at borough elections in England has increased over the century. However, geographically and temporally this has not been a homogeneous rise. There is significant geographical variation in the progress of female recruitment and this variance is an enduring phenomenon at English borough elections throughout the past century. Indeed, in both case study locations, although female recruitment has generally steadily grown, it has been shown that the major parties consistently recruited a higher proportion of female candidates at inner-London borough elections than they did at Birmingham borough elections over the century. When the trends in recruitment of female candidates was examined by party it was shown that, notwithstanding the level of contestation of the Liberal Party, when and where the Liberals did contest, the proportion of women candidates fielded equalled or exceeded that of the two major parties. In both inner-London and Birmingham, the Labour Party recruited more women than the Conservative Party at borough elections in the inter-war period. Nevertheless, the proportion of female candidates recruited by Labour declined in both locations at post-war elections up until the late 1960s. Despite convergence and upward trends in the recruitment of women by all three parties at post-1980 borough elections, it is nevertheless the case that the mean percentage of women recruited by the Labour Party to contest Birmingham borough elections from 1980 to 2002 is almost 4% lower than at elections from 1945 to 1968. There is then not only evidence of both inter-party and intra-party variation in the level of female recruitment but also, in the case of Birmingham Labour, evidence of some regression in the level of women’s recruitment.

Evidence was found that the size of district magnitude may matter when it comes to female recruitment. At inner-London borough elections where district magnitude equalled 3, 6, and 9, there was a consistent and considerable increase in female recruitment between multi-member seat plurality ward contests involving three vacancies and those involving six and nine vacancies. Furthermore, not only was it shown that female recruitment increased as district magnitude rises but also so did female representation at inner-London borough elections.

The evidence has shown that women candidates contesting borough elections in Birmingham and inner-London throughout the last century, were not subject to any systematic bias in seat selection in terms of the marginality of the seat they contested. Nor could any evidence be found of
any voter hostility towards female candidates in terms of levels of turnout. Indeed at Birmingham borough elections female candidates equalled, and at times surpassed, the level of support given to their male counterparts by the electorate. Nevertheless a gender gap in mean level of support at inner-London borough elections was revealed when the finishing position of women on their party slate was examined.

When mean finishing position on individual party slates was examined, the evidence has shown that at all levels of district magnitude of inner-London borough elections, female Conservative Party candidates have generally experienced gender-based voter hostility throughout the last century. Despite some improvement in the last decade for female Conservative candidates, there is a stark contrast between their mean finishing positions and those of female Labour candidates. Little or no gender based voter hostility from Labour Party voters can be evidenced.

Somewhat paradoxically despite a lower female recruitment rate at Birmingham borough elections than those in inner-London over the century, female candidates have been relatively more successful in Birmingham than in London. Indeed, at inner-London borough elections there has been a persistent gender gap between the relative success of female and male candidates to the disadvantage of female representation. Clearly, although increased district magnitude is conducive to female recruitment and representation, there are stronger forces at work in respect of voter hostility towards women that militate against the positive influence district magnitude may have on the progress of women’s representation.

Feminists may search for the ‘Holy Grail’ of an electoral system that promotes female representation but the determinants of gender-based voter hostility, presumably embedded in local political cultural attitudes, may, as in the case of inner-London borough elections over the last century, be a worthwhile area for scrutiny. However, as Hogan has observed regarding women’s representation in US state legislatures “the two most influential factors, education and political culture, were also the most difficult to change”(Hogan 2001:24).
Bibliography


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Figure 1: Mean percentage female candidates in a selection of county boroughs at elections 1918-1938, 1945-1980 and 1980-2003.

Mean percentage female candidates

English County Boroughs


Table 1: Mean percentage female candidates, 1918-1938, 1945-1980 and 1980-2003

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<td>1980-2003</td>
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Figure 2: CANDINDEX: women candidates as a percentage of all candidates at Birmingham municipal elections 1911-2003 and at inner-London Borough elections 1900-2002, contrasted.
Figure 3: Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties’ CANINDEX contrasted at inner-London Borough elections 1900-2002
Figure 4: Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties’ CANINDEX contrasted Birmingham borough elections 1911-2000.

Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties's CANINDEX contrasted

Birmingham Borough elections 1911-2003
Figure 5: Percentage female candidates at inner-London Borough elections 1912-2002 by district magnitude, ward contests with vacancies of 3, 6 and 9 (all years, 1925, 1928 and 1937 apart, significant Chi sq. at 95% confidence level one-tailed, 1925 sig. .087 one-tailed, 1928 sig. .123 one-tailed and 1937 sig. .238 one-tailed).
Table 2: Mean marginality contrasted by number of female candidates at Birmingham Borough elections 1911-2003

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Table 3: Mean marginality contrasted by gender at inner-London Borough elections 1900-2002

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Figure 6: Mean percentage share of the vote all candidates by gender at Birmingham Borough elections 1919-2003

Mean Percentage Share of Vote
by Gender

Birmingham Borough Elections 1911-2003

Percentage

Year
Figure: 7 Mean finishing position by gender Conservative candidates contesting three-seat ward contests at inner-London Borough elections 1919-2002.

Female contested wards only (Pearson correlation coefficient significant at the 0.05 level one-tailed, 1934, 1937, 1953, 1956, 1959, 1962, 1982, 1986 and 1988, all other coefficients same direction, i.e. a negative relationship between male contestation and finishing position scaled 1-9).
Figure 8: Mean finishing position by gender Labour candidates contesting three-seat ward contests at inner-London Borough elections 1909-2002, female contested wards only

Mean finish position by gender
District magnitude = 3

London Borough elections 1909-2002

Pearson correlation coefficient significant at the 0.05 level one-tailed, 1937, 1962, 1982, 1998, 2002., all other coefficients same direction, i.e. a negative relationship between male contestation and finishing position scaled 1-9.
Figure 9: Mean finishing position by gender Conservative candidates contesting six-seat ward contests at inner-London Borough elections 1919-1971.

<table>
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Conservative Party
Male candidates
Female candidates

Pearson correlation coefficient significant at the 0.05 level one-tailed, 1919, 1931, 1937, 1945, and 1959., all other coefficients same direction, i.e. a negative relationship between male contestation and finishing position scaled 1-9.
Figure 10: Mean finishing position by gender Labour candidates contesting six-seat ward contests at inner-London Borough elections 1909-1971.

Mean finish position by gender

District magnitude = 6

London Borough elections 1909-1971

Pearson correlation coefficient significant at the 0.05 level one-tailed, 1945, 1949, 1953, 1956, 1959 and 1962, all other coefficients same direction, i.e. a negative relationship between male contestation and finishing position scaled 1-9.
Figure 11: Mean finishing position by gender Conservative candidates contesting nine-seat ward contests at inner-London Borough elections 1919-1962 female contested wards only.

Mean finish position by gender

District magnitude = 9

London Borough elections 1919-1962

Mean position

12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4

Conservative Party
Male candidates
---
Female candidates

Year


Pearson correlation coefficient significant at the 0.05 level one-tailed, 1922, 1934, and 1937 all other coefficients same direction, i.e. a negative relationship between male contestation and finishing position scaled 1-9.
Figure 12: Mean finishing position by gender Labour candidates contesting nine-seat ward contests at inner-London Borough elections 1912-1962.

Mean finishing position by gender

District magnitude = 9

London Borough elections 1912-1962

Pearson correlation coefficient significant at the 0.05 level one-tailed, 1949, and 1962 all other coefficients same direction, i.e. a negative relationship between male contestation and finishing position scaled 1-9.
Figure 13: Relative success of female candidates at London borough elections 1900-2002.

Relative success of female candidates
at London Borough elections 1900-2002

Year

Percentage


Index
Electindex
Canindex

33
Figure 14: Relative success of female candidates at Birmingham borough elections 1911-2003.
Figure 15. Relative performance of female candidates for Conservative and Labour parties contrasted (index measured = ELECTINDEX x CANINDEX)

Relative performance of female candidates by party

Birmingham Borough elections 1911-2003

Year


RP Index

0 1000 2000

Party

Conservative

Labour
Figure 16: ELECTINDEX of Conservative and Labour parties contrasted in ward elections at inner-London borough elections 1919-2002, where vacancies = 3.
Figure 17: ELECTINDEX of Conservative and Labour parties contrasted in ward elections at inner-London borough elections 1919-1962, where vacancies = 6.

ELECTINDEX contrasted by party DM = 6

inner-London borough elections 1912-1962

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Figure 18: ELECTINDEX of Conservative and Labour parties contrasted in ward elections at inner-London borough elections 1919-1962, where vacancies = 9.
Figure 19: Conservative Party percentage female candidates elected councillors at inner-London borough elections, district magnitudes 3,6 and 9.

Conservative Party ELECTINDEX
contrasted by district magnitude

inner-London borough elections 1919-1962
Figure 20: Labour Party percentage female candidates elected councillors at inner-London borough elections, district magnitudes 3, 6 and 9.

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Biographical notes

Paul Lambe is a Research Fellow at the Local Government Chronicle Elections Centre (LGCEC), University of Plymouth. His research interests include 20th century British local government and parliamentary electoral behaviour and the application of quantitative methods to the study of history.

Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher are Professors of Politics at the University of Plymouth and co-directors of the LGCEC established in 1985 in order to collect, analyse and publish the results of local elections in Britain. Rallings and Thrasher have published extensively in the area of local electoral behaviour.

Lawrence Ware is a Research Fellow at the LGCEC. His research interests include party systems in English local government, the consequences of electoral laws, social and political exclusion, voting behaviour and quantitative research design and data collection methods.

Other papers published by the Centre for Advancement of Women in Politics include: