UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Corruption as an obstacle to women's political representation: Evidence from local councils in 18 European countries

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My talk today

- The relationship between corruption and the political recruitment of women

- An empirical study of local politics in Europe

- Implications

- The presence of elected women we believe that researchers also need to study factors exogenous to parties.

- We argue that

    a) corruption is important in explaining women's presence

    b) that this should be analyzed on the sub-national level

    c) and, after having performed the first mapping of subnational presence of women in 18 countries, we believe have the data to do so

Women in parliaments - Previous findings

- Explanations for women's representation in parliament:
  – Election systems, quotas etc
  – Values, education, etc.
  – Parties' recruitment
    » Both formal <u>and informal</u>

- We believe that is is still important to study factors exogenous to parties.

- Recent studies suggest that corruption could contribute to explain the variance of women's representation across countries.

Corruption and women's representation – previous debate
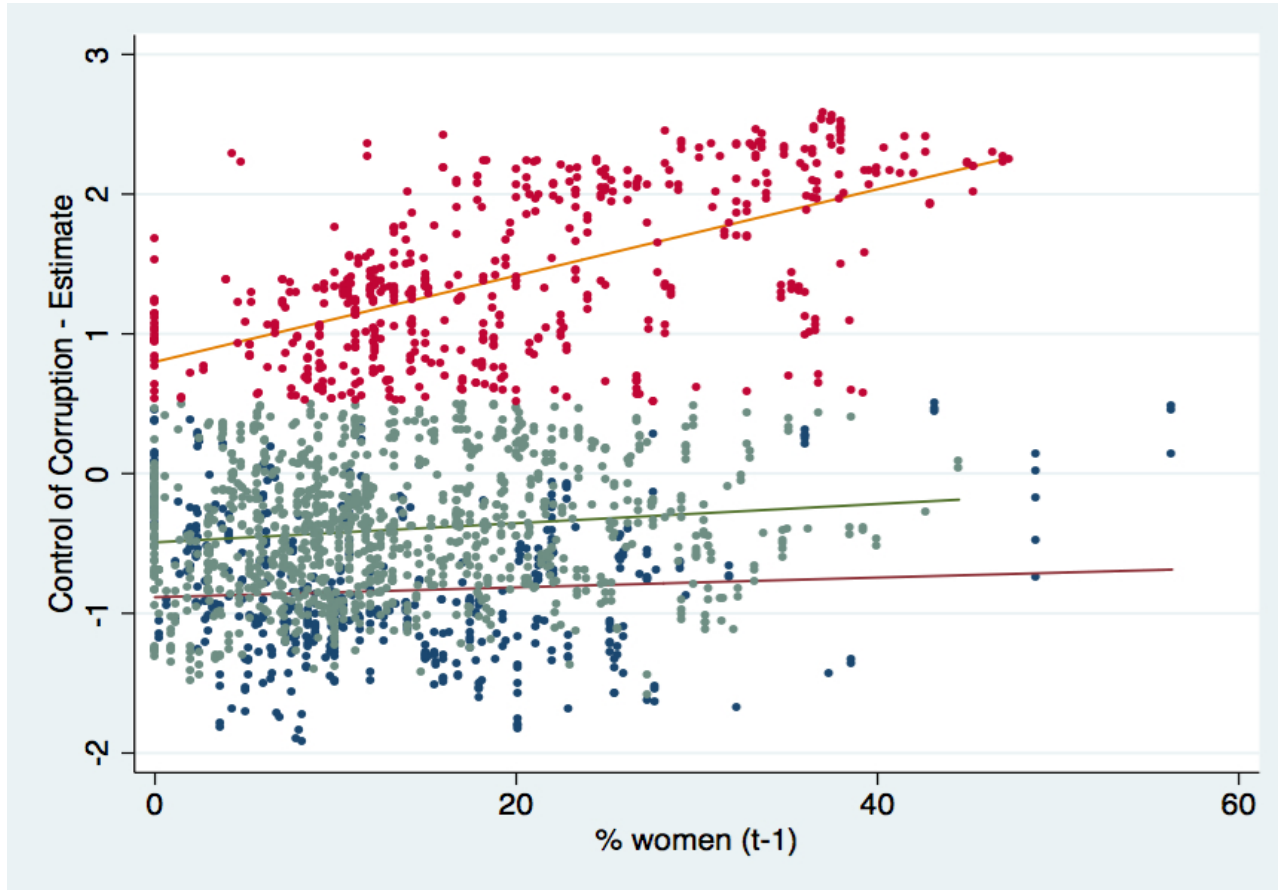
Corruption and women's representation – previous debate (contd)

- A body of research have found a correlation between estimated levels of corruption in a country and the share of women in parliament.

- To some extent a controversy has been the direction of causality in this relationship.

- As a reaction to the assumption of an "honest sex" Sung (2004) argued that liberal democracy produces both high presence of women and low levels of corruption.

- We build on the argument that it is instead corruption that tend to decrease the share of elected women.

The impact from corruption on women's representation – theoretical arguments

The argument by Bjarnegård (2013) and Stockemer (2011) has 4 parts:

1. In corrupt settings recruitment to leadership is made through informal institutions rather than formal processes.

2. Lacking transparency this informal selection is a clientilistic practice, using old networks to recruit candidates.

3. Women are seldom included in these networks, not the least due to lack of capital (homosocial, financial).

4. For this reason recruitment processes tend to "weed out" women in corrupt settings.

Theoretical expectations

- Informal institutions go hand in hand with weak formal political institutions.

- Clientelism is anchored in a societal context characterized by low quality of government.

- It plausible to believe that when corruption, partiality and ineffectiveness is prevalent in government then will the processes excluding women in recruitment tend to be present.

- We hypothesize that low quality of government – understood as high levels of corruption, partiality and ineffectiveness of government services – will have a negative impact on the proportion of female local councilors in the European regions.

Our study

- Previous literature mostly deal with cross-country comparisons.

- A sub-national focus allows researchers to move beyond national level variables. Hence, one have less problems with ecological fallacies.

- In order to gauge potential regional variance, this lead us to focus on local councilors.

- Our aim: to investigate the effect of corruption/ bad governance on women's representation on the local level.

- We study the presence of women in 167 regions of 18 European countries.

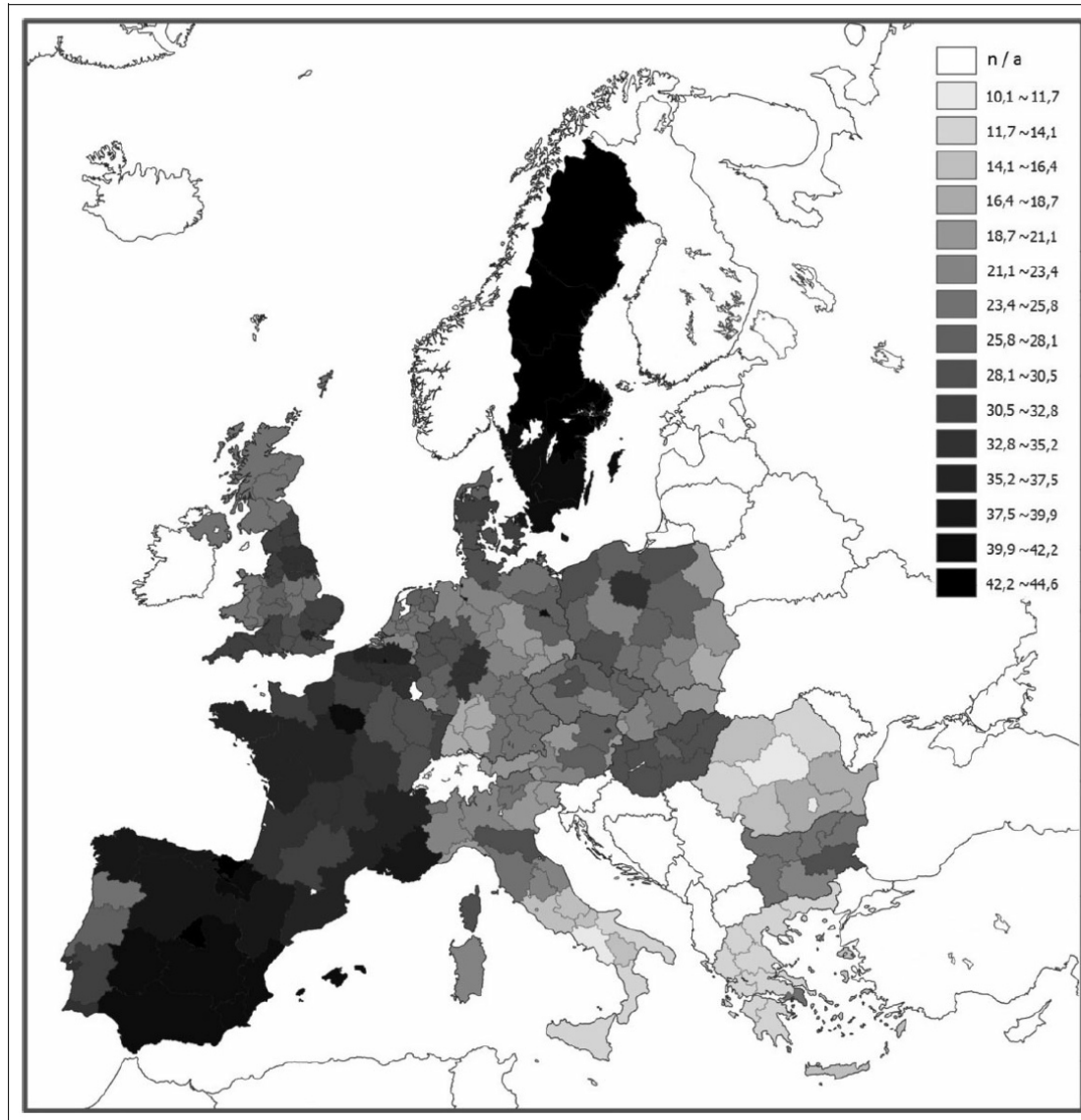- In order to do so we created the first source of data in this matter.

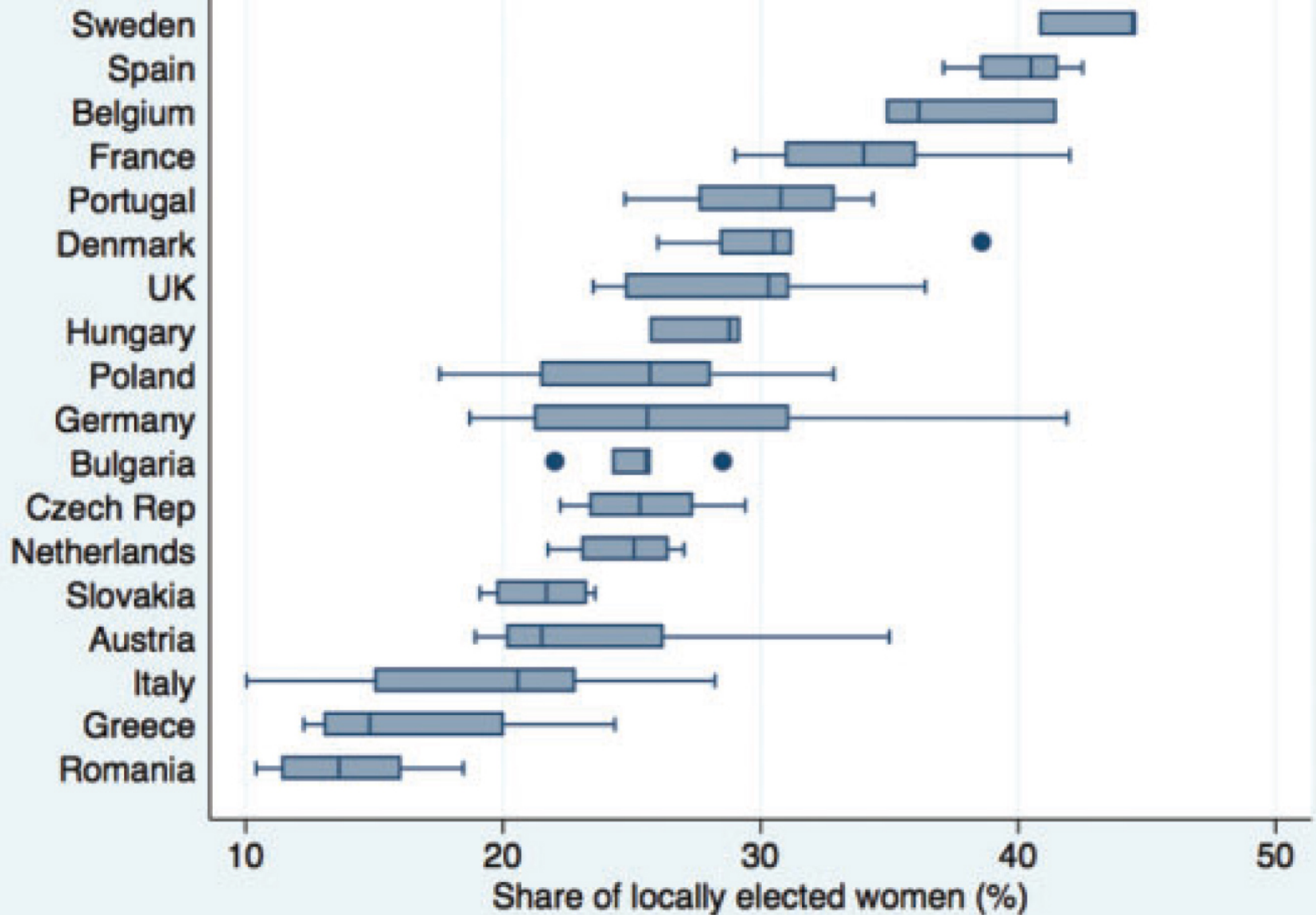A new dataset on women's local presence in the European regions

- Our dependent variable: the share of female municipal councilors aggregated to an average per each region

- To this date no source of data collects figures on womens local representation with sub-national variations.

- We collected this data by contacting officials in all of these countries and often special regions. The numbers are the official ones, taken from the most recent elections in each country and region.

- In all but three countries the politicians correspond well to the category "municipal councilor" (county councilors in Romania, mayors in Slovakia).

- A first picture of regional share of locally elected women.

Table 1. Comparing local councilors across 18 countries.

Country	Name of local councils	No. local authorities	Year of election
Austria	Municipal council (gemeinderat)	2357	2009–2012
Belgium	Municipal council (conseil communal / gemeenteraad)	589	2012
Bulgaria	Municipal council (obchtinski savet)	264	2010
Czech Republic	Municipal council (zastupitelstvo obce)	6250	2010
Denmark	Municipal council (kommunalbestyrelse)	98	2009
France	Municipal councils (conseil municipal)	36,569	2008
Germany	Local council (gemeinderat)	app 14000	2011
Greece	Municipal council (dimotiko simvoulio)	325	2010
Hungary	Municipal body of representatives (képviselõ-testület)	3175	2010
Italy	Local council (consiglio comunale)	8094	2011
Netherlands	Local council (gemeenteraad)	418	2009
Poland	Municipal council (rada gminy)	2479	2010
Portugal	Parish assembly (assembleia de freguesia)	4259	2009
Romania	County council (consiliul judeţean)	41	2012
Slovakia	Local council (obecné zastupiteľstvo in municipalities, mestské zastupiteľstvo in cities). Figures refer to mayors (starosta in municipalities, primátor in cities).	2792 (2909 mayors)	2010
Spain	Local council (concejal)	8117	2011
Sweden	Municipal assembly (kommunfullmäktige)	290	2010
UK	Local authority councils	466	2010–1212

Notes: In some countries local elections are not held simultaneously across all regions. Therefore the table reports data across several years for these countries. In Austria, local elections are held at different occasions in the Bundesländer. In the UK, Scotland has a special electoral cycle.

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	n / a
	10,1 ~ 11,7
	11,7 ~ 14,1
	14,1 ~ 16,4
	16,4 ~ 18,7
	18,7 ~ 21,1
	21,1 ~ 23,4
	23,4 ~ 25,8
	25,8 ~ 28,1
	28,1 ~ 30,5
	30,5 ~ 32,8
	32,8 ~ 35,2
	35,2 ~ 37,5
	37,5 ~ 39,9
	39,9 ~ 42,2
	42,2 ~ 44,6

Share of locally elected women (%)

Independent variables

- A regional measure of quality of government (EQI) (measuring the extent of corruption, partiality and effectiveness in government).

  – Note, according to this measure corruption vary significantly across the European regions.

- Regional-level controls: (Economic development, gender equality culture educational attainment and human development index).

- National-level controls: Electoral system, legislative gender quotas, voluntary party quotas.

- We perform a multi-level analysis.

Results a

- Bivariate positive relation: less corruption means more women
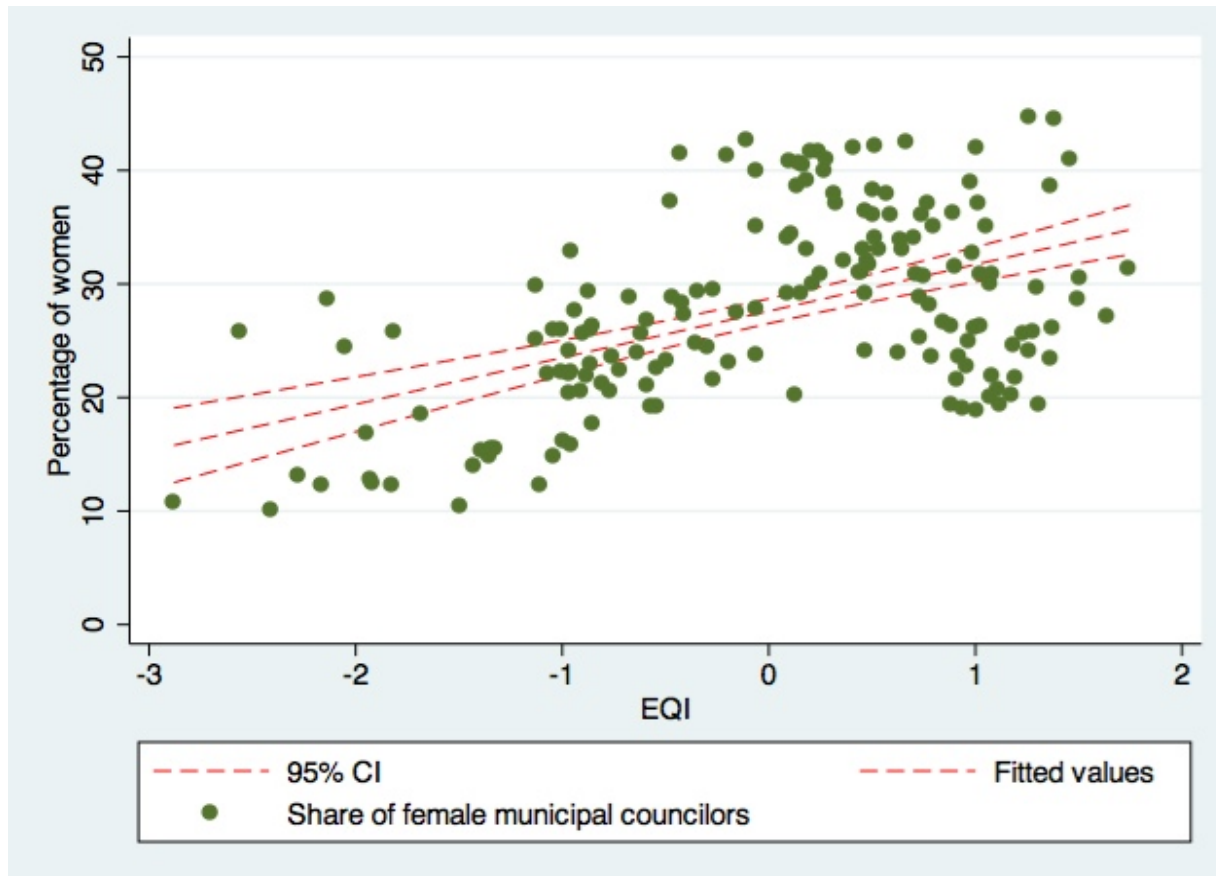
Results b

- Multivariate (and multi-level) model: the relationship is significant and substantially important with all controls included (see paper).

- Model prediction: For one point (on the EQI) a region becomes less corrupt, the share of women increase with 2.7 percentage points.

- As corruption (EQI) vary across and within many countries this has important explanatory power.

Conclusions and implications

- Our results indicate that bad governance/ corruption tend to exclude women from locally elected seats in contemporary Europe.

- This has an important implication:

    1. Hindrances to women's representation are not eliminated by reforming parties only.

    2. As the corruption-gender relationship exist also in democracies this speak against the view suggesting that liberal democracy will install both good governance and high female presence.

- Future discussion on representation of women need to further consider the importance of corruption.

Thank you!

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