One plus one equals three? The electoral effect of multiple office-holding in national and local elections.

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Abstract

Traditionally, scholars have always assumed that multiple office-holding (i.e. the combination of a local and national directly elected mandate) leads to an enhanced electoral performance. Even though there is reasonable evidence to expect that such a combination is electorally beneficial compared to candidates without public experience, it remains unclear whether a dual mandate provides an additional boost compared to holding only one national or local position prior to the election. Furthermore, the scope of previous research remained confined, concentrating on France as a case study and focussing on individual results in national elections. This paper, on the other hand, claims that dual mandate-holding pays off individually as well as collectively, for the candidate list as a whole. Additionally, we argue that it is equally rewarding at the local level, even though municipal elections have been mostly disregarded until now. This leads to four hypotheses: multiple office-holders will draw more preferential votes in national and local elections, and candidate lists with at least one multiple office-holder will receive more votes in national and local elections. These presumptions were tested based on electoral data of every elected official after Belgian national and regional elections of 2014 and the Flemish local election of 2012. Our results indicate that multiple office-holding inarguably improves the individual and the collective ballot outcome, however, the additional bonus is rather limited and most prominent for MP-mayors.

Introduction

The contemporary debate on multiple office-holding particularly involves evaluating the beneficial and harmful effects of the practice, even though the public discourse has escalated to condemning every possible variant. *Cumul des mandats*, the simultaneous exercise of at least two elected political functions, has also raised some academic eyebrows. Some authors even conceive practitioners as 'the elite within the elite' (Navarro, 2009) because the phenomenon is considered a strong form of power concentration in the hands of a small elite. This results into a self-contained and enclosed political system that aims to facilitate access for those cumulards but blocks the entry of newcomers. Additionally, the practice is often regarded as an example of the professionalization of communalism, which could cause an irrational and unequal public resource distribution that only benefits cumulards or their communes (Ackaert, 2006). Advocates, on the other hand, generally highlight the local embeddedness of dual mandate-holders as a relevant advantage, which enables them to defend local grievances in the national or regional political arena. In spite of these democratic disadvantages and many empirical uncertainties, multiple office-holding continues to flourish in various countries. Experts have long suggested that the perceived electoral advantage of holding several mandates is one of the main causes of its persistence (Knapp, 1991; Mény, 1992b). Representatives who believe an additional mandate provides them a competitive edge on their competitors will presumably continue to support the practice.

We build on the basic assumption that cumul enhances the electoral outcome, but also argue that multiple office-holding provides an additional electoral bonus compared to the most potent contestants. It is only reasonable that a double office-holder will perform better on the ballot than an ordinary candidate without any public experience, whereas it is uncertain if they also outperform single office-holders who held a local or national political function prior to the election. To support this assumption, we rely on research on voting behaviour and the personal vote. Scholars have demonstrated that voters rely to a certain extent on information shortcuts to assess political candidates (Cain, Ferejohn, & Fiorina, 1984, 1987). Personal votes are based on certain individual characteristic such as personal qualities, qualifications or behaviour of the candidate. The latter, therefore, emphasize these attributes, termed personal vote-earning attributes (PVEAs), hoping to shape voting behaviour. We argue that dual mandate-holding is a potent vote-earning attribute, as it combines two crucial determinants of the personal vote. First, holding a municipal mandate represents a politician's local roots or local background, which research has shown to be a comprehensive cue and electorally rewarding (Jankowski, 2016; Put & Maddens, 2014; Tavits, 2010). Second, their national experience, often referred to as incumbency, indicates reliability and again improves the electoral performance (Dahlgaard, 2013; Krebs & Carolina, 1998; Redmond & Regan, 2015). One can only deduce that local deputies in parliament, representatives who simultaneously exercise a national and a local directly elected political mandate, have an electoral advantage because they simultaneously rely on the local background ànd incumbency cue to nourish the personal vote. Our central research

question, therefore, is whether the accumulation of political mandates, and consequently the combination of the cues these mandates invoke, produces an additional electoral bonus compared to incumbent deputies or municipal office-holders, or does it merely match the latter?

Somewhat surprising, the electoral effect of cumul des mandats has not been separated from and compared to the incumbency- or local ties effect. Despite the limited empirical support for the advantage (Bach, 2012; Foucault, 2006; François, 2006), we are unable to assess whether the cumul-effect is larger or rather comparable to the effect of holding either national or local mandate. Another crucial shortcoming is the narrow scope of the electoral effect. So far, research has exclusively concentrated on the impact on the individual result at national legislative elections, but has failed to consider other forms of electoral gains. This can be linked to the almost exclusive focus on French case studies and the single member district system, even though literature suggests that PVEAs are beneficial in open list proportional systems as well (Carey & Shugart, 1995).

This article contributes to the current literature by filling two gaps simultaneously. First, we propose that dual mandate-holding pays off individually and collectively. Scholars have established that holding a double mandate is a deliberate and rewarding strategy for individual representatives (Foucault, 2006), but we claim that political parties as a whole can benefit as well. We believe that a candidate list with an attractive cumulard will improve the overall performance. Second, the individual and collective gains associated with cumul are tested at national and local elections, as the arguments are equally applicable for municipal elections. This leads to four hypotheses: multiple office-holders will draw more preferential votes in national and local elections, and candidate lists with at least one multiple office-holder will receive more votes in national and local elections. Compliant to preceding studies, we presume that mayors with parliamentary seat is the most rewarding combination. To our knowledge, this will be the first time that the electoral advantage of dual mandate-holding is tested this extensively in a semi-open list system.

The paper first gives an overview of the theoretical link between cumul and electoral performance, both from the perspective of individual candidates and voters. Afterwards, based on gaps in the current literature, four hypotheses are formulated. Next, the Belgian electoral system is discussed, as well as how it interacts with our assumptions. In the methods section, we present the Belgian election data, our dependent variables and the clusters of control variables. The results confirm that both individuals with a dual office and candidate lists that include one perform better at national and local elections. However, the added value of cumul compared to the local ties or incumbency effect, is rather limited. Mayors with parliamentary experience seem to profit most, as well as municipal candidate lists who see an increase in their electoral result if they include any dual office-holder. Multiple office-holding should therefore be regarded as the extension of voter appreciation of public experience, as it only sporadically creates an extra boost.

Cumul des mandats

Cumul des mandats, or internationally termed multiple office-holding, refers to the practice where political actors simultaneously exercise at least two directly elected positions (Navarro, 2009).[i] It is usually associated with the southern European state tradition (Page & Goldsmith, 1987), where the national centre dominates decision-making and the smaller subnational authorities have to compensate their limited amount of functions and discretion with a strong connection to the centre. The combination of political mandates on both levels is one of the most direct pathways from the municipality to the national state. France is often seen as the archetype of the practice, where almost every national representative has a local position (Knapp, 1991). However, a recent attempt to provide a European comparative overview has suggested that cumul is far more commonplace than expected (Navarro, 2013). The study highlights that the phenomenon is not exclusively restricted to South European countries, but also prominently exercised in some middle (e.g. Germany or Luxemburg), Northern (e.g. Finland or Sweden) and Eastern European countries (e.g. Hungary or Slovenia).[ii]

In such a comparative overview, Belgium can best be characterized as an exemplary case of multiple office-holding. Specifically, Belgian municipal representatives are allowed to accumulate one additional regional or national directly elected office. Research has demonstrated that around 60% of the Belgian parliamentarians have occupied a local position from the early sixties (Ackaert, 1994). This percentage continued to rise during the eighties and nineties (Fiers, 2001). The contemporary peak was reached in 2014, when 80% of all members of parliament combined a local and a national office (Van de Voorde, 2017).

Throughout the years, several aspects of the phenomenon have been studied, predominantly in the French context. Attention shifted from a normative angle (Debré, 1955; Knapp, 1991; Mény, 1992a) to a more empirical approach (Caille, 2000; Navarro, 2009; Pilet, 2013). Recent studies have expanded this tradition and started to question the possible consequences of the practice. To illustrate, authors have studied whether cumulards have a different representative role orientation (Brack, Costa, & Teixeira, 2012) or behave differently in parliament (Bach, 2012; François & Weill, 2016; Vaesen, 2006). Others have examined the effect on the party system (Cirone, 2015) and inter-level political trust (Karlsson, 2017). Additionally, scholars have always assumed that the electoral advantage is an attractive incentive to pursue a dual mandate. However, empirical support for this premise is limited. Despite strong theoretical arguments on how combining offices could improve the ballot result, evidence does not suggest a clear-cut and substantial positive electoral gain (Foucault, 2006; Ragouet & Phélippea, 2013). In what follows, two main theoretical perspectives are distinguished. The first perspective supposes that it is rational for politicians to pursue dual mandate-holding to increase their electoral performance. The voter's perspective assumes that it is equally rational for voters who favour these cumulards.

Politician's perspective

A dual mandate potentially has direct and indirect effects on the electoral result. As Foucault (2006) argued, holding several mandates is a rational and deliberate strategy for individual politicians to increase the longevity of their political careers. Cumulards expect it to directly increase the chances of getting re-elected and therefore surviving in parliament or in the city council. A dual mandate-holder, for example, has more financial resources than a candidate with only one public office or none at all. This significantly increases campaign spending, which contributes to a better electoral performance (Put, Maddens, & Smulders, 2015). Other relevant effects can be imagined as well. For example, national and local activity evidently widens the cumulards' network both inside and outside the party, which can be life-saving during a campaign. Finally, previous public experience facilitates access to indispensable local manpower before elections and improves personal reputation and name recognition, which probably translates into media attention.

Likewise, multiple office-holding ensures electoral success indirectly by intimidating the competition. *Cumul des mandats* has been found to act as a barrier for potential challengers, discouraging them to stand for election. This deterring effect has been termed 'the baobab strategy' (François, 2006; Mény, 1992a). Similar to the baobab tree, cumulards subtract almost all political resources from their environment, allowing for little competitive vegetation in their shadow. The concentration of political and electoral resources deprives potential opponents from a realistic chance to survive, therefore these competitors decide to abandon the idea to run for election in advance. Research has confirmed that in French single member districts where a national MP runs for election, both the quantity and quality of challengers declines (François, 2006; François & Foucault, 2013; Ragouet & Phélippea, 2013). Although the effect might be less extensive in proportional list systems, plenty examples also demonstrate that aspiring newcomers often relocate due to a national figurehead dominating the district elections. This effect, however, is probably more recurrent when said notable runs on the same party list and can threaten the (re-) election of rookies.

Voter's perspective

Multiple office-holding also facilitates the decision-making process for voters and gives them crucial cues to favour cumulards. Voting behaviour literature states that electoral support can be explained by either voter or candidate traits. Voter characteristics are located at the voter-side and can entail party affiliation, religion, social class or even the evaluation of the economic context (Cain et al., 1984, 1987). These do not only co-determine the individual electoral support, but also explain most of the variation in the ballot outcome (Bartels, 2000). Despite their importance, voter characteristics are stable and almost impossible to modify or rely on if a candidate wants to pursue a political career.

On the other hand, voters have a tendency to favour candidates with certain characteristics, such as specific personal qualifications, previous activities or a public record. This part of the electoral support is termed the personal vote (Cain et al., 1984). Voters rely on personal

attributes, or personal vote-earning attributes (PVEA), as information shortcuts because this maximizes the knowledge of a candidate's appropriateness with a minimum of information (Shugart, Valdini, & Suominen, 2005). Therefore, politicians attempt to cultivate this personal vote by advertising some individual traits and building a personal reputation, seeking to reap the electoral benefits.

Multiple office-holding can be seen as an exceptional vote-earning attribute because it combines two important PVEAs: the local background and the incumbency trait (Cain et al., 1987; Krebs & Carolina, 1998). A local background signals local embeddedness to the voter, who is likely to believe that local candidates have a general understanding of the local problems and are potentially more suitable to promote these interests after the election (Jankowski, 2016). Local roots have been operationalized as being born in the constituency, living there for a certain amount of time, or having political experience in the area. These measurements all indicate some sort of local ties and underline their local awareness. On the other hand, voters may favour municipal candidates to hold them accountable, also at the national level. Dual mandate-holders, with abundant local political experience, are ideal representatives for these local concerns. Critics, however, will point out that a municipal office could be a disadvantage as well, if one assumes that voters from other municipalities avoid voting for deputies outside their own commune, although research does not seem to support this hypothesis. We would argue that a local background certainly benefits a larger electorate. First, local representatives could be considered defenders of the general municipal interest. As experienced councilors, they grasp the needs of local government and are more suitable to defend it. Second, since Belgian communes are rather small they are naturally clustered in a network of geographically connected municipalities with similar societal challenges. Candidates cannot only claim to represent their hometown, but also this wider area in parliament. Lastly, local roots is often presented as the ability to understand the man in the street, due to the close small distance between councilors and citizens in municipalities. In reality, local officers can probably rely on a combination of these cues, which leaves the possible disadvantage of a municipal position at least unlikely.

The second PVEA cumulards can also rely on is previous experience at the same political level they seek re-election. Research indicates that incumbents are perceived as experienced, and therefore reliable and less risky public officers (Cox & Katz, 1996). Additionally, they are highly visible in the media and are known to scare-off potential challengers. It is not surprising that incumbents get re-elected more often (Krebs & Carolina, 1998). On the other hand, incumbency can also persuade voters of local awareness. Mayhew (1974) conceived it as an electoral connection between the constituency and the congressional member. The latter would develop clientelist relations with district voter and orient their legislative behaviour towards local needs, in order to assure re-election. However, this is far from necessary, as former experience can suffice to advertise the local connection.

We argue that cumulards do not only combine several mandates, but also combine the voting cues associated with those mandates. At the same time, they can rely on the local ties and incumbency effect. In national elections, cumulards are potentially the ultimate candidates with both extensive local ties, indicated by their local office, and national know-how, symbolized by their national office. In local elections, local ties are embodied by their function as councilor and the national position provides them with a reliable and professional image.

The Belgian electoral system

The Belgian electoral system is often classified as a semi-open or flexible list PR system (Marsh, 1985), or alternatively defined as a weak preferential list system (Karvonen, 2004). Although the Belgian central tier consists of a federal and regional political level with directly elected assemblies, both are conceived as 'national' levels because voters hardly distinguish regional and federal parliaments and there are few legislative difference between the electoral systems (Put & Maddens, 2014, p. 615). Federal elections were held every four year prior to 2014, and every five years thereafter. Regional elections are always held every five years. Voters are presented with numerous candidate lists, one for each party, which they can endorse as a whole or cast a vote on one or more candidates within the same list. The former is called a list vote, the latter a preferential vote. In reality, the list vote still outweighs the preferential vote in the allocation of the actual seats. The threshold of individual votes is relatively high and overcoming the list order is rather rare. However, recently the weight of the list vote has been decreased by half, consequently increasing the importance of preferential voting (Put & Maddens, 2015). In both regional and federal elections, preferential voting has become increasingly popular. Around 60% of the voters casted one or more individual votes in recent federal and regional elections (André, Wauters, & Pilet, 2012; Dodeigne, 2014). Furthermore, national and local politics are heavily interconnected in Belgium. In addition to combining offices at both levels, more than half of national candidates between 1999 and 2010 held a municipal function as well (Put & Maddens, 2013).

Similar to the national electoral system, the local system can be described as a semi-open list PR system. The municipal council is elected every six years and indirectly elects its own executive board and mayor. Compared to national elections, however, preferential voting is more popular and influential. Authors point towards political localism as a contributing factor, as Belgian municipalities are the political representation of the local community, not central vehicles for service delivery. Furthermore, the average municipal size is relatively small, which leads to well-known local politicians and improves the overall confidence in local politics (Verhelst, Reynaert, Steyvers, & De Rynck, 2014). Consequently, 85% of the local votes are preferential votes. Simultaneously, only a third of the list vote is transferred to individual candidates. As a result, the number of elected candidates outside the list order is much higher in local elections. Due to the prominence of the preferential vote, authors argue that the local system starts to resemble an open-list system more closely (Wauters, Verlet, & Ackaert, 2012).

Hypotheses

Despite the strong theoretical underpinnings of the potential electoral gains of multiple office-holding, empirical studies have been reluctant to examine the electoral advantage to its full extent. To ensure an integral operationalization we assert that dual mandate-holding pays off both individually (for the individual candidate) and collectively (for the candidate list as a whole), and should be assessed in both national and local elections.

Existing research primarily targets national elections. For example, scholars found that accumulation slightly increases the odds of getting elected after the second round in the French majoritarian single member district system (Bach, 2011; François, 2006; Ragouet & Phélippea, 2013). The effect was only found in districts with a large margin of victory, indicating that multiple office-holding is not beneficial in competitive districts. Additionally, cumulards do have a higher chance of surviving the first round but the increased odds of actually getting elected are slim. Foucault (2006) compared French national incumbents and found that cumulards received a bonus in their relative vote share, albeit only significant for mayors. However, Foucault established that cumul can also be counter-productive. Double cumul, combining two or more local mandates with a national position[iii], diminished the electoral score. Altogether, the results indicate a small and conditional advantage. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the effect has only been tested in a majoritarian system, not in a proportional one. One could even argue that the electoral effect would be more substantial in the latter due to higher inter- and intra-party competition. It is therefore vital to run this study in a proportional representation system, such as Belgium.

Although most studies suggest a slight electoral advantage for candidates and incumbents in national elections, municipal elections have been neglected until now. This exclusive national focus is remarkable because the arguments associated with electoral gains are equally applicable at municipal elections. Incumbency, for example, has a similar positive effect. Research has shown that experienced local councilors are more likely to get re-elected and receive more preferential votes (Dahlgaard, 2013; Krebs & Carolina, 1998; Trounstine, 2011), proposedly because they receive more media coverage, can take credit of local policies, and run more professional campaigns. Scholars have also confirmed that a national office, the counterpart of local ties in national elections, is also beneficial in local elections. Maddens et al. (2007), for example, have reported that national tenure has a sizeable influence over the local electoral score.

Similarly, multiple office-holders have an advantage over their local political competitors. They have access to more resources detrimental to ensure re-election, most substantially money and time. Due to their national function, cumulards are professional politicians who do not only spend more financial resources on an electoral campaign, but also have more time to prepare and run one, or even mobilize their personal staff members. They can benefit from both national and local name recognition, and capitalize on their supra local status. Also, it can be assumed

that voters favour cumulards as they can exploit their national experience and mobilize their network to accommodate municipal interests. Consequently, we expect an additional electoral boost when both are combined in the municipal context, similar to the national elections. The electoral performance is understood as the percentage of preference votes an individual received in his or her constituency, which is the provincial district in national elections and the municipality in local elections (see data and method section for a detailed discussion).

H1a: Multiple office-holders receive more preferential votes at the national elections.

H1b: Multiple office-holders receive more preferential votes at the local elections.

Second, research has concentrated on the individual benefits but failed to consider the collective gains, due to the bias for the French electoral system. Nonetheless, after the only proportional election of the national French parliament in 1986, Knapp (1991, p. 29) portrayed cumulards as *locomotives*. Especially mayors presumably pulled the entire party list forward, towards an improved overall outcome. We acknowledge that the entire candidate list, or the party in general, can benefit from the introduction of a multiple office-holder. Arguably, dual mandate-holders, who are associated with an electoral added value, will be preferred by political parties in the selection procedure as well. To illustrate, the theory of candidate selection proposes that certain individual characteristics are more pleasing for the party elite (De Winter, 1988; Gallagher & Marsh, 1988). Cumulards combine several of those traits, such as the capacity to win elections, the potential of a successful legislator and the loyalty to respect party discipline. In their attempt to ensure overall electoral success, parties are inclined to propose strong candidate lists and include a multiple office-holder, hoping to augment the collective result. We assume that the effect will emerge in national and local elections, because the incentive to introduce them is equally present at both levels. In analogy with the individual performance, the collective electoral result is regarded as the percentage of votes for the list as a whole in the constituency.

H2a: A candidate list with at least one multiple office-holder will receive more list votes at the national level.

H2b: A candidate list with at least one multiple office-holder will receive more list votes at the local level.

Throughout this paper, we will consequently resort to this four-fold interpretation of the 'electoral advantage'. Hereafter, they will be termed the national individual bonus (H1a), the local individual bonus (H1b), the national list bonus (H2a) and the local list bonus (H2b). First, they are discussed separately, and subsequently we will reflect upon the added value of the general phenomenon of multiple office-holding on the electoral performance.

Our final assumption claims that the electoral impact of multiple office-holding deviates dependent on the nature of the mandate combination. We argue that distinguishing the phenomenon based on the type of local office generates a more fine-grained analysis, because

as Bach (2012, p. 56) contends "Les cumulards ne sont pas tous égaux". A mayor, for example, is not equivalent to an ordinary municipal councilor. The former generally is a professional politician, well-known in his or her commune, and able to translate their name recognition and status to a wider electoral appeal in larger national constituencies. Research has shown that mayors indeed capitalize on their local popularity, resulting in a high probability of winning their district (Bach, 2012). Likewise, mayors receive a presidential-like bonus in municipal elections (Freier, 2015; Put & Maddens, 2014). Scholars concluded, unsurprisingly, that a deputy-mayor is the most successful variant in electoral terms. To illustrate, mayor-MPs weaken the electoral competition within the district and monopolize campaign contributions (François, 2006), which evidently translates into an elevated personal score (Foucault, 2006). We assume accordingly that mayors with a national mandate will reap most electoral benefits of their dual office, both in national and municipal elections. Consequently, introducing such a cumulard will also enhance the collective performance.

H3: Mayor-MPs will have the largest effect on the individual and collective electoral result.

Data and method

The effect of dual office-holding on the individual and collective electoral performance was examined using data from the most recent national and regional elections of 2014, and the municipal elections of 2012 in Belgium. Our aim was to incorporate representatives and candidate lists from the entire country, but consistent information on francophone municipal representatives was lacking and scatteredly archived among the regions. As nationwide data was only available for the national individual benefit (H1), we were restricted to information on Flemish MPs and councilors for the remaining three samples (H2, H3, H4). However, this does not affect our results in a substantive way, since a sufficiently large number of cases prevailed to perform our analyses. Also, previous studies have shown that the regional differences on the degree of multiple office-holding are limited to a few percentages (Van de Voorde, 2017). We should note that the regional Walloon election districts are smaller than the Flemish districts, which could potentially enhance the electoral bonus of a local background and multiple office-holding. To identify the individual benefit of cumul, we focused exclusively on elected representatives. Our main goal was to evaluate the electoral bonus, not to examine whether it increases the odds of re-election (see Bach & Cohen, 2012 and Ragouet & Phélippea, 2013 for the latter). Studying representatives is more feasible and appropriate to uncover even the smallest effects on the electoral performance in a proportional list system. This approach nevertheless impairs the variation of the dependent variable, as a certain number of votes is necessary to become representative.

Similar to our four hypotheses, the data collection was divided into four samples: the national individual bonus and the local individual bonus sample, and the national list bonus and the local list bonus sample. The first sample, concerning the national individual bonus, was based on the regional and federal elections of 2014. In total, 438 members of the federal chamber, the

Flemish, Walloon and Brussels regional parliament were analysed[iv]. A snapshot of every assembly was taken after the installation of the executive branch, to assure that representatives who entered government were already replaced in parliament. Second, the local individual sample was limited to the elected Flemish municipal councilors after the local elections of 2012 (N = 7464), as public data on the Brussels and Walloon local representatives of 2006 and 2012 was unavailable. These were necessary to estimate the electoral bonus of multiple office-holding and to control for incumbency effects. Furthermore, the national list sample only comprises Flemish national and regional candidate lists (N = 67). Without any information on Francophone councilors, the amount of local mandate-holders on these supra local lists could not be determined. In addition, the sample was restricted to party lists with at least one elected MP to eliminate the impact of meaningless lists deprived of any electoral support. Lastly, 1658 Flemish municipal lists were used to estimate the local list benefit. Walloon and Brussels lists were excluded due to the aforementioned restrictions. The data collection was based on publicly available data on the one hand, and on biographical information requested from the respective central authorities on the other hand.

The four dependent variables are discussed briefly below, however, appendix A unveils the operationalization and descriptive analyses in more detail. Every independent variable is conceived as a function of the number of preferential or list votes an individual or candidate list received within their respective constituency. The individual electoral result, for example, is regarded as the percentage of individual preference votes within the constituency: within the provincial district at the national level, or within the commune at the local level[v]. We consider the electoral performance as a function of the total number of votes in the district, not as a function of the votes for the candidate list, in accordance with earlier studies who estimated the effect of localness on the ballot result (Jankowski, 2016; Put & Maddens, 2015; Put et al., 2015). Consequently, our results can be easily compared to similar research on the effect of PVEAs. Furthermore, this approach allows comparing the individual and list effects too, as both are calculated as a percentage of the district votes. The list score is understood as the percentage of list votes within the district at the national or regional level, within the municipality at the local level. List votes are regarded as the number of votes for a certain list, therefore this can include voting for list as a whole or voting for at least one candidate on the list. Furthermore, the dependent variables were logarithmically transformed prior to our regression analyses, with the exception of the local list score. This has several advantages. The individual results, for example, were positively skewed with a limited number of candidates with an exceptionally high performance. Transforming the response variable smoothened the distribution and simultaneously improved the assumptions of linear regression. The transformation also overestimated the differences between candidates with few electoral votes, wherefore the subtle effect of certain independent variables became more apparent (Put & Maddens, 2015). As a result, the standardized beta coefficients were presented to facilitate comparisons between or among samples, effect sizes and models, even though this strategy hinders a straightforward interpretation of the absolute effect of the coefficients. The last model, which estimates the

effect on the local list score, had serious problems due to heteroscedasticity, and therefore a box-cox transformation of the dependent variable was more appropriate[vi]. To ensure accessible comparisons, standardized beta coefficients were also introduced. The impact of multiple office-holding was estimated through four linear regression models. As previously discussed, our aim was to explain variation in the share of preferential votes, hypothesizing that cumulards would receive more support. In the Belgian proportional system, there is more than sufficient variation in the dependent and independent variables due to the abundant number of candidates and party lists. On the contrary, a regression discontinuity design, occasionally suggested to study the electoral effect in France (Bach, 2012), is more appropriate in majoritarian single member districts where it isolates the effect in a competitive election between two potent candidates.

To assess the influence of multiple office-holding accurately, established control variables from previous electoral research were introduced in every model. In line with the discussion of the dependent variables, a detailed examination of all independent variables can be found in appendix B, accompanied with a brief overview here. Our first central variable, the effect of cumul, is divided in three categories based on the type of the local mandate: councilor-MPs, aldermen-MPs and mayor-MPs. This indicates that the candidate combined those two mandates before posing for re-election for either one. Incumbency refers to the practice where deputies seek re-election at the same tier of government, e.g. MPs that got elected in the previous cycle aim to renew their mandate. Additionally, a local background in national elections or a national background in local elections signifies that candidates currently hold an elected mandate at the municipal or regional level but pursue an additional mandate. Furthermore, we should note that in the last two models, national and local list bonus, the effect of incorporating at least one of such candidates was estimated on the collective result. Especially in municipal elections, the amount of dual mandate-holders was almost exclusively limited to one, hence it would be inappropriate to use the amount or share of cumulards on the list considering this could severely underestimate the potential effect.

Next, the explanatory models concerning the individual scores (national and local individual bonus models) were supplemented with four clusters of independent control variables. First, candidate characteristics such as age and gender were added. The latter, for example, can attract voters sensible to descriptive representation and the idea that women should vote for women (Thijssen & Jacobs, 2004; Thijssen & Sliwa, 2013). Second, we include institutional characteristics such as the parliament in which they are elected and the municipal size. It can be argued that Walloon MPs have a higher proportion of preferential votes because the constituencies for the regional elections are relatively small, and thus a closer link between voters and representatives leads to more personal voting. Also, candidates from larger communes have a larger local network and their local background is appealing to a larger group of voters (Put & Maddens, 2015). Third, mechanical effects are known to be highly impactful (Geys & Heyndels, 2003; Maddens et al., 2007). A position at the top or at the bottom of the

candidate list is notably visible in Belgian elections, which inevitably draws more votes. Fourth, the overall score of the party in the constituency also affects the personal result. It is reasonable to expect that a well-performing candidate list will automatically increase the individual result as well. On the other hand, control variables for list models (national and local list bonus) were less straightforward. Academic attention has recently shifted towards explaining preferential voting, due to societal developments leaving list or party list voting underexposed (Karvonen, 2004). Combined with the lack of information on individual candidates and the aggregate nature of the analysis, the number of control variables are limited. Previous work has attempted to explain the number of list votes based on detailed information of all candidates, for example the proportion of a certain occupational group or campaign expenses and geographical spread, but only found an impact of the amount of political office-holders (Maddens & Put, 2011). We could, therefore, argue that focussing on our central independent variables (the share of municipal councilors, national or regional representatives and multiple office-holders) would be sufficient. Nevertheless, we controlled for two additional factors in the national list model: the parliament to which the list was presented and the party strength at the previous elections[vii]. In the local list model, we checked for an effect of the municipal size. Although the party score at the previous elections would certainly influence the contemporary support, including this variable is problematic. The local party system is relatively unstable compared to the national one. New parties or local lists are often established before the elections, or existing organizations rename or re-invent themselves.

In each sample, two regression models were estimated. In the first models, we examined the impact of multiple office-holding on the electoral outcome while controlling for the aforementioned variables. The second models fitted the effect of incumbency (previous political experience at the same governmental level) and local ties, or national ties at the local level, holding the control variables constant. Consensus among electoral scholars indicates that these should increase the individual and collective performance (see supra). Therefore, the second model can be seen as a robustness check to evaluate the size of the cumul effect compared to the incumbency and local background effect. Limited positive effects found in previous studies, for example, may be attributed solely to the effect of holding a local mandate, and not to the effect of holding a local and national mandate (Foucault, 2006; François, 2006). Disentangling both enables us to assess whether accumulating mandates yields an additional electoral bonus. Both effects, however, could not be tested in the same model due to multicollinearity[viii]. Consequently, the coefficients were compared to assess the true impact of *cumul des mandats*.

Results

This contribution examines the electoral bonus of dual mandate-holding in Belgium. It expands on earlier research due to its inclusive perspective of electoral performance, which is divided between individual and collective benefits. Additionally, the effects are tested both at the national, regional and local elections. In each of those four samples (individual national bonus, individual local bonus, national list bonus and local list bonus), the effect of two linear model

will be discussed. First, the influence of combining offices on the electoral outcome is examined (model 1) and subsequently the effect of holding a national or local function is reviewed. To conclude, both effects are compared to estimate the additional bonus of *cumul des mandats*.

The general results reveal that multiple office-holding is indubitably a rewarding strategy. Individual candidates who have political experience in various governmental tiers are being rewarded, both at the national and municipal elections. Candidate lists who include these cumulards also perform better. However, even though cumul is advantageous in absolute terms, the effect is mostly comparable to the incumbency- or local/national ties effect and should therefore not be exaggerated.

Table 1 shows that councilor-, alderman- and mayor-MPs drew significantly more preferential votes at the national elections. The bonus for mayor-MPs is most prominent, considering it is twice as large as the effect for councilor or alderman-MPs. This seems to support our fifth hypothesis, which assumed mayors would receive the highest electoral bonus. The second model demonstrates that incumbency and a local background paid off as well. Incumbents, MPs who already held a national office prior to the elections, received more preference votes. The bonus for municipal councilors and aldermen was slightly smaller compared to the incumbency advantage. Conversely, the mayoral bonus was again almost twice as large. The impact of the control variables in both models is in line with our expectations. Walloon representatives drew more preferential votes and mechanical effects, especially being on top of the candidate list, was found to be extremely impactful. Candidates within a successful party list also received more individual votes.

As previously stated, the effect of dual office-holding should be examined in contrast with the effects of the second model. If the cumul-effect is comparable or smaller than the incumbency- or local ties effect, it can be mainly attributed to holding either a national or local mandate. In that case, it can be argued that cumul does not have an additional electoral bonus. If the cumul-effect is distinctly larger, combining elected offices does result into an electoral bonus.

Whether cumul des mandats results into an additional electoral bonus is dependent on the nature of the combination, as demonstrated by table 1. Municipal councilor and aldermen with a secondary national function, for example, are not rewarded for their mandate-mix. Even though their respective coefficients are positive in the second model, when compared to the effect of incumbency (national experience before the elections) or local background (currently holding a municipal office) one can only deduce that this accumulation hardly translates into an additional bonus. Consequently, when a former MP presents him or herself to the voter, this results into more preferential votes. Whether these MPs were also alderman or councilor seems to be irrelevant. Voters were not likely to provide extra rewards for that combination. Neither did they punish political cumul, as we did not found any negative or significantly lower coefficients in the second model. On the contrary, national representatives with a mayoral position did draw significantly more votes compared to incumbents or mayors separately. We

should, however, note that the difference between both coefficients only amounts to .04, which is rather limited. The evidence does support 1a, albeit minimal, and hypothesis 3.

[Table 1: national individual bonus around here]

Accumulating two public offices is also beneficial in municipal elections, as shown in table 2. A first glance at the table shows almost exclusively significant effects, which is primarily due to the large number of observations. To make an accurate assessment, it is advisable to look at the standardized effect sizes, not at the significance levels per se. Model 1 highlights that dual mandate-holding paid off for any local deputy, although the effect sizes gradually increase. Model 2 illustrates again that national legislators and local incumbents also significantly drew more preference votes within their commune. National experience was even more valuable than local experience as municipal councilor or alderman. The electoral surplus for mayors, however, was almost twice as high as the other local and national functions. Most control variables act as expected, such as list positions and party strength. We want to emphasize that in municipal elections, local and national positions prevail over purely mechanical effects, indicating that possibly personal vote-earning attributes are more rewarding in a local context. Female candidates, however, receive significantly less preferential votes. Not surprisingly, candidates in larger municipalities receive a smaller share of the preferential votes in their commune, probably due to the larger social distance, higher competition and more contending party lists.

The comparison of both models implies that the individual local bonus of *cumul des mandats* is limited (hypothesis 1b), similar to the national individual bonus. Councilors with a national mandate did not receive more preferential votes than MPs. Aldermen with a second function, on the other hand, did draw more votes than their local executive colleagues and their national colleagues. The electoral reward of this type of multiple office-holding outweighs the effect of single office-holders. Mayors with a parliamentary mandate were seemingly punished for their representative role. Compared to mayors, the bonus of mayor-MPs is 13% smaller. This indicates that mayors are rewarded for their local anchorage, more so than they are rewarded for national experience and status. Altogether, combining offices influences the individual results to a greater extent in municipal elections.

[Table 2: local individual bonus around here]

The collective benefit of including a dual mandate-holder on the national candidate list is sizeable, but only significant for the introduction of an alderman-MP and a mayor-MP (see table 3). Surprisingly, incorporating a national incumbent or municipal councilor did not enhance the overall result and suggests that one figurehead does not make the list. Indeed, the national party headquarter is known to coordinate list composition and strive to attract a broad variety of candidates, both geographically and characteristically (De Winter, 1988; Norris, 1997). It has to be considered that all parties attempt to balance the ticket and including one municipal councilor or one senior MP is hardly an asset, as presumably every list has at least

one. The presence of an executive local deputy conversely did positively reflect on the entire list.

National candidate lists, however, only benefit extra from cumul when they contain a mayor with parliamentary experience. This indicates limited support for hypothesis 2a. The effect of including a councilor-MP remains inexistent, whereas the size of the effect of an alderman-MP is cut in half compared to that of including an alderman. Mayors with a national mandate are the sole cumulards that have the ability to enhance the list score, even though the difference between the coefficients is also marginal. Another clue also points towards the limited influence of dual mandate-holding on the national collective performance: the R squared falls from 0.65 to almost 0.4 when comparing the second and first model. Close to half of the explained variance dissolves when estimate the impact of introducing double mandate-holders. It seems reasonable to conclude that party lists do not fare particularly well by trying to captivate a large slate of multiple office-holders, instead their efforts are better concentrated on persuading local deputies in general.

[Table 3: national list bonus around here]

Table 4 emphasizes that including a multiple office-holder, national representative or incumbent local deputy has a significant and substantial positive effect on the list score at the municipal elections. It should be noted that we excluded 11 candidate lists in the city of Antwerp because most of them were extreme outliers and highly influential for the model[ix]. Unlike all previous models, table 4 exposes a distinctive additional effect of every type cumul on the collective performance. The results are striking, especially for the inclusion of an alderman-MP and mayor-MP. The beta coefficients for the latter are almost double of including a single office-holder and provide clear support for hypothesis 2b. It is, however, remarkable that the R squared of the cumul-model is only a fraction of the explained variance of the second one. We believe that this might be caused by balance between the sample size and the amount of lists with a dual mandate-holder. The first model struggles to explain the electoral performance of many lists because the majority does not incorporate a dual officer, whilst most do include a former local officer.

[Table 4: local list bonus around here]

Discussion

Figure 1 offers a general overview of the eight models discussed above and compares the effect sizes of holding two mandates versus holding a single one. It shows the standardized coefficients and their 95% confidence intervals of the independent variables central to this study. Even though the aim was to facilitate comparing the effect of dual mandate-holding between the different linear models, the operationalization of cumul varies slightly. In the first two individual models it refers to exercising a national and local political function simultaneously, while it denotes incorporating at least one cumulard in the third and fourth list

model. Readers should consider this subtle difference when interpreting and extrapolating the subsequent results.

Firstly, it is crucial to stress that our results almost exclusively expose positive effects. Holding a local mandate, holding a national mandate or combining both, does enhance the overall electoral result, independent of its operationalization[x]. These results clearly support our hypotheses (H1a-H2b) and establish that multiple office-holding has an undeniable positive influence on the electoral performance of both candidates and lists in a flexible list system. On the other hand, the additional bonus of such a political mandate combination is rather ambiguous because the impact of cumul is in the majority of the cases quite comparable to the effect of holding either a local or a national mandate. Figure 1 highlights that the effect of dual mandate-holding seldom outperforms the effect of holding the same local office (comparing consecutive independent variables on the y-axis) or exercising a national function (represented by the vertical black line). To illustrate, mayor-MPs did receive more preferential votes at the national elections compared to ordinary mayors and compared to former members of parliaments as well, which suggests an electoral bonus. Two results stand out: mayors who simultaneously hold a seat in parliament experience the largest advantage and including a multiple office-holder seems to overall benefit the local candidate list.

The first two segments of the figure demonstrate that multiple office-holding does cultivate an individual electoral advantage, although the actual individual bonus is restricted to mayor-MPs in national elections and aldermen-MPs in municipal elections. This rather limited effect deviates from the generic expectation that combining several public offices is electorally beneficial (Knapp, 1991). Instead, our results point towards an important nuance, i.e. one political function is mostly equally profitable. Perhaps voters do not differentiate between several governmental tiers and evaluate general political experience as an advantage either way. Combined experience is apparently not rewarded[xi]. Furthermore, a dual office does not cause a backlash either, as was found in France (Foucault, 2006). It should be noted, however, that it was only counter-productive for *double-cumul*, a small proportion of the national representatives that occupies two local mandates. Mayor-MPs are the only ones who encounter a noticeable penalty in local elections for their accumulation, considering the effect of holding the position of a mayor on the electoral outcome is larger. This could indicate that local voters prefer local anchorage over national experience and expect their mayor to focus on their commune. The difference in effect sizes, however, is too limited to posit compelling conclusions. In reality, it is advisable for individual candidates to emphasize their political experience, as stressing a combination of multiple functions would not result in a substantial electoral boost.

[Figure 1: standardized effects around here]

The national collective electoral bonus can be best perceived as marginal, only including a former MP with a mayoral position draws more list votes. We presume that one multiple office-

holder does not make the list, but neither does a municipal or national representative, regardless of their name recognition or experience. In that regard, the results are exemplary for the significance of ticket balancing. A candidate list might not thrive on the basis of one figurehead, but requires a precarious balance to attract a large share of voters (Norris, 1997). This is not to say that candidate lists do not fare well by emphasizing local ties, embodied by local officers, or national experience. It is, however, remarkable that whether a list contains a local representative with an secondary national mandate seems almost irrelevant.

Multiple office-holding does provide municipal candidate lists with an apparent advantage over their competing lists in the same commune. Incorporating a notable national MP with a municipal political background does translate to a better electoral performance. Even more, the effect of the latter is substantially larger for every dual office type compared to holding either the same local position or having a parliamentary seat. It seems that cumulards are indeed the powerhouses in municipal elections.

Another prevalent finding is that mayors, and especially those with a national function, are overall key players. First of all, exercising the function of mayor or including one on the list has largest positive effect on the share of preference or list votes, consistently larger than the effect of any other local or national office. Only aldermen outperform mayors in the national list sample. Furthermore, mayors with parliamentary experience receive an individual electoral boost in national elections and have the potential to translate their popularity into a list bonus at the national and municipal elections. The evidence for hypothesis 3 is, therefore, overwhelming.

Conclusion

This paper provided an empirical test of the assumption that combining several elected political mandates leads to electoral benefits. We argued that multiple office-holding can not only be perceived as an attractive strategy for candidates, but can also be seen as rational decision for voters. Authors seem to agree that pursuing multiple mandates is a deliberate strategy for politicians who expect both direct, such as more financial resources and a wider network, and indirect gains, for example discouraging potential challengers (Foucault, 2006). Voters, on the other hand, base their voting choice partly on personal characteristics of political candidates. Two of those attributes, labelled personal vote-earning attributes, have been proven crucial to determine electoral support i.e. local embeddedness and incumbency. Both serve as information shortcuts and shape voting behaviour (Carey & Shugart, 1995).

The article made several important contributions to the literature on multiple office-holding. First, we have argued that multiple office-holding can be perceived as a strong PVEA because the combination of a local and national political mandate is essentially the combination of those aforementioned cues. To assure an accurate assessment of the electoral effect of multiple office-holding, we compared it with the effect of having either a local mandate or a national mandate prior to the elections. Second, although scholars have presumed an electoral advantage, its

operationalization has to date been restricted to individual results at national elections and tested in single member districts. Our paper, however, has established a four-fold approach. We estimated the effect both individually and collectively, and examined both national and local elections in a proportional flexible list system.

The results indicated that combining multiple offices indubitably enhances the individual and collective electoral performance, even though the additional bonus rather limited. Holding a national and local political mandate had a substantial positive impact on the amount of preference votes received and including such a dual office-holder on the candidate list also boosted the list score. Therefore, we classify cumul as a strong personal vote-earning attribute. We did not, however, found abundant evidence of an additional bonus compared to holding either a national or local mandate. This bonus was mostly dependent on the type of local office, i.e. mayor-MPs received extra votes compared to MPs or mayors and were able to translate it into an advantage for the entire list. Even more, the impact of this variant of cumul had, apart from one minor exception, the largest impact overall. Particularly striking is that incorporating a double mandate-holder had a sizeable and consistent effect on the electoral result of the municipal candidate list. Dual mandate-holders indeed seem to be 'party list locomotives', generating a competitive advantage for their own local list.

These results also established that accumulating offices pays off in a proportional list system. Additionally, we have successfully demonstrated that earlier research redundantly focussed on the electoral benefits of cumul for individual representatives in national elections, mainly neglecting the municipal context. This narrow empirical scope presumably shaped their overall conclusion: multiple office-holding has a positive, albeit limited electoral effect (Foucault, 2006; Ragouet & Phélippea, 2013). Nevertheless, we have raised some questions about the additional bonus too, as our analysis revealed that a dual office only occasionally outperformed a single one. We suggest, therefore, that cumul des mandats should not be regarded as the ultimate personal vote-earning attribute, but rather as an extension of public experience. Our results confirm that voters continue to appreciate political experience. Both a local base in national or municipal elections and a prior national position drew significantly more votes. It is doubtful that candidates and party lists would fare well by concentrating on dual mandate-holding instead of emphasizing local embeddedness and national savoir-faire.

Even though multiple office-holding is a recurrent practice in various European countries, public distrust has led to more restrictive regulation in France and Belgium, or even a complete ban in Hungary. This shift in public discourse, as a result of numerous political scandals, and negative coverage could affect the electoral bonus. Moreover, it can be argues that it has largely faded and openly combining offices could cause cumulards to lose votes instead of accumulating them. Since our design is cross-sectional, not longitudinal, we are unable to determine whether this process has already begun or when it first emerged. Furthermore, we only tested the general assumption that cumul would lead to an increased electoral score. Future research should examine the conditions under which the effect is most relevant. While

accumulating public offices was an undeniable competitive advantage in the past, it might as well develop into liability.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1. The national individual bonus, beta coefficients of the linear models with log % individual preferential votes within the constituency as dependent variable (N = 438).

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Bèta	*SE*	Bèta	*SE*
Age	0.022	*(.024)*	0.017	*(.024)*
Gender, Female	0.087*	*(.051)*	0.098*	*(.051)*
Brussels parliament	-0.486	*(.076)*	-0.479***	*(.076)*
Walloon parliament	0.145**	*(.071)*	0.158**	*(.071)*
Flemish parliament	-0.025	*(.059)*	-0.014	*(.058)*
Municipal size	-0.019	*(.024)*	-0.014	*(.024)*
First listposition	1.499***	*(.074)*	1.489***	*(.075)*
Second listposition	0.574***	*(.074)*	0.557***	*(.074)*
Third listposition	0.435***	*(.080)*	0.427***	*(.080)*
Last listposition	0.213	*(.133)*	0.163	*(.134)*
Party strength	0.450***	*(.029)*	0.440***	*(.029)*
Dual office: councilor-MP	0.222***	*(.057)*		
Dual office: alderman-MP	0.203***	*(.071)*		
Dual office: mayor-MP	0.433***	*(.071)*		
Incumbent MP			0.223***	*(.056)*
Municipal councilor			0.178***	*(.067)*
Alderman			0.166**	*(.080)*
Mayor			0.392***	*(.079)*
Constant	-4.752***	*(.071)*	-4.932***	*(.087)*
Adjusted R²	0.758		0.762	

Note: * p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Table 2. The local individual bonus, beta coefficients of the linear models with log % individual preferential votes within the municipality as dependent variable (N = 7464).

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Bèta	*SE*	Bèta	*SE*
Age	0.002	*(.006)*	-0.033***	*(.006)*
Gender, Female	-0.112***	*(.013)*	-0.074***	*(.013)*
First listposition	0.891***	*(.017)*	0.717***	*(.018)*
Second listposition	0.366***	*(.020)*	0.277***	*(.019)*
Third listposition	0.301***	*(.020)*	0.215***	*(.019)*
Last listposition	0.308***	*(.021)*	0.218***	*(.020)*
Municipal size	-0.211***	*(.006)*	-0.221***	*(.006)*
Party strength	0.492***	*(.006)*	0.443***	*(.006)*
Dual office: councilor-MP	0.296***	*(.059)*		
Dual office: alderman-MP	0.446***	*(.083)*		
Dual office: mayor-MP	0.602***	*(.093)*		
MP			0.304***	*(.037)*
Minister			0.423***	*(.120)*
Incumbent councilor			0.193***	*(.013)*
Incumbent alderman			0.392***	*(.016)*
Incumbent mayor			0.698***	*(.035)*
Constant	-3.365***	*(.010)*	-3.467***	*(.011)*
Adjusted R²	0.562		0.605	

Note: * p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Table 3. The national list bonus, beta coefficients of the linear models with log % list votes within the constituency as dependent variable (N = 66).

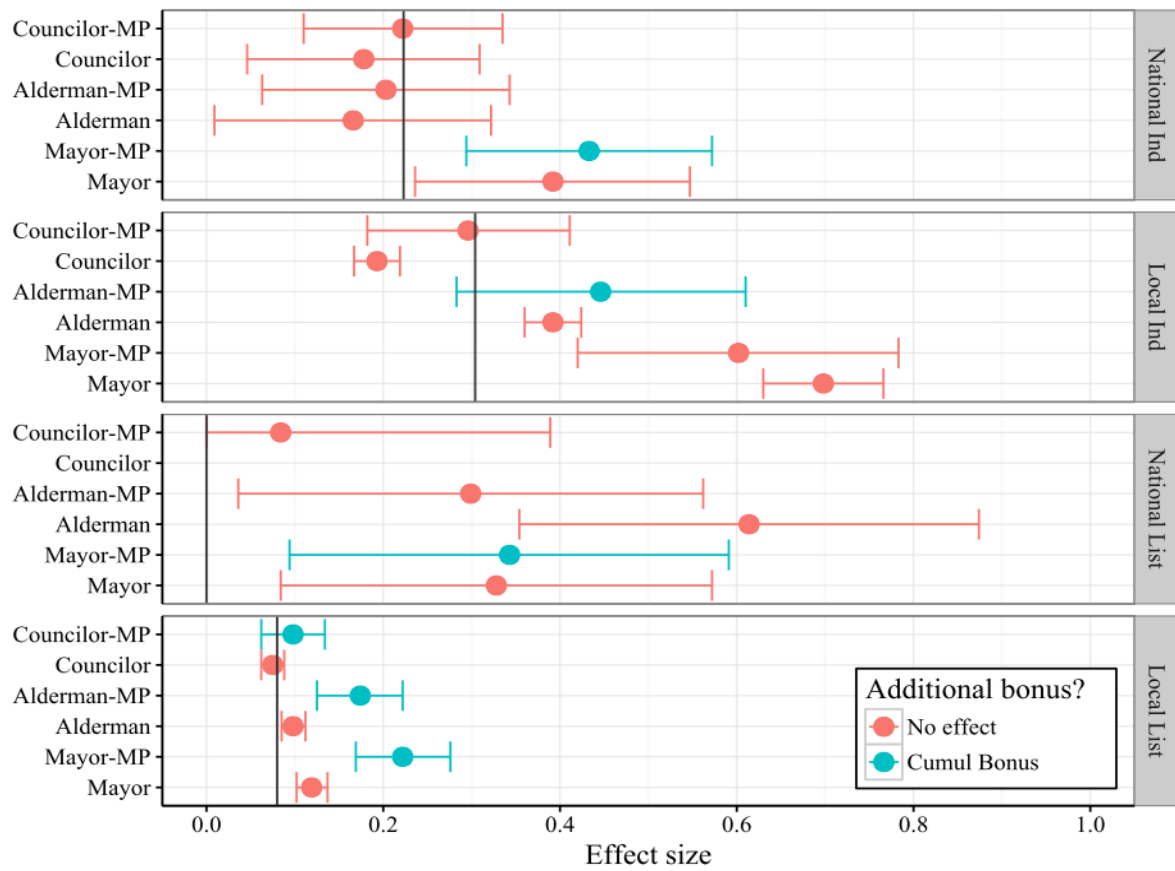| Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Bèta	*SE*	Bèta	*SE*
Federal chamber	-0.120	*(.116)*	-0.092	*(.096)*
Party strength 2010	0.246***	*(.065)*	0.230***	*(.050)*
List size	-0.096	*(.069)*	-0.059	*(.055)*
Dual office: councilor-MP	0.084	*(.152)*		
Dual office: alderman-MP	0.299**	*(.132)*		
Dual office: mayor-MP	0.343***	*(.124)*		
National incumbent			-0.005	*(.055)*
Municipal councilor			-0.468**	*(.230)*
Alderman			0.614***	*(.130)*
Mayor			0.328***	*(.122)*
Constant	-2.281***	*(.147)*	-2.219***	*(.222)*
Adjusted R²	0.424		0.654	

Note: * p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Table 4. The local list bonus, beta coefficients of the linear models with box-cox % list votes within the municipality as dependent variable (N = 1647).

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Bèta	*SE*	Bèta	*SE*
Municipal size	0.006	*(.006)*	0.010**	*(.006)*
List size	-0.057***	*(.007)*	-0.052***	*(.005)*
Dual office: councilor-MP	0.098***	*(.018)*		
Dual office: alderman-MP	0.174***	*(.025)*		
Dual office: mayor-MP	0.222***	*(.027)*		
National representative			0.079***	*(.010)*
Incumbent councilor			0.075***	*(.007)*
Incumbent alderman			0.098***	*(.007)*
Incumbent mayor			0.119***	*(.009)*
Constant	0.417***		0.312***	*(.005)*
Adjusted R²	0.153		0.490	

Note: * p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Figure 1: standardized effects and 95% confidence intervals of six independent variables in eight regression models (control variables excluded).

Appendix

Appendix A. Operationalization and descriptive analyses of the dependent variables before transformation in the four models/samples.

Dependent variable	Model/sample	Operationalization	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
National individual result	Model 1 (H1)	% of individual preference votes in the entire electoral constituency (province or district)	438	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.26
Local individual result	Model 2 (H2)	% of individual preference votes in the municipality	7464	0.06	0.05	0.00	0.63
National list result	Model 3 (H3)	% of votes for a certain list in the entire electoral constituency (province or district)	66	0.15	0.08	0.04	0.34
Local list result	Model 4 (H4)	% of votes for a certain list in the municipality	1658	0.18	0.13	0.00	0.88

Appendix B. Operationalization and descriptive analyses of all independent variables in the four models.

Independent variable	Operationalization	Mean*	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Model 1 (National individual bonus)					
Age	Age in election year	46.60	9.62	26	77
Gender, Female	Gender (ref: female)	0.41			
Brussels parliament	Elected in the Brussels regional parliament (ref: federal parliament)	0.20			
Walloon parliament	Elected in the Walloon regional parliament	0.16			
Flemish parliament	Elected in the Flemish parliament	0.37			
Municipal size	Number of municipal inhabitants	82518.50	114419.59	2771	510610
First listposition	First candidate on the ballot list	0.32			
Second listposition	Second candidate on the ballot list	0.22			
Third listposition	Third candidate on the ballot list	0.13			
Last listposition	Last candidate on the ballot list	0.03			
Party strength	% votes for the party list in the constituency	0.20	0.10	0.01	0.39
Incumbent MP	MP in the previous legislature	0.73			
Municipal councilor	Currently municipal councilor	0.40			
Alderman	Currently alderman	0.19			
Mayor	Currently mayor	0.23			
Dual office: councilor-MP	MP in previous legislature and currently councilor	0.32			
Dual office: alderman-MP	MP in previous legislature and currently alderman	0.15			
Dual office: mayor-MP	MP in previous legislature and currently mayor	0.18			
Model 2 (Local individual bonus)					
Age	Age in election year	47.69	12.39	18	88
Gender, Female	Gender (ref: female)	0.36			
First listposition	First candidate on the ballot list	0.18			
Second listposition	Second candidate on the ballot list	0.12			
Third listposition	Third candidate on the ballot list	0.11			
Last listposition	Last candidate on the ballot list	0.10			
Municipal size	Number of municipal inhabitants	26763	48730.05	952	502604
Party strength	% votes for the party list in the municipality	0.29	0.14	0.04	0.88
MP	Currently regional or federal MP	0.02			

Minister	Currently regional or federal minister	0.002			
Incumbent councilor	Councilor in the previous legislature	0.30			
Incumbent alderman	Alderman in the previous legislature	0.18			
Incumbent mayor	Mayor in the previous legislature	0.03			
Dual office: councilor-MP	Councilor in the previous legislature and currently MP or minister	0.01			
Dual office: alderman-MP	Alderman in the previous legislature and currently MP or minister	0.004			
Dual office: mayor-MP	Mayor in the previous legislature and currently MP or minister	0.004			
Model 3 (National list bonus)					
Federal chamber	Candidate list for the federal parliament	0.45			
Party strength 2010	% votes for the party list in the constituency in the previous election	0.14	0.06	0.04	0.29
List size	Number of effective candidates on the list	19.18	7.11	6	33
National incumbent	List contains at least one candidate who was MP or minister in the previous regional or national legislature	0.90			
Municipal councilor	List contains at least one candidate who is currently councilor	0.94			
Alderman	List contains at least one candidate who is currently alderman	0.76			
Mayor	List contains at least one candidate who is currently mayor	0.58			
Dual office: councilor-MP	List contains at least one candidate who was MP at the previous election and is currently councilor	0.76			
Dual office: alderman-MP	List contains at least one candidate who was MP at the previous election and is currently alderman	0.30			
Dual office: mayor-MP	List contains at least one candidate who was MP at the previous election and is currently mayor	0.38			
Model 4 (Local list bonus)					
Municipal size	Number of municipal inhabitants	22421	24985.18	952	248242
List size	Number of effective candidates on the list	25.41	6.33	7	51
National representative	List contains at least one candidate who is national or regional MP or minister	0.10			
Incumbent councilor	List contains at least one candidate who was councilor in the previous legislature	0.77			
Incumbent alderman	List contains at least one candidate who was alderman in the previous legislature	0.35			

Incumbent mayor	List contains at least candidate who was mayor in the previous legislature	0.15
Dual office: councilor-MP	List contains at least one dual officer who is MP or minister and was councilor in the previous legislature	0.04
Dual office: alderman-MP	List contains at least one dual officer who is MP or minister and was councilor at the previous legislature	0.02
Dual office: mayor-MP	List contains at least one dual officer who is MP or minister and was councilor at the previous legislature	0.02

*Note: For dummy or ordinal variables only the mean is shown, which equals the proportion

[i] This contribution focusses on vertical cumul, which implies the combination of elected representative functions along several levels of government, for example municipal councilors who are elected into parliament. The horizontal type describes the combination of one elected positions and other (semi-) public or private functions, but is disregarded in this paper.

[ii] For more information on the frequency of these national phenomena, see for example Karlsson, 2017, Navarro, 2009, Sandberg, 2013, or Várgnage, 2012.

[iii] A very specific combination, to our knowledge only allowed in France, where local councilors can be elected at the county and/or regional level on top of their national mandate. In so far that they can combine up to four directly elected political functions.

[iv] 25 representatives of the German-speaking community parliament are excluded due to a lack of information.

[v] The individual votes were comprised of the preferential votes, before the distribution of the list vote. The number of constituency votes equals the turnout, thus including invalid votes but excluding abstainment.

[vi] The box-cox transformation (lambda = 0.45) significantly improved the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. The log transformation was inadequate to meet those assumptions.

[vii] Introducing past electoral results did not pose a significantly large problem with auto-correlation (dwt = 1.173), presumably due to sufficient electoral swings within districts between elections.

[viii] For the last two models (see table 4) multicollinearity it was technically acceptable to create one single model with all variables (max vif = 3.74). To assure consistency, we opted to estimate the cumul-effect in two different models. Even more, the Bèta values and the differences between the effects remained almost exactly identical when one model was estimated. Therefore, our approach did not alter the results.

[ix] Antwerp is the biggest city in Flanders and is often the playground for a battle between national figureheads. Consequently the local lists contain much more notables compared to any other municipality. This was reflected in the analysis, where 7 out of 11 Antwerp lists were considered both outlier and influential. Therefore, we decided to exclude all Antwerp lists.

[x] The effect of including a municipal councilor on the national candidate list was excluded from the figure due to its negative effect to ensure clarity. Similarly, the lower bound of the councilor-MP effect confidence interval in the same model was also set to 0 (from -.22).

[xi] We performed alternative analyses with the percentage of preferential votes within the national and local candidate lists. The results were almost identical, especially concerning the effect of our central independent variables (local ties, incumbency and cumul). This suggests that holding several offices is electorally rewarding both within and outside the party. Cumulards withdraw votes from other party competitors (positive effect on the % of district votes), but also withdraw votes from party colleagues on the same list (positive effect on the % of list votes).