Local Candidate Dataset*

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Abstract

We present a candidate-level data set covering local (municipal and county) elections in Norway during the 1971 to 2019 period. The data set includes variables capturing candidates' background characteristics — age, gender, occupation, and place of residence — and variables capturing candidates' electoral success at different governmental tiers. We only rely on information from publicly available electoral lists to construct variables describing candidates' background. Our data set also includes district-level variables, such as party support and population size. In this note we give a detailed description of each variable included in the data set.

When using the data, please cite as follows:

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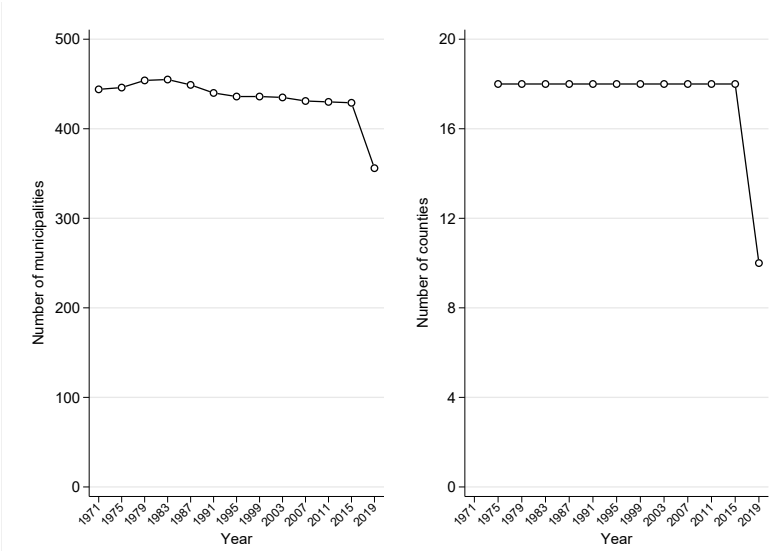
1 Introduction

Norway is a unitary state with three governmental tiers. Elections for the two sub-central tiers, i.e., municipalities (local governments; *kommuner*) and counties (regional governments; *fylkeskommuner*), are held simultaneously every fourth year in September. Our data cover candidates participating in these elections during the 1971-2019 period. The number of municipalities and counties have remained relatively stable over our sample period, as illustrated in Figure 1. However, before the most recent local elections the number of municipalities fell from 428 to 356. Similarly, the number of counties fell from 18 to 10.[1] Our data set includes 354,000 candidate-year observations, and 194,000 unique candidates. The data coverage is most complete for elections in the 2000s, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 1: Number of municipalities and counties over time



Note: This figure displays the number of municipalities and counties by election year.

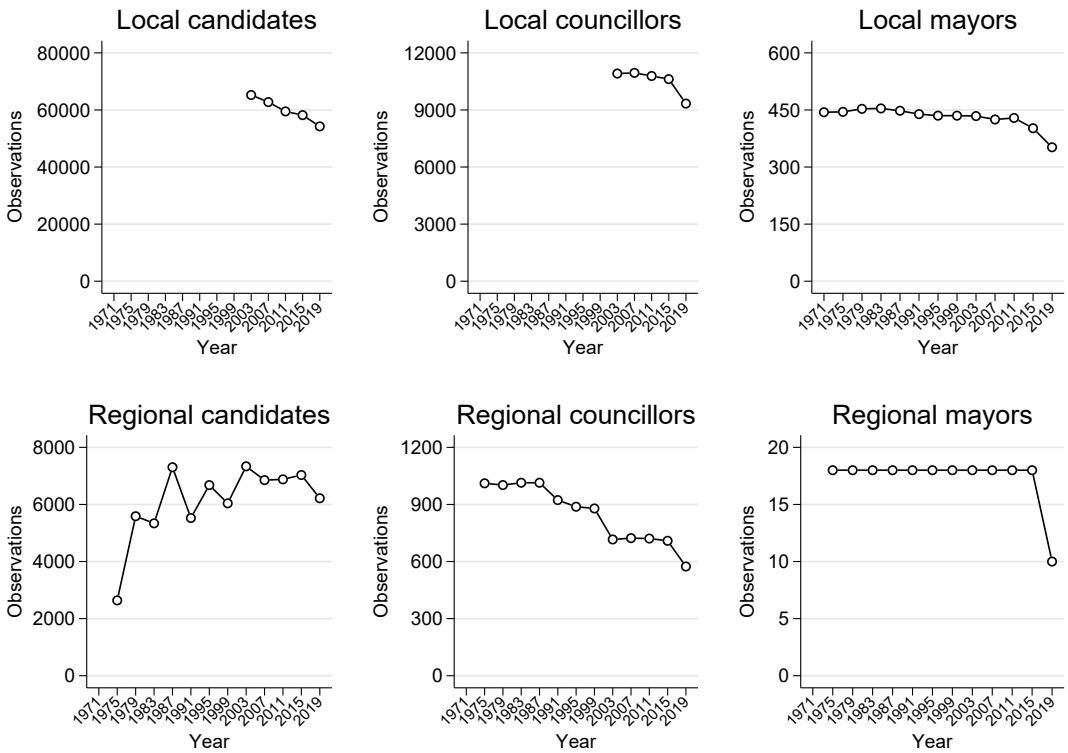
Data for municipal council elections are primarily taken from Fiva and Røhr (2018) and cover the 2003-2015 period (250,000 candidate-year observations). In addition, we collect data for the 2019 election (55,000 observations), data for Oslo for the 1975-1999 period (2,300 candidate-year observations), and all mayors covering the 1971-1999 pe-

[1]The capital, Oslo, has no regional government. The local government is responsible for both local and regional public services.

riod (3,600 candidate-year observations). Cirone et al. (2020) study political careers by merging these data with the Fiva and Smith (2017) data set.

Data for regional elections (county elections) cover the universe of elected candidates 1975-2019, all non-elected candidates in the 2003-2019 period, and about half of non-elected candidates in the 1975-1999 period (115,000 candidate-year observations).[2] These data were originally collected for the Fiva et al. (2019) study.

Figure 2: Data coverage over time by political office



Note: This figure displays the number of observations for candidates, councillors, and mayors, over time. The top-panel provides data for local (municipal) elections. The bottom panel provides data for regional (county) elections. Local candidate data from Oslo is included in the data set for the 1975-1999 period, but is omitted from the figure.

2 Municipal council elections

At the local level, the electoral system is open-list ("flexible-list") proportional representation (PR) where party seats are (since 2003) distributed using the Modified Sainte-Laguë

[2]Direct elections to the regional level were first held in 1975.

method. Citizens affect the election outcome by voting for a party list and by casting personal votes for particular candidates. Parties can opt to give certain candidates an increased share of the poll (25% of the total number of votes received by the party). Candidates with such a pre-advantage are listed at the top of the ballot in boldface (for further details, see Fiva and Røhr, 2018).

Candidates' pre-advantage status and the number of personal votes yield the personal poll that forms the basis of the within-party distribution of seats. More specifically, the poll for candidate i running for party l is given by:

$$Poll_{il} = \begin{cases} PersonalVotes_i & \text{if } i \text{ has no pre-advantage} \\ PersonalVotes_i + 0.25 \cdot PartyVotes_l & \text{if } i \text{ has a pre-advantage for list } l \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

The forcing variable in the regression discontinuity (RD) design of Fiva and Røhr (2018) is included in our data set and is given by:

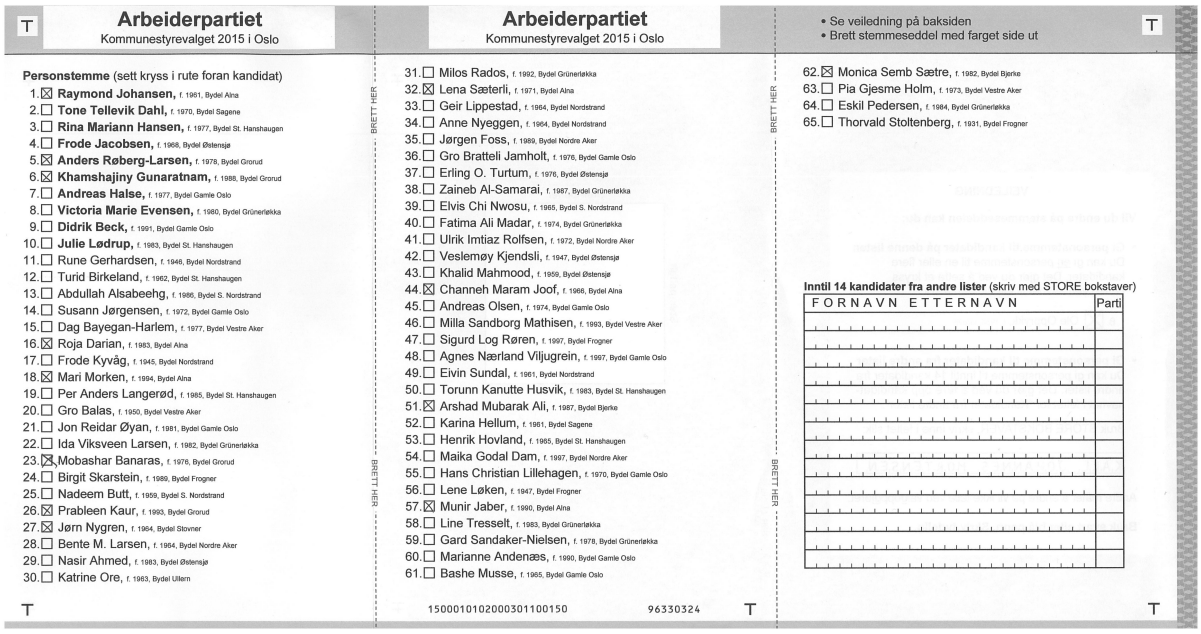
$$WinMargin_{il} = \begin{cases} \frac{Poll_{il} - Poll_l^{S_l+1}}{PartyVotes_l} & \text{if } R_{il} \leqslant S_l \text{ [elected candidates]} \\ \\ \frac{Poll_{il} - Poll_l^{S_l}}{PartyVotes_l} & \text{if } R_{il} > S_l \text{ [non-elected candidates]} \end{cases} \tag{2}$$

where R_{il} denotes candidates' (ex-post) list rank and S_l the number of seats party list l won.

On the ballot, political parties typically provides candidates' full name, year of birth and place of residence (as well as rank-position and whether the candidates' are given a pre-advantage). Figure 3 is an example ballot from *Oslo Arbeiderparti* from 2015.

Based on candidates year of birth and full name we construct variables for candidates' age and gender. Figure 4 displays the age of candidates running for municipal office in the 2003-2015 period in a histogram. Candidates' age varies from 18 to 104, with an average of 49.

Figure 3: Example of Ballot from Oslo Labor Party 2015



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Arbeiderpartiet
Kommunestyrevalget 2015 i Oslo

Personstemme (sett kryss i rute foran kandidat)

1. ☒ **Raymond Johansen,** f. 1961, Bydel Alna
2. ☐ **Tone Tellevik Dahl,** f. 1970, Bydel Sagene
3. ☐ **Rina Mariann Hansen,** f. 1977, Bydel St. Hanshaugen
4. ☐ **Frode Jacobsen,** f. 1968, Bydel Østensjø
5. ☒ **Anders Røberg-Larsen,** f. 1978, Bydel Grorud
6. ☒ **Khamshajiny Gunaratnam,** f. 1988, Bydel Grorud
7. ☐ **Andreas Halse,** f. 1977, Bydel Gamle Oslo
8. ☐ **Victoria Marie Evensen,** f. 1980, Bydel Grünerløkka
9. ☐ **Didrik Beck,** f. 1991, Bydel Gamle Oslo
10. ☐ **Julie Lødrup,** f. 1983, Bydel St. Hanshaugen
11. ☐ Rune Gerhardsen, f. 1946, Bydel Nordstrand
12. ☐ Turid Birkeland, f. 1962, Bydel St. Hanshaugen
13. ☐ Abdullah Alsabeehg, f. 1986, Bydel S. Nordstrand
14. ☐ Susann Jørgensen, f. 1972, Bydel Gamle Oslo
15. ☐ Dag Bayegan-Harlem, f. 1977, Bydel Vestre Aker
16. ☒ Roja Darian, f. 1983, Bydel Alna
17. ☐ Frode Kyvåg, f. 1945, Bydel Nordstrand
18. ☒ Mari Morken, f. 1994, Bydel Alna
19. ☐ Per Anders Langerød, f. 1985, Bydel St. Hanshaugen
20. ☐ Gro Balas, f. 1950, Bydel Vestre Aker
21. ☐ Jon Reidar Øyan, f. 1981, Bydel Gamle Oslo
22. ☐ Ida Viksveen Larsen, f. 1982, Bydel Grünerløkka
23. ☒ Mobashar Banaras, f. 1976, Bydel Grorud
24. ☐ Birgit Skarstein, f. 1989, Bydel Frogner
25. ☐ Nadeem Butt, f. 1959, Bydel S. Nordstrand
26. ☒ Prableen Kaur, f. 1993, Bydel Grorud
27. ☒ Jørn Nygren, f. 1964, Bydel Stovner
28. ☐ Bente M. Larsen, f. 1964, Bydel Nordre Aker
29. ☐ Nasir Ahmed, f. 1983, Bydel Østensjø
30. ☐ Katrine Ore, f. 1983, Bydel Ullern

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Arbeiderpartiet
Kommunestyrevalget 2015 i Oslo

31. ☐ Milos Rados, f. 1992, Bydel Grünerløkka
32. ☒ Lena Sæterli, f. 1971, Bydel Alna
33. ☐ Geir Lippestad, f. 1964, Bydel Nordstrand
34. ☐ Anne Nyeggen, f. 1964, Bydel Nordstrand
35. ☐ Jørgen Foss, f. 1989, Bydel Nordre Aker
36. ☐ Gro Bratteli Jamholt, f. 1976, Bydel Gamle Oslo
37. ☐ Erling O. Turtum, f. 1976, Bydel Østensjø
38. ☐ Zaineb Al-Samarai, f. 1987, Bydel Grünerløkka
39. ☐ Elvis Chi Nwosu, f. 1965, Bydel S. Nordstrand
40. ☐ Fatima Ali Madar, f. 1974, Bydel Grünerløkka
41. ☐ Ulrik Imtiaz Rolfsen, f. 1972, Bydel Nordre Aker
42. ☐ Veslemøy Kjendsli, f. 1947, Bydel Østensjø
43. ☐ Khalid Mahmood, f. 1959, Bydel Østensjø
44. ☒ Channeh Maram Joof, f. 1968, Bydel Alna
45. ☐ Andreas Olsen, f. 1974, Bydel Gamle Oslo
46. ☐ Milla Sandborg Mathisen, f. 1993, Bydel Vestre Aker
47. ☐ Sigurd Log Røren, f. 1997, Bydel Frogner
48. ☐ Agnes Nærland Viljugrein, f. 1997, Bydel Gamle Oslo
49. ☐ Eivin Sundal, f. 1961, Bydel Nordstrand
50. ☐ Torunn Kanutte Husvik, f. 1983, Bydel St. Hanshaugen
51. ☒ Arshad Mubarak Ali, f. 1987, Bydel Bjerke
52. ☐ Karina Hellum, f. 1961, Bydel Sagene
53. ☐ Henrik Hovland, f. 1965, Bydel St. Hanshaugen
54. ☐ Maika Godal Dam, f. 1997, Bydel Nordre Aker
55. ☐ Hans Christian Lillehagen, f. 1970, Bydel Gamle Oslo
56. ☐ Lene Løken, f. 1947, Bydel Frogner
57. ☒ Munir Jaber, f. 1990, Bydel Alna
58. ☐ Line Tresselt, f. 1983, Bydel Grünerløkka
59. ☐ Gard Sandaker-Nielsen, f. 1978, Bydel Grünerløkka
60. ☐ Marianne Andenæs, f. 1990, Bydel Gamle Oslo
61. ☐ Bashe Musse, f. 1955, Bydel Gamle Oslo

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• Se veiledning på baksiden
• Brett stemmeseddel med farget side ut

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62. ☒ Monica Semb Sætre, f. 1982, Bydel Bjerke
63. ☐ Pia Gjesme Holm, f. 1973, Bydel Vestre Aker
64. ☐ Eskil Pedersen, f. 1984, Bydel Grünerløkka
65. ☐ Thorvald Stoltenberg, f. 1931, Bydel Frogner

Inntil 14 kandidater fra andre lister (skriv med STORE bokstaver)

FORNAVN ETTERNAVN	Parti

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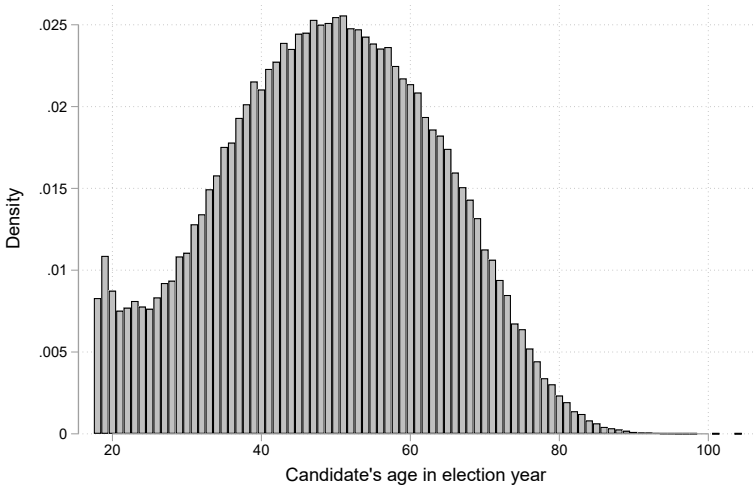
Note: This figure is adapted from Fiva and Røhr (2018) and shows the ballot paper from Oslo Arbeiderparti (Labor Party) for the 2015 election. The first ten candidates on the ballot are in boldface and hence have a pre-advantage. The ballot changes illustrated in the example yields personal votes for the check-marked candidates. To cast personal votes to candidates from a different party, those candidates' name and party has to be listed in the table to the bottom right. Source: https://groruddalslista.wordpress.com/

Figure 4: Candidates' age in municipal elections 2003-2019

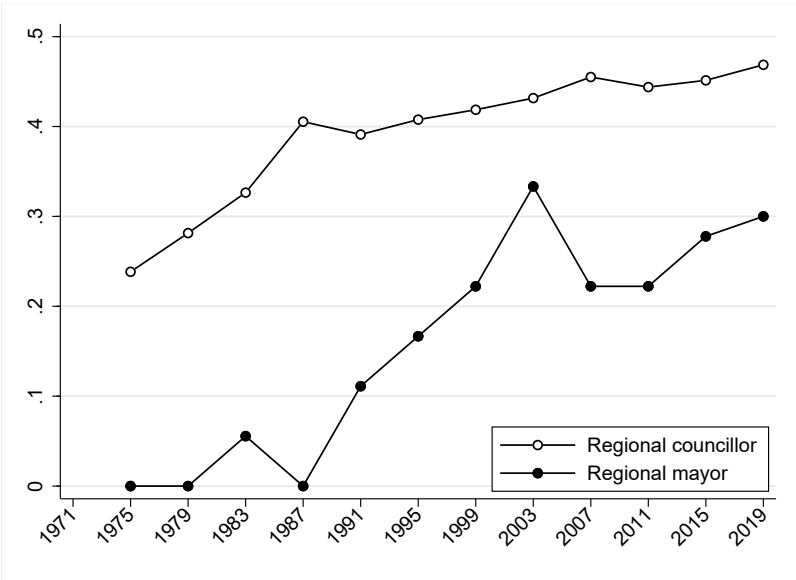


3 County council elections

Elections to the regional office are, like the local elections, decided by the Modified Sainte-Laguë method. Voters have, however, less scope to affect the selection of candidates. Up until 1999, a closed-list electoral system was being used.[3] Since 2003, voters have the opportunity to cast personal votes[4], but the switch to a *flexible list system* appears to have had negligible effect on candidate selection (Christensen et al., 2004). The current version of our data set allocates seats to candidates disregarding personal votes in the 2007-2015 period.[5]

Like for the municipal elections, we can construct variables capturing candidates age and gender using information provided on the ballot. Figure 5 illustrates that women are still underrepresented in Norwegian politics, in particular for higher offices, such as the mayoral position (*fylkesordfører*).

Figure 5: Women's representation in regional councils 1975-2019



[3]Candidates were assigned seats according to the ranking assigned them by their respective parties, but with one modification: 1/6 of the seats were reserved for candidates from municipalities with no seats once the other 5/6 of the seats had been assigned.

[4]To jump to the top of the list, a candidate needs to receive individual preference votes equivalent to 8% of their party's votes.

[5]We have requested these data from Statistics Norway and will update our data set when this information is available.

4 Code book

Candidate variables

- year: Year identifier
- pid_lcd: Personal identifier
- pid_nat: Personal identifier from Fiva and Smith (2017) data set (*pid*).[6]
- candidatename_std: Candidate's name cleaned and standardized
- candidatename_nat: Candidate's name from Fiva and Smith (2017) data set
- firstname: Candidate's first name
- middlename: Candidate's middle name
- lastname: Candidate's last name
- birthyear: Candidate's year of birth
- age: Candidate's age in election year
- female: Indicator variable for gender
- running_loc: Indicator variable for running for municipal election this year
- running_reg: Indicator variable for running for county election this year
- candrun_loc: Number of times candidate is running for municipal office in the dataset
- candwin_loc: Number of times candidate is elected for municipal office in the dataset
- candrun_reg: Number of times candidate is running for county office in the dataset
- candwin_reg: Number of times candidate is elected for county office in the dataset
- first_year: First year candidate is running for local office in the dataset
- last_year: Last year candidate is running for local office in the dataset
- first_year_loc: First year candidate is running for municipal office in the dataset
- last_year_loc: Last year candidate is running for municipal office in the dataset
- first_year_reg: First year candidate is running for county office in the dataset
- last_year_reg: Last year candidate is running for county office in the dataset
- candrun_nat: Number of times candidate is running for national office
- candrun_nat_firstyear: First year candidate is running for national office
- candrun_nat_lastyear: Last year candidate is running for national office
- candwin_nat: Number of terms serving as Member of Parliament (MP)
- candwin_nat_firstyear: First year candidate is winning national office
- candwin_nat_lastyear: Last year candidate is winning national office

[6] All variables below capturing information about national elections are from Fiva and Smith (2017). This dataset is available at `www.jon.fiva.no/data.htm`.

- canddeputy_nat_firstyear: First year candidate is elected as deputy MP (*vararepresentant*)
- canddeputy_nat_lastyear: Last year candidate is elected as deputy MP (*vararepresentant*)
- days_nat: Tenure in *Storting* measured in days (as of March 2019)

Variables specific to municipal council elections

- knr_loc: Municipality identifier based on the municipal election
- kname_loc: Municipality name
- cnr_loc: County identifier based on the municipal election
- cname_loc: County name
- party_loc: Candidate's party acronym in the municipal election
- partyname_loc: Candidate's party name in the municipal election
- rank_loc: Candidate's ex ante rank
- rankresult_loc: Candidate's ex post rank (after personal votes has been taken into account)
- candidatename_orig_loc: Candidate's name unedited
- elected_loc: Indicator variable for representation in municipal council
- preadvantage_loc: Indicator variable for being pre-advantaged (*forhåndskummulert*)
- personalvotes_own_loc: Personal votes from voters casting a party vote for candidate's party
- personalvotes_other_loc: Personal votes from voters casting a party vote for other party
- personalvotes_total_loc: Candidate's total personal votes
- preadvnvotes_loc: Additional "votes" from being pre-advantaged (25% of the total number of votes received by the party)
- mayor_loc: Indicator variable for becoming municipal mayor
- depmayor_loc: Indicator variable for becoming municipal deputy mayor
- executiveboard_loc: Indicator variable for becoming elected to municipal executive board
- party_preadvantage_loc: Number of candidates on list with a pre-advantage
- party_votes_loc: Number of party votes (*partistemmer*) for candidate's party
- totalvotes_loc: Total number of party votes (*partistemmer*) across all parties
- party_seats_loc: Number of seats for candidate's party
- sizeofcouncil_loc: Total number of seats in the municipal council
- directmayor_loc: Indicator variable for municipalities with direct mayoral elections

- pop_loc: Number of inhabitants in municipality
- poll_loc: Candidate poll in municipal election (see equation 1)
- electionmargin_loc: Distance (in ex ante rank position) to borderline elected/defeated
- pollborderlineelected_loc: Party list borderline elected poll (see equation 2)
- pollborderlinedefeated_loc: Party list borderline defeated poll (see equation 2)
- winmargin_votes_loc: Win margin in raw votes
- winmargin_loc: Standardized win margin (see equation 2)

Variables specific to county council elections

- knr_reg: Municipality identifier based on the county election
- cnr_reg: Election district/county identifier based on the county election
- cname_reg: Election distric/County name
- party_reg: Candidate's party acronym in the county election
- partyname_reg: Candidate's party name in the county election
- rank_reg: Candidate's ex ante rank
- rankresult_reg: Candidate's ex post rank (*only 2003*)
- candidatename_orig_reg: Candidate's name unedited
- kname_orig_reg: Candidate's hometown as listed on county election ballot
- occupation_reg: Candidate occupation as listed on county election ballot
- elected_reg: Indicator variable for representation in county council
- deputy_candidate_reg: Indicator variable for becoming deputy councilor (*only 2003*)
- mayor_reg: Indicator variable for being elected county mayor
- leveling_seat_reg: Indicator variable for geographical adjustment seat (*utjevnings-mandat*) (*1975-1999*)
- personalvotes_total_reg: Candidate's total personal votes (*only 2003*)
- party_seats_reg: Number of seats won in county council for candidate's party
- pop_reg: Number of inhabitants in election district/county

Variables describing issues with data

- only_elected_loc: Indicator variable for municipal election lists containing elected candidates only
- only_elected_reg: Indicator variable for county election lists containing elected candidates only
- inconsistency_candidate_loc: Indicator variable identifying inconsistencies between *win_margin_loc* and *elected_loc*

- inconsistency_list_loc: Indicator variable identifying inconsistencies between *win_margin_loc* and *elected_loc* for any candidate at the list where the candidate belongs
- inconsistency_list_reg: Indicator variable identifying any problem with the regional election list where candidate belongs
- missing_votes_candidate_loc: Indicator variable for missing personal votes for candidate
- missing_votes_list_loc: Indicator variable for missing personal votes for any candidate at list where candidate belongs
- missing_votes_municipality_loc: Indicator variable for missing personal votes in municipality-year where candidate runs
- missing_votes_candidate_reg: Indicator variable for missing personal votes for candidate
- missing_votes_list_reg: Indicator variable for missing personal votes for any candidate at list where candidate belongs
- missing_votes_county_reg: Indicator variable for missing personal votes in county-year where candidate runs

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