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14 Generational Patterns in Voters' Use of the Internet and Social Media in Finnish Parliamentary Elections 2003–2019

Tom Carlson and Kim Strandberg

Introduction and theory

The use of the Internet, and later social media, in election campaigns already has a 26-year history in Finland. The 1996 European Parliament elections that saw the first candidates testing the ground of online campaigning was the starting point of the digital age of Finnish elections (Carlson & Strandberg, 2012; Isotalus, 1998). At that time, optimistic visions of what potential impact the Internet would have in politically mobilising citizens were evident in the research field (e.g., Norris, 1999; Rheingold, 1993). Despite the early start and hopes of a promising future, the digital age of Finnish politics has been slow to mature regarding the extent to which voters have turned to online sources and applications for following and engaging with upcoming elections (Strandberg, 2013; Strandberg & Carlson, 2021).

Nevertheless, as Boulianne remarks (2015, 334, see also Kim and Amnå, 2015, 224), the true realisation of the mobilising potential of the Internet and social media might not occur until the first generation of “digital natives”—i.e., cohorts of citizens for whom the online realm is naturally ingrained in all aspects of life—comes of age. Accordingly, the time to take stock of the participatory potential of online technologies in election times is when both the technology and its user-base has sufficiently matured.

Two circumstances make Finland a suitable case for examining longitudinal trends regarding the development of voters' online engagement in election times. First, in an international comparison, Finland, like the other Nordic countries, had from early on (in late 1990s) a high percentage of Internet users (Norris, 2000). Second, the candidate-centred Finnish election system in parliamentary elections, where the voters must cast a vote on one particular candidate on fully open, and generally unranked party-lists (see Introduction chapter), brings about an extensive and diverse supply of election-related material on the web and in social media during Finnish elections. Besides the national campaigns by the parties, the numerous candidates (several hundred in each constituency) run decentralised individual campaigns at the district level (von Schoultz, 2018, 613–615) and frequently utilise the web and social media platforms in their personal campaigns targeted at the voters (Carlson & Strandberg, 2012; Strandberg, 2013). Moreover, voting advice applications (VAAs) on the web, that match voters with

candidates, were early introduced by Finnish news media (in 1999) and they are, in an international comparison, very widely consulted by the electorate (Garzia et al., 2014; Isotalo, 2021).

In this chapter, we trace the development of Finnish voters' use of online media in conjunction to parliamentary elections between 2003 and 2019 from a generational perspective and with a special focus on the youngest generations of voters, the digital natives (see also Chapter 6 on how different generations participate). First, in a longitudinal perspective, we observe *inter*-generational trends in the use of online media during election times by addressing the question whether younger generations of Finns have been more likely to turn to online sources during elections than older generations. Second, recognising that not all types of citizens may be equally likely to use online media to become politically informed and involved (see Andersen et al., 2021; Keating & Melis, 2017), we investigate *intra*-generational differences. Specifically, for each identified generation, we study the impact of resource- and motivation-based factors that drive Finnish citizens to use online media in election times. The central question here is whether the significant drivers for using the Internet and social media during elections within each generation differ across generations, in particular, between younger and older cohorts.

These questions relate to the theories of *reinforcement* and *mobilisation* coined by Norris already in the 1990s regarding political engagement within, and stemming from, online media (e.g., Norris, 1999). The reinforcement theory started out as a theory of how unequal access to the Internet would mean that typical resource-based entry barriers to offline participation – e.g., higher age, higher education and income, and being male – would replicate online (Jennings & Zeitner, 2003; Norris, 1999). Over time, as Internet access is near universal, the focus has turned to how the online realm is, more-or-less, just a new arena for the politically engaged and active citizens to continue being active in (Norris, 2001, 214; Strandberg, 2016).

The mobilisation thesis, alternatively, regards online media as having a potential to engage previously politically inactive or disengaged citizens by making information and engagement opportunities easily available and accessible (e.g., Keating & Melis, 2017; Norris, 1999; Oser et al., 2013). Essentially, online participation requires much less resources than offline participation and can act as a gateway into offline participation or increasingly blur the boundaries between offline and online participation (Hirzalla et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2017). As the web has developed into the current community-driven, sharing and collaborative social media era – what is commonly labelled as a transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 – the mobilising potential of the Internet is argued to have become even stronger (e.g., Xenos et al., 2014).

A central difference between Web 1.0 and 2.0 is that inadvertent exposure to political information and content happens much easier in social media than it did in the early days of the Internet (Keating & Melis, 2017, 879; Strandberg, 2013, 1332–1334). Such exposure can trigger an initial interest in politics, induce more seeking of political information and even spark engagement among citizens who might never have sought any political information actively themselves. Another key distinction of social media that is often cited in the literature (e.g., Keating &

Melis, 2017, 879; Strandberg, 2013; Xenos et al., 2014) is the ease through which citizens can become content creators and in other ways take part in online expressive participation which fosters their capacity for other forms of participation (Kim et al., 2017, 902–903). So, it has become easy in the current social media era to (a) create political content and share it onwards and (b) for others in ones' social media network to be exposed to such content and potentially start a mobilising process.

Coinciding with the evolution of the Internet is the coming of age of the first “net generation”, i.e., the now young adults who grew up with the Internet as a natural part of their everyday life. This means that whereas the Internet initially was a new medium in which to do digital versions of “old things”, the offline and online distinction is essentially irrelevant for today's young adults since the online world is deeply ingrained in their daily lives (Kim & Amnå, 2015). Keating and Melis (2017, 80), thus, argue that the current generation of youth is the first to truly reflect the mobilising potential of the Internet and social media. This is echoed in a recent major study by Andersen et al. (2021) dealing with generational differences regarding exposure to political information in legacy news media and social media and the effects of such exposure on political involvement. Departing from a cohort perspective, Andersen et al. (2021) point out that different generations not only have experienced different societal changes and political events in their formative stages of life; they have also been socialised into different patterns of media use during those stages:

While older generations have been socialized to use more traditional media outlets to access political information, younger generations have been socialized to use new platforms, particularly social media sites, to access this information [...]. The digital information age is likely to influence all generations but is perhaps more accessible and appealing to the youngest generations.

(Andersen et al., 2021, 25)

In their panel study of Danes, Andersen et al. (2021, 46–47), indeed, find that young generations (Millennials and the youngest cohort, Generation Z), particularly during election times, are more exposed to political content on social media than older generations (Traditionalists, Baby Boomers and Generation X) which, in comparison, use traditional political news media (offline or online) to a higher extent. This speaks to the cohort perspective but possibly also to a life-cycle perspective stating that people change their media habits and turn more to news media as they get older and their life situations change (Andersen et al., 2021, 48). Of course, as their data, collected in 2014/2015, is not truly longitudinal, life-cycle effects are hard to fully discern.

In this chapter, the first part of the empirical exploration analyses the Finnish case from a cohort perspective. We examine longitudinally whether young generations of Finns use online sources to follow elections to a higher extent than older generations. Furthermore, we also investigate whether the generational gap between younger and older generations of Finns in the use of online sources to follow elections is, over time, wider regarding social media content (Web 2.0) than traditional web content (Web 1.0).

Turning to the question whether the Internet and social media in a generational perspective equalises the exposure to and use of political and election-related information by making resource- and motivation-based drivers less relevant, studies provide mixed evidence. Regarding resources, findings indicate that they lack significance in explaining a high level of use of the newest social media platforms—i.e., those that the youngest generations use the most (e.g., Keating & Melis, 2017; Koc-Michalska et al., 2014; Strandberg & Carlson, 2017). Concerning motivation, a study by Keating and Melis (2017), examining political online engagement among a young cohort of Britons (aged 22–29), showed that socio-demographic characteristics and resources (gender, education, ethnicity and socio-economic status, SES) are not significant drivers when a central motivational factor, political interest, is added to the predictive model. Hence, although resources do not drive online engagement among young adults, which would support the mobilisation thesis, there is still an intra-generational difference considering the impact of political interest for being politically engaged online. The importance of political interest for engaging with politics online is also demonstrated in the study by Andersen et al. (2021) that examined the impact of three types of political engagement (political interest, internal political efficacy, and political knowledge) on exposure to political content on social media. They found that political interest, and efficacy, predicts more exposure to political content on social media for the youngest cohort (Generation Z) and for one old generation, the Baby Boomers, but interestingly not for the second youngest cohort, the Millennials (Andersen et al., 2021, 51).

Drawing on these observations, the final part of the empirical examination of the Finnish case first explores whether socio-economic resources are associated with higher use of online sources within older Finnish generations, but not within younger generations. Second, we study whether political interest is less associated with a higher use of online sources to follow elections within younger generations, compared to older Finnish generations. Finally, we examine whether the positive impact of political interest on the use of online sources to follow elections among Generation Z citizens is lower regarding social media content (Web 2.0) than traditional web content (Web 1.0).

Longitudinal trends

The analyses are broken down according to the generations that respondents belong to in order to explore generational patterns of election-related online media use. Based on Andersen et al. (2021, 40), we coded generations according to birth years as follows: Generation Z: those born in 1995 and later, Millennials: 1980–1994, Generation X: 1965–1979 and the two oldest generations—Baby Boomers (1945–1964) and Traditionalists (1922–1944) merged into a single category. The data is from the FNES datasets from 2003 to 2019 (see Technical appendix). The operationalisation of the two dependent variables, Web 1.0 use and Web 2.0 use, is done by using standardised sum-indices for a range of online activities; these are presented in Table 14.1.

Table 14.1 Operationalisation of dependent variables

<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Survey items</i>
Web 1.0 use (0–1) (2003–2019)	How much did you use various media outlets to follow the upcoming elections? (a) Online election news; (b) websites of candidates and parties; (c) voting advice applications (VAAs); (d) blogs (2007 and onwards).
Web 2.0 use (0–1) (2011–2019)	How much did you use various media outlets to follow the upcoming elections? (a) Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter; (b) online videos about candidates or parties, for instance on YouTube.

Each item in the dependent variables was coded as 1 for having done the activity either “quite much” or “very much” and as 0 for not having done it at all or “very little”. These items were then summarised and standardised by taking the mean score of the included items. Table A1 and A2 in the chapter Appendix provides descriptive statistics regarding the dependent as well as the independent variables. Admittedly, the operationalisations of the dependent variables—focusing solely on following upcoming elections for gaining information—are simplified measures of using the web and social media in election times. There are, of course, many other ways to use the web and social media that have political relevance (e.g., Agre, 2002; Strandberg & Carlson, 2017, 84), but the FNES has not asked about such activities. Nonetheless, seeking information is often seen as a key part of online participation with links to other expressive forms of online participation as well as to offline engagement (e.g., Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013; Hirzalla et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2017).

We begin our analyses of longitudinal trends by observing how Finnish voters’ use of the Internet and, in later elections, social media for following upcoming elections has grown over time according to the generations identified earlier. Figure 14.1 shows the development for extensively using the first generation of Internet applications (online news, blogs, candidate/party websites, and VAAs) between the 2003 and 2019 elections.

It should be noted that the trend line for Generation Z starts from the 2015 election since those citizens were under the age of 18 until then (the FNES data only includes citizens 18 years or older). Figure 14.1 shows that a steady increase in the use of the Internet for following the upcoming elections has occurred over time in Finland. The average share of Finns using the web actively among all four generations has risen from 9 percent in 2003 to 52 percent in 2019. Regarding the generational development, the use has grown the fastest among the youngest citizens, that is, Generation Z followed by the second youngest cohort, the Millennials. Almost three-quarters of the Finns belonging to Generation Z used the Internet actively to follow the 2019 election. The individual application that has grown the most in popularity is the voting advice applications (VAAs), whereas visiting candidate/party websites has grown the least in use (chapter Appendix, Table A1).

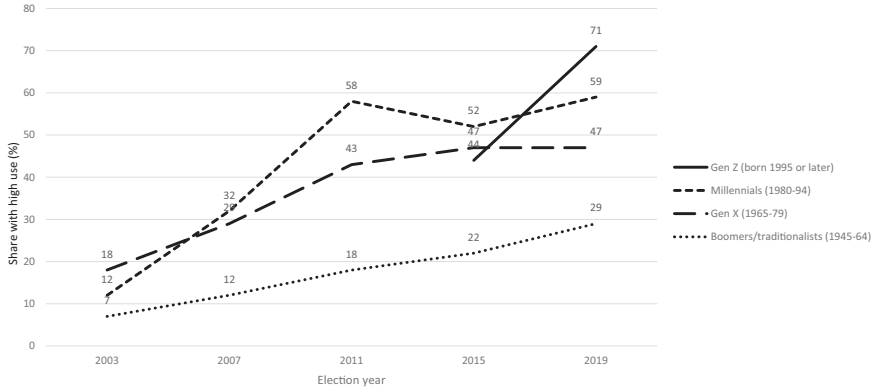


Figure 14.1 Development of using Web 1.0 applications for following the Finnish parliamentary elections, 2003–2019 (percentage share within each generation having used Web 1.0 quite or very much).

Source: Compiled by authors from FNES data for each year.

In sum, younger generations of Finns use online sources to a higher extent than older generations do. For both the Millennials and Generation X, the growth seems to have tailed off since 2011 whereas the share of Boomers/Traditionalists using the web is still increasing steadily into 2019. The generational gaps have grown over time so that there is, in 2019, a gap of 12 percentage points between Generation Z and Millennials, a 12-point gap from Millennials to Generation X and a further 18-point gap from Gen X to the Boomers and Traditionalists. The range of use between Generation Z and Boomers/Traditionalists is 42 percentage points.

Figure 14.2 traces the corresponding longitudinal trends for the use of social media for following upcoming elections. Here, the FNES data allow us to observe trends from the 2011 elections and forward.

The patterns for using social media, depicted in Figure 14.2, are rather similar to those of using Web 1.0 applications albeit the overall share of citizens using social media is smaller. The share of Finns using social media extensively to follow upcoming elections has risen from just below 10 percent in 2011 to almost 37 percent in 2019. The rate of growth is similar for the two youngest generations and slightly slower for Generation X and the Boomers/Traditionalists. Over half of the Generation Z citizens and nearly half of the Millennials actively used social media to follow the 2019 election. One-third of the Generation X citizens used social media extensively whereas only 13 percent of the Boomers and Traditionalists did so. The gap between Generation Z and Millennials is only 6 percentage points. The gap between Millennials and Generation X is 14 points and the gap between Generation X and the Boomers/Traditionalists is 20 points. The overall range is 40 percentage points from Generation Z to the Boomers/Traditionalists. The general growth in social media use is bigger between 2015 and 2019 than it was between 2011 and 2015. This is likely because the use of Facebook for following elections had surged

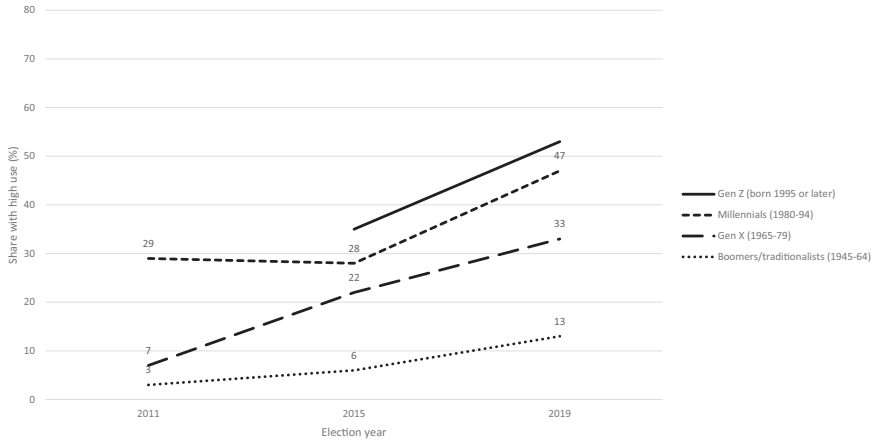


Figure 14.2 Development of using Web 2.0 applications for following the Finnish parliamentary elections, 2011–2019 (percentage share within each generation having used Web 2.0 quite or very much).

Source: Compiled by authors from FNES data for each year.

leading up to the 2011 election (see Strandberg, 2016) and no new social media application became popular until Twitter and Instagram gained popularity.

Wrapping up the longitudinal trends, it is evident that the Finnish electorate is increasingly using digital media when seeking election-related information. The youngest generations lead this development already in the Web 1.0 era and continue to do so in the Web 2.0 era. The intergenerational gaps are similar for both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 use. Nevertheless, in the two youngest generations of Finns, approximately half of the citizens did not extensively use social media to follow the elections in 2019 (47 percent in Generation Z and 53 percent among the Millennials). Accordingly, in the subsequent section, we shift focus to intra-generational patterns in the Finnish electorate by examining individual-level predictors of actively using Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 applications in election times.

Explanatory analyses

In the explanatory part of our analyses, we focus, besides the generational factor, on three types of potential drivers of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 engagement in conjunction with the 2019 Finnish parliamentary elections: (1) resources, (2) political motivation and, as a control variable, (3) political activity. We chose to focus on the 2019 election since both the medium itself and the youngest generations of users has matured sufficiently by that point in time. Resources are gender, education level and self-identified social class.¹ Political motivation is here measured with political interest (Likert scale from 0 to 1), but we also include internal political efficacy as a control variable (Likert scale 0 to 1). The questionnaire items in the

FNES 2019 are rather limited when it comes to political activity and we, thus, only use one item, which concerns how regularly respondents discuss politics in their everyday life. Table A2 in the Appendix provide detailed information about the independent and control variables. This is explored by running two linear regression analyses, one for Web 1.0 and one for Web 2.0 (Tables 14.2 and 14.3, respectively). These analyses are carried out both for all Finnish generations combined and separately for each generation. Table 14.2 presents the findings regarding Web 1.0 use.

The model for all generations together in Table 14.2 shows that belonging to a younger generation is, net of all other factors, a strong driver of using the Internet extensively to follow the upcoming elections in the Finnish case. It is, however, noteworthy that the number of respondents in Generation Z is rather low ($n = 106$). Having a high political interest and regularly engaging in political discussion in everyday life are also strong predictors. Having a higher level of education is also a significant factor whereas gender, social class, and political efficacy are insignificant factors. The fact that belonging to a younger generation and that only one resource-based predictor (education) was significant corroborates the mobilisation thesis in terms of resources (for a similar finding, see Strandberg & Carlson, 2017). On the other hand, the importance of a strong political interest and regularly engaging in political discussion indicate a motivation-driven reinforcement.

When we separate the regression analyses per generation, we find that using the web for seeking information in election times is entirely driven by motivation (political interest) and political activity (discusses politics) for the two youngest cohorts of Finns, i.e., Generation Z and the Millennials. In addition to political interest and activity, education level and social class matter in Generation X and education level for Boomers/Traditionalists. Interestingly, thus, resources only matter for older generations of Finns, whereas the impact of political motivation is higher among the youngest generations. Still, an interesting pattern is evident: in Finland, using the web politically appears to erode typical resource-based barriers to entry among the generations that use the web most frequently in their daily lives (see also Koc-Michalska et al., 2014; Strandberg & Carlson, 2017, 102). Among the Finnish generations who matured politically before the internet-era arrived, using the Internet politically is related to resources that previously also gated entry into politics such as education and social class (see also Anduiza et al., 2012; Strandberg, 2013).

We continue our explanatory analysis by focusing on the predictors of using social media extensively in conjunction to the 2019 parliamentary elections. Table 14.3 demonstrates that resource-related factors lack importance as drivers of using social media for seeking election-related information. This goes for all Finnish generations together and for the separate generations, except for the oldest cohort where a higher education level has a small but significant effect.

Another important finding is that political interest is not a significant driver of using social media actively prior to the elections for the young adults belonging to Generation Z. So, while political interest strongly predicted the use of Web 1.0 among Generation Z citizens, it lacks significance for Web 2.0 use. Nevertheless, regularly discussing politics is a strong and significant predictor for Generation Z suggesting that the politically active citizens within Generation Z are also likeliest

Table 14.2 Linear regressions predicting Web 1.0 use in the 2019 Finnish parliamentary elections

	<i>All</i>		<i>Generation Z</i>		<i>Millennials</i>		<i>Generation X</i>		<i>Boomers/Trad.</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>
Gender (Male)	-0.02	0.02	-0.11	0.07	-0.07	0.05	0.03	0.05	-0.00	0.03
Education level	***0.13	0.06	-0.00	0.20	0.06	0.14	**0.20	0.14	***0.16	0.09
Social class	0.02	0.05	0.13	0.14	-0.07	0.10	†0.10	0.10	-0.02	0.07
Political interest	***0.29	0.05	**0.37	0.19	***0.45	0.11	**0.24	0.13	***0.28	0.07
Political efficacy	0.01	0.04	0.07	0.15	-0.01	0.10	-0.04	0.09	0.03	0.06
Discusses politics	***0.18	0.05	*0.21	0.37	**0.19	0.11	**0.19	0.11	***0.18	0.07
Generation Z	***0.25	0.04								
Millennials	***0.24	0.03								
Generation X	**0.15	0.03								
Constant	***-0.33		0.13		-0.02		**_-0.26		***_-0.29	
R ²	0.33		0.34		0.32		0.25		0.22	
N	1,350		106		290		328		623	

† $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Note: The dependent variable and the predictors are standardised scales between zero and one. Predictors: gender: 0 = woman, 1 = man; education level: scale 0–1 with three steps where 0 indicates only compulsory level education and 1 indicates a university or applied university level degree; social class: scale 0–1 with five steps ranging from working class to upper class; political interest: scale 0–1 with four steps with 1 indicating respondent having a very high interest in politics; political efficacy: scale 0–1 with four steps where 1 indicates a very high internal political efficacy; discusses politics: scale 0–1 with five steps where 0 means that the respondent never discusses politics and 1 means discussing politics on daily basis; generations: the reference category is Boomers/Traditionalists.

Table 14.3 Linear regressions predicting Web 2.0 use in the 2019 Finnish parliamentary elections

	<i>All</i>		<i>Generation Z</i>		<i>Millennials</i>		<i>Generation X</i>		<i>Boomers/Trad.</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>
Gender (Male)	0.01	0.02	-0.12	0.09	-0.04	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.03	0.03
Education level	0.02	0.06	-0.09	0.24	-0.10	0.15	0.03	0.13	**0.15	0.07
Social class	-0.00	0.05	0.10	0.17	0.04	0.11	0.04	0.10	-0.06	0.06
Political interest	***0.21	0.05	0.11	0.23	***0.25	0.12	**0.24	0.12	***0.19	0.06
Political efficacy	-0.04	0.04	0.04	0.18	*-0.13	0.11	-0.01	0.09	-0.06	0.05
Discusses politics	***0.23	0.05	***0.41	0.23	***0.38	0.12	***0.23	0.11	**0.14	0.05
Generation Z	***0.25	0.04								
Millennials	***0.30	0.03								
Generation X	***0.15	0.03								
Constant	***-0.27		0.21		0.01		*-0.24		***-0.16	
R ²	0.26		0.21		0.26		0.19		0.09	
<i>N</i>	1,350		106		290		328		623	

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Note: see note to Table 14.2 for the construction of predictors.

to use social media politically. Political interest and regularly discussing politics are otherwise the strongest predictors for all generations together and within all specific generations, except for Generation Z where political interest did not matter.

In sum, in Finland, the Web 2.0 era has continued the mobilising trend of the Web 1.0 era regarding the lack of importance for resource-based factors in predicting a high use of social media for seeking election-related information. However, the political motivational and activity-related factors of the Web 1.0 era remain important in the Web 2.0 era, too.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined how different generations of Finnish voters use the Internet and social media in conjunction with parliamentary elections between 2003 and 2019. As mentioned earlier, the Finnish case is characterised by an early reached high level of societal Internet penetration and an abounding supply of election-related content in election times, much due to the election system with numerous candidates running personal campaigns at the constituency level, also online. Conceivably, this would give Finnish voters a strong incentive to monitor and consult online election-related material during campaigns. In this study, we were especially interested in how the youngest generations of Finns—Millennials and particularly Generation Z—have turned to online sources to follow upcoming elections, compared to older generations. Besides observing such inter-generational trends, we also provided an intra-generational analysis that shed light on what drives different generations to seek election-related online content in Finland. The central finding from the inter-generational comparison of the Finnish case is that the young generations over time use both the Internet and social media in election times to a considerably higher extent than older generations. This makes perfect sense from a cohort-perspective since Millennials have grown up with the web and Generation Z with social media as natural parts of their daily lives. Thus, when seeking information on elections, parties and candidates, the low-cost online realm is where young Finnish voters go.

Regarding the drivers of seeking election-related information online, the intra-generational analyses of the Finnish case support partly the optimistic mobilisation thesis and partly the pessimistic reinforcement perspective. Compared to the pre-internet era, where social and economic resources were a notable entry barrier into political engagement (e.g., Verba et al., 1995), our findings show that a high use of online media in election times is not determined by being male, better-off and highly educated within the young generations (for similar findings, see, e.g., Keating & Melis, 2017). This speaks for the mobilisation thesis. However, assessing the impact of resources for the youngest citizens is tricky since resources such as education level and social stratification tend to manifest later in the life cycle.

Concerning the role of political engagement for seeking election-related content online, on the other hand, the Finnish case supports the reinforcement thesis. For the use of both conventional web content and social media content, political interest and activity are key predictors across as well as within generations. Thus, the

main drivers of reinforcement remain intact even in the digital era, also within the young cohort: young Finnish voters go online to follow elections if they are already interested in politics and are politically active in their everyday life. Regarding the use of social media, political interest was not a significant driver for the youngest generation of Finns but being politically active still had a strong explanatory impact. This could be due to the youngest citizens not seeing their interest for societal matters as strictly “political” in the traditional sense (see Chapter 6 as well), or it could also be a life-cycle effect with an increasing political interest as their life situations change further ahead.

It would, however, be premature to draw the general conclusion that young generations’ engagement with online media and content during election times is solely driven by political interest/activity and not at all by social background and resources. As noted by Keating and Melis (2017, 891), during adolescence, young people’s political interest, attitudes and behaviours are formed under socialisation processes where socio-demographic factors are central. Such complex processes are however hard to capture and operationalise into simple predictors. Finally, it should be noted that our analysis of the Finnish case has not distinguished between different ways of using digital media. As others (e.g., Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013; Keating & Melis, 2017) have noted, online expressive engagement that is not oriented towards traditional political institutions and that does not represent traditional forms of political participation is a primary *modus operandi* of social media. It is, thus, likely that there are clear inter-generational differences not only in the degree of using social media in politics but especially in terms of *how* it is used.

Note

- 1 We also tested using household income instead of self-identified social class, but that variable unfortunately suffered from a large share of missing data and could not be used.

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Appendix

Table 14.A1 Dependent variables' indicators, 2003 to 2019 Elections (average on scale 0 to 1 where 1 equals highest level of u)

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>2003</i>		<i>2007</i>		<i>2011</i>		<i>2015</i>		<i>2019</i>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.dev.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.dev.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.dev.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.dev.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.dev.</i>
Web 1.0 use										
Online election news	.06	.24	.12	.32	.26	.44	.29	.45	.29	.45
Party/candidate websites	.05	.21	.06	.24	.09	.28	.08	.27	.11	.31
VAAAs	.07	.25	.13	.33	.18	.38	.22	.41	.31	.46
Blogs	n.a.		.02	.15	.05	.22	.05	.22	.05	.22
Web 2.0 use										
Social media	n.a.		n.a.		.09	.29	.13	.34	.25	.43
YouTube	n.a.		n.a.		.03	.27	.07	.26	.13	.33
<i>N</i>	1,270		1,422		1,298		1,587		1,598	

Table 14.A2 Independent variables, the 2019 Elections
(share of respondents per category, N = 1,598)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>2019</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Generations		
Gen Z	9.9	155
Millennials	21.9	344
Gen X	23.4	368
Boomers/Traditional.	44.8	704
Gender		
Man	48.5	774
Woman	51.5	823
Education level		
Only compulsory	24.0	381
Secondary/vocational	53.5	849
Applied university/University	22.5	357
Social class		
Working class	35.1	493
Lower middle class	15.1	213
Middle class	39.4	554
Upper middle class	9.8	138
Upper class	0.5	7
Political interest		
Not at all interested	7.2	115
Only slightly interested	22.7	361
Quite interested	46.3	737
Very interested	23.8	379
Political efficacy (mean)		
Very low	26.6	417
Low	41.2	645
Quite high	23.5	369
High	8.7	136
Discusses politics		
Never	4.9	78
Seldom	23.1	368
Sometimes	31.0	494
Often	24.8	396
Nearly every day	16.2	259