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Söderlund, Peter

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# 15 Candidates and Campaigning

*Peter Söderlund*

## **Introduction and theory**

Political candidates in an electoral system with open-list proportional representation face mixed incentives in conducting their election campaigns. Candidates at the constituency level must strike a balance between emphasizing their party's reputation, on the one hand, and cultivating a personal reputation, on the other hand. The former includes the party's policy positions and performance records, while the latter relates to the candidate's own views, abilities, and qualities. Given the leeway to run individualized campaigns in Finland, we can expect large variation between candidates in terms of what they emphasize in political campaigns. Some politicians engage in more individualized and person-oriented campaigns, while others run more party-centred campaigns. This chapter first explores the variation in campaign styles among individual candidates at the constituency level in four Finnish parliamentary elections: 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019. The question concerns to what degree candidates have pursued a personal vote rather than a party vote. Another relevant question that is addressed is whether the tendency of individual candidates to campaign on their own personal strengths has changed over the course of the last four elections. Finally, the aim is to identify factors that explain variation in the level of campaign personalization across candidates.

A theoretical distinction is made between centralized and decentralized personalization of politics. The former implies greater dispersion of influence and visibility to a few top politicians (e.g., party leaders and prime ministers), while the latter means that a larger group of individual politicians (e.g., individual candidates, members of parliament, and ministers) have gained greater prominence at the expense of the collective group. Further, decentralized behavioural personalization of politicians refers to the process where politicians increasingly engage in individual activities and act less a team player (Balmas et al., 2014). In this chapter, focus is on behavioural personalization of politicians at the electoral arena. The growing trend towards personalization of politics has gradually created a greater need for candidates to run personal election campaigns in contemporary democracies. Political institutions – such as the electoral system – are important to understand why personalization of politics thrives more in some countries (Adam & Maier, 2010;

Barisione, 2009). Electoral systems with preference voting for candidates create incentives for candidates to cultivate a personal vote (Carey & Shugart, 1995).

In its purest form, the concept of the personal vote stresses that candidate choice is independent of party affiliation (including performance, issue, and party leader evaluations) or any other external factor. The classical definition of the personal vote given by Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina (1987, 9) goes as follows: “The personal vote refers to that portion of a candidate’s electoral support which originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications, activities, and record”. Candidates who cultivate a personal vote campaign on their personal reputation (e.g., abilities, activities, qualifications, personality, and style) rather than on party appeal to attract votes for themselves (Coates 1995, 230). As already discussed in the introductory chapter, the Finnish electoral system is a highly candidate-centred one and provides a strong incentive for candidates to run personalized campaigns. Legislative candidates not only compete against opposing parties’ candidates, but also against their co-partisan peers in the same district since the intraparty allocation of seats solely depends on the number of preference votes won. The number of legislative seats in each district is large – currently between seven and thirty-six seats in mainland Finland – and, therefore, competition for the available seats is tough both between and within parties (von Schoultz, 2018). Thus, instrumental candidates want to accumulate as many unique personal votes as possible to defeat co-partisan challengers and win a seat (Passarelli, 2020, 53).

Election campaigns generally provide the candidates with a platform to communicate directly with the electorate, shape the information environment, and brand themselves (Strömbäck & Kioussis, 2014). Person-centred campaigns may inform voters about the candidates’ issue positions, qualifications, achievements, personal traits, personal life, etc. Candidates can, indeed, at the same time be team players, who want to win votes for their party, and individualists, who want to attract as much attention as possible to themselves in order to maximize the number personal votes (van Erkel et al., 2016). On the one hand, political parties are for many aspiring and established politicians crucial to realize their political goals. Individual legislative candidates rely on the party for organizational resources or cooperate with their own party’s campaign organization in times of election (Zittel & Gschwen, 2008, 982). On the other hand, under certain conditions candidates are encouraged to adapt more individualized strategies of campaigning. If the candidates compete with tens or dozens of candidates from the same party, they cannot rely solely on party brand to win a seat. Instead, the candidates have incentives to personalize their campaigns to win personal votes (Carey & Shugart, 1995).

The fact that the parties have different nomination strategies reflects the symbiosis between parties and candidates in Finland. A precondition for this is that the seats are allocated using proportional representation with the d’Hondt method (see Introduction chapter). Basically, the preference votes within a list at the district level are aggregated to determine the number of seats won collectively and the seats within the list are granted to individual candidates according to the number of preference votes. The parties tend to present full lists of candidates (i.e., as many as the total number of seats in the district in larger districts, while a legal maximum

of 14 candidates in smaller districts) to maximize the number of votes won collectively. Parties nominate experienced or well-known “magnet candidates” who are likely to draw personal votes and, thus, maximize the number of collective votes for the list (or occasionally nominate a “lead candidate” for tactical reasons when a party joins an electoral alliance in a small district). But parties also emphasize a “balanced list strategy” whereby the list is composed of very different candidates in terms of age, gender, occupation and place of residence. Under certain circumstances, a party pursues nominates many inexperienced and unfamiliar candidates to be able to present a full list (Arter, 2013, 104–106). In the latter two cases, many of the candidates realize themselves that they are not very likely to win a seat, but they represent their party out of sense of duty. These candidates are also less likely to mount highly person-centred election campaigns.

“Individualized campaigns” is a concept that denotes candidates who campaign more or less independently of their party organization (Zittel & Gschwend, 2008). A central indicator of individualized campaigning is the prevailing campaign norm which refers to the overall style of a candidate’s campaign. A candidate who actively draws attention to herself rather than to her own party conforms to an individualized campaign norm. An often-used measure is based on a direct question to what extent the candidate’s main campaign goal was to create as much attention as possible for herself as a candidate as opposed to her party. Furthermore, candidates who conform to an individualized campaign norm may use a variety of campaign strategies or styles of campaigning to reach out to voters and establish personal followings.

Zittel and Gschwend (2008, 989) identify three aspects of campaigning: campaign means, campaign agenda, and campaign organization. First, candidates may use personalized campaign materials or tools can lead to the “total separation of candidate and party image in the public eye”. Second, through personalized political communication, candidates connect with voters: e.g., they may “highlight issues that are relevant for the particular constituencies”. Third, candidates may organize individual campaigns that are detached from collective campaigns: e.g., the structure of the campaign budget reveals “the share of party contributions to their total campaign budget as opposed to personal contributions and campaign donations coming from third parties”. Pedersen and vanHeerde-Hudson (2019) on their part recognize two strategies that politicians can employ to communicate personal connections: person-oriented and constituency-oriented strategies. The former refers to candidates highlighting their individual qualities and the second to promoting the interests of the constituency.

In Finland, the central party organization runs a collective campaign at the national level and local party branches market their district candidate. But, most individual candidates run a personal campaign of some sort. The candidates often make public appearances at local events, distribute personal leaflets by mail, publish personal newspaper ads, put up large posters next to roads, and present themselves in social media. Finnish candidates also write editorials, or inform via social media how they will address local concerns or work for people in their electoral district. Many candidates spend their own money and use funding from their party organization to run personal campaigns. They also set up their own campaign teams,

which can consist of tens of persons, although the vast majority work if not all are volunteers (Ruostetsaari & Mattila, 2002; von Schoultz, 2018, 613–614).

There is a series of explanations why candidates choose to run individualized or personalized campaigns. At the individual level, candidates are more inclined to campaign in an individualized way if they are caught up in close competition for the last seats, possess greater political experience, enjoy the perks of being incumbents, and are ideologically distant from the median party candidate (De Winter & Baudewyns, 2015; Giebler & Wessels, 2013; Pedersen & vanHeerde-Hudson, 2019; Townsley et al., 2022; Zittel & Gschwend, 2008). Age and gender have been included to examine if socio-economic background affect campaign styles (De Winter & Baudewyns, 2015; Karlsen & Skogerbø, 2013). Beyond individual-level factors, the choice of campaign focus may also depend on the party organizational context (e.g., candidate selection method), the characteristics of the competitive context (e.g., district magnitude, number of parties), and the institutional context (e.g., electoral system) (Cross & Young, 2015; De Winter & Baudewyns, 2015; Giebler & Wessels, 2013).

### **Descriptive trends**

This section explores Finnish candidates' campaign norm and different campaign strategies in the four most recent parliamentary elections. It aims to describe both the variation between candidates and the variation over time in terms of the extent to which candidates run candidate-centred campaigns as opposed to party-centred campaigns. Data are from the international Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS) which collects data on the attitudes and behaviour of candidates running in national parliamentary elections. They are ordinary (or rank-and-file) candidates running in geographically defined constituencies (i.e., electoral districts). The surveys have been conducted in Finland in close proximity to each parliamentary election in the following years: 2007 (CCS, 2016), 2011 (CCS, 2016), 2015 (CCS, 2020), and 2019 (CCS, forthcoming). The sample sizes (with the response rates in parentheses) are 528 (26 percent of all candidates), 911 (39 percent), 479 (22 percent), and 770 (31 percent), respectively.

The first outcome variable is the attitudinal measure capturing the prevailing campaign norm. A survey question directly asked the candidates what their primary aim during the campaign was. The candidates then placed themselves on an 11-point scale where one extreme was “to attract as much as possible attention for my party” and the other extreme “to attract as much attention as possible for me as a candidate”. Figure 15.1 shows first of all that the candidates are relatively evenly spread on both sides of the neutral point in terms of the degree of candidate- or party-centred campaigning. In other words, there is considerable variation in the extent to which candidates in Finland emphasize themselves in campaigns rather than their party. Around half of the candidates report they attracted more attention for their party. A sizeable minority around 15 percent gave a neutral answer in the post-election surveys. Less than half of the candidates say their primary aim during the campaign was to attract more attention for themselves ed.

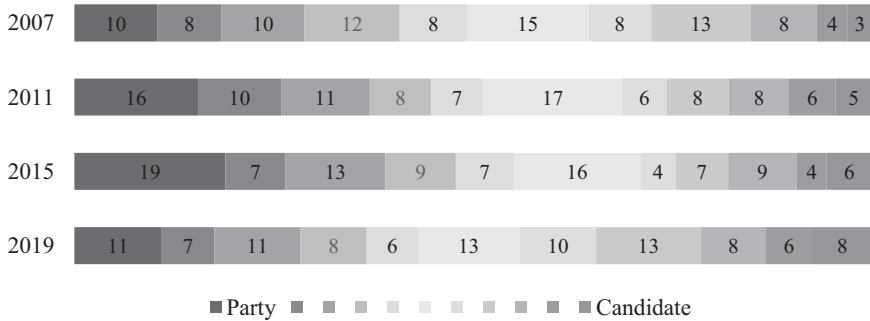


Figure 15.1 Campaign norm among Finnish legislative candidates (%).

Table 15.1 Campaign norm among Finnish legislative candidates (means)

	2007	2011	2015	2019
Total	4.4 (n=520)	4.2 (n=845)	4.0 (n=445)	4.8 (n=762)
Left Alliance	4.1 (n=72)	3.8 (n=90)	3.5 (n=60)	3.9 (n=66)
Social Democratic Party	5.0 (n=76)	4.5 (n=80)	4.7 (n=38)	5.4 (n=71)
Green League	4.4 (n=70)	4.0 (n=78)	4.6 (n=51)	5.0 (n=70)
Centre Party	5.5 (n=49)	5.8 (n=79)	5.2 (n=37)	5.6 (n=69)
Christian Democrats	4.8 (n=23)	4.0 (n=75)	3.8 (n=40)	4.2 (n=69)
Swedish People's Party	4.8 (n=24)	4.8 (n=40)	4.2 (n=23)	6.4 (n=36)
National Coalition Party	5.6 (n=57)	5.8 (n=61)	6.1 (n=29)	6.7 (n=59)
Finns Party	4.7 (n=49)	4.8 (n=90)	5.0 (n=28)	5.4 (n=44)
Other party	2.6 (n=71)	3.0 (n=143)	2.7 (n=139)	4.1 (n=278)

Note. Campaign norm is measured on a scale from zero to ten: 0 = "to attract as much as possible attention for my party"; 1 = "to attract as much attention as possible for me as a candidate".

Over time, there is no uniform trend over the entire study period. From 2007 to 2015, there is a gradual shift towards candidates being more likely to report their primary aim during the campaign was to attract attention for their party rather than themselves as candidate. The share increases from 48 to 55 percent between 2007 and 2015. However, in 2019, this share shrinks by 12 percentage points to 43 percent. In terms of candidate-centredness, 36 percent of the candidates are more oriented towards attracting attention for themselves rather for their party in 2007. This number decreases to 30 percent in 2015, only to increase to 45 percent in 2019.

Table 15.1 shows the mean responses on a scale from zero to ten where ten is maximum attention on oneself as a candidate. The mean is at its lowest in 2015 (4.0) and reaches its highest in 2019 (4.8). Hence, in the last election, roughly the same number of candidates report they wanted to attract more attention either for themselves or for their party. What accounts for the shift towards greater candidate-centredness? There is, indeed, no self-evident answer to this. One possible answer is that the meteoric rise of the populist Finns Party in the polls prior to the 2011 "protest" election lead to greater emphasis on broader issues and parties as collective actors (Karvonen, 2014, 129). Table 15.1 shows the degree of

candidate-centredness by a candidate's party affiliation. Interestingly, candidates from the three leftist and liberal parties (the Left Alliance, the Social Democratic Party, and the Green League) become more party-oriented in 2011 compared to 2007, which might be a reaction to the rise of the Finns Party. While this seems to apply for the 2015 election as well, the shift towards greater candidate-centredness in 2019 is evident among all parties' candidates. This general trend is, indeed, a something that needs to be followed up in future candidate surveys.

A battery of questions is utilized to capture the contents of campaign communication. These items measure how strongly the candidates emphasized different campaign related activities using a five-point Likert ordinal scale from "not at all" to "very much". The second and third outcome variables – person-oriented and constituency-centred strategy – measure the degree to which candidates personalized the content of their campaigns. The former measures own personal issues positions and personal characteristics. With regard to the latter, "local content is not necessarily personal", as Däubler and Muineacháin (2022, 4) point out. However, the point of including constituency-centred strategy is that individual representatives may connect with their constituents by showing they are aware of local concerns and that they would represent those concerns in the national parliament (Norton & Wood, 1990). For reference, the fourth outcome variable captures a party-oriented campaign strategy. The following eight survey items fall under the three campaign strategies:

### **Person-oriented**

- Issues specific to your personal campaign
- Your personal characteristics and circumstances

### **Constituency-oriented**

- Openness to the voters in the constituency and communicating with them extensively
- Taking care of the socio-economic well-being of the constituency
- Advocating the policy demands of the voters in the constituency
- Providing services and practical help to people in the constituency

### **Party-oriented**

- Particular items on the party platform
- Your party's record during the term

All survey items listed above were only included in the 2019 candidate survey. The 2015 survey included all but the final listed item, while the 2007 and 2011 surveys only asked about constituency-oriented campaigning. To confirm that these items load onto three separate factors, confirmatory factor analysis with polychoric correlations was first performed using the 2019 data only. Lastly, orthogonal rotation with Kaiser normalization was performed to confirm the factors. The expected three factors were identified with factors loadings between 0.38 and 0.65.

The stacked bar charts in Figures 15.2, 15.3, and 15.4 show that all three general strategies matter although some candidates run more personalized rather than party-centred campaigns (as evidence by the factor analysis which resulted in three separate factors). Within each campaign strategy category, there is large variation in terms of which specific communication strategy is more important.

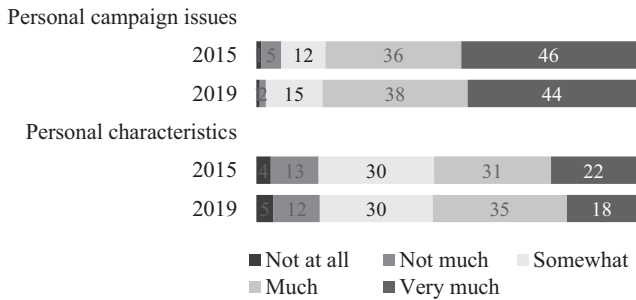


Figure 15.2 Person-oriented campaign strategies among Finnish legislative candidates 2015 and 2019 (%).

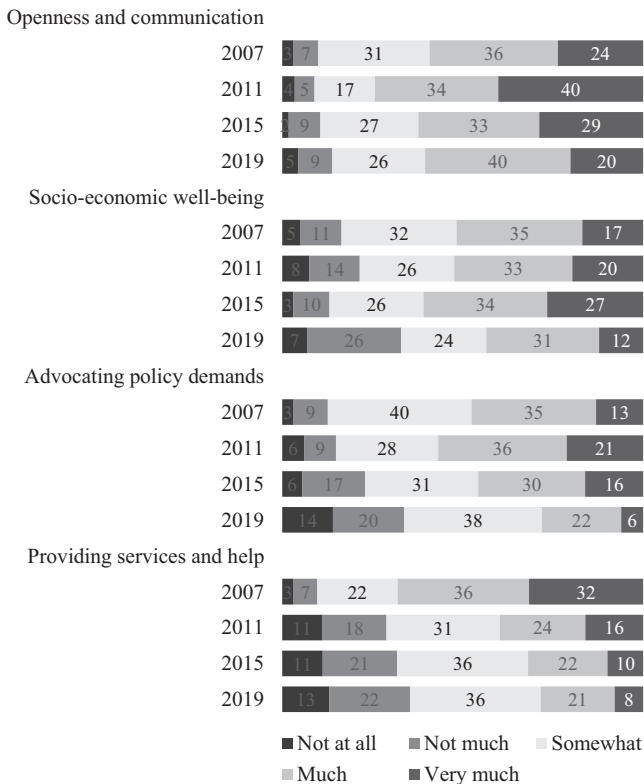


Figure 15.3 Constituency-oriented campaign strategies among Finnish legislative candidates 2003, 2007, 2015, and 2019 (%).



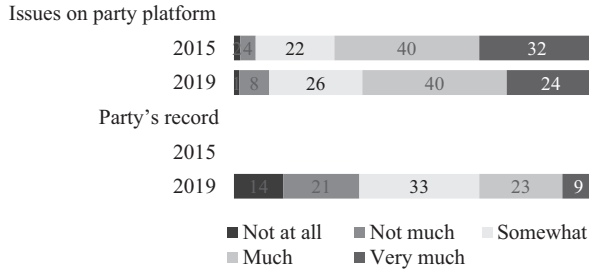


Figure 15.4 Party-oriented campaign strategies among Finnish legislative candidates 2015 and 2019 (%).

The results suggest, first, that most candidates are person-oriented. This is far from surprising given that many of the Finnish candidates build their own campaign organizations, advertise themselves, and engage in personal forms of contact to differentiate themselves. Four of five candidates say they emphasized issues that were specific to their personal campaigns both in 2015 and 2019 (see Figure 15.2). However, we cannot know what types of issues the candidates emphasized. Were they personal issues positions that were not in line with the party program? Or were they perhaps focused on specifically local issues not on the central party agenda and therefore not in conflict with the centrally or regionally decided campaign strategy? Nevertheless, the responses to the survey question bear witness of Finnish candidates having a strong individualized communicative focus. This is a strategy that politicians can employ in establishing representative links between themselves and the voters. Issue positions appear to matter more than personal qualities. A little more than half report they (much or very much) emphasized their personal characteristics and circumstances. Still this is a large part of the candidates who might have emphasized their socio-demographic profile, group affiliation, political experience, competence, or something else.

Second, the candidates have employed constituency-oriented strategies to mixed extent. In Finland, many voters expect their representatives to be in touch with the local community or the larger electoral district. Legislative candidates increase their chances of winning personal votes if they are able to show they will work, or have worked, on behalf of their home municipalities or home districts (Arter, 2018). Six of ten candidates report they emphasized being open to the voters in the constituency and communicating with them extensively during the campaign. This share is quite stable over time. The aptitude to care for the socio-economic well-being is also relatively high over time as about half say they emphasized such campaign related activities much or very much. This number is lower in 2019. Similar negative trends can be detected for the two final constituency-oriented campaign strategies. The number of candidates signalling they were highly engaged in advocating the policy demands of the voters decreases from about five in ten to three in ten. And the number providing services and practical help to people in the constituency decreases from two-thirds to less than one-third.

Third, many candidates are party-oriented. After all, candidates are running as slates with a collective platform and they are part of a greater party campaign organization. They extrapolate policy and credibility from an established collective movement. The extent to which candidates are party-oriented depends on the type of information they convey in campaigns. Two-thirds stressed particular items on the party platform. However, only one-third were much willing to communicate their party's record, or performance during the past term. Hence, a striking observation is that individual campaigns often are concerned with substantive policy issues, both from a person-oriented and party-oriented perspective. A majority of candidates cited issues, both personal issue concerns and issues central to the party platform, to have been important to their political campaigns. It is, however, not a homogenous group of candidates that stress both at the same time. Upon closer inspection (not reported in any figure or table), 36 percent of the candidates reported they both emphasized personal issue concerns and issues central to the party platform (compared to over eight percent who emphasized issues specific to their own personal campaign).

### **Explanatory analyses**

What explains the extent to which candidates in Finland personalize their election campaigns? The analysis of campaign strategies is based on the latest candidate survey (i.e., 2019). The dependent variables are identical to those presented above. They are standardized by recoding them on a scale from 0 to 1. Whether candidates adopt individualized strategies of campaigning can depend on several factors. Here, the regression models, first of all, include the socio-demographic and socio-economic factors gender, age, and education. Three dummy variables capture political experience. The candidates were asked if they had ever served as a local councillor, participated in parliamentary elections, and been an elected Member of Parliament (MP). Self-perceived electoral prospect prior to the start of campaigning is a trichotomous variable: unlikely to win a mandate, open race, and likely to win a mandate. The candidate's own left-right position is represented by five categories: very left, left, middle, right, and very right. Multivariate OLS regression models are used to gauge the effects of the independent variables on the prevailing campaign norm and the three campaign strategies. The number of respondents in the four statistical models varies from 749 to 762.

The results are graphically reported in Figures 15.5–15.8 as marginal effects which show the mean difference in the dependent variable between the category that has been dummy coded and the reference category. The confidence interval indicates the level of uncertainty around the measure of effect (a confidence interval that does not cross zero indicates statistical significance).

Gender has an inconsistent effect on campaigning style. Women candidates were significantly less likely to emphasize a individualistic campaign norm. At the same time, they were more disposed to emphasize not only person- and constituency-oriented campaign strategies, but also a party-oriented campaign strategy. We can therefore not claim that men and women are systematically different when in

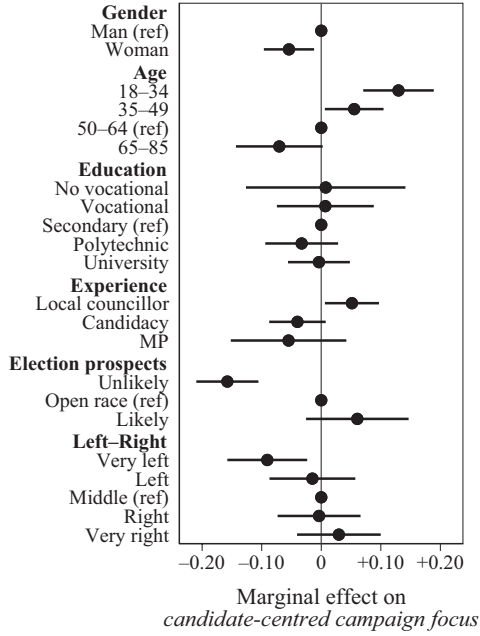


Figure 15.5 Predicting candidate-centred campaign norm in 2019 (adj.  $R^2 = 0.15$ ).

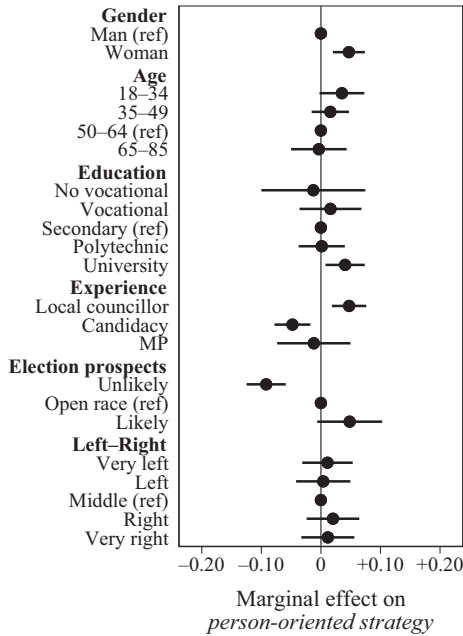


Figure 15.6 Predicting person-oriented campaign strategy in 2019 (adj.  $R^2 = 0.12$ ).

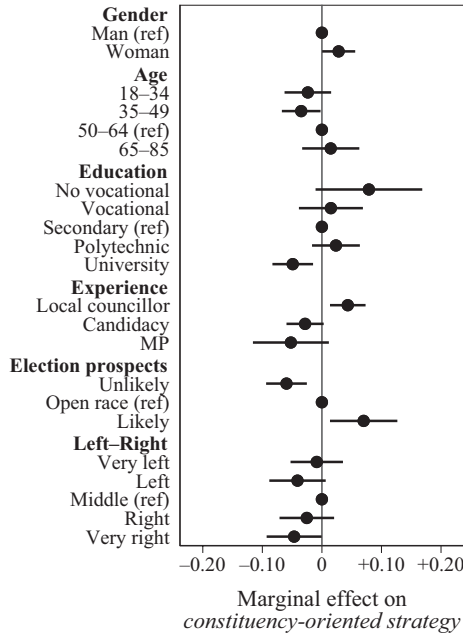


Figure 15.7 Predicting constituency-oriented campaign strategy in 2019 (adj.  $R^2 = 0.08$ ).

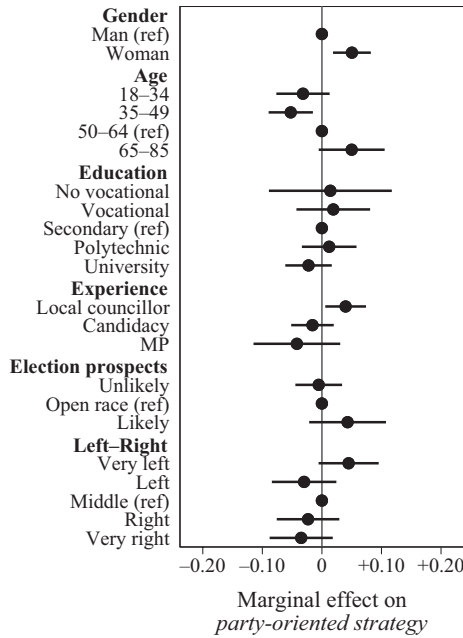


Figure 15.8 Predicting party-oriented campaign strategy in 2019 (adj.  $R^2 = 0.05$ ).

comes to style of campaigning. Generally, the expectation has been that men should be more inclined to run personalized campaigns because women are, for instance, less publicity-seeking and less inclined to emphasize personal traits (De Winter & Baudewyns, 2015; Townsley et al., 2022). In terms of age, earlier research has produced inconclusive results and, therefore, no clear hypothesis can be stated regarding the contents of campaigns (Karlsen & Skogerbø, 2013, 435). In this study, age is only a strong predictor when it comes to explaining a candidate-centred campaign norm. The younger the candidate, the more likely he or she attempted to attract as much attention as himself or herself as a candidate. Otherwise it is clear that age does not matter when controlling for other factors. De Winter and Baudewyns (2015) even acknowledged that there were no theoretical grounds to suspect that age and education would have a clear impact on campaign behaviour. In Finland, education is a poor predictor as there are no large and systematic differences across the education categories.

Two of the variables which measure political experience directly – previous candidacy in parliamentary elections and having served as a member of parliament – do not predict candidates' incentives to run an individualized campaign. Incumbents who have an advantage of better name recognition would, on the one hand, be less likely to emphasize themselves because challengers need to run more personalized campaigns in order to develop greater name recognition (Townsley et al., 2022). On the other hand, incumbents are generally expected to actively pursue a personal vote because they already have an established personal brand and a local campaign organization (Vincent, 2021). Giebler and Wessels (2013) assumed that professional and politically experienced candidates would be more likely to choose a candidate-centred campaign strategy. Thanks to their strong position within their parties, they would have greater room of manoeuvre and be able to campaign for personal votes. In their analysis of campaign foci in European parliamentary elections, Giebler and Wessels nonetheless found that the impact of political experience was limited. This also seems to be the case for national parliamentary elections in Finland. However, candidates who have served as local councillors appear to have ran individualized campaigns. They are experienced and visible politicians that already enjoy a local mandate. In their campaign communication, they are likely to draw attention to their existing personal ties to their local communities and their willingness to provide their constituents with local representation (Townsley et al., 2022, 707). The effect of the local councillor variable is statistically different from zero for candidate-centred campaign norm, person-oriented strategy, and constituency-oriented strategy. However, current or previous local councillors were also more likely to emphasize a party-oriented strategy. These findings, thus, suggest that locally known and experienced candidates use a broader range of campaign strategies – both candidate- and party-centred strategies – compared to politically inexperienced candidates.

An indirect measure of political experience is the self-perceived chances of getting elected (i.e., electoral prospects). The estimates show that particularly candidates without a chance of winning are less inclined to campaign in an individualized way. They are apparently what Arter (2013, 103) label “top-up candidates” who are

“recruited from among the party faithful who do not seriously aspire to election to parliament” and whose “primary aim is, by representing a particular reference group, to mobilize increased support for the party and so boost the aggregate list total”. In contrast, candidates who are more positive about their electoral chances score higher on the three dependent variables that capture individualized campaigning. Candidates who are in close competition with candidates from the same party are, indeed, expected to run more individualized campaigns. Possible mechanisms explaining this campaign behavior are, first, that narrow margins encourage candidates to become competitive and, second, they therefore run individualized campaigns in an effort to win additional personal votes to secure a mandate (Zittel & Gschend, 2008, 984; see also Townsley et al., 2022). Further, the results suggest that candidates who were quite or very certain about their chances of getting elected adopted individualized campaigning strategies to the same extent as those who thought it would be a close race. The difference between candidates who thought they had a good chance of winning before the election and those who thought it was an open race is only statistically significant when constituency-oriented campaigning strategy is the dependent variable. Top candidates who are highly likely to get elected are, indeed, expected to be less reliant on the party and, therefore, able to run more individualized campaigns (Karlsen & Skogerbø, 2013, 431). The ones with no chance of winning a mandate are expected more to act as party activists because they are incentivised to first build a profile within their party (Townsley et al., 2022, 706).

Finally, the electoral strategies might vary between ideologically centrist candidates and those who are ideologically more extreme. But, in Finland, there are no systematic differences between candidates according to whether they were to the left, in the middle, or to the right on the left-right self-placement scale. The only exception is that those farthest to the left on the left-right ideological scale are less likely to emphasize an individualistic campaign norm (Figure 15.5). This is not any insignificant group because one-fourth of the candidates in the sample placed themselves on 0, 1, or 2 on the ideological scale. That they are characterized by a party-centred campaign strategy is in line with the theoretical expectation that ideologically more extreme parties – which are populated by such candidates – exhibit stronger group attachments (Hollyer et al., 2022) and higher cohesion (Maor, 1997). It would also be possible that candidates who are more ideologically distant from their parties run more personalized campaigns (Townsley et al., 2022; Zittel & Gschwend, 2008). I ran additional tests by including a variable that measured the absolute difference of a candidate’s self-placement from the mean of her co-partisans, but no significant effects could be detected.

## **Conclusions**

Election campaigns in Finland are in an international perspective highly candidate-centred (Ruostetsaari & Mattila, 2002; von Schoultz, 2019). There is a great deal of heterogeneity among candidates, however. This chapter has shown that political campaigning varies substantially across individual candidates in Finnish

parliamentary elections. The styles of campaigning vary in the sense that some candidates run highly party-centred campaigns while others run more candidate-centred campaigns. This is not surprising given that the Finnish electoral system fosters both intraparty and interparty competition. The candidates have strong incentives to both emphasize their party brand (to ensure collective electoral success) and to cultivate their personal reputation (to maximize the chances of winning a seat). The balance between these strategies has not changed radically over the past two decades. Yet the campaigns appear to have become more party-centred in the beginning of the 2010s, something that co-occurred with the rise of the populist Finns Party. The balance was restored in 2019 in the sense that roughly equal proportions of the candidates are either more party-centred or more candidate-centred.

More substantive measures of campaign strategies affirmed that legislative candidates in Finland have adopted different types of campaign styles. Some candidates more strongly emphasize person-oriented strategies to communicate and forge personal connections with voters, while others to greater extent employ constituency-oriented or party-centred strategies. Yet these categories are not exclusive as some candidates report they ran both party-centred and individualized campaigns. Campaigns are undoubtedly person-oriented given that half of the candidates report they stressed their personal characteristics in the election campaign. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of the candidates reported they emphasize issues specific to their personal campaign. Unfortunately, the Comparative Candidate Survey does not allow us to measure if and to what extent candidates adopted policy positions distinct of their party in an attempt to gain an advantage relative to their co-partisans. Surely personal issue concerns and the party's issue positions coalesce for many candidates. In fact, a majority of the candidates stressed their party's policy positions. Candidates who strike a balance between personal reputation and party brand are likely to be more successful. Parties may nominate candidates with diverging opinions as a "catch-all" strategy, but they do not want to have candidates with too diverging opinions since it may undermine the cohesion of parties. Also, previous studies show that candidates closer to the median position of their fellow candidates win more preference votes compared to co-partisans who deviate from the median position (von Schoultz & Papageorgiou, 2021; Isotalo et al., 2020).

Attempts were also made to explain variations in campaign norm and campaign strategies. The magnitudes of the explanatory variables effects were generally low. The most consistent finding in that elected councillors at the local level are more likely to emphasize all forms of campaign strategies: person-, constituency-, and party-oriented. This suggests that locally established politicians are more likely to go all-in and use various campaign strategies. First, they already have experience from local elections and differentiate themselves from their co-partisans to attract personal votes. Second, they are also closely linked to their parties having served as party representatives in local councils. As expected, candidates without a chance of winning were less inclined to campaign in an individualized way. These candidates are likely loyal servants who helped to fill the party lists to maximize the number of votes pooled at the party levels

and/or novice candidates who must first build up their position within their party. Likely winners were already in a secure position and could stress their personal attributes, while those involved in open races were incentivised to bring in extra personal votes enough to secure a mandate.

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