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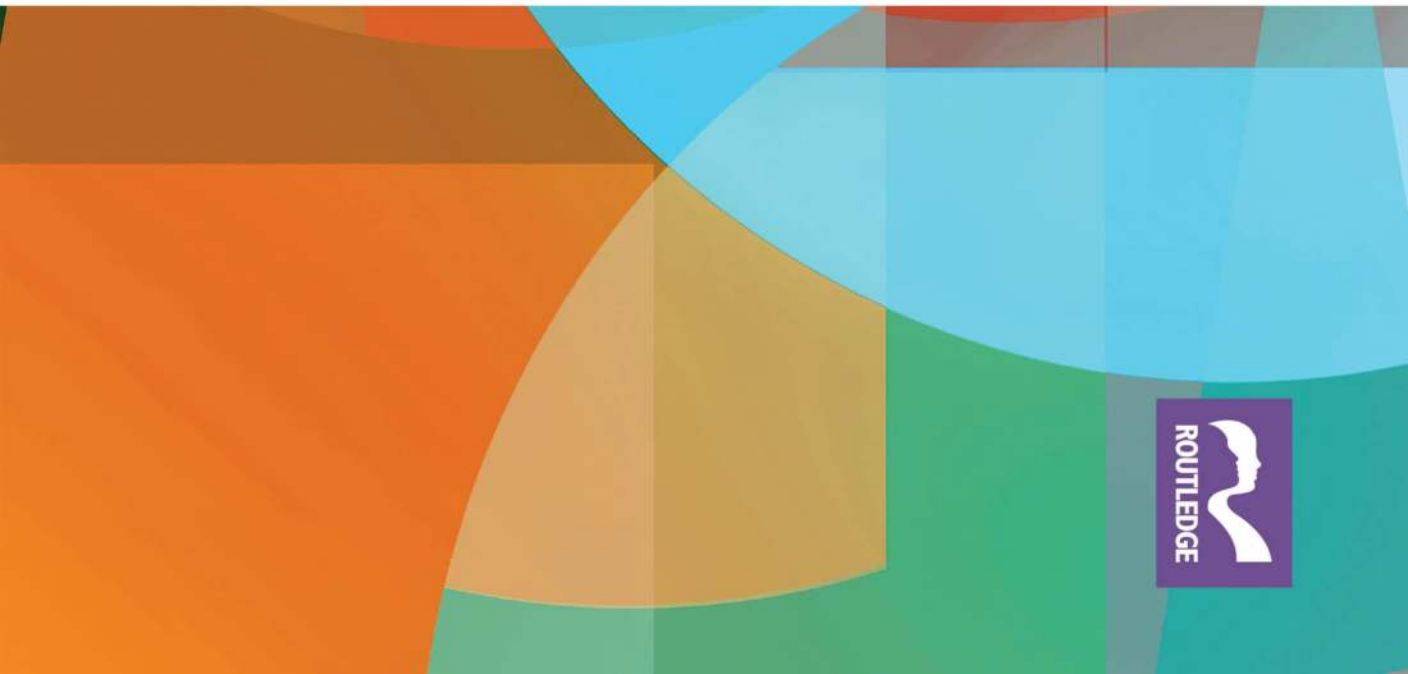
POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR IN CONTEMPORARY FINLAND

STUDIES OF VOTING AND CAMPAIGNING IN A CANDIDATE-ORIENTED POLITICAL SYSTEM

Edited by
Åsa von Schoultz and Kim Strandberg



Political Behaviour in Contemporary Finland

This book presents a comprehensive overview of Finnish electoral democracy, expertly detailing both its typical representation of a stable European party democracy and its particularities such as a personalized electoral system, a fragmented party system with tradition of grand government coalitions and its sensitive geopolitical location.

Using the Finnish National Election Study as a basis, it analyses how voters act and react in an electoral democracy characterized by a high degree of competition between and within parties, yet a democracy in which the possibility for voters to hold governments accountable for their actions is weak, leading to interesting tensions within the system and influences on how voters relate to and engage in politics. This book not only describes these patterns but also provides the reader with thorough explanations and interpretations from a team of expert contributors.

This book will be of key interest to scholars and students of Finnish politics, Nordic/Scandinavian politics and studies, political behaviour, electoral studies, public opinion and more broadly to comparative politics and democracy.

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This book is dedicated to Sami Borg, Lauri Karvonen, Mikko Mattila and Heikki Paloheimo, whose cross-university initiative in 2002 laid the foundation for the Finnish National Election Study (FNES) as a collaborative consortium. We are deeply grateful for your efforts, which have shaped the research trajectories of many Finnish researchers and put Finland on the international map of election studies.

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Acknowledgements

This book is a culmination of substantial effort by many people over an extended period. Most importantly, this book would not have existed without the initiative in the early 2000s to establish a programme for election research in Finland. The Finnish National Election Study (FNES) celebrates its 20th year and its sixth parliamentary election study in 2023. Despite being a youngster in comparison to many other National Election Study programmes, FNES is now entering adulthood. This book is dedicated to the initiators of the consortium, and we also extend our thanks to everyone who has devoted time and effort into developing FNES over the last 20 years. You have collectively laid the foundation for the analyses presented in this volume and for many other publications along the way.

It does, however, take more than time and effort to establish and consolidate an election study. The first two election studies in 2003 and 2007 were primarily financed by project funding granted by the Finnish Research Council. Since 2011, FNES receives funding from the Ministry of Justice, which is the highest electoral authority in Finland and the unit responsible for promoting and monitoring the realization of political rights. We are delighted and grateful to work in a country in which public authorities and the political arena consider scientific research about voters, elections and democracy as essential.

Coordinating a book project with 21 contributors, all of whom are busy academics engaged in various research projects, proved to be a challenging endeavour. As editors, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the authors for their diligent work and the intriguing analyses they have contributed. We also express our appreciation for their patience throughout the lengthy process. Additionally, we would like to thank research assistant Julius Lehtinen for his meticulous editing during the final stages of the publication.

Åsa von Schoultz & Kim Strandberg,
Helsinki and Vasa, 15 June 2023

Acronyms and abbreviations

List of current party abbreviations

KESK
English: The Centre Party of Finland
Finnish: Suomen Keskusta
Swedish: Centern i Finland

KOK
English: The National Coalition Party
Finnish: Kansallinen Kokoomus
Swedish: Samlingspartiet

SDP
English: The Finnish Social Democratic Party
Finnish: Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue
Swedish: Finlands Socialdemokratiska Parti

RKP
English: Swedish People's Party of Finland
Finnish: Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue
Swedish: Svenska folkpartiet i Finland

KD
English: Christian Democrats in Finland
Finnish: Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit
Swedish: Kristdemokraterna i Finland (KD)

VIHR
English: The Greens
Finnish: Vihreä liitto
Swedish: Gröna förbundet

VAS
English: The Left Alliance
Finnish: Vasemmistoliitto
Swedish: Vänsterförbundet

PS
English: The Finns Party
Finnish: Perussuomalaiset
Swedish: Sannfinländarna

LIIK
English: Movement now
Finnish: Liike Nyt
Swedish: Rörelse.nu r.p.

Other abbreviations:

API	Affective Polarization Index
CCS	Comparative Candidate Study
CI	Confidence Intervals
CSES	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems
DDOS	Digital Denial of Service attack
ESS	European Social Survey
EU	European Union
EVA	Finnish Business and Policy Forum [Elinkeinoelämän valtuuskunta]
FNES	The Finnish National Election Study
FRP	Finnish Rural Party (1959-1995)
FSD	Finnish Social Science Data Archive
GAL-TAN	Green Alternative Libertarian values and Traditionalist Authoritarian Nationalist values
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North-Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLPR	Open-List Proportional Representation electoral system
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares regression
VAA	Voting Advice Application
WW2	World War 2

1 An Introduction to the Finnish Electoral Context

Åsa von Schoultz and Kim Strandberg

Introduction

Elections are fundamental in representative democratic systems. In elections, voters are able to hold governments accountable for their actions and to express support for future policies. By analyzing the political behavior of citizens, the motivations behind their vote choices, and the processes that shape the outcome of elections, we get a better understanding of how a particular democracy works. This book, thus, zooms in on contemporary political behavior in Finland, a Western European country less well known to the public than many other countries belonging to the same region. One reason as to why Finland as a political arena and Finnish political behavior have featured to a limited extent in international scholarship is the comparatively late introduction of a national program for election and voter studies. It was not until after the turn of the new millennium that a group of scholars decided to join efforts and establish the Finnish National Election Study (FNES) consortium, and to collect regular voter surveys at times of parliamentary elections.

One purpose of this book is to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the FNES. The primary aim is, however, to provide readers interested in political behavior and Finnish politics with an interesting and comprehensive read, covering classical topics in political behavior, and with extended insights into Finnish elections and democracy. Finland is in many ways a fascinating democracy. Today, the country can be classified as a typical Western European democracy with a proportional electoral system with relatively stable governments and a relatively stable structure of coherent political parties. From a historical perspective, however, Finland was for long perceived as an outlier in the Western European sphere. The country had up until the 1990s a distinct semi-presidential system with a president who held substantial political powers (Duverger, 1980). The sensitive geopolitical location manifested by a border to Russia spanning over 1,300 km and a complex and intertwined relationship with the eastern neighbor also positioned Finland in a gray zone in terms of international politics during the cold war. Finnish national politics was in its earlier periods further marked by a high degree of party system polarization, with a strong communist party dividing the left, and of government instability (for an overview, see Karvonen et al., 2016, 18–21).

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The transformation of Finnish politics started after the long reign of President Urho Kekkonen (1956–1981). It accelerated with the ending of the cold war and with Finland joining the EU in 1996, and was in many ways finalized with the introduction of a new constitution at the turn of the millennium, which formally established the decreased political powers of the President (Karvonen et al., 2016, 11). While the Finnish president still has substantial powers within the field of foreign policy, the development converted Finland to a country firmly rooted in the Western sphere, with a more distinct parliamentary system and a more open political culture. While recent changes in the international arena, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, have again underlined the delicate geographical position of Finland, today there is no gray zone in terms of collaboration and positioning, which is further manifested by the country's recent ascendancy into membership in the security alliance NATO.

Returning to the political situation after the turn of the millennium, Finland has some features of particular interest for scholars interested in political behavior and elections – features that will be highlighted throughout this volume. The key institutional structure which today makes Finland into a particularly interesting case is that votes are cast for individual candidates rather than for a collective party list and the effects this has on the dynamics of elections and campaigning. The mandatory preferential voting for a single candidate makes the political arena highly personalized, with a high degree of competition not only between parties but also within parties. It further has substantial effects on how elections are played out with a combination of party and candidate-centered political competition, campaigning, and media coverage, which can be challenging for voters to navigate (Söderlund et al., 2021). The strong personalization in Finnish politics has contributed to an early professionalization of political campaigning and to Finland being one of the first adopters of online and social media campaigning (Carlson & Strandberg, 2012; Isotalus, 1998).

In what follows, we will provide an overview of the central features of contemporary Finnish democracy that are useful for contextualizing the more in-depth analyses in the following chapters. This will include the central political institutions such as the electoral system but also structural features such as the party system and the main political cleavages, and the development of political campaigning. After this, we move on to an overview of the volume and the 15 thematically oriented chapters it entails.

Finland's political system

Finland is a relatively young state, gaining its independence in 1917. Up until 1809, what today constitutes Finland was a part of Sweden, often referred to as the eastern part of the kingdom, after which the country was a Grand Duchy of Russian Empire for roughly a century. As a part of the process toward full independence from Russia, Finland held its first parliamentary election already in 1907. This first election was arranged according to the, at that time, radical Parliament Act of 1906, including universal and equal suffrage, with eligibility to vote and stand as candidate for adult women and men of 24 years of age or older. This made Finland the first European

country to grant women the right to vote. The electoral system adopted was proportional representation with relatively large constituencies. The rationale behind the 1906 Parliamentary Act was to foster national unity by allowing all adults the right to vote and ensuring wide representation of different societal groups in the Finnish parliament (for more on this see Raunio, 2005). The first decades of Finnish democracy were, however, characterized by internal conflicts with a civil war, linguistic conflict, a strong right extremist movement and repeated labor market struggles. In addition, the country fought two wars against its neighbor in the east.

Today, Finland is a parliamentary democracy and a unitary state but with a recently introduced (2023) regional government responsible for organizing health, social, and rescue services, and a local government with more than 300 municipalities. As part of its Swedish heritage, Finland is a bilingual country with two official languages, Finnish (spoken by 87 percent of the population) and Swedish (spoken by about 5 percent), given an equal status in the constitution. Until the turn of the millennium, Finland was classified as a semi-presidential system. Especially during the long presidency of Urho Kekkonen, the far-reaching constitutional powers of the presidency were used to control domestic politics and government formation to guarantee a stable foreign policy line and to avoid tension in the sensitive Finnish–Soviet relations that marked Finnish politics until the end of the Cold War (Karvonen, 2014, 14). With the new constitution introduced with the new millennium, the powers of the presidency were substantially reduced, and its former powers over cabinet formation were abolished (Paloheimo, 2016, 57–66).

The earlier patterns of high degree of party system polarization (Sartori, 2005, 129) and government instability (Gallagher et al., 2001, 366) have, in the post-Kekkonen era, been replaced by consensus (Mickelsson, 2007) and government stability (Karvonen, 2014, 73). In Finnish politics of today, ideological differences are less pronounced, and governing coalitions can be formed among virtually all parties (Karvonen, 2016, 122). The most common type of Finnish government has been a surplus (or oversized) majority coalition. The high occurrence of this type of government is unique by European standards (Karvonen, 2014, 7, see also Chapter 4.). Voting in the Finnish parliament – the Eduskunta or Riksdagen in Swedish – is characterized by a high level of intraparty voting cohesion, particularly among the parties constituting the government in power (Pajala, 2013, 44).

The party system

In terms of party politics, Karvonen et al. (2016) point toward five characterizing qualities: a high degree of *party system fragmentation*, the absence of a *dominating party*, the strength of *the Centre Party* (agrarian), recurrent waves of *populist protest* and an increased *weakness of the left*. The Finnish multiparty system is, indeed, one of the most fragmented in Western Europe with an average effective number of parties of more than five in the post-World War II era (Bengtsson et al., 2014, 29). The party system was, however, for long relatively stable and tended to consist of seven parties winning over 90 percent of the vote in almost all parliamentary elections.

The core of the party system was up until the parliamentary election of 2011 constituted by three medium-sized parties with a historical basis in two cleavages and three major poles of conflict: labor/workers (the Social Democratic Party), capital/business owners (the National Coalition Party), and the rural periphery/farmers (the Centre Party) (Rokkan, 1987, 81–95). The oldest of the Finnish parties is the *Social Democratic Party* (SDP), formed in 1899 to represent the interests of the workers. The party was, however, split between reformist social democrats and communists in 1922, and the left has since been divided with a relatively strong (former) Communist Party and, seen from an international perspective, relatively weak Socialist Party. In the election in 2019, the SDP won close to 18 percent of the vote. The National Coalition (KOK) was formed in 1918 but has roots in the Finnish Party formed in 1863 to further the position of the Finnish language and independence. The party of today is a classic right-wing party focused on economic policy. The Conservative Party won 17 percent of the vote in the 2019 election. The *Centre Party* (KESK, earlier the Agrarian Party) was formed to defend the interests of independent small and medium-sized farms but has along with comparatively late but intense Finnish urbanization been successful in winning the support of the population residing in the countryside and peripheral towns. The Centre Party (KESK) won 21 percent of the vote in the 2015 parliamentary election and became the largest party in the parliament. In 2019, the success turned into a historical setback, and the party won less than 14 percent of the vote. These three parties – the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the National Coalition (KOK), and the Centre Party (KESK) – have dominated political competition in Finland, and two of the three have, in altering constellations, generally constituted the central components of the government.

The smaller but fairly stable components of the party system are the Left Alliance (VAS), the Christian Democrats (KD), and the Swedish People's Party (RKP). The *Left Alliance* was formed in 1990s after the collapse of the old left Socialist-Communist Party and can be described as a green-socialist party. The party won eight percent in the 2019 election. The *Christian Democrats* has been represented in the parliament since 1970 (until 2001 the party was named the Christian League) and won just below four percent of the vote in 2019. The *Swedish People's Party* is an ethnic or linguistic party, formed already in 1906. The party has its roots in the Swedish nationalist movement, active during the heated language conflict in the second half of the 1900 century. The language issue has at times been a source of political conflict, especially up until the first half of the 2000 century (Himmelroos & Strandberg, 2020). Today, the party primarily represents the interests of the Swedish-speaking minority, constituting just above five percent of the population. The electoral support of the RKP has decreased as the Swedish-speaking population and the party won 4.5 percent of the vote in the 2019 parliamentary election.

Finland also has two newer parties, both distinct representatives of the value dimension GAL–TAN, i.e., Green–Alternative–Libertarian versus Traditional–Authoritarian–Nationalist values. In 2011, the populist-right party the *Finns Party* (then labeled the True Finns Party, PS) had its major breakthrough when it won 19 percent of the vote and became the third largest party in the parliament. The party has its roots in earlier agrarian populist movements. In the 1970s and 1980s, the

Rural Party fought several strong elections but faced bankruptcy in the 1995s after which the Finns Party was formed. The breakthrough of the Finns Party disrupted the traditional setup of three core parties, and the fragmentation of the system further increased. This new configuration with four medium-sized parties was continued in the 2015 and 2019 elections. Since the 1980s, Finland also had a party representing post-materialist and environmental values, the *Green League* (VIHR). The party was established as a political party in 1988, but representatives for the Green movement successfully ran as independent candidates already in the 1983 parliamentary election. The party has increased its support over the years, winning its strongest electoral support of roughly 11 percent in the 2019 election.

The electoral system

Elections to the Finnish national parliament take place on a Sunday in April every fourth year with the Ministry of Justice as the highest election authority. The electoral system is classified as an open-list proportional representation system or OLPR (for an in-depth description of the electoral system see Raunio, 2005 or von Schoultz, 2018). The 200 seats in the Eduskunta/Riksdagen are distributed in 13 districts (including the single-member district of the autonomous Åland Island), using the D'Hondt highest average method. The number of seats distributed in each district is determined based on the number of inhabitants. In the 2019 parliamentary election, district magnitude (M) ranged from 6 to 36. The variation in seats across districts has increased over time, and no fixed electoral threshold at the national level is applied. There is also no mechanism linking the share of votes a party receives at the national level with the distribution of seats at the district level. The practical implications of these rules are that the system is disadvantageous for parties with a relatively low and geographically equally distributed support.

The Finnish OLPR combines the feature of open lists with a pooling vote (Cox, 1997, 42), which makes the system highly competitive both between candidates (intraparty) and between parties (interparty). Parties and constituency associations, or an alliance of parties or constituency associations, present a single list of candidates at the district level, and all individual preference votes count for the list. The total amount of votes cast for candidates on each list determines how many seats the list is rewarded.

The aspect that makes the Finnish system stand out in comparison to most other PR systems is that the fully open-list system makes it impossible for parties or constituency organizations to guarantee the election to parliament of any individual candidate. Preferential voting is obligatory: to cast a vote, all voters are obliged to choose one candidate from a fairly large selection of aspirants, and they do so by writing the number of their preferred candidate on the ballot paper. The sole criterion in determining the party's internal ranking of candidates is the amount of preference votes each candidate receives. Moreover, most parties refrain from ranking their nominated candidates. By presenting candidates in alphabetical order on the lists, voters are left without indications of the parties' preferred order of preference. Lists are allowed to contain a maximum of 14 nominated candidates

per constituency, or, if M exceeds 14, as many candidates as there are seats to be distributed (Ministry of Justice, 2022). This generally amounts to an extensive number of candidates for voters to choose from. To provide an example: in the largest constituency of Uusimaa/Nyland, 492 candidates were nominated by 22 parties or constituency organizations in the 2019 parliamentary election.

Finnish election campaigns

When it comes to political campaigning, Finland is characterized by being a forerunner in terms of innovation and professionalization. Although Finland, like the other Nordic countries, has a strong public service media, its media system is surprisingly liberal and media ownership concentration is very low in international comparison (see Strandberg & Carlson, 2021; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Noam & Mutter, 2006). Thus, television in Finland has partially been funded by advertising since its early days and there are no regulations or limitations on political advertising. This has created a fertile ground for innovation and professionalization of political campaigning.

Campaigns in Finland also highly reflect the fact that votes are cast on candidates, not parties. While the parties run and coordinate the broader campaign highlighting main issues and themes, a lot of freedom and responsibility to the campaign is on the individual candidates (Karvonen, 2010; von Schoultz, 2018). Candidates typically have their own support groups, raise their own funds, and are free to run political advertising as they like (Mattila & Ruostetsaari, 2002). According to some estimates (Mattila & Sundberg, 2012; Moring & Borg, 2005), individual candidates handle roughly 75 percent of all campaign spending. One consequence of the freedom to advertise and the responsibility for individual candidates to campaign is that Finnish campaigning has become very personalized, focusing on party leaders as well as individual candidates' policies and image (Karvonen, 2010).

The combination of the liberal media market and individual campaigning has also brought with it a desire to innovate and try out new campaign forms (Strandberg & Carlson, 2021, 77–78). The first online campaign websites in Finland appeared already in the 1996 election for the European Parliament and the 1999 Parliamentary elections were the first in which the internet was used as a campaign platform (Carlson & Strandberg, 2012; Isotalus, 1998). Finland has, thus, been, and still is, one of the global leaders in online campaigning. In the 2019 election campaign, almost 90 percent of candidates had a Facebook page and younger candidates used a wide array of social media in their campaign communication (Strandberg & Borg, 2020). Digital media also gave rise to a peculiar feature of Finnish elections; the Voting Advice Applications (VAAs) hosted on media sites since 1999. The VAAs have been the most popular feature of Finnish elections for long, both in terms of their usage by voters and the media attention (Strandberg & Carlson, 2021, 80–81). Leading up to the Parliamentary election in 2019, VAAs were used by almost 60 percent of the electorate with one-third of all voters and over 80 percent of young voters reporting that the VAAs strongly influenced their choice of candidate (Strandberg & Carlson, 2021; Strandberg & Borg, 2020).

In the era of social media, the digitalization of Finnish campaigning has further increased in both scope and speed of uptake. In fact, Strandberg and Carlson (2021, 78) deem digitalization as the main transformation of Finnish campaigning since the mid-2000s. Already in the 2007 elections, YouTube and blogs were being employed as campaigning tools by candidates. In 2011, Facebook usage by candidates surged to 88 percent and Twitter also started emerging as a campaign tool. 2015 saw Twitter use rising to above 50 percent and Instagram starting to be adopted by some candidates. In the last 2019 election, campaign Instagram use by candidates was already over 40 percent. Strandberg and Borg (2020, 118) state that by 2019 there is no doubt that digital campaigning in Finland has reached a level of maturity and professionalism and is now to be considered the most important arena for Finnish campaigning (see also Strandberg & Carlson, 2021).

The contents of the volume

This volume is the first to provide a thorough analysis of the Finnish electoral democracy of today, mainly from a voter perspective, for an international audience. The book is also the first to make use of all the FNES datasets collected between 2003 and 2019 and disseminate this knowledge for international readers. Thus, most of the chapters in this volume both describe key features of Finnish electoral behavior from a longitudinal perspective and provide thorough explanatory analyses and interpretations of the 2019 election.

The volume provides a broad assessment of Finnish electoral democracy by focusing on parties and candidates, voters and campaigning. Thus, the chapters of the volume analyze mechanisms related to the electoral output and demand. Furthermore, the volume sets the stage by describing and analyzing the core state of Finnish democracy, the electoral playing ground so-to-speak. These three aspects form themes under which the individual chapters are sorted. Thus, the first section zooms in on *the state of democracy*, the second on *the electoral connection* (voters in relation to parties and candidates) and the third on *campaigning*. We will now provide a brief overview of the chapters within these three themes.

Theme 1: The state of democracy

This theme contains five individual chapters that examine citizens' perceptions of democracy and its health (Chapters 2–4) as well as participation in both elections and other activities (Chapters 5 and 6). Together, these chapters shed light on the core functioning of Finnish electoral democracy and citizens' trust in it as well as highlighting potential challenges in the forthcoming years.

Chapter 2: What kind of democracy do people want? By Lauri Rapeli and Kim Strandberg

In this chapter, Lauri Rapeli and Kim Strandberg focus on Finnish voters' support for different models of democracy. Specifically, they describe the longitudinal

development of support for representative-, direct-, deliberative-, and stealth democracy. Furthermore, the chapter studies individual-level explanations along an ideology-based and dissatisfaction-based perspective for supporting these democracy models at the time of the Parliamentary election in 2019. The findings show that representative democracy has the strongest support followed by deliberative democracy, direct democracy and stealth democracy. Support for various models of democracy was found to best be explained by dissatisfaction, or satisfaction, with representative democracy. Thus, people being satisfied with democracy and its institutions and actors support representative democracy whereas various constellations of dissatisfied citizens support the other models.

Chapter 3: Finland: A country of high political trust and weak political self-efficacy. By Maria Bäck, Elina Kestilä-Kekkonen and Thomas Karv

This chapter studies trust in political institutions and actors as well as political self-efficacy among the Finnish citizens. The longitudinal development of both aspects is presented for the years 2011–2019 and 2003–2019, respectively. In the explanatory part, the authors use political self-efficacy as the main independent variable for explaining variations in political trust. The descriptive findings in the chapter essentially show that political trust in Finland has been high and stable over time. The picture for political self-efficacy is the opposite: it has been stable but low over time. In explaining high levels of political trust, the chapter shows that political self-efficacy only has a weak significant effect whereby low efficacy explains high trust and high efficacy explains low trust. The most important explanatory factors for high political trust are social trust, strong identification with a political party and positive evaluations of the MP's competence.

Chapter 4: In safe elections, democracy wins: Perceptions of electoral harassment among candidates and voters. By Veikko Isotalo and Hanna Wass

This chapter focuses on what might be deemed as an increasing threat to democracies worldwide within the hybrid-threat era we are currently living in: electoral harassment. Specifically, the chapter studies the extent to which candidates and citizens reported that they had experienced various forms of harassment in the 2019 election. The authors also focus on whether certain types of citizens and candidates are more prone to be harassed than others are. This chapter incorporates data from the Finnish parliamentary candidate study 2019 to shed light on candidates' experiences alongside the FNES data for citizens' experiences. The main results of the chapter are that candidates report a much higher extent of harassment than voters. The most common types of harassment are disinformation, negative campaigns against certain candidates and various DDOS attacks on websites (traffic overload) or negative spamming on social media accounts. Regarding the question of whether certain types of candidates and voters experience harassment to a higher extent, the findings show that younger candidates seem to experience more harassment. Among voters, this age pattern is also evident as is an effect that women experienced harassments more than men.

Chapter 5: Foiled at every turn? Understanding turnout in Finland. By Theodora Helimäki and Hanna Wass

In this chapter, Helimäki and Wass provide an in-depth overview and explanatory contemplation on one of the main puzzles of the otherwise healthy Finish democracy: the relatively low turnout in general elections. The chapter provides a longitudinal description of turnout in Finnish parliamentary elections according to gender (1908–2019), age (1987–2019) and education level (1987–2019). For these aspects, the main findings are that modern Finnish elections have a reversed gender gap whereby women vote more than men do. Furthermore, life-cycle differences in turnout are shown to gradually becoming less pronounced over time, partly due to generational differences in turnout levels. For education level differences in turnout, the chapter demonstrates that what was already a substantial gap between lower and higher educated citizens in 1987 has grown even bigger into 2019. The final part of the chapter contemplates the applicability of two explanation models for turnout in Finland: an institutional-level factors model and an individual-level factors model. The former of these discusses effective electoral thresholds, effective number of parties and electoral uncertainty. The latter model contemplates socio-economic factors and their transmission over generations through political socialization. Health-related factors are also discussed.

Chapter 6: Act your age! Generational differences in political participation in Finland 2007–2019. By Janette Huttunen and Henrik Serup Christensen

The authors examine participation in nine different activities according to five voter generations: Traditionalists, Baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Furthermore, the chapter studies within these five generations how political interest, left-right ideology, GAL-TAN position, and satisfaction with democracy associate to different participatory activities. The findings show that boycotts and signing petitions or citizens' initiatives are the most popular activities among Finnish citizens, whereas party activity and taking part in legal demonstrations are the least popular. Younger generations tend to be more active in new forms of activities, such as consumerism and signing citizens' initiatives, whereas no big generational differences are evident for traditional activities. Finally, the chapter shows that political interest seems to be the one attitude which, across generations, is associated most often with participatory activities. Younger generations' activities seem to be more driven by attitudes than what is the case for older generations.

Theme 2: Elections, parties and candidates

In the second theme of the volume, seven chapters that focus on various aspects of the connection between the citizens and the parties and candidates are included. Mainly, this connection is studied concerning the bases or mechanisms of citizens' vote choices (Chapters 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12). Furthermore, the section contains a chapter on how the parties tie into affective polarization among citizens (Chapter 10) as well as a look at what candidate attributes contribute to electoral success (Chapter 13).

Chapter 7: The social basis of the vote: Class voting in Finland. By Aino Tiihonen and Peter Söderlund

In this chapter, Tiihonen and Söderlund depart from cleavage theories and build a longitudinal exploration of class voting in Finland between 1984 and 2019. The main focus is on the extent to which working-class voters vote for left-wing parties, but an assessment of total class voting is also made. The FNES data is complemented by data from the Finnish Business and Policy Forum (EVA) to build the longer time-series. The authors focus on both occupational class and self-identification into social classes. The findings show that class voting, both in terms of working class voting for leftist parties and in terms of total class voting, has declined over time in Finland but still remains at a significant level. A major part of the decline was until the early 2000s, after which the trends have plateaued. The working-class vote has gradually shifted from a leftist slant to increasingly being captured by the populist Finns Party. Self-identification with social class has a clearer association with class voting than occupational class has.

Chapter 8: Value dimensions and party choice in Finland. By Kimmo Grönlund and Peter Söderlund

In this chapter, the authors study how ideological differences within the Finnish electorate have evolved between 2003 and 2019. Specifically, the focus is on the traditional left-right dimension and the GAL-TAN value dimension. The authors also focus on how strongly value dimensions have predicted party choice over time. The results of the analyses show, first, that left-right differences are rather small and have not grown much over time. The differences regarding GAL-TAN values, secondly, are starker and have grown over time. The examination of the predictive power of value dimensions on party choice shows that GAL-TAN values have more effect on party choice than the left-right values have. The left-right dimension has only increased its importance over time for voting for the Social Democrats (SDP) and for the National Coalition Party (KOK). Looking at the impact of GAL-TAN values over time, the impact has grown significantly for the two parties representing the two most extreme positions in these values: the Green League (VIHR) and the populist Finns Party (PS).

Chapter 9: Party identification. By Sami Borg and Heikki Paloheimo

This chapter studies the extent to which Finnish citizens display identification with, or attachment to, political parties. The authors also focus on which party's citizens feel close to, and the explanatory part of the chapter seeks to explain this party identification. The latter of which uses sociodemographic variables (gender and age), native language, subjective class identification, area of residence and a number of attitudinal value orientations as potential explanations of party identification.

The descriptive trends show that party identification has grown overall in Finland between 2003 and 2019, from 44 percent to 60 percent of citizens feeling close to the party. Regarding which specific parties people feel close to, the Finns party appears to be the main party that has grown the most (from 1 percent to 18 percent). This seems to have been due to people feeling close to the Social Democrats and the Centre Party shifting allegiances as these two parties have seen the biggest declines in the share of citizens feeling close to them. The explanatory analyses reveal rather differing factors explaining support for specific parties. An interesting pattern is found regarding GAL-TAN values which form strong predictors for the parties at either end of the spectrum (Greens/Left vs. The Finns/Christian Democrats).

Chapter 10: Friends and foes: Affective polarization among Finnish voters.
By Arto Kekkonen, Staffan Himmelroos and Daniel Kawecki.

The authors examine developments in affective polarization among the electorate between 2003 and 2019. Furthermore, they seek to understand differences regarding affective polarization at both ideological and individual levels. The authors focus on three cleavages across which they study affective polarization: political parties, socioeconomic values (left-right) and sociocultural values (GAL-TAN). The findings over time show a clear increase in party-based affective polarization. Looking at ideological drivers of affective polarization, the analyses show that extreme positions for the socioeconomic as well as the sociocultural dimensions are the ones who have polarized the most over time. At the individual level, the authors find that the intensity of GAL-TAN values appears to be an important driver of affective polarization. Party identification and vote choices are also important predictors.

Chapter 11: Parties and candidates as objects of electoral choice.
By Peter Söderlund

This chapter sheds light on one of the key features of the Finnish electoral system: the attention voters pay to either candidate or party when casting their votes. Söderlund describes and explains both the extent to which voters vote for candidates rather than for parties and the attitudes toward preference voting for individual candidates in Finland. The descriptive findings show that the party has, over time, become slightly more important than candidates are for citizens' vote choice. The Finnish electorate nonetheless displays a strong level of support for the ability to vote for individual candidates. The explanatory analyses mainly reveal a pattern whereby political sophistication and attachment to a party are the main dividers of voters seeing the party or candidate as more important for their vote choices. As to support for the ability to cast votes on candidates, the findings show that age seems to be the main driver of this whereby older citizens value the current candidate-focused electoral system the most.

Chapter 12: How to find a needle in a haystack: Which candidate characteristics matter for voters' choice of candidate? By Theodora Helimäki and Åsa von Schoultz

This chapter examines Finnish voters' evaluation of factors that are important for their choice of candidate and how these have developed between 2003 and 2019. Helimäki and von Schoultz also explore which type of voters are prone to use certain types of heuristics in their decision-making process when choosing which candidate to vote for. The factors in focus in the chapter are the candidate's party affiliation, their age, previous experience in politics, gender, and their locality. The findings show that party affiliation is the most important attribute for Finnish voters and has been so during the whole period of study (2003–2019). Political experience of a candidate is the second most important factor followed locality, gender, and, lastly, age. The explanatory part of the chapter explains five types of voter heuristics: same-gender voting, same-age voting, locality voting, ideological proximity voting, and political experience-based voting. The main differences found between factors explaining these various voting-heuristics are age, interest in politics, and closeness to a party.

Chapter 13: What makes a successful candidate in the Finnish open-list proportional election system? By Veikko Isotalo and Åsa von Schoultz

This chapter studies individual, so-called, vote-earning attributes of candidates and how these relate to earning actual votes. This topic is first explored longitudinally for candidate gender, incumbency, political experience, and celebrity status. For these, the findings show that gender and celebrity status do not seem to make a difference in votes earned, whereas incumbency and political experience do. In the explanatory part of the chapter, the authors seek to explain candidates' individual vote shares in light of eight independent variables: being an MEP, MP, party leader, celebrity, local councilor, previous experience, age, and gender. The effect of these on vote shares are exactly in the order they were listed. Thus, being an MEP has a strong effect, followed by incumbency as MP and so forth. Further supplementary analyses also revealed that campaign spending has a clear independent effect on vote shares as well.

Theme 3: Campaigning

The final theme of the volume is about campaigning, which is arguably the main mechanism that connects citizens to parties and candidates. Without campaigning, parties and candidates would be rather unknown objects for citizens and, thus, also very hard to form opinions on and to cast votes for. The chapters in this theme focus on what candidates emphasize in their campaigning (Chapter 15), which specific campaign activities they engage in and with what level of funding (Chapter 16) as well as the extent to which different generations of Finnish voters follow campaigns via the internet and social media (Chapter 14).

Chapter 14: Generational patterns in voters' use of the internet and social media in Finnish parliamentary elections 2003–2019. By Tom Carlson and Kim Strandberg

In this chapter, Carlson and Strandberg provide a longitudinal overview of citizens' use of both so-called Web 1.0 (party/candidate websites, blogs, VAAs, and online election news) and Web 2.0 (social media, YouTube et cetera) information channels for following elections. This is broken up according to generations of voters: traditionalists and boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. The authors, thus, focus on whether certain generations use the Internet and social media to a larger extent than other generations do. Furthermore, in the explanatory part, the authors focus on the 2019 election and explain Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 use in light of the generations, demographic factors, political interest, efficacy, and engagement in political discussion. Explanatory analyses are also done within each generation. The longitudinal trends for both Web 1.0 and 2.0 unsurprisingly show that the younger the generation, the higher the extent of usage is. The regression analyses confirm that belonging to the younger generations predicts a high extent of using the Internet and social media. Other significant predictors are political interest and engaging in political discussion in everyday life. A notable finding within the youngest Generation Z is that political interest does not predict the high use of social media in the following elections.

Chapter 15: Candidates and campaigning. By Peter Söderlund

In this chapter, using data from the Comparative candidate survey, Söderlund first explores variations in campaign styles among individual candidates at the constituency level between 2007 and 2019. He focuses specifically on to what degree candidates have pursued a personal vote rather than a party vote. Furthermore, he focuses on longitudinal trends in the tendency of individual candidates to campaign on their own personal strengths. Finally, the analyses identify factors that explain variation in the level of campaign personalization across candidates. The findings show that candidates focus on either party or themselves is a rather even split. In the 2019 election, a slightly higher share of candidates did state that they focused more on their own attention than the parties in their campaign. Söderlund's findings also show that roughly 80 percent of candidates focus on issues relevant to them as individuals and also on their own personal characteristics. Nevertheless, the candidates also emphasize party-related issues and merits to a high extent which indicates that campaign focus between party and candidate is not a zero-sum game. The explanatory analyses of what explains an individualized campaign show that, among other, candidates who perceive their chances to get elected and are in competitive races tend to campaign in an individualized and personalized way.

Chapter 16: Individualized Campaigning in the Finnish Open-List System
By Mikko Mattila

In the final chapter of the volume's analytical chapters, Mattila examines, using the Comparative candidate survey, how important various campaign activities, or specific tools, were for candidates in the 2019 election campaign. He also provides an overview of campaign spending for all candidates running in the election. Finally, the explanatory part of the chapter seeks to explain candidates' vote shares in light of campaign variables, candidate experience, and with control for sociodemographic variables. Mattila's findings show that Facebook was considered the most important campaign tool by the candidates. Generally, candidates tended to favor campaign activities that are tailored for individualized, rather than party-focused, campaigning. Regarding campaign spending, the overview shows that candidates spent, on average, 8,000 euros on their campaign. Elected candidates spent 35,000 euros or more. Mattila notes that younger candidates tended to spend more on their campaign than older candidates did. In explaining the candidates' number of votes, Mattila finds that campaign funding is an important factor. Interestingly, though, a focus on digital rather than traditional campaigning appears to yield votes as well. Lastly, candidate experience as either an incumbent MP or as a local councilor has very strong effects on votes as well.

Data [reference to data appendix]

Main data: FNES (including CSES Module)

Other data used: Finnish Parliamentary Candidates Study 2019; CCS; EVA data (Tiihonen & Söderlund, ch. 7). VAA-datasets (Isotalo & von Schoultz, ch. 13).

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Part 1

The state of democracy

2 What Kind of Democracy Do the People Want?

Lauri Rapeli and Kim Strandberg

Introduction and theory

As mentioned in the Introduction, Finnish democracy can be characterized as consensus-seeking and party-centered. With a highly fragmented party system and oversized coalitions, the democratic process requires the ability to collaborate across party lines. Consequently, parties and their leading politicians, especially government ministers, are the key actors in a system that very strongly relies on party-voter ties and representation of constituents' interests.

The party-based, consensual style of democracy enjoys widespread support among the Finnish electorate. In a cross-national comparison, Finnish voters are more satisfied with how democracy works in Finland than the average electorate in other European countries (Rapeli & Koskimaa, 2020). Although general support for democracy seems relatively high in Finland, the question of what kind of democracy people really want is a different matter. How strong is support for the current, strongly representative form of democracy, when compared with alternative models for democratic governance? In this chapter, we examine what type of democracy the Finnish electorate prefers and whether the preference has fluctuated over the years. Furthermore, we study the predictors of various democracy preferences in the 2019 Finnish Parliamentary election.

We approach democratic preferences from the perspective of the vibrant scholarly debate about whether support for democracy is declining among democratic publics, even in established democracies (e.g., Foa & Mounk, 2017). While the evidence for the alleged erosion of democratic support remains inconclusive (e.g., Wuttke et al., 2020; Alexander & Welzel, 2017; Wike & Fetterolf, 2018), an adjacent literature has instead tackled the question whether democratic publics are discontent with the existing democratic processes. Perhaps support for democracy itself is not at risk, but maybe citizens are challenging the current forms of democratic decision-making? This has led scholars to examine ordinary citizens' preferences regarding the democratic process, that is, citizens' ideas about where decision-making power ultimately should be in democracy and how it should be organized. Comparatively, Finland presents a scenario, where satisfaction with democracy remains high, despite the globally declining trend, and where we can expect to find strong, continued support for representative democracy.

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In mainstream research, two influential arguments have sought to explain the reasons behind the contemporary challenge to electoral democracy and the logic behind citizens' democratic process preferences (see also Goldberg et al., 2020). Firstly, people might have grown tired of representative democracy because they sense a disconnect between the established parties and their own needs (Dalton et al., 2004). In order to fix the "trust gap" between the people and their representatives, the disillusioned citizens are looking to transform democracy through more citizen participation. According to Bowler et al. (2007), many studies have found that the push for more participation, and perhaps also for a deliberative version of democracy, comes from an increasingly sophisticated citizenry, and particularly from the younger generations. In this perspective, democratic discontentment is primarily an expression of frustration among an attentive, but distrusting section of the electorate who feel efficacious enough to demand more participation opportunities.

Secondly, according to an opposite logic, a significant portion of democratic publics would instead wish to participate less in politics and let elected representatives take care of all decision-making. Expressed most prominently by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), this type of democracy would resemble the stealth fighter plane, which we know is out there somewhere, although we cannot (usually) see it. In the same manner, people might only want to know that democracy functions in the background, while they go on with their daily lives, with minimal involvement in the democratic process. Hence, scholars have focused on two fundamentally different conceptualizations of democracy, which are distinguishable from one another in terms of how much and what kind of citizen participation they advocate. To a great extent, the choice between these models of democracy becomes a choice between active or passive democratic citizenship, or alternatively, between elite-dominated or citizen-dominated democratic processes.

Previous scholarship has sought to map out the determinants of support for representative, direct, participatory and deliberative democracy (e.g., Bowler et al., 2007; Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Webb, 2013; Goldberg et al., 2020), and even expert-driven democracy (e.g., Rapeli, 2016). In this chapter, we follow this prospering field of literature and examine support for different types of democratic processes using the FNES data from 2003 to 2019. The data allow us to trace the support rates and individual-level determinants of representative, direct, deliberative and stealth democracy.

Representative democracy is here understood as pertaining to the standard model of democracy, with a focus on elections as the mechanism for delegating power from the citizenry to elected office-holders. In the broader spectrum of democratic theory, representative democracy is an elitist form of democracy in the sense that it essentially relegates citizens into voters, whose function in democracy is to vote politicians into office, when called upon to do so in regularly arranged, competitive elections. *Direct democracy*, on the other hand, entails a model where citizens are given a chance to participate in decision-making also through referenda. In direct democracy, ordinary citizens are not only passive political subjects, but are regularly consulted in important societal questions. In a similar fashion, *deliberative*

democracy considers citizens as much more than just voters. Arguably, instead of voting, deliberative democracy emphasizes communication, (public) reasoning, perspective-taking and the power of the strongest argument as the proper basis for democratic decision-making. Debating – or deliberating – stands in the core of the deliberative view of democracy and it offers a very different approach to democracy than the representative model. Finally, *stealth democracy* is perhaps equally radical as it also proposes an alternative to contemporary applications of party-based, representative democracy. It is built on the idea that people do not really want to engage deeply in politics, but that they nevertheless want efficient governance. Hence, in a strict sense, the concept of stealth democracy involves technocratic government by experts, who allocate the available resources based on rationality and evidence, rather than a democracy based on party-voter dynamics and the logic of vote maximizing.

Previous research has produced many useful findings regarding both the structure of democratic process preferences and the individual drivers of those preferences. According to Webb (2013), those who are dissatisfied with the current state of democracy in the United Kingdom support more citizen participation. However, even those who could be categorized as "stealth democrats", and therefore prefer only little citizen participation also support direct democracy. Bengtsson and Mattila (2009) reported similar results from the Finnish context, suggesting that citizens' process preferences may sometimes seem incoherent, at least from a theoretical standpoint. Webb, on the other hand, notes that supporting referendums, while still opposing other, more demanding forms of citizen engagement, can be logically compatible and even share common ground with a populist view of democratic politics, which demands more power to the people. Certainly, it seems that citizens do not consider democratic process preferences in a one-dimensional manner, that consistently follows traditional theoretical trajectories. Font et al. (2015) investigate the structure of such preferences among democratic publics and demonstrate that people often support representative democracy but also want direct forms of engagement. Nevertheless, Font et al. show that among citizens, there is a somewhat clear distinction between supporters of representative and participatory models of democracy. This suggests that citizens' process preferences are roughly aligned according to the choice between more, or less citizen engagement.

When it comes to the individual-level determinants of support for stealth democracy, Bengtsson and Mattila (2009) and Webb (2013) find that support is higher among the disinterested, poorly informed sections of the electorate. Moreover, Bengtsson and Mattila find a sharp ideological contrast. A rightist self-identification is linked with stealth democratic attitudes, while a leftist self-identification is linked with a stronger support for direct democracy. This is consistent with Christensen and von Schoultz (2019), who show that a leftist orientation is a significant predictor of support for deliberative democracy. Bowler et al. (2007) also found increased support for direct democracy both among politically disappointed and politically sophisticated individuals. They conclude that, overall, the most significant driver of demand for more participation opportunities is distrust of politicians. Similarly,

citizens' belief in their own ability to have a say in politics (internal efficacy) and their views on the responsiveness of the system (external efficacy) are factors that some (e.g., Christensen & von Schoultz, 2019) have considered relevant for democracy preferences.

Taken together, these key studies from the field suggest that people hold relatively coherent opinions regarding what kind of democratic processes they prefer. Although the boundaries between the theoretical models are often fluid, a rough dividing line is drawn between a desire for more or less citizen engagement. Among the citizenry, the line appears to be partly ideological, as people in the political left want more participation. Partly, the desire to change the status quo seems driven by a disillusionment with conventional democratic politics. Thus, one could say that there is an ideologically based explanation for certain democracy preferences as well as an explanation based on dissatisfaction/alienation from the current system (see Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009).

In the empirical analyses that follow, we examine both the temporal development in support for representative, direct, deliberative and stealth democracy and the determinants of support for them. As regards temporal change, previous research leads us to assume that there has occurred a shift away from support for representative democracy toward other types of democracy. The assumption is based on the dissatisfaction hypothesis, according to which a growing disenchantment with representative, electoral democracy has increased across established democracies. Although it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the hypothesized effect could be visible in attitudes toward democratic processes, events such as the 2008 economic crisis are likely to have contributed to the increased criticism toward democracy (see, e.g., Wuttke et al., 2020).

In the case of Finland, the historically unprecedented, landslide victory in the 2011 parliamentary elections for the right-wing populist party, the Finns Party, seems symptomatic of democratic disillusionment among the Finnish electorate. Consequently, it seems plausible that support for the standard model of representative democracy would have decreased during approximately the past ten years, while alternative models have simultaneously received more support. Therefore, it seems logical to further assume that the individual-level drivers of support for other models besides representative democracy are also connected to indicators of democratic discontent, such as low political trust. Moreover, previous research strongly suggests that a leftist self-identification increases support for deliberative democracy, while a rightist self-identification increases support for stealth democracy (Christensen & von Schoultz, 2019). For direct democracy, the pattern seems more ambiguous, but following the Bengtsson and Mattila (2009) analysis of Finland, we assume leftist ideology to increase support for it.

Descriptive trends

In this first part of our empirical section, we show how the democracy preferences of the Finnish electorate have developed over time. Support for each type of democracy is here measured with a signpost-indicator strategy whereby one survey

Table 2.1 Indicators of support for each democracy type

Democracy type	*Survey item*
Representative	By voting people can have a say in how things are run
Direct	Important political questions should more frequently be decided by a referendum
Deliberative	Discussions for ordinary citizens should be organized to support representative democracy
Stealth	Finland's matters would be handled better if decision making were left up to independent experts instead of politicians and citizens

Note: All items use Likert scales regarding to what extent respondents agree with the statement: agree fully, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, disagree completely.

item from the FNES surveys 2003–2019 is used for each type of democracy (see Technical appendix of book). The rationale for this strategy was dictated by necessity. Typically, each FNES survey only contained one or two items that indicate support for a specific democracy type. Only support for stealth democracy has several indicators since 2003. For stealth democracy, we opted to go with the indicator that has been most used in studies throughout the world, i.e., support for independent experts to widely handle decision-making instead of politicians and citizens (Bengtsson & Mattila 2009, 1040). The measures are summarized in Table 2.1:

In the literature review, we identified six potential predictors of support for various types of democracy. These were satisfaction with democracy, political interest, left-right ideology, political trust as well as internal and external efficacy.

On to the actual analyses, Table 2.2 depicts the longitudinal trends for the preferences since the 2003 Finnish parliamentary election for each democracy type. The last row in the table shows the change in percentage points between support for the democracy types in 2003 (representative and direct) or in 2007 (deliberative and stealth) and in the latest measurement in 2019.

Overall, the preferences have been stable among the Finnish electorate, and all but stealth democracy have been supported widely throughout the period. It is, thus, clear that a large share of citizens tends to support at least some features of several different types of democracy. A simple correlation analysis (Pearson's correlation) shows that there appears to be two blocks of preferences; support for representative democracy correlates positively with support for deliberative democracy, whereas positive preferences for all *but* representative democracy correlate positively with each other. In a sense, thus, citizens view the different types of democracy as complements to each other more than as supplements.

Longitudinally, representative democracy is nonetheless the most preferred type of democracy with a support ranging between 75 and 87 percent. Support for representative democracy has grown by almost 11 percentage points during 2003 and 2019, while support for direct democracy has declined by as much. Direct- and deliberative democracy are equally preferred in 2003–2015 at around 70 percent support, but the support for direct democracy declined into the 2019 election to around 60 percent. A tentative, albeit likely, explanation for this decline in support for direct democracy is the effect of the Brexit vote in 2016, which received a lot

Table 2.2 Longitudinal development of democracy preferences 2003–2019, percentage having strong or very strong preference, as well as these collapsed, for each democracy type (n in parentheses)

		Representative	*Direct*	*Deliberative*	*Stealth*
2003	Very strong	24.7	35.5	missing	missing
	Strong	46.6	35.8	missing	missing
	Total	71.3 (492)	71.3 (905)		
2007	Very strong	42.5	41.0	27.3	8.1
	Strong	41.7	29.5	48.7	26.5
	Total	84.2 (1,197)	70.5 (1,003)	76.1 (1,081)	34.6 (347)
2011	Very strong	40.8	37.1	24.5	4.1
	Strong	42.5	32.6	45.2	13.0
	Total	83.3 (585)	69.7 (904)	69.7 (905)	17.1 (199)
2015	Very strong	47.6	35.2	26.4	9.6
	Strong	39.9	33.5	43.0	26.0
	Total	87.5 (1,389)	68.7 (1,090)	69.4 (1,102)	35.6 (566)
2019	Very strong	37.5	26.1	25.5	11.0
	Strong	44.6	35.2	51.7	29.4
	Total	82.1 (1,388)	61.3 (933)	77.3 (1,103)	40.4 (566)
	Change in total support (percentage units)	+10.8	−10	+1.2	+5.8

Note: All data has been weighted.

of media attention in Finland (Haugevik et al., 2018). At all elections, support for stealth democracy has been the lowest with a range between 17 and 40 percent support. One could contemplate whether this is partly because there are no real-world examples of stealth democracy being used that the Finnish citizens could relate to. Interestingly, though, there has been a rise in support for stealth democracy that coincided with the decline in support for direct democracy. These longitudinal trends are summarized visually in Figure 2.1.

To summarize, support for representative democracy, at least in terms of citizens' faith in voting as a mechanism for impacting society, has increased in Finland since 2003. Given the stability of high satisfaction with democracy in Finland (see also Chapter 3 on political trust), this finding seems somewhat intuitive. Although purely speculative, we are tempted to interpret this trajectory as a reflection of developments within party politics. As the right-wing populist party, the Finns Party, became one of the largest parties in Finland in the 2011 parliamentary elections, a position they have held since then, the day-to-day party politics was reinvigorated. Their entrance provided an alternative for many voters who were dissatisfied with the existing parties. The Finns Party agenda has also forced other parties to clarify their stands on many pressing issues, which probably has made party-based representative politics more attractive to many people.

Despite these interesting aggregate-level trends, it is, however, plausible that there is significant individual-level variation in support for the various democracy types.

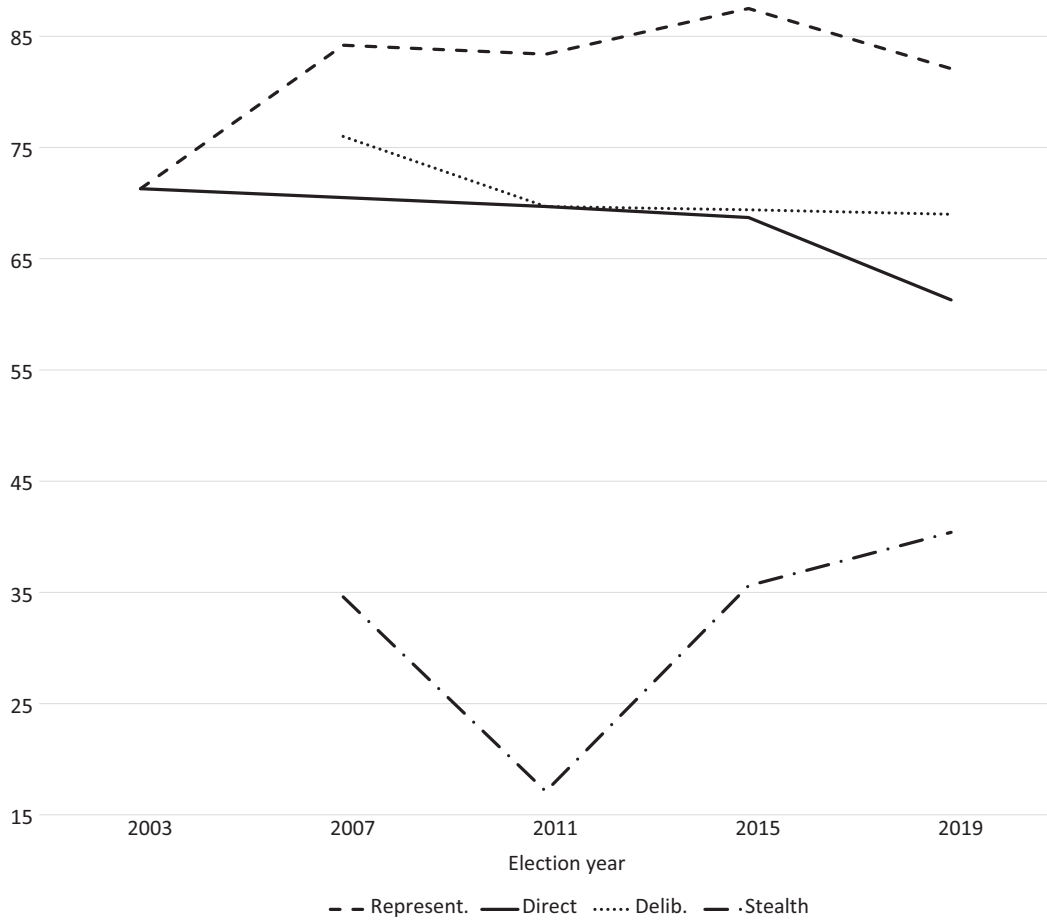

Figure 2.1 Longitudinal trends in support for the different forms of democracy (share indicating very strong, or strong support).

Source: Compiled by authors from FNES data.

Explanatory analyses

This our second part of the findings delves into how democracy preferences can be explained with a special focus to the ideology-based and disaffection-based explanations put forth earlier in the chapter. To explore this, we ran linear regressions predicting each type of democracy preference (Figure 2.2 and Table A2 in appendix):

Of the two main explanatory perspectives, the dissatisfaction-thesis receives much stronger support in Figure 2.2 than the ideology thesis does. Having a left-leaning ideology positively explains support for representative democracy, but the effect is not especially strong. Rather, strong support for representative democracy is explained essentially by being a politically interested citizen who is satisfied with democracy in general and trusts its institutions and actors. Most importantly, people who feel that the current democratic system is responsive to citizens (external efficacy) most strongly predicts strong support for representative democracy.

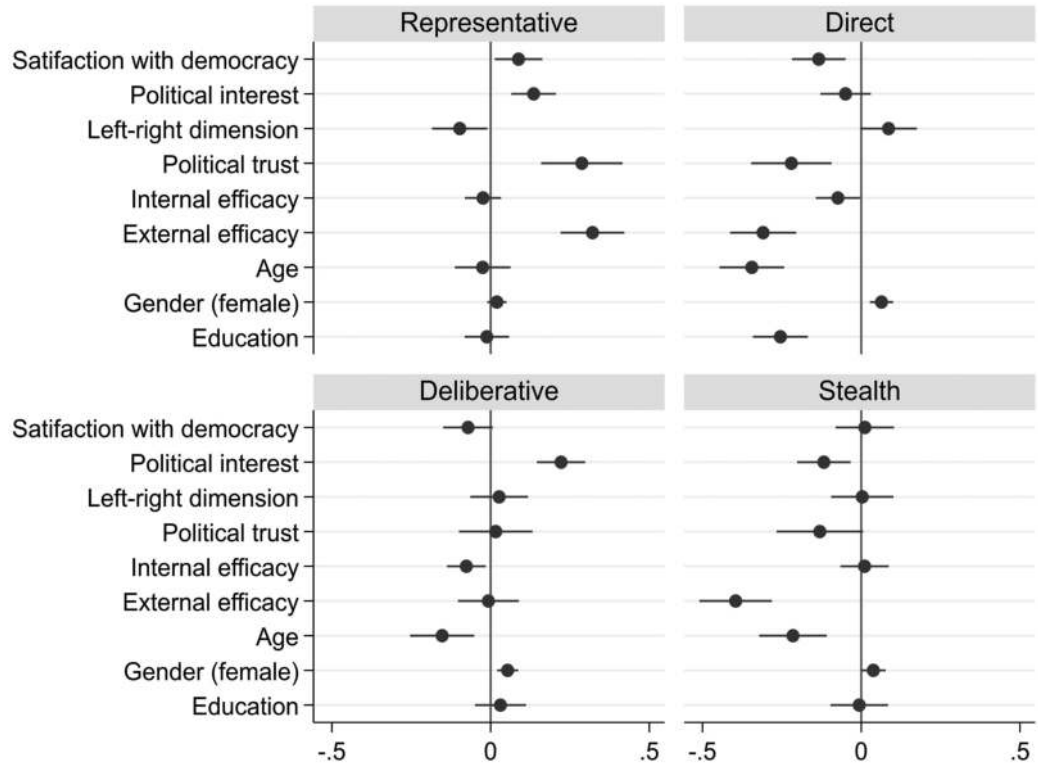

Figure 2.2 Predictors of support for different forms of democracy.

Note: All dependents and predictors are standardized scales between zero and one. Predictors: [Satisfaction with democracy]: scale 0–1 with five steps with 1 indicating respondent being very satisfied with democracy; [Political interest]: scale 0–1 with four steps with 1 indicating respondent having a very high interest in politics; [Left–right ideology]: scale 0–1 with 11 steps where 0 indicates a maximum left–wing position and 1 indicates a maximum right–wing position; [Political trust]: Standardized average level of trust 0–1 where 0 indicates no trust and 1 indicates full trust for three political actors/institutions: the Parliament, political parties, individual politicians. [Internal efficacy]: scale 0–1 with four steps where 1 indicates a very high internal efficacy; [External efficacy]: scale 0–1 with four steps where 1 indicates a very high external efficacy. [age]: respondent age; [gender]: 0=man, 1=woman; [education level]: scale 0–1 with eight steps where 0 indicates only compulsory level education and 1 indicates a post gradual degree at university level.

Regarding support for direct democracy, the explanatory patterns are in stark contrast to those regarding representative democracy albeit that the ideology-thesis again receives only slight support in that right-leaning voters are more supportive of direct democracy. Hence, supporters of direct democracy are citizens who appear dissatisfied with democracy, less trusting of its institutions and actors and who tend to feel that the current system is not responsive to citizens' needs. All covariates were also strong significant predictors of which both the effect of being young and having low education level suggest that the political competence of citizens plays an important part in explaining the support for direct democracy as well.

The model for supporting deliberative democracy has rather weak explanatory power (R^2 = .06), suggesting that the variables in the model are not particularly relevant for explaining why some people support it. The model first and foremost shows that high political interest is the most significant driver of deliberative democratic preferences followed by being dissatisfied with democracy and lower internal efficacy. Being younger and woman are also significant predictors. To some

extent, the explanations for preferring deliberative democracy resemble those of direct democracy but the strong effect of political interest, which was insignificant for direct democracy, is a clear distinction between the two democracy types. It seems that a desire for democratic deliberation is associated with an unusually high level of motivation to engage with politics.

Lastly, we turn our focus to explaining support for stealth democracy, the one type of democracy preference that the descriptive analysis showed had the least support of all types. Here, the model explains 12 percent of the variation (R^2) and points to the dissatisfaction thesis as the driver of stealth democracy preferences. Thus, being uninterested in politics, having low political trust and feeling that the system is unresponsive to citizens' needs (low external efficacy) are significant predictors. Younger age and being woman again retain some explanatory power.

Conclusions

Overall, support for representative democracy in Finland is higher than for other types of democracy and it seems to have increased during the past couple of decades. From the perspective of the crisis of democracy debate, at least in terms of support for a standard form of electoral, party-based democracy, there is no cause for particular concern in Finland.

It is, however, obvious that dissatisfaction with democracy increases support for alternatives to representative democracy, particularly direct democracy. Although on population-level support for direct democracy has declined by 10 percentage points since 2003, individual-level support for direct democracy is driven by exactly those factors that are associated with disappointment with representative democracy: democratic dissatisfaction, lack of political trust and low external efficacy. A desire to reform representative democracy through an increased use of referenda is clearly linked to a sense of disillusionment with democracy, also in Finland.

However, in addition to direct democracy, disillusionment may also lead to increased support for deliberative democracy, depending on the level of political attachment. While the politically disinterested and distrusting want more direct democracy, the politically interested prefer deliberative democracy. In other words, disappointment with how the democracy works has different outcomes depending on how politically aware and interested a person is. Moreover, the politically disengaged to a lesser extent show even some support for stealth democracy, but this pattern is much less prominent.

Women and younger people are more likely to support alternatives to representative democracy. In broad terms, this aligns well with the democratic dissatisfaction hypothesis because women and youth are typically underprivileged even in democratic societies. Although we rely on a minimalistic measurement of support for different democracy types, the findings consistently point toward support for precisely this; the desire for democratic reform among the disadvantaged.

In the case of Finland, it is nevertheless important not to overdramatize the magnitude of the impact of democratic dissatisfaction. Although we find support for the dissatisfaction hypothesis, we also find plenty of stability in democratic preferences and widespread backing for the current form of representative democracy.

However, Finland could be a sobering reminder that underneath the seemingly calm surface, there can be genuine disappointment with democracy, both among the politically active and aware and the politically unattached citizens.

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Appendix

Table 2.A1 Descriptive data for predictors in explanatory analysis 2019 (n = 1,597)

Predictors (0−1)	*Mean*	*Std.dev.*
Satisfaction with democracy	.62	.26
Political interest	.62	.29
Left-right ideology (0=Left 1=Right)	.36	.20
Political trust	.55	.19
External efficacy	.55	.22
Age	.51	.19
Gender (0=Man 1=Woman)	.51	.50
Education level	.48	.23

Table 2.A2 Linear regression predicting preferences for each type of democracy (2019)

	Representative		*Direct*		*Deliberative*		*Stealth*	
	B	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*
Satisfaction with democracy	*.088	.038	**−.134	.043	−.071	.040	.011	.047
Political interest	***.136	.036	−.049	.040	***.222	.039	**−.118	.043
Left–right ideology	*−.097	.044	.086	.046	.027	.046	.003	.050
Political trust	***.287	.065	**−.220	.065	.016	.059	−.130	.069
Internal efficacy	−.024	.029	*−.074	.035	*−.076	.031	.010	.039
External efficacy	***.321	.051	***−.309	.053	−.007	.049	***−.396	.058
Age	−.025	.045	***−.345	.052	**−.153	.052	***−.215	.054
Gender (Woman)	.020	.015	**.064	.019	**.054	.017	.038	.020
Education level	−.019	.036	***−.255	.044	.031	.041	−.006	.046
Constant	***.329	.051	***1.224	.054	***.611	.058	***.832	.060
N	1,349		1,310		1,249		1,231	1,349
R^2	.224		.213		.070		.124	.224
F	***24.93		***37.56		***7.20		***14.64	***24.93

*$p<.05$, **$p<.01$, ***$p<.001$.

3 Finland

A Country of High Political Trust and Weak Political Self-efficacy

Maria Bäck, Thomas Karv and Elina Kestilä-Kekkonen

Introduction

Finland has been described as a high-trusting society, characterised by well-functioning political institutions and a trusting population (Bäck & Kestilä, 2009; Listhaug & Ringdal, 2008; Salminen & Ikola-Norrbacka, 2010; Söderlund, 2019) with high support for democracy (Chapter 2). Thus, public authorities in Finland are perceived as both honest and trustworthy (Salminen & Ikola-Norrbacka, 2010, 654). Therefore, it is no surprise that since 1995, Finland has constantly been ranked as one of the least corrupt countries in the world, according to the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International, 2021). Finland is, subsequently, together with the rest of the Nordic countries, often distinguished as a role model for its clean and honest government (Erlingsson & Kristinsson, 2020; Zook, 2009). High quality of government has been described as one of the success factors across the Nordic countries (Haveri, 2015), and it has contributed to fostering high levels of political trust (Salminen & Ikola-Norrback, 2010). Consequently, Finland has repeatedly been ranked among the most politically trusting countries in the world (Bäck & Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2019).

However, a recent OECD report, *Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions in Finland* (2021), concludes that while Finland may boast with high trust figures, the level of internal political efficacy, henceforth political self-efficacy, of the Finns is, on average, lower in a European comparison. Political self-efficacy refers to *a citizen's subjective assessment of whether it is possible to understand and influence political processes* (Levy, 2013, 359). In addition to a modest level of political self-efficacy among the Finns in general, previous studies have shown that there are differences *between* social groups when it comes to political efficacy in Finland (Karv et al., 2022). One of the most notable of these differences is the gender gap: The Finnish National Election Study (FNES 2019) shows that one-fifth of men, but over one-quarter of women, strongly agree with the statement that "politics is sometimes so complicated that I do not understand what is going on". Added to this, there is a significant educational gap: while only 7 percent of respondents having university degrees strongly agree with the statement, the corresponding share for those who have only completed comprehensive school is 40 percent. Instead, the differences between age groups are rather small. While 28 percent of the youngest

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age group (18–24 years) and 23 percent of the oldest age group demonstrate low political efficacy, the share is a bit over or under 20 percent in other age groups. The same patterns have also been observed in previous election studies (e.g., Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2015). The story changes slightly when examining group-level differences in political trust. No other social background variables have had a substantial effect on political trust besides education, especially when other strong determinants of political trust, such as social capital, are controlled for (Bäck & Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2009).

The balance between political self-efficacy and political trust creates groups of citizens who deviate in their relationship with the political system. According to Sniderman (1981), individual citizens may be classified as either *supportive* or *committed citizens.* While the supportive citizens base their evaluation of the political system on informed citizenship, i.e., a balanced judgement and awareness of the shortcomings of it, the committed citizens display a rather uncritical loyalty to the government. In order to reach its full potential, trust in the democratic system should be based on constant evaluation of the accountability of the system (Norris, 2011). However, other combinations of political self-efficacy and political trust are possible. Well-informed citizens may withdraw their trust if they feel that the system is not acting according to their normative expectations. We will here call them *critical citizens.* Moreover, citizens may also feel that they have no political competence (i.e., their political self-efficacy is weak) and they do not trust the system itself. This group of citizens we call *alienated citizens*.

In this chapter, we set out to explore how political self-efficacy and political trust are related in the Finnish electorate. Since a low level of trust is neither good nor bad, we should delve deeper into its roots and explore to what extent the (high or low) trust levels are based on a critical evaluation of the system and an informed citizenship.

Political trust and political self-efficacy

Political trust is based on an evaluative judgement of a political object derived from normative expectations about the performance of the political object (Hetherington, 1998; Miller, 1974). A trust judgement, therefore, reflects an individual's assessment about the trustworthiness of someone or something and is, thus, relational but seldom unconditional (Levi & Stoker, 2000, 476). Hence, a citizen might express low levels of trust in the incumbent government, while expressing high levels of trust in one or a few of the Ministers. On a broader societal level, political trust has been described as a glue that keeps the political system together (van der Meer, 2010, 518) and as something vital for a well-functioning democracy (Mishler & Rose, 2001). Conversely, declining levels of political trust are considered a significant threat to the well-being of democracies, as low-trusting citizens are less likely to follow laws (Marien & Hooghe, 2011) and vote in elections (Grönlund & Setälä, 2007), contributing to a more unstable political community. Hence, political trust could even be perceived as a success criterion for democracies (Listhaug & Ringdal, 2008, 131).

Political trust is affected by the social surroundings of individuals and the experienced quality of local life (Fitzgerald & Wolak, 2016; Rahn & Rudolph, 2005; Wolak, 2018). According to Reeves and Gimpel (2012, 509), citizens use the observations they make in their everyday lives to shape their opinions. Studies have also shown that citizens are prone to use cognitive shortcuts, e.g., heuristics, when asked to make trust judgements (Anderson, 1998; Rudolph, 2017). At the national level, the levels of political trust are, thus, expected to increase when the future is seemingly getting brighter. For instance, at the macro level, better economic performance and well-functioning political institutions have repeatedly been shown to have a positive effect on political trust (Fagerland Kroknes et al., 2015; Hetherington & Rudolph, 2008; Mishler & Rose, 2001; Rahn & Rudolph, 2005; Weinschenk & Helpap, 2015).

Broadly speaking, political efficacy can be conceptualised as a norm, a disposition or a behaviour: whether citizens *should be able* to influence politics, whether they feel that *they are able* to do so or *whether they actually do* influence it (Abramson, 1972). Here, however, the attitudinal component is crucial: how a citizen feels about his or her own possibilities to have a say in a society. From this perspective, political efficacy is first and foremost a disposition and can be further divided into *internal*, *external* and *collective* efficacy. Internal efficacy is based on the evaluation of a citizen's own abilities while external efficacy is linked to the evaluation responsiveness of the political system to the needs of the citizens and collective efficacy refers to the evaluated ability of a group to pursue its goals. In this chapter, we focus on the internal efficacy or *political self-efficacy*, while still acknowledging that internal and external efficacy are empirically connected (e.g., Balch, 1974; Craig, 1979). Strong external efficacy, i.e., a belief in the responsiveness of the political system, also enables the development of stronger political self-efficacy. In turn, strong internal efficacy enables the critical outlook to the political system (Coleman & Davis, 1976).

While the concepts of external political efficacy and political trust are hardly separable – they both evaluate the extent to which the political system responds to the normative expectations of the public (see, however, e.g., Craig et al., 1990) – the relationship between political trust and political self-efficacy is less evident and its impact is likely to be more indirect. Political self-efficacy is both theoretically and empirically strongly related to several key measurements of political competence: political knowledge, educational attainment, and especially political interest, which is necessary to acquire information about politics (Craig & Maggiotto, 1982). Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that some of the impact of political socialisation on political trust is likely to be channelled through political self-efficacy. The intervening effect of political self-efficacy on political trust is likely to be related to alienation from the political system. Since the political system, at its simplest, refers to the strength of the relationship between the citizen and the state, this bond is severely weakened if the citizen has no skills or knowledge to neither understand what the state does, nor to affect its decisions (e.g., Finifter, 1970).

Descriptive trends

As mentioned, Finland is widely perceived as a high-trusting society. This assessment is confirmed after scrutinising country-level survey data from the European Social Survey (ESS), collected across Europe in 2018.[1] The ESS-data show that regardless of the political object (parliament, legal system, police, politicians, political parties, European Parliament or United Nations), the level of trust is considerably higher in Finland than in Europe on average. However, this is also the case for the other four Nordic countries (Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). Hence, the well-established image of the Nordic countries as highly politically trusting societies still seems to hold (see, e.g., Listhaug & Ringdal, 2008).

We now continue by showing how political trust in Finland has developed over time and how it differs between various political objects. Political trust is usually measured with survey items asking the respondent to either rate the trustworthiness of various political objects on a scale (i.e., how much do you trust?) or by a binary assessment (i.e., do you trust?) (Levi & Stoker, 2000). Hence, depending on whether one uses an 11-point scale (0–10) or a binary assessment (Yes/No), the trust assessment might somewhat differ.

Since 2011, the FNES has included an array of survey questions asking the respondents to rate the trustworthiness of various political objects on a scale from zero to ten, where zero indicates no trust at all and ten indicates complete trust. This makes it possible to compare the average levels of trust during three periods: 2011, 2015 and 2019. Based on the data from 2019, the President is the most trusted, followed by the police and the universities and research institutions. At the other end of the spectrum, the European Union (EU) is the least trusted, with politicians and major corporations completing the bottom three. In general, there do not seem to be any larger fluctuations in the levels of trust over time, and the trust evaluations could, therefore, be considered relatively stable in Finland. Still, in relation to both the Government and the Parliament, the trend is negative in terms of trust evaluations (see Figure 3.1).

Measuring political self-efficacy is not straightforward, and while several attempts have been made to find commonly accepted measures (see, e.g., Craig et al., 1990; Morrell, 2003), there is little consensus in the field, especially when reviewing data and surveys from different countries. Some scholars have utilised a variety of "efficacy scales" (e.g., Niemi et al., 1991; Sapiro & Conover, 1997), whereas others have relied on single-item solutions (Bennet, 1997; Michelson, 2000). An in-depth discussion on these measurement problems is, however, beyond the scope of this chapter. Unlike with political trust, the level of political self-efficacy in Finland is broadly in line with the rest of Europe (ESS 2018).[2] However, looking at political self-efficacy from a Nordic perspective, Finland appears to deviate. According to the data from the ESS 2018, the mean value for political self-efficacy in Finland was 2.2 (on a five-point scale), being clearly lower than in the other Nordic countries (Denmark 2.7, Iceland 2.8, Norway 2.7 and Sweden 2.6). Given that the level of political trust in Finland is in line with the other Nordic countries and above the European average, the discrepancy regarding political self-efficacy is quite striking.

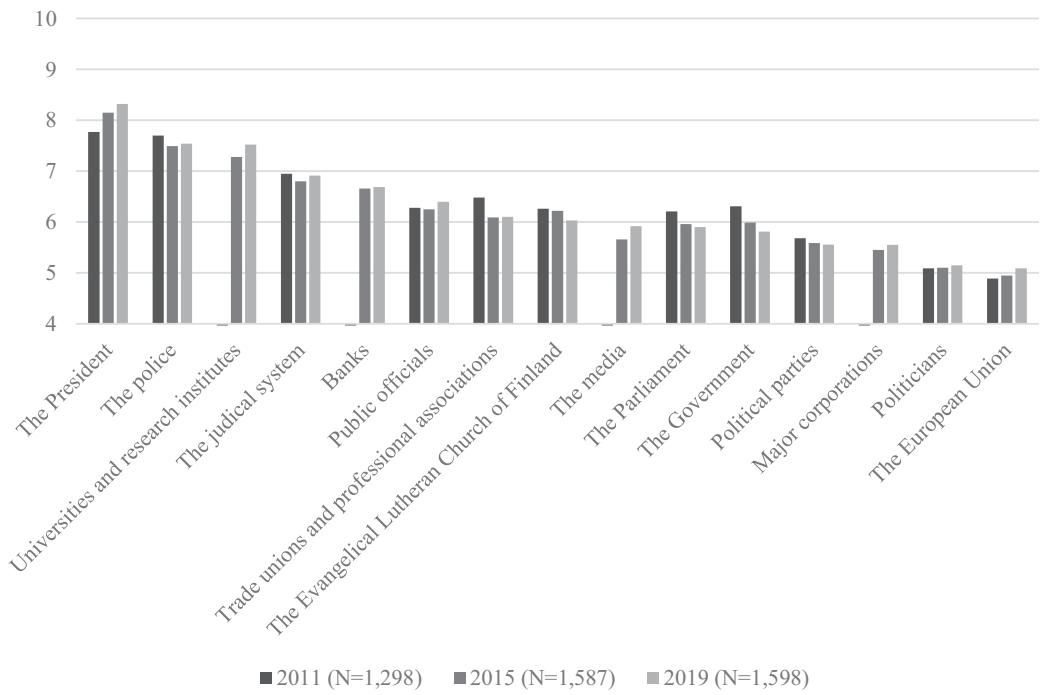

Figure 3.1 Trust in Political Institutions in Finland, 2011–2019 (FNES).

In order to measure the development of political self-efficacy in Finland over time, we use an item related to subjective evaluation of the respondents' political understanding. It is derived from a battery of statements (*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*) and the statement is as follows: "*Sometimes politics seems so complicated that I cannot quite understand what is going on*". The survey item is considered a standard item for measuring political self-efficacy (see, e.g., Niemi et al., 1991). Disagreement with the statement is coded as reflecting a more "efficacious" answer, on a four-point scale ranging from 0–3 and the survey item has been included repeatedly by the FNES since 2003. The results show that the level of political self-efficacy has actually increased in Finland for each survey during this period (see Figure 3.2).

This overview shows that political trust is comparatively high in Finland and has remained quite stable over time. On the other hand, even if political self-efficacy in Finland has slightly increased for each FNES survey since 2003, it is still comparatively lower in Finland in relation to political trust. Hence, Finland could still be considered a highly politically trusting society but simultaneously as a society with a comparatively low level of political self-efficacy. Following this, we now continue with some explanatory analyses.

Explanatory analyses

In order to examine the relationship between political self-efficacy and political trust, we use the FNES 2019. Political trust, which constitutes the

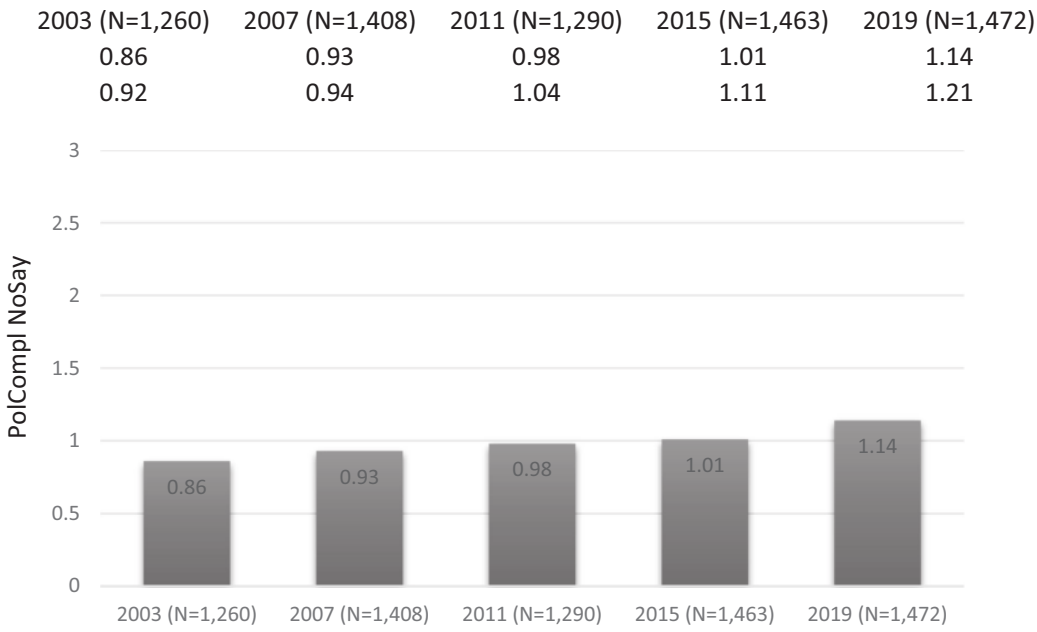

Figure 3.2 Political self-efficacy in Finland, 2003–2019 (FNES).

dependent variable in our linear (OLS) regression analysis, is measured with an index consisting of five survey questions measuring trust in the president, political parties, the parliament, the government and politicians (Cronbach's alpha 0.876). The index, as the separate questions it consists of, is measured on an 11-point scale, where 0 indicates the lowest trust and 10 indicates the highest trust.

The regression analysis is run in three steps. The first step includes only the main independent variable of interest, namely, *political self-efficacy.* To measure political self-efficacy, we employ the same single survey item used for the longitudinal overview in the previous section, i.e., *Sometimes politics seems so complicated that I cannot really understand what is going on*. Answers are given on an ordinal scale (completely agree, agree, disagree, completely disagree). Hence, those who agree with the statement have lower political self-efficacy than those who disagree.

The second step includes basic control variables related to social background, namely, *gender* and *age*, which, according to previous studies, have not proven to be strong predictors of political trust (Bäck et al., 2016, 381), and *education*. Some studies have shown a positive effect of education on political trust (e.g., Ugur-Cinar et al., 2020; Marien & Hooghe, 2011), but there are also studies that indicate the opposite. It is also possible that the capacity to be more critical of the political system increases with higher education (Listhaug, 1995), in line with the ideas of "the critical citizen".

The third model includes a number of variables that the ample literature and previous empirical studies have shown to explain variations in political trust. *Social trust* is measured with the commonly used 11-point scale reading *Generally speaking, do you think that most people can be trusted, or can you never be too*

careful? (0= "can't be too careful", 10= "most people can be trusted") and we expect the regression coefficients to be positive: higher social trust leads to higher political trust. Attachment to the political system can be measured in a variety of ways, and citizens who feel that they are highly attached to the political system are expected to display higher political trust. We measure *political interest* with the question *How interested are you in politics?* The variable is dummy-coded to represent those who are interested ("very interested" or "interested to some extent") and those who are not interested ("not very interested" or "not interested at all"). For *party identification,* we use a question reading *Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular party?* (yes/no).

The political trust of citizens is also affected by their evaluations of how the political system is performing. Especially, evaluations of the state of the economy and how satisfied the citizens are with how the government is dealing with economic fluctuations have been deemed relevant for the formation of political trust (Banducci et al., 1999; Levi & Stoker, 2000; Mishler & Rose, 2001; Bäck et al., 2016). Thus, we include variables that measure the respondents' *evaluations of the state of economy, evaluations of the competence of the MPs* and how s*atisfied they were with the previous government*. Further, to measure evaluations of the state of economy, we use the question *In your opinion, how has the state of economy in Finland changed over the past twelve months?* In the regression, we compare positive evaluations ("has gotten much or somewhat better") and negative evaluations ("has gotten much or somewhat worse") with the reference category, consisting of those who indicated that they felt that the state of the economy has stayed the same. Moreover, we explore the role of evaluations of the competence of the MPs with the question *What do you think about the following statement? Finnish Members of Parliament are competent.* Those who "agree" or "somewhat agree" with the statement are coded as having a positive evaluation of the competence of the MPs, whereas those who "disagree" or "somewhat disagree" provide a negative evaluation. Finally, we evaluate the respondents' satisfaction with the previous government with the survey question: *How good or bad a job do you think the Government led by Prime Minister Sipilä did over the past four years?* We compare those who were satisfied (very good job/good job) and those who were dissatisfied (bad job/very bad job) with the reference category of respondents who were neutral (neither a good nor a bad job).

Turning to the results of the regression analysis, we find that political efficacy, on its own (Model 1), only has a very small effect on political trust and that the effect is not significant for those who are the most efficacious. Also, as expected, adding the social background variables gender, age and education does not readily improve the model (Model 2), increasing the explained variance to just over 8 percent.

While political self-efficacy turns out to be a rather weak, albeit significant, predictor of political trust in the final regression model (Model 3), we further explored its marginal effect on political trust in Finland. This control excercize revealed that the level of political trust is highest among those respondents who agree or somewhat agree with the statement that politics is sometimes complicated, i.e., respondents with lower political self-efficacy. Conversely, those who are the most efficacious and completely

Table 3.1 Block model regression analysis (OLS) for factors associated with political trust (FNES 2019)

	Model 1	*Model 1*	*Model 3*
Political self-efficacy (ref. "completely agree")			
Somewhat agree	0.427 (0.154)**	0.302 (0.151)*	−0.090 (0.150)
Somewhat disagree	0.570 (0.165)***	0.443 (0.165)**	0.137 (0.168)
Completely disagree	0.077 (0.238)	−0.167 (0.236)	−0.664 (0.208)***
Gender (ref. "female")		−0.129 (0.117)	−0.182 (0.108)
Age		0.021 (0.003)***	0.009 (0.003)**
Education (ref. "Primary or lower secondary")			
Short vocational/college level		0.608 (0.152)***	0.486 (0.140)***
Upper secondary		0.933 (0.210)***	0.390 (0.206)
University of applied sciences degree		1.060 (0.230)***	0.283 (0.211)
University degree		0.957 (0.208)***	0.453 (0.194)*
Social trust (scale 0–10)			0.230 (0.024)***
Political interest (ref. "not interested")			0.378 (0.145)**
Party identification (ref. "do not feel close to any party")			0.521 (0.110)***
Evaluation of Finnish MPs (ref. "not competent")			1.002 (0.118)***
Satisfaction with previous government (ref. "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied")			
Very or somewhat satisfied			0.250 (0.147)
Very or somewhat dissatisfied			−0.273 (0.137)*
Evaluation of the economy (ref. "no change")			
Economy has improved			0.303 (0.129)*
Economy has worsened			−0.154 (0.137)
Constant	5.977 (0.121)***	4.458 (0.253)***	2.947 (0.312)***
Adj. R^2	0.015	0.082	0.417

Notes: Unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. $^{***}p<0.001$, $^{**}p<0.01$, $^{*}p<0.05$. All data have been weighted.

disagree with the statement demonstrate much lower political trust than those who have low political self-efficacy. The regression coefficient is significant only for those who completely disagree, indicating that the most efficacious respondents are, in fact, the least trusting. On the one hand, this supports, at least to some extent, the idea of the "critical citizens" whose informed scepticism has translated into lower political trust. On the other hand, it also indicates that there might be some amount of blind faith among those who feel that politics is complicated (low efficacy) but who still demonstrate a fairly high level of political trust.

The final model of the regression analysis also reveals that the variables with the strongest effect on political trust are social trust, party identification and positive evaluations of the MPs' competence. Adding these variables and indicators of evaluations of the economy and the performance of the government, the model explains 41.7 percent of the variation of political trust in Finland. While satisfaction with the previous government and evaluations of the economy have a modest impact, evaluations of the competence of the MPs turn out to be a very strong predictor of trust. Respondents who are interested in politics are also significantly more trusting than those who are not.

Conclusions

This chapter has studied the political trust of the Finnish citizens around the Parliamentary elections of 2019, with a special focus on the role of political self-efficacy. While political trust is high in Finland, both in international comparisons and when evaluating the level of political trust over time, the level of political self-efficacy among the Finns is weaker. Since the citizens' level of political attachment has previously been found to explain the degree of political trust, we wanted to explore how political self-efficacy and political trust are related in the Finnish electorate.

The results show that while we initially might have leaned towards expecting the relationship to be the other way around, with higher political self-efficacy being connected to higher political trust, the results, instead, support the idea of the critical citizen: the higher the political self-efficacy, the lower the political trust. This is, however, not necessarily bad news for democracy. On the contrary, it might be considered more worrying if political trust is independent of how well citizens understand the political system and its processes. It could be argued that in an ideal democracy, political trust is based on informed and critical citizenship and informed scepticism, not on blind faith and ignorance. Thus, an ideal democracy would, perhaps, consist of only supportive and critical citizens. Clearly, it would be beneficial for democracy to have representatives whose trustworthiness is based on the support of politically self-efficacious citizens who constantly and critically evaluate the political system. In a similar vein, a democracy should have a certain amount of informed distrust, which is the essence for its renewal. Based on the analysis, it seems that in Finland, the critical citizens dominate over the supportive ones, which partly explains the discrepancy between political self-efficacy and political trust in a cross-country comparison.

Interestingly, the empirical analysis also revealed that political interest matters to the relationship between political trust and political self-efficacy, but only for those who have low self-efficacy. This result explains the existence of the committed citizens and separates them from the alienated ones. Although not trusting their own capabilities to participate in politics, the committed citizens still have some curiosity when it comes to politics, which engages them and attaches them to the political system at some level. The situation is more desperate for the alienated citizens who have no interest in politics, do not feel competent to understand it and have no trust

in the system itself. Political knowledge and interest in public matters are central prerequisites for citizen involvement and, as Putnam (2000, 35) aptly writes: "If you don't know the rules of the game and the players and don't care about the outcome, you're unlikely to try playing yourself". Since we know that all these three components matter for political participation, this sends a worrying message to both scholars and decision-makers who have already been concerned about the differentiation of political participation in Finland (see Chapter 5). Any efforts that focus on increasing the Finnish citizens' political self-efficacy would, therefore, likely further benefit their attachment to the political system and their interest in participating in politics.

Notes

1 Europe here includes respondents from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Sweden, Slovenia and Slovakia.
2 Measurement of political self-efficacy in ESS 2018: '*How confident are you in your own ability to participate in politics?*'. Scale from 1 to 5, with a higher value indicating a more efficacious answer.

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4 In Safe Elections, Democracy Wins

Perceptions of Electoral Harassment among Candidates and Voters

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Introduction

In the 2020s, European liberal democracies are facing various forms of electoral interference and other external and internal attempts to cultivate disruption and distrust. These threats, often grouped under the umbrella of electoral harassment, target the core values of liberal democracy with a systematic objective to undermine its basis as the legitimate form of government (cf. Wigell, 2019). Electoral harassment may be accomplished through multiple instruments, such as hacking the official voter registers and manipulating votes, cyber-attacking, doxing, trolling and disseminating fake news (e.g., Garnett & Zavadskaya, 2017). Relying on non-militant means, electoral harassment is qualitatively different from electoral violence (Birch et al., 2020) and hence more difficult to detect due to its hybrid character (Giannopoulos et al., 2021).

Most importantly, electoral harassment seems to be effective in jeopardizing electoral integrity, which may have serious implications for both candidates and voters. Intimidation and harassment that politicians nowadays often have to face particularly on social media platforms (e.g., Akhtar & Morrison, 2019; Gorrell et al., 2018, 2021; Southern & Harmer, 2021) may erect mental barriers to running for office, making politics appear as an unpleasant or even unsafe profession. The risk of withdrawal because of potential harassment could be especially high for candidates with migrant or other minority background which narrows prerequisites for more balanced descriptive representation. Also, voters may be discouraged and demobilized because of harassment. It has been shown that allegations of fake news, massive fraud and voter suppression combined with intelligence reports of meddling by foreign powers not only weaken citizens' perception of electoral integrity but also their overall satisfaction with how democracy works (Norris, 2019). The Capitol Hill insurrection (January 6, 2021) represented a certain culmination point in which Trump supporters were trying to prevent a joint session of Congress from counting the electoral college votes in an attempt to "restore democracy" after what they had perceived as "stolen" elections. As a result, one of the core principles of electoral democracy became violated, namely that the outcome of fair elections should always be respected irrespective of partisan goals (Foa & Mounk, 2017, 15).

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In this chapter, we examine experiences of electoral harassment among candidates and voters based on the Finnish National Election Study 2019 (n = 697) and the Finnish Parliamentary Candidates Study 2019 (n = 721) with identical indicators of harassment (see Technical Appendix for description of datasets). First, we study the prevalence of observations of harassment in both groups. Traditionally, Finnish multiparty governments and consensual decision-making have contributed to a moderate and egalitarian political culture (Karvonen, 2014) accompanied by a high commitment to the integrity and decency of electoral campaigning. Reflecting such heritage, Finland was rated second out of 167 countries in the 2019 report of electoral integrity worldwide (Norris & Grömping, 2019) while 82 percent of respondents of the Finnish National Election Study 2019 (FSD3467) agreed that there was no evidence of electoral fraud. Yet, there are several examples of a rapid change including violent attacks against politicians and fabricated videos. This implies that candidates may be more sensitive to detect harassment in electoral surroundings. Second, we explore whether some groups, such as women, young and leading candidates (Collignon & Rüdig, 2020, 2021) and voters with lower level of political trust and satisfaction with democracy (cf. Norris, 2019) are more inclined to detect electoral harassment than others. Altogether, Finland with its consensual political culture, comparatively high level of political and social trust and fairly homogeneous electorate (see Chapters 1 and 3 in this book) constitutes an ideal least-likely case to study the magnitude and correlates of electoral harassment: if found there, it will most probably be even more severe problem elsewhere.

Electoral harassment targeted against candidates and voters

Electoral harassment constitutes one dimension in the framework of hybrid threats (Giannopoulos et al., 2021). It can be defined as a non-militant action characterized by a variety of *actors*, *forms*, and *platforms* with a broader objective to cause confusion, distrust and demobilization. For instance, rumors about massive electoral fraud can decrease voters' confidence in political institutions and cause dissatisfaction with the overall performance of the democratic regime. The other core objective is to weaken unity and the sense of intergroup solidarity both at national and supranational level, which can be done by emphasizing the existing divisions and cleavages and provoking new ones (e.g., Fernquist et al., 2020). Both governmental and nongovernmental actors may initiate electoral harassment. Nation-states are often the most effective in their harassment attempts (Mohan & Wall, 2019) but also extremist movements as well as individual citizens can become engaged. Forms of harassment, in turn, may vary from (cyber)technical to (cyber)psychological means. While the former refers to a concrete violation, such as breaking into information systems and leaking the content to the public, the latter includes more subtle ways to influence voters' attitudes and behavior (e.g., Rugge, 2018). Often these two also interact. Finally, harassment can take place in multiple platforms ranging from digital to physical, nonverbal to verbal and social to nonsocial.

Electoral harassment is targeted against both candidates and voters but through different mechanisms. *Regarding candidates*, the primary goal is to decrease

willingness and ability to conduct active campaigning. When assessing the pros and cons of running for office, candidates are considering several aspects. First, how large is the risk of becoming harassed and what will it mean in terms of reputation maintenance, which is increasingly difficult in the contemporary hybrid media landscape (see Laaksonen, 2017). Being a target of unfounded rumors, accusations, or fabricated videos, for instance, may cause permanent damage to a candidate's reputation and trustworthiness. The second consideration concerns the safety of campaigning. The digital campaigning environment opens various avenues for information security crimes besides information operations that aim to jeopardize a candidate's reputation. Both parties and candidates are vulnerable to hacking which effects can be further intensified by distributing information by social media accounts, like in the 2019 French presidential elections (Vilmer, 2019). Finally, candidates must have confidence in the voting process and vote counting. If violations of both seem possible or even likely, campaigning may seem like a waste of time and effort.

While the threat of harassment is harmful for all candidates, some groups may be particularly vulnerable. Previous research conducted in the United Kingdom context has shown that visibility of a candidate intersects with age and gender, making women, young and incumbents as well as leading candidates more likely targets of harassment and intimidation (Collignon & Rüdig, 2020, 2021). Also, party affiliation was found to play a role in a sense that the Conservative Party candidates face more harassment (Collignon & Rüdig, 2020). These findings suggest that it is not candidates positioned in margins who face most harassment but instead those who stand out either in terms of their personal characteristics, incumbency status or success in electoral race. Such tendency might be particularly pronounced in the Finnish open-list system with mandatory preferential voting which puts the individual candidates in the spotlight alongside with their parties. Candidates who themselves are more inclined to experience harassment are probably also more sensitive to detect and report it even at a more general level. Hence, we expect to find a similar pattern than in previous studies, namely that *female, young and more recognizable and visible candidates are more likely to report observations of harassment than others (H1)*.

Concerning voters, the primary goal of electoral harassment is to undermine the trust in political institutions and the overall support for democracy (Norris, 2019). Suspicions of electoral fraud and unfairness may also decrease citizens' motivation to participate the elections (Birch, 2010) particularly among better-educated segments of electorate who have more critical capacities to evaluate system vulnerabilities (cf. Croke et al., 2016). However, these associations might also work other way around: those who have more capacities for critical assessment and less confidence in political institutions, who are discontent with the way democracy work and who follow politics closely may be more attentive to signs of harassment. Hence, we expect that *voters with a higher level of education, interest in politics and engagement in campaigning and a lower level of political trust and satisfaction with democracy are more likely to report observations of harassment than others (H2)*.

Analysis and results

Descriptive analysis

Our analyses are based on the Finnish Parliamentary Candidates Study 2019 (Kestilä-Kekkonen & von Schoultz, 2020) and the Finnish National Election Study 2019 (FSD3467). Both questionnaires included identical questions on experiences of electoral harassment.

We start our analysis by performing a descriptive comparison between candidates and voters to identify potential differences in observations of different types of electoral harassment between the two groups. The respondents were posed the question "Which of the following forms of electoral harassment did you notice in the 2019 parliamentary elections" followed by a list of nine forms. The target of the harassment was purposefully left unspecified, implying that the experiences do not need to be personal. This open formulation was chosen to ensure the comparability between the two groups as candidates are more likely to encounter personal harassment than voters on average.

Figure 4.1 shows the shares of candidates and voters per each observed form. The most noteworthy finding concerns the prevalence of harassment observations which is relatively low among voters but considerably higher among candidates. This pattern persists for each type of harassment. The differences between candidates and voters are most pronounced in "milder" forms of harassment that would typically take place on social media, including (1) spreading disinformation, (2) defaming campaigns against individual candidates, (3) website jamming or harassment of online accounts and (4) influencing political opinions and provoking conflict. These four modes are noticed by over half of the candidates, whereas the corresponding figures are significantly lower among voters (by at least 20 percentage points or more).

Observations regarding voice and video manipulations or spreading fake documents, contesting the reliability of the election result and releasing fake polls have a prevalence around 20 percent among the candidates. Again, the corresponding figures are much lower among voters (less than 10 percent). The least common types of harassment include manipulation of the election result or widespread breach of the secret ballot and hacks and data leaks, observed by less than 10 percent of the candidates and voters.

Besides looking at different forms of electoral harassment individually, it is also useful to compare the magnitude of observed harassment among candidates and voters. Here, we summed all nine items into a single "observed electoral harassment" index (OEH, ranging from 0 to 9), constructed separately for both candidates and voters. We tested its reliability by calculating Cronbach's alpha values, which were 0.76 for candidates and 0.71 for voters. Figure 4.2 shows that candidates observed 3.14 and voters 1.24 forms of electoral harassment on average. While approximately 90 percent of candidates noticed at least one form of harassment, nearly half of the voters did not detect any form of harassment and not a single voter detected all forms. These results further confirm that candidates observe more electoral harassment than voters.

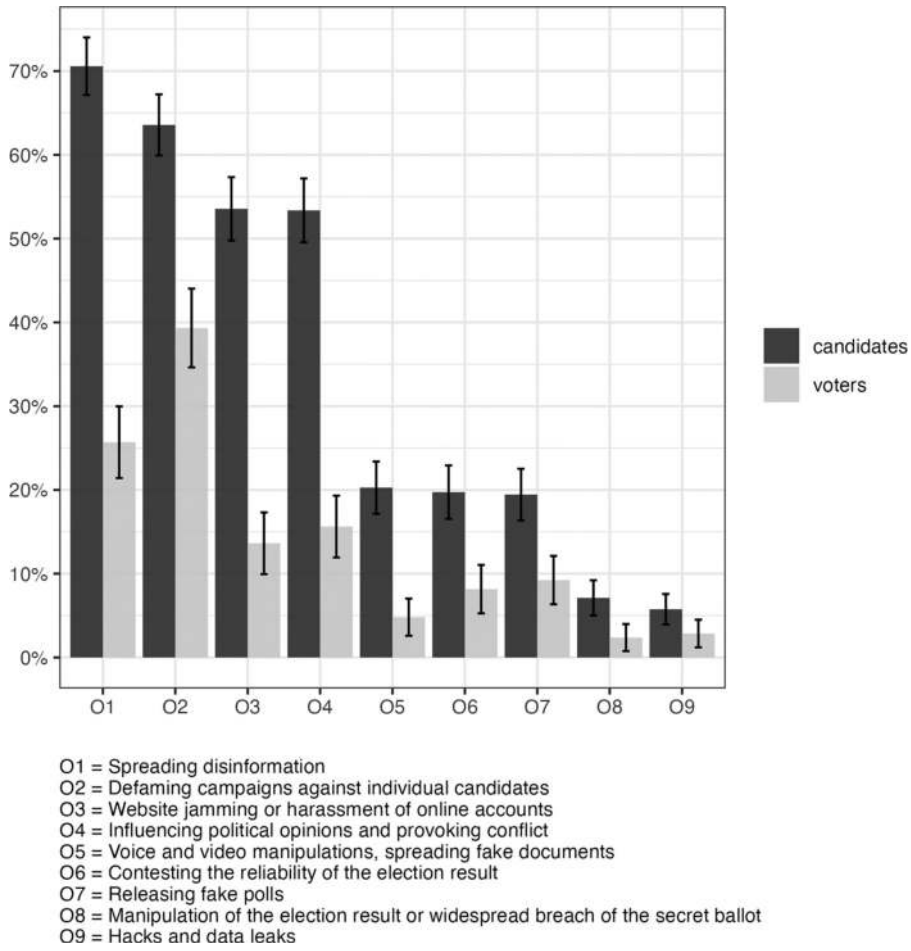

Figure 4.1 Various forms of observed electoral harassment in the 2019 parliamentary elections among candidates and voters. Error bars are set at 95 percent confidence level.

Sources: Finnish Parliamentary Candidates Study 2019 and Finnish National Election Study 2019.

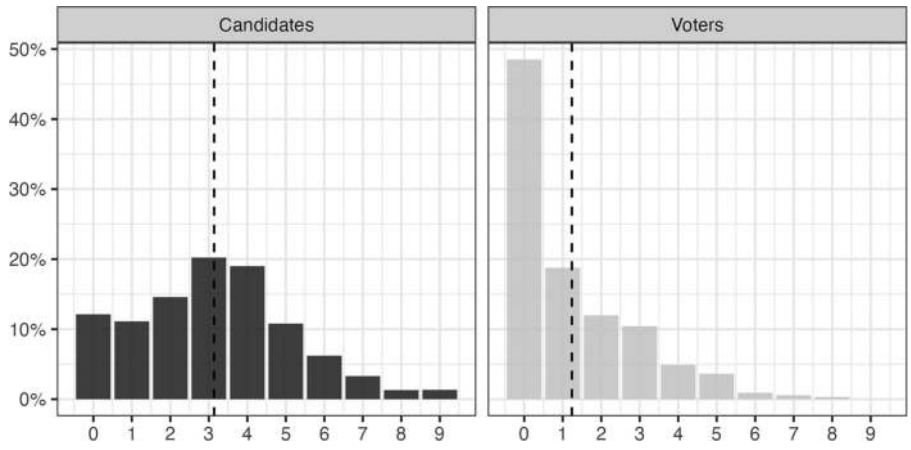

Figure 4.2 Histograms of candidates' and voters' observed electoral harassment index (OEH) in the 2019 parliamentary elections (mean value marked as dashed line).

Sources: Finnish Parliamentary Candidates Study 2019 and Finnish National Election Study 2019.

Regression analysis

In this second part of our analysis, we ran regression models for both candidate and voters to study the associations between observed electoral harassment and variables of interest and to test our hypotheses. In the model for candidates, we use incumbency, seat in local council and candidacy in previous parliamentary elections as indicators of recognition and the role of social media in personal campaigning as an indicator of visibility. We also include gender and age to explore the extent to which female and young candidates are more sensitive to electoral harassment. In line with previous studies, we include party affiliation[1] although without clear expectation of its association. Mother tongue, education and residential area are used as control variables. To test voter-related hypotheses, we use education, the use of social media to follow elections (as an indicator of campaign engagement), interest in politics, trust in politicians and satisfaction with democracy. In the case of candidates, we also add party affiliation in the model. Gender, age, mother tongue and residential area are used as controls.

Both candidate and voter datasets were assigned post-stratification weights to ensure representativeness in terms of key background characteristics of respondents. We fitted altogether five models (Poisson, quasi-Poisson, negative binomial, zero-inflated negative binomial and hurdle regression model) of which the zero-inflated negative binomial model turned out to provide the best fit to the data for both candidates and voters (using pscl package in R Jackman, 2020; Zeileis et al., 2008). The zero-inflated part of the voter model with logit-link function contained two predictors: political interest and intercept, whereas the candidate model had three variables: intercept, age, and a variable measuring the importance of social media in their campaigning. The full model is available in the chapter Appendix.

The main results for candidates are highlighted in Figure 4.3, which shows the predicted effects (calculated with ggeffects package in (Lüdecke, 2018) of the main variables of interest on observed electoral harassment while keeping other variables at their mean values. In line with our expectation, younger candidates are more likely to observe more electoral harassment than older candidates. This might reflect the fact that young candidates are more often targets of harassment than their older running mates (e.g., Collignon & Rüdig, 2021). Moreover, younger candidates are often highly active in social media which might make them more prone to electoral harassment particularly in its digital forms. In contrast to the UK finding of women being more often targets of harassment than men (Collignon & Rüdig, 2021), gender is not statistically significantly associated with observations of harassment in our analysis.

Previous political experience, measured by incumbency, seat in local council and candidacy in previous parliamentary elections, do not relate to observations of electoral harassment. This finding, which contradicts our expectations, seems surprising given that candidates with higher level of recognition could themselves be easier targets of harassment. In addition, their broader political networks could provide more information on different harassment cases. Neither visibility, measured by the importance of social media (Twitter, Facebook or Instagram) in electoral campaigning, has statistically significant relation with observations of harassment

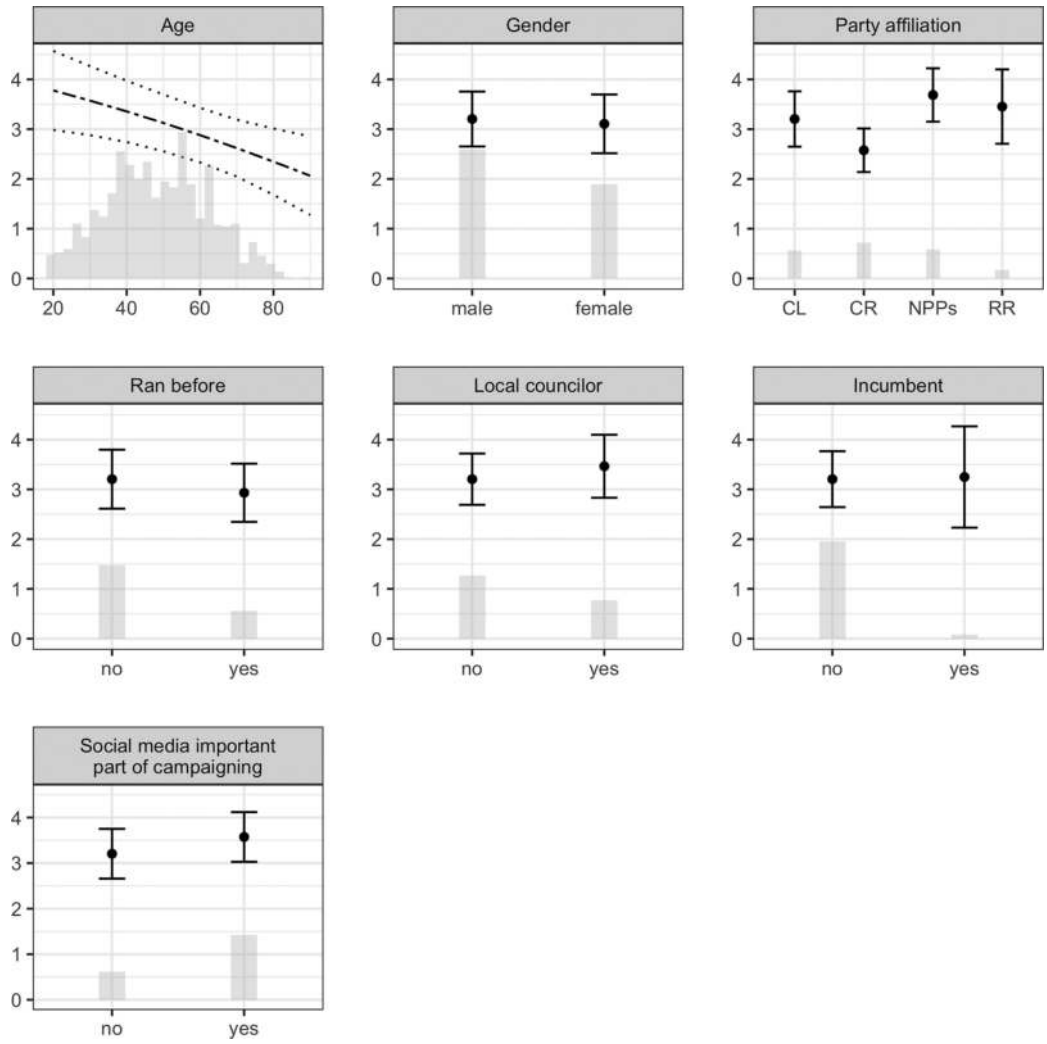

Figure 4.3 Predicted levels of observed electoral harassment (0–9) for political candidates' variables (n = 700). Gray bars show the underlying distributions of the explanatory variables.

Source: Finnish Parliamentary Candidates Study 2019.

in the general model. It is only associated with the zero-inflation part of the model, i.e., affecting whether any electoral harassment is being observed. The association turns out to be positive (lower likelihood of observing zero), suggesting that those who campaign more in social media are more likely to detect harassment.

As regards to party affiliation, candidates of center-right parties observe less harassment than candidates running in other parliamentary parties, whereas candidates of nonparliamentary parties notice it most. This could indicate that harassment cases are not equally distributed across the political space. However, our results clearly differ from those obtained in the United Kingdom, related to actual experiences of harassment which were found to be more common among the candidates of the Conservative Party (Collignon & Rüdig, 2020).

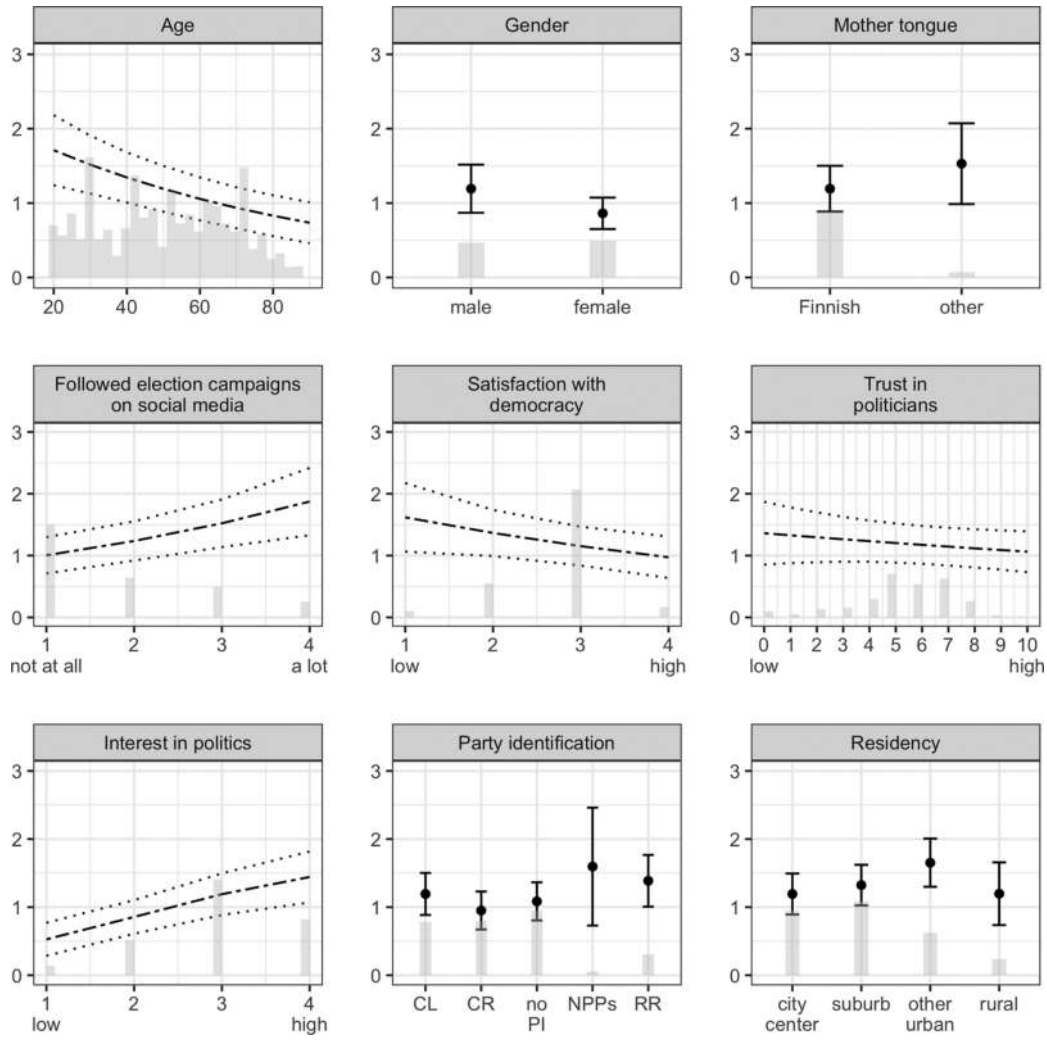

Figure 4.4 Predicted levels of observed electoral harassment (0–9) for voters' variables (n = 669). Gray bars show the underlying distributions of the explanatory variables.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2019.

Figure 4.4 presents the results for the voter model. We expected that voters with higher level of education, interest in politics and attention to electoral campaigning in social media and lower level of trust and satisfaction with democracy would be more likely to observe electoral harassment. Our findings partially confirm these expectations in the case of political interest, social media and satisfaction with democracy. The latter finding should, however, be treated with caution as satisfaction could have dropped as a result of observed electoral harassment (cf. Norris, 2019). The cross-sectional data at our disposal do not enable us to detect the causality in this association which may well be also reciprocal.

Similar to the observations of candidates, voters affiliated with center-right parties observed less harassment. With regard to the control variables, age seems to be a noteworthy factor, pointing towards the same direction as among candidates: younger voters notice more harassment whereas as older ones are

more oblivious to it. Gender is also statistically significantly related to observations of harassment with women noticing it less than men. This finding is contrary to the pattern that we expected to find among candidates and it is not explained by women voters having lower level of political interest[2] or paying less attention to electoral campaigns on social media as both are included in the models statistically significant positive effects on observing electoral harassment. The type of residential area was also associated with observations of harassment. Voters residing in other urban areas (e.g., municipal centers, but not in cities) noticed more harassment than voters in city centers, suburbs and in rural areas.

Conclusions

While the debate on the overall integrity and fairness of the elections has long historical roots, the actual electoral harassment is a more recent phenomenon. Especially with the rapid development of information technology and hybrid tools, politics constitute an important domain affected by hybrid threats (Giannopoulos et al., 2021, 33–35). In this chapter, we examined the extent to which Finnish candidates and voters observed different forms of electoral harassment in the 2019 parliamentary elections and whether the observations were more common among certain groups.

Several noteworthy findings stand out. First, observations of electoral harassment are substantially more common among candidates than voters. Second, younger candidates and voters are more inclined to detect and report harassment. The same applies to men voters compared to women. Third, candidates and voters affiliated with center-right parties observe less harassment than candidates and voters affiliating with other parties. Fourth, there is a positive association between harassment observations and the use of social media in campaigning and acquisition of information on elections. Finally, those voters who are less satisfied with democracy are more likely to observe harassment, which may also suggest reverse causality or a reciprocal relationship.

Our analyses also included some limitations. To ensure comparability between candidates and voters, we focused solely on the observations of the harassment forms. Hence, we were not able to detect whether and which candidates had themselves experienced harassment. It is possible that some candidates have reported harassment related to themselves or to other candidates which is obviously a more stringent test compared to general observations. Moreover, we were not able to measure the intensity of harassment experienced by the candidates. Finally, the modest model fit for both candidate and voter models suggest that there are potentially influential unobserved variables that we have failed to recognize and measure. Despite these limitations, we were able to provide novel perspectives on a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly relevant in contemporary democracies worldwide.

These results, which are partly in line with our expectations drawn from previous studies in the field of electoral harassment, are both reassuring and alarming for the future of Finnish democracy. On one hand, observations of more

serious forms of harassment (e.g., manipulation of the election result) were rare both among candidates and voters. On the other hand, the overall gap between candidates' and voters' observations suggests that at least some forms of harassment are more common than the majority of the voters recognize. When expectations of harassment become more prevalent, voters might become less motivated to participate in elections. At the same time, electoral harassment is already an unavoidable part of campaigning especially for young candidates which may have long-term consequences for political recruitment. There is a possibility that electoral harassment could further intensify biases in political representation as fewer candidates from minority groups are willing to take risks of becoming a target of harassment.

While Finland is still among the safest countries in the world when it comes to running elections, a growing preparedness is in order to design strategies to defend democracy both externally and internally. The growing threat of electoral harassment has already been accompanied by alarmist reactions at the European level. In a piece, published in leading European newspapers in March 2019, French President Emmanuel Macron warned the readers that European democracy is experiencing its greatest danger since the Second World War. As a precautionary measure, Macron proposed the launch of the *European Agency for the Protection of Democracies*, which would be responsible for securing the EU against cyber-attacks and the spread of fake news, accompanied by legal reforms such as banning European political parties to accept funding from foreign powers and establishing rules that ban "incitement to hatred and violence from the internet". In his speech at the European Parliament in January 2022, Macron reiterated the same theme by promoting a European digital model with an objective to protect citizens and democratic debates from manipulation and hate speech as well as secure Europe against cyber-attacks. In a similar fashion, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen remarked in her state of the union 2022 speech that the EU will prepare a "defense of democracy package" to shied itself from malign interference.

In fact, the European Union has taken considerable measures in recent years to tackle foreign electoral interference and disinformation in national and European electoral processes by recognizing that:

> these threats can neither be addressed solely by national authorities working in isolation nor by pure self-regulation of the private sector but require a coordinated multi-level, multi-stakeholder approach; considers that a legal framework for tackling hybrid threats, including cyber-attacks and disinformation, should be developed both at EU and international level.
>
> (EP resolution 2019/2810(RSP), see Hiltunen, 2021 for an overview)

The EU has also engaged itself in a massive project to formulate a new legal framework for digital platforms (Eifert et al., 2021) to address problems such as disruptive communication (Bennett & Livingston, 2018) and digital propaganda (Bjola & Papadakis, 2020; Farkas, 2018; Woolley & Howard, 2016).

In practice, many regulation attempts have faced lobbying and resistance by the "Big Five" tech companies (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple, and Microsoft)

that perceive such legislation, as the proposed Digital Services Act and Digital Market Act, as a threat to their business model (see, e.g., Hanergraaff & Poletti, 2021). These protection propositions may also be problematic at a principal level as they soon encounter the ultimate democratic dilemma: how to safeguard democracy without suffocating it? Democratic self-defense against threats such as electoral harassment requires constant balancing between the need for stricter regulation and guarantee of basic democratic values, including political participation and expression, equality and inclusion (Stahl & Popp-Madsen, 2022, 311). As tackling electoral harassment through legislation may imply restrictions to political rights, its legitimation becomes a pivotal issue. To commit to the new regulations and rules, all parties involved must recognize the reasons for acting and perceive the selected measures as justified (cf. Muller, 2016). Finding sustainable solutions to these issues sets a substantial stress test for electoral democracy.

Notes

1 Party affiliation is categorized among both candidates and voters based on parties' ideological positions: center-left (CL; consisting of SDP, Left Alliance, Greens), center-right (CR; consisting of National Coalition, Centre Party, Christian Democrats, Swedish People's Party), and radical right (RR; consisting of Finns Party). Other parties were categorized as non-parliamentary parties (NPPs). For voters, we included an additional "no party identification" (no PI) category.
2 Interest in politics was used as a predictor only in the zero-inflation part of the model. This means that lack of political interest should translate into not observing any electoral harassment.

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Appendix

Table 4.A1 Zero-inflated negative binomial regression model on candidate data

	Dependent variable
	OEH index
Age	−0.003
	(0.002)
Female	−0.031
	(0.047)
Mother tongue: other	−0.094
(cf. Finnish)	(0.090)
University education	−0.063
	(0.048)
Residency: rural	0.030
(cf. large city)	(0.063)
Residency: small city	−0.032
	(0.057)
Residency: suburb	−0.105
	(0.074)
Social media important part of campaigning	0.017
	(0.055)
Party: center-right	−0.218***
(cf. center-left)	(0.060)
Party: nonparliamentary party	0.140*
	(0.066)
Party: radical right	0.075
	(0.084)
Incumbent	0.014
	(0.129)
Ran before	−0.089
	(0.057)
Local councilor	0.078
	(0.056)
Intercept	1.465***
	(0.122)
log(Theta)	15.556
	(34.153)
Zero-inflation components	
Intercept	−3.232***
	(0.815)
Age	0.029*
	(0.014)
Social media important part of campaigning	−1.061**
	(0.397)
Observations	700
Log Likelihood	1395
McFadden's Pseudo-R^2	0.026
AIC	2853
BIC	2940
Df	21
Zeros fitted vs. actual	91/95

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

Source: Finnish Parliamentary Candidates Study 2019.

Table 4.A2 Zero-inflated negative binomial regression model on voter data

	Dependent variable
	OEH index
Age	−0.012***
	(0.003)
Female	−0.325***
	(0.093)
Mother tongue: other	0.249
(cf. Finnish)	(0.141)
University education	0.081
	(0.093)
Satisfaction with Finnish democracy	−0.170*
	(0.075)
Followed election campaigns on social media	0.208***
	(0.041)
Party: center-right	−0.227*
(cf. center-left)	(0.113)
Party: no party identification	−0.096
	(0.115)
Party: non-parliamentary party	0.291
	(0.265)
Party: radical right	0.150
	(0.120)
Residency: suburb	0.104
(cf. city center)	(0.097)
Residency: other urban	0.326**
	(0.119)
Residency: rural	0.003
	(0.169)
Trust in politicians	−0.025
	(0.022)
Intercept	1.386***
	(0.328)
log(Theta)	14.890
	(133.621)
Zero-inflation components	
Intercept	−1.639***
	(0.442)
Interest in politics	−0.801***
	(0.154)
Observations	669
Log Likelihood	−903
McFadden's Pseudo-R^2	0.079
AIC	1842
BIC	1923
Df	18
Zeros fitted vs. actual	325/327

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

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2019.

5 Foiled at Every Turn? Understanding Turnout in Finland

Theodora Helimäki and Hanna Wass

Introduction

Finland is a showcase of Nordic "happy democracies" (Tingsten, 1966) in many respects. It is characterized by consensual decision-making procedures, corporatism, wide representation of various social groups, active membership in civic organizations and remarkable levels of both institutional and social trust (Bengtsson et al., 2014; Karvonen, 2014). Yet, participation in elections is an exception. While turnout in Finnish parliamentary elections exceeded the OECD mean in the 1960s (Wass, 2008) and is still relatively high in international comparison (Bäck & Christensen, 2020), there has been in sharp decline during 1980–1990s. Especially the difference to other Nordic countries is striking. Even with recent examples of mobilization potential, most noteworthy in the 2011 elections with a landslide victory of the populist party the Finns (see Arter, 2011), low and unevenly distributed turnout remains a pressing issue in every election. Why do so many Finns refrain from voting and why some segments of the electorate have a higher propensity to abstain than others?

To address these questions, both institutional-level factors (Cancela & Geys, 2016) and individual-level factors (Smets & van Ham, 2013) as well as their interactions are relevant. The former approach focuses on the supply side of voting (options available for voters), while the latter reflects the demand side (voters' attributes and needs). Demand- and supply-side factors can be further organized into blocks in the "funnel model of turnout" based on their causal distance from the final outcome, namely, the act of voting (Wass & Blais, 2017, 462–463). Most distant causes revolve around questions of ease of voting, mobilization by parties and other actors and closeness of elections. More proximate causes include resources required (e.g., time, cognitive capacity, physical and mental health) for electoral participation as well as motivational predispositions that make it meaningful, such as interest and knowledge in politics, partisan identity, religious affiliation and sense of duty to vote (cf. Verba et al., 1995, 16–17, see also Blais & Daoust, 2020).

In this chapter, we apply the funnel model to discuss the factors associated with low turnout levels in Finnish elections. We first present descriptive trends in turnout in parliamentary elections by gender, age and education. Drawing from previous literature, we then identify various characteristics of the Finnish electoral

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system that make voting demanding in general and cause biases in participation. Third, we focus on predispositions and resources including family background, social mobility and health that have proven to be important factors in accounting for individual-level differences in voting. We conclude by discussing the means to enhance a higher and more equal turnout in Finnish elections.

Trends in turnout among different voter segments

The first Finnish parliamentary elections were held in 1908 when Finland was still a part of the Russian Empire. The elections constituted a remarkable step toward inclusiveness as Finland was among the first countries granting women a right to vote and stand for elections. Figure 5.1 presents the development of turnout by gender over this 111-years-period based on official voting records compiled by Statistics Finland. Three noteworthy observations stand out. First, turnout has fluctuated quite remarkably reflecting the current political context. This was typical especially for the inter-war period embellished by the wounds from the Civil War in 1918. During the period of reconstruction after the Second World War, turnout started to increase gradually, reaching 80 percent all the way up to the 1983 elections. After that, there was a period of 15 years in which turnout declined in every consecutive election. The new millennium has been characterized by a modest recovery and revitalization. Second, participation among women reached that of men already in the 1970s, making Finland once again a forerunner in an international comparison (Norris, 2002). Third, the traditional gender gap is nowadays reversed with women being more active voters than men. Furthermore, the size of the gender gap in favor of women is relatively large in international comparison

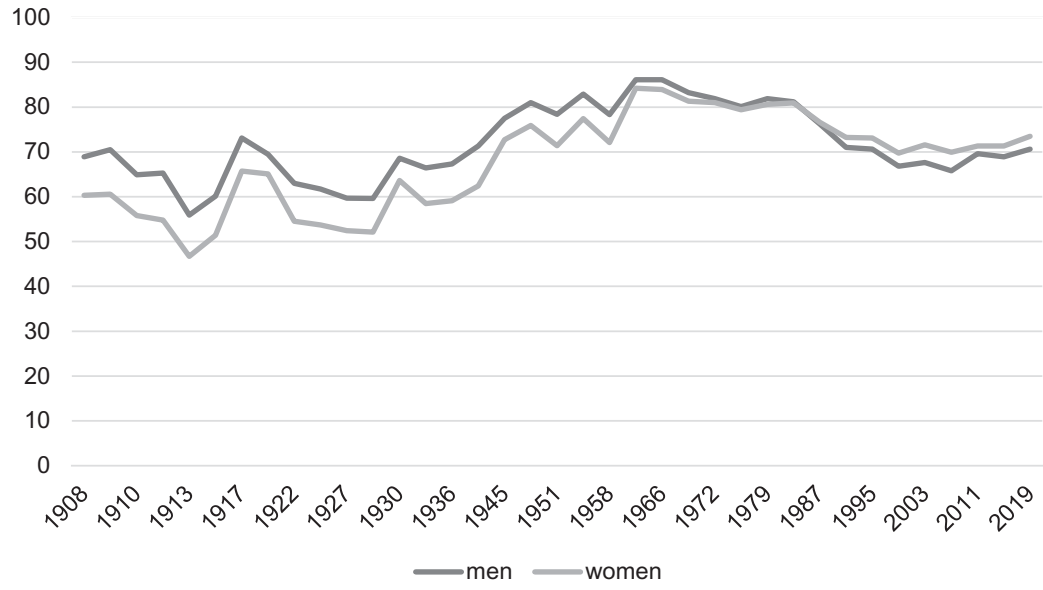

Figure 5.1 Turnout by gender in the Finnish parliamentary elections 1908–2019 (%).

Source: Statistic Finland database. The entries are based on Finnish citizens residing in Finland.

between countries in which gender-differentiated turnout figures are available (see Stockemer & Sundstrom, 2021).

Figure 5.2 shows turnout by age in four parliamentary elections (1987, 1999, 2015 and 2019) based on individual-level register data. The 1987 (N = 3,656,411) and 1999 (N = 3,925,668) data, compiled by Statistics Finland, cover the entire mainland Finland, excluding Åland (an autonomous region of Finland). The two latter datasets, administrated by the Ministry of Justice, are based on the electoral wards that utilized electronic voting registers.[1] In the parliamentary elections of 2015, electronic voting registers were used in 402 electoral wards in 115 municipalities. These wards include 24.2 percent of eligible voters residing in Finland (N = 1,019,862). The corresponding figures for the 2019 elections are 658 electoral wards in 141 municipalities, which include 29.9 percent of the eligible voters (N = 1,274,170).

As Figure 5.2 illustrates, a relationship between age and turnout in Finnish parliamentary elections has traditionally followed the curvilinear pattern which is one of the most robust findings in the study of turnout (see Bhatti et al., 2012). A relatively

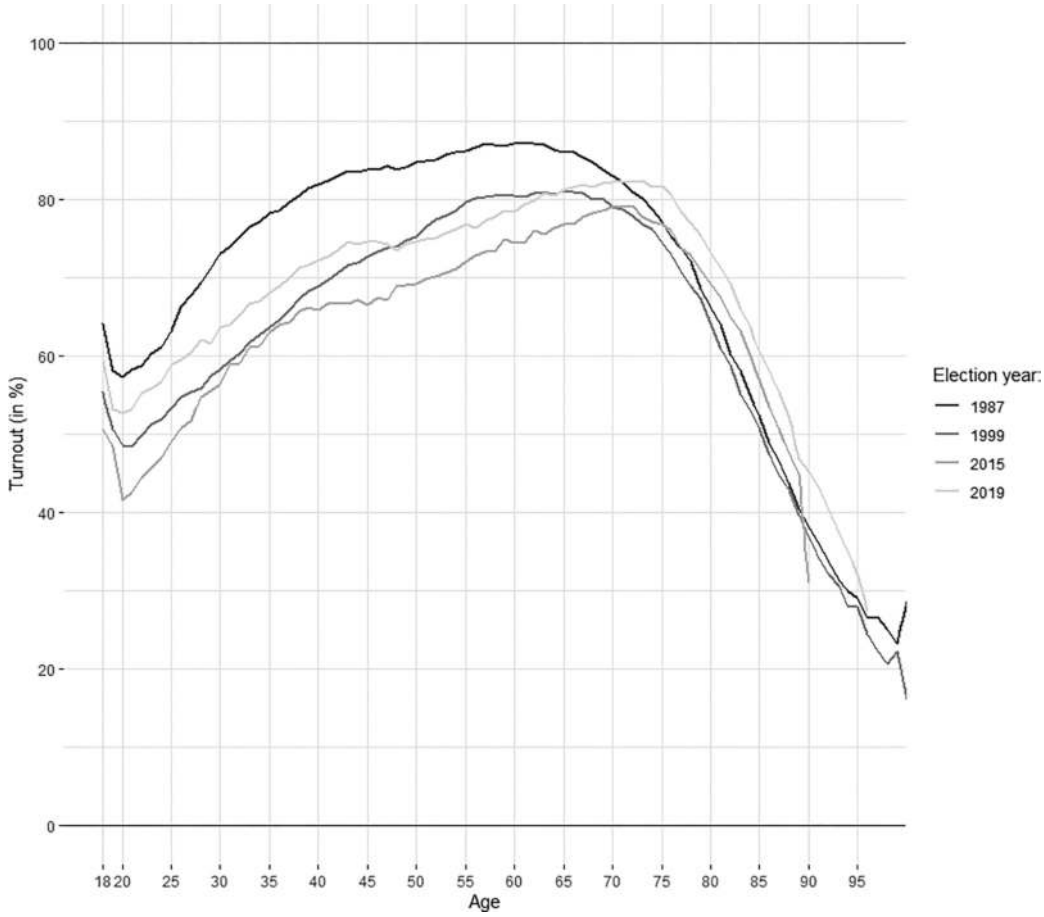

Figure 5.2 Turnout by age in the Finnish parliamentary elections of 1987, 1999, 2015 and 2019.

Source: Statistic Finland database.

low level of participation during early adult life, a gradually growing mobilization among middle-aged voters and a soft decline with old age have been reported since the seminal analyses conducted in the 1930s (for reviews, Milbrath, 1965, 134; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980, 37). However, the curve has slowly flattened with declining participation levels. Whereas the oldest age groups are still as active as 30 years ago, the drop has mainly taken place among both young and middle-aged voters. The age gap in turnout is, hence, less intense nowadays. This is mainly due to three types of development that can be traced when following various cohorts from one election to another (see Nemčok & Wass, 2021; Wass, 2007). First, voters who were young in the 1987 elections showed only a marginal increase in turnout as they aged, indicating a clear generational effect and only a weak age effect which impact becomes invisible during a long period (Nemčok & Wass, 2021). The generational effect also interacted with period effect as this was the era of declining turnout. Second, those who were young in the 1999 elections followed the life-cycle track much more closely as voters than their predecessors did a decade earlier. This was shown by a gradually increasing participation level as years went by. Furthermore, such life-cycle effect interacted with period effect as turnout started to rise in the new millennium. Third, those who became of age in the 2019 elections are showing higher participation rates than young people of same age 20 years ago. The difference between 18-year-olds in the 2015 elections and 18-year-olds in the 2019 elections (8.8 percentage points) shown in Figure 5.2 is almost astonishing. It strongly demonstrates that young voters can be mobilized when they find electoral context appealing. In the 2019 elections, the campaign by populist the Finns Party (PS) seems to have resonated among young voters (Borg, 2020).

Figure 5.3 highlights the effect of education. While turnout among those who had graduated from college was 91 percent in the 2019 elections, the corresponding figure was only 58 percent among voters with the lowest level of education. Highlighting the "law of dispersion" (Tingsten, 1937, see also Persson et al., 2013), the differences between educational groups have become more pronounced alongside with the decline of overall figure: the gap between those with the lowest and highest level of education has grown from 17 percentage points in 1987 to 33 points in 2019. The education-related polarization in turnout has been particularly strong among younger age groups (Grönlund & Wass, 2016; Lahtinen, 2019, 40).

Institutional-level explanatory factors

The electoral system, the number of parties and the structure of political competition are among the most noteworthy institutional factors that affect turnout (Wass & Blais, 2017, 463). As an open-list proportional representation system (see Reynolds et al., 2005, 84; von Schoultz, 2018), the Finnish context in principle promotes equal representation in terms of ethnic and linguistic diversity, minority status and geographical location. However, there are certain aspects related to all three factors that complicated voting and, hence, contribute to unequal participation figures demonstrated in previous sections. In the following, we discuss each of these separately on the basis of previous literature.

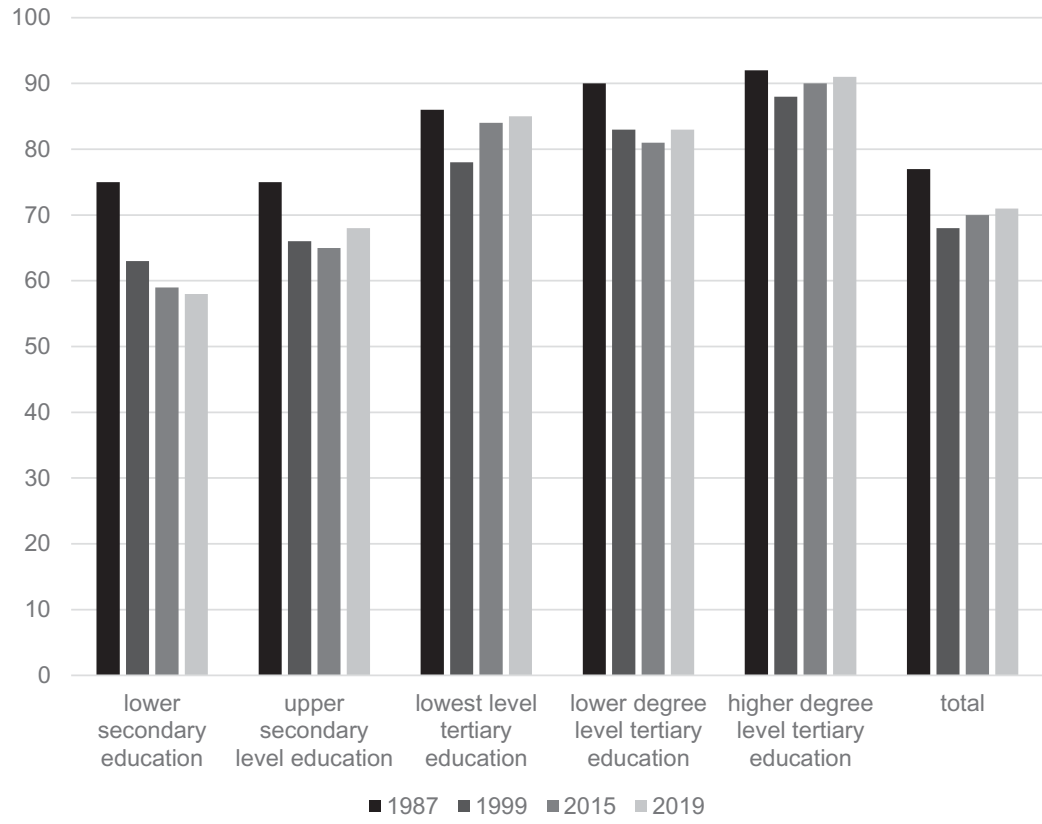

Figure 5.3 Turnout by education in the Finnish parliamentary elections of 1987, 1999, 2015 and 2019.

Source: Statistic Finland database.

Effective electoral thresholds (see Taagepera, 1998) embedded in the Finnish system and problems in proportionality have often been identified among sources of declining turnout (cf. Nurmi, 2015). Since 2015, Finland has been divided into 13 electoral districts. As all or most of the parliamentary parties compete in every district while the votes are proportionally aggregated at the district level, there is a high effective threshold for small parties to win seats (Arter, 2021; von Schoultz, 2018, 606). Such a situation causes disincentives for small parties to campaign and increases a notion of a "wasted vote" among the supporters whose chosen party gained no presence from their electoral district (Anckar, 1997). If sincere voting ("with the heart") is unlikely to have significance for the electoral outcome, voters may either choose to vote strategically or abstain altogether (Borg & Paloheimo, 2009; Westinen & Borg, 2016).

Electoral thresholds also vary substantially across different geographical areas (Taagepera, 1989). This variance has only sharpened over time. Table 5.1 shows effective electoral thresholds during the past 50 years, taking the first parliamentary elections of the decade as an indicator. It also includes the parliamentary elections held in April 2019 to demonstrate the effect of the 2015 electoral reform in which the number of districts was reduced by two. Throughout the years, Helsinki

Table 5.1 Effective electoral thresholds for the largest and smallest districts in Finland by election, 1962–2019

	1962	*1972*	*1983*	*1991*	*2003*	*2011*	*2019*
Number of districts	14	14	15	14	14	14	12
Average district magnitude	14.2	14.2	14.2	14.2	14.2	14.2	16.6
Effective threshold largest (%)	4.8	3.3	2.7	3	2.8	3.6	2.6
Effective threshold smallest (%)	6.2	7.6	8	8.7	9.8	13.7	8.2

The effective thresholds for 1972, 1991 and 2003 have been calculated using the formula *effective threshold = 75%/(M+1)*, where M denotes the district magnitude (Lijphart, 1994; Taagepera, 1998). The effective thresholds for 2001 have been calculated by averaging the electoral thresholds presented by Borg (2012). To calculate the effective thresholds in the largest districts, an average of Helsinki and Uusimaa districts' effective thresholds is calculated. To calculate the effective thresholds of the smallest districts, the average of the three smallest districts' electoral thresholds is calculated. Note that the 2020s are not included as the first parliamentary elections of this decade are to be held in 2023. The autonomous island of Åland (a district with a magnitude of 1) has been excluded from these calculations. Sources: Borg, 2012; Finlex, 2018; Taagepera, 1989, 114; Statistics Finland, 1974, 1991, 2003.

(the capital city) and Uusimaa have remained the largest districts with relatively stable effective electoral thresholds. The situation appears as quite different when looking at the smaller districts where the effective electoral thresholds have kept rising and doubled before the electoral reform. After the reform, the disparity between the smaller and larger districts' effective electoral thresholds has shifted from 10.1 to 5.6 percent. This is a notable step forward in diminishing the cross-country differences in the notion of wasted votes and inequalities of running.

The other potentially problematic feature in the Finnish electoral system vis-à-vis turnout relates to the *high number of parties*. Most empirical studies report a negative impact of the number of parties on turnout (Blais & Aarts, 2006), which seems logical when considering the amount of information to be collected in order to reach a decision.[2] Although a wider range of parties increases political choices available to voters (e.g., Grofman & Selb, 2011), it is easier to make a vote choice when there are only a small number of options (Blais & Carty, 1990, 173; Blais & Dobrzynska, 1998, 248–249). In the Finnish parliamentary elections of 2019, eight parties gained seats in parliament, while the number of registered parties was 19 (Ministry of Justice, 2019). Despite party fragmentation, ideological polarization has been clearly more modest in Finland compared to many other European countries (Casal Bértoa & Rama, 2021; Dalton, 2021) with some signs of increasing affective polarization (Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021; see also Chapter 10 in this book).

In recent years, ideological assimilation has taken place resulting in more blurred party lines (Isotalo et al., 2020). Yet, the level of electoral volatility has been low in Finland in international comparison (Söderlund, 2020) which may seem surprising given that ideological closeness and party homogenization theoretically form ideal conditions for party switching (Pedersen, 1979). One potential reason for the stability with implications for turnout lies in *mandatory preferential voting* which requires a voter to choose both the party and the candidate within the party list. In order to attract the highest possible number of voters, parties have incentives

to recruit a wide variety of candidates (Arter, 2013). A large pool of ideologically dispersed candidates within the party list makes it easier to stay loyal to the same party even if a voter wishes to exercise accountability and punish the incumbent for unsatisfactory performance (Söderlund, 2020, 473). However, cognitive demands to cast a fully informed optimal vote become high (Downs, 1957) especially as the number of parties in also high. That is because the method of counting votes may be confusing for those voters who engage in primarily candidate-centered voting (see Karvonen, 2004) as the vote first benefits the party and only secondarily the individual candidate.[3] For voters with less cognitive, mental, physical or socioeconomic resources (see next section), the costs of voting may, thus, become too substantial and abstaining appears as a compelling escape. Such interpretation for lower voter turnout is supported by empirical observation indicating that although Finns are on average interested in politics, they also find it hard to grasp (Rapeli & Borg, 2016).

The third important contextual factor to consider is the degree of electoral competition or uncertainty in the outcome of an election (see Blais & Lago, 2009). Theoretically, the closeness of elections is connected to two different hypotheses, one assuming direct and the other one indirect effects (Cox & Munger, 1989, 217). From a rational choice perspective, the closeness of elections enhances a voter's feeling that his/her vote might make a genuine difference, thus increasing the benefits of voting (e.g., Cox & Munger, 1989, 218). However, as the probability of casting a pivotal vote is extremely small even in very competitive contests, an indirect effect through parties' accelerated mobilization efforts seems more plausible (Cox, 1999, 393; Cox & Munger, 1989).

In Finnish open-list system, *intra-party competition* takes place in addition to the rivalry between parties (Coffé & von Schoultz, 2021; von Schoultz & Papageorgiou, 2021). Nation-widely or personally recognizable candidates may have considerable leverage alongside with candidates who are aligned with their parties' position on both left-right and sociocultural dimensions (Isotalo et al., 2020; Isotalo et al., forthcoming; Järvi et al., 2021). Such differentiation may discourage campaigning efforts among "out-group" candidates and motivation to cast a vote among their supporters. Furthermore, candidate-centered elections combined with multicoalition governments, typical to Finland, may blur *collective party-based accountability* (Söderlund, 2020, 473). This is further strengthened by the unwillingness of parties to indicate their preferred coalition partners before the elections. The *nontransparent electoral competition culture* constitutes a sharp difference for instance to Sweden where parties compete as blocks with closed party lists. As a result, Finnish voters do not have a clear scenario of the actual outcome of elections while making their vote choices since their preferred party may end up forming a coalition government with parties from opposite sides of the political spectrum. Uncertainty undermines the instrumental dimension of voting (cf. Downs, 1957) and as a result, voters who are mainly motivated by policy issues may find participation redundant.

Individual-level explanatory factors

Committed to the Nordic welfare model, Finland has shown a lower level of economic inequality than most advanced economies although its level has risen over time (OECD, 2022). The core principle of the Nordic model has been the attempt to build an economically and socially sustainable system, enabling all citizens' full participation in society (Hiilamo, 2015). In practice, different types of individual resources often translate into political resources (cf. Gallego, 2015; Lahtinen, 2019). Various studies employing Finnish register-based datasets have indicated three types of resources that are particularly relevant: *family background*, *social mobility* and *health*. Identification of these factors have considerably increased the understanding of the individual-level sources of low and unequally distributed turnout.

An important aspect of abstention relates to both intergenerational political learning and intergenerational transmission of social disadvantages. A study relying on Finnish register data on 18- to 30-year-olds and their parents demonstrated that both parental education and voting influence the turnout of young adults although parental voting rather than the transmission of education from parent to child appears to be the more important mediating factor (Gidengil et al., 2016). Notably, the effect of parental voting was only slightly attenuated by controlling for the parents' and child's education and income. The link persisted even after adult children left home and was still considerable among adults approaching their thirties. Another register-based study employing a sibling design showed that a quarter of the total variance in voter turnout among the Finnish cohort born between 1980 and 1989 was shared between siblings' family and community background (Lahtinen et al., 2019). Parental socioeconomic position and voting were equally important factors by explaining 30 percent of this shared part of the likelihood of voting.

Furthermore, intergenerational link in voting seems to exceed the parent-role. A study linking three Finnish generations revealed that even when controlling for a variety of status-related characteristics, grandchildren were significantly less likely to vote when their grandparents were nonvoters (Gidengil et al., 2020). The association between grandparental turnout and the turnout of their adult grandchildren was only partly explained by the mediating effect of parental turnout. Having nonvoting grandparents appears to reinforce the effect of having parents who do not vote and may even offset the effects of having parents who are both voters. Altogether, these studies indicate that voting propensity is strongly differentiated by family background and such permanent bias seems to be hard to break even in the Finnish system with comparatively high level of intergenerational socioeconomic mobility (World Economic Forum, 2020).

Inequality in voting continues later in life. Lower level of education, social class, income and home ownership are all related to lower turnout both independent from each other and jointly by contributing to accumulation of social disadvantage (Lahtinen, 2019; Martikainen et al., 2005). It also appears that socioeconomic differences in turnout reflect the family background. Using a sibling-based design that mimics the logic of a controlled experiment, Gidengil et al. (2015) found that

the empirical association between education and turnout was considerably reduced once observed (parental voting and parental education) and unobserved family characteristics shared by siblings were taken into account. This means that Finnish voters are in a highly unequal position to begin with, and resources required in adulthood can only partly function as a compensating mechanism. However, social mobility seems to have some ability to narrow social inequalities in participation. Lahtinen et al. (2017) examined the extent to which changes in adults' social class and income between 2000 and 2011 influenced voting propensity in the 2012 Finnish municipal elections. The results show that turnout among the mobile individuals settled between the averages of their original social class or income group, and those among the class where they end up who did not experience social mobility during the period covered in the analysis. An individual's current social class and income are linked to their voting propensity in a way that cannot be fully attributed to education, past voting, parental voting or their previous social class or income. Instead, the results suggest that voters tend to adjust their participation level to match the standards of their new social standing. Yet, they do not vote quite as often as the average of their new group.

Health is another noteworthy correlate in voting which is particularly relevant in the Finnish context due to the "Scandinavian paradox": generous welfare regimes have been more successful in addressing socioeconomic inequalities than health disparities (see Shore et al., 2019). First, chronic conditions such as alcoholism, mental disorders and dementia are strongly related to lower turnout in Finland (Sund et al., 2017). The accumulating health problems have the same impact (Mattila et al., 2018). Second, severe health problems mitigate the connection between turnout and social class, meaning that even high level of resources cannot fully compensate the depressing effect of very poor health on turnout (Lahtinen et al., 2017). Third, people in poor health report lower levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works in Finland, political interest and political efficacy than those in good health, which may all decline the motivation for voting (Mattila et al., 2017).

Conclusions

As indicated in the title of this chapter, voting encounters different types of barriers in Finland. Certain institutional characteristics, most noteworthy effective electoral threshold, a high number of parties, mandatory preferential voting, intra-party competition and nontransparent government coalition options make voting a cognitively demanding exercise with high level of uncertainty. This increases voting costs especially among those segments of the electorate that have fewer participatory resources at their disposal due to factors such as disadvantaged family background, low socioeconomic position and poor health. As voting requires both motivation as well as knowledge (cf. Blais & Dauost, 2020), the feeling that one's vote does not make a difference, the difficulty to find a suitable candidate, the lack of political interest, perception of other participation modes as more effective and low sense of duty to vote are all among reasons for low turnout in the Finnish system (Grönlund et al., 2005; Wass & Borg, 2016).

To remedy these hurdles, much institutional effort has been invested to make voting more inclusive and convenient. Advance voting is possible in a wide range of locations such as postal offices, schools, hospitals and shopping centers as well as abroad prior to elections (Wass et al., 2021). This type of voter facilitation could be noteworthy for voters with health problems (cf. Wass et al., 2017). Several parliamentary committees with external experts have been enacted to address problems related to electoral system. The number of electoral districts were reduced from 15 to 13 in 2015 (see Westinen & Borg, 2016). While a smaller number of electoral districts have been successful in tackling effective electoral supporting further equalizing of district size, the question is not straightforward as geographical representation is important particularly for voters living in remote areas (Bengtsson & Wass, 2011; von Schoultz & Wass, 2016).

In 2017, an expert committee examined the possibilities for electronic voting although deciding not to recommend it (Ministry of Justice, 2017). Introducing postal voting among nonresident citizens in the 2019 parliamentary elections is the latest example of governmental attempts to mobilize low-turnout segments of the electorate (Wass et al., 2021). Another important future issue relates to political incorporation of foreign-born voters (see Wass et al., 2016). However, introducing substantial system-level reforms has turned out to be difficult as parties as main stakeholders are often inclined to incorporate strategic calculations in their perceptions of optimal institutional arrangements.

Previous research has shown that those citizens who are motivated to vote have learnt to navigate in the system to reach their decisions. Contrary to expectations, those who vote find their decision easy as they are able to use accessible cues to choose their preferred candidate (Järvi et al., 2021). This underlines the differentiation in the electorate and the need to find facilitation instruments for voters with lower level of motivation and resources for participation. A long-standing tradition in electoral studies underlines the role of information cues to ease the cognitive load embedded in the vote choice (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006; Lupia, 1994; Popkin, 1995; see also Chapter 12 in this book). The most commonly applied cues in the Finnish system include voting advice applications (VAAs) (Christensen et al., 2021; Isotalo, 2020), the looks of the candidate (Berggren et al., 2017), political experience (von Schoultz et al., 2020) and personal connections to the candidate (Järvi et al., 2021). VAAs and different social media sites are especially important electoral venues for young voters (Strandberg & Borg, 2020) whose voting propensity is lower compared to the rest of the electorate. As turnout figures from the 2019 elections demonstrate, even those segments that are hard to mobilize such as young can find voting worth the effort when the context is encouraging.

Notes

1 Since 2012, electronic voting register has been used in part of the Finnish electoral wards. The register is administrated by the Ministry of Justice and the data are released to Statistics Finland after each election. In Statistics Finland, the information on whether a person voted or not has been linked to information on an individual's other characteristics on the bases of personal identification codes. These register-based datasets have

a particular advantage to survey data which often underestimate socioeconomic differences in voting due to non-response (Lahtinen et al., 2019).

2 However, this negative association is puzzling given that proportional representation (PR) systems are, on average, found to have a higher turnout than majority or plurality systems. Although the literature has not been able to ascertain the exact mechanisms accounting for the strong effect of electoral system on voting, the mobilizing effect of PR appears to be closely connected to the number of parties, either directly or indirectly via district magnitude (Söderlund et al., 2011b, 92; for a "puzzle-solving approach", Grofman & Selb, 2011).

3 The number of seats won by each party is based on the total number of votes gained by its candidates. The candidates representing each party are elected based on the number of individual votes they have received (ibid.). The elections are proportional in the sense that each party, party alliance, constituency association or joined list win seats in relation to the votes cast compared with the votes for other groups. The votes are counted by according to D'Hondt method, which appears to have a tendency to favor large parties (Ollila & Paloheimo, 2007, 357).

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6 Act Your Age! Generational Differences in Political Participation in Finland 2007–2019

Janette Huttunen and Henrik Serup Christensen

Introduction

Studies show important differences in patterns of political participation across generations whereby younger generations are found to be less active in traditional political activities such as voting and more active in demonstrating and online activities (Albacete, 2014; Dalton, 2016; Grasso, 2016; Smets & Neundorf, 2014). While similar trends have been established in several countries, the underlying mechanisms are still not well-understood. Finland here constitutes an interesting case since older generations have traditionally been fairly active in traditional forms of political participation, while younger generations have been less active in the traditional activities, opting instead for activities that are not directly connected to the formal political sphere (Albacete, 2014; Bengtsson & Christensen, 2009; Christensen et al., 2016). However, recent years have seen an upsurge in youth activism, partly because of new possibilities for taking part such as the citizens' initiative launched in 2012, but also because of new issues on the political agenda that spur youth activism (Huttunen, 2021; Huttunen & Christensen, 2020). Since much of the contemporary political discourse emphasizes increasing divisions across generations, it is instructive to examine in more detail how patterns of political participation differ across generations in Finland.

Voting continues to be the most popular form of political engagement among Finnish citizens, but alternative forms of engagement have become more popular (Raiskila & Wiberg, 2017; Bäck & Christensen, 2020; Bengtsson & Christensen, 2009; Bengtsson & Grönlund, 2005). As in other Western democracies, differences in political participation across generations entail that younger Finnish citizens participate less in traditional forms of participation, such as elections, and more in new political activities, including signing petitions, political consumerism, and online activities (Strandberg & Borg, 2020; Borg & Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2017; Rapeli & Leino, 2013, see also Chapter 14 in this book). While previous studies have tried to explain differences in participation across generations (Wass, 2007), these lack a comprehensive overview of participatory differences that also include the younger generations who have only recently become politically mature. This is important since much of the contemporary discussion focus on the perceived deficiencies in the political behaviour of these age groups (Dalton, 2016; Grasso et al., 2017;

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Theocharis & van Deth, 2018, Huttunen & Christensen, 2020). In this chapter, we, therefore, aim to examine generational differences in political participation. We first provide a comprehensive overview of participation 2007–2019. Second, we examine the extent to which any differences are connected to differences in key political attitudes.

Contemporary generational differences in political participation are typically explained by older generations being more conventional while the young prefer nonhierarchical and elite-challenging activities (Inglehart, 1997). Political attitudes are often assumed to play a central role in explaining differences in participation across age groups (Almond & Verba, 1963; Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Inglehart, 1997), and it is, therefore, of particular interest to examine how political attitudes are connected to political participation across generations. We do so by examining differences across generations when it comes to four forms of political participation in 2019: being active in political parties, taking part in legal demonstrations, discussing politics online and signing citizens' initiatives. These four activities constitute classical examples of specific forms of participation that, at the same, are particularly relevant to examine in a Finnish context.

Generations and political participation

Established democracies have, in recent decades, witnessed several transformations in patterns of participation. Traditional political participation in political parties and elections has since the 1960s and 1970s been supplemented with, or even replaced by, protest politics, political consumerism, and, more recently, online activities and democratic innovations (Dalton, 2016; Grasso, 2016; Grasso et al., 2017; Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002; Inglehart, 1997; Theocharis & van Deth, 2018). This development is often summed up in a movement away from institutionalized participation in conventional representative activities to noninstitutionalized political participation outside of the established system (Bäck & Christensen, 2016; Hooghe & Marien, 2013; Marien et al., 2010).

An influential contribution on generational differences in political participation is offered by Ronald Inglehart and his work on how shifts in social and political values are changing the political landscape (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002; Inglehart, 1997). According to Inglehart, the material well-being in Western democracies after the end of WW2 has led to persistent value changes among the post-war generations. These value changes toward post-materialism include a greater openness to alternative lifestyles and minority issues, but also more egalitarian and democratic values (Inglehart, 1997).

These changes have repercussions for political participation. According to Inglehart, the younger post-material generations will not let political elites make decisions without interference from ordinary citizens. They, therefore, refrain from hierarchical traditional political activities that are time-consuming and require long-standing ideological commitment. Instead, they opt for direct forms of involvement where they can make their voices directly heard without intermediaries. This means that they are more active in protest activities (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002)

and direct-democratic forms of democratic innovations (Huttunen & Christensen, 2020).

The work of Inglehart relates to other work on generational differences in political participation and values, as common themes emerge even when labels and thresholds differ. The generations born before the end of the Second World War are seen as embodying a subservient and somewhat passive citizen ideal, where involvement of ordinary citizens is limited to elections. These generations were politically socialized when the national party system functioned as an adequate expression of underlying social conflicts (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). They, therefore, believe in the functioning of the representative system and consider electoral participation a citizen duty (Dalton, 2008, 2016). Contrary to this, the generation born after WW2 was politically socialized during a period when protests and social movements grew increasingly popular (Barnes & Kaase, 1979). According to Inglehart, this was the first post-material generation, although others suggest that this generation has settled down and now espouses conventional norms of citizen duty and a preference for institutionalized forms of political engagement (Dalton, 2016).

Studies adopting Inglehart's approach often assume that later generations become more post-materialist and embody the value changes predicted by Inglehart (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002). However, some note that the younger generations may deviate from this pattern (Grasso et al., 2017). The younger generations have come of age during times when the classic mobilization networks have eroded (Putnam, 2000). The Millennials born in the 1980s and early 1990s, for example, entered the workforce amid financial turmoil (Dalton, 2016, 42) and have had a worse quality of life than previous generations (Pickard, 2019, 380). The younger generations' experiences reflect educational, technological, and media-related transformations (Dalton, 2016) that entail greater prerequisites for political participation. Studies suggest that they are more open to minority issues, display higher degrees of engaged citizenship and prefer direct and sporadic forms of participation (Dalton, 2017; Grasso, 2014; Huttunen & Christensen, 2020).

For the youngest generation, Generation Z, the increase in post-material values may be expected to continue, but their political participation may differ. Klandermans (2015) find that young citizens still demonstrate, but they are more likely to attend gay prides or antiracism demonstrations, while older citizens are more likely to demonstrate concerning peace, workers' rights or regional issues. The popularity of the contemporary climate strike movement shows that the young use protests to raise awareness of the climate crisis (de Moor et al., 2021; Huttunen, 2021). A more fundamental challenge to Inglehart's account dismisses the idea that the young want a more participatory democracy (Huttunen, 2021). Based on in-depth interviews with young Finnish climate activists, Huttunen shows that they want a functioning representative system rather than a fundamental transformation of the democratic system. This may also entail that they are more likely to become involved in institutionalized political activities.

Although previous studies suggest that older generations prefer traditional political activities while younger generations favour noninstitutionalized political

activities, these differences should not be exaggerated. These political activities are not mutually exclusive but may instead form a positive cycle (Pickard, 2019, 397), meaning that generational differences become blurred when examining specific political activities.

Based on the above discussion, political attitudes can be expected to play a pivotal role in explaining the political participation of different generations. The younger generations are dissatisfied with the traditional political system and distrust political elites, and they, therefore, voice their political preferences in new ways. We, therefore, zoom in on the role three specific political attitudes play in explaining generational differences in political participation: Political interest, ideology (left/right ideology and GAL/TAN) and satisfaction with democracy.

Political interest is a key component in explaining political participation (Almond & Verba, 1963; Neundorf et al., 2013). The traditional ideal of democratic citizenship entails that all citizens ought to follow political matters, so they can make informed decisions on key policy issues vote and act accordingly (Almond & Verba, 1963). Empirical studies show that the political interest of citizens is largely determined during the formative years of political socialization (Neundorf et al., 2013). Hence, there may be important differences in levels of political interest across generations. Nonetheless, political interest may be associated with other political activities among younger generations since the tech-savvy youth take advantage of the Internet or social media for political purposes (Min, 2010). Finally, issue interest may be more relevant among the young, whereas general political interest is less central (Soler-i-Martí, 2015).

When examining the impact of ideology, the focus has traditionally been on cleavages in the traditional left-right ideological dimension that mainly concerns socioeconomic issues. However, a new conflict dimension that varies between Green-Alternative-Liberal (GAL) and Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist (TAN) (Hooghe et al., 2002) may be important for the present purposes since it measures similar cultural divisions as Inglehart's post-materialism. For left-right ideology, there have been distinct ideological differences in patterns of political participation (van der Meer et al., 2009). Protests in the 1960s and 1970s were clearly left-wing (Barnes & Kaase, 1979), but even later movements have had a left-wing flavour (della Porta, 2006). Both ideological dimensions also affect attitudes to deliberative forms of democratic innovations (Christensen & von Schoultz, 2019). Some differences are nevertheless likely to exist across generations. GAL-TAN is likely to be more relevant to younger generations who cannot relate to traditional socioeconomic issues, whereas older generations are solidly entrenched within a left/right ideological spectrum.

Satisfaction with democracy measures how respondents evaluate the performance of the democratic regime rather than adherence to the democratic ideal (Linde & Ekman, 2003). It is usually believed that dissatisfied people participate in noninstitutionalized participation while the satisfied prefer traditional political activities (Stolle & Hooghe, 2011). Differences are again likely to exist across generations. Foa and Mounk (2016) show that the young are more dissatisfied with democracy, although others contest this finding (Zilinsky, 2019). Nevertheless, the

consequences of dissatisfaction may differ across generations. Dissatisfaction is usually associated with protest, but it has also been associated with preferences for direct democracy (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Dalton et al., 2001; Donovan & Karp, 2006). It may be that younger generations prefer to voice discontent through more individualized forms of engagement such as the citizens' initiative, while the post-war generations prefer protest activities.

Political participation in Finland

Finland is an established Nordic democracy where citizens exhibit high levels of satisfaction with democracy and institutional trust (see Chapters 2 and 3, and also Rapeli & Koskimaa, 2020; Bäck et al., 2016; Kestilä-Kekkonen & Söderlund, 2016; Karvonen, 2014). The patterns of political participation are fairly conventional. Voting remains the most popular form of participation, although it is lower than in the other Nordic countries (Bengtsson et al., 2014). While still lower, than voting political participation between elections have gained popularity (Raiskila & Wiberg, 2017; Bäck & Christensen, 2020; Bengtsson & Christensen, 2009; Bengtsson & Grönlund, 2005). In a European comparison, Finland has average to high levels of participation in contacting politicians and signing petitions (Bäck & Christensen, 2020). While signing petitions and contacting politicians have traditionally been popular political activities in Finland (Borg, 2013), there was previously no way to ascertain that these efforts were considered by formal decision-makers. To give citizens more of a say between elections, an agenda-setting Citizens' Initiative (CI) was introduced at the national level in Finland in 2012. The CI gives eligible Finnish voters the right to launch and sign agenda-setting legislative initiatives on an official online platform (Christensen et al., 2017). The CI has become a very popular tool (Bäck & Christensen, 2020), especially for the younger generations (Huttunen & Christensen, 2020).

Although generational effects on election participation have been smaller in Finland than in many other advanced democracies (Nemčok & Wass, 2021), a tendency for the young to participate less has also been visible in Finland as in other democracies. The CI has boosted the involvement of the young in a country where young people foster rather traditional views on political participation (Myllyniemi, 2014). Recently, younger generations have also exhibited activity in protest movements since the Fridays for Future climate movement has been successful in mobilizing young into action – however, the participatory preferences of the active young people are unclear (see Huttunen, 2021).

The importance of online participation has also increased since around one-third of Finnish citizens find online participation as valuable political activity (Raiskila & Wiberg, 2017), and use of social media, following political news and expressing political views online have become more popular (see Chapter 14; Strandberg & Borg, 2020; Bäck & Christensen, 2020). With the online accessibility of the CI and the rising importance of online engagement, the Internet has established its position as an arena for political participation (Bäck & Christensen, 2020) – an arena that is especially important for the young (Strandberg & Borg, 2020).

This indicates that important developments have occurred in the popularity of various forms of political participation across time and generations. Nevertheless, a comprehensive overview of the popularity of different activities across generations in Finland is still missing. We, therefore, aim to provide such an overview in our empirical examination.

Analyses and results

We begin our empirical part by examining how the popularity of different political activities has developed from 2007 to 2019 across generations. To explore developments over time, we present data on several forms of political participation asked in the Finnish National Election Studies 2007–2019. The activities included are *party activities, contacting politicians, associational activities, signing a petition, legal demonstrations, boycotting products, boycotting products, political discussions online*, and *signing citizens' initiatives* (only in 2015 and 2019). A basic discussion when it comes to generational differences in political participation is whether they are cohort-specific or should be attributed to life-cycle effects. Theories of political socialization suggest that historical events during the formative years leave a lasting impression, which entails that generations share distinct patterns of political participation (Grasso, 2016; Nemčok & Wass, 2021; Smets & Neundorf, 2014; Wass, 2007).

The life-cycle perspective instead suggests that every generation evolves, which means that the young always prefer elite-challenging, whereas older people prefer conventional political activities. We do not address this discussion here since our time perspective 2007–2019 is too limited to disentangle the relationships and examine whether the generational differences of today are different from generational differences in the past. Instead, our more modest ambition is simply to show what developments have occurred during the last decades.

The popularity of key political activities in Finland during 2007–2019 is presented in Figure 6.1. Three results are worth highlighting. First, there are considerable differences in the popularity of political activities. Easy activities such as boycotting, signing a petition or, more recently, a citizens' initiative, are among the most popular, whereas demanding activities such as party involvement or taking part in legal demonstrations are performed by a minority across generations. Second, trends across years are less clear-cut since there are few clear upward or downward trends. The most visible exception is for signing citizens' initiatives, which became possible in 2012 and in FNES2015 was among the most popular activities, and in 2019 the most popular political activity between elections. Clearly, this democratic innovation has managed to attract citizens.

Finally, concerning differences across generations, it is worth noting that differences are small for more traditional activities such as party activities and associational involvement and more pronounced for new activities such as political consumerism and signing citizens' initiatives. This shows that the individualization of politics differs markedly across generations. Older generations are more likely to engage in traditional activities, whereas younger generations find new outlets for

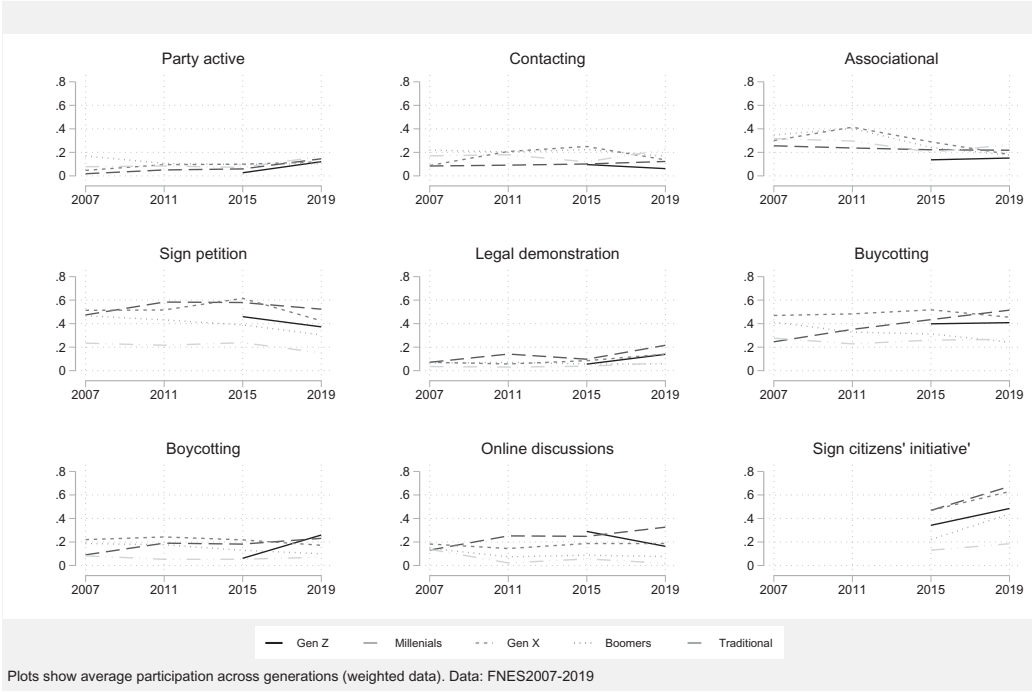

Figure 6.1 Participation across generations in nine political activities, FNES 2007–2019.

voicing their concerns. The citizen's initiative, in particular, appeals to younger, but also online discussions and political consumerism. It is noteworthy that Generation Z from 2015 to 2019 appears to increase their engagement in most activities, with the noticeable exceptions of signing petitions and online discussions, where there are clear decreases.

We continue by exploring differences across generations in the associations among political attitudes and four forms of political participation using the FNES 2019 data (see technical appendix of the book). Since the questions on political participation were asked in the self-administered drop-off part, we only rely on these respondents (n = 753). We here focus on four political activities that provide archetypical examples of more general categories or modes of political participation (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Theocharis & van Deth, 2018): *party activities, legal demonstrations, political discussions online*, and *signing citizens' initiatives*.

Previous studies suggest that inter-generational differences most likely exist in how popular these activities are among the Finnish population (Dalton, 2016; Grasso, 2016; Huttunen & Christensen, 2020; Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002). The first two activities are an established part of the political repertoire. Party activities are a conventional political activity while demonstrations are a noninstitutionalized and elite-challenging form of participation that gained popularity among the post-war generation (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Theocharis & van Deth, 2018). The two latter activities are newcomers to the political toolbox. Online participation is today a popular form of engagement, particularly among younger generations (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Loader et al., 2014). Finally, signing citizens'

initiatives is a democratic innovation that offers citizens an institutionalized channel of participation between elections without party intermediaries (Christensen et al., 2017).

We measure the four activities with answers to questions asking people about their political activities during the last four years.[1] There were three answer options ("Have done in the last four years", "Have not done but could do", and "Would never do"), but since we focus on having performed the activities, they were recoded into dichotomous variables where 1 indicates having performed the activity in question during the last four years and 0 having not.

There is no agreement on generational labels or where to draw the line between generations, but we follow the work by Brosius et al. (2021) and divide respondents into five categories of generations: Generation Z (born 1995–2002), Millennials (born 1980–1994), Generation X (born 1965–1979), Baby Boomers (born 1945–1964), and Traditionalists (born 1944 or earlier). Since the questions on political participation, as mentioned, are placed in the self-administered drop-off part of FNES2019, and the number of respondents consequently is restricted, some of the generational categories contain few respondents (39 respondents are Gen Z and 102 are Traditionalists), which means that results should be interpreted with caution.

We focus on examining how central political attitudes shape participation across generations. *Satisfaction with democracy* is measured on a four-point Likert scale (None at all – very satisfied), and *political interest* is also on a four-point Likert scale (None at all – very interested). *Left-right ideology* is measured on a 11-point scale where 0=Left, while *GAL/TAN* is measured with an index based on answers to five indicators concerning attitudes to the extent of immigration, the European Union, Christian values in society, status of sexual minorities and eco-friendliness. This index is coded so that lower scores indicate more Green/Alternative/Liberal (GAL) social values and higher scores Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist (TAN) values.[2]

Selecting control variables is complicated when examining differences across generations, where values on traditional characteristics such as occupation and income are influenced by life-cycle effects where younger respondents rarely have an occupation or a steady income. Controlling for such mediating variables may diminish the effect of generations on participation (Diemer et al., 2021). We, therefore, only control for sociodemographic characteristics unaffected by the life cycle. These include gender (dichotomy, male=1), language (0=Finnish, 1=Other), and level of urbanity, where respondents indicate the level of urbanity where they live (0=countryside, 1=large city with more than 100,000 inhabitants). We display regression results in coefficient plots where we do not display control variables. All control and independent variables are coded to vary between 0 and 1, and descriptive information on all variables is available in the appendix.

Figure 6.2 shows logistic regression models where separate models are run for each generation. It should be noted that the X-axis differs so comparison of effects between activities should be done with caution.

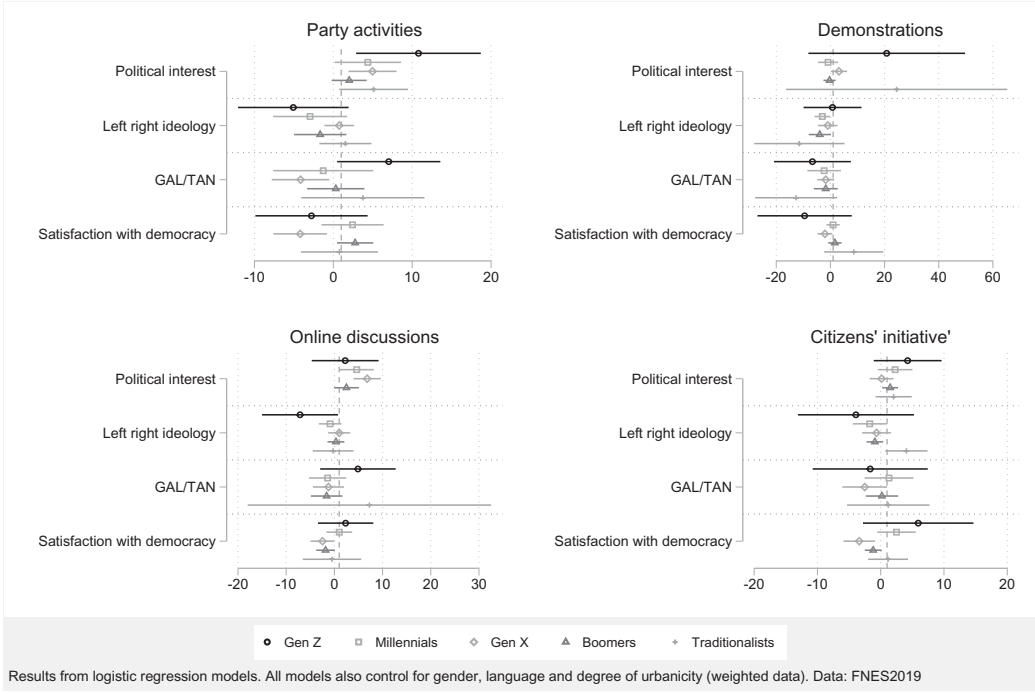

Figure 6.2 Four forms of political participation and political attitudes across generations, FNES 2019.

Political interest is associated with more participation in most activities and across generations, even if the associations often fail to reach significance. While not too much emphasis should be put on the exact figures,[3] it is noticeable that effects tend to be stronger for Generation Z, which shows that attitudes have strong effects among younger citizens. For ideology, there are few significant results, which may be explained by involvement being more common among the extremes at both ends of the spectrum. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that for party activities, the positive coefficient for Generation Z shows that party involvement is more common among those with more traditional social views, whereas those with more liberal attitudes tend to be more active among Millennials and Generation X. It is also interesting to note that involvement for Generation X in all four activities tends to be driven by dissatisfaction with democracy, whereas results are mixed for other generations. Finally, there is a tendency for the younger generation to be more driven by satisfaction with democracy when getting involved in online discussions and signing citizens' initiatives, whereas they use more traditional activities to voice discontent.

Conclusions

Our findings have implications for how different generations use political activities in Finland. The generational differences were of minor importance for more traditional activities that are not widely used by most of the population regardless of age. The differences were more pronounced for newer additions to the political

repertoire such as discussing online and signing citizens' initiatives. Here, the younger generations were more likely to be active. These results confirm that it is important to consider different political activities when exploring the contemporary generations' patterns of political engagement. Furthermore, it may be important to go beyond traditional distinctions between institutionalized and noninstitutionalized participation since this distinction fails to capture important differences.

We see important differences across generations when we examine how political attitudes are linked with political activities. We usually expect that dissatisfied citizens eschew traditional political activities and prefer noninstitutionalized alternatives such as demonstrations (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; della Porta, 2006; Klandermans, 2015), or direct-democratic alternatives to the representative system (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Gherghina & Geissel, 2019). Our results show that the links may be more complex than what this relatively simple association suggests. Different generations use different activities to voice discontent. Generation X stands out in our analyses as a generation of complainers, who in all forms of participation tend to be driven by dissatisfaction with democracy. The older generations use demonstrations and the citizens' initiative to voice their discontent, as the conventional story suggests. But for younger generations, the dissatisfied are using party politics to voice discontent rather than online activities and the CI, which are tied to higher levels of satisfaction. These results, thus, suggest that not only do the generations prefer different political activities, but they also use them for very different purposes.

These differences are not captured by the traditional institutionalized/noninstitutionalized distinction that is frequently made in studies on political participation. If we only focus on the distinction between institutional and noninstitutional, we are unable to discern the generational differences that do exist in how popular different activities are among different generations (see Koc, 2021). Instead of the degree of institutionalization, the ease of use and online availability appear to be important for the younger generations. Both signing citizens' initiatives and discussing online are sporadic and accessible online, which lends support for theories on young generations' participatory preferences that emphasize these aspects (Dalton, 2017; Grasso, 2014; Huttunen & Christensen, 2020). This seems to be a stronger driving force than post-material values, which does not appear to be a particularly strong predictor of participation, even among the younger generations.

Although the limited number of respondents entails that we are unable to settle the associations unequivocally, political participation in Finland seems to be a complex puzzle where generational differences are not only expressed in what activities different age groups are active in, but also why they are active. The findings may be distorted using election data since the focus on the traditional representative system may affect younger generations to a greater extent. The 2019 elections also took place during a time where younger generations were unusually politically active due to the popularity of the Fridays for Future climate strike movement. Nevertheless, the evidence shows that it is important to be aware of generational differences in political participation to understand the implications for democracy in Finland.

Notes

1 Offline participation: Which of the following political activities have you done during the last four years, or could do if you felt an issue is important. Discussing online: Which of the following have you done on the Internet during the last four years, or could do if you felt an issue is important, answer option: Participate in political discussions by writing comments on social media, blogs, or other networks.
2 An exploratory factor analysis indicates that the indicators form two separate dimensions, but we nonetheless proceed with a one-dimensional measure in line with the work of Grönlund & Söderlund in Chapter 8 in this book since we believe the two-dimensional solution to be an artifact due to reverse-coded questions (van Sonderen et al., 2013).
3 The remarkable large coefficients for political interest when it comes to Generation Z's involvement in party activities and demonstrations are due to the low number of respondents, which entails that very few with low interest have performed either activity.

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Appendix

Table 6.A1 Descriptive information for FNES2019

Variable	*Obs*	*Mean/%*	*Std. Dev.*	*Min*	*Max*
Political participation					
Party activities	745	0.12	0.32	0.00	1.00
Legal demonstrations	746	0.13	0.33	0.00	1.00
Discuss politics online	730	0.19	0.40	0.00	1.00
Sign citizens' initiatives	747	0.55	0.50	0.00	1.00
Generations				1.00	5.00
Gen Z	39	5.21%		1.00	1.00
Millennials	108	14.4%		2.00	2.00
Gen X	157	21.0%		3.00	3.00
Boomer	343	45.8%		4.00	4.00
Traditionalist	102	13.6%		5.00	5.00
Political attitudes					
Political Interest	752	0.69	0.26	0.00	1.00
Left/right ideology	669	0.51	0.25	0.00	1.00
GAL/TAN	753	0.45	0.16	0.00	1.00
Satisfaction w. democracy	730	0.60	0.20	0.00	1.00
Sociodemographics					
Gender	752	0.46	0.50	0.00	1.00
Language	753	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00
Urbanicity	749	0.53	0.29	0.00	1.00

Note: Unweighted data.

Part 2

Elections, parties and candidates

7 The Social Basis of the Vote

Class Voting in Finland

Aino Tiihonen and Peter Söderlund

Introduction and theory

Some of the most influential political parties have been organized around coherent social class identities and interest, particularly in West-European multiparty systems. In addition, voters' class positions have historically correlated strongly with their party choice in Western democracies (Bartolini & Mair, 1990; Knutsen, 2006; Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Nieuwbeerta, 1995; Nieuwbeerta & Ultee, 1999). Working-class voting is the epitome of class voting. The socio-economic class cleavage emerged from the industrial revolution and the confrontation between the owners of the means of production and the workers in the 19th century. Studies show, however, that voters' class positions have become less relevant determinants of electoral behaviour over the past decades (Butler & Stokes, 1974; Dalton, 1984; Clark & Lipset, 1991; Knutsen, 2006; Evans & Tilley, 2012). This trend has been more pronounced among working-class voters (Evans & Tilley, 2017; Gingrich & Häusermann, 2015; Rennwald, 2020). Class voting has not disappeared, however. Studies attest that working-class voting still matters, particularly in the Nordic countries (Bengtsson et al., 2014; Oskarson & Demker, 2015).

How strong is class voting in Finland? This chapter examines the level of class voting – working-class voting in particular – in Finland over time. Traditionally, social class has determined voters' party choices in Finland similarly as in other West-European multi-party systems. Social cleavage has been one of the key political cleavages in Finnish political system.

A recent comparative study on social structure's effect on party choices in West European democracies has shown that in the 21st century the correlation between social class and party choice has been the highest in Finland compared to 17 other Western European countries (Knutsen, 2018).

Class voting is relevant to study given the general decline in the predictive power of class in contemporary democracies. Both an objective measure and a subjective measure of class identification are used. While the objective measure of occupational class has been the predominant indicator, subjective class position has gained more and more attention in the international literature on class voting (Ares, 2020; Langsæther, 2019; Langsæther et al., 2021; see also Knutsen, 2018).

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Two datasets are analysed in this chapter: Finnish National Election Studies (2003–2019) and EVA Surveys on Finnish Values and Attitudes (1984–2019). These data, thus, enable us to detect trends in class voting from the 1980s up to 2019.

What do we mean by class voting? Class voting refers to the tendency of social classes to direct their vote to certain candidates or parties which represent the interests of these social classes. In other words, one's position in the social class structure increases the likelihood to vote for a certain party (Evans, 2017; Knutsen, 2018). Scholars focusing on class voting have distinguished between "traditional class voting" and "total class voting". Traditional class voting is the tendency of blue-collar employees to vote for left parties (as well as the tendency of the middle class to side with bourgeois or conservative parties). Total class voting, on the other hand, is not limited to the extent to which members of the working-class vote for left parties. Instead it refers to the overall predictive power of social class to explain party choice; that is, how people of different classes systematically vote for certain parties because they are thought to represent different social classes (Gingrich & Häusermann, 2015, 52).

Cleavage theories are essential to understand class voting. These theories assert that citizens are divided into opposite groups with different interests. This leads to political conflicts between these groups. According to Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967), in their seminal theory on the social divisions and cleavages, the cleavages are anchored to two historical developments: the industrial and national revolutions in earlier centuries. Lipset and Rokkan argued that these revolutions gave rise to four important cleavages, which paved the ground for political parties in Western democracies and shaped the party systems: (1) religion-cleavage, (2) centre/periphery-cleavage, (3) rural/urban-cleavage, and (4) class-cleavage among employers and workers.

Bartolini and Mair (1990) refined the thinking of Lipset and Rokkan and presented their theory of cleavages. More specifically, they sought to explain why certain cleavages become political, i.e. widely accepted cleavages in society and, thus, they illustrated a "cleavage typology". The typology presents three elements of political cleavage: (1) structural and empirical element, (2) psychological and normative element, and (3) organizational element. From the definition of Bartolini and Mair, a cleavage cannot exist without fulfilling all these three elements. Many other cleavage studies in the 21st century have adopted the cleavage typology (Dalton, 2002; Deegan-Krause, 2007 and Enyedi, 2005, 2008). Figure 7.1 illustrates how social class becomes a political cleavage in society by fulfilling the three elements.

In this chapter, focus is primarily on the first two elements. Regarding the first cleavage element – the structural element – the general assumption is that society's social structure reflects and contains class divisions. Various class indicators, for instance occupation, income, and education, are the key factors shaping these divisions. The most common of them is occupation, which is used in most class-voting studies. Second, this chapter also accounts for the second element – the psychological and normative element – as voters form their own independent class identification (i.e. subjective class position).

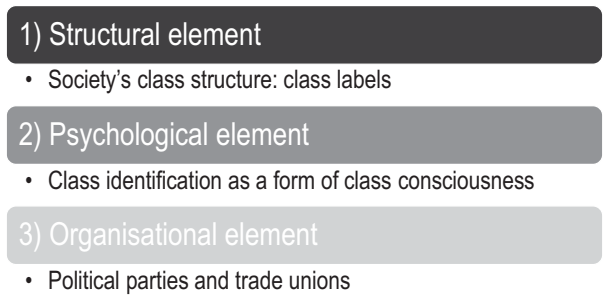

Figure 7.1 Social class becoming a political cleavage.

Source: The three elements of a cleavage are adapted from Bartolini and Mair (1990) and elaborated by Tiihonen (2021).

Descriptive trends

In Finland, the class cleavage is reflected in the socioeconomic left-right cleavage. Historically, working-class voters have been on the left of the spectrum and supported socialist ideologies, whereas the bourgeois has been on the right of the spectrum. While modernisation and industrialisation occurred relatively late in Finland, a class cleavage between owners and workers did occur in the same way as in many other Western democracies. The class cleavage became ever so salient over a century ago due to the Finnish civil war in 1918 between the socialist Reds and the bourgeois Whites. This class cleavage remained highly contentious until the 1960s (Karvonen, 2014; Pesonen & Riihinen, 2002).

In later decades, there has been a weakening of the class cleavage in Finland. For instance, effective government cooperation between the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Centre Party (KESK) in the post-war period dispelled the class cleavage in daily politics. Likewise, the collapse of the Soviet Union in the beginning of the 1990s rasped off the sharpest edges of the class cleavage in Finland. Especially in the 21st century, globalisation, occupational change, changes in work-life culture, and increasing multipolarity in the world economy have created pressures for traditional class cleavage and reshaped it (Paloheimo & Sundberg, 2005, Karvonen, 2014; Westinen, 2015). Both blue-collar employees and farmers in the agriculture and forest sectors have significantly decreased since the 1960s. The share of the working-class among all employees has decreased from 45 percent to 24 percent between years 1970 and 2020 (Statistics Finland, 2022). Simultaneously, new occupations outside the traditional class cleavage have emerged. All this has undoubtedly affected class voting in Finland (Pesonen, 2001, 121–125; Karvonen, 2014; see also Tiihonen, 2021).

The generally accepted convention in class-voting studies is to measure social class by a respondent's occupation (Alford, 1963; Bartolini & Mair, 1990; Dalton et al., 1984; Franklin et al., 1992; Knutsen, 2006). However, occupational class represents only one dimension of social class. In the recent international literature on class voting, voters' values and attitudes have been increasingly emphasised. An alternative measure for social class rests on subjective class consciousness

simply by asking the respondents to which social they feel they belong to (Ares, 2020; Langsæther, 2019; Langsæther et al., 2021; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008, 339). Combining both objective and subjective class position together with voter's attitudinal orientations, givesthe most comprehensive approach to working-class voting (Tiihonen 2021). Social class is still relevant if we are to believe survey responses "regarding their class identification". (Oskarson, 2015; Bengtsson & Berglund, 2010; Brady et al., 2009) and scholars have observed that voters' attitudinal orientations, which can have a strong effect on their party choices, are influenced by their class identification. (Bengtsson et al., 2014; Oskarson, 1994, 2015). A class identification question is also found in the Finnish post-election surveys. In terms of Finnish voters, the large majority identify with a social class. Approximately nine out of ten eligible voters identify with a specific social class, which indicates that social class – people's position in the social structure, is still a relevant source of identification (Tiihonen, 2021).

We begin by describing the distribution of Finnish voters in terms of their occupational class and class identification. The data come from five Finnish National Election Studies (2003–2019, see technical appendix). The number of respondents for occupational class is lower since people who are pensioners, on parental leave, students, and unemployed are excluded. For subjective class identification, we have a much larger number because very few respondents refused to give a response to the question. In addition, the respondents were offered to answer that they do not consider themselves to belong to any particular social class (i.e. "no class"). Cannot say responses (0.5–4.0 percent depending on the year of survey) are included in the "no class" category.

Table 7.1 reports the distribution of respondents' occupational group and class identification in each Finnish National Election Study. About a half of the respondents say they are blue-collar employees and the share has not declined from 2003

Table 7.1 Occupation and class identification in the Finnish electorate (percent by column)

	2003	*2007*	*2011*	*2015*	*2019*
Occupational class					
Blue-collar employee	54	51	50	54	54
White-collar employee	19	18	16	13	15
Senior white-collar employee	10	12	16	12	15
Manager or executive	4	5	4	5	4
Entrepreneur/Farmer	14	14	13	16	12
(N)	(762)	(902)	(729)	(914)	(879)
Class identification					
Working class	33	35	37	35	31
Lower middle	14	15	13	17	13
Middle	35	35	33	30	35
Upper middle/Upper	7	7	9	7	9
No class	11	8	9	11	12
(N)	(1270)	(1422)	(1298)	(1587)	(1598)

Sources: FNES 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019.

to 2019. Respondents were also asked to select their own subjective class, i.e. class identification, from a list of five social-class categories: working class, lower middle class, middle class, upper middle class, and upper class. The sixth alternative was that they do not feel they belong to any particular social class. Roughly one-third describe themselves as working-class. The distributions differ in the sense that respondents are more inclined to report they are blue-collar employees rather than reporting they identify with the working class. Overall, the invariability especially in class identification is interesting. Despite the ongoing debates about disappearing, weakening, or alternating classes, Finnish voters seem to still identify with them and rather steadily. The fact that approximately nine out of ten Finnish voters have class identification with a certain social class in the 21st century is exclusively interesting.

Apparently, there is a disjuncture between the objective and subjective measures, which can be used to determine class position. Upon closer inspection of the data in terms of the congruence and incongruence between voters' objective and subjective class-positions (not reported in any table), 57 percent of blue-collar employees identify themselves as being working-class. Among the remaining blue-collar employees, most identify as being middle class (21 percent) or lower middle class (12 percent). Twenty-one percent of entrepreneurs identify as working-class and 17 percent of white-collar employees did the same.

Next, we describe which parties working-class people vote for based on responses in the Finnish National Election Studies. The time span is, indeed, short – five elections and 16 years between the first and the last election – but these surveys have asked for both the respondent's occupation and self-identification. In Figures 7.2 and 7.3, the parties for whom the respondents voted for are arranged according to their position on the left-right ideology scale. The parties' ideological positions are based on expert judgment data reported in The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (Module 5, 2016–2021) which collects national election studies around the world (https://cses.org/). The Left Alliance (VAS), the SDP, and the Green League (VIHR) receive the scores 2, 3, and 4 on the 11-point scale running from 0 to 10. The Left Alliance and the Social Democratic Party, in particular, are regarded as left parties in terms of the socioeconomic ideological dimension. The Finns Party (PS) and the Christian Democrats (KD) score 6, and the Centre Party (KESK) and the Swedish People's Party (RKP) score 7, on the left-right scale. The National Coalition Party (KOK) is the party farthest to the right on the socioeconomic scale with a score of 8.

Figure 7.2 shows the share of blue-collar employees voting for any of the eight largest party by election year. What is most striking among the three left-wing parties is that the support for the SDP has diminished among blue-collar employees over the course of nearly two decades. While 30 percent of the blue-collar employees voted for the party in 2003, 21 percent did so in 2019. Interestingly, a similar secular decline cannot be detected for the other leftist party, the Left Alliance (VAS), which has in most elections been supported by more than ten percent of the blue-collar employees. In 2019, the Green League also saw a smaller boost of support from blue-collar employees, from well below ten percent to 12 percent.

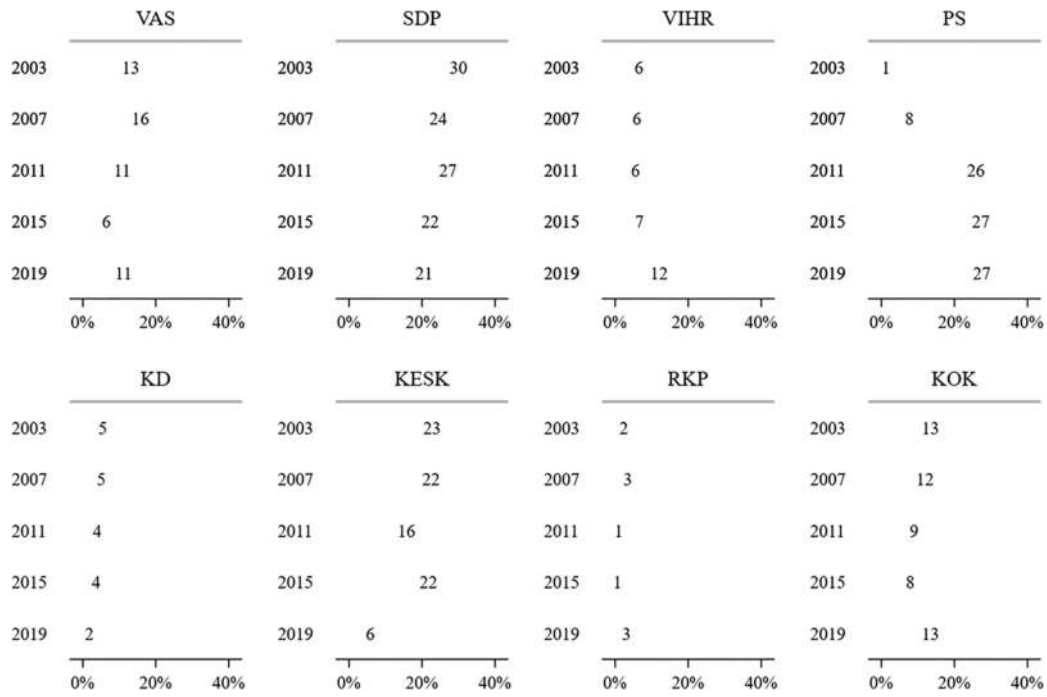

Figure 7.2 Electoral support for Finnish parties among blue-collar employees over time (percent).

Source: Finnish National Election Studies 2003–2019.

A new strong contender for the working-class vote arose in the middle of the period as the Finns Party (previously known as the True Finns) gained popularity. Overall, the party has won between 17.5 and 19 per cent of the vote in the three parliamentary elections 2011, 2015 and 2019. The Finns Party (PS) has attracted a great deal of electoral support from blue-collar workers. A steady number – over a quarter of blue-collar employees – have voted for the Finns Party in 2011, 2015, and 2019.

Initially, the Centre Party (KESK) appears to have had solid support among blue-collar workers with around 20 percent of the support from 2003 to 2015. However, according to our available data, this support plummeted in 2019 when only six percent of the blue-collar workers voted for the party. The National Coalition Party (KOK) has had a support of somewhat below and above ten percent from blue-collar workers. The Christian Democrats and the Swedish People's Party are the smallest parties in this group, and therefore, their support among blue-collar workers is also small.

Figure 7.3 summarises party choice by subjective class identification and year. Around three-fourths of the voters who claim working-class identity have voted for the SDP, Left Alliance (VAS), the Finns Party (PS), or the Centre Party (KESK) in the 2000s and 2010s. Most of these voters having working-class identity chose a candidate who represented the SDP. However, over the past two decades, the share of social democratic voters within this class identification category has decreased from 40 to 28 percent. The Left Alliance (VAS) saw its support decrease as well

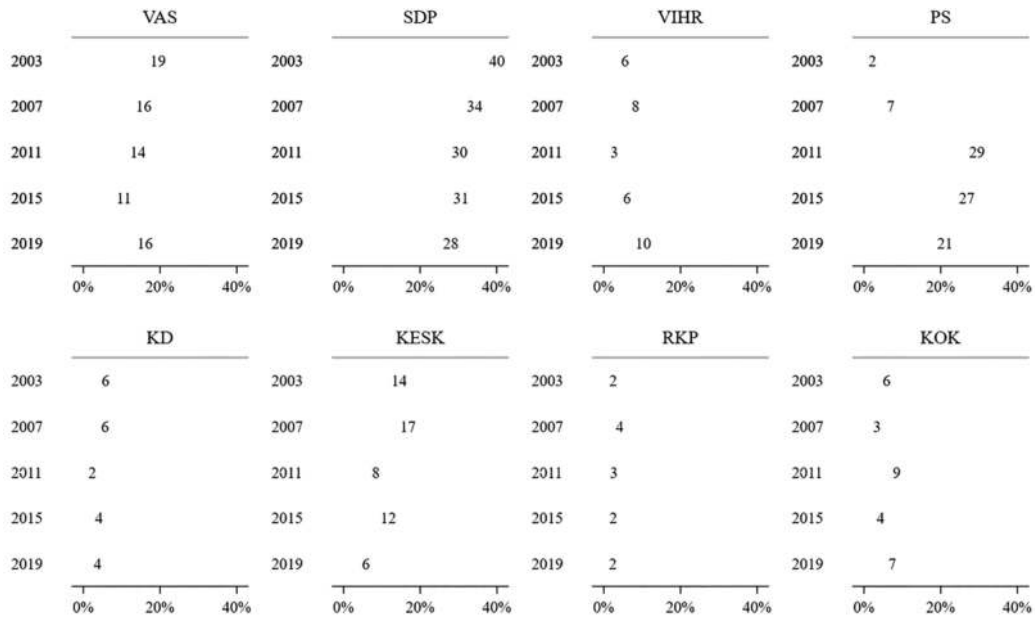

Figure 7.3 Electoral support for Finnish parties among the self-identified working class over time (percent).

Source: Finnish National Election Studies 2003–2019.

among people who feel they belong to the working class between 2003 and 2015, from 19 to 11 percent, but this number bounced back to 16 percent in 2019. The Centre Party (KESK) also initially drew considerable support from the working class, around 15 percent, but the share dipped below ten percent in the 2010s.

The results indicate that to a considerable extent, the decline in working-class support for the two leftist parties and the Centre Party can be explained by the fact that almost a third of the people identifying with the working class in 2011 voted for the Finns Party (PS). In the two subsequent elections (2015 and 2019), this share decreased first to 27 percent and then to 21 percent. Hence, there has been a decline of working-class voting for the Social Democratic Party, the Centre Party, and the Finns Party (since 2011), when voters' class-positions are measured subjectively, with their class identification. In contrast, the Left Alliance and the Green League are the two parties, which have managed to garner greater support in the 2019 parliamentary election compared to the previous election. At the same time, middle-class identification among the Finns Party supporters has increased from the 2011 election to the 2019 election. The same trend can be found among the supporters of the Green League.

Explanatory analyses

This empirical section assesses how well social class explains party choice over time. The first set of data consists of the five Finnish National Election Studies (2003–2019) analysed above. A second set of data is included to extend the time

period. The Finnish Business and Policy Forum (EVA) has in a series of surveys asked about views on Finnish society since 1984. Data from thirteen EVA surveys between 1984 and 2019 are analysed here. Party choice in the latter data is based on the question which political party the respondent would vote for if parliamentary elections were held now.

As mentioned in the introduction, class voting can be conceptualised as both "traditional" left-right class voting and "total" class voting which accounts for how all types of class differences (based on a detailed class schema) explain party choice. Different types of indexes capture different types of class voting.

The most common index has been the Alford index, named after its inventor Robert Alford in the mid-60s (Alford, 1962, 1963). Since then, the index has been used widely in many class-voting studies globally (Nieuwbeerta, 1996, 1995; Nieuwbeerta & Ultee, 1999; Lijphart, 1971; Clark et al., 1993). The Alford index measures class voting as the difference in support for left-wing parties between working-class and non-working-class voters. First, the share of working-class voters who report they voted for any of the left-wing parties is calculated. In the second step, the share of non-working-class voters who voted for the same left-wing parties is computed. Finally, the difference between the two numbers (or shares) is taken to arrive at the index score. The higher the index score, the greater the number of working-class voters who supported a left-wing party relative to non-working-class voters doing the same.

More recently, Lachat has proposed an alternative index, the so-called lambda index, to measure the extent to which there are differences in voting behaviour between social groups in general. Lachat argued that previous class-voting indexes, such as the Alford index, have not managed satisfactorily to take into account that the size of social groups change over time. The relative size of parties in multiparty systems may also bias index scores. To be able to adequately compare the strength of a given cleavage over time, a more intricate measure such as the lambda index is needed. Its calculation involves running a multinomial regression with party choice as the dependent variable and summarizing weighted deviations from the average distribution of votes per group and party. The index, thus, sums to what extent people belonging to each class homogeneously vote for a specific party. The absolute lambda index that we use can range between 0 and 0.5 where higher values indicate that certain groups of voters (according to occupation and class identification) more homogenously vote for certain parties (Lachat, 2007).

Figure 7.4 reports the impact of occupation on class voting according to the Alford index. Each number is the proportion of blue-collar employees voting for any of the left parties (the Social Democratic Party and the Left Alliance) minus the proportion of respondents in other occupational groups voting for any of the same left parties. Judging from the EVA data, the decline in the predictive power of class since 1984 is beyond dispute. The lower Alford index in 1984 might be connected to the Finnish Rural Party's (FRP) victory in the 1983 parliamentary election, which has been regarded as a protest election. The FRP ideology's core lay in anti-elitist views, criticizing other politicians and government and highlighting the benefits of ordinary people and rural entrepreneurs. In the 1983 election, all major

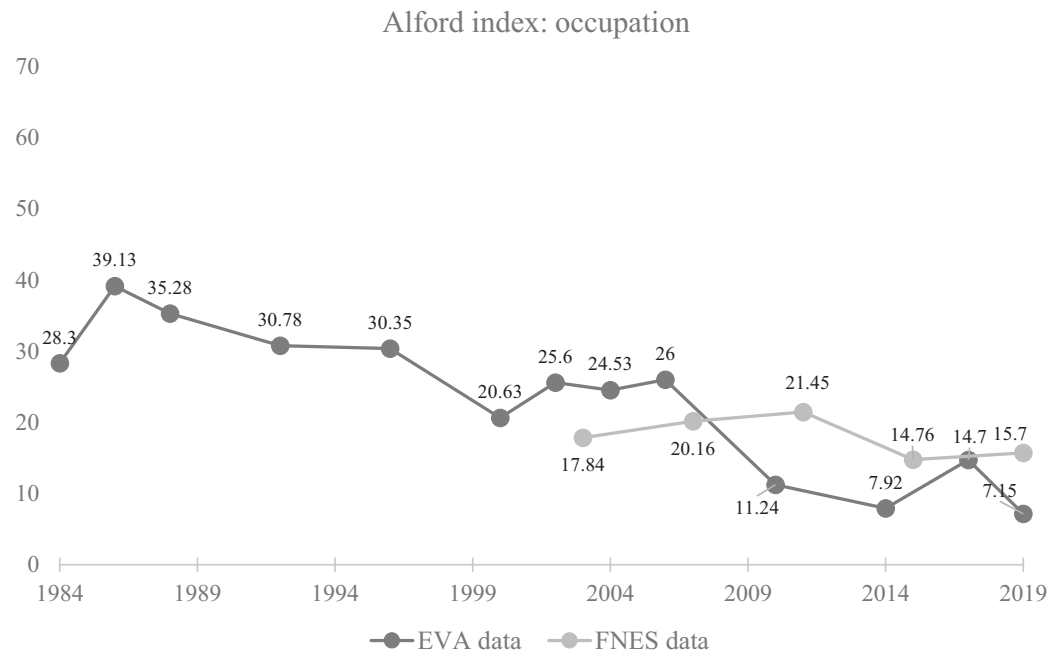

Figure 7.4 Impact of occupation on party choice: Alford index.

Source: EVA (Finnish Business and Policy Forum) Surveys on Finnish Values and Attitudes 1984–2020 and Finnish National Election Studies 2003–2019.

Finnish parties, except the Social Democratic Party, lost several seats in the Finnish parliament, whereas the FRP increased its support by 5.1 percentage points and gained 10 more seats and got in the government coalition.

While it appears that the decline was gradual from the 1980s to the 2000s, a larger decrease in the Alford index can be detected in the 2010s. The explanation to this decline is the aforementioned rise of the Finns Party which managed to attract a great deal of voters from the working class. Class voting has not disappeared, far from it, but being working class does not predict voting for a left party as strongly as before. The decline is not, however, as dramatic if we look at the extent of class voting according to the FNES data. Yet the index values for 2015 and 2019 are lower than in the previous three elections. A possible explanation to why the index scores differ is that the FNES surveys ask for party choice in the most recent parliamentary election, while the EVA surveys ask for the party the respondent is most likely to vote for in the next parliamentary election.

Figure 7.5 is based on the second index, the lambda index, which measures total class voting. Here, the EVA data also suggest that the decline in class voting since the 1980s. The index accounts for how homogenously respondents belonging to different occupational classes (blue-collar employee, white-collar employee, senior white-collar employee, manager or executive, and entrepreneur/farmer) vote for any of the major parties represented in parliament. The higher the index score, the greater the covariation between social class and party choice. On the other hand, the FNES data does indicate that there has been a decline in class voting since 2003.

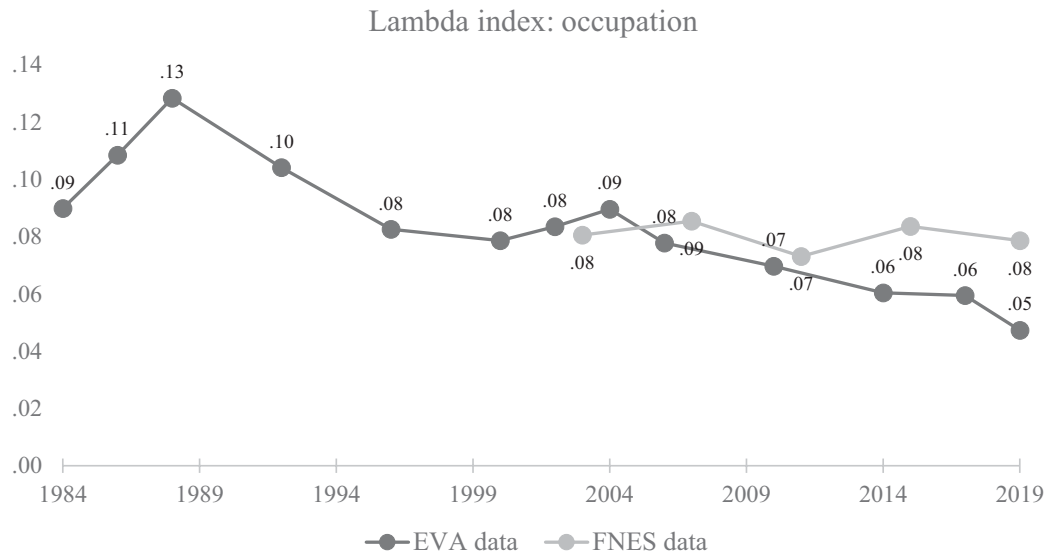

Figure 7.5 Impact of occupation on party choice: Lambda index.

Source: EVA Surveys on Finnish Values and Attitudes 1984–2020 and Finnish National Election Studies 2003–2019.

Finally, we test the relevance of subjective class identification. Overall, the covariation between class identification and voting for a left party is considerably higher than the covariation between occupation and voting for a left party. This is apparent if we compare the magnitude of the scores of the Alford index, which distinguishes between manual and non-manual occupations and whether they voted for a left party or not (Figure 7.4 versus Figure 7.6). This finding supports the point of using subjective class identification in addition to occupation as a measure for social class in studies of class voting. On the other hand, the magnitude of the lambda scores do not markedly differ depending on whether occupation or class identification is used to explain total class voting (Figure 7.5 versus Figure 7.7).

Figure 7.6 affirms a long-term decline of working-class voting over the past four decades: respondents who identify with the working class are today less likely to vote for a left party relative to respondents who identify with another social class. The Alford index score has decreased from being well above 50 to being well below 30 if we rely on the EVA data. Although the index scores from the two different datasets differ, the FNES data do suggest that the traditional cleavage has become less salient. The trends in Figure 7.7 are very similar to those in Figure 7.5. This implies that there is a decline in total or overall class voting, but the decline is much more subtle, and the negative trend is only visible in the EVA data.

Figure 7.5 is based on the second index, the lambda index, which measures total class voting. Here, the EVA data also suggest that the decline in class voting since the 1980s. The index accounts for how homogenously respondents belonging to different occupational classes (blue-collar employee, white-collar employee, senior white-collar employee, manager or executive, and entrepreneur/farmer) vote for

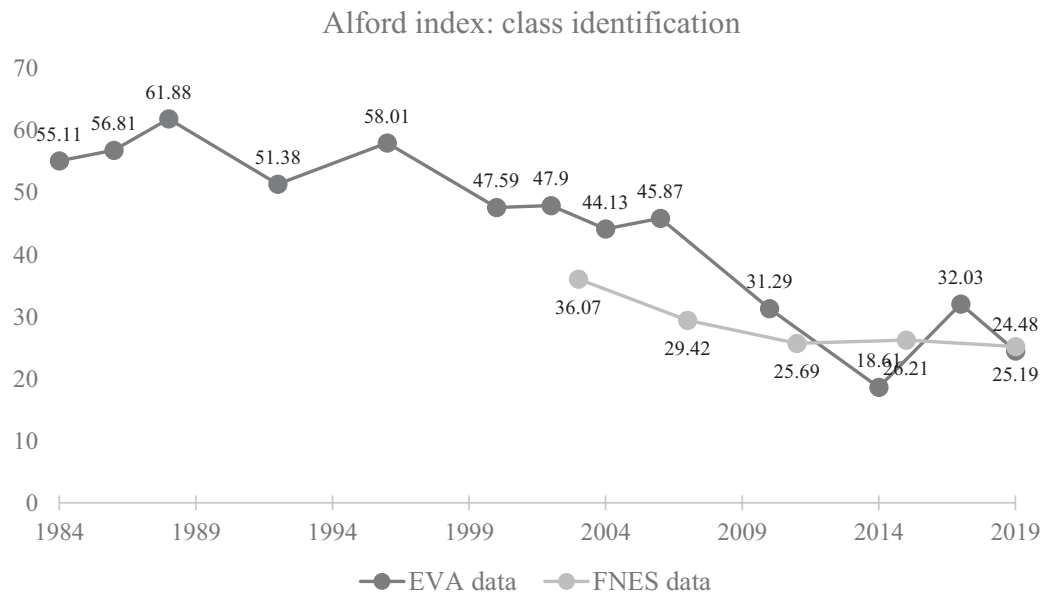

Figure 7.6 Impact of class identification on party choice: Alford index.

Source: EVA Surveys on Finnish Values and Attitudes 1984–2020 and Finnish National Election Studies 2003–2019.

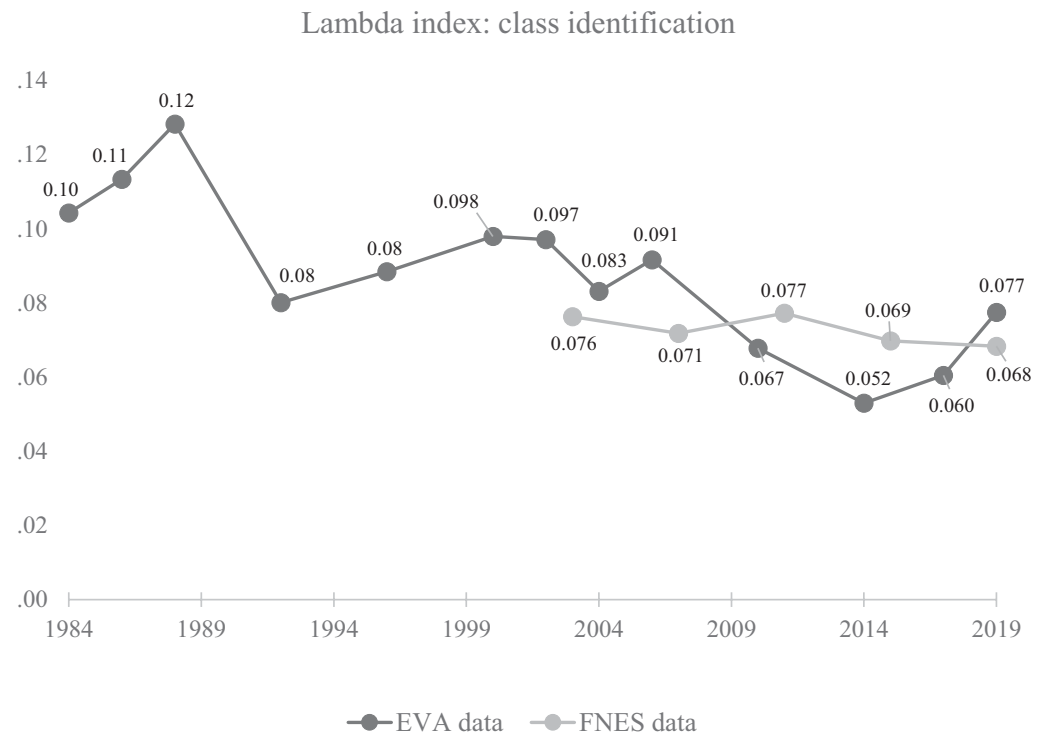

Figure 7.7 Impact of class identification on party choice: Lambda index.

Source: EVA Surveys on Finnish Values and Attitudes 1984–2020 and Finnish National Election Studies 2003–2019.

any of the major parties represented in parliament. The higher the index score, the greater the covariation between social class and party choice. On the other hand, the FNES data do indicate that there has been a decline in class voting since 2003.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the social basis of party choice in Finland by assessing the strength of class voting over the past decades. Both occupation and class identification were used as measures for social class. The results first of all showed that the relationship between class position and party choice varies depending on the class indicator. Subjective class identification was a stronger predictor than objective occupational class when it comes to explain working-class voting (i.e. the share of working-class voters who vote for left-wing parties). The subjective and objective measures of class did not differ when it came to explaining class voting in general (i.e. total class voting).

Overall, this chapter provides evidence that social class voting still contributes to explain party choice. Especially the working-class voters' tendency to vote for the two left-wing parties – the Left Alliance or the Social Democratic Party – makes sure that class remains an important factor in determining the results of general elections. When using class identification as an indicator of class position rather than occupation, the level of class voting is relatively high. This finding is in line with the recommendation in the class-voting research that scholars should be more attentive to voters' subjective class positions.

Social structure determines relatively strongly voters' party choices in Finland. Compared to Sweden, the level of traditional left-right class voting is not as strong in Finland and it has never been (Wessman, 2021). However, the results regarding Swedish voters are based on voters' occupation, not their class identification. Total class voting – when all classes and all parties are examined – has been high in Finland in an international perspective. Knutsen (2018, 161) found that the correlation between social class and party choice was the highest in Finland compared 17 other Western European countries. However, his data for Finland was from a single point of time, the 2008 European Values Study.

This chapter was a longitudinal study in the sense that the impact of social class on party choice over time was assessed. There is unquestionably a declining trend in class voting in Finland in terms of both traditional left-right and total class voting since the 1980s. This is in line with the development in most Western democracies over the past decades. Especially in the 2010s, the share of working-class voters voting for any of the left-wing parties has been lower. A large part of the working class in Finland in recent years has turned to a new party family – the populist radical right – unaccounted for by the Alford index which measures voting for left parties. However, the future of class voting in Finland does not look completely dark, that is to say voters' class positions keep determining their party choices. Especially if voters' class positions are also considered with subjective indicators. Since a remarkable share of the Finnish voters keep identifying themselves with a social class, it is justifiable for future class-voting studies to pay more attention on voters' class identification.

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8 Value Dimensions and Party Choice in Finland

Kimmo Grönlund and Peter Söderlund

Introduction

Antipathy between the supporters of opposing political camps appears to be on the rise in Finland according to recent studies (see Chapter 10 in this book as well). Especially supporters of the Left Alliance (VAS), and to some extent supporters of the Green League (VIHR), have since the beginning of the 2000s gradually moved left on the left–right self-placement scale, while supporters of the populist Finns Party (PS) have moved to the right. Concurrently, differences between the two camps have deepened over cultural and moral issues (Isotalo et al., 2020). Another study, which examined the Finnish Twittersphere, observed the public being divided along party lines with regard to the socially salient issues climate politics, immigration, and income equality. The same two opposing political camps were detected in terms of the strongly aligned positions on climate politics and views on immigration. Supporters of the Green League and Left Alliance held opposite views to supporters of the Finns Party. An issue associated with left–right distributive politics formed a separate dimension where supporters of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) formed an opposition to supporters of the National Coalition Party (KOK) and the Centre Party (KESK) (Chen et al., 2021). The latter results imply that there has been a sorting of party supporters into ideological camps. Partisan sorting refers to a process where ideological and partisan identities are brought into agreement. Like-minded citizens are clustered into parties, and within these groups, there can be further issue alignment along multiple divisive issues within the population subgroups (Baldassarri & Gelman, 2008).

In this chapter, we set out to examine if there have been growing ideological differences between voters of different parties in Finland during the 2000s and 2010s. First, we describe how voters of different parties have positioned themselves along two ideological dimensions: the traditional left–right socioeconomic dimension and the GAL–TAN value dimension (i.e., Green–Alternative–Libertarian vs. Traditional–Authoritarian–Nationalist). Second, we will examine how strongly these value dimensions have predicted party choice. If there has been a group or party sorting of individuals along ideological lines, the relationship between ideological position and party choice should have increased. One reason could be that voters with similar political attitudes cluster into certain parties. Over time, broad

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issue alignment may occur whereby partisans' attitudes are bundled together: a position on one issue corresponds with a certain position on another. The parties themselves may also over time begin to present coherent issue packages, and then refer to easily accessible general ideological orientations when they communicate with the voters (Lachat, 2008).

Social cleavages

To better understand how ideological orientations and issue positions might explain citizens' party choice, we revisit some key studies regarding cleavages and ideological voting. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) were the first to approach party system formation in Western Europe from a macro-historical perspective. The twin processes of the national and industrial revolutions resulted in four historical cleavages: centre-periphery, state-church, land-industry, and owner-worker. These cleavages reflected the primary existing divisions in society which created important preconditions for the emergence of parties and party systems around Western Europe at the turn of the 20th century. The content of the historical cleavages has been updated since. The traditional cleavages espoused by Lipset and Rokkan can in contemporary studies be measured as subnational resistance to the state (centre-periphery), religiosity vs. secularity (state-church), urban vs. rural (land-industry), and working class vs. middle class (owner-worker) (Knutsen & Scarbrough, 1995).

The concept of cleavage has also been the target of theoretical reconsideration (see also the discussion on the concept of cleavage in Chapter 7 on class voting). Bartolini and Mair (1990) understood a cleavage to necessarily include three elements: socio-structural foundation, collective identity, and organisation form. With regard to the first element, society is divided into homogeneous groups where each group shares some common characteristics (e.g., class, religion, ethnicity, and region) which forms the socio-structural foundation. Second, members in a particular social group must share a collective identity because they have similar values and priorities in one or more societal issues. Third, these issues are politicised and expressed through a common organisational structure such as political party.

All voting is, of course, not cleavage voting. Knutsen and Scarbrough (1995) presented a model of party choice in which they distinguished between structural voting, value voting, and cleavage voting. Structural voting means that members of some structurally defined social group vote for a party because they share the same social background but do not have common value orientations (e.g., members of an ethnic group vote for an ethno-linguistic party). Value voting occurs when value orientations alone guide party choice (e.g., people with postmaterialist values vote for a green party). Cleavage voting implies that social structure and value orientations matter: one's position in the social structure influences value orientations which then shapes party choice (e.g., members of the working class develop egalitarian and redistributive attitudes and, therefore, they support social democratic parties).

Processes of social modernisation and individualisation since the 1960s have contributed to a decline in long-term forces that tie voters to parties (Thomassen,

2005). With the reduced impact of stable social cleavages (i.e., social-structural factors) and traditional collective loyalties, vote choice has become more influenced by ideological orientations and issue preferences (Lachat, 2008). Henceforth, we focus on value voting which is represented by ideological orientations and the more concrete issue positions that fall under a value dimension. Theoretically, we can distinguish between value orientations, ideological orientations, and issue positions. These go from more general and enduring predispositions to more short-term attitudes depending. Long-term predisposition at least partially shapes attitudes towards current policy issues which have become salient during the election campaign (Shanks & Miller, 1991).

Cleavages and value dimensions in Western Europe

There have been various relatively durable conflicts or dimensions underlying political competition in countries across Western Europe. We have to bear in mind that there is variation between countries. Certain plural societies (e.g., Belgium and Switzerland) have been divided along several lines of cleavage such as religion, class, and language (Lijphart, 2012, 36), while other countries such as Sweden have been more one-dimensional with left–right positions on issues such as social equality and welfare being dominant (Oscarsson & Holmberg, 2013, 19–20). We also have to bear in mind that the dimensionality of the political space has evolved over time in Western Europe. Which value dimensions are then relevant if we want to study the salience of political divides? Historically, a dominant dimension has been the materialist left–right dimension, which drew attention to, for example, redistribution of income, size of the public sector, the privatisation of publicly funded activities.

For a long time in Western Europe, the socioeconomic left–right dimension was considered a sort of "super-issue" that would embed other issues as well (Thomassen, 2012, 13). In the 1970s, Ronald Inglehart began to notice a transformation in the political culture of advanced industrial societies that altered the basic value priorities. Younger generations increasingly adopted postmaterialist values that emphasised goals such as belonging, esteem, and free choice (Inglehart, 1971). This also involved a change from authoritarian to libertarian values. The New Left and Green parties in particular adopted values that emphasised tolerance, alternative lifestyles, and individual freedom. Their opponents, on the other hand, treasured traditional values in terms of cultural values, family norms, and national security (Kriesi et al., 2008, 12–13).

Various axes of competition have been suggested to capture cultural conflicts beyond Inglehartian post-materialism in modern electorates. Kriesi et al. (2008) emphasised two dimensions of conflict in Western Europe in the age of globalisation: a socioeconomic and a cultural conflict. The impact of economic issues on vote choice has decreased and cultural issues have become more important over time. With the rise of the cultural dimension, issues such as immigration and European integration have gained in salience. Rovny and Edwards (2012) conceptualised political competition in two dimensions: economic left–right and social traditionalism

vs. liberalism. The former includes policy positions on taxes, redistribution, and deregulation, while the latter dimension encompasses law and order, religious values, lifestyle choices, multiculturalism, minority issues, immigration, and national identity. Hooghe et al. (2002) introduced the GAL–TAN dimension.

Cleavages and value dimensions in Finland

Which cleavages have been represented by relevant parties in Finland? In terms of the classic cleavages of the seminal Lipset-Rokkan (1967) paradigm, the land-industry and owner-worker cleavages were important for the formation of the Finnish party system and the structure of voter alignments (see Introduction chapter of this book for more). Centre-periphery and state-church have only played limited roles (Karvonen, 2014). However, multiple cleavages have divided the population into politically relevant segments. Nine major party families – many of whose origins lie in the in the Lipset-Rokkan cleavage approach – have been represented in the Finnish Parliament since 1907. These include the socialist, social democratic, green, agrarian, religious, ethnic, liberal, conservative, and right populist party families.

Additional relevant cleavages within the Finnish electorate have, indeed, been identified in literature. Paloheimo (2008) defined seven politically relevant ideological cleavages in contemporary Finland: left vs. right, centre vs. periphery, national vs. international, elite vs. people, Finnish-speaking vs. Swedish-speaking, conservative vs. liberal moral values, and ecological values vs. materialist values. Based on Paloheimo's research, Grönlund and Westinen (2012) used FNES data and identified six ideological conflicts in the parliamentary election of 2011. They were left vs. right, centre vs. periphery, national sovereignty vs. international alliances, the elite vs. people, Finnish-speaking vs. Swedish-speaking Finns and traditional values vs. postmodern values. In a similar manner, and using FNES data from the parliamentary election of 2019, Suuronen et al. (2020) showed that six ideological conflicts are relevant for differentiating voters of different parties. They are very similar to Paloheimo's and Grönlund et al.'s lists of conflicts, but Suuronen et al. differentiated between immigration and moral values. Despite the complexity, focus in the empirical parts of the chapters will be on the two most dominant and salient political value dimensions in contemporary Western Europe: the traditional left–right dimension and the GAL–TAN dimension (see discussion below).

Descriptive trends

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate where the voters of different parties are located along different political value dimensions. As mentioned, the dimensional structure of the Finnish political space is complex since six or seven dimensions of political conflict tend to be of high or medium importance in Finland (Paloheimo, 2008; Grönlund & Westinen, 2012; Suuronen et al., 2020). Here, we identify and examine two dimensions which each consists of sets of issues. The reason for such a simplification is that the task would become "overwhelmingly complex

and intellectually incomprehensible" if we would look at all the issues separately (Rovny & Edwards, 2012, 57). Our first dimension is the traditional left–right dimension. Regarding the second dimension, we prefer the term GAL–TAN because it includes green values, while environmental protection does not automatically belong to the so-called cultural dimension according to Kriesi et al. (2008). Of the above-mentioned conflicts in the Finnish political space, nationalism vs. internationalism, the elite vs. people, and traditional vs. postmodern values are collapsed into the GAL–TAN cleavage in the analyses of the present chapter.

Our data are from the five most recent Finnish National Election Studies (FNES, see Technical appendix). More precisely, we use survey questions measuring voters' policy preferences and combine relevant items to indices in order to capture the three value dimensions. Questions on political views were included in self-administered drop-off questionnaires from 2003 to 2011, and they were asked in face-to-face interviews after the elections of 2015 and 2019. One challenge is to find an appropriate number of survey items that can be combined into an index for each of the underlying value dimensions. Unfortunately, FNES has not asked identical questions on political values and issues over time. On a positive note, several questions on issue positions have been continuously replicated in three successive surveys: 2011, 2015, and 2019. These items are rated on a disagree-agree scale from 0 to 10. To expand the time series, we identify similar questions in 2003 and 2007 although there are considerable differences in the question wording and scale structure. Questions about issue priorities instead of positions were asked in the two latter surveys. Another challenge is to achieve acceptable internal consistency because the items are not too homogenous. As explained below, we created two indices, despite the rather low empirical internal consistency, because the items theoretically capture the different constructs.

First, *left–right* ideological position is an index generated from four items. These items reflect the degree to which the respondents prefer *a lower taxation level*, *more entrepreneurship and market economy*, *a smaller public sector,* and *smaller income disparities*. The latter is reverse-coded before being averaged into an overall score where lower values denote leftist positions and higher values rightist positions. The preferred size of the public sector was not asked in 2003 and no item on income disparities featured in 2007. Internal consistency is relatively low, in part due to a mix of positively and negatively skewed observed item responses. Guttman's lambda 4 reliability coefficients, calculated separately for each survey, are around 0.5. However, we prefer to include an index consisting of multiple items that measure concrete policy positions instead of left–right self-placement which is a proxy for policy positions. Also, the index and the individual items are all positively and significantly correlated with self-reported left–right position.

Second, the *GAL–TAN* dimension (i.e., Green–Alternative–Libertarian vs. Traditional–Authoritarian–Nationalist) is created using items that elicit preferences regarding the *extent of immigration*, *commitment to the European Union*, *role of Christian values*, *status of sexual minorities,* and *eco-friendliness*. Lower index values indicate more liberal social values (GAL) and higher index values more conservative social values (TAN). Internal consistency is high in later elections as

Table 8.1 Respondents' average positions by election year

	Left–right		*GAL–TAN*	
	Mean	*(SD)*	*Mean*	*(SD)*
2003	5.3	(1.6)	5.4	(1.5)
2007	5.3	(1.4)	4.9	(1.5)
2011	5.1	(1.3)	4.9	(1.6)
2015	5.6	(1.4)	4.9	(1.5)
2019	5.2	(1.5)	4.7	(1.6)

Guttman's lambda 4 reliability coefficient increases from around 0.5 in the two first elections to around 0.7 in the three last elections.

Empirically, we begin by presenting the mean values by election year to detect possible trends in terms of whether the Finnish population has ideologically moved in a certain direction over time. For each survey, we also include a crude measure of political polarisation, the standard deviation, which increases in size if groups of people gravitate towards opposing poles (Baldassarri & Gelman, 2008). Table 8.1 shows that in terms of the classic left–right dimension the electorate (including non-voters) has not moved steadily in a certain direction, nor has there been any major polarisation judging from the standard deviations which have not increased in size. Secondly, in terms of GAL-TAN, the Finnish electorate appears to have developed more green-alternative-libertarian values: from 5.4 to 4.7 points. However, there is no clear trend of polarisation along the GAL–TAN dimension because the standard deviation remains similar over time.

Another possibility is that groups of like-minded citizens are clustered into certain parties (i.e., partisan sorting). We, therefore, examine self-reported party choice in the five most recent Finnish National Election Studies (FNES). Respondents who voted for any of the eight major parties, which have been continuously represented in parliament since 2003, are included in the analysed samples. We calculate the mean scores for the three sets of value orientations among voters for different parties.

Figure 8.1 draws a map of the party voters' positions along the socioeconomic left–right dimension. The groups of voters line up in the way we would expect.[1] Respondents who voted for the Left Alliance (VAS) and the Green League (VIHR) hold the most leftist attitudes. Supporters of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) are located close to the middle of the scale. Somewhat right of the middle we find people who voted for the Christian Democrats (KD), Finns Party (PS), Swedish People's Party (RKP), and Centre Party (KESK). National Coalition Party (KOK) voters are socioeconomically farthest to the right. Overall, there is no clear trend of growing socioeconomic ideological differences between members of different parties. An exception is the more extreme position of Left Alliance voters in 2019. This shift is expected given a four-year reign of a bourgeoisie three-party government coalition that included the National Coalition Party, the Centre Party, and the Finns Party (later replaced by Blue Reform which split from the Finns Party).

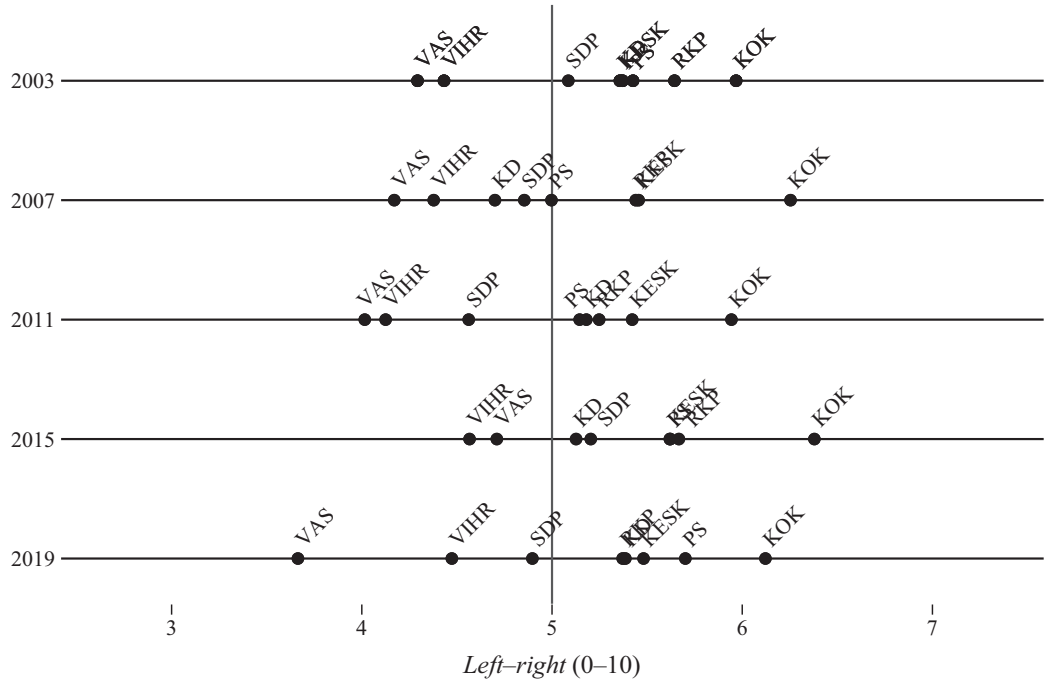

Figure 8.1 Voters' average left–right positions by party choice.
Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

Next, we examine how the parties' voters are positioned along the GAL–TAN-dimension (Figure 8.2). The most liberal respondents tend to vote for the Green League (VIHR), followed by supporters of the Left Alliance (VAS) and the Swedish People's Party (RKP). Upon closer inspection, not reported in any table or figure, supporters of the Green League have the most extreme values in the case of four of five items (all except attitude towards the European Union). People who voted for the Social Democratic Party (SDP), National Coalition Party (KOK), and Centre Party (KESK) are located in the middle ground with SDP and KOK being slightly more on the liberal side and KESK more on the conservative side. The most conservative voters are found among those who voted for the Christian Democrats (KD) and the Finns Party (PS). The GAL–TAN index apparently encompasses two sub dimensions on which the latter two parties' supporters differ. In fact, voters of Christian Democrats exhibit more extreme attitudes in terms of the importance of Christian values and the status of sexual minorities in society, while those who voted for the Finns Party (PS) are particularly critical of more immigration and environmental protection. Both groups are critical of the European Union, however. We want to point out that Finns Party voters would have been located closer to the TAN extreme if the index would have included items that picked up nativist and authoritarian attitudes (such items are only included in some of the FNES surveys).

What can we say about the development over time? There are certainly no radical spatial shifts in party voters' positions. We do observe that the groups of voters are more spread out in 2011 and 2019. Further, we see a development where two parties – the Green League and the Left Alliance – cluster together towards

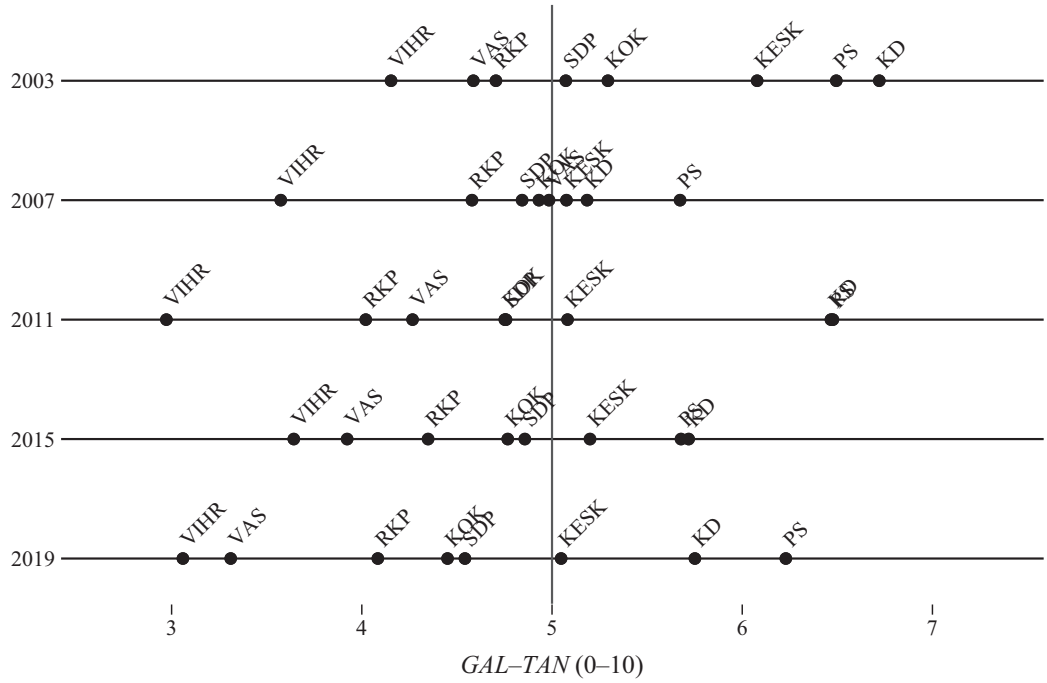

Figure 8.2 Voters' average GAL–TAN positions by party choice.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

the GAL end of the spectrum in the two recent elections. Three parties have also moved between half a point and one point away from the middle of the scale towards the GAL end: the Swedish People's Party, the National Coalition Party, and the Social Democratic Party. Towards the TAN end of the scale, the aggregate sores for the supporters of the Finns Party and the Christian Democrats have varied extensively over time.

Explanatory analyses

To what degree are people's political orientations correlated with their party choice? We begin this section by analysing the strength of the overall relations between the value dimensions and party choice, separately for each election. The dependent variable is party choice, a categorical variable with eight values (i.e., voting for any of the eight major parties). To measure how well the variables explain party choice, we report the pseudo-R-squared values (McFadden) based on multinomial logistic regression. This quantitative method is an extension of binomial logistic regression as the dependent variable may have more than two categories. In our case, the categorical dependent variable takes on eight values. Higher R-squared values indicate better model fit. The pseudo-R-squared values resemble R-squared values in the sense they may range from 0 to 1 although they cannot be interpreted as the explained variance in percent.

Figure 8.3 shows, first of all, the total explained variance when both value dimensions are included in the regression models. Then the value dimensions are

Figure 8.3 Explained variance in predicting party choice by election year.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

included in separate models to assess their individual contributions. Left–right attitudes have lower explanatory power than GAL–TAN attitudes. Only in 2007 does the former trump the latter. The total explained variance is the highest in 2011 and 2019 when the GAL–TAN dimension contributes the most. As we saw earlier in Figure 8.2, the groups of voters were more spread out along the scale in these two years. In 2011, Finland's participation in bailing out debt-laden European countries via the European Financial Stability Facility was hotly debated and many of the supporters of the True Finns (later the Finns Party) ardently opposed such measures. In addition, the fact that many voters with anti-immigrant attitudes and conservative values rallied around the True Finns contributed to greater polarisation. In 2019, immigration and climate change dominated the election campaign which surely contributed to why supporters of the Green League and the Left Alliance developed more extreme GAL attitudes and supporters of the Finns Party more extreme TAN attitudes.

We deepen the analysis by investigating how strongly each value dimension predicts party choice, controlling for the other value dimensions included in the analysis. Figures 8.4–8.5 report the average marginal effects (with 95 percent confidence intervals) over the whole series of election studies. These estimates, which are based on multinomial regression, *reflect the predicted change in likelihood of voting (expressed as percentage) for each party for a one-point increase in each value dimension* (which may vary between 0 and 10). A point estimate to the left of the red vertical line means that the likelihood of voting for a party decreases (negative effect) as the score for a value dimension increases in contrast to a point estimate to the right of the red vertical line which implies that the likelihood of voting for a party increases (positive effect).

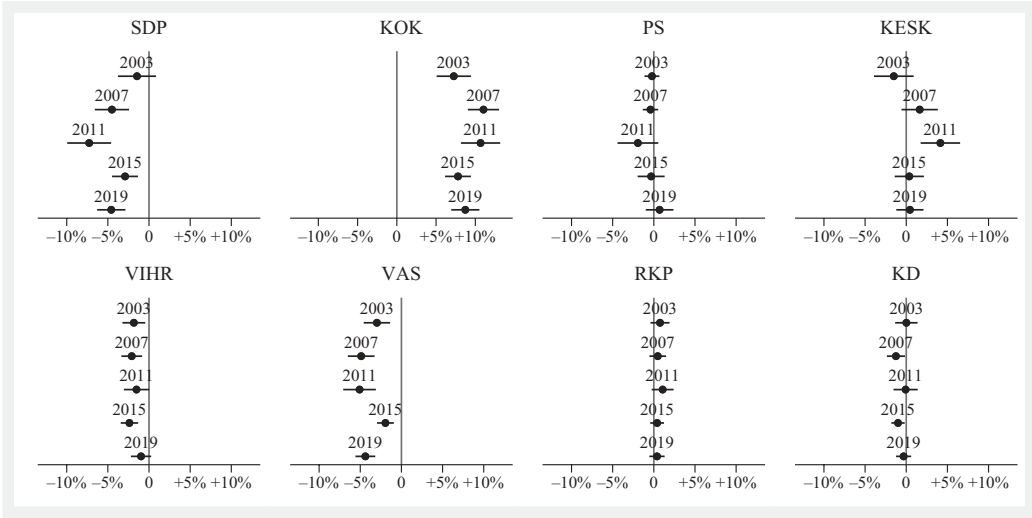

Figure 8.4 Predicted change in the likelihood of voting for each political party when a voter's position on the left–right dimension increases with one point.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

In terms of the left–right dimension, a number of points stand out. First, being left-wing predicts voting for the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Left Alliance (VAS). The probability to vote for any of these two parties decreases substantially and significantly for each one-point increase in the left–right index (i.e., going from left to right on socioeconomic issues). The marginal effect is around five percentage points. Higher left–right scale values are also negatively linked to voting for the Green League although the marginal effect is relatively weak. Second, as people's attitudes shift towards the right, the likelihood of voting for the National Coalition Party (KOK) increases substantially. Here, the marginal effect is large, around ten percentage points. Otherwise, the left–right attitudes have no or weak effects on party choice, with the Centre Party in 2011 being an exception when there was a substantial positive effect. The graph also allows us to track possible longitudinal trends. However, it appears as if there are no clear trends in the sense that left–right socioeconomic position has become a stronger or weaker determinant of vote choice.

We proceed to chart how liberal and conservative social values affect voting behaviour. Figure 8.5 shows some familiar patterns bases on the descriptive data above. People with lower scores on the GAL–TAN scale are likely to support the Green League (VIHR) with the marginal effects being close to five percentage points. Other parties that appear to draw support from more liberal voters, but to lesser extent, are the National Coalition Party (KOK) in the three most recent elections, the Left Alliance (VAS) and the Swedish People's Party (RKP). In terms of voters in the TAN end of the scale, we see that the likelihood of voting for the Finns Party increases by as much as between six and eleven percentage points. This applies for elections as of the 2011 election when the party saw their popular support increase dramatically to 15 percent. Other parties that attract people with conservative social values are the Christian Democrats (KD) and the Centre Party (KESK),

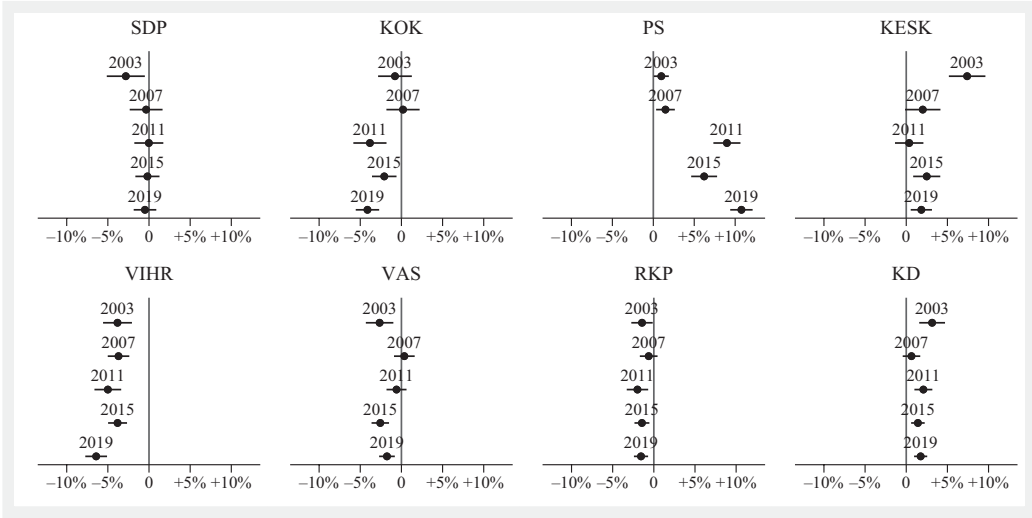

Figure 8.5 Predicted change in the likelihood of voting for each political party when a voter's position on the GAL–TAN dimension increases with one point.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

but to relatively modest extent compared to the Finns Party. Overall, there are signs of partisan sorting in the sense that people with similar views on policy issues flock to certain parties. In other words, voters' positions along the GAL–TAN dimension were poorer predictors of party choice in the beginning of the 2000s compared to the most recent election.

Conclusions

Finland is a country with a fragmented party system with multiple moderately large and smaller parties. The voters may choose between political parties that represent various political issue positions or values. In this chapter, we studied two value dimensions and their impact on party choice in Finland: the traditional left–right socioeconomic dimension and the more recent value dimension ranging from GAL (Green–Alternative–Libertarian) to TAN (Traditional–Authoritarian–Nationalist). We showed that the average respondent has over time been stable in terms of the position along the classic left–right socioeconomic dimension. The voters of the Left Alliance were most to the left at all elections, except for 2015 when supporters of the Green League were slightly more to the left. Correspondingly, the voters of the National Coalition Party were always the ones most to the right. The average voters of the rest of the parties were logically positioned. Together with the voters of the Left Alliance, social democratic and green voters were to the left, whereas the rest of voters were positioned to the right. When it comes to GAL–TAN, a similar rather consistent pattern emerged. Green voters leaned most towards the GAL end of the dimension, followed by the voters of the Left Alliance and the Swedish People's Party. In the TAN end of the dimension, we found the voters of the Christian Democrats and the Finns Party.

This chapter initially referred to recent Finnish studies that have identified increasing polarisation between political camps (see also Chapter 10). Based on the measures used in this chapter, there was no clear trend of growing socioeconomic left–right ideological differences between voters of different parties. In terms of the GAL–TAN dimension, there were some indications of polarisation in the form of partisan sorting (i.e., like-minded citizens are clustered into parties) although we cannot claim that there have been radical spatial shifts in party voters' positions over the two past decades. People who vote for the Green League and the Left Alliance cluster nowadays closer to the GAL end of the scale. To a smaller extent, the supporters of the more liberal minded parties the National Coalition Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the Swedish People's Party have shifted their positions closer to the GAL pole. Towards the TAN end of the scale, supporters of the Finns Party and the Christian Democrats have fluctuated over time so we cannot claim that their views have polarised.

Another aim of this chapter was to examine if political values have an impact on party choice. The results first suggested that the old cleavage between left and right still helps us to understand voting behaviour in Finland. Social structure in part influences values and values then influence the vote choice. But we have to bear in mind that the explanatory power of left–right attitudes was relatively low and has remained at a similar level over the past decade. Nevertheless, the results made perfect sense in terms of which types of attitudes correlated with party choice. Our findings were therefore also in line with the previous chapter on class voting where working-class voters' had a clear tendency to vote for the two left-wing parties, the Left Alliance or the Social Democratic Party. Values to the right, on the other hand, increased substantially the likelihood of voting for the National Coalition Party. Voters' left–right values did not as strongly predict voting for the remaining parties. Finally, a more important political cleavage is that between liberal and conservative moral values, in the present chapter captured by the broad GAL–TAN cleavage. The explanatory power of GAL–TAN attitudes has increased and trumped left–right attitudes in 2011 and 2019. GAL–TAN attitudes especially predicted voting for the Green League (GAL) or the Finns Party (TAN). Hence, distribution policies are joined by identity politics in the Finnish party system and the electorate.

Note

1 Since we had no values for the item on income disparities in 2003, every respondent was assigned the grand mean of the item at the next election (2.62). We did the same for the item on the size of the public sector (5.06) in 2007.

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9 Party Identification

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Introduction

Party identification is a key concept in the study of electoral behaviour and has been so since it was discovered and established by American scholars in the 1960s (Campbell et al., 1960). Early studies of voting behaviour understood party identification as an enduring psychological orientation or as a partisan self-image (Thomassen & Rosema, 2009; Blais et al., 2001). According to Dalton (2016), the concept can be defined as "an early-socialized, enduring, affective, psychological identification with a specific political party". Miller and Shanks (1996) have highlighted the significance of family and early political socialization to party identification and even juxtaposed party identification with institutional religious attachment. Party identification can, hence, be described as a long-term, affective attachment to a specific political party, which guide the attitudes and behaviours of voters. Partisans have been found to support the same party from one election to another, and to be easier to mobilise to vote compared to non-partisans. Party identification can also guide voters to form opinions on complex political issues (Dalton, 2016).

In this article, we study party identification of the Finnish electorate in the 21st century. We use data from the Finnish National Election Studies to describe the development over time and to explain citizens' attachment to the political parties present at the Finnish political arena. We begin with some introductory and theoretical considerations, which are followed by an empirical exploration of the trends over time regarding the extent to which the Finnish electorate has a sense of party identification, i.e., if they feel close any political party or not, and also with which party they tend to align. This primarily descriptive section is followed by an explanatory approach, where the variation of party identification is outlined using multivariate analyses. Here, the aim is to respond to the main research question in the chapter: what predicts party identification in today's Finland and how this vary across parties? The variables and the research questions of our analyses will be discussed in more detail in the beginning of the explanatory section. Finally, the last section presents our concluding remarks.

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A contested concept

The concept of party identification has strong roots in the American studies on electoral behaviour (Campbell et al., 1960; see Blais et al., 2001) and can be seen as particularly well suited to the bipartisan context of the United States. However, both the concept as such and the way it is operationalized have faced critique. Weisberg (1980) has, for example, questioned whether it is plausible to assume that citizens identify with one party only, and if it is reasonable to consider non-identifiers (independents) in the U.S context, as an opposite to partisans of either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. Further on, in the U.S. context, criticism has been put forward towards the primary focus of the concept. Morris Fiorina's (1981) seminal idea was to revise party identification to a concept summing up mainly cognitive evaluations of parties and their policy outcomes, which fit well to ideas on retrospective voting (Thomassen & Rosema, 2009). Such revision would considerably change the content of the original concept, which is heavily influenced by affective components of political socialization and long-lasting group membership (ibid.).

Perhaps the main criticism towards party identification as a concept has, however, come from the European multi-party context, where the usefulness of the concept has been questioned. In a study from the Dutch context, published already in the 1970s, the measure of party identification was found to be less stable than the measure of party choice (Thomassen, 1976), pointing towards party identification not being a particularly useful analytical concept when it comes to explaining party choice. This finding from the Dutch context has later been confirmed for other European countries as well, using early CSES data from 1996 to 2002 (Thomassen & Rosema, 2009).

Despite the criticism presented above, party identification has remained a central concept in the study of voting behaviour and is generally considered to be of relevance in understanding citizens' attachment to political parties. The vast research literature on party identification and changing voter alignments have demonstrated the overall usefulness of the concept when trying to understand people's affective tendencies in their political attachment and electoral choices (Campbell et al., 1986; Dalton, 2016). In European multi-party systems, party identification can primarily be understood as a robust indicator of political attachment. Being a strong party identifier also involves a self-image, relevant outside times of elections. Strong party identifiers might be party members as well, and for most political parties, the group with strong identifiers and party members are the core and stable supporters of the party, which provides the party with a baseline support in the elections.

Party identification in Finland

According to social identity theory, party identification is similar to identification with a social group (Dalton, 2016). It is hence not surprising that the reasons as to why voters identify with a certain political party are closely connected to the basic political cleavages and divides of the party system. Voters are likely to identify with a specific political party due to a strong sense of belonging with a social group

such which interests are particularly important for a specific party, such as the inserts of farmers for agrarian parties or of the working class for social democratic parties (see Chapter 7). The timing of the formative years may also be important, as orientations and networks acquired during one's youth often tend to last through lifetime. To interpret party identification among Finnish voters, it is, therefore, necessary to connect our empirical analysis to some major characteristics of the Finnish party system, the historically dominating political cleavages and the more recent developments. A complementary presentation of this is also found in the introductory chapter of this volume.

Karvonen has noted (2014) that the main trends in political behaviour and developments of the Finnish party system correspond to what is found many comparable countries. While the party system remained "frozen" longer than in some other Western countries, there has been apparent signs of change in the Finnish Parliamentary elections in 2011, 2015 and 2019. In 2011, the populist and nationalistic-populist Finns Party (PS) had its main breakthrough when they won 19 percent of the votes and increased its support with about 15 percentage points compared to the 2007 election. The Finns Party was also able to preserve its position in the following two elections (2015: 17.7 percent and 2019: 17.5 percent). The turmoil of Finnish party support became especially evident in 2019 when the Green Alliance (VIHR) made their "best ever" result in parliamentary elections with 11.5 percent of the votes. This was also the election at which, for the first time in the history of Finnish Parliamentary elections, none of the three traditionally dominating parties – The Social Democratic Party (SDP), the National Coalition Party (KOK) and the Centre Party (KESK) – managed to gather over 20 percent of the votes. The Social Democratic Party became the largest party by securing no more than 17.7 percent of the votes.

When it comes to old and new political cleavages of the Finnish party system and to dealignment or realignment of the electorate, several Finnish studies have suggested signs of change before the electoral development in 2010s. To describe this, Karvonen (2014) lists the studies of Sundberg (1999; diminished class voting and increased electoral volatility), Pesonen (2001; notable change in cleavage-based politics) and Paloheimo (2008). Paloheimo's study focused on changing political cleavages and divides of the Finnish party system, and it was based both on voter surveys and party platforms. Among other things, it demonstrated the growing importance of environmental issues and internationalization to the Finnish party system during early 2000s (see also Chapter 8). In addition, Westinen's more recent study on changing Finnish political cleavages (2015) presents quite similar conclusions. The growing importance of environmental issues explains the increase of support for the Greens, and criticism towards the EU, globalization and immigration the growing support for the Finns Party.

The development in party identification in the new millennium

In our analyses, we use a set of questions from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) which has been included in the FNES since 2003. The questions tap both whether one feels close to a particular party and the directional element

on to which political party one feels closest to.[1] To describe the Finnish trends of the strength of party identification, we use first a simple dichotomous variable on party closeness: "do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular party?" Response categories "yes" or "no" are considered valid responses whereas we treat those respondents who spontaneously reported "do not want to say" or "don't know" as missing. Secondly, to point out the trends of the direction of the party identification, we use answers to the standard question, which has been posed only to those who have said that they feel close to some party: "Which party do you feel closest to?"

How do the trends of party identification develop according to the FNES data from 2003 to 2019? The results are reported in total and by various sociodemographic groups in Table 9.1. Despite the turbulence in the party system – with the three historically dominating parties in Finnish politics losing support and the

Table 9.1 Party identification among the Finnish electorate (% who feel close to some party)

	2003	*2007*	*2011*	*2015*	*2019*
%					
All	44	50	50	45	60
Men	43	49	52	48	59
Women	44	51	47	43	62
Born before 1960	50	61	56	53	62
Born 1960–1979	36	36	45	46	59
Born 1980–	33	39	43	34	58
No or short vocational education	42	48	47	41	58
Medium level vocational educ.	44	51	53	47	64
Polytechnic/University level	53	57	54	55	62
Finnish speaking	43	50	50	46	60
Swedish speaking	59	47	47	46	67
(n)					
All	(1241)	(1355)	(1261)	(1578)	(1398)
Men	(604)	(656)	(611)	(766)	(694)
Women	(637)	(699)	(650)	(812)	(704)
Born before 1960	(703)	(718)	(588)	(639)	(533)
Born 1960–1979	(417)	(426)	(389)	(495)	(439)
Born 1980–	(119)	(213)	(285)	(444)	(405)
No or short vocational education	(795)	(917)	(792)	(895)	(748)
Medium level vocational educ.	(404)	(259)	(249)	(366)	(321)
Polytechnic/University level	(139)	(180)	(219)	(315)	(323)
Finnish speaking	(1162)	(1265)	(1184)	(1464)	(1293)
Swedish speaking	(70)	(77)	(68)	(84)	(98)
Statistical significance (Chi square test)					
Gender					
Generation	***	***	***	***	
Education	*			***	
Language	*				

*=$p<.05$; **=$p<.01$; ***=$p<.001$.

Source: FNES data. The number of respondents is reported by groups in Tables 2–4.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

Finns Party as well as the Green Alliance winning more votes – the share of party identifiers has not decreased since the turn of the new millennium, rather the opposite. While 45–50 percent of all respondents stated that they think of themselves as close to a specific party in the period 2003–2015, this share increased to 60 percent in the 2019 election. While the percentages reported in Table 9.1 should be interpreted with some cautiousness since they usually are based on a few hundreds of respondents, with a 95 percent confidence interval around ±3–4 percentage points, it seems clear that the period 2015–2019 has a stimulating effect on party identification in certain groups.

The campaign of the 2019 election was heavily dominated by issues tapping into the increasingly important GAL–TAN dimension (Hooghe et al., 2002), like the climate change and immigration. The election also followed a period with an ideologically distinct centre-right wing government, which deviated from the more common pattern with oversized and ideologically diverse government coalitions. These circumstances appear to have stimulated a slightly more polarized political environment (Kawecki, 2022), which appears to have increased the sense of party identification overall, but, in particular, in certain groups. Especially interesting is the strong increase among the youngest generation (+24 percentage points). This finding corroborates analyses of register data analysis demonstrating that in the 2019 election the turnout increased most, almost eight percentage points, among the youngest age group of 18–24-year-olds (Borg et al., 2020). It seems to be plausible that the most discussed topics of the 2019 election campaign, like the climate change (see Raunio, 2019), stimulated the interests of the youngest generation, which is also boosted feelings of party identification. It should, however, be noted that there was a distinct increase in party identification also in the generation between 1960 and 1979, among women and among voters with lower levels of education.

Table 9.2 presents data on what party the Finnish party identifiers feel close to. To clarify, the results show the distributions only for those respondents who have said in the survey that they feel close to a certain party. The aggregate (row) comparisons of

Table 9.2 Party identifiers and the election results by party and year, 2003–2019 (%)

	SDP	*KOK*	*PS*	*KESK*	*VIHR*	*VAS*	*RKP*	*KD*	*OTH*	*DK*	*Total*
Party identifiers											
2003 (n = 541)	26	14	1	26	10	9	5	5	1	4	100
2007 (n = 678)	21	22	4	24	11	7	4	3	2	2	100
2011 (n = 628)	19	20	15	16	7	11	4	4	2	3	100
2015 (n = 716)	15	17	12	20	9	9	5	4	1	7	100
2019 (n = 846)	16	14	18	12	12	11	5	4	3	5	100
Election results: % of the votes in parliamentary elections											
2003	24.5	18.6	1.6	24.7	8.0	9.9	4.6	5.3	2.8	.	100
2007	21.4	22.3	4.1	23.1	8.5	8.8	4.6	4.9	2.3	.	100
2011	19.1	20.4	19.1	15.8	7.3	8.1	4.3	4.0	1.9	.	100
2015	16.5	18.2	17.7	21.1	8.5	7.1	4.9	3.5	2.5	.	100
2019	17.7	17.0	17.5	13.8	11.5	8.2	4.5	3.9	5.9	.	100

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

the share of party identifiers and of the share of votes in the parliamentary elections point out that, at least when measured in the post-election surveys, the distributions of party identifiers are rather similar with the distributions of real electoral support. The two most popular parties are the same in all five time points. This might be interpreted to give support to the early critique towards the concept of party identification put forward by Thomassen (1976) – that in the European party systems and in the survey instruments, the party identification is not easily separable from the party choice in the elections.

The trend columns of party identification by individual political parties do, however, show considerable changes in the Finnish party identification since 2003. As in the election results, the biggest winner over the period 2003–2019, in terms of identification, is the Finns Party and the biggest loser is the Centre Party. Like in the election results, the growing popularity of the Finns party has decreased especially the shares of those who identify with the Social Democratic Party, National Coalition or with the Centre Party. All other parliamentary parties have maintained their positions in their shares among the party identifiers. Finally, the rise of the Finns Party seems to be at least as strong in the party identification landscape as in the real electoral support. Theoretically, this might promise relatively good electoral support for the party also in the forthcoming elections. The change from the least close parliamentary party in 2003 to the most frequently reported close party in 2019 deserves further analysis, which will be carried out in the next section.

Explaining party identification

In our explanatory analysis, we regress party identification of each of the eight main parties in the Finnish parliament on a specified set of variables, in order to identify what signifies partisans of the different parties. To increase the number of respondents, we use a merged dataset including the FNES data from the 2015 and 2019 elections. A separate analysis is run for each party with a dependent variable with the value one if the respondent identifies with that specific party and the value 0 if the respondent identifies with another party.

Our model consists of standard sociodemographic variables (gender and age), mother tongue, subjective class identification, area of residence and a set of attitudinal value orientations that are relevant in Finnish politics. All these factors have been important determinants of party support in Finnish politics (e.g., Paloheimo, 2005). Our attitudinal value-orientations are retrieved by a factor analysis consisting of a battery of 18 items regarding the future direction of Finland. While most other chapters in this book use the GAL–TAN dimension to describe variation in value orientations among voters of different political parties, our analysis applies a somewhat more detailed set of value orientations representing views in relation to traditional values, multiculturalism and equality, to point out significant differences between the eight parliamentary parties. The items included and the results of the factor analysis are presented in Appendix 9.1. In the following, we present and analyse party by party binary logistic regressions with the aim to see which factors that

are associated with identification of each of the eight parties. Parties are presented in the order of their size in the general election 2019.

Apart from the factor scores, all the predictors in the logistic regression models have been categorized. Reported in Table 9.3 are the exponentialized regression coefficients, i.e., the odds ratios between the category concerned and the reference category. For the categorical variables, the odds ratios are straight forward to interpret since it represents the odds ratio between the specified category and the reference category. Descriptions of the coding of the dependent and independent variables used in the analyses are presented in Appendix 9.2.

The Social Democratic Party

Starting with the largest party in the 2019 election, the Social Democratic Party, it becomes clear that partisanship is strongly associated with voters' left-right self-placement, i.e., their position on the traditional economic dimension. The probability for a voter to identify with the Social Democratic Party is twice as high among those placing themselves to the left compared to those who identify themselves at the centre of the left-right scale. The Social Democratic Party is, hence, seen as a distinct representative for left-leaning voters. Class identification does, however, not explain voters' identification with the Social Democratic Party in our analysis. It, hence, seems as if the party's previously strong connection to the working class, and image as a representative of the interests of the working class has dispersed. In contemporary Finland, Social Democratic Party has expanded its support within the middle class. Also, a large share of the public sector employees works in the area producing welfare services, professions in which a social democratic ethos is common.

The other value dimensions included in the model, i.e., traditional values, multiculturalism and equality do not differentiate the Social Democratic Party partisans in a distinct way from identifiers of other parties. With regards to the equality dimension, this is rather surprising, considering that these types of issues constitute an essential part of the Social Democratic Party's party manifesto. It, hence, seems as if some voters identify with the Social Democratic Party due to its egalitarian values, others due to its support on labour interests in the labour markets. It is also interesting to note that the overall performance (Nagelkerke R^2) of the model is relatively poor, which points towards the Social Democratic Party partisans being a less coherent group of voters based on the factors included in the analysis, compared those of other parties.

The Finns Party

The Finns Party is a distinct nationalistic and populist party. It is sceptical towards European integration, immigration and multiculturalism and it emphasises traditional values. In terms of economic policy, the party is, as the earlier party leader Timo Soini described it, a labour party without socialism. Since 2017 when the party was split and Jussi Halla-aho took over the position as leader of the party,

there has, however, been a shift towards the right in the party's economic profile and in the position of voters (Isotalo et al., 2019). In our analysis, which covers both 2015 and 2019, both the old and the new Finns Party are visible. Most of those identifying with the party position themselves at the centre or to the right on the left-right scale, but many consider themselves as belonging to the working class or lower middle class. In line with the political agenda of the party support for traditional values, and negative attitudes towards multiculturalism are all good predictors of identification to the Finns Party. The analysis also indicates that older voters (60 years or above) are less prone to identify themselves with the Finns Party compared to younger age groups, which is expected considering that the Finns Party has expanded substantially in a relatively short period of time, and that it is still a relatively new party.

The perhaps most interesting finding is that the overall performance of our model is better for the Finns Party than for the Social Democratic Party and Centre Party despite the rapid growth of the party's support and its relatively young age. There are, hence, both distinct socioeconomic factors and ideological reasons as to why voters identify with the Finns Party.

The National Coalition Party

The National Coalition Party is a typical right-wing, conservative party with roots going back to the early years of Finnish independence. Over the last decades the party has, alongside its right-wing economic policy emphasised international co-operation and been a strong proponent of a European integration. As expected, the strongest predictor of party identification with the National Coalition Party is voters' subjective position on the left-right dimension. There are, in fact, in the data, no instances of voters' placing themselves to the left or centre who identify with the National Coalition Party. We also find that support for multiculturalism is positively related with being a National Coalition Party partisan, while the opposite goes for issues related to equality, such as smaller income disparities, and less differences in development between different areas.

Socioeconomic factors are also highly relevant in differentiating National Coalition Party partisans from those of other parties. Here, we find that voters with middle or high levels of education are more likely to identify themselves to NC than those with low levels of education. The National Coalition Party is also a party which attracts voters from the more urban parts of Finland, and among voters that position themselves as members of the upper or upper middle class.

The overall performance of the model is better for the National Coalition Party than for any of the other main parties, which points towards that the National Coalition Party have a relatively distinct group of party identifiers. A typical voter identifying with the National Coalition Party is one with a middle or high-level of education and one that considers him- or herself as belonging to the middle or upper middle class. In terms of values he or she is distinctly right wing and in favour of multicultural pluralism.

The Centre Party

The Centre Party has historically been a defender of rural and agricultural interests with a centre-right ideological position. Despite the strong urbanization and decrease of the agricultural sector since the Second World War, the party has managed to keep its position as one of the three main parties in the Finnish party system, or at least they did so until very recently. A key explanation to the party's success is that they have managed to expand its support beyond those occupied in the agricultural sector to attract most voters in most occupations and social groups living at the countryside. The party has, hence, dominated in most parts of rural Finland, resulting in a strong socializing effect among voters residing in these areas and a much weaker support in suburbs and city centres.

Along with rural residence, a subjective position to the centre-right on the left-right scale is the most important factor explaining identification with the Centre Party. However, in contrast to voters identifying with the National Coalition Party, Centre party partisans tend to have low levels of education and to have a religious faith. Our model also indicates that the voters identifying with the Centre party are dispersed in terms of their position on the other value dimensions included, i.e., traditional values, multiculturalism and equality. In all these three value dimensions, Centre Party is divided into liberal and conservative fractions, with the liberal fraction being more common in the Southern parts of the country.

A typical voter identifying with the Centre Party is hence a rural resident, with a bourgeois and centre or right-wing identity, but with a low level of education, and one who considers him or herself as at least somewhat religious. The overall performance of our model for the Centre Party is the second poorest in Table 9.3. As in the case of the Social Democratic Party, internal diversity regarding both traditional values, multiculturalism and questions on equality results in a comparatively weak overall performance of the model.

The Green Alliance

As a young party, founded in the 1980s with the ethos to advance environmental issues, age, and perhaps even more so, political generations, are important factors when it comes to identifying partisans of the Green Alliance. The party has always attracted younger generations but with the ageing of the party and the high-profile founding members of the party, support has increased among the middle-aged population. As becomes clear in the analysis, the oldest age group (60 years and over) does, however, still have a low likelihood of identifying with the Green Alliance, more specifically one-third compared to the youngest age group (18–29 years).

On the left-right scale the Green Alliance partisans have a centre-left identity. Voters situating themselves at the ideological centre have a 1.6 times higher likelihood of identifying with the Green Alliance compared than those positioning themselves to the left, but a right-wing position does, on the other hand, decrease the likelihood of voters being Green Alliance partisans. The Green Alliance partisans are, however, a more distinct group of voters when it comes to liberal values

Table 9.3 Logistic regression models explaining identification to eight political parties

	SDP		*PS*		*KOK*		*KESK*		*VIHR*		*VAS*		*RKP*		*KD*	
	Exp(B)		*Exp(B)*		*Exp(B)*		*Exp(B)*		*Exp(B)*		*Exp(B)*		*Exp(B)*		*Exp(B)*	
Gender (man)	0.886		0.625	*	1.061		1.005		2.050	***	0.694		2.110	(*)	2.116	*
Age (ref = 18–30)		***		***						**						*
Age 30–44	2.193	*	0.777		0.630		0.839		0.846		1.028		4.403	*	0.502	
Age 45–59	1.879	(*)	0.690		0.928		1.225		0.669		1.438		2.179		0.354	*
Age 60	5.084	***	0.321	***	1.045		1.555		0.347	***	0.765		2.183		0.183	**
Education (ref = primary)		*		**		***		**				*				
Middle level	1.106		0.664	(*)	2.329	***	0.531	**	1.405		0.476	**	1.799		0.790	
High level	0.483	*	0.585	(*)	2.275	**	0.576	*	1.670	(*)	0.484	*	1.945		1.315	
Language Swedish (ref = Finnish)	0.949		0.000		0.056	***	0.299	**	0.339	*	0.236	*	178.20	***	0.442	
Class id. (ref = working/ low middle)	0.744		0.354	***	2.502	***	2.116	***	1.627	*	0.649	(*)	4.419	**	0.351	**
Left-right ideology (ref = left)		***		***		***		***		***		***		*		*
Centre	0.387	***	3.793	***			10.519	***	1.622	(*)	0.153	***	4.937	*	3.470	*
Right	0.095	***	2.562	***	8.898	***	10.413	***	0.326	***	0.030	***	4.229	*	3.816	*
Religiousness (ref = not religious)	1.091		0.875		0.602	*	1.841	**	0.960		0.476	**	0.538		10.398	***

Place of residence (ref = rural)						***		***								
Suburb	1.075		0.968		3.413	***	0.408	***	0.738		0.986		0.425		1.005	
City centre	0.961		1.169		2.094	**	0.524	**	0.753		0.919		0.582		1.321	
Traditional values	1.188		2.250	***	1.026		1.136		0.403	***	0.724	*	1.072		3.216	***
Multiculturalism	1.014		0.388	***	2.090	***	0.909		1.895	***	1.012		3.427	***	0.835	
Equality	1.053		0.916		0.497	***	0.986		1.113		1.541	**	1.401		1.373	
N	1337		1337		893		1337		1337		1337		1337		1337	
Nagelkerke R^2	0.257	***	0.364	***	0.451	***	0.264	***	0.352	***	0.388		0.694		0.279	***
Prediction percent	27		28		55		10		22		18		73		0	

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2015–2019.

Descriptions of dependent and independent variables including reference categories for the logistic regression models are presented in Appendix 9.1.

Exp(B) = Exponentiation of the regression coefficient, which is the odds ratio between the specified category and the reference category. As an example: among the age group 60 years and over, it is five times more probable that a voter identifies with the Social Democratic Party compared to the reference category which is the age cohort 18–29 years.

Measures on the level of statistical significance are calculated with Wald statistics using the following symbols for the levels of significance: $^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, (*) $p < 0.10$. *Prediction percent: Based on the logistic regression equation, the model calculates for each case in the data set the probability that the person identifies himself/herself to the Social Democratic Party. Cases where this probability is bigger than 0.5 are predicted to identify themselves to SDP. Cases where this probability is less than 0.5 are predicted not to identify themselves to SDP. The percentage share in the table is the share of cases with SDP identification that were also predicted to identify themselves to this party based on the logistic regression model.*

(as opposed to traditional) and support for multiculturalism, which both significantly increase voter's likelihood to identify with the Green Alliance.

A typical person identifying to the Green Alliance is below 60 years of age, highly educated, have liberal values, supports multiculturalism and positions him- or herself at the centre-left on the left-right scale. Due to the more distinct ideological and value-oriented profile among those identifying with the Green Alliance, the overall performance of model for is better than for the Social Democratic Party and the Centre Party.

The Left Alliance

The Left Alliance is party with historical roots in the communist movement which today is positioned to the left of the Social Democratic Party in terms of economic policy. It is hence not surprising that a distinct left-wing position on the left-right scale is the single best predictor of identification with the Left Alliance. Relatedly we find that values related to equality increases the odds of being a partisan of the Left Alliance. Other statistically significant predictors are education, and religion, where low levels of education and atheism increase likelihood of a voter identifying with the Left Alliance. The overall performance of the model for the Left Alliance identification is better compared to the models for the Social Democratic Party and the Centre Party, the main reason being the strong and stable effect of a left-orientation on the left-right scale.

The Swedish People's Party

The Swedish People's Party is a party with a distinct political profile, which is also clearly visible among the voters identifying with the party. The most important issues in Swedish People's Party's (RKP) political platform concern the rights and interests of the Swedish speaking minority in Finland. The party also emphasises issues related to other minorities and has a distinct multiculturalist and internationally oriented profile. In line with the profile of the party, being a Swedish speaker is the dominant factor explaining identification with the Swedish People's Party. About two thirds of those having Swedish as their native language identify themselves with the Swedish People's Party. A Middle class or upper middle-class identification, a centre-right orientation on the left-right scale, and, as expected, support for multiculturalism also increase likelihood of identifying with the Swedish People's Party.

The overall performance of the model is comparatively strong. This is primarily due to one single factor, which is native language. If a Swedish speaker happens to have a bourgeois, centre-right world view, the Swedish People's Party is typically the natural political choice for him or her. For Swedish speakers with a distinct ideological left-wing orientation the Social Democratic Party has traditionally been an alternative. In more recent years, the Green Alliance has also attracted support among Swedish speaking voters, especially among younger generations.

The Christian Democrats

The Christian Democratic Party (KD) is a small centre-right party, generally attracting three or four percent of votes in general elections. No surprisingly considering the name of the party religiosity is the key factor explaining identification with the Christian Democratic Party. A traditional value orientation, a position to the centre or right and a working class or lower middle-class identification, also single out Christian Democratic Party partisans. Overall, however, the model performs very badly. This can be explained by the low number of Christian Democratic Party partisans in the data identifying, but perhaps more importantly, that many of the factors which characterise Christian Democratic Party partisans also differentiate partisans of some of the larger parties.

Conclusions

An affective attachment to a specific political party has proven important to understand electoral behaviour. While party identification as a concept has been criticised for being too closely relate to an actual vote choice, or even to be less stable compared to vote choices, and therefore to lack analytical value (Thomassen, 1976), others have claimed party identifiers are more easily mobilised and make out the core and stable supporters of a party, which provides the party with a baseline support at times of elections. Despite the recent volatility the Finnish party system, with the breakthrough of the Finns Party, and fluctuating support for the three traditionally big parties, the Social Democratic Party, the National Coalition and the Centre Party, the share of Finnish voters identifying with a specific party has been relatively stable since the turn of the millennium, and even increased in relation to the 2019 election. While 45–50 percent of all respondents stated that they think of themselves as close to a specific party in the period 2003–2015, this share increased to 60 percent in the 2019 election. This recent increase can perhaps be attributed to a more differentiated menu of viable parties being available to voters, primarily the Green Alliance and the Finns Party, and a slightly more polarised political climate (Kawecki 2022).

On a critical note, we observe that the trend in party identification relatively closely follows the development of the parties' electoral support. This can be interpreted as supportive of the critique raised by Thomassen already in the 1970s when he questioned the analytical value of the concept of party identification. There are at least two potential explanations to our observation. The first relates to the context in which the question is posed. It might be that post-election surveys are ill suited to measure the enduring and affective elements of party attachment due to the close connection to the election and the actual vote choice made. The second potential explanation is that the inherent meaning of party identification, or, as the question is phrased "being close to a specific party", has developed over time. The close connection to the actual vote choice might hence be due to generational change and other possible developments, causing the connotation of party identification

to vary across groups of voters. It is likely that the quality of party identification is changing and that for different political parties and sociodemographic groups the meaning and reasons for party identification vary a lot. For many members of the older age cohorts identifying with some of the traditionally dominating parties, like the Social Democratic Party and the Centre party, party attachment might still be related to group identification and maybe to life history with enduring and close feelings of attachment. For younger generations, and for partisans of the newer parties, party attachment can be related to new forms of identity politics and based on value dimensions and election specific issue-orientations rather than traditional class and socioeconomic cleavages.

Political parties have often been divided into class-based parties and value-based parties, with class-based parties advancing the interests of their core socio-emographic group of supporters, and value-based parties focusing on advancing a special value orientation in society such as environmental issues or nationalist interests (Tiihonen, 2022). Based on the explanatory analysis presented in this chapter, such an interpretation does, however, not receive support. We are hence not able to divide parties into class parties and value-based parties. Except for the Social Democratic Party, subjective class identification is an important factor when it comes to explaining identification with all parties analysed.

Ideological positions and value-orientations also matter a great deal for voters' party attachments, in patterns that align relatively well with the parties' profiles and key issues (see also Chapter 8). Based on subjective identification on the left-right scale, Finnish political parties can be divided into left-wing and centre-right oriented parties. Voters positioning themselves to the left are prone to identify either with the Social Democratic Party or the Left Alliance, while a position at the centre or to the right on the same scale causes voters to identify with one of the other six parties, with the Green Alliance partisans being more distinctly positioned in between the left and right.

While voters who identify with the Social Democratic Party and the Centre Party are divided on their attitudes towards traditionalism, multiculturalism and equality, the supporters of other parties have a clearer profile at least in one of these three value dimensions. Positive stance towards multiculturalism explains identification with the National Coalition Party, the Green Alliance and the Swedish People's Party, while the opposite is valid for voters identifying with the Finns Party. Positive stances towards traditional values, in turn, explain identification with both the Finns Party and to Christian Democrats, while more liberal voters tend to align with the Green Alliance and the Left Alliance. On equality-related values, the Left Alliance and the National Coalition Party represent polar opposites, where voters with pro-equality stands align with the Left Alliance and voters with opposite viewpoints tend to identify with the National Coalition Party.

Finally, as Swedish as native language is the most important factor explaining identification to the Swedish People's Party, we can conclude that both old political cleavages and new political divides explain the party identification of the Finnish electorate. While the socioeconomic left-right dimension along with geography, religiosity and language may have lost some of the explanatory power they held a

few decades ago, they remain important building blocks of voters' party identifications. At the same time, the new divides like attitudes towards environmental issues and climate change, immigration and euro-scepticism have caused new political divides to grow in political importance, and attach, as well as realign, members of the electorate towards the newer parties.

Note

1 The set of questions used here cover same elements as the classical Michigan operationalization but is not identical. The classical operationalization starts with a question on the direction (to which party the respondent identifies) and then continues with a question of the intensity of the identification by asking how strong identifier the respondent is. Then follows a third question on party closeness to those who still lack information on the strength of the identification (see Blais et al., 2001; Thomassen & Rosema, 2009).

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Appendix

Appendix 9.A1 Descriptions of dependent and independent variables including reference categories for the logistic regression models

Variable	*Description*
Closeness to a party	1 = Identifies to the party. 0 = Does not identify to the party
Gender	1 = Man (reference category). 2 = Woman
Age	1 = 18–29 years (ref. category). 2 = 30–44. 3 = 45–59. 4 = 60–
Level of education	1 = Primary level (ref. category). 2 = Middle level. 3 = High level
Native language	1 = Finnish (ref. category). 2 = Swedish
Class identification	1 = Working class or lower middle class (ref.). 2 = Middle class. upper middle class. or upper class
Left-Right self-placement	Left (0–4. ref. category). Centre (5–6). Right (7–10)
	In the model regressing National Coalition. the reference category is centre. because there are no cases in the data identifying themselves both to the National Coalition and to the political left.
Religiousness	1 = Not at all or not much religious. ref. category. 2 = Rather or very religious
Place of residence	1 = Countryside municipality (ref. category). 2 = suburb. 3 = city centre
Traditional values	Factor scores of factor one in the factor analysis (see App. 9A2)
Multiculturalism	Factor scores of factor two in the factor analysis (see App. 9A2)
Equality	Factor scores of factor three in the factor analysis (see App. 9A2)

Appendix 9.A2 Factor analysis of eighteen value variables

	Factor		
	1	*2*	*3*
V1 Finland with more entrepreneurship and market economy	.348	.026	.077
V2 A multicultural Finland with tolerant attitudes towards people coming from other countries	−.250	.609	.414
V3 Finland with a bigger role for Christian values	.575	.112	.014
V4 Finland with less differences in development between different areas	.180	−.011	.574
V5 Finland. where the special position of Swedish speaking Finns is taken into account	.202	.600	.065

(*Continued*)

Appendix 9.A2 (Continued)

	Factor		
	1	*2*	*3*
V6 Finland. where men and women are more equal	.005	.170	.571
V7 Finland with a smaller public sector	.404	.059	−.045
V8 Finland. which strengthens the rights of sexual minorities	−.372	.377	.364
V9 Finland with lower taxation	.440	−.055	.077
V10 Finland with two strong national languages: Finnish and Swedish	.232	.592	.032
V11 Finland with more law and order	.413	.216	−.010
V12 Finland. where the position of the traditional nuclear family is strengthened	.771	−.030	.001
V13 Finland with more immigration	−.170	.633	.308
V14 Finland with smaller income disparities	.131	−.041	.611
V15 Finland less committed to the European Union	.365	−.248	.083
V16 Finland where more energy is produced by nuclear power	.251	.127	−.184
V17 Finland with fewer municipalities	.051	.221	−.032
V18 A more environmentally friendly Finland. even if it means low economic growth or no growth at all	−.106	.266	.377
Variance explained by factor percent	17.4	15.4	9.3

Each variable in the factor analysis varies from 0 (very bad proposition) to 10 (very good proposition).

Extraction method: Principal axis factoring; Rotation method: Varimax. Labels for the three factors: 1 = Traditional values; 2 = Multiculturalism; 3 = Equality.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2015–2019.

10 Friends and Foes

Affective Polarization among Finnish Voters

Arto Kekkonen, Daniel Kawecki and Staffan Himmelroos

Introduction and theory

For a long time, Finland has been viewed as a country of consensus politics and surplus governing coalitions in which parties across the spectrum have been able to compromise on policy. More recently however, there are signs of change as conflict around sociocultural issues increases (Westinen et al., 2016) and the traditional three large parties – the Social Democrats, the Centre Party, and the National Coalition Party – have become challenged by the break-through of the radical-right populist Finns party (Borg, 2012). Concurrently, concerns about political and societal polarization have grown, with many scholars recently focusing, in particular, on affective polarization. This concept was proposed by Iyengar et al. (2012) as a complementary way of understanding mass political polarization: instead of the traditional view of polarization as an ideological phenomenon, they interpreted it as an emotional distance between political groups.

According to the social identity theory applied by Iyengar et al. (2012), a group identity results in a positive emotional attachment to the group one belongs to, the so-called in-group, while other groups are seen as out-groups. This attachment results in a cognitive bias in favor of one's in-group, and negative feelings towards rivaling out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Consequently, Iyengar et al. (2012) conceptualize affective polarization as a function of both the level of positive sentiment towards the in-group and the level of negative sentiment towards the out-group. These sentiments, they argue, can be a result of both principled dislike of the other side's policy positions and the mere act of identifying with a political party, which fuels negative biases towards rivaling parties.

Affective polarization is conceptually distinct from ideological polarization, meaning that agreement or disagreement on policy is not necessarily fully reflected in affective evaluations of parties or their supporters, though empirically they are related (Reiljan, 2020). At the individual level, strong ideological leanings and partisan social identity have been identified as predictors of affective polarization (Iyengar et al., 2012; Kawecki, 2022; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021; Renström et al., 2020; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016).

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Several studies have shown substantial increases in affective polarization over time, particularly in the United States (Iyengar et al., 2018; Iyengar & Krupenkin, 2018; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). Comparative European studies of affective polarization show mixed patterns across countries, placing Finland among the least polarized countries (Reiljan, 2020; Wagner, 2020). Nonetheless, recent studies (Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021; Kawecki, 2022) indicate that affective polarization is increasing in Finland as well. In this chapter, we present a summary of the development of affective polarization in Finland between 2003 and 2019 and seek to understand what lies behind it.

In the American context, it appears as if affective polarization is largely symmetrical between followers of both the major parties: republicans and democrats alike feel increasingly negative towards "the other" party (Iyengar & Krupenkin, 2018). On the other hand, findings from Sweden (Renström et al., 2020), where the party system strongly resembles that of Finland, demonstrate that there can be clear differences in polarization levels between supporters of different parties. Specifically, the supporters of the left-wing Left Party and the right-wing populist Sweden Democrats were substantially more polarized than the other parties in 2019. Both parties are positioned toward the edges of the socioeconomic and sociocultural conflict dimensions, and the higher levels of polarization in these parties can thus be the result of more extreme ideological positions. Yet, it is also possible that factors relating more directly to supporting or identifying with the parties in question play a role. In either case, this indicates that affective polarization does not necessarily manifest symmetrically across the whole range of political parties in a multiparty system.

In our chapter, we will, therefore, direct attention towards parties as well as ideological divides when analyzing affective polarization in Finland. We limit ourselves to the eight main parliamentary parties: the left-wing Left Alliance (VAS), the Green League (VIHR), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the agrarian Centre Party of Finland (KESK), the ethno-linguistic and liberal Swedish People's Party (RKP), the conservative National Coalition Party (KOK), the Christian Democrats (KD), and lastly, the right-wing populist Finns Party (PS). Ideologically, we are mainly interested in the traditional socioeconomic (left-right) dimension and the sociocultural (GAL-TAN) dimension, which has emerged as a result of transforming cleavages in Western Europe (Ford & Jennings 2020). While these divisions do not capture every type of issue conflict, they are generally acknowledged as providing a high-level overview of ideological divisions in Western party systems. For a comprehensive treatment of the Finnish ideological landscape, we refer the reader to Isotalo et al. (2020).

We have two general research questions that will guide the analysis. Our first question is based on the observation that affective polarization does not necessarily manifest symmetrically. We ask whether the general increase in Finland is a broad trend, or if it is confined to particular partisan or ideological groups. Second, we ask what characterized affectively polarized voters in terms of ideology, partisan identity and demographic characteristics during the five election years between 2003 and 2019. In doing so, we hope to uncover some of the reasons why affective polarization is rising in Finland.

Descriptive trends

In this first part of the analysis, we examine how affective polarization has changed in Finland between 2003 and 2019. However, before we review the findings, we need to say a few words about how we and others have measured the phenomenon of affective polarization. The use of party like-dislike ratings (or *party thermometers*) has become a well-established tool for measuring voters' feelings towards in-parties and out-parties and subsequently quantify affective polarization. Respondents are asked to rate each parliamentary party on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that they "strongly dislike" said party and 10 means that they "strongly like" that party. In a multiparty setting, voter attitudes towards several parties must be taken into account. Several approaches, based on different theoretical perspectives, can be found in the literature. Next, we present three ways of measuring affective polarization that we will use to examine the general trend.

First, we have Reiljan's (2020) affective polarization index (API). This measure is based on the mean ratings given by a party's supporters to their preferred party, and the mean ratings given to other parties. After aggregating these ratings at party level, Reiljan calculates the average distance between the rating given to the preferred party and all other parties. This operation is completed for each party, and the resulting party-specific metrics are then aggregated into an index for the whole party system. The highest level of polarization is reached when every party is maximally affectively distant from every other party, which essentially amounts to a fractionalized party system.

Second, we have Wagner (2021), who takes a slightly different approach and focuses on the degree to which individual party ratings are dispersed between liked and disliked parties. Unlike Reiljan's fractionalized party system perspective, this approach measures the extent to which voters perceive the party system to be bipolarized between blocs of equal size. Despite these theoretical differences, Reiljan's and Wagner's measures both use party vote shares from the most recent parliamentary election to weigh the scores so that attitudes towards and between larger parties have a greater impact on the level of polarization.

Third, we have Kawecki's (2022) measure, which builds on both previous measures and argues for viewing affective polarization as the absence of neutrality in voter's party ratings, regardless of the size of the blocs on either side. Thus, a voter who views politics as a struggle between two blocs of similar size is considered equally polarized as a voter who sees it as a struggle of a single preferred party against all other parties.

To compute the API, we assign an inparty to each respondent based on the party they voted for in the latest parliamentary election. We discard those respondents who either did not disclose voting for a party or voted for a party whose like-dislike ratings were not included in the data. In all subsequent analyses, we rescale the measures to range from 0 to 1. More detailed descriptions on how the measures are computed are available in the papers cited above.

Figure 10.1 shows the level of affective polarization in Finland between 2003 and 2019 according to each of the measures described above. We see the same

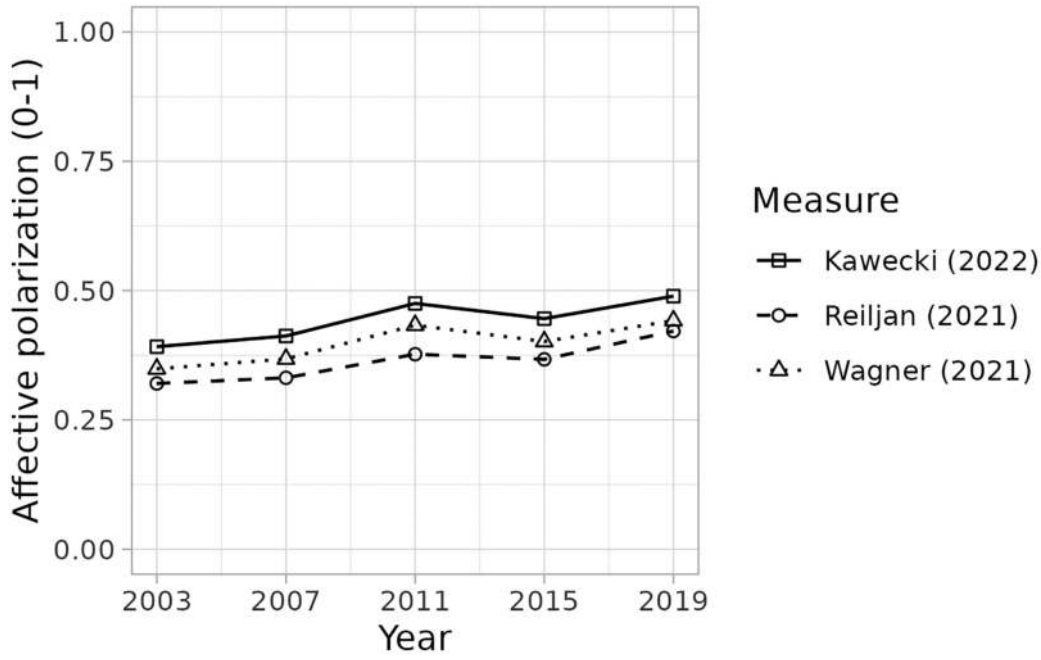

Figure 10.1 Affective polarization in Finland from 2003 to 2019.
Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

slightly increasing trend for all measures. Affective polarization increased between 2007 and 2011 according to all three measures, and either slightly slumped or stayed level between 2011 and 2015. The 2019 election again marks a new peak. The strong symmetry between the measures indicates that the findings about the increasing polarization are robust, and not the result of a particular method used to summarize the underlying like-dislike scores. However, we should note that the level of affective polarization in Finland is still rather moderate in an international comparison. Wagner (2021) ranks Finland in the bottom 10 when calculating affective polarization for 48 countries. Similarly, Reiljan (2020) ranks Finland at the lower end, together with Iceland and the Netherlands, when comparing European countries.

Explanatory analyses

Our explanatory analysis consists of two parts. First, we examine how the main trend is reflected in different partisan and ideological segments of the electorate. This will provide an initial level explanation of the main trend by showing if it is caused by a general increase in affective polarization across the electorate, or by the polarization of specific political groups. In doing so, it will also help us answer our first research question of whether affective polarization is manifesting symmetrically across the political spectrum. Next, we run ordinary least squares regression models for each election year, to more closely identify the predictors of affective polarization in the electorate, and to determine if they change over time.

This will provide the necessary results to answer our second research question about the characteristics of affectively polarized voters.

For the first part of the analysis, we will use partisanship and ideological leaning as grouping factors. We determine partisanship by self-reported vote choice, while ideological leaning is measured on both the socioeconomic (left-right) and sociocultural (GAL-TAN) dimensions. GAL-TAN placement is operationalized as an index consisting of questions measuring policy preferences related to immigration, the European Union, the rights of sexual minorities, the role of Christian values, and the environment. For the most part, we use the same questions that are used in Chapter 8 of this volume and refer the reader to that chapter for a more thorough discussion of the dimension and its evolution.[1] For the left-right axis, however, we instead use a self-reported position, which is measured on a scale from 0 (strongly left-wing) to 10 (strongly right-wing). Although this creates a discrepancy between the two dimensions, we opt for this approach as forming an index of policy positions to represent the socioeconomic dimension that is consistent internally and over time is difficult.

The exact wordings of the questions on sociocultural policy preferences vary from year to year, as do the response scales. For some questions, the scale goes from 1 to 4, where 1 denotes strong agreement and 4 denotes strong disagreement, with a separate "Don't know" option. For others, the scale ranges from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates strong disagreement and 10 indicates strong agreement. All questions are transformed so that large values indicate preferences consistent with the TAN end of the spectrum. Questions that use the shorter scale are rescaled to range from 0 to 10, and "Don't knows" and missing values are replaced with the neutral value (5) before the index is formed. Finally, the sum scores are scaled back to the 0 to 10 range so that 0 corresponds to the smallest observed value, and 10 to the largest observed value, for each year. For the left-right dimension, we exclude respondents who were not able to place themselves on the scale.

At the first stage of the analysis, we are interested in exploring whether trends differ broadly between ideological camps and parties. We divide both ideological scales into a center category, and two other categories leaning towards either side. In the second stage of the analysis, we are interested in the effects of ideology, party identification, and party choice on affective polarization.

In both stages of the analysis, we will use only Kawecki's (2022) absence-of-neutrality measure of affective polarization. The use of weights in both Wagner's and Reiljan's measures, and additionally aggregation at party level in the latter case, makes these measures more geared towards the system level. Kawecki's measure, in turn, provides an intuitive definition of individual level affective polarization: the absence of neutrality in party evaluations.

All analyses are performed using sample weights. For data from 2003, 2007, and 2011, the analyses and data involving GAL-TAN positions are based on the follow-up questionnaire and thus use weights calculated for the follow-up sample. In the analyses that include party choice, we group respondents with missing data, and those who did not disclose a party they voted, for, with non-voters, but include those who voted for a party other than one of the main eight as a separate group.

From the 2019 data, we exclude a number of respondents for whom knowledge of party choice is missing due to the fact that the question was not presented to them.

Affective polarization, ideology, and party choice

Figures 10.2 and 10.3 show the overall trend broken down by ideological leaning. On both dimensions, the center is less polarized than either side, indicating that strong ideological positions are, indeed, associated with affective polarization.

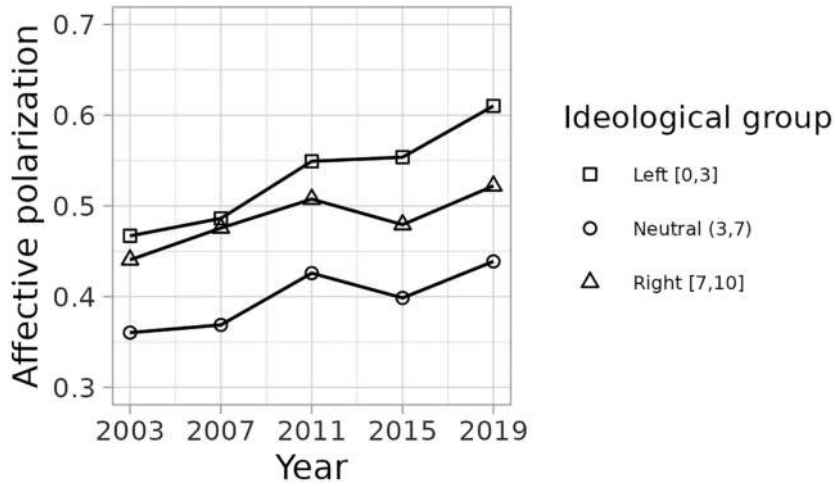

Figure 10.2 Affective polarization across ideological groups on the left-right dimension between 2003 and 2019. The Y-axis has been truncated to make sub trends more discernible.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

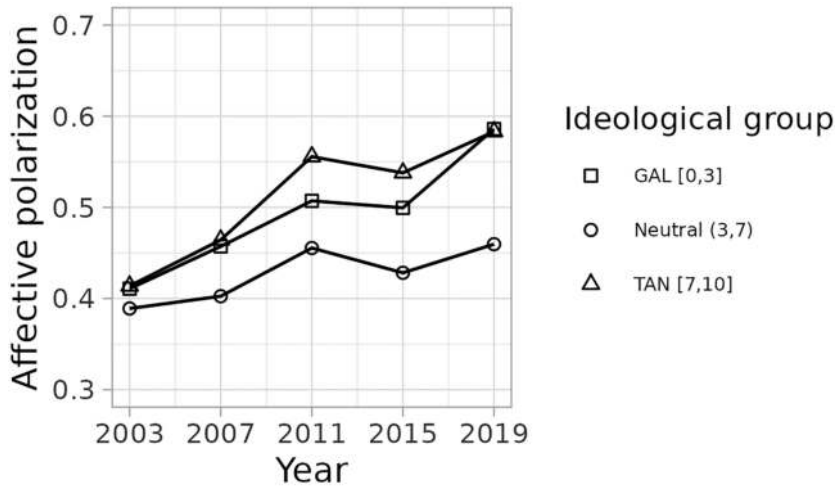

Figure 10.3 Affective polarization across ideological groups on the GAL-TAN dimension between 2003 and 2019. The Y-axis has been truncated to make sub trends more visible.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

Nevertheless, moderates have also become more polarized over time. On the left-right dimension, the left appears more polarized than the right, and has also polarized at a somewhat higher rate. On the sociocultural spectrum, we see evidence that the TAN side overtook the GAL end in 2011, but that both sides were on the same level in 2019.

To contextualize these findings, we should point out that while the ideologically centrist positions are popular in Finland on both dimensions, there has been an increase in strong ideological positions over time (Isotalo et al., 2020). Furthermore, the GAL-TAN dimension has become more consolidated over the time period (Isotalo et al., 2020). Indeed, the index we use has higher internal consistency in later years. [2] Thus, the trend that we observe may relate both to strong ideological positions generating higher levels of polarization over time and to certain kinds of respondents coming to occupy more consistent positions across the spectrum. We return to this point in the next section.

Voters of certain parties have also become more likely to occupy more discernible positions on the axes (Isotalo et al., 2020). For instance, Left Alliance voters have clearly moved towards the left and GAL ends of the dimensions, whereas Finns Party voters have moved in the opposite directions. While increased ideological sorting among partisans does not necessarily mean increased polarization, it is likely to be associated with the phenomenon.

Figure 10.4, in turn, breaks the overall trend of affective polarization into subtrends for the eight main parties with parliamentary representation between 2003 and 2019. The main trend, with its ups and downs, appears very similar across almost all groups of voters. Voters have consistently been more polarized than non-voters. Differences between parties are more difficult to discern due to uncertainty in group mean estimates. We can note a tendency for Left Alliance voters to

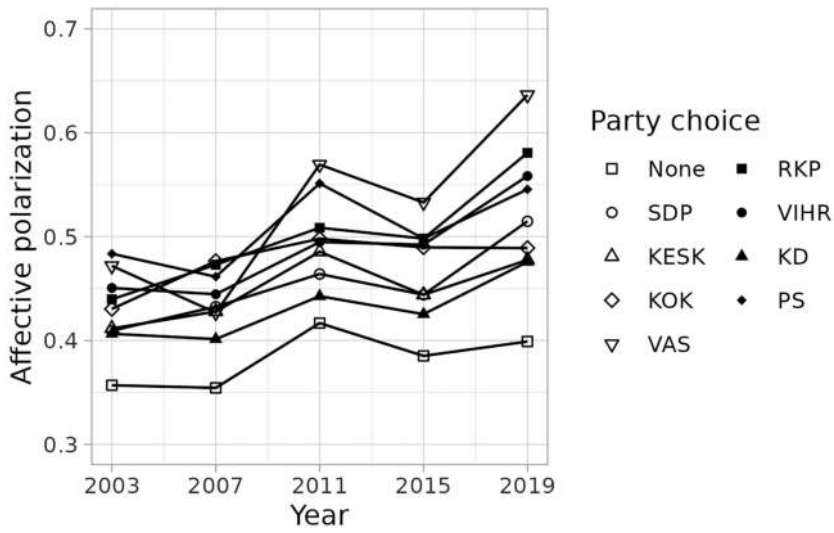

Figure 10.4 Affective polarization across voters of different parties between 2003 and 2019. The Y-axis has been truncated to make sub trends more discernible.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

have higher levels of polarization, and to a somewhat lesser extent for those who voted for the Green Alliance, the Swedish People's Party, or the Finns Party. Polarization levels for other parties appear lower and have not increased as sharply.

The characteristics of polarized voters

The trends presented above clearly indicate that affective polarization takes place across the entire political spectrum and that supporters of some parties seem more polarized than those of other parties. Furthermore, the left appears to be more polarized than the right, while the opposing camps on the GAL-TAN axis appear to have more similar levels. However, these results must be interpreted with caution, since the items are not completely orthogonal, and party choice is also related to ideology. To disambiguate the explanatory power of each ideological dimension, and party choice, we ran ordinary least squares regression models for each election year, with affective polarization (as absence of neutrality) as the dependent variable. We thus move the analysis from aggregate level trends to the individual level.

The purpose of this analysis is twofold. We want to test to what extent ideology, in the form of the strength of ideology, predicts affective polarization. We also want to generally describe the characteristics of affectively polarized voters. We measure ideological extremity by transforming the left-right and GAL-TAN positions to *ideological intensity* scales from 0 to 5, where 5 corresponds to the lowest or highest value on the original scale, and 0 is the middle value.

We take into account the effect of having a partisan identity by creating a dummy for party identification, based on a question asking whether respondents feel that they are "close" to a parliamentary party. This represents having a social identification with a party beyond merely voting for it based on policy preference – a factor that has consistently been associated with higher affective polarization in previous studies (Iyengar et al., 2012; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021; Renström et al., 2020; Kawecki, 2022).

We also include a categorical variable for party choice, using "None" (i.e., voters who did not vote, or did not disclose a party) as the reference category. The purpose of this category is twofold. First, the two chosen ideological dimensions and the presence of partisan social identity cannot account for all divisions that could drive affective polarization. As such, this variable serves the purpose of controlling for omitted factors, as well as accounting for the effect of political participation through voting, as opposed to abstaining. Second, it is, in principle, possible for there to be a more direct relationship between specific vote choices and affective polarization. For instance, contextual factors during different election years could make the supporters of certain parties more prone to polarization, as could internal factors such as party discourse.

Finally, we add several sociodemographic variables, and an indicator of political interest, to the models as controls.

These models are summarized in Table 10.1. The regression models consistently identify ideological intensity as an important predictor of polarization. However,

Table 10.1 Full regression models for each election year

	2003	*2007*	*2011*	*2015*	*2019*
(Intercept)	0.21 *** (0.04)	0.25 *** (0.05)	0.33 *** (0.05)	0.26 *** (0.03)	0.24 *** (0.03)
Ideological intensity (0 to 5)					
Left-right	0.03 ** (0.01)	0.04 *** (0.01)	0.04 *** (0.01)	0.05 *** (0.01)	0.04 *** (0.00)
GAL-TAN	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.03 *** (0.01)	0.04 *** (0.01)	0.04 *** (0.01)
Party choice (ref: none)					
SDP	0.02 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)	0.06 * (0.03)	0.04 (0.02)	0.07 *** (0.02)
KESK	−0.03 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)
KOK	0.01 (0.03)	0.06 * (0.03)	0.06 * (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
VAS	0.02 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.07 * (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.09 *** (0.02)
RKP	−0.00 (0.05)	0.03 (0.03)	0.15 ** (0.05)	0.07 * (0.03)	0.13 *** (0.04)
VIHR	0.03 (0.03)	0.07 * (0.04)	0.03 (0.03)	0.07 * (0.03)	0.09 *** (0.02)
KD	0.00 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	0.03 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
PS	0.02 (0.09)	0.11 ** (0.03)	0.12 *** (0.03)	0.10 *** (0.03)	0.11 *** (0.02)
Other	−0.13 ** (0.04)	−0.05 (0.05)	−0.02 (0.05)	−0.08 * (0.04)	−0.01 (0.03)
Party identification					
Feels close to a party	0.03 (0.02)	0.05 ** (0.02)	−0.00 (0.02)	0.03 * (0.01)	0.05 *** (0.01)
Control variables					
Age	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)
Gender (ref: male)					
Female	0.01 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	0.04 ** (0.01)
Education (ref: secondary education)					
Bachelor's or higher	0.03 (0.02)	−0.02 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)
Basic education	0.06 * (0.02)	−0.03 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.06 *** (0.02)
Type of residence (ref: suburb)					
Town or city center	0.02 (0.03)	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.02 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Population center	0.05 * (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Countryside	−0.00 (0.04)	0.05 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)
First language (ref: Finnish)					
Swedish	−0.00 (0.04)	0.06 * (0.03)	−0.08 * (0.04)	0.01 (0.03)	−0.00 (0.03)
Political interest (1-4)	0.03 * (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
N	684	955	758	1358	1213
R^2	0.15	0.22	0.24	0.21	0.31

Standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

there are differences across time, and between the two dimensions. The coefficient for left-right intensity has remained more constant throughout the years, whereas the effect of GAL-TAN intensity has more visibly increased over time. By 2019, it has caught up with the effect of left-right intensity. This points at sociocultural issues having become stronger predictors of affective polarization over time, and an additional polarizing factor on top of the traditional left-right dimension. In 2019, going all the way from the midpoint of one of the scales to an extreme end has an effect on affective polarization that is approximately equal to the standard deviation of the chosen affective polarization measure.

The interpretation of these results is complicated by the fact that the GAL-TAN index itself has evolved over time. There are many more respondents with strong GAL-TAN positions in 2019 compared to 2003. As noted before, the internal consistency of the GAL-TAN index is modest, particularly in the data sets from the first two election years. This raises the possibility that the effect this index has on polarization is underestimated, if its components have opposite effects, or that we may mistakenly attribute effects to the scale that should be attributed to some of its components only. However, bivariate analyses of relationships between the individual questions that form the index and affective polarization point at the same general trend. People are more polarized if they have strong beliefs, and this difference has increased over time (see also Chapter 8). The shorter response scales used in 2003 and 2007, however, mean that such differences would be more difficult to spot.

Transforming the 0–10 GAL-TAN scale into the 0–5 intensity scale also means that potential differences between the ends are not visible. Indeed, using quadratic transformations of the left-right and GAL-TAN positions instead of intensity scales hints that, in later years, having a strong left-wing or strong TAN position has a stronger effect on polarization than their counterparts. This matches the observations from the previous section, and those made by Kawecki (2022). However, this difference is inconsistently visible in the bivariate analyses mentioned above.

As expected, partisan social identity (feeling close to a party) also has an independent effect on the level of affective polarization. For instance, in 2019, feeling close to a party is associated with an increase in polarization that is roughly equal to taking a single step towards the extreme end on either of the ideological scales.

To assess the marginal effect of voting for one of the main parties, as opposed to abstaining from voting, we first fitted a model for each year with only party choice as an independent variable (not shown in the tables here). In the 2003 model, voting has no clear relationship with polarization. In later years, voters are generally considerably more polarized than non-voters, with the highest coefficients for the parties Left Alliance, Green Alliance, Finns Party, and Swedish People's Party. Including ideological intensity, strength of partisan identity and sociodemographic controls in these models (as shown in Table 10.1) brings down the coefficients, but not evenly. For instance, including ideological intensity roughly halves the coefficient for the Left Alliance in 2011–2019, but has a smaller effect on the coefficients for voting for the Finns Party, Green Alliance, or Swedish People's Party. In the full models and in most cases, voting by itself does not predict a higher level of

polarization compared to not voting during the first two election years, but does so in subsequent elections.

Still, there are exceptions. Voting for the Finns Party has an independent effect from 2007 onwards, and we also see statistically significant effects for the National Coalition Party in 2007 and 2011, for the Green Alliance in 2007, 2015, and 2019, for the Swedish People's Party since 2011, and for the Social Democratic Party and the Left Alliance in 2011 and 2019. Many of the coefficients are only significant at the $p < 0.05$ level, but in 2019, the coefficients for party choices appear highly significant, and the explanatory power of the regression model is substantially higher than for previous years.[3] Thus, party choice, or the uncontrolled factors for which it serves as a proxy, appears to predict affective polarization to a larger extent than in earlier years. In 2019, the additional effects of voting for various parties over not voting at all are roughly equivalent to moving between 1 and 4 points from the midpoint of one of the ideological dimensions.

Besides weakening the effects of party dummies, control variables, for the most part, have no substantial independent effects on polarization. We see some evidence that having a low education is associated with being more polarized in some years, as is being female. However, these effects are inconsistent. Perhaps surprisingly, we see no independent effect from having a higher interest in politics.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, we do not repeat the analysis with other measures of affective polarization. However, as for the overall trends, the choice of a metric does not make a substantial difference for which factors predict higher polarization. Minor differences in coefficients do appear when Wagner's measure is used as the dependent variable. This is most likely due to the fact that for some groups of respondents, the sets of highly liked or disliked parties are more evenly sized, whereas for others sympathy or antagonism may be directed at single parties. Similarly, slight variations in handling missing responses or constructing the GAL-TAN variable led to some differences in model outputs (c.f. Kawecki, 2022). Nevertheless, the main findings are robust: the consistent effect of left-right intensity, the increasing importance of the GAL-TAN scale, and the increasing importance of other factors associated with party choice.

Conclusions

We began this chapter by presenting evidence that affective polarization has increased in Finland over time and asking whether this increase is a general phenomenon or confined to specific parts of the political spectrum. Furthermore, we were interested in finding out what characterizes affectively polarized voters, and whether these characteristics have changed over time. The answer to the first question is that affective polarization has, indeed, increased across the entire political spectrum. The supporters of all parties and ideological camps have become more polarized. However, there are clear differences between supporters of different parties, with the Left Alliance, Green Alliance, Finns Party, and Swedish People's Party having, on average, the most polarized supporters, and Christian Democrats and Centre Party having the least polarized supporters. When examining the individual-level predictors of

affective polarization, we found that ideology is important. Placing oneself strongly to the left or right consistently predicted a high level of affective polarization. The sociocultural GAL-TAN dimension has increased in importance over time and has become an equally strong predictor of affective polarization as left-right position.

The relationship between ideology and affect does not necessarily follow a simple logic where affective polarization lies downstream from ideological polarization. On the contrary, this relationship could have reciprocal aspects, and lead affectively polarized voters to adopt more extreme ideological positions, and to support more radical parties. The relationship is further complicated if we chose to interpret ideology not merely as policy preferences, but as a political identity in a broader sense (Devine, 2015), or a symbolic attachment rather than operational ideology (Popp & Rudolph, 2011). It is thus possible that part of the effect we see from ideological extremity can be attributed to the same ingroup-outgroup dynamics that we ascribe to partisan identities. This also has bearing on how we measure ideological extremity: self-reported positions may capture symbolic attachment despite operational ideology, while the opposite is true of measures based on policy preferences.

The increased predictive power of GAL-TAN extremity in our results coincides both with the consolidation of the GAL-TAN axis in Finland, and the increased sorting of certain parties' bases along ideological dimensions, noted by Isotalo et al. (2020). Kekkonen and Ylä-Anttila (2021) present evidence that ideological leaning is related to viewing certain parties more favorably than others in a consistent fashion. Voters with leftist and GAL views tend to report that they like the Green Alliance, Social Democratic Party, and Left Alliance, while those leaning right or towards the TAN end of the spectrum are more favorable towards the Centre Party, the National Coalition, and the Finns Party. Nonetheless, the relations between, particularly, the parties that lean right or TAN are not characterized by consistent mutual sympathy. It is thus too early to claim that Finnish parties are polarizing into symmetrically opposed blocs. Furthermore, a sizable portion of the electorate remains ideologically moderate and showing low levels of affective polarization, which acts as a counterweight to the more polarized voters.

What, then, are the potential implications of our findings? We argue that rising levels of affective polarization represents a worrying phenomenon for several reasons. First, affective polarization can have various implications for institutional politics. According to a recent study by Kingzette et al. (2021), affective polarization can undermine the support for democratic norms, since for affectively polarized citizens even the basic principles underlying the democratic system may become politicized. Another potential consequence of increased affective polarization among Finnish voters could be that parties find it increasingly difficult to cooperate and compromise since entering coalitions with the wrong partners may displease their potential voters in future elections. Hence, increasing affective polarization could reduce the possibility for the type of consensus politics that has traditionally characterized the Finnish party system.

Lastly, we are concerned about the way affective polarization might manifest as hostility not only towards parties, but towards regular party supporters. These

two aspects are related, but distinguishable (Iyengar et al., 2012; Druckman & Levendusky, 2018; etc.). If partisan animosity spills over into the private sphere, it may have undesirable ramifications beyond institutional politics itself. Such animosity is present in multiple European countries (e.g., Harteveld, 2021; Knudsen, 2020; Renström et al., 2021) as well as in Finland (Kekkonen et al. 2022). We thus believe future research has an important role to play in further uncovering the mechanisms of affective polarization and contributing with insights about constructive approaches to societal divisions.

Notes

1 We use different questions for the EU dimension in 2003 and 2007.
2 Guttman's lambda 4 for the index is 0.50, 0.48, 0.69, 0.66 and 0.71 for the years 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019, respectively.
3 We remind the reader that analyses of the 2003–2011 data sets rely on the drop-off questionnaire, and thus have a smaller sample size and a slightly different sample overall, which may explain some of these differences.

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Appendix

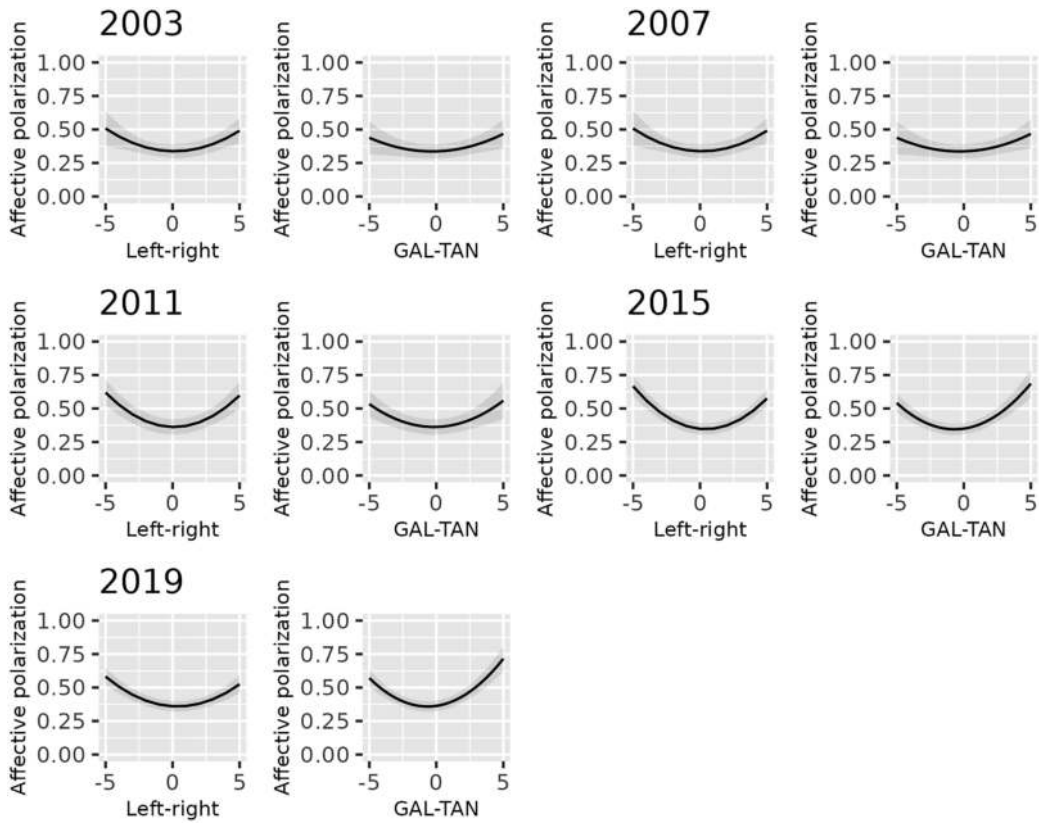

Figure 10.A1 Marginal effects of left-right and GAL-TAN positions on affective polarization in OLS regression models that use ideological positions as quadratic terms.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

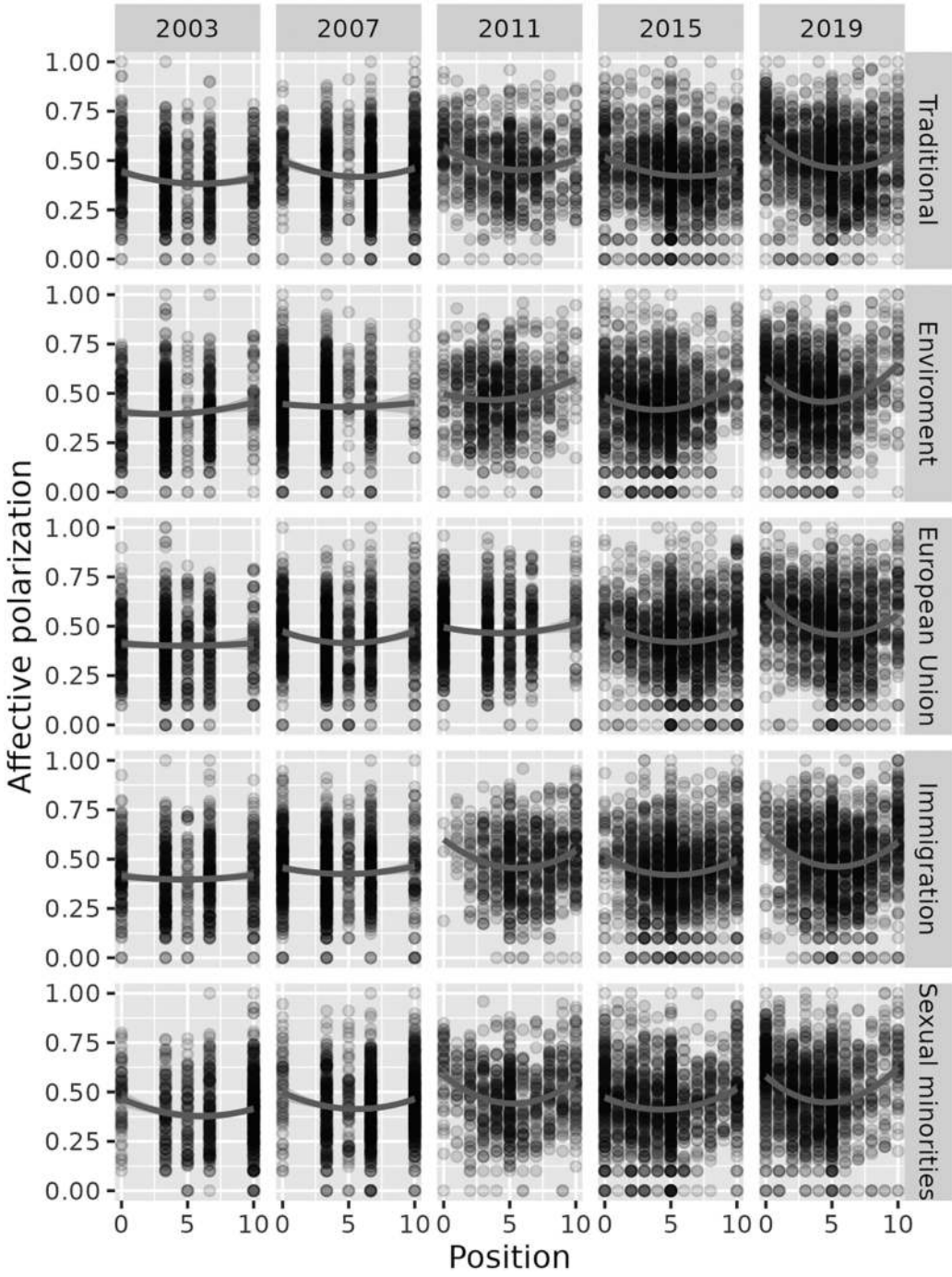

Figure 10.A2 Bivariate analyses of the components of the GAL-TAN scale versus affective polarization. Blue line denotes OLS regression line.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

Table 10.A1 Regression models that include only party choice as a categorical variable

	2003	*2007*	*2011*	*2015*	*2019*
(Intercept)	0.39 *** (0.02)	0.38 *** (0.02)	0.40 *** (0.02)	0.40 *** (0.02)	0.41 *** (0.02)
Party choice (ref: None)					
SDP	0.03 (0.03)	0.06 (0.03)	0.07 * (0.03)	0.04 (0.02)	0.11 *** (0.02)
KESK	0.00 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.07 * (0.03)	0.04 (0.02)	0.07 ** (0.03)
KOK	0.05 (0.03)	0.10 *** (0.03)	0.12 *** (0.03)	0.09 *** (0.03)	0.08 *** (0.02)
VAS	0.07 (0.04)	0.05 (0.05)	0.15 *** (0.03)	0.14 *** (0.03)	0.23 *** (0.02)
RKP	0.06 (0.03)	0.10 *** (0.03)	0.11 *** (0.03)	0.10 ** (0.03)	0.17 *** (0.03)
VIHR	0.05 (0.04)	0.08 (0.04)	0.10 *** (0.03)	0.10 ** (0.03)	0.16 *** (0.02)
KD	0.06 * (0.03)	0.04 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)	0.03 (0.03)	0.08 * (0.04)
PS	0.06 (0.09)	0.11 *** (0.03)	0.16 *** (0.03)	0.10 *** (0.03)	0.15 *** (0.02)
Other	−0.13 *** (0.04)	−0.02 (0.05)	0.02 (0.07)	−0.07 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)
N	684	955	758	1358	1213
R^2	0.04	0.04	0.10	0.05	0.12

Standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019

Table 10.A2 Full regression models using Wagner's spread-of-scores as the dependent variable

	2003	*2007*	*2011*	*2015*	*2019*
(Intercept)	0.19 *** (0.04)	0.19 *** (0.04)	0.27 *** (0.05)	0.20 *** (0.03)	0.18 *** (0.03)
Ideological intensity (0 to 5)					
Left-right	0.02 *** (0.01)	0.04 *** (0.01)	0.04 *** (0.01)	0.04 *** (0.00)	0.03 *** (0.00)
GAL-TAN	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.03 *** (0.01)	0.03 *** (0.01)	0.04 *** (0.00)
Party choice (ref: none)					
SDP	0.04 (0.02)	0.08 ** (0.03)	0.08 ** (0.03)	0.07 *** (0.02)	0.09 *** (0.02)
KESK	0.00 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.06 ** (0.02)	0.05 * (0.02)
KOK	0.02 (0.03)	0.10 *** (0.03)	0.08 * (0.03)	0.05 * (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
VAS	0.01 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.03 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	0.08 *** (0.02)
RKP	−0.04 (0.04)	−0.01 (0.03)	0.08 (0.04)	0.07 * (0.03)	0.11 *** (0.03)
VIHR	0.02 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.06 * (0.02)	0.09 *** (0.02)
KD	−0.03 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	0.00 (0.03)	−0.01 (0.02)
PS	−0.00 (0.02)	0.08 * (0.03)	0.11 *** (0.03)	0.11 *** (0.02)	0.11 *** (0.02)
Other	−0.13 ** (0.04)	−0.03 (0.04)	−0.03 (0.05)	−0.05 (0.03)	−0.01 (0.03)
Party identification					
Feels close to a party	0.03 (0.02)	0.05 ** (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.03 ** (0.01)	0.04 *** (0.01)
Control variables					
Age	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Gender (ref: male)					
Female	0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	−0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	0.03 ** (0.01)
Education (ref: secondary education)					
Bachelor's or higher	0.02 (0.02)	−0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	−0.00 (0.01)	−0.00 (0.01)
Basic education	0.05 ** (0.02)	−0.03 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.05 ** (0.02)
Type of residence (ref: suburb)					
Town or city center	0.00 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Population center	0.04 * (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)
Countryside	−0.00 (0.04)	0.05 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)
First language (ref: Finnish)					
Swedish	0.01 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	−0.05 (0.04)	0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.02)
Political interest (1–4)	0.03 * (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 * (0.01)
N	684	955	758	1358	1213
R^2	0.15	0.26	0.25	0.23	0.34

Standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

Table 10.A3 Questions used to construct the GAL-TAN index

Dimension	*2003*	*2007*	*2011*	*2015*	*2019*
Immigration	How important are the following issues to you: Controlling the entry of refugees	Immigration poses a serious threat to Finland's unique national culture	On a scale of 0 to 10, how would you rate the following propositions about what Finland should focus on: Increased immigration*	In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on these propositions? Finland that has more immigration*	In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on these propositions? Finland that has more immigration*
Sexual minorities	Same-sex couples in registered partnerships should have the right to adopt children*	How important are the following issues to you: Improving the circumstances of sexual minorities*	On a scale of 0 to 10, how would you rate the following propositions about what Finland should focus on: The status of sexual minorities is reinforced*	In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on these propositions? Finland where the status of sexual minorities is reinforced*	In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on these propositions? Finland where the status of sexual minorities is reinforced*
European Union	EU membership is a good thing for Finland*	EU membership is a good thing for Finland*	Finland should leave the EU	In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on these propositions? Finland that is less committed/ attached to the European Union	In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on these propositions? Finland that is less committed/attached to the European Union

(*Continued*)

Table 10.A3 (Continued)

Dimension	*2003*	*2007*	*2011*	*2015*	*2019*
Environment	How important are the following issues to you: Making environmental protection more effective*	How important are the following issues to you: Other environmental protection issues*	On a scale of 0 to 10, how would you rate the following propositions about what Finland should focus on: More eco-friendly Finland, even if it meant low economic growth or no growth at all*	In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on these propositions? More eco-friendly Finland, even if it meant low economic growth or no growth at all*	In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on these propositions? More eco-friendly Finland, even if it meant low economic growth or no growth at all*
Christian values	How important are the following issues to you: Strengthening traditional values and morals	How important are the following issues to you: Strengthening traditional values and morals	On a scale of 0 to 10, how would you rate the following propositions about what Finland should focus on: Christian values having a greater role	In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on these propositions? Finland where Christian values have a greater role	In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on these propositions? Finland where Christian values have a greater role

* The scale has been reversed prior to constructing the index.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

11 Party and Candidate as Objects of Electoral Choice

Peter Söderlund

Introduction and theory

Scholars often presume that "voters are thinking about and choosing between parties" (Marsh, 2007, 504). In Finland, parties are, indeed, central actors of political representation and the choice between political parties is a real and substantial one for many of the voters (von Schoultz, 2018). However, the voters in Finland are formally not asked to make a choice between political parties. Instead, the parties present lists with multiple candidates at the district level and the voters then formally choose one candidate from within a party list. Candidate choice and party choice are, thus, intertwined. First, the total number of preference votes determines the final rank order of the candidates on that list, and eventually who is elected. Second, the intraparty preference vote is also counted as a vote for the party list to which the candidate belongs. This means that the votes for all candidates are pooled to determine the total number of seats allocated to a party list. Hence, the voters cast preference votes that determine both which candidates win seats and how many seats the parties win at the district level (Carey & Shugart, 1995, 421; Cox, 1997, 42; von Schoultz, 2018).

In this kind of electoral system, both candidate and party are the objects of electoral choice (Marsh, 2007). The relative importance of party and candidate varies among voters, however. Some voters think party choice is more important than candidate choice and pay greater attention to party reputation, while others prefer to evaluate candidates and rely on candidates' personal reputations for making judgements and reaching decisions. This chapter will describe and explain both a) to what extent voters vote for candidates rather than for parties and b) the attitudes towards preference voting for individual candidates in Finland. First, the aim to examine the relative importance of candidate and party in people's voting decisions is interesting given the fact that Finland has a relatively person-centred electoral system in an international perspective (Söderlund, 2016). With survey data, it is possible to measure if candidate was the most important factor, or if personal voting is nested within, and so subsidiary to, party voting among the voters (see Marsh, 2007, 501). Since survey data from multiple post-election surveys are available, it is also possible to examine if a trend of personalization of electoral choice can be detected between 2003 and 2019.

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Second, it is also relevant to know what the Finns themselves think of the current system with mandatory preference voting. Another option would be to allow preference voting to be optional while a party vote would suffice like in many other countries. In that case, if the voter opts not to cast a preference vote, he or she would delegate the party, or those who cast preference votes, to decide the order in which candidates will be elected (Shugart, 2005, 43). Yet, Finns have cast a single preference vote since 1955 and they are, therefore, accustomed to choosing between candidates within a party list (Raunio, 2005, 475–476). To explain the incidence of personal voting and attitudes towards preference voting, sociodemographic, cognitive, and affective variables will be tested.

On a general level, focusing on personal voting is highly interesting considering the ongoing debate about the personalization of politics over the past decades. During the era of party democracy, which lasted roughly from the late 19th century to the 1960s, there was a powerful and stable relationship of trust between voters and political parties. A piece of evidence for a stronger bond is that turnout in Finnish parliamentary elections peaked in the 1960s at about 85 percent. Over the later decades, there has been a growing role of persons and personalities in politics at the expense of collective platforms in western democracies (Manin, 1997). Broadly defined, personalization of politics refers to a trend in democratic politics that marks a shift of focus from collective political actors (e.g., political parties, parliaments and governments) to individual actors (e.g., prime ministers, party leaders and individual politicians) (Karvonen, 2010). We can distinguish between at least three types of personalization: institutional, media, and behavioural (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007). Within each of these broad categories, personalization can be characterized, on the one hand, as centralized (greater weight on party leaders, prime ministers, and presidents) and, on the other hand, as decentralized (greater dispersion of influence to individual candidates, members of parliament, and ministers) (Balmas et al., 2014). In this chapter, focus is on "decentralised behavioural personalization of voters" which "implies that voters vote more on the basis of their evaluations of individual candidates (not specifically the party leaders), and less on the basis of their evaluations of parties and their identification with them" (Balmas et al., 2014, 40).

Proportional representation systems that combine party lists with preference voting for individual candidates within lists (open and flexible lists) create opportunities for both personal voting and party voting (Colomer, 2011, 14). People who cast a "personal vote" or engage in "personal voting" evaluate candidates and then cast a vote for a candidate based on who the candidate is, what she has done, or what she might do. Such candidate-centred voters are highly influenced by the personal stands, merits, and attributes of the candidates rather than their party affiliation (Marsh, 2007, 501). Citizens can employ different strategies to reach their voting decisions concerning candidates. Such decision-making strategies may include everything from intricate retrospective evaluations of accomplishments in office and congruence on issue positions to cognitively less-demanding evaluations of personal traits or candidates' sociodemographic background (McDermott, 1998). In contrast, "party vote" or "party voting" refers here to party reputation

being the sole criterion when voters fill in the ballot paper. These party-centred voters are mainly preoccupied with making comparative judgements of parties (e.g., ideological platform, issue positions, and past performance) (Slosar, 2011) or they might rely on simple cues such as party identification acquired through early socialization to decide which party to vote for (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006, 9–12).

The influence of individual candidates on election outcomes in parliamentary democracies is disputed. The question is if, and if so to what extent, there exists a pure personal vote completely independent of a partisan base for electoral support (see Carsey et al., 2017). We have to bear in mind that party-centred evaluations and candidate-centred evaluations are not necessarily in conflict with each other. Most voters probably take both party and candidate considerations into account in their electoral decisions. But the question is one of degree. Candidate evaluations exert a direct influence on party choice if voters decide based on feelings towards candidates alone and a vote for a candidate is also a vote for that candidate's party. Candidate evaluations have an indirect influence on party choice if qualitatively strong individual candidates give a party greater electoral appeal (Rosema, 2006, 474–475).

Another possibility is that personal voting is nested within party voting. In that case, voters do discriminate between different candidates and place emphasis on personal qualities, but only among candidates who stand for tolerable and viable parties (Karvonen, 2010, 51; Marsh et al., 2008, 223–224). The voter's main priority is, thus, to decide which party to support based on the collective reputation of the party while the choice of candidate is of secondary importance. But, voters are not blind to differences within the parties and they might prefer representatives from a certain geographical area or who represents a certain interest group (or faction) formed around a shared interest (Katz, 1986, 86). There is likely a mix of evaluations of personal reputation of the candidate and the collective reputation of the party. This should especially be the case if voters are encouraged to make comparative judgements both between parties and between candidates (as in Finland where each voter must formally cast a preference vote for an individual candidate).

How can we measure whether personal voting dominates party voting? Political scientists have in a variety of ways asked voters to identify what influences their vote choices. One example is to ask the voters the straight question whether party or candidate was the most important factor in their voting decision (Karvonen, 2010; Marsh, 2007). Another question is if they would still have voted for a specific candidate had he or she ran for any of the other parties (Marsh, 2007; van Holsteyn & Andeweg, 2010). Some voter surveys include a battery of survey questions where voters report to what extent different candidate characteristics mattered for their vote choice and based on that it is possible to capture the extent of candidate evaluations in voting decisions (Kestilä-Kekkonen & Söderlund, 2014). Surveys can also ask questions to probe attitudes about the electoral system (Fournier et al., 2011), including the system of preference voting.

There should be significant degrees of heterogeneity amongst voters in terms of which types of considerations dominate electoral decisions and the willingness to cast intraparty preference votes, particularly in an electoral system where both

party and candidate matters. In addition to giving a depiction of how voters think, we certainly also want to explain which types of voters think and behave in a certain way. Various explanations have been offered for inter-individual differences. van Holsteyn and Andeweg (2010) found that low education, low political knowledge, weak party identification, and late deciding predicted why voters put person above party in the Netherlands. Karvonen (2014) observed that middle-aged, less politically knowledgeable and interested, partisan independents, and ideological centrists were more likely to stress candidate over party in the 2007 and 2011 Finnish parliamentary elections. Wauters et al. (2020) presented four theoretical models to explain the propensity to cast a preference vote (since preference voting is optional in several countries). (1) The resource model assumes that voters who possess personal resources such as higher education and political interest are more inclined to familiarize themselves with and choose a specific candidate. (2) The identity model states that voters are more likely to cast preference votes for candidates with whom they identify, for example, based on age and gender. (3) The proximity model implies that people vote for candidates whom they personally know or whom they feel familiar with via media or group affiliations. (4) The instrumental model refers to strategic motives of voters whom under certain conditions want to impact the allocation of seats in favour of certain individual politicians.

Sociodemographic and socioeconomic variables are, of course, often included in models of candidate-based voting. But, such effects appear to depend on the context. For example, the effects of age, gender, education, and occupation on the probability of voting for a person vary widely (negative, positive, and null effects) in the Nordic countries (Bengtsson et al., 2014). Marsh (1985, 372) for his part stressed both electors' capacities and resources (e.g., education) and electors' psychological orientations to politics (e.g., party attachment and political trust) in a review of why some voters are more inclined to express an explicit preference for particular candidates. Hence, a prominent explanation is that voters differ according to their level of political sophistication. People with cognitive limits have a harder time to process information and form opinions about policy and performance of collective actors. It takes less political information or expertise to vote on the basis of candidates' personal characteristics. Party considerations should, therefore, dominate electoral decisions among the politically sophisticated, while the relative weight of candidate considerations should be greater among the less politically sophisticated (Slosar, 2011). Further, party identification largely structures political attitudes and vote choice. It is an affective factor that should influence the relative weight of party and candidate considerations. People who have formed an emotional or habitual attachment to a certain party, and feel represented by this party, are, therefore, more likely to think that party comes first and that candidate choice is secondary (Tverdova, 2011).

We should bear in mind, however, that candidate evaluations in an absolute sense may increase with party identification (and political sophistication). According to Marsh (1985, 372), "voters need to be closely involved with a party before differences within that party and its candidates become sufficiently visible, leading to the use of the preferential vote". Finally, people in the ideological fringes are

likely to endorse collectivist rather than individualist orientations. As with partisanship, candidate considerations should be the weakest among voters whose vote choice is rooted in ideological considerations (Gidengil 2011, 150). This means that the more ideologically extreme are more likely to engage in party voting, while moderates are more candidate-oriented. Left–right ideological extremism has often been included in models of the relative strength of party- and candidate-based voting (Bengtsson et al., 2014; Karvonen, 2014).

Descriptive trends

This section first describes the extent to which Finnish voters 2003–2019 deemed candidates as more important objects of electoral support than parties. Two survey items measure candidate-centred voting. While the first item has been included in all five post-election surveys, the second has only featured in three surveys. The two questions are:

- For your vote choice, which was ultimately the more important, the party or the candidate?
- If your candidate had been running for any of the other parties, would you still have voted for him/her?

Is the act of voting among taking place primarily through the prism of parties or candidates? The relative balance of party and candidate considerations varies among people. Figure 11.1 shows that in 2003 about half of the respondents reported party was more important and the other half that candidate was more important. While the number of candidate-centred voters increased by four percentage points in 2007, a shift occurred in 2011 when 55 percent reported that the party was the more important factor influencing their vote choice. The number of voters saying that candidate was more important has been below 45 percent in the 2010s.

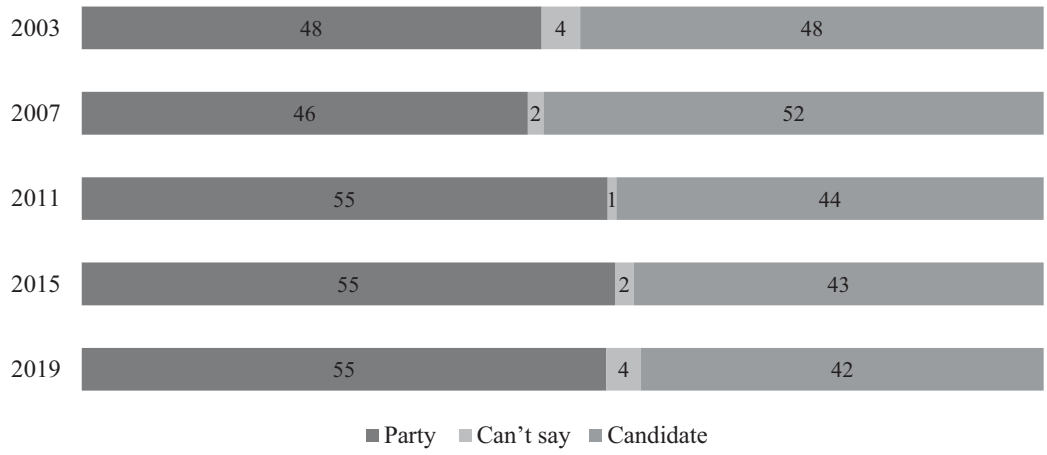

Figure 11.1 Party or candidate more important for vote choice (%).

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

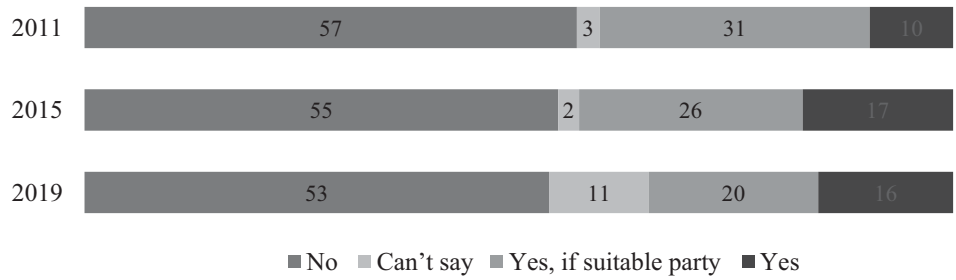

Figure 11.2 Readiness to vote for same candidate if stood for different party (%).
Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

It is generally believed that the meteoric rise of the populist Finns Party (formerly known as the True Finns) in the 2011 "protest" election lead to greater emphasis on parties as collective actors (Karvonen, 2014, 129).

Figure 11.2 includes the second indicator of personal voting, readiness to vote for the same candidate even if she stood for a different party. These numbers affirm that party has been weighted more strongly by a small majority in the 2010s. More than half of the respondents would not have voted for the same candidate if he or she had been running for any of the other parties. A small decrease in the number of party-centred voters, from 57 to 53 percent, can be detected during the 2010s. Twenty to thirty percent would have voted for the same candidate only if the other party would have been deemed acceptable. At most, 17 percent would still have voted for the same candidate irrespective of party label. These results indicate that to a large extent candidate voting is nested within, and so subsidiary to, party voting.

Next the focus is on Finnish voters' attitudes towards the practice of casting preference votes for individual candidates. How content are Finnish voters with the system of preference voting? Two survey items capture electoral system attitudes although one of these has been included three of five post-election surveys and the other question only once. The respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- If a voter so wished, he/she should be able to vote only for a party in parliamentary elections without having to choose a candidate
- Even though voters vote for a party in elections in many other countries, it is important to me to be able to vote for a candidate in parliamentary elections

Finnish voters seem to treasure highly the possibility to vote for an individual candidate. The numbers are relatively stable for the past decade in terms of the first indicator. Over 50 percent have opposed the idea of Finns being able to vote only for a party without having to choose a candidate (see in Figure 11.3). "Strongly disagree" responses are somewhat less frequent and "somewhat disagree" more frequent in 2019 compared to the previous years. In contrast, a minority, about

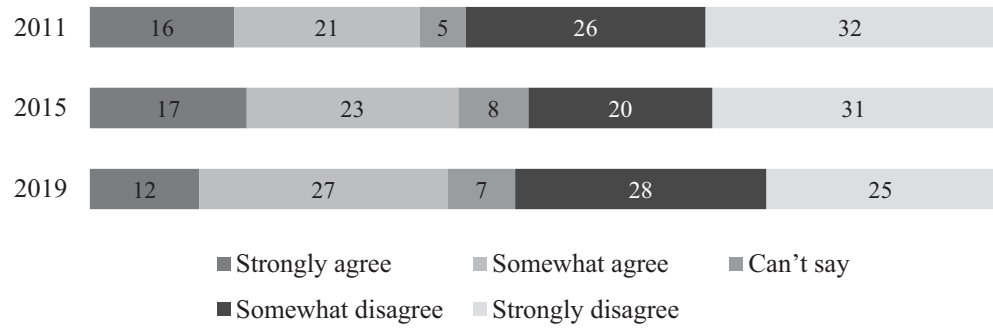

Figure 11.3 Should be able to vote only for party without having to choose candidate (%).
Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

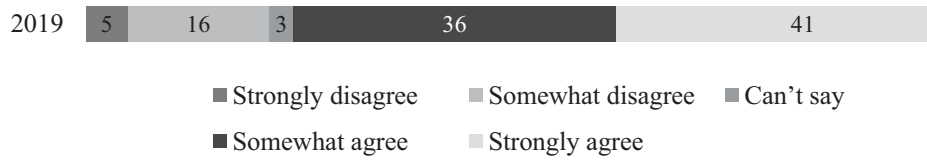

Figure 11.4 Important for me to be able to vote for candidate (%).
Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

four in ten, would not mind if it was voluntary to vote for a candidate. The final item was only included in 2019. While the former question was more about whether people in general would not have to vote for a candidate, the latter asked for how important for the respondent herself to vote for a candidate. For as many as four-fifths it was personally important to be able to vote for a candidate. Thirty-six percent somewhat agreed and 41 percent strongly agreed with the statement (see Figure 11.4). Hence, candidates are central objects of electoral support for Finnish voters.

Explanatory analyses

This section examines who the candidate-centred voters are. The dependent variables – the outcomes that I wish to explain – are identical to those in the descriptive part. By means of multivariate regression analysis, I estimate to what extent various individual-level factors explain the variability in the outcome variables. While there are multiple sources of personalized behaviour, this chapter focuses on a limited set of independent variables. The independent variables are standard variables often included in studies of political behaviour and attitudes: gender, age, education, political interest, party identification, and left-right position. Their effects on candidate-based voting were discussed in the first section of this chapter.

Multinomial regression models are estimated for the two first dependent variables: "party or candidate more important for vote choice" and "readiness to vote for same candidate if stood for different party". Don't know or can't say responses are included in the analyses. Therefore, the first dependent variable has three categories and the second dependent variable has four categories. Multinomial regression is an extension of logistic regression that is used when a categorical outcome variable has more than two values that cannot be meaningfully ordered. Second, ordinal regression models are used to describe the relationships between the explanatory variables and the two dependent variables that measure attitudes towards preference voting for individual candidates. Hence, the dependent variables were recorded on an ordinal scale running from strongly disagree to strongly agree with can't say as a middle response. Data from multiple surveys are pooled and a survey year dummies are added.

I start with examining trends in person-centred voting and willingness to cast preference voting when controlling for individual-level variables. The first dependent variable featured in all five post-election surveys, while the second and third dependent variables were only included in three latest post-election surveys. Since the fourth dependent variable (candidate choice important) was only included in 2019, there is no temporal estimate. Year dummies are included to capture variations in responses over time.

The marginal effects presented in Figure 11.5 show by how many percentage points the likelihood of giving certain responses has increased (above zero) or decreased (below zero) in a given year. The year 2011 is the reference category to

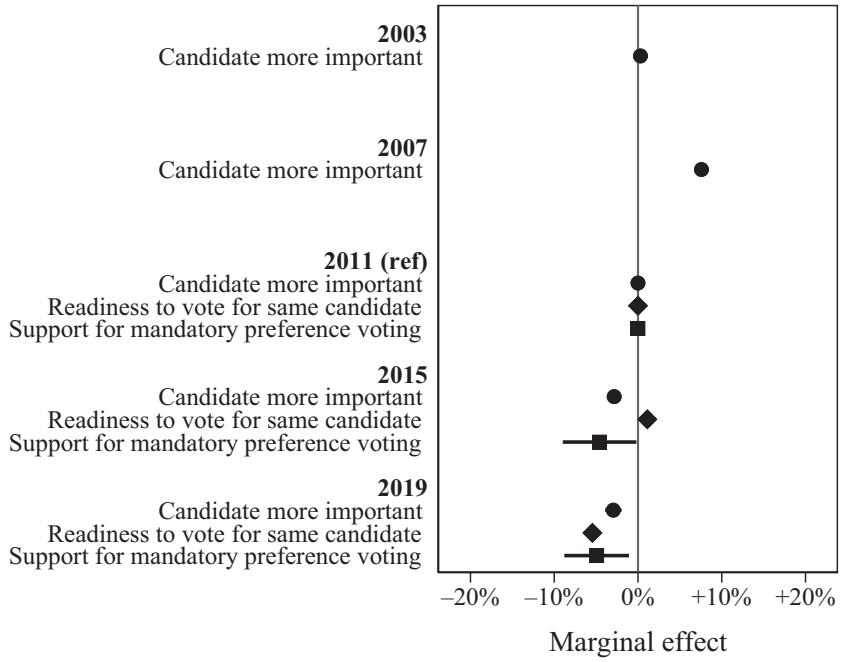

Figure 11.5 Marginal effects of year.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

which the other years are compared. The first set of marginal effects (solid circles) indicate the predicted incidence of reporting that candidate was more important than party. Finnish voters were in 2007 most likely to report they thought candidate was more important than party for their vote choice. In 2015 and 2019, party was perceived to be more important than candidate for their vote choice although the change is only three percentage points compared to 2011. Second, readiness to vote for the same candidate (solid diamonds) combines two responses: would have voted if the candidate ran for a suitable party and would have vote irrespective of party. The likelihood to follow the candidate (relative to the outcome "would not have voted for the same candidate") increased only slightly in 2015 and then decreased by six percentage points in 2019 relative to 2011. Third, support for mandatory preference voting (solid squares) combines somewhat agreed and strongly agreed. The likelihood of being positive to preference voting is about five percentage points lower in 2015 and 2019 compared to 2011. To summarise, voters appear to have become more party-oriented in the 2010s.

I begin by looking at the two first dependent variables for voting behaviour. The average marginal effects for the individual-level variables are reported in Figures 11.6 and 11.7. Each independent variable has a reference category to which the other categories are compared. In terms of the first sociodemographic variable, there does not appear to be any gender effects. In a previous study of candidate

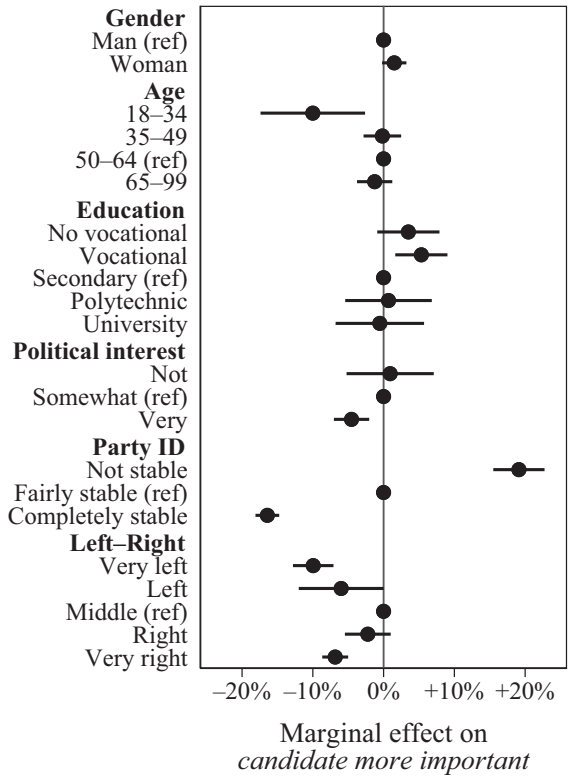

Figure 11.6 Predicting whether candidate is more important for vote choice.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

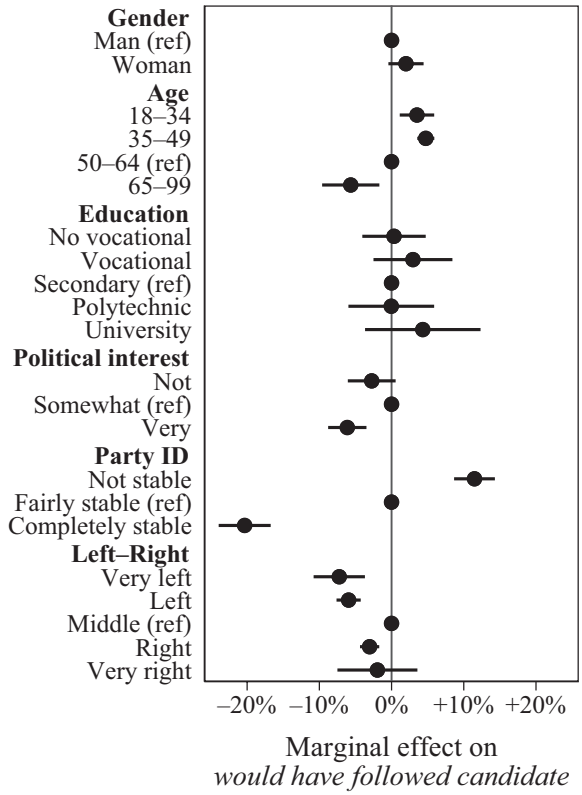

Figure 11.7 Predicting readiness to vote for same candidate if stood for different party.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

supply and success in Finland, register data revealed that over the past two decades around 40 percent of the nominated candidates have been women, and the share of elected women candidates has increased from 37 to 47 percent (von Schoultz et al., 2020, 107). The "identity model" (Wauters et al., 2020) would lead us to believe that women would be likely to cast a preference vote for a candidate of the same gender. However, here I find no evidence that women have been more candidate-centred than men (and thus being potentially more apt to support women candidates).

Age does not have a consistent independent effect on the two outcomes regarding candidate being more important than party and readiness to vote for the same candidate even if she stood for a different party. Those in the youngest age group were less likely to vote for a candidate rather than a party, while there were no differences between the remaining age groups. In contrast, people under 50 years were more likely to report they would have voted for the same candidate had he or she ran for another party (Figure 11.7). A likely explanation regarding the latter finding is that older voters have been socialized into voting for a particular party over the decades, particularly in the previous century when the parties and the social groups they represented were more salient in the minds of the voters. Older voters who develop a sense of party identification become habitual voters who

are more likely to vote for the same party in sequential elections (Dassonneville, 2017). Hence, older voters remain loyal to the same party instead of supporting an individual candidate irrespective of party label.

Formal education does not explain candidate voting: the confidence intervals for all but one of the estimates cross the zero line (i.e., statistically insignificant). Subjective political interest is an alternative measure for political sophistication since education does not always lead to political engagement: educated people can be apolitical and less educated people can be highly engaged in politics. Political interest does explain the relative weight of candidate and party considerations. Among politically interested Finnish citizens, party considerations appear to outweigh candidate considerations. Such political sophisticates are thought to have the ability to process cognitively demanding considerations relating to policy and performance. Party-centred voters have been recognized to be mainly concerned about party characteristics (e.g., ideological platforms, issue positions, and past performance) (Slosar, 2011).

The results show that strong party identifiers (i.e., stable party identification) report that party is more important than candidate. As pointed out in the theoretical section, partisans have formed an emotional or habitual attachment to a certain party and feel represented by this party. In contrast, political independents with a weak party identification regard candidate as more important than party. The latter make independent political decisions with less emphasis on cues provided by social reference groups. They are, as expected, also more likely to respond they would have voted for the same candidate if he or she would have been on the list of another party. Political independents who engage in candidate-based voting are generally considered to more likely to defect across party lines (Karvonen, 2004, 210; McAllister, 2007, 584). Data for Finland already in the beginning of the 1990s showed that voters who reported that candidate was of primary concern were more volatile than party-centred voters (Pesonen et al., 1993, 80–82).

Ideological left-right self-placement also has a substantive and significant effect when it comes to explaining object of electoral choice (Figure 11.6) and willingness to disregard the candidate's party affiliation (Figure 11.7). Groups on the ideological fringes – particularly those to the left – can be expected to adhere more to collective values and ideological considerations should dominate their electoral decisions. Voters in the middle of the ideological left-right scale are most likely to be candidate-centred, as previously demonstrated (see Karvonen, 2014, 132).

The estimates from the analysis of the two final dependent variables are presented in Figures 11.8 and 11.9. These dependent variables measure support for (mandatory) preference voting and thinking that candidate choice is important. Few of the estimates are statistically different from zero, however. Women were less enthusiastic about mandatory preference voting than men. Age has the strongest effect in terms of attitudes towards preference voting. The willingness to cast a preference vote was strongest among the oldest respondents and weakest among the youngest respondents. Older voters have manifestly over the years become familiar with the party supply and candidate supply and thus have developed more

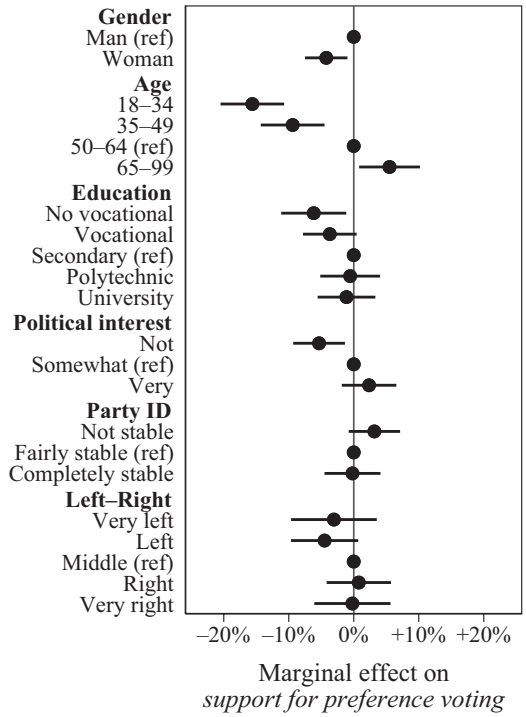

Figure 11.8 Predicting support for mandatory preference voting.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

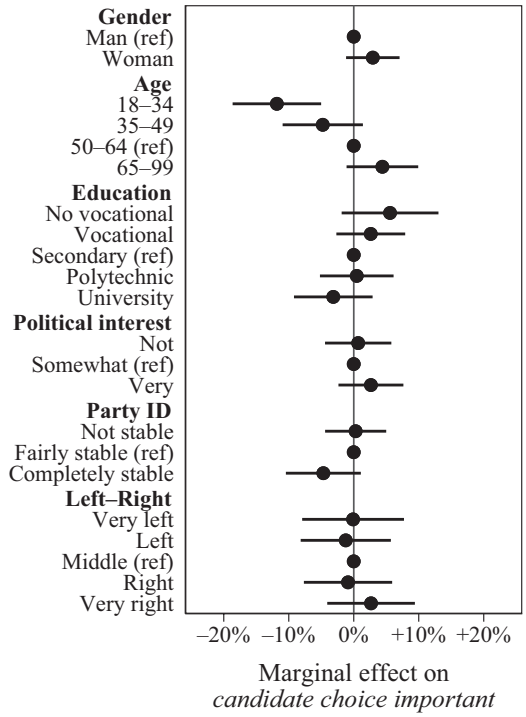

Figure 11.9 Predicting candidate choice is personally important.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2003–2019.

positive attitudes of the present electoral system with preference voting. Those with lowest education and those with lowest political interest supported to lesser extent mandatory preference voting, but by and large there are no systematic differences. Ideological self-placement does neither matter in terms of willingness to cast preference votes.

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to describe and explain party- and candidate-based voting in Finland. Both intraparty and interparty competition are central features of Finnish electoral politics. Formally, the voters cast their votes directly for a candidate and indirectly for a party because the intraparty preference vote is pooled at the party level to determine the allocation of seats among parties. It is therefore of little surprise that the results presented in this chapter showed that both party and candidate are relevant in the voters' decision-making processes. In the 2010s, 55 percent reported party was more important than candidate in their voting decision and roughly the same amount would not have vote for the same candidate if he or she had been running for another party. Finland does not deviate much from Ireland, another candidate-centred system where different measures have suggested that around 40 percent of the voters are candidate-centred (Marsh, 2007, 520).

With the declining importance of party, and increasing personalization of electoral choice, voters have become increasingly likely to emphasize candidate choice and be more responsive to personal attributes of individual candidates in the process of forming voting preferences. On a general level, this study has contributed to the assessment of the adequacy of the personalization thesis by examining the relative importance of candidate considerations in vote choice over time. Yet, a limitation of this chapter was the relatively short time frame, from 2003 to 2019, and therefore, it cannot giver a full account of whether candidate evaluations have come to exert greater influence on vote choice over time. Karvonen (2014, 129) did, however, notice that from 1983 until 2007, "there was a steady, albeit by no means dramatic, increase in the share of those who reported that candidate weighed more heavily than party", but that "the 2011 election brought about a change in this regard" mainly due to the rise of the populist Finns Party. This study affirms that voters had become even more party-centred by 2019, although it does not represent a dramatic shift. Party is undeniably still a very important factor in accounting for vote choice in parliamentary democracies in general as well as in Finland despite the latter's candidate-centred electoral system.

At the individual level, the relative weight of party and candidate considerations vary between different types of voters. In particular, party identification and ideological (left-right) extremeness best explained why party considerations dominate candidate considerations among some people. Voters who had developed a stable party identification, and those in the ideological fringes, tended to emphasize party, probably due to their heightened awareness of parties' policy positions and performance record. These findings are by no means self-evident as party identifiers and ideologically aware have been theorized to be more likely to process information

about candidates (see Marsh, 1985) and empirical support has been mixed when comparing effects on the probability of voting for a candidate in different countries (e.g., Bengtsson et al., 2014). In this study, politically interested respondents were as well more likely to emphasize the importance party and less likely to switch parties (had the candidate been nominated by another party). The findings correspond to the theoretical prediction that the more informed a person is, the more clear and stable preferences this person holds. This is also in line with the presumption that voters lacking knowledge and information give less weight to ideology and performance and more weight to personality (Slosar, 2011). Younger respondents, who are less likely to have formed an affective bond to a certain party, were also more likely to follow a candidate to another party.

Finally, even though the party brand still matters, Finnish voters still treasure the ability to cast a preference vote for an individual candidate. Particularly older voters are in favour of preference voting. The popularity of the current electoral system is expected given that preference voting has been applied for more than hundred years in Finland. Considering the current debate – or rather the lack thereof – the open list proportional representation system is likely to be around for many years to come and that there will be a mix of party- and candidate-centredness both among candidates and voters.

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12 How to Find a Needle in a Haystack

Which Candidate Characteristics Matter for Voters' Choice of Candidate?

Theodora Helimäki and Åsa von Schoultz

Introduction

In Finnish elections, votes are cast for individual candidates. The system has even been described as one of the most candidate centered in the world (Raunio, 2005). The mandatory choice of a candidate has a substantial impact on the dynamics of Finnish politics and on the incentive structure of politicians. It also has had bearing on how voters view politics, and on the process of their vote choices (see previous Chapter 11). In this chapter, we seek to respond to the following research question: *which candidate characteristics are the most important for voters when forming their vote choice; and how does the choice of candidate vary across different groups of voters?* While these questions are central in many elections, they are particularly relevant in open-list electoral systems, where the choices of voters determine which candidates become elected. Understanding the driving forces behind voters' choice of candidate can provide better insights into the kind of candidates who are electorally successful, as well as enrich our perceptions of voters' electoral behavior.

Theoretically, we outline what previous research demonstrates about the mechanism behind voters' choice of candidate, with a specific focus on the type of information they tend to rely on. Empirically we explore voters' self-reported motivations for their candidate choice, i.e., the traits that voters themselves report taking into account when deciding which candidate to support, and how this has developed over the course of the new millennium. We further present an analysis of patterns in actual candidate choices and do so from a variety of perspectives including resemblance voting in terms of age and gender, ideological proximity voting, and voting based on locality and political experience. We also explore how these types of candidate choices are related to voters' background, political sophistication and ideological stands. These analyzes of candidate choices are made possible by a unique dataset matching voter survey data from the Finnish national election studies in 2011 and 2019 (see Technical appendix) with register data on candidates and data from the two major Finnish Voting Advice Applications (VAA) from these same elections.

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Candidate choice in a complex electoral setting

In candidate-oriented electoral systems, where the votes are cast for individual candidates, voters and their behavior have a direct impact on the level of descriptive and substantive representation. It is the decision of voters that determines the composition of parliament, while parties only have power over the supply of candidates that voters have to choose from. But how do voters decide which candidate to vote for when confronted with a multitude of options?

Theoretically, the literature on how voters decide has long established that voters rely on cognitive shortcuts to assist them in their electoral choice (Popkin, 1991; Mondak, 1993). Such cues are believed to not only increase voters' cognitive efficiency and to help them overcome limitations in information processing and lack of political knowledge (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006) but also reduce the time and effort devoted to deciding how to vote. Cues can come in different forms and be related to the ideological schemata of politics (Conover & Feldman, 1986), but they can also be related to candidates' various characteristics or anchoring in different segments of society. Based on such strategies voters tend to narrow down the pool of candidates from which the actual choice is made. Based on this "consideration set" (Wilson, 2008; Eliaz & Spiegler, 2011; Oscarsson & Rosema, 2019), i.e., their personalized list of viable alternatives, they have an easier task to identify a suitable candidate.

The Finnish electoral system provides voters with a highly complex choice set-up, not the least in comparison to systems that allow voters to cast a vote for a collective party list, without identifying a specific candidate (André et al., 2012; Marsh, 1985). In the 2019 Finnish parliamentary election, there were as many as 2,468 nominated candidates, which equals an average of 12.3 competing candidates per available seat. In the largest electoral district of Uusimaa close to 500 candidates competed over 36 seats. The large number of candidates is indicative of how parties benefit from fielding as many candidates as possible, since each candidate, even those without a realistic chance of becoming elected, will contribute to the total vote of the party, which determines the proportions of seats distributed.

Voters in such candidate- and information-rich contexts are primarily expected to rely on simple cues, on shortcuts of information that are easily available and processed (Lau & Redlawsk. 2006). This is one argument for assuming that voters under these contexts use easily detectable personal attributes of candidates, such as gender, age, looks, and connections to the local setting as shortcuts to an informed vote. While the former works via stereotypes based on physical characteristics, the latter revolves around assumption about candidates as agents of local interests (knowing the area and its interests). In a setting where voters are confronted with a multitude of alternatives, political experience is also often applied as a voting cue (Tavits, 2010). Ideology and stands on policy issues are, however, generally believed to be of lesser importance due to the high costs in terms of cognitive processing this type of information involves. It is, however, plausible that the expanding usage of VAAs has made these vote tactics easier to apply and, thus, made them also more common (Christensen et al., 2021).

When looking at previous empirical research on candidate choice, it becomes clear that it is dominated by elections in single-member districts, where the number of candidates running tends to be few and where the choice of candidate is intertwined with the choice of party. One obvious reason for the relative lack of attention to candidate choice in Proportional Representation (PR) electoral systems is that these systems tend to be party oriented and that the choice of candidate is considered as less relevant. Also, most PR electoral systems use ranked party lists, where the possibility for voters to change the rank order is limited. This being said, candidate choices in multimember district are not fully ignored, and much research has been devoted to gender-based voting, in particular, to women voting for women (Giger et al., 2014; Holli & Wass, 2010; McElroy & Marsh, 2010). There is also a growing line of research approaching the question indirectly, from the perspective of vote-earning attributes of candidates (see next Chapter 13). These studies have demonstrated that experience (Dahlgaard, 2016), connectedness to the local community (Put & Maddens, 2018; Shugart et al., 2005), a reputation outside of politics (Arter, 2014), as well as candidates' looks (Berggren et al., 2010) and ideological positions (Isotalo et al., 2020) matter for how many votes they receive (the latter three of these studies are conducted in the Finnish context).

In the empirical analyses in this chapter, we put special emphasis on candidate voting in terms of resemblance voting and the importance of ideological proximity. Resemblance voting refers to the voter identifying with their chosen candidate on the base of a shared characteristic. In these instances, it is common to make references to descriptive representation (Pitkin, 1967). In the context of candidate choice, a voter emphasizing descriptive representation most likely opts for choosing his or her candidate based on certain candidate sociodemographic characteristics, such as age or gender, rather than based on the policies which candidates push for. The other option is to rely on substantive representation (ibid.), which, in turn, involves relying on ideology and issue stances when selecting one's candidate of choice. Generally, ideology or issue stands have been perceived as a challenging vote strategy in electoral contexts with many candidates at display. The growing popularity of VAAs (Borg & Koljonen, 2020), which in the Finnish context are generally based on candidates' individual responses has however made ideological positions or stands on specific policy issues more easily available for voters, and research points towards the fact that candidates' ideological positions matter for how electorally successful they are (Isotalo et al., 2020). Moreover, it has been shown that voters take the recommendations of VAAs into account when deciding which candidate to vote for (Christensen et al., 2021).

Previous literature has found strong linkages between knowledge and the use of heuristics – voters who have higher knowledge about politics more often opt for substantive representation compared to voters with lower levels of knowledge about politics (Dassonneville & McAllister, 2018). There are, however, some exceptions to this, especially when it comes to voting for women candidates, with same-gender voting being more common among politically sophisticated women voters (Sanbonmatsu, 2003, Helimäki et al., 2023). Also, it has been argued that minority members will prefer to vote for someone of the same origin as themselves (Mansbridge, 1999; Sobolewska et al., 2018).

Motivations for candidate choice

One way to understand what the Finnish voters take into account when forming their vote choices is to look into their self-reported motivations regarding which traits mattered for their choice, as well as follow how these motivations have developed over time. The Finnish National election study has included the question "How important were the following for your choice of candidate?" with a list of different vote-relevant traits of the candidates to be ranked on a 5-point scale (not at all important–decisive for my decision). The Finnish National election study has been carried out since 2003 and, thus, gives us the ability to make a two-decade comparison of voter attitudes and see if there are trend changes over time.

By combining the data from all available electoral years (2003–2019), we are able to establish what were the most important self-perceived factors for choosing a candidate. For the purposes of this study, we have concentrated on six candidate attributes – the candidate's party affiliation, their age, previous experience in politics, gender, as well as their locality. The motivation to present these specific attributes is that they are well in line with aspects highlighted in theory on candidate vote earning. We focus on the response category "it was decisive for my choice". We believe this is the best measure because voters tend to assign some importance to a large variety of attributes, and if the voter feels that the trait has been of decisive importance, they have most likely had a substantial impact on their vote choice.

As can be seen in Figure 12.1, the self-reported importance of attributes indicates that voters take the party into account when deciding which candidate to vote for,

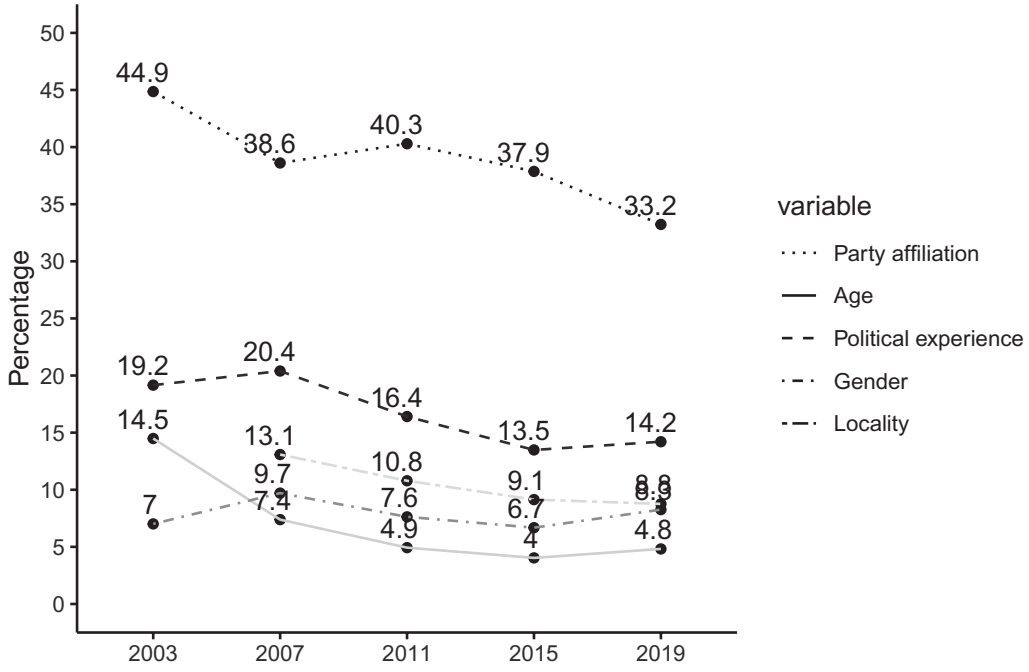

Figure 12.1 Candidate attributes serving as decisive factor for voters' choice of candidate (2003–2019).

Sources: Finnish National Election Study 2003-2019.

with party affiliation being reported as the most important of all characteristics (even in comparison to the ones omitted in this particular analysis). Even though there has been an 11-percentage point decline in perceived importance of party affiliation, this is still an important observation to make, especially regarding the candidate-centered features of the electoral system. It appears as if many voters are well aware of the central position of parties in actual decision-making in parliament, where there is a high level of intraparty voting cohesion, particularly among the government coalition parties (Pajala, 2013). Also, the fact that votes given to individual candidates are pooled at the party level and the total number of votes candidates running for a list attract determine the amount of seats allocated to each party, makes parties highly relevant actors to take into account when voting (Cox, 1993).

The second most important candidate attribute (for 19 percent of the respondents at its peak in 2003) is the previous political experience of candidates although this trait appears to have lost some of its value over time. The value of political experience is also clearly visible when studying the electoral support of individual candidates. The most well-known indicator of experience-related voting is the widely recognized incumbency advantage, which is clearly present also in Finnish politics (Kotakorpi et al., 2017). Another distinct indicator of experience related voting is the fact that a candidate with political experience from local politics tends to have an electoral advantage (see Chapter 13).

One of the attributes highlighted in research on candidate choice is local roots, or the candidate's connection to the area in which voters reside (Shugart et al., 2005). Even though voters have to vote in the districts they reside in, and most candidates tend to run for election in the district in which they reside (von Schoultz, 2018), some of these districts are large, and otherwise attractive candidates might live in a different municipality compared to the voter. The importance of this trait seems to have steadily decreased by a few percent each year, dropping to only nine percent of voters reporting it as a decisive factor in their vote choice. Considering that candidates tend to receive a significantly higher support within their home municipality compared to outside of it (Put et al., 2020), locality is most likely being taken into account at an unconscious level for many voters, and not included as a deliberate and emphasized part of their vote calculus.

The two least important candidate attributes included in Figure 12.1 are gender and age, which indicates that Finnish voters put lower emphasis to descriptive compared to substantive representation. The importance of the age of the candidate has seen a sharp ten percentage points decline in the last two decades, making it the least important trait for voters, with only four to five percent of respondents reporting it as decisive in the last three parliamentary elections. While voters themselves do not report age being a particularly important factor in their vote choice, previous research has noted a distinct tendency for voters to opt for a candidate at the age between 40 and 50 (von Schoultz et al., 2020), and for candidates to be the most successful at the same age (Bengtsson, 2016). This can, however, be a by-product of other candidate characteristics, such as political experience and competence. The importance of candidate gender has also stayed relatively steady throughout the years, changing ever so slightly every year. Although under ten

percent of the voters report this trait as decisive for their choice, there has been an increase in women being elected to parliament without a related proportional increase of women candidates running for office (Isotalo et al., 2019; Pikkala, 2020).

Overall, Finnish voters come across as prioritizing the substantive over descriptive representation, with the two most important candidate traits being party affiliation and political experience. This is interesting given that the Finnish electoral system is more complex and information-intensive, compared to many other electoral systems, which would theoretically encourage the voters to seek easier information cues in forming their decision. While it is important to note that the descriptive findings reported here are self-reporting and, thus, subjective evaluations, the results are encouraging from the perspective of the electoral system, as it appears that voters are not discouraged by the vast amount of information, and at least seem to stay informed about current political issues.

Explanatory analyses

To get a better understanding of voters' choice of candidate, we will explore in detail the voters' actual candidate choices. Here, we use a unique combination of voter survey data with information about candidates. This combined dataset allows us to search for underlying patterns in vote choices, and to study resemblance and ideological proximity voting. The primary approach we take is to explore the alignment between voters and candidates, i.e., we are interested in who votes for the same type of candidate as themselves in terms of age and gender, locality and ideology. As an additional perspective, we zoom in on which types of voters opt for a politically experienced candidate.

The 2011 and 2019 datasets were chosen for this analysis because those two years contained the questions to respondents about which candidate they voted for, which allowed us to pair voters with the respective candidates from the registry data, giving us background information on the candidates.[1] Moreover, by combining candidate VAA responses, we were able to determine and match voter and candidate ideological positions on the left-right scale.[2] After combining the data and matching the voters who disclosed their selected candidate, we end up with 854 observations for 2011 and 2019. All analyses are run as logistical regressions. Each model's odds ratios are displayed within the text and the detailed results can be found in the chapter appendix.

All models have the same set of six independent variables, chosen to allow us to analyze differences in behaviors across groups of voters. These variables are age, gender, education, political interest, political knowledge, party identification. The gender variable is dichotomous, and the odds ratio displayed in the figure is for women. There are five age groups both for the voters and candidates (18–29; 30–44; 45–59; 60–74; 75+). The youngest age group (18–29) is used as a reference age group in all models. The next two variables concern the education of the voters and are displayed as dichotomous depending on whether they have received secondary or tertiary education as their highest education. The interest in politics is again a dichotomous variable, where the four-point categorical variable has been

transformed using the lower two categories as not interested in politics, and the top two as interested in politics. The knowledge of politics variable is a composite variable. In the surveys, respondents are asked political questions – e.g., who is the prime minister or president, with differing difficulty. Because in 2011 there were seven questions and in 2019 only five, the averages of these scores have been transformed to a proportional variable ranging from 0 to 1. The feeling of closeness to a party variable has three levels – not close (0), somewhat close (1) and very close (2). These are treated as separate groups of the variable. The left-right self-placement has been brought down to a five-point scale in which one stands for most left and five for most right self-placement.

We are aware that, in some instances, the similarity-voting result might be happenstance, as the voters prioritize different aspects of the candidate in their choice (for instance, there is an overall 50-50 probability for voting for the same gender as oneself, even if that is not prioritized). However, with the current type of data, it is not possible to deepen our understanding of the decision-making mechanisms voters apply. Through this type of self-reported similarity voting analysis, however, we can see what trends emerge, and what might be the mechanism applied when the voters choose their representative. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that the sample is slightly skewed, because those who remember whom they voted for are most likely the voters who are used to voting for the same candidate or recognized the candidate, for example, through their celebrity status, incumbency or other personal relation. We would additionally like to highlight that we are looking at correlations here and do not strive to prove causality.

Same-gender voting

We start off by presenting the results for the analysis of same-gender voting. Here we are concentrating on descriptive representation, i.e., our dependent variable is a dichotomous variable displaying if the voter engaged in same-gender voting or not. A clear majority, 67 percent of the respondents, voted for a candidate of the same gender. As can be seen in Figure 12.2, there are three characteristics related to same-gender voting – the voter's interest in politics, feeling close to a party, and their ideological placement. If the voters report themselves as interested in politics, they are highly likely to vote for a candidate of their own gender. The same applies to left-leaning voters. However, the strongest and most positive effect can be found among voters who identify with a party. The effect of gender is not included in the figure due to a very high odds ratio (see regression table in the chapter appendix). It should be noted, however, that this effect is not significant. The finding for political interest and party identification suggest that politically aware voters are more inclined to opt for a candidate of the same gender as themselves. It should, however, be noted that same-gender voting, due to historical differences in women's and men's presence at the political arena, can have different underlying motivations. For a more detailed analyses of same-gender voting across women and men and how this is affected by ideological positions, see Helimäki et al. (2023). These

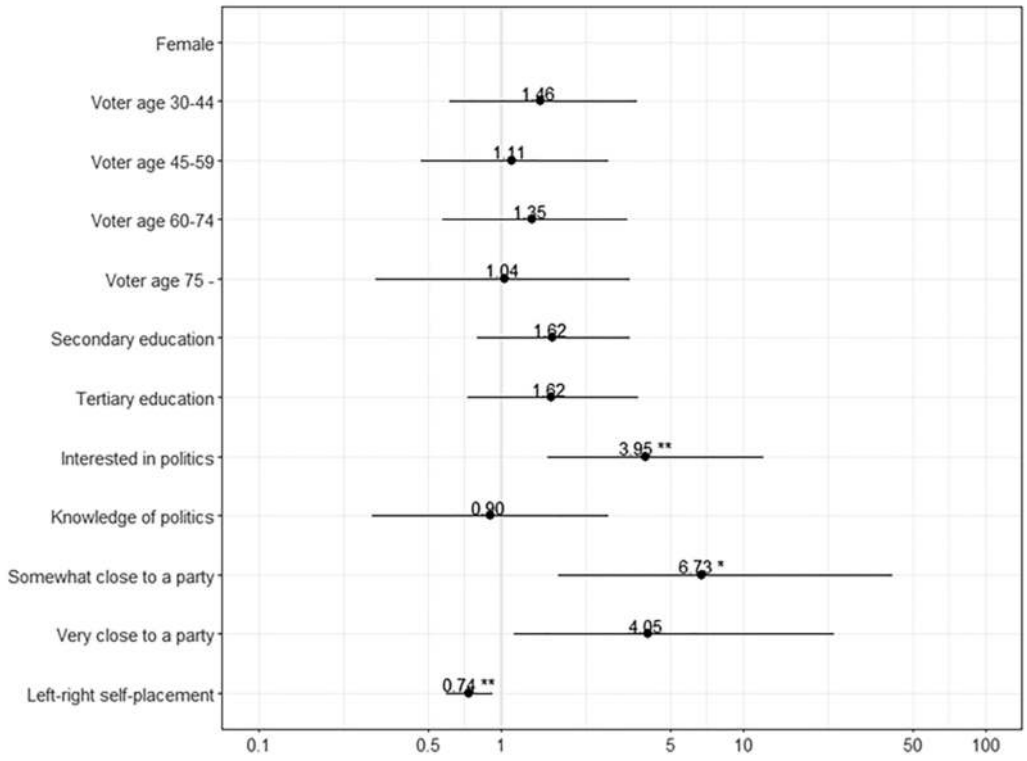

Figure 12.2 Odds ratios for voters who voted for a candidate of the same gender as themselves.

Sources: Finnish National Election Study 2011 and 2019, Ministry of Justice and Statistics Finland.

analyses point towards women to the left being more inclined to vote for women candidates, while women to the right of the ideological space tend to place their vote for man candidates.

Same-age voting

The second analysis of descriptive representation focuses on same-age voting. Similar to the previous analysis of same-gender voting, we have created a dichotomous variable combining the age groups of voters and candidates. Thirty percent of the voters cast a vote for a candidate of their own age, while a clear majority of 70 percent voted for a candidate from a different age group. It, hence, appears as if same-age representation is considered less important to Finnish voters, compared to same-gender representation. A distinct pattern is revealed in Figure 12.3 with the two age groups being most likely to vote for a candidate of their own age being 30–44 and 45–59. As noted before, this is most likely an effect of people's inclination to vote for a candidate between 40 and 50 – an age at which many candidates are likely to be perceived as experienced, while still ambitious. This finding supports earlier research on the matter (von Schoultz et al., 2020).

Another interesting result of the same age-group voting is that the feeling of the voter of being very close to a party also increases same-age voting. It is not an

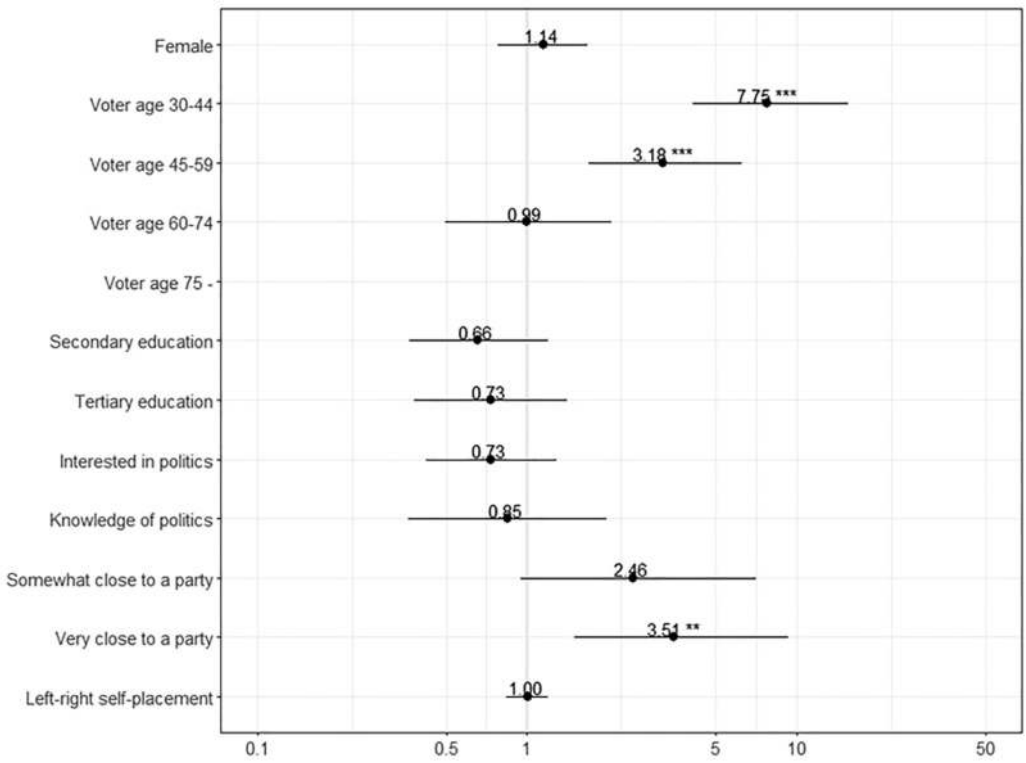

Figure 12.3 Odds ratios for voters voting for a candidate of the same age as themselves.
Sources: Finnish National Election Study 2011 and 2019, Ministry of Justice and Statistics Finland.

ideologically bound result as we see that the ideological stances are of almost no effect and not of significance. More likely this points to the notion that strongly party affiliated (usually older age groups) have been loyal to the same parties and candidates and continue supporting them.

Locality voting

Earlier in this chapter our presentation of voters' subjective evaluations of the importance of various candidate attributes suggests that the locality of candidates is not particularly important for voters. This was a bit puzzling considering that research on the distribution of candidates' personal electoral support points towards candidates receiving large shares of their support in or close by the municipality in which they reside (Shugart et al., 2005; Put et al., 2020). To analyze patterns in voters' actual behavior related to these considerations, we have combined the municipalities of residence of both candidates and voters to create a dichotomous variable indicating whether they reside in the same municipality within the district they voted in. The analysis shows that an overwhelming majority of voters (83 percent) voted for a candidate from the same municipality as themselves.[3] It hence appears as if local roots, or a local anchoring, is highly important for voters when searching for a candidate to vote for, but that it implicit and not

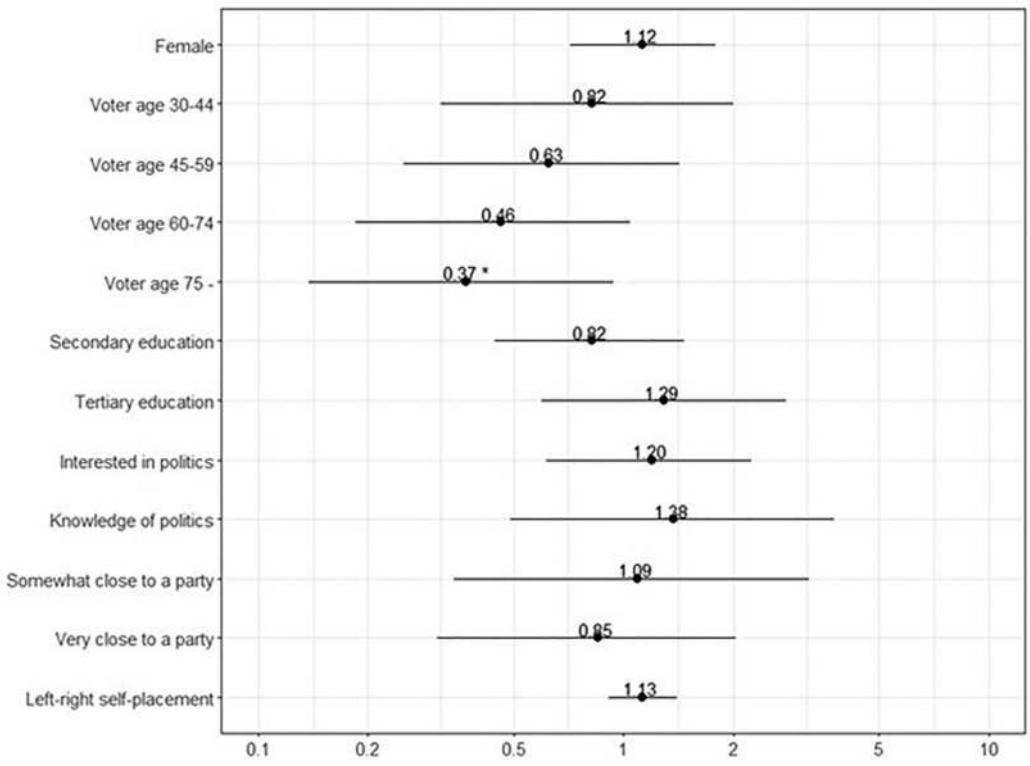

Figure 12.4 Odds ratios for voters who voted for a candidate from the same municipality.
Sources: Finnish National Election Study 2011 and 2019, Ministry of Justice and Statistics Finland.

something that is actively considered. Voters hence tend to opt for a candidate who resides in the same municipality as themselves and might even limit their choice to local candidates. However, this is not a criterion which is emphasized when they are asked about the explicit motivations for their choice. Our analysis of variation across different groups of voters indicates that there is little systematic variation in behavior. The only significant effect in Figure 12.4 is found for voters aged 75 and above, who are less inclined to vote for a local candidate.

Proximity voting (ideology)

Substantive representation seems to matter for candidate choices, at least according to the voter's self-reported importance (as shown above), where the party affiliation of the candidate was the most important attribute. Naturally, party affiliation can also be related to feelings of identification, but the choice of party tends to be strongly connected to policy platforms and ideological self-placement. Another way of measuring substantive representation is to explore the extent to which voters cast a vote for an ideologically proximate candidate, by comparing voters' ideological positions with that of the candidate they voted for. In order to do this, we use voters' self-placement on the left-right scale and compare this to candidates'

ideological positions, inferred from their responses to VAAs.[4] The candidates' responses to VAAs have been measured as a scaled variable reflecting deviation from the mean value. Therefore, the voters' responses have also been transformed into a scaled variable. Taking the quarterly dispersions, three categories of median left and right were created to group the mean voters and candidates, and the more strongly left- and right-oriented voters and candidates. By matching the stances of these groups, we were able to create the dependent variable of matching ideological stances. As it turns out slightly more than half of the voters (55 percent) voted for a candidate matching his or hers positions in terms of left-right ideology, whereas the remaining 45 percent opted for a candidate outside their quarter of the ideological space.

From the results in Figure 12.5, it can be noted that the second youngest age group, 30–44 year-old voters, is less likely to vote for a candidate with the same ideological position as themselves. A potential explanation for this finding is that these relatively young voters find the left-right ideological space less relevant compared to older age groups and rather make their vote choices based on the GAL-TAN scale. Competing explanations are that younger voters are less skilled in identifying an ideologically proximate candidate, or that they simply make their vote choice based on other factors, for example, related to descriptive representation. What is very notable is the effect of voters' feeling of being close to a

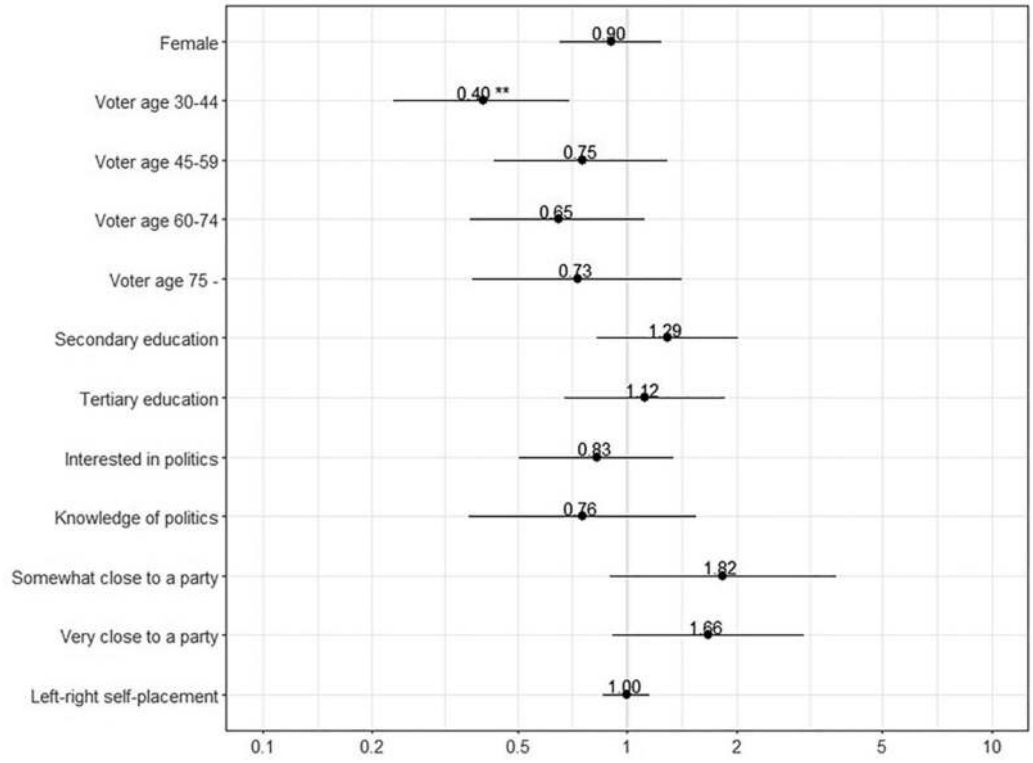

Figure 12.5 Odds ratios for voters voting for an ideologically proximate candidate.

Sources: Finnish National Election Study 2011 and 2019, Ministry of Justice and Statistics Finland.

particular party. Here, we find that voters who are close to a party are more likely to vote for an ideologically proximate candidate. This is perhaps not surprising as usually the party represents a certain ideological stance. Even though there is some dispersion within parties in the Finnish political landscape, parties are still ideologically relatively coherent (Isotalo et al., 2020). It could, thus, be said that party identification assists voters in identifying an ideologically proximate candidate.

Political experience-based voting

The last analysis covers voting for politically experienced candidates. Voters reported the candidates' previous experience in politics as being one of relevantly high importance in their vote choices and, therefore, it is important to investigate it separately. In this instance, our analysis differs slightly from the previous ones, as there can be no matches made between the voter and the candidate with regard to political experience. The dependent variable of this analysis is, therefore, whether the voter cast a vote for an incumbent MP or not.

Slightly more than one-third (36 percent) of the voters who reported the candidate they voted for in our data set, cast a vote for an incumbent member of parliament. As can be seen from Figure 12.6, there is a strong age effect in incumbency voting. The higher the age of the voter, the more likely he or she is to vote for

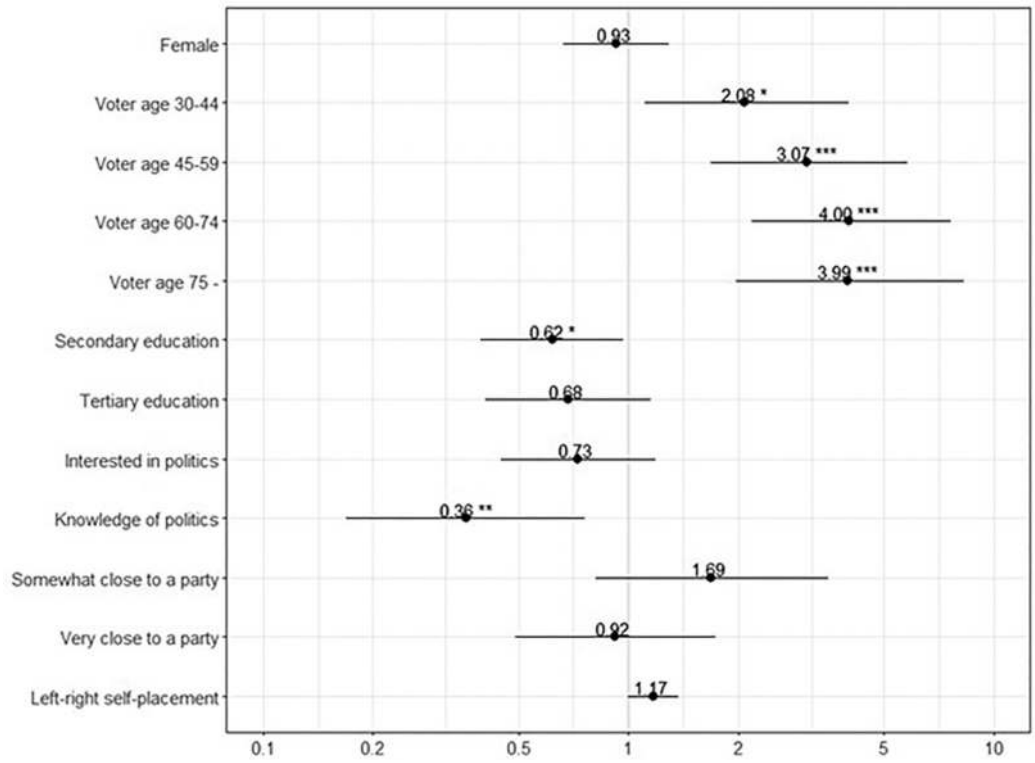

Figure 12.6 Odds ratios for voters who vote for incumbent candidates.

Sources: Finnish National Election Study 2011 and 2019, Ministry of Justice and Statistics Finland.

an incumbent legislator. This is in line with the expectation of older voters being more prone to vote for the same candidate from one election to the other – if they have been successful before, it is easier to choose the same candidate once again. Interestingly, education has the reverse effect – if the voter has secondary or tertiary education, they are less likely to vote for an incumbent. However, only the secondary education is of significance here, so no firm conclusions can be drawn. Also, a similarly interesting effect can be seen in relation to voters' level of political knowledge – those who score higher on political knowledge are less likely to vote for an incumbent. Combined with the findings about education, it could be, therefore, said that being more versed in politics and having more knowledge about the world and society make people less likely to vote for an incumbent and instead choose less established politicians, perhaps as a desired change to the current status quo of politics.

Conclusions

The Finnish open-list PR electoral system where votes are cast for individual candidates offers a unique opportunity to study patterns in voters' choice of candidate. Due to the multitude of candidates and information to be acquired to make an informed choice, voters often opt for information shortcuts related to the candidate's characteristics in order to single out the candidates of interest, and in this process, descriptive attributes can be of great assistance. In this chapter, we have analyzed these candidate choices in two different ways. First, we have presented which candidate characteristics voters' themselves see as important when deciding which candidate to cast a vote for, and how this has developed over the course of the last five Finnish elections. We have further analyzed some of the most prominently used candidate characteristics to investigate what type of voters opt for candidates of the same gender, the same age-group, from their home municipality, an ideologically proximate candidate, or for a candidate with previous political experience.

Our investigation into the last decades of voter preferences suggests that the Finnish voter cares about political substance despite the complexity of the open-list proportional electoral system with an abundance of available information on a multitude of candidates. Our findings suggest voters emphasize party affiliation and previous political experience of the candidates, which speaks towards them prioritizing substantive over descriptive representation.

Our more in-depth investigation into the different types of voting strategies that voters can engage in, yielded various interesting findings. The overall finding is that there are no distinct patterns when it comes to resemblance voting; it is hence not the case that specific groups of voters are more likely than others to choose candidates based on their descriptive characteristics corresponding to those of themselves. Across the board, it does, however, seem as if voters are inclined to cast a vote for a middle-aged candidate, perhaps seen as being at the height of their career and having enough political experience to stand out. Another distinct pattern is that older voters are more inclined to vote for politically experienced, incumbent MPs. These are not surprising results as they go hand in hand with the descriptions

of a more seasoned and routine voters who knows whom they are voting for and have supported the same party or candidate for a longer period of time. Another interesting finding is that party-identifying voters are more inclined to vote for an ideologically proximate candidate compared to others. Parties hence appear to assist voters in narrowing down the selection of candidates to those that are within close proximity ideologically.

Notes

1 Borg, Sami (University of Tampere) & Grönlund, Kimmo (Åbo Akademi University): Finnish National Election Study 2011 [dataset]. Version 4.0 (2020-10-28). Finnish Social Science Data Archive [distributor]. http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:fsd:T-FSD2653.
2 We thank Veikko Isotalo who collected and provided us with the VAA response data, as well as the weights for 2011 and 2019.
3 For 2011 the municipality codes were used directly, whereas for 2019 there is more precise data available – voters and candidates were matched by postcodes, which were transformed to municipalities. For the purposes of this analysis we have excluded the municipality of the capital Helsinki, which is the only case in which the municipality and district coincide – the district only consists of one municipality, and most candidates reside in that specific municipality. Helsinki voters do hence not have much of a choice in terms of the locality of candidates as voters in other district (for a similar strategy see Put et al., 2020).
4 The decision to focus on only the left-right scale is due to data availability. We are fully aware that these are not the only relevant ideological dimensions, especially in the Finnish context (Isotalo et al., 2020).

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Appendix

Table 12.A1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics					
Variable	*Number*	*Mean*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*	*Percentage of total*
Year of the study	854				
2011	331				38.80%
2019	523				61.20%
Gender	853				
man	416				48.80%
woman	437				51.20%
Age	853	52.9	18	90	
Education	852				
primary	83				9.70%
secondary	443				52%
tertiary	326				38.30%
Knowledge of politics (proportional)	854	0.69	0	1	
Closeness to a party	854				
not close at all	62				7.30%
somewhat close	109				12.80%
very close	683				80%
Left-right placement	820	3.06	1	5	
Candidate's gender	854	0.48	0 (man)	1 (woman)	
Candidate's and voter's gender is the same	854	0.67	0	1	
Candidate's age	854	44.51	19	78	
Candidate's and voter's age is the same	854	0.3	0	1	
Candidate's and voter's municipality is the same	854	0.86	0	1	
Candidate's and voter's ideology is the same	854	0.55	0	1	
Candidate's incumbency	854				

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2019.

Table 12.A2 Results from the logistical regression models

	Results from the logistical regression models				
	Dependent variable:				
	same_gender	*same_age*	*same_munic*	*same_ideol*	*candidate_ incumbency*
	−1	*−2*	*−3*	*−4*	*−5*
Constant	−2.965** (1.032)	−2.131** (0.674)	1.483* (0.742)	0.473 (0.505)	−0.590 (0.532)
Female	20.789 (551.255)	0.134 (0.193)	0.117 (0.233)	−0.104 (0.163)	−0.076 (0.170)
Voter's age (category 2)	0.380 (0.453)	2.047*** (0.338)	−0.195 (0.467)	−0.910** (0.283)	0.731* (0.327)
Voter's age (category 3)	0.108 (0.451)	1.157*** (0.332)	−0.469 (0.440)	−0.286 (0.279)	1.121*** (0.316)
Voter's age (category 4)	0.300 (0.447)	−0.008 (0.361)	−0.772 (0.436)	−0.432 (0.281)	1.386*** (0.319)
Voter's age (category 5)	0.038 (0.608)	−4.215* (1.985)	−0.992* (0.485)	−0.312 (0.337)	1.384*** (0.366)
Secondary education	0.485 (0.366)	−0.421 (0.302)	−0.201 (0.303)	0.253 (0.227)	−0.481* (0.230)
Tertiary education	0.481 (0.412)	−0.315 (0.332)	0.251 (0.391)	0.111 (0.260)	−0.380 (0.266)
Interested in politics	1.374** (0.514)	−0.308 (0.283)	0.178 (0.327)	−0.188 (0.248)	−0.320 (0.248)
Knowledge of politics (proportional)	−0.103 (0.571)	−0.167 (0.430)	0.319 (0.520)	−0.280 (0.365)	−1.021** (0.384)
Feeling somewhat close to a party	1.906* (0.779)	0.899 (0.508)	0.090 (0.562)	0.600 (0.363)	0.523 (0.373)
Feeling very close to a party	1.398 (0.738)	1.255** (0.460)	−0.161 (0.473)	0.509 (0.309)	−0.087 (0.319)
Left-right placement	−0.300** (0.113)	0.001 (0.089)	0.122 (0.110)	−0.003 (0.075)	0.155 (0.080)
Observations	816	816	660	816	816
Log Likelihood	−214.607	−349.708	−262.686	−472.949	−442.359
Akaike Inf. Crit.	455.214	725.416	551.371	971.897	910.717

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Source: Finnish National Election Study 2019.

13 What makes a Successful Candidate in the Finnish Open-list Proportional Electoral System?

Veikko Isotalo and Åsa von Schoultz

Introduction

In this chapter, continuing on from Chapter 12 and its analysis of voter's choice of candidates, we study individual candidates and their *electoral support* in the Finnish proportional (PR) electoral systems with open lists and mandatory preferential voting, which has been described as one of the most candidate-centered systems in the world (Raunio, 2005). The open and unranked party-lists used in Finnish elections make the system very competitive at the intraparty dimension and provides voters with the power to decide not only how many seats each party will get but also which candidates will fill these seats. These features create very different dynamics in elections and political representation compared to the more common variants of PR electoral systems with closed or flexible lists. It makes the system more focused on individual candidates and their behavior, and it has substantial influence over how candidates behave. The open lists mean that in order to obtain personal electoral success, candidates need to cultivate a personal relation with voters and run an individual campaign where they promote their personal experiences, attributes, and policies. It is generally not sufficient to enter the election as a collective party player, and to run strictly following the party platform to win a high list position. The research question that we seek to answer in this chapter is *which types of candidates that are successful under these circumstances*.

Finnish elections tend to feature many candidates, presented to voters in alphabetical order. According to the official electoral rules, parties can nominate 14 candidates or as many candidates as there are seats to be filled in the district, which was 36 in the largest electoral district of Uusimaa in the 2019 parliamentary election. Since votes are pooled at the party level, and each nominated candidate generally contributes at least a few votes to the party total, parties have an incentive to nominate as many candidates as possible (Shugart & Taagepera, 2017). Therefore, candidates running for one of the established parties typically face 13–36 competitors within the same party, depending on the district in which they are standing.

Previous research has clearly demonstrated that in order for individual candidates to be successful under such circumstances, it is important for them to have a personal reputation, and to cultivate a personal relation to voters (Shugart, 2001, 83). Being well-known, having political experience or being perceived as a credible

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representative for a local community are all well-established strategies used by candidates (see also Chapter 12 on how voters find their candidates). In this chapter, we explore the impact of personal characteristics and personal vote-earning attributes, highlighted in the literature on the personal vote and competition within parties (Cain et al., 1987; Carey & Shugart, 1995; Shugart et al., 2005). We will also explore the extent to which the ideological positioning of candidates (von Schoultz & Papageorgiou, 2019; Isotalo et al., 2021) and their campaign spending influence their electoral fortunes.

The chapter begins with a short review of the literature on individual vote-earning in personalized electoral systems with intraparty competition, followed by the empirical part, where we first present descriptive patterns of the development of changes in candidates' personal vote-earning attributes. The second part of the chapter will seek to explain recent intraparty candidate vote-winning using data from the past six elections (1999–2019). Possible factors of success include socio-demographic, ideological, and political experience-related variables. The chapter ends with a discussion of prospects of intraparty competition and its effects on Finnish democracy as a whole. The analyses build on register data on candidates' electoral fortunes, personal attributes, and contextual data. We also employ data from voting advice applications (VAAs).

Candidates' vote earning in open-list PR systems

In candidate-oriented electoral systems, candidates need to emphasize traits and engage in activities that set them apart from other candidates while also allowing them to reach out to and earn the support of voters. This is particularly true in systems where there is a high level of competition between candidates running for election on the same party list (Carey & Shugart, 1995), as is the case in Finland. Reaching out to voters in these circumstances requires candidates to engage in activities which can bring support from voters, which they tend to do by utilizing their connections to the electorate, and by emphasizing personal traits and attributes that voters are likely to find attractive. In literature, the latter are commonly referred to as *personal vote-earning attributes* (PVEAs) (Shugart et al., 2005; Put et al., 2018). PVEAs are attributes, which voters use as cues, and that are emphasized by candidates to signal their competences, qualities as representatives of certain interests or subgroups, and to make them known among voters (Gschwend & Zittel, 2015).

Personal vote-earning attributes can come in many different forms. Previous research has emphasized the vote-winning capacity of *ties to the local community* (Shugart et al., 2005; Tavits, 2010; Put & Maddens, 2015). It is generally assumed that voters prioritize locally based candidates since they are expected to "know the area and its interest" (Shugart et al., 2005) and to act on these local interests (Campbell et al., 2019). Having served in local elective office can also contribute to greater name recognition (Put & Maddens, 2015) and signal familiarity with local issues and problems (Tavits, 2010). In the Finnish context, several points speak in favor of an important local perspective in national politics. The geographical representativeness of the 200 MPs in the Parliament can be considered extensive.

Although MPs in the Finnish mainland are elected from 12 relatively large constituencies (varying from six to 37 seats) they represented as many as 89 different municipalities (of a total of 311) in the 2019 election. Moreover, when asked about their views on representative roles and foci, Finnish voters, as well as their elected representatives, tend to downplay the role of parties and emphasize the importance of the local perspective (Bengtsson & Wass, 2016).

Another, and perhaps the most well-established vote-earning attribute is *political experience*, in particular acting as a representative at the national level (Erikson, 1971; Butler, 2009; Kotakorpi et al., 2017; Dahlgaard, 2016). While it is difficult to distinguish between the experiences gathered as an MP and the personal qualities that help this candidate to become elected in the first place, it is clear that the advantage of being an incumbent MP is highly beneficial when it comes to winning personal votes. The incumbency effect is, however, considered to be smaller in PR multi-member districts with open lists compared to single-member districts (Maddens et al., 2006). This is supported by data from Finland, where the level of defeats to another co-partisan (intrapartisan defeats) has tended to be relatively high, while the level of inter-partisan defeats has tended to be substantially lower (Arter, 2009). Although weaker than in single-member districts, the incumbency advantage in Finnish politics has traditionally been highly significant. During the period 1962–2003, 85 percent of MPs ran for re-election, of which 76 percent were successful (Paloheimo, 2007, 334). Also, having previous experience from standing for election without being successful can be beneficial since this allows the candidate to cultivate a reputation (Shugart et al., 2005) and to gain valuable experience from campaigning. Moreover, they might have a previously established campaign team ready to be activated when deciding to run again (Eder et al., 2015). Under the broad label of political experience, we can also count leadership positions within the party organization, which can provide visibility and signal political credibility.

A different way to earn votes in personalized electoral systems is to have an established reputation outside of politics. Such candidates are often labeled *celebrity* candidates, which is an established concept in Finnish politics (Karvonen, 2010), but also recognized in the international literature (e.g., Knecht & Rosentrater, 2021). A celebrity candidate denotes a candidate that is well known and involved in other areas of public live, for example, from media or sports, when entering the field of politics. Celebrity status entails name recognition that expands beyond traditional political circles and can translate into valuable political capital (Arter, 2014). To be well known from other contexts has been considered an advantage in the electoral arena, especially for rookies (Arter, 2009) since these candidates tend to receive more extensive and favorable media coverage (Abramowitz & Segal, 1986). In the Finnish parliamentary election of 2007, as many as 15 percent of the rookies could be classified as celebrity candidates (Arter, 2009).

While the literature on PVEAs depart from the idea that voters primarily respond to relatively simple cues that can be used as a shortcut to more valuable political information, recent studies have demonstrated that voters also appear to act upon more cognitively demanding information such as ideological positions of candidates (von Schoultz & Papageorgiou, 2019; Isotalo et al., 2020; Schmit,

2021). While ideologies are generally connected to parties as collective actors, candidate-centered electoral systems enable individual candidates to take different ideological positions within the context of their party lists and to signal this to voters. In the literature, it has been theorized that candidates in open-list PR systems like Finland can benefit electorally from carving out distinct ideological positions (Cox, 1990; Ames, 1995; Persson et al., 2005) and offering voters a unique issue or ideological alternative. However, recent empirical findings from Finland suggest the opposite, indicating that candidates benefit from positioning themselves centrally within the party (von Schoultz & Papageorgiou, 2019; Isotalo et al., 2020).

In addition to the classical PVEAs discussed above, the analyses in this chapter will also encompass the effect on vote-earning of the demographic attributes, such as age and gender, considered particularly valuable in list systems since they can be used for balancing the list and reaching out to different groups of voters (Valdini, 2012). In particular, the impact of gender has received attention in previous studies, and it has been suggested that the general underrepresentation of women in politics is less severe in multimember districts compared to single-member districts (Matland & Brown, 1992; Rule, 1987). It has been proposed that women might have an advantage in open-list systems, specifically, if there are fewer women than men running (Rule, 1994; Shugart, 1994). In Finnish elections, the share of elected women has increased substantially over the years, from 15 percent elected in 1948 to an all-time high of 47 percent in the 2019 election (von Schoultz, 2016; von Schoultz et al., 2020). The share of women among the nominated standing for election has developed in accordance (von Schoultz, 2016; Sipinen & Koskimaa, 2020). In our analyses, we further account for campaign spending, which can be expected to increase vote-winning and the experience of being a candidate in previous election.

Results and analysis

Descriptive analyses

The main data used in this chapter consist of Finnish parliamentary election results (on a candidate-level) and characteristics of the candidates in 12 elections (1975–2019). We begin our empirical explorations by descriptive analyses, where we investigate long-term patterns in candidates' background characteristics in the two time periods: 1975–2019 and 1999–2019. For each variable, we present three metrics of interest: (1) share of elected candidates having the characteristic, (2) vote share among candidates with the characteristic, and (3) overall prevalence of the characteristic among the candidate population. Only two variables were available for the whole time period: candidate gender and incumbency status. As shown by Figure 13.1, the share of female candidates has nearly doubled between 1975 and 2019. The female candidate vote share and share of the elected have developed similarly, falling only a few percentage points short of 50 percent. The share of re-elected incumbents among newly elected has fluctuated around 60 percent; however, the combined vote share of the incumbent candidates has declined slightly over time. Similarly, the share of incumbent candidates has decreased to under ten

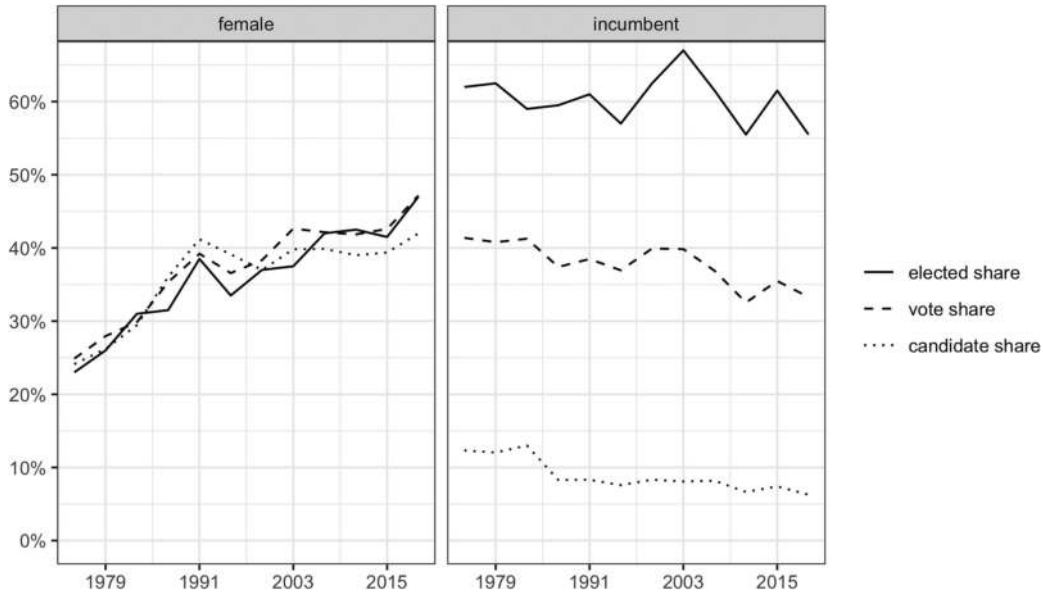

Figure 13.1 Finnish parliamentary candidates' incumbency status and gender over time.
Source: Ministry of Justice and Statistics Finland.

percent. The number of incumbents running for re-election has decreased by five percentage points (from 83 percent in 1975 to 78 percent in 2019).

We continue with four political experience and name recognition variables among the main eight parties in the latest six elections (1999–2019), reported in Figure 13.2. The share of elected candidates that are local councilors has increased to over 80 percent even though the share of candidates with the local political experience has remained relatively stable (around 50 percent). We consider this an important development. The trends in other three variables: ran in previous election, party leadership position, and celebrity status have not changed significantly. Returning candidates, i.e., candidates that have previously run for election account for more than one-third of the candidate pools in the main eight parties and they account for approximately 60 percent of their parties' votes. Party leadership positions have not increased their importance during the time period even though there have been some fluctuations. Candidates with celebrity status have remained as a fringe phenomenon in Finnish politics and their numbers have been on the decline in the last two elections. Next, we will inspect the multivariate results covering several elections.

Multivariate analyses

In the following section, we focus on explaining intraparty candidate success. To determine the importance of personal vote-earning attributes and other personal traits for candidates' intraparty electoral success, we first present a pooled OLS regression for a dataset containing the eight parliamentary parties in years 1999–2019 (n = 8,590). Our dependent variable is the preference vote share, i.e., the candidates'

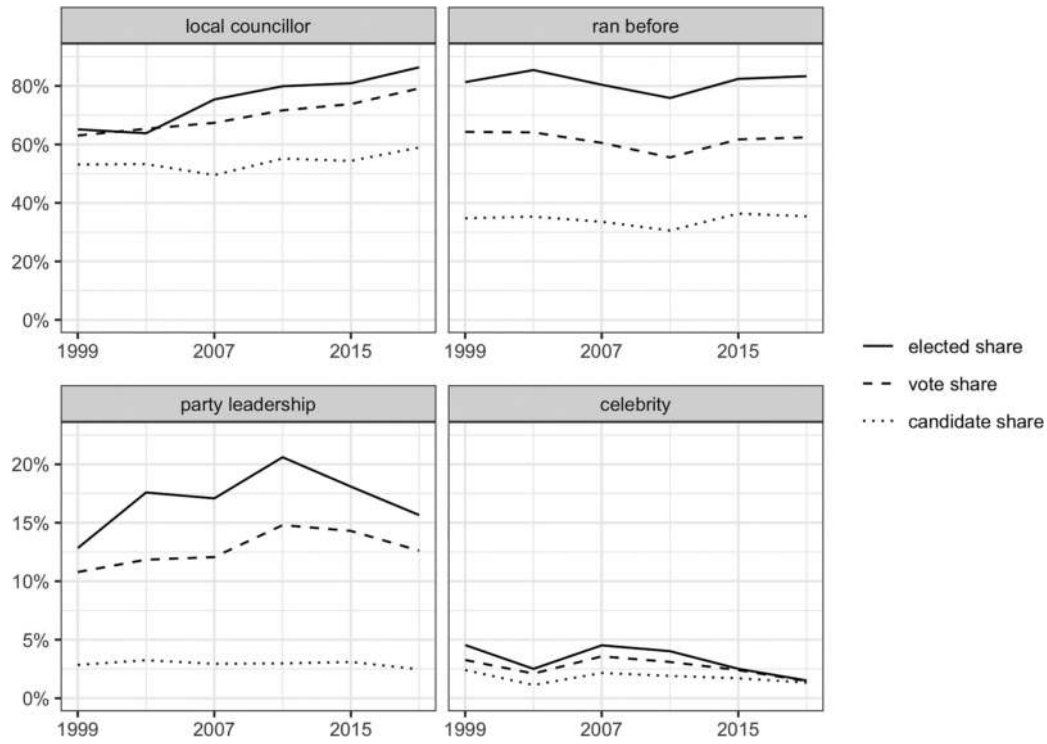

Figure 13.2 Finnish parliamentary candidates' political experience and celebrity status over time.

Source: Ministry of Justice and Statistics Finland.

share of their party's vote in the district where they were running. The variable is log-transformed due to the skewed distribution with many candidates winning small shares of the total party vote. The model consists of eight independent variables. In addition to central vote-earning attributes, we also add candidates' mother tongue, party, election year, and district controls. All variables are presented in Appendix repalce with: Table 13.A1.

The main results are presented in Figure 13.3, which shows effects of the central variables on the dependent variable (replace with Table 13.A2 in Appendix). The effects are calculated by setting all other variables of the model, except the variable in question, to their mean values.[1] Here, we notice that political experience has a significant positive effect on candidate vote shares. Being a member of the European parliament (MEP) and being an elected MP affect candidates' predicted preference vote share the most. Even though the effect of being a MEP is large, one should note that there are only 16 MEPs in the dataset, which means that this estimate is not very reliable. The incumbency effect instead has been well established in pluralist single-member district electoral systems, and additionally there is growing evidence that incumbency effect plays a part in proportional representation electoral systems with multi-member districts too (see, e.g., Dahlgaard, 2016; Kotakorpi, 2017). Being an elected MP, for example, increases a candidate's predicted intraparty vote share from 3 percent to 10 percent (an increase of seven percentage points). The second most impactful variables are

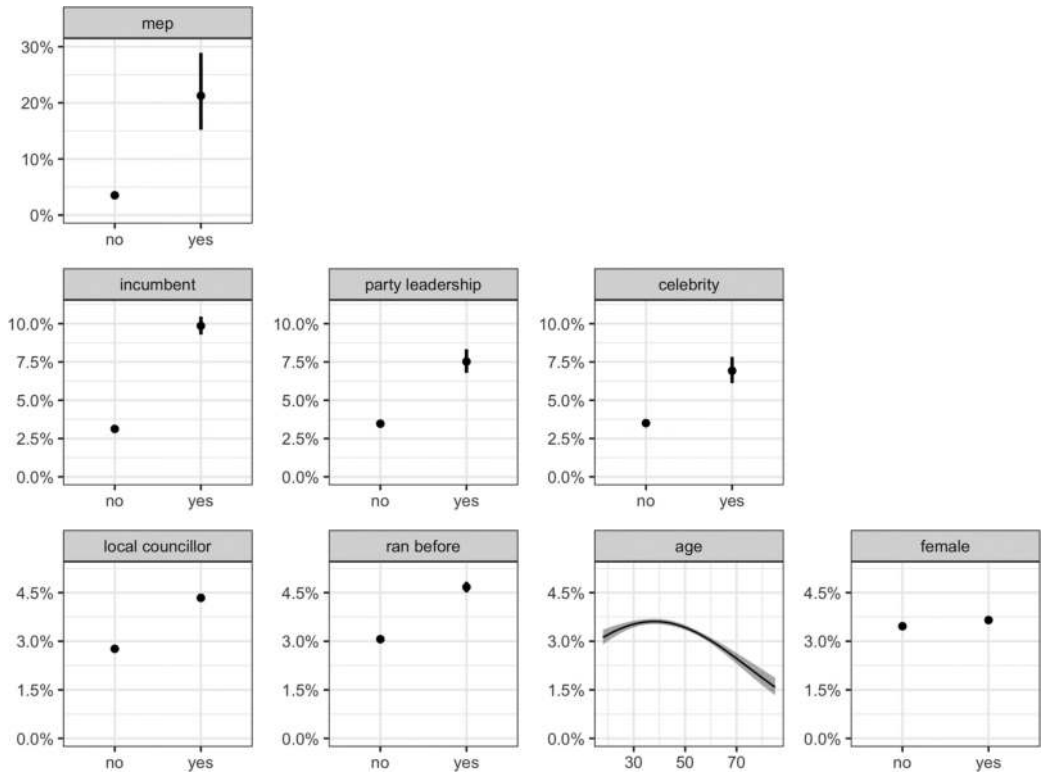

Figure 13.3 Effects of individual variables in 1999–2019.

Source: Ministry of Justice and Statistics Finland

having a party leadership position and being a celebrity candidate. The strength of these PVEAs is unsurprising as party leadership positions are visible roles that increase name-recognition of the candidates. Moreover, celebrity status has been suggested of being a decision heuristic for voters (see Zwarun & Torrey, 2011).

The magnitude of these variables' effects is half of the incumbency effect. The last two political experience variables are holding a local councilor position and having been nominated in the previous election. These two variables increase the predicted preference vote from 3 percent to 4.5 percent, which is an increase of 1.5 percentage points (half of the increase of the celebrity and party leadership variables). Previous political experience in the local level serves as useful cue for voters, as candidates with local roots can be expected to be aware of the local issues which can increase their local vote (Shugart et al. 2005).

The last two graphically presented variables relate to candidate demographics. In terms of candidate age, the relationship with intraparty vote share is non-linear. The age effect increases till the age of 40, after which age has a negative effect on candidate success. This reflects voters' preference of middle-aged candidates (peak of the curve being around 40). Even though the impact of age seems to be favoring relatively young candidates, one should keep in mind that older candidates have had more chances of obtaining previous political experience than young candidates, which might offset their relative age disadvantage.

Lastly, being a female candidate is associated with a marginal increase (0.1–0.2 percentage points) in intraparty success. Women enjoy an electoral advantage over men, which is in line with previous results in other proportional representation systems (see Rule, 1994; Shugart, 1994). This most likely stems from the fact that fewer women are running than men, which allows women to concentrate their votes to numerically fewer female candidates.

To test whether candidates' ideological positions and economic resources play a role in their electoral success, we expand the original model by adding four additional variables which were only available in the last three elections: candidates' ideological distance from party median candidate in Left–Right, ideological distance from party median candidate in GAL–TAN, having a university education, and a categorical variable for estimated campaign spending. Here, we utilize candidates' responses to two of the most popular Finnish voting advice applications (VAAs) for the latest three elections (2011, 2015, and 2019). VAA datasets were obtained directly from Helsingin Sanomat (the largest newspaper in Finland) and Yleisradio (The Finnish Broadcasting Company) websites and per request (Yle Uutisten vaalikone, 2011; Yleisradio, 2015; Yleisradio, 2019; Helsingin Sanomat, 2015; Helsingin Sanomat, 2019). The full regression results are found in Appendix (Table 13.A3).

In Figure 13.4, we can see that the newly added ideological distance variables, both Left–Right and GAL–TAN, have a negative effect on candidates' preference vote shares. However, only Left-Right has a statistically significant effect at conventional levels ($p<0.05$). A negative effect means that candidates deviating from the party's median candidate position win fewer votes, compared to candidates that are centrally positioned.[2] As deviations from the party position tend to be often small (less than one standard deviation), so are the effects. The other key variable of interest in this model, campaign spending, in turn, displays a substantial effect on vote-earning. If a candidate's estimated spending is above 20,000 euros, the candidate is predicted to win eight percent of the district's party vote (holding other variables constant), whereas spending less than 5,000 euros predicts only two percent intraparty vote share. Similar results regarding the impact of campaign spending have been noted in other open or flexible list systems (see, e.g., Maddens et al., 2006).

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have empirically demonstrated which types of candidates earn personal votes in the Finnish open-list proportional electoral system; a system in which candidates generally are presented in alphabetical order to voters, and where there is a high level of competition among candidates nominated by the same party. We have also theoretically established the mechanisms behind the personal vote-earning attributes and how these types of attributes assist candidates in cultivating a personal vote.

Our empirical analysis of 8,590 candidates in six Finnish Parliamentary elections confirm much of what we know from previous studies in the field. We show

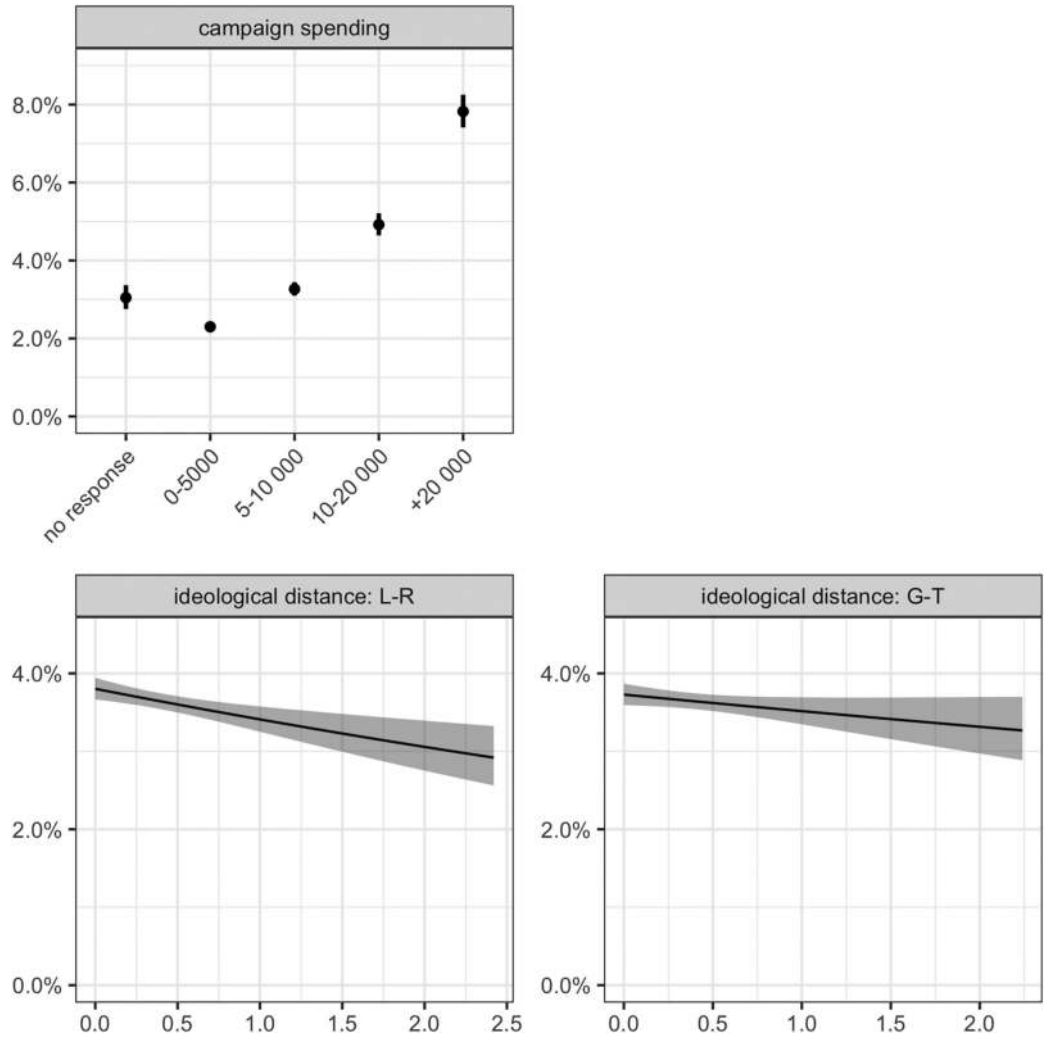

Figure 13.4 Predictor effects of additional variables in the 2011–2019 model.

Source: Ministry of Justice, Statistics Finland, and Voting Advice Application data from the Finnish broadcasting company YLE and Helsingin Sanomat.

that holding office, i.e., being an incumbent MP, is highly valuable trait in this competitive context. Other experience-related attributes, such as being a member of the European Parliament, holding office at the municipal level or a leadership position within the party, also significantly contribute to candidates winning large shares of preference votes. The only route to electoral success is, however, not the political one. Candidates that have established a reputation outside of politics, so-called celebrity candidates, are also on average more successful than the average co-partisan. Our more detailed analysis of the last three elections further demonstrates that campaign spending is an important factor in bringing in votes and that candidates that ideologically position themselves along the party line, are more successful compared to candidates that take deviating positions.

Next, we will assess the implications of our results for elections and democratic outcomes. A positive democratic feature of open-list PR electoral systems is that it

allows voters to have a substantial say in which candidates that become their political representatives. On the one hand, it is a system which tends to reward candidates with political experience (Shugart et al., 2005), which might enhance the quality of representation. On the other hand, the high rewards from being well known and established in politics or media can make it difficult for young, less experienced candidates to enter national politics. Most nationally elected politicians have taken the relatively long route, where they first establish a political platform at the municipal level, after which they make one or several attempts to get elected in parliamentary elections (Koskimaa et al., 2022). The system has further been criticized for incentivizing politicians to deliver particularistic services to their constituencies (Ames, 1995; Carey & Shugart, 1995; Grimmer et al., 2012) and to engage in corruption (Chang & Golden, 2007). However, these risks are not universal and are potentially linked to only certain cultural contexts (e.g., post-war Italy) or to countries with a less established democratic system compared to Finland. Moreover, open-list system might be a viable way to fight institutionalized party-level corruption, as open lists provide voters a direct say in eliminating the "bad apples" in elections.

Another point of critique is that the dual structure with competition both between and within parties, and the large number of candidates at display puts a high cognitive burden on voters. This burden may push voters towards sub-optimal or even irrelevant decisions or discourage them from participating in the first place (Cunow et al., 2021; Söderlund et al., 2021). Yet, recent research points towards that Finnish voters are able to select politicians that are on average more competent, motivated, and honest compared to the general population (Jokela et al., 2022).

Notes

1 The analyses were performed with R statistical software. These predictor effects were calculated with *effects* package and figures were constructed with *ggplot2* R package (Fox and Weisberg 2018; Fox and Weisberg 2019; Wickham 2016).
2 Ideological distances are calculated as absolute distances from their parties' national median candidate positions, and these distances are measured in standard deviations.

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Appendix

Table 13.A1 Analysis variable information

Variable name	*Description*	*Availability*	*Operationalization*
University education	Self-reported in Yle VAA	2011–2019	Binary (0 = no or 1 = yes)
Ideological distance: Left–Right	Calculated by using EFA on VAA statements (see detailed description in Isotalo et al. 2020)	2011–2019	Continuous
Ideological distance: GAL–TAN	Calculated by using EFA on VAA statements (see detailed description in Isotalo et al. 2020)	2011–2019	Continuous
Campaign spending (cf. No answer)	Self-reported in Yle VAA (corrected for candidates that submitted the official expense report)	2011–2019	Categorical (cf. No answer, 0–5,000, 5–10,000, 10–20,000, +20,000)
Language (cf. Finnish)	Ministry of Justice database & Statistics Finland	1999–2019	Categorical (cf. Finnish, Swedish, Other)
Female	Ministry of Justice database & Statistics Finland	1975–2019	Binary (0 = no or 1 = yes)
Age and age-squared	Ministry of Justice database & Statistics Finland	1999–2019	Continuous
Celebrity	Coded based on media articles	1999–2019	Binary (0 = no or 1 = yes)
Ran for election	Ministry of Justice database & Statistics Finland	1999–2019	Binary (0 = no or 1 = yes)
Incumbency	Ministry of Justice database & Statistics Finland	1975–2019	Binary (0 = no or 1 = yes)
Mun. councilor	Ministry of Justice database & Statistics Finland	1999–2019	Binary (0 = no or 1 = yes)
Party leadership	Ministry of Justice database & Statistics Finland	1999–2019	Binary (0 = no or 1 = yes)
MEP	Ministry of Justice database & Statistics Finland	1999–2019	Binary (0 = no or 1 = yes)

Source: Ministry of Justice, Statistics Finland, and Voting Advice Application data from the Finnish broadcasting company YLE and Helsingin Sanomat.

Table 13.A2 OLS regression 1999–2019 model

	Dependent variable: logit (Preference vote share)	
Language: Other (cf. Finnish)	−0.488***	(0.062)
Language: Swedish	0.062	(0.053)
Female	0.055**	(0.018)
Age	0.029***	(0.005)
Age-squared	−0.0004***	(0.0001)
Celebrity	0.717***	(0.068)
Stood for election	0.439***	(0.023)
Incumbent	1.220***	(0.035)
Mun. councilor	0.467***	(0.020)
Party leadership	0.818***	(0.057)
MEP	1.998***	(0.209)
Constant	−3.910***	(0.140)
Controls		
Year	Yes	
Party	Yes	
District	Yes	
Observations	8,590	
R2	0.464	
Adjusted R2	0.462	
Residual Std. Error	0.831 (df = 8549)	
F Statistic	185.360*** (df = 40; 8549)	

Note: $^{*}p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$; $^{***}p<0.001$.

Source: Ministry of Justice and Statistics Finland.

Table 13.A3 OLS regression 2011–2019 model

	Dependent variable: logit (Preference vote share)	
University education	0.174***	(0.024)
Ideological distance: Left–Right	−0.113***	(0.033)
Ideological distance: GAL–TAN	−0.061	(0.034)
Campaign spending: 0–5,000 (cf. No answer)	−0.289***	(0.055)
Campaign spending: 5,000–10,000	0.072	(0.058)
Campaign spending: 10,000–20,000	0.499***	(0.060)
Campaign spending: +20,000	0.994***	(0.060)
Language: Other (cf. Finnish)	−0.217**	(0.075)
Language: Swedish	−0.110	(0.067)
Female	0.156***	(0.023)
Age	0.011	(0.006)
Age-squared	−0.0002**	(0.0001)
Celebrity	0.579***	(0.087)
Stood for election	0.278***	(0.028)
Incumbent	0.675***	(0.046)
Mun. councilor	0.292***	(0.026)

(*Continued*)

Table 13.A3 (Continued)

	Dependent variable: logit (Preference vote share)	
Party leadership	0.627***	(0.069)
MEP	2.352***	(0.319)
Constant	−2.823***	(0.170)
Controls		
Year	Yes	
Party	Yes	
District	Yes	
Observations	4,179	
R2	0.598	
Adjusted R2	0.594	
Residual Std. Error	0.708 (df = 4136)	
F Statistic	146.327*** (df = 42; 4136)	

Note: $^{*}p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$; $^{***}p<0.001$.

Source: Ministry of Justice, Statistics Finland, and Voting Advice Application data from the Finnish broadcasting company YLE and Helsingin Sanomat.

Part 3

Campaigning

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

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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

Dependent variable	*Survey items*
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).

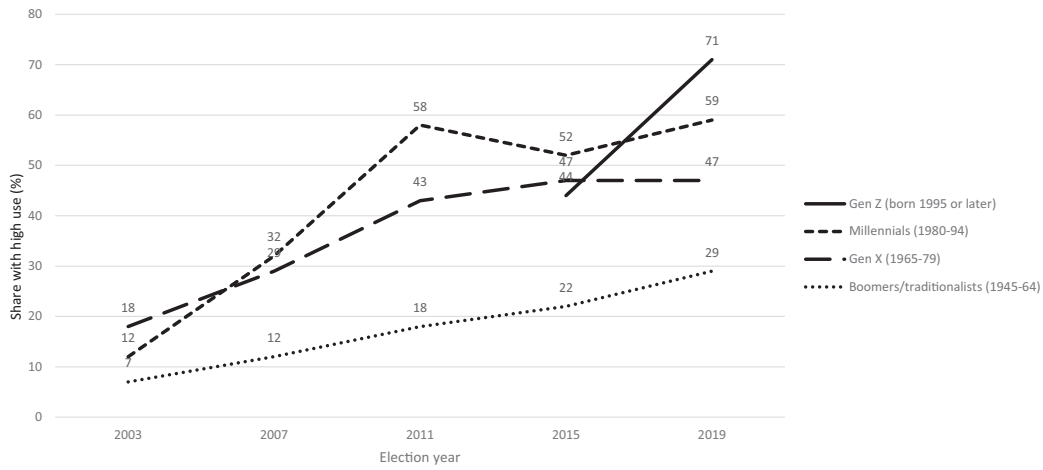

Figure 14.1 Development of using Web 1.0 applications for following the Finnish parliamentary elections, 2003–2019 (percentage share within each generation having used Web 1.0 quite or very much).

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

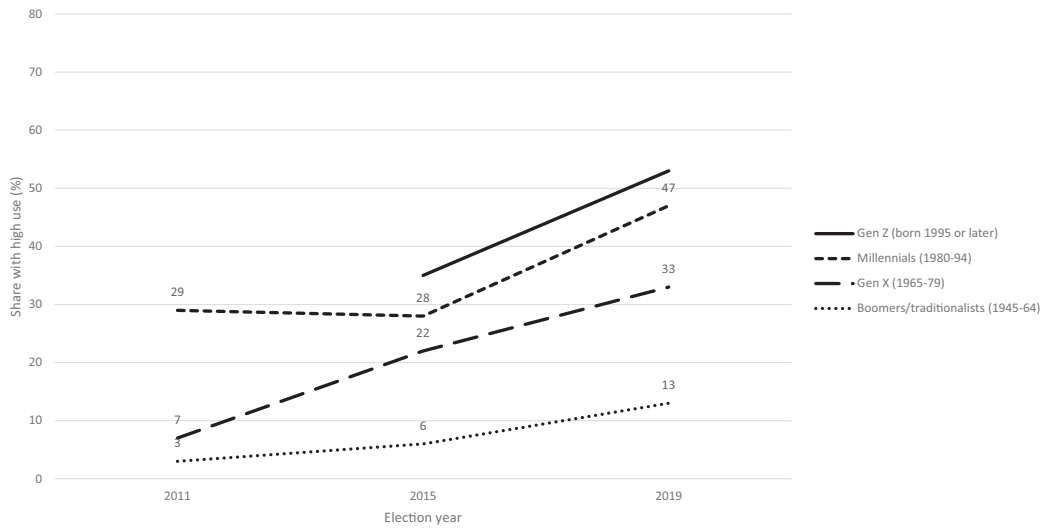

Figure 14.2 Development of using Web 2.0 applications for following the Finnish parliamentary elections, 2011–2019 (percentage share within each generation having used Web 2.0 quite or very much).

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

	All		*Generation Z*		*Millennials*		*Generation X*		*Boomers/Trad.*	
	B	*S.E*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E*	*B*	*S.E.*
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	

$^{\dagger}p < 0.10$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

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

	All		*Generation Z*		*Millennials*		*Generation X*		*Boomers/Trad.*	
	B	*S.E*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E*	*B*	*S.E.*
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	
N	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)

	2003		*2007*		*2011*		*2015*		*2019*	
Indicators	*Mean*	*Std.dev.*	*Mean*	*Std.dev.*	*Mean*	*Std.dev.*	*Mean*	*Std.dev.*	*Mean*	*Std.dev.*
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
VAAs	.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
N	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)

Variables	*2019*	
	%	*n*
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

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;

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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 though 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 & Kiousis, 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 they their primary aim during the campaign was to attract more attention for themselves ed.

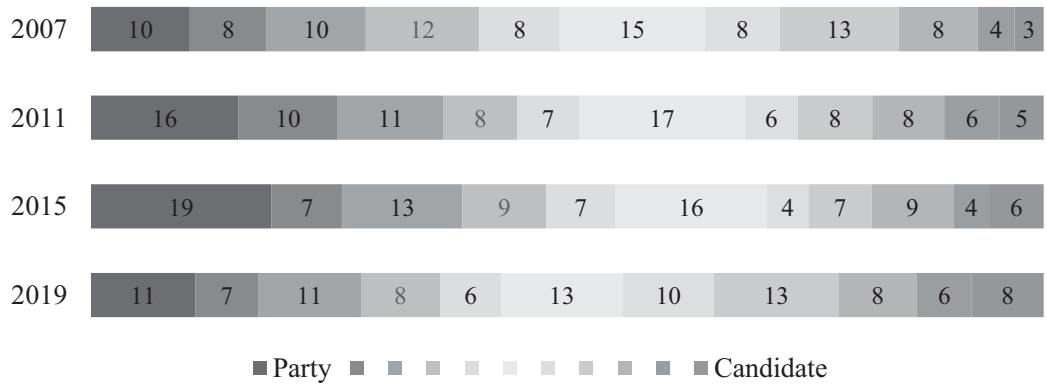

Figure 15.1 Campaign norm among Finnish legislative candidates (%).

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.

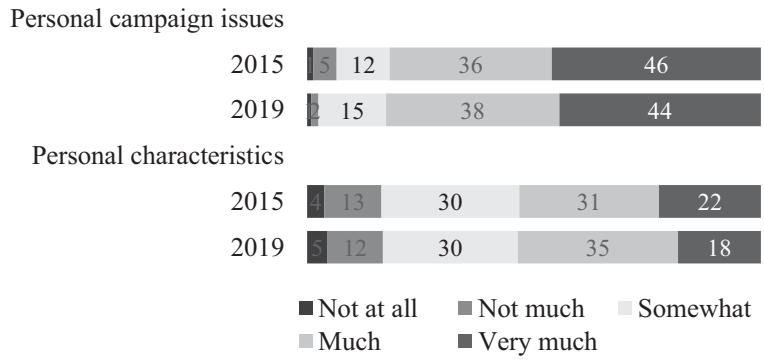

Figure 15.2 Person-oriented campaign strategies among Finnish legislative candidates 2015 and 2019 (%).

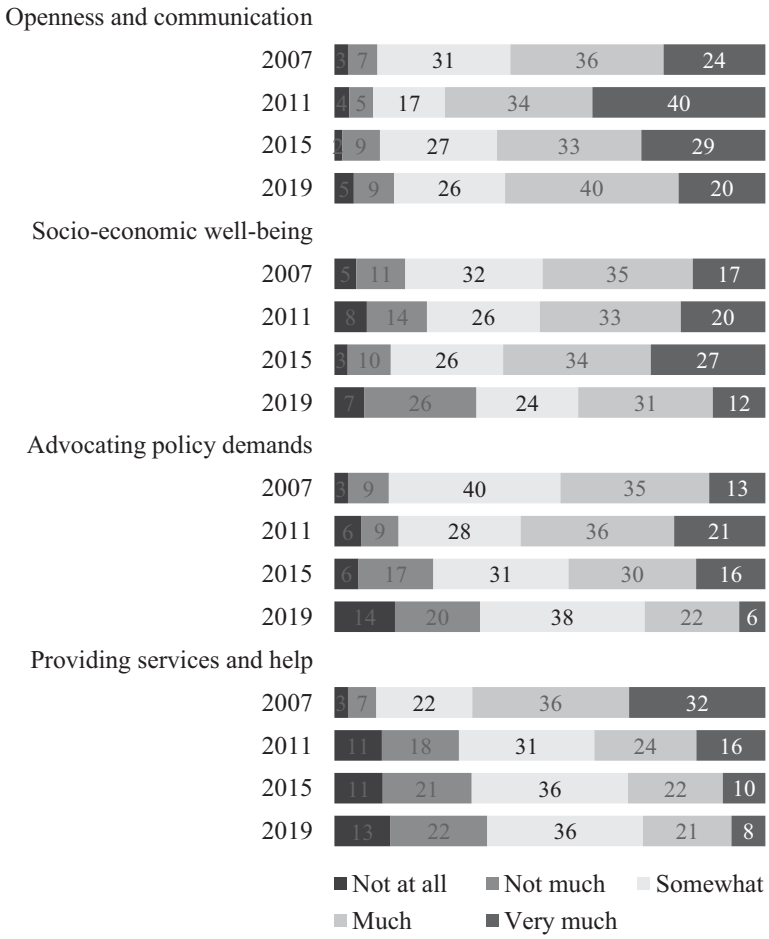

Figure 15.3 Constituency-oriented campaign strategies among Finnish legislative candidates 2003, 2007, 2015, and 2019 (%).

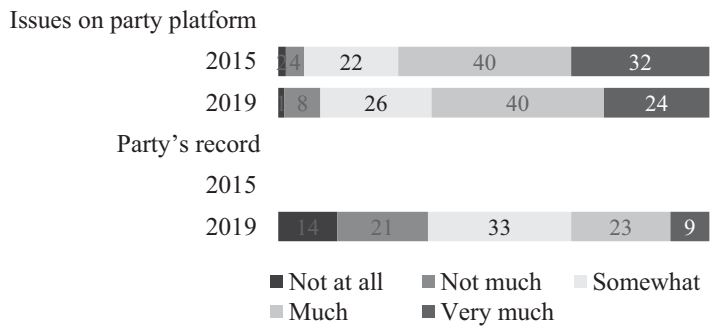

Figure 15.4 Party-oriented campaign strategies among Finnish legislative candidates 2015 and 2019 (%).

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 campaining 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

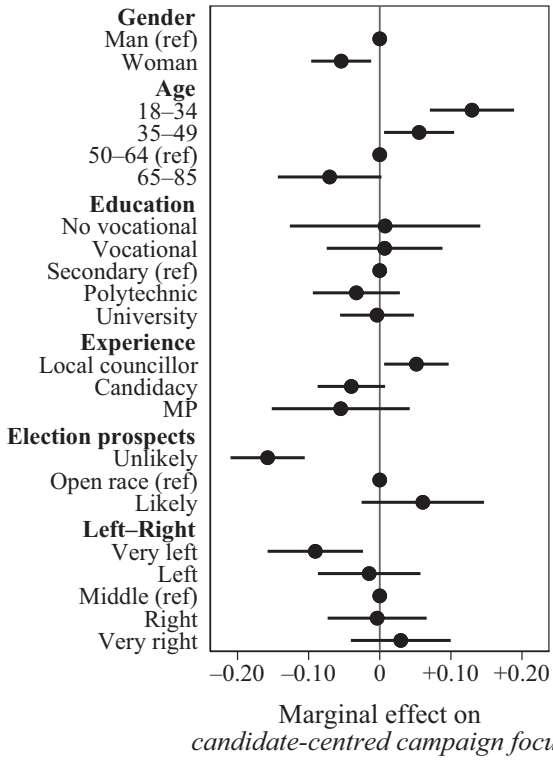

Figure 15.5 Predicting candidate-centred campaign norm in 2019 (adj. $R^2 = 0.15$).

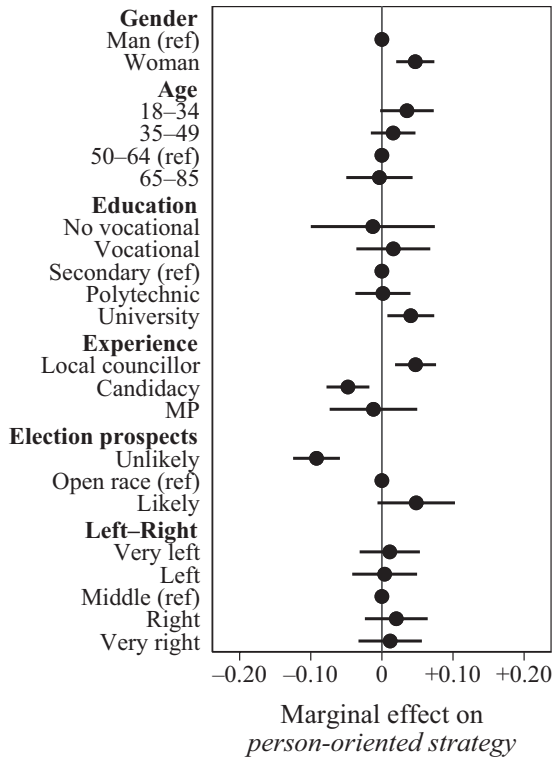

Figure 15.6 Predicting person-oriented campaign strategy in 2019 (adj. $R^2 = 0.12$).

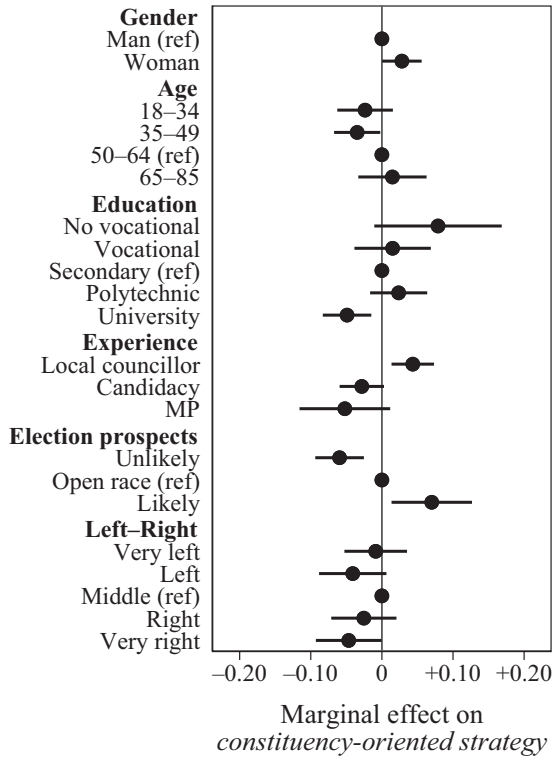

Figure 15.7 Predicting constituency-oriented campaign strategy in 2019 (adj. $R^2 = 0.08$).

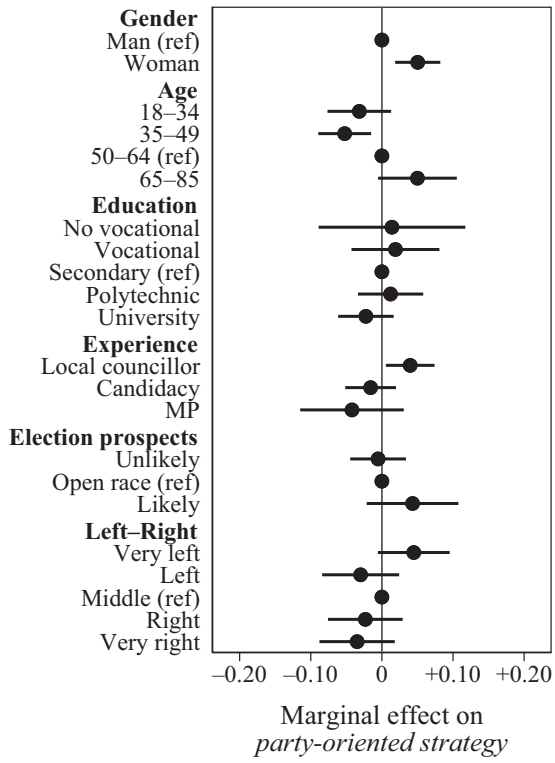

Figure 15.8 Predicting party-oriented campaign strategy in 2019 (adj. $R^2 = 0.05$)

comes to style of campaigning. Generally, the expection 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' inventives to run an individualized campaign. Incumbents who have 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 constitutens 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 campaining. 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 additonal 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 campaing 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 campaing 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 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 a 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-centre 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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16 Individualized Campaigning in the Finnish Open-List System

Mikko Mattila

Introduction

While the preceding chapter analysed the extent to which individual Finnish parliamentary candidates tend to run a party-oriented or personalized campaign, the focus in this chapter is on how the actual campaigns are conducted. Open-list proportional electoral systems typically incentivize electoral candidates to run individualized campaigns, which emphasize candidates' personal characteristics over the party or ideology they represent (Sudulich & Trumm, 2019). The Finnish electoral system has most of the features associated with individualized campaigns (Carey & Shugart, 1995; Pilet & Renwick, 2018): voters must cast a preference vote for an individual candidate and a pure party vote is not possible, preference votes determine the order in which candidates get elected and candidates are not usually ranked in the ballots. In this kind of open-list systems, the worst competitor for any candidate may not be the competing candidate in the rival party, but, instead, the co-partisan candidate running in the same district (Arter, 2013).

Previous studies on campaigning and candidate success in Finnish parliamentary elections have approached the topic from a historical (Railo et al., 2016) or a geographical (Arter, 2021; Put et al., 2020) perspective, from a specific party perspective (Arter, 2013) or they have concentrated on how internet and social media has been used in campaigns (see Chapter 14 and e.g., Strandberg, 2013; Strandberg & Borg, 2020). There are only a few studies, which have analysed the direct effects of campaigning on candidates' electoral success (Ruostetsaari, 1999; Ruostetsaari & Mattila, 2003). A broad perspective to campaigning is presented by Railo et al. (2016), who recognize three main periods in Finnish post-war campaigning. A major turn in campaigning took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when campaigning moved to the post-modern phase that was characterized by a more professional approach, increased candidate centrality and the heightened role of media. In the 2010s this development has accelerated, and the responsibility of campaigns has unequivocally moved from parties to individual candidates, which has, in turn, highlighted the importance of campaign financing. At the same time, digital marketing and the use of social media as a campaigning tool has transformed the nature of electoral campaigning.

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Hence, it seems that electoral campaigning has been in constant flux over the past decades. In this chapter, *my aim is, first, to describe the variety and use of campaigning forms and their funding in the Finnish 2019 elections and, second, to analyse how various campaigning efforts are related to candidates' electoral success*. The chapter is structured as follows: after the theoretical discussion, I analyse what kind of campaigning forms candidates used in the 2019 Finnish parliamentary elections and how candidates financed their campaigns. Then I proceed to analyse if and to what extent, campaigning styles and funding help candidates to gain votes when compared to candidates' political experience and other personal attributes. As data I use the Finnish Candidate survey that was administered just after the 2019 (see Technical appendix).

Developments in campaigning

Parties and political campaigning have been constantly changing over the past few decades. Perhaps the most important of the developments are personalization (Balmas et al., 2014), professionalization (Pedersen & Rahat, 2021; Mykkänen et al., 2021) and digitalization (Sampugnaro & Montemagno, 2021). These trends can also be observed to various degree in the Finnish context. Personalization is a process where individual politicians or candidates are emphasized more than their parties or ideologies as collective identities. The literature differentiates between centralized and decentralized personalization (Balmas et al., 2014). The former refers to the heightened role of party leaders and other key national level politicians over collective party organs. Decentralized personalization refers to the increased focus on individual politicians and their personal characteristics in all levels of politics. This decentralized form of personalization is a highly relevant perspective when analysing candidates' campaign activities in the Finnish electoral context. This is because the candidate-centred electoral system forces candidates to highlight their personal qualities and personal messages over the collective party message as they are competing both against their co-partisans as well as rivals from other parties.

Alongside personalization, the trends of professionalization and digitalization have affected campaigning. Professionalization is a broad development where parties have adopted a new, more "scientific" approach to campaigning (Gibson & Römmele, 2009; Sampugnaro & Montemagno, 2021). This approach includes the increased use of methods such as opinion polls and focus groups, hiring consultants to plan and execute campaigns, and the adoption of newer digital tools, such as social media platforms and micro-targeting. However, Finland may be an interesting outlier in the general tread on campaign professionalization, at least on the central party level. For example, when compared to Sweden, the professionalization has been considerably slower process in Finland (Mykkänen et al., 2021). The reason for this is related to the individualized nature of campaigning. When the bulk of campaigns are not conducted by party professionals but individual candidates and their support groups, possibilities for a large-scale use of costly new marketing strategies may be limited.

Digitalization is partly related to the more general process of professionalization described above, but it refers more explicitly to the modern techniques of digital campaigning. Although the general professionalization process has affected mostly the central party organization, digitalization has changed the way candidates' personal campaigns are conducted. During the past 15 years, campaigns in Finland have increasingly "gone digital" (Strandberg & Carlson, 2021). Although traditional forms of campaigning have, to a large degree, maintained their popularity among candidates, digital campaigning forms have grown in importance practically in every new election.

Despite the individualized nature of campaigning, the parties still have a significant role as well. Formally, it is the parties who decide on who gets to become a candidate in the elections. However, in the Finnish system, where the preference votes for all party candidates are pooled, parties are dependent on candidates who are able to attract significant numbers of votes (Koskimaa et al., 2021). Hence, in open-list proportional systems, individual candidates' electoral success has been typically analysed by concentrating on their personal characteristics or on their ideological positions. Studies on candidates' personal characteristics have emphasized the importance of personal vote earning attributes (PVEAs), which can give an edge to candidates over their rivals (Shugart et al., 2005; Poyet, 2021). Typical vote earning attributes include being an incumbent MP or a local councillor, being a local candidate in the district or being a "celebrity candidate" that has gained name recognition outside the field of politics. Empirical studies have shown that these vote-earning attributes are very important determinants of candidates' success (see Chapter 13). Recent studies have also shown that candidates' ideological or policy positions make a difference although the effect of ideology is typically smaller than the effects of candidates' personal characteristics (von Shoultz & Papageorgiou, 2021; Isotalo et al., 2020). However, the effects of campaigns on candidates' electoral success is a less studied area. Hence, it is interesting to contrast the effects of personal characteristics and campaigning efforts to compare their respective weights in the electoral process.

The following empirical analyses examine how these general trends manifest themselves in candidates' campaigns leading up to the 2019 parliamentary elections. It is important to know what campaigning forms candidates use and if these campaigning methods form distinct types of campaigning that vary between candidates. Running full-scale campaigns also requires considerable means. Hence, we need to examine candidates' campaigning budgets. Finally, it is critical to know how effective different kinds of campaigning efforts are in terms of electoral success. This helps us to understand, for example, how significant a role campaign financing plays in Finnish elections.

Campaigning forms

Table 16.1 shows how candidates used different forms of campaigning in the run up to the 2019 elections. In the candidate survey, the respondents were asked how an important part of their campaign 17 different campaigning forms constituted.

Table 16.1 How important parts of campaigns the following forms were? (%)

	Most important part	*Very important part*	*Somewhat important part*	*Not an important part*	*Not part of campaign at all*	*(n)*
Facebook	29	38	15	10	8	(758)
Personal flyers, posters or other campaign material (give-aways)	20	40	18	10	13	(762)
Personal web site or blog	12	34	23	10	20	(753)
Public speeches and rallies	11	28	29	16	16	(759)
Direct mailing	11	27	21	14	27	(755)
Media activities (interviews, press releases)	10	30	24	19	18	(756)
Personal ads (newspapers, radio spots, TV, movie houses)	9	24	19	13	36	(780)
Instagram	6	16	16	17	46	(756)
Distributing party campaign material	4	19	28	32	17	(752)
Meetings with party elites/members and/or party groups	3	15	28	31	23	(756)
YouTube	3	6	10	16	66	(758)
Twitter	3	12	16	22	46	(754)
Mailing list to inform supporters and voters about the campaign	2	7	11	16	64	(755)
SMS or other short message services (e.g., WhatsApp)	2	8	10	19	61	(758)
Door-knocking, canvassing	1	3	5	9	82	(752)
Calling up voters on the phone	0	1	5	13	80	(754)
Visiting businesses and social organizations	0	7	19	24	50	(754)

Source: Mattila et al. (2020).

The listed campaigning activities ranged from traditional forms such as canvassing or organizing public rallies to more modern forms of digital marketing and using social media.

According to the candidates, the most important individual form of campaigning was using Facebook. Over two-thirds of the candidates indicated that Facebook

was at least very important, if not the most important, part of their campaigns. Facebook was followed by more traditional personal handout materials, such as flyers and posters. Almost two-thirds of candidates evaluated these handouts to form at least a very important part of the campaign. On the third place, came personal websites or blogs, which formed the most important part of the campaign for 12% of the candidates and, additionally, for 34% of the candidates it was a very important part.

Clearly, the campaigning forms deemed most important by the candidates are well suited for individualized campaigns, which is natural given the need for the candidates to tailor their campaigns to highlight their personal appeal. Party-based forms of campaigning did not constitute a major part of the campaigns for most of the candidates. For example, only a quarter of respondents thought that distributing party material was important and even fewer saw that meetings with party elites or groups were significant.

It is also interesting look at the campaigning forms that were less popular among the Finnish candidates. Visiting businesses or social organizations were not considered important and neither were using email-lists nor SMS texts. Canvassing is a major part of campaigns in many countries to persuade voters and to mobilize them to vote. However, door knocking is very rarely used in Finland. The same applies for phone calls to potential voters. The low importance of these campaigning forms likely reflects the Finnish culture, which highlights the privacy of personal homes: campaigning is something that should be done outside the private sphere, in malls, media or on the internet.

Typical electoral campaigns mix different campaigning forms, with some candidates favouring certain campaigning types while others running a different kind of a campaign. The results presented in Table 16.1 are not able to show how candidates mix different activities in their individual campaigns. To analyse how likely it is that various campaigning forms are combined together, I performed a factor analysis on all the 17 campaigning forms. Factor analysis is a method that tries to identify dimensions in the data that show how some items (campaigning forms) are typically combined with each other and, conversely, which items are not likely to go together.

This analysis produced two factors, which constituted clearly identifiable campaigning dimensions. On the first dimension, named "Traditional campaigning", activities such as media appearances, public speeches, meetings with party leaders and businesses and personal ads in traditional media are emphasized. These are campaigning activities that have been parts of electoral campaigns probably since the very beginning of personal electoral campaigning. The second dimension, "Digital campaigning", has evolved and grown in importance since the 1990s. On this dimension, the use of digital platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter are significant, alongside with personal websites or blogs. I will use these factor analysis results later in the end of the chapter to analyse which campaigning types are more relevant for candidates' success.

The fact that traditional and digital campaigning form their own dimensions in the factor analysis does not mean that they constitute polar opposites of each other,

i.e., it is not the case that most candidates just concentrate either on traditional or digital campaigning and neglect the other one. As the two factors do not correlate strongly, there are actually different groups of candidates relying on different types of campaigning. Some of them emphasize both traditional and digital activities (or neither of them) while some others specialize in one of the two types. Relying on digital campaigning is, rather unsurprisingly, typical for younger candidates, especially from the Green League (VIHR), and for challenger candidates in general, while older candidates favour more traditional campaigning activities. Incumbent candidates typically use mixed strategies with strong emphasis on both types of campaigning. This is probably related to good campaigning resources (money and volunteers) which allows the incumbents to use versatile and wide-ranging campaigns (Mattila et al., 2020).

Campaign financing

Running a comprehensive and versatile personalized campaign requires resources. Next, the amount of money the candidates used on their campaigns is studied. Historically, the campaigns in Finland have been co-funded by both the party and the candidate. However, during the past few decades, two important changes have taken place. First, the amount resources spent on campaigns have increased and, second, the share of the total costs financed by candidates themselves have grown. One indication of the individualized nature of the Finnish electoral campaigns is that, combined, candidates use considerably more money to finance the campaigns than the parties (Moring et al., 2011). In the 2007 parliamentary elections, the candidates used in total 35–38 million euros to finance their campaigns and only one-third of these costs were covered by the parties (Mattila & Sundberg, 2012, 233). In the 2011 elections, the average costs of campaigns for those elected to the parliament or their deputies were 32,000 euros (Mattila & Sundberg, 2012, 234) and it grew to 36,000 euros in the following 2015 elections (Vaali-ja puoluerahoitusvalvonta, 2023). Most of these expenses were covered by private donations and candidates' own resources (savings or bank loans).

The following analysis of campaign financing in the 2019 elections is based on two data sets. First, there was a question on the amount of money used on campaigns in the Finnish part of the Comparative Candidate survey (CSS). The second, and probably more reliable, data are based on official election funding disclosures. According to the Finnish electoral law, candidates who are elected as MPs or as deputy MPs are required to file information on all their campaign costs (own funds and loans and contributions from other sources) in the National Audit Office within two months after the elections.

Based on the candidate survey data, candidates used on average about 8,000 euros run their campaigns (Table 16.2). This average number is calculated for all candidates who responded to the candidate survey. However, many of them were running for small, sometimes even fringe, parties who are not represented in the parliament and had very few hopes of being elected. If we look at only candidates from parties represented in the parliament, the respective average costs of campaigns are about 11,500 euros. Finally, when looking only at successful candidates

Table 16.2 Campaign financing in the 2019 parliamentary elections

	All candidates		*Candidates for parties represented in the parliament*		*Elected MPs and their deputies*	
	(Candidate survey)		*(Candidate survey)*		*(Election funding disclosures)*	
	€	(n)	€	(n)	€	(n)
All	8 193	(743)	11 587	(511)	34 770	(277)
Gender						
Male	7 610	(426)	12 040	(259)	37 632	(149)
Female	8 978	(317)	11 123	(252)	31 439	(128)
Age						
18–34	9 935	(143)	13 808	(101)	38 325	(41)
35–44	8 383	(191)	11 222	(139)	30 524	(95)
45–54	8 256	(185)	11 438	(129)	36 099	(69)
55–	6 878	(225)	10 492	(141)	37 770	(72)
Party						
KOK	24 303	(65)	24 303	(65)	55 175	(50)
RKP	17 278	(26)	17 278	(26)	44 037	(13)
SDP	14 902	(66)	14 902	(66)	28 922	(52)
KESK	14 558	(66)	14 558	(66)	48 038	(42)
VIHR	9 734	(65)	9 734	(65)	25 686	(29)
VAS	8 179	(67)	8 179	(67)	21 913	(26)
PS	6 186	(65)	6 186	(65)	18 236	(50)
KD	5 038	(58)	5 038	(58)	43 233	(11)
LIIK	1 672	(32)	1 672	(32)	22 597	(2)
SIN	885	(47)	885	(47)		
MUU	710	(185)				
Electoral District						
Helsinki	10 700	(87)	14 305	(64)	31 886	(28)
Pirkanmaa	8 217	(77)	13 425	(45)	36 988	(26)
Vaasa	11 130	(51)	13 357	(42)	45 963	(22)
Oulu	10 843	(55)	13 022	(45)	31 487	(24)
Varsinais-Suomi	9 247	(57)	12 786	(41)	33 801	(24)
Uusimaa	7 772	(146)	12 645	(88)	37 602	(45)
Häme	8 044	(47)	11 778	(31)	35 506	(21)
Satakunta	7 351	(37)	9 546	(28)	31 442	(13)
South-East Finland	6 859	(53)	9 195	(37)	30 342	(22)
Savo-Karjala	5 739	(49)	8 998	(28)	36 009	(22)
Middle Finland	6 289	(46)	8 353	(34)	25 402	(16)
Lapland	3 168	(37)	3 953	(28)	37 893	(12)
Åland Islands					15 736	(2)

Source: Mattila et al. (2020).

(elected or their deputies), the campaigning expenses rise to almost 35,000 euros. This figure is about the same as in the previous 2015 elections, which shows that, at least temporarily, the trend of growing campaign costs in Finland has flattened. According to the candidate survey, only 20% of the total campaigning costs for an average candidate were covered by the party and 27% was received through

contributions. The rest, over the half of the expenses, come from candidates' own purses (Mattila et al., 2020).

An interesting observation is that younger candidates spend more money on campaigning than older candidates do. This observation may be related to the fact that younger candidates are often non-incumbents who are challenging the incumbent MPs. The incumbents already have the necessary name-recognition among voters, while new candidates need to spend money to get similar exposure to wider audiences. Otherwise, the results are not very surprising. In terms of funding, the most expensive campaigns were run by candidates from the main centre-right party, National Coalition Party, and the distance to the parties next on the list was quite large. A noteworthy observation is the amount of money used by the populist Finns party. Even though they had considerably less money to use on their campaigns, the Finns were quite successful in the 2019 elections. They came second, just within a whisker of beating the winning Social Democrats (Arter, 2020). Finally, the geographical distribution shows that getting elected requires quite a lot of money in all parts of Finland, and the differences between electoral districts are quite small. It takes about the same amount of money to become an MP in the largest mainland electoral district of Uusimaa (36 seats) as from the smallest district of Lapland (seven seats) (not counting the Åland Islands district with only one seat).

Effectiveness of campaigning

The previous analyses showed that the use of various campaigning styles and the amount of funding that a candidate can allocate for campaigning vary considerably between the candidates. A crucial question is, if and to what extent do these efforts affect candidates' chances of being elected. Next, I will use the candidate survey data and regression analysis to analyse the effects of different campaigning types and funding on candidates' electoral success.

The dependent variable in the analysis is candidates' vote shares in their district.[1] The vote share was added to the survey data from the public official electoral register. As this variable is highly skewed, I performed a logit transformation to make its distribution follow the normal distribution more closely. As the main independent variables, I used the factor scores depicting candidates' use of traditional and digital forms of campaigning discussed above.[2] As a measure of campaign funding, I used the (log of) candidates' self-reported amount of money in euros. The rest of the variables are control variables. Education differences among candidates are measured with a dummy variable indicating if the candidate has university level education. The rest of the variables are rather self-explanatory. Gender (1 = female), role as a local municipality councillor (1 = local councillor) and incumbency (1 = currently Member of Parliament) are all measured with dummy variables, while age is included in the model in a linear form (measured as years).

Because the causal ordering of the independent variables may affect the "visibility" of the effects of campaigning and campaign funding, I try to disentangle these effects by estimating three different models. The first model includes only the traditional and digital campaigning variables to show their independent effects. As

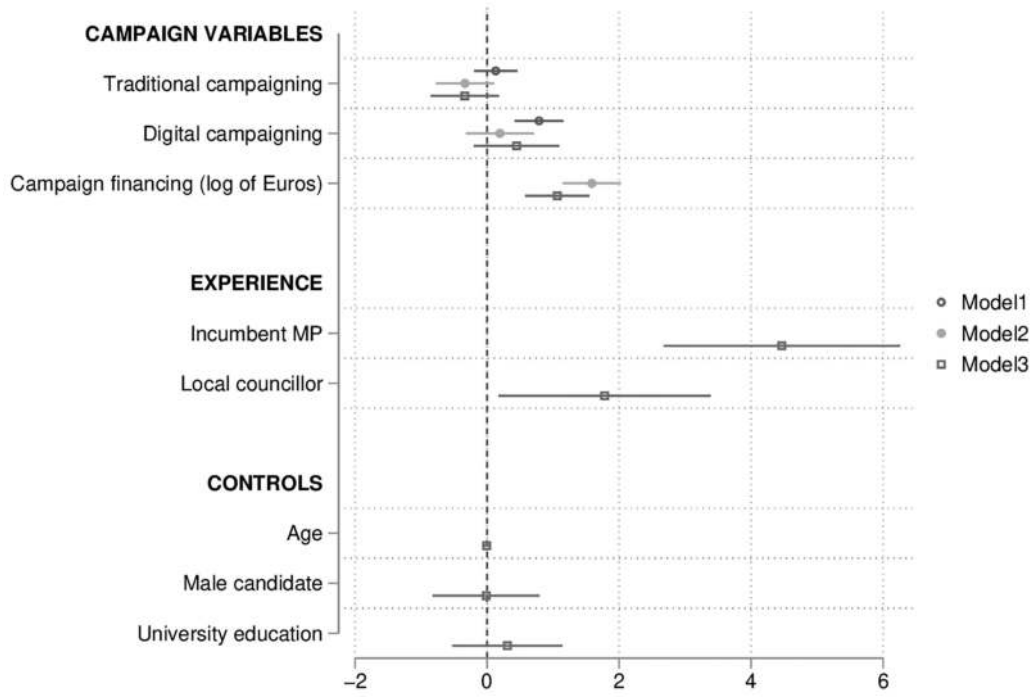

Figure 16.1 Regression analyses on factors related to candidates' voter shares. Coefficients with 95% confidence intervals.

Source: Finnish Parliamentary Candidates Study 2019, Ministry of Justice and Statistics Finland.

running full campaigns – whether traditional or digital – requires funding, the second model adds campaign funding to the analysis. Finally, the third model includes also all control variables.

The results are displayed in Figure 16.1. The picture shows the regression coefficient sizes with 95% confidence intervals for all the three models. The result from the first model, containing only the campaigning type variables, shows that digital campaigning is related to winning more votes. This shows that investing in campaigning really does make a difference. Interestingly, the effect for digital campaigning efforts is clearly larger than the effect for traditional campaigning. This mean that putting more emphasis on social media and other forms of digital marketing is a more efficient strategy for candidates than increasing traditional campaigning activities.[3]

However, campaigning activities require money. In Model 2, the campaign funding variable is added. The coefficient is positive indicating that the more money candidates can spend on their campaigns, the more successful they are in gaining personal votes. With the inclusion of the funding variable, the coefficients for both the traditional and digital campaigning variables are reduced and the coefficient for traditional campaign is not statistically significant. However, this was expected as funding comes before campaigning in the "causal chain" of the variables and running fully-fledged campaigns without good financing is practically impossible. The coefficient for the digital campaigning variable remains statistically significant, which testifies to its importance in modern election

campaigns. It can gain more votes for the candidate, partly independently of the amount of money the candidate is able to spend.

In Model 3, candidates' political experience as an incumbent MP and/or as a municipal councillor is added together with background variables. Now both campaigning variables lose statistical significance. Again, this not surprising as the two very influential personal vote earning variables reflecting political experience, and hence, increased name-recognition, are very important for vote winning. The effect size for campaign funding is reduced in Model 2, which suggests that politically experienced candidates can collect more money to use in their campaigns. Candidates' background (gender, age, level of education) does not have a major effect on their vote shares.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I analysed how candidates organized and financed their campaigns and how effective these campaigns were in the broader context of camping personalization, professionalization and digitalization. The examination of the use of various campaigning forms in the Finnish intra-party competition-inducing system demonstrated that the various individual activities form two main styles of campaigning: traditional and digital. The first one is composed of activities such as public speeches and rallies, meeting people face-to-face and in attempts to gain media visibility. In turn, the digital style of campaigning, often favoured by younger candidates, is composed of digital marketing through social media and personal web sites. However, whether the candidates relied more on traditional or digital campaigns, the use of individualized campaigning forms was clearly favoured over party-based forms, reflecting the highly personalized campaigns used in the Finnish open-list system. Distributing party materials or other party-based campaigning forms was not considered important parts of the campaigns.

Similar indicators of individualization were detected in campaign financing. According to the candidate survey, only about one-fifth of the campaigning expenses was covered by the parties. The rest came from donations to individual candidates or from candidates' own purses. Tracking changes in campaign financing is particularly important as expensive individualized campaigns may have negative effects on the functioning of the democracy for at least two reasons. First, expensive campaigns, which are based mostly of donations and own contribution, entail a risk of political corruption. The more candidates are dependent on outside non-party related contributions, the more they are likely to listen to the demands from their financial supporters. Second, the large amounts of resources needed to be successful in the elections create inequalities in the electoral process. If new potential candidates know that they need considerable amounts of their own money to be successful or private donations, it may be that it is only the candidates with access to significant personal resources are willing to run.

Finally, the results from the multivariate analysis showed that campaigning does, indeed, matter. And interestingly, it was digital campaigning that seemed to be more effective than traditional campaigning. However, the effects of campaign

efforts on vote gaining were mostly shadowed by money. For challenger candidates, i.e., those who are not running for re-election, it is mostly the financial resources that can secure electoral success. This is the main downside of individualized campaigning needed in the current Finnish open-list system, which pits against each other not only candidates from rival parties, but also, candidates from the same party.

Notes

1 It would also be possible to perform a logistic regression analysis and use a binary variable indicating if the candidate was elected or not to the parliament as the depended variable. There are, however, only 42 respondents in the survey were elected as MPs. Hence, I opted for normal regression analysis with the (transformed) vote share as an indicator of electoral success. Nevertheless, I repeated the analysis using logistic model with the elected/not-elected dummy as the dependent variable. The empirical results do not deviate significantly from the results presented in the chapter.
2 As these two variables are based on factor scores, their range, mean and standard deviation are very close to each other, making their regression coefficients easily comparable.
3 I also tested if there is an interaction effect between the two campaigning styles, which would mean that investing simultaneously to both campaigning styles would produce additional effectiveness in gaining votes, but this interaction variable was not statistically significant.

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17 Conclusions

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Introduction

As stated in the introduction to this volume, the purpose has been to provide thorough analyses of Finnish electoral democracy of today, both through describing recent trends in behaviors and attitudes and through providing explanatory analyses. Three themes have constituted the core logic of the volume: the State of democracy; Elections, parties and candidates; and Campaigning. What conclusions, then, can be drawn about contemporary Finnish electoral democracy from the 15 chapters which have analyzed the core themes of the volume?

The state of democracy

In recent times, one can safely say that the surrounding context of Finnish democracy has changed significantly. The war in Ukraine altered the perceptions of NATO membership in Finland almost overnight and eventually ended in Finland joining the alliance on April 4th, 2023. At the conception of this volume, this was an inconceivable change in Finland's core stance towards military alliances. Granted, the volume and its chapters are not about threats to Finland's security, but this development serves to demonstrate that Finnish democracy currently experiences both external and internal turmoil. The analyses in this volume have shed some light on the latter type of turmoil. An important caveat is needed though; generally, Finnish electoral democracy is in a healthy state and among the world's leading in that regard (e.g., V-dem, 2023). Chapter 2, thus, demonstrated that support for representative democracy is generally very strong among Finnish citizens. Similarly, the analyses in Chapter 3 showed that the level of institutional trust in Finland is stable and remains among the highest in Europe. Turnout is also fairly high in international comparison (Bäck & Christensen, 2020), but low in comparison with the other Nordic countries (Bengtsson et al., 2014). There are also signs that younger generations have developed a taste for online- and newer innovative forms of participation (see Chapter 6 by Huttunen & Christensen).

Nevertheless, there are also some dark clouds on the horizon. Rapeli and Strandberg, having found support for the dissatisfaction hypothesis regarding democratic preferences, concluded their chapter (Chapter 2) by stating that Finland serves as

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a reminder of how a calm surface may hide underlying disappointment with the workings of democracy. The last of which has often been seen as one of the main drivers for the explosive rise in popularity of the populist Finns party during the last decade (see Borg, 2012, 202). Bäck, Karv, and Kestilä-Kekkonen (Chapter 3) also revealed through their explanatory analyses of the relationship between political self-efficacy and institutional trust that critical citizens dominate over supportive citizens. Thus, citizens who believe in their own capacity to understand politics are the least trusting and vice versa. Furthermore, Bäck et al. point out that there is a differentiation among citizens' trust in political institutions which may partly feed into a fragmentation of participation (see also Chapter 5 and Lahtinen, 2019; Martikainen et al., 2005). Huttunen and Christensen (Chapter 6) having studied differentiation of participation across generation of Finnish citizens, gave further insights. Thus, their analyses show that while traditional participation is not differentiating Finnish generations, online activities (see also Chapter 14) and democratic innovations such as the Citizen's initiative are.

Turnout in Parliamentary elections has been stable during the period analyzed in this volume, but there was a sustained period of decline 15 years before that in which turnout dropped from around 80 percent to around 70 percent (see Chapter 5). Helimäki and Wass also (Chapter 5) discuss that the Finnish electoral system places a high cognitive burden on voters (see also Cunow et al., 2021; Söderlund et al., 2021). Thus, turnout in Finland has become segmented so that voters from disadvantaged family background, with low socio-economic position and poor health, vote to a significantly lower extent than citizen high in participatory resources. The final aspect of the state of Finish democracy studied in this volume was the occurrence of electoral harassment (Chapter 4 by Isotalo & Wass). As in many countries, harassment in conjunction with election has been a rather recent phenomenon in Finland, likely partly due to the rise of social media and the digitalization of societies in general. Chapter 4 demonstrated a rather worrisome situation whereby experiences of harassment are rather high among nominated candidates campaigning to be elected, albeit that voters do not report corresponding levels of observations of harassments. A more positive finding is that experiences of serious forms of harassment such as hacks and data leaks are rare. Nevertheless, there are clear indications that many of the malaises of digitalization—disinformation, defaming campaigns, hate speech, faking content—are commonplace in the views of Finnish candidates and often directed at younger candidates (see Chapter 4). Early reports on the 2023 election suggest that this trend has only intensified in recent years (Laakso, 2023).

Overall, the analyses of the state of Finnish electoral democracy within this volume show that although Finland is one of the healthiest democracies worldwide (e.g., V-dem, 2023), it is not a democracy without its challenges. The time period under scrutiny here is particularly interesting in this regard whereby several recent negative trends have been observed. Nevertheless, the political consensus-seeking culture, the strong position of public service media (Horowitz & Leino, 2020; Matikainen et al., 2020) and the general high trust in democracy and its institutions provide a strong basis for Finnish democracy to so-to-speak weather the current storm.

Elections, parties, and candidates

Turning to the second focus area of the volume, the analyses provided by the individual chapters have showed that the recent decades is a mixture of old and new, of stability and volatility, visible in the relevant political divides, in the party system, and in the behaviors and attitudes of voters.

On the one hand, the traditional cleavages of center/periphery, rural/urban, and workers/capital (e.g., Lipset & Rokkan, 1967) upon which the Finnish party system was formed (see Chapter 1) still retain a clear importance for the electorate. Thus, Tiihonen and Söderlund (Chapter 7) show that while the trend is downwards, class voting is still quite prevalent among the electorate, especially among working class voters. In Chapter 8, Grönlund and Söderlund likewise display that voters' average position on the socioeconomic left-right scale has been very stable since 2003. Furthermore, they also show that voters of different parties line up on the left-right axis as one would more-or-less expect and that the left-right dimension is clearly significant in explaining voting for the SDP, KOK and VAS. Borg and Paloheimo (Chapter 9) similarly show that the left-right dimension retains a strong explanatory power on voters' party identification. Furthermore, they also demonstrate how the heterogenic party system reflects in the party identification of the electorate whereby there "is a party for every taste".

On the other hand, the period under scrutiny is one in which new cleavages driven by socio-cultural—i.e., the GAL-TAN dimension (e.g., Hooghe et al., 2002)—rather than socio-economic values have grown in Finland and laid their mark on both the parties and voters. As has been mentioned throughout this book, the populist the Finns party surged in popularity in the 2011 parliamentary election largely on an anti-EU, anti-immigration, anti-minority, and anti-environmental protection rhetoric, and the party has been able to uphold its strong support in the parliamentary election that has followed.

Furthermore, in Chapter 8 (Grönlund and Söderlund), the analyses show that there has been significant movement in voter's average positions on the GAL-TAN dimension, which is centered around the same issues as the populist's agenda. Furthermore, the positioning of the voters of different parties on the same dimension has clearly spread out more, or become more sorted, over time so that certain "signpost" parties of the GAL (the Green League and Left Alliance) and TAN (The Finns and Christian Democrats) have emerged. The GAL-TAN dimension has doubled its explanatory power on party choice between 2003 and 2019, and it is a particularly strong predictor of support for the Finns (TAN values) and the Green League (GAL values). Borg and Paloheimo's findings (Chapter 9) similarly indicate that some of the components of socio-cultural values, especially traditional values versus liberal values, matter for party identification too.

In their chapter, Kekkonen, Himmelroos, and Kawecki (Chapter 10) provided an interesting angle on how the sorting of parties is potentially reflected in citizen's levels of affective polarization towards Finnish parties. A moderate but stable increase in affective polarization is observed between 2003 and 2019. This trend has been more evident among left-leaning than right-leaning citizens and

equally evident for GAL and TAN leaning citizens. Although it is important to note that a large share of the Finnish electorate is not polarized, and that voter sorting partly explains the trend (see Chapter 10), the development can be seen as worrisome and adds to the notion of the recent Finnish elections being characterized by turmoil. In the 2023 election (not analytically covered in this volume), a general observation is that all these GAL-TAN driven cleavages and their effects have amplified further.

Turning to the chapters on voting, the analyses shed light on how the Finnish open-list proportional election system where votes are cast for candidates on (generally) unranked party lists, clearly reflects on voting behavior. Firstly, Söderlund (Chapter 11) showed that voters generally feel that both the party and the individual candidate matters for their vote, albeit with a recent slight increase in the share of citizens who feel that the party is important. The latter is likely to be driven by the (moderate) increase in affective polarization and party sorting which has followed the Finns party's growth in support, whereby certain segments of voters are more strongly motivated by the party collective, compared to the individual candidates. Söderlund's analyses also show that Finnish voters value the preferential electoral system and that the central role of candidates in the Finnish system is reflected in voters' opinions. Thus, 77 percent felt that being able to vote for a candidate is important. In the exploratory analyses, Söderlund demonstrated that people with strong party identification and more extreme ideological leaning are the ones who tend to value party over candidate in their vote. Younger and less politically interested citizens tend to be more focused on candidates than parties.

Chapters 12 and 13 analyze candidate voting further. Helimäki and von Schoultz (Chapter 12) study motivations for voters' candidate choice, whereas Isotalo and von Schoultz (Chapter 13) focus on which candidate traits translates into the highest shares of votes. It should be noted that Helimäki and von Schoultz found that party affiliation was the most important aspect that voters focus on when choosing which candidate to vote for. Beyond party affiliation, though, both chapters point to the importance of political experience for Finnish voters and candidates. Thus, political incumbency is clearly an important shortcut that voters use when placing their vote, especially for older voters. Likewise, incumbents on all levels of government (i.e., MEP, MP, and local councilors) are more likely to be successful in securing intraparty votes (see Chapter 13). Isotalo and von Schoultz also found clear effects on personal votes from other factors related to name-recognitions such as being a party leader, a celebrity or having ran for election before. All these findings point to something of a catch-22 of the OLPR-system; most factors related to success are those that come from previous success. Thus, campaigning techniques may be one of the few ways in which unknown candidates can have success. This is confirmed in Isotalo's and von Schoultz's chapter, where they found that campaign spending is strongly linked to electoral success (see also Chapters 16). Other take-aways from Chapters 12 and 13 are that substantive aspects appear more important for voter candidate choices than descriptive aspects such as same-gender or same-age voting. A similar pattern shows regarding vote-earning attributes where factors such as candidate gender and age have little importance.

Overall, the analyses of the second part of the volume show how the electoral- and party system sets the stage, or boundaries, for an intricate and multifaceted electoral playing field. In this sense, the duality of the Finnish electoral system, with both individual candidates and parties being of central relevance for voting behavior and the outcome of elections, makes Finland a particularly interesting case. Furthermore, the period of analysis has been one of considerable stress regarding values, cleavages, and affective polarization. This latter has, despite the international trends towards a more personalized political arena (Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Karvonen, 2010) and dealignment between parties and voters (Schmitt, 2014), contributed to parties as collective actors again regaining some of their relevance.

Campaigning

When it comes to campaigning – the third theme of the volume – the era which has been under scrutiny in this volume has seen three major trends; professionalization, personalization, and, above all, digitalization that all are nowadays mainly candidate-driven rather than party-driven. Granted, the turn towards professionalization and increased personalization of Finnish campaigning started already in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Railo et al., 2016) and digital campaigning took its first steps in the late 1990s, so the observations on campaigning in the chapters of this book mainly serve to underline that these trends are continuously developing from each election.

In this regard, Söderlund (Chapter 15) found that while the overall reported emphasis of candidates' campaigns is evenly distributed across either the candidate him- or herself or on the party, the candidates nevertheless emphasize personal campaign issues and personal records more than their party's main issues and records in the actual campaigning. Being a young candidate was especially impactful for a candidate-centered focus in campaigning. This lends some support to the notion we presented in the previous section on how campaigning is the main tool that candidates lacking incumbency, experience, and name-recognition can use to break in on the electoral playing field so-to-speak. Söderlund also concluded that the campaign focus of Finnish candidates is very heterogenic and thus reflective of the party- and electoral system itself. The likelier a candidate is to succeed in being elected, the likelier she or he focuses on her-/himself. Other candidates that know that they are running to fill out the party's list and thus gather collective votes tend to focus on the party to a higher extent.

Mattila's (Chapter 16) analysis of the actual campaign forms and how these relate to electoral success reflect the professionalization and personalization of campaigning in Finland. He found, firstly, that candidates use a broad range of campaign techniques, most of which were entirely handled by their own campaign-groups and not the party. This, of course, reflects what has been stressed throughout this book that the Finnish system is candidate focused. This also applies for the main responsibility for running campaigns (see Introduction and Karvonen, 2010; von Schoultz, 2018). Furthermore, Mattila's findings indicate a professional marketing approach whereby candidates spread out their campaign messages over

several different forms. This is often referred to as a long-tail marketing approach (see Anderson, 2006). When analyzing factors explain electoral success, Mattila's findings further show how important professionalism and the individual candidates are. Thus, campaign funding matters which, of course, is a core trait of a professional campaign. On average, getting elected requires a campaign budget that is over four times bigger than the average budget of all candidates (Table 16.2 in Chapter 16). Furthermore, the experiences of the candidate herself or himself are crucial significant factors for electoral success.

Mattila also found, finally, that digital forms of campaigning are predominant among Finnish candidates with social media leading the way, but with traditional forms of campaigning remaining important. Facebook is the most used campaigning tool and all digital techniques add up to 53 percent of the campaign tolls that Finnish candidates deem to be the most important part of their campaign. Digital campaigning was also more effective for electoral success than traditional campaigning, almost being statistically significant even when campaign spending and political experience is considered. These findings, of course, indicate the digitalization trend of Finnish campaigning. While, as stated earlier, the digitalization of Finnish campaigning had started before the elections studied in this book, the 2003–2019 era is certainly the one in which the phenomenon exploded and took over among candidates (Chapter 16, see also Strandberg & Borg, 2020).

The digitalization trend is also very evident in Carlson's and Strandberg's (Chapter 14) analyses of inter-generational patterns in voters' use of online sources for following the elections. Firstly, they observe a general steep rise in the use of both older (web 1.0) and newer (web 2.0) forms of online sources among all generations of voters. The first of which rose from 9 percent in 2003 to 52 percent in 2019 and the latter of which rose from 11 percent in 2011 to 37 percent in 2019. Secondly, Carlson and Strandberg showed that the digitalization of following campaigns among voters is, most unsurprisingly, the clearest among the digital natives that is generation Z (those born 1995 or later). Nevertheless, all but the oldest generations of Finnish voters nowadays use online sources, to a large extent, for following elections. An interesting finding from the explanatory analyses in Chapter 14 is that using social media to follow elections is not predicted by resource-based factors such as education level or social class, and neither by having a high level of political interest. Thus, digitalization is not only breaking patterns of *how* politics is followed but also regarding *who* are following. In the 2023 election, this became even more evident when some young, inexperienced populist candidates where able to reach entirely new voter groups through TikTok (Äijälä, 2023).

A given summary of the chapters on campaigning is the same as for the previous section; the electoral- and party system set the boundaries for a heterogenic and evolving campaigning. The analyses have shown how digitalization has become predominant among both candidates and voters, a trend which is bound to continue since all new generations of candidates and voters alike are digital natives. A normative view on campaigning in Finland is that it is generally healthy, albeit that the high costs of getting elected may become problematic (see Chapter 16 for discussion on this) since candidates become reliant on funders (who have their policy

preferences). The 2023 election (not analyzed in this book) also saw a clear turn towards more negative campaigning than ever before in Finland (Laakso, 2023). Again, this development has mostly been driven by the populist Finns party and its candidates.

Conclusions

What, then, are the main take-aways from this book? First of all, the analyses have shown that the mechanisms of both electoral supply and demand are largely shaped by the institutional context. The party- and electoral system nudges both candidates and voters towards certain behavior and shape campaigning norms and practices. To put it simple, an individual-focused system places a lot of responsibility on individual candidates and makes voters inclined to place a lot of emphasis on individual candidates too. That said, the book has also demonstrated the heterogeneity hidden within this broader electoral framework, so this conclusion is to be taken as indicative, not definitive. Secondly, the period in time that the book focused on has been one of changes. Although the direction of causality is not proven here, the surge in popularity of the Finns party appears to be in the center of driving values towards polarization, in altering voting behavior and campaigning practices. Whether these observations are the start of a new era in Finnish electoral democracy remains to be seen. After all, the analyses here also observed stability regarding aspects such as class voting and left-right values. Nevertheless, the observations show that even a Nordic welfare democracy is not immune to the current global trends of populism and polarization.

Finally, we chose to end on a methodological conclusion since this book—as stated in the Introduction chapter—was conceived to celebrate 20 years of the Finnish National Election Study. Thus, we feel that the analyses and findings throughout the book have served to emphasize the importance that continuous collection of voter surveys holds. Such data can be used for tracing longitudinal developments, for comparisons with other countries and, as was the case with the Comparative Candidate Study data here, for analysis in conjunction with candidate data. So hopefully, in another 20 years, a similar book this one will emerge to celebrate the Finnish National Election Study. Until then, happy 20th anniversary to the Finnish National Election Study!

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Technical Appendix

The Finnish National Election Study

The main data source for the chapters in this volume is the Finnish National Election Study (FNES). The election study has been carried out as post-election surveys after the Finnish parliamentary elections in 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 and 2023.

The data consist of questions regarding politics and elections in a broad sense capturing attitudes towards the political system and specific political issues, ideology, party identification, turnout, party and candidate choice, political activism, and socio demographic background. The data also contain Finland's contribution to the international Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (www.CSES.org).

The surveys have been conducted as face-to-face interviews with a complementary paper or online questionnaire filled in after the interviews. Field work has been carried out by different commercial organisations and the sampling methods have varied across elections. More detailed information about the each of the election studies is found at the Finnish Social Data Archive (https://www.fsd.tuni.fi/en/) where the data are archived and publicly available for download.

Links to the individual surveys

FNES 2003 (FSD1260) https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD1260?lang=en&study_language=en

FNES 2007 (FSD2269) https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD2269?lang=en&study_language=en

FNES 2011 (FSD2635) https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD2653?lang=en&study_language=en

FNES 2015 (FSD3067) https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD3067?lang=en&study_language=en

FNES 2019 (FSD3467) https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD3467?lang=en&study_language=en

The Finnish Parliamentary Candidates Study 2019 (Kestilä-Kekkonen & von Schoultz, 2020) is used in Chapter 4 by Isotalo and Wass. and in chapter 16 by Mikko Mattila.

The Finnish Parliamentary Candidates Study 2019 (FCS2019) was collected within the framework of a large-scale international project Comparative Candidates

Survey (www.comparativecandidates.org). The Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS) is a joint multi-national project with the goal of collecting data on candidates running for national parliamentary elections in different countries using a common core questionnaire to allow for cross-country comparison. Data collection comprises surveys among candidates as well as relevant context information concerning the constituency of the candidate and the political system at large.

The Finnish Parliamentary Candidates Study was, in 2019, conducted for the fourth time in Finland. The questionnaire was sent to all nominated candidates in the 2019 parliamentary elections with a response rate of 31.1 percent (n = 770). The data collected in 2007, 2011, and 2015 are included in the cumulative CCS datasets, available on the online data repository SWISSUbase (https://www.swissubase.ch/en/), and available for public download. The FCS2019 has not yet been made publicly available.

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Note: **Bold** page numbers refer to tables; *italic* page numbers refer to figures and page numbers followed by "n" denote endnotes.