

The electoral value of ideological positions and personal attributes of candidates in intraparty competition: a study of the Swiss Open List*

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GT2.1 Los sistemas electorales y sus rendimientos

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ABSTRACT

Intraparty Preference voting (IPV) systems offer different incentives for candidates to cultivate a personal vote, but little is known about how the policy positions of candidates affect their success in intraparty competition. This paper analyses the effect of ideological positions and personal attributes of candidates on their electoral success in the Swiss Lower House election of 2019. We use candidate survey data to test three propositions. First, that under a IPV system with multiple preference voting candidates positioning themselves closer ideologically to their party position are more successful than their co-partisans deviating from the party median position. Second, that the ideological position of candidates have a weaker effect on their electoral outcomes than their personal attributes. Additionally, open lists are more complex electoral environments for voters as district magnitude increases. Therefore, as our third proposition we test whether the ideological positions of candidates have a weaker effect on their electoral success, as constituency magnitude or the number of co-partisan candidates competing increases in their district.

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PRESENTATION

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Incentives to cultivate an ideological vote-earning strategy in intraparty competition**
- 3. Hypotheses**
- 4. Data, variables and analyses**
- 5. Results**

Incentives to cultivate an ideological vote-earning strategy in intraparty competition

Open list proportional representation (OLPR) systems are complex electoral settings for both voters and candidates (Brockington, 2003; Valdini, 2012& 2013; Marcinkiewicz & Stegmaier, 2015; Muraoka, 2019; Mustilo & Polga-Hecimovich, 2020) .

Under OLPR systems, voters are allowed to choose among a party 's candidates and candidates from the same party are forced to competing against each other to get elected.

- ➡ A large number of studies have analyzed the effect of the personal attributes of candidates (such gender, age, incumbency, electoral experience and locality) on their electoral success in intraparty competition (Ortega, 2008; Valdini, 2012 & 2013; Dahlgaard, 2016).
- ➡ A extensive literature has also found that the position of candidates on the ballot affects their number of preference votes (Darcy& McAllister, 1990; Miller & Krosnich,1998, Ortega, 2003, 2004, 2008; Lutz, 2010; Marcinkiewicz& Stegmaier, 2015; Blom-Hansen et al., 2016; Mustilo & Polga-Hecimovich, 2020).
- ➡ The effect of the ideological positions of candidates on their electoral success has received negligible attention in the literature (Katz, 1980; Ortega, 2004; Von Schoultz and Papageorgiou, 2019; Isotalo et al., 2020).

HYPOTHESES

- H1: candidates pursuing a balance between their personal reputations and those of their parties will attract more preference votes than their party colleagues focusing their electoral campaign on either them as candidates or their party merits.**
- H2: in OLPR systems with bloc preference voting, candidates with party-median policy positions will receive more preference votes than their party colleagues that deviate from them.**
- H3: ideological positions of candidates will have a weaker effect on their electoral success compared to their personal attributes.**
- H4: ideological positions of candidates will have a weaker effect on their electoral success, as the district magnitude or the number of candidates competing from the same party increases.**

DATA

- Our dataset combines candidate survey data from the Swiss module of the Candidate Comparative Survey (CCS) with candidates' and their parties' election results from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office in the National Council elections of 2019. In the CCS, **a total of 2131** out of 4645 candidates standing for the 2019 Swiss Lower House election were interviewed.
- **We limited the candidate survey dataset in three important ways.**
- First, only candidates standing in multi-member constituencies were included in the analyses.
- Second, we limited the analysis to candidates from parties that received seats in either 2015 or 2019. A total of 13 parties gained seats in at least one of the last two elections to the Swiss National Council.
- Third, we limited the dataset to candidates from parties with nine or more interviewed candidates running in a district.
- **These three conditions narrowed the number of candidates in the dataset from 2131 to 1661 candidates.**

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

LOGIT PREFERENCE VOTE SHARE

- CAMPAIGN MAIN FOCUS (on a scale from 0 to 10) AND ITS SQUARED ROOT
 - IDEOLOGICAL DISTANCE (on the LEFT-RIGHT dimension)
 - IDEOLOGICAL DISTANCE (on the GAL-TAN dimension)
 - PARTY POSITION (LEFT-RIGHT)
 - PARTY POSITION (GAL-TAN)
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- GENDER (1 for women, 0 for men)
 - AGE AND SQUARED AGE (in decades)
 - INCUMBENCY (1 for members of Parliament in the previous legislature and 0 otherwise)
 - POLITICAL EXPERIENCE at regional and local levels (1 for yes, 0 otherwise)
 - PARTY EXPERIENCE at federal, regional and local levels (1 for yes, 0 otherwise)
 - LOCALNESS (on a scale from 0 to 1)
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- BALLOT POSITION (on a scale from 0 to 1)
 - LIST LENGTH (number of candidates competing on a party list)
 - LIST SIZE (percentage of total votes cast for the party list of each candidate at district level)

MULTILEVEL REGRESSION ANALYSES

**CANDIDATES (level 1) ARE NESTED WITHIN PARTIES (level 2) IN
SPECIFIC DISTRICTS (level 3)**

RESULTS

H1: candidates pursuing a balance between their individual reputations and those of their parties will attract more preference votes than their party colleagues focusing their electoral campaign on either them as candidates or their party merits.

Results do not support our first hypothesis. Candidates attract more preference votes as they more focus their electoral campaign on them as candidates rather than on their party reputations.

RESULTS

H2: in OLPR systems with block preference voting, candidates with party median policy positions will receive more preference votes than their party colleagues that deviate from them.

The ideological positioning of candidates has its expected effects in Switzerland. Decreasing the ideological distance between a candidate and their party median position provides an electoral advantage. However, ideological distances on the GAL-TAN dimension are not statistically significant.

RESULTS

H3: Candidates' policy positions will have a weaker effect on their electoral success compared to their personal attributes

Consistent with our hypothesis 3, the ideological positions of candidates have a weaker effect on their electoral success than their personal attributes. Female and younger candidates, incumbents, candidates with political/party experience receive more preference votes than their male party colleagues, newcomers and candidates with no political/party experience. Localness is also positively associated with preference vote share.

RESULTS

H4: ideological positions of candidates will have a weaker effect on their electoral success, as the district magnitude or the number of candidates competing from the same party increases.

Results do not support our hypothesis 4: the effect of ideological distance does not significantly vary, as the number of candidates competing increases.