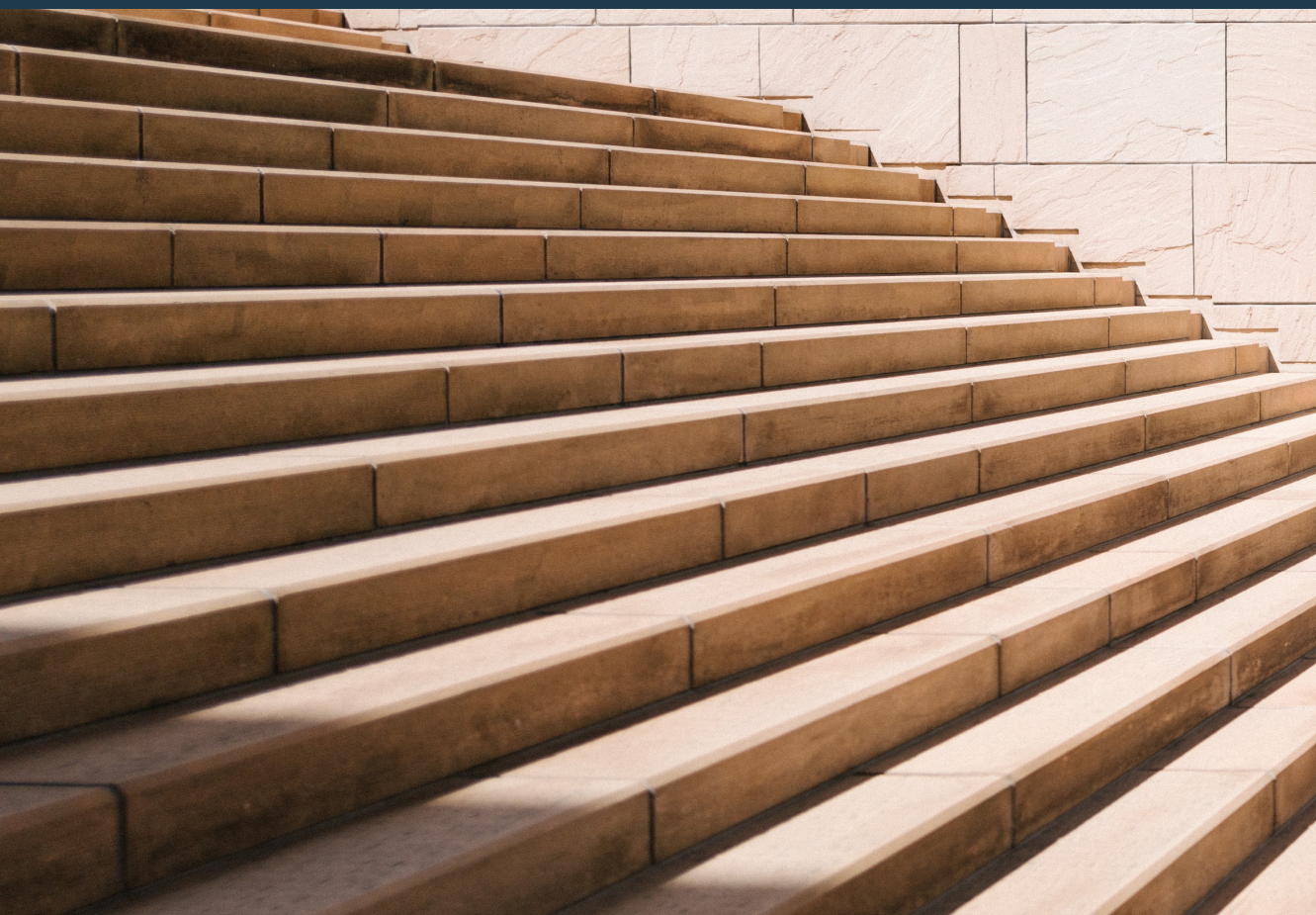
Åbo Akademi
Institutet för samhällsforskning

Voting and Public Opinion in Finland

THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION OF 2019

Edited by Kimmo Grönlund and Kim Strandberg



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FOREWORD

The data in this report derive mainly from on an online panel called eOpinion 2019. The panel was organized by the Social science research institute (Samforsk) of Åbo Akademi University between March and June 2019. It gathered almost 2,000 Finnish adults, which were surveyed eight times in total (see the technical appendix for details). The panel was the third of its kind, since we have run similar, but smaller panels in conjunction with the parliamentary elections of 2011 and 2015. The 2019 panel covered both the parliamentary election on April 14 and the election to the European parliament on May 26. The political spring of 2019 was thus especially busy in Finland, and we hope that this report will shed some further insight into both voting and contemporary public opinion in Finland. The report mainly focuses on the parliamentary election, but a brief comparison with the EU-election is also provided.

As editors of this report and managers of the eOpinion 2019-project, we would like to emphasize that this report and the panel itself are results of team work. We thank all of our colleagues who have contributed with chapters to this report. We especially want to thank PhD student Aleksi Suuronen who did an incredible amount of work in overseeing and keeping the online panel up and running. This panel would not have succeeded without your efforts, Aleksi! Special thanks go also to research assistants Rasmus Sirén and Albert Weckman, who did an excellent work with the recruitment of participant's to the panel as well as managing everyday proceedings such as responding to participants' feedback, translations of surveys and so on. Moreover, Albert and Rasmus, your help with editing this volume was more than necessary. We would also like to thank the generous funding that has made this research possible, especially the Academy of Finland projects "ConTre - Pathways to political trust" (Grönlund), decision number 289439, and "Involving citizens through deliberative processes?" (Strandberg), project number 28200171K1, as well as the Center of Excellence funding from Åbo Akademi foundation. Last but certainly not least, we extend our sincerest gratitude to all of the nearly 2,000 citizens who volunteered to our panel.

Without further ado, we hope that the readers will find the report interesting and that it answers some of the questions you have about the election. Our purpose is to provide a first and accessible insight into the different angles of voting and other political behavior. While the findings in the report are to be seen as indicative, and not as an absolute truth, we hope you will find something that suits your taste.

Åbo and Vasa, June 27, 2019

Kimmo Grönlund and Kim Strandberg

1. THE 2019 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION IN FINLAND

Kimmo Grönlund and Kim Strandberg

Finland is considered a stable consensual democracy. It has a proportional electoral system with open lists, and no legislative electoral threshold. Therefore, the party system is fragmented and governments are mostly formed as broad coalitions over the left–right cleavage. However, the 2015–2019 government under Prime Minister Juha Sipilä (the Center Party with agrarian roots) that consisted of only three parties, including the conservative National Coalition Party and the nationalist-populist Finns Party, was ideologically rather coherent. Thus, the Social Democrats (SDP), the Left Alliance, and the Greens criticized the government for having implemented policies that would have increased cleavages and inequalities. In an international comparison Finland is a typical Nordic welfare state with a universal welfare system, based on a high progressivity in income taxation and generous social transfers. Nevertheless, and even though the statistics in terms of Gini-coefficients do not support this, the opposition was somewhat successful in their criticism. The increased ideological polarization was reflected in voter turnout, which increased with two percentage points to 72.1 percent[1].

The Sipilä government had experienced internal problems as well. In June 2017, the Finns Party elected a new party leadership, whereby the fraction loyal to the former party leader Timo Soini (Foreign Minister in the Sipilä government) lost all seats to the fraction led by the prominent anti-immigration and anti-Islam MEP Jussi Halla-aho, who became the new party chairman. As a result, the party split into two, and the Soini fraction formed a new party, Blue Reform. Of the Finns Party MPs in parliament, 19 eventually moved to the Blue Reform, whereas 16 stayed in Halla-aho's Finns party. Blue Reform stayed in government, but in the 2019 election, the new party vanished from parliament. None of its candidates were elected, and the party polled only 1 percent of the vote. The Finns Party, on the other hand, made a remarkable upswing compared to the polls after the party split, and received 17.5 percent of the vote and 39 seats, and finished second, almost becoming the largest party in parliament. The more radical nationalist Finns Party only lost 0.2 percentage points compared to the old Finns party result in 2015. Thus, Halla-aho's party made a remarkably successful election.

The government was also split concerning a large reform on regional governance, where the Center Party wanted to implement a new administration at the regional level, and the National Coalition Party wanted a healthcare reform, where citizens would have had a free

[1] In Finnish national elections, all Finnish citizens are automatically registered as voters, also those permanently residing abroad. Turning out to vote among Finns living abroad is rare. This means that voter turnout is normally reported for voters living in Finland. In the election of 2019, voter turnout for all eligible voters was 68.7 %

choice of (publicly funded) healthcare between public and private health providers. The deal was a typical bargain between parties, with a content that no one wanted as a whole, the opposition and many experts criticized the deal. The Blue Reform was more in favor of regional administration. In the end, the reform failed due to constitutional problems, and the government resigned on March 8, just over a month before the election, which took place on April 14.

The main opposition party SDP became the largest party in the 2019 election with 17.7 % of the votes (up 1.2 percentage points from 2015), but the party did much worse than opinion polls suggested just a few months before the Election Day. In terms of seats, the SDP received 40 out of the total 200 seats in the Finnish Parliament. Besides the Blue Reform, which lost all its seats (but no comparison can be made to the 2015 election, since these MPs were still part of the Finns Party), the biggest loser of the election was PM Sipilä's Center Party. The party polled at 13.8 percent (down 7.3 percentage points) and lost 18 seats, obtaining only 31. Of the three governmental parties, the National Coalition did best with 17.0 % and lost only slightly in vote shares, 1.2 percentage points down from 2015, but actually managed to gain a seat and got 38 seats in the new parliament.

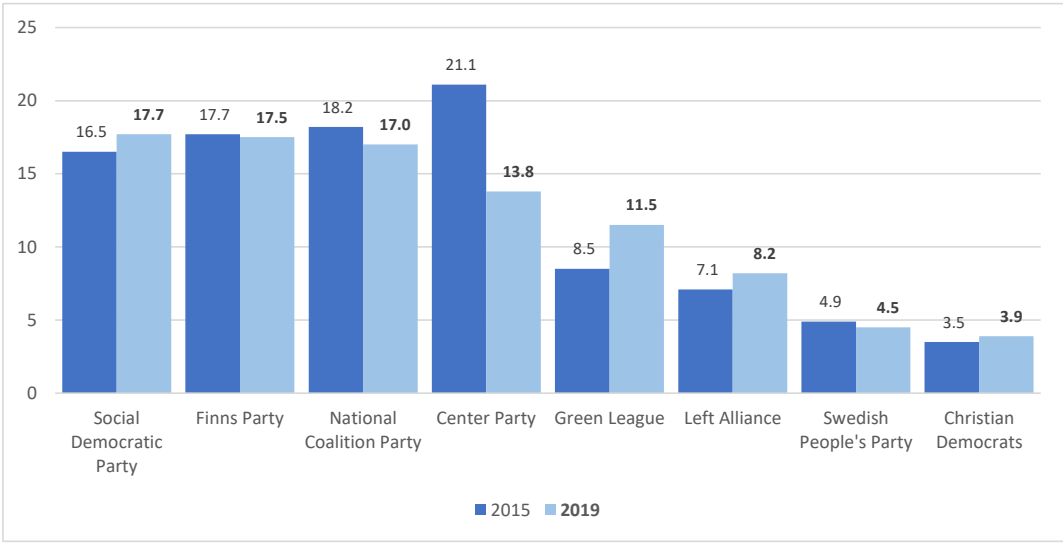

Figure 1.1 Vote share by party 2015 and 2019 (%).[1]

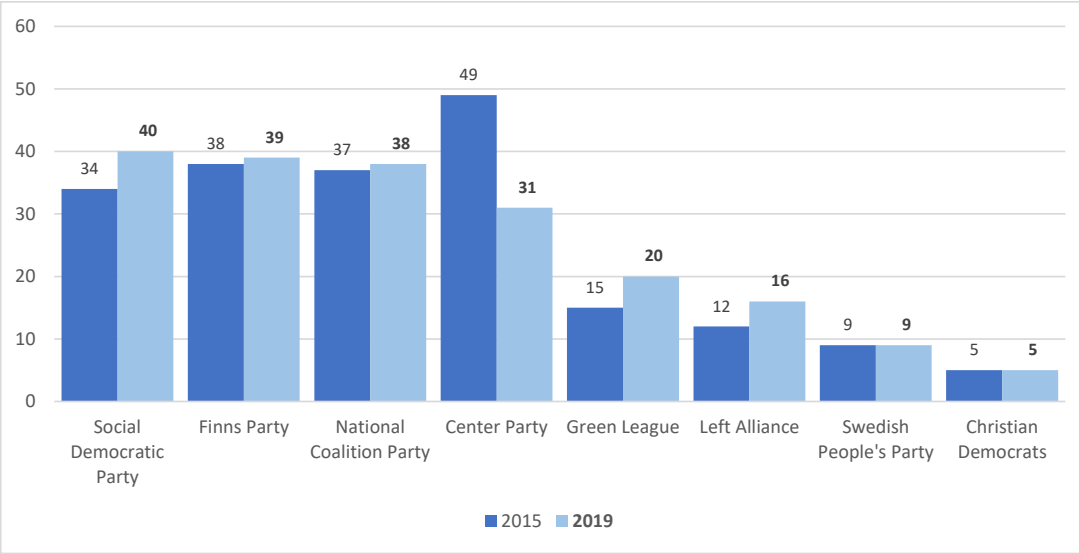

Figure 1.2 Seats per party 2015 and 2019.[2]

In terms of vote shares, the Greens were the biggest winners, attracting 11.5 percent of the vote (up 3.0 percentage points from 2015). The Green League received 20 seats, gaining five new seats. The Left Alliance gained 1 percentage point and ended at 8.2 %, with 16 seats, gaining four new seats. All in all, the leftist opposition, including the Greens, gained 15 seats. Out of the two smaller opposition parties, the Swedish People's Party lost marginally 0.3 percentage points and got 4.5 percent of the vote, as well as nine seats. The MP from Åland joins the Swedish party group, making it 10 in total. The Christian Democrats received 3.9 percent of the vote and held their five seats in parliament.

The geographic distribution of the support for the different parties can be seen in Figure 1.3 below. The map depicted therein shows the party that received the highest share of votes in each municipality.

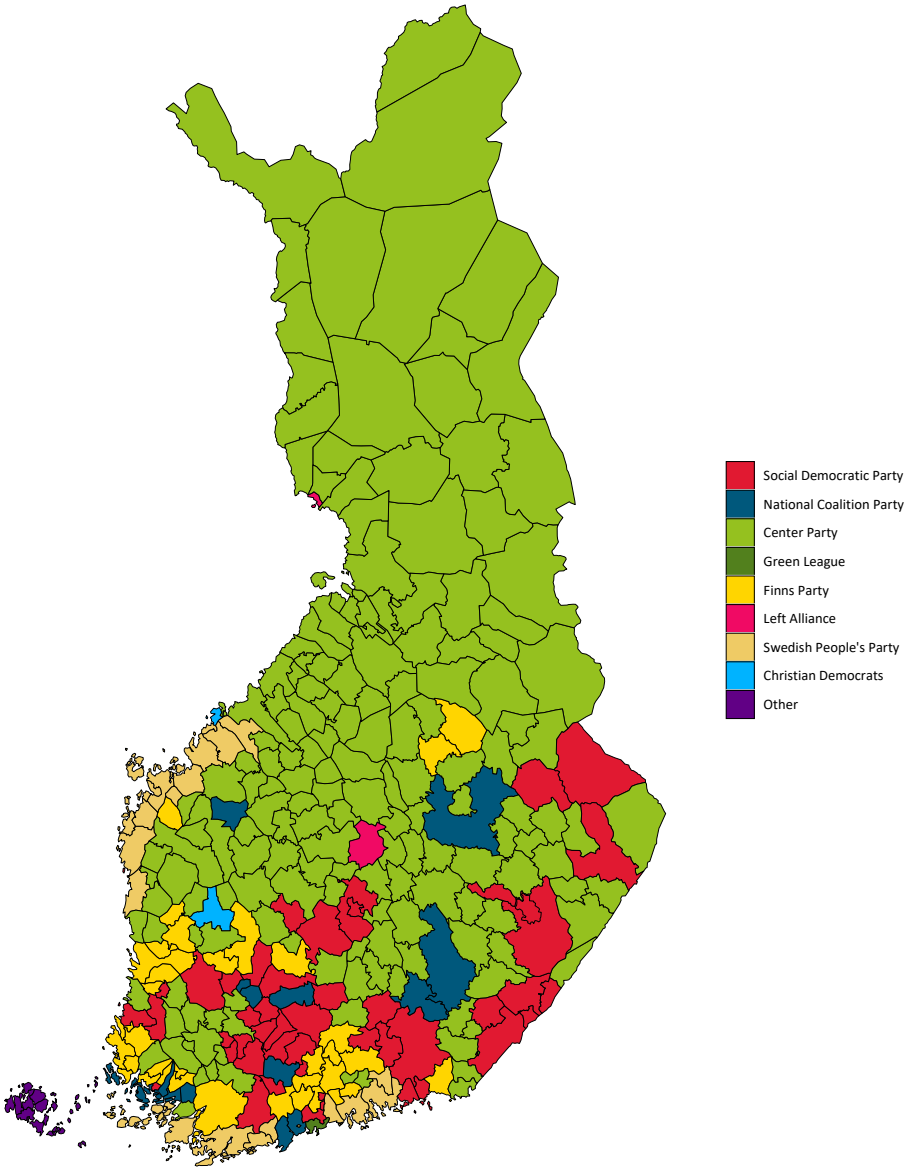

Figure 1.3 Party that received the highest share of votes by municipality.[3]

As we can clearly see, the Center Party dominates most of the sparsely populated rural areas of Finland. The National Coalition Party has support in bigger cities whereas the support for the Social Democrats can be found in former or current industrial cities. The Finns Party has support in rural areas in the vicinity of larger cities. The Green League is biggest only in Helsinki city. The Swedish People's Party has support in the municipalities along the Southern and Western coast where Swedish is the majority language.

Who voted?

As described above, voter turnout went up with two percentage points. Of eligible female voters, 73.5 percent voted, compared to 70.6 percent of male voters. Thanks to Statistics Finland, we have detailed turnout data. Table 1.1 displays turnout shares for the Finnish population according to age and education. The table combines data on turnout at the individual level from an electronic voting register, the Election Information System of the Ministry of Justice with background data from Statistics Finland. The electronic voting register does not include all Finnish voters, 42 % of eligible voters are in the register. Thus, we can treat these figures almost as hard data, and in any case more adequate than self-reported turnout in surveys.

Table 1.1 Voter turnout in percent according to age and education in the Parliamentary election.[4]

	All	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Lowest tertiary	Lower tertiary	Higher tertiary, doctorate
Total	71.4	57.9	68.0	85.2	83.4	91.1
18 – 24	55.2	49.5	58.9	..	80.2	..
25 – 34	62.9	33.6	58.0	42.6	79.9	89.0
35 – 44	71.7	43.6	64.6	77.7	81.8	89.7
45 – 54	74.9	51.1	69.4	82.4	84.7	91.3
55 – 64	78.7	62.9	78.8	86.5	89.1	92.8
65 – 74	82.0	73.8	81.7	90.1	92.3	94.4
75 –	67.5	60.0	72.3	81.8	84.0	88.6

First, only looking at age, we see that the most active age cohort were the 65–74 year-olds, among whom 82 % voted, whereas the most passive group were young people between 18 and 24 years old. In this group only 55.2 % voted. Moving on to looking at the association between education and turnout, we see that almost all (91.1 %) voters with a master's degree or higher voted. At the same time among voters with the lowest education, only 57.9 % voted. A combination of age and education shows even steeper differences. Especially in the younger cohorts, the association between education and turnout is extremely high. Among the 25–34 year-olds, those with only lower secondary education (the manda-

tory 9 years of comprehensive school) had a turnout of 33.6 %, compared to 89.0 % among those who hold at least a master's degree. This is a difference of 65 percentage points! The pattern is similar in all cohorts, but the least so – 20 percentage points – among the newly retired voters between 65 and 74 years old.

Government formation

After the election, the former Prime Minister Juha Sipilä and leading Centre Party politicians declared that the party would show electoral accountability and choose to be in opposition as a result of the major loss. According to an agreement between party leaders in parliament, the leader of the largest party can start forming government. Antti Rinne, the chairman of the SDP, started forming government. He chose a left-center coalition with the SDP, the Green League, the Left Alliance, the Swedish People's Party and the Center Party. Thus, contrary to post election announcements, the Center Party is in the Rinne government, which was appointed on June 6. The new government has 117 seats in the Finnish parliament, leaving the Finns Party, the National Coalition Party, Christian Democrats and Hjallis Harkimo's one-man group Liike Nyt (Movement Now) in opposition.

At the outset of its tenure, the new government announced that the reform of regional administration, that was the main agenda of the former Sipilä government, would continue. However, apart from this major policy area, the new government program reversed most of the policies adopted under the previous government. The program can be deemed as extensive and expansive whereby it is both long, and contains a lot of increase in public spending. How this arguably ambitious agenda pans out, is likely something that we shall revisit four years from now in a similar report as this one.

The panel data and disposition of the report

The chapters in this report are based on an online panel survey conducted at Åbo Akademi University between March and June 2019. The panel had eight survey waves with roughly one-two week intervals. Between 1,581 and 1,802 citizens answered each wave (all details on the panel in the technical appendix). As in most online panels, the sample of the eOpinion 2019-panel was biased in light of the respondents' background characteristics. In order to correct for these biases, the analyzes in this report are conducted using a statistical weight (see details on this weight in the technical appendix). Table 1.2 below shows the basic demographic distributions for the eOpinion 2019 respondents using unweighted (raw) data, weighted data and also the corresponding statistics for the Finnish population.

Table 1.2 eOpinion 2019 panel: unweighted and weighted distributions.

	Unweighted	Weighted	Population
Gender			
Female	51.2	50.8	49.3
Male	48.8	49.2	50.7
Age			
18 – 24	6.7	10.0	9.9
25 – 34	10.0	16.5	15.8
35 – 54	36.6	31.8	30.9
55 – 69	37.7	24.2	24.5
70 –	19.1	17.5	18.9
Education			
Primary	3.8	18.1	27.9
Secondary	39.4	46.0	41.2
Tertiary	56.8	35.8	31.0

The main bias, as seen in Table 1.2, was concerning education level where our sample had a clear overrepresentation of highly educated citizens. The statistical weight manages to correct this skewness rather well, but there is still too small a share of citizens with primary-level education in the weighted distributions. This means that there is due for clear caution when reading the findings contained in this report. They are certainly close to the truth but nevertheless only indicative and tentative.

The structure of the report follows a certain logic whereby we start with analyzes directly related to voting and voting patterns in the 2019 election. Thus, the next chapter by Kimmo Grönlund looks at party choice from different angles. Henrik Serup Christensen continues thereafter by contrasting advanced voting to Election Day voting. Peter Söderlund analyzes how party preferences shift during the final weeks of the election campaign and after the election. Toward the end of the report, the chapters look at other aspects in relaton to the election, such as media use in chapter 5 by Kim Strandberg and Aleksi Suuronen. Lauri Rapeli and Kim Strandberg thereafter, in chapter 6, analyze how following the elections served to educate or confuse voters. Maria Bäck looks at political trust in chapter 7 and in chapter 8, Thomas Karv and Maria Bäck look at trust form an in-group and out-group perspective. The final chapter by Thomas Karv, contrasts voting in the parliamentary election to that of the EU-election.

[1] Statistics Finland 1
[2] Statistics Finland 2
[3] Statistics Finland 3
[4] Statistics Finland 4

2. PARTY CHOICE

Kimmo Grönlund

This chapter analyzes the party choice of the Finnish electorate in the parliamentary election of 2019. It draws a picture of who voted for whom in terms of the socio-economic characteristics of the voters for each party. Moreover, it shows some fundamental differences regarding the political views of different parties' voters. Table 2.1 shows the party of the candidate that Finnish voters voted for in the parliamentary election in 2019 according to the voters' gender, age and education. It should be noted that in order to adjust for biases in the sample, the respondents have been weighted by a weight that takes into account the election result, age, region, mother tongue and education. Nevertheless, especially for the smallest parties, the shares of the vote in each cell must be read with caution, given the small number of observations.

Table 2.1 Party choice among Finnish voters in 2019, percent shares among voter categories.[1]

	SDP	Finns Party	National Coalition Party	Center Party	Green League	Left Alliance	Swedish People's Party	Christian Democrats	Others
Gender									
Female	17.7	10.9	16.4	13.7	15.9	10.5	5.3	5.3	4.3
Male	17.7	22.9	17.4	14.0	8.0	6.0	3.8	2.5	6.8
Age									
18 – 24	14.5	16.0	10.1	6.4	30.5	6.6	4.6	4.0	7.3
25 – 34	10.1	17.5	14.8	7.4	15.7	13.2	4.3	4.3	12.7
35 –54	12.4	18.7	16.6	12.7	14.3	8.4	4.9	4.8	7.2
55 – 69	23.7	17.2	20.4	14.3	5.8	6.7	4.6	3.5	3.8
70 –	23.0	12.5	22.7	22.6	2.2	7.7	4.0	2.7	2.6
Education level									
Primary	27.6	19.5	8.5	17.5	10.1	11.6	1.1	1.8	2.1
Secondary	18.3	20.3	15.7	12.6	10.5	6.6	4.0	4.9	7.2
Tertiary	9.9	11.0	24.7	12.2	14.7	9.2	7.2	3.9	7.6
Election result	**17.7**	**17.5**	**17.0**	**13.8**	**11.5**	**8.2**	**4.5**	**3.9**	**5.9**

[1] N= 1,639–1,764 unweighted, 1,436–1,441 weighted. The table uses weighted data.

Starting with gender differences, we see that two of the parties show no difference between genders in their ability to attract voters. Especially the Social Democrats but also the Center Party were equally popular among women and men, gaining vote shares that correspond to their electoral results. These two parties are followed by the National Coalition Party, which men (17.4 %) were slightly more prone to vote for than women (16.4 %) were. The largest differences between male and female voters are found on the one hand regarding the Finns Party and on the other hand regarding the Greens. The Finns were the largest party among male voters with a vote share of 22.9 percent, whereas it only attracted 10.9 percent of the female vote. For the Green League, the opposite holds – 15.9 percent of women voted for them, but only 8 percent of men did. In a similar way, the Left Alliance, the Christian Democrats and the Swedish People's Party were more popular among female voters. If only women had voted, the order of the parties would have been the SDP, the National Coalition and the Greens. If men had voted, the Finns Party would have been largest, followed by the SDP and the National Coalition.

There are large differences in electoral behavior in Finland between age cohorts. The oldest cohort – voters at least 70 years old – show a pattern where the three former main parties receive a lion's share of the vote. The SDP, the National Coalition Party and the Center Party all received circa 23 percent of the vote in this age group, i.e. attracting almost 70 percent of the vote together. The Green League is the party where the differences according to age are the largest. Our weighted data show that among the youngest voters (18 to 24 year-olds), the Greens attracted around 30 percent of the vote, whereas they only received 2.2 percent among the eldest voters.

The voting patterns in table 2.1 are similar to party choice in the Finnish parliamentary elections of 2011 and 2015 [1]. The biggest differences regarding gender are the following. The Finns Party has lost female voters (16 percent both in 2011 and in 2015), whereas the Greens and Left Alliance have gained female vote shares from 2015. Regarding age, the Finns Party and the Center Party seem to have lost support among younger voters, whereas the Greens made large gains among the youngest age cohort (up from 16 percent in 2015 to 30.5 percent). The Social Democrats show a rather similar pattern in voting according to age in 2019 as before, but the National Coalition Party seems to have lost support in the age group 25–34, where the party gained 22 percent of the vote in 2015, compared to only 14.8 in this election.

Issue voting

Table 2.2 shows the share of each party's voters, for whom an issue is very important when measured through a Likert scale with four alternatives: "very important, somewhat important, not so important, or not important at all".

Table 2.2 The percent share of each party's voters for whom an issue or policy area is very important.[2]

	SDP	Finns	Kok	Kesk	Vihr	Left	SFP	CD	All
Employment and job creation	59	48	62	56	47	52	32	54	53
Taxation	48	58	57	42	25	34	40	57	46
The viability of companies	21	36	55	49	8	8	26	25	32
The environment and climate change	45	17	30	32	88	71	48	25	43
Eldercare	67	57	40	50	39	60	36	52	50
Social security and healthcare	77	50	32	45	55	75	43	62	53
Young people and families with children	43	37	27	43	47	47	39	55	40
Education	57	37	39	43	64	63	47	33	47
Immigration and immigrants	18	56	15	14	23	20	24	14	25
Minority rights	25	9	10	11	48	42	51	19	23
European cooperation and the EU	32	10	36	23	32	24	44	19	26

Of all listed policy areas, the most important ones are on the one hand employment and the creation of new jobs, and on the other hand social security and healthcare. Both are held as very important by 53 % of all voters. This shows that the classical prerequisites of a Nordic welfare state – where a large share of people work and pay taxes, which the universal healthcare and social security model rely on – have a strong support in the Finnish electorate. Especially the voters of the leftist parties SDP and Left Alliance find social security and healthcare very important (3/4 of voters), whereas employment and the creation of jobs is more evenly distributed, and topped by the voters of the National Coalition Party (69 %) and the SDP (59 %). Eldercare, education and taxation are also important issues for almost half of the electorate. Eldercare is especially important to the voters of the SDP, probably corresponding to the party's popularity among elder voters. Education is most important to the voters of the Green League and the Left Alliance, among which over 60 percent find it very important. The lowest share of education being very important is found among the voters of Christian Democrats, the Finns Party and the National Coalition Party.

[2] Kok is the National Coalition Party, Kesk is the Center Party, Vihr is the Green League, SFP is the Swedish People's Party. The column "all" includes voters of other parties or lists. Weighted data, N=1,259–1,285.

At the same time, almost 60 percent of the voters of these three parties find taxation very important, whereas Green (25 %) and Left Alliance (34 %) voters have the lowest shares. Another left–right issue is the viability of companies. Especially the voters of the National Coalition (55 %) and the Center Party (49 %) find this very important, but Green and Left Alliance voters do not (both 8 % very important).

Fighting climate change is very important to almost all (88 %) Green voters, but only to 17 % of the Finns Party voters. At the same time, immigration is very important to 56 % of the Finns Party voters, whereas all the other parties have shares close or clearly below the average of the electorate 25 %. Minority rights are considered very important by half of the voters of the Swedish People's Party and the Greens, but only by one of ten voters of the Finns Party or the National Coalition Party. Lastly, the largest share finding the European cooperation and the EU very important is among the voters of the Swedish People's Party (44 %), followed by the National Coalition Party (36 %). The smallest share regarding the EU being very important is among the Finns Party voters (10 %).

Cleavages in contemporary Finland

In most societies, there are several ideological cleavages. Traditionally, the most relevant cleavage has been between the political left and the political right. Originally, the left defended the workers and the poor, whereas the right stood for the interests of capitalists and land-owners. [2] There are also other relevant cleavages in Finland, a conflict between the Finnish majority and the Swedish minority and a conflict between the center and the periphery. Moreover, there is an increasing value conflict between liberal and conservative values, partly developed from Inglehart's theory on post-materialist values. [3] The value conflict has been labeled GAL–TAN, where GAL stands for Green, Alternative, Libertarian, and TAN for Traditional, Authoritarian, Nationalist. [4] Based on a number of opinion and value questions, I conducted a factor analysis in order to find questions that measure these two relevant dimensions – left–right and GAL–TAN – in the Finnish electorate. Table 2.3 displays the questions that were identified as relevant for measuring the two dimensions. It also shows whether the association is negative or positive at each end.

Table 2.3 Operationalization of the left to right and TAN to GAL dimensions.

LEFT		RIGHT
-	Work conditions and salaries should be agreed on locally, without central trade unions.	+
-	In order to balance the Finnish economy, public services need to be cut.	+
-	Finns should work longer careers.	+
-	The so-called solidarity tax, where people who earn more than 76,100 euro annually, pay an extra income tax of 2 percent, should be revoked.	+
TAN		**GAL**
-	Membership in the EU has overall been a good thing for Finland.	+
+	Finland should leave the EU.	-
+	Finland has been too eager in implementing the environment and climate goals of the EU.	-
+	Our country needs strong leaders who can reinstate discipline and order in society.	-
-	Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish.	+
-	The right for same sex couples to adopt is a good thing.	+
-	Overall, immigration is a good thing for Finland.	+

Four statements are used in creating the dimension for the left–right cleavage, and seven statements for the GAL–TAN cleavage. All statements were asked on a Likert scale with four values. Both dimensions were calculated as a mean of each respondents' responses to the items, and for items with a negative association, the scale was reversed before creating the index variable. Hence, both dimensions vary between 1 (left or TAN) and 4 (right or GAL). Figure 2.1 displays the two dimensions as a scatter diagram with a mean value for each party's voters.

On the x-axis, the position of the mean voter per party is, starting from the left, Left Alliance (1.49), SDP (1.75), Greens (1.92), Christian Democrats (2.15), Finns (2.17), the Swedish People's Party (2.31), the Center Party (2.51), and finally the National Coalition Party (2.89) furthest on the right. On the y-axis, the most traditional-authoritarian-nationalist are the Finns Party voters (2.13), followed by Christian Democrats (2.39), the Center Party (2.80), the National Coalition (3.05), Social Democrats (3.19), the Swedish People's Party (3.36), followed by Left Alliance (3.41). The most green-alternative-libertarian are the voters of the Green League (3.53). If we look at the parties of the new Rinne government, the parties are somewhat dispersed, especially along the left–right dimension. In addition, the coalition is not fully GAL, since the voters of the Center party are more traditional than the voters of the four other governmental parties – the Left Alliance, the SDP and the Green League.

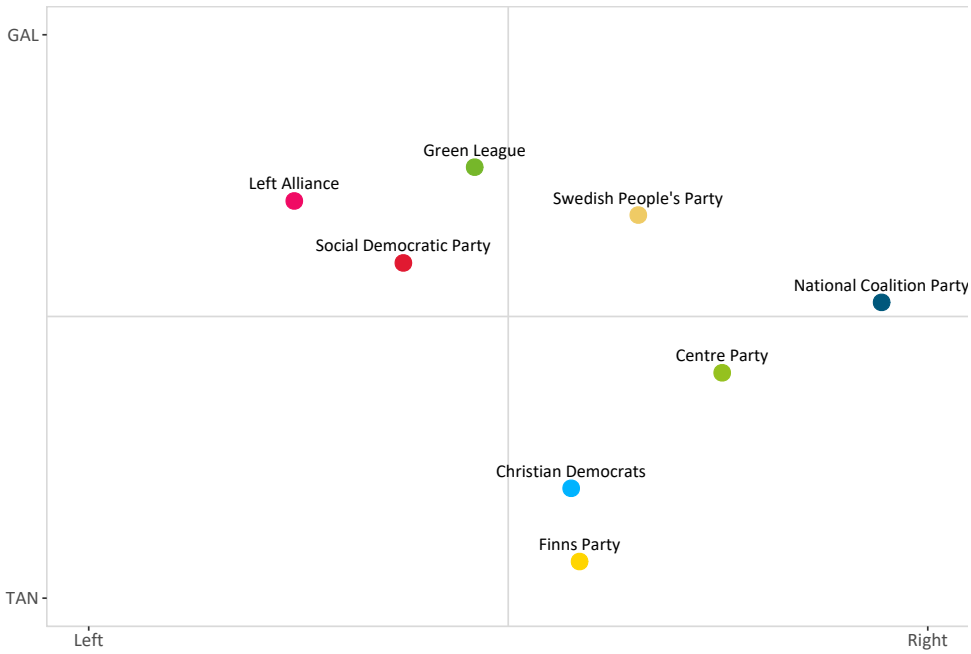

Figure 2.1 The mean voter position for each party in Finland. Left–right positions on the x-axis and TAN–GAL on the y-axis.

Summary

The Finnish electoral system is an open list system. Each voter needs to select a candidate but the vote goes primarily to party lists. The scope of this chapter has been party choice. The electoral outcome in the parliamentary election of 2019 was even, with the three largest parties with vote shares between 17.0 and 17.7. Nevertheless, as shown in table 2.1, there are large differences between the electorates of each party. The SDP, the National Coalition Party and the Center Party attracted each around 23 percent of the votes of the elderly, showing a large amount of stability among the oldest age cohort. At the same time, younger generations show very different patterns in party choice. The Greens attracted over 30 percent of the youngest voters, whereas the Finns Party did remarkably well among all age cohorts below 70. Moreover, it was the largest party among male voters. When it comes to two important cleavages, left to right and GAL to TAN, our data demonstrate that the values and opinions of voters differ clearly between the parties. We can also decipher that the voters of the parties that form the incumbent government are fairly unified, with the exception of the Center Party, whose voters are both more to the right and lean more in the direction of the traditional-authoritarian-nationalist values than the voters of the other four parties do.

[1] Westinen 2016
[2] Lipset,& Rokkan 1967
[3] Inglehart 1977
[4] Hooghe, Marks & Wilson 2002

3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VOTING IN ADVANCE AND ON ELECTION DAY

Henrik Serup Christensen

The possibility for advance voting is generally perceived as a way to boost turnout, since it makes it possible to cast a vote even when a person for various reasons is unable or unwilling to turn up on the day of the elections[1]. While increasing turnout may be considered beneficial from a democratic perspective, the effects of early voting can also be less beneficial, since a recent study suggests that early voters tend to be less satisfied with the outcome of the elections[2].

In Finland, in-person early voting is possible eleven days before Election Day and ends five days before Election Day for voters living in Finland. The proportion voting in advance has increased over time, as can be seen in Figure 3.1, which shows the percentage of all votes that have been cast in advance in the last five Parliamentary elections in Finland. In 2019, it even surpassed the number of voters who turned up on Election Day for the first time.

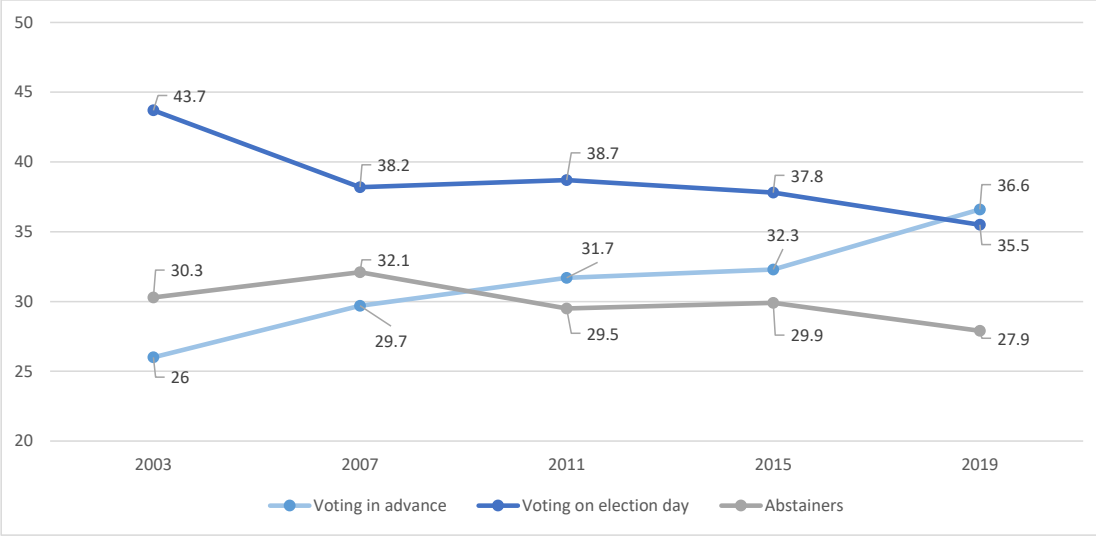

Figure 3.1[1] Percent voting in advance; on Election Day; abstaining, 2003-2019.[3]

[1] The plot shows percentages of all registered voters voting in advance, on Election Day and abstaining in five national parliamentary elections 2003–2019.

The results of the advance vote are published immediately after all polling stations close on Election Day and have so far replaced the exit polls that are performed in most other democracies to get a preview of the results. Election night traditionally starts with the publication of the results from the advance vote, and this is then continuously updated as more votes are counted, ending up with a preliminary result around midnight. However, experience shows that the advance votes do not provide a reliable estimate for the outcome of the election, since some parties tend to gain as more results come in. Some studies indicate that there are systematic differences in who votes in advance and who votes on elections day[4], which may explain why there are systematic differences in the results. Figure 3.2 shows the differences between the results for all major parties when it comes to advance voting and the outcome after all votes were counted in the 2019 elections.

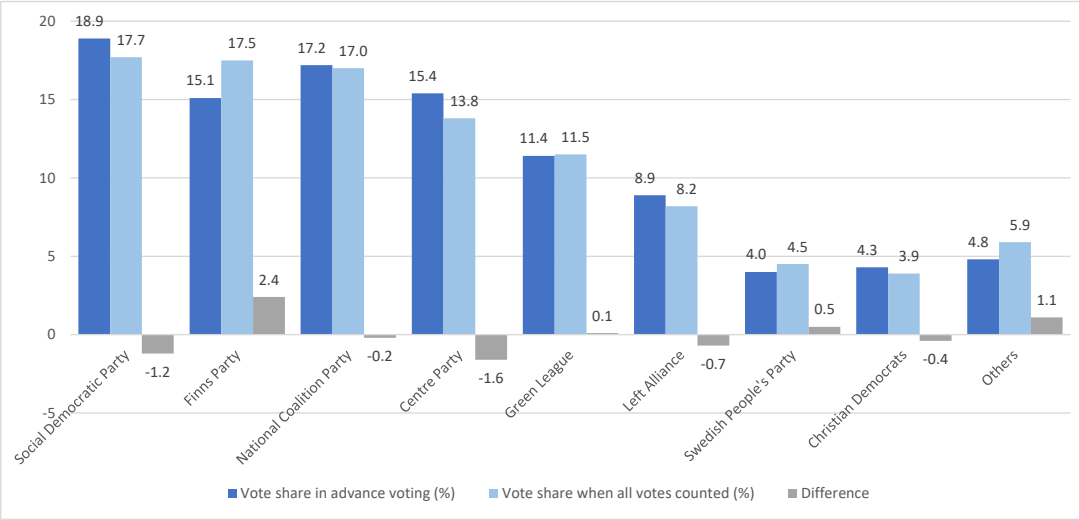

Figure 3.2[2] Comparing vote shares in advance results and final election outcome, 2019.[5]

[2] The figure shows vote shares of all major parties in the results from advance voting compared to the official election outcome.

While the developments were less drastic than on previous occasions, it is nonetheless noticeable that while some parties gained votes, others lost percentages as votes were counted. The advance results suggested that the Social Democrats would win comfortably (although with a smaller margin than what the latest polls had predicted). In the end, it turned out to be a close race between the Social Democratic Party, the Finns party and the National Coalition Party, who were within a 0.7 margin and all at various stages held the lead during the night. Hence, even when the developments were not decisive this time around, they are far from trivial as they affect the balance of powers between the major parties.

But how can we make sense of these developments? In the following, I outline some of the key differences between those who voted in advance and those who voted on Election Day. Three groups of variables are here particularly interesting:

1. **Who are the early voters and voters on Elections Day?** Are there systematic differences in voting patterns depending on age, gender and/or education?

2. **What are the political attitudes of early voters and voters on Election Day?** Are there systematic differences in voting patterns depending on political interest and/or political trust?

3. **Does it matter?** Last, but by no means least, are there systematic differences in the satisfaction with the outcome between early voters and voters on Election Day?

The results reported here focus on those who reported to have either voted in advance or on Elections Day, thereby disregarding people who did not vote or who did not fill in the relevant questions to determine their status. Even if the proportions in the data does not fully reflect the official data, it should still be possible to analyze differences between the groups. While it is impossible to give definitive answers to these questions here, the final discussion will discuss the most pertinent implications of the differences found.

Who votes early and on Election Day?

Considering the observed differences in electoral outcomes, it seems likely that there will be systematic differences in who are the voters in advance and on Elections Day, as also suggested by previous studies. Figure 3.3 shows the differences in voting in advance or on Election Day depending on age, gender and education, which are key predictors of political participation.

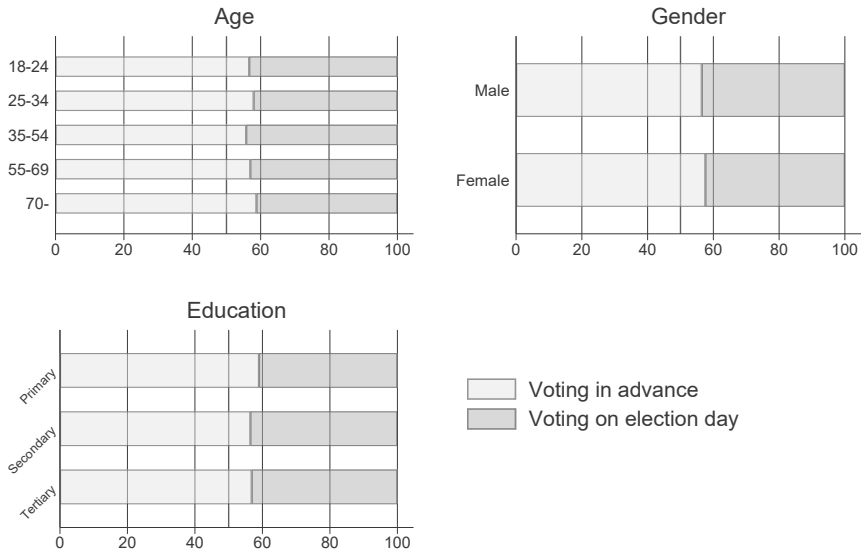

Figure 3.3 Age, gender and education[3]

The results show that for people above 70, about 59 % voted in advance compared to the average of 57 %, but the youngest aged 18 – 4 are not far behind, since 57 % voted in advance. The 35 – 54 year olds are most likely to vote on Election Day since only 56 % voted in advance. The gender differences are miniscule (men 56%, women 58%), which may be because couples often vote together thereby evening out any differences. As concerns educational attainment, it is those only finished primary education who vote in advance the most (59 %), while for those who finished a tertiary education it is only 57 %. This is somewhat surprising since it would seem plausible that those with more education, and therefore presumably better insights into political matters, would be quicker to decide and therefore more likely to vote in advance.

Despite these differences, the proportions voting in advance or on Election Day are broadly similar across age, gender and education, which is somewhat surprising considering previous studies. Hence, these characteristics do little to explain the differences in results between advance voting and voting on Election Day outlined above.

Political attitudes

Another important difference between advance voters and those who turn up on Election Day concerns their political attitudes. While it is impossible to establish causality between voting and attitude, systematic differences between advance voters and voters on Election Day in their political attitudes might help us understand why some vote in advance and others do not.

[3] The plots show percentages of all respondents indicating that they voted in advance or on Election Day by age (N=2,125), gender (N=2,124) and education (N=1,772). Weighted results to ensure representativeness. Source: eOpinion 2019.

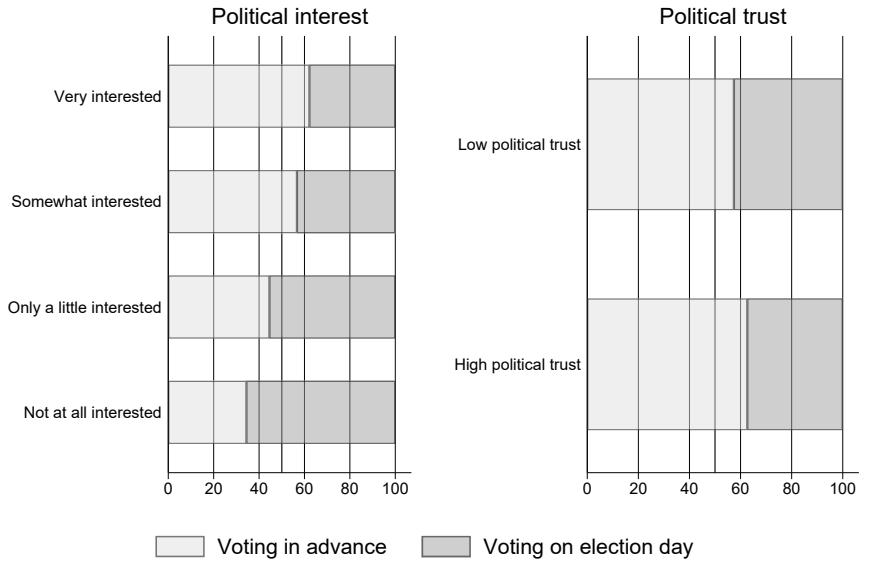

Figure 3.4 Political interest and political trust[4]

The results for political trust show that about 63 % of the advance voters have high political trust compared to 57 % for the voters on Election Day – in other words, those who trust the political authorities are more likely to vote in advance. The differences are even more pronounced when it comes to political interest and voting, since 62 % of those with high political interest voted in advance compared to about 34 % of those with low political interest. While it is impossible to be certain about the underlying mechanisms, people who follow political matters on a regular basis are clearly more likely to vote in advance, whereas those who are less attentive show up on Election Day. The pattern for these political attitudes seemingly contradicts the idea that advance voting mobilizes those who would not otherwise vote, since it suggests that it is people we would expect to vote anyway, who are most likely to take advantage of the possibility. The increased attention on Election Day and the surrounding spectacle might be more important for getting less interested and less trusting people to vote.

[4] The plots show percentages of all respondents indicating that they voted in advance or Election Day by levels of political interest (N=1,773) and political trust (N=1,644). Weighted results to ensure representativeness. Political trust is measured with a standardized index based on reported trust in Finnish government, Parliament, Politicians, Political parties and the Party closest to you. Respondents scoring below the mean (standardized to be 0) are categorized as 'Low political trust' (N=726) while respondents above the mean are categorized as 'High political trust' (N=918). Source: eOpinion 2019.

Does it matter?

While these attitudinal differences indicate important differences in voting behavior depending on psychological involvement in political matters, they fail to address the question of whether advance voting makes people more satisfied with electoral participation. To examine this aspect, Figure 3.5 shows differences in satisfaction with election outcome for advance voters and those who vote on Election Day.

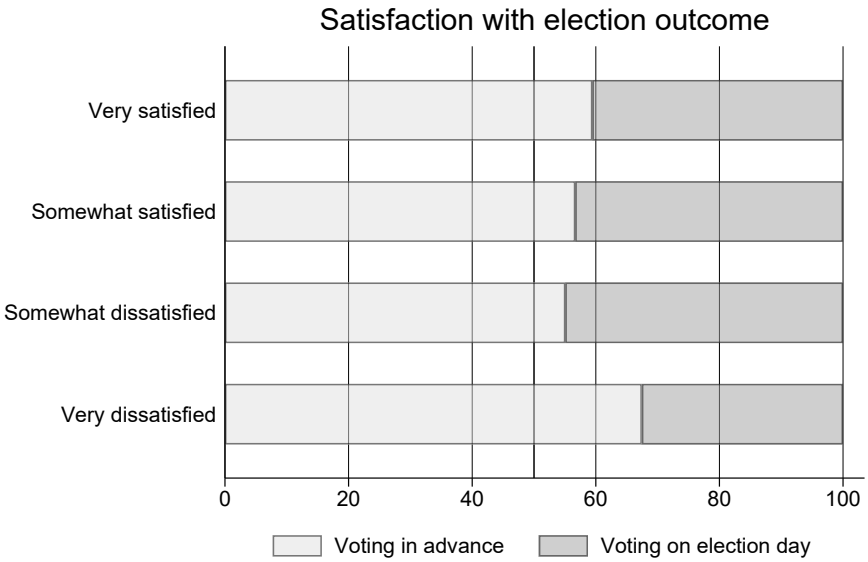

Figure 3.5 Satisfaction with election outcome[5]

About 67 % of those who are very dissatisfied with the election outcome voted in advance compared to the average of 57 %. Based on the current analyzes, it is not possible to ascertain with any certainty why advance voting is connected to lower satisfaction. It may be that those who voted in advance changed their mind because they realized that the candidate they voted for did not honestly represent their views and opinions or because some other candidate emerged as more favorable.

Curiously, among those who are very satisfied who voted in advance there are also 59 % who voted in advance, which is clearly more than in the intermediate categories. Hence, voting in advance is under certain circumstances related to increased satisfaction with the outcome. This shows that the relationship between voting and satisfaction with the outcome is more intricate than what it is possible to unravel here.

[5] The plots show percentages of all respondents indicating that they voted in advance or Election Day by satisfaction with election outcome (N=1,688). Source: eOpinion 2019.

Summary

The use of advance voting to grant citizens more flexibility in casting their vote is often considered beneficial for democracy. For the same reason, it is often seen as valuable that a large segment of the Finnish electorate takes advantage of the possibility and votes in advance. The experiences from the 2019 elections outlined here do not uniformly confirm this positive image of advance voting. Although the current results are simple analyzes that should be taken with some caution, they indicate that advance voting did not mobilize voters since it was predominantly people with high trust and interest in politics that voted in advance. Furthermore, advance voters make up the majority of those who express dissatisfaction with the outcome, meaning the possibility to vote before Election Day may lead some people to vote prematurely.

It goes beyond the aspirations of this chapter to disentangle all possible elements in this story. But there is undoubtedly a need to examine the effects of advance voting in more detail to understand the implications for democracy. This question is particularly important for Finland, where advance voting is now even more popular than voting on Election Day.

[1] Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, & Miller 2007
[2] Lago and Blais 2019
[3] Internet: https://tulospalvelu.vaalit.fi/
[4] Garnett 2018; Barreto et al. 2006; Gronke and Toffey 2008
[5] Internet: Ministry of Justice

4. MULTIPLE PARTY PREFERENCES AND PARTY CHOICE IN FINLAND

Peter Söderlund

This chapter examines, first, how positively Finnish voters evaluated the different parties on offer before and after the 2019 national parliamentary elections and, second, which parties were included in voters' consideration sets before making the final choice.

According to the consideration set approach, electoral choice can be modelled as a two-stage process.[1] In the first stage, the voters select from all possible parties a smaller set of relevant parties they will seriously consider (i.e., consideration set). In the second stage, the voters make their final choice by choosing a single party from the smaller number of options.

In electoral research, sympathy ratings or feeling thermometer scores can be used to measure the strength of party preferences and the size and content of consideration sets. For example, survey respondents are asked to rate different parties on a scale from 0 to 10. The higher the score, the greater the likelihood that the respondent votes for the party. Voters with strong preferences, typically party identifiers, evaluate one party more positively over all other parties. On the other hand, contemporary electorates include many indecisive and volatile persons. They are apartisans who are ambivalent or cross-pressured between several viable alternatives. In party evaluations, these voters are likely to rate two or more parties equally high.

Previous studies show that many voters in Finland, over 25 percent, rate two or more parties equally favorably in party evaluations.[2] This is by no means surprising considering the presence of numerous political cleavages and multiple parties in Finland[3], whereby voters are likely to switch parties from one election to another[4].

Party evaluations in Finland

Which Finnish parties are the most and least popular? I start the analysis by presenting how positively, or negatively, parties were evaluated in the web panel. The respondents were asked to rate nine parties on a dislike–like scale in wave 1 (5 to 16 days before the parliamentary elections) and wave 5 (19 to 29 days after the elections). The responses were given on a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 means that the respondent strongly dislikes the party and 10 means he or she strongly likes the party.

Ideology and policy preferences tend to explain why people give high or low scores to certain parties. Upon closer inspection, the data show that one cluster of voters favors the Social Democratic Party, the Green Alliance and the Left Alliance. Their supporters tend to have leftist and liberal values. Another cluster tends to rate the more rightist and conservative National Coalition Party, Centre Party, Christian Democrats and Blue Reform highly. Supporters of the populist Finns Party and the linguistic Swedish People's Party form separate clusters (a third and fourth one).

The results reported in Table 4.1 reveal that the Social Democratic Party was the most likeable (or the most acceptable) party among

voters, both before and after the 2019 parliamentary elections. However, we have to bear in mind that the mean value is only 5.1 on the 0–10 scale in the pre-election survey. Four out of ten respondents actually gave scores lower than 5 when they evaluated the Social Democratic Party. The Green League comes in second, although the party only finished fifth in the parliamentary elections. This shows that a relatively large share of Finnish citizens accepted the Green League, even though many of them chose to vote for another party. The National Coalition Party was behind these two parties before the elections, but the gap was reduced after the elections thanks to a larger boost in popularity compared to the other parties. The Finns Party finished second in the parliamentary elections, but the party is second to last in the party ratings. Half of the respondents gave very low scores (0 to 2), while 15 percent of the respondents gave very high scores (8 to 10). Hence, the populist Finns Party is the party that polarizes the public the most.

Table 4.1 Party evaluations before and after the 2019 Finnish parliamentary elections.[1]

	Mean dislike – like score		Difference	N
	Pre-election	Post-election		
Party				
Social Democratic Party	5.1	5.4	+0.3	1,207
Green League	4.8	5.1	+0.3	1,191
National Coalition Party	4.5	5.1	+0.6	1,173
Left Alliance	4.2	4.6	+0.4	1,128
Centre Party	4.0	4.2	+0.2	1,158
Swedish People's Party	3.9	4.2	+0.3	1,134
Christian Democrats	3.4	3.8	+0.4	1,069
Finns Party	3.4	3.6	+0.2	1,035
Blue Reform	2.2	1.9	–0.3	923

Voters' consideration sets

I move on to the size (number of parties) and content (which parties) of the consideration sets of voters. By the time the pre-election survey was administered, one to two weeks before the elections, many voters had probably narrowed down the number of parties in the consideration set, even to a single alternative. The upper half of Table 4.2 shows that 77 percent of the respondents had a single top-rated party before the elections. Among the remaining respondents, 18 percent evaluated two parties equally favorably, 3 percent three parties and 2 percent four or more

[1] Respondents who evaluated respective party in both survey waves (1 and 5) are included.

parties. These numbers changed very little after the elections. The lower half of Table 4.2 provides information about the distance between the two top rated parties. As already observed, 23 percent had multiple parties tied at first place (i.e., zero distance). An additional 33 percent had the top parties within one point. This provides evidence for the widely held assumption that levels of electoral uncertainty at the individual level are relatively high and that citizens are prone to switch parties from one election to another.

Table 4.2 Number of top ranked parties and points between them (percent).[2]

	Pre-election	Post-election	Difference
Number of top ranked parties			
One	77	74	–3
Two	18	18	±0
Three	3	6	+3
Four or more	2	2	±0
Total	100	100	
Points between top parties			
Zero	23	26	+3
One	33	32	–2
Two	20	21	+2
Three or more	24	20	–4
Total	100	99	

Table 4.3 shows which single parties were ranked first as well as the proportion of voters who voted for the party they evaluated most positively. We have to bear in mind that party evaluations do not perfectly predict voting behavior. There are many reasons why party evaluations and voting behavior do not match. For example, new information acquired during the final days of the campaign may alter one's party preferences, or voters have other reasons to vote for another party than the most preferred one. Party evaluations best predicted voting for the Centre Party (90 %), the Social Democratic Party (85 %) and the Finns Party (84 %).

Of those who rated a single party higher than any other party, 19 percent preferred the National Coalition Party and 16 percent the Finns Party. In the parliamentary elections, the National Coalition Party came in third with 17 percent and the Finns Party second with 17.5 percent of the popular vote. Furthermore, if we compare the distribution of party preferences in table 4.3 with the election

[2] N = 1,535.

results, the support for the Social Democratic Party is underestimated by roughly three percentage points and the support for both the Green League and the Left Alliance is overestimated by about 4 points. If we look at the rate of sincere voting, we get a first piece of evidence why the Social Democratic Party did well in the elections, while the latter two parties won less votes than we would have predicted. 85 percent of those who preferred the Social Democratic Party the most also reported having voted for the party. Less than 80 percent of those who either preferred the Green League and Left Alliance the most actually voted for that particular party.

Table 4.3 Pre-election distribution of respondents with a single top ranked party and vote choice (percent).[3]

	Single top ranked party	Voted for party
Party		
National Coalition Party	19	82
Finns Party	16	84
Green League	15	77
Social Democratic Party	15	85
Centre Party	12	90
Left Alliance	12	79
Christian Democrats	6	65
Swedish People's Party	5	82
Blue Reform	1	50
Total	100	

Table 4.4 reports the most popular two-party combinations and the incidence of voting for any of these parties. Close to one fourth of those who had two parties tied for first place evaluated the Green League and the Left Alliance equally high. 80 percent (44 + 36) voted for any of these two parties. The second most popular combination was the Social Democratic Party and the Green League and the third most popular the Social Democratic Party and the Left Alliance. What is striking is that the great majority (60 and 75 percent) voted for the Social Democratic Party. This is a second piece of evidence to explain why the Social Democratic Party became the biggest party, while the Green League and the Left Alliance won fewer votes than expected. Finally, Table 4.5 lists the most popular three-party combinations. The familiar trio – the Social Democratic Party, the Green League and the Left Alliance – is the most frequent one, further providing evidence that many voters were wavering between two or three of these parties.

[3]N = 1177.

Table 4.4 Pre-election distribution of respondents with two top ranked parties and vote choice (percent).[4]

	Two top ranked parties	Voted for party 1	Voted for party 2
Parties			
Green League + Left Alliance	23	44	36
Social Democratic Party + Green League	14	60	26
Social Democratic Party + Left Alliance	10	75	16
National Coalition Party + Swedish People's Party	6	66	10
Centre Party + National Coalition Party	6	69	29
Swedish People's Party + Green League	6	61	15
National Coalition Party + Green League	6	59	32
Other combination (< 3.5 %)	29		
Total	100		

Table 4.5 Pre-election distribution of respondents with three top ranked parties (percent).[5]

	Three top ranked parties
Parties	
Social Democratic Party + Green League + Left Alliance	23
Green League + Left Alliance + Swedish People's Party	8
National Coalition Party + Green League + Swedish People's Party	5
Other combination (< 5 %)	63
Total	100

[4]N = 346.
[5]N = 73.

Summary

The three key findings of this chapter are that: (1) One in four rated two or more parties equally high in the final stages of the election campaign, showing that there was a great deal of unpredictability among Finnish voters; (2) Despite being the second least liked party by the general public, the populist Finns Party had in the final stages of the campaign a sufficiently large and loyal group of supporters who liked the party and voted for it; (3) A clearly distinguishable group of voters sympathized with the Social Democratic Party, the Green League and the Left Alliance, but when making their final choice the traditionally large Social Democratic Party was the more appealing alternative.

[1] Pappi 1996; Oscarsson & Rosema 2019; Steinbrecher & Schoen 2019
[2] Söderlund & Eriksson 2011; Söderlund 2016
[3] Kestilä-Kekkonen & Söderlund 2014; Söderlund 2017
[4] Söderlund 2016
[5] Oscarsson & Rosema 2019, 259
[6] Söderlund 2017
[7] Rosema 2006

5. FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS THROUGH OFFLINE AND ONLINE MEDIA

Kim Strandberg and Aleksi Suuronen

Introduction

Finns have always been heavy media users, and ever since the internet rose to broader popularity in the mid-90s, Finland has been among the top nations in the world in terms of internet penetration and and later also social media use[1]. Similarly, political parties and candidates were quick to venture online already in the 1996 EP-elections. Since then the role of online media (internet and social media) in Finnish politics has increased steadily[2]. More-or-less every election since the 2003 parliamentary elections has been proclaimed by media as "the online election", and while there certainly have been new "hot apps" that politicians have quickly adopted in their campaigns, citizens have generally been rather lukewarm in using online media in conjunction with elections. This chapter provides the latest findings on how Finnish citizens used online media for following the 2019 elections and what part online media played in informing their vote decision.

Theoretical background

When it comes to explaining citizens' use of the internet and social media in conjunction with elections, two main theories are commonly employed. These are the mobilization and reinforcement theories described by Pippa Norris[3]. The former of these argues that since online media provides new and easy access to political information for all citizens, previously politically unengaged citizens could become mobilized as a result. The reinforcement perspective, though, states that political use of online media is driven not by the accessibility of the media per se, but instead by citizens' own interests and motivations. Thus, according to Norris[4], people who were not interested nor politically active in the first place, do not necessarily become politically active due to the availability of online media. Indeed, while the use of online media within Finland has generally grown, the actual impact of this use on political participation and civic engagement is still rather limited[5].

A second relevant perspective for this chapter comes from theories regarding what motivates people to use different forms of media and how these motivations affect their usage patterns. The most common of these theories is referred as the uses and gratifications theory[6], which depicts various motives that people have for using media to obtain political information. These motives are convenience (ease of access to information), entertainment (gaining enjoyment and passing time), self-expression (expression of personal opinions), guidance (gaining information to guide a decision), information-seeking (gathering information to stay up-to-date on current issues), and social utility (information to assist in social interactions). Prior research has shown that people tend to go to traditional and non-interactive media, such as television, newspapers and static websites for information seeking purposes while users of more interac-

tive online media –social media in particular– are more likely to have social utility motivations[7]. These motivations, in turn, influence to what degree different media can affect citizens voting considerations: information seeking and guidance motivations having naturally a greater influence in contrast to entertainment and convenience motivations.

Findings

In this section, four different aspects are shown. First, how the use of various media channels developed in the final weeks leading up to the elections. Second, we examine the background characteristics of the citizens that used offline and online media to a high extent to follow the elections. Third, we show the background characteristics of people who deem different media channels as important sources of information for their vote choices. In the final part, we chose to specifically highlight how Finnish citizens used voting advice applications (VAAs, or vaalikoneet in Finnish) to follow the elections and to what extent they regarded VAAs as providing useful information for their vote choices.

We start by showing, in Figure 5.1, how Finish citizens used media to follow the elections. Figure 5.1 shows us two things: First, TV, newspapers, and VAAs are used more frequently by citizens to follow the elections than social media, party or candidate webpages and blogs as well as radio.

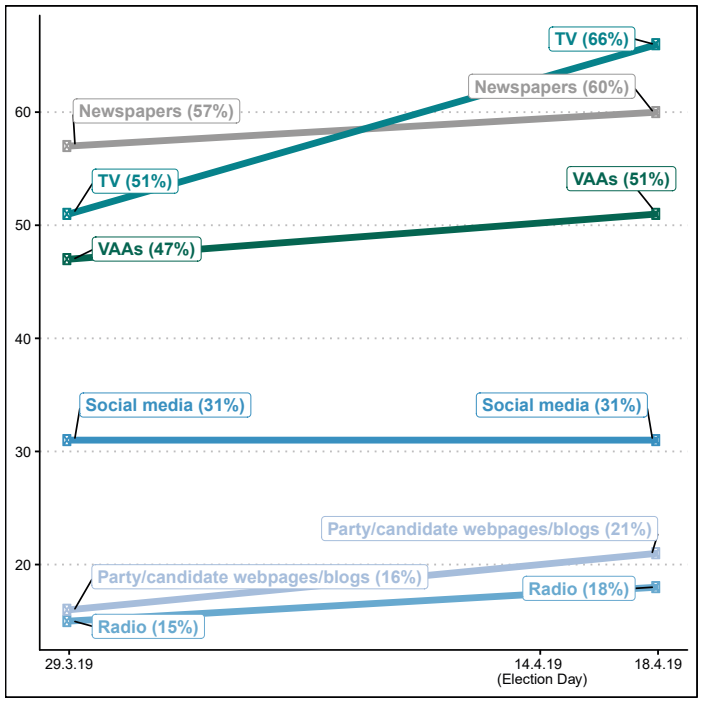

Figure 5.1. Finnish citizens' reported use of media to follow the elections in 29.3.2019 and 18.4.2019 (shares of respondents that have used respective media quite much or very much to follow the elections).

Second, besides TV, the use of media does not increase much as the Election Day draws nearer. However, it is likely that the observed increase in TV use is due to people having watched live Election Day coverage. If we scrutinize the findings, we see that two-thirds of the citizens used TV to follow the elections and almost an equal share of the citizens stayed informed about the elections through newspapers. Interestingly, half of the citizens stated that they had used VAAs to a high degree. In fact, VAAs have been the most popular web-based source through which Finnish citizens get information about parliamentary elections dating back to the 2003 campaign[8].

Next, we will inspect media usage patterns according to citizens' background characteristics. In Table 5.1 below, the share of citizens using traditional media, party or candidate webpages or blogs, VAAs, and social media to a high extent are presented according to background traits. As Table 5.1 shows, one of the major differences in the use of media is between different age groups. The youngest citizens are clearly more prone to use online media and especially prone to use VAAs to get information about the elections. Moreover, social media is clearly most often used by younger generations, even more than traditional media and candidate or party websites among those aged between 18 and 24. Regarding other factors, we see that people who are interested in politics use all types of media more to follow the elections. Online media also seems to be preferred more by people with higher education whereas traditional media is used the most by people with lower levels of education. There is a minor gender difference in the use of social media and traditional media (women use it slightly more than men do), but there are no differences regarding other types of media.

Table 5.1 The use of various media outlets for following the elections.[1]

	Traditional media	Candidate/Party Websites/Blogs	VAA use	Social media
	High	High	High	High
Gender	*			*
Female	63	21	53	34
Male	69	21	49	28
Age	***	***	***	***
18 – 24	43	38	86	45
25 – 34	51	38	69	49
35 – 54	63	21	56	32
55 – 69	76	13	38	23
70 –	85	7	26	15
Education level	*	**	*	***
Primary	61	9	44	20
Secondary	69	25	52	32
Tertiary	65	22	54	34
Interest in politics	***	***	***	***
Very low/low	30	9	37	10
Quite high	65	17	51	27
Very high	78	32	57	43

However, it is also important to know to what extent people actually found these various media channels as important sources of information for their vote choice. This aspect is analyzed in Table 5.2 below, where the overarching finding is that traditional media is clearly deemed as more important for gaining useful information for making a vote choice than any kind of online media. Moreover, it is noteworthy that social media and candidate or party websites and blogs are deemed as equally important (or unimportant) sources of information, whereas VAAs stand out as the most important online media. Looking briefly at differences between different groups of citizens, we find that only minimal differences

[1] *p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 chi-squares test of distributions.

exist for gender: females found traditional media as an important source of information slightly more often than males. Regarding age, though, we find persistent differences for all four types of media. The main pattern is that older people place relatively more emphasis on traditional media whereas younger citizens place higher emphasis on online media, especially VAAs. Moreover, citizens that are more educated perceive online media as an important information source more often than less educated people do. Interest in politics again displays a linear pattern (except for VAAs), whereby more interest equals placing more importance in information gained from any type of media.

Table 5.2 The importance of various media outlets on the vote choice.[2][3]

	Traditional media	Candidate/Party Websites	VAA	Social Media
	High impact	High impact	High impact	High impact
Gender	*			
Female	74	29	55	34
Male	68	27	50	32
Age	***	***	***	***
18 – 24	61	58	85	48
25 – 34	58	44	72	48
35 – 54	71	28	57	37
55 – 69	78	20	37	24
70 –	81	9	26	16
Education level			*	***
Primary	71	23	45	22
Secondary	70	29	53	35
Tertiary	73	29	54	35
Interest in politics	***	**		***
Very low/low	54	26	45	22
Quite high	73	25	55	29
Very high	74	34	51	42

[2] The figures show the share of who stated that they had used the respective media either quite much, or very much. Traditional media is TV, newspapers and radio, and social media refers to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube etc.
[3] * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 chi-squares test of distributions.

We end our presentation by discussing the stand-out online media outlet in the findings: Voting Aid Applications. VAAs are not only the most used and most important online outlet for vote choices, they also appear to be what one could call the most "equalizing" media outlet. No major differences exist between levels of political interest and how important the information gained from them was evaluated to be. In other words, both politically highly interested and the least interested citizens believed in almost equal measure that they gained useful information from VAAs. Further examination of different background variables show similar equalizing patterns. Younger citizens, who are commonly the least politically engaged, reported to use VAAs in an extremely high degree and to have experienced the information gained from them to be highly useful.

Summary

Overall, the findings tell a rather familiar story. As findings from previous Finnish elections have shown[9], traditional media continues to be the most important for following elections and the information gained from watching election coverage via television or newspapers is consistently ranked higher than those of other channels. Furthermore, factors that have predicted high political involvement in the past have the most immediate impact on how much different media is consumed and how useful the information gained from them is perceived to be: being highly educated and having a high interest in politics has a clear positive impact on both of these aspects. The fact that gender had only a minimal role is also a familiar finding, which has existed in previous elections[10]. Thus, one should still be rather weary of the mobilization potential of online media since it most likely supplements the already varied information sources of politically interested rather than getting the politically least interested to partake in the elections in a more active manner.

However, perhaps the greatest exception to this overall pattern can be found within the usage patterns of VAAs. It seems that VAAs have been utilized extensively by the youngest Finnish citizens and, even more importantly, almost half of the people who had used them ranked the information gained from the as highly useful for their voting decisions regardless of their level of political interest. Indeed, VAAs could cater to a perfect mix of guidance, convenience and entertainment motives identified by the uses and gratifications theory, which make VAAs function as an easily approachable tool that appeals to younger generations and can provide useful information for people with varying degrees of political interest. Since similar findings have also been made elsewhere[11], the mobilization potential of VAAs is something that calls for further research.

[1] Internet World Stats, 2019
[2] Strandberg, 2016
[3] Norris 2000; 2001
[4] Norris, 2001
[5] Strandberg, 2016
[6] Parmelee & Shannon 2011, 34–36; Kaye & Johnson, 2006
[7] Ancu and Cozma, 2009; Kaye and Johnson, 2006
[8] see Grönlund, 2016, 67–73; Strandberg, 2016
[9] Grönlund, 2016, 67–73; Strandberg, 2016
[10] Strandberg, 2016
[11] Alvarez et al., 2014, 26; van de Pol, 2016

6. DID FOLLOWING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN EDUCATE OR CONFUSE VOTERS?

Lauri Rapeli and Kim Strandberg

Introduction

Election campaigns are an exceptional period in the relationship between elected officials and the citizens who vote for them. During election campaigns, parties and individual candidates compete for voters' attention by marketing and informing the public of their political platforms and policy goals. Voters, on the other hand, pay unusually lot of attention to political messages compared with how actively they follow politics between electoral campaigns.

Consequently, it seems reasonable to say that election campaigns are the most important opportunity for parties and candidates to build rapport among voters. Meaningful political communication during campaigns is directly linked to the fundamental logic of representative democracy. Its legitimacy relies, largely, on policies representing the voters' preferences. This, in turn, requires that voters are able to navigate through the maze of electoral campaigns and find those candidates who represent their personal beliefs and policy preferences.

It is not, however, clear whether electoral campaigns make it easier for voters to arrive at a decision about voting, or help them to understand politics better in general. In this research note, we address this question by looking at whether the intensity of media consumption during the 2019 parliamentary campaign contributed to the panel respondents' understanding of politics or not. Rather than measure the impact of exposure to political media on information levels, we rely on a measure of self-assessed learning. The measure is conceptually a close relative of internal political efficacy, that is, a feeling of understanding what is going on in politics[1].

The educative effect of political campaigns

Previous scholarship on the impact of political campaigns on voters' information levels has reliably shown that there is a positive connection – campaigns increase voters' factual knowledge and understanding of politics. Beyond this, there is much less scholarly consensus. Whether all types of media contribute to voter learning is contested. For example, Dimitrova et al.[2] demonstrated using panel data that the positive impact of digital media is limited to certain news media, while party websites and social media do not increase voter sophistication. Therefore, it looks as if learning depends on the chosen media. Moreover, contextual factors seem to matter as well. As Ferrin et al.[3] have recently shown, in elections where voters are exposed to an unusually high amount of new information, people who are not very politically sophisticated learn the most. They benefit especially from infotainment shows on TV, which provide a low threshold for learning for politically inattentive citizens.

In a summary of US scholarship, Arceneaux[4] concluded that in the American context, elections tend to have an educating impact, rather than a persuading one. During campaigns,

American voters seemed to learn about key issues and the competing parties' stances on these issues, such as the economy or the political ideologies of the parties. Also, Arceneaux emphasized that particularly those voters who are not very well informed about politics learn about politics as they follow a political campaign. This is a rather hopeful message from a broader democratic perspective, given that voters' sophistication levels are typically considered to be low[5].

Conducting a cross-national analysis, Arceneaux found that campaigns have a stronger effect on political learning in countries with a list voting system and, often overlapping, less clear institutional clarity in terms of political responsibility. Finland has an open list system, and from the viewpoint of voters, placing political responsibility for government actions is difficult; with broad coalition governments that do not follow clear ideological lines, Finland is a prime example of a country, where, according to Arceneaux, there is a lot to learn during campaigns.

Analysis

Previous studies have predominantly relied on indicators measuring factual knowledge about politics in assessing political learning during campaigns. We use an alternative route and measure a self-assessment of learning. It is a close conceptual relative of internal political efficacy, which refers to the subjective sense of being able to understand what goes on in politics. We use two straight-forward measures of whether the respondent feels (s)he has gained a better understanding of politics during the campaign. Both items were asked twice during the panel along with questions measuring media use, allowing us to examine the connection between the extent to which a person followed the campaign and possible, self-assessed increases in political learning. The first time (Wave 1, March 29th) the items were asked was during the early stages of the campaign, and the second time (Wave 4) was on Election Day April 14th. The first statement, "I started understanding politics better by following the campaign", is a self-assessed measure of the impact of the campaign on internal efficacy, i.e. understanding politics in general. The second statement, "Party differences have become clearer during the campaign" is a more campaign-specific self-assessment concerning the respondents' perception of the competing parties in the election. Respondents' media use was measured separately for TV, radio, newspapers, parties'/candidates' websites and social media. Respondents' total media use across all media was first combined to a single scale, which was then divided into three roughly equal size groups according to the intensity of media use.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 below show the cross tabulations of media use and the two statements at both time points (W1 and W4). The table entries are percentages of respondents within each cell. The results have been calculated using the design weight. Although not reported here, group differences are statistically significant (chi square test, >.001 significance level).

Table 6.1 Media use and understanding of politics.

"I started understanding politics better by following the campaign"	Followed closely		Followed somewhat closely		Did not follow closely	
	W1	W4	W1	W4	W1	W4
Agree completely	14	17	5	4	5	3
Agree somewhat	51	46	47	43	46	26
Disagree somewhat	26	26	36	43	34	41
Disagree completely	9	11	12	11	15	30
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Our primary focus is in seeing whether more of those respondents who followed the campaign closely in the media, report agreeing to the statement in Wave 4. There is an increase of 3 percentage points in completely agreeing with the statement that the respondent's understanding of politics increased by following the campaign in the media, suggesting a slight learning effect. However, there is a larger decrease among those who "agree somewhat", and also more respondents who disagree completely, suggesting precisely the opposite. The pattern is even more confusing among those who did not follow the election closely. There are both dramatic increases and decreases in the understanding of politics in this group, which makes it difficult to draw definite conclusions about the impact of media use.

The picture is equally unclear when it comes to perceptions of party differences and campaign following (Table 6.2). There is an increase in perceiving clearer party differences among those who followed closely, as "agree somewhat" increases from 41 to 45. But there is a simultaneous decrease as well ("agree completely" decreases by over 7 percentage points). However, respondents who followed the campaign somewhat closely show a consistent increase, suggesting that some learning is occurring in the intermediate group.

Table 6.2 Media use and perception of party differences.

"Party differences have become clearer during the campaign"	Followed closely		Followed somewhat closely		Did not follow closely	
	W1	W4	W1	W4	W1	W4
Agree completely	24	17	6	9	6	4
Agree somewhat	40	45	43	48	37	41
Disagree somewhat	26	31	37	34	43	34
Disagree completely	10	8	14	8	14	21
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Tables 6.3 and 6.4 cross tabulate the direction of change by some key background characteristics to examine what types of respondent groups are affected by the campaign. Table 6.3 shows that increases in understanding were more common among men than women, older rather than younger age groups and those with a low education.

Table 6.3 Changes in understanding of politics by respondent group.[1]

"I started understanding politics better by following the campaign"	No change	Positive change	Negative change	Total
Gender				
Female	56	24	20	100
Male	55	29	16	100
Age				
18 – 24	62	11	27	100
25 – 34	57	25	19	100
35 – 54	57	24	19	100
55 – 69	49	33	18	100
70 –	55	33	12	100
Education				
Low	58	29	12	100
Intermediate	52	26	22	100
High	58	26	15	100

[1] Details on coding of education level is found in the technical appendix.

The picture is similar when it comes to perceptions of party differences (Table 6.4). Men and older age groups show more positive change than their counterparts do, although for the oldest age group the change is only modest. However, those with low education now show less positive change than those with intermediate or high education.

Table 6.4 Changes in perceptions of party differences by respondent group.[2]

"Party differences have become clearer during the campaign"	No change	Positive change	Negative change	Total
Gender				
Female	56	19	25	100
Male	48	28	24	100
Age				
18 – 24	57	16	27	100
25 – 34	53	29	19	100
35 – 54	52	25	23	100
55 – 69	48	25	28	100
70 –	53	19	28	100
Education				
Low	54	19	27	100
Intermediate	51	26	24	100
High	52	23	25	100

[2] Details on coding of education level is found in the technical appendix.

Summary

In this short study, we have examined to what extent following a political campaign contributes to learning about politics in general and parties in particular. Previous research suggests that campaigns have an impact on political learning, although it seems that the impact varies significantly across different media.

We find substantial variation in political learning among respondent groups. Self-reporting of increased understanding of politics through following political campaigning is more common among those with a low education. Since low education individuals typically struggle to grasp politics and are often politically passive, the finding sends a positive message as it shows that campaigns are particularly helpful for people who benefit most from learning. However, another similar group, young people, show much less learning than other age groups. It seems that at least the campaign in the Finnish 2019 parliamentary elections did not manage to reach out to the youth.

The results are much more difficult to interpret when it comes to the intensity of media use and political learning. There is no consistent pattern suggesting that a more active following of the campaign through media would have increased understanding of politics or of party differences. Across all levels of media use, typically a clear majority did not report any changes in their understanding of politics. Taken together, there is only little evidence to suggest that closely following political campaigns in Finland would have a significant educating impact. To the extent that it exists, it seems to be limited to specific groups of people.

Our examination is, of course, brief and superficial. We have not distinguished, for example, between different types of media as we have only examined the overall amount of media use and political learning. Elections also differ from one another and it would require more than just analysing one to make safe conclusions about the impact of media use on political learning from elections in Finland. In spite of these restrictions, it is nevertheless obvious that although the overall learning pattern is unclear, some types of individuals clearly benefit from following the elections closely.

[1] Morrell 2003
[2] Dimitrova et al. 2014
[3] Ferrín et al. 2015
[4] Arceneaux 2006
[5] Oscarsson & Rapeli 2018

7. POLITICAL TRUST IN FINLAND

Maria Bäck

Introduction

Scholars have defined political trust as a basic evaluative orientation towards the government, which is founded on how well the government and its main actors, such as parties, politicians and public officials function according to people's normative expectations[1]. Thus, political trust can be understood as the relationship between citizens and the political system. Both citizens' expectations and their evaluations on how these expectations are met vary across time and space, and there are remarkable differences between countries when comparing aggregated levels of political trust[2]. Finland consistently ranks high in international comparisons of country-level political trust[3], but scratching beneath the surface, and moving down to the individual level, we find differences within the country and between segments. Previous research on political trust in Finland has, for example, shown that even though the overall level of trust in the country is fairly high, the Finns' political efficacy is lagging behind. This – in combination with increasing inequalities in political participation – may erode political trust and have far-reaching consequences[4].

The developments after the parliamentary elections are relevant also from a political trust point-of-view. In a parliamentary system, it is generally expected that the election winners form the government, while the losers take seat in the opposition. After narrowly winning the elections with one seat over the runner-up, the Finns Party, the Social Democratic Party with chairman Antti Rinne initiated the cabinet negotiations. Contrary to the expectations of many, Rinne finally opted to invite the Centre Party to the government formation talks. This did not fall well with many people who feel that the Centre Party, who suffered a crushing defeat in the elections and lost one third of their seats in the parliament, should be in the opposition. According to theory[5], voting for a party that loses the election is associated with lower political trust and satisfaction with democracy. People who voted for either the governing party, or a party in the governing coalition, are more likely to feel that the government is more responsive and interested in their needs and demands, and thus more inclined to be more satisfied with how the system works [6]. This might also translate into higher political trust.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe levels of the Finnish voters' trust in central political actors and institutions and to explore whether there are differences in trust between sociodemographic segments in the society. Moreover, the eOpinion-survey's panel design allows us to evaluate whether the outcome of the elections and the following cabinet negotiations affected levels of trust in politicians and parties (including the party that the respondents identified the closest with), as well as trust in the parliament and the government.

Political trust in Finland: evidence from the eOpinion-survey

Figure 7.1 lists mean trust for different political institutions in the eOpinion-survey (wave 2) and the two previous Finnish National Election Studies (FNES)[7]. For all institutions, trust is measured on a score from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates the lowest and 10 the highest trust.

Trust in incumbents, i.e. politicians ($\bar{x}$ =4.77) and political parties ($\bar{x}$ =4.77) is generally lower than trust in the parliament and the government, because the responsibility within these institutions becomes personified. Trust in the president ($\bar{x}$ =7.99) is of course also highly personified, but it has nevertheless been very high over the years in Finland. This is much due to the fact that the Finnish president does not take part in daily politics in the same way as politicians and parties do. On the other hand, there is very little difference between trust in the government and trust in the parliament even though the government as the main executive and enforcer of laws is responsible to the parliament when it comes to the day-to-day management of the state. The European Union (EU) has been the least trusted institution in the past election studies ($\bar{x}$ =5.07 in 2011 and 5.09 in 2015). The mean score in 2019 is, however, significantly higher ($\bar{x}$ =6.04). According to some studies, political trust tends to increase during election year[8], and this might partly explain the higher-than-average trust in the EU during the time of the data collection.

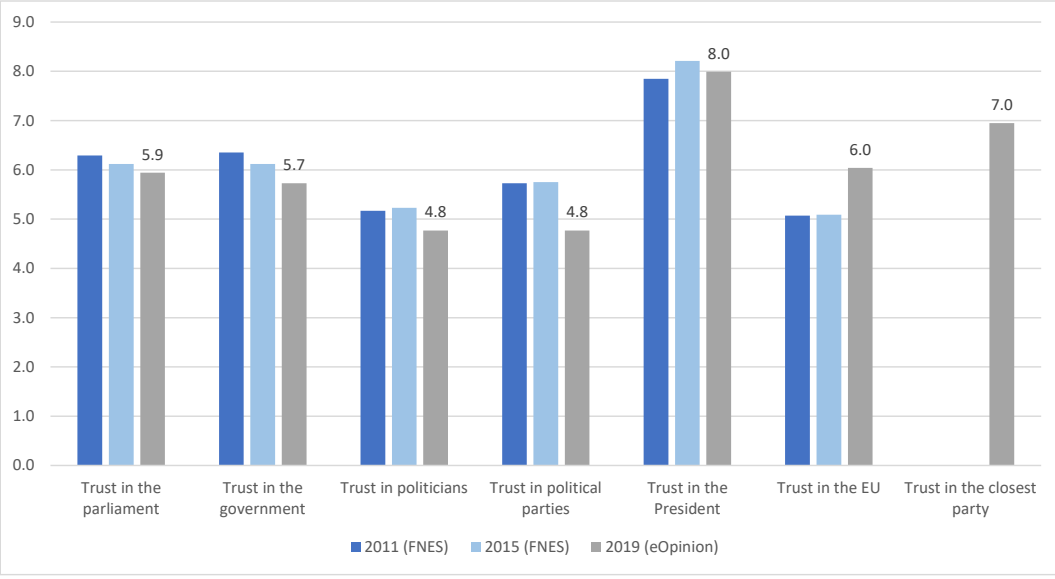

Figure 7.1 Trust in different political institutions in Finland, Country mean.[9]

Table 7.1 shows group means for political trust according to gender, age, education and language. Traditionally, socioeconomic variables have not been very strong predictors of political trust. When it comes to all objects of trust, the differences in gender are extremely small, and in fact, not statistically significant. The analyzes of variance (ANOVA)[1] show that age seems to matter somewhat more for political trust than gender. However, the relationships are not always linear. While trust – especially in the government – increases with age, the trends are not as straightforward for other forms of trust, such as trust in parties and politicians. When looking at the different age groups, the 18–24 year-olds and the 35–54 year-olds appear as the least trusting, especially when evaluating trust in parties and politicians. The oldest age cohort demonstrates the highest trust for all institutions except for the EU (and slightly less than the 55–69 year olds for trust in the president). This is in line with previous research, showing that support and trust for the EU has continuously been the highest among the young in Finland[10] . Education correlates with all types of political trust so that those who have the highest education (tertiary level) demonstrate the highest mean scores. Finally, Swedish-speaking respondents demonstrate somewhat higher political trust, with the exception of trust in the president.

Table 7.1 Political trust (mean 0-10) according to sociodemographic background.[1]

	Parliament	Government	Parties	Politicians	President	EU
Language						
Swedish	6.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	7.8	6.6
Finnish	5.9	5.8	4.8	4.8	8.1	6.0
Education						
Tertiary	6.3	6.2	5.1	5.2	8.2	6.4
Secondary	5.7	5.4	4.6	4.6	7.9	5.8
Primary	5.9	5.6	4.5	4.4	7.9	5.9
Age						
70 –	6.3	6.3	4.9	4.9	8.2	6.1
55 – 69	6.0	5.8	4.8	4.8	8.4	5.9
35 – 54	5.8	5.5	4.7	4.7	7.8	5.8
25 – 34	5.8	5.6	4.8	5.9	7.7	6.3
18 – 24	6.0	5.5	4.6	4.5	7.8	6.7
Gender						
Male	6.0	5.7	4.7	4.7	8.0	5.9
Female	5.9	5.7	4.8	4.8	8.0	6.2

[1]Independent samples t-tests and ANOVA (analysis of variance) were conducted in order to reveal significant differences between groups.

Did the outcome of the elections and government negotiations affect political trust?

In the following, we compare the respondents' trust scores *before* the elections (eOpinion wave 2) to the scores *after* the elections (eOpinion wave 8). The analyzes are limited to trust in politicians, parties, the closest party (which presumably is the party the respondent ended up voting for), the parliament and the government. These are the objects to which trust reasonably may have changed after the election results were known to the respondents and after government formation talks were finalized. Are there significant differences between the two measuring points? The results are presented in table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Comparison of political trust before and after the Parliamentary election[2] [3]

Trust in...		Mean	N	SD	Sig. (2-tailed)
Politicians	Before election	4.81	1,110	2.05	
	After election	5.17	1,110	2.04	
	Change	0.36		1.50	0.000
Parties	Before election	4.78	1,099	2.08	
	After election	5.20	1,099	1.95	
	Change	0.42		1.53	0.000
Closest party	Before election	7.00	1,112	1.90	
	After election	7.29	1,112	1.68	
	Change	0.28		1.53	0.000
Parliament	Before election	5.97	1,131	2.00	
	After election	6.32	1,131	1.85	
	Change	0.34		1.52	0.000
Government	Before election	5.82	1,126	2.34	
	After election	6.26	1,126	2.04	
	Change	0.44		1.84	0.000

[2] Means of before-and-after observations are compared using paired samples t-tests. T-test results (degrees of freedom in parentheses), sig (2-tailed): Politicians: t(1109)=-8.017, p=0.000; Parties: t(1098)=-9.295, p=0.000; Closest party: t(1111)=-6.216, p=0.000; Parliament: t(1130)=-7.673, p=0.000; Government: t(1125)=-8.055, p=0.000.
[3] t(155)=0.615, p=0.539. Sample includes both advance votes and votes on Election Day.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, trust actually increased between the two measuring points for all political actors and institutions under scrutiny when looking at data for the whole sample. This implies that people were not overly disappointed with the election results or the results of the government negotiations. Yet, in order to inspect whether trust levels changed for certain groups of voters, some additional tests were run. First, the Centre Party was the main election loser. In the case of the Centre Party, trust appears to have slightly decreased for the closest party (presumably the Centre Party itself) from $\bar{x}$ =7.31 to $\bar{x}$ =7.24. However, the test score was not statistically significant[3]. For the National Coalition Party, who can also be perceived as an election loser even though they managed to receive an additional seat in the parliament, trust in the closest party increased from $\bar{x}$ =7.21 to $\bar{x}$ =7.41[4]. Second, for the Social Democrats, who were the election winner, albeit narrowly, trust in the closest party increased from $\bar{x}$ =7.19 to $\bar{x}$ =7.46[5]. The Finns Party was an election winner, but was not included in the government formation talks. Trust in the closest party for those who had voted for a candidate for the Finns Party increased from $\bar{x}$ =6.40 to $\bar{x}$ =6.65[6]. In this case, the difference was also small, but statistically significant.

Finally, and third, it is of interest to see whether it matters for the respondents' level of trust if he or she voted for a candidate whose party ended up in the government as a coalition partner (i.e. Social Democrats, Centre Party, Greens, Left Alliance or Swedish People's Party) or in the opposition (i.e. National Coalition Party, Christian Democrats, The Finns Party or Other). The analyzes reveal that trust in the closest party increased both for those who voted for parties who made it to the government and for those whose candidate or party ended up in the opposition. Interestingly, the growth in trust was more prominent in the case of the latter[7], which to a certain extent contradicts previous findings and assumptions[11]. Trust in politicians also increased for both groups, although in this case the level of trust was much higher for those who voted for one of the government parties. The increase in trust between the two measuring points was also substantially higher for this group (voters of candidates or parties in the government coalition) than for those whose candidate represented one of the opposition parties[8]. Thus, the analyzes indicate that the Finnish voters were quite satisfied with the election outcome, at least when measured by means of political trust. In addition, trust did not decrease even for those respondents whose candidates and parties were not among the election winners.

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[4] t(198) =-2.574, p=0.011. Sample includes both advance votes and votes on Election Day.
[5] t(185)=-2.322, p=0.021. Sample includes both advance votes and votes on Election Day.
[6] t(181)=-1.818, p=0.049. Sample includes both advance votes and votes on Election Day.
[7] Trust in the closest party for voters whose candidate/party made it to government increased from x=7.17 to x=7.44. t(623)=-4.479, p= 0.000. Trust in the closest party for voters whose candidate/party ended up in opposition increased from x= 6.80 to x=7.10. t(489)=-4.309, p=0.000. Sample includes both advance votes and votes on Election Day.
[8] Trust in politicians for voters whose candidate/party made it to government increased from x=5.16 to x=5.67. t(609)=-8.658, p=0.000. Trust in politicians for voters whose candidate/party ended up in the opposition increased from x =4.39 to x =4.37. t(499)=-2.584, p=0.010. Sample includes both advance votes and votes on Election Day.

Conclusions

Political trust is an important trait of a well-functioning democracy. While political trust in Finland is comparatively high, several factors may affect the level of trust both at the aggregated and at the individual level. The results of the eOpinion-survey show little variation in political trust when it comes to gender, which is in line with previous research. There is somewhat more variation when looking at the effects of age, education and language. Contrary to the expectations, voting for an election loser (a candidate whose party either lost a significant amount of votes or ended up in the opposition) did not have a negative effect on political trust. A possible explanation is that the time between the measuring points is still quite short, and the voters do not yet know all of the effects of e.g. the new government programme. In the light of the eOpinon data, however, the Finnish voters seem to have been rather satisfied with the election outcome, at least if satisfaction is measured as political trust.

[1] Miller 1974; Stokes 1962; Hetherington 1998
[2] Kestilä-Kekkonen & Vento 2019
[3] Söderlund 2019
[4] Bäck & Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2019
[5] Anderson & Guillory 1997
[6] Anderson & Guillory 1997
[7] Bäck, Kestilä-Kekkonen, Söderlund 2016
[8] Bäck, Kestilä-Kekkonen, Söderlund 2016
[9] eOpinion 2019 and Finnish National Election Studies 2011 and 2015
[10] Karv & Raunio 2019; Bäck 2017
[11] Anderson & LoTempio 2002

8. WHOM DO FINNS TRUST? IN-GROUP AND OUT-GROUP TRUST IN FINLAND

Thomas Karv and Maria Bäck

Introduction

People's preparedness to trust strangers (generalized trust) has been associated with numerous public benefits, such as vibrant and well-functioning democracy[1], economic growth[2], social integration, cooperation and harmony[3]. The concept of generalized trust is often defined as "the belief that others will not, at worst, knowingly or willingly do you harm, and will, at best, act in your interests"[4]. However, research has also found that such generalized trust is more common in ethnically homogeneous societies, such as Finland, than in societies that are more diverse. Ethnic diversity, it is argued, often breeds particularistic, in-group trust, which undermines both generalized trust and cross-ethnic trust[5]. According to Fukyama[6], the radius of particularized trust is narrow. While in-group trust may be beneficial for those who are included in the group, it reduces the ability of the group members to liaise with outsiders and may even impose negative externalities on out-groups. Within the literature, the existence of an in-group bias has been established, suggesting that individuals tend to favor members of their in-group versus members who are not part of that group[7]. Some researchers have even suggested that the relationship between in-group trust and out-group trust is zero-sum: "the higher the trust in one's own group, the lower the faith in people outside of it"[8]. However, there are also differences regarding how different out-groups are evaluated, depending on a number of both unifying and differentiating factors[9].

This chapter examines the Finns' in-group trust, defined here as trust in other Finnish nationals, and their out-group trust. As people may respond to various groups differently, we infer out-group trust from the respondents' dispositions to trust a number of different nationalities. Trust in other nationalities is considered to reflect the extent of solidarity, acceptance and affective attachment across countries. Considered as a type of generalized trust, it allows individuals from different countries to cooperate[10]. When it comes to trust in other nationalities, earlier research on the topic has shown that cultural proximity (including in particular the similarity of languages and dominant religion proximity) are significant predictors for out-group trust[11]. Language similarities implies kinship ties while a shared religion facilitates closer cooperation between countries[12]. In short, "cultural distances between two populations affect mutual trust between those populations"[13]. Cultural values are also stable and durable[14], and familiarity between nationals is expected to increase transnational trust, which, in turn, is necessary for facilitating cooperation between different nationalities[15]. Closer cooperation also contributes to cultural diffusion across borders, leading to value convergence between countries over time[16]. However, in Europe there are different clusters of countries sharing common

values originating from a shared cultural heritage. These groups of countries are clustered around linguistic, religious and geographical regions[17], which broadly can be divided into a Western- and an Eastern Europe value cluster[18]. In a landmark study, Inglehart and Baker have even proposed that there are four main value clusters within Europe, divided into historically communist, protestant, catholic and orthodox clusters.

These cultural differences within Europe are often cited as obstacles for the deepening of the European Union (EU) within the European integration literature. This is because the cultural differences are associated with a wide range of other social differences, such as the quality of governance and levels of generalized trust. These two factors are related, and, in general, countries with higher quality of governance are characterized by higher levels of generalized trust. Thus, these types of intra-European differences have been described as a barrier for European integration. However, the absence of a united European cultural cluster does not exclude the possibility that such a cluster could be created by a political project, such as the EU, over time. There are studies suggesting that a cultural diffusion process is already occurring, as member states have undergone a process of cultural diffusion since joining the EU. This diffusion process also includes a simultaneous process of differentiation from the non-EU European countries. One explanation for this cultural diffusion process is that political cooperation between countries functions as a mechanism for value diffusion, which has contributed to a more culturally homogenous EU area. This process is also considered as a vital step towards the creation of a European demos, as the notion of shared European values is a precondition for a shared European identity. Nevertheless, within the EU it has recently been suggested that two main clusters – or cleavages – have emerged between the Northwestern and the Southeastern member states, based on both cultural and economic differences.

In-group and out-group trust in Finland according to the eOpinion survey

We begin the empirical part of the chapter by looking at the extent of generalized trust in Finland. Generalized trust has been measured by the standard survey-question for this purpose: *Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? Please tell me on a score of 0 to 10, where 0 means you can't be too careful and 10 means most people can be trusted.* The mean value of the data is 6.4 (N=1,208), suggesting that Finns are, in general, relatively trusting of strangers. This result is in line with much of the previous research on social trust. In country comparisons, Finland consistently ranks high on indicators of trust together with the other Nordic countries, whereas generalized trust is considerably lower in e.g. Eastern and Southern Europe

Looking at the results presented in Table 8.1 by gender, age and education, there are no gender differences, while the level of social trust seems to increase both with age and with education. Similar results have been obtained also in previous studies

Table 8.1 Generalized trust in Finland (%).

	Generalized trust		
	Low (0-3)	Medium (4-6)	High (7-10)
Gender			
Female	14.1	23.9	62.0
Male	14.2	23.3	62.6
Age			
18 – 24	26.4	19.1	54.5
25 – 34	14.8	24.3	60.8
35 – 54	13.2	25.1	61.7
55 – 69	14.6	19.5	65.9
70 –	8.3	27.8	63.9
Education level			
Primary	19.4	25.5	55.1
Secondary	16.3	27.5	56.2
Tertiary	9.0	17.6	73.2

In general, levels of in-group trust are very high within European countries, but the cross-country variations in both in-group and out-group trust that do exist have been attributed to the levels of income inequality. High levels of income inequality decreases both in-group and out-group trust in the country of the trust-giver. In order to measure the extent of in-group trust in Finland we use a survey item asking the respondents: *Please tell me on a scale from 0 to 10 how much you personally trust the following nationalities, where 0 means that you do not trust that nationality and 10 means that you have complete trust in that nationality.* Table 8.2 (see page 4) presents the levels of in-group trust ("Finns can be trusted"). With regard to in-group trust, females appear to be more trusting towards other Finns in general than males. Moreover, generalized trust in Finns seems to increase both with age and with the level of education.

Table 8.2 In-group trust in Finland (%).

	In-group trust		
	Low (0-3)	Medium (4-6)	High (7-10)
Gender			
Female	0.3	9.4	90.2
Male	1.8	13.9	84.3
Age			
18 – 24	0.0	18.9	81.1
25 – 34	0.5	16.4	83.1
35 – 54	2.8	11.0	86.3
55 – 69	0.3	10.4	89.3
70 –	0.5	6.3	93.2
Education level			
Primary	0.0	13.5	86.5
Secondary	1.9	13.1	85.0
Tertiary	0.7	8.8	80.5

Next, we shift to measuring out-group trust. In Table 8.3 (see page 5), the respondents were asked to evaluate the trustworthiness of a number of other nationalities. We refer to this as transnational trust. As could be expected, Swedes are considered the most trustworthy, followed by Germans and Estonians. Somewhat surprisingly, the Chinese are considered more trustworthy than Greeks, followed by Russians, Turks and Somalis. This implies that some cultural diffusion has occurred from Finns towards Swedes, Germans and Estonians – three countries that are geographically, religiously and culturally close to Finland.

The finding that the Chinese are considered more trustworthy than Greeks can most likely be explained by the fact that Finland, among other countries, was forced to financially "bail-out" Greece during the Eurozone crisis, a measure that was far from popular among the Finnish public. The finding that the Russians are not considered trustworthy among Finns could be expected based on the complicated bilateral history of the two countries. Finally, Turks and Somalis are considered the least trustworthy, which is probably explained by religious differences.

Table 8.3 Trust in different nationalities in Finland.

	Mean	SD	N
Finns	7.8	1.4	1,212
Swedes	7.5	1.5	1,206
Germans	6.9	1.7	1,207
Estonians	5.9	2.0	1,204
Chinese	5.4	2.0	1,203
Greeks	5.2	1.9	1,202
Russians	4.8	2.2	1,203
Turks	4.4	2.3	1,206
Somalis	4.1	2.5	1,202

Summary

The trustworthiness of an out-group – in this context a range of other nationalities – reflects the specific image of the countries that these nationals represent. It has been argued that cross-national interactions foster value-convergence, which, over time, generates trust. However, it seems that no single contextual-level factor is exclusively accountable for the formation of these value-clusters. Nevertheless, based on our data, Finns, Swedes and Germans do constitute a kind of cluster, at least seen from a Finnish perspective. In other words, Finns do not tend to make a significant difference between their own nationals and Swedes and Germans. The perception that these three countries are part of the same cultural cluster has been brought up in previous research as well. Moreover, these kinds of beliefs appear to remain stable over time and it has been suggested that people often use this kind of trust as a heuristic when evaluating international developments. To some extent, the levels of transnational trust are also an indication of how difficult, or easy, it would be to mobilise help for a country in times of need. It has also been proposed that "EU citizens are clearly more attached to European than to non-European countries". This is, however, a statement not straightforwardly supported by our data. Still, the fact that the Chinese are considered more trustworthy than Greeks does not directly suggest that Finns would be more positively minded towards China than towards Greece, the birthplace of democracy.

Trust in out-groups is believed to raise the likelihood that the members of the in-group

begin to view the values of the out-group as compatible with their own. In-groups and out-groups can be tied together, through this mechanism, into larger clusters of like-minded people. Hence, building trust between people from different nations is a first step of a political community-building process. Finns, who are citizens of a country characterized by a high overall level of generalized trust, also tend to have similar opinions about the trustworthiness of people from like-minded countries such as Sweden and Germany. On the other hand, people from more culturally different countries, like Turkey and Somalia, are not considered particularly trustworthy. These initial results about in-group and out-group trust among Finns seem to support hypotheses and findings from previous research.

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[1] Putnam 1993; 2000
[2] Bjørnskov 2018
[3] Delhey & Newton 2003; Misztal 1996
[4] Delhey & Newton 2003, 105
[5] Bahry et al. 2005
[6] Fukyama 2000, 5
[7] Genna 2009, 215; Tajfel 1982
[8] Bahry et al. 2005, 1
[9] Gundelach 2014
[10] Klingemann & Weldon 2013
[11] Delhey 2007
[12] Akaliyski 2017
[13] Gerritsen & Lubbers 2010, 284
[14] Inglehart & Baker 2000
[15] Genna 2017, 359
[16] Akaliyski 2017
[17] Ronen & Shenkar 2013
[18] Schwartz 2006
[19] Inglehart and Baker, 2000
[20] Rothstein, 2011
[21] Gerhards 2007
[22] van Houwelingen, Iedema & Dekker 2018
[23] Akaliyski 2019
[24] Bonikowski 2010
[25] Akaliyski 2019
[26] Fligstein, Polyakova & Sandholtz 2012
[27] van Houwelingen, Iedema & Dekker 2018
[28] Bäck 2019
[29] Bäck 2019
[30] Gerritsen & Lubbers 2010
[31] Delhey 2005, 4
[32] Genna 2009, 226
[33] Bonikowski 2010
[34] Akaliyski 2017, 406
[35] Bonikowski 2010; Inglehart & Baker 2000
[36] Brewer, Gross, Aday & Willnat 2004, 105
[37] Delhey 2005, 4
[38] Deutschmann, Delhey, Verbalyte & Aplowski 2018, 980
[39] Genna 2017

9. PARTY SWITCHING BETWEEN PARLIAMENTARY – AND EP-ELECTIONS

Thomas Karv

The political spring of 2019 was exceptional in Finland. For the first time since 1999, both a parliamentary- and a European Parliament (EP) election occurred within a short range of time. There were also significant differences in the electoral results between the two elections. It is clear which of the two elections the Finnish public considered more important, illustrated by the fact that 72.1 percent voted in the Parliamentary elections, while only 42.7 percent voted in the EP-elections six weeks later. This was no surprise, as EP-elections have, ever since the first elections in 1979, generally come to be referred to as a second-order election[1]. This illustrates the general lack of interest in the EP-elections, as the turnout has generally been lower in comparison with first-order national elections. The second-order narrative of EP-elections is mainly derived from a public perception that less is at stake during EP-elections in comparison to national elections. As a result EP-elections have become characterized by lower turnout, higher success rates for fringe parties, electoral losses for government parties and lower media attention[2]. Thanks to the unique multi-wave panel data at disposal, it is possible to delve deeper into the explanations behind the different electoral outcomes, and assess whether Finnish citizens behave differently in a first- versus a second-order election conducted within six weeks. This chapter will therefore examine the voting patterns between the Parliamentary- and the EP-elections in Finland during the spring of 2019.

Three defining elements have come to characterize voting patterns during EP-elections[3]. First, as less is at stake, the turnout is logically expected to be lower than during Parliamentary elections. Second, EP-elections have traditionally been conducted over national issues[4], and many voters have therefore seen EP-elections as an opportunity to "punish the parties they typically support"[5]. As the EP-elections are also a way of evaluating the incumbent government, it is likely that dissatisfied voters will take the opportunity to punish government parties, hence opposition parties are expected to benefit. Based on the 2014 EP-elections this was also the case in 20 out of 28 member states, but in Finland the then government parties actually managed to slightly increase their vote share in comparison to the previous Parliamentary elections[6]. Finally, it has been suggested that voters cast more sincere ballots when less it at stake, since the incentives for strategically voting for the larger parties are lower. This has been referred to as the "voting with the heart rather than voting with the head phenomenon"[7]. This also, to some extent, explains why so-called fringe and new parties often seem to perform well during EP-elections. Studies have also shown that parties with a strong EU-profile, both anti- or pro-EU, are expected to gain electorally, relative to their results during the previous national elections[8]. These assumptions regarding the relationship between first- and second-order elections have been repeatedly tested, and mostly confirmed,

ever since the first EP-elections in 1979[9]. It has even been suggested that the first EP-elections in 1979 was the least second-order in nature, as government parties and larger parties in general, have since tended to underperform even more during EP-elections[10]. That the EU since 1979 has grown from nine to 28 member states, does not either seem to have had any apparent effect on this outcome[11].

It has also been argued that there are voters who want different policies pursued at the different institutional levels, which then might function as a motivational factor for vote switching between elections. Hence, at the individual level, EU-attitudes have been connected to both vote choice and turnout during EP-elections[12]. The second-order narrative of EP-elections has therefore become under scrutiny, and studies conducted on both vote choice and turnout during the EP-elections of 2009[13] and 2014[14] have shown that EU attitudes have in fact become an important individual level determinant for both vote choice and turnout. As only six weeks separated the Parliamentary- from the EP-elections in Finland in the spring of 2019, this provides a unique opportunity to analyze whether previous findings whether previous findings can be confirmed in the Finnish case. As presented in Table 9.1 (see page 3), a notable amount of party switching also seems to have occurred between the elections. The three largest net gainers in the EP-elections were the Green League (+4.5), the National Coalition Party (+.3.8) and the Swedish People's Party (+1.8), all three parties characterized by pro-EU agendas. On the other hand, the Finns Party (-3.6), the Finnish Social Democratic Party (-3.1) and the Left Alliance (-1.3) all lost considerably. The results for the Finns Party was perhaps the most surprising, as polls had them as the most popular party prior to the EP-elections[15].

Table 9.1 Party support in the Parliamentary- and EP-elections.[16]

Parties	Parliamentary elections (14.4.2019) %	Seats	EP-elections (26.5.2019) %	Seats	Change in % points
The Finnish Social Democratic Party	17.7	40	14.6	2	-3.1
The Finns Party	17.5	39	13.8	2	-3.6
National Coalition Party	17.0	38	20.8	3	3.8
Centre Party of Finland	13.8	31	13.5	2	-0.2
Green League	11.5	20	16.0	2	4.5
The Left Alliance	8.2	16	6.9	1	-1.3
Swedish People's Party in Finland	4.5	9	6.3	1	1.8
Christian Democrats in Finland	3.9	5	4.9	0	1.0
Other	5.9	2	3.1	0	-2.8

Thanks to unique panel data, it is possible to analyze the general patterns of party switching between the two elections. The general patterns of party loyalty and party switching are initially summarized in Table 9.2 (see page 4). Similar kinds of studies regarding party switching between first- and second-order elections have been conducted on similar kinds of multi-wave panel data in other EU countries, such as Austria[17], the Netherlands[18] and Portugal[19]. Based on the sample of respondents that voted in both elections, the three largest net gainers in the EP-elections were also the three parties with the most loyal supporters. 84.7 % that voted for the National Coalition Party, 80.2 % that voted for the Swedish People's Party and 77.3 % of those that voted for the Green League in the Parliamentary elections also voted for these parties in the EP-elections. In comparison, only 60.6 % that voted for the Christian Democrats, 66.1 % that voted for the Centre Party of Finland and 67 % of those that voted for the Left Alliance also voted for these parties in the EP-elections.

The Swedish People's Party, the National Coalition Party and the Green League also had the lowest rates of absent voters in the EP-elections. Only 1.6 % that voted for the Swedish People's Party, 3.8 % that voted for the Green League and 4.8 % that voted for the National Coalition Party did not turn up to vote in the EP-elections. On the other end, the Christian Democrats of Finland had the highest abstention rate, but as the panel data only included a small number of the party's voters in the Parliamentary elections (N=40), and the party actually gained 1 % in the EP-elections, this number is probably not representative for the general voting behavior of the party supporters. Still, the high abstention rates from voters of the True Finns (14.5 %) in the Parliamentary elections are more likely connected to their result in the EP-elections, as suggested by earlier findings[20].

When analyzing the patterns of party switching, the results are clearly in line with the actual results in the EP-elections. All of the parties included in the overview lost the highest shares of their voters to either the National Coalition Party or the Green League. The Left Alliance lost almost one-fifth of their voters to the Green League in the EP-elections. Looking at the opposite end, from which party the parties actually gained voters in the EP-elections, there are more mixed results. It could however, be noted that 18.9 % of the Christian Democrats voters in the EP-elections came from voters that had supported the Centre Party in the Parliamentary elections, and that 13.9 % of the Green Party voters in the EP-election voted for the Left Alliance in the Parliamentary elections.

Table 9.2 Party loyalty between Parliamentary- and EP-elections.[1]

Party	Same party (%)	Abstained in the EP-elections (%)	Lost to most	Gained from most
National Coalition Party	84.7	4.8	Green League (5.9 %)	Centre Party of Finland (6.5 %)
Swedish People's Party in Finland	80.2	1.6	Green League (10.2 %)	The Finnish Social Democratic Party (6.8 %)
Green League	77.1	3.8	National Coalition Party (6.5 %)	The Left Alliance (13.9%)
The Finns Party	76.9	14.5	National Coalition Party (11.8 %)	The Left Alliance (5.0 %)
The Finnish Social Democratic Party	70.1	9.2	Green League (9.6 %)	Green League (6.1 %)
The Left Alliance	67.0	4.9	Green League (19.5 %)	The Finnish Social Democratic Party (8.2 %)
Centre Party of Finland	66.1	6.5	National Coalition Party (14 %)	National Coalition Party (6.5 %)
Christian Democrats in Finland	60.6	17.5	National Coalition Party / Centre Party of Finland (12.1 %)	Centre Party of Finland (18.9 %)

[1] Parentheses reflects the amount of voters lost or gained in the EP-elections in comparison to the Parliamentary elections. Unweighted data.

In Table 9.3 some general characteristics of those that voted in both elections are summarized by gender, age and education level. According to the panel data, 70.5 % of the respondents voted for the same party in both elections, while 29.5 % switched party between the elections. There were no noteworthy gender differences, but it is quite clear that party switching was higher amongst the younger and less educated voters. These findings are however in line with earlier research[21].

Table 9.3 General characteristics of voters that participated in both elections (%).[2]

	Party switching	
	Yes	No
Total	29.5 (322)	70.5 (769)
Gender		
Female	31.8 (173)	68.2 (371)
Male	27.3 (149)	72.7 (397)
Age		
18 – 24	45.2 (47)	54.8 (57)
25 – 34	32.0 (48)	68.0 (102)
35 – 54	27.9 (100)	72.1 (258)
55 – 69	32.0 (90)	68.0 (191)
70 –	19.1 (38)	80.9 (161)
Education level		
Primary	33.5 (61)	66.5 (121)
Secondary	32.7 (164)	67.3 (337)
Tertiary	23.8 (97)	76.2 (311)

[2] Observations in parentheses. Weighted data.

In reference to earlier research that has suggested that EU attitudes may be of importance for both party choice and turnout during EP-elections[22], figure 9.1 summarizes whether there seems to be any validity to that assumption in the Finnish case. In order to measure EU attitudes, the traditional survey item used for measuring EU-support was included in the survey[23]: *Generally speaking, do you think that Finland's membership of the EU is a good thing, neither a good thing nor a bad thing or a bad thing?* The findings suggest that there at least seems to be a connection between pro-EU attitudes, party choice and higher levels of turnout. Voters that supported the Christian Democrats and the True Finns in the Parliamentary elections had the lowest turnout rates in the EP-elections, and these voters are, by far, the least positive towards Finland's EU membership. Amongst the supporters of the True Finns in the Parliamentary elections only 29.2 %, and amongst the Christian Democrats supporters, only 39 % think the EU membership is a good thing.

This in comparison with the supporters of the Swedish People's Party- and the National Coalition Party in the Parliamentary elections, were over 90 % respectively think that Finland´s EU membership is a good thing, and over 90 % also turned out to vote in the EP-elections, but not everybody for the same party. These findings seem to suggest that pro-EU attitudes is a stronger motivating factor than to anti-EU attitudes, for turnout during EP-elections in Finland. This makes Finland something of an outlier in an EU context, as anti-EU parties have generally been expected to perform better during EP-elections[24].

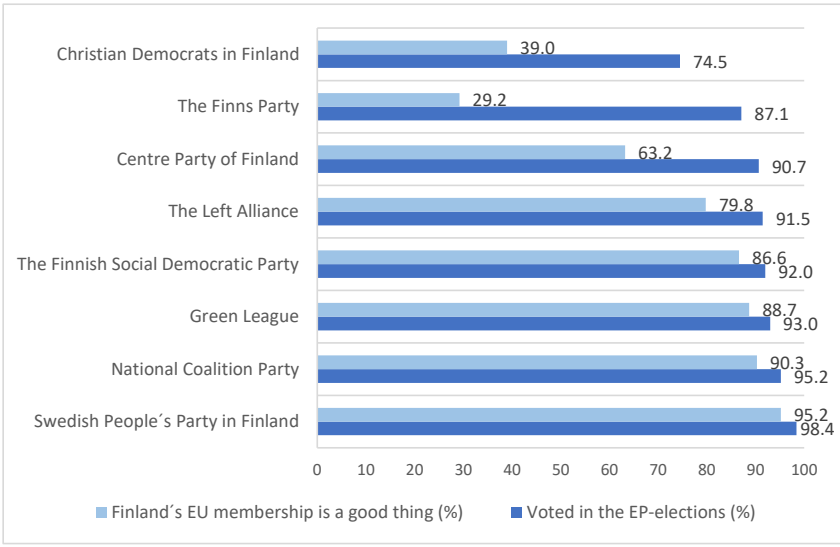

Figure 9.1 Party voted for in the Parliamentary elections.[3]

[3] Table showing percentage answering that the EU membership is "a good thing" and percentage of party voters in the Parliamentary elections that also voted, for any party, in the EP-elections. Weighted data.

These initial findings seem to be in line with both earlier findings and, more importantly, with the actual results from the EP-elections in Finland. The electoral successes of the National Coalition Party, the Green League and the Swedish People's Party, were most likely connected to the higher levels of party loyalty and turnout amongst their supporters, which is probably related to the fact that they have the most pro-EU supporters. The fact that the True Finns lost 3.6 percentage points of their electoral support between the elections is however not explained by lower levels of party loyalty, as their supporters in the Parliamentary elections remained almost as loyal as the supporters of the Green League did during the EP-elections. Nevertheless, the higher abstention rate amongst their supporters, as was also the case for the Social Democratic supporters, is most likely connected to their respective results. These findings also indicate that the parties with the clearest positions on the EU, both pro- and anti-EU, inspired higher levels of party loyalty between the elections, and that the younger, and less educated, are more likely to switch parties between elections.

[1] Reif & Schmitt 1980
[2] Boomgaarden, Johann & Kritzinger 2016, 130
[3] Boomgaarden, Johann & Kritzinger 2016
[4] Carrubba & Timpone 2005, 260
[5] McEvoy 2012, 94
[6] Schmitt & Toygür 2016
[7] Boomgaarden, Johann & Kritzinger 2016, 131; Schmitt 2005, 652
[8] Hix & Marsh 2011
[9] Niedermayer 1990; Marsh 1998; Schmitt & Toygür 2016
[10] Hix & Marsh 2011
[11] Hix & Marsh 2011
[12] Blondel, Sinnott & Svensson 1997; Flickinger & Studlar 2007; Boomgaarden, Johann & Kritzinger 2016
[13] Van Spanje & De Vreese 2011
[14] Hobolt 2015; Hobolt & de Vries 2016; van Elsas, Goldberg & de Vreese 2018
[15] Yle 10.5.2019
[16] Ministry of Justice – Information and result service
[17] Boomgaarden, Johann & Kritzinger 2016
[18] van Elsas, Goldberg & de Vreese 2018
[19] Freire & Santana-Pereira 2015
[20] Marsh 2009
[21] Hobolt & Spoon 2012
[22] Hong 2015
[23] Eichenberg & Dalton 2007
[24] Hobolt & Spoon 2012, 718

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

Aleksi Suuronen, Kim Strandberg & Kimmo Grönlund

Survey Sample, Response Rates, and Participation Attrition

The sample of the 2019 eOpinion panel survey was collected using two sampling methodologies. First, the survey was disseminated through mail with a physical invitation letter to a random representative sample of 40,000 Finnish citizens (sample provided by the Finnish Population Registry). Second, the survey was advertised in the following online media sources: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and three online versions of major Finnish newspapers (Helsingin Sanomat, Ilta-Sanomat, and Iltalehti). After a recruitment period of approximately two weeks, the final number of registered participants was 1,949 individuals. Table 10.1 summarizes the share of the participants from each of the main distribution channels. Due to the nature of the second online sample, the final number of reached unique persons is unknown, which prevents us from knowing the final response rate to the survey. However, the response rate of the random sample distributed through the Finnish post is 3.5 percent.

Table 10.1 Number of Registered Respondents.[1]

Invitation Source	Number of People Registered
Mail Invitation	1,403
Social Media	419
Online Newspapers	66
Other*	61
Total	1,949

In total, the 2019 eOpinion panel survey had 8 waves out of which 7 were sent to all respondents (Wave 3 was only sent to those respondents who did not pre-vote in the parliamentary elections). The participation rate of all of the registered respondents remained high throughout the panel, never dropping below 80 %, as can be seen in Table 10.2.

Table 10.2 Participation of the Registered Respondents.[2]

	Dissemination Day	Number of Respondents	Response Rate of the Registered
Registration	18 March 2019	1,949	100.0 %
Wave 1	29 March 2019	1,802	92.5 %
Wave 2	9 April 2019	1,732	88.9 %
Wave 3*	14 April 2019	1,148	n.a.
Wave 4	18 April 2019	1,744	89.5 %
Wave 5	3 May 2019	1,644	84.4 %
Wave 6	16 May 2019	1,588	81.5 %
Wave 7	26 May 2019	1,581	81.1 %
Wave 8	30 May 2019	1,587	81.4 %

[1] *Number of people who indicated having heard about the survey through a friend, found it elsewhere on the internet, etc
[2] *Wave 3 was only sent to respondents who did not report having pre-voted in Wave 2

Weights and Variable Operationalization

In order to correct for the unrepresentativeness of the sample due to non-response and self-selection biases, a weight was calculated using iterative proportional fitting (otherwise and henceforth known as Raking). This approach calculates weights based on known population parameters and adjusts the sampling weights by repeatedly estimating weights across each set of variables in turn until the weights converge and stop changing. The calculations were made by *SPSS version 25* and its RAKE WEIGHTS command, where weights were calculated based on the following known population statistics: level of education, age, population within each election district, portion of Swedish and Finnish speakers in the Finnish regions, gender, and support for parties according to those who pre-voted and who voted on election day. The operationalization of these variables are presented at table 10.3. The maximum threshold for each weight were set at 5 so that the final range of values is between 0 and 5.

Table 10.3 Rake Weight Variable Operationalizations.[2]

Variable	Type	Levels	Categories
Age	Ordinal	5	18 – 24, 25 – 34, 35 – 54, 55 – 69, 70 –
Gender	Nominal	2	Male, Female
Education*	Ordinal	3	Comprehensive school, Upper secondary or vocational school, Higher education
District population	Ratio	13	% of total population for each district
Portion of Swedish and Finnish speakers	Ratio	10	% of Finnish and Swedish speakers in 5 regions: Helsinki-Uusimaa Region, Southwest Finland, Ostrobothnia, South Ostrobothnia, Central Ostrobothnia
Party support from pre-voters	Ratio	10	% of citizens who pre-voted for a candidate from the following parties: SDP, KOK, KESK, VIHR, wPS, VAS, RKP, KD, SIN, Other
Party support from election day voters	Ratio	10	% of citizens who voted on election day for a candidate from the following parties: SDP, KOK, KESK, VIHR, PS, VAS, RKP, KD, SIN, Other

[3] *Education values were recoded from the following question responses:
"What is the highest level of education you have acquired?"
Comprehensive school = Basic schooling years 1-6 (kansakoulu), Basic schooling years 7-9,10 (keskikoulu)
Upper secondary or vocational school = Short vocational education or training, Vocational upper secondary qualification, Matriculation examination
Higher education = University of applied sciences education, University education, Doctoral education

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The political spring of 2019 was especially busy in Finland with both a Parliamentary election and an election to the European Parliament. This report is based on an online panel called eOpinion 2019 which political science researchers at Åbo Akademi University conducted over the course of the elections all the way into June. The panel included eight survey waves in total and had almost 2,000 participating adults.

This report provides an insight into voting behavior and public opinion in Finland in 2019. It contains nine short chapters in which political scientists focus on various aspects of the Parliamentary election and, to some extent, the EU election. Topics such as voting, value dimensions, media habits, political trust and party sympathies are covered. The report is published by the Social Science Research Institute (Samforsk) at Åbo Akademi.

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