

Individualised Constituency Campaigns in Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: Candidates in the 2005 German Elections

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Constituency campaigns are important phenomena for students of political parties, voting behaviour as well as political communication. These research communities perceive constituency campaigns as parts of centralised high-tech campaigns aiming in strategic ways at the efficient mobilisation of voters. We propose in this paper an alternative understanding of constituency campaigns using the case of the German parliamentary elections in 2005 to empirically test this understanding. We perceive constituency campaigns as phenomena signalling a relative independence of individual candidates from the national party campaign. We label this phenomenon individualised campaigning. We argue that individualised campaigning is driven among others by electoral incentives. We test this hypothesis with regard to the German mixed-member electoral system and on the basis of a survey of all candidates standing for election in 2005.

Two Different Perspectives on Constituency Campaigns

Election campaigns are traditionally multilevel. One level is national and it is populated by political celebrities standing as front runners for their parties. Their primary means of communication are the mass media, political advertisements and large-scale political rallies. A second campaign level is local. It is mostly populated by quite average citizens running on a party list or for a direct mandate in a local constituency. They meet their potential voters face-to-face on market squares, through visits to companies, at social events, or simply through knocking on their front doors. This paper is about the relationship between these two levels in the German parliamentary election of 2005 and on the way the country's mixed-member voting system patterns this relationship.

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Pippa Norris (2000) identifies in her historical analysis of campaign styles a succession of three campaign types in the course of the twentieth century which display three distinct patterns in multilevel campaigns: Norris defines pre-modern campaigns as being characterised by highly independent and intense local campaigns which were hardly connected to the less significant national level; modern campaigns are said to emphasise the national level and the mass media as a means to address voters while paying little attention to the local level; post-modern campaigns are depicted as combining a strong focus on the voting district with a high degree of centralised party-driven coordination. Denver *et al.* (2003: 542) put this phenomenon in the following way: 'national party professionals now seek to exercise much greater control over local campaigning by managing key constituency campaigns in crucial respects and managing them much more closely in the national effort'. The peculiar highly centralised character of post-modern campaigns has been illustrated through research on campaign tools, campaign content, campaign effects and campaign structure.

The increasing use of *new communication technologies* is a prerequisite for directly targeting voters at the constituency level in centralised ways while bypassing the mass media as well as the parties' organisational substructure (Römmele 2002). Denver *et al.* (2003) focus in a study of British election campaigns on this aspect of post-modern campaigns. They find a decrease of traditional forms of face-to-face campaigning such as doorstep canvassing, public meetings and campaign rallies at the constituency level. Their analysis shows instead an increase in the use of technologically enhanced and mediated campaign tactics such as telephone canvassing, direct mailing and computer-based forms of political communication.

Brettschneider (2002) perceives the growing importance of the personal characteristics of the frontrunner of a party as an important indicator for post-modern campaigns in terms of *campaign content*. The growing saliency of the personal properties as well as the personal background of main candidates is assumed to put the political issues on the backburner of campaign agendas. The concept of personalisation is largely silent about its implications for the constituency level of campaigns. We expect in this context efforts to increase the visibility of frontrunners at the constituency level on the part of the national campaign.

Students of electoral behaviour such as Denver *et al.* (2003), Whiteley and Seyd (2003), Denver, Hands and McAllister (2004) and Pattie and Johnston (2004) focus on the *electoral effects* of centralised constituency campaigns. These authors argue that vital constituency campaigns will have pay-offs for the vote shares of political parties. Their data demonstrate for the British case increases in campaign activities over time. Differences between constituencies are explained by their competitiveness and the aim of British parties to strategically target such districts. Such activities are interpreted as a particularly valid indicator for the highly strategic character of professionalised campaigns aiming to mobilise voters in most efficient ways.

At the *structural level*, post-modern campaigns were characterised by pointing to new actor constellations at the national level. Farrell and Webb (2000) and Poguntke and Webb (2005) perceive post-modern campaigns as a source for the presidentialisation of parliamentary systems. They argue that the increasing focus on front runners in candidate-centred personalised campaigns could trigger a growing gap between the party organisation and the parliamentary party on the one hand and the party leader on the other. According to Plasser and Plasser (2002: 303–22), post-modern campaigns are defined by the emergence of professional campaign consultants. The authors demonstrate in a comparative analysis that campaign professionals form the core of candidate-centred organisations and that these organisations remain to be largely independent from the national party headquarters.

This paper suggests an alternative perspective on constituency campaigns which differs from the one adopted by students of post-modern campaigns. We argue that constituency campaigns raise questions regarding the vertical axis of party organisation and that their reality might come closer to pre-modern than to modern times. We see local campaigns as a context for individual candidates campaigning in a fairly independent fashion from the party they represent. We wish to use the concept of *individualised campaigns* to label this phenomenon.¹ Individualised campaigns are characterised in an ideal way by candidates who actively seek a personal vote (Cain 1978) on the basis of a candidate-centred organisation, a candidate-centred campaign agenda and candidate-centred means of campaigning. We do not expect to find such ideal patterns in the real world. But we do expect to find constituency campaigns that are gradually approaching this ideal and we do expect to find differences between different constituency campaigns in light of this ideal.

The concept of individualised constituency campaigns contributes to most recent writings in the campaign literature. Seyd and Whiteley (2002) for example argued with regard to the campaign of the British Labour Party in 1997 that nationally directed and locally directed campaigns are different and that variations in campaign intensity across constituencies were largely produced by candidates and local party branches rather than by targeting efforts of the national campaign. This claim was contested by Denver and Hands (2004) who stressed the vertical integration of Labour's election campaign for the very same election. It goes without saying that the question of the vertical structure of election campaigns is of vital importance, not only for students of political campaigns, but also for students of political parties and political representation.

Our paper aims to further develop the notion of an independent local campaign in theoretical and empirical terms and to apply it to a non-Westminster democracy such as Germany. The paper is structured in four parts. In the first part we will discuss and model the theoretical basis for our argument. In the second part we will introduce the data that we use in our

analysis and we will develop empirical hypotheses on the basis of our general theoretical argument. The third part will be devoted to testing these hypotheses. The paper concludes by providing a critical discussion of the results of our analysis and some speculative remarks regarding the wider implications of individualised constituency campaigns.

The Electoral Sources of Constituency Campaigns

What are the factors influencing campaign behaviour? The literature on post-modern campaigning perceives technological changes as a crucial driving force in the process of the modernisation of election campaigns. Swanson and Mancini (1996) stress new media technology as a stimulus towards the global convergence of campaign behaviour and campaign style. This argument suggests that political parties will increasingly focus on the constituency level simply because the technological means are available to them. Another line of argument stresses the global diffusion of the American model of campaigning through American campaign professionals actively promoting new means and strategies of campaigning abroad. This explanation of campaign behaviour is related to the concept of the Americanisation of campaigning (Butler and Ranney 1992; Holtz-Bacha 2000; Plasser and Plasser 2002).²

A third explanation of professionalised campaign strategies aims at the party in the electorate and at changes in electoral markets. Peter Mair *et al.* (2004) see the structured electoral markets of the past populated by homogeneous social groups with strong attachments to particular political parties in decline. These social formations are assumed to give way to more complex and fragmented social networks that are only weakly associated with the political realm and that signal a declining electoral value of party labels. Dalton and Wattenberg (2000), Putnam and Pharr (2000) and Dalton (2006⁴) have documented this trend empirically on the basis of a number of indicators, which need no further discussion or elaboration at this point. In the context of our argument it is important to stress the assumed effects of these changes on campaign strategies. Mair *et al.* (2004) perceive these changes as crucial incentives for parties to target voters in more differentiated and efficient ways and to augment their efforts to constantly mobilise weak identifiers through the means of political communication.

Neither of the analyses sketched above denies the persistence of disciplined and centralised campaign structures despite the declining value of the party label as a heuristic for individual decision-making at the level of voters. This is because party organisation and electoral incentives are considered key factors for keeping the teams together in spite of flagging brand names. We believe that there are indeed good reasons for stressing the role of party organisation as a centralising factor in post-modern campaigns. Party organisation can be firstly perceived as an endogenous factor that works through shared beliefs and policy convictions at the level

of individual party members (Bowler *et al.* 1999). If we perceive parties in this way, why should we expect candidates who largely share their parties' convictions to defect in their campaign communication? Party organisation can be seen secondly as an exogenous factor in predicting campaign behaviour. Candidates are dependent on their party for getting nominated for public office and thus need to cooperate and function well as good team mates. We will come back to this argument in the remainder of the section. But we will first take up the case for the electoral sources of post-modern campaigns and their potential impact on the individualisation of constituency campaigns.

The impact of electoral systems on campaign behaviour has been discussed among others by Plasser and Plasser (2002: Chapter 5), who draw four main conclusions on this subject. They firstly argue in line with Bowler and Farrell (1992: 8) and Swanson and Mancini (1996: 17f.) that proportional election systems provide strong incentives for party-driven centralised campaign strategies. The authors secondly argue with respect to systems with preference vote schemes (Sweden, Austria) that the competition between candidates will be restricted to intraparty competition. They thirdly argue with respect to the few plurality systems that we find in established European democracies (Britain, France) that even in these cases empirical evidence points in the direction of party-driven post-modern campaigns. Plasser and Plasser fourthly associate mixed-member electoral systems and particularly the German case with the category of proportional systems and thus expect party-driven campaigns in this context.

In this paper we take issue with the third and fourth arguments made by Plasser and Plasser (2002). We argue with respect to the third argument that a lack of behavioural effects in the past does not provide conclusive evidence regarding a lack of behavioural effects in the future. This is true for two simple reasons. Electoral incentives firstly *affect* but do not *determine* actual behaviour single-handedly! Electoral incentives can be of marginal impact on campaign behaviour in a given structural context along with many other incentives affecting the behaviour of political actors at the same time. But under the condition of a changing context, marginal electoral incentives could become more consequential at the behavioural level while interacting with other contextual changes. The impact of electoral system features should thus not be written off on the basis of past evidence but should be analysed continuously, especially in a changing social and technological context. A second reason to be sceptical about the prevailing common wisdom concerns the issue of measurement. Plasser and Plasser (2002) decide the issue of electoral impact on the basis of a nominal scale, distinguishing between individualised and party-driven campaigns. But such an approach downplays gradual differences between candidates in a given system that could result in highly dynamic developments over time. We thus emphasise in this paper the need for a more differentiated form of measuring individualised campaigning and respective effects of electoral systems.

We also take issue with Plasser and Plasser's reading of the German mixed-member electoral system. It runs counter to other accounts in the electoral systems literature. Shugart and Wattenberg (2001), for example, stress mixed-member systems in the German mould as a distinct type of electoral system with distinct behavioural consequences at the voter and the elite levels. This is supported by Lancaster and Patterson (1990) or Klingemann and Wessels (2001) who find differences in the behaviour of MPs depending on their mode of election. Directly elected MPs are more constituency oriented than those MPs who have been elected via a party list. This of course need not hold true for the area of campaign behaviour. But we see good reasons for expecting exactly this kind of impact, as discussed below. We assume that the German mixed-member electoral system provides marginal incentives to candidates running in single-member districts to adopt more individualised campaign strategies compared with list candidates. We further assume an increasing impact of these incentives under certain conditions defining the structure of the competition at the district level.

We define electoral systems in the following analysis as incentive structures which pattern the strategic behaviour of candidates on the basis of given goals. In line with models of legislative behaviour, we make the following concrete assumptions regarding the behaviour of candidates. We assume that the preferences of candidates for political office are ranked in a hierarchical way, with the highest priority for the preference of being elected or re-elected (Mayhew 1974; Strøm 1997). We further assume that specific electoral systems suggest specific strategies to implement this priority (Hall and Taylor 1996). The crucial assumption in this respect is that specific campaign styles are not given goals but rather strategic reactions to specific electoral incentives. Under certain conditions, party-driven campaigns will appear as the most promising strategy to implement the goal to be elected. In a different electoral context, individualised strategies of campaigning might seem most promising to candidates.

German voters have two votes associated with two different tiers of the electoral system, suggesting *two different modes of candidacy* (Kaiser 2002). They cast a candidate vote in the SMD tier and a party vote in the PR tier for a closed party list (Gschwend *et al.* 2003; Gschwend 2007). Roughly half of the German Bundestag is thus elected via a candidate vote in a single-member district; the other half is elected via a party list in a multi-member district. This latter mode of candidacy stresses the party factor and provides incentives for a party-driven type of campaign. This is because candidates run as representatives of their parties in multi-member districts without being directly accountable to their voters. In contrast to this, the former mode of candidacy provides incentives for individualised campaign behaviour. It establishes a direct and visible relationship between a geographic subset of voters on the one hand and a particular candidate on the other. Such a relationship might result in an 'identification effect' on the part of the representative which translates into behavioural predispositions.

The distinction between the two modes of candidacy is rather simplistic if we aim to measure the impact of electoral incentives on campaign behaviour. This relationship needs to be further refined with regard to the *structure of the competition* in German single-member districts. We firstly assume with Pekkanen *et al.* (2006) that the district mode of candidacy overrides the list mode in cases of double candidacies, which is a legal and frequently practised option in the German electoral system. We secondly assume that the intensity of the incentive for individualised campaigning increases with the *chance to win the candidate vote*. The chance to win a district should have an effect on campaign behaviour independent of the mode of candidacy. The assumed effects can be explained and modelled in the following ways.

The direct mode of candidacy will have a rather weak effect on campaign behaviour if there are only slight chances to win the candidate vote. In this case, we expect few differences between candidates running on party lists on the one hand and candidates running in districts on the other. Only those district candidates who have a fair chance to win the mandate will be subject to strong incentives to adopt individualised campaign strategies. How do candidates calculate their chances to win? The chance to win a candidate vote should be first and foremost considered by incumbents to be high. But non-incumbents should be subject to equally strong incentives under certain conditions. The conditions are as follows. It is plausible to assume that non-incumbents estimate their chances to win on the basis of the results of the previous elections in terms of the margin between the first and the second winner in the candidate vote. It is also plausible to assume that candidates will calculate this estimate on the basis of a threshold rather than working on the basis of continuous increments. If the margin was narrow in the previous elections, the chances to win will be considered as high and the incentives for an individualised campaign will increase with this estimate. If the margin was large, the chances to win will be considered low, with few incentives to run an individualised campaign.³

The assumed relationship between the chances to win a candidate vote and the degree of individualised campaigning can be further substantiated by looking at three mechanisms explaining campaign behaviour and connecting the two variables in causal ways. We firstly assume that narrow margins foster the subjective ambitions of candidates to compete, to make their mark and to succeed in a competitive process. The situation resembles a 'horse race' which engages everyone involved to an increasing degree the closer it gets. If candidates realise they have a chance of winning, they secondly might enter into strategic considerations. Under these conditions, individualised campaigns could be framed as useful strategies to mobilise the extra 3 or 4 per cent that are needed to win a direct mandate. In contrast to this, candidates without a chance of winning know perfectly well that they will have to rely solely on their ability to secure a favourable list position to gain a mandate. Such candidates will thus be more inclined to campaign in a

party-driven rather than in an individualised way. The possibility for double candidacies in the German electoral law potentially reinforces the lack of incentives to adopt individualised campaign strategies on the part of candidates without any chance to win a direct mandate. If candidates occupy a secure list position while at the same time running in a hopeless district then why should they bother to run an individualised campaign? In these cases, the incentive to apply individualised campaign strategies solely rests on the 'identification effect' we identified above.

Having commented on strategic considerations, we should add a note of caution. We know from anecdotal evidence that in the German case the results of the candidates' total vote is closely watched by party officials as an indicator for a successful candidacy and as a criterion for allocating list positions in the succeeding elections. Increasing the candidate vote from 20 to 22 per cent for example can have an indirect impact on the electoral fortunes of the candidate in the future and can thus be perfectly strategic in light of the election goal, even if there is no hope of winning the district. But such strategic considerations will be entirely focused on the party list and will thus only affect the intensity of the campaign as such but not its particular style.

Selective recruitment can be seen as a third mechanism creating a causal connection between the chances to win a direct mandate and the campaign strategy. Carty *et al.* (2003) argue that internal competition for a district nomination is stiff in those districts with chances to win the mandate. In these cases, attractive and ambitious candidates will enter the internal race, some of them with a high affinity to the district they aim to compete in. This provides a favourable basis for the adoption of individualised campaign strategies. Districts without any chance of winning will in turn fail to attract attractive candidates. In these cases, parties will have to parachute in candidates, some of them with no relationship to the district whatsoever. It is a highly plausible assumption that these candidates will perceive themselves as being solely dependent on the party and that they are more likely to campaign in a party-driven way. This argument brings us back to the role of party organisation as a factor explaining campaign behaviour.

The preceding considerations reject the previously discussed notion of political parties as being unitary actors determining the behaviour of their members on the basis of common ideologies and policy preferences (party as an endogenous factor). We rather perceive party organisation as a suggestive factor in this sense, which does leave room for strategic considerations. This should be especially true in times of a weakening of the party in the electorate. Such developments should spill over to the organisational level leaving parties less homogeneous in ideological terms (Katz and Mair 1995). Candidates who are more distant from their party in this respect should be more inclined to run individualised campaigns.

Our considerations on the electoral sources of campaign behaviour also suggest that we do not perceive party organisations as unitary actors determining campaign behaviour by means of negative sanctions. We rather

perceive party organisation in this sense as an incentive structure which patterns the choices of candidates but which nevertheless leaves room for strategic considerations depending on the type of candidate. We believe in particular that incumbents having won a district in previous elections should be less vulnerable regarding their re-nomination and thus more autonomous regarding their campaign style. This assumption is supported by three theoretical considerations that can be drawn from the literature.

Incumbents⁴ possess first and foremost resources which can be side-tracked for campaign purposes. In the German case this does not primarily apply to budget and personnel. Incumbents that have been elected via party lists are entitled to a similar level of support as their counterparts who have been elected in direct ways. But Stratmann and Baur (2002) demonstrated for the German Bundestag that direct mandates are able to secure a different kind of pay-off in terms of resources. They show that direct mandates are more likely to lead to particular committee assignments which can be used to extract benefits for the district. Incumbents with a direct mandate are in this sense better off in terms of resources compared with their counterparts who have been elected via the party list. They can use their committee assignments to form a close relationship with their constituents by bringing money or infrastructure back to the district. Such successes can be used in the campaign to stress the profile of a good constituency member and to develop some independence from the party. This argument must be made with some qualifications though. Committee assignments are controlled by the party caucus and thus are not independent of party and party loyalty. Resources flowing from committee assignments therefore allow only limited leeway with regard to individualised campaign strategies.

Secondly, incumbents enjoy a relatively secure and independent political basis providing significant incentives to campaign in individualised ways. Roberts (1988) argues with respect to this issue that any type of incumbency (candidate and list) provides high electoral security in the German case. He nevertheless concedes that directly elected MPs enjoy a competitive edge in terms of electoral security. Manow (2007) underscores this argument in a more recent analysis on turnover in the German Bundestag. He demonstrates a higher electoral security of directly elected incumbents compared to those incumbents that entered the German Parliament via a party list. These observations are in line with analyses on the nomination process. Bernhard Wessels (1997: 79f.), for example, found a lower level of conflict in the nominations of direct candidates. The ability to win a district carries some weight and reputation within the larger party organisation which directly translates into status and electoral security.

Our case for incumbency does not so much focus on electoral security in itself but on the question of *who* is guaranteeing security: the party leadership on the national and regional level or the local constituency. Poguntke (1994: 188f.) and Detterbeck (2002: 85), summarising the common wisdom for the German case, stress a relatively high degree of

decentralisation of the nomination process for district nominations compared to list nominations. A recent exploratory study by Schüttemeyer and Sturm (2005: 546) for the 2002 campaign supports this argument. On the basis of this observation, it is plausible to assume that directly elected incumbents should be largely dependent on their constituents in terms of re-election while candidates elected via the party list are more vulnerable to interference from upper levels of the party organisation. This general argument finds empirical support in a survey of 315 members of the German Bundestag conducted by Bernhard Wessels (1997). This survey demonstrates that MPs elected via the party list place a higher priority on party contacts as a prerequisite for their re-election compared to incumbents who have been directly elected.

Thirdly, incumbency in the district guarantees a higher visibility and better access to the mass media and the voting public, facilitating individualised campaign strategies. This argument can be loosely supported by empirical evidence from the American case. Prior (2006) argues that the growth of television contributed to the rise in the incumbency advantage in US House elections during the 1960s. According to his analysis, incumbents received positive coverage throughout their term and were generally more newsworthy and better funded than their challengers during the campaign. We should assume for the German case that incumbents enjoy better access to the local mass media. We also know that incumbents benefit more from split votes compared with non-incumbents, indicating a relatively high recognition level and better access to the voting public (Roberts 2002: 239).

Our theoretical considerations raise questions regarding their validity for candidates representing small parties with little chance to win a district. From a theoretical perspective, this question can be answered affirmatively. The chances of winning a district form an independent part of our model and we thus expect a relatively low degree of individualisation within this group of candidates. In spite of this, we expect a moderate degree of variance even in this group depending on the mode of candidacy. The expected positive relationship between mode of candidacy and individualised campaign styles should be established in these cases via the subjective identification of candidates with the particular districts they are competing in.

Data, Measures and Hypotheses

The following analysis is based on the German Candidate Study 2005 (GCS 2005). The study is a postal survey of all 2,346 district and party-list candidates of the five parties represented in the German Bundestag in 2005: the Social Democrats (SPD), Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU), Free Democrats (FDP), Greens and the Socialist Party (Left.PDS). The majority of candidates, namely 1,050 (45 per cent), were double candidacies,

competing in a particular district as well as on a party list. Only 434 (18 per cent) of all candidates solely ran in one of the 299 electoral districts and 862 (37 per cent) competed only on a respective party list. The response rate of our survey with 1,032 completed questionnaires (44 per cent) was more than satisfactory. 669 district candidates and 363 party-list candidates did participate.⁵

The model we will test in the following analysis includes the four independent variables discussed above. First, we distinguish candidates according to their *modes of candidacy* as district candidates (= 1) or as party-list candidates (= 0). Two-thirds of the realised sample are district candidates by our definition (N = 669) and the remaining one-third (N = 363) are party-list candidates. Second, we further differentiate district candidates according to their *chance of winning* the district race in hopefuls (= 1) and hopeless (= 0) candidates: 21 per cent (N = 143) of all district candidates in our sample are hopeful candidates. Third, we differentiate district candidates according to their *status*. We distinguish between incumbents (= 1) and all other candidates (= 0). The share of incumbents (N = 74) among all district candidates is 11 per cent and about 52 per cent among the hopeful candidates.

In order to measure the degree to which individual candidates are ideologically proximal to their party we compute fourthly the absolute difference of a candidate's self-placement on a typical eleven-point left/right scale from the perceived position of his or her party on this scale. We operationalise a party's perceived ideological position as the mean value of party placement scores from all candidates of this party in our sample. Apart from less than a handful of exceptions that deviate up to four points on this scale, the majority of candidates do not deviate more than a single point from the ideological position of their respective party on the underlying left/right scale.

In the following we test our hypotheses by running several regressions with our independent variables on different indicators that measure individualised campaigns and that are taken from the GCS 2005.⁶ Above, we defined individualised campaigns in an ideal-typical way envisioning candidates who subjectively seek personal votes (campaign norm) on the basis of a candidate-centred organisation, a candidate-centred campaign agenda and candidate-centred means of campaigning. We measure the different concepts in this definition in the following ways.

To get at the prevailing *campaign norm* we asked for the candidates' assessment on a ten-point scale whether the main goal of their campaign was to maximise attention to their party (= 1) as opposed to themselves as candidates (= 10). Again, the assumption that candidates wish to separate themselves from their party in a normative sense represents an extreme in a continuum that we use to measure the prevailing campaign norm. We do not expect many candidates to coincide with this extreme. We rather expect candidates to approach this extreme in gradual ways and we expect candidates to differ in this respect.

In terms of *campaign means* we measure individualised campaigns by asking for the production of personalised campaign materials such as flyers or campaign posters by the candidate him- or herself as well as for the number of public appearances of party elites in support of a district candidate. It is rather common in German federal election campaigns that national party organisations produce flyers, posters and other campaign material and subsequently make them available to their candidates free of charge or for a small service charge (Boll and Poguntke 1992: 128ff.). Candidates running individualised campaigns should produce at least some campaign material downplaying their party affiliation through design or content. Taken to its extremes, individualised campaigning might lead to the total separation of candidate and party image in the public eye. In order to get at this we created a dummy scoring '1' if a candidate produced campaign material independent of his or her party and '0' otherwise.

Individualised *campaign agendas* should highlight issues that are relevant for the particular constituencies. To measure this concept, we created a dummy scoring '1' if candidates reported that they highlighted issues in their local campaign that were not covered by the campaign agenda of their party. All negative responses were consequently coded '0'.

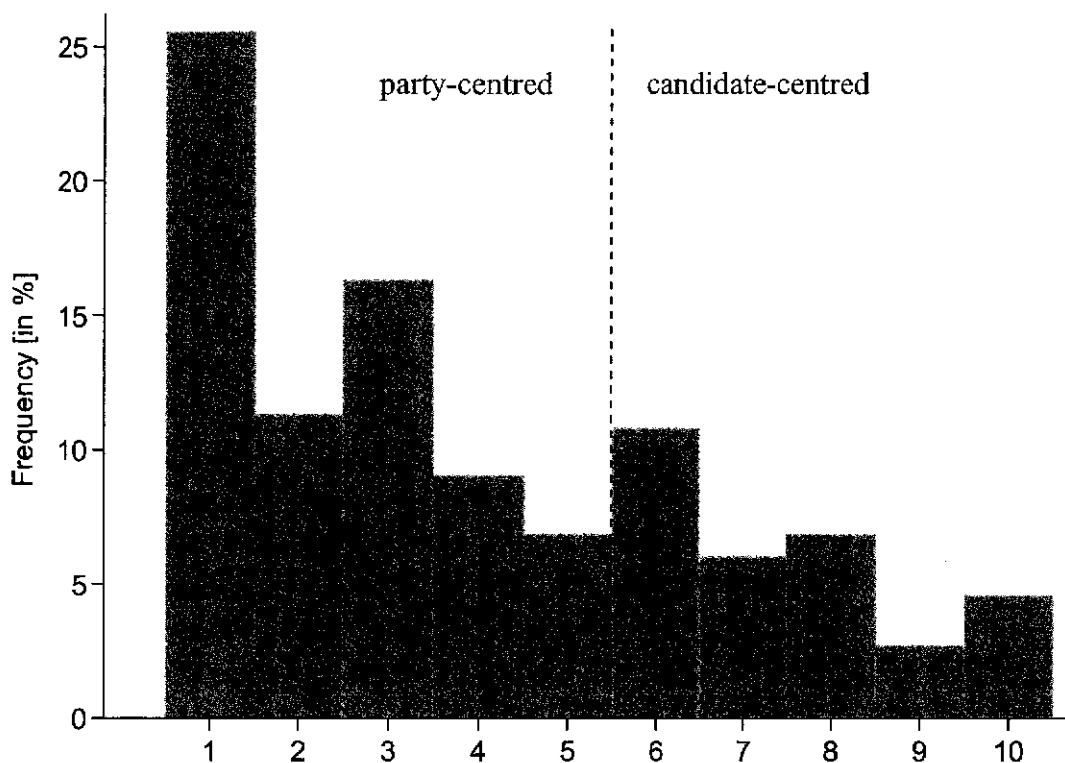
We finally measure individualised *campaign organisations* through the structure of the campaign budget. Money is the lifeblood of every campaign. It moreover creates ties and dependencies which should reflect on campaign organisation. The GCS 2005 asks candidates about the share of party contributions to their total campaign budget as opposed to personal contributions and campaign donations coming from third parties. We interpret decreasing shares of party contributions as an indicator for increasing independence from party structures and thus as a measure for increasing individualisation of local campaigns.

To sum up, in the following analysis we expect to find a relationship between electoral incentives stemming from Germany's mixed-member electoral system and campaign behaviour. The subtle and differentiated impact of a number of different incentives should create a hierarchy among the candidates in terms of individualisation. Compared to party-list candidates, district candidates should have stronger incentives – and even more so if they are hopefuls – to individualise their campaigns. Moreover, to point out the extremes of this hierarchy, incumbents should possess the strongest incentives to run an individualised campaign while party-list candidates should have the weakest incentives to operate in this style.

Local Campaigns in the German Federal Election 2005

Figure 1 shows quite some variation in the prevailing campaign norms. Every fourth candidate aims to draw the utmost attention to his or her party rather than to him- or herself. But 5 per cent of the candidates report that their main campaign goal was to maximise attention to themselves rather

FIGURE 1
DRAWING ATTENTION TO THEIR PARTY OR THEMSELVES?



than to their party. If we divide up our ten-point scale into two halves, and if we perceive candidates locating themselves between 1 and 5 as sharing *party-centred* norms and, conversely, candidates locating themselves between scale values 6 and 10 as sharing *candidate-centred* norms, we find 30 per cent of all candidates falling into this second category.

In order to test our hypotheses on the electoral sources of campaign norms we present the regression results in Table 1.⁷ Two of our three hypothesised incentives, the mode of candidacy as well as the chance of winning the district seem to systematically determine the prevailing campaign norm. Although low in absolute value, district candidates locate themselves on average at about 3.8 ($= 1.367 + 2.488$) on the underlying ten-point scale. This is significantly higher than party candidates who locate themselves on average at about 2.5. Our analysis nevertheless reveals that even district candidates still run a party-centred rather than a candidate-centred campaign. Besides the mode of candidacy additional incentives are needed in order to change the prevailing party-centred campaign norm into a candidate-centred one. The chance of winning the electoral district seems to be decisive in that regard.

Table 1 shows a statistically significant difference between hopeful and hopeless candidates. The size of the 'chance of winning effect' is on average almost three points on the scale and, therefore, more than twice as much as the incentive that stems from the mode of candidacy. Hopeful district candidates are predicted to locate themselves at about 6.6 on the underlying

TABLE 1
CAMPAIGN NORM DEPENDING ON THE MODE OF CANDIDACY, THE CHANCE
OF WINNING AND INCUMBENCY

	Campaign norm
Mode of candidacy (district = 1)	1.367*** (0.168)
Chance of winning (hopeful = 1)	2.831*** (0.273)
Status (incumbency = 1)	0.494 (0.350)
Ideological proximity	0.193** (0.095)
Constant	2.488*** (0.164)

Note: Entries are unstandardised regression coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses;
* $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.
Data source: GCS 2005, $N = 963$.

ten-point scale. While incumbents do in fact place themselves higher on this scale the incumbency status does not seem to play an additional role in explaining campaign norms. Finally we find as expected that candidates who are more distant ideologically from their party report a more candidate-centred campaign norm. Although statistically significant, this effect is rather small substantively. Even the candidates with the largest reported deviation from the ideological position of their party place themselves on average not even a scale point higher in terms of the prevailing campaign norm than typical candidates of their party.

In the second step of our analysis, we are able to demonstrate that electoral incentives in Germany's mixed-member system also affect the means of campaigning. Almost 46 per cent of all candidates report to have produced campaign material independent of their party. The logistic regression analysis reported in Table 2 demonstrates the electoral sources of these choices.

The estimated coefficients reported in Table 2 support our hypotheses regarding the impact of the electoral system. The coefficients of our two indicators measuring the electoral incentive structure are positive and statistically significant as expected. Party organisation plays out in a more subtle and differentiated way. While incumbency shows the expected positive effect, we draw blank on ideological proximity. In order to interpret these coefficients substantively we calculate predicted probabilities to assess the degree to which different types of candidates are expected to produce campaign material independent of their party.⁸ Party-list candidates are predicted with a probability of 19 per cent to produce campaign material independently. This probability rises, as expected, to 55 per cent for district candidates, 71 per cent for hopeful district candidates and 89 per cent for incumbents. The use of independently produced campaign material is supposedly quite common among candidates competing in an electoral

TABLE 2
PREDICTING THE PRODUCTION OF INDEPENDENT CAMPAIGN MATERIAL AS
A FUNCTION OF MODE OF CANDIDACY, CHANCE OF WINNING AND
INCUMBENCY

	Independently produced campaign material (1 = yes; 0 = no)
Mode of candidacy (district = 1)	1.631*** (0.164)
Chance of winning (hopeful = 1)	0.733** (0.285)
Status (incumbency = 1)	1.256*** (0.482)
Ideological proximity	-0.025 (0.087)
Constant	-1.413*** (0.169)

Note: Entries are unstandardised logit coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses;
* $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

Data source: GCS 2005, $N = 996$.

district. Even a majority of candidates facing hopeless district races is predicted to produce campaign material independent of their party. The popularity of this campaign strategy increases with the strength of the incentives stemming from the electoral system.

In the third step of our analysis we are interested in the agendas of local campaigns. Almost every second candidate (49 per cent) highlighted issues that are relevant for his or her particular constituency but were not covered by the campaign of his or her party. In order to provide an answer to the question whether incentives of the electoral system are responsible for this we estimate a logistic regression model. Table 3 summarises our estimation results.

The estimated coefficients support our expectations and are in line with the previous results regarding the effect of the electoral system on the prevailing campaign norm and the independent production of campaign material. The two indicators measuring electoral incentives – namely the mode of candidacy and the chance of winning a district – increase the likelihood of running on the basis of an independent campaign agenda. Compared to the previous analyses, the story changes slightly regarding party organisation. Incumbents are not systematically different from hopeful district candidates regarding the structure of their campaign agenda, while ideological proximity shows the expected effect.

In order to substantively interpret our logit estimates we take a look at the predicted probability based on the above model.⁹ While party-list candidates have a predicted probability of 34 per cent to run on an independent campaign agenda, a majority of hopeless district candidates (54 per cent) are predicted to do so too. The likelihood of having an independent campaign agenda increases with hopeful candidates. Two out

TABLE 3
PREDICTING WHETHER OR NOT CANDIDATES HIGHLIGHTED RELEVANT
ISSUES NOT COVERED BY PARTY AS A FUNCTION OF MODE OF CANDIDACY,
CHANCE OF WINNING AND INCUMBENCY

	Highlighted relevant issues not covered by party (1 = yes; 0 = no)
Mode of candidacy (district = 1)	0.830*** (0.150)
Chance of winning (hopeful = 1)	0.516* (0.276)
Status (incumbency = 1)	0.074 (0.367)
Ideological proximity	0.151* (0.082)
Constant	-0.820*** (0.151)

Note: Entries are unstandardised regression coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses;
* $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

Data source: GCS 2005, $N = 956$.

of three respondents that fall into this category (66 per cent) are predicted to stress issues that are relevant for their district but not covered by their party. We also find that deviating policy preferences of candidates from those of their party has only a small impact on the candidates' campaign agenda. Typical candidates with an average deviation from the ideological position of their party are only between three (for hopeful candidates) and four (for party-list and hopeless candidates alike) percentage points more likely to highlight an issue not covered by their party than their colleagues who match the ideological position of their respective party. Thus ideological proximity does not lead a typical candidate to promote or suppress an individualised campaign agenda if not otherwise motivated through the incentives that are provided by the electoral system.

In a fourth step of our analysis, we focus on the organisation of local campaigns measured by the candidates' dependency on party funds. Figure 2 presents a histogram of the share of party funds of the total campaign budget as reported by the candidates surveyed through the GCS 2005. Many candidates apparently do not get any or very little financial contribution from their party while others almost exclusively rely on party-sponsored funds as opposed to third-party donations or personal funds.

What is the relationship between the share of party funds and the electoral incentive structure? In Table 4 we present the results of a linear regression model predicting the share of party funds on the total campaign budget. Party list candidates, indicated by the coefficient of the constant, rely on average only about a third (35 per cent) on party-sponsored funds. About two-thirds of the total budget for those candidates is coming from other sources. Contrary to our expectation, party funds represent on average the largest source for the hopeless district candidates ($57\% = 35\% + 22\%$).

FIGURE 2
SHARE OF PARTY FUNDS ON TOTAL CAMPAIGN BUDGET

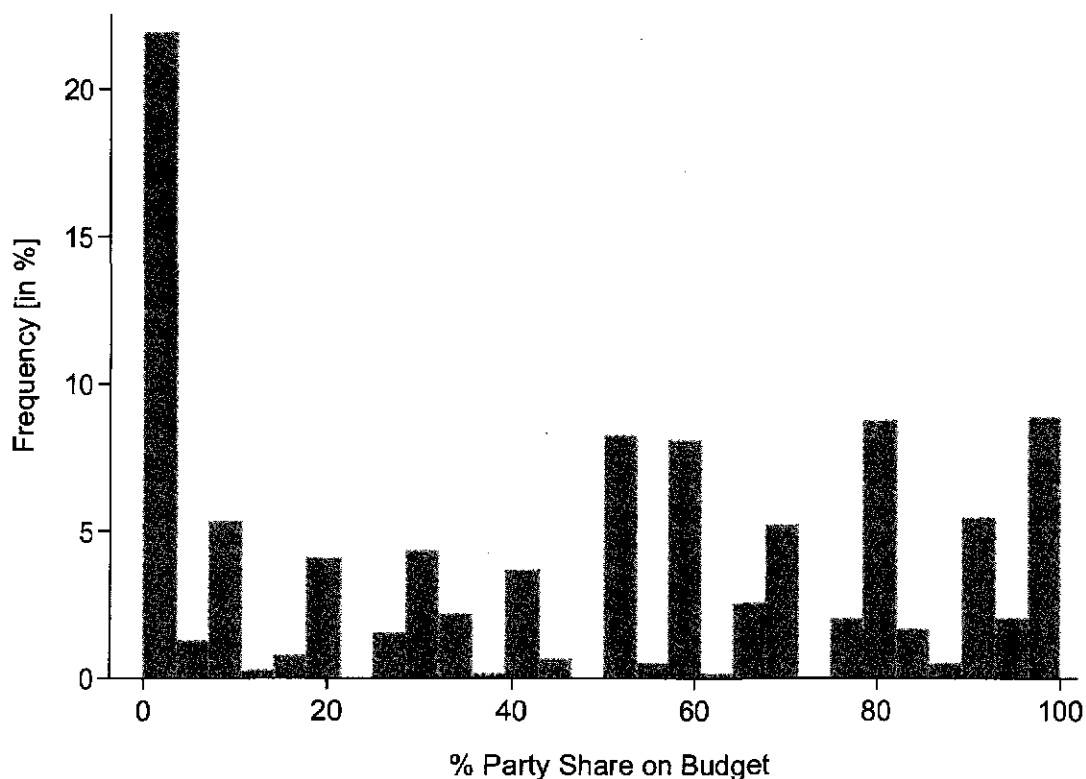


TABLE 4
PREDICTING THE SHARE OF PARTY FUNDS ON THE TOTAL CAMPAIGN
BUDGET AS A FUNCTION OF MODE OF CANDIDACY, CHANCE OF WINNING
AND INCUMBENCY

	Share of party funds
Mode of candidacy (district = 1)	21.906*** (3.054)
Chance of winning (hopeful = 1)	-5.498 (4.107)
Status (incumbency = 1)	-16.200*** (5.219)
Ideological proximity	-2.999** (1.446)
Constant	35.258*** (3.082)

Note: Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses; * $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

Data source: GCS 2005, $N = 789$.

Although not quite significant, hopeful candidates have a tendency to rely less on party money than hopeless candidates because they might make an effort to raise more donations and they are more willing to spend their own money. Table 4 demonstrates the expected effect regarding party organisation. Incumbents are able to reduce the share of party funds compared to

candidates running in a district. Only about a third ($= 57\% - 8\% - 16\%$) of an average incumbent's total budget depends on money coming from his or her party. We further find strong support that candidates who are ideologically distant from their party depend significantly less on party funds to run their campaign. This effect amounts to about three percentage points less party funds for a typical candidate who deviates about one scale point away from his or her party. Thus, we find that the stronger the incentives for district candidates to run an individualised campaign the less dependent their campaign budget is on party funds.

In the remainder of our analysis we wish to see whether the relationship between electoral incentives, party organisation and campaign behaviour holds for candidates of small parties and for candidates of major parties in the same way. In light of our theoretical expectation, party should not add anything to our analysis. We wish to test this assumption in the following. In a first step, we replicate the previous analyses for the sub-sample of those candidates representing the three small parties (FDP, Greens, and Left.PDS). This analysis produces no important differences at all. The estimated coefficients for the mode of candidacy are not substantively different from those presented above. This implies that the supposed 'identification effect' between district candidates and their local constituency operates on district candidates of small parties as well. Moreover, with only one exception, in the realised sample we do not have hopeful candidates or incumbents of small parties. Therefore we cannot identify these effects in the sub-sample of small party candidates.

Another possibility to check for a 'party effect' is to replicate our previous analyses while controlling for party size by including a dummy variable scoring '1' if the candidate belongs to a small party and '0' if he or she belongs to a major party (CDU/CSU or SPD). Table 5 provides an overview of the results of this analysis. The coefficient of party size is significant in three of our four models. While having an independent campaign agenda seems to be unrelated to party size, party size does systematically affect the campaign norm, the means of campaigning (independently produced materials) and the share of party funds.¹⁰

Controlling for party size does add to the picture drawn previously. We can say that small party candidates systematically locate themselves lower on the underlying ten-point scale compared to major party candidates, indicating a roughly one-point smaller baseline level regarding the prevailing campaign norm. While the effects for the mode of candidacy and incumbency can be successfully replicated in all four regressions without qualitatively changing the findings in this regard, controlling for party size, however, merely eliminates the expected difference between hopeful but non-incumbent candidates and hopeless district candidates for the production of party-independent campaign material. The 'chance of winning' effect found previously seems to originate in the size of the candidate's party rather than in incentives of the electoral system.

TABLE 5
 REPLICATION OF PREVIOUS ANALYSIS CONTROLLED FOR PARTY SIZE

	Campaign norm	Independently produced campaign material	Highlighted relevant issues not covered by party	Share of party funds
Mode of candidacy (district = 1)	1.729*** (0.188)	1.828*** (0.195)	0.802*** (0.167)	18.389*** (3.213)
Chance of winning (hopeful = 1)	2.016*** (0.329)	0.330 (0.331)	0.576* (0.316)	3.385 (5.065)
Status (incumbency = 1)	0.510 (0.353)	1.265*** (0.483)	0.073 (0.367)	-16.375*** (5.200)
Ideological proximity	0.165* (0.096)	-0.040 (0.088)	0.154* (0.082)	-2.803* (1.461)
Party size (small party = 1)	-0.927*** (0.205)	-0.459** (0.195)	0.069 (0.178)	10.188*** (3.432)
Constant	2.969*** (0.194)	-1.192*** (0.186)	-0.856*** (0.171)	29.695*** (3.660)
N	963	996	956	789

Note: Entries are unstandardised regression or logit coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses; * $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

Data source: GCS 2005.

Conclusion and discussion

The preceding analysis of constituency campaigns in the German parliamentary elections 2005 demonstrated considerable differences in the style of campaigning. We were able to prove the existence of an individualised style of campaigning in contrast to a party-centred campaign style at various levels of analysis. A significant number of candidates favoured the norm that their campaign activities should focus the voters' attention on their own person rather than on the party. A significant number of candidates ran their campaign on the basis of an agenda and an organisational structure that pointed in the direction of being candidate centred. A significant number of candidates used means of campaigning that were designed to increase the visibility of the candidate by downplaying his or her own party. Individualised campaigns at the constituency level are no exceptions to the rule but rather more general phenomena that come in different shapes and different levels of intensity.

The preceding multivariate analyses demonstrate a clear relationship between the style of campaigning on the one hand and electoral as well as party organisational incentives on the other. They furthermore show that different forms of incentives work with different effects and at different levels of intensity. The direct mode of candidacy exercises a visible incentive on candidates to adopt individualised forms of campaigning across most indicators we used. As expected, the chance to win a direct mandate provides a further incentive to candidates to campaign in individualised

ways. This relationship is however restricted to certain effects at the level of campaigning. It only holds with regard to the norm of campaigning and the campaign agenda if we control for the size of party.

The preceding analysis also demonstrates a relationship between party organisational factors and the style of campaigning. Incumbents with a higher degree of electoral security are more likely to campaign on the basis of independently produced campaign material and their campaign budget includes a lower share of party funds. Low ideological proximity increases the likelihood of an individualised campaign in terms of campaign norm and campaign materials used. It also results in a lower share of party funds in the overall campaign budget. These findings raise the question why electoral and party organisational factors only interact with some forms of campaign behaviour and not with others.

The secular effects of specific electoral incentives can be explained in an ad-hoc fashion with reference to a systematic split between campaign norms and rhetoric on the one hand and manifest campaign behaviour on the other. It is plausible to assume that incumbency bears no effect at the level of norms and rhetoric for very good reasons. Incumbents enjoy in most cases a high status within the party organisation that oftentimes translates into leadership positions. Incumbents should therefore feel more loyal to their party and they should have better access to the decision-making process in their own party. As a consequence, there should be less tension and conflict between the party programme and the policy beliefs of incumbents. This reduces the need to develop a campaign norm and a campaign rhetoric stressing independence. Incumbents possess the means to run an individualised campaign, but they do not necessarily possess good reasons to do so. This ad-hoc explanation suggests that incumbency will have the expected impact on campaign norms and campaign agendas only in cases where incumbents are backbenchers in parliament at the same time as being cut off from access to the decision-making process in their own party. A closer analysis of this question is beyond the scope of this paper.

The systematic divergence between norms and rhetoric on the one hand and manifest behaviour on the other can be explained in a reverse way for candidates with a chance to win in the district where they are running. It is plausible to assume that we see in this group a larger number of candidates who experience a high degree of tension and conflict with their party because of lack of access to decision-making processes. This should lead through interaction with electoral incentives to individualised campaign norms and rhetorics. It does not go any further, because, in contrast to incumbents, many of these candidates do not possess the means to raise private money and to produce campaign material independently. They are thus not able to implement their norm and their campaign agenda. Specific incentives do not work in a one-dimensional and efficient way at the behavioural level. They are rather part of a complex configuration of a larger number of incentives.

The previous analysis raises a second question that concerns the effect of party size on constituency campaigns. What kind of mechanisms and incentives that we have not touched upon in our theoretical section generate this effect? A plausible ad-hoc explanation concerns the different opportunity structures that are related to different party sizes. In Germany, large parties have a better developed local basis in terms of members and established organisational networks compared to the smaller parties. This local basis provides an opportunity structure for district candidates determined to run a highly individualised campaign. These grassroots could supply manpower and expertise for such campaigns. The effect of this opportunity structure is eventually dependent on the question of the relationship between individual candidates and their local party branch. Taking advantage of local party structures to launch individualised campaigns requires a candidate to control and dominate the party grassroots to some degree. A further discussion of this relationship for the German case is beyond the scope of the paper. But vital grassroots do provide a potential opportunity structure for individualised campaigns and German parties differ in this area according to their size. This suggests that the measured effect of size is partly based on differences in the opportunities for grassroots mobilisation.

From the perspective of political communication research, individualised campaigns are an important subject matter *per se*. The systematic description of such campaigns and the explanation of national and cross-national differences define an important research agenda in itself. But we also perceive individualised campaigns as a phenomenon that might have spill-over effects at the level of party organisation and legislative behaviour. We assume that individualised campaigns do matter in this respect. It is beyond the scope of this analysis to investigate these effects. But we will conclude with some speculative considerations on this issue with the aim to identify related phenomena at the level of party organisation, parliamentary behaviour and voting behaviour.

Local candidates and local campaign organisations running individualised campaigns could indicate and further facilitate the coming of a franchise type of party (Carty 2004). Such parties are envisioned to be made up of actors using the party name as a brand in return for basic loyalty, while keeping a large degree of independence from the upper level of party organisation. In the context of the franchise concept, independence will be thus limited and restrained, but in a very loose and general fashion. The respect candidates pay for such constraints will be 'part of the deal', a resource given in exchange for the brand name. Further research on local campaigns would have to analyse the exact terms of trade, reconciling at this empirical level the paradox of increasingly democratic parties affording at the same time more autonomy and power in their role as parties in public office (Mair 1994: 16).

Individualised campaigns could also strengthen the weight-of MPs within their parties in the process of parliamentary decision-making. In the past,

parties in parliament already provided safety valves and controlled independence for their MPs to please their voters in the district. Individual MPs were always able to provide some service for their constituents and they were always able to defect from their party in cases of a dramatic conflict between constituency interests and party position, and if majorities were not at stake. But these boundaries could be pushed back further as a result of individualised campaign behaviour. Candidates having campaigned in an individualised fashion, subjectively owing their election greatly to a personal vote, could become much more assertive towards the parliamentary party in the pursuance of constituency interests. Party cohesion could decline as a result of such assertiveness.

The envisioned impact of individualised campaign behaviour on party organisation and legislative behaviour is not without prerequisites. As we argued in this paper, the electoral system and the degree to which it allows for a personal vote is one crucial prerequisite for individualised campaign behaviour and possibly also for any further impact. We would assume that the process of candidate selection and the further developments of electoral markets and voting behaviour are two other crucial prerequisites for the rise of individualised politics. If voters react to individualised campaigning by increasingly casting personal votes, this could serve as an incentive for future individual assertiveness on the part of candidates and MPs. If parties further decentralise and even democratise candidate selection as a reaction to the increasing number of personal votes, the terms of trade could rapidly turn against them in their own franchise and the emerging patterns of individualised campaigning could spell doom in the long run.

Acknowledgements

This analysis is based on data from the German Candidate Study 2005, <http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/gcs/>. We are grateful to the German National Science Foundation (DFG) for funding the field phase of this study (ZI 608/4-1) and to the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES) for providing institutional context and support. We are indebted to André Kaiser, Philip Manow and Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck for extensive comments on an earlier version of this paper.

Notes

1. We wish to distinguish the concept of individualised campaigning from the concept of personalised campaigning as used among others in Brettschneider (2002) or Poguntke and Webb (2005). The latter concept focuses solely on the content of campaigns at the national level, while the former focuses on the structural implications of post-modern campaigns embracing the national and the local level. We also wish to emphasise that our concept focuses on the elite level. Asp and Esaiasson (1996) have used the term with respect to the voter level.

2. The term 'Americanisation' is used in different definitions throughout the debate. Swanson and Mancini (1996: 5f.) define the concept through: 'particular types and elements of election campaigns and professional activities connected with them that were first developed in the United States and are now being applied and adapted in various ways in other countries'. For these authors, the concept signifies a particular process, namely the process of the diffusion of campaign strategies.
3. This is a frequently used assumption in the literature. A 10 per cent threshold to distinguish between safe and competitive districts is used e.g. by Turner (1953) or for the German case by Schmitt and Wüst (2002). The *New York Times* uses this criterion, too, for electoral district predictions.
4. In the German context, the incumbency category could also include candidates elected via the party list in the previous elections. We exclude this group for reasons explained in the theoretical section of the paper. Incumbents in a district enjoy the highest degree of electoral security.
5. The realised sample largely represents the population. The following provides evidence for this. In the realised sample the distribution of candidates by party does systematically deviate from a theoretically expected uniform distribution (SPD 18 per cent; CDU/CSU 21 per cent; FDP 20 per cent; Greens 20 per cent; Left.PDS 21 per cent); the mean age of the candidates in the realised sample as well as in the population of all candidates of these parties are identical (46 years); even when considering the mode of candidacy, the distribution in the realised sample (35 per cent party-list-only candidates; 20 per cent are district-only candidates) is essentially the same as in the population (37 per cent party-list-only candidates; 19 per cent are district-only candidates). The share of double candidacies in the realised sample is the same as in the population (45 per cent). Moreover, the realised sample realistically reflects the rate of incumbents to non-incumbents (7:93) compared to the one in the population (11:89).
6. Denver *et al.* (2004) study constituency campaign intensity in Britain and use a composite index based on a series of post-election surveys of constituency campaign organisers. Given that we are dealing with a new theoretical phenomenon, namely individualised campaigns, whose construct validity has still to be established, we decide against constructing a summary measure. Nevertheless, and as expected, our dependent variables used in this study do scale together nicely. A factor analysis of these variables retains only one factor with an eigenvalue greater than one. Thus our dependent variables can be interpreted as indicators of the same latent construct 'individualised campaign'.
7. Substantively we get the same results when running an ordinal logit model instead.
8. In order to calculate the predicted probabilities we fix ideological proximity at its sample mean.
9. Again, we fix ideological proximity at its sample mean in order to compute the predicted probabilities.
10. We also conducted further robustness test of our models and included controls for candidates' gender and age in all our regression models without substantively changing the results.

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