



The role of gender in online campaigning: Swedish candidate's motives and use of social media during the European election 2014

Journal:	<i>Journal of Information Technology & Politics</i>
Manuscript ID	WITP-2016-0069.R2
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	Social Media, Gender, Election Campaign, European Election, Twitter

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Introduction

Social media can provide candidates better control over their self-images and public narratives. As a result, candidates have altered their campaign tactics to avoid the filtered interpretation of campaign messages released through traditional media outlets (Gainous and Wagner, 2013). Even as social media is increasingly integrated into election campaigning, the question of what it signifies for politicians to be active online remains largely unanswered. This is especially true for female candidates.

Because individual candidates can influence public perception through strategic use of social media, such media might be a particularly useful tool with which women candidates can counteract masculine communication norms in politics (Meeks, 2013). The possibility of direct communication and interaction with voters and followers may also be particularly compelling to women who wish to avoid the images given to them by traditional media, which is generally less favorable to female candidates (Heith, 2003; Jalalzai, 2006; Kahn, 1996). In this regard, social media could provide a means to strengthen women candidates by presenting new opportunities to reach out, mobilize voters and target particular groups, such as young women. There are, however, very few studies that explicitly explore gender-based differences in social media use, rather than simply including gender as a control variable in the uptake of online campaign tools. We therefore know very little about the contours of gendered differences, both in terms of motives and actual use. Moreover, most of the studies concerning online campaigning have been conducted in Anglo-American contexts (Hermans and Vergeer, 2012; Jungherr, 2014), where the political systems are more candidate-oriented and female politicians are quite few.

In this study, we test the relationship between gender and candidate approaches to social media campaigning by exploring a party-oriented system with a strong presence of female

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3 politicians, namely Sweden. Women have been present in politics and parliament for a long time
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5 in Sweden, and gender equal political representation is the norm rather than an unachievable
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7 ideal. Exploring gendered campaign strategies and practices in this relatively gender equal
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9 political setting allows us to test whether there is a difference between the motives behind and
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11 use of social media platforms for campaigning purposes by male and female candidates, even in
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13 a seemingly gender equal context. Moreover, Sweden provides an interesting case for examining
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15 candidates' use of social media in general, since Swedish parties and candidates stand out as
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17 early adopters and the most extensive users of web technologies (Vergeer, Hermans and Cunha,
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19 2013).
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25 Additionally, most studies concerning the factors driving web campaigning do not
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27 account for individual attitudes and subjective assessments of the value of online platforms as
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29 campaign tools. Previous research findings have also confirmed a discrepancy between the
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31 intention to use web campaigning and the actual adoption (Marcinkowski and Metag, 2014;
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33 Seggaard and Nielsen, 2013). By combining survey data with data regarding how candidates
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35 actually use social media, we expected to gain a deeper insight into the factors that drive the use
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37 of social media for election campaigning. When considering types of activity on Twitter, we also
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39 used three time periods to capture the candidates' behavior during non-campaign periods,
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41 whereas most studies have concentrated only on the campaign period surrounding elections when
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43 assessing the online behavior of politicians (Larsson, 2015a).
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50 The paper will proceed as follows. First, we discuss candidates' use of social media
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52 during election campaigns and the possible impact of this use. Second, we discuss research
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54 concerning gendered campaigning practices, emphasizing the online environment. Thereafter, we
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3 discuss Sweden as a case for studying gender and online campaign practices together with data
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5 and design. Finally, we discuss our results and their implications.
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8 9 **Social media and personalized campaigning**

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11 The mediatization of politics and the arrival of social media coincide with a development toward
12 individualized campaigning, in which a more personal communication style has become
13 advantageous (see Bimber and Davis, 2003; Strömbäck, 2008; Vergeer and Hermans, 2013). The
14 characteristics of social media provide individual politicians with new opportunities for personal
15 campaigning and political communication. The individual politician can easily adopt social
16 media as a campaign tool and the opportunities for more personalized campaigning through
17 social media can be expected to increase even within party-centered systems (Enli and Skogerbø,
18 2013; Karlsen, 2011), such as Sweden.
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32 In addition to bypassing media filters and journalistic frames, advantages for individual
33 politicians include opportunities to make statements about different events, add interpretations or
34 make comments (Gainous and Wagner, 2013). Furthermore, politicians might have other
35 advantages in addition to accessibility through social media for individual campaigning;
36 experimental research has shown that engagement with voters online also leads to positive
37 evaluations of politicians (e.g., Grant, Moon and Grant, 2010; Utz, 2009; Vergeer and Hermans,
38 2013). Politicians who use a more interactive communication strategy can additionally obtain a
39 larger number of followers (Lilleker and Koc-Michalska, 2013), which in turn can redistribute
40 content. The effects of social media interactivity in political campaigns, such as exposure to
41 comments, can conversely shape both positive and negative perceptions of candidates (Brewer et
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3 al., 2015), suggesting that it is important for politicians to control the content on their social
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5 media profiles.
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9 Because it gives control over messages and strategies, social media may work
10 particularly well for female candidates, who are often unelected or have junior status and,
11 therefore, are less likely to be constrained by having to conform to the party message (European
12 Parliament, 2013). For female candidates in particular, social media can also allow the
13 contradiction of pertinent gender stereotypes, such as negative appraisals of issue competencies,
14 in voter evaluations (Dolan, 2010). The potential benefits will be discussed further in the next
15 section, along with previous research concerning gender and campaigning, as well as previous
16 studies on candidates' use of social media.
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28 29 **Gender representation as a function of the equalization perspective**

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31 The arrival and amplified use of social media as an interactive, open and transparent platform has
32 raised questions of its democratizing potential. A main issue to be addressed is whether new
33 technologies can improve democratic processes by allowing interaction among candidates,
34 parties and voters, or by organizing election campaigns in less costly and more direct ways
35 (Gainous and Wagner, 2013). According to the equalization theory (Barber, 2001), the use of the
36 internet helps remove barriers that favor some groups and individuals in the electorate, and in
37 this view, online platforms can provide a means by which people and politicians gain more
38 opportunities for interaction (Barber, 2003; Hagen and Mayer, 2000). In contrast, research has
39 shown that use of the internet and new technology is being normalized into the current electoral
40 paradigm to be used as a part of the conventional political structure (Bimber and Davis, 2003;
41 Hindman, 2008; Ward, Gibson and Lusoli, 2003). Normalization theory states that actors who
42 already have the most influence will most likely to benefit from new online campaign methods
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3 (Margolis and Resnick, 2000). Parties that have more resources would, in this view, afford more
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5 professional campaigns and social media would be used as just another channel, causing no
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7 disruption to traditional patterns in offline politics (Lilleker et al., 2011).
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11 Overall, the literature suggests that different functions of normalization apply for patterns
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13 of website adoption as compared to social media, which offers some evidence to refute
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15 normalization (Southern, 2015). Minor parties, for instance, appear to be more effective in
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17 gaining votes through social media than through the adoption of personal websites (Gibson and
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19 McAllister, 2015). It is possible that given time, the differences in social media use compared to
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21 other web platforms will even out. It could be argued, however, that specific attributes of social
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23 media would be more beneficial for minor parties or lesser-known candidates. One difference,
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25 and perhaps advantage, would be the interactive attributes of social media and the possibilities of
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27 actively building a personal platform through which candidates could more efficiently reach out
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29 to voters and media, as opposed to webpages and similar platforms.
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36 Although the definition of normalization as a concept tends to lack specificity (Southern,
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38 2015), party size, campaign budget and incumbency often serve as measures to indicate whether
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40 potentially weaker parties or candidates can gain favor through web-based campaigning
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42 (Vaccari, 2013). Lusoli (2005) suggested that the influences of internet use on women
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44 candidates' chances of electoral success, or lack thereof, should also be thought of as functions
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46 of normalization. The same logic applies to social media use by underrepresented or politically
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48 marginalized groups, such as women and ethnic minorities (Jacobs and Spierings, 2016).
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53 As the term "equalization" in this context often refers to social media giving
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55 opportunities to minor parties or lesser-known candidates, the new opportunities it could provide
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3 to female candidates would, in a similar way, be an indication that social media upsets traditional
4 campaign dynamics or breaks traditional patterns of gender representation. Thus, gender
5 representation can also be thought of as a function of equalization. Flowing from the same line of
6 reasoning, differences in internet-based campaigning that show male advantages and
7 overrepresentation would subsequently indicate a normalized pattern. Perceived male bias during
8 elections would, from this perspective, result in women candidates using the platform over which
9 they have the most control. If women are perceived as being portrayed disadvantageously by
10 editorial media, this would also speak in favor of using alternative campaign strategies. In a
11 relatively gender equal context such as Sweden, equalization in terms of new campaign
12 possibilities for women candidates can be seen as a way for women to avoid gendered
13 perceptions that continue to persist. A lack of difference in social media use would, in this
14 context, suggest that men and women are campaigning under relatively similar terms.
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33 Research on web-based campaigning and candidates' use of social media has, to a very
34 limited extent, examined the role or function of gender. The literature concerning gender and
35 representation has likewise not examined if and how gender has an impact on online practices
36 and strategies. This article provides a first attempt to test the perseverance for gendered
37 campaign strategies online by studying a context where the conditions for campaigning are
38 relatively equal between male and female candidates. Below, we will develop our discussion of
39 Sweden as a case, in the context of the European elections. Prior to that, the literature on gender
40 and campaigning will be discussed, as well as literature concerning candidates' use of online
41 platforms and social media in particular.
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53 54 55 **Gender and campaign practices** 56 57 58 59 60

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3 There remain substantial gender differences in modern democracies pertaining to representation,
4 although women generally perform as well as their male counterparts in similar types of electoral
5 races (Darcy, Welch and Clark, 1994). Recent research has found little evidence to support
6 previous claims that voters employ gender stereotypes when they evaluate women candidates
7 (Dolan and Lynch, 2016). Furthermore, no financial disadvantages appear to constrain women
8 candidates in particular (Hogan, 2007; Werner, 1997). A great issue involved in increasing the
9 positions of women to elected office remains the significant lack of female candidates. In
10 general, gender affects the decisions of women and men to run for office based on their personal
11 perceptions of capability. In the United States, for instance, women are more likely to doubt their
12 abilities to engage in the campaign process (Fox and Lawless, 2011). Although research has
13 shown that women are equally supported in elections when they run, this is not necessarily
14 because they are treated equitably by the electorate. Instead, it could depend on their political
15 quality; that is, women who do run must be even better candidates to be equally competitive with
16 male contenders (Fulton, 2012; Pearson and McGhee, 2013).
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37 Gender differences related to campaign behavior, in particular, have largely focused on
38 the different issues addressed during the campaign. In previous studies, candidates' genders
39 were, to some extent, related to the issues on which they focused (e.g., Dabelko and Herrnson,
40 1997; Larson, 2001). Later research does not, however, offer any support that female candidates
41 would focus on different issues than would male candidates, or that there exist a particular set of
42 gender-stereotyped issues, like social issues (Dolan, 2005). There appear to be few gender
43 differences persistent in overall campaign behavior and the use of varying campaigning tools.
44 For example, similarities tended to outweigh the differences between male and female candidates
45 in the way they are presented in television advertisements (Sapiro, Walsh, Strach and Hennings,
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3 2011). Much less is known, however, concerning the extent to which male and female candidates
4 use different communication strategies during their campaign or differ in motives for using those
5 strategies. Nonetheless, it is during the campaign that a candidate can choose how to present
6 themselves and their political agenda, as well as choosing how to communicate with voters,
7 which later forms the basis of their representation.
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16 For the overall uptake of online campaigning by candidates, important factors include
17 party size, competitiveness, challenger versus incumbent position, and age (Gulati and Williams,
18 2013; Larsson and Kalsnes, 2014; Lassen and Brown, 2011; Strandberg, 2013; Vergeer,
19 Hermans and Sams, 2011). Existing research indicates that younger candidates belonging to
20 minor parties and coming from challenger positions are more likely to use social media.
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29 Some studies conducted in the early years of online campaigning using websites
30 indicated that gender would generate similar campaign approaches online (e.g., Carlson, 2007),
31 whereas others did not. Women candidates have, for instance, been found to be more likely to
32 use blogs in their campaign and also to utilize a broader range of blogging practices, such as
33 interactive features (Carlson, Djupsund and Strandberg, 2014). The role of gender in relation to
34 uptake of social media in particular, has proven to be important in some studies. Gender had an
35 impact in a study by Jackson and Lilleker (2011), which found that female British MPs were
36 overrepresented on Twitter, compared to their numbers in Parliament. A study of Twitter use by
37 the House candidates in the 2012 campaign also found that women were more likely to use
38 Twitter (Evans, Cordova and Sipole, 2014). In contrast, gender has proven to be a statistically
39 nonsignificant factor for online presence and adoption by candidates running in the European
40 Parliament elections or by the members of European Parliament (Vergeer et al., 2013; Larsson,
41 2015a).
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Few studies look beyond activity level to variation in actual use, but there are some exceptions. Research conducted in the United States shows that female politicians use Twitter more intensely than do male politicians, have significantly more followers and differ in their manners of using social media, in terms of content of messages and issues covered. Women were more likely to use “attack tweets”, and used campaign, issues or mobilization tweets more often. Male candidates were slightly more likely to use personal tweets. Overall, the findings suggest that women use Twitter more actively as a campaign tool (Evans et al., 2014). In contrast to these findings, Just and Crigler (2014) reported a lack of gender difference in relation to some of the above measures. Candidates tended to be as active, focus on similar topics and use similar tone. They did, however, find significant gender differences in the social aspects of social media use, in the way that women connected more positively with followers. In an analysis of state legislators on Twitter, party and gender effects interacted; specifically, non-Republican women mentioned family somewhat more often than did non-Republican men, but within the group of Republican legislators, women were much less likely to talk about family (Cook, 2016).

Although research concerning the effect of candidate gender is inconclusive, gender does appear to be an important variable in politicians’ use of social media platforms. It would be premature to declare that gender is irrelevant in newer forms of online campaigning, but it is also a demanding task to study, as social media, such as Twitter, is a moving target, and observed patterns in one election could look very different in the next. Furthermore, the different national electoral systems matter for representatives’ social media use in Europe (Obholzer and Daniel, 2016). Below, we will discuss the European elections as a particular case for studying online campaigning, as compared to national elections.

European Parliament elections

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3 Previous research controlling for gender when measuring uptake and level of activity on social
4 media has mainly looked at politicians who were already holding office. The outcome may be
5 different for challenger candidates, particularly in European elections, in which fewer established
6 candidates run compared to national elections. Women are in general more successful in the
7 European election compared to national elections, because national political parties view these
8 elections as having less at stake and thus are willing to nominate more women or other, less
9 traditional candidates (Freedman, 2002; Harrison, 2005).
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21 The logic of political competition varies across national and European elections, with the
22 latter often referred to as second-order national elections (see Schmitt, 2009). Although the
23 positive effects of this second-order setting for small parties are well known, the implications for
24 independent candidates have rarely been discussed (for an exception, see Ehin and Solvak,
25 2012). There are a number of reasons, however, why independent or non-incumbent candidates
26 may benefit from running in European Parliament elections. For example, in this electoral
27 context, the individual candidates' campaigns are less dependent on the party and the campaign
28 organization. This can be especially rewarding for less-established (female) candidates. The
29 European (second-order) election may therefore provide more variation in personal campaign
30 strategies across parties and candidates than do (first order) national elections, where individual
31 candidates' campaigns are more dependent on party organization. Lesser-known candidates
32 would also struggle more to gain traditional media attention.
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49 **Sweden as a case**

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51 In this study, we see Sweden as a critical case because female politicians are nearly as prevalent
52 as male politicians in the representative assemblies. For more than 20 years, female politicians
53 have made up at least 40 percent of all three elected levels of representative assemblies (local,
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3 regional and national). In the government, there has been equal representation of men and
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5 women since 1994 (Krook, 2006). The importance of gender-related issues is also salient in the
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7 Swedish debate (Wängnerud, 2015). In a comparative European perspective, Sweden has an
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9 equal distribution of representatives in the European Parliament (out of 20 seats, 11 went to
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11 female legislators). Moreover, in the 2014 European election, a pronounced feminist party,
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13 Feminist Initiative, made it into the Parliament with one seat.
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19 Sweden has a fairly typical party-centered European political structure, in which the
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21 members of local and national assemblies are loyal party representatives (Gilljam, Karlsson and
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23 Sundell, 2010). Sweden uses a list system, whereby candidates are placed on the list according to
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25 party selectors, and the higher they are on the list, the greater are their chances of being elected
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27 (Pierre, 2015). The candidates do have an incentive to cultivate personal votes, however, as a
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29 candidate who receives five percent of the party's votes can "break" the list. Nonetheless, this
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31 semi-open list system does not change much. For example, in the 2014 election, only one
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33 candidate became an MP due to personal votes (Berg and Oscarsson, 2015). The political parties
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35 are therefore central actors in the success of an aspiring candidate. We know from previous
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37 research that in strong party systems, the party leadership stands a better chance of ensuring that
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39 their representatives share the party's preferences than they do in more candidate-oriented
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41 systems (Müller, 2000). The leeway for individual candidates to cultivate their own relationships
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43 with voters is therefore more restricted.
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50 Taken together, the high numbers of women politicians in the Swedish system and their
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52 activities within a strong party system, in which individual candidates' actions are centered on
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54 party interests, make gendered findings less plausible. Nonetheless, gendered perceptions can be
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56 expected to be preserved even when representation is equal in numbers. For instance, women in
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3 the legislature tend to speak less on “harder” policy issues than do men in Sweden (Bäck, Debus
4 and Müller, 2014). Furthermore, a recent study on Swedish municipal politicians revealed that
5 gender inequalities continue to obstruct women from political power, due to the so-called “glass
6 ceiling effect” (Folke and Rickne, 2016). The gender-related patterns we may discover in this
7 study should be relevant in contexts where female politicians are less common and where
8 individual politicians have more pronounced roles to play during the election campaign, even
9 though Sweden is a relatively gender equal case. Women should, according to this argument, be
10 even more motivated to use social media in other modern democracies with less female
11 representation.
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25 Studying gender-based differences in campaign behavior in Sweden can improve our
26 understanding of whether increased gender equality in representation cultivates new behavior, to
27 the extent that male and female politicians behave fairly similarly, or if gendered campaigning is
28 something more fundamental, and typical male and female behavior among political candidates
29 continues to exist even in gender-equal contexts. Against the backdrop of a development towards
30 personalized campaigning and the interactive features brought forward by social media, we
31 address the following three questions:
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43 1. *Do women candidates consider social media to be a more important campaign tool than do*
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48 2. *Are female politicians more likely to use Twitter to enhance the political messages of their*
49 *party or their personal agendas?*
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53 3. *Will women politicians behave differently than male politicians on Twitter by being more*
54 *active and communicating more interactively?*
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Data material and methods

This study used the Swedish candidate survey of candidates running for the 2014 European election. The survey contained questions regarding the importance of different campaign activities, motives for Twitter use and evaluation of the candidates' use of Twitter. Previous research has found two main styles of social media campaigning: a party-centered and an individualized style (Karlsen and Enjolras, 2016). Female politicians in general are more concerned about representing the party than representing themselves, when compared to men (Scully and Farrell, 2003). In the survey, we therefore asked questions concerning the dimension of a personal versus party-centered communication style. The questions on motives also covered other aspects of uses for political purposes, such as whether the primary audience consisted of media, politicians or voters. In the survey, we asked how important Twitter was in terms of the following: communicating the politician's individual daily activities, sharing information about the party's daily activities, displaying a more personal side, contacting voters personally, highlighting personal views, highlighting the party's position, debating with political opponents, criticizing political opponents, reaching as many voters as possible and making an impact in traditional media (see questionnaire in Appendix 4).

In terms of gender and online campaigning, social media can potentially offer both opportunities and challenges for female candidates. As women are more likely to be exposed to the risk of online harassment and trolling (see Megarry, 2014), this could, for instance, hamper the use of social media platforms for female candidates. We therefore also asked the candidates why they did not use social media, and if the risk of harassment would be one reason not to do so.

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3 To analyze the candidates' actual Twitter use, we collected data on Twitter activity
4 during three time periods for candidates with Twitter accounts. These time periods included the
5 campaign period (April–May 2014), a pre-campaign period (February 2013) and a period after
6 the election (January–March 2015). From the Twitter accounts, we collected the number of
7 tweets sent, number of @ mentions, retweets, number of tweets with hashtags (#) and number of
8 tweets containing links.
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18 The questionnaire, a web survey, was sent out directly after the 2014 election to all 315
19 candidates from the main political parties. The response rate was 46 percent (see Appendix 3 for
20 response rate per party, age group and gender in the survey). In the models, we controlled for
21 age, incumbency, placement on the party list, political party and seniority (whether or not they
22 had been members of the national parliament). These variables had all proved to be important in
23 various previous studies, although their importance was not entirely consistent throughout the
24 different contexts. For social media uptake and use, age was the one factor that stood out as
25 being most significant (Larsson, 2015a; Lassen and Brown, 2011; Vergeer and Hermans, 2013).
26 Electoral vulnerability had no effect on uptake according to Lassen and Brown (2011), and
27 Strandberg (2013) reported incumbency to be positively correlated with social media use. In
28 many other cases, challenger candidates employed social media to a larger extent (Druckman,
29 Kifer and Parkin, 2007; Gibson, Lusoli and Ward, 2008; Jackson and Lilleker, 2009). According
30 to a later study of the European 2014 election by Obholzer and Daniel (2016), MEPs at risk of
31 losing their seats are more active on Twitter. Moreover, previous studies have shown that
32 seniority has an impact on activity on Twitter. Senior MPs are in general more active users
33 (Jackson and Lilleker, 2011).
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Party size is sometimes used as a measure of how resources influence uptake of social media; the larger the party, the more resources are available. For example, Lilleker and Koc-Michalska (2013) found that MEPs from minor national parties perform better for different categories of online campaigning. In addition to party size, the ideological nature of the parties must be considered if we want to explain uptake and use of social media. Party ideology was unrelated to adoption of Twitter as a campaign tool according to Vergeer and Hermans (2013); however, in a more recent study of candidates in the EU elections of 2014, party belonging was important. There was a higher likelihood that candidates belonging to mainstream parties would use Twitter as opposed to more extreme party candidates, on an economic left–right scale (Nulty, Theocharis, Popa, Parnet and Benoit, 2016). The more extreme candidates are on the Green-Alternative-Libertarian vs Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist (GAL/TAN) dimension, however, the more often they use Twitter (Obholtzer and Daniel, 2016). In Sweden, the Feminist Initiative party and the Sweden Democrats are on the opposite ends of the GAL/TAN scale. Based on a study of the parties’ official social media accounts, the Feminist Initiative party was among the most active, whereas the Sweden Democrats, on the contrary, were among the least active (Larsson, 2015b). For this reason, we also controlled for party affiliation.

Dimensions in campaign activities

The empirical section begins with a description of how the candidates assessed the importance of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, in relation to other campaign activities. The survey covered 18 campaign activities, and the candidates ranked these from unimportant to very important on a 5-point, Likert-type scale. Respondents ranked Facebook as the third most important activity; 84 percent of the candidates used it, 67 percent of which indicated that it was of importance to their campaign (Figure 1). Respondents ranked Twitter as the sixth most

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3 important, with 65 percent of candidates using it, 38 percent of which reported it to be important.
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5 Other web-related activities, such as individual blogs and webpages, were seen as less important
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7 compared to social media channels. All in all, although social media platforms were not the most
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9 important campaign aspects, Facebook and Twitter were within the upper third of the most
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11 important campaign activities.
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16 **[Insert Figure 1 here]**
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19 To study the relationship between the importance of social media and gender, we
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21 employed a factor analysis (principal-component). The results yielded five dimensions of
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23 campaign activities (see Appendix 1). Social media (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, blogs and
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25 webpages) emerged as a distinct factor (Cronbach's alpha = 0.73). These activities were all
26
27 related to the candidates' online presences. Other factors were related to what we termed either
28
29 *traditional campaign activities* (spreading the party's campaign material, meeting with party
30
31 groups, contacting media and making public speeches; Cronbach's alpha = 0.70), *outreaching*
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33 *activities* (calling voters, visiting workplaces and organizations, or communicating through
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35 individual email lists or SMS; Cronbach's alpha = 0.67), *personal activities* (visiting door-to-
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37 door, putting up individual election posters or sending letters to voters; Cronbach's alpha = 0.65)
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39 and *media activities* (releasing individual advertisements in newspapers, radio and television
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41 channels, cinemas or individual election pamphlets; Cronbach's alpha = 0.67).
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49 When analyzing these dimensions and their relationships to gender, we found that women
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51 candidates overall tended to place greater value on all campaign activities than did male
52
53 candidates (Table 1). Out of five different campaign activities, female candidates assessed three
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55 as significantly more important than did men. Among these were activities on the web (mean for
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3 female candidates was 0.47, mean for men was 0.36).¹ It is of interest that female candidates
4
5 assessed more activities as important. One of the reasons why female candidates see more
6
7 activities as important may be related to the fact that women think that more activities are
8
9 necessary to pursue a political career (Fox and Lawless, 2011). This tendency to stress that more
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11 things are important, even in a gender-equal context, could partly explain why women in less
12
13 equal contexts are reluctant to step forward as candidates; in other words, female candidates
14
15 assess that an electoral campaign demands more of them than it does of men.
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21 Among the individual control variables, we cannot see that there exists the same type of
22
23 consistent pattern as there was between male and female candidates, with the exception of age.
24
25 Younger candidates see web campaigning as more important than do their older colleagues,
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27 whereas the opposite is true when it comes to traditional campaigning, where older candidates
28
29 stress its importance. It is worth mentioning that web-campaigning is the only thing that the
30
31 incumbents assessed as more important than did the other candidates, which is in line with
32
33 Strandberg's results. Strandberg (2013) suggested that a reason for this could be that journalists'
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35 use of social media as a news source would favor more established candidates.
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41 If we study the importance of party affiliation and the candidates' assessments, it is
42
43 evident that Sweden Democrat candidates assessed *all* campaign activities as less important than
44
45 did candidates from other parties. We cannot offer a solid explanation for this finding. The
46
47 Sweden Democrats had their best election results ever, so it would be natural to assume that they
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49 would be very optimistic about the usefulness of their activities, but that is not the case. It
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51 remains plausible that the attitude stems from their status as an anti-establishment party, and that
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56 ¹ All the means in the article were calculated with the margins command in Stata 14.1, while holding other
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58 factors constant at their average values.
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3 the candidates feel stigmatized by the editorial mainstream media and the parliament's current
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5 *cordon sanitaire* around the party. This appears to also affect how they view social media,
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7 something we will discuss further below.
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11 **[Insert table 1 here]**
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14 In looking at each of the activities related to social media and web-based campaigning,
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16 there was a significant gender difference for Twitter, where women assessed Twitter as more
17
18 important than did men. Nearly half of the women (49 percent) assessed Twitter as "rather
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20 important" or "very important", whereas among the men, the corresponding number was only 28
21
22 percent. We can also see the same pattern emerging in Table 1. The tendency for female
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24 candidates to assess all activities as more important than did men is present as well (if we
25
26 collapse the four variables into one, there is a significant gender difference). The only other
27
28 significant result was found for Facebook, which was in fact even more important for women; 76
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30 percent of the female candidates saw Facebook as rather or very important, whereas 58 percent
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32 of male candidates felt the same.
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39 For the control variables, list placement had no effect on any campaign activity. Age was
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41 significant for Twitter use (as supported by previous research); older candidates were less
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43 optimistic about its usefulness. Incumbents assessed Twitter as more valuable than did the other
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45 candidates. Among the party variables, the two most interesting significant and non-significant
46
47 results were from the Sweden Democrats and the Feminist Initiative. During the election
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49 campaign, the Sweden Democrat candidates and their activities on social media were scrutinized
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51 by the media. Some of these candidates even had to resign as a result of this public scrutiny. It is
52
53 therefore interesting to note that candidates from the Sweden Democrats were slightly more
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3 skeptical about the usefulness of social media. In contrast, the Feminist Initiative candidates
4 based their campaigns to a large extent on social media (Blombäck and de Fine Licht, 2015) and
5 were the most active on various social media platforms. The Feminist Initiative party also had
6 more followers than any of the other parties, but Feminist Initiative respondents did not assess
7 Twitter and Facebook as crucial tools for their success. The results here do not support previous
8 research in which candidates from more extreme parties on the GAL/TAN scale used social
9 media more extensively.
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21 It has been theorized that social media not only allow disadvantaged parties and
22 candidates to bypass traditional media, but may also serve populist parties as they strive to
23 appeal to “common people” by offering direct contact opportunities for this aim (Jacobs and
24 Spierings, 2016). Conversely, populist radical right parties like the Sweden Democrats are often
25 organized around strong leaders who personify the party and seek to control the party as a whole.
26 As these parties are more centralized, this control decreases as a result of social media (Jacobs
27 and Spierings, 2016). The less-motivated candidates in the Sweden Democrats could therefore,
28 in addition to being affected by tough media coverage, also be the result of a more centralized
29 control over candidate behavior.²
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43 In summary, the results shown in Table 1 and Table 2 help us to answer our first
44 question, suggesting that women candidates consider social media to be a more important
45 campaign tool than do male candidates. There is a tendency, however, for women candidates in
46 general to assess all campaign activities as more important.
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52 ² In the party’s ethical guidelines from 2011, there are instructions for social media use that state that it is
53 important to be honest and sincere, and treat people the same way on the Internet as in real life. Among other
54 things, the guidelines state that candidates should: not use social media when in an upset state of mind, always
55 think about the political consequences when publishing, avoid internal discussions (the guidelines say this is
56 best handled within the party) and respect the law (pages 5 – 6). These statements give a clue as to some of the
57 trouble the party has had with their representatives on social media platforms.
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[Insert table 2 here]

Motives for Twitter use and evaluation

In the survey, we asked whether the candidates prioritized using Twitter for individual or party-centered purposes. To measure Twitter's usefulness for individual campaigning practices, we constructed an index based on three questions that asked the candidates to assess the importance of using Twitter for the purposes of (1) displaying a relatable personal side of themselves, (2) getting in personal contact with voters and (3) making their personal views visible (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$). To measure Twitter's usefulness to party-centered campaign approaches, the candidates were asked about the extent to which their Twitter usage was important for (1) spreading information about the party's daily activities and (2) making the party's views visible (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$). The different sets of questions were merged into party-centered and personal-centered categories. In the questionnaire, the scale runs from 1 "to a very small extent" to 7 "to a very large extent"; in the analyses, however, the items are merged into two indices that range between 0 "to a very small extent" and 1 "to a very large extent".

There was, in fact, a significant difference between male and female candidates in terms of motivations for using Twitter to expose themselves as candidates (Table 3). The mean for women candidates was 0.63 and for men was 0.51. At the same time, more female than male candidates stated that they used Twitter to draw attention to their parties (the mean for women was 0.68, mean for men was 0.50). This result is again in line with what we found earlier. Women candidates stress more aspects as being important in their campaign than do men, and as a consequence, Twitter is more important for women, both personally and also for their party.

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3 The control variables did not offer much variation. In fact, gender was the only consistent pattern
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5 for the party-centered model.
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9 When women candidates evaluated their party-centered uses of Twitter, they were also
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11 more positive than male candidates (Table 3). The results indicated that women candidates use
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13 Twitter as a professional campaign tool more often than do men, and these findings strengthen
14
15 the picture that emerged above: women candidates value Twitter as more important in their
16
17 campaign efforts than do male candidates, as a way to reach out to voters with the party message
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19 (mean for women was 0.53, mean for men was 0.40). In their evaluation of how well they
20
21 performed with their personal usage of Twitter, however, women were not significantly more
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23 satisfied than were men (mean for women was 0.45, mean for men was 0.40). Since the number
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25 of respondents was limited, it is difficult to further investigate the difference between how male
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27 and female candidates evaluate their success in bringing forward their personalized campaign.
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29 We can only observe that the difference between male and female candidates' motivations for
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31 using Twitter was 0.12, whereas when they assessed their success of forwarding their
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33 personalized campaign, the difference remained at 0.5. This could be another indication that
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35 women put more pressure on themselves on the campaign trail.
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43 To answer our second question of whether or not female politicians are more likely to use
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45 Twitter to enhance the political messages of their party or their personal agenda, we have seen
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47 that female candidates actually work harder than men to promote both themselves and their
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49 parties. We understand this tendency to be an indication of gendered campaigning.
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[Insert table 3 here]

The presence of incivility can have hampering effects for online political discourse (Gervais, 2015), yet it was not an issue reported by the candidates in our survey. When we asked the respondents who did not use Twitter about their reasons for refraining from doing so, only one male and one female candidate stated that they do not use Twitter because they “do not want to be exposed to personal harassment.”

To evaluate the candidates’ actual usage of Twitter (see Table 4), we collected tweets from all the Swedish candidates active on Twitter during the 2014 election campaign (between March 25 and May 25). To detect any special campaigning effects, we also collected tweets from the candidates one year before the election (February 2013) and again after the election (January to March 2015). In order to explore differences in actual use and activity between male and female candidates, we collected the number of tweets and the use of retweets, mentions, hashtags and links. Both retweeting and mentioning can indicate a more interactive style of use, whereas the use of links and hashtags indicate intention to contribute to a debate on an issue at hand or provide further information on topics such as campaign issues. To separate the different uses of Twitter, we created two variables: Twitter interactions (consisting of retweets and mentions) and Twitter information (consisting of links and hashtags). Future studies into communication practices, however, may benefit by taking a more granular approach to different uses based on disaggregate links, hashtags, retweets and @ replies. Examining the contents of tweets and a possible gendered communication style would also be of interest. In this article, we restricted our scope to a variable for the total number of tweets that candidates sent out. Because our

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3 measurements consist of count data with the existence of overdispersion, we used negative
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5 binomial regression in our models.³
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9 There were no gender differences for either numbers of tweets or Twitter activity during
10 the election campaign (Table 4). Although there was a tendency for women to be more active,
11 the difference was not significant. There were, however, some significant effects in the model.
12 Older candidates were less active on Twitter, tweeting, interacting and sharing information to a
13 lesser extent than did younger candidates. The same tendency was evident among candidates
14 who were lower ranked on the party list. We correspondingly observed that incumbents were
15 more active on Twitter in comparison to the other candidates; here, it also appears that seniority
16 matters. Candidates who had been members of the national parliament used Twitter to a higher
17 extent. It is difficult to speculate why, but one explanation could be related to party loyalty, as
18 when the election was over and a year had passed, the more senior candidates were no longer
19 more active on Twitter.
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36 The effects of election campaigning were further evident for other candidates' activities a
37 year later. Female candidates were more active on Twitter and also had more interactions with
38 their followers. The difference between male and female candidates who shared Twitter
39 information was nearly significant, as well. It appears that gender is relevant, but not when it is
40 election time. The competition between the candidates makes gender less important during the
41 election campaign than it is before or after the campaign. When the competition is over, however,
42 women candidates are more interested than men in communicating with their followers. This
43 result was not driven by the intensity during the election campaign. In the 2014 election
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57 ³ Because alpha was significantly different from zero, we preferred negative binomial regression over Poisson
58 regression.
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3 campaign, the candidates tweeted nearly 38,500 times, and in the three first months of 2015, they
4 sent more than 40,500 tweets. To further validate the results, we also looked at the candidates'
5 activities a year before the election (February 2013). Here, we found the same pattern: women
6 candidates were more active than men on Twitter (see Appendix 2). These results underscore the
7 relevance of studying what politicians are doing between elections, not only what they are doing
8 during campaigns (Esaiasson and Narud, 2013).
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11 Among the other variables, we observed that higher-ranked candidates used Twitter more
12 often even when the election was over. Similarly, younger candidates tweeted more and had
13 more interactions than did their older colleagues. Incumbents were also more active. There were
14 no larger discrepancies between the parties, however, other than candidates from the Center
15 Party being more active than the other party candidates after the election.
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[Insert table 4 here]

Conclusions

In this study, we examined the importance of gender in how political candidates use social media for campaigning purposes. Using survey data on Swedish candidates and behavioral data from Twitter during the 2014 European election, we found gender-related patterns in the level of value candidates placed on social media as a campaign tool. Women candidates tended to evaluate social media as more important and more useful than did male candidates, particularly in terms of party-centered campaign approaches. During the election campaign, however, women candidates did not use Twitter more or differently than men. The logic of election campaigning makes candidates act in more predictable ways. The highest-ranked candidates and the incumbents were generally the most active; however, we observed that more senior

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3 candidates became more active during the election campaign, but lost their interest after the
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5 election was over. Between the elections, we could see gender patterns for how men and women
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7 interacted using Twitter. This pattern has implications for the interpretation of so-called
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9 permanent campaigning (see Farrell, 1996) and the logic of online campaigning. During the
10
11 intense campaign period, the level of activity rose as can be expected, but from these theoretical
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13 perspectives, the rationale for social media usage appeared to yield unexpected differences
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15 between elections. A distinct normalized or equalized pattern in online campaigning appears
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17 difficult to argue for and as this study show, this especially holds true when considering the
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19 period between elections. It would appear that the more experienced and routine candidates value
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21 social media to a greater extent, judging by their activity and interactivity during the intense
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23 campaign period. This indicates a normalized pattern emerging on social media; however, the
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25 pattern was not consistent between elections, where we additionally found that female candidates
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27 were more prominent in their use.
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35 The normalization/equalization dichotomy provides a limited understanding of the
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37 patterns of social media use in this case. Indicators of equalization, like gender, offer inadequate
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39 explanatory power in a relatively equal setting. In a context of equal representation in parliament
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41 but with existing gender differences in de facto political power, it is not unambiguous how a
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43 pattern of more extensive social media use by women politicians should best be understood. It
44
45 could be argued that social media in this case provides more equal conditions but the results from
46
47 this use can still resemble a normalized pattern. It would be valuable if future references to this
48
49 rather dated theory provided more elaborate attempts to explain why social media represents a
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51 breaking point or continuation of previous conditions. This could be done by, for example,
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53 considering different electoral settings, and campaign vs. non-campaign periods. As this article
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3 shows, the concept of normalization appears to hold true when looking at a period of intense
4 campaigning, whereas the regular day-to-day basis of political communication on social media
5 platforms indicates a break from this pattern.
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11 Research has shown that women and men were similar in their general campaign styles
12 (Bystrom and Kaid, 2002), as well as in their overall online activity in the recent European
13 elections. Our results suggest that gender does play a role in social media campaigns, which calls
14 for further comparative research in different electoral contexts and with varying degrees of
15 descriptive representation. This study provides insight into the evolution of campaign practices
16 in a context with a relatively gender-equal representation, as well as showing the ability of
17 candidates to adopt and adapt to new media environments. In this regard, social media is seen as
18 an important platform for individual candidates, and its importance can be expected to increase
19 over time. According to Lilleker, Tenscher and Štětka (2015), indications of development
20 towards a “hypermedia” campaign style can be found in the integration and involvement of
21 several platforms as professional campaigning strategies in Europe. As the European campaign
22 structure has developed towards campaign professionalism, this pattern can help to explain the
23 emphasis put on social media campaigning. Separating practices as strategic choices that
24 influence the decision of a more permanent presence as an indication of permanent campaigning
25 is necessary, however (Tenscher, 2013). In line with this reasoning, our results could also
26 indicate that a more strategic use of social media entails a less active presence outside the
27 campaign period. To better understand election campaigns online, we should therefore also study
28 what the candidates are doing between elections. This is perhaps especially true for social media,
29 and such research is necessary to further assess whether social media is used as a professional
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3 tool for a more permanent online presence or merely as a temporary additional platform during
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6 electoral campaigns.
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9 It has been suggested that, in their effort to sidestep traditional media, female candidates
10 aim to project an image of a more open, personal and interactive politician (Carlson et al., 2014).
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12 The extent to which this could be linked to a typical female conversational style online may be
13
14 relevant to study, given that some previous research indicates dissimilar gendered behavior on
15
16 social media and women in general tend to use technology differently than men (e.g., more
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18 sociably; Cunha, Magno, Goncalves, Cambraia and Almeida, 2014; Lasorsa, 2012; Tufekci,
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20 2008; Walton and Rice, 2013). Given the results presented in this article, gender should be
21
22 studied in greater detail in relation to the political use of social media platforms. Sweden has one
23
24 of the highest voter turnouts in European elections and the gender distribution of candidates is
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26 one of the most equal; nevertheless, we can detect gendered campaigning. These findings should
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28 therefore be expected to be even more prominent in other contexts. In contrast to American and
29
30 British majority election, candidate-centered systems, Sweden's pluralistic, party-centered
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32 parliamentary system can provide different implications for individual online campaigning
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34 practices. Research has also suggested that being online has a significant effect on intra-party
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36 competition (Hansen and Kosiara-Pedersen, 2014). In contrast, the relationship between gender
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38 and social media practices in this case may not be as strong in the context of national elections,
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40 because the European election possibly presents other opportunities for less-established
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42 candidates, such as younger female contenders.
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52 The social media use of political candidates can positively affect interaction with voters
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54 and possibly yield additional preferential votes (Spierings and Jacobs, 2014). A relevant issue to
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56 address in future research could also be the extent to which a candidate's individual
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3 characteristics, such as gender, make that candidate more or less likely to benefit from using
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5 social media as a campaign strategy. If women candidates succeed in establishing themselves
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7 online and using social media to connect to voters – especially female voters, who are more
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9 likely to assess female politicians positively (Kosiara-Pedersen and Hansen, 2015) – this could in
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11 time strengthen the status of younger women candidates in the electoral system.
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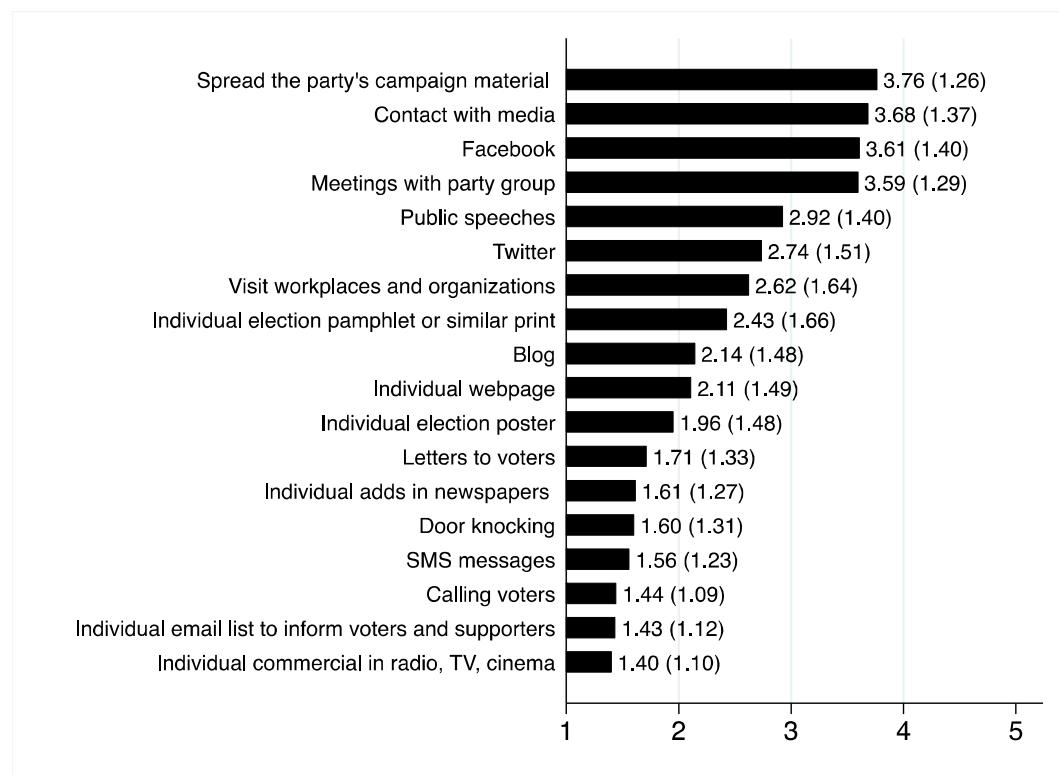
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Figure 1. Mean importance of campaign activities to candidates in the 2014 European election



Note: The scale runs from 1 (unimportant) to 5 (very important). Standard deviation within parentheses.

Table 1. Assessment of importance of campaign activities by candidates in the 2014 European election

	Web-campaign	Traditional	Outreach	Personal	Media
Sex (women)	0.11** (0.05)	0.08* (0.04)	-0.06 (0.13)	0.09** (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)
Placement on the party list (1-43)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Age (22-83)	-0.00** (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Incumbent	0.22** (0.11)	-0.03 (0.11)	-0.03 (0.31)	0.12 (0.09)	0.02 (0.10)
Experience as MP	-0.02 (0.07)	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.20)	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.07 (0.07)
Party (Social Democrats are ref. category)					
Center Party	0.03 (0.09)	-0.05 (0.08)	-0.39*** (0.25)	-0.44*** (0.07)	-0.08 (0.08)
Christian Democrats	0.03 (0.09)	-0.05 (0.09)	-0.33 (0.25)	-0.43*** (0.07)	-0.13 (0.08)
Conservative Party	-0.01 (0.10)	0.02 (0.09)	-0.21 (0.30)	-0.06 (0.09)	0.00 (0.09)
Feminist Party	-0.01 (0.15)	-0.30** (0.13)	-0.81* (0.41)	-0.66*** (0.12)	-0.35*** (0.13)
Green Party	0.03 (0.08)	-0.12 (0.08)	-0.43* (0.24)	-0.51*** (0.07)	-0.22*** (0.08)
Left Party	-0.18** (0.09)	-0.06 (0.08)	-0.86*** (0.25)	-0.53*** (0.07)	-0.36*** (0.08)
Liberal Party	0.12 (0.10)	-0.03 (0.09)	-0.26 (0.28)	-0.39*** (0.08)	0.05 (0.09)
Pirate Party	-0.02 (0.11)	-0.21** (0.10)	-0.87*** (0.30)	-0.53*** (0.09)	-0.30*** (0.10)
Sweden Democrats	-0.38*** (0.11)	-0.38*** (0.11)	-1.14*** (0.33)	-0.55*** (0.10)	-0.36*** (0.11)
Intercept	0.57*** (0.10)	0.63*** (0.10)	1.18*** (0.30)	0.65*** (0.09)	0.39*** (0.09)
R ²	0.24	0.26	0.18	0.49	0.29
N	142	142	137	143	144

Note: Linear regression (OLS). All dependent variables run between 0-1. Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2. Assessment of importance of web campaign activities by candidates in the 2014 European election

	Twitter	Facebook	Blog	Home page
Sex (women)	0.14** (0.06)	0.11** (0.05)	0.08 (0.06)	0.09 (0.06)
Placement on the party list (1-43)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Age (22-83)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Incumbent	0.42*** (0.15)	-0.05 (0.13)	0.26 (0.16)	0.28* (0.16)
Experience as MP	0.04 (0.10)	-0.16* (0.08)	-0.07 (0.10)	0.06 (0.10)
Party (Social Democrats are ref. category)				
Center Party	0.04 (0.12)	-0.19* (0.11)	0.14 (0.13)	0.09 (0.12)
Christian Democrats	-0.05 (0.12)	-0.05 (0.10)	0.17 (0.13)	0.02 (0.12)
Conservative Party	0.06 (0.14)	-0.16 (0.12)	0.07 (0.15)	-0.01 (0.15)
Feminist Party	0.10 (0.20)	-0.03 (0.18)	-0.19 (0.21)	0.07 (0.21)
Green Party	-0.04 (0.13)	-0.21** (0.10)	0.21 (0.12)	0.16 (0.12)
Left Party	-0.15 (0.12)	-0.40*** (0.10)	0.02 (0.12)	-0.20 (0.12)
Liberal Party	0.15 (0.13)	-0.05 (0.12)	0.29* (0.14)	0.21 (0.14)
Pirate Party	-0.08 (0.14)	-0.35** (0.13)	0.26* (0.15)	0.09 (0.15)
Sweden Democrats	-0.36** (0.16)	-0.79*** (0.14)	-0.11 (0.17)	-0.23 (0.17)
Intercept	0.81*** (0.14)	0.97 (0.12)	0.20 (0.15)	0.30** (0.14)
R ²	0.25	0.32	0.12	0.17
N	144	148	147	147

Note: Linear regression (OLS). All dependent variables run between 0-1. Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3. Assessment of importance of Twitter for personal or party centered purposes and evaluation of the use of Twitter for these purposes in the candidates' campaign

	Twitter Motivation		Twitter Evaluation	
	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Party</i>
Sex (women)	0.12** (0.06)	0.18*** (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)	0.13* (0.07)
Placement on the party list (1-43)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Age (22-83)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Incumbent	0.10 (0.13)	-0.11 (0.14)	0.20 (0.13)	0.10 (0.15)
Experience as MP	-0.08 (0.13)	-0.19* (0.10)	0.07 (0.10)	-0.03 (0.11)
Party (Social Democrats are ref. category)				
Center Party	0.18 (0.12)	0.02 (0.13)	0.16 (0.13)	-0.03 (0.13)
Christian Democrats	0.14 (0.12)	0.15 (0.13)	0.16 (0.13)	0.06 (0.14)
Conservative Party	0.07 (0.12)	0.01 (0.13)	0.03 (0.13)	-0.18 (0.14)
Feminist Party	-0.01 (0.18)	0.02 (0.20)	0.14 (0.19)	0.20 (0.20)
Green Party	0.02 (0.11)	-0.02 (0.12)	0.04 (0.12)	-0.21 (0.12)
Left Party	-0.28** (0.11)	0.05 (0.12)	-0.19 (0.13)	-0.22 (0.13)
Liberal Party	0.12 (0.12)	-0.03 (0.13)	-0.04 (0.13)	-0.19 (0.14)
Pirate Party	-0.16 (0.13)	-0.03 (0.15)	-0.19 (0.14)	-0.20 (0.15)
Sweden Democrats	-0.06 (0.21)	0.01 (0.23)	0.08 (0.22)	-0.04 (0.24)
Intercept	0.58*** (0.14)	0.54*** (0.15)	0.52*** (0.15)	0.53*** (0.16)
Observations	92	91	88	88
R-squared	0.28	0.19	0.24	0.22

Note: All dependent variables run between 0-1. Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4. Activity on Twitter during and after the election campaign (NBREG)

	2014 Number of tweets	2014 Twitter interactions	2014 Twitter information	2015 Number of tweets	2015 Twitter interactions	2015 Twitter information
Sex (women)	0.15 (0.18)	0.13 (0.21)	0.22 (0.19)	0.47** (0.20)	0.46** (0.23)	0.26 (0.21)
Placement on the party list (1-43)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Age (22-83)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)
Incumbent	0.98** (0.38)	1.03** (0.44)	1.19*** (0.40)	0.96** (0.47)	1.06 (0.54)	1.23 (0.47)
Experience as MP	0.60** (0.26)	0.82*** (0.31)	0.37 (0.27)	0.35 (0.29)	0.42 (0.33)	0.30 (0.29)
Party (Social Democrats are ref. category)						
Center Party	0.40 (0.36)	0.24 (0.43)	0.25 (0.36)	1.39*** (0.45)	1.52** (0.51)	0.99* (0.47)
Christian Democrats	0.08 (0.35)	-0.17 (0.39)	0.12 (0.35)	0.64 (0.45)	0.74 (0.51)	0.32 (0.45)
Conservative Party	0.25 (0.36)	0.08 (0.42)	0.34 (0.36)	-0.05 (0.44)	-0.21 (0.50)	-0.02 (0.45)
Feminist Party	0.97* (0.55)	0.65 (0.59)	0.11 (0.55)	-0.71 (0.68)	-0.77 (0.78)	-0.86 (0.68)
Green Party	0.49 (0.33)	0.47 (0.39)	0.50 (0.34)	0.35 (0.43)	0.52 (0.48)	0.21 (0.43)
Left Party	0.59 (0.37)	0.47 (0.44)	0.49 (0.38)	1.06** (0.47)	1.25* (0.53)	0.81* (0.47)
Liberal Party	0.21 (0.34)	0.17 (0.39)	0.27 (0.35)	0.86* (0.44)	1.22** (0.50)	0.58 (0.44)
Pirate Party	0.77* (0.41)	0.55 (0.47)	0.81** (0.41)	0.83 (0.51)	1.12* (0.57)	0.64 (0.52)
Sweden Democrats	-0.57 (0.49)	-0.20 (0.56)	-0.39 (0.51)	-0.18 (0.57)	0.08 (0.64)	-0.42 (0.58)
Intercept	5.62*** (0.44)	5.11*** (0.51)	5.25*** (0.45)	5.75*** (0.52)	5.10*** (0.58)	5.25*** (0.53)
Pseudo R ²	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01
N	196	196	196	195	195	195

Standard error in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Appendix 1

Table A1. Campaign activities. Factor analysis (Principal Component)

	Traditional	Web campaign	Outreach	Personal	Media
Meetings with party group	0.80				
Contact with media	0.72				
Spread the party's campaign material	0.70				
Public speeches	0.59				
Blog		0.83			
Individual webpage		0.81			
Twitter		0.59			
Facebook		0.56			
Calling voters			0.73		
SMS messages			0.72		
Individual email list to inform voters and supporters			0.59		
Visit workplaces and organizations			0.57		
Door knocking					
Letters to voters				0.75	
Individual election poster				0.72	
				0.70	
Individual commercial in radio, TV, cinema					0.75
Individual adds in newspaper					0.70
Individual election pamphlet or similar print					0.62
Eigenvalue (initial)	4.45	2.34	1.55	1.52	1.11

Appendix 2

Table A2. Gender and Activity on Twitter, February 2013 (NBREG)

	2013 Number of tweets	2013 Twitter interactions	2013 Twitter information
Sex (women)	0.91*** (0.31)	1.02*** (0.36)	0.83*** (0.31)
Placement on the party list (1-43)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
Age (22-83)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)
Incumbent	-0.11 (0.62)	-0.11 (0.75)	-0.12 (0.62)
Experience as MP	-0.90** (0.45)	-0.73 (0.54)	-0.98** (0.45)
Party (Social Democrats are ref. category)			
Center Party	0.90* (0.54)	0.93 (0.64)	0.89* (0.53)
Christian Democrats	-0.12 (0.53)	-0.39 (0.62)	0.15 (0.54)
Conservative Party	1.11* (0.65)	0.67 (0.77)	1.38** (0.64)
Feminist Party	-0.42 (1.04)	-0.36 (1.23)	-0.43 (1.04)
Green Party	0.18 (0.49)	0.15 (0.59)	0.20 (0.50)
Left Party	0.60 (0.57)	0.43 (0.69)	0.76 (0.57)
Liberal Party	0.74 (0.56)	0.90 (0.67)	0.64 (0.56)
Pirate Party	0.74 (0.64)	0.77 (0.76)	0.75 (0.63)
Sweden Democrats	1.73** (0.70)	2.20*** (0.82)	1.06 (0.72)
Intercept	4.34*** (0.62)	3.69*** (0.71)	3.71*** (0.64)
Pseudo R-squared	0.02	0.03	0.02
N	101	101	101

Standard error in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Appendix 3. Descriptive statistics

Table A3. Response rate per party (%)

Political party	Response rate
Center Party	47
Christian Democrats	47
Conservative Party	30
Feminist Party	44
Green Party	60
Left Party	51
Liberal Party	29
Pirate Party	45
Social Democrats	53
Sweden Democrats	35

Table A4. Response rate per age groups (%)

Age groups	Statistics Sweden	The survey
18-29	17	16
30-49	46	41
50-64	30	30
65+	8	13

Note: The statistics are taken from Statistic Sweden's web page: http://www.scb.se/sv/Hitta-statistik/Statistik-efter-amne/Demokrati/Allmanna-val/Europaparlamentsval-nominerade-och-valda/#c_undefined

Table A5. Response rate and gender (%)

Gender	Statistics Sweden	The survey
Women	47	51

Note: The statistics are taken from Statistic Sweden's web page: http://www.scb.se/sv/Hitta-statistik/Statistik-efter-amne/Demokrati/Allmanna-val/Europaparlamentsval-nominerade-och-valda/#c_undefined

Appendix 4 Questionnaire

Importance of campaign activities

“Were any of the following activities part of your campaign? And if yes, how important were they?

Items:”

- (A) Door-knocking, canvassing
- (B) Distributing party campaign material
- (C) Calling up voters on the phone
- (D) Visiting businesses and social organizations
- (E) Meetings with party elites/members and/or party groups
- (F) Media activities (interviews, press releases)
- (G) Public speeches and rallies
- (H) Personal campaign posters
- (I) Direct mailing
- (J) Personal newspaper adds
- (K) Personal spots in radio, TV, movie houses
- (L) Personal flyers or other campaign material (give-aways)
- (M) Personal website
- (N) Mailing list to inform supporters and voters about my campaign
- (O) Own blog
- (P) Facebook
- (Q) SMS
- (R) Twitter
- (S) Other, please specify:

Response options:

- (1) little important
- (2) somewhat important
- (3) very important
- (4) most important

Importance of Twitter

“How important was Twitter for you when it comes to:”

- (A) Tell people about your daily activities as a politician
- (B) Disseminate information of the party's daily activities
- (C) Be able to show a more personal side of yourself
- (D) Getting into personal contact with voters
- (E) Visualizing your personal views
- (F) Highlighting the party's positions
- (G) Debating with political opponents
- (H) Criticize political opponents
- (I) Reach out to as many voters as possible
- (J) Have an impact on traditional media

Response options:

1 - To very low extent, 7- To a very high extent

Evaluations of Twitter

“To what extent have you been succeeded through Twitter to:

- (A) Tell people about your daily activities as a politician
- (B) Disseminate information of the party's daily activities
- (C) Be able to show a more personal side of yourself
- (D) Getting into personal contact with voters
- (E) Visualizing your personal views
- (F) Highlighting the party's positions
- (G) Debating with political opponents
- (H) Criticize political opponents
- (I) Reach out to as many voters as possible
- (J) Have an impact on traditional media

1 - To very low extent, 7- To a very high extent