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Campaign-personalization and constituency focus in a mixed-member electoral system. The case of Hungary¹²

1. Introduction

The personalization of politics is a popular topic of contemporary political science. Personalization, however, refers to several related yet distinct concepts in the literature, which often leads to confusion. On the one hand, it is commonly used to describe the phenomena of presidentialization, which is the process of a leader gradually becoming the most important representative of his or her party³. On the other hand, personalization is also a trait of the individual candidates and representatives. In this sense, personalization is a tool for politicians to create an image of themselves which differentiates them both from their parties and their fellow candidates (Karvonen, 2009). This article considers personalization in the latter way and does not use the term in connection with party leaders.

The aim of the analysis is to uncover the micro-level determinants of personalization and constituency orientation within the individual Members' of Parliament (MPs) campaign strategies under circumstances that heavily favour party-centeredness. The main hypothesis is that despite the party-centred logic of Hungarian politics, personalization prevails in a measurable way⁴. Parties play a distinctive role in the above causal mechanism. It is because the direct effects of the components of the electoral system favouring candidate-centeredness in campaigning have to be adjusted to the actual political circumstances, and their indirect effects posed on party strategies should be taken into account as well. However, in order to explore this mechanism in detail, conducting a case study seems more appropriate than performing a cross-sectional analysis. The most common criticism of cross-country research

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² The article relies on the author's unpublished PhD dissertation *Legislators' constituency orientation under party-centred electoral rules. Evidence from Hungary* (Papp, 2013).

³ Among others, this interpretation of personalization might be connected to the growing literature on *political branding*. This line of literature claims that modern parties are very similar to what marketing studies call brands on the one hand, and that voters use the personality traits of party leaders to evaluate parties on the other (Garzia, 2013; Smith, 2009).

⁴ For similar reasoning see (Karlsen and Skogerbø, 2013; Russo, 2011).

is that it is difficult to identify the casual effects independently from other cross-country factors (Jun and Hix, 2010). Hence, it might be better to focus the attention exclusively on a single country, and thereby hold cultural and historical aspects constant.

This study investigates Hungary as a critical case (Gerring, 2007; Rohlfing, 2012) of mixed-member electoral systems. The analysis aims to explore candidate- and district-centeredness in the campaign of the Hungarian general elections in 2010. While several other potential dimensions⁵ could also be taken into account, campaign efforts are the ones which are under the strongest control of the party centre. The fact that we investigate under circumstances that leave little room for the recognition of individual preferences and characteristics, makes the critical case fashion more powerful.

In the next section, I show why the Hungarian case can be treated as a critical one. This is followed by the theoretical and empirical introduction of the dependent and independent variables, which also includes the formulation of several sub-hypotheses that establish the effects of these variables on personalization and constituency orientation during campaign. The aim of this article is to systematically explore a specific aspect of personalization in line with the international literature on representation, personalization and personal voting.

2. Electoral rules and personalization

The literature discussing the effect of electoral rules on personalization emphasizes four main components. (1) Regarding the consequences for the electoral connection, the debate revolves around the effects of majority and proportional *electoral formulas*. The differences between the two major types of electoral systems are related to the application of single member versus multi-member constituencies. One of the most frequently discussed characteristics of the single member majority systems is that they create a strong *accountability linkage* (Lancaster, 1986; Norris, 2000, 2004; Scholl, 1986). Since a district has a single representative, the voters will be able to determine who to reward or punish for the positive or negative outcomes (Lancaster, 1986; Lancaster and Patterson, 1990; Norris, 2004). Conversely, in Multi-Member Districts (MMDs), the accountability link becomes blurred and the incentive to free-ride increases because there is a territorial overlap among the legislators (Heitshusen, Young, and

⁵ For instance representational attitudes, constituency service or work in parliament.

Wood, 2005). In MMD-systems, members are more accountable to the party leadership than to the electorate (Norris, 2004), which essentially makes the contest for re-election a fight for higher positions on the party list (Curtice and Shively, 2000). (2) Students of electoral systems agree that the electoral formula is just one factor among many, and is far from being the most important. In fact, the electoral competition in systems using multi-member constituencies might be more candidate-oriented (especially with open and flexible party lists) than under Single Member Districts (SMDs). The key aspect here is the *ballot structure* that creates highly distinctive subgroups among systems applying MMD. The reason why we cannot consider the group of MMD-systems homogeneous in terms of how they affect the electoral connection is because of the different incentives that open- (preference ballot) and closed-list (party ballot) rules offer. The key factor here is *intra-party competition*. Carey and Shugart's main point is that electoral rules are important not because they distribute mandates between parties, but because they allocate "seats to specific candidates within parties" as well (Carey and Shugart, 1995, p. 417). Incumbent candidates in open list systems face a "double incentive" just because they have to defend their seats not only against the candidates of other parties but against their fellow party members as well (Curtice and Shively, 2000; Gallagher and Holliday, 2003; Heitshusen et al., 2005; Morgenstern and Swindle, 2005). (3) Regardless of the ballot structure and the incentives to free-ride, *district magnitude* is also considered to increase the voters' confusion about who to approach with their problems and who to blame or reward (Cain et al., 1987; Norris, 2004; Scholl, 1986). However, this effect is rather complex and depends on the structure of the ballot as well. Under closed party lists the increasing district magnitude decreases the incentives to personalize, while open list systems demonstrate a reversed effect (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Shugart, Valdini, and Suominen, 2005). (4) Last, but not least, candidate selection rules exert a significant effect on personalization under the given electoral rules. Several scholars have shown that the way the party selects its candidates is one of the most important determinants of whether the system rewards or punishes candidate-centeredness (Atmor, Hazan, and Rahat, 2011; Carey and Shugart, 1995; Mitchell, 2000; Norris, 2004). The inclusiveness and decentralization of the nomination process greatly affect candidate incentives to personalize (Atmor et al., 2011).

The Hungarian electoral system is one of the most complex systems in Europe. Representatives were elected on three tiers. 176 mandates were distributed in single member districts by the rules of absolute majority in the first round, and relative majority in the second. 210 seats were allocated from the party list levels based on the principle of Proportional Representation (PR). A minimum of 152 and a maximum of 58 MPs received

regional and national level mandates respectively from the closed party lists. Voters cast two votes: one for a candidate in their SMD and one for the party list in their region (*megye*). The sum of all non-utilized votes from the first valid rounds on both the SMD and the regional list tier formed the basis of mandate allocation on the national level. Non-utilized votes from the nominal tier are votes that were cast to the losing candidates. Votes that were not needed to win any mandates on the regional tier add to the national level vote count as well.

The Hungarian electoral system⁶ is often placed between being purely party- and candidate-centred (Colomer, 2011). The argument is that due to its direct effect on legislators and candidates, the nominal tier softens party-centeredness created by two tiers of closed party lists. However, taking the candidate nomination practices of the Hungarian parties into account (Marjai, 2012; Papp, 2013), potential SMD candidates have to compete for the party's support first which results in that – especially in safe constituencies – the election of individual candidates is often decided at the nomination stage (Atmor et al., 2011). Thus, first tier candidates are only motivated to emphasize their merits independent from the party in the case there is an expectation from the party centre. Contrary to the commonly held view in the international literature, in the Hungarian electoral system the direct effect of the first tier often diminishes due to the way candidates are selected. Nominal tier effects will not necessarily emerge through individual motivations but rather indirectly, through party expectations. Therefore, when discussing the effect of the Hungarian electoral system on personalization, one has to place the mixed-member setup into a dominantly party-centred context to be able to assess the mechanisms behind the causal effects. Consequently, the Hungarian case can be perceived as a *least likely* one with respect to the main hypothesis.

The following analysis uses MP-survey data acquired by the Hungarian Election Study during the summer of 2010⁷. Altogether 231 legislators were interviewed using the standardized questionnaire of the Comparative Candidate Survey. One may argue that focusing on the 2010 campaign could potentially distort the results because of the imbalance of parties at the 1st tier of the electoral system⁸. In this respect, the dominance of Fidesz-KDNP on the first two tiers could make the case too peculiar to draw conclusions about the whole system. However, oddly enough, these circumstances give more power to the findings.

⁶ Mixed member majority with partial compensation (Shugart and Wattenberg, 2001).

⁷ <http://www.valasztaskutatas.hu/eredmenyek/adatbazisok/magyar-adatok>

⁸ Fidesz-KDNP won a majority that post-transition Hungary has rarely seen before. With an overall 52.7 % of the votes they secured 2/3 (68.1 %) of the seats in the Hungarian Parliament. Furthermore, Fidesz and KDNP won 98.2 % of the 176 constituency seats, and 59.5% of the seats available at the regional party lists.

Candidate selection in Fidesz-KDNP is regarded as the most centralized with the most exclusive selectorate (Marjai, 2012; Papp, 2013). Thus, the electoral system must have stronger party-centred effects on member attitudes and behaviour than it would be the case in a more balanced partisan set-up with the selection strategies being less centralized. Therefore, if different forms of personalization are found under such circumstances, then it is reasonable to expect that such mechanisms prevail in less extreme conditions as well. Also, it is likely that party-centeredness does not rule out other forms of representation.

Furthermore, the chance of winning is another relevant issue that is influenced by the election year. Many scholars argue (Curtice and Shively, 2000; Heitshusen et al., 2005; Herron, 2002; Jun and Hix, 2010; Lundberg, 2006; Sieberer, 2010) that the candidates' chances of winning affects their behaviour. In this respect, 2010 was a peculiar year too, because opinion polls prior to the election suggested that virtually no SMD candidates would be able to defeat the nominees of Fidesz. Thus, the chance of winning probably did not play a substantial role in 2010, at least not on the most personalized level of the electoral system. Nevertheless, it can be argued that safe seats make the system even more party centred, as the decision of who gets elected remains truly in the hands of the selectors. Therefore, the 2010 Hungarian elections offer an extreme case of party-centeredness, which, according to the conventional scholarly views, is unlikely to show signs of personalization and constituency orientation. Finding empirical evidence for personalization under these circumstances would thus provide strong support for the main hypothesis.

3. Campaign norms, means and agenda

This article follows Zittel and Gschwend (2008) in the conceptualization of the dependent variables. Out of their four components with which they measure campaign personalization, three will be used here⁹. (1) Campaign norms contrast candidate- and party-centeredness within the context of campaigning¹⁰. 32.2 % (N=69) of the responding MPs would distribute their resources evenly between personal and party campaigns. Furthermore, the dominance of party campaign prevails: 15.6 % (33) of the members favoured pure party campaigns, while

⁹ The fourth dimension covers the organizational side of the campaign and investigates the proportion of the individual candidates' campaign budgets financed by the party centre.

¹⁰ „What was the primary aim of your campaign? Where would you place yourself on a scale from 1 to 11, where 1 means 'to attract as much attention as possible for me as a candidate' and 11 means 'to attract as much as possible attention for my party'?”

only 4.2 % (9) prefer personal vote-seeking exclusively (see Figure 1). However, if merging the categories below and above the mode, a more balanced picture appears. Only a slightly larger group of representatives claimed the partisan focus of their campaigns to be more important than the personal aspects: 34.6 % (74) favoured party campaigns, whereas 33.2 % (71) preferred personalization.

[Figure 1 about here]

(2) *Campaign means* refer to the modes of separating the “candidate and party image in the public eye” (Zittel and Gschwend, 2008, p. 989)¹¹. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the number of different personalized campaign tools used by the candidates. The horizontal scale entries indicate the number of personalized tools MPs used during their campaigns in 2010. 44.1 % (N=102) claimed to use all methods listed, while 10.2 % (24) reported to apply none of them.

[Figure 2 about here]

(3) Third, with regards to *campaign agenda*, Zittel and Gschwend argue that they “should highlight issues that are relevant for the particular constituencies” (Zittel and Gschwend, 2008, p. 989). Raising district-specific issues communicates not only that the candidate cares about the constituency but that he or she is familiar with the characteristics of the local area as well. More than two-third (69.2 % (N=144)) of the respondents claimed that during the campaign they mentioned problems specifically related to their districts which otherwise were left unattended by the party. Regarding the topics raised, issues are either rather general or very specific. General issues grasp problems with a slight local concern, like corruption, public safety, infrastructure, unemployment, and health care. 61.6 % of the MPs touching upon locally relevant issues mentioned general problems. Specific campaign topics relate to these rather general fields of interests as well. What makes these tied to the districts more is that they mention something very concrete about their relation to the district. They often concern local products (for example chocolate, grain and fruit), issues of environment

¹¹ „Did you use the following in the course of your campaign?” (yes/no). (a) Personal campaign posters, (b) personal ads in the local press, (c) office hours, (d) social gatherings, (e) personal flyers, (f) personal spots in radio, TV, and movie houses, (g) personal website.

protection and very concrete mentions of diverse infrastructural projects as well. 38.4 % addressed very specific issues in their campaigns¹².

There is a strong association between the three aspects of campaigning. Those legislators who pursued more personalized campaigns also applied personalized campaign tools in a significantly greater numbers than members leading party-centred campaigns¹³. Similarly, MPs who preferred more personalized campaigns covered district-specific topics significantly more often than promoters of the party¹⁴. The pursuit of personalization appeared along all dimensions of campaigning, however, due to the different nature of these aspects, correspondence is far from perfect. Norms represent a perception rather than the true state of the campaigns. It measures how representatives *felt* they manoeuvred between pursuing partisan and personal goals. Conversely, campaign means are to a great extent subject to party influence. The range of applied tools is usually assigned by the party centre to the individual candidates.

Interestingly, all three components show a firm association with the legislators' attitudes toward representation¹⁵. Constituency oriented MPs placed themselves higher on the scale of campaign norms¹⁶, and applied a significantly larger number of personalized campaign tools¹⁷. Furthermore, 52.1 % of these MPs touched upon local issues in their campaigns, which is a significantly higher percentage than in the case of legislators with a different focus of representation¹⁸.

4. Explanatory factors

In the following, eight explanatory factors will be introduced that are hypothesized to influence the levels of the dependent variables outlined above. Three of the independent variables are connected to the nominal tier of the electoral system. (1) The place of nomination does not need any introduction as its effect can be derived from the section reviewing the effect of electoral rules on candidate-centeredness. MPs competing in the single

¹² Concrete issues are not mentioned in order to preserve respondent anonymity.

¹³ Pearson correlation = .567 ***

¹⁴ F=31.19 ***; Eta=.363

¹⁵ There are different opinions about whom an elected member of parliament should primarily represent. In your view, how important is it for you to represent the following groups? (a) constituency, (b) party electorate, (c) a specific social group, (d) all the citizens in the country.

¹⁶ F = 5.274***, Eta = .265

¹⁷ F = 10.011***, Eta = .342

¹⁸ $\chi^2 = 13.533***$, V = .257

member constituencies carry out more personalized campaigns than list candidates¹⁹. (2) It is not irrelevant, however, from which position they started campaigning: from the position of the incumbent, or the one of the challenger²⁰. It is hypothesized that the campaigns of the incumbents are more candidate-oriented, as they can build on their visibility in a greater fashion than the challengers, have access to resources enabling an extended usage of campaigns tools as well as possessing a greater amount of crucial information in terms of local issues. (3) Thirdly, one should take into account the effect of former SMD experience²¹, which might manifest in the form of habits during the 2010 electoral campaign. Experience of personalization in the past could appear in the behaviour of current MPs even if this time they were not nominated to fill in the position.

The fourth variable is related to local politics (4). The parties' dilemma with regards to local politicians is known (Navarro, 2009, p. 7). On the one hand, local politicians might do a great service to the party due to their extended local connections, the knowledge of locally relevant issues and their local electoral base. According to several authors, voters seek to find the balance between national and local representation: they choose parties, but at the same time they prefer candidates who are familiar with the peculiarities of the local scenery (Putnam, 1976; Shugart et al., 2005; Tavits, 2010). On the other hand, characteristics that serve the party's interest during election time could very well undermine party unity: local politicians in Europe often step up as the representatives of interests independent from the party (Dewogheraele, Berton, and Navarro, 2008; Tavits, 2010). I hypothesise that local politicians pursue personalized and locally oriented campaigns.

Seniority plays an important role in the literature explaining personalization (5). According to Norton and Wood's intra-generational hypothesis, newcomers are more constituency-oriented than their colleagues with experience in the national legislature. The reason for this is that in the case of first term MPs, neglecting constituency needs has a greater negative impact on their electoral support by the reason of their relatively weak electoral embeddedness (Fenno, 1978; Norton and Wood, 1990). The hypothesis of new members being more constituency-oriented, however, works mostly in the politics of the Anglo-Saxon world. In closed list electoral systems, candidates rather wrestle for the party's goodwill than for the voters' support (Heitshusen et al., 2005). Similarly, in SMD-centred electoral systems, with centralized candidate selection, new legislators might find it more rewarding to follow

¹⁹ 1 = SMD candidate, 0 = List candidate

²⁰ 1 = Incumbent, 0 = Challenger

²¹ 1 = Held an SMD mandate prior to 2006, 0 = Has never held an SMD seat

the party lines to express their commitment. Due to centralized candidate selection and the role of the closed list tiers in Hungary, the latter outcome is expected: newcomers²² pay less attention to personalization and constituency-orientation than more experienced legislators.

The sixth independent variable is party leadership²³ positions (6). Wahlke and colleagues (Wahlke, Eulau, Buchanan, and Ferguson, 1962) argue that the parties play an important socializing role in the process of the development of role perceptions. MPs who served in high ranking party positions tend to consider the party as the focus of representation (Zittel, 2012) instead of the constituency. Thus, party leaders are expected to be less constituency-oriented and will pursue less personalized electoral campaigns. Seventh, (7) ideological distance from the party might also play an important role in explaining campaign personalization (Zittel and Gschwend, 2008). The concept entails that the degree of personalization is in congruence with how far the MP places himself from the party²⁴. Willingly increasing the distance between the candidate and the party in the eye of the voters might be traced back to an increased difference on the ideological spectrum. The eighth explanatory factor is the party itself (8), to which two distinct causal mechanisms could be attached. A difference between old and new parties is hypothesized on the basis of their differing collective experiences in terms of personalization and constituency-centeredness. Legislators of old parties (Fidesz and MSZP) come from a political environment that sets a high value to the single member districts, as both experienced electoral success on the nominal level which eventually enabled them to win the elections. Moreover, electoral rules favour larger parties on the majority tier, leaving small parties focusing their resources on party campaign. On the other hand, it is to be argued that during the 2010 campaign, candidates of MSZP consciously tried to create a distance between them and the party (Ughy, 2011), while Fidesz contestants relied on the party brand utilizing the popularity of the party label (Mihályffy, 2011).

5. Modelling campaign personalization

²² 1 = Newcomer, 0 = Senior member

²³ 1 = National party leader, 0 = Backbench politician. Only legislators listed on their parties' websites in party leadership are considered leaders in this study.

²⁴ Legislators were asked to place themselves and their parties on a left-right scale ranging from 1 to 11. Ideological distance is measured as the absolute difference between these two values.

In this section, the above hypotheses will be tested using multivariate models²⁵. To model the effect of the different independent variables on the relative perceived value of personalization to party campaign, simple OLS (Ordinary Least Squares) models were estimated. Results will be evaluated on the 5 % level of significance. The outputs of Table 1 reveal that electoral interests in the constituencies pose a large effect on how members evaluate the importance of personal to party campaigns. SMD candidates placed themselves – *ceteris paribus* - 3 points higher on average than list candidates on the scale from 1 to 11, where higher values represent a higher level of personalization. The value of personalization appears on the nominal tier of the electoral system, regardless of the party centeredness of Hungarian politics. Other significant variables set to zero, the average SMD candidate takes 5.6 on the dependent variable measuring campaign norms, from where he or she is further “pushed” to the personal end of the continuum by career factors like local political background and incumbency. Thus, despite the dominance of the party over the person in the Hungarian electoral system, the original impact of the nominal level was not overridden by pure partisan strategy. Candidates and parties still think that personalization is a fairly practicable strategy of voter persuasion. Again, the features of the electoral system that maintain the superiority of the party – and the observation that personalization can occur under such rules - enables us to conclude that party interests are served by a certain level of personalization. Otherwise one could not observe this level of personalization, especially when it comes to distributing resources between personal and party campaigns.

Table 1. Results of the OLS estimation of campaign norms

	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
Candidacy	3.164 (.449)***	3.01 (.456)***
Incumbent (2006-2010)	1.023 (.499)**	.817 (.422)*
SMD MP before 2006	-.602 (.746)	-.353 (.696)
Local political position	1.077 (.513)**	.651 (.368)*
Newcomer	-.412 (.456)	.281 (.401)
Party leader	-.178 (.415)	-.286 (.327)
Ideological distance	.112 (.157)	.097 (.133)
Jobbik		-.314 (.602)
KDNP		-.71 (.527)
LMP		-3.673 (1.415)***
MSZP		1.564 (.435)***
Intercept	2.478 (.581)***	2.629 (.585)***
N	206	206
F	19.18***	10.08***

²⁵ The data will be weighted to ensure representativeness along mandate type and party affiliation.

Entries are coefficients; robust standard errors in parentheses.

Contrasts: Candidacy - list candidates, Incumbent (2006-2010) – members not holding SMD mandates between 2006 and 2010, SMD MP before 2006 - has never held an SMD seat, Local political positions - members not holding any elected local positions, Newcomer - members with at least one term experience as national representatives, Party leader - backbench MPs, Party - Fidesz.

Coefficients represent the change in the value of the dependent variable due to a one unit change in the related independent variable.

*p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Based on the results of Table 1, nominal level experience too seems to influence how MPs perceive the value of personal campaigning. However, past experience is only important as long as it involves serving as an SMD MP in the preceding term (2006-2010). Incumbents were more eager to focus their resources to personalized appeal than members with no first tier experience. Nominal level mandates held before 2006 do not seem to substantially affect campaign norms in a multivariate setting, which undermines the habitual explanations when it comes to norms of campaigning. Additionally, the joint effect of incumbency and previous experience (which are designed to measure SMD experience together) is not significant on a 5 % level²⁶.

The effect of local positions points to the hypothesized direction. Filling in local political positions has a significant positive effect on the value of personal campaigns. Elected local politicians pursue more personalistic goals in their campaigns, even if they are not entering the first tier competition. Everything left unchanged, local politicians prefer personal vote-seeking to furthering the party reputation by 1.077 units on average. The positive effect of local political background suggests two things. First, personalization could become a habit to the local politicians. Admittedly, the dynamics of representation in local politics has the tendency of shifting the focus to an even lower level, than it would be expected based on the national level connection (Keil and Papp, 2011)²⁷. Secondly, putting a larger emphasis on the person might be a conscious strategy to maintain local popularity which leads to obtaining additional votes for the party candidate.

Regarding seniority, ideological distance from the party and party leadership positions, members tend not to differ as far as the choice between personal and party reputation seeking

²⁶ F=2.91*. Null hypothesis: the coefficients of incumbency and SMD mandates before 2006 are both zero.

²⁷ Local representatives tend to focus on problems of areas smaller than their constituencies. This is especially true in the case of councilmen elected on party lists.

goes. Fixing the values of significant variables at zero, members position their campaign strategies closer to the party-centred end (2.478 units), and this value remains stable when changing member characteristics with regards to the above factors.

Results of the above models are somewhat altered when party affiliation is controlled for. The dominating effect of candidacy still prevails, however, the impact of local positions and incumbency does not appear as important. The directions of the effects do not change, but the degree is substantially altered. Results regarding these variables are no longer generalizable to the whole parliament considering a 5 % level of significance. The analysis sets Fidesz as contrast in evaluating the effect of party affiliation by the reason of its dominance in the SMDs and the most centralized candidate selection strategy. Jobbik and KDNP members do not differ from Fidesz in terms of their perception of how important personalization may be. The members of LMP pursued more party centred campaigns, while MSZP candidates chose to highlight the person instead of the party. An average MSZP member placed his campaign by 1.5 units toward the personal end than a Fidesz member, *ceteris paribus*. This result is particularly interesting in the context of the previous findings, namely that direct electoral motivations were found to have the most prominent effect on the norms of campaigning. In the case of MSZP members, these motivations, however, appeared less profoundly on the nominal level, where Fidesz candidates dominated the competition. Due to the absolute majority rule on the first tier of the electoral system - and taking the distribution of preferences within the population which clearly disadvantaged MSZP -, it would have been reasonable to push the resources to the PR-level campaign (Curtice and Shively, 2000; Heitshusen et al., 2005; Herron, 2002; Jun and Hix, 2010; Lundberg, 2006; Sieberer, 2010). But this is not what seemed to happen: MSZP focused on individual campaigns on a greater extent than Fidesz did, indicating that the value of personalization was thought to be important, even if there was no real chance of winning in the constituencies. This supports the hypothesis that MSZP was trying to divert attention away from the utmost unpopular party label and focus on their candidates (Ughy, 2011). Furthermore, let us not forget that votes received on the nominal tier will be utilized on the national level, making vote-maximizing strategies beneficial even if there are no realistic chances for winning.

Table 2 shows the models estimating the number of personalized campaign tools. The dependent variable being a count, Poisson models²⁸ (Cameron and Trivedi, 1998; Long, 1997)

²⁸ It has to be noted here, that negative binomial models were estimated as well to test the effect of possible overdispersion within the data, but it has not proven more effective in explaining the number of personalized campaign tools.

were estimated. According to the results, single member district candidacy is the most influential factor explaining the variance of the dependent variable: SMD candidates used significantly more of the listed personalized campaign tools than party list contestants²⁹. There is nothing unexpected here; candidates running for seats on the most personalized level of the Hungarian electoral system evidently chose campaigning methods with a more profound personal focus. Interestingly, contrarily to what was seen earlier, SMD level experience does not affect the selection of tools. Those who were defending their seats, did not put themselves forward in terms of a more operational perception of campaigning. Campaign norms, however, handle resource allocation in a less tangible way, leaving a greater sweep to legislators' perceptions on their own campaigns. This appears to underline the assumption that experience bears habitual relevance, as it organically constructs the perceptions of members about their own behaviour. Using a more concrete question, the relevance of these factors diminishes.

Table 2. The results of Poisson models estimating the number of personalized campaign tools used during the 2010 campaign

	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
Candidacy	1.381 (0.153)***	1.398 (.152)***
Incumbent (2006-2010)	.076 (.04)*	.058 (.036)
SMD MP before 2006	.041 (.048)	.04 (.045)
Local political position	.188 (.057)***	.094 (.045)**
Newcomer	-.028 (.053)	.051 (.046)
Party leader	.021 (.043)	.000 (.0339)
Ideological distance	.000 (.018)	.002 (.017)
Jobbik		-.146 (.055)***
KDNP		-.002 (.048)
LMP		-.685 (.069)***
MSZP		.054 (.033)
Intercept	.321 (.146)**	.366 (.151)***
N	221	221
Wald χ^2	149.18***	569.61***

Entries are coefficients; robust standard errors in parentheses.

Contrasts: Candidacy - list candidates, Incumbent (2006-2010) – members not holding SMD mandates between 2006 and 2010, SMD MP before 2006 - has never held an SMD seat, Local political positions - members not holding any elected local positions, Newcomer - members with at least one term experience as national representatives, Party leader - backbench MPs, Party - Fidesz.

Coefficients represent the change in the value of the dependent variable due to a one unit change in the related independent variable.

²⁹ The rate ratio of personalised campaign tools is almost four times as high in the case of SMD candidates than regarding list contestants (IRR=3.978; s.e. = .808).

*p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Local political background has proven to be an important explanatory factor as well. The average number of personalized campaign tools is about 1.2 times higher in the case of members holding local positions³⁰. This is partly the consequence of locally available resources. The majority of the tools listed in the questionnaire is used by the MPs as a part of their jobs as local office holders. Office hours, appearances in the local media and attending social gatherings are part of the everyday lives of local politicians (Keil and Papp, 2011). Thus, the relative costs of these tools are lower in their case. Contrarily, candidates not holding local office have to establish local presence in the course of the campaign, with additional efforts. As incumbency was also controlled for, these results do not only attach to local presence (as SMD members might also carry out substantial work on the local level), but to local presence generated by multiple office holding.

The results outlined above do not change when party affiliation is brought into the equation. A major difference between old and new parties seems to stand out. Candidates of the new parties (Jobbik and LMP) tend to use significantly less of the listed tools than Fidesz members. The major differences between Fidesz (and eventually KDNP and MSZP) and the newcomers showed in office hours³¹, spots in the local TV/radio³² and maintaining personalized websites³³. In the first instance, 61.5 % of Jobbik MPs held office hours compared to the 78.3 % of Fidesz representatives. 57.7 % of Jobbik members appeared in the local electronic media, whereas 69.2 % of Fidesz MPs did, while these proportions were 57.7 and 78.7 % with respect to personal websites. According to the data, LMP was rather passive regarding all of the listed tools, except the attendance of social gatherings, in which case no difference between members of the various parties was found³⁴.

Turning to the last aspect of personalized campaign, Table 3 shows the results of the binary logistic regressions estimating the logit of touching upon local issues that were left unattended by the party during the campaign. Again, first tier candidates thematized their campaigns according to their electoral goals: they mentioned issues of local concern with a significantly greater probability than members who had no interest in being elected on the nominal level. It is no surprise that members involved in local politics also used local topics

³⁰ IRR = 1.2 (s.e. = .068)

³¹ $\chi^2=36.59^{***}$, V=.416

³² $\chi^2=23.6^{***}$, V=.334

³³ $\chi^2=15.13^{***}$, V=.269

³⁴ $\chi^2=3.704$

with a greater probability regardless of their status as candidates. Even list candidates with a local political background campaigned with locally relevant issues which were not picked up by the parties. This result sheds light on that the involvement in local politics shifts the perceived relative importance of local politics to national issues toward the local end. This is true regardless of whether the member was an SMD candidate or not.

Table 3 Results of the binary logistic regression estimating the *logit* of touching upon local issues

	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
Candidacy	2.153 (.445)***	2.185 (.479)***
Incumbent (2006-2010)	.724 (.561)	.65 (.558)
SMD MP before 2006	1.196 (1.263)	.97 (1.183)
Local political position	1.259 (.455)***	1.015 (.46)**
Newcomer	-.413 (.465)	-.18 (.495)
Party leader	.299 (.411)	-.026 (.404)
Ideological distance	-.111 (.152)	-.061 (.155)
Jobbik		.521 (.654)
KDNP		.833 (.972)
LMP		
MSZP		.306 (.496)
Intercept	-1.48 (.619)***	-1.465 (.616)**
N	201	199
Wald χ^2	32.82***	30.03***
Pseudo R ²	.199	.183

Entries are coefficients; robust standard errors in parentheses.

Contrasts: Candidacy - list candidates, Incumbent (2006-2010) – members not holding SMD mandates between 2006 and 2010, SMD MP before 2006 - has never held an SMD seat, Local political positions - members not holding any elected local positions, Newcomer - members with at least one term experience as national representatives, Party leader - backbench MPs, Party - Fidesz.

Coefficients represent the change in the value of the dependent variable due to a one unit change in the related independent variable.

*p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.01

The effect of seniority, party positions and ideological distance on campaign agenda seems almost negligible. However, their signs point to the hypothesized direction, indicating that a mechanism that pushes incumbents – in the sample - toward focusing more on the local level is in place. Only, this relation does not hold for the whole population. Interestingly, there is no statistically significant difference between parties in terms of the probability of raising locally relevant issues, although the signs are all positive which indicates that Fidesz members mentioned local issues with the lowest probability. Nevertheless, these tendencies call

attention especially in light of Fidesz being the only party with a viable chance of winning on the nominal level: legislators of the one party with the biggest chance did bring up local issues with a lower magnitude than either of their competitors. This observation strengthens the candidates' reliance of the party brand in the course of the 2010 electoral campaign (Mihályffy, 2011). This also leads to the conclusion that the most party-centered party was the least locally oriented as well, which contradicts the findings of Karlsen és Skogerbø (Karlsen and Skogerbø, 2013), who argue that these two aspects are far from being exclusive³⁵.

6. Conclusions

The analysis presented mixed results with regards to the sub-hypotheses of the article. In most cases, the effect of the variables pointed to the right direction. Thus regarding the sample, tendencies derived from the literature are also relevant in the Hungarian setting. Taking the whole parliament into account, some variables affected the dependent variable to a greater degree than others. Of course, as we observed about 60 % of the whole population, it would be justifiable to argue that non-significant results should be taken more seriously as well. However, this study cannot take on the task of deciding which effects were strong enough to be taken into account and which were utterly neglectable. Remaining within the realm of statistical significance, three variables seem to have considerable effects in all the models. Firstly, the place of candidacy was proven to be a strong predictor. Legislators running for SMD seats ran more personalized electoral campaigns than those who were not nominated on the nominal level. Secondly, the role of local political background was important in the most cases. Local politicians put a greater emphasis on themselves and their constituencies than MPs not directly involved in local politics. Thirdly, parties do not relate to personalization the same way. Repeating Zsolt Enyedi's words³⁶, this is probably not about party strategies, but party culture. The hypothesis distinguishing between the effects of old and new parties is in concordance with this. In the case of older parties, it is a substantial part of the party culture that legislators fill in constituency level positions based on the fact that these parties are the ones that have substantial experience with SMD representation. These parties might perceive SMD position to have a greater prestige in comparison with parties which have limited

³⁵ Note, that they demonstrated this relationship in the case of Norway.

³⁶ During the private defence of the doctoral dissertation of the author at the Corvinus University of Budapest (June 4, 2013).

experience either due to their short history or their small party status. Nevertheless, as campaign efforts are in the centre of this investigation, the roles of strategies cannot be overcome either. This is supported by the difference between Fidesz and MSZP. While these two parties were “baffled” into the same camp by cultural mechanisms, strategic considerations create a steady distinction between them. While Fidesz leant on the party brand, the candidates of MSZP tried to neutralize the unpopularity of the party by putting a greater emphasis on personalization.

The main hypothesis of the article was that personalization cannot be overlooked even in a party-centred environment. Irrespective of who hold the right to decide over nomination, the existence of the nominal tier brings considerable variation into the campaign strategies of the individual members. With regards to causal mechanisms, however, the focus is different in the cases of party- and candidate-centred systems. The effects might come from individual motivations, but under strict party-centeredness, personalization has to be looked at from the parties’ viewpoints as well. This means, that we have to maintain the possibility that the certain MPs and candidates are not independent actors, but the vehicles of party strategies. The strong effect of party affiliation suggests firm party-level campaign strategies to which members of the parties aligned to when balancing between candidate- and party-centeredness. However, at the same time, when including party affiliation in the models, the effect of candidacy on the nominal level stayed strong. This suggests that even parties that built their campaign on the party label allowed for a certain level of personalization on the first tier of the system. By the reason of the party-centeredness, we could conclude that it was the party’s expectation to personalize in order to maximize the number of votes.

However, the significance of local political positions supports the role of effects that stem from the political positions of individual MPs. If we could identify factors that are not connected to electoral rules (therefore not tied to possible party strategies for gaining votes) and that (theoretically speaking) place special emphasis on personal motivations (like local political background), then it should be concluded that even under heavily monitored campaign behaviour and in countries that appear to traditionally support party-centeredness, personal motivations should not be underestimated either. Based on the results of this sample, local politicians appeared to find their ways to express constituency concerns, to utilize their local resources in the course of a national electoral campaign, and perceived their campaigns as being rather personalized than party centred. Most importantly, they did this irrespective of their electoral positions as SMD candidates. Thus personalisation is a trait for a specific

segment of Hungarian legislators, which they utilize even if they are not interested in representing the local area on the nominal level.

Explanations

Fidesz	Fidesz – Magyar Polgári Szövetség/Fidesz – Hungarian Civil Alliance
KDNP	Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt/Christian Democratic People’s Party
MSZP	Magyar Szocialista Párt/Hungarian Socialist Party
Jobbik	Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom/Jobbik, the Movement for a Better Hungary
LMP	Lehet Más a Politika/Politics Can Be Different

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Figure 1. The distribution of campaign norms in 2010 (%)

Figure 2. Aggregated usage of the different personalized campaign tools (count variable, %)