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Local Candidates and Voter Mobilization: Evidence from Historical Two-Round Elections in Norway*

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Abstract

What effect do candidates with local ties have on voter turnout and party support? A considerable challenge within the existing literature on the personal vote, including that part which derives from local ties, is disentangling it from the party vote using observational data. We exploit the unique institutional context of Norway's historical two-round system, and data measured at the municipality level, to evaluate the mobilizational impact of voter attachment to parties versus (local) candidates. Under this system, entry into the second round was unrestricted, with the number and identity of candidates determined by elite coordination decisions. In municipalities where coordination at the district level between rounds resulted in the withdrawal of a candidate with local ties, we document a strong negative effect on both turnout and party support, which highlights the value of the personal vote for mobilization, and the potential trade-offs that confront parties and coalitions in nomination decisions. (150 words)

Keywords: personal vote, local ties, turnout, two-round system, Norway.

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1 Introduction

Research on voter turnout points to the importance of the mobilizational efforts of elite actors—parties, candidates, and groups in civil society—on getting voters to the polls (e.g., Key 1949; Uhlaner 1989; Cox and Munger 1989; Cox, Rosenbluth and Thies 1998; Shachar and Nalebuff 1999). Multiple studies have also documented that candidates tend to receive more votes in their hometowns, which could be due to the mobilization of local voters who would have otherwise abstained, or the conversion of erstwhile supporters of another party who would prefer to be represented by someone with a local connection (e.g., Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1944; Key 1949; Lewis-Beck and Rice 1983; Rice and Macht 1987*a*; *b*; Górecki and Marsh 2012; Meredith 2013). Key (1949) famously refers to this as “friends and neighbors” voting.

Voters may prefer candidates with local ties to their districts—or, better yet, their own municipalities within the district—even if those candidates do not come from their preferred parties (e.g., Blais et al. 2003; Arzheimer and Evans 2012; Campbell and Cowley 2014). This may be because voters expect a local candidate to better serve their interests or favor the local community in the provision of public goods (e.g., Carozzi and Repetto 2016; Fiva and Halse 2016). Local candidates may also have an advantage simply because of closer network connections to schoolmates, work colleagues, and fellow members of religious groups or other organizations that can be mobilized.

Votes based around a candidate’s local ties and personal connections are a major component of the *personal vote*: a “candidate’s electoral support which originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications, activities, and record” (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1987, p. 9). The concept of the personal vote stands in contrast to a vote cast solely on the basis of partisan affiliation. For candidates running in electoral systems where voters cast their votes at the individual level, rather than for a party or party list (in other words, any system other than closed-list proportional representation), a local connection to the district can be a powerful personal vote-earning attribute (Shugart,

Valdini and Suominen 2005; Tavits 2010; Nemoto and Shugart 2013; André, Depauw and Deschouwer 2014).¹

However, a major challenge within the existing literature on the personal vote, including that part which originates in a candidate's local ties, is disentangling it from the party vote using observational data. If turnout is higher in a particular district, it is hard to say whether it is because of the mobilizational effect of the presence of a particular candidate, versus other confounding factors, such as the competitiveness of the race and the tendency for parties to nominate high-quality candidates precisely in races that are competitive (e.g., Galasso and Nannicini 2011). Similarly, higher turnout or higher vote shares for a party in a candidate's hometown could indicate the mobilizational effort of the candidate, or could reflect the party's candidate nomination strategy in choosing candidates who come from areas where the party is already strong.

In this study, we exploit the institutional structure of two-round elections in order to evaluate the mobilizational impact of a candidate's hometown connection to a local area. The nature of competition in two-round elections often involves elite-level coordination between rounds, with the number and identity of candidates who run in the second (run-off) round influenced by the performance of the candidates in the first round. Parties often explicitly orchestrate the coordination, with co-partisan runners-up or coalition partners standing down in favor of the best-performing candidate in the first round (Tsebelis 1990; Benoit 2001; Blais and Indridason 2007; Indridason 2008). However, voters have their own preferences for representation, both in terms of parties and in terms of individual candidates, and not all voters will be motivated to turn out in the second round when their preferred candidate or party is no longer running.

Importantly, the nature of two-round elections provides a unique opportunity to directly observe and measure the trade-off between coordination and voter mobilization that operates through the personal vote, which is otherwise unobservable in single-round

¹The personal vote may also be cultivated through politicians' post-electoral behavior, such as constituency service or pork barrel politicking (e.g., Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1987; Stratmann and Baur 2002; Marangoni and Tronconi 2011).

elections (where coordination occurs *before* elections in anticipation of some expected distribution of votes). Similarly, two-round elections provide more ex-ante information about the closeness of the race (from the first round). What happens to voter mobilization when strategic coordination at the elite (party) level comes into tension with the personal vote of candidates? Specifically, when electoral coordination results in a local candidate standing down, what is the effect on voter mobilization (turnout) and party support in that locality?

We evaluate these questions using an original data set of historical municipality-level vote returns from Norway's 1909-1918 two-round, single-member district (SMD) parliamentary elections.² Despite their historical nature, these data are ideal for our purposes since they include information on each candidate's hometown (municipality of residence), and election returns measured at this level within the larger districts. In addition, these data represent a crucial period in the developmental stage of Norwegian democracy when local representation was especially important for securing a voice in infrastructure expansion and other distributive policy decisions.

Unlike most contemporary two-round systems that mechanically restrict competition in the second round (e.g., systems that use a top-two run-off or other such threshold), Norway's two-round system did not contain any restrictions on the entry of candidates in the second round—even candidates who did not run in the first round were permitted to enter competition. The lack of restrictions on entry meant that parties and coalitions were responsible for coordinating on a single candidate in the second round to avoid splitting the vote. The result was that in many municipalities, a local candidate was asked to stand down in favor of the party or coalition's preferred candidate (typically the first-round front-runner). The historical case of two-round elections in Norway thus

²The data set was collected and digitized from the candidate-level vote and biographical information contained in four volumes of *Stortingsvalget* (Parliamentary Elections) published by the Norwegian Central Statistics Bureau between 1910 and 1919 (Olafsen and Haffner 1910; 1913; Haffner and Ottesen 1916; Haffner and Wessel-Berg 1919). These data were cross-checked with municipality-level party vote data provided by Statistics Norway. The run-off system also governed the 1906 election, but the *Stortingsvalget* for this election did not include hometown information (Olafsen and Haffner 1907), so we exclude it from our analysis. In addition, the party system in 1906 was still in a state of flux following the dissolution of the union with Sweden (Helland and Saglie 2003, p. 585).

also provides us with a unique opportunity to compare changes in voter behavior across election rounds for municipalities where electoral coordination at the elite-level directly resulted in changes in the presence of a candidate with local ties to the municipality, and thus measure the trade-offs that parties or coalitions may face in balancing coordination decisions and the personal vote of candidates.

Most of the existing studies on the personal vote and friends-and-neighbors voting focus on regional differences in the concentration of votes for the same candidate—e.g., comparing the percentage of votes received by a candidate in his or her home area to the percentage of votes received by the same candidate in other areas, or an estimate of this difference (e.g., Key 1949; Lewis-Beck and Rice 1983; Rice and Macht 1987*a*; Nemoto and Shugart 2013); *or* the vote advantage enjoyed by local candidates over non-local competitors in the same district (e.g., Tavits 2010). Other studies, such as Górecki and Marsh (2012) and Arzheimer and Evans (2012), use survey data. Surprisingly, most studies have not explicitly examined the effect that a local candidate has on turnout.³

Our results identify a strong hometown bias (“friends and neighbors” effect) impacting both turnout and party support. Municipalities where a local candidate stands down between rounds exhibit a drop in turnout relative to other municipalities belonging to the same electoral district. Part of this abstention comes at the expense of the parties or coalitions that orchestrated the withdrawal. These results help shed light on the value of the personal vote and local ties for voter mobilization, as well as the difficult trade-offs between coordination and mobilization in majoritarian elections. Given the historical nature of the data, these findings also reveal important patterns in the dynamics of personal ties and party politics in this early period of Norwegian political development, and may also relate to the importance of local ties in elections in developing democracies.⁴

³Meredith (2013) is an exception. In a research note, Rice and Macht (1987*b*) also briefly present correlational evidence of the hometown effect on turnout.

⁴For example, public goods favoritism has been shown to occur for co-ethnic communities in developing states (e.g., Hodler and Raschky 2014; Burgess et al. 2015), and many developing democracies, as well as developed democracies historically, exhibit strong patterns of mobilization through local social networks (e.g., Szwarcberg 2015; Pietryka and DeBats forthcoming).

2 Elite Mobilization and Turnout

A key question in political science has been why a citizen would turn out to vote when the likelihood of his or her single vote determining the outcome of an election is low.⁵ Early rational choice theory focused on voters' incentives, and posited that close elections should increase voter turnout since they decrease the certainty that a single vote will not make a difference (e.g., Downs 1957; Riker and Ordeshook 1968). More recent explanations for district-level variation in voter turnout in the United States and elsewhere have instead emphasized the role that elite actors play in voter mobilization.

The existing literature on elite mobilization and turnout follows two, rarely overlapping, strands (Cox, Rosenbluth and Thies 1998). The first strand focuses on the relationship between closeness and turnout. Existing empirical studies on single-round SMD elections have regularly found that turnout is indeed higher in close elections, in part because elite actors tend to increase campaign spending and effort in close elections, which increases voter mobilization (Dawson and Zinser 1976; Caldeira and Patterson 1982; Cox and Munger 1989; Denver, Hands and MacAllister 2003). Studies on two-round SMD elections similarly find that the closeness in competition in the first round has a positive effect on voter turnout in the second round (Fauvelle-Aymar and François 2006; Indridason 2008; Simonovits 2012; De Paola and Scoppa 2014; Garmann 2014).

The second strand in the elite mobilization literature focuses on *who* is mobilized. The basic argument here is twofold: (1) candidates or parties will target their mobilization efforts at individuals or groups who would most likely support them, but might not otherwise turn out if not contacted; (2) candidates or parties will target their mobilization efforts at individuals or groups in civil society who will be most effective at secondary mobilization (e.g., Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Cox, Rosenbluth and Thies 1998). Thus, gaining the support of a key local boss or the

⁵For reviews of the existing theoretical literature, see Dhillon and Peralta (2002) and Cox (2015). A number of explanatory variables for cross-district and cross-national variation in turnout have been proposed and tested in the existing empirical literature, including socio-economic variables, political variables, and institutional variables; see Cancela and Geys (2016) for a review. Here, we focus on closeness and candidates' local ties.

endorsement of a local social organization or newspaper may be more effective than trying to target individuals.

One important, though often overlooked, variable in the existing literature on elite mobilization and turnout is the presence of a candidate with local ties to an area—for example, through birthplace or residence in the area. Beginning with Key (1949), several studies have noted that candidates tend to receive more votes in their hometowns (a phenomenon Key attributes to “friends and neighbors” voting), though it is not always clear whether this is a result of increased mobilization of erstwhile abstainers, or the attraction of voters away from other (non-local) candidates. Most of the existing research on “friends and neighbors” voting focuses either on variation in the concentration of votes for the same candidate across geographic areas, or the differences in vote shares earned by local candidates over other candidates in the same district. As a result, we know less about the direct impact of local candidates on turnout.

However, there is good reason to believe that local candidates boost turnout. First, voters may be more intrinsically motivated to support a favored son or daughter from their area than a candidate from a neighboring area (e.g., Campbell and Cowley 2014), and may thus turn out in high numbers to do so. Existing research also shows that politicians with local ties to a community tend to be more likely than non-locals to focus on the needs of their hometown communities in various ways (e.g., Carozzi and Repetto 2016; Fiva and Halse 2016). Second, the efforts of local candidates in their natural base of operations may increase turnout. For example, candidates may set up their campaign headquarters in their hometowns and seek to mobilize alumni associations, local service organizations, friends, neighbors and other members of their district to whom they are closest (e.g. Fenno 1978). Candidates may also be more likely to have face-to-face contact with voters in their hometowns, and this has been demonstrated to increase turnout (Gerber and Green 2000; Górecki and Marsh 2012).

The nature of two-round elections allows us to evaluate how mobilization (turnout) in a local area is affected by the presence or absence of a local candidate. Two-round

elections generate incentives for multiple candidates to enter the race in the first round, and for voters to cast their ballots sincerely, in hopes of influencing which candidates will run in the second round.⁶ In the second round, however, incentives are strong for strategic coordination around the two most popular candidates. Parties often explicitly orchestrate the coordination, with co-partisan runners-up or coalition partners standing down in favor of the best-performing candidate in the first round. For example, in French and Hungarian two-round elections, a candidate that is unlikely to win will often “step back” in order to increase the chance of an ideologically similar party carrying the district (Tsebelis 1990; Benoit 2001; Blais and Indridason 2007; Indridason 2008).

However, the success of this elite-level coordination depends in part on whether voters whose preferred candidate is no longer running will continue to turn out in the second round to support the agreed upon candidate.⁷ Indridason (2008) finds that second-round turnout in French parliamentary elections is lower when the number of candidates in the first round is higher than in the second round. This suggests that when a voter’s preferred candidate in the first round does not make it into the second round, that voter may decide to simply stay home in the second round. The exception is when an extreme candidate, such as from the radical right-wing National Front in France, makes it into the second round—in which case, turnout increases as moderate conservative voters want to assure that the extreme-right candidate will not tip the balance in favor of a leftist candidate. No study has yet examined the extent to which such changes in turnout across rounds may be affected by the presence or absence of a candidate with local ties. Our study is thus the first to unite the two separate literatures of electoral coordination and “friends and neighbors” voting.

⁶Strategic voting may occur in the first round if one candidate is expected to be close to winning a majority.

⁷It may also depend on the intensity of competition between co-partisans or coalition partners in the first round. Tsebelis (1990, p. 191) notes the strategic challenges facing parties in coalition in the French two-round system: “If the two partners of a coalition go too far in criticizing each other in the first round, they will not have time to heal the wounds (even if they wish to). Some of the votes of the loser within the coalition will not be transferred to winner; therefore, in the decisive second round, the coalition could lose.”

3 Empirical Application

Our empirical application is based on Norway’s historical two-round election system. These elections are useful for our purpose because they offer an opportunity to observe how voters and candidates coordinate their actions in response to what they learn from the results of the first ballot. Like Indridason (2008), we argue that run-off systems are interesting to study because they allow us to get at questions that are not easily addressed in the context of other electoral systems. In addition, Norway’s historical two-round elections are interesting because the elections occurred during an early period in Norway’s economic development and infrastructure expansion. In such a developing state, local representation may be of particular significance to distributive policy decisions.

3.1 Norway’s Two-Round System

The history of electoral systems for the Norwegian Storting (parliament) can be traced back two hundred years. The first electoral system, introduced by the 1814 Constitution after Norway was ceded to Sweden from Denmark, was based on indirect elections. Voters elected delegates to electoral colleges, and these delegates then selected the members of parliament (MPs) (Aardal 2002; Helland and Saglie 2003). In 1905, after Norway’s formal independence from Sweden, the indirect election system was replaced by a two-round, majority run-off system through a constitutional amendment. This electoral system governed the five elections from 1906 to 1918. Since 1921, parliamentary elections have been decided by a multi-member proportional representation system.⁸

The Norwegian two-round system worked as follows. Voters chose between ballots containing the names of the representative to be elected and his deputy (who would assume office if the elected representative resigned or was appointed to cabinet during the term).⁹ In the first round, the candidate and deputy were elected if they received

⁸Cox, Fiva and Smith (2016) analyze the consequences of the 1921 electoral reform for voter turnout.

⁹Although nearly all candidates were nominated by parties, party label was not included on the physical ballot itself (Mjeldheim 1978, p. 15), which further hints at the candidate-centered nature of the system.

an absolute majority of votes cast. If a majority was not achieved in the first round, a second round of elections was held within a few weeks.¹⁰ The candidate that obtained a plurality of the votes in the run-off election won the race. In contrast to most other run-off election systems, the number of candidates in the second round was not limited to a fixed number of candidates. Even candidates that did not run in the first round could run in the second round. A residency requirement ensured that only candidates living in the electoral district could run for office in the district.¹¹ For our purposes, the residency requirement is useful, because we can identify local ties within electoral districts for the vast majority of candidates.

Three party blocs dominated the elections: **(1)** the Labor Party (*S*), **(2)** the Liberals (*V*) and the Labor Democrats (*A*), and **(3)** the Conservatives (*H*) and the Progressive Liberals (*FV*). Since the support of the Labor Party was relatively evenly spread out across the country, it was regularly underrepresented in parliament. This came mostly to the advantage of the Liberals. Male suffrage (for those 25 years and above) was implemented in 1898. Female suffrage was gradually extended during the first decade of the 20th century. Universal suffrage was finally implemented in 1913.¹²

We restrict our analysis to the 362 district-year observations spanning multiple municipalities (hometowns) for the four elections from 1909-1918.¹³ In 159 of these election districts, a candidate won an absolute majority of votes in the first round. A second round of elections was needed in the remaining 203 districts.¹⁴ We focus on these dis-

¹⁰All first-round elections in 1918, for example, were held on October 21 and all second-round elections on November 11.

¹¹This rule did not apply to former (from 1884) or current (from 1913) cabinet ministers (Andenæs and Wilberg 1983). In practice, however, few individuals exercised this right between 1909 and 1918. There are thirteen cases where a candidate ran simultaneously in two (or in one case three) neighboring districts within the same county. The residency requirement was abolished in 1952.

¹²Anna Rogstad, elected as a deputy representative in 1909, became the first woman to sit in parliament in 1911.

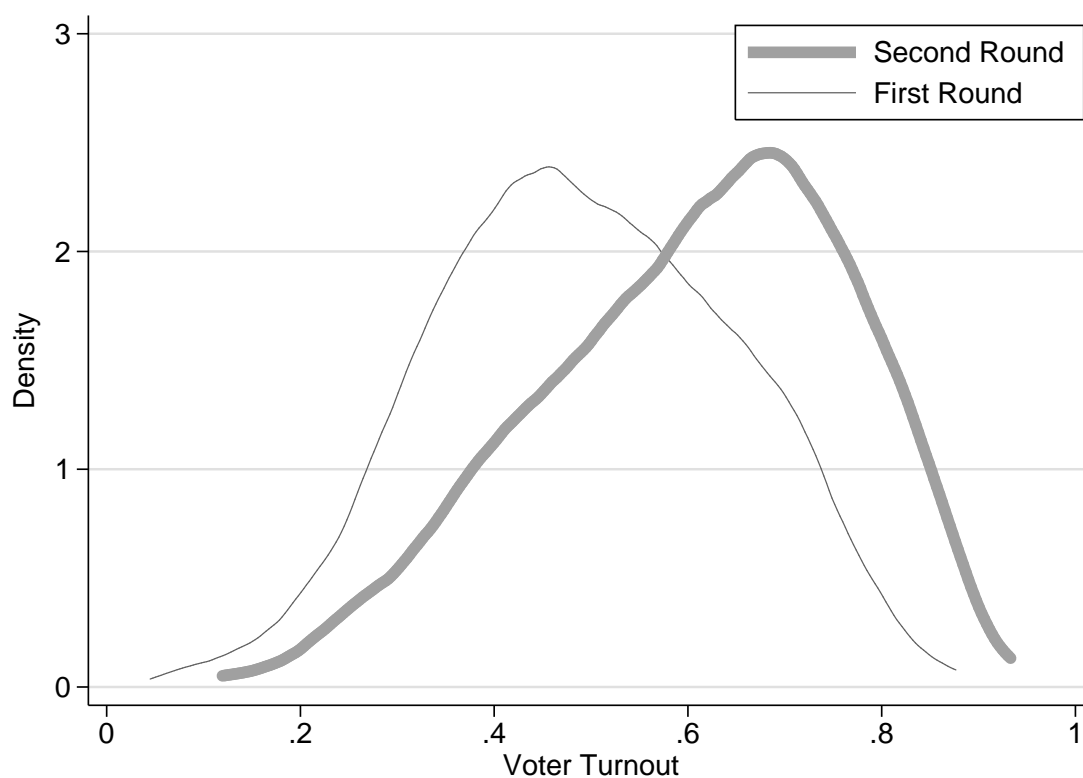
¹³In the period we study, urban (*kjøpstader*) and rural (*amt*) areas were organized into separate electoral districts. For the 1909, 1912, and 1915 elections, 123 MPs were elected in 82 rural and 41 urban districts. In 1918, three additional districts were established (two rural, one urban). Online Appendix Table A.1 provides district-level descriptive statistics by party based on all 495 district-year observations. We lose one observation in 1909 because the second-round election was cancelled in one municipality (Sandø).

¹⁴See Online Appendix Figure A.1 for the distribution of first-round electoral support of the front-runner.

tricts (comprising 1,385 municipalities), as they allow us to study changes in political behavior across election rounds. Each electoral district in our sample consists of, on average, 7,900 eligible voters (SD=2,300) living in 6.8 municipalities (SD=2.9). Municipalities within most districts are roughly of equal size. The average share of eligible voters in each municipality relative to the total electorate in the district is 0.15 (SD=0.12) (see Online Appendix Figure A.2).

Turnout, which we define as the ratio of the number of valid votes cast to the number of eligible voters in a municipality, was, on average, 49 percent and 60 percent in the first and second rounds, respectively. However, there was dramatic variation in turnout across municipalities, as illustrated in Figure 1 (see also Cox, Fiva and Smith 2016).

Figure 1: Kernel Density Plot of Municipality-Level Voter Turnout



Note: The figure shows kernel density plots of municipality-level voter turnout in the first round (thin line) and second round (thick line). The sample is restricted in the same way as in our main analysis (N=1,385).

3.2 Electoral Coordination by Parties and Blocs

Mjeldheim (1978) describes how electoral coordination typically played out during this period. In many districts, each party would only nominate a single candidate in the first round, and coordination would occur between parties within blocs if the race went to a second round. The Liberals (*V*) and the Labor Democrats (*A*) coordinated as a bloc between rounds, as did the Conservatives (*H*) and the Progressive Liberals (*FV*). In contrast, the Labor Party (*S*) rejected forming electoral coalitions with other parties, so Labor Party coordination was always between two or more co-partisans.¹⁵

In many other districts, the local party organizations would be divided over which candidate should get the nomination prior to the first round. In these cases, the first round served as a de facto party primary. Local party organizations would put up candidates freely in the first round, and then use the information from the outcome of that round to try to coordinate on a single candidate in the second round. The national party organization would generally recommend that its members coordinate on the top-finishing candidate from the first round, and these recommendations were largely followed (Mjeldheim 1978, p. 138).

The empirical data and newspaper accounts from the time further support this general account of electoral coordination. For example, in over 91% of races where more than one candidate from a party ran in the first round, the candidate with the highest district-level vote share among co-partisan competitors ran again in the second round. In contrast, the candidate with the second highest vote share only ran again in approximately 27% of cases, and lower-placed candidates seldom contested the second round.¹⁶ Similarly, within party blocs, 92% of top-finishing first-round candidates ran again in the second round, compared to just 22% of other candidates.¹⁷ Moreover, most of the cases where a co-bloc runner-up ran in the second round were not actually coordination failures—

¹⁵Class antagonism was intense in this period. The Labor Party even passed a resolution at their 1906 party congress that explicitly rejected electoral alliances with other parties (Helland and Saglie 2003).

¹⁶See Online Appendix Figure A.3.

¹⁷See Online Appendix Figure A.4.

rather, these were cases where the second-round competition was narrowed down to an intra-party or intra-bloc contest. In the entire data sample, there is only one case where a failure to coordinate in the second round between two co-partisan candidates cost a party a seat (*Nordland 2nd District* in 1915).

A pre-election article in the *Aftenposten* newspaper on September 23, 1912 describes how the Liberals approached candidate nomination in *Nordre Trondheim 3rd District*, encompassing the towns of Snaasen (modern-day Snåsa) and Beitstad, among other municipalities. The biggest issue was where a new extension of the train line would be built:

The Liberal organization in Snaasen has nominated Lieutenant Colonel Aavatsmark, and farmer Mørkved, as a candidate and deputy candidate, respectively. However, the party organization in Beitstad, Namdalseidet, and Overhallen will run Minister Foosnæs as an opponent against Aavatsmark. Presumably, railway politics will again play the main role in the election. Aavatsmark is a proponent of building the line through Snaasen, and Foosnæs advocates that the line go through Beitstad.¹⁸

Aavatsmark went on to win the election over his co-partisan competitor, and the train line was built through Snaasen, which illustrates the significance of local ties to real distributive policy outcomes for voters. As another example of the distributive policy issues at stake in these early elections, consider the words of the incumbent representative for Kristiansund, Oluf C. Müller (*FV*), when debating a reform proposal in 1919 that would merge his city's district with those of two other cities, Aalesund and Molde: "You cannot expect two [or more] cities, competing for communications, allocation of ports... nearly everything that is in the national budget... to reconcile their differences."¹⁹ These examples illustrate why local connections might have been particularly important to voters at the time.

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics of key variables in our data set. *Margin* is the

¹⁸Authors' translation and paraphrasing from the original Norwegian. In the run-up to elections in this period, *Aftenposten* often included brief predictions for how votes and electoral coordination might play out in each district.

¹⁹Authors' translation and paraphrasing from the original Norwegian in parliamentary debate records, November 28, 1919.

percentage-point difference at the district level between the front-runner and runner-up in the first round.²⁰ The other variables measure the change in the number of (local) candidates running per party bloc (*S*, *V&A*, *H&FV*, and *OTH*, which includes “other” minor parties and independents), changes in turnout, and changes in party bloc votes.²¹

Our data set is similar to that of Helland and Saglie (2003), who also analyze electoral coordination in the 1909-1918 Norwegian parliamentary elections. They find that voters tended to desert expected losers in the second round, but argue that there is less evidence of elite-level coordination. However, their analysis is based on a more limited data set, with election returns aggregated to the *party bloc* level within *districts*, and they do not directly examine changes in turnout or party support.²² Our study, in contrast, builds on *candidate*-level election returns measured at the *municipality* level. This allows for a richer analysis of electoral coordination and turnout, and also enables us to evaluate the effect of candidates’ local ties.

3.3 Empirical Specification

Following the preceding discussion, we aim to quantify how candidate competition and hometown status impacts (i) voters’ decisions to participate in the election, and (ii) electoral support for different party blocs. In other words, we aim to estimate the relative contribution of a candidate’s personal vote to voter mobilization and to his or her party or coalition’s overall electoral support. We estimate the first relationship using the following equation:

$$\Delta Turnout_{ijt} = \gamma_t + \theta(Margin_{jt}) + \sum_P \alpha_P \Delta Candidates_{jt}^P + \sum_P \beta_P \Delta Local_{ijt}^P + \xi_{ijt}, \quad (1)$$

²⁰Online Appendix Figure A.5 shows the distribution of *Margin*.

²¹Online Appendix Table A.2 shows the variation in the number of local candidates standing down in more detail. Only in 11 instances did the number of candidates increase between rounds.

²²They also limit their sample in a number of ways that may create selection bias. For example, they only consider cases where the three party blocs jointly obtained at least 90 percent of the votes, and situations where at least two of the party blocs were running in the second round.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
<i>Margin</i>	0.088	0.061	0	0.312
Δ <i>Turnout</i>	0.112	0.101	-0.382	0.573
Δ <i>Candidates</i>	-1.066	0.918	-4	1
Δ <i>Candidates</i> ^S	-0.129	0.335	-1	0
Δ <i>Candidates</i> ^{V/A}	-0.521	0.667	-3	0
Δ <i>Candidates</i> ^{H/FV}	-0.266	0.558	-3	1
Δ <i>Candidates</i> ^{OTH}	-0.144	0.405	-2	1
Δ <i>Local</i>	-0.149	0.424	-3	1
Δ <i>Local</i> ^S	-0.015	0.128	-1	1
Δ <i>Local</i> ^{V/A}	-0.074	0.288	-2	1
Δ <i>Local</i> ^{H/FV}	-0.041	0.223	-2	1
Δ <i>Local</i> ^{OTH}	-0.019	0.151	-1	1
Δ <i>Vote</i> ^S	0.012	0.05	-0.278	0.314
Δ <i>Vote</i> ^{V/A}	0.069	0.098	-0.387	0.492
Δ <i>Vote</i> ^{H/FV}	0.032	0.083	-0.347	0.560
Δ <i>Vote</i> ^{OTH}	-0.002	0.052	-0.373	0.442
N=1,385				

Note: Margin is the district level percentage-point difference in vote share between the front-runner and runner-up in the first round. Δ Turnout is the municipality level change in turnout from the first to the second round. Δ Candidates (Δ Local) is the change in the number of (local) candidates running from the first to the second round overall, and separately for each party bloc, S (Labor Party), V&A (Liberals and the Labor Democrats), H&FV (Conservatives), and OTH (Other). Δ Vote^P is the change in the number of votes cast for party bloc P divided by the size of the electorate.

where $Turnout_{ijt}$ is the fraction of the electorate that turns out to vote in municipality i belonging to district j in election year t . $Margin_{jt}$ is the percentage-point difference in vote shares of the first-round front-runner and runner-up at the district level, and is included as a proxy for the competitiveness of the race (Fauvelle-Aymar and François 2006; Indridason 2008; Simonovits 2012). We use a quadratic specification since first-round margin likely matters more in close races than it does in lopsided races. $Candidates_{jt}^P$ measures the number of candidates running from party bloc P in district j in year t . $Local_{ijt}^P$ measures the number of candidates running from party bloc P residing in municipality i in year t .

Δ is the first difference operator: $\Delta Turnout_{ijt}$ captures changes in turnout from the first to the second round. Relying on changes in turnout within a short time window is useful because it effectively holds constant most other factors that might plausibly affect mobilization or the decision to participate (e.g., voters' sense of civic duty, population size, unionization rate, newspaper subscription rate, etc.). The only important components that change from one round to the next are the number and identity of candidates, and voters' beliefs about the electoral viability of those candidates (Indridason 2008). We estimate equation (1) with Ordinary Least Squares and allow for arbitrary correlation in the error terms, ξ_{ijt} , within electoral districts (j) by clustering the standard errors at this level. The baseline specification includes year fixed effects, γ_t . We also provide results using district-year fixed effects, ν_{jt} , which holds constant all variables in equation (1) indexed $_{jt}$ (e.g., $Margin_{jt}$), but also other district-year-specific influences on turnout, such as rainfall affecting the cost of voting, and any unobserved candidate-specific characteristics. The only variable exhibiting within-district variation is $Local_{ijt}^P$.

To pin down how hometown status affects electoral support for the various blocs, we rely on the same research design, estimating:

$$\Delta Vote_{ijt}^P = \nu_{jt} + \sum_P \rho_P \Delta Local_{ijt}^P + \epsilon_{it}, \quad (2)$$

where $\Delta Vote_{ijt}^P$ is the change in the number of votes cast for bloc P in the municipality divided by the size of the municipality’s electorate.

4 Results

We begin with a graphical illustration of the hometown bias (“friends and neighbors” effect) in the raw data. Figure 2 shows kernel density plots of candidates’ municipality-level vote shares in the first (left panel) and second (right panel) round. The thick lines provide density plots of vote shares in the candidates’ hometown municipalities. The thin lines provide density plots of vote shares in other municipalities.

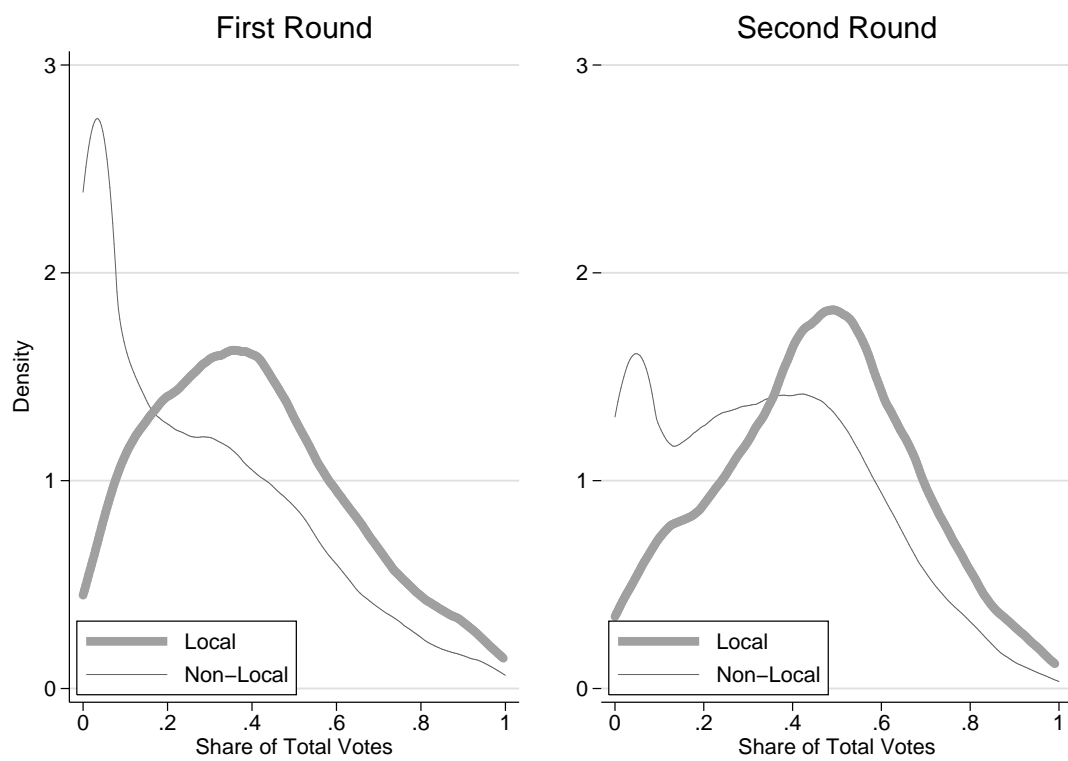
There is clear support in the raw data for the hypothesis that candidates get more votes in their hometown than in other municipalities. In the first round, the median vote share of a candidate within his or her hometown is 38 percent; in contrast, the median vote share in other municipalities is 22 percent. Within their hometowns, less than one tenth of all candidates (9 percent) get less than 10 percent of the votes in the first round. Outside their hometowns, about one third of candidates (34 percent) get less than 10 percent of the votes.

4.1 Effect on Turnout

Figure 3 shows the relation between change in turnout (residualized by year dummies) and first-round margin. As expected, we see that a close race in the first round (i.e., a small margin) is associated with an increase in turnout in the second round, and that the margin seem to matters more when the race is close than when it is not.

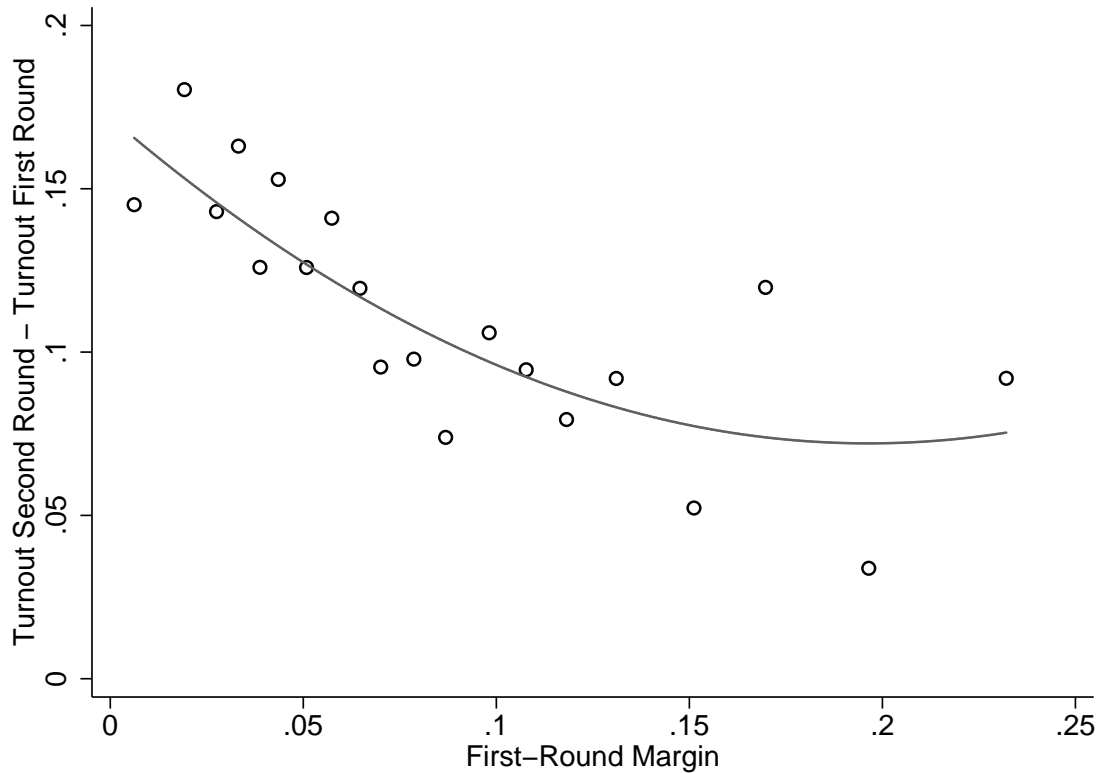
Specification (1) of Table 2 provides the regression output behind Figure 3. Both the first and second-order terms of *Margin* are statistically significant at conventional levels. The regression results imply that changing *Margin* from 0.15 to 0.05 increases $\Delta Turnout$ by about 5 percentage points, or about half a standard deviation. These effects are larger than the effects reported in previous studies of closeness and turnout in two-

Figure 2: Kernel Density Plot of Candidates' Municipality-Level Vote Shares



Note: The figure shows kernel density plots of candidates' municipality-level vote shares in the first (left panel) and second election round (right panel). The thick lines provide density plots of vote shares in candidates' home municipalities (one observation per candidate). The thin lines provide density plots of candidates' vote shares in all other municipalities.

Figure 3: Change in Turnout and First-Round Margin



Note: The figure shows the relation between change in turnout (residualized by year dummies) and margin in the first round. On the x-axis, Margin is the district-level percentage-point difference in vote shares between the front-runner and runner-up in the first round. On the y-axis, we measure the municipality-level change in turnout from the first to the second round (Δ Turnout). The fitted line is estimated using the underlying data (after residualizing), not the binned scatter points, and corresponds to specification (1) in Table 2. Each bin includes about 70 observations ($N=1,385$).

round elections. For example, Simonovits (2012) finds that a 10-percentage-point increase in margin reduces second-round turnout by about 2 percentage points in Hungarian elections. Fauvelle-Aymar and François (2006) and Indridason (2008) find that a 10-percentage-point increase in margin reduces second-round turnout by about 1 percentage point in French elections.²³

Specification (2) and (3) introduce variables capturing changes in the total number of candidates running, $\Delta\textit{Candidates}$, and changes in the number of hometown candidates running, $\Delta\textit{Local}$. As expected, there is a positive association between $\Delta\textit{Candidates}$ and $\Delta\textit{Turnout}$. The point estimate in specification (2) implies that when a candidate withdraws from the contest, turnout falls by 1.8 percentage points from the first to the second round. This estimate indicates the general effect of the personal vote of a candidate on voter mobilization. A similar pattern has been documented in run-off elections in France (Indridason 2008).

Specification (3) documents that the effect of a candidate's withdrawal on turnout is much stronger in a candidate's hometown than in other municipalities in the same electoral district. More specifically, we estimate turnout to fall by 1.3 percentage points when a candidate stands down outside his or her hometown, but by 4.2 percentage points inside his or her hometown ($0.013 + 0.029$).

In specification (4), we allow the effect of changes in the number of (local) candidates running to differ based on the bloc affiliation of the candidate. This improves the fit of the model slightly. Again, we find that the demobilizing effect of a candidate standing down is much larger within the candidate's hometown. The demobilizing effect differs considerably across political blocs. Having a hometown Labor Party (S) candidate stand down is estimated to cause a roughly 7-percentage-point drop in turnout ($0.064 + 0.005$). The effect is about half the size for candidates belonging to the two other main party blocs.

²³Garmann (2014) argues that measurement error is likely to give rise to attenuation bias in these estimates. With data from Hesse, Germany, he finds an effect of (first-round) margin of about -0.2. When instrumenting second-round margin with first-round margin, the effect is 50 percent larger.

Table 2: Effect of Margin and Candidate Exit on Change in Turnout

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Margin</i>	-0.971*** (0.253)	-1.027*** (0.254)	-1.031*** (0.254)	-1.050*** (0.254)	
<i>Margin</i> ²	2.384** (0.943)	2.694*** (0.952)	2.728*** (0.955)	2.846*** (0.975)	
Δ <i>Candidates</i>		0.018*** (0.005)	0.013*** (0.005)		
Δ <i>Local</i>			0.029*** (0.005)		
Δ <i>Candidates</i> ^S				0.005 (0.020)	
Δ <i>Candidates</i> ^{V/A}				0.022** (0.008)	
Δ <i>Candidates</i> ^{H/FV}				0.006 (0.008)	
Δ <i>Candidates</i> ^{OTH}				0.009 (0.009)	
Δ <i>Local</i> ^S				0.064*** (0.020)	0.064*** (0.020)
Δ <i>Local</i> ^{V/A}				0.023*** (0.007)	0.023*** (0.007)
Δ <i>Local</i> ^{H/FV}				0.029*** (0.008)	0.022** (0.009)
Δ <i>Local</i> ^{OTH}				0.030** (0.012)	0.030** (0.014)
<i>N</i>	1385	1385	1385	1385	1385
<i>R</i> ²	0.155	0.180	0.194	0.200	0.598
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
District-Year FE	No	No	No	No	Yes

Note: The dependent variable is the difference between second and first-round turnout. Standard errors clustered at the election district level in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

The large effect of a Labor Party candidate exit could be the result of the party ceasing to run altogether (thus mechanically limiting Labor Party supporters’ options, as the party eschewed alliances). The different magnitudes of the hometown effects indicate that voters with Labor Party sympathies may have found it hard to find good substitutes if their preferred local candidate stood down.²⁴ If we condition on second-round participation of the relevant bloc, the results do not change significantly; however, the Labor Party results are based on just a few observations, so should be interpreted with caution.²⁵

Specifications (1)-(4) exploit both within-district and across-district variation in the data. Specification (5), on the other hand, isolates within-district variation in each year by including district-year fixed effects. This implies that we are effectively comparing changes in $\Delta Turnout$ across municipalities belonging to the same electoral district in the same election year. The district-year fixed effects improve the model considerably (the R^2 is roughly tripled), and the estimates for the effect of a local candidate’s withdrawal are basically unaltered, again indicating a significant “friends and neighbors” effect in voter mobilization and turnout.²⁶

4.2 Effect on Party Support

What is the effect of a local candidate’s withdrawal on voter support for that candidate’s party, or for other parties? Table 3 relates changes in electoral support for the various party blocs to $\Delta Local^P$, which is the change in the number of local candidates running from party bloc $P \in \{S, V\&A, H\&FV, OTH\}$. In specification (1), (2), (3), and (4), the dependent variable is the change in electoral support for S , $V\&A$, $H\&FV$, and OTH ,

²⁴When all local candidates are eliminated from the second round, the estimated demobilizing effects are larger than when at least one local candidate is present in the second round (compare specification 2 and 3 of Online Appendix Table A.3).

²⁵See Online Appendix Tables A.2 and A.4.

²⁶Turnout is defined as the ratio of the number of *valid votes* cast to the number of eligible voters in a municipality. We also investigated whether the withdrawal of a local candidate impacts the fraction of *invalid votes* cast. Such effects appear to be small or non-existent (see Online Appendix Table A.5). In our sample, the fraction of the electorate that casts an invalid vote is 0.008 (SD=0.010) in the first round and 0.010 (SD=0.010) in the second round.

respectively. District-year fixed effects are included in all specifications, so inferences are based on changes in electoral support for municipalities voting on an identical set of candidates (excluding those who withdrew between rounds). In specification (5), $\Delta Abstain$ serves as the dependent variable. Results reported in this specification are equivalent to specification (5) in Table 2 (with the opposite sign) and are included for completeness.

Across all blocs, we find that electoral support for the relevant bloc declines when a local candidate stands down. The effects are substantial and statistically significant at all conventional levels. For example, when a Labor Party candidate stands down, the party's share of the vote falls by 7 percentage points more in the candidate's hometown than in other municipalities in the same election district. This corresponds to about 1.4 standard deviations in $\Delta Vote^S$. Many of these voters abstain in the second round, rather than throwing their support behind an alternative candidate, indicating that the presence of the local candidate was a key factor in their mobilization in the first round. In other words, the "friends and neighbors" effect served to mobilize voters who might have otherwise stayed home, rather than convert the erstwhile supporters of a non-local competitor. The results are still significant if we condition the sample on whether the Labor Party fielded a candidate in the second round, though this estimation is based on only a few cases.²⁷

In contrast, when a local *V&A* candidate stands down, the *V&A* bloc is estimated to lose 4 percentage points more of their support in the candidate's hometown than in other municipalities in the same election district. About half of these voters are estimated to abstain in the second round. The other half participate in the second round, and tend to throw their support behind the *H&FV* bloc, in particular. The pattern is reversed when a local *H&FV* candidate stands down. In other words, the "friends and neighbors" effect for these two blocs was roughly divided between mobilizing voters who might have otherwise stayed home, and converting the erstwhile supporters of a non-local competitor. When a local independent or other minor party candidate (*OTH*) stands down, this

²⁷See Online Appendix Table A.6.

Table 3: Effect of Local Candidate Exit on Change in Support for Party Bloc

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	$\Delta Vote^S$	$\Delta Vote^{V/A}$	$\Delta Vote^{H/FV}$	$\Delta Vote^{OTH}$	$\Delta Abstain$
$\Delta Local^S$	0.071*** (0.015)	-0.023 (0.017)	0.018** (0.008)	-0.001 (0.004)	-0.064*** (0.020)
$\Delta Local^{V/A}$	-0.004 (0.003)	0.044*** (0.010)	-0.011* (0.006)	-0.006*** (0.002)	-0.023*** (0.007)
$\Delta Local^{H/FV}$	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.011 (0.009)	0.044*** (0.010)	-0.008*** (0.003)	-0.022** (0.009)
$\Delta Local^{OTH}$	0.002 (0.004)	-0.021 (0.013)	-0.030** (0.015)	0.078*** (0.015)	-0.030** (0.014)
N	1385	1385	1385	1385	1385
R^2	0.676	0.662	0.659	0.788	0.598

Note: The dependent variable is the change in electoral support of the relevant bloc (given in the table heading) from the first to second election round, divided by the total number of first-round voters. All specifications include district-year fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the election district level in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

residual category loses 8 percentage points of its first-round support. These estimates are even larger and still significant if we condition the sample on whether the party blocs fielded a candidate in the second round.²⁸

Did voters shift their support to other (non-local) candidates within their preferred party bloc, or to other local candidates from other parties? A systematic analysis of vote movement across local candidates and parties is infeasible, but an example helps to illustrate a general pattern. Table 4 shows the results in the first and second rounds of voting for *Nordland 4th District, Nordre Salten*, in 1918. In the first round, the Liberals (*V*) ran four candidates and the Labor Party (*S*) ran only one. The votes for each candidate were generally higher in the candidate's hometown municipality (in bold) than in other municipalities. In the second round, two of the Liberal candidates withdrew from competition. One of these candidates, P. Leiros, was from Ankenes. His supporters appear to have shifted their support to one of the remaining Liberal candidates, J. H. Ellingsen of Hamarøy, despite the presence of another local candidate, M. Edvardsen,

²⁸See Online Appendix Table A.6.

Table 4: Example of Vote Movement Between Rounds: Nordland County 4th District, Nordre Salten, 1918

		Sørfold	Nordfold	Kjerringøy	Leiranger	Steigen	Hamarøy	Tysfjord	Ankenes	Evenes	Lødingen	Tjeldsund	Sum
First round													
Ellingsen, J.H., farmer, Hamarøy	V	115	36	9	106	250	296	53	161	308	53	41	1428
Edvardsen, M., farmer and laborer, Ankenes	S	198	47	59	86	58	6	93	300	258	2	106	1213
Hansen, M., farmer, Lødingen	V	–	1	–	–	8	150	241	–	4	592	121	1117
Gylseth, P., teacher, Nordfold	V	74	258	34	138	63	90	17	11	24	7	2	718
Leiros, P., teacher, Ankenes	V	–	–	–	–	–	–	46	345	15	–	–	406
Other miscellaneous	OTH	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	2	1	4
Total votes		387	342	102	330	379	542	450	818	609	656	271	4886
Second round													
Ellingsen, J.H., farmer, Hamarøy	V	195	32	21	149	330	369	190	529	414	170	177	2576
Edvardsen, M., farmer and laborer, Ankenes	S	213	46	46	84	87	8	102	302	366	5	81	1340
Gylseth, P., teacher, Nordfold	V	28	216	28	104	43	28	–	–	–	5	1	453
Other miscellaneous	OTH	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	1	1	4	1	10
Total votes		436	294	95	337	460	408	292	832	781	184	260	4379

Note: Example comes from the 1918 election in Nordre Salten, the 4th District in Nordland County. Votes earned in the candidate’s home town are in bold. V = Liberals, S = Labor Party, OTH = Other. Note that turnout remained relatively stable in Ankenes, but dropped in round two in Lødingen. Data source: Haffner and Wessel-Berg (1919).

from the Labor Party, and municipality-level turnout remained stable (818 votes in the first round compared to 832 votes in the second round). In contrast, in Lødingen, where the only local candidate stood down (the Liberal candidate Hansen), turnout simply dropped, from 656 to 184. The interpretation is that Liberal voters in Ankenes continued to turn out to vote for their party’s most viable second-round candidate, whereas Liberal voters in Lødingen were no longer mobilized. One explanation for this variation could be that the home base of Ellingsen—Hamarøy—as well as Ankenes, were on the opposite side of a fjord from Lødingen, thus making mobilization of Lødingen voters more difficult.

Overall, our results indicate that parties and party blocs *do* gain votes through the mobilizational effort of individual candidates, and that this effect is strongest in those candidates’ hometowns. This does not mean that the electoral coordination by parties between rounds was a mistake. In the vast majority of districts where coordination was necessary to avoid splitting the vote, parties and coalitions coordinated around the top-

finishing candidate in the first round, and this was logically the best option for mobilizing as many votes as possible. In this sense, the decreases in mobilization that we estimate might be thought of as the lower bound of a party’s electoral support that originates from a candidate’s personal vote. Had the more popular candidates in the first round been asked to step down, the consequences for voter mobilization and party support would likely have been greater. On the other hand, the results by party bloc indicate that elite coordination may have been most damaging to the *V&A* and *H&FV* blocs, which tended to lose votes to the rival bloc rather than to abstentions.

5 Conclusion

We have investigated how the personal vote of candidates, particularly the support that originates from their hometown ties to a municipality, impacts local voters’ decisions to participate in the election, and the overall electoral support for the candidates’ parties and coalitions. Prior research on local candidates and voter mobilization has been limited by the inherent challenge in disentangling the personal vote from the party vote and other confounding variables using observational data. In our analysis, we have taken advantage of the uniquely-suited institutional structure of Norway’s historical two-round system to evaluate how elite-level coordination that changes the constellation of candidates affects voter mobilization and turnout. Norwegian parties within ideological blocs tended to nominate multiple candidates in the first round of competition, but then coordinate on the top-finishing candidate within the party or bloc in races that went to a second round. Often this elite coordination resulted in municipalities within districts losing out on the presence of a favored local candidate.

We document a strong “friends and neighbors” effect on voter mobilization. When a candidate with local ties withdraws from competition, there is a significant drop in both turnout and electoral support for the parties or coalitions that orchestrate the withdrawal. We find that part of the drop in party support is due to increased abstentions of local

voters, and part is due to voters switching their allegiance to a different party, with the magnitude of the effect varying across parties and coalitions. Our results thus shed light on the value of the personal vote for voter mobilization under majoritarian electoral systems, as well as the difficult trade-offs that can confront parties and coalitions hoping to coordinate under such systems.

Electoral coalitions of two or more parties are common under majoritarian electoral rules, where coordination at the district-level can improve the electoral outcomes (seat shares) of ideologically compatible parties seeking control of government (Strøm, Budge and Laver 1994; Golder 2005; 2006). Our results highlight how political parties may face competing nomination incentives in such contexts. On the one hand, the winner-take-all nature of the contest encourages elites to coordinate on a single candidate within a party or coalition. On the other hand, to the extent that voters care about the personal characteristics and local connections of candidates, and given that local candidates tend to concentrate mobilization efforts around their hometowns, this strategy can reduce the effectiveness of mobilization efforts by parties.

When viewed in historical context, our findings also shed light on the dynamics of party competition and voter behavior in early Norwegian electoral politics. The period we analyze was one of rapid industrialization and expansion of railroads and other development projects throughout Norway. In this context, voters may have been especially attracted to particularistic or parochial appeals made by local candidates. The patterns in mobilization and abstention by Labor Party voters highlight the extreme class divisions in the party system and electorate at the time, while the strong hometown bias in voting illustrates the (at least partly) parochial nature of competition within the other parties. Future research might investigate whether similar patterns prevail in modern-day developing democracies, where parties might have relatively weak foundations and local appeals might be key to mobilizing voters.²⁹

²⁹For example, two-round systems offering an opportunity for a similar research design have been used in several new and developing democracies, especially in francophone Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Mali), and amongst post-Soviet republics (e.g., Uzbekistan). Georgia uses a two-round system for the district tier of its mixed-member electoral system.

Our findings from Norway also hint at some of the political incentives that led to the adoption of proportional representation in 1919. The conventional wisdom is that the conservative (*H&FV*) and liberal (*V&A*) blocs agreed to adopt a proportional representation system in a defensive move against a rising Labor Party and newly enfranchised voters—in a process that also occurred in many other Western European democracies with SMD systems around the same time (Rokkan 1970; Boix 1999; Leemann and Mares 2014). In the case of Norway, the *V&A* and *H&FV* blocs faced a difficult situation: a pressure to coordinate between rounds to avoid losing to the Labor Party (due to splitting the non-socialist vote), and the reality that such coordination, even when in effect, was not a perfect solution—many voters abstained when their favorite candidates stood down. In contrast, the Labor Party did not face the same sort of dilemma. The patterns we have documented here may have reinforced the strategic calculation of the bourgeois parties in the decision to abandon the system in favor of proportional representation. Future research should investigate whether and how these voting and representation patterns changed following the electoral system reform, or following the abolition of the residency requirement in 1952.

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