

How the True Finns won a seat in Etelä-Savo in April 2011 – and why it is important to know

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Party research in Finland appears dead and at the 2013 Poliitiikan tutkimuksen päivät in Rovaniemi a panel on political parties was conspicuous by its absence. Surprisingly, moreover, for all the voting and media studies relating to the 'jytky victory' in April 2011, along with the dissection of its programmes, we know relatively little about the big winner Perussuomalaiset (PS) as a political party. This paper argues that in understanding the PS' 'jytky', three processes have been neglected – party-building, candidacy-building and intra-party competition. It applies all three to explain how the PS won its first parliamentary seat in Etelä-Savo and then reflects on the wider significance of the result.

Introduction

My basic premise is very straightforward: we know surprisingly little about the True Finns (PS) as a political party. We presume to know much – albeit probably less than we think – about the PS voter, *inter alia* his/her socio-demographic characteristics, previous political allegiance (if any) and level of institutional trust (Borg 2012; Grönlund and Westinen 2012). We presume – at times uncritically – that the PS is of the populist-party type and then engage in a neo-determinist pursuit of those broad-gauge variables (globalisation, exponential multiculturalism etc) reputedly conducing towards growing populist-party support (Paloheimo 2012). We are advised that the media played a decisive part in the 'snowballing' of support for the PS in the later stages of the 2011 election campaign and in 'marketing' the party's message (Perna 2012). Yet I repeat: we know very little about the PS *as a political party* and, in particular, its role in the 2011 'jytky' victory. Accordingly, I want to make three basic points. First, we learn little or nothing about the PS and the mechanics and

dynamics of party-building from an ideology-driven approach. Second, whilst demand-side analyses may help us understand PS voters and their *Weltanschauung* – though reference to the prior existence of a body of 'populism supporters' seems facile (Railo 2011, 84) – they tell us little or nothing about the party's role in mobilising these voters.¹ Third, although the media tended to regard Timo Soini and the PS as effectively synonymous during the later stages of the 2011 election campaign, there was a lot more to the PS than Soini.

This paper contends that in understanding the PS' 'jytky' in 2011 three processes are central to the analytical equation – party-building, candidacy-building and intra-party competition. The theoretical section explores all three concepts, drawing where possible on the comparative literature. Following a brief scene-setting discussion, the main empirical body of the article applies the three strategic concepts to the small-magnitude (M) district (constituency) of Etelä-Savo and asks 'How did the PS win its first parliamentary seat there and what does it tell us more generally about the PS at its breakthrough

election?’ The research is based on elite interviews, both with the PS leader Soini and MPs from the Etelä-Savo electoral district; official statistical data on the ‘party vote’ and ‘candidate vote’ in Etelä-Savo; and local newspaper sources, including *Länsi-Savo* and *Itä-Savo*.

The conceptual tools

The present study proceeds from an ‘origins of party’ approach to the classification of parties (Mair and Mudde 1998) and views the PS as a new party of the *entrepreneur type*. More precisely, it views the PS at the time of its ‘jytty victory’ in 2011 as an ‘entrepreneurial issue party’ (EIP) in Harmel and Svåsand’s (1993) terms. An EIP is “founded by one person who does not hold a position in government. It must have external origins, represent the work of a single entrepreneur and will be closely associated with an issue prioritised by the founder of the party enterprise”. (Harmel and Svåsand 1993, 67–68) Whilst not strictly the work of a single entrepreneur (Soini 2008, 84–85) the PS in 2011 could reasonably be characterised as an EIP: Soini was the entrepreneur and it was ‘his’ issue, ‘Euro-scepticism’, that vested the party with its primary identity.

New entrepreneur-type parties have a notoriously high mortality rate. In the Nordic region alone parties such as New Democracy in Sweden (1991–94), the Young Finns (1995–99) and the Coastal Party in Norway (2001–05) survived only a single legislative term. The PS, however, has contested four general elections and its parliamentary representation has risen from a solitary MP in 1999 to a 39-member parliamentary group (PPG) following the 2011 general election. It qualifies as a ‘persistent new party’ in Bolleyer’s (2010) terms and its persistence needs to be understood in an expressly developmental perspective. Accordingly, the paper highlights the longitudinal process of *party-building* and views the party entrepreneur as the primary party-builder. All things being equal, party-building will entail various (analytically) distinct, albeit in practice overlapping stages, each presenting the party entrepreneur with a different set of leadership challenges. Initially, it will involve the identification of a message and its communication to prospective supporters. The message may be ‘single issue’ in character – such as abolish income tax (the Danish Progress Party in

1973), independence for Padania (the *Lega Nord* in the early 1990s) and/or embodied in the persona (charisma) of the party entrepreneur (among others, Pim Fortuyn, Silvio Berlusconi and Beppe Grillo).

The range of party-building models in entrepreneur parties needs emphasis. Hopkin and Paolucci (1999), for example, describe the ‘business firm model’ followed by Adolfo Suárez’s *Unión de Centro Democrático* in Spain and Silvio Berlusconi’s *Forza Italia*. As the authors write, “the Forza Italia product was ‘sold’ with the aid of techniques usually adopted for the promotion of merchandise” (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999, 326). Marketing was the message and policy at best of secondary importance. Both these *business firm parties* proved short-lived. De Lange and Art (2011) describe the curious mass-membership-free model pursued by Geert Wilders’ *Partij Voor de Vrijheid* in Holland. They note that “although the party statutes recognise the voters can become members of the PVV, Wilders declared a membership stop immediately after founding the party” (de Lange and Art 2011, 1240). This article, however, follows the recent literature (Bolleyer and Bytzeck 2013) in linking new-party ‘sustainability’ to the development of an organisational infrastructure along the lines of the mass membership model. In these terms, the party entrepreneur, in addition to identifying and communicating a message, works to create a ‘party in the country’ capable of ‘servicing’ election campaigns, particularly in respect of candidate recruitment. The combination of charismatic leadership and organisational leadership directed towards securing a mass membership base will conduce towards new-party ‘persistence’ or what I prefer to call a ‘resilient entrepreneurial party’ (Arter 2014). Carl I. Hagen’s role in providing both forms of leadership, so facilitating the institutionalisation of the Norwegian Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*), is a case in point (Jupskås 2013).

This paper adopts an expressly agency-based or supply-side perspective on party change. There may be a body of potential support for a political party but the party will require the capacity (resources) to mobilise the potential. A party will not attract votes – however appealing its leader and/or policies – if it does not have (enough) candidates to vote for. When viewed from a party management standpoint, moreover, candidates should have (be given) the maximum incentive to compete for votes. For most candidates, the incentive to compete will be contingent

Diagram 1. The candidacy-building process.

Stage	Objective	Methods
Product development	Developing a competitive campaign product; identification of the candidacy	Defining the substance of the campaign agenda; campaign manifestos etc
Product support	Organising the campaign	Obtaining funding; building a 'support group'; local party branch involvement
Product marketing	Selling the candidate campaign	Digital dissemination; press advertising; traditional modes of product differentiation: leaflets, campaign meetings etc

on their perceived chances of success at the forthcoming election or the one after that and this in turn will reflect an assessment of the strengths/weaknesses of their rivals. In (Finnish-style) open-list PR voting systems (Karvonen 2011, 119–134) competition will come both from the candidates in rival parties (inter-party competition) and from co-partisans in the candidate's party (intra-party competition). The incentive to campaign (for a personal vote) has also been linked, albeit not entirely convincingly, to district magnitude (Shugart 2008), that is the size of the constituency, and the record of the candidate's party (Crisp et al. 2007) in the constituency, that is party magnitude.

Predicated on a calculus of their likely prospects of success, individual candidates embark on *candidacy-building*. Candidacy-building is a process which spans the period from the selection of a candidate to the voters' verdict on that candidate on polling day and it is self-evidently designed to make a persuasive case for electoral support. Candidacy-building is not easy to research and has been largely neglected in the literature, but it may be said to comprise three generic stages. i) The first involves identifying the candidate to prospective voters. Whilst the candidate's partisanship will provide basic ID, the assumption is that candidates in preferential voting systems will have an added incentive to differentiate their message from that of rivals and run *individualised campaigns* (Balmas et al. 2012; Zittel and Gschwend 2008, 293–321). This 'product development' stage (Diagram 1) will involve 'content definition' viz determining the substance of the campaign. ii) The second stage involves organising the candidacy and attracting available 'back-up'. Organisation-building will reflect the nature and extent of 'product support', *inter alia* financial resources, support groups etc. The range is likely to be great between an incumbent parliamentarian boasting a

registered 'support group' (*tukiryhmä*) and a minor-party candidate dependent on a few family members. iii) The final stage involves selling the candidate and the candidate campaign. This 'product marketing' stage will involve a range of modes of 'message dissemination' from the digital (blogs, Facebook etc.) to the traditional (footslogging, flesh-pressing and leaflet distribution).

Whilst preferential electoral systems offer candidates incentives to run individualised campaigns, so as to distinguish their 'product' from that of co-partisan rivals, estimating the extent of policy differentiation between candidates is no simple matter. A measure of *issue valence* between co-partisans on national/local questions can perhaps be gained from responses to survey questions (in the Finnish case those posed in 'election machines' – *vaalikoneet*) although these do not necessarily form part of the candidate's campaign agenda. An insight into the *issue salience*, that is the relative priority attached to particular national/local questions, can be deduced from candidate-generated election material – web pages, letters to national/regional newspapers etc. – although there is an inevitable element of impressionism involved in piecing together policy profiles in this way. Candidates of course bring not only a supply of policies to their candidacy but also differing amounts of political experience, public recognition and a range of personal attributes (Carty et al. 2003). Indeed, the electoral systems literature has paid insufficient attention to differences in candidate type and the implications of what I choose to call the district-level *party candidate system*. In the same way that parties do not function in isolation but develop relationships with other party actors in a party system, so candidates on a party list may be said to do the same. The 'party candidate system', therefore, refers to the configuration and interaction of the candidate types on a party list (see diagram

2) and there will be implications both for candidacy-building and the extent of intra-party competition.

Viewed from the standpoint of the district party's nomination strategy, the party candidate system can be so structured – within the constraints imposed by candidate availability – as to achieve vote-maximisation by intensifying the extent of intra-party competition (Arter 2013). *Intra-party competition* is a multi-faceted phenomenon and one that is difficult to measure accurately. It begins at the selection, or indeed pre-selection, stage over ballot access when personal ambition and the attendant jockeying for position may well see make-weight candidates included and serious aspirants cynically excluded from the party list for tactical reasons. At the election (candidacy-building) stage some successful challengers, when pressed, will admit that they actively targeted a co-partisan whom they perceived to be a marginal incumbent. Incumbents in turn will guard their 'home turf' (their primary vote catchment area) assiduously and co-partisans who venture there are likely to receive a frosty reception. Intra-party competition may well have a territorial dimension, too, particularly when parties have several regional organisations representing the different areas within a district. Moreover, when there are male and female co-partisans based in the same town, the temperature of campaigning invariably rises. Yet whilst there is abundant anecdotal evidence of both overt and covert forms of intra-party rivalry, measuring intra-party competition is no simple task.²

The approach here is to adapt the Laakso-Taagepera (1979) formula for calculating the 'effective number of parties'. The idea is that the candidate choice of party voters will determine the *effective number of co-partisans* (ENCP), a measure which will reflect the distribution of the candidate vote on a party list. The ENCP can be calculated using the formula $N_c = 1 / \sum (C_v)^2$ where N_c is the effective

number of co-partisans and C_v is the candidate vote as a proportion of the total party list vote. This formula will generate a figure notionally equivalent to the number of equally matched candidates on a party list. A low ENCP will indicate a vote concentration on only a few candidates whereas the higher the ENCP the more fragmented the party vote and the higher the *per capita* value of an individual candidate's vote contribution. The reasonable supposition then is that the higher the ENCP the higher the incidence of intra-party candidate competition.

The political context

The scale and exclusivity of the PS' 'victory' in April 2011 was unprecedented in Finnish history. No party has advanced by as much as fifteen percentage points and the gains, moreover, were exclusive – the PS was the only 'winning' party. It was transformed from minor party status to become the third largest parliamentary party, gaining 19.1 per cent of the popular vote and winning seats in all fourteen mainland constituencies. From a five-member parliamentary group in the 2007–2011 Eduskunta, the PS claimed 39 seats in the 2011–2015 Eduskunta (table 1). As remarkably, the PS contrived to gain its first MP in three small-magnitude (M) districts where, with a high effective electoral threshold, small parties had previously required electoral alliances to have any realistic hope of success. In 2007 much publicity and indeed public sympathy had surrounded the fate of the Green party leader and cabinet minister, Tarja Cronberg. Cronberg's individual vote exceeded that of over three-quarters of the 200 MPs in the 2007–2011 Eduskunta but, lacking an electoral alliance, she failed to gain a seat in Pohjois-Karjala (M = 6).³ In contrast, at the same 2007 general election,

Diagram 2. The composition of the party candidate system: candidate types.

Candidates with national name-recognition

These are candidates known to a national public (electorate) *inter alia* ministers, party leaders, long-serving backbenchers and 'celebrities' from outside the world of politics.

Candidates with party-name-recognition

These are candidates known to a national party public (members and supporters) and, by extension therefore, to most party voters across the candidate's 'home constituency'.

Candidates with local name-recognition

These are candidates with a local politics and/or local issue identity, known (initially at least) only to a local public (electorate). They would be councillors or local party activists with 'home turf' support but without much wider recognition.

Table 1. The PS vote at the 2011 general election by electoral district.

	Votes	%	Seats	M
Nationally	560,075	19.1	39	200
Helsinki	45,266	13.0	3	21
Uusimaa	95,429	18.8	7	35
Varsinais-Suomi	46,956	18.1	3	17
Satakunta	29,816	23.6	2	9
Häme	41,820	20.6	3	14
Pirkanmaa	57,844	21.1	4	18
Kymi	39,357	23.3	3	12
Etelä-Savo	17,107	20.5	1	6
Pohjois-Savo	27,327	20.8	2	9
Pohjois-Karjala	20,163	23.1	1	6
Vaasa	42,753	17.2	3	17
Keski-Suomi	26,813	18.1	2	10
Oulu	49,088	20.1	4	18
Lappi	20,336	20.5	1	7

M = District Magnitude

Table 2. The distribution of parliamentary seats in Etelä-Savo, 2003-2011.

Party	2003	2007	2011
Conservatives	1	2	1
Christian Democrats	0	0	0
Centre	3	2	2
True Finns	0	0	1
Left Alliance	0	0	0
Greens	0	1	0
Social Democrats	2	1	2
M	6	6	6

M = District Magnitude

the PS ran a solitary candidate as part of an electoral alliance with the Conservatives (*Kansallinen Kokoomus*) and Christian Democrats in neighbouring Pohjois-Savo (M = 9) and the concentration of votes was sufficient to see Pentti Oinonen returned to the Eduskunta (Soini 2008, 218).

Yet, without electoral alliances in 2011 the PS did what Cronberg had failed to do in 2007: the party won a seat for the first time in Lapland (M = 7), Pohjois-Karjala (M = 6) and Etelä-Savo (M = 6). The empirical part of this paper focuses on the case of Etelä-Savo where the PS vote advanced by 17.3 percentage points on its 2007 performance and exceeded the PS' national average poll in 2011 by 1.4 percentage points.

The Etelä-Savo constituency was formed in 2002 and had previously made up the bulk of Mikkeli-province constituency (until 1998) and then Mikkelin constituency (1999–2002). The only party in all three Etelä-Savo general elections consistently to run an independent slate of candidates has been the Centre Party, which gained three seats in 2003 and two in both 2007 and 2011 (table 2). The Social Democrats gained two seats in 2003 and 2011 but their electoral alliance with the Left Alliance and Greens in 2007 came badly unstuck and they sustained two intra-partisan defeats. The incumbent Social Democrat MPs, Arto Seppälä (Mikkeli-based) and Jouni Backman (Savonlinna-based), lost out to

Pauliina Viitamies – relations between the Mikkeli Social Democrats were acrimonious to put it mildly⁴ – and a strategic 'lead candidate strategy' (Arter 2013) meant Green voters concentrated their support on Heli Järvinen⁵ and saw the latter become the first-ever Green MP in Etelä-Savo. At the same 2007 general election the PS formed an electoral alliance with the Conservatives and Christian Democrats which yielded two Conservative seats. Four years later in 2011 this was reduced to one as the PS gained its first seat in Etelä-Savo and the Conservative Olli Nepponen lost out.

Despite the party's surge in support, however, the PS' elected candidate, Kaj Turunen, polled only the tenth highest individual poll in the Etelä-Savo constituency and, ironically, substantially less than Järvinen who, this time without an electoral alliance went unelected. Indeed, only one of the 39 PS MPs elected in 2011 polled an individual vote that was smaller than Turunen's and she (Arja Juvonen) was last-placed of seven PS parliamentarians returned from the large-M (= 35) Uusimaa constituency where the effective threshold was substantially lower.

The Etelä-Savo question

How, then, did the PS win a seat in a small-M constituency traditionally dominated by the Centre in the

countryside and the Social Democrats in the three small towns of Mikkeli, Savonlinna and Pieksämäki? The analysis that follows is organised around six primary factors: i) the increased supply of candidates; ii) the rejection of electoral alliances; iii) the type of candidates recruited; iv) the process of candidacy-building and candidate differentiation; v) the role of intra-party candidate competition; and vi) the constituency executive's nomination strategy.

First, then, there was the *increased candidate supply*. The number of PS candidates in Etelä-Savo increased seven-fold compared with the 2007 general election when the PS' two candidates mustered a modest 2,653 votes in total (compared with 17,107 in 2011). In 2011 the PS ran a slate comprising the maximum legal number of 14 candidates (table 3). Five were based in the Mikkeli district, two in Savonlinna, two each in Pieksämäki and Kangasniemi and one each in Pertunmaa, Sulkava and Ristiina (see figure 1).⁶ The increased candidate supply provided electors with a prospective local vote option, so obviating the 'wasted vote' syndrome.⁷ Particularly in view of the increased inter-party candidate competition in Etelä-Savo compared with the 2007 general election – when, as a result of electoral alliances, only 48 candidates were on offer – the value of a local (PS) candidate in small communities cannot be overemphasised.

Next, there was *the decision to eschew electoral*



Figure 1. The distribution of PS candidates in Etelä-Savo at the 2011 general election.

Mikkeli district: Kivinen, Lehtinen, Pöyry, Siitari, Hämäläinen (Haukivuori)
 Savonlinna district: Rakkolainen, Turunen, Ranta (Sulkava)
 Pieksämäki: Karjalainen, Klen
 Pertunmaa: Virtanen
 Kangasniemi: Kuitunen, Leskinen
 Ristiina: Vahtera
 There were 17 municipalities in the Etelä-Savo electoral district in 2011 but in 2013 Ristiina merged with Mikkeli and Kerimäki and Punkaharju merged with Savonlinna.

alliances. This meant that prospective, first-time PS voters would elect a PS candidate, or at least the PS vote would benefit a PS candidate and not contribute to electing a candidate of another party on the joint list. In both the 2003 and 2007 general elections, the

Table 3. PS candidates in Etelä-Savo at the 2011 general election.

Candidate	Vote total	'Home turf'	% of personal vote from 'home turf'
Hämäläinen, Marja (47)	876	Mikkeli	50.3
Kivinen, Harri (51)	1,666	Mikkeli	66.6
Lehtinen, Pertti (62)	576	Mikkeli	53.0
Pöyry, Jukka (72)	2,342	Mikkeli	78.2
Siitari, Markku (55)	1,293	Mikkeli	55.0
Rakkolainen, Erkki (73)	1,425	Savonlinna	30.5
Turunen, Kaj (50)	2,631	Savonlinna	59.0
Karjalainen, Mirva (28)	1,455	Pieksämäki	46.9
Klen, Tapio (65)	907	Pieksämäki	67.6
Kuitunen, Paula (56)	365	Kangasniemi	18.9
Leskinen, Pekka (50)	1,539	Kangasniemi	41.3
Ranta, Pekka (67)	1,006	Sulkava	24.6
Vahtera, Pauli (62)	698	Ristiina	44.0
Virtanen, Outi (52)	328	Pertunmaa	25.9
Total	17,107		
Elected	Kaj Turunen		

The figures in parentheses are the candidates' age.

PS had formed part of electoral alliances with the Conservatives and Christian Democrats. It gained 0.6 per cent of the constituency vote in 2003 when its solitary candidate was Erkki Rakkolainen, then chair of the Etelä-Savo constituency party and an activist from the days of the predecessor Finnish Rural Party (*Suomen Maaseudun Puolue*, SMP). Its two candidates in 2007 attracted a somewhat increased but still modest 3.2 per cent of the constituency vote. One of them, Tauno Pehkonen, was a former Christian Democrat MP who got nearly five-thousand votes in 1995 and stood as an Independent on the PS list in 2007. Since the Christian Democrats were part of the same electoral alliance, the PS' tactic was clearly to try and purloin some of the Christian Democrat vote by running a candidate known to supporters of that party.

In deciding to run a full independent slate of candidates, the PS in Etelä-Savo was in fact the backmarker – the last PS constituency executive to 'go it alone'. The decision to contest the 2011 general election with a full list of candidates was not the only option, although the lack of a clear 'lead candidate' – and internal squabbling over who that might be – militated against a possible joint list. The constituency executive was certainly approached for electoral alliances. However, the strong rise in the PS' opinion poll ratings over the summer of 2010 ultimately proved decisive. Thus, with the opinion polls showing PS support in Etelä-Savo running at 12.6% in July 2010 (compared with 10.5% for the PS nationally), the constituency organisation rejected overtures from in turn the Conservatives, Christian Democrats and Greens for an electoral alliance and decided to run a full list of candidates.⁸

It was not just the increased candidate supply but the *configuration of candidate types* in Etelä-Savo that was significant. We noted earlier the existence of three basic types in relation to our depiction of the district-level party candidate system. In the PS' case, only Soini, as party leader, and possibly the controversial anti-Islam blogger, Jussi Halla-aho, came into the category of candidates with *national name-recognition* in 2011. Candidates with *party name-recognition* would probably have included incumbent MPs (such as Pentti Oinonen in Pohjois-Savo); previous SMP MPs (such as Anssi Joutsenlahti, Pekka Kettunen and Lea Mäkipää); 2009 European Parliament election candidates (Lauri Heikkilä, Pirkko Mattila, Kike Elomaa, Vesa-Matti-Saarakkala); to-

gether with prominent national party executive members. It may be assumed that candidates with party name-recognition would have constituency-wide 'support groups'.

Whilst many PS candidates possessed *local name-recognition*, both in Etelä-Savo, and the other two small-M districts electing first-time PS MPs in 2011, there were no national names or indeed those with strong party name-recognition (Rakkolainen was the possible exception). The aim of the PS' national executive was for districts to recruit candidates who had been party members for at least a year and across the country a significant number had established themselves in local politics. Four of the PS' fourteen parliamentary candidates in Etelä-Savo in 2011 had stood for the PS at the 2004 local elections when the party gained 1.3% of the Etelä-Savo vote. Four of the five PS candidates in Mikkeli in 2011 had stood in the 2008 local elections. Three, Pertti Lehtinen, Markku Siitari and Jukka Pyöry, were elected (albeit the latter as a Conservative) whilst another Mikkeli PS candidate, Harri Kivinen, who had not run in the 2008 local elections, was known locally as the chair of the local football club. But the lack of national name-recognition among PS candidates in Etelä-Savo needs emphasis.

So, too, does the presence of defectors from other parties: Pyöry came from the Conservatives and, a similarly late PS recruit, Pekka Ranta from Sulkava, was formerly in the Centre Party. Ranta was on the Centre's European Parliament candidate list in 2004, gaining 877 votes in total and 332 from Etelä-Savo. He topped over one-thousand votes for the PS in 2011. Another prospective Centre defector, Jarkko Wuorinen, from Savonlinna, the deposed chair of *Suomen Yrittäjät*, approached Soini (then still an MEP) in Brussels with a view to a possible PS candidacy but ultimately concluded that his chances of election were not strong enough.

In other ways, the PS' Etelä-Savo candidate-list broadly mirrored that of the party as a whole. Nationally, the PS in 2011 ran the lowest proportion of female candidates (33.2%) of any of the parliamentary parties. In Etelä-Savo the proportion of female candidates was only 28.4%. One of them, Outi Virtanen, was the nominated candidate of an enterprise-driven network within the PS called the 'Complete Change Group' (*Täysmuutos-ryhmä*), which ran a candidate in each of the 14 mainland constituencies. A PS Women's Organisation was founded in June

2009 and Paula Kuitunen, a founder member, was a second female candidate on the 2011 party slate. However, the number of women party activists in the PS Etelä-Savo district party was small.

Nationally, the PS ran the highest proportion of candidates over 60 years (23.9%) of any of the legislative parties and in Etelä-Savo exactly half (50%) of the male candidates were over 60 years. Moreover, the PS in Etelä-Savo went into the 2011 general election without a Youth Organisation and with only one, solitary young candidate. The 28 year-old Mirva Karjalainen from Pieksämäki ran a jointly-organised campaign with the 62 year-old, Ristiina-based Pauli Vahtera. It was hoped the blend of ages would appeal to voters. Three candidates (Rakkolainen, Turunen and Vahtera) were members of *Suomen Yrittäjät*. Indeed, across the whole country twenty-three members of that organisation stood for the PS.

All in all, the PS slate in Etelä-Savo was dominated by long-serving party activists in a constituency witnessing rural depopulation and a deterioration of basic services in communities increasingly populated by retired (non-economically-active) persons. The Etelä-Savo population had declined by over

twenty thousand persons in the three decades running up to the 2011 general election (table 4) whilst in 2011 over one-quarter of the Etelä-Savo population was over 65 years (compared with a national average of 18.8 per cent) and the figure was as high as one-third in Puumala (table 5). Unemployment in Etelä-Savo in December 2011, moreover, stood at 12.1 per cent, almost four percentage points above the national average. Significantly, however, none of the PS candidates in Etelä-Savo numbered among the 11 persons spread across eight of the fourteen mainland constituencies that made up the so-called ‘Halla-aho list’ of candidates known to be critical of (what were seen to be) the lax immigration rules.⁹ None signed the so-called ‘Nuiva Manifesto’.

Strikingly, in relation to the point about local name-recognition, a substantial proportion of the personal vote of PS candidates came from their ‘home turf’ (Arter 2011). Tapio Klen gained over two-thirds of his individual tally from Pieksämäki (table 3). In the case of Jukka Pöyry, still a Conservative as late as November 2010, 78.2% of his personal vote came from Mikkeli. The Pöyry case is particularly interesting since he had attracted the most

Table 4. The population decline in Etelä-Savo, 1980-2011.

1980	175,695
1990	175,233
2000	166,575
2011	153,738

Table 5. The age structure of the Etelä-Savo population (2011).

Age (years)	0–14	15–64	65+	Population
Whole Country	16.4	64.8	18.8	
Etelä-Savo	13.6	61.3	25.1	153,738
Hirvensalmi	11.9	58.0	30.1	2,400
Kangasniemi	12.3	57.5	30.2	6,000
Mikkeli	14.8	63.6	21.6	55,000
Mäntyharju	12.8	58.6	28.7	6,500
Pertunmaa	12.9	56.0	31.1	1,900
Puumala	9.1	57.9	33.0	2,500
Joroinen	15.1	61.2	23.8	5,400
Juva	13.0	58.5	28.5	7,000
Pieksämäki	12.9	61.2	25.8	20,000
Enonkoski	13.1	56.1	30.8	1,600
Heinävesi	12.4	56.2	31.4	3,900
Rantasalmi	12.9	58.9	28.2	4,000
Savonlinna	13.2	61.5	25.3	36,000
Sulkava	11.2	56.4	32.5	2,900

Source: Etelä-Savon Maakuntaliitto.

Conservative votes in Mikkeli at the 2008 local election, resigned from the Conservatives to found his own independent group on the Mikkeli town council (*valtuusto*) in January 2011 and barely three months later claimed the second highest individual poll of all the PS candidates in the constituency. Over three-quarters of his personal vote came from the district's administrative capital (Mikkeli). Yet whilst Pöyry enjoyed local name-recognition, his vote outside Mikkeli was meagre.

Candidates with at best local name-recognition, hoping to gain election, were obliged to engage in pro-active *candidacy-building* beyond their 'home turf' particularly if, as say in the case of Leskinen, they were not based in an urban centre. Equally, since the PS slate in Etelä-Savo in 2011 contained no 'big names' there was the incentive to compete on broadly equal terms and this implied the need for a degree of *candidate differentiation*. We noted earlier that the party label itself would bestow a measure of candidate identification and this was perhaps reflected in the high issue valence on national policy questions. Symptomatically, nine out of the eleven PS candidates in Etelä-Savo who responded to the battery of questions in the national state broadcasting company YLE's 'election machine' 'completely agreed' that there should be a stricter policy towards accepting and supporting immigrants at taxpayers' expense whilst exactly the same proportion 'completely disagreed' with the statement that 'Finland should continue to bail out ailing European economies'. These two questions had high issue salience in the PS' national election campaign but we cannot of course infer that they had similar prominence in the campaigns of the PS candidates in Etelä-Savo. In any event, there was a similar consensus between the PS candidates on the one expressly district-level question in the YLE election machine, namely that 'the resurfacing of motorway 5 between Mikkeli and Juva is a more important transport project in the immediate future than refurbishing the rail network'.

A measure of candidate differentiation and personal-vote-seeking intent is, however, discernible in the way *letters to the local press* were designed to develop an *issue identity*. Pekka Leskinen, the Etelä-Savo PS chair, inveighed against the inequities meted out at the hands of the insurance companies and the medics employed by them.¹⁰ Leskinen, a farmer, was a 12-year-old with his father in Pieksämäki in 1959 when Veikko Vennamo founded the Smallholders'

Party (*Pientalonpoikien puolue*) which in 1966 was renamed the Finnish Rural Party (SMP). His basic 2011 campaign thesis was that the Centre had run down rural services and the Social Democrats had done the same in the towns. Pöyry projected his opposition to the merger of two Mikkeli-based energy companies and expressed disgust at what he saw as the ageist attitudes in the newspaper *Länsi-Savo*.¹¹ Siitari criticised among other things the way in which in Mikkeli and elsewhere employers and agencies, especially in the service sector, were hiring staff on a part-time basis and he emphasised that in providing personal care for the elderly, for example, full-time care-staff were needed. He also insisted that, during the lifetime of the next government, priority should be given to converting part-time jobs into full, long-term and appropriately remunerated positions.¹²

Some PS candidates had what amounted to a *campaign manifesto*. The successful candidate Kaj Turunen's agenda included: an increase in democracy between elections; greater attention to youth questions and the unemployed; recognition for personal care work undertaken by and for family members; the pursuit of a sensible national economic policy; proper recognition of the value of entrepreneurialism; the provision of basic security for ordinary people; a comprehensive overhaul of motorway 5 between Mikkeli and Juva (he gave this top priority); and the retention of teacher-training provision in Savonlinna. On the last point he averred repeatedly¹³ to the way in December 2010 the Eduskunta had voted by 118–67 to reject the proposal from the Mikkeli-based Social Democrat MP Pauliina Viitamies for an additional two-million increase in the budget to secure the future of the teaching-training campus of the University of East Finland in Savonlinna. Turunen noted that all the Etelä-Savo MPs (Viitamies excepted) voted against the additional spending and he was particularly critical of the Green MP, Heli Järvinen, on the matter.

Turunen's 'competitive edge' over his co-partisans derived not only from his 'manifesto', or his vociferous defence of teacher training in Savonlinna, but possibly too the trials and tribulations he experienced as a local entrepreneur. In 1994 Turunen and his wife had rented a former public toilet building in the Savonlinna market-square from the town council and renovated it as a highly successful summer cafeteria (Café Torppa). However, when he sought to buy the property of Café Torppa the council turned

Table 6. The PS candidate vote in the Etelä-Savo municipalities (2011). Mikkeli and district candidates.

Candidate	Hämäläinen*	Kivinen	Lehtinen	Pöyry	Siitari	Vahtera**
Enonkoski	1 (0.1)	3 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (0.6)
Heinävesi	27 (1.2)	18 (0.8)	6 (0.3)	9 (0.4)	26 (1.2)	4 (0.2)
Hirvensalmi	18 (1.4)	34 (2.6)	19 (1.5)	42 (3.2)	29 (2.2)	9 (0.7)
Joroinen	45 (1.6)	50 (1.8)	23 (0.8)	28 (1.0)	35 (1.3)	7 (0.3)
Juva	65 (1.7)	75 (2.0)	60 (1.6)	74 (1.9)	59 (1.5)	28 (0.7)
Kangasniemi	15 (0.5)	10 (0.3)	2 (0.1)	14 (0.4)	17 (0.5)	13 (0.4)
Kerimäki	13 (0.4)	19 (0.6)	9 (0.3)	12 (0.4)	4 (0.1)	19 (0.6)
Mikkeli	441 (1.7)	1110 (4.2)	305 (1.2)	1832 (7.0)	718 (2.7)	307 (1.2)
Mäntyharju	25 (0.7)	71 (2.0)	37 (1.1)	79 (2.3)	106 (3.1)	35 (1.0)
Pertunmaa	2 (0.2)	23 (2.1)	4 (0.4)	10 (0.9)	9 (0.8)	6 (0.6)
Pieksämäki	92 (0.9)	53 (0.5)	31 (0.3)	52 (0.5)	140 (1.4)	52 (0.5)
Punkaharju	14 (0.7)	19 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.1)	10 (0.5)	6 (0.3)
Puumala	14 (0.9)	24 (1.6)	13 (0.9)	23 (1.5)	45 (3.0)	7 (0.5)
Rantasalmi	14 (0.6)	10 (0.5)	11 (0.5)	11 (0.5)	7 (0.3)	5 (0.2)
Ristiina	32 (1.2)	80 (3.1)	37 (1.4)	102 (3.9)	42 (1.6)	98 (3.8)
Savonlinna	36 (0.2)	51 (0.3)	10 (0.1)	39 (0.3)	40 (1.3)	84 (0.6)
Sulkava	22 (1.3)	16 (0.9)	9 (0.5)	12 (0.7)	6 (0.4)	12 (0.7)
Total	876	1,666	576	2,342	1,293	698

*Haukivuori; **Ristiina

The figures in parenthesis represent the candidate vote as a percentage of the total vote in the municipality.

Table 7. The PS candidate vote in Etelä-Savo municipalities (2011). Savonlinna and district candidates.

Candidate	Rakkolainen	Ranta	Turunen
Enonkoski	28 (3.0)	13 (1.4)	72 (7.6)
Heinävesi	94 (4.3)	48 (2.2)	14 (0.6)
Hirvensalmi	9 (0.7)	13 (1.0)	16 (1.2)
Joroinen	90 (3.3)	49 (1.8)	32 (1.2)
Juva	65 (1.7)	76 (2.0)	45 (1.2)
Kangasniemi	13 (0.4)	23 (0.7)	11 (0.3)
Kerimäki	84 (2.7)	43 (1.4)	280 (9.1)
Mikkeli	94 (0.4)	136 (0.5)	191 (0.7)
Mäntyharju	47 (1.4)	46 (1.3)	23 (0.7)
Pertunmaa	10 (0.9)	16 (1.5)	5 (0.5)
Pieksämäki	175 (1.7)	69 (0.7)	56 (0.5)
Punkaharju	70 (3.5)	31 (1.5)	151 (7.5)
Puumala	35 (2.3)	21 (1.4)	29 (1.9)
Rantasalmi	96 (4.3)	53 (2.4)	82 (3.7)
Ristiina	38 (1.5)	11 (0.4)	19 (0.7)
Savonlinna	434 (2.9)	247 (1.6)	1552 (10.3)
Sulkava	43 (2.6)	111 (6.6)	53 (3.1)
Total	1425	1006	2631

The figures in parenthesis represent the individual candidate vote as a percentage of the total vote in the municipality.

Table 8. The PS candidate vote in the Etelä-Savo municipalities (2011). Pieksämäki candidates.

Candidate	Karjalainen	Klen
Enonkoski	3 (0.3)	3 (0.3)
Heinävesi	32 (1.5)	17 (0.8)
Hirvensalmi	17 (1.3)	3 (0.2)
Joroinen	138 (5.0)	47 (1.7)
Juva	47 (1.2)	24 (0.6)
Kangasniemi	22 (0.7)	19 (0.6)
Kerimäki	17 (0.6)	1 (0.0)
Mikkeli	211 (0.8)	77 (0.3)
Mäntyharju	58 (1.7)	15 (0.4)
Pertunmaa	9 (0.8)	4 (0.4)
Pieksämäki	682 (6.7)	613 (6.0)
Punkaharju	23 (1.1)	4 (0.2)
Puumala	23 (1.5)	12 (0.8)
Rantasalmi	21 (0.9)	14 (0.6)
Ristiina	27 (1.0)	7 (0.3)
Savonlinna	110 (0.7)	42 (0.3)
Sulkava	15 (0.9)	5 (0.3)
Total	1,455	907

The figures in parenthesis represent the individual candidate vote as a percentage of the total vote in the municipality.

Table 9. The PS candidate vote in Etelä-Savo municipalities (2011). Kangasniemi and Pertunmaa candidates.

Candidate	Kuitunen*	Leskinen*	Virtanen**
Enonkoski	3 (0.3)	4 (0.4)	0 (0.0)
Heinävesi	16 (0.7)	87 (4.0)	3 (0.1)
Hirvensalmi	11 (0.8)	27 (2.1)	7 (0.5)
Joroinen	25 (0.9)	50 (1.8)	16 (0.6)
Juva	16 (0.4)	61 (1.6)	9 (0.2)
Kangasniemi	69 (2.1)	635 (19.7)	9 (0.3)
Kerimäki	7 (0.2)	16 (0.5)	0 (0.0)
Mikkeli	86 (0.3)	198 (0.8)	57 (0.2)
Mäntyharju	15 (0.4)	72 (2.1)	73 (2.1)
Pertunmaa	2 (0.2)	29 (2.7)	85 (7.9)
Pieksämäki	39 (0.4)	175 (1.7)	24 (0.2)
Punkaharju	7 (0.3)	15 (0.7)	7 (0.3)
Puumala	9 (0.6)	32 (2.1)	11 (0.7)
Rantasalmi	13 (0.6)	45 (2.0)	8 (0.4)
Riistiina	17 (0.7)	48 (1.8)	7 (0.3)
Savonlinna	27 (0.2)	36 (0.2)	11 (0.1)
Sulkava	3 (0.2)	9 (0.5)	1 (0.1)
Total	365	1,539	328

The figures in parenthesis represent the individual candidate vote as percentage of the total vote in the municipality.

*Candidates with Kangasniemi as their home municipality

**Pertunmaa candidate

him down. In autumn 2010 the matter came to a head and Café Torppa's Facebook attracted 1900 sympathetic members backing the sale. Although he insisted it was not much mentioned during the campaign, it is open to question whether Turunen, who was only approved as a PS candidate in December 2010, and who ran only a two-month election campaign, would have been elected without the exposure generated by the "Torppa question".¹⁴

In this last connection, in addition to seeking to build an issue identity and producing a short campaign manifesto, each (PS) candidate had at least a rudimentary *candidate election strategy*, which in essence involved assessing the strengths and weaknesses of co-partisan competitors and finding ways of outflanking them. Tables 6–9 set out the individual candidate (personal) vote for each of the fourteen PS candidates in Etelä-Savo in April 2011 broken down by municipality. Although the PS ran the maximum permitted number of candidates, it can be seen that there was significant spatial variation in the extent of intra-party competition. It was most intense in Mikkeli whereas in municipalities such as Enonkoski and Joroinen there were no PS candidates at all.

In the case of the aforementioned Turunen, he faced just a single co-partisan rival in Savonlinna,

the elderly Erkki Rakkolainen, and doubtless calculated that an energetic campaign, plus the Café Torppa publicity, would enable him to claim the lion's share of the PS vote in the town.¹⁵ The Mikkeli and district PS vote, he knew, would divide roughly five ways and, if the two PS candidates split the party vote in the small town of Pieksämäki, they would not pose a threat. Turunen probably considered that the main challenge to him would come from the *Ilta-lehti*-columnist Pauli Vahtera and the young female candidate Mirva Karjalainen who, as mentioned, ran a joint campaign. He would need to reduce their individual vote tallies possibly by running them together in his electioneering. Turunen would know, of course, that his attack on Järvinen's record on teaching-training provision in Savonlinna would not win him Green votes but it could elevate his candidate status alongside that of an incumbent parliamentarian. Much-needed personal publicity was, in any event, achieved when, (wrongly) fearful of the Rakkolainen threat, the Mikkeli candidates put Turunen forward to appear on an eve-of-polling election panel in Savonlinna organised by the regional press and YLE Etelä-Savo. Receiving the topics in advance, Turunen prepared thoroughly and acquitted himself well against the former MP Backman (Social

Table 10. The effective number of co-partisans (ENCP) in the PS by electoral district at the 2011 general election.

District	M	VAS	SDP	VIHR	KESK	KD	RKP	KOK	PS	Average
Helsinki	21	2 (1)	4 (5)	4 (5)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1 (1)	6 (8)	3 (0)	
ENCP		3.8	11.6	11.6	3.0	6.9*	6.6	14.3	7.0	8.13
Uusimaa	35	1 (2)	7 (7)	3 (4)	2 (4)	1 (1)	3 (3)	11 (11)	7 (2)	
ENCP		15.6	13.5	10.8	10.9	7.7	11.5	8.0	4.5	10.35
Varsinais-Suomi	17	2 (2)	4 (4)	1 (2)	2 (3)	0 (0)	1 (1)	4 (5)	3 (0)	
ENCP		6.3	7.3	7.9	8.4*	8.7	1.3*	9.3	7.6	6.89
Satakunta	9	1 (1)	2 (3)	0 (0)	1 (3)	1 (0)	–	2 (2)	2 (0)	
ENCP		7.5	6.3	9.0	7.0*	1.2*	–	6.8	7.4	6.49
Häme	14	1 (1)	4 (4)	0 (1)	2 (3)	1 (1)	–	3 (4)	3 (0)	
ENCP		6.5	10.0	8.4	7.2	3.4	–	10.2	10.4	8.04
Pirkanmaa	18	1 (2)	4 (5)	1 (1)	2 (3)	1 (1)	–	5 (5)	4 (1)	
ENCP		8.4	9.8	7.0	10.2	7.4	–	12.7	11.1	9.55
Kymi	12	0 (1)	4 (4)	0 (0)	2 (3)	1 (1)	–	2 (3)	3 (0)	
ENCP		3.2	9.8	9.3	6.4	4.4	–	7.9	10.0	7.34
Etelä-Savo	6	0 (0)	2 (1)	0 (1)	2 (2)	0 (0)	–	1 (2)	1 (0)	
ENCP		7.0	5.9	2.9	6.9	1.6*	–	3.2*	10.8	5.47
Pohjois-Savo	9	1 (1)	2 (2)	0 (0)	3 (4)	0 (1)	–	1 (1)	2 (1)	
ENCP		6.7	6.8	5.5	7.7	7.4*	–	9.8	5.9	7.1
Pohjois-Karjala	6	0 (0)	2 (2)	0 (0)	2 (3)	0 (0)	–	1 (1)	1 (0)	
ENCP		8.1	6.4	4.6	5.3	1.2*	–	2.4*	8.2	5.20
Vaasa	17	0 (0)	2 (2)	0 (0)	4 (6)	1 (1)	4 (4)	3 (3)	3 (1)	
ENCP		3.7	4.9	5.2	12.3	6.5	9.9	6.2	10.2	7.38
Keski-Suomi	10	1 (1)	2 (3)	0 (0)	3 (4)	0 (1)	–	2 (1)	2 (0)	
ENCP		6.5	8.0	9.9	5.9	4.7	–	5.8	10.2	7.34
Oulu	18	3 (3)	2 (2)	1 (1)	6 (9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (3)	4 (0)	
ENCP		7.4	9.7	8.2	15.0	4.9*	1.6	12.8	13.9	9.20
Lappi	7	1 (2)	1 (1)	0 (0)	3 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (0)	
ENCP		3.4	2.6	11.8	10.7	5.0	2.3	3.7	10.1	6.21
National										
Average		6.76	8.07	8.03	8.37	5.11	5.55	8.10	9.11	7.47

M = District Magnitude; * = electoral alliance. The figures in parenthesis refer to the number of seats held by the party following the 2007 general election.

Democrats) and Parkkinen, the leader of the Savonlinna town council (Centre), and got substantial amounts of positive feedback.

As part of his ‘product marketing’ strategy Turunen wrote a blog – albeit relatively infrequently – intended to highlight the problems of ordinary people. There were sixteen blog entries over the first four months of 2011. Several took the form of a ‘short story’ with fictitious elements and then a message designed to underline and empathise with the everyday problems of the general public. Turunen’s Facebook went back to the Café Torppa period. In other ways, however, his campaigning was a ‘makeshift’ and very traditional affair.¹⁶ This is broadly in line with Moring and Mykkänen’s assertion (2012, 75) that the (national)

“election winner [PS] was the party that fought the most low-tech campaign”. Remarkably, the winning PS candidate in Etelä-Savo had no ‘support group’. One man distributed leaflets for him in Kerimäki and Turunen did the remaining footslogging with his wife Erja. Pushing leaflets through letter-boxes and holding some election meetings yielded a good vote return in Punkaharju and Enonkoski, where there were no other PS candidates, and his opposition to forced mergers with Savonlinna also produced an electoral dividend in these two localities. Turunen received 1490 euros in donations but the bulk of a low-budget campaign was self-financed.¹⁷

Finally, the PS constituency executive’s *nominati-on strategy* was a vital factor in creating candidate

campaign incentives and in this way maximising the party vote. The absence of ‘magnet candidates’ (‘celebrities’ from outside the world of politics or high-profile national politicians), and the decision not to pursue a lead-candidate strategy, created a level playing field and encouraged strong intra-party competition (Arter 2013). Indeed, the effective number of co-partisans (ENCP) in the PS was comfortably the highest of any of the parties both nationally and among the parties in Etelä-Savo (table 10). This was not accidental: voters were instructed not to go for a lead candidate. The strategy was to optimize the per capita contribution of each and every candidate and, in this connection, the PS constituency chair in Etelä-Savo, Pekka Leskinen (himself a candidate), noted that during the campaign voters asked him all the time whether they should concentrate their support on a particular candidate. The response was that this was not what the PS wanted to see happen.¹⁸

A measure of the PS’ success in creating the conditions for maximum co-partisan competition can be seen in the way relatively few obvious frontrunners emerged. Timo Soini has related how, following a pre-election visit, he was not sure himself who would be elected in Lapland – like Etelä-Savo a small-M district lacking magnet candidates. He was certain one candidate would be elected, but who it would be was another matter.¹⁹ Similarly, only two weeks before the election in the Etelä-Savo constituency, the newspaper *Länsi-Savo* noted that “it is difficult to find a clear favourite on the PS list of candidates”. Whilst the five-way split in the PS’ Mikkeli vote allowed the Savonlinna-based Kaj Turunen to gain election, the only Savonlinna PS candidate mentioned in the *Länsi-Savo* article was not Turunen but the former SMP deputy-MP Erkki Rakkolainen.²⁰ Rakkolainen, as noted, was the PS’ solitary candidate in Etelä-Savo in 2003 gaining over one-fifth of his personal vote from Savonlinna. He had been active in the predecessor SMP since 1972 and at the SMP’s ‘second coming’ under Pekka Vennamo in 1983 was only 63 votes short of being elected. Soini, incidentally, has described how Turunen’s election was also a surprise, albeit “a pleasant one”.²¹ However, the wider point is that the PS’ tail-wind in the national polls created incentives for candidates to campaign for the prize of possible election. In this way, the *per-capita* vote contribution of each candidate was maximised.

Whilst Soini’s personal appeal as party leader was

unquestionably an important contextual factor in attracting PS support, equally important was his decision not to back/endorse any particular candidate in Etelä-Savo. This reinforced the ‘level-playing-field effect’. It is also pertinent to note the absence of ‘top-up’ candidates (*täyte-ehdokkaat*) – that is candidates there largely to make up a full slate and with little interest in, or incentive to campaign hard (Paloheimo 2007). The PS candidate polling the lowest individual vote, Outi Virtanen, was active in the Etelä-Savo party and had been a candidate as early as the 2004 local elections. She became a paid field worker after the election²² and was proposed for a deputy leadership post at the June 2013 PS party conference.

Why the Etelä-Savo result was significant?

When studying the PS and its unprecedented electoral advance in April 2011, two wider points are in order. First, it is essentially unhelpful to characterise it as a populist radical right party (Arter 2010) on the basis of ideological criteria. Mudde (2007) argues that populist radical right (PRR) parties should be defined by reference to their core ideological principles – populism, authoritarianism and nativism (ethno-nationalism) – of which he considers the latter to be the most important. But it is not clear that the pre-eminent ‘ism’ in this *troika* can be conclusively established on a programmatic basis (cf. Vares 2011, 33–46) and, if not, then how? Moreover, programmes and the policy priorities therein vary over time whereas party labels tend to stick – whether ideology-derived or not – and are time-bound (van Spanje 2011, 33). In short, what do we really learn about a party and *the way it works* from the designation PRR party?

Second, in so far as the PS’ ultimate goal was access to coalition government with ‘establishment parties’ it was clearly not an anti-establishment party (AEP) in Abedi’s (2009) terms.²³ Indeed, when early in May 2011, a compromise with Katainen over EU policy broke down,²⁴ Soini tried hard to put together a ‘Eurosceptic coalition’ comprising the PS, Centre and Social Democrats, only for Jutta Urpilainen to get cold feet (cf. Saari 2013, 283).²⁵ In short, the PS in 2011 was – and still is – a strongly *office-seeking party* (Strøm and Müller 1999). In fact, the PS is best viewed on the basis of its origins as belon-

ging to the family of entrepreneurial parties (cf. Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005; Hopkin and Paolucci 1999; De Lange and Art 2011) and as the personal vehicle (Lucardie 2000) of Timo Soini, the party chair since 1997 and its dominant figure.

Party-building was a tortuous process which would warrant an article in its own right. Soini has estimated that at the PS' inception in 1995 there were perhaps 100–150 'hard-core activists' from the SMP days – the likes of Markku Pyöry in Pertunmaa and Jukka Ikonen in Liperi – and no more than 350 members.²⁶ The going was tough and Soini almost quit and joined the Social Democrats before the 1999 general election. Indeed, he has remarked, that gaining election to the Eduskunta in 2003, not the 2011 'jytty', was his biggest achievement. He also played a crucial personal role in recruiting a number of subsequent PS parliamentarians, *inter alia* Ruohonen-Lerner, Oinonen, Virtanen and Niikko (and earlier Tony Halme in 2003). Clearly, giving the PS a 'media face' and making the party newsworthy represented a stiff challenge for a minor party and, in this respect, Soini's presidential campaign in 2006 marked a turning point, as well as strengthening the party's organisational infrastructure. In Etelä-Savo he gained 3.2 per cent of the first-round presidential vote. By the 2009 European Parliament election, Soini's personal vote in Etelä-Savo had risen to just under 9 per cent (cf. 9.8 per cent nationally – 130,715 votes).

However, despite Soini's extensive media coverage in 2011, the PS was not a 'charisma alone' party. Whilst Soini was often equated with the PS, there was more to the PS than Soini. Votes had to be mobilised and, with the abolition of multiple candidacy in 1972, Soini could amass a personal vote in only one constituency (Uusimaa). As the Etelä-Savo case demonstrates, the availability of local name-recognition candidates mattered and the strong intra-party candidate competition between them mattered even more as an agency of vote mobilisation.²⁷ This is not to suggest that the co-partisan competition was necessarily marked by personal animosity (as in the case of the Mikkeli Social Democrats in 2007); simply that the prize of election was a realistic scenario and, without a *de facto* lead candidate, there was every incentive to strive to achieve it. Turunen was elected precisely because co-partisan competition between local candidates covering almost the entire area of the constituency generated an aggregate list total sufficient to elect PS' first MP in Etelä-

Savo even though four non-elected candidates from other parties in the district exceeded his individual vote tally. In short, the Etelä-Savo case points up the salience of the link between candidacy-building, intra-party competition and the structure of the district-level party candidate system – that is the configuration and interaction of the candidate types on the party list.

All in all, the PS constituency executive's nomination strategy, the rejection of electoral alliances, the 'level playing field' created by local candidates lacking in high national/party name-recognition and the opportunism involved in the late recruitment of Turunen, Pöyry (the two best-supported PS candidates) and Ranta (defectors brought personal votes with them) afford an important supply-side perspective on PS vote mobilisation. As the Turunen victory also illustrates, a myriad of local issues (from teaching-training provision to a change in the firearms' legislation) could identify a candidate and influence voter choice and, for a candidate largely unknown in the wider constituency, the Café Torppa episode generated added publicity.

Conclusion

In 2011 the PS fielded the most candidates of any party nationally (equal with the Social Democrats) and the full list in Etelä-Savo represented a sevenfold increase on 2007. The decision to forego electoral alliances in all fourteen mainland constituencies (albeit taken rather tardily in the case of Etelä-Savo) served to reduce the feeling among voters that a PS vote could favour another party (on a joint list) whilst the availability of a local candidate also encouraged a PS vote. Equally, the absence, in the small-M districts (Lapland, Pohjois-Karjala and Etelä-Savo) in particular, of candidates with national or even party name-recognition served to generate strong intra-party competition for the prize of possible election when the PS clearly enjoyed a strong tailwind in the polls. Interestingly, the re-elected Conservative incumbent in Etelä-Savo, Lenita Toivakka, took seriously the prospect of not one but two PS candidates gaining election in the constituency. The PS' candidates sought to develop an issue identity and local, as well as national, issues played a part in the campaign.

Summing up, the PS should be treated as a resi-

lient entrepreneurial party whose breakthrough, whilst owing much to Soini's personal qualities, the salience of Euroscepticism as a national election issue, and a general protest mood among voters, would not have been possible without organisational acumen, electoral system-savvy and the existence of a 'party in the country'. It was of course far from a well-lubricated party machine. Going into the 2011 general election the PS in Etelä-Savo, as noted, had no Youth Organisation²⁸ and no young male candidates in the mould of Vesa-Matti Saarakkala in Vaasa or Olli Immonen in Oulu. Candidates, moreover, had to be urged to form 'support groups', to focus on their own campaign activities and to avoid 'bad mouthing' rival candidates. But, crucially, there was a 'party in the country' and full slates of candidates in every constituency. Without the agency of a supply of competitive local candidates the PS' 'jytty' would not have been possible.

I started by claiming that party research in Finland would seem to be *passé* and that we know surprisingly little about the PS as a political party. I would wager that the point could be widened to include the other legislative parties. Put at its most basic, the answer to the rider question in this piece – why should we know why the PS won a seat in Etelä-Savo? – is simply that it was not inevitable and had to be worked for. A potentially large but indeterminate PS vote had to be translated in actual PS votes through the ballot boxes and, in achieving this, micro-political variables, *inter alia* the constituency party, candidate types, candidate campaign strategies and local factors all played a part. What I am saying in general is two things. The first is that the PS' 2011 'jytty' cannot be understood without reference to the processes of party-building, candidacy-building and intra-party competition and that voter and media perspectives tell only part of the story. They are not enough. Second, I would argue that a supply-side, actor-based perspective should form an essential complementary part of electoral research. Survey data are not enough. Put baldly, it is time to reverse the apparent aversion to 'footslogging' and for researchers to get a closer 'insider understanding' of how parties work. After all, there is a generous comparative parties' literature upon which to draw.

NOTES

¹ An obvious case of voter stereotyping is Railo's statement (2011,

85) that "the PS' potential voters came to understand that the PS' populist ideology corresponded to their values better than any other party..."

² For example, Sudulich and Wall (2009) use the crude numerical formula: the number of co-partisans ÷ district magnitude.

³ Sari Palm was elected from an independent Christian Democrat list in Kymi in 2007 but the district magnitude was twice that of Pohjois-Karjala and Christian Democrat MPs had earlier represented the constituency.

⁴ Interview with Pauliina Viitamies 14.2.2009.

⁵ Interview with Heli Järvinen 23.3.2008.

⁶ Unusually, Etelä-Savo does not contain a single town with a population exceeding fifty-thousand persons although the administrative centre, Mikkeli, in the west, has been approaching that figure.

⁷ In the 2011 election study, 70 per cent of PS voters (n = 184) responded that the belief that their candidate would be elected was decisive or at least influential in their voting choice. Among those who backed the PS in 2007 the quality of the local candidate was as important as that of Soini's merits (albeit note the low n = 21) (Borg 2012, 201). Curiously, among the ten factors offered to all voters (n = 947) in the 2011 election study as possibly affecting their party choice, not one referred to candidates (Borg 2012, 200).

⁸ 'Perussuomalaisille on vauhti päällä' *Länsi-Savo* 11.9.2011.

⁹ 'Tässä on Halla-ahon lista' *Verkkouutiset* 23.11.2010.

¹⁰ 'Ihminen jää usein jalkoihin' *Perussuomalainen* 5/2011.

¹¹ 'Kaikkien ihmisten eduskunta' *Länsi-Savo* 9.2.2011.

¹² 'Pätkätöiden teettäjät ovat puupäitä' *Itä-Savo* 17.2.2011; 'Maksupalvelupiste on köyhien turva' *Länsi-Savo* 15.3.2011; 'Savonlinnan hoivapuisto on tosi tärkeä' *Itä-Savo* 26.3.2011.

¹³ 'Politiikasta on mennyt uskottavuus' *Itä-Savo* 4.2.2011; 'OKL pyörii keskustelun keskiössä' *Itä-Savo* 14.2.2011; 'Jenkan ja polkan tahdissa' *Itä-Savo* 24.2.2011; 'Muiden puolueiden ongelma on uskottavuus' *Itä-Savo* 18.3.2011.

¹⁴ 'Valentinosta tuli kansanedustaja' *Länsi-Savo* 27.6.2011.

¹⁵ Turunen was on the SMP list in the 1988 local election in Savonlinna and had known Rakkolainen two years before that. In fact, it was to Rakkolainen that he offered himself as a candidate in December 2010.

¹⁶ Only just over half of all PS candidates wrote blogs during the 2011 election campaign, less than one-third used You Tube video material and the proportion of candidates on Facebook was lower than any of the other legislative parties (Strandberg 2012, 84).

¹⁷ Interview with Kaj Turunen 12.4.2013.

¹⁸ 'Riemu räjähti kattoon' *Länsi-Savo* 18.4.2011.

¹⁹ Interview with Timo Soini 23.11.2011.

²⁰ 'Etelä-Savossa puhaltua muutospuhuri' *Länsi-Savo* 6.4.2011.

²¹ E-mail from Timo Soini 29.11.2012.

²² 'Kovien akkojen asialla' *Helsingin Sanomat* 28.4.2013.

²³ According to Abedi (2009), a political establishment party is "willing to co-operate with the main governing parties by joining them in a coalition government" – and the PS was certainly willing to do that.

²⁴ Soini's plan was to become minister of finance and then pursue a hawkish, British-style 'strictly in Finland's interests' policy on Europe. Interview with Timo Soini 23.11.2012.

²⁵ In his biography of Eero Heinäluoma, Heikki Saari also relates that Urpilainen had the opportunity of becoming prime minister, albeit at a later stage in the government negotiations. Interestingly, in writing his account Saari did not interview either Urpilainen or Soini.

²⁶ Interview with Timo Soini 4.4.2013.

²⁷ Out of the thirteen reasons for their party choice offered only to those who voted PS in 2011 (n = 184) the characteristics of the candidate were regarded as equally important as those of the party leader Timo Soini (Borg 2012, 201).

²⁸ 'Pieksämällä kaivataan lisää toimijoita' *Perussuomalainen* 1/2011.

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