

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL MANAGEMENT DIMENSIONS OF LOCAL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

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Political management of local election campaigns is the central topic of this article, which presents a wide range of factors and components of the local election campaigns, which will be called dimensions in order to unify the terminology. All dimensions are connected on the basis of the strategic dimension of political management. The dimensions are set through theoretical and empirical findings of authors from diverse environments. Different experiences indicate various dimensions of local election campaigns (normative and systemic, political and environmental, geographical and demographical, organizational and executive, strategic, and the dimensions of sources, interaction, candidate, time, and intensity). All these fundamental dimensions consist of a different number of sub-dimensions. Depending on the environment of the study, they are extremely diverse in meaning. The synthesis of international theoretical and empirical findings can be found in the form of a newly established analytical framework for the exploration of local election campaigns. With the appropriate adjustments to the different contexts of each country, this framework can also be used in the international arena in the field of directly elected representatives of the local self-government authorities. The article closes with a discussion about the empirical testing of the established analytical framework.

Key words: political management; local elections; local election campaign; dimensions; analytical framework.

1 INTRODUCTION: POLITICAL MANAGEMENT OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

The topic of the article represents one of the basic questions in democratic political systems, because the “elections are among the most interesting and important political events in the life of a country. Even non-democratical

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governments reinforce the value of elections by routinely using them to justify a regime's existence" (Medvic 2014, 1). Within the context of rational-legal authority Weber (1962) recognizes the meaning of legitimization of power through clear rules, laws, and regulations. These are defined by the law (Kranjc 2010) and more thoroughly in the context of election campaigns with the principles of the election system (Grad 2004). Elections are an essential part of the fight for political power, while the election campaigns supposedly give meaning to these fights (Herrnson and Campbell 2009). These can be further examined through Schumpeter's (1942) concept of fighting for political power with an election race (election campaign) and with the election results. Elections can therefore be understood as legitimization of receiving and asserting political power. Election campaigns are important because they offer the voters' active participation, an information-based selection of representatives, and a satisfaction of interests. Together with elections, campaigns also provide legitimization of the elected candidate and public policies (Trent et al. 2011).

Election campaigns are a frequently discussed topic within social sciences, specifically in the field of political science and communication studies. Nevertheless there are different definitions of an election campaign that vary due to its complexity. Terminological definition is offered by Safire (1993) in his political dictionary. He explains that the term is taken from military jargon and was later used in a political context in England as the idea that politics is a form of combat. Schumpeter (1942) defines election campaign as an activity connected to a power struggle. Election campaign is also defined as a political activity of opposing political actors, taking place during elections with the goal of achieving a higher number of votes through systematic and organization-based process of informing, convincing, and mobilising the voters (Norris 2002; Schmitt-Beck and Farrell 2002). Agranoff (1976,3) defines election campaigns as a process of (political) management that "coordinates effort to achieve objectives, such as electing a candidate to office, connect various operations that organize and use environmental, human, social and material resources". Mutually complementing definitions offer the best attempt to define election campaigns.

Political management mainly applies to the field of applied political science. The interest in studying political management is increasing due to the process of professionalization of politics, while its role in academic institutions around the world is becoming very important (Johnson 2009a). In the field of political management authors most frequently place management of election campaigns, political counselling, political marketing, researching the competition, lobbying and advocacy, funding, public opinion polling, and other forms of applied knowledge in the political processes (Herrnson 2005; Johnson 2009a; Burton and Shea 2010). The historical beginnings of political management could more broadly be defined through the beginnings of the Western political thought and parallel to Almond's (1996) rising curve of the Western political thought. Furthermore, we must also mention the important contribution of Machiavelli's political thought; in his work *Il Principe* he produced one of the first political manuals for rulers (Machiavelli 1966; Alatri 1980). Harris, Lock, and Rees (2000) place the aforementioned manual in analogy with modern political management. In a more narrow sense, the American political scientist Johnson (2009b) states that political management has primarily evolved in the 1930s in the field of political counselling in local election campaigns in the United States of America (with the establishment of the first company of the kind, called "Campaigns, Inc."). This is supposedly the way the market was presented with a new market sector, which has undergone major growth until today.

The interest in local election campaigns arose no earlier than in the 1980s. The reasons for the previous lack of interest can be found in the opinions about irrelevance, the perception of smallness in comparison with the national election campaigns, and the opinion about the weak link between the election campaign on a local level and its effects. Furthermore, local election campaigns were supposedly seen as extremely complex in nature and difficult to define (Carty and Eagles 2000; Carty et al. 2003). The interest arose through research of election campaigns on the national level and it was not until later that it developed into its own research question (Maarek 1995; Carty and Eagles 2000; Ware 2003). The arguments for the importance of researching local election campaigns can also be found in the historical context, which is seen in the ideal postmodern evolutionary model of the election campaign, where the election campaign returns on a local level (Norris 2002).

Resulting from the addressed issues of researching local election campaigns, this article explores local election campaigns as an independent research question in the field of political science. Through theoretical and empirical research questions authors indicate various components, factors, aspects, and other descriptions of the influences of the election campaigns, which will be called dimensions in order to unify the terminology. This unified term is used by various authors (Carty and Eagles 2000; Carty et al.; Fridkin and Kenney 2008; Olesen 2011). Here we can mainly detect researches of individual dimensions, their proportion and effects, or the connections of certain dimensions. The main shortcoming, addressed in this article, lies in an analytical framework and a complete identification and definition of the dimensions of local election campaigns. This type of void is especially felt in the research of local election campaigns in Slovenia, which are poorly researched in their dimensions.

First part of this article is prepared as an introduction to elections, election campaigns, political management and addressed issues of this article itself. Second part is about the evolution of election campaigns and campaigning. Third part starts with local election campaigns and carries on with theoretical and empirical findings of authors from different environments. All dimensions are connected on the basis of the strategic dimension of political management. Fourth part of the article establishes the strategic analytical framework of contemporary local election campaigns and synthesizes its political management dimensions. The article closes with a discussion about the empirical testing of the established analytical framework.

2 THE EVOLUTION OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS AND CAMPAIGNING

As we could see above, it is difficult to construct a definition due to the always-changing environment, organizers of the election campaigns, communication channels, and the effects of the election campaign. Besides that, the election campaigns have noticeably progressed in the last decades. The reasons for the progress or the evolution of election campaigns can be found in the television, information, and communications revolution, as well as in the political progress (Farrell 1996; Norris 2002). Of particular interest is Norris' typology (2002), which introduces three ideal types of models of evolution: pre-modern, modern, and postmodern election campaign.

A pre-modern election campaign is a campaign in its primary version. The organizers of an election campaign are the political parties or, more precisely, the party leadership, which is in contact with the voters on a local level. This way, the communication between the candidates and the electorate is predominantly direct through field activities, which are not planned long-term. One of the main characteristics of a pre-modern election campaign is an extremely loyal electorate, which gets its information through party newsletters and media. These are connected to the respective political party. A modern election campaign makes a leap from a local to a distinctly national level, with the help of the revolution of television. Television also became the central tool of a one-sided communication. With the transfer of the election campaign on a national level we can also observe the division of the electorate and the political parties and the breakaway from the loyalty to political parties, which is characteristic of pre-modern election campaigns (Norris 2002). The main difference occurs with the performers of an election campaign, meaning partial professionalization with external advisors from the field of political counselling, public relations, public opinion, and others (Plasser 2001). These mainly represent support and professional help, while political parties are the ones that centrally coordinate election campaigns. Postmodern election campaigns are the last phase in the development or the evolution of election campaigns. They are characterised by a permanent election campaign, which means a campaign that never ends and goes on the entire time during the election cycles (Mann and Ornstein 2000; Norris 2002). Another main characteristic is the act of relocation of the election campaign or, in other words, the act of coming back to a local environment, closer to the electorate. The consequence is the use of manifold local communication channels, mostly the use of local media. Furthermore, the postmodern election campaign became drastically more complex than the previous forms since it is characterised by informational and communicational revolution. Both technological revolutions bring the possibility of addressing different electorates and target audiences, as well as a two-sided communication, which is not possible with television. Different profiles of experts play an important part in election campaigns due to the complexity and the aforementioned diversity of the postmodern election campaign (Norris 2002).

From an academic and research point of view, as well as from the point of view of the market sector of political management, it is clear that the election campaign has progressed in the last decades (some authors describe it as having become more 'sophisticated'). This brings certain negative as well as positive consequences for democracy (Farrell 1996; Norris 2002). Field activities still represent an important and predominant role despite the acceptance of communications technology, which is especially true for election campaigns on a local level. We are not talking about replacing personal interaction with the voters, but about promoting political rhetoric through other channels. The positive effects can be seen not only in a better-informed environment, but also mostly in expanding the circle of citizens who receive the political information. At the same time this helps improve the quality of political rhetoric. Besides the positive and beneficent effects there remain the alarming negative effects of the development of the election campaign, originating in the increase of financial resources, intended for the executives of the election campaign. Consequently, this represents a starting advantage for all those who enter the election campaign from the incumbent position (using internal sources) as well as for all those with a higher social status. Furthermore, the political competitors are becoming more and more dependent on various interest groups that help finance the election campaigns. All of this brings uneven starting opportunities in the election campaign and also dependence on

the interest groups. It is difficult to put on the scale the positive and negative consequences since the trend is alarming from the point of view of democracy. Many academics, as well as many candidates, support redefining the mentality and turning back to traditional election campaigns, but it is difficult to expect this since the sophistication of the election campaigns remains an extremely progressive and irreversible trend (Strachan 2003).

Despite all the significance, wide range, and wastefulness of election campaigns, the scientific and research efforts of academics and researchers, and the lucrativeness of the market sector, it is interesting that there is no proven influence of election campaigns on the result of the elections. Here we should keep in mind the diverse opinions of approaches and schools dealing with this question. All different approaches come together in one point (Carmines and Huckfeldt 1996); election campaigns affect the result of the elections at least in some way. We cannot look at an election campaign solely through the prism of its activities and strategies; we have to observe it from a wider point of view, taking into account also the uncontrolled events, activities, and coincidences (Schmitt-Beckand Farrell 2002; Gosnell 1950).

3 LOCAL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS AND ESTABLISHED DIMENSIONS WITH THEIR LINKS TO CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

The development and professionalization of an election campaign can also be seen on a local level where the election campaign is no longer entirely based on field activities and direct personal approach. Specialized and financially more demanding communication techniques are used alongside the traditional ones. This means that the traditional techniques are not disappearing but are complemented with modern techniques of election campaigns. In addition, in local election campaigns, as well as in national ones, there is a real horse race going on with the new techniques of the election campaigns. The arms race progressively continues due to the trend toward professionalization, meaning that whenever one of the candidates uses a new technique or tool, others quickly follow because they cannot afford to be left behind in the election race (Moncrieft and Squire 2005).

On an international and Slovenian level, national election campaigns are better researched than local election campaigns. Politics on a local level, when opposed to politics on a national level, are seen as less important. It is with the exploration and opening of processes on a local level that politics on a local level are put in the foreground (Brezovšek 2004). With this it is given its own space that it deserves, characterised by accessibility, openness to integration, and direct participation of citizens in the issues (Brezovšek 2005). Based on this, we can claim that elections and with it the election campaigns on a local level perform a key role in the preservation of democracy. The elected representatives are given the authority to make decisions in the name of the nation. It is the frequency of elections that also guarantees the sovereignty of the people on a local level (Strachan 2003; de Tocqueville 1969). The meaning of the research of election trends and election campaigns on a local level is supported with the following additional arguments: more representatives of the people are elected on a local level in comparison with the national level; everyday decisions of local authorities are less exposed in the media than the decisions on a national level, yet all decisions play an important part in the lives of the citizens; local and national politics do not happen in a vacuum and that is why the events on a local level significantly affect the events on a national level

and the other way around; local political life sees more direct personal interaction; an election campaign on a local level has a different course and, even with the use of the same techniques, has different effects than an election campaign on a national level (Strachan 2003). In order to prepare strategic analytical framework and synthesis of dimensions, we must first look at theoretical and empirical findings of authors from different environments.

Norris (2002) presents an interesting model that focuses on the communication in election campaigns. She lists the following key factors in the preparation and execution of the strategies in an election campaign (which also apply to local election campaigns): the legal system (electoral system, type of election, other normative definitions of an election campaign); the structure of mass media (with dilemmas such as ownership, control, its own management, and democracy, see Jones 2005; Foster 2010); the organizers of the election campaign (political parties, interest groups); different channels of communication and effects of campaign messages on the target audience (public opinion, political expertise, political relations, political behaviour). Each system works in (political) environment, which determinates it. The lines are fluid (Easton 1957).

Ware (1996) presents four basic types of interaction between the transmitter and the recipient in the context of communication as a central process in all election campaigns: intensive direct contacts (discussion in a circle of acquaintances); non-intensive methods of direct approach (discussion in the context of an election campaign in the field); impersonal interaction (printed advertisements of the election campaign and print media); and indirect interaction (electronic media and radio). Communication at the beginning of the campaign is especially important for a local election campaign since there is less variety of media and sources of information on a local level. In larger political arenas there exists a variety of media that serves as source of information about the candidate and the programme (Strachan 2003).

Whiteley and Seyd (2002) present numerous other factors of an election campaign, such as geographic location, closeness to the electoral competition, organization of local political parties, and the calibre and motivation of the candidate. The following factors are of special importance when taking into account the candidate: personality, the ability to communicate well, leadership skills, professional competence, appearance, and personality traits (Vreg 2004). To this we must also add political skills and background and we must not forget the interest in acting for the social good (Krašovec 2007). Special attention is given to the dilemma of electability of partisan and non-partisan candidates and ballots on a local level (Gilbert 1962). Here we must pose the question whether non-partisan candidates truly are non-partisan, since it has been discovered that they are mostly candidates that were on previous elections connected to one party or another (Haček and Kukovič 2011). However, according to Burton and Shea (2010), the differences between perception and reality bear little meaning.

Whiteley and Seyd (2002) also systemised the process of preparing and executing an election campaign from two different points of view; from the point of view of time, where they present a long-term or permanent election campaign (Mann and Ornstein 2000), a medium-term election campaign, and a short-term election campaign; and from the point of view of organization, where they deal with an election campaign that is centrally organized, centrally coordinated, and locally organized, with the latter supposedly being the most efficient (Clark 2012).

An important part of election campaigns on a local level is their starting point. Here we are talking about the potential advantages and disadvantages, brought about by candidacy from the position of the incumbent or candidacy from the position of the challenger. The advantage of incumbents is mostly the availability of financial and staff resources, with which they solve problems of the local community and, with it, maintain their recognition and popularity. Financial and staff resources also help them with the use of more sophisticated methods of communication (access to new technology and media) (Strachan 2003; Moncrieft and Squire 2005). Disadvantages of candidacy from the position of the incumbent are mostly seen in possible past decisions, which may be exploited for the purpose of a negative election campaign. Often the voters blame current political representatives for all the problems of a certain environment, even when it was beyond the power of the candidate to change them. A disadvantage is also the time constraint of the candidate, running from the position of the incumbent, because he must take care of the activities connected to his function and the activities of the election campaign – or at least give such an appearance. The candidates who candidate from the position of the incumbent are also subject to greater control and expectation from the side of the media (Trent et al. 2011).

We should not neglect the intensity of election campaigns, which depends on numerous factors, most of all on the candidate's characteristics (especially vulnerability of the candidate who candidates from the position of the incumbent), the political environment, and the invested resources (Sulkin 2001). A case of local election campaigns in Canada showed that the possibility of relative predictions about the election results brings significantly less intensive election campaigns (Carty and Eagles 2000). Here we must add that in less competitive environments more traditional methods of election campaigns are used, while competitive environments demand the use of more sophisticated methods, which require more resources (Strachan 2003). Also important are the trends that significantly affect election campaigns on a local level, for example the perception of the economic situation, the popularity of the president, etcetera. The local level does not occur in a vacuum (Whiteley and Seyd 2002; Burton and Shea 2010). In the context of political environment Carty and Eagles (2000) warn about the importance of socio-demographic factors (for example urban or rural environment, number of inhabitants, and others).

An important factor in all election campaigns is the staffing of the performers of election campaigns, seen through the process of the aforementioned professionalization of election campaigns. The execution of an election campaign can be done within a party or individually; semi-professionally, with political parties at the centre, in cooperation with outsourcers; and professionally, characterised by equal role of political parties and outsourcers (Pitchell 1958; Farrell 1996; Plasser 2001; Norris 2002). The costs of political campaigns are also associated with this. According to multiple studies, the costs have lately drastically increased because of the professionalization of election campaigns. Consequently, this brings advantages to the candidates with a better financial starting point (Strachan 2003; Hetherington and Keefe 2007; Panagopoulos and Wielhouwer 2008). Besides the already mentioned financial resources, which play an extremely significant part in election campaigns of larger countries (as an example Wilcox (2005) stresses the election campaigns in the United States of America), staff resources are especially important. Next to the aforesaid candidates and professionals for election campaigns, staff resources comprise mostly of all the participants in an election campaign. Here we can find members of local parties, volunteers, family members, friends, and

other supporters, as well as various groups and organizations in the local environment. It is vital that all the participants are educated (party professionalised) in the execution of election campaigns; otherwise their contribution is meagre. Mere numerosness does not ensure effectiveness in the context of local election campaigns (Deutchman 1966; Christensen and Hogen-Esch 2006).

Opinions of authors differ when it comes to the importance of the contents of an election campaign. According to some, contents are losing their purpose, while others claim that the election contents still remain an important part of election campaigns (Norris 1998; Kustec Lipicer 2010). However, we most certainly cannot neglect the election programmes and contents of an election campaign and their role in election campaigns. Kustec Lipicer (2010) talks about public policy contents as a piece of the mosaic of election campaigns and a factor in the framework of election campaigns. With the goal of avoiding the banality of the contents of political campaigns, she focuses on exploring various politically ideological points of view and concrete public policy contents, offered by all the involved groups of an election campaign. In a local environment the latter could, for example, be depicted with the regulation of the local infrastructure, which is often identified in local contents of an election campaign.

All of the above is connected together by the strategy of an election campaign or the planning of an election campaign, which is, according to some authors, the most important element of political management of election campaigns; it divides responsibility, integrates work, and predicts the basic phases of an election campaign (Christensen and Hogen-Esch 2006; Burton and Shea 2010). The strategy also directs the manner of political communication and is perceived as basic knowledge of all political managers or consultants (Napolitan 1972). For example, the advertisements for an election campaign usually present the candidate's capability, personality, and ideas for the future. That can be characterized as a positive election campaign. Negative election campaign transforms campaigning almost into a real sport spectacle, which is on the one hand interesting for undecided voters, but on the other negative campaign tends to deter interest in politics (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). Besides that, there are other mixed approaches between positive and negative campaign (Faucheux 1998). According to the strategic political communication of election campaigns, campaign theme and message must also be developed. It presents to voters a choice based on clear, simplified, believable and real candidate differences (Faucheux 1998). The strategy of an election campaign also defines the orientation of an election campaign, which can be oriented towards the party, towards the candidate or towards the candidate with the support of different interest groups and organizations (Herrnson 2005). An important strategic moment is unquestionably the pre-election integration of various parties, as well as various candidates, which is a relatively common and known occurrence in Europe (Gonder 2006). In hopes of winning the elections and later gaining power to rule and control the acceptance and implementation of local politics, different types of coalitions are formed in some local communities in the period before the elections (Haček et al. 2008). The importance of using research tools for the preparation of strategies, necessary for locating, collecting, and organising information, is increasing during the time of sophisticated election campaigns (Harris 1957; Gaby and Treusch 1976).

4 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF CONTEMPORARY ELECTION CAMPAIGNS: SYNTHESIS OF DIMENSIONS

Diagram 1 presents the attempt of systematic identification of the dimensions of a local election campaign, according to the set objectives, uniformly adjusted to the terminological starting points, and the synthesis of the above mentioned theoretically-empirical findings of various authors. The diagram is set on the basis of a strategic dimension as a connecting dimension of political management of election campaigns, with the understanding of intertwined dimensions. Besides that, the diagram 1 also depicts the start of filling the research void that exists in this field.

DIAGRAM 1: DIAGRAM OF THE DIMENSIONS OF A LOCAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN



The diagram of a local election campaign portrays nine established dimensions that encompass different parts of local election campaigns. All these fundamental dimensions consist of a different number of sub-dimensions. The normative and systemic dimension defines all the normative regulations of the system of the election campaign and elections. Concretely, we are talking about the definitions of the electoral system, the type of elections, and the execution of the election campaign. The politically-environmental dimension defines the starting point of the election campaign (candidacy from the position of the incumbent, candidacy from the position of the challenger); the competitiveness of the environment and the predictability of election results; the structure and culture of the media system; socio-demographic factors; the content of the election campaign, and general trends. The geographically-demographic dimension defines the geographical characteristics of the environment. In the context of this dimension, geographic location, geographic fracture (to cities, settlements, villages, and quarters), and the closeness to the election race take the central role. The size of the election unit is also an important factor (based on the criteria of the number of inhabitants). The dimension of the candidate defines the candidate as a personality with certain skills, competence, appearance, and with personal traits, interests, and motivation. This dimension also encompasses the categorization of a non-partisan or partisan candidate. The dimension of time and intensity defines the timeline of the execution of the election campaign, which can be long-term or permanent, medium-term, and short-term. It also defines different levels of intensity of the election campaign, which changes according to various factors.

The organizational and executive dimension defines the organization of the election campaign, which can be centrally organized, centrally coordinated, or locally organized; the execution of the election campaign, which can be partisan or individual, semi-professional (central are political parties that work with outsources) or professional (equal role of political parties and outsourcers); and the level of organization of local (partisan) organizations. The dimension of resources defines all the resources of an election campaign, which can be financial, staff-related, or political. The financial sources are represented by financial means; the staff resources are represented by the available human capital; and the political resources are represented by the possibility of connecting with different local groups, civil society organizations, and political organizations. The dimension of interaction defines the communication between the transmitter and the recipient through indirect and direct channels of communication. The dimensions of interaction are the following: intensive direct contact, non-intensive methods of direct approach, impersonal interaction, and indirect interaction. Especially important is the primary interaction of the election campaign. The strategic dimension defines the connection of all the aforementioned dimensions in separate phases and ensures the effectiveness of political management of election campaigns, with the understanding of flexibility. The dimension dictates the use of positive and negative campaign strategies, as well as strategies of mixed approach; directs the political connections before the time of the election; develops the election campaign theme and message; orients the election campaign towards the party, the candidate or candidates, with the support of different interest groups and organizations; and directs the use of research tools for the preparation of a strategy.

5 CONCLUSION

The field of political management of election campaigns is one of the most interesting and among the fastest developing fields of political science by international as well as European standards. The professionalization in politics is giving prominence to political management even in academic institutions (Johnson 2009a). In Slovenian election campaigns we can identify the pre-modern or modern form of professionalization, which is also evident in the specific case of European elections in the years 2004 and 2009 (Deželan et al. 2010). We can logically conclude that the consequences of the less intense evolution and consequently less prominent professionalization of Slovenian election campaigns are visible in the fact that there is less interest for the research of the field of political management of election campaigns in Slovenia. This thesis is also confirmed by a literature review on the topic. This article offers a systematic introduction into the research of the field of local election campaigns in Slovenia since it systematically identifies the dimensions of a local election campaign and later establishes an analytical framework for the research of local election campaigns. The latter can also be used in international arena, with adequate adjustments to the context.

When put together, individual identified dimensions present different parts of local election campaigns, which are emphasized by various authors on the basis of their theoretical and empirical findings. Here we must point out that authors have different conceptions of the meaning of individual dimensions and their content since they explore them from different positions and use different approaches. Furthermore, the environment of their researches also differs. Theoretical and empirical findings of authors often research individual

dimensions in great depth, while disregarding others and believing them to be less prominent. The established analytical framework, however, does not focus on the meaning of individual dimensions in local election campaigns, but represents a unified and uniform scheme on the basis of the connecting strategic dimension of political management. The identified dimensions, connected together in the analytical framework, enable a basic starting point for empirical research.

The main limitation of empirical research can be found in the election campaigns themselves since they represent a complex, fluid, and changeable phenomenon. This is especially true for local election campaigns, which are generally carried out in smaller environments where the contacts are direct, accessible, and open. Besides that, a local election campaign never occurs in a vacuum of time and space, but is a part of miscellaneous subjective and objective factors. That is why this type of research of local election campaigns is a singular methodological challenge that requires a combination of research methods and techniques since they offer the best understanding of the research problem and neutralize the aforementioned restrictions to a maximum (Creswell 2012).

In the future, it would be reasonable to test the established analytical framework for the research of local election campaigns in different countries. With this we would get answers on questions about actual relationships, connections, and meaning of individual dimensions of a local election campaign. Consequently, this would also enable the development of a typology of local election campaigns. Empirical research could depict the characteristics of local election campaigns in the countries under consideration. A wider insight into local election campaigns would surely be achieved with an internationally comparative study that would, in the first phase, demand a research of context of the included countries and, later, test the analytical framework through the empirical part.

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