

Styles of representation in constituencies in the homeland and abroad: the case of Italy

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Abstract

The role orientation of political representatives and candidates is a longstanding concern in studies of democratic representation. The growing trend in countries to allow citizens abroad to candidate in homeland elections from afar provides an interesting opportunity for understanding how international mobility and context influences ideas of representation among these emigrant candidates. In public debates, emigrant candidates are often portrayed as delegates of the emigrant constituencies. However, drawing on the paradigmatic case of Italy and an original dataset comprising emigrant candidates, we show that the perceptions of styles of representation abroad are more complex. Systemic differences between electoral districts at home and abroad are relevant for explaining why and how candidates develop a trustee or delegate orientation.

Keywords: candidates; elections; emigrant; political parties; representation

Introduction

Delegation in representative democracies is a long-standing issue in the history of political thought. This debate originates in the campaign speech by Edmund Burke on how elected (or aspirant) MPs should behave. Should they act as pure delegates of their party voters in the constituency, or as trustees relying on their own independent judgment? The

British politician and philosopher famously leaned toward the second solution (Judge, 1999). However, other scholars have argued that respect for the mandate received by the voters is a cornerstone of representative democracy (Przeworski, Stokes and Manin, 1999). A growing volume of research has investigated whether political candidates or MPs tended to lean toward one side or the other of the ‘independence-mandate’ dichotomy, under which conditions this happens and with which consequences. Such research is increasingly supported by systematically designed candidate surveys which allow for large scale cross-country comparisons.¹

We consider how this still ongoing debate is relevant also across transnational electoral arenas. The majority of countries worldwide have extended voting rights to their citizens abroad (Ellis *et al.*, 2007). In a small but recently increasing number of states, parties can also place candidates in emigrant districts (Collyer, 2014). One of the key arguments in favour of this arrangement is to ensure a more direct representation of emigrant interests along the lines of the delegate style of representation. Yet, we have still to unpack how such emigrant candidates understand their mandate. With this analysis we take a first step in this direction. Drawing on the paradigmatic case of Italy, we focus on three main questions: which perceptions of styles of representation are more likely among candidates at home and abroad, how are they developed and how may we explain differences across these two groups?

These questions contribute to the rapidly growing research field on transnational electoral politics and parties abroad and to the broader literature on candidate orientation. In terms of the literature on transnational electoral politics, recent studies have highlighted why states decide to enfranchise citizens abroad (Turcu and Urbatsch, 2015; Burgess, 2018; Østergaard-Nielsen, Ciornei and Lafleur, 2019) and the impact on emigrant voter turnout (Burgess and Tyburski, 2020; Ciornei and Østergaard-Nielsen, 2020) and partisan support (Turcu and Urbatsch, 2020). More recently studies have highlighted how parties ‘go abroad’ to campaign for the emigrant vote (Burgess, 2018; Kernalegenn and van Haute, 2020; Østergaard-Nielsen and Ciornei, 2019b; Paarlberg, 2019; Rashkova and van der Staak, 2020a, 2020b). However, the relatively few studies of emigrant representation have mainly focused on post-election patterns of substantive representation in homeland parliaments (Østergaard-Nielsen and Ciornei, 2019a; Palop-García, 2018). We have little knowledge about how notions or styles of representation compare among candidates at home and abroad.

Such comparison contributes to the broader understanding of how representative democracy fares in the face of increased voter mobility. Candidates constitute a fundamental link in the relationship between citizens and elites (Vandeleene and De Winter, 2019). It is therefore highly relevant to question not only this new transnational dimension of political representation *per se*, but also if political candidates from abroad and at home have different ideas about how they should behave in political decision-making. Such analysis gives us a first insight into the extent to which political socialization into a different national context, as well as the daunting task of cross border representation of citizens abroad, influence notions of political representation. In continuation, this analysis can help further unpack how parties navigate transnational electoral fields in relation to both candidate selection, campaign strategies and keeping emigrant representatives in line with the party priorities once elected.

The case of Italy is paradigmatic for several reasons. As detailed below the long-standing emigrant trajectory has resulted in no less than 7.5% of the electorate being registered to vote from abroad. Moreover, Italy is one of the few cases where the emigrant vote actually changed the outcome of the election. This happened in 2006 when the emigrant candidates for the Senate secured the majority for the Prodi led left-wing coalition, despite the right-wing coalition gaining more votes. Importantly in this context, the introduction of so-called special emigrant representation in the 18 seats across the Chamber and Senate in 2001 (Lafleur, 2013; Tintori, 2012) was accompanied by a lengthy and polarized debate on the extent to which these representatives could and should represent their emigrant constituencies (Østergaard-Nielsen, Ciornei and Lafleur, 2019).

Our analysis relies on a combination of the Italian Candidates Survey and an original online survey conducted in 2017 among emigrant candidates in the Italian legislative elections of 2013. The 2013 election in Italy is interesting among other things because the ‘independence vs. mandate’ issue turned out to be an important part of the public debate on popular mandate of the outgoing technocratic governments’ austerity policies (see also Tronconi, 2015). In the rest of this paper we will first discuss the literature on styles of representation and present our framework for understanding differences between candidates at home and abroad. Our main findings include that trustee styles of representation are more common in emigrant electoral contexts. In addition, we find that the causes of these perceptions of style tend to follow alternative patterns abroad and at home.

Definitions of styles of representation

Representing is acting on behalf of someone else (Pitkin, 1967). In politics, this dynamic is akin to a *principal-agent* relationship, in which voters can be easily identified as principals, who temporarily delegate representatives as agents responsible for implementing public policies (Powell, 2004). Yet, such definition neglects the nature and contents of a representational role. The issue basically refers to the long-standing debate on styles of political representation. As summarized by Thomassen and Schmitt (1999), the substantive point underlying styles is twofold: *who* should elected members of Parliaments represent and *how* should they do so. Is it better that they act on behalf of the overall nation or rather on behalf of those who voted for them? Should they be taking political decisions on the basis of their inner convictions or with reference to the opinions of those that they represent?

In order to answer these questions, the literature has identified two different ways of understanding representatives' role orientations: focus, i.e. the actual object to be represented (e.g., the entire nation, the party electorate at large, constituency voters, etc.) and style, i.e. the degree of autonomy that one should enjoy while taking political decisions. We focus exclusively on the latter because, to use the words of Andeweg, 'it is this concept of style that has become the standard reference for students of representational roles' (2012: 67). One of the most long-standing and influential conceptualisations is the distinction between *trustees* and *delegates* (e.g. Andeweg, 2012; Eulau et al., 1959). The *trustee* style refers to representatives who deem it appropriate to follow their own judgment during the decision-making process. The *delegate* style means that the primary objective for a representative is to represent the will of the voters. Alongside these two types, Eulau et al. (1959) elaborate also a third one: the *politico*. This category is characterized by 'hybrid' role expectations. Converse and Pierce (1986) suggest an alternative style of representation which reflects the central role of political parties in Western Europe: the *partisan*. This relates to the idea of democracy based on the guiding role of collective actors (so-called *Responsible Party Model*). Consequently, the *partisan* style runs through the ideal continuum between 'mandate' and 'independence' (1986: 499).

The typology of delegates, trustees and partisans has been criticized for being too simplistic (e.g. Andeweg and Thomassen, 2005). Moreover, according to Pitkin (1967), representatives cannot completely identify themselves with the questions or interests of the voters, nor can they completely disregard them. Therefore, measuring styles as purely alternative categories risks being highly misleading, since representational processes - by

their very nature - can neither completely identify with the demands of the voters, nor completely disregard them (Pitkin, 1967). However, arguably being categorized within one type or another may also simply indicate that there is a limited propensity towards a particular style, without denying that the repertoire of representatives' role orientations can be in fact far wider (see also Camatarri and Segatti, 2016).

Despite these criticisms, the original typology of *partisans*, *trustees* and *delegates* is still widely used in the analysis of parliamentary roles and the self-conceptions of political elites' (e.g., Janssen, Chiru and De Winter, 2018). In our analysis we will also draw on these categories. Indeed, although the reality of representational roles may be more complex, the distinction between partisans, trustees and delegates can provide a relevant entry point to take a first cut into candidates' styles and how they compare across domestic and overseas districts.

Styles of representation, the issue of context

Over the past decades, the issue of why candidates and MPs identify with different representational roles has gained attention (e.g. Barnes, 1977; Thomassen and Schmitt, 1999; Andeweg, 2012). Studies on Italy are no exception (Legnante, 2004; Russo and Verzichelli, 2016).

Analyses have identified which factors determine the propensity to adopt a particular style of representation. These factors can be grouped into three different categories. In the first category we find the ideological and organisational characteristics of the party to which the representatives (or the potential representatives) belong. In terms of ideology, studies have shown that in leftist parties a *partisan* style tends to be prominent (Weßels and Giebler, 2011).

The second category regards the personal experiences and political trajectory of the candidate and/or representative. This includes the level of selection (e.g. party leadership, party voters, etc.) and the fact of running (or not) as a former representative in a local or national assembly. For example, some studies have shown that a *partisan* style seems to be more associated both with having held previous parliamentary mandates and with having been a member of a party for many years (e.g. Andeweg and Thomassen, 2005). Moreover, Eulau et al. (1959) demonstrated that in the US a trustee orientation is more likely when representatives feel committed to representing the state of which they are part rather than their electoral district.

The third category of factors comprises all those elements that qualify the context in which representatives and/or candidates operate. For example, the growing heterogeneity of the voters' interests foster the rise of the *trustee* style of representation. This is because an increasingly complex issue-space and increasing shares of independent voters push parties to delegate part of their decision-making powers directly to their elected representatives (Rohrschneider and Whitefield, 2013). According to others, however, the source of a greater diffusion of the trustee style should not be linked to the functional adaptation of parties to changing electorates but rather to the direct influence of the voters themselves. For instance, Fox and Shotts (2009) have argued that voters encourage candidates and/or representatives to develop a trustee style of representation in those competitions where they consider the competence of a candidate – and not his/her partisan ideology – to be their main selection criteria. Other studies have shown that the propensity to adopt a delegate style is more likely among those who candidate in non-competitive electoral districts (Eulau et al., 1959), that is, where the winner could hardly have been different. In addition, recent studies have shown that the electoral system matters. Indeed, candidates appear more inclined to lean toward a partisan style the lower their probability to win in single-member constituencies (Zittel, 2012).

Representation is one of the core themes when countries decide if and how to extend voting rights to their citizens residing abroad. In the majority of countries where emigrants are allowed to vote, their vote is added to the pool of in-country votes and only in a minority of cases are emigrants electing 'their own' representatives. Across both types of electoral systems parties go abroad to capture the emigrant vote (Burgess, 2018; Kernalegenn and van Haute, 2020; Østergaard-Nielsen and Ciornei, 2019b; Paarlberg, 2019; Rashkova and van der Staak, 2020a; Rashkova and van der Staak 2020b). A previous study has found that a higher level of post-election party attention (legislative and non-legislative parliamentary activities) related to emigrant issues is related to previous electoral success abroad no matter if parties have emigrant representatives. Moreover, levels of substantive representation among parties is higher in systems with special emigrant representatives (Østergaard-Nielsen and Ciornei, 2019a). Yet, this does not tell us if the emigrant representatives are taking their main cue from the constituency, themselves or the party when promoting emigrant issues. One of the key political arguments in favour of letting emigrants elect their own candidates in overseas districts is the expectation that emigrant representatives would act as delegates for emigrant interest. However, candidates running their campaign in overseas districts abroad are influenced by a

configuration of contextual factors which differ from those on the domestic electoral scene. Parties and candidates abroad, are faced with the higher cost of navigating the uncertainty and logistical challenges of transnational electoral arenas. Emigrant voting districts span vast geographical territories usually comprising several states and languages. Added to this, the emigrant vote can be volatile. For instance, no matter the domestic results, the majority of the Spanish emigrant voters consistently voted for the incumbent governing party until 2011 elections (Østergaard-Nielsen and Ciornei, 2019b). Such volatility is difficult to predict as emigrant voter preferences remain un-pollled in between elections. Finally, countries such as Italy or Spain with long-standing trajectories of emigration combined with inclusive citizenship laws for emigrant descendants have overseas electorates that span several generations and perhaps therefore also different levels of ‘political distance’ to homeland politics.

Some electoral systems with special representation may seek to ensure a minimum of bottom-up representation through rules related to the residence of the candidates. Until the electoral reform in 2017, Italian legislation obliged parties to only nominate candidates inscribed in the official registry for Italians abroad (AIRE). Parties are therefore forced to scout for party members or sympathizers already residing abroad. Other countries do not oblige candidates for the emigrant districts to reside abroad and thus give parties the possibility to field party notables abroad. For instance, the 2012 legislative election in France saw parties place ‘parachute candidates’ in emigrant districts. One of the more high profile examples was the candidature of Lefebvre for the UMP in North American district. During the campaign emigrant media repeatedly criticized Lefebvre repeatedly for his lack of understanding of the concerns of the emigrants in the district.² In either scenario, parties are faced with the logistical challenge of identifying candidates with their preferred configuration of party loyalty/membership and relevant resources to succeed, such as visibility, networks and funding. It should be noted that the presence of special emigrant parties such as the MAIE in Italy (Associative Movement for Italians Abroad) or USEI (South American Union for Italian Migrants) illustrate that prospective emigrant candidates are not just seeking nomination through homeland political parties but may set up their own parties.

In the light of existing accounts in the field of transnational electoral studies, we propose here three distinct expectations regarding patterns of development of styles of representation in homeland/emigrant electoral constituencies. First, while an argument in

favour of emigrant representatives is their direct link with the constituency then the complex and uncertain electoral environment abroad could work as a disincentive to adopt a delegate style. Indeed, the vastness and heterogeneity of the electoral districts makes it difficult to develop a thorough understanding of the profiles and demands of the voters that one should represent. In parallel, the distance of emigrant constituencies from homeland's party-centered logics of representation makes it less likely that candidates rely on partisan orientations.³ All this considered, *we expect that emigrant candidates will be more associated with a trustee style of representation compared to those in the homeland (H1).*

Similarly, *we also expect that the emigrant candidates need a stronger connection and acquaintance with their district political environment before they claim to be delegates, compared to their homeland-based counterparts (H2).* The delegation issue was strongly mobilized by the Five Star Movement' during the 2013 electoral campaign (e.g. Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2015). This is probably why most of its candidates at home adopted a delegate orientation, even though they had limited political experience (see Camatarri and Segatti, 2016). However, in competitive contexts abroad that are less affected by Italian policy issues and party strategies, we could expect that only candidates with a long-standing experience in the emigrant district will feel more partial to the preferences of their constituency voters (Carey and Shugart, 1995).

In addition, it is also important to bear in mind that styles of representation can be sensitive to how the candidates understands their similarity with their voters in the constituency (see Eulau et al., 1959). Specifically, the less candidates feel mirrored by their party voters on specific policy issue positions, the lower the probability that they will feel motivated to represent their voters' preferences. This assumption has been tested but not found to hold true in the Italian case. In fact, many Italian candidates in the 2013 election chose a delegate style more as a matter of alignment to the anti-establishment rhetoric of their parties rather than on the basis of their voters' policy profiles (for an overview, see Camatarri and Segatti, 2016). However, in emigrant constituencies, the more salient heterogeneity of citizens' preferences makes it more likely that candidates will think of their (dis)similarity with the policy profile of their voters when deciding to pick one style over another. In light of this, *we expect that in the case of emigrant candidates the higher the perception of distance from the policy views of one's own party voters in the constituency,*

the lower the probability of adopting a delegate style. When it comes to homeland candidates, on the other hand, no significant probability changes are expected at increasing levels of distance (H3).

Measuring styles of representation

We focus on the case of the 2013 elections in Italy. Both the country and particular election are particularly relevant for this analysis. In terms of the country, the long-standing trajectory of emigration from Italy has led to a relatively high number of emigrant voters (7,5% of the overall electorate). Also, the turnout among Italian voters abroad is relatively high (40%) compared to emigrant turnout in other countries (Ciornei and Østergaard-Nielsen, 2020).

Importantly in the context of this analysis, the issue of representation took centre stage during the debates of the proposal to extend voting rights to emigrants in 2001. The legislative proposal of Mirko Tremaglia (the National Alliance) aimed to allow emigrant voters to not only vote from afar but also select a total of 18 MPs (12 in the Camera and six in the Senate) across four electoral districts (Europe, North/Central America, South America and ‘the rest of the world’) (Østergaard-Nielsen, Ciornei and Lafleur, 2019). During the parliamentary debates the centre-right parties defended the proposal with the argument that special representatives would guarantee real representation of emigrant interests and avoid that the Italian political parties would send out ‘parachutes’ to capture these emigrant seats and prioritize their own interests rather than those of the emigrants. The most common criticism regarding representation from in particular the centre-left was that the system of special representation with a particular territorial mandate would create ‘ghetto districts’ or ‘Indian reserves’ where the emigrant representatives and by extension the emigrant voters are marginalized by a narrow mandate and linkage instead of representation based on broader national interests.⁴ Thus the concern with the representativity and political influence of overseas candidates and representatives was central, with the delegate style being alternately assessed as the best (or worst) solution to top-down partisan logics of recruitment abroad.

In terms of the election, the 2013 election is particularly interesting for this study because it provides a unique context for testing expectations about candidates' representational styles. In the 2013 campaign period the ‘independence vs. mandate’ issue was particularly heated in public debate, as the outgoing technocratic government was being

strongly accused of implementing austerity policies without having a popular mandate (Tronconi, 2015). Moreover, the 2013 election in Italy can be seen as a critical case in terms of the likelihood for a delegate style among emigrant candidates because the electoral system only allowed for nomination of candidates already residing abroad. This rule is not in place in countries such as France nor in the later election of 2018 in Italy. This aside, the 2013 election was the third election with emigrant voting. Parties had therefore already gained experience with the process of candidate selection abroad avoiding any first election effects (Østergaard-Nielsen and Ciornei, 2019a).

In order to compare the prevalence and causes of different styles of representation at home and abroad we draw on two candidate surveys from the 2013 Italian election. The Italian Candidate Survey focuses exclusively on Italian candidates on the Italian territory and was conducted by the Italian National Election Study in 2013 within the framework of the Comparative Candidates Survey research program (CCS). This survey did not include candidates in emigrant constituencies. We therefore conducted a survey of the emigrant candidates within the context of the Transincor project in 2017. It should be noted that the public debate in Italy on the ‘independence’ vs. ‘mandate’ issue was more distant at the time of conducting this survey. This survey enquired into the profile of the candidates, their motivations to run, their selection process, their campaign strategies and a series of questions regarding their political opinions and perceptions of party strategies, policy issues including emigrant policies and attitudes towards the functioning of Italian democracy.⁵

Through web searches and interactions online with both parties and candidates (by email and/or social networks), we tracked down viable email contacts of approximately 168 (i.e. 74 per cent) of the emigrant candidates in the 2013 election for both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Based on all the procedures highlighted above, the link to the online questionnaire was successfully visualized by overall 89 candidates, 67 of whom completed the survey. This amounts to a response rate of 39.8 per cent of the number of contacts we reached and to a completion rate of 75.3 per cent.

In order to measure styles of representation, we asked how the candidates deem it appropriate to behave once elected if there is a divergence between: 1) The position of their party and the opinion of their constituency voters; 2) The candidates’ opinion and the opinion of their constituency voters; 3) The candidates’ opinion and the opinion of their party.⁶ In line with previous studies (e.g. Önnudóttir, 2014), the answers given to two of the questions above have been alternatively used to define the three types of styles

that were used. Candidates who said they wanted to follow their party in any case (item one and three) were classified as *partisans*. Those who believe that the opinion of the MP should always prevail (items two and three) have been identified as *trustees*. Finally, those prioritizing the opinion of their constituents in both item one and item two were coded as delegates, while those falling into neither of the previous categories have been excluded as not classifiable cases.⁷

In line with the existing literature, our independent and control variables belong to three clusters of factors: personal experiences of the candidate, party level characteristics and contextual level features. Regarding the first cluster, previous studies have shown that political career paths can influence candidates' propensity toward one style rather than another (Andeweg and Thomassen, 2005). Our models will therefore include information about previous party service. This will be measured as a dummy which takes the value 1 when the candidate declares to have served a party in Italy or abroad respectively, either at the local, regional or national level. For the same reason, we will also include a dummy for candidates who have been previously elected. We also include involvement and contacts with local civil society through an index synthetizing the extension of candidates' membership of associations. The variable ranges from 0 (the candidate is not a member of any associations) to 5 (the candidate is member of all the different association types covered by our survey).⁸

Alongside these experience-related variables, we also test the effect of perceptions of candidate-party voters policy distance. Candidates in both surveys were asked to locate the position of themselves and their party voters in the constituency on a scale from 0 to 10 on the following four issues: European integration (0=has gone too far; 10=should be pushed further), taxes vs. public services (0=prefer to cut taxes even if services are reduced; 10=prefer to expand services even if taxes are increased), new forms of family (0=new forms of family should be recognized; 10=traditional family should be safeguarded) and immigration in Italy (0=we receive too many immigrants; 10=we could receive many more immigrants). Subsequently, for each question, we computed the absolute distance between each candidate's self-placement and the position that the candidate attributed to his/her party voters in the constituency. Then we created an index of the average per candidate of the perceived distances on the four policy issues above. This index concerns perceptions (and not actual distances) because our aim is not to understand how emigrant elites and citizens objectively position themselves on some policy space.

Rather, we intend to focus on the choice of a style of representation and its underlying factors, in constituencies at home and abroad.

At the party level, we included a dummy for belonging to leftist parties at the 2013 General Elections, because this can affect the attitudes and perceptions of candidates.⁹ Some candidates, in particular in the South American district, run for parties set up by the emigrants themselves. The main emigrant parties such as the Associative Movement of Migrants Abroad (MAIE) or the South American Union for Italian Migrants (USEI) have fielded successful candidates in several elections. It could be argued that these candidates would be likely to have a stronger likelihood of leaning towards a delegate style. However, we have too few observations to control for this intuition at this point.

Regarding the third cluster of variables accounting for the contextual factors, we constructed a dummy accounting for the emigrant/homeland character of the constituency in which the candidate ran.

Additional controls at the individual level include gender, education level, occupation (being employed vs. not being employed) and left-right self-placement. We estimate our findings based on five binary logistic regressions, where each style at the centre of the above hypotheses (i.e. trustee and delegate) will in turn assume the value of one, while all the others will be kept at “0”. In this respect, it is important to specify that, as the original styles variable consists of three states (namely, trustee, partisan and delegate), an empirical approach based on multinomial logistic regressions would be normally recommended. However, since our research expectations relate to what affects the prominence of a specific style over all the others (trustee vs. others and delegate vs. others respectively), we have opted for a binary approach. As a robustness check, we have conducted the multinomial strategy in parallel and ascertained that its results do not differ significantly from the binomial estimations. Please refer to Supplementary Table S1 and Figure S2 for an overview of the multinomial output. Please refer instead to Table 1 here below for a complete list of the predictors that we use.

[Table 1 about here]

Findings

Before getting into the detail of our statistical tests, it is relevant to present the general profile of candidates abroad and at home. The structural differences between these two

contexts highlighted above could suggest that there would be significant differences between the profiles of these two sets of candidates. Yet, in terms of socio-economic variables, emigrant candidates in 2013 do not appear to differ markedly from the general field of Italian candidates (reference anonymized). Candidates abroad and at home are predominantly male and highly educated, with more than 60 per cent holding a university degree (see Figure 1). One difference that stands out is that emigrant candidates are on average older than their counterparts running in districts in Italy (approximately 18 per cent of emigrant respondents are over the age of 65, compared to less than 10 per cent in Italy). Emigrant candidates are also more likely to be self-employed compared to their counterparts in the homeland (approximately 47.7 per cent vs. 40 per cent). Even so, the social and economic profiles of homeland and emigrant Italian candidates are largely similar. Such a finding leaves room for a possibly stronger role of political contexts in explaining differences in styles of representation, as assumed by our first hypothesis (H1).

[Figure 1 about here]

It is important to note that the proportions of styles of representation among candidates at home are slightly different. In the survey of candidates in Italy, 38 per cent think of themselves as trustees, 35 per cent as delegates and 27 per cent as the partisans. In the survey of candidates abroad, the distribution among different styles is 43 per cent trustees, 38 per cent delegates and partisans 18 per cent. Regarding the territorial distribution, emigrant trustees and partisans appear to be concentrated especially in the European district (77 per cent and 55 per cent of them respectively). In contrast, delegates are more prevalent in the South American constituency, which is also the area where a more long-standing emigration trajectory may favour an increased familiarity of the candidates with their local political environment. Interestingly, the South American district has the highest number of candidates born in the district (Italian Ministry of the Interior).¹⁰ According to our survey, this district also has the highest number of candidates with dual citizenship. Approximately 38 per cent of those who declared to have a second nationality reside in the South American district.

In Models 1-5, we estimate whether, *coeteris paribus*, emigrant characteristics play a specific role in the development of a trustee and delegate style respectively (see Table 2). Model 1 shows that being an emigrant candidate has a significant effect on the probability of understanding oneself as a trustee style candidate ($B=0.738$; $p<0.05$).

Keeping all other factors at a fixed level, being an emigrant candidate increases such probability by 0.17 on a scale from 0 to 1, while it decreases the likelihood of being either a delegate or a partisan by the same amount (for further details, please refer to Supplementary Figure S1). In more general terms, also the education level and the variety of one candidate's association memberships seems to play a role. Considering our sample of candidates in its entirety, holding a university degree implies a 96 per cent increase in the probability to develop a trustee style, while a one unit increase in the types of one candidate's association memberships increases this same probability by approximately 21 per cent. Moreover, variables usually associated with a trustee style, e.g. being an elected representative, do not appear to have any significance here. Regardless of this, Model 1 clearly confirms the expectations of H1. Candidates from emigrant districts are significantly more likely to identify with a trustee style compared to candidates within Italy.

[Table 2 about here]

The fact that a trustee style is relatively emigrant-specific in the Italian context makes it particularly interesting to understand the conditions under which emigrant candidates become more likely to lean toward the opposite side of the mandate-independence dichotomy, i.e. to develop a delegate style of representation. Here is where H2 comes into play. Models 2 to 4 estimate the effects of different indicators of 'experience' with one's own constituency (i.e. years lived in the constituency, extension of association memberships and party service), on having a delegate style. All three interactive terms have a positive sign and those involving years lived in the constituency and previous party service respectively are significant at $p < 0.05$. This information, together with the constantly negative main effect of our dummy for emigrant candidates, confirms H2. Figure 2 shows the probability of having a delegate style at different levels of political experience (association memberships and acquaintance to one's own constituency) for emigrant and homeland candidates. The probability trends of the two groups tend to differ substantively. Indeed, in the case of emigrant candidates, a more in-depth knowledge and involvement in their political environment increases the chances of having a delegate orientation toward one's own constituency confirming our second hypothesis (H2). For homeland candidates it tends to be the other way around. This might well relate to the fact that in Italy the adoption of a delegate orientation in 2013 was fairly politicized in debates on 'amateur

politicians' particularly by the 5 Star Movement (Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2015). Meanwhile, it is likely that when recruiting candidates abroad, parties acknowledge the value of contextual awareness and experience of candidates, as a pre-condition to appropriately represent the interests of a territorial constituency.

However, it should be recognized that this explanation does not reflected in the same way across all the relevant graphs. The most convincing of these latter is the one representing the impact of the number of years that candidates have lived in the constituency. Indeed, the longer the candidates have resided in the constituency abroad, the more they are likely to assume a delegate style compared to candidates in Italy. In the two following graphs, with past party service and number of association memberships on the x axis respectively, differences in probability trends between candidates abroad and at home appear not as sharp, but are overall similar. All this allows us to conclude that, as expected, acquaintance with one's own political environment has some triggering role with respect to a delegate orientation.

[Figure 2 about here]

Regarding the relationship between perceived distance on policy issues and styles of representation (H3), the lower right graph of Figure 2, which is derived from Model 5, provides two main answers in this respect. First, as expected, the probability of adopting a delegate style remains rather stable at increasing levels of perceived distance on policy issues from party voters in the constituency in the case of homeland candidates. This finding is in line with previous studies of this issue (Camatarri and Segatti, 2016). It confirms that homeland candidates tend to decide their style regardless of how they see their relationship with their party voters with respect to policy positions. However, as expected things work differently abroad. Emigrant candidates present decreasing probabilities of being delegates at increasing levels of perceived policy distance from their party voters, confirming H3. Such probabilities tend to become even lower than those of homeland candidates and lose statistical significance in correspondence of a value of 4 on the index of distance. As mentioned earlier, these findings suggest that in the homeland constituency orientations are mostly assimilated to anti-establishment attitudes, since many candidates tend to perceive themselves as an expression of the *vox populi*, in line with their national party's rhetoric (Stavrakakis, Andreadis and Katsambekis, 2017).¹¹ In emigrant districts, however, adopting a delegate orientation is a more policy-based process, as only

candidates feeling sufficiently close to (as well as experienced with) the political views of their local party voters are motivated to make such a choice.

Conclusions

The longstanding debate on delegation in representative democracies is highly relevant to the research field on transnational electoral arenas. The representation of non-resident citizens in homeland parliaments is one of the core principles behind their enfranchisement in general and the system of special emigrant candidates and overseas electoral districts in particular. In public debates, including in the case of Italy, this points to an expectation of emigrant representatives as delegates of emigrant interests. However, our analysis shows that perceptions of representational roles among emigrant elites is more varied and complex.

Among the key findings of this analysis is that emigrant candidates perceive themselves as trustees to a larger extent than their counterparts at home. That is, they see themselves as more independent from both their voters and political parties than is the case among their counterparts in Italy. Yet, compared to the in-country candidates, emigrant candidates are more likely to perceive themselves as delegates the longer they reside in the district abroad. That is, the more experience and trajectory they have in the emigrant district, the more they perceive their role as representing the interest of their voters. Together these findings point to the relevance of context for understanding how candidates understand their representative style. The political environment abroad provides a different set of options, incentives and strategies for parties and candidates in order to maximize their electoral success.

Another difference between candidates at home and abroad is how perceptions of distance from the voters affect the propensity to adopt a delegate style of representation. Indeed, candidates at home tend to adopt a delegate orientation irrespective of how they are representative of their own party voters' preferences. Candidates abroad appear to care much more about that aspect, as they are likely to declare themselves as delegates only if they perceive their own opinions on policy issues to be not too far from those of their party voters in the constituency.

In turn the comparison between candidates abroad and at home is also relevant for the general understanding of perceptions of styles of representation by highlighting the relevance of context. It provides a first cut into an understanding of how candidates

abroad are influenced – or not – by their challenging electoral environment compared to their in-country colleagues. A more in-depth study of the Italian case can highlight further how these perceptions differ across districts, emigrant trajectories and political parties. Importantly, further broader systematic studies, based on a synchronized collection of data at home and abroad can compare the extent to which these dynamics in case of Italy can be identified in other cases with special emigrant representatives. In a world where an increasing number of countries debate and grant external voting rights and parties go abroad to link up with emigrant voters, further comparative analysis of styles of representation can provide an interesting optic for understanding dynamics of representation of mobile citizens.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to report.

Footnotes

¹ See, www.comparativecandidates.org

² Le Petit Journal, Gaétan Mathieu: Désaveu profond à l'UMP envers Frédéric Lefebvre, 26/3 2013, online article saved on 8/3 2016.

³ Contrary to the homeland's closed-list system in place in 2013, where every candidate had an incentive to maximize the votes for his or her party, emigrant competition is traditionally more candidate-centered, as it provides for open lists and preference votes, thus encouraging competition among members of the same party.

⁴ Parliamentary debate on TREMAGLIA ed altri: "Norme per l'esercizio del diritto di voto all'estero dei cittadini italiani residenti oltreconfine" (339), http://legxiv.camera.it/_dati/leg14/lavori/schedela/trovaschedacamera_wai.asp?PDL=339

⁵ Differently from CCS survey, the Transincor survey has been conducted by means of Computer Assisted Web Interviews (CAWI) and has been programmed by the software Qualtrics. Relying on a web survey was more a necessity than an actual choice in our case, due to the world-wide residences of our respondents.

⁶ The same questions are included in the general questionnaire of the Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS). Therefore, they allow to compare Italy with other European countries.

⁷ As they are not included in the original typology, all unclassified cases have been excluded from our analyses.

⁸ The types of associations on the basis of which we constructed this variable are: trade unions, cultural associations, social associations, professional associations, religious associations and sports clubs.

⁹ Leftist parties refer to a more or less explicit leftist outlook at the 2013 Italian General Election (i.e. the Democratic Party, Civic Revolution and Left Ecology Freedom).

¹⁰ For further information please visit: <http://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it/>.

¹¹ In support of this, please also note that the vast majority (approximately 75%) of Five Star Movement candidates in Italy in 2013 were classified as delegates (for further details, see Camatarri and Segatti, 2016).

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List of Tables

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of independent variables

Variable	Mean	Min.	Max.	Standard deviation	N
Left-right self-placement	4,49	0	10	2,12	687
Years in constituency	39,06	1	75	2,12	642
Emigrant candidate (Yes=1)	0,09	0	1	0,29	739
Elected (Yes=1)	0,22	0	1	0,42	739
Belonging to left party (Yes=1)	0,38	0	1	0,49	736
Employed (Yes=1)	0,86	0	1	0,35	729
Education (University Degree = 1)	0,69	0	1	0,46	736
Gender (female=1)	0,27	0	1	0,45	736
Extension of association membership	1,43	0	5	1,19	739
Previous party service (Yes=1)	0,56	0	1	0,50	739
Perceived issue distance from own party voters in the constituency	1,28	0	8,5	1,13	661

Table 2 Explaining the probability of being trustees and of having a delegate style, in the homeland and abroad

VARIABLES	Model 1 (<i>Trustee=1</i>)	Model 2 (<i>Delegate=1</i>)	Model 3 (<i>Delegate=1</i>)	Model 4 (<i>Delegate=1</i>)	Model 5 (<i>Delegate=1</i>)
Left-right self-placement	0.0338 (0.0609)	-0.113* (0.0631)	-0.123** (0.0628)	-0.123** (0.0628)	-0.115* (0.0630)
Years in constituency	-0.00700 (0.00676)	-0.00896 (0.00759)	-0.00287 (0.00711)	-0.00265 (0.00711)	-0.00259 (0.00708)
Emigrant candidate (Yes=1)	0.738** (0.353)	-2.285*** (0.799)	-1.361** (0.552)	-1.202*** (0.463)	-0.282 (0.529)
Elected (Yes=1)	-0.0123 (0.250)	-0.545* (0.294)	-0.556* (0.294)	-0.552* (0.294)	-0.578** (0.292)
Belonging to left party (Yes=1)	0.490 (0.300)	-1.392*** (0.328)	-1.494*** (0.328)	-1.458*** (0.327)	-1.408*** (0.328)
Scope of association memberships	0.187** (0.0820)	-0.0492 (0.0890)	-0.0737 (0.0916)	-0.0380 (0.0884)	-0.0365 (0.0885)
Previous party service (Yes=1)	0.0963 (0.222)	-0.456** (0.226)	-0.424* (0.226)	-0.549** (0.232)	-0.430* (0.226)
Perceived issue distance from own party voters in constituency	0.0779 (0.0822)	-0.0299 (0.0892)	-0.0462 (0.0880)	-0.0495 (0.0885)	0.00101 (0.0946)
Employed (Yes=1)	0.172 (0.289)	-0.190 (0.301)	-0.263 (0.300)	-0.196 (0.302)	-0.276 (0.298)
Education (University Degree = 1)	0.674*** (0.219)	-0.729*** (0.220)	-0.776*** (0.219)	-0.754*** (0.219)	-0.787*** (0.218)
Gender (female=1)	-0.175 (0.231)	0.0572 (0.252)	0.135 (0.252)	0.126 (0.251)	0.0993 (0.250)
Emigrant candidate*Years in constituency		0.0529** (0.0222)			
Emigrant candidate*Scope of association memberships			0.572* (0.318)		
Emigrant candidate*Previous party service				1.686** (0.783)	
Emigrant candidate*Perceived issue distance from own party voters in the constituency					-0.302 (0.274)
Constant	-1.633*** (0.545)	1.889*** (0.559)	1.840*** (0.557)	1.774*** (0.556)	1.684*** (0.556)
Observations	500	500	500	500	500

Standard errors in parentheses
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Socio-demographic characteristics of candidates, in Italy and abroad (%)

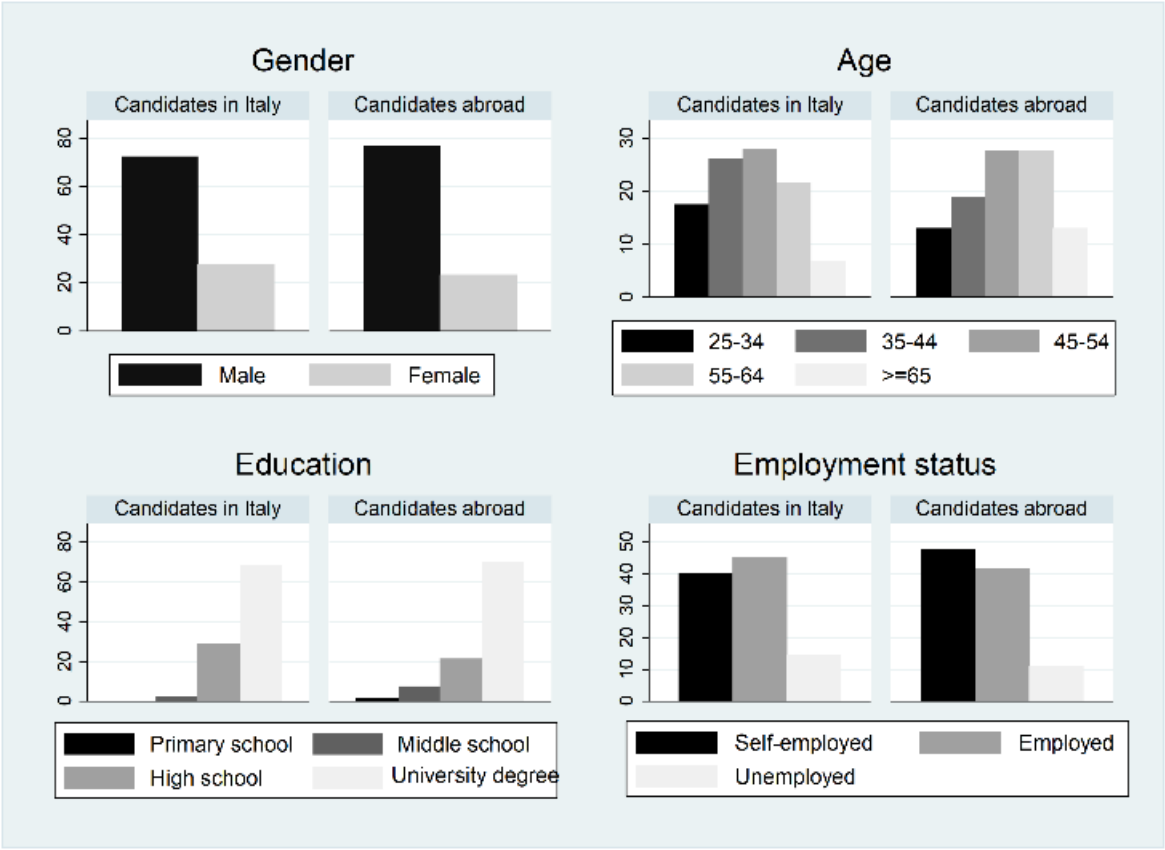
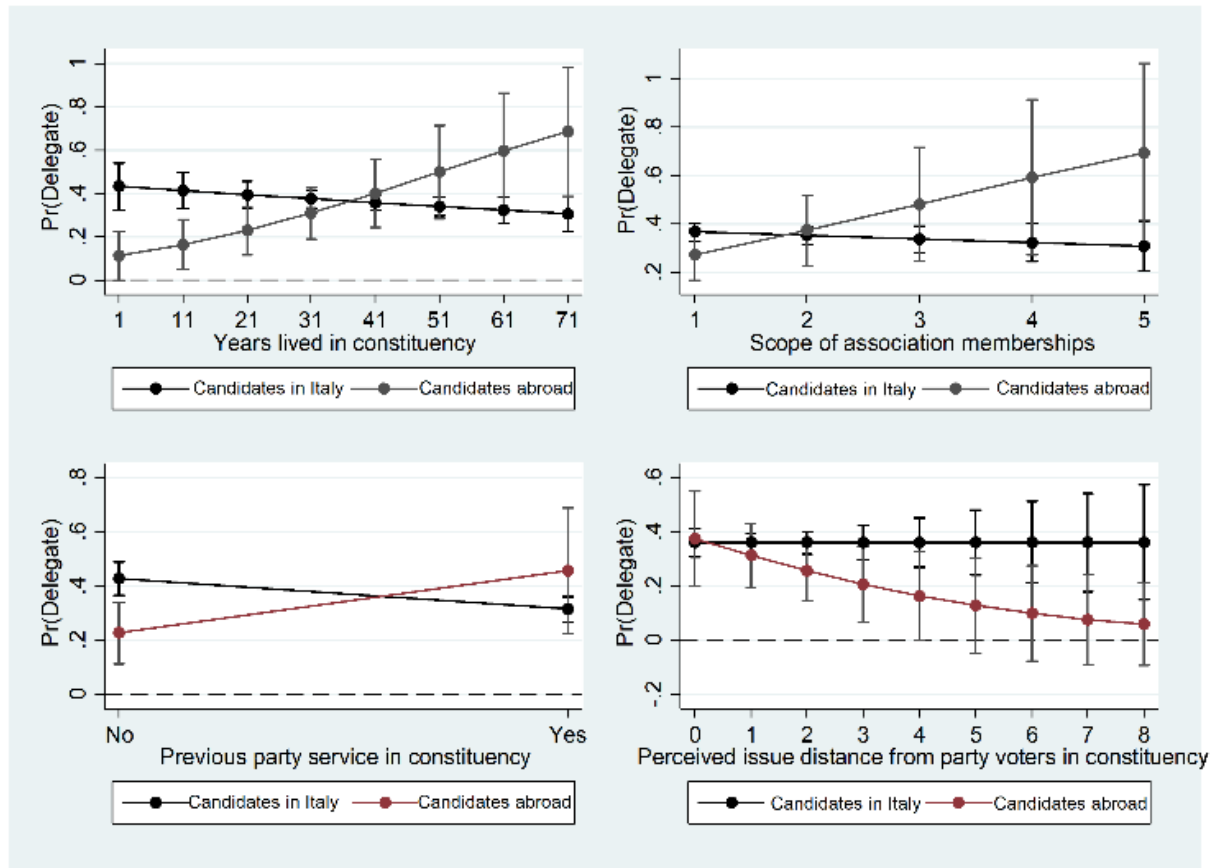


Figure 2 - Probability of adopting a delegate style at different levels of familiarity with the political environment and perceived distance from constituency party voters, in Italy and abroad



Note: 90% CI

Supplementary Materials

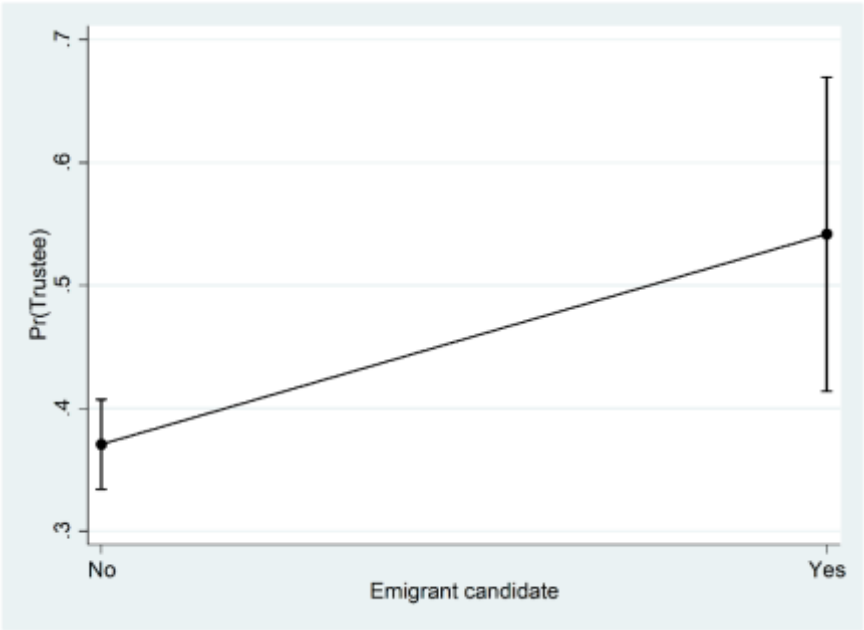
Supplementary Table S1 Explaining styles of representation in the homeland and abroad by applying an alternative classification algorithm to the data (multinomial logistic regressions)

VARIABLES	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	<i>Delegate</i>	<i>Trustee</i>	<i>Delegate</i>	<i>Trustee</i>	<i>Delegate</i>	<i>Trustee</i>	<i>Delegate</i>	<i>Trustee</i>	<i>Delegate</i>	<i>Trustee</i>
Left-right selfplacement	-0.167** (0.0793)	-0.0730 (0.0780)	-0.160** (0.0797)	-0.0755 (0.0783)	-0.168** (0.0797)	-0.0734 (0.0784)	-0.168** (0.0806)	-0.0738 (0.0792)	-0.166** (0.0799)	-0.0819 (0.0789)
Years in constituency	-0.0106 (0.00888)	-0.0134 (0.00851)	-0.0157* (0.00945)	-0.0113 (0.00914)	-0.0113 (0.00892)	-0.0133 (0.00853)	-0.0114 (0.00898)	-0.0136 (0.00857)	-0.0107 (0.00888)	-0.0130 (0.00853)
Emigrant candidate	-0.369 (0.506)	0.496 (0.467)	-1.706* (1.007)	0.754 (0.833)	-1.059 (0.706)	0.475 (0.618)	-1.278** (0.576)	-0.116 (0.518)	-0.243 (0.687)	0.104 (0.650)
Elected (Yes=1)	-0.752** (0.331)	-0.315 (0.282)	-0.732** (0.332)	-0.324 (0.282)	-0.735** (0.332)	-0.316 (0.283)	-0.718** (0.334)	-0.286 (0.283)	-0.753** (0.331)	-0.307 (0.282)
Belonging to left party (Yes=1)	-1.687*** (0.401)	-0.426 (0.376)	-1.659*** (0.402)	-0.440 (0.376)	-1.744*** (0.404)	-0.418 (0.379)	-1.723*** (0.405)	-0.456 (0.379)	-1.688*** (0.403)	-0.464 (0.379)
Scope of association memberships	0.116 (0.111)	0.243** (0.103)	0.104 (0.111)	0.247** (0.103)	0.0772 (0.114)	0.246** (0.106)	0.113 (0.112)	0.240** (0.104)	0.115 (0.111)	0.244** (0.103)
Previous party service (Yes=1)	-0.585** (0.284)	-0.252 (0.281)	-0.603** (0.285)	-0.248 (0.282)	-0.574** (0.285)	-0.251 (0.281)	-0.795*** (0.297)	-0.403 (0.297)	-0.583** (0.285)	-0.253 (0.281)
Perceived issue distance from party voters	0.0186 (0.111)	0.0930 (0.104)	0.0250 (0.112)	0.0882 (0.104)	0.0137 (0.112)	0.0948 (0.104)	0.00140 (0.113)	0.0813 (0.105)	0.0302 (0.118)	0.0506 (0.114)
Employed (Yes=1)	-0.246 (0.364)	0.0392 (0.356)	-0.183 (0.367)	0.0158 (0.358)	-0.239 (0.366)	0.0376 (0.356)	-0.135 (0.373)	0.0928 (0.361)	-0.251 (0.365)	0.0370 (0.356)
Education (University Degree=1)	-0.592** (0.267)	0.333 (0.269)	-0.553** (0.269)	0.303 (0.272)	-0.579** (0.268)	0.332 (0.269)	-0.537** (0.269)	0.359 (0.270)	-0.592** (0.267)	0.331 (0.270)
Gender (female=1)	-0.00435 (0.299)	-0.178 (0.277)	-0.0395 (0.301)	-0.162 (0.278)	0.0261 (0.301)	-0.177 (0.278)	0.0138 (0.301)	-0.172 (0.278)	-0.00762 (0.300)	-0.178 (0.278)

Emigrant candidate*Years in constituency			0.0426	-0.0125						
			(0.0283)	(0.0267)						
Emigrant candidate*Scope of assoc. membership					0.638	0.0518				
					(0.453)	(0.406)				
Emigrant candidate*previous party service							14.83	13.79		
							(396.5)	(396.5)		
Emigrant candidate*perceived issue distance from party voters									-0.104	0.242
									(0.360)	(0.305)
Constant	3.013***	0.915	3.123***	0.886	3.093***	0.901	3.087***	0.998	3.005***	1.007
	(0.724)	(0.730)	(0.728)	(0.735)	(0.729)	(0.738)	(0.733)	(0.738)	(0.728)	(0.738)
Observations	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500

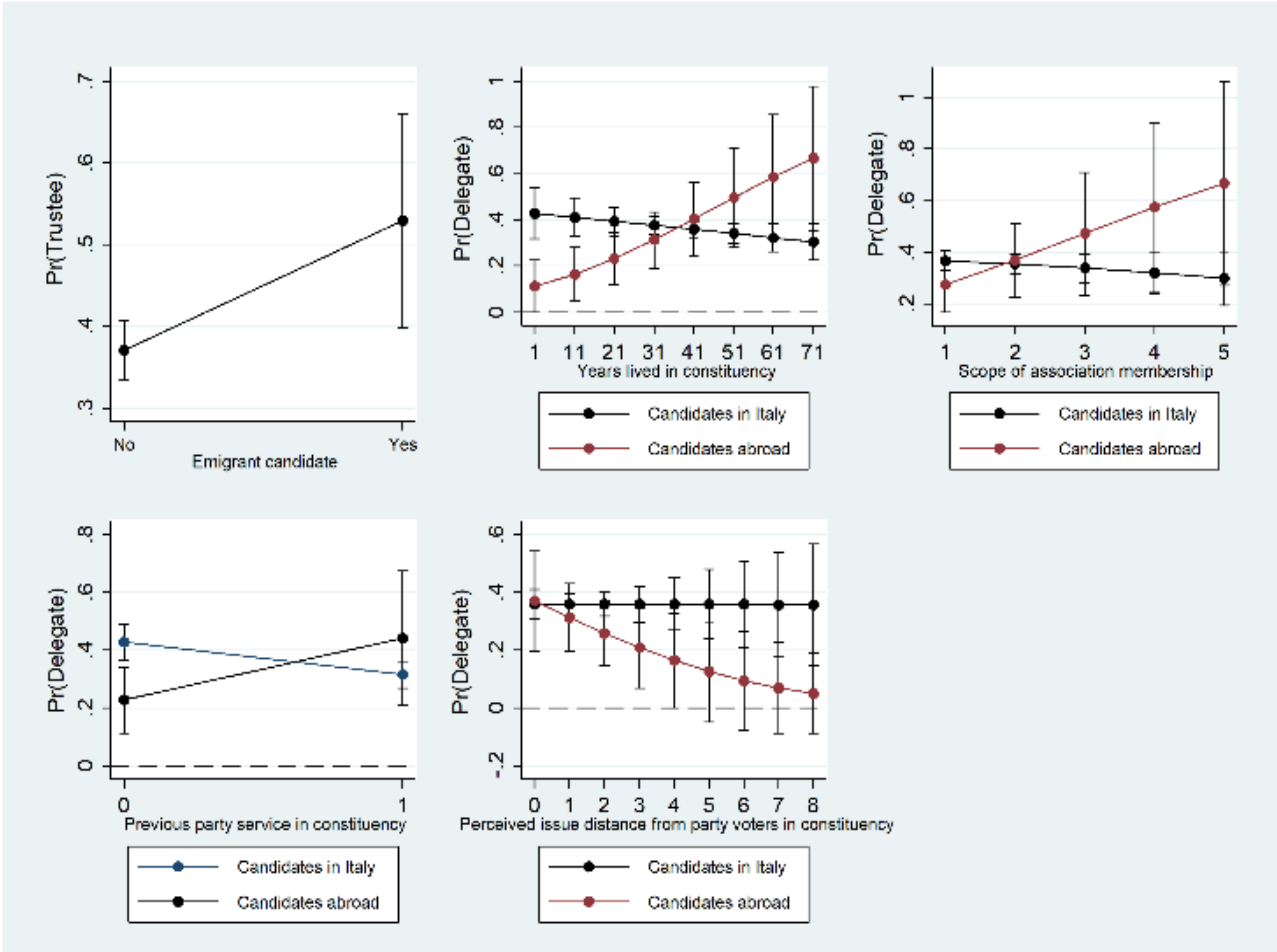
Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Supplementary Figure S1 Probability of having a trustee style, in Italy and abroad



Note: 90% CI

Supplementary Figure S2 Predicted probability plots obtained by applying an alternative classification algorithm to the data (multinomial logistic regressions)



Note: 90% CI