

Physical Appearance and Turnout in Finnish Elections: An Inequality Perspective

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- **Motivate the problem:** It's clear that the **better the candidate's looks, the higher the turnout.**
- **Problem:** The literature *only* looks at candidate attractiveness, which is just one dimension of physical appearance.
- **Gaps:** we explore the degree in which a candidate's **occupation is congruent with his/her physical appearance.**
- **Empirics:** we exploit a novel data set of candidate's physical appearance in the context of the 2017 Finnish Municipal Elections.
- **Results:** we find that there exists a systematic electoral penalty for female candidates that look-like and also hold working-class occupations.

Good-looking Candidates do Better in Elections

- Better-looking candidates are more likely to win elections.
- Dion et al. (1972) we know that “beautiful is good” and that “voters vote beautiful” (Efrain and Patterson, 1974).



“What Are Good-Looking Candidates?” (Stockemer and Praino, 2019)

Nixon-Kennedy 1960 Debate

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Mattes et. al (2010).



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- Radio listeners thought Nixon would win, while TV-watchers though Kennedy would.



Milestones

- **Motivate the problem:** vote buying literature is purely based on the Expected Utility Theory (EUT) (von Neumann and Morgenstern).
- **Problem:** as a consequence, there are too many important loose ends.
- **Propose a possible solution:** re-think about how parties make decisions under risk (Prospect Theory).
- **Empirics:** we formalized a vote buying game, and then test it in an economic lab experiment.
- **Results:** we find strong support in favor of Prospect Theory.
- **Feedback wanted!**

Argument

Vote-buying will be higher when parties,

- ✓ **Are probable winners**—risk-averse in the domain of gains.
- ✓ **Have experienced losses in the past (sunk costs)**—risk-seeking in the domain of losses.



Clientelism and the Expected Utility Theory