

TUULI TÄHTINEN

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Villa La Fonte, Via delle Fontanelle 18, 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole, Italy

Research interests

Political Economy, Public Economics, Development Economics, Applied Microeconomics

Education

European University Institute PhD in Economics	2023
Aalto University Visiting Doctoral Student	2022–2023
European University Institute MRes Economics	2018
University of Helsinki M.Soc.Sc. Economics	2016
University of Helsinki B.Soc.Sc. Economics	2013

Research

Job Market Paper

“Populism and Ideological Convergence: Evidence from a Multiparty System”

(Revise & resubmit at the Journal of Public Economics)

Populist parties have gained significant power in European politics in the last decades, raising concerns over the potentially contagious effect of populism. I study how populist party representation in local councils affects other parties’ ideological positions. I use variation created by close elections to identify ideological shifts resulting from a change in party representation, holding voter preferences constant. I derive ideological positions from a voting advice application, and model candidates’ responses using item response theory to obtain measures of ideology that are comparable across election years. I show that higher populist representation causes mainstream parties to become more ideologically aligned with the populist party. The results demonstrate that increased populist representation can spread populist ideologies.

Working Papers

“When Facebook is the Internet: the Role of Social Media in Ethnic Conflict”

(Revise & resubmit at World Development)

This paper investigates whether social media affects the intensity of ethnic conflict. To distinguish the potential effects of social media from those of the broader internet, I focus on the ongoing Myanmar conflict because in such context internet is mainly accessed via Facebook. To identify the causal effect of social media on conflict, I take advantage of a shock in Facebook availability and use local variation in cell phone coverage as an exogenous determinant of social media use. Results indicate that on average social media availability reduced the occurrence of conflict. However, the analysis reveals important regional differences suggesting that inflammatory content on social media may escalate conflict in areas where ethnic tensions are particularly high.

Work in Progress

“Making the Cut: Close Elections and Local Welfare Policies”, with Nikolaj Broberg and Thomas Walsh

This paper investigates how political alignment affects the implementation of punitive welfare measures in the UK. In particular, we examine whether a legislator’s party affiliation affects the rate of sanctions to unemployment benefits in the MP’s constituency. To address the endogeneity of which party wins in a constituency and area characteristics, we use a regression discontinuity design based on close elections to compare the sanction rates

across constituencies that are marginally aligned or unaligned with the central government. We find that implementation of the sanction regime is significantly more lenient in constituencies won by the government parties. Our findings suggest pork barrel politics can also influence the allocation of economic “bads”, even within a highly centralised system, and can undermine institutions which should be neutral to local partisan considerations.

“Politician Ideology and Policy Outcomes”

“It Was Better Back in My Day: Heterogeneity in Support for Democracy”, with Nicole Stoelinga

Policy Papers (in Finnish)

“Profitability, competition, and development needs in the private rental housing market”, with Eeva Alho, Valtteri Härmälä, Antti Kekäläinen, Kirsi Noro and Lauri Vuori, Publications of the Government’s analysis, assessment and research activities 9/2018.

“Immigrants on the labour market – A study of the working lives of immigrants arriving in Finland in different years”, with Henna Busk, Signe Jauhiainen, Antti Kekäläinen and Satu Nivalainen, Finnish Centre for Pensions, Studies 6/2016.

“Patient freedom of choice, the Swedish model and Finland’s health and social services reform – from the point of view of functionality of the markets and economic effects”, with Ari Ahonen and Liisa Vuorio, Publications of the Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority 6/2015.

Conferences and Seminars

2023: ZEW-ifo Young Scholar Political Economy Workshop; Helsinki GSE; MPSA Annual Conference; ETLA seminar

2022: Helsinki Development Economics PhD Workshop; Helsinki GSE

2021: EALE Annual Conference; EEA-ESEM Congress; Annual Conference of the International Association for Applied Econometrics; International Conference on European Studies; Annual Congress of the Swiss Society of Economics and Statistics; Congress of the French Economic Association; Annual Conference of the Canadian Economics Association; XXIII Applied Economics Meeting; QMUL Economics and Finance Workshop for PhD & Post-doctoral Students; European Meeting of the Urban Economics Association; Scottish Economic Society Annual Conference; Annual Meeting of the European Public Choice Society; ETH Zürich; RGS Doctoral Conference in Economics

2019: Annual Meeting of the Finnish Economic Association

Professional Activities

Referee service: Journal of European Economic Association, European Economic Review, Scandinavian Journal of Economics

Grants

PhD Grant, Academy of Finland	2017–2021
PhD Completion Grant, European University Institute	2020

Research and Professional Experience

Pellervo Economic Research PTT. Helsinki, Finland. Economist	2016–2017
Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority. Helsinki, Finland. Research Assistant	2015
VATT Institute for Economic Research. Helsinki, Finland. Research Assistant	2014

Skills

Software	R, Stata, MATLAB, QGIS, L ^A T _E X
Languages	Finnish (native), English (fluent)

References

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