

Rightwing candidates are better looking, study shows

23 February 2011

Rightwing candidates are better looking than their leftwing counterparts, something they benefit from during elections, according to a study conducted by Swedish and Finnish economists.

"One possible explanation is that people who are seen or consider themselves beautiful tend to be more anti-egalitarian and rightwing," Niclas Berggren, one of the three co-authors of the study, told AFP Wednesday.

The study compared [election](#) results from parliamentary and municipal elections held in Finland in 2003 and 2004 respectively with an online poll of non-Finns to determine how the 1,357 participating Finnish candidates ranked in terms of beauty.

More than 2,500 non-Finns were shown photographs of each candidate, with no indication of which side of the political spectrum they stood on, and were asked to rank them on a scale from one (very ugly) to five (very beautiful).

"We establish two main results. First, we find that the candidates on the right look better than the candidates on the left. Second, we find a greater effect of good looks, in terms of more votes for candidates on the right," the report states.

Berggren pointed out that "several studies have shown that good looks bring more votes, but we believe we're the first to analyse this in terms of political sides."

Explaining the findings, he said that globally, "the left perhaps traditionally has used a more rational approach.

The right meanwhile, "has been more conscious of the importance of looks," he said, pointing to the examples of Ronald Reagan and Sarah Palin in the United States.

The study also shows that the "beauty premium" for garnering votes is more apparent in municipal elections than in a national vote.

"As municipal candidates are relatively unknown, the beauty-premium gap indicates that voters, especially those to the right, use beauty as a cue for candidate ideology or quality in the municipal elections," the report reads.

The preliminary study, which was published by the German Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA), has yet to appear in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

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APA citation: Rightwing candidates are better looking, study shows (2011, February 23) retrieved 1 December 2021 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-02-rightwing-candidates.html>

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