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Formal and Informal Styles of Clothing in the Assessment of Female Political Candidates

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Abstract: This study will research the importance of dress code of female candidates on the confidence in leadership. The research question is: How Important is the Formality of Dress Code in the Assessment of Leadership of Female Political Candidates? It is addressed by using an experimental design carried out in India and the United States, using Qualtrics and Amazon Mechanical Turk. This research gathered 400 responses, 200 from each country. Primary data collection was used, with the implementation of two experiments. The experimental design of the two experiments consisted of two conditions, one in which the main political candidate is dressed formally and one in which she is dressed casually. Results show that the assessment of leadership changes when the candidate changes her dress code. The assessment of dress code on leadership was also influenced by the following variables: gender of the participants, gender of the household, political viewpoint, and country of residence of the participants.

1. Introduction

The gender equality gap has been narrowing down majorly in the last decade. However, it must be said that the effects of certain stereotypes are still present and are deeply rooted in our societies. One example of such would be the appearance of females, including facial features, body shapes, dress code and many other.

Females are often judged because of their appearance in everyday life. This could not only affect their perception of themselves but can also have an effect on their career paths and economic outcomes. It has been seen that the judgmental atmosphere on females is also present in politics. In addition to that, it is well known that female candidates often have less political space than the male candidates. Even within that political space, women face more criticism and the effects of stereotyping are felt more. (Paxton, Kunovich, 2003).

It has been proven that the effect of females' appearance has substantial impacts on voters' preferences. In addition to that, it has been seen that it is also possible to shape the votes in accordance with appearance. Research has indicated that the voters prefer certain profile of appearance of women who are political candidates. (Rosenberg et al, 1991)

One can understand how and why experience, education, and reputation impact the voters' choice; however, it is hard to imagine how can appearance do so. Research has shown that the voters apparently care about the appearance of their leader, because a more attractive leader means that the person is in better health condition, as there is shown to be a relation between attractiveness and health. Undoubtedly, it is important to have a healthy leader because the group is highly dependent on the leader. (White et al., 2013) There are many additional explanations regarding the importance of appearance in politics mentioned in the literature review section.

However, it is even a greater surprise to see that a minor factor of appearance, like clothing, may influence a decision of the voters on such big conclusions like choosing their leader who will be their representative. In fact, as mentioned, it is seen that clothing actually matters on the political scene, and that "clothes make a man". In fact, as James Laver says: "Clothes are never a frivolity: they always mean something. (n.d.)

Having in mind that the importance of clothing is an important factor for the voters' preferences, this study will examine that. More precisely, it will examine how important is dress code in the assessment of leadership of female political candidates.

This was done by using two experimental designs. The first one created a simulation of the elections for mayor. Four political candidates were presented, and participants were asked to place their vote. The experimental design had two versions. In one version the main political candidate was dressed formally, and in the second version her profile was identical, the only difference was that her clothing was casual. The second experimental design included only one female candidate and various questions regarding the participants' opinions of her. This also included two versions, as the first experiment did. The survey was conducted in two countries: India and the United States. The two countries were chosen specifically because the research wanted to include one country which has a large gender equality gap and one with a small gender equality gap, to additionally test whether differences in perceptions exist because of the cultural differences.

The results have indicated that the formality of clothing does impact the voters' preferences. More specifically, that difference is seen in the gender of participants, gender of the head of the household, country of residence, and political viewpoint of the participants.

2. Literature Review

The literature review indicates different topics which are of great importance for the research question being studied. This includes the topics of Female Struggles in Politics, and the Importance of Appearance. Female Struggles in Politics talks about the challenges women face in politics like the lack of opportunities, and voters' stereotypes. This is important to mention to identify that women face additional pressure on the political scene.

In addition to that, the Importance of Appearance underlines how influential appearance is. It goes into detail about the importance of beauty, fashion, and clothes on the economic outcomes and social acceptance.

2.1. Female Struggles in Politics

Political Space

One of the struggles women face is that they have less political space. Differences in women's political representation exist because of the following factors: social structure, politics, and ideology. Low levels of female participation are connected with the "supply" of female candidates and "demand" for female candidates. Supply is determined by structural factors (access to educational and professional opportunities), while demand is determined by the institutional differences in political systems (political parties and electoral systems). However, the ideological factors influence both the supply of and demand for women. On the supply side, it may influence women's decision to run for political office. On the demand side, it may influence voters acceptance of women. Norms can limit the voters' preferences. (Paxton, Kunovich, 2003).

Additionally, one section of the experiments created for this research involved questions about women in politics and importance of dress code. One of the questions was to identify how much the participants agree with the following statement: "Men are better suited for politics than women". 31.2% of the participants chose to agree and 12.5% of the participants chose strongly agree. Another statement was: "Women are judged more in politics than men." The statistics show that 40% of respondents chose to agree and 19.5% strongly agree. These figures identify additional proof of judgement and unacceptance of women in politics.

To achieve equal political engagement, women need more opportunities and need to be empowered to fight the inequality in politics. Some solutions were offered in Women Empowerment and Economic Development by Esther Duflo. She mentions that empowering women will bring changes in decision making, which will have a direct impact on development. (2012) Therefore, it is seen that empowering woman will bring positive impacts and increase the political participation of females. However, it is not only important just to create space for females in politics, but also to create a space with equal opportunities without additional judgements. Differences exist between the stereotypes of women and men. Firstly, women's labor market achievements continue to lag behind those of men. The explanation is that women make educational choices that translate into lower expected labor market earnings, and second, parenthood has sharply asymmetric impacts on labor market outcomes between the genders, depressing mothers' earnings while leaving fathers' earnings essentially unchanged. (Bertrand, 2020) Therefore, here it is also seen that women have less opportunities, i.e., the working climate for women is less stable than for men. What is interesting, the author makes concluding remarks

saying: “Finally, it is tempting to say, and many have, that the world would be a kinder—and, in the long-run, better—place if more women were in charge, with less hate, less greed, and/or more sustainable policies.” (Bertrand, 2020) This is an additional proof that is important to set an equal space for both genders. What is interesting is that there is greater inequality in poor countries than in rich ones. Even within the poor countries the provided opportunities are often preferred for the sons, due to cultural practices and norms and preserving female’s purity. However, there are ways to change that perception by: growth of the services sector, technological advances in home production, and reduced risk and frequency of childbearing. It is considered that gender inequality in developing countries will likely diminish with economic growth. (Jayachandran, 2015) So, it is seen that equal space for women needs to be created by changing the perceptions. Additionally, it was indicated that there are differences among countries regarding the inequality, and that is the reason why this research will include two countries, India, and the United States.

One additional support to the argument that perception is one of the leading factors to the hindrance to gender equality in the opportunities for women is provided by the paper Social Norms as a Barrier to Women’s Employment in Developing Countries, which mentions the gender norms as barriers to women’s full and equal participation in the labor market in developing countries. However, this could change with the implementation of policies and programs. Some of them are creating more equality in the labor market and increasing female employment by policymaking. (Jayachandran, 2021) Another solution for greater opportunities is creating role models. Women’s competitiveness significantly increases after observing a role model (not dependent whether the role model is female or male), while men’s competitiveness does not seem to be affected. The findings pose a question whether role models can also be effective in increasing the competitiveness of other minority groups that are currently underrepresented in politics. (Shier, 2015) Therefore, there is a possibility that if women would be offered an opportunity of having a role models their significance in politics could increase. Presenting a role model who is a good leader and empowers women may have a positive influence on female political participation.

Voters’ Choices

Gender affinity exists when voters place their votes. Voters' preferences may be strongly affected by ideology and their ability to judge the female candidates, whether the judgement is based on appearance or something else.

Some clarifications for the role of gender in determining preferential votes and the importance of ideology for voting preferences, are offered by observing the elections in Belgium. It is considered as an ideal case because multiple preferential votes are allowed, gender quota exist, and voting is compulsory. It was found out that right leaning voters who are politically not engaged show a clear preference for male candidates. Educated voters have greater odds for voting for women. It is also considered for the left-wing ideologies to be more women friendly, because they promote equality more. The reading also explains that gender importance for voting preferences is associated with "gender affinity" or "gender consciousness". Gender affinity/consciousness explains that women (men) self-identify with women (men) based on shared particular experiences. The second reason for the importance of the gender for the voters' preference is that one gender group may be concerned with the numerical (under)representation of their group. (Erzeel & Caluwaerts, 2015) To conclude, this article explains that voting preferences based on gender do exist, making women more disadvantaged. Additionally, it is seen that votes differ in accordance to how the voters associate themselves with the candidate. This could be also connected to the importance to dress code, if certain voters find dress code important in their personal life there might exist a probability that they will do so even when voting for a candidate.

2.1. Importance of Appearance

How important is appearance actually? Research shows that it is important, and that people spend a lot of time worrying about their own appearance, but also the appearance of others. "The average American husband spends thirty-two minutes on a typical day washing, dressing, and grooming, while the average American wife spends forty-four minutes." (Hamermesh, 2011).

The section in the experimental design of this research, which has been mentioned above, also included questions about appearance and importance of dress code. It will help to identify the importance of appearance. One of the statements was: "Women are judged more because of the way they dress in politics." 37% answered agree and 16% answered

strongly agree. In addition, respondents were asked “Is appearance really important in the way you evaluate someone’s worth?” The high number of 59.25% chose to answer “Yes”. Similarly, the question “Is dress code really important in the way you evaluate someone’s worth?” was asked. 60% of the respondents chose “Yes.”

The answers of the respondents provide a clear understanding of the importance of appearance and dress code, both generally speaking and in politics.

To better understand the relation of appearance and politics, it is important to mention identity.

Identity

An important concept for the research question is identity. Identity could help us explain how the political female candidates need to be viewed, or how are they already viewed. The paper by Akerlof and Kranton goes into detail about this concept. They show how identity affects economic outcomes. Here it is seen that identity is based on social difference, that is a “person’s sense of self is associated with different social categories and how people in these categories should behave.” The identity is influential as it changes the payoffs from one’s own actions, changes the payoffs of others’ actions, different identities affect an individual’s economic behavior, and the social categories and behavioral prescriptions can be changed, affecting identity-based preferences.(Akerlof, Kranton, 2000) Therefore, people create an identity and expect others to behave in that sense. Beauty identity, and fashion identity are seen to be important and will be mentioned.

Beauty Identity

Evidence suggest that beauty identity is important in economic outcomes, and therefore also in political outcomes.

Labor markets generate premium pay for good looks and pay penalties for bad looks. It is considered that it generates differences in salaries and because of that people trade beauty for additional income to increase the living standards, but also for non-monetary goods of work and interpersonal relations. Evidence exists regarding this, and it is seen that women whose looks are rated as below average, received 4% lower pay than average

looking women. However, women whose looks are rated as above-average, received 8% more than average-lookers. For men, the comparable figures are a 13% penalty and a 4% premium.

(Hamermesh, 2011). Now the question is whether beauty identity is also present in politics for females, and if so what are the characteristics voters prefer?

The answer is yes, beauty identity is also a factor in the political life of females, and the reading below helps identify the preferential features. "Creating a Political Image: Shaping Appearance and Manipulating the Vote" analyzes the importance of beauty identity on voters' preferences. It has done so by conducting a two-study experiment for female candidates. In the first one, photos of more than 200 women were analyzed and the participants of the study were questioned regarding their voter preference based on those photos. In the second study, based on the findings from the first one, a make-up artist and a photographer were employed to shape the appearance of six women to see whether it is possible to shape the political image. It was found that it is possible to shape the political image of the candidate which influences the electoral outcomes. The voters prefer female candidates which have eyes with an almond shape or where more of the curvature is on the top rather than on the bottom, a hairline which comes to a slight widow's peak, hair which is combed back or with a side part, hair which is cut short, and an overall face which is broad or round. It was also found out that the participants preferred older looking candidates, candidates who were smiling. It was also seen that the participants prefer candidates who are dressed formally (Rosenberg et al, 1991) This paper provided inspiration to use experimental methods to test the research question being analyzed, as it provides evidence that appearance is extremely important for women in politics. Another evidence that appearance is important for voting is "Gender, Candidate Image and Electoral Preference" which examines the effects of appearance on voting. This article confirms that voters make judgements about candidates regarding their competence, honesty, warmth and other based on the physical appearance, which later has an influence on the voters' preferences. (Johns, Shephard, 2017) It was also seen that appearance matters for politics, as physical attractiveness has been associated with health. It explains that people who are truly concerned with disease threats often care more for the appearance of the leader, as it shows a relationship with health. The reason why voters actually care for the physical attractiveness of the leaders, which is associated with the leaders' health, is because the group is highly dependent on the leader. Firstly,

groups with effective leaders are more successful. Secondly, the cost of the leader becoming ill could create group instability. (White et al., 2013) . “Republicans Prefer Republican-Looking Leaders: Political Facial Stereotypes Predict Candidate Electoral Success Among Right-Leaning Voters” also looks at the relationship between Republican versus Democratic facial features and electoral success, for U.S. political candidates running in conservative versus liberal electorates. The reading finds that the U.S. political candidates who run in right-leaning states, or face conservative voters, benefit from having stereotypical Republican looking facial features. All in all, this reading confirms that appearance matters for the voters’ preferences. Instead of providing us with a reason behind that, like the first article does, this one explains that the voters draw inferences about the candidates’ personality from the look of the candidate’s face. This then was proven to influence the voters’ preferences, i.e. votes. (Olivola et al, 2012)

Therefore, it is seen that beauty identity is a key factor in politics. The candidate needs to appear on television and need to attract the voters by good looks. More research exists regarding this. One of it is studying the elections to office in the Northern Territory of Australia. The outcomes of the research proved that it was not important how good-looking a candidate was, but only how much better- or worse-looking than the opponents the candidate was. (Hamermesh, 2011)

All in all, it is seen that beauty identity is a key factor when it comes to estimating the voters’ preference for female candidates. More precisely, the belief the voters hold may impact their vision of the appearance factor when it comes to voters’ preference. This may explain why politicians invest a lot of funds to look better. Media give the politicians with better beauty identity more publicity, which directly pays off in elections. Being better looking increases the chances of winning the election. (Hamermesh, 2011)

To conclude, voters’ preferences for women may be influenced by different factors, one of them is undoubtedly the appearance of the candidate.

Fashion Identity

“Money and fashion are forms of social interaction.” (Kang, 2018)

What is politics without social interaction? Does that also mean that fashion is important for politics?

So far it has been clearly identified that beauty identity plays an important role in political and economic outcomes. However, fashion is also a part of the appearance and is also seen to be influential on the voters' preferences. Social forms, aesthetic judgment and the style of human expression are constantly transformed by fashion. (Sproles, 1974) These are the key factors which are important when a voter places a vote: social form, judgement and freedom of expression. If fashion can transform these factors, then it is not surprising that fashion influences the voters' decisions and therefore plays an important role in politics. Fashion also influences social distinctions. (Aspers, Godart, 2013) This can be influential for voters' preferences, for the voters to create certain social forms and distinctions of the political candidate based on fashion. So, the voters judge the candidate regarding their perception of fashion and make decisions based on that. However, not only voters create certain images, but also fashion does and can shape such. Fashion plays an enormous role in acceptance of ideological movements, educational practices, scientific pursuits, and emerging lifestyles, the forces of fashion may be directly influential to the acceptance process. (Sproles, 1974). This means voters may be willing to accept different ideological and policy beliefs if the fashion identity of the candidate strongly matches their vision of such.

Moreover, fashion creates judgments and experiences on social and cultural meanings. (Kang, 2018) There is strong evidence that the fashion identity shapes the voters' preferences. That means that there are signs that clothing is also influential in politics.

This research wants to narrow it down to the clothing. What is the difference?

The differences are of subjective nature and based on the aesthetic evaluation. Clothing is considered to be term used for covering the body and is available in different types and styles. Clothing covers more the aspect of a functional form and can be easily replaced. On the other hand, fashion is associated with aesthetic value, and cannot be easily replaced as it is linked with one's identity. Fashion is also known as the second skin. (Kang, 2018)

Clothes as Identity

Clothes are considered as a form of communication. More precisely it is viewed as the signifier. The signifier (in this case clothes) is given a meaning by the signified. The

signified needs others to understand the "code" - that is, "a set of shared rules" similar to a language which the garment represents. For instance, it is commonly known that clothing is often used to define class or occupation-based identity. (Aspers, Godart, 2013) Probably that is the reason why we think of politicians as people in suits, or people formally dressed. We need politicians' codes to communicate loyalty and seriousness, that is why it is common to think of politicians in formal wear. Clothes are also linked to the operation of power that constructs body and its presentation. (Hansen, 2004) That is what politicians need to portray to get votes. A lot of money is spent on clothes for a reason. "In 2008 the average American household spent \$718 on women's and girls' clothing; \$427 on men's and boys' clothing; \$655 on infants' clothing, footwear, and other apparel products and services. Such spending totaled roughly \$400 billion and accounted for nearly 5 percent of all consumer spending that year." (Hamermesh, 2011) This is additional proof of how influential clothing is.

Clothes can be defined as an item whose aesthetic values take over the utility values. The idea that clothes communicate is far more important than the idea of using it to cover your skin. When an individual decides to wear a piece of clothing because it is viewed as aesthetically pleasing or meaningful, its value cannot be substituted by a functionally equivalent piece of clothing. (Kang, 2018) This provides a good hint for the research question posed for this study. It does make a reader wonder could a politician in a t-shirt be viewed the same as a politician in a suit?

According to the literature review, there is evidence of difference, since each of the two clothing styles communicate a different message and now the only way to confirm that is to actually test it. Theories intend to be inaccurate and imprecise. The experiments can fill the gap and confirm theories by providing evidence. (Samuelson, 2005) That is what the following part of this research will do, check whether differences exist.

3. Experiment

Primary data was gathered to analyze the research question being studied. Two experiments were designed just for the purpose of this research.

3.1. Design of the Experiment

Data for this study comes from two different experiments which are designed in form of surveys. The surveys are created using an online software called Qualtrics¹. The first experiment was in a form of a simulation of elections. The participants were presented four political candidates running for mayor and asked to choose one candidate by placing their vote. Additionally, the participants needed to provide their opinions about each candidate by answering: "I would vote for this political candidate." The participants were presented with a profile of each candidate accompanied with a photo.

The profile of each candidate consisted of: information regarding the political party of the candidate and the position of the candidate in such, educational background, and information about the experience of the candidate. The candidate's name who is being examined is Ana Poljak.

In summary, the first experiment collected:

- A. Consent: Informed written consents needed to be signed by the participants that show they understand their rights, roles, and possibilities during the survey.
- B. Opinion: The participants asked to provide their opinion about the four political candidates presented, more precisely answered how likely (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree) would they vote for each candidate.
- C. Vote: The participants were asked to place their vote for only one political candidate.
- D. Basic Demographic Data: Age, gender, country of residence, political viewpoint, employment status and other.
- E. Point of View: Regarding participants' opinion about gender differences and importance of appearance.

The second experiment presented the same profile and photograph of only one political candidate who is running for mayor (Ana Poljak) and asked the participants to provide their opinion about the candidate by answering multiple questions, regarding her political competences. Such questions include: " On a scale 1-5 how qualified the

presented candidate is for this political position?”, “I would vote for this candidate.”, “The presented candidate seems trustworthy.”

The second experiment collected:

- A. Consent: Informed written consents needed to be signed by the participants that show they understand their rights, roles, and possibilities during the survey.
- B. Opinion: The participants asked to provide their opinion about the political candidate presented, more precisely they answered how likely (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree) would they vote for the candidate, how trustworthy she seems, and to grade her qualifications using a 1-5 scale.
- C. Basic Demographic Data: Age, gender, country of residence, political viewpoint, employment status, and other.
- D. Point of View: Regarding participants opinion about gender differences and importance of appearance.

The names, profiles, and political parties of the candidates are fictional, and participants are informed about that in the written consent.

It is extremely important to mention that both experiments have two versions. The two versions only differ in one female candidate’s photo. The rest of the candidate’s profile was identical to the other version. This applies to both experiments. In the first photograph she is dressed in a suit, wearing formal clothing. In the second she is presented in a more informal clothing. No other differences in posing, facial expression, or other exist in the photograph. The different clothing styles is the control variable of the experiments.

To demonstrate this, the candidate’s two different photographs are inserted below:



Figure 1. Formal Clothing

Figure 2. Casual Clothing

3.2. Sample

3.2.1. Sample size

The sample size is 400 participants. More precisely, 200 participants for Experiment 1 and 200 experiments for Experiment 2.

Half of the participants got the survey which includes Ana Poljak dressed formally, and half got the version where she is dressed casually.

3.2.2. Sample restrictions

This study included participants who are eligible to vote. Because of that this study excluded participants younger than 18 years old.

3.2.3. Sample requirements

In order for the participant to take part in this research, apart from being older than 18 years old, the participants needed to be from either India or the United States. The experiment included participants from two countries to examine whether differences in the culture exist.

3.2.4. Personal Characteristics

The experiment included participants from different age groups (18-60+), educational level statuses, genders, political viewpoints, income levels and other.

Such data was obtained from the demographics section of the experiment with the purpose to add them as control variables to the outcome variables. The purpose is to see whether differences in the perception of the importance of the dress code exist, when differences exist in these variables.

The following control variables are chosen for analysis: country of residence, gender of the participants, gender of the household, educational level, and political viewpoint.

3.3. Recruitment of the Participants

The recruitment of participants was performed online, through Amazon Mechanical Turk¹. The forms of advertisement for recruitment contained only the title, purpose of the study, protocol summary, basic eligibility criteria, and how to contact the study site for further information. The participants were compensated for taking part in this research.

3.3.1. Validity of the Data

The main concern in the data collection process was how to ensure that one Amazon Mechanical Turk worker does not take part in both experiments, or even worse in both versions of one experiment. If such happened, data would not be considered representable and would not be valid for analysis. In order to stop this from happening, a software Cloud Research² was used. The Cloud Research account connects to an Amazon Mechanical Turk account and prevents such case from happening by setting limitations of who can take part in your research. That is where one needs to upload the worker IDs who already performed tasks for

¹ Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) is a crowdsourcing marketplace that makes it easier for individuals and businesses to outsource their processes and jobs to a distributed workforce who can perform these tasks virtually. (MTurk, n.d.)

² Formerly TurkPrime, is a participant-sourcing platform for online research and surveys. (CloudResearch, n.d.)

them and in that way prevent them from taking part in the second version, or second experiment. This does not block or in any way harm the reputation of the Amazon Mechanical Turk worker.

3.3.2 Pilot Studies

Multiple pilot studies were performed before launching the experiments. Two pilot studies were done in graduate Economics classes, one was done by snowball sampling, and one was done using Survey Circle. Pilot studies are shown to be helpful in this case, as adjustments were made before publishing the experiments on Amazon Mechanical Turk.

3.4. India and the United States

This research involved respondents from only two countries: India and the United States. The two mentioned were included because there is a different level of gender equality present in the two countries, so a comparison is done to test whether that has a significant influence on dress code and voters' preferences.

3.4.1. India

Even though India has one of the largest economies in the world, the country is falling behind many countries when it comes to gender equality. When it comes to labor participation of women, the country decreased to 20% over the last two decades, but also a preference for sons has clearly shown the disproportionately for more men than women. (Northwestern, 2021)

The country has been ranked 140 out of 156 countries according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021 and has dropped 28 places. The country is now the third-worst country in gender equality in South Asia. (The Wire Staff, 2021)

Additionally, gender pay gap exists, and women less likely to get permanent positions than men are. (GVI, 2022) More precisely, women earn 27% less than men. (Arrora, 2022)

Therefore, India will be used for this experiment in the sense that it will represent a country with lower gender equality.

3.4.2. United States

The gender equality in the United States has dropped in the couple of years, however the country remains on the 30th position out of 156 countries, according to the World Economic Forum Report. (Wallet Hub, 2021)

It is important to mention that a steady growth in labor force participation is seen over the past decades. (Wallet Hub, 2021)

Women make up 46% of the U.S. labor force, which demonstrate an increase of 30% from the 1950 labor force report. (Zane, 2022)

However, a key factor is that growing wages for women helped narrow the gender pay gap. The differences in wages among males and females do exist, however they are not as big as in India. Women are paid 17% less than men. (Sheth, Hoff et al, 2022)

Also, women surpass men in education in the United States, as 37.1 percent of women hold at least a bachelor's degree compared to 34.9 percent for men. (International Labor Organization, n.d.)

Having these facts in mind, the United States in this research is considered the country with the smaller gender equality gap.

4. Empirical Model and Hypotheses

4.1.1. Hypotheses

The main hypothesis was to see whether dress code impacts voters' preferences. Adding additional control variables allowed the research to test the other hypotheses.

The following hypothesis were tested to examine the impact of dress code on the perception of leadership:

H₀/H_a: The importance of the dress code on the assessment of leadership of female political candidates does not/does have an impact on voter's preference.

H₀/H_a: The importance of the dress code on the assessment of leadership of female political candidates does not/does differ in different cultures.

H₀/H_a: The importance of the dress code on the assessment of leadership of female political candidates does not/does differ in different genders.

H₀/H_a: The importance of the dress code on the assessment of leadership of female political candidates does not/does differ in different genders of household.

H0/Ha: The importance of the dress code on the assessment of leadership of female political candidates does not/does differ in different educational level statuses.

H0/Ha: The importance of the dress code on the assessment of leadership of female political candidates does not/does differ in different political viewpoints.

4.1.2. Empirical Model

Multiple models are used for data analysis of this research. More precisely: ttest, binary logit, and OLS.

The model equations are:

$$(1) y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Dress code}_i + \beta_2 \text{Gender}_i + \beta_3 \text{Gender of Household}_i + \beta_4 \text{Political viewpoint}_i + \beta_5 \text{Educational level}_i + \beta_6 \text{Country}_i + \beta_7 (\text{Dress code} * \text{Gender})_i + \beta_8 (\text{Dress code} * \text{Gender of Household})_i + \beta_9 (\text{Dress code} * \text{Political viewpoint})_i + \beta_{10} (\text{Dress code} * \text{Educational level})_i + \beta_{11} (\text{Dress code} * \text{Country})_i \varepsilon_i$$

$$(2) y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Dress code}_i + \beta_2 \text{Gender}_i + \beta_3 \text{Gender of Household}_i + \beta_4 \text{Political viewpoint}_i + \beta_5 \text{Educational level}_i + \beta_6 \text{Country}_i$$

$$(3) y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Dress code}_i + \beta_2 \text{Gender}_i$$

$$(4) y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Dress code}_i$$

It is important to say that the logit and OLS regression were ran for four models. First model includes the outcome variable, Dress code, all control variables (gender, gender of household, country, educational level, and political viewpoint), and interaction of Dress code with the controls. The second model included the same as the first, just without interactions. The third model only includes the outcome variable, Dress code, and gender. The last model includes the outcome variable and Dress code.

The ttest was performed on all five outcome variables to test the significance of dress code on the outcome variables. Three out of five outcome variables showed significance: "Please place your final vote." (Experiment 1), "I would vote for Ana Poljak." (Experiment 1), "On a scale 1-5 how qualified do you think the candidate is?" (Experiment 2).

The second specification is the binary logit, used for the first outcome variable, to examine whether participants voted for Ana.

$$\text{logit}(p) = \ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) \text{ for } p \in (0,1)$$

The binary values (0,1) are defined as 0= if the participants did not vote for the political candidate which is being researched, and 1= if they did vote for her.

The third estimation is the OLS regression used for the remaining outcome variables: "On a scale 1-5 how qualified do you consider the presented candidate is for this political position?", "I would vote for Ana Poljak." and "The candidate seems trustworthy.". All of them had 5 values.

The OLS was used to analyze the other outcome variables: "I would vote for Ana.", "The candidate seems trustworthy.", and "On a scale 1-5 how qualified do you think the candidate is for this political position?". All of the mentioned variables take five values. Either a scale 1-5, 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest rating; or a range from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

$$y = \alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \dots + \beta_n x_n$$

5. Results

The results indicate that there is a difference in voting preferences as the formality of dress code changes. Certain variables are identified which show a strong impact on these outcomes and will be mentioned below.

As mentioned, the research has 5 outcome variables, two in Experiment 1 and three in Experiment 2. Experiment 1 includes 4 candidates and is considered a group profile; while Experiment 2 includes one candidate (the control candidate), which is considered a single profile. It is important to say that no differences are seen among the comparison of group versus individual, as both indicate that dress code matter for voters' preferences.

Both of the experiments have one theoretical question (I would vote for Ana Poljak) and at least one action question. The action question in Experiment 1 is to choose only one

candidate and place the final vote. The action questions in Experiment 2 are to rate the candidates' qualifications and trustworthiness. A difference in results is seen. When participants were asked theoretically whether they would vote for Ana, no statistical significance was found in the difference of clothing. On the other hand, when they were asked to take action and vote or rate, statistical significance is seen and a clear preference for formal clothing.

The results of each experiment will be described below in greater detail.

5.1. Experiment 1

The outcome variables for this experiment are: "Please place your final vote.", and "I would vote for Ana Poljak."

Please Place Your Final Vote

This outcome variable will analyze whether the participants placed their vote for Ana or not and compare the difference in votes for Ana when the formality of clothing changes. Logit was used for the analysis, and differences in results are seen. The results indicate that the variable "Dress code" is highly significant at 1% level when using it with a model which only interacts the outcome variable with dress code, with a log odds value of 1.112. The variable Dress code is also highly significant at 1% level for the outcome variable, when used with a model which involves only gender as the control variable (1.127) and a model which involves all of the control variables (1.165) log odds. However, when Dress code is used in the model which includes all of the controls and the interaction of controls and Dress code, then no significance is seen. However, high significance (1% level) is seen in that model for the interaction of Dress code and gender dummy of participants. It has a value of -2.375 log odds, which explains that male participants are the ones who had bias regarding the differences in clothing when placing their vote. The results are seen in Table 1. Therefore, the model with the interactions of the control variables and dress code indicates that the differences for this outcome variable do exist when the dress code changes, however only for the male participants. Dress code was also interacted with the gender of the household, country of residence, political viewpoint, and

educational level and showed no significance. This brings us to the conclusion that male participants voted for Ana Poljak to be their mayor when she was dressed formal.

I would vote for this candidate

This outcome variable was asked four times, for every candidate. However, the study will only analyze this question when asked for the control candidate, Ana Poljak. The variable has five values: strongly disagree, disagree, neither disagree nor agree, agree, and strongly agree. It is considered to be a more theoretical question, unlike the first outcome variable. The results for this outcome variable are seen in Table 2.

It is seen that the effect for the Dress code is only seen in one out of four of the models, and the significance is at 10% level. The model in which the Dress code is significant is the OLS regression involving the control variable, and has an effect of 0.227, indicating a positive impact of formal clothing. No other significance is seen for the Dress code variable, or the interactions with Dress code.

This shows that this variable does not show a large difference in the voters' preferences as the dress code changes. As it is a theoretical question, the voters could not have taken it as important as the action question mentioned above.

5.2. Experiment 2

This experiment has three outcome variables: "On a scale 1-5 how qualified do you think the candidate is for this political position?", "I would vote for this candidate.", and "The candidate seems trustworthy." It only includes one candidate, more precisely the profile of Ana Poljak.

On a scale 1-5 how qualified do you think the candidate is for this political position?

This outcome variable identified significance. It asks participants to rate the candidate's qualifications on scale 1-5. The results can be seen in Table 3.

The variable Dress code indicates significance for all four OLS models. The OLS model with interaction shows a 1.287 effect at 10% level on Dress code. It is found that interaction with country and political viewpoint show a significance too. The effect for the country interaction is -0.666 at 5% level. This explains that participants from India show more bias in their rating of Ana's qualifications, as the dress code changes. The effect for Dress code and political viewpoint is -0.213, at 5% level. This indicates that right leaning voters shown more bias for this outcome variable as the clothing style changes. The effect of Dress code for the model which includes the control variables is 0.256 at 10% level. The model which included Dress code and gender shows a 0.242 effect at 10% level; and the model which included only Dress code is shows a 0.260 effect at 10% level. All in all, significance is shown for the difference in voters' preference as the dress code changes. This question is also considered as an action question. So, additional proof of difference for an action question.

I would vote for this candidate

This outcome variable is identical to the one in Experiment 1, the only difference is that it is asked only one time in this experiment, as only one candidate is presented.

However, no significance is identified in the four OLS models for Dress code and its interactions.

This is considered a theoretical question, which is an additional proof that no differences exist. The outputs can be seen in Table 4.

The candidate seems trustworthy

This outcome variable asks participants to rate Ana Poljak's trustworthiness. It is a categorical variable with 5 values. The results can be seen in Table 5.

No significance is found in neither OLS model for Dress code. However, significance is found for the interaction of Dress code and gender of the head of household, and interaction of Dress code with political viewpoint.

There is a 0.534 effect at 5% level for the interaction of Dress code and the gender of the head of the household. This indicates that if the head of the household is female, they tend to be more bias in rating Ana's trustworthiness as the dress code changes.

An effect of -0.187 at 5% level is seen for the interaction of Dress code and political viewpoint. This shows that there the right leaning participants tend to be more bias as the clothing changes, in judging Ana's trustworthiness. This means they trust her more when she is dressed formally.

This outcome variable is considered as an action question, add provides additional proof that differences exist in voters' preferences as the dress code changes.

6. Summary and Conclusion

This study answered the posed research question: "How Important is the Formality of Dress Code in the Assessment of Leadership of Female Political Candidates?" Results from the two experiments show that dress code is an important factor in the voter's preferences. Evidence is seen from India and the United States.

The two experiments used for analysis had two different versions of each. First experiment asked participants to place their final vote and choose only one out of four candidates for the political position of the mayor. The second experiment presented only one candidate, the control candidate, and asked the participants to provide their opinion about her competences, qualifications, trustworthiness, and other. The two versions of each experiment only differed in the clothing of the candidate. One version included a suit, a formal clothing, and the second version included an informal clothing style, a T-shirt.

Both of the experiments demonstrated that importance of the formality of dress code does impact the voters' preferences. More precisely, the action questions, like placing the vote or rating the candidate's competences showed a vast difference and preference for formal clothing. However, the theoretical question, like how likely would you vote, did not indicate a significant difference among the two different versions. This explains that the participants do not tend to be judgmental until they are actually asked to show an action. The difference is seen, even though participants were informed that the candidates and political party were fictional. Stronger differences could be predicted when it comes to actual elections when voters have the chance to choose their representative.

In summary, there are five main findings of this research:

- (1) Dress code is important for the female candidate. The voters' preferences change when different clothing styles are presented. Voters prefer a candidate which is formally dressed. This confirms the importance of the power of clothing and the message it sends.
- (2) Male participants are more bias. They placed their vote for Ana 2.375 log odds less when she was dressed informally. This is seen both in India and the United States.
- (3) Additionally, the gender of the head of the household matters when estimating the differences. Surprisingly, it is seen that if the head of the household is female, they consider Ana less trustworthy when she is dressed formally. The female head of household see Ana as 53.4 percentage points less trustworthy when she is dressed informally.
- (4) Country of residence is also seen influential for the differences of preferences of the participants when different clothing styles are introduced. It is demonstrated that participants from India are more bias towards Ana when she is dressed casually. Participants from India see Ana as 66.6 percentage points less qualified when she is not formally dressed. This confirms the literature review, that countries which greater gender inequality tend to have greater stereotypes towards women. Cultural differences do exist.
- (5) Lastly, it is seen that the political viewpoint also matters in distinguishing the differences. The results indicate that right leaning voters rate Ana's qualifications less and consider her less trustworthy when she is dressed informally. The results show a 21.3 percentage points difference for the outcome variable "On a scale 1-5 how qualified do you think the candidate is for this position" and 18.7 percentage points difference in the outcome variable "The candidate seems trustworthy". This also confirms the literature review which showed that rightist voters tend to vote less for female and tend to have stronger stereotypes compared to leftist voters.

All in all, this research finds significant differences in voters' preferences as the formality of the female candidate's clothing changes. The differences vary according to the gender of participants, gender of the head of the household, country of residence, and political viewpoint. The next step would be to include a male control candidate and analyze whether bias exists, as the dress code changes.

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APPENIDIX

Table 1.

Model specification VARIABLES	Control variables & Interactions	Control variables voted Ana Poljak	Dress code & gender	Dress code
Dress code (0=casual, 1=formal)	-0.357 (1.745)	1.165*** (0.323)	1.127*** (0.312)	1.112*** (0.307)
Gender (0= male, 1=female)	1.150** (0.557)	-0.0580 (0.383)	-0.126 (0.314)	
Gender of hh (0=male, 1=female)	-0.377 (0.639)	-0.0542 (0.408)		
Country of residence (0=India, 1=USA)	-0.105 (0.513)	-0.247 (0.328)		
Educational level	0.104 (0.270)	0.187 (0.172)		
Political viewpoint	0.171 (0.238)	0.382** (0.160)		

Dress code*gender	-2.375***			
	(0.812)			
Dress code*gender of hh	0.730			
	(0.875)			
Dress code*country	-0.128			
	(0.686)			
Dress code*political viewpoint	0.383			
	(0.325)			
Dress code*educational level	0.314			
	(0.362)			
Constant	-2.445*	-2.944***	-1.134***	-1152
	(1.278)	(0.868)	(0.265)	(0.234)
Observations	197	197	197	197

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2.

Model specification	Control variables & Interactions	Control variables	Dress code & gender	Dress code
VARIABLES	I would vote for Ana Poljak			
Dress code (0=casual, 1=formal)	0.558	0.277*	0.259	0.260
	(0.783)	(0.153)	(0.166)	(0.163)
Gender (0= male, 1=female)	0.244	0.302	0.0417	
	(0.255)	(0.184)	(0.169)	
Gender of hh (0=male, 1=female)	-0.200	-0.288		
	(0.293)	(0.199)		
Country of residence (0=India, 1=USA)	-0.318	-0.515***		
	(0.227)	(0.159)		
Educational level	-0.0761	-0.0496		
	(0.122)	(0.0830)		
Political viewpoint	0.387***	0.347***		
	(0.108)	(0.0740)		
Dress code*gender	0.169			
	(0.375)			
Dress code*gender of hh	-0.228			
	(0.406)			
Dress code*country	-0.424			
	(0.324)			
Dress code*political viewpoint	-0.0667			
	(0.150)			
Dress code*educational level	0.0467			
	(0.169)			
Constant	2.261***	2.404***	3.147***	3.170***
	(0.548)	(0.393)	(0.135)	(0.116)

Observations	197	197	197	200
R-squared	0.199	0.189	0.013	0.013

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3.

Model specification	Control variables & Interactions	Control variables	Dress code & gender	Dress code
VARIABLES	On a scale 1-5 how qualified do you think the candidate is			
Dress code (0=casual, 1=formal)	1.287* (0.698)	0.256* (0.132)	0.242* (0.132)	0.260* (0.132)
Gender (0= male, 1=female)	-0.163 (0.188)	-0.192 (0.140)	-0.226* (0.135)	
Gender of hh (0=male, 1=female)	-0.351* (0.202)	-0.147 (0.148)		
Country of residence (0=India, 1=USA)	0.210 (0.184)	-0.0937 (0.133)		
Educational level	0.0584 (0.0759)	-0.0320 (0.0535)		
Political viewpoint	0.205 (0.138)	0.164* (0.0907)		
Dress code*gender	-0.106 (0.279)			
Dress code*gender of hh	0.423 (0.292)			
Dress code*country	-0.666** (0.263)			
Dress code*political viewpoint	-0.213** (0.107)			
Dress code*educational level	-0.0355 (0.181)			
Constant	2.752*** (0.527)	3.281*** (0.364)	3.617*** (0.109)	3.520*** (0.0932)
Observations	200	200	200	200
R-squared	0.117	0.059	0.033	0.019

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4.

Model specification VARIABLES	Control variables & Interactions	Control variables I would vote for this candidate	Dress code & gender	Dress code
Dress code (0=casual, 1=formal)	-0.0691 (0.607)	0.113 (0.112)	0.106 (0.111)	0.110 (0.110)
Gender (0= male, 1=female)	-0.103 (0.163)	-0.0230 (0.119)	-0.0468 (0.114)	
Gender of hh (0=male, 1=female)	-0.153 (0.175)	-0.0381 (0.126)		
Country of residence (0=India, 1=USA)	-0.0281 (0.159)	-0.128 (0.113)		
Educational level	-0.000928 (0.0660)	-0.0153 (0.0453)		
Political viewpoint	0.0334 (0.120)	0.0701 (0.0769)		
Dress code*gender	0.174 (0.243)			
Dress code*gender of hh	0.237 (0.253)			
Dress code*country	-0.228 (0.228)			
Dress code*political viewpoint	-0.0304 (0.0926)			
Dress code*educational level	0.0829 (0.157)			
Constant	4.122*** (0.458)	4.034*** (0.309)	4.140*** (0.0921)	4.120*** (0.0779)
Observations	200	200	200	200
R-squared	0.033	0.018	0.006	0.005

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

Table 5.

Model specification VARIABLES	Control variables & Interactions	Control variables	Dress code & gender	Dress code
The candidate seems trustworthy				
Dress code (0=casual, 1=formal)	0.414 (0.576)	0.0112 (0.108)	0.00467 (0.107)	0.0100 (0.107)
Gender (0= male, 1=female)	-0.142 (0.155)	-0.115 (0.115)	-0.0667 (0.110)	
Gender of hh (0=male, 1=female)	-0.0865 (0.167)	0.169 (0.121)		
Country of residence (0=India, 1=USA)	0.108	0.110		

	(0.151)	(0.109)		
Educational level	0.113*	0.0173		
	(0.0627)	(0.0438)		
Political viewpoint	0.0319	0.0255		
	(0.114)	(0.0743)		
Dress code*gender	-0.0100			
	(0.231)			
Dress code*gender of hh	0.534**			
	(0.241)			
Dress code*country	-0.0490			
	(0.217)			
Dress code*political viewpoint	-0.187**			
	(0.0880)			
Dress code*educational level	0.0195			
	(0.150)			
Constant	3.664***	3.907***	4.129***	4.100***
	(0.435)	(0.298)	(0.0892)	(0.0755)
Observations	200	200	200	200
R-squared	0.064	0.018	0.002	0.000

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1