Women Don’t Run?
Election Aversion and Candidate Entry

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Descriptive under-representation

- College Degrees
- Professional Degrees
- State Legislators
- U.S. House Members
- U.S. House Candidates

Percent Women

Kanthak and Woon (Pittsburgh)
Diversity and quality of representation

- Legitimacy (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005)
- Issue attention (Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004, Swers 1998)
Potential sources of election aversion

- Believe capable of representing?
- Willing to run in an election and convince others?
Overview of experiments

- Lab analogue of policy-making ability: Addition Task (Niederle and Vesterlund 2007)
- Common incentives for selecting the best representative
- Vary selection mechanism (electoral vs non-electoral)
Experiment 1 procedures

- Part I. Piece rate
  - Addition Task
  - $0.75 per correct sum
  - Feedback only about individual score
Experiment 1 procedures

- Part II. Group representation
  - Choose to volunteer
  - Representative randomly selected from volunteers
  - Repeat addition task
  - $0.50$ per rep. sum, $0.25$ per own sum
Experiment 1 procedures

Part III. Election

- Choose to run as candidate
- Candidates simultaneously send campaign text messages
- Election by plurality rule, random tie-breaker
- Earn $1 per vote, $2 cost of running

- Repeat addition task
- $0.50 per rep. sum, $0.25 per own sum
Theoretical expectations

- Volunteering depends on beliefs about relative policy ability
  - Run if own ability above the average of other volunteers
  - Risk aversion $\Rightarrow$ More likely to volunteer

- Running for office depends on beliefs about relative policy ability and beliefs about the likelihood of winning
  - Number of other candidates
  - Informativeness of campaign environment
  - Voter responses to messages
Task performance

![Graph showing task performance by gender. The x-axis represents performance (piece rate) and the y-axis represents density. The graph compares male and female performance with blue line representing male and red dashed line representing female. The peak performance is higher for females compared to males.]
Choice results

![Bar chart showing percentage of male and female volunteers and runners.](chart.png)

- **Volunteer**
  - Male: 75%
  - Female: 25%

- **Run**
  - Male: 25%
  - Female: 75%

Kanthak and Woon (Pittsburgh)  Women Don’t Run
Choice results

![Bar chart showing percentage of male and female volunteers and runners.](chart.png)

- **Volunteer**
  - Male: 75%
  - Female: 25%

- **Run**
  - Male: 50%
  - Female: 25%
Overview of Experiment 2

Costs and benefits of entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaign</th>
<th>Chat</th>
<th>Truth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$CCB$</td>
<td>$TCB$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$CNO$</td>
<td>$TNO$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 1 Piece rate
Part 2 Volunteer
Part 3 Election
Part 4 Estimation (belief elicitation)
Part 5 Lottery choice (risk preference)
Volunteer choices

Kanthak and Woon (Pittsburgh)  Women Don’t Run  EITM/MPSA  13 / 18
Candidate choices

Kanthak and Woon (Pittsburgh)  Women Don’t Run  EITM/MPSA
Candidate choices

Kanthak and Woon (Pittsburgh) Women Don’t Run EITM/MPSA
Candidate choices

Kanthak and Woon (Pittsburgh) Women Don’t Run EITM/MPSA 14 / 18
Candidate choices

ChatCB | ChatNO | TruthCB | TruthNO
---|---|---|---
Men | Women

Kanthak and Woon (Pittsburgh) Women Don’t Run EITM/MPSA 14 / 18
Beliefs about others

Kanthak and Woon (Pittsburgh)  Women Don’t Run

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highest</th>
<th>2nd highest</th>
<th>3rd highest</th>
<th>Lowest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td></td>
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Part 1 Score

Kanthak and Woon (Pittsburgh)  Women Don’t Run

EITM/MPSA  15 / 18
Risk preferences

Kanthak and Woon (Pittsburgh)  Women Don’t Run  EITM/MPSA
## Probit regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe Choices</td>
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<td>-0.09</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number Willing</td>
<td>0.17*</td>
<td>0.61**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Willing</td>
<td>-0.22**</td>
<td>-0.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
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</table>

* p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05

Model includes treatment indicators and interactions with Score
Summary

- Strong election aversion among women, but not men
- Not explained by differences in ability, risk aversion, or beliefs
- Only mitigated by combination of truthful campaigns and eliminating costs of entry and benefits of office