Physical Attractiveness and Family Life as Determinants of Candidates' Images and the Vote.
Empirical Evidence for the German National Election 2002

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Outline

1. Data and Operationalizations

1.1. Data

The following analyses are based on a national pre-election study which was conducted in the week immediately before the German national election (September 22, 2002).[1] The data were collected by *forsa* (Berlin), using an access panel (forsa omninet). The panel is representative for the whole of Germany.

Vote choice was asked in the week after September 22, 2002.

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[1] The election study was devised by the author of this paper and my Cologne colleagues Hermann Duelmer, Markus Klein, Markus Quandt, and Ulrich Rosar.

1.2. Operationalizations

Candidate Traits and Evaluative Dimensions

Leadership Qualities

He has leadership qualities.
He is energetic.
He follows a straight course in his policies.
He is able to successfully solve situations of national crisis.

Trustworthiness

He is trustworthy.
He is a man of sound character.

Communication Skills

His public presence is convincing.
He talks in a way that can be easily understood by all citizens.

Charisma

He has a pleasant charisma.

Physical Attractiveness

He is a good-looking man.

Private Life

He has his private life under control.

Each item has a five point scale from "1" (do not agree at all) to "5" (agree completely);
rescaled to "0" (do not agree at all) – "1" (agree completely);
evaluative dimensions are arithmetic means of individual items.

<u>Subgroups for Conditional Analyses of 'Non-political' Traits</u>
<u>(cf. Section 5.)</u>

Party Identification:	Identification with SPD, CDU/CSU, Green Party, FDP or other party
Independent:	no Party ID
Political Interest −:	0 (not at all), 1, or 2
Political Interest +:	3, or 4 (very strong)
Political Information −:	no correct answer or only one correct answer on 2 questions about the German electoral laws
Political Information +:	2 correct answers
Education −:	no educational certificate or less than "Abitur"
Education +:	"Abitur" (highest general educational certificate) or a university degree
TV News −:	below average number of days per week (2 days), all channels
TV News +:	average number of days per week or more, all channels
News, priv. TV channels −:	below average number of days per week (1.7)
News, priv. TV channels +:	average number of days per week or more
Quality newspapers −:	never
Quality newspapers +:	1 day per week or more
Tabloids −:	"Bildzeitung", never
Tabloids +:	"Bildzeitung", 1 day per week or more
Local newspapers −:	less than 4 days per week
Local newspapers +:	4 days per week or more

2. German Chancellor Candidates and Individual Traits
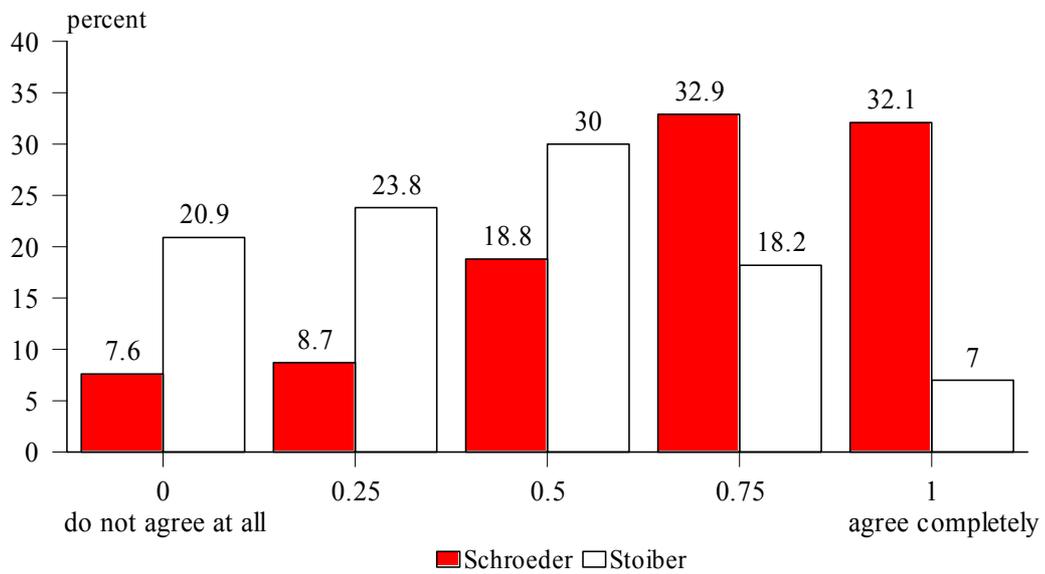## 2.1. The Chancellor Candidates 2002
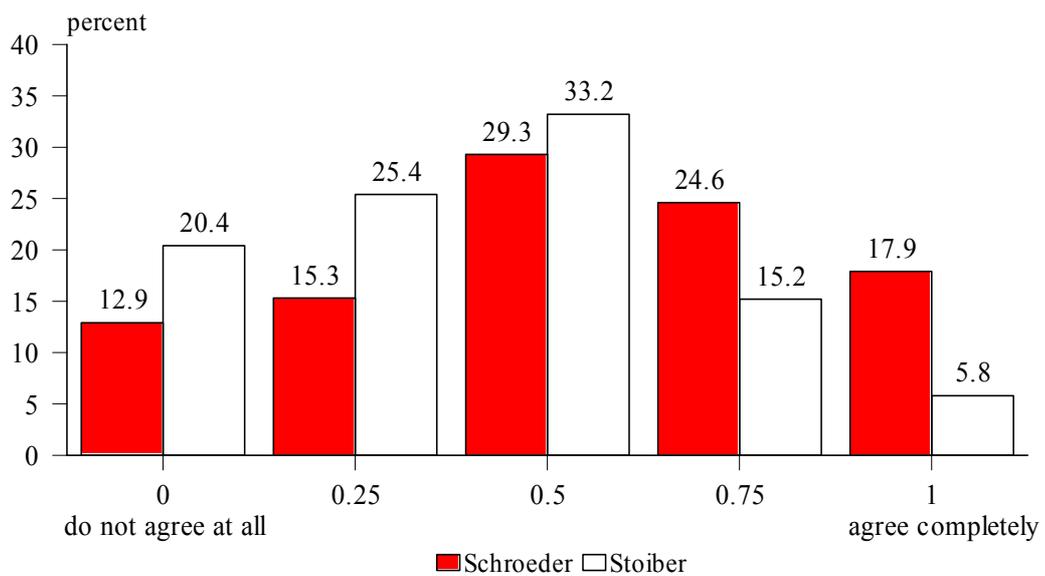
Gerhard Schroeder (SPD)

Edmund Stoiber (CDU/CSU)

2.2. Evaluation of Candidate Traits

Figure 1: He has a pleasant charisma

Figure 1: He has a pleasant charisma

percent

	0	0.25	0.5	0.75	1
Schroeder	7.6	8.7	18.8	32.9	32.1
Stoiber	20.9	23.8	30	18.2	7

do not agree at all — agree completely

■ Schroeder ☐ Stoiber

Data: forsa omninet 2002.

Figure 2: He is a good-looking man

Figure 2: He is a good-looking man

percent

	0	0.25	0.5	0.75	1
Schroeder	12.9	15.3	29.3	24.6	17.9
Stoiber	20.4	25.4	33.2	15.2	5.8

do not agree at all — agree completely

■ Schroeder ☐ Stoiber

Data: forsa omninet 2002.

Figure 3: He has his private life under control

percent

	Schroeder	Stoiber
0 (do not agree at all)	16.3	1.1
0.25	15	3.1
0.5	22.6	10.9
0.75	27.4	30.2
1 (agree completely)	18.8	54.7
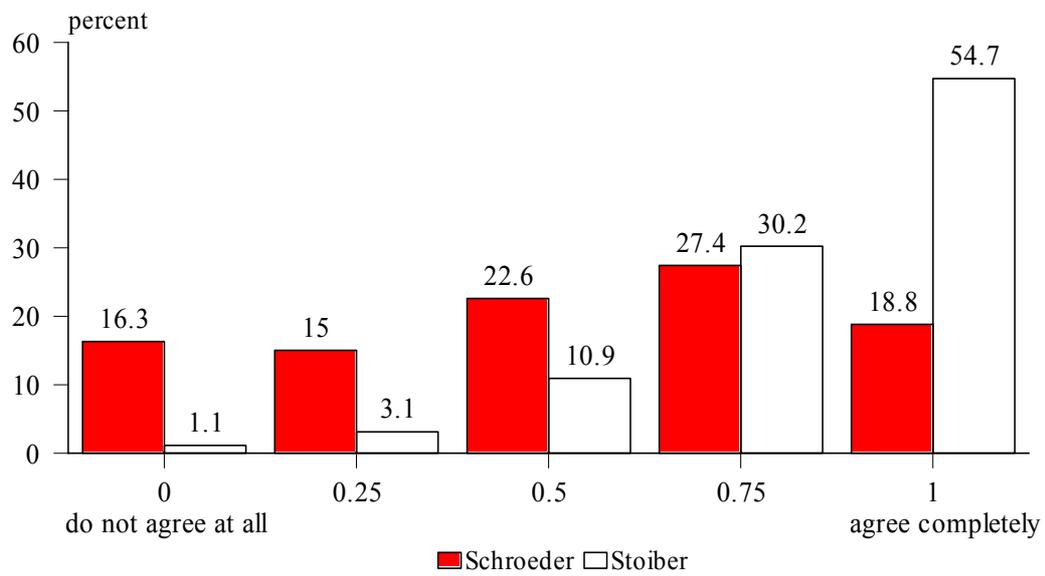
■ Schroeder □ Stoiber

Data: forsa omninet 2002.

TABLE 1   Evaluation of Candidates' Individual Traits, 2002
(arithmetic means, scaled from 0 to 1)

	Schroeder (SPD)	Stoiber (CDU/CSU)	Diff.
Leadership Qualities	0.61	0.54	0.07**
Trustworthiness	0.56	0.47	0.09**
Communication Skills	0.70	0.49	0.21**
Charisma	0.68	0.42	0.26**
Physical Attractiveness	0.55	0.40	0.15**
Private Life	0.54	0.84	-0.30**
n_{max}/n_{min}	1052/1011		

Mean substitution of missing values for "attractiveness" and "private life".

**: $\alpha \leq 0.01$; *: $\alpha \leq 0.05$ (two tailed).

Data: forsa omninet 2002.

3. 'Non-political' Traits and Overall Evaluation of the Candidates

TABLE 2a   Overall Evaluations of the Candidates
and Individual Traits, 2002
(Pearson Correlations)

	Schroeder[a] (SPD)	Stoiber[a] (CDU/CSU)
Leadership Qualities	0.83**	0.78**
Trustworthiness	0.81**	0.83**
Communication Skills	0.70**	0.77**
Charisma	0.68**	0.77**
Physical Attractiveness	0.51**	0.52**
Private Life	0.53**	0.32**
n_{max}/n_{min}	1040/1023	1036/1007

a Overall evaluation of Gerhard Schroeder/Edmund Stoiber;
scale from "0" (general opinion very low) to "10" (general opinion very high).

Mean substitution of missing values for "attractiveness" and "private life".

**: $\alpha \leq 0.01$; *: $\alpha \leq 0.05$ (two tailed).

Data: forsa omninet 2002.

TABLE 2b   Effects of Individual Traits on
             Overall Evaluations, 2002
             (OLS Regression, Beta-coeff.)

	Schroeder[a] (SPD)	Stoiber[a] (CDU/CSU)
Leadership Qualities	0.43**	0.25**
Trustworthiness	0.35**	0.34**
Communication Skills	0.03	0.14**
Charisma	0.09**	0.23**
Physical Attractiveness	0.06**	0.05**
Private Life	0.03	-0.03
R^2	.77	.78
n	1012	996

a Dependent variables: overall evaluation of Gerhard Schroeder/Edmund Stoiber; scale from "0" (general opinion very low) to "10" (general opinion very high).

Mean substitution of missing values for "attractiveness" and "private life".

**: $\alpha \le 0.01$; *: $\alpha \le 0.05$ (two tailed).

Data: forsa omninet 2002.

4.   'Non-political' Traits and Party Vote 2002

TABLE 3a   Party Vote 2002 and Individual Traits
(Pearson Correlations)

	Party Vote[a]
Schroeder	
Leadership Qualities	0.60**
Trustworthiness	0.59**
Communication Skills	0.49**
Charisma	0.47**
Physical Attractiveness	0.29**
Private Life	0.43**
Stoiber	
Leadership Qualities	-0.58**
Trustworthiness	-0.57**
Communication Skills	-0.57**
Charisma	-0.55**
Physical Attractiveness	-0.27**
Private Life	-0.25**
n_{max}/n_{min}	908/889

a "Party Vote": "1" (SPD), "-1" (CDU/CSU), "0" (other parties).

Mean substitution of missing values for "attractiveness" and "private life".

**: $\alpha <= 0.01$; *: $\alpha <= 0.05$ (two tailed).

Data: forsa omninet 2002.

TABLE 3b Effects of Individual Traits on Party Vote 2002
(OLS Regression, Beta-coeff.)

	(1)a	(2)b
Schroeder		
Leadership Qualities	0.16**	0.03
Trustworthiness	0.26**	0.17**
Communication Skills	0.01	0.01
Charisma	0.01	-0.02
Physical Attractiveness	0.01	0.03
Private Life	0.06	0.03
Stoiber		
Leadership Qualities	-0.16**	-0.08*
Trustworthiness	-0.09*	-0.06
Communication Skills	-0.10*	-0.04
Charisma	-0.11**	-0.09*
Physical Attractiveness	0.03	0.03
Private Life	-0.08**	-0.06**
R^2	.57	.69
n	816	816

a Dependent Variable "Party Vote":
"1" (SPD), "-1" (CDU/CSU), "0" (other parties).
b Model as in (1) + controlling for Party Identification
(2 dichotom. variables for PID SPD and PID CDU/CSU)

Mean substitution of missing values for "attractiveness" and "private life".
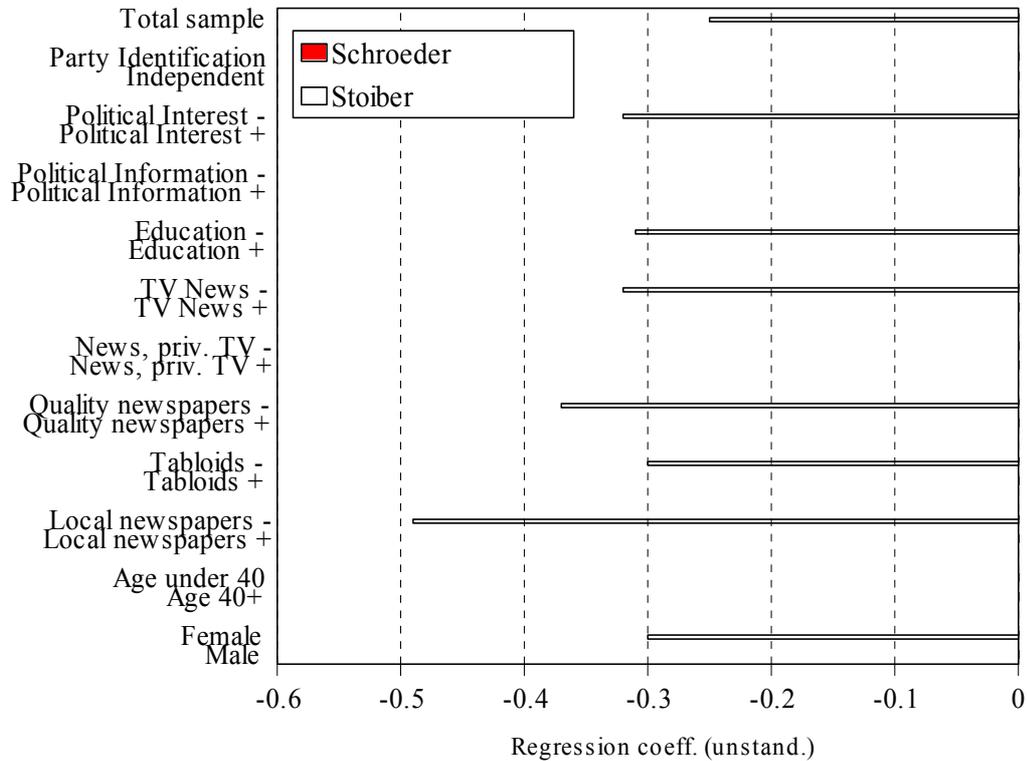
**: $\alpha <= 0.01$; *: $\alpha <= 0.05$ (two tailed).

Data: forsa omninet 2002.

5. Conditional Effects of 'Non-political' Traits

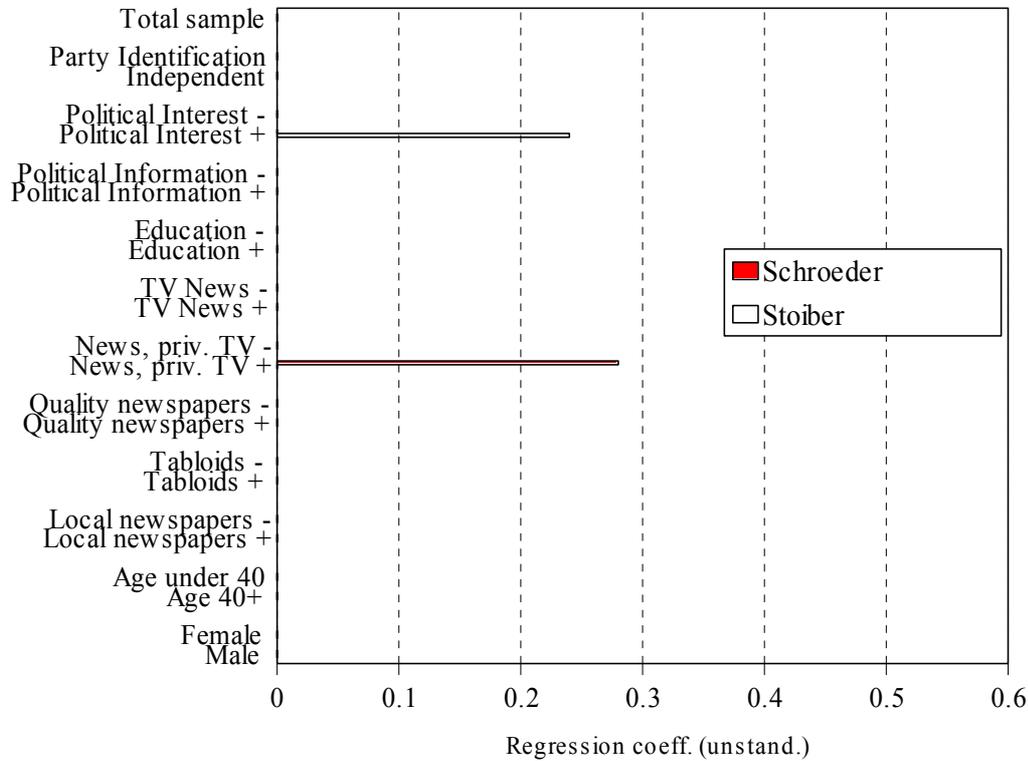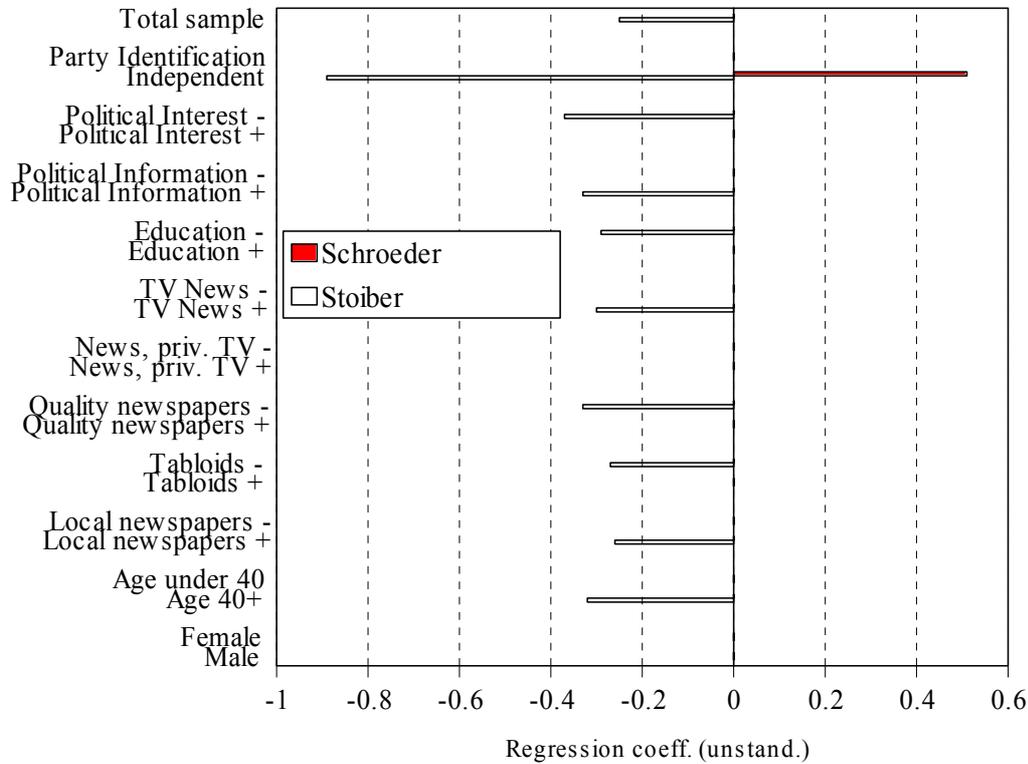## 5.1. Charisma

Figure 4: Effects of "Charisma" on Party Vote

Regression model for each subgroup as in TABLE 3b, model (2); only statistically significant coefficients (α <= 0.05, two tailed) are depicted.

Data: forsa omninet 2002.

5.2. Physical Attractiveness

Figure 5: Effects of "Attractiveness" on Party Vote

Regression model for each subgroup as in TABLE 3b, model (2); only statistically significant coefficients (α <= 0.05, two tailed) are depicted.

Data: forsa omninet 2002.

5.3. Private Life

Figure 6: Effects of "Private Life" on Party Vote

Regression model for each subgroup as in TABLE 3b, model (2); only statistically significant coefficients (α <= 0.05, two tailed) are depicted.

Data: forsa omninet 2002.