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UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES:

Bachelor of Social Sciences, Economics, University of Helsinki, 2011

MASTERS LEVEL WORK:

Master of Social Sciences, Economics, University of Helsinki, 2013

DOCTORAL STUDIES:

Institute for International Economic Studies, Stockholm University, 2013 to present

Thesis Title: "Essays in Political Economy"

Expected Completion Date: June 2019

Thesis Committee and References:

Torsten Persson (Primary Advisor)
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Janne Tukiainen
Visiting Professor, Department of Government,
London School of Economics and Political Science,
and Associate Research Professor, VATT
Institute for Economic Research
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TEACHING AND RESEARCH FIELDS:

Political Economy, Applied Microeconometrics

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Spring 2018	Political Economics II, Stockholm University, Teaching Assistant for Professors Torsten Persson and David Strömberg
Spring 2017	Political Economics II, Stockholm University, Teaching Assistant for Professors Torsten Persson and David Strömberg
Spring 2016	Political Economics II, Stockholm University, Teaching Assistant for Professors Torsten Persson and David Strömberg
Fall 2012	Preparation Course for Mathematical Analysis, University of Helsinki, Instructor

Fall 2012 Introduction to Economics, University of Helsinki, Teaching Assistant
Spring 2012 Introduction to Statistics II, University of Helsinki, Teaching Assistant

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

2013-2015 IIES, Stockholm University, Research Assistant
Summer 2013 VATT Institute for Economic Research, Research Assistant
Fall 2012 Department of Economics, University of Helsinki, Research Assistant
Summer 2012 VATT Institute for Economic Research, Research Assistant

CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS:

2018 IIES, APSA, IIPF, EPSA, NICEP Conference, LSE, ZEW, ENTER Conference
2017 SUDSWED Workshop, IIPF, EPSA, EPCS, Stockholm University
2016 VATT Institute for Economic Research, EPCS, Stockholm University
2015 HECER Public and Labor Economics Workshop, Stockholm University

HONORS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND FELLOWSHIPS:

2015 Hedelius Scholarship, Handelsbanken Research Foundations
2013 Best Thesis Award, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki
2011 Väinö Linna Scholarship for Excellence in Studies, University of Helsinki

PUBLICATIONS:

Hyytinen, Ari, Jaakko Meriläinen, Tuukka Saarimaa, Otto Toivanen, and Janne Tukiainen. 2018. "Public Employees as Politicians: Evidence from Close Elections." *American Political Science Review* 112(1), 68-81. <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055417000284>>

Hyytinen, Ari, Jaakko Meriläinen, Tuukka Saarimaa, Otto Toivanen, and Janne Tukiainen. 2018. "When does regression discontinuity design work? Evidence from random election outcomes." *Quantitative Economics* 9(2), 1019-1051. < <https://doi.org/10.3982/QE864>>

Meriläinen, Jaakko, and Janne Tukiainen. 2018. "Rank effects in political promotions." *Public Choice* 177(1), 87-109. <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-018-0591-8>>

Meriläinen, Jaakko. 2017. "Single-Party Rule, Public Spending and Political Rents: Evidence from Finnish Municipalities." Forthcoming in *Scandinavian Journal of Economics*. <<https://doi.org/10.1111/sjoe.12288>>

JOB MARKET PAPER:

"*Politician Quality, Ideology and Fiscal Policy*"

Abstract: This paper studies the role of politician quality in policy-making. I use administrative registry data on local politicians in Finland to examine the markers of politician quality that are typically employed in empirical research. Exploiting exogenous variation generated by close electoral races that shift the quality composition of local councils, I show that high-income, re-elected incumbent and competent politicians (i.e., politicians with high residuals from a Mincer income regression) improve fiscal sustainability outcomes without cutting public goods and services provision. Symmetrically, university-educated local councilors manage to increase public spending without affecting fiscal sustainability. I use unique survey data on candidates' policy positions to show that politician quality is also associated with economic ideology. These correlations are in line with the policy effects that I find. Thus, good representatives on both sides of the political spectrum improve policies.

RESEARCH PAPERS:

"*Victorian Voting: The Origins of Party Orientation and Class Alignment*" (with Torun Dewan and Janne Tukiainen; under review)

Abstract: Much of what we know about the alignment of voters with parties comes from mass surveys of the electorate in the postwar period or from aggregate electoral data. Using individual elector-level panel data from 19th century United Kingdom poll books, we assess the development of a party-centered electorate. We show that (i) the electorate was party-centered by the time of the extension of the franchise in 1867; (ii) a decline in candidate-centered voting is largely attributable to changes in the

behavior of the working class; and (iii) the enfranchised working class aligned with the Liberal left. This early alignment of the working class with the left cannot entirely be explained by a decrease in vote buying. The evidence suggests instead that the alignment was based on the programmatic appeal of the Liberals. We argue that these facts can plausibly explain the subsequent development of the party system.

“Class, Social Mobility, and Voting: Evidence from Historical Voting Records” (with Torun Dewan and Janne Tukiainen)

Abstract: How do voters’ social background and economic circumstances affect their voting behavior? Do changes in social status affect how people vote? We study these questions using unique individual-level administrative records from the 19th-century United Kingdom. Before the introduction of the secret ballot, votes were recorded in so-called poll books that contain information on which candidates each voter voted for, and the voters’ occupations. While we do not find strong evidence of class-based voting along the working class and middle class divide, we do find evidence of a union of the landed gentry, farm workers, non-skilled workers, and white-collar workers voting more for the Conservatives, and petty bourgeoisie and skilled workers for the Liberals. The changes in voting behavioral within individuals due to social mobility are consistent with the same cleavage. One interpretation of these results is that voting behavior was influenced by economic incentives related to the interests of the new and old industries.

”Public Procurement versus Laissez-Faire: Evidence from Household Waste Collection” (with Janne Tukiainen; revised and resubmitted)

Abstract: What form of market organization results in the most efficient provision of local (impure) public goods? If an efficient solution can be identified, what prevents policymakers from implementing it? We document that switching from laissez-faire production to public procurement in residential waste collection in Finland reduces the number of firms active in the local market but induces a statistically significant and large decrease in price. While a price reduction without decrease in quality seems to be desirable from the citizens’ perspective, not all local governments have adopted public procurement. We show that local politics may be one obstacle for the efficient provision of local public services. In particular, municipalities with more left-wing councilors or public employee politicians are less likely to adopt the publicly procured system.

“How Much Should We Trust RDD Estimates of the Personal Incumbency Advantage?” (with Leandro De Magalhães, Dominik Hangartner, Salomo Hirvonen, Nelson Ruiz Guarín and Janne Tukiainen)

Abstract: We study how sensitive the RDD estimates of personal incumbency advantage are to the implementation approach. We provide three pieces of evidence using detailed micro-data from local government elections in four countries. First, we compare RDD estimates to comparable estimates from lottery election outcomes in Colombia and Finland and show that state-of-the-art implementation with bias-correction and robust inference approach performs better in replicating the experimental benchmark than conventional local linear estimates in both countries. Second, we assess the substantive implications of these results for the personal incumbency advantage in open-list PR election system in Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, and Finland. We find that in all cases the state-of-the-art implementation produces smaller estimates than the (biased) conventional approach, but that the magnitude of the differences varies across countries. Third, we argue that it is not simple to uncover which types of elections are more prone to the curvature issues that are behind the differences in estimates between the different implementation approaches.

SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS:

“Campaign Limits and the Selection of Local Councilors in Colombia” (with Nelson Ruiz Guarín)

“Formation and Effects of Pre-Electoral Coalitions: Theory and Evidence” (with Rafael Hortala-Vallve and Janne Tukiainen)

“Selective Abstention in Simultaneous Elections: Understanding the Turnout Gap” (with Sirus Dehdari)

“Poverty, Outside Options and Insurgency – Finland in 1918” (with Matti Mitrunen and Tuomo Virkola)

“The Suction of Liberation – Impact of the Milking Machine on Rural Women” (with Matti Mitrunen and Matti Sarvimäki)