Abstract
I will present ongoing work on attractiveness discrimination in organizations. The social sciences have had a difficult history studying discrimination, or even just proving it exists, due to a variety of related methodological challenges (Bertrand and Duflo, 2017). Researchers, mostly in psychology and economics, addressed this challenge by experimentally recreating key processes relevant to discrimination in lab settings, which allowed for major advances in terms of internal validity. There are hundreds of papers published on attractiveness discrimination, and with few minor exceptions, the conclusion of this body of work is that “physical attractiveness is always an asset” (Hosoda et al, 2003). I argue that this conclusion is partly an artifact of the relatively narrow way in which attractiveness discrimination has been studied and conceptualized. I highlight the importance of considering the key features of the organizational context and the diversity of relevant organizational agents for understanding and managing attractiveness (and other forms of) discrimination. After a quick review of a few relevant published experiments, I present in detail a recent multi-wave study of 100 teams and their supervisors in India utilizing a round-robin design, which sheds new light on sources and nature of attractiveness advantage.

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All interested are welcome.