

NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND VOTER PARTICIPATION: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY*

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Abstract

We study the effect of social embeddedness on voter turnout by investigating the role of information about other voters' decisions. We do so in a participation game, in which we distinguish between early and late voters. Each late voter is told about one early voter's turnout decision. Cases are distinguished where the voters are allies (support the same group) or adversaries (with opposing preferences) and where they are uncertain about each other's preferences. Our experimental results show that the social context matters: this information increases aggregate turnout by approximately 50%. The largest effect is observed for allies. Early voters strategically try to use their first mover position and late voters respond to this.

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