

Lifecycle changes and the activation of habitual voting: The case of Costa Rica

Ronald Alfaro-Redondo

Abstract

Under circumstances of substantial turnout reductions, the development of electoral habits may constitute a key factor to attenuate or even revert such tendency in the long term. Using a unique dataset I examine the extent to which age and lifecycle changes mediate the effects of prior turnout (*habituation*) on future electoral behavior. Three findings are highlighted. First, age and turnout_{t-1} reinforce each other and boost turnout to higher rates. Second, even under favorable circumstances, residential mobility still can disrupt individuals' voting patterns, regardless of whether their behavior was already habituated. Finally, habitual voting is activated by the time individuals participate in their fourth election, and the sooner they cast their first vote.