

The Effects of Exposure to Electoral Advertising: Evidence from Spain^{*}

Teresa Esteban-Casanelles[†]

2020-09-29

Abstract

I measure the effects of street-level political advertising on voting behavior, estimating not only how parties' ads affect their own vote shares but also other parties' electoral outcomes. I use a novel dataset on legally determined ad location in a major Spanish city during elections for the national parliament as well as granular socio-economic data. In order to successfully identify the effects of parties' ads, I exploit legally mandated randomized assignment of ad location to parties across multiple years. My main findings are that, overall, own ads have a positive effect on a party's vote share and ads of parties with similar (distant) platforms act as complements (substitutes) to own ads.

Keywords: advertising; political campaign; political parties; spatial correlation; voting.

JEL Classifications: D72; L15; M37; R32.

^{*}I am very grateful to Andrea Prat, John Marshall, Suresh Naidu, and Mark Dean for their insightful comments and conversations. I also thank Alessandra Casella, Duarte Gonçalves, and the participants of the Behavioral and Cognition Lab and the Applied Microeconomics Colloquium at Columbia University for valuable feedback.

[†]Department of Economics, Columbia University; teresa.estebancasanelles@columbia.edu.