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Ana García-Hernández - Political Voice and Public Goods Provision Evidence from a Lab-in-the-Field Experiment in Uganda

In recent years, many policies have been implemented to increase the presence of certain underrepresented groups, like women, in decision-making bodies. The effect of the increase in political voice of those groups in the context of informal institutions remains unclear. This paper aims to understand the relationship between political voice and contributions to community, using a modified version of a Public Goods game (PGG) in rural Uganda. The proposed PGG, examines the effect of increasing political voice on public good provision through an exogenous empowerment manipulation.

Results suggest that empowered people contribute slightly more than individuals that do not have voting power in a decision that affects the community. Furthermore, this effect is only present when the participants experience the change on status in the group, suggesting that they are sensitive to changes in the social position. The design includes two novel components; 1) an external variation on empowerment, in the form of inclusion in a decision making process, and 2) the use of the strategy method to decide the contributions, which allows to separate the effect of political voice on contributions coming from agency and the effect coming from increasing the probability of the sector you prefer being chosen.