

Social influence and participatory behaviors: the diffusion of political participation through social networks*

Emilien Paulis¹, Matteo Gagliolo², and Emilie van Haute¹

¹CEVIPOL

²GERME, Institute of Sociology
Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)

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The mobilizing effects of social networks have attracted a growing attention in political science. Many theoretical and empirical studies stressed the role that peers can play on triggering or hindering political participation (Burt & Klobstad 2008, Wolf et al. 2010, Huckfeldt & Sprague 2003, Sinclair 2012, Zuckerman 2005). Nonetheless, these contributions have not always relied on the full analytical power of the Social Network Analysis (SNA) toolbox to investigate the role of personal networks in mobilizing individuals in politics. They are generally quite static and integrate network indicators in basic statistical regressions. Moreover, they tend to focus on electoral participation and do not emphasize other, less conventional forms of participation. Based on data collected via an online panel survey, this paper is a first analytical attempt to apply a specific class of network statistical models called Auto-Logistic Actor Attribute models (ALAAM) in order to account for the structural effect of social networks on political participation. We show that social network structure does indeed affect the diffusion of political participation.

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