

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/love-thy-elected-neighbor/>

This video discusses research conducted on urban economics, specifically focusing on neighborhood segregation and the impact of local public goods on geographic inequalities. It starts by identifying the correlation between childhood environments—growing up in poor neighborhoods versus rich neighborhoods—and future life outcomes. The authors express interest in understanding how local public services and political processes influence these inequalities.

The study analyzes local municipal politics, particularly looking at the relationship between elected officials' proximity to schools and the likelihood of those schools remaining open. Using a unique electoral system in Finland, which incorporates open list proportional representation, the authors investigate how personal votes affect service allocation. They find that schools in neighborhoods with elected officials living nearby are less likely to close.

Data analyzed includes the addresses of candidates and schools, which provides insights into local representation. The findings indicate that affluent neighborhoods are better represented in local politics due to higher voter turnout and geographical loyalty in voting patterns, resulting in more elected officials from wealthy areas.

The research also highlights the consequences of school closures, revealing that wealthier residents tend to leave neighborhoods when schools shut down, perpetuating a cycle of decline in less affluent areas. The authors suggest that municipalities should consider long-term implications of public service locations on neighborhood dynamics and inequalities when making policy decisions.

In conclusion, they emphasize the importance of political processes and voter turnout on representation, cautioning that increasing turnout could lead to unintended consequences. They also discuss the inherent trade-offs in electoral systems regarding representation, accountability, and quality of political selection, emphasizing the need for careful consideration by lawmakers when choosing such systems.