

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/do-billboard-advertisements-increase-voter-turnout/>

This video discusses the effectiveness of billboard advertising in influencing voter turnout, particularly in the context of the 2020 presidential election in the United States. Scholars have long questioned the impact of outdoor signage in both marketing and political science, but research on this topic is limited and often lacks rigorous methodology.

The authors conducted a nationwide randomized control trial to evaluate how billboard advertisements, promoting voting, affected turnout in over 150 metro areas. They focused on placing billboards in locations likely to reach local residents rather than along highways, allowing for a diverse geographical representation. The study aimed to detect subtle effects, especially in non-battleground states that typically receive less campaign attention.

Using cell phone data, the researchers tracked how many people passed by the billboards, ensuring no individual voter data was compromised. Overall, the findings revealed that while there may be slight increases in voter turnout very close to the billboards, the overall effects were generally close to zero. Interestingly, the billboards did not significantly raise registration rates, which suggests that passive advertising might not effectively motivate voters to take action.

The authors noted that the high turnout rates in the 2020 election might have made it harder to detect the billboard's influence. They also acknowledged that future research could explore whether more compelling messages or different election contexts could yield better results in advertising effectiveness.