

Publication

Rain, emotions and voting for the Status Quo

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Do emotions affect the decision between change and the status quo? We exploit exogenous variation in emotions caused by rain and analyze data on more than 400 ballot propositions in Switzerland for the years 1958 to 2014 to address this question. The empirical tests are based on administrative ballot outcomes and individual postvote survey data. We find that rain decreases the share of votes for a change. Our robustness checks suggest that changes in the composition of the electorate or changes in information acquisition do not drive this result. In addition, we provide evidence that rain might have altered the outcome of several high-stake votes. We discuss the psychological mechanism and document that rain reduces the willingness to take risks, a pattern that is consistent with the observed reduction in the support of change.

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