

Title:
The Impact of Internet on US Citizens' Political Participation in Election Years

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INTRO

The digital divide is the gap between those who are able to benefit from the advent of the digital age and those who are not.

While each year the percentage of those who have home access to the internet increases, there are still million of Americans who still do not have access. A few key factors that this gap is identifiable at are age, geographic location, and most predominantly identity factors such as race and socioeconomic status.

METHODS

Using data from both the 2016 and 2020 CES survey, I ran a difference to difference regression.

IV: home access to the internet

DV: donating to a campaign, putting up a lawn sign in support of a candidate, and attending local political meeting.

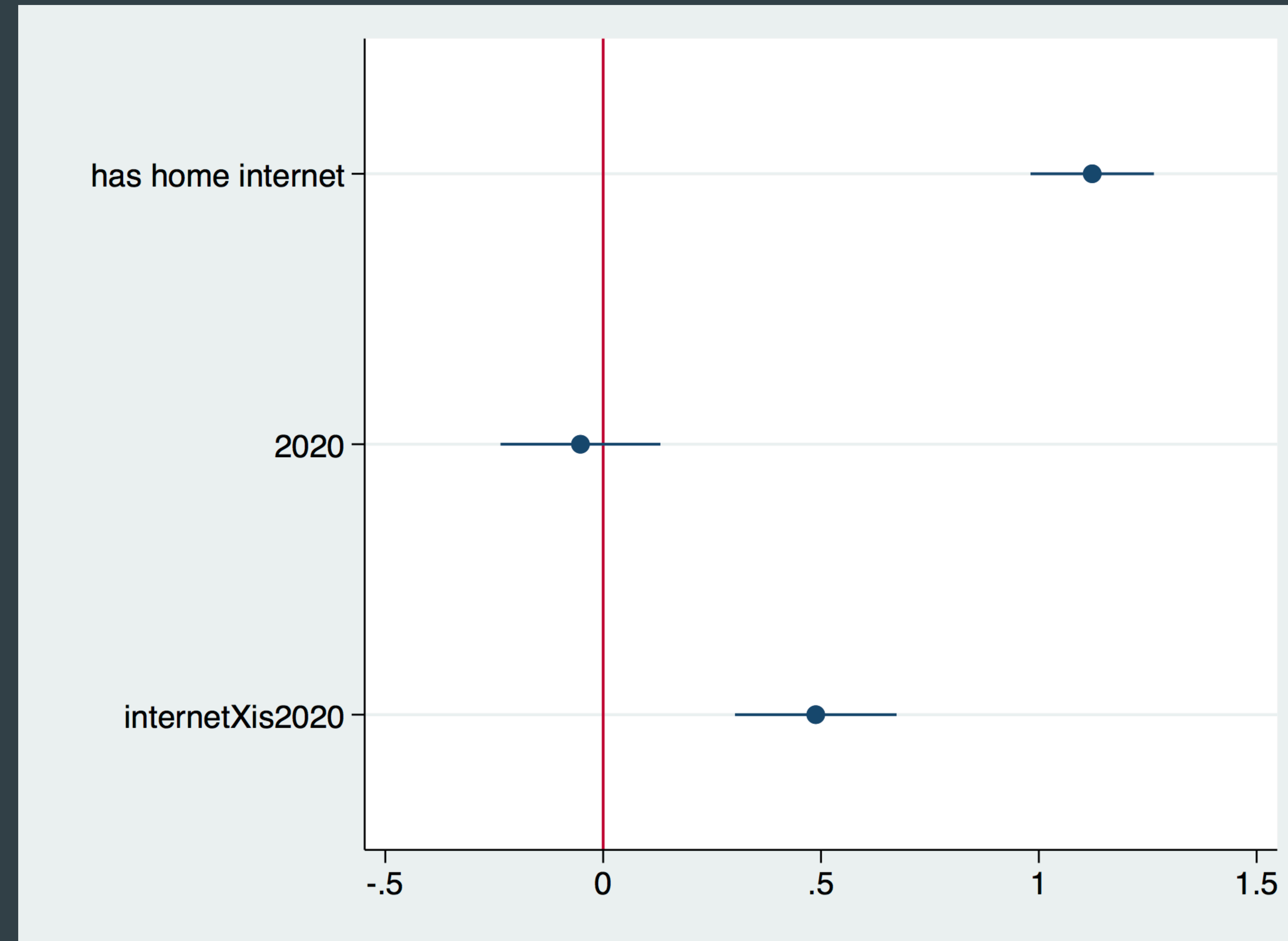
THEORY

- The majority of campaign fundraising occurs online
- In the 2020 election campaigning and rallying occurred mostly online through platforms like Zoom
- Merchandise for candidates such as lawn signs are mostly sold through websites

RESULTS

- More likely to donate to a campaign
- More likely to put up a lawn sign in support of a candidate
- More likely to attend a local political meeting

Does home internet access have an effect on citizens' political participation?



Yes, home internet access does affect certain types of political participation citizens partake in ie donating to campaigns.

	(1)
donated to a campa~n	
has home internet	1.123*** (0.0723)
2020	-0.0521 (0.0936)
internetXis2020	0.488*** (0.0946)
Constant	-2.526*** (0.0715)
Observations	125600
Standard errors in parentheses * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001	
	(1)
put up a la~n	
has home internet	0.606*** (0.0707)
2020	-0.0174 (0.0907)
internetXis2020	0.320*** (0.0921)
Constant	-2.466*** (0.0697)
Observations	125600
Standard errors in parentheses * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001	
	(1)
attended a ~s	
has home internet	0.567*** (0.0811)
2020	-0.747*** (0.123)
internetXis2020	0.465*** (0.124)
Constant	-2.783*** (0.0800)
Observations	125600
Standard errors in parentheses * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001	

Discussion:

These findings add to the discussion about how digital and social media are reshaping political participation. They also prove that those with home access to the internet are more likely to partake in more forms of political participation, especially in a broader sense than just voting. This speaks to the importance of addressing the digital divide, so that all citizens have the same opportunity to partake in their government and political processes.