

# 5th Political Science & Political economy Conference Titles and Abstracts

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*From Chatter to Action: How Social Networks Inform and Motivate in Rural Uganda (with Janet I. Lewis, and Pedro Rodríguez)*

**Abstract:** From election campaigns to public service announcements, numerous political activities and policy interventions hinge on the spread of new information that motivates behavior. However, few studies directly examine the process by which information spreads via word-of-mouth, or compare that to the separate process by which those who learn the information act on it. Using a novel design that seeded information in rural Uganda, we show that both processes depend on a group's social network, but in different ways. Information spreads via a straightforward contagion process. Behavior, however, does not spread so simply; it depends on social proximity to those motivated to act early, and endorsement by intimate ties. Moreover, while those most central in a network are most likely to become informed, it is the less central among the informed who ultimately act. Connections to highly-connected peers may generate pressure to refrain from taking novel actions.

