

# Youth electoral participation and representation

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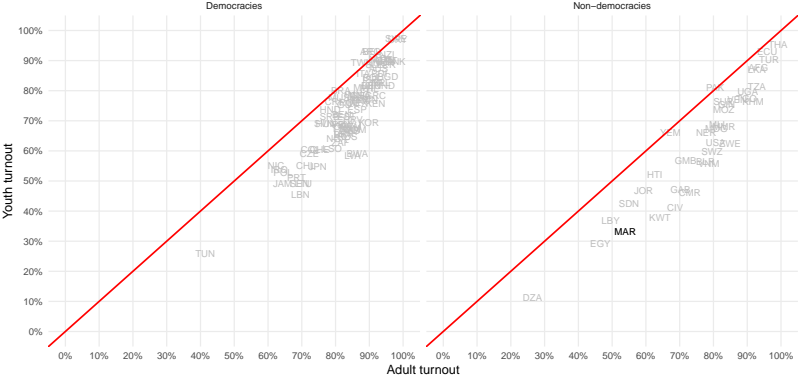
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# Motivation

- ▶ Young citizens are under-represented among active party members who engage in campaigns.
  - ▶ E.g., they are 50% less likely to have volunteered in politics than older citizens in Europe.
- ▶ Young citizens
  - ▶ Are less likely to become candidates
  - ▶ Vote at relatively low rates
- ▶ Political parties deprioritize the youth's preferences.
- ▶ Reinforces young citizens' lack of interest in political participation.

# Motivation (Cont.)



**Figure: Turnout across the world.** Younger citizens (y-axis) compared to older citizens (x-axis). Democracies/Non-democracies (left/right panel) are those countries that have a Polity-V score above/below 5.

# Road map

- ▶ Morocco: GOTV and Informed Vote
- ▶ Netherlands: Volunteer Recruitment
- ▶ Stepping back
- ▶ Possible Next Steps

# Morocco

- ▶ Partnered with non-partisan CSO Tafra in Morocco.
- ▶ Low-cost online interventions ahead of 2021 elections designed to encourage youth to
  - ▶ Turn out, and
  - ▶ Cast an informed vote
- ▶ Recruited 7,521 participants between the ages of 18 and 35 using Facebook ads.
- ▶ 70.5% Moroccan internet users aged 16-64 using the platform monthly.
- ▶ After a few baseline questions, study participants were randomly assigned to different information treatments.

# Theoretical framework

- ▶ Citizens vote if their expected expressive utility from voting

$$u_j = p^* + d - c > 0$$

is larger than zero, and refrain from voting otherwise, where:

- ▶  $p^*$  are the expressive policy benefits that accrue from voting for a party that would implement policies that are congruent with the citizen's policy preferences,
- ▶  $d$  are the expressive benefits associated with the civic duty of voting independent of vote choice, and
- ▶  $c$  are the expected costs of voting.

# Treatments and expectations

- ▶ Interventions aimed at
  - ▶ Lowering participation costs ( $c$ ) by providing information about the registration process (*registration treatment*)
  - ▶ Increasing the expected benefit of voting ( $d$ ) by highlighting both the election's stakes (*civics treatment*), and the distance between respondents' policy preferences and parties' platforms (increase  $p^*$ , *distance treatment*).

# Treatments and expectations (Cont.)

12:29

Etude sur les jeunes et la politique  
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English

As part of a tax reform, would you support that more Moroccans pay taxes? 2/6

Yes

~ Maybe

No

Will whether a party shares your view on this issue be important for you when casting your vote in the coming elections?

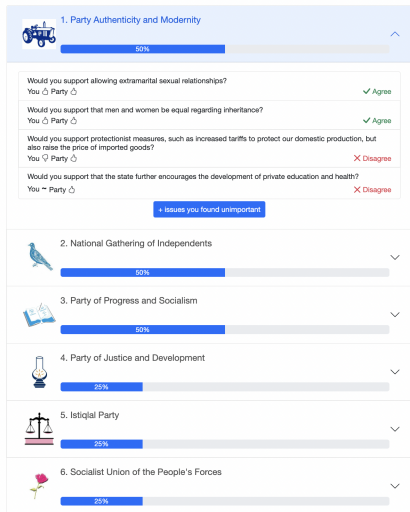
Yes

No

→

## Your results

We get the percentage of match between you and a party by counting the number of questions for which you and the party agree, for those policies that matter to you.





# Treatments and expectations (Cont.)

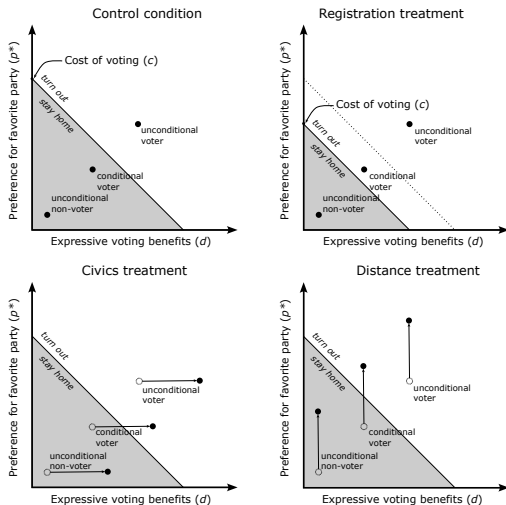
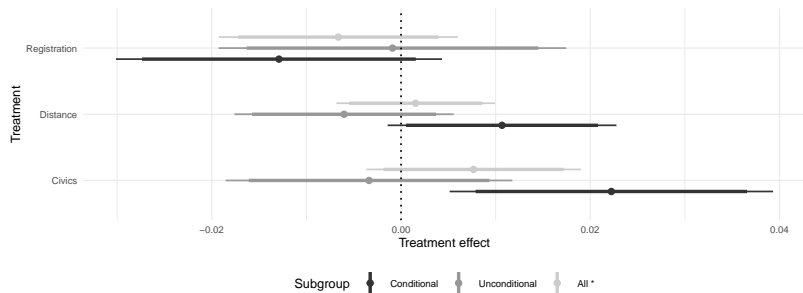


Figure: Illustration of the model's theoretical implications

# Results

- ▶ No average effect of any of the treatments.
  - ▶ Maybe no effect of the registration treatment due Morocco's non-democratic setting.
- ▶ Increase in turnout for those who received the *civics* and *distance* treatments and were unsure about whether to vote at baseline.
- ▶ Information about parties' platforms increased support for the party that is closer to respondents' preferences.
- ▶ Treated participants only internalized its bottom-line recommendation.
  - ▶ 20 percentage point reduction/increase in actual voting for the party that participants had ranked as their favorite/second at baseline.
  - ▶ Median participant spent only about 16 seconds on the party *distance treatment*.

# Results: Turnout intentions



(\*) pre-registered tests

Figure: Treatment effects on turnout intentions

- ▶ No effects on actual turnout.

# Results: Voting

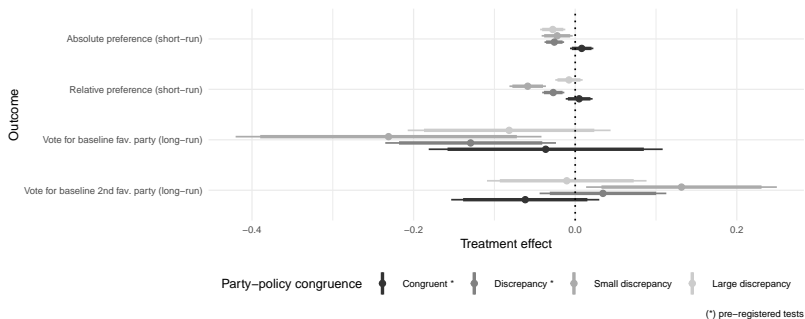


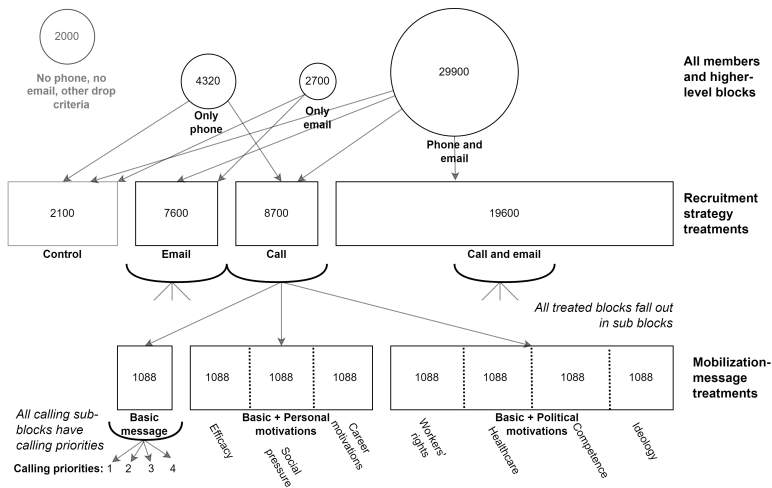
Figure: Effect of the *distance treatment* on party preferences (short-term outcomes measured in the pre-election survey) and voting decisions (long-term outcomes measured in the post-election survey).

# Netherlands

- ▶ Two field experiments before the 2021 general and 2022 municipal elections.
- ▶ Tested the efficacy of calls, emails, or both in encouraging volunteer participation to reach out to voters during campaigns
- ▶ Also played around with the content of the message, but it was inconsequential
- ▶ Target over 35,000 party members of a major left-wing party.
- ▶ Outcome measure: index of whether party members signed up for a variety of different campaign events.

# Flexible Research Design

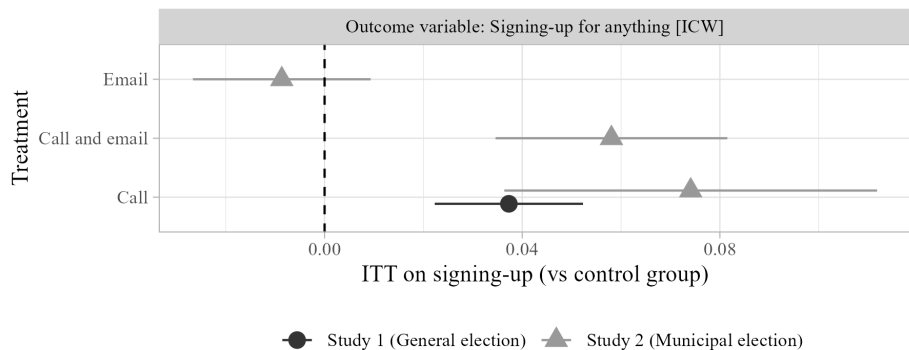
Figure: Research Design



# Results

- ▶ Personal calls to party members are highly effective in recruiting volunteers
  - ▶ 0.037 and 0.074 standard deviations, or 83% and 361% increase relative to the control group.
- ▶ The treatment is significantly more effective for younger party members (those 35 and under) than for older respondents (those between 35 and 65 and those over 65).

## Results: Pooled



**Figure:** Pooled results for the recruitment strategies. The outcome is whether party members sign up for different types of activities on the party website, combined using Inverse Covariance Weighting.



# Results: By Age Group

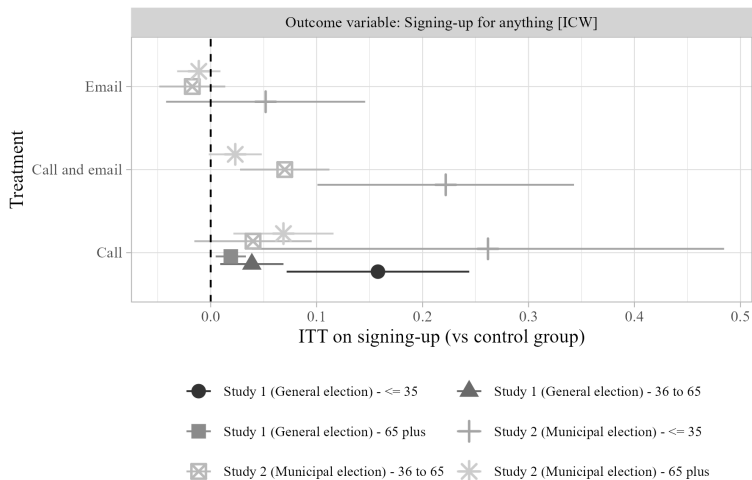


Figure: Recruitment strategy results by age group. The outcome is whether party members sign up for different types of activities, combined using ICW.

# Possible mechanisms

- ▶ Information:
  - ▶ Young party members were motivated to become active but did not know how to do so.
  - ▶ The youth has experienced little socialization as party members.
  
- ▶ Signal of interest.
  - ▶ Calls, as opposed to emails, reflect party interest.

# Stepping back

- ▶ Information can be effective when:
  - ▶ It primes preferences.
  - ▶ It nudges attention.
  - ▶ It corrects miss-perceptions; ideally around changes.
- ▶ Preference and attention changes are short-lived, but could be consequential if around immediate actions.
- ▶ Explains why durable effects in the Netherlands, and turnout effects only short-lived or muted in Morocco.

## Possible Next Steps

- ▶ Improve effectiveness of scalable online information interventions through the use of nudges.
  - ▶ Prime open-mindedness or preventing future politicization, or instruct individuals about their biases.
- ▶ Training the youth on the skills needed to win elections: “if you can mobilize votes, finance your campaign and win, you will secure a seat regardless of your age.”
  - ▶ Interviews with CSO members and political party officials in Morocco.
  - ▶ CSOs are the path to political candidacy.
  - ▶ Political parties and CSOs are closely intertwined: service delivery and voter mobilization.
  - ▶ Youth are unable to access electoral lists because they lack the ability to mobilize sufficient voters, and lack funds for campaigning.
  - ▶ Politically engaged youth have a comparative advantage in social media use for voter mobilization.

# References

- ▶ Jonne Kamphorst and Horacio Larreguy. 2024. “Get Out The Volunteer: Encouraging Diverse Political Party Activism.” Working Paper.
- ▶ Guy Grossman, Romain Ferrali, and Horacio Larreguy. 2022. “Can low-cost, scalable, online interventions increase youth informed political participation in electoral authoritarian contexts.” Science Advances.