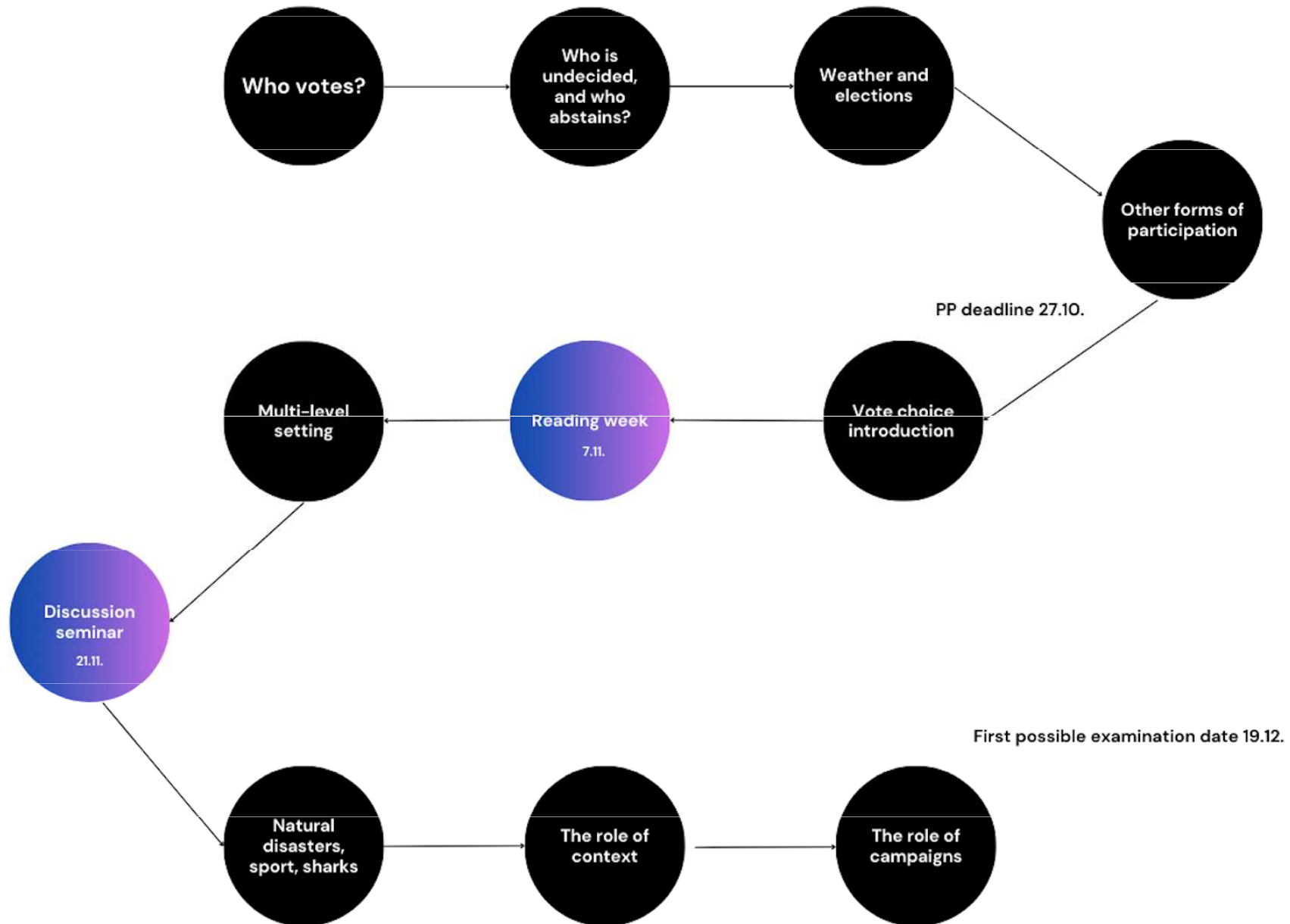


Elections and electoral behavior



M U N I
F S S

Who votes? Determinants of turnout
Part I

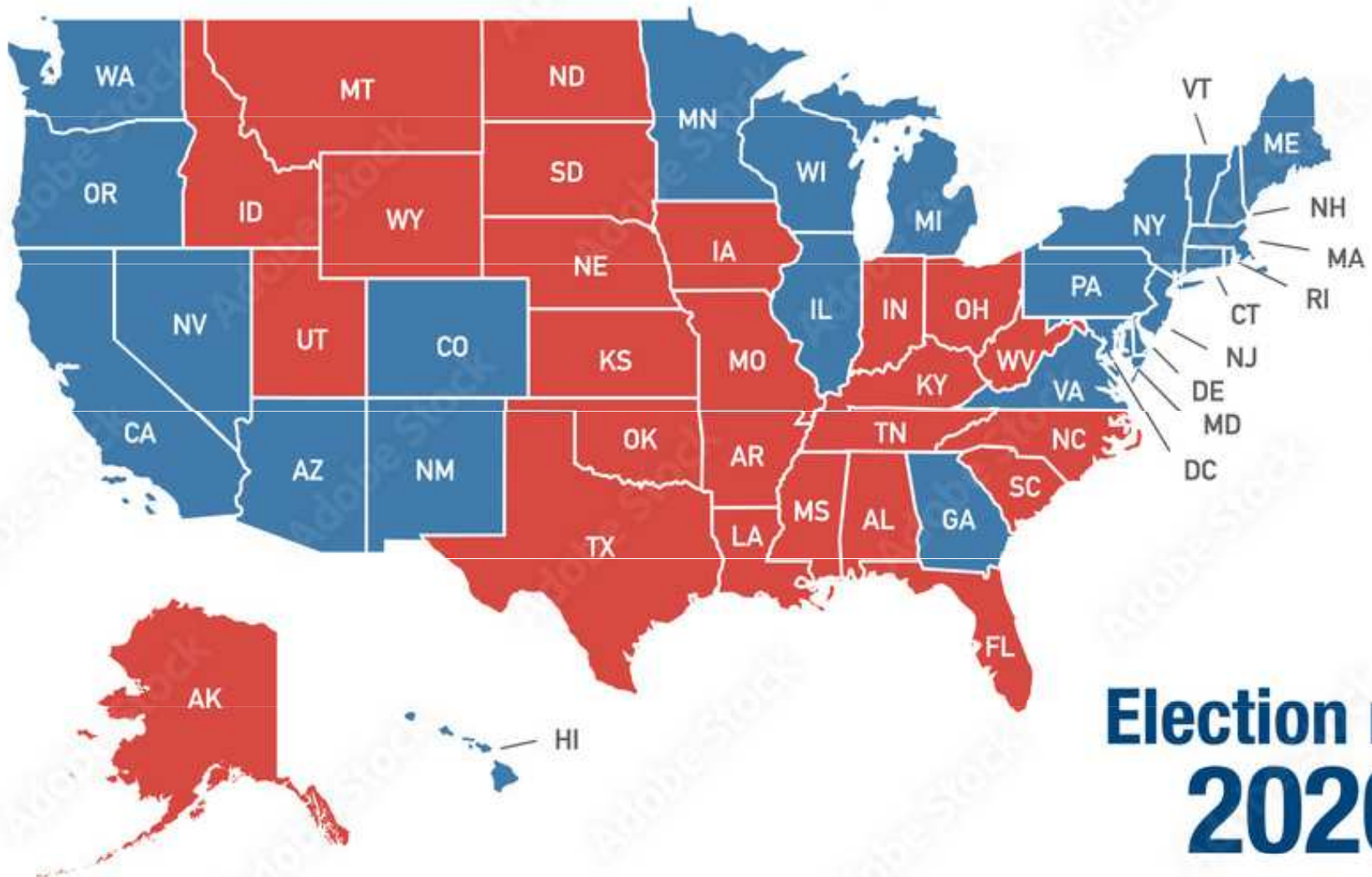
Jakub Jusko

Introduction and relevance

"Voting as the most common and important act of the citizen in a democracy" Aldrich 1993

"One of the most important indicators of democratic performance"
Powell 1982

"An important factor in electoral performance"



Election map 2020



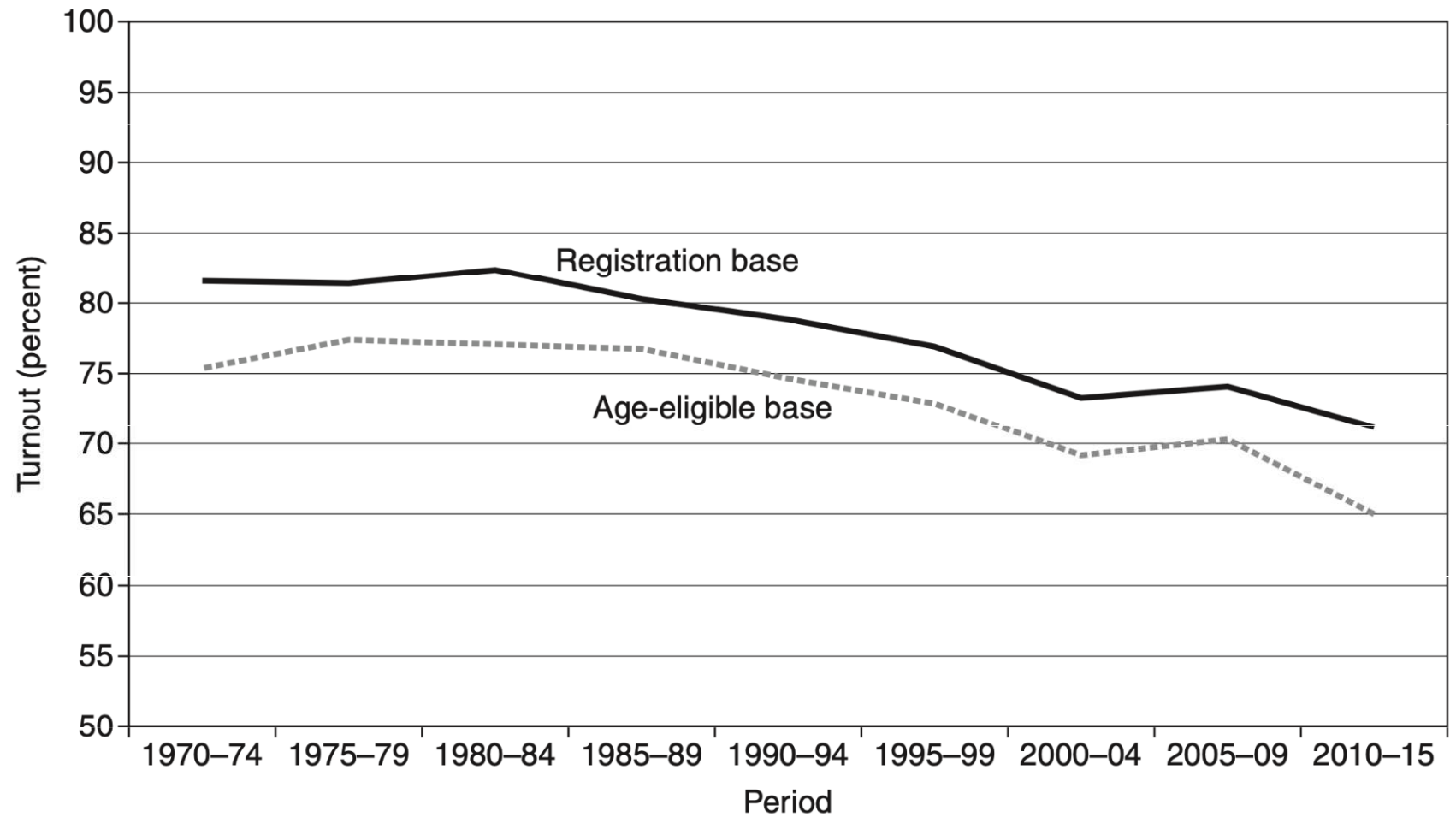


Figure 5.1 Turnout 1971–2014, 31 consistently free countries

Source: Fisher et al. 2018

+ VARIATIONS across countries, continents, contexts

+ different “turnouts”

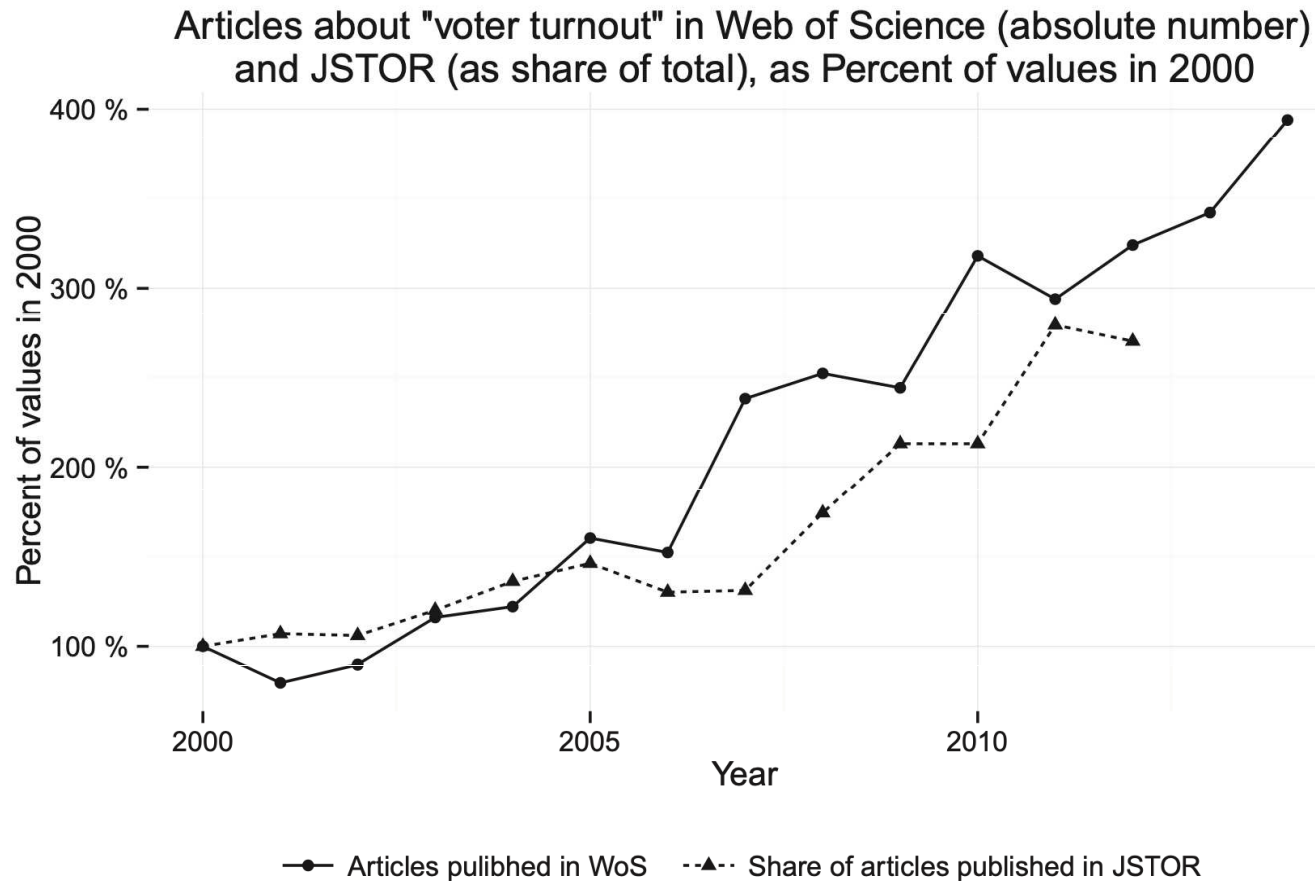


Fig. 1. Development of voter turnout literature: 2000–2014. Note: Published articles about voter turnout. The solid line represents the yearly evolution of the number articles returned in a search for ‘voter turnout’ in Thomson Reuters Web of Science. The dashed line represents the number of articles on ‘voter turnout’ available in JSTOR as a share of the total number of articles published in a given year. Both time-series are expressed as a percentage of the values observed for the year 2000. Data for JSTOR available only until 2012. Sources: Thomson Reuters Web of Science and JSTOR Data for Research.

Source: Cancela a Geys 2016

Phenomenon in the academia

- The argument about whether high turnout is important:
 - IS (e.g. Lijphart 1997) vs. IS NOT (e.g. Rosema 2007)
- Working with individual and macro-level, data-based from cross-sectional to longitudinal surveys, from big-data to experimental methods
- Voter turnout and voting one of the most researched areas of political behaviour => in other words - *lots of research*

Phenomenon in the academia

- Difference:
 - 1) **Whether they vote (how high the turnout is and why),**
 - 2) How people vote (determinants of choosing a particular party)
- Lack of consensus within the scientific community on the "core model" of T -> Many factors and theories not always valid
- T meta-analyses can help (e.g. Geys 2006, Smets and Van Ham 2013, Cancela and Geys 2016, Stockemer 2017)

Two streams of turnout studies

1) Individual level studies

- Which personal characteristics among voters distinguish them from going out to vote?

2) Macro-level studies

- How does the context in which the election takes place affect turnout?

What factors influence turnout?

1) Individual level studies

how to measure?

Table 2: Regressions measuring the effect of political sophistication on turnout

| Model | Turnout | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Self-competence | 0.981 (0.139) * | 0.306 (0.161) <u>.</u> | |
| Political interest | | 1.334 (0.154) * | |
| <i>Political sophistication</i> | | | 1.549 (0.168) * |
| Age | 0.027 (0.007) * | 0.024 (0.007) * | 0.024 (0.007) * |
| Education (Secondary) | 0.825 (0.227) * | 0.737 (0.241) * | 0.782 (0.236) * |
| Education (University) | 0.681 (0.293) <u>!</u> | 0.485 (0.312) | 0.479 (0.304) |
| Gender (Women) | 0.156 (0.204) | 0.333 (0.222) | 0.354 (0.214) <u>.</u> |
| Nationality (Hungarian) | 0.581 (0.429) | 0.809 (0.446) <u>.</u> | 0.739 (0.442) <u>.</u> |
| Nationality (Other) | -0.048 (0.882) | -0.739 (0.966) | -0.265 (0.939) |
| Municipality size | -0.011 (0.079) | -0.047 (0.085) | -0.022 (0.083) |
| Constant | -3.196 (0.584) * | -3.743 (0.634) * | -4.470 (0.618) * |
| AIC | 717.44 | 631.92 | 666.81 |
| N | 1,032 | 1,032 | 1,032 |

Note: Estimates are unstandardised logit coefficients, standard errors in parentheses. The reference category for education is primary, men for gender, and Slovak for nationality. Significance: . $p < 0.10$; ! $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.01$.

Individual level studies

- A) The resource model
- B) Rational choice model
- C) Mobilisation model
- D) Socialisation-psychological model



Social Class Pyramid

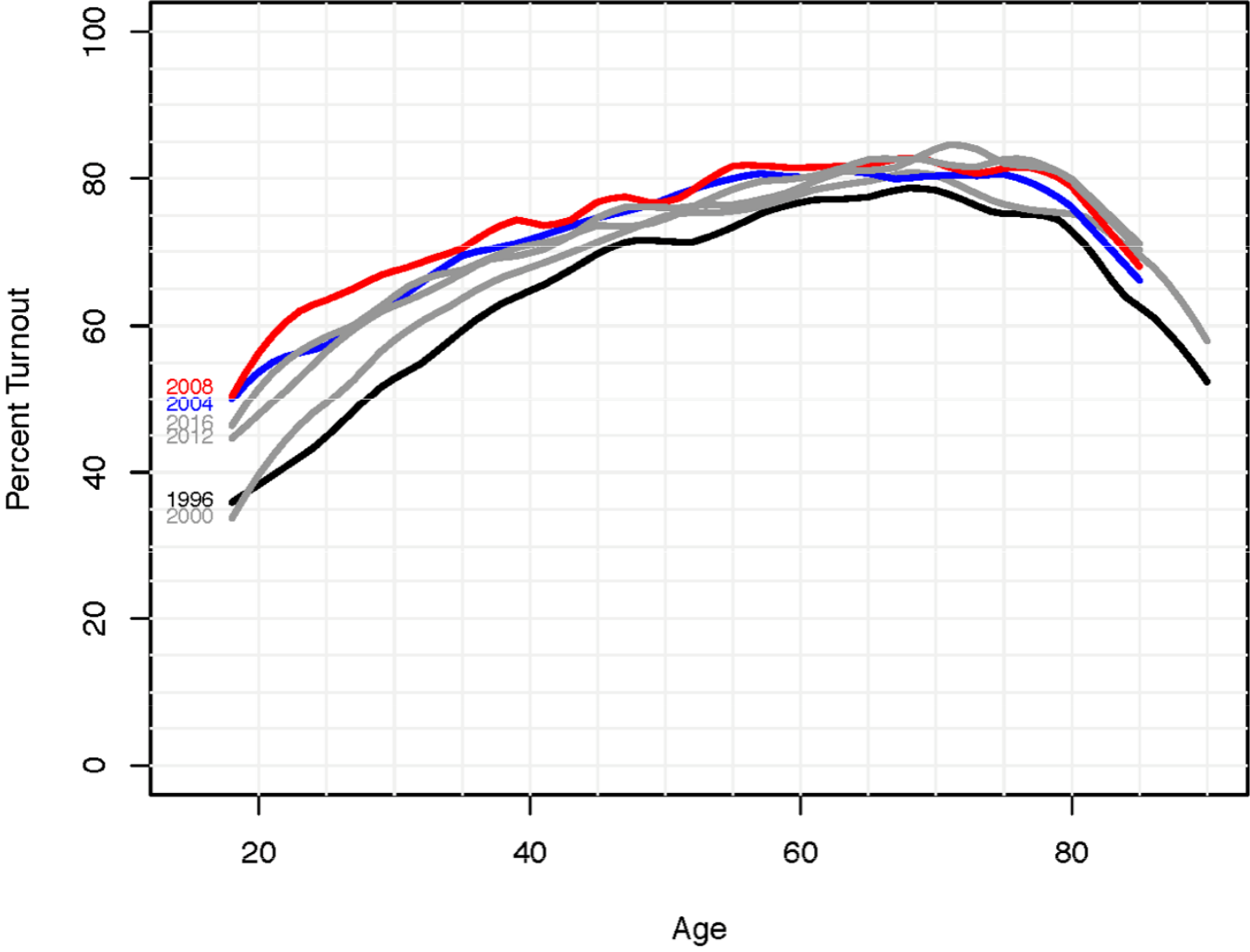
A) Socio-economic status model (SES, the resource model)

- Participation is an act driven by individual **resources** (time, money, skills)
- People who work, have higher income, and higher SES are more likely to have a wider range of resources
- Persons with low SES are less likely to participate either because:
 - they cannot bear the costs of voting (how to vote, registering)
 - the need to concentrate on one's own material well-being does not increase civic interest and, thus, interest in politics

A) Socio-economic status model (SES, the resource model)

- **Age (+):** young voters are not clear about their political interests, adults are more likely to accept social norms, changes in social networks (groups)
- **Education (+):** contributes to resources -> proxy social class and skills
one of the strongest predictors,
the paradox of increasing education (and not increasing participation)
- **Income (+):** small but significant effects

Presidential Turnout by Age, 1996–2016



Charles Franklin: @PollsAndVotes / Data: Current Population Survey

A) Socio-economic status model (SES, the resource model)

- **Residential stability (-):** citizens more anchored in the community -> stronger community ties -> better knowledge of local (political) issues
- **Region (-):** possible large differences within the landscape (as a control variable)

A) Socio-economic status model (SES, the resource model)

- Less "successful" variables:
- **Gender**
- **Race**
- **Citizenship**
- **Marital status:** more committed partner, more pursuit of "good citizenship" vs. less free time

The gender gap in voter turnout: An artefact of men's over-reporting in survey research?

Daniel Stockemer¹ 
and Aksei Sundstrom²

Abstract

Is there a gender gap in voting? Most cross-national survey research on gender inequalities in voter turnout finds that men have a higher probability to vote than women. Yet, some studies using validated turnout data shed some doubt on this finding. We revisit the question of a gender gap in voting using official records. In more detail, we compare the gender gap in turnout between survey data and official electoral figures across 73 elections. Our results highlight that in surveys, men still report higher turnout in most countries. However, official electoral figures reveal contrasting trends: across countries, women are, on average, more likely to vote. We also test two explanations for this difference in turnout between official figures and surveys: (1) men over-report voting more than women and (2) the survey samples of men and women are different. We find some, albeit very moderate, evidence for the first explanation and no support for the second explanation. All in all, our research nevertheless suggests that scholars should be careful in using surveys to detect gender differences in voting.

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B) Rational choice model

- It focuses on the "calculus of voting" of a voter who should vote when the benefits outweigh the costs of voting

$$R = PB - C$$

- A voter should vote when $PB > C$
- Modified version: $R = PB - C + D$

B) Rational choice model

- **Civic duty (D) (+):** 'in a democracy it is the moral duty of every voter to vote', 'necessary to maintain democracy', 'failure to do so = guilt' + reciprocity
- **Instrumental Benefits (B) (+):** I care who won the election, personal benefit of winning
- **Costs (C) (-):** time to vote, how "hard" it is to vote (less successful)



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B) Rational choice model

- **Civic duty (D) (+):** 'in a democracy it is the moral duty of every voter to vote', 'necessary to maintain democracy', 'failure to do so = guilt'
- **Instrumental Benefits (B) (+):** I care who won the election, personal benefit of winning
- **Costs (C) (-):** time to vote, how "hard" it is to vote (less successful)

B) Rational choice model

Blais et al. (2000): The calculus of voting: An empirical test

Benefit (B)

- (1) For you personally, does it make much difference whether the YES or NO side wins? Does it make an enormous difference, a great difference, a small difference or no difference?

[For you personally, does it make much difference who wins the election in the province as a whole? Does it make an enormous].

[For you personally, does it make much difference who wins the election in your riding? Does it make an enormous ...]

Probability (P)

- (1) Do you expect the result of the referendum to be very close, somewhat close, not very close or not close at all?

[Do you expect the result of the election in the province as a whole to be very close ...]

[Do you expect the result of the election in your riding to be very close ...]

B) Rational choice model

Blais et al. (2000): The calculus of voting: An empirical test

- (2) Have you ever thought of the possibility that the YES or NO side would win by a single vote, and that it would be your vote that decides which side wins?

[Have you ever thought of the possibility that the election in your riding could be decided by a single vote, and that it would be your vote that decides who wins?]

- (3) In your opinion, what are the chances of the YES or the NO side winning by a single vote: very high, somewhat high, somewhat low or very low?

[In your opinion, what are the chances that the election in your riding will be decided by a single vote: very high . . .]

- (4) Would you say that the chances of the YES or NO side winning by a single vote are absolutely zero, almost zero or just low?

[Would you say that the chances of the election in your riding being decided by a single vote are . . .]

Costs (C)

- (1) How much time do you think it would take to go to the poll, vote and return? Is it about a quarter of an hour, half an hour, three-quarters of an hour, an hour, or more than an hour?

- (2) For you personally, is it very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat difficult, or very difficult to go to vote?

- (3) And do you find it very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat difficult, or very difficult to get information to decide how to vote?

B) Rational choice model

Pr) Blais et al. (2000): The calculus of voting: An empirical test

Duty (D)

- (1) Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements:

It is the duty of every citizen to vote?

In order to preserve democracy, it is essential that the great majority of citizens vote?

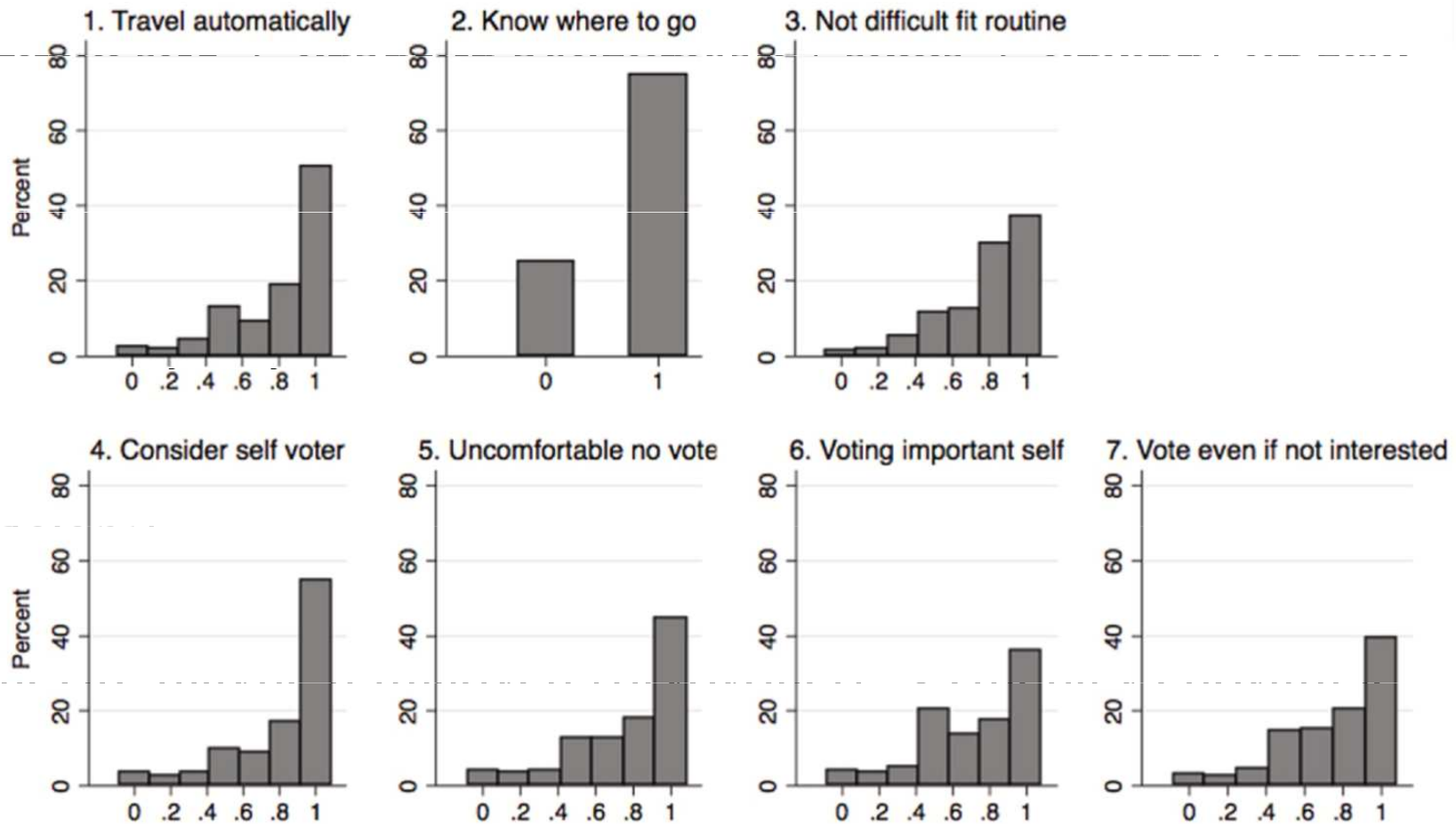
- (2) If you did not vote, would you feel that you had neglected your duty as a citizen enormously, a lot, a little or not at all?
- (3) If you did not vote, would you feel very guilty, somewhat guilty, not very guilty or not guilty at all?

Interest in politics

- (1) In general, would you say you are very interested in politics, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not interested at all?

B) Rational choice model

(a) UK Pre-Election Sample, N=3,025




Note: Y-axis depicts the percent of sample with each item value.

B) Rational choice model

- **Age-related differences within C** -> maturity -> outcomes -> social networks -> capacity for field knowledge + skills -> cost of information gain -> correlation with age
- Extension of B) explanation to include behavioural component => voting is **HABITUAL** = voting in the first election makes it easier to vote in subsequent elections the more likely (more than age and education) to vote in subsequent elections (self-reinforcing effect)
- Important especially for the young (first-time voters) -> behavioural change is stronger -> snowball effect on long-term political behaviour (and vice versa)


<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2DSphgsZ7iXDXxycJRRwd4?si=034d4e2cf3d542f8>



EPIZÓDA PODCASTU

Humans and habits

Brain Science: Neuroscience, Behavior



EPIZÓDA PODCASTU

The Science of Making & Breaking Habits | Episode 53

Huberman Lab

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1k7ofXS8K0le5Gj1Ov40Cj?si=9afe4de336ac4559>

GET **OUT** THE
VOTE!

C) Mobilisation theories

- Sometimes taken within the rational choice model
- Political parties and organizations absorb part of the **cost of participation (C)** by providing information about parties, candidates, and political process so that **C does not outweigh B**
- The burden of participation is on organizations that mobilize a rationally "deactivated" public

C) Mobilisation theories

- **Partisan + non-partisan mobilisation (GOTV) (+):** usually stronger effect of partisan mobilisation
- **Media exposure (+):**
 - Political news leads to higher levels of political awareness
 - Reading newspapers, TV, radio, a positive effect on GOTV (increase in the amount of content but per se does not increase GOTV)

C) Mobilisation theories

Green et al. 2013 - Field Experiments and the Study of Voter Turnout

Methods:

- door to door => 2.54 p.p. increase.
- phone calls => increase 0.16-1.94 p.p.
- direct mail + leaflets left at the door => increase of 1 p.p.
- non-personal techniques bring weaker effects

Arguments:

- Social coercion, thank you notes, electoral closeness, civic duty...

D) Socialisation-psychological model

S

- The formative period of life between childhood and adulthood is generally considered to be a crucial period for gaining a foundation of political attitudes and behaviour
- The important role of parents, teachers, schools, media,...
- Less successful: education of parents and SES; political debate

D) Socialisation-psychological model

P

- Cognitive characteristics, usually successful
- **Interest in politics, political knowledge (+)** => should act as resources, reduce C
- Personal preferences associated with party identification, ideology (+) => intended to function as benefits (enjoyment of the act of voting)
- Less successful: cognitive knowledge, trust in institutions, satisfaction with democracy, trust in others,...

D) Socialisation-psychological model

You've Either Got It or You Don't? The Stability of Political Interest over the Life Cycle

Markus Prior Princeton University

Some people are more politically interested than others, but political scientists do not know how stable these differences are and why they occur. This paper examines stability in political interest. Eleven different panel surveys taken in four different countries over 40 years are used to measure stability. Several studies include a much larger number of interview waves—up to 23—than commonly used panels. The analysis empirically characterizes the stability of interest over time using a model that accounts for measurement error and a dynamic panel model. The large number of panel waves makes it possible to relax many restrictive assumptions to ensure robustness. With one exception (Germany reunification), political interest is exceptionally stable in the short run and over long periods of time. Hence, this study provides strong justification for efforts to understand how political interest forms among young people.

2) Macro-level studies

how to measure?

A) Institutional variables

Compulsory voting (+):

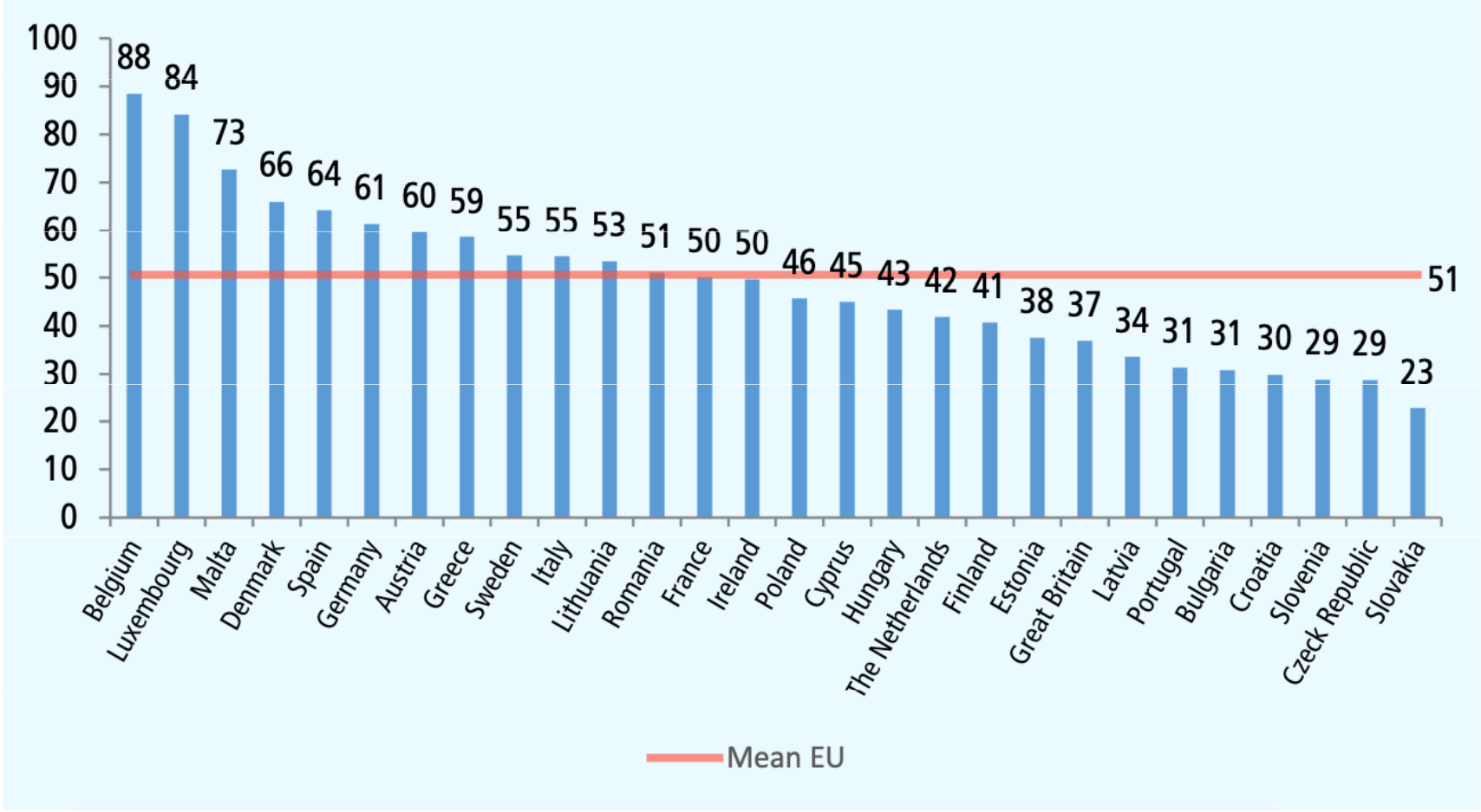
-Countries where citizens are legally obliged to vote have higher T

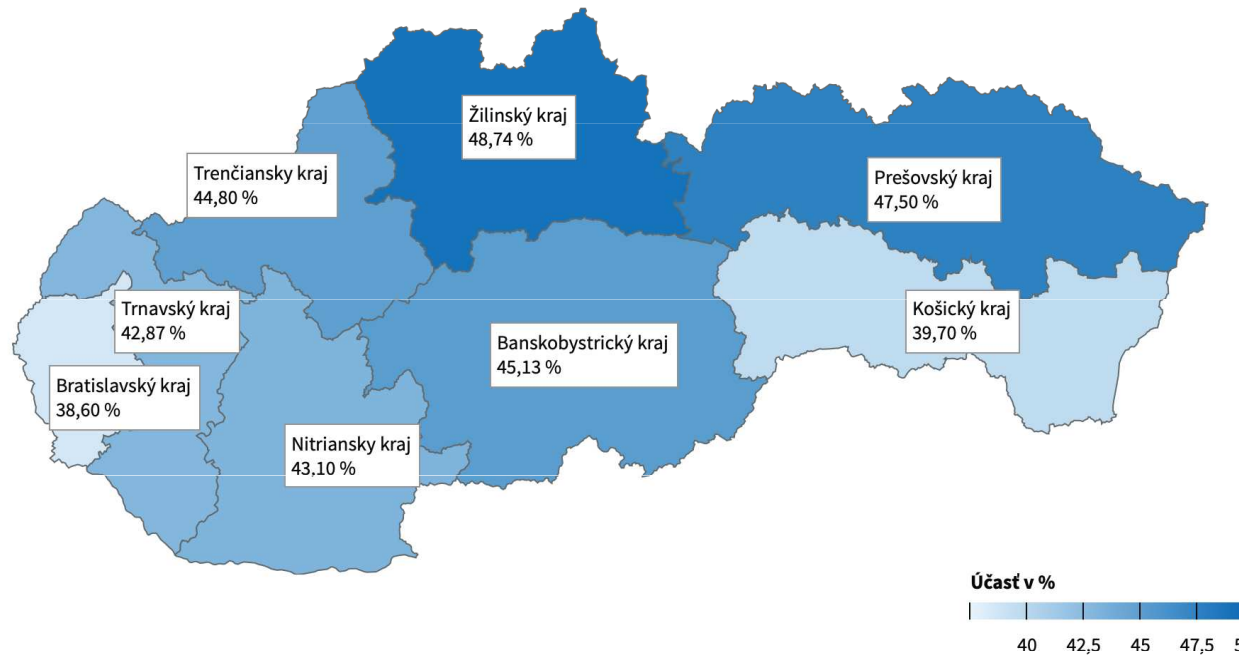
-"Only" half the effect in the case of non-application of a sanction or partial sanction (versus full sanctions)

Importance of elections (+):

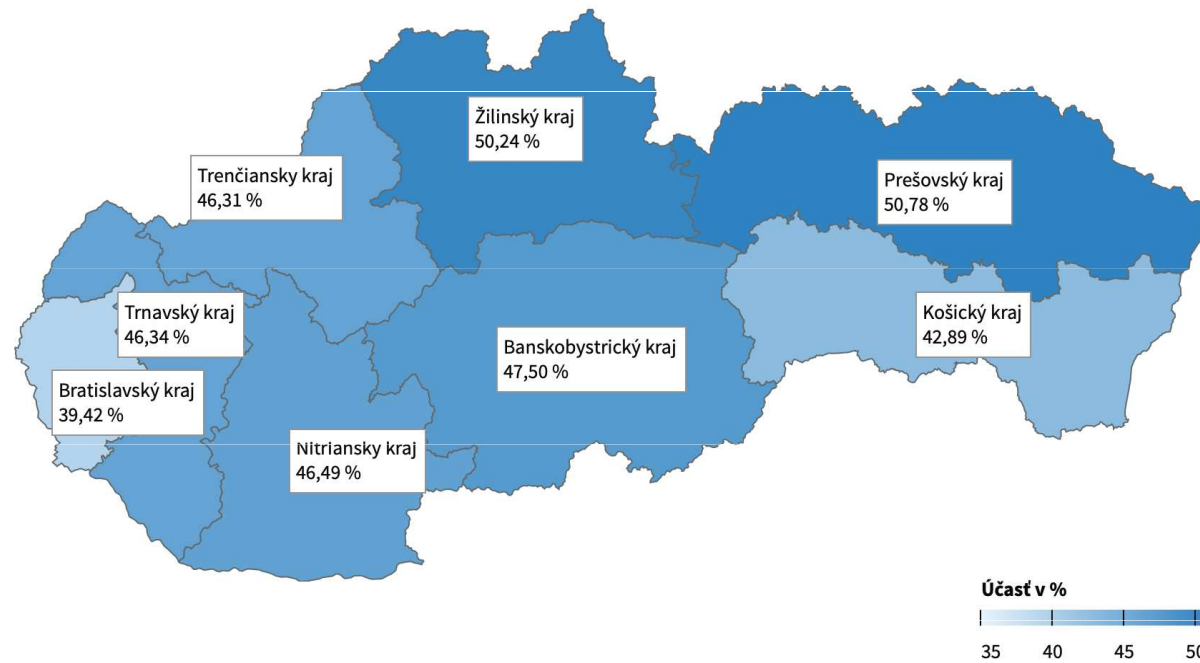
-The more important the election (stronger the representative body), the stronger the incentive to participate

Figure 1. The electoral turnout of the EU member states in the European Parliament election in 2019 (percent).





Zdroj: ČSÚ SR



UNI
SS

Zdroj: ČSÚ SR

A) Institutional variables

Other:

Electoral system (PR+, FPTP-): argumentatively mastered BUT only a minority of cases (mainly by increasing the cases in non-Western EU countries)

Lowering the voting age (-): hard to measure (not many outside the 18 year mark)

Single chamber, voting on a free day, easier ways to vote: unclear conclusions

B) Socio-economic variables

Population size (-): smaller countries have more homogeneous populations and closer relationships with each other and representatives (perhaps a sense of higher P?)

Other:

Economic development of country (+): long and short term, linked to age and education argument BUT unclear conclusions

Population density (-), corruption (-): few cases

C) Political and partisan variables

Closeness of elections (+):

- related to P in the rational model

- the smaller the gap between the two main candidates/parties, -> higher the chance that the citizen's vote will count => close elections attract media coverage and more party mobilization

Blais (2020) works vs. Stockemer (2017) doesn't

C) Political and partisan variables

Political Psychology, Vol. 44, No. 5, 2023
doi: 10.1111/pops.12868

The Most Important Election of Our Lifetime: Focalism and Political Participation

Curtis Bram 
Duke University

This article argues that a psychological bias called “focalism” contributes to an overestimation of the differences between political candidates, which in turn increases participation and polarization. Focalism causes people to confuse the allocation of attention to things with the importance of those things. Because attention to politics typically centers on conflict, the result is an exaggeration of differences across the partisan divide. I test this intuition using an experimental design that provides all respondents with all the information they need to estimate how much Joe Biden and Donald Trump objectively disagreed on policy positions just before the 2020 election. I find that shifting attention—toward either those positions the candidates agreed or disagreed with each other on—influences beliefs about the differences between candidates. The effect exceeds that of identifying as a Democrat or as a Republican. Beyond those perceptions, focalism increases turnout intentions, perceptions of election importance, negative feelings towards the out-candidate, and affective polarization.

KEY WORDS: participation, polarization, focalism, cognitive bias

C) Political and partisan variables

Less successful:

- Number of parties (+): the more parties competing, the more choices voters have + better mobilization -> more likely to reflect their opinion vs. More parties means a more complicated system to understand (more info needed) + coalition governance

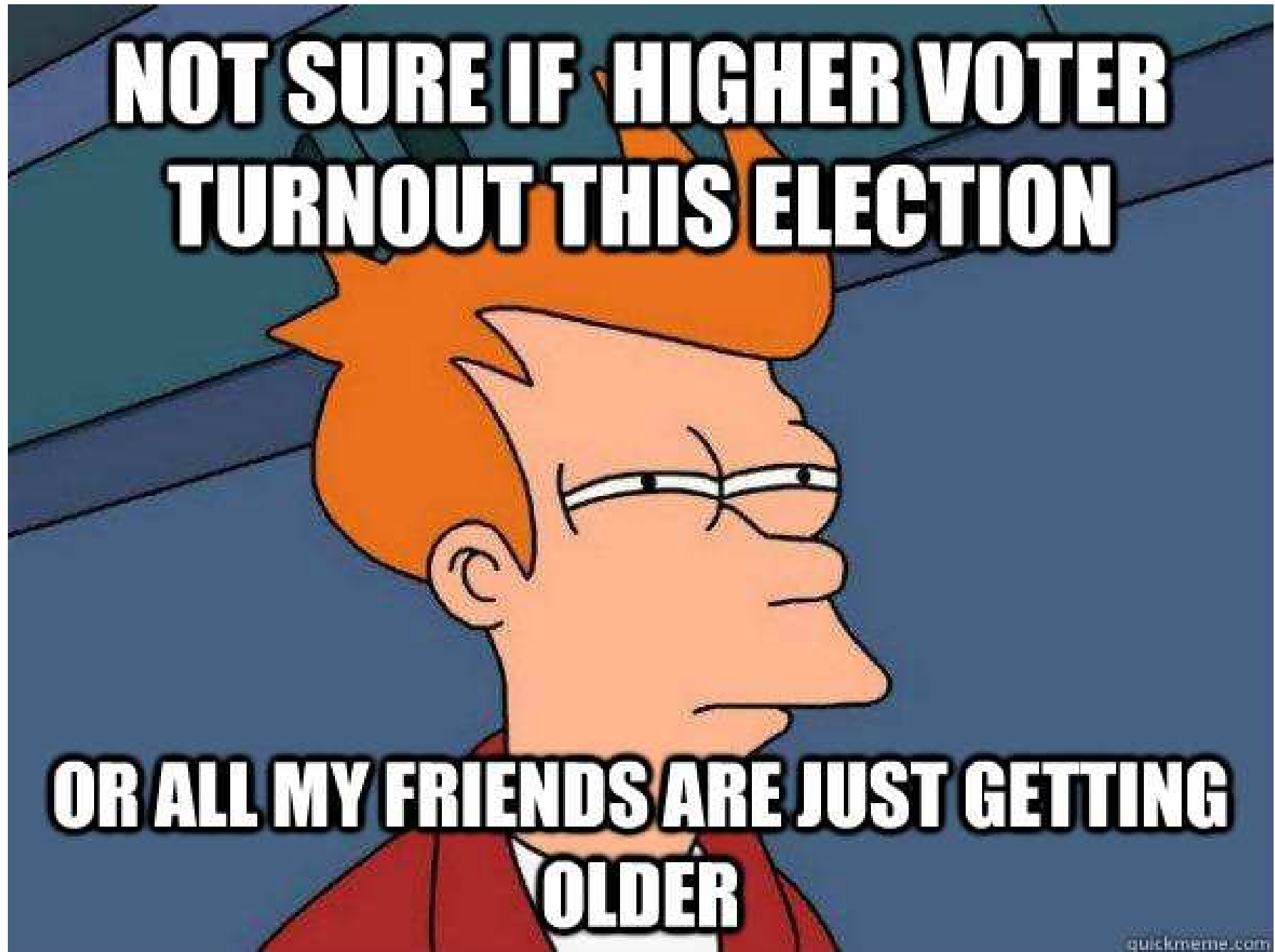
Conclusion

Motivation is key:

- 1) Do I like politics?
- 2) Do I have a duty to vote?
- 3) Do I care about the outcome?
- 4) Do I find it easy to vote?

(Blais and Daoust, 2020)

- The research provided new predictors of VU (corruption, weather, ethnic fractionalization...) and better modelling techniques
- Need to conduct research contextually (within regions, countries) and take contexts into account
- Better comparisons are needed between different levels of analysis (local - regional - national) and between countries



**NOT SURE IF HIGHER VOTER
TURNOUT THIS ELECTION**

**OR ALL MY FRIENDS ARE JUST GETTING
OLDER**

quickmeme.com **NI**
FSS

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