

# Class 5: Randomization - Paper 2 - Example

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Applied Microeconomics

2018

# Paper

- ▶ “Increasing the Electoral Participation of Immigrants: Experimental Evidence from France”
  - ▶ Guillaume Liegey (Macron), Vincent Pons (Harvard Business School)
  - ▶ The Economic Journal (The Royal Society)

# Summary

- ▶ Increasing immigrants' political participation could advance their interests and facilitate their integration into receiving countries.
- ▶ Researchers evaluated the impact of a non-targeted get-out-the-vote campaign on voter turnout in France.

## Summary

- ▶ The campaign increased voter turnout among immigrants by 3.1 percentage points across two voting rounds and had no effect on non-immigrants.
- ▶ Voter turnout was similar between immigrants and non-immigrants who did not receive a canvassing visit.
- ▶ However, the impact on immigrants did not persist in the local elections the following year.

## Policy Issue

- ▶ As the number of immigrants increases in the United States and Europe, their integration has become increasingly important.
- ▶ On average, immigrant citizens have lower levels of economic well-being than non-immigrants, which may lead to their lower sense of national belonging.
- ▶ In France, for instance, less than half of naturalized immigrants say that they strongly feel French, compared to 88 percent of the mainstream population.

## Policy Issue

- ▶ Traditional approaches to facilitate immigrant integration generally include civic integration, anti-discrimination laws, and labor market and housing policies.
- ▶ Increasing immigrants' political participation may be a valuable complement to these approaches as enhanced participation could increase the influence of immigrant preferences on policy choices.
- ▶ However, low integration or tensions with non-immigrant communities may make political mobilization of immigrants difficult.

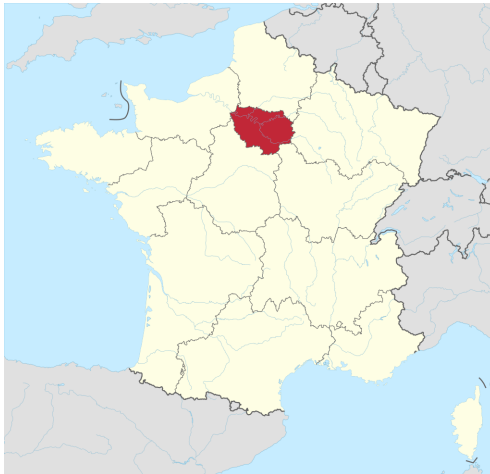
## Policy Issue

- ▶ A few studies have found large effects of get-out-the-vote campaigns that target immigrants.
- ▶ However, few evaluations of generic get-out-the-vote campaigns compare effects across immigrant and non-immigrant groups.

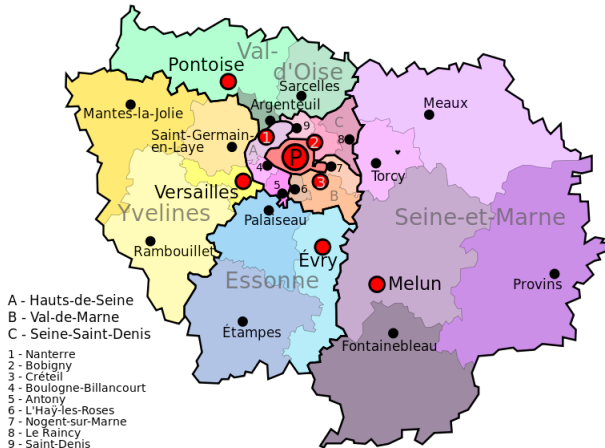
## Context of the Evaluation

- ▶ This intervention took place leading up to the 2010 regional elections in Île-de-France, the region that includes Paris and surrounding areas.
- ▶ Turnout at the 2010 elections was relatively low: only 46 percent and 51 percent of the registered citizens participated in the first and second rounds, which took place one week apart, respectively.

# Île-de-France



# Île-de-France



## Context of Evaluation

- ▶ Ethnic diversity in the Île-de-France cities that were a part of the study is wide
  - ▶ Immigrants: defined as people of foreign birth and French-born children living with them
- ▶ Contribute to a larger share of the population than in the country as a whole and come from over 100 different countries.

## Context of the Evaluation

- ▶ Within the study, 30 percent of the sample were immigrants (compared to 12 percent in the overall French population in 2012), with most coming from Northwest Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, or Asia.
- ▶ These neighborhoods are marked by increased internal tensions, particularly between youth and the police.

## Details of Intervention

- ▶ Researchers conducted a **randomized evaluation** to test the impact of a general voter outreach effort on the political participation of immigrants relative to participation of non-immigrants.

## Details of Intervention

- ▶ Location: Île-de-France
- ▶ Sample: 1,347 addresses including 23,773 citizens across 8 cities
- ▶ Timeline: 2010 to 2011
- ▶ Target Group: Voters
- ▶ Outcome of Interest: Electoral participation
- ▶ Intervention Type: Community participation Information, Nudges and reminders

## Details of Intervention



## Details of Intervention

- ▶ In the four weeks leading to the 2010 elections, activists from the Parti Socialiste (PS), a left-wing political party perceived as more sensitive to immigrants' concerns, canvassed eight cities of the Île-de-France region to encourage registered citizens to vote.
- ▶ Citizens were randomly assigned by building address to treatment or comparison. Six hundred and seventy-eight addresses received a visit from canvassers while 669 addresses did not receive a visit.

## Details of Intervention

- ▶ Canvassers knocked on doors on evenings and Saturdays and provided basic information about the date of the election and the location and opening times of the poll office.
- ▶ They urged people to vote, using general arguments about the importance of voting and significance of the forthcoming elections as well as personal examples and stories.
- ▶ At the end of the discussion, the canvassers gave their listener a leaflet summarizing the points discussed.

## Details of Intervention

- ▶ To measure voting behavior, researchers utilized attendance sheets signed by those who voted in each election.
- ▶ In addition, researchers administered a post-election survey to a subsample over the phone within two months to measure citizens' socioeconomic status, how much they knew about the elections, and their political preferences.

## Results and Policy Lessons

- ▶ The canvassing treatment increased voter turnout of immigrants without affecting turnout of non-immigrants.
- ▶ In the comparison group, turnout was roughly equal between immigrants and non-immigrants.

## Short-Term Effects

- ▶ About half of households canvassed answered the door.
- ▶ Canvassers' visits increased the turnout of immigrants and children of voting age living with them by 3.4 percentage points from a base of 34.4 percent (a 9.9 percent increase ) in the first round of voting.
- ▶ In the second round of voting, the increase among immigrants and their children was 2.8 percentage points from a base of 38.7 percent (a 7.2 percent increase ).

## Short-Term Effects

- ▶ Results were similar when allowing for treatment effects to differ by other characteristics including gender, age, housing price, and distance to the polls.
- ▶ The campaign had no impact on the voter turnout of non-immigrants.

## Medium-Term Effects

- ▶ Effects of canvassing on voter turnout diminished over time.
- ▶ Researchers compared voter turnout in local elections one year later and found no significant impact of the canvassing from the previous year.

## Potential Mechanisms

- ▶ Survey results of a subset of the sample indicate that immigrants had significantly less political information than non-immigrants
  - ▶ which may have led to a stronger impact of the information provided by the canvassers.

## Potential Mechanisms

- ▶ In addition, immigrants may have been more receptive to the PS canvassers since the PS is considered more sensitive to immigrants' interests than are right-wing parties.