

B1.6 Field Experiments on Citizen Participation in Elections and Referenda



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Aim of the Project

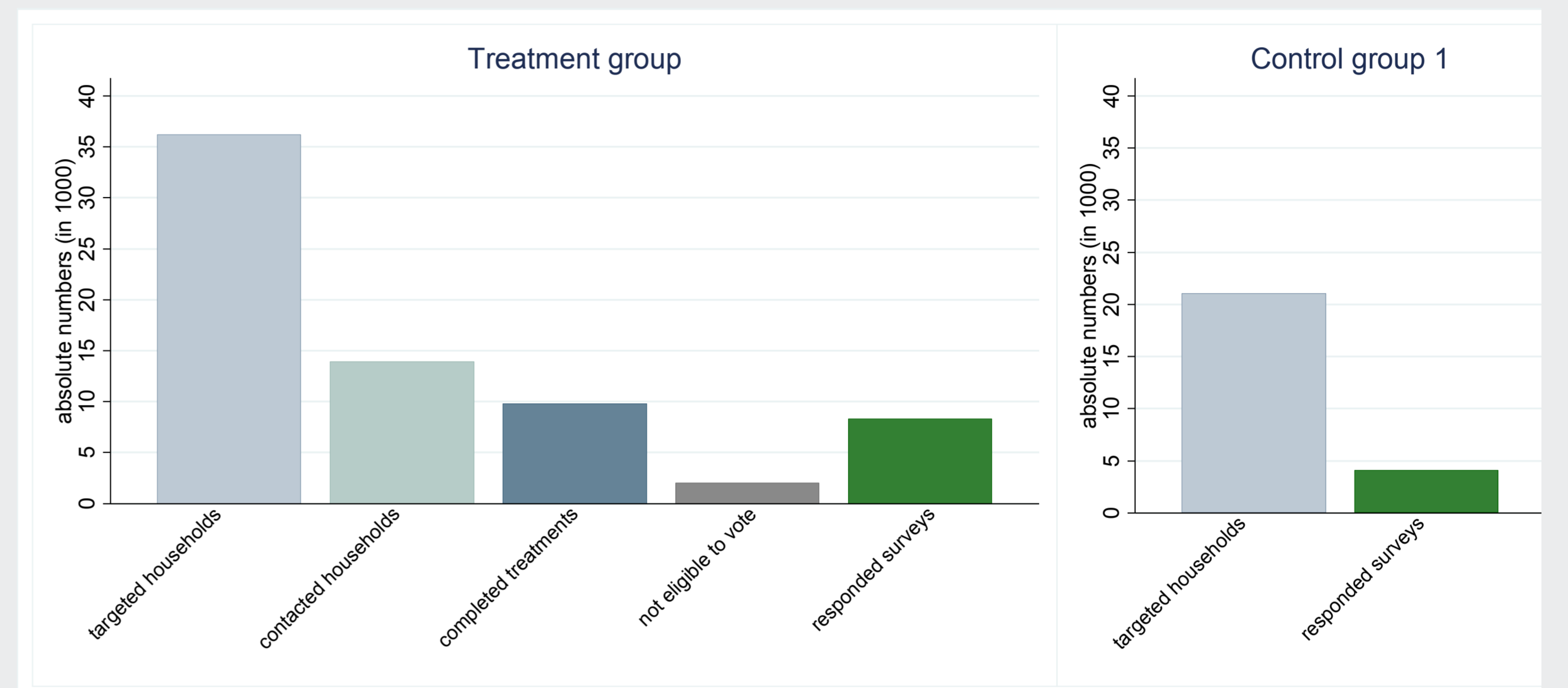
In order to investigate the chances and determinants of short-term mobilization for election turnout, the project conducts the first large-scale “get-out-the-vote” field experiments in Germany.

- State election of Baden-Württemberg
- Field experiment in Mannheim and Heidelberg
- Face-to-face treatment with mobilizing messages which appealed to the civic duty of voters

Main research questions:

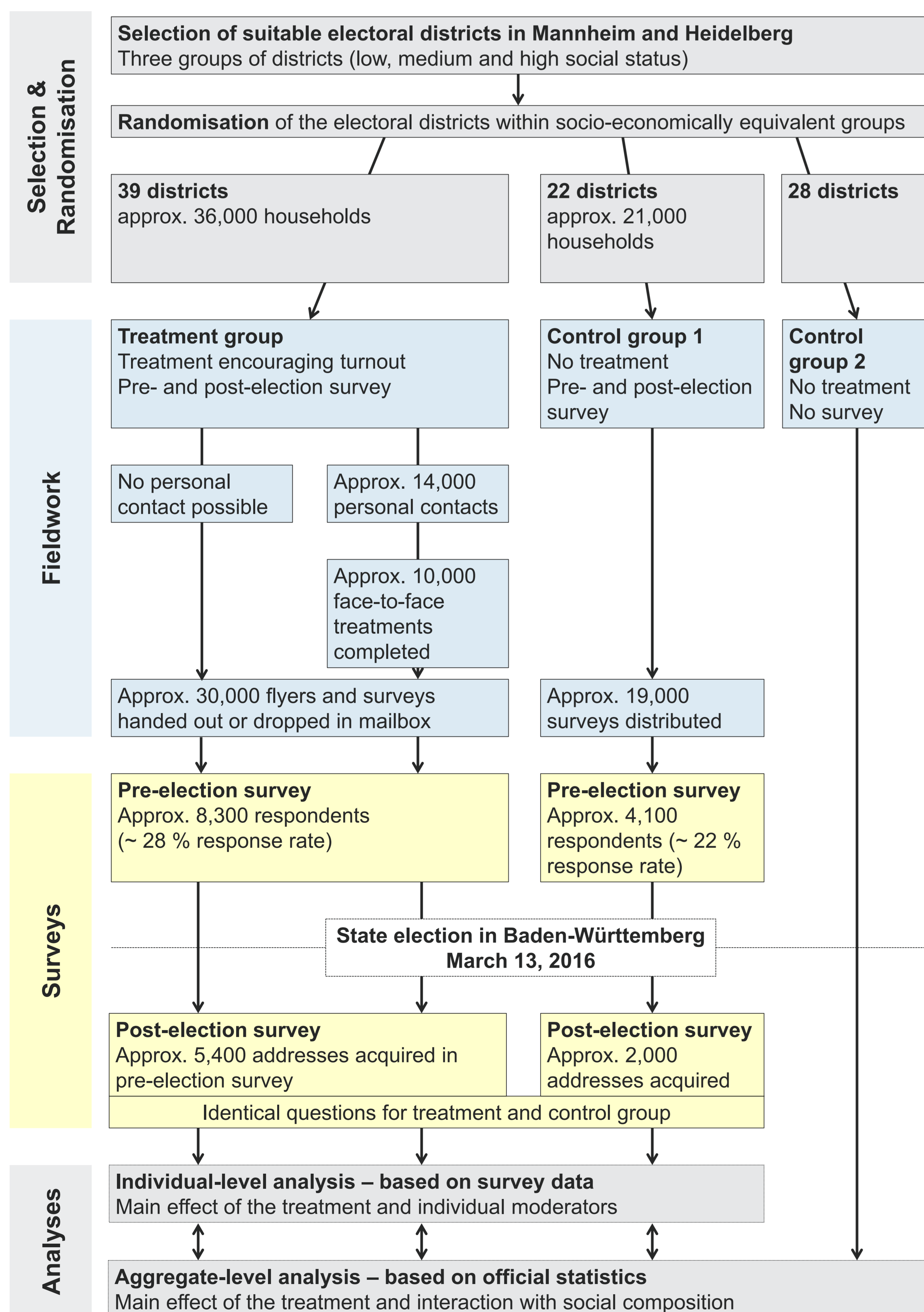
- Can non-partisan mobilization campaigns have an effect on turnout in the European context of parliamentary, multi-party systems?
- Are non-partisan mobilization campaigns possible tools for reducing the increasing social inequality of turnout?
- Which individual and structural factors determine short-term voter mobilization?

Summary of Field Work



- Fieldwork was carried out by a field staff of 93 student assistants, usually in teams of two or three
- Each team had to hand in daily protocols of their fieldwork
- Protocols included the number of targeted households, contacted households, completed treatments, and number of persons not eligible to vote

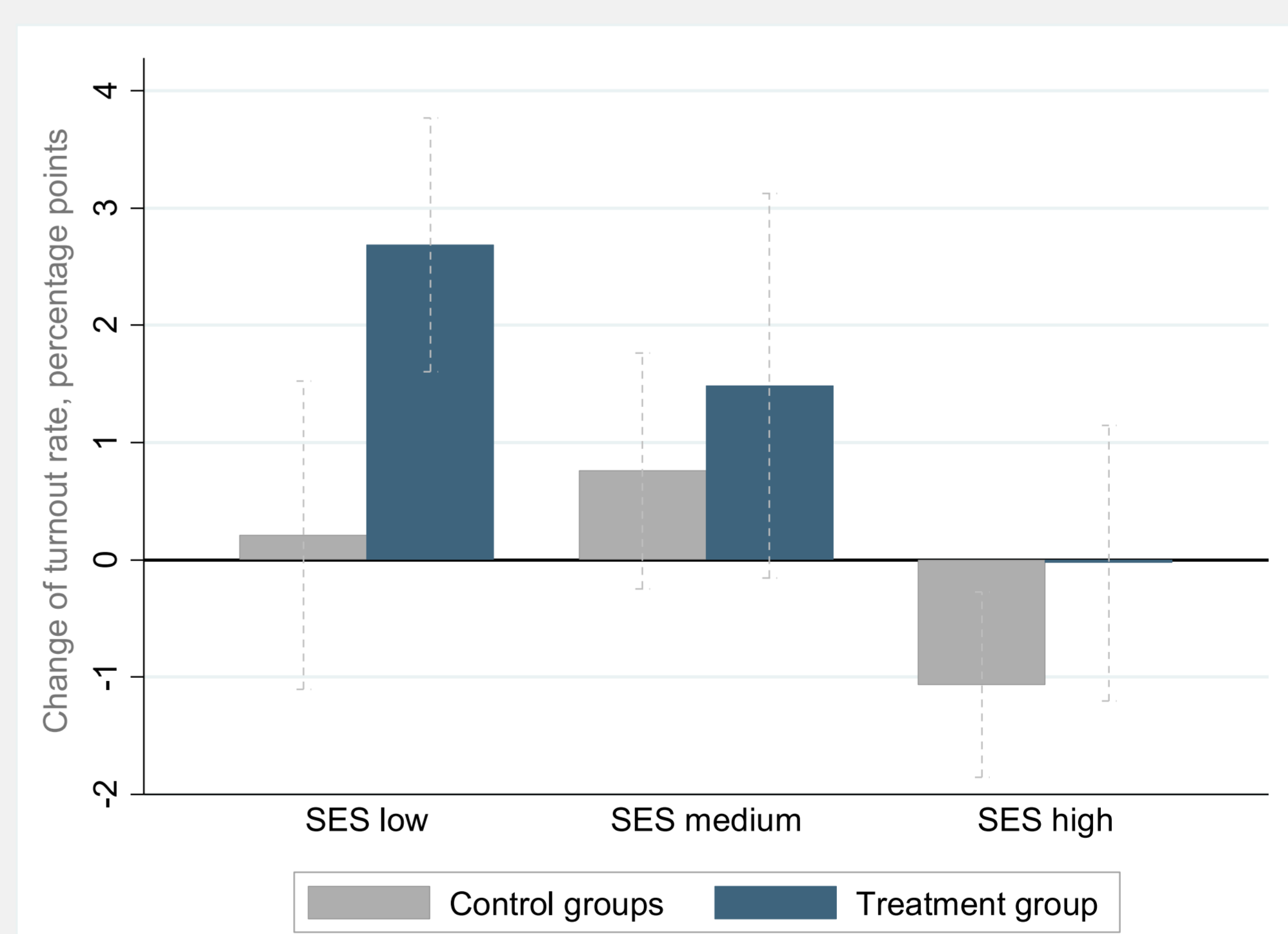
Research Design



Preliminary Aggregate Results

- Face-to-face mobilization had a significant effect on aggregate turnout
- Change of turnout rate was 1.4 percentage points higher in treated districts (t-test: $t=2.25$, $p<.05$)
- Mobilization was particularly successful in districts with low social status

Change of turnout rate in districts with low, medium and high social background, compared to last state election, only in-person votes



Current State & Outlook

- Still early stage of analysis
- Fieldwork and pre-election surveys are completed
- Post-election surveys are in the field
- More fine-grained aggregate measures of social stratification are being collected in cooperation with the local statistical offices in Mannheim and Heidelberg
- Outlook: Individual-level analysis of pre-/post- panel data, further investigation of individual moderating factors of mobilization, linking aggregate-level analysis with individual-level analysis