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When Do Campaign Effects Persist for Years?

Evidence from a Natural Experiment

Kai Jäger

Department of Political Economy, King's College London

E-Mail: kai.jager@kcl.ac.uk
40 Aldwych
London WC2B 4BG
United Kingdom

Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES), University of Mannheim

E-Mail: kai.jaeger@mzes.uni-mannheim.de
University of Mannheim, MZES
68131 Mannheim
Germany

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When Do Campaign Effects Persist for Years?

Evidence from a Natural Experiment

Abstract

A unique re-vote allows for a natural experiment to evaluate whether campaign effects can last for nearly a decade: A right-wing conservative party missed the five-percent threshold in a German state by a mere vote in 2007, but the Constitutional Court ordered a re-vote in a single precinct over potential election fraud. After a one-sided campaign focusing on law and order, the party's vote share increased more than sixfold. By comparing the precinct with its direct surroundings, the study shows that the re-vote campaign had long-lasting effects on vote choice and broader security-sensitive behavior. Residents in the re-vote precinct installed more warning signs on their property to deter burglars. They were not more supportive of right-wing attitudes, but more likely to believe that election fraud reoccurred. Based on habitual-voting and social-norm theories, the study suggests that persuasion could be durable if candidates provide an unchallenged interpretation of political events.

Replication Materials: The data, code, and any additional materials required to replicate all analyses in this article are available on the American Journal of Political Science Dataverse within the Harvard Dataverse Network, at: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/MB2UKU>

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1. Introduction

Election campaigns are an essential component of democracies in which political parties provide selected information in order to persuade citizens to vote for them in an upcoming election. While scholars find that campaigns have pronounced effects on turnout or vote choice (Jacobson 2015; Foos and John 2018), these effects appear to be short-lived: The desired persuasion effect of campaigning declines rapidly over a short period of time (Gerber et al. 2011; Hill et al. 2013; Sides and Vavreck 2013), particularly if voters are exposed to counter-frames by political competitors, which could cancel out the original message (Chong and Druckman 2012; Druckman and Lupia 2016; Lecheler and de Vreese 2016). A meta-analysis of field experiments on campaigning shows that the average effect is zero in general elections. Campaign effects exist early in the general election cycle, but they are likely to decay until the election date (Kalla and Broockman 2018).

As election campaigns are designed to persuade voters for an upcoming election, the time horizon of most studies is limited to a short period that rarely exceeds the election date. Another reason for the shortage in long-term studies is the methodological difficulty to orchestrate an experimental setting to identify long-term campaign effects due to potential confounders: The campaign strategy is deliberately designed by candidates, and campaign activity is likely to correlate over time with location, electoral competitiveness, previous strategies, or the activity of other campaigns (Gerber et al. 2011: 136; Selb and Munzert 2018: 1052). Nonetheless, some experimental studies show that political campaigning could also have a durable impact (Broockman and Kalla 2016; Foos 2017). But given the shortage of experimental long-term studies, we have limited knowledge about (a) the conditions that facilitate campaign effects to persist for months or even years, and (b) what types of political behavior can be durably changed by campaigns.

A unique political event in Germany allows for a natural experiment to evaluate whether campaign effects could persist for nearly a decade: In the 2007 state elections of Bremen, the local right-wing conservative party *Bürger in Wut* (Citizens in Rage, BIW), which predominantly put salience on law and order, missed the five-percent threshold for parliamentary representation by a single vote. The outcome was a “historic occurrence that had never before taken place in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany” (Decker and Hartleb 2007: 442). As a result of vote counting irregularities in an election office, the Constitutional Court of Bremen ordered a re-vote in a single precinct. In the re-vote election campaign, BIW had an unprecedented campaigning advantage, as it was the only party that had its frontrunner campaigning door-to-door in the precinct. BIW increased its vote share in the precinct’s re-vote from 4.35 to 27.57 percent.

I argue that these characteristics of the re-vote election campaign had a positive impact on BIW’s vote share in the long run, because the act of voting for BIW in the re-vote increased the attachment and positive perception of voters, providing the party with a valence advantage in subsequent elections (Gerber et al. 2010; Dinas 2014). It is unlikely, however, that the re-vote campaign made citizens more likely to adopt BIW’s programmatic beliefs and attitudes, as such a change would require a different type of intervention. Nonetheless, people’s behavior could be affected by a perceived change in social norms rather than by a change of attitudes (Paluck 2009a, 2009b; Paluck and Green 2009). Such norm-induced behavior could be durable if it is reinforced by social interaction or not challenged by a counter-frame. It is conceivable that the re-vote has made it socially acceptable to vote for BIW, as citizens noticed the voting behavior of their neighbors. Additionally, it is possible that BIW’s law-and-order campaign influenced security-sensitive behavior as well. An indicator for security-sensitive behavior is the installation of warning signs on housing units, which displays to the public that the property possesses additional

crime-prevention measures (e.g., a dog or a burglar alarm). As warning signs have no maintaining cost and could increase the salience of crime in a community (Schultz and Tabanico 2009), they could persist as a social norm without affecting long-term security attitudes. I therefore argue that warning signs are more widespread in the re-vote area.

By comparing the voting behavior of the re-vote area with the adjacent precincts, I show that BIW's vote share has increased on average by nearly 4.2 percentage points in the subsequent elections since the re-vote. But as the natural experiment is based on one treated cluster and four untreated clusters, the smallest possible p-value of randomization inference cannot reach statistical significance due to the small sample size. In addition, I conduct an observational shoe-leather study, in which I counted the warning signs by walking through the area, and an attitudinal survey, in which I invited residents via mail to complete a questionnaire. The observational study shows that the re-vote area was 13 percentage points more likely to have warning signs on their properties. The attitudinal survey finds that respondents from the re-vote area were 15.4 percentage points more likely to vote for BIW and 15.0 percentage points more likely to consider BIW as the most competent party on security. Both treatment and controls groups were statistically indistinguishable in terms of support for right-wing programmatic positions. It seems that the re-vote has affected the trust of residents of the re-vote area in the democratic system, as they were more likely to believe that election fraud reoccurred in the last Bremen election.

The implications of this study go beyond this unique case: The findings suggest that campaign effects are more likely to persist for longer periods if parties enjoy a comparative campaign advantage vis-à-vis other political groups, which allows them to use political events in their favor. Such dominant campaigns could even shape broader non-political behavior that depends on norm perception, suggesting that strong canvassing efforts in uncompetitive first-past-

the-post constituencies or in non-election periods are not conducted in vain, but might shape long-term political behavior.

The article proceeds as follows: In the beginning, I discuss the conditions under which campaign effects are likely to persist and what kind of political behavior can be durably shaped under such conditions. The next section will introduce BIW's re-vote campaign. Three hypotheses are derived from the theoretical discussion and the particular case. Subsequently, I describe how the hypotheses are tested based on three different analyses of actual election results, observational data on warning signs and attitudinal survey data. The last section conducts the empirical analysis, followed by the conclusion.

2. Long-term persuasion effects

While the impact of election campaigns generally appears to be minimal and short-lived, prior research highlights several conditions that could facilitate the longevity of persuasion effects. Sears and Valentino (1997) argue that political events have the capacity to affect long-term political behavior in the domains that are made salient by those political events. Research shows that extraordinary events, such as terrorist attacks, influence long-term political behavior (Montalvo 2012; Robbins et al. 2013; Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014). Analyzing the political behavior of victims' families and neighbors of the 9/11 terrorist attacks for over a decade, Hersh (2013) shows that they have become more politically active and more supportive of the Republicans as a result of the terrorist attacks.

The general public hardly experiences political events directly. The information as well as the interpretation of political events is transmitted and mediated through third sources to the public (Valentino and Sears 1998). Thus, focusing solely on the direct impact of events without taking the information transmission process by media reports or political campaigns into account appears to be insufficient. Indeed, Boomgaarden and de Vreese (2007) find that opposition towards immigration immediately increased in the Netherlands after the assassination of filmmaker Theo van Gogh by an Islamist in 2004. High exposure to a unified media subsequently moderated this effect. Boomgaarden and de Vreese (2007: 356-7) describe that the media promoted social inclusion of immigrants, and blamed socio-economic circumstances rather than religious or cultural problems for the integration difficulties of Muslim immigrants. The moderating effect of media consumption in this case confirms Zaller's (1992: 8-9) suggestion that "when elites uphold a clear picture of what should be done, the public tends to see events from that point of view."

Similarly, intensive campaigns could have long-term effects on political behavior if there is not a credible counter-frame by political opponents. Campaign intensity increases the likelihood that voters receive the message, and one-sided campaigns ensure that voters do not become familiar with an opposing perspective (Kriesi 2002; Sciarini and Tresch 2011). Intense and one-sided campaign messages are easy learning situations, particularly for the least aware voters (Zaller 1992: 124).

In a historical analysis of German elections between 1927 and 1933, Selb and Munzert (2018) find that Hitler speeches only had a positive impact on his local election results if they were accompanied by an intense and one-sided campaign. Experimental evidence suggests that long-term persuasion is possible by interactive face-to-face interventions – even in the absence of unexpected political events: After Miami-Dade's County Commission banned discrimination

based on sexual orientation in December 2014, Broockman and Kalla (2016) evaluate in a randomized study whether a door-to-door campaign by a pro-LGTB advocacy group could have long-term effects. They find that interactive canvassing improved the perception of transsexuals for at least three months in conservative neighborhoods. Support for an anti-discrimination law decreased when respondents were confronted with a counter-message six weeks later, but the treatment effect persisted and returned to its old level at the three-month mark.

In addition, persuasion attempts tend to be the most successful if performed by political candidates (Barton et al. 2014; Kalla and Broockman 2018: 162). Political candidates have a personal stake in the election and the fact that they have won the nomination in intra-party competition indicates that they are skillful persuaders. By contrast, party activists are often more extreme than the median voter and motivated by ideology, prompting them to campaign on issues that deviate from the voters' interest (Enos and Hersh 2015). Political candidates thus appear to be the most capable persuaders. Foos (2017) finds that face-to-face interactions by a Labour candidate in the United Kingdom have larger and longer lasting persuasion effects on vote intention. This effect eventually disappeared about 250 days after the treatment.

The previous findings yield the empirical expectations that persuasion effects are more likely to persist over time if campaigns occur in response to an unexpected political event, are intense and one-sided, and conducted face-to-face by a skillful political candidate. In addition, I argue that two mechanisms based on habitual-voting and social-norm theories are likely to ensure that campaigns have long-lasting effects on voting behavior and on broader norm-induced behavior, but not on political attitudes.

First, prior research suggests that voting has positive habitual effects in terms of turnout and partisanship in upcoming elections (Green and Shachar 2000; Gerber et al. 2003; Dinas 2012, 2014, Coppock and Green 2016). A person who is voting for a party at time t is more likely to participate in an election at time $t+1$ and vote for the party again. Dinas (2014: 451-2) argues that the act of voting strengthens party identification by converting a preference into actual political behavior. By voting for a party, voters develop more favorable attitudes towards their vote choice in order to self-justify their behavior. Gerber et al. (2010) find in an experimental setting that the requirement to register with a party increased party attachment and led to a positive perception of the party's candidates, thus bestowing the party with a valence advantage, which made it more likely that respondents voted for the party. The literature on voting habits indicates that campaign effects could persist over time for vote choice and valence factors, because previous voters have developed a sense of partisanship.

Second, Noelle-Neumann's (1974, 1993) seminal study "the spiral of silence" shows that people's behavior can depart from their attitudes. According to the spiral of silence people would remain silent if they perceive that their beliefs are at odds with society, because they fear social exclusion as a consequence of their deviant opinion. The spiral of silence gives rise to a public discourse that is based on a possibly flawed perception of the social environment rather than on actual political beliefs. The fact that social outcomes could be the outcome of perceived social norms has been repeatedly demonstrated for turnout (Gerber et al. 2008; Gerber and Rogers 2009), but also for non-political behavior, such as energy conservation (Allcott 2011), littering, trespassing, or stealing (Keizer et al. 2008).

Paluck (2009a) and Paluck and Green (2009) show that individuals adopt their behavior to perceived changes in social norms without changing their attitudes. They find that experimental

exposure to a year-long radio program in Rwanda made individuals aware of changing social norms. The experiment shifted their behavior in the direction of the perceived change, but existing attitudes did not change. Social interactions in the community play a crucial role in sustaining norm-induced behavior, as they foster emotional engagement and raise awareness of social norms (Paluck 2009b). Therefore, campaigns could be able to induce a change in long-term norm-induced behavior if it is reinforced by social interaction or at least not challenged by an alternative norm.

By contrast, the study of political socialization shows that political attitudes are highly resilient to change (Tesler 2015; Rekker et al. 2017). The difficulty to change political attitudes applies to politically unaware as well as aware voters, albeit for different reasons. Since the publication of Converse's (1964) pioneering study on non-attitudes among the electorate, public opinion studies have repeatedly shown that a considerable amount of voters do not have consistent attitudes on many political issues. Voters tend to be unable to perceive changes in the policy statements of parties (Adams et al. 2011); the general public tends to fail to make a connection between their own attitudes on economic inequality and supporting tax policies that could reduce inequality (Bartels 2005).

Politically aware voters tend to have a consistent understanding of political attitudes, often motivated by an underlying ideological conviction. Zaller (1992) argues, however, that politically aware individuals are also more likely to resist attitudinal change if the persuasion is inconsistent with their convictions. Taber and Lodge (2006) show in experiments that participants with high levels of political awareness are also more likely to resist evidence that contradicts their convictions, while uncritically accepting arguments that are consistent with their prior attitudes.

Therefore, it is unlikely that a one-time election campaign can durably shape attitudes among the politically ignorant or among politically aware voters with opposing convictions.¹

The discussion suggests that election campaigns that are accompanied by a favorable political event, that are intense and one-sided, and that are conducted by a political candidate in a door-to-door campaign have long-term effects on vote choice and norm-induced behavior, but do not affect political attitudes.

3. A natural experiment for studying long-term campaign effects

3.1 Background: The re-vote of 2008

A unique feature of state elections for the *Bürgerschaft* (parliament) of Bremen is that there are two separate five-percent thresholds for parliamentary representation; one for the city of Bremen (68 seats) and one for the city of Bremerhaven (15 seats). BIW was founded in 2004 on a platform of law-and-order as a programmatic successor of the right-wing *Partei Rechtsstaatlicher Offensive* (Party for the Promotion of the Rule of Law, PRO) of former judge and Hamburg Senator, Ronald Schill. PRO received 4.3 percent in Bremen and 4.8 percent in Bremerhaven in the 2003 Bremen state elections. The BIW leader, police officer Jan Timke, was also PRO's frontrunner for Bremen in this election (Decker and Hartleb 2007: 442).

¹ An exception is Broockman and Kalla's (2016) finding that a ten-minute intervention could durably change attitudes for at least three months. It appears unlikely, however, that a typical election campaign could achieve a similar result. Broockman and Kalla (2016: 220-1) explain that canvassers framed the anti-discrimination law as a potential vote choice in the future, and employed perspective-taking persuasion methods. Election campaigns frame the vote choice around a candidate or party, for which such persuasion techniques are often not applicable.

BIW can be described as a right-wing conservative party. The party focuses on domestic security, and it has campaigned for increasing the police force, stronger punishment for criminals, and restrictive immigration rules. BIW supports Germany's membership in NATO, while also opposes sanctions against Russia. The party favors Charles de Gaulle's vision of a "Europe of Fatherlands," in which the nation states retain a substantial degree of policy autonomy vis-à-vis the European Union.² BIW has only participated in state elections in Bremen so far, and Timke has been the frontrunner for every state election in Bremerhaven.

In the Bremen state election of 13 May 2007, BIW received 4.998 percent in Bremerhaven, thus missing the five-percent threshold for parliamentary representation by a mere voter or exactly 0.8 votes. The Social Democrats (SPD), who have governed the state continuously since 1945 remained the largest party with 36.7 percent, followed by the Christian Democrats (CDU) with 25.6 percent, the Greens with 16.5 percent, the Left with 8.4 percent, the Free Democrats (FDP) with 6.0 percent, and the German People's Union (DVU) with 2.7 percent, which passed the five-percent threshold in Bremerhaven.

However, severe irregularities of vote counting occurred in one of Bremerhaven's precincts. The vote count in the precinct Eckernfeld 2 deviated by 13 votes from the number of actual voters. The main poll clerk decided to transport all ballots in a backpack on an unescorted cycling trip to the central electoral office. It was thus possible that ballots were intentionally destroyed or replaced, and that BIW missed the five-percent threshold due to fraud (Gundel 2008). As a consequence, the Constitutional Court of Bremen decided on May 22, 2008 that a re-vote has

² Personal interview with Jan Timke, 22 November 2017. The classification of these positions as populist (e.g., Decker and Hartleb 2007) appears to be inappropriate. Populism is not fixed to a certain programmatic position but a style of argumentation or discourse that could occur across the political spectrum (Moffitt and Tormey 2014; Aslanidis 2016).

to take place on July 6, 2008 – but only in the affected precinct Eckernfeld 2. BIW had received 4.35 percent or 35 votes in the now annulled election in Eckernfeld 2.

This unprecedented case in German politics had the following strategic consequences for voters: Whether BIW would pass the five-percent threshold depended on its vote share and turnout in the re-vote. Passing the threshold would have secured one seat for BIW’s frontrunner Timke in parliament at the expense of Wolfgang Jägers (SPD). The seat allocation of all other parties remained unaffected in any event, and the majority of the newly formed coalition government between SPD and the Greens did not depend on this seat. As a consequence, voting for any party other than BIW implied supporting the SPD, while abstaining from voting implied weakly supporting BIW (Zicht 2008a). Table 1 summarizes the required votes for BIW to pass the five-percent threshold based on different turnout scenarios. If all 1,311 eligible voters would have voted, BIW needed at least 4.73 percent or 62 votes to pass the threshold. If turnout would have been 6.3 percent or lower, BIW would not need any votes to pass the threshold.

Table 1: Re-vote election scenario for BIW to pass the five-percent threshold of parliamentary representation

Hypothetical turnout	Required result
100%	4.73% (62 votes)
90%	4.66% (55 votes)
80%	4.67% (49 votes)
70%	4.58% (42 votes)
60%	4.57% (36 votes)
50%	4.42% (29 votes)
40%	4.39% (23 votes)
30%	4.07% (16 votes)
20%	3.44% (9 votes)
10%	2.29% (3 votes)
6.3%	0%
Annulled result:	4.35% (33 votes), turnout 60.4%
Re-vote result:	27.57% (153 votes), turnout 43.4%

Source: Zicht (2008b).

A few days after the Constitutional Court of Bremen announced the re-vote, the office of the district attorney prosecuted Timke over alleged residency fraud: Timke was accused of having cheated on his principal residence status in Bremerhaven in order to be able to run as a candidate. Timke was acquitted of this charge in January 2009, but the case was covered by the local media before the re-vote.

BIW campaigned intensively in the re-vote election campaign in Eckernfeld 2. BIW posters were put up throughout the whole precinct and every household received two leaflets in which BIW presented its law-and-order program, refuted the accusations against Timke, and highlighted the importance of the re-vote for democracy. Timke visited every household in the precinct one or two weeks before the re-vote except for a small new housing development in the southeast of the precinct. Timke introduced himself as a candidate for the re-vote in his door-to-door campaign, presented BIW's main messages, and answered questions upon request. On average, the talks lasted for about three minutes, and each household received party-themed gimmicks such as a pen. Timke stated that most voters recognized him and perceived him favorably despite the pending court case.³

The SPD organized their annual summer festival with free food and drinks in Eckernfeld 2 one week before the re-vote. The SPD distributed an anti-Timke leaflet in the precinct, describing Timke as “not a Bremerhaven citizen” who cannot represent Bremerhaven's interest in the Bremen state parliament. But these efforts were small relative to the BIW's campaign. SPD candidate Jägers did not campaign door-to-door as he “did not want to annoy the voters.” He considered it unlikely that he would be able to keep his seat (Hellwig 2008; Schirrmeister 2008). The other

³ Personal interview with Jan Timke, 22 November 2017. The Supporting Information depicts Timke campaigning in Eckernfeld 2 on page 1.

parties with parliamentary representation, the CDU, the Greens, the Left, FDP, and the DVU apparently did not campaign at all. Jägers criticized them for not providing any support for the SPD against the BIW in the re-vote (Hellwig 2008).

The BIW – a new party that was largely unknown – enjoyed an unprecedented campaign advantage for a small right-wing conservative party. In the re-vote of 6 July 2008, BIW received 27.57 percent or 153 votes in Eckernfeld 2, successfully passing the five-percent threshold in Bremerhaven with now 5.29 percent. The unusual event of a re-vote accompanied with strong local media coverage made the electorate receptive for BIW’s face-to-face campaign, which was conducted by frontrunner Timke. Moreover, the BIW campaign faced little to no counter-campaigning by mainstream political parties. Thus, the campaign meets the necessary conditions outlined for long-term persuasion effects. Based on the theoretical distinction between persuasion effects on behavior and attitudes, we can derive the following three hypotheses:

Habitual-Voting Hypothesis (H1): Residents in the re-vote precinct are more likely to continue to vote for BIW, because they have formed an attachment to BIW.

Norm-Induced Behavioral Hypothesis (H2): Residents in the re-vote precinct are more likely to engage in security-sensitive behavior, because BIW’s law-and-order campaign made norms on security and self-protection more socially acceptable.

Non-Attitudinal Hypothesis (H3): Residents in the re-vote precinct are not more likely to have adopted BIW’s programmatic beliefs and attitudes, because a one-time election campaign does not seem to have the leverage to durably shape programmatic attitudes.

3.2 Identification strategies

While counting irregularities have caused re-votes in other democratic countries – most notably the re-run of the 2016 Austrian presidential election – there is apparently no comparable international case of a re-vote in a single precinct. The re-vote can be seen as a natural experiment to evaluate the long-term campaign effects on voters, as the event was exogenous to previous campaigning by BIW or other parties.

In order to evaluate the Habitual-Voting Hypothesis, I compare the election results of BIW in the re-vote precinct Eckernfeld 2 (treatment group) with the four adjacent precincts Eckernfeld 1, Eckernfeld 3, Klushof 1, and Twischkamp 1 as well as with all other precincts in Bremerhaven.

I also analyze the election results of the *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany, AfD) in these precincts. The AfD proposes similar domestic security policies like BIW, and was the first right-wing party that has passed the five-percent threshold at the national level in 2017.⁴ Both BIW and the AfD participated in the 2015 local and state elections. The AfD also participated in the 2013 and 2017 national elections and in the 2014 EU election without facing competition from BIW.

The analyses evaluate whether voters in the re-vote precinct have become more likely to vote for BIW in the long run, and whether this support translates into votes for another right-wing party. Better results for the AfD in the treatment group – particularly in elections without BIW participation – would suggest that voters in the treated precinct have generally become more

⁴ See Jäger (2019) for an overview of the emergence and development of the AfD.

supportive of right-wing parties, which would indicate that voters were programmatically persuaded by BIW's re-vote campaign.

An analysis based on election results, however, does not reveal whether the treatment group differs in their norm-induced behavior and political attitudes, which are relevant for the other two hypotheses. As a consequence, I conducted an observational study on security-related behavior and a survey on political beliefs and attitudes in the treatment and control groups.

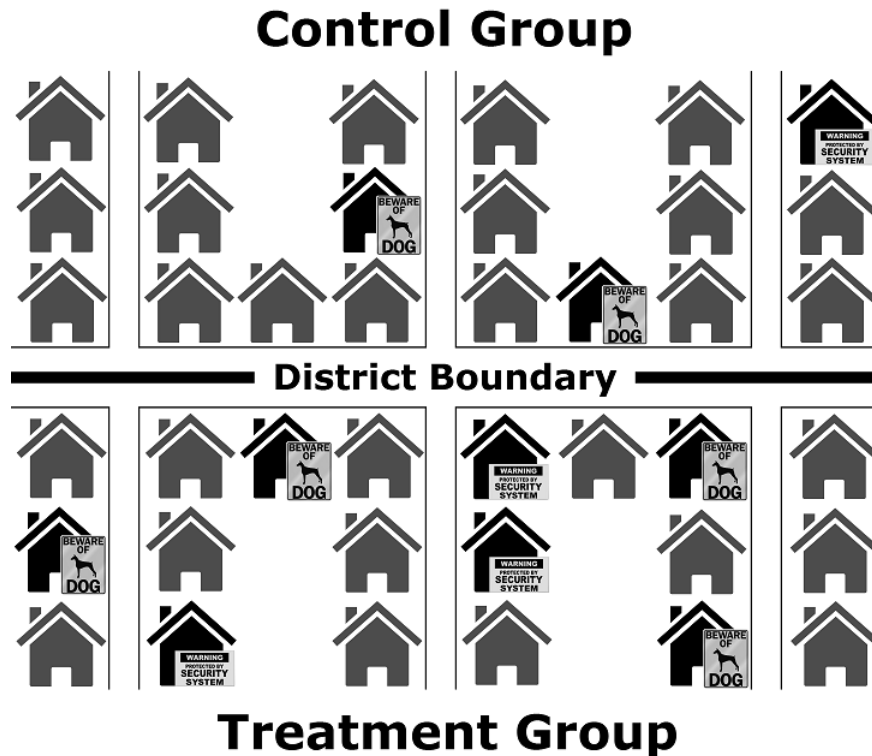
The Norm-Induced Behavioral Hypothesis suggests that the treatment group should have a higher propensity for security-sensitive behavior. Acquiring an alarm device and installing warning signs on one's property is an indicator for security-sensitive behavior. A warning sign sends a signal to the public and to potential burglars that the property has additional protection by an alarm device or by a dog. Such warning signs "convey a clear normative message that 'crime is not tolerated here'" (Schultz and Tabanico 2009: 1202). Schultz and Tabanico (2009) find in experiments that warning signs could give the general impression that crime is salient issue in a community. As a consequence, the installation of crime-prevention measures and warning signs could become a norm and the spread of warning signs could be self-reinforcing. Moreover, warning signs are likely to persist, because residents do not face any additional maintaining cost after installing them. Thus, warning signs qualify as a norm-induced behavior that could persist over time as a consequence of BIW's re-vote campaign.

I evaluate whether warning signs occurred at a higher frequency in the treatment group.⁵ Figure 1 illustrates the research strategy with an example. Both treatment and control groups

⁵ The Supporting Information shows examples of warning signs in Eckernfeld 2 on page 2.

consist of 20 houses each. Seven houses have installed warning signs in the treatment group, whereas there are only three such signs in the control group in this example.

Figure 1: Example of warning signs in the treatment and control groups



Instead of asking respondents directly in the questionnaire on warning signs, I chose an observational research design: Each house of the control and treatment groups was analyzed whether it had installed any warning signs featuring an alarm device or a dog that were visually detectable from the surrounding public streets. The observation was conducted by walking through the area between 21-28 January 2017. In comparison to an ordinary survey, the advantage of this shoe-leather research design is that the data is not based on stated but on actual observed behavior, and that all houses of the area are included in the data set. Thus, the analysis cannot be affected by systematic biases caused by non-responses.

Furthermore, I invited residents via mail to complete a two-page questionnaire. Each invitation was accompanied with a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the anonymous questionnaire.⁶ The survey consisted of two waves. The first wave of May 2017 was based on 282 personalized invitations who received a phone call as a reminder. In the second wave of June 2017, 573 anonymous invitations were received by residents for whom no personal information was available. Their addresses were obtained from the publicly available German household database *Immobilien* and their validity was confirmed via *Google Maps*. Letters were returned if the household refused mail advertisement or if the invited person has moved away. 855 total invitation were received, and the response rates were 23.0 percent for the first and 12.6 percent for the second wave, yielding a total number of 137 responses or a response rate of 16.0 percent. The response rate was statistically indistinguishable between the treatment (16.1 percent, 76 responses) and the control group (15.9 percent, 61 responses). City statistics indicate that 48.8 percent of Eckernfeld residents have already lived in the district for the re-vote campaign. Given the precinct's turnout data, this would suggest that the survey captured about 25.7 percent of actual voters in the precinct and surrounding areas for the 2015 state election, who were living in the area when the re-vote campaign occurred in 2008.⁷

The attitudinal survey includes vote choice and takes different linkage mechanisms into account. Respondents of the treatment group could be more likely to vote for BIW because they believed that BIW can solve security problems or recognize BIW frontrunner Timke as likeable or competent (valence persuasion), or they shared BIW's beliefs or attitudes (programmatic

⁶ The survey items and their descriptive statistics are shown on pages 5-10 in the Supporting Information.

⁷ Based on the assumption that a respondent represents the whole household, the survey would capture 48.0 percent of 2015 state election voters, who have experienced the 2008 re-vote campaign, as an average household in Bremen state consists of 1.87 persons.

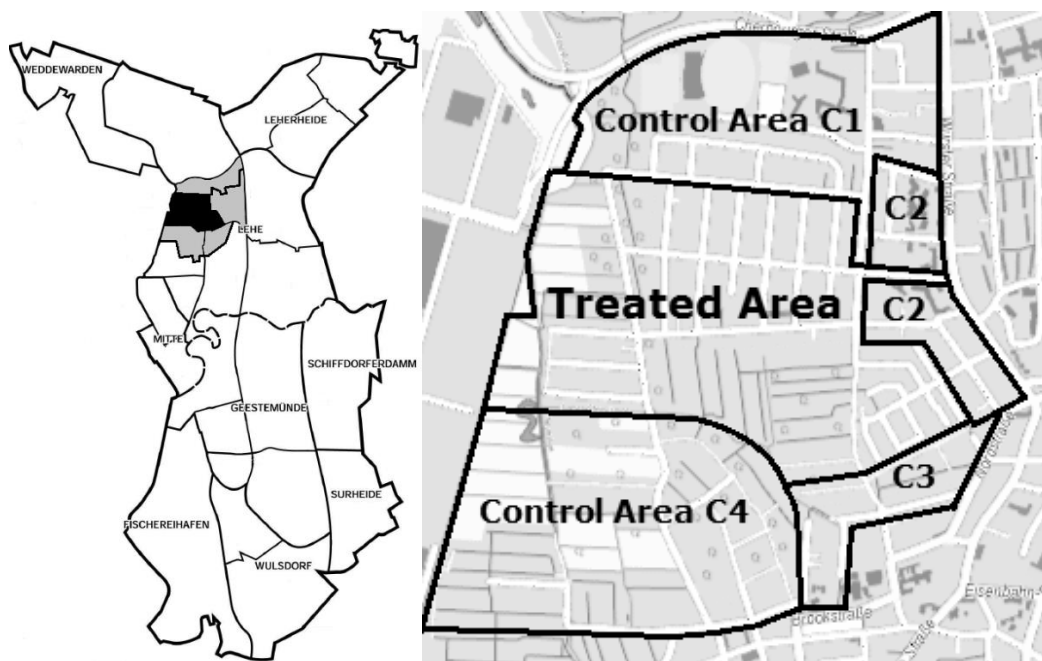
persuasion). While voting and valence persuasion is relevant for the mechanism of the Habitual-Voting Hypothesis, programmatic persuasion directly addresses the Non-Attitudinal Hypothesis.

Additionally, it is possible that the re-vote has permanently undermined the trust in the democratic system. The issue of election fraud became relevant again after the 2015 election. The AfD barely missed the five-percent threshold in Bremerhaven and sued against the result. The election commission court detected vote counting irregularities again and decided in December 2015 that the AfD has surpassed the five-percent threshold in Bremerhaven. The election supervisor and the SPD, who lost a seat, sued against this decision. The Constitutional Court of Bremen ordered a new recount and decided in September 2016 that the AfD received 4.9899 percent and thus failed to surpass the five-percent threshold by 17 votes or 3.4 voters. The AfD brought this issue to the national Constitutional Court in October 2016, which was conclusively rejected in July 2017. Consequently, the questionnaire includes items on democratic procedures and election fraud.

Both the observational study and the attitudinal survey are based on a narrower boundary definition than the election analysis, because the election analysis cannot exclude the possibility that election results differ between precincts over time as a result of different socio-demographic developments within the precincts. The treatment group is a calm upper middle-class area of mainly older residents without a main street. It overwhelmingly consists of stand-alone houses, and also has a community garden area in the south. The precinct is structurally dissimilar from the traditional right-wing strongholds in the city. The streets of the four adjacent districts are included in the control group if they directly border the treatment group and if they have an identical housing profile. The inclusion in the control group is suspended once a structural break in the precinct

occurs, such as a main street or a housing estate area without stand-alone houses.⁸ This procedure also ensured that both groups have a similar size. Figure 2 shows the definition of the treatment and control groups for the analysis of election results based on precinct boundaries on the left, and for the attitudinal survey and observational study based on structurally similar surroundings on the right.

Figure 2: Definition of treatment and control groups for the election analysis (*left*) and attitudinal survey and observational study (*right*)



Note: Left: Treated precinct Eckernfeld 2 in black and adjacent precincts Eckernfeld 1 (north), Eckernfeld 3 (east), Klushof 1 (southeast), and Twischkamp 1 (south) in grey. Right: Treated area refers to the Eckernfeld 2 precinct. Control area C1 is the adjacent neighborhood of Eckernfeld 1, C2 is Eckernfeld 3, C3 is Klushof 1, and C4 is Twischkamp 1.

It is conceivable that the re-vote has changed the campaign strategies of the involved parties in the subsequent elections. However, it is unlikely that campaigning efforts by any party stopped

⁸ The boundary streets (*Straßen*) for the control groups are the following: C1 extends to the north until the main street Cherbourger Straße, which is also the formal boundary of the precinct Eckernfeld 1. The Eastern boundary of C1 as well as C2 is the main street Wurster Straße. The southern boundary of C2 is the main street Nordstraße. The Nordstraße which becomes the main street Brookstraße is also the boundary for C3. The boundary streets for C4 are Brookstraße and Am Twischkamp, after which a housing estate area without stand-alone houses occurs. The city limit is the western boundary. Beyond the boundary is a commercial port area belonging to the city of Bremen.

directly at the precinct’s boundaries, because there was no incentive for it in the subsequent elections as seats were allocated based on city-wide proportional representation. As the treatment and control areas are structurally integrated, there is also no efficiency reason to stop campaigning at these boundaries. BIW did not specifically target the precinct in their subsequent campaigns. Both the treatment precinct as well as the adjacent precincts received the same amount of face-to-face canvassing, leaflets, and posters by BIW.⁹

The boundary design of the attitudinal survey and observational study aims to ensure that housing, socio-demographic backgrounds, and exposure to political information before and after the intervention are similar in the treatment and control groups. The only difference between the groups is that the treatment group experienced the BIW re-vote election campaign in 2008 and was eligible to vote in this election.

4. Empirical Analysis

The empirical models are based on OLS regression analyses with robust standard errors.¹⁰ As an alternative estimator, randomization inference (RI) is used via the r-package “ri2” to calculate the p-values based on 5,000 simulated replications or the maximum number of possible replications.

⁹ Personal interview with Jan Timke, 22 November 2017. Even if Eckernfeld 2 unintentionally received on average more BIW advertising than the direct surroundings before the last state election on 10 May 2015, the control and treatment groups were sampled over two years later. We can also exclude the possibility that the study is distorted by recent political advertising campaigns because the sampling was conducted before the campaign period for the 2017 national election. Thus, in the worst case, detecting significant differences between the groups would still suggest long-term campaign effects of at least two years – a durability that no comparable study has detected so far.

¹⁰ This is also the case for binary or ordinal dependent variables, because logit or probit models can be inconsistent for experiments (Freedman 2008). Section 3 of the Supporting Information shows the tabloid results of all empirical results and further robustness tests.

RI assesses whether the treatment would have an effect if the units or precincts were allocated at random to the treatment and control groups (Gerber and Green 2012).

4.1 Analysis of election results

In the local and state elections after the re-vote, BIW achieved parliamentary representation again. Table 2 summarizes the election results for BIW in the treated precinct of Eckernfeld 2, the adjacent precincts, and Bremerhaven until 2017.

Table 2: BIW and referendum results over the pre- and post-treatment period 2003-2017

Election	Treated Precinct	Adjacent Neighborhood	Whole City
Local 2003	1.25%	1.74%	2.23%
State 2003	4.81%	4.76%	4.81%
Local 2007	3.92%	5.10%	5.42%
State 2007, 2008	4.35%, 27.57%	4.59%	4.99%, 5.29%
Local 2011	11.23%	7.19%	7.74%
State 2011	10.16%	6.86%	7.13%
Local 2015	11.95%	8.24%	7.26%
State 2015	10.59%	6.89%	6.47%
Referendum 2017	42.09%	48.97%	51.51%

Notes: Re-vote of 2008 is cursive. Results for 2003 are for PRO. In 2011, voting age was reduced to 16 and the voting system was changed from a one-vote closed-party list to a five-vote open-party list. Detailed results of each precinct are shown on page 3 in the Supporting Information.

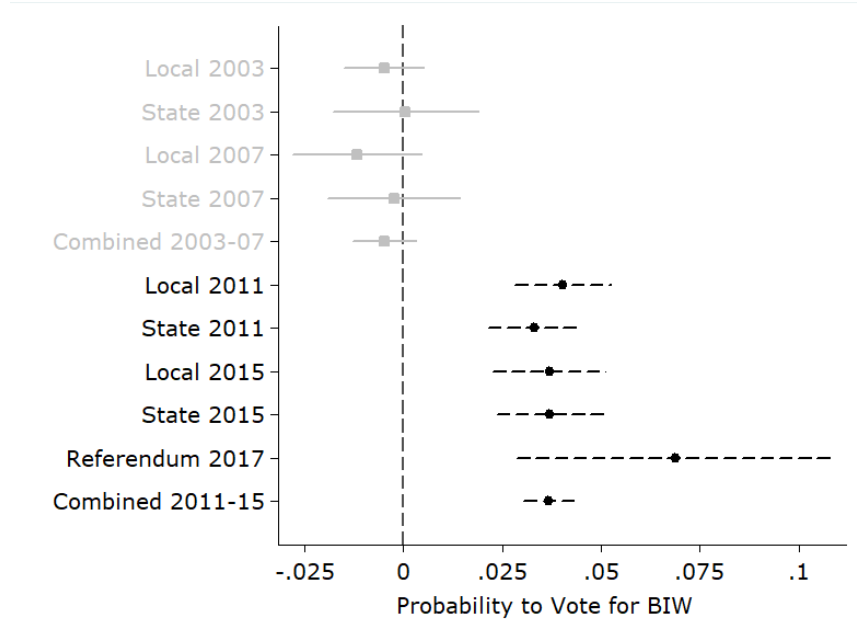
The treated precinct remained a stronghold with double-digit results. Additionally, in a referendum on the extension of the state’s legislative period from 4 to 5 years on 24 September

2017, BIW publicly supported a no-vote on social media. The regional newspaper, the *Nordsee-Zeitung*, presented BIW's position shortly before the referendum. The proposal failed as only 48.4 percent voted affirmatively in Bremen state. Particularly, the support was low in Eckernfeld 2 with only 42.1 percent in favor of the proposal.

The average treatment effect (ATE) on voting for BIW is analyzed on two levels. First, the election results provide information on how many voters casted their vote and how many of them supported BIW in a precinct in each election. For instance, in the 2015 state election, BIW received 261 of 2,465 votes in the treated area and 527 of 7,653 voted for BIW in the four untreated precincts, allowing to estimate the ATE at the individual voter level for the adjacent neighborhood with a treatment-group dummy as independent variable and a binomial dependent variable that equals one for BIW voters.

Figure 3 shows the ATE on the individual level for all voters of the adjacent neighborhood for each election. In elections before the treatment, the coefficient for voters in the treated precincts is negative but statistically indistinguishable from voters in the untreated neighborhood. By contrast, voters were significantly more likely at the 99-percent confident level to vote for BIW in the four local and state elections (3.4 to 4.1 percentage points) and in the referendum (6.4 percentage points). Combining all post-treatment elections over the period 2011-15, the ATE is 3.6 percentage points, which indicates that individual voters in the treatment group were on average 3.6 percentage points more likely to vote for BIW in the post-treatment period.

Figure 3: ATE on voting for BIW, individual level

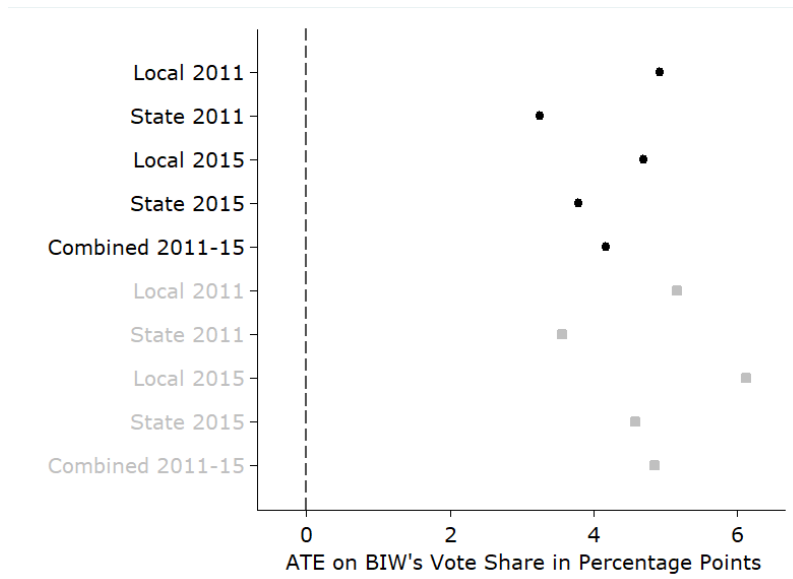


Note: Regressions control for year and election type in combined elections. Error bars show 95% confident intervals. ATE for pre-treatment elections are displayed in gray as a square, post-treatment elections in dashed black lines as a circle. The Supporting Information show the results and further robustness tests with postal voting estimates on page 11.

Second, it is also possible to conduct a difference-in-differences analysis (DID) to detect ATEs at the precinct level. Figure 4a shows the OLS estimates of the interaction term between treatment group and a time dummy for the pre- and post-treatment periods. The dependent variable is BIW’s precinct vote share for the 2011 and 2015 elections and their 2007 results for the adjacent neighborhood and the whole city. Figures 4b and 4c show the simulated estimates for the combined post-treatment elections for the adjacent neighborhood and the whole city using RI. The independent variable is the treatment dummy and the dependent variable is the difference between BIW’s precinct vote share in the 2011 and 2015 elections and their 2007 results in order to yield the same coefficients in the RI and DID procedures.

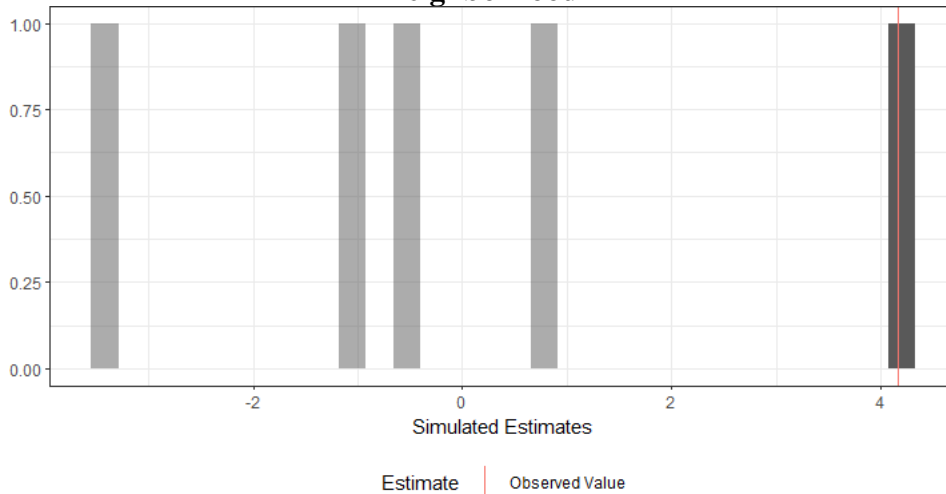
Figure 4: ATE on voting for BIW, precinct level

(a) DID for adjacent neighborhood and whole city



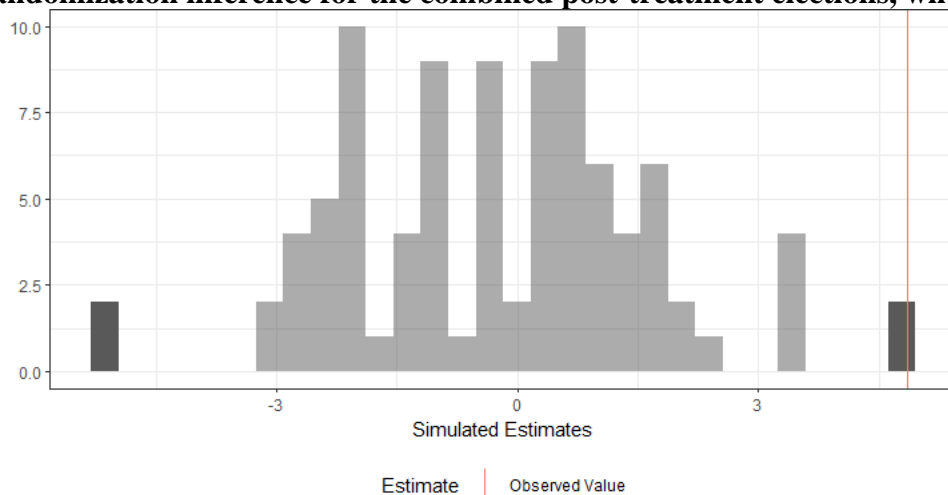
Note: Regressions control for postal precincts, year and election type in combined elections. Point estimates for the adjacent neighborhood are displayed in black as a circle, for the whole city in gray as a square.

(b) Randomization inference for the combined post-treatment elections, adjacent neighborhood



Note: 5 precincts, point estimate=4.167.

(c) Randomization inference for the combined post-treatment elections, whole city



Note: 93 precincts, point estimate=4.858.

As the set-up of the natural experiment is based on one treated cluster and four untreated clusters, the number of clusters may be too small to generate unbiased standard errors for the DID (Middleton 2008; Aronow and Middleton 2015), and the smallest possible p-value of randomization inference would equal $1/5 = 0.2$. As a consequence, Figure 4 only displays point estimates and simulated distributions without references to statistical significance.¹¹ The point estimates for the 2011 and 2015 elections range between 3.6 and 6.1 percentage points. BIW's vote share has increased in the treatment group on average by about 4.2 percentage points compared to the adjacent neighborhood and by about 4.9 percentage point compared to the whole city.

Was the AfD relatively stronger in the treated than in the adjacent precincts? The average election results of Table 3 suggest otherwise. The AfD election result was even lower in the treated

¹¹ For documentary reasons, the p-values are reported together with the tabloid results on page 12 in the Supporting Information. I conduct the same analysis with imputed postal vote estimates as additional clusters for the treatment and control groups on pages 13-14 in the Supporting Information.

precincts compared to the adjacent precincts in all elections over the period 2013-2017 – even in elections without competition from BIW.¹²

Table 3: AfD election results over the period 2013-2017

Election	Treated Precinct	Adjacent Neighborhood	Whole City
National 2013	4.52%	5.44%	4.16%
EU 2014	3.96%	6.42%	5.97%
Local 2015	3.87%	4.70%	4.83%
State 2015	4.30%	4.82%	4.99%
National 2017	13.86%	15.11%	12.53%

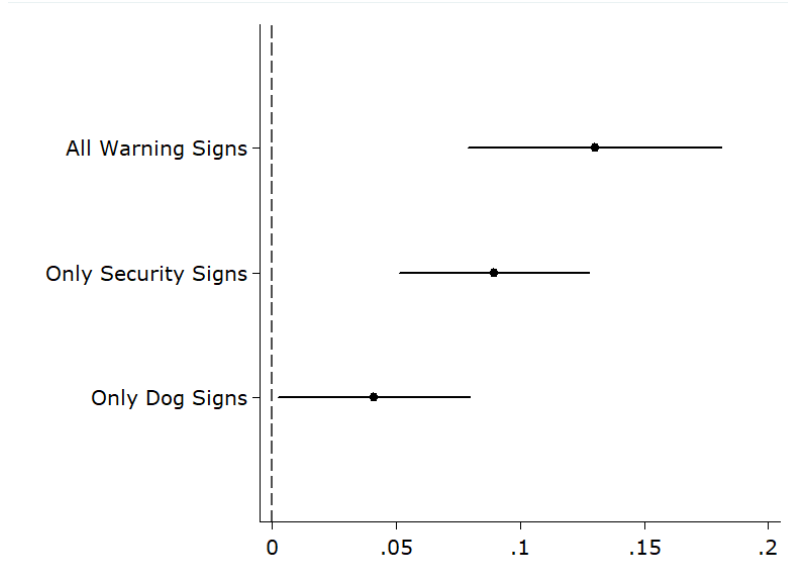
Thus, the analysis of the election results shows that there is a positive long-term treatment effect on BIW’s vote share as suggested by the Habitual-Voting Hypothesis. The support for BIW in Eckerfeld 2 has not transcended to the AfD, which has a similar political program like BIW. This appears to provide indirect evidence for the Non-Attitudinal Hypothesis.

4.2 Observational study of warning signs

The units of analysis are residential houses that were exposed to BIW’s face-to-face campaign in 2008. This yields a sample of 777 units of which 419 were from the control and 358 from the treatment group. 22.1 percent of houses in the treatment group and 9.1 percent in the control group had warning signs.

¹² Page 15 in the Supporting Information shows the empirical analysis of the AfD’s election results.

Figure 5: ATE on using warning signs



Note: Error bars show 95% confident intervals.

The empirical analysis evaluates whether there was a treatment effect on installing warning signs. The dichotomous dependent variable becomes one for a unit if it had an alarm device or security warning sign or a dog warning sign. Figure 5 shows the ATE for the regression analyses. Residents in the treatment group were associated with a higher probability of 13.0 percentage points to have a warning sign in general and with a higher probability of 8.9 percentage points to have an alarm-device sign. Both differences are significant at the 99-percent confidence level. The ATE was 4.1 percent for dog warning signs, which appears to be significant at the 95-percent confidence level. Using RI at the unit and street level as robustness tests based on a one-tailed test of the sharp null hypothesis, the treatment group appears to have installed more security signs than the control group in general, which is significantly different at the 95-percent confidence level. The ATE for dog warning signs remains statistically significant at the 95-percent confidence level, while it becomes insignificant for security signs.

As suggested by the Norm-Induced Behavioral Hypothesis, the re-vote appears to have durably affected the security feeling of the residents in the treatment group.

4.3 Attitudinal survey

A t-test of means shows that the treatment and control groups appear to be statistically indistinguishable for education, age, gender, and long-term residency. However, the differences for gender and long-term residency are sizeable: 34.3 percent of the treatment group and 25.4 percent of respondents in the control group were females. 90.7 percent of the treatment group and 96.7 percent of the control group lived in the precinct at the time of the re-vote. The differences suggest that the respondents of both groups might not be interchangeable. As relatively fewer respondents lived in the treatment group during the re-vote and as BIW received slightly less support from women,¹³ a potential sampling bias appears to make it more difficult to detect a treatment effect in the attitudinal survey.

The following survey items are used as dependent variables: *BIW Vote* indicates that a respondent voted for BIW.¹⁴ The *AfD Vote* distinguishes between national and state elections. Valence persuasion suggests that respondents in the treatment group are more likely to recognize BIW candidate Timke on a picture and *Know* his name, to be able to *Evaluate* his performance in parliament, to give him a better *Rating* for his work, and to believe that BIW has the most *Competence* to improve domestic security in Bremen. We would find evidence for persuasion of

¹³ According to representative exit polls, BIW received 4% among men and 3% among women in the 2011 and 2015 state elections (Probst 2011: 811; Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2015).

¹⁴ Vote choice is for the 2015 Bremen election, except for one respondent from Klushof 1 who entered BIW as “Other party” for the national election, although BIW was not participating.

beliefs and attitudes if the treatment group is more likely to have a higher *Crime Perception* or to feel threatened in their *Personal Safety*. The treatment group should also be more likely to support tougher security policies, such as *Shackles* for terrorist suspects, more *CCTV* in public places, and racial *Profiling*. On immigration, the treatment group would be expected to be in favor of a *Reduction* of the number of refugees and to evaluate the net effect of immigration to be *Negative* for Germany.

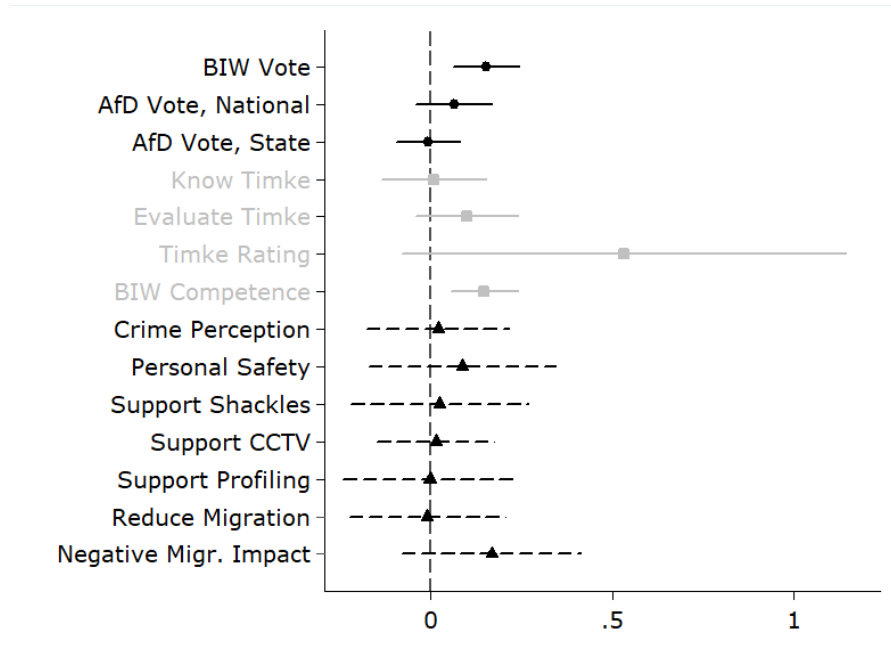
Additionally, the following variables are relevant for trust in the democratic system: *Election Fraud* indicates that respondents do not think that votes are counted fairly. *No Fair Reporting* indicates that respondents think that journalists do not report impartially, while *No Fair Campaigning* measures whether respondents think that there are campaign disadvantages for some parties. The *Personal Vote Matters* if respondents disagree with the statement that the personal vote has no impact on politics. Finally, respondents could also agree with the statement that there was *Election Fraud against the AfD*, which prevented the AfD from passing the five-percent threshold.

The dichotomous treatment variable is the key explanatory variable, which equals one for respondents from the treatment group. In addition, the analyses include the control variables education, age, gender, and long-term residency.

Figure 6 shows the ATE on the first set of items. For the voting items, the treatment group was 15.4 percentage points more likely at the 99-percent confidence interval to vote for BIW, as suggested by the Habitual-Voting Hypothesis. The vote intention for the AfD for the upcoming national election was higher but not statistically significant for the treatment group. There was also

no ATE for the AfD in the Bremen state election. These findings are congruent with the previous analysis of election results.

Figure 6: ATE on survey items pertaining to voting, valence factors, and programmatic persuasion



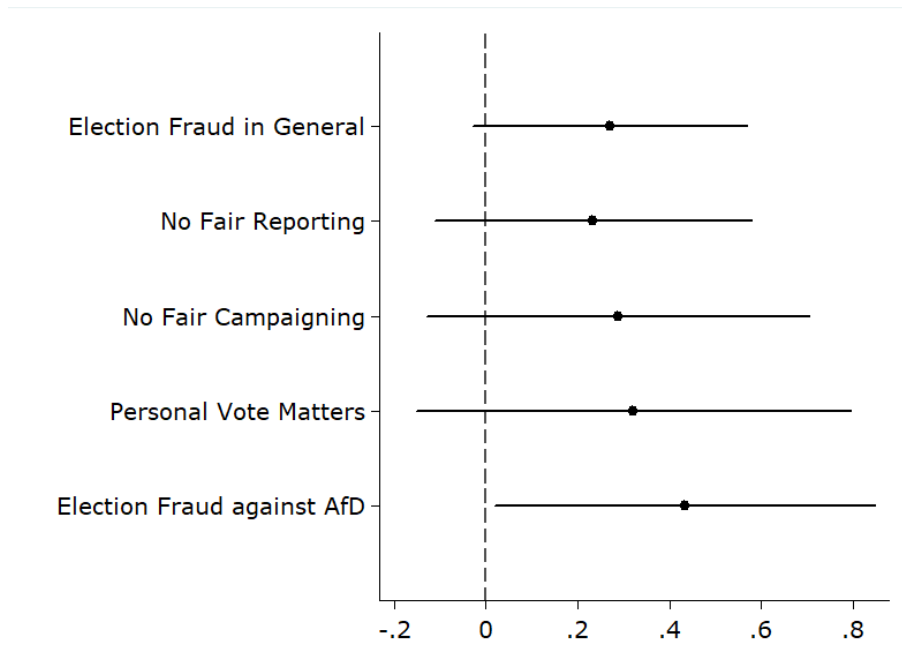
Note: Error bars show 95% confident intervals. Vote items are displayed in solid black lines as a circle, valence items in grey as a square, and items on political beliefs and attitudes in dashed black lines as a triangle. Regressions control for age, education, gender, and long-term residency.

In terms of recognizing BIW candidate Timke, there were no significant differences between the groups. The coefficients for evaluating and knowing Timke are positive but miss the level of statistical significance. The treatment group was 15.0 percentage points more likely to consider BIW as the most competent party on security policies, which is significant at the 99-percent confidence level. Additionally, there were no significant differences for voting and valence items between the treatment and control group for all other parties represented in parliament (CDU, SPD, Greens, FDP, and The Left).

Respondents from the treatment group were not significantly more likely to perceive higher crime rates, to feel threatened in their personal security, or to support law-and-order policies. There was also no significant difference for supporting stricter immigration policies. The coefficient for evaluating immigration negatively is positive but misses the standard for statistical significance. As a consequence, no item indicates that there were significant differences in right-wing programmatic beliefs and attitudes between the groups.

Figure 7 shows the items pertaining to trust in democracy. The coefficients for general election fraud, no fair reporting or campaigning, and personal vote matters are positive but miss the standard for statistical significance. The treatment group appears to be significant more likely at the 95-percent confidence level to believe that election fraud against the AfD occurred.

Figure 7: ATE on survey items pertaining to trust in the democratic system



Note: Error bars show 95% confident intervals. Regressions control for age, education, gender, and long-term residency.

Using RI as a robustness test at the individual level, the estimated p-values suggest that the treatment group and the control group differ from each other at the 99-percent confidence level in terms of voting for BIW and considering BIW the most competent parties on domestic security based on a one-tailed test of the sharp null hypothesis. Moreover, the treatment group was significantly more likely at the 95-percent confidence level to believe that election fraud against the AfD occurred. Thus, the empirical analysis of the attitudinal survey suggests that the treatment has made respondents more likely to vote for BIW and to perceive BIW as the most competent parties to improve domestic security in Bremen, which is further evidence for the Habitual-Voting Hypothesis. They were not relatively more likely to share right-wing programmatic attitudes on security and immigration issues, as suggested by the Non-Attitudinal Hypothesis. However, the trust in the democratic system was affected, as the treatment group was more likely to believe that election fraud prevented the AfD from passing the five-percent threshold.

5. Conclusion

Campaigns matter for elections, but a large canon of studies shows that campaign effects evaporate shortly after an election. Given the focus on short-term campaign effects and the difficulty to conduct a randomized study over a longer time horizon, we only have limited insights into whether campaigns can have long-term effects, and which political behavior can be durably influenced by election campaigns. This study utilized a unique case of a precinct-specific re-vote in Germany to show that a dominant one-sided campaign has long-term effects on vote choice and even on norm-induced behavior.

The analysis of election results suggests that BIW's re-vote campaign has made voters permanently more likely to cast their ballot for a small right-wing conservative party. However, a limitation of this finding is that the smallest possible p-value of randomization inference cannot reach statistical significance as a consequence of the small sample size of one treated cluster and four untreated clusters. Studying the observational behavior of residents, it appears that non-political behavior has been durably changed as residents in the re-vote precinct were more likely to install warning signs. The findings of the mail survey indicate that respondents from the re-vote precinct do not seem to differ in their political beliefs and attitudes from dwellers of the adjacent neighborhood. Thus, it appears likely that the long-term effects of the re-vote were transmitted via BIW-specific valence considerations for voting and via changes of security-related norms for installing warning signs. Both associations are in accordance with the habitual-voting and social-norm theories. In addition, it seems that the event has made residents more likely to suspect election fraud.

The implications of this study go beyond the unique case of the precinct's re-vote. One-sided campaigns are unlikely in a competitive election environment, but might be possible in party strongholds or in non-election periods. Remarkably, the durable campaign effects of nearly a decade were detected for a new minor right-wing party campaigning in a precinct that previously was not a right-wing stronghold. It is thus conceivable that parties or advocacy groups that are better established and better equipped to conduct one-sided campaigns could achieve stronger effects than revealed in this study, particularly if their messages are reinforced by the interpretation of external political events. While intense campaigns in strongholds or during non-election periods do not offer immediate political gains, they might turn out to be beneficial in the long-run as they

could be a promising strategy for parties to build long-term linkages with voters and to affect broader social norms in their favor.

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