

BLINDED BY OUT-GROUP HATRED

WHY DOES RADICAL PARTY ENTRY REDUCE ITS VOTERS' SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRACY?

Álvaro Canalejo-Molero (with Morgan Le Corre Juratic)

University of Lucerne

September 19th, 2024

MOTIVATION AND OVERALL ARGUMENT

THEORY

RESEARCH DESIGN

STUDY 1 - PANEL DATA ANALYSIS

STUDY 2 - VIGNETTE EXPERIMENT

STUDY 2 - QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

CONCLUSION

MOTIVATION AND OVERALL ARGUMENT



MOTIVATION AND OVERALL ARGUMENT

Growing electoral success of populist and radical parties

However, these voters become *less* satisfied with democracy

Why?

This paper proposes a novel theoretical argument by introducing an *affective out-group* logic to changes in SWD after elections

Radical and populist losers become more dissatisfied **because of the out-group (most disliked) party win**

THEORY

THEORY

The utilitarian logic focuses on satisfaction derived from voters' *own party's* performance

Yet, literature shows that more radical groups are affectively polarized, where negative *out-group party* feelings matter

Changes in SWD after elections would be driven by two factors for radical voters:

1. The **utility** of the **in-group party** electoral outcomes
2. An **affective** response to the **out-group party** results

When facing a defeat, a negative response to the out-group party win should be prevalent for radical voters

HYPOTHESES I (IN-GROUP)

Hypothesis 1a: Increasing the salience of the in-group party's representation potential will be associated with a positive change in SWD.

Hypothesis 1b: Increasing the salience of the in-group party's coalition-making potential will be associated with a positive change in SWD.

HYPOTHESES II (OUT-GROUP)

Hypothesis 2: *Increasing the salience of the in-group party's coalition-making potential will be associated with a larger positive change in SWD than increasing the salience of the in-group party's representation potential.*

Hypothesis 3: *Increasing the salience of the out-group party's winning potential will be associated with a negative change in SWD.*

Hypothesis 4: *Increasing the salience of the out-group party's winning potential will be associated with stronger negative feelings towards the out-group party.*

RESEARCH DESIGN

A 2-STUDY, MIXED-METHODS DESIGN

1. Study 1 - Panel data analysis: Representative and observational evidence of lower SWD following elections of RR voters
2. Study 2 - Vignette Experiment: Causally assess the effect of relative electoral success and party entry on SWD and out-group affects
3. Study 2 - Qualitative evidence: Triangulation and causal link between out-group affects and decreasing SWD

CASE SELECTION

The 2022 French Presidential Elections

1. Emergence of a new RR party : Eric Zemmour and his party *Reconquête*
2. Relative electoral success : 7% of vote share (more than the two mainstream parties)
3. Uncertainty regarding the second round result and coalition/representation potential in governing institutions
4. An affectively polarized group of voters

PARTY FEELING THERMOMETERS OF ZEMMOUR VOTERS

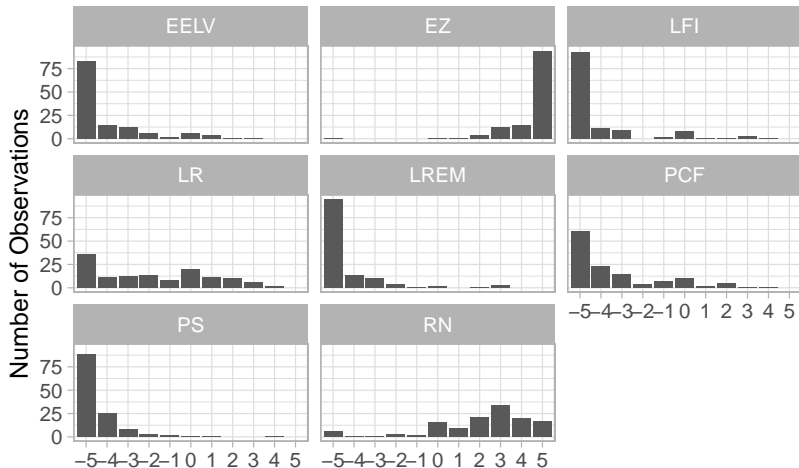


Figure 1: Feeling thermometer scores of Z

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

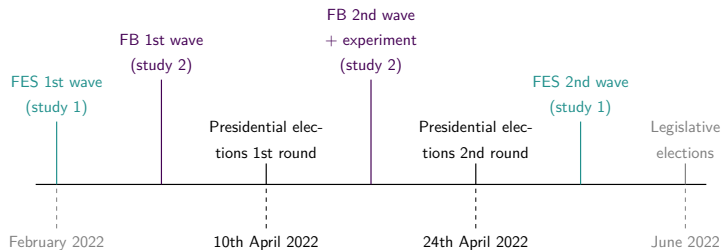


FIGURE 2: Timeline of studies and significant events

STUDY 1 - PANEL DATA ANALYSIS

DESIGN PANEL

Data: French Election Study 2022 (panel during 2022 elections)

Regressing (normalized 0-1) change of SWD pre-post the presidential election on vote choice

Controls:

1. political : pre elections SWD, left-right position,
2. socio-demographics: gender, age, education, income, occupational status

RESULTS PANEL

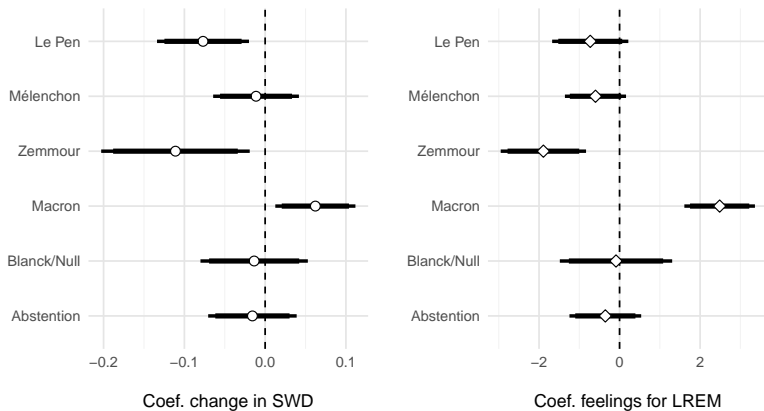


FIGURE 3: Vote choice effect on SWD (ref: other vote choice)

STUDY 2 - VIGNETTE EXPERIMENT

DESIGN VIGNETTE EXPERIMENT

Recruitment: Convenience sample of RR voters using Facebook Ads ($N = 126$ Zemmour Voters, Overall sample $N=370$, $RR = 52\%$)

EXAMPLE OF FB ADS

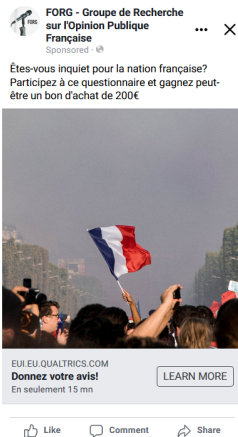


FIGURE 4: Facebook ad example

DESIGN VIGNETTE EXPERIMENT

Experimental manipulation: perceived in-group/out-group electoral success

Control and 4 treatment conditions:

1. **Control:** Descriptive information two winners of the 1st round (1) and four first candidates (2)
2. **T1a:** In-group success - Government coalition
3. **T1b:** In-group success - Parliament (Assembly) representation
4. **T2:** (Mainstream) Out-group success - Winning 2nd round elections
5. **T3:** Placebo - Normative danger of RR party success

EXAMPLES OF VIGNETTES

TABLE 1: Description of the vignettes by treatment condition (Zemmour voters)

Condition	Text
Control	The results of the first round of the presidential elections were known already the 10th of April. Among the competing candidates, Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen passed to the second round. The candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon and the candidate <i>Éric Zemmour</i> were the third and fourth most voted candidates, respectively.
T1a In-group Government (Zemmour version - Blocks I and III)	+ Some people highlight that the candidate Éric Zemmour obtained particularly good results, especially because the winner of the second round may include him in the new government.
T1b In-group Parliament (Zemmour version - Blocks I and III)	+ Some people highlight that the candidate Éric Zemmour obtained particularly good results, especially because with the confirmation of these results in the legislative elections, he could play a central role in the National Assembly.
T2 Out-group Government	+ Some people highlight that the candidate Emmanuel Macron obtained particularly good results, especially because he has a great chance of becoming the winner of the second round.
Placebo Social Norm	+ Some people highlight that the candidate Éric Zemmour obtained particularly worrying results, especially because of his controversial opinions during the campaign.

DATA AND MEASUREMENT EXPERIMENT

Dependent Variables

1. Change Satisfaction with Democracy (SWD) (0-10)
2. Change out-party affect: (Out-party like/dislike 0-10)

Three blocks of voters (Zemmour / Le Pen / Others) with replication of the experiment

SUMMARY OF THE EXPERIMENT DESIGN

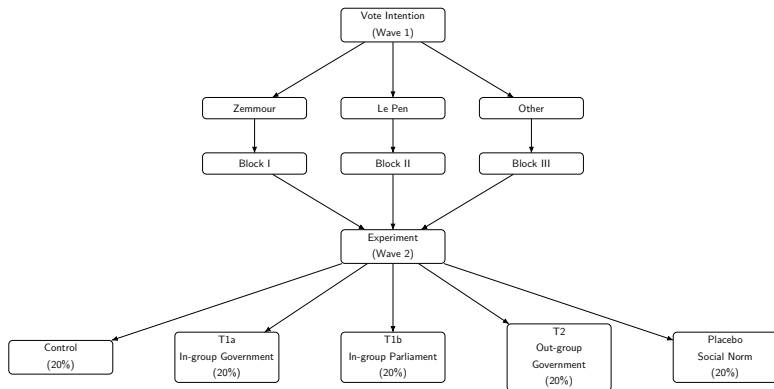


FIGURE 5: Experimental design diagram

RESULTS VIGNETTE EXPERIMENT ON ZEMMOUR VOTERS

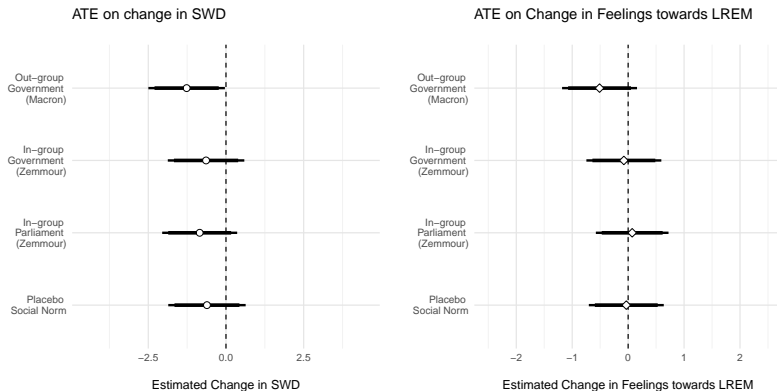


FIGURE 6: ATE on change in SWD (left) and in feelings towards LREM (right)

RESULTS VIGNETTE EXPERIMENT ON 'OTHERS'

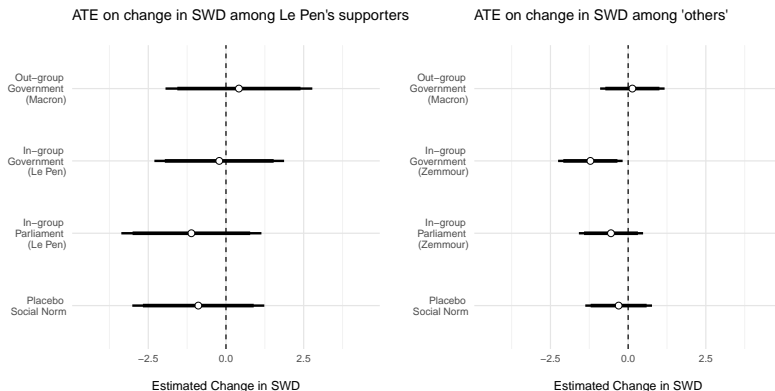


FIGURE 7: ATE on change in SWD among Le Pen's supporters (left) and 'others' (right)

STUDY 2 - QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

DESIGN QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Open-ended question *“Finally, in one or two sentences and on your own words, could you describe your feelings regarding the results of these elections?”*.

DESIGN QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Triangulation Expectations:

1. Negative and affectively charged mentions of out-group party rather than positive in-group references
2. Link out-group blaming and negative evaluations of democracy

Systematic Qualitative coding of:

1. Feelings
2. Groups mentioned
3. Democracy Evaluations

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS RESULTS I

1. Overwhelmingly negative feelings expressed in reference to the out-group party victory. **No** reference to satisfaction with Zemmour (or Le Pen's) performance

Q3: *“**Deeply disappointed** that more than 25% of the voters voted for Macron after 5 terrible years for France”*

2. This negative out-group feelings displays strong negative affects (i.e anger/loathing) against the out-group

Q4: *“I am **disgusted** that Macron is in the second round of the presidential election after all the **dirty** deals he has done.”*

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS RESULTS II

3. Link with dissatisfaction with democracy : “rigged” elections through media control/manipulation

Q8: “***Rigged non-democratic election*** confiscated by ***the media*** subjected to the billionaire ***friends of Macron***”

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Findings:

1. In three mixed-methods studies, Zemmour voters are consistently shown **to become less satisfied with democracy following elections**
2. No support for the utilitarian in-group argument
3. Support for the affective out-group argument both experimentally and qualitatively

Implications:

A vicious circle between RR party emergence, out-group hatred, and satisfaction with democracy

Thank you!