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NOVALAND: INVESTIGATING POLITICAL SOLIDARITIES IN AN ARTIFICIAL ONLINE STATE

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INTRODUCTION

Scientists have high interest in effects of government structures and performances, societal composition, and exogenous events on political attitudes and behaviors

Usually, such (structural) aspects cannot be easily manipulated, impeding testing causal chains

Most studies are based on observational studies using data from surveys, field experiments, or administrative records

Online platforms simulating artificial states may represent a completely new avenue

GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Which micro- and macro-level factors explain political solidarities? (RQ1)

How stable are cause-effect relationships across different contexts? (RQ2)

Which factors can be manipulated by political actors to create political solidarities? (RQ3)

PRELIMINARY METHODS

Field study in Germany in 2022 (one day) using push-notifications for invitation

Programmed via oTree: Mostly text-based information (some audio/visual inputs)

In-the-moment participation and interaction

Convenience (quota) sample: N ~ 200

Incentives: 5€ (registration) – 2€ (per phase) – 5€ (all phases)

NOVALAND
PHASE 1: INTRODUCTION AND STORY TELLING

bit.ly/novaland2022

Random assignment to income groups (low, middle, high) including tax payment information

Life-style selection: housing, food, and mobility (depends on net income)

Comprehension and satisfaction questions

Participants can build savings

Information on the government, opposition, and potential coalitions

Introduction of the parties (including programs):
- Liberal Party Novaland (LPN)
- Conservative Party Novaland (KPN)
- Party Progressive Novaland (PPN)
- Social Party Novaland (SPN)

Call for parliamentary election

Election outcome (piechart) and government formation based on particicants‘ real votes in Novaland

Sudden outbreak of devastating forest fires: initially, no participant is impacted

1. Appeal for donations from savings

Random assignment to groups that are impacted by the fire (yes/no)

Random assignment to government performance groups (good; no financial losses/poor; financial losses)

2. Appeal for donations from savings

Satisfaction questions

Internal validity

Are experiments well enough embedded in the narrative context?
Do participants fully engage in the study?

External validity

Are participants willing to take part?
Does behavior in Novaland align with the real world?

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Many thanks for your attention!

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