

# The Institutional Context of Voter Participation

## Voter Turnout and Abstention in Context (IP 2)

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# Research questions

We know that both individual and contextual factors influence voter turnout, but:

- How do individual and contextual factors interact?
- Under which contextual conditions are individual characteristics relevant to predict voter participation?
- Are some citizens more sensitive to the context than others?

# Contextual characteristics

- Institutional setting (electoral systems and proportionality, voting regulations and procedure, compulsory voting)
- Links between political parties and society (cultural segmentation and organizational density)
- Characteristics of electoral competition (margin of victory, party policy polarization, electoral fragmentation)

# Individual characteristics

- Attitudes as motivations
  - Feeling of voting as a civic duty
  - Attachment to social groups (party identification, national identity, political party and trade union membership)
- Socio economic and demographic characteristics as resources

# Method and research design

- Cross-sectional:
  - Comparative contextual and survey data (ESS, CSES), as many countries as possible
- Longitudinal:
  - Contextual and survey data (national election studies) for selected countries with good time series
- Various multilevel methods (two-step and single-equation hierarchical models)