

Turnout Nation 2021 Relational Voter Turnout Test

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Sam Gass (he/him), Maya Gutierrez (she/her), and Sam Roth (he/him)



Overview of Experiment



- Relational programs provide the opportunity to leverage pre-existing relationships in order to mobilize voters, including voters who may not be reached by campaigns otherwise.
- Turnout Nation's [2019 experiment](#) demonstrated the value and impact of their RVT program. Turnout Nation recruits voting captains to contact their friends and family members, and found that their oversight and check-ins with voting captains increased the number of captains that followed through on their promises of engagement in order to further boost turnout.
- The purpose of this test was to replicate previous experimental findings and estimate the impact of Turnout Nation's RVT program in Atlanta, Georgia during the 2021 mayoral election.

Research Question



- What is the effect of Turnout Nation's RVT program, recruiting volunteer voting captains to contact their friends and family, on voter turnout?

Randomization Universe

570 individuals identified by 30 Turnout Nation voting captains as relational contacts in Atlanta, Georgia

Control

285 individuals were assigned to *not* be contacted prior to the 2021 Atlanta mayoral election by their Turnout Nation voting captain

Relational Contact

285 individuals were assigned to be contacted prior to the 2021 Atlanta mayoral election by their Turnout Nation voting captain

RVT contact happened between 10/21 and Election Day, 11/2

Analysis and Results

Compared differences in 2021 general election turnout across treatment conditions

Turnout Nation's Voting Captain Program

- Volunteer voting captains shared the names and addresses of friends or relatives who would be eligible to vote in Atlanta's mayoral election with Turnout Nation.
- Captains agreed to take on the responsibility of encouraging this specific list of voters to vote, and Turnout Nation staff had check-ins with voting captains to encourage follow-through.
- Contact could have been made across any mode (phone, SMS, in person, etc.) and could have been made at multiple points in time.

The randomization was conducted prior to matching individuals to the voter file. Voters were subsequently matched to the voter file three times and 95% of voters in the experimental universe were included in the analysis.

- Voters were matched immediately after Election Day to determine who was listed as a registered voter in Atlanta, Georgia. **Because the voter registration deadline had already passed when the program began, anyone who did not already appear on the voter file would not have been eligible to vote.** Accordingly, matching could not have been impacted by treatment assignment. At this stage, we excluded 26 unmatched individuals from the analysis.
- Voters were also matched to pre-treatment voter file data to obtain demographic data on individuals in the universe. This data was not used to balance the randomization, but was obtained for inclusion in the analysis.¹
- After the voter file updated with 2021 vote history, voters were matched to the updated voter file to obtain outcome data on 2021 voter turnout.

¹ An additional 28 people did not match to the pre-treatment voter file data; they are included in the analysis and covariates that would have been obtained from the voter file were estimated using mean/mode imputation.

The majority of the universe was **modeled as white**. Although most voted in the 2018 and 2020 general elections, **a little less than two thirds of the universe voted in Atlanta's last mayoral general election in 2017.**

Mean Age	52
% Women ¹	49%
% Black ²	17%
% White ²	79%
% Voted in 2020 General Election	94%
% Voted in 2018 General Election	93%
% Voted in 2017 General Election	63%
Mean 2021 Turnout Score	12

¹ At the time of this test, Catalist only provided male, female and unknown as options for gender identity.

² Voter file data on race is self-reported when available, modeled otherwise. Turnout Nation's perception was that its captains and the voters they reached were majority Black, but they did not ask captains to collect this information.

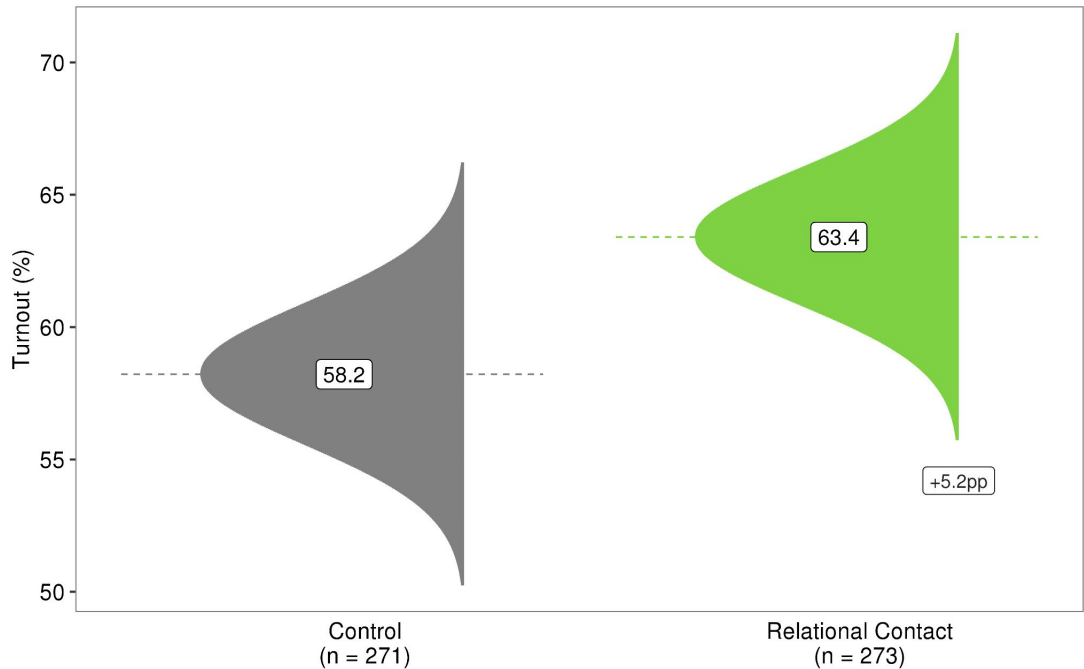
Results



Turnout in 2021 General Election

It is very likely that Turnout Nation's voting captain RVT program increased turnout in the 2021 general election by 5.2 percentage points (pp).

Baseline turnout in the control group was 58.2%.



Conclusions



Summary of Results

- It is very likely that Turnout Nation's voting captain RVT program increased turnout in the 2021 Atlanta mayoral general election by 5.2 pp.
- Due to the relatively small universe, it was not possible to reliably estimate the effect of the program on smaller portions of the universe to determine whether the program was more effective across different types of voters (e.g. age, race, gender).

Discussion

- The results from this test provide further evidence that volunteer voting captains can be effective at increasing voter turnout among their relational contacts.
- Although the vast majority of voters in the universe had voted in recent higher-salience elections (2018, 2020), a little over one third of the universe did not vote in Atlanta's 2017 mayoral election. In this test, RVT appears to have been effective at increasing turnout among semi-regular voters in a lower-salience context. In a higher-salience context, it would likely be important for voting captains to identify more targets who are infrequent voters.

Discussion

- Collecting addresses of contacts from their voting captains was an effective method to match the majority of contacts in this universe to the voter file, which made it possible to measure the effect of the program.
- Approximately 1 in 11 voters included in the universe matched to the voter file only after Election Day. The voter file covariates for these individuals were imputed, which adds some uncertainty to the results.

Thank You!

Turnout Nation

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For more information, please visit analystinstitute.org.
Join the Analyst Group at analystinstitute.org/join.



Appendix

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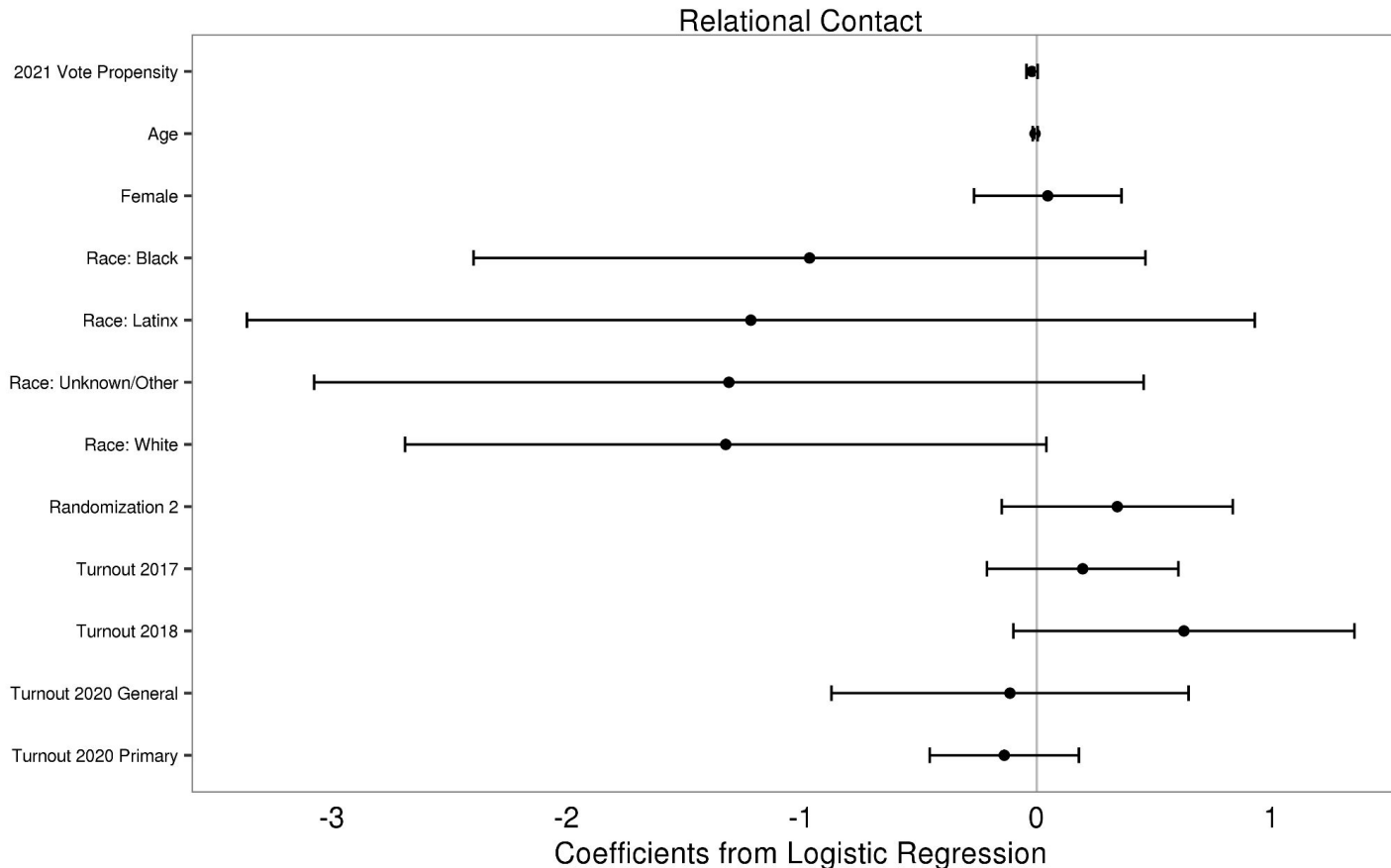
Treatment Effects

Turnout in 2021 General Election

Treatment Group	Predicted Level	Difference From Control	Standard Error of Difference	<i>p</i> -value
Control	58.22	-	-	-
Relational Contact	63.41	5.19	3.70	0.16

A logit regression of turnout in the 2021 general election on treatment assignment controlling for age, race, gender, 2021 turnout score, 2020 general vote history, 2020 primary vote history, 2018 general vote history, and 2017 general vote history, with values mean/mode imputed for individuals unmatched to the voter file pre-treatment.

Although it was not possible to check balance during the randomization phase of the project due to the program's timing, individual characteristics were balanced across treatment assignment in most cases.



The universe had low mean turnout score, but had relatively high turnout rates in recent elections.

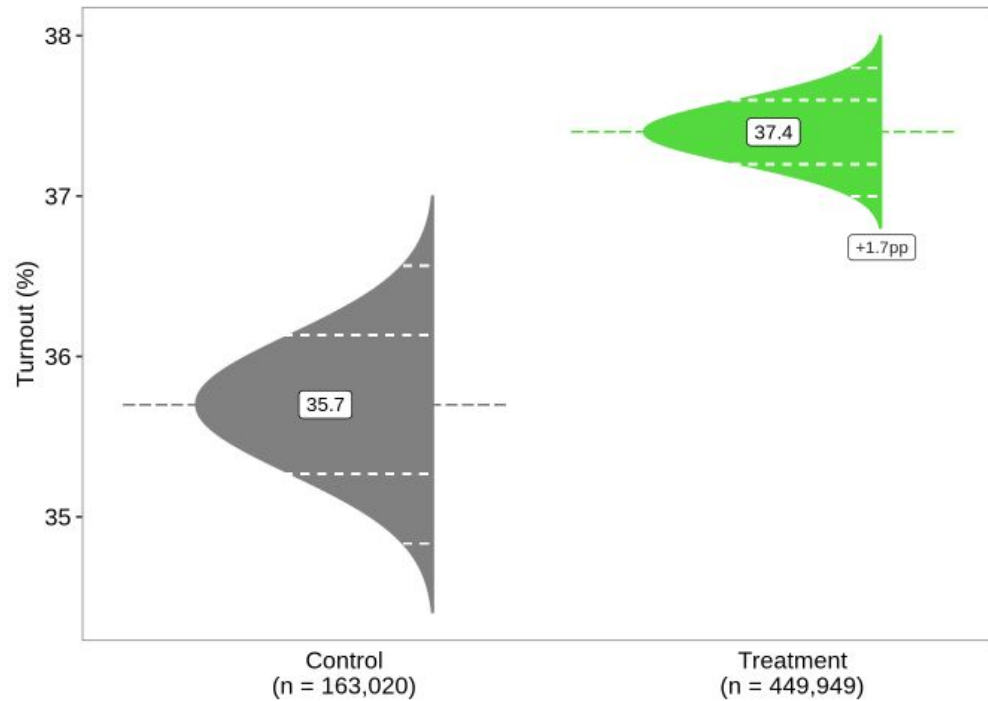
- The universe has a mean 2021 turnout score of 12, which would typically suggest that the majority of individuals would be unlikely to vote in the 2021 election.
- Alternately, relatively high turnout among voters in this universe in 2017, 2018, and 2020 suggests that voters in this universe are *very* likely to vote in high-salience elections, and many are also likely to vote in municipal elections.
- It is not clear why the turnout scores for this universe suggest a substantially lower likelihood of voting in the 2021 general election than in the 2017 general election.

How to read our results plots



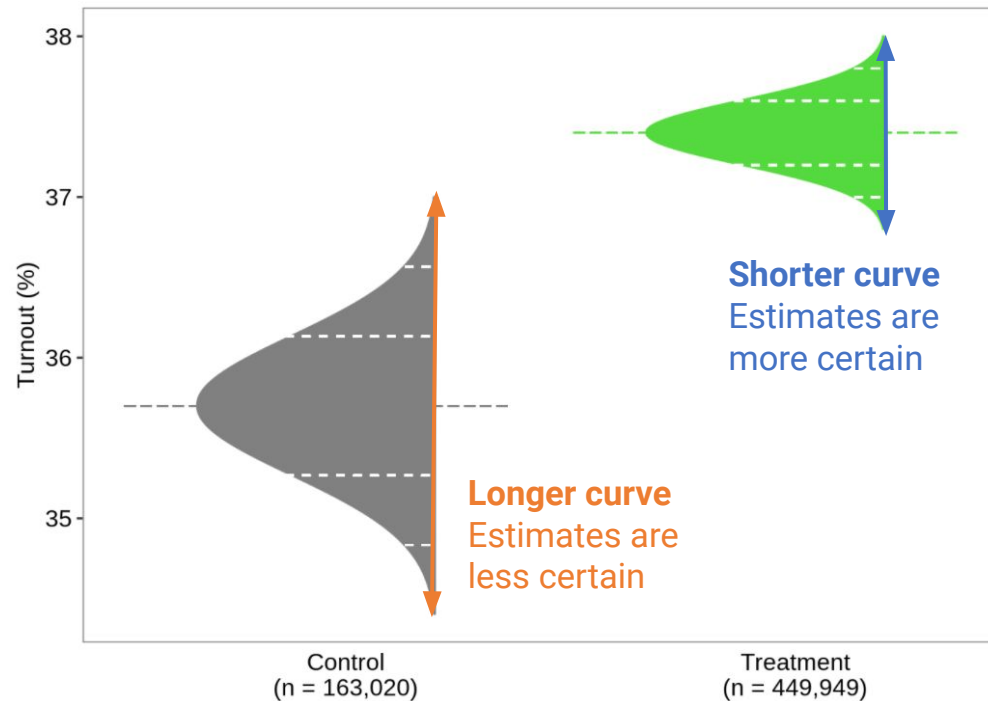
How to read our results plots

- Even with well-powered randomized experiments, no estimate is certain.
- That's why we provide not just one number, but an interval of values that may capture the true effect.
- We visualize this interval of values using curves.



Shorter vertical length means more certainty

- Vertically shorter curves mean more certainty and vertically longer curves mean less certainty.
- The green curve on the right is shorter than the gray curve on the left.
- This means that the estimate represented by the gray curve is more uncertain than the estimate of the green curve on the right.



More condensed curves mean more certainty

- More condensed curves mean more certainty and less condensed curves mean less certainty.
- The green curve on the right is more condensed than the gray curve on the left.
- This means that the values on the gray curve on the left carry more uncertainty.

