Article

Public Support for Voter ID Laws in the UK: How Citizens Weigh Electoral Integrity and Voter Access

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Abstract
Voter identification laws aim to enhance electoral integrity but may reduce turnout. This study examines British public opinion on these competing goals following the introduction of photo identification in 2023. Using an original survey and an experimental design, we find that while concerns about low voter turnout are widespread, they do not significantly influence support for photo identification. Instead, beliefs about electoral fraud and political ideology are the strongest predictors of support. This suggests that arguments about voter suppression may not effectively counter support for stricter voter identification requirements.

Introduction

One of the fundamental objectives that guide the administration of elections is to ensure that they meet respected standards and global norms governing the conduct of elections. This means that every election must be conducted in a fair, accurate and transparent way that protects privacy and minimises fraud. Apart from integrity, another fundamental objective in a democratic system is to ensure that everyone has equal access to the ballot. When either of these objectives are not met, voters may question the legitimacy of an election.

There is, however, a fundamental tension between these competing objectives. Efforts to ensure electoral integrity may undermine access to the ballot (Atkeson et al., 2014). Making voting more convenient is one example of this tension. Laws that expand access

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to the ballot and make it more convenient to vote can help to facilitate higher turnout and inclusiveness (Karp and Banducci 2000; Alvarez et al., 2012), but they also pose challenges to electoral integrity. For example, one of the most common concerns among critics of various forms of convenience voting, such as early voting, 'no excuse absentee voting', voting by mail and electronic voting, is that they increase the risk of fraud and coercion (Gronke et al., 2008). Postal ballots are less secure than a ballot distributed at a polling place because someone other than the designated voter can fill it out. A Eurobarometer survey in 2018 across all EU member states indicated that as many as two-thirds expressed concerns about postal or online voting.[1] Technological solutions have the potential to alleviate these concerns. For example, some jurisdictions are experimenting with signature verification requirements that match signatures on file and in the case of a mismatch, allow voters to 'cure' the mismatch by returning a signature verification statement (Janover and Westphal, 2020). The debate about integrity has only intensified after the covid pandemic when many countries adopted special voting arrangements to make voting more convenient (see Barreto et al., 2023).

Internet or 'i-voting' has the potential to make voting even more convenient than voting by mail. In Estonia, where it was introduced in parliamentary elections in 2007, i-voting proved to be especially popular with almost half the electorate choosing to vote online in the 2019 parliamentary elections (Trumm, 2022). Nevertheless, few other countries have embraced the technology because of concerns over the security of the process (Fisher and Savani, 2023).[2]

The debate in some countries about whether voters should be required to have photo identification (ID) when voting in person is another reform that reflects the tension between access and integrity.[3] In the United States, the debate about whether voters should be required to show ID has been highly partisan, with Republicans claiming that it is necessary to ensure integrity and Democrats claiming that it amounts to voter suppression. Similar arguments were made in Britain where photo ID was recently introduced as a requirement by the Conservative government.

Several studies that have examined the influence of the introduction of voter ID requirements in the US have failed to find substantial effects on voter turnout (see, for example, Cantoni and Pons, 2021; Highton, 2017; Valentino and Neuner, 2017). Nevertheless, there are fears that such requirements will disproportionately impact those who are likely to vote Democratic and who are less likely to have valid forms of ID. Some studies have found that voter ID requirements adversely affect ethnic minorities, low-income and working-class communities and undereducated voters (Barreto et al., 2009). Other studies have found evidence that turnout of racial minorities is more likely to be depressed in states that adopted strict voter ID laws (Hajnal et al., 2017). There is also some evidence that the application of photo ID laws may be discriminatory (Atkeson et al., 2010). Whether these negative consequences translate into opposition is also a matter of debate. It may be challenging to explain how ID requirements will negatively impact groups who have difficulty obtaining a voter ID (see Conover and Miller, 2017). There is some evidence that support for restrictive voting laws is not affected by information about their potential to depress voter turnout, suggesting that citizens are not moved by arguments about voter suppression (Clayton, 2023).

In this article, we investigate attitudes about access and integrity and how these shape opinions on the use of photo ID in Britain. Nearly all the studies that have examined public support for voter ID laws have focused on the American context which is highly polarised and perhaps unique. For the first time in England, voters were required to show a

form of photo ID before casting a ballot in the 2023 English local elections. In the following year, the photo ID requirement was extended to the UK general election. Little is known about what the British public thinks of this new law or how much weight British citizens place on electoral integrity and voter access to the ballot.

While previous studies have examined why citizens lack confidence in elections, few have focused on what people think about other democratic ideals such as full electoral participation. In the next section, we examine the context of the debate in Britain and later develop a set of theoretical expectations about what factors influence attitudes about integrity and access to the ballot and how these might shape opinions on voter ID requirements. We suggest that different factors have an influence on these attitudes which challenges the assumption that citizens view these as a simple trade-off. The findings demonstrate that concerns about electoral fraud play a more important role in shaping opinion which has implications for how people may respond to other electoral reforms.

The Introduction of Photo Identification in the UK

Electoral integrity is often thought of as a concern that mainly applies to new and emerging democracies who lack a history of clean and fair elections. But even in established democracies, where cases of actual fraud are exceedingly rare, many people lack confidence in the integrity of elections (Karp et al., 2018). Many citizens have come to believe that electoral fraud is widespread which has serious implications for democratic legitimacy.

In the UK, a YouGov survey conducted after the 2019 general election by the Electoral Commission indicates that more than a third of the public believe there could be enough electoral fraud to change the election result.[4] That many people express doubts about the integrity of elections represents a challenge and a potential threat to democracy.

Ostensibly to improve the integrity of elections, the Conservative government recently enacted a number of electoral reforms. The Elections Act 2022 includes a strict voter ID requirement that voters must produce an accepted form of photo ID to vote in polling stations. Before the change, polling place voters only needed to provide their address.

Unlike other European countries, Britain does not have mandatory national ID and millions lack the strictest form of ID such as a passport or a driver's licence.[5] Accepted forms of photo ID can include these as well as other proof of ID issued by government authorities, including bus passes issued to the elderly, concessionary travel cards or defence identity cards. If a person does not have one of the accepted forms of ID, they can apply online or by post for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC).

Like the United States, there have only been isolated cases of electoral fraud in Britain, but these have had the effect of amplifying perceptions of the problem. The Pickles report (2016) that led to the decision to implement voter ID requirements documented various cases of electoral fraud in areas with large minority populations in Labour strongholds. These include cases of postal vote fraud in Birmingham in 2004 and a scandal involving a mayoral election in East London Borough of Tower Hamlets in 2014. The election was overturned by the High Court after evidence was found of vote rigging and malpractice. Conservative elites have also expressly linked electoral fraud with illegal immigration, where the most visible incidents of documented voter fraud have involved immigrant communities (Fogarty and Pamphilis, 2024). The need to restore public confidence in British elections was cited by both Pickles (2016) and the Electoral Commission response to his review.

Apart from improving confidence in elections, there is also a desire to preserve voter access to the polls to facilitate high voter turnout. The debate about requiring photo ID in British elections has reflected both concerns but has also divided along partisan lines. Conservative MPs have emphasised the need to restore public confidence in elections while Labour MPs have warned about the disproportionate impact on voter suppression and disenfranchisement (Alonso-Curbelo, 2023).

Photo ID was first introduced in the English local elections in May 2023 in 230 areas comprising around 27 million eligible voters.[6] These elections typically have very low turnout, with an average of 40%, although turnout can vary substantially from one ward to another (Rallings and Thrasher, 1990). Those who tend to participate in local elections are those who are highly engaged in the process, with age and length of residence as primary determinants (Rallings and Thrasher, 1997). A 10-day deadline was given for those who did not have an accepted form of ID to apply for the VAC.

Concerns were raised that the introduction of photo ID would adversely affect voter turnout in the UK. Among those most likely to be affected are older voters, who are less likely to possess an acceptable form of ID. The Electoral Commission estimates based on data collected at polling stations that at least .25% of people who tried to vote in person in the 2023 local elections were not issued a ballot paper because of the ID requirement. In a survey following the election, 4% of non-voters reported that they did not vote because of voter ID.[7] In the 2024 local elections, a YouGov poll estimated that 14% were still unaware that they would need a photo ID if they were to vote in person.[8] When photo ID was first implemented in the general election, Fieldhouse et al. (2024) estimate that one percent did not attempt to vote in the 2024 general election and 0.3% were turned away for not having ID. Among them was former prime minister Boris Johnson, whose government was responsible for enacting the legislation. He was turned away when he failed to bring any ID with him when he tried to vote in the 2024 local elections.[9]

Expectations

It is often assumed that self-interest shapes public support for electoral reform. Rules determine who the winners and losers are and as such changes to these rules are often framed in terms of how they affect electoral outcomes. A number of studies have found that attitudes about democracy (Anderson et al., 2005) and confidence in elections (Sinclair et al., 2018) are strongly influenced by who wins and who loses elections. For this reason, reform proposals are likely to be viewed in terms of electoral benefits and loss. Studies of public opinion tend to support this assumption, with partisan self-interest playing a major role in shaping attitudes about change (Biggers, 2018; Biggers and Bowler, 2021; McCarthy, 2019). Along these lines, concerns about electoral participation could be based on expectations about how one party might benefit from a reform that changes the composition of the electorate.

Changes in rules can also be viewed in broader terms because electoral rules often enshrine normative conceptions of democracy such as equality, fairness and participation (Banducci and Karp, 1999; Bowler and Donovan, 2013; Bowler et al., 2006). As suggested earlier, the debate over voter ID requirements reflects a tension between access to the ballot and concerns about electoral fraud. These are both core values that constitute one's understanding of 'right and wrong' that can sometimes trump concerns about whether one party stands to gain an advantage over another (Virgin, 2023).

Table 1. Summary of Expectations.

	Concerns about electoral fraud	Concerns about low turnout	Support for photo identification
Age	-	+	NE
Left/Right Ideology	+	-	+
Partisanship			
Labour	-	+	-
Liberal Democrat	-	+	-
Other Opposition Parties	NE	NE	-
No Party Identification	-	-	NE
Civic Mindedness	+	+	NE
Conspiracy Theory	+	NE	NE
Egalitarian	+	+	NE
Political Knowledge	-	+	NE
Political Interest	-	+	NE
Education	-	+	NE
Concerns about Electoral Fraud			+
Concerns about Low Turnout			-

No expectation (NE). Conservative is the reference group for partisanship.

With this in mind, we can establish a set of expectations about what factors might affect how British citizens weigh integrity and access and how these attitudes might affect support for photo ID requirements. These expectations are summarised in Table 1. Given the partisan nature of the debate, we should expect Conservatives to be more likely to be concerned with electoral integrity and less concerned with access.[10] Apart from partisanship, ideology should also play a role (see Miller et al., 2016). Those on the right should be more likely to believe that electoral fraud can affect electoral outcomes, while those on the left should be more likely to want to expand electoral participation. Various studies have also found that those who believe in conspiracy theories are likely to be particularly sensitive to claims about electoral fraud (Albertson and Guiler, 2020; Uscinski, 2018) regardless of whether they are on the right or the left (Enders et al., 2021). Other research has found that a lack of knowledge about electoral rules can increase perceptions of electoral fraud (Karp et al., 2018). Another factor that may have an influence on shaping attitudes about fraud is age. Older voters who have more experience with elections should have more confidence in the integrity of elections. Along with experience and knowledge, education may also be associated with greater confidence in elections.

Less is known about what shapes attitudes towards democratic ideals such as high voter turnout. We expect, however, that many of these factors will be different than those that influence assessments of electoral integrity. From an ideological perspective, one might expect those on the left to embrace efforts that ensure that everyone participates in the political process. Along these lines, those who want to promote equality should place more value on high turnout where every citizen is likely to have an equal say. Apart from ideology and egalitarianism, voter turnout is a collective good. Those who are more civic-minded and those who are more engaged in politics are more likely to value a high level of turnout in elections. Education may also be associated with greater concerns about low voter turnout.

If opinions about photo ID reflect the trade-offs between core values such as integrity and access, then those who express concerns about electoral fraud should be more likely to support the introduction of photo ID while those who concerned about electoral participation will be opposed. However, as suggested above it is also possible that people are not easily persuaded about the negative consequences. Apart from the potential influence of these core values, opinions should divide along partisan lines given the nature of elite discourse on this issue.

Data

To examine these questions, we conducted a representative survey in all four nations of the United Kingdom following the 2023 local elections. The survey was conducted online using Qualtrics on July 21–28, 2023. Respondents were drawn by CINT (formally Lucid) from a large panel of over 5.4 million UK residents from CINT. Quotas were used for region, age and sex based on census data. Respondents were first provided with a letter approved by Brunel University's IRB board and asked if they gave their consent to participate. Another question screened for UK citizens at least 18 years of age. A total of 2163 respondents agreed to participate. Attention checks were used to ensure panel quality and reduce any potential bias in attitudes or behaviour (Alvarez et al., 2019). About a third were screened out due to failing two sets of attention checks, resulting in 1495 completions. The average time it took to complete the survey was 15 minutes.

As evidence of the representativeness of the survey, estimates of voting intention closely match those from other surveys conducted at the same time. Overall, 48% said they intended to vote for Labour, compared to 21% for Conservative, and 10% for the Liberal Democrats. *The Economist* estimated support for Labour at 46%, the Conservatives at 26% and Liberal Democrats at 11%, based on estimates from a number of reputable survey organisations.[11]

We asked several questions to measure attitudes about democratic norms. To measure attitudes about electoral participation, we asked respondents whether they were concerned or not concerned that fewer people were voting in elections. We also asked respondents whether they believed that electoral fraud affected electoral outcomes (see Appendix for question wording, available online).

Figure 1 shows how responses to these questions are distributed. About a quarter of the respondents said that they were very concerned that fewer people were voting, while less than 10% said they were not concerned at all. Overall, the distribution is skewed more towards the right, suggesting that the electorate values broad participation in elections. Like studies elsewhere, many also express concerns in the UK about electoral fraud. Figure 1 shows that about 15% believe that fraud is extremely likely to affect electoral outcomes, and another 32% believe that it is somewhat likely.[12]

We also asked a more specific question about voter suppression and ineligible people being allowed to vote (see question wording in the Appendix, available online). Note that this is more specific about each problem than the more general question about fewer people voting or electoral fraud. The question also forced respondents to choose which of the two they believed to be a greater threat to democracy, although it allowed respondents the option to express uncertainty. When forced to choose, a majority of 51% expressed more concern that some voters may be turned away at the polls than the possibility of ineligible people being allowed to vote. This finding is similar to Atkeson et al. (2014) who posed a similar question in New Mexico asking respondents whether voter access or fraud was
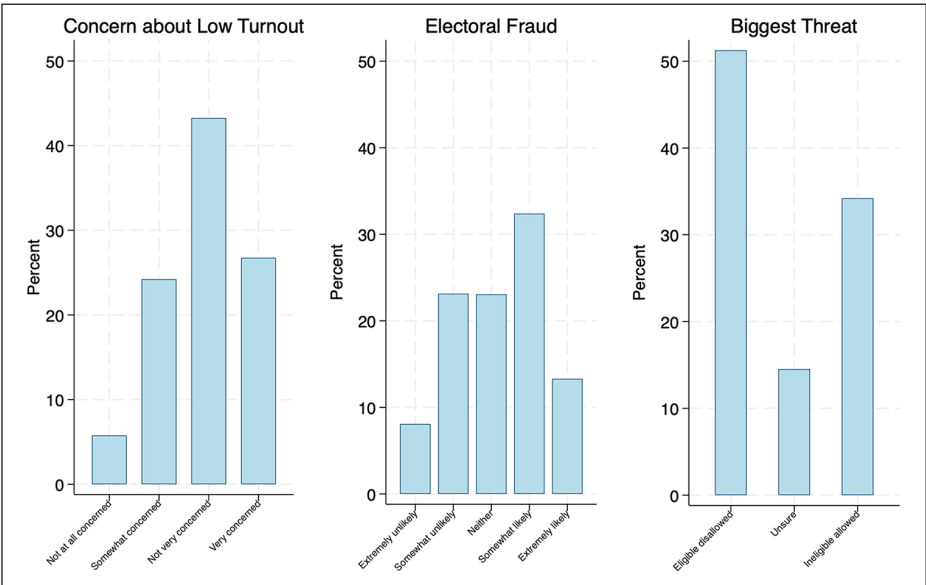
Figure 1. Concerns About Voter Turnout and Electoral Fraud.

more important to them. They found that more people said 'ensuring the right to vote' is more important than 'protecting against fraud'.

The independent variables hypothesised to influence these attitudes were measured in the following ways. To measure beliefs in conspiracy theory, respondents were asked whether they agreed that 'COVID-19 was intentionally released by a foreign government'. About 20% agreed. Political knowledge is based on a question asking respondents if they knew how many women are currently in parliament (within a range of 10%). Only 12% of respondents identified 31% to 40% as the correct answer.

Civic mindedness is based on a series of questions about whether respondents consider it a duty or a choice to engage in various activities. Among these activities are those that could be seen as contributions to the collective good: to always get vaccinated against infectious diseases to protect others, to serve on a jury and to vote. These items load together in a factor analysis so they have been combined together to form a single additive scale ranging from 0 to 3. We also include political interest, which ranges from 1 to 4. To measure ideology, respondents were asked to place themselves on a 10-point scale ranging from 0 (left) to 10 (right). Support for egalitarianism is based on a question that asked about whether 'The law should be strengthened to reduce pay differences between women and men'. Table A1, available online, provides a summary of the distribution of each of these measures.

Explaining Concerns about Electoral Fraud and Low Voter Turnout

Ordered logit is used to estimate the results which are displayed in Figure 2. All of the variables (except for age) have been standardised on a scale ranging from 0 to 1 so the
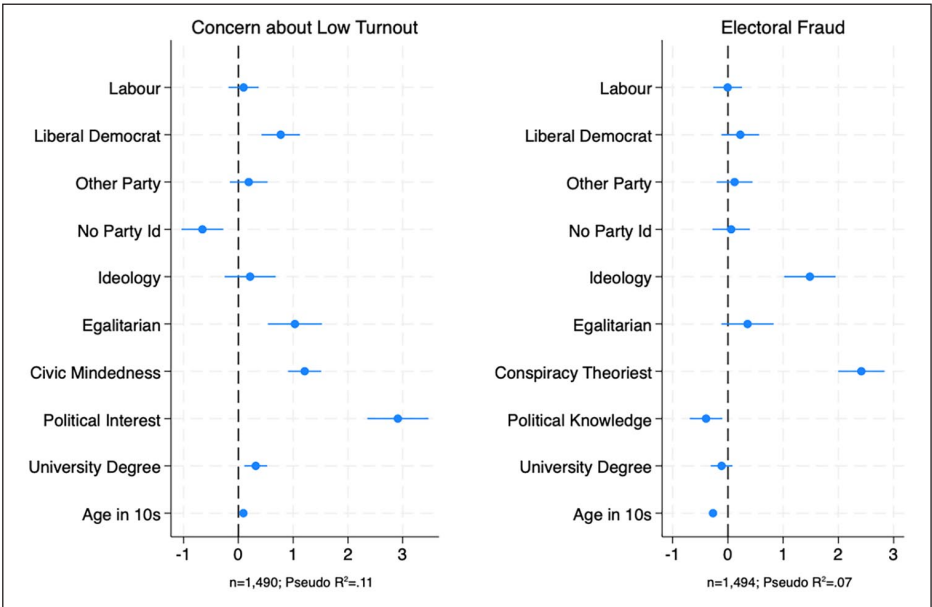
Figure 2. Explaining Attitudes About Turnout and Fraud (Logit Coefficients).
Estimates derived from ordered logit models. Coefficients with confidence intervals greater or less than zero are significant at $p < .05$.

coefficients are comparable. Dummy variables are used for party identifiers, with Conservative identifiers as the reference category.

Ideology emerges as a strong predictor of beliefs in electoral fraud with those on the right being more likely to believe in electoral fraud than those on the left. Specifically, the estimated probability (holding all other variables constant at their mean values) of believing that fraud is extremely likely is 0.08 for those on the left and 0.23 for those on the right. As for conspiratorial beliefs, those who strongly disagreed that covid was intentionally released by a foreign government have an estimated probability of believing that fraud is extremely likely of 0.13 compared to 0.47 for those who strongly agreed. When controlling for these factors, there are no significant partisan differences.

Reflecting the rare occurrences of electoral fraud, those who have more experience with voting (by virtue of their age) and those who are knowledgeable about politics are less likely to believe that fraud influences electoral outcomes. While older voters are less concerned about electoral fraud, they are more concerned with voter turnout. The effects of age, which are illustrated in Figure 3, are substantial; the oldest citizens are twice as likely to be extremely concerned about voter turnout than the youngest citizens and they are nearly four times as likely than the youngest citizens to disagree that fraud influences electoral outcomes.

Apart from age, the factors that have the strongest influence on concerns about low voter turnout are political interest, civic mindedness and egalitarianism. Of these, political interest has the largest impact indicating that those who are most engaged with the process are most likely to express concerns that fewer people are going to the polls. Contrary to expectations, ideology has no influence on concerns about voter turnout.
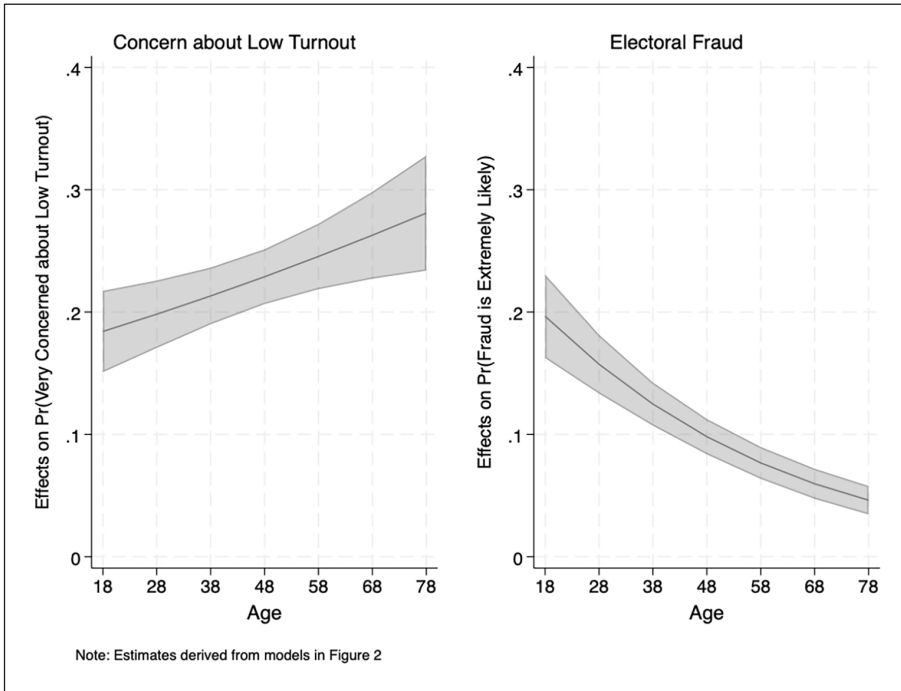
Figure 3. The Effects of Age on Attitudes about Turnout and Electoral Fraud.

Explaining Support for Photo Identification

These results demonstrate that different factors influence attitudes about integrity and electoral participation. We now consider how much influence these attitudes have on support for photo ID. Overall, there appears to be strong support for the introduction of photo ID with 66% expressing support for the policy and only 19% opposed. A third strongly agree that voters should be required to show photo ID before they are given a ballot while 8% are strongly opposed, and 16% are ambivalent. These estimates are equivalent to a larger survey of more than 30,000 respondents conducted at the same time by the British Election Study (BES). Although the wording of the question was slightly different, both surveys estimate 32% who strongly favour the proposal and about 20% who are opposed (see Table A2, available online). The BES sample is more ambivalent with fewer expressing support and a slightly larger number who are ambivalent. Both surveys also show similar partisan differences. Overall Conservatives are strongly in favour compared to Labour identifiers who are more likely to be opposed. In the BES sample, 33% of Labour identifiers expressed opposition compared to 23% in our survey.

These findings suggest something of a puzzle. Although a relatively small percentage of people report that electoral fraud is extremely likely to affect electoral outcomes, a substantial majority favour the introduction of photo ID. Clearly there are other reasons apart from concerns about fraud as to why citizens support voter ID requirements. To examine what structures support, an ordered logit model is estimated that includes the explanatory variables summarised in Table 1.
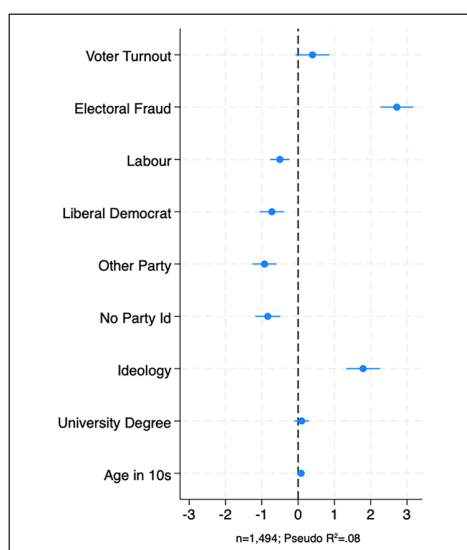
Figure 4. Support for Photo Identification.

The results are reported in Figure 4. They indicate that citizens do not view photo ID requirements as a trade-off between turnout and integrity. While beliefs in electoral fraud are strongly associated with support for photo ID, concerns about voter turnout do not have any influence on opinion. This suggests that arguments about voter suppression may not translate into opposition to photo ID. Apart from concerns about fraud, ideology is a strong predictor of support. Those on the far left have a probability of strongly agreeing of just 0.14 compared to those on the far right who have a probability of 0.57. Unlike the previous models, there are also significant partisan differences between the two largest parties. All those who identify with opposition parties as well as those who do not identify with any party are less likely than Conservatives to support photo ID.

An Experimental Test

The results suggest that while ideological values appear to play a strong role in shaping attitudes about voter ID, partisanship is also a factor. The question that remains is whether these partisan differences exist because of a perceived electoral advantage or whether they simply reflect elite opinion on the issue. It is important to note that the survey was administered after the 2023 local elections when electoral outcomes are not as salient as in a general election. Respondents may be less likely to think about partisan implications than had they been asked these questions in the context of a general election. We also do not know from these results whether opinions about photo ID can change when concerns about low voter turnout are raised.

To examine these questions, an experiment was included following the administration of the other questions in the survey.[13] A multi-group design was used where respondents are randomly assigned to one of three groups. The first group received a treatment that was designed to frame reforms in terms of partisan self-interest consisting of a brief statement that there is a partisan disagreement about whether reforms are needed to
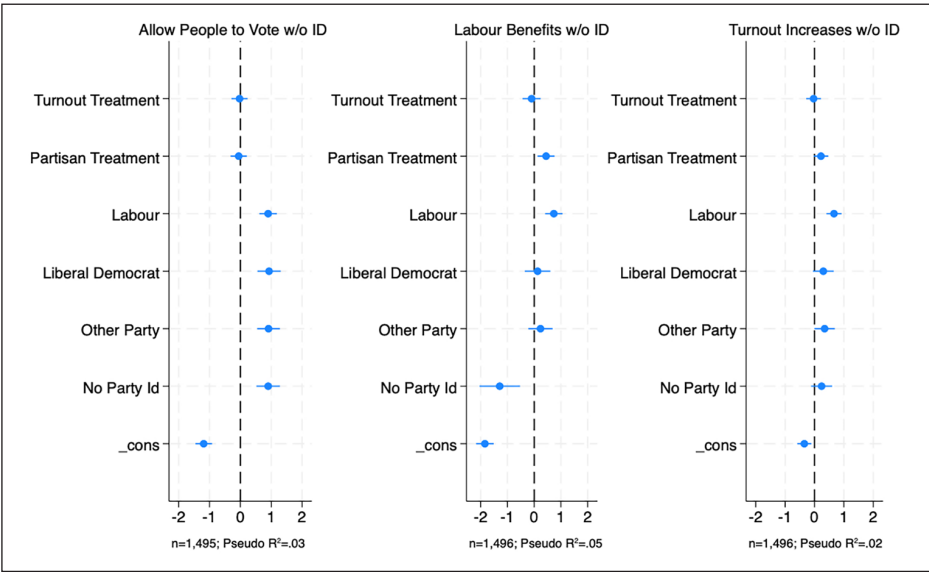
Figure 5. Experimental Results (Logit Coefficients).

increase turnout. A photograph was also used showing each of the party leaders engaging in a debate (see Appendix for question wording and photo, available online). Another group was exposed to a treatment that framed reforms in terms of addressing the problem of low voter turnout. Respondents were told that only two-thirds of British citizens voted in the last general election which is low compared to other established democracies. An image was used to illustrate a group of hands casting ballots. A further statement made it clear that for democracy to work, reforms are needed to increase turnout. Following these statements, respondents were asked their opinion on various reforms. Among them was a question about whether voters who forgot their photo ID should be allowed to vote. The question was designed this way to propose an alternative to the status quo. A third group of respondents were randomly assigned to a control group where they were only asked the question about not enforcing the law without any frame. Overall, 37% were in favour of not enforcing the law which mirrors the percentage who did not express agreement that voters should be required to present photo ID.

A logit model was used to estimate the two treatment effects. Party dummy variables are included in the model to illustrate differences. The dependent variable is dichotomous, with those who are opposed to letting people vote without ID (52%) and unsure (11%) coded as 0.[14] These results are illustrated on the left side of Figure 5.

As the results show, neither treatment is statistically significant, indicating that there is no difference from the control group (reference category). This suggests that neither partisan advantage nor the low turnout frame had any influence on changing opinion. There is, however, evidence for heterogenous effects, indicating that some people are more responsive to the message than others. In another model, Labour identifiers who were exposed to the low turnout treatment were more likely to say that people who forgot their photo identification should be allowed to vote.[15]

While the partisan treatment suggests that opinions on this issue are not influenced by partisan self-interest, it is nonetheless clear that opinion is divided along partisan

lines. All those who identify with parties in opposition as well as those who do not identify with any party are more likely than the Conservatives (reference category) to say that people who forgot their photo ID should be allowed to vote which is consistent with the results in Figure 4.

One explanation for the null treatment effects is that the treatment was not administered properly, or respondents failed to carefully read the statement. As a manipulation check, we asked two more questions after the experiment. One question asked respondents if not enforcing the photo ID requirement would raise turnout. Overall, 51% believed that not enforcing photo ID would increase turnout while 34% disagreed and 14% were unsure. A second question asked which parties would benefit from the reforms.[16] Those who were exposed to the partisan frame were more likely to believe that Labour would benefit if the photo ID requirement was not enforced, indicating that the treatment had some influence but the overall effect is small (see middle of Figure 5).[17] However, the coefficient for the turnout frame is not significant, indicating that the low turnout message about the need for reform had no influence. In addition, those identifying with the Labour party are more likely than Conservatives to believe that Labour would benefit if people who forgot their photo id were allowed to vote. Labour identifiers are also more likely to believe that changes to the photo ID requirements would increase voter turnout (see right of Figure 5).

Discussion

Like the Republicans in the United States, Conservatives in Britain are more likely to favour photo ID. Apart from partisanship, ideology is also a strong predictor of support. Although British public opinion is divided somewhat along party lines, it is not as wide as in the US, where views on many policies are highly polarised.

The experimental evidence suggests that when people are cued to think in partisan terms, their support for photo ID does not vary even though they are more likely to see the Labour party as the beneficiary if the policy were changed. This suggests that Conservative support could reflect support for the government's policy rather than any assumed electoral advantage. It is important to point out that while partisanship influences support for photo ID, it does not influence attitudes about electoral fraud, nor does it have an influence on attitudes about electoral participation.

There is also a substantial proportion of the British population irrespective of partisanship that expresses concerns that fewer people are voting. Although fewer people are concerned about electoral fraud, the issue itself is something that resonates with some people. Younger citizens and those on the right are far more likely to believe that fraud can influence electoral outcomes. Among the various determinants, age stands out as an important factor that shapes these attitudes about the electoral process. The distrust in the electoral process among the youngest citizens and their lack of concern that fewer people are turning out can have important implications for the future.

While many British citizens may care about declining voter turnout, and believe that voter suppression is a more serious threat to democracy than fraud, these concerns do not translate into opposition to photo ID. This helps to explain why British citizens do not view the introduction of photo ID as a trade-off between access and integrity. Even though actual cases of fraud are rare, people who are less knowledgeable about politics and more susceptible to beliefs about unfounded conspiracies are going to have serious doubts about the fairness of the democratic system. This poses a challenge to electoral

administrators and policy makers. The introduction of photo ID has the potential to address these concerns but not necessarily alleviate them (Bowler and Donovan, 2016; Bowler et al., 2015).

These results also have implications for other electoral reforms that appear to involve potential trade-offs between integrity and access. Demands for greater voter convenience may lead policy makers to consider a broader range of alternatives for voters. Many countries, for example, are now allowing more citizens to vote early either in person or by post. Other countries are experimenting with i-voting. These reforms have the potential to expand voter's access to the ballot and in doing so address concerns about declining participation. In a context where some citizens may not have much confidence in the electoral process, it is important that any proposals avoid any perceived trade-offs between access and integrity. Photo ID requirements enjoy strong public support from those who lack confidence in elections. One way to promote new electoral innovations may be to emphasise how they can help to safeguard elections while also ensuring that they improve voter access to the ballot.

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Supplementary Material

Additional supplementary information may be found with the online version of this article.

A1. Question Wording
Table A1: Summary of Measures
Table A2: Support for Photo Identification

Notes

1. https://coinform.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Euro-Barometer.pdf
2. Notwithstanding advances in end-to-end (E2E) verifiability that operates on complex cryptographic principles, utilising algorithms to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and authenticity of each vote cast.
3. Many countries require voters to have photo or biometric identification, but they also have national ID requirements (see Barton, 2023) so the question of how such requirements affect access has not been a matter of debate.
4. https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/our-views-and-research/our-research/public-attitudes

5. https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/campaigns/voter-id/
6. Pilot studies were conducted earlier in a selection of local government areas. In their survey of poll workers, James and Clark (2019) report that some voters were turned away for not having the correct form of ID.
7. https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/our-views-and-research/our-research/voter-id-may-2023-local-elections-england-interim-analysis
8. https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/49305-14-were-still-unaware-of-voter-id-rules-ahead-of-2024-local-elections
9. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-68947834
10. There are no clear expectations about the minor parties. Those who lack partisan identification should be more apathetic and thus less concerned about electoral fraud and less concerned with voter turnout.
11. https://www.economist.com/interactive/uk-general-election/polls
12. These estimates are somewhat higher than those from the Electoral Commission. A YouGov survey commissioned by the Electoral Commission in 2022 indicated that 33% believed that 'There could be enough electoral fraud in some areas to affect the election result'. See https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/research-reports-and-data/public-attitudes/public-attitudes-2022.
13. The experiment was pre-registered with AsPredicted which is funded by the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania (see https://aspredicted.org/7hsy-jpc4.pdf). It was submitted in 2022 prior to conducting a pilot study on Amazon Mechanical Turk. The pilot study was administered to US citizens and consisted of a series of questions about electoral reforms.
14. Omitting those who are unsure makes little difference to the results.
15. The interaction term for the turnout frame and Labour was positive and statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. The predicted probability for Labour identifiers exposed to the turnout treatment is 0.55, compared to 0.47 for Labour identifiers in the control group.
16. Respondents were also presented with a list of other reforms and asked to evaluate whether they would increase turnout and what party would benefit from them.
17. More than half the respondents were either unsure what party would benefit or said that no party would benefit.

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