

# MODERATE VS. RADICAL DISCOURSE OF NGOS: AN EXPERIMENTAL ANALYSIS

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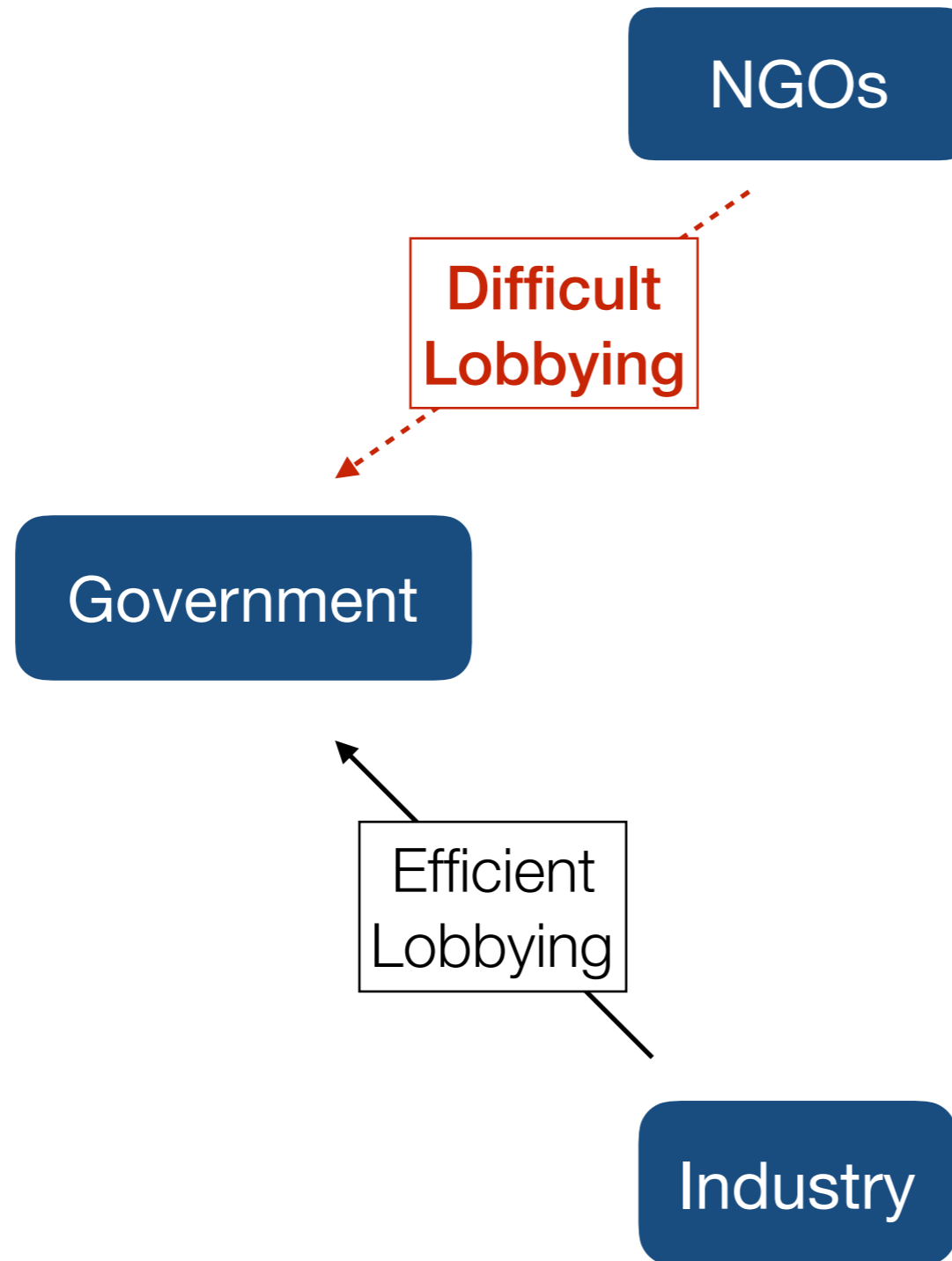
JICA, 11 avril 2019

# INTRODUCTION

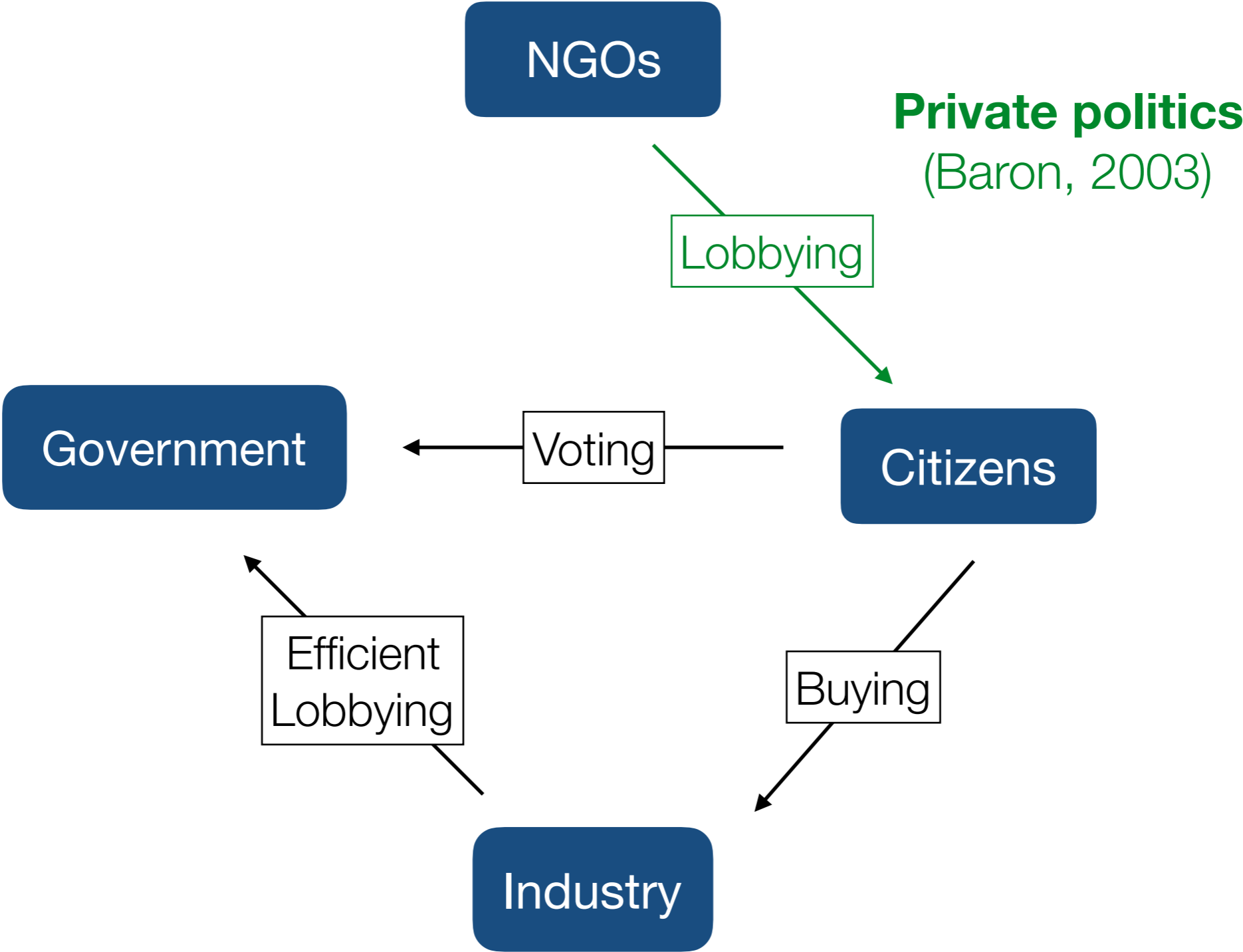


# Motivation

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**Slavery in 19th century** .....

*“We should take care about slaves, improve their condition.”*

*“We should free all slaves, they are equally humans.”*

**Feminism in early 20th century** .....

*“We should allow women to vote.”*

*“Women should have equal rights (vote, work), and should be allowed to abort”*

**Black movement in the US in 1950s** .....

Martin Luther King .....

Black Panthers

**Animal Protection** .....

*“We should care about how animals live and how they are killed.”*

*“We should forbid all kinds of exploitation.”*

# Motivation

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Supply-driven hypothesis  
(Baron, 2012)

The moderate NGO cooperates with socially responsible firms, and the radical NGO launches a confrontational campaign against profit-maximizing firms.

Demand-driven hypothesis (our work)

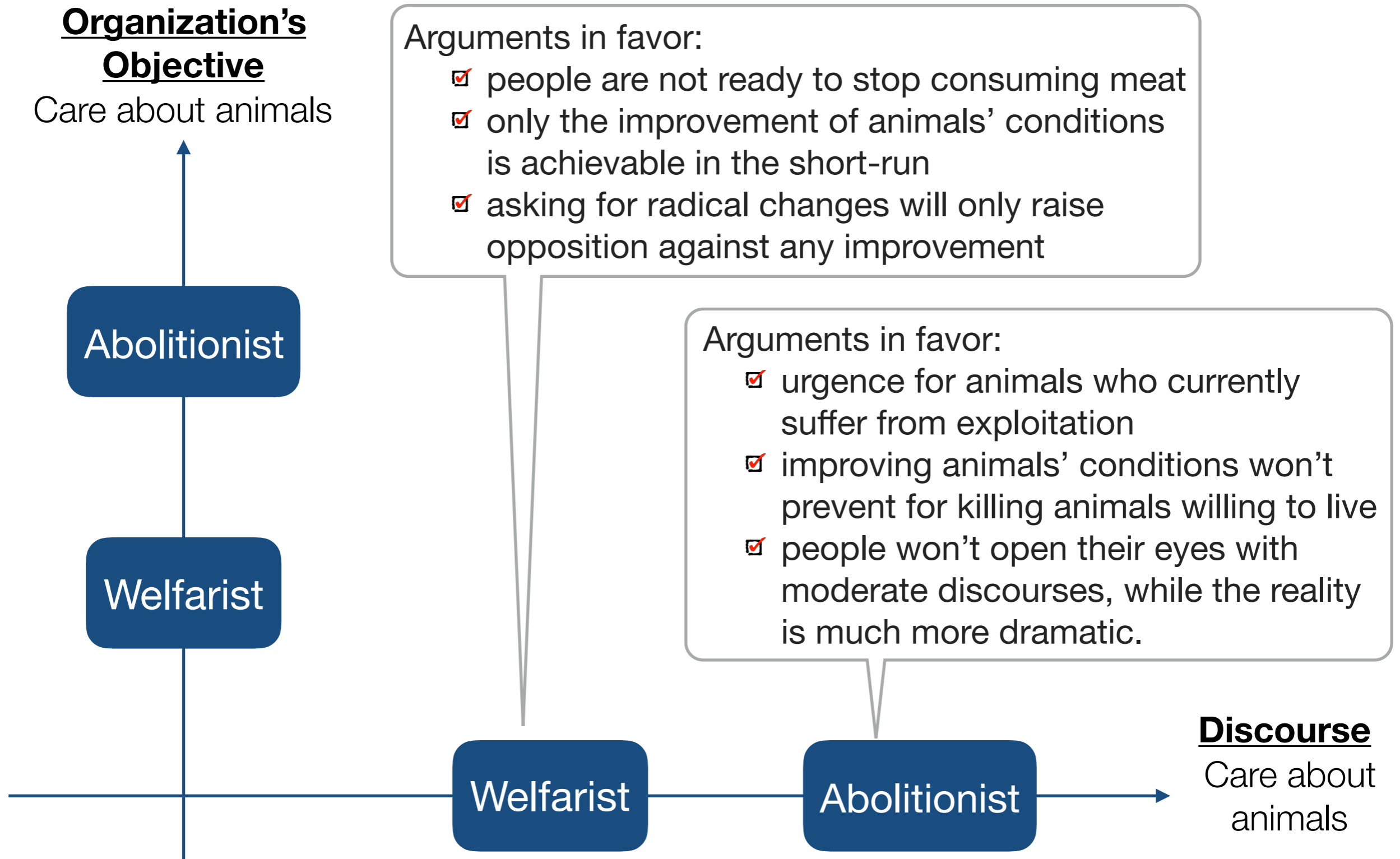
NGOs' different discourse can target different people.

Our objective: Compare the impact of moderate vs. radical discourse on subjects.

Our context: Animal condition.

Our method: Lab experiment.

# Research Question



DESIGN





# Design

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## **Pre-experimental Survey:**

Two weeks before the experiment, a 10-minute mandatory online survey that includes:

- Dietary habits
- Cognitive dissonance questionnaire
- Other questions to decrease the emphasis on the issue (e.g., political questions).

The survey yields 5€, paid only if effectively shows up at the session.

# Design

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## **Dietary Habits:**

- At which frequency do you eat... ?

—> Red meat, white meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, vegetables, legumes, fruits, starch.

[Never, a few times per year, a few times per month, a few times per week, almost at each meal]

# Design

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## **Pre-experimental Survey:**

- Cognitive dissonance questionnaire

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To which extent do you agree with the following statements?

[Strongly disagree to strongly agree, Likert-like scale]

2

- It is ok to eat meat because animals killed for our consumption do not really suffer. [Denial of animal pain]
- It is ok to eat meat because animals killed for our consumption have lower cognitive abilities than we do. [Denial of animal mind]
- It's acceptable to eat certain animals because they're bred for that purpose. [Hierarchical justification]
- God intended for us to eat animals. [Religious justification]
- Eating meat is necessary for being in good health. [4N-necessary]  
[Denial of sanitary impacts]
- It's natural to eat meat, it's written in our genes. [4N-natural]
- It's normal to eat meat. [4N-normal]
- I enjoy eating meat too much to ever give it up. [4N-nice]
- Eating meat is damaging for the environment, but so are plant-based diets (vegetarian, vegan). [Denial of environmental impact]

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# Design

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## **Pre-experimental Survey:**

Two weeks before the experiment, a 5-minute mandatory online survey that includes:

- Dietary habits
- Cognitive dissonance questionnaire
- Other questions to decrease the emphasis on the issue (e.g., political questions).

The survey yields 5€, paid only if effectively shows up at the session.

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Other questions:

- Questions on political engagement (e.g., boycott, writing to PM, signing petitions).
- Opinions on other political topics (fight against climate change, income inequality, women rights, LGBT rights).
- General trust (e.g., National Assembly, police, judges, etc.)

# Design

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**Public Good Game:**

To elicit individuals' propension to privately contribute to the social good.

Important control because animal welfare can be seen as a public good.

# Design



## **Treatment:**

(i) BASELINE, (ii) WELF, (iii) ABOL

- In BASELINE: nothing happens.
- In WELF and ABOL: Participants are shown a text that contains information about the farming industry.
  - > Before displaying the text, we tell participants whether the text originates from a welfarist or an abolitionist association.
  - > The text is the same except the title and the conclusion.
- Note: the texts were written by ourselves and were published by two NGOs to ensure external validity (L214, Welfarm).
- The last sentence of the texts mentioned that all data had been verified by INRA and CNRS researchers.

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## Treatments:

The text is introduced as follows:

### For the WELF treatment:

*Le texte que vous allez lire s'intitule : « **Réduisons notre consommation de viande !** ». Il a été publié en ligne par une association dont **l'objectif est l'amélioration des conditions de vie des animaux d'élevage.***

### For the ABOL treatment:

*Le texte que vous allez lire s'intitule : « **Arrêtons de consommer de la viande !** ». Il a été publié en ligne par une association dont **l'objectif est l'abolition de l'exploitation des animaux d'élevage.***

# Design



*Environ 1 milliard d'animaux d'élevage sont abattus chaque année en France pour produire de la viande. Ces animaux souffrent de leurs conditions d'élevage, et de transport jusqu'aux abattoirs. La production de viande, bio ou industrielle, implique des pratiques incluant mutilations, castrations à vif, abattage sans étourdissement, écornage des veaux, époinçage des volailles, ablation des queues des agneaux et des porcelets, inséminations artificielles etc.*

*Aujourd'hui, les cochons sont tués après six mois d'existence, alors qu'ils peuvent vivre jusqu'à 10 ans en bonne santé. Ces cochons sont élevés pour 95% d'entre eux dans des élevages intensifs, et environ 85% des porcelets mâles sont castrés sans anesthésie. Les vaches à lait sont inséminées artificiellement, et sont séparées de leurs veaux à la naissance, qui sont abattus au bout de quelques mois après avoir été engraisés. Dans la filière poules pondeuses, environ 50 millions de poussins mâles sont broyés vivant chaque année. Environ 69% des femelles vivent dans des cages avec une très forte promiscuité, jusqu'à 22 poules pondeuses par mètre carré.*

*Les protéines végétales, présentes en grandes quantités dans les légumineuses et les céréales, sont mieux assimilées par l'organisme et suffisent à assurer votre bonne santé. La surconsommation de viande augmente les chances de développer des problèmes de santé, comme des maladies cardiovasculaires, certains cancers, et le diabète de type 2. De plus, un repas avec viande et produits laitiers est beaucoup plus polluant qu'un repas végétal. Par exemple, de récents travaux scientifiques ont montré qu'un gramme de protéine de boeuf émet jusqu'à 250 fois plus d'émissions de gaz à effet de serre qu'un gramme de protéine végétale.*





## Treatments:

The conclusion of each text was (in bold in the text):

### For the WELF treatment:

***Les animaux produits par l'industrie agro-alimentaire vivent aujourd'hui dans des conditions de vie qui ne répondent pas à leurs besoins essentiels. Pour notre santé, pour limiter la souffrance des animaux et les atteintes à l'environnement, adoptons une attitude d'achat responsable en réduisant notre consommation de produits animaux et en refusant ceux issus des élevages intensifs.***

### For the ABOL treatment:

***Les animaux produits par l'industrie agro-alimentaire perdent la vie prématurément. Quelle que soit la façon, tuer un animal ne peut se faire sans violence. Pour notre santé, pour limiter la souffrance des animaux et les atteintes à l'environnement, adoptons une attitude d'achat responsable en arrêtant de consommer de la viande et tout produit d'origine animale.***

# Design

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**Elicitation of cognitive dissonance:**

Same questionnaire as online to capture changes in cognitive dissonance.

# Design



## **Elicitation of willingness to improve animals' condition:**

- Dictator game:

Participants are given 10€. They can give a share of this amount (from 0€ to 10€ by increments of 0.1€) to an “association that works for animal welfare”.

- Political activism:

Participants are proposed to sign two petitions:

- One against intensive farming for egg-laying hens.
- One for the introduction of the daily presence of a vegetarian meal in French schools.

- Willingness to change dietary habits:

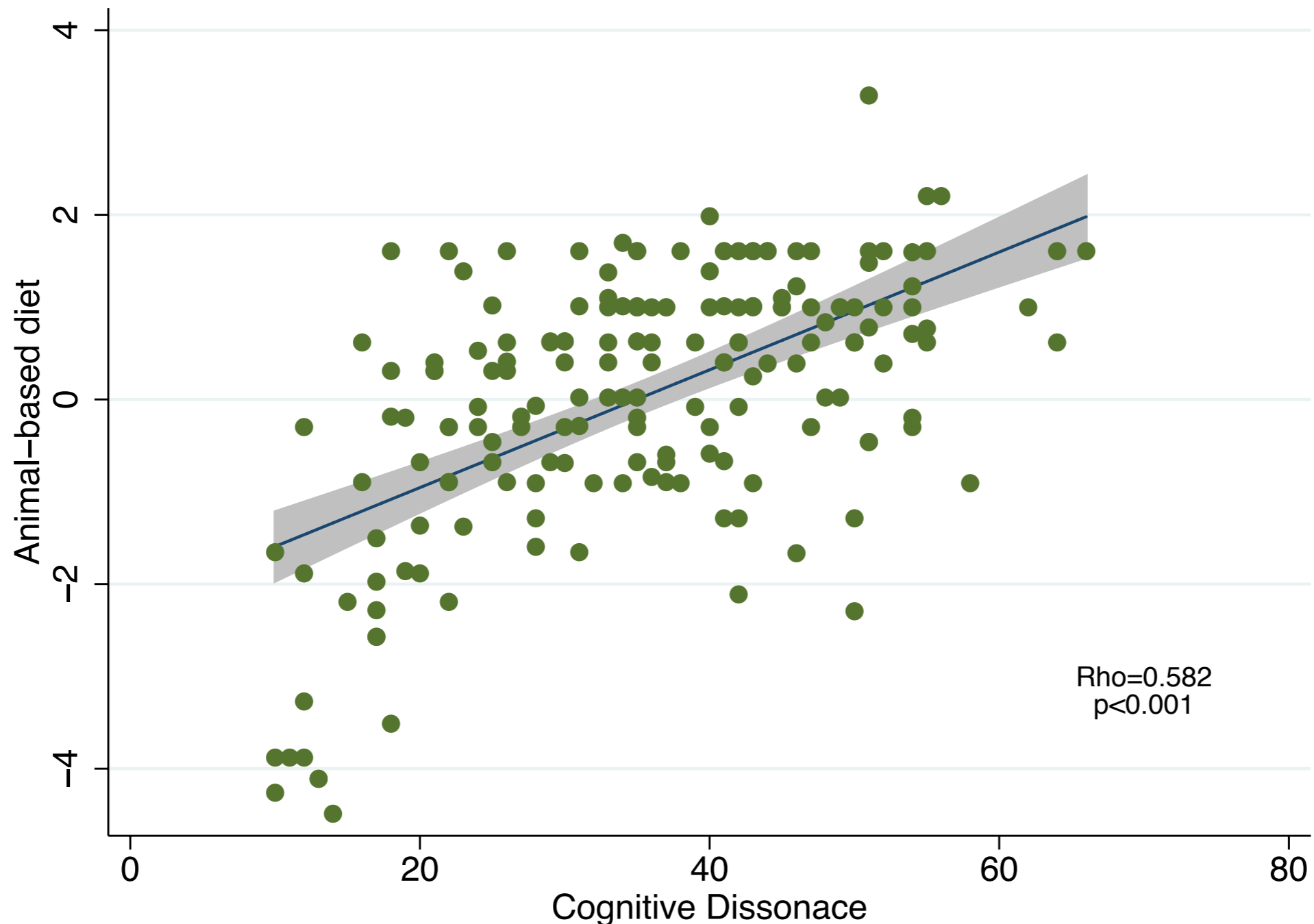
Participants can subscribe to a newsletter containing advices how to adopt to a vegan diet. (*Not displayed: Veggie Challenge - L214*).

# RESULTS



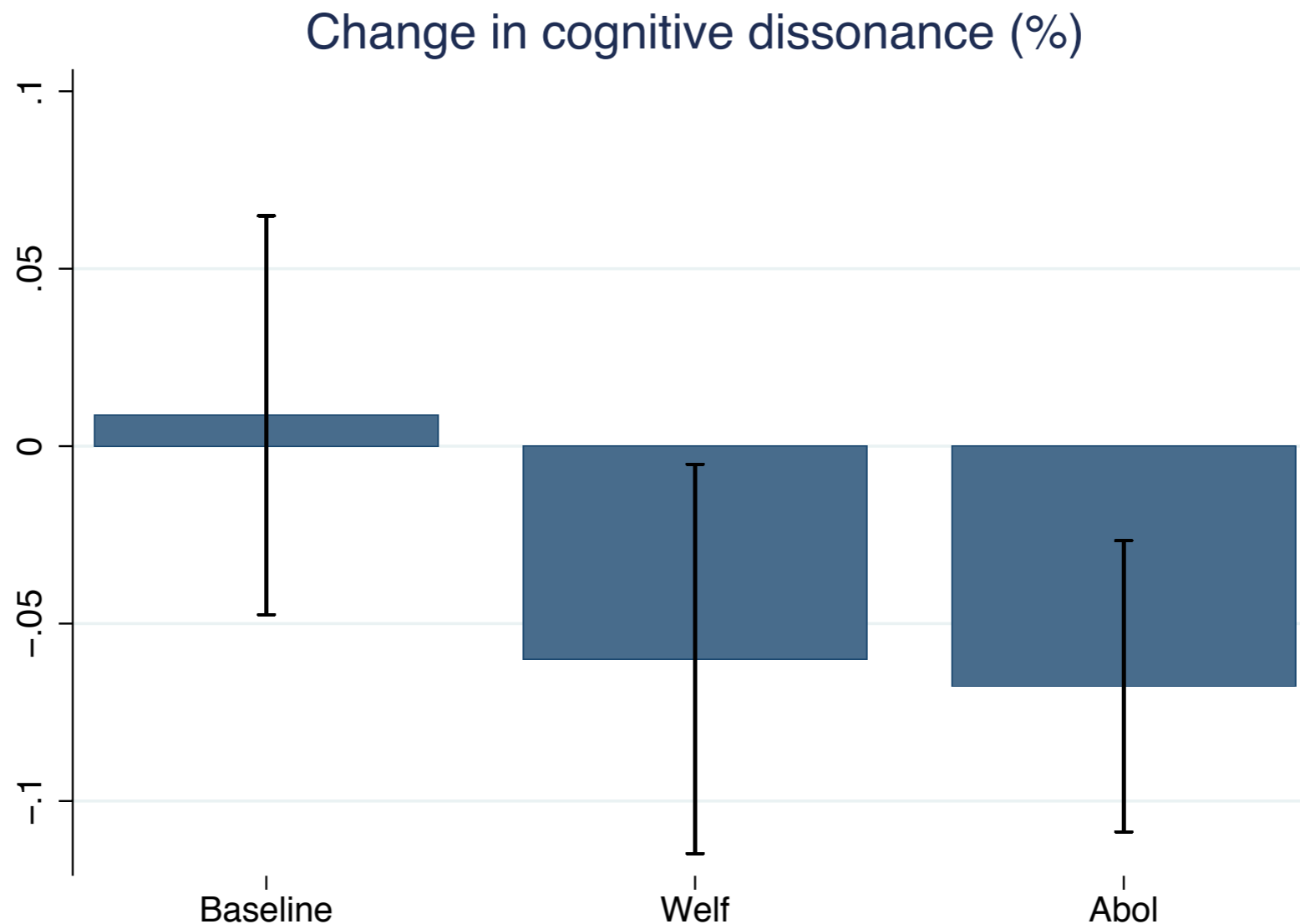
# Results: online cognitive dissonance and diet

**Result: Higher levels of cognitive dissonance are associated with higher consumption of animal-based products**



# Results: change in cognitive dissonance across treatments

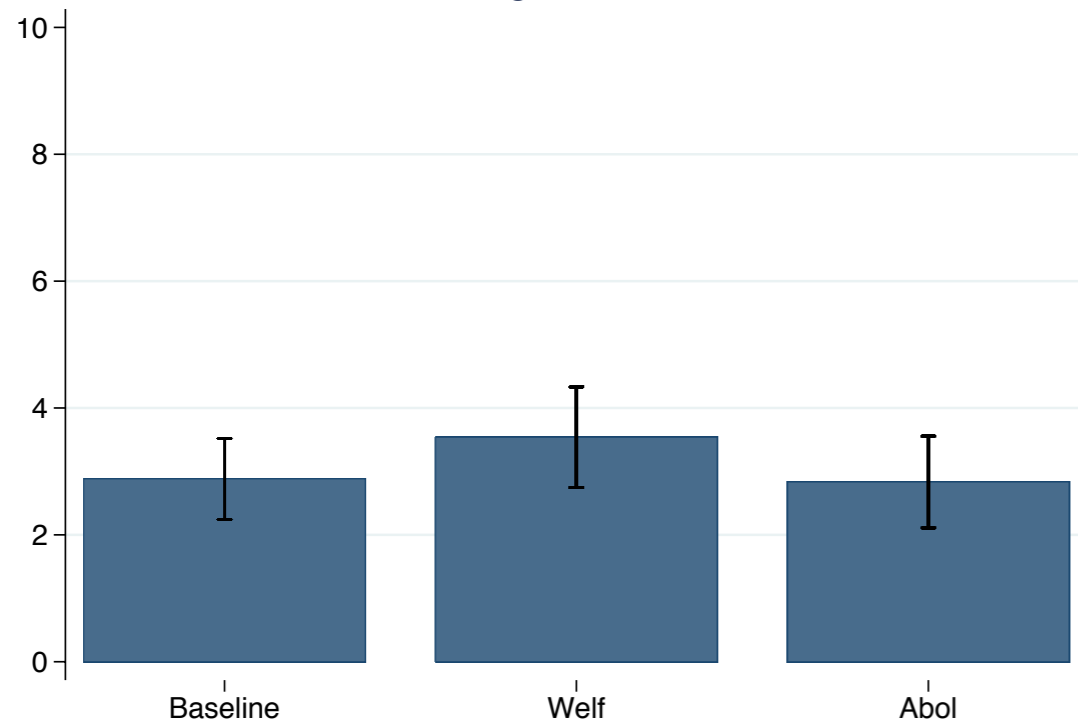
**Result:** Significant changes in cognitive dissonance when participants are exposed to WELF and ABOL.



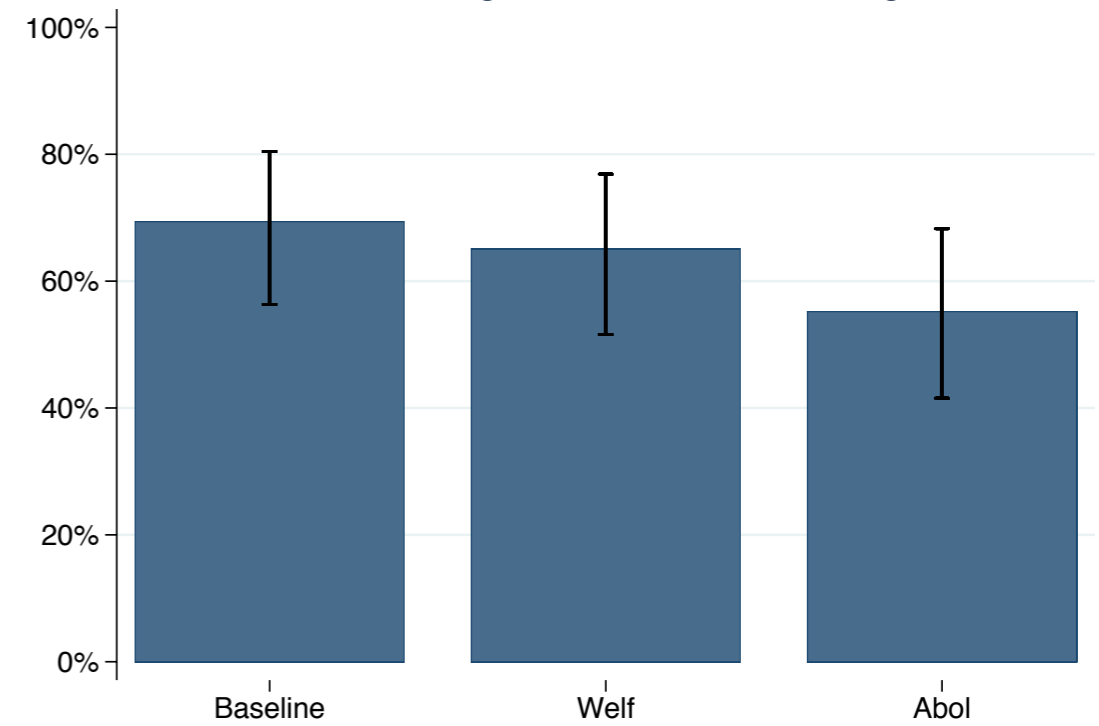
**Tests:** OLS: Welf vs. Baseline,  $p=0.059$ . Abol vs. Baseline,  $p=0.037$ . Abol. vs Welf,  $p=0.835$ .

# Results: online cognitive dissonance and diet

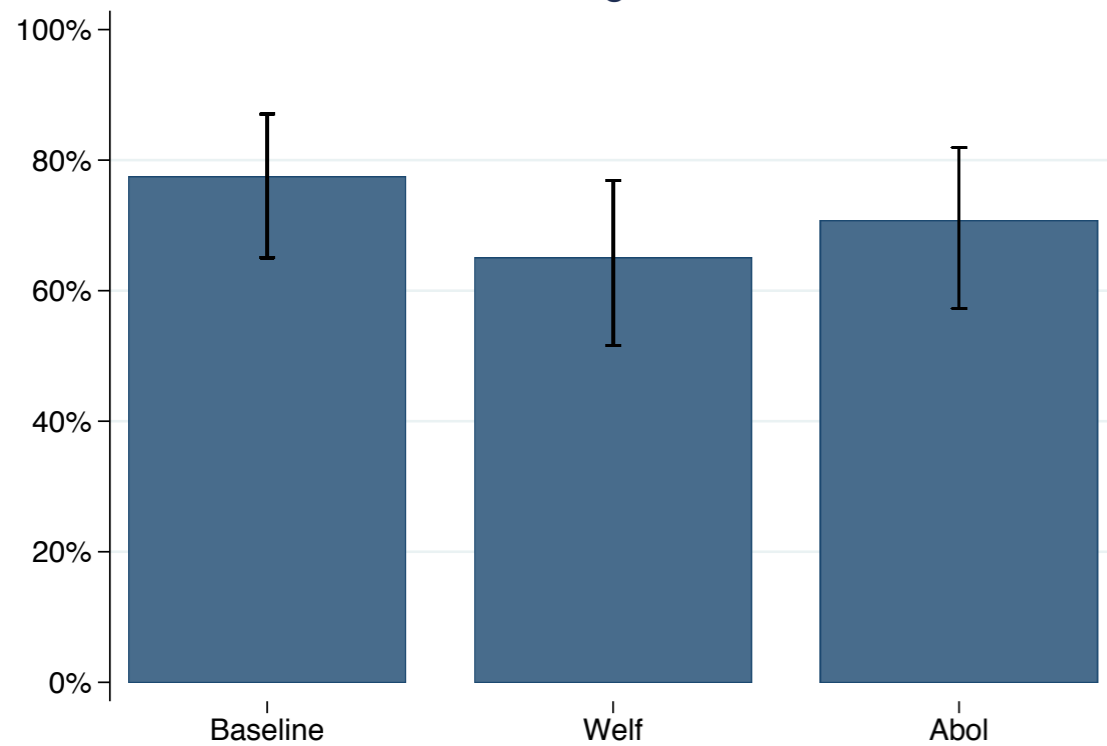
Dictator game with NGO



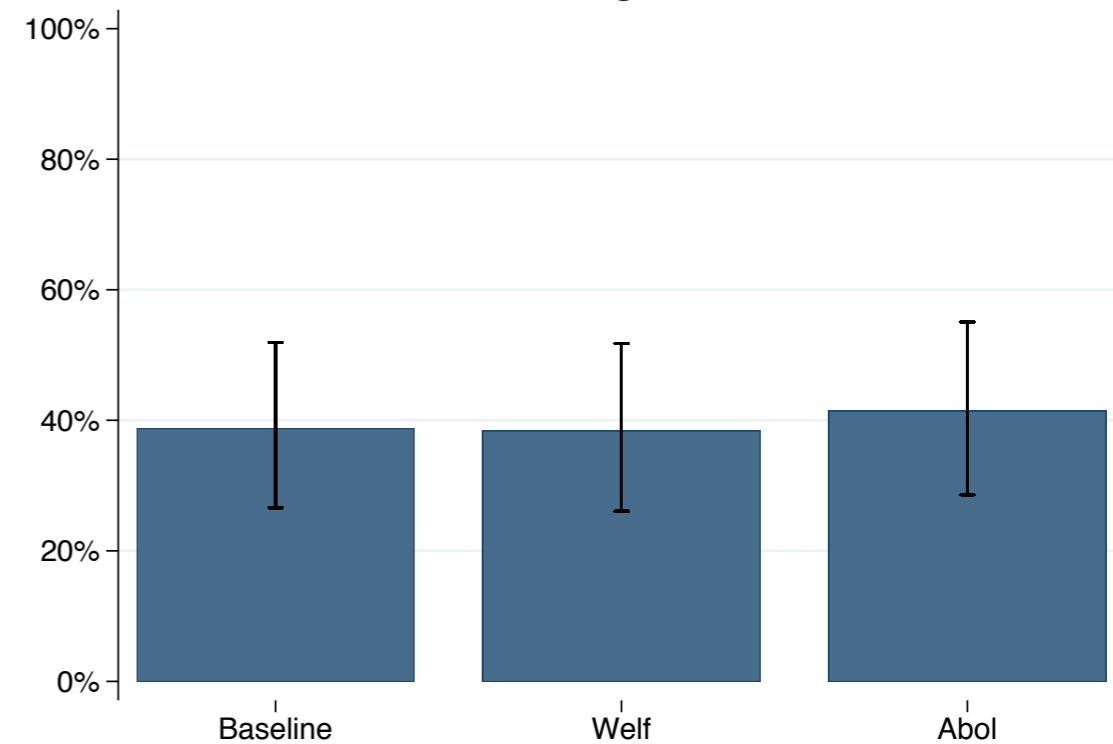
Petition against intensive farming



Petition for vegetarian meals



Petition for vegan newsletter



# Results: online cognitive and diet

**Result: A general negative effect of treatments. On overall, statistically negative for ABOL.**  
(See last column.)

	<b>Dictator</b>	<b>Petition Farming</b>	<b>Petition Veg Meals</b>	<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>PCA</b>
<b>Welf</b>	0.668 (0.496)	-0.196 (0.271)	-0.636** (0.300)	-0.0133 (0.253)	-0.139 (0.209)
<b>Abol</b>	-0.213 (0.509)	-0.612** (0.272)	-0.679** (0.308)	-0.00719 (0.260)	-0.386* (0.215)
<b>Public Good</b>	1.141*** (0.309)	0.470*** (0.172)	0.324* (0.186)	0.320** (0.156)	0.541*** (0.130)
<b>Online CD</b>	-0.0438** (0.0208)	-0.00404 (0.0109)	-0.0367*** (0.0124)	-0.0226** (0.0106)	-0.0296*** (0.00879)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Obs</b>	180	180	180	177	180

**Controls** include gender, whether raised in the countryside, religiosity, age, political self-placement, diet of animal-based products, political views (PCA).



# Results: online cognitive and diet

**Result: Treatments mostly activated contribution of socially concerned individuals.**

(See last column.)

	<b>Dictator</b>	<b>Petition Farming</b>	<b>Petition Veg Meals</b>	<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>PCA</b>
<b>Welf</b>	-0.0792 (0.761)	-0.664 (0.41)	-0.673 (0.436)	-0.023 (0.386)	-0.411 (0.320)
<b>Abol</b>	-0.844 (0.773)	-1.342*** (0.427)	-0.654 (0.453)	-0.275 (0.401)	-0.782** (0.325)
<b>Public Good * Baseline</b>	0.562 (0.524)	-0.0416 (0.288)	0.315 (0.340)	0.218 (0.265)	0.267 (0.221)
<b>Public Good * Welf</b>	1.497*** (0.521)	0.555* (0.308)	0.373 (0.311)	0.218 (0.258)	<b>0.595*** (0.219)</b>
<b>Public Good * Abol</b>	1.367** (0.551)	0.898*** (0.298)	0.282 (0.307)	0.566* (0.290)	<b>0.778*** (0.232)</b>
<b>Online CD</b>	-0.0432** (0.021)	-0.00574 (0.0111)	-0.0364*** (0.0124)	-0.0239** (0.0107)	-0.0301*** (0.00883)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Obs</b>	180	180	180	177	180

**Controls** include gender, whether raised in the countryside, religiosity, age, political self-placement, diet of animal-based products, political views (PCA).

# Recap

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## Take-home message:

- We exposed in the lab individuals to two types of NGOs' discourses (welfarist or abolitionist) which had similar informational content, but which differed in the NGO's recommendation.
- We showed that participants significantly reduced their declared support of meat-consumption when they faced a welfarist or an abolitionist discourse.
- There is no statistically significant impact of NGO discourses on the overall propensity to effectively engage for animal-welfare. If any, the results suggest a negative impact of abolitionist discourses.
- We observe however a norm-activation phenomenon: free-riders are more likely to reject the NGO's discourse and are therefore less likely to contribute than if they had not been exposed to the discourse.

**Thanks for your attention!**