



# **Evidence from a Voter Awareness Campaign in Pakistan**

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# Motivation

- Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women have acquired **de jure** rights to participate in democratic institutions
- However, barriers to effective participation by women both as voters and as legislators remain significant
- Number of efforts to introduce quotas for women legislators
- But also:
  - Women have lower turnout in elections than men
  - More likely to vote according to the preference of male clan and household heads (family voting)

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# Barriers to female participation

- **Costs of Participation**

- Social constraints may restrict choices and/or restrict women's mobility
- Traditions, social and cultural stereotypes may discourage women from participation
- Concerns about security in conflict environments may have a greater impact on female participation

- **Information**

- Women have fewer and poorer sources of information about the significance of political participation and/or the balloting process, perhaps due to illiteracy and mobility constraints
- Lack of information may reinforce disempowerment and stereotypes

# What we assess

## 1. How important is information for turnout and candidate choice?

- Attitudes change slowly but information can be provided quickly and may serve to:
  - enhance equity
  - induce a change in attitudes
  - change policy

## 2. Are there significant spillovers?

- Voting behavior may be influenced by the behavior of others, either because information is obtained from talking to others or because voting is subject to peer pressure and social norms
  - Affects cost-benefit analysis of such interventions

# Context

- Rural Pakistan
- According to the 1998 Human Development Report, Pakistan ranked
  - 138 out of 174 on the Human Development Index (HDI)
  - 131 out of 163 on the Gender Development Index (GDI)
  - 100 out of 102 on the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)
- *“Political parties, by and large, tend to view women as a passive vote bank, following the dictates of men within their families or clans. Even within their own parties, they treat them largely as followers to be strategically used for election canvassing and public campaigns. Thus, most parties do not even have lists of female members.”*

Aurat Foundation, 2004

# What we do

- Conduct a door to door voter information campaign directed at rural women just before the February 2008 national elections in Pakistan
- **Two “treatments”**
  - The importance of voting (T1)
  - T1 plus the significance of secret balloting: Ability to vote in accordance with one’s own preferences without external pressure (T2)
  - Information campaign developed as a set of simple visual messages

# Visual Aids for Treatments

1

علاقے کی صورتحال کا ذمہ دار کون ہے؟



# Visual Aids for Presentation

2

آپ کے ووٹ سے بنے ہوئے نمبر ان ترقیاتی  
کاموں کے فیصلے کرتے ہیں

3



2



4



1

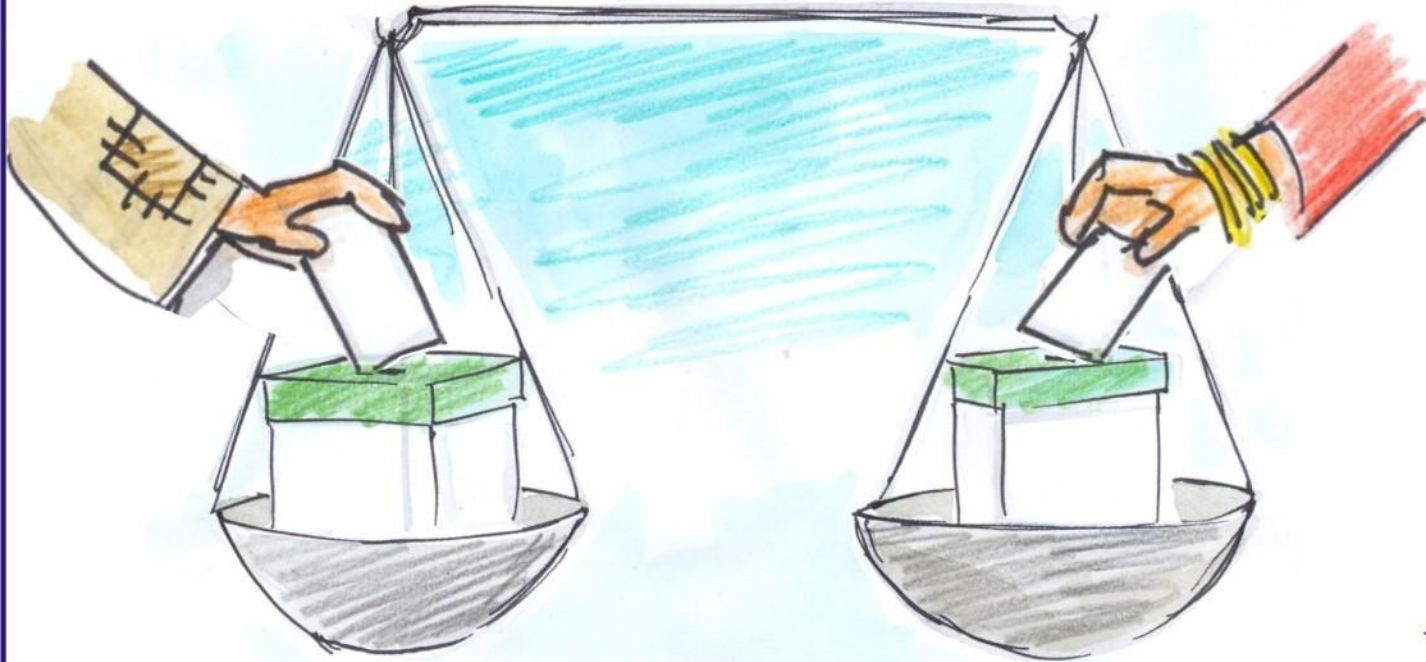




# Visual Aids for Presentation

3

ہر پاکستانی کا ووٹ برابر کی اہمیت رکھتا ہے  
خواہ وہ امیر ہو یا غریب، مرد ہو یا عورت



# Visual Aids for Presentation

8

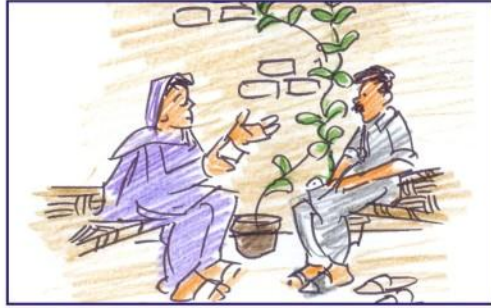
ایکیشن میں کھڑے یہ اُمیدوار کون ہیں



# Visual Aids for Presentation

9

## اُمیدوار کے بارے میں معلومات لینا



گھر کے مردوں سے



ہمسائیوں سے



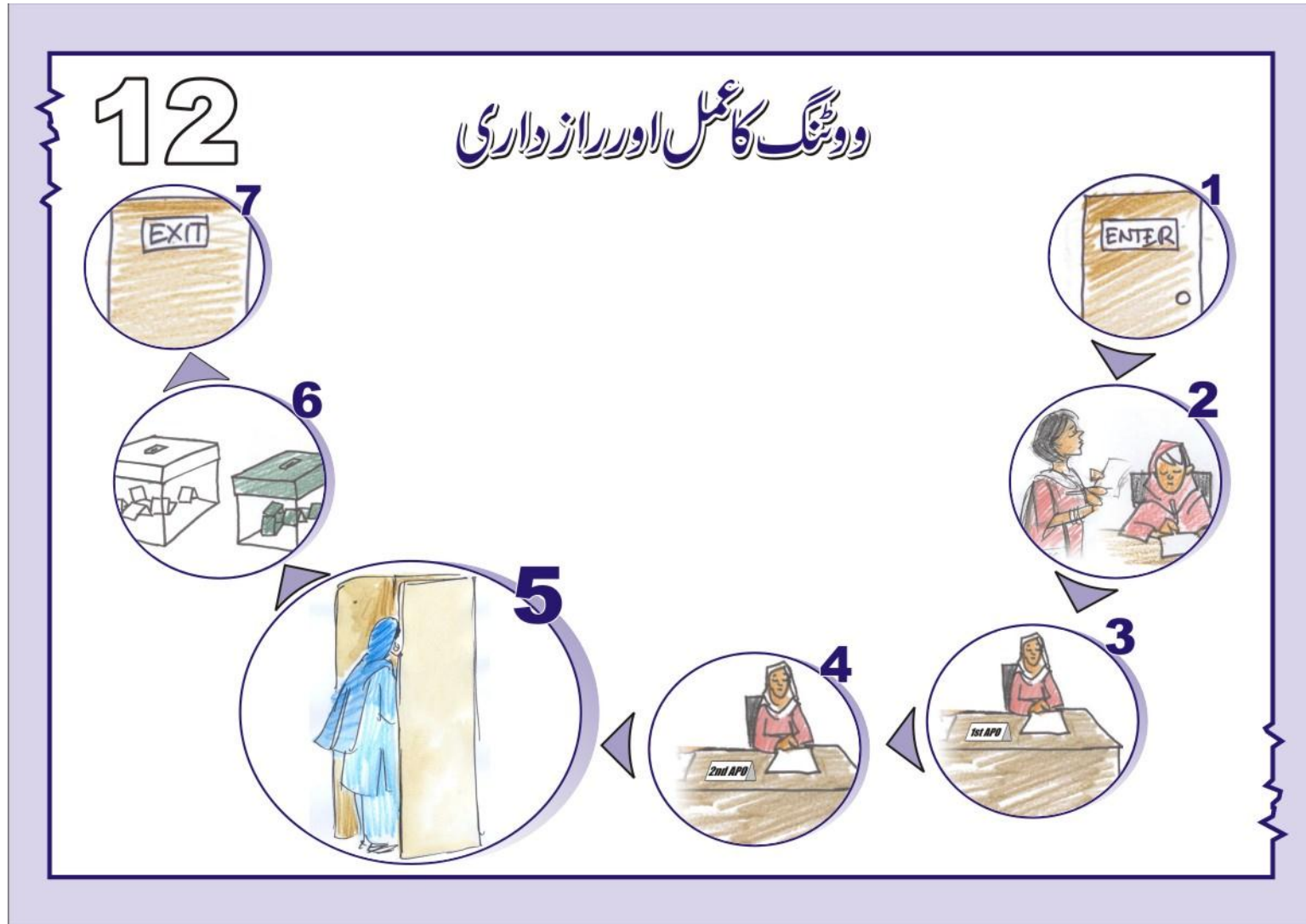
علاقے کے استاد/معززین



پارٹی کے کارکنان سے



# Visual Aids for Presentation – Secrecy of Ballot



# Visual Aids for Presentation

13

## خواتین کے لئے پولنگ کا علیحدہ انتظام



خواتین کے لیے الگ پولنگ کی جگہ



زنانہ پولنگ ایجنٹ



زنانہ پولنگ اسٹیشن

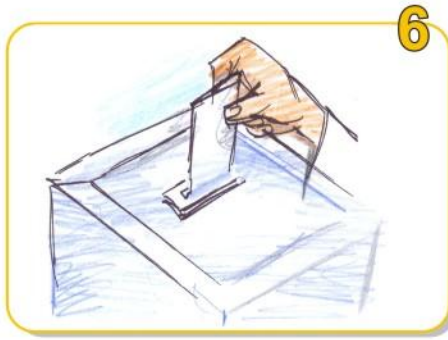
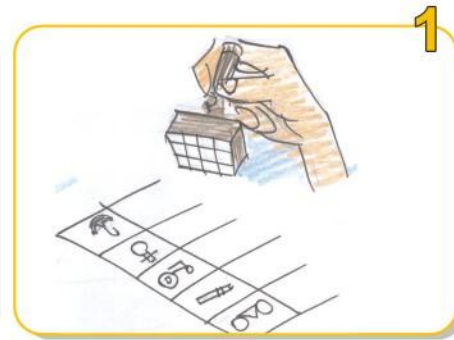
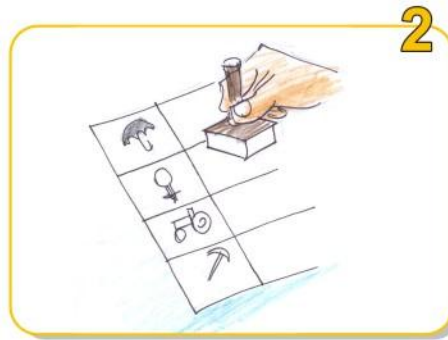
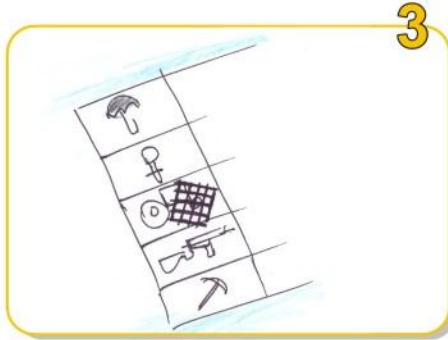


مردانہ پولنگ اسٹیشن

# Visual Aids for Presentation

14

اپنی مرضی کے اُمیدوار کے نشان پر مہر لگا کر پیلٹ بکس میں ڈالیں



# Visual Aids for Presentation



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# Study Design

- Two districts in Sindh, selected because sharp electoral competition between two major political parties
- Variation in treatment type (T1 or T2) as well as treatment intensity to look at social interactions
  - Final sample has:
    - 991 households and 2637 women
    - 21 polling stations
    - 67 geographical clusters





163 m

Image © 2009 DigitalGlobe

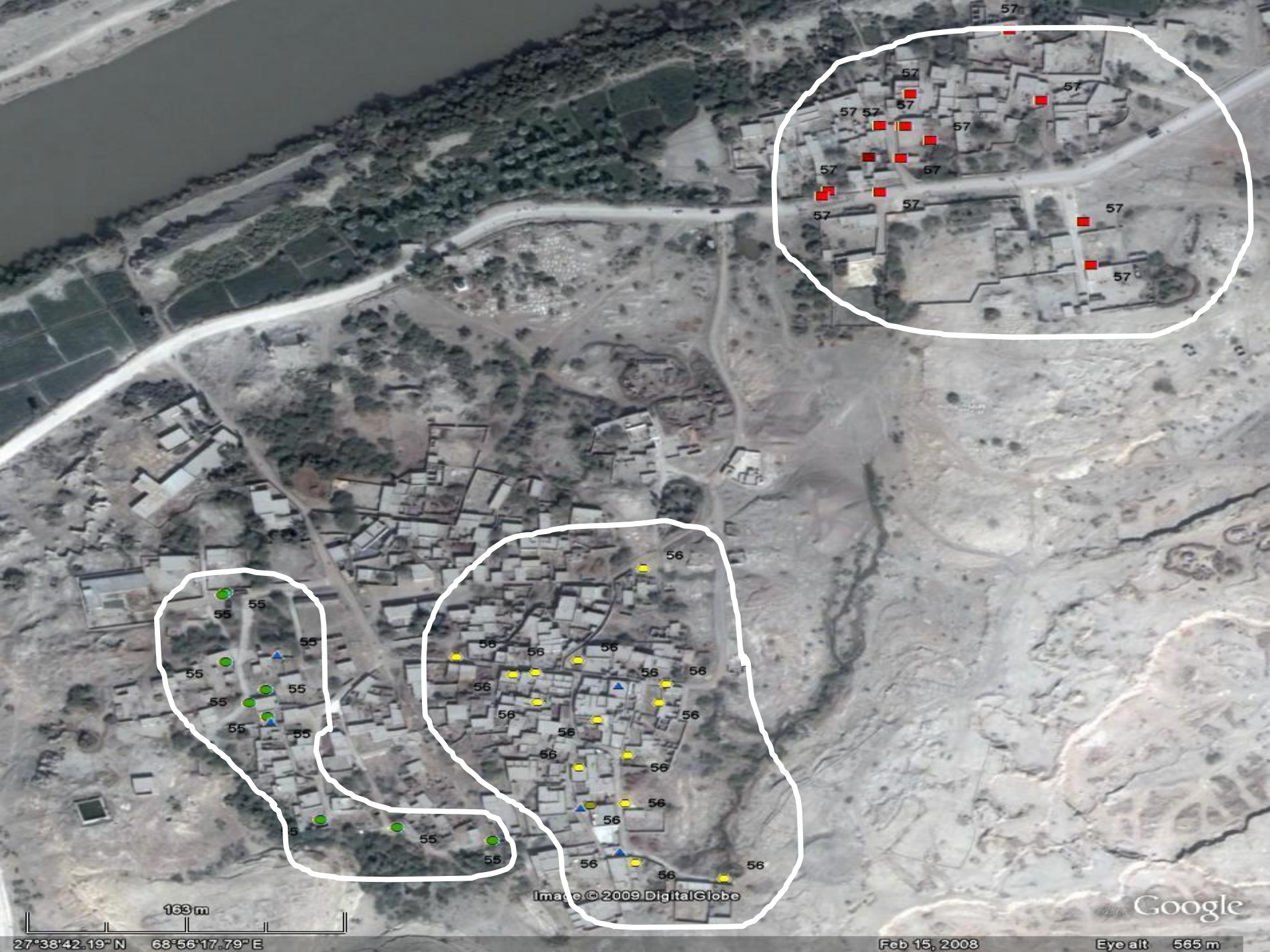
Google

27°38'42.19" N 68°56'17.79" E

Feb 15, 2008

Eye alt 565 m





163 m

Image © 2009 DigitalGlobe

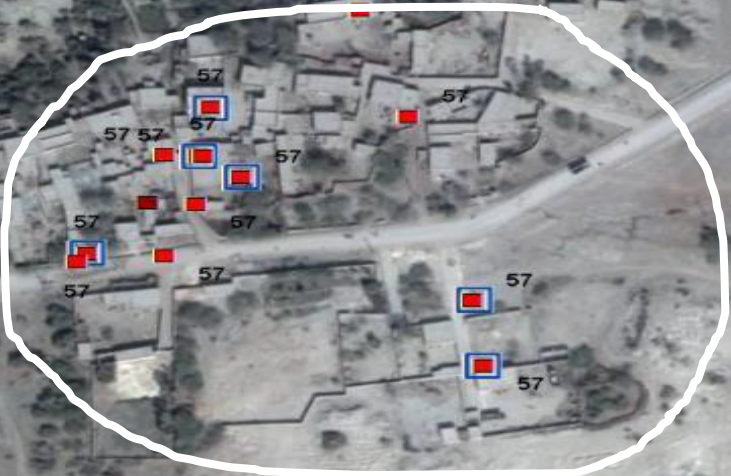
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163 m

Image © 2009 DigitalGlobe

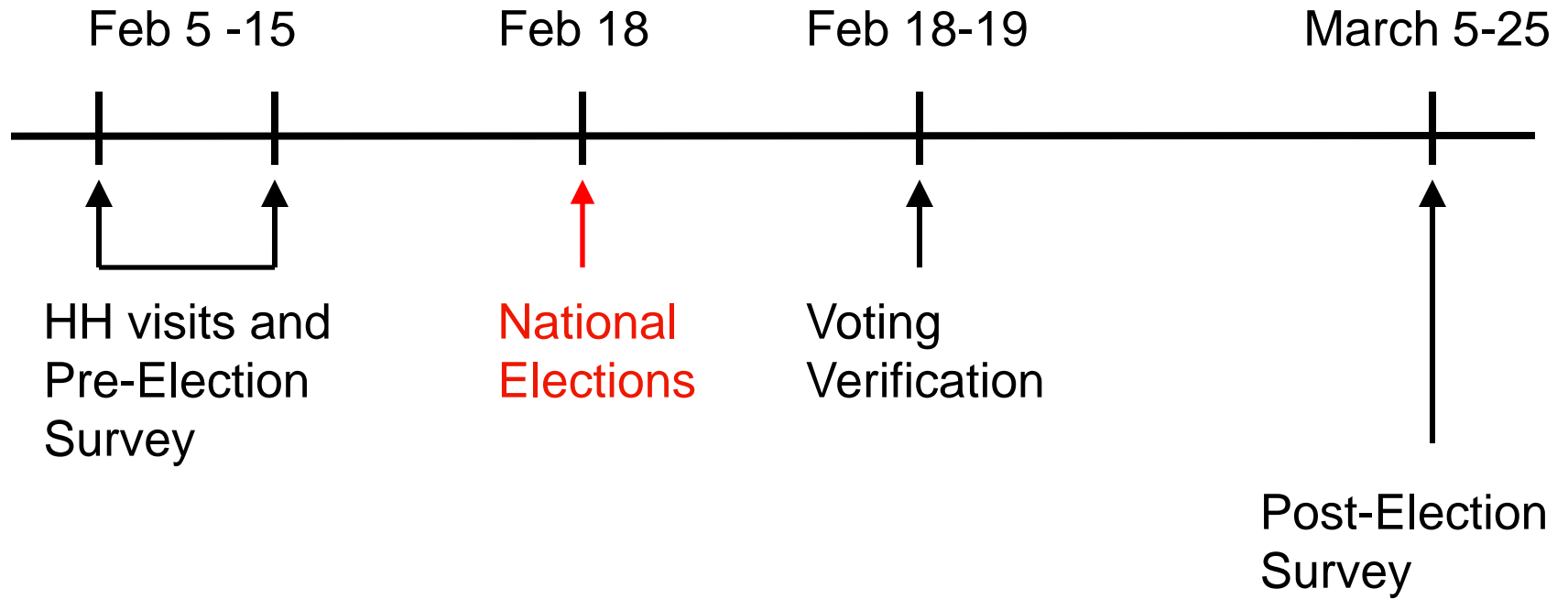
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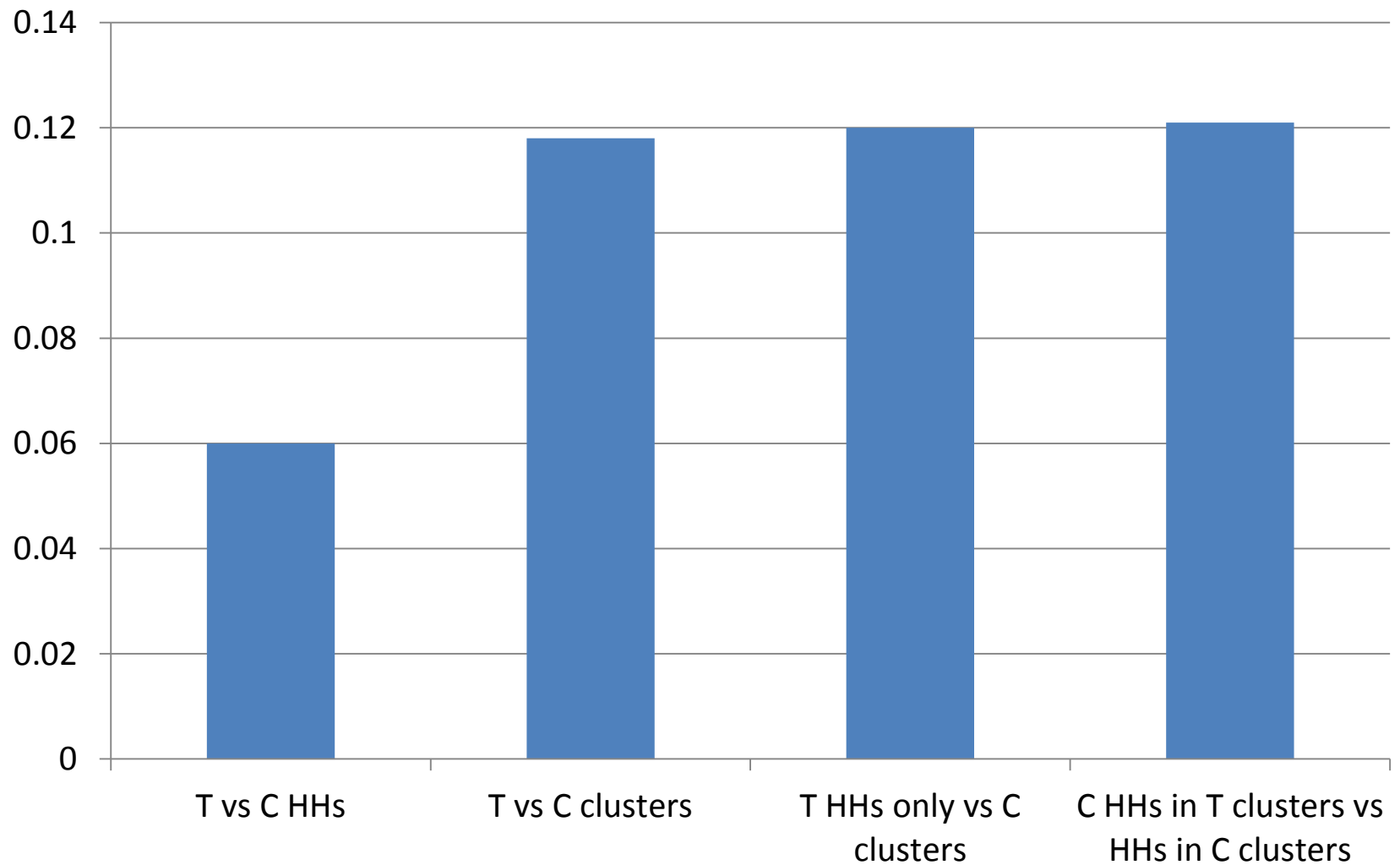
# Timeline



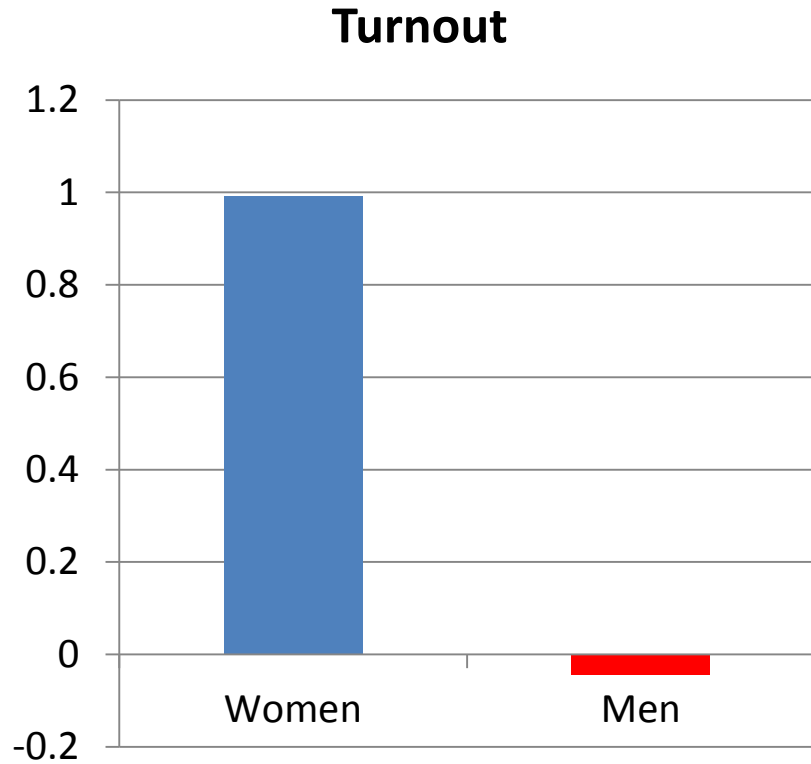
# Data

- **Pre-Election Visit (information intervention):**
  - Household location (GIS); basic roster of all adult women, plus past voting record and the name and address of closest friend/confidant in the village
  - No refusals, so we have 100% compliance
- **Post-election verification:**
  - Self report and verification by checking ink stain
  - One friend per household, randomly selected from among women “eligible” to vote (had NIC or claimed to be on the voter list)
- **Post election survey**
  - Household demographics, including caste (*zaat/biradari*, election outcomes and whether other household members voted and for whom
- **Administrative Polling Station Data**
  - Electoral results by gender and by candidate/party

# Turnout among study women

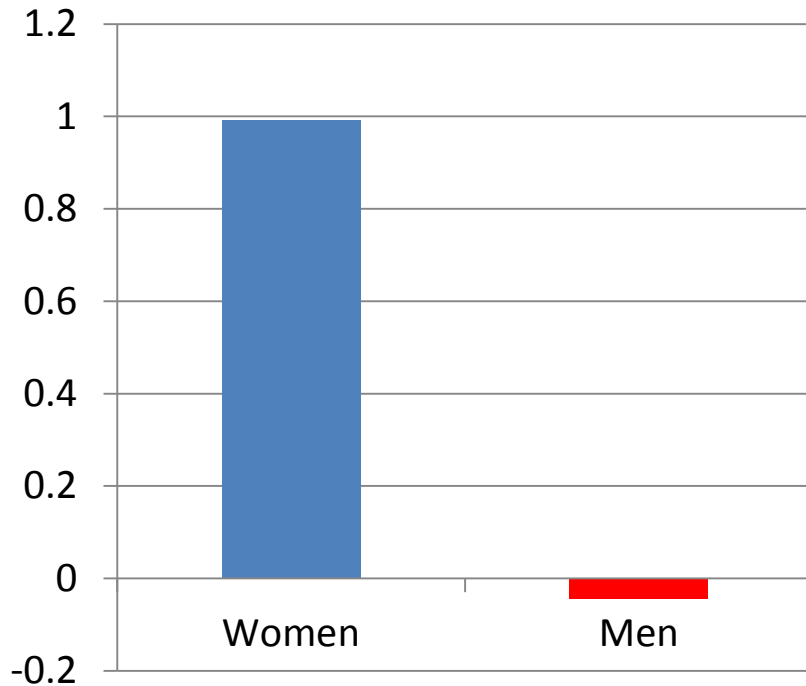


# Turnout and Candidate Choice at Polling Station

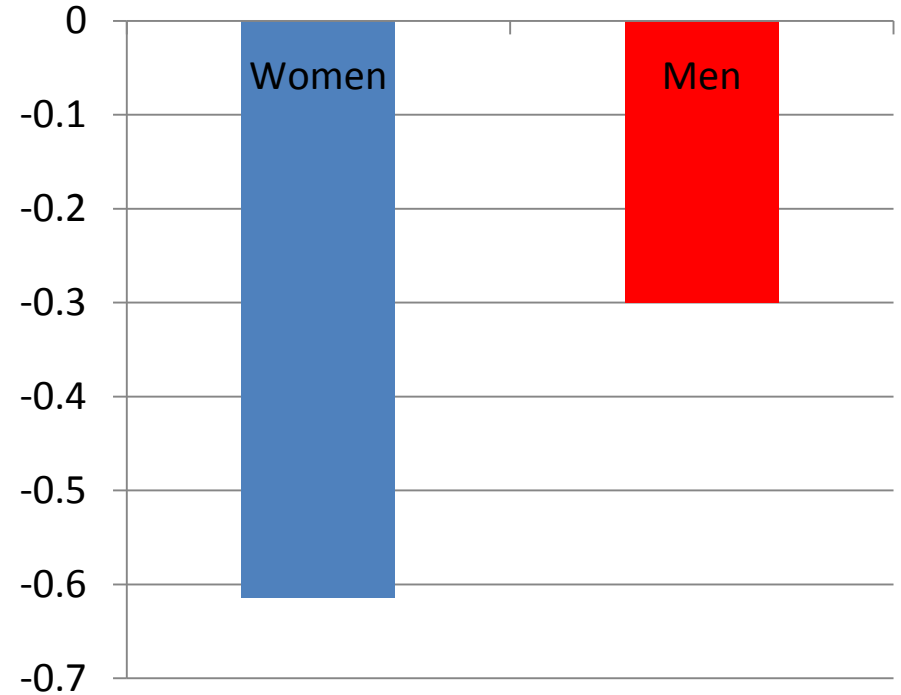


# Turnout and Candidate Choice at Polling Station

## Turnout



## Share PPPP





# Summing up and Policy Implications

- **Substantial peer effects**
  - Information campaign increased turnout among sample women by 1.2 additional female vote for every 10 women (or about 4 households treated)
  - The polling station level effects are much larger. For every 10 women treated, there are 9 additional votes
- **Information campaigns appear to be an effective way of reaching poor rural women**
  - 1 additional vote cost about USD 2.3 (or USD 5 inclusive of fixed costs)
    - Ignoring externality, additional vote cost USD 16.7 or USD 37.5
- **Information campaigns can affect not just turnout but also independence in candidate choice**
  - Men in treated households have significantly less knowledge about women's candidate choice
  - Treated women more likely to vote for other party