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Private Participation and its Discontents: Insights from Large-Scale Surveys

Silvia Albrizio, Hippolyte Balima, Bertrand Gruss, Eric Huang and Colombe Ladreit

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ABSTRACT: This paper investigates public attitudes toward product market regulation (PMR) reforms aimed at fostering private participation and competition in two network sectors—electricity and telecommunications. Despite the benefits of such reforms, including enhanced productivity and lower prices, they often face significant public resistance. We conduct large-scale surveys of 6,300 individuals in three emerging market and developing economies (Mexico, Morocco, and South Africa) to analyze the role of socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs, and perceptions in shaping support for PMR reforms. Our findings reveal that individual beliefs and perceptions, particularly those related to how policies work and market economy views, are major predictors of reform support. Randomized information treatments show that raising awareness about the costs of the status quo and the benefits of PMR reforms significantly increases public support. Among initially skeptical individuals, societal concerns play a larger role in respondents' reasons for nonsupport, consistent with models of social preferences. However, offering tailored complementary and compensatory measures can further enhance support among those skeptical individuals.

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Keywords:	Product market reforms, political economy, perceptions, survey, experiment
Author's E-Mail Address:	salbrizio@imf.org; hbalima@imf.org; bgruss@imf.org; ehuang@imf.org; cladreit@imf.org

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†International Monetary Fund. Email: salbrizio@imf.org
‡International Monetary Fund. Email: hbalima@imf.org
§International Monetary Fund. Email: bgruss@imf.org
¶International Monetary Fund. Email: ehuang@imf.org
||International Monetary Fund. Email: cladreit@imf.org

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§International Monetary Fund. Email: bgruss@imf.org

¶International Monetary Fund. Email: ehuang@imf.org

||International Monetary Fund. Email: cladreit@imf.org

Private Participation and its Discontents: Insights from Large-Scale Surveys *

Silvia Albrizio[†] Hippolyte Balima[‡] Bertrand Gruss[§] Eric Huang[¶]
Colombe Ladreit[‖]

Abstract

This paper investigates public attitudes toward product market regulation (PMR) reforms aimed at fostering private participation and competition in two network sectors—electricity and telecommunications. Despite the benefits of such reforms, including enhanced productivity and lower prices, they often face significant public resistance. We conduct large-scale surveys of 6,300 individuals in three emerging market and developing economies (Mexico, Morocco, and South Africa) to analyze the role of socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs, and perceptions in shaping support for PMR reforms. Our findings reveal that individual beliefs and perceptions, particularly those related to how policies work and market economy views, are major predictors of reform support. Randomized information treatments show that raising awareness about the costs of the status quo and the benefits of PMR reforms significantly increases public support. Among initially skeptical individuals, societal concerns play a larger role in respondents' reasons for nonsupport, consistent with models of social preferences. However, offering tailored complementary and compensatory measures can further enhance support among those skeptical individuals.

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[§]International Monetary Fund. Email: bgruss@imf.org
[¶]International Monetary Fund. Email: ehuang@imf.org
[‖]International Monetary Fund. Email: cladreit@imf.org

Contents

1 Introduction

Product market reforms easing regulation in network sectors, such as electricity, telecommunications, gas, and transport, have shown substantial benefits. Empirical evidence highlights that private participation in these sectors, especially when associated with increased competition, leads to enhanced productivity and output, better service coverage, enhanced quality, and, in many cases, lower prices for consumers (Megginson and Netter, 2001; Wallsten, 2001; Bortolotti et al., 2002; Harris, 2003; Andrés et al. (2008); Zhang et al., 2008).[1] Private participation and competition in network sectors has typically benefited the poor more than others, especially by broadening access to services (Fay and Morrison, 2007; McKenzie et al., 2003; Galiani et al., 2005). And higher efficiency in network sectors can boost productivity of downstream industries, further amplifying the benefits of reforms (Gal and Hijzen, 2016; Bourlès et al., 2013).

Despite documented advantages, reforms to allow private participation in network sectors have often encountered social backlash, including violent protests and policy reversals (Boix, 2005; Nellis, 2003; Denisova et al., 2012; Lora and Panizza, 2003; Panizza and Yañez, 2005). Public unrest, often violent, led to abandoning reform attempts in Latin America (such as in the electricity sector in Arequipa, Peru, and in telecommunications in Paraguay) or reversing earlier reforms (such as the water concession in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and in the Argentine province of Tucuman). Protest against reforms to increase private participation in network sectors also erupted in Indonesia, Pakistan, India, South Africa, Poland, and Hungary. The literature has pointed to several possible causes of public skepticism, including fears of higher tariffs for the general public, job losses, concerns over service quality and poor regulatory controls, perceptions about corruption and lack of transparency, and distrust in the government and private firms, including in regard to fariness in the share of profits (Fay and Morrison, 2007; Andrés et al., 2008). However, while significant progress has been made to understand policy preferences at the individual level toward reforms related to trade (e.g., Rodriguez Chatruc et al., 2021), climate mitigation (e.g., Douenne and Fabre, 2022), taxes (e.g., Stantcheva, 2023), and even labor market regulation (e.g., Duval et al., 2024),

[1] Reforms to increase private participation and competition in network sectors frequently involve divesting state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in the sector, and are often referred simply as "privatization". However, not all of these reforms include the privatization of SOEs; they may involve lease contracts, concessions, or management contracts. Moreover, they typically include several other processes, such as breaking up, or "unbundling", the incumbent monopoly provider into separate segments (e.g., generation, transmission, and distribution in the case of electricity) and, importantly, allowing the entry of additional private firms under the supervision of regulatory bodies (e.g., Zhang et al., 2008; Andrés et al., 2008).

much less progress has been made on structural reforms in product markets.

This paper seeks to investigate individuals' beliefs and preferences toward product market regulation reforms aimed at fostering private participation and competition in network sectors (PMR reforms hereafter). We focus on three key objectives: (1) understanding the drivers of skepticism toward PMR reforms; (2) examining whether research-based information on the need for and potential effects of policy changes can influence public support for reforms; and (3) assessing whether complementary or compensatory measures can foster greater reform support. To address these objectives, we conducted large-scale online surveys of 6,300 individuals across three countries—Mexico, Morocco, and South Africa—focusing on two network sectors: electricity and telecommunications. Half of respondents in each country are randomly assigned to a questionnaire focusing exclusively in one of those two sectors.

We first investigate what explains individuals' attitudes toward private participation in network industries. Drawing from recent literature on policy preferences at the individual level, we hypothesize that beliefs—especially those related to knowledge of policies and how they work—play a central role in shaping support or opposition to reforms. To assess this, and following the literature on the political economy of reforms, we explore the role of: (1) individuals' socioeconomic characteristics that can proxy economic self-interest (such as sector of employment and education level); (2) beliefs about the role of government versus markets in the economy; (3) perceptions about the role of network sectors for equity; (4) beliefs about trust and corruption; (5) views about and satisfaction with utility services; and (6) perceptions about the effect of reforms to increase competition on price, quality, and access to utility services.

We find that individuals' beliefs and (mis)perceptions, some of which can be affected by the design of reforms, are major predictors of whether individuals support PMR reforms. In particular, individual socioeconomic characteristics only account for only 6% of individuals' support for PMR reforms. Instead, knowledge and perceptions of policies explain the lion's share of support for PMR reforms, followed by market-economy beliefs. Individuals are more likely to support the reform if they believe that private firms competing in the sector will lead to lower prices, higher quality, or broader access to electricity or telecommunications services. Views on trust and corruption significantly correlate with policy support but they account for a smaller fraction of the variability in individuals' attitudes. Views about the role of the government or electricity and telecommunication companies in ensuring equitable access to utility services do not significantly correlate with reform support.

Second, we use randomized information treatments to causally test whether providing information about policies increases reform support. The political economy of reforms literature argues that lack of awareness of the need for reform (that is, the cost of the status quo, or the nonreform scenario) is a key obstacle for advancing structural reforms (Tompson, 2009). To test this hypothesis, a first treatment provides information on the cost of the status quo. Individuals assigned to this arm are given factual information (drawing from the International Telecommunication Union, the International Energy Agency, the World Bank Enterprise Surveys, and the Global System for Mobile Communications) about the cost, quality, and access to electricity or telecommunications in their own country, with comparisons with those in the United States.

The second information treatment complements the information on the cost of the status quo with research-based evidence on the effect PMR reforms on the price, quality, and access to utility services based on cross-country studies. More specifically, the second treatment describes findings from the literature on how private participation in network sectors led to improvements in cost, quality, and access to services, especially when reforms where combined with strong regulation ensuring competition and customer protection. The information treatment is written in a simplified form to make it accessible to the general public, and includes country examples to illustrate more clearly the policy effects.

The results show some support for the status quo hypothesis, albeit not strong nor general across sectors. Raising awareness of the need for reform has a positive impact on support for PMR reforms in the electricity sector. Support increases by 0.08 standard deviation for respondents who receive the status quo treatment, corresponding to a 30% reduction in the policy support gap between left-wing and right-wing respondents on this issue. The effect is also positive, but not statistically significant, for the telecommunications sector. This may reflect that, on average, respondents see private participation as higher in the telecommunications sector, so simply informing them that there is scope for improvement does not necessarily change their views on allowing private firms to operate in the sector.

However, we find that when information about the need for reform is complemented with research-based evidence on the effect of PMR reforms, the effect is stronger and statistically significant in regard to both sectors. The treatment effect is economically meaningful, as it is equivalent to 1.6 times the policy support gap between left-wing and right-wing respondents when respondents on the two sectors are pooled. The effect of this treatment is confirmed with real-stakes questions. More precisely, after eliciting policy support, we asked respondents if they would be willing to sign hypothetical petitions, either in support of or against

policy changes. The information treatment significantly increased respondents' likelihood to endorse a petition supporting the reform and decreased their likelihood to sign a petition against the reform.

These findings confirm that the importance of explaining how policies work for policy support in the case of climate policies (e.g., Douenne and Fabre, 2022; Dechezleprêtre et al., 2022) and labor regulation reforms (Duval et al., 2024) also apply for product market reforms.

Finally, we zoom in on individuals who say they would not support policy change to identify the main reasons for nonsupport and assess whether complementing reforms with mitigating measures would change their support. More precisely, respondents are first asked why they do not support the policy change and, second, are asked if they would instead support the reform if the government committed to additional hypothetical measures, related to their concerns. For instance, respondents who express concerns about the cost and quality of utility services following reforms increase competition in the electricity or telecommunication services are asked if they would change their support assuming the government committed to creating an independent regulatory agency to ensure firms compete to provide services and customers are protected.

We find that societal concerns play a larger role in respondents' reasons for nonsupport, consistent with models of social preferences (Charness and Rabin, 2002;Paetzel et al., 2014). We also find that, irrespective of the concerns raised by respondents, offering tailored complementary and compensatory measures can significantly foster support for reforms. Although results should be interpreted as indicative rather than causal evidence, 50–80% of respondents in the control group initially opposed to PMR reforms indicate they would change their stance toward support if mitigating measures were taken to address their concerns. Mitigating measures play a particularly important role in boosting support from individuals who may fear job losses from PMR reforms, such as workers in public utility companies or individuals with close connections to them.

Following up on respondents that would not support PMR reforms, even if offered mitigating measures, reveals that lack of trust is the prevailing motive. In particular, those who continue to oppose reforms mostly cite reasons related to trust in the parties involved (the government and the private sector) and doubts about institutions' ability to implement the reforms or mitigating measures effectively.

Literature This paper is related, first, to the literature on the political economy of reforms. In particular, Tompson (2009) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010) argue that lack of awareness about the cost of the status quo is a key obstacle for implementing structural reforms. Andrés et al. (2008) and Andrés et al. (2013) argue that explaining the likely impact and the consequences of maintaining the status quo and argue the reform's cost-benefit tradeoff is critical to garner support for private participation in network sectors. However, evidence supporting the status quo hypothesis is mostly based on case studies. We contribute to this literature by empirically assessing the effect of providing information on the cost of the status quo for reform support.

Second, this paper is related to a growing literature that has used large-scale surveys to study the determinants of policy support at the individual level. Rodriguez Chatruc et al. (2021) and Alfaro et al. (2023) explore the role of evidence-based information in shaping individuals' preferences for trade policies. Douenne and Fabre (2022), Dechezleprêtre et al. (2022), and Dabla-Norris et al. (2023) explore the determinants of public support for climate mitigation policies and the role that explaining the effect of policies can have on reform support. The closest to our paper is Duval et al. (2024) who explore the role of beliefs in explaining resistance to structural reforms in labor markets—more precisely on changes to employment protection legislation. We contribute to this literature by exploring the role of beliefs in shaping individuals' attitudes toward product market reforms and testing whether information strategies that tackle misinformation about policies and misperceptions regarding how policies work can affect reform support. We also contribute to this literature by testing explicitly the cost-of-status quo hypothesis for reform support, which to our knowledge had not been done in the context of large-scale survey studies.

Finally, the paper is related to several studies that studies people's skepticism toward privatization reforms (e.g., Panizza and Yañez, 2005; Denisova et al., 2012; Lora and Panizza, 2003; Kaltenthaler et al., 2006). This literature largely focused on people's attitudes toward concrete privatization experiences they were exposed to. While some studies relied on survey evidence, there were not tailored to the policy reform specifically, but were rather based on recurrent regional surveys. Moreover, by focusing on previous reforms, the results can be influenced by the context the individuals faced at the time of those reforms, including the simultaneity of other policy changed. One exception is the survey conducted in Peru and reported in World Bank (2006), which asked respondents if they would support hypothetical private participation reforms under certain conditions (e.g., if they were transparently conducted, with clear performance targets for the private operator, and with a regulator was in

place to enforce the rules). To our knowledge, however, our paper is the first attempt to study the determinants of policy support for product market reforms that can encompass the privatization of state owned enterprises with a dedicated survey conducted in several countries.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: The next Section 2 describes the survey. Section 3 examines respondents' views on private participation and competition in network sectors. Section 4 presents the experimental results, focusing on the causal effect of information on individuals' support for policies, willingness to sign petitions, and beliefs about the effects of policies. Section 5 discusses the reasons for nonsupport and the role of mitigation policies. Section 6 explores the heterogeneity of the information treatments' causal effects on support. In Section 7, we discuss the robustness of the main results. The Appendix A provides additional details on the survey and analyses.

2 The Survey

2.1 Data

Our survey was conducted online between June 7 and July 12, 2024 by YouGov, a leading market research and opinion polling company. The survey was conducted in three emerging market and developing economies: Mexico, Morocco, and South Africa.[2] These are all emerging economies where there is scope to ease regulation and increase private participation and competition in network sectors. Indeed, in all three countries the regulatory stance of network sectors is relatively tight compared to peers, in either the electricity sector, the telecommunications sector, or both, based on existing dataset on the regulatory stance in product markets. For instance, the regulatory stance in the tighter network sector in the three countries ranks between the 6th and 52nd percentiles among 46 emerging market peers—with a lower percentile indicating a tighter regulatory stance—according to the IMF Structural Reform Database.[3] For Mexico and South Africa, the regulatory stance in network sectors (entry barriers) ranks between the 12th and 24th percentiles—with a lower percentile also indicating a tighter regulatory stance—among 67 advanced and emerging market peers, based on the World Bank-OECD database.[4]

[2]Before the launch of the survey, a pre-analysis plan was registered on AsPredicted (#178272) and an ethics certificate granted by the German Association for Experimental Economic Research under their expedite review procedure.

[3]https://data.imf.org/?sk=8a361b05-ac3f-4cb2-be4a-f9a2b0cba124

[4]https://prosperitydata360.worldbank.org/en/dataset/OECDWBG+PMR

YouGov maintains a panelist of respondents recruited through various methods, including web advertisements, member referrals, press coverage, and marketing, among others.[5] For each country, YouGov identified a representative sample of respondents from the panelist, aligned with country-specific demographic distributions, including age, gender, education, employment status, and regional distribution using the sampling and sample matching methodology.[6] The survey company also rewards respondents upon their successful completion of the survey, with varying amount and form depending on the country, regardless of whether they are retained in the final dataset. To qualify for the survey, respondents had to be the residents of the country in which the survey was conducted and 18 years of age or older. In the baseline sample, a total of 6,300 respondents were selected from the pool for the survey, with 2,100 respondents for each country.[7]

The distribution of respondents' time spent on the surveys is highly right-skewed: while the median time is 21 minutes, the average is 122 minutes, driven by some respondents spending an exceptionally long time on the survey webpage. After removing the top and bottom 5% of respondents, the average drops to 24.5 minutes. In Appendix A.2, Figure A2, we show the cumulative density function of time spent on the survey.

2.2 Sample

While YouGov's targeting approach aims to identify a representative sample, its online nature inevitably results in some deviations from demographic targets, as it is common in studies of this kind (see Stantcheva, 2023, Stantcheva, 2021; Alsan et al., 2023), especially in emerging market economies and developing countries where network infrastructures are unevenly developed, constraining access to certain parts of the population.

Figure A1 in Appendix A.1 illustrates the differences between the sample averages for quota variables and the population means in each country. The degree of deviation from the population distribution varies by country. Overall, our sample best represents the population in South Africa. Similar to the pattern documented by Dechezleprêtre et al. (2022) for middle-income countries, our sample tends to over-represent individuals with tertiary educa-

[5] All YouGov's new members must complete a double opt-in process, where they confirm their consent a second time by responding to an email. Additionally, YouGov's database verifies that the newly recruited panelist is indeed a new member and ensures that the address information provided is valid.

[6] The sampling and sample matching approach is a two stage process: first a random sample of the target population is chosen (sampling frame) and, in a second step, survey respondents are matched with the sampling frame using propensity scores.

[7] We also collected a supplementary sample to augment our baseline analysis. The supplementary sample is described in more detail later in the robustness checks section.

tion and under-represent those living in rural areas. For respondents with tertiary education, our sample over-represents the target population by 6% in South Africa, 10% in Mexico, and 22% in Morocco. For urban residents, our sample over-represents it by 5% in South Africa, 27% in Mexico, and 23% in Morocco. Overall, our sample represents the target population most closely in South Africa, with the largest deviation being the share of unemployed workers, which under-represents by around 10%. For Mexico and Morocco, the maximum deviation is 2-4 times higher. Therefore, in Section 7, we reproduce our main results by re-weighting the samples within each country to match the distribution in the population.

2.3 Data Quality

We took several measures to ensure the quality of survey responses. First, to ensure that the survey was well-understood by respondents and was in line with local customs and contexts, the questionnaire was translated and administered in the local languages of each country.[8] Moreover, the text and illustrations in the treatment slideshow were tailored to the context of each corresponding country. In the treatment section, the information regarding the status quo of the network sectors was based on country-specific data, and illustrative images accompanying the treatments were customized to include each country's national flag and map.

Second, to refine the survey design and questions, we conducted two pre-tests of the questionnaire twice with small groups of participants before launching the full survey–once on the Prolific platform and another on the YouGov platform.

Third, various measures were taken to minimize potential bias in survey responses. The survey was administered by YouGov without disclosing the institutional source of the questionnaire to prevent respondents' opinions about the institution from influencing their answers. Additionally, to reduce the potential impact of priming–a cognitive bias where the framing of a question inadvertently influences respondents' thinking and affects their subsequent answers–we introduce two types of post-treatment randomization: 1) the order of the two petitions to increase or limit private entry in the network sectors, and 2) the choices in the questions regarding reasons for not supporting private operations in the network sectors.

Finally, several approaches were implemented to screen out low-quality responses that might potentially compromise the quality of our sample. To filter out responses potentially

[8]The survey was administrated in Spanish in Mexico, French and Arabic in Morocco, and in Afrikaans, English, Xhosa, and Zulu in South Africa. Respondents were given the option to select their preferred language at the beginning of the survey.

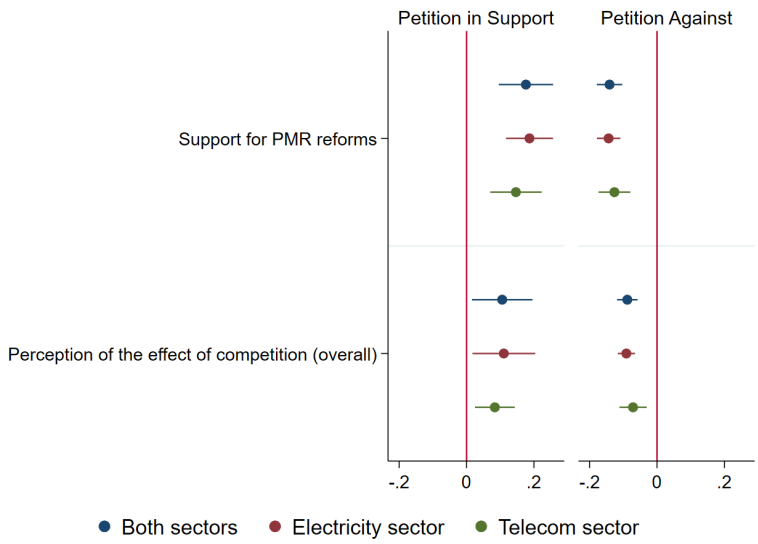
generated by bots, YouGov imposed checks for disposable email domains, duplicate answers in open-ended questions, and suspicious similarities between email addresses. To identify inattentive respondents, we included two attention check questions unrelated to the content of the survey. The first attention check required respondents to follow specific instructions to answer a multiple-choice question about their level of interest in sports. The second attention check asked respondents to state their favorite color according to the given instructions. The second question was used to screen out inattentive respondents in the baseline sample, while the first question was used for robustness analysis. Additionally, YouGov conducted a qualitative review to remove duplicate entries, nonsense responses, and other suspicious entries that indicated a lack of attention or authenticity in open-ended questions.

2.4 Real-stakes Questions

While the survey questionnaire is designed to directly elicit respondents' views on PMR policies, one possible concern is that self-reported preferences may not necessarily align with actual behavior. Several studies have nonetheless documented a correlation between survey responses and actual behavior when both can be measured (such as Fehr et al., 2021). Although the current setting does not allow us to directly measure policy support in the real world, we include real-stakes questions in the survey. More precisely, after eliciting policy support, the survey asks respondents if they would be willing to sign a hypothetical petition, either in support of or against the policy to foster private participation in utility sectors.

Figure 1 shows the correlations between respondents' willingness to sign petitions and post-treatment support for the policies, as well as perceptions about the effect of policies. Support is measured through a post-treatment question assessing respondents' approval of private companies to producing and selling in the particular sector, while perceptions are evaluated through a post-treatment question that gauges respondents' view on whether private companies competing to provide services benefits or harms consumers. The coefficients shown in Figure 1 are estimated based on regressions of petition signing on policy support and perceptions with controls for socioeconomic characteristics and country fixed effects. The analysis is conducted based on the entire sample, as well as sub-samples for the electricity and telecommunications sectors respectively. Indeed, respondents showing stronger support for PMR reforms are about 20% more likely to sign a petition in support of policies fostering private participation, and around 15% less likely to sign a petition limiting private participation. The correlations are qualitatively similar, though less pronounced for respondents having more positive perceptions about the effects of private participation.

Figure 1: Correlation between Support for Policies and Petition Signing



Note: This figure presents the regression coefficients for two variables: 1) the level of support for private participation in utility sectors, and 2) the perception of whether competition has a positive effect on consumers. The dependent variable is a dummy indicating whether the respondent signed a petition either in support of or against policies promoting private participation. The regressions control for individual socioeconomic characteristics. See Appendix A.5 for the precise definitions of the variables.

2.5 Questionnaire Structure

Our survey consists of 7 main sections, as outlined in Figure 2. We maintained a uniform questionnaire structure across the surveys for all three countries. Appendix A.10 provides the full questionnaire and the links to the English version of each country's questionnaire.

Socioeconomic Questions: We start by collecting basic socioeconomic information from respondents, including their age, gender, race, region of residence, employment, language, education, and whether they live in urban or rural areas. These demographic questions are used in the analysis but also for quota targeting, so need to be placed at the beginning of the survey.

Pre-treatment Beliefs: We ask respondents four groups of pre-treatment beliefs questions. The first set elicits respondents' societal views about trust, as well as their perceptions about corruption in the country, distribution of income, and standard of living. For example, respondents are asked "Would you say the governments in Mexico/Morocco/South Africa can or cannot be trusted, no matter which political party is in charge?" A second set gauges

respondents' views about the market economy, the role of the government, as well as private and foreign companies in the economy. For example, respondents are asked "How much do you think the government in Mexico/Morocco/South Africa should intervene in how private companies set prices for the goods and services they sell?" A third set collects respondents' knowledge about the sector's regulator, the satisfaction with services provided, perceptions about corruption in the utility sector, sector-specific views about the role utility companies in ensuring equity, of as well as their assessment on the impact of foreign companies involvement in the sector on the economy.[9] The final group centers on respondents' perception of private participation in the sector and their pre-treatment support for private participation.

Treatments: We randomly assign respondents into one of two information treatments or to a control group. The different treatments are described in Section 4.1. The treatments scripts for South Africa for the electricity sector, the links to the treatments for all countries in both sectors, and other data sources used to design the treatments are reported in Appendix A.3.

Post-treatment beliefs, support for policies, and willingness to act: This section of the survey consists of three parts. First, we elicit respondents' post-treatment beliefs about the effects of competition in the network sectors. We ask a general question about their overall beliefs regarding the impact for consumers when several companies compete to deliver services in the network sector, as well as specific questions about the effects on cost, quality, and access to services. Second, we gauge respondents' support for private participation in the network sector. Finally, we include real-stakes questions asking whether respondents would be willing to sign two petitions—one in favor of policies facilitating the entry of private firms into the sector, and the other limiting such entry.

Reasons behind support or opposition: Respondents were asked why they support or do not support policies that facilitate private participation in the network sector. They could select personal reasons (such as concerns over job loss or higher costs), societal reasons (such as the potential impact on the economy or their community), or other reasons (including national security concerns, with an open box for additional respondent-specific reasons). For those who support the policies, we further ask if they would still support if it meant the government sells its own businesses in the network sector to private companies. For those who oppose the policies, we ask if they would reconsider their stance if the government committed to complementary and compensatory measures addressing their concerns.

[9] At the start of this third set of pre-treatment belief questions, and for the remainder of the survey, half of the respondents in each country are randomly assigned to a questionnaire that focuses exclusively on one of the two sectors—either electricity or telecommunications.

Finally, those who remain opposed despite the complementary and compensatory measures are then asked to specify the reason.

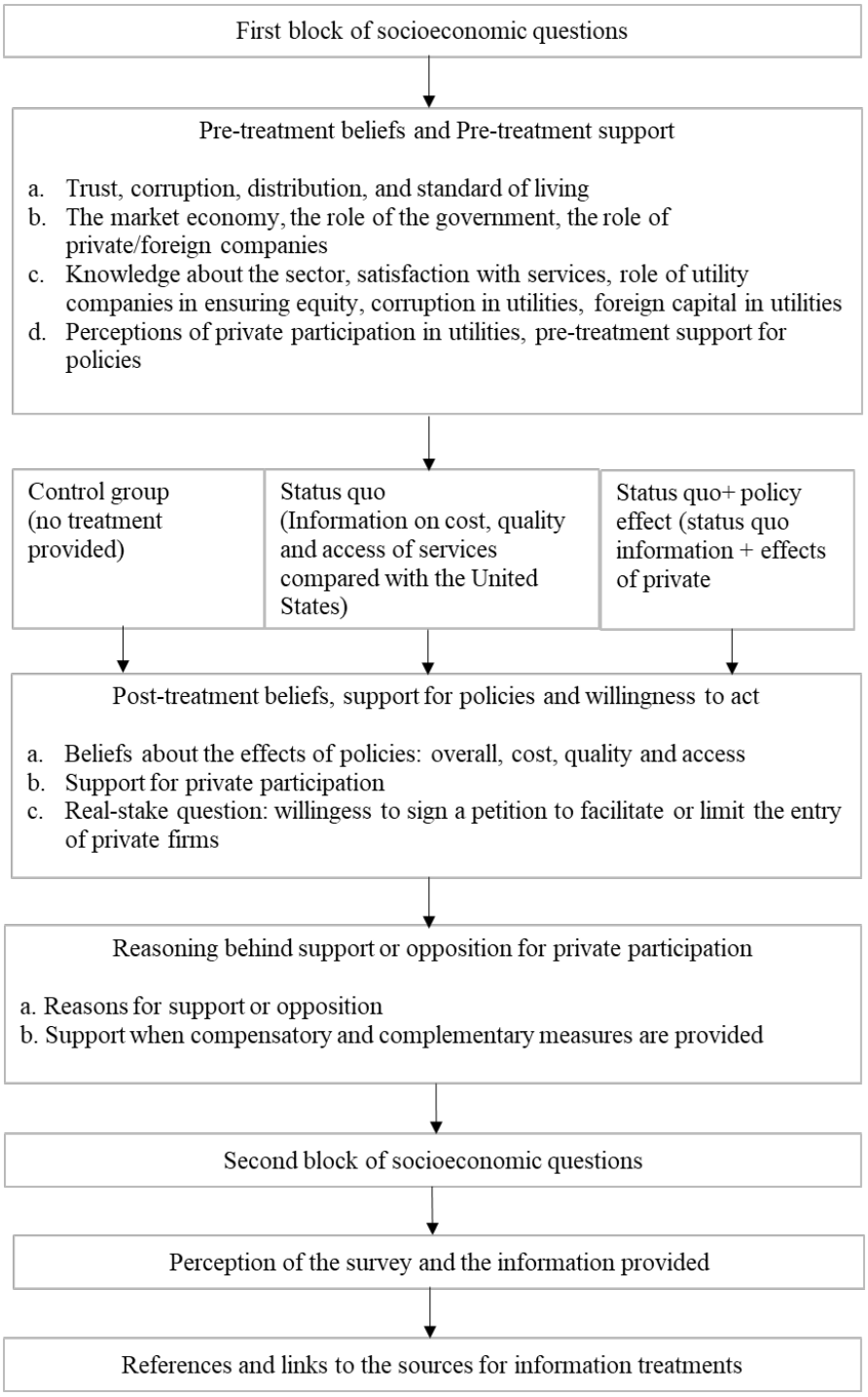
Additional socioeconomic questions, perceptions of the survey, and links: This section includes additional socioeconomic questions, which allow us to expand the set of control variables and study heterogeneous treatment effects. Since these questions cover predetermined characteristics that are not used for quota targeting purposes, we include them toward the end of the survey to minimize attention deficits in the main blocks. The survey concludes with a final section on respondents' perceptions of the survey (such as perceived political bias, trustworthiness, or easiness to understand, and length of the survey), which allows us to conduct robustness analysis. For treated respondents who expressed interest, we also provide links to the sources and studies referenced in the treatment sections.

All variables used and constructed from the questionnaire are defined in Appendix A.5. The descriptive statistics for our main variable of interest, support for policies, and for the petitions are presented in Appendix A.6. We show in Appendix A.7 that respondents' socioeconomic characteristics are broadly balanced between the control and treatment groups.

3 What Explains Support for PMR reforms?

We first study respondents views about private participation and competition in network sectors. In particular, we investigate how individuals perceive the effect of allowing private companies to compete to provide electricity and telecommunications for consumers, including in terms of service price, quality, and access. We then explore the role these perceptions related to policy effects in explaining support for PMR reforms, and compare their role with that of other beliefs flagged in the literature (e.g., trust and distributional concerns) as well as individual characteristics (which can underpin economic self-interest).

Figure 2: Questionnaire outline



3.1 Perceptions about the effects of private participation and competition

A key aspect of interest in our survey is respondents' beliefs about the impact of private participation and competition. How do people perceive private participation and competition? We elicit respondents' perceptions about the overall effect of having more competition in the electricity or telecommunications sector for consumers on a scale between highly detrimental and highly beneficial. We do the same for questions eliciting respondents' perceptions about about of competition on the price the would pay, the quality of the service they would receive, and in terms of the extent of access to services by the population.

In Figure A5, we report the shares of respondents in the control group for each country with positive views about the overall effect of competition, as well as effect on the cost, quality, and access of services. Panel 3a reports the shares pooling together respondents assigned to the two sectors, while Panels 3b and 3c report the shares for the electricity and telecommunications sector respectively.

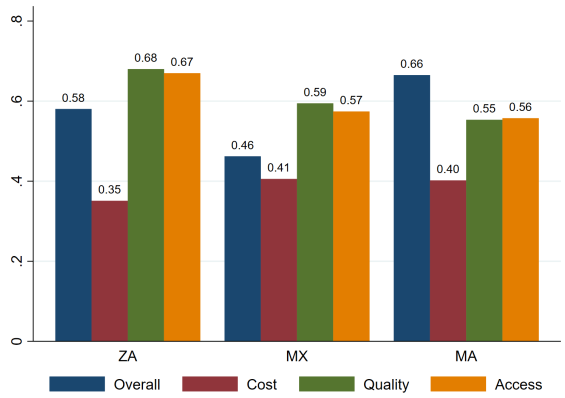
Our survey reveals significant heterogeneity in favorable views regarding private participation and competition across countries, sectors, and service aspects. Respondents in Mexico tend to have the least favorable opinions, with only 39% in the electricity sector survey and 54% in the telecommunications sector survey expressing positive perceptions of the overall role of private participation and competition. In contrast, in South Africa and Morocco, over 50% of respondents in the electricity sector survey and over 60% in the telecommunications sector survey hold positive views. When examining different service aspects, respondents are the least positive about the impact of private participation and competition on costs, with only around 40% expressing favorable perceptions. In comparison, around 60% have positive views regarding quality and access to services. Additionally, favorable perceptions are consistently higher in the telecommunications sector than in the electricity sector across all dimensions mentioned above, except for the perception of the cost impact in South Africa.

Who has positive views regarding the effect of of private participation and competition? To identify the types of respondents who view competition more favorably, we regress the standardized perceptions variable on respondents' socioeconomic characteristics and views and satisfaction with the sector, controlling for country fixed effects and treatment indicators. Figure 4 reports coefficients from the whole sample, including both respondents assigned to the electricity sector survey and those assigned to the telecommunications sector survey.[10]

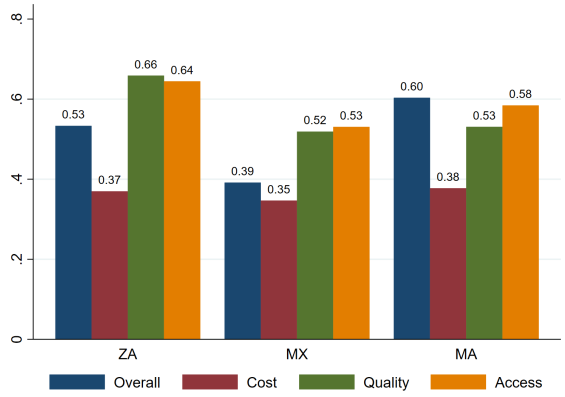
[10]Throughout the paper, we plotted the estimated coefficients from the regressions. The corresponding regression tables are reported in Appendix A.9.

Figure 3: Share of Positive Views about the Effects of Competition in Network Sectors

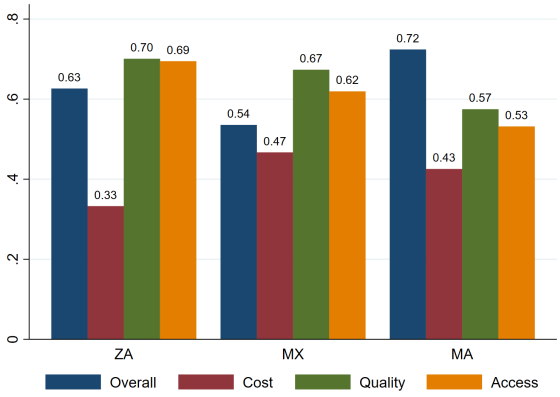
(a) Both Sectors



(b) Electricity Sector



(c) Telecommunications Sector

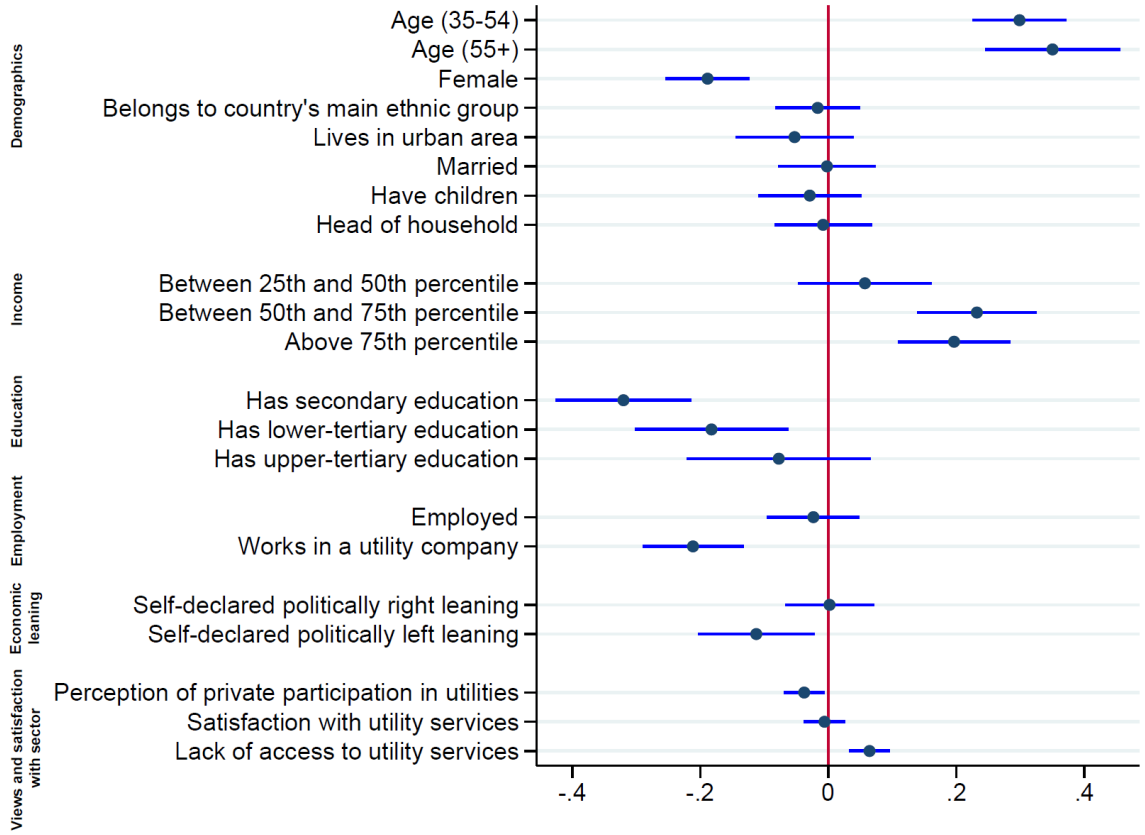


Note: This figure presents the fractions of respondents in the control group in each country who hold positive views on the impact of competition on overall consumer welfare, as well as on the cost, quality, and accessibility of services provided. ZA = South Africa, MX = Mexico, MA = Morocco.

In Appendix A.8.1, we present alternative results in Figures A6 and A7 based on the sub-sample for the electricity sector and telecommunications sector only.

Overall, perceptions of private participation and competition in the network sectors tend to be more positive among males, older individuals (aged 35 or above), higher-income respondents (those in the upper 50th percentile), and those who perceive limited private participation in network sectors or have experienced limited access to services. Conversely, respondents with lower levels of education (secondary), those working in utility companies, and individuals with left-wing political orientations tend to have more negative views on private participation and competition.

Figure 4: Perceptions of the overall effect of competition, socioeconomic characteristics, and views and satisfaction with sector: Both Sectors



Note: This figure shows the regression coefficients of socioeconomic characteristics, and views and satisfaction with the sector, with the dependent variable being individuals' overall belief about the beneficial effect of competition in the network sectors. The dots represent point estimates and spikes represent 95% confidence intervals. For the precise definitions of the variables, see Appendix A.5.

3.2 Predicting policy support: Beliefs and perceptions versus socioeconomic characteristics.

We then study the role that individual socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs, and perceptions play in shaping support for PMR reforms. The analysis relies of the following specification:

$$y_{i,c} = \beta_2 S_{i,c} + \beta_3 B_{i,c} + \beta_1 T_{i,c} + \theta_c + u_{i,c} \tag{1}$$

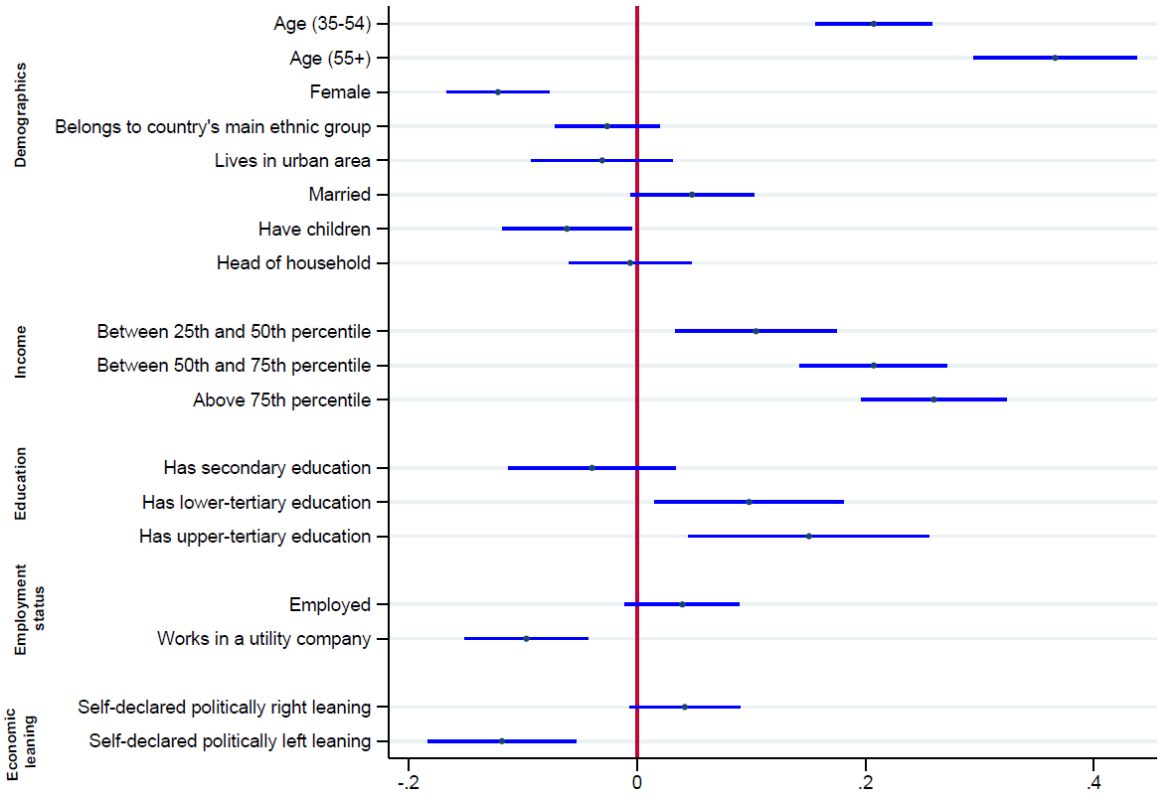
where $y_{i,c}$ is the main variable of interest, support for *PMR reforms*, for the individual i of country c. The vector $S_{i,c}$ captures individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, that can be grouped into five main categories: demographics, income, education, employment, and political leaning. Similarly, $B_{i,c}$ represents individuals' beliefs and perceptions, which can also grouped into five categories: market economy, distribution and equity, trust and corruption, views and satisfaction with sector, and knowledge and effect of policies. The model specification accounts for the treatment indicators ($T_{i,c}$), country fixed effects (θ_c), and $u_{i,c}$ represents the error term. We estimate equation 1 above using an OLS regression.

We first report the results when including only individuals' socioeconomic characteristics ($S_{i,c}$) that can arguably underpin economic self-interest but no variables on beliefs and perceptions ($B_{i,c}$). The results in Figure 5 show that support for PMR reforms is notably lower among individuals working in, or who know someone working in, public utility companies.[11] This may reflect self-interest concerns about the potential costs of introducing competition in network sectors, consistent with previous findings on anti-reform bias (Fernandez and Rodrik, 1991; Rodrik, 1995). Additionally, support is lower among women and respondents with children, likely reflecting the lower risk tolerance generally observed among these groups (Barsky et al., 1997). Similarly, respondents who self-identify as politically left-leaning also demonstrate lower support for reforms, consistent with the broader literature on political orientation and market-oriented reforms (Bortolotti et al., 2002; Duval et al., 2024). Conversely, support for PMR reforms tends to increase with age, income, and education levels, indicating that higher social status may be associated with greater openness to reform in network sectors.

We then incorporate beliefs and perceptions variables into the regression explaining support for PMR reforms, while again controlling for treatment indicators, country fixed effects, but also for individual socioeconomic characteristics. The results reported in Figure 6 high-

[11] The results for the two sectors combined are broadly consistent with results for each individual sector. Those individual sectors results are reported in Appendix A.8.

Figure 5: Correlation between socioeconomic characteristics and support for policies - Both sectors



Note: The figure shows the estimated coefficients from Ordinary Least Squares regressions of the support for PMR reforms (electricity and telecommunications sectors combined) on individuals' socioeconomic characteristics. The regression controls for the treatment indicators and country fixed effects. A positive coefficient indicates an increase in policy support. Bars represent 90% confidence intervals. See Appendix A.5 for the precise definitions of the variables.

light several key findings. First, respondents who hold pro-market beliefs—those who believe the government should play a minimal role in market activities or view foreign capital as beneficial—are more supportive of PMR reforms.

Second, respondents who perceive income distribution in their country as unfair are less supportive of reforms. Earlier studies pointed that public discontent with privatization of utility services could reflect a deep ideological principle that basic needs, such as water or electricity, should not be subject to the profit calculus of private firms (McKenzie et al., 2003). Interestingly, however, we find that those who believe that the government should ensure everyone has access to essential utility services, or that companies providing these services have a key role in reducing inequality and ensuring fair access, do not necessarily

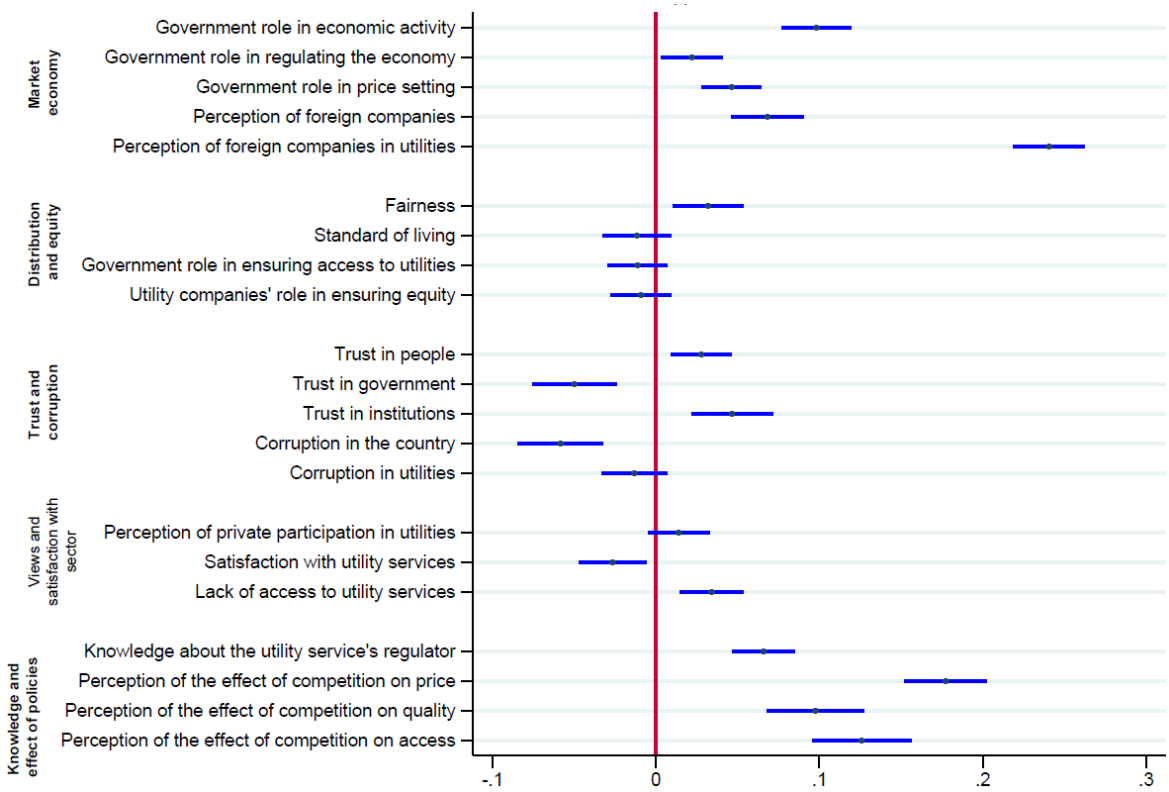
oppose private participation in these sectors. The two variables capturing these factors are not statistically significant.

Third, our survey allow to dig deeper into postulated relationships between trust and attitudes toward private participation (notably privatizations) based on earlier experiences. Lora and Panizza (2003) posit that public discontent with privatizations in Latin America was stronger where they were contaminated with corruption, but also where institutions failed (i.e., regulation was not able to prevent monopolistic practices). Di Tella and Macculloch (2009) argue that perceptions that the level of corruption is widespread may call for higher state ownership of business while Estache et al. (2009) suggest that the introduction of independent regulatory institutions can offset the effect of corruption. Our results show that trust in others and in public institutions (e.g., courts and parliament) is significantly and positively associated with support for private participation. Low trust in the government and perceptions of corruption are however associated with a favorable view toward private participation. Differently from previous studies, our analysis is based on questions about hypothetical rather than actual reforms, so this finding likely reflects that people are skeptic to let governments they don't trust or see as corrupt handle utility services. In a similar vein, we find that respondents dissatisfied with public utility services, or those who experienced a lack of access for themselves or someone close to them, tend to be more supportive of reforms.

Last but not least, beliefs about the expected effects of reforms strongly correlate with support. Specifically, respondents who perceive that having companies compete to provide utility services can lead to lower prices, improved quality, or broader access to services, are more likely to support PMR reforms.

What is the relative role of individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs, and perceptions in explaining support for PMR reforms? Previous studies using surveys to study the determinants of support at the individual level in other policy areas have demonstrated that beliefs and perceptions often exert a stronger influence on policy support than socioeconomic characteristics (such as the education level and sector of employment). For example, Dechezleprêtre et al. (2022) find that approximately 70% of individuals' views on climate policy are explained by belief-related covariates, whereas individual characteristics account for only 17%. Similar results have been reported by Dabla-Norris et al. (2023) regarding support for carbon pricing, and Duval et al. (2024) with respect to attitudes toward employment protection legislation. This raises the question: do beliefs and perceptions similarly outweigh individual socioeconomic characteristics in explaining support for product martket

Figure 6: Correlation between beliefs and perceptions and support for policies - Both sectors



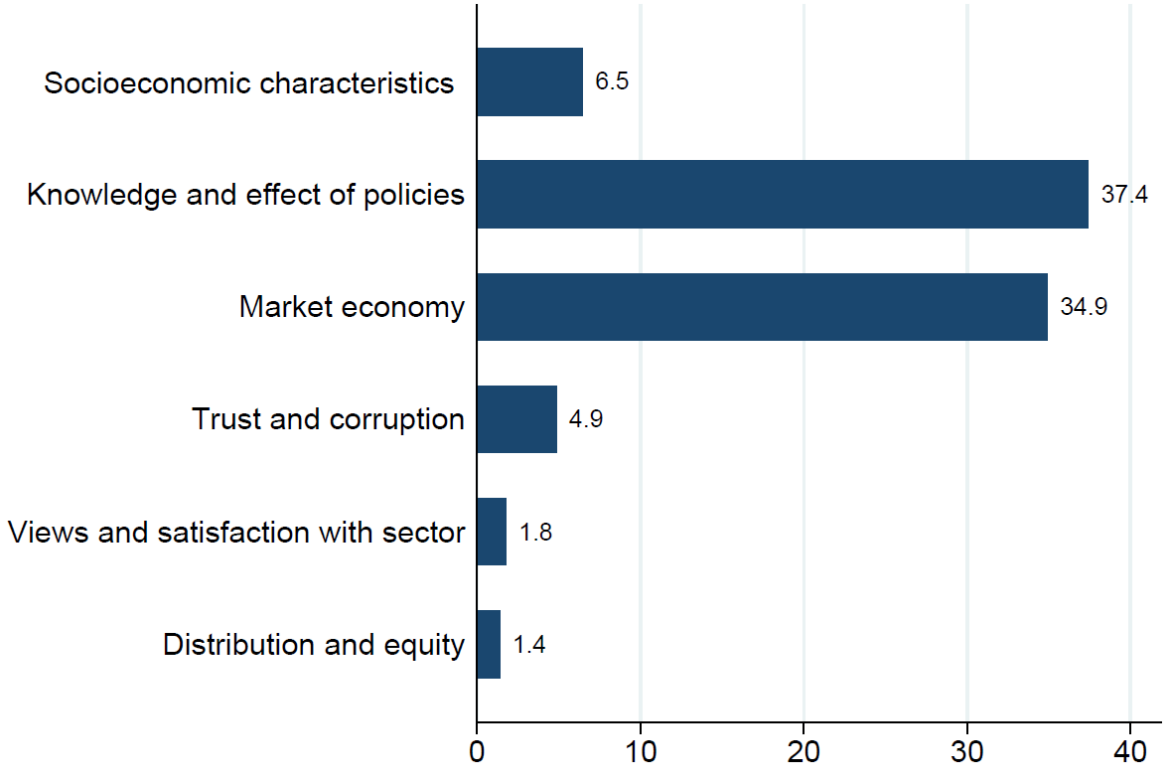
Note: The figure shows the estimated coefficients from Ordinary Least Squares regressions of the support for PMR reforms (electricity and telecommunications sectors combined) on individuals' beliefs and perceptions. The regression controls for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, the treatment indicators and country fixed effects. A positive coefficient indicates an increase in policy support. Bars represent 90% confidence intervals. See Appendix A.5 for the precise definitions of the variables.

reforms? To answer this question, we follow Dabla-Norris et al. (2023) and use a dominance analysis in the spirit of Luchman (2021) to decompose the share of overall variance in people's support for PMR reforms explained by different explanatory variables.

The results of the dominance analysis are reported in Figure 7, for both sectors combined. The findings suggest that while individual socioeconomic characteristics do play a role, they account for only 6% of individuals' support for reforms. In contrast, policy views are primarily driven by individuals' beliefs and perceptions, some of which can be affected by the design of reforms. Overall, beliefs and perceptions explain about 80% of support for policies. Out of this, knowledge and perceptions of policies explain the largest share (37%) of support for PMR reforms, while market-oriented beliefs also contribute a substantial share (35%) of policy views. Distributional concerns, together with trust and perceptions on corruption,

weigh as much as individual characteristics in explaining support. These findings hold true at the sector level (see Appendix A.8 for results for the electricity and telecommunications sectors separately).

Figure 7: Drivers of PMR reforms support - Both sectors



Note: The figure shows the results of a dominance analysis that quantifies the share of variance in support for PMR reforms (electricity and telecommunications sectors combined) by individuals' socioeconomic characteristics and different sets of beliefs and perceptions based on an Ordinary Least Squares regression. The regression controls for country fixed effects and treatments indicators, whose contributions are not shown. See Appendix A.5 for the precise definitions of the variables in each group.

4 Randomized Information Experiment

This section focuses of the experimental part of the survey and presents the average treatment effects from the *Status quo* and *Status quo + effect of policies* on individuals' support for policies, willingness to sign petitions, as well as their beliefs about the effect of policies.

4.1 The treatments

Respondents are randomly given one of two alternative information treatments or assigned to a control group that receives no information. The content of the information treatments is conditional, in turn, to the sector to which respondents were randomly assigned earlier in the survey.

***Status Quo* treatment.** The literature on the political economy of reforms has stressed that lack of awareness of the need for reform (i.e., the cost of the status quo) is a key obstacle for advancing structural reforms (e.g., Tompson, 2009). In the context of utility sectors, Andrés et al. (2013) highlight that better communication the likely impact and the consequences of maintaining the status quo is key to garner popular support for reforms. However, there is scant empirical evidence of the relevance of this hypothesis. The first information treatment aims to fill this void. It provides respondents with sector-specific information about the cost of the status quo (that is, the opportunity cost of maintaining the nonreform scenario). For the electricity sector, we provide information on the unit cost of electricity (in purchasing power) in the respondent's country compared to the US and information on the quality of services (measured by the frequency and duration of power cuts), based on latest factual data gathered from the International Energy Agency and the World Bank's Enterprise Surveys. For the telecommunications sector, we provide factual information the cost of mobile phone subscription and mobile download speeds in the respondent's country relative to the US, along with information on the percentage of individuals without internet access in the respondent's country, based on latest available information from the International Telecommunication Union and Global System for Mobile Communications. The treatment does not convey any information on private participation in network sectors.

***Status Quo* + *Effect of Policies* treatment.** Providing information on how policies work has found to be effective in boosting public support for, e.g., climate policies (Douenne and Fabre, 2022; Dechezleprêtre et al., 2022; Dabla-Norris et al., 2023) or labor-market deregulation (Duval et al., 2024). The objective of the second treatment is to assess whether those findings hold for product market policies. It complements the first treatment by adding research-based corss-country evidence on the effect of PMR reforms. In addition to the *Status quo* treatment's information, this treatment presents a simple description of findings from the literature on how private participation in the network sector led to improvements in cost, quality, and access to electricity or telecommunications services in other countries,

especially when reforms where combined with strong regulation ensuring competition and customer protection. It also provides illustrative examples from selected countries. Survey participants are given links to cross-country studies from the World Bank (Harris, 2003) and the Inter-American Development Bank (Balza et al., 2020a, which was published as Balza et al., 2020b) supporting those findings.[12] The overall findings reported in the treatment are consistent with those in a wider range of studies (e.g., Zhang et al., 2008; Fay and Morrison, 2007; Wallsten, 2001; Andrés et al., 2013).

4.2 Effects of the treatments on support for policies

Given our information treatments are randomly assigned, we can estimate the causal impacts of the two treatment variables, $T_{i,c}$ in Equation 1, on individuals' policy support. The estimated coefficient, β_1, measures the average treatment effect of respondents to each of the two information treatments, that is the average difference in support for policies between each treatment group and the control group.

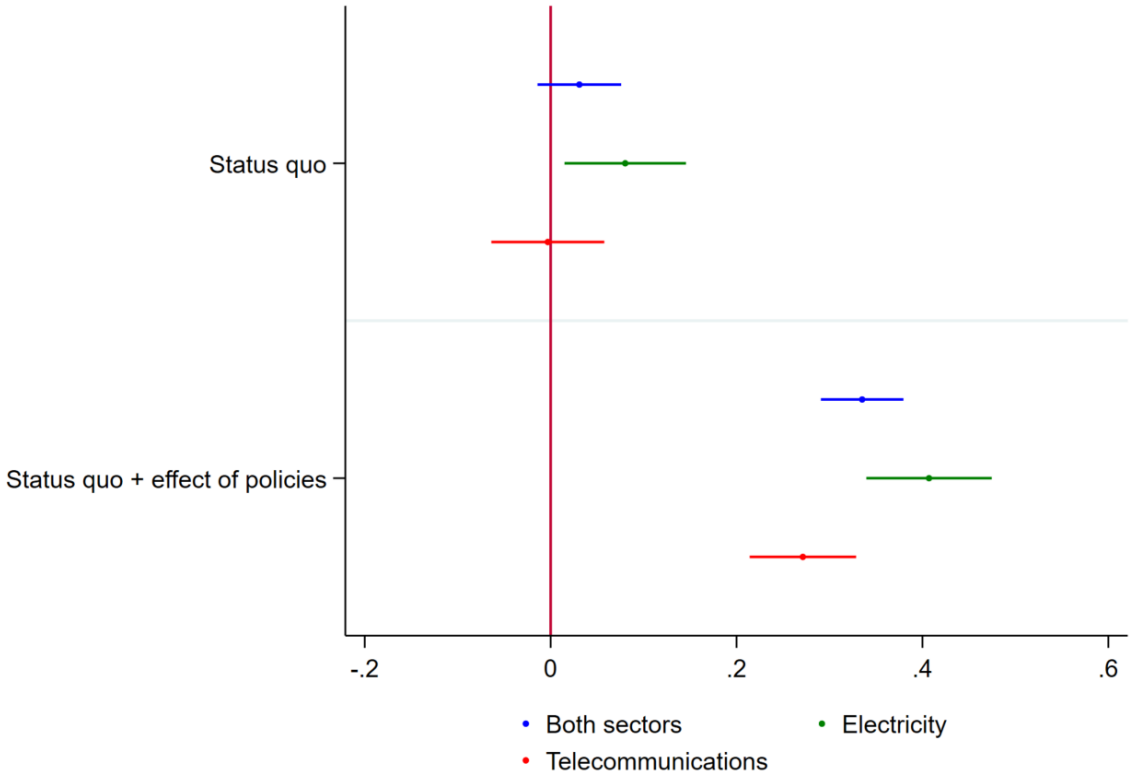
We report the estimated effects of the information treatments on policy support in Figure 8 for both sectors combined, as well as for the electricity and telecommunications sectors individually, using our pre-specified measure of self-reported support for reforms. The *Status Quo treatment* has a positive and statistically significant effect on support for reforms in the electricity sector. However, the estimated effects are statistically insignificant for both sectors combined and for the telecommunications sector. The relatively small treatment effect observed in the electricity sector (a 0.08 increase in the standard deviation of the policy support variable) remains economically meaningful, as it represents a 30% reduction in the policy support gap between left-wing and right-wing respondents on this issue. This suggests that raising awareness of the costs of not reforming primarily influences support for reforms in the electricity sector, but not in the telecommunications sector.

By contrast, the *Status Quo + Effect of Policies* treatment exhibits much stronger and more consistent effects across both sectors. The estimated impacts are positive and statistically significant for both sectors combined, as well as for the electricity and telecommunications sectors individually. The treatment effect is particularly strong in the electricity sector, where the effect size is approximately 50% larger than in the telecommunications sector. Quantitatively, the *Status Quo + Effect of Policies* effects are equivalent to 1.5 times and 1.7 times the policy support gap between left-wing and right-wing respondents for the electricity

[12] After the information treatments, we ask the treated respondents if they would like to view the links to the sources and studies mentioned at the end of the survey, to avoid attrition.

and telecommunications sectors, respectively.

Figure 8: Effect of the treatments on policy support



Note: The figure shows the treatments effects on support for PMR reforms for both sectors, the electricity sector and the telecommunications sector using Ordinary Least Squares regressions. The regressions control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perception, and country fixed effects. Bars represent 90% confidence intervals. See Appendix A.5 for detailed variables definitions.

The disparity in treatment effects between the two sectors—both for the *Status Quo* treatment and the *Status Quo + Effect of Policies* treatment—can be explained by several factors. First, it may reflect that, on average, respondents already see the initial level of private participation as higher in the telecommunications sector, compared to the electricity sector. It may also reflect higher levels of satisfaction with utility services in the telecommunications sector compared to the electricity sector. Indeed, as shown in Table A1 the perception of private participation and satisfaction with services in the telecommunications sector are significantly higher than in the electricity sector. Third, as we will discuss in Section 4.4, these differences may also reflect respondents' underlying beliefs and perceptions regarding the beneficial effects of competition in each sector. Section 6 will further explore the variation

in support for reforms at the country level and the interaction between the treatments and individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs, and perceptions.

4.3 Effects of the treatments on willingness to sign petitions

Are the effects of the treatments on real-stakes measures consistent with those observed for support for policies? To address this question, we estimate the treatment effects on respondents' willingness to sign the petitions using Equation (1), with the dependent variable $y_{i,c}$ measuring the willingness to sign the hypothetical petitions to either facilitate or limit private entry. A pre-specified petition index is constructed using these two petition variables, where the index takes a value of -1 for respondents willing to sign the petition limiting private entry, 1 for those supporting the petition facilitating entry, and 0 for respondents who either declined to sign or expressed willingness to sign both petitions. Figure 9 presents the estimated average treatment effects on the treated for the three petition variables.

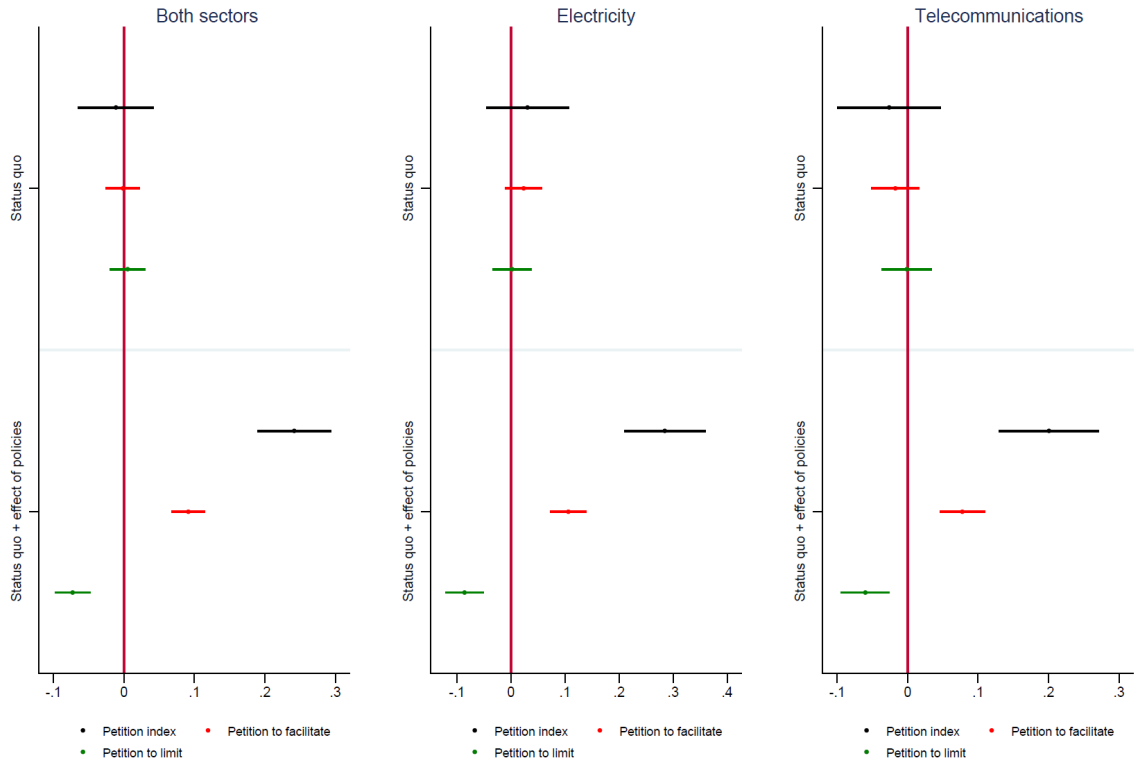
The *Status Quo* treatment has no statistically significant impact on respondents' willingness to sign any of the petitions. While the estimated effects of the petition index and the petition to facilitate entry have the expected direction in the electricity sector, they are not statistically significant. Echoing Dechezleprêtre et al. (2022), our finding suggests that the *Status Quo* treatment does not generate demand for private actions.

In contrast, the *Status Quo* + *Effect of Policies* treatment has both statistically and economically significant impacts on the petition index and on respondents' willingness to facilitate or limit private entry in both sectors. This treatment increases respondents' willingness to sign a petition asking the government to facilitate private entry by 11.3% in the electricity sector and by 6.7% in the telecommunications sector, corresponding to increases of 20.9% and 10.1% relative to control group means of 54.1% and 66.6%, respectively.[13] Similarly, the *Status Quo* + *Effect of Policies* treatment decreases respondents' willingness to sign the petition to limit private entry by 9% in the electricity sector and 5.4% in the telecommunications sector, corresponding to reductions of 17.3% and 12.8% relative to control group means of 52.1% and 42.2%, respectively.

Taken together, these results suggest that the *Status Quo* + *Effect of Policies* treatment generates demand for both public policy reform and private action. The fact that this treatment significantly influences the willingness to sign a petition while this is not the case for the Status *Quo treatment* suggests that the effects are due to the specific information content,

[13]The control group's means for the petitions to facilitate and limit are reported in Appendix A.6.

Figure 9: Effect of the treatments on willingness to sign a petition



Note: The figure shows the treatments effects on the willingness to sign petitions for both sectors, the electricity sector and the telecommunications sector using Ordinary Least Squares regressions. The regressions control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perception, and country fixed effects. Bars represent 90% confidence intervals. See Appendix A.5 for detailed variables definitions.

and not simply to priming about utility services.

4.4 Uncovering the mechanism: Treatment Effects on policy beliefs

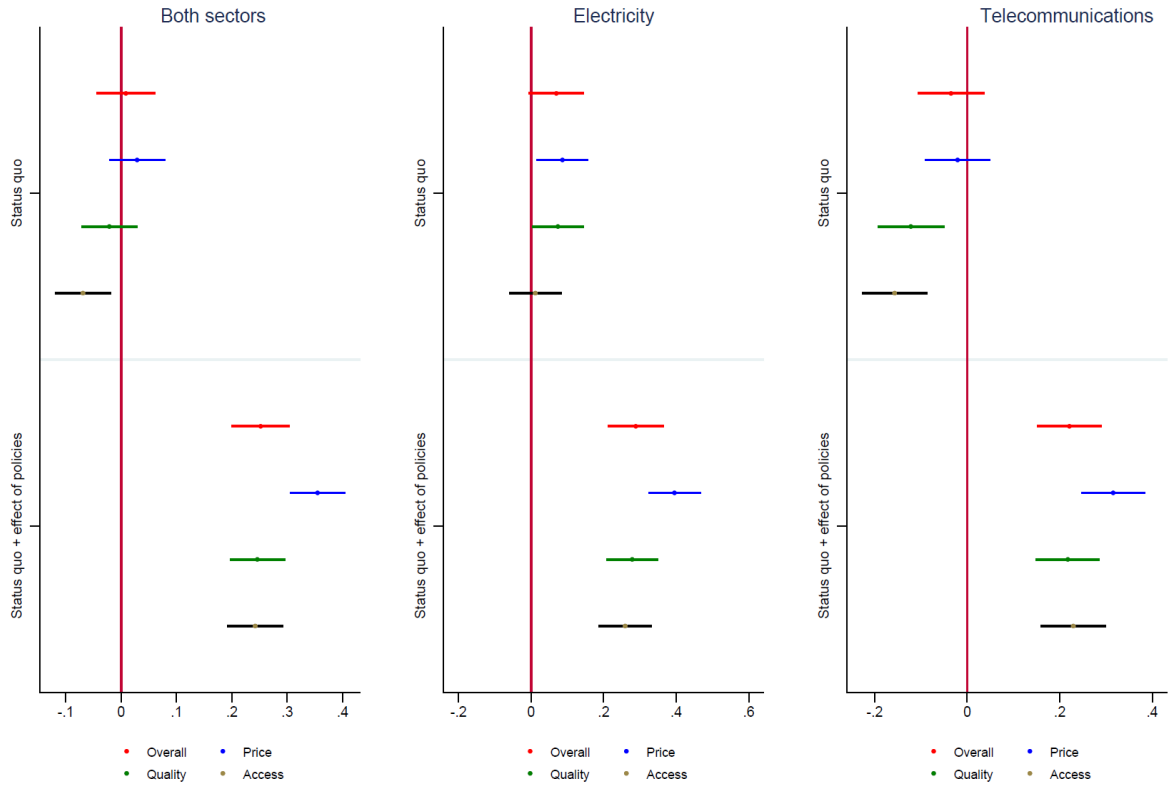
Respondents may hold differing beliefs about the impact of policies aimed at fostering competition in the electricity and telecommunications sectors. Analyzing how the treatments influence individuals' perceptions of these policies provides insight into the earlier findings regarding respondents' support for reforms and their intentions to take private actions. Furthermore, this analysis helps explain the variation in both the direction and magnitude of the treatment effects, as well as the sectoral differences outlined in previous sections. To address this, we estimate the impact of the treatments on individuals' perceptions of policy effects using Equation (1). The dependent variables are four perceptions of the effect of private

participation and competition: an overall perception of whether it is beneficial or not for consumers, and three perception variables related separately to the perceived effect on the cost, quality, and access to services in each sector. Figure 10 presents the regression results.

Focusing first on the *Status Quo* treatment, informing respondents about the costs of nonreform does not significantly change individuals' perceptions about the overall effect of private participation and competition for consumers in any of the two sectors. Since perceptions about the effect of policies are strong predictors of policy support (Section 3.2), the insignificant treatment effect on policy perceptions is consistent with the rather small effect of the *Status Quo* treatment on policy support (Section 4.2). Looking at perceived effects on individual dimensions (prices, quality, and access), the treatment increases (marginally) the perception that competition in the electricity sector leads to lower prices for consumers (the estimated impact is statistically significant at only the 10% level). This is consistent with the results in Section 4.2, suggesting that the rise in respondents' perception of the benefits of competition on prices likely explains the treatment effect on policy support in the electricity sector. Surprisingly, however, the *Status Quo* treatment reduces respondents' beliefs that having companies compete in the telecommunications sector leads to improvements in quality and access. This may reflect the differences in pre-treatment perceptions of private participation and satisfaction between sectors (see Table A1) and the nature of the content of the information treatment. While the treatment does not make any reference to private participation, informing how bad the quality and access to telecommunications in their country is compared to that in the US may lead to a negative shift in policy perceptions.

On the other hand, the *Status Quo* + *Effects of Policies* treatment significantly improves respondents' overall perception of the effects of competition for consumers, as well as their perceptions that it leads to lower prices, better quality, and better access, in both the electricity and telecommunications sectors. Since those beliefs are key predictors of policy support (Section 3.2), these results confirm that the additional information on the effects of policies is really what makes a difference for the effect that this treatment has on policy support. Also consistent with the results on policy support is Section 4.2, the magnitude of the treatment effects on all four perception measures is notably higher in the electricity sector (ranging from 0.295 to 0.410 standard deviations) compared to the telecommunications sector (ranging from 0.189 to 0.289 standard deviations)—with differences between both sectors being 33.7% higher for perceptions about access to 63.5% for the overall perception variable.

Figure 10: Effect of the treatments on beliefs about the effects of policies



Note: The figure shows the treatments effects on the beliefs about the effects of policies for both sectors, the electricity sector and the telecommunications sector using Ordinary Least Squares regressions. The regressions control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perception, and country fixed effects. Bars represent 90% confidence intervals. See Appendix A.5 for detailed variables definitions.

5 Reasons of Non-Support and Mitigation Policies

The results in the previous sections showed that effective information strategies can shift perceptions about policies and increase reform support. However, approximately 60.5% and 50.2% of respondents in the electricity and telecommunications sectors, respectively, who received the *Status Quo* treatment, indicated they would not support the reform. For the *Status quo + Effect of Policies* treatment, these figures drop to 48.5% and 37.3% but are still large. This suggests that simply explaining the need for reform and how policies can improve outcomes is not sufficient to secure comprehensive support. Leveraging the experimental setup of the survey, we zoom in on these individuals who say they would not support

policy change.[14] This helps identify the main reasons for nonsupport and test whether complementing reforms with mitigating measures would change their stance. To this end, and as discussed in section 2.5, we first ask respondents why they do not support the policy change. Next, we inquire if they would reconsider their position if the government committed to hypothetical measures tailored to address their concerns.

We provide three hypothetical mitigating measures to respondents, depending on their stated concern. First, for respondents expressing concerns about the cost and quality of services, or risks related to national security if the sector is handled by private companies, the corresponding mitigating measure is the creation of an independent regulatory agency (to ensure, for instance, that companies compete to deliver high-quality services at fair prices). Next, for those with concerns about access and affordability of services for the poorest, the mitigating measure assumes the government commits to ensuring price affordability for the poorest households and adequate coverage across the country, including in remote rural areas. Finally, for respondents concerned about the effect of PMR reforms on jobs, the mitigating measure assumes temporary jobs protection and job-training programs for affected workers.

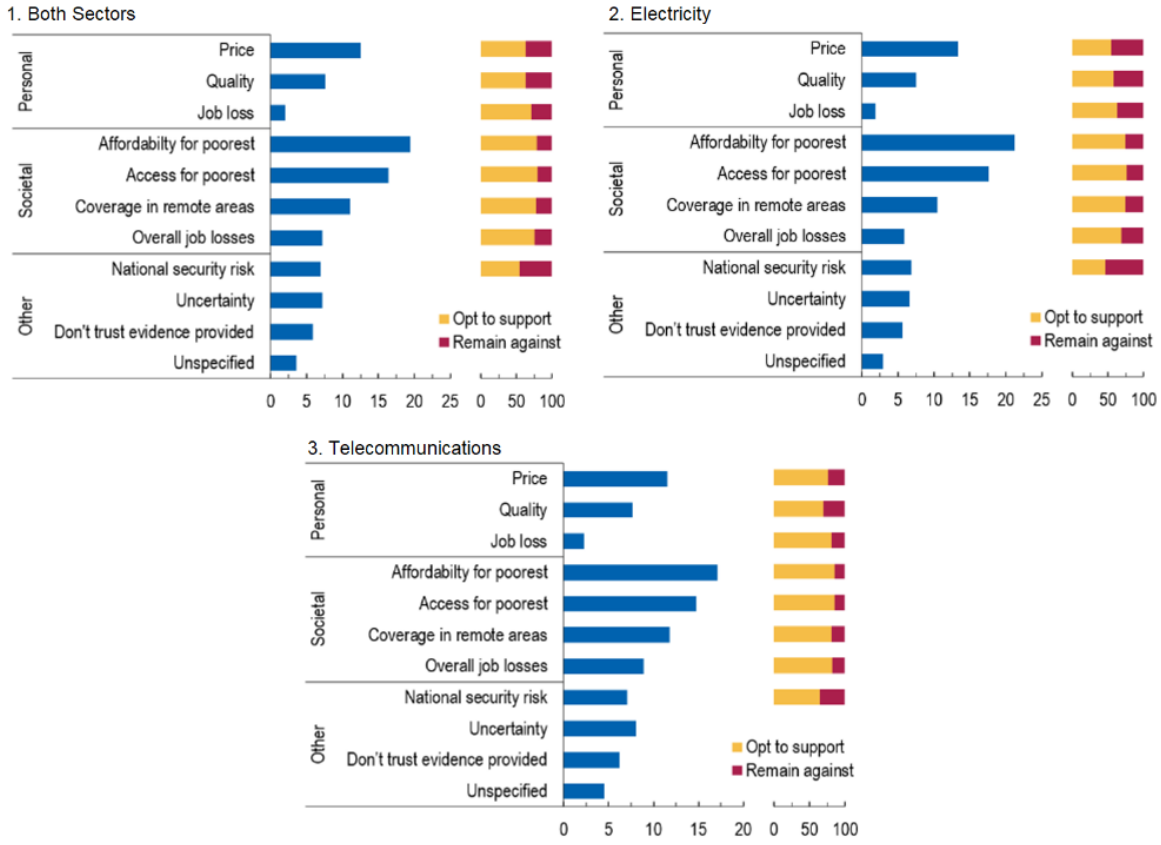
We group respondents' reasons for nonsupport into three categories: personal concerns (where individuals are worried that policy changes would personally affect them), social concerns (where individuals are worried about the impact on their communities), and other reasons (which include concerns related to national security risks, uncertainty about the reform's benefits, lack of trust in the evidence provided in the information treatments, or unspecified reasons). Figure 11 shows the distribution of reasons for nonsupport, focusing on the control group only, for both sectors combined (panel 1), and separately for the electricity sector (panel 2) and telecommunication sector (panel 3).[15] Irrespective of the sector, the results indicate that societal concerns play a much larger role. For both sectors combined, the two most cited reasons against PMR reforms are concerns about service affordability and access for the poorest households if private companies are allowed to manage the sector. Together, all societal concerns account for 54% of total responses. In contrast, self-interest or personal concerns—such as worries about price increases, service quality, or the possi-

[14] For those respondents who support the reform, we also ask if they would still support it if it required the government to sell its businesses in the network sector to private companies. Regardless of the sector, about 80% of these respondents maintained their support, with no significant difference between the treatment and control groups.

[15] We focus on the control group only to address any concerns related to the latent effects of the information treatments. Results on the whole sample (including the treatments groups) are quantitatively similar to those reported here.

bility of job loss—represent 22% of responses. Other concerns account for approximately 24% of responses. These results are broadly consistent across the electricity and telecommunications sectors. Our findings on the prominent role of societal concerns align broadly with models of social preferences regarding respondents' inequality aversion or Rawlsian maximin preferences (Charness and Rabin, 2002;Paetzel et al., 2014).

Figure 11: Reasons for nonsupport and role of compensatory and complementary measures



Note: The blue bars show the distribution of respondents' reasons for not supporting the reform (control group only). The yellow (red) bars display the proportion of these respondents that would opt to support policies (remain against) if offered mitigating measures. See Appendix A.10.2 for detailed questions on the reasons for nonsupport and compensatory and complementary measures.

Importantly, the results also indicate that, regardless of the concerns raised by respondents, offering tailored complementary and compensatory measures can significantly increase support for reforms. While these results should be interpreted as indicative rather than causal evidence, 50–80% of respondents in the control group who initially opposed PMR reforms indicated they would change their stance to support if mitigating measures

were implemented to address their concerns. The share of individuals who would opt to support the reforms exceeds the 50% mark across all complementary and compensatory measures, potentially highlighting the effectiveness of these measures as policy instruments for gaining public support.

We then ask those who indicate they would still oppose the reform, even if the government committed to provide complementary or compensatory mitigating measures, to indicate the reason for their ultimate non-support. Irrespective of the sector, those who continue to oppose reforms mostly cite reasons related to trust in the parties involved (the government and the private sector) and doubts about institutions' ability to implement the reforms or mitigating measures effectively (Table 1).

Table 1: Ultimate reasons for non-support

1. Both sectors	
Don't trust the private sector	43.8
Don't want the private sector or foreign investors to control the provision of services	35.9
Don't trust the government's willingness or ability to implement good reforms	18.2
Other Reasons	2.1
2. Electricity	
Don't trust the private sector	44.4
Don't want the private sector or foreign investors to control the provision of services	36.1
Don't trust the government's willingness or ability to implement good reforms	17.6
Other Reasons	1.9
3. Telecommunications	
Don't trust the private sector	42.2
Don't want the private sector or foreign investors to control the provision of services	35.1
Don't trust the government's willingness or ability to implement good reforms	19.9
Other Reasons	2.8

Note: The table shows the ultimate reasons for not supporting reported by respondents, for both sectors (Panel 1), the electricity sector (Panel 2), and the telecommunications sector (Panel 3). See Appendix A.10.2 for detailed questions on the reasons of non-support despite compensatory and complementary measures.

To better understand the characteristics of respondents who remain opposed to reforms despite the introduction of mitigating measures—the "ultimate non-supporters"—we estimate the likelihood of a respondent being an ultimate non-supporter, conditional on their socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs, and perceptions. The dependent variable equals 1 if the respondent opposes the reform despite the complementary and compensatory measures, and

0 if the respondent supports the reform following these measures. The results are presented in Appendix A.8 for each sector. In the electricity sector, mitigating measures play an important role in securing support from individuals who might otherwise fear job losses due to the reform. Specifically, individuals working in utility companies are less likely to oppose the reform once mitigating measures are in place. These measures also help garner support from initially skeptical respondents but with pro-market views, particularly those who believe the government should have a minimal role in economic activity, perceive foreign companies in utility services as beneficial, trust their country's institutions, or view competition in the electricity sector as beneficial for prices and access to services. However, respondents with left-leaning political views remain more likely to oppose the reform, even with mitigating measures in place. In the telecommunications sector, the mitigating measures help gain the support of individuals in the 25th to 50th income percentiles, as well as those who perceive foreign companies as beneficial to their country's economy. Nonetheless, respondents who believe that utility companies play an important role in ensuring equity are more likely to oppose the reform, even after the mitigating measures are introduced.

6 Heterogeneity in treatment effects

We finally examine whether the average treatment effects on support for PMR reforms reported above display significant heterogeneity. We start by analyzing the country level heterogeneity before digging into differences driven by individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, as well as their beliefs and perceptions.

6.1 Country-level heterogeneity

We estimate the regressions for support for reforms at the country level for the electricity and telecommunications sectors, and report the results in Figure 12 for Mexico, Morocco, and South Africa, separately. The *Status quo* treatment shows no significant variation across country, either in the electricity or telecommunications sector, as the estimated effects are largely statistically non-significant—through with broadly the expected sign. The only exemption is Mexico where the estimated effect is positive and statistically significant, suggesting that this treatment's impact on support previously reported for the pooled sample is driven by Mexico. The *Status quo* + *effect of policies* treatment has positive and statistically significant impact on support across the board. Its magnitude is higher in Mexico, followed

by Morocco, and South Africa, respectively, for the electricity sector. For the telecommunications sector, it is higher in South Africa, followed by Mexico, and Morocco. Overall, we find the impact of the *Status quo + effect of policies* to be qualitatively similar across countries. However, the results show quantitatively significant heterogeneity in this treatment impact's magnitudes across countries.

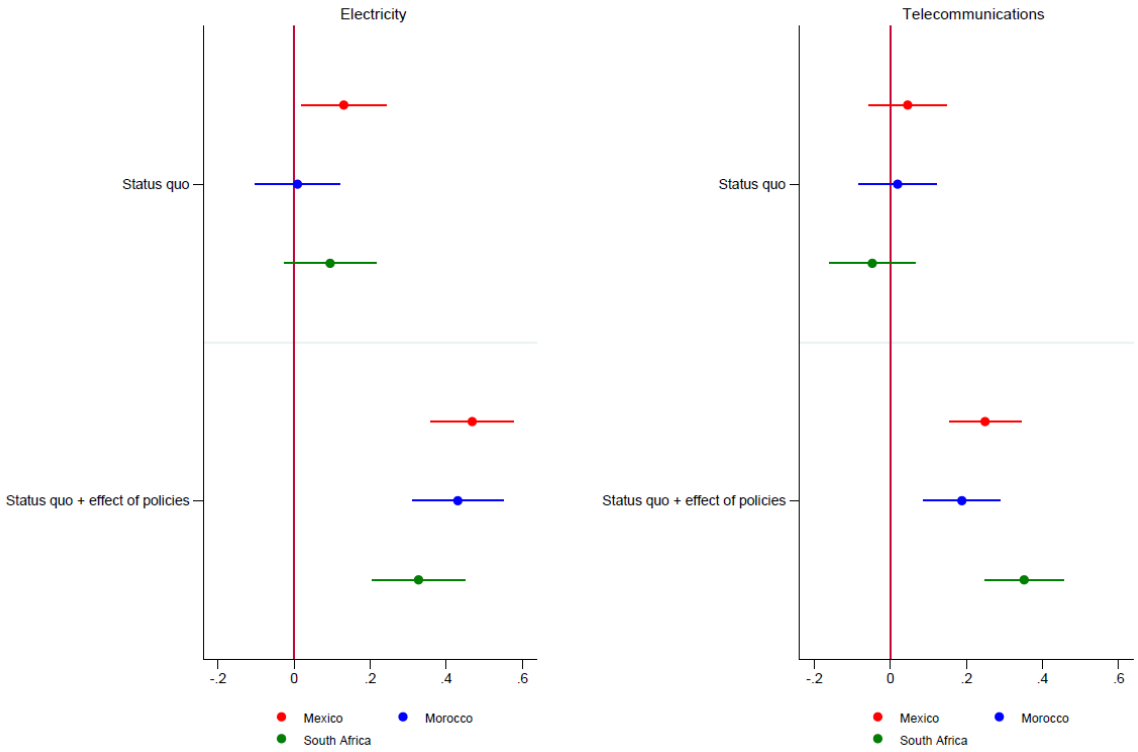
The reasons for the observed cross-country heterogeneity in the impacts of the two treatments remain unclear. For the *Status Quo* treatment, which benchmarks countries relatively to the US, a plausible interpretation is that Mexico's geographical proximity to the US may lead Mexican respondents to have stronger preferences for catching up with their neighbor economically, making them more responsive to the framing around the cost of not reforming. In contrast, the lower magnitude of the *Status Quo + Effect of Policies* treatment in the electricity sector in South Africa may be attributed to the fact that electricity sector reform has been a long-standing issue in the country, including as a central topic during the May 2024 general elections. Given the continued prominence of this issue, respondents in South Africa may be less swayed by the treatment.

6.2 Individual-level heterogeneity: socioeconomic characteristics

We now turn to the heterogeneity in responses based on pre-determined individuals' socioeconomic characteristics. Figure 13 presents the results from regressions of support for policies in each sector on various socioeconomic characteristics, along with their interactions with the treatment indicators. Our focus is on the interactions between treatment indicators and socioeconomic characteristics to assess how the sensitivity of each treatment varies with these covariates. For simplicity, only the socioeconomic characteristics with statistically significant interactions with at least one of the treatments are reported.

Overall, we find that individuals' demographics, income, and employment status exhibit varying degrees of sensitivity to the treatments, though some heterogeneities exist across sectors. In the electricity sector, wealthier respondents (those above the 75th percentile of their country's income distribution) show less sensitivity to the *Status Quo* treatment. Respondents residing in urban areas are more responsive to the *Status Quo + Effect of Policies* treatment, whereas individuals in the 25th to 50th income percentiles demonstrate lower sensitivity. Interestingly, individuals working in, or knowing someone employed by, public utility companies are less sensitive to both treatments. In the telecommunications sector, female respondents and those with incomes between the 25th and 50th percentiles show greater sensitivity to the *Status Quo + Effect of Policies* treatment, the latter result contrasts with the

Figure 12: Effect of the treatments on support for policies - Country-level heterogeneity

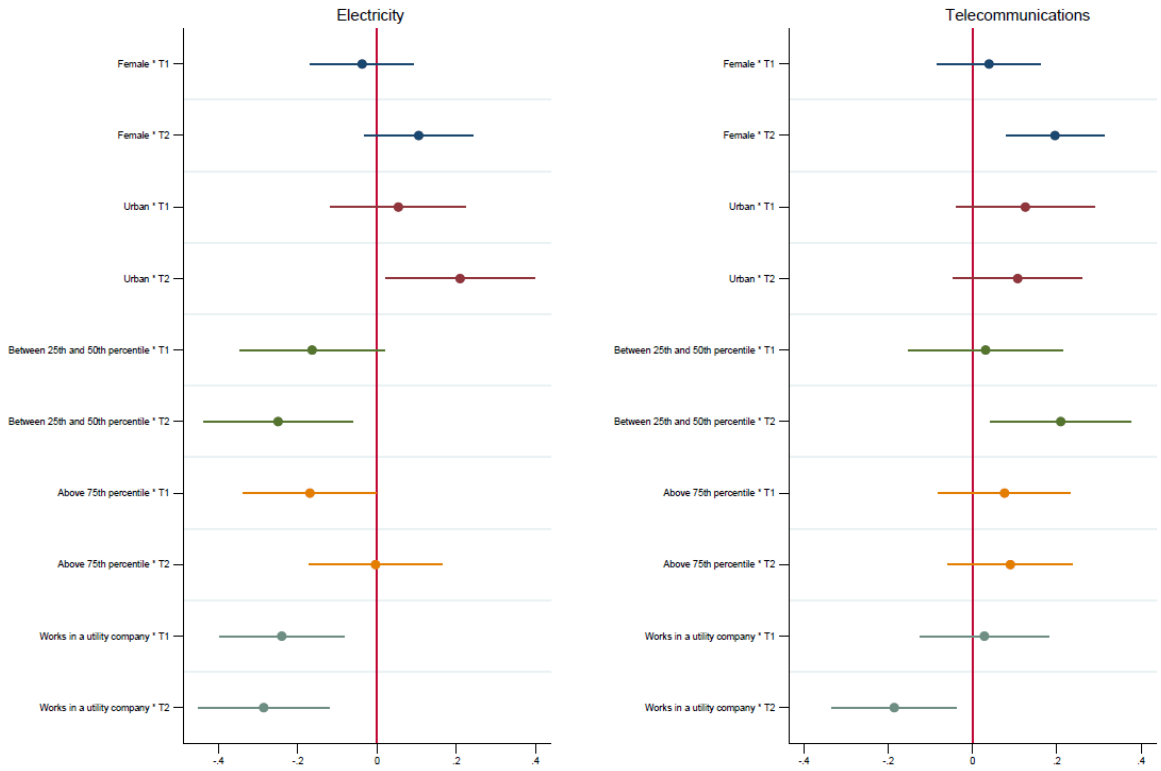


Note: The figure shows the treatments effects on support for PMR reforms at the country level for the electricity sector and the telecommunications sector using Ordinary Least Squares regressions. The regressions control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perception. Bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

finding in the electricity sector. Similar to the electricity sector however, individuals working in, or who know someone working in, public utility companies are less sensitive to the *Status Quo + Effect of Policies* treatment.

These results are to be expected and broadly consistent with the existing literature. For example, the less supportive attitude of the upper class may reflect the fact that these respondents have better alternative options for accessing electricity, even under a poor status quo. Urban residents and women, on the other hand, may have more to gain from PMR reforms, as such reforms could release women from home production and create opportunities in the labor market (Dinkelman, 2011; Duflo, 2012). The findings for those working in utilities are also consistent with the insider-outsider approach to the political economy of reform. However, the lower sensitivity of low-income respondents in the electricity sector is somewhat surprising given that these respondents, who may be living in rural areas with limited access

Figure 13: Effect of the treatments on support for policies - Interactions with socioeconomic characteristics



Note: The figure illustrates the heterogeneity of treatment effects on support for PMR reforms in the electricity and telecommunications sectors, using Ordinary Least Squares regressions. These regressions are based on interactions between the treatment indicators and individuals' socioeconomic characteristics. The models control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perceptions, as well as country fixed effects. T1 = *Status quo*; T2 = *Status quo* + *effect of policies*. The bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

to services, would presumably benefit from the reform. It may reflect that these respondents may be skeptical of the willingness of private companies to expand utility services to remote areas at a loss. This result also aligns with recent findings suggesting no meaningful impacts on economic or non-economic outcomes from rural electrification (Lee et al., 2020).

6.3 Individual-level heterogeneity: beliefs and perceptions

We also assess the heterogeneity of treatment effects based on individuals' beliefs and perceptions. Figure 14 presents the results for covariates with statistically significant interactions, separately for the electricity and telecommunications sectors.

In the electricity sector, respondents who believe utility companies' should play a key role in ensuring equity and fair access are less sensitive to both treatments, while respondents who believe the government should ensure access to utilities are less sensitive to the *Status Quo + Effect of Policies* treatment. Those perceiving improved relative deprivation are more responsive to the *Status Quo + Effect of Policies*. In the telecommunications sector, those with experiences of lack of access, perceiving improved relative deprivation and lower corruption in utility companies are also more sensitive to the *Status Quo + Effect of Policies* treatment. Although the theoretical grounding for these findings is less clear, the results seem intuitive and aligned with the expected pay-off of the reforms for respondents with different sets of beliefs and perceptions.

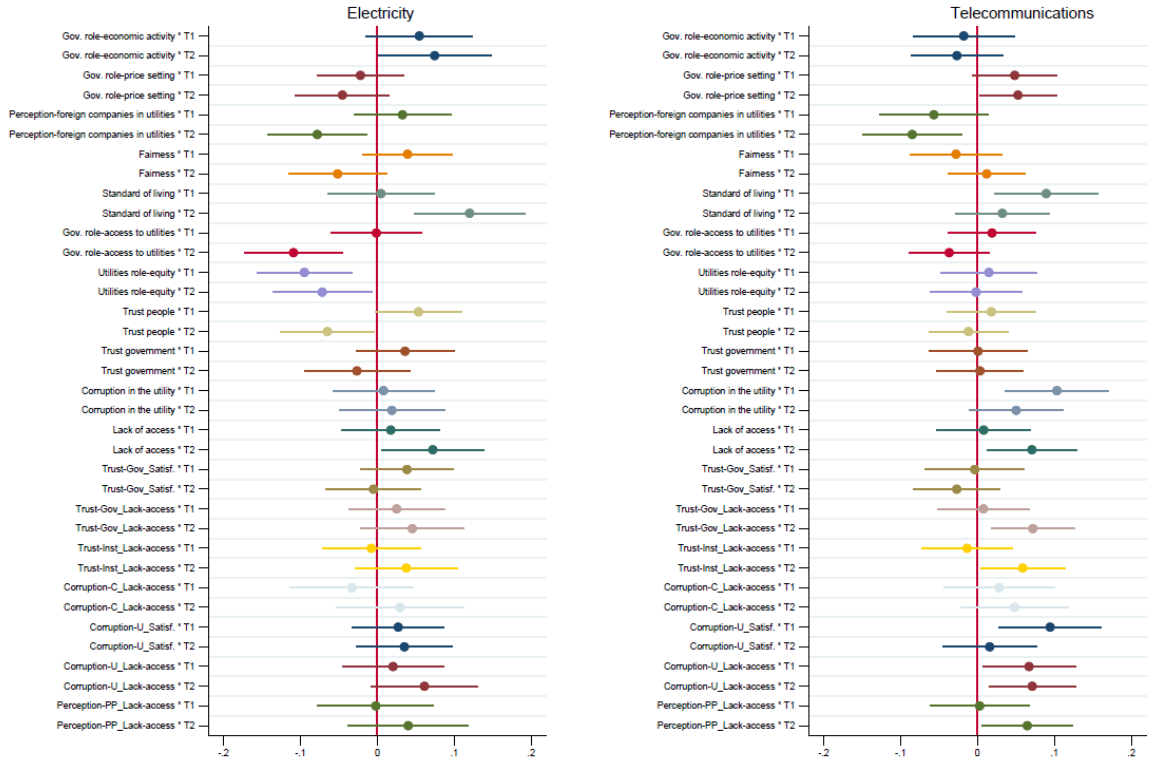
We also examine the sensitivity of the treatments to double interactions, with the results also presented in Figure 14. Overall, we do not observe significant differences in the electricity sector. However, some heterogeneity effects in the telecommunications sector ermerge. Respondents who trust their government or key national institutions, believe that corruption in utility companies is low, or perceive a high level of private company participation in the sector, and simultaneously experience a lack of access to services, are more sensitive to the *Status Quo + Effect of Policies* treatment.

7 Robustness

We assess the robustness of the main results in many ways. First, we show that the main results remain unchanged to different alteration of the control variables included in the regressions. In columns 1-3 of Table 2, we estimate the treatment impacts excluding control variables from the regression; in columns 4-6, we control for the limited set of pre-specified control variables.

Second, as in all studies of this kind, we are mindful of the experimenter demand effect, where respondents may alter their behavior knowing they are part of an experiment. However, prior research suggests these biases are likely modest (Quidt et al., 2018). In our case, it is unclear how such effects would influence the differences between treatments or cross-sector heterogeneity previously reported. Nonetheless, columns 7-9 of Table 2 show that treatment impacts remain unchanged when we randomized the order of the support for policies question. Additionally, columns 10-12 show consistent results when we limit the sample to men, considering evidence that women are more sensitive to experimenter demand effects (Quidt et al., 2018; Di Tella and Rodrik, 2020). These findings suggest that experimenter

Figure 14: Effect of the treatments on support for policies - Interactions with beliefs and perceptions



Note: The figure illustrates the heterogeneity of treatment effects on support for PMR reforms in the electricity and telecommunications sectors, using Ordinary Least Squares regressions. These regressions are based on interactions between the treatment indicators and individuals' beliefs and perceptions. The models control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perceptions, as well as country fixed effects. T1 = *Status quo*; T2 = *Status quo* + *effect of policies*. The bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

demand effects are not significant in our survey.

Third, we also test the robustness of the main findings on support to different data quality checks. In columns 1-3 of Table 3, we delete respondents who failed our second attention check. In columns 4-6, we augment our baseline sample with additional data we collected, excluding all respondents who failed the second attention check.[16] In Columns 7-9, we drop those who felt the survey was biased. And in columns 10-12, we also drop respondents in the top and bottom 5% of the distribution of time spent on the survey. We find that the main results on support remain unchanged.

[16] Alongside the baseline sample of 2,100 respondents per country, we gathered additional data from 692 respondents in Mexico, 336 in Morocco, and 405 in South Africa.

Table 2: Robustness checks: control variables and experimenter demand effect

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Status quo	0.031	0.103**	-0.015	0.037	0.091**	-0.011	0.077**	0.132**	0.044	0.029	0.098*	-0.020
	(0.033)	(0.047)	(0.043)	(0.029)	(0.042)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.059)	(0.051)	(0.038)	(0.055)	(0.053)
Status quo + effect of policies	0.345***	0.381***	0.314***	0.326***	0.379***	0.274***	0.368***	0.443***	0.306***	0.271***	0.355***	0.177***
	(0.032)	(0.047)	(0.041)	(0.029)	(0.043)	(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.059)	(0.050)	(0.037)	(0.056)	(0.049)
Status quo * Block 4 first						-0.091*		-0.103	-0.092			
						(0.055)		(0.079)	(0.074)			
Status quo + effect of policies * Block 4 first						-0.065		-0.074	-0.067			
						(0.054)		(0.082)	(0.070)			
Observations	6,300	3,190	3,110	5,735	2,896	2,839	6,287	3,186	3,101	3,363	1,726	1,637
R-squared	0.088	0.122	0.060	0.345	0.361	0.312	0.354	0.369	0.320	0.372	0.377	0.344
Sector	Both	Electricity	Telecom	Both	Electricity	Telecom	Both	Electricity	Telecom	Both	Electricity	Telecom
Controls	NO	NO	NO	Pre-specified	Pre-specified	Pre-specified	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Note: The table presents the treatment effects on support for PMR reforms for both sectors, the electricity sector, and the telecommunications sector. The regressions control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perceptions, and country fixed effects. Columns (1)-(3) exclude control variables from the regressions while columns (4)-(6) include the limited set of pre-specified control variables. Columns (7)-(9) show the treatments interactions with the order of the support for policies question (i.e., whether collected after individuals' views and satisfaction with the sector). Columns (10)-(12) limit the sample to men. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The symbols *, **, and *** indicate that the coefficients are statistically significant at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

Table 3: Robustness checks: data quality check

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Status quo	0.038	0.094	0.000	0.048	0.127**	-0.016	0.037	0.082*	0.010	0.036	0.095**	-0.003
	(0.040)	(0.059)	(0.053)	(0.036)	(0.053)	(0.048)	(0.031)	(0.046)	(0.041)	(0.029)	(0.042)	(0.039)
Status quo + effect of policies	0.398***	0.477***	0.328***	0.415***	0.504***	0.337***	0.393***	0.481***	0.317***	0.372***	0.433***	0.304***
	(0.038)	(0.059)	(0.049)	(0.034)	(0.052)	(0.044)	(0.030)	(0.047)	(0.039)	(0.028)	(0.043)	(0.036)
Observations	2,835	1,423	1,412	3,501	1,749	1,752	4,700	2,341	2,359	5,662	2,880	2,782
R-squared	0.372	0.399	0.324	0.362	0.388	0.316	0.359	0.375	0.329	0.335	0.372	0.316
Sector	Both	Electricity	Telecom	Both	Electricity	Telecom	Both	Electricity	Telecom	Both	Electricity	Telecom
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Note: The table presents the treatment effects on support for PMR reforms for both sectors, the electricity sector, and the telecommunications sector. The regressions control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perceptions, and country fixed effects. Columns (1)-(3) exclude respondents who failed the second attention check while columns (4)-(6) augment the sample for columns (1)-(3) with a supplementary sample. Columns (7)-(9) excludes respondents who felt the survey was biased. Columns (10)-(12) drops respondents in the top and bottom 5% of the distribution of time on the survey. The symbols *, **, and *** indicate that the coefficients are statistically significant at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

Finally, as discussed in Section 2.2, our sample tends to overrepresent individuals with higher education levels, urban residents, and those currently employed—especially in Mexico and Morocco, due to the inherent challenges in reaching low-skilled individuals and rural populations in low- and middle-income countries through an online survey. Given our previous finding that support for policies increases with the respondents' income levels, we worry that we might be overestimating support for policies reported in the main results. Therefore, we re-estimate the treatments impacts on our three main groups of outcomes variables in section 4—support for policies, the petitions, and beliefs about the effect of policies—by

Table 4: Robustness checks: weighted-OLS

	Willingness to sign a petition				Beliefs about the effect of policies			
	Reform support	Petition index	Petition to facilitate	Petition to limit	Overall	Cost	Quality	Access
(A) Both sectors	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Status quo	0.005	-0.030	-0.017	0.001	-0.056	-0.056	-0.042	-0.122***
	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.049)	(0.047)
Status quo + effect of policies	0.311***	0.244***	-0.289***	-0.235***	-0.289***	-0.289***	-0.289***	-0.289***
	(0.048)	(0.047)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.047)
Observations	6,287	6,287	6,283	6,281	6,286	6,286	6,286	6,283
R-squared	0.331	0.188	0.180	0.148	0.230	0.187	0.189	0.199
Sector	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
(B) Electricity	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Status quo	0.057	0.064	0.012	-0.032	0.056	-0.056	-0.042	-0.122***
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.034)	(0.032)	(0.056)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Status quo + effect of policies	0.128***	0.373***	-0.289***	-0.289***	0.128***	0.373***	-0.289***	0.373***
	(0.068)	(0.065)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.065)	(0.063)	(0.067)	(0.061)
Observations	3,186	3,186	3,184	3,184	3,185	3,186	3,186	3,186
R-squared	0.378	0.226	0.233	0.188	0.252	0.170	0.175	0.200
Sector	Electricity	Electricity	Electricity	Electricity	Electricity	Electricity	Electricity	Electricity
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
(C) Telecommunications	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Status quo	-0.049	-0.113**	-0.041	0.034	-0.035	-0.035	-0.161**	-0.211***
	(0.051)	(0.057)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.054)	(0.061)	(0.067)	(0.067)
Status quo + effect of policies	0.176***	0.158***	0.037	0.217***	0.176***	0.158***	0.125***	0.125***
	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.067)	(0.067)
Observations	3,101	3,101	3,099	3,099	3,101	3,100	3,100	3,100
R-squared	0.378	0.183	0.156	0.210	0.235	0.152	0.202	0.192
Sector	Telecom	Telecom	Telecom	Telecom	Telecom	Telecom	Telecom	Telecom
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Note: The table presents the treatment effects on support for PMR reforms, willingness to sign petitions, and beliefs about the effect of policies for both sectors (Panel A), the electricity sector (Panel B), and the telecommunications sector (Panel C). These results are based on weighted-OLS regressions, where the weights match the within-country distribution of age, gender, employment status, education, and geographic location. The regressions control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perceptions, and country fixed effects. In each panel, column (1) shows the treatment effects on reform support, columns (2)-(4) cover the petitions, and columns (5)-(8) present the treatment effects on beliefs about the effect of policies. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The symbols *, **, and *** indicate that the coefficients are statistically significant at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

re-weighting the sample to match the within country distribution of education, urbanicity, employment, gender, age, and region of residence. The regressions' results are reported in panels A, B and C of Table 4, for both sectors combined, the electricity sector, and the telecommunications sector, respectively. We find that the *Status quo + effect of policies* treatment has a statistically significant positive effect on support for policies, irrespective of the sector. Importantly, there is no clear sign that we might be overestimating support for policies reported in the main results. For both sectors combined, the impact of this treatment in the weighted sample is only about 7% lower than the estimate in the unweighted sample, and it is also significantly higher for the electricity sector, and lower for the telecommuni-

cations sector. The *Status quo + effect of policies* treatment also broadly has significant and large effects on the petitions and individuals' perceptions of the effects of policies. For the *Status quo* treatment, however, the estimated impact on support for reforms becomes statistically insignificant, irrespective of the sector. It is also largely statistically insignificant for the petitions and the first stage variables.

8 Conclusion

This paper has explored public attitudes towards PMR reforms aimed at fostering private participation and competition in network sectors—electricity and telecommunications. Despite the documented benefits of such reforms—including enhanced productivity, better service coverage, and lower prices—they often face significant public resistance. Our analysis, based on large-scale surveys conducted in three emerging markets and developing economies (Mexico, Morocco, and South Africa), reveals that individual beliefs and perceptions play a crucial role in shaping support for PMR reforms.

We find that socioeconomic characteristics account for a relatively small portion of the variability in support for PMR reforms. Instead, knowledge and perceptions of policies, along with market-economy beliefs, are major predictors of reform support. When examining the reasons for nonsupport, we found that societal concerns, such as the impact on affordability for the poorest households, feature more prominently than personal concerns, like fear of losing one's job. This highlights the importance of addressing broader social implications when designing and communicating PMR reforms.

Our randomized information treatments tested two hypotheses. The status quo hypothesis, flagged by the literature on the political economy of reforms but not previously tested, posits that lack of awareness about the costs of maintaining the status quo is a significant barrier to reform. Our findings support this hypothesis, particularly in the electricity sector, where providing information about these costs had a positive, though not strong, effect on support for PMR reforms. However, the effect was not statistically significant in the telecommunications sector, possibly due to higher satisfaction with those services and the perception that private participation is already high in that sector.

The second hypothesis tested whether providing research-based evidence on the effects of PMR reforms could further increase support. The results were more robust, with significant increases in support across both sectors. Respondents' support for PMR reforms increased by a rate equivalent to 1.6 times the policy support gap between left-wing and

right-wing respondents on the issue when informed about the benefits of reforms, demonstrating the effectiveness of explaining how policies work in garnering public support. We also find that this treatment significantly shift people's perceptions about the effect of having firms competing to provide utility services for consumers. These results confirm that while raising awareness about the need for reform can be important, explaining how policies work is crucial to increase reform support.

However, raising awareness and explaining the effect of policies may not be enough to overcome public resistance. We then analyzed the impact of mitigating measures, both complementary and compensatory, on support for PMR reforms. Complementary measures, such as ensuring affordability and quality of services, and compensatory measures, like temporary job protection and training programs, were found to significantly increase support among initially skeptical individuals. Offering tailored measures to address specific concerns resulted in 50-80% of initially opposed respondents changing their stance to support the reforms. Respondents that still oppose reform mostly cite lack of trust in the government's ability to implement and enforce the reforms effectively and fairly. This underscores the importance of addressing public concerns through trustworthy, targeted measures to foster a more favorable opinion towards PMR reforms.

Our findings highlight the importance of not only designing effective reforms but also communicating their benefits and addressing public concerns through mitigating measures. Trust in the institutions responsible for implementing reforms and ensuring fair outcomes is crucial. Without a strong institutional framework and transparent communication, public skepticism may remain a significant barrier to the successful implementation and sustainability of PMR reforms. These insights offer valuable guidance for policymakers seeking to navigate the complex political economy of structural reforms in network sectors.

In conclusion, while PMR reforms hold the potential for substantial economic and social benefits, their success largely depends on public perception and acceptance. Policymakers could strengthen communication strategies and engage with stakeholders and the public to identify mitigating measures to address concerns, thereby paving the way for more effective and sustainable reforms in network sectors.

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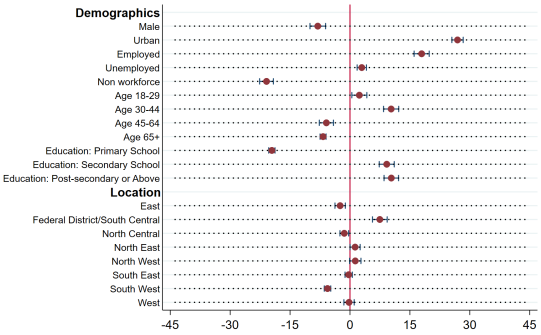
A Appendix

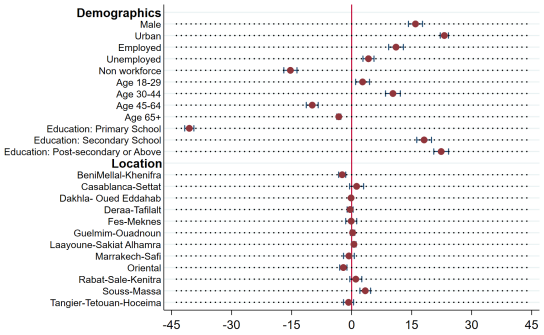
A.1 Sample Statistics

Figure A1: Difference between Sample Averages and Population Means

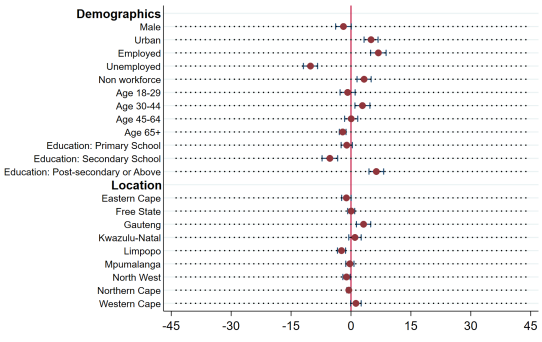
(a) Mexico



(b) Morocco



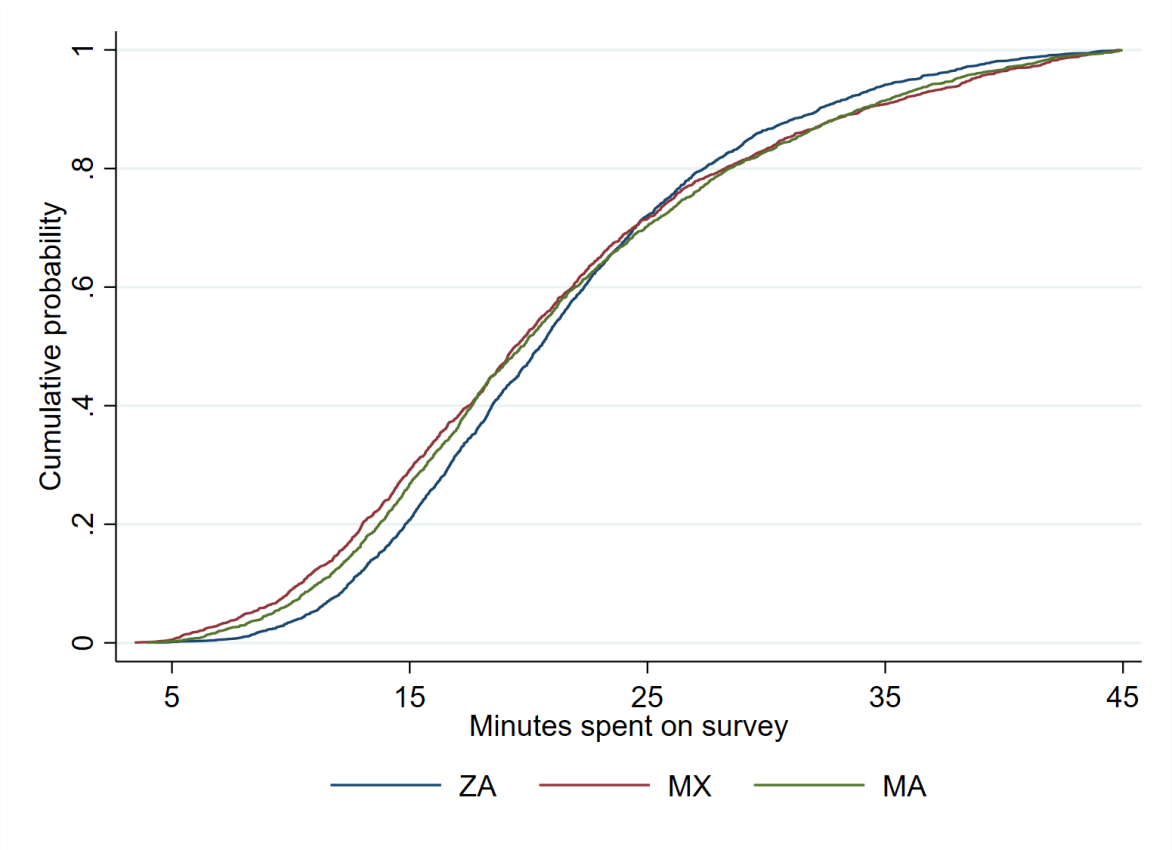
(c) South Africa



Note: This figure shows the differences between the sample averages and population means for the quota variables in each country. The dots represent the point estimates, and the capped spikes illustrate the 95% confidence intervals.

A.2 Duration

Figure A2: Distribution of Time Spent on the Survey



Note: This figure shows the cumulative density functions of survey duration in each country. ZA = South Africa, MX = Mexico, MA = Morocco.

A.3 Treatment scripts

Below are the links to the English versions of the treatment scripts for each country:

- Mexico
- Morocco
- South Africa

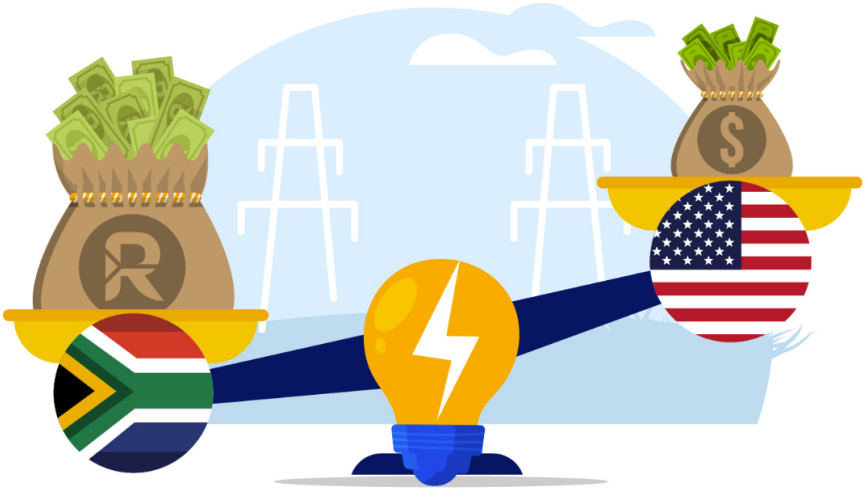
Below are the benchmark two treatments scripts for South Africa for the electricity sector:

Figure A3: *Status quo* treatment for the electricity sector in South Africa

*You will see a presentation with some **information** regarding the **electricity** in South Africa. Please **pay attention** as you will be asked some questions after the presentation.*

The **cost of electricity is higher** in South Africa than in rich countries. South Africans **pay 68% more for electricity** than people in the United States*.

*Source: Prices in national currency from the International Energy Agency (IEA) are adjusted by the purchasing power of the South African Rand vis-à-vis the US dollar.



Electricity is also less reliable in South Africa than in richer countries. About **92%** of the companies in South Africa report that they face electricity **power cuts** for about **2 hours and 20 minutes** each time.*

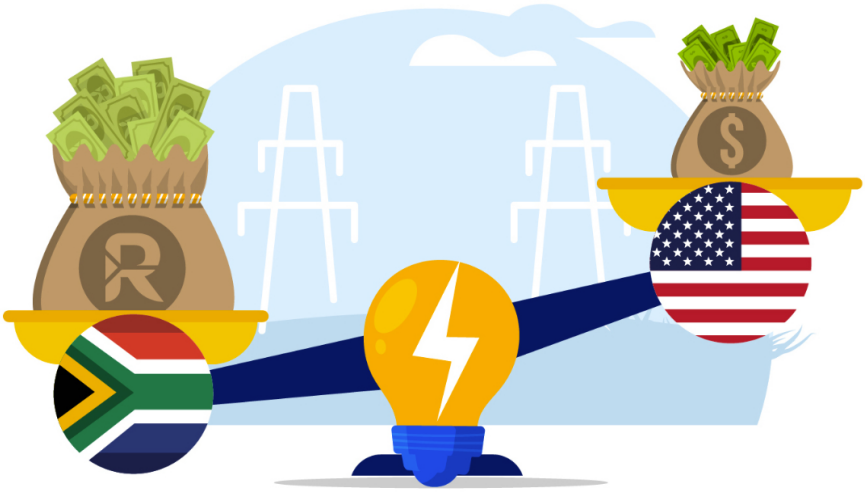
*Source: World Bank.

Figure A4: *Status quo + effect of policies* treatment for the electricity sector in South Africa

*You will see a presentation with some **information** regarding **electricity** in South Africa, as well as the **results from some studies conducted by researchers** in universities and international organizations **across the world.** Please **pay attention** as you will be asked some questions after the presentation.*

The **cost of electricity is higher** in South Africa than in rich countries. South Africans **pay 68% more for electricity** than people in the United States*.

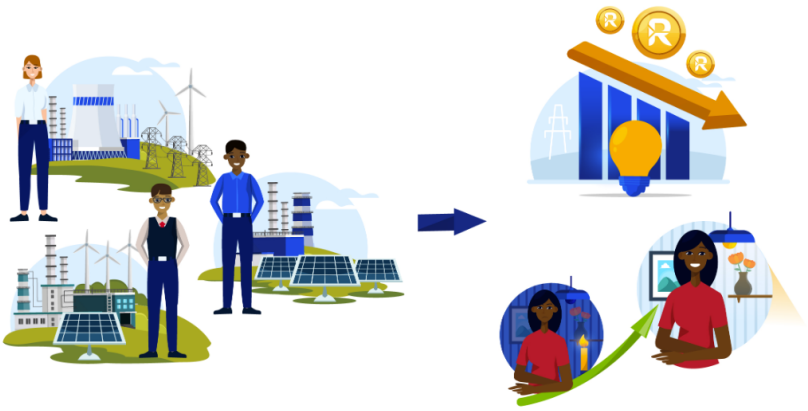
*Source: Prices in national currency from the International Energy Agency (IEA) are adjusted by the purchasing power of the South African Rand vis-à-vis the US dollar.



Electricity is also less reliable in South Africa than in richer countries. About **92%** of the companies in South Africa report that they face electricity **power cuts** for about **2 hours and 20 minutes** each time.*

*Source: World Bank.

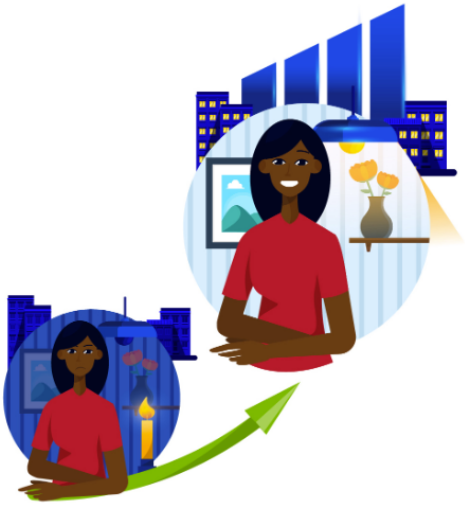
Academic studies* show that when **private companies** help deliver electricity services, **more people get access** to these services, the **quality improves,** and consumers often **pay less.**



*Sources: World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

For example, **researchers found** that production costs and consumer **tariffs fell by 10 to 30%** in some Latin American countries when private firms entered the market...

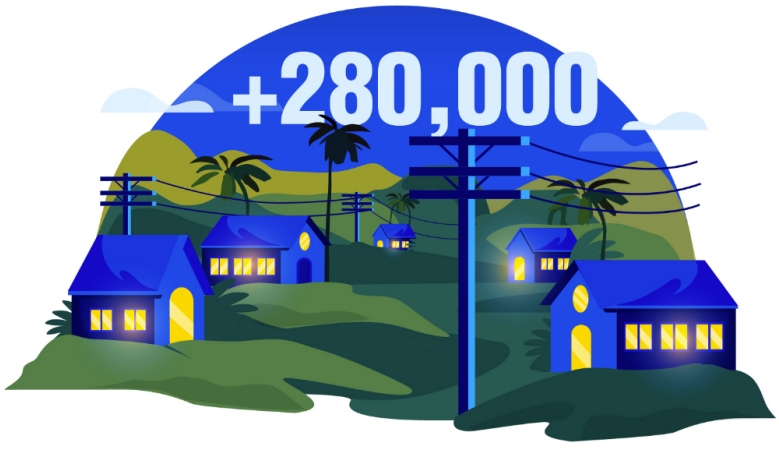
...and that the frequency and duration of service interruptions decreased significantly, with one study showing **a 28% reduction in power outages.**



*Sources: World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Researchers* also found that when private companies are allowed in the electricty market, the **benefits are greater** if there is a **strong and independent regulator** to ensure companies truly compete to offer **better and cheaper electricity**, the private sector **delivers on its promises**, and **costumers are protected**.

In Guatemala, for instance, **combining private investment with effective regulation** allowed to enhance rural electricity access, with **280,000 new residential connections** by private electricity distributors.



*Sources: World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

A.4 Data sources used to design the treatments

Below are the data sources used to design the *Status quo* and *Status quo + effect of policies* information treatments.

Electricity - Status quo

- *Cost of electricity*: International Energy Agency (IEA)'s Energy Prices dataset.
- *Electricity reliability*: World Bank's Enterprise Surveys.

Electricity - Status quo + effect of policies

- *Cost of electricity*: International Energy Agency (IEA)'s Energy Prices dataset.
- *Electricity reliability*: World Bank's Enterprise Surveys.
- *Academic Studies*

  World Bank: Harris (2003).

  Inter-American Development Bank (IDB): Balza et al. (2020a).

Telecommunication - Status quo

- *Cost of telecommunication services*: International Telecommunication Union (ITU) - World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database.
- *Telecommunication services reliability*: International Telecommunication Union (ITU) - World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database; Global System for Mobile Communications (GSMA) - Mobile Connectivity dataset.

Telecommunication - Status quo + effect of policies

- *Cost of telecommunication services*: International Telecommunication Union (ITU) - World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database.
- *Telecommunication services reliability*: International Telecommunication Union (ITU) - World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database; Global System for Mobile Communications (GSMA) - Mobile Connectivity dataset.
- *Academic Studies*

  World Bank: Harris (2003).

  Inter-American Development Bank (IDB): Balza et al. (2020a).

A.5 Variables definitions

We define below the treatments indicators, various outcome variables (support for policies, willingness to sign petitions, and beliefs about the effect of policies), socioeconomic characteristics, and beliefs and perceptions variables.

The outcome variables on support for policies and beliefs about the effect of policies are transformed into z-scores using a two-step process, following the methodology of Dechezleprêtre et al. (2022). First, we subtract the control group mean and divide by the control group standard deviation within each country-sector. This first-step z-score has a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1 for the control group. Second, we standardize the resulting index from the first step across the entire sample by again subtracting the mean and dividing by the standard deviation within each sector. The final z-scored outcome variables for support for policies and beliefs about the effect of policies have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

All other beliefs and perceptions variables, used as independent variables, are also transformed into z-scores by subtracting the control group mean and dividing by the control group standard deviation within each country-sector.

Treatment indicators

- *Status quo*: respondent was randomized to see the *Status quo* treatment.
- *Status quo + effect of policies*: respondent was randomized to see the *Status quo + effect of policies* treatment.

Support for policies: z-score based on the following question:

- Respondent's answer to the question: "*Do you support or oppose allowing private companies to produce and sell 'electricity / telecommunication services' in 'country'*?" coded on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is "*Strongly oppose*," and 3 is "*Neither oppose nor support*," and 5 is "*Strongly support*".

Willingness to sign petitions: indicator variables constructed as follows:

- *Petition to facilitate*: This variable takes a value of 1 if the respondent is willing to sign the petition facilitating the entry of private firms, 0 the respondent does not want to sign the petition..
- *Petition to limit*: This variable takes a value of 1 if the respondent is willing to sign the petition limiting the entry of private firms, 0 the respondent does not want to sign the petition.

- *Petition index*: This variable takes a value of -1 if the respondent is willing to sign the petition limiting private entry, 1 if the respondent supports the petition facilitating private entry, and 0 if the respondent either declined to sign or expressed willingness to sign both petitions.

Beliefs about the effects of policiess: z-scores variables based on the following:

- *Overall*: respondent's answer to the question: "*Do you view it as beneficial or detrimental for consumers when several companies compete to provide services such as 'electricity / telecommunication services'?*" coded on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is "Highly detrimental," and 3 is "Neither beneficial nor detrimental,", and 5 is "Highly beneficial".

- *Cost*: respondent's answer to the question: "*How do you think private companies competing to provide 'electricity / telecommunication services' change things? Think about the cost (that people pay), the quality (how well it works), and access (that is, if more places and people get access to 'electricity / telecommunication services').*" coded on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is "*Significantly pricier*," and 3 is "*No change*," and 5 is "*Significantly cheaper*".

- *Quality*: respondent's answer to the question: "*How do you think private companies competing to provide 'electricity / telecommunication services' change things? Think about the cost (that people pay), the quality (how well it works), and access (that is, if more places and people get access to 'electricity / telecommunication services').*" coded on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is "*Significantly worse*," and 3 is "*No change*," and 5 is "*Significantly better*".

- *Access*: respondent's answer to the question: "*How do you think private companies competing to provide 'electricity / telecommunication services' change things? Think about the cost (that people pay), the quality (how well it works), and access (that is, if more places and people get access to 'electricity / telecommunication services').*" coded on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is "*Significantly worse*," and 3 is "*No change*," and 5 is "*Significantly better*".

Pre-treatment support for policies: z-score based on the following question:

- Respondent's answer to the question: "*How do you feel about private companies being allowed to 'generate and sell electricity / sell telecommunication services' in 'country'?*" coded on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is that *The provision of 'electricity / telecommunication services' in 'country' should be "Fully handled by public companies or the government*," and 3 is "*Equally handled by public and private companies*," and 5 is "*Fully handled by private companies*".

Socioeconomic characteristics (indicator variables)

Demographics

- *Age (35-54)*: respondent's age is between 35 and 54 years.
- *Age (55+)*: respondent's age is more than 55 years old.
- *Female*: respondent is a women.
- *Belongs to country's main ethnic group*: respondent belongs to the country's main ethnic group - Mestizo in Mexico, Arab in Morocco, and Black in South Africa.
- *Lives in urban area*: respondent lives in urban area.
- *Married*: respondent is married
- *Have children*: respondent has child(ren).
- *Head of household*: respondent is head of a household.

Income

- *Between 25th and 50th percentile*: respondent's household income (before withholding tax) is between the 25th and the 50th percentile of the country distribution.
- *Between 50th and 75th percentile*: respondent's household income (before withholding tax) is between the 50th and the 75th percentile of the country distribution.
- *Above 75th percentile*: respondent's household income (before withholding tax) is above the 75th percentile of the country distribution.

Education

- *Has secondary education*: respondent's highest education level achieved is a secondary education.
- *Has lower-tertiary education*: respondent's highest education level achieved is a lower-tertiary education.
- *Has upper-tertiary education*: respondent's highest education level achieved is an upper-tertiary education.

Employment

- *Employed*: respondent is currently employed.
- *Works in a utility company*: respondent works for, or knows someone in their close circle who works for, a public utility company (such as electricity, telecommunication services, or water and sanitation services).

Economic leaning

- *Self-declared politically right leaning*: respondent's self-declared economic policy leaning is right.
- *Self-declared politically left leaning*: respondent's self-declared economic policy leaning is left.

Beliefs and perceptions: z-scores variables based on the following:

Market economy

- *Government role in economic activity*: respondent's answer to the question "*Productive activities refer to the creation of goods and services that people buy and use, such as manufactured products or transport services. In your view, who should handle productive activities in 'country'?*" coded on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is "*Government-owned companies*," and 3 is "*Equally private companies and government-owned companies* ," and 5 is "*Private companies*".
- *Government role in regulating the economy*: respondent's answer to the question "*Regulation refers to the government setting rules for businesses and individuals to follow. These rules can affect for instance how companies operate and treat their customers. In some countries, the government heavily controls economic activities, while in other countries the government allows the market more freedom to set its own rules. In your view, how large of a role should the government have in regulating the economy?*" coded on a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 is "*Extensive role*" and 4 is "*Minimal role*".
- *Government role in price setting*: respondent's answer to the question "*How much do you think the government in 'country' should intervene in how private companies set prices for the goods and services they sell?*" coded on a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 is "*The government should always intervene*" and 4 is "*The government should rarely intervene*".
- *Perception of foreign companies*: respondent's answer to the question "*When foreign companies do business in 'country', how do you think they affect our economy?*" coded on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is "*They greatly harm our economy*," and 3 is "*They neither improve nor harm our economy*," and 4 is "*They greatly improve our economy*".
- *Perception of foreign companies in utilities*: respondent's answer to the question "*How would you describe the impact on the economy if foreign companies were involved in providing services like 'electricity / telecommunication services' in 'country'?*" coded on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is "*Very negative*," and 3 is "*Neither positive nor negative*," and 4 is "*Very positive*".

Distribution and equity

- *Fairness*: respondent's answer to the question "*How fair do you think the distribution of income is in 'country'?*" coded on a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 is "*The distribution of income is very unfair*" and 4 is "*The distribution of income is very fair*".

- *Standard of living*: respondent's answer to the question "*How do you characterize your current standard of living compared to those of your parents or grandparents when they were about your age?*" coded on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is "*My standard of living is worse*," and 3 is "*My standard of living is about the same*," and 5 is "*My standard of living is better*".

- *Government role in ensuring access to utilities*: respondent's answer to the question "*How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "The government in 'country' should ensure that everyone has access to essential services like water, electricity, internet, and transport."*" coded on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is "*Strongly agree*," and 3 is "*Neither agree nor disagree*," and 5 is "*Strongly disagree* ".

- *Utility companies' role in ensuring equity*: respondent's answer to the question "*What role should companies providing services like 'electricity / telecommunication services (such as phone, mobile phone, and access to the internet)' have in reducing inequality and ensuring fair access to 'electricity / telecommunication services' for all in 'country'?*" coded on a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 is "*A major role*" and 4 is "*No role at all*".

Trust and corruption

- *Trust in people*: respondent's answer to the question "*Generally speaking, would you say people can be trusted or people cannot be trusted?*" coded on a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 is "*People cannot be trusted*" and 4 is "*People can be trusted*".

- Trust in government: respondent's answer to the question "*Would you say the governments in 'country' can or cannot be trusted, no matter which political party is in charge?*" coded on a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 is "*Governments in 'country' cannot be trusted*" and 4 is "*Governments in 'country' can be trusted*".

- *Trust in institutions*: respondent's answer to the question "*Would you say that key institutions in 'country' (for example, courts and the parliament) can or cannot be trusted?*" coded on a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 is "*Institutions cannot be trusted*" and 4 is "*Institutions can be trusted*".

- *Corruption in the country*: respondent's answer to the question "*How would you place your views on corruption in 'country' on a 10-point scale where "1" means "there is no corruption in this country" and "10" means "there is abundant corruption in this country*". This variable was reversed so that a value of 1 indicates high levels of corruption and 10 indicates no corruption, before being transformed into a z-score.

- *Corruption in utilities*: respondent's answer to the question "*If you think about companies providing services like 'electricity / telecommunication services' in 'country', would you say they work mostly for the benefit of a few powerful people or for everyone's benefit?*" coded on a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 is "*They work for the benefit of a few powerful people*" and 4 is "*They work for everyone's benefit*".

Views and satisfaction with sector

- *Perception of private participation in utilities*: respondent's answer to the question "*In some countries, the provision of 'electricity / telecommunication services' is handled by companies owned by the government. In other countries, these services are provided by a mix of public and private companies. Finally, in some countries the provision of 'electricity/ telecommunication' services is handled completely by private companies. To your knowledge, 'is electricity / are telecommunication services' in 'country' provided by public companies (that is, owned by the government), by private companies, or both? Please select a value to characterize your views.*" coded on a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 is "*Fully handled by public companies*," and 5 is "*Equally handled by public and private companies*," and 10 is "*Fully handled by private companies*".

- *Satisfaction with utility services*: respondent's answer to the question "*How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with 'electricity / telecommunication services' in 'country'? Please move the slider to characterize your views.*" coded on a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 is "*Very dissatisfied*" and 10 is "*Very satisfied*".

- *Lack of access to utility services*: respondent's answer to the question "*Have you, or anyone you know, ever experienced a lack of access to 'electricity services or experienced loadshedding (planned cuts) / telecommunication services or systematic interruptions of service', either now or in the past?*" coded 1 "*Yes*" and 2 "*No*" and missing for "*Not sure*".

Knowledge and effect of policies

- *Knowledge about the utility service's regulator*: respondent's correct answer to the question "*Have you heard of [REGULATOR ACRONYM in 'country'] and, if yes, in which context?*" We listed 8 options: 1 (No, I have never heard that name), 2 (Construction company), 3 (Sport company), 4 (Electricity regulator), 5 (Industrial activities), 6 (Telecommunication services), 7 (Water services), 8 (Telecommunications regulator). The correct answer being 4 for the electricity sector, and 8 for the telecommunications sector.

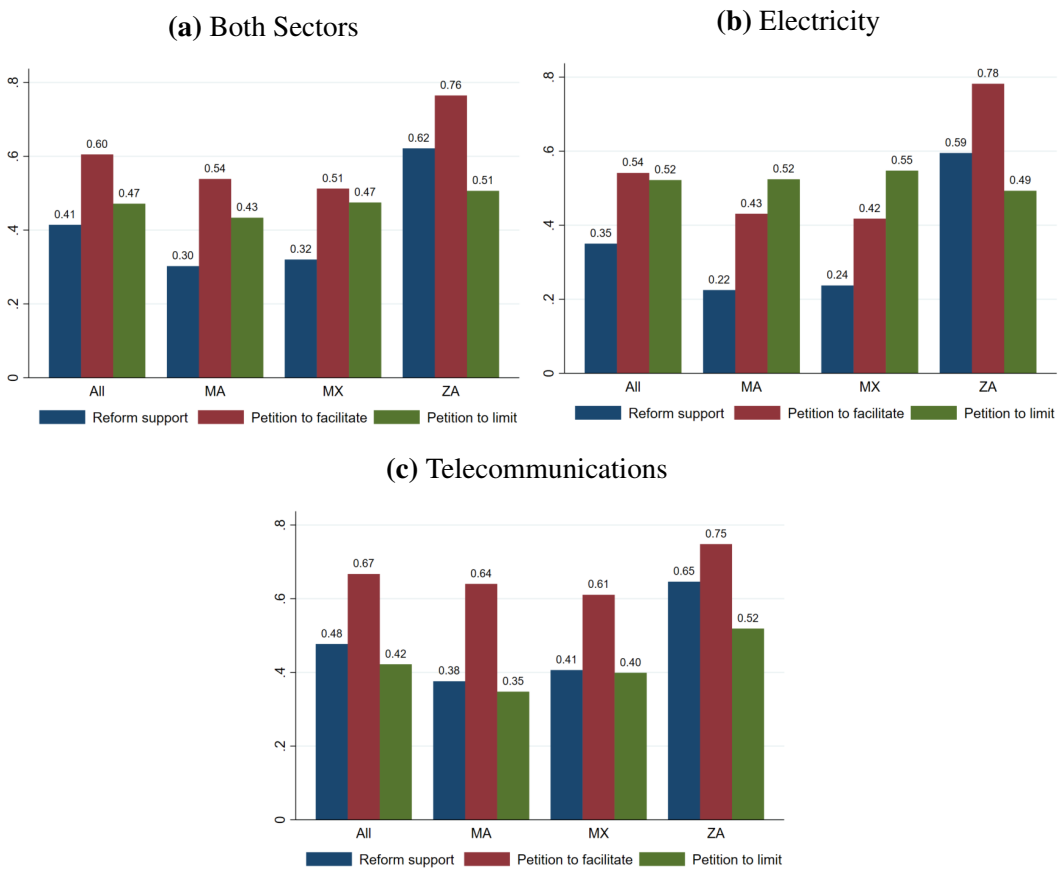
- *Perception of the effect of competition on price*: same question as the beliefs about the effects of policies on cost above.

- *Perception of the effect of competition on quality*: same question as the beliefs about the effects of policies on quality above.

- *Perception of the effect of competition on access*: same question as the beliefs about the effects of policies on access above.

A.6 Additional descriptive statistics

Figure A5: Share of respondents supporting the reform or willing to sign the petition



Note: This figure shows the proportion of respondents in the control group who support the reform (i.e., strongly or somewhat support) or are willing to sign the petition to facilitate or limit the entry of private firms in the network sector. The results are presented for the entire sample (All), as well as for Morocco (MA), Mexico (MX), and South Africa (ZA).

Table A1: Differences between electricity and telecommunications sectors: views and satisfaction, and knowledge of the sector's regulator

Sample	Variable	[1] Electricity	[2] Telecommunications	[3] = [2] - [1] Difference	t-test	p-value
All countries	Perception of private participation in utilities	-0.42	0.05	0.47	18.77	0.00
	Satisfaction with utility services	0.20	0.34	0.14	5.40	0.00
	Lack of access to utility services	0.05	0.05	0.00	-0.07	0.95
	Knowledge about the utility service's regulator	-0.14	0.12	0.26	10.28	0.00
Mexico	Perception of private participation in utilities	-0.54	0.03	0.57	12.87	0.00
	Satisfaction with utility services	0.60	0.55	-0.04	-1.08	0.28
	Lack of access to utility services	-0.15	0.01	0.14	3.11	0.00
	Knowledge about the utility service's regulator	-0.14	0.10	0.24	3.81	0.00
Morocco	Perception of private participation in utilities	-0.31	0.00	0.31	7.80	0.00
	Satisfaction with utility services	0.37	0.77	0.40	-8.83	0.00
	Lack of access to utility services	-0.17	0.08	0.25	5.57	0.00
	Knowledge about the utility service's regulator	-0.36	0.03	0.40	10.56	0.00
South Africa	Perception of private participation in utilities	-0.39	0.13	0.52	12.26	0.00
	Satisfaction with utility services	-0.40	0.49	0.89	20.05	0.00
	Lack of access to utility services	0.49	0.08	-0.41	-11.63	0.00
	Knowledge about the utility service's regulator	0.10	0.22	0.12	2.47	0.01

Note: The table shows the differences in means between the electricity and telecommunications sectors for sector-specific variables measuring respondents' views and satisfaction with the sector, and their knowledge of the sector's regulator. The means for the electricity and telecommunications sectors are reported in columns [1] and [2], respectively, with the corresponding differences in means, t-test statistics and p-values in column [3].

A.7 Balance Analysis

To examine whether the survey treatment make it more likely to respondents with certain characteristics to drop out and therefore result in respondents' self-selection into treatment groups, we need to test whether the sample is balanced between the treatment groups and the control group, along the socioeconomic characteristics and pre-treatment perceptions and beliefs considered in the baseline results. Table A2 presents results of t-tests comparing respondents' characteristics in the control group with the treatment group, which includes respondents from both treatment branches. In addition, Tables A3 and A4 report the results of balance tests for the status quo treatment and the status quo + effect of policies treatment, respectively.

None of the differences in variables are statistically significant across all three scenarios. For the status quo treatment, the treatment and control groups differ in two aspects: respondents in the treatment group have less favorable views of private participation in utility sectors and believe that private companies should play a smaller role in economic activities. However, the balance test does not indicate a statistically significant difference when considering all characteristics jointly, with a the p-value of 0.151 for the likelihood ratio test. For the tests shown in Tables A2 and A4, the p-values are even higher, at 0.603 and 0.866 respectively.

Table A2: Balance Test of Covariates between Treatment and Control Groups

Variable	Treated	Control	t	p-value
Demographics				
Age (35-54)	0.41	0.41	0.55	0.579
Age (55+)	0.13	0.13	0.05	0.956
Female	0.47	0.45	1.32	0.187
Belongs to the country's main ethnic group	0.61	0.62	-1.20	0.231
Lives in urban area	0.83	0.84	-0.77	0.443
Married	0.47	0.47	0.33	0.744
Have children	0.60	0.61	-0.84	0.403
Head of household	0.60	0.60	0.03	0.975
Income				
Between 25th and 50th percentile	0.14	0.14	0.36	0.721
Between 50th and 75th percentile	0.18	0.18	-0.12	0.906
Above 75th percentile	0.19	0.17	1.43	0.152
Education				
Has secondary education	0.54	0.55	-0.70	0.485
Has lower-tertiary education	0.26	0.27	-0.37	0.712
Has upper-tertiary education	0.09	0.08	0.59	0.555
Employment status				
Employed	0.55	0.55	-0.28	0.783
Works in a utility company	0.23	0.24	-1.08	0.281
Economic leaning				
Self-declared politically right leaning	0.47	0.48	-0.55	0.585
Self-declared politically left leaning	0.18	0.17	0.25	0.803
Market economy				
Government role in economic activity	0.16	0.20	-1.68	0.093
Government role in regulating the economy	0.45	0.46	-0.06	0.949
Government role in price setting	0.47	0.48	-0.22	0.823
Perception of foreign companies	0.13	0.11	0.97	0.330
Perception of foreign companies in utilities	-0.20	-0.23	0.94	0.349
Distribution and equity Fairness	0.22	0.25	-0.78	0.433
Standard of living	0.20	0.20	-0.04	0.965
Government role in ensuring access to utilities	-0.02	-0.04	0.53	0.595
Utility companies' role in ensuring equity	0.07	0.07	0.16	0.876
Trust and corruption Trust in people	0.31	0.28	1.09	0.274
Trust in government	0.03	-0.01	1.34	0.179
Trust in institutions	0.03	0.01	0.77	0.441
Corruption in the country	-0.40	-0.40	0.17	0.866
Corruption in utilities	-0.06	-0.05	-0.37	0.715
Views and satisfaction with sector				
Perception of private participation in utilities	-0.20	-0.16	-1.53	0.127
Satisfaction with utility services	0.29	0.24	1.78	0.076
Knowledge about the utility service's regulator	-0.00	-0.02	0.53	0.597

Note: This table presents the results of a balance test for regression covariates between the treatment and control groups, where the treatment group includes respondents from both treatment branches. The "Treated" and "Control" columns report the means of each variable in their respective sub-samples.

Table A3: Balance Test of Covariates between the Status Quo Treatment and Control Groups

Variable	Treated	Control	t	p-value
Demographics				
Age (35-54)	0.41	0.41	0.54	0.592
Age (55+)	0.13	0.13	0.62	0.535
Female	0.48	0.45	1.80	0.072
Belongs to country's main ethnic group	0.61	0.62	-0.84	0.403
Lives in urban area	0.83	0.84	-1.12	0.264
Married	0.48	0.47	0.82	0.414
Have children	0.60	0.61	-0.87	0.386
Head of household	0.59	0.60	-0.25	0.800
Income				
Between 25th and 50th percentile	0.14	0.14	-0.13	0.894
Between 50t and 75th percentile	0.18	0.18	0.02	0.982
Above 75th percentile	0.18	0.17	0.71	0.477
Education				
Has secondary education	0.53	0.55	-0.84	0.399
Has lower-tertiary education	0.25	0.27	-0.99	0.320
Has upper-tertiary education	0.09	0.08	0.67	0.500
Employment status				
Employed	0.53	0.55	-1.27	0.203
Works in a utility company	0.23	0.24	-0.25	0.799
Economic leaning				
Self-declared politically right leaning	0.47	0.48	-0.41	0.680
Self-declared politically left leaning	0.17	0.17	-0.42	0.674
Market economy				
Government role in economic activity	0.14	0.20	-1.93	0.053
Government role in regulating the economy	0.41	0.46	-1.37	0.169
Government role in price setting	0.45	0.48	-0.76	0.446
Perception of foreign companies	0.14	0.11	0.88	0.378
Perception of foreign companies in utilities	-0.19	-0.23	1.25	0.211
Distribution and equity				
Fairness	0.21	0.25	-1.05	0.296
Standard of living	0.17	0.20	-0.94	0.349
Government role in ensuring access to utilities	-0.02	-0.04	0.58	0.563
Utility companies' role in ensuring equity	0.08	0.07	0.58	0.564
Trust and corruption				
Trust in people	0.30	0.27	0.72	0.473
Trust in government	0.04	-0.01	1.48	0.140
Trust in institutions	0.04	0.01	0.73	0.463
Corruption in the country	-0.39	-0.40	0.19	0.846
Corruption in utilities	-0.05	-0.05	0.17	0.864
Views and satisfaction with sector				
Perception of private participation in utilities	-0.23	-0.16	-2.34	0.019
Satisfaction with utility services	0.29	0.24	1.60	0.109
Knowledge about the utility services regulator	-0.02	-0.02	-0.15	0.880

Note: This table presents the results of a balance test for regression covariates between the treatment and control groups, where the treatment group includes respondents receiving information about the status quo of the utility sector in their countries. The "Treated" and "Control" columns report the means of each variable in their respective sub-samples.

Table A4: Balance Test of Covariates between the Status Quo + Effect of Policies Treatment and Control Groups

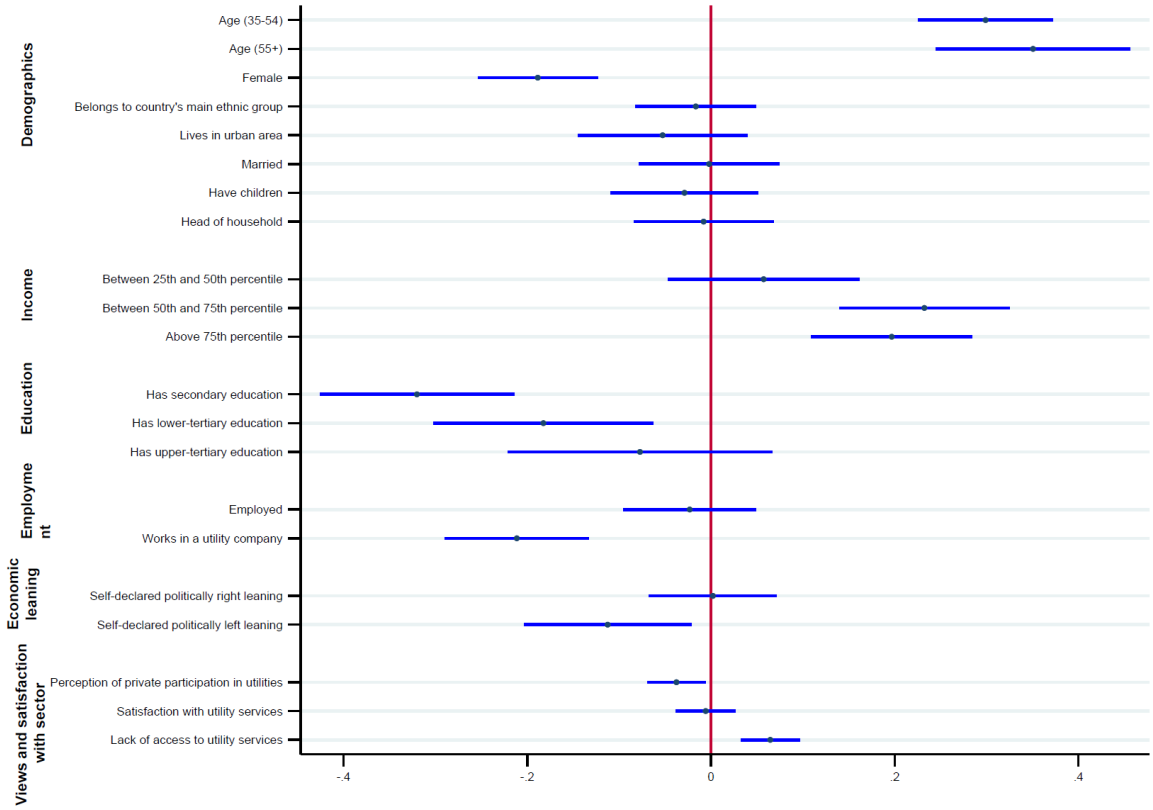
Variable	Treated	Control	t	p-value
Demographics				
Age (35-54)	0.41	0.41	0.42	0.674
Age (55+)	0.12	0.13	-0.53	0.596
Female	0.46	0.45	0.48	0.628
Belongs to country's main ethnic group	0.60	0.62	-1.23	0.219
Lives in urban area	0.84	0.84	-0.21	0.835
Married	0.47	0.47	-0.25	0.804
Have children	0.61	0.61	-0.58	0.565
Head of household	0.60	0.60	0.30	0.762
Income				
Between 25th and 50th percentile	0.15	0.14	0.74	0.459
Between 50th and 75th percentile	0.18	0.18	-0.22	0.822
Above 75th percentile	0.20	0.17	1.76	0.079
Education				
Has secondary education	0.54	0.55	-0.36	0.718
Has lower-tertiary education	0.27	0.27	0.34	0.731
Has upper-tertiary education	0.08	0.08	0.35	0.729
Employed	0.56	0.55	0.79	0.430
Works in a utility company	0.22	0.24	-1.60	0.110
Economic leaning				
Self-declared politically right leaning	0.47	0.48	-0.53	0.598
Self-declared politically left leaning	0.18	0.17	0.83	0.405
Market economy				
Government role in economic activity	0.17	0.20	-0.97	0.333
Government role in regulating the economy	0.50	0.46	1.25	0.213
Government role in price setting	0.49	0.48	0.37	0.711
Perception of foreign companies	0.13	0.11	0.80	0.426
Perception of foreign companies in utilities	-0.22	-0.23	0.37	0.708
Distribution and equity				
Fairness	0.23	0.25	-0.31	0.757
Standard of living	0.23	0.20	0.85	0.396
Government role in ensuring access to utilities	-0.03	-0.04	0.35	0.728
Utility companies' role in ensuring equity	0.06	0.07	-0.30	0.764
Trust and corruption				
Trust in people	0.31	0.27	1.16	0.244
Trust in government	0.02	-0.01	0.84	0.399
Trust in institutions	0.03	0.01	0.60	0.551
Corruption in the country	-0.40	-0.40	0.10	0.924
Corruption in utilities	-0.08	-0.05	-0.79	0.428
Views and satisfaction with sector				
Perception of private participation in utilities	-0.17	-0.16	-0.29	0.770
Satisfaction with utility services	0.28	0.24	1.45	0.148
Knowledge about the utility service's regulator	0.01	-0.02	1.05	0.293

Note: This table presents the results of a balance test for regression covariates between the treatment and control groups, where the treatment group includes respondents receiving information about the status quo of the utility sector in their countries as well as the effects of policies fostering competition and private participation. The "Treated" and "Control" columns report the means of each variable in their respective sub-samples.

A.8 Additional figures

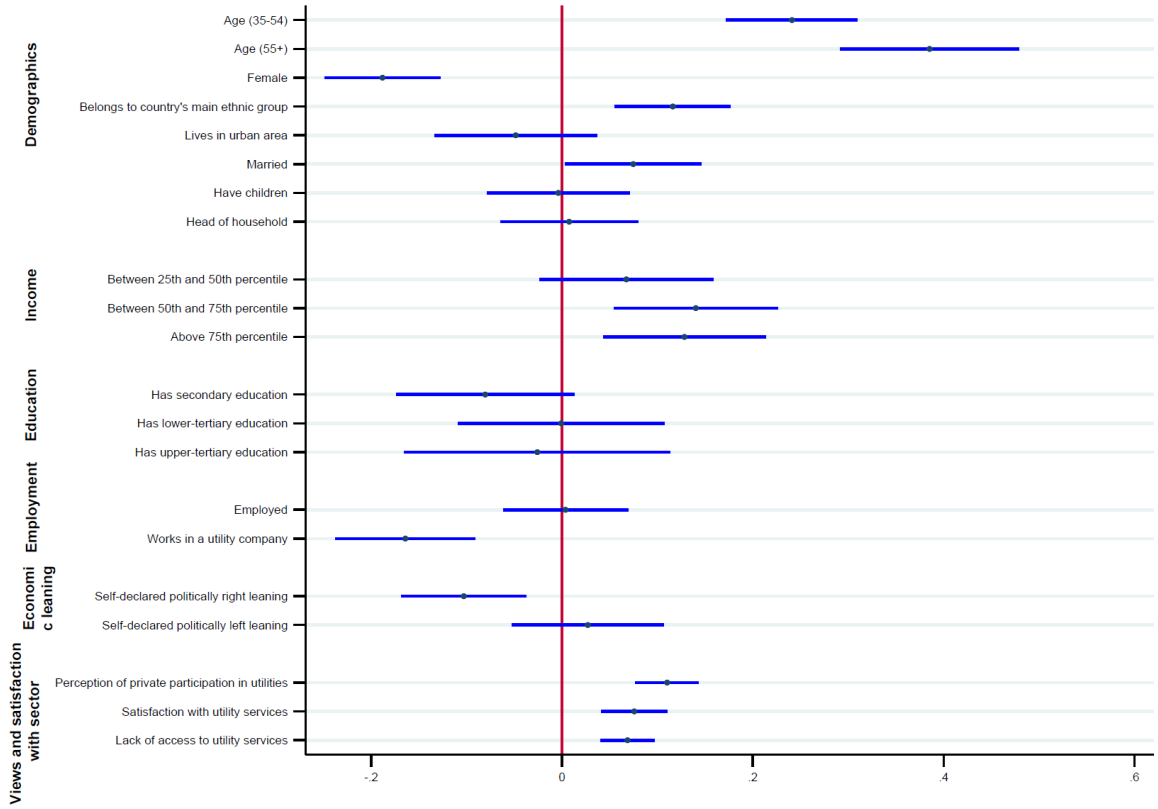
A.8.1 Who holds positive perceptions about competition?

Figure A6: Perceptions of the overall effect of competition, Socioeconomic Characteristics, and views and satisfaction with sector: Electricity Sector



Note: This figure shows the regression coefficients of socioeconomic characteristics, and views and satisfaction with the electricity sector, with the dependent variable being individuals' overall belief about the beneficial effect of competition in the electricity sector. The sample is limited to respondents taking the survey on the electricity sector. The dots represent point estimates and spikes represent 95% confidence intervals.

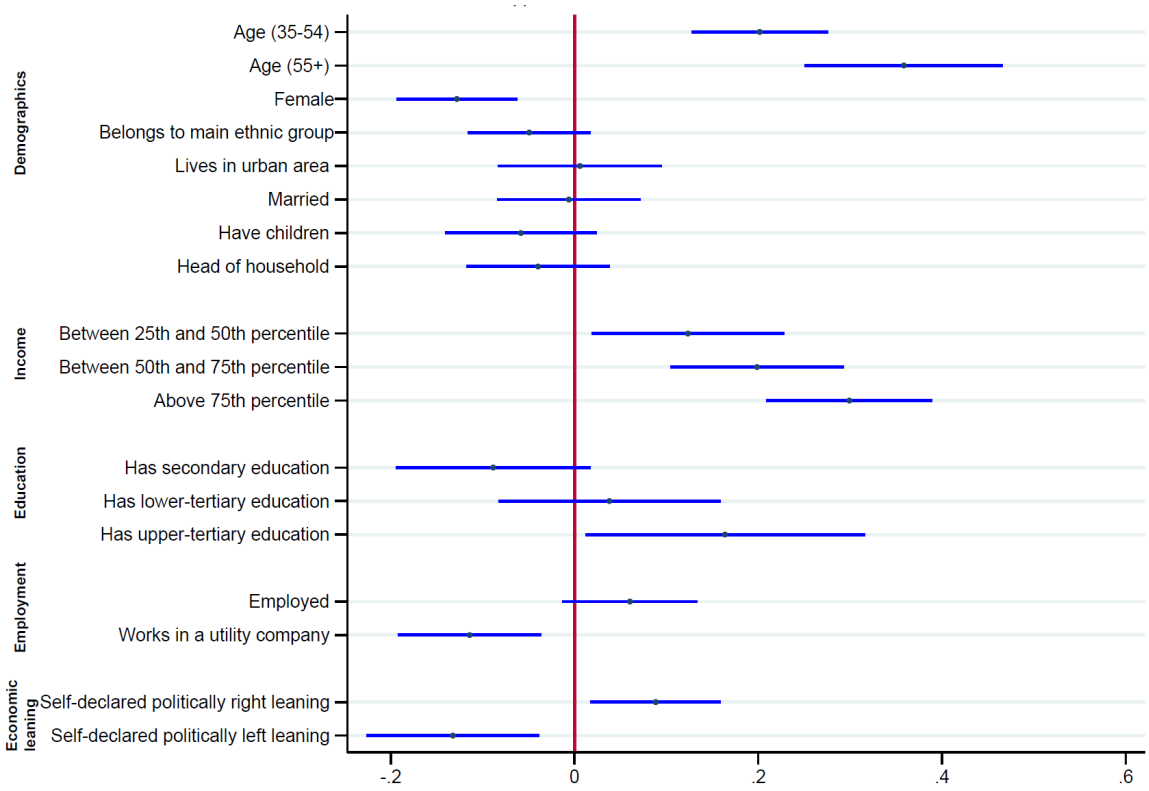
Figure A7: Perceptions of the overall effect of competition, Socioeconomic Characteristics, and views and satisfaction with sector: Telecommunications Sector



Note: This figure shows the regression coefficients of socioeconomic characteristics, and views and satisfaction with the electricity sector, with the dependent variable being individuals' overall belief about the beneficial effect of competition in the electricity sector. The sample is limited to respondents taking the survey on the telecommunications sector. The dots represent point estimates and spikes represent 95% confidence intervals.

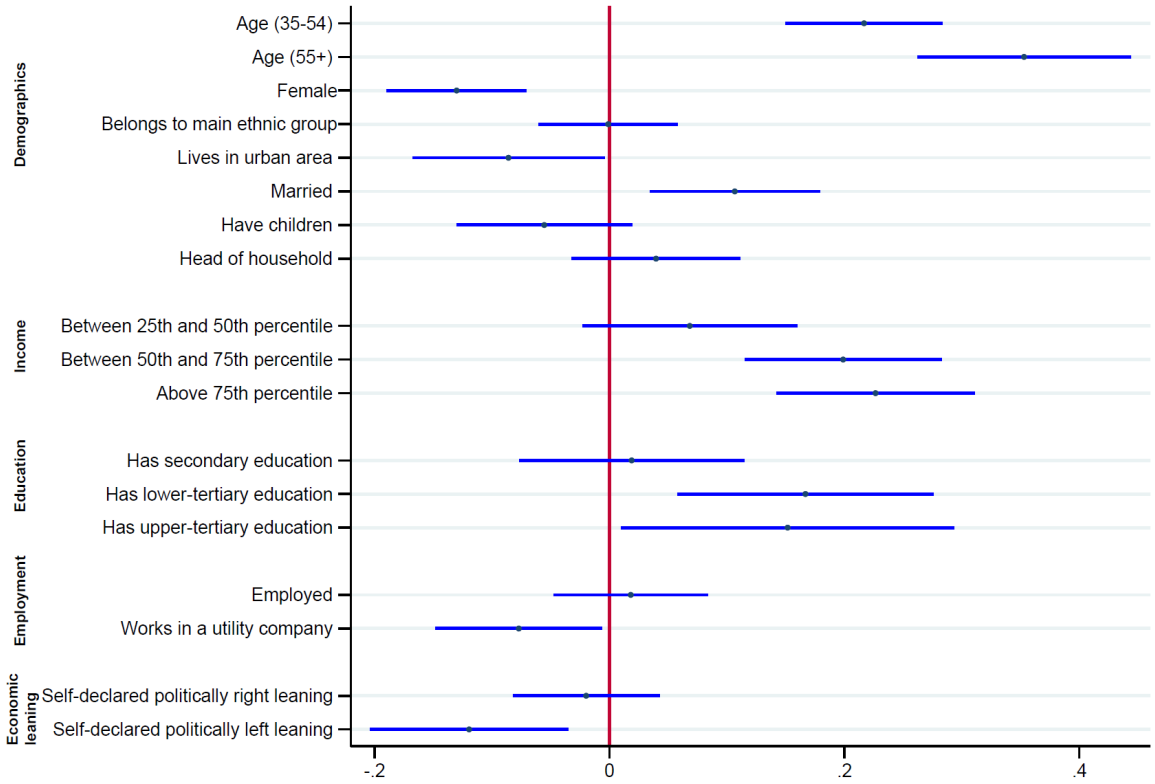
A.8.2 Role of socioeconomic characteristics and beliefs and perceptions

Figure A8: Correlation between socioeconomic characteristics and support for policies - Electricity sector



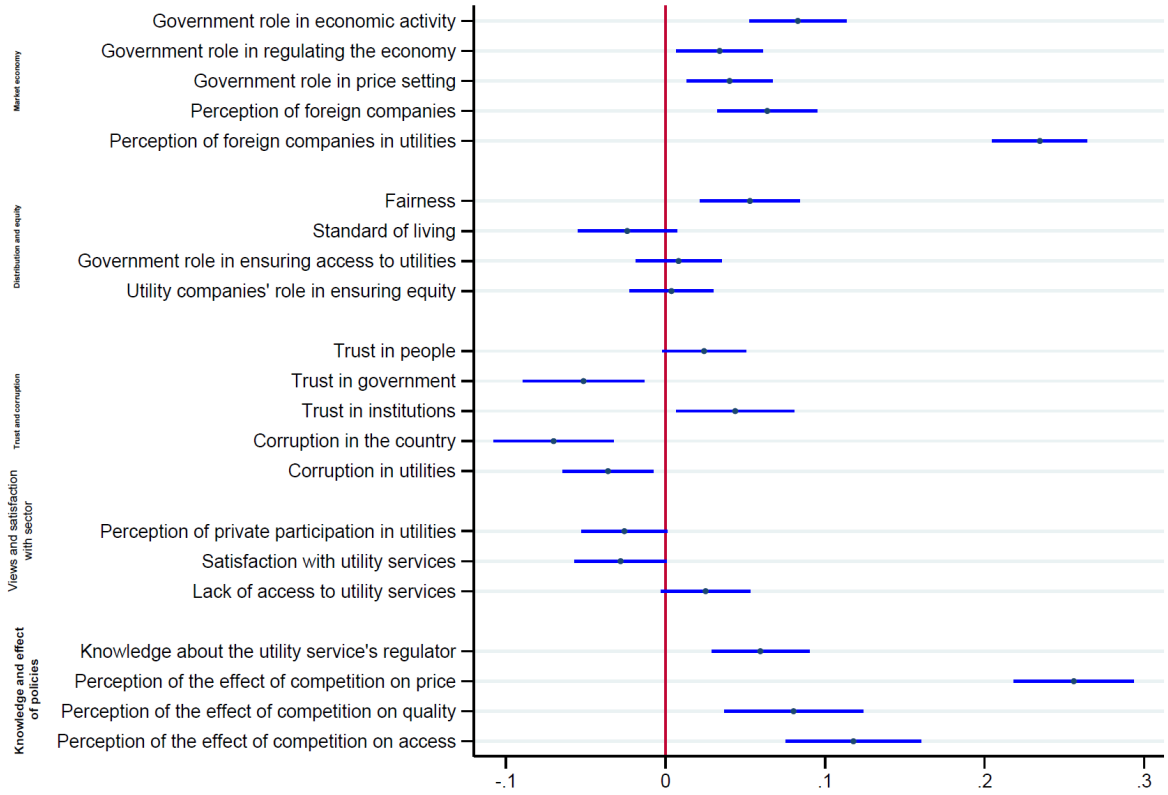
Note: The figure shows the estimated coefficients from Ordinary Least Squares regressions of the support for PMR reforms (electricity sector only) on individuals' socioeconomic characteristics. The regression controls for the treatment indicators and country fixed effects. A positive coefficient indicates an increase in policy support. Bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

Figure A9: Correlation between socioeconomic characteristics and support for policies - Telecommunications sector



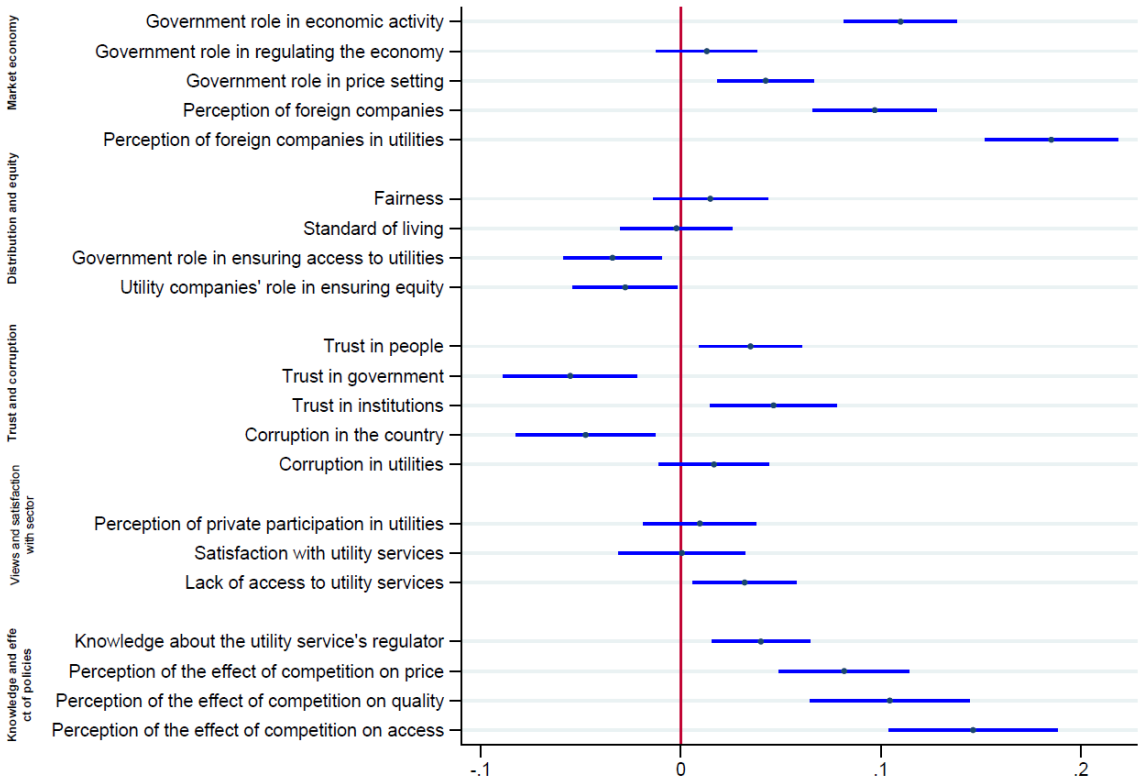
Note: The figure shows the estimated coefficients from Ordinary Least Squares regressions of the support for PMR reforms (telecommunications sector only) on individuals' socioeconomic characteristics. The regression controls for the treatment indicators and country fixed effects. A positive coefficient indicates an increase in policy support. Bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

Figure A10: Correlation between beliefs and perceptions and support for policies - Electricity sector



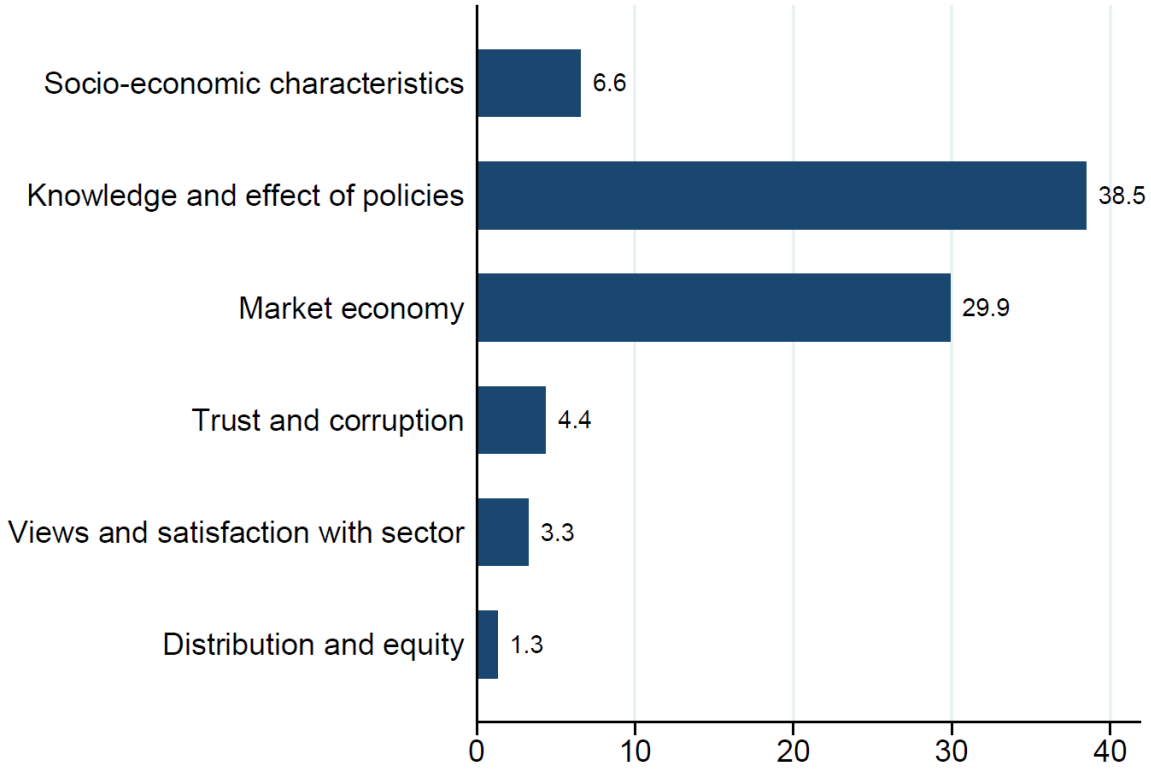
Note: The figure shows the estimated coefficients from Ordinary Least Squares regressions of the support for PMR reforms (electricity sector only) on individuals' beliefs and perceptions. The regression controls for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, the treatment indicators and country fixed effects. A positive coefficient indicates an increase in policy support. Bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

Figure A11: Correlation between beliefs and perceptions and support for policies - Telecommunications sector



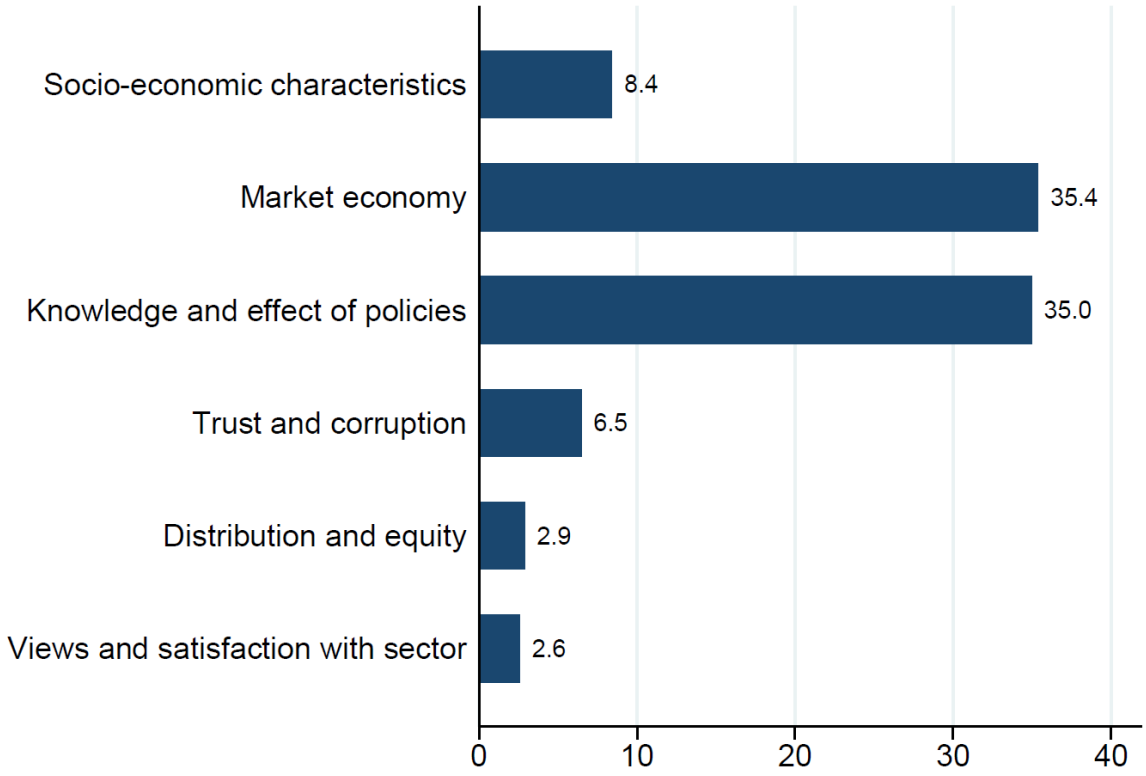
Note: The figure shows the estimated coefficients from Ordinary Least Squares regressions of the support for PMR reforms (telecommunications sector only) on individuals' beliefs and perceptions. The regression controls for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, the treatment indicators and country fixed effects. A positive coefficient indicates an increase in policy support. Bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

Figure A12: Drivers of PMR reforms support - Electricity sector



Note: The figure shows the results of a dominance analysis that quantifies the share of variance in support for PMR reforms (electricity sector only) by individuals' socioeconomic characteristics and different sets of beliefs and perceptions based on an Ordinary Least Squares regression. The regression controls for country fixed effects and treatments indicators, whose contributions are not shown.

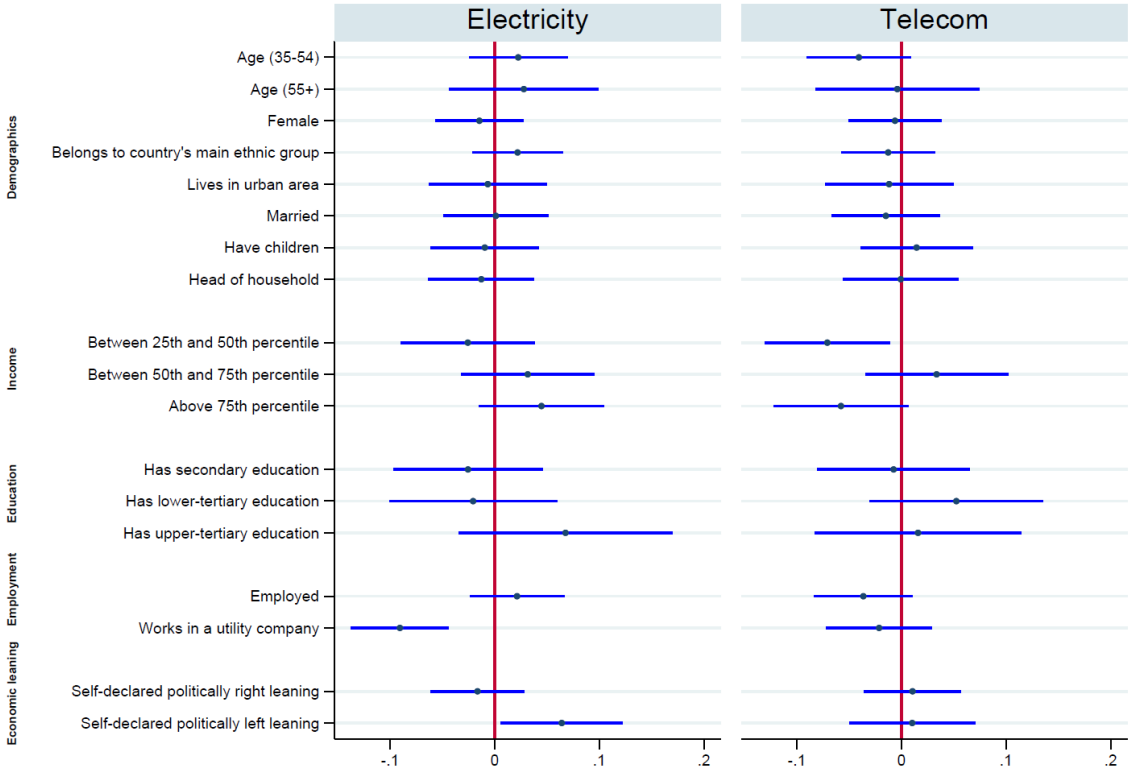
Figure A13: Drivers of PMR reforms support - Telecommunications sector



Note: The figure shows the results of a dominance analysis that quantifies the share of variance in support for PMR reforms (telecommunications sector only) by individuals' socioeconomic characteristics and different sets of beliefs and perceptions based on an Ordinary Least Squares regression. The regression controls for country fixed effects and treatments indicators, whose contributions are not shown.

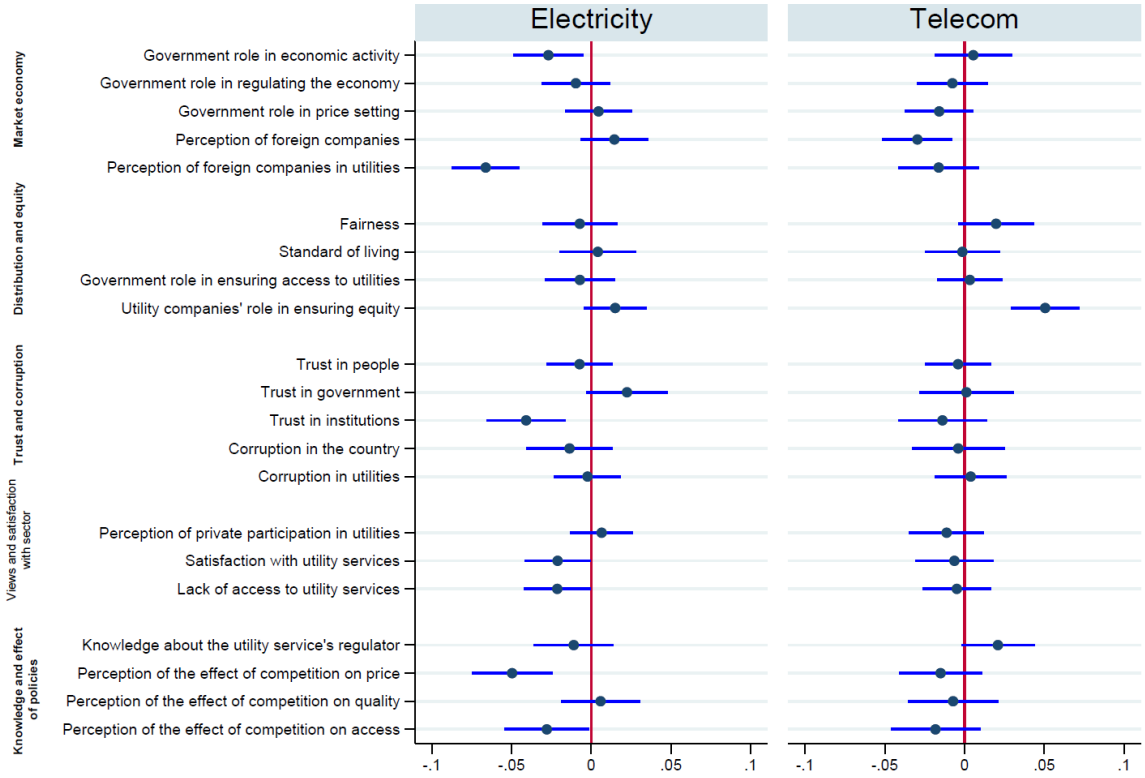
A.8.3 Characteristics of the ultimate non-supporters for reforms

Figure A14: Socioeconomic characteristics of the ultimate non-supporters for reforms



Note: The figure shows the correlations between individuals' socioeconomic characteristics and their ultimate nonsupport for reforms in the electricity and telecommunications sectors, based on Ordinary Least Squares regressions. The dependent variable takes a value of 1 if the respondent opposes the reform despite the complementary and compensatory measures, and 0 if the respondent supports the reform following these measures, as illustrated by the yellow and red bars in Figure 11. The regression controls for beliefs, perceptions, and country fixed effects. A positive coefficient indicates an increased likelihood of being an ultimate non-supporter of the reform. The bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

Figure A15: Beliefs and perceptions of the ultimate non-supporters for reforms



Note: The figure shows the correlations between individuals' beliefs and perceptions and their ultimate nonsupport for reforms in the electricity and telecommunications sectors, based on Ordinary Least Squares regressions. The dependent variable takes a value of 1 if the respondent opposes the reform despite the complementary and compensatory measures, and 0 if the respondent supports the reform following these measures, as illustrated by the yellow and red bars in Figure 11. The regression controls for socioeconomic characteristics and country fixed effects. A positive coefficient indicates an increased likelihood of being an ultimate non-supporter of the reform. The bars represent 90% confidence intervals.

A.9 Additional tables

Table A5: Perceptions of the overall effect of competition

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Demographics			
Age (35-54)	0.275***	0.299***	0.241***
	(0.031)	(0.044)	(0.042)
Age (55+)	0.393***	0.351***	0.385***
	(0.043)	(0.064)	(0.057)
Female	-0.183***	-0.189***	-0.188***
	(0.027)	(0.040)	(0.037)
Belongs to main ethnic group	0.041	-0.017	0.116***
	(0.027)	(0.040)	(0.037)
Lives in urban area	0.038	0.030	0.052
	(0.038)	(0.056)	(0.052)
Married	0.041	0.024	0.075*
	(0.032)	(0.046)	(0.043)
Have children	-0.424***	-0.406**	-0.396**
	(0.034)	(0.049)	(0.046)
Head of household	-0.008	-0.008	0.008
	(0.032)	(0.048)	(0.046)
Income			
Between 25th and 50th percentile	0.055	0.057	0.068
	(0.043)	(0.063)	(0.055)
Between 50th and 75th percentile	0.196***	0.232***	0.140***
	(0.039)	(0.050)	(0.052)
Above 75th percentile	0.157***	0.197***	0.128**
	(0.038)	(0.053)	(0.052)
Education			
Has secondary education	-0.187**	-0.320***	-0.080
	(0.038)	(0.053)	(0.057)
Has lower-tertiary education	-0.063	-0.182**	-0.001
	(0.049)	(0.073)	(0.061)
Has upper-tertiary education	-0.023	-0.077	-0.026
	(0.040)	(0.062)	(0.052)
Employment			
Employed	-0.010	-0.023	0.004
	(0.030)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Works in a utility company	-0.023***	0.211***	0.164**
	(0.033)	(0.048)	(0.044)
Economic leaning			
Self-declared politically right leaning	-0.047	0.042*	0.048**
	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.024)
Self-declared politically left leaning	0.037	0.072**	0.048*
	(0.027)	(0.032)	(0.021)
Views and satisfaction with sector			
Perception of private participation in utilities	0.062***	-0.038**	0.010**
	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.020)
Satisfaction with utility services	0.030*	0.060**	0.070***
	(0.014)	(0.021)	(0.017)
Lack of access to utility services	0.072***	0.065**	0.069**
	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.017)
Observations	6,295	3,187	3,108
R-squared	0.293	0.093	0.115
R-squared adjusted	0.090	0.080	0.108
Sample	Full	Full	Full
Sector	Both	Electricity	Telecom
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES

Note: The table shows the regression coefficients of socioeconomic characteristics, and views and satisfaction with the sector for both sectors (column 1), the electricity sector (column 20 and the telecommunications sector (column 3). The dependent variable measures individuals' overall belief about the beneficial effect of competition in the network sector. The regression controls for the treatment indicators and country fixed effects (not reported). See Appendix A.5 for the precise definitions of the variables. Standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A6: Correlation between socioeconomic characteristics and support for policies

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Demographics			
Age (35–54)	0.207***	0.202***	0.217***
	(0.031)	(0.045)	(0.040)
Age (55+)	0.366***	0.359***	0.353***
	(0.044)	(0.065)	(0.055)
Female	-0.122***	-0.128***	-0.102***
	(0.027)	(0.040)	(0.036)
Belongs to main ethnic group	-0.026	-0.049	-0.007
	(0.028)	(0.041)	(0.036)
Lives in urban area	-0.030	0.006	0.086*
	(0.038)	(0.054)	(0.050)
Married	0.048	-0.006	-0.001
	(0.033)	(0.047)	(0.044)
Have children	-0.061*	-0.058	-0.055
	(0.034)	(0.050)	(0.047)
Head of household	-0.006	-0.040	0.040
	(0.033)	(0.047)	(0.044)
Income			
Between 25th and 50th percentile	0.104**	0.124**	0.068
	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.052)
Between 50th and 75th percentile	0.207***	0.199***	0.199***
	(0.039)	(0.057)	(0.051)
Above 75th percentile	0.260***	0.299***	0.227***
	(0.038)	(0.055)	(0.050)
Education			
Has secondary education	-0.039	-0.088	-0.019
	(0.044)	(0.058)	(0.051)
Has lower-tertiary education	0.098*	0.038	0.167**
	(0.050)	(0.073)	(0.066)
Has upper-tertiary education	0.151**	0.164*	0.127
	(0.064)	(0.092)	(0.086)
Employment			
Employed	0.040	0.060	0.010
	(0.030)	(0.045)	(0.044)
Works in a utility company	-0.097***	-0.114**	-0.077*
	(0.033)	(0.047)	(0.043)
Economic leaning			
Self-declared politically right leaning	0.042	0.088**	-0.020
	(0.029)	(0.043)	(0.038)
Self-declared politically left leaning	-0.118***	-0.132**	-0.119**
	(0.039)	(0.057)	(0.051)
Observations	6,300	3,190	3,110
R-squared	0.133	0.165	0.118
Sample	Full	Full	Full
Treatments	Controlled	Controlled	Controlled
Sector	Both	Electricity	Telecom
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES

Note: The table shows OLS regressions of the support for reforms on individuals' socioeconomic characteristics for both sectors (column 1), the electricity sector (column 2), and the telecommunications sector (column 3). The regression controls for the treatment indicators and country fixed effects (not reported). See Appendix A.5 for the precise definitions of the variables. Standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A7: Correlation between beliefs and perceptions and support for policies

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Market economy			
Government role in economic activity	0.098***	0.083***	0.110***
	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.017)
Government role in regulating the economy	0.022*	0.034**	0.013
	(0.011)	(0.016)	(0.015)
Government role in price setting	0.046**	0.040*	0.042**
	(0.011)	(0.016)	(0.015)
Perception of foreign companies	0.068***	0.064**	0.087***
	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Perception of foreign companies in utilities	0.241***	0.235***	0.185***
	(0.013)	(0.018)	(0.020)
Distribution and equity			
Fairness	0.032**	0.053***	0.015
	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.017)
Standard of living	-0.012	-0.024	-0.002
	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.017)
Government role in ensuring access to utilities	-0.011	0.008	-0.034**
	(0.011)	(0.016)	(0.015)
Utility companies' role in ensuring equity	-0.009	0.004	-0.028*
	(0.010)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Trust and corruption			
Trust in people	0.028**	0.024	0.035**
	(0.014)	(0.020)	(0.016)
Trust in government	-0.050***	-0.051**	-0.055**
	(0.016)	(0.023)	(0.020)
Trust in institutions	0.047***	0.044*	0.046**
	(0.015)	(0.023)	(0.019)
Corruption in the country	-0.058***	-0.070***	-0.048**
	(0.016)	(0.023)	(0.020)
Corruption in utilities	-0.013	-0.036**	-0.017
	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Views and satisfaction with sector			
Perception of private participation in utilities	0.014	0.026	0.010
	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Satisfaction with utility services	-0.027**	-0.028	0.001
	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Lack of access to utility services	0.034***	0.010	0.032**
	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Knowledge and effect of policies			
Knowledge about the utility service's regulator	0.066***	0.059**	0.040**
	(0.012)	(0.019)	(0.015)
Perception of the effect of competition on price	0.177***	0.256***	0.082**
	(0.015)	(0.023)	(0.020)
Perception of the effect of competition on quality	0.098***	0.080***	0.104***
	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.024)
Perception of the effect of competition on access	0.126***	0.118***	0.146***
	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Observations	6,281	3,186	3,095
R-squared	0.398	0.432	0.364
Sample	Full	Full	Full
Treatments	Controlled	Controlled	Controlled
Sector	Both	Electricity	Telecom
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES

Note: The table shows OLS regressions of the support for reforms on individuals' beliefs and perceptions for both sectors (column 1), the electricity sector (column 2), and the telecommunications sector (column 3). The regression controls for the socioeconomic characteristics, the treatment indicators and country fixed effects (not reported). See Appendix A.5 for the precise definitions of the variables. Standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A8: Effect of the treatments on policy support

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Status quo	0.031	0.080**	-0.003
	(0.027)	(0.040)	(0.037)
Status quo + effect of policies	0.335***	0.407***	0.271***
	(0.027)	(0.041)	(0.035)
Observations	6,287	3,186	3,101
R-squared	0.353	0.368	0.319
Sector	Both	Electricity	Telecom
Controls	YES	YES	YES
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES
Control group's outcome mean	-0.309	-0.521	-0.101

Note: The table shows the treatments effects on support for reforms for both sectors (column 1), the electricity sector (column 2) and the telecommunications sector (column 3) using OLS regressions. The regressions control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perception, and country fixed effects. Standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A9: Effect of the treatments on willingness to sign a petition

	Both sectors			Electricity			Telecom		
	Petition index	Petition to facilitate	Petition to limit	Petition index	Petition to facilitate	Petition to limit	Petition index	Petition to facilitate	Petition to limit
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Status quo	-0.004	0.002	0.003	0.021	0.018	0.003	-0.013	-0.009	-0.003
	(0.030)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.042)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.041)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Status quo + effect of policies	0.235***	0.089***	-0.071***	0.302***	0.113***	-0.090***	0.176***	0.067***	-0.054**
	(0.029)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.042)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.040)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Observations	6,287	6,283	6,281	3,186	3,184	3,184	3,101	3,099	3,097
R-squared	0.199	0.166	0.147	0.228	0.207	0.139	0.174	0.135	0.166
Sector	Both	Both	Both	Electricity	Electricity	Electricity	Telecom	Telecom	Telecom
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Control group's outcome mean	-0.224	0.604	0.471	-0.393	0.541	0.521	-0.0594	0.666	0.422

Note: The table shows the treatments effects on the willingness to sign petitions for both sectors (columns 1-3), the electricity sector (columns 4-6) and the telecommunications sector (columns 7-9) using OLS regressions. The regressions control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perception, and country fixed effects. Standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A10: Effect of the treatments on beliefs about the effects of policies

	Both sectors				Electricity				Telecom			
	Overall	Cost	Quality	Access	Overall	Cost	Quality	Access	Overall	Cost	Quality	Access
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Status quo	0.006	0.030	-0.022	-0.069**	0.039	0.077*	0.064	0.004	-0.008	-0.003	-0.104**	-0.139***
	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.039)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.040)
Status quo + effect of policies	0.242***	0.344***	0.238***	0.234***	0.309***	0.410***	0.295***	0.270***	0.189***	0.289***	0.190***	0.202***
	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.039)
Observations	6,286	6,286	6,286	6,282	3,185	3,186	3,186	3,186	3,101	3,100	3,100	3,096
R-squared	0.247	0.157	0.160	0.167	0.242	0.168	0.156	0.165	0.246	0.160	0.183	0.189
Sector	Both	Both	Both	Both	Electricity	Electricity	Electricity	Electricity	Telecom	Telecom	Telecom	Telecom
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Control group's outcome mean	-0.243	-0.174	-0.107	-0.0837	-0.429	-0.253	-0.180	-0.139	-0.0610	-0.0964	-0.0358	-0.0294

Note: The table shows the treatments effects on beliefs about the effects of policies for both sectors (columns 1-4), the electricity sector (columns 5-8) and the telecommunications sector (columns 9-12) using OLS regressions. The regressions control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perception, and country fixed effects. Standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A11: Effect of the treatments on support for policies - Country-level heterogeneity

	Electricity			Telecommunications		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Status quo	0.131*	0.009	0.095	0.045	0.019	-0.048
	(0.068)	(0.067)	(0.073)	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.068)
Status quo + effect of policies	0.468***	0.430***	0.327***	0.249***	0.188***	0.352***
	(0.067)	(0.073)	(0.074)	(0.057)	(0.061)	(0.063)
Observations	1,089	1,068	1,029	1,006	1,028	1,067
R-squared	0.384	0.265	0.305	0.395	0.299	0.271
Country	Mexico	Morocco	South Africa	Mexico	Morocco	South Africa
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Country fixed effects	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Control group's outcome mean	-0.818	-0.766	0.0375	-0.195	-0.254	0.144

Note: The table shows the treatment effects on support for reforms in each surveyed country, for the electricity sector (columns 1-3) and the telecommunications sector (columns 4-6), using OLS regressions. Columns (1) and (4) report the results for Mexico. Columns (2) and (5) show the results for Morocco. Columns (3) and (6) present the results for South Africa. The regressions control for individuals' socioeconomic characteristics, beliefs and perceptions, and country fixed effects. Standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

A.10 Questionnaire

A.10.1 Survey links

Below are the links to the English versions of the questionnaires for each country:

- Mexico
- Morocco
- South Africa

A.10.2 Benchmark questionnaire

Below is the benchmark questionnaire in English for South Africa, with the references to the specific PMR sector indicated under the bracket [electricity/telecommunication].

First block of socioeconomic questions

1. Ungathanda ukuthatha le nhlolovo ngesiZulu, isiBhunu, isiXhosa noma isiNgisi? / Sou jy verkies om hierdie opname in Zoeloe, Afrikaans, Xhosa of Engels te voltooi? / Ngaba ungathanda ukwenza olu ngesiZulu, isiBhulu, isiXhosa okanye isiNgesi? / Would you prefer to take this survey in Zulu, Afrikaans, Xhosa, or English?
   1. IsiZulu / Zoeloe / IsiZulu / Zulu
   2. IsiBhunu / Afrikaans / IsiBhulu / Afrikaans
   3. IsiXhosa / Xhosa / IsiXhosa / Xhosa
   4. IsiNgisi / Engels / IsiNgeisi / English

2. Which year were you born?
Drop down menu including years from 1900-2024

3. What is your gender?
   1. Man
   2. Woman
   3. Non-binary
   4. Other

4. Please indicate your race (note that this information is only used for analysis purposes)
   1. Asian / Indian
   2. Black
   3. Coloured
   4. White

5. Which province do you live in?
   1. Eastern Cape
   2. Free State
   3. Gauteng
   4. KwaZulu-Natal
   5. Limpopo
   6. Mpumalanga
   7. North West
   8. Northern Cape
   9. Western Cape

6.Please enter your 4-digit postal code.
Short answer response

7. Would you say that you live in an urban city or town or in a rural village?
   1. Urban (city or town, population 2,001 or more)
   2. Rural (village, population 2,000 or less)

8. Which, if any, of the following options best describes your current employment status?

1. Self-employed or independent
2. Salaried employee in a state company
3. Salaried employee in a private company
4. Salaried employee in a government department
5. Temporary out of work
6. Retired or pensioner
7. Don't work, responsible for housework
8. Student

9. Which **three** words are days of the week? Please select all **three** that apply.

Answer choices appear in random order

1. Monday
2. Tuesday
3. Wednesday
4. December
5. August

Consent

This is a survey for academic research. Your name will never be recorded by researchers. Results may include summary data, but you will never be identified. It will take about 20 minutes to complete the survey.

Please note that it is very important for the success of our research that you **answer honestly** and **read the questions very carefully** before answering. If at any time you don't know an answer, please give your best guess **without consulting any external sources.** However, please be sure to spend enough time reading and understanding the questions.

In exchange for your participation, you will receive 1500 credited to your YouGov account.

Your participation in this study is purely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the survey at any time and for any reason. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact us at surveypeople2024@gmail.com.

You must live in South Africa to participate in this survey.

10. *consent question.*
1. Yes, I would like to take part in this study, and I confirm that I LIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA, and I am 18 or older.
2. No, I would not like to participate.

11. What language(s) do you speak at home?

1. Afrikaans
2. English
3. Southern Ndebele
4. Xhosa
5. Zulu
6. Northern Sotho
7. Southern Sotho
8. Tswana
9. Swati
10. Venda
11. Tsonga
12. Other

12. Which is the highest level of education or work-related qualification you achieved?
1. Primary school
2. Some Secondary School
3. Completed Secondary School (Year 12/ or equivalent)
4. Higher Certificates and Advanced National (vocational) Cert.
5. National Diploma and Advanced certificates
6. Bachelor Degree (including Honours Degree)
7. Master's Degree or Doctoral Degree
96. None of these
98. Don't know
95. Prefer not to say

13. At what age did you finish full-time education?
1. 15 or under
2. 16
3. 17-18
4. 19
5. 20+
6. Still at school/Full time student
7. Can't remember
97. Not applicable

14. How many years of formal education have you completed?
Drop down list with selections from 0-22 years. Not sure is also an answer choice.

Trust, corruption, distribution, and well-being

15. Generally speaking, would you say **people can be trusted or people cannot be trusted?**
1. People <u>cannot</u> be trusted
2. Most people <u>cannot</u> be trusted
3. Most people <u>can</u> be trusted
4. People <u>can</u> be trusted

16. Would you say the **governments** in South Africa **can or cannot be trusted,** no matter which political party is in charge?
1. Governments in South Africa cannot be trusted
2. Most governments in South Africa cannot be trusted
3. Most governments in South Africa can be trusted
4. Governments in South Africa can be trusted

17. Would you say that **key institutions** in South Africa (for example, courts and the parliament) **can or cannot be trusted?**
1. Institutions cannot be trusted
2. Most institutions cannot be trusted
3. Most institutions can be trusted
4. Institutions can be trusted

18. How would you place **your views on corruption in South Africa** on a 10-point scale where "1" means "there is no corruption in this country" and "10" means "there is abundant corruption in this country". Please move the slider to characterize your views. *This question is the number 1-10 set on a slider. The respondent rests the slider on the number that corresponds with their view of corruption.*

19. How fair do you think the **distribution of income** is in South Africa?
1. The distribution of income is very unfair
2. The distribution of income is unfair
3. The distribution of income is fair
4. The distribution of income is very fair

20. How do you characterize your **current standard of living** compared to those of your parents or grandparents when they were about your age?
1. My standard of living is worse
2. My standard of living is slightly worse
3. My standard of living is about the same
4. My standard of living is slightly better
5. My standard of living is better

Market economy, role of the government, and role of private/foreign companies

21. **Productive activities** refer to the creation of goods and services that people buy and use, such as manufactured products or transport services.
In your view, **who should handle productive activities** in South Africa?
1. Government-owned companies
2. Government-owned companies, but with some private involvement
3. Equally private companies and government-owned companies
4. Private companies, but with some government involvement

5. Private companies

22. **Regulation** refers to the government setting rules for businesses and individuals to follow. These rules can affect for instance how companies operate and treat their customers. In some countries, the government heavily controls economic activities, while in other countries the government allows the market more freedom to set its own rules. In your view, **how large of a role should the government have in regulating the economy?**

1. Extensive role
2. Moderate role
3. Some role
4. Minimal role

23. How much do you think the **government** in South Africa should **intervene in how private companies set prices** for the goods and services they sell?

1. The government should always intervene
2. The government should often intervene
3. The government should occasionally intervene
4. The government should rarely intervene

24. When **foreign companies** do business in South Africa, how do you think they **affect our economy?**

1. They greatly harm our economy
2. They somewhat harm our economy
3. They neither improve nor harm our economy
4. They somewhat improve our economy
5. They greatly improve our economy

25. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "The government in South Africa should ensure that everyone has access to essential services like water, electricity, internet, and transport."

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Knowledge about the sector, satisfaction with services, role of utility companies in ensuring equity, corruption and foreign capital in utilities

26. Have you heard of [NERSA/ICASA] in South Africa and, if yes, in which context? *NERSA or ICASA would be displayed depending on if the respondent had been randomly selected to answer questions on electricity or telecommunications. NERSA is the electric regulator; ICASA is the telecom regulator.*

1. No, I have never heard that name

2. Construction company
3. Sport company
4. Electricity regulator
5. Industrial activities
7. Water services
8. Telecommunications regulator

27. How **satisfied or dissatisfied** are you with [**electricity/telecommunication services**] in South Africa? Please move the slider to characterize your views.
This question is the number 1-10 set on a slider. The respondent rests the slider on the number that corresponds with their view of corruption.

28. Think about the **cost** (that people pay), the **quality** (how well it works), and **access** (how many places and people get access) of [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa. What would you say?

Question	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
The cost you pay	Very expensive	Somewhat expensive	Neither cheap nor expensive	Somewhat cheap	Very cheap
The quality you get	Very bad	Bad	Neither good nor bad	Good	Very good
How many people and areas have access	Access is very limited	Access is limited	Access is neither good nor bad	Access is good	Access for almost everyone/everywhere

29. What role should **companies providing services like** [**electricity**/**telecommunication services** (such as phone, mobile phone, and access to the internet)] have in **reducing inequality** and ensuring **fair access** to [electricity/telecommunication services] for all in South Africa?
1. A major role
2. A moderate role
3. A limited role
4. No role at all

30. If you think about **companies providing services like [electricity/telecommunication services]** in South Africa, would you say they work mostly for the benefit of a few powerful people or for everyone's benefit?
1. They work for the benefit of a few powerful people

2. They mostly work for the benefit of a few powerful people
3. They mostly work for everyone's benefit
4. They work for everyone's benefit

31. How would you describe the impact on the economy if **foreign companies** were involved in **providing services like [electricity/telecommunication services]** in South Africa?

1. Very negative
2. Somewhat negative
3. Neither positive nor negative
4. Somewhat positive
5. Very positive

Attention Check

32. The next question is about the following problem. In questionnaires like ours, sometimes there are participants who do not carefully read the questions and just quickly click through the survey. This means that there are a lot of random answers which compromise the results of research studies. To show that you read our questions carefully, please choose both “Extremely interested” and “Not interested at all” as your answer in the next question. Do not select any other option.
How interested are you in sports?

1. Extremely interested
2. Very interested
3. A little bit interested
4. Almost not interested
5. Not interested at all

Perceptions of private participation in utilities, pre-treatment support for policies

33. In some countries, the provision of [electricity/telecommunication services] is handled by companies owned by the government. In other countries, these services are provided by a mix of public and private companies. Finally, in some countries the provision of [electricity/telecommunication services] is handled completely by private companies.
To your knowledge, [is electricity/are telecommunication services] in South Africa provided by public companies (that is, owned by the government), by private companies, or both? Please select a value to characterize your views.
[Electricity/Telecommunication services] in South Africa [is/are]

This question is a slider that allows respondents to choose a number between 1 and 10. 1 refers to fully handled by public companies; 10 refers to fully handled by private companies.

34. How do you feel about private companies being allowed to [generate and sell electricity/sell telecommunication services] in South Africa?
The provision of [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa **should be:**

1. Fully handled by public companies or the government
2. Mostly handled by public companies or the government
3. Equally handled by public and private companies
4. Mostly handled by private companies
5. Fully handled by private companies

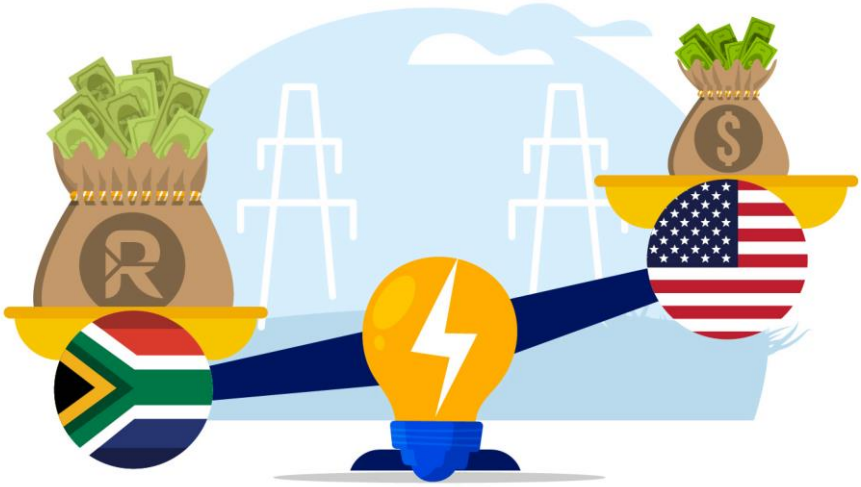
Treatment

Note: No content is shown to the control group. The respondents are randomly allocated to three groups and received different treatments. There are separate treatments depending on whether or not the respondent was chosen to answer questions on Electricity or Telecommunications.

Electricity – Status quo

You will see a presentation with some **information** regarding the **electricity** in South Africa. Please **pay attention** as you will be asked some questions after the presentation.

The **cost of electricity is higher** in South Africa than in rich countries. South Africans **pay 68% more for electricity** than people in the United States*.



*Source: Prices in national currency from the International Energy Agency (IEA) are adjusted by the purchasing power of the South African Rand vis-à-vis the US dollar.

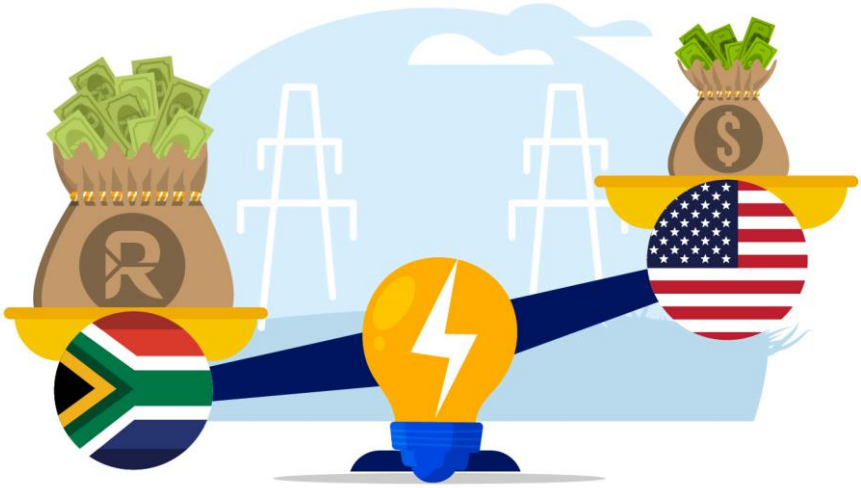
Electricity is also less reliable in South Africa than in richer countries. About **92%** of the companies in South Africa report that they face electricity **power cuts** for about **2 hours and 20 minutes** each time.*

*Source: World Bank.

Electricity – Status quo + effect of policies

You will see a presentation with some **information** regarding **electricity** in South Africa, as well as the **results from some studies conducted by researchers** in universities and international organizations **across the world.** Please **pay attention** as you will be asked some questions after the presentation.

The **cost of electricity is higher** in South Africa than in rich countries. South Africans **pay 68% more for electricity** than people in the United States*.



*Source: Prices in national currency from the International Energy Agency (IEA) are adjusted by the purchasing power of the South African Rand vis-à-vis the US dollar.

Electricity is also less reliable in South Africa than in richer countries. About **92%** of the companies in South Africa report that they face electricity **power cuts** for about **2 hours and 20 minutes** each time.*

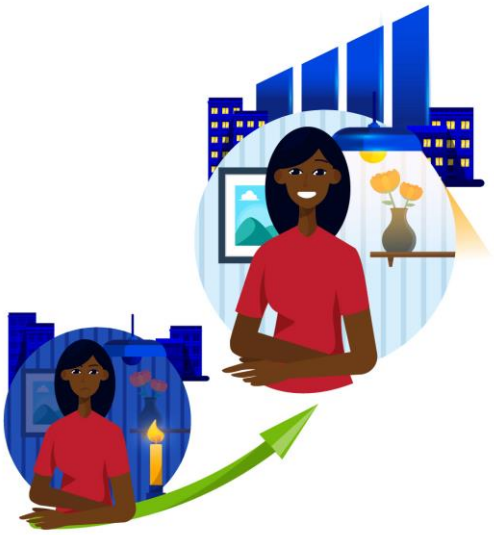
*Source: World Bank.

Academic studies* show that when **private companies** help deliver electricity services, **more people get access** to these services, the **quality improves,** and consumers

often **pay less.**

*Sources: World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

For example, **researchers found** that production costs and consumer **tariffs fell by 10 to 30%** in some Latin American countries when private firms entered the market...



...and that the frequency and duration of service interruptions decreased significantly, with one study showing **a 28% reduction in power outages.**

*Sources: World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Researchers* also found that when private companies are allowed in the electricty market, the **benefits are greater** if there is a **strong and independent regulator** to ensure companies truly compete to offer **better and cheaper electricity**, the private sector **delivers on its promises**, and **costumers are protected**.

In Guatemala, for instance, **combining private investment with effective regulation** allowed to enhance rural electricity access, with **280,000 new residential connections** by private electricity distributors.

*Sources: World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Telecommunication – Status quo

You will see a presentation with some **information** regarding **telecommunication services** in South Africa. Please **pay attention** as you will be asked some questions after the presentation.

In South Africa, the **cost of mobile phone subscription is high**. South Africans **spend five times more** of their monthly income on mobile data plans than people do in the United States. *

*Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Telecommunications are also less reliable in South Africa than in richer countries. Downloading on mobile phones is **74% slower** compared to the United States, and about **25% of people still can't use the internet.***

*Sources: International Telecommunication Union (ITU); Global System for Mobile Communications. (GSMA).

Telecommunications – Status quo + effect of policies

You will see a presentation with some **information** regarding **telecommunication services** in South Africa, as well as the **results from some studies conducted by researchers** in universities and international organizations **across the world.** Please **pay attention** as you will be asked some questions after the presentation.

In South Africa, the **cost of mobile phone subscription is high**. South Africans **spend five times more** of their monthly income on mobile data plans than people do in the United States. *

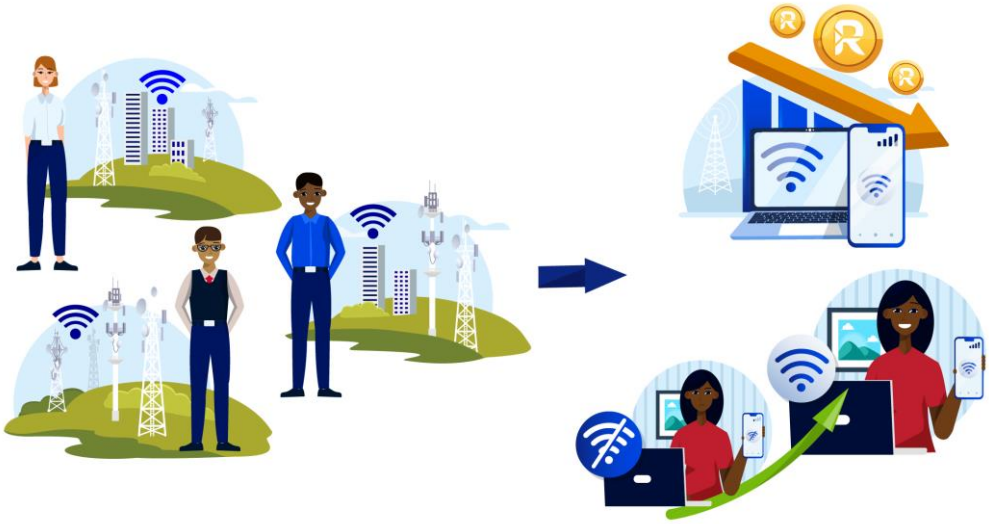
*Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Telecommunications are also less reliable in South Africa than in richer countries. Downloading on mobile phones is **74% slower** compared to the United States, and

about **25%** of people still can't use the internet.*

*Sources: International Telecommunication Union (ITU); Global System for Mobile Communications. (GSMA).

Academic studies* show that when **private companies** help deliver phone services and internet, **more people get access** to these services, the **quality improves**, and consumers often **pay less.**



*Sources: World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

For example, **researchers concluded that** the number of **phone connections skyrocketed** in Uganda after private mobile companies entered the market in the late 1990s. Within just four years of a second company joining the market, **mobile**

subscriptions increased more than twentyfold.

*Sources: World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Researchers* also found that when private companies are allowed to offer phone services and internet, the **benefits are greater** if there is a **strong and independent regulator** to ensure companies truly **compete** against each other to offer better and cheaper services, the private sector **delivers on its promises**, and **customers are protected.**

In Peru, for instance, combining private investment with effective regulation in the 1990s allowed to enhance the provision of payphones in rural areas.

*Sources: World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

35. We can provide the links to the mentioned sources and studies at the end of the questionnaire (to avoid interrupting the survey flow). Would you like to receive those links?

1. Yes, I would like to receive the links to the mentioned studies.
2. No, I don't want to receive the links to the mentioned studies.

Post-treatment beliefs about the effects of policies

36. Do you view it as **beneficial or detrimental for consumers when several companies compete to provide services** such as [electricity/telecommunication services]?

1. Highly detrimental
2. Somewhat detrimental
3. Neither beneficial nor detrimental
4. Somewhat beneficial
5. Highly beneficial

37. How do you think **private companies competing** to provide [electricity/telecommunication services] changes things? Think about the **cost** (that people pay), the **quality** (how well it works), and **access** (that is, if more places and people get access to [electricity/telecommunication services]).

Question	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Cost	Significantly pricier	Somewhat pricier	No change	Somewhat cheaper	Significantly cheaper
Quality	Significantly worse	Somewhat worse	No change	Somewhat better	Significantly better
Access	Significantly worse	Somewhat worse	No change	Somewhat better	Significantly better

Post-treatment support for policies

38. Some countries have adopted reforms allowing private companies to compete among themselves and with public companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] to the population. In some cases, the government also sold its own [electricity/telecommunication services] business to private companies.

Do you support or oppose allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa?

1. Strongly oppose
2. Somewhat oppose
3. Neither oppose nor support
4. Somewhat support
5. Strongly support

Post-treatment willingness to act

If we were to follow up this survey with the following two petitions, would you sign one of them?

Questions 39-40 appear in random order

39. A petition asking the government to **facilitate the entry of private firms** in the [electricity/telecommunication services] sector.
1. I want to sign this petition.
2. I do not want to sign this petition.

40. A petition asking the government to **limit the entry of private firms** in the [electricity/telecommunication services] sector.
1. I want to sign this petition.
2. I do not want to sign this petition.

Reasons behind support or opposition

Many questions in this section appear conditionally. A question only appears if certain answers are chosen, the conditions are notated accordingly.

Question appears if answer choices corresponding to "support" (4 and 5) are selected in Question 38. This question appears for respondents the treatment groups.
41. You responded that you support allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa. Which of the following describe the **reasons for your support?** (Select ALL that apply)
1. Would benefit me personally.
2. Would benefit the economy.
3. Would reduce inequality by allowing more people to have access.
4. I was not aware of how much the [electricity/telecommunication services] could improve in South Africa.
5. Other reasons

Question appears if answer choices corresponding to "support" (4 and 5) are selected in Question 38. This question appears for respondents in the control group.
42. You responded that you support allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa. Which of the following describe the **reasons for your support**? (Select ALL that apply)
1. Would benefit me personally.

2. Would benefit the economy.
3. Would reduce inequality by allowing more people to have access.
4. Other reasons

Question appears if "Other reasons" are selected in question 41 or 42
43. You selected "Other reasons". Please explain:
Short answer response

Question appears if answer choices corresponding to "support" (4 and 5) are selected in Question 38.
44. You responded that you support allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa. Would you still support this if it meant the government would sell its own [electricity/telecommunication] business to private companies?
1. Yes, I would still support
2. No, I would not support

Question appears if answer choices corresponding to "do not support" (1, 2, and 3) are selected in Question 38.
45. You do not think private companies should produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa. **Can you tell us why?**

Question appears if answer choices corresponding to "do not support" (1, 2, and 3) are selected in Question 38.
46. Which of the following better describe **the reasons why you do not support allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services]** in South Africa? (Select all that apply)

Answer choices appear in random order

1. It would hurt me personally as I could lose my job
2. It would hurt me personally as I would need to pay more for utility services
3. It would hurt me personally as the quality of services will deteriorate and/or cannot be guaranteed
4. It may benefit me personally, but I am not certain and I would rather not take the chance
5. It would affect my community, as many jobs would be destroyed
6. It would affect my community, as poorer households will need to pay more or will lose access
7. It would affect my community, as private firms would cut service immediately to poor households if payment is delayed
8. It would affect my community, as private firms would not provide coverage in remote areas
11. It would pose national security risks
9. I don't trust the evidence provided
10. Other reasons

47. You selected the following reasons as to why you do not support allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa. Please **rank** in order of importance.
For the ranking question, answers appear based on responses in Question 46 and if more than one option was selected. Only answers selected in Question 46 appear, and respondents are asked to rank those selections.

Question appears if answer choice 2,3, or 7 (enumerated in the question below) are selected in Question 46.
48. You responded that you do not support allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa because:

It would hurt me personally as I would need to pay more for utility services
It would hurt me personally as the quality of services will deteriorate and/or cannot be guaranteed
It would pose national security risks

Imagine the government committed to create a **regulatory agency**, to control the [electricity/telecommunication] sector, run by professionals that are **independent from the government** but with delegated powers to ensure that companies compete to provide a service of **good quality** and at a **fair price** for consumers, and that **national security** interests are preserved
Would you then support allowing private companies to produce and sell [**electricity/telecommunication services**]in South Africa?
1. Yes
2. No

Question appears if respondent answers "No" in Question 48.
49. You responded that you would oppose allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services]in South Africa, even if the government commits to create an **independent regulatory agency**. Which of the following better describe the reasons for your opposition?

Answer choices appear in random order

1. I do not trust the private sector can improve the provision of utility services
2. I do not trust the government can implement good reforms to allow private firms to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services]
3. I do not trust the private sector
4. I do not want the private sector to control the provision of utility services
5. I do not want foreign investors to control the provision of utility services
6. Other reasons

Question appears if "Other reasons" selected in Question 49.
50. You selected "Other reasons". Please explain.

Short answer response

Question appears if answer choice 6,7, or 8 (enumerated in the question below) are selected in Question 46.
51. You responded that you do not support allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa because:

It would affect my community, as many jobs would be destroyed
It would affect my community, as poorer households will need to pay more or will lose access
It would affect my community, as private firms would not provide coverage in remote areas

If the government committed to adopt measures that ensure the price of [electricity/telecommunication services] is **affordable for the poorest** households and that [electricity is/ telecommunication services are] **provided across the country**, even in remote rural areas, **would you then support allowing private companies to produce and sell** [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa?
1. Yes
2. No

Question appears if the response to Question 51 is "No".
52. You responded that you would oppose allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa, even if the government commits to adopt measures to ensure the price of [electricity/telecommunication services] is **affordable for the poorest** households and that [electricity is/ telecommunication services are] **provided across** the country, even in remote rural areas. Which of the following better describe the <u>reasons</u> for your opposition? Select all that apply.

Answer choices appear in random order

1. I do not trust the private sector can improve the provision of utility services
2. I do not trust the government can implement good reforms to allow private firms to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services]
3. I do not trust the private sector
4. I do not want the private sector to control the provision of utility services
5. I do not want foreign investors to control the provision of utility services
6. Other reasons

Question appears if "Other reasons" is selected in Question 52
53. You selected "Other reasons". Please explain
Short answer response

Question appears if answer choice 1 or 5 (enumerated in the question below) are selected in Question 46.

54. You responded that you do not support allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa because:

It would hurt me personally as I could lose my job
It would affect my community, as many jobs would be destroyed

If the government committed to adopt **measures to protect jobs** in affected firms (for instance, prohibits firing for some time) and **provide training opportunities** for workers that may want or need to apply for jobs in other sectors, **would you then support allowing private companies to produce and sell** [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa?

1. Yes
2. No

Question appears if "No" is selected in Question 54
55. You responded that you would not support allowing private companies to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services] in South Africa, even if the government commits to adopt **measures to protect jobs** in affected firms (for instance, prohibits firing for some time) and **provide training opportunities** for workers that may want or need to apply for jobs in other sectors. Which of the following better describe the reasons for your opposition?

Answer choices appear in random order

1. I do not trust the private sector can improve the provision of utility services
2. I do not trust the government can implement good reforms to allow private firms to produce and sell [electricity/telecommunication services]
3. I do not trust the private sector
4. I do not want the private sector to control the provision of utility services
5. I do not want foreign investors to control the provision of utility services
6. Other reasons

Question appears if "Other reasons" is selected in Question 55
56. You selected "Other reasons". Please explain
Short answer response

Second block of socioeconomic questions

57. This is a simple color test to check if you are paying attention to the question. To show that you've read this much, when asked for your favorite color, please enter the word "puce" in the text box below.
What is your favorite color?

58. Have you, or anyone you know, ever experienced a lack of access to [electricity services or experienced loadshedding (planned cuts)/ telecommunication services or systematic interruptions of service], either now or in the past?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

59. Does anyone in your close circle, including yourself, work for a public utility company? (Public utility companies provide public services such as electricity, telecommunication services, and water and sanitation services.)
1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Ask if 1, 2, 3 or 4 are selected in Question 8.
60. Which sector of the economy better describes your main job (single answer)
1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
2. Mining and Quarrying
3. Manufacturing
4. Electricity, Gas, Water Supply
5. Construction
6. Wholesale Trade
7. Retail Trade (including, among others, stores and retailers)
8. Transportation and Storage (including, among others, air, rail and road transport, and postal and courier activities)
9. Accommodation and Food Activities (including, among others, hotels and restaurants)
10. Information and Communication (including, among others, IT, telecommunications, publishing and broadcasting activities)
11. Finance and Insurance
12. Real Estate
13. Professional, Scientific, Technical, Administrative and Support Service Activities (including, among others, lawyers, accountants, architects, notaries…etc)
14. Community, Social and Personal Services (including, among others, public administration, education health, social services)
15. Arts and Entertainment

Ask if 5, 6, or 7 are selected in Question 8.
61. Even if you are not currently working, which, if any, of the following options best describes your latest employment?
1. Self-employed or independent
2. Salaried employee in a state company
3. Salaried employee in a private company
4. Salaried employee in a government department
5. Didn't work, responsible for housework

Ask if 5, 6, or 7 are selected in Question 8 AND Question 61's selection is different from 5.

62. Even if you are not currently working, which sector of the economy better describes your latest main job?

1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
2. Mining and Quarrying
3. Manufacturing
4. Electricity, Gas, Water Supply
5. Construction
6. Wholesale Trade
7. Retail Trade (including, among others, stores and retailers)
8. Transportation and Storage (including, among others, air, rail and road transport, and postal and courier activities)
9. Accommodation and Food Activities (including, among others, hotels and restaurants)
10. Information and Communication (including, among others, IT, telecommunications, publishing and broadcasting activities)
11. Finance and Insurance
12. Real Estate
13. Professional, Scientific, Technical, Administrative and Support Service Activities (including, among others, lawyers, accountants, architects, notaries…etc)
14. Community, Social and Personal Services (including, among others, public administration, education health, social services)
15. Arts and Entertainment

63. Are you the head of the household?

1. Yes
2. No

64. Gross HOUSEHOLD income is the combined income of all those earners in a household from all sources, including wages, salaries, or rents and before tax deductions. What is your gross household income?

1. Under R2,000 per month
2. R2,000 - R3,999 per month
3. R4,000 - R5,999 per month
4. R6,000 - R7,999 per month
5. R8,000 - R9,999 per month
6. R10,000 - R11,999 per month
7. R12,000 - R13,999 per month
8. R14,000 - R15,999 per month
9. R16,000 - R17,999 per month
10. R18,000 - R19,999 per month
11 if 0. R20,000 - R39,999 per month
17. R20,000 – R24,999 per month
18. R25,000 – R29,999 per month
19. R30,000 – R34,999 per month
20. R35,000 – R39,999 per month
12. R40,000 - R59,999 per month

13. R60,000 - R79,999 per month
14. R80,000 - R99,999 per month
15. R100,000 - R149,999 per month
16. R150,000 or more per month
95. Prefer not to answer
98. Don't know

65. Do you own or rent the home in which you live?
1. Own – outright without a loan/mortgage
2. Own – with a mortgage/loan (i.e I have borrowed money from a bank or similar to buy a house)
3. Rent
4. Neither – I live with my parents, family or friends but pay some rent to them
5. Neither – I live rent-free with my parents, family or friends
97. Other
95. Prefer not to say

66. What is your marital status?
1. Married
2. Separated
3. Divorced
4. Widowed
5. Never married
6. Domestic / civil partnership

67. Are you a parent or guardian? Please select all that apply
1. Yes, of at least one child younger than 18
2. Yes, of at least one child 18 years old or older
3. No, I am neither a parent or guardian
98. Don't know/Prefer not to say

68. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion, and if so, to which of these do you belong?
2. Yes - Anglican
3. Yes - Baptist
4. Yes - Catholic
5. Yes - Uniting Church
6. Yes - Presbyterian
7. Yes - Greek Orthodox
8. Yes - Buddhism
9. Yes - Islam
10. Yes - Jewish
11. Yes - Hinduism
12. Yes - Other Christian

13. Yes - Methodist Church
14. Yes - Zion Christian Church
15. Yes - Pentecostal
16. Yes - Other African traditional religion
97. Yes - Other
1. No, I do not regard myself as belonging to any particular religion.
95. Prefer not to say

69. How important is religion in your life?
1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not too important
4. Not at all important

70. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs ...
1. Most of the time
2. Some of the time
3. Only now and then
4. Hardly at all
7. Don't know

71. With which political party do you most closely identify?
1. African National Congress (ANC)
2. Democratic Alliance (DA)
3. Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)
4. Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)
5. Freedom Front Plus (VF+)
6. African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)
7. United Democratic Movement (UDM)
8. African Transformation Movement (ATM)
9. Good
10. National Freedom Party (NFP)
11. African Independent Congress (AIC)
12. Congress of the People (COPE)
13. Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)
14. Al Jama-ah (ALJAMA)
15. ActionSA
16. Patriotic Alliance (PA)
17. Forum for Service Delivery (F4SD)
18. Abantu Batho Congress (ABC)
19. MAP16 Civic Movement
20. Independent Civic Organisation of South Africa (ICOSA)
21. African People's Convention (APC)
22. National Coloured Congress (CCC)

23. African People's Movement (APEMO)
24. United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP)
25. Team Sugar South Africa (TSSAP)
26. Concerned Local Residents - Plaaslike Besorgde Inwoners (PBI)
27. Bolsheviks Party of South Africa (BPSA)
28. United Independent Movement (UIM)
29. African Democratic Change (ADeC)
30. Better Residents Association (BRA)
31. Build One South Africa (BOSA)
32. uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK)
98. Other
97. None
99. Don't know

72. In political matters, people talk of "the left" and "the right". How would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking?
Slider question that allows respondent to select where their political alignment falls

73. Did you vote in the elections for National Assembly held on 29 May 2024?
1. Yes, I voted
2. No, I did not vote
3. Don't want to answer

74. Which party did you vote for in the National Assembly?
1. Hope4SA
2. ActionSA
3. African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)
4. African Independent Congress (AIC)
5. African National Congress (ANC)
6. African Transformation Movement (ATM)
7. Al Jama-ah
8. Build One South Africa (BOSA) With Mmusi Maimaine
9. Congress of the People (COPE)
10. Democratic Alliance (DA)
11. Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)
12. Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus)
13. Good
14. Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)
15. National Freedom Party (NFP)
16. Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)
17. Patriotic Alliance (PA)
18. Rise Mzansi (RISE)
19. uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK)
20. United Democratic Movement (UDM)
21. Independent candidate
22. Other

23. Not sure
24. Prefer not to say

Perception of the survey and the information provided

We would like to have feedback from you about this survey.

75. Do you think this survey was politically biased?
1. Yes, very left-wing biased
2. Yes, somewhat left-wing biased
3. No, it did not feel bias
4. Yes, somewhat right-wing biased
5. Yes, very right-wing biased

76. How would you qualify the information we provided you with?
1. Very untrustworthy
2. Somewhat untrustworthy
3. Neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy
4. Somewhat trustworthy
5. Very trustworthy

77. How easy was it to understand this survey?
1. Very difficult
2. Difficult
3. Neither difficult nor easy
4. Easy
5. Very easy

78. How did you find the length of the survey?
1. Too short
2. About the right length
3. Too long

79. Thank you for taking part in this survey. Please feel free to give us any feedback you may have regarding this survey.
Short answer response

References and links to the sources for information treatments

The links are shown to respondents in the treatment groups who express interest in viewing the sources and studies mentioned in the information treatments.

Electricity – Status quo

Here is the list of sources and references for the information shown in this survey. Please navigate forward to submit your survey responses.

- Cost of electricity: International Energy Agency (IEA).
- Electricity reliability: World Bank.

Electricity – Status quo + effect of policies

Here is the list of sources and references for the information shown in this survey. Please navigate forward to submit your survey responses.

- Cost of electricity: International Energy Agency (IEA).
- Electricity reliability: World Bank.

Academic Studies:

- World Bank.
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Telecommunication – Status quo

Here is the list of sources and references for the information shown in this survey. Please navigate forward to submit your survey responses.

- Cost of telecommunication services: International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
- Telecommunication services reliability: International Telecommunication Union (ITU); Global System for Mobile Communications (GSMA).

Telecommunication – Status quo + effect of policies

Here is the list of sources and references for the information shown in this survey. Please navigate forward to submit your survey responses.

- Cost of telecommunication services: International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
- Telecommunication services reliability: International Telecommunication Union (ITU); Global System for Mobile Communications (GSMA).

Academic Studies:

- World Bank.
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

PUBLICATIONS

Private Participation and its Discontents: Insights from Large-Scale Surveys

Working Paper No. WP/2024/216