

# The Extreme Right Vote in Western Europe 1980-2002. Individual and Contextual Factors

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# Overview

## Theory

The Research Question  
Theoretical approaches  
Mode of explanation  
Hypotheses

## Design, Model, Data

## Empirical findings

The overall relevance of contextual factors  
Individual Characteristics  
Contextual factors

## Summary and conclusion

# What makes the Extreme Right vote 'interesting'?

- ▶ After decades of stagnation (Scandinavia), enormous rise since ca. 1980
- ▶ From mid-/late 80s on, indirect and later direct impact on policies and elite rhetorics/positions
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- ▶ Questions of legitimacy/democratic stability
- ▶ Success of (Extreme) Right parties unexpected/unusual for many WE societies
  - ▶ Support for Extreme Right highly variable over time and space
  - ▶ Like the emergence of the Greens a sign of change

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  - 2.1 *Why is support for the Extreme Right so unstable over time?*
  - 2.2 *Why is the Extreme Right so weak in many West European countries but successful in others?*



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- ▶ Specialised theories of political (right wing) extremism
- ▶ Should be linked to general model (background)

# Which specialised explanations can be linked to the general model?

1. Personality factors/value orientations
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3. Group conflicts
  - 3.1 Realistic Group Conflict
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4. *(Opportunity structures and other context factors)*

# Who 'should' vote for the Extreme Right?

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- ▶ But ...

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  2. Massive fluctuation *within* countries
- ▶ *Which external (i.e. political) factors determine the level of mobilisation?*

# The research question, reframed


*Which external factors can explain the variation (over time and space) in support for the Extreme Right, provided that individual characteristics of the voters are held constant?*

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- ▶ Path model would be nice, but all variables (if present) put into one straightforward regression model

# How can contextual variables affect the individual vote?

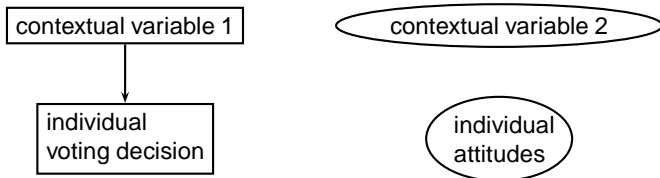
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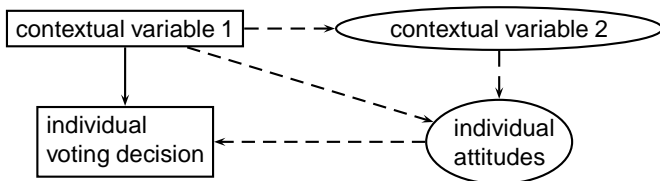
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3. (Of course, both can happen at the same time)

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- ▶ Analyse people, nested in survey waves, nested in *political systems*

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- ▶ Other potentially important factors *not* included (media agenda, elite behaviour (but: CMP))

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# Which countries/time-frame?

- ▶ EU-15 + Norway (votes for the usual suspects pooled)
- ▶ 1980-2002
- ▶ Data availability

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- ▶ Agreement on
  - ▶ Which parties should be considered borderline cases (AN)
  - ▶ Have joined the group subsequently (Scandinavian Parties, NL)

# Who are the usual suspects (Eurobarometer) ? I

- ▶ Austria: Freedom Party (FPÖ)
- ▶ Belgium: Front National, Vlaams Blok/Belang
- ▶ Denmark: Freedom Party, Danish People's Party
- ▶ Finland: Rural Party, True Fins,
- ▶ France: National Front
- ▶ Germany: German People's Union (DVU), Republikaner, National Democrats (NPD)
- ▶ Greece: EPEN, National Front, Political Spring
- ▶ Italy: National Alliance (AN), Northern League (LN)
- ▶ Luxembourg: National Movement (NB)

## Who are the usual suspects (Eurobarometer) ? II

- ▶ Netherlands: Centre Parties, Lijst Pim Fortuyn/Leefbaar Nederland
- ▶ Norway: Freedom Party
- ▶ Portugal: 'Christian Democrats' (PDC)
- ▶ Spain: Various splinter parties (Falange)
- ▶ Sweden: New Democracy

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- ▶ Unique coverage; including early years of success and weak parties

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  - ▶ Pooled over time/countries
  - ▶ Matched with appropriate contextual data

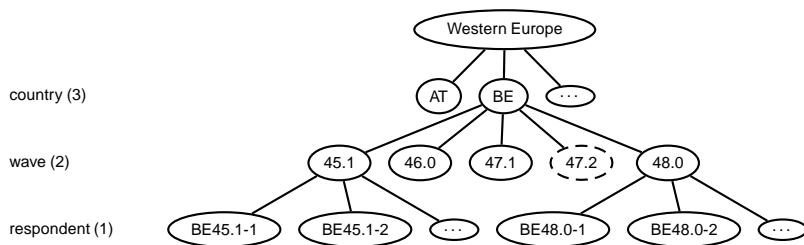
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- ▶ Multi-Level logistic analysis
- ▶ Three levels: country, wave, respondent

# What does the structure of the data look like?





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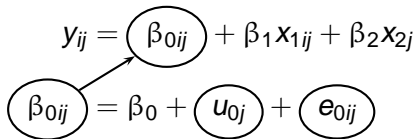
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  - ▶ Features of the respective context
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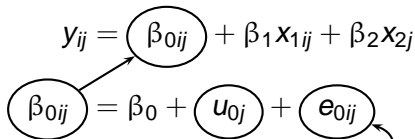
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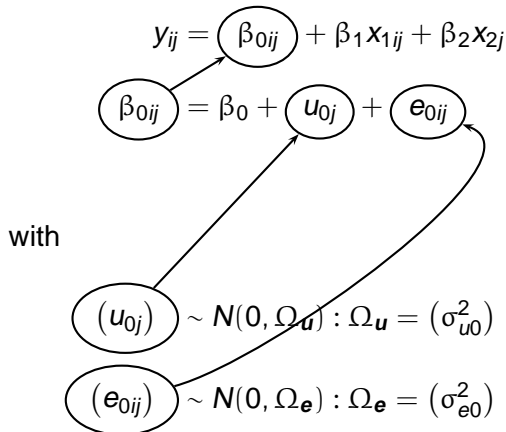
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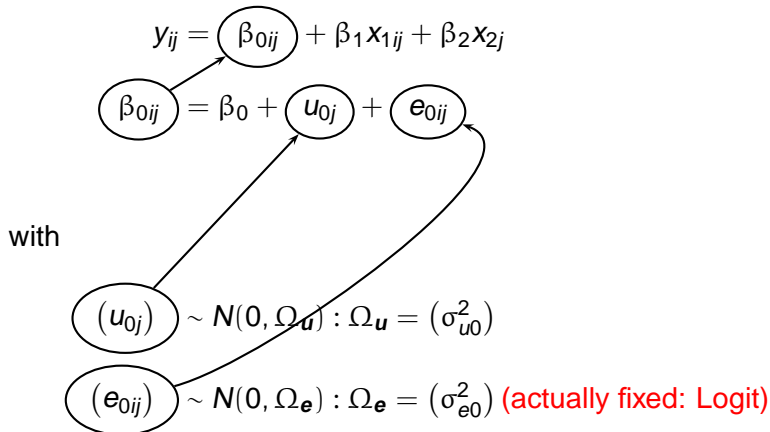
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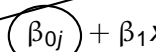
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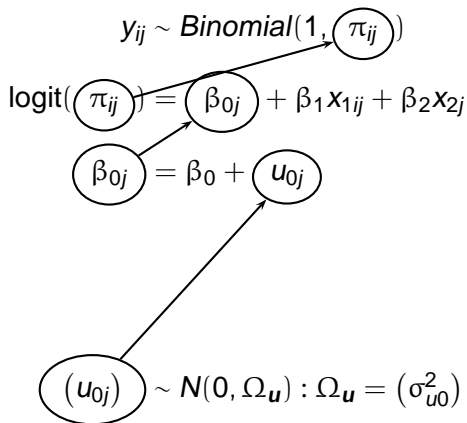
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# What does the basic model look like?

The diagram illustrates a hierarchical binomial model. It consists of three equations with latent variables  $\pi_{ij}$ ,  $\beta_{0j}$ , and  $u_{0j}$  enclosed in circles. Arrows indicate the flow of information: from  $\pi_{ij}$  to the binomial distribution, from  $\beta_{0j}$  to the logit equation, and from  $u_{0j}$  to  $\beta_{0j}$ .

$$y_{ij} \sim \text{Binomial}(1, \pi_{ij})$$
$$\text{logit}(\pi_{ij}) = \beta_{0j} + \beta_1 x_{1ij} + \beta_2 x_{2j}$$
$$\beta_{0j} = \beta_0 + u_{0j}$$

## What does the basic model look like?



## How important is the (national) context?

- ▶ Standard procedure: Estimate empty (intercept only) model, assess Variance Partition Coefficient (VPC)

# Empty model (variance components)

$$y_{ij} \sim \text{Binomial}(1, \pi_{ij})$$
$$\text{logit}(\pi_{ij}) = \beta_0 + u_{0j}$$

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## How important is the (national) context?

- ▶ Standard procedure: Estimate empty (intercept only) model, assess Variance Partition Coefficient (VPC)
- ▶ Problem: Variance at individual fixed to identify model



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  - ▶ Methods tend to disagree for all smaller parties
  - ▶ Context is more important for all smaller parties
  - ▶ Context slightly more important for the Extreme Right than for green or liberal parties

# What features of the context are important?

- ▶ Third level (countries) represented by a series of dummies

## Overall constant is replaced. . .

$$y_{ij} \sim \text{Binomial}(1, \pi_{ij})$$
$$\text{logit}(\pi_{ij}) = \beta_0 + u_{0j}$$

with

$$(u_{0j}) \sim N(0, \Omega_u) : \Omega_u = (\sigma_{u0}^2)$$

...by 15 country-specific constants (country effects)

$$y_{ij} \sim \text{Binomial}(1, \pi_{ij})$$
$$\text{logit}(\pi_{ij}) = \beta_1 AT_j + \beta_2 BE_j \cdots + \beta_{15} SE_j + u_{0j}$$

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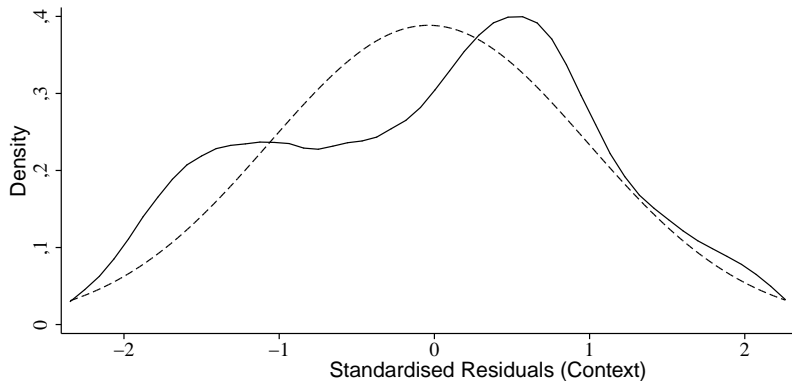
- ▶ Third level (countries) represented by a series of dummies
- ▶ Once *time-invariant* country effects are introduced, contextual variance reduced by more than two thirds



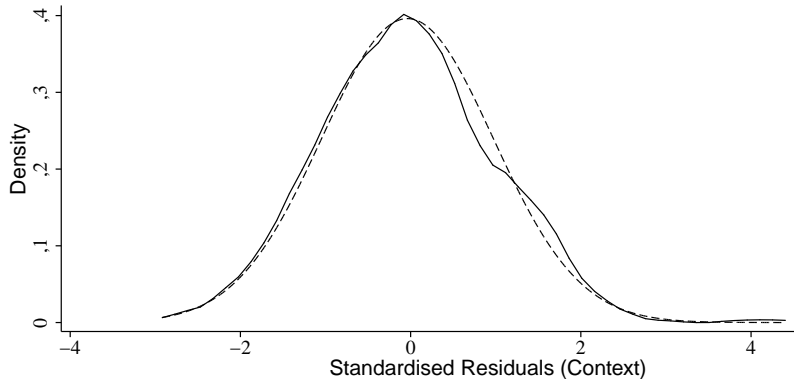
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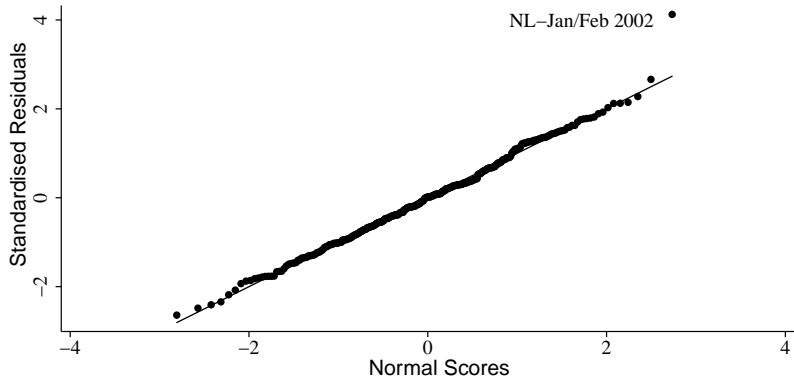
## Residuals: Empty model



# Residuals: Country effects



# Residuals (country effects): Outlier



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- ▶ Further reduction of contextual variance by including individual and contextual variables?

# Which individual characteristics are important?

Male	0.507	(0.022)	0.485	(0.020)
18-29 years	0.296	(0.031)	0.284	(0.037)
30-45 years	0.058	(0.030)	0.054	(0.030)
65++ years	-0.052	(0.041)	-0.051	(0.041)
Ed: middle/high	0.102	(0.027)	0.092	(0.028)
Ed: university	-0.317	(0.033)	-0.285	(0.030)
petty bourgeoisie	0.378	(0.036)	0.359	(0.035)
Worker	0.330	(0.030)	0.341	(0.032)
Pensioner	0.123	(0.040)	0.121	(0.041)
Unemployed	0.470	(0.042)	0.491	(0.040)
AT	-2.080	(0.222)	-2.090	(0.223)
BE	-3.508	(0.151)	-3.469	(0.152)
DE-O	-4.671	(0.175)	-4.674	(0.175)
...	...	...	...	...
$\sigma_{u0}^2$	0.521	(0.047)	0.526	(0.050)
N(1)	253 630		330 394	
N(2)	336		336	

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- ▶ Social ties:
  - ▶ Strong negative effect of union membership
  - ▶ Weaker effects of church attendance, household size, living with partner
  - ▶ PID: problematic

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- ▶ Value orientations (virtual no support amongst postmaterialists)
- ▶ Ideology (very strong effect of self left-right placement)
- ▶ Yet largely stable effects for socio-demographic variables – probably due to ethnocentric attitudes (cross sectional data)

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- ▶ Political relevance of individual features depends on base level
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- ▶ Which in turn depends on
  - ▶ Country effects
  - ▶ Random influences on the context level
  - ▶ Measured features of the contexts

## Contextual variables: Scales

- ▶ Proportionality: Gallagher-Index
- ▶ Decentralisation: Lijphart-Index
- ▶ Unemployment: OECD 'Standardised Unemployment Rates' (SUR), centred
- ▶ Asylum seekers: OECD/UNHCR figures, new applications per 1 000 inhabitants, centred
- ▶ Unemployment benefits: OECD Gross Unemployment Benefit Replacement Rates (GRR), centred

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- ▶ (Cabinet composition)



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- ▶ (Dis-)Proportionality has a weak but borderline-significant *positive* impact on Extreme Right support
- ▶ Due to French cases?
- ▶ Positive effect gets *stronger* once French cases excluded
- ▶ No substantial effect in more complex models

# Unemployment and Immigration

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- ▶ Presumably large positive interaction
- ▶ Expected difference (in logits) between low immigration and high immigration contexts large (about three times larger than difference between men and women)
- ▶ Roughly the same for unemployment

# Unemployment and Immigration

- ▶ But: Substantial *negative* interaction between unemployment and immigration

# Unemployment and Immigration

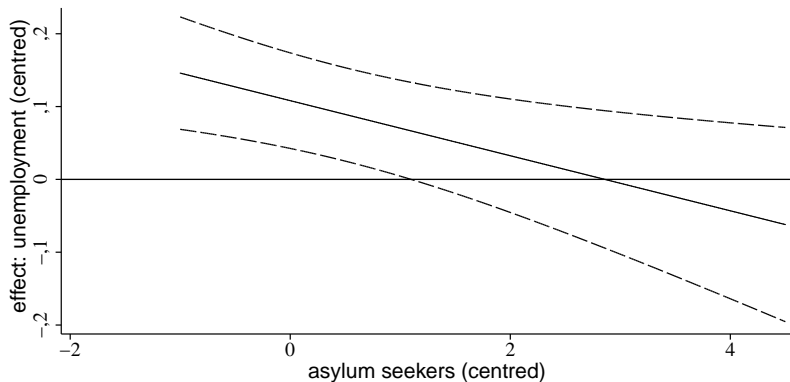
- ▶ But: Substantial *negative* interaction between unemployment and immigration
- ▶ Extreme Right less successful if both immigration and unemployment are high?

# The impact of four contextual factors/one interaction

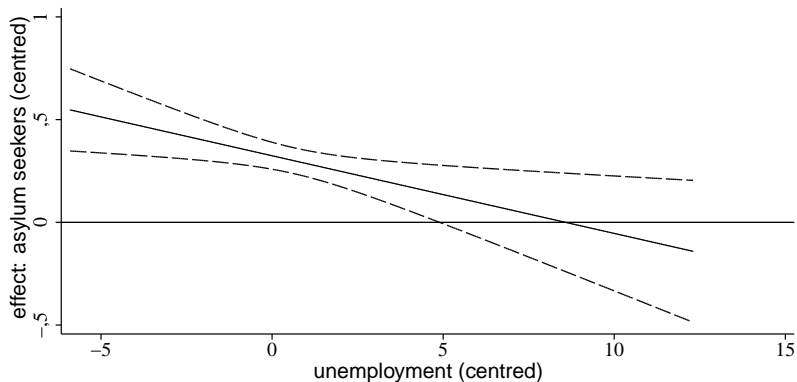
Male	0.482	(0.029)	0.486	(0.025)
...	...	...	...	...
Dis-Proportionality	0.025	(0.018)	0.032	(0.018)
Decentralisation	0.230	(0.166)	0.195	(0.169)
Asylum seekers	0.324	(0.054)	0.315	(0.053)
Unemployment	0.108	(0.033)	0.096	(0.034)
Asylum seekers $\times$ Unemployment	-0.038	(0.015)	-0.041	(0.015)
AT	-3.415	(0.813)	-3.255	(0.832)
...	...	...	...	...
$\sigma^2_{u0}$	0.395	(0.043)	0.410	(0.045)
N(1)	176 679		271 303	
N(2)	276		276	



# Effect of unemployment, conditional on asylum seekers



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- ▶ Done for more complex model

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- ▶ Modest negative effect if established right is not in government

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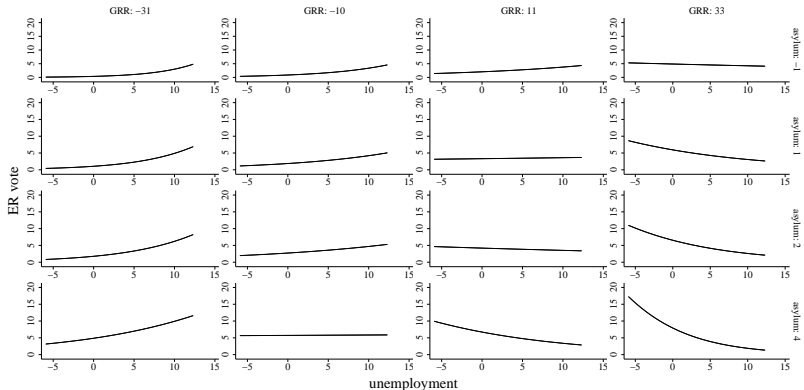
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- ▶ Negative interactions with asylum seekers and unemployment
- ▶ Again: What is the political relevance of this?
  - ▶ Link between support for the ER and ethnic competition in the labour market *if welfare state protection is minimal* (squares nicely with Betz/Swank)
  - ▶ In many situations, no relevant effect of unemployment, but usually some effect of asylum seekers
  - ▶ Model implies *negative* effect of unemployment if benefits are very generous and level of immigration is extremely high – artifact or welfare chauvinism of those who still have something to lose?

# Interaction between unemployment, asylum seekers, and unemployment benefits



A base logit (constant + all other effects) of  $-4$  is assumed

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- Impact of some variables might vary over contexts (Euroscepticism, ideology, gender . . .)

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# Are individual level effects constant over contexts?

- ▶ Impact of some variables might vary over contexts (Euroscepticism, ideology, gender . . .)
- ▶ Add random effects
- ▶ Some variation for being unemployed and Euroscepticism, but effects of ideology and gender quite stable (gender effect  $0,548 \pm 0,283$  in more than 2/3 of all contexts)

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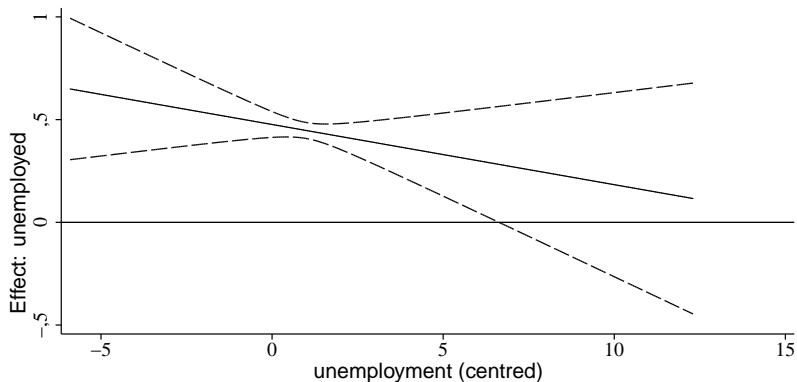
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- ▶ But effect for global unemployment the same in both groups

# Cross-level interaction between global and individual unemployment



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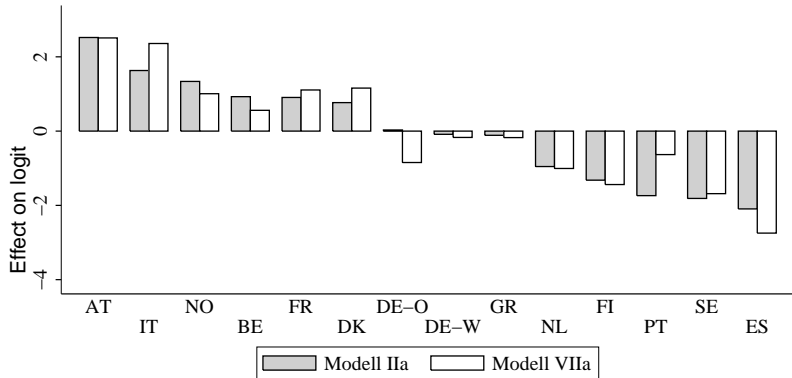
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# What is gained by studying country-level variables?

- ▶ Macro effects often in line with expectations ...
- ▶ ... or at least plausible
- ▶ But persistent country effects do not disappear!

# Country effects only vs. complex model



# Summary

1. Extreme right has clear social profile
2. Salience of issues in elite statements matter
3. Unemployment and Immigration increase support for the Extreme Right
4. But not if unemployment benefits are generous

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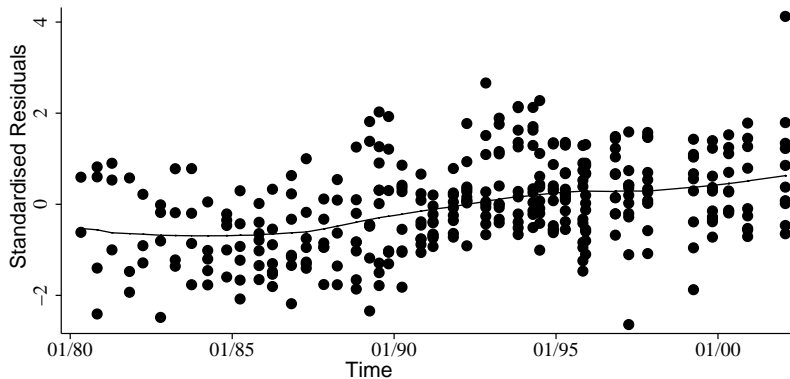
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4. Further research needed!





# Residuals: Trend



# Support for the Extreme Right 1980-2003

