# Democracy in Hard Times: Economic Shocks, Social Capital and Voting Patterns

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APSA Conference 2020 Online Meeting

September 2020

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1. Intends to go further than discussions that separate economic explanations from cultural ones
2. Approaches the exploration of current unemployment shocks by exploiting a new dataset on layoffs at the regional-level
3. Explores the role of social capital as the mediating variable that can explain the persistence of deep cultural roots

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Also evidence for the mechanism:

- Social capital as the intervening factor that links historical family types, contemporaneous shocks and political responses
- Documents a reversal of the effect of social capital on nationalist voting

# Theory I: Literature review

- Long standing literature on the effect of family types on in-group and out-gorup trust, institutional quality and development (Alesina and Giuliano 2010, 2014; Grief 2005; Duranton et al 2009; Hager and Hilbig 2019; Tur-Prats 2019).

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- Less studies on the political consequences of family types (Todd 1985, 1987, 1990). And even lesson the mechanisms of persistence of historical family types (Hager and Hilbig 2019, Tur-Prats 2020, Giuliano and Nunn 2017).

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- With the Emmanuel Todd (1985) arguments that historical family types affect not only development but also social and political hierarchies:
  - and, specifically, stem family types are associated with greater out-group trust, political trust and cooperation
  - and, also, that contemporaneous levels of social capital and it's ability to generate public goods might depend on the vertical and horizontal structure of organizations (Boix and Posner 1998)

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  - Stem historical families: non-egalitarian and strong authority families (no equal inheritance, no cohabitation)
  - Communitarian historical families: egalitarian and strong authority families (equal inheritance, cohabitation)
- In a *reduced form* framework, and given persistence of the effects of family types, we should observe lower political backlash with current unemployment shocks when there is a dense network of social relations to rely upon

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  1. Greater social capital in stem family areas should act as an insurance mechanism preventing political backlash
  2. At the same time, contemporaneous levels of social capital in stem family areas might be eroded by the negative income shock
  3. In communitarian family areas, the unemployment losses can be associated with more political backslash, trust and nationalist voting
  4. The net total effect could imply a reversal of the effect of social capital on political backlash and nationalist voting

# Hypotheses

Given an unemployment shock, stem family regions should reduce the extent of political backlash via nationalist voting, because of the persistence of high levels of social capital (H1)

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Given an unemployment shocks, communitarian family regions should amplify political backlash via nationalist voting, because of the persistence of low levels of social capital (H2)

# Data collection I

Individual survey-data matched with European regional data

- ESS Surveys
- New dataset on job layoffs, European Restructuring Monitor (ERM)
- Emmanuel Todd data on historical family types
- Social capital indicators at the regional-level:
  - ESS (pre-shock data, early 2000s)
  - EVS (pre-shock and post-sock data, comparable measures)
  - EU-SILC (pre-shock and post-shock data)

# Data collection II: Layoffs data by Restructuring Monitor

- Rich firm-level data covering 2002-2018, we calculate the average of the ratio of layoffs by region and ESS round
- It records restructurings which involve the creation or destruction of at least 100 jobs, or affect 10% of the workforce at sites employing more than 250 people
- First, we calculate the ratio between the announced direct dismissals and the number of employees (at the firm-level) for each of the observation in ERM data
- Second, we calculate the total by region (NUTS 2, NUTS1) and announcement year (coded from news in newspapers)
- Then, we match the announcement year with the corresponding ESS round to calculate totals by region and ESS round, and finally, the average

# Data collection III: Social Capital at the Regional Level

- Data Pre-shock: using the module on Citizens Involvement from ESS Round 1
- We calculate the regional average of social capital based on the membership or participation of the respondent in at least one of the following organizations:
  - sports, cultural, humanitarian, environmental, science, social club, or voluntary organization
- We create the dummy which takes the value of 1 if the respondent belongs to at least one of the aforementioned organizations, and 0 otherwise
- Then, we generate the variable mean social capital calculating the regional averages

# Data collection IV: Social Capital at the Regional Level

- Data pre and post shock: using data from the European Values Study (EVS) from 1981 to 2010
- We calculate the regional average of social capital based on the membership or voluntary work of the respondent in at least one of the following organizations:
  - cultural, human rights, conservation of environment and animals, conservation of environment, animal rights, youth, sports, or health
- We generate the variable social capital evs which takes the value of 1 if the respondent belongs to at least one of the organizations, 0 otherwise
- Then, calculating the regional average of social capital evs

# Empirical strategy

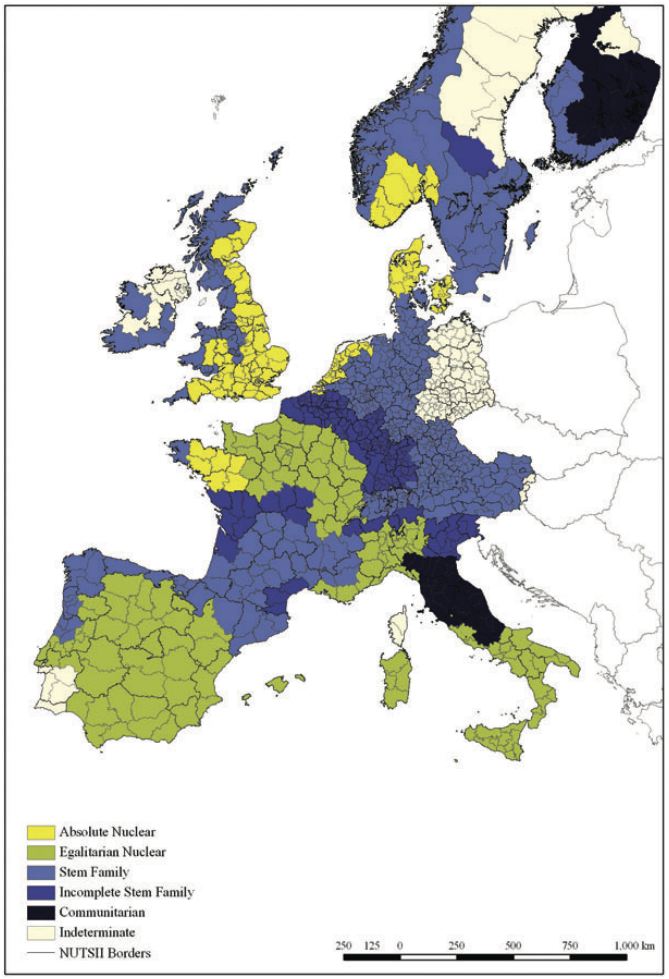
Combination of different strategies

1. Individual-level analysis
2. Regional-level analysis, before and after
3. Cross-sectional regional evidence to explore the mechanism

# Roadmap

1. Exploration of the shock: Unemployment shock, job dismissals
2. DVs: Nationalism scores (as in Colantone and Stanig), trust in politicians, inter-personal trust
3. Individual-level baseline models first, afterwards regional-level
4. Exploring the mechanism: social capital

# Historical family types across European regions



# Econometric specification:

- Individual-level specifications:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{ijt} = \beta_1 UnemplShock_{jt} + \beta_2 HistoricalFamily_j + \\ + \gamma UnempShock_{jt} \times HistoricalFamily_j + \\ + \delta_1 X_i + \delta_2 R_{jt} + \delta_3 CY + \varepsilon_{ij} \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

- All models include Country X Year FEs
- Standard errors are always clustered at the regional-level

# Unemployment shock and Nationalism: Stem families

| | (1) Nationalism Score | (2) Nationalism Score | (3) Nationalism Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Stem | 0.292*** | 0.328*** | 0.319*** |
| | (0.083) | (0.092) | (0.091) |
| Unemployment | -0.012** | -0.021*** | -0.019*** |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.005) |
| Stem X Unempl | -0.048*** | -0.051*** | -0.051*** |
| | (0.015) | (0.014) | (0.014) |
| Individual Controls | No | No | Yes |
| Regional Controls | No | Yes | Yes |
| CountryXYear FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| ESS Rounds FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Mean Dep. Var | 1.665 | 1.604 | 1.604 |
| *N* | 78967 | 69751 | 69537 |
| Number of regions | 136 | 124 | 124 |
| Number of countries | 12 | 11 | 11 |

Standard errors clustered at the regional level in parentheses.
Individual Controls: Gender, age, education.
Regional Controls: Log regional GDP
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

# Unemployment shock and Nationalism: Communitarian

| | (1) Nationalism Score | (2) Nationalism Score | (3) Nationalism Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Communitarian | -1.271*** | -1.373*** | -1.374*** |
| | (0.353) | (0.329) | (0.335) |
| Unemployment | -0.015** | -0.025*** | -0.023*** |
| | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.007) |
| Commun X Unempl | 0.121*** | 0.131*** | 0.132*** |
| | (0.038) | (0.034) | (0.035) |
| Individual Controls | No | No | Yes |
| Regional Controls | No | Yes | Yes |
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# Job dismissals and Nationalism: Stem families

| | (1) Nationalism Score | (2) Nationalism Score | (3) Nationalism Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Stem | 0.025 | -0.009 | -0.013 |
| | (0.046) | (0.056) | (0.054) |
| Dismissals | 0.002 | 0.003 | 0.003* |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Stem X Dismissals | -0.005 | -0.007* | -0.007* |
| | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Individual Controls | No | No | Yes |
| Regional Controls | No | Yes | Yes |
| CountryXYear FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| ESS Rounds FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Mean Dep. Var | 1.609 | 1.606 | 1.606 |
| *N* | 90792 | 66799 | 66589 |
| Number of regions | 136 | 122 | 122 |
| Number of countries | 13 | 11 | 11 |

Standard errors clustered at the regional level in parentheses.
Individual Controls: Gender, age, education.
Regional Controls: Log regional GDP, regional unemployment
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# Job dismissals and Nationalism: Communitarian

| | (1) Nationalism Score | (2) Nationalism Score | (3) Nationalism Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Communitarian | -0.287*** | -0.454*** | -0.456*** |
| | (0.106) | (0.141) | (0.144) |
| Dismissals | -0.001 | -0.002 | -0.002 |
| | (0.001) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Commun X Dismissals | 0.004 | 0.022* | 0.024** |
| | (0.003) | (0.011) | (0.010) |
| Individual Controls | No | No | Yes |
| Regional Controls | No | Yes | Yes |
| CountryXYear FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes |
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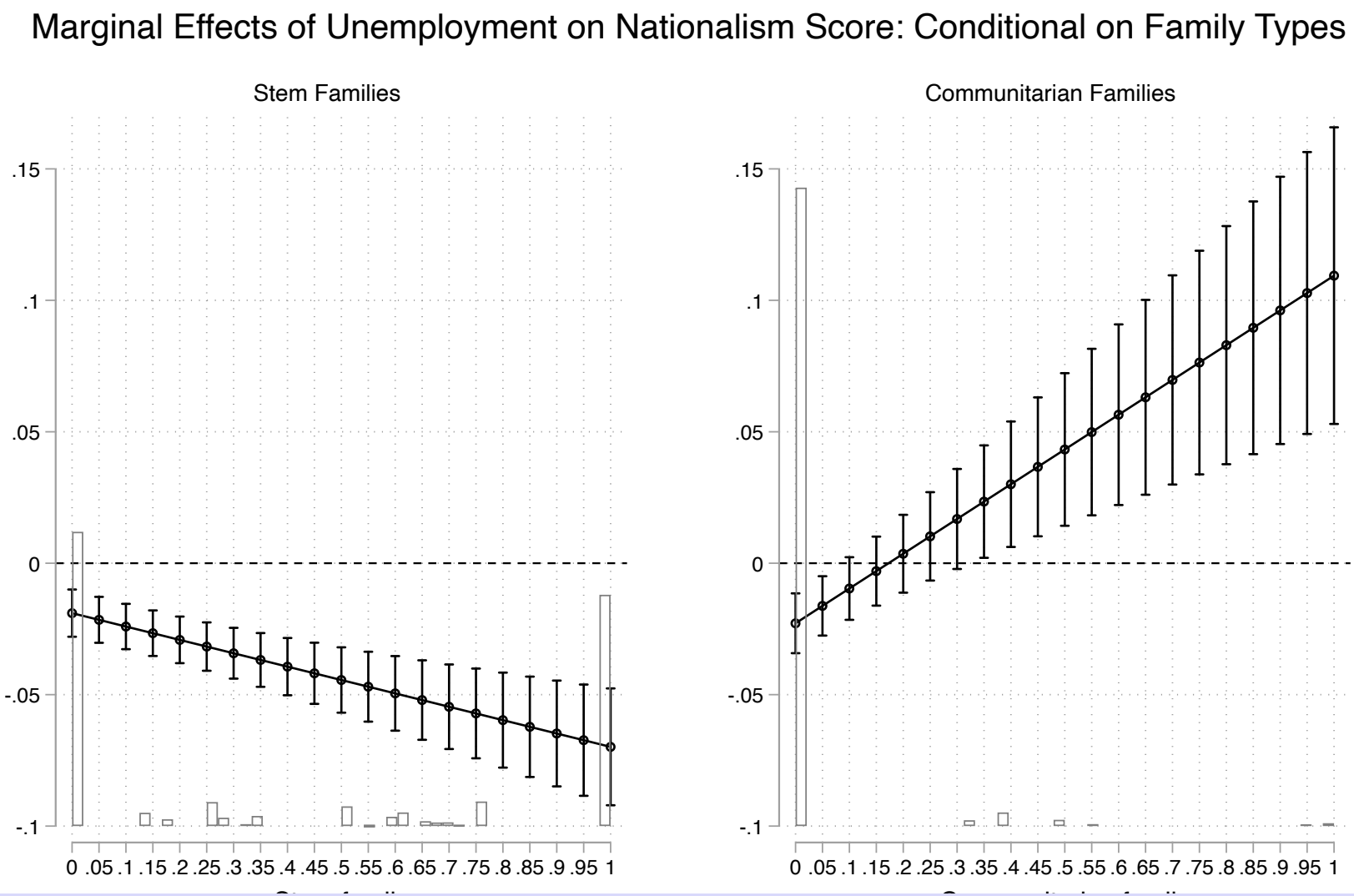

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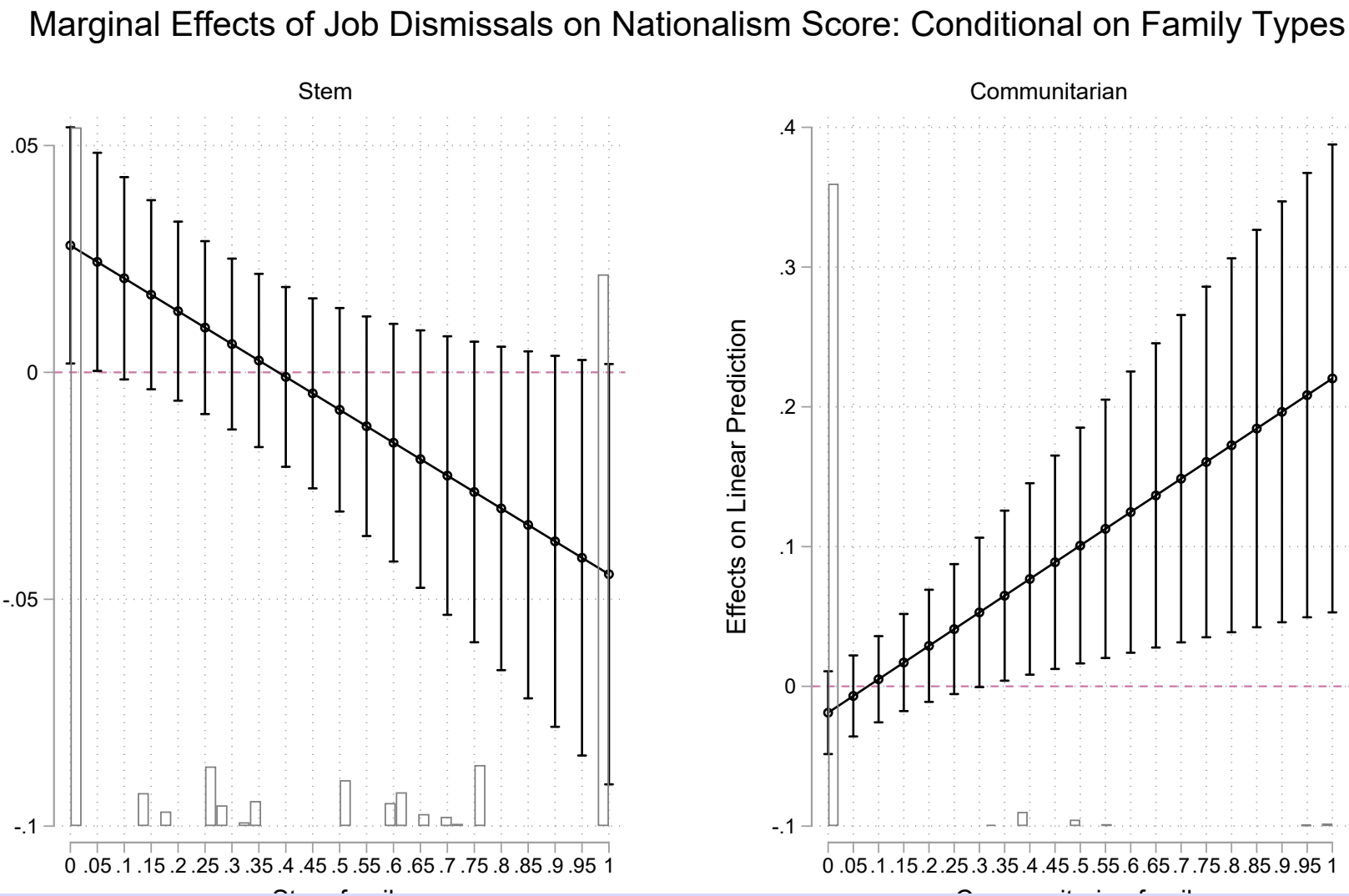

# Job dismissals shock and Political Trust: Stem families

| | (1) Trust in Politicians | (2) Trust in Politicians | (3) Trust in Politicians |
|---|---|---|---|
| Stem | 0.092** | 0.071 | 0.080 |
| | (0.047) | (0.053) | (0.053) |
| Dismissals | 0.007*** | 0.004** | 0.004** |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Stem X Dismissals | -0.008*** | -0.006*** | -0.006*** |
| | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Individual Controls | No | No | Yes |
| Regional Controls | No | Yes | Yes |
| CountryXYear FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| ESS Rounds FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Mean Dep. Var | 3.753 | 3.560 | 3.562 |
| *N* | 151708 | 114062 | 113428 |
| Number of regions | 136 | 122 | 122 |
| Number of countries | 13 | 11 | 11 |

Standard errors clustered at the regional level in parentheses.
Individual Controls: Gender, age, education.
Regional Controls: Log regional GDP, regional unemployment
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

# Job dismissals and Political Trust: Communitarian

| | (1) Trust in Politicians | (2) Trust in Politicians | (3) Trust in Politicians |
|---|---|---|---|
| Communitarian | 0.037 | -0.295 | -0.272 |
| | (0.283) | (0.201) | (0.204) |
| Dismissals | 0.002 | 0.001 | -0.000 |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Commun X Dismissals | 0.032** | 0.048*** | 0.047*** |
| | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Individual Controls | No | No | Yes |
| Regional Controls | No | Yes | Yes |
| CountryXYear FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes |
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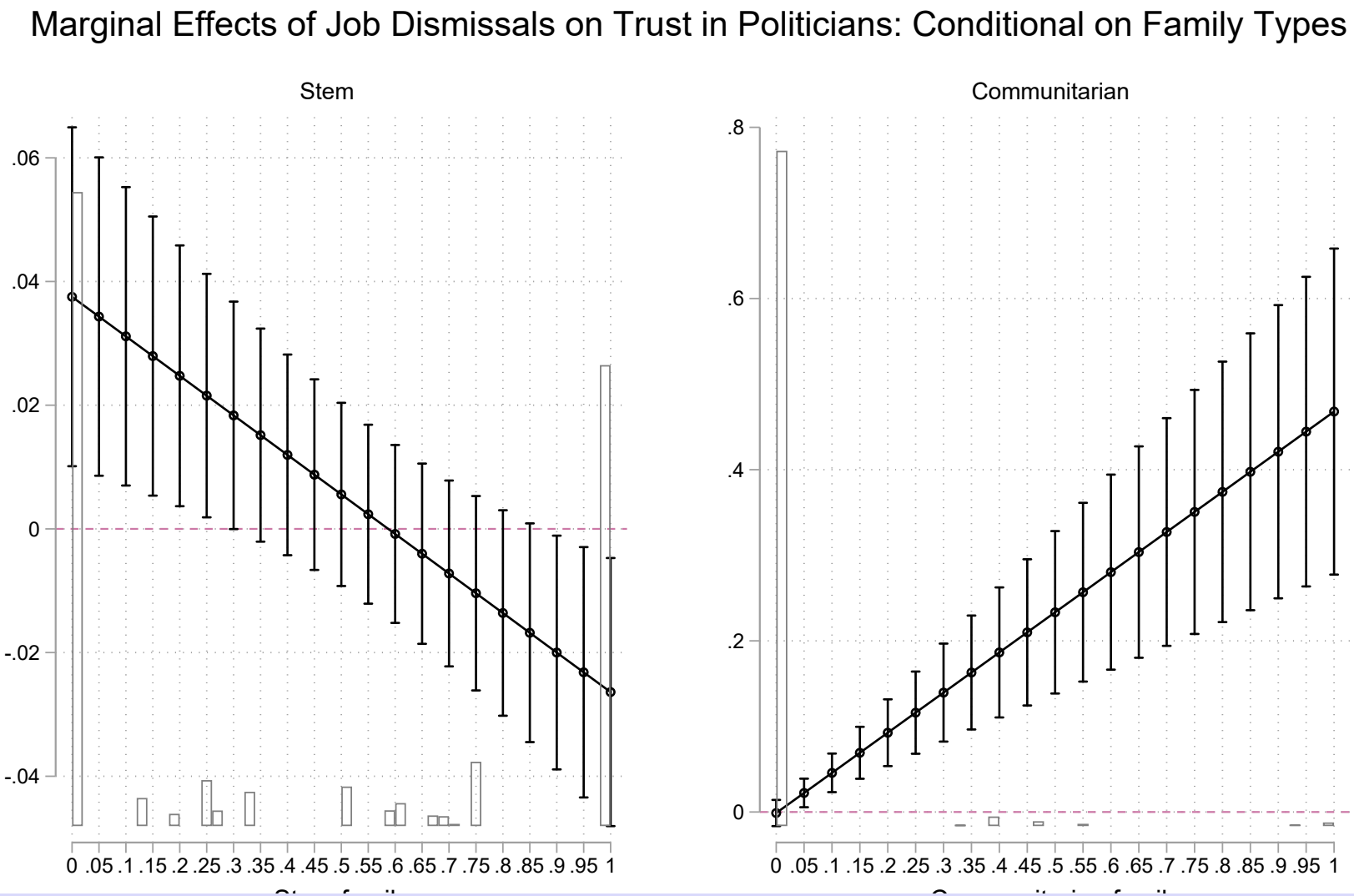

# Regional Level-Analysis I: Nationalism

| | (1) Nationalism Score | (2) Nationalism Score | (3) Nationalism Score | (4) Nationalism Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unemployment Post | -0.001 | 0.019** | 0.001 | 0.027*** |
| | (0.005) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.009) |
| Stem | 0.217** | 0.219*** | | |
| | (0.092) | (0.062) | | |
| UnemplPost X Stem | -0.034*** | -0.033*** | | |
| | (0.008) | (0.005) | | |
| Communitarian | | | -1.062*** | -1.525*** |
| | | | (0.200) | (0.319) |
| UnemplPost X Commun | | | 0.105*** | 0.129*** |
| | | | (0.020) | (0.031) |
| Log GDP pc Pre | -0.158 | -0.290** | -0.148 | -0.329** |
| | (0.110) | (0.123) | (0.107) | (0.137) |
| Unemployment Pre | | -0.028*** | | -0.038*** |
| | | (0.004) | | (0.010) |
| Country FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Mean Dep. Var | 1.607 | 1.647 | 1.607 | 1.647 |
| $R^2$ | 0.832 | 0.869 | 0.818 | 0.861 |
| Number of regions | 136 | 121 | 136 | 121 |
| Number of countries | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |

Standard errors clustered at the country level in parentheses.

# Regional Level-Analysis II: Trust in Politicians

| | (1) Trust in Politicians | (2) Trust in Politicians | (3) Trust in Politicians | (4) Trust in Politicians |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unemployment Post | 0.011 | 0.005 | 0.013 | 0.002 |
| | (0.013) | (0.010) | (0.018) | (0.016) |
| Stem | 0.173* | 0.166*** | | |
| | (0.080) | (0.052) | | |
| UnemplPost X Stem | -0.018*** | -0.015*** | | |
| | (0.006) | (0.004) | | |
| Communitarian | | | -0.560 | -0.903** |
| | | | (0.639) | (0.390) |
| UnemplPost X Commun | | | 0.064 | 0.119** |
| | | | (0.063) | (0.041) |
| Trust in Politicians Pre | | 0.337*** | | 0.387*** |
| | | (0.059) | | (0.061) |
| Log GDP pc Pre | 0.594** | 0.461** | 0.599** | 0.460** |
| | (0.193) | (0.179) | (0.194) | (0.180) |
| Unemployment Pre | -0.003 | 0.004 | -0.004 | 0.009 |
| | (0.015) | (0.012) | (0.020) | (0.021) |
| Country FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Mean Dep. Var | 3.324 | 3.324 | 3.324 | 3.324 |
| $R^2$ | 0.953 | 0.961 | 0.952 | 0.962 |
| Number of regions | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 |
| Number of countries | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |

Standard errors clustered at the country level in parentheses.
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

# Exploring the Mechanism I: Social Capital

| | (1) Social Capital Pre | (2) Social Capital Pre | (3) Social Capital Pre | (4) Social Capital Pre |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stem | 0.097*** | 0.057** | 0.032* | |
| | (0.030) | (0.024) | (0.018) | |
| Communitarian | -0.131** | -0.162** | | -0.127* |
| | (0.055) | (0.074) | | (0.071) |
| Log GDP pc Pre | | 0.317*** | 0.055 | 0.042 |
| | | (0.037) | (0.039) | (0.035) |
| Unemployment Pre | | -0.005* | -0.006** | -0.009*** |
| | | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Country FEs | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Mean Dep. Var | 0.537 | 0.530 | 0.530 | 0.530 |
| $R^2$ | 0.101 | 0.591 | 0.836 | 0.842 |
| Number of regions | 136 | 120 | 120 | 120 |
| Number of countries | 13 | 12 | 12 | 12 |

Standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

# Exploring the Mechanism II: Social Capital

| | (1) Social Capital Post | (2) Social Capital Post | (3) Social Capital Post | (4) Social Capital Post |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unemployment Post | -0.023*** | -0.002 | -0.031*** | -0.010** |
| | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.006) | (0.005) |
| Communitarian | -0.780*** | -0.188 | | |
| | (0.238) | (0.140) | | |
| UnemplPost X Commun | 0.070*** | 0.022* | | |
| | (0.020) | (0.012) | | |
| Egalitarian Nuclear | | | -0.333*** | -0.174* |
| | | | (0.072) | (0.088) |
| UnemplPost X Egalitarian | | | 0.023*** | 0.014** |
| | | | (0.006) | (0.006) |
| Social Capital Pre | | 1.114*** | | 1.071*** |
| | | (0.105) | | (0.104) |
| Mean Dep. Var | 0.344 | 0.356 | 0.344 | 0.356 |
| $R^2$ | 0.313 | 0.668 | 0.370 | 0.683 |
| Number of regions | 126 | 106 | 126 | 106 |
| Number of countries | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |

Standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

# Exploring the Mechanism III: Social Capital Reversal

| | (1) Nationalism Score | (2) Nationalism Score | (3) Nationalism Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social Capital Pre | -0.775** | -0.712** | -0.682* |
| | (0.341) | (0.330) | (0.372) |
| Individual Controls | No | Yes | Yes |
| Regional Controls | No | No | Yes |
| CountryXYear FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| ESS Rounds FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Mean Dep. Var | 1.624 | 1.624 | 1.635 |
| *N* | 130756 | 130206 | 96822 |
| Number of regions | 187 | 187 | 156 |
| Number of countries | 18 | 18 | 15 |

Standard errors clustered at the regional level in parentheses.
Individual Controls: Gender, age, education.
Regional Controls: Log regional GDP
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

# Exploring the Mechanism IV: Social Capital Reversal

| | (1) Nationalism Score | (2) Nationalism Score | (3) Nationalism Score | (4) Nationalism Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Capital Pre | -0.478 | -0.952* | | |
| | (0.385) | (0.534) | | |
| Social Capital Post | | | 0.441** | 0.432** |
| | | | (0.209) | (0.195) |
| Individual Controls | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Regional Controls | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| CountryXYear FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| ESS Rounds FEs | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Mean Dep. Var | 1.940 | 1.932 | 1.549 | 1.617 |
| *N* | 66120 | 44722 | 64075 | 47658 |
| Number of regions | 149 | 115 | 195 | 157 |
| Number of countries | 20 | 16 | 23 | 19 |

Standard errors clustered at the regional level in parentheses.
Individual Controls: Gender, age, education.
Regional Controls: Log regional GDP, regional unemployment
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

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- Historical family types moderate the effect of contemporaneous unemployment shocks on voting patterns and political trust
- Stem family regions alleviate shocks, whereas communitarian family regions amplify the political backlash
- Social capital as the mediating factor linking historical family types and contemporaneous shocks and political responses

# Conclusions

The main findings are:

- Historical family types moderate the effect of contemporaneous unemployment shocks on voting patterns and political trust
- Stem family regions alleviate shocks, whereas communitarian family regions amplify the political backlash
- Social capital as the mediating factor linking historical family types and contemporaneous shocks and political responses
- Social capital reverses the effect before and after the economic crisis

# Implications

The findings suggest that social capital is a mediating variable:

# Implications

The findings suggest that social capital is a mediating variable:

- Reversal of the effect of social capital on nationalism voting, before and after the 2008 economic crisis
- Potential reconciliation of the literature: social capital itself as a function of contemporaneous economic shocks and deep and pre-existing cultural roots