

How do Local Contexts Affect Perceptions of Crisis in Germany and What Does This Mean for AfD Voting?

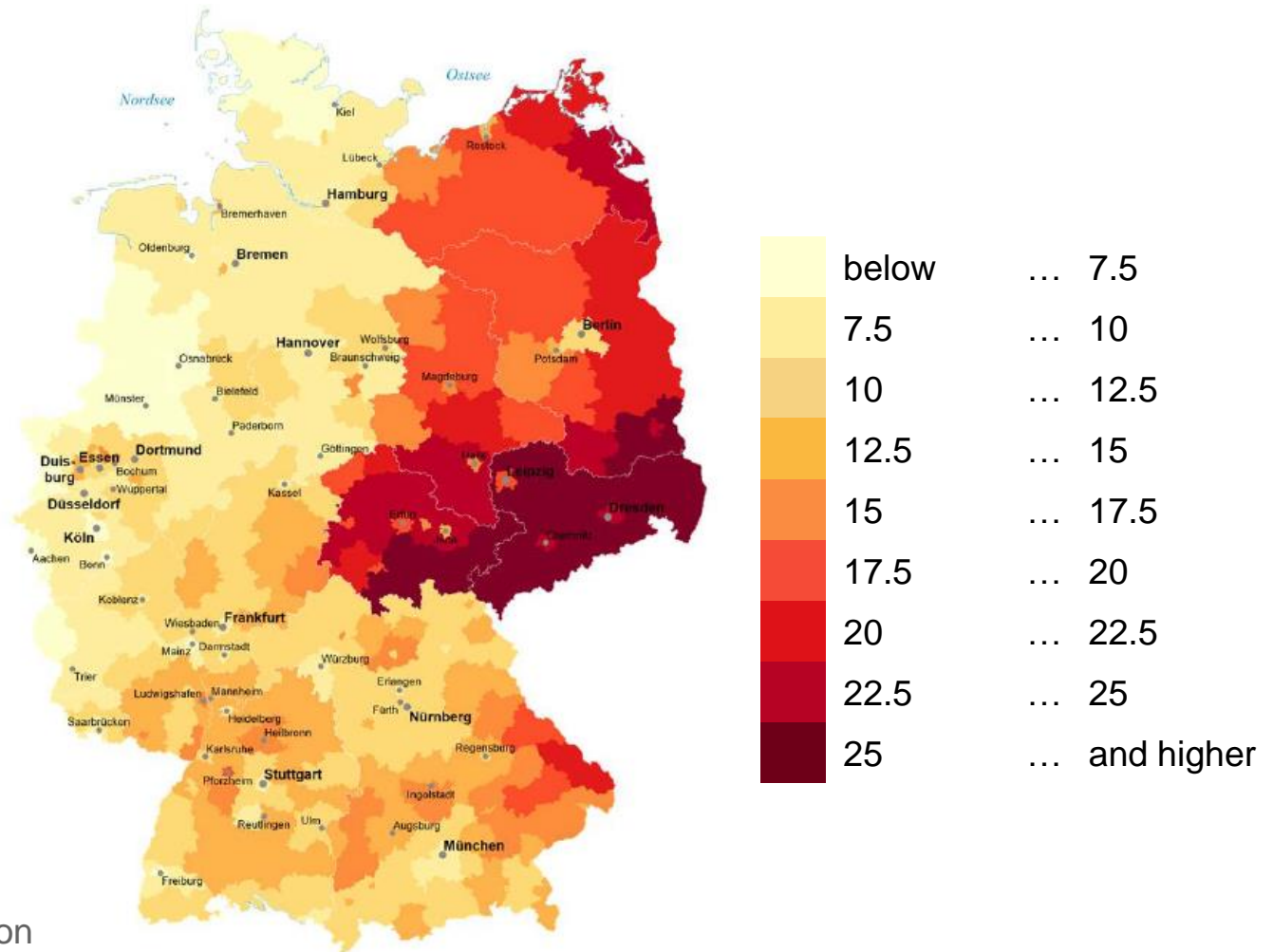
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The Power of Where, Joint Spring Meeting of BBSR, BTU & SOEP RegioHub

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Panel: Politics and Political Behavior

Populist Radical Right Voting in Germany



AfD results; 2017 federal election
(second vote, district level)
Source: Bundeswahlleiterin (2023)

We (more or less) understand ...

- Who tends to vote for PRR parties
- What drives people to vote for PRR parties
- Which contextual-level characteristics induce PRR support

We do not yet understand ...

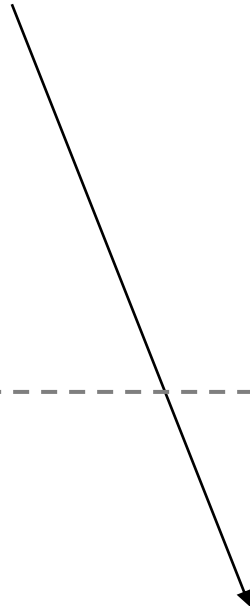
1. How exactly local settings affect voters, i. e. what individual-level processes are in play
→ *mediation mechanism*
 2. Whether local contexts exert a homogeneous effect on individuals
→ *moderation mechanism*
- A more thorough understanding of the mechanisms between local contexts and individual PRR support is needed

Mediation mechanism: Perceptions of crisis as mediators

- PRR vote can be interpreted as an ultimate reaction to long-term processes of social change (see e. g. Arzheimer 2018; Fitzgerald 2018; Hartevelt et al. 2021; Margalit et al. 2022; Scheuch/Klingemann 1967)
 - Social change manifests itself at the local level
- Social change triggers emotions and attitudes that can roughly be summarised under *perceptions of crisis*
 - An emotional response to social change
 - A conglomeration of various attitudes such as feelings of relative deprivation, perceptions of regional exclusion, status threat, or anomia
 - See also Scheuch/Klingemann (1967) (and: Ionescu et al. 2021; Jay et al. 2019; van der Bles et al. 2018)
- Perceptions of crisis as a mediator linking local and PRR vote?

Perceptions of crisis as mediators

Local contextual situation:
Manifestation of social
change



Perceptions of
crisis:
Reaction to
social change



PRR attitudes



PRR
support

Contextual level

Individual level

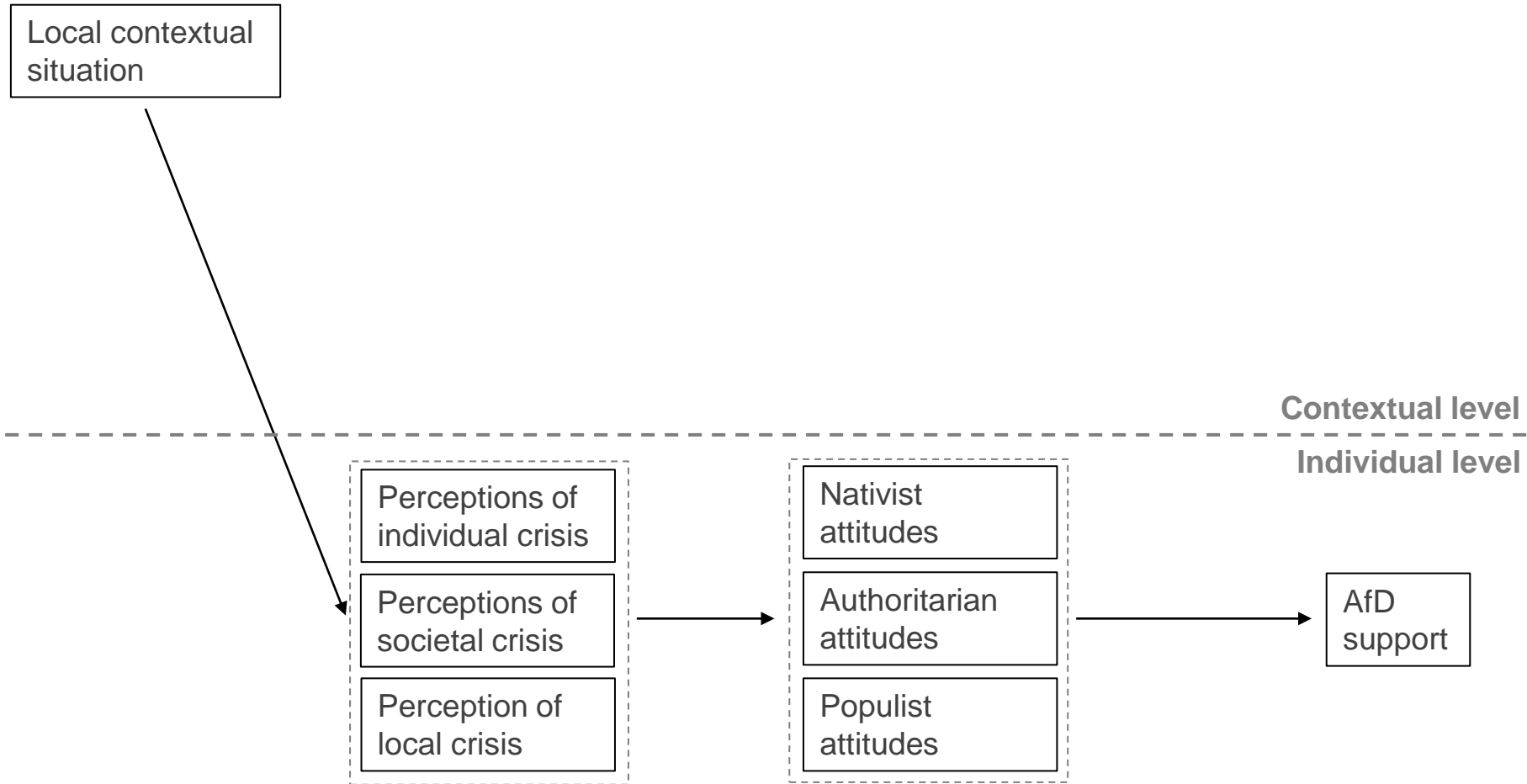
Three types of perceptions of crisis

- **Perceptions of individual crisis:** self-directed worries such as
 - feelings of relative deprivation
 - external inefficacy
 - subjective social statussee e. g. Engler/Weisstanner (2021); Gidron/Hall (2017); Mutz (2018)

- **Perceptions of societal crisis:** concern about the state of society and its future, includes
 - anomia
 - social distrustsee e. g. Elchardus/Spruyt (2016); Steenvorden/Harteveld (2018)

- **Perceptions of local crisis:** specific form of group-related attitudes containing
 - regional resentment
 - feelings of local declinesee e. g. de Lange et al. (2022); Huijsmans (2023); McKay (2019); Munis (2020)

Mediation



Mediation

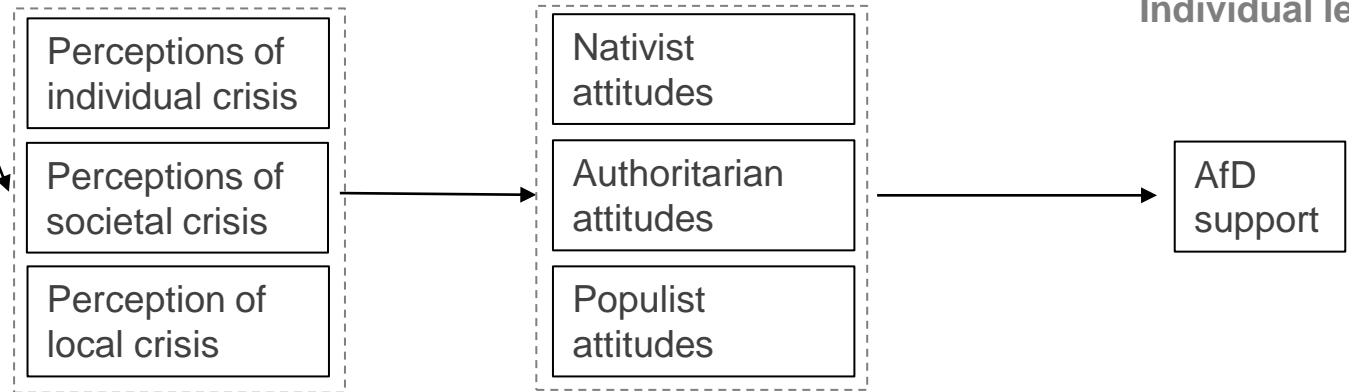
Local contextual situation

- Economic deprivation
- Demographic deprivation
- Infrastructural deprivation
- Cultural deprivation
- Urbanity/rurality
- East/West Germany

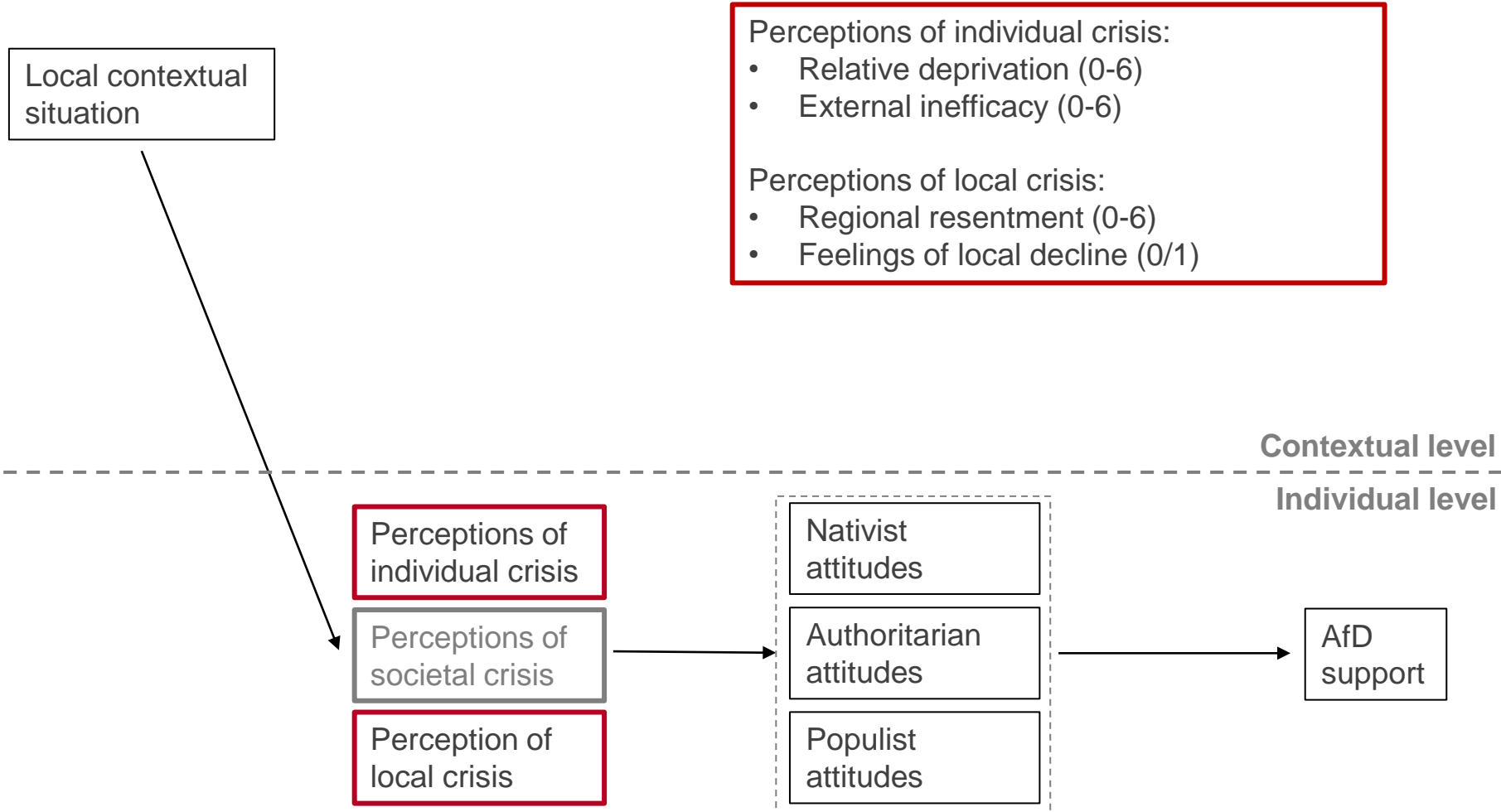
Economic deprivation: unemployment (%)
Demographic deprivation: Proportion of women among 20 to 40 year olds
Infrastructural deprivation: % population with supermarket < 1km distance
Cultural deprivation: foreigners (%)
Urban/semi-urban/rural: based on
 (1) the proportion of a region's population in large cities;
 (2) the presence and size of a major city;
 (3) the population density;
 (4) the population density excluding major cities (BBSR 2019)

Contextual level

Individual level

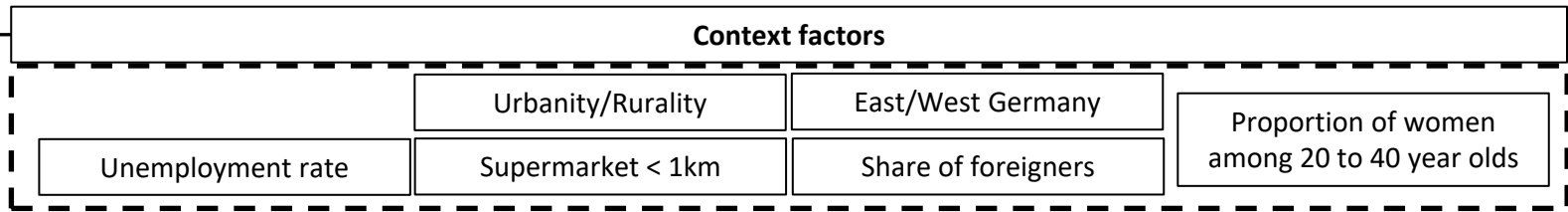


Mediation

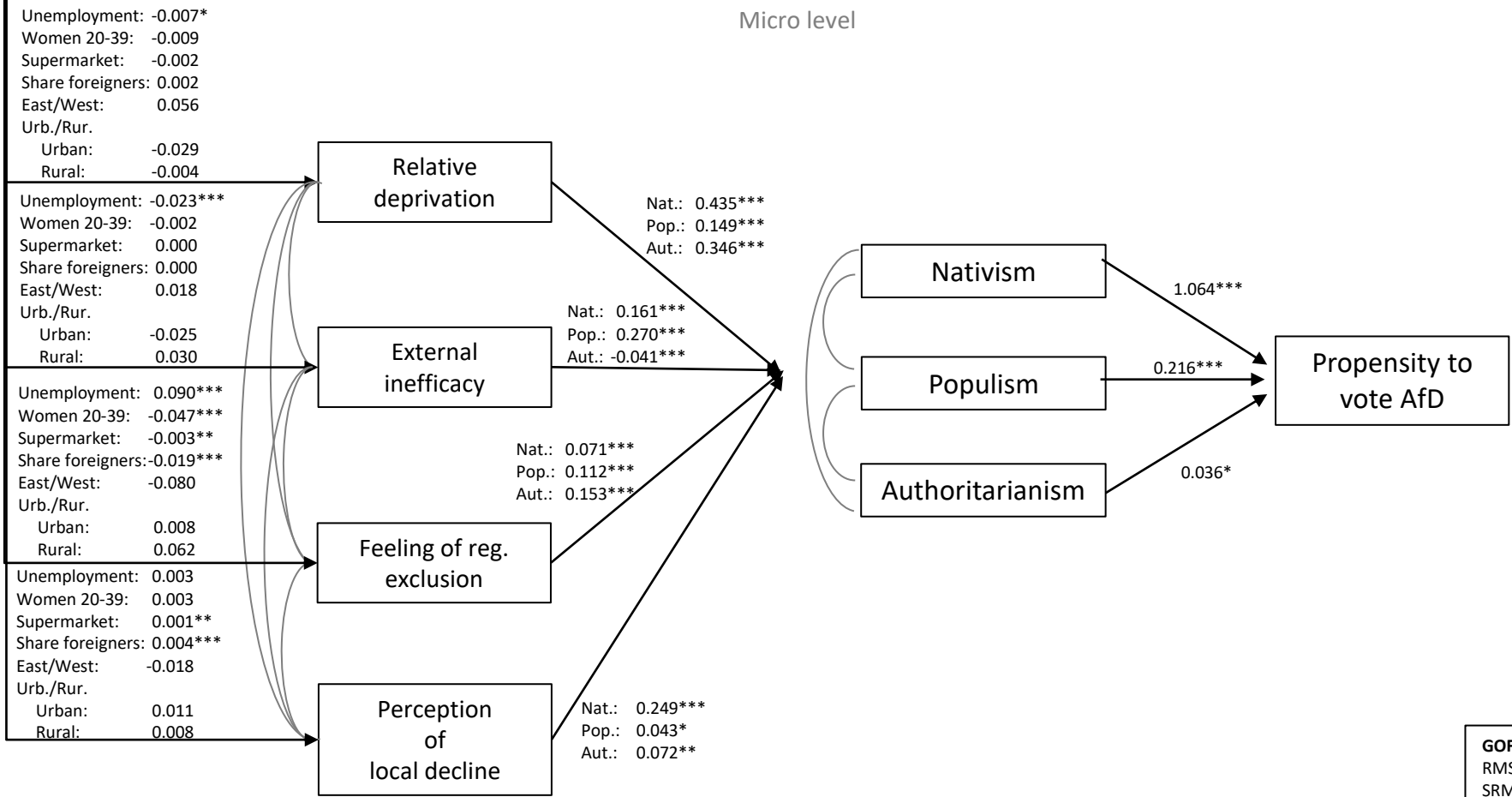


Empirical design

- **Model:** Multi-level path analyses and mediation analyses
 - District level (*Landkreise*)
 - 2017
 - Sample size: <20,000
- **Operationalisation:**
 - DV: propensity to vote AfD (0-10)
 - Right-wing populist attitudes: rowmean indices
- **Controls:** age, gender, education, material resources, occupational status, social integration, political distrust
- **Data:**
 - Individual level: SCoRE (Arzheimer/Berning 2020)
 - Contextual level: INKAR (BBSR 2023)



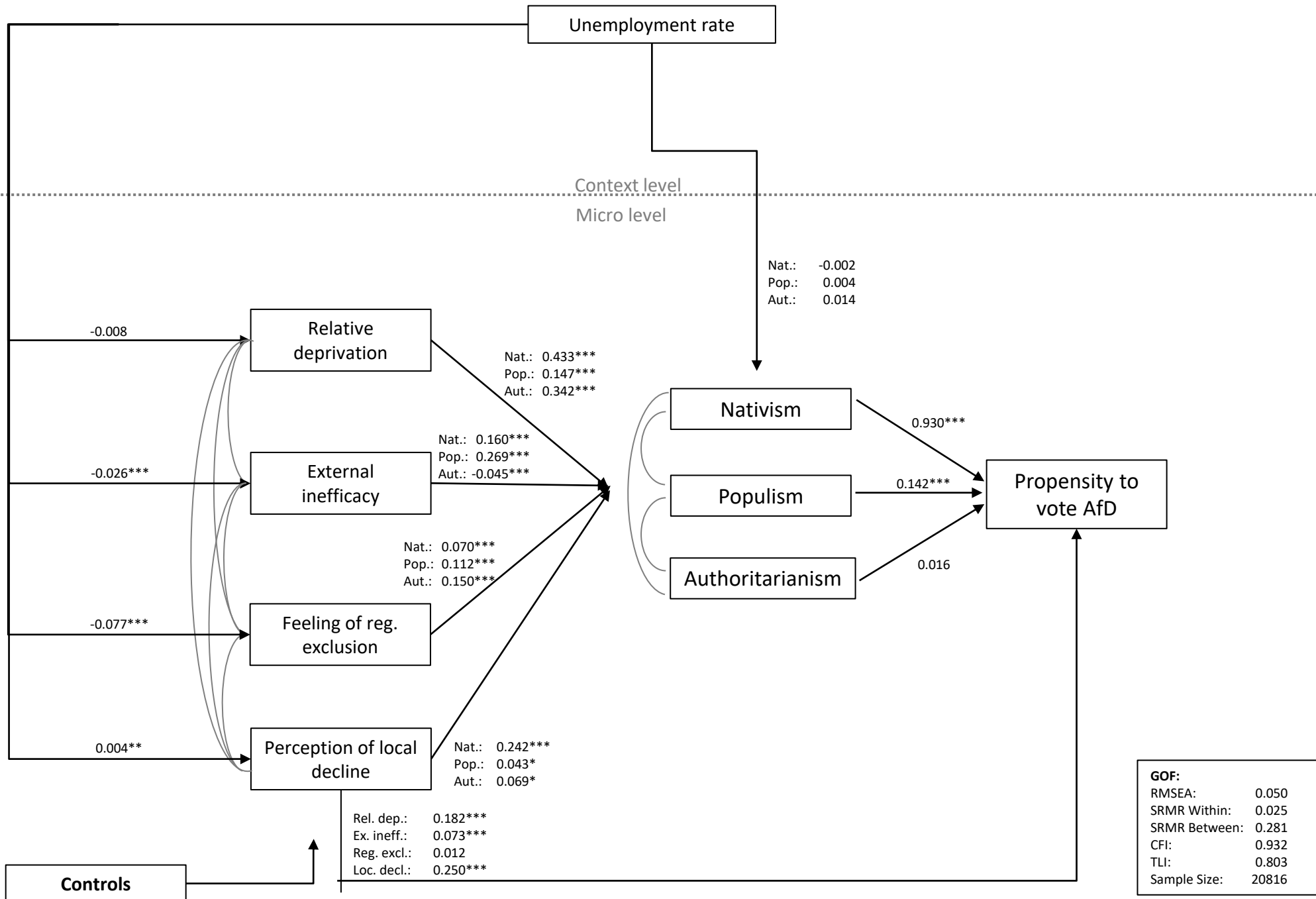
Context level
Micro level



Controls

GOF:	
RMSEA:	0.051
SRMR Within:	0.025
SRMR Between:	0.022
CFI:	0.936
TLI:	0.799
Sample Size:	20816

* p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001



Context level
Micro level

Nat.: -0.002
Pop.: 0.004
Aut.: 0.014

Nat.: 0.433***
Pop.: 0.147***
Aut.: 0.342***

Nat.: 0.160***
Pop.: 0.269***
Aut.: -0.045***

Nat.: 0.070***
Pop.: 0.112***
Aut.: 0.150***

Nat.: 0.242***
Pop.: 0.043*
Aut.: 0.069*

Rel. dep.: 0.182***
Ex. ineff.: 0.073***
Reg. excl.: 0.012
Loc. decl.: 0.250***

-0.008

-0.026***

-0.077***

0.004**

0.930***

0.142***

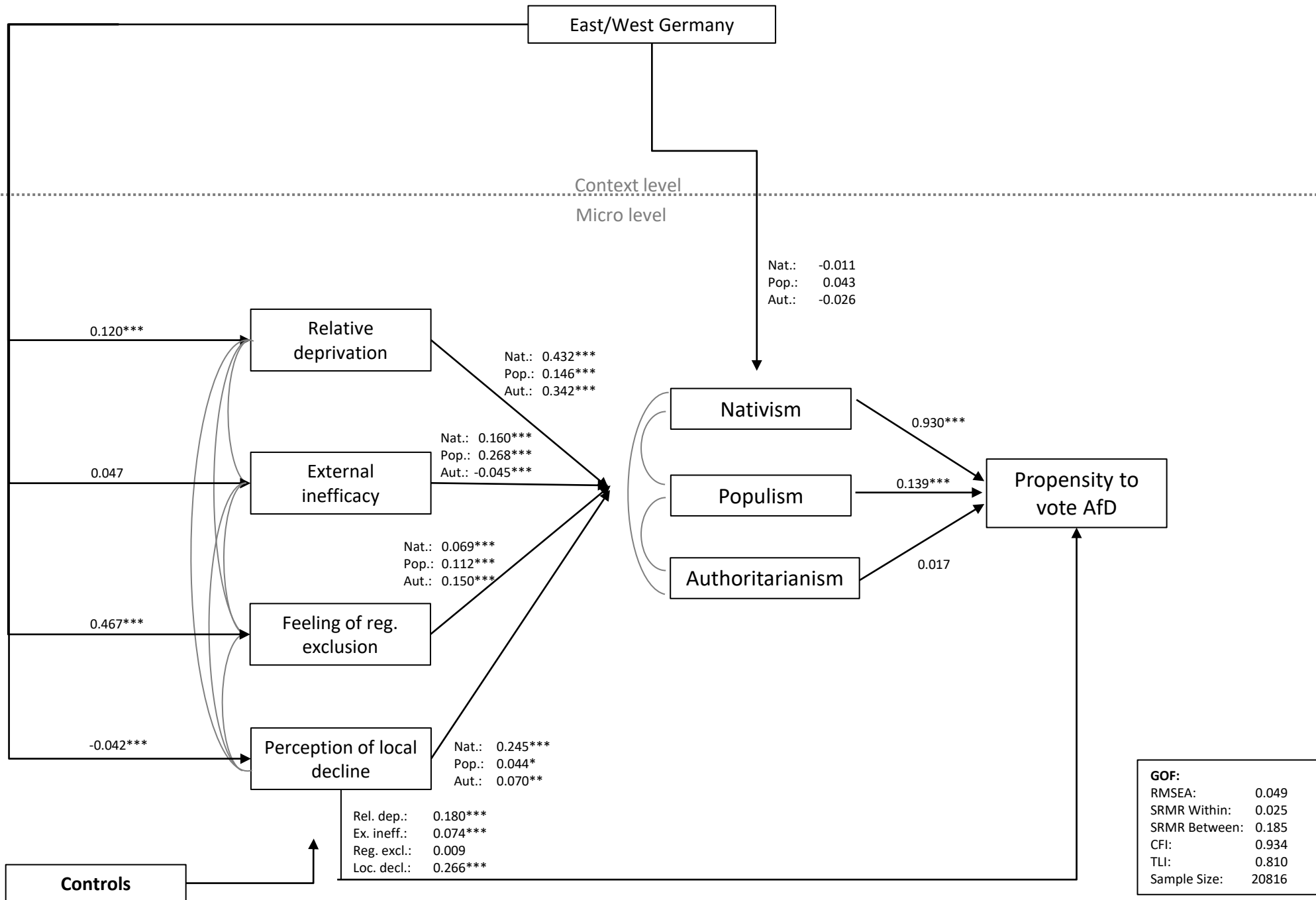
0.016

* p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001

Mediation analysis

	(1) Nativism	(2) Populism	(3) Authoritarian.	(4) PTV AfD Rel. dep.	(5) PTV AfD Ex. ineff.	(6) PTV AfD Reg. excl.	(7) PTV AfD Loc. decline
Mediated perception of crisis							
Mediated context factor	Unemployment	Unemployment	Unemployment				
Total effect	-0.003 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.003)	0.014** (0.004)	0.611*** (0.015)	0.259*** (0.013)	0.095*** (0.015)	0.482*** (0.059)
Indirect effect							
Total	-0.001 (0.010)	-0.005 (0.008)	0.000 (0.015)	0.429*** (0.012)	0.186*** (0.008)	0.083*** (0.006)	0.232*** (0.019)
Specific							
Rel. dep.	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.003)				
Ex. ineff.	-0.012 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.006)	-0.011 (0.013)				
Reg. excl.	0.012** (0.004)	0.007* (0.003)	0.015** (0.006)				
Loc. decline	0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.003)				
Nativism				0.402*** (0.012)	0.149*** (0.006)	0.065*** (0.006)	0.225*** (0.018)
Populism				0.021*** (0.003)	0.038*** (0.005)	0.016*** (0.002)	0.006* (0.003)
Authoritarian.				0.006 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)
Direct effect	-0.002 (0.009)	0.004 (0.008)	0.014 (0.015)	0.182*** (0.017)	0.073*** (0.013)	0.012 (0.014)	0.250*** (0.053)

Standard error in parantheses; * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001



* p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001

Mediation analysis

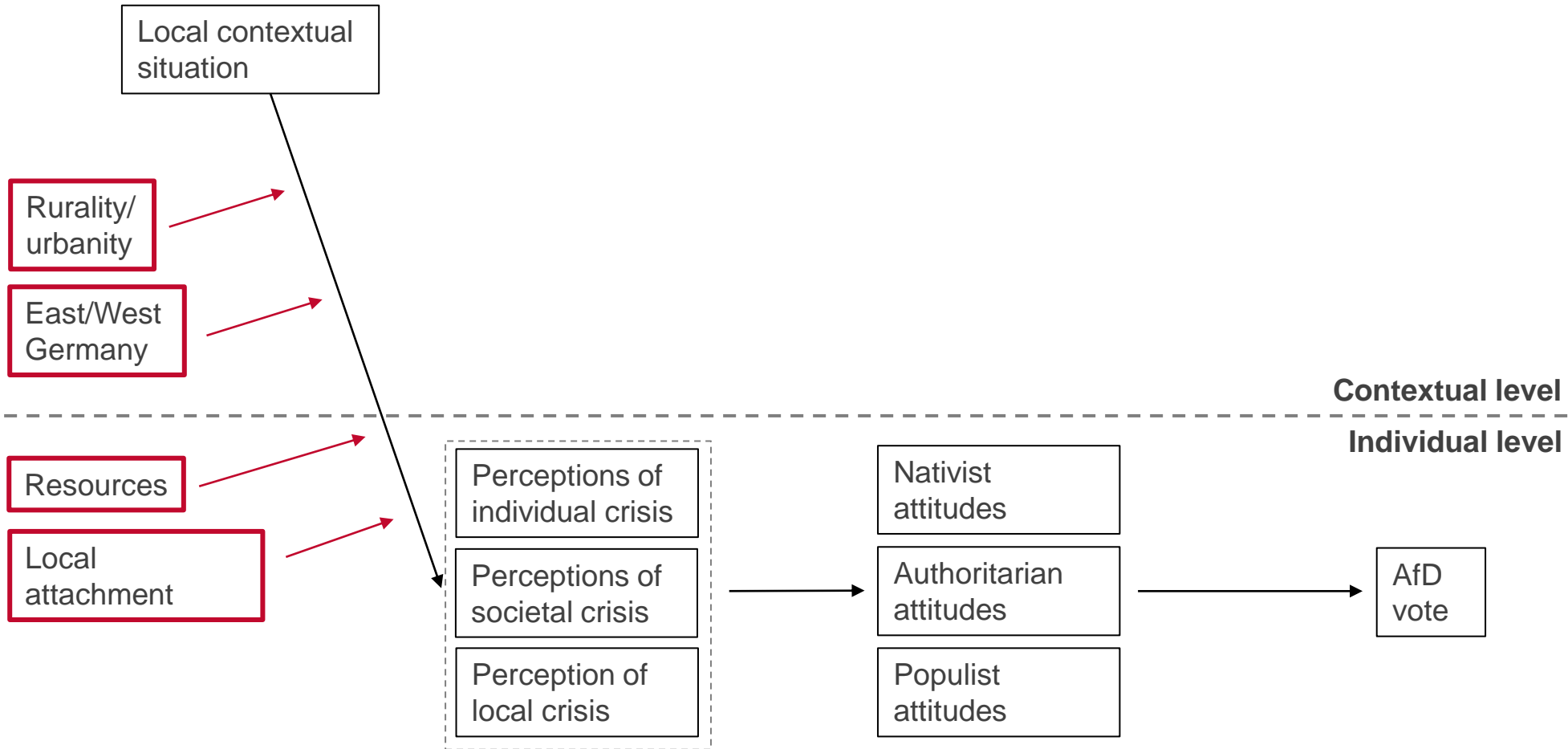
	(1) Nativism	(2) Populism	(3) Authoritarian.	(4) PTV AfD Rel. dep.	(5) PTV AfD Ex. ineff.	(6) PTV AfD Reg. excl.	(7) PTV AfD Loc. decline
Mediated perception of crisis Mediated context factor	East/West	East/West	East/West				
Total effect	0.102*** (0.023)	0.130*** (0.019)	0.132*** (0.029)	0.608*** (0.015)	0.259*** (0.014)	0.091*** (0.015)	0.501*** (0.059)
Indirect effect							
Total	0.114*** (0.031)	0.087** (0.025)	0.158*** (0.040)	0.428*** (0.012)	0.185*** (0.008)	0.082*** (0.006)	0.235*** (0.019)
Specific							
Rel. dep.	0.074** (0.026)	0.047* (0.020)	0.059 (0.037)				
Ex. ineff.	0.018 (0.012)	0.015 (0.010)	0.009 (0.013)				
Reg. excl.	0.049** (0.016)	0.024* (0.011)	0.099*** (0.025)				
Loc. decline	-0.027 (0.015)	0.001 (0.013)	-0.008 (0.027)				
Nativism				0.402*** (0.012)	0.148*** (0.006)	0.064*** (0.006)	0.227*** (0.018)
Populism				0.020*** (0.003)	0.037*** (0.005)	0.016*** (0.002)	0.006* (0.003)
Authoritarian.				0.006 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)
Direct effect	-0.011 (0.029)	0.043 (0.024)	-0.026 (0.047)	0.180*** (0.017)	0.074*** (0.013)	0.009 (0.014)	0.266*** (0.054)

Standard error in parantheses; * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001

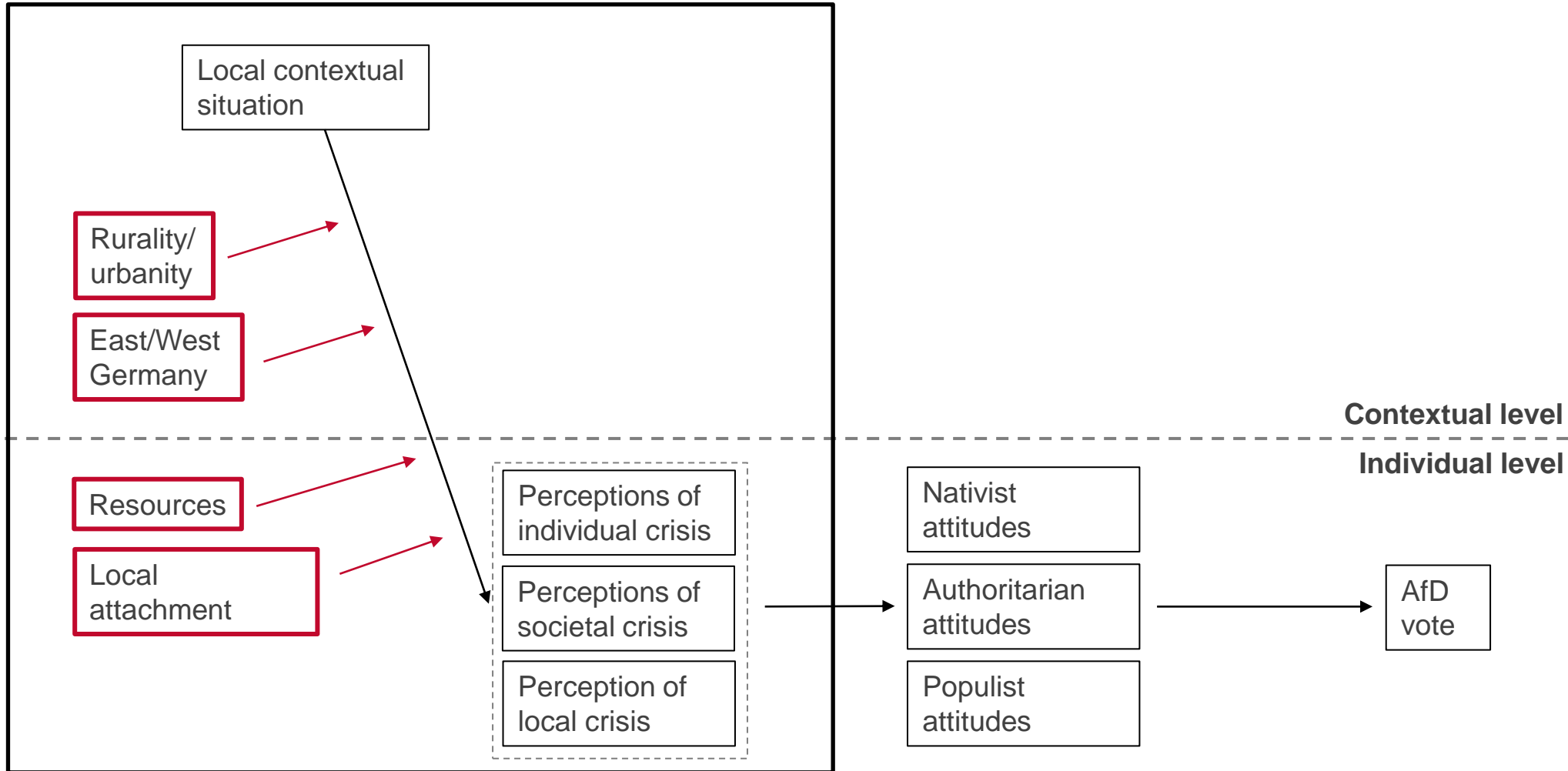
Moderation

- Varying effects of local context factors on perceptions of crisis?
- Individual-level moderators:
 - Voters with few (material and cognitive) resources (Becker et al. 2017)
 - Individuals with a strong (emotional or social) connection to their locality (Fitzgerald 2018; Hegewald/Schraff 2022)
- Geographical moderators:
 - Rurality/urbanity (Harteveld et al. 2021)
 - East/West Germany
- For similar argumentation see de Lange et al. (2022); Dorn et al. (2020); Harteveld et al. (2021)

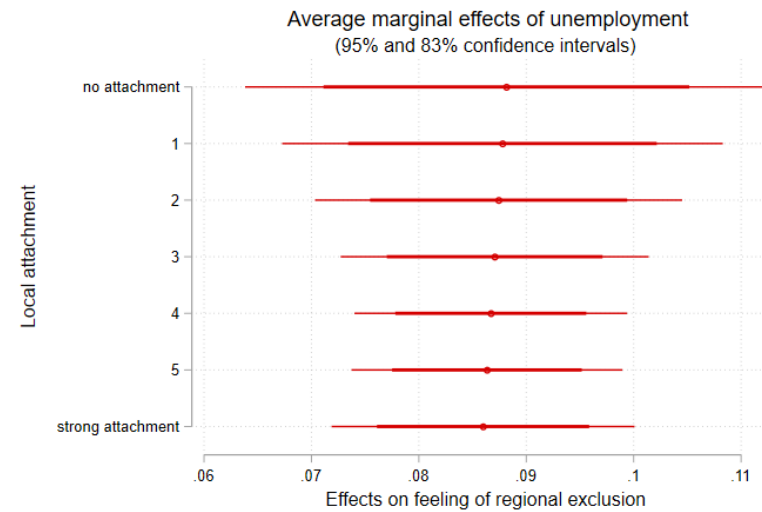
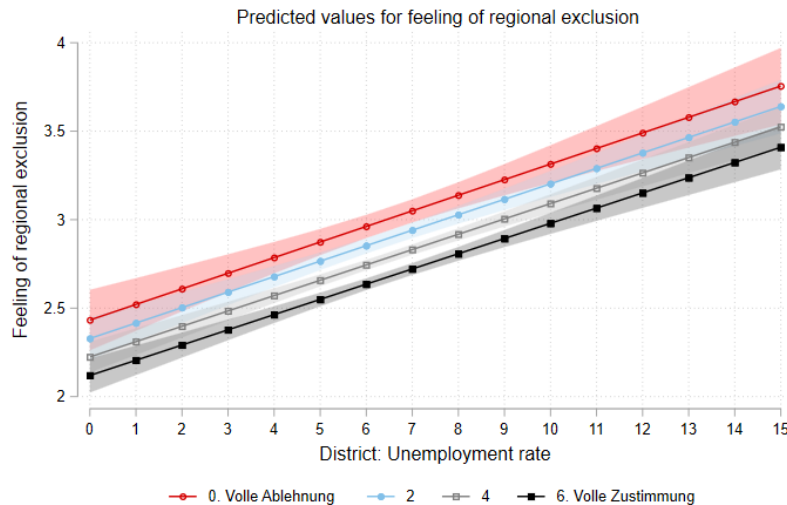
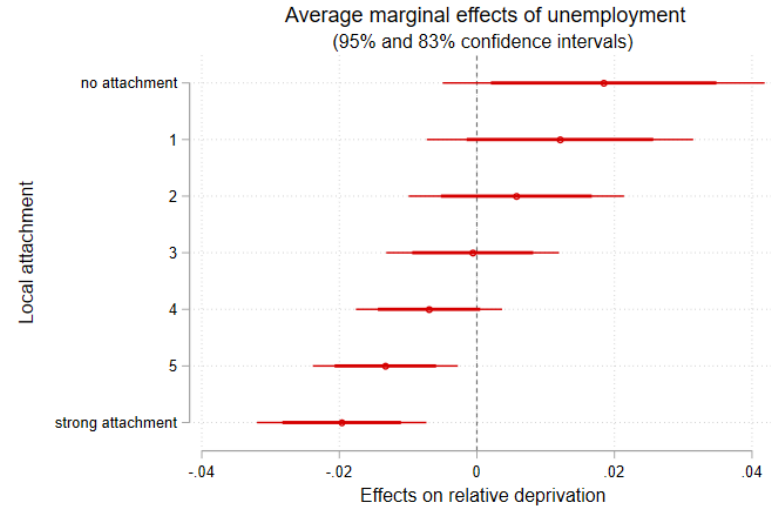
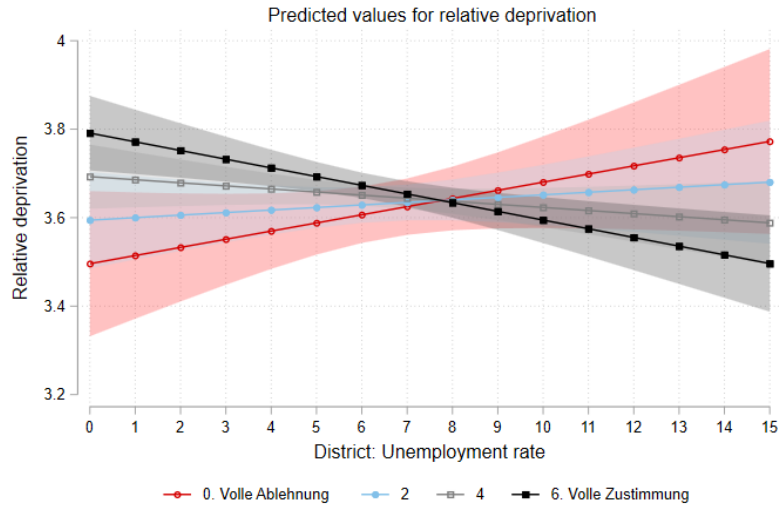
Moderation



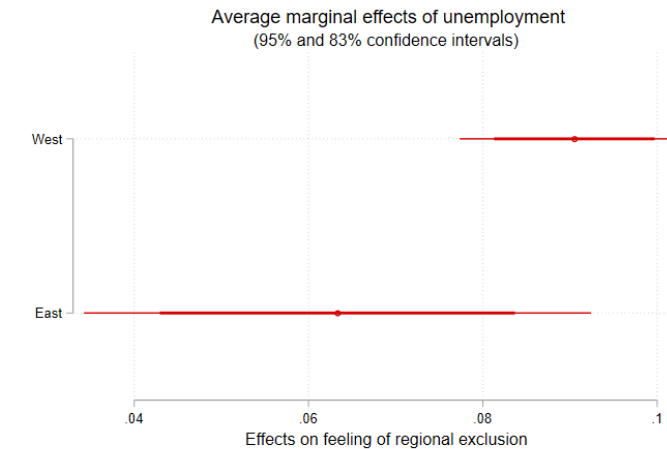
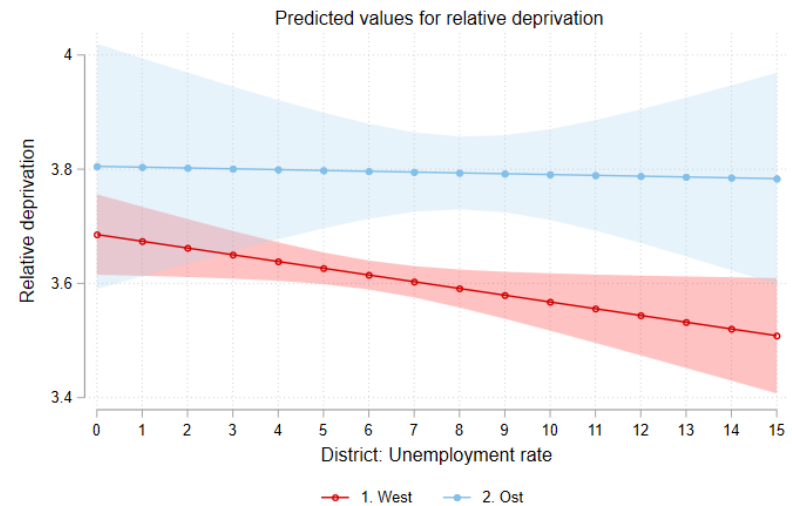
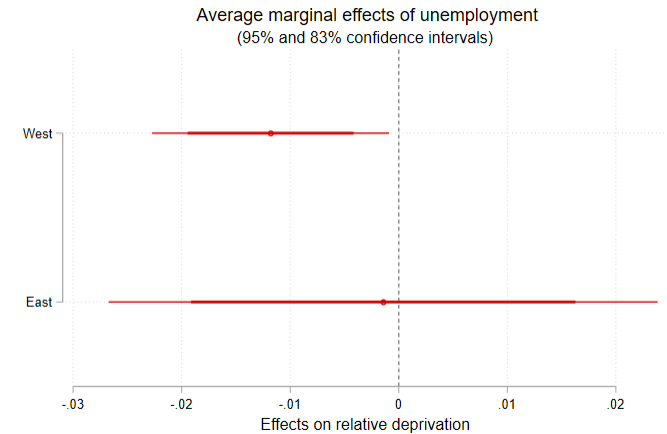
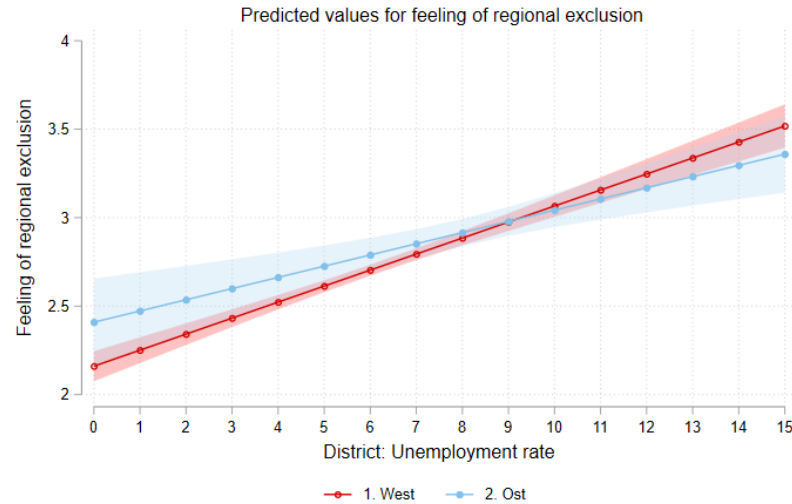
Moderation



Effect of local unemployment moderated by local attachment



Effect of local unemployment moderated by East/West



Conclusion and outlook

- The effect of the local context on PRR support is indeed (partially) mediated by attitudes, i. e. perceptions of crisis
 - Analyses only with individual and local perceptions of crisis
- Nativism and populism in turn mediate the effect of perceptions of crisis on PRR support
- Effect of local conditions on perceptions of crisis and AfD support is much smaller than expected
 - Worth to look more into subjective perceptions
- Only minor indications of a moderating effect of various local contextual factors on PRR support
 - If any, it is individual characteristics that alter the effect of local contextual factors
- More research about mechanisms and perceptions of crisis needed

Thank you!

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