

Contextualizing Disparities: Local Variance in the Salience of Perceived Inequality

MICHAEL WEBB

A solid orange horizontal bar at the bottom of the slide.

My Work

Currently waiting to defend my dissertation at the University of Florida (next month!)

My dissertation focuses on populism using large cross-sectional datasets, complex interaction terms, and random effects.

- In depth case studies of Germany and the United States
- Broader analysis of Euroscepticism across Europe.

I also study the informal dynamics of agenda setting in the European Union's legislative process through programmatic text analysis.

- I scrape metadata from sites like Eurlex and analyze the text of associated documents.
- Ongoing projects:
 - N-gram analysis of document change pre and post trilogue, tied to other metadata.
 - Framing analysis of presentations of the environment in Commission Impact Assessments.

Why Does Context Matter?

In quantitative work we depend on heuristics, like social categories, to simplify the world.

Qualitative scholars criticize the usefulness of these categories:

- Ernesto Laclau's theory of Hegemony (Laclau & Mouffe 1985, Laclau 2005)
- In the intersectionality literature, the notion of a "mutually constitutive identity"

"There is no meaning to the notion of 'black', for instance, which is not gendered and classed, no meaning for the notion of 'woman' which is not ethnocized and classed..." (Yuval Davis 2007, 565)

This logic extends to political identity, which can only be understood in relation to other elements.

What Does this Mean?

If we accept the critique, then categorization becomes inherently problematic.

The attribution of effects to specific traits (or even specific opinions) without appropriate contextualization becomes difficult.

The effect of perceived inequality on political behavior, for example, might depend upon the place a person lives, their income, their education, etc.

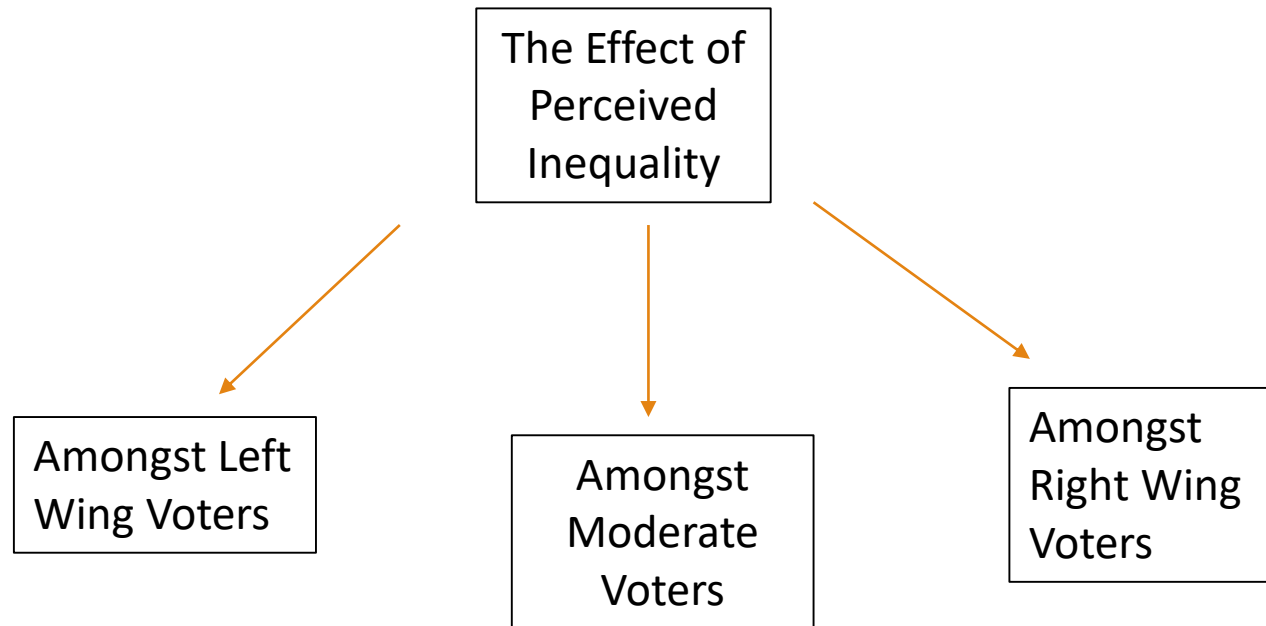
In essence, the argument for “mutually constitutive identity” asserts that everything is moderating everything else.

Conventionally, to address moderation we use interaction terms.

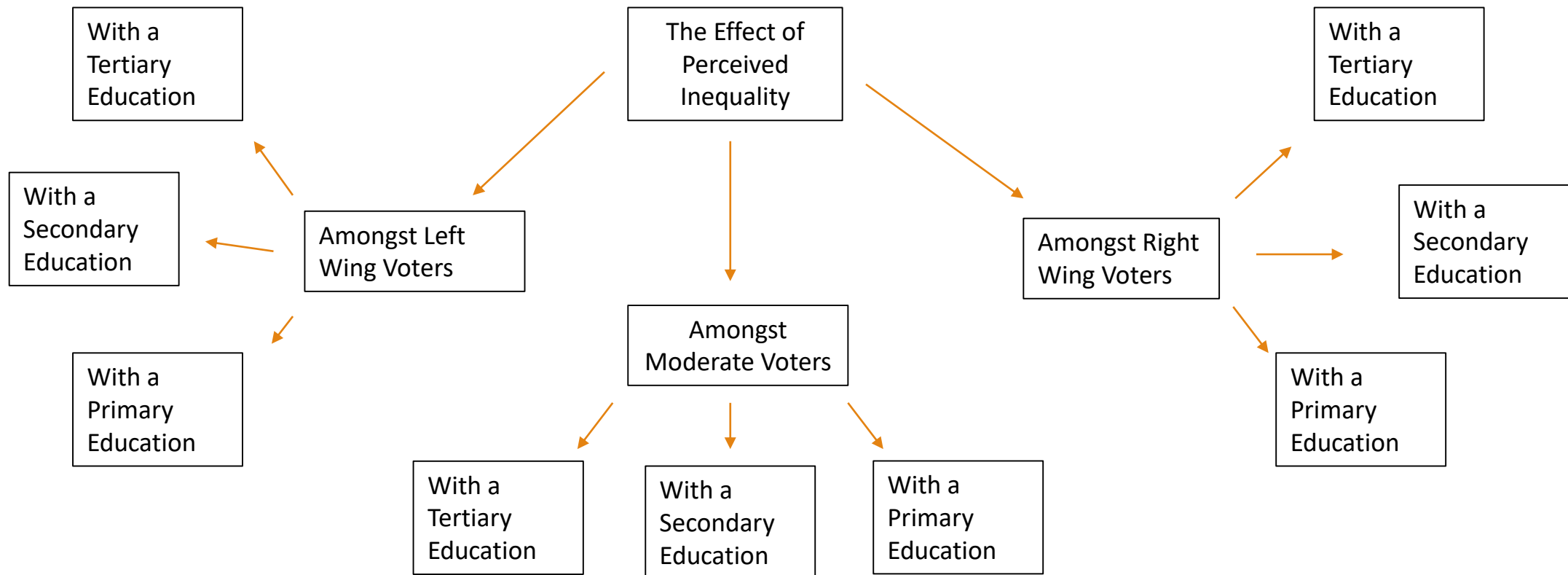
One Effect

The Effect of
Perceived
Inequality

Becomes Three Effects



Becomes Nine Effects, and so on...



Methodological Challenges

The more interaction terms we have, the more complicated the interpretation of the interaction.

Additionally, the scale of interaction terms diminishes in proportion to the multiplied scale of the component covariates.

This means that the effects are smaller, which means the sample sizes must be larger to identify them.

Coefficients:

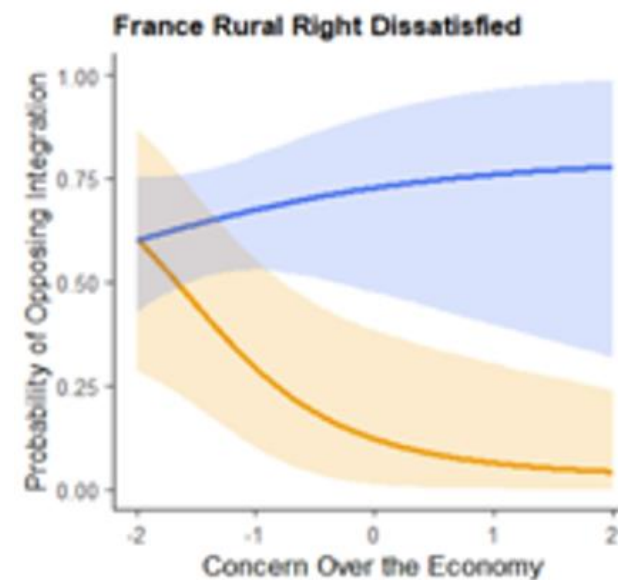
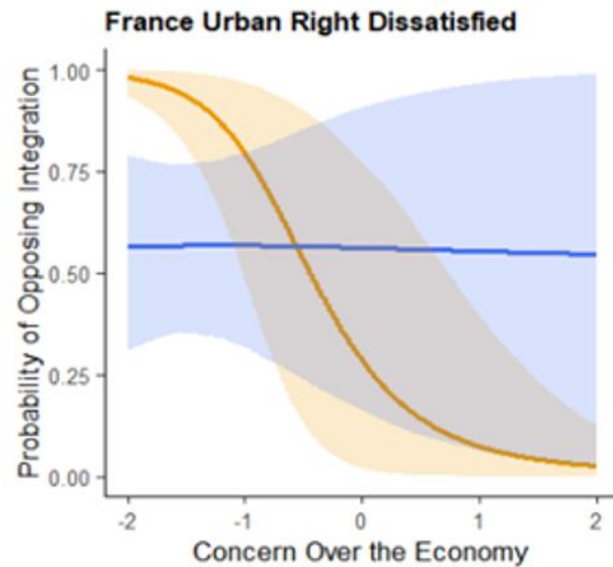
	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	-19.98264	0.29764	-67.137	< 2e-16	***
college_educated	1.42076	0.22393	6.345	2.49e-10	***
as.factor(age_as_factor)over thirty under fifty-five	-1.24189	0.23886	-5.199	2.11e-07	***
as.factor(age_as_factor)under thirty	-1.12534	0.33910	-3.319	0.000913	***
core_dem_2	1.26261	0.22197	5.688	1.38e-08	***
core_filt_labelled_rural	1.19221	1.19022	1.002	0.316564	
core_filt_labelled_peri-urban	0.58824	0.54291	1.084	0.278653	
scale(power_average)	-2.67873	0.19576	-13.684	< 2e-16	***
as.factor(Degurba_3)2	0.08719	0.37823	0.231	0.817695	
as.factor(Degurba_3)3	0.85238	0.69261	1.231	0.218513	
core_filt_labelled_rural:scale(power_average)	0.94674	1.28348	0.738	0.460781	
core_filt_labelled_peri-urban:scale(power_average)	0.24858	0.59742	0.416	0.677375	
core_filt_labelled_rural:as.factor(Degurba_3)2	0.44443	1.29889	0.342	0.732245	
core_filt_labelled_peri-urban:as.factor(Degurba_3)2	-0.24985	0.72977	-0.342	0.732087	
core_filt_labelled_rural:as.factor(Degurba_3)3	0.10536	1.38803	0.076	0.939495	
core_filt_labelled_peri-urban:as.factor(Degurba_3)3	-0.34324	1.00045	-0.343	0.731551	
scale(power_average):as.factor(Degurba_3)2	1.36988	0.35798	3.827	0.000132	***
scale(power_average):as.factor(Degurba_3)3	1.66900	0.75781	2.202	0.027697	*
core_filt_labelled_rural:scale(power_average):as.factor(Degurba_3)2	-3.27374	1.38637	-2.361	0.018256	*
core_filt_labelled_peri-urban:scale(power_average):as.factor(Degurba_3)2	-1.81743	0.80587	-2.255	0.024174	*
core_filt_labelled_rural:scale(power_average):as.factor(Degurba_3)3	-3.26320	1.50163	-2.173	0.029833	*
core_filt_labelled_peri-urban:scale(power_average):as.factor(Degurba_3)3	-2.86705	1.12619	-2.546	0.010941	*

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Bayesian Solutions

Interpretation of complex interactions can be eased by plotting predicted probabilities after sampling from a model's posterior distributions.

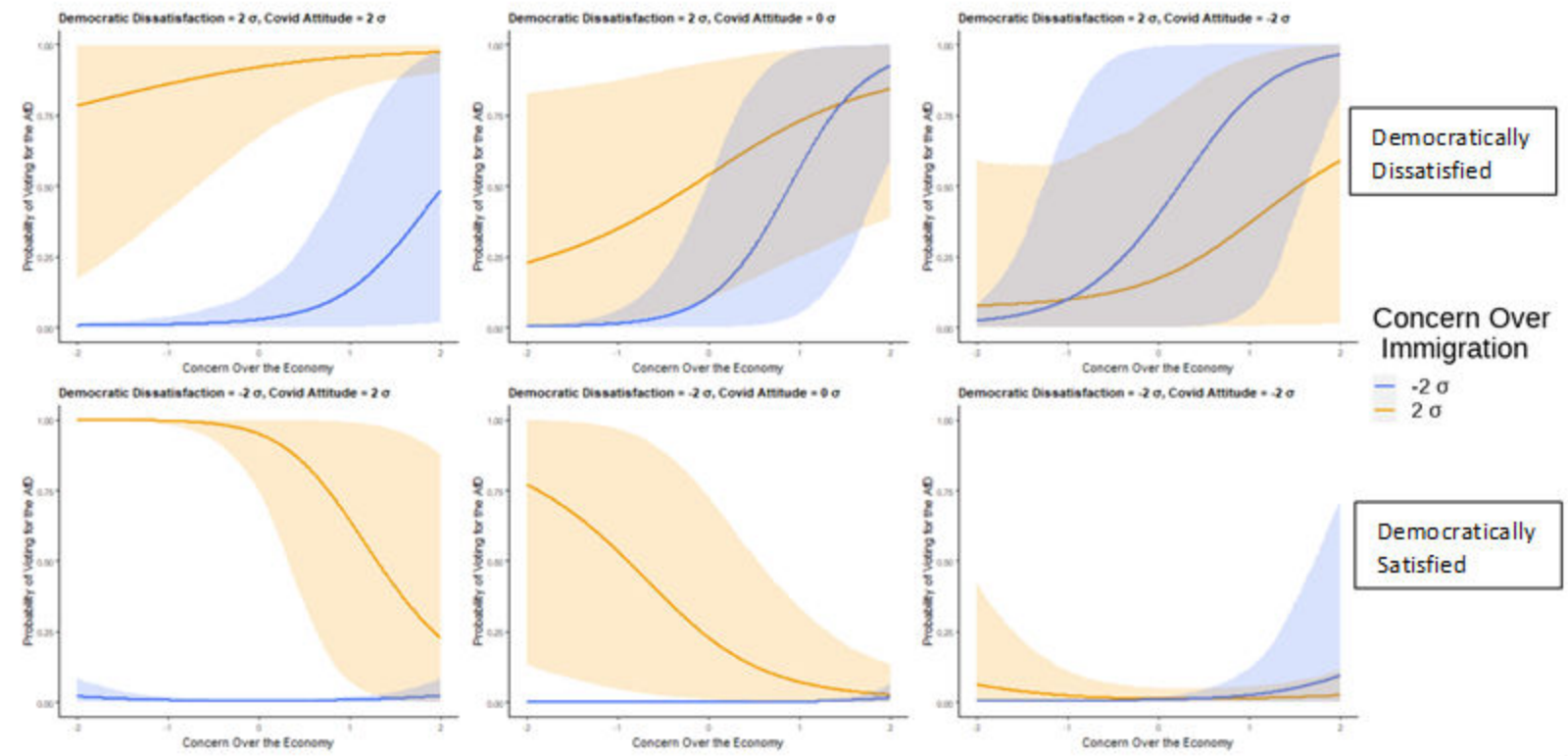
The necessary sample size issue can be eased with regularizing priors, which curtail the parameter space to consider only feasible values.



Dissatisfied with Covid Response

Indifferent to Covid Response

Satisfied with Covid Response



Thank You!

MICHAEL.WEBB@UNIV-GRENOBLE-ALPES.FR