

The electoral consequences of compensation for globalization

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Abstract

As opposition to globalization grows, many governments seek policy responses. One response – the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund – provides support to workers in European Union member states who are made redundant as a result of globalization. Proponents argue that by offsetting some of the costs of globalization, the programme may bolster public support for international economic integration and the political parties that support it. I investigate the impact of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund on voters' support for protectionist political parties using a difference-in-differences research design and official election results at the district and commune level. I also examine individual-level voting data. I find that in regions exposed to rising imports, assistance from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund generates a small decrease in the vote share of one of Europe's most prominent anti-globalization parties, which ranges in magnitude from 0 to 1.5 percentage points. While consistent with the logic of embedded liberalism, the finding suggests that the theorized connection between compensation and support for globalization may be conditional rather than categorical.

Keywords

Compensation, elections, European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, globalization, trade protection

Introduction

Opposition to globalization appears to be growing in Europe (e.g., O'Rourke, 2019). Over the past decade, political parties opposed to international economic integration

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have won legislative seats in an array of European democracies. In France, a presidential candidate unabashedly in favour of higher barriers to international trade won sufficient votes to make it to the final round of the 2017 and 2022 elections. And in one of the most conspicuous expressions of anti-globalization sentiment seen in recent decades, 52% of voters in the United Kingdom chose to leave the European Union (EU) (e.g. Hobolt, 2016).

Compelling evidence suggests that voters' hostility towards globalization is due, at least in part, to economic openness. Skepticism about globalization increased after a period of rising imports (Scheve and Slaughter, 2018). In regions exposed to surging imports, voters across 15 European countries disproportionately turned to political parties that opposed globalization (Colantone and Stanig, 2018b; Milner, 2021). This evidence suggests that economic liberalism itself may contribute to the backlash against globalization (Lake et al., 2021).

Faced with this dilemma, governments seek policy responses. One response is the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), which provides assistance to workers in EU member states made redundant as a result of globalization. Support measures include personalized job-search assistance and guidance, career advice, training courses, and assistance with setting up a business. Funds are also available to help trade-displaced workers update their knowledge and skills and, in some cases, cover the costs of childcare, as well as temporary financial incentives and allowances. These measures are co-financed by the EU as well as member states and are provided in addition to national support programmes. To qualify, workers must have lost their jobs due to a 'substantial increase in imports, a serious shift in trade of goods or services, a rapid decline of market share in a given sector, or the offshoring of activities' (Claeys and Sapir, 2020: 2).¹

When envisioning the EGF, policy makers invoked the logic of 'embedded liberalism' – an idea with a long intellectual history (e.g. Frieden, 2018; Hays, 2009; Hays et al., 2005; Ruggie, 1982). In the post-war period, governments anticipated that policy could be used to minimize socially disruptive adjustment costs and any national political vulnerabilities that might accrue from the multilateral system. By reducing the negative impacts of international economic integration on workers' material well-being, it was believed that government-funded 'compensation' programmes could bolster public support for economic liberalism and the political parties that support it.

Building on this logic, proponents of the EGF argued that it would help to stem the rise of protectionism and anti-globalization voting in Europe. The former European Commissioner for Trade, Peter Mandelson, said that the EGF was an important policy response in light of 'a wind of opposition to openness and a certain populist drift' in 'some member states' (Tovi, 2006).

In this study, I investigate how the EGF influences voters' support for one of Europe's most prominent anti-globalization parties – France's National Front (*Front national*, FN) which in June 2018 changed its name to *Rassemblement National* (RN).² The FN explicitly identifies globalization as the main culprit behind many of the economic difficulties faced by workers. It advocates increased barriers to trade in order to combat 'unfair competition' from foreign imports (Ivaldi, 2013; Malgouyres, 2017b; Swank and Betz, 2003).

The party proposed a ‘social contribution’ tariff that would impose a 3% tax on the price of imported products (de Vergé s, 2017).

I investigate how the EGF affects voters’ support for the FN using official election results at the district (i.e. *département*) and commune level, as well as individual-level voting data. The results show that the additional assistance provided by the EGF reduces the vote share of the protectionist FN party by between 0 and 1.5 percentage points. This finding, which is consistent with the logic of embedded liberalism, emerges from a difference-in-differences research design that compares the change in the FN’s vote shares between elections in two types of trade-exposed areas: (a) those in which globalization-displaced workers received EGF assistance (i.e. treated areas); and (b) those in which globalization-displaced workers did not receive EGF support (i.e. control areas). A similar result emerges in Denmark where EGF assistance has a small, albeit statistically insignificant, reductive effect on voters’ support for the Danish People’s Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*, DPP), which, like France’s FN party, expresses deep skepticism about globalization.

The EGF’s modest impact on protectionist parties’ vote shares does not imply that compensation is irrelevant or that providing greater support for displaced workers is an unworthy policy goal. On the contrary, government assistance plays an essential role in the economic and social well-being of many citizens. Providing additional support to people made worse off by globalization may keep some voters from turning to protectionist parties. Furthermore, reductions in government spending may stimulate a backlash against mainstream political parties (e.g. Dal Bó et al., 2018; Fetzer, 2019).

This article makes two contributions. First, the meso-level analysis, which is conducted at both the district (i.e. *département*) and commune levels, provides a novel assessment of how compensation affects regional voting patterns. Trade shocks impact *regional* voting, as a growing number of studies document (e.g. Ballard-Rosa et al., 2022; Colantone and Stanig, 2018b; Dorn et al., 2020). Yet, the influence of *compensation* on regional voting patterns has gone largely unexplored. Most studies focus instead on individual-level survey data (e.g. Ehrlich and Hearn, 2014) or reductions in government spending (e.g. Gabriel et al., 2022). In contrast, I examine how additional compensation, made possible by the EGF, influences protectionist parties’ vote shares in trade-exposed regions.

Second, using an innovative empirical strategy, this study brings new evidence to debates over compensation. While some argue that compensation can lessen protectionist parties’ appeal (e.g. Foster and Frieden, 2019; Halikiopoulou and Vlandas, 2016; Roubini, 2016), others question the efficacy of compensation and cast doubt on the ability of government assistance programmes to assuage voters’ discontent with globalization (e.g. Gidron and Hall, 2017; Rodrik, 2017). By employing a difference-in-differences research design, this article advances the literature beyond cross-national correlations and provides novel evidence of the *causal* connection between compensation and support for globalization. By doing so, it contributes to a research agenda long stymied by empirical challenges.³

My findings suggest that targeted compensation programmes, like the EGF, may marginally reduce voters’ support for protectionist political parties. However, given the

magnitude of the estimated effect, targeted compensation alone is unlikely to turn the tide of protectionist sentiment. Other assistance programmes, such as ones that build a life-long ladder of opportunity, may be required to give all citizens the human capital necessary to adapt to the forces of globalization (Scheve and Slaughter, 2007). As Ruggie (1982: 413) presciently noted, ‘some manner of renegotiating the forms of domestic [...] social accommodation reflected in embedded liberalism is inevitable’. Perhaps now is the time for such a renegotiation.

Motivation

The EGF was conceived as a policy response to the mounting protectionist sentiment in Europe (Cernat and Mustilli, 2018). Peter Mandelson, the European Commissioner for Trade from 2004 to 2008, said that ‘the simplistic solutions of protectionism and economic nationalism will lead nowhere. The opening up of our economies is the only guarantee of our prosperity and the preservation of our social model in Europe. These changes must be accompanied [by support]. That is why I have been so vocal in favour of the principle of a European Globalisation Adjustment Fund’ (Tovi, 2006).

The President of the European Commission at the time – José Manuel Barroso – said, ‘The [European Globalisation Adjustment] Fund will express the Union’s solidarity towards those severely and personally affected by trade-adjustment redundancies. In this way, it will provide a stimulus to respond appropriately and effectively to the adverse impact of market opening. The fund will help workers made redundant back to work because we want a competitive, but also a fair EU’ (Gonnet, 2005). When launching the Fund in 2006, Barroso said: ‘We want to reconcile European public views with globalisation’ (Commission, 2006).

Speaking in support of the EGF, a Member of the European Parliament (MEP), argued that the fund would help ‘certain governments sell the idea of globalisation to their voters. It is in all our interests that concerns regarding possible downsides of globalisation are addressed so that the upsides of globalisation can be released’ (EP 2006).

As these statements illustrate, proponents of the EGF implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) invoked the logic of embedded liberalism – arguing that additional compensation for the costs of globalization could bolster public support for international economic integration and the political parties that support it. These anticipated effects may materialize via several mechanisms. First, EGF assistance may offset some of the costs of globalization-induced job losses. Because EGF funding allowed for more significant retraining than was available to workers through national-level programmes alone, the reemployment rate of EGF beneficiaries is generally higher than that of non-beneficiaries (Weber et al., 2015). In this way, EGF assistance offsets at least some of the costs of globalization by helping displaced workers find new jobs, thereby limiting the appeal of protectionist parties who seek the support of voters in economic distress from globalization (e.g. De Bromhead et al., 2013; Swank and Betz, 2003).

Second, EGF assistance may reduce the appeal of protectionist parties by helping to stave off the cascading regional effects of trade shocks. Trade shocks have negative effects on local labour markets (Autor et al., 2013) and because individuals are

increasingly linked together by economic spillovers, individuals' economic welfare tends to rise and fall with local economic conditions (Broz et al., 2021). If EGF assistance helps globalization-displaced workers become re-employed more quickly, as evidence suggests (Claeys and Sapir, 2020), then the surrounding local area may be spared some of the negative economic outcomes that arise from trade shocks, such as lower local wages and employment levels. Additionally, every re-employed worker no longer has an incentive to move away from the local community in search of a new job, which helps to avert a decrease in the local population, the subsequent shrinking of the local tax base and a decline in public services (Broz et al., 2021; Weber et al., 2015). If EGF assistance helps to improve local economic conditions, it may reduce the propensity of voters in trade-exposed regions to support protectionist parties out of economic self-interest.

Third, EGF assistance may diminish the appeal of protectionist parties via a local sociotropism mechanism. Local sociotropism refers to the idea that voters are concerned about the economic well-being of their community – not because it affects their own financial situation – but because they care about the well-being of those closest to themselves, including their neighbours and local community (e.g. Ansolabehere et al., 2014; Kiewiet and Lewis-Beck, 2011; Rickard, 2022b). Research shows that voters often consider the interests of others when formulating their attitudes about economic policies and the responsible governments (e.g. Lü et al., 2012; Mansfield and Mutz, n.d.a,n; Rickard, 2022b). Because individuals have a social and psychological stake in their communities, voters may turn to protectionist parties out of a sense of 'place-based' threat in response to local trade shocks (Cramer, 2016). However, if EGF assistance is seen as helping members of the community, it may keep voters from turning to protectionist parties in trade-exposed areas.

Finally, voters may see the EGF as an admission by governments that greater economic openness entails costs and these costs should be addressed by government action (Cramer, 2016). Such an admission may help to 'depoliticize' globalization and lessen the appeal of protectionist parties. This may be why many governments are keen to make EGF assistance visible to voters (Claeys and Sapir, 2020). The French government, for example, distributes information about EGF support to local stakeholders and places leaflets with information about EGF assistance on notice boards at impacted employment sites. The French government also issues press releases upon adoption of EGF support and highlights it on the relevant Ministry's website.

The European Commission and other member states also routinely publish press releases about EGF assistance. They typically include information about the cause of the job losses (e.g. offshoring) and the number of workers impacted. The press releases are often reprinted by the local media. In fact, all of the cases of EGF assistance in my sample were covered in at least one newspaper. Yet despite the publicity surrounding EGF assistance, and the plausibility of the mechanisms suggested above, it remains unclear what impact, if any, EGF assistance has on voters' support for protectionist parties at the ballot box.

Research design

A large literature examines who votes for which political parties and why (e.g. Golder, 2016; Kayser, 2009; Rooduijn et al., 2017; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2009). Here, I focus instead on whether a particular policy intervention – EGF assistance – changes voters' support for a protectionist party, which is defined as a political party that expresses skepticism about globalization and advocates for higher barriers to international trade. I examine one of Europe's most conspicuous protectionist parties: France's FN, now called RN.

Since the early 2000s, the FN's discourse has increasingly focused on economic issues and globalization has gained more and more prominence in the party's rhetoric. Data from the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) confirm that FN is France's most protectionist party. The FN's manifestos consistently include the most frequent positive mentions of tariffs and other forms of trade protection.⁴ In the 2012 election, for example, the total number of (quasi-)sentences supportive of trade protection in the FN's manifesto was at least five times higher than any of the other parties.

France provides a compelling case study for several additional reasons. France championed the creation of the EGF.⁵ In an article published in 26 European newspapers, French President Jacques Chirac urged EU member states to 'find the strength of a new impetus' to respond to the 'concerns' of their fellow citizens about globalization (Chirac, 2005). A French MEP was responsible for handling both the substance and procedure of the legislative proposal that would create the EGF. France was also the first country to use the programme. For these reasons and others discussed below, France is a fruitful case. Furthermore, examining a single country keeps institutional factors constant and sidesteps the ideological and programmatic idiosyncrasies that exist among different anti-globalization parties in different countries (e.g. Kestilä and Söderlund, 2007).

To examine whether EGF assistance influenced voters' support for the FN, I exploit the within-country variation in EGF aid. More precisely, I use a difference-in-differences estimator that compares the change in the FN party's vote shares between elections in two types of trade-exposed regions: (a) those in which workers received EGF assistance (i.e. treated regions); and (b) those in which workers displaced by globalization did not receive EGF support (i.e. control regions).

Regions are the primary unit of analysis because trade shocks have localized effects on sub-national labour markets, as documented by a growing number of studies (e.g. Autor et al., 2013; Ballard-Rosa et al., 2021; Broz et al., 2021). Areas exposed to rising imports experience reductions in the local rate of employment. By reducing local employment in manufacturing, trade shocks subsequently reduce the demand for local non-traded services and increase the available supply of workers in the area thereby creating downward pressure on wages.

The localized effects of trade shocks on sub-national labour markets help to explain why trade-exposed regions often vote differently from non-trade-exposed regions. In the 2016 UK referendum on EU membership, for example, the Leave vote share was systematically higher in areas that were more exposed to rising imports, holding all else equal (Colantone and Stanig, 2018a). In 15 Western European countries, the electorate

tilted towards parties that supported protectionism in regions more exposed to rising imports (Colantone and Stanig, 2018b; Milner, 2021). In Spain, citizens in municipalities that experienced an offshoring event (i.e. a plant closure to move production abroad) voted against incumbent government parties at higher rates than citizens in other municipalities (Rickard, 2022b). And in the United States, voters punished incumbent politicians for trade-related job losses (Margalit, 2011), as well as local import shocks (Jensen et al., 2017). In sum, trade shocks have regional impacts on voting behaviour.

Regions are defined here by départements. French départements are sub-national geographic units that approximate local economies (Frocrain and Giraud, 2017). The original design of départements was economically motivated and départements continue to represent meaningful lines of demarcation for both economic activities and economic networks (Combes et al., 2005).

Using information from French government documents, EU documents and the Bureau van Dijk's Orbis database, I identify the départements that are 'treated' – that is, départements in which workers received EGF support.⁶ Using a difference-in-differences estimator, I then compare the change in the choices of voters in 'treated' départements between two elections with the change in the choices of voters in control départements, where control départements are those in which workers displaced by globalization did not receive EGF support. By comparing the *change* in choices of voters in treated and control groups over time instead of directly comparing both groups' choices in a particular election, the difference-in-differences estimator helps to rule out alternative explanations.

Prior to treatment, the treated and control groups have statistically indistinguishable rates of employment, total income, GDP per capita, shares of immigrants, and FN vote shares, as demonstrated in Table 1. Treated départements are slightly larger, in terms of total population, than untreated départements. However, population is not a robust predictor of treatment. In fact, none of the pre-treatment département-level variables robustly predict treatment in a logit regression model, as illustrated in the Online appendix.

Several factors help to explain why treated and control départements share similar pre-treatment characteristics. First, all French applications for EGF assistance during the period under investigation were successful, which indicates that neither the French

Table 1. Balance between control and treatment groups.

Variable	Year	Mean		Diff-in-Means	
		Control	Treatment	T-stat	p-value
Employment rate	2006	40.23	39.41	0.353	0.725
GDP per capita	2006	25055	24868	0.065	0.948
GDP (nl)	2006	23.19	23.72	-1.72	0.088
Population (nl)	2006	13.06	13.58	-2.00	0.048
% Foreign born	2007	10.01	9.28	0.378	0.706
FN vote share	2007	10.88	12.52	-1.50	0.137

Notes: GDP: gross domestic product; FN: National Front.

government nor the EU strategically allocated EGF support to some départements but not others via a selective approval process. Second, applications for EGF assistance typically covered workers in multiple départements.⁷ Given this, even a selective approval process would not allow the French government or the EU to strategically target assistance to a particular département. Actors with control over the process of treatment assignment did not, and in most cases *could* not, strategically target EGF assistance to select areas.

Difference-in-differences test

I examine the change in the FN's vote shares in the first round of voting in consecutive presidential elections. Presidential elections lend themselves particularly well to this research design because voters across the country choose from the same set of candidates. In contrast, legislative elections allow parties to run different candidates in different districts. Parties may strategically select particular types of candidates to run in certain districts. For example, parties may select candidates with more anti-globalization views to run in areas hit by import shocks. In contrast, a single candidate runs in front of the entire electorate in presidential elections.

I examine elections between 2007 and 2012. I focus on these elections for several reasons. First, EGF assistance became available for the first time in 2007 and, as a result, these elections span the earliest period during which EGF compensation varied across départements. All départements went into the 2007 election 'untreated'. Extending the analysis past the 2012 election would introduce the myriad problems involved in a staggered difference-in-differences design (Baker et al., 2022). Second, départements' geographic boundaries remained consistent over the 2007–2012 period, which ensures accurate over-time comparisons. Third, the pre-treatment trends in FN voting in treated and control départements are parallel prior to 2007 (see the Online appendix for details). In contrast, for départements treated after 2012, the pre-treatment trends in FN voting are *not* parallel. Because the pre-treatment parallel trends assumption is violated for départements treated between 2012 and 2017, these elections are excluded.

The sample is restricted to only those départements exposed to rising imports, as indicated by a geographic-specific measure of import exposure constructed by interacting the initial sectoral composition of each local economy with nationwide sector-specific imports originating from low-wage countries from 1995 to 2012 (Malgouyres, 2017a). Départements in the top three quintiles by import-exposure are included in the sample.⁸ Limiting the sample to import-exposed départements ensures that a comparison is made between areas hit by rising imports with and without EGF assistance. If instead the sample included all départements, the control group would consist of both non-trade-exposed areas and trade-exposed but untreated areas, which would produce incorrect estimates of the treatment effect. Note that among départements without exposure to imports, none were treated – that is, none received EGF assistance.

Table 2 reports the results using a binary indicator of treatment (*EGF*) that equals one if workers in a given département received EGF support between the first rounds of voting in the two consecutive presidential elections, and zero otherwise. To estimate

Table 2. Estimated effect of EGF on FN vote shares.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
ATT (EGF)	-0.381 (0.501)	-0.433 (0.484)	-0.523 (0.396)	-0.500 (0.388)	-0.438 (0.444)	-0.337 (0.516)	-0.432 (0.428)
Post period	7.885*** (0.179)	8.098*** (0.190)	7.620*** (0.231)	7.670*** (0.182)	6.993*** (0.402)	7.711*** (0.227)	7.638*** (0.529)
Population (nl)		-10.93 (7.065)					-22.36** (10.78)
GDP (nl)			-8.061** (3.226)				15.58** (6.21)
GDP per capita				-0.0004*** (0.0001)			-0.001*** (0.0001)
Employment rate					-0.755*** (0.256)		-0.520** (0.260)
% Foreign born						0.120 (0.119)	0.121 (0.106)
Intercept	11.09*** (0.084)	155.2 (93.18)	199.1** (75.28)	21.16*** (3.01)	41.41*** (10.33)	10.08*** (1.02)	-18.68 (94.32)
Observations	130	130	130	130	130	130	130
Département fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Trade-exposed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Standard errors clustered by départements shown in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

EGF: European Globalisation Adjustment Fund; ATT: average treatment effect on the treated; GDP: gross domestic product; FN: National Front.

the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT), the dichotomous treatment variable (*EGF*) is interacted with the variable *Post period*, which equals 0 in 2007 and 1 in 2012.

In addition to the dichotomous treatment indicator, I also employ two ‘intensity of treatment’ indicators. The first equals the total amount of EGF assistance provided to displaced workers in a treated département as a percentage of the département’s GDP. To construct this measure, I calculate the total amount of EGF assistance going to a treated département between the 2007 and 2012 elections. Values range from €2.29 m to €23 m. I then divide total EGF assistance by the département’s GDP in 2012, which provides an indication of how significant the EGF assistance is relative to a département’s economy. This measure ranges from 0.005% to 0.06% of GDP.

The second ‘intensity of treatment’ indicator equals the per capita amount of EGF assistance going to a treated département. To calculate this variable, I take the total value of EGF assistance going to a département and divide it by the département’s population. This variable ranges from €1.20 to €16.17 per person.

To estimate the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT), both of the intensity of treatment indicators, as well as the dichotomous treatment indicator, are multiplied by *Post period*. The resulting interaction terms are used to estimate the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT). More formally, let $Y1_{it}$ and $Y0_{it}$ indicate the pair of potential vote shares that FN attains in département i at time t when exposed to the treatment or the control condition between the two elections. The quantity of interest is the effect of EGF assistance, which is defined as the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) given by $\alpha = E[Y1_{i,t} - Y0_{i,t} | D_i = 1]$. This measures the average difference between the post-treatment vote shares that trade-exposed départements attain with and without the treatment.

Since it is not possible to observe $E[Y0_{i,t} | D_i = 1]$, I estimate the potential outcome based on the usual difference-in-differences assumption of parallel trends. To assess the empirical validity of the parallel trends assumption, I examine whether the FN’s vote share in treated départements followed a similar trend to that in control départements in the years prior to the treatment. As illustrated in the Online appendix, the pre-treatment trends are parallel. I therefore assume $E[Y0_{i,t} - Y0_{i,(t-1)} | D_i = 1] = E[Y0_{i,t} - Y0_{i,(t-1)} | D_i = 0]$, where $t-1$ equals the year of the most recent previous election. Based on this assumption, the ATT is identified from observed outcomes as $\alpha = (E[Y_{i,t} | D_i = 1] - E[Y_{i,t-1} | D_i = 1]) - (E[Y_{i,t} | D_i = 0] - E[Y_{i,t-1} | D_i = 0])$.

I estimate α using a standard fixed effects regression given by: $Y_{it} = \nu_i + \delta_t + \alpha D_{it} + X_{it}\beta + \epsilon_{it}$ where Y_{it} is the FN’s vote share in département i at time t . δ_t is a period dummy to control for common trends (*Post period*), ν_i is a département-level fixed effect to control for any time-invariant unobserved factors (which absorbs the time-invariant treatment indicator), α is the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT), D_{it} indicates treated departments in the post-treatment period, and ϵ is an idiosyncratic error term. X_{it} is a vector of time-varying covariates including an intercept. The covariate data come from the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE).

In order for a difference-in-differences estimator to be valid, several assumptions must hold. I investigate and confirm the validity of each. First, I show the treatment is unrelated to the outcome at baseline. The FN’s vote share does not differ significantly between the

treated and control groups in the pre-treatment period, as illustrated in Table 1. In the Online appendix, I report the average marginal effects of FN's pre-treatment vote shares on the probability that a département receives EGF support. The marginal effects are estimated using a logit model where the dependent variable is the dichotomous treatment indicator *EGF*. The FN's vote share in a département in the pre-treatment period does not robustly predict treatment.

Second, I probe the plausibility of the parallel trends assumption. I plot the FN's average vote shares in the first round of presidential elections over time in treated and untreated départements. These trends are displayed in the Online appendix and show that prior to treatment, trends in the FN's vote shares were parallel in treated and control groups. I also estimate the effect of the 2007–2012 treatment indicator on the 2002–2007 changes in FN vote shares. The 2007–2012 treatment indicator has no robust effect on the 2002–2007 changes in FN vote shares, as reported in the Online appendix. The null result confirms that the trends in FN vote shares in the treated and control groups were parallel in the pre-treatment period.

Results

Table 2 reports the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT), estimated using the dichotomous treatment indicator. All of the ATTs are negatively signed, indicating that the protectionist FN party did less well with voters in départements that received EGF assistance than in trade-exposed départements that did not. The magnitude of the difference is small and estimated with uncertainty. The ATTs range in size from -0.34 to -0.52 indicating that the FN's vote share was, on average, less than half a percentage point lower than it would have been in the absence of EGF assistance.

The EGF's modest impact may reflect, in part, the size of the programme. During the period under investigation, France received just €7.8m a year from the EGF on average. Because EGF assistance is relatively modest, it may be reasonable to expect its' effects to be small. Furthermore, EGF assistance is provided in addition to other national support programmes. As a result, the EGF treatment effect equals the marginal impact of additional compensation on protectionist voting.

The control variables generally perform as expected. Each control is entered individually to minimize concerns about multicollinearity. All of the controls are included together in model 7 (Table 2). Areas with declining employment rates exhibit increased levels of support for FN. Additionally, areas experiencing rising immigration tend to see increases in FN vote shares. However, the immigration effect is not statistically significant at conventional levels. In short, the FN tends to do better in parts of the country with declining local employment and growing immigrant populations, as previous studies document (e.g. De Bromhead et al., 2013). The novel finding here is that additional government assistance for workers displaced by globalization has a modest reductive effect on voters' support for the protectionist party, controlling for local economic conditions.

Table 3 reports the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) as estimated using the two ‘intensity of treatment’ measures. The first row reports the ATTs estimated using the total amount of EGF assistance going to a département between 2007 and 2012 as a percentage of the département’s GDP. The second row reports the ATTs estimated using EGF assistance per capita. The control variables included in each model are identical to the corresponding models reported in Table 2. Each control is introduced individually and model 7 includes all controls. The control variables are not reported in Table 3 due to space constraints but can be found in the Online appendix. The sample, identical to the one used in Table 2, includes only trade-exposed départements.

All of the ATTs in Table 3 are negatively signed. Two of the ATTs estimated using EGF as a percentage of département’s GDP are statistically significant at the 10% level in a two-tailed test. The average value of these two ATTs equals 17.8, which indicates that the maximum observed value of EGF assistance would reduce FN vote shares by 1.03 percentage points.

Five of the ATTs estimated using EGF per capita are statistically significant in two-tailed tests: one at the 10% level; two at the 5% level; and two at the 1% level. The average of these five statistically significant coefficients equals -0.091 . A coefficient of this magnitude suggests that the maximum observed value of EGF assistance would reduce the FN’s vote share by nearly 1.5 percentage points, on average.

Robustness checks

The results reported above are estimated using a sample of départements exposed to rising imports. As a robustness check, I limit the sample to départements exposed to rising imports that also experience a reduction in the local employment rate between 2007 and 2012. As an additional test, I restrict the sample to those départements exposed to rising imports that also exhibited net job losses between 2007 and 2012. The key results remain unchanged across these different samples: the ATTs are negatively signed, small in magnitude, and estimated with uncertainty, as reported in the Online appendix. Among these models, the largest ATT equals -0.56 , which occurs in the sample of trade-exposed départements with net job losses.

Table 3. Estimated effect of Intensity of Treatment on FN vote shares.

ATT	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
EGF (% GDP)	-13.15 (16.348)	-15.155 (16.027)	-19.125* (9.950)	-16.467* (9.788)	-16.974 (11.335)	-12.071 (17.437)	-13.885 (12.926)
EGF (per capita)	-0.091 (0.057)	-0.098* (0.055)	-0.096*** (0.031)	-0.086*** (0.031)	-0.093** (0.036)	-0.089 (0.061)	-0.084** (0.041)

Notes: Standard errors clustered by départements shown in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. EGF: European Globalisation Adjustment Fund; ATT: average treatment effect on the treated; GDP: gross domestic product; FN: National Front.

As a further robustness check, I move from the *département* level to the *commune* level. *Communes* are the smallest administrative unit in France. On average, each *département* contains 379 *communes*. I construct a binary treatment variable that indicates whether workers in a given *commune* received EGF support between the first rounds of the 2007 and 2012 presidential elections. As before, I estimate a difference-in-differences model. The outcome of interest is now the *commune*-level change in FN vote shares. The *commune* results are reported in Table 4.

Communes in trade-exposed *départements* vary in size with populations ranging from 6 to 232,741. Most of the treated *communes* fall in the upper end of this range. In order to address this heterogeneity, I generate two samples. The first includes only those *communes* in trade-exposed *départements* that fall within the top 10% by population. This sample is used in model 1 in Table 4. The second includes *communes* in trade-exposed *départements* that fall within the top 5% by population and is used in model 2 (Table 4). Data on additional control variables are not available at this fine-grained level of geographic analysis and therefore the *commune*-level results must be treated with caution.

The estimated treatment effect at the *commune* level is strikingly similar to that at the *département* level. The *commune* ATTs are negatively signed and small in magnitude. Even with the larger sample made possible by using *communes* as the unit of analysis, the treatment effect is estimated with uncertainty in model 1 (Table 4). However, in model 2 (Table 4), the ATT is statistically significant at the 5% level in a two-tailed test. The statistically significant ATT equals -1.416 , indicating that among *communes* in trade-exposed *départements* with relatively similar sized populations, the FN's vote share was 1.416 percentage points *lower* in those that received EGF assistance than in those that did not. This treatment effect lies within the range of ATTs estimated at the *département* level.

These results demonstrate that the modest EGF effect is unlikely to be an artefact of the sample size or the unit of analysis. Instead, the treatment effect appears to be consistently small and likely reduces the FN's vote share by no more than 1.5 percentage points.

Table 4. Estimated treatment effect on FN vote share by *commune*.

	(1)	(2)
ATT (EGF)	-1.145 (0.705)	-1.416** (0.451)
Post period	5.605*** (0.443)	5.076*** (0.547)
Intercept	9.949*** (0.222)	9.386*** (0.275)
Observations	1,066	579
Trade exposed	Yes	Yes
Commune fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Communes included	Top 10% by pop	Top 5% by pop

Notes: Standard errors clustered by *département*. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

EGF: European Globalisation Adjustment Fund; ATT: average treatment effect on the treated; FN: National Front.

Individual level survey data

Using data from the French Electoral Study, I estimate the impact of the EGF on individuals' self-reported vote choice in the first round of the 2012 presidential election. I estimate a logit model where the dependent variable equals 1 if the respondent reported voting for the FN's candidate and 0 otherwise. The dichotomous variable *EGF* indicates whether or not an individual's département received EGF support (i.e. was treated) prior to the 2012 election.

The sample is restricted to individuals living in import-exposed départements. This restriction is important because individuals living in départements exposed to rising imports have twice the odds of voting for FN as compared to individuals living in départements not exposed to rising imports, as reported in the Online appendix. This observation is consistent with previous studies that show a positive correlation between local import shocks and votes for the FN (Malgouyres, 2017b), and protectionist parties more generally (Colantone and Stanig, 2018a; Milner, 2021).

In all of the models of individual-level vote choice, the coefficients on dichotomous variable *EGF* are statistically indistinguishable from zero (see the Online appendix). Individuals living in trade-exposed *treated* départements are no less likely to vote for the FN than individuals living in untreated trade-exposed départements. In other words, EGF support has no robust effect on the probability that an individual living in a trade-exposed département votes FN, controlling for age, education, employment status and sex.

While it is not possible to identify the individuals who received EGF support, I investigate two potential sources of heterogeneous treatment effects. First, I examine the possibility that the treatment effect is conditional on voters' attitudes towards the EU.⁹ Because EGF assistance is co-financed by the EU and national governments, an individual's attitude towards the EU may influence their reaction to EGF assistance. To test this possibility, I employ a question from the French Electoral Study that asks respondents about their views on France's membership in the EU. Using these data, I generate a dichotomous variable (*EU Good*) that equals 1 if respondents say that being part of the EU is a good thing for France and 0 otherwise.

Individuals who believe that EU membership is good for France are less likely to vote for the FN, all else equal (see the Online appendix). An individual's opinion about the EU does not, however, modify the treatment effect. Individuals who think that being part of the EU is a good thing for France react no differently to EGF assistance than individuals who think that being part of the EU is not a good thing.

Second, I examine the possibility that the treatment effect is conditional on income. In a survey experiment conducted in the United States, Ehrlich and Hearn (2014) find that providing individuals with information about trade-related compensation leads to higher support for free trade among individuals with low incomes but not high incomes. The finding suggests that the effect of EGF assistance may vary across people with different income levels. To examine this possibility, I generate a dichotomous variable (*Lower Income*) that is coded 1 for respondents who report that the net total revenue of their household is less than €2500 per month (the approximate sample median) and 0

otherwise. *Lower Income* is not a robust predictor of voting for the FN nor does it meaningfully modify the treatment effect. The estimate coefficients on both *Lower Income* and the interaction term are statistically insignificant at conventional levels.

Generalizability

All of the results reported above come from France. However, these results are unlikely to be unique to the French case. Because of the EU's common external tariff, France is as open to trade as any other member state and the amount of redistribution in France is similar in magnitude to that in other rich countries, including the United States (Bozio et al., 2020).

To probe the generalizability of the French results, I investigate the impact of EGF assistance in Denmark. Between the 2007 and 2011 national elections, Denmark received more money from the EGF than any other EU member state, making it a potentially decisive case. As in France, globalization-displaced workers in some parts of Denmark received EGF assistance, while those in others did not.

Using a difference-in-differences estimation strategy, I consider $i = (1, \dots, 98)$ Danish municipalities for election years $t = (2007, 2011)$. Danish municipalities are relatively small; half have fewer than 35,000 eligible voters. Treated municipalities are those in which displaced workers receive EGF assistance between the 2007 and 2011 general elections.

For each municipality, I calculate the share of the vote won by the *Dansk Folkeparti* (Danish People's Party, DPP). Like France's FN party, the DPP expresses deep skepticism about globalization. The DPP opposes Denmark's membership in the EU, wants to maintain the Danish krone as the country's legal currency and opposes further international economic integration. Prior to treatment, the treated and control municipalities have similar shares of DPP votes, as reported in the Online appendix.

I first present the main results without time varying covariates (except a constant) and then add each control variable individually before including them all together in the final model (see the Online appendix). All control variables are measured at the municipality level and include population, unemployment rates and average family incomes. Not all of the control variables used in the French model are available at the municipal level in Denmark. Prior to treatment, the treated and control municipalities have statistically indistinguishable rates of unemployment, income, population and DPP vote shares.

The Danish results are strikingly similar to those in France. All of the ATTs are negatively signed and estimated with uncertainty. The Danish ATTs are also similar in magnitude to the French ATTs; they range from -0.382 to -0.421 . The Danish results confirm that the effect of EGF assistance on protectionist party's vote shares is likely to be small.¹⁰

The similarity between the Danish and French results is notable, particularly given the countries' different political institutions. Denmark is a parliamentary system with proportional representation, while France is a semi-presidential system with two-round plurality voting (Rickard, 2018). The Danish results come from national

parliamentary elections, while the French results come from presidential elections. Yet despite these differences, the EGF treatment has similar effects on protectionist voting in the two countries.

Discussion

In response to the growing backlash against globalization, governments in EU member states agreed to provide supplementary aid to workers made unemployed by international economic integration. Does such assistance reduce voters' support for protectionist political parties, as suggested by embedded liberalism? This study finds that extra assistance for globalization-displaced workers likely engenders a reduction in protectionist parties' vote share of no more than 0.5 percentage points. The impact could be as little as zero and is almost surely no larger than 1.5 percentage points.

The finding, while consistent with the expectations of embedded liberalism, implies that the long-theorized connection between compensation and support for globalization may be conditional rather than categorical. Three mediating factors, or scope conditions, are suggested by this study: (1) the nature of compensation; (2) the impact of trade shocks; and (3) the direction of change.

First, the nature of compensation may shape how voters respond to trade shocks. The EGF provides targeted compensation exclusively to workers made unemployed by globalization. In contrast, general programmes assist the unemployed regardless of the reason for their job loss. Some studies find that general programmes do not keep voters from turning to protectionist political parties following global economic shocks (e.g. Gingrich, 2019; Milner, 2021). Yet other studies find that countries with more generous welfare states exhibit less protectionist voting (e.g. Swank and Betz, 2003).

While evidence of the impact of general compensation programmes is mixed, this study shows that targeted compensation may marginally reduce voter support for protectionist parties. Analogous evidence emerges from investigations of the United States' similarly targeted Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programme (Ritchie and You, 2021). Going forward, future research may usefully investigate the effect of targeted compensation programs *relative* to general assistance programmes.

The small effect of targeted compensation suggests a second possible mediating factor, namely the impact of trade shocks. Trade shocks have region-wide impacts than go beyond job losses. In regions exposed to rising imports, wages decline and property values fall (e.g. Broz et al., 2021; Autor et al., 2013). Individuals that remain employed but nevertheless experience wage cuts or decreased property values fail to qualify for assistance from targeted programmes like the EGF. This observation may explain, at least in part, the EGF's relatively small impact on protectionist voting in trade-exposed areas (Rickard, 2022a).

Third, increases in compensation may affect voters differently than reductions. This possibility has remained largely unexplored to date because most studies focus on static spending levels (e.g. Hays, 2009; Swank and Betz, 2003) or cuts to government spending (e.g. Fetzner, 2019). In contrast, I examine the electoral consequences of *increased* compensation. I find that additional compensation has a modest reductive

effect on protectionist voting. This finding, taken together with studies of austerity (e.g. Foster and Frieden, 2019; Gabriel et al., 2022), suggests that voters' support for globalization may respond more strongly to cuts to compensation than to increases, as anticipated by the theory of loss aversion (Kahneman and Tversky, 1984).


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Supplemental material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. In 2021, the EGF's eligibility criteria were widened to allow people who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 crisis, digitisation, automation or the transition to a low-carbon economy to be eligible for support.
2. I refer to the party as FN throughout this article because it was the name by which the party was known during the period under investigation.
3. See Kayser (2007) and Margalit (2011) on these methodological challenges.
4. Data are available at: <https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/> (accessed on 10 June 2021).
5. France championed the creation of the EGF following two events. First, in 2005 Hewlett-Packard announced the elimination of more than 1000 French jobs. Chirac appealed to the European Commission for assistance, but the Commission refused, saying that they had no means by which to respond. Second, on 29 May 2005, France voted against the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. One of the arguments for a no vote was that the Constitution would enforce a neo-liberal economic model. The EGF was seen as a way to respond to this concern.
6. EGF documents are available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=326> (accessed on 15 March 2020).
7. During the period under investigation, firms filled out an EGF application on behalf of their former employees. The French application form is freely and publicly available online and, at the time, was just eight pages long. Firms submit their applications electronically to the French Minister of Labour, Full Employment and Integration. Given the number of EGF recipients and the number of trade-displaced workers during this period, it appears that some firms that could have applied for EGF assistance did not. It is unclear why they did not. If it becomes possible to obtain data on the universe of firms that could have applied for EGF assistance, future research may usefully investigate this question. After receiving a firm's application, French officials then submit it to the

European Commission. Once the European Commission is satisfied that the EGF criteria are met, the application is submitted to the European Parliament and the Council of the EU for budgetary approval.

8. Alternative cut points have no meaningful impact on the ATT; in all cases, it remains small in magnitude. When all départements are included in the sample, the estimated ATTs are smaller than in the import-exposed sample (see the Online appendix).
9. See Foster and Frieden (2021) on predictors of public support for and satisfaction with the EU.
10. While the Danish evidence suggest that the French findings may generalize to other EU member states, future research is needed to investigate the extent to which these results hold in other contexts.

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