



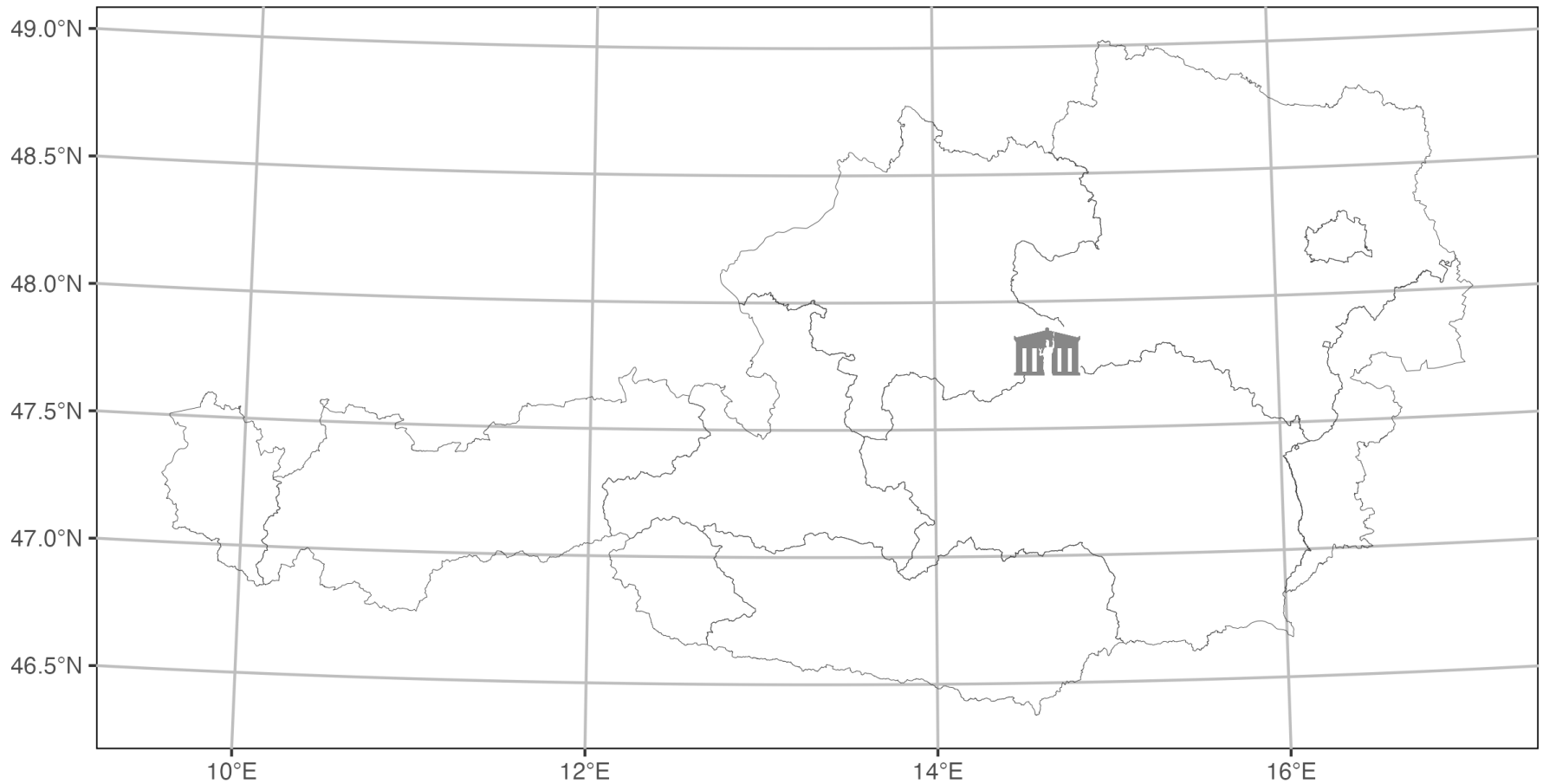
# Where do we go? Explaining capital re-location decisions

## David M. Willumsen

The University of Innsbruck was founded in 1669 and is one of Austria's oldest universities. Today, with over 28.000 students and 4.500 staff, it is western Austria's largest institution of higher education and research. **For further information visit: [www.uibk.ac.at](http://www.uibk.ac.at).**

June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## Population-weighted centroid of Austria



# Motivation & theoretical framework

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- Central location as normatively desirable
  - Equal access to power
- Self-interest of voters & representatives: Proximity to seat of power
- Capitals can be moved relatively easily

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  - Switzerland (1848) – floor votes

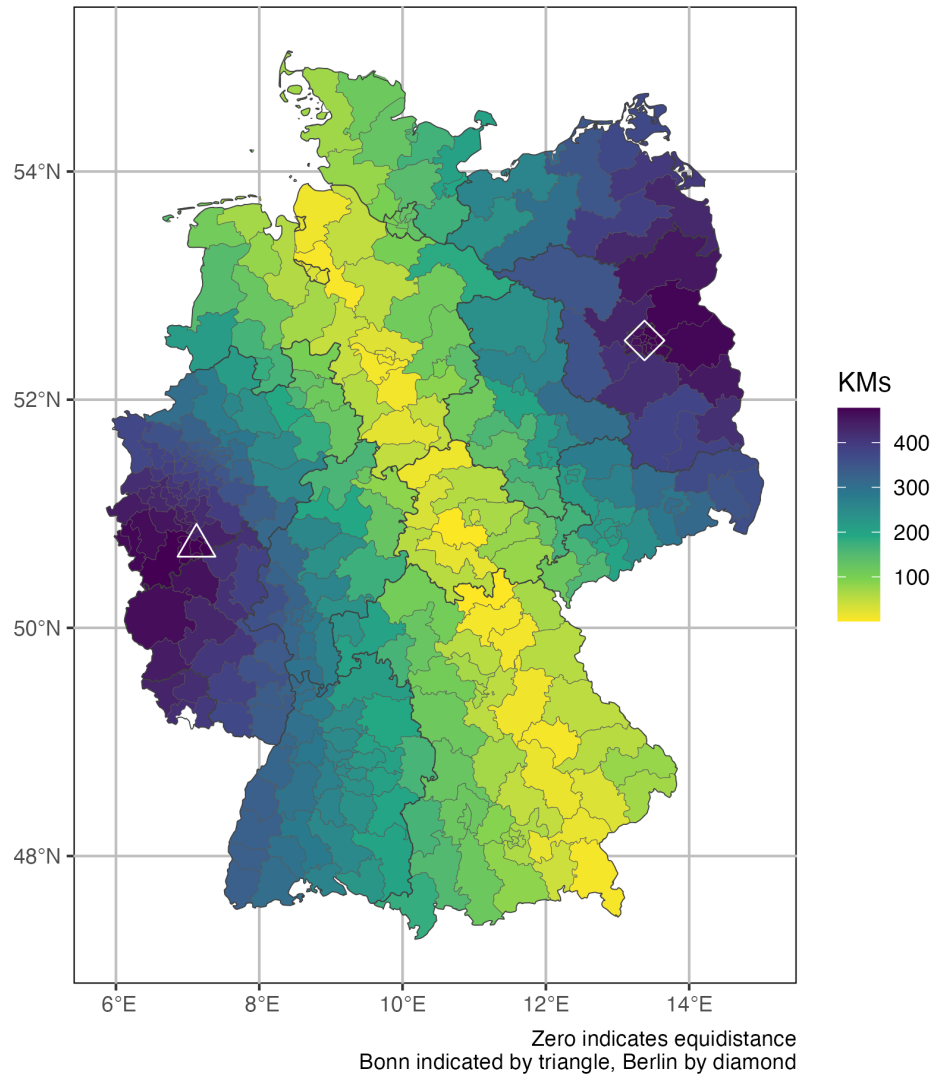
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  - Lower Austria (1986) – public opinion poll (Volksbefragung) – 61% of citizens responded

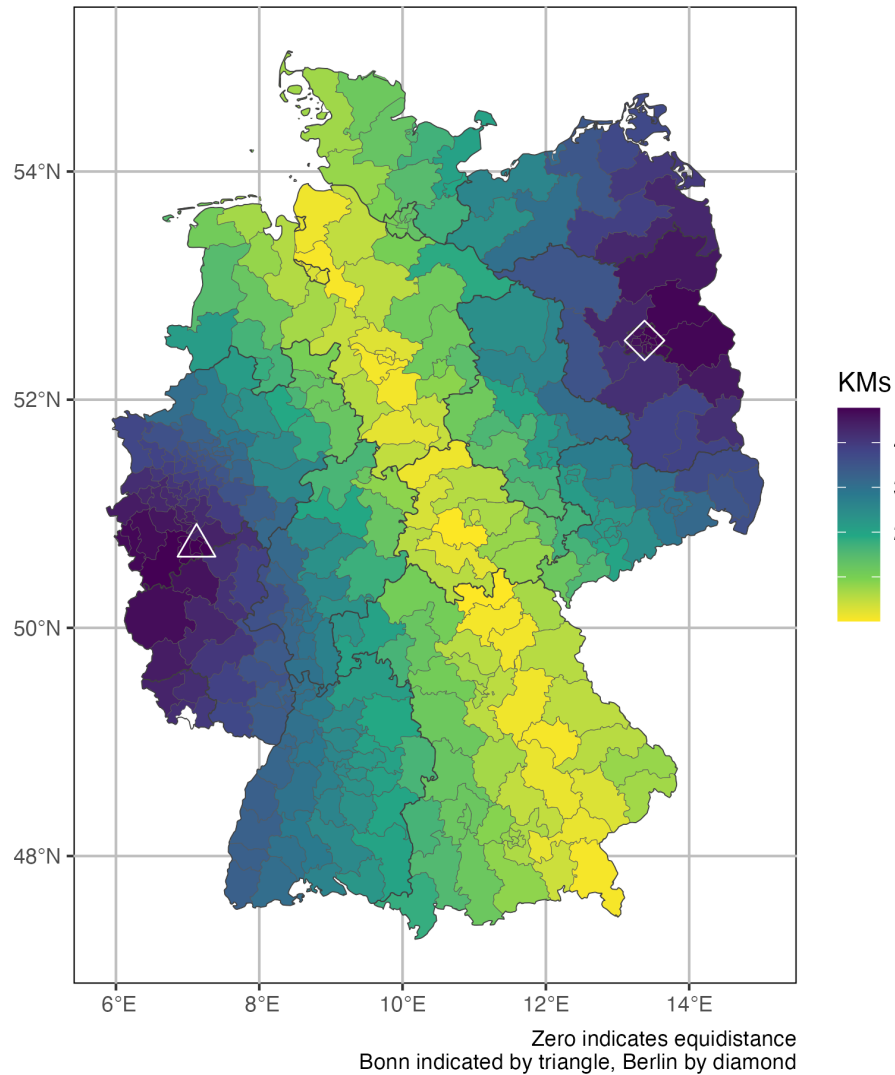
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- Can observe residence/constituency in all cases
  - Shapefiles for constituencies, Bezirke, cantons, municipalities

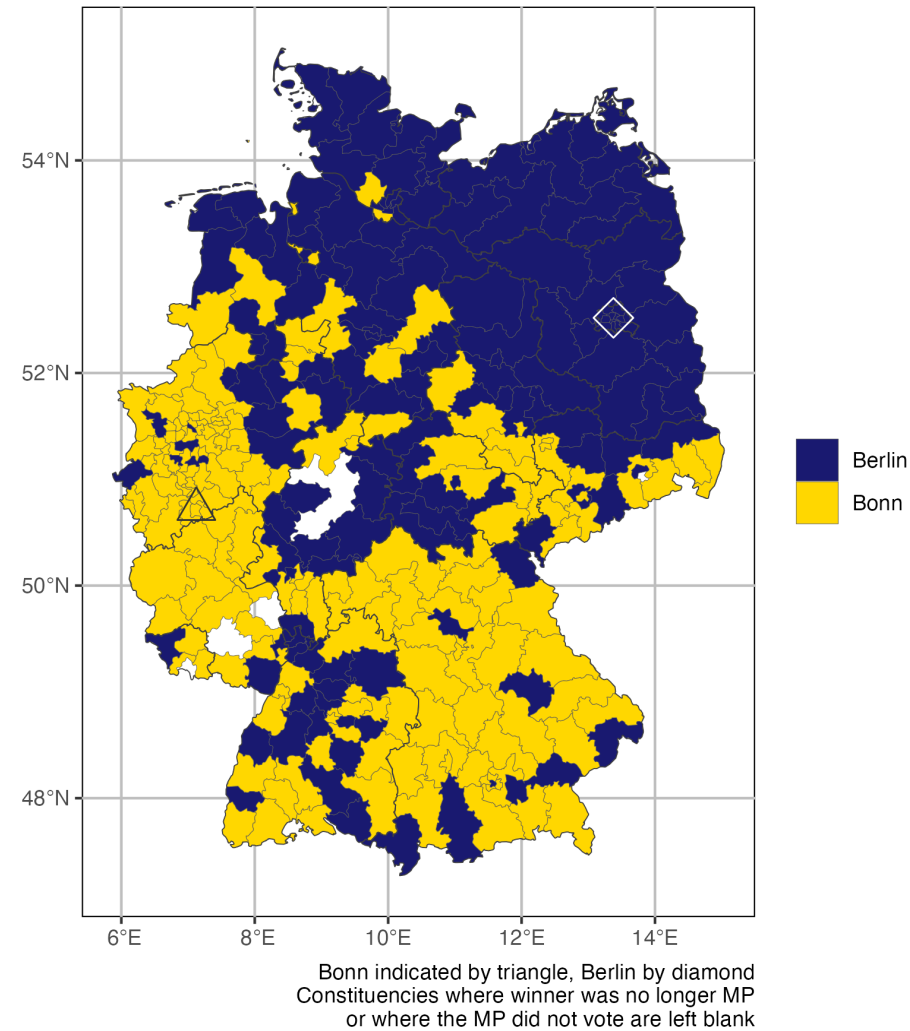
## Difference in Distance from Constituency to Berlin/Bonn



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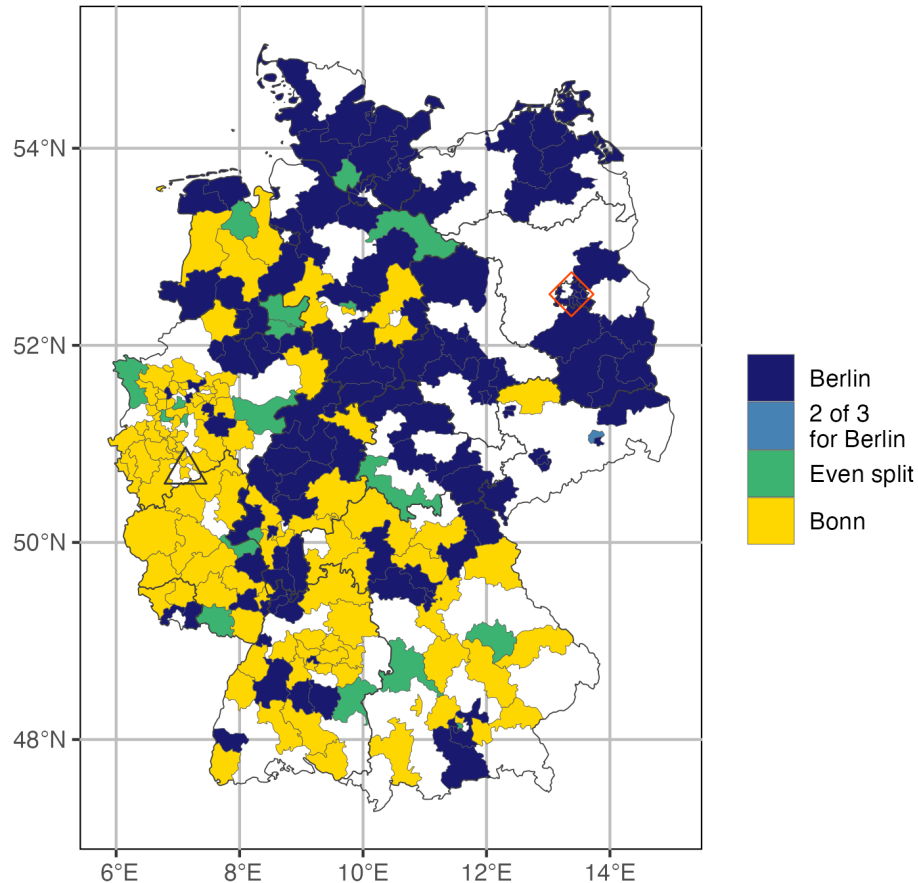


### SMD MPs' voting behaviour Vote on location of German capital



## Dual-candidate list MPs' voting behaviour

Vote on location of German capital

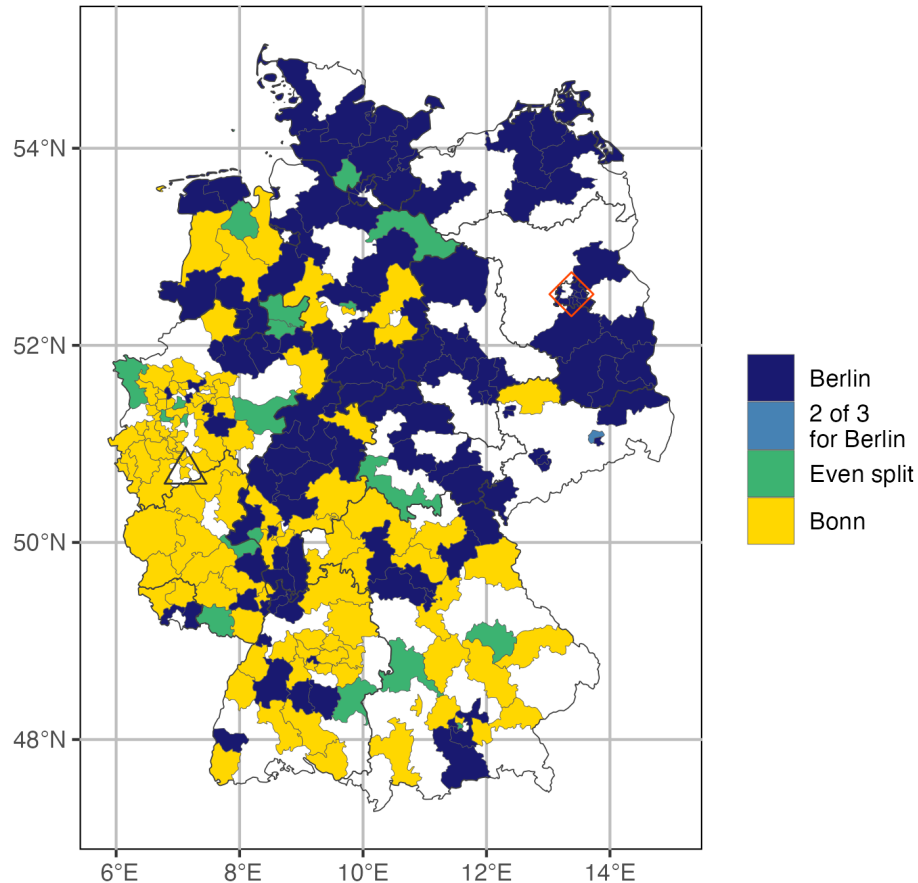


Bonn indicated by triangle, Berlin by diamond  
Constituencies where the MP either abstained or  
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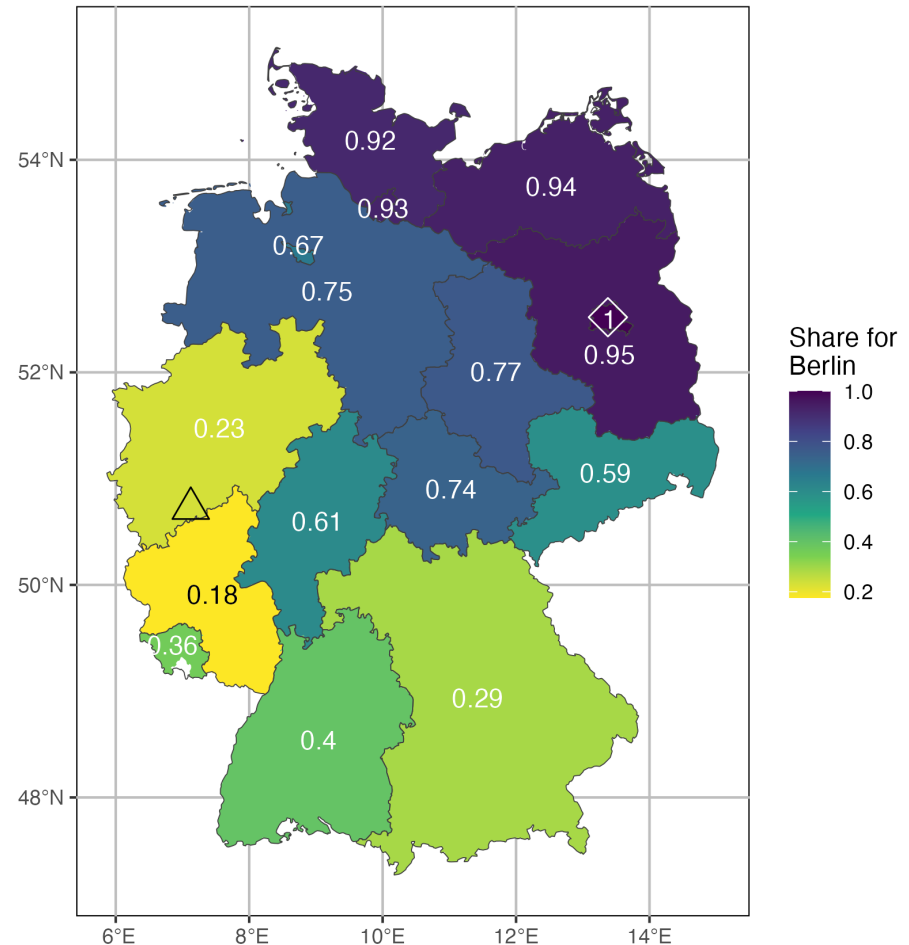
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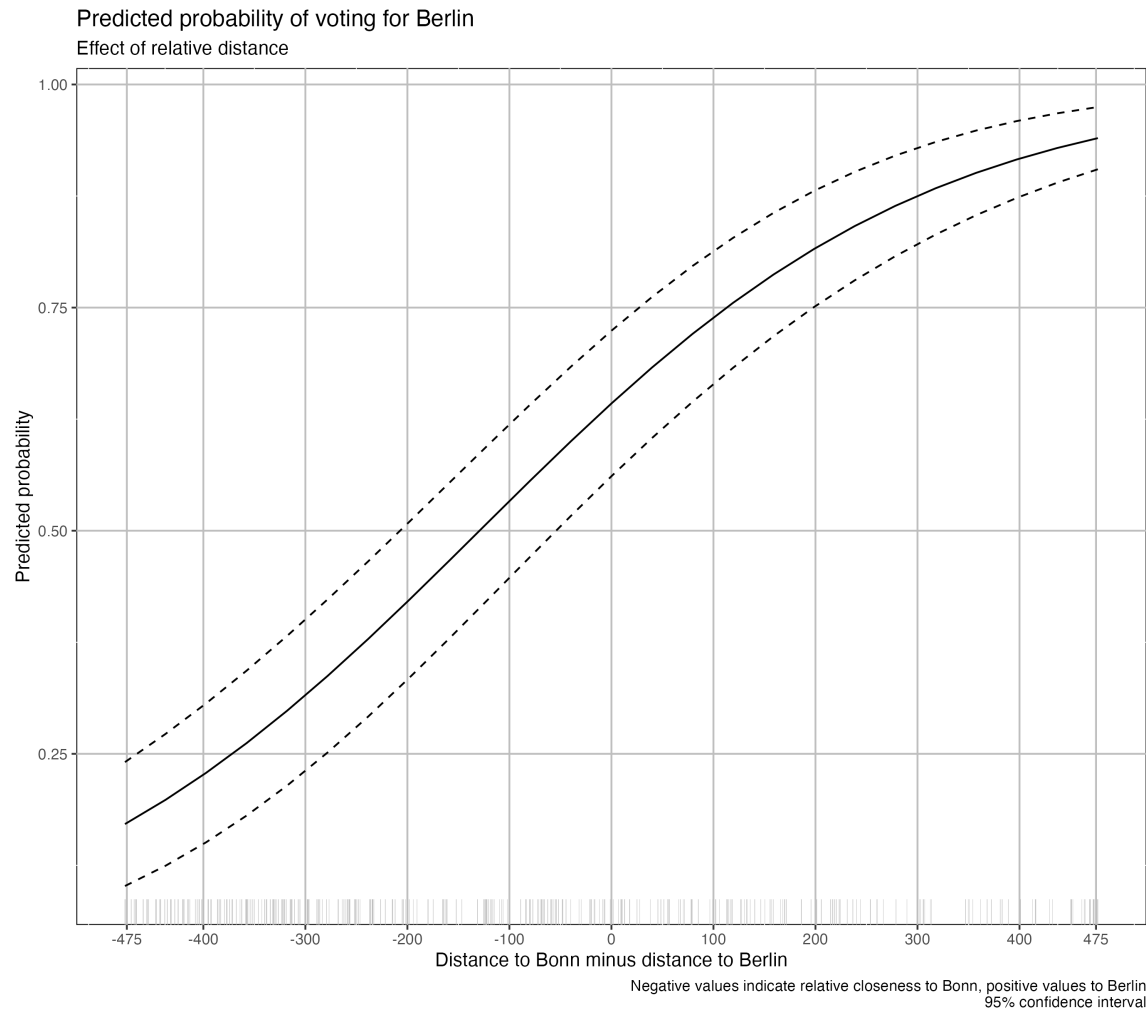
## Land delegation voting behaviour

Vote on location of German capital



Bonn indicated by triangle, Berlin by diamond

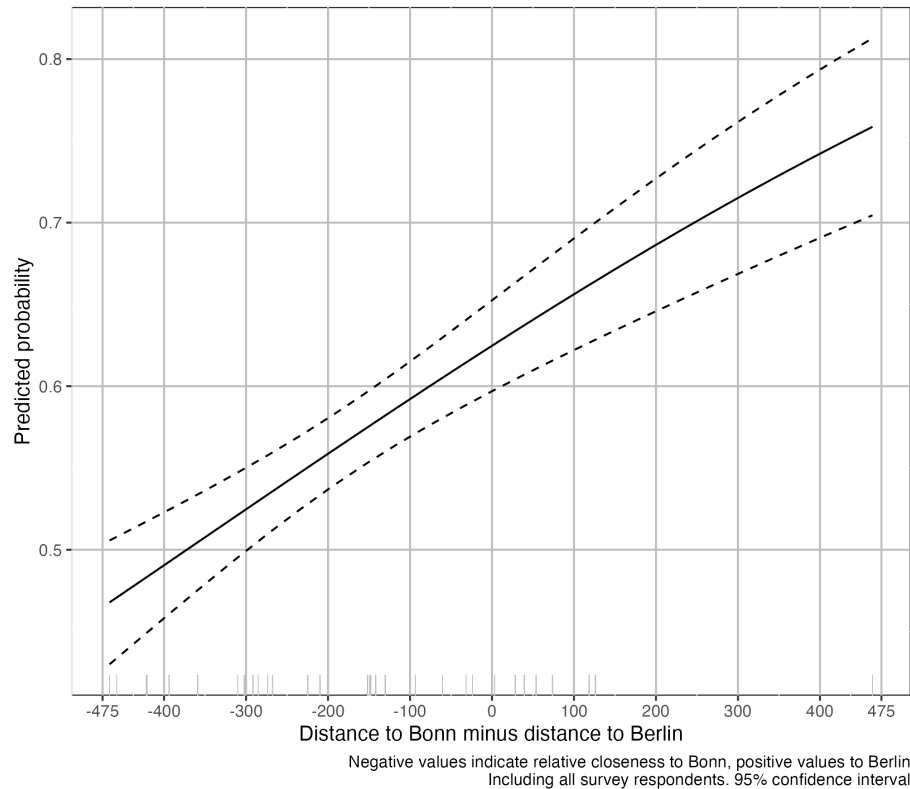
# Bonn vs. Berlin (legislators)



# Bonn vs. Berlin (voters)

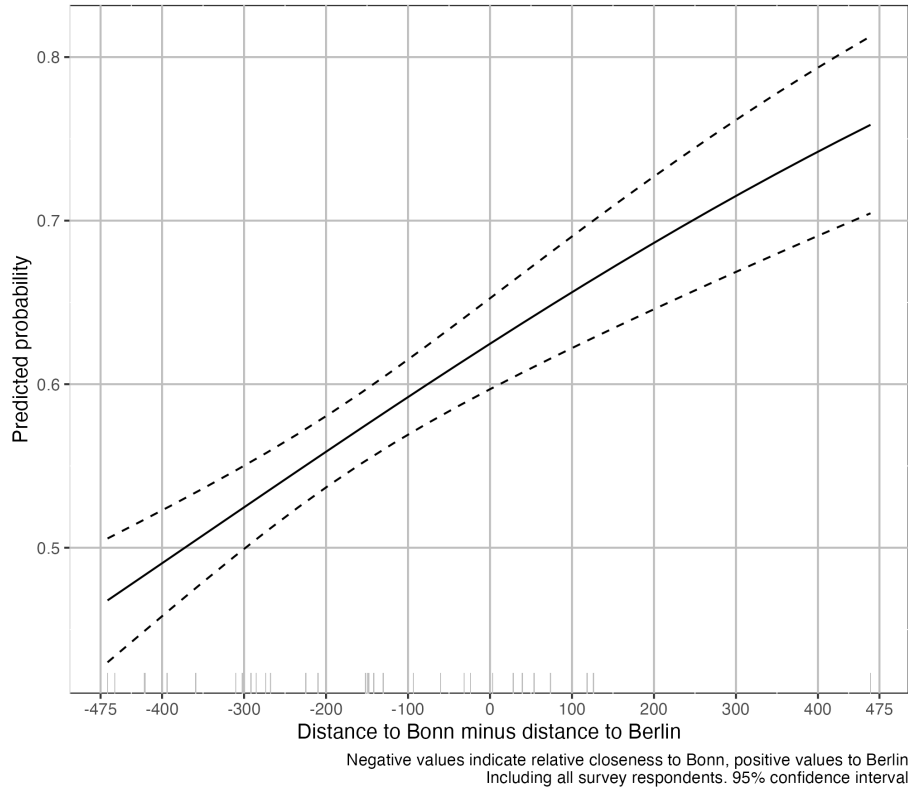
Predicted probability of supporting Berlin

Effect of relative distance

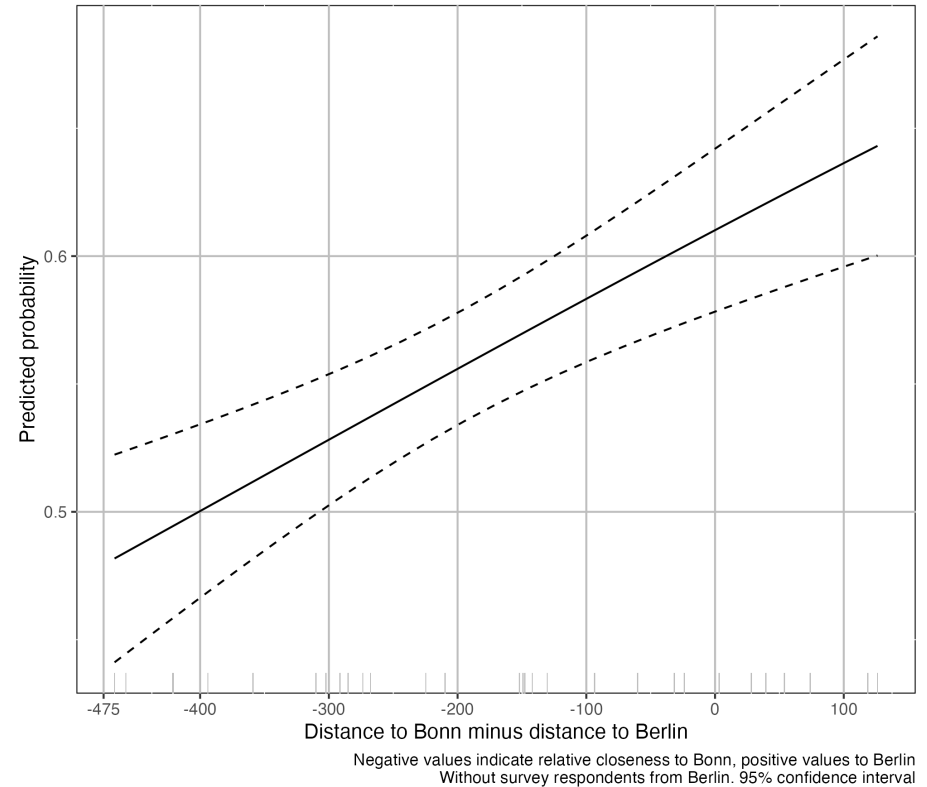


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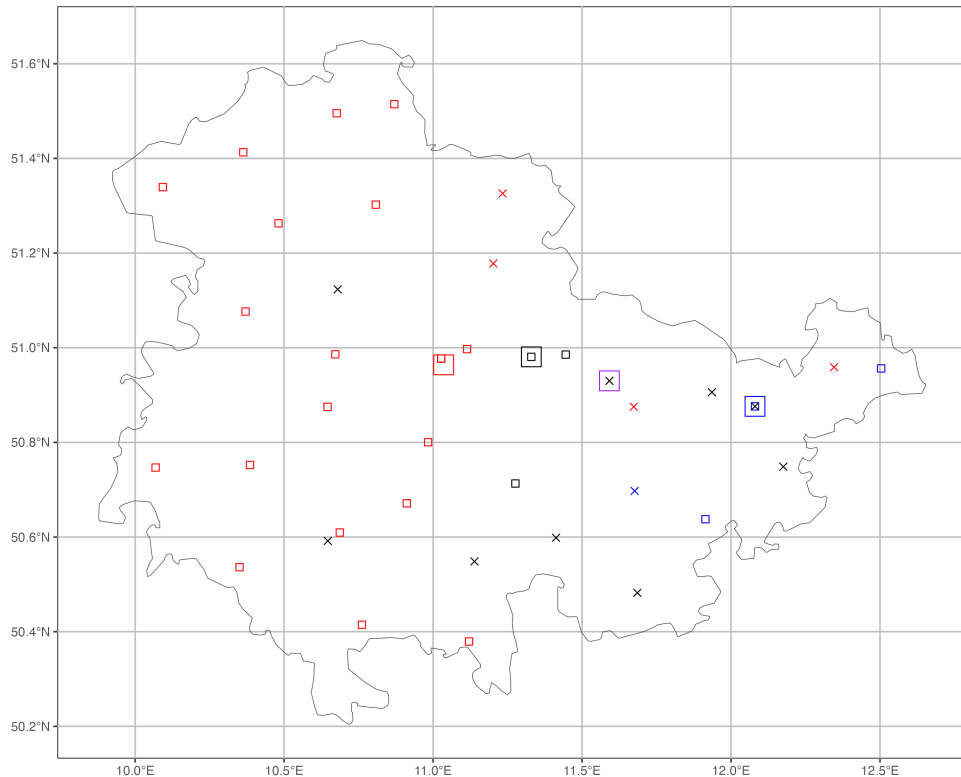


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# Voting on the Landtag of Thuringia (1991)

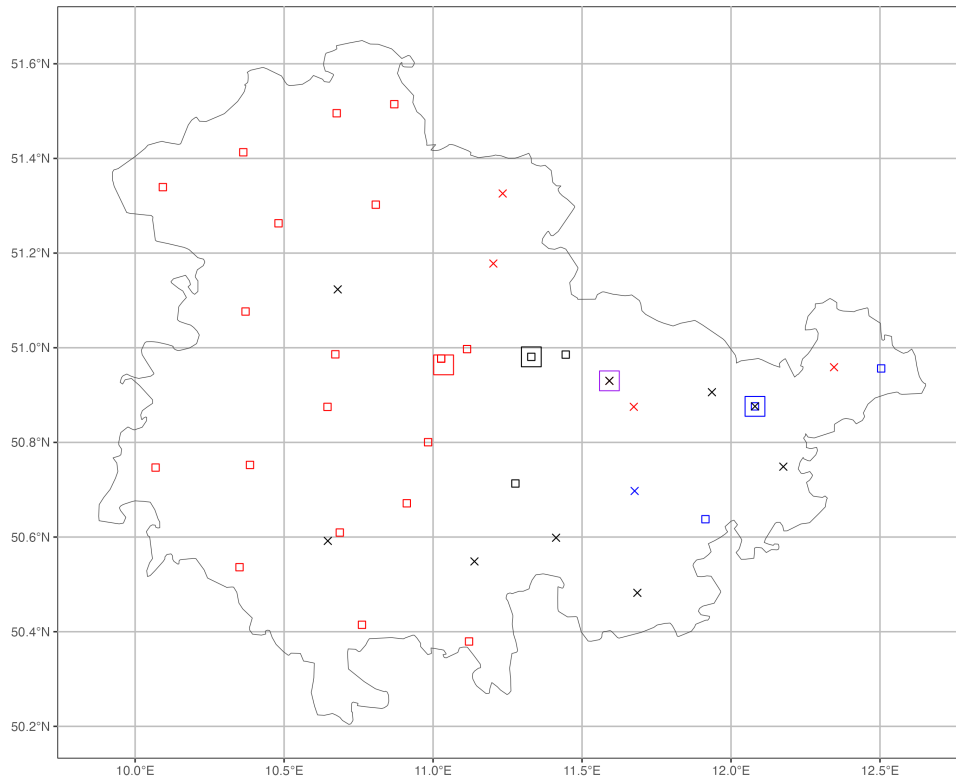
Voting for the location of the Landtag of Thuringia



Large square: Candidate city. West to East: Erfurt: Red; Weimar: Black; Jena: Purple; Gera: Blue.  
Small square: Voted for closest city. Small cross: Voted for other city.  
Erfurt I, III, and IV all voted for Erfurt. Gera-Nord voted for Gera, Gera-Süd for Weimar.

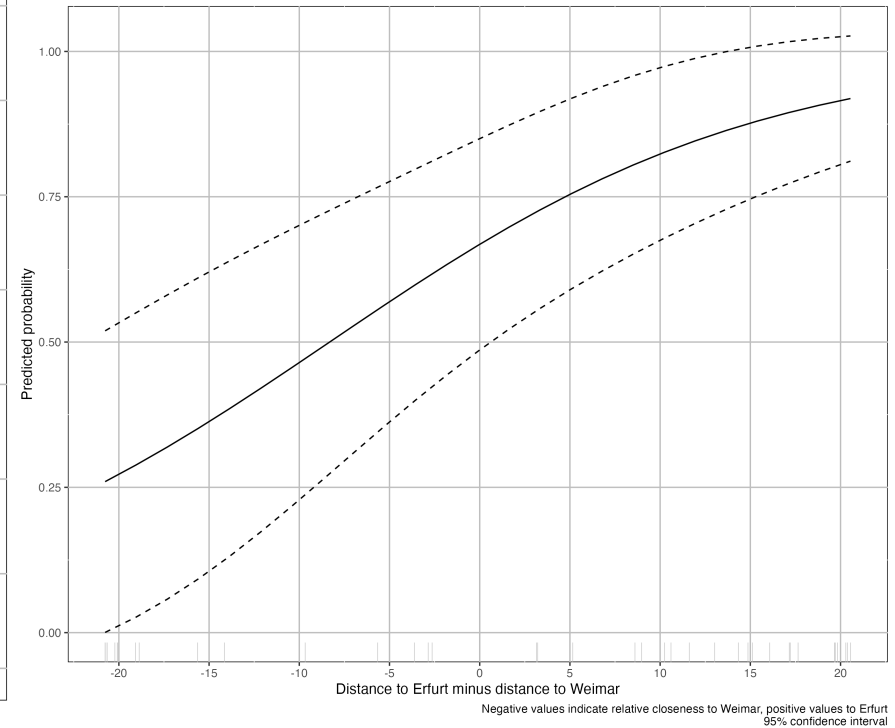
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Erfurt I, III, and IV all voted for Erfurt. Gera-Nord voted for Gera, Gera-Süd for Weimar.

Predicted probability of supporting Erfurt  
Effect of relative distance

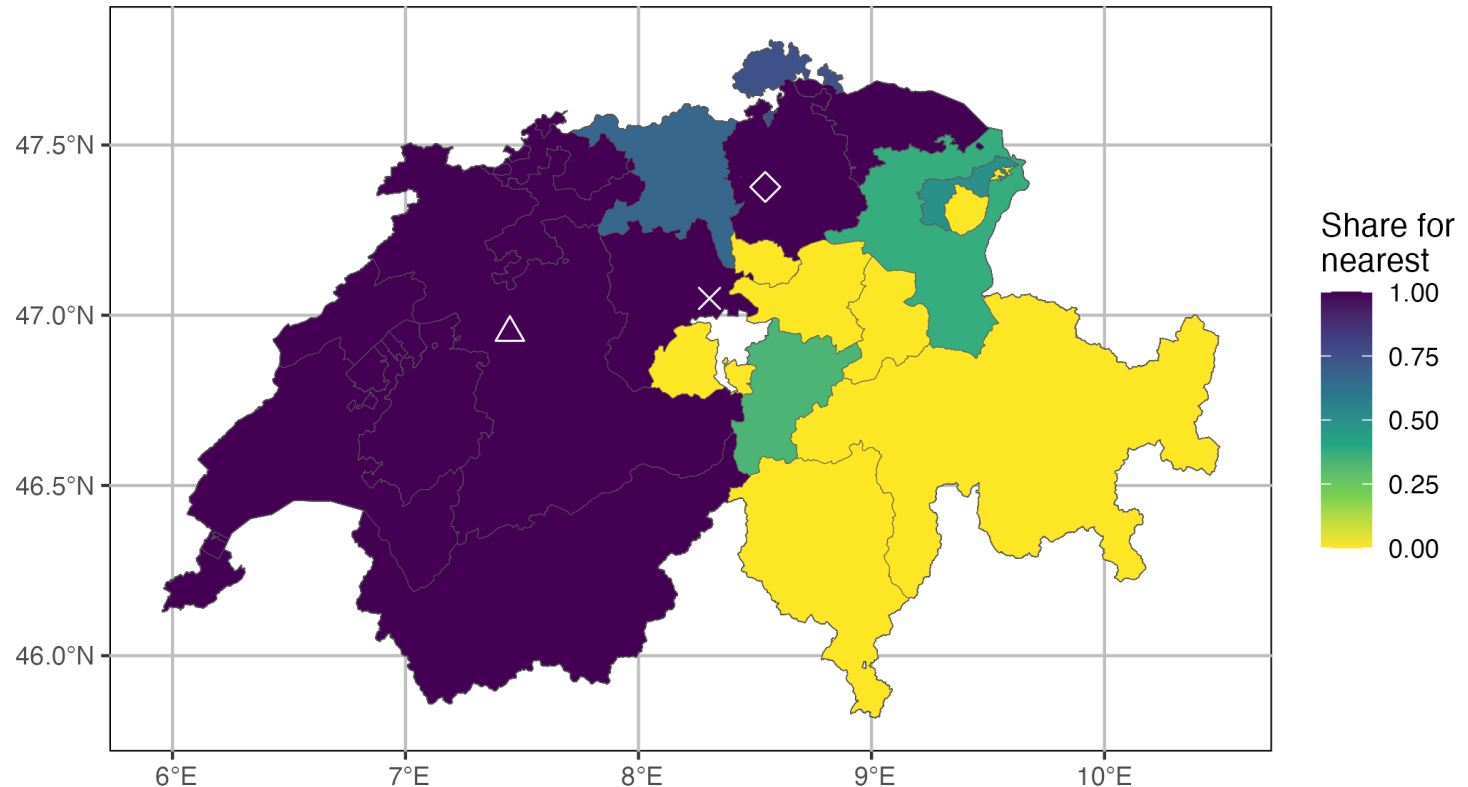


Negative values indicate relative closeness to Weimar, positive values to Erfurt  
95% confidence interval

# Voting on the capital of Switzerland (1848)

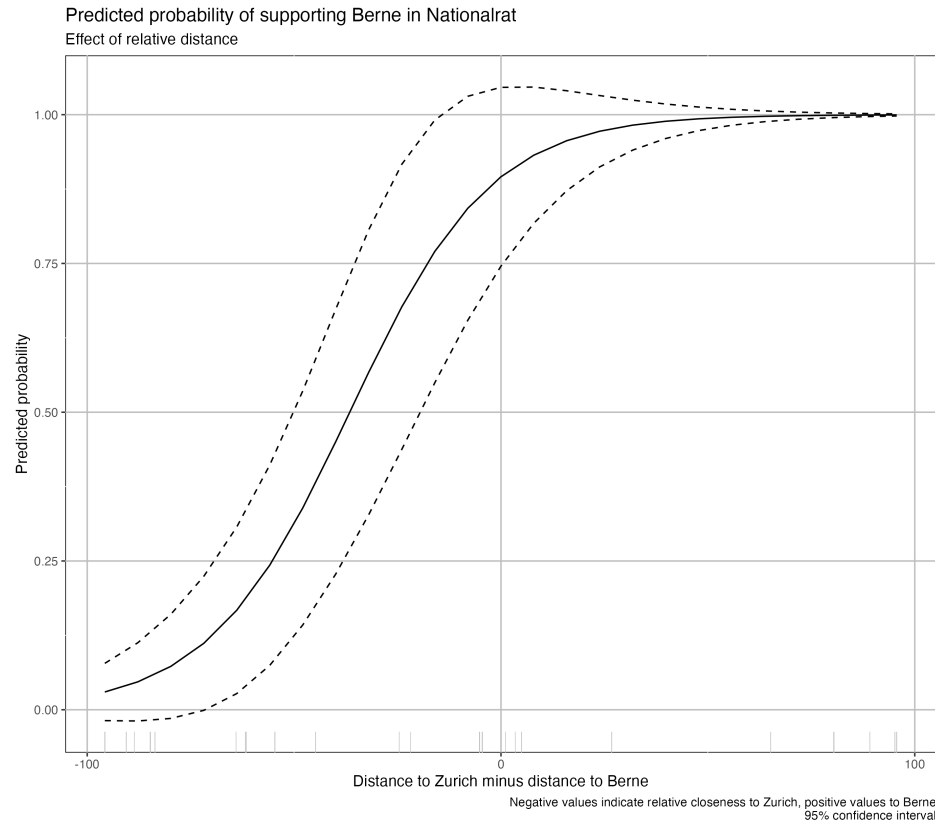
Cantonal delegation voting behaviour

Vote on location of Swiss capital (28/11/1848)



Share of a canton's voting members of parliament of which voted for the nearest candidate city  
Berne indicated by triangle, Zurich by diamond, Lucerne by cross  
The members from Nidwalden did not vote

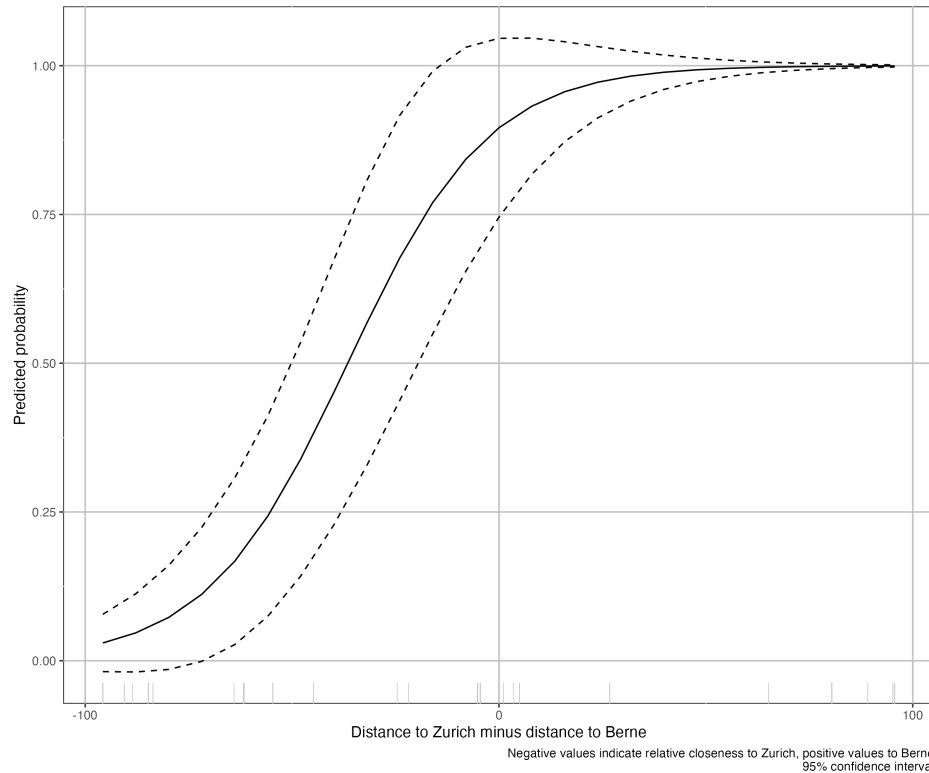
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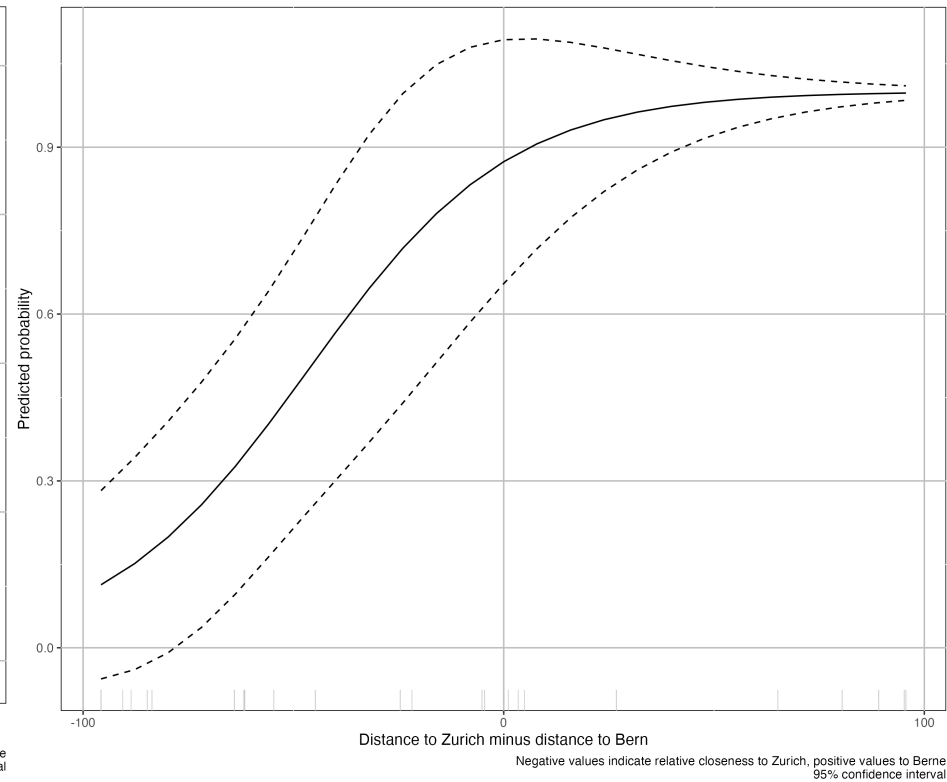


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Predicted probability of supporting Berne in Nationalrat  
Effect of relative distance



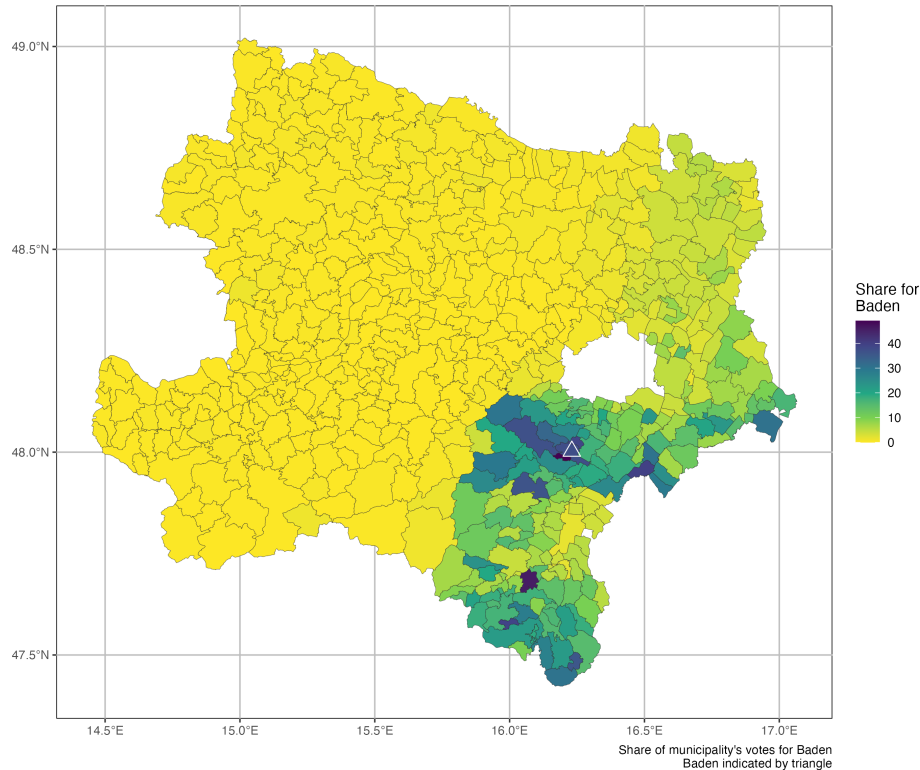
Predicted probability of supporting Berne in Ständerat  
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# Volksbefragung in Lower Austria (1986)

Support for Baden

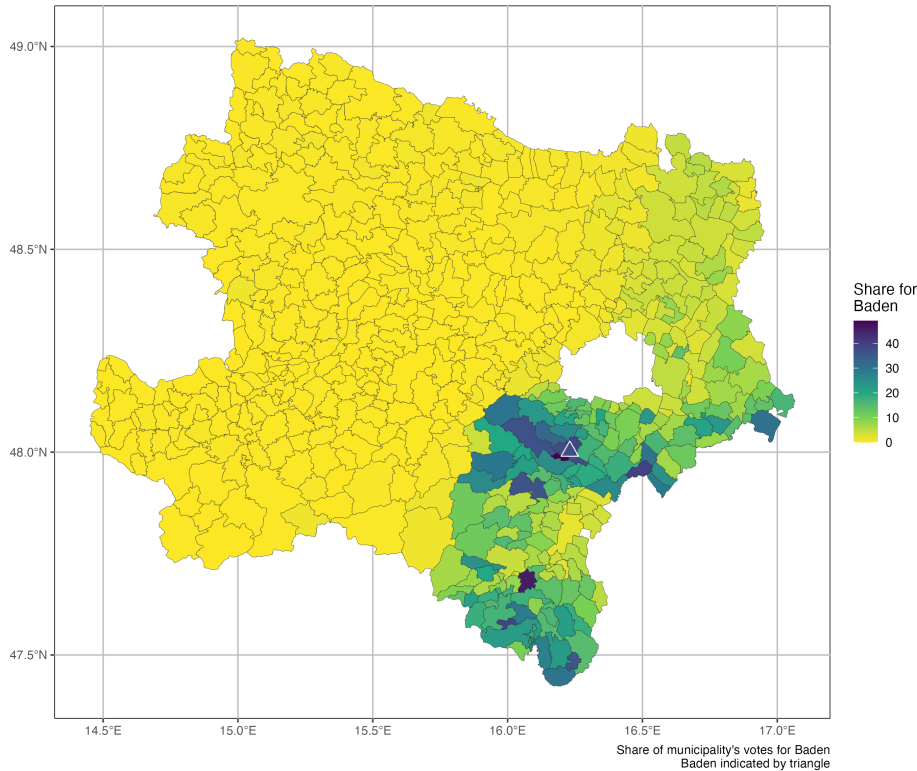
Volksbefragung Lower Austria (March 1 & 2, 1986)



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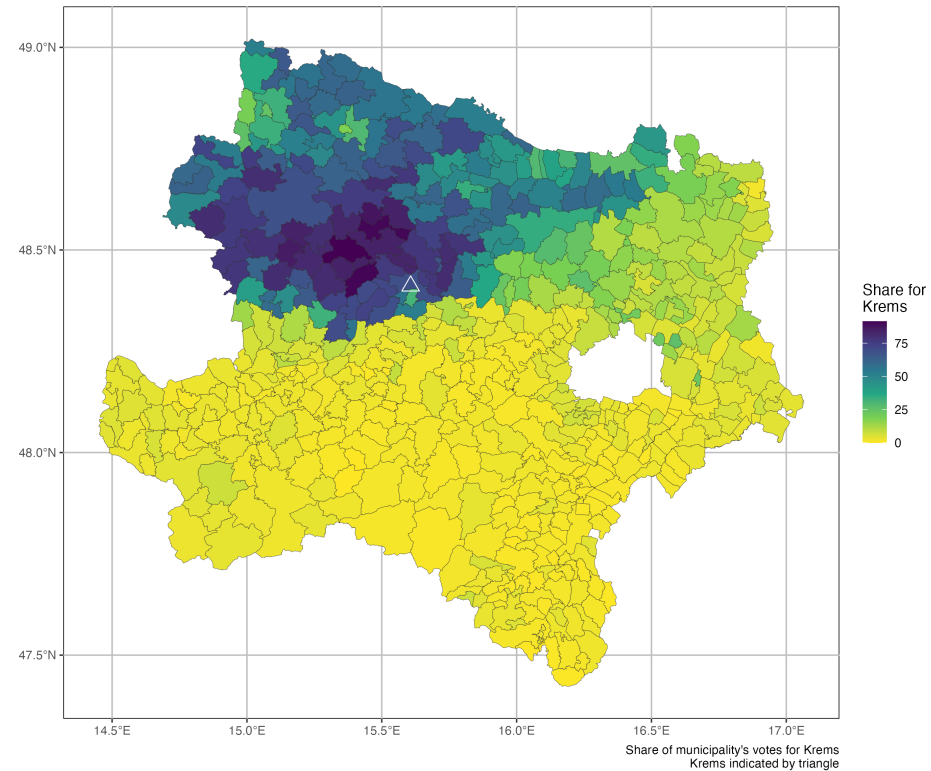
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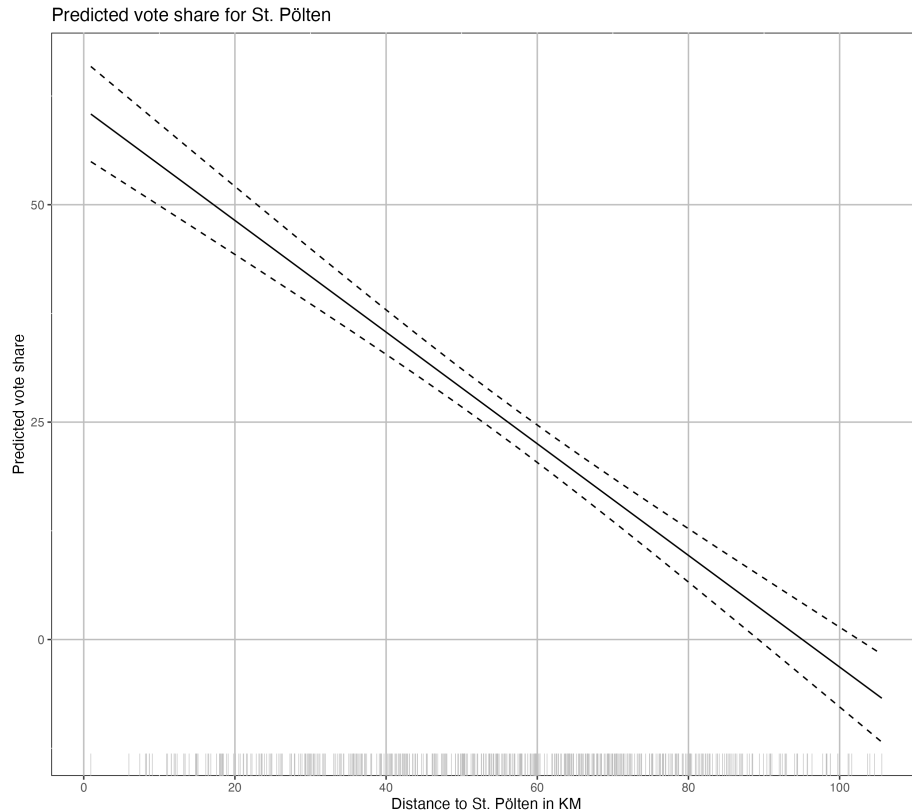


## Support for Krems

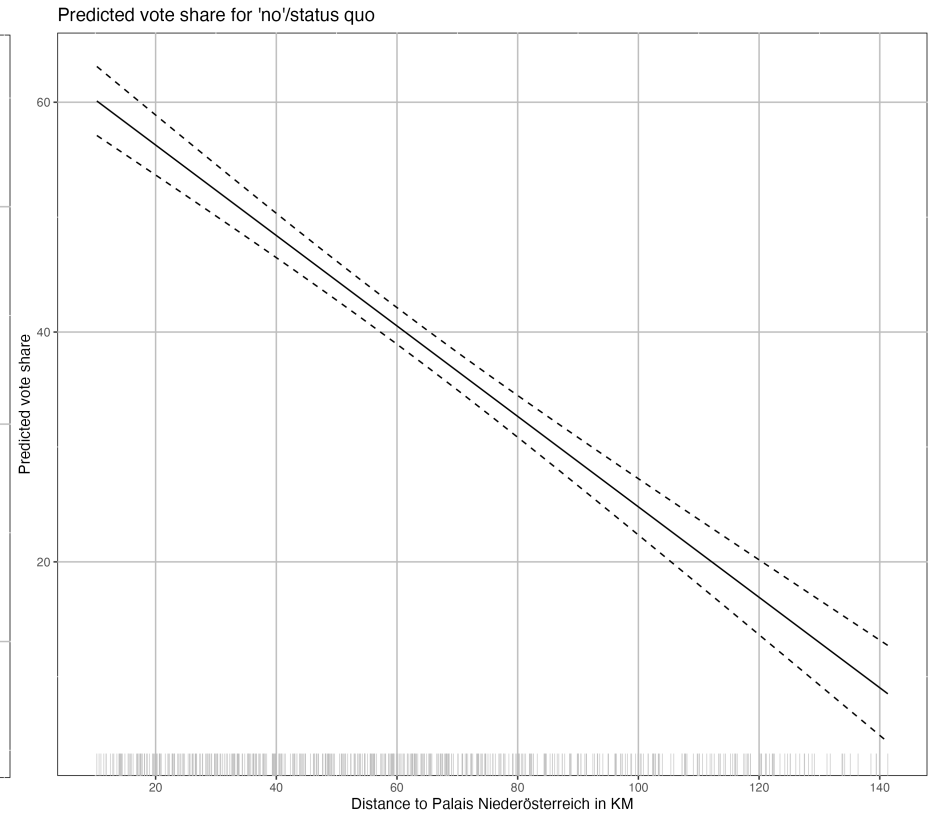
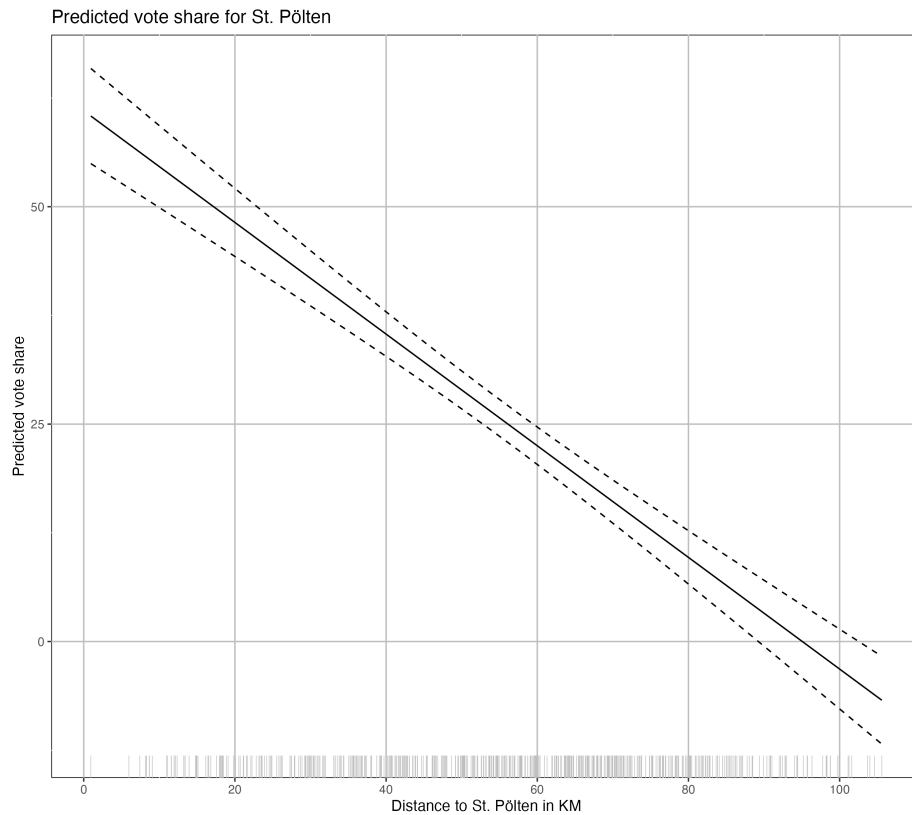
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- Proximity matters
  - For legislators
  - For voters
- Selfish incentives drive preferences
- But: Fair representation + selfish voting = geographic centroid
- Lots of room for improvement: Germany (317km), France (203km)
  - Austria (134km)



Thank you for listening  
Questions are very welcome  
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