When Refugee Exposure Increases Incumbent Support through Development: Evidence from Uganda

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with **Guy Grossman** (University of Pennsylvania)

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Research Questions

How does *exposure to refugees* affect

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- **the voting behavior of local citizens?**
- **development outcomes?**
- **and citizen support for migration?**

Literature from Wealthy Democracies

When voters are more exposed to refugees/migrants,

- **they punish incumbents:** Italy (Bratti et al., 2017), Denmark (Harmon, 2018), South Africa (Bedasso and Jaupart, 2020)

- **turn to anti-migrant and far-right parties:** Germany (Otto and Steinhardt, 2014), Spain (Mendez and Cutillas, 2014), Italy (Barone et al., 2016), Austria (Halla, Wagner and Zweimüller, 2017; Steinmayr, 2021), Switzerland (Brunner and Kuhn, 2018), Greece (Dinas et al., 2019), Denmark (Dustmann, Vasiljeva and Piil Damm, 2019), France (Edo et al., 2019), U.S. (Mayda, Peri and Steingress, 2020)

- **and support anti-migrant policies:** U.S. (Enos, 2014), Greece (Hangartner et al., 2019)

Why might our Expectations Differ for Low-Income Countries in the Global South?

- **Refugees / migrants may not be as stigmatized**
- **Cultural and ethnic ties with host communities**
- **(Immigration) politics do not fall on a left-right partisan divide**
- **Fewer concerns about 'drag on the welfare state'**
- **Refugees' presence might bring aid and local development in contexts where the state has weak capacity**

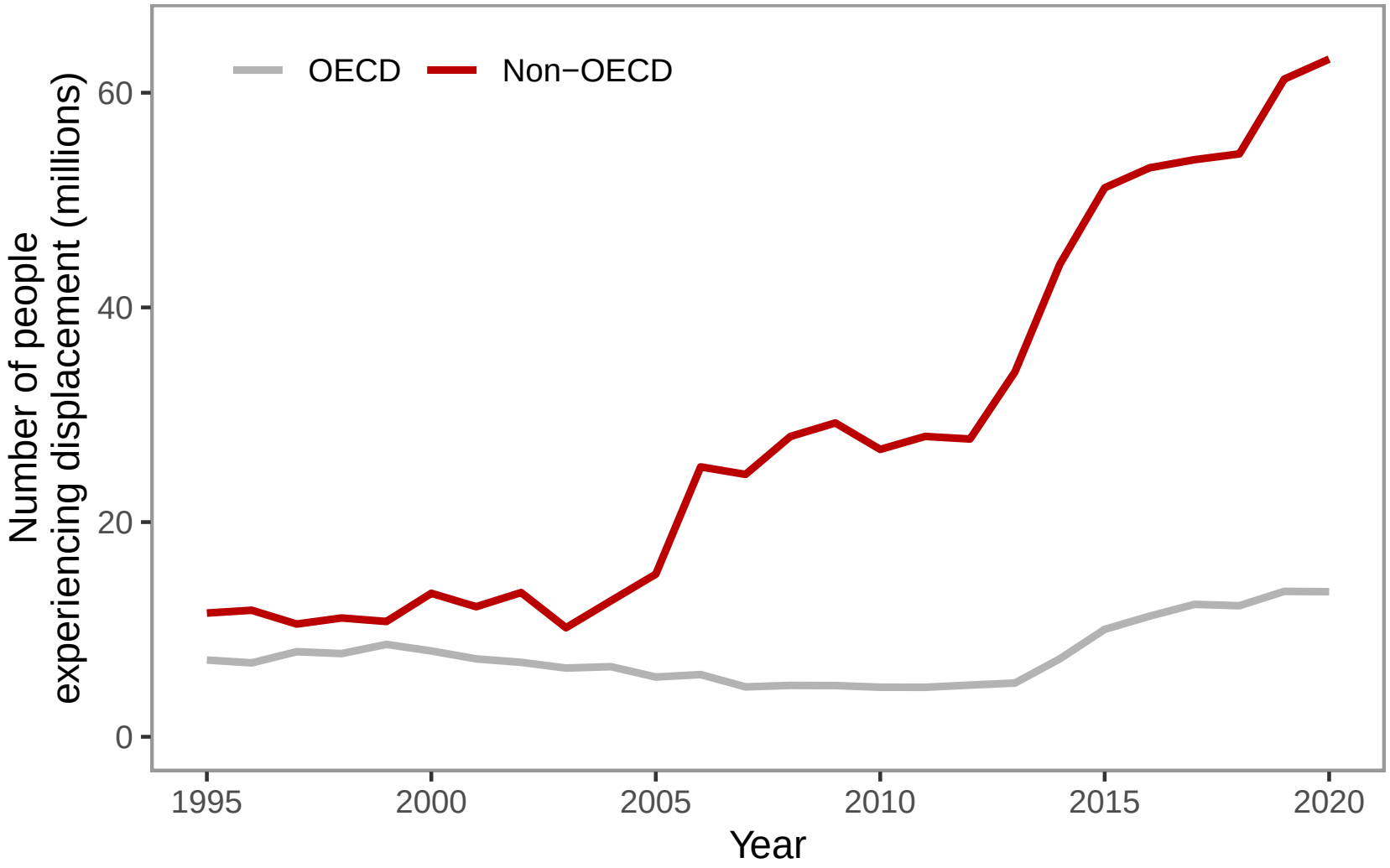
Positive/Mixed Effects of Hosting on Development

Aid and infrastructural development, although primarily intended for refugees, can lead to positive externalities for local communities (Jacobsen, 2002; Loschmann, Bilgili and Siegel, 2019).

Refugees bring human and physical capital, revitalizing economies (Betts et al., 2017; Lehmann and Masterson, 2020).

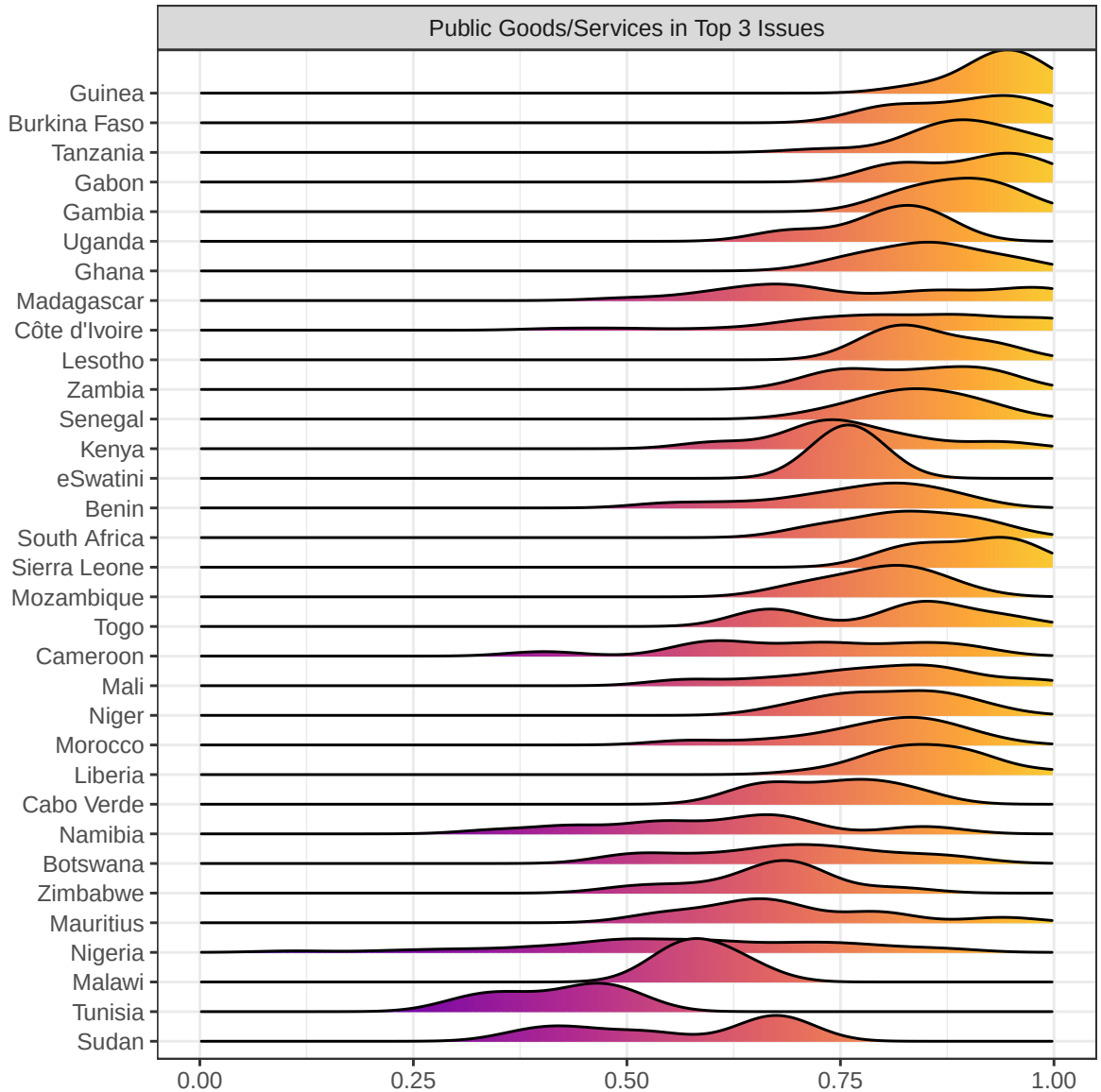
Opportunities for the state to develop capacity in peripheral, marginalized areas (Whitaker, 2002; Sanghi, Onder and Vemuru, 2016).

This matters because 85% of Refugees and Asylum-seekers are Hosted in the Global South



Data source: UNHCR population statistics database

And these Voters care about Public Service Delivery



Data source: Afrobarometer Round 7 (2016–2018)

Our Expectations

Main argument
Host communities with greater *refugee exposure* (geographic proximity to larger settlements) will be more supportive of the incumbent.

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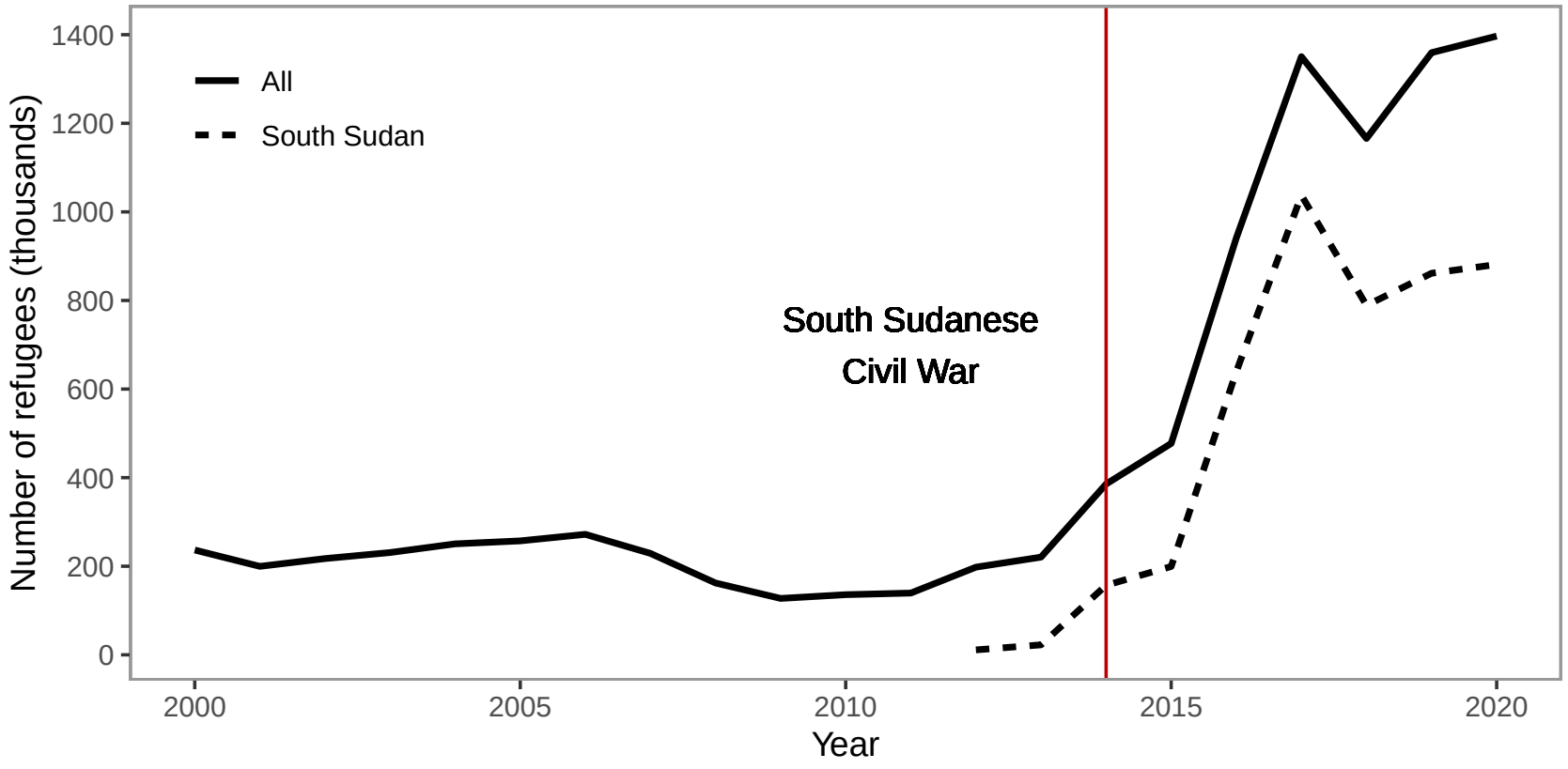
Mechanism
Positive spillovers from aid flowing to refugee settlement areas not only address congestion affects of refugees arriving, but actually lead to *better public goods provision* that proximate voters attribute to the government.

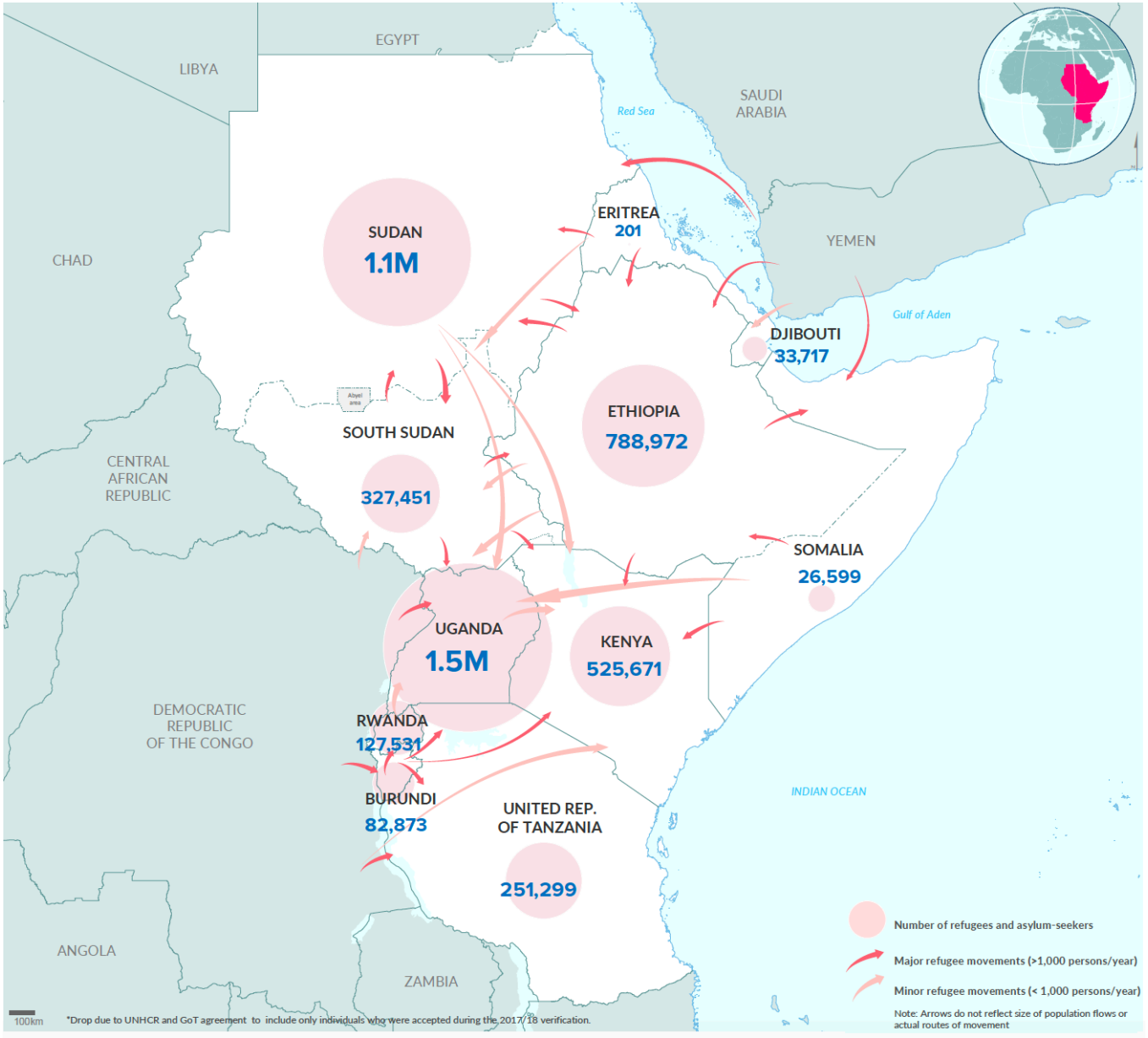
Context: Refugees in Uganda

At 1.5 mil, Uganda is the fourth largest refugee-hosting country in the world

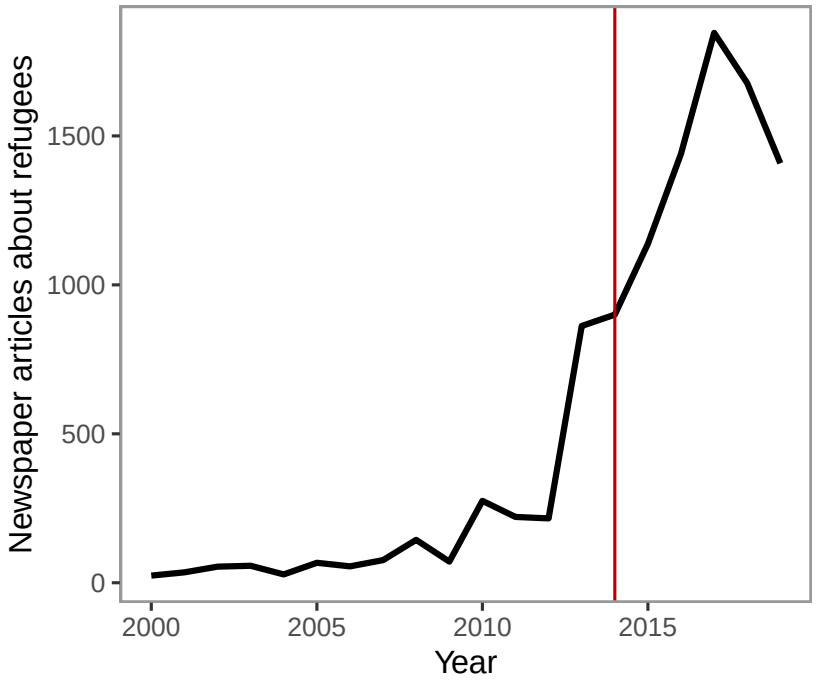


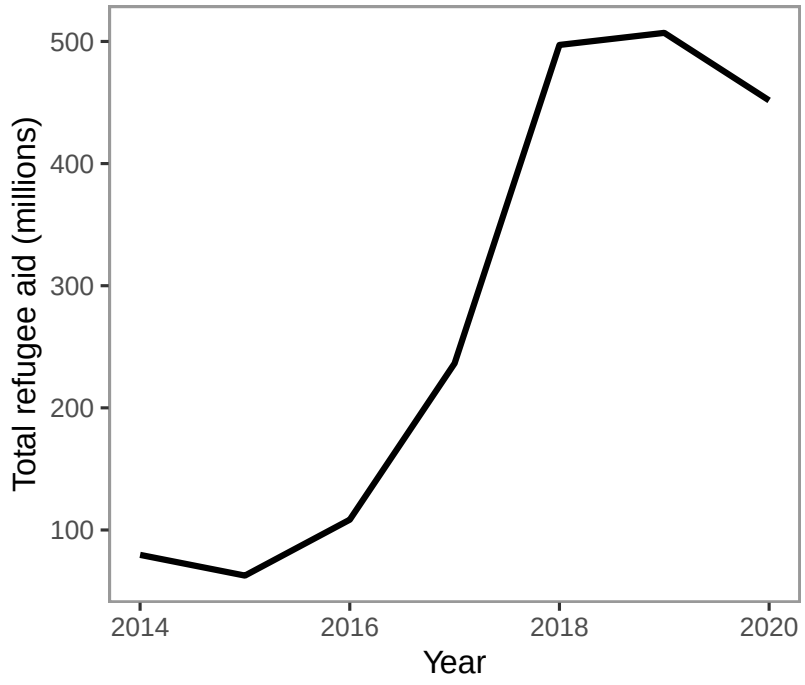
Data source: UNHCR population statistics database

And the largest in Africa



Post-2014, refugee salience and aid increases dramatically





Data source: UNHCR Uganda, Lexis-Nexis, Factiva

Refugee-Hosting in Uganda is considered Progressive

MIGRATION

Uganda stands out in refugees hospitality

The country hosts the largest number of refugees in Africa – more than a million

From Africa Renewal: December 2018 - March 2019 | By: Sulaiman Momodu

PUBLICATION | OCTOBER 1, 2019

Uganda: Supporting Refugees and Host Communities to Become Secure and Self-Reliant

Latest Issue: October 2019

THE WORLD BANK
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- *Uganda hosts more than 1.3 million refugees and its progressive and welcoming refugee policy is a model for other countries*

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Grandi praises Uganda's 'model' treatment of refugees, urges regional leaders to make peace

UNHCR chief stresses host communities must also benefit from refugee presence with infrastructure improvements

By Jonathan Clayton | 31 January 2018 | Español | Français | عربي

Refugee-Hosting in Uganda is considered Progressive

Uganda's 2006 Refugee Act & the 2010 Refugee Regulation

- "Open-door" policy (up until COVID-19)
- Free movement and settlement (as opposed to encampment)
- Access to healthcare, education, plot of land, support for economic self-sufficiency

94% are hosted in 13 districts (mostly West Nile region) in over 30 settlements

"30-70 Principle" (ReHoPE) dictates that 30% of all refugee interventions target host-community needs.

Data and Measurement

Data Stucture

- **Units of analysis**: parish (5133) - years (4), using 2002 parishes, 30k+ children (DHS), 10k+ Afrobarometer respondents R3-7

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- **Controls**: population, average age, proportion male, literacy rate, unemployment rate, agriculture share, coethnic share, violent events, fatalities, poverty index, distance to nearest oil well, distance to border, distance to major road, distance to capital

Refugee Exposure

Nearest: exposure is based on the nearest settlement *n* in year *t*: $\log\left(\frac{\text{population}_{nt}}{\text{distance}_{nt}+1}+1\right)$, in which distance is measured in kilometers.

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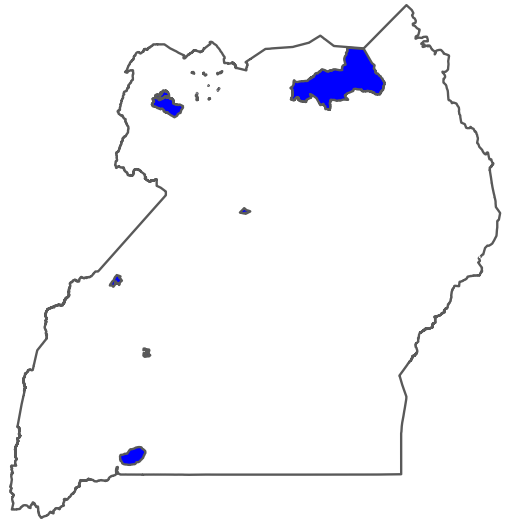
Nearest + 20km: exposure takes into account not only the nearest settlement *n* in year *t*, but also all settlements *i* within 20km of the parish:
$\log\left(\frac{\text{population}_{nt}}{\text{distance}_{nt}+1}+\sum_{i\in \text{rad}_{20km,-n}}\frac{\text{population}_{it}}{\text{distance}_{it}+1}+1\right)$.

Nearest + 50km: exposure takes into account the nearest settlement *n* in year *t* and all settlements *i* within 50km of the parish:
$\log\left(\frac{\text{population}_{nt}}{\text{distance}_{nt}+1}+\sum_{i\in \text{rad}_{50km,-n}}\frac{\text{population}_{it}}{\text{distance}_{it}+1}+1\right)$.

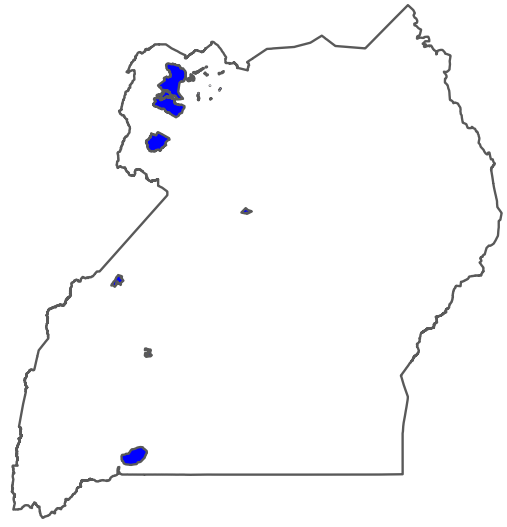
All measures are standardized mean 0, standard deviation 1.

Map of Refugee Settlements in Uganda over Time

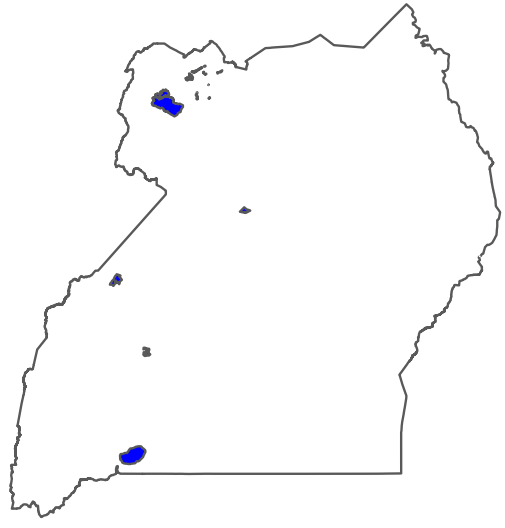
2000



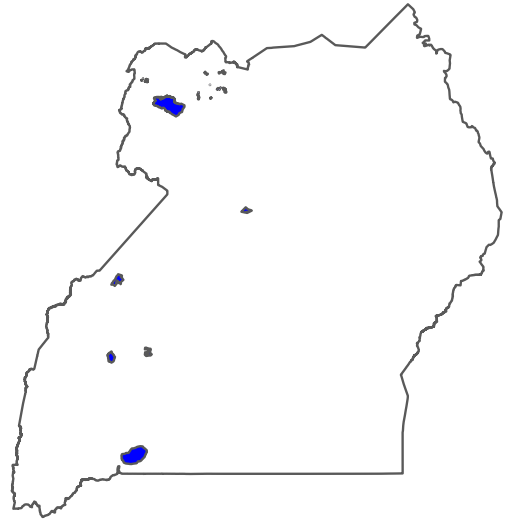
2005



2010

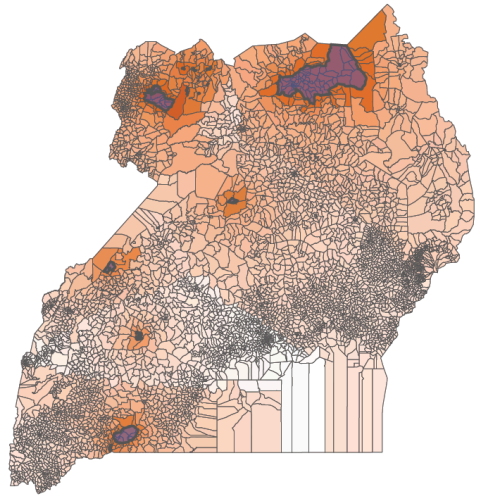


2015

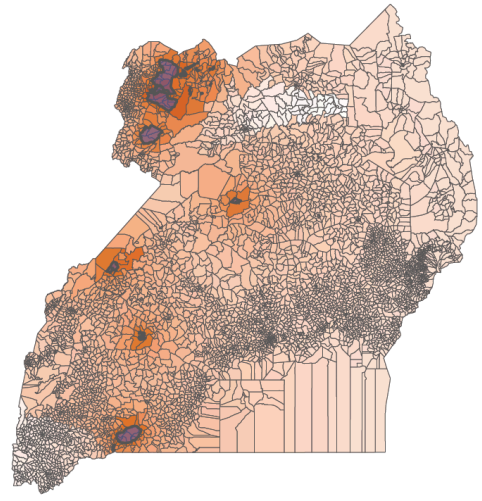


Heatmaps of Nearest + 20km Exposure over Time

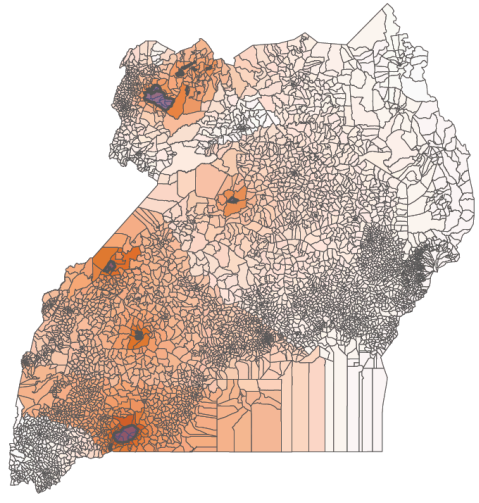
2001



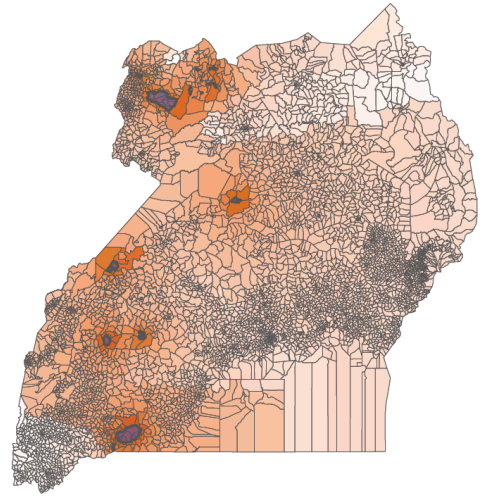
2006



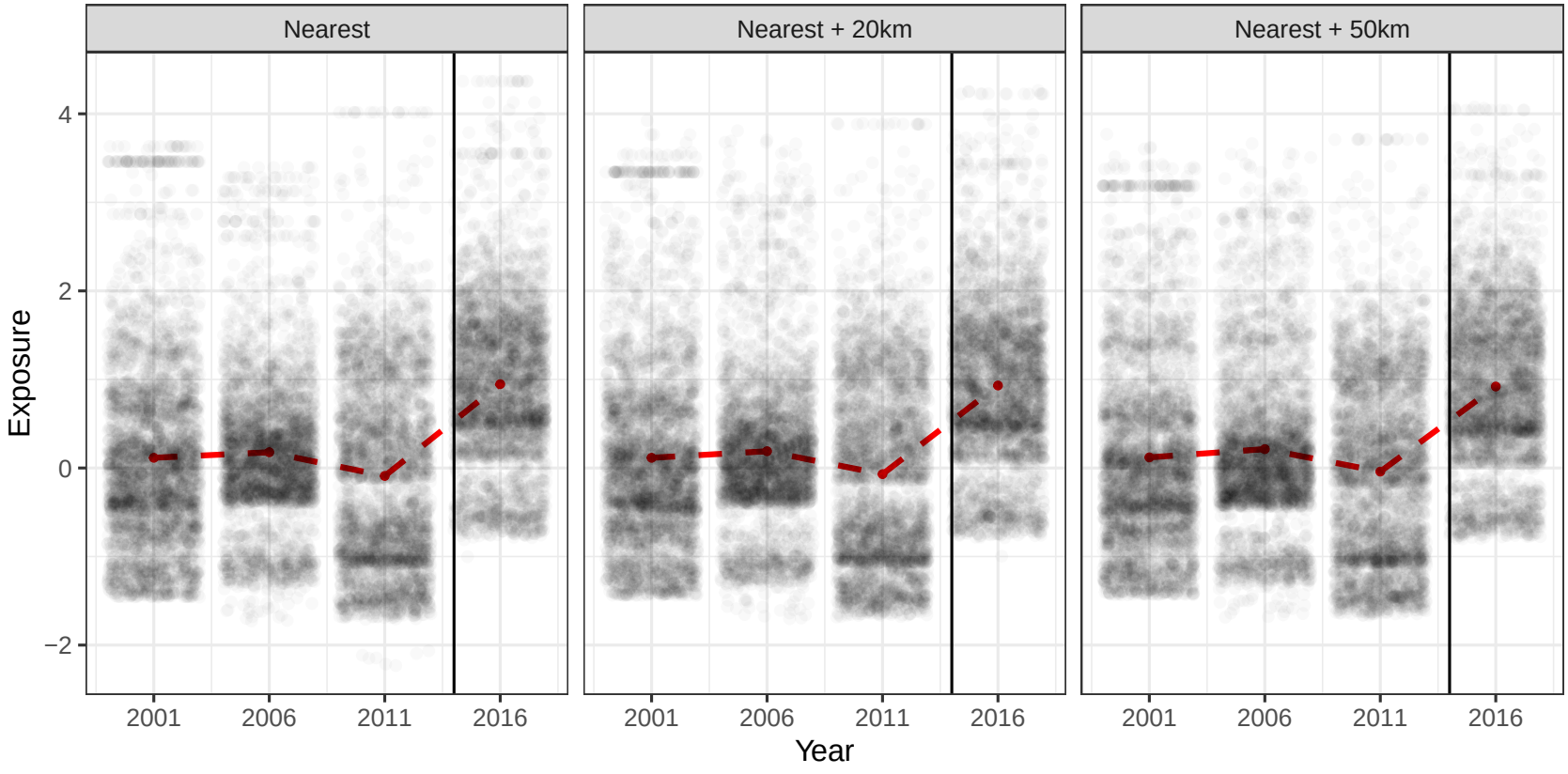
2011



2016



Value of Exposure Measures over Time



Empirical Strategy

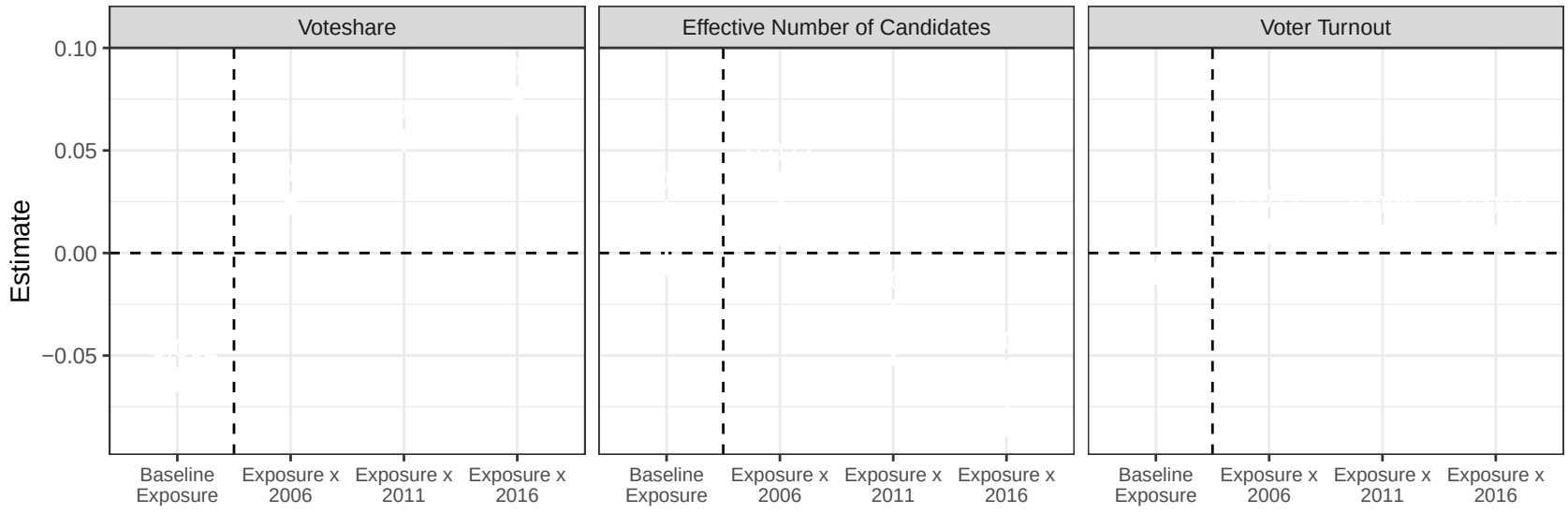
Diff-in-diff OLS: exposure and controls interacted by year, parish and year fixed effects, and SEs clustered at the parish level,

$$
\begin{aligned}
y_{it} = \; & \eta_i + \eta_t + \eta_r + \beta_1 \text{exposure}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{exposure}_{it} \times \mathbf{1}\{year_{it} = 2006\} \\
& + \beta_3 \text{exposure}_{it} \times \mathbf{1}\{year_{it} = 2011\} + \beta_4 \text{exposure}_{it} \times \mathbf{1}\{year_{it} = 2016\} \\
& + \lambda_{\mathbf{1}} \mathbf{x_i} \times \mathbf{1}\{year_{it} = 2006\} + \lambda_{\mathbf{2}} \mathbf{x_i} \times \mathbf{1}\{year_{it} = 2011\} \\
& + \lambda_{\mathbf{3}} \mathbf{x_i} \times \mathbf{1}\{year_{it} = 2016\} + \epsilon_{it}
\end{aligned}
$$

Alternative specs: exposure, radii (100km, 150km, 200km, all parishes), nonlinear GAMs, two-period (pre/post-2014) two-group diff-in-diff, shift-share instrumental variable, formal sensitivity analysis, multiple hypothesis testing

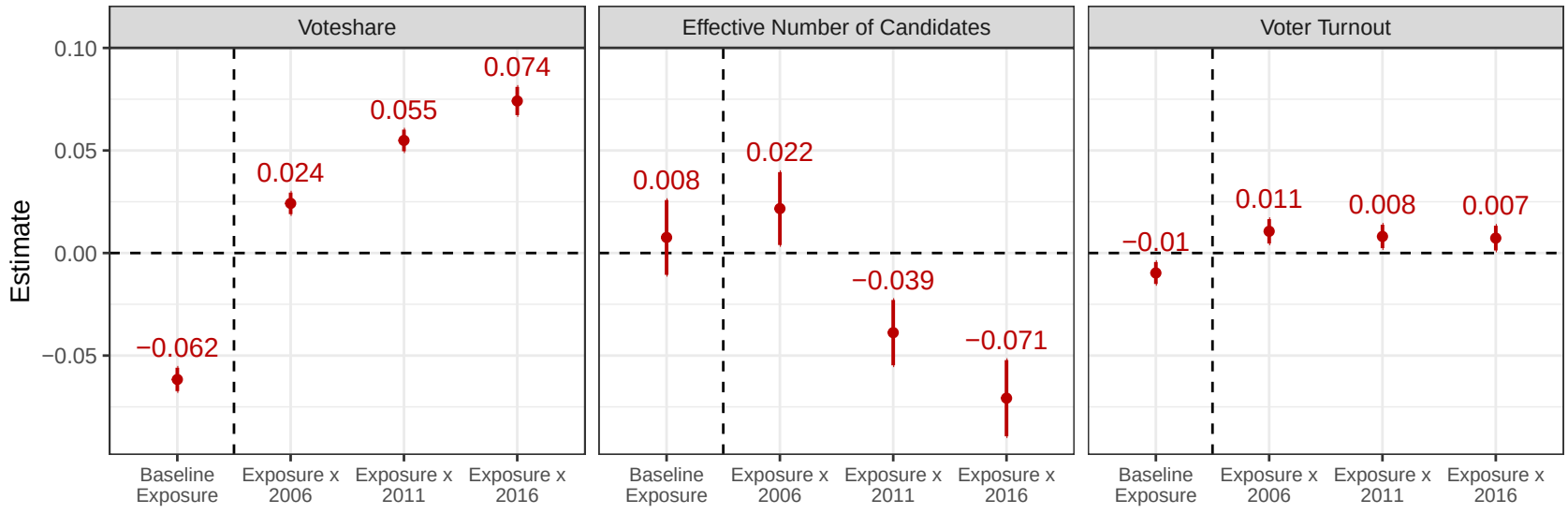
Main Electoral Results

Refugee Exposure Increases Incumbent Support, Not Turnout



DiD estimates using Nearest + 20 exposure measure, with a radius cutoff of 150km

Refugee Exposure Increases Incumbent Support, Not Turnout



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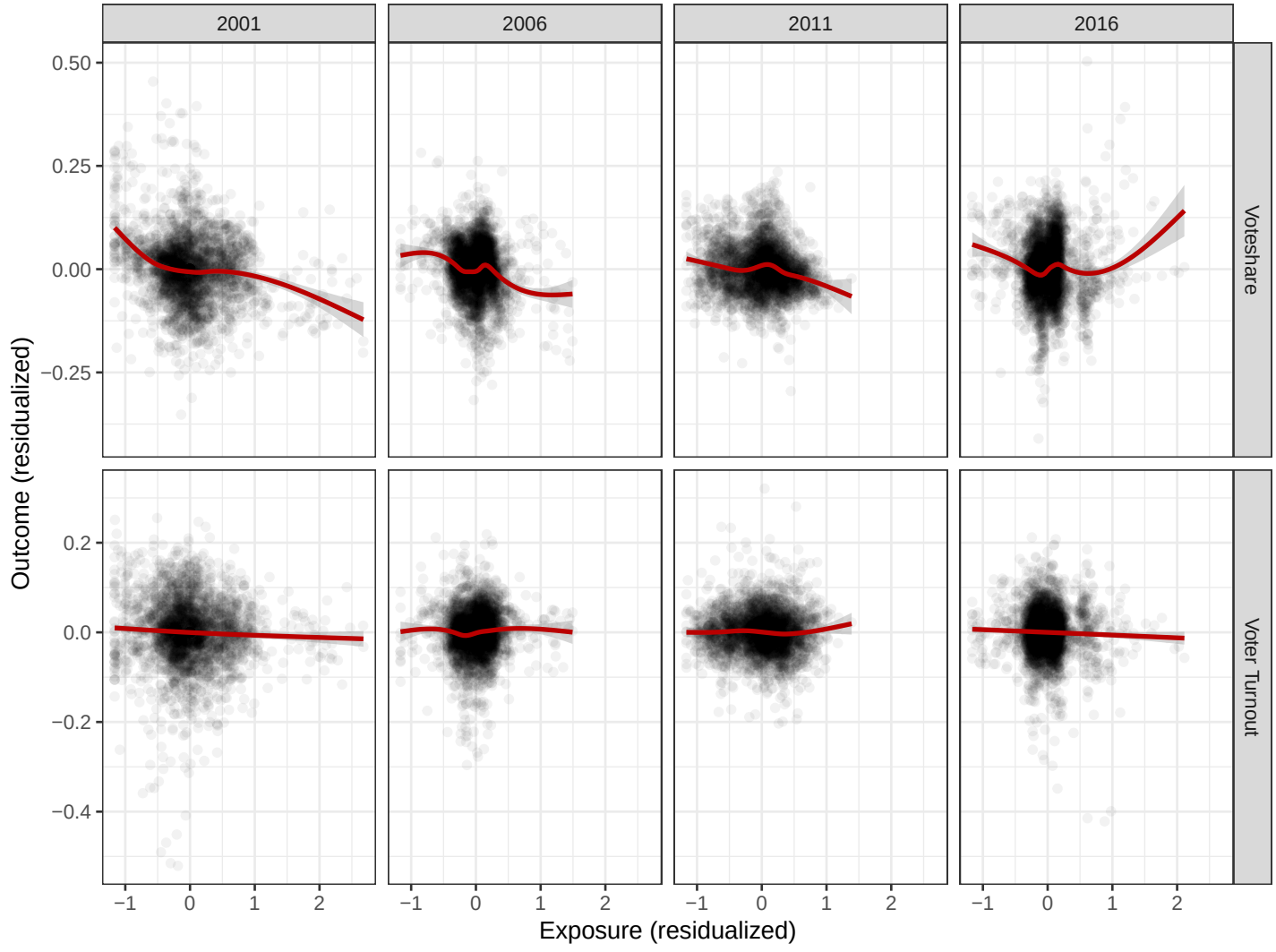
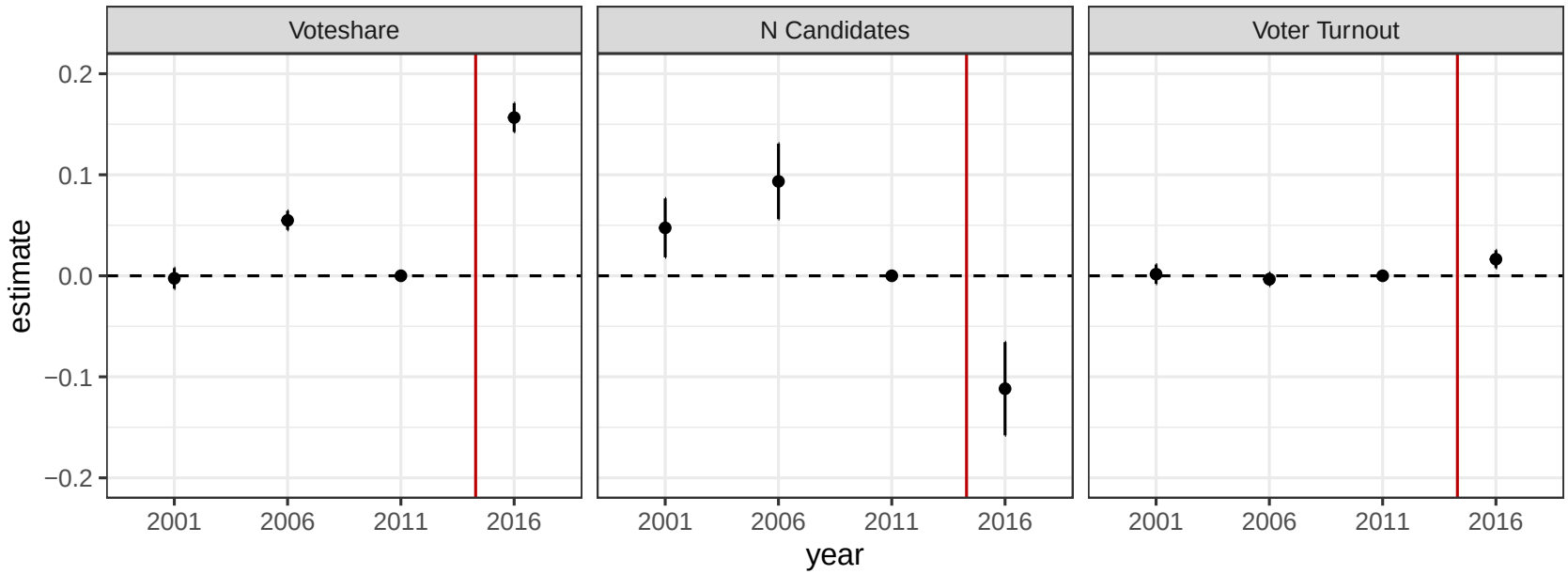
In 2016, Most Exposed Parishes driving Support



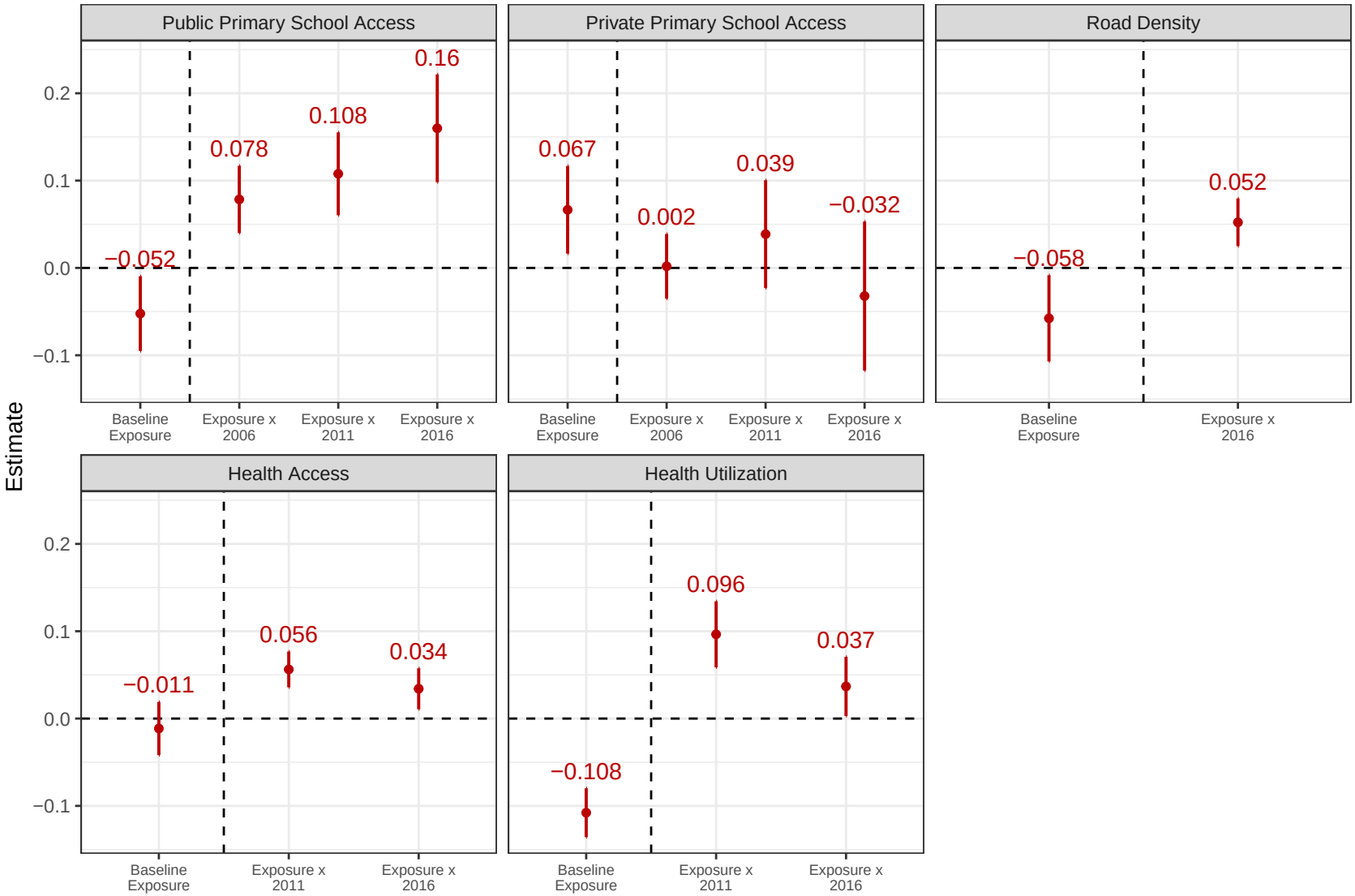
Lags and Leads



We create ”treated” / ”control” parishes by setting their exposure level to 2016 values, cutoff at median. We evaluate whether there are systematic differences in the outcomes prior to 2014.

Mechanism of Local Development

Refugee Exposure Improves Public Goods



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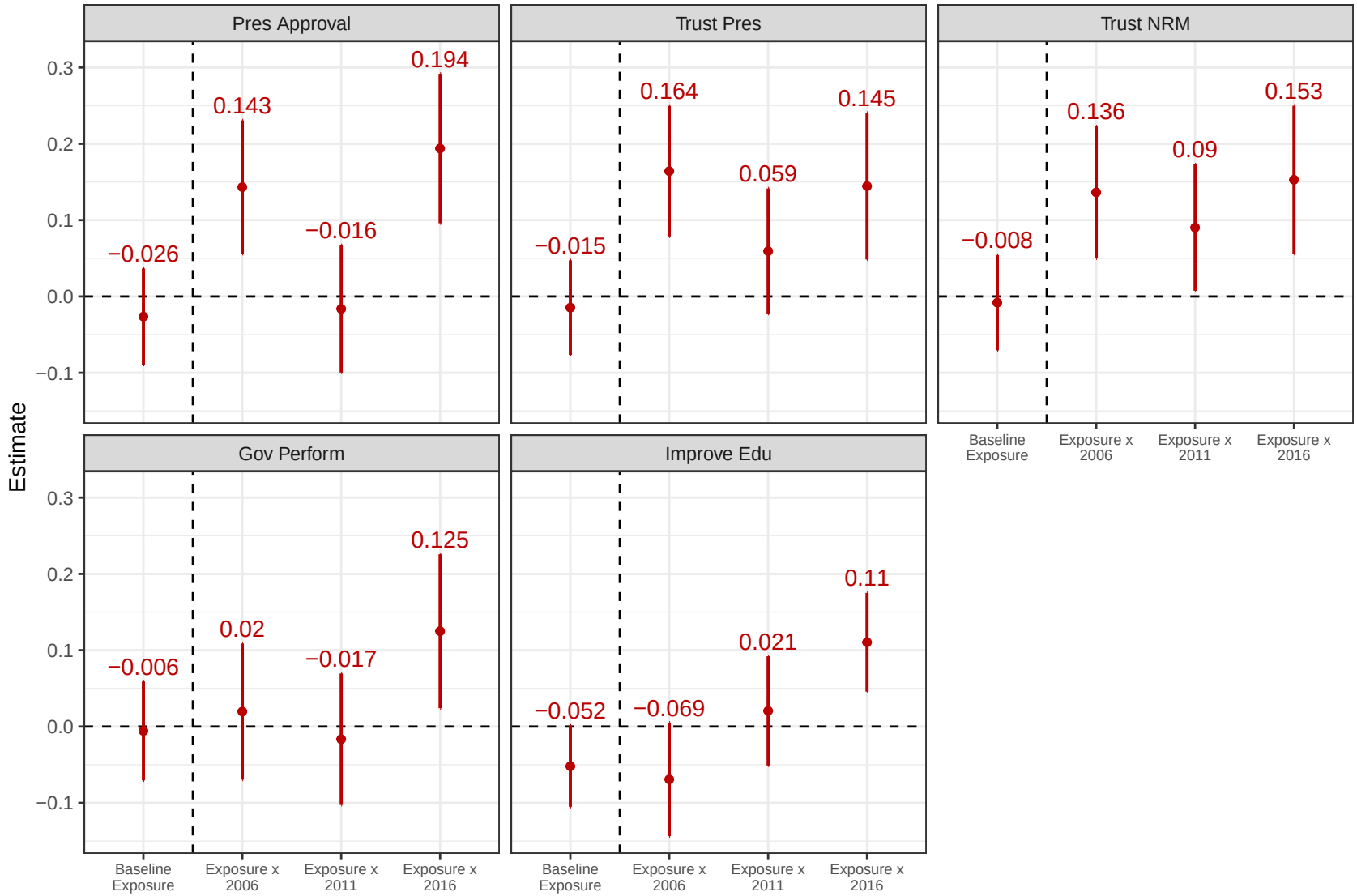
More Exposed Citizens Assess the Government as More Effective



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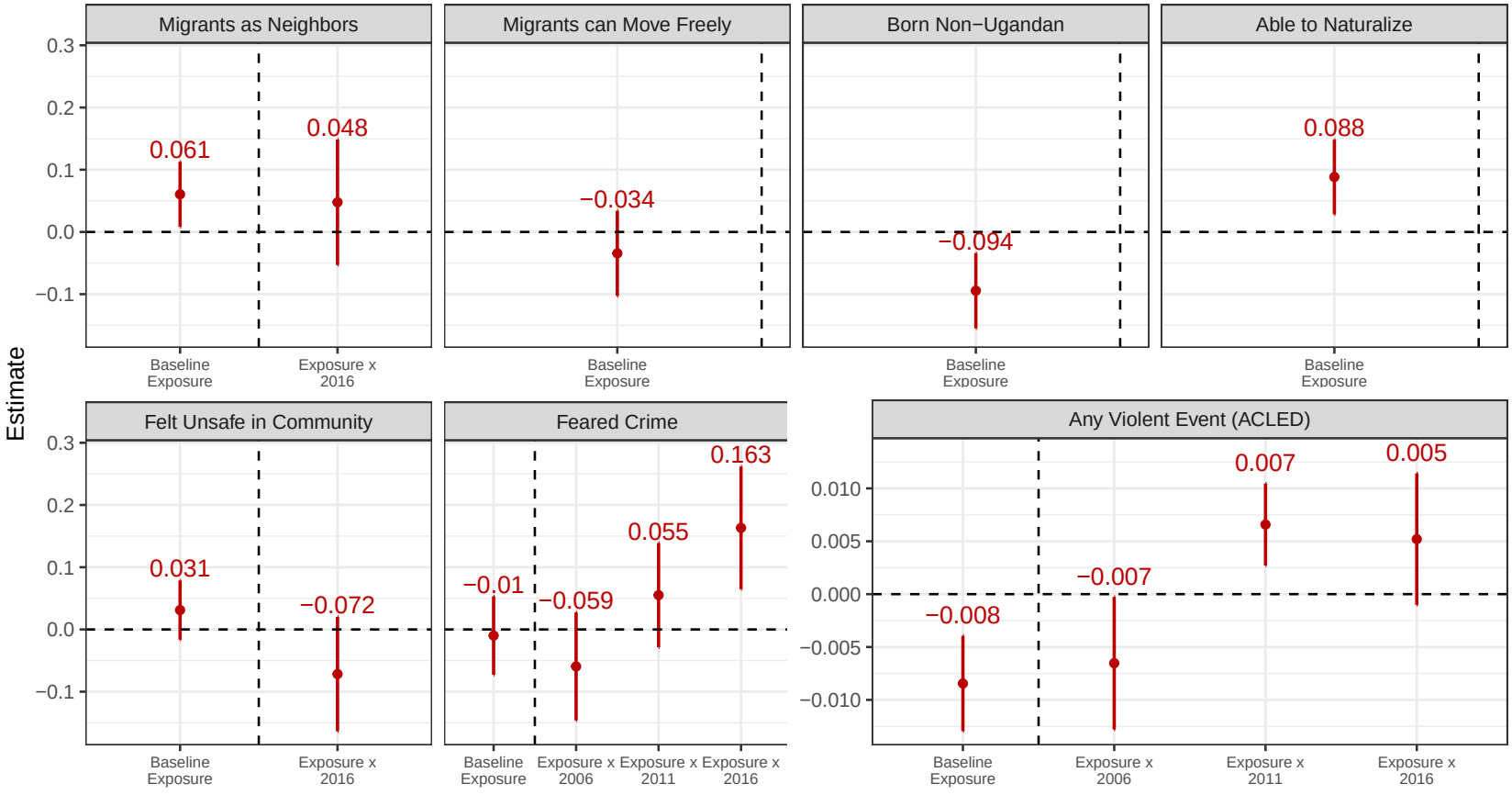
No Backlash against Migration Policy, Some Fears of Insecurity



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Implications

- More inclusive refugee-hosting can lead to positive development spillovers, citizen recognition of these benefits, and support for the incumbent.

- In this context, voters are responding to performance (retrospective voting).

- Hard test case: liberal policies and large number of refugees should lead to backlash.

- Public backlash against migrants is not a generalized phenomena.

- Policy implications for development approach to hosting migrants, e.g. 2018 Global Compact on Refugees.

Thank you

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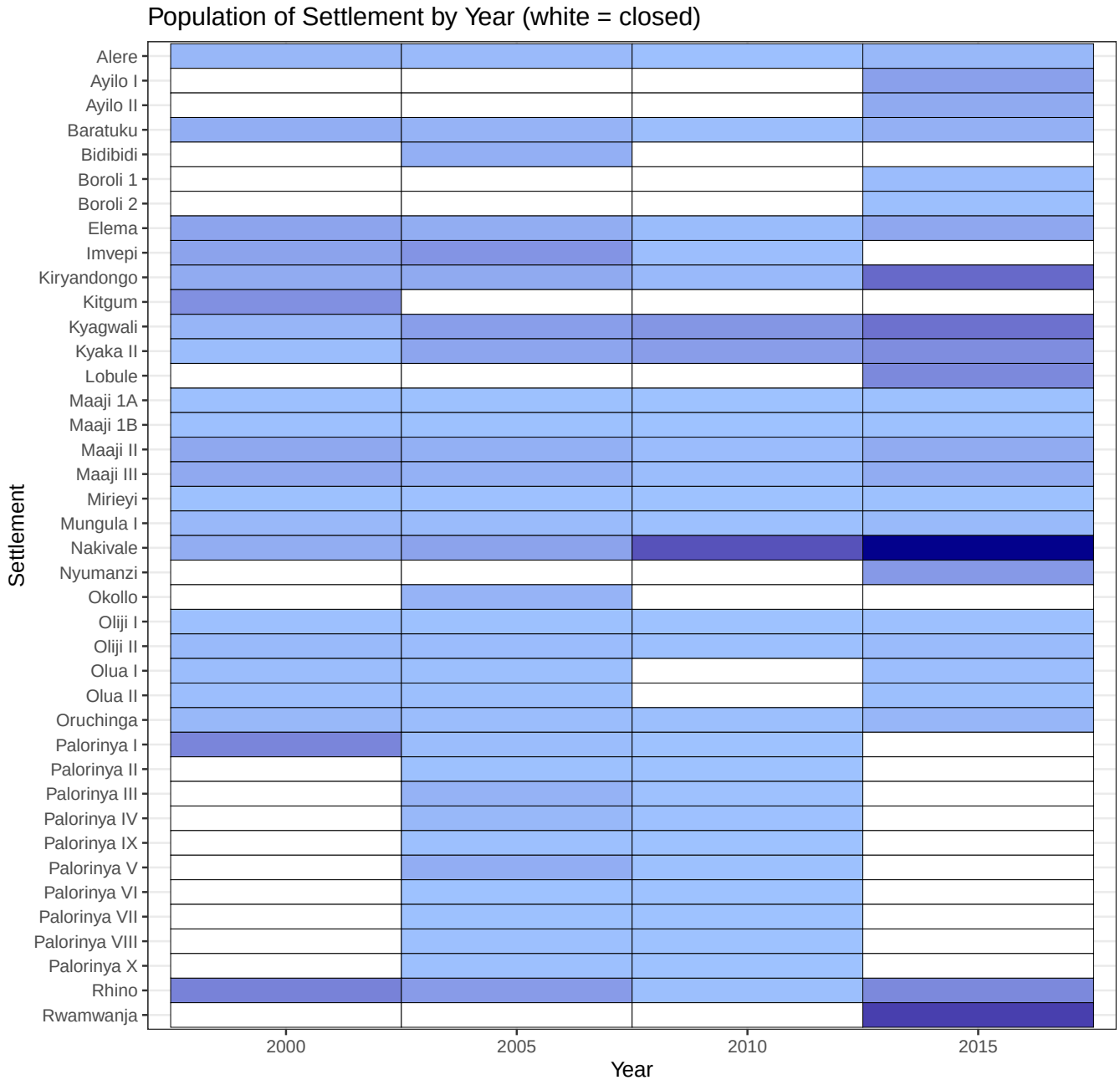
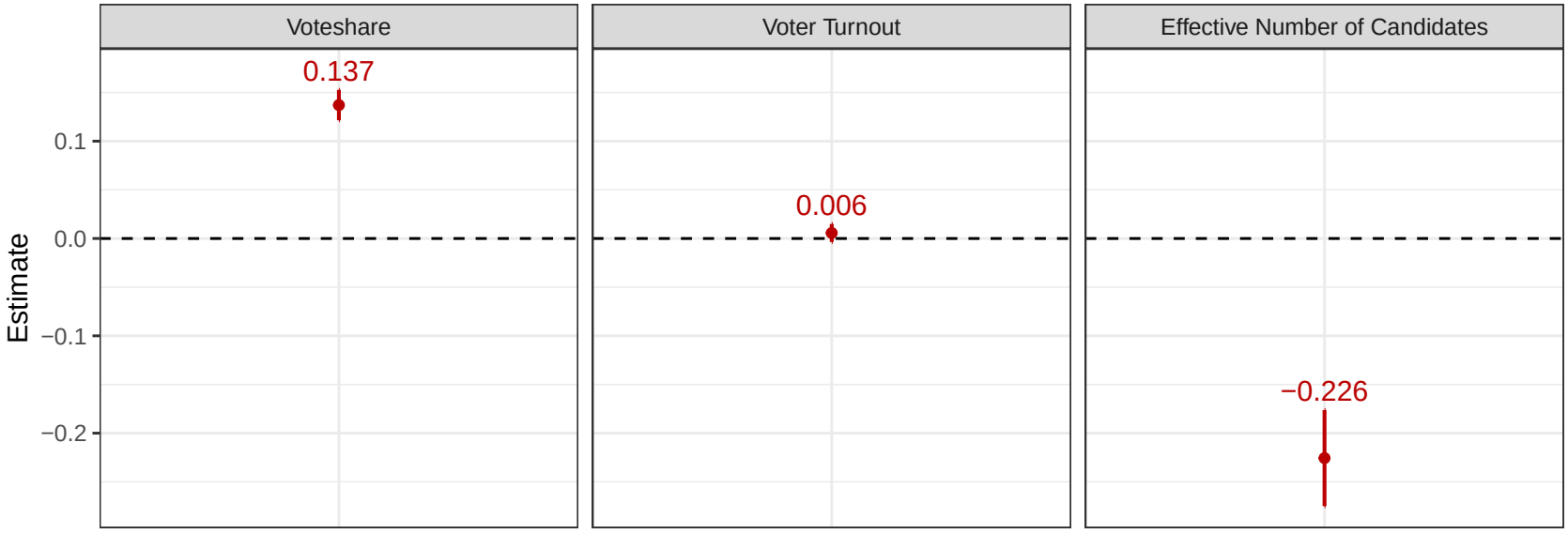
Extra Slides

List of Settlements Shaded by Population over Time



Two-Period Diff-in-Diff



Instrumental Variable

Modified shift-share IV at the refugee settlement level $Z_{st} = \sum_{p \leq t}^{t} Z_{sp}^{\text{MOV}}$, where $Z_{st}^{\text{MOV}} = \sum_{c \neq \text{Uganda}} \delta_{sc}^{2000} M_{ct}$, in which δ_{sc}^{2000} is the share of refugees from origin country *c* who lived in settlement *s* in the year 2000, M_{ct} is the inflow of refugees from country *c* between year $t-1$ and *t*. Our instrument is IVexposure: $\log(\frac{Z_{nt}}{distance_{nt}+1} + 1)$ where *n* is the nearest settlement.

First stage:

$$(\text{exposure}_{it} \times \mathbf{1}\{yr_{it} = 2006\}, \text{exposure}_{it} \times \mathbf{1}\{yr_{it} = 2011\}, \text{exposure}_{it} \times \mathbf{1}\{yr_{it} = 2011\}) =$$
$$\delta_i + \lambda_t + \alpha_1 \text{IVexposure}_{it} \times \mathbf{1}\{yr_{it} = 2006\} + \alpha_2 \times \text{IVexposure}_{it} \times \mathbf{1}\{yr_{it} = 2011\} +$$
$$\alpha_3 \times \text{IVexposure}_{it} \times \mathbf{1}\{yr_{it} = 2016\} + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x_i} \times \mathbf{1}\{yr_{it} = 2006\} + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x_i} \times \mathbf{1}\{yr_{it} = 2011\} +$$
$$\gamma_3 \mathbf{x_i} \times \mathbf{1}\{yr_{it} = 2016\} + \nu_{it}$$

IV Results

	Vote Share	Voter Turnout	Candidates	Primary School Access	Private Primary School Access	Public Primary School Access	Secondary School Access	Private Secondary School Access	Public Secondary School Access	Health Access	Road Density
Baseline Exposure	-0.030	-0.017	-0.408***	-0.045	0.122**	-0.117***	-0.150***	-0.017	-0.134**	0.444***	-1.981**
	(0.022)	(0.012)	(0.131)	(0.044)	(0.056)	(0.040)	(0.052)	(0.041)	(0.054)	(0.112)	(0.955)
Exposure x 2006	0.097***	0.004	-0.578***	-0.062	0.111	-0.130**	-0.206***	-0.075	-0.170**		
	(0.029)	(0.016)	(0.180)	(0.060)	(0.077)	(0.055)	(0.072)	(0.056)	(0.071)		
Exposure x 2011	0.047***	0.010***	-0.046***	0.032**	0.008	-0.010	-0.013	-0.016	-0.016	-0.193***	
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.053)	
Exposure x 2016	0.111***	-0.013	-0.643***	-0.055	0.145	-0.232***	-0.333***	-0.139*	-0.268**	-0.130***	-1.271*
	(0.036)	(0.021)	(0.218)	(0.088)	(0.114)	(0.080)	(0.101)	(0.080)	(0.107)	(0.031)	(0.701)
Diff 2016-2011	0.064	-0.022	-0.598	-0.087	0.137	-0.222	-0.319	-0.123	-0.252	0.062	
SE Diff 2016-2011	0.035	0.020	0.218	0.084	0.107	0.077	0.097	0.075	0.104	0.059	
Exposure Measure	Nearest + 20km	Nearest + 20km	Nearest + 20km	Nearest + 20km	Nearest + 20km	Nearest + 20km	Nearest + 20km	Nearest + 20km	Nearest + 20km	Nearest + 20km	Nearest + 20km
Sample Distance (km)	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Controls x Year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
F-Statistic	24.329	7.245	2.818	27.066	11.039	47.486	20.234	21.689	27.884	13.512	1.010
Num. obs.	16079	16079	16079	16928	16928	16928	16928	16928	16928	12576	8384

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