



Why displacement? Colombia

POL 126

Prof. Juan Tellez

TODAY

Displacement

Strategies of displacement

Opportunism

Displacement

Categories of displacement

Displaced = forced (??) to flee by conflict/instability

Internally displaced people (IDPs) = displaced **within** country

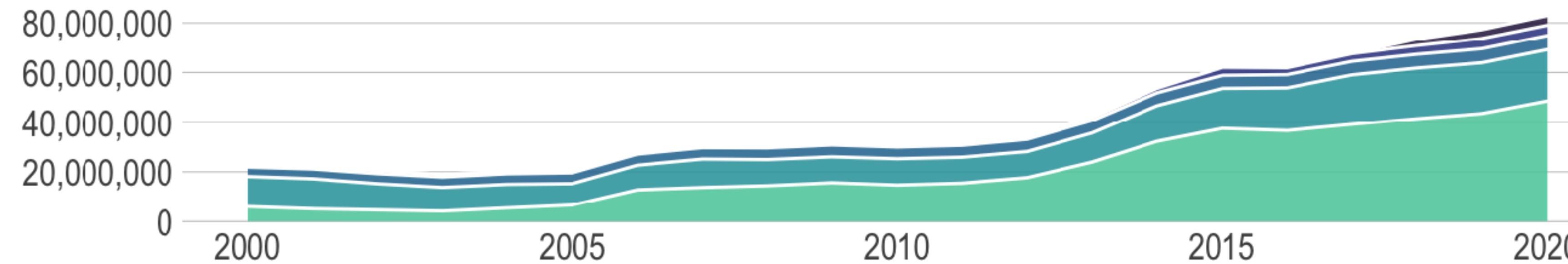
Refugees = Flees **outside** country

Many other categories – **who counts** is contentious!

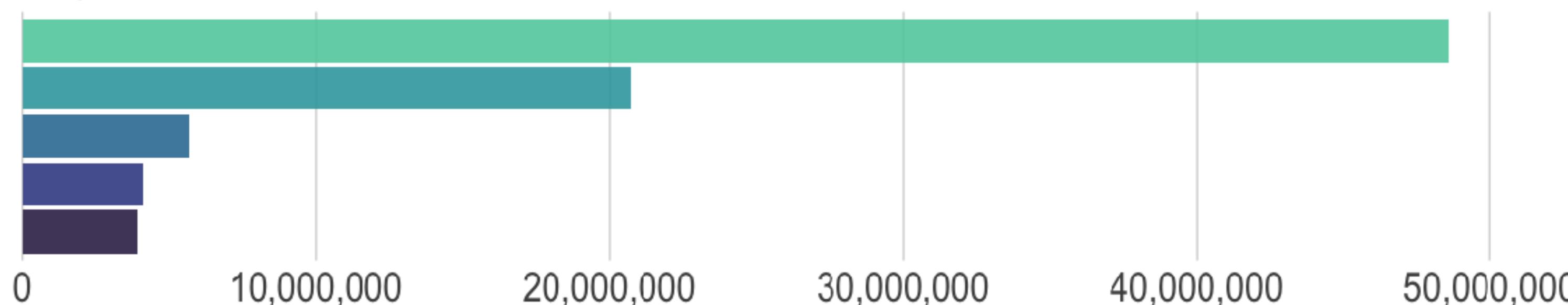
Gobal Displacement Trends

People displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order.

Displacement trends over time



Displacement trends in 2020



80 million; 1% of all people!

Are displaced different from economic migrants?

Should climate migration count?

Was I displaced?





THIS
WEEK'S
WORLD

Humanitarian crisis

Psychological **trauma**

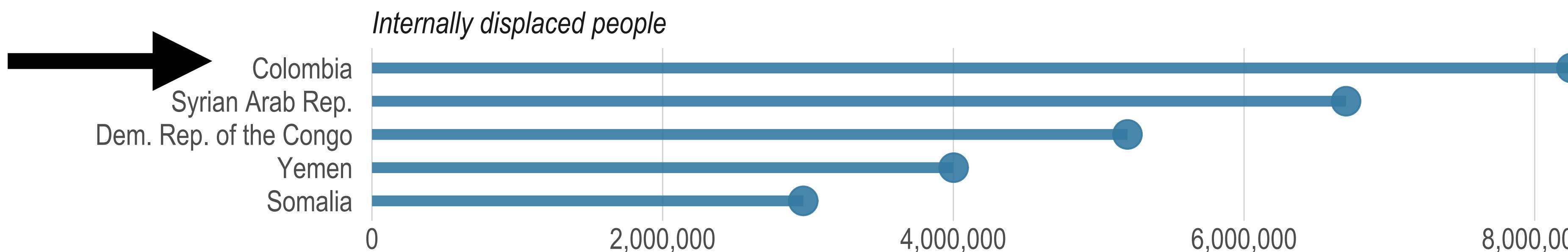
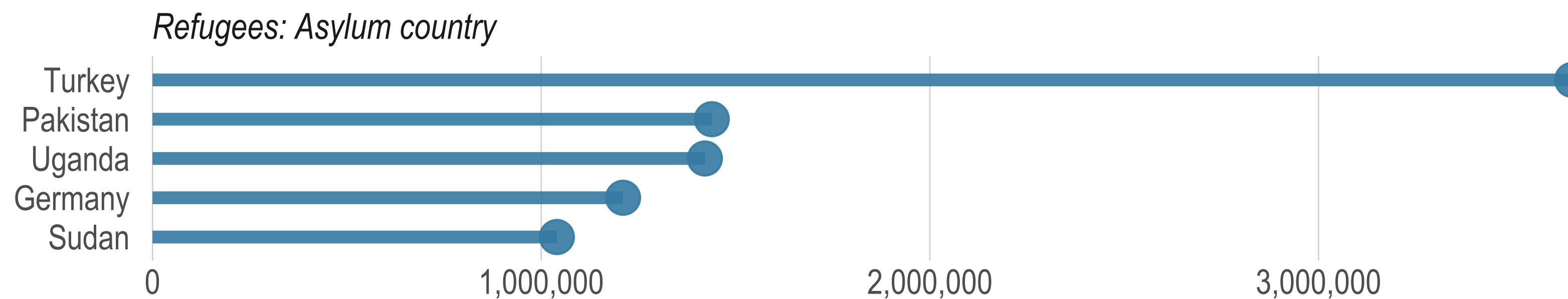
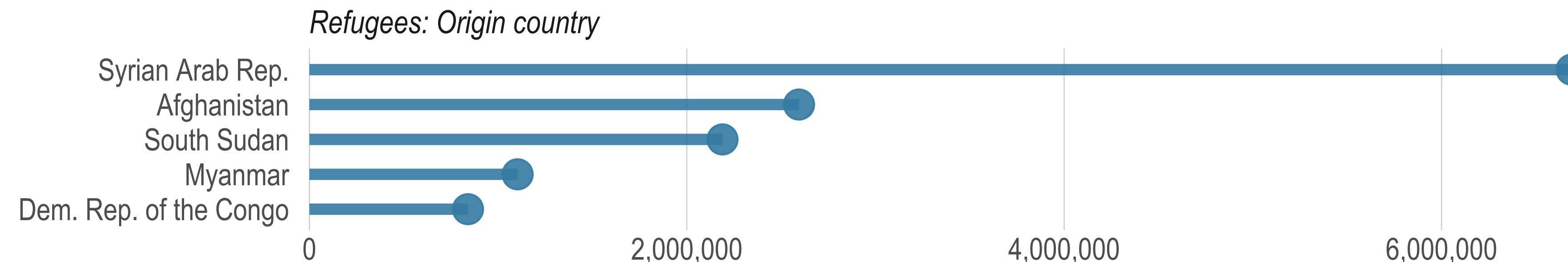
Huge **economic losses**

Where to go?
How to return?
Is return possible?



The Geography of Displacement

Top five countries in terms of number of refugees abroad, refugees seeking asylum, and internally displaced people. Y

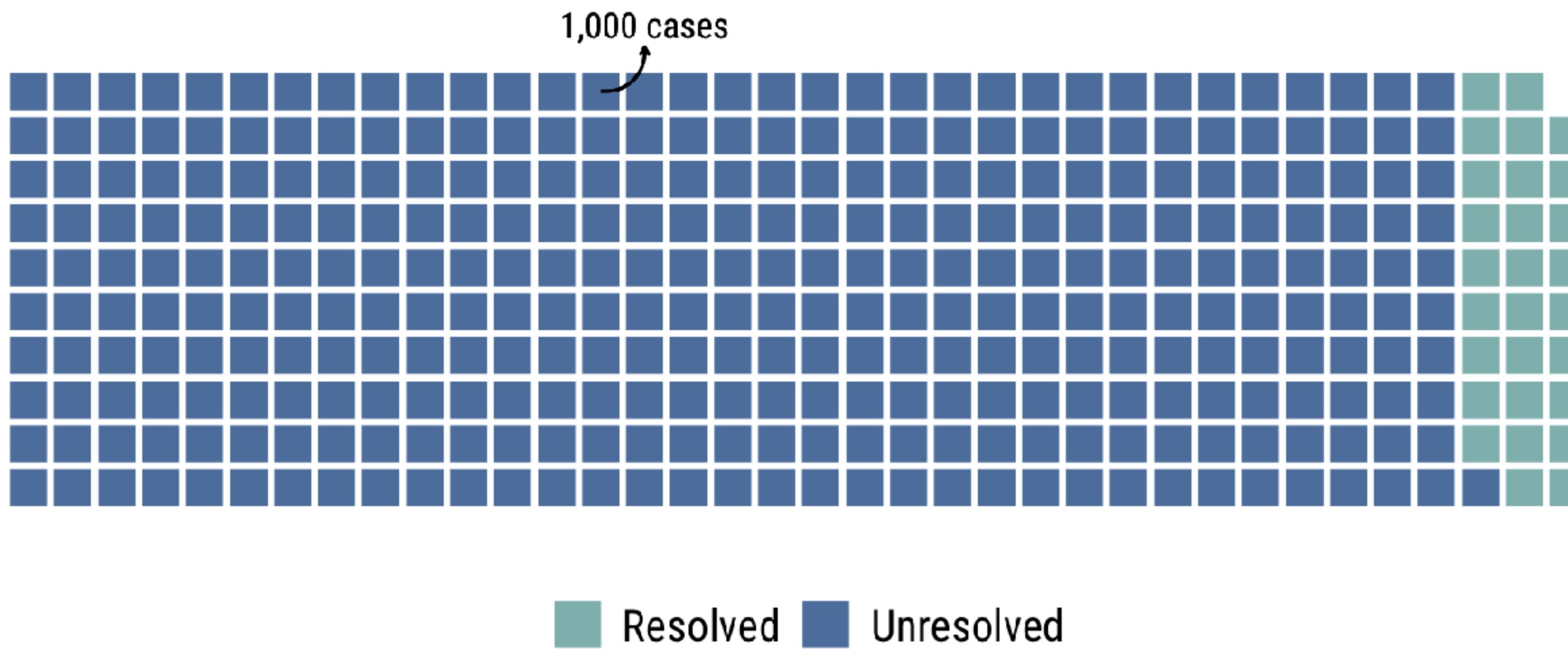


Data source: The UN Refugee Agency.
<https://www.unhcr.org/60b638e37/unhcr-global-trends-2020>

Displacement in Colombia

Requests for Return of Land/Property in Colombia

Wartime restitution cases. Source: Verdad Abierta.



Displacement is a huge problem in Colombia – return is difficult

Challenges to return

In Colombia, many/most own land/property **informally**

Displaced returns years later – finds new occupant

New occupant may have stolen land, or purchased/occupied in good faith; How to tell?



And how should courts adjudicate this?

Strategies of displacement

Steele

Steele distinguishes between:
Displacement as a *by-product of war*
Strategic displacement

What's the difference?

And why displace?

Strategic displacement

Combatants deliberately displace civilians as a strategy of war

Different problems – different tactics

How does Lichtenheld describe each tactic?

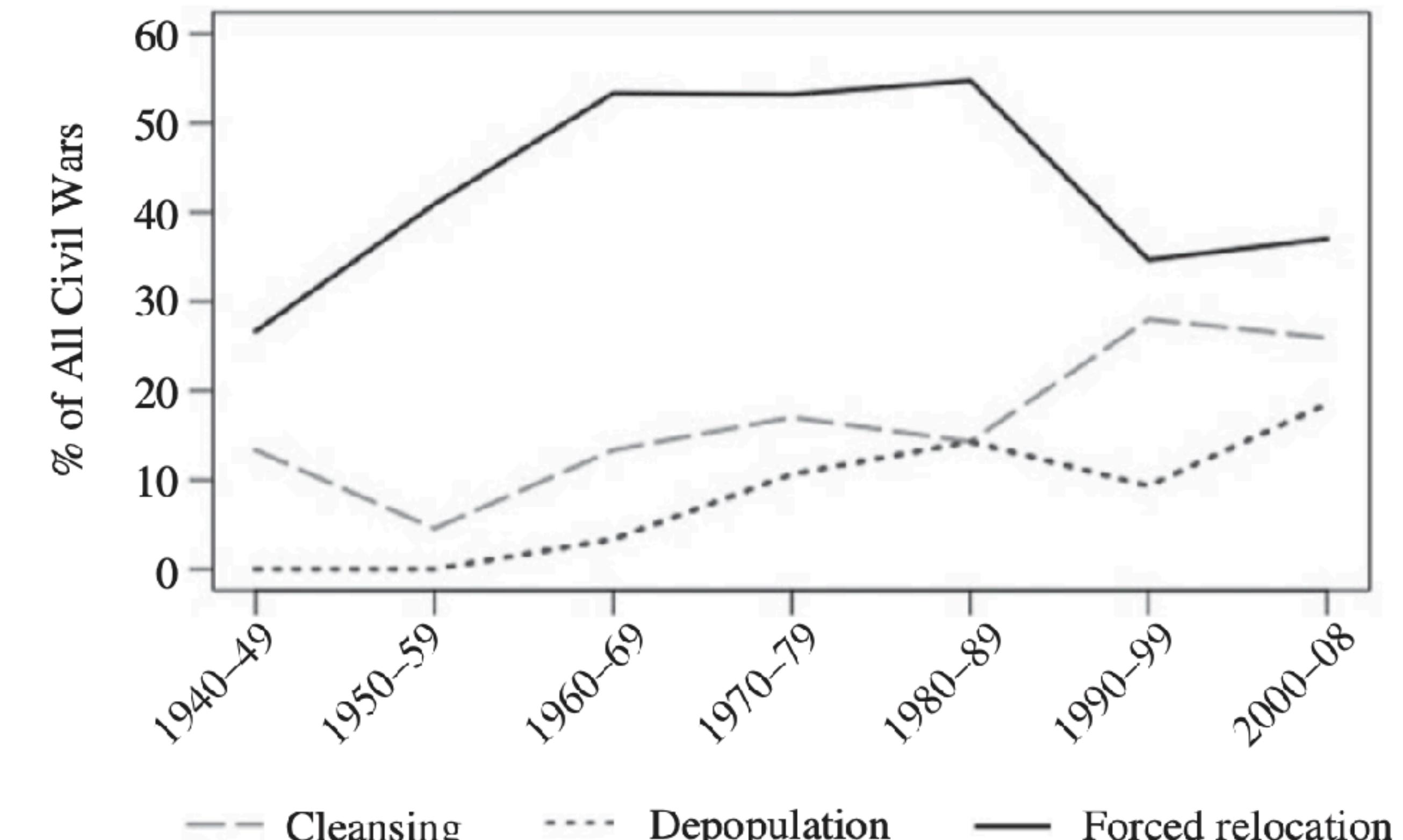


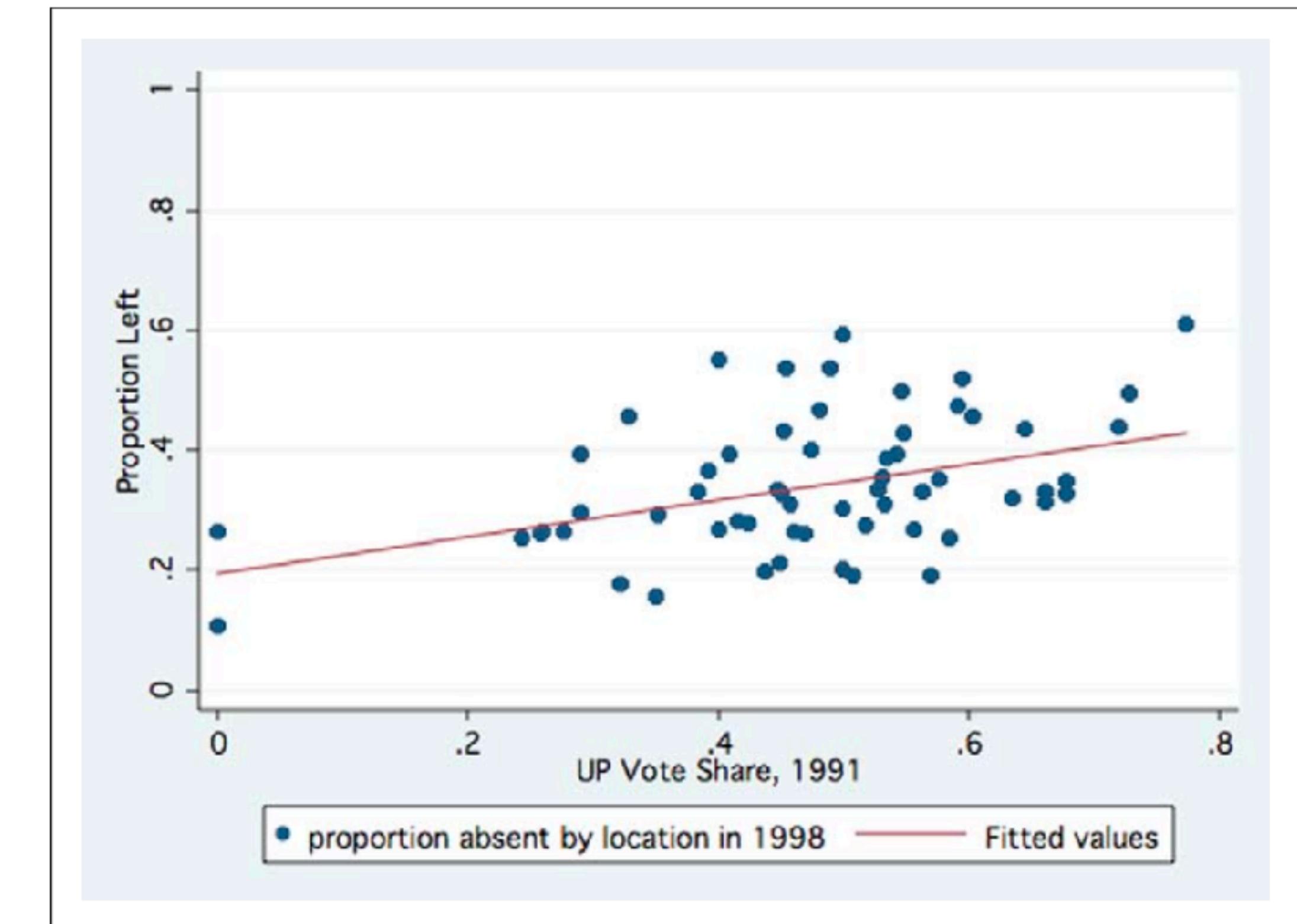
FIGURE 2. *Prevalence of state-induced displacement strategies*

Cleansing

Forced, permanent expulsion
based on **group-level heuristic**

More common in **conventional wars**, where identification less important

What kinds of heuristics?



Depopulation

Indiscriminate expulsion,
often using indirect
attacks
(shelling, airstrikes)

“Free-fire” zones were created along the main roads and extended back to the hills behind them, and the villages within these zones were “virtually obliterated.” In addition, field crops, food storage facilities, and the irrigation systems so vital to Afghan agriculture were bombed in the attempt to drive the people off the land. Soviet aircraft also deliberately attacked civilian caravans coming into or leaving the country, thus causing many casualties among women and children. Small bombs shaped as toys or other attractive objects were used with the intent to maim children, and these caused many livestock casualties as well.

Rare! Is this essentially mass killing/genocide?

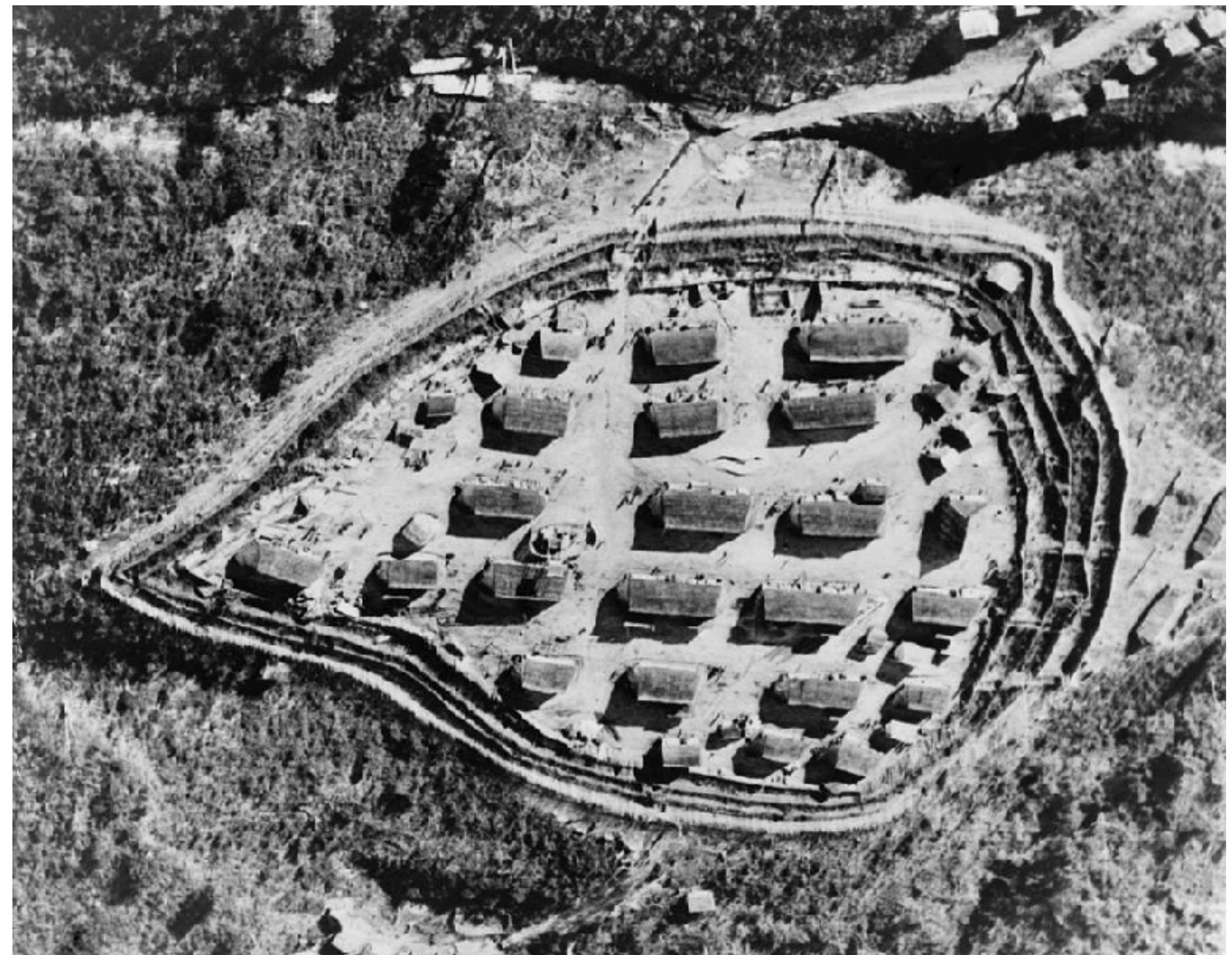
Soviet “Rubbleization” policy in Afghanistan

Forced relocation

“Pull” and concentrate
enemy population

Common in irregular wars,
where **identification** is
paramount

Force civilians to “signal”
loyalty (how?)



Strategic hamlet in Vietnam

Iraqi Forces Push Through ISIS-held Mosul as Civilians Flee



Iraqi forces pushed further into the Old City of Mosul this week, getting closer to retaking the Islamic State's last stronghold in Iraq.

But can civilians actually do this?
And if so, why send “wrong” signal?

Russia - Ukraine

Allegations of “abductions”
of Ukrainian citizens by
Russian troops

Is this displacement? What
kind?

**Russia transfers thousands of
Mariupol civilians to its territory**

By Laurence Peter
BBC News

© 27 March



Russia-Ukraine war



| Dozens of refugees are now housed in a sports centre in Taganrog, Russia, east of Mariupol

Opportunism

State of things

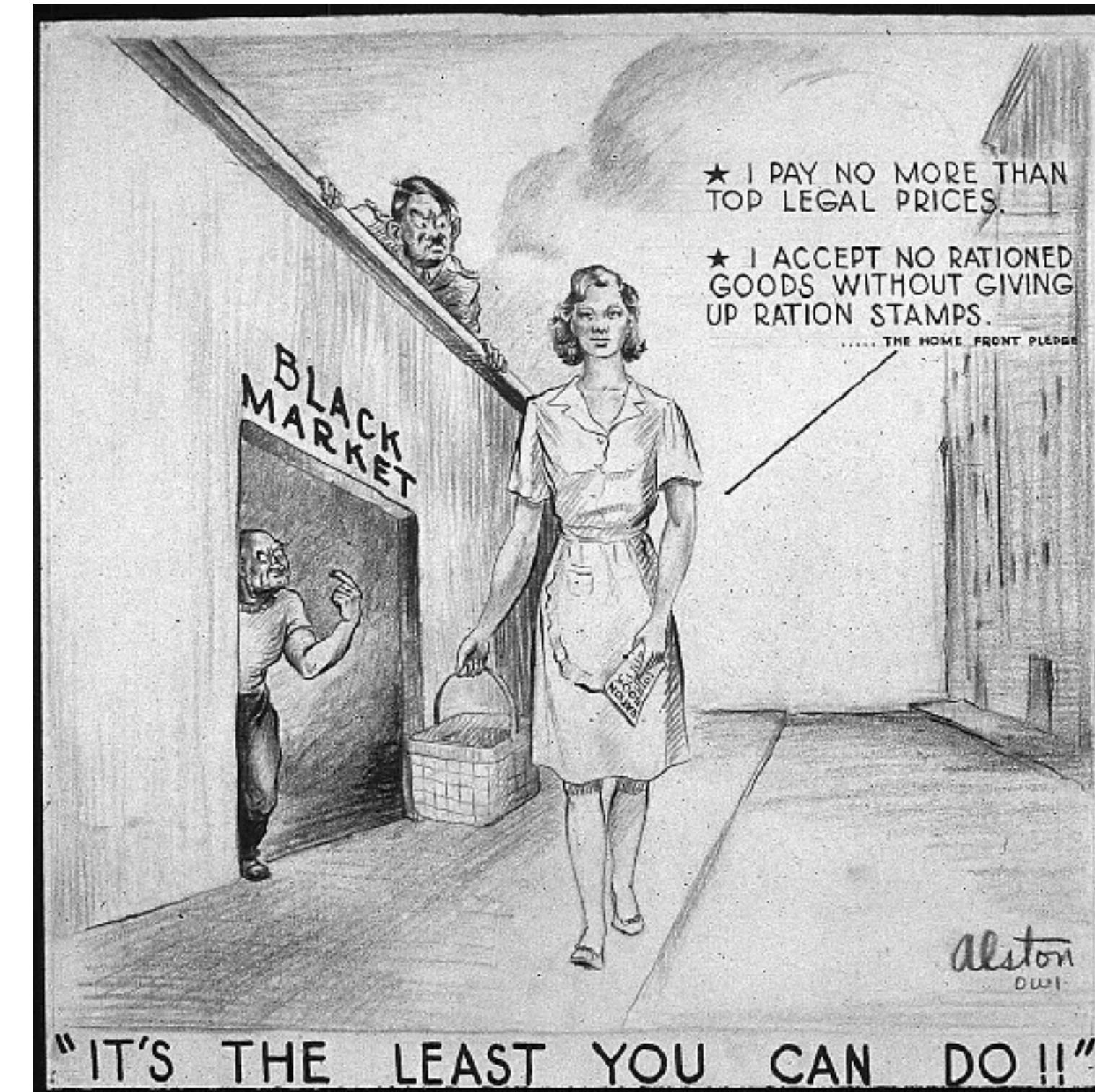
Civil war research tends to assume:

Everything that happens in war is
done by combatants

Violence is rational, and about
strategy

War as opportunity

*“...individual and local actors **take advantage** of the war...[actions] often bearing **little or no relation to the causes of the war** or goals of the belligerents.”*
— Kalyvas (2001)

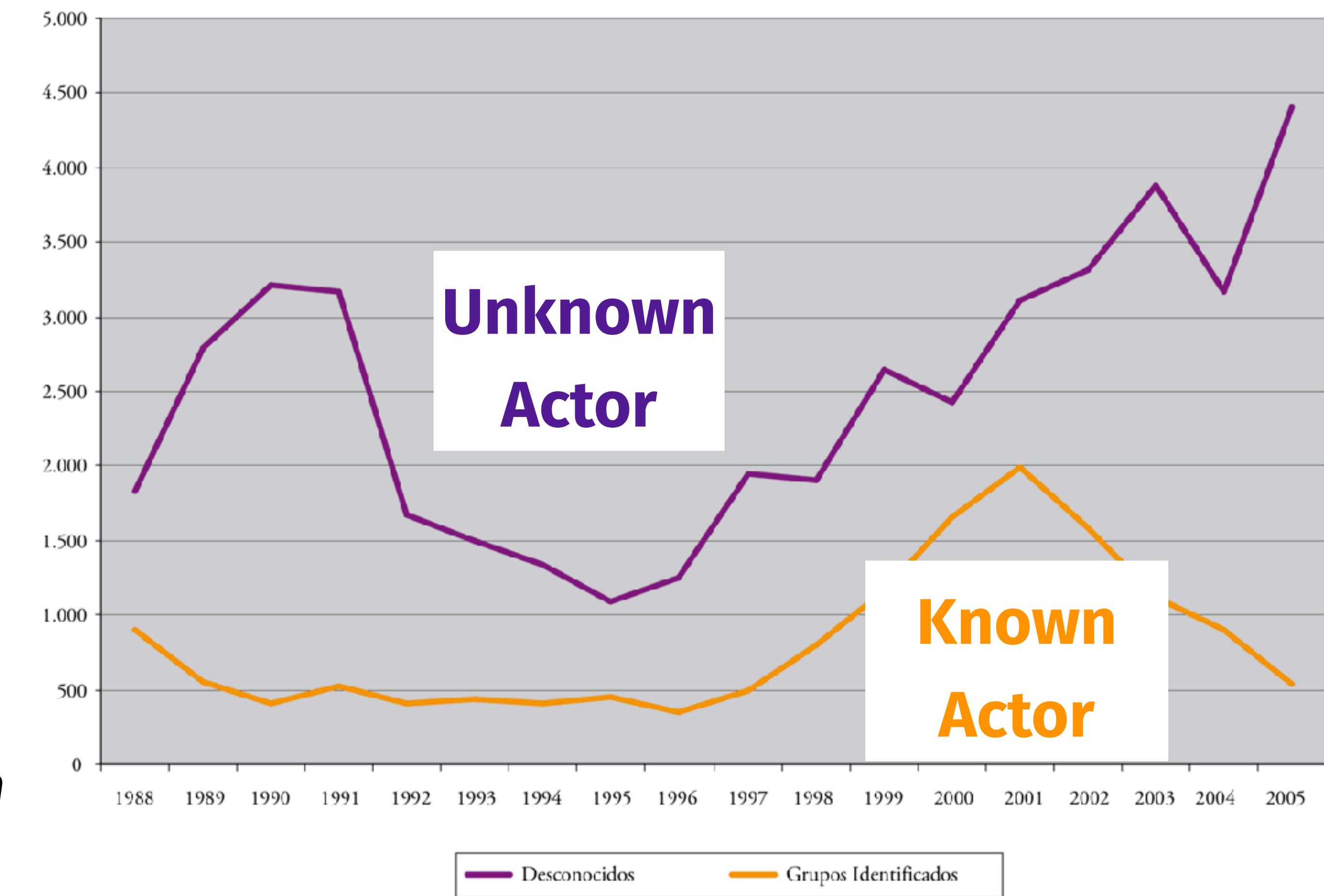


But war provides **opportunity** for others in society to pursue private goals

The fog of war

Violence happens; whose the perpetrator? Hard to tell – especially with **displacement**

*“...because displacement is frequently **perceived to be a byproduct of violence**...[actors] can deny responsibility more easily than when using lethal violence”
(Steele, 2011)*



Elites often **collude** with violent orgs, though we don't know exactly when/why

Gold mining in the Ulindi River by Kun Hou Mining, Shabunda, RDC



Last update:
2018-02-05



Numerous corruption scandals between different state agencies and collusion of interests between Kun Hou Mining with the rebel group Raia Mutomboki in the exploitation of gold in Ulindi river's banks.

Mining companies, rebel groups, gold



Politicians, violent orgs, elections

Opportunistic displacement

War provides the **opportunity**

Economic shocks can provide the
motivation

Sudden increases in **demand** for
land → displacement
(to capture land)



So: displacement motivated by
opportunism; not strategy!

Palm oil in Colombia

Everything from biodiesel to household goods

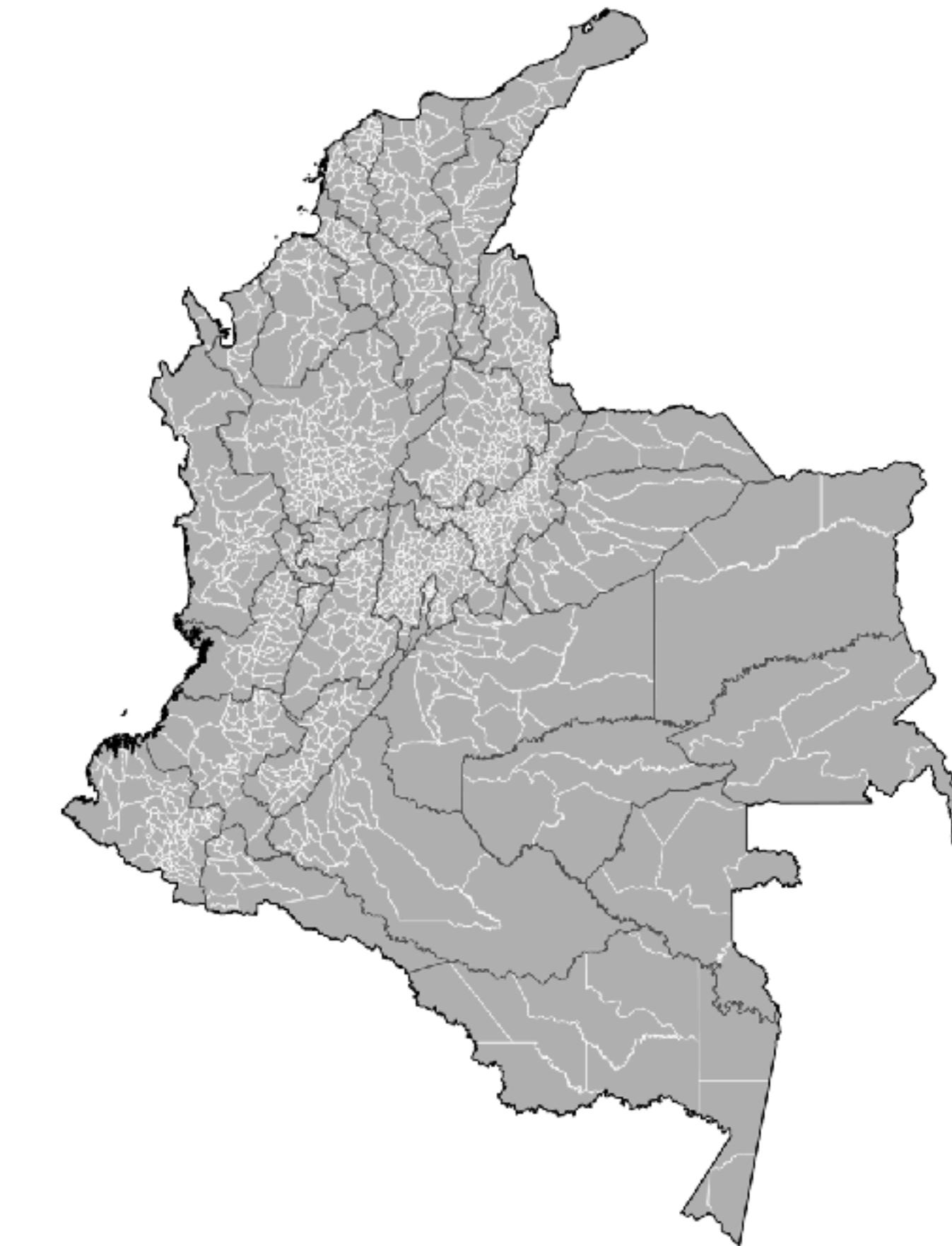
Colombia rises to **4th largest** producer in ~10 years

Very land-intensive



Palm oil → demand for land

Data

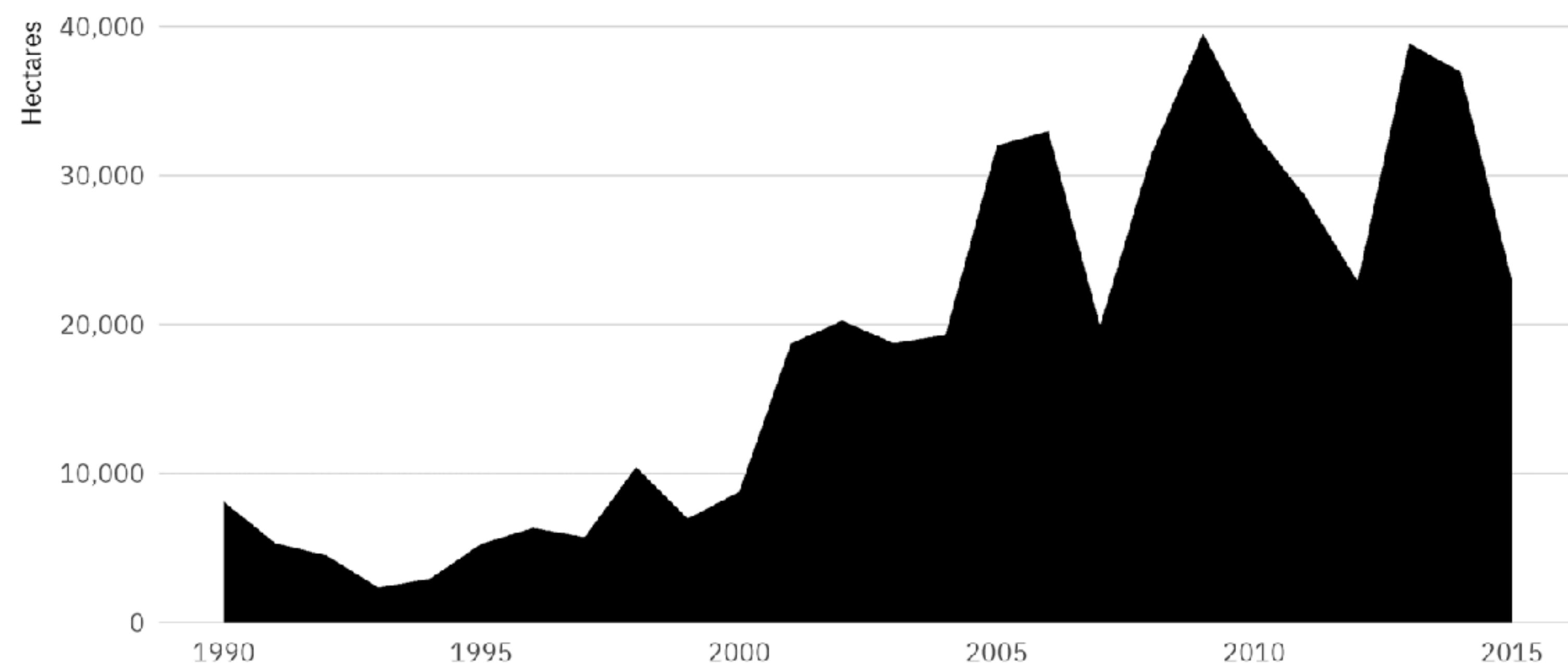


Went and figured out **when** each town first started growing

Analysis

Palm Oil Production in Colombia

New or renovated plantations. Data from SISPA.

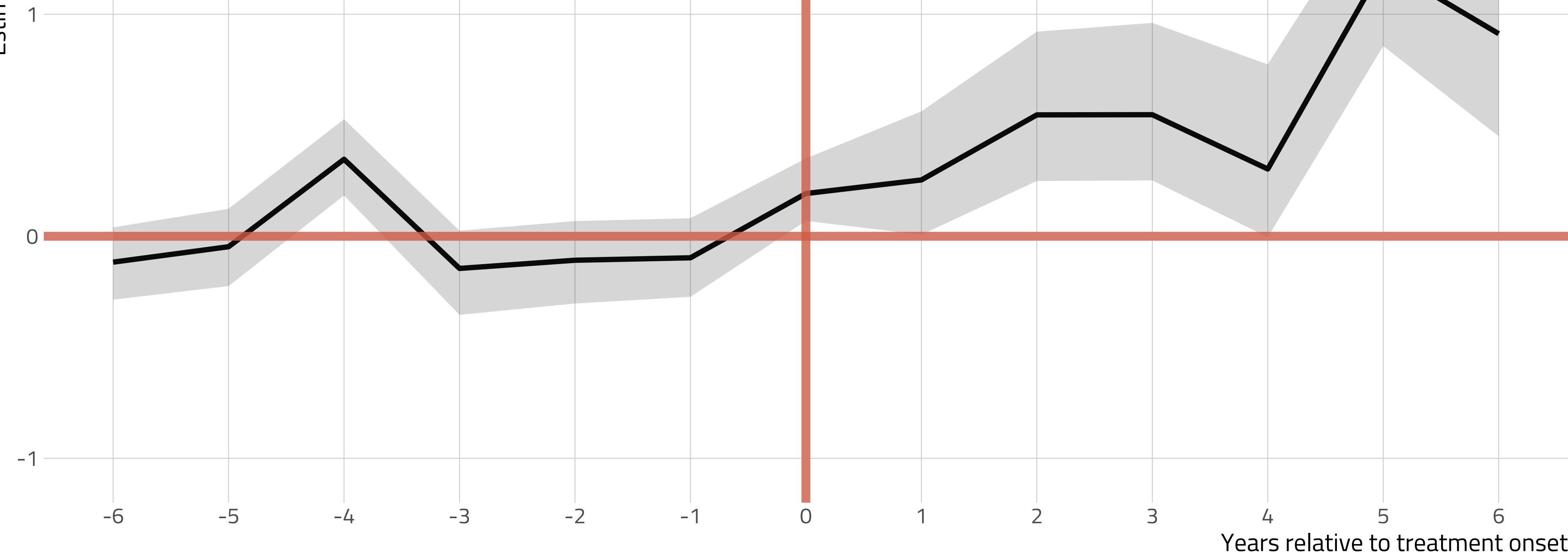


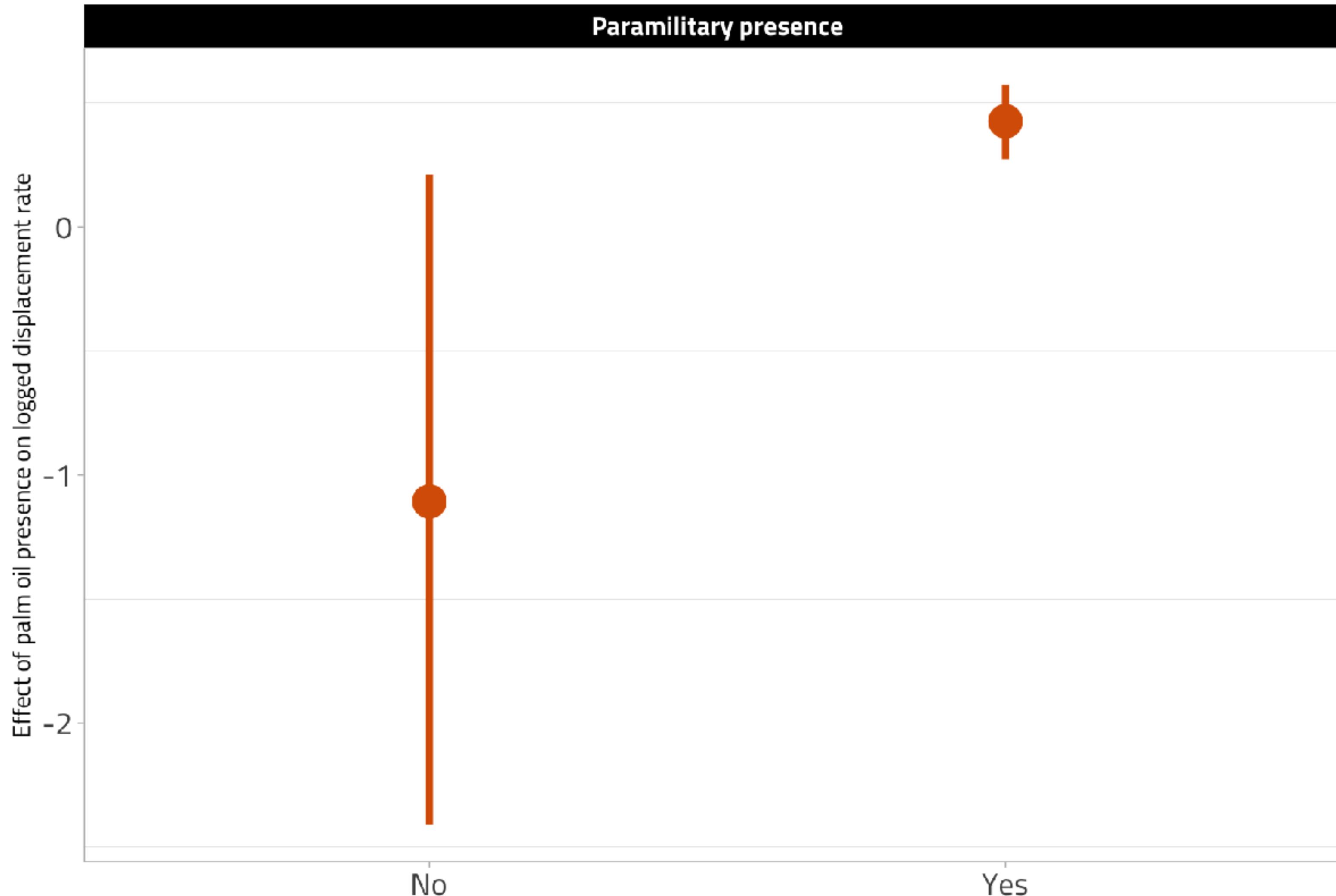
Compare what happens to towns that **start growing** vs. towns that never grow (but otherwise similar)

Estimated average treatment effect on the treated

Pre palm oil – parallel trends. Those that grow and don't grow are similar ✓

Post palm oil – divergence. Those that grow see more displacement ✓



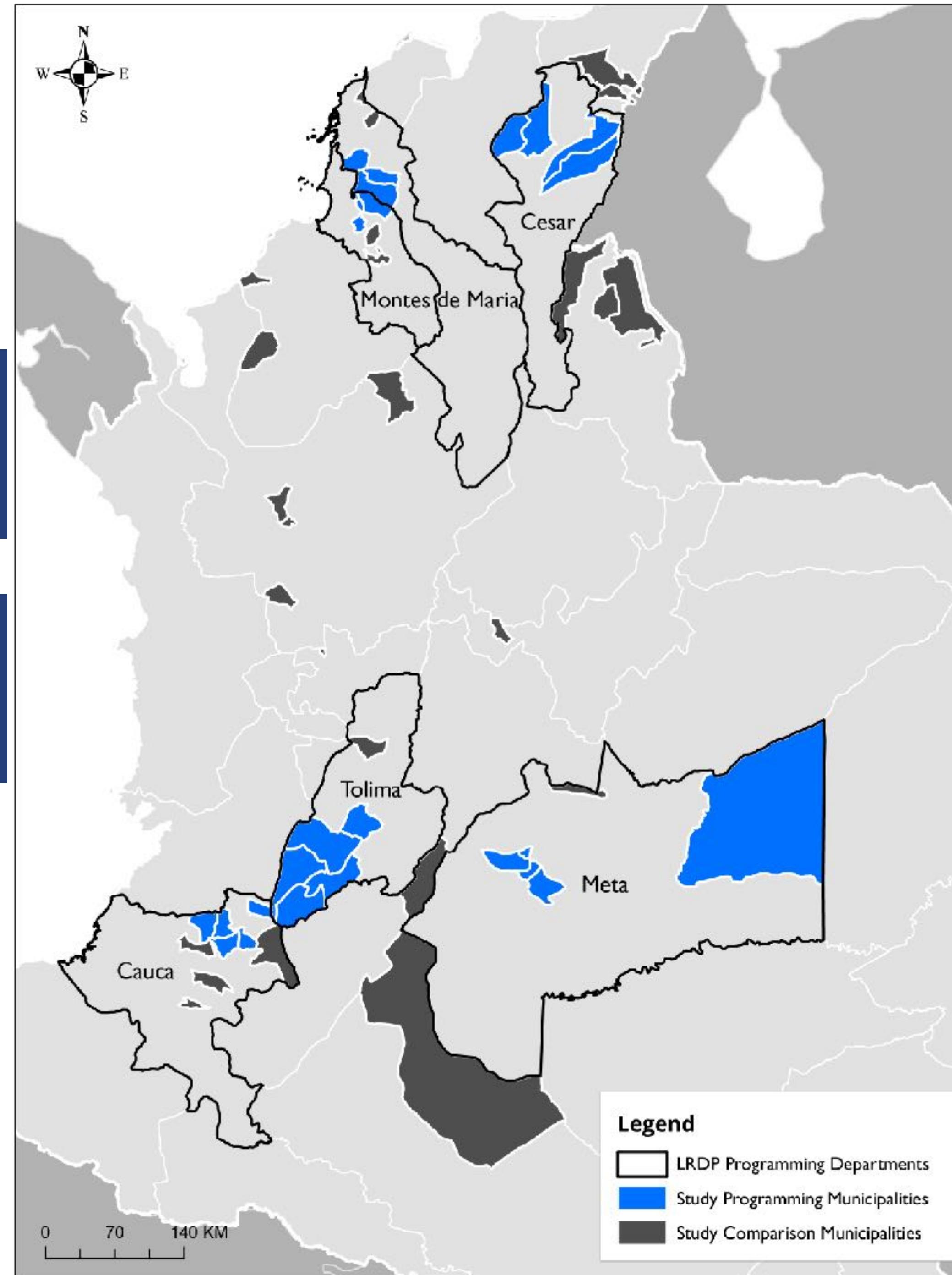


Especially in places where **elite-allied** armed orgs dominate

Survey

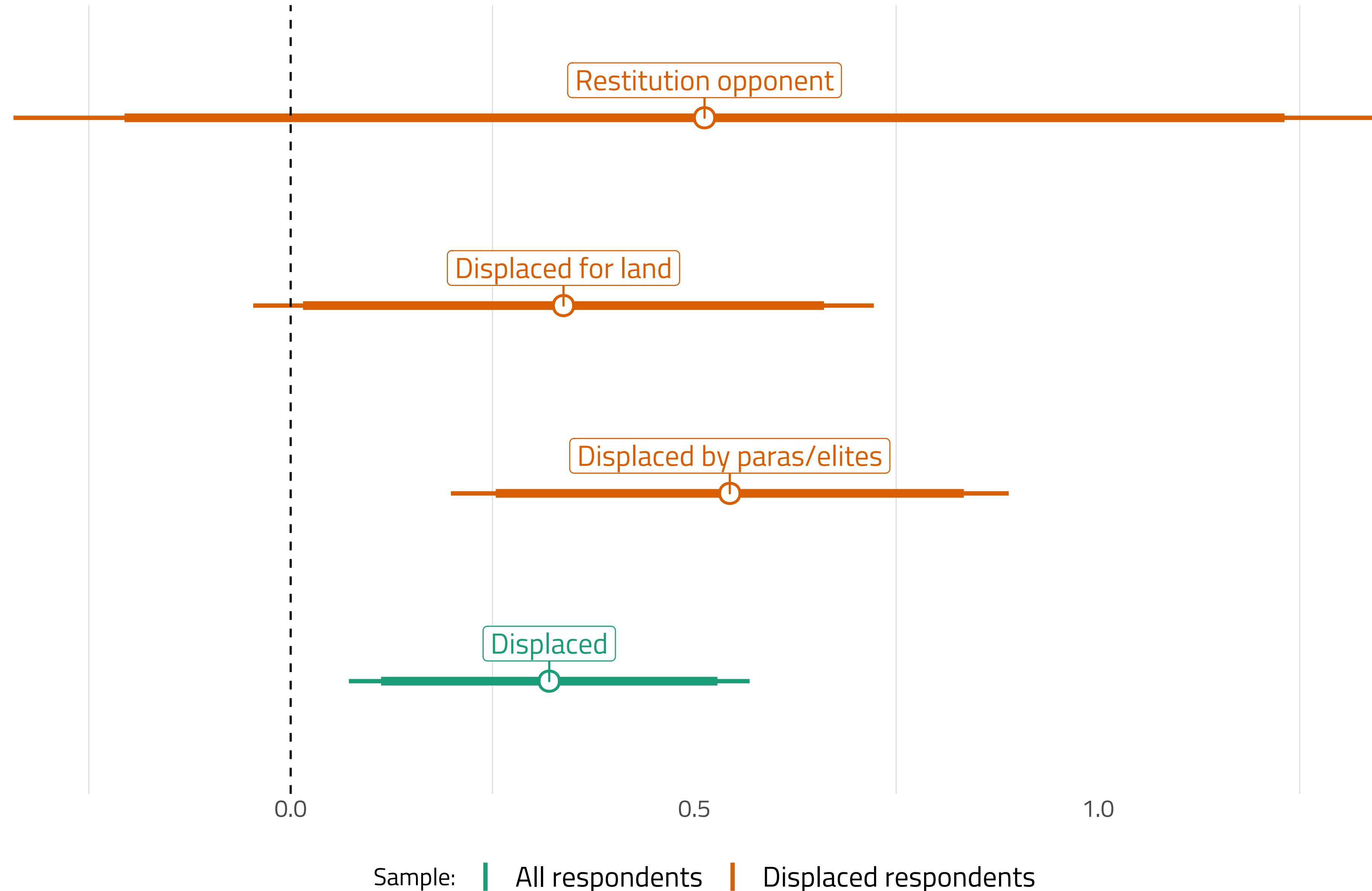
Survey of rural households in poor,
conflict-afflicted areas of country

Perpetrator, motive, timing of
displacement



Effects of Palm-oil on Household Displacement Experiences

Logit models. Treatment = respondent is from palm-oil region.



Ethnography

"One day [the paramilitaries] came to my place; they said – **either you sell us your farm, or we'll buy it from your widow.** We took all our stuff and we left. They never paid for the land...my brother went back to our lands a few months ago, he told me **the whole county is now planted with oil palm**, hundreds of hectares. It is enclosed with fences and there is a `private property' notice",
in Grajales (2013)

Ethnographic accounts

2014 court case by Afro-Colombian community in Choco
against 16 large agricultural companies (pacifista.co)

"There is **a curious relationship** between displacement, land theft, and palm-oil plantations in at least 5 departments [of Colombia]"
Center for Historical Memory

Ethnography

"If you don't want to sell [your land] now, your widow will sell it for less later",

farmer from Petén, Guatemala
in *Ser un Nadie en Tierra de Narcos*

Wikileaks

P 061632Z MAY 08 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2646

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 001656

SUBJECT: THREATS TO PRIESTS IN SOUTHERN BOLIVAR

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.

Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) Three Catholic priests and ten lay workers in Southern Bolivar said they were [threatened by persons with] links to narcotraffickers Victor and Miguel Mejia (Los Mellizos). The priests believe they were targeted due to their alternative development, human rights, and social organization programs which antagonize corrupt local politicians and narcotraffickers. They said narcotraffickers have penetrated elements of the security forces-- leading to human rights abuses--and complained that some African palm firms are using armed force to seize peasants' land. The GOC met with the priests to discuss their security and committed to expedited investigations. Ambassador Brownfield visited the region on April 7 to show support for local alternative development programs and social groups. End summary.

R 201546Z FEB 08

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1431

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 000618

SUBJECT: TRIP TO CURVARADO HIGHLIGHTS SECURITY CONCERN; GOC RESPONSE

REF: BOGOTA 239

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.
Reasons 1.4 b and d.

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Local members of the Afro-Colombian communities of Jiguamiando and Curvarado complained about GOC delays in returning their land, lack of security and GOC financial support, and perceived military bias in favor of African palm companies. Local leader Enrique Petro told us the palm firms continue to develop land claimed by the communities and employ demobilized paramilitaries to intimidate local residents. The local military commander said his unit protects Petro--who participates in the Interior Ministry's protection program--and stressed that the unit stays out of the land dispute between the communities and the palm firms. Still, he conceded the military's use of the palm

R 302232Z MAY 07

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5750

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 003855

SUBJECT: CURVARADO AND JIGUAMIANDO: A TALE OF TWO DISPLACED AFRO-COLOMBIAN COMMUNITIES

REF: A. BOGOTA 2533
B. BOGOTA 2274

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.
Reason: 1.4 (b,d)

Summary

¶1. (C) Conflict between paramilitary and FARC forces displaced the Afro-Colombian communities of Curvarado and Jiguamiando in 1997. Between 2001-2002, after the GOC designated 100,000 hectares in the area as Afro-Colombian "communal territories," community members returned. They found their land occupied by African palm plantations. Palm companies claimed they "bought" the land, but human rights and Afro-Colombian advocacy groups say sellers were intimidated by paramilitaries and/or lacked the legal right to sell the land. The GOC's land titling agency has spent years sorting out

Why it matters: is growth always good?

Colombian government (ostensibly)
pushed palm-oil as a growth strategy

Growth can interact with war to produce
unexpected local consequences

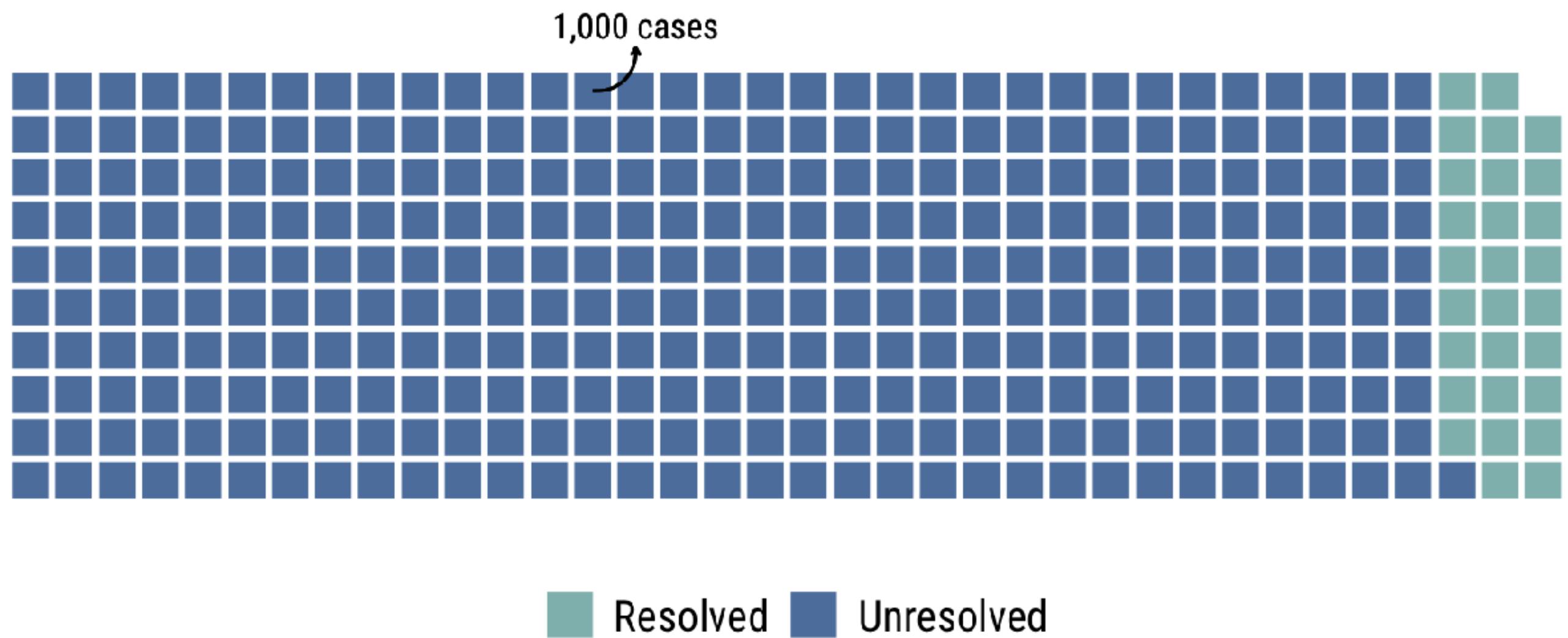
Raises **caution** concerning policy, aid

*“War takes on a life
of its own.”*
– Kalyvas (2011)

Why it matters: after war ends

Requests for Return of Land/Property in Colombia

Wartime restitution cases. Source: Verdad Abierta.



How and why people are displaced **matters** for post-conflict stability

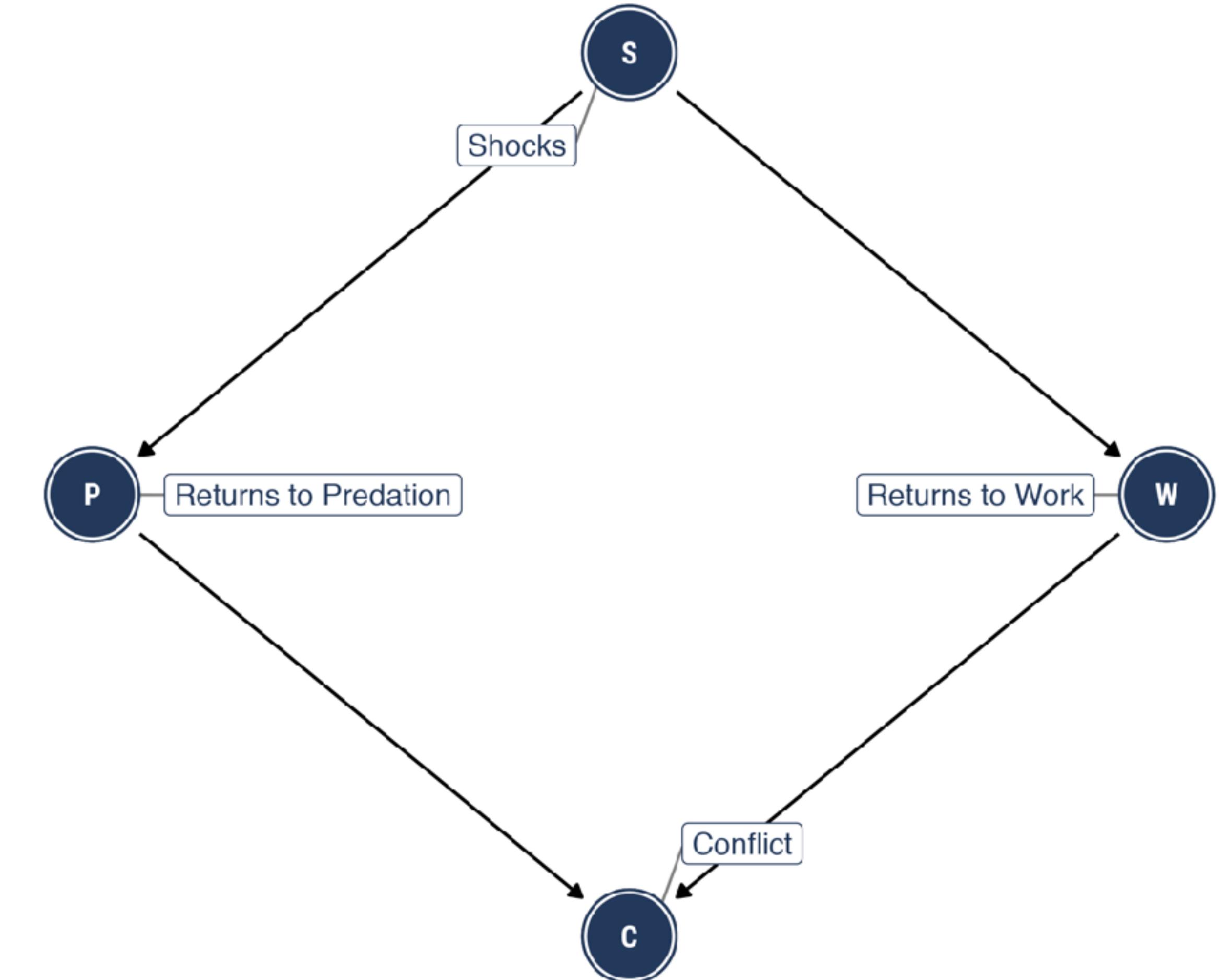
Opportunistic displacement → powerful restitution opponents

Why it matters: political economy

Economic models all about whether **shocks** make peasants more likely to rebel (vs. labor)

Paper shows effects can also run through **elites**

How do firms/elites respond to wartime economic shocks?



Recap

Displacement is a major consequence of war

Can be a by-product or deliberate

When deliberate, might be:

Combatants, trying to win

Others, taking advantage