

Supporting Materials for
“Building State Capacity through Public Land Disposal:
An Application of Matrix Completion for
Counterfactual Prediction”

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1 Exploratory data analysis

Table 1: Definitions and data sources of variables.

Theme	Variable	Coverage	Definition	Source
Farms	Farm size	1860	Log average farm size	Haines (2010)
	Farm value	1850,1860	Log average value of farmland and buildings per acre (\$)	Haines (2010)
	Land inequality	Ibid.	Gini coefficient based on distribution of farm sizes, adjusted for the share of propertyless farmers	Ibid.
State Capacity	Revenues	1783-1982	Log per-capita state government total revenue (1982\$)	Sylla et al. (1993, 1995a,b); Haines (2010) (total free pop. data from Haines (2010))
	Expenditures	Ibid.	Log per-capita state government total expenditure (1982\$)	Ibid.
Homesteads	Homestead entries	1869-1982	Log per-capita statewide sum of patents issued under the HSA	U.S. BLM (https://glorecords.blm.gov) (total free pop. data from Haines (2010))
Railroads	Railroad access	1850, 1860	Log total miles of operational railroad track per sq mi	Constructed from Atack (2013)

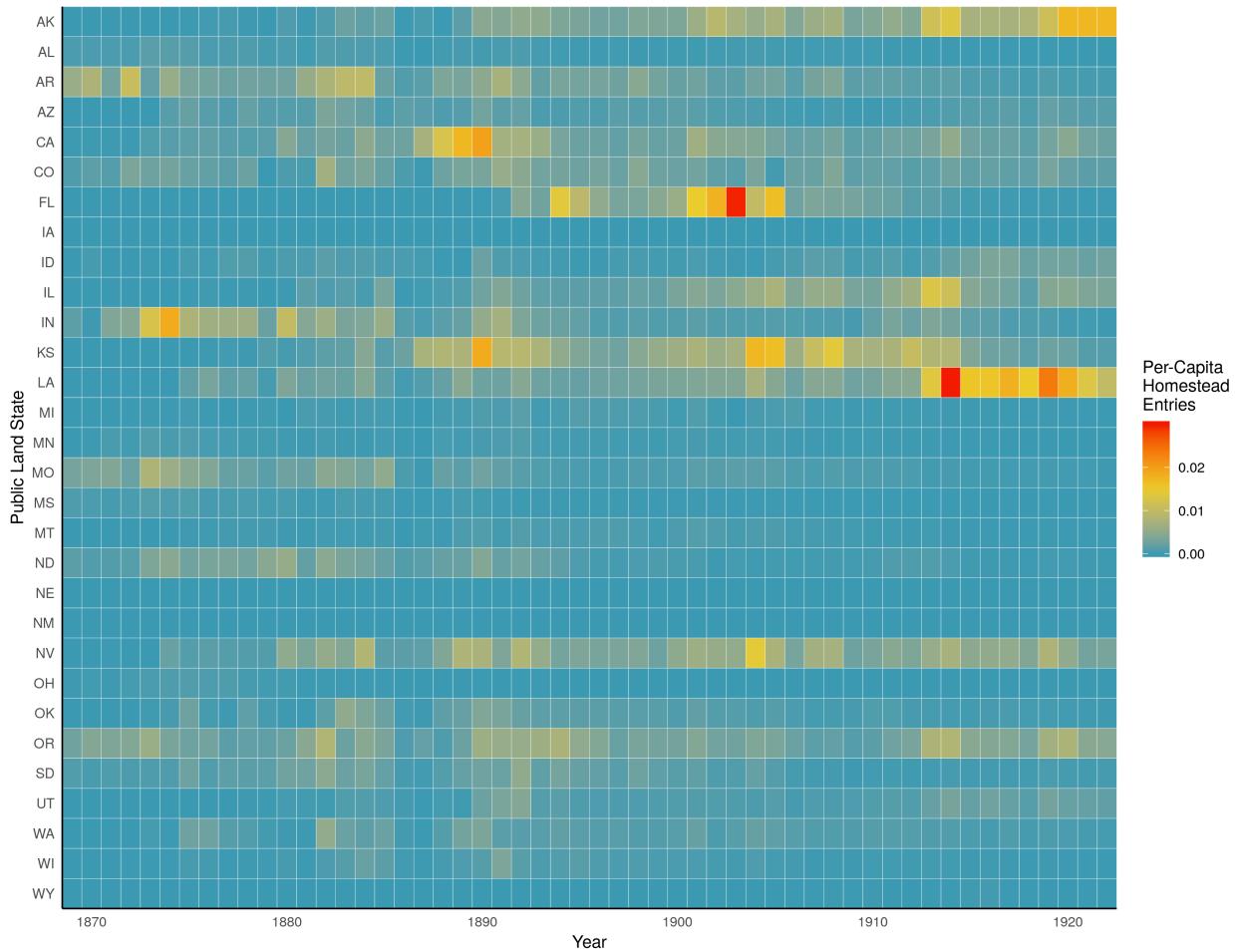
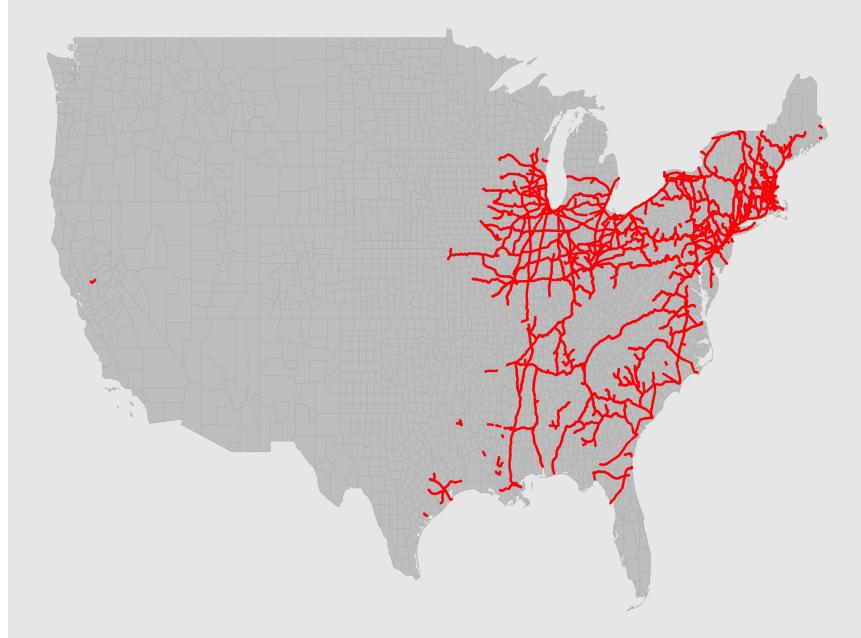


Figure 1: Per-capita statewide sum of homestead entries in state i and year t , 1869-1922.

1862 (1911 county borders)



1911

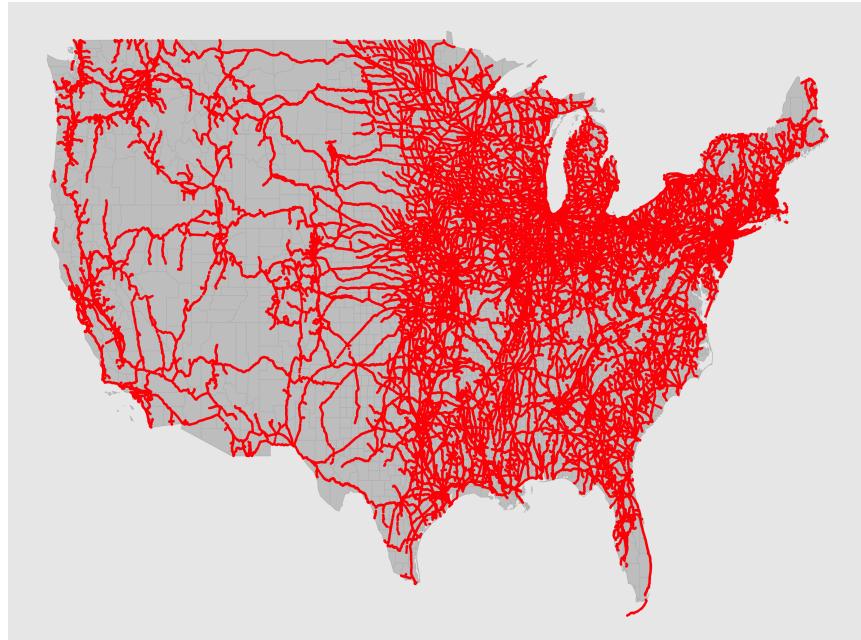


Figure 2: Railroad lines in 1862 and 1911, overlaid on 1911 county borders. Railroad data from Atack (2013) and county border data from Long (1995).

2 Simulations

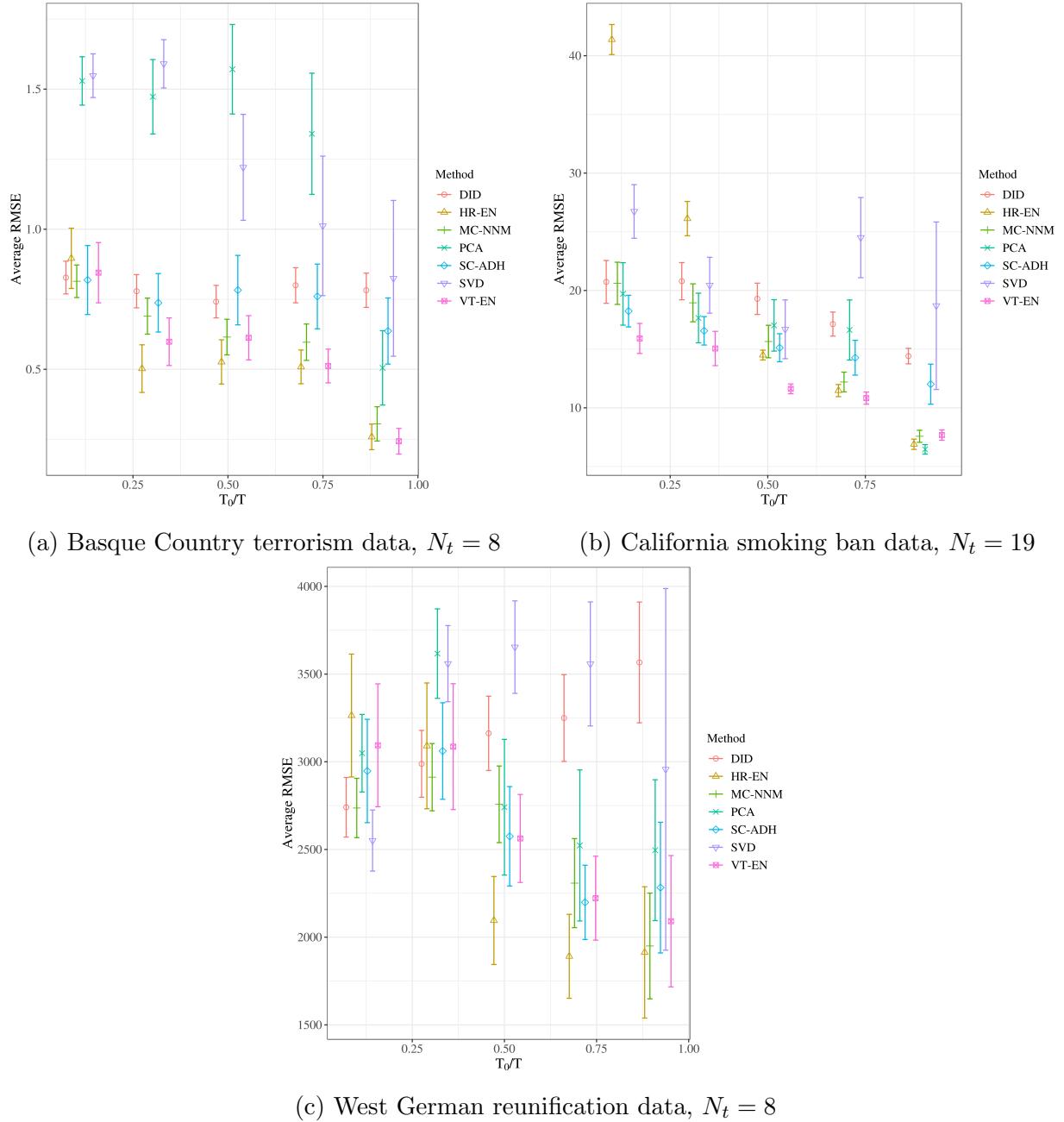


Figure 3: Placebo tests under simultaneous treatment adoption. See footnotes to Fig. 1.

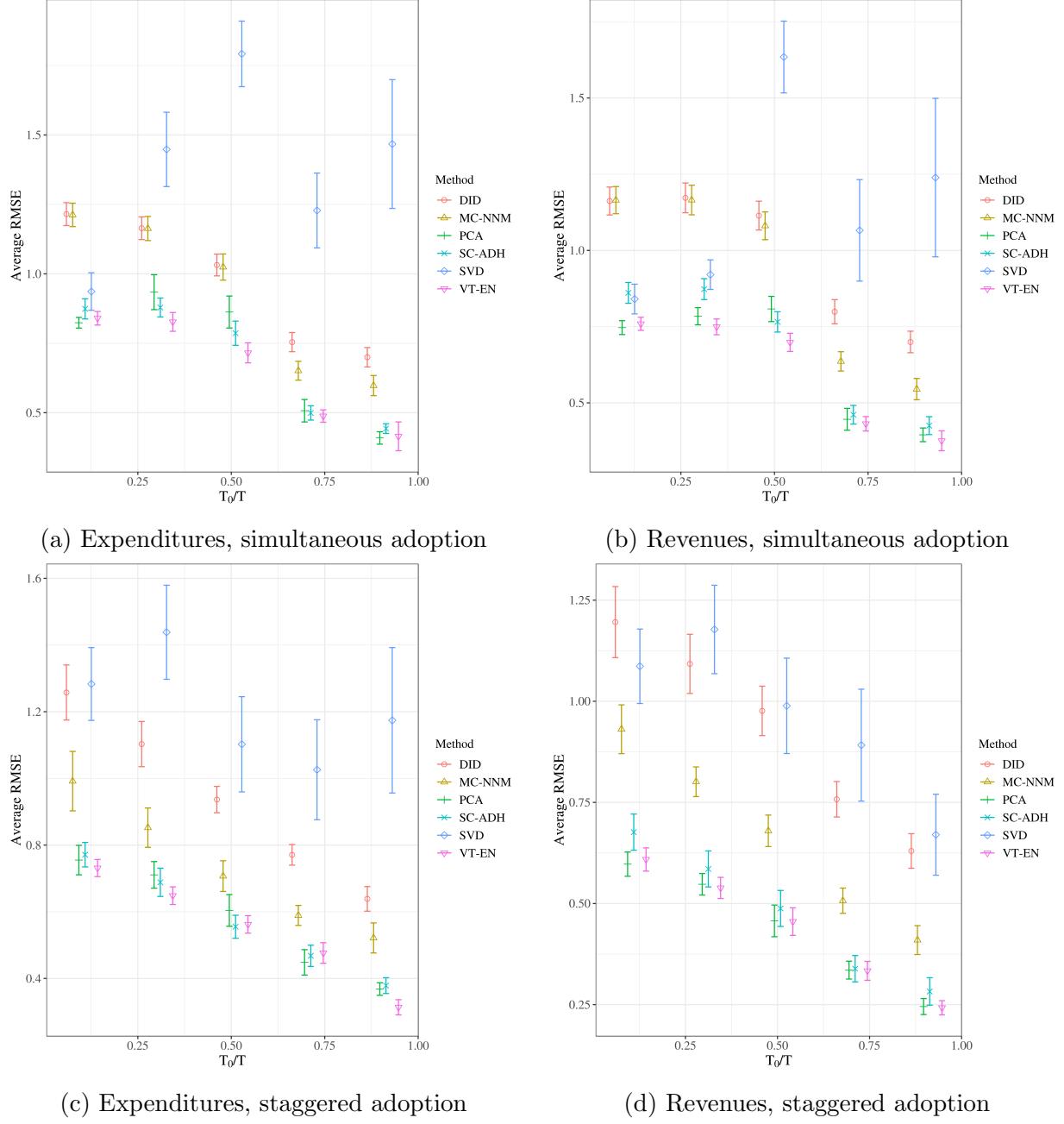


Figure 4: Placebo tests under simultaneous and staggered treatment adoption, with $N_t = 9$. See footnotes to Fig. 3.

3 Estimates

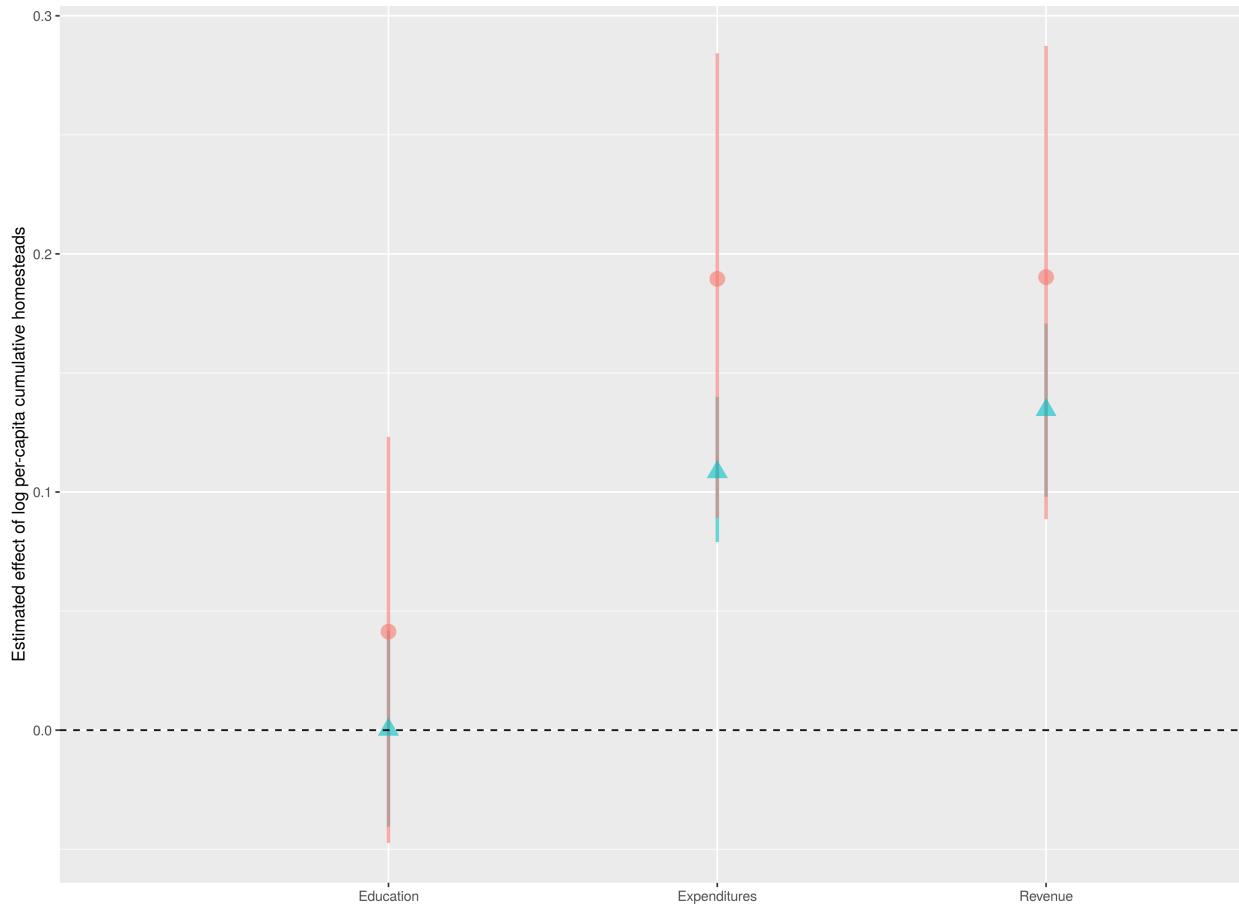


Figure 5: DD estimates of log per-capita cumulative homesteads on log per-capita state government finance, without including average farm values in the regression. See notes to Fig. 3.

4 Causal mechanisms

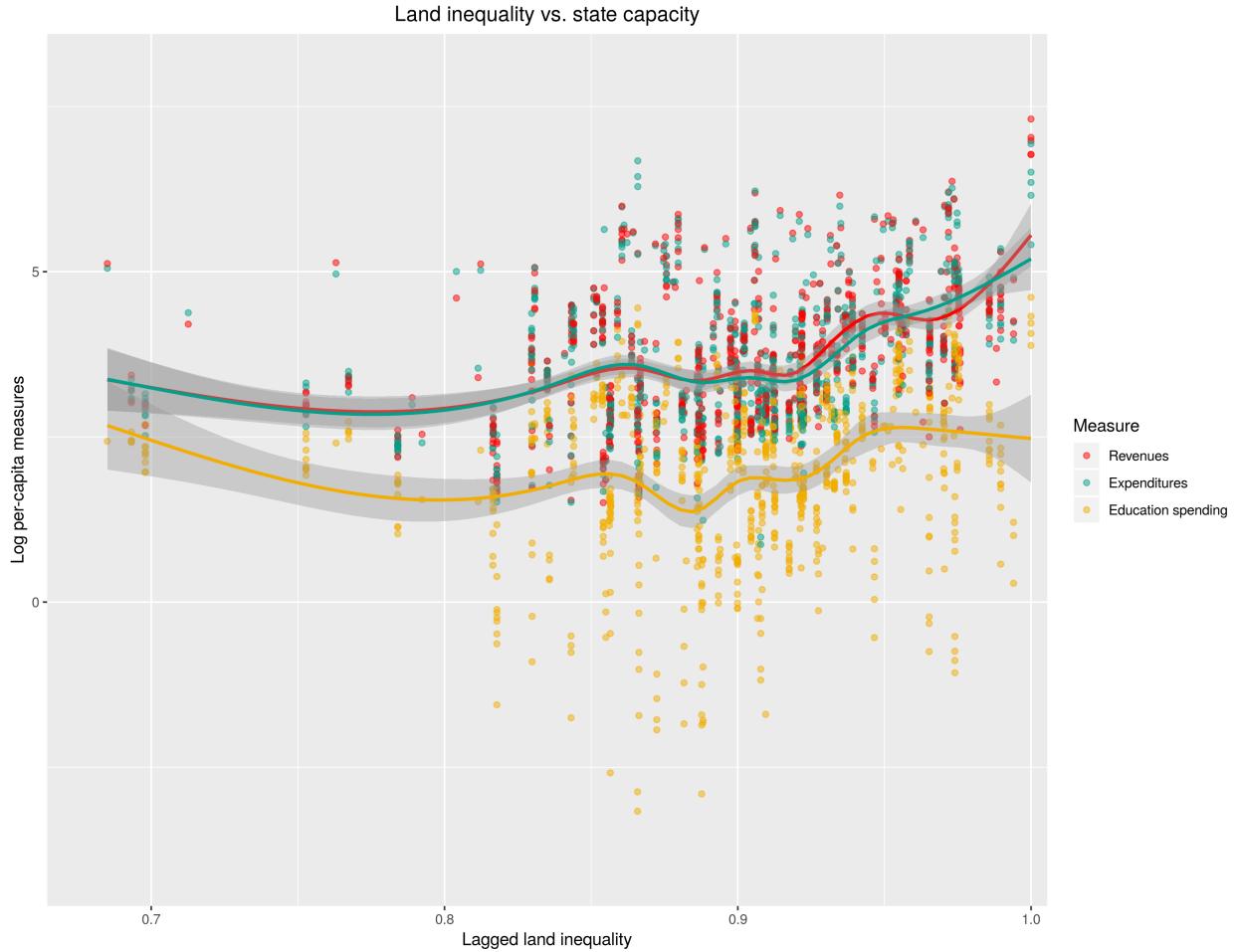


Figure 6: Land inequality vs. log per-capita revenues and expenditures at the state-level, 1860-1950. Each point is a state-year observation. Lines represent generalized additive model (GAM) fits to the data and shaded regions represent corresponding 95% confidence intervals.

Table 2: DD estimates: Impact of log per-capita cumulative homesteads (county-level).

Outcome \ Region	South	West
Land inequality	-0.001 [-0.003, 0.0004], N = 523	-0.004 [-0.005, -0.002], N = 2,002
Land inequality (no farm values)	0.0007 [-0.0008, 0.002], N = 590	-0.001 [-0.002, -0.0001], N = 2,549
Railroad access	0.03 [0.01, 0.05], N = 350	0.09 [0.07, 0.1], N = 1,053
Railroad access (no farm values)	0.06 [0.04, 0.08], N = 361	0.12 [0.11, 0.13], N = 1,251

Notes: Values in brackets represent 95% confidence intervals constructed using 1,000 state-stratified bootstrap samples.

References

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