

# Authority After the Tempest

## Hurricane Michael and the 2018 Elections

Kevin Morris

Brennan Center for Justice / CUNY Graduate Center, Sociology

Comparative Politics Workshop, 9/23/2021

# Hurricanes and other Climate Disasters are Becoming More Common

"All the News  
That's Fit to Print"

# The New York Times

Late Edition  
Today, variable clouds, showers, a  
moderate wind. High 50°. Tonight, partly  
cloudy, seasonably cool, low 40°. Wed-  
nesday, partly sunny, breezy, high  
50°. Weather map is on Page B1.

VOL. CLXII . . . No. 55,942 + © 2012 The New York Times NEW YORK, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2012 \$2.50

## NEW JERSEY REELS FROM STORM'S THRASHING



**State Bore Brunt  
in Floods and  
Destruction**

By DAVID M. HALFINGER

HOBOKEN, N.J. — New Jersey was reeling on Wednesday from the impact of Hurricane Sandy, which has caused catastrophic flooding here in Hoboken and in other New Jersey cities, destroyed entire neighborhoods across the state and wiped out last vestiges of life in shore towns that had enchanted generations of vacationers.

Though the storm raged up the East Coast for days, it was increasingly apparent that New Jersey took the brunt of it. Officials estimated that the state suffered billions of dollars in property damage. About a quarter of the state's population — more than two million people — remained without power on Wednesday, and more than 6,000 were still in shelters, state emergency officials said.

At least 100 people died, and officials expressed deep concern that the toll would rise as more searches of homes were carried out.

On Wednesday, President Obama visited the state and viewed the destruction with Gov. Chris Christie.

"The entire country has been watching what's been happening," Mr. Obama said at a stop in Atlantic City. He visited the Seaside Beach Community Center in Brigantine. "Everybody knows how hard Jersey has been hit."

Perhaps as startling as the

In New Jersey, where flooding destroyed large parts of areas like Hoboken and Seaside Heights, above, over two million people were without power on Wednesday.

**Long Gas Lines, Clogged Roads,  
And Slim Hope for a Better Day**

**An Unlikely Political Pair, United by a Disaster**

By MARK LANDLER  
and MICHAEL BARBARO

him to Marine One, where the two men shared a grim flight over shattered sea walls, burning houses and a submerged roller

Speaking to storm victims at a community center in the hard-hit town of Brigantine, Mr. Obama said, "We are come to be here for

# Hurricanes and other Climate Disasters are Becoming More Common

The collage includes several newspaper and magazine covers:

- New Jersey:** A small inset shows a flooded area with debris.
- Orlando Sentinel (Final Edition, Friday, October 7, 2016):** The main headline is "IT'S HERE" with a large image of a flooded city skyline. Sub-headlines include "Long Gas Lines, Clogged Roads, And Slim Hope for a Better Day" and "An Unlikely Ponzi".
- Orlando Times (Late Edition):** Headlines mention Hurricane Sandy's impact on New Jersey, including flooding in Hoboken and damage to the state's infrastructure.
- Time Magazine:** A sidebar discusses the storm's impact on New Jersey.
- Newsweek:** A sidebar discusses the storm's impact on New Jersey.
- Business Week:** A sidebar discusses the storm's impact on New Jersey.

Text snippets from the clippings describe scenes of destruction, including flooded roads, damaged infrastructure, and the challenges faced by survivors in New Jersey and Florida.

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# Hurricanes and other Climate



In New Jersey, where flooding destroyed

**Long Gas Lines, Clog  
And Slim Hope for c**

**Hurricane Michael coverage**

**MORE INSIDE**

- A home to wait for guide for hurricane prep. **28**
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- FDLR, FDML officials adjusting for Michael. **34**
- High-speed reporting teams activated. **34**

**ONLINE**

Contributed by tallahassee.com  
Photo gallery, video, photos and editorials  
about Hurricane Michael's path. As Michael moved inland, its eye was still offshore, so it's not certain if it will make landfall again.

## TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

HURRICANE MICHAEL

# 'TAKE ACTION'



## Officials prep for worst, head lessons of Hermine

By Jeffrey Saksman | Tallahassee Democrat | jaksman@tallahassee.com | 850-578-2306



Grocery stores were busy Monday at The Piggy Wiggly on Franklin Street.

See MICHAEL, Page T8

## Wakulla, Franklin order mandatory evacuation

By Jeff Ethier | Tallahassee Democrat | jethier@tallahassee.com | 850-578-2306

**WT. MAILED:** Hills along the coast of Franklin and Wakulla counties are under a mandatory evacuation as that is predicted to happen.

On Monday, Leon County issued a mandatory evacuation order for all of Leon County, including the city of Tallahassee, and parts of Franklin and Wakulla counties. Leon County and the city of Tallahassee have been under a state of emergency since Hurricane Michael arrived on Saturday.

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See MICHAEL, Page T4

Michael has already passed through the Panhandle, but is predicted to move inland toward the central Florida panhandle on Wednesday.

Leon County Mayor John Beliles said he expects Michael to pass through the county around 10 p.m. on Wednesday.

"We're going to be prepared," Beliles said.

Leon County officials have been preparing for Michael since the storm was first forecasted.

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**Late Edition**

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\$2.50

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**HALFINGER**  
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ough the storm raged up the East Coast, it had become clear that New Jersey took the brunt. Officials estimated that the state suffered more than \$100 billion in damages. About a quarter of the state's population — more than two million people — remained without power on Wednesday, and more than 6,000 were still in shelters, state emergency officials said.

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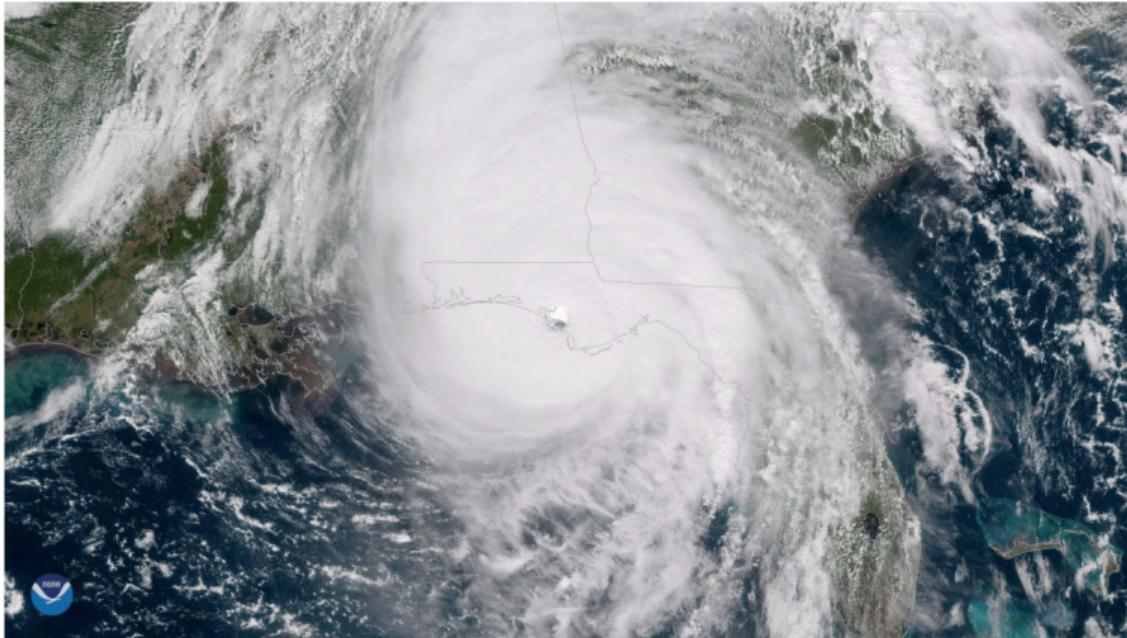
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# Hurricane Michael hits Florida Panhandle on October 10, 2018



GOES-16 PSEUDO-NATURAL COLOR IMAGE OF HURRICANE MICHAEL AT 1730 UTC 10 OCTOBER 2018. IMAGE COURTESY OF NOAA/NESDIS.

# Florida Governor Issues Executive Order 18-283

**STATE OF FLORIDA**  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**  
**EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 18-283**  
**(Emergency Management—Elections)**

**WHEREAS**, on October 10, 2018, Hurricane Michael made landfall in Bay County as a category 4 hurricane with sustained winds of 155 miles per hour, traveled across North Florida, and exited the state as a category 3 hurricane, disrupting the lives of Floridians throughout the Florida Panhandle; and

## Our Question: Can Administrative Changes Prevent Turnout Losses?

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- Morris and Miller (2021) shows that polling place consolidation in the face of another emergency—COVID-19—had major depressive effects.

## Data and Methods

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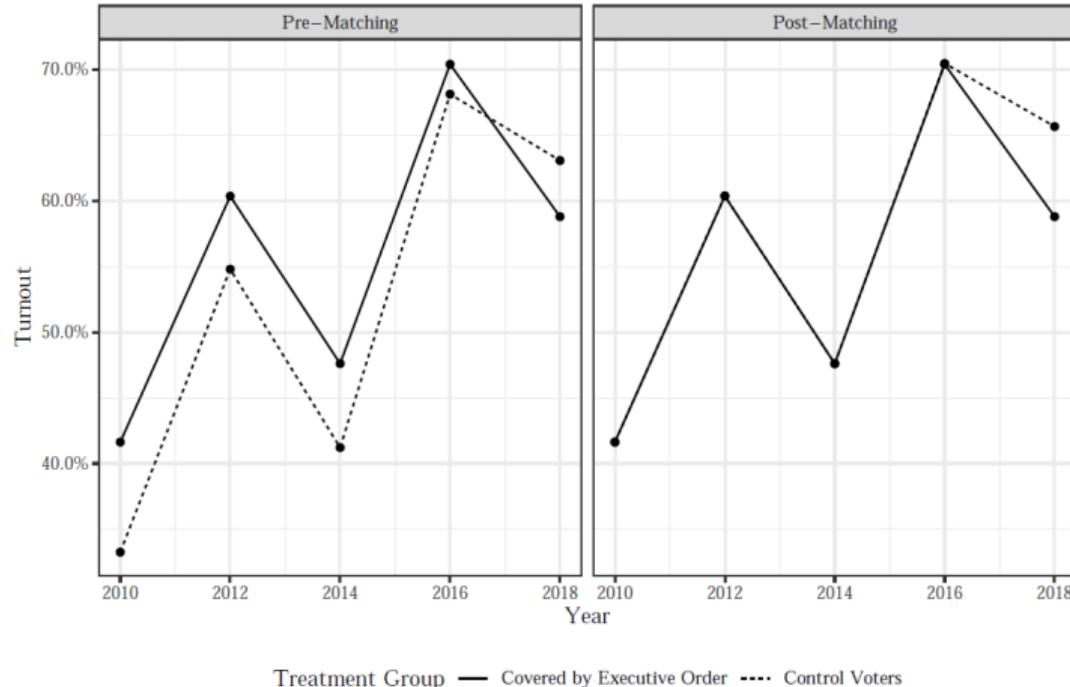
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- That's going to involve a matched-DiD that also incorporates a regression discontinuity in space.
- We also look at the vote behavior of folks whose polling places were suddenly moved much further away.

# Average Marginal Effect of the Hurricane



# Is this influenced by rainfall?

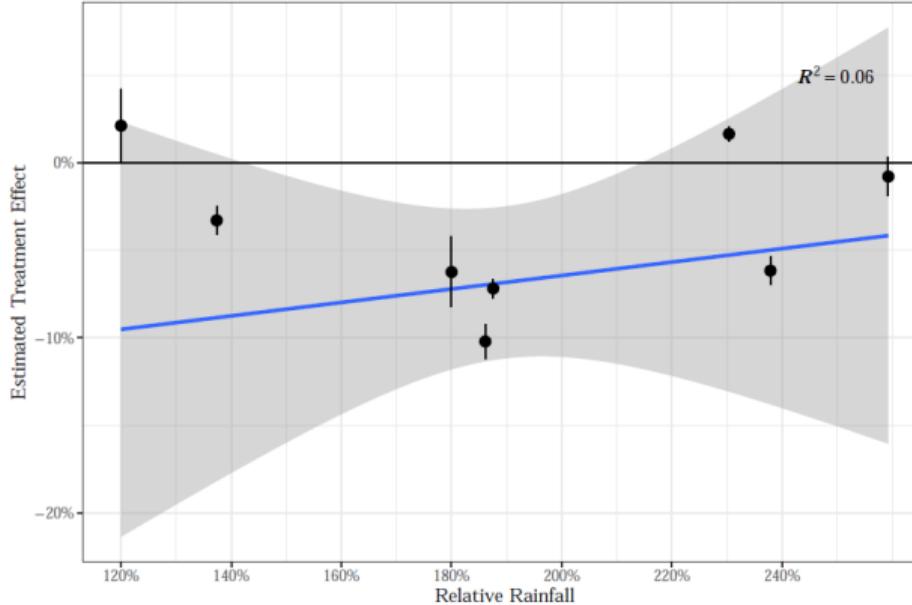


Figure A4: Relationship Between County Treatment Effect and Relative Rainfall

# How about polling place closures?

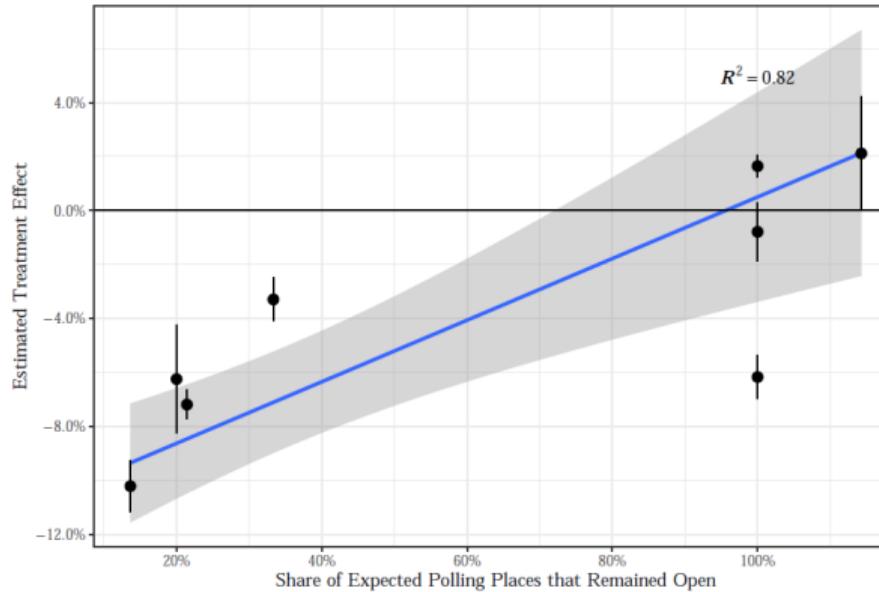


Figure A5: Relationship Between County Treatment Effect and Share of Polling Places Open

# Decomposing Administrative and Weather Treatments

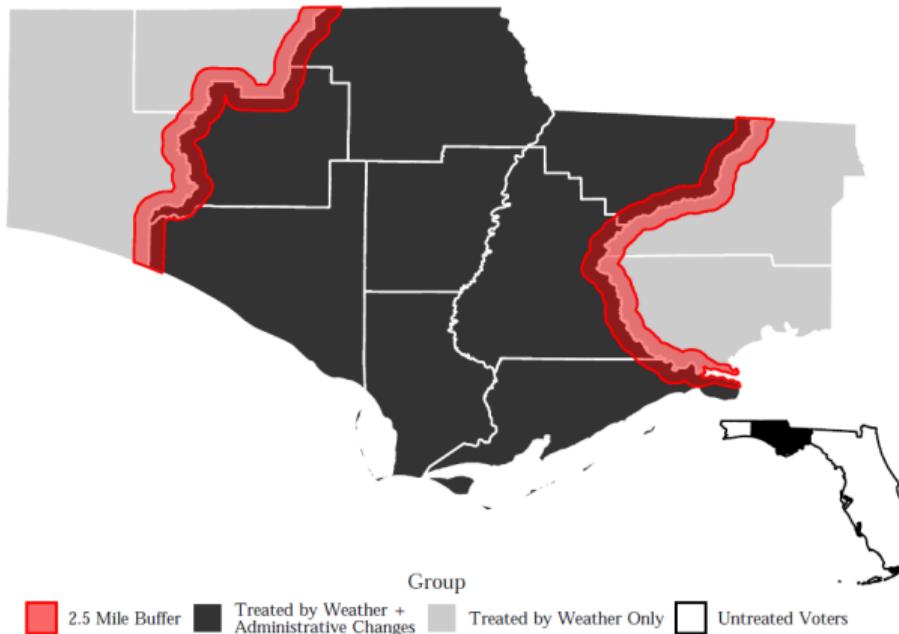
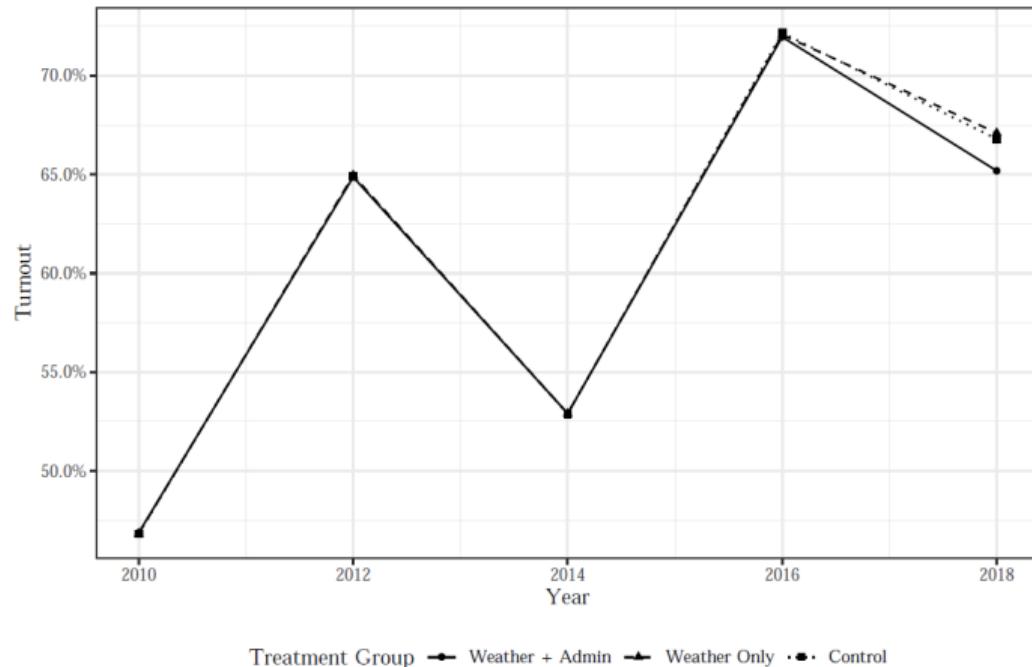
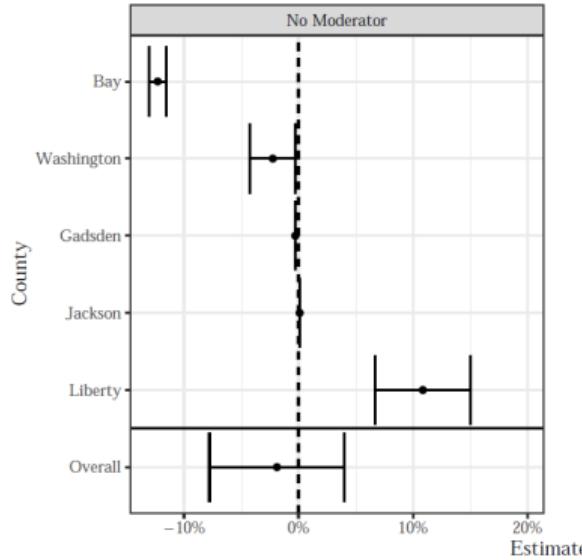


Figure 1: Treated and Control Counties with 2.5 Mile Buffer

# Weather and Administrative Treatments



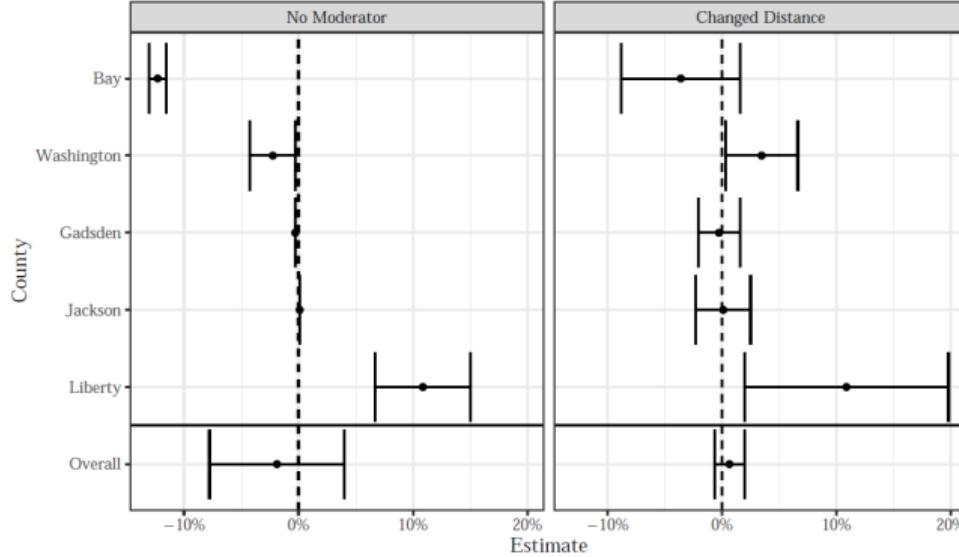
# County-Specific Effects



Notes: Robust standard errors clustered by county on left and match on right.  
Models include county and year fixed effects, and a dummy indicating weather-treated voters in 2018,  
each interacted with a dummy indicating the administratively treated county. In the right panel,  
changed distance to polling place is interacted with the other covariates to produce consistent estimates.

Figure 4: Estimated Adminisitrative Treatment Effects

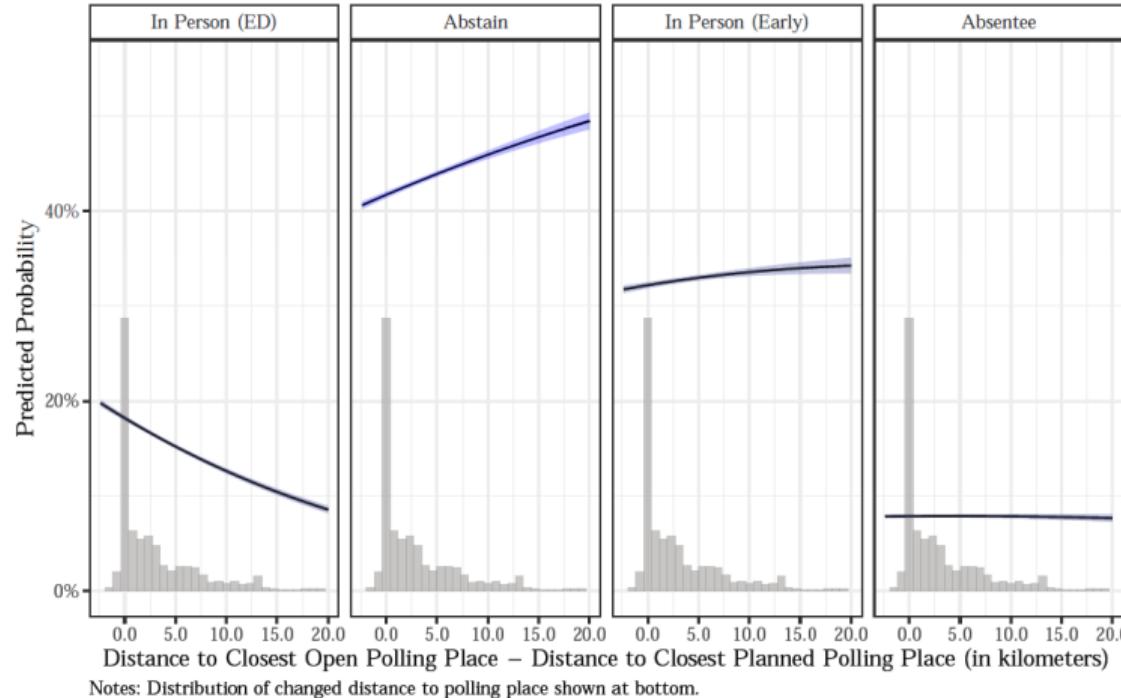
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# How did changed distance to your polling place change *how* you voted?



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# Takeaways

- We provide evidence that, even in the face of a Category 5 hurricane, big turnout effects can be avoided
- This means that election administrators can't hide behind the weather—how they responded to the storm in 2018 had big participatory consequences
- The distributed nature of American election systems means that the effects of weather emergencies are going to be hyper-local.
- My question for YOU ALL: how can this translate into an international context? Can this inform how other countries prepare for climate disasters? What is the importance of the US's highly federalized election administration regime?

Thanks!

kevin.morris@nyu.edu

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