

How Proximity to Refugees Affects Political Attitudes: Evidence from Germany

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Stanford University

Motivation

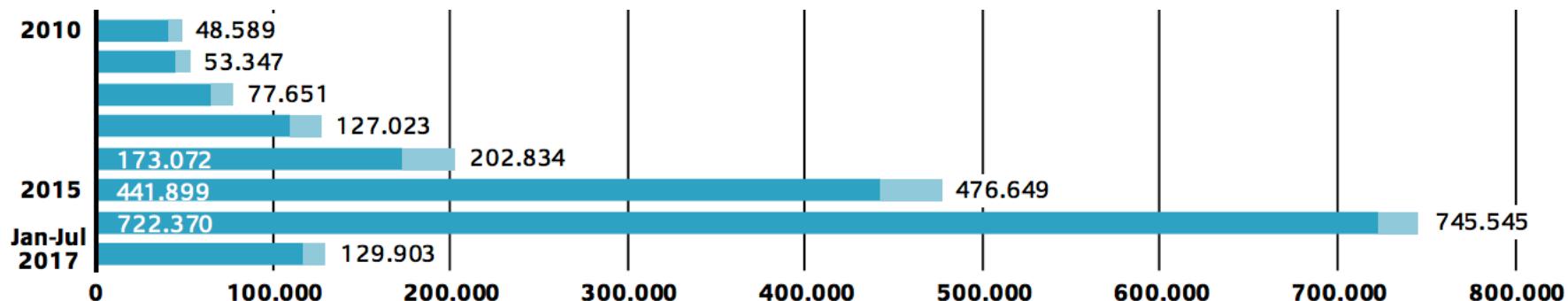
- Longstanding literature on the negative (group threat) and positive (contact theory) effects on encountering immigrants.
- Broad (endogeneity) vs narrow (generalizability)

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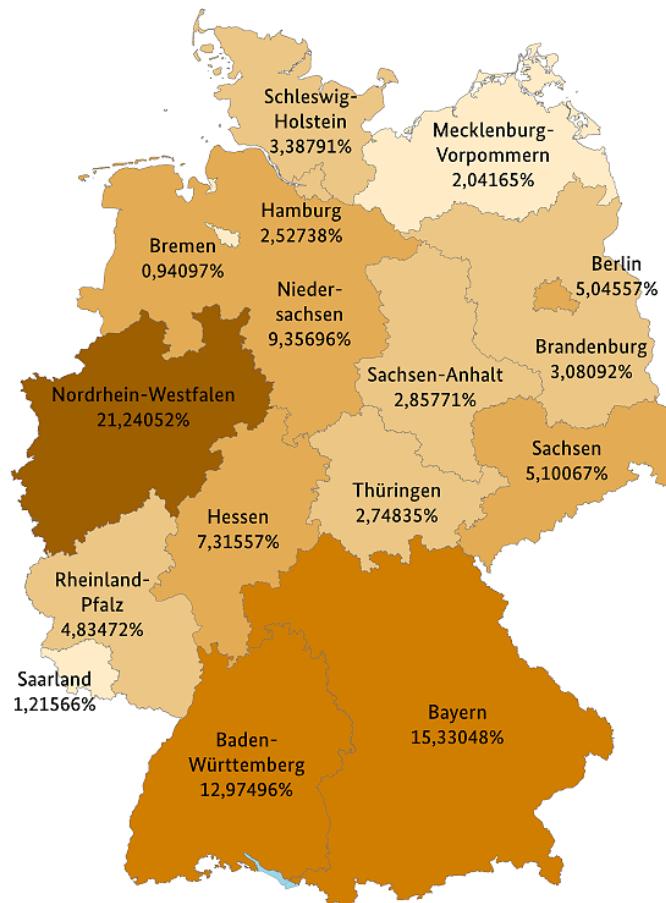
- Longstanding literature on the negative (group threat) and positive (contact theory) effects on encountering immigrants.
- Broad (endogeneity) vs narrow (generalizability)
- We implement a large sample, 18-month panel survey in Germany during the refugee crisis

Refugee Crisis in Germany

- Over 1 million registered asylum claims between September 2015 and July 2017



Federal Distribution



Verteilungsquoten nach dem Königsteiner-Schlüssel
für die Anwendung im Jahr 2015

- bis unter 2,5%
- von 2,5% bis unter 5,0%
- von 5,0% bis unter 10,0%
- von 10,0% bis unter 20,0%
- ab 20%

State Distribution



Distribution Keys

Reg.bezirk	Kreis	Kommune	Zuweisungsschlüssel (§ 3 I,II FlüAG)
Köln	kreisfreie Stadt	Aachen	1,296091966852
Münster	Kreis Borken	Ahaus	0,244132191381
Münster	Kreis Warendorf	Ahlen	0,301886418640
Köln	Kreis Düren	Aldenhoven	0,083785330037
Köln	Rhein-Sieg-Kreis	Alfter	0,129274866774
Düsseldorf	Kreis Wesel	Alpen	0,082597268978
Köln	Kreis Aachen	Alsdorf	0,247409138728
Arnsberg	Märkischer Kreis	Altena	0,101352904344
Detmold	Kreis Paderborn	Altenbeken	0,065027508861
Münster	Kreis Steinfurt	Altenberge	0,070981875559
Arnsberg	Kreis Soest	Anröchte	0,073864365295
Arnsberg	Hochsauerlandkreis	Arnsberg	0,431904299403
Münster	Kreis Coesfeld	Ascheberg	0,106720958969
Arnsberg	Kreis Olpe	Attendorn	0,154242042092
Detmold	Kreis Lippe	Augustdorf	0,062369914580

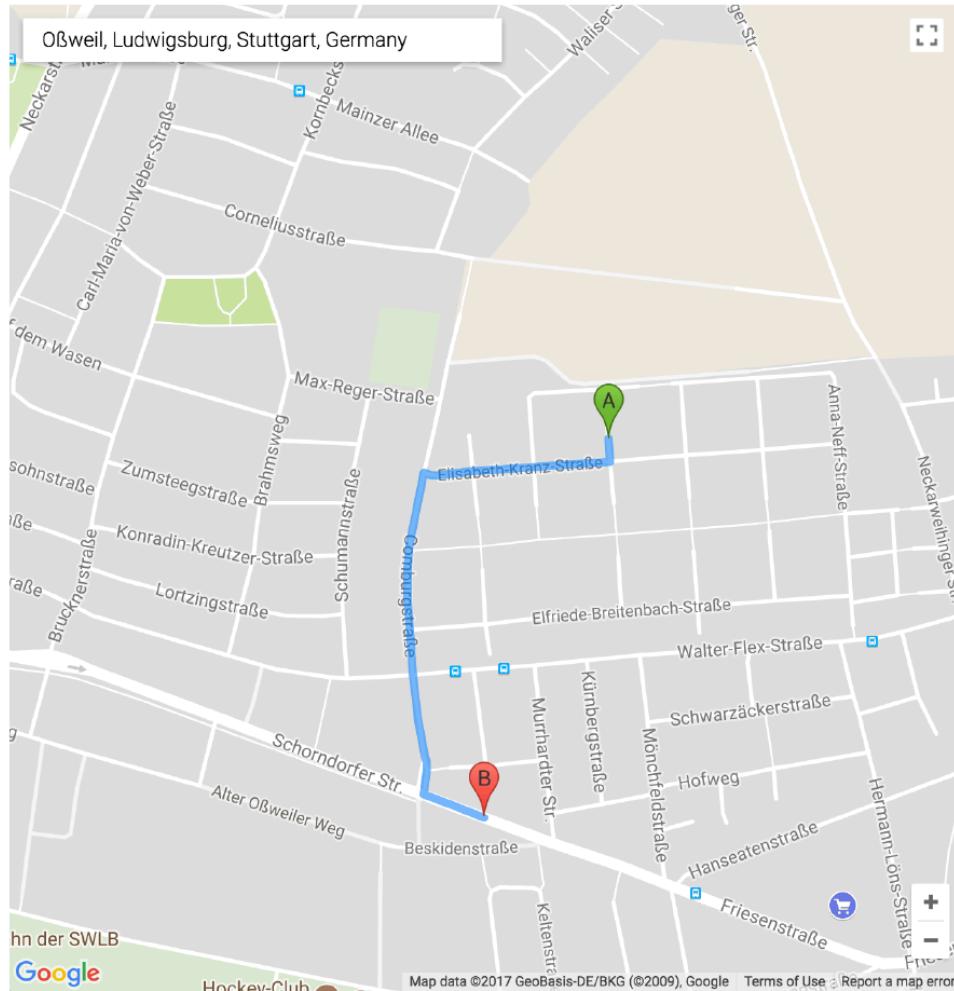
Empirical Approach

- Panel survey of ~8,200 German citizens.
- Small municipality oversample: ~6,100
 - Median size: 9,920

Empirical Approach

- Panel survey of ~8,200 German citizens.
- Small municipality oversample: ~6,100
 - Median population: 9,920
- Waves fielded in March 2016, December 2016, July 2017
 - After crisis, but before large-scale distribution to municipalities.
- Final sample size: 4,240

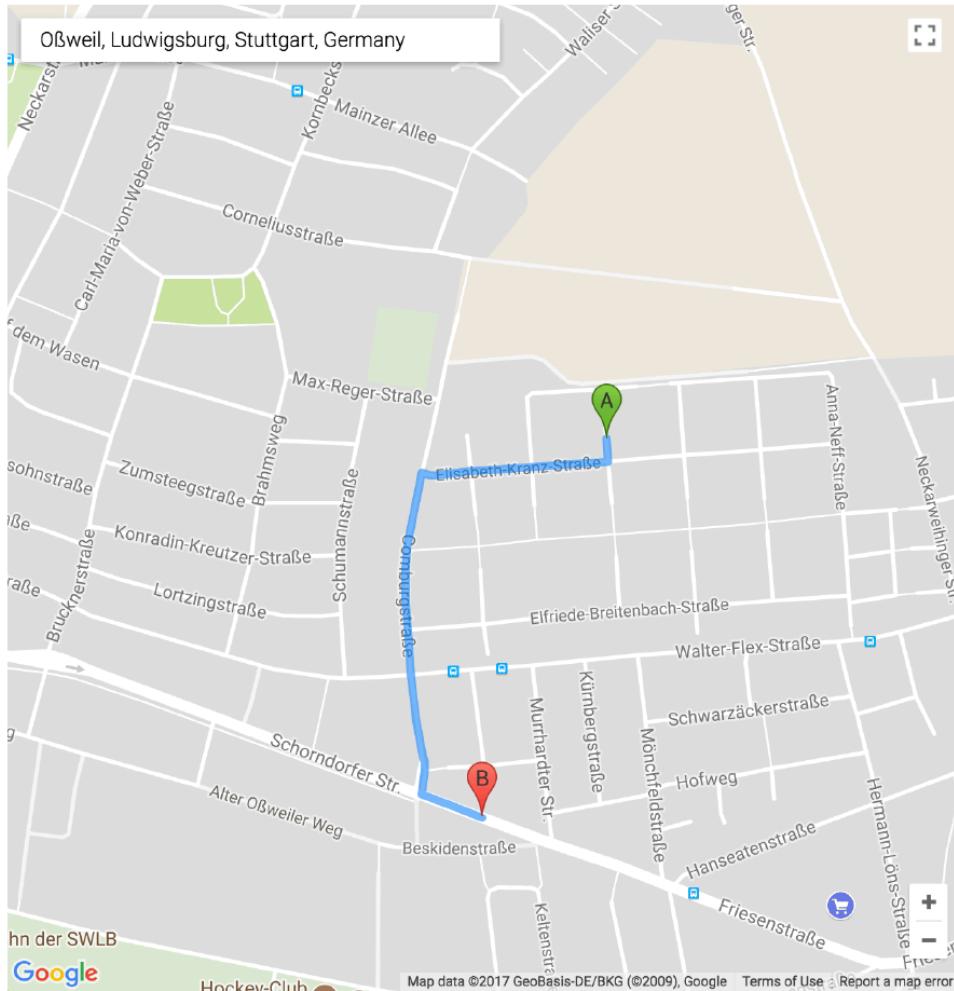
Geo-location



Klicken Sie auf die nächste Bushaltestelle oder den
nächste Bahnhof und verschieben Sie die Punkte um
die Entfernung zu messen.

0.686 km

Geo-location



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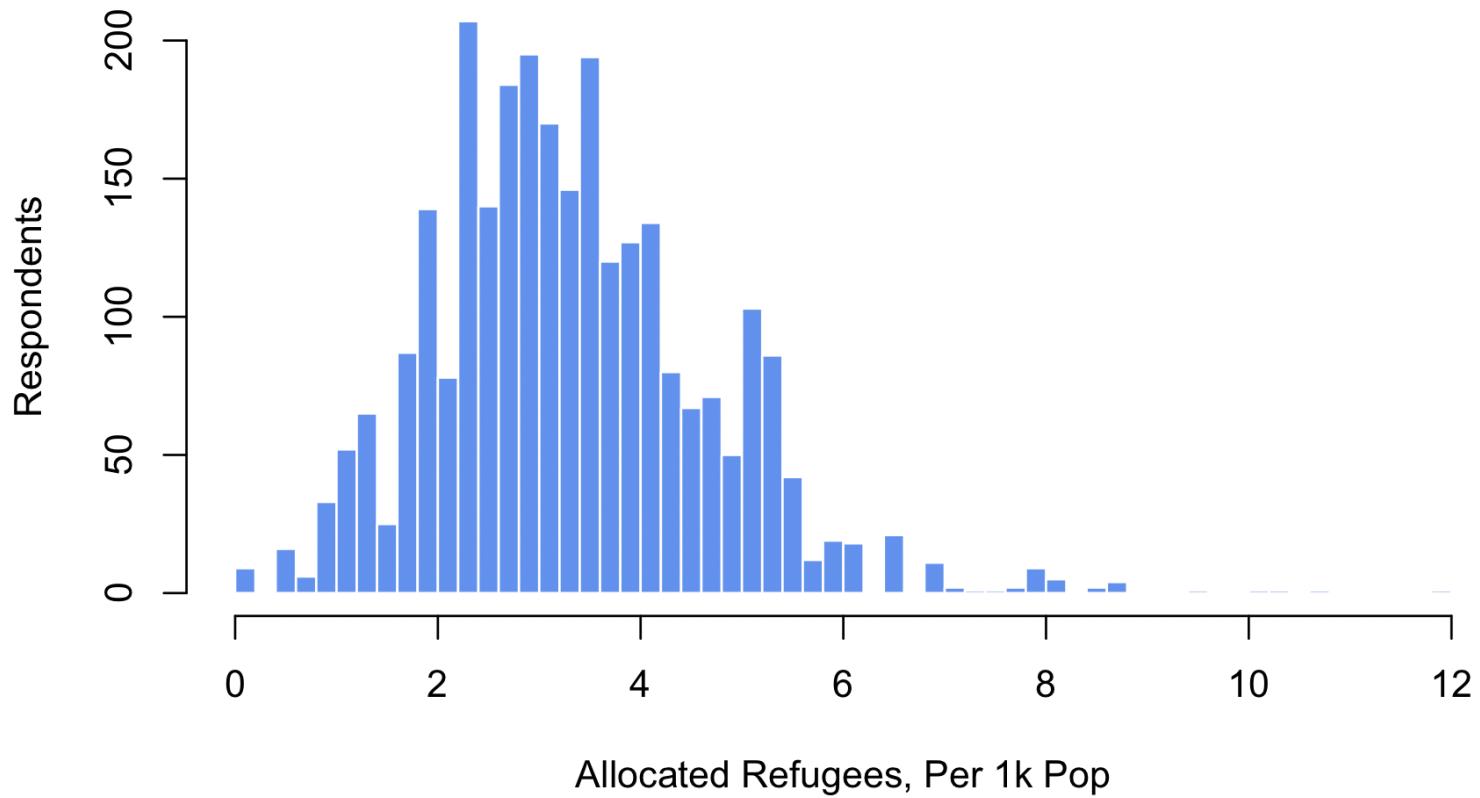
0.686 km

Location within 100m for 48% of respondents

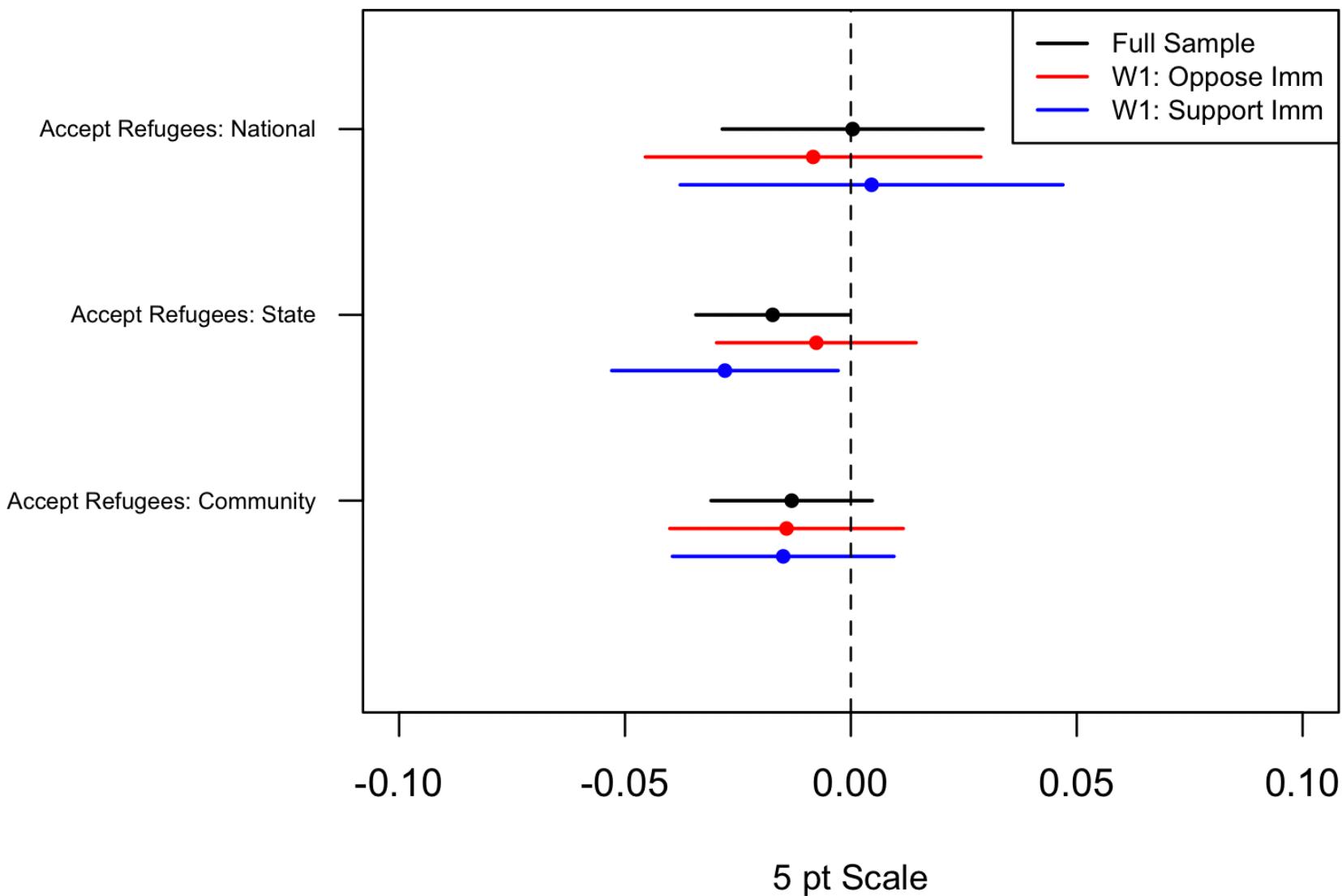
Change in exposure

	Initial Wave	Final Wave
Objective: Allocated Refugees (Per 1k Pop)	1.88	5.34
Subjective: Refugee Count	1014.5	2164.9
Subjective: Aware of Asylum Center	38.9%	47.7%
Subjective: Number of Refugee Interactions	0.87	0.96

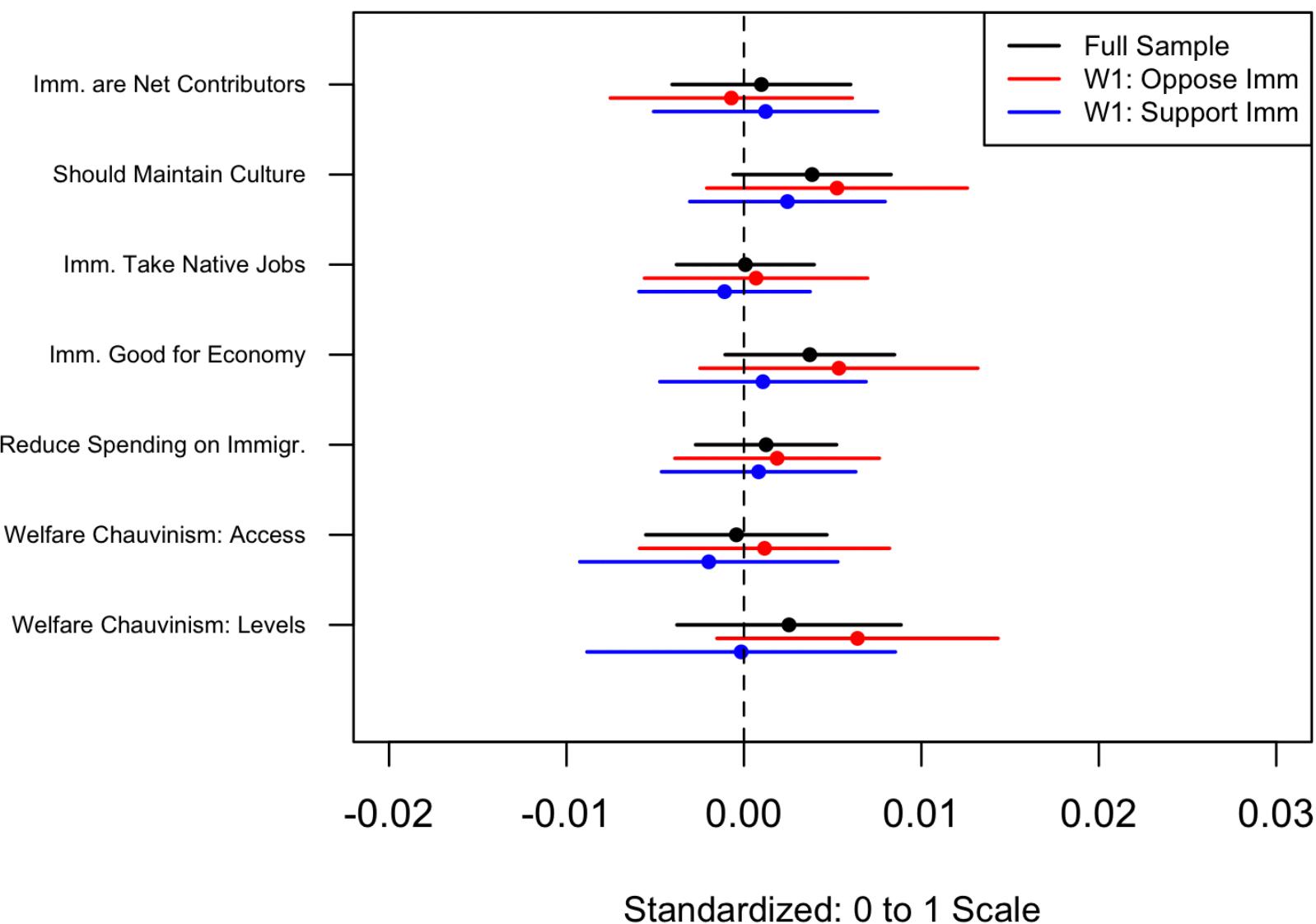
Change in exposure



Allocations

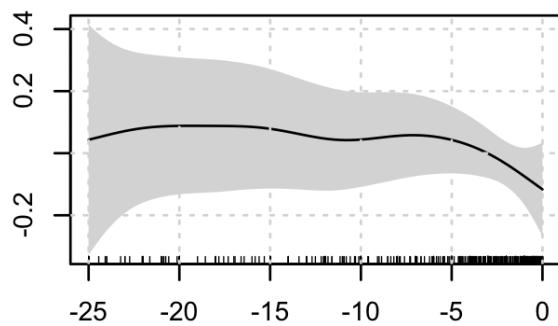


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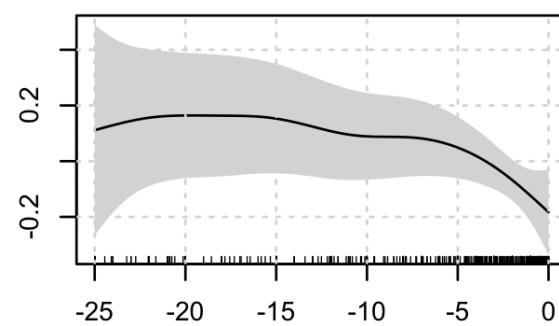




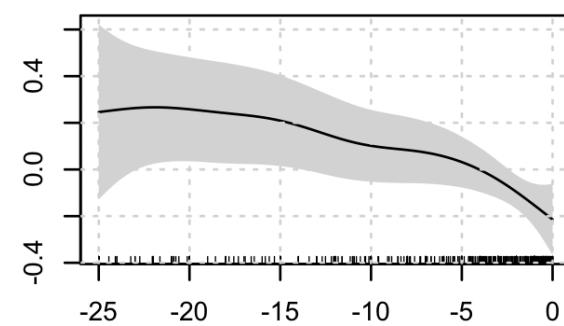
Refugee Admissions - National



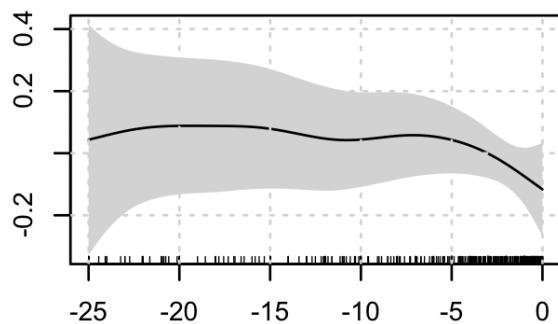
Refugee Admissions - State



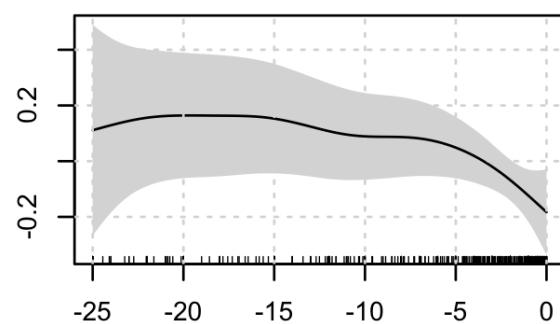
Refugee Admissions - Locality



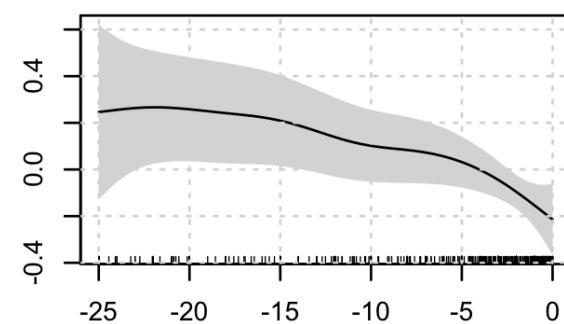
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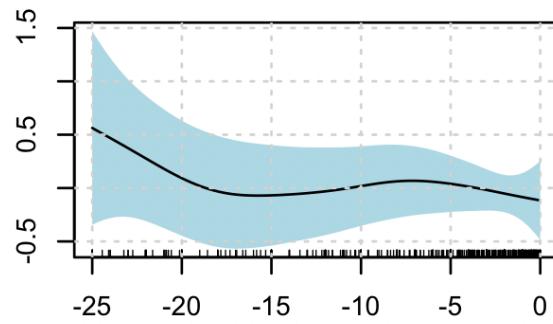
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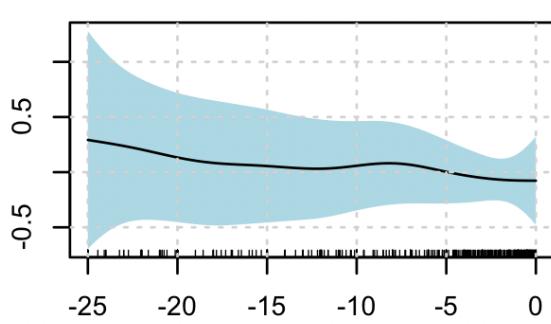
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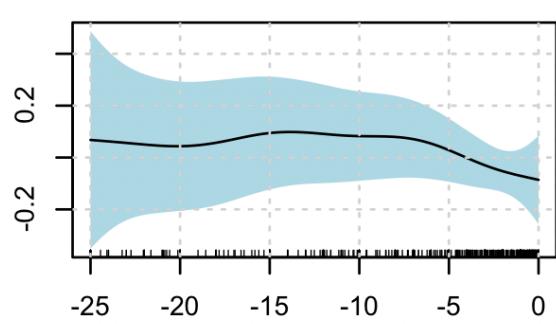
Immigrants: Net Contributors



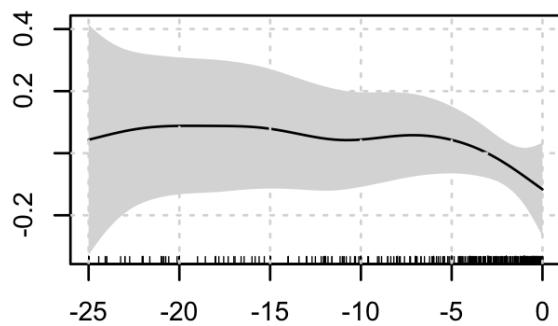
Immigrants: Good for Economy



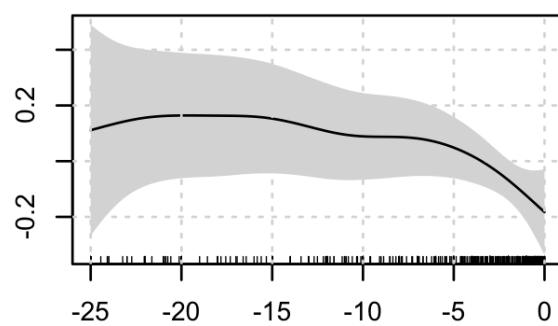
Immigrants: Labor Market



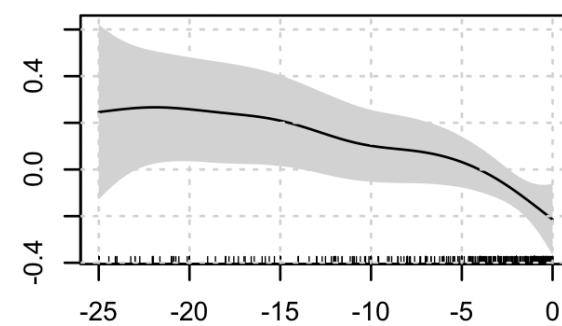
Refugee Admissions - National



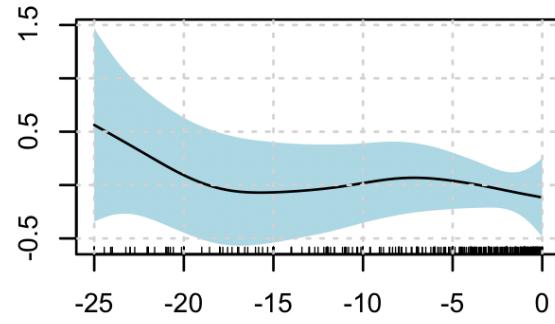
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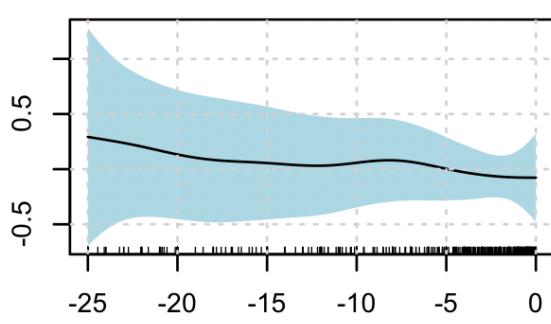
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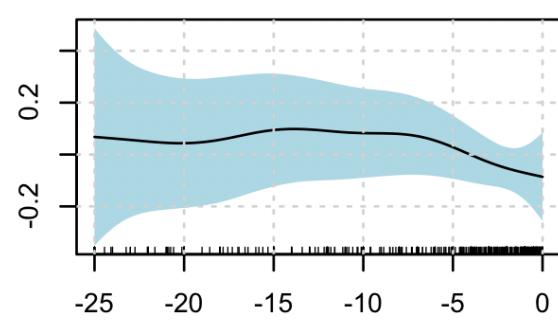
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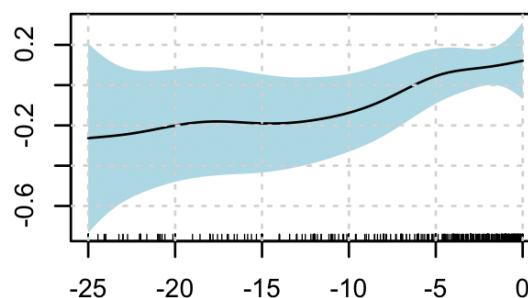
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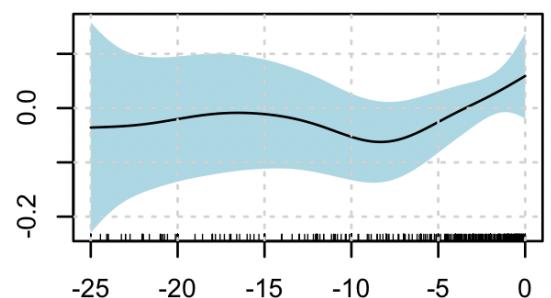
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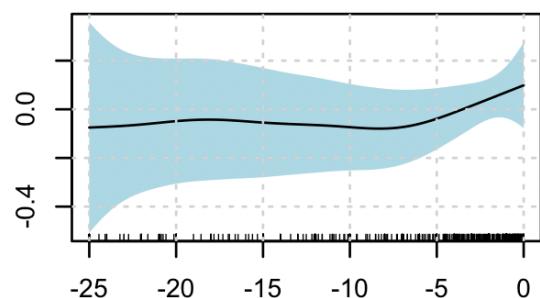
Should restrict benefit access



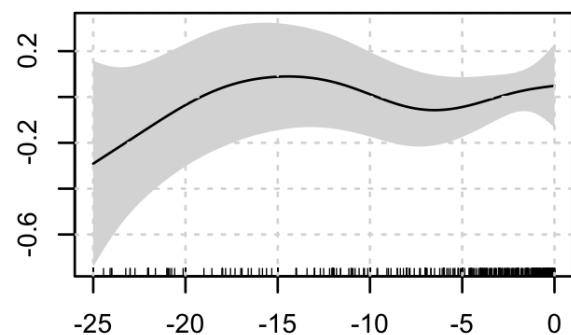
Should restrict benefit rates



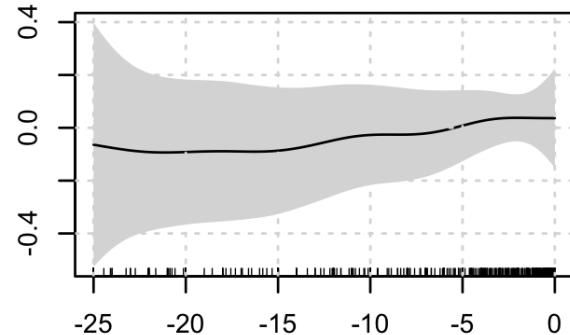
Too much spent on immigrants



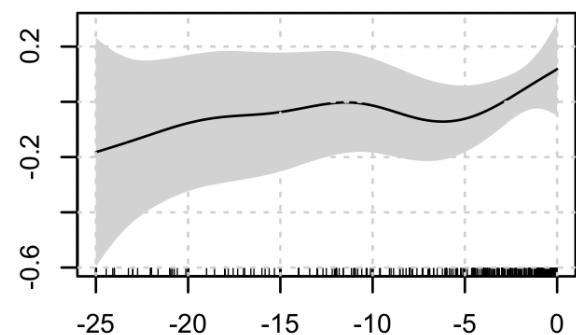
Concerns: Crime



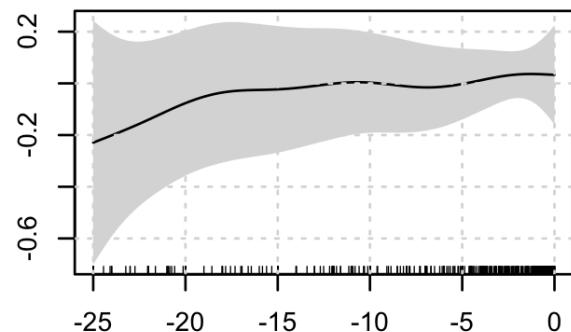
Concerns: Labor Market



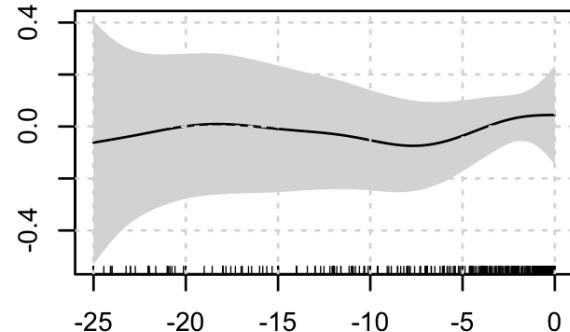
Concerns: Fiscal Impact



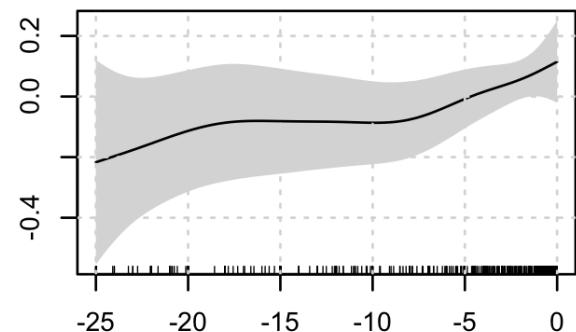
Concerns: Culture



Concerns: Terrorism



Concerns: Personal Safety

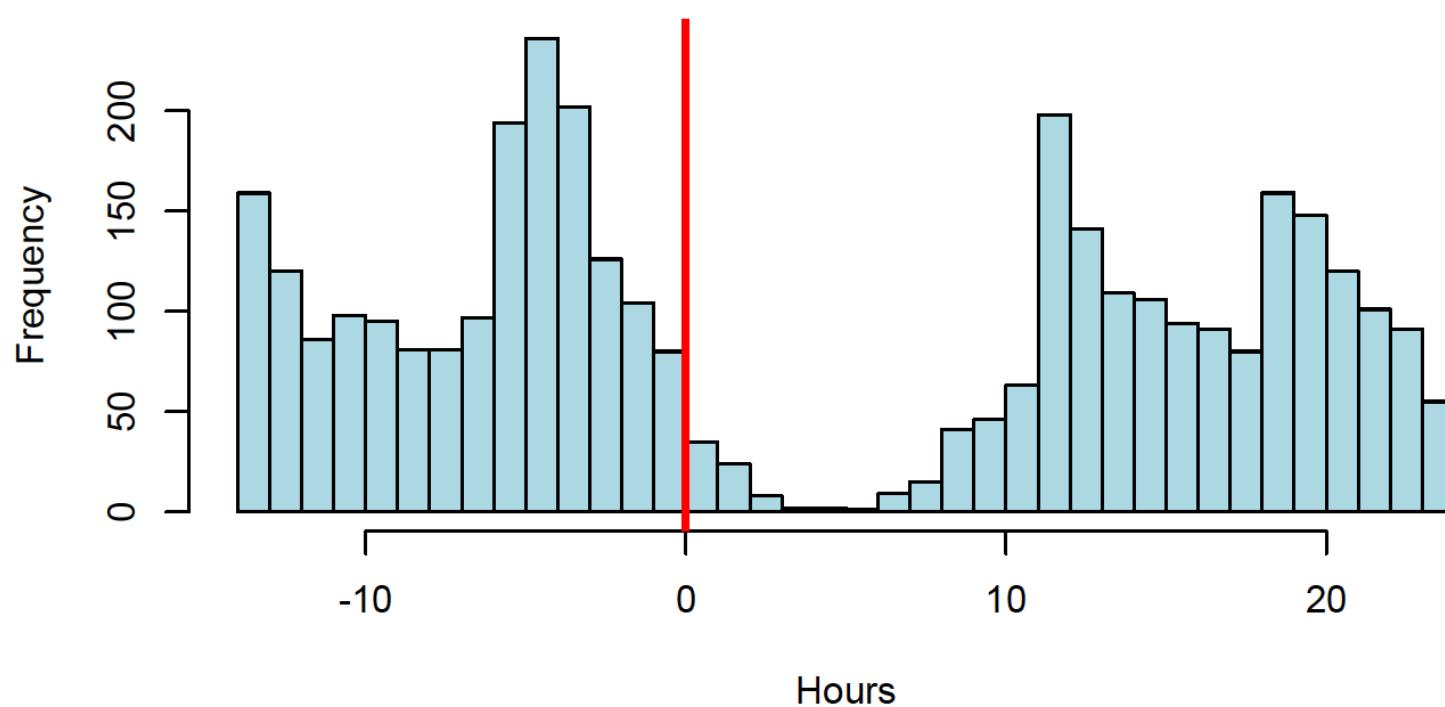


Response to Terrorism

- Wave 2 fielded between Dec 17 and Dec 22
- Dec 20th : largest terror attack on German soil since 1980.



Response to Terrorism



Response to Terrorism

Table 2: Average Respondent Characteristics

	24h Before Attack	24h After Attack
Female	47%	48%
Age	48.70	50.77
Income (10 pt)	5.21	5.17
Left-Right (10 pt)	5.70	5.61
Political Interest (5 pt)	2.59	2.59
W1: Admit More Refugees (5pt)	2.23	2.25
W1: Merkel Support (4pt)	2.80	2.85
n	1757	1739

Response to Terrorism

Table 3: Local linear specification: Effect of Terrorist Attack on Attitudes

Outcome	24 hour bw		36 hour bw	
	Estimate	z-score	Estimate	z-score
Δ Germany should accept more refugees (5 pt)	-0.094	-0.65	-0.133	-1.07
Δ Federal state should accept more refugees (5 pt)	-0.054	-0.71	-0.064	-0.99
Δ Community should accept more refugees (5 pt)	-0.044	-0.54	-0.089	-1.26
Δ Merkel approval (4 pt)	-0.001	-0.01	-0.013	-0.16
Δ Accepting refugees will increase terrorism (5 pt)	0.068	0.59	0.005	0.034
Δ Accepting refugees will increase crime (5 pt)	0.047	0.48	-0.013	-0.16
Δ Isolationism index (5 pt)	0.023	0.38	0.007	0.13
Δ Gone too far in accommodating all religions (5 pt)	0.180	1.63	0.170	1.83
Δ Gone too far in accommodating ethnic minorities (5 pt)	-0.128	-1.36	-0.100	-1.23

Response to Terrorism

Table 4: Local linear specification: Effect of Terrorist Attack on Attitudes (24 hr)

Outcome	<i>Wave 1 Opponents</i>		<i>Wave 1 Supporters</i>	
	Estimate	z-score	Estimate	z-score
Δ Germany should accept more refugees (5 pt)	-0.003	-0.02	-0.082	-0.44
Δ Federal state should accept more refugees (5 pt)	-0.027	-0.29	-0.019	-0.20
Δ Community should accept more refugees (5 pt)	-0.067	-0.69	-0.031	-0.30
Δ Merkel approval (4 pt)	-0.153	-0.79	0.180	0.97
Δ Accepting refugees will increase terrorism (5 pt)	0.030	0.20	0.043	0.30
Δ Accepting refugees will increase crime (5 pt)	0.000	0.00	0.077	0.55
Δ Isolationism index (5 pt)	0.036	0.45	0.074	1.08
Δ Gone too far in accommodating all religions (5 pt)	0.255	1.93	0.117	0.79
Δ Gone too far in accommodating ethnic minorities (5 pt)	-0.091	-0.70	-0.169	-1.56

Preliminary Conclusions

- Core political attitudes on immigrants and redistribution appear highly resistant to change.
- Proximity is more predictive of attitudinal change than volume.
- Citizens appear to separate refugee policy from general immigration attitudes.

Change in attitudes

	Allocated	Perceived	Proximity
Δ Immigrants are Net Contributors (10pt)	0.010 (0.40)	0.003 (0.51)	-0.006 (-1.01)
Δ Better to Maintain Homogeneous Culture (5pt)	0.018 (1.56)	-0.001 (-0.19)	-0.003 (-1.08)
Δ Immigrants Take Jobs from Natives (5pt)	0.000 (0.02)	-0.002 (-0.83)	0.000 (-0.02)
Δ Immigrants Good for Economy (10pt)	0.039 (1.60)	0.002 (0.33)	0.000 (0.00)
Δ Too much money spent on welfare for immigrants (5pt)	0.007 (0.70)	0.004 (1.51)	0.005 (1.92)
Δ Immigrants should have restricted access to benefits (5pt)	-0.002 (-0.17)	0.005 (1.65)	0.004 (1.17)
Δ Immigrant benefit levels should differ from natives (3pt)	0.008 (0.88)	-0.002 (-0.69)	0.000 (-0.09)

t-statistics in parentheses