



The Effect of Moving Precincts on Voting

MIMS 2019

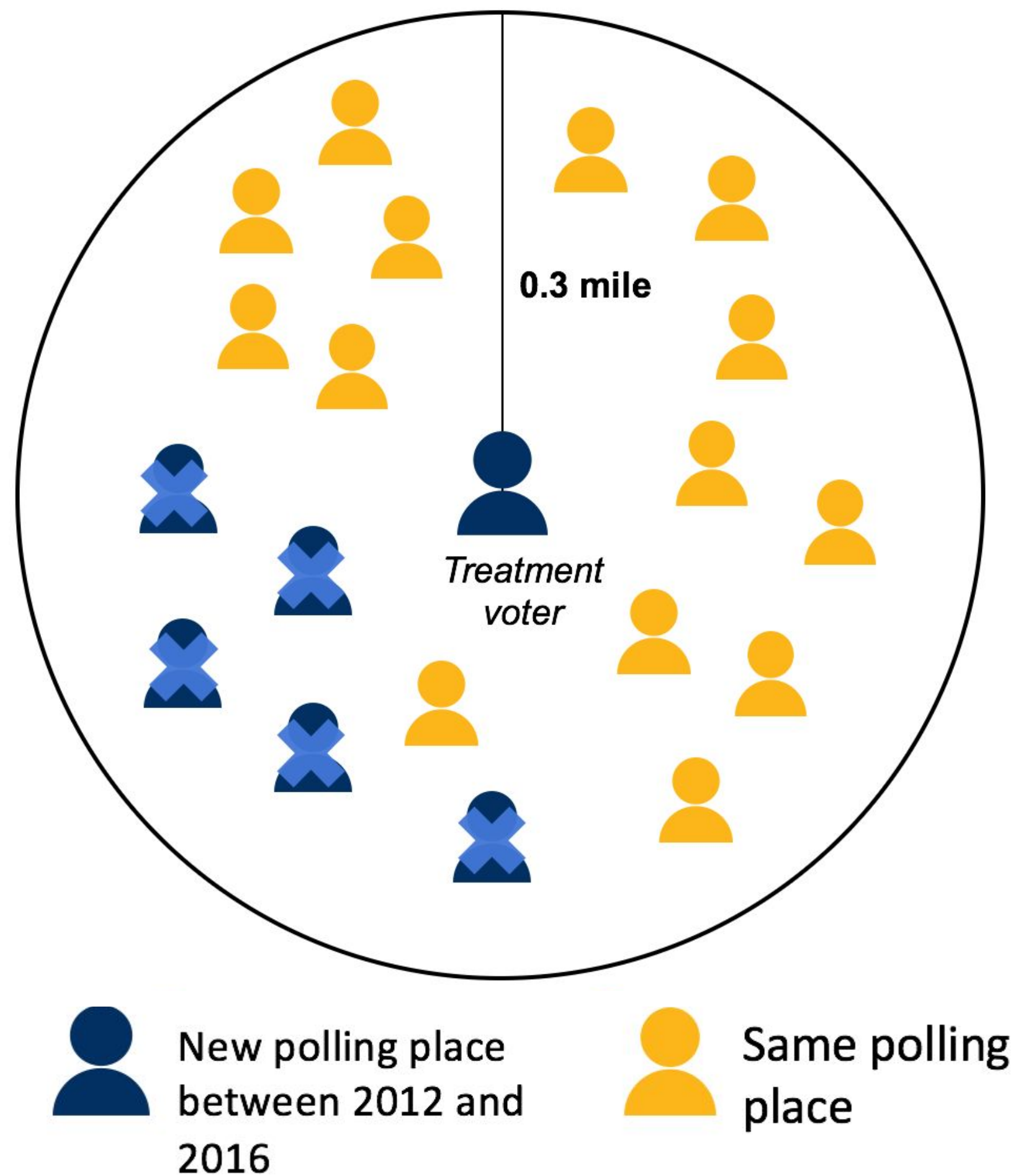
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Does a change in polling place impact voter turnout in states such as **North Carolina** that are no longer subject to federal preclearance?



Our Model



Statistic	2016 Voter Rolls	Our Sample
Number of Eligible Voters	6,251,529	3,002,034
Voter Turnout	72.3%	85.6%
Voted as Registered Democrat	28.3%	35.5%
Voted as Registered Republican	24.0%	30.4%
Mean Age	49.3	57.8
Female	52.6%	54.1%
White	68.7%	74.0%
Non-White	31.3%	26.0%

Not every voter can be included in our model - we only include voters who are **registered in 2012 and 2016** and **did not move addresses** between the two years

$$Pr(Vote_i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Poll_Further_i + \beta_2 Poll_Closer_i + \gamma Block + \epsilon$$

Our model creates a comparison group for each **person in treatment** - voters whose polling places changed between 2012 and 2016. For each of those individuals, we compare their voter turnout to that of their **control group** - the individuals within 0.3 miles whose polling place was **not** changed.

Key Findings

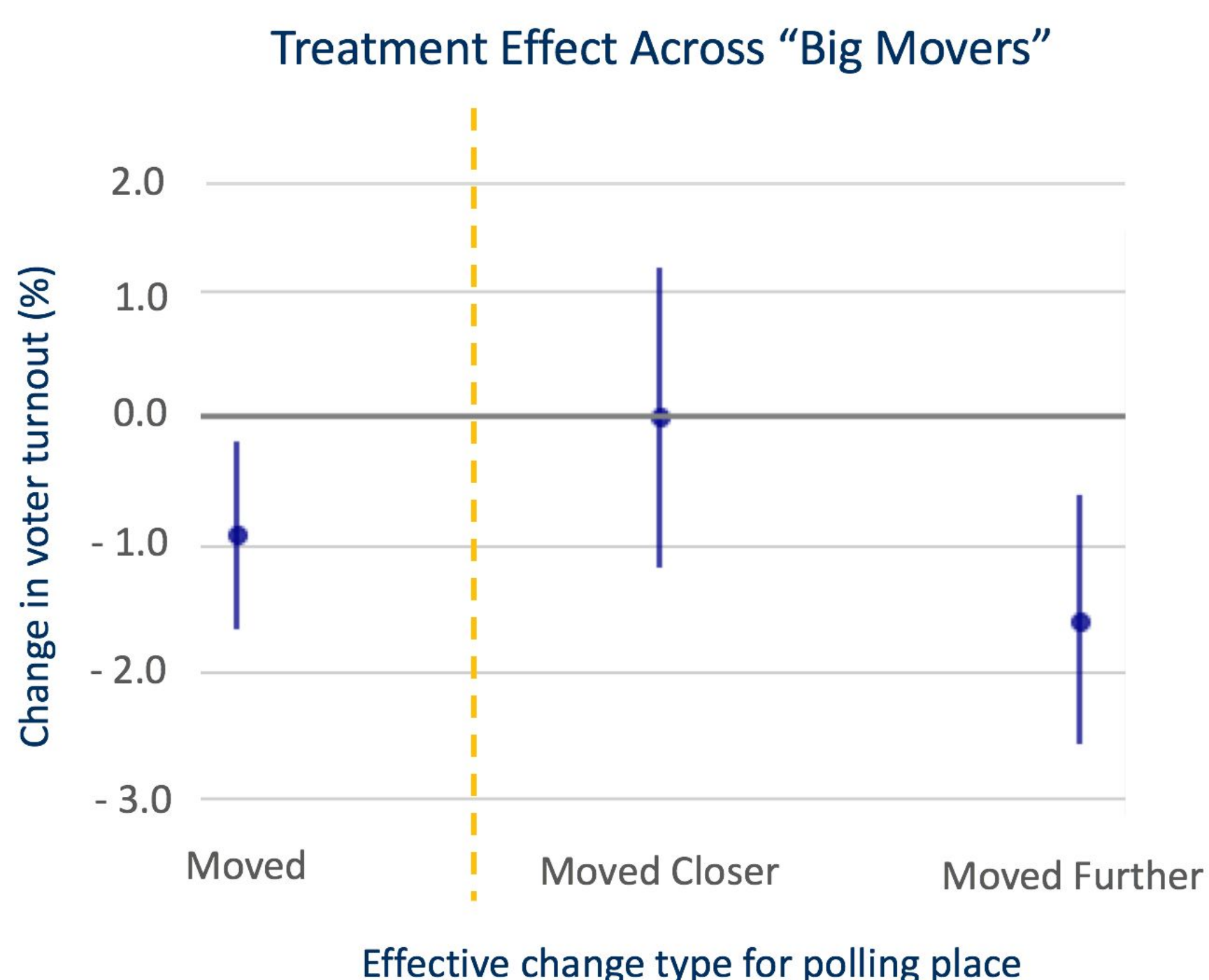


Table 2: Turnout by change in distance to poll

	Dependent variable:
	Voted
Closer polling location	-0.008** (0.003)
Farther polling location	-0.008*** (0.003)
Fixed effects by block?	Yes
Observations	420,791
Adjusted R ²	0.092
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Across the full set of voters, we find that being assigned to a new polling place, **regardless of whether it is closer or farther** than the previous one, corresponds to a **0.8% decrease** in voter turnout

Table 3: Turnout by change in distance to poll (over 1 mile)

	Dependent variable:
	Voted
Closer polling location	-0.00000 (0.006)
Farther polling location	-0.016*** (0.005)
Fixed effects by block?	Yes
Observations	170,740
Adjusted R ²	0.044
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

When subsetting to those whose distance to polling place **changed by greater than 1 mile**, the effects are more pronounced: a **closer polling place** has **no impact on turnout**, while a **farther one** leads to **1.6% lower turnout**