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Abstract

During recent immigration waves, nationalist parties increased their vote shares in many countries, but the political backlash against immigration in some regions was much stronger than in others. We examine whether past experience with migrant inflows shapes voters' reactions to current immigration waves. Our study is based on a natural experiment from Germany, where a short-term and demonstrably arbitrary drawing of occupation zones entailed a discontinuous distribution of forced migrants after World War II. Combining historical migration and election records in a 1949–2021 panel at the municipality level, we exploit these differences in a spatial fuzzy regression discontinuity design. Our results show a substantially weaker nationalist backlash against current immigration in regions that received more forced migrants in the past. Current immigration levels activate and mute this effect of exposure to immigration in the past over a period of at least 70 years.

JEL Codes: D72, O15
Keywords: Migration, Nationalism, Persistence, Voting Behavior

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1 Introduction

Immigration polarizes. Recent inflows of migrants and refugees have sparked political conflict in many advanced economies. Far-right nationalist and populist parties have increased their vote shares and political influence by running on anti-immigration platforms. Recent studies document causal effects of exposure to immigration on the decision to vote for such parties (Dinas et al., 2019; Dustmann et al., 2019; Halla et al., 2017; Steinmayr, 2020). Yet, not all voters respond to immigration by supporting anti-immigrant movements. Quite the opposite, many people are in favor of welcoming and integrating migrants, emphasizing advantages such as economic opportunities and cultural diversity. But why are political reactions to immigration so diverse? What explains these differences, which feature prominently in the political debates of most advanced democracies?

We examine this heterogeneity and focus on the role of experience with past migration inflows. Regions differ markedly in the extent to which their residents have been confronted with immigration in the past. As voters may learn from experiences with immigration, they may update their beliefs on its advantages and disadvantages. This can translate into short-run and long-run changes in political preferences and voting behavior. We use a natural experiment from Germany to analyze how past exposure to immigration shocks affects electoral reactions to current immigration. The setting we study allows us to analyze the link between immigration and support for nationalism in Germany over a period of more than 70 years.

Immigrants typically sort into areas that are attractive for them. Economic opportunities, a region's reputation, and pre-existing diaspora networks play important roles in this regard (e.g., Bartel, 1989; Bracco et al., 2018; Brox & Krieger, 2021; Kleven et al., 2014; Verdugo, 2016). Hence, past exposure to immigration may be related to unobserved determinants of current voting behavior. To circumvent this endogeneity problem, our study draws on a natural experiment. After Nazi-Germany's defeat in World War II, more than ten million people were expelled from the Eastern territories of the German *Reich* and forced to migrate to regions within the borders of the newly created Federal Republic of Germany. Due to disagreements among the occupation forces, these expellees were not allowed to enter the French occupation zone in Germany's Southwest between the end of the war in 1945 and 1949. This led to a strong discontinuity in the number of expellees

at the newly drawn border between the French and the US occupation zone. Just north of the new occupation zone border, expellees increased the population by more than 20%. In the municipalities just south of the border, expellees constituted less than 10% of the population. Our analysis studies the effects of this large inflow of forced migrants on electoral outcomes in the short and long run.

To identify the causal effect of the discontinuity along the border, we exploit this quasi-random variation in a spatial fuzzy regression discontinuity (RD) design (Dell, 2010; Dell & Olken, 2020; Keele & Titiunik, 2015). Obtaining a causal estimate in this setting hinges on the assumption that the newly drawn border is exogenous to other potential determinants of voting behavior. For this reason, we focus on the German state of Baden-Württemberg. Its contemporary territory consists of both territory occupied by France and territory occupied by the United States in the 1945–1949 occupation period. Here, the border drawing did not follow any pre-existing state borders. Instead, the occupation forces agreed on using the southern boundaries of counties that are passed by *Autobahn A8* (the highway from Karlsruhe to Munich) as the occupation zone border. Municipalities in this culturally and economically homogeneous region found themselves being part of either of the two zones, without the possibility to sort into either of them by choice. A series of tests confirms that pre-treatment characteristics of these municipalities are continuous at this border.

To estimate the political implications of this shock, we compile a large 1949–2021 panel data set at the level of the municipality, the smallest administrative unit in Germany. The state of Baden-Württemberg consists of 1,101 municipalities and the median municipality in our sample has 4,000 inhabitants. The data that we collected is a combination of archival data that we digitized and administrative data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg. Covering more than seven decades, the length of this panel allows us to study long-term electoral patterns for the entire history of the Federal Republic of Germany. In addition to collecting the universe of votes cast in this state in German federal elections, we gather panel data on economic and demographic outcomes to study mechanisms. Our focus is on the evolution of nationalist voting in Germany after the fall of the Nazi regime in 1945.

Our main result is that experience with immigration in the past reduces voting for nationalist parties in the long run. Initially, we document that the differential inflow of people along the occupation

zone border implies a difference of more than 12 percentage points in the expellees' share in the population of municipalities around the border in 1950. Electorally, this treatment leads to a short-run boost in votes for right-wing parties representing expellee interests in the 1950s, but in subsequent elections Germany's major parties absorb expellee votes and electoral differences vanish until the 1980s. Things begin to change in the 1990s when Germany experiences new immigration waves. Starting in the federal elections of 1990, nationalist parties receive fewer votes in regions that experienced the expellee shock after World War II. Importantly, this effect is stronger both in years and in regions with higher levels of current immigration. Throughout the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, this pattern remains intact until the time of writing. Regions with more exposure to the large-scale wave of forced migrants after World War II are significantly less likely to react to current immigration by voting for nationalist parties. We interpret this as evidence for the idea that current immigration makes latent but persistent differences in attitudes toward immigration politically salient. A region's historical experience with immigration reduces its nationalist response to current immigration.

To further examine this finding, we conduct a number of additional tests. We find evidence for a strong activation of the effect around the 2015 European migrant crisis in a difference-in-discontinuities analysis. Furthermore, administrative tax data show that the historical inflow of forced migrants had, in the long run, positive economic effects on the receiving regions. Higher incomes, higher land values, and higher corporate tax revenues start to become visible in the 1970s and persist until today. This is evidence for *positive* experiences with economic advantages of immigration in these regions. Economic differences alone, however, do not explain the heterogeneous political reactions during immigration waves. The mitigation of nationalist responses to immigration flows, is only observable where higher local incomes result from the historical immigration shock.

The study relates to three strands of literature. First, it adds to research on how exposure to immigration affects political behavior. In the context of the European migrant crisis, a large literature on the effects of immigration on voting behavior emerged. The evidence in most studies suggests that exposure to immigration, on average, increases voting for far-right and center-right parties (Dinas et al., 2019; Dustmann et al., 2019; Edo et al., 2019; Halla et al., 2017; Harmon,

2018).[1] These results are consistent with the related finding that exposure to immigrants can spark hostile reactions by natives (Hangartner et al., 2019; Tabellini, 2020). In contrast to this literature, our approach would not focus on the average effect but is geared towards examining its heterogeneity. Political reactions to immigration differ markedly across individuals and regions. With this emphasis, our analysis is most closely related to two studies in this literature that note heterogeneities in the effect of immigration on voting behavior. Steinmayr (2020) compares different forms of exposure to immigrants and finds that short-term exposure increases far-right voting while sustained interaction with immigrants decreases it. Dustmann et al. (2019) find that immigration only increases far-right voting in rural areas, while the effect is insignificant or even negative in urban areas; they explain this difference by arguing that attitudes towards immigrants in urban areas are generally more positive. Our results relate to and build on these findings. In contrast to them, we explicitly focus on an underlying cause for why political reactions differ across regions by exploiting an exogenous source of variation in a variable that drives this heterogeneity. Our findings suggest that past experience with immigration can promote changes in local political attitudes that alter political reactions to new immigration waves.

Second, our results speak to the literature on how exposure to immigrants and other minorities can reduce hostility towards them. According to the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), interpersonal contact with outgroups can, under appropriate conditions, reduce prejudice and anxiety in the ingroup (see Pettigrew et al., 2011, for a comprehensive literature review). A number of recent studies have provided evidence for this hypothesis showing that contact with minorities can affect racial biases (Schindler & Westcott, 2021), political attitudes (Billings et al., 2021), and voting behavior (Steinmayr, 2020). We add evidence suggesting that local exposure to forced migrants can have long-lasting hostility-reducing effects that are transmitted across generations. This result is consistent with survey-experimental evidence by Dinas et al. (2021), who show that historical exposure to immigration increases sympathy for refugees when surveys mention parallels between past and present immigration. Our evidence on the proposed mechanism of experiencing the economic advantages of immigration resonates with recent studies on the local economic effects of immigration (Beerli et al., 2021; Ciccone & Nimczik, 2022; Peters, 2021; Sequeira et al., 2020;

[1] An exception in this literature is Schaub et al. (2021), who find a null effect.

Tabellini, 2020) and our results are in line with those that find positive economic effects. Our approach of differentiating between short-run and long-run effects is related to Sequeira et al. (2020) and supports their main results. However, our results emphasize the importance of place-specific experiences with migration for understanding contemporary differences in the nationalist backlash against immigration.

Third, we contribute to the literature on the long-term persistence of political attitudes with a dynamic perspective. Several studies have documented the persistence of attitudes, traits, and norms. This includes mistrust (Nunn & Wantchekon, 2011), anti-Semitism (Voigtländer & Voth, 2012), preferences towards the role of the state in the economy (Alesina & Fuchs-Schündeln, 2007), trust (Becker et al., 2016), and gender norms (Alesina et al., 2013). This literature argues that such attitudes, traits, and norms are transmitted across generations, thereby leading to long-term persistence of differences across regions. Unlike the bulk of this literature, our focus is on the dynamics of persistence over time. Rather than comparing differences across units at single points in time, decades (or centuries) after the shock, we study how contemporary contexts can activate and mute differences in political norms. The two papers in this literature that are closest to our approach are Ochsner & Roesel (2019) and Cantoni et al. (2019). Congruent with our work, both of them show that differences in norms can be dormant or inactive for long periods and (re-)activated by current political events. Ochsner & Roesel (2019) study how the Austrian far-right party FPÖ used Turkish sieges in the 16th and 17th century to strategically activate anti-Turkish sentiment in recent elections. Cantoni et al. (2019) argue that many Germans had right-wing political preferences that were latent and only resulted in observable differences in right-wing voting when the national political landscape recently changed and supplied a new far-right party. In contrast to these two studies, our approach and data allow us to observe the entire time span before, during, and after the historical shock, allowing us to trace the dynamics of persistence over a seven-decade post-treatment period. We find that persistence does not translate into constant and stable differences in political behavior. Different contemporary contexts can activate, mute, and even reverse the political implications of historical shocks.

The study is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses the historical context and describes the data we digitized and collected. Section 3 presents the empirical strategy based on the spatial fuzzy RD

design. Section 4 presents the results on the historical expellee shock (4.1), on its short-run and long-run electoral consequences (4.2), on its role for nationalist reactions to current immigration (4.3), and on channels (4.4). Section 5 concludes.

2 Historical Background and Data

2.1 The Inflow of Forced Migrants to Germany after World War II

The outcome of World War II in Europe entailed a redrawing of Germany's boundaries. Compared to the 1939 borders of the German *Reich*, the Federal Republic of Germany lost about 25% of its territory, mainly because its Eastern territories and regions it annexed during the war became part of the Soviet Union, Poland, and the Czech Republic. The German-speaking population that had not fled these territories by the end of the war was subject to expulsions in the subsequent years. This was also true for the German-speaking population in regions that had not been part of the German *Reich* before the Nazi era, such as the Sudetenland.

In total, about 14 million people had to resettle (Kossert, 2008). This caused a massive inflow of forced migrants to Germany within its new borders. By 1950, about a sixth of the population of the newly established Federal Republic of Germany were expellees (Braun & Dwenger, 2020). For the receiving regions, the arrival of this large number of forced migrants presented a substantial challenge. In war-torn Germany, housing was scarce and economic output had collapsed. Among natives, arriving expellees were often met with opposition and prejudice, sometimes with xenophobia and racism (Klussmann, 2018).[2] Historians report that many forced migrants experienced "exclusion and rejection as unwanted foreigners" (Kossert, 2008, p. 12) and describe a "competition" between them and natives with "features of a struggle between nationalities and classes" (Bade, 1994, p. 45). Differences in dialects, denominations, and customs contributed to animosities between natives and expellees (Burchardt, 2001; Kossert, 2008).

In retrospect however, the integration of the expellees was generally portrayed as a success story. For the German post-war economy, they constituted a flexible workforce that took low-paying jobs

[2]Hostility towards expellees went as far as outright insults as "refugee pigs" and open discrimination by the native population. In some cases, allied forces made way for expellees at gunpoint (Wiederschein, 2016)

in a period when the country was rebuilding its economic structures and when new industries were emerging (Chevalier et al., 2018). Historians report that expellees thereby played a significant role in Germany's post-war economic boom (*Wirtschaftswunder*) in the 1950s (Kossert, 2016; Wiederschein, 2016). While fast integration is considered a post-war myth (Lüttinger, 1986), the positive experience of the expellees' labor market absorption might have been a reason for the ex-post glorification of their integration in society (cf. Borutta & Jansen, 2016; Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2018).

The number of arriving expellees varied significantly across regions within the new German borders. Overall, factors such as war destruction, population density, geographic location, and supply conditions played a role in the allocation of expellees (Braun & Dwenger, 2020; Peters, 2021).[3] However, a newly drawn internal border between the occupation zones of the French and US occupation forces led to an additional, striking source of variation in the distribution of expellees in the German Southwest. France had not been part of the initial negotiations on Germany's post-war occupation in Potsdam and Yalta but requested to occupy a part of Germany after the war (see Mosely, 1950, for details on these negotiations). The Soviet Union only agreed to France as an additional occupying force under the condition that the French zone was constructed out of a fraction of the hitherto designated British and US occupation zones. For logistic reasons, the US military insisted on keeping the highway from Karlsruhe to Munich (Autobahn A8) in their zone. Disregarding local circumstances, it only ceded the areas to the southwest of this highway to France (Schumann, 2014).

Figure 1 shows the border of the occupation zone in the German Southwest. The drawing of the resulting occupation zone boundary did not resemble any previous historical borders of the former provinces Baden, Württemberg, and Hohenzollern Lands. As a consequence, the occupation zone border within today's state of Baden-Württemberg – unlike in the rest of Germany – did not follow historical state borders. Neither does it follow any contemporary state borders. The administrative

[3]In the existing literature, there are several studies that explore effects of expellees arriving in all of Germany after World War II. Braun & Dwenger (2020) and Menon (2020) explore political consequences of forced migration but focus on cross-sectional correlations of initial expellee arrivals and voting behavior. As initial expellee placement correlates with war destruction, proximity of a location to the expellees' region of origin, economic sectors in the receiving areas, the degree of urbanity, and other unobserved location-fixed heterogeneity, such results for long-run outcomes cannot be interpreted as causal. Peters (2021) uses an IV-strategy at the county (Kreis)-level to study causal effects of expellees with a focus on economic outcomes.

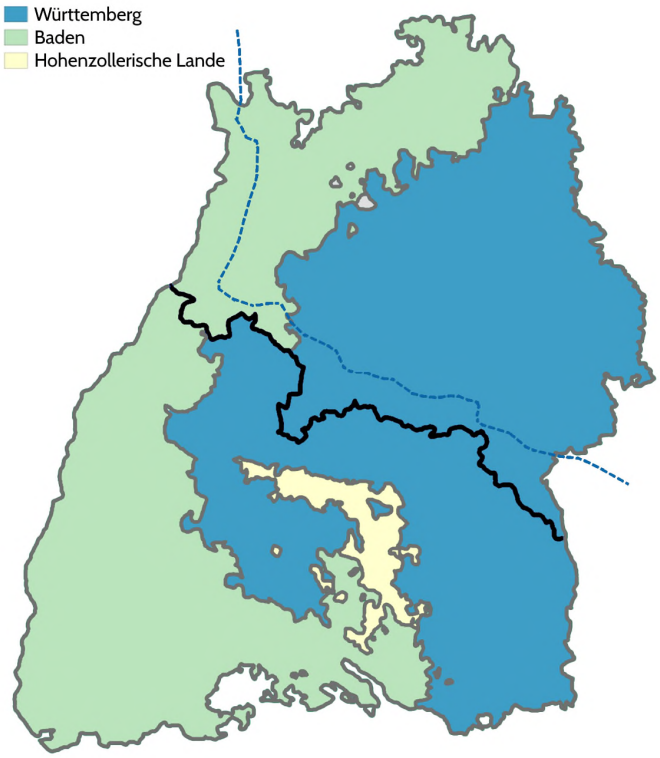

Figure 1: **Occupation Zone Border and Historical Provinces**

The map shows the state of Baden-Württemberg that has existed in this form since 1952. It also shows the historical regions of Württemberg (blue), Baden (light green), and Hohenzollern lands (yellow), that existed until 1945. The bold black line is the occupation zone border which split these regions into a part belonging to the US zone in the north and a part belonging to the French zone in the south between 1945 and 1949. The dashed dark-blue line depicts the highway.

boundary only existed for the short period between the fall of Nazi-Germany (1945) and the creation of the state of Baden-Württemberg in 1952 as part of the Federal Republic of Germany.[4]

The drawing of the occupation zone border had crucial consequences for the expellee distribution because France refused to accept expellees in its zone (Schumann, 2014; Wyrwich, 2020). The French government did not feel obliged by the agreements about accepting expellees at the Potsdam conference, because it had not taken part in it. Only refugees that arrived prior to July 1945 were allowed to stay (Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2018).[5] The policy remained in place until

[4]Between the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949 and the state of Baden-Württemberg in 1952, the northern part temporarily formed the German state of Württemberg-Baden, while the southern part formed the states of Baden and Württemberg-Hohenzollern.

[5]Other than that, the only exception to the French expellee embargo during the occupation was the acceptance of 36,000 German refugees from Denmark in 1947 (Mix, 2005).

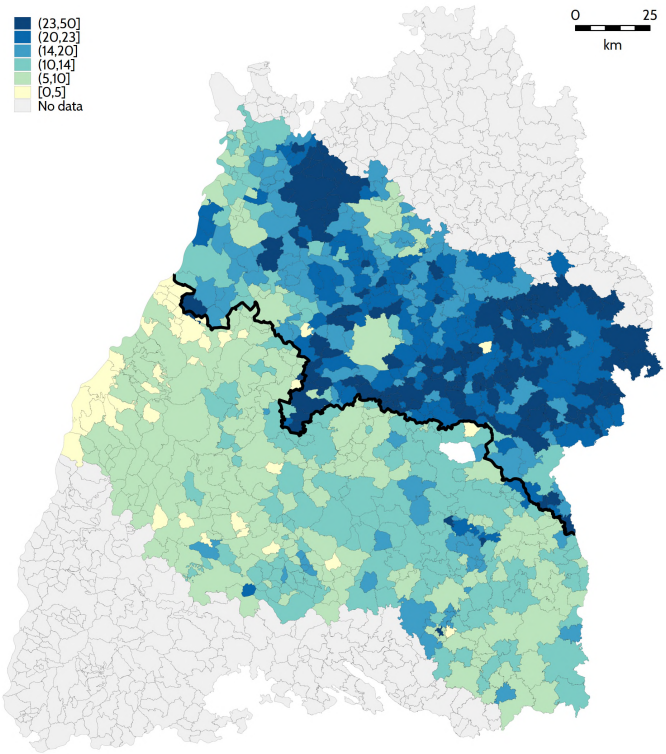

Figure 2: **Distribution of Expellees in Baden-Württemberg**

The map shows the share of expellees in today's state of Baden-Württemberg as a percentage of the total population in 1950. It visualizes the data on the municipality level that we digitized for all municipalities within 60 km distance to the border.

the end of the occupation regime in 1949. After the Federal Republic of Germany was founded in May 1949, free movement across occupation zone borders was reinstated (Schumann, 2014).[6]

We digitize data on the number of expellees from historical statistical volumes for the state of Baden-Württemberg. These data record the share of expellees in each municipality in 1950, at the time of the first census in the Federal Republic of Germany. Figure 2 illustrates the geographic discontinuity in expellee presence at the border of the two former occupation zones. In our sample, the municipality share of expellees averages 9.51% in the French zone and 20.74% in the US zone, where the maximum is at 45.16%.[7]

[6] Schumann (2014) studies the persistence of population density for this spatial discontinuity in Baden-Württemberg for the 1950–1970 period. In a recent working paper, Ciccone & Nimczik (2022) study economic effects of this discontinuous distribution of expellees.

[7] As there have been administrative reforms in the 1970s that reduced the number of municipalities in Baden-Württemberg, we collect the location of the historical municipalities in latitude-longitude space and match the number of expellees and inhabitants to the respective current municipalities using geographic information system (GIS) software. Shapefiles for current municipalities are from *Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung*,

2.2 Election Outcomes

We study the outcomes of all German federal elections between the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany and the time of writing. For the 20 federal elections between 1949 and 2021, we record each individual vote that was cast in Baden-Württemberg at the level of the municipality.[8]

While we show results for all major political parties, our focus is on votes for far-right, nationalist parties. In Germany, parties from this party family typically hold strong anti-immigration positions. After the fall of Nazi-Germany and the dissolution of Hitler's *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbiterpartei* (NSDAP), different nationalist parties with far-right positions competed in federal elections; the most prominent ones are *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (NPD) since the 1960s, *Die Republikaner* (REP) in the 1990s and 2000s, and *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) since the 2010s. To define far-right, nationalist parties we compile a list of all parties that ever participated in the German federal elections. We then combine a number of official sources and contributions to the political science literature that characterize these parties (see Appendix A.3 for details). Based on these characterizations, we coded each party as far-right nationalist if at least one of these sources unambiguously uses the terms "extreme right", "far-right", "right-wing populist", or "nationalist" to describe the party. This yields a total of 21 parties. Many of these are small fringe parties that participated in only a small number of elections and received a very minor number of votes.[9] For our main outcome variable, we sum up the vote share of these parties in each municipality. The strongest results for the far-right parties in federal elections are in 2017 (13.6% on average), 2021 (9.7%) 2013 (7.3%), and 1998 (6.1%).

downloaded January 10, 2020. We collect latitude-longitude records for the old municipalities via the *Nominatim* search engine in December 2020 and June 2021 and verified the locations manually.

[8] To obtain the results from the 1949 and 1953 elections, we digitized election results from statistical yearbooks of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg. For all other elections, we received the results from the state's statistical office.

[9] In addition to the three major far-right parties (AfD, REP, NPD), we add 18 fringe parties falling into this category. These parties received on average less than 1% of the vote share in elections in which they competed. In the following, we list them in alphabetical order: *Ab jetzt... Demokratie durch Volksabstimmung*, *Arminius-Bund*, *Bund freier Bürger*, *Christliche Mitte – Für ein Deutschland nach Gottes Geboten* (CM), *Dachverband der nationalen Sammlung* (DNS), *Der III. Weg*, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft* (DG), *Deutsche Reichspartei* (DRP), *Deutsche Liga für Volk und Heimat*, *Deutsche Reichspartei* (DRP), *Deutsche Soziale Union* (DSU), *Deutsche Volksunion* (DVU), *Die Rechte*, *Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (FAP), *Bürgerbewegung pro Deutschland*, *Bürgerbewegung pro NRW*, *Partei Rechtstaatlicher Offensive* (Schill), *STATT Partei – Die Unabhängigen*.

In addition, we define the party category of *Expellee Parties*. In the early elections of the Federal Republic, a number of parties represented the particular interests of expellees. Over time, some of them formed various alliances and cooperated and we thus group them together for the analysis.[10]

We also use the vote shares of the other major German parties as outcome variables: the Christian conservative *CDU*, the social democratic *SPD*, the liberal *FDP*, the Green party *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*, and the left socialist party *DIE LINKE*. As they all belong to different party families, we do not group them together. To run pre-treatment placebo-tests, we also make use of data on the vote share of Hitler's nationalist-socialist party *NSDAP*, available for a subset of municipalities in the 1930s.

2.3 Immigration Data

As we are interested in how past experience with immigration affects political reactions to immigration in the present, we add panel data on immigration levels. The Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg provides annual data on immigration at the state-, county-, and municipality-level. These data go back to the 1970s.[11] For the empirical analysis we define the variables *Immigration (State)* as the change in the share of foreigners in Baden-Württemberg since the last federal election. Analogously, *Immigration (County)* and *Immigration (Municipality)* denote the change in the share of foreigners at the county and municipality level.

Figure 3 visualizes the history of immigration to Baden-Württemberg between the 1970s and today. The figure shows the values of *Immigration (State)* for the 1976–2021 period in concert with data from German election surveys. We plot the share of respondents in Baden-Württemberg who state that "immigration" is "currently the most important issue in Germany".[12] As is visible, this share is highly correlated with net immigration. Both measures of immigration salience reach their highest values in the early 1990s, when many immigrants from Yugoslavia, Turkey, and the Soviet Union

[10] The parties' names are *Vertriebenenorganisation Notgemeinschaft Württemberg-Baden*, *Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten* (BHE), *Gesamtdeutscher Block/Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten* (GB/BHE), *Gesamtdeutsche Partei* (GDP), *Deutsche Partei* (DP).

[11] See https://www.statistik-bw.de/BevoelkGebiet/MigrNation/01035010.tab?R=LA, accessed and downloaded last on April 16, 2021.

[12] The survey data are from *Forschungsgruppe Wahlen: Politbarometer*. The number of survey participants in Baden-Württemberg per year ranges between 1600 and 3700 (the mean is 2353). The original German question text is: "Was ist Ihrer Meinung nach gegenwärtig das wichtigste Problem in Deutschland?"

arrive in Germany, and in the mid-2010s, the height of the European refugee crisis with many immigrants from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

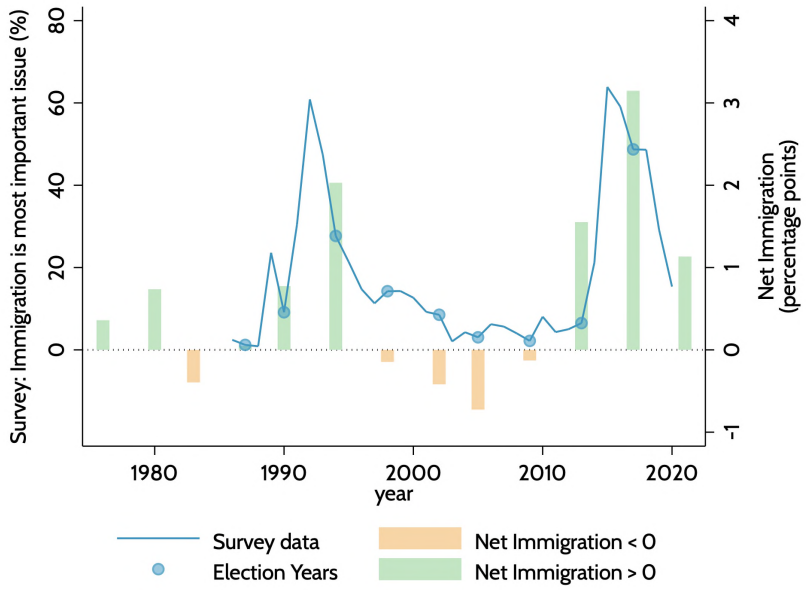

Figure 3: **Current Immigration and Total Share of Immigrants**

The blue line represents the share of people who report they perceive "immigration" as the currently most important issue in Germany. Dots on this curve indicate federal election years. The green and orange bars depict current immigration to Baden-Württemberg as the difference in the population share of migrants to the previous election year. Systematic and reliable immigration data are available since 1970.

2.4 Further Covariates

We also collect data on various economic and demographic statistics at the municipality-year level. These include data on local tax revenues (from income taxes, land taxes, corporate taxes), household income, age structures, gender identities, religious affiliations, and population density. We digitized data for the 1950–1990 period from various statistical yearbooks found in archives. Data for the post-1990 period are a combination of web-scraped data and administrative data files that we received from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg. For all municipalities, we also code multiple variables that indicate their geographic location, their distance to the state capital, to the nearest city, etc.

Appendix A.2 provides summary statistics for all variables used in the analysis and Appendix A.3 describes the coding of the variables in detail. In total, we use data for more than 15,000 municipality-election-year observations.

3 Empirical Strategy

We study the effect of a massive inflow of forced migrants on local voting behavior over a period of eight decades. Our focus is on how this relationship evolves from the short to the long run and how it depends on current levels of immigration.

3.1 Identification

Studying the political and socio-economic effects of immigration is challenging due to several endogeneity issues. Immigrants typically self-select into places based on various local factors such as pre-existing immigrant communities, economic conditions, social and political environment, etc. Existing research often addresses this endogeneity issue with shift-share-IV strategies that use the interaction of national immigrant inflows with immigrants' past geographic distribution as an instrument (Altonji & Card, 1991; Barone et al., 2016; Halla et al., 2017). For our purpose, to estimate the causal effects of the initial forced immigration treatment, this type of strategy is inapt because it does not allow to differentiate between short-run and long-run effects when there is persistence in migration flows (Jaeger et al., 2018).[13] As an alternative, Dustmann et al. (2019) use a quasi-random refugee allocation across Danish municipalities, but as this setting only allows studying short-run effects, our research question requires a different strategy.

Our empirical strategy is tailored to studying how exposure to an inflow of migrants in the past affects political behavior in the long run. We focus on a setting where a large-scale inflow of forced migrants entailed a quasi-random component in their spatial distribution. By using municipality-level panel data for the more than 70 years from the time of the forced migrants' arrival until today, we can study the short-, medium-, and long-run effects of this quasi-random immigration shock.

[13] Jaeger et al. (2018) argue that estimates based on this strategy can "conflate the short- and long-run responses to immigration shocks" when inflows of immigrants across places are highly serially correlated. See Tabellini (2020) for a study that addresses this issue.

As described in the previous section, the setting we study is Germany between the fall of the Nazi regime in 1945 and the time of writing (our observation period ends in 2021). Specifically, we focus on the border between the US and the French occupation zone that ran through the territory of the contemporary state of Baden-Württemberg, which led to a spatially discontinuous distribution of forced migrants in the immediate post-war period. These forced migrants were German-speaking expellees from territories in Eastern Europe that after World War II belonged to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union.

In order to use the discontinuity at the border for causal identification, a number of assumptions have to hold. First, there should not be any pre-existing, discontinuous differences between the two sides of the border. This assumption is unlikely to be violated in this setting because the border did not follow any politically important pre-existing administrative boundaries. Rather than following existing state borders – like occupation zone borders in the remainder of Germany – it cut across the existing states of *Baden* and *Württemberg* (see Figure 1). This arbitrary drawing of the border through politically, socially, and socio-economically homogeneous areas was the result of political negotiations between the United States and France and was determined by logistical considerations of the US military (see previous section). In Figure 4, we show the absence of pre-treatment differences along the border in several observable pre-treatment characteristics. The results of these placebo-regressions confirm that pre-treatment characteristics such as population size and population density in 1939 (and in 1950 when excluding expellees), distance to the nearest city, and historical vote shares for the NSDAP in 1933 balance on both sides of the cut-off created by the border.

A second important assumption in RD-based research designs is the absence of sorting. In our setting, this requires us to assume that municipalities could not select themselves into one of the two occupation zones. This assumption holds because the border was drawn by the occupation forces following the rule to use the southern borders of all counties crossed by highway A8. Historical maps show that this rule was adhered to without a single exception (see Appendix Figure A1). In Appendix Figure A4, we also show the result of a formal manipulation test based on local polynomial density estimators (Cattaneo et al., 2020). The density of municipalities is not significantly different on the two sides of the border.

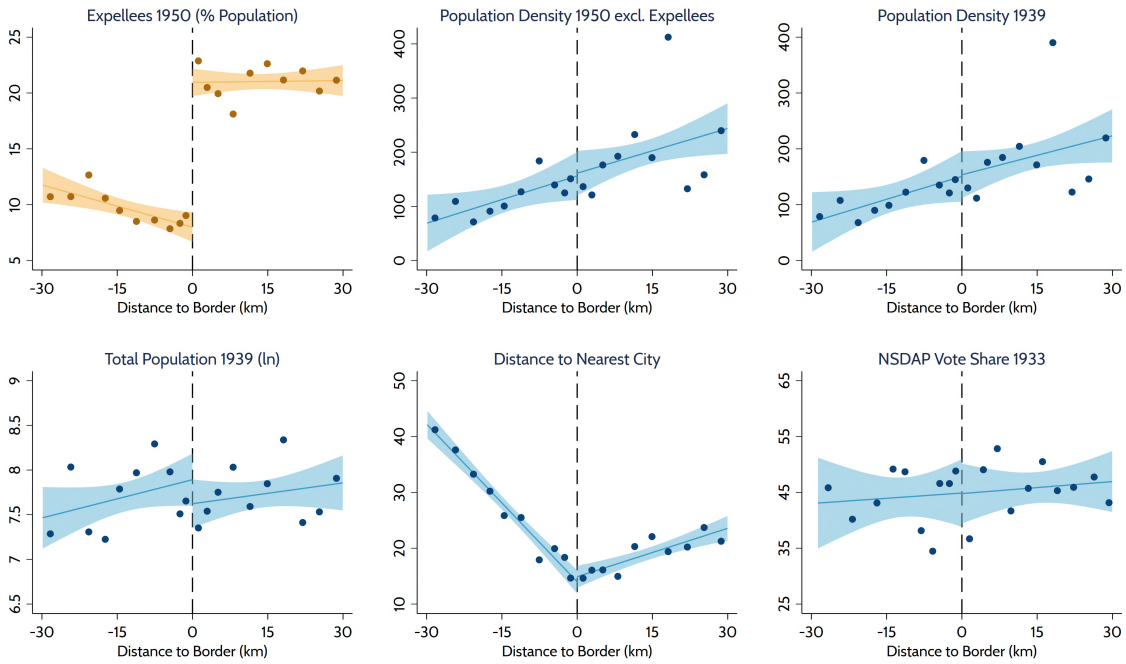

Figure 4: **Pre-Treatment Placebos**

This figure displays RD plots for the expellee distribution in 1950 and placebo tests for differences in pre-treatment municipality characteristics. Each panel represents an individual sharp RD estimation using the occupation zone border as the cut-off and *Distance to Border* as the running variable. Panel titles depict the respective dependent variable. Dots display binned means of the dependent variable. The figures represent RD estimations using a linear fit with the respective 95% confidence intervals. For none of the observable pre-treatment characteristics, the placebo regressions suggest the existence of a discontinuity at the border.

Since we focus on long-term effects we also need to assume that after the expellees were discontinuously distributed along the border there was no subsequent treatment along the same border. This assumption is plausible because the occupation zone border was removed when the Federal Republic of Germany was founded in 1949. In 1952, the three states of Baden, Württemberg-Baden, and Württemberg-Hohenzollern, which the occupation forces had founded in 1945 and which had shared the occupation zone border in the 1945–1952 period were merged and combined to the state of Baden-Württemberg. Since then, Baden-Württemberg has comprised the former border and the surrounding municipalities in its entirety. The state has remained in this shape until today and is the only area state of the Federal Republic of Germany that was divided into two large occupation zones.[14] Subnational, state-level policies have thus not differed between the regions

[14] To be precise, there was one exception. The Bavarian county of *Lindau* was part of the French occupation zone in order to provide France with a connection to the territories they occupied in Austria. The rest of Bavaria was occupied by the United States. The city state of Berlin was famously divided into four occupation zones.

along the former border after 1952. Not even the next lower administrative units, the governorates (*Regierungsbezirke*), follow this former border.

While it is thus plausible to exclude other spatial discontinuities before 1945 and after 1952, there may have been other differences between the French and the US occupation zone in addition to the intake of forced migrants in the 1945–1952 period. Initially, it is important to note that the discontinuity in the share of forced migrants naturally coincides with a discontinuity in population density because the inflow of migrants was large. The empirical strategy does not allow isolating the effect of immigration from the effect of population density. Furthermore, although the Allied Control Council (*Alliierter Kontrollrat*) coordinated policies across the occupation zones in Germany, we cannot fully exclude the possibility that French and US occupation forces differed in how they implemented these common policies. This implies the caveat that our empirical strategy identifies the combined causal effect of both the arrival of forced migrants and any such potential differences between the French and the US occupation zone in this time period. As historians generally emphasize coordination and similarities between the three Western occupation forces until they combined their territories to the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949 (cf. Pünder, 1966), we assume that the long-run implications of any such temporary differences will be subtle compared to the massive inflow of forced migrants that increased the population in the US zone by more than a fifth.

In spite of these limitations, the state of Baden-Württemberg constitutes a natural laboratory that is well-suited to examine the short- and long-run consequences of the massive inflow of forced migrants after World War II. While the boundary did not cause a binary shock with no expellees in the south and a homogeneously distributed influx of people in the north, it discontinuously changed the probability of observing a higher number of expellees (see Figure 2). This allows us to use the quasi-random spatial variation in the share of expellees across the historical occupation zone boundary in a spatial fuzzy regression discontinuity (RD) design. To isolate the exogenous share of the variation, we use the border as an instrument in fuzzy RD models.

3.2 Empirical Model

In the baseline, we estimate the fuzzy RD model by two-stage least squares.[15] The first stage of this analysis estimates the extent to which the occupation zone border implied a discontinuity in the share of expellees in the population of municipalities m around the border in the year 1950. The second stage uses the instrumented *Expellees* treatment to explain variation in the share of votes for party p in year t. The main outcome variable is the cumulative vote share of far-right parties but we extend the analysis to all parties and party families p that ever achieved a significant vote share in German federal elections. We apply this analysis to all $T = 20$ German federal elections between $t_1 = 1949$ and $t_{20} = 2021$.

First-stage equation:

$$expellees_m = \alpha zone_m + f(dist_m, zone_m) + g(long_m, lat_m) + \sum_{s=1}^{5} seg_m^s + \epsilon_m \tag{1}$$

Second-stage equation:

$$votes_m^{p,t} = \beta \widehat{expellees}_m + f(dist_m, zone_m) + g(long_m, lat_m) + \sum_{s=1}^{5} seg_m^s + \varepsilon_m^{p,t} \tag{2}$$

In these models, *US Zone* (*zone*) is an indicator taking the value of 1 if the territory of the municipality was in the US occupation zone, and 0 if it was in the French zone. To locate the municipalities in either of the two occupation zones, we use the geocoded data on the course of the occupation zone border from Schumann (2014). Functions $f(.)$ and $g(.)$ are the RD polynomials. *Distance to Border* (*dist*) indicates the geographic distance between the municipality's centroid and the border (in km) and is the "running variable" for our RD estimations. Positive values denote municipalities that belonged to the US zone and municipalities in the French zone are assigned negative distances. In the baseline, *f(dist, zone)* is a local linear RD polynomial that is estimated separately in both zones. Robustness tests in Appendix A.6.5 use a second-order polynomial but following Gelman & Imbens (2019), we refrain from using higher-order polynomials. The function $g(long_m, lat_m)$ is a two-dimensional RD polynomials that controls for smooth functions of longitude

[15] For robustness, we also run reduced-form analyses in the form of a sharp RD. See Appendix A.6.1.

and latitude of the municipality's centroid. It is linear in the baseline and quadratic in robustness tests (Appendix A.6.5). To ensure that we compare proximate observations along the occupation zone border, which has a length of more than 150 km, we follow Dell (2010) and Dell & Olken (2020) by dividing the border into several segments of equal length (five in the baseline) and add these segment fixed effects (seg) to the regression.[16]

Our panel data set builds on the $N = 1,101$ municipalities in Baden-Württemberg and includes data of the time period between 1933 and 2021. As we focus on the municipalities around the former occupation zone border we collected complete data for all 759 municipalities within 60 km distance to the border. In the baseline, we follow the related literature on spatial RD designs and choose an RD bandwidth of 30 km (cf. Dell, 2010; Dell & Olken, 2020; Ochsner & Roesel, 2019, for related models using similar standard bandwidths). We also show that the results hold for both smaller and larger bandwidths (see Appendix A.6.2). In the baseline, we assign equal weight to all observations by using a uniform RD kernel in the baseline as the distribution of expellees on both sides of the border is close to uniform (see Figure 4). In Appendix A.6.3, we show that the results are robust to using a triangular kernel, which assigns more weight to observations near the border.

In the baseline, we do not add any control variables to restrict our degrees of freedom. In robustness regressions, we include additional control variables that address potential concerns (Appendix A.6.4). Here, we control for smooth functions of a municipality's distance to the state capital, Stuttgart, and to the next major city. To account for the role played by the highway, which influenced the border drawing, we also control for the municipality's distance to it. In addition, for Table A9 and Figure A15, we construct a placebo border that uses the northern – rather than the original southern – boundaries of the counties through which the highway runs. The placebo tests produce a series of statistically insignificant estimates for key outcome variables. In Appendix A.6.7 we also show that results are robust to excluding all municipalities that are close to the highway. As Baden-Württemberg consists of many small municipalities and few large ones, another concern could be that the large municipalities, i.e., cities, are atypical observations. In Appendix A.6.7 we thus show that results are robust to excluding cities with more than 50.000 or 100.000 inhabitants.

[16] It is evident from Figure 2 that the distribution of expellees is not homogenous along the occupation zone boundary. The share of expellees is somewhat larger in the east. Segment fixed effects and the smooth functions of the longitude-latitude space control for this.

In addition to studying the short- and long-run effects of the inflow of expellees after World War II, a key element of the analysis is to assess how it affects political reactions to current immigration. We are interested in how current levels of immigration "activate" or "mute" the long-run treatment effect of a municipality's exposure to the massive inflow of forced migrants after World War II. To do so, we add panel data on immigration inflows at the municipality-year level between 1970 and 2021. Making use of the panel structure of our data, we interact the expellees treatment with the current level of net immigration (between years t and $t-x$, with x indicating the time since the last election):

$$\begin{aligned} votes^{p}_{m,t} = \gamma \widehat{expellees}_m + \delta(\widehat{expellees}_m \times immigration_{mt}) \\ + \tau_t + h(dist_m, zone_m, immigration_{mt}) + g(long_m, lat_m) + \sum_{s=1}^{5} seg^{s}_{m} + \varepsilon^{p}_{mt} \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Initially, we measure yearly immigration at the state-level for Baden-Württemberg as a whole, and continue using county-level data and, subsequently, municipality-level data. These different operationalizations of current immigration exposure (and salience) have different advantages. Measuring immigration to the entire state of Baden-Württemberg has the advantage that it is exogenous to local political developments in individual municipalities. Using data at the county- and municipality-level exploits more variation and allows absorbing unobserved temporal variation at the state-level by adding year fixed effects (τ_t).[17]

When considering multiple years in the models, we use standard errors that are robust to clustering at the municipality level. Appendix A.6.6 shows that results are very similar when using standard errors that are robust to clustering at the county level, to autocorrelation, and to correlations in the spatial dimension using Bartlett kernels (Colella et al., 2019).

[17] In these models, $h(.)$ also needs to include full interactions of the RD polynomial with *Immigration* (cf. Carril et al., 2018).

4 Results

4.1 The Historical Expellee Shock

The first step of the empirical analysis examines the effect of the border between the two occupation zones on the distribution of expellees after World War II. We use the RD model, specified in equation 1, to estimate the discontinuity in the share of expellees at the border. Table 1 reports the results of regressions of the share of expellees in 1950 at the municipality level on the indicator of being located in the former US occupation zone. The estimated coefficients are statistically different from zero at the 0.1% level in all models. The size of the estimated effect ranges between 11.1 and 13.0 percentage points. Across different specifications of the RD model, the size of the estimated discontinuity is very stable, suggesting that it is not sensitive to modelling choices, including, e.g., latitude-longitude controls, segment fixed effects, and alternative bandwidths. The estimated effect size is also very similar to the raw difference in means in the two occupation zones. The mean expellee share in the US zone was 20.9 (SD=5.9), while the mean in the French zone was 9.6 (SD=3.9), when considering all municipalities whose centroid is closer than 30 km to the border. Hence, the results confirm that the separation of the region into two occupation zones led to a substantially larger immigration wave in the municipalities just north of the border than in the municipalities just south of the border.

Table 1: **The Occupation Zone Border and the Distribution of Expellees**

Dep. var.: *Expellees*	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
US Zone	12.968***	12.528***	12.518***	12.077***	12.169***	11.665***	11.128***
	(0.930)	(0.805)	(0.835)	(0.804)	(0.826)	(1.118)	(0.651)
Observations	185 + 219	185 + 219	185 + 219	185 + 219	185 + 219	107 + 122	364 + 395
Distance Polynomials	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coordinates		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Segments				✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	30	30	30	30	30	15	60

The table displays coefficients from seven sharp RD regressions with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. The outcome variable is the share of expellees per municipality in 1950. 'Observations' reports the number of observations on each side of the cut-off. 'Bandwidth' depicts the sample bandwidth (in km). 'Distance Polynomials' indicate that local linear polynomials of the running variable *Distance to Border* are included. 'Coordinates' denotes additional inclusion of a two dimensional RD polynomial that is linear in latitude and longitude. 'Segments' indicates the usage of segment fixed effects. Model 5, which controls for distance to the border, latitude-longitude, and segment fixed effects represents the baseline specification for the following analysis. All estimations use a uniform RD kernel. See equation 1 for details. Figure 4 visualizes the discontinuity by means of an RD plot. It shows the sharp increase in the share of expellees once the occupation zone border is crossed from the French zone (negative distances) to the US zone (positive distances). This visualization corresponds to model 1 of Table 1.

4.2 Electoral Effects, 1949–2021

We now turn to studying the political implications of this large inflow of forced migrants. We consider all 20 federal elections in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany, from the first election after the end of the Nazi dictatorship in 1949 to the most recent one in 2021. For each election, we estimate how the arrival of forced migrants affected voting outcomes at the municipality level. The effects are based on the fuzzy RD design specified above and are estimated by 2SLS.

4.2.1 Effects on Major Parties of Post-War Germany

We begin by looking at votes for parties that represented the interests of expellees in post-war Germany. Expellees immediately received the right to vote and it is thus natural to expect that expellee parties were more successful in municipalities with larger inflows of expellees. In 1953, when these expellee parties stood for election for the first time, we find a strong positive effect of the share of expellees in the municipality on the combined vote share of these parties.[18] An increase in the expellee share by one percentage point increases the vote share of expellee parties by about 0.4 percentage points. The effect gradually diminishes in the subsequent elections of the 1950s and early 1960s, suggesting that other parties gradually absorbed these voters. Over the course of the 1960s, expellee parties stopped playing a significant role in German politics. In the federal election of 1961, the remaining expellee party failed to reach the required threshold of 5% to get into parliament and in 1965 no expellee party participated in the federal election.[19]

The remaining three panels of Figure 5 examine the effect on votes for the three major parties that dominated the German political system in the post-war era. An interesting pattern is visible for the center-right, christian-conservative party CDU, which received the most votes in all German elections in the early decades of the Federal Republic. In the first federal election, municipalities with more expellees had a lower CDU vote share, most likely because independent expellee can-

[18] Note that parties eligible to run in the first federal election of 1949 had to be licensed by the occupying forces and the formation of parties with particular interests, such as expellee issues, was not permitted. Expellee parties were founded in the early 1950s. A predecessor in 1949 and 1950 was an independent list called *Notgemeinschaft der Kriegsgeschädigten und Vertriebenen in Württemberg-Baden*. Their candidates achieved on average 18.6% of the votes in the US occupation zone.

[19] For the sake of completeness, note that GDP changed its name to GPD (*Gesamtdeutsche Partei Deutschlands*) in 1965 and participated in the federal elections of 1969, where it received 0.1% of the votes.

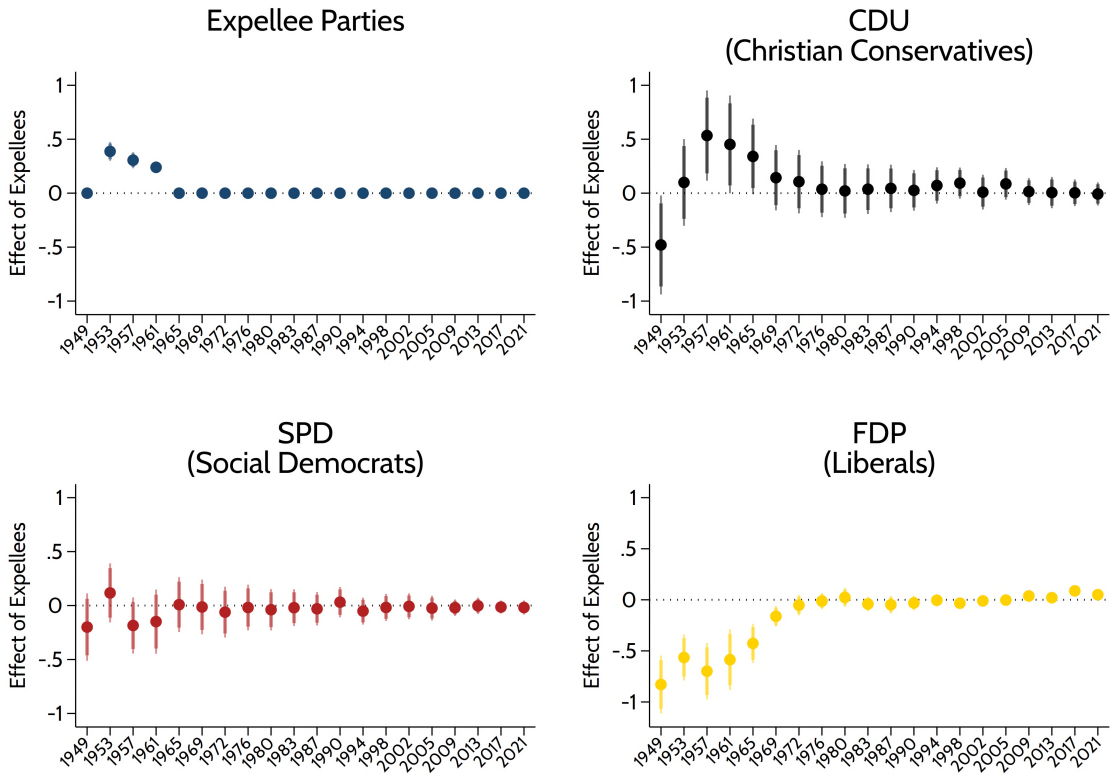

Figure 5: **Electoral Effects, All Federal Elections 1949–2021**

The coefficient plots show results from individual fuzzy RD regressions, where the share of *Expellees* is the variable of interest instrumented with the *US Zone* indicator. The dependent variables are the municipality vote shares of the parties indicated in the panel titles in federal elections. See equations 1 and 2. Each dot shows the coefficient estimate for the share of *Expellees* from an individual regression in the election year indicated on the horizontal axis. Vertical bars represent 95% and 90% confidence intervals based on heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. The sample bandwidth is 30 km.

didates, which ran without an established party platform in 1949, attracted some potential CDU voters (cf. fn. 18). In the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, when expellee parties lose their political significance, there is a positive effect of the expellee share on the CDU's vote share. In conjunction with the finding above, this strongly suggests that the CDU managed to absorb their voters. This short-run effect, however, washes out in the long run and soon approaches zero. In contrast, the CDU's main competitors, the social-democratic, center-left SPD and the liberal FDP, were unable to benefit from the expellee inflow in the short run. In the early federal elections, both parties fared less well in the municipalities with more expellees just north of the border. The success of expellee parties in these municipalities seems to have been to the detriment of social democrats and particularly the liberals. As for the conservatives, the short-run effect fades out in

the long run. From the 1970s onwards, there are no longer any differences in the vote shares of these mainstream parties along the former occupation zone border.

4.2.2 Effects on Far-Right Parties

In Figure 6 – and in the remainder of this paper – we focus on far-right, nationalist parties. For the regressions plotted in this figure, we add up the vote shares of all nationalist parties that ever participated in German federal elections. In the early federal elections of the 1950s and 1960s, voters in regions north of the border, where more expellees settled, are more likely to vote for nationalist parties. This result may be explained by plans among German nationalist parties to re-annex former home regions of the expellees. After the mid-1960s, however, this short-run effect vanishes and expellees did not affect the vote share of far-right parties in post-war Germany until the late 1980s.

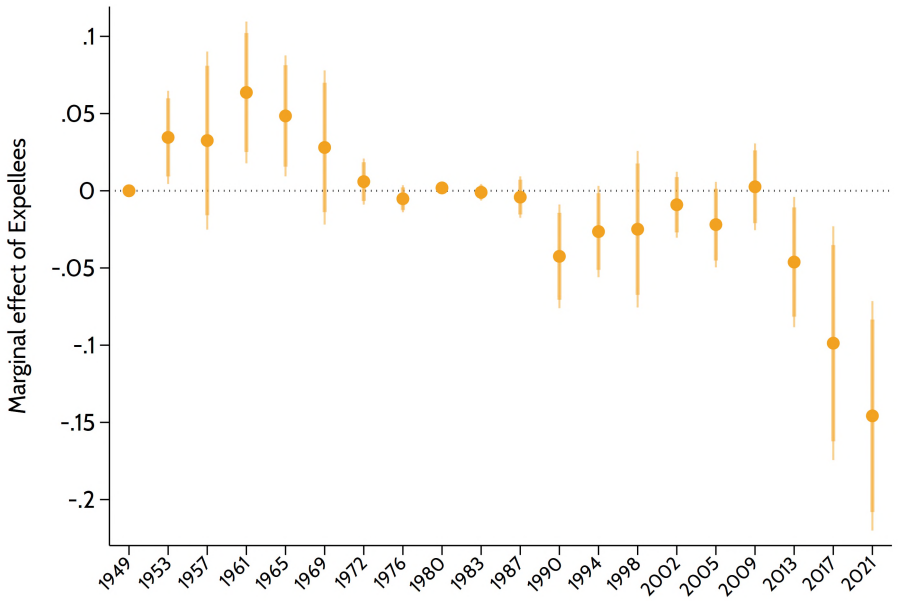

Figure 6: **Far-Right Parties, All Federal Elections 1949–2017**

The coefficient plot shows results from individual fuzzy RD regressions, where the share of *Expellees* is the variable of interest instrumented with the *US Zone* indicator. The dependent variable is the municipality vote share of *Far-Right Parties* in federal elections. See equations 1 and 2. Each dot shows the coefficient estimate for the share of *Expellees* from an individual regression in the election year indicated on the horizontal axis. Vertical bars represent 95% and 90% confidence intervals based on heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. The sample bandwidth is 30 km.

Things start to change in the 1990s. From the federal election of 1990 onward, we observe negative coefficients in all federal elections until 20211.[20] These effects are statistically significant at the 5%-level in 1990, 1994, 2013, 2017 and 2021. If their municipalities received more expellees after World War II, voters are less likely to vote for far-right parties in contemporary Germany. The effect is strongest in the two most recent elections. The regression estimates suggest that an increase in the 1950 expellee share by one percentage point reduces the vote share of the far-right AfD in 2021 by more than 0.1 percentage points. Considering that the mean expellee share in the US zone was 20.9%, this implies a reduction in the AfD vote share by about 2 percentage points in the mean municipality in the former US occupation zone compared to the counterfactual absence of any expellee inflow. Given that the AfD won 10.1% of votes in the German federal election of 2021, this is a substantial effect on their vote share.

We visualize the discontinuity using a sharp RD estimation, showing RD plots for the two most recent elections (Figure 7). The results show a drop in the far-right vote share by about 1-2 percentage points in the municipalities that were exposed to the large expellee inflow after World War II.

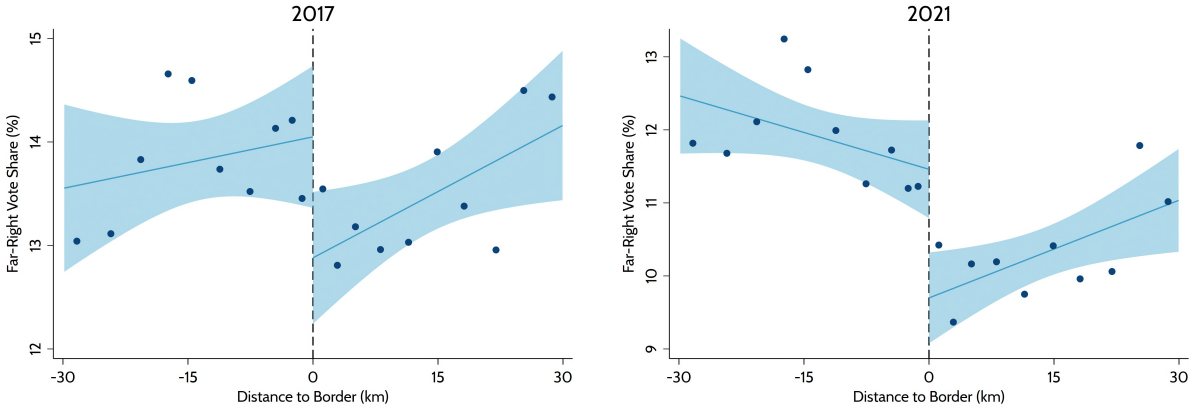

Figure 7: **Sharp RD: Effects on Far-Right Voting**

This figure displays estimates (along with 95% and 90% confidence intervals) from individual sharp RD estimations using the occupation zone border as the cut-off and *Distance to Border* as the running variable. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in the 2017 federal election (left panel) and the 2021 election (right panel). The dark blue dots display binned means of the dependent variable. The fitted lines represent parametric RD estimations using linear polynomials. The light blue area displays respective 95% confidence intervals.

[20]The only exception is an insignificant coefficient of 0.002 in 2009.

The remainder of this paper focuses on explaining this finding. Why did the large inflow of forced migrants after World War II start to affect voting for nationalist parties in contemporary Germany?

4.3 The Role of Current Immigration

4.3.1 Immigration and Nationalist Voting

Our explanation is based on the idea that voting for nationalist parties often is a reaction to a perceived threat from immigration. Existing research provides strong evidence for this relationship (e.g., Dustmann et al., 2019; Steinmayr, 2020). Anecdotally, the case of Germany supports this view. The entrance of the far-right AfD to German parliaments coincides with the exceptionally large inflow of refugees in the context of the 2015-16 European migrant crisis (Stecker & Debus, 2019). More generally, periods of immigration to Germany also coincided with increased far-right voting in earlier decades. Appendix Figure A3 plots the share of migrants along with the vote share of far-right parties in the German state of Baden-Württemberg. The graph visualizes the simultaneity of increasing immigration to the state and voting for far-right parties during the European migrant crisis of the 2010s. In addition, it shows that an earlier immigration wave in the 1990s – consisting mainly of Yugoslavian refugees and Turkish immigrants – also coincided with increased electoral support for far-right parties, mainly the *Republikaner* (REP).

To probe this descriptive evidence on the link between immigration and nationalist voting in Baden-Württemberg with regression-based evidence, Table 2 examines this association with panel data at the municipality level. The five specifications regress the vote share of far-right parties on immigration since the last election, a set of municipality-year-specific controls as well as on year fixed effects and municipality fixed effects. The sample covers almost all municipalities in Baden-Württemberg; it is limited to the 1990–2021 period by the availability of data for the control variables. Columns 1-3 show strong positive associations between far-right voting and immigration at the level of the state (1), the county (2), and the municipality (3). Columns 4 and 5 show that these associations hold when the different measures are added to the same regressions. While columns 1 and 4 do not allow to absorb time trends, the remaining columns include the full set of two-way fixed effects and thus suggest that the relationship is neither driven by unobserved

Table 2: **Immigration and Far-Right Voting, Fixed-Effects Regressions**

Dep. var.: *Far-Right Vote Share*	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Immigration (State)	1.369***			0.499***	
	(0.022)			(0.039)	
Immigration (County)		0.306***		0.946***	0.371***
		(0.044)		(0.040)	(0.047)
Immigration (Municipality)			0.084***	0.058**	0.051***
			(0.016)	(0.023)	(0.016)
Observations	10,964	10,964	8,974	8,974	8,974
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE		✓	✓		✓

The table displays coefficients from five OLS fixed-effects regressions. Standard errors clustered at the municipality-level are in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections in percent. The vector of controls includes the following municipality-year-specific variables: *Population (ln)*, *Income Tax (per Capita)*, *Share Male (%)*, *Share Older than 65 (%)*, *Share Younger than 25 (%)*. Appendix Table A13 shows the full set of coefficients for the covariates.

statewide time trends nor unobserved, time-invariant municipality characteristics. These results imply that the association between immigration and far-right voting, which is well-established in the existing literature, also holds for the case studied in this paper. While the literature has so far focused on establishing that this nexus is due to a causal effect, our focus in the remainder of this study is on the causes for the differences in voter reactions to immigration.

4.3.2 The Interaction of Past and Present Immigration

We study an explanation for why only some but not all voters react to immigration by voting for far-right nationalist parties. We hypothesize that voters in municipalities that experienced more immigration in the past, will oppose contemporary immigration less strongly. To test this hypothesis, we estimate whether the historical inflow of forced migrants to the region affects voter reactions to immigration in the present.

Table 3 reports the results of fuzzy RD regressions of the far-right vote share on the 1950 expellee share and combines it with information on contemporary immigration in the 1976–2021 period.[21] Column 1 is a baseline specification, that serves as the starting point for the subsequent analysis. It

[21] Note that this analysis in restricted to the 1976–2021 period, because detailed data on immigration is only available since 1972. As we use the change in the migrant share between two elections for the construction of the *Immigration* variable, the federal election of 1976 is the first election we can consider.

Table 3: **Elections and Expellees: The Role of Current Immigration, 1976-2021**

Dep. var.: *Far-Right Vote Share*	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Expellees	-0.032***	-0.014	-0.062***	-0.019*	-0.018*	-0.024**
	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.019)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Expellees × Immigration (State)				-0.022***		
				(0.007)		
Immigration (County)					0.415***	
					(0.100)	
Expellees × Immigration (County)					-0.019***	
					(0.005)	
Immigration (Municipality)						0.236***
						(0.078)
Expellees × Immigration (Municipality)						-0.013***
						(0.005)
Bandwidth	30	30	30	30	30	30
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Distance Polynomials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Distance Polynomials × Immigration				✓	✓	✓
Segment FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coordinates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Periods of Low/High Immigration	All	Low	High	All	All	All
Observations	5252	3232	2020	5252	5656	4443
Municipalities	404	404	404	404	404	344
F-statistic (KP)	221	221	220	97	91	83
First Stage:						
US Zone	12.169***	12.169***	12.169***	12.169***	12.161***	12.013***
	(0.819)	(0.819)	(0.820)	(0.819)	(0.814)	(0.811)

The table displays coefficients from six spatial fuzzy RD regressions with standard errors clustered at the municipality-level in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections. 'Bandwidth' depicts the sample bandwidth (in km). 'Observations' reports the number of observations for the indicated number of 'Municipalities'. All estimations use a uniform kernel. All regressions include year fixed, segment fixed effects, as well as a set of cross-interactions of migration and the running variable (*Distance to Border*) allowed to differ on both sides of the cut-off. The lower panel shows the results from the first stage, the regression of the *Expellees* share on the *US Zone* indicator. Columns 2 and 3 compare the effect of *Expellees* in two sub-samples: elections in periods of low immigration (2) and during immigration waves (3). An immigration wave is defined as a period between two elections, during which the share of migrants in society increased by more than one percentage point.

shows a negative and statistically significant negative effect of *Expellees* on far-right voting when all federal elections since 1976 are pooled together while year fixed effects are absorbed. On average, the historical immigration shock reduced support for nationalism in the long run.

Before adding granular data on contemporary immigration to the analysis, specifications 2 and 3 split the sample into periods with low and high migration pressure. "High immigration" years denote periods between two elections, during which the share of migrants in the state increased by more than one percentage point. The remaining years are coded as "low immigration" periods. The results show that the estimated effect is substantially larger in elections that are held after periods

with more immigration.[22] The effect of the expellee share on far-right voting is insignificant when there are no immigration waves (column 2) and twice as large during immigration waves (column 3) as it is on average (column 1).

To study this more rigorously, specification 4 interacts the 1950 expellee share with a measure of *Immigration* to the state of Baden-Württemberg. The variable indicates the change in the share of migrants in the population between two federal elections. The interaction enters with a negative sign that is statistically significant at the one-percent level. Figure 8, Panel [a] plots the corresponding marginal effects. As is visible, the effect of *Expellees* is zero in periods without positive net immigration. However, when statewide immigration is higher, voters in municipalities with more historical expellee exposure are significantly less likely to vote for nationalist parties than voters in municipalities with less exposure. In other words, in such elections the association between migration and far-right voting is substantial and significantly stronger in municipalities that did not experience the large-scale expellee shock after World War II.

Specifications 5 and 6 in Table 3 use more detailed data on contemporary immigration. Rather than considering immigration to the entire state of Baden-Württemberg, they consider immigration to specific counties and municipalities. This helps to identify more local effects. Column 5 is based on county-year-level immigration data from the 44 counties (*Landkreise* and *Stadtkreise*) that Baden-Württemberg consists of. Figure 8, Panel [b] shows that the pattern is very similar to the marginal effects identified with state-level immigration data. The effect of the expellee share on far-right voting is substantially more pronounced in counties to which more people migrated since the last election. Specification 6, repeats this exercise with highly granular data at the municipality-year level. Figure 8, Panel [c] shows the corresponding marginal effects. The estimated pattern is the same as before. There is a strong negative effect of the expellee share on far-right voting, but only in municipalities where contemporary immigration is high.

In Table A11 in the Appendix, we show that this result holds when we control for annual statewide immigration and its interaction with the treatment in the regressions that use county-level and municipality-level variation in immigration. This shows that the heterogeneity of the effect is not

[22] This means that the federal elections of 1980, 1990, 1994, 2017, and 2021 are classified as elections after immigration waves.

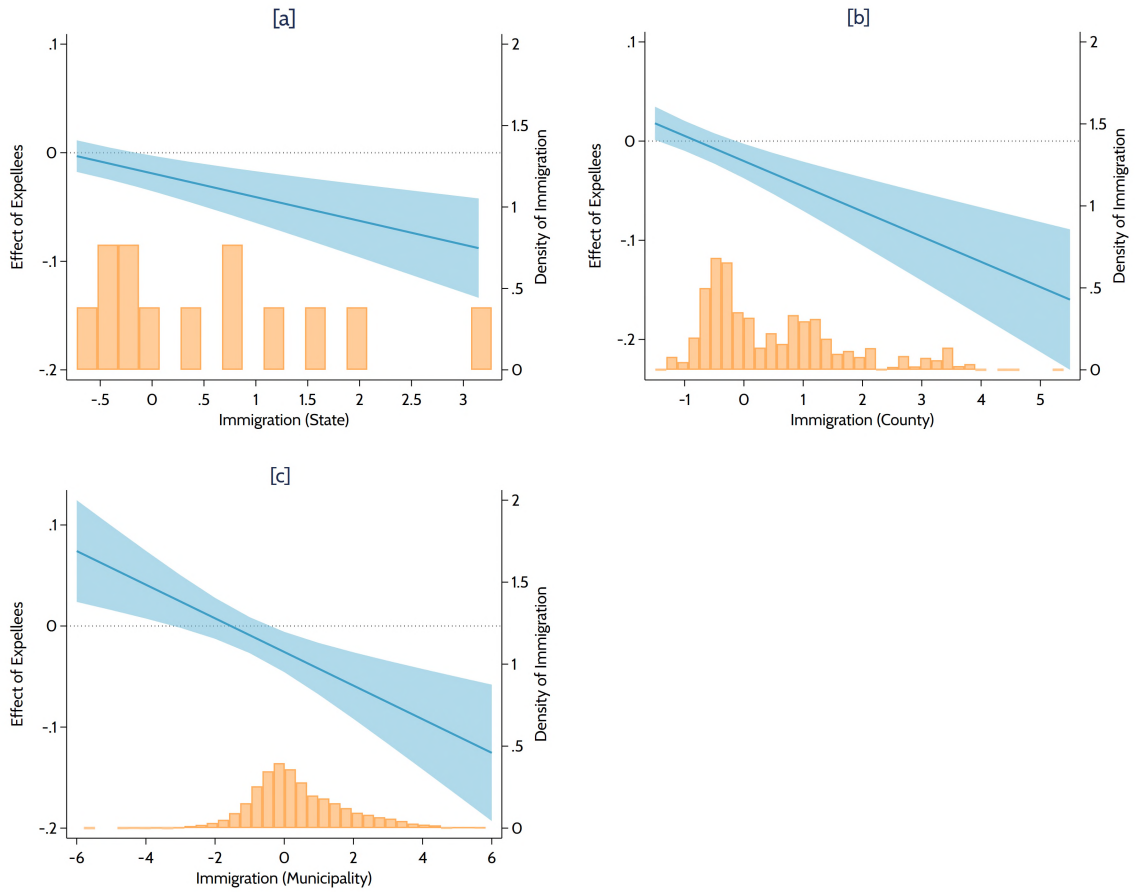

Figure 8: **Marginal Effects of Expellees on Far-Right Vote Shares**

The figure plots results from three spatial fuzzy RD regressions as described in Table 3, columns 4-6. The dependent variable is *Far-Right Vote Share*. The blue lines display marginal effects of *Expellees* given different levels of current *Immigration* at the state level (Panel [a]), county level (Panel [b]), and municipality level (Panel [c]) with 95% confidence intervals (shaded blue areas). The orange bars provide histograms of *Immigration* at the state, county, and municipality level, respectively.

only driven by temporal variation but also by spatial variation in immigration for given levels of contemporary statewide immigration. The effect on voters is stronger *when* and *where* there is more contemporary immigration.

4.3.3 The European Migrant Crisis: Difference-in-Discontinuities

To further probe the hypothesis that contemporary immigration activates the electoral effect of past exposure to immigration, we provide additional evidence from the European migrant crisis. The crisis started in 2015, when more than 1.3 million refugees and migrants came to Europe to

request asylum. The largest share of migrants were Syrians, Afghans, and Iraqis, who fled their home countries because of ongoing civil wars. Of all European countries, Germany experienced the largest inflow of migrants with about 500,000 asylum seekers in 2015 and 750,000 in 2016. As we show in Figure 9, survey data indicates that migration was the most salient issue in German politics at this time. In the state and federal elections of this period, the far-right *Alternative für Deutschland* ran on a decidedly anti-immigration platform and gained an increasing share of votes.[23]

The subsequent analysis studies this period in detail. In addition to data on German federal elections, we collect data on state-level and EU-level election results to compile panel data with a higher frequency of elections ($T = 12$) in the 2005–2021 period, i.e., the time before and after the European migrant crisis in 2015/16. We then estimate the RD model for all elections before and after this external shock and visualize the results in Figure 9. In a sense, this represents a "difference-in-discontinuities" type of model – a combination of a regression-discontinuity with a difference-in-differences design – with the time after the shock of the European migrant crisis as the *post-treatment* period.

The results show that there are no consistent discontinuities in far-right voting in the period preceding the European migrant crisis (2005–2014). This immediately changes in the first election of the post-2015 period, staying constant for all elections in the 2016–2021 period. All RD estimates of the post-treatment period are statistically significant with p-values of 0.017 and smaller. The evidence thus supports the idea that the European migrant crisis activated a latent difference between the regions with and without exposure to the historical migration shock. Once immigration becomes politically salient, local experiences with immigration in the past have implications for the local support of nationalism.

In sum, the evidence presented in this section supports the hypothesis that previous experience with immigration changes voters' reactions to contemporary immigration. Voters in municipalities with such experiences are significantly less likely to react to contemporary immigration in a hostile way. The following section sheds more light on this local experience. Arguably, an implication of

[23]See Cantoni et al. (2019) for details on the party's anti-immigration positioning during and after the European migrant crisis.

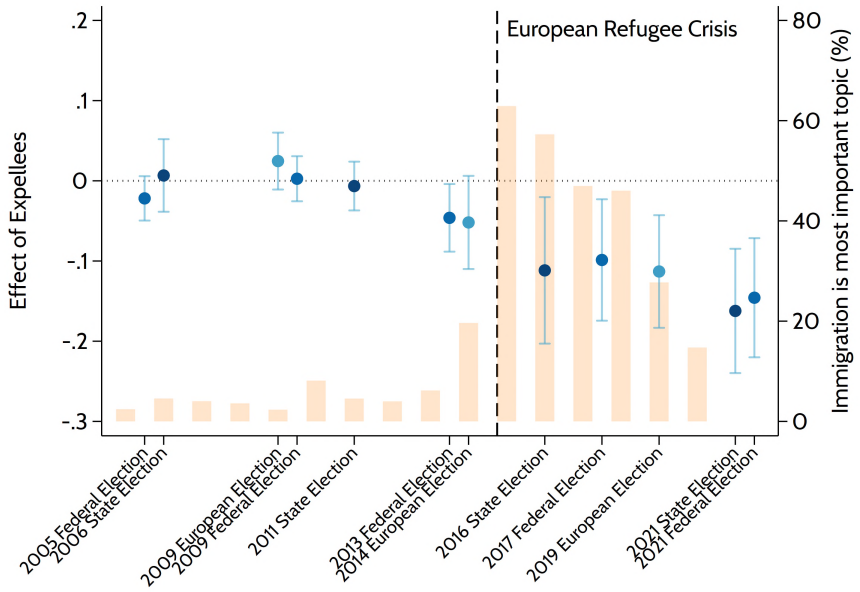

Figure 9: **Far-Right Voting and the European Migrant Crisis: RD Event Plot**

The coefficient plot shows results from individual fuzzy RD regressions, where the share of *Expellees* is the variable of interest instrumented with the *US Zone* indicator. The dependent variable is the municipality vote share of *Far-Right Parties* in European, federal, and state elections. Each dot shows the coefficient estimate of the share of *Expellees* (left vertical axis) from an individual regression for the election indicated on the horizontal axis. Thin vertical bars represent confidence intervals based on heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. Each estimation is a spatial RD regression controlling for latitude and longitude and allowing for segment-specific fixed effects as well as differing linear slopes on both sides of the cut-off. The sample bandwidth is 30 km. The orange bars in the background represent current salience of immigration measured by the share of survey respondents in Baden-Württemberg who state that immigration "is currently the most important issue in Germany" (right vertical axis). The dashed vertical line indicates the start of the European migrant crisis.

our argument is that local experiences with past immigration shocks must have been *positive* in the long term in one way or another. Hence, the analysis in the subsequent section examines whether there is evidence in support of the hypothesis that the inflow of forced migrants entailed long-run positive consequences on the local level.

4.4 Channels

4.4.1 Positive Economic Experience

As was observable in recent immigration waves, there is a widespread fear in the societies of destination countries that immigration creates economic problems. To the extent that these fears

originate from economic theory, a standard argument is that increased labor supply, which immigration implies, puts downward pressure on wages, especially for low-skilled workers. There is, however, mounting evidence that, in many cases, this expected impact does not materialize. In fact, a number of studies have shown positive effects of migration on regional economic performance including the incomes of natives (Basten & Siegenthaler, 2019; Beerli et al., 2021; Card, 1990; Foged & Peri, 2015; Tabellini, 2020).[24] If such positive effects on regional incomes are also observable in our setting, this could explain the less hostile political reaction to current immigration in regions that made such a positive experience with immigration in the past.

To test this potential explanation, we collected and digitized administrative data on local tax revenues at the municipality level and use our setting to study the long-term economic effects of the expellee shock. We focus on the taxes for which data is available for the longest time period: income taxes, land taxes, and corporate taxes. The local revenue from income taxes is the most direct measure of local incomes but municipality level-data is only available from 1970 onwards. Data on municipality-level land tax revenues is also available for 1950 and 1960 and thus allows us to observe the early post-treatment period. Municipality-level corporate taxes are also available for earlier years but they represent a more noisy measure of local incomes, because they are heavily influenced by individual large firms in individual municipalities. For the analyses, we adjust local tax revenues for municipality-specific tax factors, convert them to per-capita amounts and take the natural logarithm to examine effects in relative terms rather than in absolute amounts. Table 4 reports the results of sharp RD regressions that estimate the discontinuity at the border based on equation 1.

Column 1 focuses on the income tax. For the entire time period between 1970 and 2020, the results show larger incomes north of the former occupation zone border. In the 1970s, the discontinuity is still small and only marginally significant, but it becomes economically large and highly statistically significant in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s. For 2020, the size of the estimated discontinuity at the border is 9-10 percent of local income tax revenues. Column 2 looks at local land tax revenues. For the 1990–2020 period, the estimated effects are very similar as effects on income tax revenues, both in terms of statistical significance and in economic size. The land tax indicates the local value

[24]See Borjas (2003) for a deviating result and Lewis & Peri (2015) for a comprehensive review of this literature.

Table 4: **Long-Term Economic Effects**

Outcome variable:	*Income Tax (per capita, ln)*	*Land Tax (per capita, ln)*	*Corporate Tax (per capita, ln)*
2020	0.008***	0.009***	
	(0.002)	(0.003)	
2015	0.008***	0.009***	0.020*
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.011)
2010	0.008***	0.009***	
	(0.002)	(0.003)	
2005	0.011***	0.008***	
	(0.002)	(0.003)	
2000	0.008***	0.007**	
	(0.002)	(0.003)	
1995	0.013***	0.008***	
	(0.002)	(0.003)	
1990	0.013***	0.007*	
	(0.002)	(0.004)	
1976	0.004		0.000
	(0.003)		(0.010)
1970	0.007*		0.012
	(0.004)		(0.012)
1960		-0.022***	-0.006
		(0.008)	(0.012)
1960 (*per native*)		-0.006	0.003
		(0.011)	(0.012)
1950		-0.020**	-0.016
		(0.009)	(0.011)
1950 (*per native*)		-0.003	-0.008
		(0.008)	(0.012)

The table displays coefficients from separate sharp spatial RD regressions. The treatment variable is the *US Zone* indicator. The various dependent variables are indicated in the top row and measured at the municipality level. The first column indicates the year in which the outcomes are measured. Cells are empty if data are not available. Apart from the outcome variables, the specifications are the same as in Table 1.

of real estate property in the municipalities and thus also serves as a proxy for local incomes. For the observations between 1990 and 2020, the effect of being located just north of the border is estimated at about ten percent.[25] Importantly, data on municipality-level land tax revenues are also available for the pre-1970 period. With these data, we find that positive economic effects are not yet observable in 1950 and 1960. These results suggest the absence of a difference in income levels around the occupation zone border shortly after the treatment. When calculating land tax revenue per capita (natives + expellees) there is a negative effect, suggesting that the arrival of expellees did not immediately increase land tax revenues – and thus the value of real estate property

[25] Note that in Germany, the last re-valuation of land for the collection of land taxes took place in 1964. This is why there would be no significant changes in land tax revenues between 1990 and 2020 even if actual land value had changed differentially on the two sides of the border.

– north of the border. Positive economic effects only become visible in the long run. Results on local corporate tax revenues in the last column generally support these conclusions, albeit statistical precision is smaller. Nevertheless, the results on corporate taxes are consistent with the absence of a discontinuity in the 1950s, a growing discontinuity in the 1970s and a significant discontinuity in the 2010s.

In sum, our evidence is consistent with a positive causal effect of immigration on local incomes.[26] It is thus plausible that local experiences with the massive inflow of immigrants after World War II were, in the long run, positive from an economic perspective. These positive experiences with immigration, in turn, can explain why political reactions to renewed inflows of immigration are less hostile than in places without such experiences.

4.4.2 Alternative Explanations and Additional Results

The Electoral Effects of Income. This finding raises the subsequent question if the electoral effect we identify is exclusively due to a more general association between local income levels and local nationalist voting. From this perspective, the reduced support for nationalist parties in treated regions does only result from increased local economic well-being and not from the local collective, and economically positive, experience with immigration.

First, the heterogeneous effects (section 4.3.2) and, in particular, the finding that the European migrant crisis of 2015 activated the effect (section 4.3.3) go against this interpretation. As the previous section shows, the positive economic effect of the forced migrants has been there for decades but the local experience has only translated into differences in voting behavior *when* and *where* it turned politically salient through a contemporary immigration shock.

Second, to test this further, we examine the association between local incomes and nationalism in our context more specifically. Specifically, we test whether there is an association between local income levels and nationalist voting that depends on contemporary immigration. If the effect we identified were exclusively driven by higher local incomes and were independent of the local experience with immigration, we would see that locations with lower incomes react more strongly

[26] These results are consistent with Peters (2021) and Ciccone & Nimczik (2022), who both find positive long-term economic effects of the immigration of expellees to Germany.

to contemporary immigration. However, we do not find this pattern (Figure 10). While higher local incomes do reduce the far-right vote share overall, this association is homogeneous and does *not* depend on contemporary immigration. Richer municipalities show less support for far-right parties also when contemporary immigration is low. The experience with the expellee shock, however, only matters when contemporary immigration is high. We interpret this result as evidence for the idea that the local experience with immigration matters. According to this interpretation, it is this positive experience that prevents voters from shifting to nationalist parties when contemporary immigration is high.

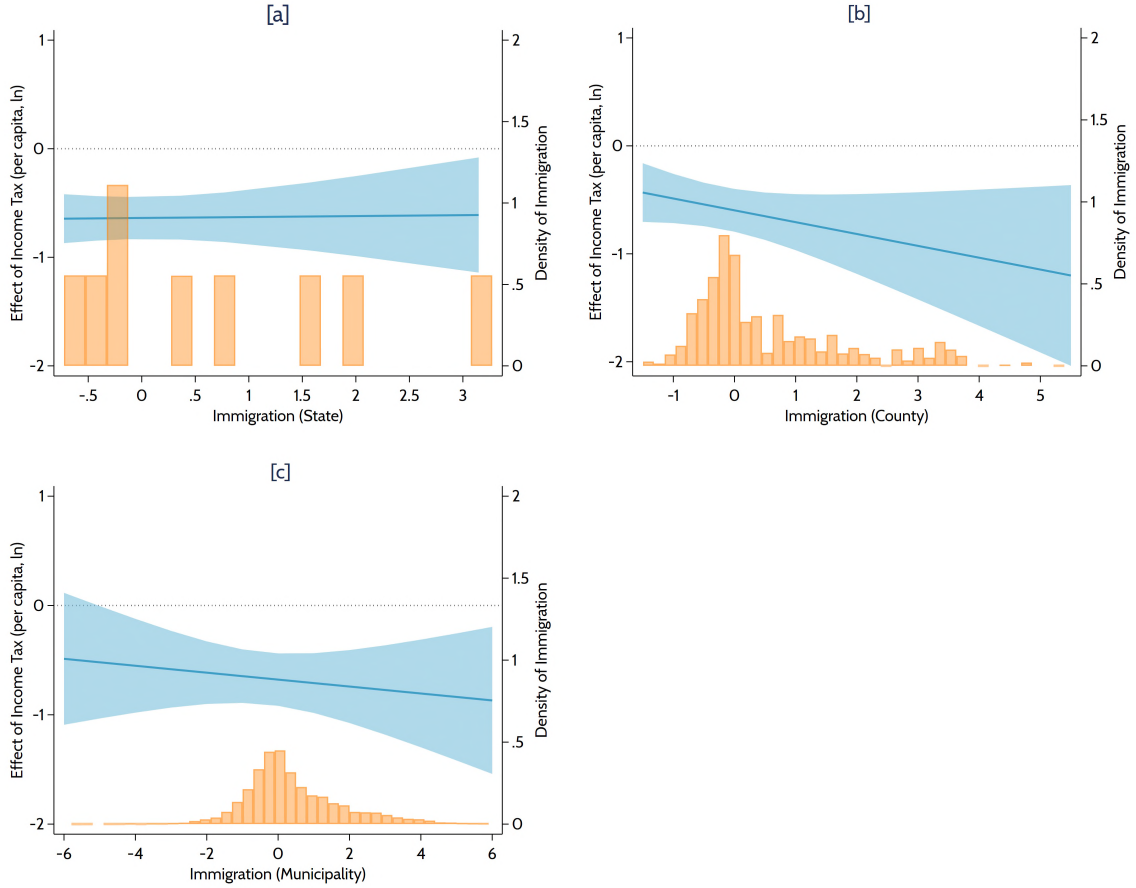

Figure 10: **Marginal Effects of Income on Far-Right Vote Shares Depending on Immigration**

The figure plots results from three OLS regressions. The dependent variable is *Far-Right Vote Share*. The blue lines display marginal effects of *Income Tax (p.c., ln)* given different levels of current *Immigration* at the state level (Panel [a]), county level (Panel [b]), and municipality level (Panel [c]) with 95% confidence intervals (shaded blue areas). Table A10 in the appendix reports the regression output. The orange bars provide histograms of *Immigration* at the state, county, and municipality level, respectively.

Demographic Effects. To examine alternative channels, we test whether there is evidence for long-term effects on the demography of the municipalities. Table A12 looks at population density, population growth, the share of women, the share of immigrants, annual immigration rates, the share of people over the age of 65 and the share of catholics. We find that the forced migrants' effect on local population density persists in the long run for a period of more than 75 years.[27] Other than that, there is no evidence for long-lasting effects on other demographic characteristics of the municipalities.

Symmetry of the Effect. So far, we have studied voter reactions with regards to nationalist, *anti-immigration* parties and found that exposure to past immigration *reduces* support for them under the condition of current immigration. As an extension of our argument, we examine its "symmetry" and test whether exposure to past immigration, under the condition of current immigration, *increases* support for *pro-immigration* parties. Following expert surveys on German political parties (Jankowski et al., 2022), we consider the German Green party as the most immigration-friendly German party and study how our setting influences support for the Greens. The results indeed point to a symmetric, inverse effect for this pro-immigration party (Appendix A.8.5). Although the results are somewhat weaker than for nationalist, anti-immigration parties, voters tended to support the Greens more in the most recent federal elections in regions that experienced the historical migration shock (Figure A17). As for the nationalist parties, the absolute size of the effect – with the opposite sign – is stronger when contemporary immigration is higher (Figure A18). This supports the view that the historical immigration shock not only reduced support for nationalism but also increased support for immigration in the long run.

5 Conclusions

This study examines the long-run political effects of exposure to immigration. Using a natural experiment from Germany, we show that the massive inflow of forced migrants after World War II has an impact on voting for nationalist parties more than 70 years later. Voters in municipalities that experienced this historical immigration shock are substantially less likely to respond to current

[27] Schumann (2014) identified this persistence until the 1970s.

immigration waves by voting for far-right parties. Current immigration activates latent differences in political attitudes toward immigration. The analysis documents beneficial economic effects, suggesting that local experiences with immigration were positive. This reduced anti-immigrant attitudes with electoral consequences when immigration is politically salient.

These results provide an explanation for the strong regional differences in political reactions to immigration. In many countries, the current nationalist backlash against immigration is regionally concentrated; interestingly, often in regions with relatively few immigrants. Our results may explain this phenomenon and suggest that the lack of experience with immigration in these regions is an important mechanism behind this hostile reaction. Second, the results highlight that the short- and long-run political effects of immigration can go in opposite directions. While immediate political reactions to immigration may be hostile if past long-run positive experience with immigration is absent, support for immigration is more likely to increase in the long run.

It is likely, however, that this effect depends on the successful economic and social integration of immigrants. Our results are limited to the context of an inflow of forced migrants in the German Southwest, where the evidence suggests that integration was indeed successful. Future research should thus examine the exact political, social, and economic conditions under which exposure to immigration has this type of long-run political effect to be able to infer policy implications for immigration management that obviates major socio-political upheaval.

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A Supplementary Material

A.1 Historical Maps

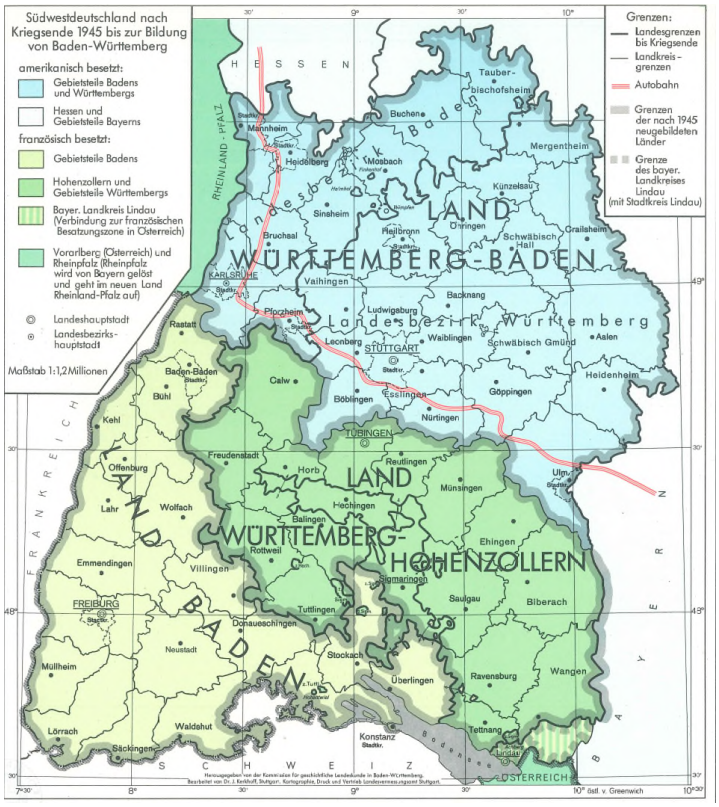

Figure A1: **The Occupation Zones in Baden-Württemberg**

The map shows which areas in today's state of Baden-Württemberg belonged to the US occupation zone (light blue) and the French occupation zone (light green and medium green). The red line shows the highway A8. As can be seen from the map, none of the previously existing borders (bold black lines) of the former historical provinces of Baden, Württemberg, and the Hohenzollern Lands played a role in the determination of the occupation zone border. These regions were cut apart by the border until the state of Baden-Württemberg was founded in 1952. The three provinces that are visible in the map were created by the occupation forces and only existed in the 1945–1952 period. Source: Historischer Atlas von Baden-Württemberg (Kommission für geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg 1972).

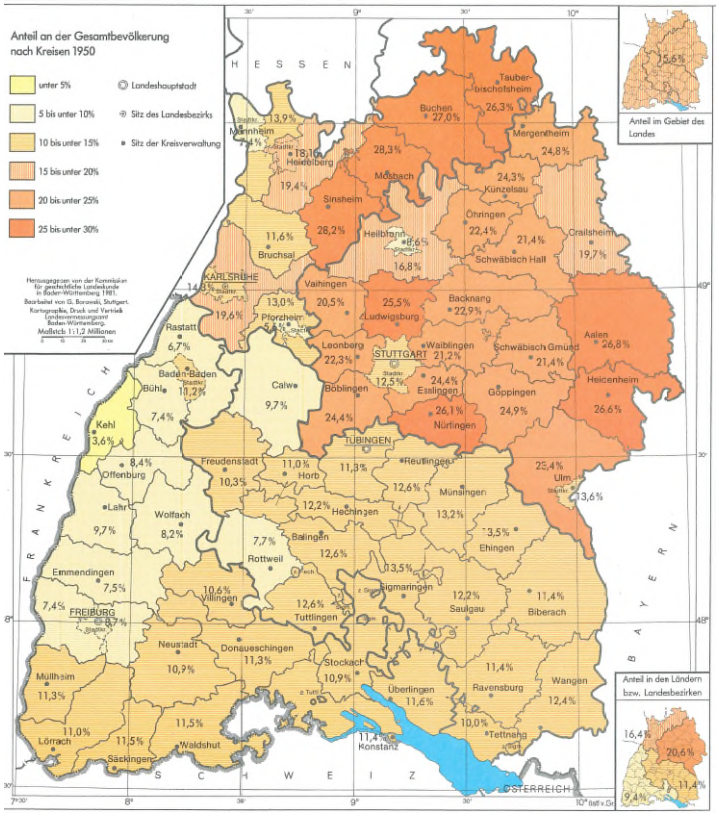

Figure A2: **Distribution of Expellees in Baden-Württemberg**

The map shows the share of expellees in Baden-Württemberg as a percentage of the total population in 1950. The figure is a scan of a historical map on the county level (Historischer Atlas von Baden-Württemberg, Kommission für geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg 1972).

A.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table A1: **Summary Statistics**

	Observations	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Far-Right Vote Share	15,180	3.36	3.90	0.00	25.00
Expellee Parties Vote Share	4,554	4.38	6.50	0.00	47.72
CDU Vote Share	15,180	50.77	16.29	7.46	100.00
SPD Vote Share	15,180	24.97	10.32	0.00	59.50
FDP Vote Share	15,180	11.12	6.77	0.00	71.43
Green Party Vote Share	9,108	8.22	3.91	0.00	36.95
US Zone	759	0.52	0.50	0.00	1.00
Distance to Border	759	28.12	17.88	0.03	59.87
Expellees	759	15.26	7.52	0.90	45.17
Immigration (State)	12,144	0.88	1.13	-0.73	3.15
Immigration (County)	11,385	0.78	1.30	-1.49	5.39
Immigration (Municipality)	8,754	0.64	1.52	-14.29	10.02
Periods of High Migration	15,326	0.25	0.43	0.00	1.00
Population (in Thousands, ln)	14,567	1.41	1.15	-2.06	6.46
Male Population Share (%)	12,290	49.13	1.64	23.17	64.18
Population Share Older than 65 (%)	10,609	14.53	3.87	5.59	36.79
Population Share Younger than 25 (%)	10,608	32.91	5.88	19.17	55.43
Catholics Share	759	40.06	22.22	2.69	90.43
Population Growth	15,180	0.97	1.95	-27.14	27.48
Annual Immigration	10,626	0.17	0.74	-6.96	10.13
Total Population 1939 (ln)	759	7.70	1.09	4.86	13.12
Population Density 1950	759	182.58	196.18	22.08	2,400.41
NSDAP Vote Share 1933	146	45.42	12.28	13.61	73.80
Area of Municipality	759	30.18	29.15	1.85	207.33
Distance to Stuttgart	759	58.24	26.97	0.69	135.47
Distance to Nearest City	759	29.71	17.29	0.61	79.74
Distance to Autobahn	759	32.97	23.60	0.01	90.11
Income Tax (p.c., ln)	6,828	5.80	0.35	3.06	7.30
Land Tax (p.c., ln)	6,068	3.30	0.33	1.20	4.65
Corporate Tax (p.c., ln)	2,265	4.35	0.80	0.61	8.48

Summary statistics for observations in election years (1949–2021) from all municipalities within 60 km distance to the former occupation zone border. For variables without time-variation in our panel, we show only one observation per entity.

A.3 Definition of Variables

Far-Right Vote Share. Combined vote share of all far-right, nationalist parties (in percent). Party coding according to Decker & Neu (2018); Schedler (2021); Stöss (1980–1986). Data sources: digitized statistical yearbooks and online files of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Expellee Parties Vote Share. Combined vote share of all expellee parties (in percent). Data sources: digitized statistical yearbooks and online files of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

CDU Vote Share. Vote share of the Christlich Demokratische Union (CDU) in percent. Data sources: digitized statistical yearbooks and online files of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

SPD Vote Share. Vote share of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) in percent. Data sources: digitized statistical yearbooks and online files of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

FDP Vote Share. Vote share of the Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP) in percent. Data sources: digitized statistical yearbooks and online files of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Green Party Vote Share. Vote share of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen in percent. Data sources: online files of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

US Zone. Binary variable indicating municipalities whose territory is located in the former US occupation zone. Data sources: based on Historischer Atlas von Baden-Württemberg (1972), GIS shapefiles provided by Schumann (2014), and the Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung of Baden-Württemberg (2019).

Distance to Border. Euklidian distance between a municipality's centroid and the closest point on the former occupation zone border in kilometers. Data source: own coding based on GIS shape-

files provided by Schumann (2014) and the Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung of Baden-Württemberg (2019).

Expellees. Share of expellees in the total population of the municipality in percent in 1950. Data sources: digitized statistical yearbooks of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg. We matched 1950 and current municipalities based on exact geo-locations that we collected and verified using the Nominatim search engine.

Immigration (State). Change in the share of foreigners in the state of Baden-Württemberg between two elections in percentage points. Data sources: web-scraped data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Immigration (County). Change in the share of foreigners in a county (Kreis) between two elections in percentage points. Data sources: web-scraped data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Immigration (Municipality). Change in the share of foreigners in a municipality (Gemeinde) between two elections in percentage points. Data sources: web-scraped data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Periods of High Migration. Binary variable indicating periods in which *Immigration (State)* is larger than one percentage point. Data sources: web-scraped data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Population (in Thousands, ln). Number of residents of a given municipality. Natural logarithm. Data sources: web-scraped data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Male Population Share (%). Share of male residents. Data sources: web-scraped data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Population Share Older than 65 (%). Share of residents aged 66 and older. Data sources: web-scraped data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Population Share Younger than 25 (%). Share of residents aged 24 and younger. Data sources: web-scraped data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Catholics Share (%). Share of residents who are of Catholic faith. Data sources: web-scraped data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Population Growth. Annual change in the number of residents in percent. Data sources: web-scraped data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Annual Immigration. Annual change in the number of foreigners in percentage points. Data sources: web-scraped data from the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Total Population 1939 (ln). Number of residents in 1939. Natural logarithm. Data source: statistical yearbooks of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Population Density 1950. Number of residents per square kilometer. Data sources: own coding based on GIS shapefiles provided by the Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung of Baden-Württemberg (2019) and 1950 population reported in statistical yearbooks of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

NSDAP Vote Share 1933. Vote share of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei in 1933 in percent. Data source: (Falter & Hänisch, 1990).

Area of Municipality. Geographic size of the municipality in square kilometers. Data source: own coding based on GIS shapefiles provided by the Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung of Baden-Württemberg (2019).

Distance to Stuttgart. Euklidian distance between a municipality's centroid and the center of Stuttgart in kilometers. Data source: own coding based on GIS shapefiles provided by the Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung of Baden-Württemberg (2019).

Distance to Nearest City. Euklidian distance in kilometers between a municipality's centroid and the center of the nearest municipality with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Data source: own coding based on GIS shapefiles provided by the Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung of Baden-Württemberg (2019).

Distance to Autobahn. Euklidian distance between a municipality's centroid and closest point on the highway A8. Data source: own coding based on GIS shapefiles provided by Schumann (2014) the Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung of Baden-Württemberg (2019)

Income Tax (p.c., ln). Municipality-level revenues of the income tax. Divided by municipality-specific tax factors. Divided by the number of residents. Natural logarithm. Data sources: Digitized statistical yearbooks and online files of of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Land Tax (p.c., ln). Municipality-level revenues of the land tax. Divided by municipality-specific tax factors. Divided by the number of residents. Natural logarithm. Data sources: Digitized statistical yearbooks and online files of of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

Corporate Tax (p.c., ln). Municipality-level revenues of the corporate tax. Divided by municipality-specific tax factors. Divided by the number of residents. Natural logarithm. Data sources: Digitized statistical yearbooks and online files of of the Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg.

A.4 Correlation: Migration and Far-Right Voting

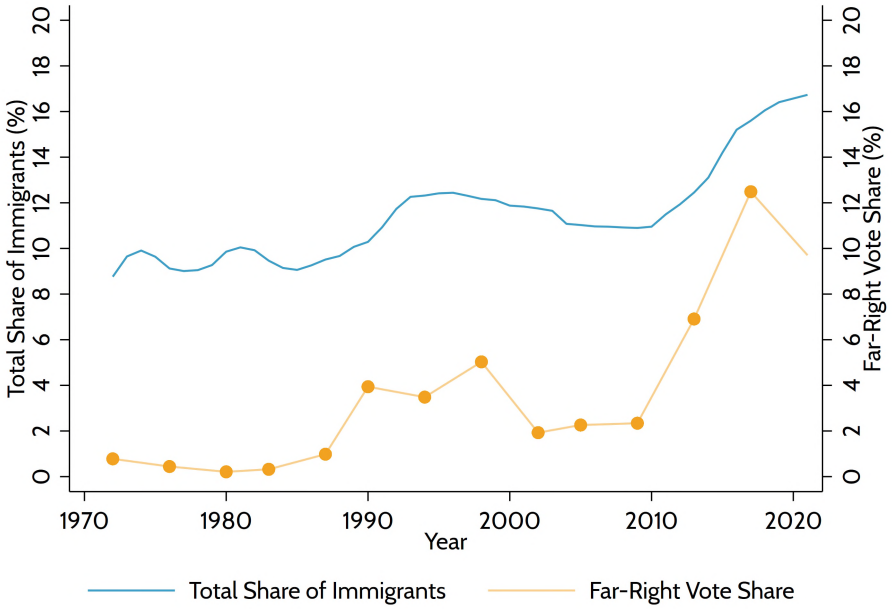

Figure A3: **Trends in Immigration and Far-Right Voting**

The blue line represents the total percentage share of immigrants in the state of Baden-Württemberg for the years indicated on the horizontal axis. The orange curve depicts the vote shares of far-right parties in federal elections.

A.5 Manipulation Test

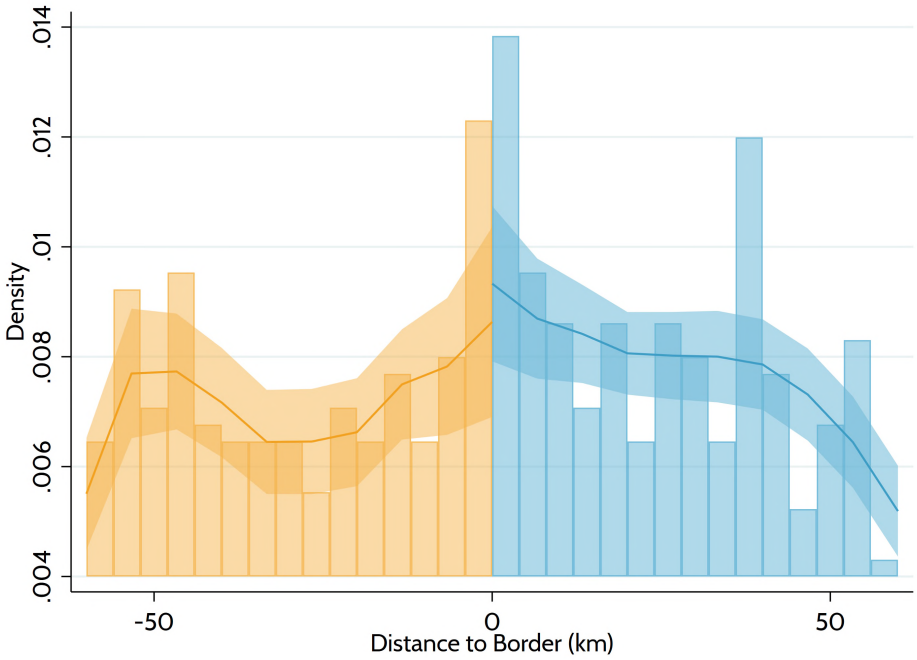

Figure A4: **Manipulation Test**

The figure shows the density of the observations with respect to their distance to the border between the French (negative values) and the US occupation zone (positive values) in the state of Baden-Württemberg. This manipulation testing procedure applies local polynomial density estimators (Cattaneo et al., 2020). The border predominantly follows municipality boundaries and *Distance to Border* captures the distance from the center of the respective municipalities to the occupation zone border in kilometers. Hence, for mechanical reasons, very few observations have a distance that is quasi zero, but as a consequence, we observe a relative accumulation of distances in the range of two to five kilometers. As the manipulation test shows, this pattern exists on both sides of the border and we do not observe significantly different densities at the cut-off.

A.6 Robustness and Sensitivity

A.6.1 Reduced-Form Regressions

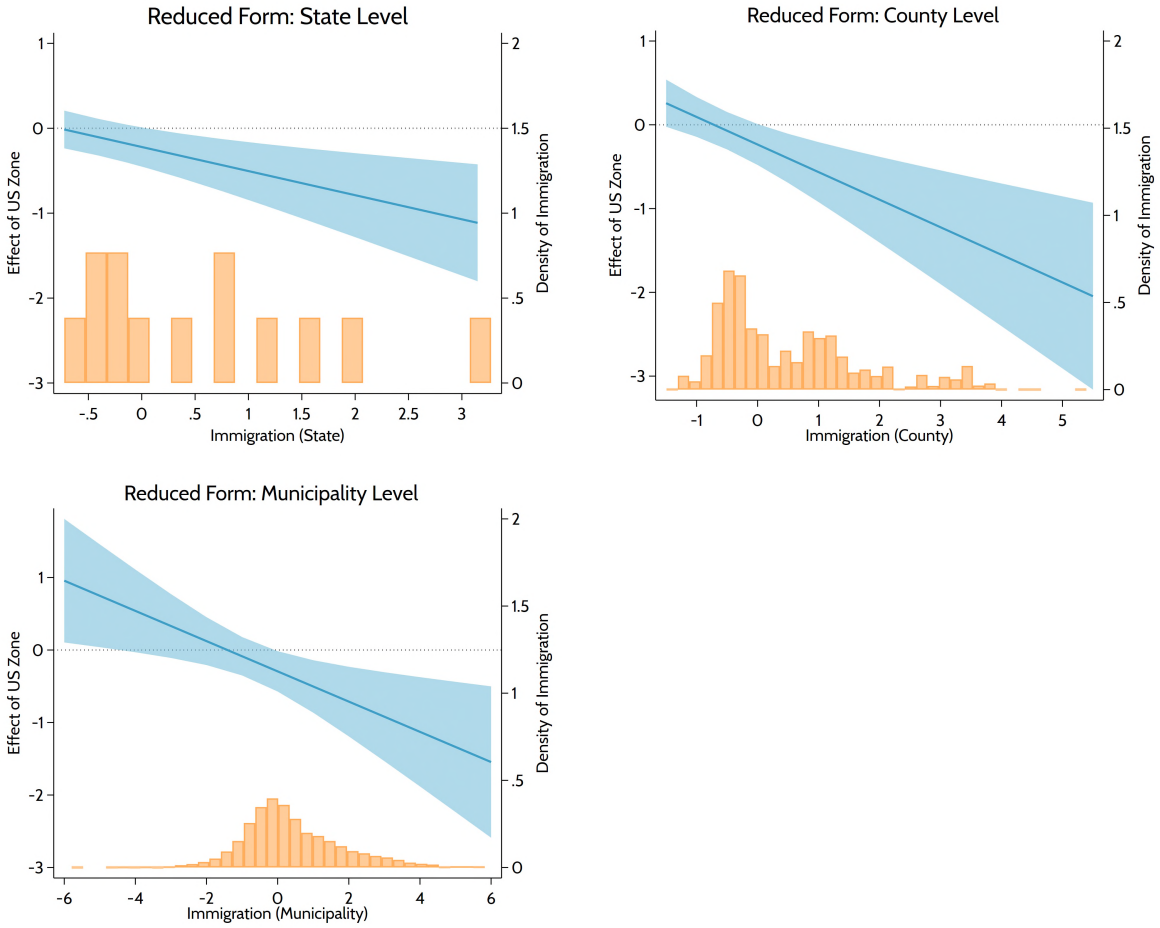

Figure A5: **Reduced-Form Regressions: Marginal Effects of Expellees on Far-Right Vote Shares**

The figure plots results from three spatial sharp RD regressions. These are the reduced-form model corresponding to models 4-6 in Table 3. The dependent variable is *Far-Right Vote Share*. The blue lines display marginal effects of being located in the former *US Zone* given different levels of current *Immigration*. The shaded blue areas are 95% confidence intervals. The orange bars represent a histogram of *Immigration* at various levels of observation.

Table A2: **Robustness: Reduced Form**

	(1)
Panel A. Periods of High Migration	
US Zone	-0.758***
	(0.228)
Panel B. Periods of Low Migration	
US Zone	-0.167
	(0.113)
Panel C. 2017	
US Zone	-1.201***
	(0.464)
Panel D. 2021	
US Zone	-1.774***
	(0.445)
Municipalities	404
Bandwidth	30
Segments	✓
Coordinates	✓

The table displays coefficients from separate spatial sharp RD regressions (see equation 1) with the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections as the dependent variable. Standard errors are in parentheses and are robust to clustering at the municipality level in Panels A and B and to heteroskedasticity in Panels C and D. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Panels A and B compare elections in periods of high and low immigration. An immigration wave is defined as a period between two elections, during which the share of migrants in society increased by more than one percentage point. These two specifications include year fixed effects. Panels C and D focus on vote shares in the German Federal Elections of 2017 and 2021, respectively.

A.6.2 Alternative Bandwidths

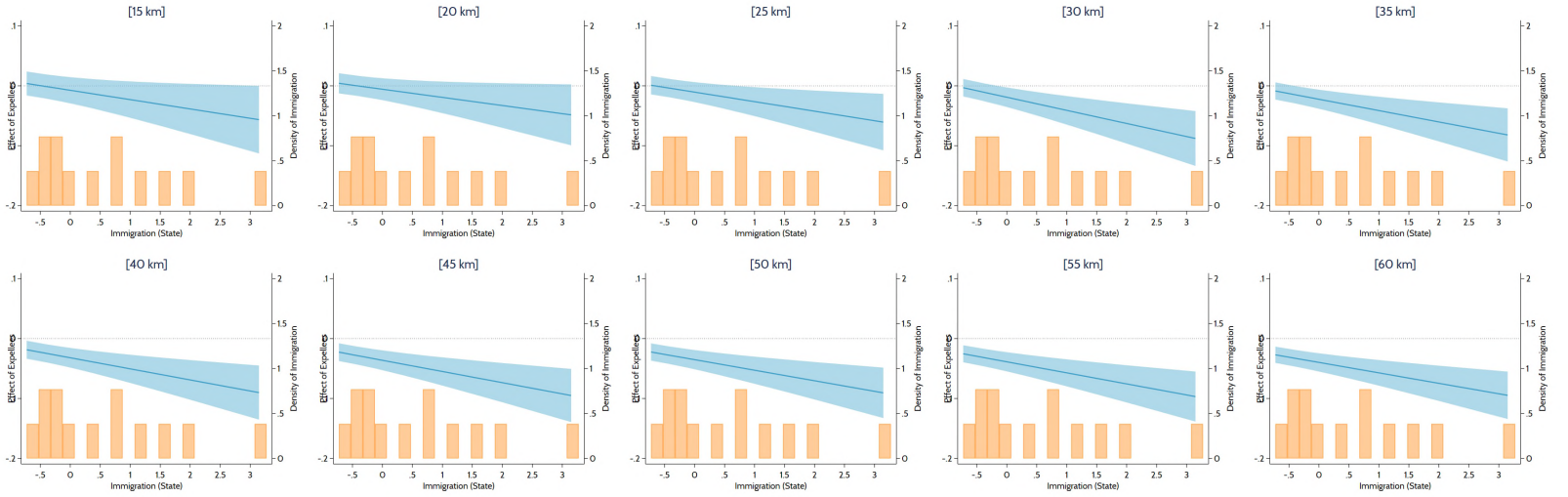

Figure A6: **Marginal Effects of Expellees on Far-Right Vote Shares – State-Level Immigration**

The figure plots results from ten spatial fuzzy RD regressions as described in Table 3, column 4. The blue lines display marginal effects of *Expellees* given different levels of current *Immigration* at the state level with 95% confidence intervals (shaded blue area). The orange bars represent a histogram of *Immigration* at the state level. Bandwidth choices restricting the respective samples are indicated in the panel titles.

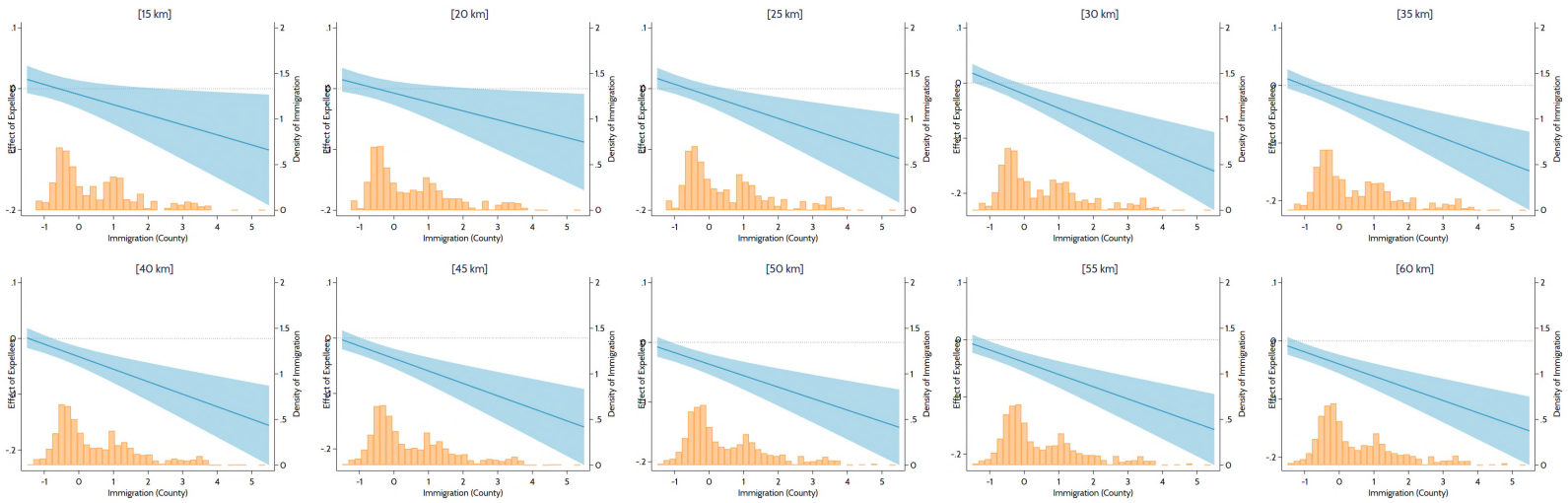

Figure A7: **Marginal Effects of Expellees on Far-Right Vote Shares – County-Level Immigration**

The figure plots results from ten spatial fuzzy RD regressions as described in Table 3, column 5. The blue lines display marginal effects of *Expellees* given different levels of current *Immigration* at the county level with 95% confidence intervals (shaded blue area). The orange bars represent a histogram of *Immigration* at the county level. Bandwidth choices restricting the respective samples are indicated in the panel titles.

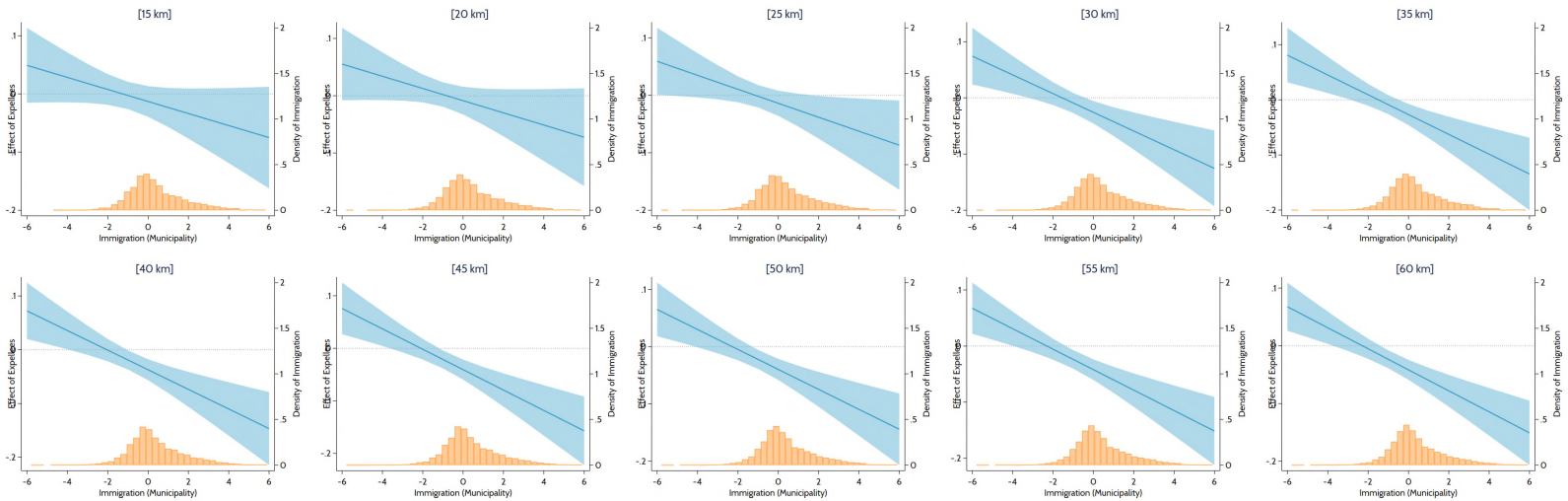

Figure A8: **Marginal Effects of Expellees on Far-Right Vote Shares – Municipality-Level Immigration**

The figure plots results from ten spatial fuzzy RD regressions as described in Table 3, column 6. The blue lines display marginal effects of *Expellees* given different levels of current *Immigration* at the municipality level with 95% confidence intervals (shaded blue area). The orange bars represent a histogram of *Immigration* at the municipality level. Bandwidth choices restricting the respective samples are indicated in the panel titles.

Table A3: **Robustness: Alternative Bandwidths**

Bandwidth (km)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Panel A. Periods of High Migration										
Expellees	-0.032	-0.028	-0.042**	-0.062***	-0.064***	-0.076***	-0.083***	-0.078***	-0.082***	-0.082***
	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Panel B. Periods of Low Migration										
Expellees	-0.008	-0.005	-0.006	-0.014	-0.015	-0.023**	-0.026***	-0.026***	-0.030***	-0.031***
	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.008)
Panel C. 2017										
Expellees	-0.042	-0.033	-0.057	-0.099**	-0.103***	-0.118***	-0.128***	-0.122***	-0.131***	-0.131***
	(0.049)	(0.043)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.035)
Panel D. 2021										
Expellees	-0.073	-0.065	-0.101***	-0.146***	-0.152***	-0.181***	-0.203***	-0.198***	-0.220***	-0.225***
	(0.046)	(0.041)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.038)
Municipalities	229	288	344	404	458	527	587	646	710	759
Bandwidth	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60
Segments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coordinates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The table displays coefficients from 40 spatial fuzzy RD regressions with standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections. 'Bandwidth' depicts the sample bandwidth (in km). 'Municipalities' indicates the number of observations by counting the municipalities within a certain bandwidth. All specifications use a uniform kernel and include local linear polynomials of *Distance to Border*, segment fixed effects, and latitude-longitude controls. Panels A and B compare elections in periods of high and low immigration. These two specifications include year fixed effects. Panel C shows results for the 2017 federal election and Panel D for the 2021 federal election.

A.6.3 Triangular RD Kernel

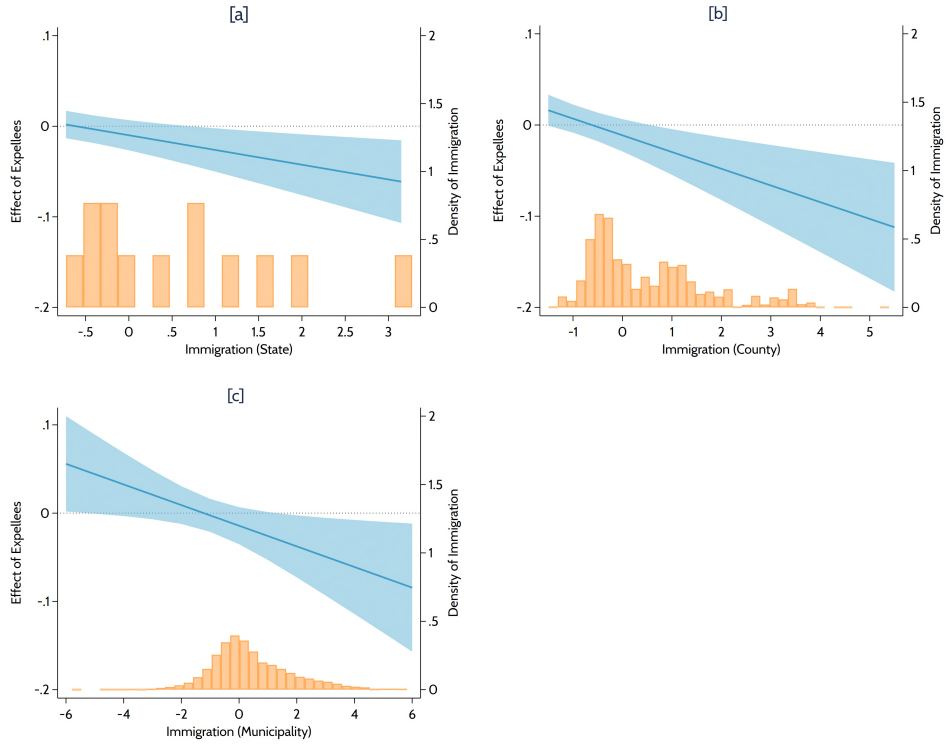

Figure A9: **Triangular Kernel. Marginal Effects of Expellees on Far-Right Vote Shares**

The figure plots results from spatial fuzzy RD regressions as described in Table 3, columns 4-6. The specifications are identical except that they use a triangular RD kernel. The blue lines display marginal effects of *Expellees* given different levels of current *Immigration* at the state level (Panel [a]), county level (Panel [b]), and municipality level (Panel [c]) with 95% confidence intervals. The orange bars provide histograms of *Immigration* at the state/county/municipality level.

Table A4: **Robustness: Alternative Kernel**

	(1)
Panel A. Periods of High Migration	
Expellees	-0.039**
	(0.019)
Panel B. Periods of Low Migration	
Expellees	-0.008
	(0.010)
Panel C. 2017	
Expellees	-0.055
	(0.039)
Panel D. 2021	
Expellees	-0.092**
	(0.036)
Municipalities	404
Bandwidth	30
Segments	✓
Coordinates	✓

These specifications are identical to those reported in Table A3, except that they use a *triangular* instead of a *uniform* kernel.

A.6.4 Control Variables

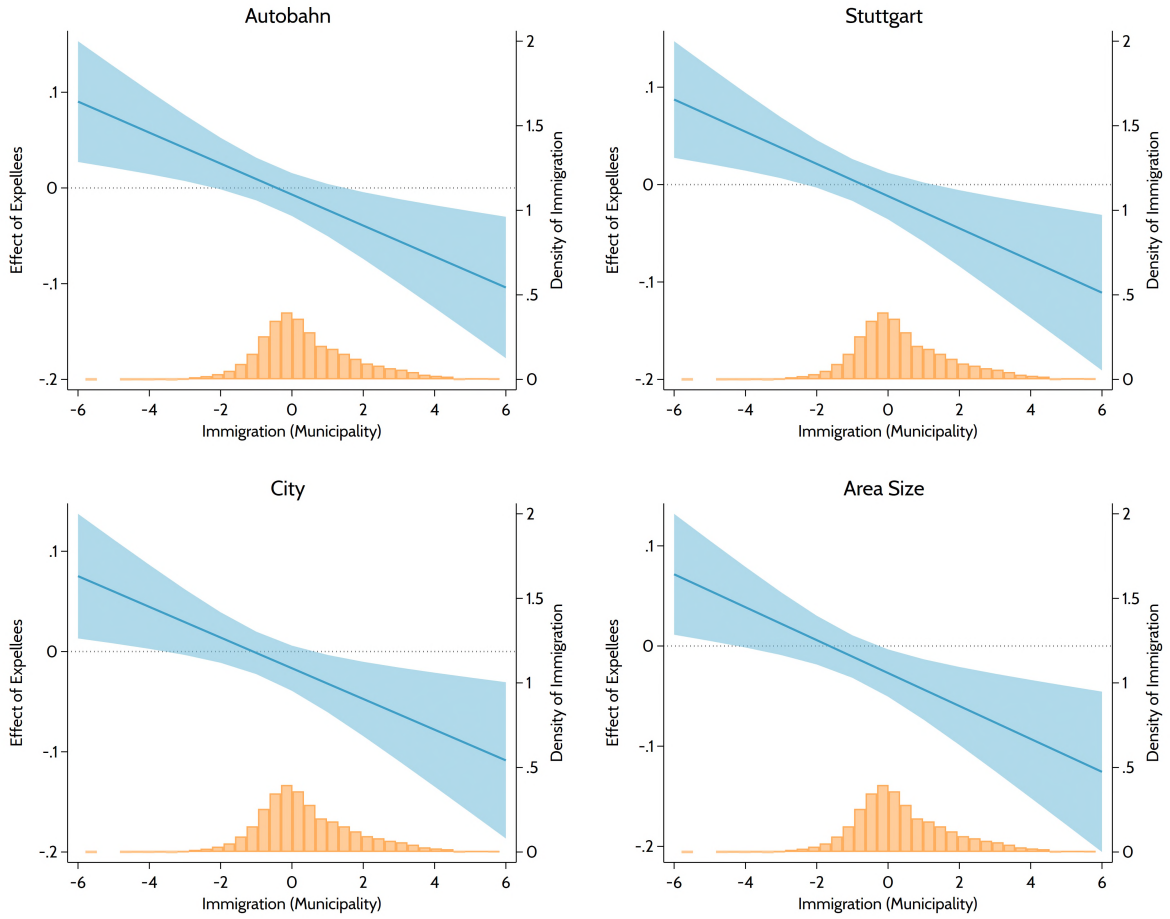

Figure A10: **Additional Control Variables**

The figure plots results from four spatial fuzzy RD regressions. The dependent variable is *Far-Right Vote Share*. The blue lines display marginal effects of *Expellees* given different levels of current *Immigration* at the municipality level with 95% confidence intervals (shaded blue areas). The orange bars provide histograms of Immigration at the municipality level. The specifications are identical to those reported in Figure 8, panel [c] but add the control variables indicated in the panel titles: **Autobahn** indicates that the regressions control for second-order polynomials of distance to the Autobahn A8. **Stuttgart** indicates that the regressions control for second-order polynomials of distance to the state capital Stuttgart. **Nearest City** indicates that the regressions control for second-order polynomials of distance to the nearest city with more than 100.000 inhabitants. **Area Size** indicates that the regressions control for second-order polynomials of the municipality's area size in km^2.

Table A5: **Robustness: Additional Control Variables**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Panel A. Periods of High Migration					
Expellees	-0.040**	-0.041**	-0.049***	-0.064***	-0.062***
	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Panel B. Periods of Low Migration					
Expellees	-0.009	-0.008	-0.006	-0.015	-0.014
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Panel C. 2017					
Expellees	-0.057*	-0.058	-0.074**	-0.102***	-0.099**
	(0.034)	(0.038)	(0.036)	(0.039)	(0.039)
Panel D. 2021					
Expellees	-0.089***	-0.094***	-0.116***	-0.149***	-0.146***
	(0.033)	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Municipalities	404	404	404	404	404
Bandwidth	30	30	30	30	30
Segments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coordinates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Covariates	Autobahn	Stuttgart	Nearest City	Area Size	–

The table displays coefficients from separate spatial fuzzy RD regressions. Standard errors are in parentheses and are adjusted for clustering at the municipality level in Panels A and B and heteroskedasticity-robust in Panels C and D. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections. 'Bandwidth' depicts the sample bandwidth (in km). All regressions include year fixed, segment fixed effects, as well as a full set of cross-interactions of segment fixed effects, migration and the running variable (*Distance to Border*) allowed to differ on both sides of the cut-off. Panels A and B compare the effect of *Expellees* in two sub-samples: elections in periods of low immigration (2) and during immigration waves (3). An immigration wave is defined as a period between two elections, during which the share of migrants in society increased by more than one percentage point. Panels C and D focus on vote shares in the German Federal Elections of 2017 and 2021, respectively.

Autobahn indicates that the regressions control for second-order polynomials of distance to the Autobahn A8.

Stuttgart indicates that the regressions control for second-order polynomials of distance to the state capital Stuttgart.

Nearest City indicates that the regressions control for second-order polynomials of distance to the nearest city with more than 100.000 inhabitants.

Area Size indicates that the regressions control for second-order polynomials of the municipality's area size in km^2.

A.6.5 Alternative RD Specifications

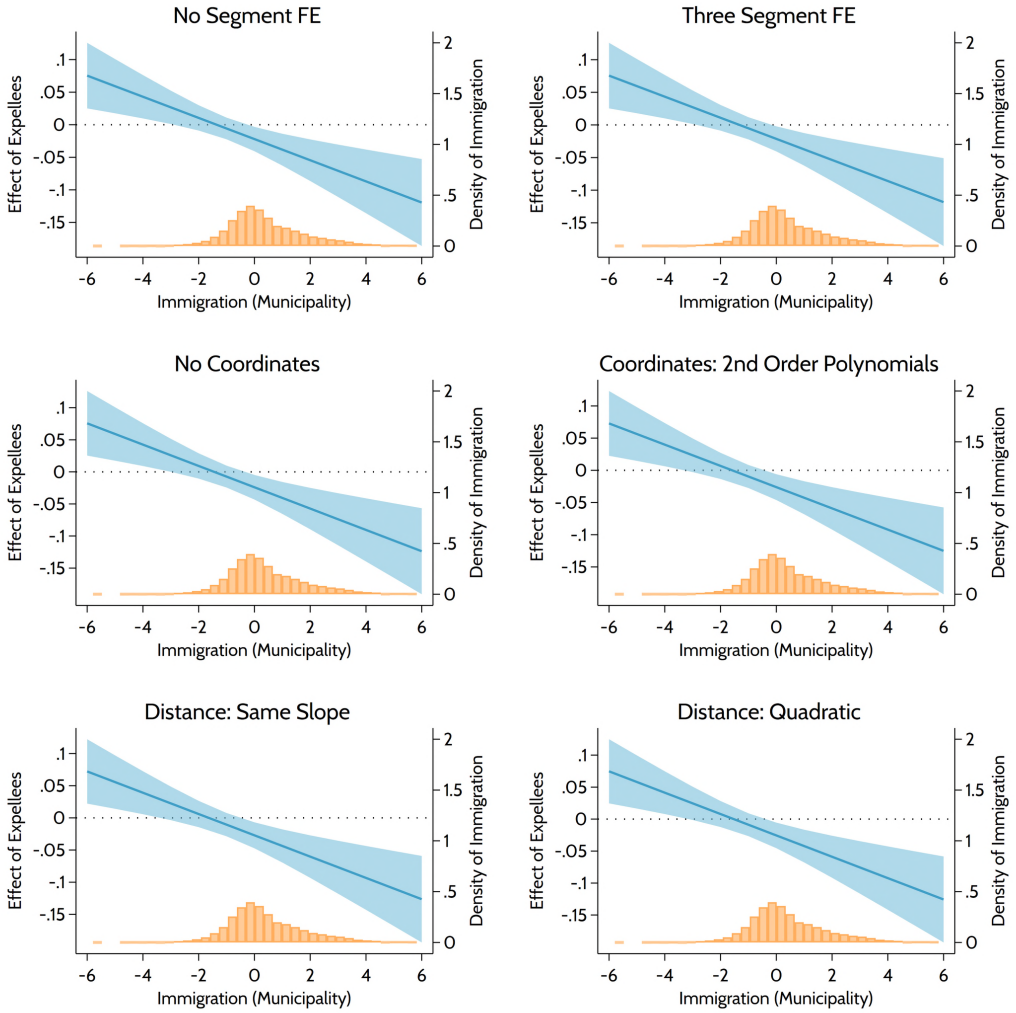

Figure A11: **Alternative RD Specifications**

The figure plots results from separate spatial fuzzy RD regressions that use alternative RD specifications for the baseline result in Figure 8, panel [c]. The dependent variable is *Far-Right Vote Share*. The blue lines display marginal effects of *Expellees* given different levels of current *Immigration* at the municipality level with 95% confidence intervals (shaded blue areas). The orange bars provide histograms of Immigration at the municipality level. **No Segment FE** runs the baseline specification but excludes segment fixed effects. **Three Segment FE** uses three instead of five segments. **No Coordinates** excludes latitude-longitude controls. **Coordinates: 2nd Order Polynomials** controls for second order polynomials of the latitude-longitude space. **Distance: Same Slope** does not allow different linear slopes of the running variable on both sides of the cut-off. **Distance: Quadratic** controls for second order polynomials of *Distance to Border*.

Table A6: **Robustness: Alternative RD Specifications**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A. Periods of High Migration						
Expellees	-0.055***	-0.056***	-0.059***	-0.061***	-0.064***	-0.062***
	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Panel B. Periods of Low Migration						
Expellees	-0.013	-0.012	-0.015	-0.015	-0.014	-0.014
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Panel C. 2017						
Expellees	-0.087**	-0.090**	-0.092**	-0.096**	-0.102***	-0.099**
	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)
Panel D. 2021						
Expellees	-0.138***	-0.134***	-0.135***	-0.139***	-0.153***	-0.146***
	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.038)
Municipalities	404	404	404	404	404	404
Bandwidth	30	30	30	30	30	30
Segments		✓(3 segments)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coordinates	✓	✓		✓(quadratic)	✓	✓
Specification					Distance: same slope	Distance: quadratic

The table displays coefficients from separate spatial fuzzy RD regressions. Standard errors are in parentheses and are robust to clustering at the municipality level in Panels A and B and to heteroskedasticity in Panels C and D. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections. 'Bandwidth' depicts the sample bandwidth (in km). All regressions include year fixed, segment fixed effects, as well as a full set of cross-interactions of segment fixed effects, migration and the running variable (*Distance to Border*) allowed to differ on both sides of the cut-off. Panels A and B compare the effect of *Expellees* in two sub-samples: elections in periods of low immigration (2) and during immigration waves (3). An immigration wave is defined as a period between two elections, during which the share of migrants in society increased by more than one percentage point. Panels C and D focus on vote shares in the German Federal Elections of 2017 and 2021, respectively. **No Segment FE** runs the baseline specification but excludes segment fixed effects. **Three Segment FE** uses three instead of five segments. **No Coordinates** excludes latitude-longitude controls. **Coordinates: 2nd Order Polynomials** controls for second order polynomials of the latitude-longitude space. **Distance: Same Slope** does not allow different linear slopes of the running variable on both sides of the cut-off. **Distance: Quadratic** controls for second order polynomials of *Distance to Border*.

A.6.6 Alternative Standard Errors

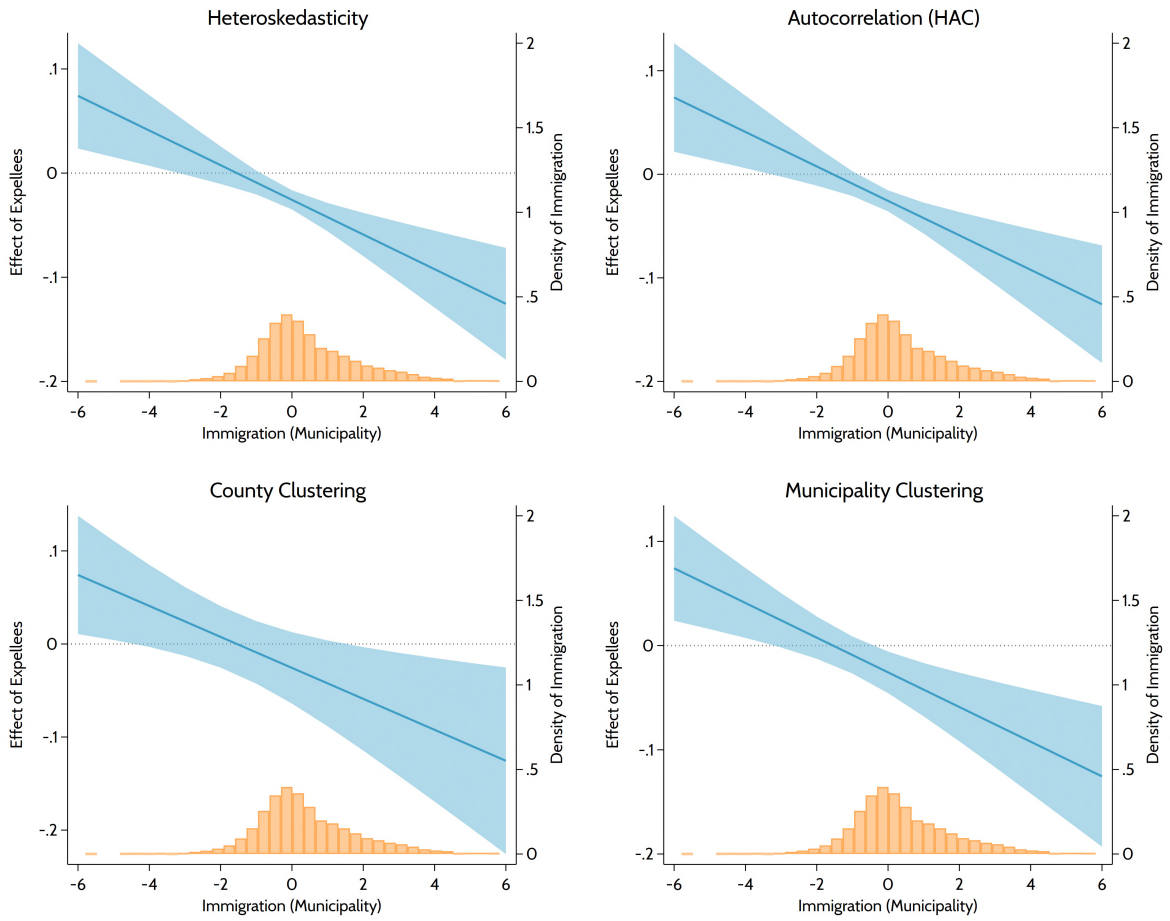

Figure A12: **Alternative Standard Errors I**

The figure plots results from separate spatial fuzzy RD regressions of the baseline specification in Figure 8, panel [c]. The dependent variable is *Far-Right Vote Share*. The blue lines display marginal effects of *Expellees* given different levels of current *Immigration* at the municipality level with 95% confidence intervals (shaded blue areas) based on alternatives to calculate standard errors. The orange bars provide histograms of Immigration at the municipality level. **Heteroskedasticity** indicates heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. **Autocorrelation (HAC)** indicates HAC-robust standard errors. **County Clustering** ajdusts standard errors for clustering at the county level. **Municipality Clustering** adjusts standard errors for clustering at the municipality level.

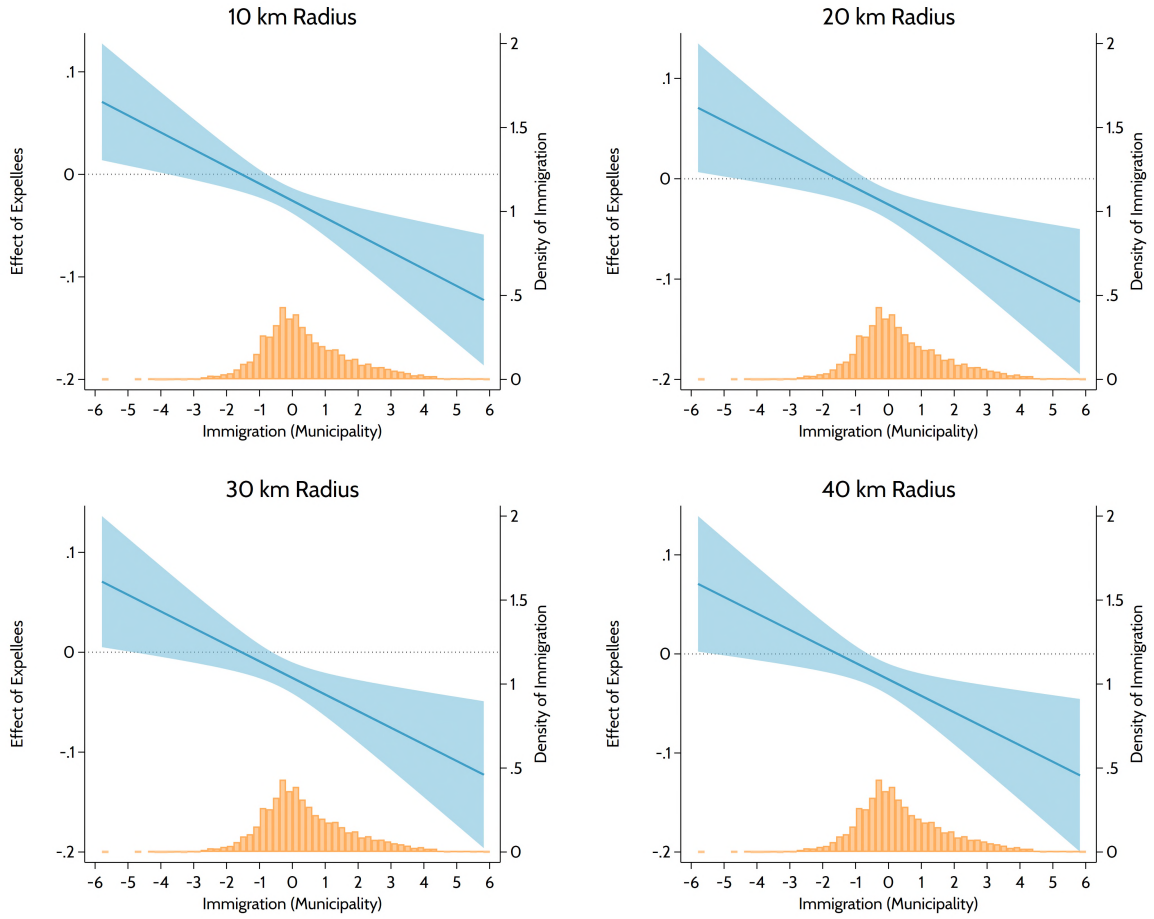

Figure A13: **Alternative Standard Errors II: Spatial Clustering**

The figure plots results from separate spatial fuzzy RD regressions of the baseline specification in Figure 8, panel [c]. The dependent variable is *Far-Right Vote Share*. The blue lines display marginal effects of *Expellees* given different levels of current *Immigration* at the municipality level with 95% confidence intervals (shaded blue areas) based on spatial (Conley) standard errors using a Bartlett kernel with different cut-offs. Panel titles indicate the respective cut-off distances for the calculation of standard errors. The orange bars provide histograms of Immigration at the municipality level.

Table A7: **Robustness: Alternative Standard Errors**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Panel A. Periods of High Migration								
Expellees	-0.062***	-0.062***	-0.062*	-0.062***	-0.062***	-0.062***	-0.062***	-0.062***
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.036)	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Panel B. Periods of Low Migration								
Expellees	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014*	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Panel C. 2017								
Expellees	-0.099**		-0.099	-0.099**	-0.099*	-0.099	-0.099	-0.099
	(0.039)		(0.073)	(0.039)	(0.053)	(0.065)	(0.069)	(0.073)
Panel D. 2021								
Expellees	-0.146***		-0.146**	-0.146***	-0.146***	-0.146**	-0.146**	-0.146**
	(0.038)		(0.074)	(0.038)	(0.054)	(0.067)	(0.070)	(0.073)
Municipalities	404		404	404	404	404	404	404
Bandwidth	30		30	30	30	30	30	30
Segments	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coordinates	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Standard Errors	Heterosked.	HAC	County Clust.	Municip. Clust.	Spatial (10km)	Spatial (20km)	Spatial (30km)	Spatial (40km)

The table displays coefficients from separate spatial fuzzy RD regressions. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections. 'Bandwidth' depicts the sample bandwidth (in km). All regressions include year fixed, segment fixed effects, as well as a full set of cross-interactions of segment fixed effects, migration and the running variable (*Distance to Border*) allowed to differ on both sides of the cut-off. Panels A and B compare the effect of *Expellees* in two sub-samples: elections in periods of low immigration (2) and during immigration waves (3). An immigration wave is defined as a period between two elections, during which the share of migrants in society increased by more than one percentage point. Panels C and D focus on vote shares in the German Federal Elections of 2017 and 2021, respectively. Standard errors are in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. 'Standard Errors' indicates the respective standard error correction, where **Heterosked.** represents heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors, **HAC** indicates heteroskedasticity- and auto-correlation robust standard errors, **County Clust.** indicates standard errors adjusted for clustering at the county level, **Municip. Clust.** indicates standard errors adjusted for clustering at the municipality level. **Spatial (x km)** indicates Conley spatial standard errors with a Bartlett kernel and an x km cut-off.

A.6.7 Alternative Samples

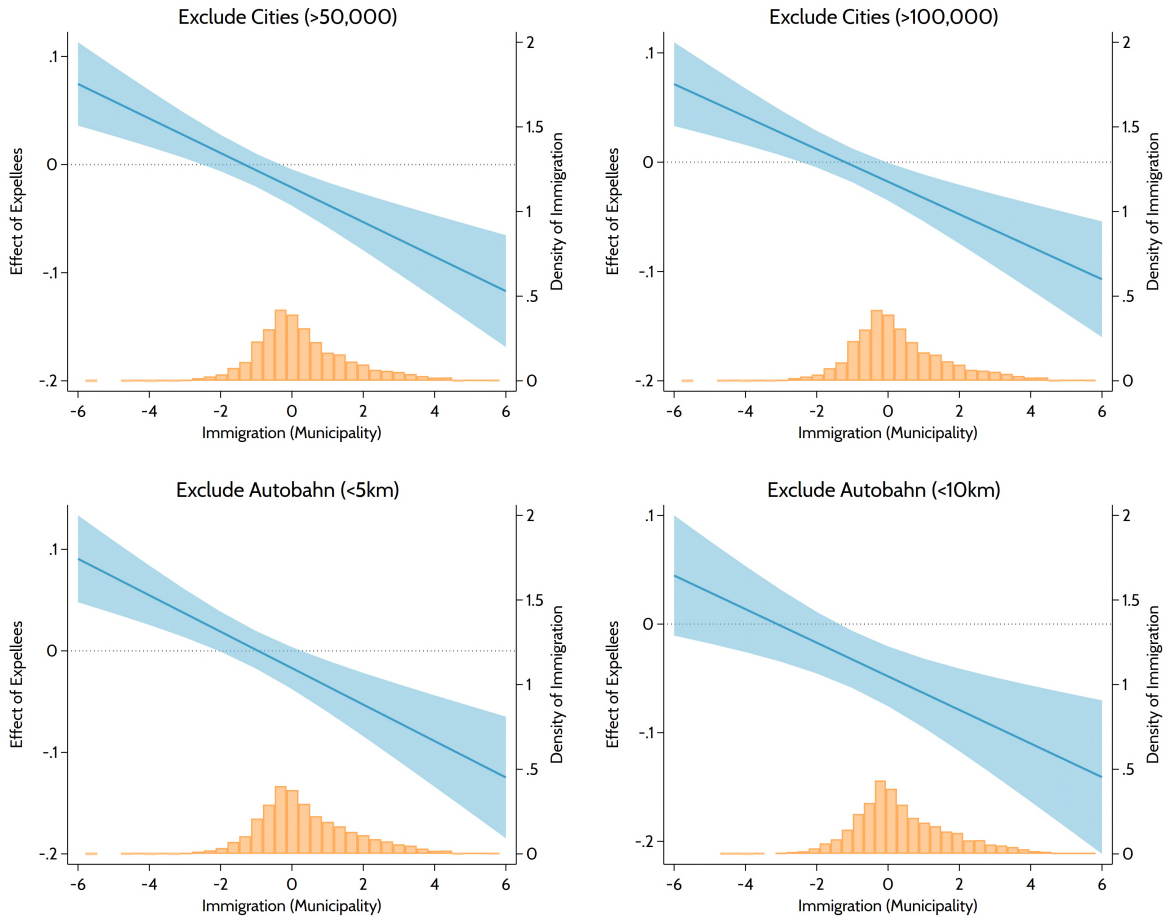

Figure A14: **Alternative Samples**

The figure plots results from separate spatial fuzzy RD regressions that use alternative RD specifications for the baseline result in Figure 8, panel [c]. The dependent variable is *Far-Right Vote Share*. The blue lines display marginal effects of *Expellees* given different levels of current *Immigration* at the municipality level with 95% confidence intervals (shaded blue areas). The orange bars provide histograms of Immigration at the municipality level. **Exclude Cities (>50,000)** indicates that the sample excludes municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants. **Exclude Cities (>100,000)** excludes municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. **Exclude Autobahn (<5 km)** excludes municipalities that are within 5 km distance to the Autobahn. **Exclude Autobahn (<10 km)** excludes municipalities that are within 10 km distance to the Autobahn.

Table A8: **Robustness: Alternative Samples**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A. Periods of High Migration				
Expellees	-0.046***	-0.041***	-0.055***	-0.087***
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.019)	(0.025)
Panel B. Periods of Low Migration				
Expellees	-0.015*	-0.013	-0.010	-0.033**
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.015)
Panel C. 2017				
Expellees	-0.111***	-0.098***	-0.087**	-0.142***
	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.036)	(0.048)
Panel D. 2021				
Expellees	-0.111***	-0.098***	-0.128***	-0.162***
	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.036)	(0.049)
Municipalities	392	399	337	264
Bandwidth	30	30	30	30
Segments	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coordinates	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sample	Excl. Cities (>50,000)	Excl. Cities (>100,000)	Excl. Autobahn (<5km)	Excl. Autobahn (<10km)

The table displays coefficients from separate spatial fuzzy RD regressions. . * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections. 'Bandwidth' depicts the sample bandwidth (in km). All regressions include year fixed, segment fixed effects, as well as a full set of cross-interactions of segment fixed effects, migration and the running variable (*Distance to Border*) allowed to differ on both sides of the cut-off. Panels A and B compare the effect of *Expellees* in two sub-samples: elections in periods of low immigration (2) and during immigration waves (3). An immigration wave is defined as a period between two elections, during which the share of migrants in society increased by more than one percentage point. Panels C and D focus on vote shares in the German Federal Elections of 2017 and 2021, respectively. **Excl. Cities (>50,000)** indicates that the sample excludes municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants. **Excl. Cities (>100,000)** excludes municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. **Excl. Autobahn (<5 km)** excludes municipalities that are within 5 km distance to the Autobahn. **Excl. Autobahn (<10 km)** excludes municipalities that are within 10 km distance to the Autobahn.

A.7 Placebo Border

Table A9: **Robustness: Placebo Border**

Bandwidth (km)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A. Occupation Zone Border				
US Zone	-0.758***	-0.167	-1.201***	-1.774***
	(0.228)	(0.113)	(0.464)	(0.445)
Panel B. Placebo Border				
US Zone	-0.075	-0.096	-0.315	-0.837
	(0.347)	(0.164)	(0.658)	(0.654)
Sample	high	low	2017	2021
Observations	2165	3464	433	433
Bandwidth	30	30	30	30
Segments	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coordinates	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓		

The table displays coefficients from eight spatial fuzzy RD regressions with standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections. 'Bandwidth' depicts the sample bandwidth (in km). 'Observations' reports the number of observations for the indicated number of 'Municipalities'. The upper panel uses the occupation zone border as the cutoff and *Distance to Border* as the running variable. The lower panel makes use of a placebo border. While the original border was defined by using the southern borders of all counties through which the highway runs, the placebo border uses the northern boundaries of those counties. The specifications in column (1) and (2) are based on subsamples of high- and low-immigration years, respectively. An immigration wave is defined as a period between two elections, during which the share of migrants in society increased by more than one percentage point. Column (3) shows results for the 2017 federal election and column (4) for the 2021 federal election.

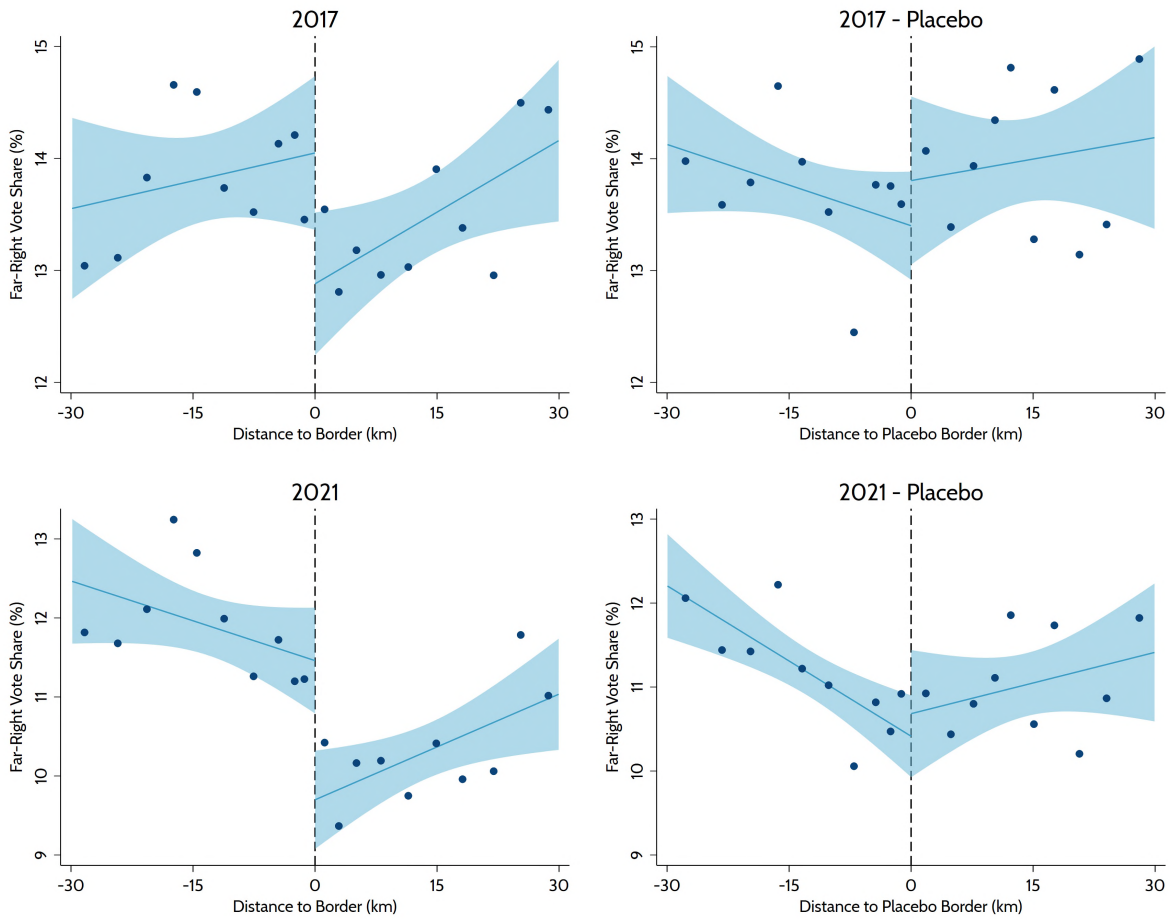

Figure A15: **Placebo Border**

This figure displays estimates from individual sharp RD estimations. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in the 2017 federal election (upper panels) and the 2021 election (lower panels). The dark blue dots display binned means of the dependent variable. The fitted lines represent parametric RD estimations using linear polynomials. The light blue area displays respective 95% confidence intervals. The left panels use the occupation zone border as the cut-off and *Distance to Border* as the running variable. The right panels show results using a placebo border and distances to the placebo border as the running variable. While the original border was defined by using the southern borders of all counties through which the highway runs, the placebo border uses the northern boundaries of those counties.

A.8 Additional Results on Channels

A.8.1 Interaction of Immigration and Income

Table A10: **Elections and Income Tax: The Role of Current Immigration, 1976-2021**

Dep. var.: *Far-Right Vote Share*	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Income Tax (p.c., ln)	-0.633***	-0.611***	-0.678***	-0.638***	-0.597***	-0.678***
	(0.130)	(0.111)	(0.209)	(0.118)	(0.120)	(0.146)
Income Tax (p.c., ln) × Immigration (State)				0.009		
				(0.095)		
Immigration (County)					0.535	
					(0.496)	
Income Tax (p.c., ln) × Immigration (County)					-0.110	
					(0.087)	
Immigration (Municipality)						0.163
						(0.339)
Income Tax (p.c., ln) × Immigration (Municip.)						-0.032
						(0.060)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Periods of Low/High Immigration	All	Low	High	All	All	All
Observations	9896	6596	3300	9896	9896	8066
Municipalities	1101	1101	1100	1101	1101	932

The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections. Standard errors adjusted for clustering at the municipality level in parentheses. The specifications mirror those reported in Table 3 but look at the interaction of local income levels and contemporary immigration.

A.8.2 Isolating Cross-Municipality Variation of Immigration in Given Years

Table A11: **Elections and Expellees – Spatial and Temporal Variation in Immigration**

Dep. var.: *Far-Right Vote Share*	(1)	(2)
US Zone	-0.278**	-0.255**
	(0.124)	(0.123)
US Zone × Immigration (State)	0.168	-0.100
	(0.185)	(0.113)
Immigration (County)	0.301***	
	(0.109)	
US Zone × Immigration (County)	-0.469**	
	(0.192)	
Immigration (Municipality)		0.113*
		(0.064)
US Zone × Immigration (Municipality)		-0.152*
		(0.091)
Bandwidth	30	30
Year FE	✓	✓
Lin. Polynomials	✓	✓
Lin. Polynomials x Migration	✓	✓
Segment FE	✓	✓
Coordinates	✓	✓
Observations	5252	4182
Municipalities	404	344

The table displays coefficients from two spatial sharp RD regressions with standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parentheses. Significance levels: * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections. 'Bandwidth' depicts the sample bandwidth (in km). 'Observations' reports the number of observations for the indicated number of 'Municipalities'. All estimations use a uniform kernel. All regressions include year fixed, segment fixed effects, as well as a full set of cross-interactions of segment fixed effects, migration, and the running variable (*Distance to Border*) allowed to differ on both sides of the cut-off.

A.8.3 Income Taxes and Household Incomes

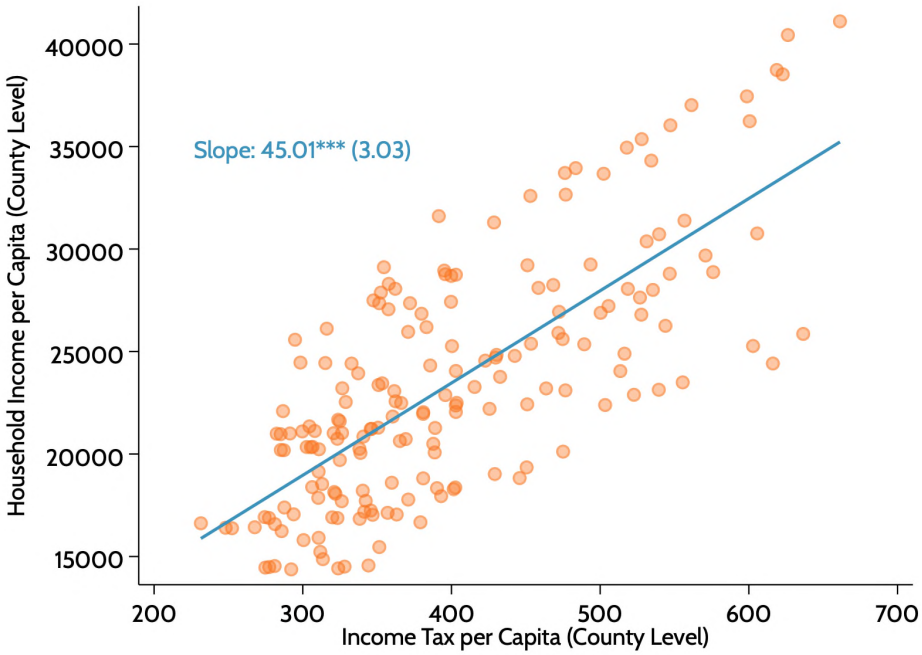

Figure A16: **Income Tax**

The figure shows the correlation of county-level income tax revenues and mean household incomes.

A.8.4 Demographic Effects

Table A12: **Long-Term Demographic Effects**

Outcome variable:	*Population Density*	*Population Growth*	*Immigrants Share*	*Annual Immigration*	*Elderly Share*	*Catholics Share*
2020	0.027***	-0.005	0.050	-0.003	0.035	0.251
	(0.009)	(0.016)	(0.066)	(0.011)	(0.036)	(0.216)
2015	0.027***	0.006	0.032	-0.003		
	(0.009)	(0.017)	(0.064)	(0.012)		
2010	0.027***	-0.001	-0.001	0.002		
	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.092)	(0.010)		
2005	0.027***	0.003	-0.004	-0.001		
	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.136)	(0.011)		
2000	0.028***	0.030*	-0.019	0.002		
	(0.009)	(0.018)	(0.185)	(0.011)		
1995	0.026***	0.031	-0.076	0.004		
	(0.009)	(0.022)	(0.234)	(0.012)		
1990	0.027***	-0.027	-0.091	-0.005		
	(0.009)	(0.024)	(0.279)	(0.012)		
1976	0.028***	0.002	-0.038	-0.002		
	(0.010)	(0.024)	(0.424)	(0.014)		
1970	0.025***	0.090***	-0.082			
	(0.010)	(0.034)	(0.485)			
1950	0.020**	0.077***				
	(0.008)	(0.007)				

The table displays coefficients from separate fuzzy spatial RD regressions. The treatment variable is the 1950 share of expellees per municipality in percent. The various dependent variables are indicated in the top row and measured at the municipality level. The first column indicates the year in which the outcomes are measured. Cells are empty if data are not available. Apart from the outcome variables, the specifications are the same as before. Note that for some variables values for 2020 are not yet available; in this case the most recent values are used. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01.

A.8.5 Effects on a Pro-Immigration Party: The Greens

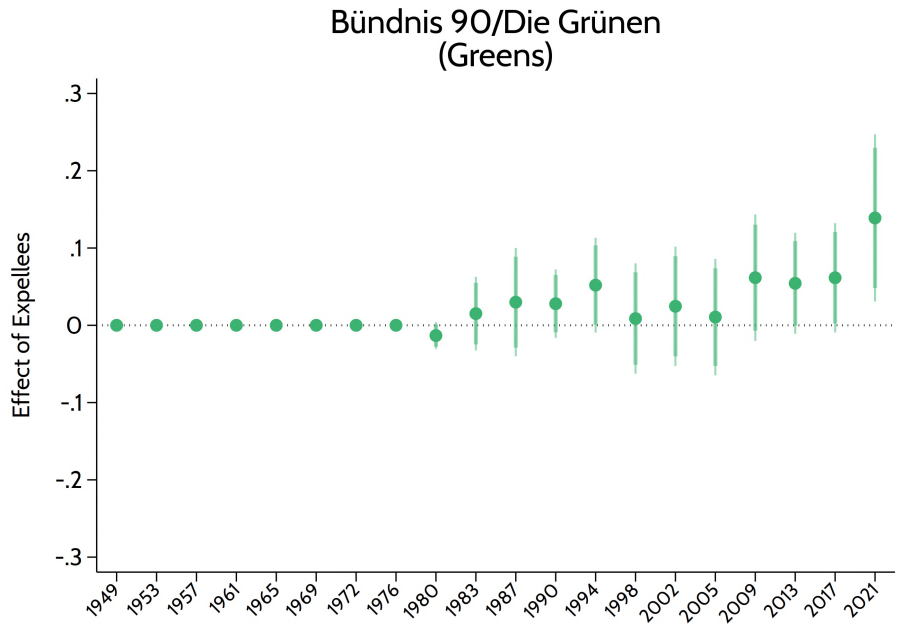

Figure A17: **The Greens, All Federal Elections, 1949–2021**

The figure is a coefficient plot that is identical to the plots shown in Figure 5 except that the vote share of the Green party is used as the dependent variable. The party was founded in 1980.

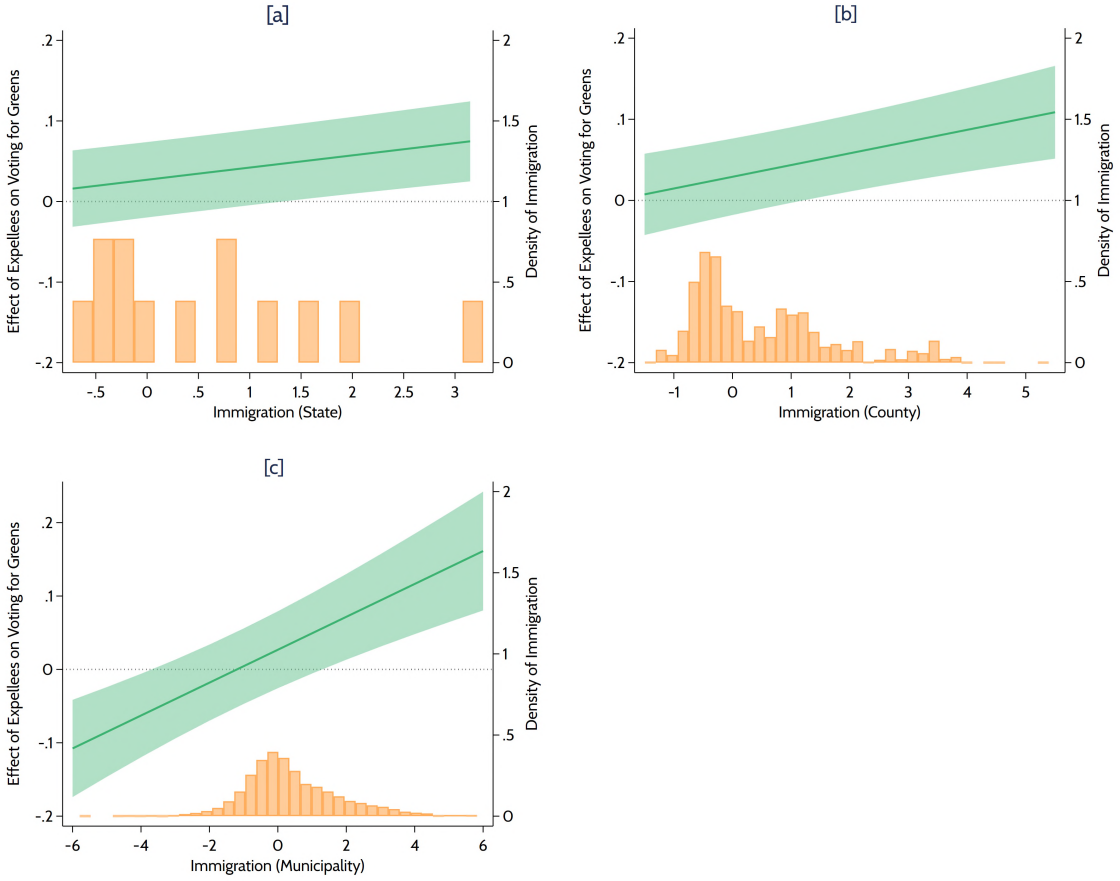

Figure A18: **The Greens, Marginal Effects Depending on Current Immigration**

The figures are marginal-effect plots that are identical to those shown in Figure 8 except that the vote share of the Green party is used as the dependent variable.

A.9 Full Regression Outputs

Table A13: **Immigration and Far-Right Voting, Fixed-Effects Regressions**

Dep. var.: *Far-Right Vote Share*	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Immigration (State)	1.369***			0.499***	
	(0.022)			(0.039)	
Immigration (County)		0.306***		0.946***	0.371***
		(0.044)		(0.040)	(0.047)
Immigration (Municipality)			0.084***	0.058**	0.051***
			(0.016)	(0.023)	(0.016)
Population (ln)	0.597	-0.338	-0.386	-0.945**	-0.405
	(0.373)	(0.365)	(0.367)	(0.411)	(0.365)
Male Pop. Share (%)	0.390***	0.100***	0.064*	0.379***	0.059*
	(0.042)	(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.046)	(0.034)
Pop. Share Older than 65 (%)	0.073***	-0.074***	-0.090***	0.064***	-0.084***
	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.015)	(0.020)
Pop. Share Younger than 25 (%)	-0.062***	-0.017	-0.077***	-0.050***	-0.069***
	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.013)	(0.020)
Income Tax (p.c., ln)	4.835***	-0.741***	-0.787***	5.303***	-0.785***
	(0.218)	(0.177)	(0.173)	(0.279)	(0.171)
Observations	10,964	10,964	8,974	8,974	8,974
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE		✓	✓		✓

The table displays coefficients from five OLS fixed-effects regressions. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level are in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. The dependent variable is the vote share of far-right parties in federal elections in percent.

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