When is Contact Effective? Evidence on Refugee-Hosting and Far-Right Support in France. *

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Abstract

Does exposure to refugees change the political preferences of natives towards far-right parties, and how does this change in preferences occur? This paper examines the political economy of refugee-hosting. Using the opening of refugee centers in France between 1995 and 2017, I show that a center opening leads to a 2 percent reduction in voting for the far-right in presidential elections. The drop in far-right voting is higher in municipalities with a small population, working in the primary and secondary sectors, with low educational levels, and few migrants. This is because the decrease is most likely explained by potential far-right voters not voting, with the left-wing parties benefiting from this decrease. I show that this negative effect cannot be explained by an economic channel, but rather by a composition channel, through natives' avoidance, and a contact channel, through natives' contact with refugees. I provide suggestive evidence that too-disruptive contact with refugees, as measured by the magnitude of the inflows, the cultural distance, and the media salience of refugees, can mitigate the beneficial effects of contact on reducing far-right support.

JEL: F22, J15, D72, P16, R23

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I. Introduction

During the height of the refugee crisis, in 2015 and 2016, the European Union received over one million asylum seekers per year. This surge in refugee inflows placed existing accommodation schemes under strain, and the magnitude and media coverage of the arrival reignited public concerns about hosting refugees. These fears have been used and fueled by long-standing anti-immigrant far-right parties, whose core political agenda includes opposition to immigration (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2020). Concurrently with the refugee crisis, far-right voting increased in Europe, with parties such as the *AfD* in Germany, the *FPö* party in Austria, the *Lega* in Italy, the *Golden Dawn* party in Greece, or the *Front National* in France gaining prominence. However, there is no consensus over the actual effects of hosting refugees on the vote for anti-immigrant parties, with some finding a negative, mixed, or positive effect on the far-right vote-share (Dinas et al., 2019; Hangartner et al., 2019; Dustmann et al., 2019; Vertier and Viskanic, 2019; Steinmayr, 2020; Bratti et al., 2020; Gamalerio et al., 2020; Campo et al., 2021).

I provide a novel analysis of how exposure to refugees affects natives' political preferences toward far-right parties, as well as a new and comprehensive analysis of possible mechanisms that could help explain the disparate findings in the literature. Indeed, hosting refugees has the potential to influence far-right voting in a variety of ways. On the one hand, direct exposure to refugees may result in far-right voting due to the actual or feared economic and fiscal costs of immigration (Becker et al., 2016), negative externalities on the neighborhood of residence (Halla et al., 2017), on the educational environment of native children (Otto and Steinhardt, 2014), or on natives' culture (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014). On the other hand, exposure to refugees may reduce far-right voting at the local level, whether as a result of a positive demand or amenity shock, intergroup contact (Allport, 1954), or compositional changes (Batut and Schneider-Strawczynski, 2021).

I take advantage of the opening of refugee centers in 446 municipalities in France between 1995 and 2017 to identify the effect of humanitarian inflows on far-right voting at presidential elections. The opening of a refugee center is a good experiment for examining the political consequences of exposure to humanitarian migrants, as the process of opening refugee centers is centralized at the national level, leaving municipalities with barely any discretion over the opening. I examine the evolution of the far-right vote in hosting and non-hosting municipalities before and after the opening of a refugee

center using a difference-in-differences strategy in a staggered adoption design. I employ a variety of specification strategies, including a control group of municipalities that are matched on observable characteristics and a control group of municipalities that will open a refugee center in the future. I present an analysis demonstrating the absence of pre-trends across all specifications, along with several robustness tests, such as examining variation within municipalities using polling station data or an instrumental variable strategy that has been used in non-experimental settings (Steinmayr, 2020). To address concerns raised by the recent econometric literature on staggered adoption difference-in-difference designs (Borusyak and Jaravel, 2017; Goodman-Bacon, 2018; Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2018; de Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille, 2020), I implement the estimator proposed by de Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille (2020) to ensure that the treatment effects are estimated using only comparisons of units switching from no treatment to treatment compared to those remaining untreated. This enables me to derive the causal impact of refugee center openings on far-right voting. I then employ detailed information about the center's openings and combine a variety of datasets to conduct a thorough analysis of the channels that could account for such an effect.

On average, I find that the far-right vote share in presidential elections decreases by about 2 percent in hosting municipalities compared to non-hosting municipalities following the opening of a refugee center.

I observe a greater decline in municipalities with a higher proportion of primary and secondary workers, a lower proportion of highly skilled workers, and lower incomes, implying that the relative decline in far-right voting occurred among those with characteristics that may lead them to be anti-immigrant, and thus potential far-right voters. I also show that the decrease in far-right voting is greater when the population is not already voting for the far-right but rather votes for the left and that the opening of a refugee center results in a relative decline in turnout. This suggests that opening a refugee center acts as a buffer, deterring potential future far-right voters from participating in the election and voting for the far-right. As the effect predominates in municipalities that were more left-wing at the start of the period, it stands to reason that the left is the political side that benefits from the relative decrease in turnout. This pattern is reinforced by the fact that the opening of a refugee center does not affect far-right voting in local elections – legislative and municipal elections – in which only regular voters typically vote, implying that the

opening of a refugee center does not sway regular far-right voters, but rather discourages marginal voters who could have been lured to the far-right to go vote for them. To the best of my knowledge, I am the first to document the political characteristics of the native population affected by contact with refugees.

I then present new direct evidence that the contact theory (Allport, 1954) – which postulates that contact between majority and minority groups can alleviate majority prejudice against minority groups – is at work in explaining the decline in far-right voting, and I am the first to provide a comprehensive analysis of the contact theory's various mechanisms. I demonstrate that increased contact, as measured by the distance between the refugee center and the municipality center, as well as the presence of contact facilities such as schools, reduces support for the far-right. I provide suggestive evidence that too-disruptive contact, as measured by the magnitude of inflows, cultural distance, and media salience of refugees, can mitigate the beneficial effects of contact on reducing far-right support. I also find that the decrease in far-right voting is greater in municipalities with a small population and a lower migrant population, which supports the contact hypothesis because contact is more likely to occur and would be more noticeable in municipalities with a small population and a lower migrant share, the latter of which would also reduce the likelihood of disruptive contact with an immigrant population.

I show that this decline is not the result of an economic demand shock or an increase in local amenities, and I am the first to account for the existence of a composition channel (Batut and Schneider-Strawczynski, 2021). In particular, I show that, even in the absence of a native flight – natives leaving hosting municipalities to go to non-hosting municipalities –, a previously overlooked phenomenon of native avoidance – natives from non-hosting municipalities coming less to hosting municipalities – can explain approximately 25 percent of the decrease in far-right voting.

I also provide novel evidence that the political shift away from the far-right induced by the opening of a refugee center is likely to be long-lasting, as the effect more than doubles five to ten years after the opening of a refugee center.

France is an appropriate context for studying these issues because it reflects typical refugee-hosting patterns, with periods of consistent inflows as well as waves and resurgences of asylum seeker flows. Because my analysis spans more than two decades, I can include both periods of crisis and normal refugee inflows, whereas the current lit-

erature on the political consequences of hosting refugees is almost entirely focused on the aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis (Dinas et al., 2019; Steinmayr, 2020; Vertier and Viskanic, 2019; Gamalerio et al., 2020; Bratti et al., 2020; Campo et al., 2021). These studies also focus on the effect of hosting refugees only on the subsequent election and lack the opening date of the centers to account for exposure time, limiting the possibility of studying longer-term patterns.[1] Unlike them, I can investigate not only the role of exposure time but also estimate the effect on the two subsequent presidential election cycles. Combined with data on European elections, I can also plot the dynamics of this impact over up to five election periods, which is also useful to check for the absence of pre-trends. Thus, in comparison to the existing literature, my analysis context enables me to examine the short- and long-term consequences of a representative and typical pattern of refugee hosting.

So far, there is no consensus over the political effect of refugee migration. A part of the literature finds that hosting refugees increases far-right voting. Dinas et al. (2019) show that far-right Golden Dawn votes increased in the Greek islands exposed to massive refugee inflows. Hangartner et al. (2019) corroborate that natives on Greek islands subject to sudden and large increases in refugee inflows have become increasingly hostile to them. Zimmermann and Stutzer (2021) also show that Swiss natives exposed to asylum seekers vote more restrictively on immigration issues in national referendums and are less supportive of redistribution. Bratti et al. (2020) find that the presence of migrants or refugees increases the share of votes for populist parties in Italy, in accordance with findings from Campo et al. (2021). While some others display more nuanced findings. Dustmann et al. (2019) display an increase in far-right voting in rural Danish municipalities hosting refugees, with opposite effects in urban municipalities. Steinmayr (2020) finds that exposure to large inflows of refugees passing through the Austrian border increases far-right voting, but that contact with small-scale refugee inflows decrease far-right voting. Finally, a part of the literature finds that exposure to small-scale refugee inflows due

[1] In particular, this an important aspect that differentiates my work from the one of Vertier and Viskanic (2019) as they focus on the French context of emergency relocation of refugees to provisional housing centers for dismantling the Calais Jungle during the refugee crisis and on short-term exposure to refugees. To my knowledge, the only paper that focuses on the political effects of refugee-hosting outside of the refugee crisis is the one by Dustmann et al. (2019) who look at the effect of refugee-hosting in Danish municipalities over the 1986-1998 period. Differently from that paper, I focus the French context on a longer and more recent period from 1995 to 2017 and I find different heterogeneity results for small and rural municipalities.

to dispersal policies have a negative impact on far-right-wing voting in Italy (Gamalerio et al., 2020) and in France (Vertier and Viskanic, 2019), a result that the authors attribute to the contact hypothesis.

This paper thus makes an original contribution to the political economy of migration. I show that refugee hosting can decrease far-right voting and support the contact hypothesis channel (Allport, 1954). However, unlike the above-reviewed literature, this paper finds support for the contact hypothesis once accounted for potential confounding factors such as economic or amenities consequences of refugee-hosting and compositional changes. I also perform my analysis on the premise that it is not just any type of contact between two distinct groups that can result in a decrease in prejudice (Valentine, 2008) and qualifies it in relation to the threshold (Schelling, 1971; Card et al., 2008; Aldén et al., 2015) and realistic group conflict theories (Campbell, 1965; Bobo, 1983; Quillian, 1995; Dustmann et al., 2019). More precisely, it provides comprehensive evidence that the relationship between the contact with refugees and votes for the far-right depends on the intensity of contact, as measured by the capacity of the center, the cultural distance of hosted refugees, or the media salience of the refugee topic. Therefore, this also contributes more generally to the literature on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Valentine, 2008; Frumkin et al., 2009; Finseraas and Kotsadam, 2017; Finseraas et al., 2019; Laurence, 2019).

Beyond the findings themselves, this paper makes a unique contribution to the literature on the political economy of refugee migration (Steinmayr, 2020; Dinas et al., 2019; Vertier and Viskanic, 2019; Bratti et al., 2020; Zimmermann and Stutzer, 2021; Campo et al., 2021) in that it allows to reconcile findings in which hosting refugees increased or decreased the vote for the far-right by emphasizing the specific conditions under which a decrease in far-right voting could occur. With this in mind, increased far-right voting could thus be interpreted as a result of negative economic or amenities externalities, a lack of contact with the refugee population, a large cultural distance with the migrant population, large flows of arrivals, or even a dearth of marginal voters who could be prevented from voting for the far-right.

This paper also contributes to the literature on migration dispersal policies. This literature puts an emphasis on the role of dispersal policies[2] for the integration of refugees (Rooth, 1999; Wren, 2003; Robinson et al., 2004; Edin et al., 2004; Damm, 2005; An-

[2]A dispersal policy consists in dispatching refugees over the national territory, most often in order to share the burden between different municipalities and avoid a concentration of refugees in the capital city.

dersson et al., 2010), but also uses these dispersal policies as an exogenous allocation of refugees on the territory to study the effects of networks (**?**Åslund and Fredriksson, 2009; Damm, 2014) and of characteristics of the assigned place of residence (Bevelander and Lundh, 2007; Åslund and Rooth, 2007; Åslund et al., 2010) on the labor market integration of refugees. I add to this literature by demonstrating that dispersal policies have political consequences. Additionally, a connected literature examines matching algorithms to transform blind dispersal policies into more efficient systems that would match the characteristics of refugees and hosting municipalities (Moraga and Rapoport, 2014; Fernández-Huertas Moraga and Rapoport, 2015; Andersson and Ehlers, 2016; Delacrétaz et al., 2016; Bansak et al., 2018) in order to improve refugees' integration and acceptance by the native population. I contribute to this literature by stressing new distinctive characteristics of refugee waves and hosting populations that should be accounted for in such mechanisms.

To conclude, this article contributes more generally to the literature on the drivers and causes of populism (see Guriev and Papaioannou, 2020, for a review). This literature identifies migration as a significant concern for contemporary populists, owing to the perceived economic and cultural threat that immigrants can pose to natives (Cerrato et al., 2018; Colantone and Stanig, 2018; Dorn et al., 2020). Even though populist leaders prioritize migration, the results indicate that they can lose ground on this very core point of their agenda when natives come into contact with migrants. I show that, while migration has been identified as a driver of populism and far-right vote, policymakers should not take this as an unalterable reality, as it varies by context and type of migration. This suggests that authorities could consider opening refugee centers in places where they foresee the rise of the far-right and that the opening of refugee centers with the appropriate mix and size of flows could even be used to prevent that from happening. It is also connected to the literature that identifies wrong perceptions of the reality of immigration as a driver of political opinions (Alesina et al., 2018; Barrera et al., 2020; Alesina and Stantcheva, 2020), as it suggests that the contact hypothesis could counteract how incorrect perception of migration may lead to voting for far-right parties.

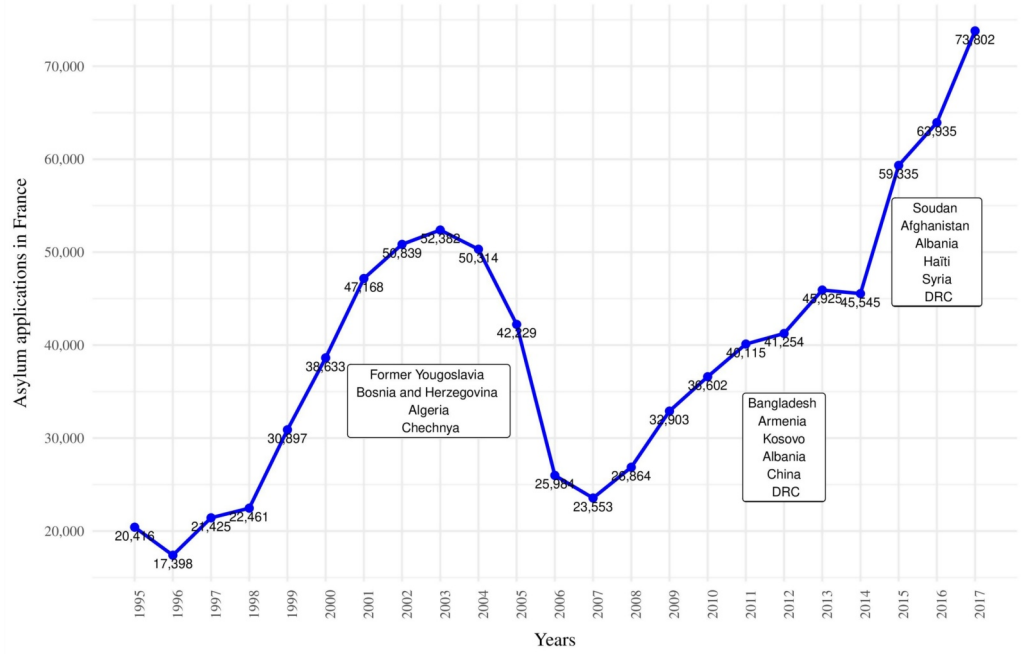
The paper is structured as follows. Section II presents the context and data. Section III details the empirical and identification strategy. Section IV investigates the effect of refugee center openings on the vote for the far-right. Section VI concludes.

II. Context

II.1. Humanitarian migrants

France has a long history of hosting those who were named *refugees*, starting with Dutch refugees who arrived in 1787 to escape from the Orangists' revolution in the United Province of the Netherlands, the Poles in the 1830s, Spanish refugees fleeing Carlist wars in the 1840s, Russian whites and Armenian refugees in the 1920s, Spanish Republicans in the 1930s, or refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos from the mid 1970s (Burgess, 2008; Djegham, 2011). Since the 2015 refugee crisis, the scale of the refugee migration has increased public awareness of refugees. The number of sea and land arrivals increased significantly in 2015, rising from 6,913 monthly detected sea arrivals in the Mediterranean Sea in January to 222,800 sea arrivals in October. Between 2015 and 2016, the European Union registered over a million first-time asylum seekers, with circumstances varying between member states. While the number of asylum seekers in Germany increased by 159 percent between 2014 and 2016, reaching approximately 587 thousand in 2016, France saw a much more modest increase of 12% during the same period, reaching 63 thousand new asylum seekers in 2016. However, as illustrated in Figure 1, France has seen a number of different waves of asylum seekers over the last two decades.

Figure 1: Asylum seekers inflows in France – 1995 - 2017



Source: OFPRA activity reports. Note: Main asylum seekers' countries of origin are displayed for the specific periods.

This analysis focuses on these various waves of humanitarian migration involving asylum seekers, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and refugees. Individuals who apply for refugee status are considered asylum seekers. In France, and since 1991, they do not work during their asylum procedure[3] and receive the "Allocation pour demandeurs d'asile" , a monthly subsidy equivalent to 6.80 euros per day for a one-person household. Since 2000, the average time required to process an asylum application has been 5 months, with periodic peaks, such as in 2015, when the processing time increased to 7 months. Asylum seekers can be assigned to a housing center during the processing of their asylum application. They have no say in the location of the housing center to which they are assigned, and their monthly subsidy is contingent upon their acceptance of the offered housing solution. The "Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et des Apatrides" (OFPRA, French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons) evaluates their asylum demand and either denies it, grants them refugee status, or grants them subsidiary protection status. Those who obtain the refugee status have a ten-year renewable residence permit and the same rights as French citizens, except for the right to vote. Asylum seekers who do not meet the criteria for refugee status but are at risk of serious harm in their origin country[4] obtain subsidiary protection, which consists of a renewable one-year residency permit with the right to work[5]. Those whose applications are denied must either leave France or become undocumented.

II.2. Hosting scheme for humanitarian migrants in France

European countries have implemented dispersal policies for refugees aimed at spreading the cost of hosting them across their territory[6]. In France, the welcome scheme consists of various types of centers that house refugees and asylum seekers. The first center opened in the 1970s to house South American refugees fleeing the dictatorships of the 1960s

[3] Asylum applicants are allowed to ask for a temporary work permit if the processing of their application takes more than nine months. In practice, even if their application has been pending for more than nine months, they avoid this time-consuming administrative process and do not apply for a work permit.

[4] Among the possible serious harms covered are: the death penalty or execution, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, serious and individual threat to the life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence resulting from a situation of internal or international armed conflict.

[5] Only 5.5 percent of refugees had obtained French nationality three years after obtaining refugee status according to ELIPA data. Given the small size of refugee centers relative to the population (0.3% of the population), and the fact that centers opened on average 1.5 years prior to the next election, it is unlikely that an inflow of refugee voters is driving the results.

[6] For example, Denmark from 1986 to 1998, Sweden from 1984 to 1994, the Netherlands from 1987, Norway from 1994, Ireland from 2000, or the United Kingdom from 2000 (Robinson et al., 2004; Dustmann et al., 2017).

and 1970s, as well as boat people from Vietnam. Several waves of asylum seekers have put the hosting scheme under pressure, and new centers have frequently been established to accommodate these new waves. There are different types of centers for refugees and asylum seekers, and this analysis covers them all. The earliest centers, established in the 1970s, are the "Centres Provisoires d'Hébergements" (CPH, Provisional Accommodation Centre) and they house refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. The "Centres d'Accueil pour Demandeurs d'Asile" (CADA, Reception Centres for Asylum Seekers) were established in the early 1990s and are typically reserved for asylum seekers, but refugees may stay for up to three months, and sometimes longer in practice, if other hosting schemes are at capacity. Then there are the "Hébergements d'Urgence des Demandeurs d'Asile" (HUDA, Emergency Accommodation for Asylum Seekers), the "Acceuil Temporaire - Service de l'Asile" (AT-SA, Temporary Reception Asylum Service) and "Programme d'Accueil et d'Hébergement des Demandeurs d'Asile" (PRAHDA, Reception and Accommodation Program for Asylum Seekers) for hosting asylum seekers. In order to deal with the refugee crisis, another type of center, "Centres d'Accueil et d'Orientation" (CAO, Hosting and Orientation Centers), was set up in 2015 to assist in the absorption of migrants and asylum seekers from the Calais camp[7], but most of them were temporary and closed within the year of their opening. A housing center's average capacity is 66 humanitarian migrants, and the greatest increase in the number of centers opened occurred between 2015 and 2016, as illustrated in Figure A2a. As depicted in Figure A3, most of the increase in that year was attributable to the opening of CAO centers. In 2018, there were about 1,000 housing centers spread across the French territory. Figure 2 shows that, as of April 2018, housing centers for humanitarian migrants are relatively homogeneously distributed across national territory.

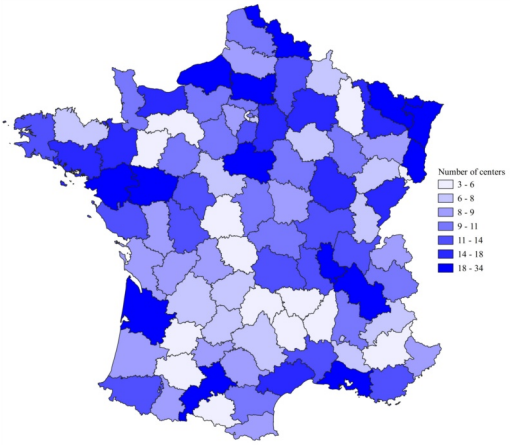
The French government is implementing a centralized hosting scheme in order to "spread the burden" – that is, to mitigate the feared negative economic or social consequences – of hosting humanitarian migrants. The French Interior Ministry launches project calls to open housing centers for refugees. Social housing landlords[8] and NGOs

[7]The Calais Camp (alternatively referred to as Calais Jungle) is a collection of migrant and refugee camps located near the town of Calais. They have existed since 2002, but have been dismantled by law enforcement several times. It hosted up to 9,000 migrants in August 2016.

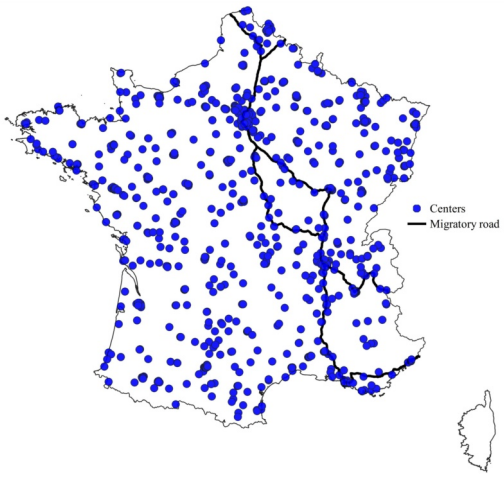
[8]National housing landlords are referred to in French as "bailleurs sociaux" and operate throughout the entire French territory. A social landlord is an organization that rents social housing to households in exchange for a moderate, means-tested rent that is either paid by the tenants or subsidized by the government. It may also be responsible for the construction of such housing.

Figure 2: Housing centers for refugees and asylum seekers in France

(a) Centers over French departments



(b) Centers localization in France



Source: Ministry of the Interior with data extraction in April 2018 (centers) and IOM - monitoring flows (migratory routes). Note: Figure 3a is a map of French departments, the darker the shade, the more centers in the department. Figure 3b shows the location of all housing center for refugee in France in April 2018 and the migratory routes.

then apply to open and operate a center. According to discussions with French asylum actors (NGOs and social housing landlords), the choice of a location to open a housing center is primarily determined by the availability of a building already owned or rentable for about 15 years. There are also anecdotal evidence that if the project is not selected, they do not change the location and that they "recycle" the project for subsequent open center calls. This anecdotal evidence is also central to one of the specification strategies where I focus exclusively on municipalities in which a center opened. Importantly, municipalities have no influence, or information, over the allocation process, such that they have no leverage over the allocation timing or the number of refugees allocated to them.

The selection of winning projects is informed by a selection grid covering a number of criteria, as shown in the example of a project call for the opening of CADA centers in 2013 on Figure A9 in Appendix A. The three components are the architectural aspects (22 percent of the coefficients), the quality of the project and the future operator (47 percent of the coefficients) and the funding modalities of the center (31 percent of the coefficients). Because the choice of the project was top-down, and because there were no criteria for whether the localities should be notified or accept the opening of the center, the municipality had no say in the opening process until 2015. Starting in the autumn of 2015, a criterion for the “position of local representatives” was added to the project

architecture section of the selection grid, as it can be seen from the example of the project call for the opening of the CPH centers in 2019 in Figure A10. Although this was added, it accounted for no more than 12.5% of the coefficients, and local representatives did not necessarily mean the mayor, but could be, for instance, the agreement of the Departmental Representative (prefect) who was in charge of facilitating the openings. Indeed, there are a number of examples of local authorities' opposition to the physical opening of centers post-2015[9], which means that municipal authorities were not necessarily consulted or their views were not taken into account in the centralized process. The selection process for the CAO centers opened in 2015 differed, as the Interior Ministry needed to quickly open them to dismantle the Calais and Dunkerque camps. The Interior Ministry and prefects may have played an active sourcing role in finding and persuading local authorities, generally mayors, to open CAO centers. Given the opening of CAO centers in 2015 and the slight change in selection criteria for other centers in 2015, I show that the results are still of a similar magnitude when excluding CAO centers or focusing on the preceding period 1995-2012.

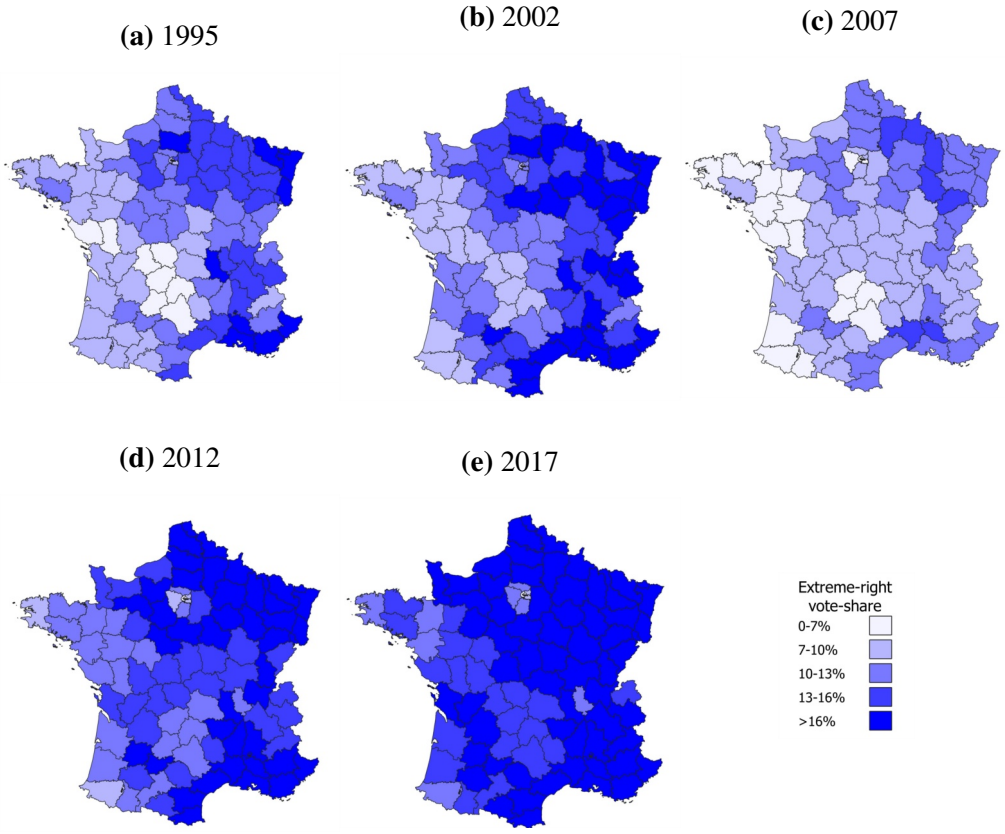
II.3. The far-right in France

The rise in the number of humanitarian immigrants in the aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis was not the only dynamic of social change in Europe. Simultaneously, far-right parties such as France's Rassemblement National, Germany's AFD, Italy's Lega Nord, and Austria's FPÖ grew rapidly. In France, the far-right share of the vote rose from 15% in 1995 to 21.3% in 2017 in the first round of presidential elections. In Germany, the AFD increased its vote share from 1.9% in the 2013 federal election to 12.6% in the 2017 federal election. In Europe, the rise of the far-right has frequently been attributed to the current refugee crisis, given that if the population's discontent with immigration were expressed in the ballot box, the far-right party would be the one harvesting the votes.

In France, the main far-right party is the *Rassemblement National*. Formerly known as the *Front National* (National Front), it was founded on 5 October 1972, following the neo-fascist group *Ordre Nouveau* ideology. It was led for most of its history by Jean-Marie

[9]See several examples, such as: `https://www.lepoint.fr/societe/essonne-le-futur-centre-d-accueil-pour-migrants-incendie-06-09-2016-2066236_23.php`, or `https://www.senat.fr/questions/base/2016/qSEQ161023714.html`, or `https://www.20minutes.fr/marseille/1938699-20161008-var-commune-manifeste-contre-centre-accueil-migrants` (accessed on December, 2020).

Figure 3: Far-right vote share at presidential elections first round in France



Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: Figure 3 presents maps of the extreme-right vote share at the first round of presidential elections in 1995, 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017 over French departments. The darker the shade, the higher the extreme-right vote-share.

Le Pen, and since 2011 by Marine Le Pen. From the outset, the *Front National* developed an anti-immigration discourse as a party unifying theme. As early as 1988, Jean-Marie Le Pen was spreading his anti-immigration discourse "The people who give in to foreign invasions have not long survived".[10]' From 1995 to 2017, the prevention of immigration to France has always been the main focus of the far-right *Rassemblement National* candidates. Their immigration policy platform during presidential elections ranged from expelling all foreigners and preventing any immigration to France from 1995 to 2007, to cutting immigration to 10,000 immigrants per year from 2012 to 2017.

Presidential elections in France are conducted using a two-round majority system. Prior to 2002, presidential elections were held every seven years; since 2002, they have been held every five years. I examine the evolution of the far-right's share of votes in the first round of presidential elections from 1995 to 2017. Figure 3 depicts the geographic

[10]January 10, 1988. The National Convention of the *Front National*.

distribution of far-right voting shares in the first round of presidential elections during the period. The far-right appears to be particularly prominent in the eastern part of the country, and there has been a substantial rise in far-right voting over the period, increasing by 40% in the first round of presidential elections between 1995 and 2017.

II.4. Data

To investigate the effect of exposure to humanitarian migrants on far-right voting, I focus on housing centers for humanitarian migrants that have opened in France. I use a database that I obtained from the French Interior Ministry in April 2018 that provides information on housing centers in France. It encompasses all types of centers for asylum seekers (HUDA, CADA, AT-SA[11]) and all centers for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (CPH[12]), and CAO[13] centers. It contains information about the type of center, the operator's name, the date of opening, the center's capacity, and its address.

The presidential election results at the municipal level for 1995, 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017 are publicly available through the French Ministry of the Interior. I calculate the far-right's vote share as the number of votes cast for the far-right over the total number of registered voters. In the 1995, 2007, 2012, and 2017 presidential elections, the *Front National* (FN) was the only party classified as far-right. In 2002, Bruno Mégret's *Mouvement National Républicain* is classified alongside the FN as a far-right party.

I also rely on data from INSEE at municipal level on population age, proportion of workers in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, proportion of the population with baccalaureate or tertiary education, proportion of unemployed, proportion of vacant housing, proportion of immigrants, density or population size. I also use DGFIP IRCOM data for the average resident income in each municipality.

Table 1 shows static differences between municipalities that opened a center after 1995 and those that never opened one. In 1995, the share of votes cast for the far-right was comparable in hosting and non-hosting municipalities, and while both types of municipalities reported an increase in the vote for the far-right, non-hosting municipalities reported a 5 percentage point higher share of votes cast for the far-right in 2017 compared

[11] HUDA: Emergency Accommodation for Asylum Seekers. CADA: Reception Centres for Asylum Seekers. AT-SA: Temporary Reception Asylum Service.

[12] CPH: Provisional Accommodation Centre.

[13] CAO: Hosting and Orientation Centers.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics by hosting and non-hosting municipalities

	1995			2017		
	Non-hosting	Hosting	Difference	Non-hosting	Hosting	Difference
Far-right vote-share	11.61	11.54	0.08	21.45	15.97	5.48***
Men share	0.50	0.49	0.02***	0.50	0.48	0.02***
Young share (0-19 years-old)	0.26	0.26	-0.00*	0.24	0.23	0.00
Elderly share (>65 years-old)	0.18	0.17	0.01***	0.20	0.21	-0.01*
Migrants share	0.02	0.06	-0.04***	0.03	0.07	-0.04***
Unemployed share	0.09	0.11	-0.03***	0.09	0.14	-0.05***
Primary sector workers share	0.17	0.04	0.13***	0.09	0.02	0.07***
Secondary sector workers share	0.29	0.28	0.01	0.24	0.21	0.03***
Tertiary educated share	0.10	0.13	-0.03***	0.22	0.24	-0.02***
Vacant housing share	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.08	0.10	-0.01***
Rural municipality	0.50	0.25	0.25***	0.50	0.25	0.25***
Density	126	1274	-1147***	146	1390	-1243***
Population	1,150	21,477	-20,326***	1,345	23,047	-21,702***
Observations	33,520	446	33,966	33,520	446	33,966

Source: INSEE - French censuses (1990,1999,2006-2017). Note: For pre-2006 data, a linear interpolation is performed to convert data annually. The Table compares municipalities which experienced a refugee housing center opening between 1995 and 2017 (Hosting) and those that did not (Non-hosting).

to hosting municipalities. In other words, this suggests that the far-right's vote share increased less in hosting municipalities. Additionally, centers open in less rural municipalities, that are more populated, with a higher proportion of migrants, a higher proportion of tertiary-educated residents, are more specialized in the tertiary sector, and have a higher rate of unemployment. These static differences will be accounted for in the empirical specification with municipality fixed effects, and I also provide a matching specification for which there are no differences between hosting and non-hosting municipalities, as illustrated in Table E2.

III. Empirical Strategy

III.1. Estimation

My identification strategy takes advantage of France's staggered opening of refugee housing centers between 1995 and 2017. As explained in Section II.2, the location and timing of refugee housing center openings are unrelated to municipalities' trends, which is a key assumption for the main specification's identification strategy. In that context, a standard specification over the period 1995-2017 would be:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta Opening_{it} + \omega_i + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

with municipality i in election year t. Y_{it} is the outcome of interest, that is the log share of votes for the extreme right at the first round of presidential elections in my main specifications[14]. $Opening_{it}$ is a variable equals to the number of refugee centers opened in municipality i at time t. A municipality i is thus considered treated if refugee centers opened before the election date t. δ_t, ω_i are election year and municipality fixed effects respectively. Municipality fixed effects capture any municipality-specific time-invariant unobserved factors. Election year fixed effects capture any time-specific municipality-invariant unobserved confounders. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Under conventional identification assumptions, the OLS estimated coefficient of β measures the average deviation in the outcome of interest of hosting municipalities relative to non-hosting municipalities.

In Table B1, I estimate the effect by using a standard difference-in-differences design. However, recent developments in the estimation of difference-in-differences in staggered adoption designs (Borusyak and Jaravel, 2017; Goodman-Bacon, 2018; Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2018; de Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille, 2020) show that the estimated ATT is a weighted sum of different ATTs with weights that may be negative. As explained in Appendix B, tis can lead to substantial estimation errors.

Therefore, I use de Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille (2020) estimation procedure to estimate the treatment effects in groups switching from no treatment to treatment compared to those remaining untreated:

$$\beta^S = E\left[\frac{1}{N_S}\sum_{(i,t):t\geq 2, D_t\neq D_{t-1}}[Y_{i,t}(1)-Y_{i,t}(0)]\right] \tag{2}$$

with municipality i and election year t. $N_S = \sum_{t\geq 2, D_t\neq D_{t-1}} N_t$ with N_t the number of registered voters at t. D_t denotes the average treatment at t, $Y_{i,t}(1)$ and $Y_{i,t}(0)$ the average potential outcomes with and without treatment respectively. β^S is the average of the treatment effect at the time when the treatment is received across all treated units. In our context, it will estimate the effect of opening refugee centers, in a municipality that did not have any center before, compared to municipalities that have not opened a center. This estimator estimates the treatment effect in the groups that switch to treatment, at the time when they switch, and does not rely on any treatment effect homogeneity condi-

[14] Results remain the same when using the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation $log(x_i + \sqrt{x_1^2+1})$ that is defined in zero.

tion. Results in Table 2 using the estimator of de Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille (2020) are similar to results using the standard difference-in-differences estimation, as shown on Table B1 in Appendix B.

III.2. Identification

The identification hypothesis is that the same evolution in the vote for far-right parties would have occurred in control and treated municipalities in the absence of the opening of refugee centers. The main concern is thus selection into treatment leading to differential pre-trends between control and treated municipalities. In Table 2, I show that the the opening of refugee centers decrease far-right voting. Then, one could worry that control municipalities do not open refugee centers because they are increasingly against migrants or that treated municipalities open refugee centers because they are increasingly pro-migrants. As shown Section II.2, the timing of treatment should be uncorrelated to the evolution of outcomes over time in treated and untreated municipalities given the exogenous and centralized nature of the refugee housing centers opening process.

However, I do not solely rely on the experimental nature of the opening of refugee housing centers to support the common-trend assumption. I also use two more conservative specifications to mitigate identification threats. In the first specification, I restict the sample of analysis to municipalities that are treated at one point in time. This specification is based on anecdotal evidence described in Section II.2 that operators typically use the location of unsuccessful applications to open centers in subsequent project calls. This implies that the location of refugee housing centers may be considered exogenous over time. Comparing only treated municipalities, i.e. comparing at t hosting municipalities opening centers at time t to hosting municipalities opening centers at time $t+1$, mitigates the concerns about the differences between control and treated municipalities. In a second specification, I use a propensity score matching procedure to address differences in socio-demographic characteristics to alleviate concerns that control and treated municipalities experience different trends because they differ in the level of their socio-demographic characteristics. A detailed description of the propensity score matching procedure is available in Appendix E.

Furthermore, I provide various complementary evidence to alleviate remaining identification concerns. I perform placebo tests in Table 3 and a pre-trends analysis in Figure

4 for all the specifications showing that centers did not open in places where the far-right was on a different trend compared to control municipalities. In column (3) of Table 11, I restrict the control group to only adjacent municipalities of localities where centers opened, because one might think that close municipalities experience similar trendsIn Table 9, I control for department-time fixed effects in column (4) or for a wide range of time-varying controls in column (5), which alleviates concerns about differential trends at the department level or related to observable characteristics driving the results. In Table 12, I also perform an analysis at the polling-station level where it compares a zone in which a refugee-center opened to other zones within a same municipality where a center did not open to mitigate concerns that there could be some endogeneity driving the results at the municipality level mitigates concerns that there could be some endogeneity driving the results at the municipality level.Finally, in Table 13, I perform what the literature does in non experimental settings (Steinmayr, 2020; Vertier and Viskanic, 2019; Gamalerio et al., 2020) and use an instrumental variable strategy using the number of group accommodation as an instrument for the opening of refugee centers In Section IV.5, I describe these analyses in greater detail, as well as additional robustness tests relating to spillovers, estimation method, and sample of analysis.

IV. Results

IV.1. Contemporaneous impact of opening a refugee center on far-right vote

Table 2: Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections

Outcome: far-right vote-share	(1) Full Sample	(2) Only Treated	(3) Matching
Center opening	-0.037***	-0.021***	-0.018***
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Election year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	135,048	1,522	3,928

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the far-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

This section examines the impact of opening a refugee center on the 1995-2017 vote for the far-right in France. Table 2 displays the estimated β^S for far-right voting in three

specifications. Column (1) presents the estimate when the control group consists of all non-hosting municipalities. Column (2) presents the estimate when the control group consists of municipalities not being treated at that time, but being treated at subsequent periods. Column (3) presents the estimate when the control group consists of municipalities matched by a propensity score as described in Appendix E. On average, following a refugee center opening, the voting share of the far-right decreases by about 2 percent at the next presidential election compared to the control group in the most conservative specifications. As, on average, municipalities that did not experience the opening of the refugee center had an extreme right-wing vote of 16.2 over the period 1995-2017, the voting share for the extreme right increased by 0.328 points less in the hosting municipalities than in the non-hosting municipalities.

Table 3: Placebo tests – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections

Outcome: far-right vote-share	(1) Full Sample	(2) Only Treated	(3) Matching
Center opening	-0.012 (0.010)	0.011 (0.013)	0.010 (0.009)
Election year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	100,839	860	2,755

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. This table compares the evolution of the extreme-right voting from $t-2$ to $t-1$ in the municipalities that are treated and not treated between $t-1$ and t. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

The identification relies on the assumption that municipalities that have opened a refugee center experienced similar trends as municipalities that have not. To test this assumption, I use the placebo estimate of de Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille (2020) that compares the evolution of the far-right voting from $t-2$ to $t-1$ in municipalities that are treated and those not treated between $t-1$ and t. Table 3 displays the results of these placebo tests for all specifications, and none of these placebo tests have a significant effect on far right voting. This supports the claim that our estimate captures well the impact of the opening of a refugee center. Using the standard difference-in-differences estimation, I present qualitatively similar estimates in Appendix B and provide evidence

that some of the specifications are actually exposed to the negative weights issue when using the standard estimate.

IV.2. Dynamic impact impact of opening a refugee center on far-right vote

Table 4 extends the results to the next election period to show the dynamic effect of the opening of a refugee center on far-right voting two presidential elections after the opening. The negative effect on the far-right vote significantly doubles two elections after the opening, as the vote for the extreme-right dropped between 3.7 to 10 percent. Since presidential elections were held every five years from 2002, two elections after the opening correspond to about 5 to 10 years after the refugee centers opening. This suggests a significant long-term impact of the opening of refugee centers on reducing far-right voting.

Table 4: Treatment dynamics – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at the second presidential elections

Outcome: far-right vote-share two presidential elections after	(1) Full Sample	(2) Only Treated	(3) Matching
Center opening	-0.100***	-0.042**	-0.037**
	(0.017)	(0.20)	(0.018)
Election year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	100,561	860	2,755

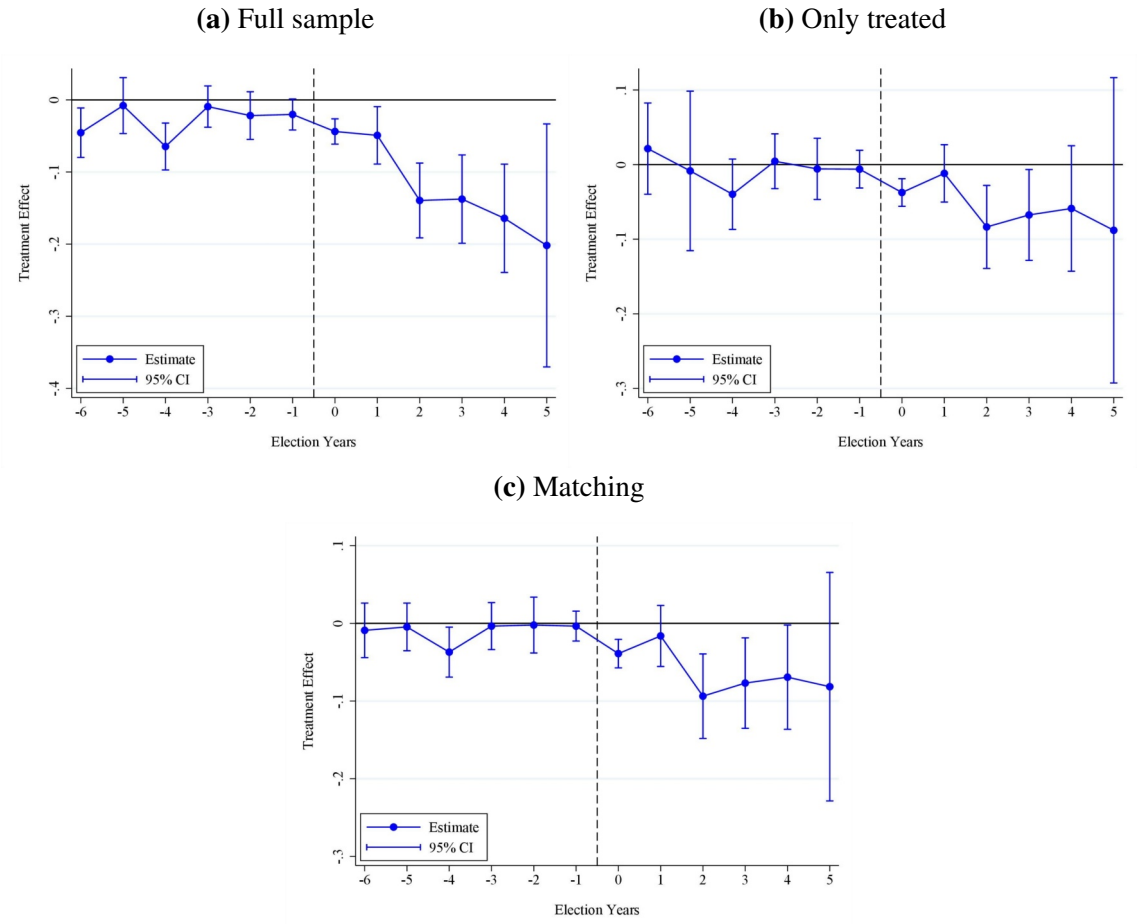
Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

On Figure 4, I extend the number of periods by complementing presidential elections with European elections to take a better look at the dynamics of the effect. I take advantage of the fact that, as shown on Figure C1 in Appendix C, European elections are held regularly between presidential elections and the far-right party *Front National* has participated in all those elections. Thus, I estimate the impact of refugee center opening on *Front National*'s voting share.

Several new estimators were proposed to estimate dynamic treatment effects of staggered adoption designs. For example, Callaway and Sant'Anna (2018) use groups that are never treated as their control group, and Abraham and Sun (2018) use groups that

become treated at the last period as a control group. I chose the estimator proposed by de Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille (2020) because it uses both never treated units and non-treated units at t+1, forming a larger control group that could lead to a more precise estimator. To estimate the dynamic treatment effect, I replace in equation 2 all $Y_{i,t}(0)$ by the counterfactual outcome of the locality i at period t, that is $Y_{i,t}(0, D_{i,t-1}, ..., D_{i,0})$, and set the past treatment status equal to its actual values.

Figure 4: Treatment dynamics – Effect of a refugee center openings on voting for the *National Front* at presidential and European elections



Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: Estimated β_S from equation (2) where the x-axis is the number of elections relative to the opening of the refugee housing center and where the outcome is the log vote-share for the national front at presidential and european first round of elections. The incertitude of each point is asserted with a 95% confidence interval.

Figure 4 plots the effect coefficients comparing the outcome evolution from $t-1$ to $t+1$, between groups treated at period t, and groups still untreated at period $t+1$ with $t \in \{-6;5\}$. There are no trends prior the opening of a refugee center in all specifications. After the opening of a refugee center, we observe a shift in the trend towards a decline in *Front National* voting share starting from the very next elections after the opening. The

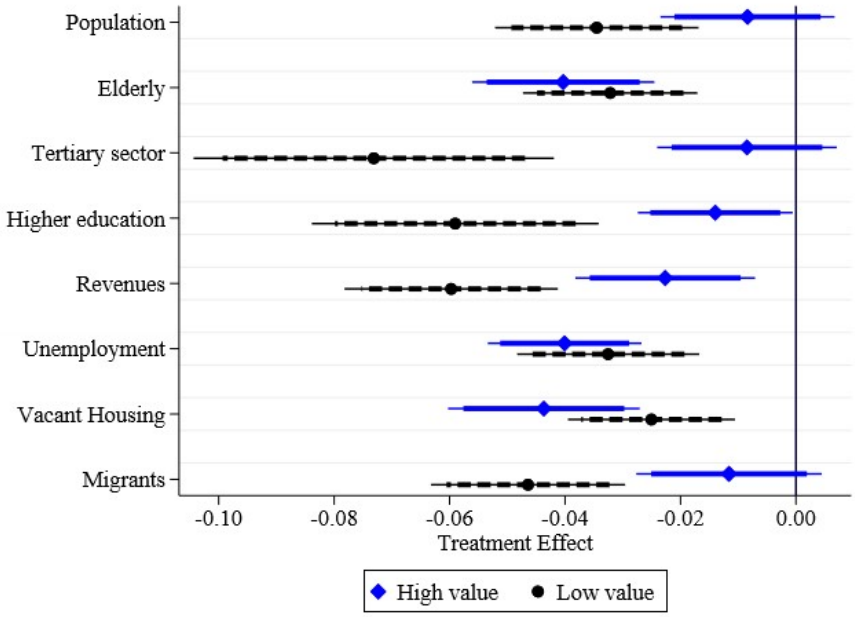
higher decline three periods after the opening could be attributed to differential timing of the mechanisms, and specifically to the composition mechanism, as discussed in Section IV.4.2. In Table C1, it can be seen that the magnitude of the effect of opening refugee centers when pooling European and presidential elections together indicates a decrease in the *National Front* vote share of about 4 percent in all specifications.

IV.3. Heterogeneity of the effect

IV.3.1. Municipalities' characteristics

This section examines the effect's heterogeneity to see if certain characteristics of the municipality play a role in the magnitude of the results. I divide the samples at the median value of the observable characteristics of treated municipalities in 1995.[15] For example, the median population in 1995 in municipalities that will open a center between 1995 and 2017 is 782. I define "High" a sample of municipalities with a population in 1995 that is

Figure 5: Treatment heterogeneity by municipal characteristics – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections



Source: Ministry of the Interior, INSEE - French censuses, and IRCOM data. Note: The incertitude of each point is asserted with 95% and 90% confidence intervals. Estimated β_S from equation (2) in the full sample specification. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

[15] Unfortunately, interactions cannot be computed using de Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille (2020).In Figure B1 in Appendix B, I show that the results are similar when interacting the center opening variable with the binary median-cut municipalities' characteristics variables using the standard estimation method.

greater than or equal to 782 and "Low" a sample of municipalities with a population in 1995 that is less than 782. Figure 5 and Table D3 in Appendix D present an analysis of the heterogeneity of the effect based on population size, proportion of elderly, proportion of people employed in the tertiary sector, proportion of people with tertiary education, income, proportion of unemployed, share of vacant housing and proportion of migrants in the municipality.

The reduction in the vote for the far-right after the opening of refugee centers appears to be higher in small municipalities, which could be because the vote for the far right generally increases more in small municipalities or because the contact or compositional channels are more active in small towns. Table D1 in Appendix D displays the far-right vote-share in 1995 and 2017 with samples divided by the same cutoff as in Table D3. If the far-right vote-share was higher in small towns in 1995, it was much higher in the highly populated municipalities in 2017, as the extreme-right vote increased more in large cities. This suggests that the larger effect in small towns may be explained by more active contact or composition channels in small towns.

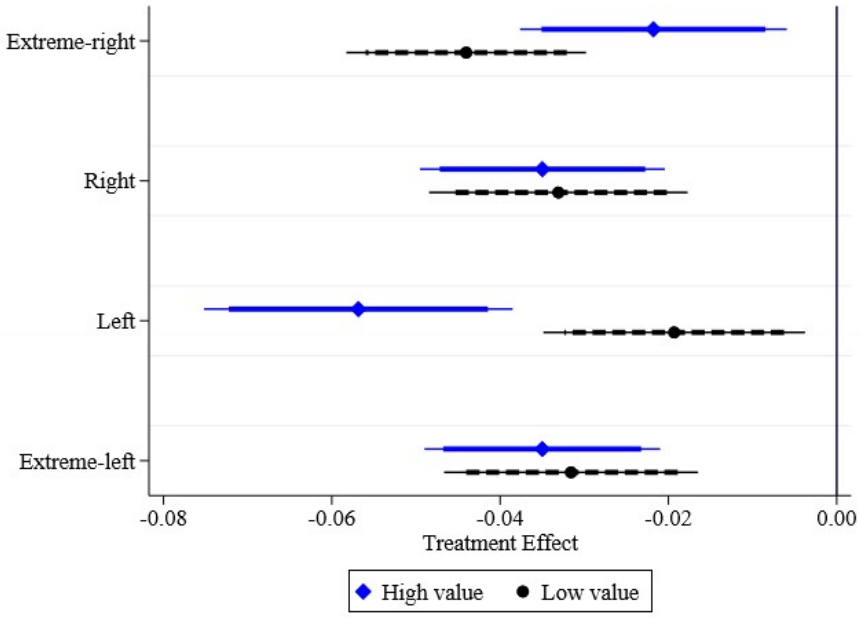
In terms of the socio-demographic characteristics of the municipality's population, Figure 5 shows that the vote for the far-right decreased more in municipalities where the population mainly worked in the secondary or primary sector, was less skilled, and had lower incomes. This suggests that the effect of opening a refugee center is primarily the result of a contact that has changed the minds of those who may have been more opposed to immigration (Mayda, 2006), and thus, who may have been potential far-right voters. These findings differ from those found by Dustmann et al. (2019) in Denmark where hosting refugees had a positive effect on far-right rural voting but a negative effect on urban areas.

Finally, the decrease in the vote for the far-right is higher in municipalities that initially had a low proportion of immigrants. This again points to the contact hypothesis as a refugee center opening in municipalities in which fewer immigrants were living would increase the salience of refugee's presence and the likelihood of contact, but would decrease the likelihood of disruptive contact with an immigrant population according to the threshold hypothesis (Schelling, 1971; Card et al., 2008; Aldén et al., 2015).

IV.3.2. Other political parties

In Figure 6 and in Table D4 in Appendix D, I investigate whether the drop in far-right voting after the opening of a refugee center was more pronounced in left or right-wing municipalities. To do so, I split the sample of treated municipalities at the median vote share of the far-right, right-wing, left-wing, and far-left in 1995[16]. It provides suggestive evidence that the reduction in voting for the far-right was greater where the share of far-right voters was lower. It also suggests that the reduction in votes for the far-right was significantly higher in municipalities with a high share of left-wing votes at the beginning of the period.

Figure 6: Treatment heterogeneity by political parties vote-share in 1995 – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections



Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: The incertitude of each point is asserted with 95% and 90% confidence intervals. Estimated β_S from equation (2) in the full sample specification. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table 5 reproduces the main analysis presented in Table 2 for other political parties and turnout. Turnout appears to be decreasing by about 1 percent, while the left-wing parties are the ones benefiting from the relative decline in far-right voting, increasing their vote-share by about 1.5 percent. It is important to bear in mind that changes in vote-shares are always relative to control municipalities, so the vote for the far-right rose in treated municipalities but not as much as in control municipalities, as illustrated by the

[16] A description of the candidates' classification is available in Appendix A.

descriptive statistics in Table 1.

Table 5: Effect of refugee center openings on turnout and other political parties voting at presidential elections

	Turnout (1)	Right (2)	Center (3)	Left (4)	Far-left (5)
	Table 5(a) : Full Sample				
Center opening	-0.012***	0.008	-0.003	0.024***	0.005
	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.005)	(0.005)
	Table 5(b): Only Treated				
Center opening	-0.004	0.013	-0.018	0.014*	-0.001
	(0.004)	(0.008)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.007)
	Table 5(c): Matching				
Center opening	-0.009***	0.006	-0.014	0.015**	-0.000
	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.001)
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Obs. (Full sample)	135,843	135,722	135,315	134,548	134,308
Obs. (Only Treated)	1,522	1,522	1,522	1,522	1,522
Obs. (Matching)	3,961	3,961	3,961	3,960	3,959

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log turnout in (1), and the log vote share at presidential election's first round of right-wing parties in (2), center-wing parties in (3), left-wing parties in (4), and extreme-left parties in (5). Table 5(a) uses all municipalities as controls. Table 5(b) uses treated municipalities at a later period as controls. Table 5(c) uses a matched sample of municipalities as controls. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. "FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

When combined with evidence from Figure 6 indicating that the decline in far-right voting was greater where the population was not already in favor of the far-right, this suggests that opening a refugee center has a buffering effect, deterring potential future far-right voters from participating in the election.[17] As the effect predominates in municipalities that were more left-wing at the beginning of the period, it is sensible that the left should be the political side that gains from the opening of refugee centers.

[17] In order to investigate the extent to which the decrease in turnout could explain my results, I perform an exercise where I cancel the decrease in turnout by doing as if the 1 percent decrease in the turnout had not existed by adding back missing voters to hosting municipalities after the opening of a refugee center, and taking the extreme assumption that they would all have voted for the far-right. This allows me to derive an upper bound of the effect of a decrease in turnout. Doing this simulation, the effect of the opening of a refugee center disappear and even become positive in one specification. This suggests that the decrease turnout could a mechanism explaining the entire effect of the opening of a refugee housing center on far-right voting. The results are available upon request.

IV.3.3. Other types of elections

I then investigate whether the opening of refugee housing centers influenced elections that may be more dominated by local debates, such as legislative and municipal elections. Legislative elections in France are held every five years using a two-round majority system at the constituency level, which is lower than the departmental level in France. I look at changes in the vote-share of the far-right *Front National* party in the first round of legislative elections from 1993 to 2017. In Table 6, I show that the opening of refugee centers seems to have little effects on far-right voting in legislative elections.

Table 6: Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at legislative elections

Outcome: far-right vote-share	(1) Full Sample	(2) Only Treated	(3) Matching
Center opening	-0.020**	-0.014	0.015
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.014)
Election year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	177,405	2,522	6,617

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the far-right vote-share at the first round of legislative elections. The hyperbolic sine transformation $log(x_i + \sqrt{x_1^2 + 1})$ is defined in zero and can be interepreted as *logs*. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Using data from municipalities with more than 3,500 inhabitants in the first round of municipal elections in 2001, 2008, 2014, and 2020, I show in Table 7 that the opening of refugee housing centers have no impact on the supply of far-right candidates. I also see litte effects on the vote for the far-right in municipal elections in Table F3.

Interestingly, the placebo tests on legislative and municipal elections, Table F1 and F2 respectively, also suggest that refugee housing centers did not open in municipalities that were voting less for the far-right in local elections, bolstering the identification strategy.

Openings of refugee housing centers may have less of an impact on far-right voting in legislative and municipal elections due to at least two factors. First, migration-related issues are usually prominent in the political debate during presidential elections, but not so much at the constituency or municipal level. This makes sense given that local authorities have little influence over migration policies that are enforced at the national level, as

Table 7: Effect of refugee center openings on far-right candidates at municipal elections

Outcome: far-right candidate	(1) Full Sample	(2) Only Treated	(3) Matching
Center opening	0.011 (0.045)	0.080 (0.070)	0.044 (0.049)
Election year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	13,927	634	1,581

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is equal to one if at least one far-right candidate run at municipal elections and zero otherwise. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

mentioned in Section II. Second, this could imply that the effect of the refugee housing center does not affect traditional traditional far-right voters, who are usually mobilized to vote in local elections, but rather voters who are on the margins and may not vote in local elections.[18] Taken together with findings from Sections IV.3.1 and IV.3.1, this would imply that the opening of a refugee center deterred marginal, potentially far-right, voters from participating in the election compared to control municipalities where marginal voters were convinced to start voting for the far-right. This is also consistent with the notion that voters are rarely swayed by further knowledge if they already know a great deal or are already convinced (Bullock, 2009; DellaVigna and Gentzkow, 2010; Hill, 2017; Broockman and Kalla, 2020), whereas less involved voters are more easily swayed.

IV.4. Channels

IV.4.1. Contact hypothesis

The Allport (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory postulates that contact between majority and minority groups can reduce majority prejudice against minority groups. The intergroup contact theory is activated, according to Allport (1954), when both groups have i) similar characteristics, ii) work together towards a common goal, and iii) support their environment's authorities, laws, or customs. However, inherent differences in the charac-

[18] Local election turnout in France is typically much lower than the turnout in presidential elections, as local elections are mostly attended by more strongly affiliated voters. In 2017, the turnout for the first round of presidential elections was 77.77%, compared to 48.70% for legislative elections and 44.66% for municipal elections in 2020.

teristics of natives and refugees prevent condition i) from being met. Thus, the analysis is predicated on the premise that not just any type of contact between two distinct groups can result in a decrease in prejudice (Valentine, 2008).

First, I examine if there is evidence that contact between refugees and natives may have contributed to the decrease in far-right voting. Looking at municipalities' characteristics, recall that in Section IV.3.1, the decline in far-right voting was more pronounced in municipalities with a small population and a lower share of immigrants, suggesting that the contact hypothesis was at work. In Figure 7, I analyze whether there is heterogeneity using the same methodology as in Section IV.3.1 according to the presence of contact facilities, which is measured as the number of facilities over the initial population in the Municipality Inventory. Local facilities include shops and services[19], health care facilities[20], foodshops[21], and schools[22]. Figure 7 shows suggestive evidence that the greater the share of local facilities in hosting municipalities, and particularly the greater the share of school facilities, the greater the decline in far-right voting. The role of school facilities may imply that schools are an important point of contact for refugee and native families that may contribute to prejudice reduction.

Second, I provide a variety of measures that can be used to determine whether or not contact is occurring, including the duration of exposure to refugees and the proximity of the refugee center to the municipality-center, as well as the characteristics of this contact based on the centers' capacity, cultural distance from the hosted refugees, and the refugees' salience in the media. To do so, I divide the treated municipalities at the election period in which they became treated between municipalities below or above the median value of the centers' characteristic[23]. In Figure D1 in Appendix D, I split the sample over more percentiles to investigate the heterogeneity dynamics in more detail.

Figures 8 and D1b in Appendix D demonstrate how the distance between the refugee

[19]Shops and services encompass hairdressing salons, appliance stores, tobacco shops, department stores, clothing stores, furniture stores, shoe stores, coffee shops, liquor stores, restaurants, repair garages, and gas stations.

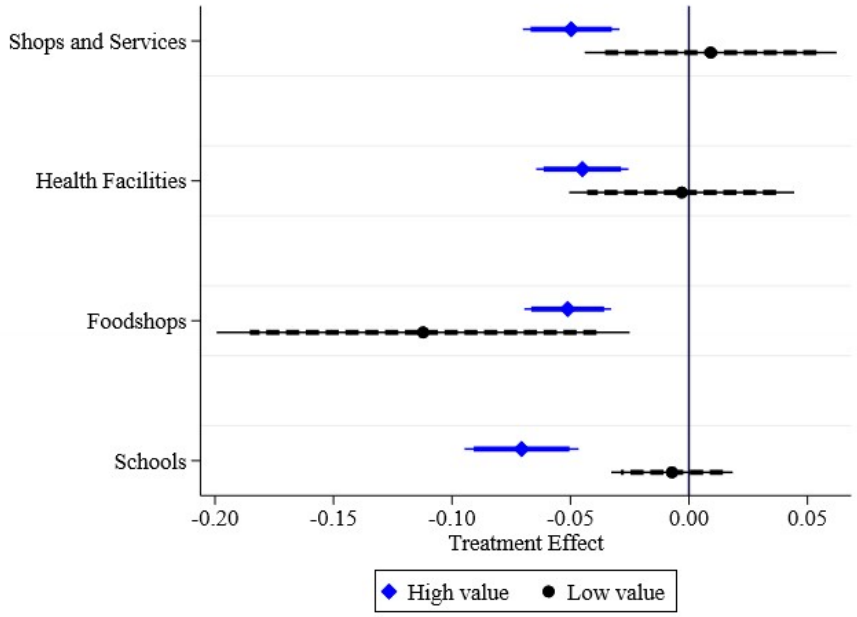
[20]Health facilities include health institutions, medical-social centers, dispensaries and care centers, dentists, nurses, medical analysis laboratories, general practitioners, and drugstores.

[21]Foodshops include hypermarkets, supermarkets, grocery stores, bakeries, pastry shops, butcheries, delicatessens and the number of farmers' markets per month.

[22]Schools include daycare centers, family daycares, collective nurseries, mini nurseries, kindergarten schools, school cafeterias, public or private primary schools, boarding schools, public or private junior high school, and senior high schools.

[23]This ensures that treated municipalities are evenly split across election periods and prevents treated municipalities from concentrating on certain periods of time for some characteristics.

Figure 7: Treatment heterogeneity by municipalities' facilities – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections



Source: Ministry of the Interior, Municipality Inventory 1998. Note: The incertitude of each point is asserted with 95% and 90% confidence intervals. Estimated β_S from equation (2) in the full sample specification. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

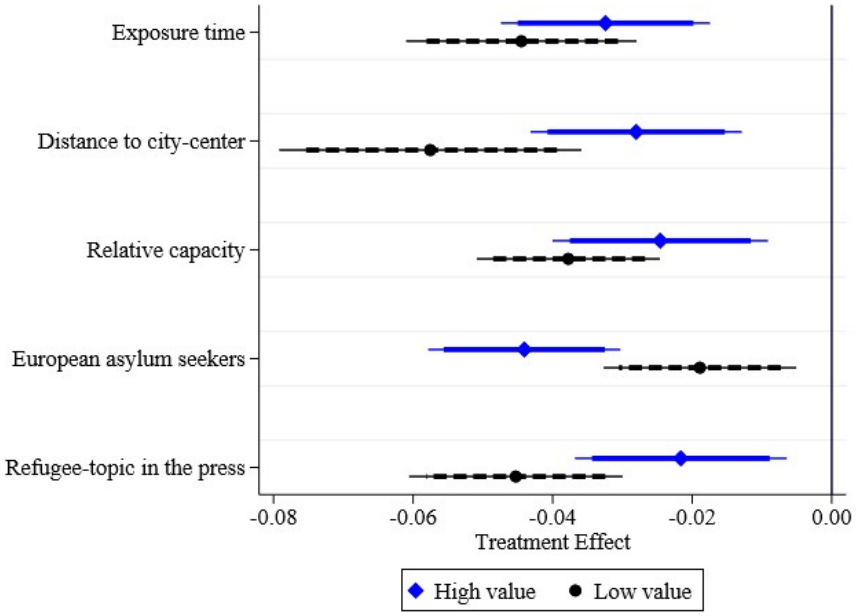
center and the municipal center contributes to the decline of the far-right vote. This distance is estimated by the distance in meters between the refugee center and the centroid of the municipality. Municipalities with centers located closer to the municipality center experience a greater reduction in far-right voting [24]. This suggests that the contact theory is at work, as natives who are closer to and more in contact with refugees have a lower level of prejudice toward them.

I then explore how the magnitude of the decline in far-right voting varies with the duration of refugee exposure prior to the next election. The time interval between the opening of the refugee center and the next election is between 0 and approximately 80 months, as illustrated in Figure A6 in Appendix A. Figure 8 demonstrates that the duration of exposure to the refugee center has no discernible effect and that, if anything, short-term exposure reduces far-right voting. In comparison to the results described in Section IV.2, this suggests that the subsequent reduction in far-right voting is not a long-term effect of exposure to the center, but rather a continuation of the political change induced by the

[24] I find qualitatively similar results when I perform the analysis at the polling station level using the distance from the refugee center to the centroid of the polling station area.

centers' opening.

Figure 8: Treatment heterogeneity by centers' characteristics – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections



Source: Ministry of the Interior, OFPRA, and Europress data. Note: The incertitude of each point is asserted with 95% and 90% confidence intervals. Estimated β_S from equation (2) in the full sample specification. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

In analyzing the characteristics of this contact, I first examine how the reduction in far-right voting varies with the center's relative capacity, defined as the number of refugee center beds available relative to the municipality's population. Centers with a lower capacity appear to reduce far-right voting more than those with a higher capacity, but this difference is not statistically significant. However, Figure D1c in Appendix D provides additional suggestive evidence that the effect on far-right vote reduction appears to be greater when the center's relative capacity is low (below the 20 percentile of the distribution). This is in line with the findings of Vertier and Viskanic (2019) and Gamalerio et al. (2020).

Figures 8 and D1d in Appendix D examine the role of cultural distance between hosted refugees and the native population in the decrease in far-right voting following the opening of a refugee center. I use monthly data on the country of origin of asylum seekers taken from the OFPRA[25] to estimate the origin of humanitarian migrants at the refugee

[25]The OFPRA is the agency responsible for processing asylum claims in France.

center on its opening date.In line with the findings of Edo et al. (2019), I find that the greater the proportion of European asylum seekers in the center, ie. the lower the cultural distance with the hosted refugees, the greater the effect on the far-right vote reduction.

Finally, Figure 8 and Figure D1e analyze whether the decline in far-right voting is heterogeneous when the center opened during a period of increased media attention to refugee issues. To do so, I matched Europress data on the monthly share of refugee articles in the national generalist press with the opening date of refugee centers. Figure A4 in Appendix A displays the occurrence of the refugee topic in the national press from 1995 to 2018. I find that the more press coverage of refugees at the time of the refugee center's opening, the less the far-right vote declines.

This section provides quantitative evidence that the contact hypothesis does contribute to the decline in far-right support, as well as suggestive evidence that too-disruptive contact between natives and refugees – enhanced by a greater number of hosted refugees, a greater cultural distance with the hosted refugees, and a greater prominence of the refugee topic in the press – can mitigate the effect of opening a refugee center on the reduction of far-right voting.

IV.4.2. Compositional changes

Another possible mechanism for the decline in far-right voting is compositional changes caused by far-right natives leaving or coming less in hosting municipalities following the opening of refugee centers. In the same context, Batut and Schneider-Strawczynski (2021) demonstrate that the opening of a refugee center results in a decline in the municipal population, which stabilizes at around 2 percent four years later. This population decline is not due to native flight – locals leaving hosting municipalities – but rather to native avoidance – natives avoiding relocation to refugee-hosting municipalities. Thus, the municipal population could differentially change between hosting and non-hosting municipalities, with natives coming less to treated municipalities and going to control municipalities instead. This could explain the decline in far-right voting if prospective far-right voters were less likely to come to host municipalities.

In Batut and Schneider-Strawczynski (2021), the compositional change takes at least one year to occur. As illustrated in Figure A6, 40 percent of the openings occurred in the year preceding the election. I examine in column (1) of Table 8 whether the number of

Table 8: Effect of opening a refugee center on voters

Outcome:	(1) Registered voters	(2) Far-right voters	(3) Far-right vote share with simulated pop. transfers
	Table 8(a) : Full Sample		
Center opening	-0.010***	-0.048***	-0.030***
	(0.002)	(0.007)	(0.006)
	Table 8(b) : Only Treated		
Center opening	-0.005	-0.026***	-0.016*
	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.009)
	Table 8(c) : Matching		
Center opening	-0.007***	-0.025***	-0.012*
	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Obs. (Full sample)	135,854	135,048	135,048
Obs. (Only Treated)	1,522	1,522	1,522
Obs. (Matching)	3,961	3,961	3,961

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variables are the log number of registered voters in (1), the log number of voters who cast a ballot for the extreme-right in (2), and the log vote-share of the extreme-right after simulating populations changes in (3). Table 8(a) uses all municipalities as controls. Table 8(b) uses treated municipalities at a later period as controls. Table 8(c) uses a matched sample of municipalities as controls. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. "FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

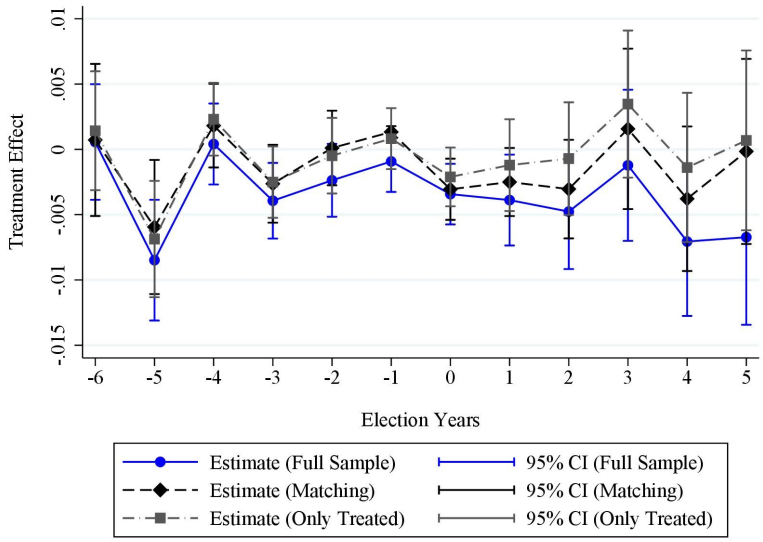
registered voters decreased more in hosting municipalities compared to non-hosting municipalities after the opening of a refugee center. The matching and full sample specifications detect a decrease of 0.7 to 1 percent of the registered population. To check whether this population change could account for the results, I look in column (2) whether the measure of decline in far-right voting as a share of registered voters does not decrease mechanically due to the greater decrease in registered voters in hosting municipalities compared to non-hosting municipalities. Estimates in all three specifications still suggest a drop in the number of extreme-right voters from 2.5 to 4.8 percent.

Column (3) of Table 8 displays the result of an exercise in which I cancel the native avoidance channel by doing as if treated municipalities would receive 2 percent more registered voters from control municipalities following the opening of the refugee center.

[26], and that all of them would vote for the extreme-right in the hosting municipalities. This is a conservative simulation as it assumes a 2 percent change based on Batut and Schneider-Strawczynski (2021) population estimates, rather than the 0.7 to 1 percent observed in registered voter data, and because it assumes that all newcomers would vote for the far-right. While accounting for the compositional channel reduces the effect of the opening of a refugee center on far-right voting, a substantial part of the effect remains and is significant. This suggests that a compositional effect could account for approximately 25% of the decline in far-right voting following the opening of a refugee center.

IV.4.3. Economic and amenities changes

Figure 9: Effect of refugee center openings on population's revenues



Source: IRCOM data 2000-2017. Note: Estimated β_S from equation (2) where the x-axis is the number of years relative to the opening of the refugee housing center and where the outcome is the log average revenues of the municipal population. The incertitude of each point is asserted with a 95% confidence interval.

Improved economic or labor market conditions could account for the decline in the extreme right's vote following the refugee center's opening. A positive economic shock could be plausible as humanitarian migrants are eligible for monetary subsidies [27], which could result in increased demand and expenditure on local services. Vertier and Viskanic (2019) examine the effect of CAO housing center openings in France from 2012 to 2017,

[26] I take this 2 percent of the population from control municipalities weighted by the vote-share for the extreme-right in these control municipalities.

[27] Asylum seekers are entitled to the "Allocation pour Demandeurs d'Asile" while refugees over 25 years-old can apply for the "Revenu de Solidarité Active".

and do not find any significant difference in net job creation per inhabitant between municipalities that eventually received a CAO center and those that did not. Batut and Schneider-Strawczynski (2021) examine the same refugee-allocation context in France in 2002-2014, and find that the opening of a refugee center does not impact the employment or salary of workers in treated municipalities. However, Batut and Schneider-Strawczynski (2021) observe a decline in firm economic activity and in municipal tax revenue as a result of the native avoidance entailed by the refugee-center opening. If adverse economic conditions were to spur the vote for the extreme-right party, this would work against the effect of a decline in support for the far-right, resulting in the reported estimate being a lower bound on the true effect.

Even though the potential effects on the labor market and municipalities' tax collection were already examined in the same context, I still check for positive effects of opening a refugee center on the local population's incomes, as variations in this characteristic may affect electoral outcomes. To do so, I use annual IRCOM tax data on municipal population revenues and show no evidence of a revenue shock from the arrival of refugees in Figure 9. This is also useful for checking the presence of economic pre-trends prior to the opening of a refugee center, as it can be seen that hosting municipalities and non-hosting municipalities do not differ in terms of income trends prior to the opening of a refugee center.

As a positive demand shock could be revealed in terms of amenities, but also as the additional refugee population could assist in reaching a certain threshold for certain amenities, I examine in Figure 10 whether the opening of refugee centers had a beneficial effect on the share of shops and services[28], foodshops[29], health care facilities[30] and schools[31] using the Public Database of Equipments. Overall, the opening of refugee housing centers has no impact on the provision of local amenities, and if anything, the number of health care facilities may decrease.[32] As in Figure 9, this is also useful to confirm the absence

[28]Shops and services include post offices, clothing stores, shoe stores, jewelry stores, florists, opticians, banks, and bookstores.

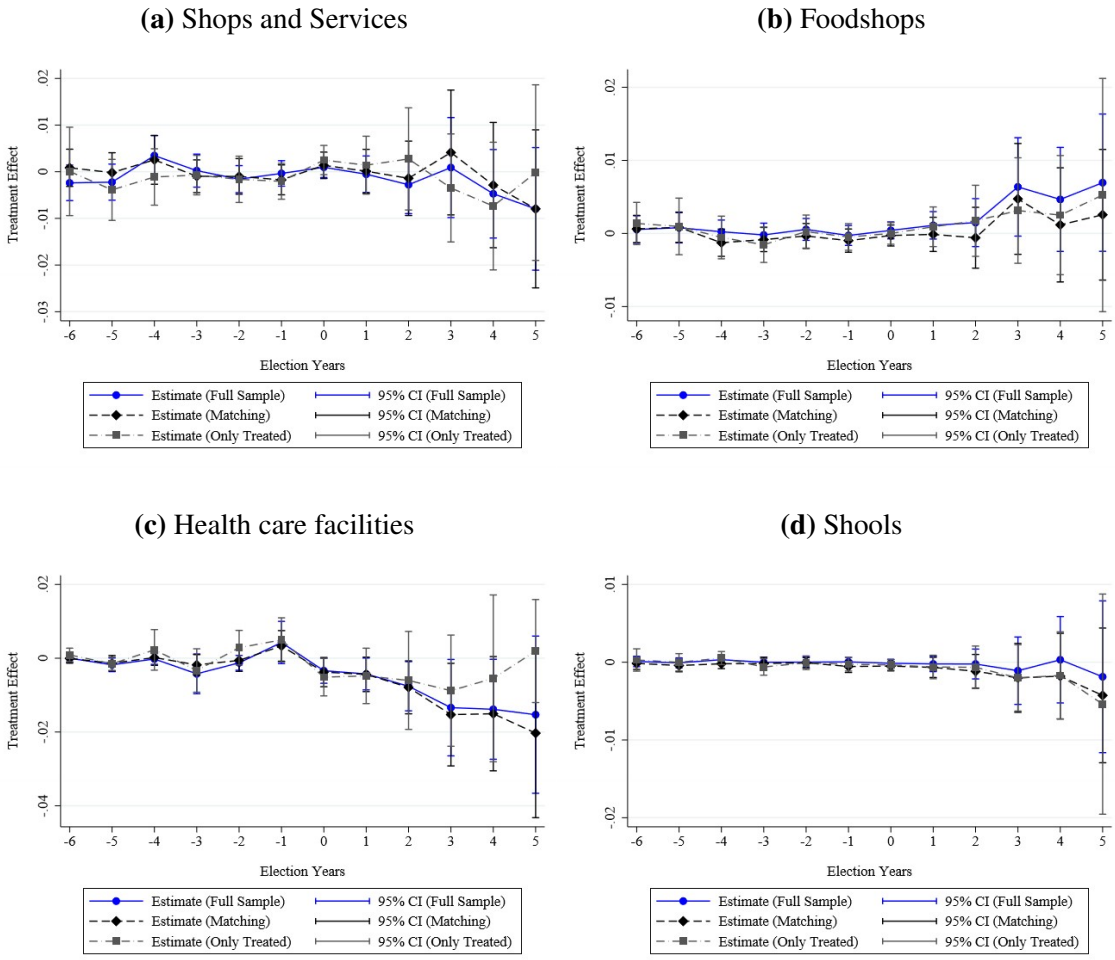
[29]Foodshops include hypermarkets, supermarkets, mini-markets, grocery stores, bakeries, butcher shops and fish shops.

[30]Health care facilities include health centers, medical centers, pharmacies, medical analysis laboratories, and general practitioner.

[31]Schools include nursery schools, elementary schools, junior and senior high schools, and driving schools.

[32]In France, health care professionals are free to establish their practices wherever they wish, and thus react strongly to local conditions (Samson and Delattre, 2011; Dumontet et al., 2016). As a result, it would make sense for them to react similarly to the population avoiding municipalities where a refugee center has

Figure 10: Effect of a refugee center openings on the municipalities' amenities



Source: Public database of equipments 2007-2017 (BPE). Note: Estimated β_S from equation (2) where the x-axis is the number of years relative to the opening of the refugee housing center and where the outcome is the share of facilities with respect to the municipal population at baseline. The incertitude of each point is asserted with a 95% confidence interval.

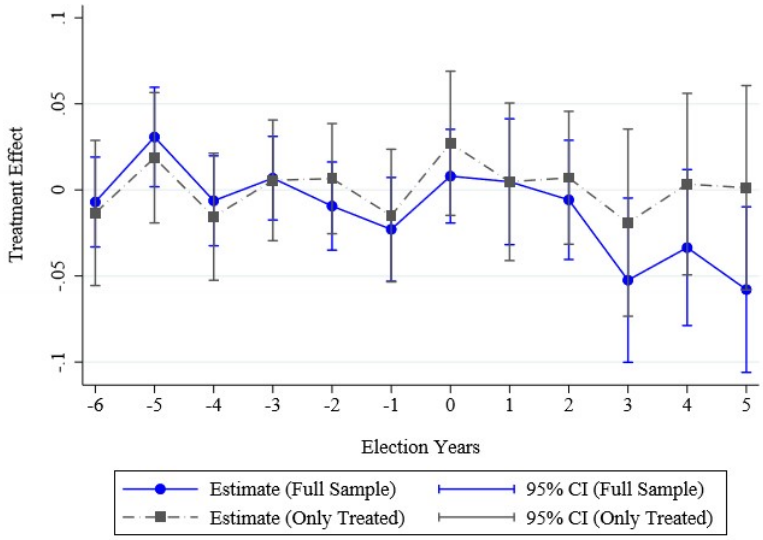
of pre-trends on local facilities prior to the opening of a refugee center.

Another potential amenity that may have improved as a result of the opening of a refugee center and resulted in a relative decline in far-right voting is the size of the local NGO presence in the municipality. To determine whether the establishment of a refugee housing center boosted the formation of local NGOs, I use data from the Official Journal Associations and Foundations that publish the law orders for new NGOs at the postal code level[33]. Figure 11 shows that the number of newly formed NGOs did not increase in the aftermath of the opening of the refugee housing center, and that there were no differential

opened, as they may perceive it as a negative amenity shock.

[33] In France, a single postal code may cover multiple municipalities. As a result, I present only the results for the full sample and only-treated specifications, as the matching specification would require rescaling the observable variables at the postal code level and a different propensity score matching.

Figure 11: Effect of refugee center openings on the creation of local NGOs



Source: Official Journal on associations and foundations (JOAFE) data. Note: Estimated β_S from equation (2) where the x-axis is the number of years relative to the opening of the refugee housing center and where the outcome is the log average revenues of the municipal population. The incertitude of each point is asserted with a 95% confidence interval.

trends in the formation of local NGOs between hosting and non-hosting municipalities prior to the openings, further supporting the common trend assumption. Overall, this section indicates that economic or amenity-related positive shocks are unlikely to account for the decline in far-right voting following the opening of refugee housing centers.

IV.5. Robustness

In this section, I provide additional tests to support the identification assumption and illustrate the results' robustness to alternative samples and specifications. I previously conducted placebo tests and pre-trends analysis in Table 3 and Figure 4 to demonstrate that municipalities that opened refugee centers followed the same far-right voting trend as municipalities that did not open refugee centers.

IV.5.1. Alternative samples

Given the increased media attention received by refugees in the aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis, one might be concerned that this increased interest influenced the practice of opening refugee centers in a way that avoided challenging local governments' preferences for hosting refugees. Since this could be a source of endogeneity, I examine whether the results hold in the period 1995-2012, i.e. prior to the refugee crisis, when

public concern and awareness about refugees were much lower. In column (1) of Table 9, I remove the election year 2017 and show that the results hold for the period 1995-2012 and even appear to be slightly higher than for the period 1995-2017. Given the heterogeneity results on press exposure in Figure 8, this suggests that increased media exposure to refugees following the refugee crisis may have actually negated some of the reduction in far-right voting associated with the opening of refugee centers.

Table 9: Robustness tests – Alternative samples – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections

Outcome: vote-share of the extreme-right	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Table 9(a) : Full Sample			
Center opening	-0.059***	-0.039***	-0.036***	-0.042***
	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.007)
	Table 9(b) : Only Treated			
Center opening	-0.026**	-0.017*	-0.010	-0.023**
	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.011)
	Table 9(c) : Matching			
Center opening	-0.026**	-0.018**	-0.030***	-0.019**
	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Obs. (Full sample)	101,181	134,380	134,490	134,043
Obs. (Only Treated)	1,336	1,033	1,065	727
Obs. (Matching)	2,974	3,309	3,419	2,972

Source: Ministry of the Interior, INSEE - French censuses. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. In column (1), I remove the election-year 2017 and perform the analysis over the 1995-2012 period. In column (2), I remove all CAO centers from the estimation. In column (3), I run the regression on a subsample of large NGOs operating housing centers. In column (4), I restrict the treated sample to municipalities in which a CADA center opened for the first time.Table 9(a) uses all municipalities as controls. Table 9(b) uses treated municipalities at a later period as controls. Table 9(c) uses a matched sample of municipalities as controls. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. "FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

As noted by Vertier and Viskanic (2019), who focused their analysis on *Centres d'Accueil et d'Orientation* (CAO) centers that were opened for the dismantling of the Calais jungle in 2015, another source of concern is that the opening of this specific CAO type of center did not adhere to explicit allocation criteria. We cannot be certain that mayors

were not involved in the process of opening some CAO centers, despite the assertion that regional allocation was based on sociodemographic criteria. In column (2) of Table 9, I replicate the analysis without the municipalities opening a CAO center and find very similar results to the main estimate.

One might also be concerned that, in comparison to large or national NGOs managing multiple buildings across the national territory, relatively small or local NGOs may be more exposed to contact with local authorities, resulting in potential endogeneity in choosing where to open a refugee center. I exclude all centers opened by smaller-scale or local NGOs[34] in column (3) of Table 9 and find quantitatively similar results as of the main estimates presented in Table 2.

Section II presented various types of centers for humanitarian migrants in France (AT-SA, CADA, CPH, CAO, HUDA, PRAHDA). Unfortunately, analysis by these types of centers cannot be performed properly. Indeed, CAO and PRAHDA centers only appeared during the most recent election cycle, making it impossible to conduct analysis of these types of centers. AT-SA, HUDA, and CPH centers each represent too few initial openings to be singled out, as it would greatly limit the analysis's statistical power. Only CADA centers representing 269 first openings of centers could be singled out, and the results presented in column (4) of Table 9 are statistically equivalent to those presented in Table 2.

IV.5.2. Alternative specifications

In column (1) of Table 10, I include department-time fixed effects to account for department-specific trends by capturing time-varying shocks within the department. In the full sample analysis, the estimated β^S coefficient thus measures the average deviation of hosting municipalities from their department trends following the opening of a refugee center. I find very similar effects to the ones described in Table 2. Column (2) provides an alternative specification to the matching specification presented in Table 2, in which I control for time-varying socio-demographic variables at the municipality level, and still obtain similar results. It should be noted that these control variables may be regarded as "bad controls" since they may be jointly determined with refugee center openings (Angrist

[34] I limit the sample of treated municipalities to those with a center operated by the following operator: *ADOMA*, *l'Armée du Salut*, *France Horizon*, *Forum Réfugiés*, *le Diacconat Protestant*, *Emmaus*, *l'Escale*, *l'Entraide Pierre Valdo*, *Audacia*, *Accueil et promotion*, *Afla3A*, *ADDSEA*, *COS*, *SOS solidarité*, *la Croix Rouge Française*, *COALLIA*, *France Terre d'Asile*.

Table 10: Robustness tests – Alternative specifications – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections

Outcome: vote-share of the extreme-right	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Table 10(a) : Full Sample		
Center opening	-0.039***	-0.034***	-0.018***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.002)
	Table 10(b) : Only Treated		
Center opening	-0.022*	-0.016*	-0.025***
	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.009)
	Table 10(c) : Matching		
Center opening	-0.027***	-0.015**	-0.032*
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.019)
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Department-time FE	Yes	No	No
Obs. (Full sample)	135,048	134,659	134,743
Obs. (Only Treated)	1,522	1,522	1,217
Obs. (Matching)	3,961	3,961	3,561

Source: Ministry of the Interior, INSEE - French censuses. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. In (1), I include department-time fixed-effects. In (2) I control for the time-varying share of workers in the primary sector, in the secondary sector, the share of elderly, the share of migrants, the share of the population with a higher education, and the share of vacant housing. In (3), I rescale the opening variable by the municipality population in 1995. Table 9(a) uses all municipalities as controls. Table 9(b) uses treated municipalities at a later period as controls. Table 9(c) uses a matched sample of municipalities as controls. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. "FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

and Pischke, 2008). In column (3), I rescale the opening variable by the municipality population in 1995 and find that one refugee center opening per 10,000 inhabitants decrease far-right voting by around 2.5 percent. In Appendix G, I also present the results of an alternative estimation strategy that employs a stacked-by-event design in the spirit of Deshpande and Li (2019) and compares municipalities that have entered treatment to a rolling control group of municipalities that have not yet entered treatment. This alternative estimation method, which may be susceptible to negative-weighting issues, produces very similar estimates to the standard difference-in-differences estimation method.

IV.5.3. Adjacent municipalities

Table 11 provides different specifications according to municipalities that share a border with municipalities in which a refugee center opens. In column (1), I consider adjacent municipalities as treated and exclude municipalities in which a refugee center opens from the treatment group. The effect remains significantly negative but decreases in magnitude, indicating that there may be some spillover effects on neighboring municipalities. I address the threat of potential spillovers by excluding all control municipalities sharing a common border with hosting municipalities. If close control municipalities were also exposed to treatment, the effect of opening a refugee center could be underestimated. In column (2), the treatment group is composed of municipalities in which a refugee center opens but I exclude adjacent municipalities from the control group. The effect remains

Table 11: Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections

Outcome: vote-share of the extreme-right	(1) Treatment group: Only adjacent mun.	(2) Control group: Without adjacent mun.	(3) Control group: Only adjacent mun.
	Table 11(a) : Full Sample		
Center opening	-0.027***	-0.046***	-0.013**
	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.007)
	Table 11(b) : Only Treated		
Center opening	-0.011***	-0.021***	
	(0.002)	(0.008)	
	Table 11(c) : Matching		
Center opening	-0.012***	-0.024***	
	(0.004)	(0.007)	
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Obs. (Full sample)	129,643	122,314	14,511
Obs. (Only Treated)	1,612	1,522	
Obs. (Matching)	1,971	3,349	

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. In (1) the treatment group is composed of municipalities that are adjacent to one where a refugee center opens. In (2), adjacent municipalities are excluded from the control group. In (3), the control group is composed of only adjacent municipalities. Table 11(a) uses all municipalities as controls. Table 11(b) uses treated municipalities at a later period as controls. Table 11(c) uses a matched sample of municipalities as controls. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. "FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

similar in magnitude as the ones presented in Table 2, indicating that spillovers are unlikely to significantly bias the results and that the estimated effects only capture the impact on treated municipalities. In column (3), the treatment group is composed of municipalities in which a refugee center opens but I restrict the control group to only adjacent municipalities. The effect remains significantly negative, though the magnitude of the effect decreases, as expected given the possibility of spillovers. Finally, I show in column (4) of Table B1 in Appendix B that the standard estimation is robust to using Spatial HAC errors (Conley, 1999) to control for spatial correlation.

IV.5.4. Polling-Station level

In this section, I replicate the main analysis but focus on the polling station level, that is, within municipalities. I compare polling stations in areas where a refugee center has opened to other polling stations in the same municipality where a refugee center has not opened. By examining variations within the same municipality, the existence of a selection bias at the municipal level influencing the effect can be discarded. I use purchased data[35] on the results of the 2007, 2012 and 2017 polling station-level presidential elections. For the election years 1995 and 2002, no data on polling station boundaries was available. I inferred the 2002 polling station area from the 2007 data for municipalities that did not change their polling stations. Additionally, some municipalities did not have polling station boundaries, which resulted in data loss, with approximately 10% missing in 2017, 11% missing in 2012, 21% missing in 2007, and approximately 30% missing in 2002. Some centers may also have multiple housing units spread throughout the municipality, even though the data only records the address of the main buildings, increasing the risk of spillovers in the polling stations analysis. Reduced sample size, fewer available periods, and a greater risk of spillovers could all contribute to a reduction in the ability to detect an effect.

In Table 12, I provide an estimate of when the treated units are polling stations in which a refugee center has opened and the control units are polling stations in the same municipality where a refugee center has not opened. In column (1), the effect of the opening of the refugee center on the far-right vote can be seen, with an estimate quantitatively

[35]The data was purchased from a private company specializing in consulting and numerical tools for politics.

Table 12: Polling-station level – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections

Outcome: far-right vote-share	(1) Next election	(2) Two elections after	(3) Previous election
Center opening	-0.020*	-0.039	-0.015
	(0.011)	(0.036)	(0.017)
Polling-station FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality-time FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,289	2,228	2,392

Source: Ministry of the Interior, INSEE - French censuses, and IRCOM (revenues data). Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. "FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

similar to that obtained in Table 2. This is reassuring because it means that the results hold when considering variations within municipalities. Column (2) shows no significant effect two elections after the opening of a refugee center with that specification. The failure to detect long-term effects could be explained by the flaws described above. Finally, I conduct the placebo test as described in Table 3, indicating that polling station areas that opened a refugee center experienced similar trends to polling station areas in the same municipality that did not open a refugee center.

IV.5.5. Instrumental variable strategy

As described in Sections II.2 and III.2, the context of the spatial allocation of housing centers in France can be used as a quasi-experimental design to study the effect of the opening of a refugee center on the vote for the extreme-right. As a robustness test, this section follows the literature that looks at potentially non-randomly allocated centers (Steinmayr, 2020; Vertier and Viskanic, 2019; Gamalerio et al., 2020) and uses an instrumental variable approach to circumvent potential endogneity issues.

In the Austrian context, Steinmayr (2020) uses the presence of group housing in a municipality as an instrument because it increases the likelihood of hosting asylum seekers in a municipality. Similarly, this section's empirical strategy makes use of the existence of group housing as an instrument for the opening of refugee centers. The exclusion restriction requires that the number of group housing units be unrelated to changes in the

far-right vote share, other than by increasing the probability of opening a refugee center. To circumvent potential reverse causality concerns, I use the presence of group housing at the start of the period, prior to the opening of refugee centers. To do so, I use the FINESS data from 2004 to 2017 on the number of group housing facilities for people with disabilities, the elderly, child protection and other institutions[36], excluding centers for asylum seekers and refugees.

Municipalities with group housing may have differing socio-economic characteristics, which could result in divergent political trends. To account for this endogeneity threat, I condition on a set of covariates that capture relevant municipality characteristics that could be correlated with far-right voting. I use the population size, the share of workers in the primary sector, the share of workers in the secondary sector, the share of men, the share of individuals aged 0 to 19, the share of individuals aged 65 or older, the share of migrants, the share of unemployed, the share of people with no education, some education but not a baccalaureate, and tertiary-level education, the share of vacant housing, and the average revenue of the municipality population. These variables are introduced as controls in levels at the beginning of the period in 2007, and in changes in the previous electoral period 2002 - 2007.

As in Steinmayr (2020) and in Vertier and Viskanic (2019), the identification hypothesis is that, conditional on this set of covariates, it is unlikely that municipalities with and without group housing follow different political trends. The first-stage equation is the following:

$$\Delta Opening_{i,t} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 GroupHousing_{i,t-1} + \mu X_i + \lambda_t + \gamma_d + \upsilon_{i,p} \tag{3}$$

with municipality i and time period $t \in [2007; 2012; 2017]$; ; $Opening_{i,i}$ equals the number of centers that open in municipality i at time t; $GroupHousingi,t$ is equal to the number of group housing units in the municipality at the start of each election period (in 2007 and in 2012); X_i are control variables; λ_t and γ_d election periods and department fixed-effects respectively. Standard errors are clustered at the department level. For the 2SLS estimation, I estimate the following equation:

$$\Delta log(FarRightVote_{i,t}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta Opening_{i,t} + \delta X_i + \lambda_t + \gamma_d + \varepsilon_{i,t} \tag{4}$$

[36] "Établissements d'accueil, hébergement, réadaptation et services", Finess Code 4000.

with municipality i and time period $t \in [2007; 2012; 2017]$; $\Delta log(FarRightVote_{i,t})$ represents the difference in log vote share for the far-right between 2012 and 2007, and between 2017 and 2012; $\Delta Opening_{i,t}$ is equal to the number of centers that opened in municipality $i$in the time period 2007 - 2012 or 2012 - 2017; X_i are control variables; λ_t and γ_d time period and department fixed-effects respectively. Standard errors are clustered at the department level.

Table 13: Instrumental Variable Strategy – Effect of refugee centers openings on far-right voting

Outcomes:	(1)	(2)	(3)
Refugee center openings	Table 13(a) First stage (IV)		
Group Housing	0.016***	0.017***	0.017***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Far-right voting	Table 13(b) Second stage (IV)		
Center opening	-0.069***	-0.018***	-0.017***
	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Controls in 2007	No	Yes	Yes
Controls Δ 2002-2007	No	No	Yes
Period & Department FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	67,653	67,349	67,285
First-stage F-statistic	124.53	97.58	96.32
R^2	0.16	0.23	0.23

Source: Ministry of the Interior, FINESS, Census, and IRCOM data. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. This table displays the results of the first and second stage of a 2SLS regression weighted by the number of registered voters in 2007. Standard errors are clustered at the department level. " FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

Table 13 shows the first stage regression results using the number of accommodation buildings as an instrument for the opening of refugee centers. The specifications with controls suggest that one additional group accommodation increases by 0.017 the number of refugee housing centers. The first stage is strong with a F-statistic for the excluded instrument of 96.45 with all controls, which is higher than Stock and Yogo (2005) threshold of 16.38. According to Lee et al. (2020), this F-statistic is equivalent to a 5.11 percent test or to a critical value of 1.98. Table 13 shows the results of the second stage 2SLS estimation where the opening of a refugee center decreases by 1.7 to 1.8 percent the vote for the far-right.

V. Discussion

According to the results reported in Section IV, opening refugee centers reduces far-right voting as a result of contact between refugees and natives. There is also some evidence that this decline in far-right support can be mitigated if the contact is perceived as too disruptive, as is the case with large inflows of refugees, primarily from non-European countries, and when the refugee issue is highlighted in the press. What does this imply for policy recommendations?

The first set of policy recommendations is related to dispersal policies. The purpose of implementing a dispersal policy is to spread the burden of hosting refugees and dilute their presence in order to mitigate any potential negative externalities associated with hosting (Robinson et al., 2004). One possible negative externality is social unrest or a loss of trust in elected officials, as a result of increased discontent with having to host refugees, not only due to the cultural threat but also due to economic or amenity externalities[37]. When it comes to hosting refugees, far-right voting can be interpreted as a proxy for anti-immigrant sentiment and a barometer of the success of the government's refugee dispersal policy. If anti-immigrant sentiments were expressed, the far-right would garner the votes. The first takeaway from the results is that dispersal policies appear to work in preventing local discontent from hosting refugees, as the vote for the far-right relatively decreased[38]. This also implies that the dispersal policy struck a reasonable balance without introducing excessive frictions, as I demonstrated that when contact was too disruptive, the decline in far-right voting could be mitigated. In terms of practical recommendations for dispersal policies, this study demonstrates the importance of both cultural factors and the magnitude of the flow, and policymakers should pay close attention to the size of centers compared to the population's size and attempt to maintain a relative mix of origins within centers, with an emphasis on avoiding concentrations of refugees of non-European origins. Globally, this provides additional justification for enforcing policies that promote contact between communities in order to mitigate any prejudices they may harbor toward one another. This positive effect of contact has been demonstrated

[37] See Batut and Schneider-Strawczynski (2021) for a discussion of the economic impact of refugee-hosting in France.

[38] Batut and Schneider-Strawczynski (2021) also demonstrated that, in the same context, the opening of a refugee housing center did not make locals fleeing more hosting municipalities, such that there was no native flight.

through policies such as national military service (Finseraas and Kotsadam, 2017; Finseraas et al., 2019), and national service for community (Frumkin et al., 2009; Laurence, 2019). Interest in such policies is particularly timely in the French context, as the country is currently implementing a Universal National Service[39] and expanding its Civic Service program[40]. This study also shed light on the possible role of particular points of contact, such as schools. With future research elucidating the role of specific locations or services as a vector of contact, dispersal policies could be tailored accordingly.

It should be noted, however, that this study does not examine the effect of such dispersal policies on refugees' integration, which may matter more in the long run, as more integrated refugees may be more acceptable to the local population. There is a body of literature on the impact of refugee dispersal policies on refugee integration. In Sweden, Edin et al. (2004) established that the policy resulted in significant long-run costs for refugees. The failure of the Swedish dispersal policy was also demonstrated by the fact that a sizable proportion of refugees relocated outside the designated area (Andersson et al., 2010), which ultimately resulted in the policy's abandonment in 1994. Additionally, there is a literature that examines the role of the characteristics of dispersal policies in refugees' integration. In particular, it appears that refugees integrated more successfully into traditional or manufactured economic localities (Bevelander and Lundh, 2007) and more prosperous economic conditions, given the state dependence of initial employment conditions on subsequent job market performance of refugees (Åslund and Rooth, 2007; Åslund et al., 2010). Integration of refugees was also facilitated in areas with a high ethnic concentration (Edin et al., 2003) and a higher employment rate for non-western migrants, due to the ethnic stratification of residence-based job information networks (Damm, 2014). A recommendation based on this literature would be to account for the characteristics of both the hosting destinations and the refugees in order to im-

[39]The "Service National Universel" (SNU) was first implemented in 2019 and is open to all young people, girls, and boys, between the ages of 15 and 17. It lasts at least a month: for two weeks, young girls and boys experience life and collective moments outside their home department. They will then devote another two weeks to an association, an administration, or a uniformed corps in order to accomplish their general-interest mission. The SNU should become mandatory in the medium term.

[40]The Civic Service is a voluntary commitment to serve the public interest that is open to all young people aged 16 to 25, without regard to diploma requirements, and extended to young people with disabilities for a period of 30 years. It is compensated at 580 euros net per month and can be carried out with associations, local authorities (town halls, departments or regions), or public institutions (museums, colleges, high schools, etc.) in France or abroad, for a minimum of 24 hours per week. One of the primary actors in the civic service program in France uses this program to bring together all young people in order to foster social cohesion, including through the implementation of sociodemographic quotas to ensure a balanced composition of young groups. It was extended in 2020 through the Youth Plan ("Plan jeunes").

prove the match in terms of refugee integration outcomes. I demonstrate in this study that some of the potentially significant characteristics of hosting municipalities that policymakers may consider for integrating refugees include selecting smaller municipalities with a lower pre-existing share of migrants and requiring refugee arrivals to be smaller and more evenly distributed in terms of origin. This could help maximize positive contact between refugees and natives, thereby contributing to the integration of refugees.

Another set of policy recommendations is related to the evolution of the far-right, and the goal of limiting its prominence. Why would it be a goal in and of itself to reduce far-right voting? Apart from the far-right's historically disastrous consequences, far-right populist politics today are more likely to target religious and ethnic minorities and circumvent established checks and balances (Eichengreen, 2018), which can result in not only violence, but also decreased investment, resource misallocation, and slower growth (Robinson and Acemoglu, 2012). In today's context, far-right leaders' negative externalities may also stem from their contempt for science and anti-expert narratives (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2020), which may become critical in the event of climate change or a pandemic. The fact that hosting refugees reduces far-right voting means that, despite the fact that migration is a top priority for far-right leaders (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2020), they can lose ground on this very core point of their agenda when natives come into contact with migration. Thus, while migration and globalization have been identified as drivers of populism and far-right voting, policymakers should not regard this as an unalterable fact, as it may vary by context and type of migration. At a national level, this also means that policymakers should not be afraid to open refugee centers in areas where they anticipate the far-right gaining prominence and that the opening of refugee centers with the appropriate mix and magnitude of flows may even be used to prevent that from happening. At a higher level, a refusal to host refugees, for instance in schemes to resettle refugees across European countries, out of fear of fomenting the far-right vote, should not be considered valid, given that the proper conditions for hosting can be created to avoid this.

To maximize a not too disruptive hosting, a final policy recommendation could be to take refugee-hosting to a higher level, such as the European level for European countries (Moraga and Rapoport, 2014; Fernández-Huertas Moraga and Rapoport, 2015). Indeed, such global hosting mechanisms could be used to improve refugee integration by ensuring that their characteristics match those of the hosting area and by optimizing the specific

conditions of refugee arrival (Andersson and Ehlers, 2016; Delacrétaz et al., 2016; Bansak et al., 2018). This could even be used as a tool to rein in far-right voting at a global level.

VI. Conclusion

This paper provides new evidence on the political economy impact and mechanisms of hosting refugees. Taking advantage of the openings of housing centers for refugees and asylum seekers in more than four hundred French municipalities between 1995 and 2017, I provide causal evidence that the vote for the far-right declines by about two percent after the opening of a center.

I demonstrate that this decline is not due to an economic demand shock and I am the first to explain it through both a composition and a contact channel. In particular, I show that, even in the absence of a native flight, a previously overlooked phenomenon of native avoidance can explain approximately 25% of the decrease in far-right voting.

I provide direct evidence that the contact theory is at work in explaining the decline in far-right voting, and I am the first to provide a comprehensive analysis of the contact theory's various mechanisms. I show that increased contact, as measured by the distance between the refugee center and the municipality center, as well as the presence of contact facilities such as schools, decreases support for the far-right. I then consider the contact theory in relation to the threshold and realistic group conflict theories and provide suggestive evidence that too-disruptive contact, as measured by the magnitude of inflows, cultural distance, and media salience of refugees, can mitigate the beneficial effects of contact on reducing far-right support.

To the best of my knowledge, I am also the first to document the political characteristics of the native population affected by the contact with refugees. In particular, I show that the opening of a refugee center does not change the minds of regular far-right voters, but rather discourages marginal voters who could have been lured to the far-right to go vote for them. I demonstrate that it is left-wing parties that benefit from this phenomenon.

Finally, I offer new evidence that the political shift away from the far-right induced by the opening of a refugee center is likely to be long-lasting, as the effect more than doubles five to ten years after the opening of a refugee center, and that this benefits to left-wing parties at presidential elections.

Beyond the findings themselves, this paper makes a unique contribution to the litera-

ture on the political economy of migration in that it allows to reconcile findings in which hosting refugees increased or decreased the vote for the far-right by emphasizing the specific conditions under which a decrease in far-right voting could occur. With this in mind, increased far-right voting could thus be interpreted as a result of negative economic externalities, a lack of contact with the refugee population, a large cultural distance with the refugee population, large flows of arrivals, or even a dearth of marginal voters who could be prevented from voting for the far-right.

To conclude, these findings have important policy implications and can inform the global debate on policies for hosting refugees and preventing far-right voting. They may, in particular, assist policymakers in adapting accommodation and dispersal schemes at the national or regional level to increase refugee acceptance, generating positive externalities in terms of refugee integration and the reduction of far-right voting in host communities.

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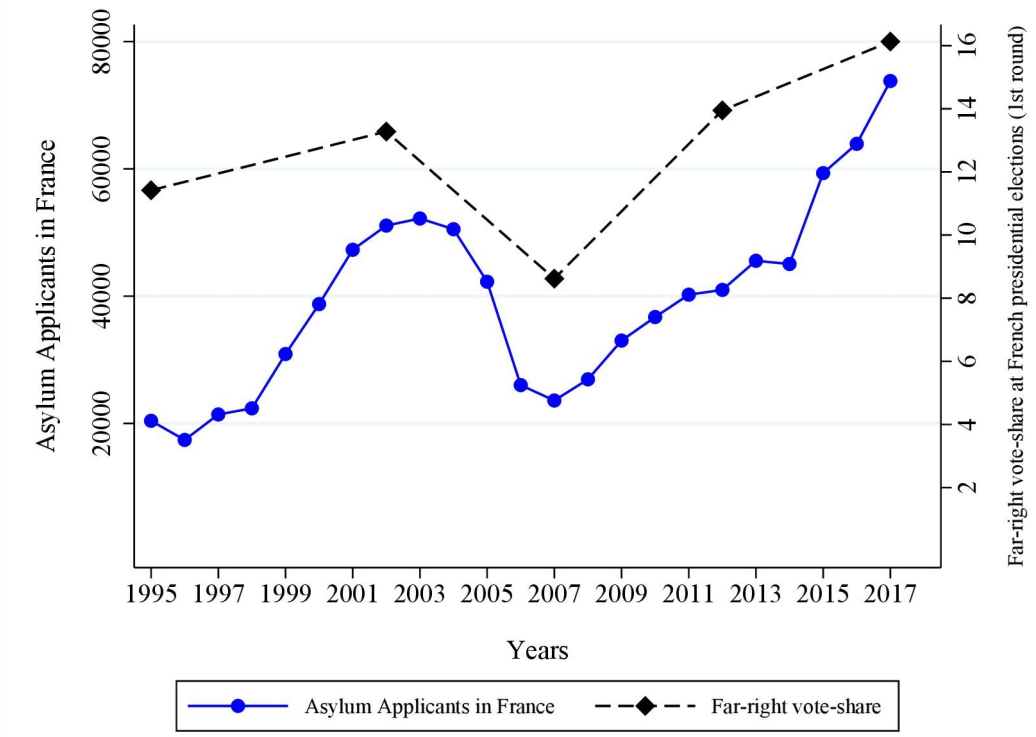
Online Appendix

A. Context

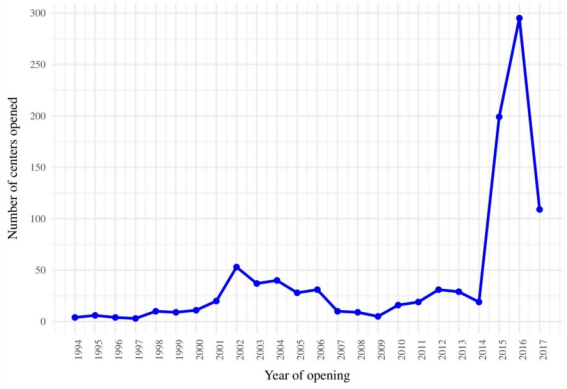
Figure A1: Asylum seekers applicants and far-right vote-share at the 1st round of presidential elections



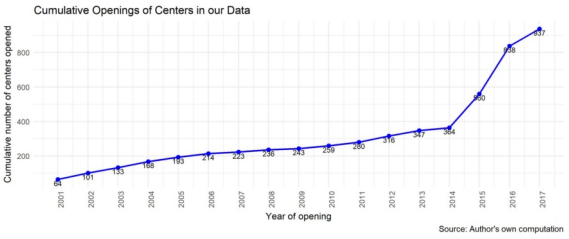
Source: Ministry of the Interior.

Figure A2: Housing centers for humanitarian migrants openings in France

(a) Yearly openings

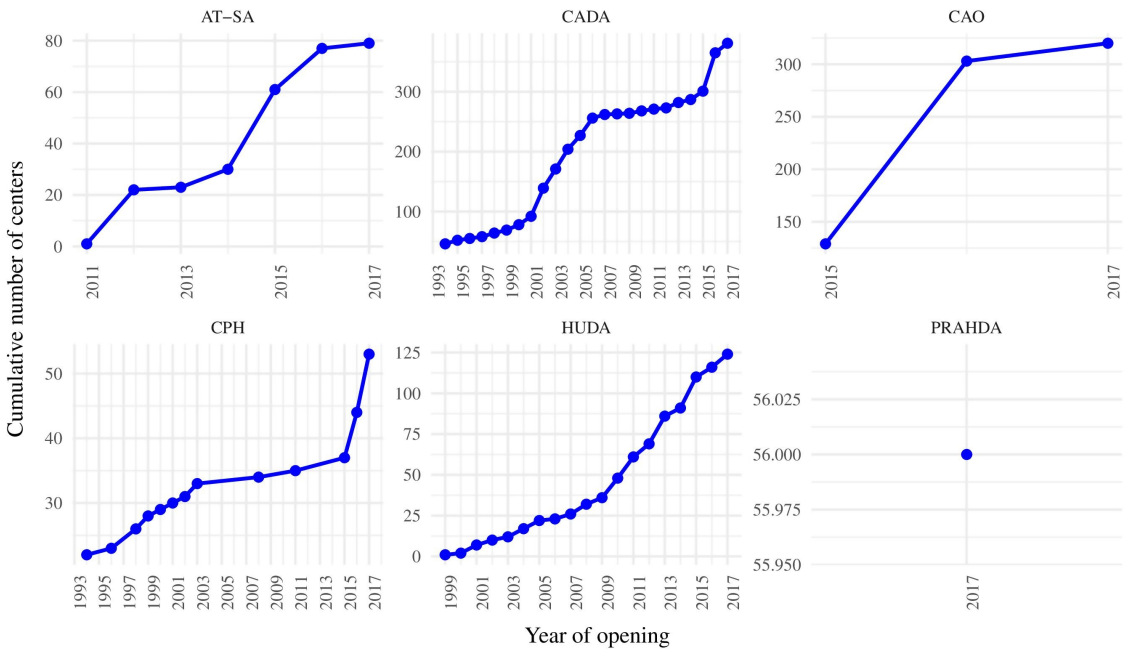


(b) Cumulative openings



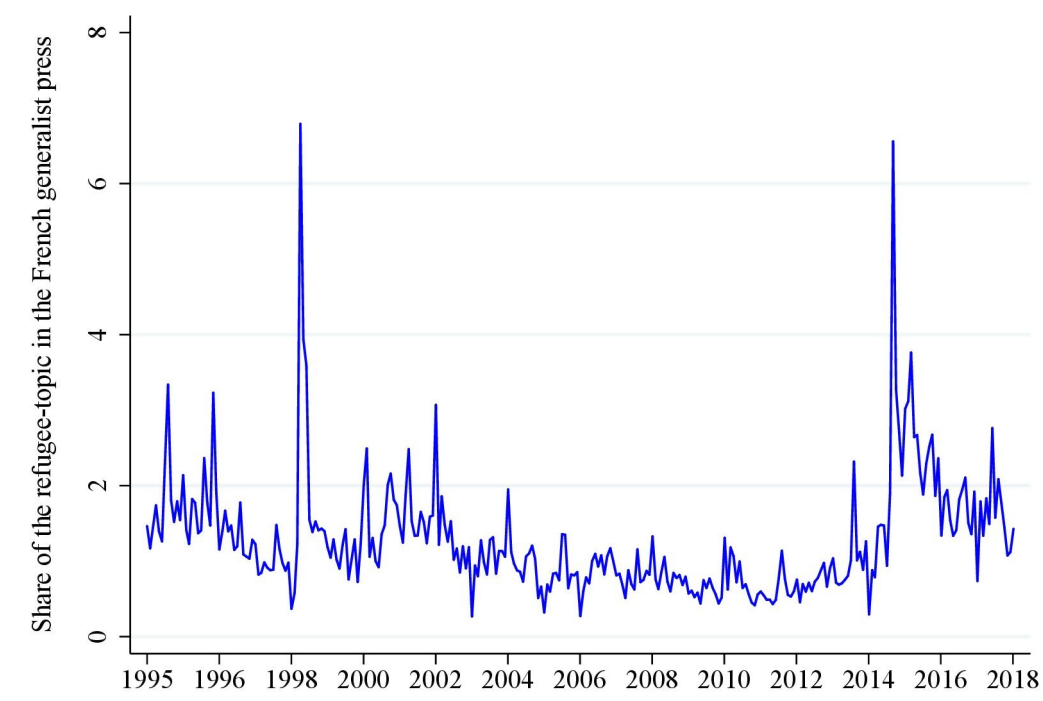
Source: Ministry of the Interior.

Figure A3: Cumulative number of centers by type of centers



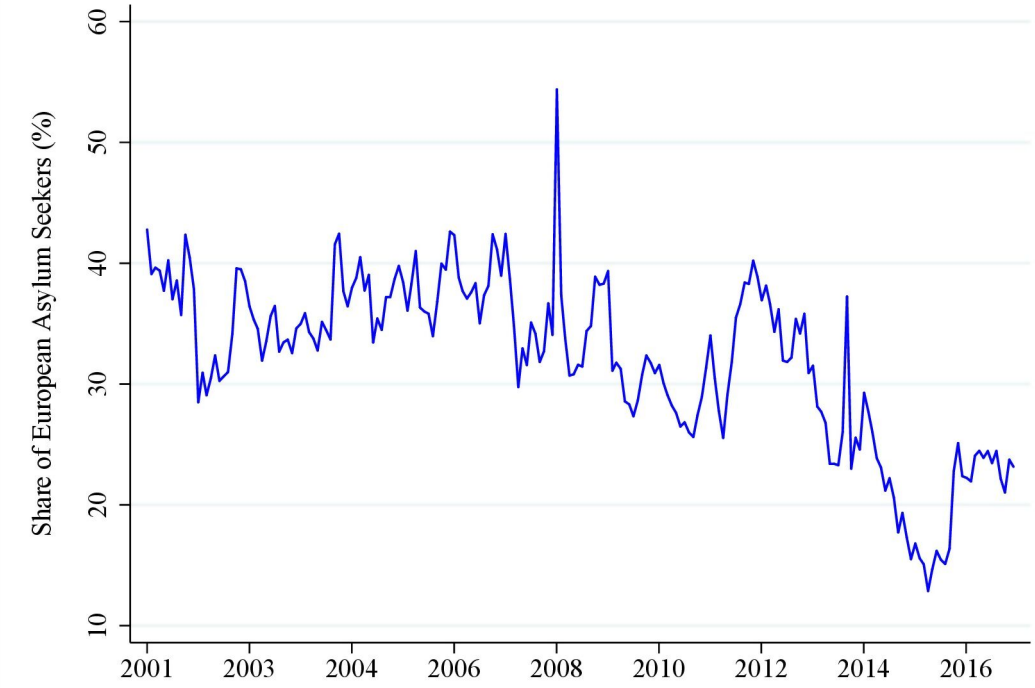
Source: Ministry of the Interior.

Figure A4: Share of refugee-topics in the French national generalist press



Source: Europress.

Figure A5: Share of European Asylum Seekers in France



Source: OFPRA.

Figure A6: Distribution of the month-distance between the opening of a refugee center and the next election

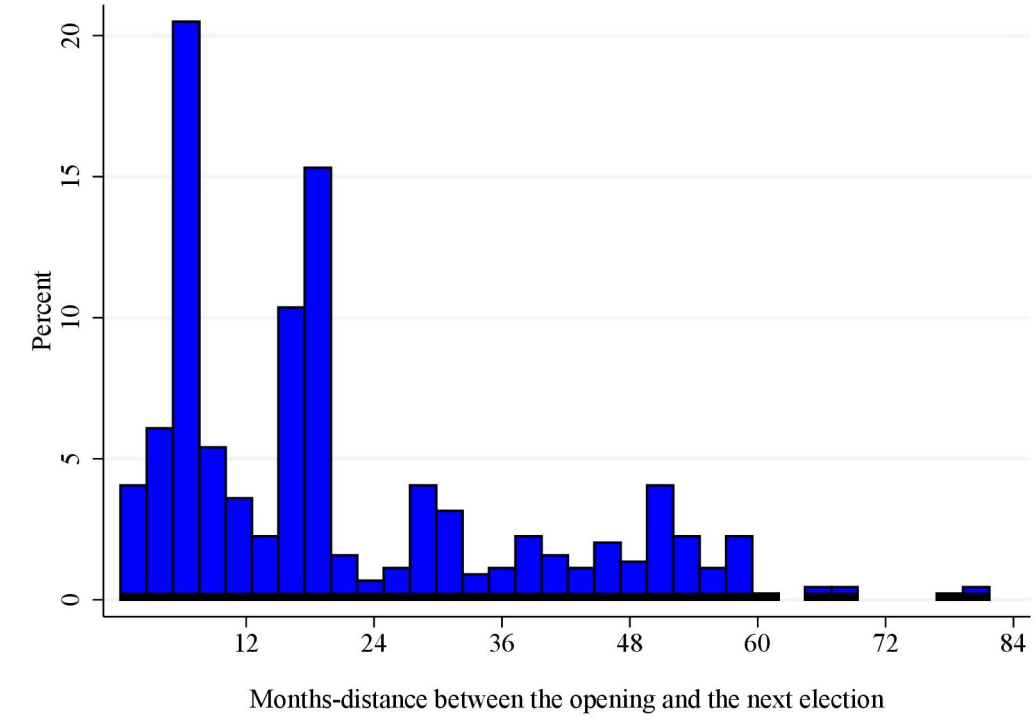


Figure A7: Distribution of the capacity (number of places) of refugee centers

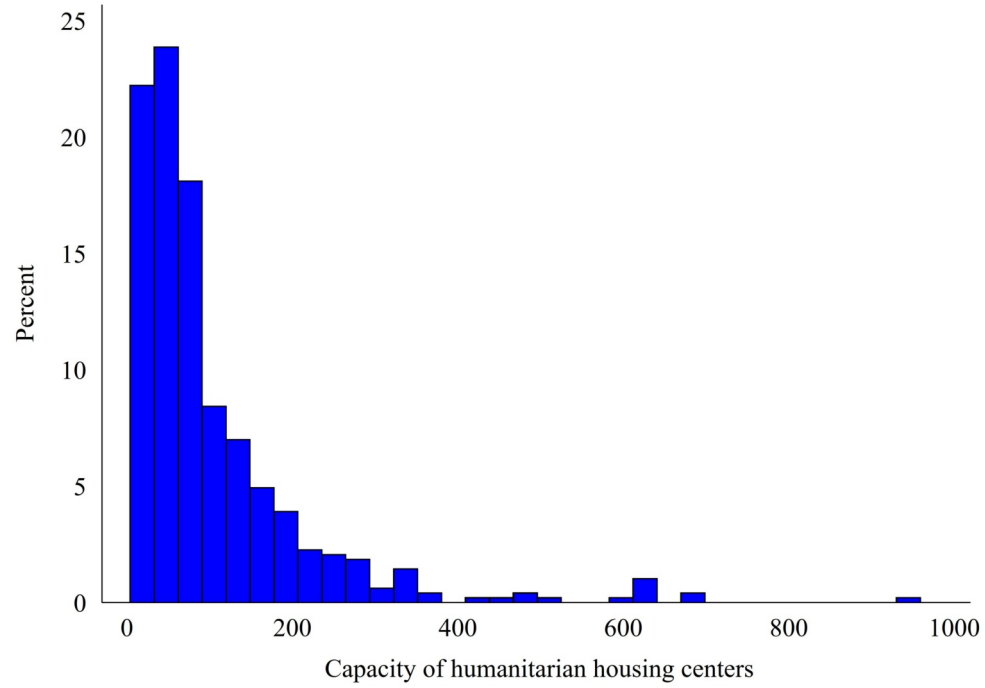


Figure A8: Distribution of the distance in meters between refugee housing centers and municipalities centers

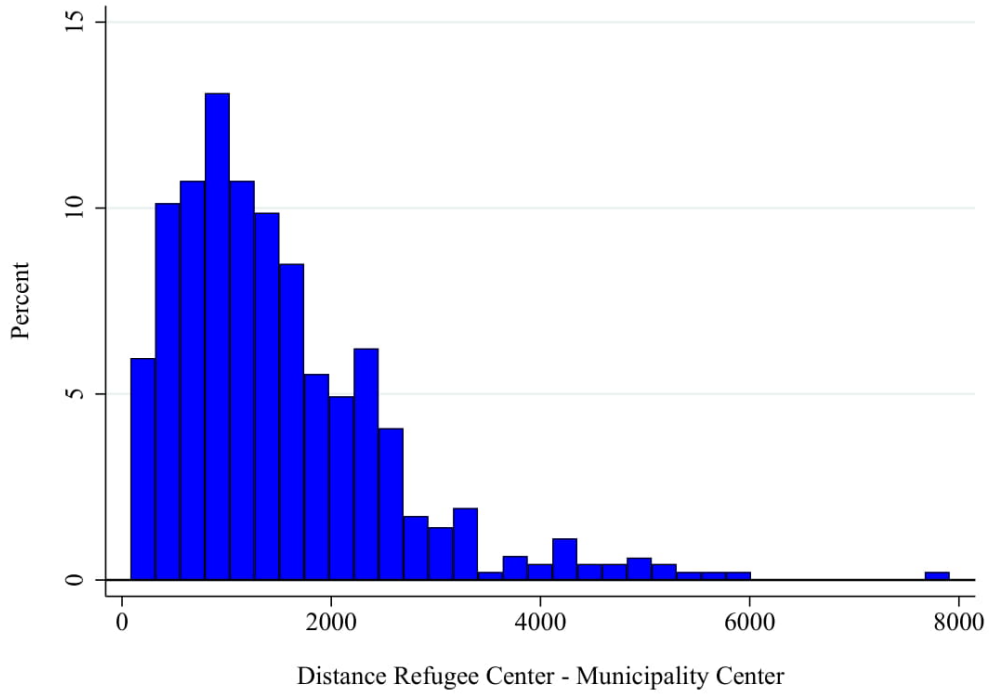


Table A1: Candidates Classification in 1995

Name of the Candidate	Party	Classification
DE VILLIERS	MPF	Right
LE PEN	FN	Extreme-right
CHIRAC	LR	Right
LAGUILLER	LO	Extreme-left
CHEMINADE	SP	Center
JOSPIN	PS	Left
VOYNET	EELV	Left
BALLADUR	UDF	Center
HUE	PCF	Extreme-left

Table A2: Candidates Classification in 2002

Name of the Candidate	Party	Classification
CHIRAC	RPR	Right
MEGRET	MNR	Extreme-right
LEPAGE	CAP21	Center
GLUCKSTEIN	PT	Extreme-left
BAYROU	UDF	Center
LE PEN	FN	Extreme-right
TAUBIRA	PRG	Center
SAINT-JOSSE	CPNT	Right
MAMERE	VEC	Left
JOSPIN	PS	Left
BOUTIN	FRS	Right
HUE	PC	Extreme-left
CHEVENEMENT	PREP	Center
MADELIN	DL	Center
LAGUILLER	LO	Extreme-left
BESANCENOT	LCR	Extreme-left

Table A3: Candidates Classification in 2007

Name of the Candidate	Party	Classification
SARKOZY	UMP	Right
ROYAL	PS	Left
BAYROU	UDF	Center
LE PEN	FN	Extreme-right
BESANCENOT	LCR	Extreme-left
DE VILLIERS	MPF	Right
BUFFET	PC	Extreme-left
VOYNET	VEC	Left
LAGUILLER	LO	Extreme-left
BOVÉ	CP	Left
NIHOUS	CPNT	Right
SCHIVARDI	PT	Extreme-left

Table A4: Candidates Classification in 2012

Name of the Candidate	Party	Classification
HOLLANDE	PS	Left
SARKOZY	UMP	Right
LE PEN	FN	Extreme-right
MÉLENCHON	FG	Extreme-left
BAYROU	MD	Center
JOLY	VEC	Left
DUPONT-AIGNAN	DLF	Right
POUTOU	NPA	Extreme-left
ARTHAUD	LO	Extreme-left
CHEMINADE	SP	Center

Table A5: Candidates Classification in 2017

Name of the Candidate	Party	Classification
MACRON	EM	Center
LE PEN	FN	Extreme-right
MÉLENCHON	FI	Extreme-left
HAMON	PS	Left
DUPONT-AIGNAN	DLF	Right
LASSALLE	R	Center
POUTOU	NPA	Extreme-left
ASSELINEAU	UPR	Right
ARTHAUD	LO	Extreme-left
FILLON	LR	Right
CHEMINADE	SP	Center

Figure A9: Selection grid to choose CADA centers to open in 2013

Annexe 5

GRILLE DE SÉLECTION
APPEL À PROJETS CRÉATION DE PLACES DE CADA

	CRITÈRES	Coef. pondé-rateur	Cotation (1 à 3)[1]	TOTAL	Commentaires/ Appréciations
Projet architectural	Type de structure envisagée *Diffus : 1 point* *Mixte : 2 points* *Collectif : 3 points*	1			
	Type de création de places *Création : 1 point* *Transformation : 2 points* *Extension : 3 points*	1			
	Taille critique de la structure atteinte *Moins de 80 places : 1 point* *Plus de 120 places : 2 points* *De 80 à 120 places : 3 points*	1			
	Accessibilité de la structure aux personnes à mobilité réduite ou atteintes de pathologies lourdes	2			
	Localisation et implantation géographique de la structure par rapport aux besoins locaux	2			
Qualité du projet et de l'opérateur	Personnels : taux d'encadrement adapté et qualification des ETP	3			
	Qualité générale de l'accompagnement proposé	3			
	Implantation locale de l'opérateur et coopération avec des partenaires extérieurs	3			
	Niveau d'expérience de l'opérateur en matière de prise en charge des demandeurs d'asile	1			
	Indicateurs de pilotage des établissements gérés par l'opérateur le cas échéant (taux d'occupation et de présence indue)[2]	2			
	Coopération de l'opérateur avec les services de l'État	3			
Modalités de financement	Coûts de fonctionnement à la place et rapport coût-efficacité au regard du référentiel de coûts	4			
	Mutualisations de moyens proposées et incidences budgétaires	3			
	Cohérence du chiffrage budgétaire avec les moyens annoncés	3			
TOTAL		**32**			**/96**

[1] 1 étant la note la plus basse, et 3 la note la plus élevée.
[2] Si l'opérateur ne gère aucun établissement, ce critère ne sera pas pris en compte et la note maximale sera ramenée à 90 points.

Figure A10: Selection grid to choose CPH centers to open in 2019

ANNEXE 2 Grille de sélection

GRILLE DE SELECTION
APPEL A PROJET – CREATION DE PLACES DE CPH en 2019

	CRITERES	Coef. Pondé-rateur	Cotation (1 à 3)	TOTAL	Commentaires / Appréciations
ralarchitectuProjet	Capacité à mettre en œuvre rapidement	4			
	Modularité des places proposées (accueil familles et isolés)	4			
	Accessibilité de la structure aux personnes à mobilité réduite.	1			
	Localisation et implantation géographique de la structure (niveau de demande de logement social, accès à la santé, à l'enseignement, aux transports) et position des élus locaux	4			
Qualité du projet et de l'opérateur	Personnels : Taux d'encadrement (minimum 1 ETP pour 10 résidents et qualification des ETP).	2			
	Contenu des prestations administratives et sociales conformes au cahier des charges.	3			
	Implantation locale de l'opérateur et coopération avec les partenaires extérieurs.	3			
	Niveau d'expérience de l'opérateur en matière de prise en charge des réfugiés.	2			
	Indicateurs de pilotage des établissements gérés par l'opérateur le cas échéant (taux d'occupation, durée de séjour, taux de sortie vers le logement, accès à l'emploi).	2			
	Coopération de l'opérateur avec les services de l'Etat.	3			
Modalités de financement	Coût de fonctionnement à la place au regard du coût ciblé par le cahier des charges (25 €)	2			
	Cohérence du chiffrage budgétaire avec les moyens annoncés.	3			
TOTAL		33			**/ 99**

B. Original Difference-in-Differences

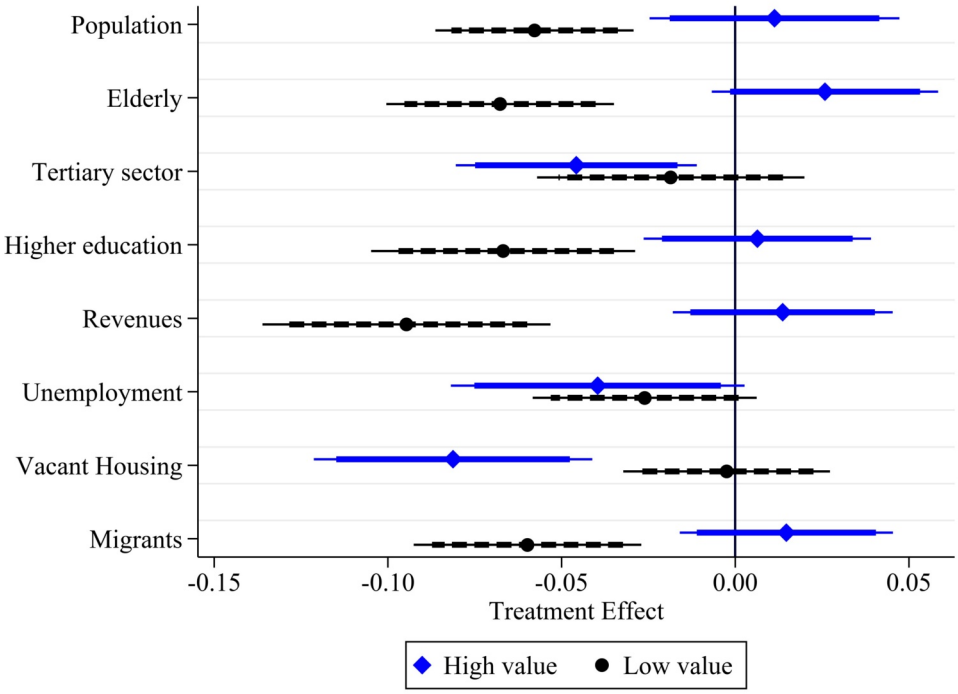
Table B1 shows that the weights using a standard difference-in-differences can be negative. The negative weights are an issue when the treatment effect is heterogeneous between groups or over time, as one could have that the treatments coefficient in those regressions is negative while the treatment effect is positive in every group and time period. This is because the estimated ATT is actually a weighted sum of different ATTs for comparisons between: i) early treated and untreated, ii) lately treated and untreated, iii) early treated and lately treated before the treatment, and iv) lately treated and early treated after the treatment. I show that in my context, standard estimation could indeed be exposed to this negative weighting issue. Nevertheless, results from the standard estimation remain relatively similar to the ones presented in Table 2 where negative weighting issuse are accounted for. Column (4) shows that the main results of column (1) is robust to using Spatial HAC errors (Conley, 1999) to control for spatial correlation.

Table B1: Extreme-right vote share at presidential elections

	Standard Specification			**Spatial HAC e.**
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Full Sample	Only Treated	Matching	Full Sample
Center opening	-0.058***	-0.025***	-0.014	-0.058***
	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.007)
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
% ATTs with neg. weights	8.2%	46.5%	17.7%	
Observations	169,169	2,230	5,560	169,169

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level for (1) to (3) and Spatial HAC errors (Conley, 1999) are computed in (4). "FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

Figure B1: Treatment heterogeneity by municipal characteristics – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections



Source: Ministry of the Interior, INSEE - French censuses, and IRCOM data. Note: The incertitude of each point is asserted with 95% and 90% confidence intervals. Estimated β_S represents the marginal effect from a regression where all municipalities' binary characteristics are interacted with the treatment variable. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

C. Pooled European and Presidential Elections

Figure C1: Timeline of European and Presidential Elections in France

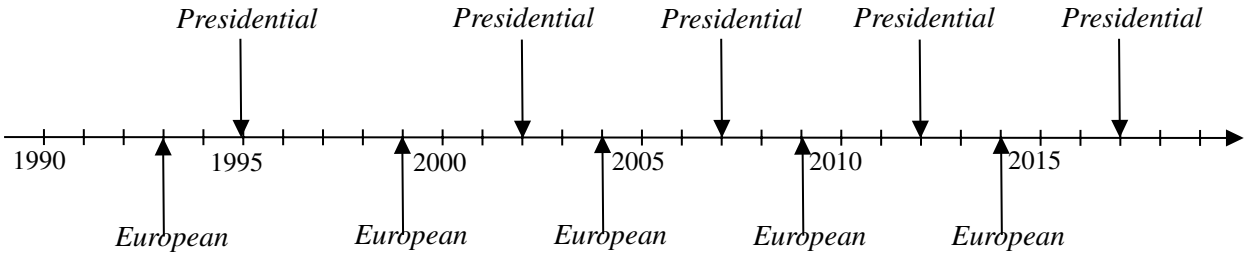
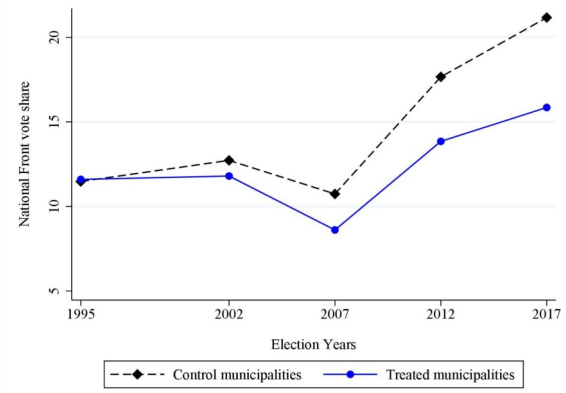
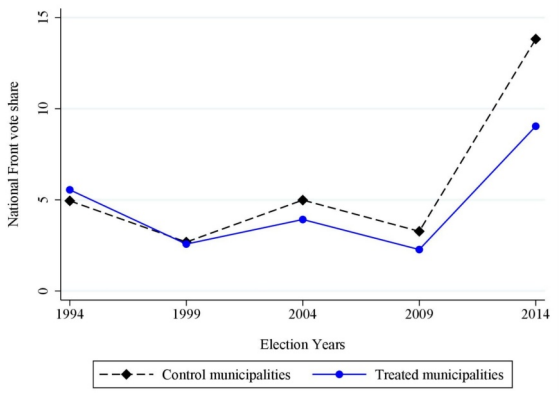


Figure C2: National Front vote-share at Presidential and European elections

(a) Presidential elections



(b) European elections



(c) Presidential and European elections

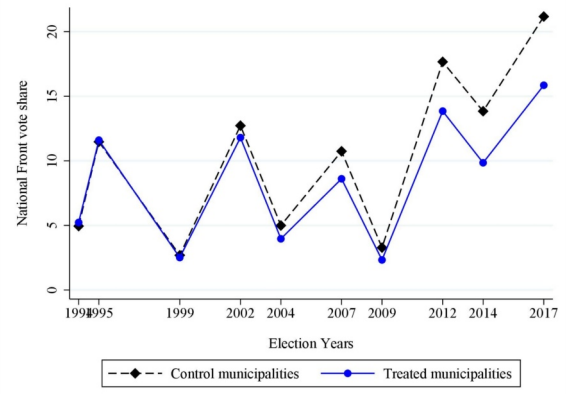


Table C1: Effect of a refugee center openings on voting for the National Front voting at presidential and European elections

	(1) Full Sample	(2) Only Treated	(3) Matching
Center opening	-0.043***	-0.037***	-0.039***
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	285,434	3,372	7,153

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. "FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

D. Heterogeneity of extreme-right voting in France

Table D1: Extreme-right vote share at presidential elections- Heterogeneity by municipalities' characteristics

	Population			**% Old**			**% Tertiary**			**% High skilled**		
	High	Low	Diff	High	Low	Diff	High	Low	Diff	High	Low	Diff
Extreme-right vote share (1995)	11.60	12.40	-0.80***	13.35	10.13	3.22***	11.61	11.62	-0.00	11.54	11.81	-0.27***
Extreme-right vote share (2017)	21.53	14.66	6.87***	22.24	20.63	1.61***	22.02	18.21	3.82***	22.44	18.74	3.69***
Observations	33122	783	33905	15662	18243	33905	28159	5746	33905	24185	9720	33905
	Revenues			**% Unemployed**			**% Vacant House**			**% Migration**		
	High	Low	Diff	High	Low	Diff	High	Low	Diff	High	Low	Diff
Extreme-right vote share (1995)	10.31	13.12	-2.81***	11.69	11.41	0.28***	12.40	10.62	1.78***	11.47	12.65	-1.17***
Extreme-right vote share (2017)	21.44	21.30	0.15	21.04	22.36	-1.32***	21.36	21.40	-0.05	21.64	19.48	2.16***
Observations	18140	15765	33905	25168	8737	33905	18970	14935	33905	29751	4154	33905

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table D2: Predicted extreme-right vote share at 1995 Presidential election

	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max	Obs.
Predicted extreme-right vote-share (Treatment)	11.53	2.62	5.16	22.41	446
Predicted extreme-right vote-share (Control)	11.62	2.45	-1.98	23.60	33,424

Predicted value of the vote-share for the extreme-right at 1995 presidential election from a regression with all controls described in Table 1.

Table D3: Heterogeneity by municipalities' characteristics – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections

	Population		**% Old**		**% Tertiary**		**% High skilled**	
Outcome: vote-share	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
of the extreme-right	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Center opening	-0.008	-0.035***	-0.040***	-0.032***	-0.008	-0.073***	-0.014**	-0.059***
(Full sample)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.016)	(0.007)	(0.013)
Center opening	-0.016*	-0.045**	-0.016	-0.016*	-0.010	-0.052**	-0.012	-0.044**
(Only treated)	(0.009)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.021)	(0.009)	(0.020)
Center opening	-0.010	-0.022**	-0.016**	-0.015*	-0.005	-0.045***	-0.007	-0.028**
(Matching)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.007)	(0.025)
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Obs. (Full sample)	3,125	131,695	72,389	62,423	22,785	112,036	38,578	96,248
Obs. (Only treated)	800	715	737	778	777	738	788	727
Obs. (Matching)	1,457	2,497	1,940	2,006	1,718	2,237	1,607	2,353
	Revenues		**% Unemployed**		**% Vacant House**		**% Migration**	
Outcome: vote-share	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
of the extreme-right	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Center opening	-0.022***	-0.060***	-0.040***	-0.033***	-0.043***	-0.025***	-0.011	-0.046***
(Full sample)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Center opening	-0.014	-0.027**	-0.024***	0.006	-0.017	-0.010	-0.012	-0.028**
(Only treated)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.013)
Center opening	-0.008	-0.030***	-0.024***	0.007	-0.016	-0.007	-0.008	-0.028***
(Matching)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.010)
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Obs. (Full sample)	62,799	72,017	34,661	10,0158	59,315	75,494	16,410	118,410
Obs. (Only treated)	772	743	756	759	750	765	790	725
Obs. (Matching)	1,925	2,025	1,810	2,143	1,792	2,151	1,741	2,213

Source: Ministry of the Interior, INSEE - French censuses, and IRCOM data. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. "FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

Table D4: Heterogeneity by political parties in 1995 – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections

Outcome: Vote-share of the extreme-right	**Extreme-Right**		**Right**		**Left**		**Extreme-Left**	
	(1) High	(2) Low	(3) High	(4) Low	(5) High	(6) Low	(7) High	(8) Low
Center opening (Full sample)	-0.022*** (0.008)	-0.044*** (0.007)	-0.035*** (0.007)	-0.033*** (0.008)	-0.057*** (0.009)	-0.019** (0.008)	-0.035*** (0.007)	-0.032*** (0.008)
Center opening (Only Treated)	-0.012 (0.010)	-0.017 (0.011)	-0.014 (0.010)	-0.017* (0.009)	-0.035*** (0.011)	-0.011 (0.010)	-0.008 (0.011)	-0.016* (0.009)
Center opening (Matching)	-0.009 (0.008)	-0.015 (0.010)	-0.006 (0.008)	-0.018** (0.008)	-0.034*** (0.010)	-0.002 (0.009)	-0.013 (0.008)	-0.012 (0.008)
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Obs. (Full sample)	66,963	68,071	93,075	41,960	57,010	78,024	59,123	75,908
Obs. (Only Treated)	759	749	749	760	749	759	758	747
Obs. (Matching)	2,153	1,794	1,977	1,971	1,840	2,107	1,989	1,955

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. "FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

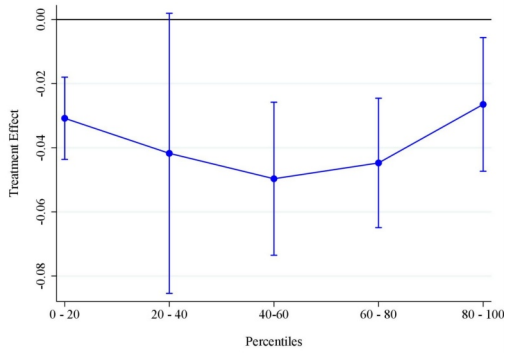
Table D5: Treatment heterogeneity by centers' characteristics – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections

Outcome: Vote-share of the extreme-right	**Exposure time**		**Distance to city-center**		**Capacity**		**European asylum-seekers**		**Refugee-topic in the press**	
	(1) High	(2) Low	(3) High	(4) Low	(5) High	(6) Low	(7) High	(8) Low	(9) High	(10) Low
Center opening (Full sample)	-0.032*** (0.008)	-0.044*** (0.008)	-0.028*** (0.008)	-0.057*** (0.011)	-0.024*** (0.008)	-0.038*** (0.007)	-0.044*** (0.007)	-0.019*** (0.007)	-0.021*** (0.008)	-0.045*** (0.008)
Center opening (Only Treated)	-0.019** (0.009)	-0.018* (0.011)	0.004 (0.010)	-0.040*** (0.015)	-0.017 (0.012)	-0.018** (0.008)	-0.025*** (0.010)	0.002 (0.010)	-0.029*** (0.011)	-0.023** (0.011)
Center opening (Matching)	-0.015* (0.008)	-0.019** (0.009)	-0.000 (0.008)	-0.029** (0.009)	0.006 (0.008)	-0.017** (0.008)	-0.025*** (0.007)	0.004 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.008)	-0.024*** (0.009)
Election year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Obs. (Full sample)	134,161	134,148	134,128	134,099	134,155	134,147	134,387	133,919	134,312	133,988
Obs. (Only Treated)	761	751	733	707	756	749	948	561	885	618
Obs. (Matching)	3,082	3,081	3,057	3,036	3,088	3,068	3,312	2,848	3,241	2,913

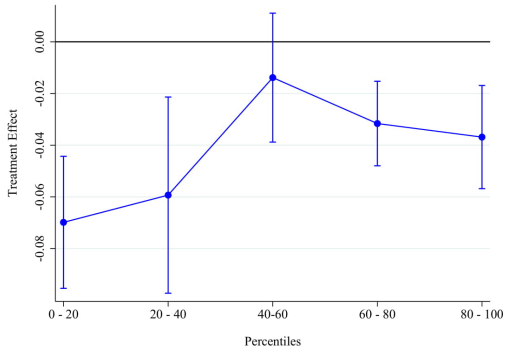
Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. "FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

Figure D1: Treatment heterogeneity by centers' characteristics – Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections

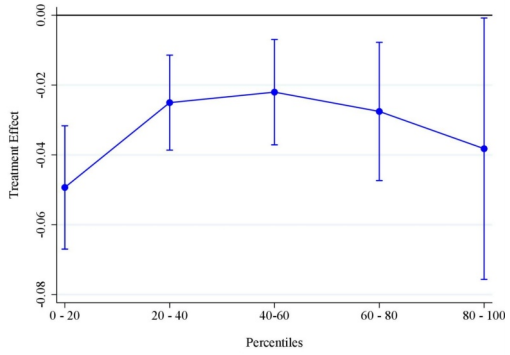
(a) Time distance (months) between the date of centers' opening and the next election



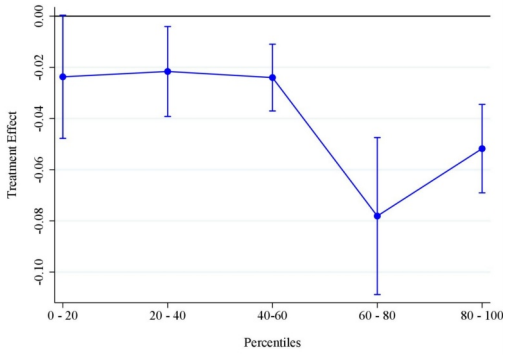
(b) Distance (km) between the center and the town-hall



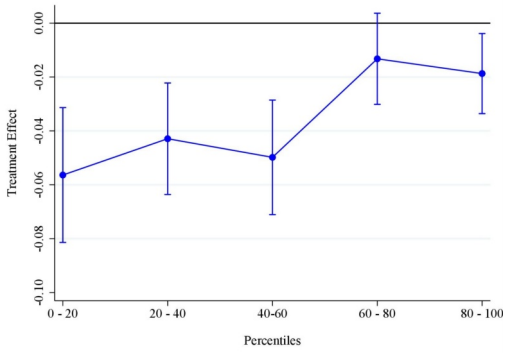
(c) Capacity of the center relative to the municipality's population



(d) Share of European asylum seekers at the time of centers' opening



(e) Salience of the refugee-topic in the national press at the time of centers' opening



Source: Ministry of the Interior, "annuaire de l'administration", OFPRA, and Europress data. Note: Figure D1 examines whether the effect of the drop in the extreme-right vote following the opening of the refugee center is modified with the characteristics of the center opening. I use the full sample specification and subdivide the treated municipalities into 5 subsamples at 20, 40, 60, 80 percentile of the distribution of the target characteristic at the election period when they become treated. The incertitude of each point is asserted with a 90% confidence interval. Estimated β_S from equation (2) in the full sample specification where the percentile distribution over variables described in (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e). The dependent variable is the log vote share of the extreme-right at presidential election's first round. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

E. Propensity Score Matching

As discussed by Ryan et al. (2019), matched difference-in-differences tend to perform better in dealing with non-parallel trends. As suggested by Kahn-Lang and Lang (2019), difference-in-difference estimates are more plausible if the treatment and control groups are similar first in levels and not only in trends.

I match control and treated municipalities regarding the following socio-demographic characteristics in 1995: the population number, density, whether the municipality is rural, share of vacant housing, share of immigrants, share of unemployed persons, share of young persons, share of farmers, share of executives, share of the population with no diploma, share of the population with a baccalaureate, share of the population with higher education, residents' income and road distance to the department's prefecture. I perform the propensity score matching with 2 neighbors, no replacements, and a caliper of 0.1. In Tables E1 and E2 I report the covariates means in the control and treatment groups with and without matching, as well as the p-value of t-test of the difference between the mean of each covariate in the treatment and control group.

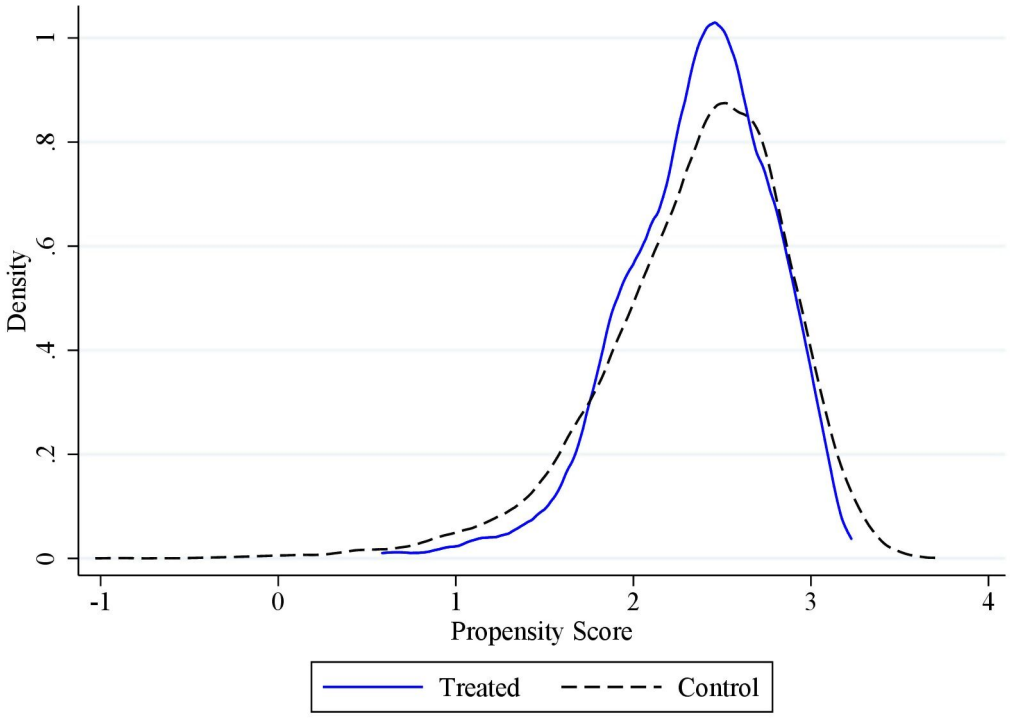
Table E1: T-tests without matching - 1995

	Control group (mean)	Treatment group (mean)	P-value
Population (log)	9.0523	6.1757	0.000***
Density	12.842	1.3433	0.000***
Rural municipality	.26022	.48683	0.000***
Vacant housing share	.07259	.07201	0.752
Immigrants share	.05901	.02133	0.000***
Unemployed share	.1146	.08494	0.000***
Youth share	.2605	.25879	0.525
Farmers share	.03866	.15632	0.000***
Executives share	.6779	.54728	0.000***
No diploma share	.5432	.57798	0.000***
Baccalaureate share	.22684	.22969	0.335
Higher education share	.12569	.09605	0.000***
Residents' income	12,265	11,911	0.032**
Road distance to prefecture	9.795	10.515	0.000***
Observations	35,571	467	

Table E2: T-tests with matching - 1995

	Control group (mean)	Treatment group (mean)	P-value
Population (log)	9.0373	9.0548	0.868
Density	12.809	13.004	0.877
Rural municipality	.26247	.2744	0.683
Vacant housing share	.07254	.07421	0.385
Immigrants share	.05883	.06417	0.119
Unemployed share	.11447	.11416	0.912
Youth share	.26053	.26108	0.840
Farmers share	.03895	.03723	0.683
Executives share	.67747	.67538	0.778
No diploma share	.54364	.54253	0.850
Baccalaureate share	.22674	.22401	0.324
Higher education share	.1254	.1293	0.379
Residents' income	12,267	12,499	0.207
Road distance to prefecture	9.8177	9.8821	0.441
Observations	731	467	

Figure E1: Common Support



F. Alternative elections

F.1. Legislative elections

Table F1: Placebo: Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at previous legislative elections

Outcome: far-right vote-share	(1) Full Sample	(2) Only Treated	(3) Matching
Center opening	0.001 (0.013)	0.017 (0.015)	0.023 (0.015)
Election year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	140,682	1,629	4,970

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the far-right vote-share at the first round of legislative elections. The hyperbolic sine transformation $log(x_i + \sqrt{x_1^2 + 1})$ is defined in zero and can be interepreted as *logs*. This table compares the depedent variable from $t-2$ to $t-1$ in the municipalities that are treated and not treated between $t-1$ and t. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

F.2. Municipal elections

Table F2: Placebo: Effect of refugee center openings on far-right candidates at previous municipal elections

Outcome: far-right candidate	(1) Full Sample	(2) Only Treated	(3) Matching
Center opening	0.073 (0.057)	-0.122 (0.122)	0.061 (0.060)
Election year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,755	215	180

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is equal to one if at least one far-right candidate run at municipal elections and zero otherwise. This table compares the depedent variable from $t-2$ to $t-1$ in the municipalities that are treated and not treated between $t-1$ and t. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table F3: Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at municipal elections

Outcome: far-right vote-share	(1) Full Sample	(2) Only Treated	(3) Matching
Center opening	-0.003*	0.003	-0.000
	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Election year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	13,927	634	1,581

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the far-right vote-share at the first round of municipal elections. The hyperbolic sine transformation $log(x_i + \sqrt{x_1^2 + 1})$ is defined in zero and can be interepreted as *logs*. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table F4: Placebo: Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at previous municipal elections

Outcome: far-right vote-share	(1) Full Sample	(2) Only Treated	(3) Matching
Center opening	0.009**	0.003	0.003
	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.002)
Election year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,755	215	958

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation of the far-right vote-share at the first round of municipal elections. The hyperbolic sine transformation $log(x_i + \sqrt{x_1^2 + 1})$ is defined in zero and can be interepreted as *logs*.This table compares the depedent variable from $t-2$ to $t-1$ in the municipalities that are treated and not treated between $t-1$ and t. Weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

G. Alternative Estimation

In this Section, I use a stacked-by-event design in the spirit of the one by Deshpande and Li (2019) to estimate the treatment effect by comparing municipalities that switch into treatment to not-yet-treated municipalities. I create a separate dataset for each cohort of treated municipalities, *i.e.* a cohort consist of municipalities that opened a refugee center after a previous election and before a same next election. In each datasets, municipalities in which a refugee center opens in an election period are considered treated, while municipalities that will experience the opening of a refugee center in a later election period are

considered as controls, and event-time dummies are specified relative to the specific election year of treatment for that cohort. After appending all dataset, I estimate the following difference-in-difference model:

$$log(FarRightVote_{i,t}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Treated_{i,c} + \beta_1 Treated_{i,c} \times Post_{i,t} + \sum_{k=-2}^{2} \beta_k E_k + \lambda_i + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{i,t} \tag{5}$$

Where $Treated_{i,c}$ is a binary variable that equals 1 if the municipality i is treated in cohort c. $Post_{i,t}$ is a binary variable that equals 1 for election periods in which a refugee center has opened. E_k are relative event-time dummies that equal 1 when election year t is k periods after the opening when $k > 0$, or k periods before the opening when $k < 0$. λ_i and δ_t are municipality and year of election fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table G1: Stacked-by-event design: Effect of refugee center openings on far-right voting at presidential elections

Outcome: far-right vote-share	(1)
$Treated \times Post$	-0.053***
	(0.002)
Election-Year & Municipality FE	Yes
Observations	5,423
R^2	0.92

Source: Ministry of the Interior. Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. This table displays the results of stacked-by-event design weighted by the number of registered voters at the beginning of the period. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. " FE" stands for Fixed Effects.

Table G1 shows the results of our stacked-by-event estimation the opening of a refugee center decreases the vote for the far-right by 5 percentage points. The coefficients are compared using the traditional difference-in-differences design because, like the stacked-by-event design, they are vulnerable to negative-weighting issues. The estimation find an effect of similar magnitude as the estimates of the standard difference-in-differences design presented in Appendix B.