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Legacies of victimization: Evidence from forced resettlement in Zimbabwe

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Legacies of victimization

Evidence from forced resettlement in Zimbabwe

Shelley Liu*

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Abstract: How does wartime victimization shape victims' political attitudes in the long run? We argue that violence increases politics' salience to victimized communities, which in turn increases these communities' political awareness and evaluation of governance quality decades after war has ended. We examine Protected Villages in the Zimbabwe Liberation War (1972–79). Protected Villages, a Rhodesian counterinsurgency strategy, was a large-scale resettlement programme designed to cut off rebel–civilian interactions, but it intensified civilian support for the eventually victorious rebel group. Using archival data, we map pre-war to current-day administrative divisions to Protected Villages-affected areas and estimate a difference-in-discontinuities regression to identify Protected Villages' long-run effects. We find that Protected Villages-affected areas have a greater awareness of the country's political development today and are more critical of poor government performance. Contrary to two major strands of the conflict literature, we find no evidence of increased political participation and pro-social behaviour in the long run, nor hardened support for the ruling party—which these areas had supported during the war.

Key words: victimization, political awareness, Zimbabwe Liberation War, Protected Villages

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1 Introduction

States often victimize civilian communities during counterinsurgency campaigns. How do such violent experiences shape these communities' post-war political attitudes in the long run? Literature on the post-war effects of wartime civilian victimization have highlighted two major findings. First, in the short term, scholarship describes a *pro-social activation*: victims of violence—from both the state and rebels—become more politically active and exhibit pro-social behaviours within their communities (Bauer et al. 2016; Bellows and Miguel 2009; Henrich et al. 2019). These effects run through coping with shared trauma, meaning that civilians in victimized communities come together after wars to work towards social and political change (Gilligan et al. 2014). Second, in the long term, scholars describe *hardened attitudes* against the perpetrators, which may deepen in- and out-group divides (Mironova and Whitt 2018). Within the literature on state-led mass victimization, these effects are clearest in cases with limited change in political leadership—meaning that the violent state remains dominant (Acharya et al. 2018; Wang 2017)—and effects run through enduring social memories of collective suffering under state victimization or repression (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017; Rozenas et al. 2017).

These explanations may insufficiently account for the agency of wartime victims to evaluate and update their political support over time. When considering pro-social activation, there is the question of the durability of behaviours: it is unclear whether increased political participation and community-level collective action resulting from wartime victimization are enduring behavioural outcomes, and whether they may additionally be transmitted across generations. On long-run hardened attitudes, there is the question of the stability of support. While the extant literature examines cases where the perpetrators are dominant long-lasting regimes, far less is known about how wartime victimization affects civilians' political attitudes when the perpetrators fail to hold on to power. This distinction warrants investigation because the salience of wartime cleavages affects the longevity of social memory: if cleavages are no longer salient, then in- and out-group divides need not persist (Balcells 2012). Since most conflicts in fact do not end in government victory, salient cleavages may be more likely to shift over time as civilians re-evaluate politics.¹

This paper argues that the wartime politicization of victims creates enduring change in *political awareness*, but not necessarily in behaviours nor stagnant political support. Put another way, wartime civilian victimization increases political awareness and understanding, and civilians continue to use this knowledge to evaluate politics in the long run. This is for two reasons. First, wartime victimization thrusts ordinary civilians into politics in violent and life-altering ways, cementing the role that politics plays in everyday life. We may therefore expect people who have lived through such violence to pay more attention to politics. Second, when communities are victimized for their perceived support for the rebellion, they may paradoxically become more open to rebel politicization (Kocher et al. 2011; Wood 2003). Such wartime politicization may teach civilians how to evaluate those who seek to govern them: civilians have a better understanding of political demands that can be made and have clearer ideas of good governance; they additionally may expect actual political change when rebels make it into government (Huang 2016). Overall, in the long run, we may expect political awareness to be sustained, and for these citizens to continue to evaluate their government's performance with a more critical eye and a better understanding of politics.

¹ For example, major conflicts across the world have seen rebel groups take control of politics through peace agreements and power-sharing, elections, or outright victory. In many cases—El Salvador, Uganda, Nepal, Zimbabwe, to name a few—civilians who suffered wartime victimization belonged to communities that supported rebel groups who would eventually either become major political parties or win control of the state outright. Particularly with respect to rebel victory, wartime political cleavages become less salient over time as the country heals in the decades after the war. This is particularly clear for countries that were victimized during liberation wars, and subsequently gained their independence.

We explore how a history of wartime forced resettlement under the colonial regime during the Zimbabwe Liberation War affects current-day civilian political attitudes. Forced resettlement, also known as relocation or villagization, involves uprooting and moving entire communities into dense, surveilled areas such as concentration camps—with deleterious consequences for civilians (Branch 2010). This strategy has been used in almost one-third of civil wars since 1945 and is primarily deployed in low-information environments as both punishment and a method for increasing state legibility (Lichtenheld 2020): governments aim to identify rebel supporters and deprive rebels of support.² Forced resettlement represents a form of mass repression that was designed not to scatter populations but to contain them for surveillance; it therefore kept communities together, sustained networks, and provided space for covert—albeit higher-risk—civilian political mobilization against the perpetrating state (Costa and Kahn 2007; Einwohner 2006).

During the Zimbabwe Liberation War (1972–79), two independence-seeking rebellions, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU), fought against the colonial Rhodesian government for the country’s independence. Rhodesian forces used various counterinsurgency tactics throughout the state, but we focus particularly on forced resettlement in parts of eastern Zimbabwe, where ZANU’s guerrilla army operated. The porous Zimbabwe–Mozambique border and strong local civilian support for the ZANU soldiers frustrated the colonial government. To sever rebel–civilian ties, the colonial state erected Protected Villages (PVs), which were fenced and guarded temporary villages that were meant to eliminate rebel contact with civilians and thus starve rebels of their support. Between 1974 and 1978, entire communities were forced to uproot their lives and move into crowded and guarded quarters, angering civilians and hardening political support for the liberation struggle and ZANU in particular. Civilian mobilization and strong rebel–civilian ties helped not only to sustain the rebel movement but also to elect the party (now ZANU-PF, Patriotic Front) into power in 1980.

Decades after the end of the war, shifts in Zimbabwe’s post-independence political landscape present a useful opportunity to better extricate various outcomes that tend to move together: support for the in-group, political participation, and political awareness. Although racial tensions are still relevant, the main political cleavages have shifted substantially since independence. From 1980 onward, ZANU-PF has remained in power by eliminating its wartime rival, ZAPU, and consolidating political power. ZANU-PF’s 40-year rule has been marked by illiberal politics, corruption, and policy failures. Today, Zimbabwe is a competitive authoritarian regime and a *de facto* one-party state. Although major opposition parties have arisen in the past 20 years, these parties have thus far failed to overthrow the ruling party through democratic elections. ZANU-PF’s transition from an armed group to the ruling party, its subsequent disappointing trajectory in government, and the fading relevance of independence politics, allows us to thoroughly explore and adjudicate between various causal pathways regarding how legacies of wartime victimization affect civilian communities in the longer term.

We test the observable implications of our argument—greater political awareness and higher expectations for government performance—by examining the current-day political attitudes of rural Zimbabweans living in areas once affected by PVs. We leverage a differences-in-discontinuities causal identification strategy to identify the effect of living in a PV-affected communal land area today, in comparison to living in a communal land area that was not affected by PVs. To do so, we first digitize archival data collected from the National Archives of Zimbabwe to geocode the locations of the PVs and to identify which current-day wards (the third administrative level in Zimbabwe) would have been subject to the policy. We then measure political outcomes using Afrobarometer survey data (rounds 1–7). We subset all analyses to wards within 150 km of the eastern border—where ZANU support during the war was

² To a lesser extent, rebels sometimes forced displacement and resettlement to create ethnic majorities and solidify civilian support in key territories (Hägerdal 2019).

strongest, and where PVs were implemented—to minimize heterogeneity in wartime rebel presence and ideological support within the citizen population. Altogether, estimated effects derived from this identification strategy may be cautiously interpreted as the consequences of the forced resettlement policy (PVs) rather than rebel effort, presence, ease of access, prior state capacity, or co-ethnicity.

We show the following results in support of our theory. First, rural Zimbabweans living in PV-affected communal lands are more critical of the ruling party and the state institutions that uphold their dominance, including national courts, the Electoral Commission, the police, and the national army. Second, respondents do not report greater political participation at the national, community, or interpersonal levels. Specifically, they neither engage in the electoral process nor protest more frequently; they are not more likely to join community associations and meetings; and they do discuss politics with others. We then explore several mechanisms to explain these results. We first show evidence of our argument that respondents are less supportive of the ruling party because they are more political aware: they are more critical of the ruling party's performance across a wide variety of issues, are more likely to reject illiberal politics, and rate Zimbabwe's democratic quality poorly. Second, we show that these results cannot be explained by variations in state capacity as it relates to economic, infrastructural, and coercive capacity. Third, we rule out the possibility that these results are simply due to depressed political interest overall.

Taken together, these results indicate that PV-affected communities today remain *evaluative*: they are politically aware of Zimbabwean politics, and have updated their pre-existing beliefs about the ruling party. Although they had supported the ZANU guerrillas during the war and the ZANU-PF political party immediately after the war, such support does not necessarily persist in the long run when politics changes. Instead, the findings in the paper comport with existing literature arguing that, under competitive authoritarianism, politically aware citizens may choose to deliberately disengage with the political process due to discontent over its legitimacy (Croke et al. 2016). Thus, people are more critical, yet are less likely to participate.

This study provides a conceptual model that centres the agency of victims in the connection between wartime violence and long-run political awareness. War has wide-ranging downstream consequences on social, political, and economic development (Costalli and Ruggeri 2019; Justino 2012; Lazarev 2019; Lin 2020; Liu 2022a). On its socio-political effects, the literature has identified trauma-induced prosociality within communities (Bauer et al. 2016; Bellows and Miguel 2009), intergroup political polarization (Beber et al. 2014; Grossman et al. 2015; Hadzic et al. 2020; Mironova and Whitt 2016), and hardened attitudes against the perpetrating state (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017; Rozenas et al. 2017). Yet, when political power changes and political cleavages shift, so do victimizations' socio-political effects (Balcells 2012). This paper contributes to the ongoing conversation by examining how wartime violence conditions post-war expectations regardless of post-war cleavages: political support that emerges from wartime victimization is not entrenched but rather is re-evaluated and updated over time.

2 Political legacies of wartime victimization

During civil war, civilians living within local communities may contribute to, or comply with, rebel activities, such as providing rebels with invaluable information, as well as shelter, food, or medicine. To sever such civilian ties with rebels, the government turns towards counterinsurgency that is carried out with the goal of reducing insurgent effectiveness in establishing territorial and social control (Azam and Hoeffler 2002; Wright et al. 2017). Counterinsurgency efforts encompass a broad set of strategies that involve both the use of violence as punishment for supporting rebels—either discriminate or indiscriminate (Lyall 2009; Zhukov 2017)—and ‘hearts and minds’ initiatives that aim to win civilian support (Croft et al. 2016; Lyall et al. 2020; Mikulaschek et al. 2020; Wright et al. 2017). If civilian support for

rebels increases—and as rebels are more able to embed themselves into local communities—the government is less able to extract credible information from the population. Counterinsurgency strategies then become more indiscriminate and turn towards collective punishment, such as mass killings, ethnic cleansing, or forced resettlement (Hägerdal 2019; Valentino et al. 2004; Zhukov 2015).

We examine how civilian communities' political attitudes and beliefs are affected by forced resettlement. Forced resettlement (or *relocation*) is preferred in asymmetric warfare to re-establish social control and increase state legibility while also increasing the barriers to cooperation between rebels and civilians (Lichtenheld 2020). The strategy was frequently used by colonial governments: the British, for example, used forced resettlement first in Malaya, and then in Kenya and Zimbabwe. The French used a similar strategy to combat guerrilla rebels in Viet Nam and Algeria, while the Portuguese implemented villagization during the Mozambican War for Independence. Across these cases, the state used strategies of forced population resettlement as one way to glean more accurate information about rebel supporters among the local population.

Victimization strategies such as forced resettlement during war indiscriminately thrust people into politics—*regardless* of whether they wished to be a part of it. During civil war, while some may choose to support various sides in the conflict, most simply prefer to remain safe. Indiscriminate violence, however, eliminates the possibility of abstaining from participation for everyone in the community in two ways.

First, victimizing both rebel supporters and unaligned civilians alike impinges upon civilian freedoms and increases motivations for supporting the rebellion. As Wood (2003) writes of the Salvadoran Civil War, communities' participation increased with victimization in part due to defiance—a refusal to acquiesce. Resettlement increases civilians' credible information about state violence, thereby encouraging greater civilian resistance (Balcells 2018). Additionally, in some cases, forced resettlement not only gives civilians greater reason to participate in the war effort, it also increases perceptions of community-level threat and provides the opportunity and motivation for greater collective participation (Shesterinina 2016). Unlike other forms of displacement due to violence (Steele 2019), civilians who are forcibly villagized do not scatter or flee; rather, they continue to live together with others in their community but in a new location. This continuity in community ties is key to facilitating community action if people wish to act: when intra-community networks remain intact, civilians can sustain hope for collective resistance (Gade 2020).

Second, even among those who avoid actively participating in the war, there are indirect effects: living under forced resettlement policies means experiencing—and being affected by—politics in particularly visceral ways. Under forced resettlement, which increases government coercion and legibility, even those who do not participate directly are subject to violence as punishment. States justify forced resettlement and villagization schemes as efforts to increase development outcomes—particularly when used outside of war—and to maintain civilian safety during war by guarding them from rebel presence. These strategies, however, often fail to live up to purported goals (De Wet 2012). Forced resettlement during war induces physical and mental hardships by forcing communities—under threat of violent coercion—to move away from their homes and livelihoods into more densely populated and guarded areas. Civilians are subjected to indignities including food shortages, poor hygiene, education disruption, and constant surveillance, among other effects. Thus, like other forms of civilian victimization, it may increase civilian grievances and highlight the effects of political injustice.

Being forced to contend with the importance of politics during war has long-term implications: civilians gain greater awareness of politics and ought to continue being more political and discerning of politics after war. Because forced resettlement significantly increases the primacy of politics, resettlement-affected communities ought to be more aware of politics and have a more concrete understanding of how oppressive politics can affect their lives. They are therefore more likely to continue paying attention to governance in the country, and may also pass on the importance of political awareness to their children.

In addition to paying attention to politics, resettlement-affected communities may have heightened expectations for post-war progress following rebel victory. During war, rebels make major promises about post-war reforms to extract support from civilians,³ which may lead civilians to expect these reforms in the post-war period. In sum, we argue that wartime victimization increases civilians' awareness of politics and its importance, gives civilians a better understanding of what good governance entails, and finally increases expectations for post-war governance.

Notably, our argument differs from existing theories of post-war political *participation* following collective trauma. Across studies in different contexts, scholars have found pro-social outcomes following wartime victimization (Bauer et al. 2016; Bellows and Miguel 2009; Henrich et al. 2019). Pro-sociality and collective action is observed due to collective coping through shared trauma in inducing greater altruism, trust, and collective action (Gilligan et al. 2014). The mechanism we propose, on the other hand, runs through wartime experience and political awareness—which does not necessarily increase political participation in the long run. Rather, we ought to observe increased political awareness *regardless* of political participation, because long-run patterns of political participation are shaped heavily by the state's existing political institutions and by people's incentives to buy into the political system (Larreguy and Liu 2022). Particularly in the case of rebel victories, which so often result in authoritarian regimes as the new party consolidates power (Liu 2023; Lyons 2016; Meng and Paine 2022), political awareness and politicization would manifest as greater criticism of the ruling party. It may not, however, result in outright political participation itself as participation legitimizes illiberal electoral processes (Croke et al. 2016).

In addition, the political awareness we describe departs from existing scholarship that predicts hardened attitudes and in-group preferences among civilians who were affected by war (Beber et al. 2014; Glaudić and Vuković 2016; Grossman et al. 2015; Hadzic et al. 2020). In this set of literature, politicians can continue to inflame tensions to sustain support on the ground long after war has ended. On their long-term effects, state violence in the USSR across the 1900s has received particularly significant attention: studies find both hardened attitudes towards the state and also induced long-run fear of state repression (Rozenas et al. 2017; Rozenas and Zhukov 2019). These negative attitudes persist in the long run as they are passed from older to younger generations through intra-household transmission of political beliefs (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017). The longevity of the social memory of collective punishment and violence can also be observed across other contexts, including across Europe (Cassar et al. 2013), in the United States (Acharya et al. 2018), in China (Wang 2017), and in Iraq (Blaydes 2018).

The argument we put forth—greater political awareness—may result in hardened long-run attitudes if the violent regime or group remains in power or salient in politics. In such cases, political tensions derived from the same issues are likely to remain, meaning that civilian evaluations of politics would push them away from violent perpetrators. However, our argument would suggest different outcomes, depending on the quality of governance and politics, if there is change in political leadership and salient cleavages.

The *type* of indiscriminate victimization may be one important scope condition. Since we focus on forced resettlement, our theory and evidence primarily draw from forms of mass civilian victimization that leave an opening for collective action against the violent perpetrator. In short, our argument should apply to forms of civilian victimization that: (1) raise threat perception levels and encourage civilians to engage with the rebellion, while still (2) allowing for greater political awareness to occur. Most forms of mass violence against civilians are more likely to fulfil the first criterion: when civilians are indiscriminately targeted and warring factions use collective punishment, there is clear threat to civilian lives regardless of whether they perceive themselves as supporters of the rebellion. The second criterion, col-

³ In Zimbabwe, for example, wartime promises included not only independence—which was achieved at war's end—but also solutions to inequality such as education, health, and land rights.

lective action potential, is more variable. Methods of depopulation, which are designed to remove the population from the territory, may be more likely to reduce the likelihood of politicization and the likelihood of organized political participation. These strategies, like ethnic cleansing or mass displacement, may therefore reduce communities' abilities to evaluate good governance.

3 Forced resettlement in Zimbabwe

3.1 Guerilla operations during the Liberation War

The Zimbabwe Liberation War began as a political movement and evolved into a full-fledged military conflict in 1972. Between 1972 and 1979, the two liberation parties—ZAPU and ZANU—formed armed wings⁴ to fight against the colonial Rhodesian government. Despite similar goals, tensions between the two liberation armies meant that they fought independently: ZAPU attacked the western border of Zimbabwe from its bases in Zambia and Botswana, while ZANU entered the country through Zimbabwe's eastern border from well-established bases in Mozambique. All side ceased fighting and came together to sign the Lancaster House Agreement in 1979.

Under the colonial government, rural Black Zimbabweans were forced to live in designated areas with poorer land quality. These were known during the colonial period as Native Areas, which can be further split into two types: (1) a small percentage were designated as Purchase Areas, which encompassed better land and could be purchased by the wealthier middle-class Black Zimbabweans; (2) most of the Native Areas were designated as Tribal Trust Lands, which were communal farmlands where poorer Black Zimbabweans lived. We refer to both of these land types as communal areas throughout the paper.

Guerrilla operations during the Liberation War in rural Zimbabwe primarily took place within these communal areas: since the Black Zimbabwean population was concentrated there, both ZANU and ZAPU enjoyed support among their core constituents, while the Rhodesian administration had lower capacity relative to urban areas.⁵ Both liberation armies engaged civilians on the ground through rebel governance efforts, to varying degrees of success based on their ability to remain militarily present and to politicize successfully. ZANU was particularly successfully in establishing ties to civilians within its strongholds, and was able to engage civilians to increase its organization's capacity to recruit, gather materials, politicize, and conduct reconnaissance on the ground (Kriger 1991).

3.2 Forced displacement through PVs

Such high levels of civilian engagement were militarily and politically problematic for the colonial Rhodesian government, and it used various counterinsurgency strategies to combat this. We focus here on PVs, a policy of forced resettlement implemented along the eastern Zimbabwe–Mozambique border from 1974 to 1978.⁶

The use of PVs as a counterinsurgency strategy began in 1974 with Operation Overload in Chiweshe communal area, located in the northeastern Mashonaland Central province. ZANU found its earliest successes there, and the Rhodesian army was unable to sever civilian ties with the armed group (Cilliers

⁴ ZANU's armed wing was the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) while ZAPU's armed wing was the Zimbabwe People's Liberation Army (ZIPRA).

⁵ Urban politicization was also vibrant in the west, within ZAPU strongholds.

⁶ PVs were created only along eastern Zimbabwe, within ZANU territory. In ZAPU territory in the west, the Rhodesian government created Protected Sub-offices as an alternative to PVs.

1985). At the start of Operation Overload, the District Commissioner of the area reminded civilians that he and others had ‘advised [them] of the consequences if [they] continued to assist terrorists’, and that they had been continually told by their chiefs ‘to report the presence of terrorists in [their areas]’ (CCJP 1974a). Because rebels continued to operate and civilians had failed to report their presence, the government would be resettling everyone into PVs out of a ‘duty to protect the property and lives of the people’.

Within weeks, all civilians—49,000 people—living in Chiweshe had been resettled from 187 villages into 21 PVs (Kesby 1996). Though the government had portrayed PVs as permanent new settlements that would lay the foundations for new towns, they were in effect fenced keeps guarded by Rhodesian agents (CCJP 1974a). As the war continued, more PVs in other communal areas were quickly erected: 10 more followed in 1974, and another 72 in 1975. By 30 May 1977, there were 203 PVs across 12 communal areas in eastern Zimbabwe. These PVs housed around 750,000 people (Cilliers 1985)—roughly one-twelfth of the total Black Zimbabwean population. Though the government estimated around 2,000 people in each PV, some PVs saw more than 5,500 people (CCJP 1977). By the end of the programme in 1978, there were 232 PVs across eastern Zimbabwe (Ministry of Internal Affairs, NAZ n.d.).

Unsurprisingly, resettlement greatly disrupted civilian lives. While children were still expected to go to school, only schools close enough to the PVs were to remain open, while other schools were closed down (CCJP 1974a). Schools and clinics closed, while businesses were forced to relocate. People were expected, if possible, to dismantle their homes and rebuild them within the PVs following a shortage of building materials. To sustain themselves, people were allowed to leave during the day to return home and tend to their fields, but not before being thoroughly searched by Rhodesian agents to ensure that they did not take food out of the PVs (CCJP 1974b). This was particularly problematic for women who took their children to the fields for the entire day, as they would have nothing to eat. Cramped spaces, food shortages, lack of water, and unhygienic quarters contributed to rampant disease and hardship for civilians. Meanwhile, civilians’ actual home villages were pillaged, razed, or languished under disuse. In 1978, when the resettlement programme ended, civilians returned to disarray.

3.3 Highlighting politics’ salience and civilian mobilization

The PV resettlement policy, as a counterinsurgency strategy, broadly failed to prevent rebel–civilian collaboration. While it briefly did reduce rebel operations in 1974, it ultimately increased resentment and support for ZANU soldiers. Although Rhodesian administrators portrayed PVs as protecting civilians from rebel violence, ‘The people affected do not think much of this advantage. Few have anything to fear from the guerrillas and feel no need to be “protected” from them’ (CCJP 1977). Across resettled areas, people resisted the PV policy and indicated that they were safer outside of PVs than within; to force them to move, Rhodesian security forces utilized significant violence—including burning down villages and destroying crops—to coerce cooperation (CCJP 1977; Msindo and Nyachega 2019). As Ranger (1985: 268) writes about Operation Overload in Chiweshe communal area, while administrators sought complete control, this backfired: ‘*the effect of the move* was to bind the different strata of the Chiweshe peasantry yet more firmly together’. Altogether, the PV policy failed because it pushed rural Black Zimbabweans, many of whom had not been politicized and were not participating in the war effort, towards supporting the liberation struggle (Cilliers 1985: 16).

Although the PV policy hardened attitudes against the colonial government, it was also now more difficult to aid the guerrillas. Yet, ‘the insurgent parallel hierarchies ... were not broken prior to or concurrently with the resettlement of people in Protected Villages’ (Cilliers 1985: 101). Civilian political action manifested in two ways. First, in the face of greater organizing difficulties, people only became more creative as they continued to participate in war (Msindo and Nyachega 2019). Guerrillas were able to move in and out of PVs themselves with civilians’ help (CCJP 1977). The Zimbabwe Liberation War featured youth messengers—*mujibas* (male) and *chimbwidos* (female)—who formed reconnaissance

teams, identified sellouts, and acted as couriers between villages and guerrilla camps. These civilians continued to engage in various forms of subversion after being moved into PVs; young women (the *chimbwidos*), in particular, were organized to smuggle food for the guerrillas and acted as organized support (Kesby 1996). Second, although the PV policy aimed to resettle everyone in designated areas, a portion of the civilians were able to escape villagization with the help of guerrillas. They lived just outside the PVs in ‘liberated zones’—areas where rebel governance featured strongly—where they continued to support the rebellion in various ways (Chisi 2019; Cilliers 1985; Msindo and Nyachega 2019).

3.4 Post-independence politics

In 1979, all sides ceased fighting and signed the Lancaster Agreement to prepare for independence and elections. Zimbabwe officially declared its independence in 1980 and Robert Mugabe won the first post-independence elections as leader of ZANU-PF.

The first post-independence decade was marked by both bureaucracy-driven development and violence for the purposes of state-building and consolidating its control over the state. Although the government officially shared power between ZANU-PF and ZAPU (with ZANU-PF at its head), politics was immediately dominated by ZANU-PF politicians and bureaucrats across much of the country. ZANU-PF took a top-down, centralized approach with respect to development, heavily focusing on education provision and some health initiatives. With respect to violence, ZANU-PF cited security threats one year after independence and began pushing ZAPU politicians out of the government. ZANU-PF also unleashed mass state-sponsored violence against suspected ZAPU supporters, the Ndebele ethnic group, living in Western Zimbabwe. Violence continued until 1987, when ZAPU and ZANU-PF signed the Unity Accords—where ZAPU formally agreed to be subsumed under ZANU-PF.

ZANU-PF’s rule over four decades has been marked by illiberal politics. Electorally, it is a competitive authoritarian regime. Between 1987 and 1999, ZANU-PF’s dominance remained largely unchallenged and Zimbabwe operated as a *de facto* single-party state. In 1999, the main opposition party—the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)—emerged and won nearly half of the seats in Parliament in the 2000 elections. ZANU-PF responded to the MDC’s electoral success by clamping down on opposition, engaging in electoral intimidation, and silencing free media and press. Elections in 2002, 2008, 2013, and 2018 all exhibited marked irregularities, and the ruling party has retained power through violent and non-violent coercion.

Zimbabwe has also suffered with respect to development and economic policies. The MDC’s rise highlighted a broad base of citizens who were dissatisfied over a variety of development issues—particularly land redistribution—that were promised but unsatisfactorily implemented. In response to the possibility of losing elections, ZANU-PF implemented the Fast Track Land Reform in 2000. The reform in essence allowed large-scale land expropriation from White farmers without compensation. The Fast Track resulted in widespread political violence, led by pro-ZANU-PF war veterans, and redistribution also primarily benefited ZANU-PF partisans with little farming experience or desire to engage in farming, which has significantly reduced the farming industry’s productivity and led to low crop yields, malnutrition, and starvation. In part because of farming industry failures and because of economic mismanagement, Zimbabwe has faced prolonged economic crisis, hyperinflation, and high unemployment throughout the 2000s.

4 Data and methods

The PVs resettlement policy during the Zimbabwe Liberation War affected the lives of roughly 750,000 civilians and increased pro-ZANU attitudes during the war. We theorize that wartime participation increased post-war political awareness, and that people continue to evaluate politics post-war. In the face of illiberal politics and poor governance outcomes, we therefore expect PV-affected areas to be more critical of their government today, and to be particularly attuned to Zimbabwe’s authoritarianism.

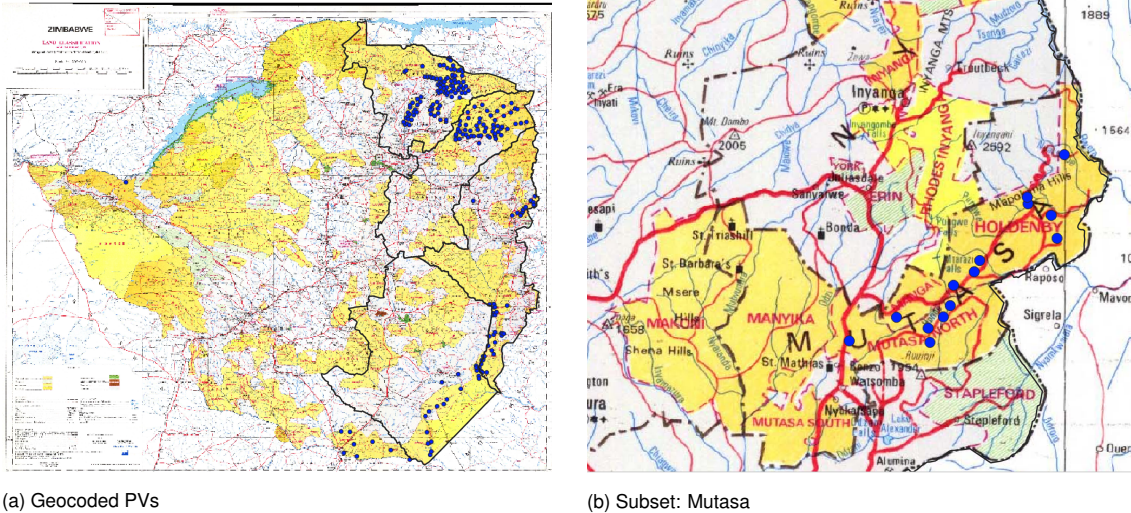
We first explain the construction of the data used to evaluate our argument, and then the identification strategy that we use to mitigate threats to causal identification.

4.1 Geolocating communal lands affected by PVs

The PV resettlement policy was implemented along the eastern border of Zimbabwe within a portion of the communal lands. We identify which communal lands were affected by the PV resettlement scheme using data gathered from the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), which houses Rhodesian government documents from prior to independence. Documents detailing the counterinsurgency provided the (1) military coordinates of all PVs and (2) the district and communal areas within which these PVs fell. We digitized Rhodesian military maps and then used the military coordinate system to locate the PVs on an XY coordinate system.

Figure 1a depicts the colonial-era Land Apportionment map, with PVs plotted in blue. Yellow regions are communal lands where Black Zimbabweans were allowed to farm (see Section 3). The four pro-ZANU provinces affected by the PVs policy (Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, Manicaland, and Masvingo) are outlined in black. The PV policy was applied at the communal land level, meaning that all villages within a communal land would have been moved to one of the PVs erected within those boundaries. For example, Figure 1b shows Mutasa chieftaincy using the the Land Apportionment map from Figure 1a. Mutasa chieftaincy includes six communal areas: Makoni, Manyika, Mutasa South, Mutasa North, Holdenby, and Manga. Of the six, three had PVs: Mutasa North (five PVs), Holdenby (eight PVs), and Manga (one PV).

Figure 1: Locations of PVs



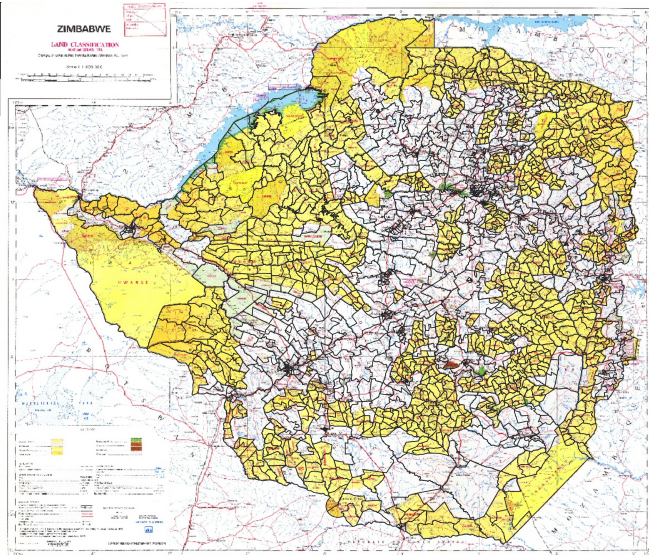
Note: geocoded PVs dotted in blue and communal lands shaded in dark yellow. In Figure 1a, pro-ZANU provinces are highlighted with black borders. Figure 1b zooms in on Mutasa communal land.

Source: author’s compilation based on data from the NAZ; EUDASM map available under CC BY 4.0 licence.

Next, we match present-day administrative divisions to communal lands to identify the relevant population of people living in PV-affected areas. The boundaries of the communal lands match well to

current-day wards, which is the third and smallest administrative level for which boundaries exist. Figure 2 depicts the Land Apportionment map with current-day ward polygons outlined in black. The communal lands are shaded in dark yellow within this map; we use the Land Apportionment map to match wards to specific communal lands, which then allows us to identify which wards were subject to forced resettlement during the war.

Figure 2: Communal areas in colonial Zimbabwe



Note: communal areas shaded in dark yellow, current-day wards are outlined in black.

Source: author's compilation; EUDASM map available under CC BY 4.0 licence.

4.2 Outcome variables

To construct our outcome variables, we use a series of outcome variables drawn from Zimbabwe's Afrobarometer surveys rounds 1–7.

First, in Zimbabwe, where the government has been performing poorly for decades, we expect on the aggregate that people who lived in PV-affected areas during war will today be less satisfied with government performance. We show critical evaluation of performance using two groups of variables: (1) satisfaction with government performance and economic discontent, in comparison to (2) actual economic outcomes and community-level economic development. If respondents are more dissatisfied with the government but are not differentially worse off, then we interpret them as being more critical. Next, we examine whether there is (3) greater support for democracy and critical evaluations for democratic quality in Zimbabwe—a competitive authoritarian regime. Finally, given Zimbabwe's poor political record, we expect more negative sentiments about the ruling party, their politicians, and their institutions. We show this using two additional groups of variables: (4) trust in the ruling party and elected representatives, and (5) trust in the state's electoral and coercive institutions.

Beyond these main analyses, we also explore alternative hypotheses. First, if wartime trauma reduced trust in political processes across the board, we would additionally expect reduced trust in opposition parties. Second, the post-war recovery hypothesis—that collective action and pro-social outcomes persist due to victimization—would predict greater participation in politics and community organizations. Third is a state legibility concern: participants may be more critical of ZANU-PF simply because PVs increased the state's coercive capacity during the war and ZANU-PF may have benefited from such capacity after the war. We examine this using variables constructed from enumerator-recorded responses on police presence and fear.

Where indicated, we created index variables comprising similar outcomes in the surveys. We discuss the underlying variables as we report the results, and more detailed index coding and explanations are available in Appendix A.

4.3 Identification strategy

Estimating the effect of PVs in this context introduces two threats to causal identification. First, it is implausible to suggest that PVs were randomly assigned to some communal lands and not others. Thus, we cannot simply compare communal lands with and without PVs. While it is theoretically possible to use a regression discontinuity design to compare the respondents at the border between communal lands with and without PVs, the strategy is infeasible due to sample size concerns as there are very few shared borders. Second, it is also implausible to compare communal areas with PVs to adjacent non-communal areas due to significant sorting with respect to population demographics, wealth, and land quality.

A difference-in-discontinuities (diff-in-disc) identification strategy can be used to address both concerns. Conceptually, the data can be separated into four distinct geographical regions: (1) communal lands with PVs; (2) communal lands without PVs; (3) non-communal lands adjacent to communal lands with PVs; and (4) non-communal lands adjacent to communal lands without PVs.⁷ The diff-in-disc estimation strategy estimates two geographical regression discontinuities: (a) the discontinuity at the border of PV-affected communal lands, that is between (1) and (3) above; and (b) the discontinuity at the border of unaffected communal lands, that is between (2) and (4). The *difference* between the two discontinuities (a) and (b) is then the causally identified effect.

The identification strategy helps to account for sorting. In a regular regression discontinuity between a communal land affected by PVs and its adjacent non-communal land, there is sorting at the border that is introduced by colonialism—introducing bias in the estimate. However, that sorting should be *equivalent* to sorting that occurs at the border of a communal land that is not affected by PVs, and its adjacent non-communal land. Thus, intuitively the first step of this identification strategy—the regression discontinuities—allows me to identify how outcomes shift between communal and non-communal lands *without* taking into account sorting at these borders. Sorting is then differenced out in the second step, thereby recovering the causal effect of living in a communal lands that was affected by the PV policy. This identification strategy relies on the assumption that the level of sorting is the same across the two types of borders. Theoretically, there is no reason to expect pre-treatment that sorting was more severe in some communal lands than others. As some evidence of this, we show balance in Appendix E across a variety of pre-treatment colonial land designations and geographical features. There is a slight imbalance in the proportion of land designated national parks and forests. In Appendix F we find that results are robust to controlling for these imbalanced features. We estimate:

$$y_{i,p,s} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 P_{i,p,s} + S_i(\beta_3 + \beta_4 P_{i,p,s}) + T_i[\beta_5 + \beta_6 P_{i,p,s} + S_i(\tau_1 + \beta_7 P_{i,p,s})] + \zeta_i + \theta_s + \kappa_p + \varepsilon_{i,p,s}$$

where τ is the diff-in-disc estimator and the effect of interest. The regression also includes: $P_{i,p,s}$ as the running variable distance from the communal lands border, S_i as an indicator for whether an individual lived along a PV-affected border, and T_i as an indicator for whether the individual lived in communal lands with PVs. Additionally, ζ_i are individual-level controls (gender, year of birth) and ward-level controls defined at the individual level (distance to the Mozambique border, and distance to the capital Harare). We also include θ_s as survey round fixed effects to account for time variation, and κ_p as district fixed effects to account for additional geographic variation on top of the two distance controls. Robust standard errors are clustered at the local council level, which are governing areas that subset districts

⁷ In practice, to categorize non-communal lands as falling under either (3) or (4) we rely on the ward centroid's distance to the closest communal area border. The non-communal lands ward is then coded as being under area (3) if its closest communal lands was affected by PVs; otherwise, it is coded as falling under (4).

into rural and urban areas. In the Appendix we show that results are robust to estimations using Conley standard errors.

Finally, for comparability, we subset the data to locations within 150 km of Zimbabwe’s eastern border along Mozambique, which is the distance that captures the full sample of communal areas that were forced into PVs during the war. Within this distance to the border, districts were far more likely to be homogeneously ZANU-PF supporters during the war, which eliminates the possibility of pre-existing support for the current-day ruling party as a major confounder (Liu 2022a). Subsetting the data to Zimbabwe’s eastern border also helps to eliminate confounding bundled treatment effects arising from the main wartime ethnic cleavage between the Shona and the Ndebele ethnic groups.

5 Results

Throughout the results section we explain the variable construction for the relevant outcomes. We then present regression estimates across ten bandwidths (5–9.5 km) to demonstrate the robustness of effects. Regression tables in Appendix C present results using MSE-optimal bandwidths.

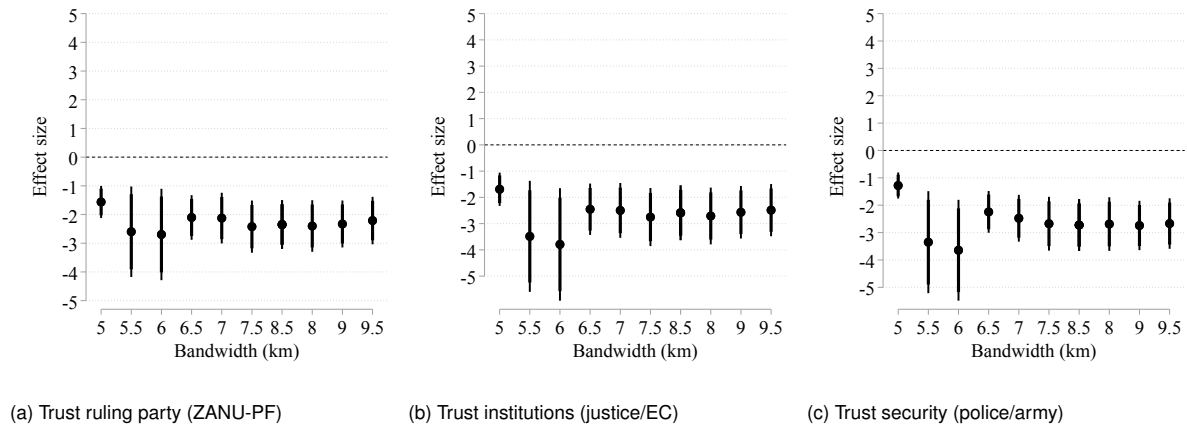
5.1 Political attitudes and behaviours

Eastern Zimbabwe experienced the earliest and greatest degree of rebel activity, rebel–civilian interactions, and politicization. These were therefore areas that were pro-ZANU during the war, and pro-ZANU-PF immediately after the war.

We first examine how PVs, which were used as a counterinsurgency strategy, may have affected civilian attitudes towards the ruling party today. We create the (a) *trust ruling party (ZANU-PF)* index using questions that ask whether the respondent feels closest to ZANU-PF (rather than other political parties), whether they trust the current incumbent party, and whether they trust the president. Next, we examine (b) national institutions that have helped to cement the ruling party’s power (courts and Electoral Commission) and also (c) security institutions associated with the ruling party’s dominance (police and army). Figure 3 present results that suggest waning support for the ruling party in previously partisan regions that were affected by PVs. Trust in the justice system and the Electoral Commission, as well as in security institutions, are statistically significantly negative.

These outcomes, however, are not associated with greater political participation at the national, community, or interpersonal levels. In Figure 4 we examine whether the wartime victimization literature—which argues that citizens increase pro-social behaviour and political participation after victimization—has long-run effects. Because of Zimbabwe’s nondemocratic politics, citizens may either participate in national-level politics within the (a) formal system such as participating in political campaigns, rallies, or voting; or they may choose to participate outside of the formal system by (b) attending demonstrations. Additionally, citizens may participate within their community and increase intra-community cohesion. We create an index variable for (c) joining community or religious associations, and also look at a variable measuring (d) how often the respondent attends community meetings. Finally, people may engage more at a personal or interpersonal level with politics by (e) consuming political news through regular media channels or online media, and by (f) discussing politics with others.

Figure 3: Trust in the ruling party



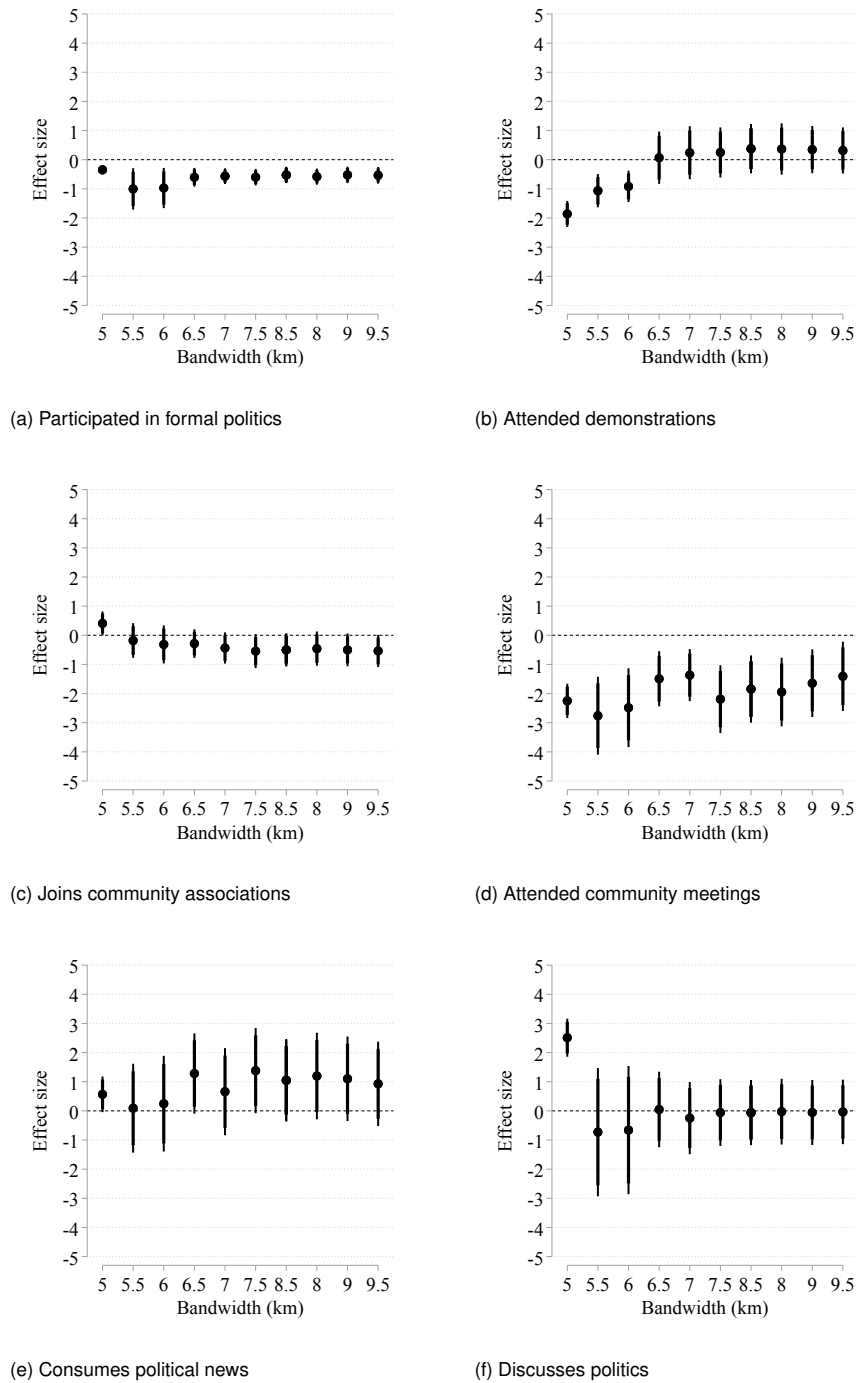
Note: regressions are: subsetting to areas within 150 km of the Zimbabwe–Mozambique border; control for respondent year of birth; and include province fixed effects and Afrobarometer round fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the local authority (rural district) level. Number of observations range between $n = 701$ (5 km bandwidth) and $n = 1,435$ (9.5 km bandwidth).

Source: author's calculations.

We find no long-run effects of forced resettlement during the war on post-war political activity across these six variables measuring political or pro-social engagement. Respondents are less likely to participate in formal politics and not more likely to protest; they are also less likely to participate in community affairs. Though imprecisely estimated, respondents are perhaps more likely to consume political news, though not more likely to discuss politics with others.

Taken together, the results in Figures 3 and 4 may be indicative of deliberate disengagement (Croke et al. 2016) from a population that has re-evaluated the ruling party's ability to govern effectively. This comports with existing work on the role of greater politicization in engendering disillusionment and lack of trust in politics when the state is ill-equipped to sustain citizen expectations (Ceka 2013; Cheng and Liu 2018; Liu 2022b; Paller 2013).

Figure 4: Political activity



Note: regressions are subsetting to areas within 150 km of the Zimbabwe–Mozambique border; control for respondent year of birth; and include province fixed effects and Afrobarometer round fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the local authority (rural district) level. Number of observations range between $n = 701$ (5 km bandwidth) and $n = 1,435$ (9.5 km bandwidth).

Source: author's calculations.

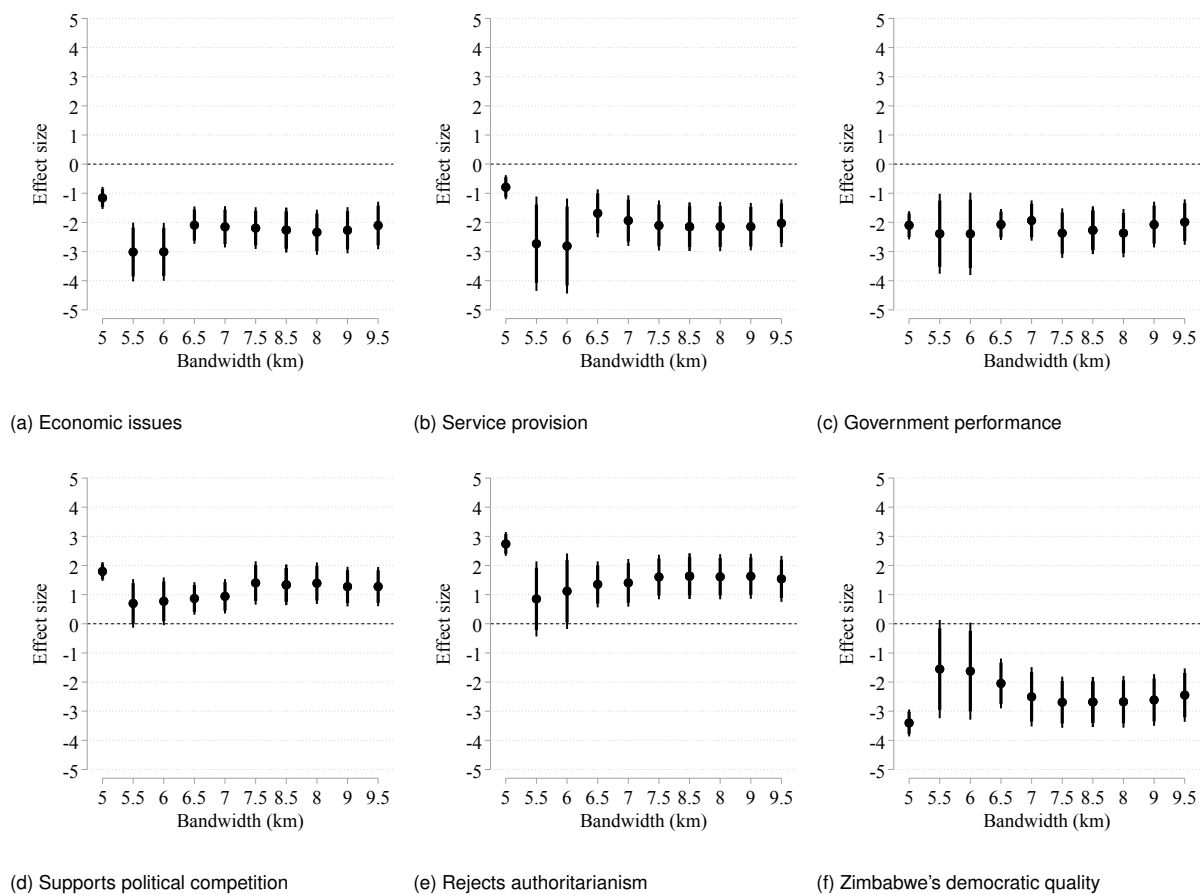
5.2 Mechanism

We argue that these outcomes run through the channel of political awareness: wartime victimization leads communities to be more evaluative of government performance. We show evidence for this in Figure 5. In the first row, we examine governance issues—respondent satisfaction with how the government handles (a) economic issues, including managing poverty, jobs, inequality, and prices. We create

a similar index that measures satisfaction with how the national government handles (b) public goods provision and social issues, such as reducing crime and corruption, and providing health, education, infrastructure, electricity, and water. Finally, we investigate respondent views about (c) government performance, which includes president and MP performance. Across all three variables, respondents indicate dissatisfaction with governance in Zimbabwe.

In the second row of Figure 5 we examine political issues. We find that respondents are more supportive of (d) political competition and also (e) reject various authoritarian regimes, which is an index variable measuring attitudes towards single-party, military, and one-man rule. Finally, respondents are asked about their satisfaction with (e) the quality of Zimbabwe's democracy. Accurately reflecting Zimbabwe's competitive authoritarianism, respondents in PV-affected regions are more critical of Zimbabwe's democratic quality. These results show evidence for two key points in our argument: first, people are more aware of what good democracy entails and that Zimbabwe's democratic institutions are of poor quality; second, this awareness is indicative of evaluating—and being disappointed by—political development in Zimbabwe.

Figure 5: Evaluation of government and politics



Note: regressions are subsetting to areas within 150 km of the Zimbabwe–Mozambique border; control for respondent year of birth; and include province fixed effects and Afrobarometer round fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the local authority (rural district) level. Number of observations range between $n = 701$ (5 km bandwidth) and $n = 1,435$ (9.5 km bandwidth).

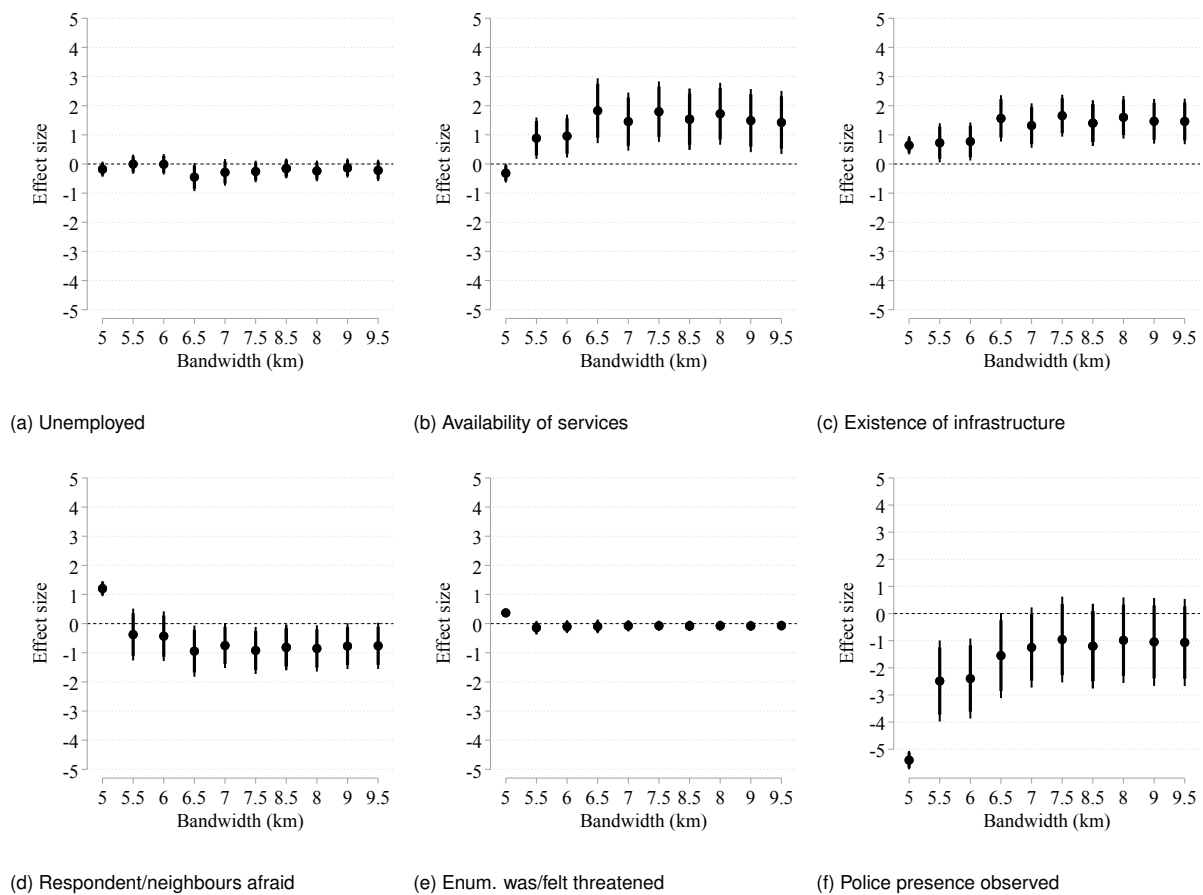
Source: author's calculations.

We also explore a state capacity-related mechanism, which may manifest in two ways. First, because PVs substantially decreased quality of life during the war, this underdevelopment may have persisted, leading to long-term resentment towards the state. In this case, respondents would indeed be evaluative of government performance, but may not be comparatively *more* evaluative than those who were not victimized by the PV programme. Second, because PVs were erected to increase state legibility, PV-

affected communities would have been subject to greater state coercive capacity. This increased state legibility and coercive capacity may have persisted until today, resulting in greater dissatisfaction with the state and greater fears towards political participation.

We find no evidence for these alternative channels. In Figure 6 we examine both variations of a potential state capacity argument. In the first row, we explore whether there are differential levels of public goods provision based on the argument that poorer development would increase dissatisfaction with the ruling party. We first find that respondents are (a) not more or less likely to be unemployed. As part of the survey, enumerators are asked to record the availability of a wide range of public services—including electricity, water, sewerage, and cell service. They also record the existence of infrastructure such as post offices, schools, police stations, health clinics, or market stalls. Because these are enumerator-recorded, these responses are not biased by respondents' perceptions of the state. Across both (b) the availability of services and (c) the existence of infrastructure, there is no evidence that persistent underdevelopment could explain disapproval of the government.

Figure 6: State capacity and public goods provision



Note: regressions are subsetting to areas within 150 km of the Zimbabwe–Mozambique border; control for respondent year of birth; and include province fixed effects and Afrobarometer round fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the local authority (rural district) level. Number of observations range between $n = 701$ (5 km bandwidth) and $n = 1,435$ (9.5 km bandwidth).

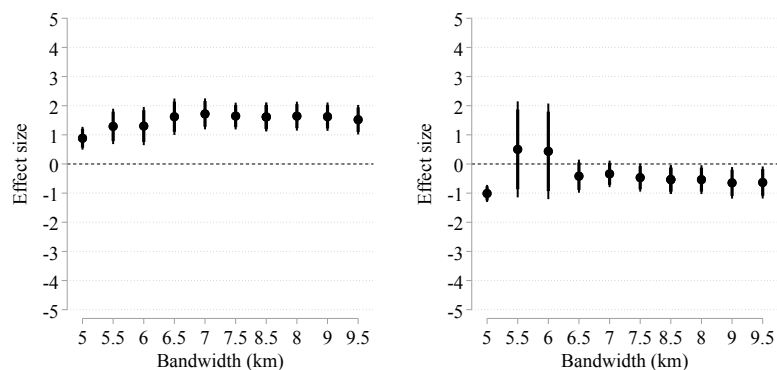
Source: author's calculations.

In the second row, we examine outcomes related to persistent state legibility and coercive capacity, which we measure using variables on fear and state security presence. We present regression results from three indices, all constructed from enumerator-recorded responses: (d) whether the respondent or the respondents' neighbours seemed suspicious or afraid; (e) whether the enumerator themselves felt threatened or were approached by politicians; (f) whether police presence—police vehicles and roadblocks—was observed. These outcomes are, as with the development outcomes above, reasonably

more objective than respondents' survey answers and represent a more truthful representation of the state of affairs. The three outcomes demonstrate no major differences in the state's coercive capacity in PV-affected areas. State security presence is similar, and people are not more afraid.

Another alternative mechanism for the main findings may be that wartime victimization depressed civilian attitudes across the board—leading to exit from politics and reduced interest in political affairs. We argue that this channel is inconsistent with several of our results, namely no difference in consuming political news or discussing politics (Figure 4) and decreased support for authoritarianism (Figure 5). In Figure 7 we further show evidence against this. We first create an index to examine (a) support for the main opposition party using questions about feeling closest to, and trusting, the main opposition party. We also examine an indicator variable for whether participants felt that democracy did not matter for 'people like me'—which is most indicative of a resigned attitude towards politics. We find greater support for the opposition and negative effects on democracy not mattering. We take these two results as evidence against this final alternative channel.

Figure 7: Depressed outlook



(a) Support main opposition

(b) Democracy doesn't matter

Note: regressions are subsetting to areas within 150 km of the Zimbabwe–Mozambique border; control for respondent year of birth; and include province fixed effects and Afrobarometer round fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the local authority (rural district) level. Number of observations range between $n=701$ (5 km bandwidth) and $n=1,435$ (9.5 km bandwidth).

Source: author's calculations.

5.3 Robustness checks

We show that our results are robust to various alternative specifications in Appendix F. First, in our preferred specification, we include province-level fixed effects—which are at a higher administrative unit—to maximize the number of clusters with enough data points for estimation. We show that all results are robust to using district fixed effects instead. Second, because our data is spatial in nature, clustering is a major concern. Without our preferred specification, we cluster at the level of the local council, which corresponds to urban and rural district-level government. We further show that results are robust to using Conley standard errors instead. Third, we note in Appendix E that our sample is imbalanced for three geographical features—national parks, cropland, and forested land. We show that our results are robust to the inclusion of these geographic features as controls. Fourth, our sample primarily consists of rural regions, since the war and the PV strategy was primarily concentrated within rural terrain. However, a small portion of the wards are today classified as urban according to the Afrobarometer survey. We show that our results are robust to dropping these wards from our sample.

6 Conclusion

This paper has explored the Zimbabwe Liberation War to examine the longer-term effects of wartime forced resettlement on civilian attitudes. During the Liberation War, civilians living in a subset of ZANU-supporting areas along Zimbabwe's eastern border were forced to live in PVs—fenced and guarded keeps that were erected to sever the links between rebels and civilians. Entire communities that were forced into PVs were subsequently politicized as politics affected their lives in a comparatively more visceral manner.

We argued that the PV policy increased affected communities' political awareness, both during the war and in the long run. During the war, victimized communities increased their support for the broader nationalist movement. Through interactions with the Rhodesian state and with the independence-seeking rebels, civilian communities were more likely to have learned how to identify illiberal politics through their experiences, and taught ideas of good governance and development policies. After the rebels became incumbents these same civilian communities continued to evaluate the new government's governing methods.

Zimbabwe's illiberal politics today allow us to disentangle our argument, political awareness, from the existing literature, which emphasizes pro-social activation in the short term and hardened attitudes in the long term. Since independence in 1980, ZANU-PF has dominated the government under de facto single-party rule. Under ZANU-PF, Zimbabwe has suffered from poor policy implementation, corruption, and competitive authoritarian rule. The country's economic conditions have deteriorated across the decades, and—while once known as Africa's bread basket—its agricultural sector has particularly suffered. Increased political awareness would therefore also increase criticism of government performance and the state of democracy in Zimbabwe.

We use a difference-in-discontinuities causal identification strategy to estimate differences in attitudes towards the ruling party, ZANU-PF. Our results indicate that individuals living in PV-affected wards today are less supportive of the ruling party. They are more critical of the government, both with respect to economic issues and public goods provision, and also with respect to the political climate. Notably, we show null or negative results for political participation—which is consistent with greater political awareness and deliberate disengagement from politics (Croke et al. 2016). We rule out alternative channels for our main effects: (1) state development and coercive capacity, and (2) depressed dispositions towards politics overall due to wartime experiences.

These results add to ongoing work on the legacies of conflict and civilian victimization. While existing work has compellingly showed the role of social memory in sustaining long-run negative attitudes towards their oppressors, this body of scholarship has focused primarily on cases where the perpetrators remain powerful and wartime cleavages are still present. In a large proportion of conflict termination, however, the rebels—over whom citizens are punished for supporting—do in fact make it into power. Some, such as in Zimbabwe, take control completely. Results from the Zimbabwean case show that termination matters for post-war legacies, which opens up further avenues of inquiry: while we have focused on rebel victory and the enduring effects of political awareness, future research ought to explore how civilians' relationships with their preferred party develops following other forms of conflict termination, such as power-sharing.

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Appendix

A Variable construction

Figure 3: **Trust in ruling party variables**

- *Trust ruling party* is an index variable of *closest to ZANU-PF*, *trust incumbent*, and *trust president*.
- *Trust institutions (justice/EC)* is an index variable of *trust national courts* and *trust electoral commission*.
- *Trust security (police/army)* is an index variable of *trust police* and *trust army*.
- Variables measuring trust in the incumbent, president, EC, courts, police, and army are all coded from 0 to 3 where 0 indicates “not at all” and 3 indicates “a lot.”

Figure 4: **Political activity**

- *Formal politics* is an index comprising the following variables: attend campaign rally; attend campaign meeting; persuade others to vote for party; worked for candidate; registered to vote; voted. All variables are coded as 1 if the participant had done so in the past national election.
- *Attends demonstrations* asks whether respondents attend demonstrations or protests. The variable is coded from 0 to 4, where 0 indicates “would never do this” and 4 indicates “all the time.”
- *Joins community associations* is coded from 0 to 3 where 0 indicates “not a member” and 3 indicates that the respondent is a “leader” in organizations.
- *Attended community meetings* is coded from 0 to 4, where 0 indicates “would never do this” and 4 indicates “all the time.”
- *Consumes political news* is an index variable of whether the respondent consumes any political news via the radio, TV, newspapers, Internet, or social media. Responses are coded between “0” if the respondent never does, and “4” if they always do.
- *Discuss politics* asks whether the respondent discusses politics with others. The variable is coded from 0 to 2, where 0 indicates “never” and 2 indicates “often.”

Figure 5: **Evaluation of government and politics**

- *Satisfied (economic)* is an index variable that measures satisfaction with government performance on economic issues. Variables include: managing the economy, managing poverty, creating jobs, keeping prices down, narrowing the income gap, and ensuring that there is food to eat. All are coded from 0 to 3 where 0 indicates the the government handles the issue “very badly” and 3 indicates “very well.”
- *Satisfied (issues)* is an index variable that measures satisfaction with government performance on public goods provision. Variables include: reducing crime, improving health, addressing educational needs, maintaining roads, providing electricity, providing water and

sanitation, and fighting corruption. All are coded from 0 to 3 where 0 indicates the the government handles the issue “very badly” and 3 indicates “very well.”

- *Gov performance* is an index variable that measures whether respondents were satisfied with the performance of the president and their MP. Both are coded from 0 to 3, where 0 indicates that they are “not at all” satisfied, and 3 indicates “very” satisfied.
- *Supports political competition* is an index variable of whether respondents support: elections, political parties, two-term limit, and party competition. All variables are coded as 0 to 3 where 3 indicates strong support.
- *Rejects authoritarianism* is an index variable of whether respondent rejects: one-man rule, one-party rule, military rule. All variables are coded as 0 to 3 where 3 indicates strong rejection.
- *Zimbabwe’s democratic quality* is coded from 0 to 3, where 0 indicates “not a democracy” and 3 indicates “full democracy.”

Figure 6: **State capacity and public goods provision**

- *Unemployed* is coded as 1 if the respondent indicates that they are unemployed.
- *Availability of services* is an index variable of whether the following services exist (as observed by the enumerator): electricity, piped water, sewage, and cell service. All variables are coded as 1 if they exist.
- *Existence of infrastructure* is an index variable of whether the following infrastructure exist (as observed by the enumerator): post office, school, police station, health clinic, and market stalls. All variables are coded as 1 if they exist.
- *Respondent or neighbors seemed afraid* is an index comprising the following variables: respondent was suspicious, respondent seemed misleading, respondent was hostile, respondent was uncooperative, neighbor seemed interested, neighbor was suspicious, neighbor was afraid. Respondent variables are coded from a 0 to 2 scale; neighbor variables are coded on a 0 and 1 scale.
- *Enumerator was, or felt, threatened* is an index comprising the following variables: enumerator approached by political representatives, enumerator felt threatened, enumerator physically threatened. All variables are coded on a 0 and 1 scale.
- *Police presence observed* is an index variable of two variables: enumerator saw police vehicles and numerator saw police roadblocks. Both are coded on a 0 and 1 scale.

B Descriptive statistics

Table B1: Summary statistics

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Designated native land	2924	0.616	0.487	0	1
Protected village policy	2924	0.360	0.480	0	1
Figure 3: Trust in ruling party					
Trust ZANU	2923	0.932	0.745	0	3
Trust president	2808	1.759	1.133	0	3
Trust Electoral Commission	2658	1.425	1.098	0	3
Trust courts and dept of justice	2773	1.789	0.949	0	3
Trust police	2889	1.497	1.052	0	3
Trust army	2573	1.854	0.997	0	3
Figure 4: Political activity					
Participates in formal politics	2647	0.573	0.315	0	1
Attend demonstration	2882	0.430	0.792	0	4
Participates in associations	2378	0.900	0.759	0	3
Attend community meeting	2604	2.430	1.176	0	4
Discusses politics	2681	0.915	0.707	0	2
Consumes political news	2915	1.252	1.131	0	4
Figure 5: Evaluation of government and politics					
Satisfied with handling the economy	2907	1.088	0.728	0	3.333
Satisfied with public goods provision	2902	1.208	0.675	0	3
Good government performance	2829	1.504	0.927	0	3
Reject authoritarian regimes	2804	2.249	0.748	0	3
Supports political competition	2599	2.072	0.602	0	3
Zimbabwe is a democracy	2425	1.216	1.027	0	3
Figure 6: State capacity and public goods provision					
No job	2917	0.689	0.463	0	1
Infrastructure	2700	0.523	0.272	0	1
Services	2698	0.399	0.326	0	1
Respondent/neighbors afraid	2923	0.384	0.435	0	2
Enumerator threatened	2921	0.014	0.092	0	1
Police vehicles or police seen in/near EA	2699	0.179	0.384	0	1
Roadblocks set up by police in/near EA	1870	0.081	0.273	0	1

Source: author's elaboration.

C Tables from main results

Table C1: Trust in ruling party

	(1) Trust ruling party	(2) Trust institutions	(3) Trust security
Effect of PV	-1.264*** (0.240)	-1.012*** (0.211)	-1.567*** (0.211)
Observations	991	1144	1042

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table C2: Political activity

	(1) Participates formal pol	(2) Attend demo.	(3) Participates associations	(4) Attend comm. meeting	(5) Consume pol. news	(6) Discusses politics
Effect of PV	-0.220*** (0.064)	-0.271 (0.179)	-0.502* (0.288)	-0.789*** (0.236)	-0.469 (0.290)	0.191 (0.654)
Observations	924	953	916	1075	867	1031

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table C3: Evaluation of government and politics

	(1) Good gov. perf.	(2) Satisfied econ	(3) Satisfied pub goods from
Effect of PV	-1.008*** (0.167)	-0.347 (0.460)	-0.734*** (0.199)
Observations	1047	1445	1007

	Supp. pol. comp.	Reject auth. regimes	Zim. is democracy
Effect of PV	0.519*** (0.147)	0.682*** (0.177)	-0.775*** (0.203)
Observations	968	1033	1023

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table C4: State capacity

	(1) Unemployed	(2) Services avail.	(3) Infrastructure
Effect of PV	0.093 (0.158)	0.331* (0.169)	0.277 (0.224)
Observations	1299	1099	1106

	(1) Resp/neighbor afraid	(2) Enum threatened	(3) Police presence
Effect of PV	1.214*** (0.088)	0.114 (0.145)	-0.276 (0.410)
Observations	1159	1436	1152

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table C5: Depressed outlook

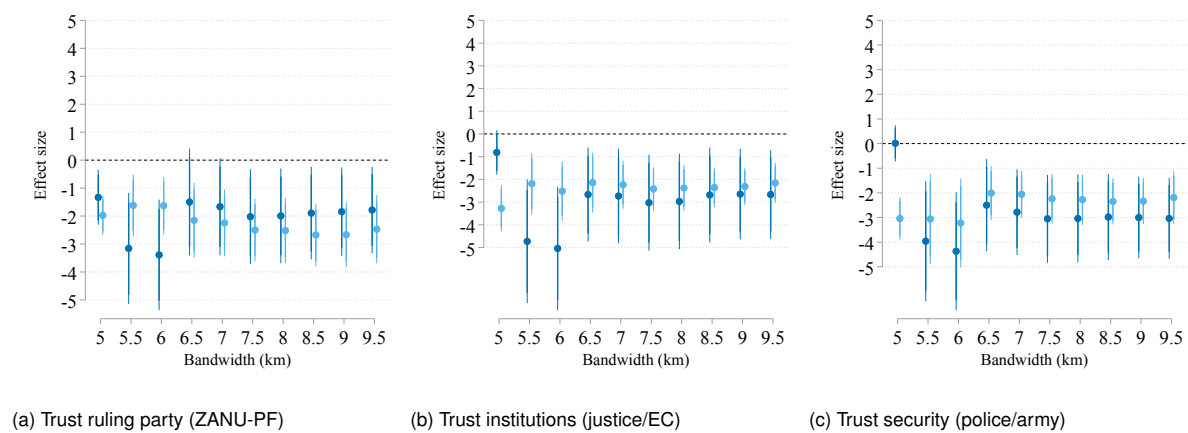
	(1) Supp. main opposition	(2) Democracy doesn't matter
Effect of PV	0.864*** (0.178)	0.436 (0.770)
Observations	1062	1125

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

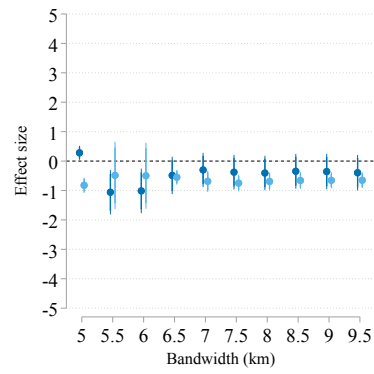
D Cohort effects

Figure D1: Trust in ruling party

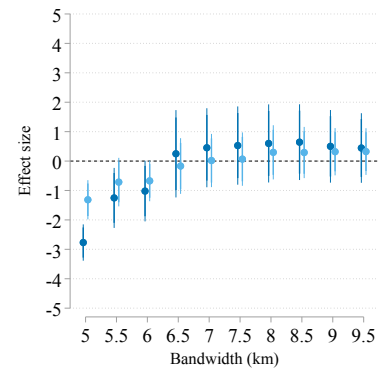


Source: author's calculations.

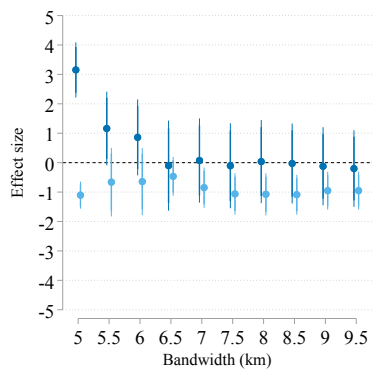
Figure D2: Political activity



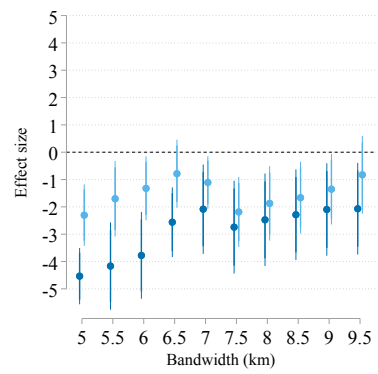
(a) Participated in formal politics



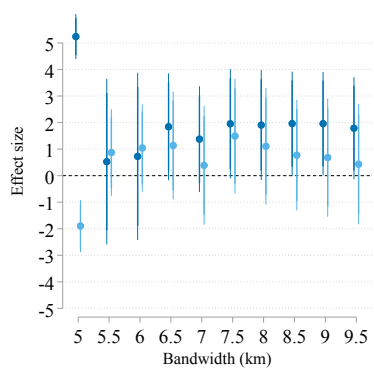
(b) Attended demonstrations



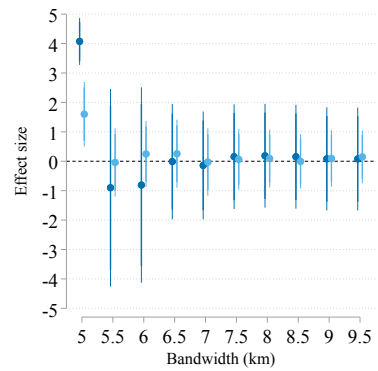
(c) Joins community associations



(d) Attended community meetings



(e) Consumes political news

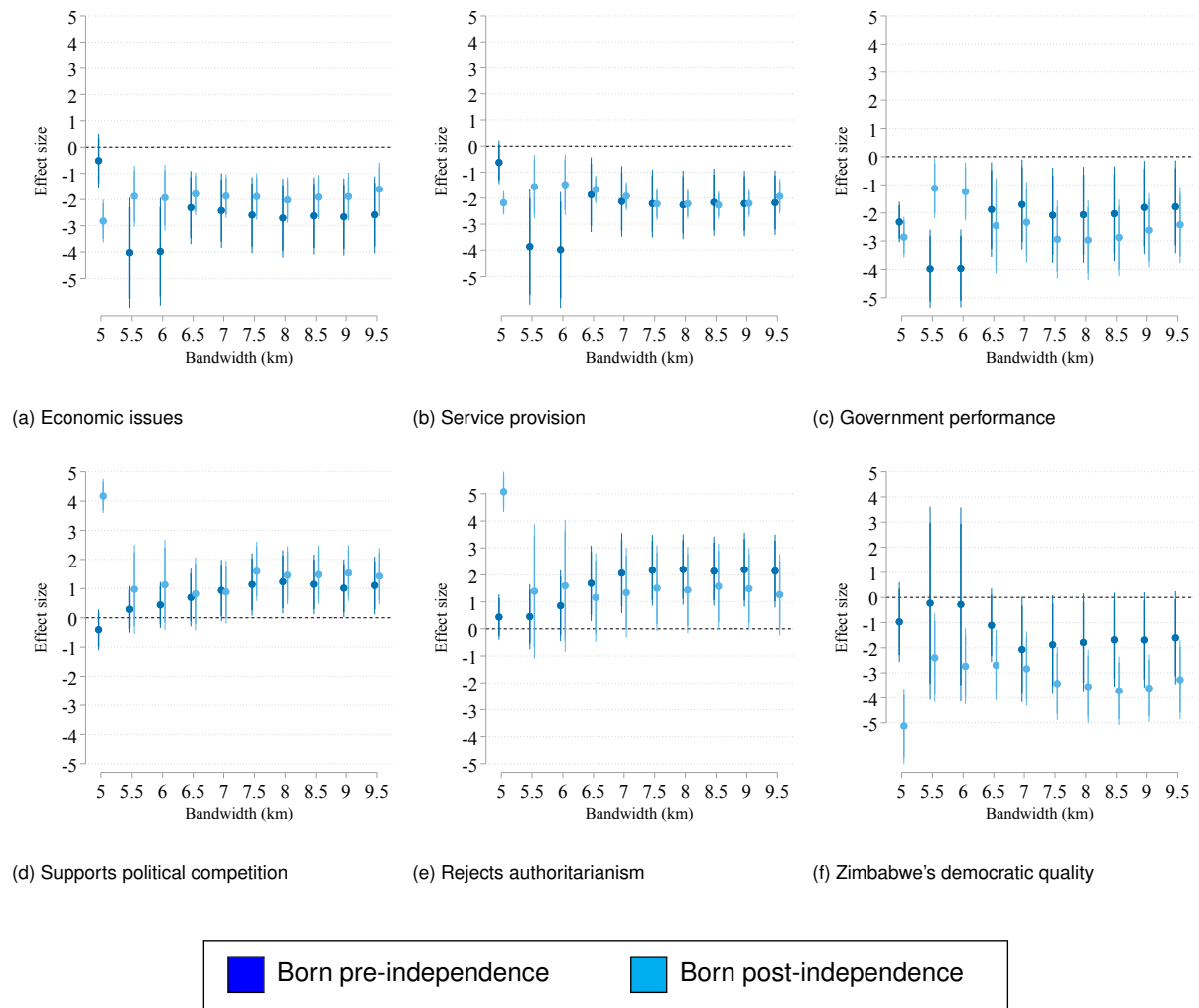


(f) Discuss politics



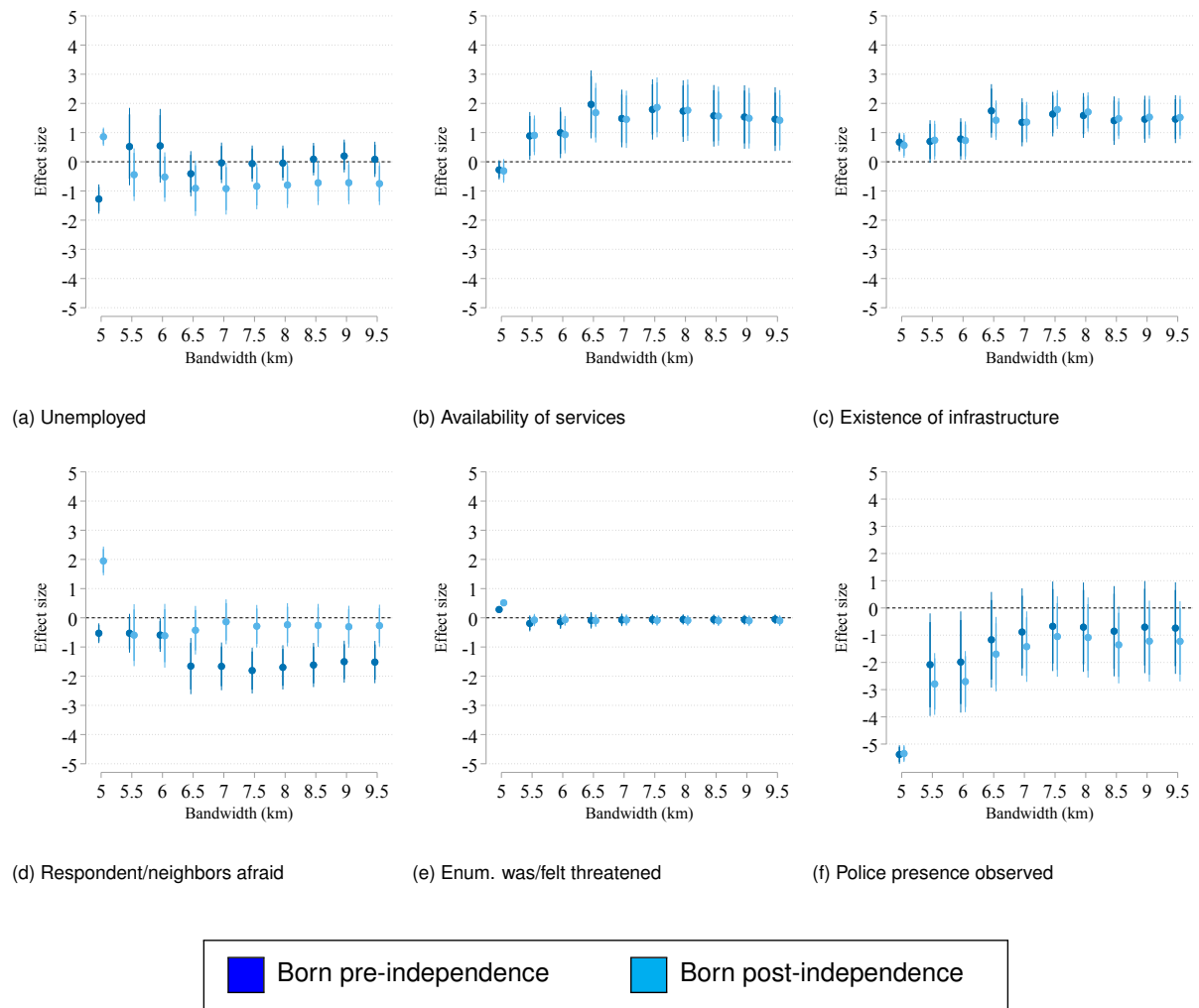
Source: author's calculations.

Figure D3: Evaluation of government and politics



Source: author's calculations.

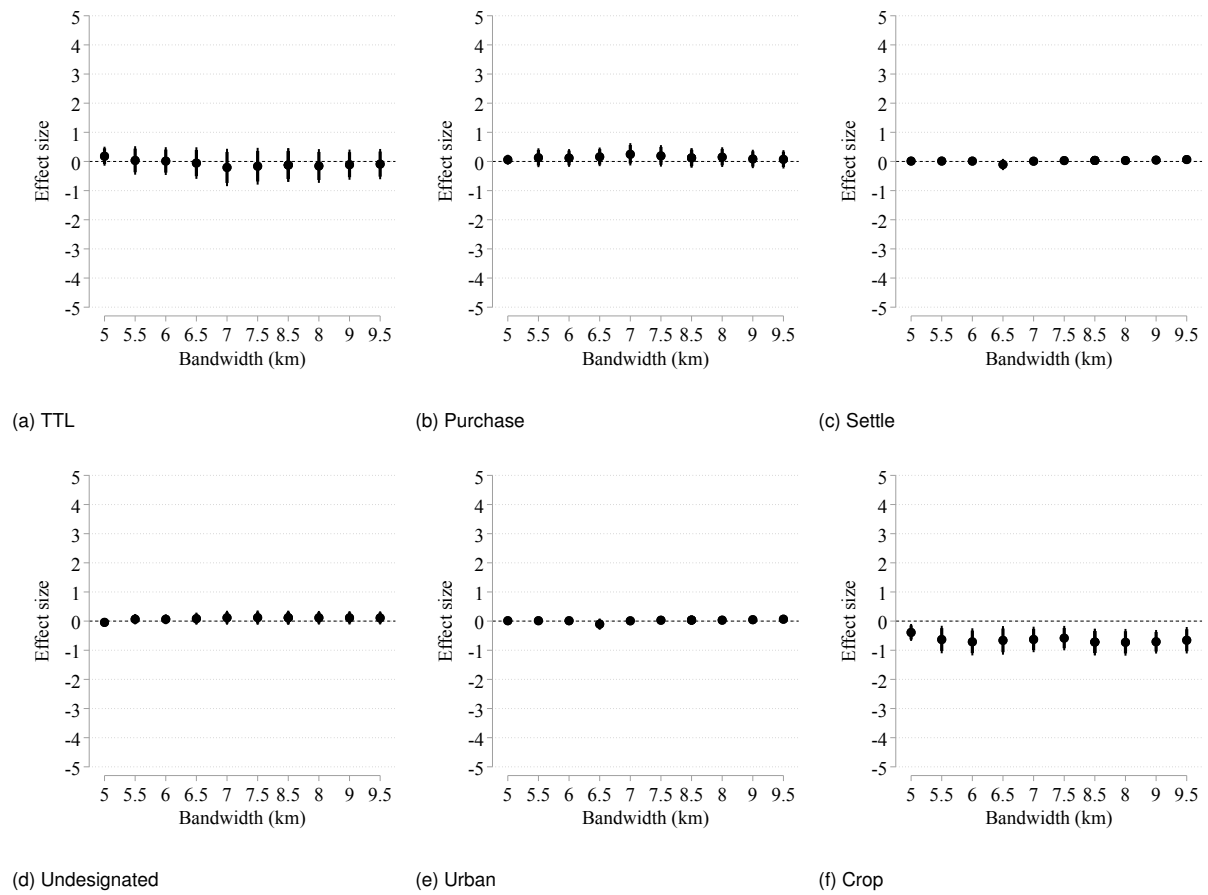
Figure D4: State capacity and public goods provision



Source: author's calculations.

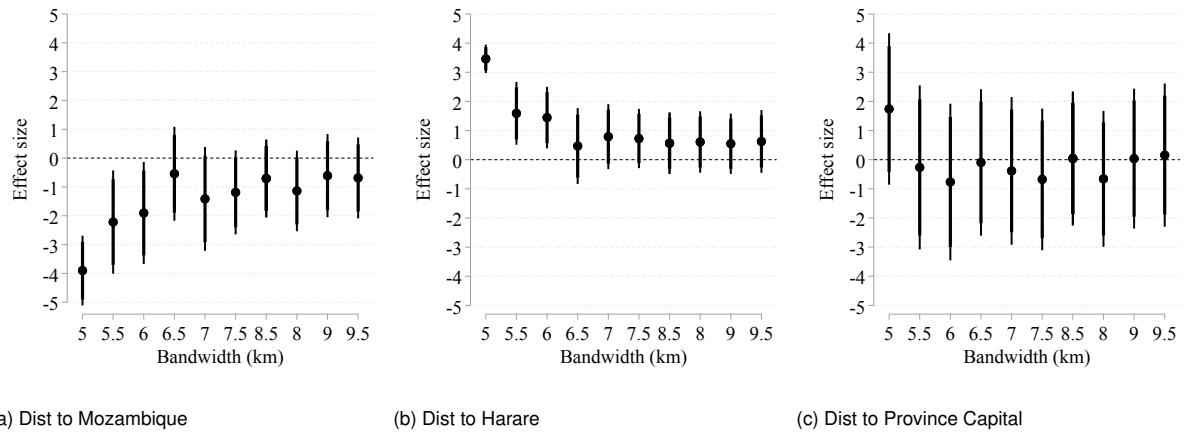
E Balance

Figure E1: Pre-war colonial land designations



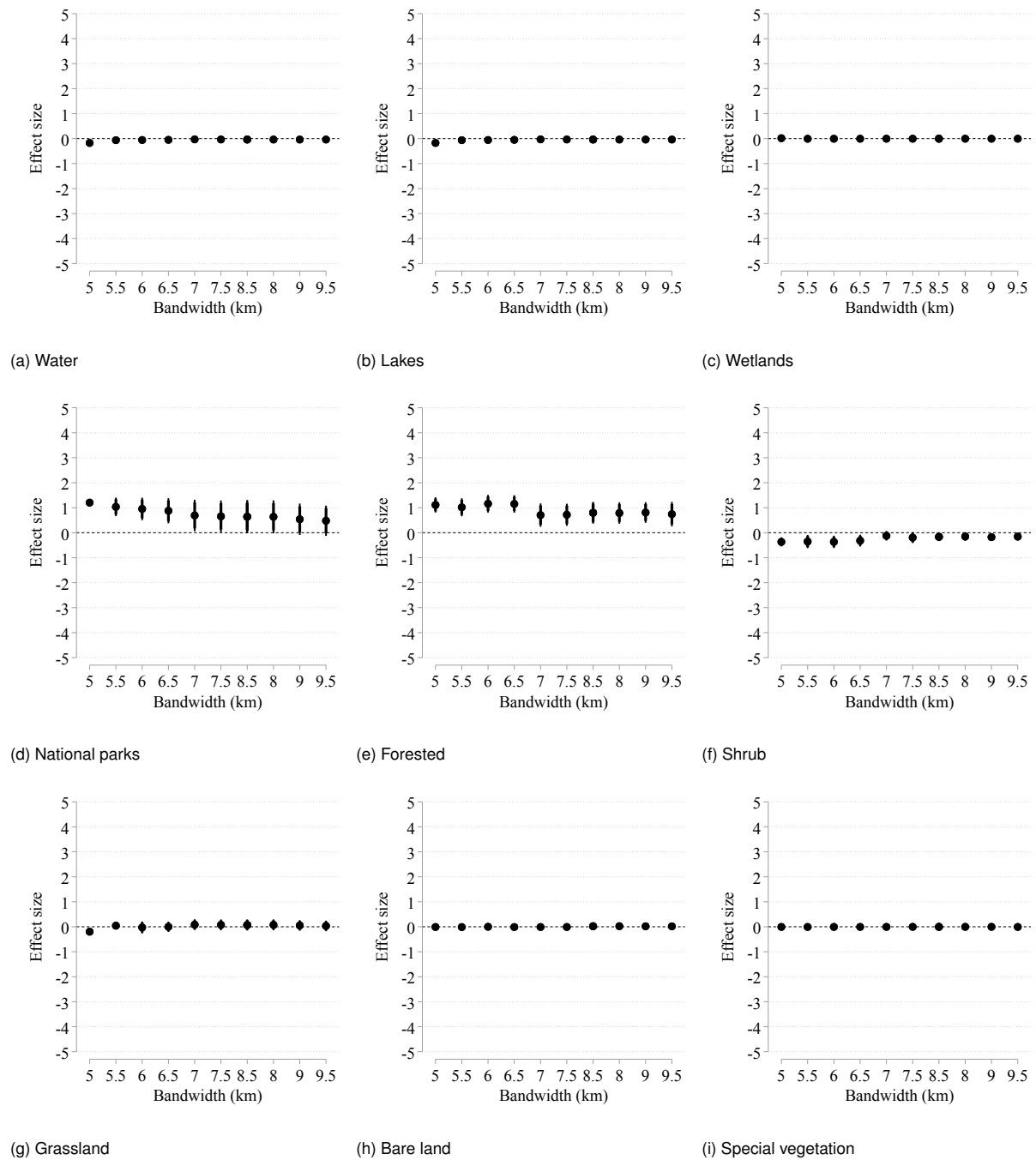
Source: author's calculations.

Figure E2: Distance to border, capital, and provincial capitals



Source: author's calculations.

Figure E3: Geographical features



Source: author's calculations.

F Robustness checks

F1 Trust in ruling party

Figure F1: With district fixed effects

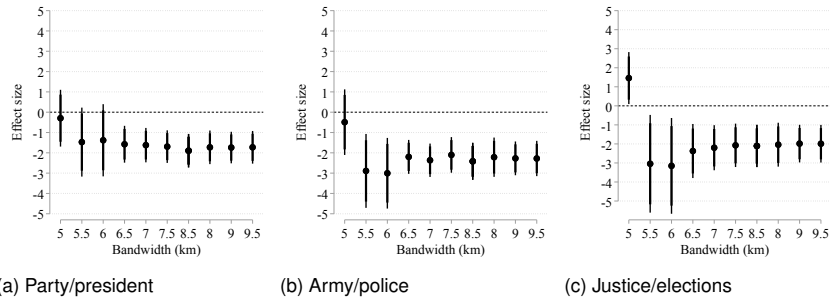


Figure F2: With Conley standard errors

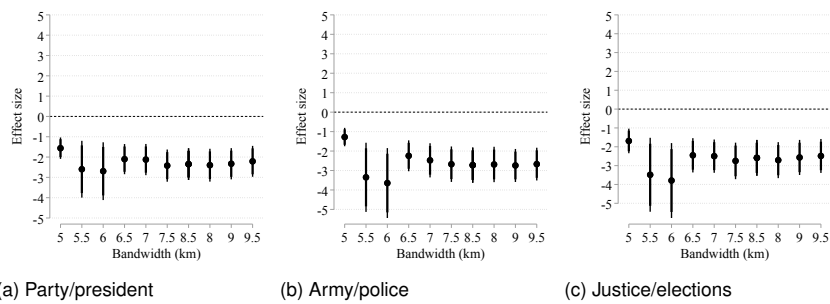


Figure F3: With geographic controls

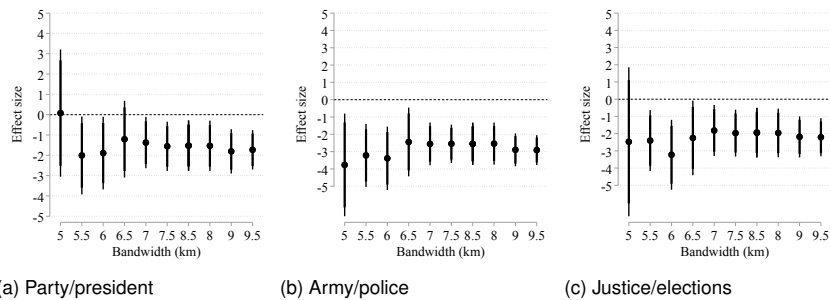
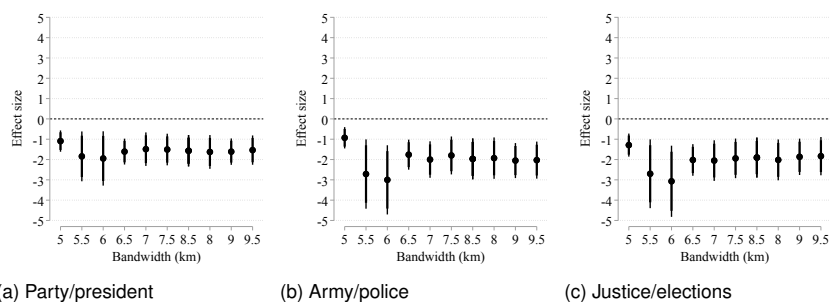


Figure F4: Dropping urban wards



Source: author's calculations.

F2 Political activity

Figure F5: With district fixed effects

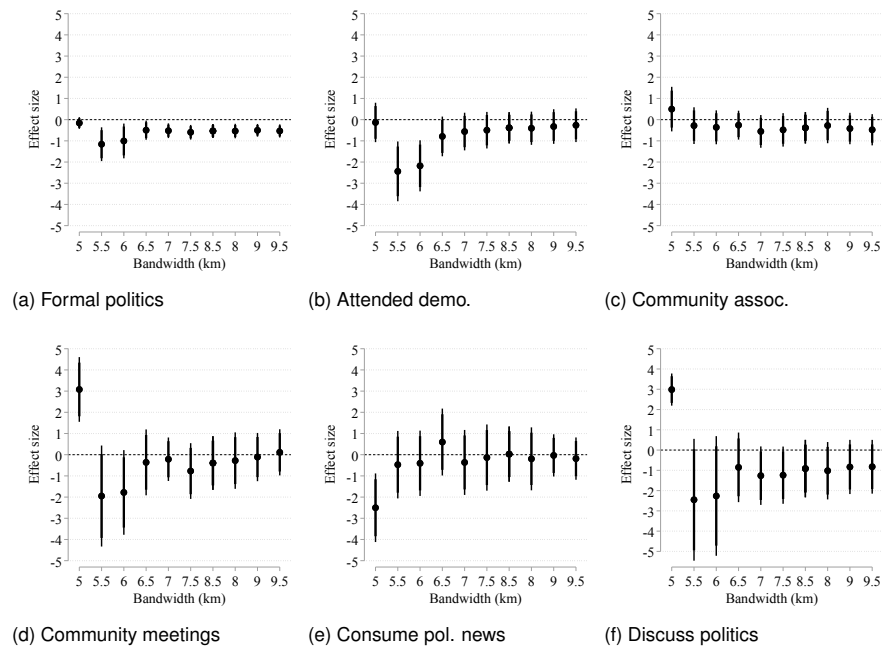
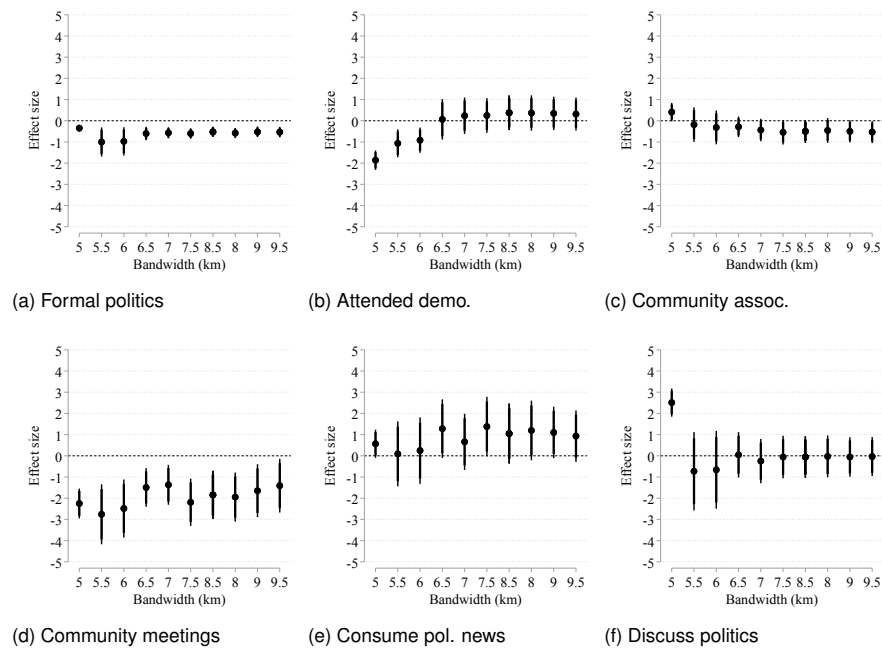


Figure F6: With Conley standard errors



Source: author's calculations.

Figure F7: With geographic controls

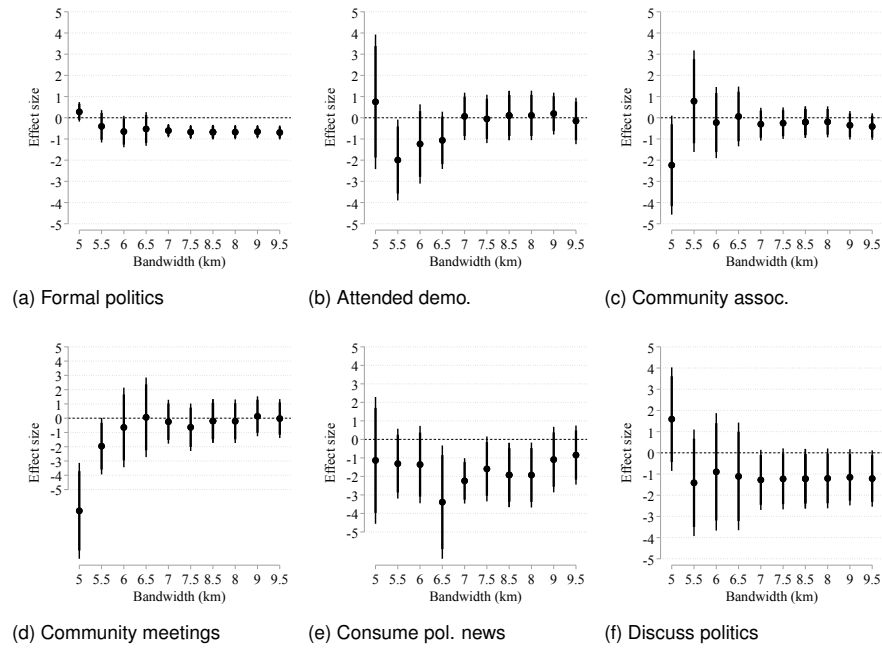
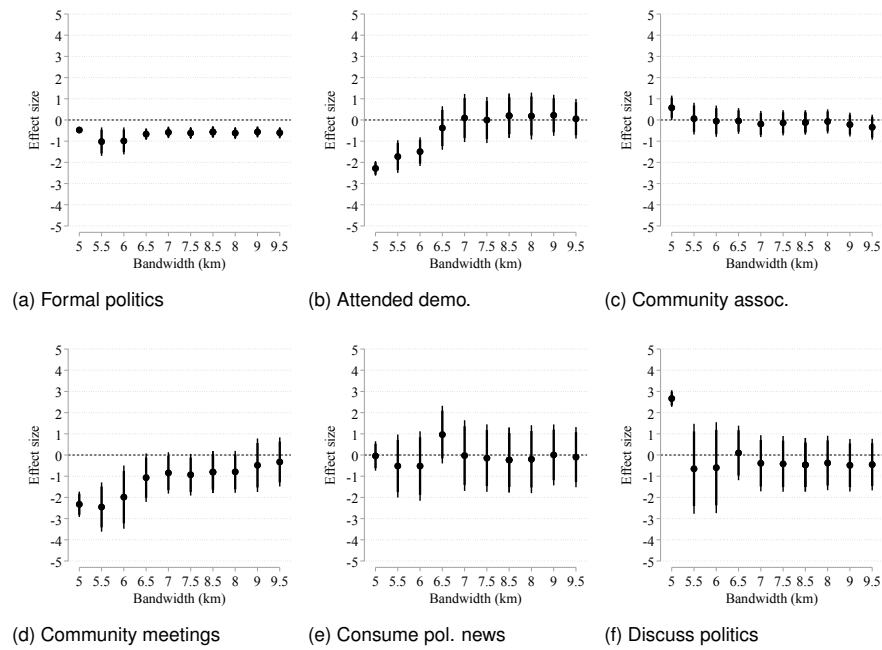


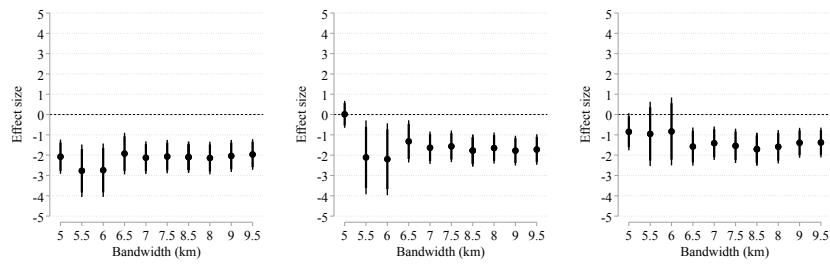
Figure F8: Dropping urban wards



Source: author's calculations.

F3 Evaluation of government

Figure F9: With district fixed effects

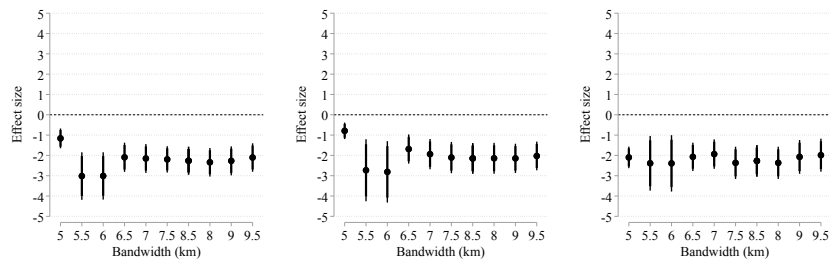


(a) Economic issues

(b) Service provision

(c) Gov. performance

Figure F10: With Conley standard errors

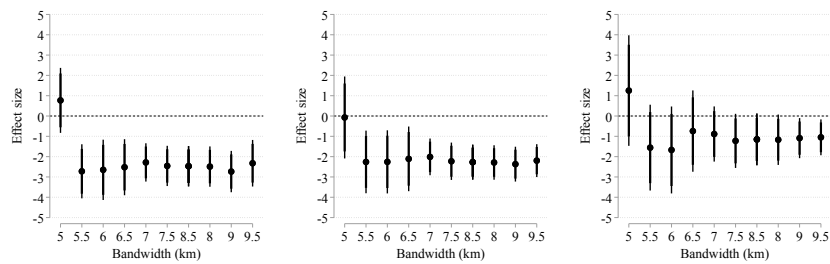


(a) Economic issues

(b) Service provision

(c) Gov. performance

Figure F11: With geographic controls

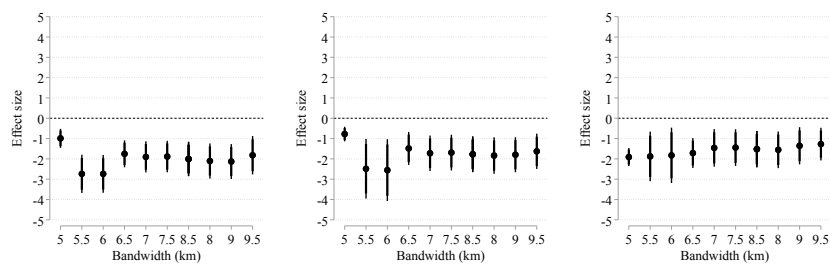


(a) Economic issues

(b) Service provision

(c) Gov. performance

Figure F12: Dropping urban wards



(a) Economic issues

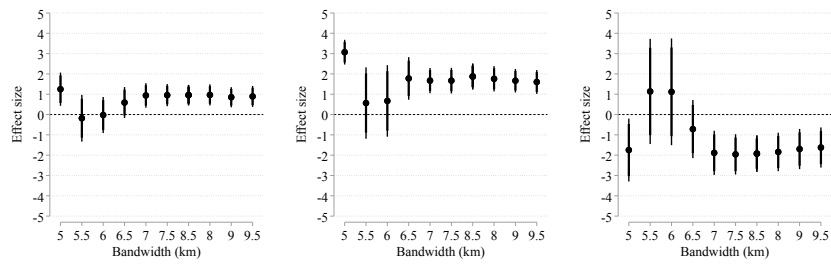
(b) Service provision

(c) Gov. performance

Source: author's calculations.

F4 Evaluation of politics

Figure F13: With district fixed effects

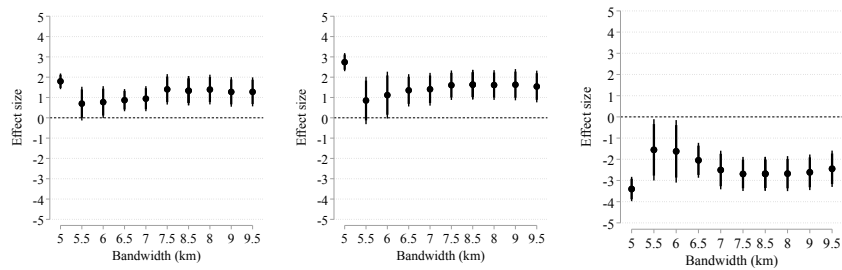


(a) Supports pol. comp.

(b) Rejects auth.

(c) Zim. dem. quality

Figure F14: With Conley standard errors

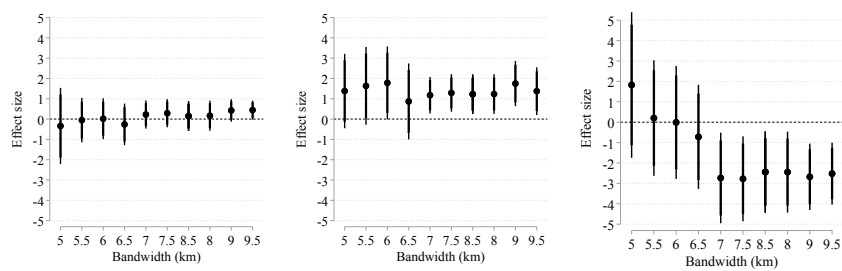


(a) Supports pol. comp.

(b) Rejects auth.

(c) Zim. dem. quality

Figure F15: With geographic controls

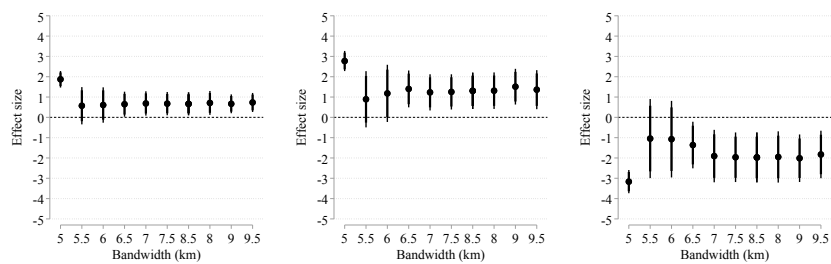


(a) Supports pol. comp.

(b) Rejects auth.

(c) Zim. dem. quality

Figure F16: Dropping urban wards



(a) Supports pol. comp.

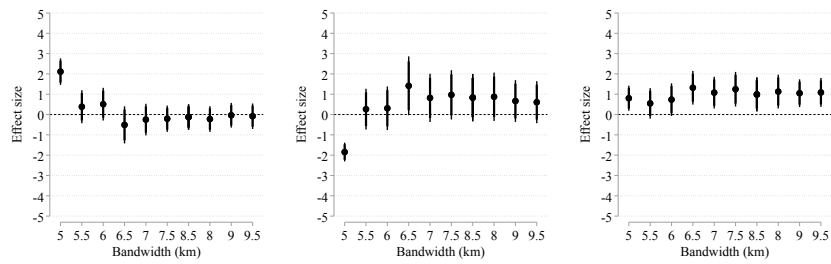
(b) Rejects auth.

(c) Zim. dem. quality

Source: author's calculations.

F5 State capacity (public goods)

Figure F17: With district fixed effects

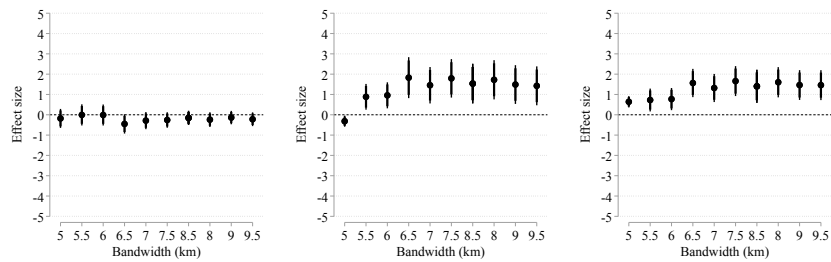


(a) Unemployed

(b) Avail. services

(c) Infrastructure

Figure F18: With Conley standard errors

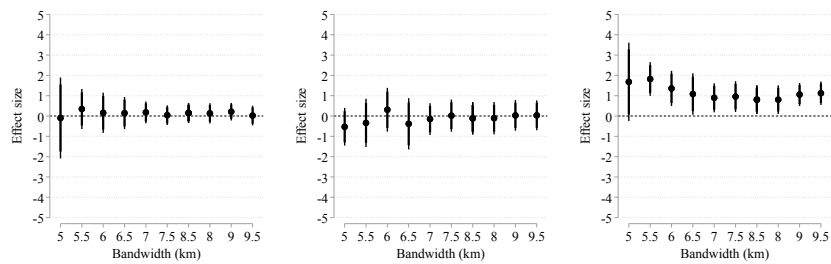


(a) Unemployed

(b) Avail. of services

(c) Infrastructure

Figure F19: With geographic controls

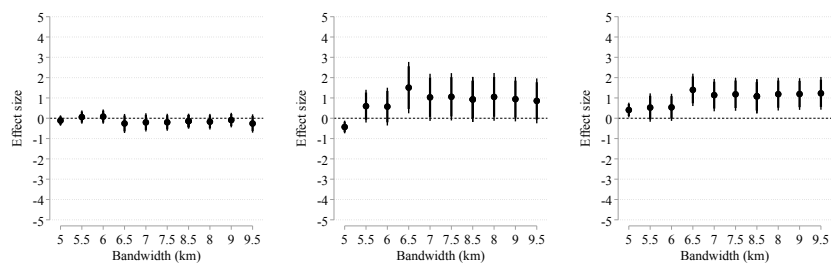


(a) Unemployed

(b) Avail. of services

(c) Infrastructure

Figure F20: Dropping urban wards



(a) Unemployed

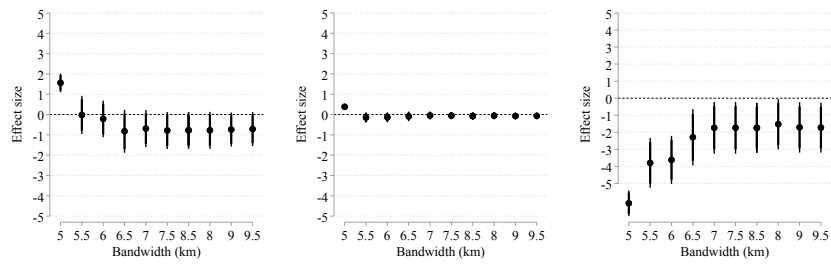
(b) Avail. of services

(c) Infrastructure

Source: author's calculations.

F6 State capacity (coercion)

Figure F21: With district fixed effects

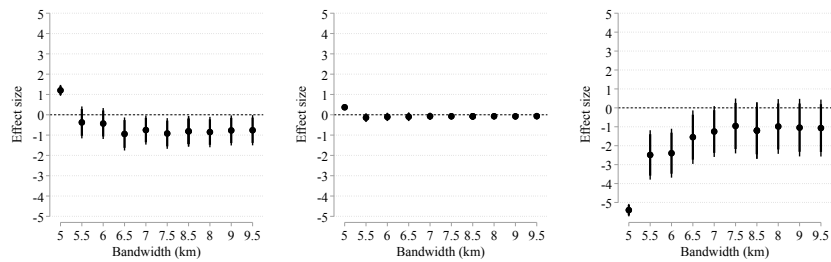


(a) Resp. afraid

(b) Enum. threatened

(c) Police observed

Figure F22: With Conley standard errors

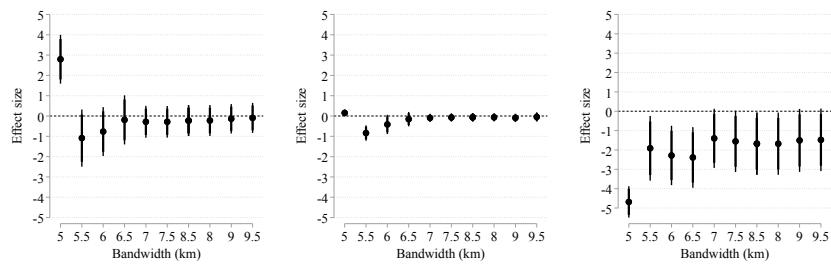


(a) Resp. afraid

(b) Enum. threatened

(c) Police observed

Figure F23: With geographic controls

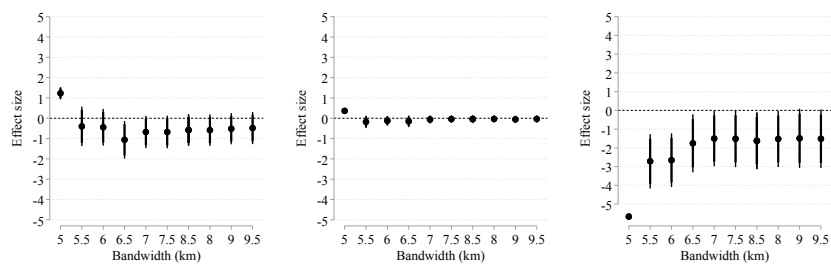


(a) Resp. afraid

(b) Enum. threatened

(c) Police observed

Figure F24: Dropping urban wards



(a) Resp. afraid

(b) Enum. threatened

(c) Police observed

Source: author's calculations.