



The impact of natives' attitudes on refugee integration[☆]

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ABSTRACT

Exploiting the random allocation of asylum seekers to different locations in Germany, we study the impact of native attitudes, proxied by voting behaviors, on refugees' integration. We find that in municipalities with more voting for the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) political party, refugees have worse social integration. These impacts are largest for groups targeted by AfD campaigns. Refugees are also more likely to suffer from harassment and right-wing attacks in areas with greater AfD support. Positive interactions with locals are also less likely and negative opinions about immigration spillover to supporters of other parties in these areas. On the other hand, stronger support for pro-immigrant parties enhances social integration.

1. Introduction

The EU received almost 2.6 million asylum applications in 2015 and 2016, with over 75% of these individuals fleeing conflict in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan (Eurostat, 2020; Spindler, 2015). This sudden inflow quickly dominated media headlines and the political debate, and became known as the "European Refugee Crisis" (Fengler and Kreutler, 2020). Past immigrants to Europe as well as their children have been found to generally integrate slowly both economically and socially (Algan et al., 2010, 2012). Labor market outcomes for refugees are even further behind those of other migrants in Europe (Fasani et al., 2022). Given the size and context of this recent inflow, it is crucial that better integration outcomes are achieved. While initial attitudes towards these refugees were positive in many countries, opinions were polarized with right-wing political groups accusing them of importing crime and regressive social attitudes (Hoven and Hestermann, 2019).¹

This paper studies how the host society's attitude towards immigrants influences the integration of recent refugees. Specifically, we examine the relationship between local (municipality) support for the right-wing populist political party, Alternative for Germany (AfD), and the economic and social integration of refugees who arrived in Germany during the large inflow in 2015 and 2016, controlling for a wide variety of other local characteristics. As discussed below, anti-immigrant and anti-refugee rhetoric is a core part of the AfD's party platform.² Recent work has argued that the attitudes of locals are potentially an important factor influencing immigrant integration and that negative attitudes can potentially lead to either better or worse integration depending on other factors (Bisin and Tura, 2019).

We are able to identify the causal impact of local attitudes because new refugees to Germany are quasi-randomly allocated to federal states based on a quota system and most federal states further allocate refugees quasi-randomly to municipalities within the state and restrict

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¹ The term "refugee" is used in this paper to describe any immigrant who has applied for or has received asylum status or who resides in Germany under any other protection status. It does not necessarily reflect an immigrant's legal status.

² Several papers show a correlation between right-wing voting and unfavorable attitudes towards immigrants (Avdeenko and Siedler, 2017; Billiet and De Witte, 1995; Bukow, 2017; Lubbers and Scheepers, 2000).

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their mobility.³ Importantly, previous research has found that immigrants are less likely to move to municipalities that have voiced anti-immigrant attitudes (Bracco et al., 2018; Slotwinski and Stutzer, 2019), hence it is critical to have an identification strategy that eliminates the possibility of this type of selection.⁴

We measure integration outcomes using high-quality data from a representative sample of refugees who came to Germany between 2013 and 2016 (the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees). This is the largest representative survey of refugees in Europe and asks a variety of questions about economic and social integration, as well as detailed questions about each refugee's socio-demographic background. We are also able to identify the municipality of residence for all sample members in the secure access version of the data. Germany was a particularly large recipient country during the latest refugee inflows; by the end of 2016, around 1.22 million asylum seekers had arrived in Germany, which accounted for 47.3% of all applications in the EU in those years (BAMF, 2017; European Migration Network, 2017).

Using administrative data on the location of refugees at the municipality level for all of Germany, we first show that the allocation of refugees appears to be unrelated to both previous local voting behaviors and the socio-demographic characteristics of municipalities prior to the refugee crisis. We then show that local AfD voting is also unrelated to the demographic characteristics of refugees in different municipalities in the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees. Therefore, from the refugees' perspective, the attitude of Germans in their municipality of residence appears to be randomly allocated. We also show that, consistent with most of the previous literature looking at larger geographical areas, the allocation of refugees in 2015 and 2016 did not influence voting for the AfD in the subsequent years at the municipality level (Gehrsitz and Ungerer, 2022; Schaub et al., 2021; Gallegos Torres, 2022).⁵ Hence, local voting for the AfD can be taken as a proxy measure for local attitudes towards migrants.

We then examine the relationship between local attitudes and integration outcomes. Controlling for a wide variety of local characteristics, including voting for the mainstream center-right party, as well as state-fixed effects, we find that in municipalities where more Germans vote for the AfD refugees have significantly worse social integration. This result is robust to controlling for county fixed effects, excluding states that allow refugees to choose their municipality of residence, as well as instrumenting for a refugee's current location with that of their initial placement. On the other hand, local economic conditions, proxied by the local unemployment rate, are more important for determining economic integration.

We next examine the mechanisms behind our results. In line with our interpretation of voting for the AfD as a proxy for negative attitudes towards immigrants, we find that local AfD voting has the largest negative effect on groups targeted directly by AfD campaigns, specifically individuals from countries with a predominantly Muslim population and single men. We also find that the local AfD vote share strongly correlates with the share of racist attacks and reported harassment of

refugees in that area. Supporting the model of Bisin et al. (2011), which predicts that immigrants are more likely to emerge as an oppositional minority culture when there is a more threatening environment, we find that social integration is lower when there is an increasing threat from natives. Also consistent with this model, the impact of local attitudes is larger in areas with less previous immigration and local support for the Green party, which favors a more liberal immigration policy, has a positive effect on refugees' social integration in the host society.

We also show that local voting is related to the behavior of natives in regard to their interactions with refugees. In areas with more AfD support, natives are less likely to volunteer their time or donate money, and overall offer less support to refugees. On the contrary, in areas with more support for the Green party, natives are more likely to demonstrate in favor of refugees and generally offer more support. These are clearly pathways through which the action of natives can improve the integration of refugees.

Furthermore, with increasing local AfD vote share, supporters of other political parties, including those on the left, think immigration rules should be more restrictive and that it is increasingly important that immigrants assimilate to the German culture. Therefore, concerns about immigration voiced by the AfD spillover to supporters of other parties when they are likely more exposed to anti-immigrant campaigns and rhetoric in their daily life. This likely creates an even stronger oppositional culture in these areas.

Our paper makes an important contribution to the literature that examines how local attitudes and behaviors influence the assimilation of migrants in the host society. While previous papers have shown that specific events have negative impacts on immigrant integration, we are one of the first papers to focus on a more general measure of local hostile attitudes in a setting where migrants are randomly allocated to locations.⁶ Our paper shows that hostile attitudes do not need to have an extreme expression to have a negative impact on the minority group's integration. We also contribute more broadly to a recent literature examining the economic and social integration of these recent refugees (Bauer and Schu, 2017; Brell et al., 2020; Becker and Ferrara, 2019) as well as to the larger literature looking at the impact of local conditions on outcomes for immigrants (e.g., (Gould et al., 2004, 2011; Battisti et al., 2022; Keita and Valette, 2019; Åslund and Rooth, 2007; Barsbai et al., 2023)).

Our paper is closely related to recent work by Jaschke et al. (2021), Aksoy et al. (2023) and Müller et al. (2022), who all use similar identification strategies as in our paper to examine the impact of the local environment on outcomes for refugees. One limitation of each of these papers is that they measure the local environment at a more aggregated level (either counties or states in Germany or cantons in Switzerland) than we do in our paper. As we discuss below, this leads to different findings in terms of the relative importance of local attitudes and economic conditions on social and economic integration. Our focus on municipality-level variation also allows us to identify important effect heterogeneity, for example, we find that local attitudes matter more in locations with fewer previous immigrants.

Examining county-level variation in the placement of refugees, Jaschke et al. (2021) focus on the impact of attitudes towards immigrants in Germany on cultural and economic assimilation. Similar to the historical work for German immigrants in the USA by Fouka (2019),

³ Since 2016, accepted refugees are no longer allowed to move between federal states and in several states are even obliged to stay in the municipality of assignment for three further years if they receive benefits (residence restriction, §12a AufenthG). We limited our analysis to refugees who arrived in 2015 or later and hence are more likely to face these further mobility restrictions.

⁴ A number of papers have used the random allocation of refugees to examine the impact on the host community, for example, Dustmann et al. (2019) examine the impact on right-wing voting in Denmark, Dahlberg et al. (2012) examines the impact on preferences for redistribution also in Denmark, Entorf and Lange (2023) examine the impact on right-wing attacks in Germany, while Glitz (2012) looks at the impact on labor market outcomes in Germany.

⁵ One exception is Bredtmann (2022) who finds a small positive effect of exposure to refugees in a municipality and right-wing vote shares with the result solely driven by municipalities with reception centers.

⁶ Examples include Steinhardt (2018), which examines the impact of xenophobic attacks, Deole (2019), which examines anti-immigrant biases in the German justice system, Gould and Klor (2016), which examines the impact of the increase in hate crimes against Muslims after the 9/11 attack on the assimilation of Muslims in the USA, and Abdelgadir and Fouka (2020) finding the French headscarf ban to reduce French Muslim women's socioeconomic integration. In contrast to these papers, which all find negative impacts, Fouka (2019) finds that increased hostility towards German immigrants in the USA during World War I led to increased assimilation by this group.

they find that refugees converge faster towards the German culture when there are more negative attitudes in their region, while like our paper, they find no effect on the speed of labor market integration. Importantly, our paper shows that refugees in hostile areas can have worse social integration even while having faster cultural convergence. Social integration is arguably more important than cultural convergence as previous research has shown that it is strongly related to return migration decisions (Hannafi and Marouani, 2023).

Aksoy et al. (2023), on the other hand, focus on the impact of county-level economic conditions and unfavorable attitudes measured by Twitter sentiments and support for right-wing political parties in the 2017 federal election on economic integration and a multi-dimensional measure of integration among recent refugees in Germany. Different from our results, they find that both economic conditions and attitudes matter for integration, while we find that, once one controls for municipality characteristics, there is no relationship between either local attitudes and economic integration, or local economic conditions, measured by the unemployment share, and social integration. In general, we find that controlling for municipality economic conditions is particularly important for understanding the role of local attitudes as they are strongly correlated with refugee economic outcomes and local voting for the AfD.

In contrast to the evidence for Germany, Müller et al. (2022) find that refugees in Switzerland integrate faster economically if they face more hostile local attitudes measured through referendum votes. This paper examines refugee arrivals from 1998 to 2018, so potentially, the diverging results are explained by changes over time in the relationship between local attitudes and economic assimilation and/or differences in the type of refugees who came to Switzerland in the past and those who arrived in Germany in recent years. Or, more generally, because of the different economic and institutional environment in Switzerland. Unfortunately, it is not straightforward to disentangle these different potential reasons.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides background information on asylum seekers and right-wing voting in Germany. Section 3 describes the data and the empirical strategy used for the analysis. Section 4 describes the main results, as well as additional evidence on heterogeneity and the mechanisms behind our findings. Section 5 concludes.

2. Background

2.1. German asylum policy

With the very well-known “Wir schaffen das” (“We can handle this”) the German chancellor Angela Merkel decided in the fall of 2015 to suspend the Dublin rules for refugees stuck on the Balkan route, leading to around 1.2 million refugees arriving in Germany (BAMF, 2020). This event can be seen in Fig. 1; the number of refugees arriving in Germany increased slowly starting in 2011, then there was a sudden spike in 2015 and 2016. The refugee arrival rate has been declining since and by 2018 returned to the level seen in 2014.⁷

Refugees arriving in Germany must report their intention to seek asylum to a state organization where they are registered in the EASY system (Erstverteilung der Asylbegehrenden - initial distribution of asylum seekers), and their data is then stored in the Central Register of Foreigners. During this initial period, they are accommodated in short-term facilities and receive an asylum seeker registration certificate (or starting in 2016, proof of arrival) that entitles them to reside in Germany and receive asylum seeker benefits.

Individuals registered in the EASY system are then randomly sent to initial reception facilities in different federal states according to a

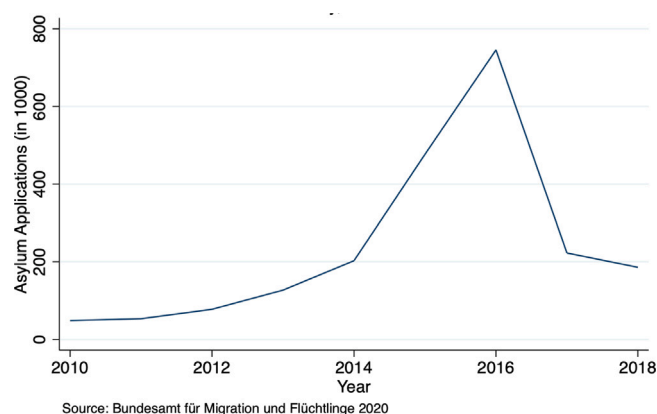


Fig. 1. Asylum applications in Germany.

quota based on the “Königsteiner Schlüssel” (§45 AsylG) (BAMF, 2020). This quota was initially designed in 1949 to determine the financial contribution to scientific research institutions and is commonly used to distribute the costs of joint tasks between the federal states. It is updated yearly based on the tax revenue ($\frac{2}{3}$) and population ($\frac{1}{3}$) of each state and hence its structure is unrelated to the supply of asylum seekers.⁸

After arriving in the assigned state, individuals are accommodated in state reception facilities for up to six months. During this time, they file a personal application (§47 AsylG) and in most federal states are assigned to live in a county and then a municipality within that federal state.⁹ While states typically make this decision based on population shares, the exceptionally high numbers of people to allocate in 2015 forced authorities to also base the distribution of individuals on the availability of suitable housing (e.g., empty hotels, vacant houses, old military buildings, but also improvised tent-cities and containers) (Baier and Siegert, 2018). After arrival at a local accommodation center in a particular municipality, refugees are required to stay in this location until a decision about their asylum application has been made.¹⁰ Since 2016, even accepted refugees receiving benefits are not allowed to move to another federal state. Certain regions further restrict accepted refugees to remain in particular municipalities (residence restriction, §12a AufenthG).¹¹

⁸ Appendix Table A.1 shows that the final refugee allocation to the federal states aligns largely with the targeted quota. According to the BAMF, minor deviations occur because the quota does not apply to applicants that are imprisoned, in other public custody, in a hospital or other sanatoriums, nor for those with a permit to reside for more than six months.

⁹ In a robustness check, we only include federal states that allocate refugees at the municipality level and restrict their mobility. Specifically, North Rhine-Westphalia (their 2018 ruling that residence restrictions are not legal does not affect our sample), Bavaria, Baden Württemberg, Hessen, Saarland, Saxony, and Saxony-Anhalt.

¹⁰ The only exception is when a core family member lives in another state, in which case a refugee can apply to change states. According to a small inquiry (“Kleine Anfrage”) to the Government by members of the Left party, the average processing time for the asylum decision was 6 months in the first quarter of 2016. This time does not reflect the period refugees had to wait to register. According to the Ministry for Migration and Refugees half a million asylum seekers that arrived in 2015 were not registered until 2016 (BAMF, 2017).

¹¹ These policies are intended to prevent clustering of nationalities in certain locations and enhance integration. Accepted refugees can move in these situations if they have a job offer for more than 15 h per week that guarantees an earning of at least 712 Euro (gross) and payment of social security taxes; if they start professional training, an apprenticeship or a university education program; or if a direct family member lives in another federal state.

⁷ The numbers are rising again, with around 1 Million Ukrainian refugees registering in Germany in 2022 (BMI, 2023).

Crucial for our identification strategy, asylum seekers cannot influence their allocation, and hence some cannot avoid being assigned to municipalities with strong xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiments. Local politicians are also unable to affect the allocation of asylum seekers into their municipality (Schaub et al. 2021).¹² Hence, from the refugees' perspective, the attitude of Germans in their municipality of residence should be randomly allocated. We will next examine whether this is, in fact, what we see in the data.

2.2. Implementation of allocation policy

While the policies discussed above should lead to the random allocation of refugees, we check if this is actually the case by using confidential administrative data from the German statistical office on the allocation of refugees at the municipality level as of December 31st, 2014, 2015 and 2016 (Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), 2014, 2015, 2016). This dataset includes all individuals seeking refugee status in Germany and receiving government benefits or financial support under the Act on Benefits for Asylum Seekers (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz, AsylbLG).¹³

We use this data to examine whether there is a relationship between the location of refugees and local characteristics, including voting patterns in the 2013 federal election. Because we do not know the initial allocation of each refugee, we examine three different measures of the local allocation of new refugees. The first is the change in the stock of refugees in each municipality between 2014 and 2016 as a share of the total population of the municipality. The second is the number of recipients whose asylum benefits started in 2015 per municipality divided by the municipality's population in 2014. The third is the average share of the refugee population of each municipality that receives asylum benefits in 2014 to 2016.

We regress each of these outcomes on a wide variety of local characteristics measured at the municipality level in 2014, including log population, population density, the share of the population who is foreign (in 2011), male, over 65, and unemployed, the number of tourist beds per capita, empty apartments per capita (in 2011), total personal income tax per capita, and the share of the population who voted for the Far Right (NPD and Republikaner party), AfD, CDU (center-right) and Green parties in the 2013 Federal Election. We also control for the following county-level characteristics measured in 2014, the share of employees with an academic degree, log GDP per capita, the share of criminal cases with a foreign suspect, and the number of criminal cases per capita. See below for more information on the source of these data and how the variables are defined. We include state-fixed effects in these regressions to account for the quota ("Königsteiner Schlüssel") that defines the number of refugees per year allocated to the different federal states. All of these municipality and county characteristics (excluding election results in 2013) are included as control variables in our main regression models.

The results from these regressions are presented in Table 1. In general, there is very little relationship between local characteristics and the allocation of refugees. At most 2.8 percent of the variation is explained and, looking at the change between 2014 and 2016, only 0.9 percent of the variation is explained. As expected, the number of empty apartments per capita is one of the few variables that is significantly correlated with the allocation of refugees (for two out of the three outcomes). When looking at the change in refugees between 2014 and 2016, the only significant predictor is the share of local employees with

¹² While wishes from counties can be voiced e.g., due to the currently available housing situation, they are only considered if they fall within the quota.

¹³ Unfortunately, this data cannot be combined with other data sources with more information about refugees, such as the survey data we use for the rest of our analysis.

Table 1
The allocation of refugees across municipalities.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	$\Delta R_{m16,14}$	New 2015	Av 14–16
Log Population 2014	-0.013 (0.040)	0.058 (0.060)	0.062 (0.042)
Pop Density qkm 2014	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.001* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)
Share Foreign 2011	-0.002 (0.033)	0.151 (0.121)	0.097 (0.068)
Share Male 2014	0.053 (0.081)	0.103 (0.070)	0.092 (0.058)
Share above 65 years 2014	-0.003 (0.005)	0.000 (0.019)	0.006 (0.015)
Share Unemployed 2014	0.040 (0.033)	0.007 (0.058)	0.019 (0.035)
Tourist Beds PC 2014	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)
Personal Income Tax PC (in 100) 2014	-0.020 (0.032)	-0.087*** (0.033)	-0.068*** (0.024)
Empty Apartments PC 2011	0.020 (0.037)	0.099** (0.040)	0.073** (0.031)
Share Empl. w/ Academic Degree Cnty 2014	0.025** (0.010)	0.003 (0.018)	0.006 (0.009)
Log GDP PC Cnty 2014	0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Share Criminal Cases w/ Foreign Suspect Cnty 2014	-0.002 (0.007)	-0.033 (0.023)	-0.020 (0.013)
Criminal Cases PC Cnty 2014	-0.004 (0.015)	-0.009 (0.038)	-0.016 (0.022)
Share Far Right 2013	-0.018 (0.019)	-0.028 (0.025)	-0.014 (0.017)
Share AfD 2013	0.020 (0.026)	0.067 (0.051)	0.066 (0.045)
Share CDU 2013	0.004 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.009)	0.001 (0.007)
Share Green 2013	0.039 (0.038)	0.039 (0.040)	0.036 (0.034)
R-squared	0.009	0.024	0.028
Observations	10 938	10 938	10 938

Notes: OLS relationship between local characteristics and refugee placement controlling for state fixed effects. All characteristics are measures at the municipality level unless noted. Col (1) examines the change between 2016 and 2014 per 100 population, Col (2) the number of recipients of asylum benefits in a municipality per 100 population whose benefits started in 2015, Col (3) the average number of recipients of asylum benefits between 2014 and 2016 per 100 population. Vote share for each political party is from the 2013 federal election. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Significance: * 10%; ** 5%; *** 1%.

an academic degree. For the other two outcomes, personal income tax per capita is a significant predictor of the allocation of refugees. With seventeen explanatory variables, we would expect to find at least one potentially non-relevant variable to be significant.

That said, this could give some indication that richer municipalities are allocated less refugees, perhaps because they are less likely to have available accommodation (even though we control for this) or because in states where refugees are not randomly assigned to municipalities they have more lobbying power. Importantly, voting patterns in 2013 are not related to any of our measures of the assignment of refugees. This provides strong evidence that, from the refugees' perspective, the attitude of Germans in their municipality of residence, as proxied by voting, is randomly allocated. We also show in the next section that local AfD voting is also unrelated to the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals in the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees. We control in our regressions for all of the local characteristics of municipalities included here to account for any deviations from random allocation. And, as discussed above, our main results are robust to examining only federal states that allocate migrants at the municipality level.

2.3. Alternative for Germany

The “Alternative for Germany” (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) was formed in 2013 as a Eurosceptic party that had the goal to end German rescue packages for foreign states and banks and to devolve certain policies back to national states instead of the EU (Beyme, 2017). At the federal elections in September 2013, they only barely failed to enter the German Bundestag with 4.7% of second votes in Germany’s Mixed Member Proportional System (MMP).¹⁴

As attention to the financial crisis declined, the AfD focused on the high inflow of asylum seekers in 2015 and started campaigning against immigrants. This caused conflict within the party leading neoliberal members to resign and the party to become more radical (Kroh and Fetz, 2016). Quickly, members of the two main right-extremist parties in Germany, the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) and the Republikaner, as well as from other small local far-right-wing parties, found their way into key roles of the AfD, uniting into one bigger right-wing movement (Niedermayer, 2015). During the time period we examine, the party focused solely on xenophobic topics. Their posters campaign for ‘Bikinis instead of Burkas’, ‘No Islam in German Schools’, and more generally against a multicultural Germany. Party leaders suggest shooting at immigrants trying to cross the border, call the Holocaust memorial a monument of shame, and cooperate with the Islamophobic PEGIDA movement (Arzheimer and Berning, 2019; BBC, 2016; Chambers, 2017).

Since this change, anti-immigrant attitudes are consistently named as the main driving factor for their support (Arzheimer and Berning, 2019; Bukow, 2017; Goerres et al., 2018). AfD voters typically have welfare chauvinist attitudes, are anti-Semitic, and view immigration very critically, especially towards refugees from ethnically different countries and those with a Muslim population (Arzheimer and Berning, 2019; Goerres et al., 2018).¹⁵ The AfD finds stronger support in rural areas with an aging population (which occurs to a larger extent in Eastern Germany) (Franz et al., 2018). Unique in the European context, the AfD also receives votes from previous immigrants, particularly ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union who have the feeling that refugees today are treated better than they were upon their arrival in Germany (Schade et al., 2019; Goerres et al., 2018).

The AfD obtained 12.6% of the vote in the 2017 federal election and, after 2018, has succeeded in crossing the 5% hurdle to enter parliament in all states.¹⁶ Between 2017 and 2021, they were the main federal opposition party as well as the main opposition in many states. So far, all of the mainstream parties have refused to cooperate with them, so they are not in government in any state.

Fig. 2 shows the variation across German counties in AfD voting as well as the location of refugees in 2017. Voting for the AfD is strongest in the former Eastern German states but also is high in rich states like Bavaria. The maps hint that there is little spatial correlation between the location of refugees and local support for the AfD. Throughout the paper, we use local support for the AfD starting in 2017 as a proxy measure of underlying local anti-immigration attitudes. We do this because prior to this time there was little support for anti-immigrant

¹⁴ Only parties achieving 5% of the vote share or three direct mandates receive an allocation in parliament.

¹⁵ Goerres et al. (2018), Schwander and Manow (2017) find a relation between voting for the radical right in the 90’s and the AfD around 20 years later, which suggest that a local nationalist culture or infrastructure exists that lasts over time and is passed on between generations (using survey results see also Avdeenko and Siedler (2017)). Examining electoral results from the Weimar Republic, Cantoni et al. (2019) show that the persistence of right-wing ideology dates even further back and that support for the NSDAP in municipalities in 1933 correlates with the support for the AfD at the 2017 federal election.

¹⁶ They did not manage to stay over the threshold in the state election in 2022 in Schleswig Holstein.

Table 2
The allocation of refugees and voting for AfD.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Change Refugee share 2014 to 2016	-0.009 (0.026)		
Share Refugees starting Benefits in 2015		-0.026* (0.014)	
Average Refugee Share 2014 till 2016			-0.035* (0.020)
Log Population 2014	0.002*** (0.000)	0.002*** (0.000)	0.002*** (0.000)
Pop Density qkm 2014	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)
Share Foreign 2011	-0.065*** (0.016)	-0.061*** (0.016)	-0.061*** (0.016)
Share Male 2014	0.095*** (0.033)	0.097*** (0.033)	0.097*** (0.033)
Share Above 65 years 2014	-0.099*** (0.013)	-0.099*** (0.013)	-0.099*** (0.013)
Share Unemployed 2014	0.430*** (0.034)	0.430*** (0.034)	0.430*** (0.034)
Tourist Beds PC 2014	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.002)
Personal Income Tax PC (in 100)	-0.003*** (0.000)	-0.003*** (0.000)	-0.003*** (0.000)
Empty Apartments PC 2011	-0.027 (0.037)	-0.025 (0.037)	-0.024 (0.037)
Share Empl. w/ Academic Degree Cnty 2014	0.047** (0.018)	0.047** (0.018)	0.047** (0.018)
Log GDP PC Cnty	-0.021*** (0.002)	-0.021*** (0.002)	-0.021*** (0.002)
Share Criminal Cases w/ Foreign Suspect Cnty 2014	0.024** (0.009)	0.023** (0.009)	0.023** (0.009)
Criminal Cases PC Cnty	0.348*** (0.048)	0.348*** (0.048)	0.348*** (0.048)
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-squared	0.718	0.718	0.718
Observations	10938	10938	10938

Notes: The table reports the relationship between the vote results for the AfD at the 2017 federal election and the share of recipients of asylum benefits. Column (1) uses the change between 2016 and 2014 per 10 000 population, column (2) the number of recipients of asylum benefits in a municipality per 10 000 population whose benefits started in 2015, column (3) uses the average number of recipients of asylum benefits between 2014, 2015 and 2016 per 10 000 population. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. * Significance at 10%; ** Significance at 5%; *** Significance at 1%.

parties in Germany. It is possible that local AfD support from 2017 also reflects poor integration outcomes for refugees. While we cannot examine this directly, we can examine whether there is a relationship between the local allocation of refugees between 2014 and 2016 and voting for the AfD in 2017.

In Table 2, we show the results from regressing the AfD vote share in 2017 at the municipality level on the three measures of refugee allocation defined above.¹⁷ We find no relationship between the change in the share of refugees in a municipality between 2014 and 2016, and local voting for AfD in 2017. On the other hand, we find a small significant negative relationship between our other two measures of refugee allocation and AfD voting. In other words, municipalities that host more refugees in 2015 or, on average, in 2014–2016, have slightly

¹⁷ Our results look similar if we instead examine the change in the AfD vote share between 2013 and 2017.

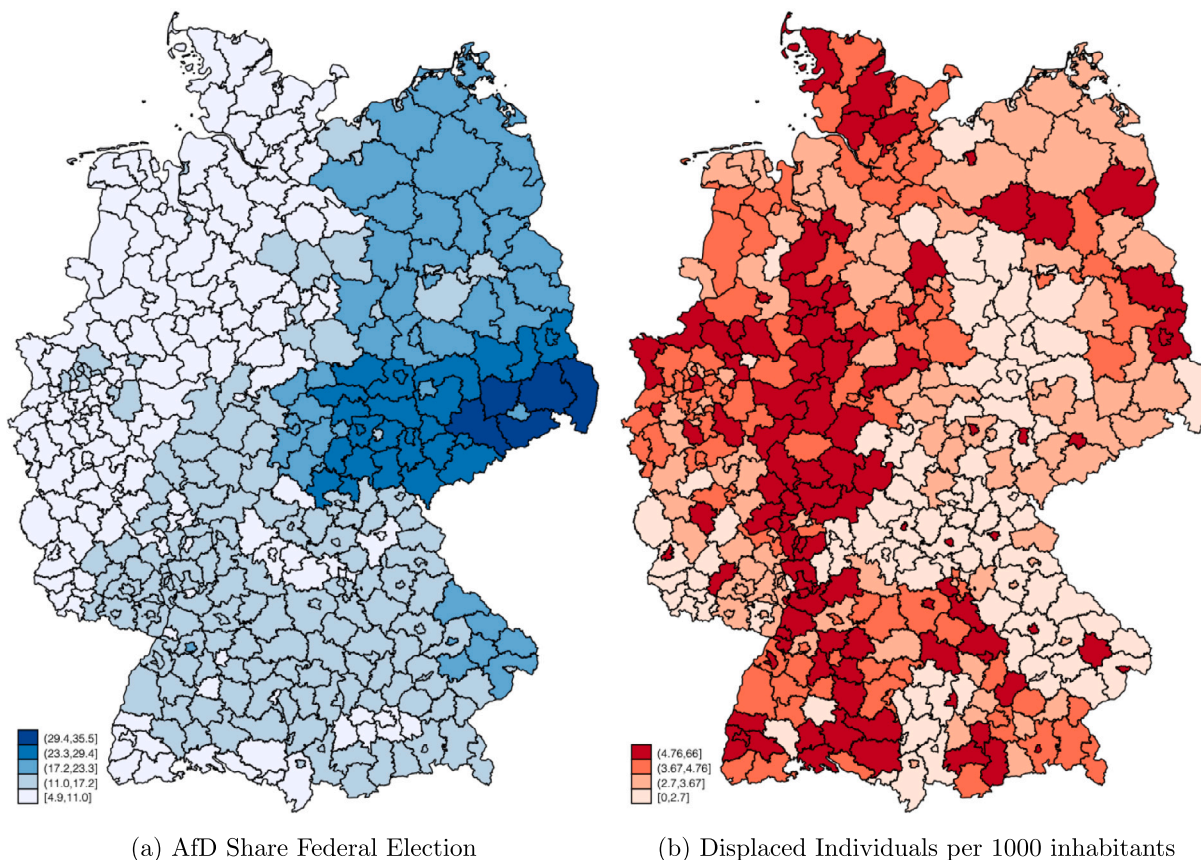


Fig. 2. AfD vote share and distribution of displaced individuals in Germany in 2017.

less support for AfD. This is consistent with prior research by Fremerey et al. (2022) that finds a negative impact of refugee inflows on AfD voting in the immediate neighborhood within 1 × 1 km grid cells in urban neighborhoods.

We further examine the relationship between AfD vote shares at the municipality level and the characteristics of refugees in our analysis sample from the 2018 IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees (discussed in more detail in the next section). As seen in Table 3, we do not find any evidence of a relationship between the individual characteristics of refugees and local voting for AfD, except for their area of origin. Individuals in our sample from Asia and the Middle East are more likely to live in areas with a higher AfD vote share. We believe that this occurs because individuals from countries where relatively uncommon languages are spoken are allocated to certain locations based on translators' availability for those languages, and it is, therefore, still random from the perspective of the refugee where they are allocated. Nevertheless, we control for all individual characteristics in our main regression. We can easily rule out that the full set of individual characteristics, including country of origin, have a significant impact on local AfD voting.

Taken together, our results support the use of the AfD vote share since 2017 as a proxy for local anti-immigration attitudes and that from the perspective of the refugee that this is randomly assigned. Regardless, we control for all individual and municipality-level characteristics in our main regression analysis to rule out any small sample biases, to improve the precision of the estimates, and to control for other local characteristics that might be related to both outcomes for refugees and voting for the AfD.

3. Data and empirical strategy

3.1. Data

We combine several datasets to measure the impact of local AfD voting on refugees' integration. Our main data source is the 2018 wave of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees of the German Socioeconomic Panel (SOEP) (Bruecker and Schupp, 2020; Goebel et al., 2019). Since 2016, this specifically developed survey has been conducted in collaboration with the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) and the Research Centre on Migration, Integration, and Asylum of the Federal Office of Migration and Refugees (BAMF-FZ) and is designed to be representative of the population of asylum seekers that arrived in Germany between 2013 and 2016 and were registered in the Central Register of Foreigners (Kroh et al., 2016; Kühne et al., 2019).¹⁸

We focus on a sub-sample of 3188 working-age individuals (18 to 65 years-old) interviewed in the 2018 wave who arrived in Germany between 2015 and 2017 and answered our outcome questions and key demographic questions.¹⁹ We restrict our analysis to refugees who

¹⁸ Overall, 7430 adult refugees were interviewed along with more than 5000 children at least once over the three waves since 2016. Interviews are undertaken in reception centers, communal accommodation facilities, and private housing using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). The questionnaire is available in the seven main languages and includes audio files in case of illiterate refugees. In case of any further problems, interpreters can be reached via a hotline to assist during the interview (Kühne et al., 2019).

¹⁹ Only 186 individuals did not answer the outcome and key demographic questions.

Table 3
Local voting for the AfD and refugee characteristics.

Female	-0.003	(0.075)
Age	0.027	(0.025)
Age2	-0.037	(0.033)
Family: Ref Married no kids		
Married with kids	-0.103	(0.216)
Single with kids	-0.158	(0.252)
Single no kids	0.006	(0.188)
Education: Ref no degree		
Elementary school basic vocational	0.094	(0.118)
Secondary I or II	-0.123	(0.108)
University/Applied University	-0.096	(0.125)
Area of Origin: Ref Syria		
S-E-Europe	0.233	(0.519)
Asia	0.288*	(0.168)
Middle East	0.289**	(0.146)
Africa	0.363	(0.224)
Household Size	0.026	(0.039)
Private house	-0.097	(0.175)
Immigration Year: Ref 2015		
2016	0.070	(0.129)
2017 or later	0.254	(0.322)
Joint test of all indiv. controls being significant:	F(18, 832) = 0.93	
With Area of Origin	Prob >F = 0.5371	
Joint test of all indiv. controls being significant:	F(14, 832) = 0.62	
Without Area of Origin	Prob >F = 0.8495	
State FE	Yes	
County and Municipality Controls	Yes	
R-squared	0.829	
Observations	3188	

Notes: The table reports the relationship between the vote results for the AfD at the 2017 federal election and federal state elections that took place after and the individual characteristics of the refugees in our sample. Municipality-level controls include log population, population density, the share of the population who is foreign (Census 2011), male, over 65, and unemployed, number of tourist beds per capita, empty apartments per capita (Census 2011), and total personal income tax per capita. County-level controls include share of employees with an academic degree, log GDP per capita, the share of criminal cases with a foreign suspect, number of criminal cases per capita, and the inflow share of asylum seekers 2014–2016. City-States Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen are included in surrounding federal states for state fixed effects. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. * Significance at 10%; ** Significance at 5%; *** Significance at 1%.

have arrived since 2015 because, as discussed above, these individuals are the most likely to still be living in the location of their original assignment. Relying on the 2018 wave of the data allows us to capture arrivals during the entire period of the recent refugee inflow and to focus on a period of time when the AfD was very successful with anti-immigrant campaigns in wide areas of Germany.²⁰

Table 4 describes the characteristics of the analysis sample as well as those of both non-refugee immigrants and native Germans in the same age-range interviewed in the same round of the SOEP for comparison. Over half of the refugees are in families with children, and their average age is 34. 38% have only seven years or less schooling and, consequently, no accepted school degree in Germany. In comparison, non-refugee immigrants are, on average, eight years older and almost 14 percentage points more likely to have a secondary education. 23.7% of the observed refugees are working in 2018, while among Germans and other immigrants over 70% are employed. The majority of refugees arrived in 2015, and 58% immigrated from Syria. While only 1.4% of refugees are originally from South-East Europe, this group makes up the largest share of ‘other’ migrants (58.7%).

Election data is accessed from the German Statistical Authority’s regional database. Germany has a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system where each voter has two votes: the first vote is a personal

²⁰ Later waves of the data have been released. Unfortunately, not all of the questions we rely on to measure integration were asked in later waves making it difficult to examine changes in integration over time in a comparable way.

vote for a specific candidate, and the second vote for their preferred party. This second vote determines the party distribution in regional and the federal parliament. Our main explanatory variable is defined as the share of valid second votes for the AfD in a municipality in the 2017 federal election. This is updated to reflect any regional election that took place after 2017 but before an individual’s interview date.

We measure economic and social integration along a number of dimensions. Our main analysis examines the impact on two aggregated indexes. We focus on these measures because it reduces the numbers of statistical tests that have to be run and therefore decreases the chance of finding falsely significant results (Kling et al., 2007). Each outcome variable is first standardized to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one for the entire sample with some variables reversed so that a higher value always represents a better outcome. We then average across each outcome variable in an index (i.e., each is given an equal weight). Hence, a higher score on each index means that a refugee is doing better.

Our economic index includes: (i) whether or not the individual is employed; (ii) whether an individual participated in an integration course organized by the BAMF; (iii) an individual’s German language skills (aggregated self-evaluated speaking, reading, and writing skills); and (iv) their time spent studying German.²¹ Language skills have been shown to directly impact the labor market participation of immigrants which is why we include them in our economic index (Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003; Foged et al., 2022; Lochmann et al., 2019; Sarvimäki and Hämäläinen, 2016). They could potentially also impact social integration, but we choose to focus on more direct measures in that index.

Following Ager and Strang (2008) and Harder et al. (2018), we measure the social integration of refugees based on their response to: (i) whether they feel welcome in their municipality; (ii) how much they trust others; (iii) how often they feel disadvantaged due to their heritage; as well as social ties measured by: (iv) how much time they spend with Germans in general; and (v) more specifically, time spent with their German neighbors. Importantly, social integration has been shown to be crucial factor determining whether refugees remain in Germany (Hannafi and Marouani, 2023). Appendix Table A.2 presents summary statistics for each unstandardized outcome variable.

We collect data on local characteristics from a number of sources. A number of municipality characteristics are measured for 2014 using data obtained from the German Statistical Authority; specifically, the population size and population density, the share of the population who is male and over 65, the number of tourist beds per capita, and the total personal income tax per capita. We calculate the share of the population who is unemployed using data from the Federal Labor Office. We measure the share of the population who is foreign and the number of empty apartments per capita using the 2011 Census. We collect some additional data at the county level in 2014, GDP per capita from the German Statistical Authority, the share of employees with an academic degree from the Federal Labor Office, and the number of criminal cases per capita and the share with a foreign (non-German citizen) suspect from the Federal Criminal Police Office. We also control for the refugee inflow rates into each county between 2014 and 2016 using data from the German Statistical Authority.

3.2. Empirical approach

As the location of each refugee is quasi-randomly assigned, we can estimate the impact of local AfD voting on economic and social integration using a simple OLS regression of the form:

$$Y_{ims} = \alpha + \beta AfD_m + Ind_{ims} + Mun_{ms} + C_{cs} + \zeta_s + e_{ims} \quad (1)$$

²¹ Refugees in our sample faced few barriers to entering the labor market. The German Integration Law of 2016 declared that all individuals waiting for their asylum application to be processed and not residing in reception centers are allowed to work after three months in Germany (§61 AsylG).

Table 4
Sample descriptive statistics.

	Refugees		Immigrants		Germans	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Proportion females	0.394	0.489	0.576	0.494	0.543	0.498
Average Age	33.880	10.447	42.482	11.135	43.846	13.537
Family Status						
Married No Children	0.070	0.255	0.239	0.427	0.254	0.435
Family with Children	0.563	0.496	0.444	0.497	0.269	0.443
Single Parent	0.137	0.344	0.115	0.319	0.139	0.346
Single	0.230	0.421	0.201	0.401	0.338	0.473
HH Size	4.113	2.259	3.313	1.495	2.915	1.389
Education						
Missing Education	0.059	0.236	0.029	0.169	0.049	0.215
No Degree	0.386	0.487	0.051	0.221	0.010	0.102
Elementary School	0.220	0.414	0.327	0.469	0.202	0.402
Secondary I or II	0.172	0.377	0.309	0.462	0.490	0.500
University	0.163	0.370	0.283	0.451	0.248	0.432
Proportion in private housing	0.812	0.391				
Proportion working	0.237	0.425	0.739	0.439	0.786	0.410
Immigration Year						
Immigrated 2015	0.771	0.420				
Immigrated 2016	0.202	0.402				
Immigrated 2017 or later	0.027	0.162				
Immigrated before 1989			0.183	0.386		
Immigrated between 1990 and 1999			0.283	0.451		
Immigrated between 2000 and 2009			0.302	0.459		
Immigrated between 2010 and 2014			0.201	0.401		
Immigrated in or after 2015			0.031	0.174		
Area of Origin						
South-East Europe	0.014	0.118	0.587	0.493		
Asia	0.142	0.349	0.174	0.379		
Middle East	0.202	0.401	0.123	0.329		
Syria	0.581	0.493	0.006	0.078		
Africa	0.061	0.240	0.015	0.123		
Total	3,188		3,445		15,147	

Notes: Summary of individuals searching for protection (who immigrated after 2014), immigrants, and native Germans between the age of 18 and 65 in Germany in 2018. Source: SOEP v35.

where Y_{imcs} is either the index for economic or social integration for individual i living in municipality m in county c in state s in the year 2018. AfD_m is the share of second votes for the AfD in that municipality, and Ind_{imcs} are individual controls including age, a quadratic in age, and indicator variables for gender, family status, education, area of origin, household size, housing type, year of arrival and the interview month. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level as this is the aggregation where election results are measured (Cameron and Miller, 2015).

One concern with interpreting, β , the coefficient on local voting for the AfD, is that this might be measuring other local characteristics that are correlated with voting for the AfD besides xenophobic attitudes. Hence, in our preferred specification, we control for a wide variety of municipality characteristics measured in 2014 (Mun_{ms}), including log population, population density, the share of the population who is foreign (in 2011), male, over 65, and unemployed, the number of tourist beds per capita and empty apartments per capita (in 2011), and the total personal income tax per capita as well as the following county-level characteristics measured in 2014 (X_{cs}), the share of employees with an academic degree, log GDP per capita, the share of criminal cases with a foreign suspect, the number of criminal cases per capita, and the refugee inflow rate between 2014 and 2016. We also control for state fixed effects ζ_s .²² These controls cover the main alternative pathways (the economic situation, population composition, and crime) that could be correlated with both local AfD voting and integration outcomes.

²² The city-states of Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen are included in the surrounding federal states.

4. Results

This section presents the results from the main empirical analysis. We first examine the impact of local AfD voting on our economic and social integration indexes. We next examine a number of robustness checks on our main findings. We then examine heterogeneity in the impacts and discuss potential mechanisms for the effect of local AfD support on integration outcomes.

4.1. The impact of AfD voting on refugee integration

Our main regression analysis examines the effect that hostile attitudes towards immigrants, voiced through right-wing voting, have on the economic and social integration of refugees. Table 5 reports the estimates of β , the effect of the AfD vote share in a municipality on economic (Panel A) and social (Panel B) integration of refugees placed there, from various specifications. Standard errors in all cases are clustered at the municipality level. In column (1), we only control for individual characteristics. Refugees in municipalities with a 10 percentage point higher local vote share (a little more than the difference between the 25th and 75th percentile of the municipalities in our sample) for the AfD have 0.09 standard deviation (SD) worse economic integration and 0.15 SD worse social integration.²³ Both effects are statistically significant at the 1% level.

In column (2), we add controls for the municipality and county-level characteristics discussed above. The impact of the AfD vote share on both economic and social integration is now slightly larger. In column

²³ We tested whether the effect found here is non-linear but did not find any evidence for this.

Table 5
The impact of local voting for the AfD on refugee integration.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A: Economic Integration				
AfD Share	-0.925*** (0.231)	-1.259*** (0.312)	-0.368 (0.529)	0.093 (0.763)
Share Unemployed 2014		-1.008 (0.719)	-1.467* (0.853)	-3.817** (1.777)
R-squared	0.168	0.175	0.189	0.288
Observations	3188	3188	3188	3188
Panel B: Social Integration				
AfD Share	-1.452*** (0.264)	-1.760*** (0.331)	-1.251** (0.485)	-1.899** (0.815)
Share Unemployed 2014		-0.200 (0.989)	0.365 (1.349)	1.237 (1.646)
R-squared	0.084	0.109	0.127	0.275
Observations	2728	2728	2728	2728
State FE	No	No	Yes	No
Local Characteristics	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	No	No	No	Yes

Notes: The table reports OLS estimates of the effect of AfD vote shares in municipalities on the integration indexes of refugees. The main explanatory variable AfD Share reports the vote share for the right-wing AfD based on the second vote during the 2017 federal election on the municipality level and is updated in case of later regional elections. All models include individual controls for gender, age, age-squared, family status, education, area of origin, household size, housing type, and year of immigration. Municipality level controls include log population, population density, the share of the population who is foreign (Census 2011), male, over 65, and unemployed, number of tourist beds per capita, empty apartments per capita (Census 2011), and total personal income tax per capita. County-level controls include share of employees with an academic degree, log GDP per capita, the share of criminal cases with a foreign suspect, the number of criminal cases per capita, and the change in recipients of asylum seeker benefits 2014–2016. City-States Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen are included in surrounding federal states for state-fixed effects. Using county-fixed effects, we include the municipality controls. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. * Significance at 10%; ** Significance at 5%; *** Significance at 1%.

(3), we further add state-fixed effects. We now find no impact of local AfD voting on the economic integration of migrants. On the other hand, the share of unemployed individuals in a municipality is now strongly related to the economic integration of refugees. Our main results for social integration remain.

In column (4), we control for county-fixed effects instead of our county controls. We now find a slightly larger impact of local AfD voting on social integration (refugees in locations with a 10 percentage point higher local vote share have 0.19 SD worse social integration), while the impact on economic integration is again not statistically different from zero. Standard errors are much larger in this specification as within counties, there is less variation in the outcome variables. Because of the decreased precision of these findings, we focus on the previous specification that includes county controls and state-fixed effects in our further analyses.

We next look separately at the impact on the individual outcomes that are components of the two indexes. Appendix Table A.5 shows that the greater local support for the AfD has no significant impact on any of the components of economic integration. The negative impact on social integration is driven by individuals being more likely to report feeling disadvantaged because of their heritage and having spent less time with their German neighbors in areas with higher AfD support. There is also a large negative but insignificant impact of higher AfD support on trusting people and time spent with Germans in general.

Overall, we find that the xenophobic attitudes of locals expressed by voting for the AfD have negative impacts on the social integration of refugees, while local economic conditions, as measured by the local unemployment rate, are more important for explaining economic integration.

4.2. Robustness checks

We conduct several robustness checks that are reported in Table 6. In particular, we are interested in confirming that the AfD share is a good proxy for local attitudes towards refugees and that endogenous movement of refugees is unlikely to bias our results. In column (1), we test whether the impact we are finding is because of higher levels of voting for the AfD as opposed to higher mainstream conservatism in a particular municipality. We do this by adding local support for the center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party as a control variable. We find no evidence for a relationship between local voting for the CDU and refugee integration and a slightly stronger negative impact of local AfD support on social integration. This further supports the idea that there is something in particular about local support for the AfD that causes worse outcomes for refugees.

Our results for the impact of local voting for the AfD are also unaffected by controlling for the vote share received by far-right parties in the 2013 federal election (which was generally low) and vote shares for the Nazi party (NSDAP) in the 1933 federal election (column 2).²⁴ While Cantoni et al. (2019) found voting for the Nazis in 1933 to be correlated with voting for the AfD in 2017, we find no significant effect of previous right-wing attitudes on the integration of refugees today. It seems that underlying right-wing extremist views are less harmful to refugees' integration than openly voiced anti-immigrant opinions that are commonly spread through the wider public. According to the head of the Federal Criminal Police Office, "the AfD has made xenophobia acceptable in our society", (Jansen and Tretbar, 2016) therefore, making it also more visible and possible to experience in everyday life. This interpretation is in line with a recent study from Bursztyn et al. (2020) finding that Donald Trump's rise in popularity and success in the election made individuals more willing to engage in public xenophobic behavior, as well as observers becoming less likely to sanction xenophobia knowing it is the more popular view.

One concern with our main findings is that the AfD vote share is measured after the large inflow of asylum seekers in 2015 and it is possible that the success or failure of local refugees influences local voting for the AfD. To examine whether this is an issue, we examine the impact of the vote share of all far-right parties in the 2013 federal election (column 3). Consistent with our main findings, in municipalities with more far-right voting in 2013, refugees have worse social integration (significant at the 10% level).²⁵ These findings are imprecise because far-right voting was uncommon in 2013.

An additional concern with our identification strategy is that some refugees in our sample may have been able to move from their original placement municipality if their application for asylum was quickly accepted, and hence could potentially move away from locations with hostile attitudes. For two-thirds of the refugees in our main sample, we know the location of their first place of residence (this is self-reported and, unfortunately, it is not possible to see what type of residence this is, and whether a later move was voluntary or decided by the authorities). For this sample, we can account for the potential endogenous mobility of some refugees by instrumenting for the AfD share in their current location with the AfD share in their initial municipality or by examining the relationship between AfD voting in their original placement location and current integration (the intention to treat effect). The results of these analyses are presented in column (4) and (5). Our findings here are qualitatively similar, although no longer statistically significant.

Alternatively, we can examine this potential problem by limiting our sample to federal states that allocate refugees to municipalities and

²⁴ The crosswalk for the 1933 NSDAP vote share was provided by Cantoni et al. (2019). We drop a small number of observations where the current municipality could not be matched to its historical counterpart.

²⁵ In Table 8, we also show that a threat index construct only with data measured prior to 2015 is also negatively related to social integration.

Table 6
Robustness: The impact of local voting for the AfD on refugee integration.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Economic Integration						
AfD Share	-0.453 (0.529)	-0.409 (0.643)		-0.048 (1.639)		-0.728 (0.675)
CDU Share	-0.147 (0.283)					
Right Wing Share 2013		0.479 (2.873)	-0.400 (2.377)			
NSDAP Share 1933		-0.009 (0.118)				
AfD Share First					-0.009 (0.304)	
R-squared	0.189	0.187	0.189	0.197	0.197	0.191
Observations	3188	3115	3182	2252	2252	2060
Panel B: Social Integration						
AfD Share	-1.376*** (0.496)	-0.952 (0.622)		-0.930 (2.088)		-1.415** (0.640)
CDU Share	-0.231 (0.285)					
Right Wing Share 2013		-2.541 (3.237)	-4.872* (2.673)			
NSDAP Share 1933		0.132 (0.128)				
AfD Share First					-0.167 (0.384)	
R-squared	0.127	0.127	0.126	0.143	0.141	0.111
Observations	2728	2665	2724	1948	1948	1808
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local Characteristics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OLS vs IV	OLS	OLS	OLS	IV	OLS	OLS

Notes: The table reports the estimates of different measures of local hostility towards immigrants on the integration of refugees. Individual, municipality, and county controls remain the same as in the previous tables, and all regressions include month- and federal-state fixed effects. City-States Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen are included in surrounding federal states for state-fixed effects. Column (4) presents instrumental variable results, instrumenting AfD share with AfD share at the first place of assignment. F-statistic for economic variable: 58.49 and F-Statistic for social variable: 51.18. Column (5) presents the ITT, with the AfD vote share at the first place of residence as the explanatory variable. Column (6) only includes individuals living in a federal state that further restricts residence to county and municipality. * Significance at 10%; ** Significance at 5%; *** Significance at 1%.

restrict their mobility. In those states, it is less of a concern that refugees were able to choose their location freely and move to areas that are more open-minded. Column (6) presents these results which are similar to our main findings. Overall, selection into moving does not appear to be a problem for our analysis.²⁶

Overall, our robustness checks suggest that the AfD vote share is a good measure of current attitudes towards migrants in each municipality. Since not all respondents indicated their first place of residence and the attitudes where someone currently lives as opposed to where they were initially placed should have a larger impact on current outcomes, we proceed with the OLS specification presented in column (3) of Table 5 in all further analyses.

4.3. Heterogeneity and mechanisms

Bisin et al. (2011) provide a theoretical framework which we use to structure our investigation of the heterogeneity in and mechanisms behind why refugees living in areas with higher AfD support have worse integration outcomes.²⁷ As the AfD and their voters target asylum seekers regardless to their degree of integration, we consider what Bisin

²⁶ In Appendix Table A.4, we further show that our findings are robust to only including Syrian refugees (the largest group), to controlling for the availability of local integration courses, and to leaving out the foreign share and inflow of asylum seeker benefit recipients as control variables. Furthermore, we find imprecise evidence of weaker economic integration in federal states that belonged to the former GDR in areas with a higher AfD share, while social integration remains unaffected (Berlin is in this analysis included in Western Germany. The results do not change if it is included in the East or excluded).

²⁷ While their model is generally concerned with why ethnic minorities might adopt oppositional identities and how these are passed on to the next

et al. (2011) call the unconditional harassment model. Here, racist native individuals are negatively affected by being matched with a minority individual, unconditional on their integration status. This causes them to feel a loss of identity, which leads to increased harassment of the minority group. In response, minorities can either adopt mainstream values or choose an oppositional identity. They assume that harassment negatively affects the expected economic payoff of assimilation and increases the psychological cost of interacting with the majority group. Therefore, an oppositional minority culture is more likely to arise with increasing harassment and a higher number of racists in the society.

In the context of our paper, this model leads to a number of testable hypotheses. First, the negative impact of higher local AfD support on economic and social integration should be larger for the groups directly targeted by the AfD since members of these groups are the most likely to experience harassment and develop an oppositional identity. Second, negative attitudes from the host society might be able to be balanced off by other in-group members. Third, refugee integration should be worse in areas with more conflict between natives and refugees and better in areas with more support for refugees. Finally, positive investments by locals towards refugees should be less in areas with more support for the AfD as an oppositional culture is more likely to develop in these areas.

The AfD largely campaigns against refugees from countries with a predominantly Muslim population, openly stating that Islam is not part of Germany (AfD, 2017). They also stereotype single men as criminals

generation, part of the model focuses on how harassment and the number of racists among the majority society may contribute to the emergence of oppositional minority cultures.

Table 7
Heterogeneous impacts of local voting for the AfD on integration.

	(1) Economic Integration	(2) Social Integration
Panel A: Origin		
AfD share	-0.281 (0.573)	-1.056** (0.524)
Syria Reference Group		
Eastern Europe	-0.488** (0.241)	-0.223 (0.157)
Middle East	0.062 (0.065)	0.126* (0.067)
AfD Share interacted with Eastern Europe	3.432** (1.621)	2.320** (1.129)
with Middle East	-0.639 (0.481)	-0.914* (0.494)
Panel B: Family Status		
AfD share	-0.331 (0.562)	-1.009** (0.503)
Single Men	0.158** (0.062)	0.143** (0.071)
AfD Share interacted with Single Men	-0.468 (0.430)	-1.176*** (0.435)
Panel C: Foreign Share		
AfD Share	-1.002* (0.592)	-1.922*** (0.595)
Foreign Share 2011	-0.902 (0.726)	-1.644* (0.870)
AfD Share interacted with Foreign Share	10.785** (5.379)	11.419** (5.455)
Observations	3188	2728

Notes: The table reports OLS estimates of the effect of AfD vote shares in municipalities on the integration indexes of asylum seekers and refugees in 2018. The main explanatory variable AfD Share reports the vote share for the right-wing AfD based on the second vote during the 2017 federal election on the county level and is updated in case of later regional elections. In Panel A, the AfD share is interacted with the area of origin, in Panel B with family status, and in Panel C with the foreign share in the municipality. Individual, municipality, and county controls remain the same as in the previous tables, and all regressions include month- and federal-state fixed effects. City-States Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen are included in surrounding federal states for state-fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered on the municipality level. * Significance at 10%; ** Significance at 5%; *** Significance at 1%.

from “misogynist medieval societies” (Hoven and Hestermann, 2019). Interestingly, as noted in the background section, they openly recruit supporters among Eastern European migrants, even publishing their manifestos in Czech, Russian, and Hungarian.

In Table 7, we examine heterogeneity in the impact of AfD voting by refugee area of origin and family status. As hypothesized, we find even worse social integration for refugees from other Middle Eastern countries relative to Syrians in municipalities with more support for the AfD (see Panel A). On the other hand, refugees from Eastern Europe (of which 43% are from Russia), are more integrated relative to Syrians in areas with more support for the AfD. Also, as hypothesized, we find that the negative impact of local AfD support on social integration is larger for single men relative to other family types (i.e., couples and single women — see Panel B).²⁸ Interestingly, this is the case even though single men, on average, are actually more integrated than other refugees.

Finally, we examine whether anti-immigrant attitudes have differential impacts depending on the number of foreigners already living in a municipality. Having established local immigrants to interact with

²⁸ The impact of local AfD support on the integration of single women and couples is not statistically distinguishable so here we pool them together to increase our power to detect differences from single men.

could possibly balance out negative contacts with natives. In Panel C, we show that while outcomes for refugees are worse in locations with more established foreigners, the negative impact of a higher AfD vote share is significantly smaller. This is true for both social and economic integration. In fact, we now estimated a marginally significant negative impact of the local AfD share on economic integration in locations with no prior immigration.

As discussed above, not only the number of racists, but also the local level of harassment increases the emergence of an oppositional minority culture. The relationship between right-wing party support and xenophobic attacks is theoretically ambiguous. On the one hand, strong right-wing parties could mitigate violence against foreigners as the hostile opinion could be voiced through the electoral system (Braun, 2011; Koopmans, 1996). On the other hand, right-wing parties often legitimize violence and anti-immigrant networks could easily lead to more harassment (Braun, 2011; Jäckle and König, 2017).

Therefore, we examine whether local support for the AfD is correlated with hostile behavior towards refugees in a local area. Specifically, we use data from the German Federal Criminal Police on the number of attacks on refugee shelters, refugees and asylum seekers, and NGOs supporting refugees in a particular municipality between 2016 and 2018.²⁹ Between 2016 and 2018, 7800 attacks on shelters, NGOs, or refugees have been classified as politically motivated (right-wing). We divide the number of attacks per year by the number of refugees in the county and then take the average share of attacks for a county over the years.

Fig. 3 presents the correlation (point estimate and 95% confidence interval) between AfD vote share and right-wing attacks on refugees, shelters, and NGOs per refugee at the county level. We do this for each measure separately and as a total, and focus on the county level because a large proportion of municipalities do not experience any attacks. There is a positive and significant correlation between AfD voting and the share of right-wing attacks at the county level. The result is driven by the relationship between support for the AfD and harassment and attacks against asylum seekers and refugees.

We next analyze whether a measure of local threat directly affects refugee integration. We do this by running our main regression model, but now examining the relationship between an index of threat based on far-right voting in 2013 as well as attacks on refugees and anti-immigrant demonstrations prior to 2015 and economic and social integration among refugees living in that municipality.³⁰ We report this results in panel A of Table 8. Consistent with our previous results, a more threatening environment leads to worse social integration among refugees but has no impact on the economic integration.

To see if positive and supportive attitudes have the opposite effect, we estimate our main regression model from Table 5 adding the share of votes for the Green party in the 2017 federal election or later

²⁹ This is published quarterly in response to “small inquiries” (“kleine Anfrage”) made by parliamentary members of the Left Party (Die Linke). Each attack is listed with the date, the federal state, the municipality name, the type of crime, and whether the attack was registered as politically motivated. Attacks on shelters include amongst others property damage (Sachbeschädigung §303 StGB), sedition (Volksverhetzung §130 StGB), use of signs of unconstitutional organizations (Verwenden von Kennzeichen verfassungswidriger Organisationen §86a StGB). Registered attacks on asylum seekers and refugees include for example sedition, insult (Beleidigung §185 StGB), personal injury (Körperverletzung §223 StGB; Gefährliche Körperverletzung §224 StGB), violations of the gun law (Waffengesetz WaffG). Attacks against NGO’s include insults, sedition, and property damage.

³⁰ Specifically, the threat index is a dummy variable that is one if the far-right vote share in a given municipality was above the 50th percentile at the 2013 federal election or if any attack was recorded in a municipality on a refugee center in 2014 (“small inquiries”) or the municipality had any anti-immigrant demonstration in 2013 or 2014 (Kanol and Knoesel, 2021), and zero otherwise.

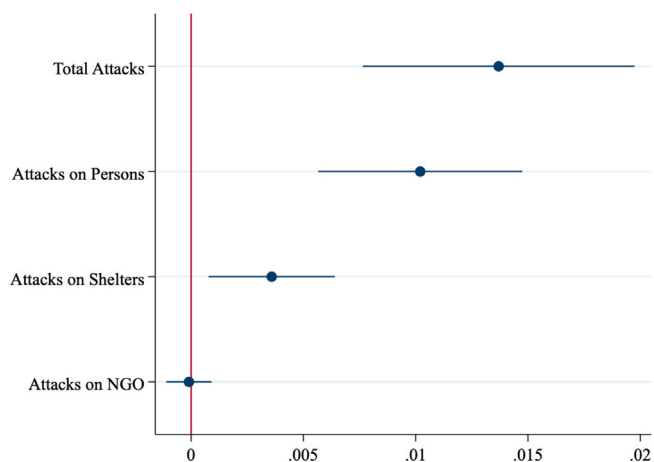


Fig. 3. Right-wing attacks and AfD voting. *Notes:* The Figure shows OLS estimates of the correlation of the mean share of right-wing attacks between 2016 and 2018 and the vote share for the AfD. County level controls include log population, population density, the share of the population who is foreign (Census 2011), male, and over 65, unemployment rate, number of tourist beds per capita, empty apartments per capita (Census 2011), total personal income tax per capita, the share of employees with an academic degree, log GDP per capita, the share of criminal cases with a foreign suspect, and the number of criminal cases per capita. City States Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen are included in surrounding federal states for state fixed effects.

Table 8
Other measures of local attitudes and refugee integration.

	(1)	(2)
	Economic Integration	Social Integration
Panel A: Threat Index		
Threat 2013/2014	-0.028 (0.028)	-0.068** (0.033)
R-squared	0.189	0.126
Panel B: Green and AfD Vote Share		
AfD Share	-0.343 (0.560)	-0.974* (0.528)
Green Share	0.070 (0.440)	0.768 (0.473)
R-squared	0.189	0.128
Observations	3188	2728

Notes: Panel A reports OLS estimates of the effect of a threat index comprised of right-wing voting in 2013, attacks on refugee centers in 2014, and demonstrations in 2013 and 2014 on the integration indexes of refugees. Panel B reports OLS estimates, including Green Party vote shares in municipalities on the integration indexes of refugees. Individual, municipality, and county controls remain the same as in the previous tables, and all regressions include month- and federal-state fixed effects. City-States Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen are included in surrounding federal states for state-fixed effects. Robust Standard errors are clustered on the municipality level and shown in parentheses. * Significance at 10%; ** Significance at 5%; *** Significance at 1%.

regional elections in the municipality as an explanatory variable. While immigration policy is not the primary focus of the Green party, their manifesto in 2017 had a very positive attitude towards migration and argued for a more liberal immigration law and rejecting the inhumane tightening of the asylum law during the last years (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2017). Hence, on average, Green party supporters are likely to have a more liberal opinion about immigration. Consistent with the Bisin et al. (2011) model, we find that refugees have better social integration in municipalities where more locals support the Green party, conditional on local support for the AfD (Table 8, Panel B, significant at the 15% level). In fact, the effect sizes nearly offset.

Table 9
AfD voting and support for refugees among the general population.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Support Refugees last year	Any Support	Volunteer Time Donation	Demonstration
Panel A: Support and AfD Vote Share				
AfD Share	-1.032*** (0.297)	-0.624** (0.263)	-1.029*** (0.291)	-0.191 (0.231)
R-squared	0.076	0.025	0.074	0.029
Panel B: Support and AfD and Green Vote Share				
AfD Share	-0.727** (0.331)	-0.440 (0.301)	-0.824** (0.322)	0.096 (0.258)
Green Share	1.061** (0.476)	0.639 (0.423)	0.713 (0.449)	0.998** (0.410)
R-squared	0.076	0.025	0.074	0.029
Observations	24 639	24 639	24 639	24 639

Notes: The table reports OLS estimates of the relation of AfD vote shares and Panel B also for Green Party vote shares and support for refugees. The sample includes all adults who do not have a refugee background. Individual, municipality, and county controls remain the same as in the previous tables, and all regressions include month- and federal-state fixed effects. City-States Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen are included in surrounding federal states for state-fixed effects. Robust Standard errors are clustered on the municipality level and shown in parentheses. * Significance at 10%; ** Significance at 5%; *** Significance at 1%.

Next, we examine whether positive investments by locals towards refugees are lower in areas where there is more support for the AfD. Specifically, we examine the impact on whether the non-refugee population donate their time and material goods, and whether they demonstrate for asylum seekers and refugees. We find that, in municipalities with greater support for the AfD, locals are less likely to support refugees through volunteering or donating money or goods to them (Table 9, Panel A). The results for the AfD are robust to controlling for the local vote share for the Greens and, furthermore, we find that voting for the Greens is related to more direct local support for refugees (Panel B). Similar to these findings, analyzing Facebook friendship data, Bailey et al. (2022) find that Syrian’s refugees’ social integration is affected by German’s tendency to form friendships in general as well as with Syrian migrants.

Finally, we examine whether the overall environment is more hostile in areas where the AfD receives more support. In particular, we analyze whether the AfD’s anti-immigrant rhetoric spills over to supporters of other parties. Here, we use the GLES-Rolling Cross-Section 2017, which surveys a representative sample of the population that is eligible to vote in the 2017 federal election and asks questions about voting behaviors, attitudes and specifically about opinions about migration policies (GLES, 2019).³¹ We examine the relationship between AfD voting in an individual’s electoral district and individual’s opinions about different immigration topics, excluding all individuals who indicate that they intend to or have voted for the AfD in the 2017 election. Here, we control for individual and electoral district characteristics along with indicators for where individuals place themselves on a left-right political scale, and interact one’s political position with local AfD voting.

We examine three outcomes: (i) whether a migration-related topic is one of the top two problems Germany is currently facing (0/1); (ii) whether immigration rules should be stricter (1–11); and (iii) whether immigrants should assimilate to German culture (1–5).³² In Table 10, we find that individuals living in areas with stronger AfD vote are more

³¹ Appendix Fig. A.1 shows the number of participants in each electoral district. One can see that they are fairly evenly distributed around the country.

³² We generated the dummy variable “Worries” being equal to one, if the participant named Islamic fundamentalism, immigration, integration, restriction of immigration, asylum, percentage of foreigners, governmental benefits

Table 10
AfD voting and attitudes towards immigration among non-afd voters.

	(1) Worries	(2) Restrictive	(3) Assimilation
Panel A: Attitudes and AfD Vote Share			
AfD Share District 2017	-0.005 (0.343)	4.902** (1.490)	1.748* (0.724)
Political ideology: Ref middle			
Left leaning	-0.124*** (0.036)	-1.582*** (0.182)	-0.553*** (0.104)
Right leaning	0.071 (0.051)	0.293 (0.336)	0.083 (0.146)
AfD Share interacted with left leaning	0.254 (0.264)	1.382 (1.379)	1.442 (0.739)
with right leaning	-0.021 (0.381)	4.945 (2.647)	0.836 (0.954)
Panel B: Attitudes and AfD and Green Vote Share			
AfD Share District 2017	-0.368 (0.362)	3.380 (1.924)	2.023* (0.898)
Green Share District 2017	-0.739 (0.444)	-3.092 (2.166)	0.564 (1.073)
Political ideology: Ref middle			
Left leaning	-0.121*** (0.036)	-1.570*** (0.182)	-0.556*** (0.104)
Right leaning	0.070 (0.051)	0.288 (0.336)	0.084 (0.146)
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	5824	5824	3331

Notes: Sample excludes individuals indicating that they will or have voted for the AfD. Worries means participant named a migration related topic as the most or second most important problem facing Germany today. the higher the value for Restricted the more the respondent agrees that immigration rules should be tightened. The higher the value for Assimilate, the more the respondent agrees that immigrants should assimilate culturally. Individual controls: female, age, age-squared, household size, employment, education, political direction. District controls: log population, population density, share foreign population, population share over 60, log gdp per capita, unemployment rate, school leavers with high school degree in 2017. Standard Errors clustered on district level. * Significance at 10%; ** Significance at 5%; *** Significance at 1%.

likely to favor restrictive immigration policies and feel stronger that immigrants should assimilate to German culture. This is equally true of left of center and right of center voters (as we see in the interaction terms with AfD voting). In Panel B, we also control for local support for the Green party. This has no impact on our main results.

Overall, our results indicate that it is more difficult for refugees to meet Germans in areas with higher AfD support and hence to get in touch with people who have a favorable opinion about immigration. On top of that, individuals living in these areas who do not support the AfD also appear to adopt more anti-immigrant attitudes. Immigrants randomly placed in these areas are therefore, more likely to interact with someone who is racist, which, as hypothesized in Bisin et al. (2011), should reduce investments in integration and increase the emergence of an oppositional minority culture. This is precisely what we see in our main results.

5. Conclusion

How does support for right-wing parties affect the integration of refugees? While a large literature has focused on whether increased immigration causes a rise in support for right-wing parties (Barone et al., 2016; Halla et al., 2017; Otto and Steinhardt, 2014; Steinmayr,

for foreigners, integration of Muslims, or integration of economic migrants to the question: “In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing Germany today?”

2021; Hangartner et al., 2019), little is known about how expressed negative attitudes influence the lives of newly-arrived individuals. This paper analyzes this open question by examining the effect of local support for the right-wing political party AfD on the integration of refugees in Germany.

Using the quasi-random distribution of refugees to different locations in Germany to avoid self-selection bias, we show that refugees allocated to areas with higher support for the AfD have worse social integration. This is especially true for groups targeted by AfD campaigns. Furthermore, right-wing support is correlated with attacks against refugees and hinders positive contacts with the majority society. In municipalities with strong right-wing support, Germans are also less likely to engage with refugees favorably by donating their time or money. In areas with strong right-wing support, even non-AfD voters want more restrictive immigration policies and for immigrants to assimilate to the German culture.

Our findings offer some of the first evidence that negative attitudes voiced through local right-wing voting hinder refugees’ successful social integration in their new country. Overall, local attitudes are an important factor explaining why some refugees integrate better into German society. In line with Fasani et al. (2022), our results suggest that the current policy of randomly placing refugees is unlikely to be optimal.

Data availability

The authors do not have permission to share data.

Appendix

See Fig. A.1, Tables A.1–A.6.

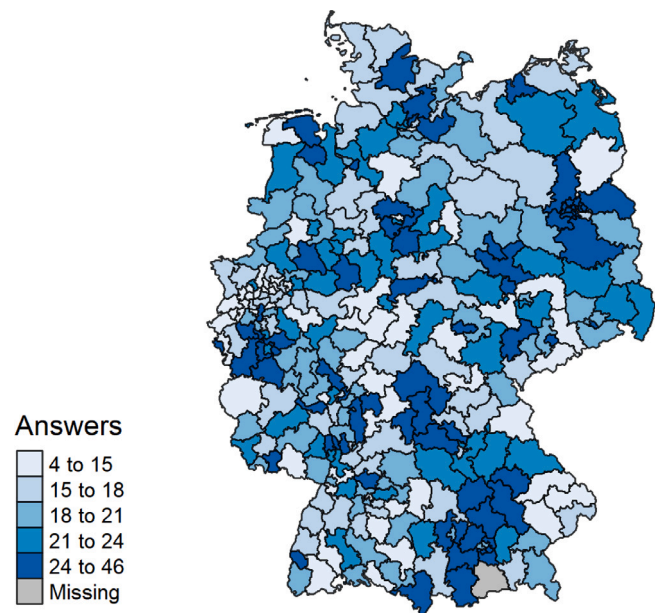


Fig. A.1. Distribution of GLES participants over Germany. Notes: The Figure shows the number of answers from the GLES sample in each electoral district. Sample excludes individuals indicating that they will or have voted for the AfD.

Table A.1
Asylum applications and Königsteiner Schlüssel quota.

	AfD Share in Federal States (Mean)	AfD Share in Federal States (SD)	Asylum Applications 2015–2018	Königsteiner Key 2015–2018	Population Share 2015–2018
Schleswig–Holstein	7.91%	0.030	3.65%	3.40%	3.49%
Hamburg	7.82%	.	2.54%	2.54%	2.20%
Niedersachsen	8.94%	0.027	9.79%	9.34%	9.63%
Bremen	11.04%	0.021	1.17%	0.95%	0.82%
Nordrhein– Westfalen	8.89%	0.022	23.42%	21.18%	21.66%
Hessen	12.93%	0.025	7.64%	7.36%	7.53%
Rheinland-Pfalz	11.09%	0.044	5.09%	4.83%	4.92%
Baden–Württemberg	13.08%	0.032	11.36%	12.96%	13.29%
Bayern	13.15%	0.035	13.10%	15.48%	15.69%
Saarland	9.94%	0.015	1.61%	1.21%	1.20%
Berlin	12.05%	.	5.28%	5.07%	4.34%
Brandenburg	22.93%	0.055	3.10%	3.05%	3.02%
Mecklenburg– Vorpommern	21.59%	0.057	2.25%	2.02%	1.95%
Sachsen	32.14%	0.055	4.46%	5.07%	4.94%
Sachsen–Anhalt	21.40%	0.043	2.91%	2.81%	2.70%
Thüringen	25.10%	0.059	2.57%	2.71%	2.61%

Notes: Mean and standard deviation of AfD vote shares in municipalities in federal election 2017. Percentage of asylum applications per federal state and planned quota based on the Königsteiner Schlüssel for the respective state average of years 2015–2018. Population share of the federal state.

Table A.2
Summary statistics for the outcome variables.

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Economic		
Employment	0.237	0.425
Enrolled in an Integration Course	0.492	0.5
German Language Skills	3.118	0.961
Hours Studying German	2.269	2.344
Social		
Feel Disadvantaged	1.453	0.611
Time Spent w/ Germans	3.618	1.873
Time Spent w/ German Neighbors	2.376	1.714
Feel welcome	4.104	0.888
Trust in people	2.784	0.915

Notes: Employment and Enrolled in Integration course are dummy variables indicating if the individual is in employment or has participated in an integration course. 23.7% are employed, and almost 50% participated in an integration course. German language skills are self-evaluated on a scale from one to five, while hours studying German are self-reported hours the individual spends studying German per day. For the Variable “feel disadvantaged,” a high number indicates individual feels more often disadvantaged (i.e., three indicated individuals feel often disadvantaged due to heritage, while a one means they never feel disadvantaged). This is recoded once the variables are standardized so that higher numbers indicate positive outcomes. The time spent with Germans or German neighbors lays between one and six, and fewer individuals spend time with their neighbors. Feel welcome is scaled between one and five, and trust in people between one and four.

Table A.3
The Impact of county voting for the AfD and the integration of refugees.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A: Economic Integration				
AfD Share County	-1.131*** (0.305)	-0.988*** (0.299)	-1.651*** (0.390)	-0.704 (0.696)
R-squared	0.013	0.167	0.177	0.190
Observations	3188	3188	3188	3188
Panel B: Social Integration				
AfD Share County	-1.613*** (0.408)	-1.630*** (0.378)	-2.151*** (0.473)	-0.704 (0.847)
R-squared	0.031	0.085	0.115	0.130
Observations	2728	2728	2728	2728
Individual Controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
County Controls	No	No	Yes	Yes
State FE	No	No	No	Yes

Notes: The table reports OLS estimates of the effect of AfD vote shares in counties on the integration indexes of refugees. The main explanatory variable AfD Share County reports the vote share for the right-wing AfD based on the second vote during the 2017 federal election on the county level and is updated in case of later regional elections. Individual controls include: gender, age, age-squared, family status, education, area of origin, household size, housing type, and year of immigration. County-level controls include log population, population density, the share of the population who is foreign (Census 2011), male, and over 65, unemployment rate, number of tourist beds per capita, empty apartments per capita (Census 2011), total personal income tax per capita, share of employees with an academic degree, log GDP per capita, the share of criminal cases with a foreign suspect, the number of criminal cases per capita, and the change in recipients of asylum seeker benefits 2014–2016. City-States Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen are included in surrounding federal states for state-fixed effects. * Significance at 10%; ** Significance at 5%; *** Significance at 1%.

Table A.4
Robustness checks for the impact of local voting for the AfD and the integration of refugees.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Main Results	Syrians	Control integration courses	No Foreign/ Displ Share	East/West
Panel A: Economic Integration					
AfD Share	-0.368 (0.529)	-0.244 (0.672)	-0.375 (0.529)	-0.405 (0.529)	-0.041 (0.588)
Share Unempl. 2014	-1.467* (0.853)	-1.372 (1.111)	-1.486* (0.861)	-1.384 (0.849)	-1.006 (0.898)
Former GDR					0.029 (0.173)
Reference Group: Western Germany AfD # Former GDR					-0.874 (0.746)
Observations	3188	1852	3188	3188	3188
R-squared	0.189	0.224	0.189	0.188	0.190
Panel B: Social Integration					
AfD Share	-1.251** (0.485)	-1.878*** (0.613)	-1.162** (0.489)	-1.408*** (0.490)	-1.071* (0.550)
Share Unempl. 2014	0.365 (1.349)	1.621 (1.445)	0.602 (1.305)	0.100 (1.402)	0.993 (1.543)
Former GDR					-0.252 (0.166)
Reference Group: Western Germany AfD # Former GDR					-0.031 (0.845)
Observations	2728	1602	2728	2728	2728
R-squared	0.127	0.104	0.128	0.122	0.129

Notes: The table reports OLS estimates of the effect of AfD vote shares in municipalities on the integration indexes of refugees. The main explanatory variable AfD Share reports the vote share for the right-wing AfD based on the second vote during the 2017 federal election on the municipality level and is updated in case of later regional elections. Individual controls remain the same as in the previous table (Column (2) does not control for area of origin), and all regressions include month- and federal-state fixed effects. Column (3) includes a county-level control of integration course offer, column (4) does not control for foreign share or the change in recipients of asylum seeker benefits 2014–2016, column (5) interacts AfD share with a dummy that is one if a federal state belonged to the former GDR. All other individual, municipality and county controls remain the same as in the main regression. City-States Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen are included in surrounding federal states for state-fixed effects. * Significance at 10%; ** Significance at 5%; *** Significance at 1%.

Table A.5
The impact of local voting for the AfD on the separate integration outcomes.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	Economic				Social				
	Employed	Integr Course	Language	Study German	Feel Disadv	Time Germans	Time German Neighbors	Feel Welcome	Trust People
AfD Share	-1.060 (0.764)	-0.224 (0.926)	-0.439 (0.791)	0.252 (0.915)	-1.902* (1.015)	-0.765 (1.026)	-2.585*** (0.950)	0.798 (0.950)	-1.802 (1.153)
R-squared	0.192	0.083	0.343	0.055	0.101	0.145	0.114	0.078	0.058
Observations	3188	3188	3188	3188	2728	2728	2728	2728	2728

Notes: The table reports OLS estimates of the effect of AfD vote shares in municipalities on the separate integration indicators of refugees. The outcome variables are standardized. The main explanatory variable AfD Share Municipality reports the vote share for the right-wing AfD based on the second vote during the 2017 federal election on the municipality level and is updated in case of later regional elections. Individual, municipality, and county controls remain the same as in the previous tables. City-States Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen are included in surrounding federal states for state-fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered on the municipality level. * Significance at 10%; ** Significance at 5%; *** Significance at 1%.

Table A.6

Number of integration courses per displaced, new eligible, and recipients of asylum seeker benefits.

	(1) Courses per displaced	(2) Courses per newly eligible	(3) Courses per benefit recipient
AfD Share County 2017	0.007 (0.017)	-0.038 (0.043)	0.009 (0.071)
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	802	802	800
Adjusted R ²	0.192	0.298	0.537

Notes: OLS number of offered integration classes, in column (1)–(3) per displaced people in the county and in column (4)–(6) for newly eligible individuals in the county. Not shown County Controls: log population size, share foreign population, share of male population, share of population above 65 years, population density, unemployment rate, Log GDP per capita, employees with an academic degree, personal income tax, tourist beds per capita, empty apartments per capita, share criminal activity, criminal share where the suspect is not German.

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