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# Political Regimes and Refugee Entries: Motivations behind Refugees and Host Governments\*

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## **Abstract**

What drives refugee movements? Focusing on host countries' domestic conditions, we argue that refugee entry is determined by their political regimes that shape the incentives of both host governments and refugees. Specifically, we theorize that there is an inverted U-shaped relationship between political regimes and the volume of refugees. When a host country is highly autocratic, refugee volume turns small, because refugees are less willing to enter those countries due to uncertainty over post-entry treatment; when host countries are highly democratic, refugee volume decreases again, because democratic leaders are constrained by negative public opinion toward refugees. Using a global data set (143 countries, 1951-2016), we perform a series of statistical analyses and find strong evidence in support of our theoretical expectations. We also test implications on the preferences of both refugees and host governments, demonstrating that democracies attract a larger number of refugee-status applications, yet these countries are less likely to confer formal refugee status to asylum-seekers.

# 1 Introduction

Over the last 30 years, issues on refugees<sup>1</sup> have received a great attention due to a rapid increase in its volume, flooding to the West seeking asylum. This phenomenon is, however, neither new nor constrained only to developed democracies.<sup>2</sup> In fact, non-advanced democracies have been the recipients of the larger size of refugees since the end of the World War II (Betts and Collier 2017). According to refugee stock data compiled by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), approximately 68,000 refugees arrived in matured democracies on average between 1951 and 2016, whereas countries of non-advanced democracies received more than 110,000 refugees (UNHCR 2018).<sup>3</sup> What explains refugee movements in the modern world? More specifically, how do political regimes relate to refugee entries? Despite the importance of understanding patterns of refugee movements across the globe, there have been only a few comparative studies on the manners in which political

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<sup>1</sup>Refugees can elicit various meanings and images. In general, displaced persons from their home countries are not subject to a formal refugee status determination process prior to the application and therefore have not obtained refugee status. Only after 2007, UNHCR has defined these individuals as being in a “refugee-like” situation, as belonging to “groups of persons who are outside their country or territory of origin and who face protection risks similar to those of refugees, but for whom refugee status has, for practical or other reasons, not been ascertained”(UNHCR 2015). In sum, UNHCR counts refugees as all individuals residing in a third country, (1) who enjoy formally recognized refugee status, (2) who have been granted complementary and temporary forms of protection, or (3) who are in a refugee-like situation (after 2007). Hence, throughout the remainder of the paper, we adopt this broad definition of refugees, while distinguishing individuals with recognized refugee status (formal refugees) from those with asylum-seeking status or refugee-like status (displaced people) whenever needed. Sources on this definition of refugees can be found in the United Nations Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (GCR: 1951), along with the 1967 Protocol as well as various regional coverage, such as the 1969 Organization for African Unity Convention.

<sup>2</sup>According to UNHCR report (UNHCR 2018), the number of refugees has doubled over the past two decades. The succession of new or worsening crises has caused an increase in displacement from about 1 in 160 people a decade ago to 1 in 113 today. Of those refugees under UNHCR’s mandate, 84 percent are residing in low- or middle-income countries, and a quarter of those are living in the world’s least developed countries.

<sup>3</sup>Here, we use that the Polity score is more than 8 as the preliminary cut-off identifying matured democracies.

regime types influence refugee migration.

Against this backdrop, this paper explores the relationship between regime types and refugee entries. We argue that refugee movements are the result of an interaction between preferences of refugees and leaders of receiving countries,<sup>4</sup> and that the preferences of those two actors are formulated based upon political regimes in receiving countries. Specifically, we contend that refugees would prefer to flee to a country that provides them with political, social, civil, and economic protections and rights. Thus, they would prefer to settle in democracies compared to autocracies that tend to breed high uncertainties in their rights and protection. Meanwhile, host governments' incentives in receiving refugees depend on to what extent they need to be accountable to public opinion. We expect that democratic leaders would prefer to minimize the volume of refugees due to a large winning coalition, which tends to be apprehensive about refugees. In contrast, autocratic leaders are less controlled by (or free from) the general public, therefore, less concerned about a size of refugees.

These differing preferences between potential refugees and leaders lead to our main theoretical expectation: *When a country is highly autocratic or democratic, refugee stock tends to be small. Countries whose political regime is in-between end up receiving the larger size of refugees.* As an effort to observe this overall trend, we conduct a series of cross-national statistical analyses, using data spanning from 1951 to 2016. Fixed effects negative binomial regressions confirm that political regimes exhibit the inverted U-shaped relationship with the size of refugees. We also test the preferences of both refugees and host governments by examining a number of asylum applications and the approved numbers, finding that democracies tend to attract larger numbers of refugee-status applications from asylum-seekers than autocracies, yet democracies are also less likely to confer them with formal refugee status. The results are robust to a battery of sensitivity analyses, including different data structures (monadic vs dyadic data), alternative estimators, different measures of political regimes,

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<sup>4</sup>In this paper, we assume that leaders' preferences are reflected in policy outcomes

multiple imputation, and outlier analyses.

This paper contributes to the literature on democracy, authoritarian regimes, human rights, and political economy of international migration.<sup>5</sup> In the scholarship of political economy, there have been a large volume of studies examining the relationships between political regimes and important outcomes, such as state repression (Davenport 2007), economic and human developments (e.g., Przeworski et al. 2000; Ross 2006; Acemoglu and Robinson 2012; Gerring, Thacker, and Alfaro 2012), social spending/public goods provisions (e.g., Stasavage 2005; Rudra and Haggard 2005), as well as openness to trade and other economic flows (e.g., Eichengreen and Leblang 2008; Mansfield, Milner, and Rosenforff 2000, 2002; Milner and Kubota 2005). Through plugging this variable into the refugee literature, this research suggests that we can also understand refugee movements via the lens of host governments' regime types. In so doing, we speculate overall refugee directions and volumes by shedding light on actors' preferences in a combined fashion.

Furthermore, issues on refugees are frequently framed within a human rights framework where many scholars advocate bottom-up approaches (e.g. localization of human rights of refugees) as the most practical solution (e.g., De Feyter 2007; Merry 2006; Temple and Moran 2011). While appreciating this approach, our theory also re-emphasizes impacts that domestic institutions can bring about (top-down effect). Lastly, by exploring refugee move-

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<sup>5</sup>Note that we have several important scope conditions on our theory and empirics. First, it mainly considers refugees, asylum-seekers, and those under refugee-like situations, who are officially registered under appropriate host governments. It is well acknowledged that a great portion of refugees crosses borders illegally. Unfortunately, it is notoriously difficult to accurately count those undocumented refugees even for a single host country, not least on cross-national investigation. One may claim that relying only on official refugee data would yield a partial depiction of an actual reality. Yet, it seems reasonable to assume that even official numbers reflect some truth in observing overall trends of where refugees migrate. Second, migration literature (Money 1999; Ruhs 2013; Ruhs and Martin 2008) indicates that refugee-related policies can be divided into two dimensions: entries (e.g. the amount of refugees allowed to enter) and post-entry rights (e.g. integration of refugees). While this paper focuses on entries of refugees and entry policies of receiving countries, our mechanisms also consider an impact of political regime types on post-entry rights and how they are filtered in preferences of the refugees and host governments.

ments with a focus on the interaction between refugees and host governments, we speak to the general literature of international migration (e.g., [Breunig and Luedtke 2012](#); [Miller and Peters 2018](#); [Shin 2017, 2019](#)). It is widely understood that democratic countries are hesitant in accepting a large size of refugees, implicitly assuming that this is due to their democratic nature ([Dustmann et al. 2017](#); [Neumayer 2005](#); [Zaun 2018](#)). However, little theorizing and empirical exploration have been done thus far on the manners in which political regimes of recipient countries shape the incentives of both refugees and host governments, while systematically comparing with authoritarian countries. By closely assessing incentive structures of these two actors driven by regime types of receiving countries, this research untangles the complex architecture of refugee movements ([Brochmann and Hammer 1999](#); [Freeman and Kessler 2008](#); [Ruhs 2013](#)).

## 2 Theoretical Framework

Why do displaced people choose to abandon their home countries ([Apodaca 1998](#); [Hakovirta 1986](#); [Schmeidl 1997](#)) and where do they eventually resettle ([Gibney, Apodaca, and McCann 1996](#))? Many studies point out that people in "distress" ([Goodwin-Gill 1986](#); [Collinson 1999](#)) strategically make choices even under highly constrained circumstances ([BenEzer and Zetter 2014](#); [Davenport, Moore, and Poe 2003](#); [Kunz 1981](#); [Faist 2000](#); [Moore and Shellman 2004, 2007](#); [Neumayer 2005](#); [Stein 1981](#)). The most commonly emphasized factors include: 1) economic disparities between sending and receiving countries ([Alvarado and Massey 2010](#); [Bohra-Mishra and Massey 2011](#); [Melander and Öberg 2006](#); [Neumayer 2005](#); [Schmeidl 1997](#); [Wood 1994](#); [Zolberg, Suhrke, and Aguayo 1989](#); [Weiner and Münz 1997](#)), 2) geographical proximity ([Iqbal 2007](#); [Melander and Öberg 2007](#); [Schmeidl 1997](#)) with mixed empirical results (e.g. negative findings: [Böcker 1998](#)), and 3) cultural determinants, such as ethnic compositions and linkages ([Dacyl 1995](#); [Moore and Shellman 2004, 2007](#); [Newland 1993](#); [Rüegger and Bohnet 2018](#); [Schmeidl 1997](#)), historical and linguistic ties ([ECRE 1995](#);



Neumayer 2004), and colonial relationships (Böcker 1998; Robinson and Segrott 2002).

Despite significance of aforementioned economic, geographical and cultural factors, we know less about the manners in which politics shapes the landscape of their trans-border movements. Countries' varying degrees of political freedom and competition lead to distinctive leadership selection procedures, final decision making schemes, and methods of public opinion transmissions. These diverging institutional settings then greatly impact displaced people's incentives on where to refuge and host governments' actual practices of domestic refugee policies as well as integration measures (Neumayer 2004). In this sense, examining the relationship between political regime types and where distressed people flee to is consequential.

So far, social scientists mainly scrutinize the impact of regime types of sending countries as an effort to understand causes and remedies for refugee movements. Neumayer (2005) and Siegle, Weinstein, and Halperin (2004: p. 62) claim that the level of democracy in a country has a strong impact on the number of people who flee from the given country, while democracies do a better job of avoiding humanitarian emergencies. In contrast, Moore and Shellman (2004) find a partial effect and Schmeidl (1997), Davenport, Moore, and Poe (2003), and Moore and Shellman (2006) find no impact of sending countries' political regimes. Consequently, one of the common policy recommendations is democratization of the origin countries (Davenport 1999; Davenport, Moore, and Poe 2003; Neumayer 2005). Unfortunately, it is surprising to discover the lack of investigation on the effects of regime types of host countries on outcomes of refugees under a spectrum of democracy and autocracy. Put differently, it is dominantly, yet implicitly, assumed that the most desired resettlement for refugees occurs in consolidated democracies with high levels of economic development, and this stereotype leaves out a scrutiny on receiving countries that are not democratic.

This paper precisely aims to fill this gap in the refugee literature in order to better understand the direction and volume of refugee movements. To do so, we develop a two-stage, stylized, rationalist account of preferences of the two main actors. In the first stage, we

theorize on how political regimes impact displaced persons' preferences on where to refuge. In the second stage, we explore the manners in which political regimes influence host country leaders' preferences and action on refugee acceptance. In so doing, we conceptualize that political regimes can range between fully consolidated democracies to closed autocracies.

## 2.1 Preferences of Refugees: Push-Pull Model

Migration literature suggests that people move based on a calculation of net transaction costs incurring from push (negative or deterring) factors of the origin country and pull (positive or attractive) factors of the receiving country (Massey et al. 1993; Ravenstein 1885; Portes and Böröcz 1989).<sup>6</sup> Those push and pull factors also exist in refugee contexts (Davenport, Moore, and Poe 2003; Neumayer 2005), and a political regime type of a host country reasonably impacts their net transaction cost, in addition to economic, cultural, or geographical factors.

Distressed people tend to be pushed away by homelands' conditions when there are coercive activities, such as human rights violations, state-sponsored genocide, violent behavior of dissidents, civil war, or international war (Apodaca 1998; Hakovirta 1986; Moore and Shellman 2004; Schmeidl 1997). Especially since these distressed people have experienced human-rights violating behaviors by their home governments, closed autocracies with a great government pressure along with a high uncertainty would not seem attractive as destination countries. Instead, they would rather value institutions that (1) protect individual rights and freedoms, and (2) increase the prospects for economic prosperity through stabilized and

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<sup>6</sup>Lists of push factors include such elements as economic, social, and political hardships in the poorer countries while the pull factors include elements, such as better economic conditions (Borjas 1989; Hatton and Williamson 2003; Ortega and Peri 2013), distance (Ravenstein 1885) or social networks (Massey et al. 1999). Among these numerous factors, a host country's domestic political environment plays an important role because it is directly linked to post-entry rights and protection of these rights as well as freedom (Awases et al. 2004; Kymlicka 2003; Fitzgerald, Leblang, and Teets 2014). Consequently, migrants tend to prefer moving to rich democracies, compared to closed autocracies. Indeed, Gallup surveys since 2007 have shown that the United States is the top desired destination for potential migrants worldwide and that Northern America (which includes the US and Canada) is the most desired region.

protected labor, welfare, and political rights (Moore and Shellman 2007; Rügger and Bohnet 2018: p. 815). Thus, we should expect that refugees prefer to settle in democracies while they would hope to avoid autocracies, if they are free from constraints incurring from other transaction costs. Unfortunately, there is no such detailed data that systematically gauges refugees' true preferences over where they want to resettle. Still, there seems to be a general consensus that consolidated democracies are more ideal places compared to neighboring countries whose political institutions tend to be more fragile.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, some may be concerned with distressed people's urgent situation to evacuate from their home countries, which in turn, does not allow them a luxury to calculate where to move, but instead, forces them to move away by 'push factors' of home countries (Boyle, Halfacree, and Robinson 1998; Day and White 2002; Petersen 1958). Indeed, we have witnessed a massive influx of displaced people fleeing to their neighboring countries, which end up becoming the largest host countries (Betts 2008; Moore and Shellman 2007). Although it may be an accurate depiction that a survival is refugees' ultimate goal, this may not be always true mainly under two considerations. First, while distressed people's initial objective would be to secure their lives, their purposes and goals are likely to change over time, since the experience of refugees also changes over the period of threat in the home country, the time of flight and asylum, and final resettlement or repatriation (Silove 2001). In fact, many of refugees arriving in the rich world must first have the resources to make the journey, and those who succeeded in financial and legal (or illegal) procedures can finally

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<sup>7</sup>For instance, Taintor and Lichtenstein (2016)'s longitudinal interview-based survey on newly arrived refugees in the United States shows that 95 percent feels safe in the US free from dangers and restrictions of refugee camps in neighboring countries. Similarly, according to Syrian refugees settled in the US, based on Yigit and Tatch (2017)'s interviews, the meaning attached to refugee status in the US is different than being a refugee in neighboring countries: The meaning of refugee status in the US comes with hope, future plans, and potential to start a new and meaningful life. Furthermore, within Turkey, Yildiz and Uzgören (2016)'s study reveals that many Syrian refugees consider Turkey as a hotspot to reside to save money before they head to Europe. Even those who hope to permanently reside in Turkey due to its cultural and religious similarities with Syria, it is conditional upon whether Turkey grants them citizenship or work permits: otherwise, they claim to depart to Europe.

manage the way to the democratic world (Gibney 2004). Thus, it is valid to assume that they eventually engage in utility maximizing behaviors prior to resettlement. Second, terms, such as ‘asylum-seekers,’ ‘refugees,’ ‘forced migrants,’ ‘economic migrants,’ or ‘irregular migrants,’ are closely interlinked since individuals may change status or simultaneously fit in two or more (Collyer and de Haas 2012; Crawley and Skleparis 2018; Koser and Martin 2011; Mainwaring and Brigden 2016). For instance, migration patterns in Europe show that asylum-seekers seem to arrive whenever legal avenues to economic migration are closed. In other words, there is a good chance that stocks of displaced people may be partially made up of *de facto* economic migrants (Gibney 2004; Joppke 1998), implying that a reasonable ratio of displaced people, in fact, strategically consider where to flee. In this sense, both push and pull factors should be taken into account when evaluating their preferences.

## 2.2 Preferences of Leaders: (Non-)Democratic Governance

Political leaders’ ultimate goal is to maximize their duration of tenure (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). To what extent do leaders need to incorporate public opinion depends upon political regime under which they operate.<sup>8</sup> We speculate that democratic leaders are more likely to express passive attitudes toward refugee acceptance due to several distinct features of democracies.

Past research suggests that the general public tends to negatively view an inflow of refugees especially in Western democracies (Hangartner et al. 2019; Poushter 2016; Telhami 2016).<sup>9</sup> Similar to public sentiments toward immigrants, public perception toward refugees

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<sup>8</sup>We acknowledge that domestic politics includes many other actors, such as ethnic lobbies that promote resettlement of co-ethnics (Zucker and Zucker 1989) and xenophobic politicians who try to keep out racialized others (Madokoro 2016). Past studies note that leaders need to balance between interests of the general public and those of interest groups in order to stay in office (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). Domestic decisions may be also influenced by international actors. Yet, these actors do exist both in democracies and autocracies. The key difference between leaders is how much discretion a leader possesses vis-à-vis these actors, which is directly linked to to what extent leaders can prioritize their opinions, depending on regime types.

<sup>9</sup>For instance, according to Pew Research Center (Poushter 2016), many Europeans are

can be driven by the fact that native citizens view refugees as a threat to their security, economic status, and/or cultural status-quo (Kunovich 2004; Quillian 1995; Scheepers, Gijbbers, and Coenders 2002). More specifically, anti-immigrant sentiment can be caused by materialistic economic conditions such as a fear of labor market competition (Dancygier 2010; Kessler 2001; Mayda 2006; Scheve and Slaughter 2001)<sup>10</sup> or a fiscal burden on public services or the welfare system (Cornelius and Rosenblum 2005; Facchini and Mayda 2009; Hanson and Slaughter 2007; Mayda 2006; O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006). In addition, this threat perception can also emerge due to non-materialistic concerns, such as feelings of threats to national identity (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004), religious values (McDaniel and Shortle 2011), or cultural integrity (Fetzer 2000; Poynting and Mason 2007). Furthermore, security concerns (e.g. a fear of terrorism) can ignite public opposition against refugees.

It is more difficult for leaders in democracies to be open to refugees than those in autocracies through three potential mechanisms. First and foremost, leaders are unable to easily ignore the negative tendency of the public opinion about refugees, because doing so is likely to be punished through free and fair elections. Indeed, refugee and migration issues significantly impact people's voting behavior in the midst of party competition since these tend to be a highly salient issue about which voters have strong opinions (Dustmann, Vasiljeva,

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concerned that the influx of refugees will increase the likelihood of terrorism. A mean of 59 percent across 10 European countries (Hungary 76 percent, Poland 71 percent, Germany 61 percent, Netherlands 61 percent, Italy 60 percent, Sweden 57 percent, Greece 55 percent, UK 52 percent, France 46 percent, Spain 40 percent) voice this concern. Also, many Europeans believe refugees are a burden to society because they take jobs and social benefits that would otherwise be available to citizens of each nation. Overall, a mean of 50 percent across the countries surveyed have pointed out these concerns.

<sup>10</sup>It is widely regarded that an inflow of migrants would lower the labor costs, especially of low-skilled workers: one of the major reasons natives oppose against open migration policies (De New and Zimmermann 1994). In case of refugees or people under refugee-like situations, they oftentimes either hold conditional working permissions or are completely prohibited from working. As a result, they tend to be overly underemployed and/or engage in illegal economic activities. From a standpoint of the general public, this works as a threat to their wage levels.

and Damm 2019; Shin 2017: p. 17). Because competitive elections transmit popular will into election results, the incumbents become reluctant to pursue open refugee policies for fear of electoral losses.

Second, because democracies generally recognize and protect individual rights and civil liberties (Collier and Levitsky 1997; Lipsky 2018), citizens can outspokenly express their fears against refugees through associations and interest groups, often accompanying with public demonstrations or even riotous acts (Neumayer 2004). Furthermore, due to respect for physical integrity, property rights, and other civil liberties, governments in democracies may find it difficult to subdue popular demands through coercive measures. As a result, democratic leaders are likely to become hesitant to enact policies that accept a large number of refugees since it is against popular preferences.

Third, political leaders' reservations about refugees and subsequently less open refugee policies may gain stability through institutional checks and balances. Democratic leaders tend to face a larger number of veto players from whom they need consent in making decisions, due to the institutionalized balance of power between the legislatures and the executive, as well as partisan divides between those bodies (Tsebelis 2002; Henisz 2002). The presence of those veto players implies that decision-making procedures are likely to involve a lot of oppositions and compromises and thus lead to a considerable amount of time and high levels of policy stability. Such a nature of democratic politics imposes additional challenges on implementing swift policy decisions on the acceptance of refugees.

By contrast, political leaders in autocracies are less constrained by these mechanisms. Autocratic elections are not free and fair enough to transmit popular preferences to election results. Elections in dictatorships, even if they permit opposition parties to participate, are far from institutions that make leaders accountable to citizens, but serve as tools that help them hold onto power (e.g. Magaloni 2006; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018). Individual rights and civil rights are severely circumscribed and state repression is ubiquitous, which makes it difficult for citizens to publicly express their dissents (Davenport 2007). Autocrats

are generally less constrained from institutionalized checks and balances. Autocrats make decision-making themselves or rely exclusively on support from small groups of ruling elites (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Svobik 2012), implying a small number or absence of veto players (Frantz and Ezrow 2011). In such conditions, autocrats are unlikely to take public opinion seriously. Rather, they may not regard refugees to be burdensome, because refugees might even contribute to lowering labor costs, which would be positive for the rich (i.e., employers or capital owners), who is likely to be political allies of the autocrats (Boix 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Shin 2017). For instance, most of the post-Soviet autocratic countries (e.g., Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) have been relatively open toward refugee entries, despite that some of their post-entry right provisions have been weak due to fragile welfare and social infrastructures, as well as rampant political corruption.

A comparison of reactions to Syrian refugees, emerging from the Syrian Civil War, among EU member states and their neighboring non-democratic countries reveal a clear difference. EU has faced with conflicting interests of its member states. In case of Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel introduced the so-called open-door policy in late 2015,<sup>11</sup> however, soon reintroduced border controls in response to exacerbated public discontent. Other traditional refugee recipient countries, such as Austria and Sweden, have also insisted for regional burden-sharing mechanisms (e.g. a capacity-based quota system) to assuage their domestic dissatisfaction arising from refugee pressures. However, the EU failed to realize a collective mechanism since other member states were afraid that this system would force them to take more refugees in and get electorally punished as a consequence as they have observed from other EU countries that have accepted refugees (Dustmann et al. 2017; Zaun 2018).<sup>12</sup> In

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<sup>11</sup>In August 2015, Chancellor Angela Merkel chose to allow Syrian refugees who had already registered elsewhere in the European Union to enter Germany and register there, temporarily suspending an EU law that required asylum seekers to be returned to the first country they entered. Furthermore, in September of the same year, she relaxed controls on the border with Austria, allowing tens of thousands of refugees stranded in Hungary to enter Germany.

<sup>12</sup>For instance, Malta and Italy are closely located from Libya and Syria in the Mediter-



contrast, other non-democracies or young democracies, such as Jordan and Turkey, revealed opposing policies. Despite severe *de facto* restrictions on the right to work, Syrians were generally welcomed in Jordan. Similarly, Turkey has continuously hosted the largest size of refugees. However, this does not mean that the public opinion was supportive of refugees.<sup>13</sup> Still, these governments have continued admitting even a greater number of (both Syrian and non-Syrian) refugees across years, prioritizing their personal interests. These stark differences among neighboring countries' reactions toward the Syrian refugees highlight variations in leaders' necessity to incorporate the public opinion, depending on their political regime types among other features, such as economic or developmental differences.

### 2.3 Combined Preferences: An Inverted U-Shaped Relationship

As aforementioned, displaced people would prefer to enter a country that provides them with better civil, political, social, and economic (i.e., labor market and welfare accesses) protections. Thus, they would naturally prefer to settle in democracies. On the other hand, as a country democratizes, leaders would be more hesitant to admit displaced people as refugees due to a nature of democratic governance. In contrast, political leaders of autocracies are less likely to deter refugee inflows, although displaced people would avoid entering extremely autocratic countries that do not guarantee their lives and rights due to severe controls and uncertainties. As a result, more refugees end up falling in between these two political regimes. These expectations arising from differing preferences between refugees and

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ranean Sea; however, rarely allow asylum-seekers to enter their territories.

<sup>13</sup>For instance, in Turkey, refugees have been framed as a societal and economic threat. In fall 2011, as the number of Syrian refugees began to increase and the Turkish government started accommodating them, two devastating earthquakes hit, killing more than 600 people and leaving thousands injured and homeless. These events immediately sparked public discontent with the government's emergency assistance for Syrians. During the local elections in 2014, the government's newly adopted policy of registering the Syrian refugees and issuing them with biometric temporary ID cards was viewed with a suspicion and doubt, leading to widespread concerns about Syrian refugees turning into 'potential voters' for the governing party (Memisoglu and Ilgit 2017:p. 326). A survey result by Hugo (2014) finds that the majority of Turkish people perceived the Syrians' presence in Turkey as troublesome.



leaders can be summarized as:

***Regime Hypothesis:** When a country is highly autocratic or democratic, refugee volume tends to be small. Countries with intermediate levels of political freedom and political competition end up receiving the larger size of refugees.*

Put differently, we hypothesize that we expect an inverted U-shaped relationship between regime types and refugee stock.<sup>14</sup> Displaced persons prefer to move to a democratic country, which enables them to protect rights while they would avoid entering autocracies. Concerned with a large number of incoming displaced persons, democratic governments would more aggressively deter refugee inflow due to costs associated with democratic governance, such as free and fair elections, individual rights and civil liberties, and institutionalized checks and balances. Consequently, the number of refugees is speculated to reach its peak somewhere in the middle between democracy and autocracy.

The refugee movements based upon these two groups of actors can be more clearly and practically illustrated through an observation of African countries, which send and receive the greatest volume of refugees due to the number of protracted conflicts and wars. The African region was originally known for its open and welcoming stances toward the displaced people. The development of Pan-Africanism, an ideology to unite countries in the region after World War II, gave birth to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. The purpose of its Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1969) was to

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<sup>14</sup>There could arise a few caveats. First, some readers may consider our treatment of regime types to be too simplistic since both democracies and non-democracies can be disaggregated into multiple forms, eliciting dissimilar conditions, affecting attitudes toward refugees. Democracies can be further distinguished into various forms, ranging from “presidential versus proportional representation” to “single-party dominance versus coalition government.” Similarly, non-democracies can be differentiated into multiple forms, according to electoral competitiveness (Schedler 2002; Levitsky and Way 2010) or authoritarian regime types (military, party-based, and personalist; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018). Yet, we still rely on a spectrum between full democracy and closed autocracy since our main interest is to focus on evaluating the effects of varying levels of “democraticness” of political regimes on the volumes of refugees.

overcome limitations in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol (McFadyen 2012; Nyaoro 2019). This regionally collaborative approach was praised for its hospitality toward refugees and asylum-seekers (Crisp 1999; Loescher et al. 2010). However, soon after the colonial administration departed and these countries faced sudden independence, they have chosen diverse approaches, particularly since the 1990s, toward refugees as an effort to establish their national identities until today. And these dissimilar attitudes toward refugees by national leaders, as well as refugees' preferences and decisions, seem to be closely associated with host governments' political regime types.

In regards to displaced people in Africa, many case studies suggest that their ultimate goal is a resettlement at industrialized and humanitarian countries in the West, instead of repatriation as UNHCR recommends. One of the reasons for this preference is due to media images and stories told by resettled refugees in the Western countries. For instance, many Sudanese resettled refugees, who used to reside in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya and resettled in the United States or Australia, come back to Kakuma to select brides, offering expensive dowries while presenting themselves with luxurious clothes, pictures of their homes and livelihoods, and stories of education and success (Jansen 2008). Although these stories occasionally turn out to be lies, hiding difficulties and failures as an effort not to disappoint expectations and hopes of their family members and friends (Bixler 2005), they nonetheless fantasize an image of Western world and increase a wish for resettlement among people in refugee camps. Many Sudanese refugees use a phrase, 'life or knife,' meaning resettlement or suicide (Jansen 2008). Similar tendencies can be also found in other camps, such as Somalis refugees in the Dadaab camps (Horst 2006). This tendency among African displaced people in refugee camps highlights a few important facts: Although they may have chosen refugee camps near their home countries as a way to secure their lives in early stages, they look for new means to improve standard and quality of their livings. In such a process, Western democracies naturally become most desired destinations, because they are expected, from refugees' perspectives, to provide safe and humanitarian environments where they can protect

their lives through greater employment opportunities and access to better educations and welfare systems.

While a great number of Sudanese refugees reside in Kenya, Sudan also receives a large volume of refugees from her neighboring countries, such as Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda. Although Sudan occasionally experienced democratic paths, it faced series of conflicts between its north and south, along with conflicts in the western region of Darfur. Even after it recognized an independence of South Sudan (2011), various tensions and conflicts still exist due to shared oil revenues and border demarcation. In addition, considering past military governments and series of coup d'état, protests, and massacre, Sudan can be considered as a non-democracy or fragile democracy at best. And its refugee policies seem to resemble what we can expect based upon its regime type: Open refugee policies on entry with a minimal provision of post-entry rights. For instance, its Regulation of Asylum Act (1974) severely limits refugee rights. They are not allowed to own land or immovable assets (Article 9). Also, they are not allowed to leave the place of residence, and non-compliance will cause punishment, such as imprisonment (Article 10(2)). Even among refugees in camps, the government is not able to protect their basic rights and needs, because it does not have both economic capacity and political will (Mudawi 2019). Sudanese approach shows a stark difference from other African democratic countries, such as Ghana, which instead stress generous refugee integration systems.<sup>15</sup>

Despite Sudan's political and economic conditions, displaced people from the neighboring countries have chosen it as a destination to flee for the last thirty years (Schmitt 2014). It is an interesting trend since these neighboring countries have enjoyed greater economic growths and developments. The main reasons for this movement are: Sudan's generous refugee entry policy, adherence to the principle of non-refoulement, and no effective border control

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<sup>15</sup>There have been times when the Sudanese government expressed anti-refugee attitude and reluctance to accept refugees. This kind of attitude was prevalent at a time of a democratically elected government (Kibreab 1996). It also indicates that governments tend to restrict refugee movements when they are constrained by democratic governance.

(Karadawi 1999; Kibreab 1999; Mudawi 2019). In other words, it is relatively easier for displaced people to cross borders with less danger of involuntary repatriation, although their lives after entry may be controlled. More importantly, many of these neighboring countries are even less democratic than Sudan, and thus, it is portrayed as a valid choice to refuge. In sum, the observation of African countries, at least partially, tell us that attitudes toward refugees by host governments tend to reflect characteristics incurred by their political regime types while economic and materialistic calculations cannot solely explain the preferences and movements of displaced people. For a more accurate examination of our hypothesis, next section statistically tests overall trend of refugee movement as well as preferences of both groups of actors.

### 3 Quantitative Analysis: Refugee Movements

#### 3.1 Dependent Variable

To measure the volume of refugees, we follow a previous study (Rüegger and Bohnet 2018) and use refugee stock data compiled by UNHCR. The refugee stock data covers the period of 1951-2016, recording the number of refugees residing in a country in a given year. Figure 2 plots the annual total numbers of refugees on the globe. It shows that the total number of refugees reached its peak toward the end of the Cold War (approximately 17 million people) and then decreased. The graph also indicates that the volume of refugees increased in the 2010s when the Syrian civil war produced displaced people flowing into its neighbors and countries in Europe.

The application of the UNHCR data requires some justification. UNHCR compiles the data based on their definition of refugees: individuals internationally recognized or granted complementary or temporary forms of protection as well as people in a refugee-like situation. It implies that displaced people are counted as ‘refugees’ regardless of duration of their stay (e.g., permanent versus temporary) and amount of rights they can enjoy. The greatest con-

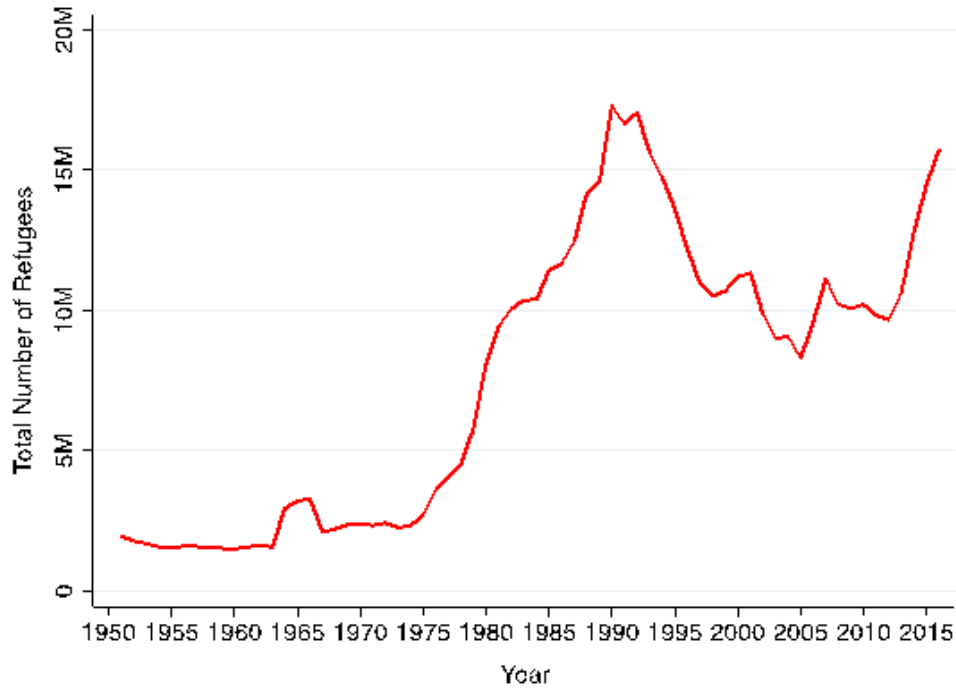


Figure 1: Annual Total Number of Refugees (1951-2016)

cern lies on people in refugee camps since the UNHCR data counts displaced people in those camps also as refugees. A large number of them tend to involuntarily get stuck once entering those camps without adequate economic or social rights. These realities are in a sharp contrast with our theoretical expectation that displaced people make strategic calculations even under highly constrained circumstances. However, the World Refugee Council report (Muggah and Abdenur 2018) states that more than sixty percent of refugees on the globe reside in urban areas. Most of displaced people settle in cities, even by leaving the camps, in order to achieve autonomous living as well as better economic and educational opportunities.<sup>16</sup> Thus, we rely on the UNHCR refugee data: It is not only the most comprehensive global dataset on refugee stock, but it is also, after all, a decision that the distressed people make on whether they stay in refugee camps or become urban refugees.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Of course, we acknowledge that there are many refugees that do not have any other choices but to continuously reside in the camps due to various economic, political, social, and personal circumstances. We do not mean to disregard those unfortunate situations. Instead, the purpose of our research is to grasp an overall trend of refugee movements.

<sup>17</sup>In recognizing the fact that most of refugees tend to settle in urban areas, we also need

## 3.2 Independent Variables

The variable of interest in this study is host country’s political regime. To measure political regime types, we employ two measures, Polity V score and Variety of Democracy (V-Dem)’s Polyarchy index. First, we use the Polity V score, a conventional and widely-used continuous measure of democracy on a 21-point scale (from -10 to 10), created by [Marshall and Gurr \(2020\)](#). In measuring political regimes, the Polity project centers on two general principles of democracy: (1) The presence of institutions and procedures through which citizens can express effective preferences about alternative policies and leaders (political competition) and (2) the existence of institutionalized constraints on the exercise of power by the executive (political constraints). Along these two dimensions, the Polity V score includes the following five subcomponents to measure autocracy and democracy: regulation of chief executive recruitment (XRREG), competitiveness of executive recruitment (XRCOMP), openness of executive recruitment (XROPEN), executive constraints (XCONST), and competitiveness of participation (PARCOMP). Since majority of previous empirical refugee studies (e.g. [Kathman 2011](#); [Moore and Shellman 2006, 2007](#); [Salehyan 2008b](#)) adopt Polity score in measuring regime types of origin or host countries, we also rely on this democracy index in order to make our outcomes comparable.

Meanwhile, to ensure that the results are robust (i.e., for heteroskedastic measurement errors of Polity indicators and unjustifiable quadratic relationships, see [Treier and Jackman 2008](#)), we also employ an alternative measure, the Polyarchy Index from the V-Dem project.

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to consider a notion of undocumented migrants. Once displaced people choose to live in cities, these urban refugees are, in most of times, required to self-sustain themselves. Due to their vulnerable statuses (e.g. limited labor rights, no identification documents, or even prejudice and discrimination), there is a high chance that their labors are illegally exploited. Hence, displaced people can be victims of various forms of illegal activities: smuggling to cross borders, human trafficking (e.g. sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery, or removal of organs), involvement with organized crimes, to name a few. Despite acknowledging this close tie between refugees and undocumented migrants, we constrain our scope into “recognized” refugees because data on victims of these illegal activities are still infant due to a lack of uniformed data collection method and too many missing data due to surreptitious nature of the subject.

This indicator measures “the electoral principle of democracy” and includes five subcomponents from the V-Dem data: freedom of association (frassoc), clean elections (frefair), freedom of expression (freexp), elected officials (elecoff), suffrage (suffr) and the five-way multiplicative interaction between those indices (V-Dem version 9.0; Coppedge et al. 2019; Pemstein et al. 2020). Adopting an Bayesian Item Response Theory technique to aggregate these indices, the original variable takes values between 0 and 1. We re-scale the original variable and make the Polyarchy index range from 0 to 100, with a higher score indicating a more democratic regime.

To test our hypothesis on refugee entries, we introduce a squared term of host country’s political regime variables ( $Democracy * Democracy$ ). We expect the squared term to be negative, meaning that the number of refugees reaches a peak somewhere in the middle of the indicators and then refugee volumes decrease as a country becomes more authoritarian or more democratic.

### 3.3 Data Structures, Estimators, and Control Variables

*Data Structures* To test the bell-shaped hypothesis, we adopt two data structures, monadic and dyadic. The primary data structure is monadic, which sets host country-year as the unit of analysis (1951-2016). The monadic data structure is the most suitable to investigate our theoretical expectation, because it enables us to model the effect of host country’s political regimes on its refugee volume with simple statistical modeling (two-way fixed effects, which are discussed later) while controlling for various host country and neighbor level covariates without inflating host country level observations and thus statistical significance of host country level variables, including the political regime ones. That said, dyadic data structures which record bilateral relationships between two countries may be also useful in directly modeling the relationships between sending and accepting countries of refugees. Therefore, to complement with the findings from the monadic data, we also test our hypothesis based upon dyadic data of refugees constructed by Rügger and Bohnet (2018). The unit of anal-

ysis of this dataset is ethnic group-country-dyad-years and records refugee movements from each ethnic group in a country of origin to host countries over time (1975-2009). Although this data structure significantly inflates host country level observations and thus put our hypothesis into less conservative test settings, this data structure also enables us to directly include variables capturing pertinent dyadic relationships between the countries of origin and arrival, including transnational ethnic networks and geographical distances.

*Monadic Data: Estimator and Model Specification* The refugee volume is a count variable and its distribution is highly dispersed across observations, meaning that the variable takes non-negative values and the counts of refugees more than one observation are not, in theory, independent of one another. Therefore, we use a Negative Binomial (NB) estimator rather than a Poisson or Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) test (King 1989; Brandt et al. 2000; Hilbe 2011). The natural logarithm of the recipient country’s total population is included as an offset variable in all models to account for varying levels of exposure to refugee entries across country-years. For instance, 500,000 refugees in a country with a relatively small population (e.g., the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1975) should be expected to yield a different impact, compared to the equivalent number of refugees to a country with a large population (e.g. the United States in 2000).

By introducing country- and year-dummies, this study utilizes two-way Fixed Effects (FE) models, which correspond with a generalized version of the Difference-in-Differences (DiD) analysis and thus address confounding biases due to unobserved time trends and country-specific heterogeneity at the same time. Furthermore, two-way FE allows us to control for several important country-level confounding factors that may affect refugee movements according to the previous study of refugees. For instance, the country’s ethnic configuration, which does not usually change drastically over time, determines ethnic kinship between (mostly, neighboring) countries which are one of such variables that significantly influence refugees’ decisions of destination (Rüegger and Bohnet 2018). Another example is



the country’s geographical location, which may affect to what extent displaced people find it easy to move to the country and thus should be another time-invariant confounding factor.

Previous flows of refugees significantly affect refugee movements thereafter through the construction of ethnic, family, and religious networks, and therefore, it is extremely important to account for the temporal dependence of refugee flights. To model the path-dependent nature of refugee movements, non-constant error variance and autocorrelation are addressed by using country-clustered robust standard errors, assuming that errors are correlated within country unit. Robustness checks directly model first-order autocorrelation through the generalized estimating equations (GEE) and OLS with the lagged dependent variable to find that the main results remain unchanged.<sup>18</sup>

To control for other confounding factors that are associated with both refugee entries and political regimes, we introduce the following as control variables. The country’s level of economic development should be a pertinent confounding factor, as emphasized by earlier works (Alvarado and Massey 2010; Bohra-Mishra and Massey 2011; Melander and Öberg 2006; Schmeidl 1997; Wood 1994; Zolberg, Suhrke, and Aguayo 1989). Economic prosperity is associated with the likelihood of democratic transitions and consolidation, and high-income countries tend to invite more displaced people (Moore and Shellman 2006, 2007; Salehyan 2008b). To control for economic development, we use GDP per capita (logged) from the Maddison Project (Bolt and van Zanden 2014). On the contrary, countries in the midst of political conflict may not be a desirable destination for displaced people and political conflict may also impact regime outcomes (Moore and Shellman 2006, 2007; Salehyan 2008b). Therefore, we control for whether a country is under civil war, which is taken from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program’s Armed Conflict Dataset (Gledisch et al. 2002). As additional socio-economic controls, following Neumayer (2004, 2005) we include economic growth (annual percent, the Maddison Project), assuming that growing countries may be attractive for refugees and also these governments are more willing to accept those refugees.

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<sup>18</sup>Regarding the GEE framework for negative binomial regressions, see (?).

As suggested by the literature, refugees often arrive from neighboring countries due to political turmoil in neighbors, such as a civil war, at least temporarily (Betts 2008; Chimni 1998; FitzGerald and Arar 2018). Also, if there are neighbors harboring a significant number of asylum-seekers or refugees, potential refugees may be more likely to arrive in the country through established networks (Dacyl 1995; Moore and Shellman 2004, 2007; Newland 1993; Rügger and Bohnet 2018; Schmeidl 1997). Since democratization often diffuses from neighbors (e.g., Huntington 1991; Brinks and Coppedge 2006), controlling for those spillover effects is crucial to accurately estimate the impact of host countries' political regimes on entries of refugees to host countries. To tease out these spatial influences, we control for (1) proportion of neighbors under civil wars, (2) total number of refugees in neighboring countries (logged), and (3) the average score of the political regime variables in neighboring countries (as suggested by Kathman 2011; Moore and Shellman 2006; Neumayer 2005).<sup>19</sup>

*Dyadic Data: Estimator and Model Specification* In the dyadic data, our estimator and model specification are built upon Rügger and Bohnet (2018), which provides a systematic global analysis of refugee movements from ethnic groups in countries of origin to host countries. In the dyad data, the refugee volume variable includes an excessive number of zero-observations because few dyads experience refugee movements. Therefore, following Rügger and Bohnet (2018), we employ hurdle models, which assume that the binary zero and non-zero observations and the count of non-zero observations are generated by two different data generating processes. Specifically, logit models are used for the binary outcome of whether any refugees are present, whereas zero-truncated negative binomial models are used for the count of refugees. To consider country- and time-specific heterogeneity, we include dummies of home country and host country, along with year dummies. Standard errors are clustered by both country and year to consider spatial and temporal dependence of refugee movements. Similar to the monadic data analysis, the natural logarithm of the

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<sup>19</sup>Descriptive statistics of the variables used in the analyses is available in Appendix Table A.

host country’s total population is included as an offset variable to consider different levels of exposure to refugee entries.

Our model specifications are also based upon [Rüegger and Bohnet \(2018\)](#)’s while we additionally include variable of our interest: host countries’ political regimes.<sup>20</sup> As discussed, the most useful feature of dyadic data is that we can directly model bilateral relationships. In particular, trans-border ethnic ties and spacial distance between the two countries are seen as strong predictors. The variable of transnational ethnic linkage measures whether a country-dyad (connecting both the country of origin and the country of asylum) has ethnic ties for a particular ethnic group (1 is coded if such ethnic ties exist and 0 otherwise). The spatial dimension of refugee movements are also considered by controlling for the minimal distance between an ethnic group’s settlement territory in the country of origin and the possible host country. Other than these two variables, models include the following variables as controls: size of ethnic kin group, differences in levels of democracy, GDP per capita (log), population of ethnically excluded groups between host and home countries, conflict existence, battle deaths, and civilian deaths in home countries, and whether transnational ethnic kin groups involve conflict. Lastly, years since refugee entries are controlled to take the path-dependent nature of refugee movements into account.

### 3.4 Results

Table 1 summarizes the key results.<sup>21</sup> The upper section of the Table reports the results of monadic data analysis (Models 1-3). Model 1 includes the Polity score and its squared term without controls. The squared term is negative and statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that the number of refugees increases toward the midpoint of the Polity score and then it decreases as the score becomes smaller or larger.<sup>22</sup> Models 2 and 3 introduce control

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<sup>20</sup>The replication data of their analysis is available from <https://icr.ethz.ch/data/epr/er/>

<sup>21</sup>For the entire estimation results including those with control variables, see Appendix B1.

<sup>22</sup>We obtain the same results when we set the V-Dem’s polyarchy score as the dependent variable (without control variables).

variables, while using different measures of political regimes (the Polity score in Model 2 and the V-Dem's Polyarchy index in Model 3) and again the squared terms of the regime variables are negative and statistically significant at the 1 percent and 5 percent levels, respectively.<sup>23</sup>

In the lower section of Table 1 (Models 4-6), we employ dyadic data to test the same hypothesis.<sup>24</sup> Again, the squared term of the political regime variables is negative and statistically significant across all three models ( $p < 0.01$ ), consistent with the findings from the monadic data analysis.

Using the estimation results of Models 2 and 3, Figure 3 shows predicted numbers of refugees, depending upon the Polity score (upper left) and the Polyarchy Index (upper right). As shown, the impact of political regimes follows an inverted-U curve. In case of the Polity score, predicted numbers of refugees maximize (approximately 140,000 people) when the Polity score is about -2, and then decreases when the score becomes larger (i.e., a country becomes more democratic; 22,000 refugees at the largest score of Polity) or smaller (i.e., more authoritarian; 64,000 refugees at the lowest score of the Polity). Using the Polyarchy index, the empirical pattern is highly similar: predicted number of refugees reaches a peak when the score is about 30 (96,000); Then, predicted refugee stock tends to decrease when a host country becomes more authoritarian (59,000 refugees at the lowest score of the Polyarchy Index) or becomes more democratic (20,000 refugees at the highest score of the Polyarchy Index). Given that within-country standard deviation (SD) of the refugee variable is 150,000 and changes in refugee volumes across political regimes range between 76,000 (50 percent of SD in case of V-Dem) and 11,8000 (80 percent of SD in case of Polity), its effect size is

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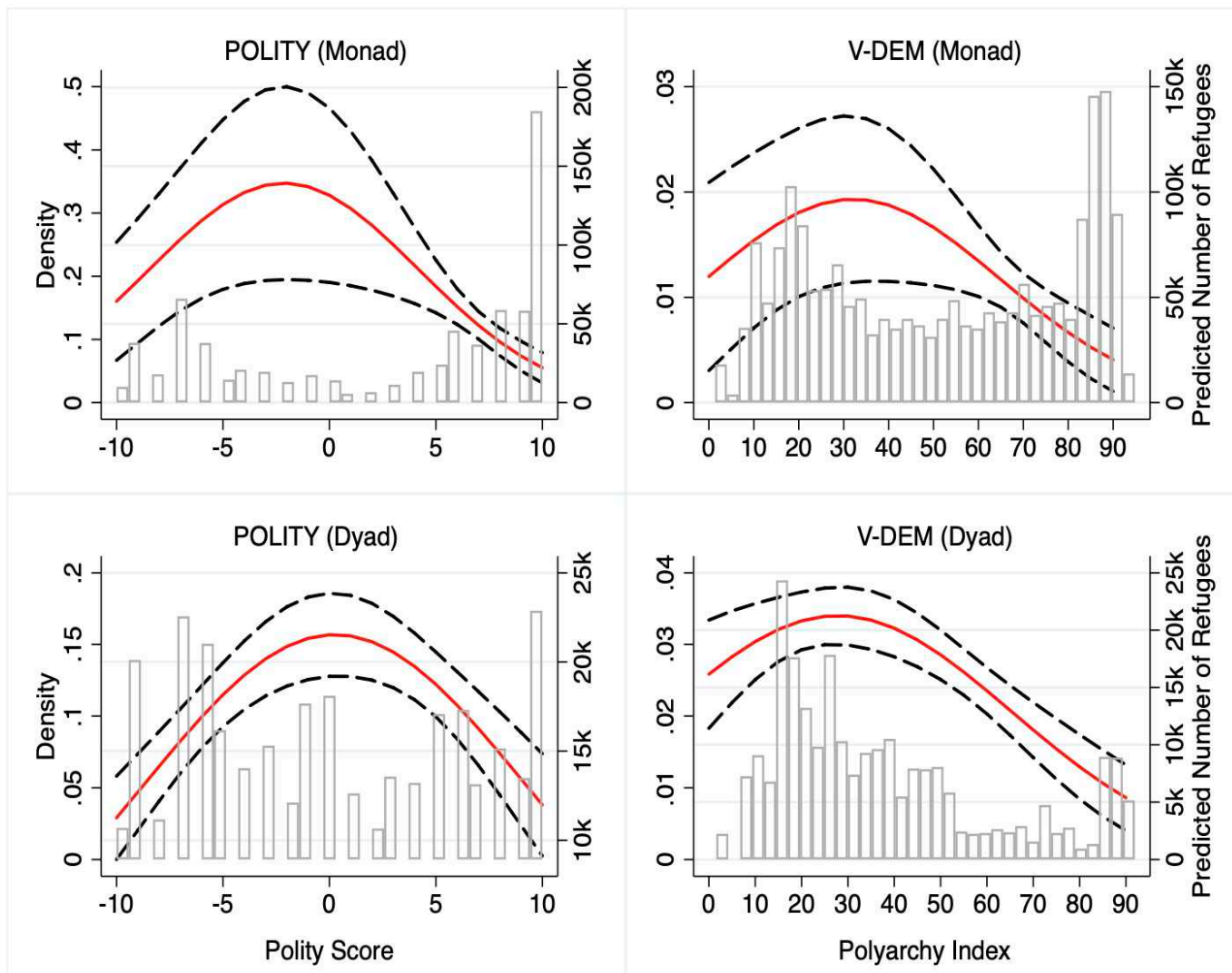
<sup>23</sup>To evaluate model fitting, we inspect the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) for Models 1-3 and the same model specifications but without the squared term of democracy. Models with the squared term yields 41 to 121 lower BIC than those without it. Given that a BIC difference in more than 6 is judged to be strong evidence in favor of the model with the lower BIC (Raftery 1995), model fitting with the squared term, i.e., *Democracy\*Democracy* is better than that with only *Democracy*. This also holds for the dyadic data analysis.

<sup>24</sup>Here, we report the results of zero-truncated negative binomial models, as our hypothesis is concerned primarily with the number of refugees, not whether a country accepts any refugees or not. The results based on logit analysis are very similar and the details are provided in Appendix B1 Table 2.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Dependent Variable	Refugee Volume	Refugee Volume	Refugee Volume
Regime Variable	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
Data Structure	Monad	Monad	Monad
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>-0.074***</b> (0.021)	<b>-0.053**</b> (0.02)	<b>0.03*</b> (0.018)
<b>Democracy*Democracy</b>	<b>-0.011***</b> (0.003)	<b>-0.013***</b> (0.003)	<b>-0.0005**</b> (0.0002)
Controls	No	Yes	Yes
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Countries	143	133	136
Number of Observations	5,201	4,899	4,986
Log Pseudolikelihood	-55366	-51907	-52770
Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC)	111,323	104,461	106,179
	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Dependent Variable	Refugee Volume	Refugee Volume	Refugee Volume
Regime Variable	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
Data Structure	Dyad	Dyad	Dyad
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>-0.013**</b> (0.006)	<b>0.003</b> (0.008)	<b>0.02**</b> (0.009)
<b>Democracy*Democracy</b>	<b>-0.005***</b> (0.001)	<b>-0.006***</b> (0.001)	<b>-0.0004***</b> (0.0001)
Controls	No	Yes	Yes
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Host Countries	161	153	153
Number of Observations	40,217	33,961	34,351
Number of Non-Zero Observations	4,361	3,571	3,571
Log Pseudolikelihood	-47,318	-38,265	-38,268
Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC)	96,278	78,101	78,107

Note: Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\*:  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*:  $p < 0.05$ , \*:  $p < 0.1$

Table 1: An Inverted U-Curve Relationship between Political Regimes and Refugee Volumes



Note: The straight line indicates the predicted number of refugees. The dotted line is the 95 percent confidence intervals. The graphs are drawn based on the estimation results of Models 2 and 3 (for monad) and 5 and 6 (for dyad) respectively

Figure 2: Political Regimes and Predicted Number of Refugees

substantive. We also find the very similar patterns in the case of the dyadic data analysis, using the Polity score (lower left of Figure 3) and the Polyarchy index (lower right).<sup>25</sup> These results are consistent with our theoretical expectation.

One concern arises in regards to wider confidence intervals in the areas of authoritarian

<sup>25</sup>Although the results with the Polyarchy index is slightly more right-skewed than the other models, its BIC score indicates that the assuming quadratic relationship between regime types and refugees yields better model fitting than assuming the linear relationship.

regimes (i.e., lower scores of the Polity score and the Polyarchy index, especially in the monadic data analysis). As the confidence intervals indicate, the point estimates are more uncertain in predicting refugee volumes across autocratic countries. In addition to smaller sample sizes in those ranges, it may reflect the fact that autocratic countries exhibit more diversity in their manners to approach displaced people. For example, oil-rich countries in the Middle East, most of which are not signatories of the UNHCR Convention or Protocol, do not recognize a concept of refugees, and instead, treat all refugee-situation people as economic migrants, requiring them to hold a proper visa and work permit issued by an employer. Such denial of refugee concept may result in increasing the number of irregular migrants and under-counting the number of refugees in those autocratic countries. Even including these outlier countries, however, the amalgamated expectation suggests the strong inverse relationship between political regimes and refugee stocks. Furthermore, excluding these autocracies in the Middle East does not change our results either.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.5 Robustness Checks

To ensure that the results are robust, we conduct a battery of sensitivity analyses for the monadic data analysis, including (1) different estimators (OLS and GEE), (2) different lag structures, (3) multiple data imputation, and (4) Jackknife analyses.

Instead of the count model, we apply alternative estimation methods: two-way FE-OLS with the lagged dependent variable<sup>27</sup> and GEE estimator with log-link function that models

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<sup>26</sup>We are not here to claim that countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries do not recognize a concept of refugees due to their resources. The countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) share unique and long history of ethnic, religious, class, and border conflicts (e.g., Egyptian-Israeli border, the issue of Palestinian refugees, and conflicts in Libya), and they have essentially shaped current stances of GCC countries toward refugees. Thus, we use possession of oil as a proxy to indicate these countries while accounting their economic growths.

<sup>27</sup>Since refugee volume is overdispersed, we take its natural log to estimate OLS. In addition to co-country-clustered standard errors, we also apply Driscoll-Kraay standard errors to consider spacial correlation, autocorrelation, and heteroskedasticity simultaneously to ensure the robustness of the results.

autocorrelation with AR (1) process. The results remain unchanged and political regimes remain to hold the same statistically significant effects on refugee movements (Appendix B3).

Although the analysis so far assumes that changes in political regimes affect refugee movements immediately, the impact of political regimes may go through some time lags until refugees understand potential host countries' political situations. Therefore, in addition to the immediate impact of political regimes, we introduce its lagged variables (up to 3 years) to investigate whether there are political regimes' long-term effects on refugee inflows. The results show that only the present terms ( $t$  year) of the political regime variables are statistically significant, suggesting that political regimes do not necessarily impact refugee movements in the long run (Appendix B4).

As the variable on refugee volume has numerous missing values, we adopt a multiple imputation method to fill out those missing values to deal with possible selection bias.<sup>28</sup> The results do not change after imputing missing values (Appendix B5). Lastly, we conduct Jackknife analyses by excluding a country and a year on by one to make sure that our results are not sensitive to possible outliers. The results remain unchanged with exclusion of any single country or year.<sup>29</sup>

## 4 Mechanisms: Preferences of Refugees and Host Governments

The results thus far suggest that both advanced democracies and closed autocracies tend to have limited numbers of refugees, compared to countries whose political regimes are situated somewhere between these two extremes. While these results confirm that both types of polit-

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<sup>28</sup>We conduct multiple imputation with multivariate normal regression and iterate data imputation processes five times to fill out missing values. As the multivariate method only allows for continuous variables, we use logged refugee numbers to apply multiple imputation.

<sup>29</sup>The estimation results are available upon request.



ical regimes deter volumes of refugees, it is questionable whether we observe these trends due to our hypothesized mechanisms. Our theory suggests that the mechanisms through which advanced democracies and closed autocracies receive fewer refugees are strikingly different: In advanced democracies, governments are reluctant to open their doors to refugees because the incumbents are heavily constrained by public opinion, and thus, the main driving force for the limited refugee numbers lies in the governments' incentives. In contrast, authoritarian countries tend to receive fewer numbers of refugees, because refugees themselves are less inclined to move into those countries where human rights and civil liberties are often severely circumscribed. In other words, refugees' disincentive to enter autocracies is the main cause of smaller numbers of refugees in authoritarian regimes. To empirically assess the validity of these mechanisms, we conduct additional cross-national analyses.

## 4.1 Refugees' Motivations

To measure refugees' desired destination, we use the annual number of asylum-seekers' applications to refugee status in host countries by using the UNHCR's dataset on asylum-seekers' refugee status determination.<sup>30</sup> The dataset covers the time period of 2000-2016. Regressing political regimes and other control variables on the number of applications to refugee status, we expect that democracies are positively correlated with the number of refugee status applications by asylum-seekers. As time series (16 years) is far shorter than cross-section (138 countries) and the models include sluggish variables like the Polity score or the Polyarchy index, employing a country-fixed effects estimator may yield high variance, meaning that estimates are extremely sensitive to the random error in the data (Clark and Linzer 2015). Therefore, we adopt random-effects negative binomial regression to deal with country-level unobserved heterogeneity as well as the GEE framework with country-clustered robust stan-

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<sup>30</sup>The data is available from the following link: [http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/asylum\\_seekers](http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/asylum_seekers). According to the UNHCR's website, asylumseekers are defined as "individuals who have sought international protection and whose claims for refugee status have not yet been determined, irrespective of when they may have been lodged" (<http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview>).

	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Dependent Variable	Refugee Status Application	Refugee Status Application	Refugee Status Application
Regime Variable	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>0.116***</b> <b>(0.015)</b>	<b>0.0789***</b> <b>(0.013)</b>	<b>0.0218**</b> <b>(0.005)</b>
Controls	No	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Countries	139	130	133
Number of Observations	2,196	2,072	2,133
AR (1)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Country-clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\*:  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*:  $p < 0.05$ , \*:  $p < 0.1$ .

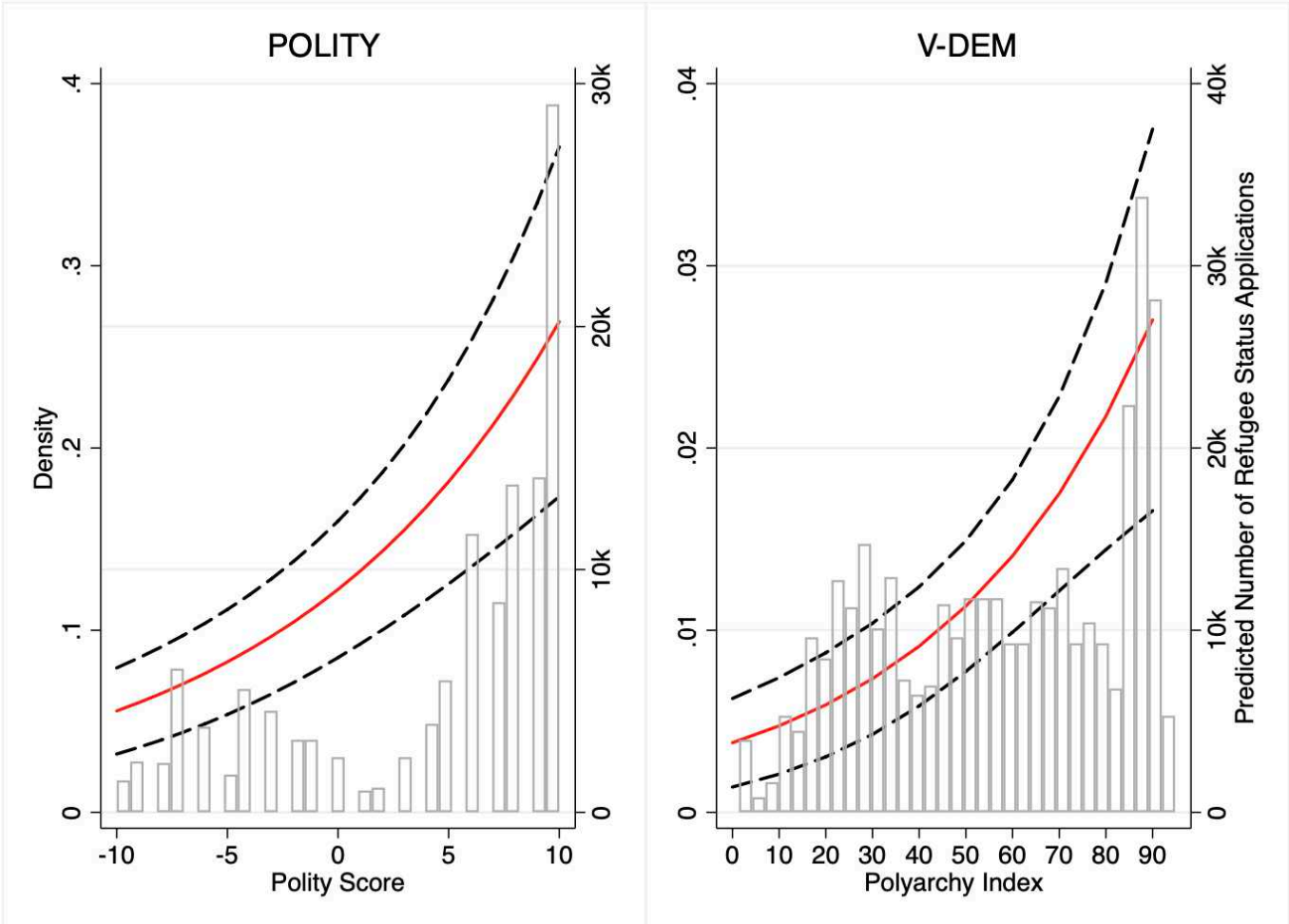
Table 2: Determinants of Asylum-Seekers' Applications to Refugee Status

dard errors while modeling first-order autocorrelation.<sup>31</sup>

Table 2 presents the results of refugee-status applications. In all models, democracy is positively associated with the number of asylum-seekers' applications to formal refugee status in statistically significant ways, consistent with our theoretical expectation.<sup>32</sup> To interpret the results substantively, Figure 4 graphically shows predicted numbers of refugee-status applications by asylum-seekers with the two different measures of democracy: the Polity score and the Polyarchy index. In both graphs, predicted numbers of refugee-status applications in authoritarian regimes (for example, less than 0 in the Polity IV score and less than 40 in the Polyarchy index) are less than 10,000. As countries become more democratic, the number of applications tend to exponentially increase. When they become the most democratic (10 of the Polity IV score and 94.8 of the Polyarchy Index), the number of asylum-seekers applying for the formal refugee-status exceeds 20,000. These results indicate

<sup>31</sup>Year dummies are included in both GEE and random-effects models to account for year-specific confounding factors. The results of random effects models are shown in Appendix Table B7.

<sup>32</sup>As for refugee-status application, the squared term of political regimes, *Democracy\*Democracy*, is not statistically significant, suggesting that the relationship between regime types and refugee-status applications is linear.



Note: Note: The straight line indicates the predicted number of refugee status applications. The dotted line is the 95 percent confidence intervals. The graphs draws from the estimation results of Models 8 and 9

Figure 3: Democracy Receives More Refugee-Status Applications

that asylum-seekers seek to be recognized as formal refugees from the countries that are more democratic.

**4.2 Host Governments’ Motivations**

How do political regimes influence host governments’ attitudes toward refugees? To answer this question, we focus on what decisions host governments have made on asylum-seekers by using the UNHCR’s dataset on asylum-seekers’ refugee status determination. The dataset is suitable since it documents (i) how many asylum-seekers in a country-year are formally

	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Dependent Variable	Recognition Rate	Recognition Rate	Recognition Rate
Regime Variable	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>-0.035***</b> <b>(0.007)</b>	<b>-0.015***</b> <b>(0.007)</b>	<b>-0.004**</b> <b>(0.002)</b>
	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15
Dependent Variable	Rejection Rate	Rejection Rate	Rejection Rate
Regime Variable	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>0.03***</b> <b>(0.007)</b>	<b>0.01</b> <b>(0.008)</b>	<b>0.005**</b> <b>(0.002)</b>
Controls	No	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
AR (1)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Countries	138	129	132
Number of Observations	2,149	2,020	2,081

Note: Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\*:  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*:  $p < 0.05$ , \*:  $p < 0.1$ .

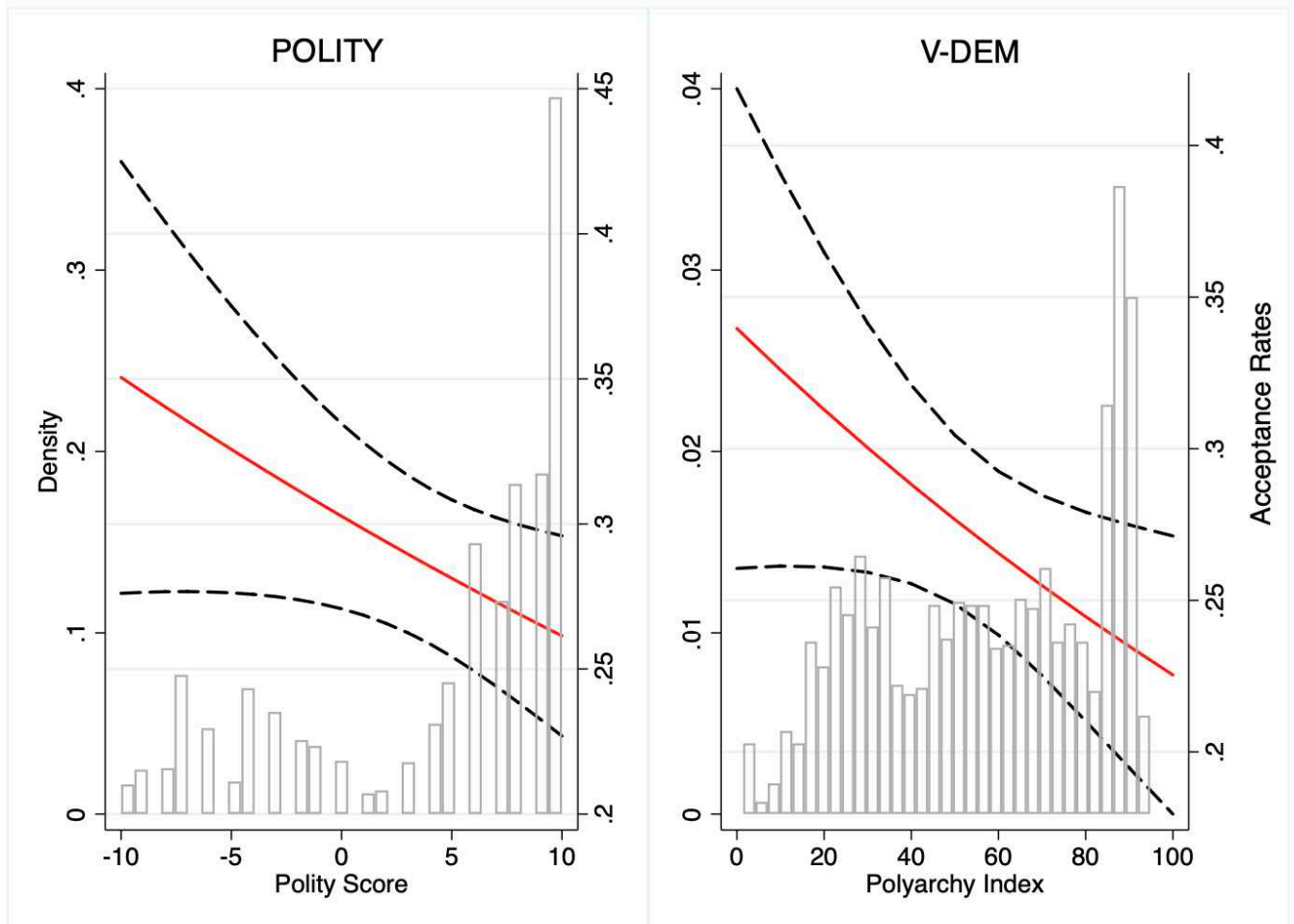
Table 3: Determinants of Governments' Responses to Refugee-Status Applications

granted formal refugee-status by the host government and (ii) how many applications of asylum-seekers to refugee status in a country-year are rejected by the host government. Dividing the numbers of recognition and rejection by total numbers of decisions made by the host government in a given year, we calculate annual rates of recognition and rejection, which are used as our dependent variables.<sup>33</sup> As the dependent variables are continuous and bounded by 0 and 1, we employ the panel data Generalized Linear Models (GLM) with the log link function while modeling first-order autocorrelation and employing country-clustered robust standard errors.<sup>34</sup>

Table 3 reports the estimation results. As expected, democracies are negatively correlated

<sup>33</sup>Besides recognition and rejection, many refugee-status applications gain the status of pending in a given year. Therefore, summing the numbers of recognition and rejection do not correspond to those of total decisions made by the government in a given year.

<sup>34</sup>Random-effects OLS regressions lead to the similar estimation results (Appendix Table B7).



Note: The straight line indicates the predicted number of refugee status recognition. The dotted line is the 95 percent confidence intervals. The graphs draws from the estimation results of Models 11 and 12

Figure 4: Democracy Recognizes Fewer Refugees

with the likelihood of endowing asylum-seekers with formal status of refugees in all models in statistically significant ways.<sup>35</sup> Figure 5 visually shows predicted values of acceptance rates according to the two different measures of democracy. In the most authoritarian countries (where the Polity score is -10 and V-Dem's Polyarchy index is 8), acceptance rates range between 33 percent (V-Dem) and 34 percent (Polity). These scores, however, tend to decrease as countries become more democratic, and when countries reach the most democratic status

<sup>35</sup>The squared term of political regimes, *Democracy\*Democracy*, is not statistically significant for this dependent variable, suggesting that the relationship between regime types and acceptance rates is linear. The same holds for rejection rates.

(where the Polity score is 10 and V-Dem's Polyarchy index is 94.8), the acceptance rates become 22 percent (V-Dem) and 26 percent (Polity), respectively. The empirical pattern is consistent with our theoretical expectation that countries become more reluctant to accept refugees as they hold more democratic characteristics.

Interestingly, when we set the rate of rejection as the dependent variable, the negative effect of democracy becomes statistically uncertain: Although democracies are positively associated with the likelihood of rejection, the results are unstable and not statistically significant even at the 10 percent level in Model 14. One possible interpretation on these diverging results of recognition and rejection is that although democratic governments are not eager to accept many asylum-seekers as their refugees, they may also be reluctant to actively reject refugee-status applications due to the humanitarian point of view and a duty to abide to non-refoulement clause of GCR. Nonetheless, the results suggest that democracies limit the number of refugees not by rejecting the applications of refugee-status but by not recognizing the submitted applications and therefore prolonging wait times for refugee applications.

## 5 Conclusion

This paper has examined what impacts volumes of entries by refugees. It argues that refugee movements are the result of an interaction between preferences of refugees and leaders of receiving countries, and that the preferences of those two sides are configured based on political freedom and political competition in receiving countries. We have developed a two-stage account in order to assess preferences of these two groups of actors. In the first stage, we speculate that people would prefer to refuge to a country that provides them with various rights as well as economic, legal, and political protections. Thus, they would naturally prefer to settle in democracies. In the second stage, preferences of political leaders in host countries are expected to depend on how strongly they are constrained by the general public. We expect that democratic leaders would prefer to minimize the volume of refugees

while autocratic leaders would be indifferent towards it. In sum, we should observe a smaller volume of refugees in both democracies and autocracies while the greatest volume falls under countries with intermediate political regimes. Using a global dataset of volume of refugees by the UNHCR between 1951 and 2016, fixed effects negative binomial model yields that political regimes confirm the inverted U-shaped relationship with the size of refugees. We also specifically test the hypothesized mechanisms on preferences of both refugees and host governments, based on a number of asylum application as well as host countries' likelihoods of accepting and rejecting those applications. Our analyses find that democracies tend to attract larger numbers of refugee-status applications from asylum-seekers than autocracies, yet they are also less likely to confer them with formal refugee status. These results support our expectations on overall refugee movements as well as preferences of the involved actors.

Past studies have scrutinized why (particularly democratic) countries do not receive a larger amount of refugee status applications, despite generous benefits entitled to their acceptance. Some suggested mechanisms include electoral misgovernance ([Skouras and Christodoulakis 2014](#)), low bureaucratic capacity ([Bohmer and Shuman 2007](#)), and information mismanagement ([Carlson, Jakli, and Linos 2018](#)). Our empirical findings additionally introduce an important, yet intriguing, observation: democratic governments accept much fewer asylum applications compared to autocracies do, but they also do not necessarily reject them more often in a significant manner either. A genuine question arises here: what happens to those asylum-seekers in democracies, who did not succeed in obtaining refugee status but also did not get rejected by host governments? In case of rejected asylum-seekers, they have to either leave the host country autonomously (if they already reside in a territory), look for another country for resettlement, or be returned to their home country. Many advanced democracies, however, are subject to the principle of non-refoulement clause, which prevents them from forcefully expelling these individuals. Since many matured democracies are confined by this international commitment, they may be hesitant to officially and publicly reject asylum applications in order to save their faces before domestic and international

audiences. Yet, this implies that the democratic countries are likely to leave asylum-seekers with an undefined status (Dustmann et al. 2017: p. 504).

What needs to be taken into account is that the fuzzy status of refugees, either through non-decision or pending status, implies that these displaced persons are unable to get access to various rights entitled to those with formal refugee status, such as rights for economic activities, international movements, and family reunification. This dehumanization of refugees are likely to increase a probability to turn them into undocumented migrants (most frequently as victims of illegal brokers) as a way for survival – the least favored type of migration in most democracies. Furthermore, these restrictive or uncertain decisions by democratic governments could spread rumors and misinformation, which may exacerbate distressed people’s sense of threat and insecurity (Carlson, Jakli, and Linos 2018). This perception in turn could force them into relying on illegal channels even before considering an option of obtaining formal refugee status. In order to avoid such tragic and ironic outcomes, international burden-sharing and monitoring mechanisms need to be realized, instead of consistently relying on ad hoc decisions.

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## Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics

### Monadic Data

Variables	Number of Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Number of Refugees	5,201	82,826	234,282	0	4,404,995
Polity Score	5,201	2.93	7.04	-10	10
Polyarchy Index	5,156	51.43	28.53	1.4	94.8
Logged GDP per capita	4,999	8.8	1.18	4.89	11.56
Civil War	5,195	0.042	0.201	0	1
Economic Growth	4,996	1.67	12.91	-654.27	57.19
Number of Refugees in Neighboring States (Logged)	5,104	10.8	1.51	3.09	15.24
Average Polity Score in Neighboring States	5,201	1.97	4.91	-8.8	10
Average Polyarchy Index in Neighboring States	5,135	48.04	20.59	6.56	93.7
Civil War in Neighboring States	5,201	0.057	0.088	0	1
Number of Refugee-Status Applications	2,174	8078	28783	0	745,545
Refugee-Status Recontion Rate	2,123	0.3	0.3	0	1
Refugee-Status Rejection Rate	2,123	0.33	0.27	0	1

### Dyadic Data

Variables	Number of Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Number of Refugees	40,170	7,796	79,244	0	3,108,676
Host Country's (HC) Polity Score	40,217	0.28	6.84	-10	10
HC's Polyarchy Index	40,081	39.86	26.24	1.3	92.3
Transnational Ethnic Linkage	40,217	0.13	0.34	0	1
Size of Ethnic Kin Group	40,217	0.03	0.21	0	1
Distance (Logged)	34,257	5.2	2.46	0	9.00
Difference in Democracy	37,581	0.92	5.55	-17	17
Difference in GDP per capita	38,610	0.39	1.13	-3.57	4.84
Difference in Population of Excluded Ethnic Groups	39,228	-0.13	0.36	-0.97	0.98
Battle Deaths in Origin Country	40,217	4.02	4.16	0	12.2
Civilian Deaths in Home Country	40,217	0.49	1.21	0	5
Conflict in Host Country	38,905	0.22	0.41	0	1
Conflict of Transnational Ethnic Kin Group	40,217	0.005	0.075	0	1
Years with Refugees	40,217	1.02	3.87	0	35
Any Refugee Inflow	40,217	0.1	0.31	0	1
Years without Refugees	40,217	8.71	8.03	0	34

**Appendix B: Tables and Figures of Statistical Analyses**  
**Appendix B1: Main Analysis (Table 1)**

**1. Monadic Data**

Dependent Variable	Model 1 Refugee Volume	Model 2 Refugee Volume	Model 3 Refugee Volume
Regime Variable	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>-0.0742***</b> <b>(0.0213)</b>	<b>-0.0533**</b> <b>(0.0219)</b>	<b>0.0298*</b> <b>(0.0180)</b>
<b>Democracy*Democracy</b>	<b>-0.0117***</b> <b>(0.00326)</b>	<b>-0.0125***</b> <b>(0.00336)</b>	<b>-0.000464**</b> <b>(0.000200)</b>
Neighbors' Civil War		0.0511 (0.304)	1.696*** (0.613)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		1.605** (0.632)	0.403*** (0.0912)
Neighbors' Democracy		0.449*** (0.0849)	-0.0183 (0.0114)
GDP per capita (log)		-0.0587 (0.0370)	-0.0486 (0.309)
Civil War		0.112 (0.147)	0.250 (0.177)
Economic Growth		-0.00200 (0.00134)	-0.00255 (0.00173)
Constant	-3.914*** (0.446)	-9.529*** (3.002)	-9.385*** (3.253)
Observations	5,201	4,899	4,986
Number of groups	143	133	136
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Log Pseudolikelihood	-55366.34	-51907.75	-52770.62
Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC)	111,323	104,461	106,179

## 2. Dyadic Data

VARIABLES Regime Variable	Model 4 Refugee Volume Polity	Model 5 Refugee Volume Polity	Model B1-2 Refugee Volume V-Dem
<b><u>Zero-Truncated Negative Binomial</u></b>			
Host Country (HC)'s Democracy	<b>-0.0125**</b> (0.00613)	<b>0.00315</b> (0.00834)	<b>0.0197**</b> (0.00862)
HC's Democracy*Democracy	<b>-0.00529***</b> (0.00121)	<b>-0.00617***</b> (0.00128)	<b>-0.000355***</b> (0.000105)
Transnational Ethnic Linkage		0.0257 (0.142)	0.00165 (0.144)
Size of Ethnic Kin Group		0.285 (0.269)	0.293 (0.263)
Distance (Logged)		-0.141*** (0.0158)	-0.139*** (0.0160)
Difference in Democracy between Host and Origin countries		0.00704 (0.00754)	0.0111* (0.00636)
Difference in GDP per capita		0.220*** (0.0689)	0.180*** (0.0687)
Difference in Population of Excluded Ethnic Groups		0.247** (0.111)	0.255** (0.112)
Battle Deaths in Home Country		0.0485*** (0.00699)	0.0509*** (0.00689)
Civilian Death in Home Country		0.215*** (0.0307)	0.205*** (0.0313)
Conflict in Host Country		-0.0766 (0.0608)	-0.0888 (0.0606)
Conflict of Transnational Ethnic Kin Group		-0.203 (0.158)	-0.202 (0.154)
Years with Refugees	0.0612*** (0.00570)	0.0554*** (0.00536)	0.0571*** (0.00541)
Constant	10.71*** (0.559)	8.388*** (0.475)	8.371*** (0.489)
<b><u>Logit</u></b>			
Host Country (HC)'s Democracy	<b>0.0124***</b> (0.00459)	<b>0.0305***</b> (0.00530)	<b>0.0340***</b> (0.00593)
HC's Democracy*Democracy	<b>-0.0100***</b> (0.000954)	<b>-0.00440***</b> (0.00115)	<b>-0.000280***</b> (6.20e-05)
Transnational Ethnic Linkage		0.229*** (0.0785)	0.273*** (0.0769)
Distance (logged)		-0.374*** (0.0130)	-0.371*** (0.0129)
Conflict in Host Country		0.0791 (0.0776)	0.152** (0.0752)
Years without Refugees	-3.092*** (0.110)	-3.006*** (0.125)	-3.030*** (0.125)
Constant	0.809*** (0.0550)	2.081*** (0.0956)	1.129*** (0.126)
Cubic Splines	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	40,217	33,961	34,351
Non-Zero Observations	4,361	3,571	3,571
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Log Pseudolikelihood	-47318.15	-38265.45	-38268.23
Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC)	96,278	78,101	78,107

Note: Model specifications in both logit and zero truncated negative binomial analyses are based upon Ruegger and Bohnet (2018).

Robust standard errors in parentheses (clustered on countries and years)

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## Appendix B2: Additional Analyses

### 1. Refugee Status Application (Tables 2)

Dependent Variable	Model 2-1 Refugee Status Application	Model 2-2 Refugee Status Application	Model 2-3 Refugee Status Application
Regime Variable	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>0.116***</b> <b>(0.0149)</b>	<b>0.0789***</b> <b>(0.0125)</b>	<b>0.0218***</b> <b>(0.00460)</b>
GDP per capita (log)		0.329*** (0.104)	0.285** (0.120)
Neighbors' Civil War		0.703*** (0.233)	0.766*** (0.229)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		0.479*** (0.0648)	0.452*** (0.0658)
Neighbors' Democracy		0.0865** (0.0380)	0.00941 (0.00774)
Civil War		0.0922 (0.144)	0.111 (0.139)
Economic Growth		-0.00479 (0.00503)	-0.00396 (0.00410)
Constant	-8.290*** (0.174)	-16.72*** (1.209)	-17.16*** (1.258)
Number of Countries	139	130	133
Number of Observations	2,196	2,072	2,133
AR(1)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes

## 2. Recognition/Rejection Rates (Table 3)

Dependent Variable	Model 3a-1	Model 3a-2	Model 3a-3
Regime Variable	Recognition Rate	Recognition Rate	Recognition Rate
	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>-0.0351***</b> <b>(0.00656)</b>	<b>-0.0147**</b> <b>(0.00724)</b>	<b>-0.00410**</b> <b>(0.00198)</b>
GDP per capita (log)		-0.156*** (0.0360)	-0.116*** (0.0336)
Neighbors' Civil War		0.641*** (0.199)	0.446** (0.219)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		-0.0334 (0.0374)	-0.0780** (0.0334)
Neighbors' Democracy		-0.0466*** (0.0161)	-0.0181*** (0.00370)
Civil War		0.0206 (0.104)	0.0469 (0.0836)
Economic Growth		0.000106 (0.00361)	-0.000155 (0.00331)
Constant	-1.011*** (0.0929)	0.691 (0.467)	1.767*** (0.512)
Dependent Variable	Model 3b-1	Model 3b-2	Model 3b-3
Regime Variable	Rejection Rate	Rejection Rate	Rejection Rate
	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>0.0289***</b> <b>(0.00674)</b>	<b>0.00976</b> <b>(0.00803)</b>	<b>0.00494**</b> <b>(0.00231)</b>
GDP per capita (log)		0.168*** (0.0408)	0.125*** (0.0424)
Neighbors' Civil War		-0.0608 (0.0967)	0.0136 (0.105)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		0.0129 (0.0265)	0.0145 (0.0237)
Neighbors' Democracy		0.0252* (0.0151)	0.00395 (0.00335)
Civil War		-0.0156 (0.114)	0.0421 (0.108)
Economic Growth		-1.39e-06 (0.00206)	-0.000202 (0.00208)
Constant	-1.134*** (0.0734)	-2.820*** (0.399)	-2.825*** (0.366)
Number of Countries	138	129	132
Number of Observations	2,149	2,020	2,081
AR (1)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes

## Appendix B3: Alternative Estimators

### 1. Two-Way FE OLS with Standard Errors Clustered with Country

	Model B3-1	Model B3-2	Model B3-3
Dependent Variable	Refugee Volume (Log)	Refugee Volume (Log)	Refugee Volume (Log)
Regime Variable	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
Estimator	Two-way FE-OLS	Two-way FE-OLS	Two-way FE-OLS
Lagged refugee volume (log)	0.869*** (0.0120)	0.849*** (0.0133)	0.854*** (0.0129)
<b>Democracy</b>	-0.00382 (0.00447)	0.000763 (0.00532)	0.00683 (0.00426)
<b>Democracy*Democracy</b>	<b>-0.00186**</b> <b>(0.000777)</b>	<b>-0.00246***</b> <b>(0.000880)</b>	<b>-8.47e-05*</b> <b>(4.69e-05)</b>
GDP per capita (log)		0.0521 (0.0621)	0.0394 (0.0543)
Neighbors' Civil War		0.731*** (0.211)	0.702*** (0.196)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		0.0893*** (0.0219)	0.0885*** (0.0218)
Neighbors' Democracy		-0.0154* (0.00885)	-0.00233 (0.00244)
Civil War		-0.0114 (0.0637)	-0.00220 (0.0662)
Economic Growth		-0.00136 (0.00205)	-0.00159 (0.00203)
Constant	1.842*** (0.195)	0.600 (0.590)	0.446 (0.582)
Observations	4,962	4,654	4,740
Number of groups	141	131	134
R-Squared	0.938	0.934	0.934
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Country-clustered robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1



## 2. Two-Way FE OLS with Driscoll-Kraay Standard Errors

Dependent Variable	Model B4-4	Model B4-5	Model B4-6
Regime Variable	Refugee Volume	Refugee Volume	Refugee Volume
Estimator	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
	Two-way FE-OLS	Two-way FE-OLS	Two-way FE-OLS
Lagged refugee volume (log)	0.869*** (0.0206)	0.844*** (0.0231)	0.854*** (0.0223)
<b>Democracy</b>	-0.00382 (0.00323)	0.00119 (0.00389)	0.00683* (0.00374)
<b>Democracy*Democracy</b>	-0.00186*** (0.000685)	-0.00256*** (0.000819)	-8.47e-05** (3.66e-05)
GDP per capita (log)		0.0583 (0.0589)	0.0394 (0.0520)
Neighbors' Civil War		0.838*** (0.239)	0.702*** (0.220)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		0.0910*** (0.0241)	0.0885*** (0.0239)
Neighbors' Democracy		-0.0168** (0.00828)	-0.00233 (0.00233)
Civil War		-0.00344 (0.0764)	-0.00220 (0.0790)
Economic Growth		-0.00123 (0.00173)	-0.00159 (0.00183)
Constant	1.224*** (0.208)	-0.0430 (0.547)	
Observations	4,962	4,526	4,740
Number of Countries	141	131	134
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Driscoll-Kraay standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

### 3. Generalized Estimating Equations with AR (1)

Dependent Variable	Model B4-7	Model B4-8	Model B4-9
Regime Variable	Refugee Volume	Refugee Volume	Refugee Volume
Estimator	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
	Two-way FE GEE	Two-way FE GEE	Two-way FE GEE
<b>Democracy</b>	-0.0162	-0.0244*	0.0231**
	(0.0111)	(0.0144)	(0.00971)
<b>Democracy*Democracy</b>	<b>-0.00407**</b>	<b>-0.00318*</b>	<b>-0.000280***</b>
	<b>(0.00192)</b>	<b>(0.00162)</b>	<b>(9.64e-05)</b>
GDP per capita (log)		-0.461**	-0.487**
		(0.205)	(0.214)
Neighbors' Civil War		0.135	0.151
		(0.121)	(0.106)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		9.85e-07***	9.50e-07***
		(1.48e-07)	(1.33e-07)
Neighbors' Democracy		-0.0823***	-0.0239***
		(0.0183)	(0.00666)
Civil War		0.0182	0.0456
		(0.0614)	(0.0569)
Economic Growth		-0.000729	-0.00188
		(0.00113)	(0.00159)
Constant	-4.278***	-1.006	-0.968
	(0.426)	(1.927)	(2.054)
Observations	5,199	4,898	4,986
Number of Countries	142	133	136
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes

## Appendix B4: Deeper Lag Structure

Dependent Variable Regime Variable	Model B4-1 Refugee Volume Polity IV	Model B4-2 Refugee Volume Polity IV	Model B4-3 Refugee Volume V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>-0.0730***</b> <b>(0.0246)</b>	<b>-0.0620**</b> <b>(0.0263)</b>	<b>0.0338**</b> <b>(0.0169)</b>
<b>Democracy*Democracy</b>	<b>-0.00805**</b> <b>(0.00322)</b>	<b>-0.00727**</b> <b>(0.00323)</b>	<b>-0.000419**</b> <b>(0.000169)</b>
Democracy (1 year lag)	0.0203 (0.0139)	0.0247 (0.0160)	0.00483 (0.0110)
Democracy*Democracy (1 year lag)	-0.000440 (0.00182)	-0.00270 (0.00195)	-6.50e-05 (0.000107)
Democracy (2 year lag)	0.00729 (0.0149)	0.00543 (0.0154)	0.0108 (0.0117)
Democracy*Democracy (2 year lag)	-0.000553 (0.00263)	-0.000765 (0.00249)	-8.99e-05 (9.98e-05)
Democracy (3 year lag)	-0.0456*** (0.0176)	-0.0338* (0.0172)	-0.0325** (0.0141)
Democracy*Democracy (3 year lag)	-0.00419 (0.00263)	-0.00355 (0.00275)	0.000204 (0.000144)
GDP per capita (log)		0.134 (0.323)	-0.0282 (0.320)
Neighbors' Civil War		1.517** (0.646)	1.550** (0.612)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		0.452*** (0.0848)	0.410*** (0.0923)
Neighbors' Democracy		-0.0575 (0.0374)	-0.0147 (0.0116)
Civil War		0.149 (0.162)	0.286 (0.188)
Economic Growth		-0.00271 (0.00268)	-0.00338 (0.00282)
Constant		-10.04*** (3.153)	-9.372*** (3.406)
Number of Countries	143	131	136
Observations	5,133	4,848	4,941
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Log Pseudolikelihood	-54575.11	-51300.75	-52226.99
Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC)	109,791	103,288	105,142

Note: Country-clustered robust standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## Appendix B5: Multiple Data Imputation

Dependent Variable	Model B5-1	Model B5-2	Model B5-3
Regime Variable	Logged Refugee Volume	Logged Refugee Volume	Logged Refugee Volume
	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>-0.0218</b>	<b>-0.00219</b>	<b>0.0365*</b>
	<b>(0.0186)</b>	<b>(0.0183)</b>	<b>(0.0209)</b>
<b>Democracy*Democracy</b>	<b>-0.0130***</b>	<b>-0.0104***</b>	<b>-0.000438*</b>
	<b>(0.00382)</b>	<b>(0.00324)</b>	<b>(0.000228)</b>
GDP per capita (log)		-0.407	-0.411
		(0.281)	(0.276)
Neighbors' Civil War		1.238*	1.297**
		(0.640)	(0.622)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		0.441***	0.436***
		(0.0681)	(0.0701)
Neighbors' Democracy		-0.0553	-0.0125
		(0.0370)	(0.0107)
Civil War		0.467*	0.511*
		(0.265)	(0.272)
Economic Growth		-0.00627***	-0.00615**
		(0.00230)	(0.00247)
Constant	14.29***	12.90***	-5.902**
	(0.589)	(2.767)	(2.321)
Number of Countries	146	135	137
Observations	6,949	6,609	6,692

Note: Country-clustered robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## Appendix B6: Random-Effects Negative Binomial Regressions for Refugee Status Applications

Dependent Variable	Model B6-1 Refugee Status Application	Model B6-2 Refugee Status Application	Model B6-3 Refugee Status Application
Regime Variable	Polity	Polity	V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>0.0545*** (0.00438)</b>	<b>0.0164*** (0.00561)</b>	<b>0.00779*** (0.00116)</b>
GDP per capita (log)		0.0923*** (0.0276)	0.0478* (0.0289)
Neighbors' Civil War		0.0289 (0.204)	0.0652 (0.192)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		0.0210 (0.0199)	0.0346* (0.0196)
Neighbors' Democracy		0.131*** (0.0116)	0.0261*** (0.00221)
Civil War		-0.247*** (0.0764)	-0.281*** (0.0750)
Economic Growth		-0.0137*** (0.00334)	-0.0143*** (0.00333)
Constant	-17.70*** (0.0714)	-18.78*** (0.312)	-19.82*** (0.319)
Number of Countries	140	131	134
Number of Observations	2,197	2,073	2,134
Country Random Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Log Pseudolikelihood	-18994.73	-17839.44	-18392.76
Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC)	38,143	35,877	36,984

Note: Country-clustered robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## Appendix B7: Random-Effects OLS Regressions for Host Governments' Responses

Table B6-1: Host Governments' Acceptance of Refugee-Status Applications

Dependent Variable Regime Variable	Model B8-1 Recognition Rate Polity	Model B8-2 Recognition Rate Polity	Model B8-3 Recognition Rate V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>-0.0101***</b> <b>(0.00189)</b>	<b>-0.00574***</b> <b>(0.00209)</b>	<b>-0.000987*</b> <b>(0.000540)</b>
GDP per capita (log)		-0.0566*** (0.0100)	-0.0406*** (0.0106)
Neighbors' Civil War		0.250*** (0.0789)	0.202*** (0.0746)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		0.00298 (0.00848)	-0.00627 (0.00811)
Neighbors' Democracy		-0.00715* (0.00401)	-0.00380*** (0.000875)
Civil War		-0.0544 (0.0370)	-0.0491 (0.0358)
Economic Growth		-0.000570 (0.000960)	-0.000913 (0.000933)
Constant	0.385*** (0.0264)	0.839*** (0.117)	1.012*** (0.119)

Table B6-2: Host Governments' Rejection of Refugee-Status Applications

Dependent Variable Regime Variable	Model B8-4 Rejection Rate Polity IV	Model B8-5 Rejection Rate Polity IV	Model B8-6 Rejection Rate V-Dem
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>0.00717***</b> <b>(0.00187)</b>	<b>0.00373*</b> <b>(0.00220)</b>	<b>0.00134**</b> <b>(0.000558)</b>
GDP per capita (log)		0.0592*** (0.0113)	0.0510*** (0.0116)
Neighbors' Civil War		-0.146** (0.0714)	-0.121* (0.0681)
Neighbors' Number of Refugee (log)		-0.00783 (0.00855)	-0.00622 (0.00816)
Neighbors' Democracy		0.00521 (0.00435)	0.00119 (0.000935)
Civil War		0.0586* (0.0336)	0.0621* (0.0327)
Economic Growth		-7.99e-05 (0.000863)	2.78e-05 (0.000847)
Constant	0.313*** (0.0249)	-0.123 (0.125)	-0.173 (0.125)
Number of Countries	140	129	133
Number of Observations	2,151	2,021	2,082
AR (1)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Country-clustered robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1