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Hiroataka Fujibayashi

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Why do states contribute to the global refugee governance? Fiscal burden-sharing in the post-2011 Syrian refugee crisis

Hiroataka Fujibayashi 

Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

ABSTRACT


Why are some states motivated to contribute financially to international efforts to protect refugees and assist host countries? Despite general agreement on the need for burden-sharing in global refugee governance, research up to now has not explained the underlying motivations behind the provision of financial assistance tied to the international protection of refugees. In addressing this gap, this article offers two competing perspectives of the potential impact of refugee migration on the decisions by individual states concerning whether and how much they contribute to a given refugee crisis. The article further hypothesizes that the connection between refugee migration and states' financial contribution depends on the geographic context. The proposed hypotheses are tested using the cross-country panel data on humanitarian assistance to the post-2011 Syrian refugee crisis, and the test confirms that states receiving a more significant number of refugees have a greater incentive to offer a financial contribution. However, this explanation only holds for contributing states remote from Syria. Conversely, states in the geographical proximity of Syria likely have fewer interests to take on a financial burden to support Syrian refugees staying outside of their territories. These findings provide several important insights into the broader policy of refugee governance and into academic debates on the sharing of financial burdens to protect refugees.

¿Por qué algunos estados tienen la motivación de aportar dinero a los esfuerzos internacionales para proteger a los refugiados y ayudar a los países anfitriones? A pesar del acuerdo general sobre la necesidad de compartir la carga en la gestión global de los refugiados, la investigación realizada hasta ahora no ha explicado las motivaciones subyacentes a la provisión de ayuda financiera relacionada con la protección internacional de los refugiados. A fin de abordar esta brecha, en el presente artículo, se ofrecen dos perspectivas contrapuestas sobre el impacto potencial de la migración de los refugiados

KEYWORDS

Fiscal burden-sharing;
global refugee governance;
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CONTACT Hiroataka Fujibayashi  hirotaka.fujibayashi@graduateinstitute.ch  Department of International Relations and Political Science, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2A, Case Postale 1672, Geneva 1211, Switzerland

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en las decisiones de los estados individuales respecto a si contribuyen o no, y en qué medida, a una determinada crisis de refugiados. En el artículo, también se plantea la hipótesis de que la conexión entre la migración de refugiados y la contribución financiera de los estados depende del contexto geográfico. Las hipótesis propuestas se ponen a prueba utilizando los datos del panel de países sobre la asistencia humanitaria a la crisis de refugiados sirios después de 2011, y la prueba confirma que los estados que reciben una cantidad más considerable de refugiados tienen un mayor incentivo para ofrecer una contribución financiera. Sin embargo, esta explicación solo es válida para los estados contribuyentes alejados de Siria. Por el contrario, los estados situados en la proximidad geográfica de Siria probablemente estén menos interesados en asumir una carga financiera para ayudar a los refugiados sirios que se encuentran fuera de sus territorios. Estos resultados ofrecen varias ideas importantes sobre la política general de gobernanza de los refugiados y los debates académicos sobre la distribución de las cargas financieras para proteger a los refugiados.

Pourquoi certains États sont-ils motivés à contribuer financièrement aux efforts internationaux visant à protéger les réfugiés et à aider les pays d'accueil? Malgré l'accord général sur la nécessité d'un partage des charges dans la gouvernance mondiale des réfugiés, les recherches menées jusqu'à présent n'ont pas permis d'expliquer les motivations sous-jacentes à l'apport d'une aide financière liée à la protection internationale des réfugiés. Pour combler cette lacune, cet article propose deux perspectives concurrentes sur l'impact potentiel de la migration des réfugiés sur les décisions des États individuels quant à leur contribution à la gestion d'une crise des réfugiés donnée et à l'ampleur de celle-ci. Il émet en outre l'hypothèse que la relation entre migration des réfugiés et contribution financière des États dépendrait du contexte géographique. Les hypothèses proposées sont mises à l'épreuve à l'aide de données de panel transnationales sur l'aide humanitaire apportée à la crise des réfugiés syriens après 2011 et cette analyse confirme que les États qui accueillent un nombre plus important de réfugiés sont davantage motivés à offrir une contribution financière. Cependant, cette explication ne tient que pour les États contributeurs éloignés de la Syrie. À l'inverse, les États géographiquement proches de la Syrie sont moins susceptibles d'avoir des intérêts à assumer une charge financière pour soutenir les réfugiés syriens séjournant en dehors de leur territoire. Ces conclusions apportent plusieurs renseignements importants pour la politique plus large de la gouvernance des réfugiés et les débats intellectuels concernant le partage des charges financières de protection des réfugiés.

Introduction

In recent years, the principle of burden- or responsibility-sharing has fostered engaging discussions on how best to allocate the burdens and costs of

protecting refugees internationally. Although scholars and refugee law experts explain the said principle in different ways, there is a consensus that burden-sharing can be achieved through either financial resource transfers or physical relocation of refugees between two or more countries, or both (Betts, Loescher, and Milner 2011; Dowd and McAdam 2017). In popular discourse, the latter approach has received attention recently for being the most straightforward solution to the unequal distribution of the refugee population. However, equally important is fiscal burden-sharing, broadly defined as the sharing of financial burdens to protect refugees, to support their host communities, and to prevent humanitarian crises causing the flight of refugees (Acharya and Dewitt 1997; Noll 2003). In fact, as the vast majority of the world's refugees stay in low or middle-income states, adequate financing is crucial not only for the short-term protection of refugees but also for the long-term solution to their host communities (Betts and Collier 2017).

While the need for international cooperation and burden-sharing is evident, there have been significant gaps when it comes to explaining the related principles and practices. For many years, global humanitarian operations and the refugees' basic needs, such as food, housing, education, and medical assistance, have been underfunded (Betts and Collier 2017; Martin et al. 2018). The underprovision of refugee protection funds happens partly because each state decides on an entirely voluntary basis whether it makes a contribution, and how much. The modern international community of countries has never regulated the coordination of individual states' behaviors in a legally binding manner. Thus, the amount of funding available for international refugee protection is still mainly decided by donor governments. Meanwhile, the efforts to finance the global refugee governance are consistently plagued by international collective action problems (Väyrynen 2001; Whitaker 2008).

Drawing on the extant literature on public goods and international collective action, scholars have considered that burden-sharing efforts in global refugee governance tend to fail because of the absence of enforceable rules regulating the states' self-interests and incentives to free-ride (Betts 2003, 2009; Suhrke 1998; Thielemann 2006). However, such a simplistic explanation obscures the rationale behind the motivation of some states for voluntarily contributing to the international protection of refugees with the transfer of financial resources. Notably, some states agree to participate in fiscal burden-sharing efforts in global refugee governance (e.g., Czaika 2009; Noll 2003; Thielemann 2018). Remarkably, moreover, little attention has been given to uncovering the underlying motivations behind such behavior. Even fewer studies have offered systematic empirical evidence for the relevant state-level motivations to provide such help, beyond findings from a limited number of case studies or anecdotal evidence (see, for a notable exception, Roper and Barria 2010).

This article contributes to this scholarship in two ways. First, I offer two competing perspectives of the potential impact of refugee migration on the decisions by individual states concerning whether and how much they contribute to a given humanitarian crisis. An important implication of both perspectives is that the shifting scale of bilateral refugee movements is positively or negatively correlated with a state's motivation for financially contributing to the alleviation of a crisis. Moreover, the article inspects whether the relationship between the share of refugees hosted by each state and the likelihood or the size of contributions by each respective government is conditional on the geographic context. Although a focus on the possible connection between foreign economic assistance and refugee and immigration control is not new (e.g., Bermeo and Leblang 2015; Berthélemy, Beuran, and Maurel 2009; Czaika and Mayer 2011; Lanati and Thiele 2018), this article expands on the connection while keeping the focus on combined fiscal burden-sharing in today's global refugee governance.

Second, this article tests the proposed hypotheses using data of the humanitarian response plans organized by the United Nations (UN) to the post-2011 Syrian refugee crisis. I have chosen the Syrian crisis because it is the world's largest humanitarian crisis of its kind, and the response of the global governance initiative to the crisis enables us to examine the nature of fiscal burden-sharing at a truly global level. The findings provide support for my hypothesis that states receiving a relatively larger number of Syrian refugees have a greater incentive to make a financial contribution to stabilize the crisis and alleviate the risks of further migration and displacement. Notably, however, this explanation holds under the condition that donor states have a big geographical distance to Syria. By contrast, states within greater proximity to Syria appear to reduce their motivations to take on financial burdens as the number of Syrian refugees they have hosted increases. While these two different findings deserve in-depth analysis, this study enriches the broader policy of refugee governance and academic debates on fiscal burden-sharing efforts to protect refugees by explaining the underlying motivations behind states' financial contributions to the Syrian refugee crisis.

This article is structured as follows. In the first section, I survey the relevant literature on fiscal burden-sharing in global refugee governance and then present the hypotheses to be tested. Next, I explain the research design and discuss the data to be analyzed. In the following section, I present empirical findings and then move on to the discussion of a series of robustness tests and supplementary analyses. I conclude by discussing my major findings, some limitations, and the implications of the results, as well as potential paths for future research.

Fiscal Burden-Sharing in Global Refugee Governance

Review of the Literature

Funding is crucial in contemporary refugee governance. However, research into fiscal burden-sharing dynamics is limited. The primary debate in the literature concerns why it is so hard to achieve an optimal outcome from international collective action to provide adequate protection for refugees and support their host countries (Betts 2003; Suhrke 1998; Thielemann 2006, 2018). From the conventional perspective of public goods, these studies have offered a series of explanations of why a seemingly straightforward notion of burden-sharing tends to fail in the context of refugee governance (e.g., Bauböck 2018; Czaika 2009; Thielemann 2018). A starting point for discussion is that international refugee protection is a “global public good,” because protecting refugees and improving their welfare can produce collective benefits such as enhanced security, public order, and stability in a region experiencing large-scale refugee movements (Betts 2003; Suhrke 1998; Thielemann 2018). Virtually all countries of the world can enjoy such benefits, regardless of whether and how much they provide, and this aspect leads to the theoretical prediction that most states are likely to set their commitments at a very low level, or be tempted to free-ride on the contributions from others (Betts 2009; Suhrke 1998). This is a typical example of the free-rider problems, and many scholars admit that the efforts of international cooperation often end up with collective action failures in the area of refugee governance.

In the broader field of international relations, there have been several different scholarly explanations of the conditions under which international collective action failures can be resolved or minimized. Traditionally, analyses of international collective actions started by examining the so-called “exploitation hypothesis” that presumes that larger states contribute more to the provision of public goods (Olson and Zeckhauser 1966). However, this prediction is often contradicted in many issue-areas (e.g., Khanna and Sandler 1996; Kwon 1998; Sandler 2004; Thielemann and Armstrong 2013), because the extent to which a state contributes is not merely determined by its size or capacity, but rather results from a mixture of different reasons (Barrett 2007). Furthermore, not every state prioritizes individual rationality over collective benefits, especially when some (ancillary) benefits can be enjoyed privately by states that have contributed to collective benefits (Kaul et al. 2003; Sandler 2004, 2010).

By placing these discussions in the context of refugee governance, Betts (2003) has stressed that international refugee protection can yield more than one type of benefit. The stability and security resulting from protecting refugees fit well the definition of international public goods, but other

benefits accrue to individual states, especially when they make a voluntary contribution to the international efforts to protect refugees. For instance, states may be motivated to resolve a particular refugee crisis in order to protect their special security interests or to obtain reputational benefits from being generous contributors (Betts 2003; Thielemann 2006). Some of these benefits are considered—at least partially—excludable or rivalrous, and the concept of burden-sharing dynamics has been extended by further research (Czaika 2009; Hatton 2015; Lutz, Kaufman, and Stünzi 2020; Thielemann 2018).

What factors, then, influence a state's voluntary contribution to fiscal burden-sharing efforts in contemporary refugee governance? The refugee studies literature has hinted at the potential influence of national security or at normative considerations behind some states' cooperative behaviors to protect refugees internationally (Betts 2003; Gibney 2004; Thielemann 2006). However, the existing scholarly on those factors is of limited help to explain why some states choose to engage "financially" in the protection of refugees and the support for their host communities. As a notable exception, Roper and Barria (2010) have statistically tested several determinants of state financial contributions to the annual budgets of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). However, their analysis remains ambiguous about why some states choose to offer financial contribution to the UNHCR rather than, for example, to states hosting refugees or other international and non-governmental agencies that deliver direct humanitarian support for refugees on the ground. Notably, a great volume of refugee assistance has bypassed the UNHCR over the years. Also, some donor states have preferred spending their money on tackling a particular refugee crisis (Betts, Loescher, and Milner 2011; Väyrynen 2001). Since these facts are overlooked by Roper and Barria (2010), it is important to ask why some states are inclined to provide financial contributions to tackle a particular refugee crisis, moving beyond the exclusive analysis of the UNHCR's funding.

Why Share Fiscal Burdens? Hypotheses

Most financial costs associated with international refugee protection consists of voluntary contributions by national governments. Not only the UNHCR but most humanitarian agencies working on the ground are heavily dependent on governments' financial contributions (Martin et al. 2018). In a stylized model of fiscal burden-sharing, once a refugee emergency happens somewhere in the world, each state first decides whether it contributes to the protection of refugees under the crisis or not—financially or otherwise. If the state chooses a financial channel instead of, or in addition to, other types of commitments, then it has to make another decision

concerning how much it provides. In the absence of any systematic rules or legally binding framework, however, the amounts of contributions made by the respective governments can vary widely—not only across states but also over time (Väyrynen 2001). Furthermore, oftentimes such monetary contributions are unequally distributed, which means that some refugee emergencies are likely to attract more assistance than others (Betts, Loescher, and Milner 2011; Väyrynen 2001).

The main question that this article addresses is why some states are motivated to financially contribute to tackle a global refugee crisis, while others are reluctant to do so or are even tempted to free-ride (i.e., do nothing). Focusing on a particular destination state or region, most contributing states disburse a great deal of money through several channels of development and humanitarian assistance, not as part of their general contributions to the UNHCR. In this regard, the above question is by and large similar to the question long studied by foreign aid allocation scholars. While a complete survey of this literature is beyond the scope of this article (for an extended discussion, see Alesina and Dollar 2000, Bermeo 2017, and Neumayer 2003), we can draw on some insights found in this literature to develop the hypotheses to be tested in the subsequent empirical analysis. In particular, some recent contributions are increasingly interested in the connection between foreign assistance and refugee migration or international migration in general (e.g., Bermeo and Leblang 2015; Berthélemy, Beuran, and Maurel 2009; Czaika and Mayer 2011; Lanati and Thiele 2018). This particular line of inquiry is useful to explain the rationale behind the motivation of some states to use financial resources in the context of global refugee governance.

By the early 1990s most Western states started to impose tighter restrictions on the entry of labor migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers, the majority of whom came from low-income states (Hatton 2009; Hollifield, Martin, and Orrenius 2014). Against such an international trend, policymakers in destinations traditionally preferred by migrants started to regard foreign economic assistance as a convenient tool to deter “unwanted” immigration (Bermeo and Leblang 2015). Although the existing econometric analyses have provided mixed evidence and have left controversy over whether foreign assistance is effective in alleviating increasing immigration pressure and asylum inflows (Berthélemy, Beuran, and Maurel 2009; Clemens and Postel 2018; Dreher, Fuchs, and Langlotz 2019; Lanati and Thiele 2018), national governments and policymakers are still keen on targeting their economic assistance to some specific countries or regions from where a number of low-skilled migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers come (Ostrand 2015; UNHCR 2006).

Such donor states' interests are partly confirmed by recent empirical studies. Through the analysis of decisions for the allocation of development and humanitarian assistance, Czaika and Mayer (2011) find evidence suggesting that, at an aggregate level, Western industrialized states tend to offer more financial assistance to developing states that have sent more asylum-seekers. Similarly, Bermeo and Leblang (2015) find a robust correlation between bilateral aid commitments by donors and numbers of immigrants from each aid-recipient country, and conclude that donor states use development assistance to reduce heightened immigration pressures from developing countries.¹ These studies collectively lead to a hypothesis about the correlation between a state's financial contribution to a particular refugee crisis and the scale of refugee migration from that crisis spilling over into the state's territory.

This prediction can also be supported from the perspective of international collective actions. Even though burden-sharing in global refugee governance is often characterized by collective action failures, some states may become motivated to voluntarily contribute when they anticipate gaining larger or at least not smaller returns from their contributions (Betts 2003; Thielemann 2006, 2018). In tackling a global refugee crisis, the ultimate goal is reducing negative externalities of the crisis; that is, mitigating the root causes of refugee migration, strengthening protection capacities in neighboring host countries, and making the home country's situation better for the future return of refugees (Betts and Collier 2017; Martin et al. 2018). In brief, the principal beneficiaries of the end or scale-down of a refugee crisis are those states that have received a comparatively large number of refugees fleeing the crisis (as well as those refugees themselves). In contrast, the benefits for states that have faced no or limited refugee influxes are expected to be small or less visible. From this perspective as well as from the traditional logic of international collective actions, we can derive the hypothesis that the former group of states have greater incentives to contribute than the latter.

Hypothesis 1. States attracting more refugees and asylum-seekers from a given emergency area have a greater incentive to make financial contributions to decrease the pressure of heightened asylum inflows.

However, this prediction can be challenged by another prediction, namely that states will not take additional financial burdens if they have already been faced with a large-scale refugee inflow. For instance,

¹Note that Bermeo and Leblang (2015) find a negative correlation between the sizes of the refugee population in donor states and the amounts of economic assistance made strictly for the purposes of socio-economic development in aid-receiving states. However, they explain this result as mainly caused by the donor states' intention to send emergency relief and humanitarian assistance, not financial aid for development, towards refugee-sending states. For this reason, Bermeo and Leblang's analysis does not refute the findings by Czaika and Mayer (2011), and the arguments underlying both studies are largely consistent with each other.

considering that most conflict-plagued and human-rights-abusing states are located in the Middle East, Africa, and several of the less developed parts of Asia and Latin America, it is not surprising that many states within or neighboring those refugee-sending regions prefer using their limited resources for more direct and practical measures to improve domestic asylum procedures and strengthen their border control and coast guard capacities (e.g., López-Sala 2015; Petsinis 2016; Triandafyllidou 2013). Furthermore, if fiscal burden-sharing can be viewed, at least in part, as a kind of compensation for the unequal distribution of refugee-hosting burdens (Thielemann 2006, 2018), states that have already been exposed to a comparatively large pressure of asylum-seekers and irregular migration would neither see it necessary nor financially wise to take extra financial burden to support refugees abroad and other refugee-hosting states. The above considerations lead to a competing prediction against the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2. States receiving more refugees and asylum-seekers from a given emergency area have a lower incentive to make financial commitments.

While the two hypotheses compete, their observable implication is that the shifting scale of bilateral refugee movements from a given refugee crisis is either positively or negatively correlated with each state's motivation to provide financial contributions for that crisis management. And yet, it may be unrealistic to presume that all states behave in the same way. For some states, particularly rich ones and remote from most refugee-generating states, such as Australia, Canada, Japan, and countries in Northern Europe, sending financial resources is arguably the easiest and less controversial way to engage in international efforts to stop refugee emergencies (FitzGerald 2019; Ostrand 2015; Schuck 1997; Suhrke 1998). Meanwhile, many states in the global south, which, for geographical reasons, are generally at a higher risk of receiving mass refugee arrivals than their northern counterparts, have a different outlook on their financial spending. While it is normal to see that national governments have different responses to the same refugee emergency, a possible explanation for cross-country divergences is the geographic dynamics of refugee migration. Although in today's interconnected world geography alone cannot explain the complex patterns of refugee migration, it is still a significant predictor of possible destinations of refugees (Fransen and de Haas 2019). And the suspected connection between refugee migration and states' financial contributions could be altered or conditioned by the geographic proximity of each state to the origin of those who are internationally displaced. Therefore, I propose another hypothesis to examine whether the scale of refugee migration and bilateral distance interact in their effects on states' provisions of financial resources to mitigate the negative externalities of a refugee crisis.

Hypothesis 3. Bilateral refugee movements from a given emergency area have a different effect on a destination state's incentives to offer financial contributions, depending on the state's geographical proximity to the emergency area.

Research Design and Data

To test the proposed hypotheses, this article analyzes the funding data of the UN-led humanitarian response plans to the post-2011 Syrian refugee crisis. In addressing this crisis, all the funding efforts to protect refugees and internally displaced persons have been coordinated in two parallel humanitarian response plans. One is the plan to protect people living in internal displacement, stop the war, and promote peace and post-war reconstruction inside Syria. The other is the regional response plan to support refugees and their host communities in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, or Egypt. When making a financial contribution, states can specify how and where their contributions are to be used. Meanwhile, the main objective of this study is understanding the broader picture of fiscal burden-sharing efforts to address the Syrian refugee crisis as a whole and asking whether and how much each state accepts its share of responsibility for tackling the crisis. Accordingly, I will construct a cross-sectional time-series dataset that compiles data on the annual contributions made by every UN-member state, except Syria and the aforementioned five neighboring states, towards the humanitarian response plans of interest over the period 2012–2020.² The unit of analysis is set to contributing state/year, and the dataset is designed to investigate whether assistance was offered and, if so, how much per year to address the humanitarian challenges of the Syrian crisis.

A common challenge to the study of foreign economic assistance is the potential presence of sample-selection biases caused by unobservable data (McGillivray 2003; Neumayer 2003). Generally, a record of assistance is observed if a donor provides a positive amount of aid, while the record is unobserved if a donor does not. Indeed, it is common for official assistance records to be available only for the assistance provided, while zero-assistance data are generally not recorded. The data examined by this study share a similar problem—that of a high prevalence of missing or zero observations—and have two major subsamples of (a) states that DO NOT contribute (and whose data are unobserved) and (b) states that DO contribute (and whose data are observed). One may treat type (a) observations either as missing or as to be replaced with zeros. Yet, given the data

²Data is collected through the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) Financial Tracking Service's database.

structure, it is more accurate to treat the unobservable type (a) data differently from the strictly positive observations. Because the probability of missing or zero observations (i.e., no contribution provided) is not random, the selectivity for a state becoming a donor needs to be taken into account before estimating how much assistance that state provides; otherwise, the estimation results are likely to be biased. Furthermore, this study needs a two-step estimation technique, such as a standard two-part model or a Heckman selection model.³

Two-step estimators, either a two-part or a Heckman model, consist of the first-stage probit (or alternatively logit) model that estimates the probability of a state contributing financially, and the second-stage linear regression that estimates the sum of the contributions provided by donors selected in the preceding binary-response model. The major difference between the two models is their different assumptions on the (in)dependency of the first- and second-stage equations—whether the error terms of the two equations are assumed to be independent (in a two-part model) or dependent (in a Heckman model). While in this study the assumption of independent equations is pre-tested, no strong evidence for the interdependency of the two equations is identified. This means that the first- and second-stage equations are uncorrelated, or that the correlation can be ignored. Indeed, previous studies often conclude that a two-part model performs as efficiently as the counterpart Heckman model, with or without sample selection biases (Berthélemy 2006; Neumayer 2003; Czaika and Mayer 2011). And in the absence of significant selection biases, a two-part model has naturally become the model of choice because, compared to the Heckman methods, it is generally less vulnerable to the model's misspecification errors, but more easily applied to panel data analysis (Barthel et al. 2014; Neumayer 2003). For these reasons, this article selects a standard two-part model as a benchmark, while the Heckman and other alternative models are used to test robustness.

Dependent Variables

In a two-part model, the first-stage equation can be estimated through a probit regression corresponding to whether or not a state provides a positive amount of assistance in a given observation year. Therefore, for the first-stage estimation, I create a dummy dependent variable to measure

³Although other techniques such as Tobit or Poisson Pseudo-Maximum Likelihood (PPML) estimators have also been used in the aid-allocation literature (e.g., Acht, Omar Mahmoud, and Thiele 2015; Bermeo 2017; Bermeo and Leblang 2015), using a two-step estimator is the most appropriate way to deal with potential sample-selectivity problems. The two-stage assumption is also attractive, compared to other one-stage estimators, in that it enables researchers to obtain separate equations for both the probability and the level of assistance provided.

whether or not a state financially contributed to the UN-led humanitarian response plans in Syria and neighboring host states during each calendar year.

In the second stage, a linear regression model estimates the level of contributions provided by individual states, but the model analyzes the subsample with strictly positive observations. Here, the dependent variable is set to financial contributions made by each state in a given calendar year. To avoid errors associated with skewed distribution, I take the natural logarithm of each state's real-dollar contributions (plus one). The list of states included in the sample, as well as information on the amount contributed, is reported in [Table A1 in the Supplemental Appendix](#).

Independent Variables

The key explanatory variable is the number of refugees and asylum-seekers from Syria to each potential donor state. This variable is approximated by the annual number of Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers per donor and retrieved from the UNHCR's *Population Statistics* database. Although the UNHCR's population statistics on the Syrian refugees is a conservative estimate due to the existence of unregistered refugees and asylum-seekers, it is currently the only available data of its kind. As states are different in size and refugee-hosting capacity, I use the relative rather than absolute figures of the Syrian refugee population, that is, the number of Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers per 10,000 inhabitants of each state. Similar to other continuous variables, this variable is log-transformed after adding one in order to keep the maximum number of observations. It is also lagged by one year because real-time data are not available to policymakers at the time of their decision-making. In short, the analysis examines whether a shift in the relative number of Syrian refugees hosted per donor in year $t-1$ is correlated with the likelihood and the size of contributions made by each donor in year t .

As discussed above, this study hypothesizes two competing mechanisms in which a state's contributions to a refugee crisis corresponds to the scale of refugee migration from the crisis spilling over into its territory. Yet the study also argues that the geographic context matters in explaining the effect of bilateral refugee movements with regards to whether and, if so, how much the destination states of refugees spend externally in addressing the causes and negative externalities of a crisis. Note that this expectation results from the possibility that the likelihood of a state facing mass refugee arrivals will decrease as the state's distance to the source country increases.⁴

⁴Indeed, in the post-2011 Syrian refugee crisis most refugees have been hosted by neighboring states or have attempted to cross to Europe through Eastern-Mediterranean and Western-Balkan routes. Not surprisingly, these

To account for this dimension, this study includes a variable to measure the bilateral distance from Syria (Damascus) to the states in the sample of this study. The variable is provided by the Centre d'Études Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales (CEPII)'s *GeoDist* database, in which the bilateral distance between two states is calculated using the latitude and longitude of each state's most populous city,⁵ and I use the natural logarithm of this variable. In the analysis below, I will interact this bilateral distance variable with the number of Syrian refugees hosted by each state in order to examine whether a state's humanitarian assistance to a refugee crisis is conditional on the geographical proximity of the state. If the underlying geopolitical dynamics modify the relationship between a state's voluntary contribution and the scale of refugee migration from Syria spilling over into the state's territory, considering this interaction can be useful to interpret the above-proposed competing perspectives.

Control Variables

This study considers alternative explanations to the motivations of states to contribute to refugee crises. First, I take into account the economic capacity of individual states, since governments cannot offer financial contribution to refugee-protection efforts abroad unless they have the financial capacity to do so. Accordingly, I use the World Bank's *Databank* to include the log of per capita GDPs (calculated in constant 2017 international USD adjusted to purchasing-power parity) as control for the fiscal capacity of states to offer financial contribution.

Second, as a control for the commercial interests of donor states, I include a variable to measure the strength of the donors' trade ties with Syria and the broader neighborhood. Bilateral trade data are taken from the International Monetary Fund's *Direction of Trade Statistics*, and my analysis includes a variable that measures the log of each state's annual export to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) expressed as a percentage share of their total export values in that year (plus one). In line with the existing aid-allocation literature, this control variable is expected to have a positive coefficient on the dependent variables in both stages. Alternatively, the (logged) absolute values of bilateral exports and of total trade (export + import) between donors and the MENA states are used in sensitivity analysis.

states have reacted to the Syrian refugee emergency very differently than wealthy and remote states like the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, or countries in Northern Europe (Betts and Collier 2017).

⁵While the CEPII original dataset does not include data for Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, or South Sudan, I compute the bilateral distances from Syria to these states using the same formula, in order to obtain as many observations as possible. The inclusion/exclusion of these four states, however, does not alter the results of this article.

Third, the study needs to control some moral or normative aspects of the voluntary contributions by states to the international protection of refugees. As suggested by previous studies, some states may be prepared to assume a burden of supporting refugees and their host states guided by certain international norms related to the protection of refugees and international burden-sharing (Betts, 2003; Gibney, 2004; Thielemann, 2006). From this perspective, the level of a state's commitment to refugee protection is presumed to be positively associated with both the probability and the level of financial contributions offered. Using the *Migration Data Portal's* list of core international treaties stating the basic rights of refugees and migrants, this study constructs a relevant indicator by counting how many treaties each state has ratified in preceding years. To ensure maximum variance, my analysis includes a variable based on information on each state's ratifications of a total of eighteen core human-rights treaties and their associated protocols, as well as of other nine public law instruments on the rights of refugees and migrants; accordingly, the maximum value of this variable is twenty-seven.⁶ However, as the reasons for not ratifying the human rights instruments may be unrelated to refugee and migration issues, I use an alternative indicator focusing strictly on the number of each state's ratifications of the nine public law instruments for protecting the rights of refugees and migrants. Notice that I am aware of the limitations of using these variables as an indication of the extent to which individual states adhere to humanitarian norms and have truly altruistic motivations to protect refugees. This is because the signing or ratifying of an international treaty does not automatically translate into true intentions to comply with the treaty's standards and norms (e.g., Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Neumayer 2005). Nonetheless, given the fact that contracting states have internationally agreed to assume certain obligations and duties by ratifying an international treaty, quantifying the numbers of those ratifications is a way to measure moral or normative considerations inducing a state's voluntary commitment to fiscal burden-sharing efforts in global refugee governance.

Fourth, this study adds another control for how much each state offers for tackling other contemporaneous humanitarian crises. The underlying assumption is that some states may favor efforts into other humanitarian emergencies over the protection of Syrian refugees. It is plausible that some states may stop or reduce their contributions to the Syrian crisis to spend

⁶This study does not include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) because it is not a treaty, even if all UN member-states must respect the Declaration (i.e. cross-country variation cannot be measured). Three International Labour Organization's Conventions (No. 97, 143, 189) are also ignored because these are the instruments regulating the rights of labor migrants, and therefore are not suitable for the purpose of this study. Table A3 in the Appendix provides a complete list of the international instruments used to construct relevant indicators for this article.

more money on other conflicts as well as on natural and man-made disasters. To create a control for this possibility, I have retrieved all the available data, except for the Syrian response plans, compiled in the UNOCHA's Financial Tracking Service database in each observation year, and divided the amount of each state's annual contributions by the sizes of their economies (GDP). In short, this variable is defined as the log of (one plus) each state's real dollar contributions to the management of other crises relative to the donor's GDP.

Fifth, I include a dummy variable to measure whether a donor state is a member of the UNHCR's Executive Committee (ExCom). In the ExCom annual meetings, a number of global refugee protection issues are discussed and decided; moreover, budgetary issues almost always become a central agenda for the discussions. Accordingly, the ExCom members are predicted to have a greater chance of participating in fiscal burden-sharing efforts than non-members, although this dummy variable will likely have little influence on the second-stage results, given the diverse characteristics of the ExCom member-states (Roper and Barria 2010).

Lastly, year dummies are included for both stages' equations to address the issue of temporal dependency that may arise from the panel data structure. As a common strategy to address the issue of potential autocorrelation, all estimation models assume heteroskedasticity robust standard errors clustered by donor state. Further, most control variables enter with a one-year time lag due to potential concerns of endogeneity, while an exception is made to the amounts of contributions to other humanitarian crises, since the expected decision-making time-lag does not apply to this variable. In the [Supplemental Appendix](#), [Table A2](#) provides a list of the definitions and sources of all the variables used in both the main analysis and the robustness checks, and [Table A4](#) presents the summary statistics for these variables.

Results

Descriptive Findings

Before conducting the empirical analysis, I investigate the bivariate relationships between the log of the sum of contributions provided by a state and the logged number of Syrian refugees hosted by the same state relative to its 10,000 national population. [Figure 1](#) presents a series of scattergrams displaying the bivariate relationships between the two variables for every observation year, as well as their pooled data. Also, as a rough graphical test of whether the above bivariate relations could be conditioned by each state's bilateral distance to Syria, I distinguish between those states relatively close to Syria (within 2,500 km) and other states (over 2,500 km).

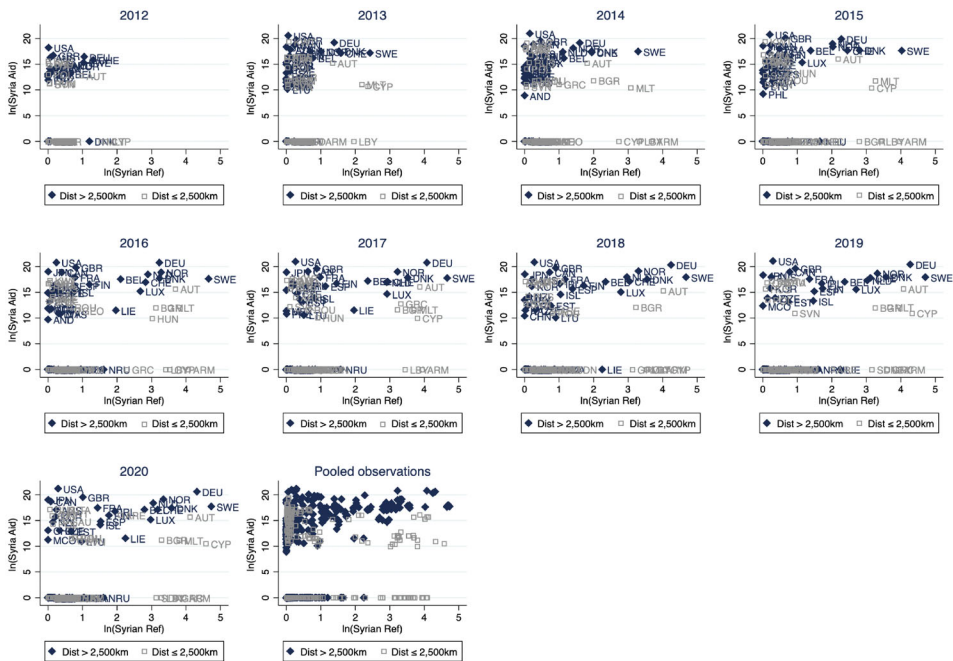


Figure 1. Bivariate relationships between logged number of Syrian refugees per 10,000 population and logged amount of contribution to the Syrian refugee response plans.

Though not in an evident manner, the scatter plots suggest that, overall, the relative scale of the Syrian refugee population in donor states has a weak but positive association with their contribution amounts in proportion to the greater distance to Syria from donor states. In contrast, the bivariate relationship of interest seems to turn negative if donor states are geographically closer to Syria. Here, the geographical cut-off point is introduced arbitrarily, but these findings can be corroborated by the next empirical analysis.

Empirical Findings

Table 1 provides the estimation results of the standard two-part models with robust standard errors clustered by donor state. All models in Table 1 are estimated with random effects, while the corresponding results based on pooled regressions and fixed-effects models are reported in Table A8 in the Supplemental Appendix. As it happens with this study, random-effects models are the standard choice for the probit regression with panel data. Although the choice between fixed and random-effects models often becomes the subject of methodological debates (e.g., Bell and Jones 2015; Clark and Linzer 2015), this study relies on the latter in the second-stage linear regression mainly for two reasons. First, since this study tests the effect of a time-invariant variable (bilateral distance from Syria),

Table 1. Two-part models with random effects.

	1st stage DV: donor			2nd stage DV: ln(Syria Aid)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
ln(Syrian Ref), L1	0.995*** (0.278)	−2.666 (2.711)	−2.417* (1.111)	0.140 (0.149)	−6.958*** (1.924)	−6.257*** (1.626)
ln(Distance)	−0.805** (0.286)	−0.909*** (0.249)	0.152 (0.255)	0.693 (0.506)	−0.177 (0.534)	0.346 (0.411)
ln(Syrian Ref) × ln(Distance)		0.489 (0.361)	0.397** (0.149)		0.899*** (0.246)	0.808*** (0.210)
ln(GDP pc), L1			2.294*** (0.366)			1.990*** (0.480)
ln(Export share), L1			0.216 (0.194)			0.819** (0.283)
Treaties, L1			0.025 (0.045)			0.012 (0.045)
ln(Aid to others)			14.544 (16.829)			8.364 (9.795)
ExCom member, L1			1.527*** (0.433)			
Year Dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	2.093 (2.978)	3.309 (2.541)	−27.939*** (5.098)	6.550 (4.150)	13.901** (4.423)	−12.259t (6.723)
Observations	1,675	1,675	1,587	304	304	299
Number of Donor States	187	187	177	56	56	53

Robust standard errors clustered by donor state are in parentheses. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, $t < 0.10$.

random-effects models are preferred over the alternative fixed-effects models. Relatedly, as many predictors of this study have limited variation over time, there is a risk that fixed-effects models will estimate the coefficients of those slowly changing variables imprecisely. Second, I perform a series of Hausman's specification tests to confirm whether random-effects models can be used in this study. The Hausman test results do not disprove the null hypotheses, which indicates that random-effects models are to be preferred over fixed-effects models in this study.

In both stages, I begin my empirical analysis with a parsimonious setting that only includes the main independent variable accounting for the number of Syrian refugees hosted by each donor state and the bilateral distance indicator as regressors (Models 1 and 4). Next, I consider an interaction between the two regressors to test whether the spillover effect of refugee migration from Syria on the financial contributions of states is modified by their geographical distances to Syria (Models 2 and 5). Then, I progressively add other control variables, with the full models (Models 3 and 6) reported in Table 1.

Models 1–3 show the results of the first-stage probit regressions, in which the dependent variable is set to the probability of financially contributing to the protection of refugees in Syria and neighboring host states. In Model 1, I find a positive and statistically significant effect of the Syrian refugee population. In contrast, when taking its interaction with the bilateral distance indicator, the sign of the main coefficient turns negative, while the interaction effect is positive (Models 2–3). Although the interaction

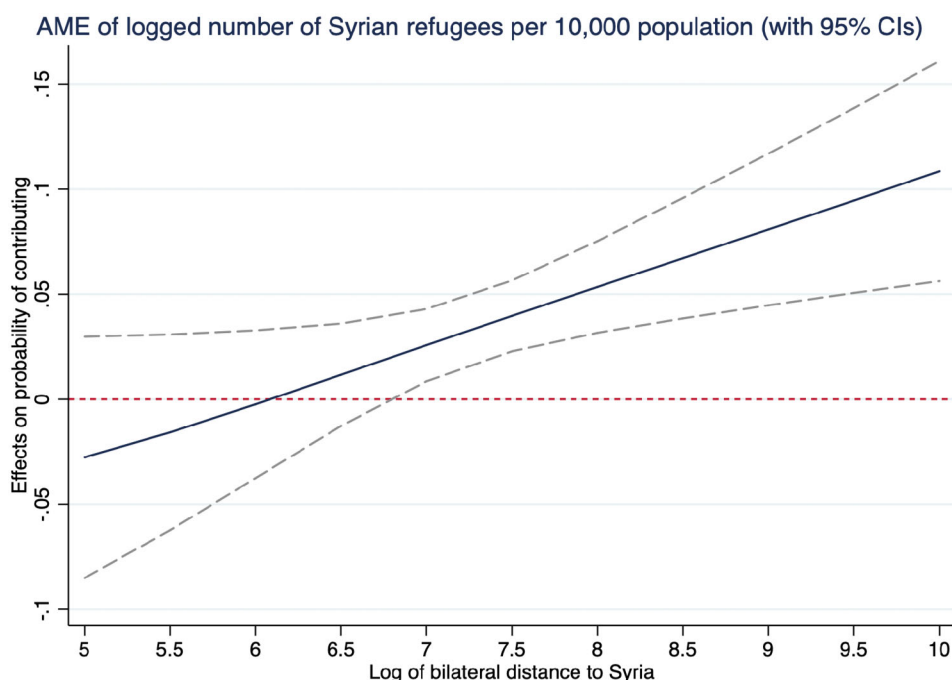


Figure 2. Average marginal effect of logged number of Syrian refugees per 10,000 population upon the probability of contributing to the Syrian refugee response plans, by log of bilateral distance to Syria.

effect is not statistically significant at $p < .05$ level without adding controls, I find a positive and statistically significant interaction between the two regressors in Model 3. The results indicate that the effect of the number of Syrian refugees hosted upon the probability that each state will financially contribute varies depending on their bilateral distances to Syria.

As the interpretation of a continuous-by-continuous interaction is complicated, Figure 2 visualizes the average marginal effects of the relative population sizes of Syrian refugees in donors upon the probability of a financial contribution to the Syrian refugee response plans, for different values of the bilateral distance indicator. Computation of the average marginal effects is based on Model 3. As the graph shows, for states that are more than approximately 850 km (logged value ≈ 6.75) away from Syria, the spillover effect of the Syrian refugee population on their binary decision to contribute or not are positive. In contrast, there is no measurable effect for states inside the said geographical threshold. Indeed, the only two states appearing in the sample (Cyprus and Israel) are located within 850 km of Syria. This leads to the general interpretation that except for a few states geographically very close to Syria, states that have received a relatively larger number of Syrian refugees are more likely to make financial contributions to address the Syrian crisis.

In Table 1, Models 4–6 present the second-stage linear regression results, which analyze the effects of a set of predictors upon the decisions of donor states concerning how much they contribute, based on the reduced sample with strictly positive observations. In Model 4, neither of the two explanatory variables achieves statistical significance at $p < .05$ level. However, once their interaction effect is introduced, the estimation results provide a better understanding of whether and, if so, how the underlying geopolitical dynamics modify the relationship between the contribution amount given by individual states and the number of Syrian refugees spilling over into their territories. In terms of the signs of regression coefficients, the results of Models 5–6 are consistent with the first-stage probit results; that is, the main coefficient of the Syrian refugee variable is negative, while its interaction with the distance is positive. Furthermore, in the second stage, both the main and the interaction effects are statistically significant.

Based on the results of Model 6, Figure 3 illustrates the average marginal effects of the relative size of bilateral refugee migration from Syria upon the donor states' decision concerning the contribution amount, calculated over the range of bilateral distance values. The graph indicates that if donor states are within 1,550km (logged value ≈ 7.35) of the Syrian territory, the

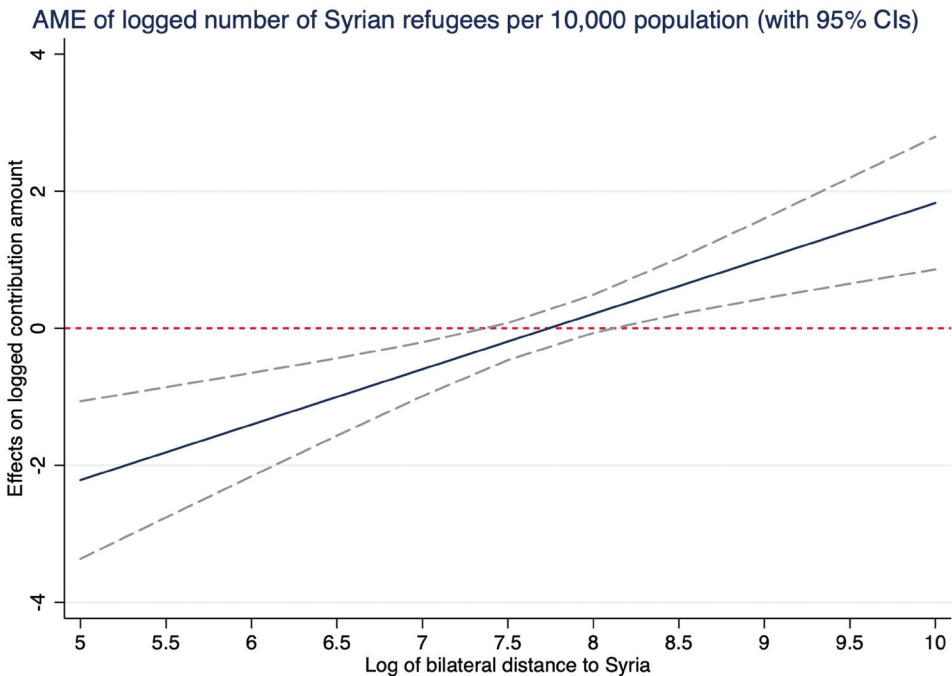


Figure 3. Average marginal effect of the logged number of Syrian refugees per 10,000 population on logged amount of contribution to the Syrian refugee response plans, by log of bilateral distance to Syria.

relative population size of Syrian refugees has a negative impact on their decision concerning how much to contribute. In contrast, the same effect becomes positive for states that have more than (approximately) 3,450 km (logged value ≈ 8.15) from Syria, and almost zero for states located between the two geographical cut-off points. Overall, the results provide support for Hypothesis 1 insofar as donor states keep a greater geographical distance from the origin of refugees (Syria). Interestingly, however, the competing hypothesis (Hypothesis 2) seems to be more accurate for states that have greater proximity to Syria, as many of the Eastern Mediterranean states are located about 1,500 km away from the epicenter of the refugee crisis. These findings are largely consistent with the prediction of Hypothesis 3.

To gain a more substantive understanding of the estimation results, Figure 4 visualizes the predicted levels of financial contributions across different values of the Syrian refugee population, based on the results of Model 6, focusing on two different geographical locations relative to Syria. The graph shows that holding the logged value of bilateral distances at seven ($\approx 1,097$ km), the predicted volume of contributions falls from 2.84 million USD (logged value ≈ 14.86) to 0.47 million USD (logged value ≈ 13.07) as the Syrian refugee measure increases from zero to its maximum. Conversely, the predicted value of contributions increases from 5.67 million

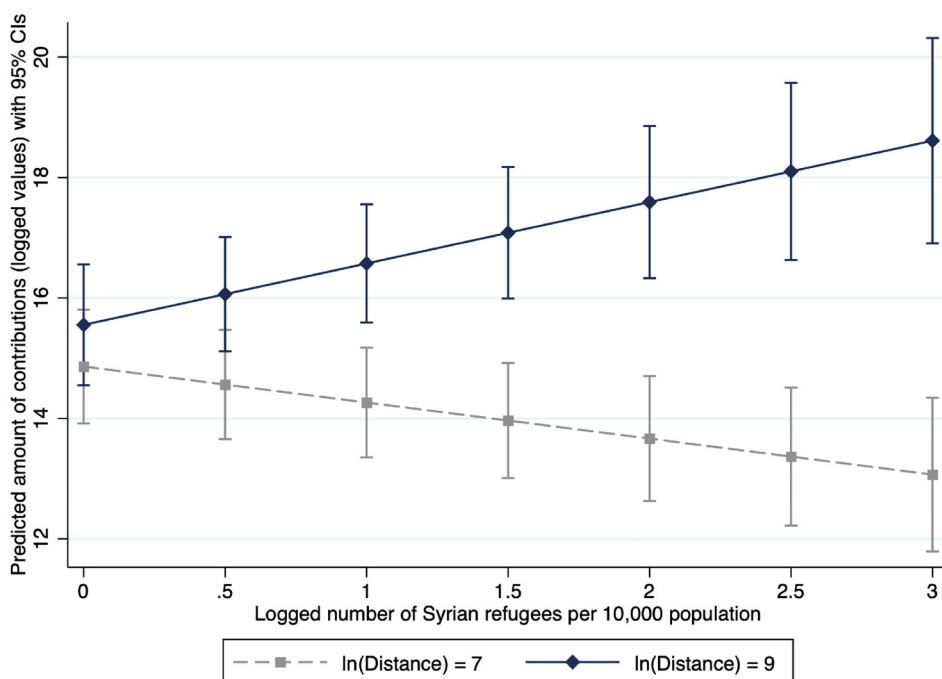


Figure 4. Predicted amount of contribution (logged value, USD) by logged number of Syrian refugees per 10,000 population.

USD (logged value ≈ 15.55) to 120.84 million USD (logged value ≈ 18.61) in accordance with the increase of the Syrian refugee variable from zero to its maximum, holding the logged value of bilateral distance at nine ($\approx 8,103$ km). For instance, in the latter setting, that is, the one holding the logged bilateral distance value at nine and other variables constant, we can expect an about 1.10% increase in the level of financial contributions when the relative size of the Syrian refugee population increases by 1%. On the other hand, the same 1% increase in the Syrian refugee population measure will be associated with a 0.60% decrease in the level of contributions provided, if we hold the logged distance value at seven and other variables constant.

Regarding the control variables, overall, the results are overall consistent with the initial expectations insofar as all of their coefficient signs are positive, although two of them—on one hand, the number of a state's ratifications of the international instruments stating the basic rights of refugees and migrants and, on the other, the amount of financial assistance provided by each state to tackle other humanitarian emergencies—are not statistically significant at either the first or the second stage. The logged GDP per capita has a positive and statistically significant effect on both equations, which means that, *ceteris paribus*, wealthier states are more likely to contribute as well as contribute more than lower-income states. Similarly, though not statistically significant in the first-stage decision, a measure for bilateral trade has a positive and statistically significant effect on donor states' decision concerning the contribution amount, which suggests that states with relatively stronger trade interests in the MENA region contribute more to the post-2011 Syrian crisis than states with lesser trade interests in the region. As for the first stage, the effect of the UNHCR's ExCom membership status is positive and statistically significant, which means that, *ceteris paribus*, ExCom member-states are more likely to contribute to the protection of refugees in Syria and neighboring refugee-hosting states than non-ExCom members.

Robustness and Supplementary Empirical Results

I have conducted a range of alternative analyses to test the robustness of my results, setting Models 3 and 6 as benchmarks. All these results are reported in the Supplemental Appendix. First, before estimating panel data models, I cross-sectionally examine the data for every observation year (Tables A5 and A6). Not surprisingly, due to a smaller number of observations, statistically significant results for the main independent variables are only confirmed for a few years, and the sizes of their coefficients, especially in the second stage, show a certain degree of volatility. Nevertheless, it is

important to take into account that cross-sectional models show overall consistency with the panel data models. As reported in [Table A7](#), I also replicate the second-stage models excluding some of the potentially influential observations,⁷ but results remain basically unchanged.

Next, I compare the two-part random-effects models to the alternative estimation models, starting with pooled regressions in both stages and the corresponding fixed-effects models in the second stage ([Table A8](#)). Except for several minor changes, pooled regression results are almost identical to the random-effects models. As for the second stage, although the Hausman test supports the use of random-effects models in this study, fixed-effects models are also applied as they are never biased by the unobserved unit-specific heterogeneity. The inclusion of donor fixed effects loses the statistical significances of all control variables, but it does not cause any significant changes to the Syrian refugee measure and its interaction with the log of bilateral distances. I also re-estimate Models 3 and 6 using the Heckman two-step approach (Models 1–3 of [Table A9](#)) and double hurdle (DH) models (Models 4–6 of [Table A9](#)), with or without fixed effects in the second-stage equations. The Heckman models are the most appropriate method to correct potential sample selectivity issues, while the DH model introduced as a more flexible variant of Tobit models is another popular way to address similar problems. However, if we make the additional assumption that unobserved assistance data can be replaced with zeros, the PPML methods ([Table A10](#)) will likely generate better estimation outcomes than the above-mentioned two-step estimation techniques. While each of these models has several drawbacks, the main findings of this article—that the coefficient of the Syrian refugee variable is negative while its interaction effect with bilateral distance indicator is positive—remain unchanged throughout the models reported in [Tables A9 and A10](#).

[Tables A11–A13](#) report the results of the two-part random-effects models using a series of alternative variables. In [Table A11](#), I modify the values of the second-stage dependent variable (logged values of contributions made) by dividing it by the logged values of the donor states' GDP, following the approach used by Roper and Barria (2010). In [Table A12](#), I use three alternative measures to account for the size of Syrian refugee migration in receiving states: (a) absolute values of the Syrian refugees figures, (b) an approximation of the net inflows of Syrian refugees, and (c) annual number of asylum applications submitted by Syrian nationals in each state.⁸ I use

⁷In a strict sense, these states are neither outliers nor influential observations, but it is important to test whether the exclusion of these states alters the results, because they have taken on a comparatively larger burden of hosting Syrian refugees than other states.

⁸Following previous work (e.g. Dreher, Fuchs, and Langlotz 2019; Moore and Shellman 2007), I compute net inflows of Syrian refugees in each state by taking differences of the relevant refugee stocks from year $t-1$ to year t . While a year-to-year shift in the refugee stocks can be negative, these negative values are replaced with

several different measures for control variables in [Table A13](#), where Models 1–4 use the absolute export and trade values instead of the export share variable. Meanwhile, Models 5 and 6 of [Table A13](#) introduce a modified variable representing how many treaty ratifications each state has made in previous years, only counting the number of instruments regulating refugee/migrants-specific rights that have been ratified (ranging from zero to nine). While the changes in the sizes of coefficients are inevitable, the main results are robust enough against these alternative measures.

Lastly, although my main analysis focuses on the average behaviors of donor states, I extend the analysis to the anticipated heterogeneous reactions of donors to a shift in the number of Syrian refugees hosted per donor. Given the research design, this study is unable to construct separate estimation equations for every single donor, as each state has less than ten observations maximum in my dataset. As an alternative, I define a donor-specific dummy— $D_{\alpha}(i) = 1$ if $i = \alpha$; $D_{\alpha}(i) = 0$ otherwise—and consider its interaction with the explanatory variable of interest (the logged number of Syrian refugees per 10,000 national population). Similar methods are used by Berthélemy (2006) and Czaika and Mayer (2011), but unlike previous work this study does not interact the donor-specific dummies with the other predictors, since I do not have theoretical reasons to assume significant effect differences among donors with respect to the control variables. [Table A14](#) summarizes the coefficients of the main independent variable and its interaction with the donor-specific dummies in the second-stage equation. Here, I only report the results for donor states with more than seven observations, given that results for other states are far less reliable. Another important note is that the reported estimations are based on the fixed- rather than random-effects models without the time-invariant predictor (log of bilateral distances). The purpose of this exercise is to test whether a significant difference between a donor α and others exists with respect to the effect of the size of bilateral Syrian refugee migration on a state's provision of financial contributions. It is still necessary to interpret the results with caution because the positive category of a donor-specific dummy $D_{\alpha}(i)$ does not have more than nine observations. Nonetheless, it is interesting to see that in [Table A14](#) the interaction effect for states geographically closer to Syria tends to be negative, while the effect turns positive as the bilateral distance from Syria increases. While there are exceptions (e.g., Australia and Iceland), these findings are largely in line with the main findings of this article.

zeros. Original information on the numbers of Syrian refugees and their asylum applications is taken from the UNHCR's *Population Statistics* database.

Conclusion

In this article I have conducted statistical analysis to investigate why some states are motivated to make financial contributions to the post-2011 Syrian refugee crisis. My primary finding is that whether and, if so, how much a state provides to protect Syrian refugees is influenced by the scale of bilateral refugee movements. A more striking finding is that the spillover effect of the Syrian refugee migration on a state's financial contribution changes depending on the location of the state. On the one hand, my empirical findings suggest that, insofar as a state has greater geographic distance to Syria, both the probability and the level of the state's contributions will increase in proportion to whether the number of Syrian refugees increases. On the other hand, states located within greater geographical proximity to Syria are likely to reduce their interests in making financial commitments as the number of Syrian refugees increases.

These findings provide several important insights into the broader policy of refugee governance and into academic debates on fiscal burden-sharing in global refugee governance. Most notably, this article develops a set of hypotheses explaining why some states commit themselves financially to the global fight against a refugee crisis (like post-2011 Syria), and tests them with robust empirical analysis. Previous studies have been inadequate in paying sustained attention to state-level motivations for contributing to fiscal burden-sharing efforts in refugee governance, and this article intends to overcome such a shortcoming. Caveats to my empirical analysis remain, mainly due to data availability problems, and future studies should come up with a better strategy to capture the complex mixture of nationalistic self-interest and normative motivations by individual governments. Nonetheless, this study is an important first step to more systematically investigating the reasons why states choose to make (not) financial contributions to the protection of refugees.

This study also contributes to the study of humanitarian assistance, specifically its connection with national policymakers' interests to mitigate the heightened immigration pressure from refugees and other migrants fleeing conflict, political violence, and the resulting extreme poverty. My findings for states remote from the origin of refugee emergency (Syria) provide another piece of evidence for the recently emerging argument, in both policy-focused and academic discourse, that foreign economic assistance can be used as an instrument to alleviate the root-causes of cross-border migration and thereby reduce the volume of ongoing and future immigration (Bermeo and Leblang 2015; Berthélemy, Beuran, and Maurel 2009; Czaika and Mayer 2011). However, supporting itself on the global coverage of the humanitarian assistance data, this study gives a different explanation in the case of states geographically closer to Syria, as their interests to contribute

reduce in response to the increasing number of Syrian refugees spilling over into their territories.

Another contribution of this article is the investigation of the behaviors of both Western and non-Western states within the same estimation models. Even though most humanitarian assistance is still given by a small group of rich nations, and non-Western donors are usually left out from samples in the aid-allocation literature, it is important to keep in mind that, compared to the case of development assistance, humanitarian assistance can be given by a relatively larger number of national governments. Concerning the sample of this study, nearly 60 states provided a positive sum of contributions at least once for the protection of Syrian refugees. Since this study's capacity to explain the interesting cross-country variations as well as the underlying geopolitical dynamics of the Syrian refugee crisis is limited, it would be interesting, as a next step, to examine whether my findings can be corroborated by investigating the states' financial commitments in the international protection of refugees, especially in the case of non-Western states geographically closer to a source country of refugees.

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ORCID

Hiroataka Fujibayashi  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8408-0647>

Data availability statement

Data (.dta file) is available.

Code availability statement

Code (Stata do-file) is available.

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