

Brothers or invaders?

How crises-driven migrants shape voting behavior*

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Abstract

Several studies have documented negative political attitudes of local voters towards immigration. By exploiting how episodes of crises-driven internal and international migration affect electoral outcomes in Colombia, we explore whether these attitudes are explained by *self-interest* or *sociotropic* motives. *Self-interested* voters predominantly care about the impacts of migration inflows on their personal economic status. In contrast, *sociotropic* voters view migrants as a threat to local cultural or social norms. We take advantage of the fact that both internal migrants (displaced by the armed conflict) and international migrants (ousted by economic and political downturns in neighboring Venezuela) disproportionately locate in municipalities with early settlements of individuals from their town of origin and find that, while internal migrant inflows do not affect voting behavior, international migration reduces the support for the incumbent party and increases that of right-wing candidates. These results are consistent with political attitudes being driven by *sociotropic* motives, and cannot be accounted for by other socio-economic impacts caused by migration flows on receiving municipalities

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I Introduction

A growing literature in economics has documented the existence of a strong correlation between migration inflows and political support for right-wing ideologies, or the resentment towards incumbent politicians (examples include [Gerdes and Wadensjö, 2008](#); [Otto and Steinhardt, 2014](#); [Barone et al., 2016](#); [Harmon, 2017](#); [Halla et al., 2017](#)). There is, however, very little evidence on the driving mechanisms of these effects. On the one hand, a group of studies grounded in political economy suggests that local voters resent politicians who are more welcoming to migrants because, by affecting employment, wages, tax revenue and public goods provision, they constitute a threat to the economic conditions and wellbeing of the hosting communities ([Scheve and Slaughter, 2001](#); [Mayda, 2006](#); [Hanson et al., 2007](#); [Facchini and Mayda, 2009](#); [Malhotra et al., 2013](#)). This is the so-called *self-interest* motive hypothesis, as defined by [Hainmueller and Hopkins \(2014\)](#). In contrast, another branch of the literature, grounded in political social-psychology, documents that the negative political attitudes towards immigration are mainly driven by group-related concerns about the cultural impacts of migrants, due to factors such as race, religion, language, nationality, or social norms ([Citrin et al., 1997](#); [Sniderman et al., 2004](#); [Card et al., 2012](#); [Tingley, 2012](#)). This is the so-called *sociotropic* motive hypothesis ([Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014](#)).

This paper exploits a unique natural experiment that took place in Colombia between 1995 and 2015 to assess the relative empirical support for these hypotheses. During this period Colombia experienced two different large migration waves. On the one hand, the intensification of the armed conflict following the dismantle of the drug cartels in the early 1990s and the formation of an umbrella organization of paramilitary militias in 1997 resulted in nearly 10 percent of the country's population being forcefully displaced within the country ([Rozo, 2018](#)). On the other, economic and political turmoil, as well as the surge of criminal violence in neighboring Venezuela induced a large migration wave to Colombia and, by 2018, the number of *registered* Venezuelans in Colombia was over 1.3 million ([Revista Semana, 2018](#)).¹ Because of their nature of being driven by crises, both

¹The actual figure is likely higher as registration is not enforced and a large share of migrants may actively avoid it and work in the informal sector.

migration shocks disproportionately feature poor, vulnerable, and low educated households that flee conflict or political turmoil without much previous panning or preparation.²

If the *self-interest* hypothesis holds true, we should see similar effects of both migration shocks on voting behavior, as migrants affect local labor markets and potentially increase the fiscal burden of locals irrespective of their origin or background. Yet, if the *sociotropic* hypothesis has more empirical leverage, we should see voters responding to international migration much more than to internal migration. This is because internal migrants are likely to be perceived more positively by local voters as they share common characteristics such as nationality and culture. In contrast, international migrants may be more easily perceived as potential threats to local social norms.³ Finally, if voters responded more to internal migration than to international flows, this would be inconsistent with both the *self-interest* and the *sociotropic* hypotheses.

We assess the relative empirical support for these hypotheses using longitudinal data on voting behavior and migration inflows at the municipal level in Colombia.⁴ Since migration inflows are not random, we cannot simply compare differences in voting behavior across municipalities with higher and lower shares of migration inflows. Our empirical strategy, consequently, exploits two sources of exogenous variation on crises-driven migration inflows at the municipality-year level. Municipal variation comes from the share of population within each receiving municipality who were born at expulsion regions (within Colombia or in Venezuela) and arrived before the crisis began. Annual variation comes from the number of individuals leaving each municipality (or country for the case of Venezuela) each year, as the crises worsen. The interaction of these two sources of variation corresponds to our *predicted migrant inflow* measure. Our identification strategy, thus, exploits the fact that crises-induced migrants tend to move disproportionately to municipalities where they have pre-determined networks (formed before the beginning of the crisis). Our identi-

²This does not preclude the existence of relatively wealthy migrants, who flee from crisis-origin locations to save their assets.

³This is of course a relative statement. Colombia and Venezuela share language as well as a number of other traits due, for instance, to their shared colonial heritage. However, all we need for our argument is that local voters perceive Venezuelan migrants as an out-group, relative to how they perceive other Colombians.

⁴Colombian roughly 1,100 municipalities are equivalent to U.S. counties.

fication assumption is that predicted migrant inflows are correlated with actual migration but do not affect electoral behavior independently or through any other channel.

Our analysis is structured in two parts. First, we examine the effects of migration inflows on voting behavior. We start looking at presidential elections and find significant negative effects of Venezuelan migrant inflows on incumbent support and political participation. These effects are economically meaningful and suggest that when Venezuelan municipal inflows increase by one-percentage-point the total number of votes received by the incumbent president falls by 0.08 percent, and political participation drops by 0.04 percent. In contrast, when internal migrant inflows increase by one-percentage-point the total votes for the incumbent government increase by 1.07 percent and there are no significant effects on political participation. We also look at mayoral elections and find similar results for incumbent support and turnout. Moreover, mayoral elections allow us to test the effect of migration inflows on the electoral support of candidates representing different stances in the ideological spectrum (Fergusson et al., 2017). When exploring this dimension we find that larger Venezuelan migrant inflows are associated with higher support for candidates with right-wing ideologies, but this is not the case when municipalities are exposed to larger inflows of internal migration.

In a second stage, we test the necessary conditions for the *self-interest* to be theoretically feasible, and explore whether migrant inflows affect socioeconomic outcomes in host regions. Moreover, we test whether these changes drive the observed results on electoral outcomes, established in the first part. Specifically, we test whether crises-induced migration affects the incidence of conflict, the engagement in illegal-economic activities (measured through coca production), the overall level of violence (measured through homicide rates), and economic growth (measured through nightlight intensity). We find that, while larger inflows of internal migration are associated with higher economic growth, the opposite is true for the case of Venezuelan migrants. These results are not surprising in as much as internal migration redirects public resources towards reception areas but that is not the case of Venezuelan migrants. We also find that larger crises-driven migration inflows of any type are associated with higher violent crime at the municipal level, but not with

more conflict or a larger illegal economic activity.

We then examine the effects of the inclusion of economic growth and violent crime as controls in our main analysis of the effects of forced migration on voting behavior. Consistently, we observe that controlling for economic activity fully accounts for the positive effects internal migration inflows in incumbent support. However, we continue to observe that larger inflows of Venezuelan migration inflows reduce political participation and incumbent support in the presidential elections and increase support for right-win methodologies on the mayor elections.

Overall, our results reject the *self-interest* hypothesis as we only observe significant negative effects on political attitudes from locals towards international migrants, even after controlling for other socioeconomic changes.

As our estimates include fixed effects by municipality and year, our identification is not threatened by static differences between municipalities or by annual aggregate shocks. Our identification will be valid as long as there are no other time-varying covariates that affect voting behavior which are also correlated with our predicted migration inflows measure. It is possible, for example, that differences in socioeconomic variables that were prevalent before the forced migration shocks took place may be correlated with the location of different ethnic settlements and that, the time evolution of these covariates may bias our estimates. To account for this possibility we include controls for full interactions of year dummies and several ex-ante municipal covariates including conflict intensity, violence intensity, local and national public expenditures, number of public institutions, sector composition, and economic growth.

Our paper contributes to two strands of literature. First, it contributes to the strand of papers that study the effects of migration in political outcomes. Most of the work in this area has been focused on studying the effects of voluntary migrants in developed countries (see [Gerdes and Wadensjö, 2008](#); [Otto and Steinhardt, 2014](#); [Barone et al., 2016](#); [Mayda et al., 2016](#); [Harmon, 2017](#); [Halla et al., 2017](#) for examples). We contribute to this literature by contrasting the validity of the *self-interest* and *sociotropic* motive hypotheses for the case of forced migrants within a de-

veloping country. Forced migrants arrive in large numbers, are traumatized by conflict or political persecution, arrive typically with little economic means, and have big uncertainty on the duration of their visit, as such their effects in host economies may be vastly different that the ones caused of economic migrants. Additionally, developing countries host the bulk of forced migration in the world [UNH \(2017\)](#), as such the effects of forced migrants may be affected by the scale of the migration figures.

Second, our study contributes to the literature that examines the effects of forced displacement on host economies (see [Del Carpio and Wagner, 2015](#) and [Altindag et al., 2018](#) for examples). The closest paper to our study is [Altindag and Kaushal \(2017\)](#), who study the effects of Syrian refugees on political outcomes in the national elections in Turkey. The authors do not identify any effects on incumbency support in provinces that received a higher share of migrants. We contribute to this group of studies by contrasting the effects of internal and international migration in voting behavior and exploring the possible mechanisms driving these effects.

II Forced Migrants in Colombia

Our article studies the political effects of internal and Venezuelan migration flows. Both migration waves were induced by violence or political crises, are characterized by large inflows of low educated and young individuals, and primarily correspond to migration inflows to the major urban areas in Colombia.

II.1 Internal Forced Displacement

The escalation of the armed conflict, fought between the guerrilla groups, paramilitary vigilantes, and governmental armed forces, was the main reason for internal forced displacement in the late 1990s and the early 2000s in Colombia.⁵ Figure I shows that internal displacement in Colombia

⁵see [Engel and Ibáñez, 2007](#); [Dube and Vargas, 2013](#); [Rozo, 2018](#) for a detailed description of the Colombian conflict.

increased dramatically in the late 1990s and early 2000s and has been steadily dropping after 2002.

Data from the *Registro Único de Víctimas*, which consolidates information on forced displacement from local, federal, private and public institutions, suggests that the population of forced migrants is balanced in terms of gender (51 percent women) and young. In particular, 39 percent of forcefully displaced individuals were 15 years old or younger at the time of displacement, this percentage is disproportionately larger than this age group within the population of Colombia as a whole (28 percent). Previous studies, using surveys given to migrants who were forcefully displaced, also report that this population has low education levels (around 5 years of education) (Ibáñez and Moya, 2006; Garay, 2008; Carrillo, 2009). Most displaced individuals, moved from rural to urban areas, and consequently, had previously worked primarily in agriculture (Ibáñez and Moya, 2006; Carrillo, 2009).

Forced migrants in Colombia moved to areas where they had friends or relatives and that were closer in distance to their municipalities of origin (Ibáñez and Moya, 2006; Carrillo, 2009; Lozano-Gracia et al., 2010). Yet, there is an ample geographic variation on the IDP inflows by municipality during the period of study (see Figure I). In regions with extreme violence, however, individuals preferred to relocate to more distant locations and to cities that were more populated; they were attracted to the sense of anonymity both provide (Carrillo, 2009; Lozano-Gracia et al., 2010). Other criteria that internal migrants used when choosing their destinations includes the provision of public goods and the population density of the destination places (Carrillo, 2009; Lozano-Gracia et al., 2010).

II.2 Venezuela's Migrants

The beginning of the Venezuelan political crisis can be traced back to the election of Hugo Chávez as president in December 6 of 1998. Chávez socialist regime was characterized by constitutional amendments, land expropriations, the implementation of populist social programs, nationalizations, and restrictions to private businesses (Crašto and Álvarez, 2017). Chávez policies were con-

tinued by Nicolás Maduro who was delegated president of Venezuela in 2013. Maduro's regime dramatically worsen the economic and social crisis in Venezuela. Insecurity became endemic, repression to the opposition became extremely violent, violations to human rights from public authorities were consistently reported by the media, and more economic and political policies that further weakened the country's stability were introduced (see [El Nuevo Herald, 2014](#); [BBC News, 2017](#); [BBC, 2016](#) for media reports). Shortages of food and basic necessities, for example, became extremely common and looting began to occur systematically throughout the country ([Revista Semana, 2017](#)). Figure II shows the annual evolution of the total number of Venezuelan migrants registered entering Colombia between 2003 and 2015 the only information recorded at migration points by the Colombian government. The figure shows that Venezuelan migration has increased five-fold during this period as the humanitarian crisis caused by Chávez' and Maduro's regimen has worsen.

Initially, Venezuelan migrants mainly consisted of wealthy Venezuelans and entrepreneurs who came to invest in Colombia and fled to save their capital from expropriations and high inflation ([Revista Semana, 2017](#); [Crasto and Álvarez, 2017](#)). As years passed and the crisis intensified, however, the core of the Venezuelan migration has shifted to low educated population who report fleeing to Colombia escaping violent crime, political repression, and looking for basic necessities to survive ([NPR, 2018](#)).

According to recent characterizations of the Venezuelan migrants using the Colombian household surveys of 2015 and 2016, more than 80 percent of the registered Venezuelan migrants in the survey had less than high school education, more than 50 percent had less than 25 years of age, and this population was balanced in terms of gender (see [OLR, 2017](#)).

III Data

III.1 Forced Displacement

We employ two sources of information on forced displacement. Data on internal forced displacement come from the *Registro Único de Víctimas* (RUV) of the Colombian government. It registers the number of individuals received as a consequence of the armed conflict in every year and municipality (it also registers their municipalities of origin). As in the past several federal and local institutions collected information on the victims of the armed conflict, the information was consolidated recently under the RUV in fulfilling plans to repair victims. As such the information from RUV is the best source of conflict victims in Colombia. The information is available between 1985 and 2017. We focus on the period between 1995 and 2015 as it was the period for which we had available information on political outcomes.

Data on total Venezuelan arrivals to Colombia is available annually through the Colombian Statistics Department between 2003 and 2015. It corresponds to a count of the number of migrants registered entering Colombia between 2003 and 2015 the best and only information recorded at migration points by the Colombian government.

III.2 Voting Behavior

Data on voting behavior for each municipality comes from the *Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil*, the Colombian electoral agency. We use data on vote results for president (first and second-round) and mayor elections.

We use the different elections to study the effects of migration on three outcomes: i) the number of votes received by the incumbent government, ii) political participation, measured through the total number of votes, and iii) support for the left-, right- and center-oriented political ideologies. We use the presidential elections to study the effects of migration on the first two outcomes, and

the mayor elections to study the effects of migration inflows in the later.⁶

III.2.1 Presidential elections

Our analysis for presidential elections focuses on the period between 2006 and 2014 because during that period presidential reelection was allowed by congress. Presidents are elected by half plus one of the total valid votes in the corresponding elections. If no candidate receives the 50 percent plus one of the votes in the first round, a run-off between the two candidates with the most votes takes place three weeks later. The winning candidate governs for a maximum period of 4 years and the period of government is fixed between August 7 of the year in which the election was held until August 7, 4 years later. In 2004, Alvaro Uribe, the president in office, introduced the figure of immediate presidential reelection in Colombia. This allowed past presidents to participate in an immediate presidential election, and stay in office for a second term. We examine the effects of forced migration inflows in the four first-round elections and two second-round elections that took place between 2006 and 2014.

The number of votes received by the incumbent government were estimated as the number of votes received by the president in office in the previous presidential term. For the elections of 2006 it corresponds to the votes to Álvaro Uribe (in office between 2002 and 2006), for the elections of 2010 to the votes received by Juan Manuel Santos (as he was the candidate appointed by Álvaro Uribe), and in 2014 it corresponds to the votes received by Juan Manuel Santos (in office between 2010 and 2014).

III.2.2 Mayor elections

Mayors are elected at the local level by the majority of the total valid votes obtained in the corresponding municipality. Mayor elections, take place in October, and the government term starts in

⁶Due to the low variation on the political ideology of presidential candidates during the period of study, we only focus our analysis on the first two outcomes for the presidential elections. Conversely, since mayors cannot be reelected and political parties are atomized and short lived we focus on the effects on immigration over the support on political ideologies for that case.

January of the following year. We focus on the elections that took place after 1991 as a new constitution was implemented in that year and it dramatically modified political elections in Colombia. The first election took place in 1994 after the constitution amendment. We excluded this election year, considering that the first implementation of the new rules could have introduced unwanted measurement error in the data. Our analysis, consequently, comprises the period between 1997 and 2015 and contains information on 6 elections (1997, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015).⁷

For each election we classify all candidates into left-, right-, and center-oriented ideologies. To do this, we identify the political party of each mayor candidate and then classified all the political parties in three groups: left-wing, right-wing, or neither following the methodology by [Fergusson et al. \(2017\)](#).

Figure III shows the geographic distribution of political participation in the first- and second-round president and mayor elections. In addition, Appendix I describes in detail the steps followed to construct the electoral data employed in our analysis and Appendix II presents descriptive statistics for each type of election.

IV Empirical Strategy

As forced migrants do not choose their arrival municipalities randomly we cannot use a mean comparison to identify their effects on host locations. A simple mean comparison between municipalities that receive more migrants and those that do not will likely be bias since, for example, those municipalities that receive a higher share of migrants are presumably more prosperous and that prosperity may be associated with voting behavior. Our empirical strategy, consequently, exploits the fact that migrants tend to move disproportionately to municipalities where they have networks when the political crisis or conflict intensifies in their origin locations. In particular, we

⁷Mayors who were elected in 1997 and 2000 had three-year terms. However, starting in 2003, the terms were extended to four years, so the remaining election years of our sample are 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015.

estimate the following specification

$$\text{Log}(Y_{mt}) = \theta[\text{Predicted Inflows}_{mt}] + X_{mt}\Gamma + \gamma_m + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{mt} \quad (1)$$

where m represents the municipality, t the election year, Y stands for the total votes for the incumbent president or ideology and political participation (measured by the total number of votes); X is a vector of time-varying controls, and γ_m and γ_t stand for fixed effects by municipality and year.

Our measure of predicted inflows of forced migrants was constructed following standard practices in the literature (see [Lewis and Peri, 2014](#) for details) that exploit the disproportionate inflows of migrants to areas with previous settlements of similar racial or identity groups. Particularly, our measures of inflows are constructed as

$$\text{Predicted Venezuelan Inflows}_{mt} = \left[\frac{1}{\text{Population}_{mt}} \left(\text{Venezuelan Outflows}_t \times \text{Venezuelan Share}_m^{1993} \right) \right] \times 100$$

$$\text{Predicted IDP Inflows}_{mt} = \left[\frac{1}{\text{Population}_{mt}} \sum_{j=1 \in J} \left(\text{IDPs Outflows}_{jt} \times \text{Migrants Share}_{m,j}^{1993} \right) \right] \times 100$$

where *Venezuelan Share* was constructed as the ratio of Venezuelan nationals that lived in municipality m and the population who lived in municipality m but was not born in Colombia in 1993; *Migrants Share* $_{m,j}^{1993}$ is the ratio of the number of individuals who lived in municipality m but who were born in municipality j and the total population living but not born in m in 1993; *Venezuelan Outflows* is the count of individuals leaving Venezuela and arriving to Colombia; *IDPs Outflows* $_{jt}$ measures the number of individuals who were internally displaced by conflict in municipality j and year t (where J represents the total group of

municipalities); and $Population_{mt}$ is the municipal annual population.⁸ Standard errors were clustered at the municipality level to account for unobserved serial correlation at the geographic level, they were also corrected for heteroskedasticity. Figure IV illustrates the mean geographic distribution of out predicted migration inflows measures.

We use the year 1993 to estimate our predicted measures of forced migration because in that year the Colombian statistics agency collected the last population census before the large waves of forced displacement began in Colombia.⁹

IV.1 Robustness Tests

Because our identification strategy includes fixed effects by municipality and year, our estimates are not threatened by static differences between municipalities such as geographic-related variables or by aggregate time shocks. Our empirical strategy will be valid if there are no other time-varying covariates which may be affecting local voting behavior and are also correlated with our predicted migration inflows measures.

One important threat to our empirical strategy is that differences in socioeconomic variables that were prevalent before the forced migration shocks took place may be correlated with the location of different ethnic settlements and that, the time evolution of these covariates may bias our estimates. Areas that had a higher share of migrant settlements, for example, may also have lower conflict, better institutions, different sector composition, or more governmental intervention relative to rest of the country. It is possible that these characteristics may facilitate higher economic growth and through that channel change voting behavior. To account for these threats we fully control for the interaction of annual dummy variables and municipal ex-ante indicators of conflict intensity, violent crime, government intervention, institutional development, economic sector composition, and economic growth. Particularly, we control for interactions of year dummies and: i) number of attacks by illegal armed groups in 1995, ii) fatal victims of armed attacks in 1995, iii) homicide rates in 1995, iv) public expenditures in 1995, v) central government's transfers to

⁸Considering that the different elections take place in different months of the year and we wanted to have sufficient variation in migration outflows, we aggregated the outflows of migrants observed in year t and $t-1$ when constructing the predicted inflows of forced migrants in each case.

⁹We use raw data on the 1993 population Census available at the processing center of the Colombian statistics agency.

health, education, and other expenditures in 1995, vi) number of financial institutions in 1995, vii) number of tax collection offices in 1995, viii) 2000 GDP share in agriculture, services, and industry,¹⁰ ix) municipal tax income in 1995, and x) night light density in 1995.

Additionally, for the case of IDP inflows, since we directly observe annual-municipal figures, we also estimate an instrumental variable regression. The results for the first stage regression are reassuring across elections as they suggest that our predicted migration inflows measure has a strong correlation with the actual observed number of individuals arriving at each municipality (see Tables I through III). The only exemption are the estimates for the second-round presidential elections, which have lower variation because they only happened twice during the period of analysis.

V Results

Our main results are presented in Tables I through III.

We find consistent and strong negative effects of Venezuelan migration in voting outcomes for the presidential elections. Particularly, our estimates in Table I suggest that larger inflows of Venezuelan migration are reflected in a lower number of votes for the incumbent government and political participation. In contrast, we find that larger inflows of IDP have the opposite effect. These effects are economically meaningful and suggest that when the predicted Venezuelan migration inflows increase in one-percentage-point the total number of votes received by the incumbent president falls by 0.08 percent and political participation drops by 0.04 percent. Conversely, the estimates also suggest that when the predicted IDP inflows increase by one-percentage-point the total votes for the incumbent government increase by 1.07. These results are robust across first- and second-round presidential elections, to the inclusion of additional controls, and the type methodology used (reduced form vs. instrumental variables).

Our results for the effects of forced migration using voting data from the mayor elections also suggest that larger Venezuelan inflows are associated with worst political attitudes towards immigration. Particularly, we observe that a one-percentage-point increase in predicted Venezuelan migration inflows causes a reduction of votes towards right-wing oriented ideologies of 0.41 percent. These results are robust to the

¹⁰This is the oldest municipal GDP decomposition available.

inclusion of controls and are not observed for the case of larger IDP inflows.

V.1 Testing the *self-interest* motive hypothesis

In this section we explore the possibility that our results are predominantly driven by the effects that forced migration inflows can have in other socioeconomic variables that affect the personal interest of voters. Large forced migration inflows, for example, may be associated with a disproportionate inflows of public resources to support these populations () or larger business profits as wages fall due to the higher labor supply (as documented by [Scheve and Slaughter, 2001](#); [Mayda, 2006](#); [Hanson et al., 2007](#); [Facchini and Mayda, 2009](#); [Malhotra et al., 2013](#); [Del Carpio and Wagner, 2015](#); [Altindag et al., 2018](#)). It is plausible that the effects of migration that we observe in voting behavior are predominantly explained by these economic changes. In other words, we test whether the negative attitudes that we have identified towards Venezuelan migration are motivated by *self-interest* motive (as defined by [Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014](#)).

We proceed to test this hypothesis in two steps. First, we examine for other effects of forced displacement in conflict, violence, and economic growth on Table [IV](#). We find, in line with our argument that larger IDP inflows are associated with higher economic growth (as measured by night light density), with opposite effects observed for Venezuelan migration. We also find that larger forced migration inflows of any type are associated with higher violent crime (as measured by homicide rates). These effects are not surprising as forced migrants are more vulnerable and may more likely become perpetrators or victims of crime (see [Rozo et al., 2016](#) for evidence). We do not find any evidence of a statistically significant effect of forced migration in conflict or illegal economic activities.

In a second step, we proceed to control for homicide rates and night light density in our main specifications to check if the changes caused by forced migration inflows in those variables are accounting for our main results. Specifically, we examine the effects of the inclusion of these controls in tables [V](#) and [VI](#). Consistently, we observe that the inclusion of controls for homicide rates does not affect our main results. However, controlling for economic activity changes (through night light density) accounts for the positive effects IDP inflows in incumbent support. However, even after including these controls, we continue to observe strong, robust, and negative effects of large inflows of Venezuelan migration in political participation and support for the incumbent.

Overall, these results suggest that internal and international forced migration induce very different reactions from local voters in Colombia. Despite the fact that both types of migrants could be equally perceived by locals as a threat to their economic status (i.e.g, their jobs, wages, taxes, or public service access), local voters seem to react more drastically towards international migrants. Our results, consequently, support the idea that negative political attitudes towards immigration are more related to concerns related to cultural rather than self-interest economic motives.

VI Discussion

This paper examines the effects of forced migrants inflows in voting behavior. We focus on the case of Colombia as it allows to study separately the effects of internal and international forced displacement in voters behavior. We find evidence of strong negative effects of international forced migration on incumbent support and political participation in host municipalities. We also see that large international forced migration waves are associated with more political support towards right-wing oriented political ideologies.

Notably these results are not accounted for changes caused by migrants in other socio-economic variables, such as crime or economic growth. We interpret our findings as supportive evidence towards the idea that negative political perceptions about migrants are not explained by detrimental economic effects on local populations, but rather are more likely associated with the perception that migrants with different nationalities, races, or religions are a threat to local social or cultural norms.

Consequently, our results underline the importance of policy responses to control for the detrimental effects that inflows of forced migration can have on incumbent support and political participation. These types of interventions may be crucial in favoring a positive attitude of politicians towards forced migrants.

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Table (I) Effects of Forced Displacement in President Elections (First-Round)

Dependent variable	Log(Total Votes) (1)	(2)	Log(Incumbent Votes) (3)	(4)	Incumbent/Total (5)	(6)
Panel A. 2SLS Second-Stage						
IDP (% Population × 100)	0.0124 (0.0114)	0.0108 (0.0114)	0.0946** (0.0392)	0.1020*** (0.0387)	0.0220** (0.0110)	0.0247** (0.0104)
Observations	3110	3110	3110	3110	3110	3110
Panel B. 2SLS First-Stage						
Predicted IDP Inflows	0.1045*** (0.0234)	0.1054*** (0.0244)	0.1045*** (0.0234)	0.1054*** (0.0244)	0.1045*** (0.0234)	0.1054*** (0.0244)
Observations	3110	3110	3110	3110	3110	3110
F-test (excluded instrument)	25.06	25.12	25.06	25.12	25.06	25.12
Panel C. Reduced Form						
Predicted IDP Inflows	0.0013 (0.0012)	0.0011 (0.0012)	0.0099** (0.0040)	0.0107*** (0.0037)	0.0023* (0.0012)	0.0026** (0.0011)
Adj. R-squared	.9783	.9792	.764	.7816	.2989	.3649
Observations	3110	3110	3110	3110	3110	3110
Panel D. Reduced Form						
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	-0.0005*** (0.0001)	-0.0004*** (0.0001)	-0.0007** (0.0003)	-0.0008** (0.0003)	-0.0002 (0.0001)	-0.0002** (0.0001)
Adj. R-squared	.9782	.9791	.7643	.7822	.3068	.3737
Observations	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086
Controls (all panels)						
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: Each coefficient corresponds to a separate regression. Additional controls include interactions of year dummies and i) armed attacks by illegal armed groups in 1995, ii) fatal victims of attacks in 1995, iii) homicide rates in 1995, iv) public expenditures in 1995, v) central government's transfers to health, education, and other expenditures in 1995, vi) number of financial institutions in 1995, vii) number of tax collection offices in 1995, viii) 2000 GDP share in agriculture, services, and industry, ix) municipal tax income in 1995, and x) night light density in 1995. Clustered standard errors at the municipality level are reported in parentheses. *** significant at the 1%, ** significant at the 5%, * significant at the 10%.

Table (II) Effects of Forced Displacement in President Elections (Second-Round)

Dependent variable	Log(Total Votes) (1)	(2)	Log(Incumbent Votes) (3)	(4)	Incumbent/Total (5)	(6)
Panel A. 2SLS Second-Stage						
IDP (% Population × 100)	0.0683** (0.0304)	0.0632** (0.0299)	0.3603** (0.1481)	0.3563** (0.1561)	0.1536** (0.0612)	0.1521** (0.0633)
Observations	2074	2074	2074	2074	2074	2074
Panel B. 2SLS First-Stage						
Predicted IDP Inflows	0.0859* (0.0487)	0.0826* (0.0489)	0.0859* (0.0487)	0.0826* (0.0489)	0.0859* (0.0487)	0.0826* (0.0489)
Observations	2074	2074	2074	2074	2074	2074
F-test (excluded instrument)	3.11	2.86	3.11	2.86	3.11	2.86
Panel C. Reduced Form						
Predicted IDP Inflows	0.0059*** (0.0017)	0.0052*** (0.0015)	0.0310*** (0.0100)	0.0294*** (0.0091)	0.0132*** (0.0048)	0.0126*** (0.0045)
Adj. R-squared	.9829	.9834	.8035	.8202	.1988	.2773
Observations	2074	2074	2074	2074	2074	2074
Panel D. Reduced Form						
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	-0.0005*** (0.0001)	-0.0005*** (0.0001)	-0.0022*** (0.0005)	-0.0021*** (0.0005)	-0.0010*** (0.0002)	-0.0009*** (0.0002)
Adj. R-squared	.9825	.9831	.7968	.8151	.1762	.2602
Observations	2058	2058	2058	2058	2058	2058
Controls (all panels)						
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: Each coefficient corresponds to a separate regression. Additional controls include interactions of year dummies and i) armed attacks by illegal armed groups in 1995, ii) fatal victims of attacks in 1995, iii) homicide rates in 1995, iv) public expenditures in 1995, v) central government's transfers to health, education, and other expenditures in 1995, vi) number of financial institutions in 1995, vii) number of tax collection offices in 1995, viii) 2000 GDP share in agriculture, services, and industry, ix) municipal tax income in 1995, and x) night light density in 1995. Clustered standard errors at the municipality level are reported in parentheses. *** significant at the 1%, ** significant at the 5%, * significant at the 10%.

Table (III) Effects of Forced Displacement in Mayor Elections

Dependent variable	Log(Votes for Left) (1)	Log(Votes for Left) (2)	Log(Votes for Center) (3)	Log(Votes for Center) (4)	Log(Votes for Right) (5)	Log(Votes for Right) (6)
Panel A. 2SLS Second-Stage						
IDP (% Population × 100)	0.1048 (0.0720)	0.0835 (0.0575)	0.0092 (0.0094)	0.0094 (0.0094)	0.0120 (0.0402)	0.0183 (0.0403)
Observations	1213	1213	5750	5750	2392	2392
Panel B. 2SLS First-Stage						
Predicted IDP Inflows	0.1510*** (0.0272)	0.1481*** (0.0275)	0.1510*** (0.0272)	0.1481*** (0.0275)	0.1510*** (0.0272)	0.1481*** (0.0275)
Observations	5872	5872	5872	5872	5872	5872
F-test (excluded instrument)	30.84	28.93	30.84	28.93	30.84	28.93
Panel C. Reduced Form						
Predicted IDP Inflows	0.0148* (0.0079)	0.0111 (0.0071)	0.0014 (0.0014)	0.0014 (0.0014)	0.0013 (0.0042)	0.0020 (0.0044)
Adj. R-squared	.4438	.4555	.7127	.7228	.3873	.3958
Observations	1213	1213	5750	5750	2392	2392
Panel D. Reduced Form						
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	-0.0173* (0.0098)	-0.0128 (0.0100)	-0.0001 (0.0003)	0.0000 (0.0003)	0.0036** (0.0014)	0.0041*** (0.0012)
Adj. R-squared	.5099	.5049	.7926	.7945	.4021	.4061
Observations	744	744	3029	3029	1945	1945
Controls (all panels)						
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: Each coefficient corresponds to a separate regression. Additional controls include interactions of year dummies and i) armed attacks by illegal armed groups in 1995, ii) fatal victims of attacks in 1995, iii) homicide rates in 1995, iv) public expenditures in 1995, v) central government's transfers to health, education, and other expenditures in 1995, vi) number of financial institutions in 1995, vii) number of tax collection offices in 1995, viii) 2000 GDP share in agriculture, services, and industry, ix) municipal tax income in 1995, and x) night light density in 1995. Clustered standard errors at the municipality level are reported in parentheses. *** significant at the 1%, ** significant at the 5%, * significant at the 10%.

Table (IV) Effects of Forced Displacement on Other Outcomes

Dependent variable	Fatal Victims (1)	Armed Attacks (2)	Homicide Rates (3)	Coca (Hectares) (4)	Night Light Density (5)
Panel A. 2SLS Second Stage					
Share of IDPs by year	-0.005 (0.019)	0.000 (0.001)	2.748** (1.272)	1.941 (3.050)	0.090*** (0.027)
Adj. R-squared	.00566	.0384	.462	.422	.969
Observations	18862	18862	22006	22006	19910
Panel B. 2SLS First Stage					
Predicted IDP Inflows	0.102*** (0.022)	0.102*** (0.022)	0.105*** (0.022)	0.105*** (0.022)	0.103*** (0.022)
Observations	18862	18862	22006	22006	19910
F-test (excluded instrument)	12.53	11.95	12.53	11.95	12.53
Panel C. Reduced Form					
Predicted IDP Inflows	-0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.000)	0.288* (0.170)	0.204 (0.320)	0.009** (0.004)
Adj. R-squared	.0066	.0384	.441	.422	.97
Observations	18862	18862	22006	22006	19910
Panel D. Reduced Form					
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.000 (0.000)	0.001 (0.000)	1.137*** (0.383)	-1.656 (1.305)	-0.081*** (0.031)
Adj. R-squared	.018	.0268	.5	.646	.966
Observations	10300	10300	14420	14420	11330
Controls (all panels)					
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: All regressions include municipality and year fixed effects. Clustered standard errors are reported in parentheses. *** significant at the 1%, ** significant at the 5%, * significant at the 10%.

Table (V) Accounting for the Effects on Homicide Rates and Economic Activity

Dependent variable	log (Total Votes)			log (Incumbent Votes)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Panel A. Presidential Elections - IDP Inflows								
Predicted IDP Inflows	0.0013 (0.0012)	0.0012 (0.0012)	-0.0009 (0.0014)	-0.0015 (0.0013)	0.0099** (0.0040)	0.0098** (0.0040)	-0.0028 (0.0038)	-0.0033 (0.0038)
Adj. R-squared	.9783	.9784	.9767	.977	.764	.7641	.9049	.905
Observations	3110	3110	2072	2072	3110	3110	2072	2072
Panel B. Presidential Elections - Venezuelan Inflows								
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	-0.0005*** (0.0001)	-0.0005*** (0.0001)	-0.0006*** (0.0001)	-0.0005*** (0.0001)	-0.0007** (0.0003)	-0.0007** (0.0003)	-0.0004** (0.0002)	-0.0003** (0.0002)
Adj. R-squared	.9782	.9784	.9766	.977	.7643	.7644	.9042	.9043
Observations	3086	3086	2056	2056	3086	3086	2056	2056
Additional Controls (all panels)								
Homicide Rates	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Night Light Density	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

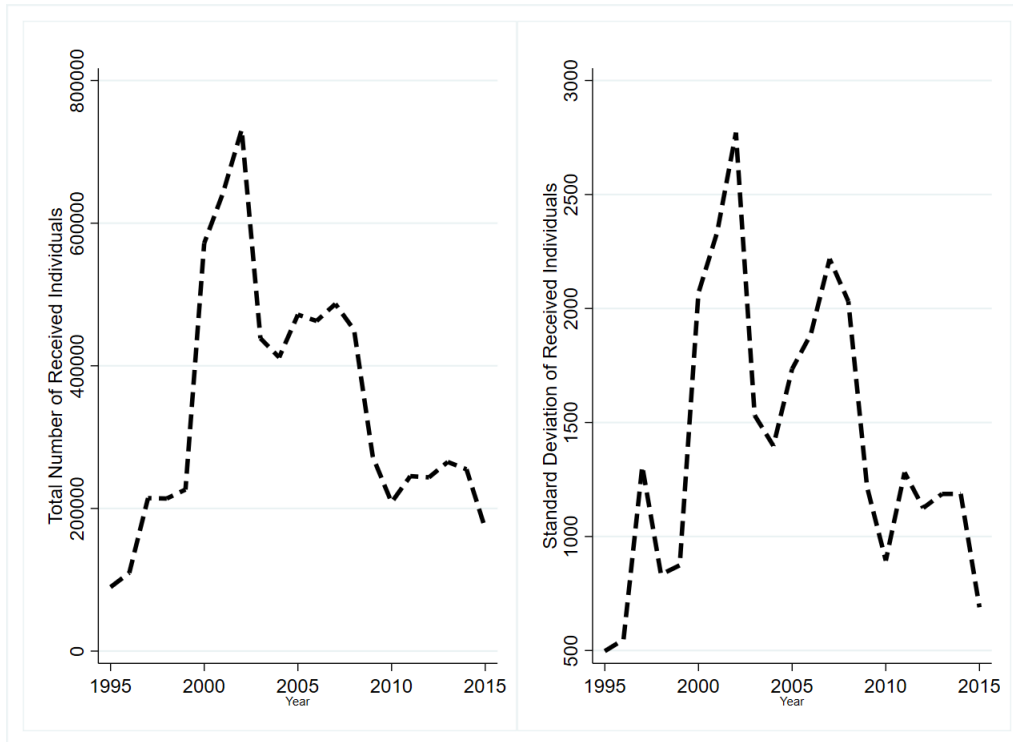
Notes: All regressions include municipality and year fixed effects. Each coefficient corresponds to a separate regression. Clustered standard errors are reported in parentheses. *** significant at the 1%, ** significant at the 5%, * significant at the 10%.

Table (VI) Accounting for the Effects on Homicide Rates and Economic Activity

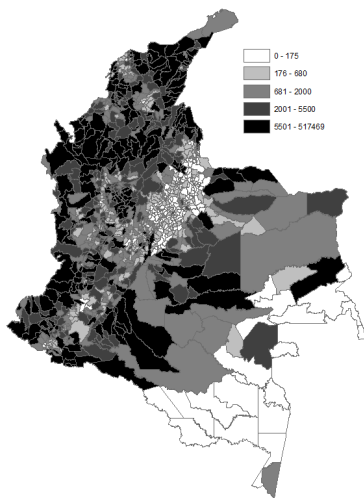
Dependent variable	log (Votes for Right)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A. Mayor Elections - IDP Inflows				
Predicted IDP Inflows	0.0040 (0.0093)	0.0033 (0.0092)	-0.0003 (0.0130)	-0.0003 (0.0127)
Adj. R-squared	.4311	.4352	.4896	.4892
Observations	897	897	457	457
Panel B. Mayor Elections - Venezuelan Inflows				
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.0086 ^{***} (0.0024)	0.0078 ^{***} (0.0025)	0.0143 ^{***} (0.0042)	0.0144 ^{***} (0.0042)
Adj. R-squared	.4445	.4467	.5495	.5463
Observations	681	681	278	278
Additional Controls (all panels)				
Homicide Rates	No	Yes	No	Yes
Night Light Density	No	No	Yes	Yes

Notes: All regressions include municipality and year fixed effects. Each coefficient corresponds to a separate regression. Clustered standard errors are reported in parentheses. *** significant at the 1%, ** significant at the 5%, * significant at the 10%.

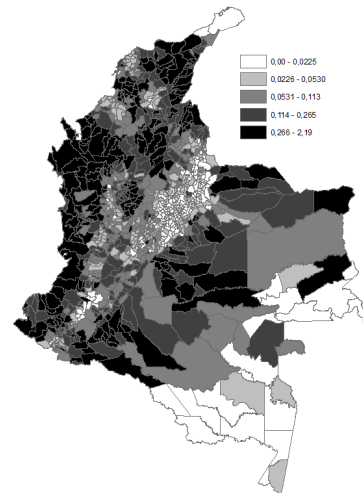
Figure (I) Annual IDP Inflows, 1995-2015



(a) Sum and standard deviation (Individuals)



(b) Mean geo. distribution (Individuals)



(c) Mean geo. distribution (IDP as % Population)

Figure (II) Annual Venezuelan Inflows, 2003-2015

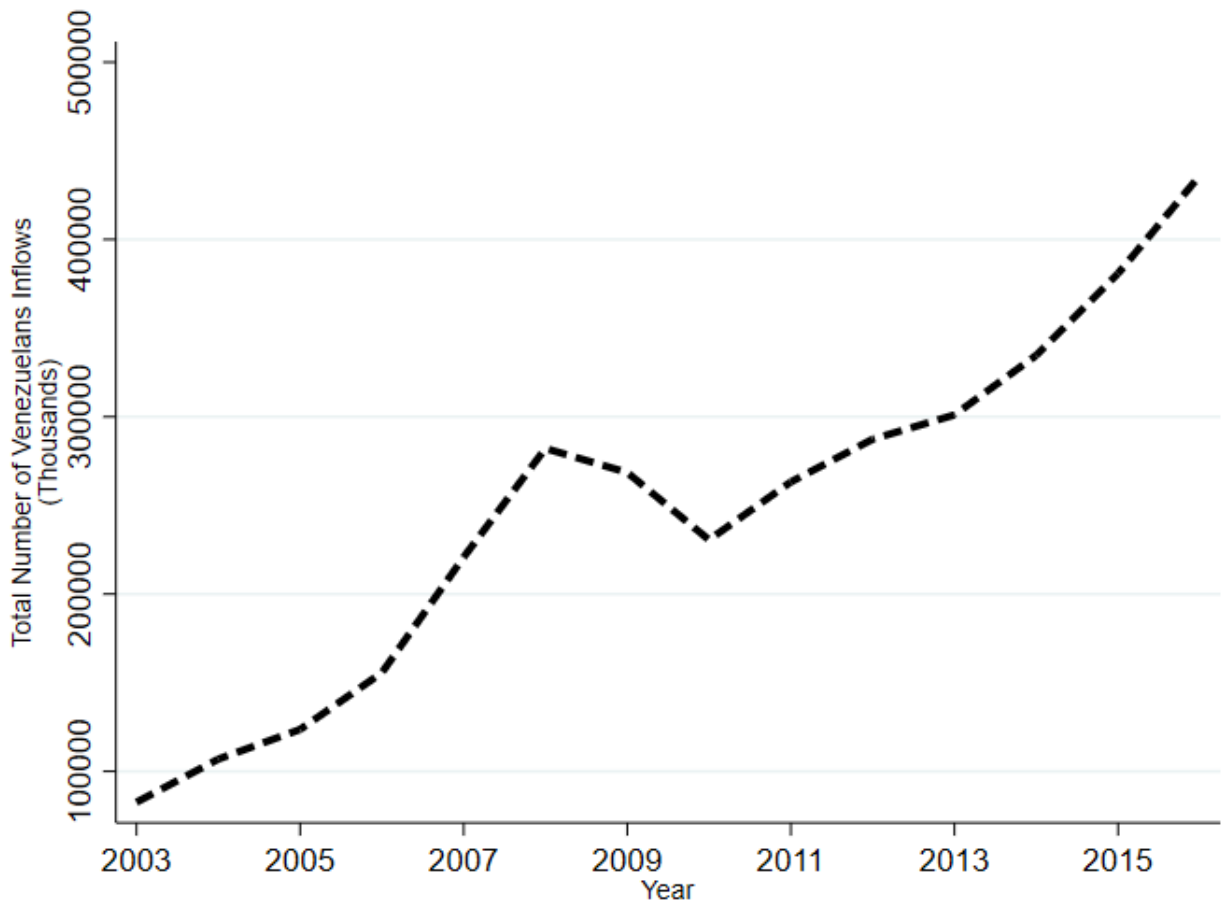
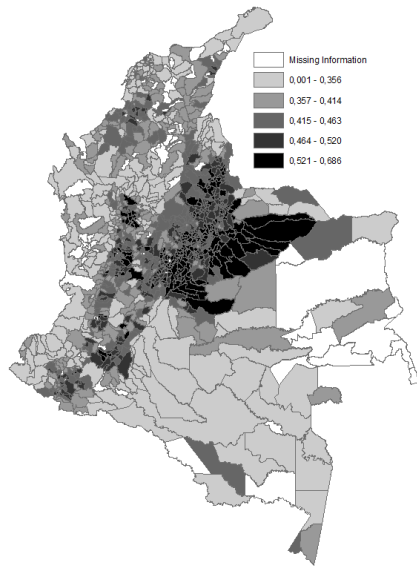
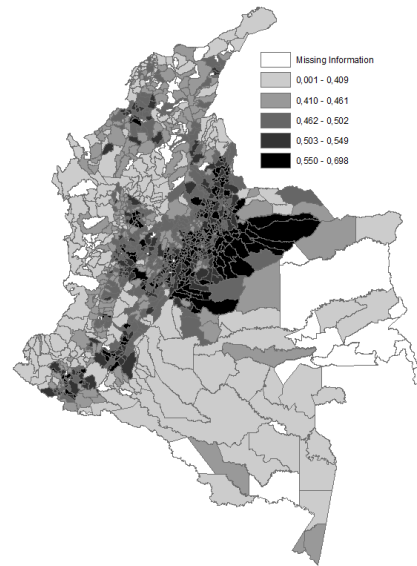


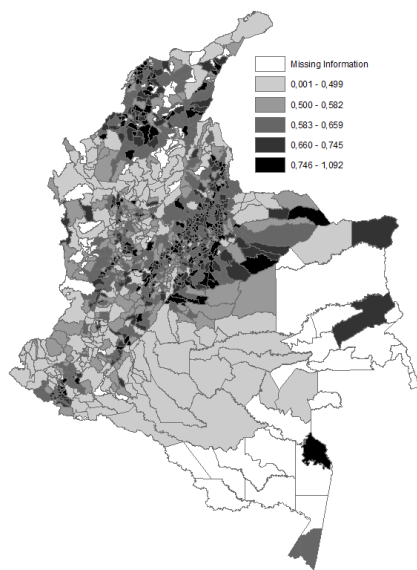
Figure (III) Political Participation (Mean Number of Votes)



(a) First-Round Presidential Elections

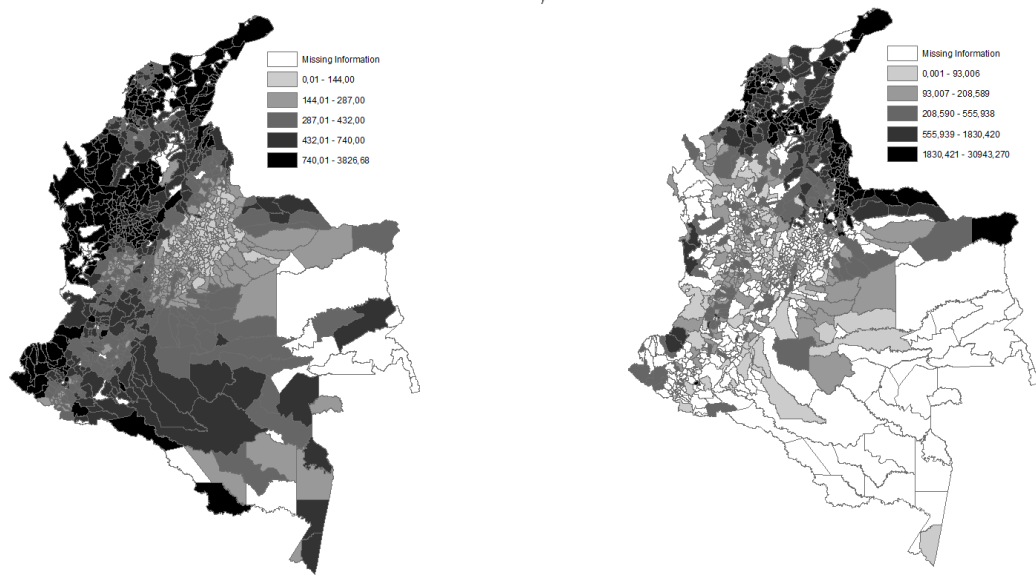


(b) Second- Round Presidential Elections



(c) Mayor Elections

Figure (IV) Predicted Inflows of Forced Migrants (Annual Mean)



(a) Predicted IDP Inflows, 1995-2015

(b) Predicted Venezuelan Inflows, 2003-2015

Appendix I: Political Elections Data Base Construction

We constructed three data bases for each type of election, two for national elections (presidential elections first- and second-round), and one for local elections (mayor). The three databases were constructed with original data from the *Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil*, the Colombian electoral authority.

Presidential Elections - First Round (2006-2014)

The database covers the period between 2006 and 2014 only, since presidential re-election was approved after 2004 in Colombia. Consequently, our database includes the results of three presidential elections 2006, 2010, and 2014.

The variable votes for the incumbent government were estimated as the total number of votes received by the incumbent candidate in each municipality. The incumbent candidate in each of three elections was determined as:

1. Elections of 2006: Reelection was approved when Alvaro Uribe was in office (his first tenure lasted from 2002 to 2006). The first election results we used are those of 2006, when Alvaro Uribe was considered the past incumbent government. Hence, the municipal votes of the incumbent government were counted as the votes for Alvaro Uribe.
2. Elections of 2010: Alvaro Uribe was reelected for a second term in 2006 and his second tenure lasted from 2006 to 2010. For the elections of 2010, he publicly appointed a presidential candidate that was planned to continue his government plan, Juan Manuel Santos. Consequently, in the elections of 2010, the votes received by Juan Manuel Santos are counted as the support for the past incumbent government.
3. Elections of 2014: Juan Manuel Santos was elected in 2010, and ran for reelection in the election of 2014. Consequently, in the elections of 2014, the votes he received correspond to

the votes for the past incumbent government.

Presidential Elections - Second Round

The database covers the elections of 2010 and 2014, since in 2002 and 2006 Álvaro Uribe won the elections in the first electoral round. Consequently, the variable votes for the incumbent for each election is defined as the total number of votes received by Juan Manuel Santos in the second electoral round in each municipality.

Mayor Elections

Colombia's constitution establishes that the mayor cannot be reelected for two consecutive periods. For this reason, we construct the variable votes for the incumbent taking into account the votes received by the incumbent ideology of the political parties of each mayor. We do not use the votes received by political parties directly because they are atomized and very few have continuity across time. The database was built for the seven elections that took place between the periods of 1994 to 2015.

To begin we identify the political party of each candidate for mayor elections and follow the methodology proposed by [Fergusson et al. \(2017\)](#), to classify the ideology of each political party in three groups: left-wing, right-wing, or neither. The classification for each political party includes three steps.

1. Check party names, mottos, and slogans for words that identify the mayor's party clearly as left leaning or right-leaning (e.g., communist, or socialist for left-wing oriented and conservative or Christian for right-wing oriented).
2. Since few parties can be classified using the method outlined in the previous step, check the party statutes (when available) for policy stances that are clearly left- or right-leaning.

A party is coded left-wing if the party statutes include at least three of the following five leftist policy positions: (1) pro-peasant, (2) advocates greater market regulation, (3) thinks that workers should be defended against exploitation, (4) advocates state-owned or communal property rights, and (5) anti-imperialist. A party is coded as right-leaning if its statutes include at least three of the following five right-wing policy positions: (1) economic growth is emphasized over redistribution, (2) advocates free market, orthodox policies, and privatization, (3) believes that family and religion are the moral pillars of society, (4) appeals to patriotism and nationalism, and accepts the suspension of some freedoms in order to guarantee security, and (5) prioritizes law and order. Parties that do not include at least three of the policy stances from either list in their statutes are classified as neither left- nor right-wing.

3. For parties for which official statutes are not available, check the government plan that candidates submit to the electoral authority before elections and, when available, search them for the same policy stances as in the second step.

The final database for our analysis was built for the seven elections that comprise the periods of 1994 to 2015 because for the elections between 1988 and 1994 there is no information on the vote count of losers. The construction of the votes for the incumbent ideology is constructed in each elections as follows:

1. Define the ideology of the mayor in each election and municipality. This ideology is the incumbent ideology for the next elections.
2. In each election count the total votes for candidates belonging to the incumbent ideology (the ideology associated with the past mayor).

Appendix II: Descriptive Statistics

Table (I) Summary Statistics President Elections First-Round

	Observations	Average	St. Deviation
IDP Inflows	3110	609.83	2860.43
IDP Inflows (% Pop) \times 100	3110	1.33	2.63
Predicted IDP Inflows (% Pop)	3110	7.84	10.98
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	3086	1664.89	5014.93
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows (% Pop) \times 100	3086	19.17	84.85
Population +15	3110	27831.87	165709.97
Total pop by mun	3110	42970.04	259944.09
Votes for Incumbent	3110	5430.89	36501.46
Total Votes	3110	12532.59	85618.76
Votes for Incumbent/Total Votes	3110	0.49	0.23
Political Participation (% Pop +15)	3110	0.44	0.11
Votes obtained by the left ideology	3110	1870.10	14672.38
Votes obtained by the center ideology	3110	4454.12	36284.83
Votes obtained by the right ideology	3110	5588.68	37196.50

Notes: Forced Displacement inflows (IDP and Venezuelan) were estimated aggregating information in year of elections and the prior year. These statistics correspond to three elections: 2006, 2010, and 2014.

Table (II) Summary Statistics President Elections Second-Round

	Observations	Average	St. Deviation
IDP Inflows	2102	469.21	2303.32
IDP Inflows (% Pop) \times 100	2102	0.97	1.77
Predicted IDP Inflows (% Pop)	2074	6.93	11.04
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	2058	2003.61	5778.80
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows (% Pop) \times 100	2058	23.23	98.78
Population +15	2102	28982.53	172951.64
Total pop by mun	2102	43562.36	265040.09
Votes for Incumbent	2102	7842.94	47563.94
Total Votes	2102	13570.05	85532.54
Votes for Incumbent/Total Votes	2102	0.61	0.23
Political Participation (% Pop +15)	2102	0.47	0.10
Votes for Left	2102	0.00	0.00
Votes for Center	2102	2660.23	18864.88
Votes for Right	2102	3715.04	22033.39

Notes: Forced Displacement inflows (IDP and Venezuelan) were estimated aggregating information in year of elections and the prior year. These statistics correspond to three elections: 2006, 2010, and 2014.

Table (III) Summary Statistics Mayor Elections

	Observations	Average	St. Deviation
IDP Inflows	3708	617.56	3246.34
IDP Inflows (% Pop) × 100	3708	1.44	3.69
Predicted IDP Inflows (% Pop)	3708	7.36	11.33
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	1778	1913.29	5729.51
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows (% Pop) × 100	1778	21.65	95.77
Population +15	3708	25120.92	152935.77
Total pop by mun	3708	36199.22	203983.99
Votes for Incumbent	3708	8643.15	29417.53
Total Votes	3708	12188.00	58833.25
Political Participation (% Pop +15)	3708	0.62	0.19
Share Left (% of Total Votes)	3708	0.03	0.09
Share Center (% of Total Votes)	3708	0.80	0.20
Share Right (% of Total Votes)	3708	0.09	0.16

Notes: Forced Displacement inflows (IDP and Venezuelan) were estimated aggregating information in year of elections and the prior year. These statistics correspond to six elections: 1997, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015.

Table (IV) Summary Statistics - Other Outcomes

	Observations	Average	St. Deviation
Fatal Victims of Conflict	20196	0.06	1.09
Armed Attacks	20196	0.00	0.07
Homicide Rates (per 100,000 ind.)	24739	17.30	45.68
Hectares of Coca	24739	67.65	510.07
Night Light Density	21337	3.77	7.16