

Brothers or Invaders? How Crisis-Driven Migrants Shape Voting Behavior*

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Abstract

We study the electoral effects of the arrival of 1.3 million Venezuelan refugees in Colombia as a consequence of the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis. We exploit the fact that forced migrants disproportionately locate in places with earlier settlements of Venezuelans after the intensification of the crisis. We find that larger migration shocks increase voter's turnout and shift votes from left- to right-wing political ideologies. These effects are predominantly driven by voter's concerns on the economic effects of migrants as well as by a novel channel that we call electoral manipulation, whereby political parties make the forced migration shock salient to voters in order to demonize the political agenda of contenders.

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“The fear of immigration is poisoning Western politics. Donald Trump owes his job to it. Brexit would not be happening without it. Strident nationalists wield power in Italy, Hungary, Poland, and Austria, and have gained influence elsewhere.” The Economist¹

I Introduction

A growing stream of studies has documented a strong correlation between migration inflows and voter’s antipathy toward pro-migrant political views.² However, there is an ongoing debate on the mechanisms driving these effects. A group of studies suggests that voters penalize politicians who are more welcoming to migrants if the latter displace local labor or depress wages and thus threaten their socioeconomic well-being.³ Another group of studies suggests that voter’s antipathy toward immigration is driven by group-related concerns about the cultural impacts of migrants, due to factors such as race, religion, language, nationality, or social norms.⁴

This paper proposes a third driver of these effects, that is likely to occur in contexts of political polarization. We call this novel mechanism *electoral manipulation*. Electoral manipulation takes place when political parties in hosting countries use the migration wave to highlight the association between their competing parties’ electoral platform and the predominant ideology of the ruling regime in the migrant’s expelling countries. This strategy’s main objective is to create fear among voters in order to reduce the electoral support of contenders.

Our analysis centers on the political effects of the arrival, by the end of 2018, of 1.3 mil-

¹Last accessed August 30, 2018, from: <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2018/08/25/the-way-forward-on-immigration-to-the-west?cid1=cust/ednew/n/bl/n/2018/08/23n/owned/n/n/nwl/n/n/LA/146317/n>.

²Examples of these studies include Gerdes and Wadensjö (2008); Otto and Steinhardt (2014); Mendez and Cutillas (2014); Barone et al. (2016); Harmon (2017); Halla et al. (2017); Dustmann et al. (2016). Current examples include the rise in support for the anti-immigration *Swedish Democrats*, which increased their vote share in the parliamentary elections of September 2018 by 5 percentage points relative to the 2014 elections, giving them 18% of the seats in the Riksdag. Over the past few years, right-wing parties have also seen their vote share increase significantly in other parts of Europe, including Italy, Poland, and Germany.

³See Scheve and Slaughter (2001); Mayda (2006); Dustmann and Preston (2006); Hanson et al. (2007); Facchini and Mayda (2009); Malhotra et al. (2013) for examples.

⁴A few notable examples include Citrin et al. (1997); Sniderman et al. (2004); Card et al. (2012); Tingley (2012); Dustmann et al. (2019); Tabellini (2020).

lion Venezuelan refugees in Colombia, as a consequence of the intensification of the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis.⁵ Most of the existing evidence on the political effects of migration has been concentrated in developed countries.⁶ However, developing nations, which according to the United Nations Refugee Agency host 85 percent of the world’s forced migration (UNHCR, 2020), have larger fractions of vulnerable populations and a less flexible labor demand to absorb the labor supply shock generated by the arrival of large numbers of migrants.⁷ These characteristics may translate into different effects and mechanisms to the ones documented in previous work.

We assess the effects of forced migration in voting behavior using longitudinal data at the municipal level in Colombia between 1994 and 2018.⁸ Since migrants choose their arrival municipalities and their choices may be correlated with voting behavior inside those areas, we cannot simply compare differences in electoral outcomes across municipalities with higher and lower migration levels. Consequently, we exploit the fact that crisis-induced migrants tend to move disproportionately to municipalities where they have networks that were formed before the beginning of the crisis. In particular, we leverage identification from two sources of exogenous variation in crisis-driven migration shocks at the municipality-year level. Municipal variation comes from the share of early settlements of Venezuelans before the crisis began. Annual variation comes from the cumulative number of individuals arriving to Colombia from Venezuela each year, which significantly increased as the Venezuelan crisis worsened in the last few years. We interact these two sources of variation to create our *predicted cumulative migration shock* measure.

Our main identification assumption is that predicted migration cumulative shocks affect voting behavior only through actual migration and not through any other channel after controlling for a flexible set of municipal-level characteristics. First, because our estimates include fixed effects by

⁵The 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.

⁶See Gerdes and Wadensjö (2008); Otto and Steinhardt (2014); Barone et al. (2016); Mayda et al. (2016); Harmon (2017); Halla et al. (2017); Dustmann et al. (2019); Tabellini (2020) for examples.

⁷In contrast to, for example, the mass migration era in the United States when the country hosted large waves of voluntary migration in a buoyant economy (see Abramitzky et al., 2012, 2014; Tabellini, 2020; Sequeira et al., 2020 for a detailed analysis of the effects of migration in this time of history).

⁸Colombia’s roughly 1,100 municipalities are equivalent to U.S. counties.

municipality and election year, they are not confounded by time-invariant differences across municipalities nor by temporal shocks that are common among all the municipalities. Second, since the pre-existing networks of migrants coming from expulsion regions might be larger in places with specific characteristics that might have evolved over time in a way correlated with future electoral behavior, we include interactions between year dummies and a large set pre-migration shock municipal covariates. These include variables related to the incidence of conflict and violence, the magnitude of local and national public expenditures, the number of public institutions, poverty, inequality, labor market conditions, and economic growth. Third, we control for full interactions between department and year indicators in all our estimates.⁹

Our analysis is structured in two parts. First, we examine the effects of the migration shock on political participation and the support of right-, center-, and left-wing ideologies in the presidential (first- and second-round) and the mayoral elections in Colombia. In line with previous evidence, we find that larger migration shocks result in higher political participation in the first and second round presidential elections. The point estimates suggest that when Venezuelan municipal predicted shocks increase by one standard deviation turnout increases by 1.1 and 1.3 percentage points in the first and second presidential elections, respectively.

We also find that Venezuelan migration affects the composition of presidential votes from left- to right-wing political ideologies. We find that a one-standard-deviation increase in the predicted shock of Venezuelan migration reduces the share of votes for left-wing political ideologies by 0.9 percentage points and increases the share of votes for right-wing ideologies by a similar amount in the first round elections. Considering that the mean support for left-wing ideologies was approximately 10 percent during the first round presidential elections, a reduction of 0.9 percentage points represents a substantial impact. Our analysis of mayoral elections largely validates the effects we

⁹Departments are the second level administrative unit, equivalent to states in the U.S. One additional recent criticism to the validity of using early migrants networks to study the impacts of migration is that in settings in which migration flows to specific locations are stable over time one cannot disentangle the short- and long-term causal effects of migration (Jaeger et al., 2018). Our empirical strategy is not sensitive to this threat because the inflows of Venezuelan forced migrants are sudden and large in scale, while the cross sectional component of our instrument is measured prior to this shock.

observe for the presidential elections.

In a second stage, we examine the potential mechanism driving these effects. We consider three potential mechanisms. First, we explore whether voter's behavior may be explained by the economic effects caused by the migration shock. For this purpose we examine the impacts of Venezuelan migrants in the labor market outcomes of Colombian workers. Our findings support the empirical relevance of this mechanism: we document that larger Venezuelan migration shocks are associated with higher unemployment rates and more hours worked by Colombian workers. These effects are meaningful: a one-standard-deviation increase in the predicted cumulative shock of Venezuelan migrants rises overall unemployment by 1.3 percentage points and increases hours worked by 1.8 and 1.2 percent in the formal and the informal sector respectively. These effects are in line with other studies documenting the impacts of refugee migration in countries with large informal sectors (see [Del Carpio and Wagner, 2015](#); [Cengiz and Tekguc, 2018](#), and [Altindag et al., 2018](#) for examples).

Second, we examine the possibility that the political effects of migration may be driven by cultural differences between migrants and hosting communities. Although we do not perform a formal test of this mechanism due to lack of representative survey data on social preferences and values, we speculate that this explanation is not likely an important driver of the effects we observe. There are two reasons for this. First, in contrast to migration waves that trigger interactions of communities with large cultural differences such as the recent migration experienced by Western European nations, Colombia and Venezuela share a strong common cultural heritage and speak the same language. Second, right-wing parties in Colombia are not typically "anti-immigration" as is commonly seen in other countries. For instance, the current right-wing Colombian president has offered a wide set of social programs and benefits to Venezuelan migrants, including those undocumented or illegal.

Finally, we explore the validity of a novel *electoral manipulation* hypothesis, namely that political parties in receiving countries strategically take advantage of people's awareness of salient

migration shocks to campaign against contenders that they claim are ideologically aligned to the regime that triggered the migration crisis in the country of origin. In our setting, right-wing parties have manipulated the Venezuelan migration shock to campaign against left-wing contenders, that they associate with the failure of the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela that ultimately led to the recent exodus. For instance, during the most recent presidential elections in 2018, the right-wing alliance widely promoted the theory that voting for the left would pave the way to led Colombia into a Venezuela-like economic collapse. To the extent that this propaganda is at least partially effective by generating fear among voters, then it is plausible that municipalities where Venezuelan migration has been more salient would be more likely to vote for the right.

We test the empirical validity of this mechanism indirectly, leveraging on the fact that some municipalities in Colombia have traditionally been more exposed to an extreme version of left-wing failure, namely to violence perpetrated by left-wing illegal insurgencies. We show that the effect of the Venezuelan migration shock on the support for the right is much more pronounced in these municipalities. Moreover, using recent national perception surveys we document that Colombians are increasingly afraid of the possibility of becoming a second Venezuela, a threat that has been largely positioned in the public agenda by right-wing political parties.

In sum, our analysis suggest that larger migration shocks increase voter's turnout and shift votes from left- to right-wing political ideologies. These effects are potentially explained by electoral manipulation in addition to other channels that have been studied before such as the economic effects of migrants in hosting labor markets. In turn, they are not likely to be explained by cultural differences between migrants and host communities.

This paper contributes to the study of the effects of migration on political outcomes. Most of the work in this area has 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](#); [Dustmann et al., 2019](#); [Tabellini, 2020](#) for examples). Our contribution to this literature is two-fold. First, we study the effects of forced,

crisis-induced migrants within a developing country. Forced migrants arrive in large numbers and are often traumatized by conflict, economic turmoil, crime victimization, or political persecution. They typically arrive with little economic means, and face large levels of uncertainty regarding the duration of their stay. As such, their impact on host economies may be vastly different than that of economic migrants arriving in developed countries. Additionally, developing countries host the bulk of forced migration in the world and have lower resources to attend these populations. This suggests that the effects of forced migration in these countries may be different than what has been estimated for developed countries. Second, our set up allows us to examine the mechanisms mediating the electoral effects of migration. Particularly, we explore the importance of electoral manipulation, a mechanism that has not been studied before.

Overall, our analysis is informative on the political consequences of hosting refugees, especially in developing countries with similar migration inflows and polarized political parties, but that however may not have comparable rich data to conduct similar analyses.

II Context

The beginning of the Venezuelan political crisis can be traced back to the election of Hugo Chávez as president on December 6, 1998. Chávez' socialist regime was characterized by constitutional amendments, land expropriations, the implementation of populist social programs, nationalizations, and restrictions on private businesses ([Crašto and Álvarez, 2017](#)). These policies were continued by Nicolás Maduro, who was elected president of Venezuela in 2013. Coupled with declining international oil prices and with international sanctions, Maduro's regime has dramatically worsened the economic and social crisis in Venezuela. Shortages of food and basic necessities became extremely common, and looting began to occur systematically throughout the country ([Revista Semana, 2017](#)). Moreover, insecurity became endemic, repression of the opposition became common, and systematic human rights violations by public authorities were repeatedly reported by the international media (see [El Nuevo Herald, 2014](#); [BBC News, 2017](#); [BBC, 2016](#)). This situa-

tion triggered large waves of out-migration by Venezuelans, who most often moved to neighboring Colombia.

Figure I shows the annual evolution of the total number of registered Venezuelan migrants entering Colombia between 1994 and 2018, as recorded at the different migration points established by the Colombian government. According to the official statistics, Venezuelan migration increased five-fold during this period, as the humanitarian crisis caused by Chávez and Maduro's regime worsened.

Initially, Venezuelan migrants consisted mainly of wealthy people and entrepreneurs who came to invest in Colombia and fled to save their capital from expropriations and from high inflation rates (Revista Semana, 2017; Crasto and Álvarez, 2017). As the crisis intensified, however, the core of Venezuelan migration shifted to the poorly educated population who report fleeing to Colombia to escape violent crime, political repression, and to look for basic necessities for survival (NPR, 2018). Indeed, according to recent characterizations of Venezuelan migrants based on the Colombian household surveys of 2015 and 2016, over 80 percent of registered migrants have not completed a high school education, at least half are 25 years old or less, and they are balanced in terms of gender (see OLR, 2017).

III Data

Our analysis of the impacts of forced migration on political outcomes focuses on the period 1994 to 2018 in line with data availability. The main data that we use to carry out our analysis can be divided in two groups as follows:

III.1 Venezuelan displacement

Data on the total number of Venezuelans arriving annually in Colombia is available through the Colombian Statistics Department for the period 1994 to 2018. The information between 1994

and 2002 was constructed using the population censuses of 1993 and 2005 and corresponds to the Venezuelan nationals that arrived to Colombia each year, as retrospectively reported by census respondents. The data from 2003 to 2018 come from the information recorded at official migration points. Figure I shows the Venezuelan migration inflows observed in Colombia during our period of analysis.

III.2 Voting behavior

Data on voting behavior for each municipality come from Colombia's electoral agency. We use data on municipal-level electoral results in presidential and mayoral elections to study the effects of forced migration on political participation, measured by the share of individuals who vote as a share of voting-age population (18 years or older),¹⁰ and support for left-, center-, or right-wing political ideologies. For each election, we classify all candidates according to their political party into left-, right-, and center-oriented ideologies, following the methodology proposed by [Fergusson et al. \(2020\)](#). Appendix A describes in detail the steps followed to classify each candidate.

III.2.1 Presidential elections

Our analysis of presidential elections focuses on the period 1994-2018, when there is information available on the votes for all presidential candidates.¹¹ Presidents are elected by majority rule. If no candidate receives at least half plus 1 vote on election day, a run-off election between the two candidates with the most votes in the first round takes place three weeks later. The winning candidate governs for a 4-year period. We use information on the 6 first-round and 5 second-round (run-off) elections that occurred between 1994 and 2018.

¹⁰Municipal-level voting registries were not available for the entire sample period. They are available since 2002. If we compare turnout using registered voters or the voting-age municipal population as the denominator for the period 2002-2018, we observe a distribution that is extremely similar across measures. The difference is not statistically significant.

¹¹Prior to 1994 the Colombian Electoral Bureau only recorded the municipal votes of the winning candidate.

III.2.2 Mayoral elections

Mayors are elected at the local level by plurality rule in a single election (there is no run-off for local elections). As in the case of the presidential elections, due to the availability on votes received for all candidates only since 1997, for our estimates we focus on the six local elections that took place between 1997 and 2015.

Figures II, III, IV, and V show the geographic distribution of the electoral outcomes that we analyze in the presidential and mayoral elections. In addition, Tables I and II present descriptive statistics for all the variables used in our analysis.

IV Empirical Strategy

As forced migrants do not choose their arrival municipalities randomly, we cannot use a mean comparison of the municipalities that receive higher and lower migration. More generally, it is reasonable to assume that migrant’s decision of where to locate is associated with municipal characteristics that may be correlated with current and future voting behavior. To account for this possibility our empirical strategy exploits the fact that, as crises intensify in their locations of origin, migrants tend to move disproportionately to municipalities where they have networks, family, or acquaintances.¹² In particular, we estimate the following specification:

$$Y_{m dt} = \theta_1 \text{Pr. Ven. Inflows}_{m dt}^{1993} + \sum_{c \in Z_{md}} [c \times \psi_t] + \phi_{d \times t} + \psi_t + \gamma_m + \epsilon_{m dt} \quad (1)$$

where m represents the municipality, d the department and t the election-year. Y is one of our dependent variables regarding electoral results, Z_m is a vector of municipal characteristics observed

¹²Our measures of predicted cumulative inflows of forced migrants follow the standard practice in the literature. See Card, 2001 and Altonji and Card, 1991 for the pioneer approaches and Lewis and Peri, 2015 for a review of the literature on applications. However, our estimates are not subject by recent critiques to Bartik-type specifications (e.g. Goldsmith-Pinkham et al., 2019; Borusyak et al., 2018) as we control for a large set of pre-established municipal characteristics -that may be correlated with the early migrant networks- interacted with year indicators. We also focus on the reduced form effects of the predicted migration inflows on electoral outcomes.

before the beginning of the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis (described in detail in the robustness section), and ψ_t , $\phi_{d \times t}$, and γ_m represent election year, department \times election year, and municipality fixed effects respectively.¹³ Pre-shock municipal characteristics are interacted with the year fixed effects to flexibly control for differential municipal trends. Robust standard errors are clustered at the municipality level to account for potential serial correlation within municipalities.

Our measure of *predicted cumulative migration shock* (Pr. Ven. Inflows) is constructed as:

$$\text{Pr. Ven. Inflows}_{mdt}^{1993} = \left[\frac{1}{\text{Pop}_{md,1993}} \left(\text{Cum. Ven. Inflow}_t \times \text{Venezuelan Share}_{md}^{1993} \right) \right] \quad (2)$$

where $\text{Venezuelan Share}_{md}^{1993}$ is the ratio of Venezuelans in municipality m of department d to all foreigners in m according to the 1993 population census (the last census before the start of the intensification of the Venezuelan crisis). $\text{Cum. Ven. Inflow}_t$ represents the cumulative number of individuals leaving Venezuela and arriving in Colombia between 1993 and year t . The interaction between these two variables is normalized by the total *initial* municipal population (in 1993). Finally, we standardize our measure of the predicted migration cumulative shock to facilitate the interpretation of our results.

Figure VI and VII illustrate the geographic distribution of our predicted migration shock. The figures also presents the correlation between the predicted and observed Migration using the population censuses of 2005 and 2018. We were able to recover observed inflows of Venezuelan migrants from the population census of 2005. However, for 2018 we were only able to recover the share of foreigners to total population in each municipality. According to the Statistics Department, foreigners in Colombia are mostly composed by Venezuelan nationals representing more than 95% of these population group. Consequently, the foreigners geographic distribution should

¹³Because our identification strategy includes fixed effects of these dimensions, our estimates are not threatened by time-invariant differences across municipalities such as geographic variables, or by time shocks that affect the all the municipalities within a department but can vary across departments. Our empirical strategy is thus valid to the extent that there are no time-varying omitted municipal characteristics that both are correlated with our predicted migration measure and affect municipal electoral outcomes.

be an excellent proxy for the location of Venezuelan nationals in 2018. The figures confirm that the predicted and observed measures of cumulative migrant inflows have a strong correlation. The figures also suggest that there was ample geographic variation in Venezuelan migration across Colombia.

Recently, [Jaeger et al. \(2018\)](#) proposed that using early migrant settlements to identify the effects of migration in hosting regions may confound its short- and long-term causal effects in countries where migration patterns are consistently directed to the same areas and are stable in time. Our empirical strategy is not sensitive to their critique because the inflows of Venezuelan migration were sudden and dramatically large in scale after the intensification of the humanitarian crisis, while the 1993 settlements are measured well before such events.

IV.1 Robustness Tests

Pre-shock differences between municipalities

One important threat to our identification strategy may be caused by pre-shock differences in municipal characteristics that may be correlated with the early migrant settlements ([Goldsmith-Pinkham et al., 2019](#)). This may be the case to the extent that the post-shock evolution of such characteristics affects electoral outcomes. For instance, areas with a higher share of migrants in 1993 may have also had lower levels of conflict or violence, better institutions, more economic growth, more public investment, less poverty or inequality, or lower levels of informality relative to the rest of the country. If these characteristics affected electoral outcomes, through their effect on municipalities' economic performance, for instance, then our results would be biased.

To flexibly account for these potential threats, we control for the interaction of a large number of pre-shock municipal-level characteristics and election-year fixed effects. Our pre-shock controls include indicators of conflict intensity, violent crime, government intervention, institutional development, economic growth, poverty and inequality, and labor outcomes. These time-invariant municipal characteristics are listed in [Table II](#).

Excluding bordering municipalities

It may be the case that most of the variation of our predicted migration shock is driven by the municipalities located by the 1,378 miles border between Colombia and Venezuela, where indeed Venezuelan pre-settlements turn out to be larger. If such municipalities are differentially affected by the Venezuelan crisis for reasons other than the large migration flows they faced –such as a decrease in bilateral trade–then voting behavior may respond to these confounders. To test for this possibility, we run our estimates excluding from our sample each one of the 32 Colombian departments at a time, to verify that our results were not driven by the high interactions of the Venezuelan economy with some departments such as La Guajira and Norte de Santander (which comprise most of the Venezuelan-Colombian border). Our results are robust to every one of the 32 sample restrictions (see Appendix B).

Using an alternative source of cross-sectional variation: distance to border-crossing locations

One alternative to computing our proposed measure of the *predicted cumulative migration shock* is to interact the annual Venezuelan cumulative inflows to Colombia with the average distance from every municipality to each one of the border-crossing sites between Colombia and Venezuela. Our results are robust of using this alternative source of shock exposure, which by and large picks up the same variation as our baseline measure. The correlation between the average distance to the bilateral border-crossing sites and the share of Venezuelan population in 1993 is 0.64.

V Main Results

Our main results for the first-round and run-off presidential elections are presented in Panels A and B of Table III, respectively. Panel C reports the results for the mayoral elections. Columns 1 and 2 examine the effect of the predicted cumulative Venezuelan migration shock on turnout, columns 3 and 4 on the share of votes of left-wing parties, columns 5 and 6 on the share of votes of

center (neither left- nor right-wing parties) and columns 7 and 8 on the share of votes of right-wing parties. In addition to municipality, year and department×electoral year fixed effects (included in all columns), even columns include the interaction between several pre-determined municipal characteristics and electoral year fixed effects.

Presidential Elections

We find consistent and positive effects of Venezuelan migration on political participation in the form of electoral turnout in first and second round presidential elections. We also find that larger inflows of Venezuelan migrants result in a re-composition of the votes share from left- to right-wing political ideologies.

The magnitude of the estimated effects of the migration shocks on electoral outcomes is economically meaningful and robust the inclusion of flexible trends parametrized by pre-shock municipal characteristics. Focusing on Panel A and the most demanding specification (even columns), a one-standard-deviation increase in the predicted Venezuelan cumulative migration shock increases political participation in the first (second) round presidential elections by 1.1 (1.3) percentage points. A predicted shock of that same magnitude also reduces the share of votes for left-wing political ideologies by 0.9 percentage points and increases the share of votes for right-wing ideologies by 0.8 percentage points in the first round elections, with no effect on non-left- or non-right-wing political parties, which abusing terminology we call ‘center’. Since the mean support for left-wing parties during first round presidential elections is 10 percent, a reduction of 0.9 percentage points in the support for left-wing political ideologies is equivalent to a substantial size effect, of almost 10 per cent.

The ideology re-composition of the votes is larger in magnitude in run-off presidential election. A one-standard-deviation increase in the predicted Venezuelan cumulative migration shock decreases the electoral support of left-wing parties in 1.5 percentage points and increases the support for the right on 1.6 percentage points. The size of these effects is 50 percent larger than that estimated for first round presidential elections.

Mayoral Elections

When we look at mayoral elections, in Panel C of Table III, we find a consistent albeit somewhat weaker picture, at least in terms of the ideological re-composition of votes. As in the case of first round presidential elections, we find that a one-standard-deviation increase in the predicted cumulative Venezuelan migration shock results in an increase in turnout of 1.1 percentage points and in a reduction in the electoral support of left-wing parties on 0.7 percentage points. Although the evidence does suggest that this translates into an increase in the support of the right of a similar magnitude (0.9 percentage points), the point estimate is not significant at standard statistical levels. This may reflect the fact that the classification of parties in the left/right ideological spectrum of Fergusson et al. (2020) is somewhat more noisy for the case of mayoral elections, which include over 500 parties during our sample period, many of which are single-candidate parties that run in particular municipality-year races. The lack of power is perhaps also due to the fact that the last mayoral race of our sample period took place in 2015, before Venezuelan migration showed its largest increment (see Figure I). As such, our mayoral elections sample has a lower variation on Venezuelan inflows than the one observed for the presidential elections.

VI Mechanisms

Our results so far suggest that Venezuelan migration inflows result in higher political participation and a re-composition of votes from left- to right-wing ideologies. These findings are in line with other studies recently carried in developed countries (see Tabellini, 2020 and Dustmann et al., 2019 for recent examples). In this section we explore the validity of the mechanisms plausibly driving voter's responses to the forced Venezuelan migration shock. In addition to mechanisms previously discussed in the literature, at the end of the section we highlight a novel one: the strategic manipulation of the migration shock by political parties to weaken the electoral base of contenders.

VI.1 Economic Concerns

Changes in voter's behavior in response to Venezuelan migration could be explained by the effects that migrants have on the economic outcomes in hosting economies. We focus on studying the effects of Venezuelan migration on labor markets, arguably the most obvious economic reason why voter's may react to migration inflows, and definitely the one that the literature has mostly focused on.¹⁴

For this purpose we employ the labor force surveys carried out, between 2014 and 2018, by the Colombian Statistics Agency (DANE, from its Spanish acronym).¹⁵ The labor force surveys correspond to monthly repeated cross sections that characterize individual socio-demographics as well as labor outcomes. The surveys are representative for 23 of the 32 departments of the country.¹⁶ Because of its representativeness, we use the survey to study the impacts of Venezuelan migration on labor markets using department-year variation. We restrict our sample to all individuals in the labor force (i.e., those who are working or actively looking for employment at the time surveyed) of ages 12 to 65 years old, and who are not house workers.¹⁷

We study the effects of Venezuelan migration on the logarithm of monthly wages and on the logarithm of hours worked inside the informal and formal sectors.¹⁸ We also study the impacts of migration on unemployment. We construct the unemployment rate dividing the number of individuals looking for a job over the entire labor force of the department. Our estimates include all the independent variables included in our main regression as described in equation 1, plus two

¹⁴As of today, there is a fierce academic debate on the effects of migration inflows in general on the labor markets of hosting economies. Relevant studies that explore the impacts of immigration on labor markets include [Borjas \(2003\)](#), [Card \(2005\)](#), [Ottaviano and Peri \(2012\)](#), [Dustmann et al. \(2016\)](#), [Foged and Peri \(2016\)](#), and [Dustmann et al. \(2017\)](#) for notable examples.

¹⁵We focus on this time period considering that, for those years, we can identify the Venezuelan migrants and exclude them from the sample, in order to identify the effects that the migration shock has on natives. This time period includes information before and after 2017, the year in which Colombia experienced the abrupt increase in Venezuelan migration inflows (see Figure).

¹⁶These correspond to the departments where the most populated cities of the country are located. The survey is also representative of the 13 main metropolitan areas of the country and of 11 secondary cities.

¹⁷Legal working age begins at 10 years in Colombian rural areas, whereas it is 12 years in urban areas. Our results are robust to using either threshold.

¹⁸In Colombia, a worker is consider an informal worker if he or she does not make contributions to the health system.

additions. First, we include individual-level covariates such as age, gender, years of education, and a head of household dummy variable. Second, we exploit the rolling nature of the household survey to include Year×Month fixed effects, which flexibly control for any aggregate shock that is common to all departments within the same year/month. Standard errors were clustered at the department and year level.

We present the results of these exercise in Table [IV](#). Our results suggest that a larger size of the Venezuelan migration shock is associated with a deterioration of the labor outcomes of Colombian workers. In particular, we find that a one-standard-deviation increase in the predicted cumulative migration shock is associated with a 1.3 percentage points increase in the unemployment rate (column 5). It is also associated with more hours worked and lower wages, both in the formal and in the informal sector. The estimates for wages are, however, not statistically significant. In terms of the magnitude, and given the log-linear nature of the specification, a one-standard-deviation increase in the predicted level of the Venezuelan migration shock is associated with an increase in the number of hours worked of 1.8 (1.2) percent in the formal (informal) sector. These effects are in line with other studies documenting the impacts of refugee inflows in countries with large informal sectors (see [Del Carpio and Wagner, 2015](#); [Cengiz and Tekguc, 2018](#), and [Altindag et al., 2018](#) for examples).

As a complementary analysis we also study whether the migration shock is associated with an institutional response in the form of a disproportionate targeting of public resources to support migrants, or with a larger tax collection as documented by [Chevalier et al. \(2018\)](#). We test these hypotheses by evaluating the effect of the predicted cumulative migration shock on municipal tax revenues, transfers from the central government, and municipal expenditures. All variables are evaluated in per capita terms. Our regressions replicate the specification described in equation [1](#), but replace the dependent variable with the logarithm of these three fiscal variables.

The results of this exercise are reported on Table [V](#). We find that a one-standard-deviation increase in the predicted cumulative migration shock is associated with an increment of 2.7 percent

in municipal tax revenues and to 4.4 percent higher transfers from the central government (see Table V). In turn, municipal expenditures do not change in response to the migration shock.

In sum, our results concerning the impacts of Venezuelan migration in the Colombian labor markets and the institutional response of the government –as manifest in the fiscal outcomes– largely support the idea that economic concerns may be driving the political effects caused by the large inflows of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia.

VI.2 Cultural Bias

A second mechanism that has been extensively discussed in the empirical literature on the electoral effects of migration is that voters may dislike Venezuelan migrants for reasons other than the economic effects of their arrival in large numbers. Specifically, cultural differences associated with race, religion, language or social norms may exacerbate xenophobia among local communities or at least an in-group vs. out-group sentiment. In turn, this may affect voting behavior, especially in the presence of pro- and anti-migration parties, a difference that is largely associated to the left-right ideological divide (Budge et al., 2001).

A formal test of this mechanism is difficult since Colombia lacks perception surveys covering our sample period that contain information for enough municipalities.¹⁹ We argue, however, that this explanation is not likely a main driver of the effects we observe for two reasons. First and foremost, right-wing ideologies in Colombia are not typically anti-immigrant as is commonly seen in other countries. For instance, the current right-wing Colombian president has offered the largest amnesty to undocumented Venezuelan refugees seen in the modern history. These policies were actually initiated by president Juan Manuel Santos, the center-right-wing predecessor of the current office holder. Second, Colombian and Venezuelan individuals are culturally very similar, they speak the same language and share a common historical past. In fact, both countries were part

¹⁹*Latinobarometer* surveys about 1,200 individuals in Colombia in 20 of the 33 departments—the second administrative level, equivalent to U.S. states—with department samples ranging from 20 to 100 individuals (and 205 in Bogota). This provides neither representatives nor the ability to directly test the effect of migration shocks on the perceptions of local communities.

of La Gran Colombia up until 1831.

VI.3 Electoral Manipulation

Yet another potential explanation behind our results, that to the best of our knowledge has not been explored in the academic literature of the electoral effects of forced migration, is what we call the *electoral manipulation* hypothesis. It suggests that political parties may demonize electoral contenders by portraying them as associated with the political regime in the migrants' place of origin. This is essentially a strategy to create fear among voters regarding the consequences of voting for a specific party. In our specific context, right-wing parties in Colombia are known to manipulate the salience of the Venezuelan migration (which is very visible on a day by day basis due to its unprecedented magnitude) in order to equate left-wing rivals with the Bolivarian Venezuelan regime of Chavez and Maduro.

For example, during the last presidential elections in Colombia (2018) the main right-wing political coalition pushed forward the theory that voting for the left was equivalent to transforming Colombia into another Venezuela (see [El Espectador, 2018](#); [BBC, 2018](#); or [El País, 2018](#) for media evidence). For instance, billboards were posted throughout the country with messages such as: “*Vote para que Colombia no sea otra Venezuela*” [Vote so Colombia will not become another Venezuela] (see [BBC, 2018](#)) or “*No quiero vivir como Venezolano*” [I do not want to live like a Venezuelan] (see [Letras Libres, 2018](#)). The messages would include the name of the right-wing presidential candidate as a way of offering a way out the highlighted threat. Ultimately, the right-wing party won the election.

Beyond the large body of anecdotal evidence, we offer an informal test of this hypothesis. In particular, we posit that the right-wing anti-left propaganda is more likely to influence the behavior of voters in areas that have previously experienced the potentially damaging effects of the radicalization of the left. We evaluate this idea by testing whether our effects regarding the ideological re-composition of votes are larger in municipalities that experienced the internal armed conflict

prior to the start of the Venezuelan migration.²⁰

We thus create a dummy variable for the incidence of the internal conflict in 1993 (before the beginning of our period of analysis) and explore the potential heterogeneous political effect of the predicted cumulative Venezuelan migration shock in such areas. The results largely support our hypothesis. In particular, municipalities with past exposure to the conflict react disproportionately to the Venezuelan migration shock by increasing electoral turnout as well as by shifting votes from left to right-wing political parties (see Table VI).

These results are robust across the two rounds of presidential elections, and to a lesser extent in local mayoral elections. Also, their magnitude is substantial. While a one-standard-deviation increase in the Venezuelan migration shock increases turnout in the first (second) round presidential election in 1.4 (1.6) percentage points in non-conflict affected municipalities, in conflict areas the turnout response to a shock of the same size is of 2.2 (2.4) percentage points. In mayoral elections the response to a similar migration wave is 1.5 percentage points in non-conflict areas and 2.5 in conflict ones (column 1). As in the baseline case presented on Table III, the ideological re-composition of votes is much more salient in presidential elections than in mayoral ones. In response to a migration shock of a one-standard-deviation size, left-wing parties experience a 1 (1.7) percentage point decrease in non-conflict municipalities in the first (second) round presidential elections, but a 1.3 (2.1) percentage point decrease in conflict-affected areas (column 2). These votes seem to largely transfer to the right (column 4), whereas the vote-share of ‘center’ parties remains largely unaltered (column 3).

Appendix C shows that, consistent with our indirect test of the novel mechanism, these heterogeneous effects are driven specifically by the violent activity of the radical left. To that end, we interact our predicted measure of the migration shock with a dummy that equals one if a mu-

²⁰Colombia’s internal armed conflict originated with the formation of the left-wing guerrilla organizations FARC and ELN in the mid-1960s. The conflict was a Cold War proxy war until the end of the 1980s. Yet, it escalated during the 1990s, fueled by the involvement of the guerrillas in illegal drug trafficking and the consolidation of right-wing paramilitary groups, who effectively became a third force in the conflict when splintered paramilitary armies colluded under an umbrella organization (the AUC). The escalation of the conflict was the main driver of the internal forced displacement witnessed in Colombia in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. See [Engel and Ibáñez, 2007](#); [Dube and Vargas, 2013](#); [Rozo, 2018](#) for detailed descriptions of the Colombian conflict.

nicipality was highly affected violence perpetrated by FARC (i.e. in the 90th percentile of attacks perpetrated by this illegal armed group) in 1993, prior to our sample period. FARC is the largest left-wing insurgent group active in Colombia since the mid 1960s and during most of our sample period. Table B.1. shows that the increase in the vote share of right-wing parties following the Venezuelan migration shock is substantially larger in the areas that were most affected by violence perpetrated by the radical left in the past.²¹

As an additional suggestive piece of evidence, existing country-wide perception surveys support the validity of the electoral manipulation hypotheses. For instance, a survey carried out to 1,200 individuals representative of 96% of Colombian voters every two months between September of 2017 and November of 2018 in 57 municipalities including the 14 most populated Colombian cities, suggests that roughly 50% of voters thought Colombia could repeat Venezuelan history and 45% of voters disagree with the statement that Colombia should host Venezuelan migrants (See Figure VIII).²²

VII Discussion

We explore the political effect of the recent unprecedentedly large exodus of Venezuelan forced migrants in Colombia. We document two main findings. First, larger migration inflows are associated with an increase in political participation and a re-composition of votes from left to right-wing oriented political ideologies. Second, the political effects of Venezuelan forced migration can be potentially explained by electoral manipulation, in addition to standard economic concerns regarding the effects of migrants in hosting communities.

The context of our analysis is a hosting developing country with limited resources and forced migration inflows of people with a very similar cultural background. Our results contrast to pre-

²¹Although the point estimates for the share of votes for left-wing parties is negative it, is no longer significant at conventional levels.

²²The surveys were carried out by *Invamer S.A.S. Gallup* and were funded by three large news outlets including *Caracol Televisión, Semana*, and *Blu* radio. See [Invamer \(2018\)](#).

vious evidence for developed countries where hosting economies were buoyant, migrants had a negligible/positive economic impacts, and cultural distancing or out-group threats account for majority of the the political effects of migration inflows (see [Tabellini, 2020](#) and [Dustmann et al., 2019](#) for recent examples).

Although we find similar political effects of forced migration as the ones documented for the case of developed countries, our results shed light on the fact that the mechanisms driving such effects are context dependent. In particular, we present evidence of a mechanism not explored before which consists on the idea that migration itself can be used to demonize certain political agendas.

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VIII Tables

Table (I) Descriptive Statistics

	Year	Obs.	Average	St. Deviation
Panel A. Presidential Elections First Round 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018				
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	1994-2018	5,779	66.24	233.47
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows (Standardized)	1994-2018	5,779	0.005	1.015
Population (by municipality)	1994-2018	5,779	48,860.32	275,506.40
Population 18+ (by municipality)	1994-2018	5,779	31,546.65	190,108.90
Total Votes	1994-2018	5,779	14,086.34	93,244.20
Votes for Left	1994-2018	5,779	1,913.34	18,984.77
Votes for Center	1994-2018	5,779	6,451.59	45,637.16
Votes for Right	1994-2018	5,779	4,987.51	36,376.75
Share of Total Votes (% Pop. 18+)	1994-2018	5,779	0.47	0.17
Share of Votes for Left	1994-2018	5,779	0.10	0.13
Share of Votes for Center	1994-2018	5,779	0.50	0.32
Share of Votes for Right	1994-2018	5,779	0.34	0.27
Panel B. Presidential Elections Second Round 1994, 1998, 2010, 2014, and 2018				
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	1994-2018	4,126	88.55	272.54
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows (Standardized)	1994-2018	4,126	0.005	1.015
Population (by municipality)	1994-2018	4,126	49,378.37	279,023.40
Population 18+ (by municipality)	1994-2018	4,126	32,160.50	194,279.30
Total Votes	1994-2018	4,126	15,421.55	95,349.51
Votes for Left	1994-2018	4,126	1,818.66	31,224.91
Votes for Center	1994-2018	4,126	6,940.23	47,393.92
Votes for Right	1994-2018	4,126	5,859.15	41,527.14
Share of Total Votes	1994-2018	4,126	0.53	0.17
Share of Votes for Left	1994-2018	4,126	0.07	0.16
Share of Votes for Center	1994-2018	4,126	0.52	0.41
Share of Votes for Right	1994-2018	4,126	0.37	0.34
Panel C. Mayoral Elections 1997, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015				
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	1997-2015	4,693	42.33	133.59
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows (Standardized)	1997-2015	4,693	0.004	1.014
Population (by municipality)	1997-2015	4,693	49,884.57	280,593.40
Population 18+ (by municipality)	1997-2015	4,693	32,057.70	192,075.30
Total Votes	1997-2015	4,693	16,515.94	80,530.95
Votes for Left	1997-2015	4,693	1,406.19	22,631.63
Votes for Center	1997-2015	4,693	10,097.30	45,223.70
Votes for Right	1997-2015	4,693	1,932.06	8,616.02
Share of Total Votes (% Pop. 18+)	1997-2015	4,693	0.67	0.20
Share of Votes for Left	1997-2015	4,693	0.04	0.12
Share of Votes for Center	1997-2015	4,693	0.70	0.26
Share of Votes for Right	1997-2015	4,693	0.13	0.20

Table (II) Descriptive Statistics - Control Variables

Variable	Year	Obs.	Average	Standard Deviation
Hectares of Coca Crops	1999	1,124	142.46	960.24
N. of Terrorist Attacks	1993	1,124	0.66	2.63
Homicide Rate (per 100,000 Indv.)	1995	1,048	52.92	66.89
Municipal Tax Income (Millions)	1995	1,098	1,033	16,066
Mun. Public Expenditure (Thousands)	1995	1,098	2,909	28,866
Central Gov.Transfers (Millions)	1995	1,098	1,168	5,348
Number of Financial Institutions	1995	1,046	1.75	8.92
Number of Tax Collection Offices	1995	1,046	36.05	182.37
Per capita GDP (Millions)	2005	1,097	6.38	6.63
Night Light Density	1995	1,048	3.97	7.47
GINI	1993	1,043	0.46	0.04
Unsatisfied Basic Needs (UBN, % Households)	1993	1,035	52.98	19.21
Subsidized Health System Cov. (%Pop.with UBN)	1998	1,136	0.72	0.41
Informal Labor* (% Household)	2005	1,114	0.95	0.06

Notes: *Informal Labor is a dummy variable equal to one if less than 100% of the economically active population within a household does not contribute to the pension system.

Table (III) Effects of Venezuelan Migration on Presidential and Mayoral Elections

Dependent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Panel A. Presidential Elections (First Round)								
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.007** (0.004)	0.011*** (0.004)	-0.009*** (0.002)	-0.009*** (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.008*** (0.003)
Adj. R-squared	0.827	0.840	0.747	0.768	0.922	0.930	0.892	0.906
Observations	5,779	5,779	5,779	5,779	5,779	5,779	5,779	5,779
Panel B. Presidential Elections (Second Round)								
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.009** (0.004)	0.013*** (0.005)	-0.017*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.018*** (0.003)	0.016*** (0.003)
Adj. R-squared	0.822	0.835	0.898	0.915	0.970	0.974	0.960	0.966
Observations	4,126	4,126	4,126	4,126	4,126	4,126	4,126	4,126
Panel C. Mayoral Elections								
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.011** (0.005)	0.011** (0.005)	-0.006*** (0.002)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.005 (0.006)	0.002 (0.007)	0.013** (0.005)	0.009 (0.006)
Adj. R-squared	0.791	0.797	0.422	0.437	0.420	0.441	0.469	0.484
Observations	4,693	4,693	4,693	4,693	4,693	4,693	4,693	4,693
Controls (all panels)								
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year × Department FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conflict and Violence × Year FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Government Finance × Year FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Institutions × Year FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Growth × Year FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Poverty and Inequality × Year FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Labor Market × Year FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: Clustered standard errors at the municipality level are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table (IV) Effects of Venezuelan Migration on Labor Outcomes

Dependent Variables * in logs	Hours Worked* Formal Sector (1)	Wages* (2)	Hours Worked* Informal Sector (3)	Wages* Informal Sector (4)	Unemployed All Labor Force (5)
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.018*** (0.004)	-0.012 (0.012)	0.012* (0.007)	-0.016 (0.016)	0.013*** (0.002)
Adj. R-squared	0.063	0.067	0.014	0.034	0.042
Observations	786,110	786,110	543,730	543,730	1,648,520
Controls (all panels)					
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year - Monthly FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year × Department FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conflict and Violence × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Government Finance × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Institutions × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Growth × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Poverty and Inequality × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Labor Market × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Clustered standard errors at the municipality level are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table (V) Effects of Venezuelan Migration on Fiscal Burden

Dependent variables in logs	Municipal Tax Income Per Capita	Government Transfers Per Capita	Expenditures Per Capita
	(2)	(3)	(3)
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.027* (0.014)	0.044*** (0.007)	0.002 (0.007)
Adj. R-squared	0.957	0.702	0.959
Observations	19,797	19,395	19,849
Controls (all panels)			
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year × Department FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conflict and Violence × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Government Finance × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Institutions × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Growth × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Poverty and Inequality × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Labor Market × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

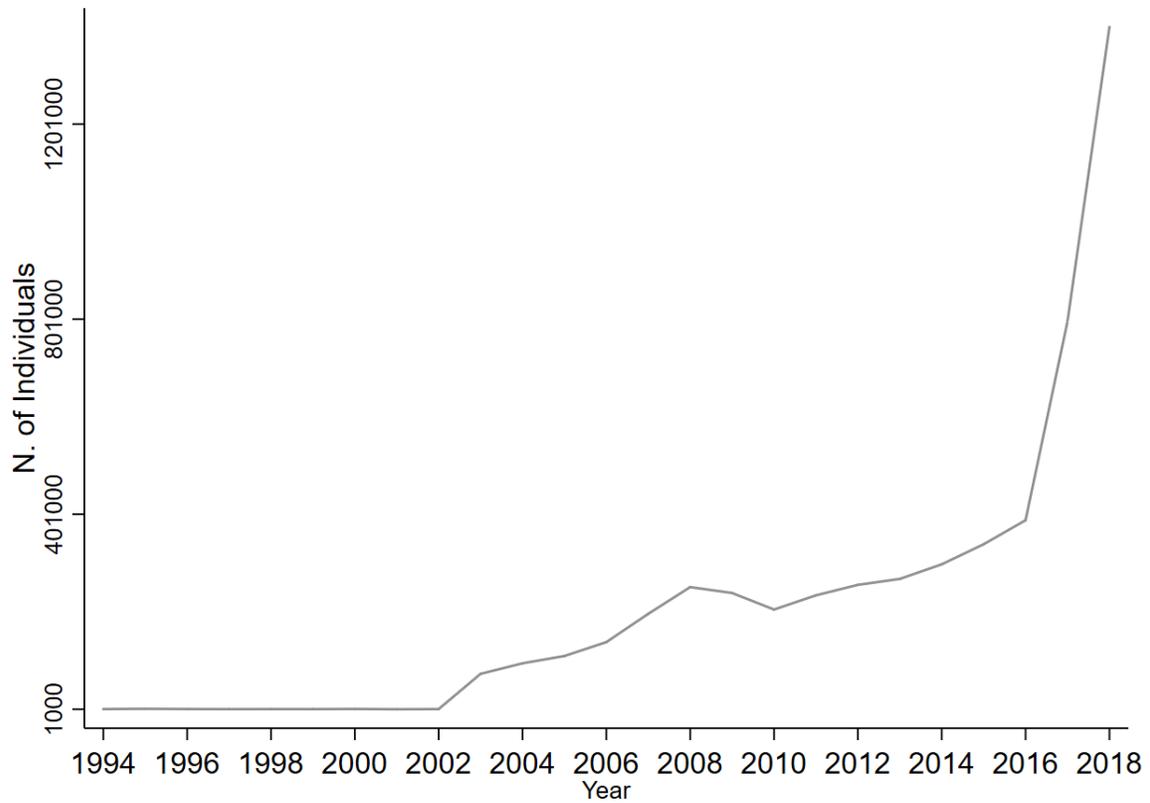
Notes: Clustered standard errors at the municipality level are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table (VI) Heterogeneous Effects of Venezuelan Migration in Municipalities with Past Armed Conflict

Dependent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Share of Total Votes	Share of Votes for Left	Share of Votes for Center	Share of Votes for Right
Panel A. Presidential Elections (First Round)				
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.014*** (0.004)	-0.010*** (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	0.011*** (0.003)
Pred. Venezuelan Inflows × I (Presence of Armed Groups)	0.008*** (0.003)	-0.003** (0.001)	-0.004** (0.001)	0.007*** (0.002)
Observations	5,772	5,772	5,772	5,772
Panel B. Presidential Elections (Second Round)				
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.016*** (0.005)	-0.017*** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.017*** (0.003)
Pred. Venezuelan Inflows × I (Presence of Armed Groups)	0.008** (0.003)	-0.004** (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)	0.004* (0.002)
Observations	4,126	4,126	4,126	4,126
Panel C. Mayoral Elections				
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.015*** (0.005)	-0.006* (0.003)	0.001 (0.008)	0.009 (0.006)
Pred. Venezuelan Inflows × I (Presence of Armed Groups)	0.010*** (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.006)	-0.000 (0.005)
Observations	4,693	4,693	4,693	4,693
Controls (all panels)				
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year × Department FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

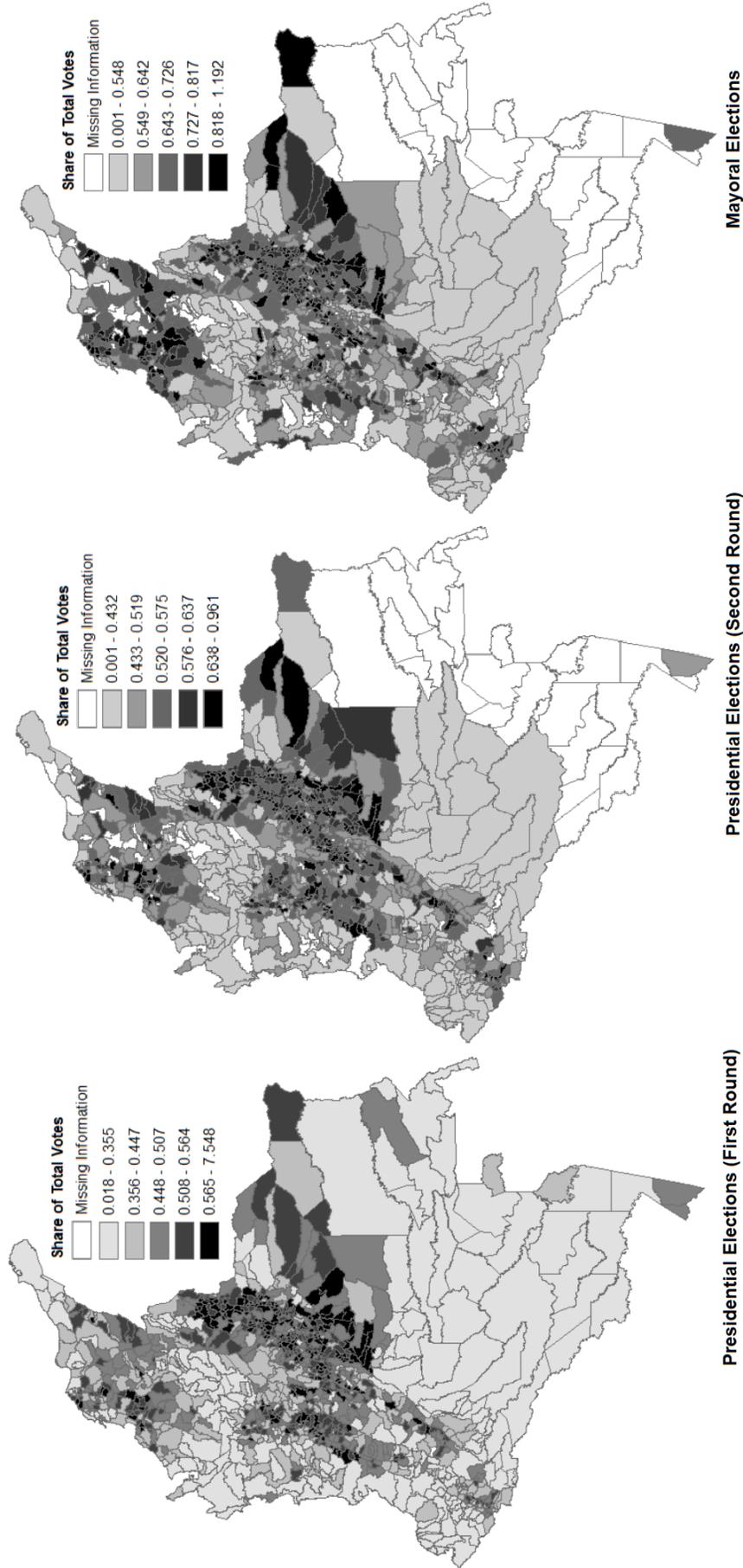
Notes: Clustered standard errors at the municipality level are reported in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p< 0.05, * p< 0.1.

Figure (I) Annual Venezuelan Inflows in Colombia



Notes: Venezuelan migration between 1994 and 2002 was estimated with information available from the population censuses of 1993 and 2005. The data available from 2003 to 2018 come from the official statistics of migration produced by the Colombian Statistics Department and *Migración Colombia*, it includes transitory migration.

Figure (II) Mean Share of Total Votes (% of Population 18+ years)



Notes: For the mayoral elections a few municipalities show share of votes larger than 1 as there have been cases of voter fraud.

Figure (III) Average Share of Vote for Left-, Center-, and Right-Wing Political Ideologies (Presidential Elections First-Round)

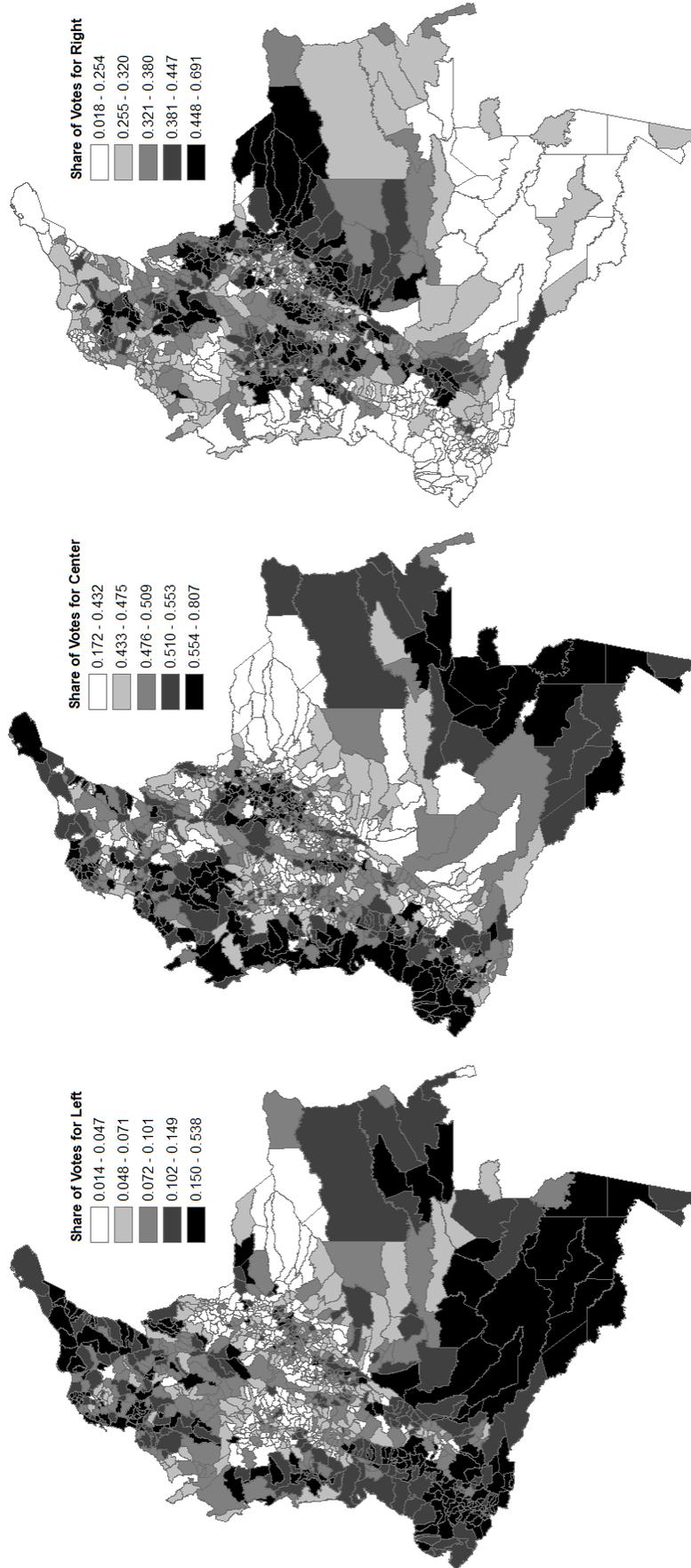


Figure (IV) Mean Share of Vote for Left-, Center-, and Right-Wing Political Ideologies (Presidential Elections Second-Round)

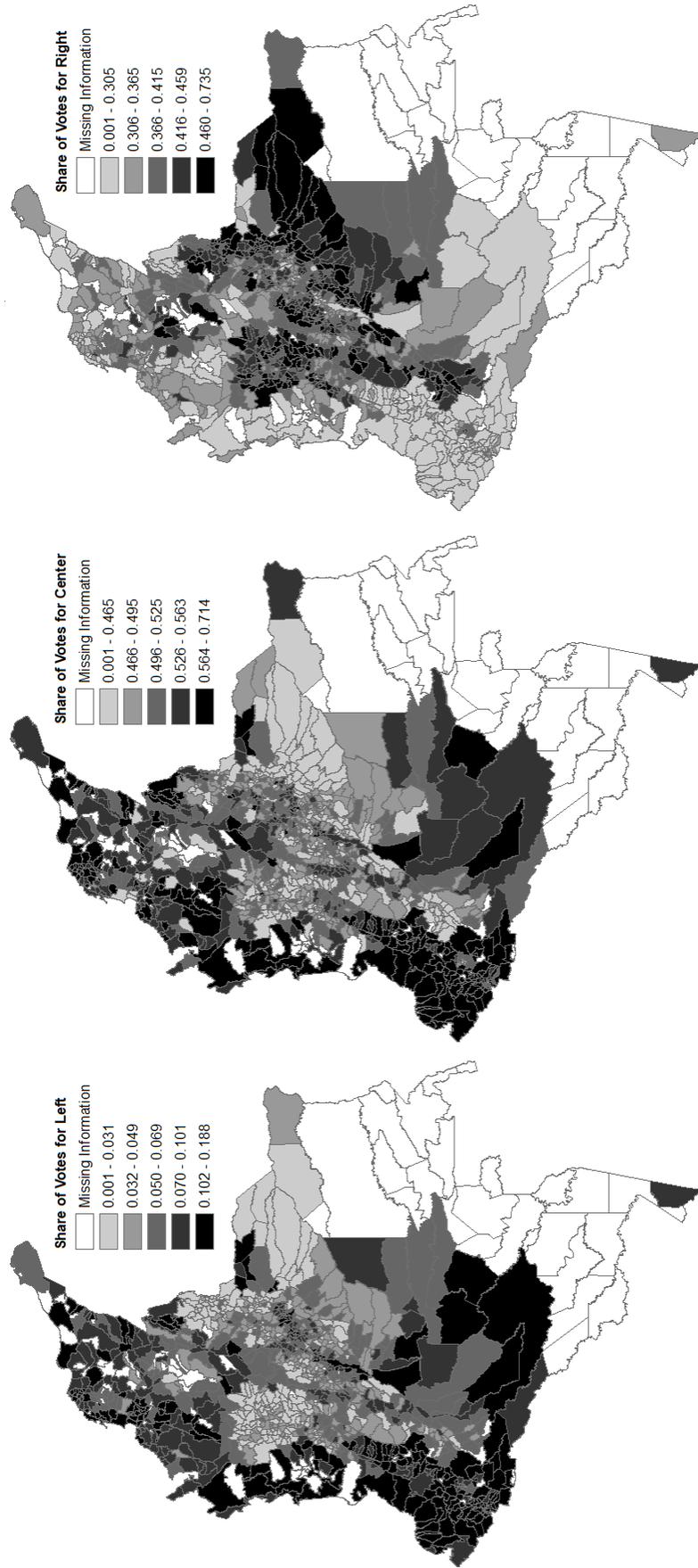


Figure (V) Average Share of Vote for Left-, Center-, and Right-Wing Political Ideologies (Mayoral Elections)

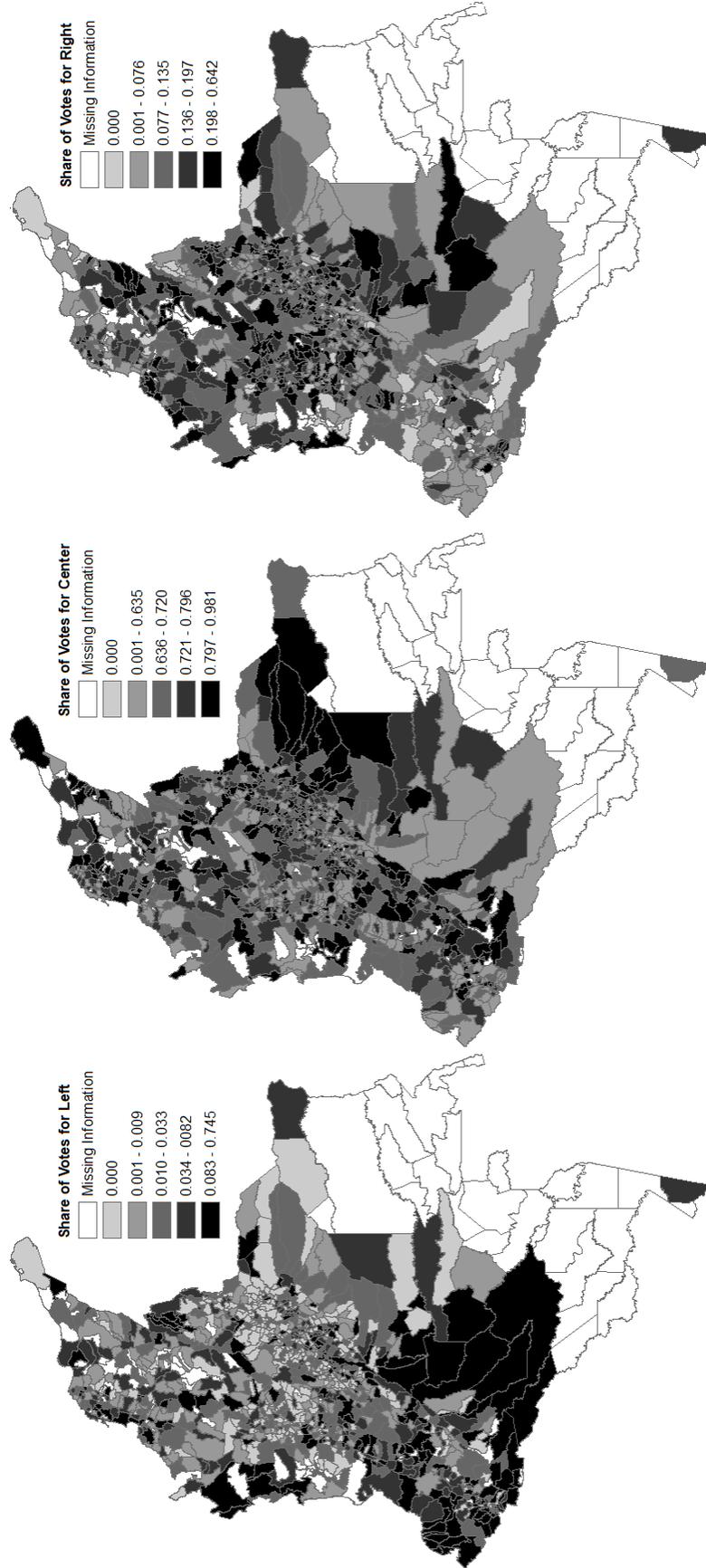
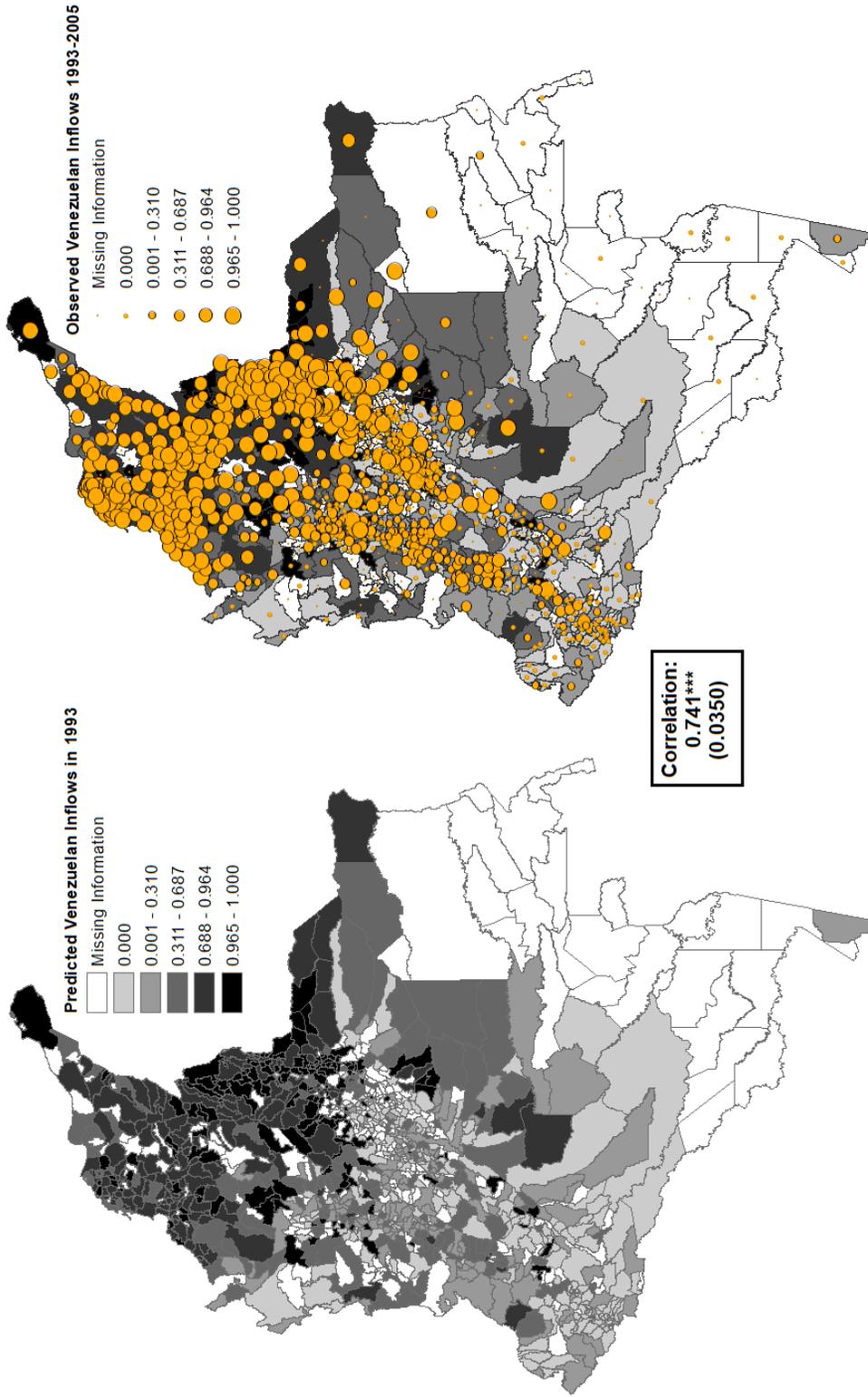
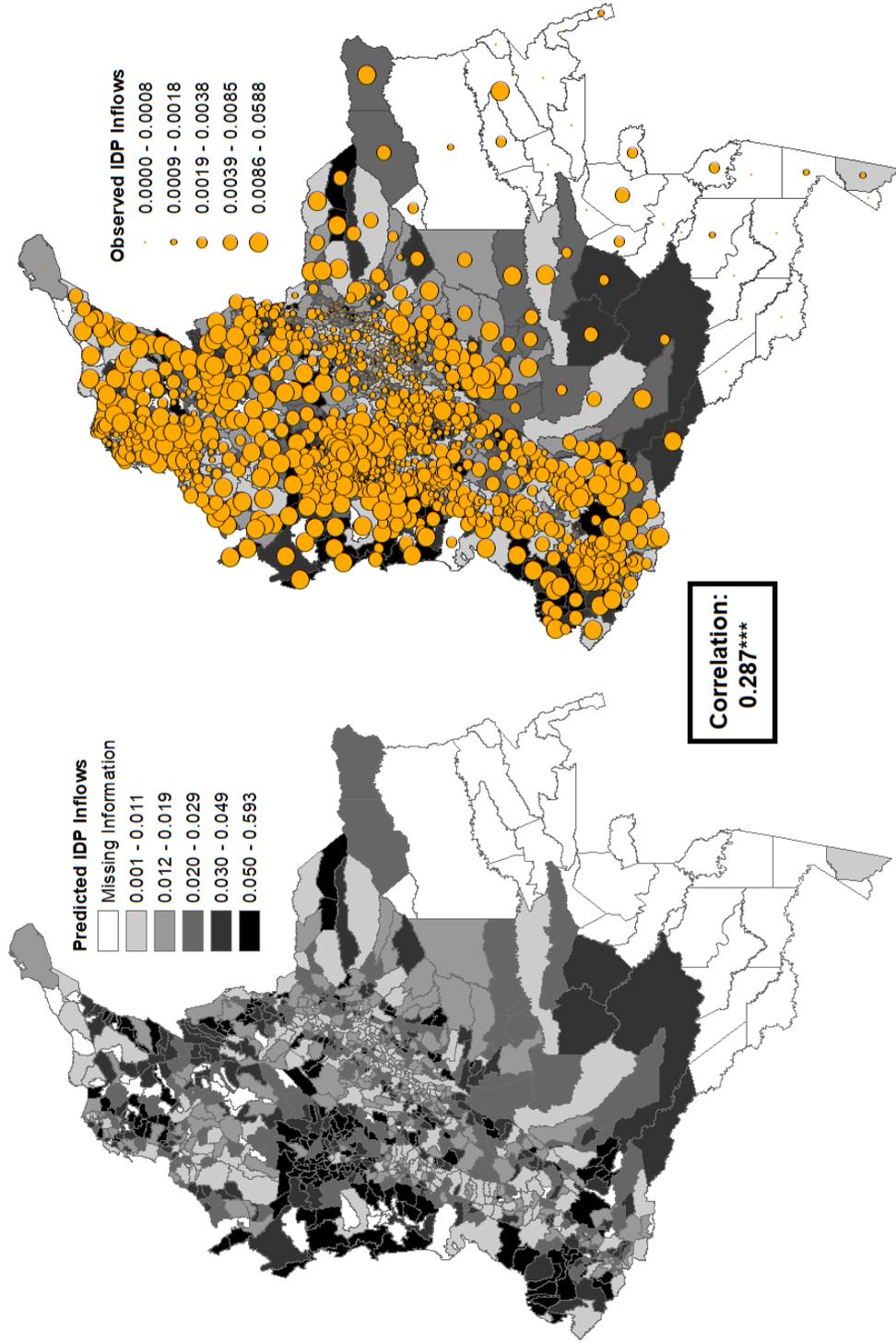


Figure (VI) Predicted Venezuelan Inflows in 1993 and Aggregate Venezuelan Inflows between 1993 and 2005



Notes: Municipalities with missing information were created after 1993. The maps were constructed using information from the populations censuses of 1993 and 2005. *Predicted Venezuelan Inflows in 1993* and *Venezuelan Inflows between 1993 and 2005* were constructed using the following formulas:
 Predicted Venezuelan Inflows 1993 = [Venezuelans in 1993_m/Population Bormed Abroad in 1993_m]
 Venezuelan Inflows between 1993-2005 = [Aggregate Venezuelan Inflows 1993-2005_m/Population Bormed Abroad between 1993-2005_m]

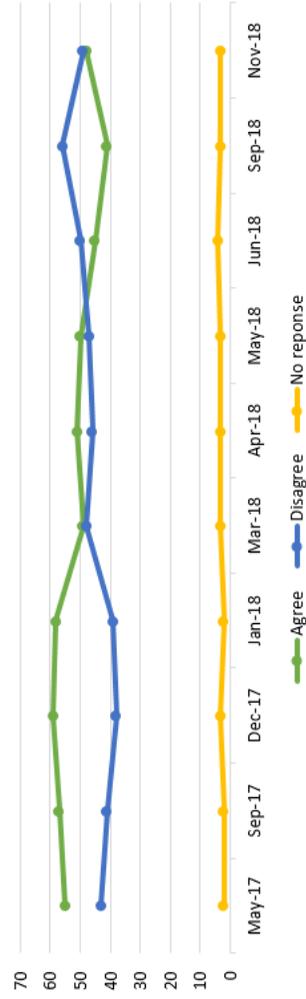
Figure (VII) Predicted and Observed Inflows between 1993 and 2018 (Mean Values)



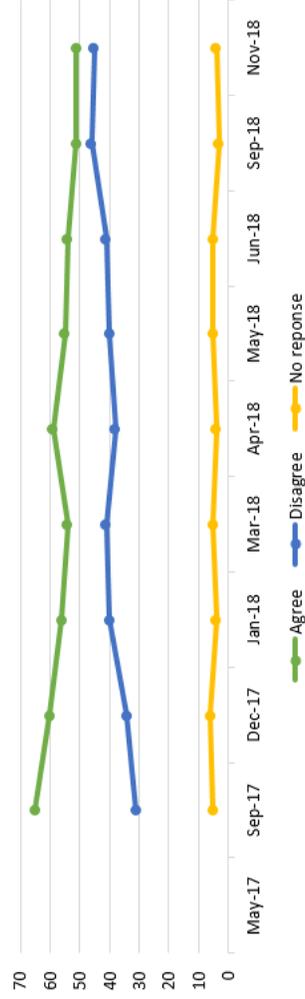
Notes: Municipalities with missing information were created after 1993.

Figure (VIII) Voters Perceptions towards Venezuelan Migration

Colombia might be in the same situation as Venezuela in the near future (% of respondents)



Colombia should host Venezuelan migrants (% of respondents)



Appendix A: Political Elections Data Base Construction

We constructed three data bases two for presidential and one mayor elections. The databases were constructed with original data from the *Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil*, the Colombian electoral authority. We begin all data bases after 1994, since after this year the electoral data has information on the total votes received for all candidates.

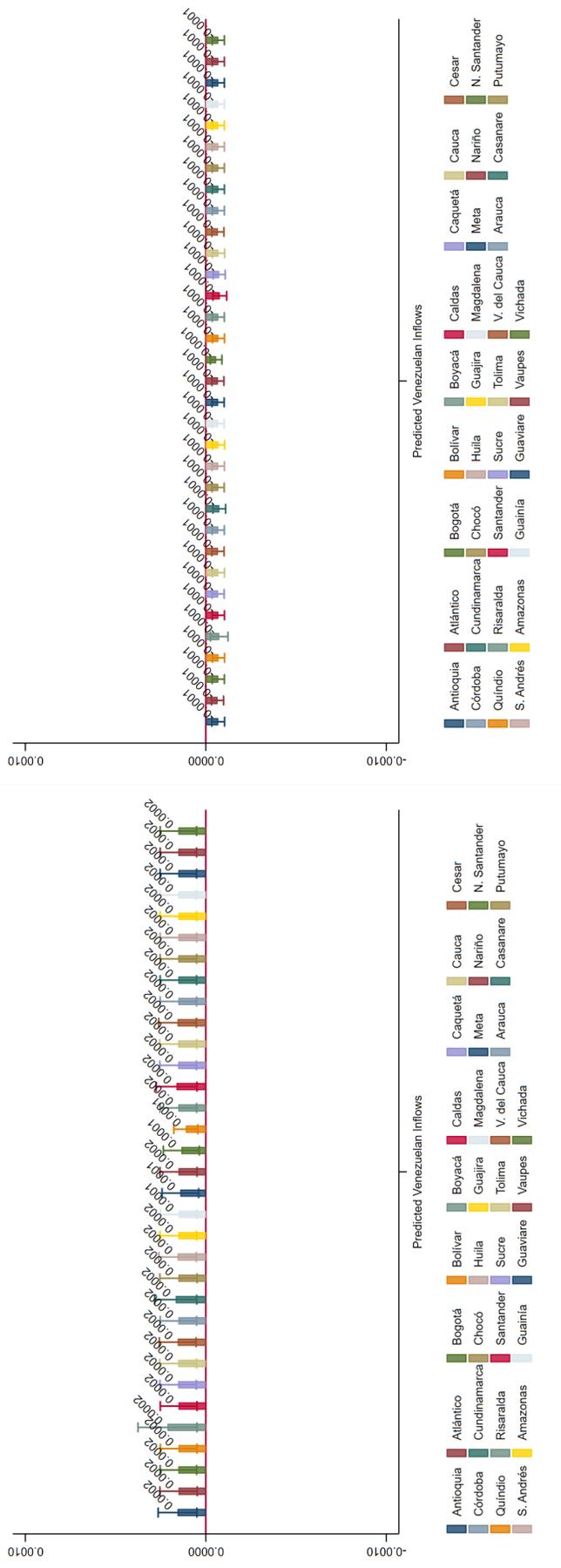
To begin we identify the political party of each candidate for mayor or presidential elections and then classify it in left, center, or right following the methodology proposed by [Fergusson et al. \(2020\)](#). The classification for each political party includes three steps.

1. Check party names, mottos, and slogans for words that identify the mayor's/president'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.

Appendix B: Excluding Each of the 32 Departments from the Sample

Figure (B.1) Presidential Elections (First-Round)

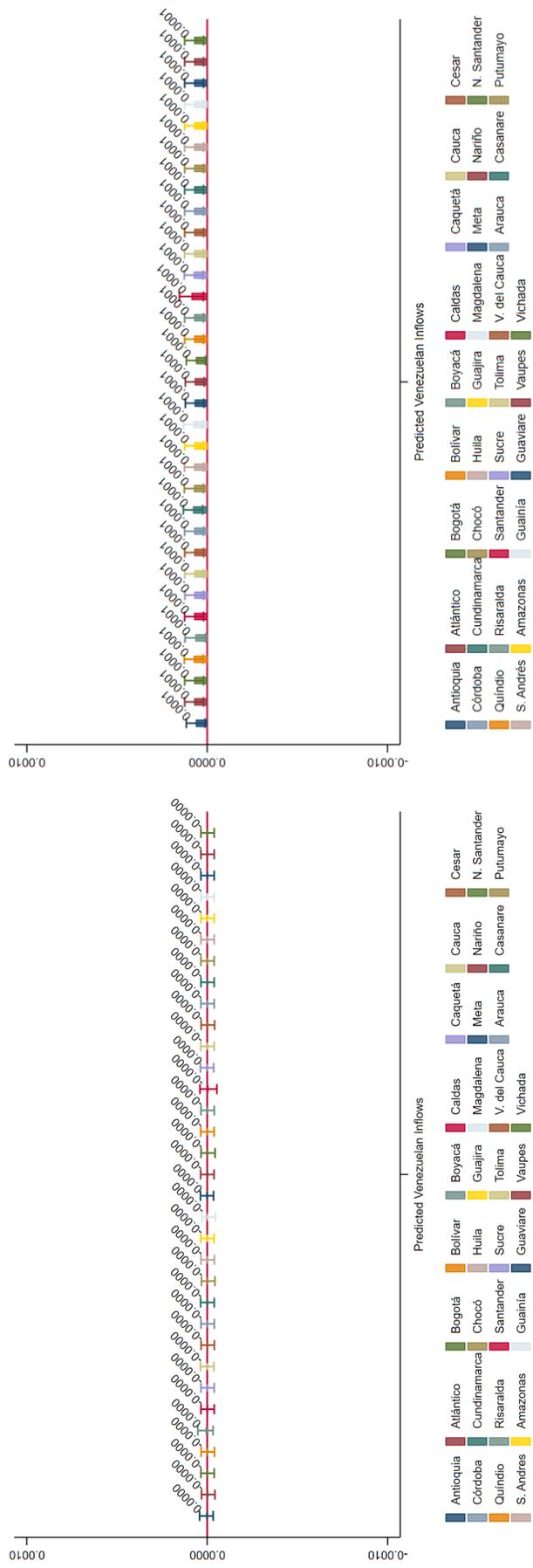


(a) Share of Total Votes

(b) Share of Votes for Left

Notes: The numbers correspond to the estimated coefficient of a reduced form regression on the predicted Venezuelan inflows including all the controls listed on Table II (which comprise also interactions of election-year dummies with the static variables). Standard errors were clustered at the municipality level. The bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Presidential Elections (First-Round)

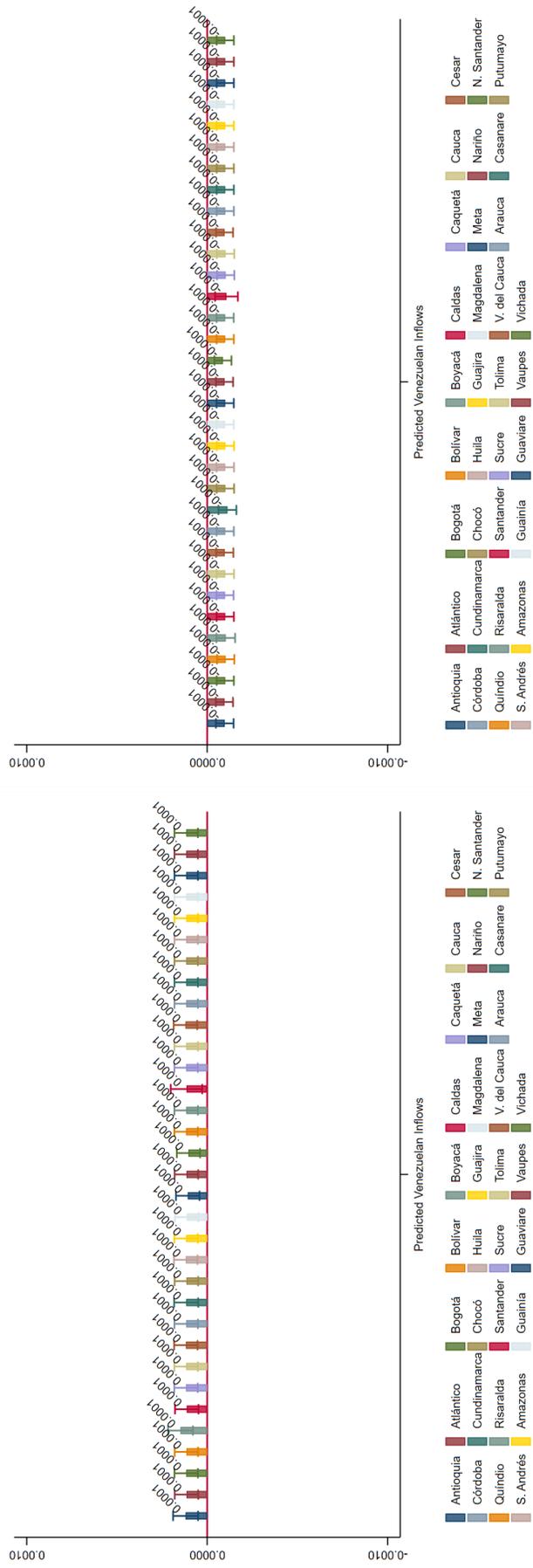


(a) Share of Votes for Center

(b) Share of Votes for Right

Notes: The numbers correspond to the estimated coefficient of a reduced form regression of each electoral outcome on the predicted Venezuelan inflows including all the controls listed on Table II (which comprise also interactions of election-year dummies with the static variables). Standard errors were clustered at the municipality level. The bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure (B.3) Presidential Elections (Second-Round)

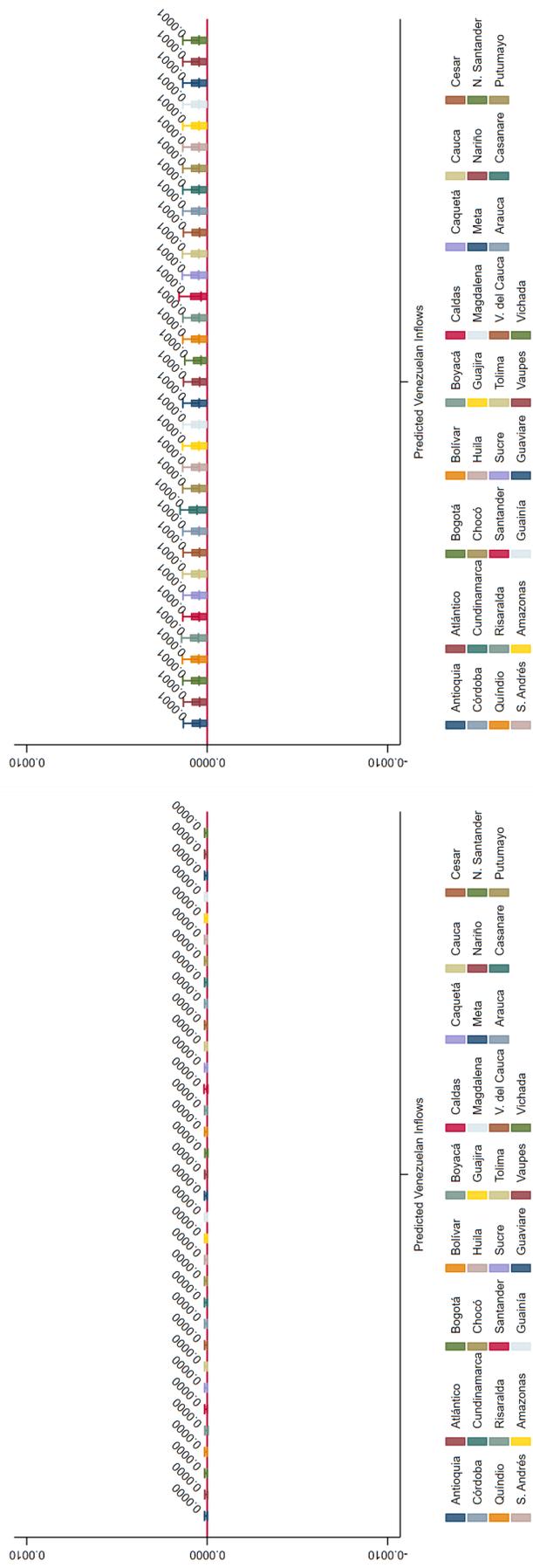


(a) Share of Total Votes

(b) Share of Votes for Left

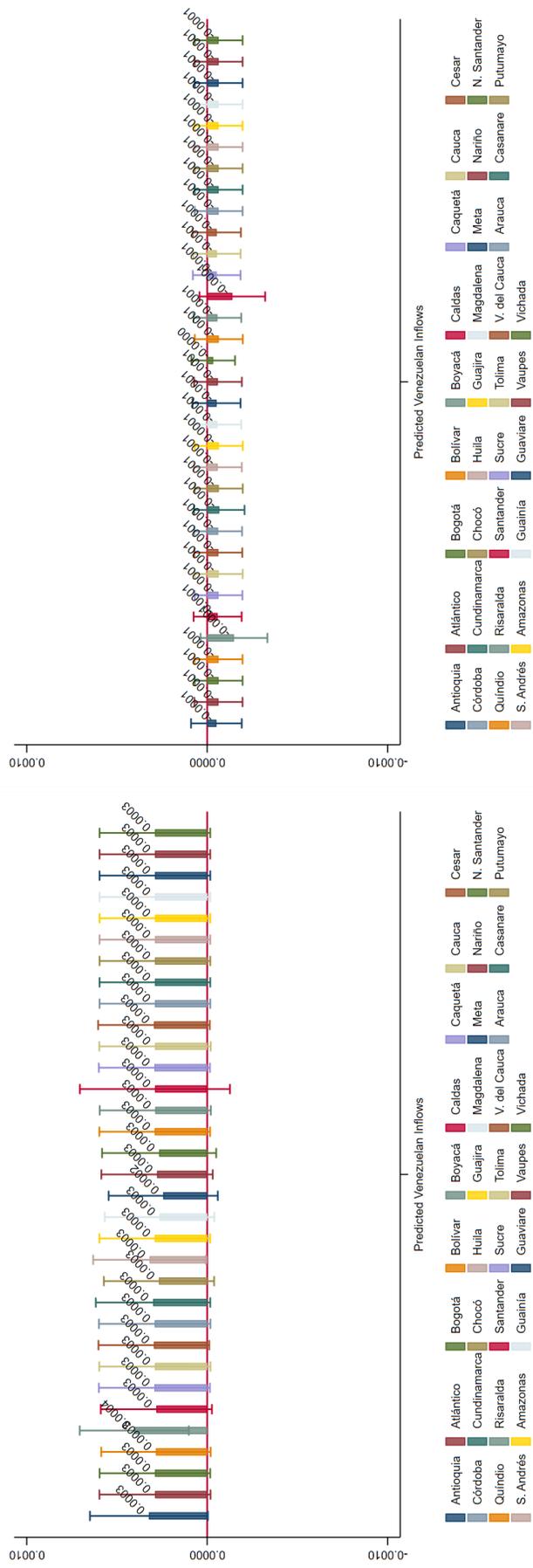
Notes: The numbers correspond to the estimated coefficient of a reduced form regression of each electoral outcome on the predicted Venezuelan inflows including all the controls listed on Table II (which comprise also interactions of election-year dummies with the static variables). Standard errors were clustered at the municipality level. The bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Presidential Elections (Second-Round)



Notes: The numbers correspond to the estimated coefficient of a reduced form regression of each electoral outcome on the predicted Venezuelan inflows including all the controls listed on Table II (which comprise also interactions of election-year dummies with the static variables). Standard errors were clustered at the municipality level. The bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure (B.5) Mayoral Elections

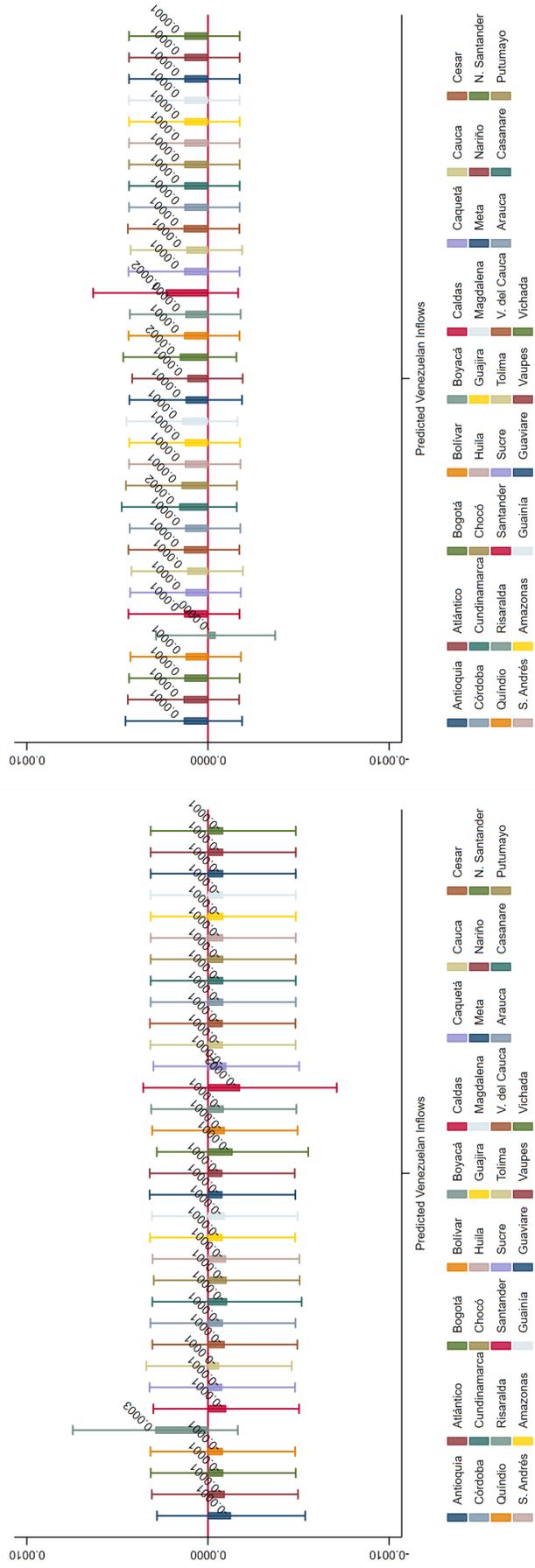


(a) Share of Total Votes

(b) Share of Votes for Left

Notes: The numbers correspond to the estimated coefficient of a reduced form regression of each electoral outcome on the predicted Venezuelan inflows including all the controls listed on Table II (which comprise also interactions of election-year dummies with the static variables). Standard errors were clustered at the municipality level. The bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Mayoral Elections



(a) Share of Votes for Center

(b) Share of Votes for Right

Notes: The numbers correspond to the estimated coefficient of a reduced form regression of each electoral outcome on the predicted Venezuelan inflows including all the controls listed on Table II (which comprise also interactions of election-year dummies with the static variables). Standard errors were clustered at the municipality level. The bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Appendix C: Heterogeneous Effects of FARC Attacks

Table (B.1) Effects of Venezuelan Migration in Municipalities with Intense FARC attacks in 1993

Dependent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A. Presidential Elections (First Round)				
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows (Baseline)	0.011*** (0.004)	-0.009*** (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.008*** (0.003)
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.008** (0.004)	-0.008*** (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	0.006*** (0.003)
Pred. Venezuelan Inflows \times I (90th percentile FARC attacks in 1993)	0.020*** (0.008)	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.007* (0.004)	0.015*** (0.004)
Observations	5,772	5,772	5,772	5,772
Panel B. Presidential Elections (Second Round)				
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows (Baseline)	0.013*** (0.005)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.016*** (0.003)
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.011** (0.005)	-0.014*** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.015*** (0.003)
Pred. Venezuelan Inflows \times I (90th percentile FARC attacks in 1993)	0.019*** (0.009)	-0.006 (0.004)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.008* (0.005)
Observations	4,126	4,126	4,126	4,126
Panel C. Mayoral Elections				
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows (Baseline)	0.011** (0.005)	-0.007** (0.003)	0.002 (0.007)	0.009 (0.006)
Predicted Venezuelan Inflows	0.008 (0.005)	-0.007** (0.003)	0.005 (0.007)	0.007 (0.006)
Pred. Venezuelan Inflows \times I (90th percentile FARC attacks in 1993)	0.028*** (0.010)	0.006 (0.006)	-0.032*** (0.013)	0.017* (0.010)
Observations	4,693	4,693	4,693	4,693
Controls (all panels)				
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year \times Department FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Clustered standard errors at the municipality level are reported in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.