

# Migration as Municipal Management: The Political Effects of Venezuelan Migration in Colombia

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## Abstract

How does migrant reception affect local political dynamics in Latin America? Using a difference-in-differences strategy, I examine the effects of receiving Venezuelan migrants on local candidate incentives in 820 municipalities in Colombia. I find that shock of location on a migrant route leads to an increase in party fragmentation. To explore the mechanisms, I conduct text analysis on political platforms of mayoral candidates and draw on over 100 interviews with candidates, government officials, and host citizens. The analysis reveals that party fragmentation results from citizen dissatisfaction with the perceived effects of unincorporated migrants on local services and public order. This paper makes two contributions: it argues that quality and availability of city services, and not exclusively anti-migrant attitudes, is salient in settings with resource scarcity, and that migrant reception can create alternative political opportunities beyond gains for right-wing ideologies in contexts without strong parties.

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# 1 Introduction

Migration is reshaping the political terrain all over the world. Numerous studies have established the link between migrant arrivals and the rise of right and far-right parties in the US and Europe (Otto and Steinhardt 2014; Halla, Wagner, and Zweimüller 2017; Edo et al. 2019; Harmon 2018; Roupakias and Chletsos 2020; Kaufmann 2017). Underpinning these political shifts are the alignment of citizens' cultural anxieties, aggravated by migration, with the ethno-nationalist programs offered by right-wing ideologies (Gidron and Hall 2017; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Oesch 2008). Yet, in some of the top migrant-receiving countries in Latin America and others in the Global South, there are high levels of discontent with the effects of migration without the emergence of a strong anti-migration right party.<sup>1</sup> In this paper, I ask how does South-South migration affect local political dynamics in host towns and cities?

I propose that key structural factors related to the welfare state and political institutions in Latin American countries create different shifts in political opportunities in response to migration. Countries in Latin America often feature weak party systems and have varied public service provision. In addition, migrants are often more culturally proximate to their hosts. In these settings, I argue that 1) the quality and availability of city services is more salient than prejudicial attitudes, and 2) public opinion of migration management affects the legitimacy of the incumbent instead of mapping onto existing ideological cleavages. Particularly, I propose that in the case of a fragmented party system, the consequences of high volume migration can spur even greater party fragmentation, and under conditions of a weak welfare state, such effects are driven by negative citizen reactions to the perceived material impacts of migrants on public space, services, and social order.

Colombia provides an ideal test case for empirically assessing how and why migra-

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1. Such is the case across Latin America (Winter 2020), and for example in Turkey (Uras 2022)

tion affects local elections. There are well-established and largely-utilized migrant transit routes that pass through certain municipalities, and the majority of the close to 2 million Venezuelan migrant arrivals were concentrated highly between the years 2016-2018, which coincides with mayoral election cycles. In response to the large exodus of Venezuelans in 2017, the Colombian government permitted migrants to enter and transit freely throughout the country as well as to access emergency services, giving rise to a phenomenon called “los caminantes” or the walkers. Cities and towns along highways connecting Venezuela to desirable destinations in Colombia and other countries experienced a stream of migrants passing through their cities, sometimes numbering in the thousands. In the perception of residents and city governments, a lack of humanitarian infrastructure to receive highly-vulnerable migrants led to a rise of informal settlements, often in public spaces, as well as increased demands on municipal services – health, education, and trash collection. I digitize NGO maps in order to assemble a dataset of the 311 municipalities along these routes and 609 comparable municipalities off the route, and use data on mayoral elections (2011-2019) from Colombia’s election agency (La Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil).

Using a difference-in-differences (DiD) model, I identify how the shock of location along a migrant route causally affects political party competition. I find that in municipalities along the migrant route, there is an increase in party fragmentation relative to municipalities not along the migrant route. I measure party fragmentation in two ways: 1) party proliferation measured by the number of political contenders per municipality in an election and 2) the number of “independent” candidates who enter without a traditional party label in an election. These analyses are robust to a number of placebo tests and robustness checks, and I show that municipalities along the migrant route had similar trends to municipalities not along the route prior to the start of the arrival of Venezuelan migrants.

I explain the effect of increased party fragmentation as driven by real and perceived de-

terioration in municipal management. Due to increases in visible poverty and competition for local services from high volume migration, the pool of would-be political candidates anticipate incumbent weakness and loss of legitimacy, as well as mounting dissatisfaction among citizens with the declining quality of municipal life. Under these conditions, a greater number of candidates decide to enter and fewer link themselves with institutionalized political parties. I use a mixed methods approach to provide evidence for this mechanism. First, I show that migrant routes drive the results rather than high numbers of settled migrants. I then use text analysis to fit two topic models for the 3,825 political platforms of mayoral candidates in municipalities along the route and municipalities off the route. Finally, I present an analysis of over 100 interviews with mayoral candidates, host community members, migrants, migrant leaders, and NGO members. Rather than an increase in anti-migrant discourse, these sources reveal that local services and city management were key political issues in municipalities along the migrant routes.

My work makes several contributions to research on local migrant reception and the political consequences of migration. First, it shows that there is no universally fixed political “frame” for migration; in other words, the linked issues and associations are context-dependent (Chong and Druckman 2007; Zaller et al. 1992). While the salient aspects of migration in the US and Europe are cultural, such debates are at the forefront of national and local politics. My article shows that in at least one Latin American context experiencing migration, the issue is salient in regards to the relevant political problems and existing cleavages, in this case, service competition and visible poverty. A second contribution this article makes is to examine the political impacts of migration in a state with weakly institutionalized political parties. Most studies of the impacts of migration focus on highly institutionalized democracies. However, in authoritarian or fragmented party systems, consolidated ideological divisions between parties are often absent (Aldrich et

al. 1995; Coppedge 1998). I therefore introduce a novel political indicator beyond ideology or polarization; in this instance, the degree of fragmentation.

A third contribution of my article is to offer a more comprehensive measure of the exposure to high volume migrant arrivals using a measure of transit routes rather than migrant settlement. Much existing scholarship uses data on migrant populations from censuses or administrative counts, which tends to reflect only settled and incorporated migrants (Rozo and Vargas 2021; Alrababa'h et al. 2019; Dustmann, Fabbri, and Preston 2005; Card 2001; Otto and Steinhardt 2014). Measures of migrant stock or migrant density, however, are not able to capture the full effects of high-volume migrant arrivals. For example, a small town at an key bottleneck along a migrant route may experience a large number of migrants living in informal settlements or passing through, yet report a relatively low number of migrants in official counts. The use of migrant transit routes as a treatment instead facilitates the inclusion of other effects of migration beyond settlement. In this way, I add to a smaller literature focused on the impacts of migrant routes (Ajzenman, Aksoy, and Guriev 2020; Hangartner et al. 2019).

Finally, the findings in this paper are policy relevant. Permissive national migration policies in Latin America and beyond are often convenient for political interests in the Global North, and can at times be outward-facing products of international compacts and agreements. Colombia, like many nations in Latin America and the broader Global South, possesses a liberal migration regime with extensive rights for migrants (Blair, Grossman, and Weinstein 2022). Limitations in policy implementation, however, can lead to detrimental humanitarian consequences for migrants and large negative externalities for host citizens and for local politicians. In this study, the real and perceived effects of Venezuelan migration on public space, services, and social order in Colombian communities result from structural inefficiencies to meet the basic needs of migrants. In addressing future migra-

tion crises, policy choices that address the immediate, emergency needs of migrants and increased resource allocation in these areas could alleviate strains on municipalities and migrants.

## 2 Party Fragmentation and Challenger Entry in Elections

Under standard models of electoral competition, citizens choose to enter as candidates when the benefits of winning office outweigh the costs of entry.<sup>2</sup> When the relative ratio of potential gains to expenditure is higher, a greater number of candidates can be sustained in equilibrium (Osborne and Slivinski 1996; Gordon, Huber, and Landa 2007). When the cost of entry is thus lower, such as by incumbent vulnerability, the pool of political aspirants update their calculus and may seek to run as for office.

In electoral systems with stable and highly institutionalized parties, however, candidate entry is constrained by parties. Parties play a gate-keeping role in recruiting candidates, who are not able to win in these systems without the infrastructure, resources, and the “branding” that parties provide them (Aldrich et al. 1995). Under conditions of programmatic politics in which parties feature real ideological distinctions, only two parties in plurality-rule systems in equilibrium (Duverger 1954). New parties form only when there is available political space created by new issues or changing values that the existing parties are not able to represent (Inglehart 2020; Kitschelt 1994).<sup>3</sup>

A multitude of scholars, however, have shown that the under fragmented party systems, which are common in Latin America, the entry of new parties or candidates can follow a different electoral logic. In these systems, established parties lack legitimacy (Levitsky and Cameron 2003; Lupu 2014), and so candidates may find independent candidature or

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2. See Gulzar (2021) for a review of the literature on political entry.

3. One such example is the emergence of green parties to represent new policy issues around environmentalism (Meguid 2005; Kitschelt 2019).

short-term coalition alliances provide a greater strategic advantage than association with an existing party label. Furthermore, without strong parties that dominate in elections, the electoral market is more “permeable” to outsiders, and these new contenders can more easily win a meaningful share of voters (Mainwaring, Gervasoni, and Nájera 2010). In sum, without the spatial constraints of ideological differentiation and the intermediary role played by parties, we should expect more candidates to run when there are decreases in the relative cost of running to winning office.

This in turn raises the question of what raises the cost-to-benefit ratio of running for office in a potential contender’s calculus. One such area is their estimation of the potential votes they can gain if they run (Cox 1997). Unlike in institutionalized systems, where new policy issues and programs rise to the voters’ agendas, in weak party systems citizen dissatisfaction with the status quo can create available votes (Laroze 2019). In general, citizens penalize their governors for poor performance, such as corruption, scandals, resource management, and at times for as events beyond their purview such as natural disasters and economic crises (Maier 2011; Hobolt and Tilley 2016; Dal Bó et al. 2018; Krasa and Polborn 2018).

I propose that a high volume of migration and a lack of adequate management, can have similar consequences to crises, scandals, or disasters. In essence, an institutional failure to address the consequences of migration can be a catalyst for new entrants and new parties. In the next section, I further elaborate the model under which the impacts of a high volume of economically-vulnerable migrants can provide the source of citizen dissatisfaction that spurs greater political fragmentation in impacted localities.

### 3 Migration as Municipal Management

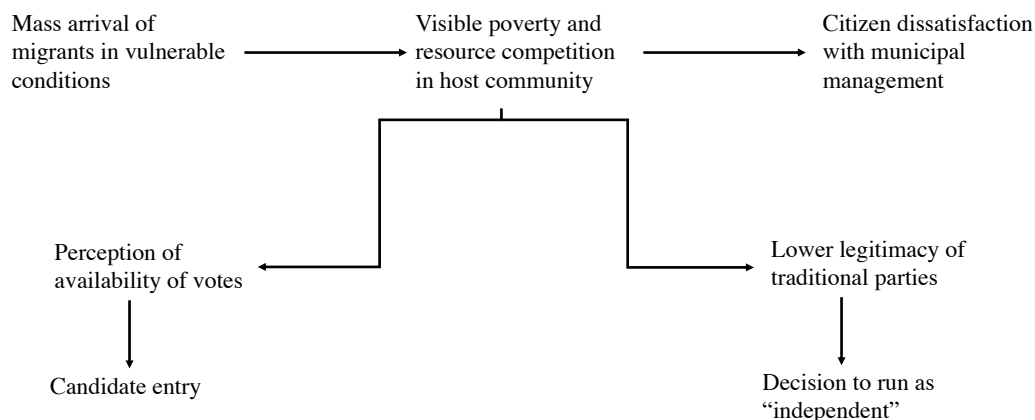


Figure 1: Diagram of Causal Chain

Much focus has been on anti-migrant attitudes related to citizen fears and anxieties about the global impacts of migration, which turns into xenophobic political discourse (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Dancygier and Laitin 2014). However, a high and sudden volume of migration can also cause strains for towns and cities and a deterioration in the real and perceived quality of municipal life for host citizens. I propose that citizen discontent with municipal management of migration arises from two effects particular: 1) an increase in visible poverty and 2) an increase in resource competition. This in turns spurns greater party fragmentation as citizen dissatisfaction with the status quo of city management increases the perception of available votes to potential candidates, as well as incentivizes these candidates to distance themselves from the traditional political establishment.

Migrants, fleeing conflict, natural disasters, economic and political crises, arrive en



mass in vulnerable conditions to key transit and destination hotspots. In the absence of a robust humanitarian response by states or international actors in which the minimum basic needs of migrants are met (shelter, food, and emergency assistance), municipal governments become the frontline responders.<sup>4</sup>

In these cases, towns and cities witness stark changes in their environment. Shanty towns arise, the population of those sleeping in the streets and parks increases, foreigners transit through on foot or on public transportation, and soup kitchens and assistance sites crop up. Migrants who arrive in poor health conditions may overwhelm hospitals, tent settlements can generate additional waste a city is unable to manage, and migrants may require food and social assistance that support services are unable to provide.<sup>5</sup> In these cities and towns, the impact of receiving migrants can lead to both real and perceived deterioration in the quality of municipal life in the short-term (Ekmekci 2017; Alkhalil et al. 2018; Baez 2011). Such was the case in a small city, Riohacha, on a key migrant route in Colombia, in which the mayor's office noted a "collapse of public services and rationing of certain services" due to the effects of migration.<sup>6</sup>

Initially, host citizens in these sites are often receptive and provide assistance towards migrants and refugees. Across distinct contexts, local residents have opened their homes to host strangers, cooked food for them, and donated blankets, clothes, and time to assist refugees and migrants.<sup>7</sup> The Colombian host population has been recognized for their generosity and empathy in assisting their Venezuelan "siblings" (Martinez, Villanueva,

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4. Conversely, in many refugee settings in the Global South that have highly-funded responses and large investments in infrastructure for refugees and host community members, there can be positive spillovers for the community, as in the case of Uganda (Zhou, Grossman, and Ge 2022; Kreibaum 2016) and Lebanon (Lehmann and Masterson 2020). Notwithstanding, there are multiple critiques of the camp model for the impacts and access to rights of the refugees and migrants who reside in them.

5. See for example the effects of the 2015 'migrant crisis' in Greece (News 2015) and France (Gentleman 2015)

6. C73, Author interview in Riohacha, 2022

7. Such was the case in responses to the Syrian migration (Hall 2016) and to the Venezuelan migration (Feline Frier and Parent 2019)

and Viguier 2018), which is not unusual in the early years of migrant reception. However, sustained migration over months and even years, without adequate resources or policy interventions to assist migrants and address the needs of the host communities, can lead to grievances in the host community. In the words of an NGO worker, host citizens “have short term memories and are more concerned with their day to day life and so it becomes harder and harder to help other people.”<sup>8</sup>

Negative externalities generated by structural incapacities to address the needs of unincorporated migrants are those directly attributable to municipal governments: crime and policing, trash, public spaces and parks, roads, water, school and hospital administration. Declines in the perceived management of municipalities are likely to have electoral consequences for mayors, as voters reward and penalize politicians for their performance, particularly when lines of attribution are clear (Martin and Raffler 2021; Powell Jr and Whitten 1993; Anderson 2006). In Colombia, this is likely even more pronounced as mayors are relatively powerful due to decentralization reforms<sup>9</sup> and are directly responsible for the administration of local resources (Falleti 2010). Management of social services and social order are areas that are directly observable by citizens, and require little politicization or media coverage to rise to their attention.

In their study of mayoral performance, Arnold and Carnes (2012, 952) note that citizens observe for themselves when “streets are filled with snow, potholes, or trash.” Changes in these areas translate directly to votes at the ballot box as voters are highly responsive to local conditions (Howell and Perry 2004; Arnold and Carnes 2012; Oliver and Ha 2007), and prioritize local problems over ideology in mayoral elections (Trounstine 2009). In strong party systems, the penalties for poor management and citizen discontent may be faced by

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8. C98, Interview with a field staff member at a humanitarian organization, 2020

9. Article 287 of the Colombian Constitution grants territories autonomy in governance and management over their own resources: <https://www.constitucioncolombia.com/titulo-11/capitulo-1/articulo-287>

the incumbent politician or party, opening up space for challengers from established parties to compete. In weak party systems where democratic accountability and continuity is not as clear, citizen perception of poor governance may further increase dissatisfaction with the status quo and diminish the value of the brand names and legitimacy of traditional political parties. This is likely particularly true in the case of Colombia, where the migration policies were implemented by the established political class holding both liberal and conservative ideologies.<sup>10</sup>

### **3.1 The Importance of Migrant Routes**

The municipal consequences of migration, however, are not uniform as irregular migration creates uneven local consequences. Geographically proximate nations bear the brunt of migration, and within these countries, the regions, cities, and towns serving as entry points or sites of transit are the most impacted. These localities are often along established routes: in Europe there are a number of migrant pathways taken by African and Middle-Eastern asylum-seekers (ANSA and InfoMigrants 2021), Latin Americans pass through key destinations in Central America (Alfredo), and Venezuelans route through major highways in South America (Rueda 2020). In their studies in Europe, Hangartner et al. (2019) and Ajzenman, Aksoy, and Guriev (2020) conceive of these destinations along the routes as temporary stopping points. However, many of these transit sites end up housing migrants for varying lengths of time. Some only stay for a few days; others remain for months or years as they wait for money or opportunities; still others end up staying and settling. Therefore, while the migrants themselves may be in transit, these routes become like migrant corridors with a near constant flow of people and a continual presence of unincorporated migrants.

Beyond the real material impacts discussed in the previous section, studies have shown

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10. Continuity in migration policy has been marked throughout the administrations of Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) and Ivan Duqué (President from 2018-2022).

that visible poverty, such as homelessness, can also lead to negative perceptions by citizens and city managers, activating “disgust” (Clifford and Piston 2017) and fears of spiraling social problems (Gibson 2004). In particular, the condition of homelessness is associated with “undesirable disorder” (Young and Petty 2019). By studying migrant routes I am therefore able to offer an additional explanation beyond xenophobia or anti-immigrant sentiment for the political changes in response to migration. Certain types of poor migrants, such as the ones using these routes, instead affect municipalities in the host country and political outcomes through “aporophobia,” or anti-poor sentiment.<sup>11</sup> These visible conditions of poverty and a resultant rejection of the poor relate to matters of municipal management rather than questions of integration or ethnic difference, which can create alternative political opportunities.

## 4 Background

### 4.1 Venezuelan Migration in Colombia

There are close to two million Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, a country of over 50 million people. The majority of these migrants arrived between 2016-2019, fleeing political and economic crises in Venezuela. Though the scale of displacement is similar in magnitude to that of a mass refugee crisis, Venezuelan migration has been considered a “mixed flow” with the majority of arrivals classified as economic migrants.<sup>12</sup> Correspondingly, the domestic and international policy response has emphasized the socio-economic integration of Venezuelans into Colombian society, particularly into the labor market. Notably, international funding for Colombia and countries hosting Venezuelan migrants has been lower than comparable displacement crises and the approach has not included camps, settlements, or

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11. See a discussion of aporophobia vs. xenophobia in Colombia in Jiménez (2018)

12. A population that is not a straight-forward refugee crisis, comprised of asylum-seekers, economic migrants, unaccompanied minors, among others.

other significant humanitarian infrastructure.(Bahar and Dooley 2021)

The Colombian government has implemented highly generous and integrationist policies. Starting in 2017, they issued several rounds of Special Stay Permits for Venezuelans called PEP, which granted Venezuelans access to work, education, and health care, which have been increasingly expansive in rights and in inclusion of both regular and irregular migrants<sup>13</sup> (Guerrero Ble et al. 2020). The open arms reception policy coupled with integrationist policies and anti-encampment stances of the Colombian government led to a phenomenon called “los caminantes”, or the walkers. These “caminantes” constituted a significant population of the poorest Venezuelan migrants who walked or used public transit in order to travel throughout Colombia, seeking work, shelter, to rejoin relatives or friends, or to cross into a third country (Broner 2018).

At the peak of Venezuelan migration in 2018, thousands of people were crossing from Venezuela into Colombia per day through towns along established road networks, often sleeping on the street or competing for space in the limited number of temporary shelters and soup kitchens, many of them run by small community-based organizations and local volunteers. In an interview in Pamplona, a border town, migrants walking described how they walked for over 3 months to reach Cali, a city in Southern Colombia, stopping along the road at different towns when they ran out of money to look for informal work or to ask for alms on the streets.<sup>14</sup> In the process of walking or using public transit, these migrants often reached their final destinations slowly and were highly visible when passing through. A resident of a border municipality, Villa de Rosario, noted her empathy for the suffering of Venezuelans but lamented that migrants had transformed her town into the biblical land of “Sodom and Gomorrah,” replete with drug sales, trafficking, public consumption

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13. Unidad Administrativa Especial Migración Colombia. Resolución 2033. 2 de agosto de 2018. <https://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/normativa/send/17-resoluciones-2018/82-resolucion-2033-del-2018>

14. C84, C85, C86, C80: Author interviews and focus group discussions with migrants, migrant leaders, and migrant shelters in Pamplona and along the migrant route, 2021

of substances, and poverty.<sup>15</sup>

These inclusive policies and their consequences have garnered a mixed reception by Colombian citizens. Around the time of the October 2019 elections, public frustration towards government migration policies and anti-Venezuelan sentiment were on the rise. A nationally representative survey in August 2019 showed that unfavorable opinions of Venezuelans had increased to 62% (a 9% increase from 6 months prior), and only 36.9% of Colombians approved of the government's management of the Venezuelan migration, which was a 23% decrease from approval rates in February of that same year (Semana 2019).

## **4.2 Migration During Municipal Elections in Colombia**

Colombia has several levels of elections. At a national level, there are elections for the President and legislature every four years. At a regional level, there are elections for the governors of 32 departments and for mayors of the 1,122 municipalities every four years that are off-cycle with national elections. The first popular elections for mayors were instituted in 1988 as prior mayors were appointed by departmental governors who themselves were appointed by the President. Following a series of reforms, mayors have gained greater autonomy, as their terms were extended from two years to four years and as they were granted direct control over the administration of local resources.<sup>16</sup>

Similar to many Latin American governments, Colombia has a weak party system that is particularly fragmented at the local level. In mayoral elections, there are hundreds of candidate-driven parties that emerge for only one electoral period and mayors may not run for re-election. In the 2019 local election, for instance, there were over 1,000 distinct parties, coalitions, or individual candidates.

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15. C92, Author interview in Villa del Rosario, 2021

16. See references from the Colombian National Elections Agency for a timeline of these changes: <https://www.registraduria.gov.co/Se-cumplen-25-anos-de-la-primera-eleccion-popular-de-alcaldes-en-el-pais-9141-9141-9141.html>

Candidates can enter elections in three ways. They can enter as part of established party of which there are currently 13 officially recognized by the Colombian elections agency. Candidates can also enter as part of a coalition, in which multiple parties band together to back a single candidate often using a slogan or the candidate name rather than a party affiliation. Candidates can also form citizen-candidate movements, in which they collect signatures from city residents and create a temporary party for a single election period (GSCs). These coalitions and citizen-candidate movements tend to be more “short-term strategic alliances of vote-seeking politicians than enduring political organizations” (Dargent and Muñoz 2011), and can constitute attempts to distance themselves from the political establishment. A former mayoral candidate referred to party coalitions and GSCs as simply “marketing campaigns” to re-brand themselves.<sup>17</sup> The decision to run as an independent as part of a coalition or “by signatures” (por firmas) therefore reveals little about whether or not a candidate is from the traditional political class. Both traditional politicians and outsiders, or alternative politicians, use these strategies. Deciding whether to run with a single party label or a coalition depends greatly on how a candidate evaluates the cost and benefits of party affiliation, their strength of ideological commitment, and what they want to signal to voters.<sup>18</sup>

In the first national elections since the start of the major Venezuelan exodus to Colombia in 2018, the right presidential candidate, Iván Duque accused the Colombian left candidates of wanting to turn the country into a “second Venezuela.” In Colombia, this resonated with many citizens’ fears of insecurity from a past of a long-standing armed conflict with left-wing guerilla groups including the FARC and other actors. Therefore, the association of the political left with disorder, populism, and socialism, timed with a massive outflow

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17. C9, Author interview with Movimiento Alternativo Indigena Y Social Mais Candidate in Pamplona, 2021

18. Information from author interviews with mayoral candidates and political analysts in 2021 and 2022

of Venezuelans was politically valuable to the right. Stoking fears around left leadership shepherding Colombia towards the same fate as Venezuela was a successful strategy, leading to support and votes for the right party, particularly in areas with high Venezuelan migrant settlement (Rozo and Vargas 2021).

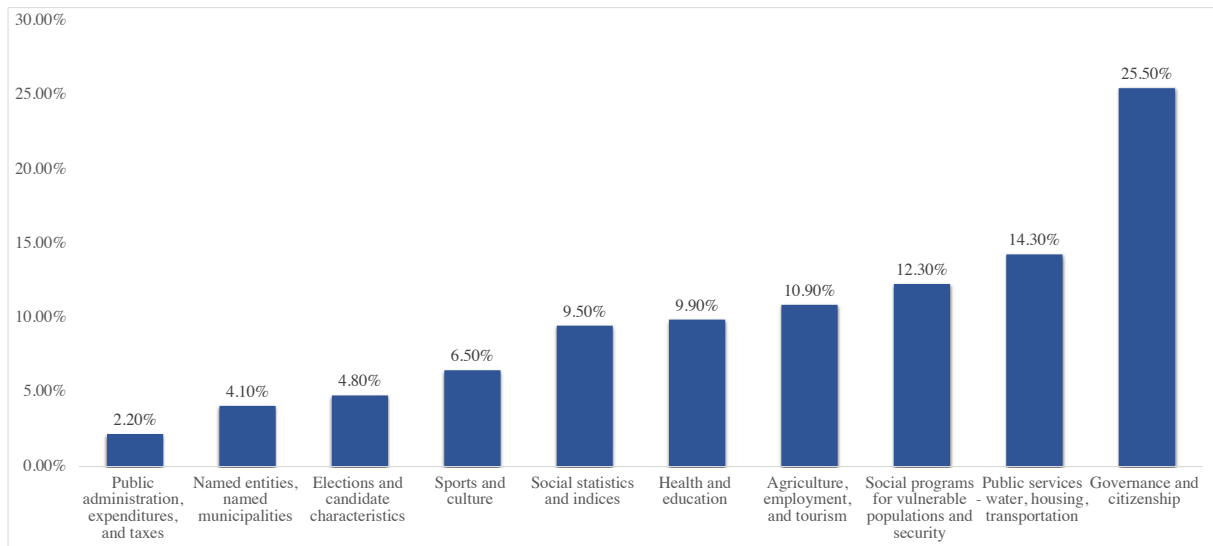


Figure 2: The Top Ten Topics in Political Platforms

Unlike the national elections, Venezuela and the Venezuelan migration was not a major campaign issue during regional and territorial elections for mayors and governors. During the 2019 local elections, the fear of “castro-chavismo”<sup>19</sup> and the more inflammatory rhetoric were far less salient and nearly absent in campaign speeches or platforms. Instead, local issues and problems dominated the political debates in towns and cities receiving migrants (Prieto 2019). From an examination of mayoral platforms collected from the Colombian National Elections Agency, the top issues were related to local governance, public services, and social programs and security as displayed in Figure 2.<sup>20</sup>

19. The primary campaign message of President Iván Duque’s campaign in 2018 promoted a fear of socialism and left-wing politics termed “castrochavismo,” a portmanteau of Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez

20. See Appendix J for the full topic models of mayoral platforms and a description of the data



Out of the 4,908 campaign platforms across Colombian municipalities, 564 politicians mentioned migration (about 11.5%) in 347 cities (about 30%) of cities. Most of these discussions of migration were limited to paragraph or a few sentences, and contained largely neutral statements about plans to include migrants in services or to increase integration.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, there were a few isolated incidents of candidates using anti-migrant language, such as a candidate in a small town, Tunja, on a main migrant-route, referring to Venezuelans as “a plague” (Caracol 2019).

In an effort to limit anti-migrant discourse in political speech, the Attorney General’s Office, and IOM, and USAID coordinated with party leaders<sup>22</sup> in a campaign called, “There’s Space for All” (Aquí cabemos todos) ahead of the local elections in 2019 (Migración 2019). However, interviews with politicians and political analysts revealed the limited ability of the Attorney General or party structures to enforce such a ban.<sup>23</sup> Rather than fears of national sanctioning, candidates noted that local elections, unlike national elections, are far less ideological and partisan. In Cúcuta, a border city and directly along the route taken by the majority of Venezuelan migrants, a candidate stated that “castrochavismo and the fear of the left is a national frame” and that the main priorities on the public agenda for his constituents were around “work opportunities, health access, and welfare expansion for Colombian citizens.”<sup>24</sup>

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21. These mentions were searched for in R using a series of migration-words and then hand-coded by an RA due to difficulties with automated sentiment analysis in understanding contextual discussions of migration. A similar approach is used by Dancygier and Margalit (2020).

22. Partido Conservador, Alianza Verde, Partido de la U, Partido Liberal, Centro Democrático, Farc y Colombia Justa Libres

23. Authors interviews with mayoral candidates, 2021-2022

24. C7, Author interview, 2021

## 5 Data

In this section, I describe the data I collected as well as how I construct the municipal sample and my key dependent and treatment variables.

**Treatment: Migrant Routes** Location along migrant routes is theorized to directly impact electoral outcomes. These routes are well-established and are along central highway networks in Colombia. The principle routes begin in border cities and towns and follow a trajectory southward through the country, often filtering to major cities and towns while passing through small, rural municipalities along the way. Since these routes have been established as of 2017, NGOs have created maps and directions for migrants as shelters, soup kitchens, and emergency first aid exist along the route. Figure 3 shows the digitized routes.<sup>25</sup> Location along a migrant route consists of a bundled treatment of reception of migrants in transit, migrants in residence for short periods, as well as migrant settlement. In total, there are 311 municipalities (out of the 1,231 municipalities in Colombia in 2019) along the route constituting approximately 25% of municipalities. I assign municipalities along one of the main migrant routes to my treated group and municipalities that are not along a route to my control group. Treatment is a binary variable, meaning that if a city or town has a route passing through, it takes a value of 1, otherwise it takes a value of 0. Treated municipalities are marked in red in Figure 4.

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25. The maps I used were created by Red Cross <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/05c6aa5b85e54555a221b58d02e4891d> and the GFIMM <https://www.r4v.info/es/document/gifmm-colombia-infografia-de-respuesta-para-caminantes-de-arauca-casanare-junio-2021>

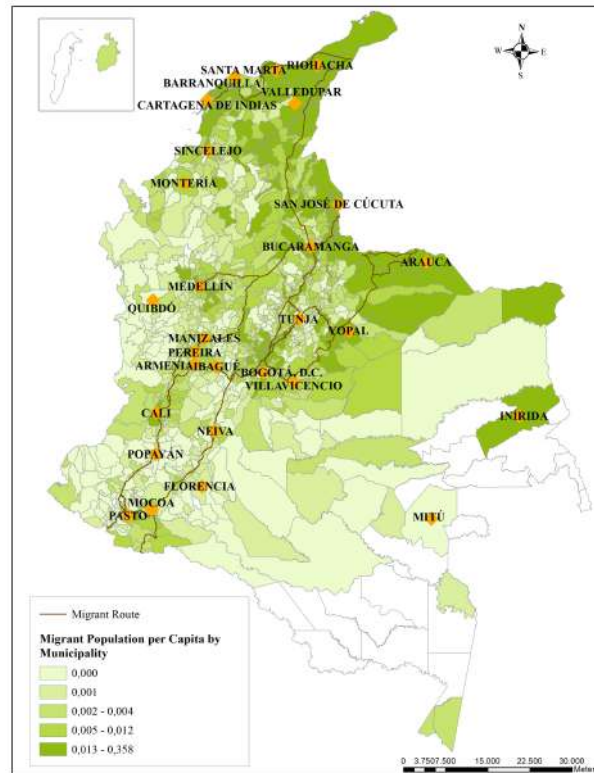


Figure 3: Venezuelans per Capita Overlaid with Migrant Routes

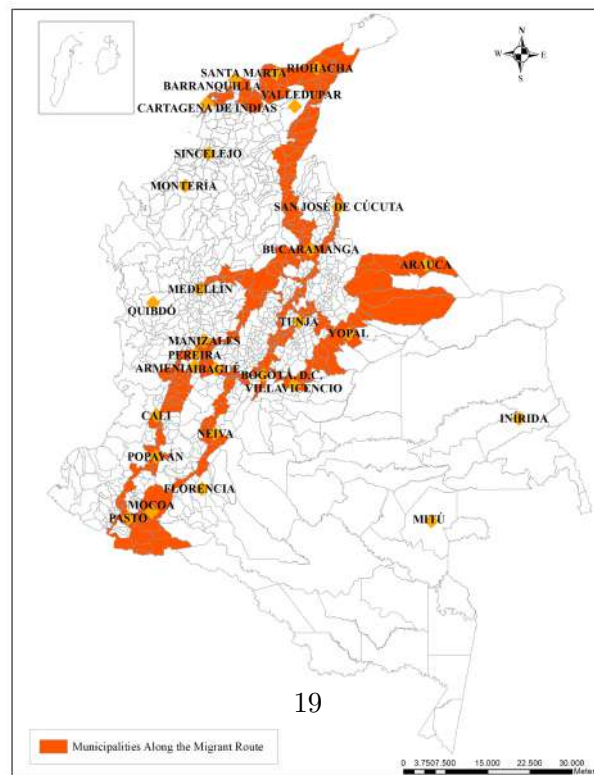


Figure 4: Migrant Routes

## Other Data:

**Venezuelan Settlement Estimates** For my analysis of mechanisms, I use Venezuelan migrants per capita generated by municipal estimates from June 2019 (three months prior to the elections) created by an agency of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, Migración.<sup>26</sup> I dichotomize this variable into high Venezuelan settlement and low Venezuelan settlement, using a thresholds for high migration of municipalities with the top 25% of migrants per capita. I use an alternate measure of migration in Appendix F.

**Roadway Networks** As a placebo test, I use municipalities along the Colombian highway network, “la Red Vial” as my treated group, excluding those municipalities that are also along migrant transit routes. The data is available from the Colombian Government Open Data Site.<sup>27</sup> In Appendix A, the map displays the national highway network and transit routes.

**Political Platforms** I collect all political platforms in Colombia during the 2019 local elections from mayoral candidates, which number 4,908 candidate platforms from 1,250 parties in 1099 municipalities of Colombia.<sup>28</sup> The platforms of mayoral candidates are officially registered and collected by Colombia’s national election agency, legally constraining candidates in implementation once in office.<sup>29</sup>

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26. The estimation by Migración started in 2019 and is released in regular intervals, and provides an estimate of Venezuelans per municipality.

27. Accessible at <https://www.datos.gov.co/Transporte/Red-Vial/dkuf-xn5d>

28. Around 400 platforms were missing broken.

29. In the Colombian Constitution, Article 259 states that once elected to office, governors and mayors must implement their registered campaign platforms (Art. 259 CPC 1991) and this forms the basis of their governance plans.[http://www.secretariasenado.gov.co/senado/basedoc/ley\\_0131\\_1994.html](http://www.secretariasenado.gov.co/senado/basedoc/ley_0131_1994.html)

## 5.1 Main Outcome: Party Fragmentation

Using local election outcomes from all Colombian municipalities from 2007-2019, I construct my main outcome: party fragmentation. I measure the degree of party fragmentation using two variables: party proliferation and the number of independent candidates.

*Party Proliferation* For my first measure of party fragmentation, I use party proliferation, or the number of parties in an election in a municipality. I use a simple count of the number of parties that participate in each election in all municipalities. The average number of parties in my sample is 4.45 per municipality, with the maximum number of 14 parties and minimum number of 1 party.

*Independent Candidates* For my second measure of party fragmentation, I use a count of candidates entering without a single party brand – those that are part of a coalitions or are unaffiliated with any party (GSCs). I take this approach to capture ideological dilution, as coalitions are often constituted of strategic alliances that do not bear a single party name, and are instead registered with an invented slogan. Rather than coherent ideological groupings, these coalitions represent negotiations among elites who come together to support a given candidate. For example, a candidate I interviewed in Pamplona, entered with the party name, “Pamplona Positiva,” which was a coalition of the Green Party (Alianza Verde) and a rightist party (Partido de la U). Such cases are widespread in my dataset. The number of independent candidates also captures a loss of legitimacy of traditional party brands, as these independents are not necessarily outsiders. A candidate from an established party referred to coalitions and GSCs as traditional parties and politicians in

“disguise.”<sup>30</sup> I also run an analysis with a count of the number of candidates who entered in a single party that is in Appendix D.

**Secondary Outcomes: Election Results** In a secondary analysis, I examine the other side of elections, citizen choice. I construct a measure of voteshare by using the percent of votes gained by independent parties. I use a measure of winning parties for which I create a binary variable to indicate whether an independent party won the election. Finally, I create a binary variable of party switching, in which if the type of party who won the election, established or independent, changed between two election cycles, the variable takes on a value of 1. If there is continuity in the party type of mayors across election cycles, then it is assigned a value of 0.

## 6 Difference-in-Differences Along Migrant Routes

I examine the consequences of transit migration on party fragmentation using mayoral races in 866 municipalities in Colombia between 2015 and 2019. I choose this time period because the majority of Venezuelans arrived between these electoral years as depicted in Figure 5.

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30. C17, Author interview with MAIS candidate in Girardota, 2022

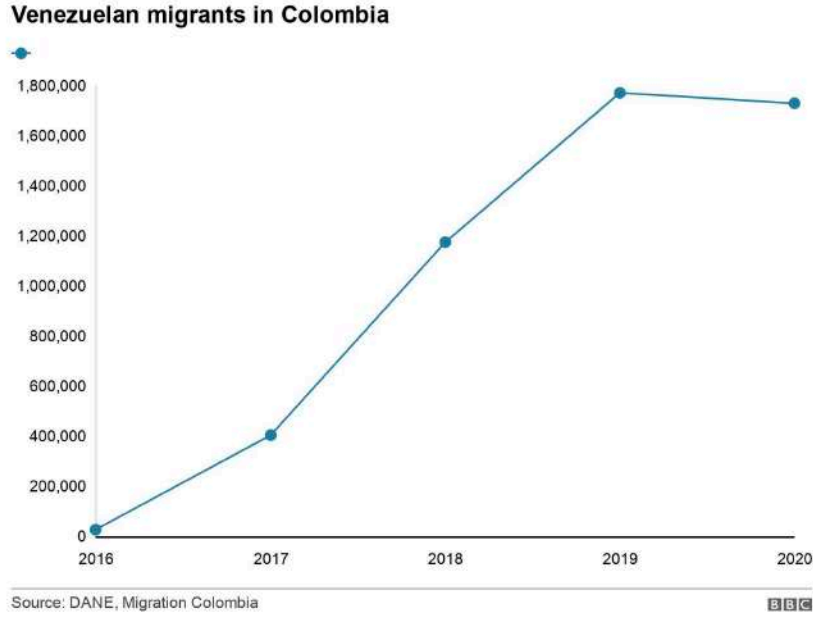


Figure 5: Estimated Number of Venezuelans in Colombia reported by the Colombian National Statistical Agency (DANE)

In order to examine the effects of the shock of migration in cities along the migrant route on local elections, I select a difference-in-differences design, which can account for time-invariant confounders. It allows me causally estimate a number of electoral outcomes in municipalities affected by migration. The specification is a standard two way fixed effects model below:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \lambda_t + \beta(Treated_i * Post_t) + \epsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

In this equation,  $Y_i$  is the dependent variable,  $\alpha_i$  refers to the municipal fixed effects,  $\lambda_t$  captures time fixed effects, and  $\epsilon_{it}$  is the error term.  $\beta(Treated_i * Post_t)$  is the independent variable of interest—the post-migration election period interacted with the migration

treatment.

Treated municipalities are along a migrant route and control municipalities are located within 40 kilometers of a main migrant route, which is the mean distance of all municipalities to a migrant route. The bandwidth of 40 kilometers covers all treated municipalities and adjacent municipalities, as Colombian municipalities are large, around 300 square kilometers on average. Furthermore, limiting my control group allows for more precise comparisons as migrant routes are not determined at random, but influenced by the geographic, climatic, and topographical characteristics of Colombia, and their connection to migrant destinations such as major cities and international borders. Therefore, municipalities in Colombia far from zones that meet these conditions have a close to 0 probability of being treated, while control municipalities within a certain radius of the transit routes share many of these same characteristics as treated municipalities. My analysis, however, are robust to different distance bandwidths, which I discuss in Section 9 and provide results for in Appendix E.2.

There are several assumptions that need to hold in order for my identification strategy to be valid. The main identification assumption is that without exposure to migration, the change in the number of political candidates and in the number of independent candidates would have followed the same pattern, in essence, that these municipalities would have continued to follow the same trends. I examine the parallel trends assumption in these cities by conducting an event study, for which I find null results on the pre-treatment trends of party numbers and the presence of other parties. I show in Figure 6 that municipalities along the migrant route did not experience differences in electoral competition compared to those not along the route prior to 2016. In Figure 7 shows that there were no significant differences in the presence of independent candidates in treated and control groups prior to the arrival of Venezuelan migrants. In Appendix B, I display results for parallel trend



plots. In all analyses, I cluster standard errors at municipality level, which is the level at which treatment is assigned.

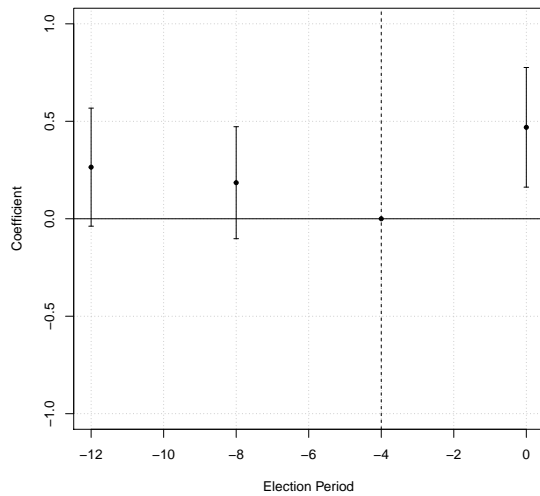


Figure 6: Number of Parties (2007-2019)

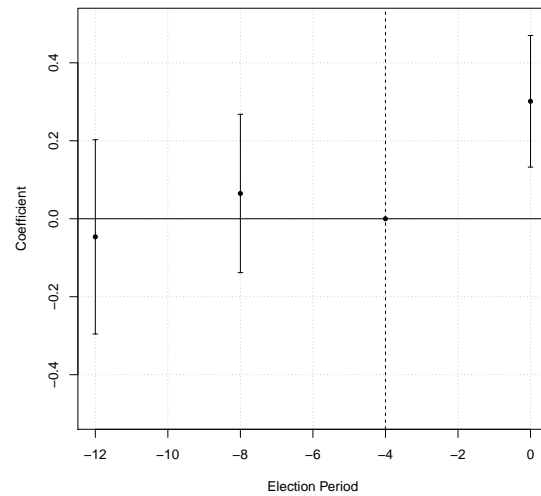


Figure 7: Independents (2007-2019)

The plots above display coefficients with 95% confidence intervals on their treatment leads and the post treatment period (0), with the last period pre-treatment set as the baseline. The coefficients pre-treatment are statistically insignificant for my treatments for at least two periods before treatment. Full results for the figures displayed here are in Appendix B.1

## 7 Results

Table 1: DiD Estimates: Within 40 KM of a Migrant Route - Change Candidate Entry

	Party Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	0.485*** (0.158)	0.312*** (0.085)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,835	1,835
R <sup>2</sup>	0.741	0.750
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.508	0.526
Residual Std. Error (df = 966)	1.348	0.754
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

In table 1, I display the main results. I find evidence that being along the migrant route increases party fragmentation. In column 1, I show that the shock of location along a migrant route has an effect size of 0.485, meaning that there are more political parties in treated cities by close to half a party. In column 2, I show that there is a statistically significant difference in the number of independent parties in cities along the route compared to those in the control group, with .312 more independent candidates in localities along the transit route. Both of these effects are significant at the .01 level.

From analysis of voteshares and election outcomes in Appendix D.2, I find that there is a rational basis for these independent party candidates to enter as there are positive but statistically insignificant coefficients for voteshares for independent parties, independent candidates winning elections, and switching between party-type. Perhaps, one electoral cycle is not enough to completely change political outcomes in a city.

## 8 Mechanisms Tests

There could be a number of different explanations for why migration would lead to a greater entry of candidates, as well as a rise in candidates running on independent party labels. I provide evidence for my proposed mechanism using three separate analyses.

### 8.1 Routes vs. Settlement

To explain the increase in the number of candidates within cities along the migrant transit route, I propose that there is a dissatisfaction with negative externalities associated with migration. I show that this is particularly pronounced in cities along the migrant route, which have the largest effects of unincorporated and in-transit migration – visible poverty and resource competition – compared to cities with high migrant settlement in which migrants are often living and working. Below is a table showing the municipalities in my sample (within 40km of a migrant route) that have high migrant settlement, are located along a migrant route, have both high migrant settlement and are located along a migrant route, or neither. As Table 2 suggests, there is a correlation between cities with high migrant settlement and those located along the migrant route. On average municipalities along the migrant route have 1.3% migrant population, which puts them in the top quartile in the country. In this analysis, I seek to disentangle the effects of the route holding constant the effect of migrant settlement.

Table 2: Municipalities with Migrant Routes and High Migrant Settlement

	Migrant Route	No Migrant Route
High Settlement	114	122
Low Settlement	197	536

In this analysis, I use a difference-in-differences model with two treatments: location along a migrant route and high migration per capita. In this way, I can compare the effect of migrant settlement and migrant routes. I run this analysis with all municipalities in Colombia and a different measure of migrant settlement as a robustness check (results in Appendix F).

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \lambda_t + \beta_1(Treated_i^R * Post_t) + \beta_2(Treated_i^S * Post_t) + \beta_3(Treated_i^S * Treated_i^R * Post_t) + \epsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

In this equation,  $Y_i$  is the dependent variable,  $\alpha_i$  is municipal fixed effects,  $\lambda_t$  captures time fixed effects, and  $\epsilon_{it}$  is the error term.  $\beta_1(Treated_i^R * Post_t)$  is the the post-migration election period interacted with being along a migrant route,  $\beta_2(Treated_i^S * Post_t)$  is the the post-migration election period interacted with high migration settlement, and  $\beta_3(Treated_i^S * Treated_i^R * Post_t)$  is the interaction of two treatments interacted with the post-migration election period. Standard errors are clustered at municipal level.

Table 3: DiD Estimates: Migrant Route vs Migrant Settlement - Change in Party Entry

	Party Competition and Candidate Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	0.375** (0.181)	0.291*** (0.098)
High Settlement	0.054 (0.197)	0.065 (0.120)
Route and Settlement	0.269 (0.361)	0.023 (0.194)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,835	1,835
R <sup>2</sup>	0.742	0.751
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.508	0.525
Residual Std. Error (df = 964)	1.348	0.755
F Statistic(full)	3.181***	3.334***

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

From Table A12, the municipalities along migrant routes appear to be driving my main results, as being along a migrant route is associated with an increased number of parties by .375, or more than a third of a political party and increased independent candidate entry by .291, around one third of a candidate, and null results on localities with high migrant settlement and on those localities with both the routes and settlements. These coefficients are significantly different from each other as the last row in the table reports results from an F-test in order determining these coefficients are significantly different from one another.

This analysis is consistent with interviews of government officials along the migration route. In an interview, a local councillor in a city along a main migration route stated that

she was “critic of the national government’s migration policies...in our city, it’s brought total disorder, disorder everywhere.”<sup>31</sup> Government workers also confirmed pressures in their cities in interviews, with the widely repeated phrase that hospitals and schools had “collapsed” due to migration. One interviewee in the local health department in Pamplona recounted that when Venezuelan migrants started arriving, “there was not enough coverage by far and [in this period] almost no help from international aid organizations....and no intervention from the government.”<sup>32</sup>

## 8.2 Text Analysis using LDA models

As a secondary source of evidence for the main mechanism that perceptions of poor municipal management drive political entry, I present descriptive evidence to show that services and governance were more relevant in political platforms in areas along the migrant route than in control municipalities. I choose to use Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic models, which is an unsupervised method of text analysis that constructs topics based on a set of documents, in my case platforms. I first model topics across all 4,913 platforms, and then I divide the platforms into the treated group, which are municipalities along the migrant route and the control group, which are the municipalities within 40km of a route.

In Figure 8, I compare the topic proportions in platforms in treated municipalities compared to control municipalities, with the size of the bubble referring to the proportion of the topic across all platforms. The majority of topics are service-related, and there are no explicit migration topics in the top 10 topics in platforms. The key differences between platforms along the migrant route and those that are that those along the route have greater proportions of topics related to services and governance, whereas in control municipalities there are greater proportions of the topics of public administration and re-

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31. C55, Author Interview with Local Council member in Cúcuta, 2021

32. C78, Author Interview with the Secretary of Health, 2021

sources, as well as employment and agriculture. In municipalities along the route, the most common topics are 1) Governance and Citizenship (24.7% of tokens), 2) Social Programs for Vulnerable Populations and Security (15.8 % of tokens), 3) Public Services - Water, Housing Transportation (15.8 % of tokens). The percentage of tokens, or words, classified as belonging to these topics is lower in control municipalities, with 18% relevance for Governance and Citizenship, 10% for Public Services - Housing, Water, Transportation, and 9.9% for Social Programs for Vulnerable Populations. These are all highly statistically significant as they are based on differences in hundreds of thousands of tokens. In the Appendix J, I provide a link to interactive results for these models and further discuss the methodology and cleaning procedures.

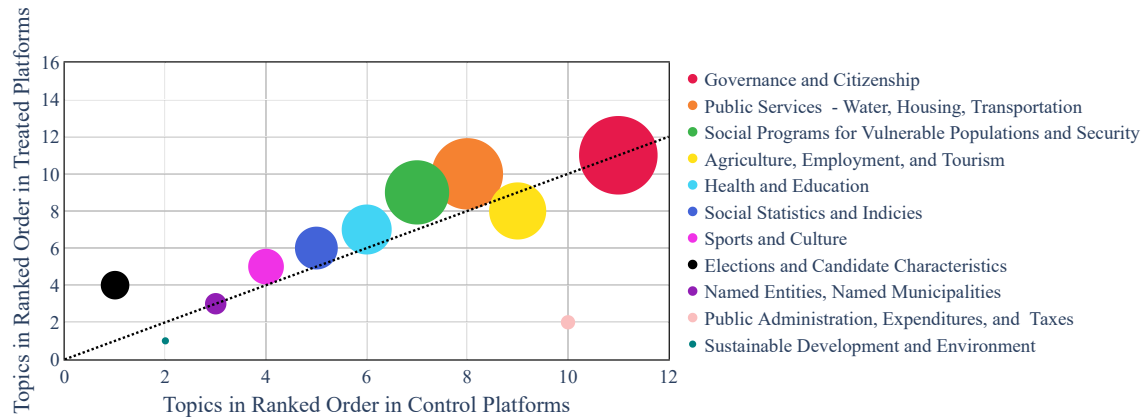


Figure 8: Political Platform Analysis of Topics Along on Migrant Routes vs Not On Routes

### 8.3 Candidate Interviews and Platforms

A final mechanism check I use are 32 candidate interviews from 24 cities and towns along the migrant route,<sup>33</sup> and additional supplementary interviews with political analysts and key informants. From an analysis of these interviews, the topic of Venezuelan migration was not

<sup>33</sup>. See Appendix I for the full list

highly polarized in political speeches, or a “determining” factor for voters.<sup>34</sup> A candidate in Cali, a city along the migrant route and hosting a large settled migrant population stated, “of course, [migration] is a problem because there’s a population growth... and that creates a greater demand in the consumption of the local or departmental budget.” This candidate also referred to the impact of high volume arrivals of Venezuelans as “very chaotic” and that the mayors in office at the time were faced with “a very difficult situation.”<sup>35</sup> For this candidate, economy recovery and job creation was at the center of his campaign.

Another candidate’s proposal in Pamplona in regards to migration was to prohibit migrants from setting up shelter and receiving aid within the town limits, and instead to set up points on the outskirts, citing a lack of “migration control” or any national entity in charge of ensuring order.<sup>36</sup> Candidates from various cities commented on migration as both a “humanitarian” crisis in which migrants needed to have their minimum basic needs met, at the same time as casting blame on Venezuelan migration leading to an increase in drug trafficking, insecurity, theft, sex work, poverty, and “disorder in the territory.” A candidate in Arauca stated, “What we proposed was more authority...We believe that there is an institutional weakness and a lack of governance.”<sup>37</sup>

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34. C24, Interview in Duitama with candidate from Partido De Reivindicacion Etnica, 2022

35. C14, Interview with MAIS candidate in Cali, 2021

36. C10, Interview in Pamplona with candidate from a coalition party, Pamplona Positiva, 2021

37. C2, Interview with candidate from Partido Colombia Renaciente in Arauca, 2021



Dentro de la estructura organizacional municipal, es la Secretaria de Gobierno la que da cumplimiento al Derecho a la Identidad, realizando una labor valiosa e indispensable para acceder a los servicios institucionales y garantía de otros derechos, destacándose como dato emergente y en crecimiento la garantía del derecho con Población Infantil Migrante.

Con relación a población migrante, se incrementan progresivamente las problemáticas sociales asociadas con población de Venezuela, que presentan movilidad urbana y múltiples condiciones de vulnerabilidad a nivel individual y familiar, con recurrencia a prácticas de mendicidad en las que involucran la población infantil. Estos grupos poblacionales acceden a algunos servicios institucionales relacionados con salud y educación, no obstante, dado el aumento y las condiciones de vulnerabilidad en que se encuentran, este tema amerita ser trabajado desde las características de contexto y la focalización de casos, al amparo de las normas, con los consejos consultivos de Gobierno, Seguridad y Compos.

Figure 9: Excerpt of a Conservative Party Candidate in Itagui, Antioquia

#### ANÁLISIS DEL SECTOR VIVIENDA

Los datos arrojados por el DNP insisten en que falta muy poco para cubrir el déficit de vivienda en el municipio 25,9%, aun cuando hay varias urbanizaciones que no han podido iniciar procesos de construcción por falta de apoyo administrativo. Los datos arrojan una cifra alarmante en el déficit cualitativo de vivienda. El 9.62% de los habitantes del municipio viven en hacinamiento crítico, el 0.17% de la población no tiene servicio sanitario y en un 18.45% de las viviendas hay presencia de roedores, problema que se hace más crítico en las zonas rurales donde se necesita prioritariamente el diseño y la implementación de un programa de mejoramiento para la reducción de los índices de pobreza.. Los datos provenientes del DNP y del Modelo de los Determinantes Sociales De Salud (ASIS 2015) pueden no reflejar la realidad actual ya que no se ha tenido en cuenta el crecimiento poblacional y la población flotante se ha exponenciado debido a la migración de venezolanos particularmente.

Figure 10: Excerpt of a Coalition Candidate in Guateque, Boyaca

In Figures 9 and 10, I provide excerpts from candidate platforms in which candidates discuss migration. The candidate from the Conservative Party in Itagui in 9 references how social problems have increased progressively due to Venezuelan migrants, and references the panhandling in the streets and migrants' use of services. An independent coalition candi-

date from Guateque similarly discusses poverty-related issues presented by the Venezuelan migrant, noting that the increase in population and transient population has increased due to the arrival of Venezuelans.

## **9 Alternative Explanations and Threats to Inference**

I propose that perceptions of poor governance create a political opening and drive party fragmentation. There is however, an alternative explanation that follows more standard accounts of xenophobic and polarized political responses to migration. In addition, there are potentially other threats to inference due to the construction of the treatment and control groups and the identifying assumptions of the difference-in-differences design. I therefore conduct a series of robustness checks in order to validate the empirical strategy and proposed mechanism.

### **9.1 Anti-Migrant Campaigns**

The main alternative explanation for why migration drives political changes is that politicians directly campaign on anti-migrant discourse and instrumentalize citizen fears of migrants' differences. In an analysis of the political platforms and interview data I collected, I find that there are few politicized discussions of migration, in which positions regarding migration are mapped onto larger social cleavages which is distinct from the issue during national elections in 2018. In local political platforms, there was not a single reference to fears of the left and few explicitly anti-migrant messages. Instead, the majority of discussion of migration centers on expanding services as displayed in Figure 11, as well as to integration. Negative mentions of migration were related to security and migrants' impact on services.

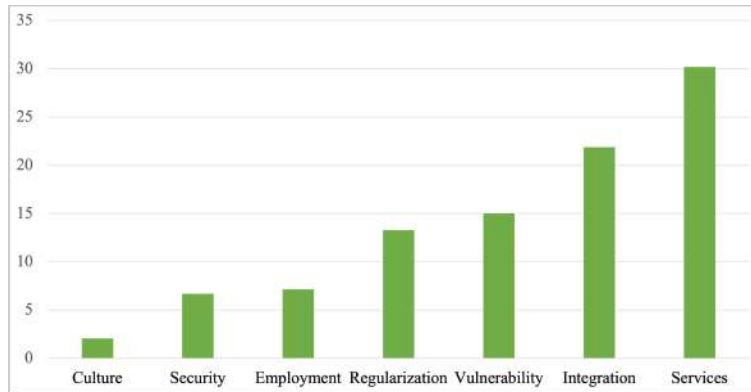


Figure 11: Percent of Mentions of Venezuelan Migration by Topic

Since political platforms do not reveal the totality of political discourse during campaigns, I also draw on interviews with politicians, local officials, and host community members along the transit routes. These respondents agreed that migration was not the decisive issue in local politics. Some candidates, however, proposed more restrictive solutions ranging from the use of police to clear Venezuelan settlements to increasing documentation for Venezuelans.<sup>38</sup> Overall, however, former candidates expressed that since Venezuelan migrants were not voters and that since there was no perceived constituency for overtly tolerant policies, there was little advantage to campaigning on migration. In the words of a candidate from Los Patios, “if in your campaign platform there was a chapter about ‘Assistance for Migrants’ it was not well seen.”<sup>39</sup> On the other side, local politicians perceived limited space to propose large changes to the national migration policy. A candidate in Arauca stated this clearly, “There are 107 senators, 160 representatives, and we have 2 so we had minimal participation in the decision-making process.”<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, actions taken on the part of local government that deviate from the national policy could be sanc-

38. Information from author interviews in 2021. Identification related to Venezuelans was mentioned repeatedly since there is a perception that undocumented people could commit crimes and be released without charge and join armed groups.

39. C8, Interview in with Movimiento Alternativo Indígena Y Social Mais candidate in Los Patios, 2021

40. C2, Interview in with Partido Colombia Renaciente candidate in Arauca, 2021

tioned. In the same city, Arauca, the local government attempted to put up a long-term shelter for Venezuelans, which violated the anti-encampment approach and its construction was stopped.<sup>41</sup> Overall, there was little political gain perceived to centering pro or anti-migration messages during campaigns.

## 9.2 Robustness Checks

The treatment of receiving migrants is not randomly assigned across municipalities, and so a few concerns may arise. Treated municipalities are necessarily located along the main roadways and highways, while some municipalities in my control group lack major transit routes. The effect of being along a roadway may correlate with other unobservables that are not captured by time or municipality fixed effects. Therefore, I construct a placebo test using those portions of the Colombian highway networks (“la Red Vial”) as my treatment and fit the same DiD model. I find no statistically significant results for party fragmentation associated with being located along a national transit route (Results in Appendix E).

A second difference between my treatment and control groups is that treated municipalities tend to be more urban and larger. There is imbalance on municipal characteristics in this dimension: treated municipalities are more educated, less rural, have larger populations and budgets on average (See Appendix G for a balance table). While including municipality fixed effects in the DiD model allows for comparisons within municipalities and absorbs time-invariant differences between municipalities, nevertheless I create a matched sample in Appendix H and find that my results replicate in this reduced sample.

In my main analysis, I restrict my control group to municipalities within 40km from migrant routes in order to create a more comparable control group, which could lead to selection bias. I therefore replicate my results with alternative distance cutoffs. I run the

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41. C105, Interview with Deputy Director of an international organization, 2020

same analysis with limits of 10, 20, 30, 40, 60, and 80 kilometers from the migrant route, and across all of Colombia. I find my results hold across all these analyses (see Appendix E.2). Finally, since small municipalities may have different dynamics than larger cities, I conduct two analyses restricting the sample to cities that have a population of less than 1 million and of cities that have a population of less than 500,000, in which I find the same results (See Appendix E.3).

## **10 Conclusion: Policy Gaps in Addressing Migration Create Opportunities for Party Fragmentation**

In this paper, I examine the political effects of the open-door migration policy in cities and towns in Colombia. I argue that an insufficient response to transit migrants, constituting a population of often the poorest and most vulnerable Venezuelans, created perceptions of poor municipal management among citizens and would-be political contenders along the routes these migrants travel. This work highlights how two important structural factors, low party institutionalization and a weak welfare state, generate concerns for host citizens about social class and visible poverty rather than cultural cleavages, and leads to party fragmentation rather than a rise in right party strength.

There are several implications for future research, and these findings may be generalizable. A first implication of this article is that political consequences and shifts in response to migration are not solely due to prejudicial attitudes. My findings shed new light on the settled debate between “economic” or ego-centric concerns and “symbolic” motives as shaping citizen preferences and vote choices in regards to migration. Existing literature finds that fears of “symbolic” impacts of migration on culture or national issues outweigh concerns over material impacts on an individual or local amenities (Hainmueller and Hop-

kins 2014, 2014; Sides and Citrin 2007). In Global North settings with high-performing economies, however, there is little conclusive evidence that migration has negative impacts on services or the labor market (Gaston and Nelson 2000; Dustmann, Fabbri, and Preston 2005; Dustmann, Schönberg, and Stuhler 2016; Hainmueller, Hiscox, and Margalit 2015; Citrin et al. 1997; Dancygier and Laitin 2014). In the context of weak welfare states, I show there are concerns around migration related to localized impacts rather than abstract political frames.

The finding that the material impacts of migration as drivers of political changes and behavior may be applicable in other settings and domains. As Zhou (2018) shows in Tanzania, resource competition can eventually lead to prejudice towards refugees and migrants. Similarly, Bearak and Dugger (2008) finds that job competition with immigrants motivated xenophobic attacks in South Africa. In the short term, messages of “empathy” and perspective-taking have been shown to change attitudes toward migrants and drive support for migration policy across various contexts (Adida, Lo, and Platas 2018; Kalla and Broockman 2020; Baseler et al. 2021). However, in some settings, the legitimate grievances due to policy gaps and structural inefficiencies could foster resentment and receptivity to xenophobic discourse and policies. Further research and policy initiatives could explore the link between material needs of the host communities and political instrumentalization or actions against refugees and migrants.

A second implication of my work is that there is alignment with the causes of party fragmentation at local levels with those at the national level. For example, Lupu (2014) and Mainwaring, Gervasoni, and Nájera (2010) find that party fragmentation occurs due to poor performance; however, there is little research on the causes of party fragmentation at local levels. In systems where politics is less ideologically driven, migration does not map onto larger narratives of xenophobia or symbolic attitudes at local levels. Instead,

citizen dissatisfaction as a result of structural failures to incorporate migrants can accelerate party fragmentation, which can make it harder to achieve democratic accountability as it decreases continuity of parties in government and ideological coherence of parties. Further research should explore other causes of subnational party fragmentation as well as the implications for governance and for citizens.

Finally, I discuss the generalizability of this study. In comparison to the US and Europe, the Colombian case appears unique due to its cultural closeness to Venezuela where migrants originate from and a national right party that took an integrationist approach. However, it shares similarities with other Latin America countries which receive a high number of Venezuelan migrants and stances on migration does not align with left-right politics.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, across the Global South, host countries often receive migrants and refugees from the same regions and possess liberal migration policies absence of progressive politics in other respects such as Turkey, Jordan, and Ethiopia. While anti-migrant sentiment and discourse exists in these countries, and many others across the globe, the implications of this study are that the political motivations for stances on migration and the social cleavages that migration maps onto may be locally specific. Therefore, beyond studies which transport prominent and existing theories from Global North contexts to the rest of the world, more research is needed that generates theory directly from Global South contexts.

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42. For example, in the case of Peru, left-wing President Pedro Castillo has made anti-Venezuelan declarations and implements more restrictive migration policies that emphasize deportation of undocumented and non-vaccinated migrants (Cero 2021)

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# Supplementary Materials

## A Migrant Routes Maps



Figure A1: Example of migrant routes mapped by the GFIMM, from <https://www.r4v.info/es/document/gifmm-colombia-infografia-de-respuesta-para-caminantes-de-arauca-casanare-junio-2021>



Figure A2: Photo from soup kitchen called “Hermanos Caminantes” along the Pamplona-Cúcuta route



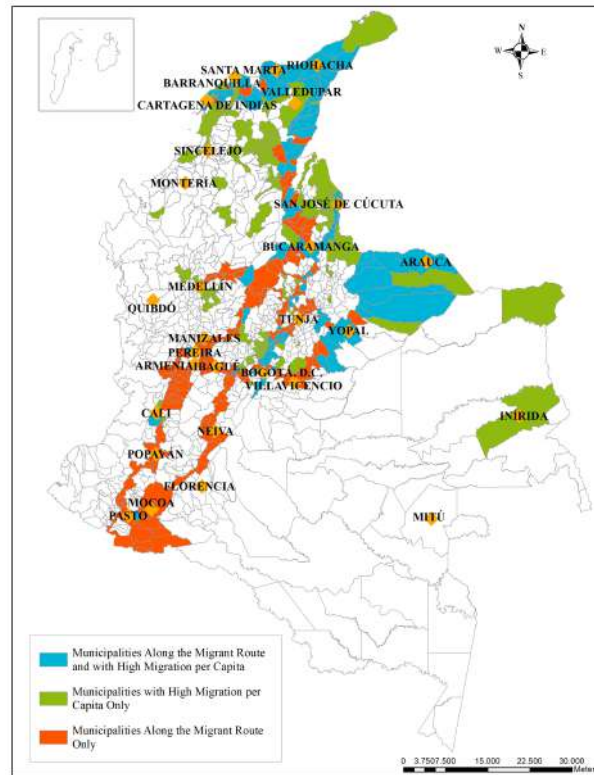


Figure A3: Map displaying municipalities along the Migrant Route, with High Migrant Settlement, and those in Both

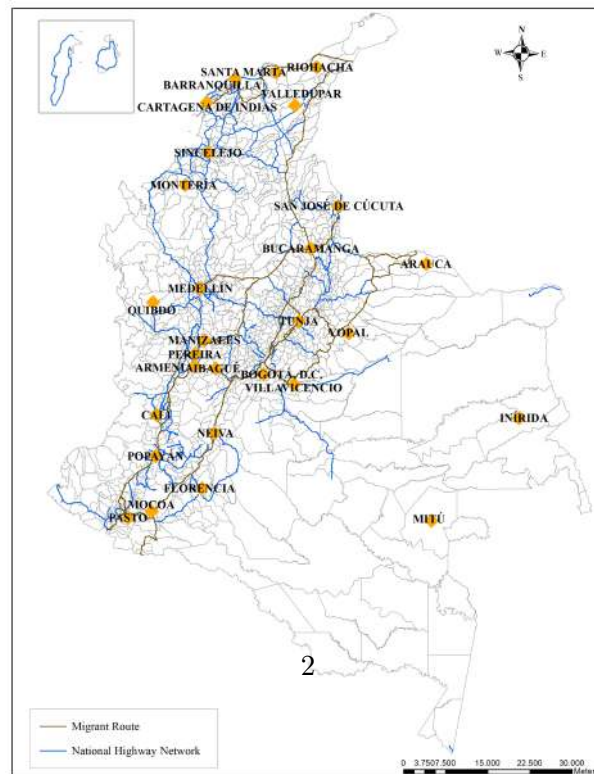


Figure A4: Map displaying the Migrant Route highways and the National Highway Network

## B Parallel Trends Plots

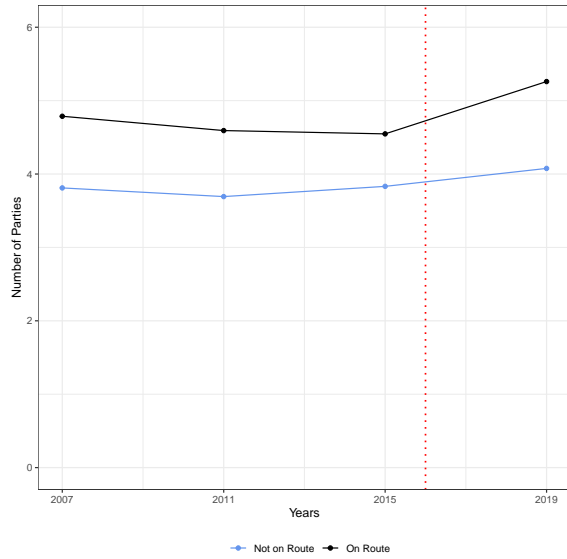


Figure A5: Number of Parties (2007-2019)

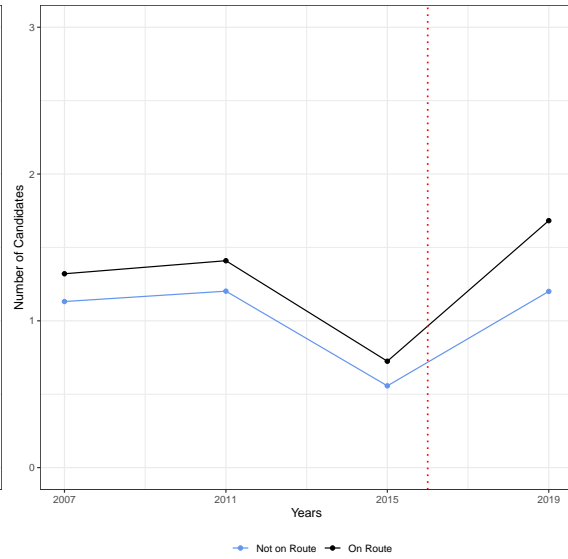


Figure A6: Independents (2007-2019)

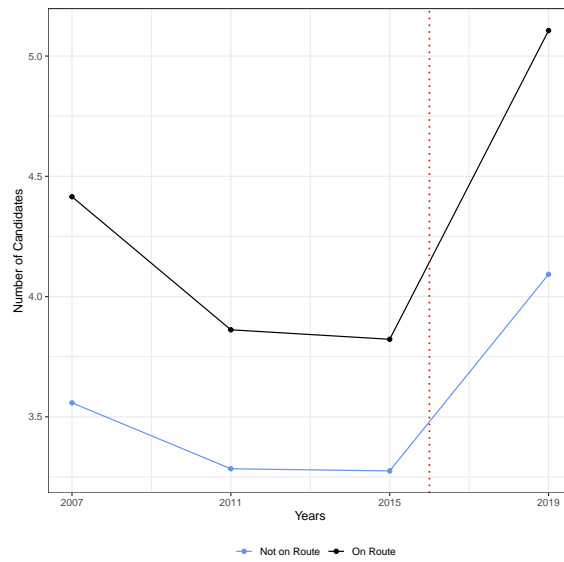


Figure A7: Established Parties (2007-2019)

## B.1 Event Study Results

Dependent Variable:	Number of Parties
<u>Variables</u>	
Migrant Route $\times$ Election Period = -12	0.2647* (0.1545)
Migrant Route $\times$ Election Period = -8	0.1849 (0.1466)
Migrant Route $\times$ Election Period = 0	0.4691*** (0.1566)
<u>Fixed-effects</u>	
municipality	Yes
year	Yes
Observations	6,920
R <sup>2</sup>	0.55531
Within R <sup>2</sup>	0.00410

Signif. Codes: \*\*\*: 0.01, \*\*: 0.05, \*: 0.1

Dependent Variable:	Independents
<u>Variables</u>	
Migrant Route $\times$ Election Period = -12	-0.0464 (0.1271)
Migrant Route $\times$ Election Period = -8	0.0649 (0.1036)
Migrant Route $\times$ Election Period = 0	0.3013*** (0.0861)
<u>Fixed-effects</u>	
municipality	Yes
year	Yes
Observations	2,401
R <sup>2</sup>	0.63521
Within R <sup>2</sup>	0.01211

Signif. Codes: \*\*\*: 0.01, \*\*: 0.05, \*: 0.1

## C Coding of Political Parties

I separate parties out into established parties and independent parties. Established parties include both traditional parties that have long existed in Colombia, for example, El Partido Liberal and El Partido Conservador, in addition to newer parties or movements that have persisted for 2 or more elections. I code other parties or independents if candidates entered in a coalition or in GSCs. I rely on the Elections Registry for registered parties, as well as newspaper and academic sources to classify these officially registered parties.<sup>43</sup>

There are different coding choices that could be made for how to group local candidates in the Colombian system. Fergusson et al. (2021) and Rozo and Vargas (2021) focus on how local candidates are sorted into right, left, or center using a system of coding their platforms and party slogan. There are also those who have instead focused on the categories of “traditional” and “alternative” in order to characterize mayors as either political outsiders or those connected to the established political class such as in Freeman and Prieto (2020).

I choose to focus on party fragmentation instead of ideology for several reasons: 1. From my interviews with candidates and Colombian citizens, there is a strong association of the left with certain established parties such as Colombia Humana, and an association with the right with parties like the Partido Centro Democrático, and candidates may not be strongly affiliated to a single party but it matters to a candidate whether they align themselves in an elections with the left or the right, and they do so in order to have the party backing, infrastructure, and reputation. From my interviews, citizen-parties and coalitions are choices that candidates pursue in order to distance themselves from traditional parties or a left-right ideology. Politicians discuss their choice to join coalitions are more strategic considerations than ideological ones, and while officially one or more of the parties involved

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43. I used the official source of <https://www.registraduria.gov.co/-Partidos-y-movimientos-politicos,317-.html> and Gamboa Gutiérrez (2019).

must register, they often do not bear the party name but a new party name or slogan. For example, “Hand in hand with the People,” (De la Mano con el Pueblo) which is a coalition of two left parties (AICO-ASI). However, coalitions are not always ideological alignments such as the party “Work is Proof” (Obras Son Razones) is a coalition of a left and a right party (Partido Conservador and ASI). This is one of the reasons that in spite of platforms having ideologies or being made up of parties with certain ideological tendencies, I code them as “Independents” as their intentions are to distance themselves from the established spectrum of parties.

The second reason is that on the part of citizens, there is acknowledgement and recognition of these established parties as either right or left - whereas in order to understand the political ideology of a coalition or a single candidate, a citizen would have to be highly specifically engaged with that election, the proposals, and the candidates’ positioning relative to other candidates. There is little inherent association with these party slogans or citizen candidates.

This is a divergence from the approach taken by Rozo and Vargas (2021) and Fergusson et al. (2021) in which they code the independent and coalition platforms based on criteria which is a very thorough method that captures each candidates’ ideology, and by Freeman and Prieto (2020) who examines political linkages. However, these strategies would not align with the mechanism in my model in which candidates are deciding on how to brand themselves and whether to enter using a rough model of dissatisfaction and a barometer of public opinion of established parties.

The parties in my dataset I code as established include Polo Democratico, Alternativo, Partido Verde, Partido Social De Unidad Nacional Partido De la U, Partido Polo Democratico Independiente, Partido Liberal Colombiano, Partido Conservador Colombiano, Partido Colombia Democratica, Partido Cambio Radical Colombiano, Movimiento Vol-

untad Popular, Movimiento Independiente de Renovación Absoluta, Movimiento Fuerza Progresista, Movimiento de Salvación Nacional, Movimiento de Integración Nacional, Movimiento Covergencia Ciudadanan, Movimiento Colombia Viva, Movimiento Cambio Radical, Movimiento Apertura Liberal, Movimiento Alternativo Indígena Y Social (MAIS), Movimiento Alizana Social Indígena (ASI), Movimiento Alas Equipo Colombia.

## D Voteshares and Election Winners for Migrant Routes- Main Sample

### D.1 Main Results: Including Results for Established Parties

Table A1: DiD Estimates: Within 4KM of a Migrant Route - Change Candidate Entry

	Party Entry		
	Number of Parties	Independent	Established Party
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Migrant Route	0.485*** (0.158)	0.312*** (0.085)	0.379 (0.294)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,835	1,835	1,835
R <sup>2</sup>	0.741	0.750	0.704
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.508	0.526	0.438
Residual Std. Error (df = 966)	1.348	0.754	2.368

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

## D.2 Election Outcomes: Voteshares and Winners

Table A2: DiD Estimates: Migrant Route - Voteshares, Election Winner, and Incumbency Analysis

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Independent Voteshares (1)	Independent Won (2)	Switch Parties (3)
Migrant Route	0.028 (0.027)	0.053 (0.044)	0.045 (0.039)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,835	1,835	1,835
R <sup>2</sup>	0.685	0.621	0.689
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.403	0.281	0.410
Residual Std. Error (df = 966)	0.254	0.412	0.361

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

In table A2, I display the results of the effect of the shock along migrant route on election outcomes. I find that null effects for voteshares for Independent parties in column 1 as well as null effects for these Independent candidates winning in column 2, though a positive point estimate for each. In column 3, I show that being along a migrant route does not have a significant effect of switching party type, from traditional to independent or independent to traditional in municipalities along the migrant route, though again there is a positive point estimate. These trends are perhaps indicative that voters are shifting their votes towards these independent parties and that there is a rational basis for these politicians who decided to enter and use non-traditional party labels.

## E Placebo and Robustness Checks

### E.1 High Placebo Test

Table A3: DiD Estimates: Highway Placebo - Change Candidate Entry

	Party Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	-0.132 (0.129)	-0.072 (0.072)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,331	2,331
R <sup>2</sup>	0.732	0.743
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.491	0.512
Residual Std. Error (df = 1228)	1.372	0.748

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01



## E.2 Robustness Analysis for Municipalities with Distance Bandwidths - 10km, 20km, 60km, 80km, and All Colombia

Table A4: DiD Estimates: Migrant Route - Change in Candidate Entry for All Municipalities in Colombia

	Party Entry	
	Number of Parties (1)	Independents (2)
Migrant Route	0.419*** (0.154)	0.354*** (0.080)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,331	2,331
R <sup>2</sup>	0.734	0.748
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.495	0.521
Residual Std. Error (df = 1228)	1.367	0.741
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table A5: DiD Estimates: Within 10 KM of a Migrant Route - Change Candidate Entry

	Party Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	0.414** (0.180)	0.304*** (0.100)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,157	1,157
R <sup>2</sup>	0.739	0.749
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.507	0.525
Residual Std. Error (df = 611)	1.419	0.768
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table A6: DiD Estimates: Within 20 KM of a Migrant Route - Change Candidate Entry

	Party Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	0.449*** (0.166)	0.294*** (0.091)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,455	1,455
R <sup>2</sup>	0.744	0.749
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.515	0.524
Residual Std. Error (df = 767)	1.374	0.766
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table A7: DiD Estimates: Within 60 KM of a Migrant Route - Change Candidate Entry

	Party Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	0.442*** (0.157)	0.330*** (0.083)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,001	2,001
R <sup>2</sup>	0.736	0.749
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.499	0.523
Residual Std. Error (df = 1053)	1.360	0.754
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table A8: DiD Estimates: Within 80 KM of a Migrant Route - Change Candidate Entry

	Party Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	0.444*** (0.156)	0.335*** (0.082)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,065	2,065
R <sup>2</sup>	0.734	0.750
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.495	0.525
Residual Std. Error (df = 1086)	1.365	0.751
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

### E.3 Small Cities Analysis

Table A9: DiD Estimates: Towns with Pop Under 1 Million - Change Candidate Entry

	Party Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	0.485*** (0.157)	0.331*** (0.084)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,827	1,827
R <sup>2</sup>	0.741	0.748
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.509	0.522
Residual Std. Error (df = 962)	1.339	0.748
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table A10: DiD Estimates: Towns with Pop Under 500,000 - Change Candidate Entry

	Party Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	0.415*** (0.157)	0.298*** (0.084)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,810	1,810
R <sup>2</sup>	0.734	0.745
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.495	0.515
Residual Std. Error (df = 953)	1.328	0.745
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

## F Additional Tables for Analysis of Migrant Per Capita and Alternate Measure

### F.1 All Municipalities Robustness Analysis

Table A11: DiD Estimates: Migrant Route vs Migrant Settlement - Change in Party Entry

	Party Competition and Candidate Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	0.332* (0.176)	0.333*** (0.094)
High Migration	0.198 (0.189)	0.067 (0.101)
Route and Settlement	0.125 (0.356)	0.021 (0.182)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,331	2,331
R <sup>2</sup>	0.734	0.748
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.495	0.521
Residual Std. Error (df = 1226)	1.366	0.742

### F.2 Census Measure Robustness Analysis

As an additional check, I also use foreign-born data from the Colombian census in 2018, which is a strategy used by Rozo and Vargas (2021). The 2018 census includes the number of foreigners in each municipality, and those that arrived over the last five years coded as Venezuelans.<sup>44</sup> I use a binary measure of over 1.3%, which is above the third quartile –

44. The national statistical agency of Colombia, DANE, did not release the locations of Venezuelans publicly, the majority of Venezuelan migration happened in and after 2016, as well as vast majority of foreigners in Colombia are Venezuelans. In 2015, there were 139, 134 foreigners living in Colombia.<sup>45</sup> In,

within the 75% of migration.

Table A12: DiD Estimates: Migrant Route vs Migrant Settlement - Change in Party Entry

	Party Competition and Candidate Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	0.316* (0.174)	0.322*** (0.092)
High Settlement	0.248 (0.162)	0.009 (0.090)
Route and Settlement	0.165 (0.315)	0.083 (0.163)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,331	2,331
R <sup>2</sup>	0.735	0.748
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.496	0.520
Residual Std. Error (df = 1226)	1.366	0.742

## G Correlates of Treatment and Balance Tables

I use administrative panel data from CEDE at the Universidad de los Andes in order to examine municipal characteristics in Colombian municipalities, by treatment and control in my sample, and examine the correlates of treatment. This data can be located here: <https://datoscede.uniandes.edu.co/es/>.

This table displays municipal characteristics comparing those in the treated and control groups in my main sample.

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2019, there were 1,142,319 officially living in Colombia.

Characteristic	Along Migrant Route		p-value <sup>2</sup>
	0, N = 590 <sup>1</sup>	1, N = 276 <sup>1</sup>	
Rural Index (%)	0.61 (0.22)	0.44 (0.27)	<0.001
Avg Education (years)	7.00 (0.96)	7.76 (1.24)	<0.001
Population	18,071 (33,480)	112,390 (502,034)	<0.001
GDP per capita (COP)	8,489,994 (8,110,727)	9,085,409 (9,261,015)	0.4
Poverty Rate %	0.50 (0.10)	0.47 (0.10)	<0.001
Total Revenues (COP)	22,785 (43,955)	149,022 (832,967)	<0.001
Deficit (COP)	-2,423 (5,761)	-4,065 (61,718)	0.007
Health Coverage %	0.976 (0.014)	0.973 (0.012)	<0.001
Total Expenditures (COP)	25,208 (47,078)	153,086 (784,820)	<0.001
School Population (%)	27.5 (3.9)	29.7 (3.6)	<0.001
Distance to District Capital (m)	72 (49)	70 (51)	0.3

<sup>1</sup>Statistics presented: Mean (SD)

<sup>2</sup>Statistical tests performed: Wilcoxon rank sum test

Since municipal location along a main migrant route or off a migrant route is not randomly assigned, I investigate municipal factors correlated with receiving treatment. In table A14, I display the results of a regression of treatment assignment (location along a route) and municipal characteristics. I include poverty rates, rural/urban index, school age population, gini index, average educational attainment, health coverage, regional dummies, homicide rate, municipal deficit, expenditures, and different revue streams, a dummy for whether the municipality experienced “La Violencia” from 1948 - 1953, a dummy for coca production, population, and distance to the department capital. I find that treatment is correlated with a lower poverty rate, higher educational attainment, a larger population, and to a closer distance to the district capital. Since these variables are unlikely to vary across short periods of time, the municipal fixed effects in my DiD absorbs these differences. However, in the following section, I create a matched sample as a robustness check in order to achieve greater balance between treatment and control groups.

Table A14: Correlates of Being Located Along a Migrant Route - 2015 Values

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	Migrant Route
poverty rate	-0.771*** (0.191)
rural/urban index	-0.123 (0.080)
school population	0.001 (0.004)
gini	0.022 (0.579)
edu attainment	0.069*** (0.021)
health coverage	0.315 (0.785)
Andino Region	0.063 (0.110)
Caribe Region	0.126 (0.115)
Pacifica Region	0.185* (0.110)
Orinoquia Region	-0.065 (0.129)
homicides	-0.0001 (0.0004)
deficit	-0.00000 (0.00000)
total expenditures	-0.00000 (0.00000)
total revenues	-0.00000 (0.00000)
nontributary revenues	-0.00000 (0.00000)
tributary revenues	0.00000 (0.00000)
violencia 48 - 53	0.029 (0.037)
coca	-0.035 (0.044)
pop 2018	0.00000*** (0.00000)
discapital	0.001*** (0.0003)
Constant	-0.304 (0.856)
Observations	983
R <sup>2</sup>	0.186
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.169
Residual Std. Error	0.390 (df = 962)
F Statistic	10.989*** (df = 20; 962)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01



## H Matching Analysis

I create a matched sample using nearest neighbor matching from the MatchIt package in R. I match on an on urban/rural index, the years of education, population size, GDP per capita, percent of population attending school, total municipal expenditures, total municipal revenues, total deficit, health coverage, and poverty rate. Below is a balance table from the matched sample (due to missingness only 983 out of the 1100 municipalites that I have data for in 2015 were included in the matching).

Characteristic	Along Migrant Route		p-value <sup>2</sup>
	0, N = 237 <sup>1</sup>	1, N = 237 <sup>1</sup>	
Rural Index (%)	0.48 (0.25)	0.44 (0.28)	0.060
Avg Education (years)	7.60 (1.03)	7.86 (1.23)	0.068
Population	34,210 (62,650)	125,730 (540,615)	< 0.001
GDP per capita (COP)	9,547,757 (9,847,075)	8,758,493 (8,633,574)	0.2
Poverty Rate %	0.46 (0.10)	0.46 (0.10)	> 0.9
Total Revenues (COP)	41,466 (83,771)	165,266 (897,868)	< 0.001
Deficit (COP)	-3,985 (11,363)	-3,748 (66,426)	0.2
Health Coverage %	0.974 (0.014)	0.973 (0.012)	0.2
Total Expenditures (COP)	45,451 (90,952)	169,014 (845,743)	< 0.001
School Population (%)	29.5 (4.0)	29.6 (3.4)	0.9
Distance to District Capital (m)	66 (53)	70 (52)	0.3

<sup>1</sup>Statistics presented: Mean (SD)

<sup>2</sup>Statistical tests performed: Wilcoxon rank sum test

There are still some significant differences between municipal characteristics, largely related to population size as those along the migrant route tend to be larger municipalities, and therefore have larger revenues and expenditures. However, there is no reason to expect that the treatment of receiving Venezuelan migrants in transit would have a stronger effect in larger municipalities. In Appendix E.3, I perform the same difference in differences with a sample restricted to small municipalities. Theoretically, smaller municipalities are

likely to have experience a stronger treatment as migrants in transit are more visible and concentrated in fewer places in small towns unlike larger cities in which there are already existing homeless and unincorporated populations and therefore these migrants are less obvious as well as more diffusely spread out across the city.

DiD Estimates: Matched Sample - Change Candidate Entry

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	Party Entry	
	Number of Parties	Independents
	(1)	(2)
Migrant Route	0.354* (0.199)	0.249** (0.103)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,007	1,007
R <sup>2</sup>	0.715	0.778
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.460	0.580
Residual Std. Error (df = 531)	1.469	0.747

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

From table A16, the results replicate with the matched sample in effect size, and the increase in the number of parties is significant at the .1 level and the increase in the number of independents at the .05 level, some loss of significance may be due to power as the matched dataset is smaller, with only about 250 municipalities in each group.

## I Interview List

### *Candidate Interviews*

<b>Label</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Party</b>
<b>C1</b>	Antioquia	Medellin	Partido Polo Democratico Alternativo
<b>C2</b>	Arauca	Arauca	Partido Colombia Renaciente
<b>C3</b>	Atlantico	Barranquilla	Partido Alianza Verde
<b>C4</b>	Bolivar	Cartagena	Compromiso Ciudadano Por Cartagena
<b>C5</b>	Bolivar	Cartagena	Partido Social De Unidad Nacional Partido De La U
<b>C6</b>	Norte De Santander	Cucuta	Colombia Humana Union Patriótica
<b>C7</b>	Norte De Santander	Cucuta	Partido Liberal Colombiano
<b>C8</b>	Norte De Santander	Los Patios	Movimiento Alternativo Indigena Y Social Mais
<b>C9</b>	Norte De Santander	Pamplona	Movimiento Alternativo Indigena Y Social Mais
<b>C10</b>	Norte De Santander	Pamplona	Pamplona Positiva
<b>C11</b>	Norte De Santander	Villa Del Rosario	Movimiento Alternativo Indigena Y Social Mais
<b>C12</b>	Norte De Santander	Villa Del Rosario	Partido Centro Democratico
<b>C13</b>	Santander	Bucaramanga	Unidad Alternativa
<b>C14</b>	Valle	Cali	Movimiento Alternativo Indigena Y Social Mais
<b>C15</b>	Antioquia	Bello	Partido Colombia Renaciente
<b>C16</b>	Antioquia	Girardota	Partido Alianza Verde
<b>C17</b>	Antioquia	Girardota	Movimiento Alternativo Indigena Y Social Mais
<b>C18</b>	Antioquia	Puerto Berrio	Partido Cambio Radical
<b>C19</b>	Antioquia	Santa Rosa De Osos	Partido Alianza Verde
<b>C20</b>	Antioquia	Santa Rosa De Osos	Partido Alianza Social Independiente Asi
<b>C21</b>	Boyaca	Chiquinquirá	Jefferson Caro Alcalde 2020 2023
<b>C22</b>	Boyaca	Chiquinquirá	Partido Colombia Renaciente
<b>C23</b>	Boyaca	Chiquinquirá	Partido Alianza Verde
<b>C24</b>	Boyaca	Duitama	Partido De Reivindicacion Etnica
<b>C25</b>	Boyaca	Paipa	Partido Alianza Social Independiente Asi
<b>C26</b>	Boyaca	Sogamoso	Partido Polo Democratico Alternativo
<b>C27</b>	Casanare	Monterrey	Partido Alianza Verde
<b>C28</b>	Casanare	Paz De Ariporo	Partido Colombia Justa Libres
<b>C29</b>	Casanare	Yopal	Somos Una Fuerza Para El Bien
<b>C30</b>	Nariño	Ipiales	Partido Ada
<b>C31</b>	La Guajira	Maicao	El Verdadero Cambio
<b>C32</b>	La Guajira	Riohacha	Riohacha Cambia la Historia

*Other Interviews*

<b>Label</b>	<b>Departament</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Office or Function</b>
<b>C31</b>	Antioquia	Girardota	Secretary of Health
<b>C32</b>	Antioquia	Girardota	Secretary of Governance
<b>C33</b>	Antioquia	Santa Rosa de Osos	Victim's Unit
<b>C34</b>	Casanare	Monterrey	Local Council
<b>C35</b>	Casanare	Monterrey	Mayor's Office
<b>C36</b>	Arauca	Arauca	Representative
<b>C37</b>	Atlántico	Barranquilla	Professor
<b>C38</b>	Atlántico	Barranquilla	Professor
<b>C39</b>	Atlántico	Barranquilla	Professor
<b>C40</b>	Norte de Santander	Pamplona	NGO
<b>C41</b>	Santander	Bucaramanga	Coordinator of Migración Colombia
<b>C42</b>	Santander	Bucaramanga	NGO
<b>C43</b>	Santander	Bucaramanga	NGO
<b>C44</b>	Santander	Bucaramanga	Personero
<b>C45</b>	Santander	Bucaramanga	Senator
<b>C46</b>	Valle	Cali	NGO
<b>C47</b>	Chocó	Quibdó	Governor's Office
<b>C48</b>	Chocó	Quibdó	Secretary of Inclusion
<b>C49</b>	Chocó	Quibdó	NGO
<b>C50</b>	Chocó	Quibdó	NGO
<b>C52</b>	Norte de Santander	Cúcuta and Villa del Rosario	Government Advisor
<b>C53</b>	Norte de Santander	Cúcuta and Villa del Rosario	NGO
<b>C54</b>	Norte de Santander	Cúcuta and Villa del Rosario	Secretary of Health
<b>C55</b>	Norte de Santander	Cúcuta	Local Council
<b>C56</b>	Norte de Santander	Cúcuta and Villa del Rosario	Government Advisor in Migración COlombia
<b>C57</b>	Norte de Santander	Cúcuta and Villa del Rosario	NGO
<b>C58</b>	Norte de Santander	Cúcuta	Advisor in Gerencia de Frontera
<b>C61</b>	La Guajira	Maicao	Education Specialist/School Director
<b>C62</b>	La Guajira	Maicao	Community Leader/Mayoral Aspirant
<b>C63</b>	La Guajira	Maicao	Community Leader/Education Worker
<b>C64</b>	La Guajira	Maicao	NGO
<b>C65</b>	La Guajira	Maicao	NGO
<b>C66</b>	Antioquia	Medellín	Politician/Candidate to the Senate
<b>C67</b>	La Guajira	Riohacha	Secretary of Governance
<b>C68</b>	La Guajira	Riohacha	NGO
<b>C69</b>	La Guajira	Riohacha	NGO

<b>C70</b>	La Guajira	Riohacha	Government Advisor
<b>C71</b>	La Guajira	Riohacha	Community Leader
<b>C72</b>	La Guajira	Riohacha	NGO
<b>C73</b>	La Guajira	Riohacha	Secretary of Development
<b>C74</b>	La Guajira	Pamplona	Community Leader
<b>C75</b>	Norte de Santander	Pamplona	Personero and Defensor del Pueblo
<b>C76</b>	Norte de Santander	Pamplona	Secretary of Transport and Mobility
<b>C77</b>	Norte de Santander	Pamplona	Local Council
<b>C78</b>	Norte de Santander	Pamplona	Secretary of Health
<b>C79</b>	Norte de Santander	Pamplona	Local Council
<b>C80</b>	Norte de Santander	Pamplona	Social Leader
<b>C81</b>	Cudinamara	Bogotá	Government Advisor
<b>C82</b>	Cudinamara	Bogotá	NGO
<b>C83</b>	Cudinamara	Bogotá	Government Advisor
<b>C84</b>	N/A	Migrant Route	Transit Migrant Focus Group 1
<b>C85</b>	N/A	Migrant Route	Transit Migrant Focus Group 2
<b>C86</b>	Norte de Santander	Pamplona	Colombian Citizen Focus Group 1
<b>C87</b>	Norte de Santander	Villa del Rosario	Colombian Citizen Focus Group 2
<b>C88</b>	La Guajira	Maicao	Bienestar Familiar
<b>C89</b>	Chocó	Quibdó	NGO
<b>C90</b>	Cudinamarca	Bogotá	Residents/Voters
<b>C91</b>	Norte de Santander	Pamplona	Residents/Voters
<b>C92</b>	Norte de Santander	Villa del Rosario	Residents/Voters
<b>C93</b>	La Guajira	Riohacha	Residents/Voters
<b>C94</b>	Cudinamarca	Bogotá	NGO
<b>C95</b>	Cudinamarca	Bogotá	NGO
<b>C96</b>	Cudinamarca	Bogotá	NGO
<b>C97</b>	USA	Washington D.C.	NGO
<b>C98</b>	Arauca	Arauca	NGO
<b>C99</b>	Norte de Santander	Villa del Rosario y Pamplona	NGO
<b>C100</b>	Valle	Cali	Migrant Focus Group 3
<b>C101</b>	Valle	Cali	Colombian Citizen Focus Group 4
<b>C102</b>	Valle	Cali	Community Leader
<b>C103</b>	Boyacá	Tunja	NGO
<b>C104</b>	Boyacá	Chía	NGO
<b>C104</b>	Boyacá	Cajicá	NGO
<b>C105</b>	Cudinamarca	Bogotá	NGO
<b>C106</b>	Cudinamarca	Bogotá	NGO
<b>C107</b>	Cudinamarca	Bogotá	NGO
<b>C108</b>	Cudinamarca	Bogotá	NGO
<b>C109</b>	Cudinamarca	Bogotá	NGO

## J Topic Model - Full Results and Methodology

### J.1 Interactive Results

This section contains links to the interactive topic models:

- All Platforms
- Treated Platforms - On Migrant Route
- Control Platforms - Not Along Migrant Route

### J.2 Cleaning and Robustness

In order to construct the topic models, I used `pyLDAvis` in Python from <https://github.com/bmabey/pyLDAvis>. First, to process the documents of each political grouping located in a given municipality, page-by-page cleaning was conducted in order to eliminate links, punctuation marks, double spaces, repetitive letters within words, quotation marks and strange characters (UTF-8 or Latin symbols). After this process, stopwords were eliminated from the text to avoid using overused words that did not provide predictive power to the classification, then bi-grams and tri-grams were built to detect repetitive phrases in the texts, helping to improve the final classification for each topic. This made it possible to detect names of political groups throughout the document (Example: `leticia_sostenible`), which allowed them to be counted as differentiated tokens during the classification. Finally, through the <https://spacy.io/> library, entities belonging to the texts with their own names were recognized and the words inside the documents were lemmatized to avoid repetition generating noise in the final prediction.

Then, a bag-of-words approximation was used to fit the LDA model to the data. The bag-of-words approach facilitates mixing the distribution within multiple words to create

larger text structures such as n-grams that later permits the incorporation of the estimation of the probabilistic topic model. Resulting from the optimization process, the model can identify the probability that a document in the corpus belongs to a topic. Thus given the collection of platforms I can identify how they are related based on the probability generated by the words in it and the meaning of the combination of these words.

### J.3 Robustness of the LDA Models

Since I pre-process the documents to build the model, the metrics used to optimize are robust and valid (Doshi - Velez, Fan & Miratriz, 2017). There are two classic measures used - coherence and perplexity - in order to evaluate the performance of LDA models.

**The Coherence** metric was introduced by Mimno et al. (2011) and measures the degree of similarity between the documents in a topic. The higher the coherence is, the better the model is semantically classifying the topics, which means that the topics are more likely to predict the corpus. As a robustness check, I run 540 models each with different parameter combinations (number of topics, and different alpha, and beta values) to optimize the coherence score. The results of this analysis are displayed below for the three main models in Figure A8,– the general model for all platforms, the model of the Treated municipalities, and the model of the Control municipalities.

Figure A8: Coherence Plots

