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THE POLITICS OF U.S. SOUTHERN BORDER MIGRATION

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Abstract

This thesis examines the impact of the post-2020 surge in U.S. Southern Border migration on political attitudes and policy preferences. Using a shift-share instrument and data from the Cooperative Election Study, it identifies a rightward shift among voters, particularly Democrats, toward stricter immigration policies and increased border security. The study also links immigration surges to enhanced approval for Republican politicians and reduced support for Democrats, indicating a broader realignment of political dynamics. The findings highlight the intricate interplay between migration patterns and political shifts, contributing to the literature on immigration and electoral behavior.

JEL Codes: D72, F22, F52, J15.

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I. Introduction

In November 2020, Democratic candidate Joe Biden was elected as the 46th president of the United States, marking the culmination of the Democratic Party's concerted effort to unseat incumbent Republican Donald Trump. Yet, four years later, the political tides have shifted dramatically. The same candidate defeated by Biden has now reclaimed the presidency, triumphing over Vice President Kamala Harris. With the Republican Party once again securing dominance, the question arises: what changed? According to Gallup, nearly all crucial issues that have historically correlated with presidential election outcomes or reflect current views of the major parties, which include advantages in party identification and leanings among U.S. adults, perceptions that the GOP is better equipped to address the nation's most pressing issue, widespread dissatisfaction with the state of the nation, and negative assessments of the economy under a Democratic administration leaned in favor of the Republican Party over the Democratic Party before this year's election (Jones, 2024) which ultimately culminated in the worst evaluation of Biden's job tenure - under one third of Americans (32%) approved of Biden's job as president as of July 2024 (Pew Research Center, 2024).

Simultaneously, over the last three years, immigration - particularly through the Southwest Land Border (SLB or SB hereafter) [1] - surged as one of the core issues of the Biden administration. Between 2021 and 2024 a record number of crossings was registered in the SLB, which lead to what 45% of American citizens called, as of February 2024, an '*immigration crisis*' (Pew Research Center, 2024). In fact, not only was immigration viewed negatively, but also held significantly more importance in the American political landscape, as, according to Gallup, in February 2024 immigration became the single most important problem for American citizens, the first time it had done so since 2019 (Jones, 2024).

As immigration grew more important in the political landscape, many analysts, commentators and political figures questioned the effect immigration might have had in the political shift observed over the Biden administration - Ronald Brownstein of CNN weighed in on the

1. The term 'Southwest Land Border' specifically denotes the entirety of the land border shared between the United States and Mexico. This should not be conflated with the 'Southern Land and Coastal Border', which encompasses both the U.S.-Mexico land border and the coastal border along the southern United States. (*Source*: U.S. Customs and Border Protection)

matter: ”the increased focus and rightward tilt of Republican voters on the [immigration] issue is clearly boosting Trump.” (Brownstein, 2024). Whereas other factors like access to mobile internet (Melnikov, 2021) or policy diffusion (DellaVigna and Kim, 2022) may have been the drivers of previous political shifts in the U.S., a general sentiment that immigration might also be a driver of political shift has been echoed in a number of present-day investigations (Barone et al., 2016; Halla, Wagner, and Zweimüller, 2017; Dustmann, Vasiljeva, and Piil Damm, 2019; Edo et al., 2019; Bursztyn et al., 2021; Mayda, Peri, and Steingress, 2022; Calderon, Fouka, and Tabellini, 2023; Alesina and Tabellini, 2024), despite some authors arguing that (total) immigration is a complex issue that encompasses different types of effects and might not be the driver of political shift, focusing instead on the different skill levels of immigrants (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010; Moriconi, Peri, and Turati, 2022) or the type of immigration (e.g. legal vs. undocumented migration) (Light and Miller, 2018) as drivers of political shift.

This paper addresses the impact of immigration, with a particular focus on the increase in total SLB crossings in 2021-2023, on the U.S.'s political landscape. It is the first to explore how this specific increase in the influx of migrants has affected U.S. Politics and to extensively analyze its impact not only on politics but also on policy preferences, particularly in regards to immigration related ones. Using data from Harvard's Cooperative Election Study (CES) (formerly the Cooperative Congressional Election Study, CCES) covering 548,234 individuals living in 3,139 counties between 2010 and 2023, I show that this surge in immigration caused respondents to shift towards more stringent immigration policy positions, like supporting an increase in border security, becoming more concerned about granting legal status to undocumented immigrants and encouraging increased police spending. The spike in immigration also prompted voters to become less aligned with liberal political views. These effects appear to be more significant among Democratic and swing voters. I also demonstrate that this immigration influx contributed to an increase in Republican politicians' approval rates and a decrease in the Democratic politicians' approval.

This work's empirical approach is grounded in a two-stage least squares (2SLS) estimation, employing a shift-share instrument derived from historical immigrant settlement patterns and country-of-origin inflows (Card, 2001). By using 2000 Census data on immigration patterns

coupled with CBP data on overall SLB immigration flows from 2010 to 2023 this instrument is used to predict exposure to migration in this time period (2010-2023). Year and county fixed effects and baseline covariates are employed to mitigate potential issues related to omitted variable bias. The findings are robust to the inclusion of state-year and political-affiliation-year fixed effects, indicating that the estimated effects are primarily attributable to local immigration patterns. Additionally, controlling for individual-level factors such as race, gender, education, income and age does not alter the results.

The instrumental variable identification strategy adopted in this study mirrors that of prior research in many empirical papers that study the impact of immigration on political or labor-market outcomes (Card, 2001; Borjas and Cassidy, 2019; Edo et al., 2019; Tabellini, 2020; Moriconi, Peri, and Turati, 2022) . It relies on the assumption that the historical distribution (patterns) of immigrants is uncorrelated with subsequent economic and demographic transformations in the native population, beyond its impact on current immigration flows.

Additionally, I use the share of Mexican immigrants instead of the share of (overall) migrants as the static component of a placebo instrument. The intuition behind this is that Mexican migration, contrary to overall migration, did not increase over the last years - in fact, it has been decreasing since 2010. Thus, given that new migrants settle in the same communities as previous generations of migrants, places with larger shares of Mexican migrants should not experience the same effects as other regions, as migrants from other nationalities settled where their own country communities resided, opposed to moving into Mexican neighborhoods. By documenting that there are indeed no significant effects on this placebo exercise, I strengthen the robustness of my analysis.

This study contributes to nine strains of the existing literature. Most importantly, it expands upon the substantial existing body of knowledge regarding the political implications of immigration in the U.S. (Espenshade and Hempstead, 1996; Daniel J. Tichenor, 2002; Daniel J Tichenor, 2009; Doty, 2012; Leitner, 2012; Valentino, Brader, and Jardina, 2013; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2015; Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2018; Bursztyn et al., 2021; Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022; Mayda, Peri, and Steingress, 2022; Chavez, 2023; Portes and Rumbaut, 2024). This literature has predominantly focused on the political implications of im-

migration for previous waves of U.S. migration using direct analysis of surveys or utilizing country-of-origin variations of the shift-share instrument. I present novel evidence that shows that not only within-country communities have settled in the same place but also that, overall, migrants have been settling in the same places as the previous generations of migrants, which allows me to present a unique transformation in the shift-share instrument, where the share of overall migrants is used as the static component. Furthermore, using this state-of-the-art instrument, I extend this work by showing how overall U.S. Southern Border migration, as opposed to distinct forms of migration, has led to new political developments in the U.S.. For instance, I demonstrate that these inflows contributed to changes to anti-immigration stances in immigration related preferences by both Democratic-leaning and Republican-leaning voters, with Republican-leaning voters growing increasingly concerned about granting legal status to undocumented immigrants and Democratic-leaning encouraging increased border security and greater police spending.

Subsequently, by advancing the literature on the political implications of immigration in the U.S., this paper also contributes to the broader literature on contemporary U.S. political shifts (Schaffner, MacWilliams, and Nteta, 2018; Autor et al., 2020; Martherus et al., 2021; Melnikov, 2021) and the general political implications of immigration, which range from the impact of immigration on reducing liberal-leaning preferences (Hampshire, 2013; Edo et al., 2019; Alesina, Murard, and Rapoport, 2021) or increasing conservative/right-wing political views (Halla, Wagner, and Zweimüller, 2017; Edo et al., 2019; Moriconi, Peri, and Turati, 2022) to political polarization (Gattinara and Morales, 2017; Hout and Maggio, 2021; Schneider-Strawczynski and Valette, 2023), which in turn play a part in the literature on immigration and voting behavior (Barone et al., 2016; Dustmann, Vasiljeva, and Piil Damm, 2019; Rozo and Vargas, 2021). My paper differs from this literature by showing that the political consequences of immigration in the latest immigration inflow were not uniform (i.e. marked by distinct characteristics - reduction in liberal-leaning preferences and increase in conservative/right-wing political views - in different aspects of political change) which also distinguishes the latest political shift from previous U.S. political shifts, as shown in the placebo exercise, where I prove that Mexican immigration, key to previous U.S. political shifts (Gutiérrez, 1995; Acuña, 2020), did not con-

tribute to the effects observed in the latest U.S. political shift.

This paper also builds on existing research on the impact of immigration in immigration-related policy preferences. The work most closely related to mine is that of Calderon, Fouka, and Tabellini (2023), which find, using a shift-share instrument to predict Black inflows, that Great Migration boosted Democratic Party support, increased congressional support for civil rights, and spurred efforts to advance civil rights in non-Southern regions of the US. Beyond focusing on distinct policy preferences, my research departs from this study in two significant respects. Firstly, my instrument is predictive of total immigration and by nationality inflows, thus allowing me to study the political consequences of different types of immigration (rather than 'ethnically uniform' migration) . Second, I elucidate that total migratory flows, and not just Black inflows, have an impact on immigration-related policy preferences.

Furthermore, by studying the impact of Mexican and total immigration alike, this paper is also related to the literature on the determinants of natives' preferences about immigrants (Tabellini, 2020). Finally, this paper associates with the long-standing literature on Bartik instruments (Bartik, 1991; Blanchard et al., 1992; Autor, Dorn, and Hanson, 2013; Adao, Kolesár, and Morales, 2019) and more specifically on immigration shift-share instruments (Card, 2001; Card, 2009; Jaeger, Ruist, and Stuhler, 2018; Goldsmith-Pinkham, Sorkin, and Swift, 2020).

The subsequent sections of this paper are organized as follows. Section II presents an introductory background on the history of U.S. Southern Border migration. Section III describes the data and the identification strategy. Section IV demonstrates the effects of U.S. Southern Border migration on immigration-related policy preferences, political views and political polarization. Section V delves into the direct effects linked to the political ramifications of migration. Section VI concludes.

II. Historical Overview: U.S. Southern Border Migration

Since the inauguration of Joe Biden as U.S. president in January 2021 more than 8 million immigrants (as of the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 [2]) were encountered at the Southwestern

2. A Fiscal Year (FY) in the U.S. starts in October of the previous civil year and end in September of said year, so the end of FY2024 is September 2024.

Land Border - nearly 6 million immigrants arrived during the period analyzed in this paper (up to the end of FY2023). Annual immigration peaked in FY2022 (October 2021 – September 2022), but the highest monthly total occurred in December 2023, when 301,982 encounters reported. Figure 1 displays encounters at the yearly level until the end of FY2024.

This is not the first instance of the U.S. Southwest Land Border taking center stage in a surge of migratory flows. To understand the context of this phenomenon, it is crucial to examine the history of migration along the U.S.-Mexico border. Following the establishment of the border in the 19th and early 20th centuries, U.S. labor demands in agriculture and railroad construction attracted many Mexican workers. The Mexican Revolution (1910–1917) further spurred migration, particularly among women and children. The mid-20th century saw the Bracero Program (1942–1964) facilitate the temporary migration of Mexican laborers to address labor shortages. However, migration patterns shifted dramatically in the late 20th century due to sociopolitical factors and legislative changes, such as the termination of the Bracero Program, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, and increasing unauthorized immigration. Ironically, IRCA, designed to curb illegal immigration, inadvertently contributed to its rise, particularly among Mexican nationals, due to emerging challenges in border control and enforcement (Lorey, 1999).

In the 21st century, migration patterns at the U.S.-Mexico border underwent significant changes shaped by a multifaceted interaction of social and political dynamics and economic conditions. In response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the U.S. government introduced heightened security measures, leading to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003, which expanded immigration enforcement and border security agencies. In the aftermath of the 2008 Financial Crisis, there was a stabilization on the number of migrants at the border, until 2021, when, migrant crossings significantly increased after President Biden's relaxation of migration policies.

This migration surge, which began right as President Biden stepped into office, can be attributed to four main root causes - the first relates to economic challenges, as many migrants fled deteriorating economic conditions in their home countries, particularly in Central America. High levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality contributed significantly to migration

pressures (Portes and Rumbaut, 2024) and all of these were exacerbated by the second responsible factor of the migration surge - the COVID-19 pandemic (Huezo and Hare, 2021; UNDP, 2023). The third factor behind this spike is one of political and social nature - political unrest and violence in Central America and South America, particularly in countries such as Brazil, Nicaragua or Venezuela. This turmoil has pushed many to migrate to the U.S. in search of safety and stability (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS), 2023). The final element of the four is the structural change in migration networks - the expansion of transcontinental smuggling networks, fueled by advancements in digital technology, has also transformed migration dynamics (Clemens, 2021; De Haas, 2021). These networks have become more sophisticated, allowing for easier and faster movement of people across borders. This final component, in particular, has contributed to a massive shift in one of the key aspects of Southern Land Border migration influxes - migrant composition by citizenship. Whereas Mexican and Northern Triangle (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) immigrants constituted the majority of past migration flows in the U.S. SLB, migrants from Caribbean countries, South America and other nations like China, India or Turkey [3] played a massive role in the current spike in migration numbers .

These four factors, coupled with early changes in immigration policies in the Biden Administration like the introduction of the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 on his first day in office, which aimed to halt the construction of the Mexican border wall, rescind the travel ban, and reaffirm protections for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, or the implementation of measures to restrain deportation practices by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), focusing enforcement efforts on national security and violent crime rather than on non-violent offenses and the revoke of several Trump-era policies [4] helped contribute to the rapid immigration spike that began in 2021 and then extended, and even accelerated, into the following years [5].

3. Appendix Figures A1-A3 display migration data for select countries which were major contributors for the 2021-2024 Southwest Land Border crossings surge.

4. Appendix Section A.2 discusses one of these migration policies - Trump's Title 42 policy - and its consequences in further detail.

5. This migration surge also featured another attribute which distinguished it from previous migratory influxes - its intricate and complex connection with modern social media, which is discussed in Appendix Section A.1.

III. Data and Identification Strategy

III.A. Data

This subsection provides a concise overview of the principal data sources employed in the analysis. A more comprehensive examination of these data sources, accompanied by an overview of supplementary variables, is available in Appendix Section A.2.

Immigration: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). - The data on yearly U.S. Southern Border Encounters comes from data provided by the CBP on these statistics and cover the period from 2010 to 2023 [6]. Figure 1 illustrates migration data for these years, showing the rapid increase in SLB migration in the Biden Administration [7].

Immigration: 2000 Census Immigration Shares. - For the static component of the shift-share instrument I use 2000 county-level immigration shares as the historical predictor of migration patterns across the U.S.. The data are derived directly from county-level estimates of the total immigrant population, categorized by nationality, as reported in the 2000 U.S. Census. Figure 2A depicts the distribution of immigrants (share of migrant population in county) in 2000 [8].

Immigration: American Community Survey (ACS). - To conduct the first-stage regression, in which I assess if the shift-share instrument is a good predictor of contemporary immigrant settlement patterns, I use yearly Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) level estimates of immigration inflows from 2012 to 2018 [9]. The map in Figure 2B illustrates immigration patterns in 2022-2023, demonstrating that recent immigrants chose to establish themselves in regions previously settled by earlier waves of migrants.

Congressional Election Study (CES). - The paper's main outcome variables examine individuals' policy preferences and political views using data from the CES, spanning 2010 to 2023. This data comprises annual cross-sectional polls of 10,000-18,000 (non-election years) and 25,000-60,000 (election years) respondents, geolocated at the county level. Respondents

6. A more detailed discussion on the intricacies of this data, including, e.g. the different apprehension and encounter definitions, can be found in Appendix Section A.2.

7. Immigration figures by nationality are displayed in Figures A1-A3 in the Appendix.

8. For comparison sake, the shares depicted in the map are estimates at the 2020 Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) geographical level, though county-level estimates will be used for the shift-share instrument.

9. In the following subsection I address the validity of the instrument and some restrictions of this data. Moreover, in Appendix Section A.2 I address some other concerns regarding the choice of estimates (ACS over Current Population Survey (CPS)) and some concerns regarding ACS estimates/geographical issues.

are inquired on their opinions on increasing security along the U.S.–Mexico border (2010–2017, 2019-2023), conferring legal status to unauthorized immigrants (2010–2017, 2019-2023), and their spending preferences on law enforcement (2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2023). Regarding political views, the question of interest is the following: *"How would you describe your political views: very liberal, liberal, moderate, conservative, or very conservative?"* Focusing on this question enables me to analyze the divergence in Democrats' and Republicans' preferred positions on a one-dimensional ideological spectrum. Additional survey items elicit information pertaining to political affiliation, institutional approval, voting intentions, and demographic characteristics, including gender, race, age, educational attainment and income level. All in all, the Cooperative Election Study (CES) covers 548,234 individuals living in 3,139 counties between 2010 and 2023.

III.B. Identification Strategy

Instrument for Immigration Changes. - The primary empirical difficulty in this analysis lies in the possibility that migrants may have self-selected into areas already experiencing economic and political transformations. To address this and related issues, I estimate migratory inflows to county c in year t using a variant of the shift-share instrument frequently utilized in migration studies (Card, 2001; Boustan, 2010; Mayda, Peri, and Steingress, 2022; Calderon, Fouka, and Tabellini, 2023). The instrument $\widehat{Immigration}_{ct}$ forecasts the variation in the immigrant population residing in a given county c by interacting the share of immigrants present in county c in 2000 (sh_c) with the number of immigrants that have been encountered at the Southern Border during year t (IMG_t):

$$\widehat{Immigration}_{ct} = sh_c \, IMG_t \tag{1}$$

Finally, I scale $\widehat{Immigration}_{ct}$ by units per standard deviation change. As discussed in a number of previous studies, immigrant settlement patterns in the U.S. have kept highly persistent over time. Borjas and Katz (2007) display evidence that despite a steady and substantial redistribution of Mexican immigrants from Texas to California in the mid 20th Century the distribution of Mexican migrants has kept fairly persistent over the late 20th Century, with just

a slight redistribution of migrants from California to other states like Arizona, New York and Florida [10]. Massey and Zenteno (1999) argue that the dynamics of mass migration cause persistence of migration to the '*principal immigrant-receiving states (California, New York, Florida, Illinois, Texas).*', especially in the second half of the 20th century.

Several recent papers discuss the conditions for the validity of shift-share designs (Jaeger, Ruist, and Stuhler, 2018; Adao, Kolesár, and Morales, 2019; Goldsmith-Pinkham, Sorkin, and Swift, 2020; Borusyak, Hull, and Jaravel, 2022). An alternative formulation of the instrument's underlying identifying assumption can be stated as follows. 1. In the absence of the immigration growth, would politics in areas with different immigration shares in 2000 have evolved in the same way? Section IV.C discusses the identifying assumption through an event study analysis, where the existence of pre-trends is analyzed.

IV Specifications. - To estimate the effects of immigration on a range of political outcomes, I estimate the following specification:

$$y_{it} = \alpha \, \widehat{Immigration}_{ct} + \mathbf{X}'_{ict} \, \beta + \varphi_c + \delta_t + \epsilon_{it} \tag{2}$$

where i, c and t denote individuals, counties and years, in that order. The outcomes y_{it} can be divided into two main groups: immigration-related policy preferences and political views.

The former describes individuals' policy preferences regarding border security, immigrant legalization and police spending. The latter represents the political perspectives of participants (e.g., a binary indicator denoting if the person reports their stance as liberal or very liberal). φ_c and δ_t are county and year fixed effects. $\mathbf{X}$ is a vector of baseline individual-specific variables, incorporating binary indicators for participants' sex, race, age, educational attainment and income category.

I also predict the impact of immigration on these outcomes by political affiliation (i.e. Democrat or Republican) utilizing Specification (3):

$$y_{it} = \alpha \, \widehat{Immigration}_{ct} \times Pol.Affiliation_c + \mathbf{X}'_{ict} \, \beta + \varphi_c + \delta_t + \epsilon_{it} \tag{3}$$

where $Pol.Affiliation$ is a measure representing the partisan alignment of the county where

10. Card and Lewis (2007) discuss the Mexican immigrant diffusion in the 1990s with greater detail.

the person resides during the 2008 presidential race.

Finally, I employ the subsequent first stage regression to analyze whether the instrument $\widehat{Immigration}_{pt}$ is a valid predictor of immigration inflows:

$$\textbf{\textit{ImmigrantFlows}}_{pt} = \alpha \, \widehat{Immigration}_{pt} + \varphi_p + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{pt} \tag{4}$$

where p indexes Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA), $\textbf{\textit{ImmigrantFlows}}_{pt}$ are the ACS estimates of immigration inflows in PUMA p for year t and φ_p and γ_t are PUMA and year fixed effects, respectively [11].

As outlined earlier, the primary hurdle in establishing the causal interpretation of the IV estimates lies in the possibility that immigration shocks occurred in regions already undergoing shifts in political attitudes prior to the migration influx. To mitigate this issue, Section IV.C introduces various robustness checks and placebo tests. For example, it demonstrates that the observed shifts in political perspectives remain consistent even when incorporating state-year and political-affiliation-year fixed effects. In addition, as a placebo exercise, I demonstrate that locations with large shares of Mexican migrants did not experience changes in political views. This result supports the notion that the fact that migration from Mexico did not increase in 2021-2023. Finally, I use the Affordable Care Act and Clean Air and Water Acts as placebo outcomes - I find that immigration did not impact preferences regarding healthcare or environment.

Finally, I investigate particular direct consequences linked to the effect of immigration on political viewpoints - utilizing Specifications (2) and (3) I investigate the impact of immigration on political perceptions, more specifically Senator approval rates and vote intentions (i.e. the party the Senator which the respondents self-report as intending to vote in the upcoming elections is affiliated with).

11. ACS county-level estimates are not available for public use, which is why the first-stage equation is estimated separately - a more robust analysis of why PUMA estimates were not used to construct the instrument can be found in Appendix Section A.3.

IV. The Politics of U.S. Southern Border Migration

IV.A. Main Results

Column 1 of Table 1 displays the findings of the first-stage equation estimated using Specification (4). The sample consists of 2168 PUMA-level estimates between 2012 and 2018. The results suggest that the instrument is very predictive of actual PUMA immigration inflows, with an F-stat of 214. This conclusion is complemented by the results presented in Figure 2, where similarities can be found between the distribution of immigrants in 2000 and immigration patterns in 2022 and 2023.

The subsequent columns display the findings from analyzing how immigration influenced individuals' preferences regarding immigration-related policies, utilizing Specification (2). The variables of interest are binary indicators representing individuals' policy preferences. The results presented in this table evidence that immigration has caused a shift in policy preferences leading to higher support for increased border security, reduced approval for granting legal status to unauthorized immigrants and higher support for increased police spending. These results confirm that immigration had a strong impact on individuals' policy preferences.

Table 2 showcases the outcomes of assessing how immigration impacts individuals' political perspectives, employing Specification (2). In Column 1, the dependent variable is a binary indicator for holding liberal or strongly liberal views, while in Column 2, it represents a binary indicator for conservative or strongly conservative views [12]. It can be seen that whilst immigration did not impact significantly the share of individuals that hold conservative or very conservative views, it did significantly decrease the share of individuals that self-describe as having liberal or very liberal views. These results evidence that immigration, in general, led to a rightward shift of political views along the one dimensional political spectrum.

IV.B. Results by Political Affiliation

Table 3 highlights the findings of measuring the impact of immigration on individuals' immigration related policy preferences by political affiliation, using Specification (3). County

12. Remarkably, the variable representing conservative or strongly conservative political views is not entirely collinear with the one capturing liberal or strongly liberal views, as respondents had the option to identify themselves as moderate.

political alignment is determined by the voting results from the 2008 presidential election. Counties where Obama won (lost) by at least 10 percentage points are classified as Democratic-leaning (Republican-leaning), while all other counties are categorized as swing counties. Based on this classification, Column 1 indicates that recent immigration influxes significantly increased support for enhanced border security measures in Democratic-leaning and, to a lesser extent, in swing counties. Column 2 shows that, on the other hand, Republican-leaning counties became significantly more strict regarding immigrant legalization, though Democratic-leaning counties also followed the same trend. Finally, Column 3 shows that it was again in Democratic-leaning counties where support for higher police spending increased significantly following the latest migratory influx.

Table 4 illustrates the findings from estimating the relationship between immigration and respondents' political views. using Specification (3). Columns 1 and 3 display results on the impact of immigration on the share of individuals that hold liberal or very liberal and conservative or very conservative views, respectively, using county-level political affiliation. These results confirm that there seems to be no significant change in the share of individuals that are conservative or very conservative but, on the other hand, inhabitants of predominantly Democratic counties were less inclined to identify with liberal or strongly liberal views. Columns 2 and 4 present findings where 2008 county-level voting patterns with are replaced by individual-level party affiliation as a measure of political orientation [13]. The results in Column 2 reveal that after the latest wave of immigration, voters overall were less inclined to identify with liberal or strongly liberal views. Conversely, Column 4 indicates that while Democratic voters showed a significant surge in the probability of adopting conservative views, the effect was reversed for independent voters, who became less likely to hold such views.

Overall, these results show that Democratic voters' policy preferences and political views seem to be the ones most affected by the latest migration flows - more specifically, these results point to a rightward movement across the political axis towards more conservative immigration policy preferences and political views.

13. Given that immigration shocks can lead respondents to change their party membership, individual-level party affiliation results should be interpreted cautiously.

IV.C. Identification Assumptions and Robustness Checks

In the following subsection, I examine several key assumptions that must hold for the observed effects of immigration on individuals' policy preferences and political views to be interpreted as causal. Specifically, I show that shifts in policy preferences and political attitudes began only during the most recent surge in immigration. Additionally, I conduct various tests and robustness checks, including an analysis of how locations with Mexican migrants changed their policy preferences and political views.

Event Study. - To establish that changes in policy preferences and political views occurred only after the arrival of the latest wave of migrants, I perform an event-study analysis. In this framework, a county is considered treated in the post-2020 period, the point when immigration inflows sharply increased. Figure A4A displays the event-study results for the outcome variable of supporting increased border security and A4B for the outcome indicator of holding liberal or very liberal political views. The results indicate that counties were not experiencing changes in border security policy preferences or political views before the latest immigration wave. However, after the start of the latest migratory surge, these figures show that individuals began supporting increased border security and were less inclined to identify with liberal or strongly liberal views. Overall, the results of the event-study analysis confirm the notion that individuals' policy preferences and political views started to change only after the latest immigration uptick.

Political-affiliation-year and state-year fixed effects. - One possible concern is that changes in individuals' policy preferences and political views might not result from county-level variations in immigrant settlement patterns but instead from state-level or party-level factors unrelated to immigration. To address this issue, I estimate Specification (3) for policy preferences and political views, incorporating controls for state-year and political-affiliation-year fixed effects (in different specifications). These controls account for all variations stemming from their respective levels. The results, presented in Appendix Tables A1 and A2, show that the estimates remain strongly significant even when accounting for political-affiliation-year and state-year fixed effects. This finding highlights that local variation in immigrant settlement patterns is the primary driver of the observed effects on policy preferences and political views.

Placebo policy preferences. - To demonstrate that the instrument changes individuals' policy preferences through the effects of immigration, I study the impact of the shift-share IV on policy preferences which do not have any relevance in immigration policy discussions, namely healthcare (whether the respondent thinks the Affordable Care Act should be repealed) and environment (whether the respondent thinks the Clean Air and Water Acts should be strengthened) preferences. The findings displayed in Table A3 indicate that the instrument has no effects on these preferences.

Mexican immigration as placebo treatment. - As observable in Figure A1 in the Appendix, Mexican immigration, contrary to total immigration, had been decreasing until 2022, with a slight uptick in 2023 which still didn't take it above the values witnessed in the early years of the Obama administration. As such, by using a shift-share predictor of Mexican immigration as a placebo IV, which uses the share of Mexican migrants as the static component of the instrument, I try to prove that the impacts of immigration mentioned throughout the paper came over the last three years and not before that [14]. The estimates derived from Specifications (2) and (3) in relation to policy preferences and political views are presented in Tables A4 and A5 in the Appendix. These results confirm the notion that the impacts of immigration on policy preferences mentioned throughout the paper were felt in the latest migratory wave, as in places with higher Mexican immigration the majority of the effects came from Republican-leaning counties and, overall, there is virtually no substantive evidence of policy-related or political consequences of Mexican immigration in the time of analysis.

V. Immigration and Politicians

This section examines one crucial factor that may have influenced the trajectory of immigration's impact regarding the political inclinations of the American electorate: immigration policy [15]. As pivotal policymakers, Senators draft and vote on legislation addressing critical

14. Note that Mexican immigration can have political consequences, as shown in Mayda, Peri, and Steingress (2022). As such, the objective is to prove that the Mexican immigration is different from the impacts of migration described in this paper.

15. Another potential factor which may be relevant in explaining the beforehand mentioned results is the impact of social media on contemporary migration rhetoric - Appendix Section A.1 briefly discusses this factor.

issues like border security, citizenship pathways, and refugee resettlement. These actions shape public opinion, with constituents evaluating Senators' performance based on their alignment with prevailing concerns about immigration's economic, cultural, and security implications. Thus, Senators' stances on immigration policies have a direct bearing on their approval ratings and electoral outcomes.

Democratic and Republican Senators typically adopt contrasting approaches to immigration policy. Democrats often advocate for inclusive measures such as citizenship pathways, DACA protections, and increased refugee admissions, emphasizing moral responsibility and economic integration. In contrast, Republicans focus on stricter border controls, reducing unauthorized immigration, and promoting merit-based systems, citing national security and labor market concerns. These differing strategies resonate with distinct voter demographics, influencing public perceptions of Senators' effectiveness, meaning that the political impact of Senators' performance on immigration extends beyond approval ratings to voting intentions.

For these reasons, I analyze how Senator approval rates and voting intentions have changed with immigration, utilizing Specifications (2) and (3). The outcome variables include a binary indicator for Senator approval, taking a value of one if the respondent expresses approval of the performance of Democratic or Republican Senators and a dummy variable representing vote intentions, assigned a value of one when the individual expresses an intention to vote for the Democratic (Republican) nominee in the U.S. Senate election within their state. Table A6 shows that, in general, immigration has caused an increase in Republican Senators' approval rates and the opposite effect on Democratic Senators. Table A7 displays evidence that this trend is verified among Democratic, swing and Republican voters alike, especially the erosion in Democratic Senators' approval rates. These results go in line with the previous findings that voters seem to be moving towards increasingly conservative immigration stances, which are closer to those of Republican politicians - these tendencies can be confirmed by looking at the Senator vote intentions results displayed in Table A8: whilst Republican voters are not planning on changing their vote (i.e. no significant effects) and seem to be happy with Republican Senators' performances, significant vote substitution is verified among Democratic and swing voters, with significantly increased preferences for Republican Senators and significantly lower pref-

erences for Democratic Senators. All in all, these results show a clear intending trend of vote substitution, where Republican Senators, who's political preferences are now closer to the the public opinion on immigration-related preferences, as shown in the results analyzed throughout this paper, clearly benefited (electorally) from the repercussions of migration on the political stances of the American electorate.

VI. Conclusion

This study examines the political impact of the recent surge in U.S. Southern Border migration, which has shifted public opinion and policy preferences. Using empirical methods, it finds that increased immigration flows have pushed voters - especially Democrats and swing voters - toward stricter border and immigration policies. The research highlights key differences between recent and past immigration waves, emphasizing unique socio-political dynamics of the last three years. By analyzing factors like Senatorial approval ratings and support for Republican immigration policies, it reveals how migration influences political realignment. Future studies can explore its long-term effects on policy and societal integration.

FIGURES

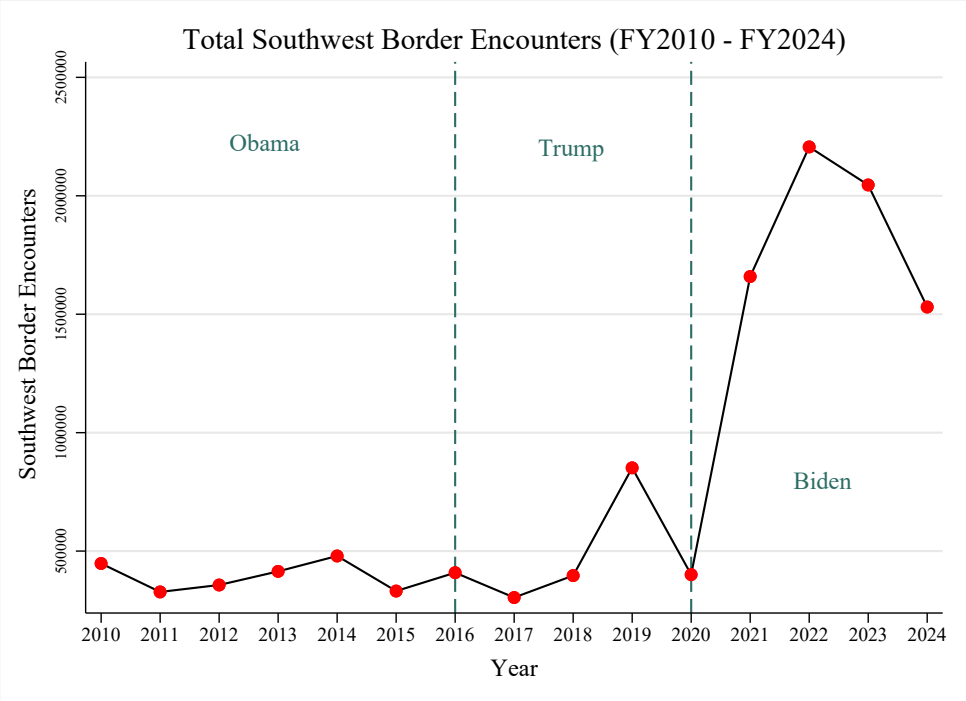
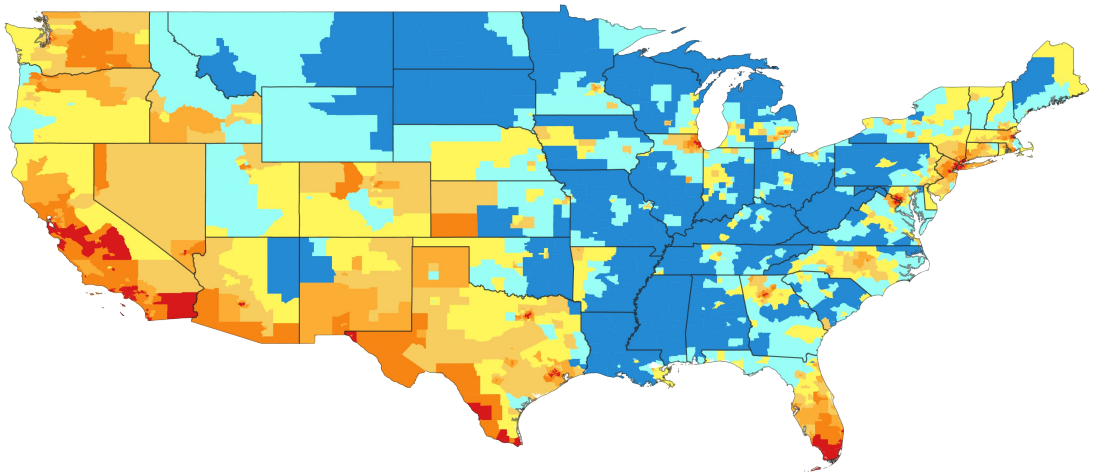


Figure 1: Southwest Land Border Encounters
Source: U.S Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Note: Figure 1 depicts yearly Southwest Border Encounters from the beginning of Fiscal Year 2010 (October 2009) to the end of Fiscal Year 2024 (September 2024). In these graphs, just as in the remainder of the paper, only Title 8 U.S. Border Patrol Apprehensions are considered for the Encounters count, for consistency of the definition throughout the considered time period of 2010 to 2023(4).

(A) U.S. Immigrant Shares in 2000



(B) Immigrant Settlement Patterns 2022-2023

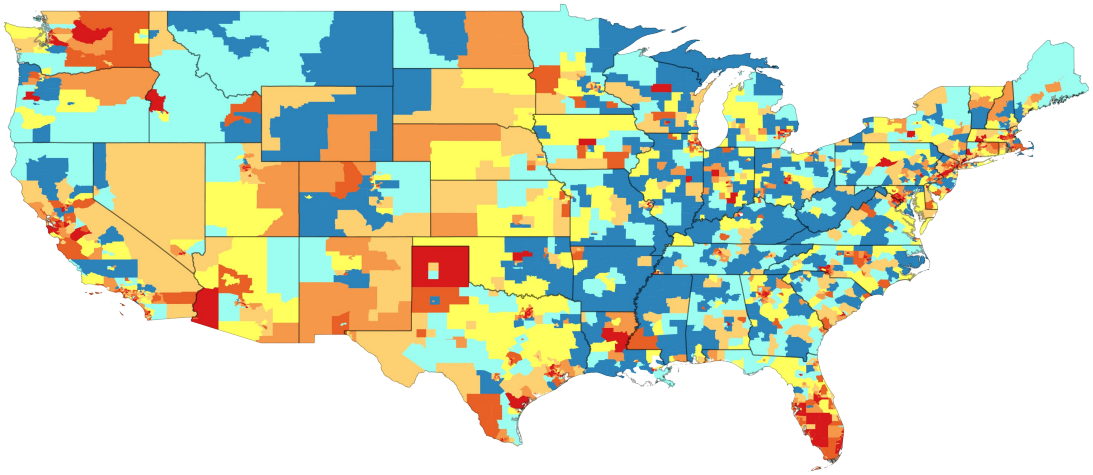


Figure 2: Immigration in the U.S. in 2000 & 2022-2023

Note: The map 2A depicts U.S. Immigrant Shares in 2000 at the PUMA-level (i.e. percentage of immigrants in each PUMA in 2000). Data is provided by the U.S. Decennial Census of 2000, which is a comprehensive census of all households in the U.S.. The map 2B represents immigrant settlement patterns in 2022 and 2023, i.e., immigrant inflows in 2022 and 2023 as a percentage of PUMA population. Data is obtained from the American Community Survey (ACS), which samples a percentage of U.S. population. Appendix Section A.2 discusses possible issues with this data. For comparison and consistency sake, both maps are equally heat colored by septiles - i.e. the highest septile in 2000 Immigrant Shares or 2022/2023 Immigration is colored in the hottest color and vice-versa.

TABLES

Table 1: Immigration and Policy Preferences - Border Security, (Conditional) Immigrant Legalization and Police Spending

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Var.:	PUMA Immigrant Inflows	Increase Border Security	Grant Legal Status to Undocummented Migrants	Increase Police Spending
Immigration	1,447.2***	0.0087***	-0.0024*	0.0054***
	(98.8972)	(0.0015)	(0.0014)	(0.0017)
Observations	14,583	480,659	480,684	278,007
R-squared	0.8031	0.1105	0.1180	0.0983
Number of clusters (PUMAs/counties)	2168	2844	2844	2844
PUMA/County & Year FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline Controls		✓	✓	✓
F-Stat	214.1			

Note: Column 1 of this table highlights the outcomes of estimating the first-stage equation in Specification (4). The unit of observation is a PUMA. Baseline controls include PUMA and year fixed effects. The remaining columns of the table provides the results of estimating Specification (2) for the respondents' policy preferences. The unit of observation is an individual. The outcome variables are dummies for the respondents' policy preferences. Baseline covariates comprise fixed effects for both county and year, along with binary variables capturing respondents' gender, ethnicity, age, educational attainment and income bracket. Standard errors in parentheses are corrected for clusters at the level of the counties included in the regression. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 2: Immigration and Political Views

	(1)	(2)
Dep. Var.:	Political views are....	
	Liberal or Very Liberal	Conservative or Very Conservative
Immigration	-0.0026**	-0.0015
	(0.0012)	(0.0011)
Observations	544,546	544,546
R-squared	0.0919	0.1200
Number of clusters (counties)	2982	2982
County & Year FEs	✓	✓
Baseline Controls	✓	✓

Note: Table 2 presents the results from estimating Specification (2) based on respondents' self-reported political views, with individuals serving as the unit of analysis. In Column 1, the dependent variable is a binary indicator for whether respondents identify as having liberal or strongly liberal views, while Column 2 uses a similar indicator for conservative or strongly conservative views. Baseline controls include fixed effects for county and year, along with binary variables for respondents' gender, race, age, education level and income bracket. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering at the county level included in the analysis. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 3: Immigration and Policy Preferences by Political Affiliation - Border Security, (Conditional) Immigrant Legalization and Police Spending

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dep. Var.:	Increase Border Security	Grant Legal Status to Undocummented Migrants	Increase Police Spending
Immigration ×			
× Resident of Democratic-leaning county	0.0087***	-0.0025*	0.0055***
	(0.0014)	(0.0014)	(0.0017)
× Resident of swing county	0.0071*	-0.0033	0.0021
	(0.0041)	(0.0025)	(0.0037)
× Resident of Republican-leaning county	-0.0010	-0.0142***	-0.0040
	(0.0047)	(0.0037)	(0.0050)
Observations	480,659	480,684	278,007
R-squared	0.1105	0.1181	0.0983
Number of clusters (counties)	2844	2844	2844
County & Year FEs	✓	✓	✓
Baseline Controls	✓	✓	✓

Note: This table presents the results derived from estimating Specification (3) regarding respondents' policy inclinations. Observations are made at the individual level. The dependent variables are binary indicators representing respondents' policy choices. Baseline control variables encompass fixed effects for county and year, along with binary indicators for respondents' gender, ethnicity, age, educational attainment and income bracket. A county is classified as Democratic-leaning if Obama secured victory there in 2008 with a margin of at least 10 percentage points, and Republican-leaning if he was defeated in the county by the same margin; counties not meeting these criteria are designated as swing counties. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering at the county level within the regression framework.*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 4: Immigration and Political Polarization

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Var.:	Political views are....			
	Liberal or Very Liberal		Conservative or Very Conservative	
Immigration ×				
× Resident of Democratic-leaning county	-0.0030**		-0.0013	
	(0.0013)		(0.0012)	
× Resident of swing county	0.0018		-0.0034	
	(0.0025)		(0.0022)	
× Resident of Republican-leaning county	-0.0032		-0.0038	
	(0.0038)		(0.0038)	
× Democratic voter		-0.0082***		0.0137***
		(0.0021)		(0.0013)
× Independent voter		-0.0049***		-0.0121***
		(0.0019)		(0.0015)
× Republican voter		-0.0089**		-0.0060
		(0.0036)		(0.0040)
Observations	544,546	544,524	544,546	544,524
R-squared	0.0921	0.3030	0.1200	0.3831
Number of clusters (counties)	2982	2982	2982	2982
County & Year FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: This table presents the results of estimating Specification (4) for respondents' self-described political views. The unit of observation is an individual. In Columns 1 and 2, the outcome variable is a dummy for whether the respondent describes their political views as liberal or very liberal; Columns 3 and 4 use a similar dummy for self-described views being conservative or very conservative. Baseline covariates comprise fixed effects for both county and year, along with binary variables capturing respondents' gender, ethnicity, age, educational attainment and income bracket. In Columns 2 and 4, controls also include dummies for individuals' party affiliation. A county is assumed to be Democratic-leaning if Obama won the county in 2008 by a margin of at least 10 percentage points, and Republican-leaning if Obama lost the county in 2008 by a margin of at least 10 percentage points; other counties are characterized as swing counties. Standard errors in parentheses are corrected for clusters at the level of the counties included in the regression. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

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APPENDIX

A.1. Social Media and Modern U.S. Southern Border Migration

An important feature which differentiates this wave from previous waves is the media attention - especially the role of social media and, in particular, X (formerly Twitter). In October 2022, Elon Musk acquired Twitter (later renamed X), a platform he would use two years later to help presidential candidate Trump's campaign, which, as mentioned previously, leaned heavily on the immigration issue. A Bloomberg investigation (Alba et al., 2024) reports on Elon Musk's anti-immigration campaign on X by looking at his posts since the creation of his account - immigration and voter fraud became Musk's most dominant topic in 2024, generating an astonishing 10 billion views. Over the year, he posted about the issue more than 1,300 times, with a significant uptick of 330 posts in the two months preceding the U.S. Election. Surprisingly, he had not mentioned the topic at all as of August 2023, just 6 months before he began his posting spree. It is important to notice this as a possible narrative shifter - social media has had impact on political outcomes many times in the past (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017; Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2023; Fujiwara, Müller, and Schwarz, 2024) and it might be one of the relevant factors behind possible political impacts of immigration.

A.2. Data

Immigration: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). - The data used to estimate border crossings comes from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Data Portal, more specifically from their data on Southwest Land Border Encounters (available on the CBP Data Portal) and includes U.S. Border Patrol Title 8 apprehensions, Office of Field Operations Title 8 inadmissibles, and all Title 42 expulsions for Fiscal Years 2019 to date. Data prior to 2019 is available in the '*U.S. Border Patrol Nationwide Apprehensions by Sector and Citizenship FY07-FY18*' file and encompasses data on U.S. Border Patrol Apprehensions from Fiscal Year 2007 to Fiscal Year 2018. For this paper, data on U.S. Border Patrol Title 8 Apprehensions from FY07 to FY24 is used for all purposes, for reasons listed below:

1. *Title 42 Expulsions:* A Title 42 expulsion denotes the United States government's policy of removing individuals who had recently been in an area affected by a contagious illness. This legal basis for such health-related removals is defined under 42 U.S.C. § 265. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), during the Trump administration, utilized this statute to impose extensive restrictions on land entry for many migrants. This approach was initially maintained by the Biden administration (Beitsch and Bernal, 2022) but was discontinued following the conclusion of the COVID-19 national emergency on May 12, 2023. Title 42 of the United States Code encompasses various provisions concerning public health, social services, and civil liberties. However, within the realm of immigration, the term 'Title 42' became shorthand for expulsions conducted under section 265 of the code.

The regulation granted U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) the authority to prevent the admission of individuals considered a potential health threat, either as a result of prior travel restrictions or by entering unlawfully to avoid health screening procedures (Homeland Security (DHS), 2021; U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2021). Individuals covered by the directive are not processed in shared detention facilities but are instead promptly returned to the last country they transited through (U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), 2020). If returning them to that country is not feasible (for instance, if the country refuses entry based on the individual's nationality), CBP collaborates with other agencies to facilitate removal to their country of origin (U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), 2020). In certain situations where this is unworkable, migrants may be sent to a third country willing to accept them based on their prior residence. Given that these expulsions only started in 2020, and not from the beginning of the sample, they are not included in the encounters counts, for consistency sake.

2. *Office of Field Operations (OFO) Title 8 Inadmissibles:* AAnother category captured in the CBP Southern Land Border Encounters Data Portal is OFO Title 8 inadmissibles. The Office of Field Operations (OFO), a division within U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), oversees customs operations at 20 regional offices, 328 border entry points, and 16 pre-clearance locations in Canada, Ireland, the UAE, and the Caribbean. Led by an Executive Assistant Com-

missioner, OFO manages a workforce of over 27,000 personnel, including more than 22,000 CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists, making it the largest division within CBP. The term 'inadmissibles' refers to individuals encountered at entry points who are denied lawful admission into the United States, those seeking humanitarian protection under U.S. laws, and individuals who voluntarily withdraw their admission applications and promptly return to their home countries (Homeland Security (DHS), 2021). The reason why this data is not included in the encounter counts in this study is once again consistency - prior to 2019, only U.S. Border Patrol apprehensions data is available and, thus, only U.S. Border Patrol (Title 8) apprehensions are considered in this paper.

Immigration: American Community Survey (ACS). - The data on immigration inflows comes from the 1-Year Estimates of the American Community Survey (ACS). The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey that collects and produces information about the U.S.'s population every year. The survey is administered to a sample encompassing around 3.5 million residences across the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. It seeks to collect data on topics outside the scope of the Decennial Census, including education, workforce participation, online activity, migration movements, and commuting habits. To compute immigration inflows, I deploy the method developed by Warren and Passel (1987) and further optimized by Warren and Warren (2013); Warren (2014) which is the official method used by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) - given that the data in the ACS 1-year Estimates for year t comprise data collected throughout that year, I use the ACS variable $yrimmig$ [16], which corresponds to the immigration year of immigrant i and compute a weighted count of non-citizen immigrants (using the variable $citizen$, which describes citizenship status) at the 2010 Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) (2351 PUMAs) level:

$$\mathbf{IMM}_{pt} = Count(w_i * immig_{ipt}) \tag{5}$$

where w_i is the individual weight of each immigrant in the overall sample and $immig_{ipt}$ is a dummy variable which is equal to 1 if immigrant i is a non-citizen immigrant in PUMA p which entered the U.S.. This is done for years t 2012-2018 as the ACS reliably estimates overall mi-

16. This variable's universe is all foreign-born people in the ACS sample.

gration figures in these years, which can not be said for 2019 to 2021.

To start, in 2019 a surge in border apprehensions occurred (see Figure 1), however, this increase was not reflected in the migratory inflows data for various reasons - first and foremost, the sharp rise in people seeking asylum triggered a tremendous response from the Trump administration, one of those being the 2019 Immigration Bill which included the ”Remain in Mexico” program, under which many asylum seekers at the Southwest Land Border waited in Mexico while their claims were adjudicated, from the start of 2019 (January 25). This was the principal reason for the differential between the two statistics, as the ACS statistic only counts immigrants as they enter the U.S., whereas these encounters still counted for the CBP statistics. Second, because many of these processes were delayed, a lot of immigrants which entered the country in 2019 began getting their processes rejected in 2020 as a consequence of Trump's immigration policies, most notably the 'Title 42' Policy mentioned above (Gramlich, 2020).

As for 2020 and 2021 data, Van Hook et al. (2021) and Warren (2022) explore the deficiencies of the ACS data caused by the COVID-19 pandemic - thus, for precautionary sake, this paper will not include ACS data for 2020 and 2021.

Finally, the reason why ACS data is chosen over Current Population Survey (CPS) data is the geographical range of both surveys - given that one of the key components of the instrument is the spatial distribution of immigration, the data needs to have a broad geographical range - despite the ACS suffering from issues like unreliability of immigrant inflows estimates for small populations (e.g., specific immigrant groups or rural areas) due to sampling errors or inaccuracies in capturing sudden changes in immigration patterns due to policy shifts, economic conditions, or crises due to various problems (e.g., 2019) it still offers a broader geographical dispersion than the CPS - whereas the ACS has data for every PUMA, which covers the entirety of the U.S. territory (+ Puerto Rico), the CPS's current sample design only includes about 72,000 “assigned” housing units from 824 sample areas which is a much smaller geographic extension.

A.3. Shift-Share Instrument: Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) vs. County-Level Immigration Estimates

This section intends to explore the differences between Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) and counties, the two geographical areas used throughout this work.

Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) represent unique, non-overlapping spatial divisions that partition each state or territory into subsections, each with a minimum population of 100,000 individuals. These divisions span the entire U.S., including Puerto Rico and Guam. The Census Bureau designates PUMAs for the structured presentation and dissemination of data derived from both the decennial census and the American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). In addition, both the ACS and the Puerto Rico Community Survey rely on PUMAs to distribute their periodic statistical estimates. The delineation of new PUMAs takes place following the completion of each decennial census [17], thus meaning that PUMA borders and, more critically, the number of PUMAs change every 10 years (2000, 2010, 2020). IPUMS USA provides a consistent PUMA variable which allows for the representation of ACS data - however, this variable is currently only available for 00-10 PUMAs (a consistent PUMA (2000)-2010-2020 variable is in the works [18]) which means that 2022 and 2023 data (available for 2020 PUMAs) could not be included in the first-stage equation (the maps of Figure 2 are used as alternative proof of the instruments predictive power).

This all means that, in essence, PUMA boundaries are established according to three primary guidelines: 1. Each PUMA must consist of a population of at least 100,000 individuals at the time it is defined, and this minimum population must be sustained throughout the decade [19]. 2. PUMAs are created exclusively by combining counties and census tracts and cannot extend across state lines. 3. The geographic units forming PUMAs must be contiguous or share a common boundary, except in cases where the counties or census tracts serving as components are

17. Population tallies from the decennial census and revised census tracts serve as essential components in the delineation procedure.

18. **Source:** https://forum.ipums.org/t/extend-cpuma0010-to-2022/5899

19. Regions undergoing significant population decline at the time of delineation, or where such a decline is expected, are designed to encompass a population exceeding 100,000 individuals. Should the population in a PUMA drop well below this threshold, the Census Bureau may merge that PUMA with one or more neighboring PUMAs to maintain the confidentiality of the data.

naturally noncontiguous, such as islands [20]. Thus, PUMA boundaries hold no significant value - they are arbitrary. This means that counties, which are the smallest geographical unit relevant politically, are naturally more suitable for the analysis of the political impacts of immigration - county-level analysis is relevant for political sake, whereas PUMA-level analysis may arbitrarily combine a number of counties, which would result in information and relevance loss for this analysis. This also implies that electoral and voting intention outcomes and political affiliation are much more relevant (and accessible) at the county-level.

20. A single county may qualify as a PUMA if it satisfies the population requirements. Adjacent census tracts can be combined to form a PUMA, as can two or more neighboring counties. PUMAs based on census tracts are permitted to span county borders, provided that each segment within a county has a population of at least 2,400 individuals.

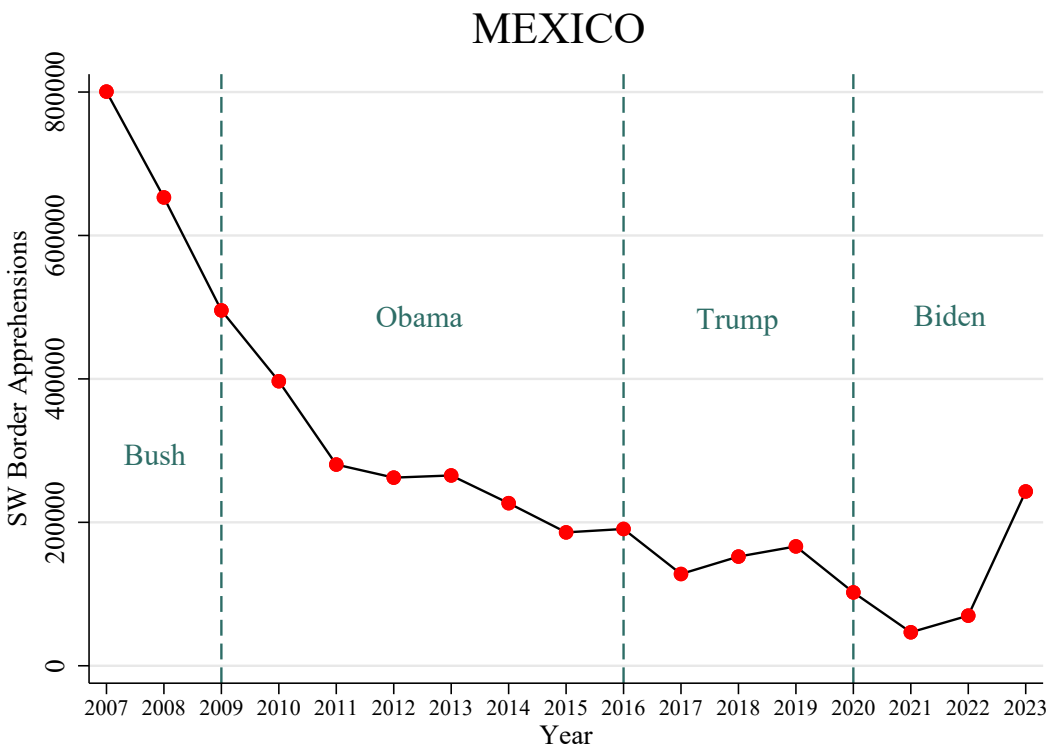


Figure A1: Mexican Southwest Land Border Encounters
Source: U.S Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Note: In this paper, only U.S. Border Patrol Apprehensions are counted as U.S. Southwest Land Border Encounters. Appendix Section A.2 delves into the reasoning behind this choice.

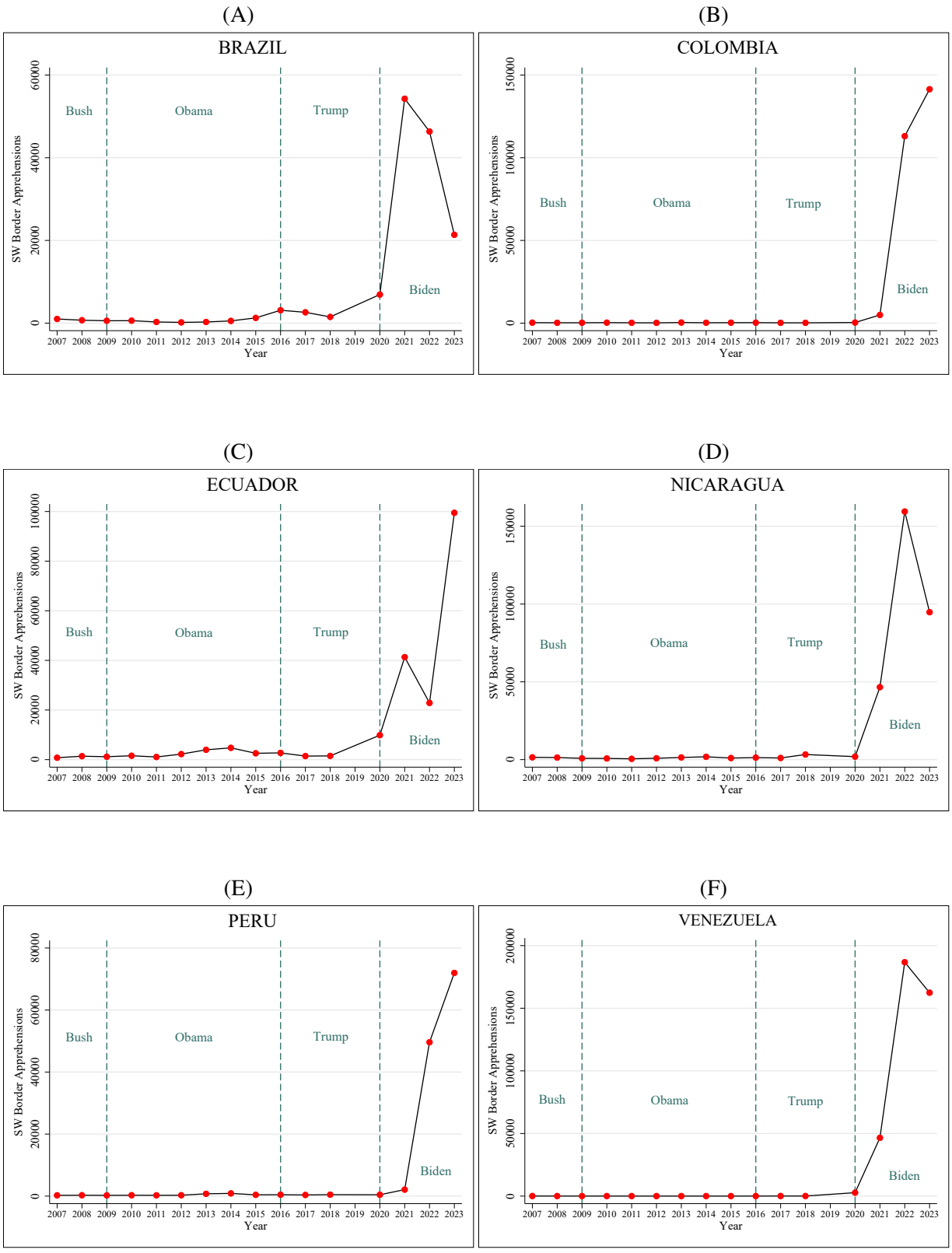


Figure A2: Southwest Land Border Encounters - South American Countries

Source: U.S Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

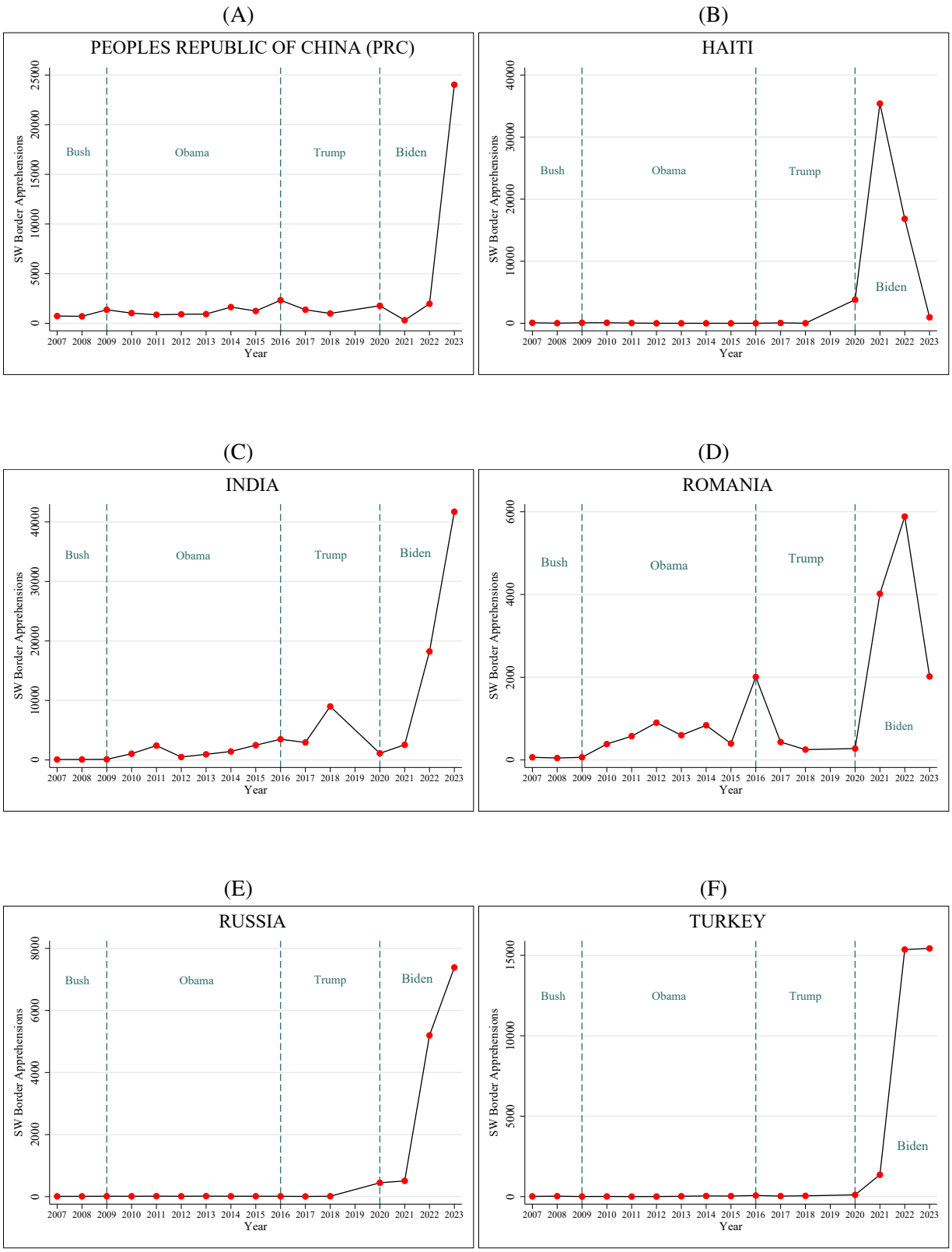
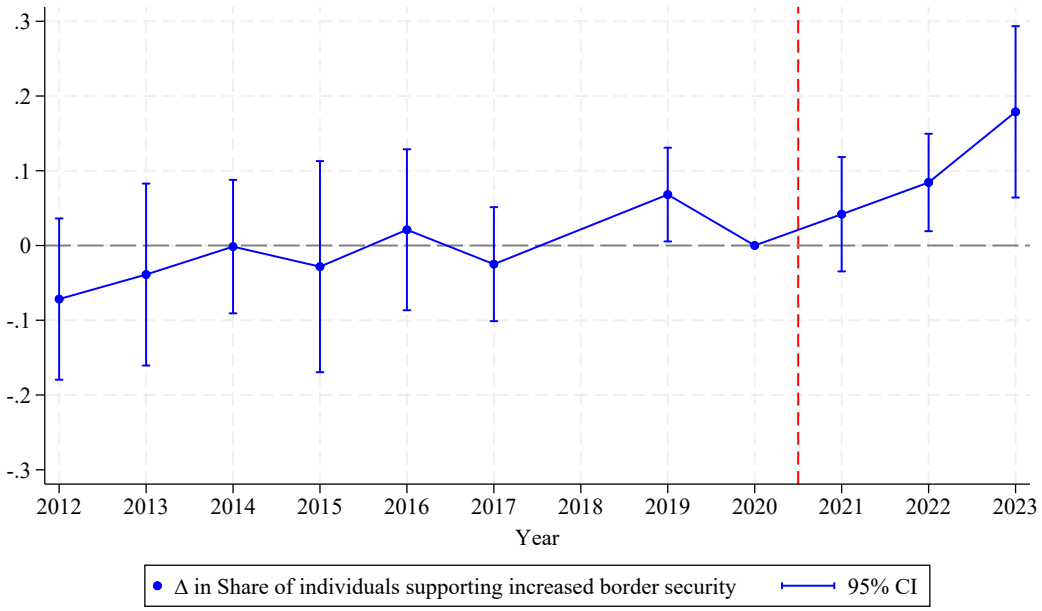


Figure A3: Southwest Land Border Encounters - Rest of the World

Source: U.S Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

(A) Event Study: % of individuals supporting increased border security



(B) Event Study: % of individuals with liberal views

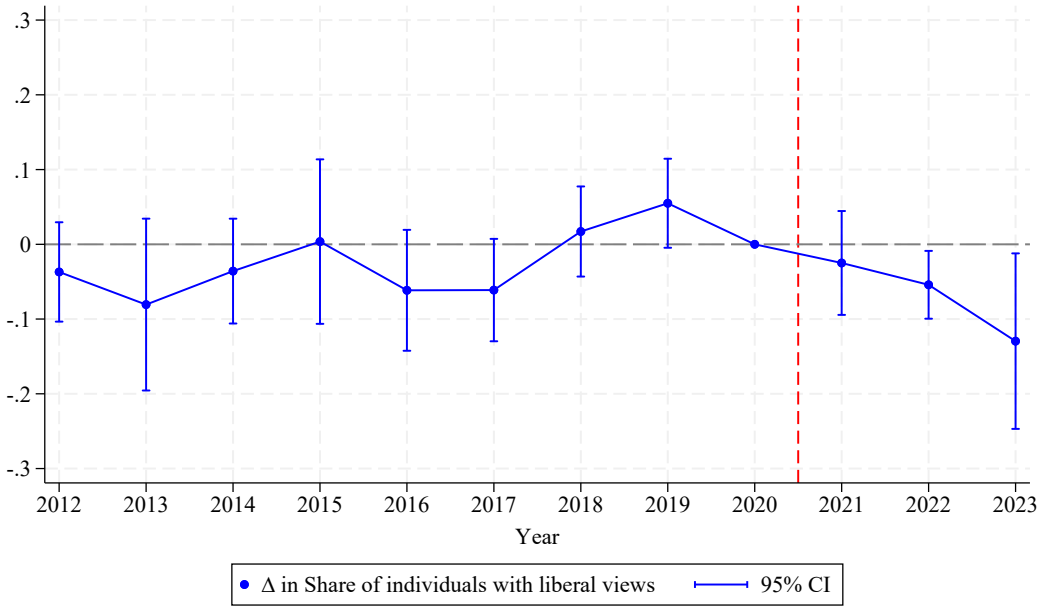


Figure A4: Event Study - The impacts of immigration before and after 2020

Note: The figure illustrates an event study analysis depicting the manner in which the participants' border security policy preferences (top panel) and political views (bottom panel) changed after the start of the immigration surge. Both figures present standard event-study estimates.

Table A1: Political Affiliation-Year and State-Year Fixed Effects: Immigration-Related Policy Preferences

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Dep. Var.:	Increase Border Security				Grant Legal Status to Undocummented Migrants				Increase police spending			
Immigration	0.0077***		0.0059***		-0.0035**		-0.0015		0.0041**		0.0051***	
	(0.0017)		(0.0016)		(0.0015)		(0.0014)		(0.0019)		(0.0021)	
Immigration ×												
× Resident of Democratic-leaning county		0.0090***		0.0055***		-0.0022		-0.0018		0.0060**		0.0066***
		(0.0018)		(0.0016)		(0.0016)		(0.0014)		(0.0022)		(0.0021)
× Resident of swing county		0.0055		0.0040		-0.0043		-0.0014		-0.0030		0.0001
		(0.0049)		(0.0036)		(0.0033)		(0.0029)		(0.0046)		(0.0035)
× Resident of Republican-leaning county		-0.0011		-0.0039		-0.0145***		-0.0094**		0.0002		0.0042
		(0.0055)		(0.0058)		(0.0048)		(0.0047)		(0.0059)		(0.0061)
Observations	480,659	480,659	480,659	480,659	480,684	480,684	480,684	480,684	278,007	278,007	278,007	278,007
R-squared	0.1107	0.1107	0.1122	0.1122	0.1182	0.1182	0.1193	0.1193	0.0989	0.0989	0.1001	0.1001
Number of clusters (counties)	2968	2968	2968	2968	2968	2968	2968	2968	2637	2637	2637	2637
County & Year FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Political Affiliation-Year FEs	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓		
State-Year FEs			✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓

Note: Table A1 displays the findings from estimating Equations (2) and (3), which analyze respondents' policy preferences while accounting for state-year and political-affiliation-year fixed effects. Observations are at the individual level, with the dependent variables represented as binary indicators reflecting respondents' policy stances. Baseline covariates include county- and year-specific fixed effects, along with binary variables for respondents' gender, race, age, educational attainment and income bracket. Counties are categorized as Democratic-leaning if Obama secured a victory in 2008 by a margin of 10 percentage points or more, and Republican-leaning if Obama lost by at least 10 percentage points; counties falling outside these thresholds are classified as swing counties. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering at the county level within the regression. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A2: Political Affiliation-Year and State-Year Fixed Effects: Political Views

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
	Political views are...											
Dep. Var.:	Liberal or Very Liberal						Conservative or Very Conservative					
Immigration	-0.0032**			-0.0029**			-0.0004			-0.0012		
	(0.0013)			(0.0015)			(0.0012)			(0.0015)		
Immigration ×												
× Resident of Democratic-leaning county		-0.0049**			-0.0029**			0.0014			-0.0011	
		(0.0015)			(0.0015)			(0.0014)			(0.0015)	
× Resident of swing county		0.0015			0.0001			-0.0042			-0.0014	
		(0.0030)			(0.0031)			(0.0028)			(0.0030)	
× Resident of Republican-leaning county		0.0042			-0.0055			-0.0120**			0.0007	
		(0.0048)			(0.0052)			(0.0050)			(0.0049)	
× Democratic voter			-0.0080***			-0.0061***			0.140***			0.114***
			(0.0021)			(0.0022)			(0.0015)			(0.0019)
× Independent voter			-0.0047***			-0.0028			-0.0119***			-0.0147***
			(0.0020)			(0.0023)			(0.0016)			(0.0018)
× Republican voter			-0.0088**			-0.0067**			-0.0057			-0.0087**
			(0.0036)			(0.0031)			(0.0040)			(0.0042)
Observations	544,546	544,546	544,524	544,546	544,546	544,524	544,546	544,546	544,524	544,546	544,546	544,524
R-squared	0.0920	0.0921	0.3031	0.0932	0.0932	0.3038	0.1201	0.1201	0.3832	0.1213	0.1213	0.3840
Number of clusters (counties)	2982	2982	2982	2982	2982	2982	2982	2982	2982	2982	2982	2982
County & Year FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Political Affiliation-Year FEs	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓			
State-Year FEs				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓

Note: Table A2 presents the outcomes of estimating Specifications (2) and (3) to examine respondents' self-identified political orientations, accounting for state-year and political-affiliation-year fixed effects. The analysis uses individual-level observations. In Columns 1–6, the dependent variable is a binary indicator for whether respondents describe their political views as liberal or very liberal, while Columns 7–12 focus on a similar binary indicator for conservative or very conservative self-descriptions. Baseline covariates include fixed effects for counties and years, as well as binary variables for respondents' gender, race, age, educational attainment and income category. Columns 3, 6, 9, and 12 additionally control for respondents' party affiliations. Counties are classified as Democratic-leaning if Obama's 2008 victory margin was at least 10 percentage points, Republican-leaning if Obama lost by 10 points or more, and otherwise categorized as swing counties. Standard errors, reported in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering at the county level within the regression analysis. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A3: Immigration and Policy Preferences - Placebo Outcomes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Var.:	Repeal the ACA		Strenghten the Clean Air & Water Acts	
Immigration	-0.0017		0.0025	
	(0.0022)		(0.0015)	
Immigration ×				
× Resident of Democratic-leaning county		-0.0012		0.0025*
		(0.0023)		(0.0013)
× Resident of swing county		-0.0044		0.0018
		(0.0030)		(0.0025)
× Resident of Republican-leaning county		0.0098		-0.0049
		(0.0074)		(0.0050)
Observations	465,678	465,678	390,035	390,035
R-squared	0.0548	0.0548	0.0983	0.0983
Number of clusters (counties)	2945	2945	2906	2906
County & Year FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Table A3 presents the impact of estimating Specifications (2) and (3) on respondents' preferences regarding healthcare and environmental policies. Observations are recorded at the individual level. The dependent variables are binary indicators reflecting respondents' support for ACA and CAWA policies. Baseline controls comprise fixed effects for county and year, along with binary variables capturing respondents' gender, race, age, educational attainment and income level. Counties are categorized as Democratic-leaning if Obama's 2008 victory margin was 10 percentage points or greater, Republican-leaning if Obama lost by at least 10 percentage points, and classified as swing counties otherwise. Standard errors, displayed in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering at the county level in the regression analysis. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A4: Mexican Immigration and Policy Preferences - Border Security, (Conditional) Immigrant Legalization and Police Spending

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dep. Var.:	Increase Border Security		Grant Legal Status to Undocummented Migrants		Increase police spending	
Mexican Immigration	0.0012		-0.0006		-0.0003	
	(0.0018)		(0.0011)		(0.0028)	
Mexican Immigration ×						
× Resident of Democratic-leaning county		0.0031*		0.0002		0.0020
		(0.0016)		(0.0011)		(0.0030)
× Resident of swing county		-0.0000		0.0003		-0.0042
		(0.0030)		(0.0020)		(0.0028)
× Resident of Republican-leaning county		-0.0069**		-0.0062**		-0.0058*
		(0.0032)		(0.0026)		(0.0033)
Observations	430,625	430,625	430,650	430,650	248,588	248,588
R-squared	0.1035	0.1035	0.1107	0.1107	0.0896	0.0896
Number of clusters (counties)	1552	1552	1552	1552	1552	1552
County & Year FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Table A4 summarizes the impact of estimating Formulations (2) and (3) on respondents' policy preferences, employing Mexican immigration as an instrumental variable. Observations are at the individual level. The dependent variables are binary indicators representing respondents' policy stances. Baseline controls include fixed effects for county and year, as well as binary variables for respondents' gender, race, age, educational attainment and income category. Counties are classified as Democratic-leaning if Obama secured a margin of victory of at least 10 percentage points in 2008, Republican-leaning if Obama lost by 10 or more points, and swing counties otherwise. Standard errors, provided in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering at the county level in the regression model. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A5: Mexican Immigration and Political Views

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Var.:	Political views are....			
	Liberal or Very Liberal		Conservative or Very Conservative	
Immigration	-0.0014		-0.0022*	
	(0.0015)		(0.0012)	
Immigration ×				
× Resident of Democratic-leaning county		-0.0026		-0.0020*
		(0.0016)		(0.0010)
× Resident of swing county		0.0028		-0.0034*
		(0.0026)		(0.0018)
× Resident of Republican-leaning county		-0.0019		-0.0012
		(0.0022)		(0.0023)
Observations	487,533	487,533	487,533	487,533
R-squared	0.0782	0.0782	0.0.1060	0.1060
Number of clusters (counties)	1552	1552	1552	1552
County & Year FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Table A5 displays the results of estimating Functional Forms (2) and (3) for the respondents' self-described political views using Mexican immigration as the explanatory variable. The observation unit is an individual. In Columns 1-3, the dependent variable is a binary indicator for whether the respondent identifies their political stance as liberal or very liberal; in Columns 4-6, the binary variable reflects self-identified conservative or very conservative views. Baseline covariates include fixed effects for county and year, along with binary variables for respondents' gender, race, age, educational attainment and income category. Columns 3 and 6 additionally incorporate binary variables for party affiliation. A county is classified as Democratic-leaning if Obama won there in 2008 by a margin of 10 percentage points or more, Republican-leaning if Obama lost by at least 10 percentage points, and otherwise as a swing county. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering at the county level within the regression. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A6: Immigration and Senator Approval

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Var.:	Senator Approval			
	Generally Approve Senator 1...		Generally Approve Senator 2...	
	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
Immigration	-0.0026	0.0180***	-0.0129***	0.0055*
	(0.0025)	(0.0055)	(0.0028)	(0.0030)
Observations	325,152	191,820	248,977	268,440
R-squared	0.0828	0.0985	0.0848	0.1042
Number of clusters (counties)	2028	2028	2329	2329
County & Year FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Table A6 reports the effect of estimating Specification (2) for the respondents' senator approval rates, where the unit of observation is a respondent. The outcome variables are dummies for the respondents' approval of Senators 1 and 2 (i.e. = 1 if they approve of Senator 1/2's job). Baseline covariates comprise fixed effects for both county and year, along with binary variables capturing respondents' gender, ethnicity, age, educational attainment and income bracket. Standard errors, indicated in parentheses, are adjusted to account for clustering at the county level in the regression analysis. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A7: Immigration and Senator Approval By Political Affiliation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Var.:	Senator Approval			
	Generally Approve Senator 1...		Generally Approve Senator 2...	
	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
Immigration ×				
× Resident of Democratic-leaning county	-0.0022	0.0195***	-0.0124***	0.0058*
	(0.0025)	(0.0041)	(0.0030)	(0.0033)
× Resident of swing county	-0.0140***	0.0114	-0.0257***	0.0047
	(0.0034)	(0.0118)	(0.0041)	(0.0057)
× Resident of Republican-leaning county	-0.0336*	0.0058	-0.0199**	0.0137**
	(0.0179)	(0.0130)	(0.0097)	(0.0063)
Observations	325,152	191,820	248,977	268,440
R-squared	0.0829	0.0985	0.0849	0.1042
Number of clusters (counties)	2028	2028	2329	2329
County & Year FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: This table presents the results of estimating Specification (3) for the respondents' senator approval rates. The unit of observation is an individual. The outcome variables are dummies for the respondents' approval of Senators 1 and 2 (i.e. = 1 if they approve of Senator 1/2's job). Baseline covariates comprise fixed effects for both county and year, along with binary variables capturing respondents' gender, ethnicity, age, educational attainment and income bracket. A county is classified as Democratic-leaning if Obama's 2008 victory margin in that county was 10 percentage points or greater, and as Republican-leaning if Obama lost the county by a margin of 10 percentage points or more. Counties not meeting either criterion are designated as swing counties. Standard errors, indicated in parentheses, are adjusted to account for clustering at the county level in the regression. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A8: Immigration and Senator Vote Intentions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Var.:	Senator (Party) Vote Intentions			
	Democrat		Republican	
Immigration	-0.0138***		0.0134***	
	(0.0048)		(0.0040)	
Immigration ×				
× Resident of Democratic-leaning county		-0.0127**		0.0125***
		(0.0051)		(0.0042)
× Resident of swing county		-0.0352***		0.0290***
		(0.0088)		(0.0067)
× Resident of Republican-leaning county		-0.0057		-0.0001
		(0.0173)		(0.0178)
Observations	198,856	198,856	198,856	198,856
R-squared	0.2065	0.2066	0.1963	0.1964
Number of clusters (counties)	2785	2785	2785	2785
County & Year FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Table A8 reports the effect of estimating Specifications (2) and (3) for the respondents' senator voting intentions. The unit of observation is an individual. The outcome variables are dummies for the party of their intended vote in the upcoming Senator election (i.e. if the Senator is affiliated with the Democrats or the Republicans). Baseline covariates comprise fixed effects for both county and year, along with binary variables capturing respondents' gender, ethnicity, age, educational attainment and income bracket. A county is classified as Democratic-leaning if Obama's 2008 victory margin in that county was 10 percentage points or greater, and as Republican-leaning if Obama lost the county by a margin of 10 percentage points or more. Counties not meeting either criterion are designated as swing counties. Standard errors, indicated in parentheses, are adjusted to account for clustering at the county level in the regression. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.