

# Carlos A. Mesa-Guerra

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## EDUCATION

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### **Cornell University**

Ph.D. in Regional Science (*Urban and Regional Economics*)

Ithaca, NY

2023

M.Sc. in Regional Science (*Urban and Regional Economics*)

2022

### **Universidad del Rosario**

M.A. in Economics of Public Policy

Bogotá D.C., Colombia

2017

B.Sc. in Economics

2016

B.A. in Political Science and Government

2016

## FIELDS

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Urban and Regional Economics

Labor Economics

Public Economics

## REFERENCES

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### **Ravi Kanbur**

T.H. Lee Professor of World Affairs, Cornell University  
E-mail: sk145@cornell.edu

### **Stephen Coate**

Kiplinger Professor of Public Policy, Cornell University  
E-mail: sc163@cornell.edu

### **Michèle Belot**

Professor of Economics, Cornell University  
E-mail: mb2693@cornell.edu

### **Lawrence E. Blume**

Distinguished Professor of Economics, Cornell University  
E-mail: lb19@cornell.edu

## FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

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- Lourdes Benería Award, Cornell-LACS 2020
- Fulbright-MinCiencias Scholarship 2018–2022
- Magna Cum Laude, Universidad del Rosario 2017
- Best University Student (Top 5), Newspaper Portafolio Prize 2016
- Colegio de Número, Universidad del Rosario 2016
- Undergraduate Fellowship, Universidad del Rosario 2010–2016
- Member, The National Society of High School Scholars 2010

## TEACHING

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<b>Teaching Assistant</b> at Cornell University Undergraduate: <i>Introduction to Business Management (AEM1200)</i>	Summer 2021–2023
<b>Adjunct Professor</b> at Universidad del Rosario Undergraduate: <i>Economics for Lawyers</i>	Fall 2016–Spring 2018
<b>Teaching Assistant</b> at Universidad del Rosario Graduate: <i>Political Economy</i>	Fall 2017
<b>Adjunct Professor</b> at School of Business-CESA Undergraduate: <i>Current Economic Problems</i>	Spring 2016–Fall 2017

## EMPLOYMENT

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<b>Inter-American Development Bank</b> Consultant – Assess the economic impact of immigration and return migration in Latin America	Washington, D.C. Sep 2023–Present
<b>Universidad del Rosario</b> Consultant – Led the research on the relationship between immigration and the labor market	Bogotá D.C., Colombia Aug 2022–Jul 2023
<b>Confecámaras</b> Consultant – Developed a proposal to reform the structure of business registration tax	Bogotá D.C., Colombia Jun 2019–Aug 2019
<b>Fedesarrollo</b> Junior Researcher – Conducted research on the economic and fiscal effects of the recent Venezuelan immigration to Colombia	Bogotá D.C., Colombia Jan 2018–Jul 2018
Research Assistant & Economic Analyst – Conducted research and analysis on the state of the global economy, employment and labor formalization, financing of higher education, decentralization and regional development, taxation and public spending	Aug 2015–Dec 2017
Intern, <i>Department of Macroeconomic and Sectorial Analysis</i> – Assisted in the analysis of sectoral trends and macroeconomic forecasting; compiled detailed economic data to be used in statistical appendices	Feb 2015–Jul 2015

## JOB MARKET PAPER

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### Immigrant Networks in the Labor Market

Using unique survey data linked to social security records and the large influx of Venezuelan immigrants to Colombia in recent years, this paper reexamines the role played by referral networks in the labor market. By explicitly accounting for both the urban and the social space, this paper provides new insights into the mismatch between the residential location and labor outcomes of immigrants. Referrals are a critical source of information about available jobs for immigrants, particularly for recent arrivals, but struggle to improve the quality of the match between firms and workers. The misalignment between where immigrants live and where they can find suitable employment opportunities reinforces occupational downgrading and increases the persistence of informal employment.

## PUBLICATIONS

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- [1] “The Effect of Minimum Wages on Rural Employment: Theory and Evidence from Colombia”, 2020, *Coyuntura Económica*, 50(1-2): 169–209.
- [2] “Elementos para una política pública frente a la crisis de Venezuela” (with M. Reina & T. Ramírez), 2018, *Cuadernos de Fedesarrollo*, No 69, 192p.
- [3] “De la política pública a la política gremial: el Fondo de Estabilización de Precios de la Palma de Aceite en Colombia”, 2018, *Revista Palmas*, 39(1), 91-119.

## WORKING PAPERS

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### **The Fiscal Impact of Immigration: Labor Displacement, Wages, and the Allocation of Public Spending** (with A. Castaño)

We reexamine the effect of immigration on public finances by accounting for second-order effects. We exploit exogenous variation in immigration across Colombian metropolitan areas between 2013 and 2018, resulting from the large increase in Venezuelan immigrants, and instrument immigrants’ residential location using pre-existing settlement patterns and the distance between origin-destination flows. Our findings indicate that immigration did not reduce natives’ average fiscal contributions. Exploring the mechanisms in place, we document that immigration had no effect on employment, average wages in the upper half of the wage distribution, or hours worked that would have explained changes in labor-driven tax contributions. In addition, immigration did not trigger a decline in property values or changes in the composition of local public spending. The results suggest that general equilibrium effects are not sufficiently large enough to induce changes in fiscal contributions.

### **Estimating the Effect of Immigration on Public Finances: Evidence from the Influx of Venezuelan Migrants to Colombia** (with T. Ramírez)

What is the fiscal impact of immigration on all levels of government? We study this question using the large and sudden increase in Venezuelan immigration to Colombia from 2013 to 2018. Over a million Venezuelan-born individuals and roughly 350 thousand native-born returnees moved to Colombia during this period. Our findings indicate that while immigrants tend to have less access to, and make lower use of, the welfare system, they have lower net fiscal contributions relative to natives overall, driven by lower contributions to regional and local government budgets. However, relative to the size of the economy, their overall fiscal effect is small. Lower fiscal contributions by immigrants are explained entirely by recent arrivals. Immigrants that have been in the country for more than a year have—if any—a better per capita fiscal position relative to natives. We show that the fiscal effect on local budgets is mediated by two forces: cities’ ability to raise revenues from their own sources and the size of immigrant inflows relative to the local population.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

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### **A Model of Spatial Job Referral Networks**

I provide new insights on the contribution of referrals to the overall employment of workers, their commuting, residence, and employment locations by linking the urban and social space. Using the well-known fact that workers rely on their social contacts to find jobs, I develop a model in which workers face a tradeoff between searching for employment outside their neighborhood of residence driven by the strength of their social network and the commuting cost. The model incorporates three key facts from the data: dual search methods (direct vs. indirect), network congestion, and spatial mismatch. The model is extended to capture first-order features of cities and to simulate the effect of shutting down job referrals. Results suggest that

networks may suffer from congestion effects, reducing workers employability, particularly for immigrants, but allow workers to find better matches.

### **Carrying the Weight of Autonomy? Growth and Spatial Inequality among Municipalities in Colombia** (with C. F. Holguín)

We study the implications of fiscal decentralization for growth and regional inequality at the local level in Colombia. We exploit a new dataset at the municipal level containing multiple measures of fiscal decentralization and estimates of municipal GDP per capita based on satellite-recorded data between 1993 and 2018. We apply machine learning techniques to night-time and daytime satellite images to predict changes in income at high spatial resolutions and test the convergence hypothesis in the growth literature, examining the role of fiscal decentralization in closing the urban-rural gap.

## **POLICY REPORTS**

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- [1] “Revisión de gasto sector comercio, industria y turismo” (with N. Salazar, M. Barragán & V. Sánchez), Fedesarrollo, August 2017, [www.repository.fedesarrollo.org.co/handle/11445/3505](http://www.repository.fedesarrollo.org.co/handle/11445/3505)
- [2] “La estructura de las tarifas de registro en las Cámaras de Comercio y beneficios de sus servicios: impacto sobre la competitividad y la formalidad empresarial” (with N. Salazar & N. Navarrete), Fedesarrollo, June 2017, [www.repository.fedesarrollo.org.co/handle/11445/3445](http://www.repository.fedesarrollo.org.co/handle/11445/3445)
- [3] “Financiación de la educación superior a través del ICETEX: estimación de necesidades de recursos a futuro y propuestas de mecanismos de fondeo” (with N. Salazar & C. Correa), Fedesarrollo, November 2016, [www.repository.fedesarrollo.org.co/handle/11445/3303](http://www.repository.fedesarrollo.org.co/handle/11445/3303)
- [4] “Transferencias intergubernamentales y descentralización de la educación: revisión de la literatura y lineamientos para una propuesta de esquema de distribución de los recursos del SGP orientados a educación” (with N. Salazar & O. Gracia), Chapter 5, Fedesarrollo, March 2016, [www.repository.fedesarrollo.org.co/handle/11445/3303](http://www.repository.fedesarrollo.org.co/handle/11445/3303)

## **PRESENTATIONS IN SEMINARS & CONFERENCES**

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**2023.** 4th Urban and Regional Economics Workshop, Fedesarrollo, UC Davis Global Migration Center.

**2022.** APPAM 2021 Fall Research Conference (*rescheduled*).

**2021.** Fedesarrollo.

**2020.** APPAM 2020 Fall Research Conference, NARSC 2020 Fall Conference.

## **RESEARCH GRANTS**

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**2022.** Grant 60185 and FP44842-220-2018, Alianza EFI-Colombia Científica, Universidad del Rosario.

**2020.** Research Travel Grant, Graduate School, Cornell University.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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**Programs:** Stata, R, MATLAB, ArcGIS, Microsoft Office

**Languages:** Spanish (Native), English (Proficient), French (Basic)