Does Immigration Increase Nationalism? The Effect of a Sudden Demographic Change on Political Attitudes and Electoral Behaviors*

Giancarlo Visconti†
Pennsylvania State University

Catalina Vega-Mendez‡
Purdue University

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Abstract

Do demographic changes caused by migration make people more nationalistic? It is difficult to answer this question because demographic transformations can boost support for far-right parties that employ nationalistic rhetoric; therefore, people's new attitudes could be elite-driven. Using administrative and panel survey data from Chile before the emergence of a far-right party, we demonstrate that immigration shocks (i.e., rapid and large demographic changes) increase nationalistic attitudes. We also provide evidence from multiple sources documenting increased hostility, animosity, and discrimination toward migrants. Therefore, we interpret people's new attitudes as evidence of exclusionary nationalism. In addition, we find that municipalities that receive large numbers of migrants are more likely to support the far-right party that was founded a few years later. This finding suggests that demographic changes explained by migration might make parties using nationalistic rhetoric more appealing to these now more nationalistic citizens.

Keywords: Nationalism, Immigration, Far-Right Parties, Panel Data, Chile.

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†Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802, email: gvisconti@psu.edu.

‡Ph.D candidate, Department of Political Science, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907, email: cvegamen@purdue.edu.

1 Introduction

Over the past decade, global migration has triggered profound demographic transformations, with an increasing number of individuals departing from unsafe and impoverished countries in favor of more secure and stable places (Holland and Peters, 2020). Also, in the last years, there has been a notable surge in the use of nationalistic rhetoric in global politics (Bremmer, 2017), with nationalist politicians assuming prominent roles in diverse countries like Turkey, Brazil, and the U.S. (Cagaptay, 2020; Wehner, 2022). The question arises: are these recent demographic and political changes connected? When large migration flows alter a country's demographics, native-born citizens might perceive this as a threat to their identity and self-image, which could make them more likely to adopt nationalistic attitudes. This heightened attachment to a national identity can have significant political consequences, such as fostering prejudice, discrimination, and, in extreme cases, even violence against out-group members (Druckman, 1994; Leyens et al., 2003).

However, it is difficult to explore this topic because demographic transformation, in addition to increasing nationalistic attitudes, can also foster the (re)emergence of far-right parties (Lubbers et al., 2002; Abrajano and Hajnal, 2015; Hangartner et al., 2019; Reny et al., 2019; Dinas et al., 2019).[1] Such parties promote ideas such as the congruence between the state and the nation (Mudde, 2007; Golder, 2016) and have fueled the public discourse with nationalistic ideas (Rydgren, 2006). In this context, elites could be driving people's political attitudes (Vrânceanu and Lachat, 2018; Luttig, 2020; Smith et al., 2021), in which case the rise of far-right parties, rather than demographic changes, may explain the growth in nationalistic sentiment.

To address this problem, we study whether demographic changes affect people's attitudes and

[1]Other studies have found no connection between immigration and far-right parties, which could be explained by the size of a country's immigrant community (Arzheimer and Carter, 2006; Lucassen and Lubbers, 2012), the existence of deeper rather than superficial interactions between natives and immigrants (Andersson et al., 2020; Schaub et al., 2021), or immigrant characteristics (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010; Valentino et al., 2019).

behaviors *before* the emergence of a far-right party that advocates an anti-immigration agenda and uses nationalistic rhetoric. By focusing on the increase in nationalistic attitudes before the emergence of far-right parties, we can directly attribute this outcome to demographic changes, which might then make far-right candidates more attractive to voters who have developed nationalistic orientations. We study how immigration shocks (i.e., sudden demographic changes) influence individuals' nationalistic attitudes and subsequent support for far-right parties.

While there is extensive research on how demographic transformations caused by migration affect people's economic and cultural grievances (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014), much less is known about how immigration can affect people's political attitudes and preferences (Hangartner et al., 2019); and we know even less about the political consequences of demographic changes in the Global South. The lack of research on this region is striking since developing countries have been the "most impacted by the recent wave of migration, which has been driven largely by refugees and asylum seekers" (Alrababa'h et al., 2021, p.35). While a large proportion of migration occurs within the Global South (UNHCR, 2017), almost all previous research on this topic has focused on receiving countries in the Global North. For instance, more than 6 million people fled Venezuela in the last few years, and 80% of them live in another Latin American country (Chaves-González and Echevarría, 2020). [2]

The case of Chile provides an unusual opportunity to study the political effects of immigration for two reasons. First, since 2015, it has experienced a rapid and sudden demographic transformation due to migration from other Latin American and Caribbean countries; some parts of the country have experienced drastic demographic changes, while others have not (Bellolio and Valdés, 2020). Second, we analyze rich municipality-level administrative data on how the number of visas requested changed from 2014 to 2017. During this period, people from other Latin American countries could travel to Chile without a tourist visa and could request a (non-tourist) visa

[2] For examples of research studying the politics of migration in Latin America, see Malone (2019), Vega-Mendez and Visconti (2021), Holland et al. (2021), and Acevedo and Meseguer (2022).

during their visit. Visa requests thus serve as an accurate measure of actual demographic changes (before the 2018 immigration reform) (Severino and Visconti, 2023).

Additionally, the Chilean case provides a unique chance to address the endogeneity problem associated with the emergence of far-right parties and political attitudes since the country's first far-right party, called the Republican party, was formed in 2019 (Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2021). In 2021, this new party secured multiple seats in Congress and made it to the second round of the presidential election, where it obtained 44% of the votes. We use panel data from 2016 to 2018 to leverage the timing of both the surveys and the rise of a national far-right political organization to rule out the possibility that the party's launch shaped political attitudes.[3]

We combine the administrative data (to measure exposure to immigration) with a three-wave panel study (to capture the outcomes). We use a dynamic or event-study difference-in-differences (DiD) design to draw inferences about how immigration shapes nationalistic attitudes; this approach provides the effects of different lengths of exposure to a sudden demographic change.

When examining the three waves, we find that immigration shocks make people more likely to hold nationalistic attitudes one year after their initial exposure to a rapid and large demographic change explained by migration. We provide evidence from multiple sources documenting an increase in prejudice and hostility against foreigners. We, therefore, interpret the changes in attitudes as evidence of exclusionary nationalism (i.e., an identitarian reaction) rather than benign nationalism or patriotism (i.e., characterized by pride in one's country for helping people in need). We expand on this alternative explanation in Section 6.

We also show that areas more exposed to a rapid shift in migration in Chile were more likely to support the newly formed far-right party in the 2021 presidential election, which suggests parties

[3] Before the emergence of the Republican party in 2019, an independent far-right candidate ran in 2017. However, he did not run on an anti-immigration platform (Cruz and Varetto, 2019), and immigration was not even a topic in that electoral campaign (Bunker, 2018). This candidate played only a minor role in the 2017 election and had no party or legislative candidates. We expand on this in Section 3.2.

that rely heavily on nationalistic rhetoric might be more appealing to voters in a more nationalistic context.

The supplementary appendix contains more analyses using administrative data on hate crimes (Appendix E) and georeferenced tweets about migration (Appendix F) to enhance our understanding of how migration shaped people's attitudes in Chile. We also present survey data from eight Latin American countries to improve the external validity of the main results and show that an increase in migration across Latin America is associated with more nationalistic attitudes (Appendix G).

These findings have important implications for three main strands of research. First, while a growing literature examines the political consequences of migration (Bove and Böhmelt, 2016; Masterson and Yasenov, 2021; Zhou and Shaver, 2021; Fouka and Tabellini, 2022; Adida et al., 2023) as well as attitudes and behaviors toward migrants (Ward, 2019; Zhou and Lyall, 2021; Kustov et al., 2021; Holland et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2023), important geographic imbalances of knowledge remain. We focus on the understudied but important case of South–South migration. Second, understanding how nationalistic attitudes are formed and how the context shapes them has important political implications since nationalism can affect people's attitudes and behaviors, such as by increasing xenophobia (Rosenzweig and Zhou, 2021) and support for far-right parties (Lubbers and Coenders, 2017). Finally, we know that mainstream right-wing parties are reacting to the emergence of the far right (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Abou-Chadi and Krause, 2020), and the rise of nationalistic attitudes suggests that even if these mainstream parties adopt stricter measures to curb immigration, they might not necessarily receive an electoral boost. Native-born residents might wish to go beyond curtailing demographic changes. The change in attitudes might make voters more likely to support parties that rely heavily on nationalistic rhetoric.

2 Theoretical Background

Previous research has documented how demographic changes generated by migration can trigger anti-immigration attitudes among native-born residents driven by economic or cultural concerns. Studies conducted in the United States and Europe have revealed how migration can affect a variety of outcomes, including the rise of anti-immigration sentiments (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014), hate crimes (Igarashi, 2021), and increased voter turnout (Hopkins, 2010). However, there has been relatively limited research on how local demographic changes in the Global South might be fostering a stronger sense of nationalism and the consequences of these new political attitudes.

2.1 What Is Nationalism?

As with other important political concepts, nationalism has multiple definitions as well as negative and positive connotations. While new forms of nationalism have emerged that are associated with xenophobia and discrimination (Mylonas and Tudor, 2023), the concept of nationalism has also been connected with freedom and democracy, such as during the decolonization process in Africa (Birmingham, 2008) and Latin American countries' independence from Spain (Miller, 2006). Invoking nationalism can, therefore, generate diverse outcomes, such as intolerance of newcomers or freeing a country from external oppression.

It is, therefore, important to first establish common ground and then explore what type of nationalism we are observing. Definitions of nationalism commonly entail identifying with one's own nation and differentiating from other nations (Bonikowski and DiMaggio, 2016; Rosenzweig and Zhou, 2021). Past work has highlighted the importance of constructing an imagined political community (Anderson, 1983), defining membership of that community, and building a conscious and self-aware social identity around that membership (Mylonas and Tudor, 2023).

How can we measure this common ground? Previous studies have evaluated national pride and national identity as a proxy for nationalism (Bonikowski and DiMaggio, 2016; Rosenzweig and Zhou, 2021). National pride refers to "individual sentiments of pride directed towards the

nation-state," while national identity corresponds to "an awareness of affiliation with the nation that gives people a sense of who they are in relation to others" (Hjerm, 1998, p.342). This approach, therefore, captures some of the key dimensions of this "imagined political community."

2.2 Migration and Nationalism

Prior research has demonstrated that nationalism is not a static identity; external shocks influence its salience. For example, terrorist attacks have been shown to increase nationalism: the September 11 attacks in the US and the March 2016 bombings in Brussels increased in-group solidarity and citizens' identification with their country (Skitka, 2005; Kuehnhanss et al., 2021). Sports events, such as football games in Africa, have also been shown to impact national (rather than ethnic) identity (Depetris-Chauvin et al., 2020). In addition, economic conditions can trigger national sentiments, such as import trade shocks in Western Europe (Colantone and Stanig, 2018). In other words, contextual factors, including national identity, can activate social identities (Bisbee and Rosendorff, 2020).[4]

According to social psychology explanations, migration triggers national sentiments by encouraging people to classify individuals into social categories (Tajfel and Turner, 1982), particularly in-groups and out-groups (Dunne, 2018). In this context, group membership "leads people to favor that group and see others less worthy in comparison" (Druckman, 1994, p.48).

However, it is not only classifying people into groups that fuels negative sentiments and group conflicts. The existence of a potentially competitive out-group and perceptions of a threat lead to sharper distinctions between groups (Piazza, 2015). Therefore, the in-group can enhance its self-image and identity as a preservation mechanism when confronted with an out-group, a process known as hierarchy-enhancing behavior (Craig and Phillips, 2023).

In the context of migration, this becomes particularly relevant since native-born citizens might feel compelled to strengthen their group's self-image and identity when faced with perceived

[4] Another nationalistic-related sentiment that can be activated by contextual factors is anti-Americanism (Carreras et al., 2021; Bateson and Weintraub, 2022).

threats from newcomers – which fuels the "us" versus "them" conflict inherent in nationalism. When migrants and native-born citizens share identity traits such as language and cultural heritage, national identity might gain ever more prominence. In these circumstances, such as the Venezuelan migratory crisis in Latin America, the human propensity for categorization and group-based comparisons converges with the presence of a potentially competitive out-group, triggering nationalism among native-born citizens.

3 Immigration and the Far Right in Chile

3.1 The Immigration Landscape

As mentioned above, the significant geographic imbalances in knowledge about the political effects of demographic changes are particularly concerning given that a large proportion of migration occurs between countries in the Global South (since refugees and economic migrants commonly relocate to places close to their countries of origin). For example, in Africa, Uganda has been receiving refugees from neighboring countries experiencing civil war and political violence for decades. Since 2011, over a million individuals from South Sudan alone have sought refuge there (UNHCR, 2017). In the Middle East, Lebanon has received close to two-thirds of the Syrians displaced by the civil war (Corstange and York, 2018). In the Caribbean, the 2010 earthquake in Haiti prompted thousands of people to migrate to the US and Latin America (Esnard and Sapat, 2011). Venezuela's socioeconomic collapse has generated large-scale displacements to other countries in South America (Holland et al., 2021). In this context, Chile has become a major recipient of migrants, mainly from Venezuela and Haiti (Bivort et al., 2019).

The case of Chile is particularly interesting. It has historically had a small proportion of foreign-born residents, but its immigration rate has increased faster than any other country in Latin America (Doña Reveco, 2018) – from roughly 1% of the population in 2002 to 8% by 2018 (Bellolio and Valdés, 2020). This rapid and sudden demographic transformation has led to the politicization of immigration, as it has in the United States and Europe (Arostegui, 2018). Hence,

although intergroup conflict in Chile has traditionally centered on disputes involving indigenous communities (Gerber et al., 2018; Carlin et al., 2022), the emergence of tension between native populations and migrants is a new source of societal strain in the country.

The number of visa requests submitted before 2018 serves as an excellent proxy for actual immigration in Chile. Nine out of ten migrants in Chile come from other countries in the region (Bellolio and Valdés, 2020), which is relevant because before the 2018 reform Latin American citizens could enter Chile as visitors without a tourist visa,[5] and many did not need a passport – just a valid ID.[6] While in the country as visitors, Latin American citizens could request a (non-tourist) visa following a simple bureaucratic process. Migrants needed to present an employment contract to obtain a temporary visa, and then after two years, they could apply for permanent residency (Stefoni, 2011). Employment contracts were not limited to working in a company or an industry; less formal agreements, such as working for an individual taxpayer or a household as a nanny or contractor, were acceptable (Fernandez, 2017).

Chile had a strong focus on securing its borders before 2018 (Aedo, 2017), and obtaining a regular status gave migrants access to social benefits and key public services.[7] It is therefore not surprising that there were very few irregular crossings (an average of three people were arrested per day) according to official numbers (Vedoya, 2017), and that the most common way to migrate to Chile was to request a visa while in the country (Severino and Visconti, 2023).

However, these conditions changed dramatically in 2018 with the administration of then-president Sebastian Piñera. He passed a bill reforming the immigration law that required people from Venezuela and Haiti – the countries with the largest percentage of migrants entering Chile – had to request a tourist visa *before* traveling to the country as visitors (Bellolio and Valdés, 2020).

[5] The exception is people from the Dominican Republic.

[6] Citizens of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay could visit Chile without a passport before 2018.

[7] For example, to be part of the public health system FONASA or to receive financial support to rent a home.

This reform made the strategy of migrating as a tourist and using the 90-day window to obtain an employment contract infeasible for a large proportion of migrants. The number of irregular crossings skyrocketed after the reform; thus, using visas to proxy for migration was no longer an accurate and informative measurement approach. We, therefore, rely on administrative data covering the period before the immigration law was adopted in 2018.

3.2 The Political Landscape

After the transition to democracy in 1990, a center-left and a center-right-wing coalition dominated Chilean politics. The former won four presidential elections in a row, and the latter broke that pattern in 2009. The coalitions then traded control of executive power until 2022. Over time, these two large political alliances have converged toward the center (Visconti, 2021),[8] which can be explained by the center-left government's decision to keep the market-based reforms introduced by Pinochet during the military dictatorship (Maillet, 2013) and the moderation of the center-right parties that have appropriated elements of social welfare policies (López and Baeza, 2011; López et al., 2013). These traditional coalitions could not adapt to a new social context and failed to include demands from relevant social groups in their platforms (Luna, 2014; Morgan and Meléndez, 2016; Rosenblatt, 2018).

In the context of a crisis of representation, the ideological landscape has changed in recent years. In 2017, the left-wing *Frente Amplio* coalition emerged and obtained surprising results in the presidential and legislative elections that year. Its presidential candidate nearly made it into the second round, and 20 of its candidates were elected to the Lower House. The second round was between the two traditional coalitions (i.e., center-left and center-right), and the center-right candidate, Sebastián Piñera, won the election that year (Toro and Valenzuela, 2018).

However, a far-right candidate ran for president before the creation of the far-right party in 2019. José Antonio Kast competed in 2017 as an independent candidate without the support of

[8] At least until the second election of Michelle Bachelet in 2014.

a political party.[9] The center-right and far-right candidates had separate platforms in the 2017 presidential election, but neither featured immigration. While Piñera (center-right) focused on the economic costs of the reforms implemented by the incumbent center-left government, Kast (far-right) based his campaign on social issues such as rejecting abortion and equal marriage (Bunker, 2018). Immigration was not a political and electoral issue until after 2018 (Bianchini et al., 2022).

Therefore, although a far-right candidate emerged in 2017, he obtained less than 8% of the votes, did not make it to the second round, and played a minor role in that election with no party or congressional candidates. As a result, there is no reason to believe elites were driving nationalistic attitudes until 2019 when a far-right party was created.

In 2019, the Republican Party emerged, using clear anti-immigration and nationalistic rhetoric (Díaz et al., 2023).[10] In 2022, the party won seats in the Lower and Upper Chambers of Congress and made it to the second round of the presidential election, where it obtained 44% of the votes. In 2023, it had more members elected to the Constitutional Assembly than any other party. The Republican Party became very vocal about immigration; in 2021, its presidential candidate proposed digging a ditch on the northern border to stop irregular migration, mimicking Trump's wall rhetoric (Díaz et al., 2023).

Chile, therefore represents a perfect opportunity to investigate the consequences of demographic changes in the Global South for three reasons: (i) it has experienced unprecedented immigration waves in the last decade, (ii) local demographic changes before 2018 can be accurately measured, and (iii) a far-right party with an anti-immigration agenda did not emerge until 2019 (and quickly became very successful).

[9] Voters typically back independent candidates in Chile as an anti-elite statement rather than as a signal of support for their policies (Argote and Visconti, 2023).

[10] See Zanotti and Roberts (2021) and Rovira Kaltwasser (2022) for reviews of the emergence of the (populist) far-right in Latin America.

4 Data and Empirical Strategy

Several methodological challenges must be addressed to study the effects of demographic changes. One of the most important is the non-random nature of migration (Dancygier and Laitin, 2014). Areas that have experienced the arrival of a significant number of newcomers might differ in terms of observed and unobserved covariates from places that have not. To address this concern, we use a three-wave panel survey and detailed administrative data from Chile to implement a dynamic difference-in-differences (DiD) analysis to estimate how immigration affects nationalistic attitudes. Additionally, we take advantage of the rapid demographic transformation in Chile since it began receiving large numbers of immigrants in 2015.

A DiD design employs pre- and post-treatment longitudinal data to estimate the effects of a given intervention by comparing outcomes over time between a treatment and a control group. These groups do not need to be similar but do need to follow a similar trajectory before the treatment (i.e., the parallel-trends assumption) so that any difference in their trajectories after the treatment can be attributed to exposure to the treatment. A DiD is a particularly useful design if the treatment cannot be randomized, but the longitudinal nature of the data can be exploited to provide more credible inferences than studies that only adjust for cross-sectional variables.

We use a dynamic (also called event-study) DiD, which is ideal when the treatment being measured occurs across multiple time periods (Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2020). When relying on a dynamic DiD, effects are aggregated by the length of exposure. For example, we can determine the impact of being exposed to an immigration shock just once or more than once. When using a dynamic DiD, the treatment follows a staggered adoption, meaning that when subjects are treated, they will remain in the treatment group, and the control group is composed only of never-treated units.

Measuring exposure to immigration is not easy. One option is to use perceptions of demographic changes, but previous studies have shown that people's perceptions tend to be endogenous to their political attitudes (Evans and Andersen, 2006). A possible solution to this problem is to

use administrative data to calculate immigration rates. However, demographic changes can be explained by both regular and irregular migration, and administrative data can only inform us about the former. The case of Chile provides an opportunity to address this concern since, as explained above, before 2018, Latin American citizens could easily request a (non-tourist) visa while in Chile as visitors. Regular migration thus explains most of the demographic transformations before 2018. We exploit the rich and detailed administrative data that contains all visa requests made in Chile between 2014 and 2017 and includes information about each migrant's municipality of residence. This data allows us to compute immigration patterns at the municipality level. In Appendix A, we expand on using this administrative data.

Another potential issue associated with studying the impact of immigration is that native residents of areas exposed to high levels of immigration might get used to these demographic changes and, as a result, not update their political attitudes after foreigners arrive. Previous studies have highlighted the limitations of using immigration rates to measure perceived immigration (Newman and Velez, 2014) and demonstrated that people tend to focus on changes rather than absolute levels (Kahneman and Tversky, 2013). To address this concern, we analyze immigration shocks or substantive demographic changes caused by migratory waves that occur in a short time period (Severino and Visconti, 2023).

We compute the annual change in immigration to measure demographic transformations. For example, for the survey implemented in 2017, we use the number of visas requested in 2016 and 2015 to estimate the demographic change. In particular, we calculate the percentage-point change between 2016 and 2015 (i.e., changes in visa requests from one year to the next).[11] We define exposed municipalities as those with a change in visa requests equal to or greater than one standard deviation above the mean (considering all of the differences between years in a given survey wave).[12] Control municipalities are those in which demographic changes were less than one

[11] Percentage change: (Visas year 1 – Visas year 2)/(Visas year 2).

[12] Using a one-standard-deviation increase is a common strategy when studying the impact of different types of shocks (see Bazzi and Blattman (2014) and Carreras and Visconti (2022) for

standard deviation. Survey respondents living in exposed municipalities are considered exposed subjects, and those in control municipalities are control subjects. We use a continuous version of the exposure indicator in Section 5.2 as a robustness check (i.e., the change in percentage points), and conclusions do not change. Finally, since we only use administrative data before the immigration reform in 2018 to better capture migration changes, we compute immigration shocks for the years 2015, 2016, and 2017.

The panel study is based on a nationally representative sample; the Centre for Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies administered the survey in person (Appendix B includes details about sampling). We use three waves from 2016 to 2018 to measure the outcomes. For example, for an outcome from the second wave (year 2017), the immigration shock is computed using visa requests from 2016 and 2015 to compute changes in migration. The logic of using a lagged treatment is that exposure to migration needs to precede the measurement of the outcome. Regarding the outcomes, we use two questions from this panel study to evaluate how demographic changes (measured using administrative data) affect nationalistic attitudes (measured using panel survey data). We use agreement with the statements "I feel proud to be Chilean" and "I identify with Chile" (1: strongly disagree; 5: strongly agree).[13] We use the average of responses to both statements to proxy for nationalistic attitudes to simplify the interpretation of the main results. Appendix C reports the findings when using pride and identity as different outcomes, and the conclusions hold. We standardize all outcomes to facilitate their interpretation.

To estimate the dynamic DiD, we rely on the Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021) DiD estimator, which computes the treatment's effect by the length of exposure using never-treated units as the control group. We also include a set of placebo covariates (i.e., not affected by exposure to migration) to increase the efficiency of our estimates, such as respondents' education, gender, age, and survey date. Appendix D includes the results of the dynamic DiD without controls and the main

examples).

[13] Prior studies have employed these statements to capture nationalistic attitudes (e.g., Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016) and Rosenzweig and Zhou (2021)).

conclusions hold.

The panel survey data includes 25% of all municipalities in Chile, but they cover 67% of the population. We have 6,249 observations (or 2,083 participants across three waves) from the 92 municipalities used in the study (29 exposed and 63 never treated). Since exposure to a demographic change is assigned at the municipality level, but outcomes are measured at the individual level, we use bootstrapped-based standard errors (Cameron et al., 2008). Figure 1 depicts the distribution of the control (i.e., never treated) and exposed groups (i.e., regardless of the time of exposure). Both groups exhibit some differences in population size, poverty levels, and electoral behavior as reported in Table 3 in Section 7 (pre-exposure characteristics). However, DiD designs do not require covariate balance but parallel trends as the key identification assumption.

The exposed and control municipalities are located in the country's three main geographic areas – north, center, and south.[14] Regarding spillovers, since the entire country experienced a demographic transformation and the key distinction between places is the degree of change, we expect violations of the non-interference assumption to bias the effects toward zero. This design is, therefore, a hard test to find any effects.

In the final dataset, the units of analysis are thus survey respondents embedded in panel data. Exposed individuals are those living in a municipality in which immigration increased by more than one standard deviation in the previous year, and control subjects live in municipalities that were never exposed to an immigration shock. The outcome measures national sentiments toward Chile.

[14] Excluding the deep south (Aysen and Magallanes regions), which only accounts for around 1% of the population.

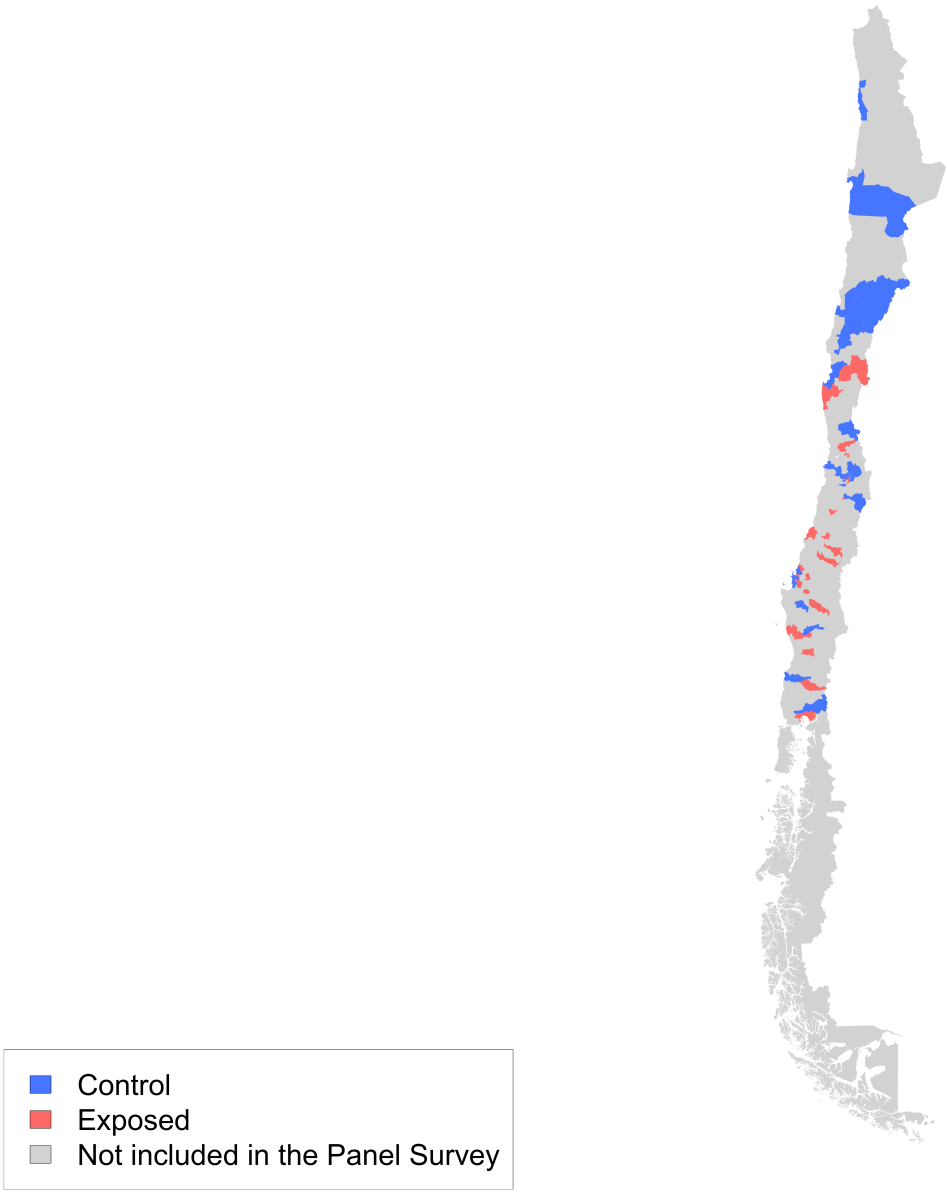

Figure 1: Map of Chile depicting municipalities that: (i) were exposed to an immigration shock, (ii) were not exposed to an immigration shock, and (iii) were not included in the panel survey data.

5 Results: Nationalistic Attitudes in Chile

We start by exploring the descriptive statistics of nationalistic attitudes in Chile using the panel survey data presented in Table 1. We examine three groups: never treated (i.e., respondents living in a municipality that did not experience an immigration shock), first treated (i.e., respondents exposed for the first time to an immigration shock), and second treated (i.e., respondents exposed for a second time to an immigration shock).[15] Nationalistic attitudes are calculated as the average between national pride and identity (1 = least nationalistic; 5 = most nationalistic). Table 1 indicates that nationalism increased more for people who experienced an immigration shock for at least two years than among those who did not, which works as a first piece of evidence.

Table 1: Nationalistic attitudes by time of exposure

Group	Mean	Std.Dev.	Min	Max
Never Treated	4.31	0.74	1	5
First Treated	4.37	0.74	1	5
Second Treated	4.52	0.62	2	5

5.1 Dynamic Difference-in-Differences

Because it is not easy to interpret a design based on multiple time periods, a common approach is to aggregate group-time effects into an event-study plot (Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2020). This approach provides the average treatment effects with different lengths of exposure.[16] We report

[15] Units treated in the first wave (i.e., always treated) are removed from the analysis since they do not provide pre-treatment information (Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2020). They represent 2% of the sample.

[16] Since some municipalities were never exposed to an immigration shock, and the rest were exposed at different times, the dynamic DiD allows us to compute the effects of an immigration shock based on the length of exposure.

the effects of the first (immediate) and second (after one year) exposures to an immigration shock.

Figure 2 displays the main results of immigration shocks on nationalistic attitudes. The dots represent the average effects, and the lines 95% confidence intervals. The results in grey correspond to the pre-exposure analysis, which compares the *never treated* (i.e., controls) and *eventually treated* (i.e., not exposed at the time but will be exposed in the next waves). The results in black correspond to the post-exposure analysis or the effects of an immigration shock by the length of exposure, which is based on the comparison between *never treated* and *first treated* (i.e., exposed for a first time or immediate exposure), and *never treated* and *second treated* (i.e., exposed one year after initial exposure).

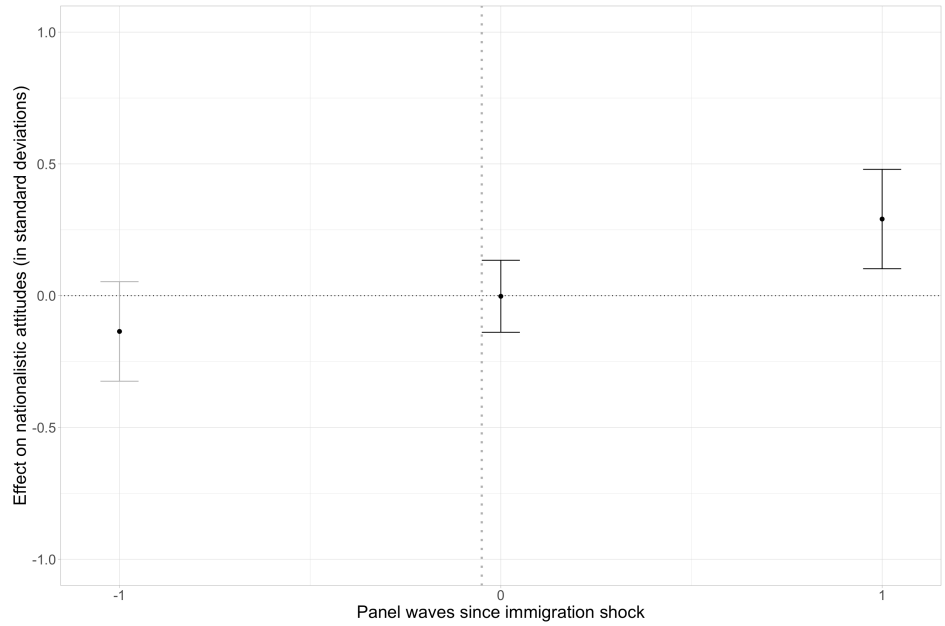

Figure 2: Average effect of immigration shocks on nationalistic attitudes by length of exposure. A length of exposure of -1 refers to the period before the first exposure, 0 to the first exposure, and 1 to the second exposure to an immigration shock. 6,034 observations (respondent-wave).

The figure displays a non-significant result before the first exposure (95% CI: [-0.325, 0.053]), which provides evidence to support the parallel-trends assumption (i.e., both groups followed the

same trajectory in the pretreatment period, which is expressed by the null results). There is no evidence of an effect during the initial exposure (95% CI: [-0.139, 0.134]), but there is evidence of such an effect one year after the first exposure. A second exposure to an immigration shock increases nationalistic attitudes by 0.29 standard deviation units (95% CI: [0.102, 0.479]). The patterns are the same when using national pride and national identity separately (rather than the average of both): there is no evidence of a pretreatment effect, no evidence of an immediate effect, and a significant increase one year after the initial exposure (national pride 95%: [0.164, 0.541], national identity 95%: [0.004, 0.401]).

To provide more context to the effect sizes, unstandardized nationalistic attitudes are scored between 1 and 5. When we use this version of the outcome rather than the standardized one, we find that the immigration shock increases nationalism by 0.21 points after two exposures. Considering that the average score for nationalistic attitudes in the never-treated group is 4.31, changing this outcome by a fifth of a point is not a minor update.

Figure 2 thus shows that people do not change their political attitudes immediately after being exposed to an immigration shock. Their new attitudes crystallize after a year, suggesting that some contact with migrants is needed to make them more nationalistic. This particular result does not align with the traditional contact hypothesis where prejudice should decrease with time (Allport, 1954) but is in line with recent findings about how people react to migration in the Global South (Severino and Visconti, 2023).

5.2 Generalized Difference-in-Differences

In the main analysis, we use a binary version of exposure to migration following a staggered structure. As a robustness check, this section employs a continuous measure of demographic change – the percentage-point change between years 1 and 2 before the survey. Since our previous design can only be implemented with a binary treatment (Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2020; Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2021), in this section, we use a generalized DiD design or two-way fixed effects. We use waves to capture time-fixed effects and respondents or municipalities for unit-fixed effects

and include the same controls as in the previous analysis. We use this robustness check to evaluate whether the results are robust to using a different exposure indicator (continuous rather than binary) and a different estimation approach (generalized rather than dynamic DiD). We implement the following generalized DiD design using a continuous version of the treatment:

$$Y_{it} = \beta D_{it} + X_{it}\Delta + \gamma_i + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

Table 2 indicates how a demographic change affects nationalistic attitudes (β from equation 1). The outcome and demographic change indicator are standardized to facilitate the interpretation of the analysis.

Table 2: Generalized DiD using a continuous exposure indicator

	Nationalistic attitudes			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Demographic change	0.039**	0.039**	0.039**	0.038**
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Wave fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Respondent fixed effects	Yes	Yes	No	No
Municipality fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	6,208	6,205	6,208	6,205
Note:				*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

The results show that a one-standard-deviation increase in demographic changes due to migration raises nationalistic attitudes by 0.04 standard deviation units. Effect sizes cannot be compared with the dynamic DiD due to the different structures of their exposure indicators.[17] Yet the direction and significance of the effects are the same, which confirms that the study's main conclusions are robust to different specifications. We use national pride and identity as outcomes in Appendix C.

[17] In this analysis, the exposure indicator is continuous and does not distinguish between the first or second exposure.

6 Alternative Explanation

We interpret the above findings as evidence of how immigration affects people's identity and self-image following theories from social psychology (Craig and Phillips, 2023). However, an increase in national pride and identity could be interpreted as more positive – what is usually called *benign nationalism* (Fine, 1999) or *patriotism* (Feshbach, 1987). This concept is based on affection toward one's nation and comes with a sense of responsibility and pride (Zhai and Yan, 2022), which is often related to tolerance of newcomers (de Figueiredo Jr and Elkins, 2003; Green et al., 2011; Jeong, 2013). Prior evidence has demonstrated how patriotism can predict positive behaviors such as civic activity (Marzęcki, 2020) and is compatible with certain kinds of cosmopolitanism (Audi, 2009). Consequently, benign nationalism and patriotism are associated with positive and inclusive feelings that should not trigger exclusionary attitudes and behaviors against out-group members.

Therefore, an increment in national pride might result from people's solidarity with and support of other nations' struggles. This empathy is more likely when immigrants come from countries with similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds, such as South–South migration in Latin America. Previous research has demonstrated how empathy can help explain a reduction of prejudice toward migrants (Sirin et al., 2016; Miklikowska, 2018). Other positive approaches, such as perspective-taking or shared concepts of citizenship, can foster the inclusion of migrant communities (Williamson et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2022), which could be particularly relevant when helping like-minded nations (e.g., Venezuelans migrating to Chile).

In summary, benign nationalism (i.e., being proud of living in a country that helps others in need) or exclusionary nationalism (i.e., identitarian reaction to demographic changes) can explain why citizens are proud of being Chilean and likely to identify with their country. We use multiple secondary sources such as surveys, interviews, and media to document what type of nationalism Chile exhibited after the immigration shocks.

Evidence from a survey administered to migrants in Chile in 2018 shows that half of the respondents reported that native-born Chileans had discriminated against them. Migrants felt discrimi-

nated against in various contexts, such as when applying for jobs, when trying to rent a house, when using public transportation, and when looking for health care (CENEM, 2018). Qualitative evidence from interviews with migrants supports these findings. Newcomers reported differential treatment in private and public services, such as Chileans being attended to before migrants who had been waiting longer (Rojas Pedemonte et al., 2015). Latin American migrants in Chile have encountered multiple obstacles to integration. For example, Chilean protesters attacked migrants and destroyed their property in a large anti-immigration demonstration in the north of the country in 2022. This protest prompted a response from the United Nations condemning violence against migrant communities as an erosion of their human rights.[18] Due to the high levels of exclusionary attitudes against foreigners in the country, migrants have conducted their own protests asking for better working conditions, respect for their human rights, and an end to racism.[19] In 2021, many Haitians coming from Chile tried to cross the US southern border. Testimonials obtained by *The New York Times* illustrate the hostility toward them in Chile: "They tell us to go back home, that we are scum."[20] In summary, this evidence from surveys, interviews, and media reports describes widespread discrimination and hostility against newcomers.

[18] *Voz de America*, "The UN expresses concern about violence against Venezuelans in Chile," February 2, 2022.

[19] *El Mostrador*,"Immigrants march against labor abuse and discrimination," February 18, 2018.

[20] *New York Times*, "Why Haitians in Chile keep heading north to the U.S.," September 27, 2021.

Figure 3: Anti-migrant protests and violence in Chile. Top: sign translates as "Chile for Chileans: No more unwanted immigrants" (picture by Martin Bernetti, AFP). Bottom: protesters destroying the property of Venezuelan families living in a homeless camp (picture by Fernando Muñoz, AFP).

In Appendix E, we use a proxy of hate crime to learn about exclusionary attitudes. In particular, hate crimes are defined as targeting a victim due to their religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or nation (Alrababah et al., 2019). We use crimes that are connected to hostility toward migrants (and crimes that cannot be connected as placebos). We find evidence of an increase in hostile behavior against foreigners.

In Appendix F, we use tweets between 2016 and 2018 (such as the panel survey) that can be georeferenced to Chile to evaluate sentiments about migration. The results indicate a positive correlation between immigration rates and negative sentiments toward newcomers. These findings are relevant since previous studies have documented how a negative and xenophobic national discourse about migration can result in severe forms of hostile behavior, including a rise in ethnic violence and hate crimes against migrants (Igarashi, 2021; Dipoppa et al., 2023).

To sum up, it is hard to argue that an increase in violence against foreigners and more negative sentiments toward immigration is occurring in a context of more patriotism or benign nationalism. Therefore, this evidence suggests an increase in exclusionary nationalism after a large and sudden demographic change. This interpretation is bolstered by the secondary data from media, interviews, and surveys reported above.

7 Support for Far-Right Parties

The main findings show that Chileans are becoming more nationalistic after a demographic shock explained by migration and before the emergence of a far-right party using nationalistic rhetoric. These results suggest that these demographic changes might make nationalistic parties more appealing to these now more nationalistic citizens. In a preliminary analysis, we evaluate whether immigration shocks impact far-right parties' electoral performance and, as a result, people's behavior. We want to document whether a far-right party obtains more votes in places that receive more immigrants as suggestive evidence of a connection between people's updated nationalistic sentiments and support for nationalistic parties.

In 2021, a far-right party competed nationally for the first time by presenting candidates for the Lower and Upper Chambers and the presidency. This party elected legislators in both chambers, and its presidential candidate received the most votes in the first round. Since the panel survey data does not include respondents' intended vote choice for the 2021 presidential election, in this section, we use municipality-level electoral results. This approach fits with the main analysis in Section 5.1 since exposure to migration is also measured at the municipality level.[21]

Because we have only one time period for the outcome since the far-right party emerged in 2019, it is not possible to implement a DiD design as we did in the previous analysis. We, therefore, use a different empirical strategy in this section. We rely on advances in optimal matching and mathematical programming to construct a matched sample in which the matched exposed and matched control groups are similar in key observed characteristics.

While traditional matching techniques such as propensity score matching do not guarantee covariate balance (King and Nielsen, 2019), we rely on cardinality matching where the researcher defines the tolerances for imbalances in advance and then identifies the largest matched sample that meets those tolerances (Zubizarreta et al., 2014; Visconti and Zubizarreta, 2018).[22]

We define the standardized differences between the matched exposed and control groups to be no greater than 0.2 standard deviations for all the covariates in our study, a threshold commonly used in the literature to illustrate covariate balance (Silber et al., 2013). As a result, our exposed and control groups will not differ on more than a fifth of a standard deviation unit. We use a mean balance constraint for all the pretreatment covariates,[23] and municipalities as the unit of analysis.

[21] We use the same 92 municipalities included in the panel survey to be able to compare between analyses.

[22] Unfortunately, the unmatched sample is too small and the groups too different to include more constraints such as constructing a representative matched sample (Bennett et al., 2019; Kuffuor et al., 2022). However, cardinality matching is particularly good at addressing problems of limited overlap in small samples (Visconti and Zubizarreta, 2018).

[23] All of these covariates are continuous, ordinal, or binary, so the mean balance constraint is a

Regarding pretreatment covariates, we use the vote share of the center-right and center-left candidates in the 2013 presidential election (the two candidates who made it into the second round), income index in 2003, health index in 2003, education index in 2003, human development index (HDI) in 2003, and population in 2002.[24]

We acknowledge that matching is not an identification strategy by itself (Sekhon, 2009; Keele, 2015). However, this design allows us to implement a sensitivity analysis afterward to evaluate whether the findings are robust to hidden biases of different magnitudes (Rosenbaum, 2010). We believe this method generates more robust results than relying on techniques that also adjust on observables but do not check for sensitivity to unobservables.

Table 3 compares the averages for all the covariates between the exposed and control groups before matching. It shows how both groups present important differences regarding their observed characteristics (i.e., all of the standardized differences are greater than 0.2 standard deviation units).

Table 3: Average values of covariates before matching

Covariates	Control group	Exposed group	Stan. Diff.
Center-right vote share 2013	0.26	0.22	0.53
Center-left vote share 2013	0.44	0.55	1.31
Education 2003	0.77	0.70	1.27
Health 2003	0.79	0.74	0.77
Income 2003	0.69	0.60	1.03
HDI 2003	0.75	0.68	1.17
Population 2002	140,776	68,780	0.78
Observations	61	29	

Table 4 illustrates what happens after implementing cardinality matching to achieve covariate balance. Now, the matched exposed and the matched control have similar averages for the pretreat-

meaningful requirement, which would not be the case if we included nominal covariates.

[24] We use official electoral results for the vote share, census data for population, and UNDP data for income, health, education, and the human development index. All the covariates are pretreatment since the exposure indicator is constructed using immigration data between 2014 and 2017.

ment covariates (i.e., all the standardized differences between these three groups are lower than 0.2 standard deviation units).

Table 4: Average values of covariates after matching

Covariates	Matched control	Matched exposed	Stan. Diff.
Center-right vote share 2013	0.21	0.22	0.16
Center-left vote share 2013	0.53	0.54	0.18
Education 2003	0.72	0.71	0.19
Health 2003	0.76	0.75	0.17
Income 2003	0.62	0.61	0.15
HDI 2003	0.70	0.69	0.20
Population 2002	89,932	73,322	0.18
Observations	25	25	

Finally, to evaluate the impact of an immigration shock, we use a one-sided permutational t-test in matched pairs that incorporates a sensitivity analysis to hidden biases (Rosenbaum, 2015). The outcome of interest is the vote share of the candidate representing the far-right party in the first round of the 2021 election. Table 5 provides the point estimates, which show that an immigration shock increases support for the far right at the municipality level by 4.8 percentage points. As a reference, previous research indicates that the 2010 earthquake in Chile (i.e., the sixth-largest earthquake ever recorded) affected the incumbent's vote share by 1.5 percentage points (Visconti and Zubizarreta, 2018). Therefore, exposure to an immigration shock has an impact three times larger than exposure to one of the most devastating disasters in Chile's history.

For the sensitivity analysis, the parameter Γ represents the odds of differential assignment to the immigration shock due to an unobserved factor we call u. A $\Gamma = 1.00$ means that two municipalities with the same observed characteristics have the same probability of being exposed to an immigration shock (i.e., there are no hidden biases). A $\Gamma = 1.42$ means that two municipalities with the same observed characteristics have different probabilities of being exposed to an immigration shock; one is 1.42 times more likely than the other to be exposed due to the existence of hidden biases. Therefore, since the p-values are still significant for a $\Gamma = 1.42$, we have evidence that our results are robust to medium-sized hidden biases explained by failing to adjust for some

unobserved covariate u.[25]

Table 5: Effect of immigration shocks on the far-right vote share in 2021

Point estimate	0.048
p-value (Γ=1.00)	0.010
p-value (Γ=1.42)	0.049

The far-right Republican Party in Chile put forward a radical anti-immigration and nationalistic agenda in the 2021 presidential election (Díaz et al., 2023). Therefore, the results depicting an increase in electoral support for this party in areas that experienced an immigration shock can be interpreted as extra evidence of the existence of exclusionary (rather than benign) nationalism.

8 Conclusions

Large, unprecedented demographic changes have multi-faceted political outcomes in host countries. When large migration flows change a country's population structure, native-born citizens often perceive a threat to their identity and self-image. This perception can make them more susceptible to adopting nationalistic attitudes, which may, in turn, lead to increased support for far-right political parties. While conventional explanations have focused on economic and cultural factors as the primary drivers of these shifts, we propose a more complex narrative that complements but goes beyond these grievances. We argue that immigration may fuel nationalist sentiments even before the emergence of far-right parties, potentially providing an ideal environment for such political organizations to gain traction over others.

We demonstrate how native-born citizens' adverse reactions toward immigrants, in conjunction with the growing trend of exclusionary nationalism, can magnify the influence of local immigration concerns on political attitudes. To study how immigration shapes nationalistic attitudes, we use rich administrative data containing all visa requests made at the local level over a four year pe-

[25] The results stop being significant at the 0.05 level for a $\Gamma = 1.42$.

riod, which allows us to accurately estimate the scale of immigration in Chile. We complemented this data with a three-wave panel data that asks a series of questions about nationalistic attitudes, allowing us to construct the outcomes of interest.

Using a dynamic DiD design, we show that people changed their political attitudes after being exposed to sudden and large migration-driven demographic changes. Native-born residents have become more likely to express pride in and identification with Chile (i.e., more nationalistic). Additionally, we document the existence of hostility toward migrants in the country, which supports the idea that the type of nationalism taking shape is, indeed, exclusionary in nature.

This research goes beyond individual attitudes to explore the political ramifications of demographic changes at the local level. We observe that municipalities exposed to immigration are more inclined to support far-right parties that emerge later. Indeed, immigration shocks increased support for the far-right Republican Party when it competed for the first time in the 2021 Chilean presidential election. When immigration shocks increase levels of nationalism before the emergence of far-right parties, this creates an environment in which this type of political organization might outperform other parties.

Far-right parties can promote a type of nationalism that is not always compatible with democratic values such as individual rights and tolerance (Golder, 2016). In the U.S., ethnocultural conceptions of identity have been associated with nativism and preferences for cultural homogeneity, which translates into support for restrictions on immigration, language, and citizenship (Wright, 2011; Schildkraut, 2014). Similarly, studies using survey data from Europe have shown that "ethnic" conceptions of the nation are associated with radical right voting (Lubbers and Coenders, 2017), an increase in perceived threats caused by immigration, and preferences for more restrictive migration policies (Stockemer et al., 2021; van der Brug and Harteveld, 2021).

As nations all over the world grapple with immigration-related challenges, our findings have important political implications for trying to understand identity formation in Latin America and beyond. They highlight factors that have facilitated the rise of far-right parties in recent years, which can advocate policies that erode democratic norms and foster prejudice and discrimination

against newcomers. This is particularly pertinent in the context of South–South migration, an often overlooked yet crucial phenomenon in which neighboring developing countries host the majority of immigrants. Understanding these dynamics is vital for addressing the potential consequences of such parties for the global political landscape.

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