Immigration Shocks and Politicians' Rhetoric: Evidence from The Venezuelan Migration Crisis

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How does an immigration shock affect politicians' discourses? This study examines the sudden influx of Venezuelan migrants into Latin America. We argue such events reshape politicians' agendas, creating opportunities to frame new issues. Using over 3 million social-media posts by parliament members from Chile and Peru (2013–2020), we apply computational text analysis—from dictionaries to advanced techniques like topic modeling and OpenAI—and an instrumental variable approach to investigate changes in rhetoric. Our results show that in the short-term immigration gained salience across all party families, with limited regional exposure effects, highlighting a disconnect between local experiences and national debates. Our findings reveal novel mechanisms for salience: right-wing politicians criticized Venezuela's "socialist" regime rather than amplifying anti-immigration sentiment, while left-wing politicians promoted pro-immigration attitudes. Unlike developed countries, anti-immigration rhetoric was minimal, reflecting distinct dynamics of South-South migration. This study enhances our understanding of immigration's politicization in the digital age.

Key words: Immigration, Global South, OpenAI, Text-as-data.

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INTRODUCTION

How does an immigration shock affect politicians' discourses? Immigration has long been recognized for its significant political effects, often triggering hostility among native populations, influencing voters' political preferences, and shaping electoral outcomes. However, less is known about how immigration shocks reshape attitudes beyond those of the native population (Alesina and Tabellini 2024). For instance, the potential for migrant flows to exacerbate political divisions among elites has received limited attention. Existing evidence focuses primarily on developed nations (e.g., Gessler and Hunger 2022; Hutter and Kriesi 2022; Van Spanje 2010; Grande, Schwarzbözl, and Fatke 2019), leaving a gap in our understanding of how low- and middle-income nations, which host more than 80% of the world's refugees (Davis et al. 2024; UNHCR 2020), are affected.[1] Our research aims to fill this gap.

This article examines how immigration shocks reshape political agendas in the Global South, particularly by introducing a new issue during a crisis. Does immigration salience increase across all party families? How do politicians respond in regions more exposed to immigration? We argue that such crises introduce unclaimed issues to the political agenda, creating opportunities for parties to differentiate themselves by strategically framing the topic. Unlike developed countries, where migration debates have long been dominated by right-wing parties (e.g., Gessler and Hunger 2022; Hutter and Kriesi 2022; Grande, Schwarzbözl, and Fatke 2019), immigration shocks in the Global South exhibit a different pattern, with no single party claiming ownership in the short term.

More specifically, we expect two main framing patterns. First, we expect exposed politicians to be likely to adopt pro-immigration and humanitarian stances, as lower cultural anxiety fosters empathy, consistent with contact theory (Allport, Clark, and Pettigrew 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp 2008). These stances are expected to be more common among left-wing politicians. Second, we expect right-wing politicians may

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[1] See Figure A.1 in the Appendix for the evolution of the number of people displaced in non-OECD countries, which has largely surpassed those in OECD countries.

amplify fears and critique migrants' left-wing home governments, strategically converting foreign crises into domestic critiques of leftist ideology. In the Global South, where liberal immigration policies often grant migrants swift voting rights (Blair, Grossman, and Weinstein 2022; Hammoud-Gallego and Freier 2023), this strategy resonates with many soon-to-be voters who align with these critiques while seeking acceptance in their host country. For example, in the 2024 Chilean presidential election, foreign voters comprised over 5% of the electorate, reaching nearly a third in Santiago comuna. Venezuelan voters alone saw a 2346% increase since 2020, highlighting migrants' growing political influence.[2]

We test this theory using the Venezuelan exodus, which has brought over 6.6 million immigrants to Latin America. Countries across the region initially responded with openness, granting legal status and access to education and healthcare (Selee et al. 2019). To analyze this, we develop a novel dataset of online political discourse from members of the Chilean and Peruvian parliaments—two major destinations for these migrants. This dataset includes over 3 million X's posts (formerly Twitter) from 2013 to 2020, allowing us to examine how immigration is integrated into daily political discourse through X's temporally granular measures (Esberg and Siegel 2023; González-Rostani, Incio, and Lezama 2024).

Using computational text-analysis methods—from dictionaries to advanced techniques like unsupervised topic modeling and OpenAI tools—and an instrumental variable strategy to address potential endogeneity from migrants' regional self-selection, we demonstrate that politicians' discourse in host countries changes after the shock. Our results show a significant rise in immigration saliency across all party families.[3] Additionally, we find limited evidence that regional exposure affects salience, suggesting a disconnect between national debates and local experiences.

Exploring how politicians frame immigration, we find it to be highly divisive and shaped by ideology. Pro-immigration discourse was more common in exposed regions, driven

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[3]Party families are defined by ideological positions: right, center and left.

largely by left-wing politicians, while anti-immigration rhetoric showed no link to immigrant population size. Although right-wing legislators used more anti-immigration rhetoric, most of their statements were pro-immigration. Rather than opposing immigrants, right-wing politicians focused on critiquing Venezuela's "socialist" regime, while left-wing politicians emphasized human rights. Right-wing leaders framed the crisis as evidence of the dangers of leftist ideologies, drawing parallels to domestic threats.

By empirically demonstrating how immigration shocks influence elites in the Global South, this study sheds light on the supply-side dynamics of one of the largest post-WWII migratory crises. Our findings show that political framing, particularly of immigration, is highly context-dependent (Chong and Druckman 2007; Zaller 1992), diverging from the anti-immigration rhetoric typical of right-wing parties in developed countries (Gessler and Hunger 2022; Hutter and Kriesi 2022; Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020). We contribute to the growing body of research on migration in the Global South (Blair, Grossman, and Weinstein 2022; Alrababa'h et al. 2021; Zhou and Shaver 2021; Esberg and Siegel 2023), particularly recent work on forced migration from Venezuela. While prior studies primarily focus on economic impacts (Caruso, Canon, and Mueller 2021; Lebow 2022; Rozo and Vargas 2021; Argote and Daly 2024; Martínez and Martínez Heredia 2023; Forero-Vargas and Iturra 2022; Undurraga and Gonzalez-Navarro 2023) and crime perception (Ajzenman, Dominguez, and Undurraga 2023; Severino and Visconti 2024), newer research explores voter attitudes, such as anti-immigration sentiment (Argote and Perelló 2024; Zhou, Peters, and Rojas 2022), and misperceptions of migrants' political views (Holland, Peters, and Zhou 2024). By focusing on political elites' strategies, we provide novel insights into the supply-side response to immigration crises, with a comparative analysis of Chile and Peru.

Our findings reveal new evidence of the polarizing role elites play following an immigration shock. Understanding how elites frame immigration is essential, as these frames shape voter attitudes by amplifying the salience of specific narratives (Schleiter, Tavits, and Ward 2022; Getmansky, Sınmazdemir, and Zeitzoff 2018; Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008; Pérez 2015). For instance, pro-immigration frames may foster tolerance by

emphasizing empathy for migrants' challenges (Schleiter, Tavits, and Ward 2022; Kustov and Landgrave 2025). Conversely, anti-socialism frames can exacerbate polarization and anti-migrant bias, especially when migrants are misperceived as leftist, as documented by Holland, Peters, and Zhou (2024). Overall, our results highlight the potential for a right-wing populist backlash, with migrants, as new voters, reinforcing conservative shifts, and natives—particularly in regions with histories of left-wing insurgency, as noted by Rozo and Vargas (2021)—viewing right-wing accusations against the left as credible.

Our empirical approach contributes to the growing use of large language models (LLMs) in social science. By employing OpenAI's API to classify political statements as pro- or anti-immigration, we advance text analysis methods beyond sentiment detection to capture positions on political issues. Our application demonstrates LLMs as efficient tools, building on prior research that underscores their utility for topic classification (Gilardi, Alizadeh, and Kubli 2023; González-Rostani, Incio, and Lezama 2024). Moreover, the language-agnostic design of LLMs facilitates cross-linguistic analysis of political speech, enriching comparative studies (Licht 2023; Courtney et al. 2020; De Vries, Schoonvelde, and Schumacher 2018).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: POLITICIANS' RHETORIC, IMMIGRATION SHOCKS, AND NEW VOTER ENTRY

Crises such as the Venezuelan displacement disrupt the political status quo, bringing immigration to the forefront of public debate. In Latin America—where immigration has historically been a low-salience issue due to relatively small immigrant populations and significant diasporas (Hammoud-Gallego and Freier 2023)—such shocks make immigration a new and urgent concern. Our framework examines how politicians' responses are shaped by their ideological orientation, regional exposure, and changing voter demographics.

Immigration Crises and the Salience of Immigration

Immigration crises fundamentally reshape political discourse by increasing public concern about immigration, compelling politicians to address the issue to maintain relevance. Ignoring such crises risks perceptions of unresponsiveness (Klüver and Sagarzazu 2016; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Abou-Chadi and Wagner 2020; Green-Pedersen 2019). Meanwhile, engaging with immigration offers opportunities to connect with voters and shape the debate.

As a new issue on the political agenda, immigration lacks established ownership by any party, offering ideological groups across the spectrum an opportunity to frame the issue and enhance its salience. Hence, we expect increased salience across all parties in the short term, preventing any single ideological group from monopolizing the narrative. This contrasts with developed countries, where immigration debates are typically dominated by right-wing parties (e.g., Gessler and Hunger 2022; Hutter and Kriesi 2022).

Regional exposure introduces an additional layer of complexity in understanding the salience of immigration. In heavily affected areas, economic strain and public anxieties—such as concerns over competition for resources—may prompt legislators to prioritize immigration to address local challenges and strengthen ties with their constituents.[4] Higher salience in these regions may reflect local responsiveness, while uniform increases may suggest nationally driven debates disconnected from local needs.

Partisan differences in framing

While we expect salience to increase across all party families, immigration shocks also offer parties opportunities to frame the issue according to their perspectives. Political framing is context-dependent (Chong and Druckman 2007; Zaller 1992), particularly in South-South migration, where distinct mechanisms may drive political incentives. We anticipate two dominant frames in the short term. Politicians in exposed areas, particularly leftists, are likely to frame the issue as a humanitarian crisis rooted in

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[4]See for instance recent works by Alesina, Murard, and Rapoport (2021) and Rozo and Vargas (2021) about economic and social impact of the shock.

regional solidarity, avoiding hostility toward immigrants. Meanwhile, right-wing politicians, regardless of regional exposure, are expected to emphasize anti-socialism and critiques of leftist regimes to leverage the crisis in domestic competition, a frame leftists will avoid.

Pro or Anti-Immigration Stances Among Exposed Legislators?

Legislators in heavily impacted areas may respond to public anxieties over economic competition, strained services, or poverty by adopting anti-immigration rhetoric. These concerns are acute in South-South migration, where migrants frequently match or surpass natives in qualifications—for example, 43% of Venezuelan migrants in Chile hold university degrees compared to 16% of natives, while in Peru, both Venezuelan migrants and natives show similar educational profiles.[5] This similarity, coupled with high labor market informality, heightens job competition and exacerbates economic issues like lower incomes (Lebow 2022), unemployment (Rozo and Vargas 2021), and poverty (Caruso, Canon, and Mueller 2021). These dynamics may prompt politicians to support stricter immigration policies, reflecting trends seen in developed countries (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015).

However, there are compelling reasons why politicians in South-South migration contexts may adopt a more inclusive approach. Evidence suggests that cultural, linguistic, and religious similarities reduce hostility toward immigrants (Allport, Clark, and Pettigrew 1954; Lebow et al. 2024; Tabellini 2020). For example, Venezuela, Peru, and Chile share key characteristics: Spanish as the primary language, Catholicism as the dominant religion (66.7%, 69.8%, and 52.9%, respectively), and comparable family structures (nuclear households: 54%, 53.9%, and 57%).[6] These shared traits likely ease cultural integration and reduce perceptions of threat. Supporting this, Lebow et al. (2024) find that proximity to Venezuelan migrants does not heighten anti-immigrant attitudes, while Lebow, Moreno Medina, and Coral (2021) suggest that given appropriate conditions it may even improve cooperative attitudes. Similarly, Zhou, Peters, and

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[5]In Chile, among younger cohorts, secondary education predominates for both groups, further narrowing the differences. In Peru, approximately 20% of natives and Venezuelan immigrants have completed secondary education, according to the 2022 ENPOVE and ENAHO surveys. Table A.2 provides further details.

[6]See more details about these examples and their similarities in Appendix A.2.

Rojas (2022) highlight Colombia's empathetic response to Venezuelan migration during COVID-19, despite widespread xenophobia globally. Familial ties, personal contact, and repeated interactions (Argote and Daly 2024; Lebow et al. 2024) further mitigate xenophobia, providing a basis for politicians to frame immigration as a humanitarian issue. In this context, we expect that politicians, particularly left-leaning ones, will emphasize solidarity and shared challenges, fostering pro-immigration narratives in the short term.

Strategic Politicians: Framing the Venezuelan Crisis

National dynamics may also shape how politicians respond to immigration shocks, leading to distinct strategies across the ideological spectrum. We argue that for right-wing politicians, direct anti-immigration rhetoric, common in developed countries (e.g., Gessler and Hunger 2022; Hutter and Kriesi 2022), is less viable in Latin America. This is due to (1) cultural and socio-economic similarities between host and sending countries, and (2) liberal policies granting voting rights to immigrants after short residency periods (e.g., two years in Peru).[7] The latter point highlights a potential shift in electoral composition. For example, in Chile's recent 2024 elections, immigrants made up approximately 5.1% of the electorate, with this share rising to 32% in certain regions, such as the comuna of Santiago (SERVEL 2024).

These factors make alienating future pro-immigration voters costly. Instead, we argue that they will adopt fear-based framing, portraying forced migration as a failure of leftist regimes like Venezuela's, warning of similar risks for host countries. This approach critiques ideological opponents without targeting migrants, appealing to both moderates and displaced voters, many of whom lean right politically.[8]

In contrast, left-wing politicians have incentives to focus on humanitarian narratives, framing immigration as an opportunity for regional solidarity. This strategy aligns with their values and strengthens their base while appealing to pro-immigration constituencies, and avoiding discussions of the crisis's root causes.

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[7]See Appendix A.3 for an overview of immigrant voting rights in South America.
[8]Holland, Peters, and Zhou (2024) shows that only 12% of Venezuelan migrants identify as leftists.

To sum up, South-South migration's political and cultural similarities and shifts in voter composition foster distinct political strategies, likely diverging from the anti-immigration rhetoric common in developed countries. These dynamics create a new equilibrium in political rhetoric, where immigration becomes central but is framed differently:

- Right-wing politicians will critique leftist regimes, avoiding direct attacks on migrants.

- Left-wing politicians will emphasize humanitarian and solidarity narratives, steering clear of references to the immigrants' country-regime.

Background on the Venezuelan Exodus

We test our theory by examining Venezuelan migration triggered by the severe economic and political crisis following President Hugo Chavez's death in 2013. His successor, Nicolas Maduro, faced opposition and accusations of electoral irregularities. Falling oil prices led to reduced government revenue, severe shortages, high inflation, and an economic contraction of two-thirds of Venezuela's GDP from 2013 to 2019 (Knight and Tribin 2020), resulting in protests and the exodus of approximately 8 million Venezuelans (R4V 2024).

This case offers a unique opportunity to study the political effects of the sudden influx of immigrants into Spanish-speaking Latin American countries unaccustomed to high immigration levels, triggered by factors exogenous to the recipient countries. The influx began in 2015 and accelerated after the Venezuelan-Colombian border reopened in August 2016 (BBC 2016) and the Trump administration imposed sanctions in August 2017, restricting Venezuela's access to the US financial system (see Figure 1). As of March 2023, Colombia and Peru hosted about 2.5 million and 1.5 million Venezuelans, respectively, representing roughly 4.9% and 4.5% of their populations (see Figure 2). In comparison, the United States had fewer than 600,000 Venezuelans in 2021 (R4V based on ACS). To contextualize the magnitude, the influx was 19.25 and 1.20 times the 2010 foreign-born population in Peru and Chile, respectively, significantly impacting

citizens and public policies (see Appendix A.4 and A.5). Notably, Latin America hosts 80% of displaced Venezuelans.
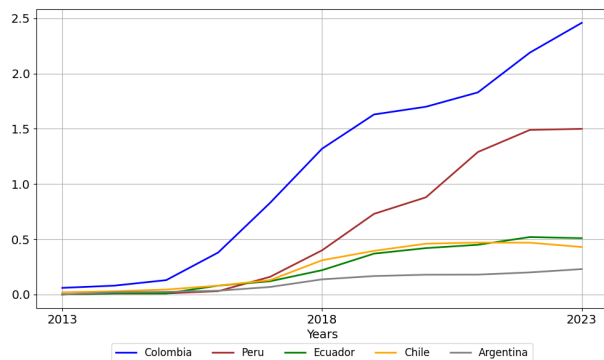

Figure 1: Evolution of the Number of Immigrants in the Top 5 Spanish-Speaking Countries
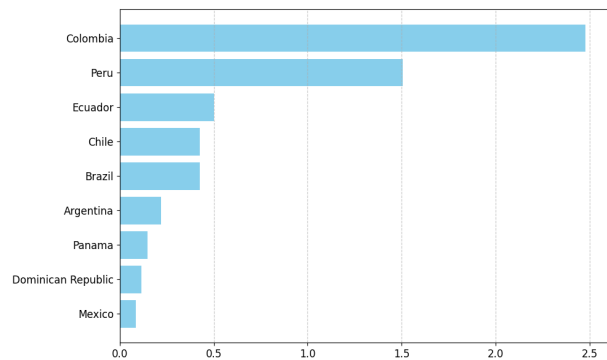Note: Y-axis represents millions of Venezuelan nationals. Source: Authors' own elaboration based on R4V (2024).

Figure 2: Latin American Countries with the Highest Number of Venezuelan Immigrants
Note: X axis represents millions of Venezuelan nationals reported by country. Source: Authors' own elaboration based on R4V (2024).

Data and Methods

To examine the political impact of immigration, we collected temporally disaggregated data comprising over two million posts from Peruvian and Chilean legislators on X, spanning the period before and after the immigration shock (2013–2020). First, we analyze the salience of immigration in political discourse. Next, we estimate the impact of immigration shocks on framing topics—such as socialism and pro- or anti-immigration stances—using OLS models and a shift-share instrumental variable strategy.

The Cases

We focus on Peru and Chile, two major destinations for Venezuelan immigrants during the crisis (see Figure 2). Both countries experienced significant migration shocks, enabling us to track political responses before and after the crisis. Our analysis includes legislators serving during the immigration shock: the 2018 Chilean Congress and the 2016 Peruvian Congress.[9] These cases provide a clear context for studying the impact of immigrant settlement, unlike transit countries such as Colombia and Ecuador, where migration dynamics differ.[10] Colombia, in particular, has a long history of immigration

[9]In Peru, this includes the Congress elected in 2016, dissolved in 2019, and the interim Congress elected in 2020.

[10]Ecuador and Colombia primarily served as transit countries during the Venezuelan migration peak years, with many immigrants continuing to Peru or Chile (e.g., Woldemikael 2022). In 2018, Ecuador's

with Venezuela and significant internal migration due to decades of civil war (Lebow 2022), making it difficult to isolate the effects of the recent wave of immigration.

Peru and Chile differ in their party systems and institutional contexts, providing a comparative perspective. Chile also experienced a smaller migration shock from Haiti during this period, further contributing to the broader context of immigration pressures (see Figure H.10).

Data

Politicians statements

To analyze the relationship between immigration exposure and politicians' discourse on X, we used X's API to collect posts from 223 Chilean and 295 Peruvian legislators between 2013 and 2020.[11] This timeframe captures the period before, during, and after the Venezuelan exodus. To credibly identify the effects of the immigration shock and ensure that any observed changes in rhetoric are not driven by changes in congressional composition, we restricted our sample to legislators serving during the immigration shock—141 in Chile and 114 in Peru (see Table D.12). The dataset includes reposts, quotes, replies, posting dates, and user handles, covering 88% of Peruvian and 71% of Chilean legislators. In total, it comprises 2,026,110 posts, 515,433 of which were posted after the shock (2018–2019).

Unlike complex and infrequent party manifestos, X offers real-time insights into politicians' strategies, aligning with more dynamic approaches to party politics, such as those proposed by Gessler and Hunger (2022) and Hopmann et al. (2012). Moreover, analyzing individual legislators on this platform reveals dynamics within political parties, challenging the notion of parties as monolithic entities (Meyer and Wagner 2021). Social media platforms, particularly X, are widely used by politicians to engage with the public. Nearly all US Congress members maintain active X accounts (Golbeck et al. 2018), with similar trends observed in Europe (Scherpereel, Wohlgemuth, and Lievens 2018) and

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government reported that 80% of Venezuelan immigrants entering the country were destined for Peru and even provided free transportation to its southern border (Cuartero 2018; Caceres 2018).

[11]Data collection occurred between November and December 2023.

Latin America (Munger et al. 2019).[12] Studies have shown that X data can be used to measure political attitudes, spotlight key issues, and mobilize the public (e.g., Waisbord and Amado 2017; Barberá et al. 2019; Munger et al. 2019; González-Rostani, Incio, and Lezama 2024). For example, during the Venezuelan migration crisis, X served as a valuable tool for citizens in exile, enabling them to engage politically and socially (Esberg and Siegel 2023).

Exposure to Immigrants

Immigrant inflows by electoral district are derived from census data[13] (Chile: 2002, 2017; Peru: 2007, 2017) and bilateral migration flow data from the UN Population Division (2010–2017). For the initial immigration share, we use earlier census data, supplemented with individual-level visa and residency records to update the Chilean data to 2007.[14] Immigration exposure is calculated as the proportion of new immigrants in a district relative to its total population. Figure 3a illustrates the regional distribution of foreign arrivals in both countries.

Party system

Legislators' ideological affiliations were determined using their parties' positions from CHES:LA data, with smaller parties not covered by CHES coded by the authors. Parties were classified as left (scores < 4), center (4–7), or right (scores > 7).[15]

Measurements: Legislators' Rhetoric

Our outcome variables capture politicians' immigration discourse through a text-based analysis of X statements. We first identified immigration-related posts dating back to 2013, then estimated variations in framings and topics across party families. The specific outcomes are defined below.

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[12]Social media enables politicians to share updates, connect with voters (Hemphill, Otterbacher, and Shapiro 2013), and amplify their presence in traditional media (Graham et al. 2013).

[13]Variations are estimated based on a census question identifying individuals' residence during the past five years and their country of origin. The most recent census available is from 2017.

[14]The focus on authorized immigration in Chile is justified by its geographic isolation due to the Andes (Ajzenman, Dominguez, and Undurraga 2023).

[15]See Appendix B for the list of parties included in the analysis.

Salience: Identifying Immigration Statements

Our first outcome variable, immigration salience, is defined as the proportion of posts about immigration relative to total statements. Immigration-related posts were identified using an adapted dictionary of keywords (e.g., "immigrant," "migrant," "refugee") provided in Appendix C.3. The dataset was refined using a Naive Bayes Classification Model to identify similar posts, with hand-coding in one country to update the dictionary (including single and multi-word terms) and exclude irrelevant entries (e.g., "migration birds"). Two independent coders reviewed 500 posts per country, achieving 85% accuracy. Detailed steps are outlined in Appendix C.1. Figure 3b illustrates the distribution of immigration debates, showing that discussions were concentrated in northern Chile and Lima, Peru, with overall salience being higher in Chile.

*Pro and Anti-Immigration Positions*

Immigration statements were classified as pro- or anti-immigration using OpenAI's API (GPT 3.5), which effectively identifies features like irony, negation, and specific language patterns often missed by dictionaries or sentiment analysis. Recent studies demonstrate ChatGPT's high accuracy in annotation and topic classification tasks (Gilardi, Alizadeh, and Kubli 2023; Kocoń et al. 2023), as well as its ability to detect topics such as hate speech (Ji et al. 2023), populism (Bellodi et al. 2023), and policy issues (González-Rostani, Incio, and Lezama 2024).

Statements were initially scored on a scale from "Highly Pro-Immigration" (2) to "Highly Anti-Immigration" (-2), with "Other" (0) assigned to immigration-related statements lacking a clear stance. For analysis, we simplified the classification into two categories: pro- and anti-immigration. Validation by two research assistants on 1,376 posts confirmed an 84% accuracy rate.[16]

Ideological Framing

To assess whether political leaders adjust their language and ideological framing, we estimate an ideological score for each post using Wordscores (Laver, Benoit, and Garry

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[16]Details on the prompt, validation process, and justification for using a closed-source model are provided in Appendix C.2.
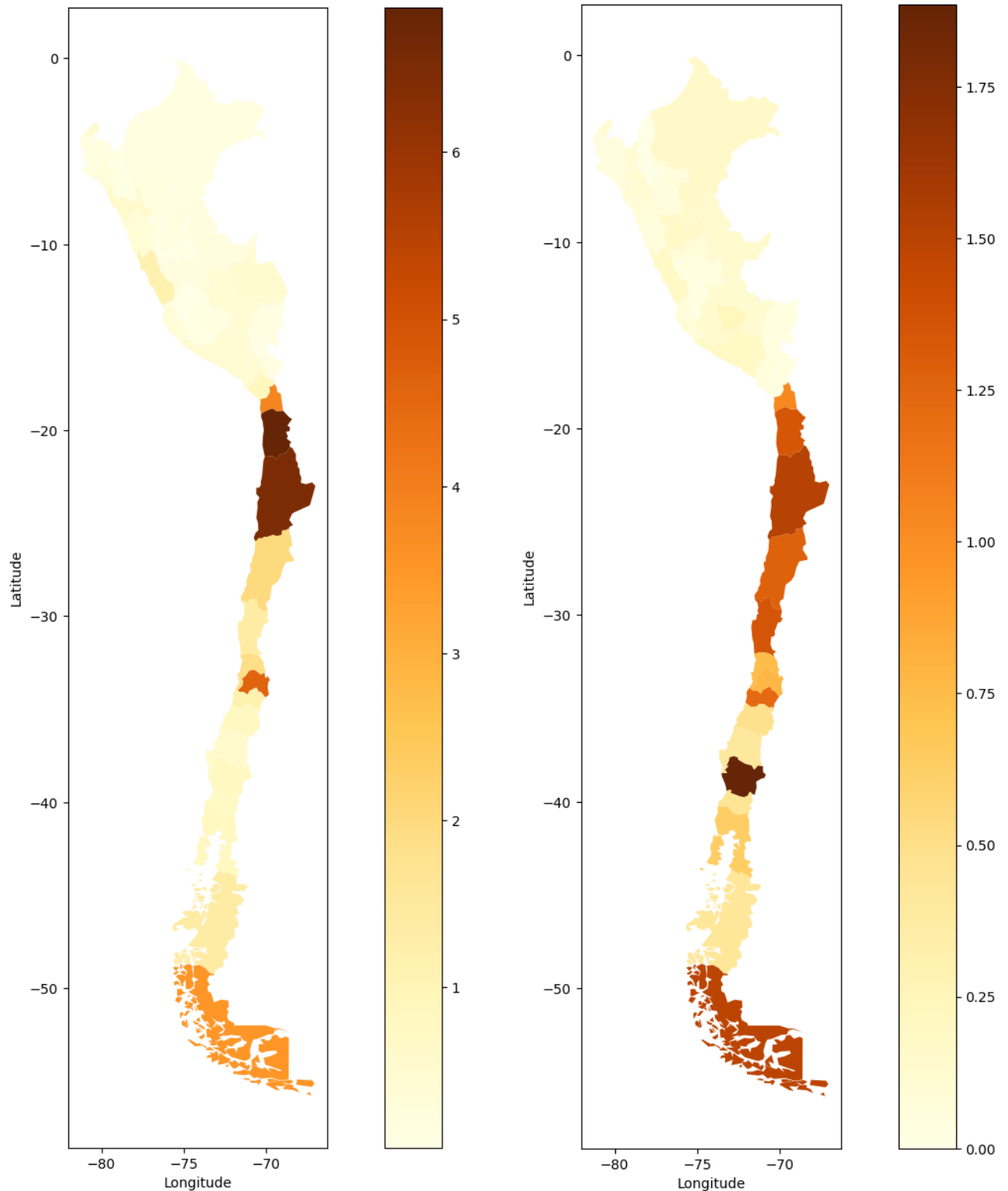
(a) New Immigrants in the period 2012-17
Note: This map shows regions in Chile and Perú. The colors illustrate the share of the population in different regions in Chile and Perú that have arrived from a foreign country in the period 2012-2017. Source: 2017 census for Chile and Perú.

(b) Share of Posts discussing immigration in 2018
Note: This map shows regions in Chile and Peru. The colors illustrate the share of the posts by legislators representing the different regions in Chile and Perú that refer to immigration. Source: authors calculations.

Figure 3: Comparison of New Immigrants and Immigration-Related Posts

2003). This measure captures the similarity of a post to the corpora of left- or right-wing party posts. Yearly word frequencies from left- and right-wing posts (excluding immigration-related statements) are used to compute scores for individual words and the overall corpora.[17] Scores range from -1 (average left-wing tweet) to 1 (average right-wing tweet). Detailed calculations are provided in Appendix C.4, following the method outlined by Le Pennec (2021).

Topics

To identify topics in immigration discourse, we use unsupervised machine learning methods to uncover semantic structures and latent themes. Specifically, we apply Non-Negative Matrix Factorization (NMF), a matrix decomposition technique that highlights significant words in the corpus while reducing text complexity, enhanced with TF-IDF weighting. We cluster posts into four groups and analyze them within ideological families.[18] Additionally, we examine two specific frames in immigration discussions: Venezuela and socialism. Posts related to these topics are identified using keyword dictionaries.[19] A summary of the measures is presented in Table D.13, and examples of posts with their classifications are provided in Appendix C.5.

Empirical Strategy

To analyze elite responses to the immigration shock, we first assess the salience of immigration issues over the period 2013–2020. The primary dependent variable is the proportion of immigration-related posts, which captures changes in how prominently immigration features in legislators' discourse. We then focus on immigration-related posts from the post-shock period (2018–2019), aggregating statements at the legislator level to examine framings such as policy stances, topics, and ideological dimensions.

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[17]This approach preserves the distance between reference texts (Martin and Vanberg 2008).

[18]For more on NMF, see O'Callaghan et al. (2015) and Greene and Cross (2017) for applications in political speech analysis.

[19]Refer to Appendix C.3 for dictionary details. Table C.9 presents the percentage of posts for each frame, and Table D.14 provides summary statistics by legislator.

Model Specification

We estimate the following OLS model with individual legislators as the unit of analysis. For salience, the sample includes all legislators, while for rhetoric, it is restricted to those who tweeted about immigration. Party family dummies (right and center, with left as the baseline) capture ideological variation. Control variables (X_{pt}) include gender and post count (to weigh more active users), while district fixed effects (δ_i) account for time-invariant regional differences:

$$Y_p = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Right_p + \beta_2 Center_p + \gamma X_p + \delta_i + \varepsilon_p \tag{1}$$

Here, Y_p denotes either the proportion of immigration-related posts (salience analysis) or the share of specific framings within immigration-related posts for legislator p. The primary independent variable, $Right_p$, is a binary indicator of right-wing party affiliation. A positive β_1 suggests that right-wing legislators emphasize immigration or adopt specific framings more frequently than their left-wing counterparts within the same electoral district (i).

To further examine the impact of immigration exposure, we leverage regional variation in immigrant inflows, hypothesizing that areas with higher inflows (e.g., frontier and capital regions) exhibit increased engagement with immigration discourse or specific framings (see Figure 3a and Figure 3b). The adjusted model is specified as follows:

$$Y_{p,18-19} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Right_p + \beta_2 Center_p + \beta_3 \Delta imm_{p,12-17} + \gamma X_p + \mu_c + \varepsilon_p \tag{2}$$

In this equation, $(\Delta imm_p = \frac{\text{NewImmigrants}_p}{\text{Population}_p})$ measures the share of immigrants who arrived from another country in the last five years (2012–2017) relative to the district population, as recorded in both countries' censuses. This captures the regional exposure to immigration at the district level. β_3 represents the effect of this exposure on legislators' behavior. Since we incorporate regional exposure at the district level, district fixed effects are omitted, but we include country dummies μ_c and control for the number of legislators per district i to ensure that variations in discourse are not confounded by

different levels of political competition across districts. The dependent variable Y_p and the interpretation of β_1 remain consistent with equation 1.

IV Approach: Regional Exposure to the Immigration Shock

To address the non-random allocation of immigrants—where migrants may settle in districts that are more welcoming or economically prosperous—we employ a shift-share instrument:

$$\widehat{\Delta imm_{p,12-17}} = \sum_n \theta_{p,07}^n \times \Delta log(imm)_{12-17}^n \tag{3}$$

Here, $\theta_{p,07}^n$ represents the share of immigrants from country n in district p pre-shock, while $\Delta \log(imm)_{12-17}^n$ captures the log change in immigrant stock.[20] Our shift-share instrument addresses potential endogeneity by leveraging pre-existing settlement patterns. Causal interpretation of equation 2 relies on the assumption that pre-shock immigrant distributions, rather than new influxes, drive variation. The instrument assumes new migrants settle in areas with established ethnic communities, whose pre-shock size remains unaffected by concurrent political shifts. In the absence of the Venezuelan exodus, political rhetoric trends would likely have been consistent across regions, allowing variation in initial shares to isolate the impact of exposure on political behavior. This approach aligns with studies on immigration inflows, such as Ajzenman, Dominguez, and Undurraga (2023), Rozo and Vargas (2021), and Lebow et al. (2024).

RESULTS

This section examines how the Venezuelan exodus amplified immigration discourse among political elites on X. Our findings suggest that the increase in salience was likely more driven by national-level debates rather than regional exposure to the immigration shock. Consistent with our theory, immigration emerged as a cross-cutting issue, with all major party families—left, center, and right—engaging with it. However, the framing varied ideologically. While leftist legislators increased pro-immigration rhetoric

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[20]We computed this using UN data, for a few top sources (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Spain, the United States, and Venezuela for both countries, and Haiti for Chile and Japan for Peru) to other LAC countries (excluding Chile and Peru).

in response to immigration exposure, right-wing legislators used the issue to critique socialism and the Venezuelan regime without significantly altering their pro- or anti-immigration stances in exposed districts.
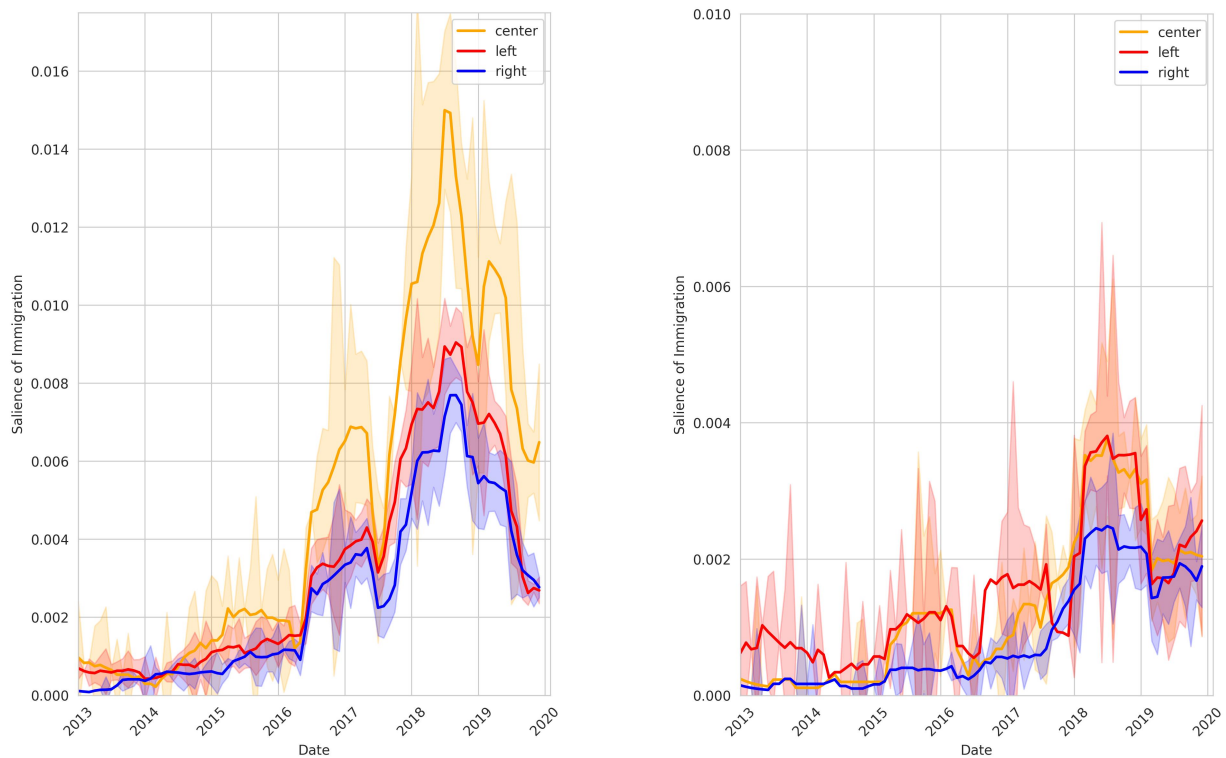
Rising Salience of Immigration

Figure 4: 12-Month Moving Average of Immigration Salience - Chile and Peru (2013-2020)
Note: the figure shows salience of immigration operationalized as the ratio of statements about immigration to the total number of public statements made. For this plot, we included legislators' posts from 2013 to 2020. Left (red), Center (yellow), and Right (blue) are defined as discussed in B. Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data retrieved from X

We argue that the Venezuelan exodus heightened the salience of immigration among political elites, making it a prominent agenda issue across all-party families. Figure 4 shows that before 2016, immigration was nearly absent from political discourse, with mentions close to zero in 2013. The topic gained traction following the first migration wave, peaking in 2018. For example, Chilean center parties devoted 1.5% of their posts to immigration in 2018. While this share may appear modest, it is significant given that 50–70% of political posts typically address non-policy topics (González-Rostani, Incio, and Lezama 2024; Hemphill, Russell, and Schöpke-Gonzalez 2021; Barberá et al. 2019). By comparison, even at its peak, COVID-19 accounted for only 10% of

posts (Appendix E).[21] Chilean legislators averaged 5.1 immigration-related posts daily compared to 1.5 in Peru, with salience rising more steeply in Chile.

VARIABLES	(1) Imm Tweets (%)	(2) Imm Tweets (%)	(3) Imm Tweets (%)
Right	-0.104	-0.115	-0.147
	(0.109)	(0.096)	(0.165)
Center	0.134	0.132	0.121
	(0.134)	(0.118)	(0.127)
Share Imm		0.038	
		(0.026)	
Right*Share Imm			0.046
			(0.035)
Observations	241	234	234
R-squared	0.329	0.138	0.136
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Model	OLS	IV	IV
F-stat		112.3	29.60

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

TABLE 1: Effects of exposure to immigration on legislators' salience of immigration.
 Notes: The table displays the results of OLS and IV estimates on posts posted in 2018 and 2019 from all legislators included in the analysis. Individual members as the unit of analysis. The dependent variables are the share of immigration-related posts as explained in subsection C.1. All regressions control for the politician's gender, the number of representatives in their electoral district, and their total number of posts. The F-stat indicates the F statistic of the first stage.

Does the increase in salience vary across party families? As shown in Table 1 (Column 1), the rise in salience does not significantly differ among party families, with right- and center-aligned legislators engaging at similar levels to their leftist counterparts. One possible explanation for this uniformity is the variation in party families' exposure to immigration shocks (e.g., border areas or capital cities), where high immigrant inflows may heighten salience through direct demographic and economic impacts (Ajzenman, Dominguez, and Undurraga 2023; Caruso, Canon, and Mueller 2021; Rozo and Vargas 2021). However, our IV analysis (Columns 2–3, Table 1) reveals no significant relationship between regional exposure and salience. Even when exposure is interacted

[21]For context, González-Rostani, Incio, and Lezama (2024) reports that in 2015, Chilean Congress members' posts on Education (6.82%) and Health (4.36%) were among the most-discussed topics. Immigration, with 1.5%, would rank as a top issue, surpassing topics like Corruption, Crime, and Inflation.

with party families (Column 3), we fail to reject the null hypothesis. These null effects suggest that legislators' immigration exposure does not significantly influence their rhetoric. Instead, immigration discourses appear to be shaped more by national-level debates than by localized dynamics.

Position regarding Immigration Across Party Families

While immigration salience has undoubtedly increased, this rise does not appear to stem from regional exposure or party ideology. Does this suggest a convergence between left- and right-wing positions on South-South migration shocks? Table 2 provides a clear answer: right-wing legislators posted 18.4 percentage points (pp) fewer pro-immigration posts and 12.9 pp more anti-immigration posts than their left-wing counterparts (Columns 1–2), highlighting a distinct ideological divide.

VARIABLES	(1) Pro-Imm	(2) Anti-Imm	(3) Pro-Imm	(4) Anti-Imm	(5) Pro-Imm	(6) Anti-Imm
Right	-18.473***	12.941***	-38.846**	11.636	-14.313*	8.079
	(5.660)	(4.018)	(18.096)	(11.600)	(7.893)	(5.674)
Center	-1.073	9.091	-12.694	18.059	-1.223	10.220
	(8.782)	(7.621)	(13.160)	(11.272)	(7.962)	(7.317)
Share Imm			3.180**	0.055		
			(1.363)	(1.167)		
Right*Share Imm					0.695	1.986
					(1.871)	(1.880)
No Right*Share Imm					2.931*	-0.062
					(1.694)	(1.023)
Observations	182	182	176	176	176	176
R-squared	0.357	0.395	0.250	0.197	0.112	0.073
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Model	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	IV	IV
F-stat			53.51	53.51	39.06	39.06

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

TABLE 2: Party Families and Position Toward the Immigration Issue.
Notes: Models estimated using data from members of Congress who discussed immigration in 2018-2019 on X. The unit of analysis is individual legislators. Dependent variables represent the proportion of immigration-related , calculated as a share of each legislator's total immigration-related posts. All models control for legislator gender, district magnitude (number of representatives per electoral district), and total post volume. Robust standard errors in parentheses.The F-stat indicates the F statistic of the first stage.

The results persist even after controlling for regional exposure (columns 3–6), which nullifies the significance of anti-immigration differences but not pro-immigration differences. These results reject the null hypothesis of ideological convergence, as left- and right-wing legislators maintain distinct positions. Notably, legislators from regions with higher immigration exposure post 3.2 pp more pro-immigration statements, which seems to be primarily driven by left- and center-aligned legislators (Column 5).

Interestingly, while right-wing legislators are less pro-immigration than their left-wing counterparts, the majority of their statements (over 60%) remain pro-immigration, with fewer than 20% being anti-immigration. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of pro- and anti-immigration statements across party families, providing a stark contrast to developed countries where right-wing parties predominantly adopt anti-immigration positions (e.g., Gessler and Hunger 2022; Hutter and Kriesi 2022; Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020). This limited xenophobic response and broadly pro-immigration stance prompt questions about whether these patterns reflect ideological convergence or strategic vote-maximizing, a topic explored in the following section.
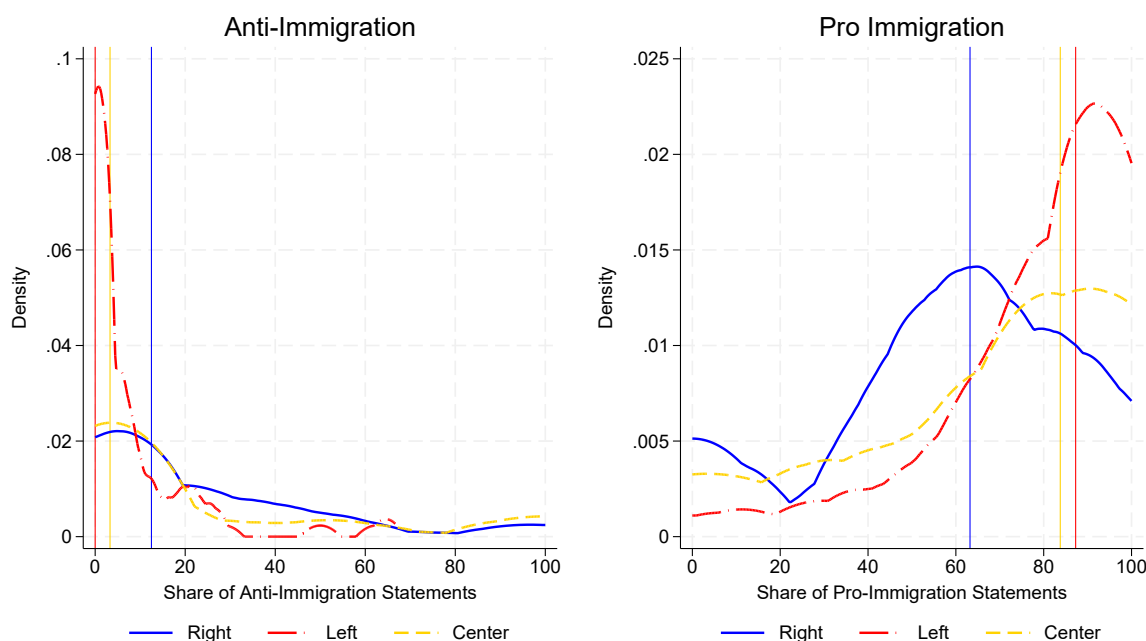

Figure 5: Anti-Immigration and Pro-Immigration by Party Families
Note: Lines represent the density distribution of posts posted in 2018 and 2019. Vertical lines represent the median values. Parties are grouped in families (represented by colors) following section B. Pro and anti-immigration statements were classified using OpenAI.

Party and Ideological Influences on Immigration

The immigration shock brought a new issue to the political agenda, enabling politicians to frame it ideologically. We hypothesize that right-wing politicians will critique socialism by highlighting Venezuela's crisis, while left-wing politicians will emphasize humanitarian and anti-xenophobia narratives. To evaluate these hypotheses, we first analyze ideological scores, then apply topic modeling, and finally examine framing patterns using dictionaries.

Figure 6 shows average ideological scores, confirming differentiation: left-wing statements cluster near -1 and right-wing statements near 1, consistent with ideological baselines. Party families frame immigration through existing ideological lenses, using language similar to their coverage of other topics. Notably, immigration-related posts are more moderate, with scores closer to 0. This moderation, particularly among Peru's left-wing and Chile's right-wing legislators, suggests a strategic effort to depolarize immigration discourse.

Our topic modeling analysis further highlights divergent framing across party families (Table 3). In Chile, Topics 2 and 4 (43.8% of posts) highlight rights and humanitarian concerns, with left-wing legislators predominating, using terms like "derechos," "mujeres," and "niños." Conversely, right-wing legislators focus on administrative and national issues in Topic 1, emphasizing terms like "pais," "gobierno," and "extranjeros." In Peru, left-wing discourse is concentrated in Topic 2, addressing rights and Trump's policies, while right-wing legislators dominate Topic 1, focusing on Venezuelan migration with terms like "venezolanos" and "Maduro." The greater disparity in topic usage in Peru compared to Chile may suggest a more polarized immigration discourse there.[22]

Our results so far have indicated that politicians have integrated the immigration issue into their agendas, framing it within their ideological perspectives. In what follows, we present further evidence supporting the hypothesis that right-wing parties strategically employ voters' fears, leveraging the immigration shock for ideological gain. Specifi-

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[22]Appendix F presents similar findings for Venezuela-specific immigration statements, with right-wing legislators describing immigrants as "brothers" fleeing Maduro's regime.
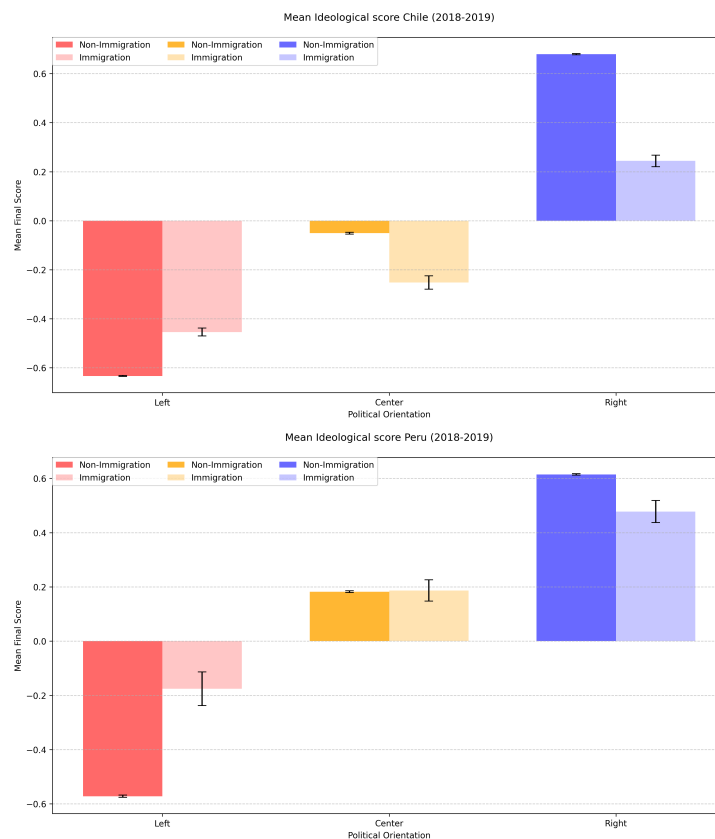
Figure 6: Mean Ideological Score by Party Families and Immigration Content
Note: Bars represent the mean of the ideological score (-1 left, 1 right) for legislators' posts posted in 2018 and 2019 by ideological party family and subject (immigration or not immigration). The dark color bars represent the ideological score of non-immigration-related posts, while the light color bars represent the ideological score of immigration posts. Error bars show standard errors of the means. Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data retrieved from X.

	Chile				Peru			
	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4
	para	politica	venezolanos	migrantes	venezolanos	trump	japonesa	campo
	migracion	niños	chile	derechos	peru	politica	inmigracion	ciudades
	pais	migratoria	venezuela	este	pais	contra	amistad	migracion
	nuestro	trump	maduro	como	para	migratoria	años	ciudad
	gobierno	gobierno	dictadura	junto	peruanos	donald	peruano	solo
	inmigrantes	sobre	como	organizaciones	venezuela	derechos	japon	estar
	haitianos	separados	piñera	trabajo	maduro	mocion	peru	preparadas
	chile	familias	millones	todos	esta	niños	congresoperu	resentidos
	inmigracion	eeuu	guaido	mujeres	xenofobia	migrantes	exteriores	todas
	extranjeros	derechos	frontera	proceso	como	gobierno	relaciones	ante
%	40.8	13.1	15.4	30.7	67.8	18.0	7.7	6.5
Left (%)	36.0	14.9	12.3	36.8	55.5	35.3	5.0	4.2
Center (%)	42.4	12.0	21.7	23.9	60.7	17.9	8.1	13.3
Right (%)	47.1	10.9	17.5	24.5	79.5	9.2	8.7	2.6
Distance L-R	-11.1	4.0	-5.2	12.3	-24.0	26.1	-3.7	1.6

TABLE 3: Topic Analysis - NMF 4 clusters regarding Immigration statements
Note: The columns display the most representative words for each topic and the distribution of topics across party families by country. The analysis includes all immigration-related posts from 2018 and 2019 in Peru and Chile. The row labeled "%" indicates the size of each topic, while the rows labeled Left, Center, and Right represent the proportion of each party family addressing that topic. The row "Distance L-R" shows the difference in the shares between the left and right party families.

cally, we analyze the focus on 'socialism'—particularly criticisms of the Venezuelan regime—and the emphasis on Venezuelan immigrants relying on dictionaries (outlined in measurement section).

Table 4, columns 1 and 2, shows that right-wing legislators reference socialism and Venezuela 4.8 pp and 11.8 pp more than their left-wing counterparts, respectively. These results remain robust after controlling for regional exposure to the immigration shock (Columns 3 and 4). The insignificant interactions between exposure and party ideology suggest these frames reflect strategic, national-level choices rather than direct responses to immigration exposure.

VARIABLES	(1) Socialism	(2) Venezuela	(3) Socialism	(4) Venezuela	(5) Socialism	(6) Venezuela
Right	4.809**	11.487***	3.148**	10.444***	4.647**	14.450**
	(2.044)	(4.364)	(1.445)	(4.037)	(2.323)	(6.108)
Center	4.668	-9.630	3.592	-5.584	4.032	-4.409
	(4.430)	(7.420)	(4.752)	(6.811)	(4.935)	(7.070)
Share Imm			-0.098	-0.202		
			(0.265)	(1.248)		
Right*Share Imm					-0.502	-1.282
					(0.550)	(1.528)
No Right*Share Imm					0.210	0.619
					(0.302)	(1.857)
Observations	182	182	176	176	176	176
R-squared	0.337	0.525	0.025	0.321	0.021	0.316
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Model	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	IV	IV
F-stat			94.34	94.34	39.06	39.06

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

TABLE 4: Party Families and Framing Used when Discussing the Immigration Issue.
Notes: Models estimated using data from members of Congress who discussed immigration in 2018-2019 on X. The unit of analysis is individual legislators. Dependent variables represent the proportion of immigration-related statements falling into each specified category, calculated as a share of each legislator's total immigration-related posts. All models control for legislator gender, district magnitude (number of representatives per electoral district), and total post volume. Robust standard errors in parentheses. The F-stat indicates the F statistic of the first stage

To interpret the framing effects easily, we re-estimated models using a binary variable for high usage of socialist and Venezuelan frameworks. Figures G.8 and G.9 in the Appendix reveal that right-wing legislators are about 20% more likely to be top users of these frames, supporting the hypothesis that the right employs immigration strategically to critique opponents and appeal to voters.[23]

[23]These estimates remain robust across different thresholds.

In Appendix H, we conduct a robustness check focusing on Chile, which received significant numbers of both Venezuelan and Haitian migrants (see Figure H.10). While Haitian migration was slightly lower, Haitians were culturally and demographically more distant from Chileans, speaking Haitian Creole and French and differing racially and religiously. Based on a cultural distance hypothesis, we would expect right-wing politicians to emphasize Haitian immigration more as they may be a greater cultural threat.

Our findings, however, show that right-wing politicians prioritized Venezuelan immigration, supporting the hypothesis that immigration is strategically framed for domestic politics. Venezuelans' closer cultural and linguistic ties to Chileans allowed right-wing politicians to frame their migration as a warning about the risks of leftist governance, linking it to the failures of Venezuela's government. In contrast, Haitian migration—occurring under the center-right presidency of Jovenel Moïse and following natural disasters—offered less strategic value and was less politically relevant to Chileans. Right-wing politicians referenced Venezuelan migration in 21% of immigration-related posts, compared to only 7% for Haitian migration, while left-wing politicians referenced both groups at 12% and 15%, respectively. As shown in Table H.16, right-wing politicians were significantly less likely than their leftist counterparts to highlight Haitian immigration, further supporting the argument that immigration shocks were framed to serve domestic political narratives.

To sum up, these analyses have demonstrated that while immigration has become more salient across party lines, politicians frame it through distinct ideological lenses, reinforcing the hypothesis that parties differentiate rather than converge following the immigration shock. In this South-South context, where immigration is a relatively new issue, the right adopts selective pro-immigrant stances, focusing on crisis impacts and regulatory responses, particularly related to Venezuela. This framing allows the right to critique the politics of the sending country while leveraging fears that the host country's left might pursue similar policies, appealing strategically to soon-to-be immigrant voters. In contrast, the left emphasizes broader immigrant rights and societal concerns, largely avoiding discussions about the origins of the crisis or immigrant backgrounds.

Conclusion

In this article, we demonstrate that large immigration shocks, particularly when they introduce a new issue to the political agenda, reshape political elites' discourse and create opportunities for ideological framing. We argue that such shocks compel politicians to address immigration using their preferred frames. To test this, we analyze an original dataset of legislators' X histories surrounding the Venezuelan exodus to Latin America. Our findings reveal two main insights: first, migration inflows heighten the issue's salience across all party lines, though this increase is unrelated to regional exposure. Second, framing varies by party affiliation—left-leaning politicians in exposed regions often adopt a pro-immigration stance, while right-wing politicians, regardless of exposure, emphasize fears about socialist regimes as potential threats to the host country.

Although extensive research has examined South-North immigration shocks, our understanding of the most common type of migration—South-South—remains limited. This study addresses this gap by analyzing one of the largest immigration shocks, offering insights into politicians' responses in these contexts. Unlike South-North migration, South-South scenarios involve fewer differences in ethnicity, language, skills, and religion, highlighting the need to adapt theories developed in the Global North (Fernández-Rodríguez and Freier 2024). Our findings diverge from research on developed countries, where right-wing parties dominate immigration debates by promoting anti-immigration views, while left-wing parties often follow without articulating distinct perspectives (e.g, Gessler and Hunger 2022; Hutter and Kriesi 2022; Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020).

We demonstrate that the mechanisms driving salience and polarization around immigration are context-dependent. Our results align with the view that immigration's political effects are primarily strategic national-level phenomena, disconnected from local migrant-related struggles (Rozo and Vargas 2021; Ajzenman, Dominguez, and Undurraga 2023; Lebow et al. 2024). Furthermore, by employing LLMs, this study contributes to the growing literature on analyzing political discourse, extending applications

in topic identification (González-Rostani, Incio, and Lezama 2024) and populism (Bellodi et al. 2023) to a new domain. We present the first large-scale quantitative analysis using LLMs to detect policy positions in online political statements.

Regarding the generalizability of our findings, while this analysis relied on X data, we anticipate that similar patterns would emerge across other platforms politicians use to communicate. Additionally, although we analyzed only two cases, the consistent patterns observed in Chile's institutionalized party system and Peru's fragmented one underscore their robustness across diverse institutional settings. Anecdotal evidence, such as Colombia's cross-party anti-xenophobia agreement (Migra-Venezuela 2019), further supports the idea that anti-immigration strategies are unlikely to dominate in these contexts, at least in the short term.

Our analysis, centered on short-term political responses to crises, and provides a foundation for temporally disaggregated studies. Future research could build on this by exploring long-term political trends, especially in the Global South, where migrants are set to become voters. It would also be valuable to examine whether nationalist regimes, such as present-day El Salvador or right-wing dictatorships of 1960s Latin America, elicit similar strategies among left-wing politicians in host countries. Do left-wing leaders leverage immigration crises to challenge their right-wing counterparts? Another promising avenue is to study the political impact of immigration along transit routes without settlement, where contact theory and immigrant integration into the electorate are unlikely to play a role. These extensions would deepen our understanding of the political dynamics surrounding immigration in diverse contexts.

Finally, several mechanisms could explain our findings, though further exploration is needed. This study focused on the strategic behavior of politicians, evidenced by their rhetorical emphasis in political speeches. However, it remains unclear to what extent this rhetoric translates into concrete policy actions. While South American countries have largely welcomed Venezuelan immigrants, they have also implemented regulations, imposed restrictions (e.g., work permits, humanitarian visas), and adapted

public services to manage the influx. Examining how political discourse aligns with or diverges from these policy responses is a crucial area for future research.

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ONLINE APPENDIX

Contents

A South-South Migration

A.1 Evolution of People Displaced and region of Destination

Data source: UNHCR population statistics database
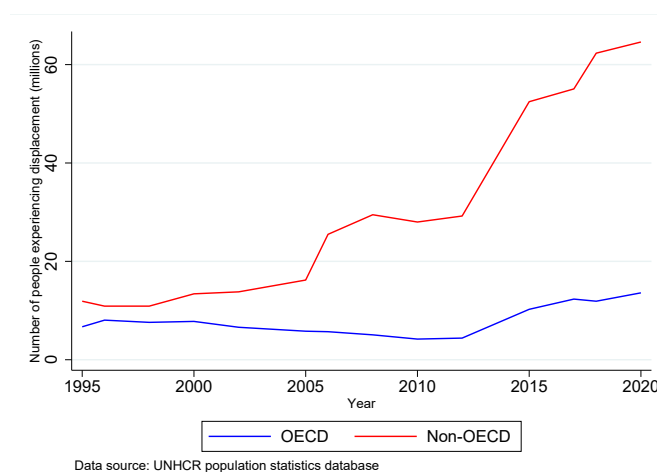
Figure A.1: Evolution of the number of people affected displacement in OECD and non-OECD countries
Note: Data from UNHCR population statistics database.

A.2 Similarities between Natives and Immigrants

Tables Table A.1 and Table A.2 draw from national surveys (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática 2022b, 2022a; Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas 2017) and regional data (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2018; Universidad Católica Andrés Bello 2017).

TABLE A.1: Cultural and Demographic Characteristics (2018)

Characteristic	Venezuela	Peru	Chile
Language			
Spanish as mother tongue	99.9%	85.7%	98.9%
Religion			
Catholic	66.7%	69.8%	52.9%
Evangelical	18.0%	15.3%	13.8%
Ethnicity			
Self-identified as mestizo	37.7%	62.8%	–
Indigenous population	7.1%	24.7%[a]	12.8%
Household Composition			
Nuclear households	54.0%	53.9%	57.0%
Average household size	3.4	3.4	3.1
Political Ideology			
Center political identification	48.6%	52.1%	46.5%

Notes: [a]Includes 22.3% Quechua and 2.4% Aymara.
Source: Latinobarómetro (2018), National Census data, and INEI (2017).
Note: All data corresponds to 2018 unless otherwise specified.

TABLE A.2: Educational Attainment Distribution Across Populations (2022)

Education Level	Peru		Chile	
	Natives	Venezuelan Imm.	Natives	Venezuelan Imm.
No education	6.58	2.99*	4.12	0.24
Complete Primary	10.83	6.88*	29.00	1.28
Some Secondary	15.39	6.90*	-	3.19
Complete Secondary	20.62	20.30	37.84	16.36
Some/Complete Technical	9.66	18.04	8.11	18.04
Some University	4.78	10.85	-	10.85
Complete University	5.95	11.00	15.29	43.34
Post-graduate Studies	1.22	5.03	1.15	5.03

Notes: Data for natives comes from ENAHO 2022 (Peru) and CASEN 2022 (Chile). Data for Venezuelan immigrants comes from ENPOVE 2022 (Peru) and Encuesta Migrantes 2022 (Chile). Some categories have been combined in the Chilean data due to different categorization in the original source. All values are percentages. *Values from ENPOVE 2018 as 2022 exact figures were not available in similar categories.

A.3 Foreigners' right to vote

In South America, immigrant voting rights showcase a commitment to democratic inclusion, yet the extent of these rights varies widely across countries. Notably, Uruguay, Chile, and Ecuador are among the few countries worldwide that grant universal voting rights to noncitizen residents across all political levels—local, intermediate, and national—placing them in a unique global group alongside New Zealand and Malawi (Altman, Huertas-Hernández, and Sánchez 2023). Uruguay's inclusion dates back to 1934, Chile to 1980, and Ecuador to 2008, reflecting the region's progressive stance in recognizing immigrants as integral members of the political community.

However, these advances coexist with practical and institutional challenges. While countries like Colombia and Peru grant voting rights primarily at the local level with moderate residency requirements, others, such as Uruguay, impose longer residency periods, limiting accessibility. These diverse approaches highlight both the region's aspirations for inclusion and the ongoing barriers to fully integrating immigrants into political life what Hammoud-Gallego and Freier (2023) describe as symbolic purposes.

Table A.3 summarizes immigrants rights to vote in South American countries.

Country	Legal Framework	Residency Requirement	Scope of Voting Rights
Chile	Article 14 of the 1980 Constitution	5 years	Immigrants can vote in national elections, including presidential and parliamentary elections.
Peru	Ley N.°26864 de Elecciones Municipales, 1997: art. 7	2 years	Immigrants can vote in municipal elections.
Colombia	Article 100 of the 1991 Constitution. RESOLUCION 542 DE 2015	5 years	Immigrants can vote in municipal and district elections.
Ecuador	Article 63 of the 2008 Constitution	5 years	Immigrants can vote in all local and national elections and plebiscites.
Uruguay	Article 78 of the 1967 Constitution	15 years	Immigrants can vote in national elections.
Argentina	Varies by province; for example, Buenos Aires Constitution, Article 61	Varies (e.g., 2 years in Buenos Aires)	Immigrants can vote in provincial and municipal elections; requirements differ by province.
Brazil	Article 14 number 2°, Constitución Federal	15 years	Immigrants have the right to vote in national or local elections.
Bolivia	Electoral Law (Ley del Régimen Electoral, Law No. 026, Article 45)	2 years	Immigrants can vote in municipal elections.
Paraguay	National Constitution, Article 120	3 years	Immigrants can vote in municipal elections.

TABLE A.3: Laws or Executive Decrees Referring to the Right to Vote of Immigrants in South America

To put in context the exercise of this right we know the follow heterogeneous context for Chile and Peru:

- In Chile, immigrants represent a significant portion of the electorate, accounting for 5.1% of the 2024 electoral roll, equivalent to 786,466 voters, with this share reaching up to 32% in areas of high immigrant concentration, such as the comuna of Santiago. Between the Constitutional Plebiscite of 2023 and the national elections of 2024, the number of registered immigrant voters increased by 16.3%. Registration in Chile is facilitated through accessible channels, including online platforms, enabling broad participation. Data comes from SERVEL (2024).

- In Peru, 153 foreign citizens were registered to vote in 2022, an increase from 26 in 2018. Registration in Peru requires in-person visits and substantial documentation, reflecting a more complex administrative process. Data comes from GOB-PE (2023).

A.4 Public Salience of Venezuelan's Migration

The influx of refugees and migrants from Venezuela has not gone unnoticed by citizens; rather, it has captured considerable attention from the general public. As illustrated in Figure A.2, there is a notable surge in Google searches for the term "Venezuelans," signaling an increased awareness and concern regarding the influx of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. There is a notable peak in the popularity of the issue between 2018 and 2020, coinciding with the significant influx of migrants to the region. To illustrate, when examining the trend in Peru (represented by the red line), the popularity

of searches remained relatively low until around 2016, after which it began to rise steadily.

The heightened popularity of these searches not only demonstrates a broader societal interest and concern regarding Venezuelan migration but also reflects the recognition of the profound impact and significance of this phenomenon within the region.
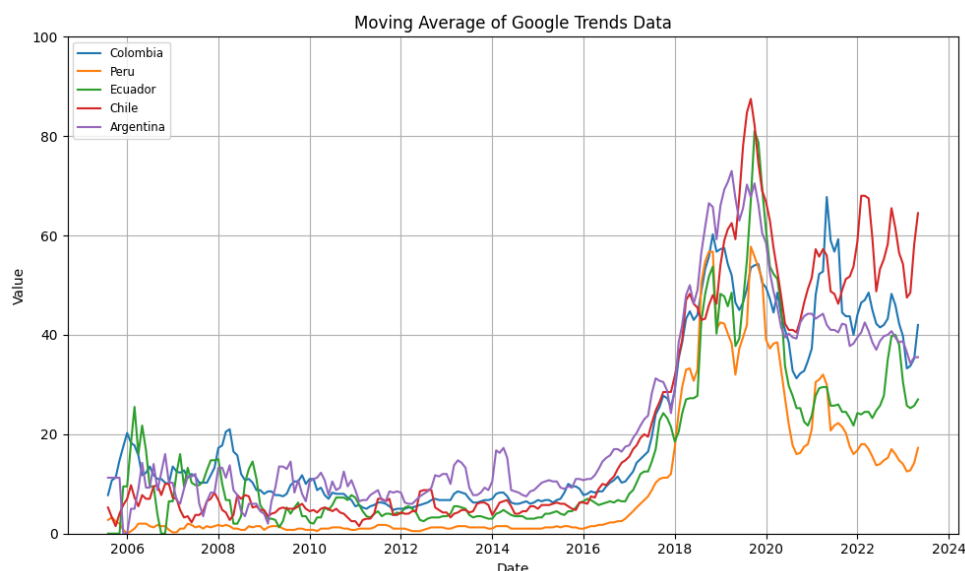

Figure A.2: Public Saliency: Venezuelans

Note: The graph shows the 4-month moving average of the search interest relative to the highest point on the chart for the given region and time for the word "Venezolanos" (Venezuelans), from 2005 to May, 2023. A value of 100 is the peak popularity for the term. A value of 50 means that the term is half as popular. A score of 0 means that there was not enough data for this term. Source: Authors' own elaboration base on Google Trends' data.

A.5 Policies

The influx of Venezuelan migrants has prompted significant policy responses in host countries. Table A.4 presents a chronological overview of key immigration policies implemented by Chile and Peru in response to the Venezuelan exodus. These policies reflect the evolving nature of the crisis and the host countries' attempts to manage its impact. Both nations have implemented a range of measures, from creating new visa categories and temporary residence permits to establishing shelters and modifying identification requirements. Notably, Chile's policies seem to focus more on border control and national security, while Peru's approach appears to emphasize regularization and socio-economic integration.

TABLE A.4: Immigration Policies During the Venezuela Migration Exodus

Country	Date	Institution	Description	Source
Chile	02/2022	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Formation of a working group with the Bolivian government, subsidizing and adopting measures presented by UNHCR such as the Regional Response Plan for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants	https://www.minrel.gob.cl/noticias-anteriores/situacion-migratoria-en-la-macro-zona-norte-de-chile
Chile	05/2023	Chamber of Deputies and Ministry of the Interior	Deployment of the Armed Forces at the border of the northern macro-zone for 3 months	https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=1189669&idParte=10410548

(Continúa en la siguiente página)

Immigration Policies During the Venezuela Migration Exodus (continued)

Country	Date	Institution	Description	Source
Chile	07/2023	Ministry of the Interior and Public Security	National migration and foreign policy applying cross-cutting approaches for control such as biometric identification, new residency requirements, economic development, integration, family reunification, etc.	https://serviciomigraciones.cl/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/PNM-VERSION-EJECUTIVA.pdf
Peru	2017	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	National Migration Policy 2017-2025	http://transparencia.rree.gob.pe/index.php/datos-generales-11/13-normas-emitidas-por-la-entidad/133-decretos-supremos-ds/2017-5/10116-ds-n-015/file
Peru	2019	International agencies	Study on the socio-economic profile of the Venezuelan population and their host communities: a look towards inclusion	https://www.observatoriovenezolanodemigracion.org/noticias/politica-migratoria-cambiante-del-estado-peruano-ha-dificultado-la-inclusion-de-inmigrantes-venezolanos
Peru	2018	Presidency of Peru and Ministry of the Interior	Policies for control and identification: requirements for the PTP and Special Resident migratory status	https://www.acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/BDL/2017/11018.pdf
Peru	2017	Municipality of San Juan de Miraflores	Creation of the largest shelter in Lima for Venezuelan migrants	https://perureports.com/meet-first-venezuelan-neighborhood-lima/6000/
Peru	2020	Presidency of Peru and Ministry of the Interior	Change from PTP to Temporary Permanence Permit Card (CPP) for people with irregular residence, in practice the benefited population was low	https://busquedas.elperuano.pe/normaslegales/decreto-supremo-que-aprueba-medidas-especiales-excepcionale-decreto-supremo-n-010-2020-in-1895950-4/
Peru	2021	Presidency of Peru and Ministry of the Interior	Ease of immigration regularization for children and adolescents and expansion of the foreign ID card to include foreigners who have a request to access resident migration status	https://cdn.www.gob.pe/uploads/document/file/1813182/DS%20002-2021-IN.pdf.pdf?v=1618708384

B Chilean and Peruvian's Parties

We employ the CHES:LA project (Martínez-Gallardo et al. 2022), an expert survey on political parties' programmatic and ideological positions, to categorize mots parties into ideological families. Tables B.5 and B.6 present the parties' ideological scores, assigned party families, and their positions on immigration as assessed by experts. We classify parties based on their ideological scores: those below 4 are categorized as "left," those above 7 as "right," and those between 4 and 7 as "center."

We observe a correlation between the parties' attitudes and their positions on migration. However, the CHES:LA survey relies on expert opinions of political parties rather than legislators' views and rhetoric, which limits our understanding of their positions and dynamics regarding the impact of Venezuelan immigration. Our work contributes to this field by providing more dynamic coverage of the issue and analyzing direct statements from legislators.

TABLE B.5: Parties Chile

	Party Family	L-R Ideol.	Immigration Position	Salience
Amplitud	Right	-	-	-
Evolución Política	Right	7.33	6.92	3.69
Federacion Regionalista Verde Social	Left	-	-	-
Izquierda Ciudadana	Left	-	-	-
Mov. Indep. de Renovacion Absoluta	Left	-	-	-
Partido Comunista de Chile	Left	1.22	1.69	4.31
Partido Demócrata Cristiano	Center	5.00	4.58	3.31
Partido Humanista	Left	1.65	1.22	4.73
Partido Igualdad	Left	-	-	-
Partido Liberal de Chile	Left	-	-	-
Partido Progresista	Left	-	-	-
Partido Radical Chileno	Left	-	-	-
Partido Radical Socialdemócrata	Left	3.88	3.75	3.91
Partido Socialista de Chile	Left	3.11	2.58	3.77
Partido por la Democracia	Left	3.61	2.67	3.62
Renovación Nacional	Right	7.11	7.58	4.21
Revolución Democrática	Left	2.28	1.38	4.00
Unión Demócrata Independiente	Right	8.94	9.00	4.21

TABLE B.6: Parties Peru

	Party Family	L-R Ideol.	Immigration Position	Salience
Acción Popular	Center	6.13	6.22	3.40
Alianza para el Progreso	Center	6.93	6.44	3.50
Avanza País	Right	7.50	6.40	4.50
Frente Amplio	Left	2.00	4.60	4.27
Frente Popular Agrícola del Perú	Center	4.79	5.75	2.80
Fuerza Popular	Right	7.80	7.70	5.00
Juntos por el Perú	Left	2.50	4.17	4.50
Partido Aprista Peruano	Right	7.27	7.00	5.00
Partido Democrático Somos Perú	Right	7.00	6.14	4.00
Partido Morado	Center	6.07	4.30	4.00
Partido Popular Cristiano	Right	7.93	6.11	4.45
Perú Libre	Left	0.67	8.83	6.50
Podemos Perú	Center	6.47	7.00	5.18
Renovación Popular	Right	9.83	9.33	7.17
Unión por el Perú	Left	2.42	6.90	5.20

Note: The ideological position goes from 1 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right). Position on immigration is a 10 point scale going from 1 (welcoming) to 10 (restrictive). Immigration salience is also a 10 point scale going from 1 (low) to 10 (high). Parties with out CHES score were classified manually by authors.
Source: Author's own elaboration based on CHES:LA

C Measurements: Legislators' Rhetoric

C.1 Salience: Identifying Immigration Statements

Our first outcome variable, the salience of immigration, is measured by the frequency of posts about immigration relative to total statements. We identify immigration-related posts following several steps summarized in Figure C.3. We start by using an adapted dictionary approach, combining close reading of politicians' statements, machine learning techniques, and commonly used public words to reference immigration. Initially, we compile a list of relevant keywords related to immigration, such as "immigrant," "migrant," "refugee," and "asylum seeker" (see C.3). These keywords filter posts by identifying those containing at least one of the specified terms.[24] Next, natural language processing techniques expand our dataset. We train a Naive Bayes Classification Model to identify posts similar to those classified by the dictionary. We also search for posts mentioning Venezuelans, carefully evaluating them since discussions about Venezuela extend beyond migration.

We hand-code all posts related to immigration in one country to assess the accuracy of our selection and ensure that only relevant statements are included in our analysis.[25] This process identifies word combinations that may refer to immigration and words that should not be included in our dictionary. Consequently, we create an updated dictionary of single words and word pairs to extend the analysis to other countries. Finally, we apply the updated dictionary to the remaining countries and have two independent coders evaluate a sample of 500 posts per country. The accuracy of classification exceeds 0.85 in all cases, indicating a high level of accuracy in identifying posts related to immigration while excluding unrelated content. We refine the dictionary based on misclassified cases, removing irrelevant classifications such as "migrating birds."

---

[24]The initial dictionary focuses on terms directly related to immigration and excludes specific terms like "Venezuelan" by itself.

[25]Three annotators coded the posts, and any discrepancies were thoroughly re-evaluated.

1) Design dictionary with limited words	→	2) Apply dictionary to specific case	→	3) Train super-vised ML models

4) Redefine dictionary ad-ditional words	5) Hand-code tweets , 3 annotators	6) Refine dictio-nary based on false positives

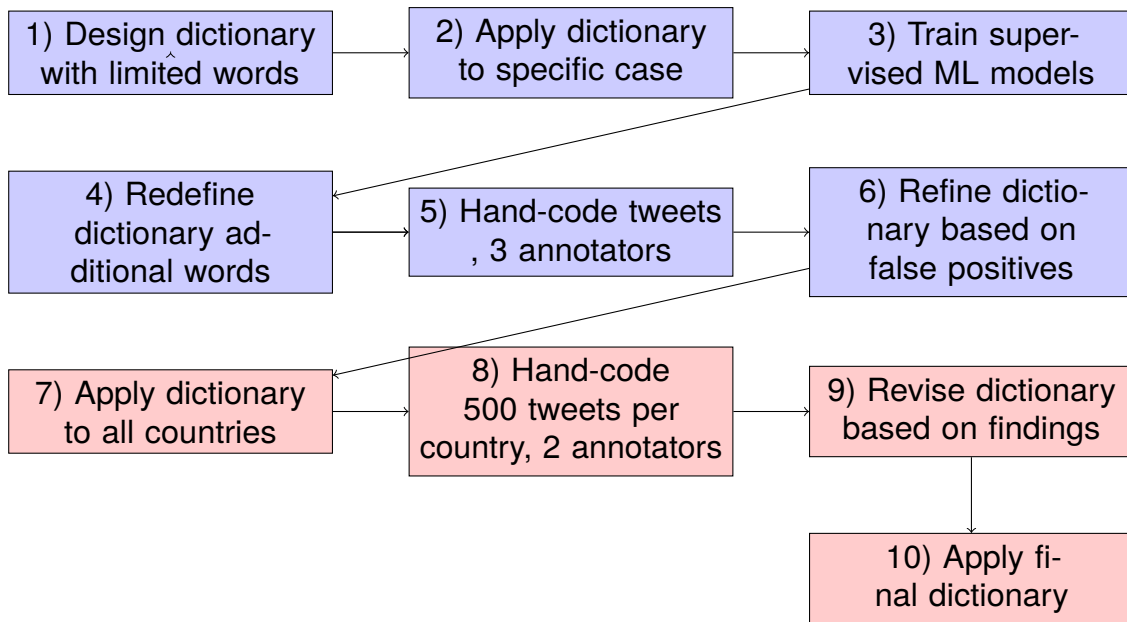| 7) Apply dictionary to all countries	8) Hand-code 500 tweets per country, 2 annotators	9) Revise dictionary based on findings

10) Apply fi-nal dictionary

Figure C.3: Summary of the steps for detecting immigration-related posts

Note: Blue refers to steps implemented with only one country (Perú), red refers to steps including both countries.

C.2 Open AI

Our Python function configures ChatGPT-3.5 with a few instructions (detailed in the next section) and connects to the OpenAI API. The function processes all posts and executes the given instructions. The function processes all posts and executes the given instructions. Based on the prompt in subsubsection C.2.1. The cost of using the OpenAI API for this project was 8.53 USD.

Scores of 2 and 1 refer to posts advocating for immigration, from strong endorsements to subtle support. "Other" (0) includes posts discussing immigration without a clear stance. Scores of -1 and -2 cover posts opposing immigration, from mild concerns to strong opposition.

C.2.1 Prompt

The prompt we used to configure the language model parameters is detailed below. It is a complete list of instructions to avoid ambiguities during classification.

prompt = ("Prompt for Classifying Tweets on Immigration:" "Objective: Classify tweets from members of the Chilean Congress regarding their stance on immigration, " "based on the content and implications of the tweet. Pay special attention to the context, including irony, " "negation, and the specific use of language that may indicate criticism or support of immigration policies." "Classification Categories:" "Highly Pro-Immigration (2): Tweets that strongly advocate for immigration, emphasizing support through " "explicit messages against discrimination, highlighting economic benefits, or welcoming senti-ments. " "Includes tweets using negation or irony to criticize anti-immigration stances, or directly accusing others of promoting hate or discrimination." "Pro-Immigration (1): Likely supportive but less emphatic, subtly advocating for immigrant rights or benefits. " "This includes criticizing restrictive policies proposed by others, questioning the motives behind such policies, " "or using indirect speech to oppose anti-immigration rhetoric (e.g., questioning the ethics or logic of restrictive policies)." "Other (0): Tweets that are descriptive or neutral, discussing immigration-related events, administrative actions, " "or

mentioning issues without advocating for or against immigration policies. This includes discussions on geopolitical " "or humanitarian issues in countries like Venezuela without explicitly linking these issues to immigration stances." "Anti-Immigration (-1): Likely opposes immigration, subtly suggesting restrictions or expressing concerns " "over societal impacts without explicit hostility. This includes agreeing with or supporting policies that restrict or control immigration." "Highly Anti-Immigration (-2): Strongly opposes immigration, explicitly associating negative aspects such as " "crime or economic burdens with immigrants, or advocating for strict regulations and deportations. " "Clear expressions of support for restrictive or punitive immigration measures fall into this category." "Unrelated (99): Tweets that do not pertain to immigration or only mention it in passing without any clear stance " "or relevant content." "Key Considerations for Classification:" "1. Look for indicators of irony, sarcasm, or negation that may flip the apparent meaning of a statement. " "A tweet that on the surface might seem to support anti-immigration actions but is actually criticizing such views should be considered pro-immigration." "2. Assess the context of quotes: determine whether the politician is endorsing the views they quote or using the quote to criticize those views." "3. Distinguish between criticism of foreign political situations and immigration views: Criticism of a political situation in another country should be classified as neutral unless it explicitly links to views on immigration." "Analyze the tweets provided below, and for each, indicate only the number(s) it pertains to (NEVER A TEXT), based on the central theme of the tweet in relation to the topics and keywords listed." "Remember, the classification should be based on the tweet, not on general expressions or sentiments. Do it from a Chilean Perspective. Provide only the number(s) of the relevant topic(s), nothing else.")

C.2.2 Validation

To validate our classification strategy, we employed two approaches. The first involved human coding. From a pool of posts pre-selected by dictionaries as potentially discussing immigration, we sampled 954 posts for Chile and 646 for Peru. Two research assistants (RAs), undergraduate students majoring in social sciences, independently classified these posts, determining whether they genuinely discussed immigration.

The level of agreement between the annotators was high.[26] Subsequently, a coauthor reviewed the classifications and resolved any discrepancies between the RAs to establish the final reference classification.

This reference classification was then used to evaluate the performance of the OpenAI classification. Table Table C.7 presents the accuracy measures comparing the reference classification with OpenAI's results. The validation analysis reveals a strong agreement between OpenAI's classification and the reference classification, with an overall accuracy of 84.0% and a substantial Cohen's Kappa of 0.678. Particularly noteworthy is the excellent performance in identifying positive statements, demonstrated by high precision (0.866), recall (0.922), and F1-score (0.893) for this category. These results indicate that the OpenAI classification system is highly reliable.

---

[26]The percentage of agreement is 86, and the Cohen's Kappa value is 0.67 showing significant agreement between coders

TABLE C.7: Validation Metrics: OpenAI vs. Human Classification

Metric	Overall	Neutral (0)	Positive (1)	Negative (2)
Accuracy	0.840			
Cohen's Kappa	0.678			
Precision	-	0.780	0.866	0.782
Recall	-	0.580	0.922	0.809
F1-Score	-	0.664	0.893	0.796

Our second approach is to use **Fighting Words approach** to identify the most distinctive words associated with anti-immigration, pro-immigration, and "other" stances in political discourse. This approach calculates the log-odds ratio with a Dirichlet prior for each word across three categories, providing a measure of how strongly each word is associated with one category compared to the others.

This approach highlights words that best capture the sentiment and themes of each stance, providing insights into the language patterns associated with different immigration views.

For example, among those with an anti-immigration stance, we find words such as "delincuentes" (criminals) and "antecedentes" (background checks), reflecting a framing that associates immigrants with crime and emphasizes requirements for proof of good conduct ("antecedentes") for entry ("ingreso") into the country. Additionally, the term "extranjero" (foreigner) is used instead of "inmigrante" (immigrant), portraying immigrants as outsiders or alien to the nation.

In contrast, pro-immigration language includes words like "refugiados" (refugees), "personas" (people), and "niños" (children), which convey a more humanizing perspective, often evoking empathy. Terms such as "derechos" (rights) indicate a focus on protecting immigrants' rights, while "xenofobia" (xenophobia) appears frequently in the context of condemning xenophobic attitudes or actions.

"Other" statements typically refer to government actions and policies, with terms like "comisión" (commission), "gobierno" (government), and "política" (policy), as well as words describing specific aspects of the immigration situation, such as "frontera" (border).

Further details on how fighting word scores were calculated can be found below:

- Text Vectorization: First, the code converts cleaned text data into a document-term matrix using CountVectorizer, where each column represents a word, and each row represents a document (tweet).

- Frequency Counts: The words are then separated based on stance categories (anti-immigration, pro-immigration, and other), with word counts summed across documents within each category.

- Log-Odds Calculation with Dirichlet Prior: For each word, the log-odds ratio is computed with a Dirichlet prior to prevent zero-frequency issues and to smooth low-frequency counts. This calculation identifies words with the highest log-odds scores in each category, indicating their distinctiveness for that stance.

- Top Words Extraction: Finally, the code extracts the top words for each category based on their log-odds scores, reporting words that are most likely to distinguish one category from the others.

TABLE C.8: Fighting Words for Immigration Stance Categories

Anti-immigration		Pro-immigration		Other	
Word	Score	Word	Score	Word	Score
extranjeros	-4.96	migratoria	-5.07	comision	-5.06
peru	-5.13	inmigrantes	-5.09	gobierno	-5.14
gobierno	-5.13	migracion	-5.11	pais	-5.14
inmigracion	-5.31	politica	-5.22	peru	-5.25
peruanos	-5.39	derechos	-5.40	inmigracion	-5.31
migraciones	-5.51	peru	-5.44	ahora	-5.34
migracion	-5.57	niños	-5.57	inmigrantes	-5.38
antecedentes	-5.57	xenofobia	-5.60	maduro	-5.41
ingreso	-5.57	personas	-5.77	politica	-5.45
politica	-5.60	refugiados	-5.81	frontera	-5.56
solo	-5.67	inmigracion	-5.85	personas	-5.56
maduro	-5.67	migrante	-5.86	migracion	-5.60
delincuentes	-5.71	solo	-5.90	situacion	-5.69
haitianos	-5.78	venezuela	-5.93	trabajo	-5.69
venezuela	-5.78	debe	-5.93	venezolana	-5.74

C.2.3 Justification for Using OpenAI API (Closed-Source Model)

As recommended by best practices for closed LLMs by Barrie, Palmer, and Spirling (2024), the trade-offs of using proprietary models are acknowledged and justified by the need for high performance and contextual accuracy, as discussed below. The decision to use OpenAI's proprietary API (ChatGPT-3.5) was driven by its demonstrated superior accuracy in managing Spanish-language data. Many mainstream LLMs, such as LLaMA, are pretrained on English-dominant corpora, which limits their performance in non-English languages, giving OpenAI a clear advantage (Zhao et al. 2024). For instance, Ahuja et al. (2024) show that GPT-4 outperforms PaLM2 and Gemini-Pro across more datasets when using non-English data.

Specifically, OpenAI allows us to excels in capturing context-dependent meaning, irony, and other subtle features critical for analyzing political discourse of Latin American politicians. While proprietary systems raise concerns about replication and transparency, OpenAI mitigates these limitations through comprehensive documentation and we provide the prompt and model characteristics for future researchers. Additionally, its efficiency in processing large datasets ensures scalability and feasibility, making it indispensable for our analysis. Although open-source models offer benefits in version control and reproducibility, they lack the robustness needed to handle complex linguistic constructs in non-English datasets, which is essential for this study.

C.3 Dictionaries

C.3.1 Immigration

This section presents the construction of dictionaries to identify the immigration issue. We begin with a minimum dictionary (refer to Figure C.4), followed by the incorporation of combinations of two words, as indicated in Figure C.5. Finally, we include combinations of three words (see Figure C.6).

Figure C.4: Minimum initial dictionary

- data = ["migrantes", "inmigrantes", "inmigrante", "xenofobia", "refugiados", "migratoria", "inmigracion", "migrante"]

- Venezuela = ['venez', 'maduro', 'hugo chavez']

- Socialism = ['socialis', 'comunis', 'cuba', 'nicaragua', 'hugo chavez', 'fidel castro', 'evo morales', 'daniel ortega']

Figure C.5: Dictionary of two words combinations

data = [("yosoyvenezolano", "años"), ("antecedentes", "extranjeros"), ("antimigratoria", "derechos"), ("antimigratoria", "presidente"), ("años", "inmigracion"), ("años", "japonesa"), ("campo", "extranjero"), ("cancilleriaperu", "migratoria"), ("cancilleriaperu", "venezolanos"), ("chile", "venezolanos"), ("ciudadanos", "extranjeros"), ("ciudades", "extranjero"), ("conmemoracion", "japonesa"), ("crisis", "huyen"), ("crisis", "migratoria"), ("derechos", "migrantes"), ("emigrar", "millones"), ("escapan", "miles"), ("exodo", "maduro"), ("extranjero", "migracion"), ("extranjero", "migratorias"), ("extranjero", "venezolanos"), ("extranjeros", "migraciones"), ("extranjeros", "socialismo"), ("extranjeros", "venezolanos"), ("extranjeros", "xenofobia"), ("familias", "inmigrantes"), ("familias", "migrantes"), ("familias", "migratoria"), ("familias", "venezolanos"), ("frontera", "migracionespe"), ("frontera", "migratoria"), ("frontera", "venezolanos"), ("hermanos", "huyen"), ("huyen", "maduro"), ("huyen", "venezolano"), ("huyen", "venezolanos"), ("inmigracion", "japonesa"), ("inmigracion", "migracion"), ("inmigrantes", "pais"), ("inmigrantes", "paises"), ("internacional", "migrante"), ("internacional", "refugiados"), ("japonesa", "marco"), ("japonesa", "migracion"), ("migracion", "solo"), ("migracion", "todas"), ("migracion", "venezolana"), ("migracion", "venezolanos"), ("migraciones", "personas"), ("migraciones", "situacion"), ("migraciones", "trabajo"), ("migraciones", "venezolanos"), ("migrantes", "niños"), ("migrantes", "pais"), ("migrantes", "personas"), ("migrantes", "situacion"), ("migrantes", "trump"), ("migrantes", "venezolano"), ("migrantes", "venezolanos"), ("migrantes", "venezuela"), ("migratoria", "niños"), ("migratoria", "paises"), ("migratoria", "personas"), ("migratoria", "politica"), ("migratoria", "trump"), ("migratorias", "puede"), ("migratorias", "solo"), ("migratorias", "todas"), ("miles", "refugiados"), ("niños", "trump"), ("pais", "xenofobia"), ("paises", "refugiados"), ("personas", "refugiados"), ("peruanos", "venezolana"), ("peruanos", "venezolanos"), ("peruanos", "xenofobia"), ("argentinos", "venezolana"), ("argentinos", "venezolanos"), ("argentinos", "xenofobia"), ("chilenos", "venezolana"), ("chilenos", "venezolanos"), ("chilenos", "xenofobia"), ("ecuatorianos", "venezolana"), ("ecuatorianos", "venezolanos"), ("ecuatorianos", "xenofobia"), ("colombianos", "venezolana"), ("colombianos", "venezolanos"), ("colombianos", "xenofobia"), ("problemas", "venezolana"), ("puede", "venezolanos"), ("trabajo", "venezolanos"), ("venezolana", "venezolanos")]

Figure C.6: Dictionary with a combination of three words

data = [("frontera", "peru", "venez"), ("peruanos", "salud", "venezolanos"), ("perú", "educaci", "venez"), ("frontera", "cerr", "venez"), ("permiso", "renovable", "trabajo"), ("peru", "venezolanos", "lleg"), ("delinc", "frontera", "venez"), ("trabaj", "peruan", "venez"), ("venezol", "recibir", "peru"), ("venezol", "ingres", "frontera"), ("venezol", "salud", "frontera"), ("venezol", "golp", "miraflores"), ("venezol", "norte", "frontera"), ("venezol", "peruan", "dialogo"), ("venezol", "peruan", "explot"), ("venezol", "peru", "labor"), ("venezol", "fronter", "ecuado"), ("peru", "colombianos", "expuls"), ("frontera", "colombianos", "ingres"), ("frontera", "miner", "ilegal"), ("extra", "mineros", "ecuador"), ("refugio", "venezo", "frontera"), ("peru", "venezolanos", "proteger"), ("peru", "venezolanos", "porcentaje"), ("peru", "venezolanos", "hermandad"), ("peru", "venezolanos", "turista"), ("peru", "venezolanos", "calidad"), ("gracias", "venezolanos", "apoyar"), ("miles", "venezolanos", "apoyar"), ("argentina", "venezolanos", "peruanos"), ("afect", "venezol", "peruano"), ("crimin", "venezol", "fronte"), ("trabaj", "venezol", "solid"), ("preocupan", "venezol", "peruanos"), ("trabajo", "venezol", "visas"), ("nacionalizar", "venezol", "peru"), ("brazos", "venezol", "peru"), ("llegad", "venezol", "peru"), ("bienvenid", "drama", "venezolanos"), ("trabaja", "reconstru", "venezolanos"), ("venezol", "chile", "protest"), ("venezol", "chile", "captur"), ("venezol", "chile", "acogi"), ("venezol", "chile", "llegan"), ("venezol", "chile", "joven"), ("venezol", "peru", "comunidad"), ("venezol", "exilio", "ppkamigo"), ("venezol", "apoyemos", "peru")]

C.3.2 Immigration, Venezuela

The data reveals interesting patterns in political discourse on immigration in Chile and Peru. In both countries, right-wing parties mention immigration less overall (0.30% in Chile, 0.12% in Peru), but focus more on Venezuela when discussing immigration (17.1% in Chile, 53.7% in Peru). Notably, attention to Venezuelan immigration is much higher in

Peru than in Chile across all political spectrums, with the Peruvian right dedicating over half of their immigration-related posts to Venezuela. In contrast, left and center parties in both countries show a more balanced distribution in their mentions of immigration and Venezuela, although with significant differences between the two countries.

TABLE C.9: Summary Descriptives

	Chile		Peru	
	Immigration	**Venezuela**	**Immigration**	**Venezuela**
Left	0.35	1.20	0.17	0.56
Center	0.36	1.04	0.15	0.76
Right	0.30	1.17	0.12	1.34
Total	0.33	1.17	0.14	0.93
	Within Immigration Tweets		Within Immigration Tweets	
Left		14.3		25.6
Center		14.1		30.2
Right		17.1		53.7
Total		15.2		36.0

Note: The numbers refer to percentages.
Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data retrieved from Twitter

C.4 Ideological Score

To unpack whether political leaders revise their language and ideological framing we estimate an ideological score per each post following Le Pennec (2021). This measure indicates to what degree a post of a politician is similar to the corpus of other posts of the parties considered as left-wing or right-wing. This method builds on the *Wordscores* method (Laver, Benoit, and Garry 2003).

We computed the frequencies p_w^R and p_w^L that represent how frequent a word w is in all the posts in the left or right

$$p_w^i = \frac{\sum_{j \in i} c_{wj}}{\sum_{j \in i} m_j}$$

where c_{wj} is the counts of word w in statement j, and m_j is the total number of words of statement j. We estimated these frequencies in a year basis, allowing right-left to vary the way they expressed over time. We also performed this analysis for the posts that were not classified as discussing immigration issues.

Using these frequencies, we can compute the right-wing score of each word w:

$$s_w = \frac{p_w^R}{p_w^R + p_w^L} - \frac{p_w^L}{p_w^R + p_w^L} \tag{4}$$

A post j score S_j, representing the parties' positioning in the left-right axis is calculated by:

$$S_j = \frac{\sum_w p_{wj} \times s_w}{S_R} \tag{5}$$

where S_R is the score of the aggregation of all the posts of the right-wing group.[27] Thus, the score of a post is not limited to a specific range, but a score of -1 represents an average post from the left, while a score of 1 represents an average post from the right. In both cases, these scores are estimated by utilizing the vocabularies associated with the left and right wings for posts not related to migration.

C.5 Examples of Classification

All translations were made using OpenAI.

C.5.1 Examples of Politicians Linking Immigration Issues to Venezuela's Left-Wing Regime

Peru

- "El socialismo real acaba en migraciones masivas. Por eso, los regímenes socialistas han llegado a construir muros: no para impedir que los extranjeros entren en manada para disfrutar de los frutos del socialismo, sino para evitar que los locales escapen de su fracaso."
  "Real socialism ends in mass migrations. That's why socialist regimes have come to build walls: not to keep foreigners from flocking in to enjoy socialism's fruits, but to prevent locals from escaping its failure."

- "No ha habido en Venezuela un gobierno que le haya hecho tanto daño y causado tanto sufrimientos a la juventud venezolana como el gobierno de Maduro. Hoy somos un país vacío de jóvenes por el éxodo."
  "There has not been a government in Venezuela that has done so much harm and caused so much suffering to Venezuelan youth as Maduro's government. Today we are a country emptied of young people due to the exodus."

- "¿Por qué Amnistía Internacional no se atreve a amenazar a Chile o Ecuador sobre los migrantes venezolanos? ¿O mejor, por qué no le grita a Maduro para que no atropelle los DDHH de su gente y no tengan que huir? Que no venga a dar órdenes a nuestros militares que defienden la frontera."
  "Why doesn't Amnesty International dare to threaten Chile or Ecuador over Venezuelan migrants? Or better yet, why don't they shout at Maduro so he stops trampling on his people's human rights and forcing them to flee? They shouldn't come here to give orders to our soldiers defending the border."

- "@HDeSotoPeru no solo dice que solucionará el problema de la inmigración, sino que tiene un plan. Necesitamos sancionar a los delincuentes y formalizar a la gran mayoría que vienen a aportar a nuestro país. Mi solidaridad con quienes huyen del genocidio socialista de Maduro."
  "@HDeSotoPeru not only says he will solve the immigration problem but also has a plan. We need to sanction criminals and formalize the vast majority who come to contribute to our country. My solidarity with those fleeing Maduro's socialist genocide."

- "@littlepipedream @otravezandres @elcomercioperu @PoliticaECpe JPP sigue defendiendo un modelo criminal: mata de hambre o directamente a quienes gobiernan. No lo dice @otravezandres, lo dicen los hechos, la historia y sobre todo los refugiados que se escaparon de Venezuela, Cuba y otros experimentos socialistas."
  "@littlepipedream @otravezandres @elcomercioperu @PoliticaECpe JPP continues to defend a criminal model: it starves or outright kills those it governs. It's not @otravezandres saying this; the facts, history, and above all the refugees who escaped from Venezuela, Cuba, and other socialist experiments say it."

Chile

- "Una verdadera fiesta de delincuencia la caravana de migrantes que está generando el caos en Centroamérica. Sólo un sistema es capaz de promover el Caos como forma de acción, y este es el Comunismo. Con el gentil patrocinio del Foro de Sao Paulo, @DiazCanelB y @NicolasMaduro."

---

[27]This is done to preserve the distance between the reference texts (Martin and Vanberg 2008).

"The migrant caravan creating chaos in Central America is a true crime spree. Only one system can promote chaos as a form of action, and that's Communism, with the gentle sponsorship of the São Paulo Forum, @DiazCanelB and @NicolasMaduro."

• "Comunidad de Venezolanos en Chile solicitan solidaridad con los presos políticos del régimen de Maduro."
"The Venezuelan community in Chile is calling for solidarity with the political prisoners of Maduro's regime."

• "Aquí el Alcalde @danieljadue muestra la hilacha. Prefiere defender al Gobierno corrupto, castrista comunista y tiránico de Maduro que defender a los venezolanos que están siendo diezmados por el hambre y la enfermedad. Así son los miembros disciplinados del @PCdeChile!"
"Here Mayor @danieljadue shows his true colors. He prefers defending the corrupt, Castro-style, communist, tyrannical Maduro government over defending the Venezuelans who are being devastated by hunger and disease. That's how the disciplined members of the @PCdeChile are!"

• "Venezolanos escapan a Chile del socialismo https://t.co/ygkVgXW6Yj y @labeasanchez y @SenadorGuillier quieren llevarnos por ese camino."
"Venezuelans flee socialism to Chile https://t.co/ygkVgXW6Yj, yet @labeasanchez and @SenadorGuillier want to lead us down that same path."

• "Y pensar que el Partido Comunista persigue y agrede a los inmigrantes y perseguidos políticos venezolanos. . ."
"And to think that the Communist Party harasses and attacks Venezuelan immigrants and political refugees..."

C.5.2 Examples of Pro, and Anti-immigration posts

TABLE C.10: Examples of Pro, and Anti-immigration posts in Peru

Country	Anti-Immigration	Pro-Immigration
Peru	• "124 delincuentes con armas y drogas [...] 118 venezolanos. Todo extranjero en el territorio nacional con antecedentes, ilegales [...] DEPORTARLOS" "124 criminals with weapons and drugs [...] 118 Venezuelans. Any foreigner in the national territory with criminal records, illegal [...] DEPORT THEM" • "Que vergüenza da ver a fiscales liberando a choferes extranjeros sin licencia de conducir [...] ¿Que espera el gobierno para expulsarlo?" "It's shameful to see prosecutors releasing foreign drivers without a driver's license [...] What is the government waiting for to expel them?" • "La política migratoria @MigracionesPe donde está? Cómo es que se puede ser tan permisivo ? Cuál es la data que maneja el Gob? Se deben dar rptas inmediatas pues la pandemia de la delincuencia también mata." "Where is the migration policy @MigracionesPe? How can they be so permissive? What data is the government using? Immediate answers are needed because the crime pandemic also kills." • "Es xenofobia apoyar que expulsen a los delincuentes extranjeros?" "Is it xenophobic to support the expulsion of foreign criminals?"	• "En Navidad recordamos el nacimiento de un niño en medio de un viaje forzoso [...] No hagamos a los migrantes en el Perú lo que no queremos que les hagan a nuestros compatriotas" "At Christmas, we remember the birth of a child amid a forced journey [...] Let's not do to migrants in Peru what we don't want them to do to our fellow citizens" • "Para un país que tiene millones peruanos fuera inaudito expulsar refugiados extranjeros" "For a country with millions of Peruvians abroad, it's unheard of to expel foreign refugees" • "No ha habido en Venezuela un gobierno que le haya hecho tanto daño y causado tanto sufrimientos a la juventud venezolana como el gobierno de Maduro. Hoy somos un país vacío de jóvenes por el éxodo" "There has not been a government in Venezuela that has caused so much harm and suffering to Venezuelan youth as Maduro's government. Today we are a country emptied of youth due to the exodus" • "@HDeSotoPeru no solo dice que solucionará el problema de la inmigración, sino que tiene un plan. Necesitamos sancionar a los delincuentes y formalizar a la gran mayoría que vienen a aportar a nuestro país. Mi solidaridad con quienes huyen del genocidio socialista de Maduro." "@HDeSotoPeru not only says he will solve the immigration problem, but he has a plan. We need to sanction criminals and formalize the vast majority who come to contribute to our country. My solidarity with those fleeing Maduro's socialist genocide."

TABLE C.11: Examples of Pro, and Anti-immigration posts in Chile

Country	Anti-Immigration	Pro-Immigration
Chile	• "Queremos a estas personas deshumanizadas fuera de nuestras fronteras": AFEP pide la expulsión de venezolanos "We want these dehumanized people out of our borders": AFEP calls for the expulsion of Venezuelans • "Este es el estándar del nuevo director nacional del INDH? [...] Chileno primero los migrantes y el resto a la fila" "Is this the standard of the new national director of the INDH? [...] Chileans first, migrants and the rest get in line" • "Es muy duro para las regiones del sur que les digamos que la violencia q sufren todos los días es "legítima"; como es muy duro para la gente del norte que les digamos que sus plazas y calles se pueden llenar de migrantes porq la migración "es un derecho". ¿Lo vivimos nosotr@s?" "It is very hard for southern regions to be told that the violence they suffer daily is "legitimate"; and for the northern people, it is very hard to be told that their squares and streets can be filled with migrants because "migration is a right." Do we experience it ourselves?" • "Hoy la Cámara de Diputados aprobó nuestro proyecto de migraciones. Gran paso adelante para seguir poniendo orden en nuestra casa en materia de migraciones y así combatir mejor la inmigración ilegal y el ingreso a Chile de males como delincuencia, narcotráfico y crimen organizado." "Today the House of Representatives approved our migration project. A big step forward to continue putting order in our home in terms of migration and thus better combat illegal immigration and the entry into Chile of evils such as crime, drug trafficking, and organized crime."	• "Esta es la realidad a la que nos enfrentamos. Debemos ser generosos y acoger a nuestros hermanos venezolanos que huyen de la tiranía de Maduro Venezuela" "This is the reality we face. We must be generous and welcome our Venezuelan brothers fleeing Maduro's tyranny Venezuela" • ".@joaperezolea llama al Gobierno a tener humanidad, por caso de embarazada venezolana que perdió a su hijo fuera de consulado chileno en Tacna. Además pide dar estatus de refugiados a cientos de desplazados políticos de dictadura de Maduro" ".@joaperezolea calls on the government to show humanity in the case of a pregnant Venezuelan who lost her child outside the Chilean consulate in Tacna. He also calls for granting refugee status to hundreds of political refugees from Maduro's dictatorship" • "Ayer se produjeron manifestaciones de odio, intolerancia y de características fascistoides en contra de l@s migrantes. Todavía son minoritarias. Debemos rechazar el odio, la xenofobia y la intolerancia con fuerza y energía. La Patria es humanidad." "Yesterday there were hateful, intolerant, and fascist-like demonstrations against migrants. They are still a minority. We must reject hatred, xenophobia, and intolerance with strength and energy. The Homeland is humanity." • "Todas las personas tienen derechos y los migrantes son igualmente personas a quienes debemos reconocer como aportes a nuestra economía" "All people have rights, and migrants are equally people whom we must recognize as contributions to our economy"

D MEASUREMENT DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Country	Legislature	Tweets during 2013-2020	Tweets during 2018-2019	Number of Legislators
Chile	2018-2022	1,271,545	299,915	141
Peru	2016-2020	754, 565	215,518	114

TABLE D.12: Number of Posts per Country and legislature

Notes: The "Legislature" column indicates the years of the legislature under study for each country. The third column shows the total number of posts posted by these individuals between 2013 and 2020, which forms our sample for analyzing the evolution of immigration issue salience. The "2018-2019" column presents the number of posts posted right after the immigration shock, representing the sample used to examine how politicians construct rhetoric around immigration. Source: Authors' elaboration based on data retrieved from X.

TABLE D.13: Descriptive Statistics for Posts after the immigration shock (2018 and 2019)

Country	Posts	Imm.	Immigration Posts (% of Imm.)			
		(% of Posts)	Pro-Imm.	Anti-Imm.	Venezuela	Socialism
Chile	299,915	0.63	73.00	11.09	16.03	3.02
Peru	215,518	0.24	61.00	23.58	46.67	4.89
Total	515,433	0.47	68.91	15.69	27.3	3.71

Notes: The first column shows the total number of legislators' posts in 2018-2019 (post-immigration shock). The second column is the percentage of posts about immigration. The remaining columns are estimated based on the number of posts about immigration. Authors' elaboration based on data retrieved from X.

TABLE D.14: Summary Statistics by Legislators

| Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	p50	p25	p75	p90
Total Tweets	254	0	17209	2029.264	1264	525	2554	5105
Share of Tweets Imm	241	0	5.2545	0.4430	0.2374	0.0562	0.5994	1.0962
Frames % of Imm. Tw.:								
Share Socialism	182	0	100	3.7143	0	0	0	11.1111
Share Venezuela	182	0	100	27.3167	16.6667	0	50	75.8621
Share Pro-Immigation	182	0	100	68.9158	75.7353	50	100	100
Share Anti-Immigration	182	0	100	15.6922	2.8783	0	20	50

E Benchmark Salience
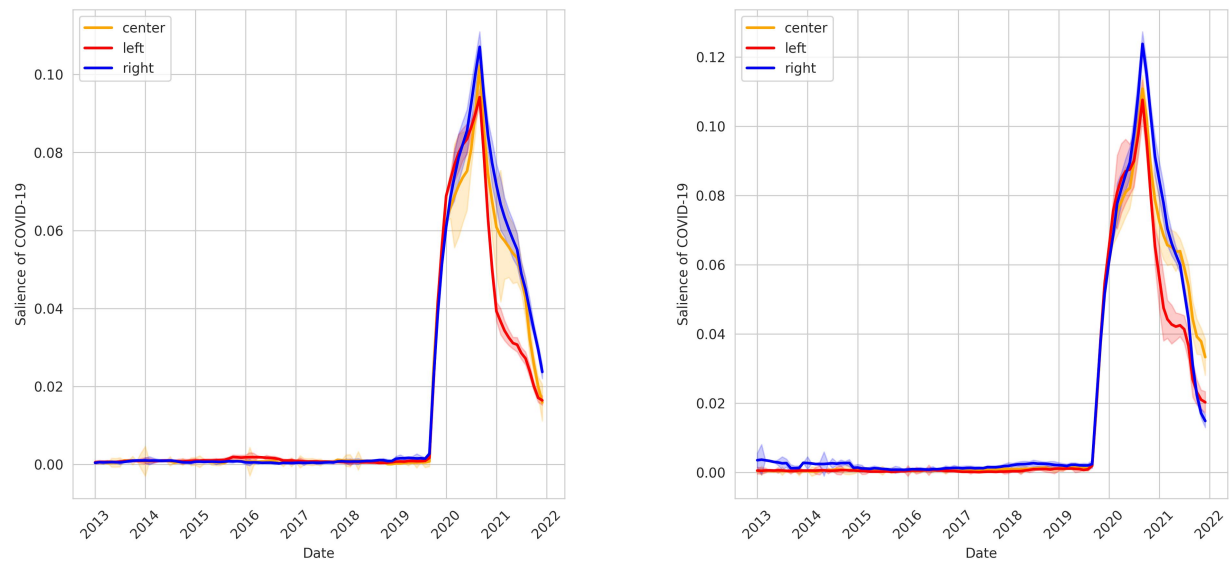
Figure E.7: 12-Month Moving Average of Covid Salience - Chile and Peru (2013-2022)
Note: the DV is the salience of covid operationalized as the ratio of statements about Covid-19 to the total number of public statements made. Left, Center and Right are defined as discussed in Figure . Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data retrieved from X

F Topic Analysis: NMF

Table F.15 confirms the main results. In Chile, left-wing discourse emphasizes migrants' conditions (e.g., Topic 1), while right-wing discourse highlights political aspects with terms like 'dictadura' and 'Maduro' (e.g., Topic 4). In Peru, right-wing parties frame Venezuelans as victims of an authoritarian regime (e.g., 'hermanos,' 'huyen,' 'Maduro' in Topic 1), whereas left-wing parties focus on work-related issues (e.g., 'trabajo,' 'jovenes' in Topic 3).

	Chile				Peru			
	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4
	chile	nuestro	frontera	maduro	maduro	migracion	trabajo	venezuela
	venezolanos	pais	para	dictadura	venezolanos	venezolana	venezolanos	peruanos
	venezuela	venezolano	chilena	gobierno	para	sobre	jovenes	chile
	para	rector	senadornavarro	chileno	pais	para	peruanos	peru
	sobre	primer	informante	presidente	huyen	peru	para	venezolanos
	migrantes	quien	humanitaria	venezolanos	hermanos	comision	buen	total
	migracion	bello	crisis	consulado	como	rree	inmigrantes	amigos
	situacion	gran	durante	ddhh	nuestros	ahora	ministro	socialismo
	ingreso	migrar	sido	miles	peru	exteriores	porque	pais
	piñera	compromiso	hipocrita	puede	esta	relaciones	ciudadanos	democratas
%	55.8	8.6	9.4	26.2	41.6	15.3	16.8	26.3
Left (%)	61.9	13.4	10.3	14.4	17.9	5.1	41.0	35.9
Center (%)	44.0	4.0	4.0	48.0	34.5	28.6	6.0	31.0
Right (%)	55.8	6.7	10.8	26.7	51.7	10.6	16.6	21.2
Distance L-R	6.0	6.7	-0.5	-12.2	-33.7	-5.5	24.5	14.7

TABLE F.15: Topic Analysis - NMF 4 clusters regarding Venezuelan statements by ideological party family

Note: The columns show the most probable words within each topic, and the topic distributions among the party families by country. All the sample of immigration post from 2018 and 2019 in Peru and Chile was used.
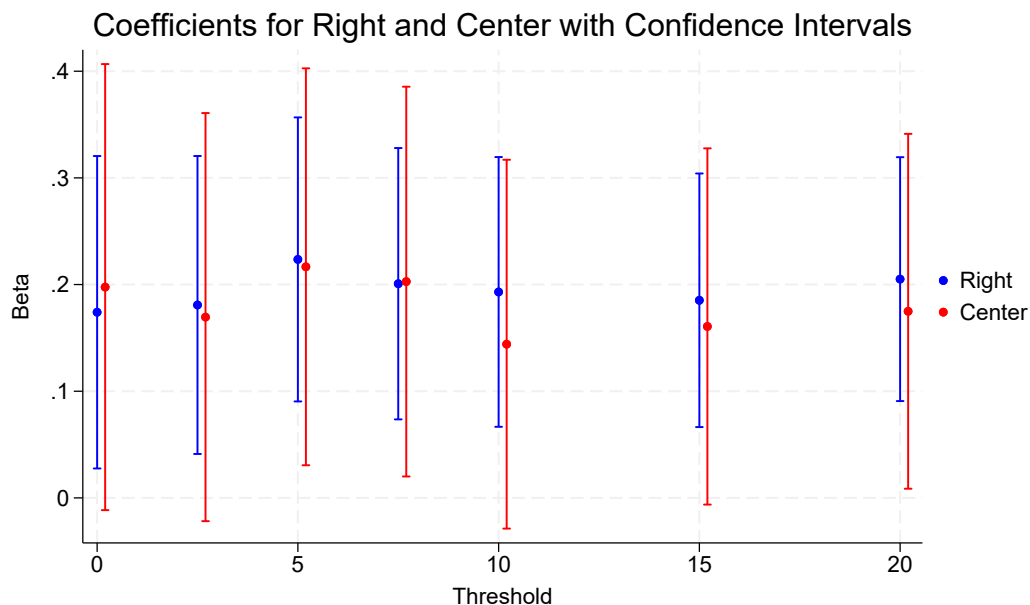
G Socialism and Venezuela

Figure G.8: Probability of having a high share of statements about Socialism by party family (baseline Left)

Note: This figure presents the estimated coefficients (Beta) from a Linear Probability Model, illustrating the change in the probability of support for Right (blue) and Center (red) ideological positions across different thresholds (i.e, alternative definitions of high-share of statements about socialism). Each coefficient represents the estimated increase in probability associated with each threshold, with confidence intervals displayed to show the level of uncertainty. The results highlight how shifts in threshold levels do not influence the results.
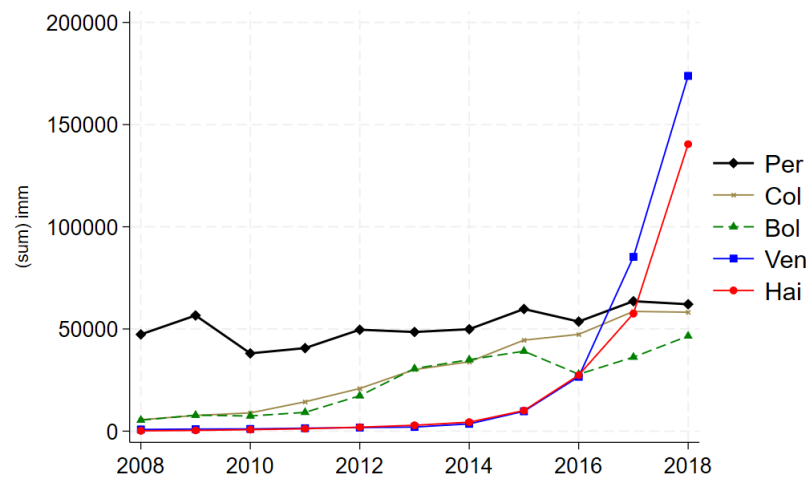
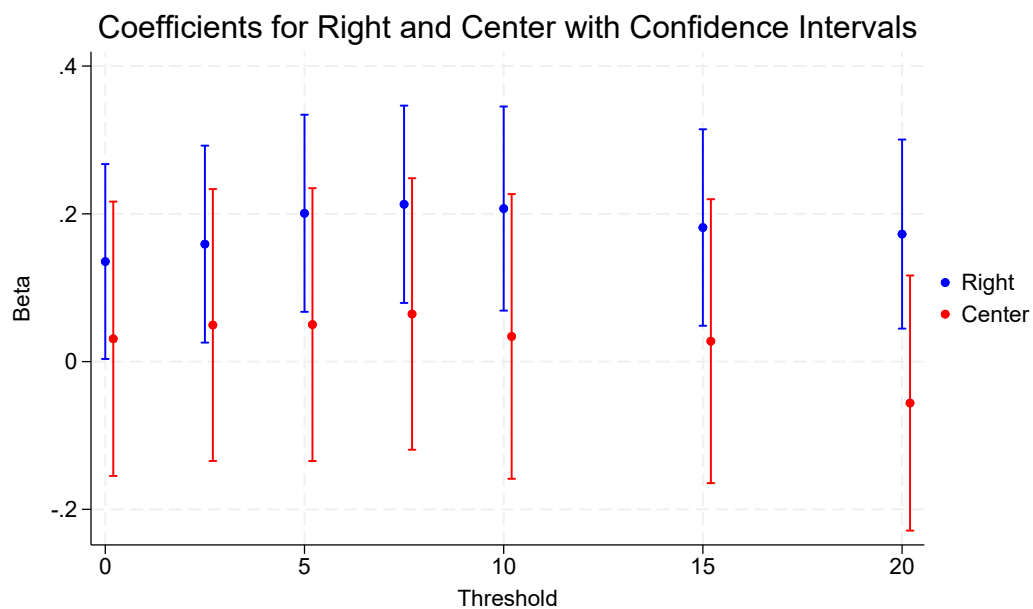*Figure H.10:* Number of Immigrants in Chile per Origin Country

Figure G.9: Probability of having a high share of statements about Venezuela by party family (baseline Left)

Note: This figure presents the estimated coefficients (Beta) from a Linear Probability Model, illustrating the change in the probability of support for Right (blue) and Center (red) ideological positions across different thresholds (i.e, alternative definitions of high-share of statements about Venezuela). Each coefficient represents the estimated increase in probability associated with each threshold, with confidence intervals displayed to show the level of uncertainty. The results highlight how shifts in threshold levels do not influence the results.

H HAITI

VARIABLES	(1) Haiti	(2) Venezuela	(3) Haiti	(4) Venezuela	(5) Haiti	(6) Venezuela
Right	-7.479**	8.665**	-5.777*	6.456	-5.268	12.245*
	(3.330)	(4.124)	(3.108)	(4.078)	(5.954)	(6.591)
Center	8.318	4.594	7.876	1.421	7.999	2.811
	(9.140)	(5.135)	(9.712)	(5.931)	(9.744)	(6.013)
Share Imm			-0.700	0.042		
			(0.604)	(0.993)		
Right*Share Imm					-0.800	-1.098
					(0.899)	(1.304)
No Right*Share Imm					-0.619	0.967
					(0.867)	(1.499)
Observations	115	115	109	109	109	109
R-squared	0.364	0.327	0.088	0.058	0.088	0.019
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Model	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	IV	IV
F-stat			103.8	103.8	33.63	33.63

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

TABLE H.16: Party Families and Framing Used when Discussing the Immigration Issue.
Notes: Models estimated using data from members of Congress who discussed immigration in 2018-2019 on X. The unit of analysis is individual legislators. Dependent variables represent the proportion of immigration-related statements falling into each specified category, calculated as a share of each legislator's total immigration-related posts. All models control for legislator gender, district magnitude (number of representatives per electoral district), and total post volume. Robust standard errors in parentheses. The F-stat indicates the F statistic of the first stage

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