

# Gender and perceptions of migration: A reflection of our predisposing factors

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## Abstract

This thesis analyzes the perceptions of immigration by the native-born populations of Latin American countries from a gender perspective. In Latin America, women hold more negative perceptions of migrants than men. To explain this gap, I study underlying mechanisms that potentially affect this relationship. The analysis indicates that women perceive greater vulnerability in their present and future circumstances and report lower levels of trust and solidarity with others, leading to more negative perceptions of migrants across different domains and a higher preference for anti-immigration policies. I suggest considering these predisposing factors when engaging in public discussions on migration to deliver an effective message that will resonate with the native-born population and promote the integration of migrants into society.

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# 1 Introduction

Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean has been a growing phenomenon. The number of international migrants in the region increased from 7 to 15 million between 2005 and 2020. This has made Latin America the region with the highest migration growth rate and the destination of 5.3% of all international migrants (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). Intraregional migration in Latin America and the Caribbean has also expanded significantly. Since 2010, the number of intraregional migrants has increased to nearly equal the number of Latin Americans living outside the region. This implies a shift in historical migration trends that have been dominated by emigration from the region (Goebel, 2016). The migratory wave from Venezuela stands out due to the political, economic, and social crisis that has forced the migration of 7 million people from the country, with 84% of them residing in Latin America and the Caribbean (R4V, 2022; UNHCR, 2018).

This study explores perceptions of migration and how they differ according to the gender of native-born individuals in the receiving country. First, it analyzes the correlation between gender and perceptions of migration across different levels of impact: at the country, neighborhood, and family levels. Second, as the Blinder–Oaxaca decomposition (Blinder, 1973; Oaxaca, 1973) reveals that a significant portion of these differences cannot be explained by sociodemographic, educational, and labor-related characteristics. Therefore, this study proposes a causal inference model to examine potential mediating mechanisms, specifically psychological predisposing factors, that can account for the correlations observed.

Studying perceptions is crucial due to their potential impact on public policies (Cattaneo & Grieco, 2020). Public opinion generates “bottom-up” narratives that emerge through person-to-person contact, media channels, and social networks, reflecting value judgments. Since these narratives generate social interest in a phenomenon to be attended by the State, they provide windows of opportunity (King, 1985) that can be exploited by elites and politicians to advance their agendas (Rosenblum & Hipsman, 2016). In the case of migration, narratives can be used to define it as a threat or an opportunity. Migration can be portrayed as a phenomenon that brings economic, cultural, or security challenges. Alternatively, it can be presented as part of the solution to existing challenges, such as addressing labor shortages

in the workforce,<sup>1</sup> and as an opportunity for the receiving country to benefit from the skills and experiences of individuals. Therefore, narratives play a crucial role in advocating for and legitimizing political actions related to migration, whether they aim to facilitate or restrict it.

The effects of public opinion on migration have already been documented for some migratory waves. In Europe, the overestimation of the number of migrants who are unemployed or receive state aid, as well as the underestimation of their education level, leads to less support for pro-immigration policies (Alesina et al., 2018a). In line with this research, the report by ACNUR (2019) emphasizes that current narratives in Europe portray migrants as a labor and cultural threat to the native-born population. Extreme right-wing populist parties accentuate these narratives through hate speech against migrants to advance their electoral agendas. Notably, these parties have had increased support, particularly in the wake of the 2019 European Parliament election (Cattaneo & Grieco, 2020).

The effect of perceptions in the public sphere is also relevant due to the potential impact of prejudice against migrant populations already settled in the receiving country. Evidence indicates that migratory flows deteriorate native-born trust in migrants (Cettolin & Suetens, 2018), resulting in heightened misperception of migrant's quantity and attributes (Alesina et al., 2018b). Regarding migration from Venezuela, Hidalgo et al. (2021) find that migrants face prejudice, discrimination, and xenophobia in receiving countries.<sup>2</sup> This presents a significant problem as it leads to increased barriers to accessing essential public services, including health care and education. Additionally, it exposes migrants to challenges that obstruct their integration into the community, such as instances of violence and inequality (Paluck & Green, 2009). Consequently, the process of economic, social, and institutional integration in receiving countries is impeded, depriving them of the potential benefits that immigration can bring. These benefits include enhancements in labor markets, productivity, innovation, and long-term fiscal stability (Koczan et al., 2021). Conversely, exclusion can

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<sup>1</sup>For instance, Venezuelan migrants in Colombia are filling the labor gap in the coffee sector (Toro, 2019).

<sup>2</sup>Prejudice refers to the set of negative preconceptions held about another group without evidence to support them. Discrimination is the act of denying equal treatment to a person or group based on factors such as religion, ethnicity, or gender, and can arise from prejudice. Xenophobia is a specific form of discrimination that targets individuals solely based on their migrant status (Worley, 2021).

lead to a detrimental cycle in which negative perceptions translate into institutional and social practices that perpetuate the marginalization of migrants. This leads to direct discrimination in areas such as finance, employment, and access to public services, ultimately resulting in deteriorating conditions for both migrants and native-born populations (Horvath et al., 2007; Vala et al., 2006).

In contrast with the assumption in many studies and policy interventions that perceptions about migration are flexible and can be modified by exposure to information, Kustov et al. (2021) find that perceptions about migration are stable over time and are largely determined by individual-level factors. A potentially important individual-level factor is gender,<sup>3</sup> about which there is not a clear consensus in the literature. According to classical theories on gender, men should exhibit more negative attitudes to immigration than women as they are more likely to have an authoritarian personality (Worley, 2021) and more conservative views (Harteveld et al., 2015). However, the meta-analysis conducted by Dražanová (2020) shows that when gender is significant in explaining perceptions, women are equally or even more likely to hold anti-immigration attitudes than men. Using World Value Survey data in 49 countries, Dennison and Geddes (2021) evidence that women are more likely to agree that immigration increases unemployment and social conflict. Studies examining the gender effect indicate that women are less supportive of immigration (Hainmueller et al., 2015) and exhibit greater bias in their views on the proportion of migrants and their characteristics (Grigorieff, 2020; Stantcheva, 2021), particularly overestimating the number of migrants present in the country and the percentage receiving government assistance. Moreover, women are less willing to pay for accurate information about migration (Alesina et al., 2019). In the specific case of migration from Venezuela, the study by Gandelman and Lamé (2021) finds that men in Uruguay display greater trust and reciprocity toward migrants.

Using information from Gallup World Poll (2020), I show that men exhibit a more positive perception of migrants (Figure 1); they are more likely to consider migrants to be good for the country, neighborhood, and family. The largest gap is found in perceptions at

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<sup>3</sup>Gender relates to socially constructed characteristics such as “masculine” and “feminine,” whereas sex refers to the biological categories of male and female assigned at birth. As gender shapes behavioral expectations based on assigned sex (Gambara et al., 2012), this classification is used for identification purposes.

the country and neighborhood levels. As a plausible explanation for this gap, I propose that women hold stronger biases in areas where they perceive they have less control and where there is a greater expectation of being negatively impacted by migrants, such as in the labor market.

To the best of my knowledge, there is not a study that explores the importance of gender in explaining migration perceptions.<sup>4</sup> This work contributes to the literature by performing an exploratory exercise that allows us to understand why women hold more negative perceptions toward migrants. A better understanding of the motives that lead to accepting or rejecting migrants is needed to develop an effective strategy to reduce the social distance between different groups.<sup>5</sup> I posit that women hold worse perceptions of migrants due to having a higher perception of vulnerability. This perception of vulnerability manifests in lower self-reported well-being, optimism regarding the future, and locus of control. Moreover, women exhibit less solidarity and interpersonal trust and are more anxious about their careers. These psychological predisposing factors make women more likely to reject groups representing potential threats, even though the literature suggests that migration can have mutual benefits.<sup>6</sup> Without a comprehensive understanding of the factors underlying perceptions of migration, awareness-raising strategies aimed at improving perceptions of migrants will not have a significant effect on at least 50.8%<sup>7</sup> of the native population. These biases are even more problematic considering that 75% of childcare is carried out by women (Samman & Lombardi, 2019), a high level of negative perceptions of migrants within this group may result in the intentional or unintentional teaching of prejudice to future generations.

This thesis does not suggest that the predisposing factors are inherent characteristics

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<sup>4</sup>The only study that offers an explanation is specific to the European case and suggests that women in Europe see Muslim migrants as a threat to gender equality, perceiving that they hold more patriarchal values (Ponce, 2017).

<sup>5</sup>Social distance refers to the degree of closeness that one individual has with another (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2014). In the extreme of a high social distance, the mechanism of sympathy becomes impaired. This hinders the ability to identify with others and recognize them as similar, leading to social exclusion (Hurtado & Álvarez, 2015).

<sup>6</sup>Evidence suggests that negative effects of migration are small and short term (Ajzenman et al., 2022; Blau & Mackie, 2017; Clemens & Hunt, 2017), while there are substantial benefits of migrants' integration (Dinkelman & Mariotti, 2016; Hiller & Rodríguez Chatruc, 2022; *How Immigrants Contribute to Developing Countries' Economies*, 2018; Kennan, 2017).

<sup>7</sup>The percentage of women in Latin America (Bank & UN, 2021).

among women. On the contrary, according to the social role theory of gender differences, it is believed that differences in behavior between men and women arise from the gender roles they are assigned at an early age (Buchan et al., 2008). These gender roles influence behavior through normative pressures regarding what is expected of men and women, as well as through the internalization of skills and beliefs that are reinforced from childhood.<sup>8</sup> In that sense, the differences in the predisposing characteristics are not inherent to women. Instead, they result from the social role to which women have been exposed from an early age.

## 2 Conceptual framework

This thesis explores the potential reasons why women tend to have a more negative perception of migrants. One possible explanation is that sociodemographic and economic differences between men and women lead to distinct perceptions. For instance, women may have lower levels of education, a factor associated with less favorable views toward migrants. Another explanation could involve predisposing variables that mediate the relationship between gender and perceptions. For example, women might experience a lower sense of control over their future, leading to more negative attitudes toward migrants due to the fear of being more vulnerable to external shocks. This section includes a literature review that explains why these sets of characteristics are relevant to understanding perceptions and how they relate to gender.

### Differences in composition

#### Sociodemographic characteristics

The sociodemographic variables identified as relevant to explaining perceptions regarding migration are age, place of birth, and ethnic group. First, older age correlates with stronger anti-migration views (Card et al., 2005), mostly due to a cohort effect rather than changes

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<sup>8</sup>For instance, from an early age, children observe that female caregivers tend to engage in household activities, while male caregivers are more involved in sports and competitive activities (Eagly & Wood, 2017).

throughout the lives of individuals (Schotte & Winkler, 2018). Although evidence shows that political views are stable over a person’s life, they are more unstable during young adulthood (the “impressionable years,” corresponding to ages 18 to 25) when individuals are consolidating their political and social beliefs. Therefore, their migration preferences may be more susceptible to change than those of older people. (Kustov et al., 2021). In Latin America, Rodríguez Chatruc and Rozo (2021) find that individuals in the impressionable years in Colombia have more positive attitudes toward Venezuelan migrants.

Secondly, individuals who are non-citizens, are foreign-born, or have at least one foreign-born parent are more likely to hold pro-immigration views than others as they may identify with a personal migration history (Dražanová, 2020). Similarly, identifying as non-white or belonging to an ethnic minority is correlated with more favorable perceptions of migrants, likely due to greater identification with the status of being a member of an out-group (Dražanová, 2020). Theoretically, being a woman does not inherently amplify these sociodemographic characteristics, and as such, these traits cannot serve as mediators between gender and perceptions.

## **Economic conditions**

To characterize economic status, education and employment situation are considered relevant determinants. Higher levels of education or skills are correlated with stronger preferences for pro-immigration policies (Card et al., 2005; Dražanová, 2020; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014; Pardos-Prado & Xena, 2019; Rodríguez Chatruc & Rozo, 2021; Scheve & Slaughter, 2001b). However, individuals in specific sectors of the economy with limited opportunities for job mobility may hold more negative perceptions of migrants who could represent labor market competition (Pardos-Prado & Xena, 2019).

The importance of both levels and types of education aligns with conflict theory, which posits that groups within the same social environment compete for scarce resources (Quillian, 1995). Therefore, it is the most vulnerable individuals, such as those with lower incomes, unemployed people, and job seekers, who are more likely to have a negative perception of migrants (Card et al., 2005; Scheve & Slaughter, 2001a) and support anti-immigration poli-

cies to prevent competition from immigrants for jobs and government assistance. Similarly, economically vulnerable individuals may have more negative perceptions of migrants because they assess the economic effects within shorter time horizons. As a result, their perception of threat is based on expected short-term risks rather than the long-term effects of migration (Pardos-Prado & Xena, 2019).

The literature has identified women as having greater labor market vulnerability (Novta et al., 2017) and greater educational lag (Roberts, 2012). Therefore, labor and educational characteristics are considered factors that, if relevant in explaining gender differences in perceptions, would be due to a different composition between the two groups.

## Predisposing factors

Predisposing factors refer to psychological and cognitive characteristics that define an individual's personality. According to Allport (1979), negative prejudice toward a group is a reflection of the individual's value system. Therefore, it is important to characterize the underlying cognitive process. These predispositional variables are believed to mediate the relationship between gender and perceptions and, as such, are considered as mediating mechanisms (see Figure 2). In this subsection, each of the predisposing factors and their relationship to gender and perceptions is described. Since gender is a socially constructed characteristic from birth, as part of the individual's identity according to the assigned sex,<sup>9</sup> it serves as the starting point in the causal chain to explain perceptions of migrants. In this causal framework, predispositional characteristics develop after gender assignment and may be influenced by gender itself (Huber, 2015).

### Self-esteem

Self-esteem is a subjective measure that reflects an individual's perception, value, and acceptance of themselves (Moksnes & Espnes, 2013). This can influence perceptions of migration under two social psychology theories. First, according to cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), individuals may reduce biases to remain consistent with values or behaviors

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<sup>9</sup>From 18 months of age, an individual becomes aware of their gender and develops the ability to identify behaviors specific to each gender category (Baldwin & Moses, 1996).



they consider important to protect their self-esteem. Thus, if individuals identify a value that is important to them and is incompatible with prejudice against migrants, such as tolerance of diversity, they may adjust their perceptions to align with that value. Second, according to self-affirmation theory (Steele, 1988), individuals exhibit less hostility toward other groups when their self-esteem and self-worth are bolstered, for example, through positive feedback about their intelligence (Fein & Spencer, 1997). The literature shows that women have lower self-esteem than men (Casale, 2017; Kearney-Cooke, 1999; Lundeberg et al., 1994), partly explained by the internalization of negative stereotypes (Bordalo et al., 2019).

In line with self-esteem, under self-affirmation theory, Steele (1988) predicts that individuals tend to express more negative views about others when they feel their identity is threatened and need to reaffirm it. This threat leads to ethnocentrism—the tendency to divide society into “in-groups” and “out-groups” and react with disdain or condescension toward members of society who differ notably in terms of race, dress, language, and religion, among other factors (Kinder & Kam., 2009). Both prejudice and ethnocentrism manifest through the assumption of stereotypes about migrants and are correlated with support for anti-immigration policies (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). In this context, it is expected that women will have more negative perceptions due to their lower self-esteem.

The data available for this study include measures of personal satisfaction, well-being, optimism, and happiness. Given that self-esteem is the result of various factors, such as the quality of interpersonal relationships, feelings of belonging or exclusion, success or failure in achieving personal goals, and satisfaction in different dimensions (Patel et al., 2018), it is considered that the available variables serve as approximations of this multidimensional indicator.

## **Empathy**

Empathy is another important mechanism influencing attitudes toward migrants and is frequently employed in interventions aimed at changing perceptions. Empathy refers to the ability to relate to the feelings of others or “put oneself in their shoes,” and is analogous to Adam Smith’s concept of sympathy (Smith, 2002). Following the empathy-altruism hy-

pothesis, which posits that feelings of empathy for another person generate an altruistic motivation to improve that person’s well-being, Rodríguez Chatruc and Rozo (2021) use virtual experiments to study the effect of efforts to enhance the ability of native-born people to identify with Venezuelan migrants and increase their altruism and trust. The study finds that, although the increase in trust and changes in attitudes toward migrants are more pronounced among women, the positive effect of donations is primarily driven by men. In this sense, the experiment suggests that while women have more malleable perceptions, men are more likely to change their behavior when the empathy mechanism operates.

Studies suggest that women report higher levels of empathy than men (Hoffman, 1977; Mestre et al., 2009) and engage in more generous acts (Aguiar, 2009; Engel, 2011). This is partly because women tend to have a greater orientation toward the social good, whereas men are more focused on individual gain (Eckel & Grossman, 1998). However, Eagly and Crowley (1986) find that when this help is directed toward strangers, men display greater altruism in the short term due to the social expectation of chivalry and the “hero” stereotype. In contrast, women exhibit greater altruism in close relationships, given the social expectation of caregiving roles. Since greater altruism among women is mediated by their relationship with others, they may report helping migrants to a lesser extent, as they are new members of society.

## **Interpersonal trust**

Interpersonal trust is correlated with more positive perceptions of migrants (van der Linden et al., 2017). Allport (1979) suggests that individuals who tend to have negative feelings toward one group are also likely to harbor negative feelings toward any other group that differs in some way—be it race, dress, language, or religion, among others (Kinder & Kam., 2009). Therefore, low interpersonal trust is a characteristic that underlies prejudice toward other groups. Even more importantly, although changes in trust over time are small, they result in significant shifts in feelings toward migrants (Mitchell, 2021).

The meta-analysis by Croson and Gneezy (2009) suggests that women exhibit levels of trust equal to or lower than men’s. A possible explanation is that men anticipate a higher

return when engaging in acts of trust and, therefore, view it as a strategic behavior (Buchan et al., 2008; Riley & Babcock, 2002). As a result, it is expected that women will exhibit lower trust toward migrants.

### **Risk aversion**

Risk aversion has been identified as part of the psychological tendencies that shape perceptions, with individuals who exhibit higher risk aversion being less likely to have positive attitudes toward migration (Shim & Lee, 2018). The literature indicates that women tend to have a higher aversion to risk (Dohmen et al., 2011; Eckel & Grossman, 2008) and report greater fear and anxiety than men when anticipating negative outcomes (Fujita et al., 1991; Gneezy et al., 2009). Reports from Latin America regarding migration from Venezuela have indicated that migrants are perceived as responsible for job shortages, lower wages, and the saturation of public services (OXFAM, 2019). In this context, given a higher perception of risk and competition for resources due to the arrival of a migrant population, it is expected that women will show lower acceptance of migrants, driven by the expectation of negative consequences.

### **Locus of control**

The locus of control is another significant factor shaping perceptions toward migrants. Harell et al. (2016) find that individuals who believe their actions considerably influence their fate are less likely to hold hostile attitudes toward migrants. This is because they feel capable of adapting to a rapidly changing social context without their personal circumstances being heavily impacted. Various studies suggest that men are more likely to believe their actions determine their destiny (Babcock & Laschever, 2004; Sherman et al., 1997). Since women may feel less able to control what happens around them, they may perceive that any change in their environment could affect them negatively, leading to less willingness to accept migrants.

To incorporate all these characteristics, Allport (1979) defines the “prejudiced personality.” This refers to a set of predisposing traits that emerge as patterns among individuals

who tend to reject minority groups. These individuals are characterized by feeling threatened and living in constant vigilance due to the insecurity resulting from lower self-esteem, satisfaction, and locus of control. Given their perceived lack of control, they tend to externalize the causes of their own situation by blaming “scapegoats,” in this case, migrants. This personality contrasts with the “tolerant personality,” which is characterized by higher interpersonal trust, empathy, and self-satisfaction. It is expected that women may have a greater inclination toward the “prejudiced personality” due to its correlation with each of these components. As mentioned previously, this does not imply an inherent characteristic of being a woman but rather the result of the social construction of each gender.

### 3 Empirical strategy

The empirical strategy of this work is based on analyzing the correlation between gender and migration perceptions, followed by developing a causal inference model to explore potential mediating mechanisms. The primary source of information is the Gallup World Poll, which provides representative samples of the adult population. This study uses 2016 and 2019 waves of information available for Latin America , with approximately 1,000 individuals surveyed per country per period, resulting in a final sample size of 16,721 observations. The online appendix summarizes the distribution of observations by country and year.

A linear probability model is estimated to examine the correlation between perceptions of migration, gender, and other relevant factors. Although this analysis does not establish a causal relationship, it provides exploratory evidence of how perceptions are formed among individuals in Latin America. The following equation is estimated:

$$y_{ict} = \alpha + \lambda women_i + \delta x_i + year_t + country_c + \mu_{ict}, \mu_{ict} \sim N(0, \sigma_{\mu_{ict}}^2) \quad (1)$$

The variables are defined as follows:

- $y_{ict}$  is a binary variable equal to one if the individual reported a positive perception toward migrants. Perceptions of migrants are analyzed across three domains in which migrants may have an impact: the country, the neighborhood, and the family.

- $women_i$  is a binary variable equal to one if the individual identifies as a woman.
- $x_i$  is a vector of variables capturing sociodemographic characteristics, educational background, employment status, and predisposing factors.
- $year_t$  and  $country_c$  are year and country fixed effects, respectively.

The online appendix provides a detailed description of the construction of variables.

The Blinder–Oaxaca decomposition (Blinder, 1973; Oaxaca, 1973), presented in the online appendix, reveals that most of the differences in migration perceptions between men and women cannot be explained by sociodemographic characteristics. Consequently, this study focuses on exploring predisposing mechanisms to explain this gap. To achieve this, I rely on a causal inference model following the methodology of Baron and Kenny (1986). This model examines the importance of variables that mediate the relationship between gender and perceptions of migration. For a variable to qualify as a mediator, the following conditions must be satisfied:

1. *The treatment (gender) must have a statistically significant effect on the outcome variable (perceptions of migrants). The following equation is estimated:*

$$y_{ict} = \alpha_1 + \lambda_1 women_i + \theta_1 cofounders_i + year_t + country_c + \mu_{1,ict} \quad (2)$$

$$\mu_{1,ict} \sim N(0, \sigma_{\mu_{1,ict}}^2)$$

where  $cofounders_i$  is a vector of variables related to sociodemographic, educational, and employment characteristics. A cofounder is a variable that can simultaneously influence the mediator and the variable of interest. Therefore, it is essential to control for these characteristics in the mediation analysis.

2. *The treatment (gender) must have a statistically significant effect on the mediator. The following equation is estimated:*

$$mediator_{ict} = \alpha_2 + \lambda_2 women_i + \theta_2 covariants_i + \widehat{year}_t + \widehat{country}_c + \mu_{2,ict} \quad (3)$$

$$\mu_{2,ict} \sim N(0, \sigma_{\mu_{2,ict}}^2)$$

3. *The effect of the treatment (gender) on the outcome variable must be reduced or nullified*

when controlling for the mediator. If the effect of gender decreases when the mediator is included, this indicates partial mediation. If the effect of gender on the outcome variable disappears entirely, the mediator is said to exhibit full mediation. The following equation is estimated:

$$y_{ict} = \alpha_3 + \lambda_3 women_i + \phi mediator_{ict} + \theta_3 covariants_i + \widetilde{year}_t + \widetilde{country}_c + \mu_{3,ict} \quad (4)$$

$$\mu_{3,ict} \sim N(0, \sigma_{\mu_{3,ict}}^2)$$

In addition to these conditions, the estimates in (2) and (3) must be free from omitted variable bias, there must be no measurement error in the mediator, and the outcome variable must not causally influence the mediator. To reduce omitted variable bias, all estimations control for sociodemographic, educational, and employment characteristics, as well as country and year fixed effects.

Since the mediator variable is a self-reported psychological variable, there is a high likelihood of measurement error. This type of error tends to underestimate the mediator's effect and overestimate the effect of gender on the dependent variable when all coefficients are positive (Judd et al., 2001).

The condition that the outcome variable should not causally influence the mediator is satisfied, as there is no theoretical evidence suggesting that perceptions of migrants influence predisposing determinants. These characteristics are shaped over time through the accumulation of experiences and personality development (Allport, 1979), making it unlikely that a migration shock would alter this deeply ingrained value system in the native-born population.

The above equations are computed simultaneously for all available predisposing mechanisms, as studies have shown that this is the optimal approach to minimize standard errors. To test the fulfillment of conditions (1) and (2), the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982) is estimated:

$$TestSobel = \frac{\lambda_1 \phi}{\sqrt{\lambda_1^2 \sigma_{\mu_{3,ict}}^2 + \phi^2 \sigma_{\mu_{1,ict}}^2}} \quad (5)$$

If neither  $\lambda_1$  nor  $\phi$  is not statistically significant, then mediation does not occur. When

mediation is present, the effect of gender on perceptions, including the indirect effect through the mediators, can be expressed as

$$\begin{aligned}
y_{ict} = & \alpha_3 + \lambda_3 \text{women}_i \\
& + \phi(\alpha_2 + \lambda_2 \text{women}_i + \theta_2 \text{covariants}_i + \widehat{\text{year}}_t + \widehat{\text{country}}_c + \mu_{2,ict}) \\
& + \theta_3 \text{covariants}_i + \widetilde{\text{year}}_t + \widetilde{\text{country}}_c + \mu_{3,ict}
\end{aligned} \tag{6}$$

The terms can be reorganized as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
y_{ict} = & (\lambda_3 + \phi\lambda_2) \text{women}_i + (\alpha_3 + \phi\alpha_2) + (\theta_3 + \phi\theta_2) \text{covariants}_i \\
& + \phi(\widehat{\text{year}}_t + \widehat{\text{country}}_c) + \widetilde{\text{year}}_t + \widetilde{\text{country}}_c + \phi\mu_{2,ict} + \mu_{3,ict}
\end{aligned} \tag{7}$$

This representation highlights the key parameters of interest in this study:  $\lambda_3$  represents the direct effect of gender, while  $\phi\lambda_2$  captures the indirect effect through the mediator.

## 4 Main results

The results presented in Table 1 demonstrate that women are less likely to exhibit positive perceptions of migrants at the country, neighborhood, and family levels. This effect is greater at the country and neighborhood levels, with gender gaps of 8.29% and 7.17%, respectively. At the family level, the gap is 4.86%. This aligns with the literature suggesting that women’s empathy is shaped by their sense of closeness to an individual. In this view, negative perceptions of a migrant are less pronounced if the migrant belongs to the immediate social circle.

Another plausible explanation is that women may feel a greater sense of control within the family circle, reducing anxiety about the potential impact migrants may have. Available evidence supports both hypotheses, highlighting the importance of solidarity (as a proxy for empathy) and the locus of control over one’s circumstances in mediating the effect of gender on perceptions. Additionally, mechanisms related to well-being and optimism about the future play a role, as they lead to more positive perceptions due to greater confidence in one’s present and future circumstances.

Next, the relevance of the proposed potential mediators is analyzed using the methodology of Baron and Kenny (1986). First, Table 2 presents the correlations between gender and each of the potential mediators. Women report higher satisfaction with their present life but lower well-being and more negative emotions. Although the satisfaction variable directly measures whether individuals say they are satisfied with their lives, the well-being and negative emotion indicators encompass a range of positive and negative experiences (see online appendix), making them more reliable predictors for understanding how individuals feel. The results for these latter two variables align with the literature, which suggests that women tend to have a less positive perception of themselves and their lives.

Additionally, women report lower optimism about the future, are less likely to engage in acts of solidarity with a stranger, and perceive themselves as having less control over their destiny. These characteristics are also consistent with existing literature. As previously noted, women are often found to feel more vulnerable regarding their present and future circumstances and are more likely to display acts of solidarity only when the recipient is part of their close social circle.

Table 3 presents the results of the mediation analysis for the three variables of interest. Together, the mediator variables explain 11.5%, 14.8%, and 18.5% of the gender effect on perceptions at the country, neighborhood, and family levels, respectively. In all cases, the variables that mediate the effect of gender on perceptions are well-being, optimism, solidarity with a stranger, and locus of control. The relevance of perceptions of well-being and optimism as mechanisms for more positive perceptions stands out. As previously mentioned, women report lower levels of these variables. This is an expected result, as the literature highlights the role of self-worth, self-esteem, and expectations for a better future as important factors in fostering more positive perceptions of migrants.

To a lesser extent, solidarity with a stranger and locus of control are also relevant in explaining the gender gap. This has also been documented in the literature, which emphasizes the role of empathy and a sense of control in forming more positive perceptions of migrants. Once again, in line with the literature, the previous results show that women report lower levels of these variables, which explains part of their negative correlation with



perceptions. Finally, other potential mechanisms that are not classified as mediators include life satisfaction and experiencing negative emotions, as no correlation with perceptions is observed.

## 4.1 Further analysis

To explore additional potential mechanisms and expand the results to other dimensions of perceptions and preferences for migration policies, data from the World Values Survey (2020) is used. The seventh round of this survey collects cross-sectional information for 2017, 2018, and 2020, with only one year of data available per country and sample sizes of approximately 1,000 individuals per period. For greater comparability, the sample is restricted to the same countries available in the Gallup dataset. The online appendix reports the number of observations per country and the years covered.

One factor not captured in the Gallup World Poll but included in the World Values Survey is political affiliation. A correlation has previously been documented between right-wing ideology and stronger anti-migration positions (Alesina et al., 2018a). Since classical literature suggests that men are more conservative than women, political affiliation could be a relevant mechanism that cannot be identified from the Gallup data.

First, the correlation between gender and perceptions about migration is estimated. Column (1) of Table 4 shows that women are less likely to agree that migrants are beneficial for the country, which is consistent with the Gallup World Poll results, although they suggest an even stronger negative correlation (11.63%). Column (2) of Table 4 does not allow to draw a conclusion about the correlation between gender and acceptance of a migrant as a neighbor, given the imprecision of the estimate as indicated by the standard errors.

Column (1) of Table 4 indicates that women are less likely to agree that migrants are beneficial for the country, consistent with the findings from the Gallup World Poll. However, the gap between women and men is even greater (11.63%) in the Gallup data. Column (2) of Table 4 does not provide sufficient evidence to establish a correlation between gender and acceptance of a migrant as a neighbor, given the lack of precision reflected in the large standard errors. This result differs from the Gallup World Poll findings, in which women

are shown to have a less positive perception of migrants in the neighborhood (Table 1). However, it is plausible that this less favorable perception does not necessarily translate to outright rejection of having migrants as neighbors. According to the scale proposed by Allport (1979), the intensity of feelings manifests in different levels of action. Antilocution—expressing negative feelings verbally—is the weakest level. The next levels, avoidance and discrimination, involve actions of exclusion against a group. It is plausible that the Gallup questions reflect antilocution, whereas the question in Column (2) of Table 4 points toward a potential act of rejection, placing them at different levels of sentiment toward migrants.

The remaining columns of Table 4 explore additional dimensions not available in the Gallup data. The results show that women report lower trust in migrants, with a negative correlation of 12.78%. This lack of trust may help explain why women are more likely to perceive migrants as having negative impacts on the country. Women also express less agreement that migrants strengthen culture or reduce social conflict. These concerns highlight two specific dimensions in which women appear particularly apprehensive about the potential effects of migration at the national level. Notably, there is a strong negative correlation between gender and the perception that migrants do not cause social conflict, suggesting that women are more likely to expect migrants to contribute to social tensions in the receiving country. Lastly, due to the imprecision of the estimates regarding gender differences in perceptions of the impact of migrants on unemployment and crime—evidenced by the large standard errors—no definitive inferences can be drawn about these variables.

The World Values Survey also enables the analysis of preferences for migration policies. As previously mentioned, preferences that involve rejection actions indicate a more intense negative sentiment on the scale proposed by Allport (1979). Table 5 presents the correlation of gender with four policy preferences: allowing immigration without restrictions, permitting entry of migrants only if employment is available, imposing strict limits, and completely prohibiting immigration. The analysis reveals that women are more likely to support completely prohibiting migration than men, with a notably high gap compared with other variables (22.6%). This indicates a gender gap in favor of the most extreme position of not allowing migrants to enter. However, no inferences can be made regarding the correlation

with more lenient migration policies due to the imprecision of the estimates, as evidenced by the standard errors.

The correlation between gender and each of the potential mechanisms is presented in Table 6. It is found that women report lower household economic satisfaction and greater work-related concerns. This result is important because, as Allport (1979) suggests, when fear and concern become chronic, they are categorized as “anxiety,” which leads to greater prejudice toward other groups due to the constant fear of being replaced or losing income. Women also report lower interpersonal trust, which aligns with the result from the Gallup World Poll that women show lower solidarity with outsiders.

Finally, contrary to classical theories in which men are considered more conservative, the World Values Survey data suggest that women are more right-wing than men in Latin American countries. According to the literature, this implies a lower likelihood of supporting pro-immigration policies. There is no evidence of a correlation between gender and happiness indicators, life satisfaction, or locus of control in this survey. Since the World Values Survey has a smaller sample size than *Gallup*, the latter results, in which correlations are observed, are considered more plausible.

The results of the mediation analysis for the variables correlated with gender are presented in Table 7. For all the variables studied, interpersonal trust is a significant mechanism mediating the correlation of gender with migration perceptions and policy preferences. The expected result from the literature is observed, in which greater interpersonal trust leads to a more positive perception of migrants and a lower preference for anti-immigration policies. This variable is particularly important in explaining trust in migrants (8.0%), which aligns with the expectation, as greater overall trust tends to translate into greater trust in specific groups (Allport, 1979). When analyzing the perception of the effect of migrants on social conflict, it is found that job-related concerns serve as an important mechanism. This expected result indicates that social conflict is partly driven by concerns about the personal impacts of changes in the labor market. Regarding political ideology, mixed results are found. Both left and right leaning positions show a correlation with more positive perceptions but also a stronger preference for anti-migration policies.

In summary, the analysis using data from the Gallup World Poll and the World Values Survey shows that the effect of gender on perceptions of migrants is partially mediated by predisposing mechanisms, which can explain up to 18.5% of these differences. These predispositional mechanisms demonstrate that women have a higher perception of vulnerability regarding their current and future situations and report lower levels of trust and solidarity with others. This leads to more negative perceptions of migrants in various domains and a stronger preference for anti-immigration policies.

In light of this analysis, it is important to consider the implications of the fact that most of the migrant shock comes from Venezuela in the recipient countries analyzed. Research suggests that generosity in both the public and private spheres tends to be higher when there is alignment in language, religion, ethnicity, and race (Alesina & Glaeser, 2004). Thus, given that the migrant population from Venezuela does not exhibit significant differences in language, religion, or culture from most of Latin American countries (UNDP, 2020), this analysis may serve as a lower bound compared with other migration cases in which there is a greater disparity between the characteristics of native- and foreign-born individuals.

## 5 Conclusions

Intraregional migration in Latin America is a growing phenomenon. This trend has been accompanied by increasing negative sentiment toward migrants, which hinders their integration into society and presents a barrier to generating mutual benefits. This study shows that women have a less positive perception of the impact of migrants in various domains. Specifically, women are less likely to believe that migrants are good for the country, the neighborhood, and the family, and they report lower levels of trust in migrants. Regarding the expected effects of migrants at the country level, women are more likely to believe that migrants do not strengthen their culture and could lead to greater social conflict. These more negative perceptions are accompanied by a greater preference among women for anti-immigration policies.

To explain why women have a more negative perception of migrants and determine

the mediating factors, I propose a causal inference mechanism based on a theoretical framework. This analysis evidences that women, who perceive higher difficulty controlling their destiny and have a more negative expectation of their present and future lives, feel greater vulnerability regarding the impact of migrants on their own situation. Additionally, women report a lower willingness to help strangers, indicating a reduced level of empathy for new members of their society.

The complementary analysis emphasizes the importance of interpersonal trust and job-related concerns as mediating mechanisms. Interpersonal trust is a fundamental characteristic of a “tolerant personality.” Women are less likely to exhibit interpersonal trust, which implies worse perceptions of migrants. However, job-related concerns are also relevant because they reflect a specific dimension of the lack of a locus of control: Women feel they have less ability to influence their own professional destiny.

This analysis suggests that the predisposing factors of the native population should be considered to help understand the underlying reasons why a population is reluctant to accept migrants, and that these factors should be incorporated into discussions on migration in public debate. If these factors are not considered, it may be assumed that people reject migrants solely due to xenophobia, without any deeper basis beyond rejection of an external group. However, part of this rejection reflects a sense of vulnerability about one’s own circumstances, which should be acknowledged in discourse to engage the population of a host country effectively.

I recommend that questions about risk aversion be included in future migration perception surveys, given the salience of this predisposing factor in the literature and the lack of relevant data. Additionally, it would be beneficial to expand questions regarding perceptions of migrants in surveys. For example, when asking if migrants are “good,” it would be useful to ask in what ways they are considered good and how this response might differ when the respondent is answering at the country, neighborhood, or family level. This greater multidimensionality would provide a better understanding of the perceptions of native-born populations.

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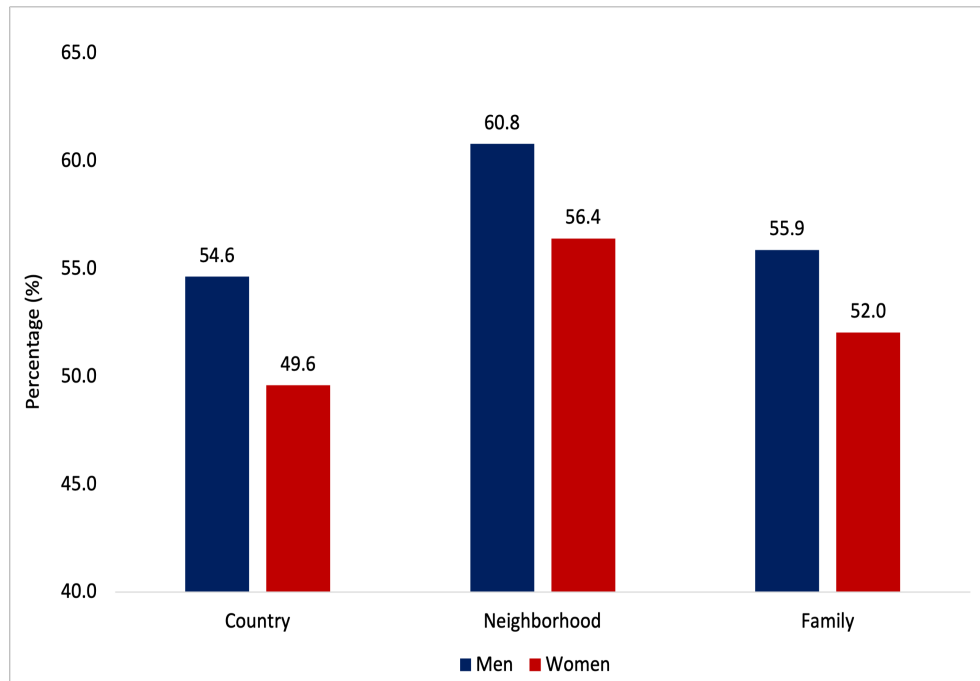
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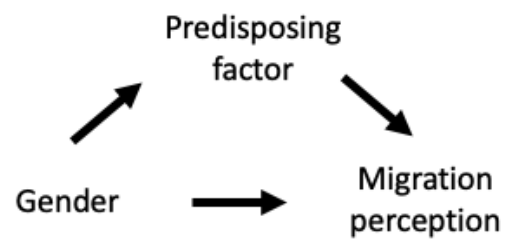
# Figures

**Figure 1:** Participants who consider migrants are good in different dimensions



Source: Gallup World Poll (2020).

**Figure 2:** Mediating Mechanism



Source: own elaboration.

# Tables

**Table 1:** Correlation between gender and migration perceptions

|                                | (1)<br>Migrants are good<br>for the country | (2)<br>Migrants are good<br>as neighbors | (3)<br>Migrants are good<br>in the family |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Women                          | −0.045**<br>(0.000)                         | −0.042**<br>(0.000)                      | −0.027**<br>(0.003)                       |
| Observations                   | 16,721                                      | 16,721                                   | 16,721                                    |
| $R^2$                          | 0.098                                       | 0.083                                    | 0.069                                     |
| Average dependent variable     | 0.543                                       | 0.600                                    | 0.556                                     |
| Effect                         | −8.29%                                      | −7.00%                                   | −4.86%                                    |
| Country and year fixed effects | Yes   | Yes                                      | Yes                                       |
| Controls                       | Yes   | Yes                                      | Yes                                       |

*p*-values in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Notes: Data from the Gallup World Poll for 2016 and 2019. The dependent variable equals 1 if the individual reports a positive perception of migrants in each specified domain. The independent variable equals 1 if the individual identifies as a woman. The controls are age, migrant status, urban residence, logarithm of income, educational attainment, employment status, present life satisfaction, well-being, negative emotions experienced the previous day, optimism, solidarity with a stranger, and locus of control. Country and year fixed effects are included.

**Table 2:** Correlation between gender and potential mediating predisposing mechanisms

|                                | (1)<br>Life<br>satisfaction | (2)<br>Well-being   | (3)<br>Negative<br>feelings | (4)<br>Optimism     | (5)<br>Solidarity<br>toward a stranger | (6)<br>Locus of<br>control |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Women                          | 0.121**<br>(0.006)          | −0.158**<br>(0.000) | 0.434**<br>(0.000)          | −1.799**<br>(0.001) | −0.020*<br>(0.027)                     | −0.015*<br>(0.032)         |
| Observations                   | 16,721                      | 16,721              | 16,721                      | 16,721              | 16,721                                 | 16,721                     |
| Average dependent variable     | 6.178                       | 3.963               | 1.764                       | 54.721              | 0.541                                  | 0.815                      |
| Effect                         | 1.96%                       | −3.99%              | 24.60%                      | −3.29%              | −3.7%                                  | −1.84%                     |
| Country and year fixed effects | Yes                         | Yes                 | Yes                         | Yes                 | Yes                                    | Yes                        |
| Controls                       | Yes                         | Yes                 | Yes                         | Yes                 | Yes                                    | Yes                        |

*p*-values in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Notes: Data from the Gallup World Poll for 2016 and 2019. The dependent variable corresponds to each of the potential mediators. The independent variable equals 1 if the individual identifies as a woman. The controls are age, migrant status, urban residence, logarithm of income, education level, and employment status. Country and year fixed effects are included.

**Table 3:** Mediation analysis between gender and perceptions of migrants

|   | (1)<br>Migrants are good<br>for the country | (2)<br>Migrants are good<br>as neighbors | (3)<br>Migrants are good<br>in the family |
|---|---|--|---|
| <i>Panel A: Mediation using the methodology of Baron and Kenny (1986)</i> |   |  |   |
| Life satisfaction   | No  | No                                       | No  |
| Well-being  | Partial                                     | Partial                                  | Partial                                   |
| Negative feelings   | No  | No                                       | No  |
| Optimism  | Partial                                     | Partial                                  | Partial                                   |
| Solidarity toward a stranger  | Partial                                     | Partial                                  | Partial                                   |
| Locus of control  | Partial                                     | Partial                                  | Partial                                   |
| <i>Panel B: RIT (indirect effect as a percentage of total effect)</i>     |   |  |   |
| Life satisfaction   | 0.0   | 0.0                                      | 0.0                                       |
| Well-being  | 3.9   | 6.4                                      | 6.4                                       |
| Negative feelings   | 0.0   | 0.0                                      | 0.0                                       |
| Optimism  | 4.9   | 4.9                                      | 7.0                                       |
| Solidarity toward a stranger  | 1.3   | 1.8                                      | 3.1                                       |
| Locus of control  | 1.4   | 1.7                                      | 2.0                                       |
| <b>Total mediated effect</b>  | <b>11.5</b>                                 | <b>14.8</b>                              | <b>18.5</b>                               |
| <i>Panel C: Effect of the mechanisms and gender</i>                       |   |  |   |
| Life satisfaction   | 0.003<br>(0.106)                            | 0.003*<br>(0.098)                        | −0.000<br>(0.791)                         |
| Well-being  | 0.016**<br>(0.000)                          | 0.018**<br>(0.000)                       | 0.011**<br>(0.001)                        |
| Negative feelings   | −0.003<br>(0.293)                           | 0.003<br>(0.265)                         | 0.000<br>(0.930)                          |
| Optimism  | 0.001**<br>(0.000)                          | 0.001**<br>(0.000)                       | 0.001**<br>(0.000)                        |
| Solidarity toward a stranger  | 0.030**<br>(0.000)                          | 0.037**<br>(0.000)                       | 0.042**<br>(0.000)                        |
| Locus of control  | 0.042**<br>(0.000)                          | 0.049**<br>(0.000)                       | 0.036**<br>(0.000)                        |
| Women   | −0.045**<br>(0.000)                         | −0.042**<br>(0.000)                      | −0.027**<br>(0.001)                       |
| Observations  | 16,721                                      | 16,721                                   | 16,721                                    |
| Average dependent variable  | 0.554                                       | 0.614                                    | 0.565                                     |
| Country and year fixed effects  | Yes   | Yes                                      | Yes                                       |
| Controls  | Yes   | Yes                                      | Yes                                       |

Notes: Data from the Gallup World Poll for 2016 and 2019. The dependent variable equals 1 if the individual reports a positive perception of migrants in each of the domains. Panel A presents the results of the mediation test by Baron and Kenny (1986) using the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982). Panel B reports the indirect effect of each mediator as a percentage of the total gender effect. Panel C presents the regression results that support Panels A and B: the effect of each mediator on perceptions. The controls are age, migrant status, urban residence, logarithm of income, education level, and employment status. Country and year fixed effects are included.

**Table 4: Migration perceptions**

|                                | (1)<br>Migrants are<br>good for<br>the country | (2)<br>Accepts<br>migrants as<br>neighbors | (3)<br>Trust<br>toward<br>migrants | (4)<br>Migrants<br>strengthen<br>the culture | (5)<br>Migrants<br>do not increase<br>social conflict | (6)<br>Migrants<br>do not increase<br>unemployment | (7)<br>Migrants<br>do not increase<br>crime |
|--------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Women                          | -0.025**<br>(0.005)                            | -0.003<br>(0.696)                          | -0.034**<br>(0.000)                | -0.028*<br>(0.012)                           | -0.035**<br>(0.000)                                   | -0.011<br>(0.222)                                  | -0.008<br>(0.402)                           |
| Observations                   | 9,722  | 9,722                                      | 9,722                              | 9,722  | 9,656   | 9,689  | 9,657                                       |
| $R^2$                          | 0.061  | 0.044                                      | 0.093                              | 0.039  | 0.055   | 0.053  | 0.076                                       |
| Average dependent variable     | 0.215  | 0.860                                      | 0.266                              | 0.466  | 0.226   | 0.234  | 0.263                                       |
| Effect                         | 11.63%   | 0.35%                                      | 12.78%                             | 6.01%  | 15.49%  | 4.70%  | 3.04%                                       |
| Country and Year fixed effects | Yes  | Yes  | Yes                                | Yes  | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   |
| Controls                       | Yes  | Yes  | Yes                                | Yes  | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   |

*p*-values in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Notes: Data from the World Values Survey. The dependent variable takes a value of 1 if the individual reports a positive perception of migrants in each respective dimension. The controls are age, urban residence, high income, educational level, employment status, life satisfaction, economic satisfaction, locus of control, job-related concerns, and interpersonal trust. Fixed effects for country are included.

**Table 5: Preferences for migration policies**

|                            | (1)<br>No restrictions<br>on migration | (2)<br>Allow entry of migrants<br>if there is employment available | (3)<br>Impose strict limits<br>to migration | (4)<br>Completely<br>prohibit migration |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Women                      | -0.004<br>(0.578)                      | -0.011<br>(0.282)  | -0.015<br>(0.167)                           | 0.030**<br>(0.000)                      |
| Observations               | 9,722                                  | 9,722  | 9,722                                       | 9,722                                   |
| $R^2$                      | 0.106                                  | 0.073  | 0.036                                       | 0.069                                   |
| Average dependent variable | 0.125                                  | 0.317  | 0.422                                       | 0.136                                   |
| Effect                     | 3.20%                                  | 3.47%  | 3.55%                                       | 22.06%                                  |
| Year fixed effect          | Yes                                    | Yes  | Yes   | Yes                                     |
| Controls                   | Yes                                    | Yes  | Yes   | Yes                                     |

*p*-values in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Notes: Data from the World Values Survey. The dependent variable takes the value of 1 if the individual agreed with each of the migration policies. The controls are age, living in an urban area, high income, education level, employment status, life satisfaction, economic satisfaction, locus of control, work-related concerns, and interpersonal trust. Fixed effects for country are included.

**Table 6: Correlation between gender and possible mechanisms**

|                            | (1)<br>Happiness | (2)<br>Life<br>satisfaction | (3)<br>Economic<br>satisfaction | (4)<br>Locus of<br>control | (5)<br>Concern<br>regarding work | (6)<br>Interpersonal<br>trust | (7)<br>Left-leaning | (8)<br>Right-leaning |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Women                      | 0.001<br>(0.930) | -0.045<br>(0.323)           | -0.138**<br>(0.007)             | 0.039<br>(0.410)           | 0.125**<br>(0.000)               | -0.014*<br>(0.035)            | -0.026**<br>(0.006) | 0.026*<br>(0.016)    |
| Observations               | 9,722            | 9,722                       | 9,722                           | 9,722                      | 9,722                            | 9,722                         | 9,722               | 9,722                |
| Average dependent variable | 3.336            | 7.786                       | 6.555                           | 7.822                      | 3.173                            | 0.094                         | 0.224               | 0.428                |
| Effect                     | 0.03%            | -0.58%                      | -2.11%                          | 0.50%                      | 3.94%                            | -14.89%                       | -11.61%             | 6.07%                |
| Year fixed effect          | Yes              | Yes                         | Yes                             | Yes                        | Yes                              | Yes                           | Yes                 | Yes                  |
| Controls                   | Yes              | Yes                         | Yes                             | Yes                        | Yes                              | Yes                           | Yes                 | Yes                  |

*p*-values in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Notes: Information from the World Values Survey. The independent variable takes the value of 1 if the individual identifies as a woman. The controls are age, whether the individual lives in an urban area, whether they have a high income, education level, and employment status. Country fixed effects are included.

**Table 7:** Mediation analysis between gender and migrants' perceptions and policy preferences

|   | (1)<br>Migrants<br>are good<br>for the country | (2)<br>Trust<br>towards<br>migrants | (3)<br>Migrants<br>strengthen<br>culture | (4)<br>Migrants<br>do not increase<br>social conflict | (5)<br>Forbid<br>Migration |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------|
| <i>Panel A: Mediation using the methodology of Baron and Kenny (1986)</i> |  |                                     |  |   |                            |
| Happiness   | No   | No                                  | No                                       | No  | No                         |
| Life satisfaction   | No   | No                                  | No                                       | No  | No                         |
| Economic satisfaction   | No   | No                                  | No                                       | No  | No                         |
| Locus of control  | No   | No                                  | No                                       | No  | No                         |
| Labor anxiety   | No   | No                                  | No                                       | Partial   | No                         |
| Interpersonal trust   | Partial  | Partial                             | Partial                                  | Partial   | Partial                    |
| Left-leaning  | Partial  | No                                  | No                                       | Partial   | Partial                    |
| Right-leaning   | No   | No                                  | No                                       | Partial   | Partial                    |
| <i>Panel B: RIT (Indirect Effect (% Total Effect))</i>                    |  |                                     |  |   |                            |
| Happiness   | 0.0  | 0.0                                 | 0.0                                      | 0.0   | 0.0                        |
| Life satisfaction   | 0.0  | 0.0                                 | 0.0                                      | 0.0   | 0.0                        |
| Economic satisfaction   | 0.0  | 0.0                                 | 0.0                                      | 0.0   | 0.0                        |
| Locus of control  | 0.0  | 0.0                                 | 0.0                                      | 0.0   | 0.0                        |
| Labor anxiety   | 0.0  | 0.0                                 | 0.0                                      | 5.6   | 0.0                        |
| Interpersonal trust   | 1.9  | 8.0                                 | 2.4                                      | 2.4   | 1.2                        |
| Left-leaning  | 2.9  | 0.0                                 | 0.0                                      | 1.7   | 3.5                        |
| Right-leaning   | 0.0  | 0.0                                 | 0.0                                      | 1.5   | 3.9                        |
| <b>Effect mediators</b>   | 4.8  | 8.0                                 | 2.4                                      | 11.2  | 8.6                        |
| <i>Panel C: Effect of the mechanisms and gender</i>                       |  |                                     |  |   |                            |
| Happiness   | -0.002<br>(0.737)                              | 0.005<br>(0.409)                    | -0.012<br>(0.124)                        | 0.008<br>(0.197)                                      | -0.012*<br>(0.016)         |
| Life satisfaction   | 0.005*<br>(0.021)                              | -0.001<br>(0.789)                   | 0.002<br>(0.478)                         | 0.003<br>(0.277)                                      | 0.006**<br>(0.001)         |
| Economic satisfaction   | 0.001<br>(0.481)                               | 0.001<br>(0.595)                    | 0.003<br>(0.165)                         | 0.000<br>(0.868)                                      | 0.002<br>(0.245)           |
| Locus of control  | -0.001<br>(0.788)                              | 0.006**<br>(0.004)                  | 0.011**<br>(0.000)                       | -0.002<br>(0.467)                                     | -0.009**<br>(0.000)        |
| Labor anxiety   | -0.003<br>(0.444)                              | -0.005<br>(0.232)                   | 0.004<br>(0.442)                         | -0.016**<br>(0.000)                                   | -0.006*<br>(0.063)         |
| Interpersonal trust   | 0.036*<br>(0.013)                              | 0.216**<br>(0.000)                  | 0.050**<br>(0.004)                       | 0.061**<br>(0.000)                                    | -0.027*<br>(0.025)         |
| Left-leaning  | 0.030**<br>(0.007)                             | 0.001<br>(0.911)                    | 0.011<br>(0.414)                         | 0.024*<br>(0.038)                                     | 0.039**<br>(0.000)         |
| Right-leaning   | 0.015<br>(0.113)                               | -0.005<br>(0.639)                   | -0.019*<br>(0.090)                       | 0.020*<br>(0.040)                                     | 0.045**<br>(0.000)         |
| Women   | -0.025**<br>(0.003)                            | -0.034**<br>(0.000)                 | -0.028**<br>(0.009)                      | -0.035**<br>(0.000)                                   | 0.030**<br>(0.000)         |
| Observations  | 9,722  | 9,722                               | 9,722                                    | 9,656   | 9,722                      |
| Average dependent variable  | 0.216  | 0.264                               | 0.465                                    | 0.225   | 0.135                      |
| Country and Year and fixed effects  | Yes  | Yes                                 | Yes                                      | Yes   | Yes                        |
| Sociodemographic controls   | Yes  | Yes                                 | Yes                                      | Yes   | Yes                        |

Notes: Information from the World Values Survey. The independent variables are those that are correlated with gender. Panel A presents the results of the mediation test by Baron and Kenny (1986) using the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982). Panel B reports the indirect effect of each mechanism as a percentage of the total gender effect. Panel C presents the regression results underlying Panels A and B: the effect of each mechanism on perceptions. The controls are age, urban residence, high income, education level, and labor condition. Country fixed effects are included.