Immigrant Perceptions in Colombia:

President Petro

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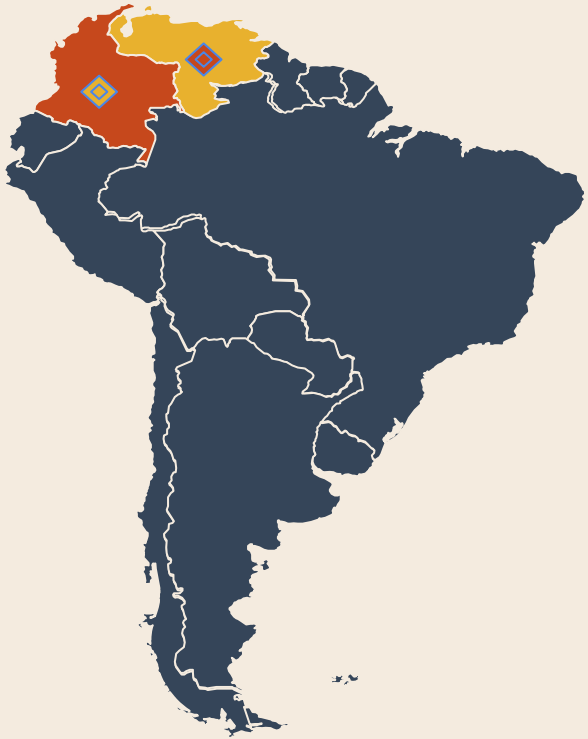
Venezuela

7.7 millions have fled due to extreme inflation, rising instability, and high crime rates.

Colombia

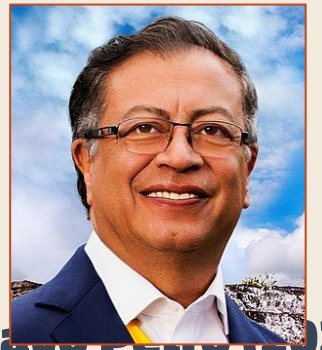
3 Million have made Colombia their home. In the past, it was Colombians who fled to Venezuela.



Colombian presidents & their views on Venezuelan immigrants

Iván Duque (2018-2022)

Right leaning government
Anti-Maduro rhetoric



Gustavo Petro (2022-Present)

(First) Left leaning government
De-Venezualization of migration

Different rhetorics to immigration

Iván Duque

Venezuelan Migration due to the failures of Bolivarian Chavismo

Addresses Venezuelan Immigrants specifically in policy

Gustavo Petro

Venezuelan migration due to U.S sanctions on Venezuela

Addresses [transitional] immigrants in general, rather than specifically from Venezuela

disclaimer: This research is not meant to portray either president as "good" or "bad."

"There has been a momentous change in the line that the government or the last governments had been taking, in the migration field - and, in the current government, in particular, it is because it is not a common issue on its agenda, in addition to a change in the narrative that is not yet very clear"

María Clara Robayo, Venezuelan Observatory of the University of Rosary in Voz de America (2023)

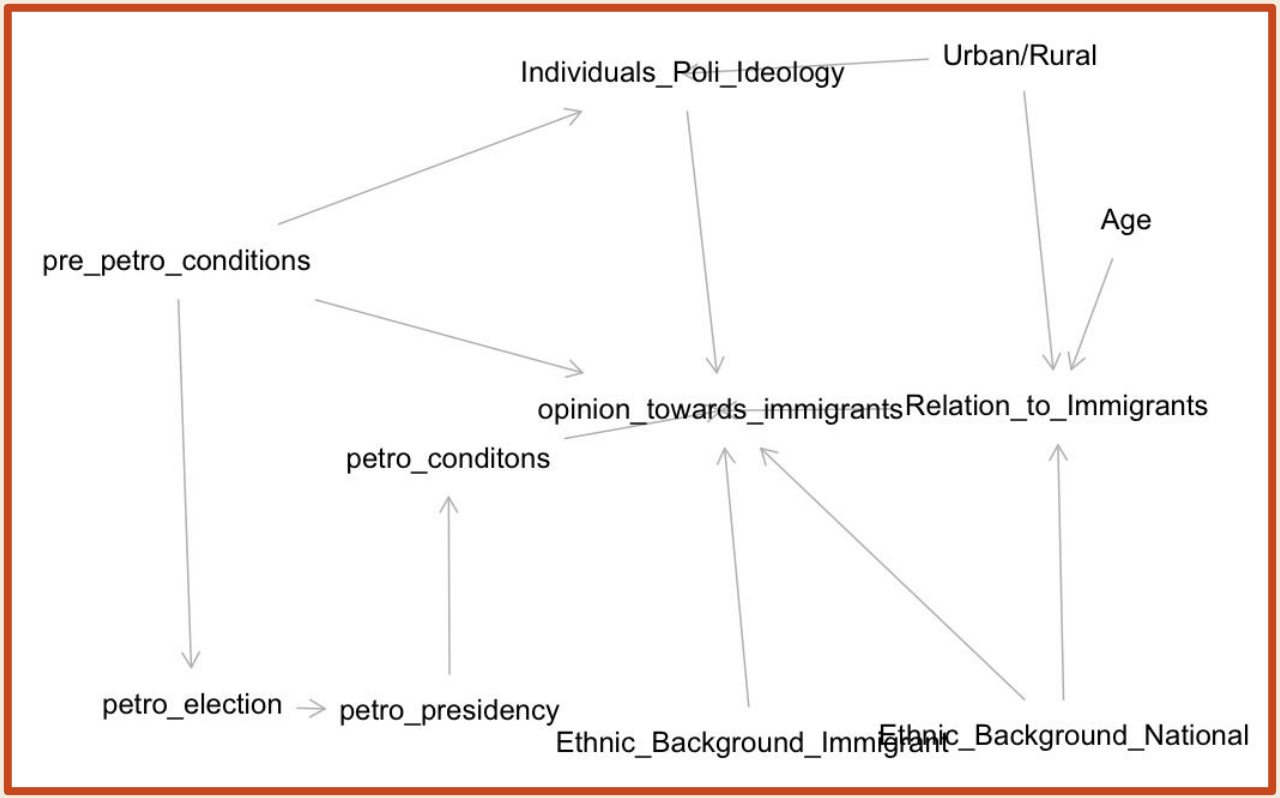
Question:

How did one year of de-Venezuelization change public attitudes towards immigrants in Colombia?

How has the shift in political rhetoric influenced public opinion about immigrants in Colombia?

Latinobarómetro & ECLAC

We combined survey data and socioeconomic conditions data to create a dataset containing 60,000 cases from 7 nations.


Individuals_Poli_Ideology
Urban/Rural
Age
pre_petro_conditions
opinion_towards_immigrants
Relation_to_Immigrants
petro_conditons
petro_election
petro_presidency
Ethnic_Background_Immigrant
Ethnic_Background_National

Control Countries

Euclidean Distances based on:

1. **Poverty Rate**
2. **Migration Rate**
3. **Unemployment Rate**
4. **Employment Anxiety Rate**

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Brazil
Costa Rica
El Salvador
Ecuador
Honduras
Paraguay

Variables

We controlled for Social conditions, demographics, time, and geographies. We justified this with theories such as Group Threat Perspective Theory, which argue that conditions and identity can cause xenophobia (Lebow 2020).

We binary coded perceptions of immigrants as our outcome variable.

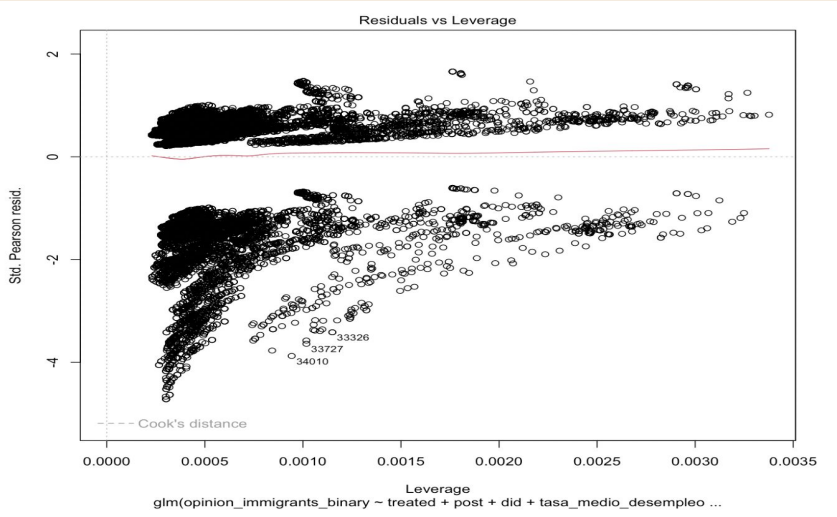
Difference-in-Difference

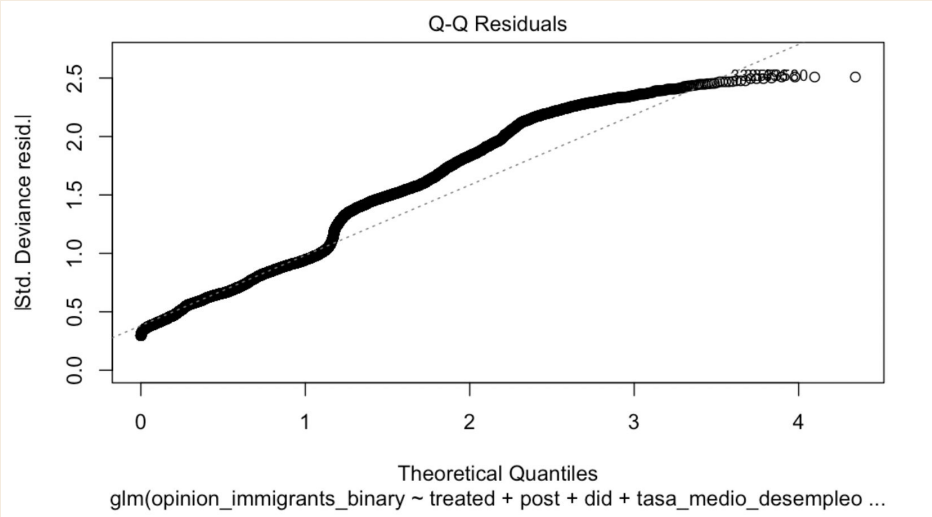
Model	Specification Highlights	DID Coefficient (p-value)	AIC
M1	Basic model: No year interactions, no presi_leading or class vars	0.3984 (p=2.25e-07 ***)	46761
M2	Adds year interactions for all rates; no presi_leading/class/urban/rural	0.24883 (p=0.0557 .)	45375
M3 ◈	Year interactions + presi_leading + urban_rural + SELFsocial_class + left_right	0.337615 (p=0.01759 *)	36321
M4	Year interactions + presi_leading + left_right (no urban_rural or class)	0.313016 (p=0.0275 *)	36411

Findings

- The treatment group (Colombians), when compared to the control group, are much less likely (56%) to view immigration negatively
- There has been a general downward trend in negative perception since the treatment across the 7 countries
- However, de-Venezuelization caused a ~40% increase in negative perceptions in the first year

Evaluations





Limitations

- Our data only contains perceptions after one year of the presidency.
- It is difficult to evaluate opinions as opposed to facts.
- We cannot fully control for all social variables, such as an individual's relationship to immigrants.
- We cannot measure xenophobia, we can only perception to immigration.

Conclusion

- The DiD model tells us that there was a significant decrease in positive perceptions toward immigrants, something not seen in control countries
- Evaluations show us that the model is too simple.

Thank You!