



# A Better World for Migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean



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# **A Better World for Migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean**

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# Foreword

**T**he new migration flows in Latin America and the Caribbean is a challenge for governments and host communities. However, they present an enormous opportunity for the development of the region. Some of the challenges are concrete, and tangible, and have been tested and analyzed for the design of public policies. Others are more difficult to identify, measure, and address, such as xenophobia and the public perception of migrants.

The attitude of the local population towards migrants is key to integration. Public opinion influences the migration agenda and policy decisions. The Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean have partnered in an ambitious experiment that allows us to understand how the perception of migrants can be changed. The results are in this book, which also gives us resources and recommendations for its approach.

The Inter-American Development Bank works with countries to achieve the full integration of migrant populations into their host communities.

This book is also part of an effort by the United Nations Development Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean to contribute to understanding and addressing migration as a central issue for the development of the region.

The information and findings presented in this book offer recipient countries of migrants, the academic community, and policymakers in the region a guide to the design of strategies that contribute to transforming the challenges of migration into an opportunity for development.

**Benigno López**

Vice President for Sectors and Knowledge  
Inter-American Development Bank

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Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean  
United Nations Development Programme



# Preface and Acknowledgments

**M**igration is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that requires comprehensive policies and strategies to ensure that immigrants fully enjoy their rights and can contribute to the development of the societies that host them. In the last 30 years, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has experienced an unprecedented migration movement, especially during the previous five years. The migrant population in the region searching for better opportunities doubled during this period. This joint publication of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) presents the results of an experiment carried out in nine countries of the region to provide evidence on the type of interventions that would allow working on knowledge biases to correct misconceptions about migration and facilitate the integration of the migrant population. The book also offers a synthesis of the government's responses to this recent phenomenon of human mobility and analyzes some of the effects of migration on host countries. The emphasis is, of course, on analyzing migration perceptions and the short-term effects of the experiments carried out, to shed light on the way forward.

We offer this work to the region as a contribution to evidence-based public policy design from an inter-institutional alliance that has been possible thanks to a shared vision of the region's development challenges.

This work reflects the effort of many people. As Regional Director of UNDP for LAC, Luis Felipe López-Calva recognized the migration phenomenon as one of the region's most pressing challenges and supported the development of this initiative in 2021. From the IDB, this work is part of the knowledge agenda of the Migration Unit of the Bank's Social Sector and, specifically, a product of the Public Perceptions Laboratory on Migration.

In addition to the book's authors, Marisol Rodríguez-Chatruc from the IDB and Ana María Tribín from UNDP participated in the initial stage of the project, and Andrea García and Nicolás Peña-Tenjo were involved in the data processing. FACTSTORY and Roytram collaborated with the research team in the production of the videos used in the experiments and in conducting the surveys. The UNDP teams working on migration issues in Latin America and the Caribbean contributed to the detailed design of the interventions and the final text with their comments. Both organizations, the IDB and the UNDP leveraged their contributions on a load of previous or simultaneous work, which from the IDB includes the knowledge work produced by the Migration Unit and from the UNDP, the production of nine country studies that have been added to the UNDP LAC Policy Documents series. María José Uribe coordinated the activities of multiple teams in the editorial stage. The communications teams of both entities worked together for the entire editing and publishing process. Carlos Scartascini from the IDB was a discussant at a pre-launch event in 2022. An anonymous reader read the whole book and made comments contributing to improving it. We want to thank the contribution of all those without whom the book we present today would not have been possible. The errors and omissions are the sole responsibility of the authors.

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# Overview<sup>1</sup>

The Latin American and the Caribbean region has gone from hosting 7 million migrants in 1990 to having a migrant population of almost 15 million in 2020. The massive migratory crisis in Venezuela, which began in 2015, is the most significant exodus that the Western Hemisphere has experienced during the last 50 years. The scale of this movement over a such short time period has made it one of the most challenging diasporas in the world. Approximately 6.8 million Venezuelans have left their country. According to the most recent data, more than 80 percent of these migrants have been taken in by other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Venezuelan exodus is occurring addition to other migratory movements in the region.

The economic literature provides a wealth of evidence showing that among other benefits, international migration boosts productivity, stimulates innovation, and generates more diverse societies. At the same time, such sudden, large-scale migrant flows are a source of pressure that affect poverty rates, economic development, and demographic dynamics, just to list some of the impacts from these movements. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the scale and urgency of meeting the needs of the migrant population are putting further strain on the region's already limited capacity to provide its general population with sufficient access to basic services. The rapid growth in the migrant population has exacerbated xenophobia in the receiving Latin American and Caribbean countries. Although individual countries and other stakeholders in the region have implemented strategies to reduce exclusionary and discriminatory attitudes towards migrants, as well as prevent violence against this population, there is little evidence on whether the actions undertaken to reduce xenophobia and promote the inclusion of migrants in the host societies have had a positive impact on public opinion in the receiving countries. All governments in the region need to implement initiatives of this sort for Latin America and the Caribbean to realize the potential economic and social benefits that migration offers.

This book seeks to further this goal by providing evidence on how public information campaigns can be used to foster the integration of migrants into the destination countries. It also seeks to aid government policymakers and other agencies in designing strategies to serve the needs of their constituents. This project is the result of a joint research initiative between the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to improve the well-being of the migrant population in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the media often initiate informational campaigns to promote better public outcomes, including efforts to facilitate the harmonious integration of migrants

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<sup>1</sup> At the IDB, this project is part of the Public Perception Laboratory on Migration that the Migration Unit launched at the beginning of 2023: <https://laboratoriomigracion.iadb.org/#/en/>. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the IDB, its Board of Directors, or the countries they represent. Similarly, the findings, interpretations, and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not represent the official position of UNDP.

into the host society. This book describes the results of a series of recent experiments conducted in order to evaluate the effectiveness of different campaigns undertaken in nine of the region's countries that have received a majority of the migrants. The findings reported in this volume contribute to the literature on international migration by providing evidence from developing countries that in recent years have experienced waves of different types of migration. The chapters offer an in-depth examination of country-specific, or local, contexts that differ from what typically has been featured to date in studies on migration.

Why even consider attempting to modify the local population's perceptions about migration? Initially, it does seem counterintuitive to get involved with trying to change people's attitudes about migration and the migrant population. After all, socioeconomic and demographic developments have consequences, and citizens are free to form their own opinions about these events and the ensuing consequences. However, the premise underlying this book is that people frequently form attitudes based on biased or inaccurate information. Such misconceptions may occur for any number of reasons: they may not have direct contact with the migrant population and their problems and challenges; obtaining objective information is often costly; the local population may lack the resources needed to interpret information correctly or may fall into a series of pervasive and well-documented cognitive biases; different organized stakeholders may have an interest in presenting selective and subjective information about migrants; a lack of empathy may lead to prejudice toward and rejection of the migrant population. Therefore, the project's objective seeks to work with existing, country-specific data sources and experiences with migration and the migrant population in order to provide the best available information, as free from bias as possible. The end goal is to influence the local population's attitudes regarding migration, though without this endeavor taking a paternalistic approach to the task. This initiative also compares the effectiveness of these fact-based interventions with a narrative approach that focuses on a migrant woman's life in order to generate empathy with her situation—because when prejudicial attitudes against an entire class of people arise from a lack of empathy and emotional understanding, the provision of objective and factual information on the migrant population may not be effective in changing public opinion. To some extent, the experimental interventions serve to expand the freedom of choice of the citizens in the receiving countries: by correcting the most common societal biases regarding migrants, and generating empathy for their plight, better public choices and better public outcomes can be achieved throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Analyzing the effects of the interventions described in this book has the potential to inform the design of future policies, thereby helping to accelerate the migrant population's integration into the receiving communities.

## **1. Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean and Views on the Migrant Population**

### **Migratory patterns over the last 20 years**

Since 2000, Latin America and the Caribbean have witnessed a virtual doubling of their immigrant population. The region went from hosting 7 million migrants in 1990 to having an immigrant population of almost 15 million in 2020 (figure 0.1). Intraregional movements account for the bulk of this increase: in 2020, 76 percent of the migrant population in Latin America and the Caribbean came from countries within the region, compared to 56 percent in 1990. This more recent intensification of intraregional migration is in response to several intersecting factors. On top of the increasingly restrictive immigration policies adopted in other regions of the developed world, growth has been significant in several Latin American and Caribbean economies. At the same time, citizens of other countries in the region have found it increasingly difficult to access opportunities and exercise their rights to the fullest extent in their home countries.

Currently there are many migratory movements taking place within Latin America and the Caribbean. To give a sense of the scale of these trends, the current wave of migration from Venezuela is the largest exodus that the Western Hemisphere has experienced in the last 50 years: according to recent United Nations reports, about 6.8 million Venezuelans have left their country. More than 80 percent of the Venezuelan diaspora has relocated to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially to nations in South America, but also to countries in the Caribbean and Central America. Migration from northern countries in Central America has resulted in very high numbers of migrants at the southern border of the United States. This migratory corridor has caused a spike in applications for refugee status in Mexico. Population movements from Nicaragua and Cuba are also reaching significant levels in some other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean region. All of these above-mentioned migratory movements are in addition to the movement of Haitian nationals who left their country following the 2010 earthquake and who, in recent years, have attempted to reach the southern border of the United States. As a result of these combined flows, the Darién region, which lies between Colombia and Panama, has been converted to a high traffic zone for migrants, despite the risks entailed by traveling this route.

These reconfigured migratory patterns in Latin America and the Caribbean are opening up opportunities for greater integration and economic development in the region. Yet the impact of this intensified migration on the individual countries and the welfare of their inhabitants will depend on their governments' capacity to respond to these economic and social challenges. The current migration patterns are putting pressure on border services, the provision of public goods, and the functioning of labor markets. The current situation may also prove challenging for the region's institutions, as the visibility of migration-related issues in the public debate is forcing governments to be more sensitive to the opinions of the local inhabitants in the receiving countries. In effect, the fear and skepticism that the current migratory flows have sparked among some segments of the native population could translate into hostile attitudes toward migrants, which potentially could weaken public support for the integration process.

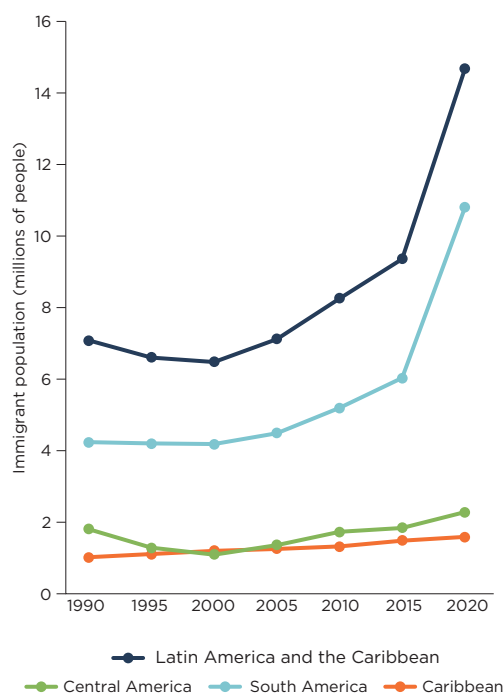
To ensure that policy decisions maximize the economic benefits of migration in the receiving countries, while simultaneously promoting the welfare of the migrant population and the local population, the design of any interventions should include an analysis of potential channels for influencing public sentiment. By doing so, it is possible to identify mechanisms that may moderate antimigration attitudes and contribute to reducing hostility towards migrants.

### Regional responses to the recent migrant flows

Migratory patterns in the region have been transformed over the last 20 years. Previously, the predominant trend was extraregional emigration, but this pattern has now shifted to intraregional movements. In recent

**Figure O.1. South America has received the most migrants**

*Total immigrant population in Latin America and the Caribbean (millions), 1990–2020*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

years, sudden and massive movements and other recent migratory trends have forced governments in the region's receiving countries to adapt their policies and the institutional framework for responding to this new pattern of migration.

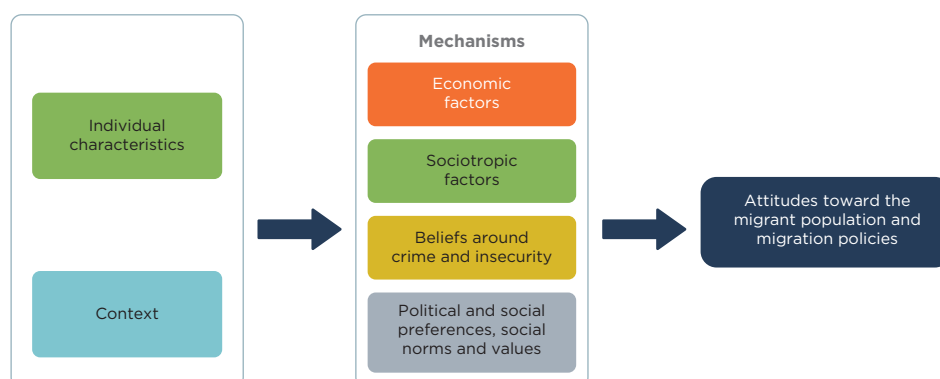
These institutional and legal responses varied, depending on the specific characteristics of each country and subregion. However, these responses are characterized by four general tendencies:

- i) *More stringent legal standards.* Most countries in the region have endorsed international and human rights agreements concerning migration, the most recent being the 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. In addition, since 2000 more than 17 countries in the region have updated their migration legislation, either by amending existing laws or enacting new ones.
- ii) *Additional regularization mechanisms.* The last 20 years have seen the region's countries develop and implement more than 90 special regularization processes, with different scopes and features, to cope with these new patterns of migration. The sheer scale of the Venezuelan exodus has led various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to regularizing the status of migrants from Venezuela and from other countries. Recent regularization processes in Belize, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Peru, among other countries, speak to the diversity of the legal responses that have been adopted.
- iii) *Wider spectrum of issues in regard to migration.* Despite enacting these new laws and endorsing international agreements related to migration, a third factor has been identified: there is a broader spectrum of additional legal and juridical issues that the regional governments need to consider. The process of recognizing a migrant's official status is vital insofar as this is a gateway to guaranteeing access to basic human rights (healthcare, education, social protection), economic integration (job opportunities, recognition of skills), and full social inclusion. For this reason, countries in the region continue to issue statutory guidelines that are moving toward recognizing the migrant population's rights beyond regularizing their residency status in the destination country. A comparative analysis reveals that restrictions persist that affect the inclusion of migrants in the labor market, although these barriers vary from country to country (the differences relate to issues including the validation of educational qualifications, the certification of competencies, national and migrant workforce quotas, and work visas).
- iv) *Regional standards.* Some regulations deriving from regional agreements have gone even further than nationally-based standards. In the English-speaking Caribbean, migratory policy has focused on regional integration and the easing of border restrictions for citizens of the Caribbean Community (Caricom), albeit with less emphasis on migrants coming from other regions in Latin America. Recent decisions by the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) have also opened the door to mechanisms that facilitate mobility and the recognition of migrant rights among member countries. The recent adoption of the Andean Migration Statute by the Andean Community (CAN) has expanded guarantees for migrant mobility within the bloc. Finally, the Central American Integration System (SICA) also has enacted agreements that facilitate movement between member countries.

To summarize, the individual countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have responded to the recent migratory changes in a variety of ways. However, future progress on advancing norms to further the integration of the migrant population could be jeopardized by public opinion within the receiving countries. Attitudes toward the migrant population will have a decisive effect not just on the migrant population, but also on the economic development of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.



**Figure O.2. Mechanisms Influencing attitudes and preferences toward the migrant population and migration policies**



Source: IDB/UNDP.

### Native attitudes toward the migrant population

The attitudes of the native population influence policy discussions and the design of migration policies. Likewise, the degree to which the local population is willing to welcome migrants and offer them economic opportunities can play a decisive role in their successful integration in the destination countries. In turn, attitudes and preferences towards immigration are shaped by the local context in the origin and destination countries and by the specific characteristics of the migrant population and the local population. These attitudes and preferences are further mediated by concerns about immigration's potential impact on the economy, culture, and public safety in the receiving country. The political and social preferences of the native population, as well as the norms and values of their community, also influence sentiments toward the migrant population in the receiving countries (figure O.2).

With the arrival of the migrant population, the local population may fear that their financial situation will worsen through deteriorating labor market conditions and greater tax burdens. If citizens in the receiving country believe that migrants increase the competition for economic resources, political opposition to immigration may deepen. In other words, the arrival of migrants can create a sense of heightened competition and labor market uncertainty among the native population. In practice, the impact migrants have on the labor market is heterogeneous, as the effect depends on the relative skill profiles of the migrants and the local population. Moreover, the effects mainly seem to occur in the short term and are not usually sustained over time. For this reason, the perception that migrants cause labor market conditions to deteriorate does not always fully conform to economic reality.

Migration may also increase the tax burden in the destination country due to an increased demand for social services that is not immediately offset by additional tax revenue. Governments may reduce their average investment to deliver services to the migrant population, or increase taxes to cover the increase in fiscal demand. Again, the size of the fiscal burden on the government in the receiving country varies according to the migrant population's skill levels.

Ultimately, when determining the local population's attitudes toward the migrant population, the relative weight of these motivating economic factors is determined by the level of development in the destination country. In less-developed receiving countries, economic factors seem to be more important, perhaps because labor markets and government services tend to be more exposed to potential saturation.

Another narrative that has become commonplace in Latin America and the Caribbean is associating the arrival of migrants with a decline in public safety and an increase in crime and delinquency. Although the effects that migration has on crime rates is not clear, the native population tends to form prejudices based on an erroneous understanding of the relationship between them. At times, the media fuels these misconceptions, for example, by making excessive use of linguistic associations between crime and migration, and by overemphasizing crimes perpetrated by migrants in their news coverage.

Hostility directed toward immigrants and pressure from certain groups in the native population who favor enacting more restrictive migration policies are not just rooted in fears based on economic self-interest and concerns about public safety and crime. Cultural prejudices, the desire for a more homogeneous society, and perceived threats to national identity and values are issues that repeatedly come up in the antimigration discourse. In developed countries, local concerns around the cultural and social effects of migration are just as important as economic concerns, if not more so. Indeed, the former often have more of an influence on the desire to restrict the entry of immigrant populations, especially when there is a greater cultural divide between the migrants in question and the native population, such as when the immigrants come from nations that are more remote from the destination country. In fact, the strong negative effects of social and cultural preoccupations tend to exacerbate intolerant attitudes toward migrants, despite the substantial economic benefits that migration may bring. This suggests that such attitudes are based more on prejudice and visceral reactions rather than on evidence-based calculations of the costs and benefits of migration. Such attitudes can lead voters to demand policies that close a country's borders to migrants, though such demands may well ultimately be detrimental to the native population and economic growth.

Individual preferences around identity, prejudice, values, ideologies, and prosocial inclinations influence people's behavior toward migrants. Individuals who prefer to interact with people from their own social group rather than other population groups, such as migrants, often draw boundaries to differentiate themselves and assign stereotypes to other groups, leading to exclusionary social dynamics. This behavior fuels fear of others, intolerance of differences, and concerns over losing majority status. It also reinforces a narrative based on the idea of "us versus them," which often results in restrictive migration policies that negate the economic benefits that go hand in hand with having a more diverse population. Ignorance regarding the realities faced by the migrant population and misperceptions about migration reinforce group identity while exacerbating discrimination, along with xenophobia.

In contrast, prosocial inclinations that manifest as altruism and a sense of justice are associated with more favorable attitudes toward migrants and more generous migration policies. Appealing to altruistic considerations may therefore increase support for the migrant population. Values that resonate with multiculturalism and universalism are associated with attitudes favoring migration, while people whose inclinations lean toward security, conformity, nationalism, and ethnocentrism tend to have more negative views of migration. Similarly, groups whose ideologies and political preferences fall on the right of the political spectrum are often associated with advocating for more restrictive migration policies, while people at the center tend to hold less fixed positions and be willing to change their opinions about migration policies. about migration policies can be easily facilitated by using the instruments of political discourse.

Individuals with higher levels of educational attainment are less intolerant towards the migrant population and more supportive of policies promoting migration. Older people tend to be more critical of migration, and their anti-immigrant attitudes are more rigid. Even so, individual attitudes are also anchored within the context of the specific country and community where one resides. The overall context involving institutions, economic and social policies, the country's political dynamics, and media narratives act in concert to influence individual attitudes toward migration. In the destination country, acute changes in the economic

and social context, such as financial crises and the initial arrival of immigrants, tend in the native population to induce fluctuating attitudes toward migration that eventually fade over time.

Prior to this study's findings, there was almost little evidence regarding the attitudes and preferences toward migration held by the local population in the region's destination countries. However, the broad findings suggest that in seven of the nine Latin American and Caribbean countries included in this study, the native population's willingness to receive migrants is low. There is no majority position that looks on the arrival and reception of migrants to be beneficial for the receiving country. However, there is great heterogeneity in the actual attitudes among the countries in question. Furthermore, in recent years there has been a marked decline in positive attitudes toward migration, especially in those countries that did not tend to receive immigrants in the past, but which have recently experienced large, sustained influxes. In every case, the low acceptance of migrants does not translate into low support for granting the migrant population access to the same levels of healthcare, education, and living standards enjoyed by the native-born population. However, the local population is more reluctant to express support for the unrestricted entry of labor migrants. Most citizens in the destination countries prefer to restrict the entry of this group of migrants through strict limits or mechanisms that only allow them to enter the country to fill job vacancies.

The potentially negative economic impacts of immigration, be these higher unemployment rates or larger tax burdens, are concerns that are frequently expressed in the countries included in this study. Concerns over the effects of increased labor market competition are at the forefront of the local population's negative attitudes toward migration, but the increased tax burden associated with immigration is an even prevalent concern. These combined beliefs around the negative impacts on employment rates and the tax burdens in the destination countries accounts for the high levels of pessimism and doubt regarding the benefits that immigration may confer upon the receiving economies.

Likewise, the local population tends to believe, often erroneously, that the large-scale immigration jeopardizes public safety in the destination countries. Concerns over increased rates of crime due to a rise in the migrant population is a prevalent attitude in all the countries included in the study. These reservations about public safety are greater than concerns about the potential economic effects of migration. Moreover, the increased diversity brought by the arrival of migrants does not translate into more positive attitudes toward their contributions to society. In the countries analyzed, there is a largely negative view of the immigrant population's social contributions in terms of bringing new ideas and enriching the culture. Likewise, the majority share of the local native population thinks that the arrival of migrants heightens social conflict.

This reluctance to accept greater social and cultural diversity may be the result of strong preferences for social homogeneity and the exclusion of certain groups that threaten this perceived stability. Some of the countries in question have limited experience with immigrants, which may further deepen apprehension toward their arrival and strengthen insular attitudes. The data show that the native population's reluctance to forge social bonds with the immigrant population is relatively more common in this group of countries.

## **2. Experimental Interventions to Improve Native Attitudes Toward Immigration**

### **Improving attitudes by breaking down prejudices and appealing to empathy**

The results of the experiments that are presented in this book seek to establish which approaches are most effective at bringing about a positive change in the local population's attitudes toward migrants. A major barrier to their social inclusion are prejudicial and exclusionary attitudes toward this population.

As described above, previous studies based on data from various surveys have documented that most countries in the region harbor widespread and negative attitudes toward migrants, which tend to be based on the belief that they compete for local jobs and state social services, are more likely to engage in illegal activities, and threaten fundamental national values.

This initiative explores the effectiveness of two simple interventions carried out in nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The first is an intervention seeking to correct misinformation about the impacts of immigration. It was based on previous studies showing that people have biased beliefs about the size and characteristics of the immigrant population in their country. The second intervention aims to influence people's emotions by sparking feelings of empathy. It was based on evidence that perspective-taking can promote more inclusive attitudes and behaviors.

### Strategy: Online videos and surveys

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The methodological strategy implemented for the experiments discussed in this book first involved asking individual participants to respond online to a baseline survey inquiring about their demographic, socioeconomic, and political preferences. The second step was to implement the informative and emotive interventions. After answering the baseline questionnaire, each participant was randomly assigned to one of the three groups described below.

- i) *Treatment group I: informative video.* Participants were shown a video conveying factual information on the size of the immigrant population living in their country, the migrants' home countries, and their education levels, drawing attention to any biases in the respondents' preconceived attitudes. The video also sought to counter misperceptions by mentioning that studies on migration in Latin America and the Caribbean have generally not found links between increased immigration and negative labor market outcomes for the native-born population, nor have these studies found connections between an increase in the migrant population and a rise in crime rates.
- ii) *Treatment group II: emotive video.* Participants were shown a video featuring migrant women who discussed the difficulties they faced in their country of origin (poverty, persecution, illness) and the destination country (mistreatment, language and cultural barriers, stereotypes, difficulties related to the labor market). A different video was used for each receiving country in the sample. Each video contained the single testimony of a migrant mother from the country of origin forming the largest immigrant population group in each receiving country. We chose to use testimonies from women who have a completed secondary education or higher, and who have settled in and are employed in the receiving country.
- iii) *Control group: placebo video.* Participants were shown a video on a topic unrelated to the study, and thus unlikely to generate changes in respondents' opinions on migration. The control group was shown a video to prevent differential attrition between the groups when answering the survey and control for the experience of watching a video.

Finally, after providing the first treatment group with relevant factual information, appealing to the emotions of the second treatment group, and showing a placebo to the control group, the researchers had all the participants answer a questionnaire to measure changes in their attitudes, beliefs, and political and social preferences regarding immigration. The differences between the various group responses can be measured through participants' answers to the questions they were asked after being shown each video. If these statistical differences are large enough, the changes can be attributed to the interventions that were implemented.

These experiments included participants from nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean: Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago. Taken together, these countries make up an interesting laboratory for testing how different types of messages affected attitudes toward the migrant population, as several of these nations have recently experienced large-scale arrivals of migrants, while others have historically hosted large migrant populations. The variety of migratory movements and receiving countries included in this study make it extremely heterogeneous and thus rich for analysis. This feature facilitates the study of the effectiveness of the distinct interventions administered in very different economic, social, and cultural contexts, such that the study includes policy recommendations that are appropriate for different country-specific contexts.

## Experiment results

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This book discusses the results of the experiments conducted in each country separately and also presents the results obtained by pooling the samples from the nine countries into a single database.

The results obtained from analyzing this combined group data demonstrates the capability that interventions based on using short videos have the ability, in a short period of time, to influence participants' views on multiple topics. This goal is achieved by reducing the information biases that often feed into attitudes that compromise the well-being of the various populations living in Latin America and the Caribbean. Generally speaking, exposure to the videos modified the attitudes of those in the native population who did not already harbor very negative views of the region's migrant population. The videos are particularly effective at making the younger, less educated, and lower-income members of the local population, and those natives who self-identify as holding "right-wing" political views, more open to welcoming and being more generous to the migrant population. Interventions are also more effective in places where the average public opinion polls on migration is less favorable at the outset, such that there is more room for improvement.

In many cases, despite numerical variations, no statistically significant differences were found between the effects elicited by the informative video and the emotive video. However, the informative video is found to be more efficacious at reducing the belief that migrants compete with the local population for jobs and that the immigrant population threatens public safety and increases crime rates. The informative intervention is also more effective at promoting recognition of the migrant population's economic contributions to the destination country. This fact-based intervention further strengthened participants' willingness to look favorably on the arrival of migrants in their country, reduced views that migrants are a burden to the state, and countered the perceptions that migrants take more from their host countries than they give back to these societies. However, the informative intervention is not effective at increasing the native population's support for their government increasing humanitarian aid to migrants. On the other hand, the emotive video worked better than the informative video at increasing support for the government providing health services to migrant children on the same level as that enjoyed by the native population. It also changed the view that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work. The only instance in which neither of the two interventions was effective was when participants were asked if it was easier to see issues from the viewpoint of the migrant women featured in the second treatment.

Aggregating the data permitted the average results across the nine country samples to be calculated, and this larger database improved the statistical robustness of the coefficients measuring the effects. However, these averages conceal heterogeneous differences between these countries in terms of attitudes before the interventions were implemented and the outcomes of the experiments. Consequently, these averages complement the country-specific results but do not replace them.

For example, on average, 45 percent of people in the control group do not believe that the presence of migrants in the host country increases crime, but for this response, the country-specific shares ranged from 26 percent of the participants from Peru to 79 percent of the participants in Barbados. When the results were aggregated, both of the treatment videos proved effective at moderating this perception: the informative video increased the average share by 12 percentage points (going from 45 percent to 57 percent), and the emotive video did so by 4 percentage points (increasing from 45 percent to 49 percent). Overall, however, the country-specific experimental results are very heterogeneous. Neither video had a significant effect on changing public opinion regarding immigrants in Barbados, Chile, or Trinidad and Tobago. In Costa Rica, Mexico, and Peru, only the informative video had any significant effect on changing beliefs held by the local population. In Ecuador, both videos were equally effective at eliciting results. And in Colombia and the Dominican Republic, both videos were effective, but the informative video was the more effective of the two treatments.

A selection of the aggregated results is presented below. These should be interpreted as the average findings from the country-specific experiments and are provided as an invitation to readers to delve more into detailed findings of this research, presented in the subsequent chapters:

- Both videos had a positive effect on influencing the local population's acceptance levels of migrants in the destination country, in the neighborhood, and as potential immediate family members of those participants who did not already indicate an extremely negative attitude toward the migrant population. The emotive video was especially effective in improving acceptance levels among individuals who have children of their own.
- Both videos made participants more levels of trust toward the migrant population but did not make it more likely that participants would see from issues from a migrant's points of view. Although both the informative video and the emotive video improved people's willingness to make donations that would benefit the migrants, the change in these attitudes is extremely low.
- Although a high proportion of the local population was already in favor of their government providing humanitarian aid and health and education services to the country's migrant population, both videos increased that inclination. However, the emotive video was marginally more effective at eliciting this response.
- Although most respondents thought the migrant population contributed to the economy and should be granted work permits, a significant proportion felt that migrants compete directly with the local population in the labor market and deemed migrants a burden on the state. Both treatment videos improved these opinions, but the informative video had a greater effect.
- Each video also increased the proportion of people who thought that the migrant population benefited the country by contributing new ideas and enriching the culture. In this particular case, the informative video was as effective as the emotive video, or even more so, in influencing the perspective of the local population.
- Both videos were effective at changing respondents' views on how migration affects public safety and crime rates, but the informative video was more influential in this regard. However, the emotive video was more effective at reducing the stigma around migrant women engaging in sex work.

The interventions did not have any adverse effects. This outcome is significant when it comes to designing policies to influence public opinion, and is true of both the aggregate results and the country-specific

analyses.<sup>2</sup> The videos contribute to reorienting attitudes and preferences in the desired direction or simply have no effect, but the treatments never steer attitudes in a direction that could jeopardize the migrant population.

### 3. Summary

The Latin American and the Caribbean region has been experiencing unprecedented and unanticipated intraregional migration flows, alongside other migration-related processes, all of which differ in terms of composition and the structure of migratory routes. The challenges have required countries in the region to adopt a new series of public policies over a very short time period. These policies include institutional reforms within the agencies or authorities whose remits include overseeing the migratory processes and regulatory reforms to adapt legal frameworks within the region in order to better address the current wave of migration.

As in other global regions, these movements obviously have an effect on local public opinion, especially if these occur on a large scale and over a short time. Levels of public acceptance vary, especially when a given country has no significant history of migration or when waves of migration suddenly occur, as has been the recent experience in Latin America and the Caribbean. Given that migration is a fact of life and will continue to be one moving forward, understanding, analyzing, and measuring public opinion on migration has become a necessity for policymakers around the world. This consideration is particularly true in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the issue of immigration has not been tackled in the same fashion as in other parts of the world.

Beyond measuring and analyzing how the native population views migration, countries need to be able to take action, and helping them do so is the main objective of this joint IDB/UNDP research initiative. This is why the experiment was designed to include nine countries in the region with varying migration profiles, volumes of migrants, and geographic locations. It thus provides a basis for analyzing the effectiveness of certain interventions on different issues and in a variety of contexts.

The possibility of changing public opinion by providing different types of information is widely documented in the literature and in many areas of development in the region. However, interventions seeking to influence the local population's attitudes toward migrants have been concentrated in developed countries, which have long histories of migration and different socioeconomic contexts. As immigration is a fairly recent phenomenon in Latin America and the Caribbean, we believe this research contributes to the broader discussion around it. Identifying issues, tools, and forms of communication and outreach that reduce misperceptions and shed light on the realities of migration will benefit the region's migrant population. It will also help governments, since public opinion that is averse to the inclusion of migrants in the destination countries generates outcomes that prove costly to society as a whole.

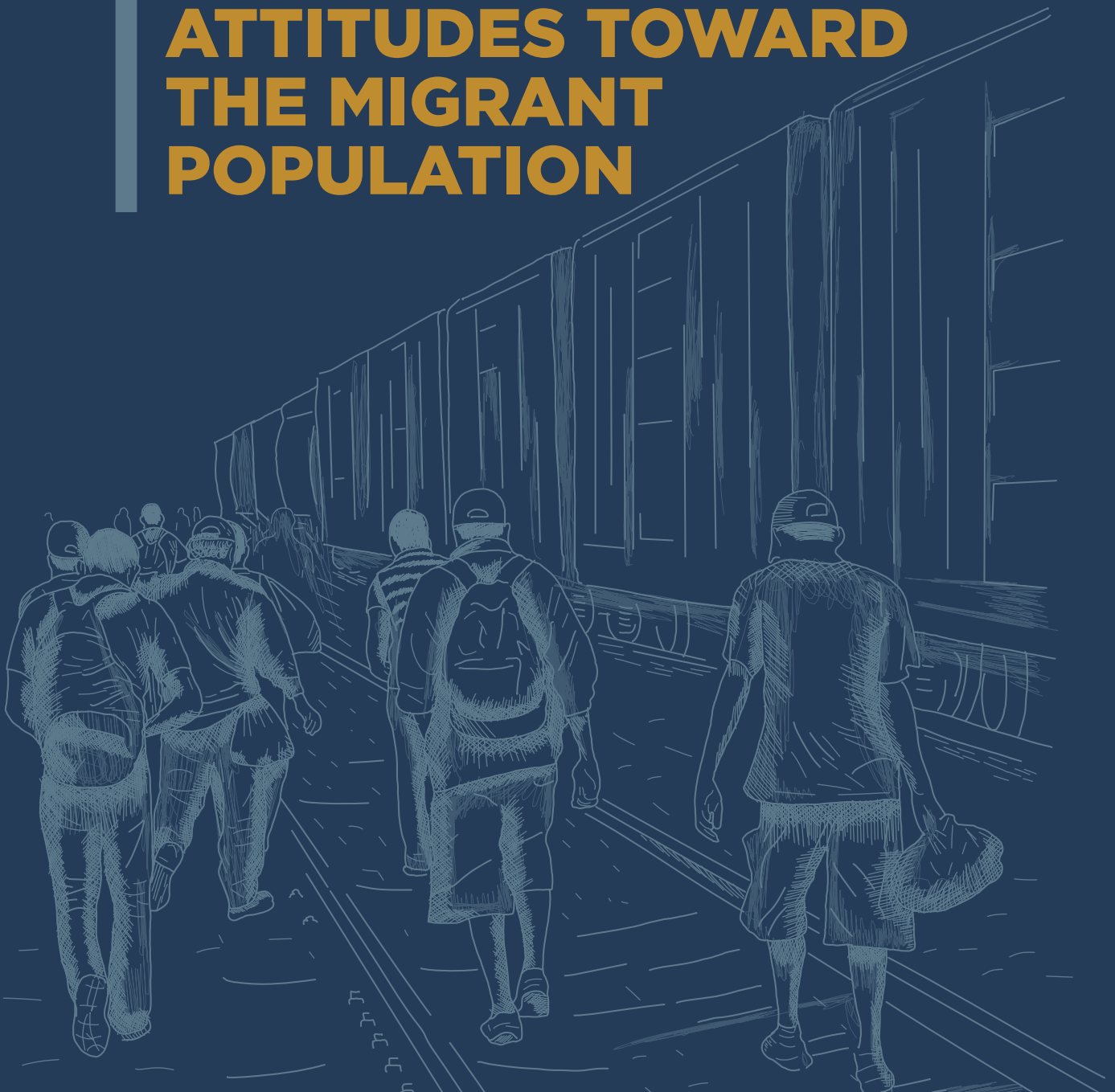
The detailed analysis of the results of this project will help countries design policies that are tailored to their specific context. In combination with other forms of measurement, it will allow governments to coordinate public policies and will provide tools for the media and civil society, as well as data for further research on this topical issue that is currently affecting the region's development and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

<sup>2</sup> There is a single exception to this finding: in Chile, the informative video marginally increased the share of people who considered that it was "bad" to having a migrant as their neighbor.



CHAPTER 1

# MIGRATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN AND ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MIGRANT POPULATION





## 1.1. Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean

The history of Latin America and the Caribbean has been marked by immigration. From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the first half of the twentieth century, many countries in the region received migrants from Europe; the total number has been estimated as ranging between 13 and 16 million people.<sup>1</sup> In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most countries in the region became a constant source of emigration to the United States and Europe. This latter movement amounted to almost 16.5 million people by 2000, the vast majority of whom emigrated to the United States. Economic factors motivated much of this migration.<sup>2</sup> However, a certain percentage of the migrant population was escaping political violence.<sup>3</sup> Yet over the last two decades, intraregional migration has intensified, reaching historic levels. This reversal of the previous trend is partly due to the tightening of migration regulations in the United States, the economic growth of several countries in the region, and the ongoing mass exodus of the Venezuelan population that began in 2015. Although Latin America and the Caribbean continues to be a region of net emigration, these levels fell from 8.1 million people in 1990 to 6.7 million in 2020.<sup>4</sup>

These recent changes in the region's migration flows are creating opportunities for economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the short term, however, within the receiving population these new migration patterns may spark fears some of which are valid, while others are unfounded—and fuel antimigration attitudes that could hamper the assimilation of the migrant population in destination countries.<sup>5</sup> Given that public opinion influences policymaking, the emergence of hostile attitudes toward migration can result in policies that create additional obstacles to the integration of the migrant population and can be detrimental to their well-being.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the attitudes of the local population toward the migrant population and immigration policies, based on secondary data. After a brief description of the dynamics of intraregional migration flows in Latin America and the Caribbean since 2000, which is presented below as part of this first section, the second section discusses the existing evidence on the factors that determine native attitudes toward migration. The third section describes attitudes toward migration based on secondary data in nine countries: Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago. The countries make up the ACOGER+9 group that is the focus of the intervention and survey described in Chapter 2. ACOGER+9.<sup>6</sup> After this background, the fourth section describes the objective of this book and the research underlying it.

### 1.1.1. Intraregional migration flows

Since 2000, intraregional migration has intensified in Latin America and the Caribbean. Immigration in the region doubled between 1990 and 2020. In 1990, there were just over 7 million immigrants in the region; by 2020, this figure had climbed to almost 15 million (figure 1.1). Intraregional flows account for the bulk

1 Sánchez-Alonso (2007), Moya (2018), and Pérez (2017). According to Pérez (2017), some 55 million migrants arrived in the Americas prior to 1913. Argentina, which received the second-largest number of migrants in that period after the United States, received 6.2 million.

2 See OECD, ECLAC, and OAS (2011) for data on the United States and OECD (2003) for data on Europe.

3 Jones (1989).

4 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *International Migrant Stock 2020*.

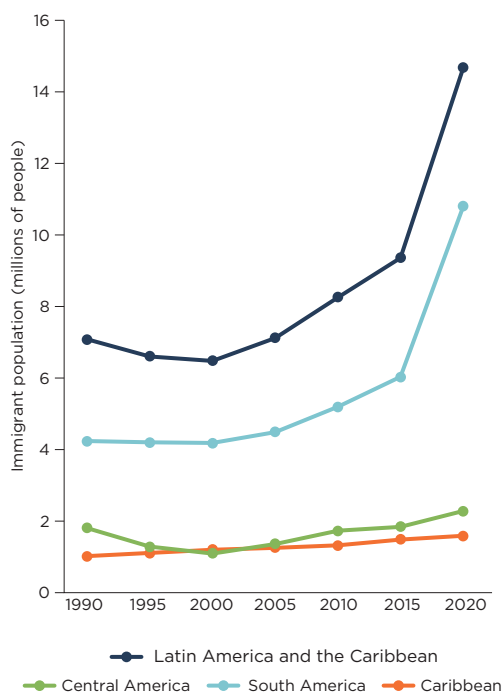
5 Banulescu-Bogdan, Malka, and Culbertson (2021).

6 ACOGER+9 is the survey that was designed and used in this project. The countries that make up the ACOGER+9 group are: Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago. Chapter 2 describes the intervention and the survey.

of this increase and have gone from accounting for 56 percent of total immigration to 76 percent. These are historic levels. Immigration to South America increased by 155 percent as a result of the subregion receiving 74 percent of these intraregional flows. By 2020, Latin America and the Caribbean was home to 5.3 percent of the world's total migrant population due to the sustained growth that began in 2000, when this figure was just 3.8 percent (figure 1.2).

**Figure 1.1. Immigration in Latin America and the Caribbean has doubled since 1990**

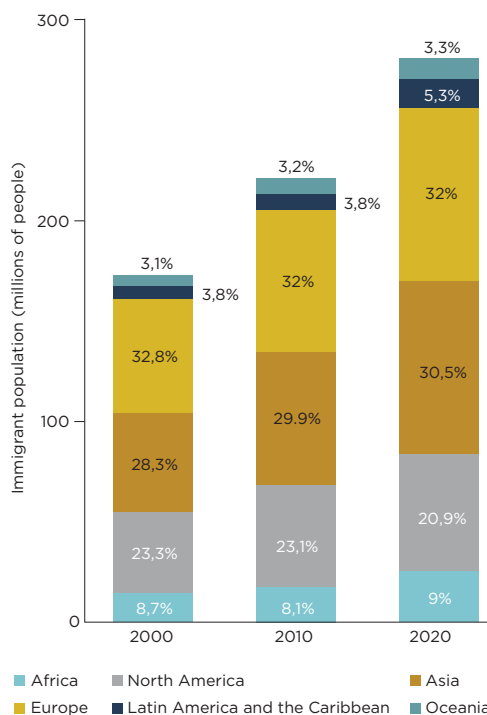
*Total immigrant population in Latin America and the Caribbean (millions of people), 1990–2020*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.  
**Note:** Central America includes Mexico.

**Figure 1.2. The share of the immigrant population in Latin America and the Caribbean has increased between 2000 and 2020**

*Cumulative immigrant population in the world by receiving region (millions of people and percentages), 2000, 2010, and 2020*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

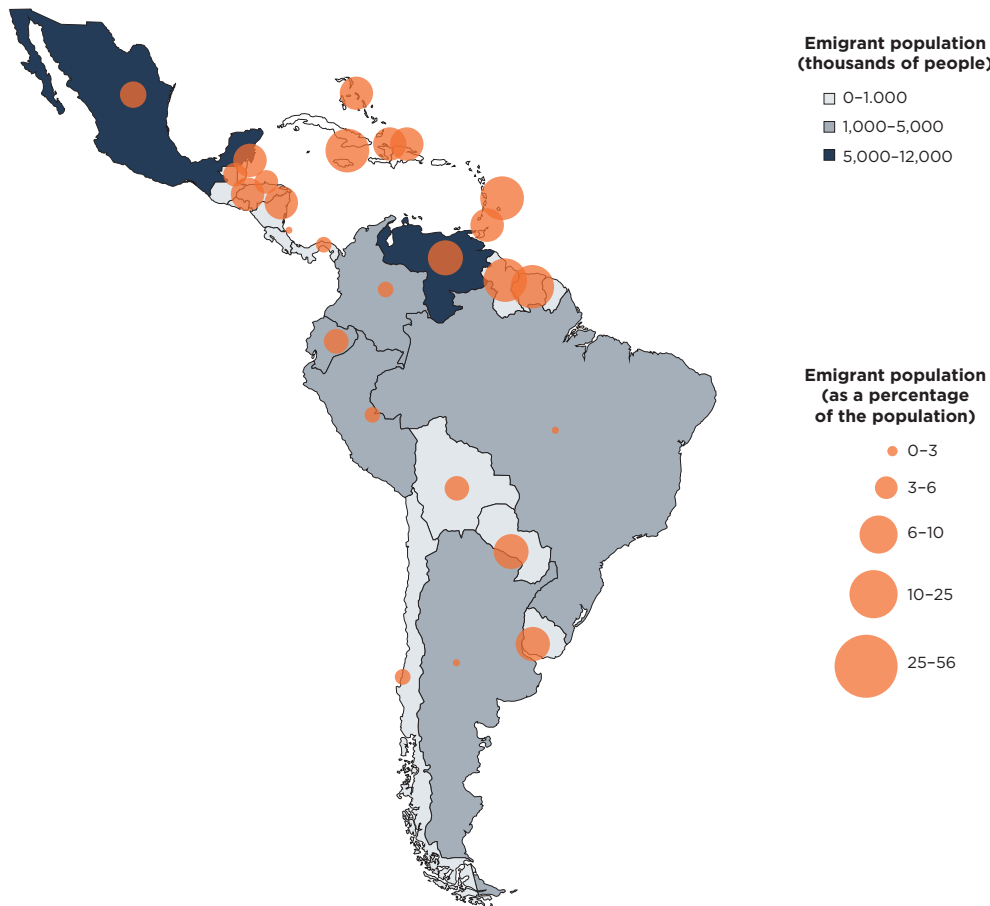
Several specific factors explain Latin America and the Caribbean's recent growth in intraregional migration. Maps 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate the distribution of the emigrant and immigrant stock by country in 2020. First, the mass migration from Venezuela is the largest exodus in the Western Hemisphere in the past 50 years.<sup>7</sup> This mass exodus represents a significant challenge for the receiving countries due to the sheer number of people that have migrated in the short period beginning in 2015.<sup>8</sup> As of August 2022, just over 6.8 million people have emigrated from Venezuela, more than 80 percent of whom went to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>9</sup> As a result, Chile, Colombia, and Peru have become major receiving countries. Migrants now make up 5 percent of the total population in Colombia and Peru and more than 8 percent in Chile. Costa Rica receives increasing numbers of migrants from Colombia, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Just over 718,000 people had emigrated from Nicaragua by 2020, which

7 ACNUR (n.d.).  
 8 Banco Mundial (2018).  
 9 R4V (s.f.).

is equivalent to 11 percent of the country's population.<sup>10</sup> Migration has also increased from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to Belize and Mexico, the third major corridor in Latin America. The migrant stock in Belize in 2020 corresponded to 16 percent of the country's total population. In the Caribbean, the main intraregional migration corridor is between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Haitian emigrants are equivalent to 16 percent of the total population living in Haiti. There have also been recent migration flows from Venezuela to the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago: immigrants account for 5.1 percent of the population living in Trinidad and Tobago; more than 60 percent of these immigrants came from Venezuela.<sup>11</sup>

### Map 1.1. Emigration in the region has intensified over the past few years

*Emigrant population by country of origin in Latin America and the Caribbean (thousands of people and percentages), 2020*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

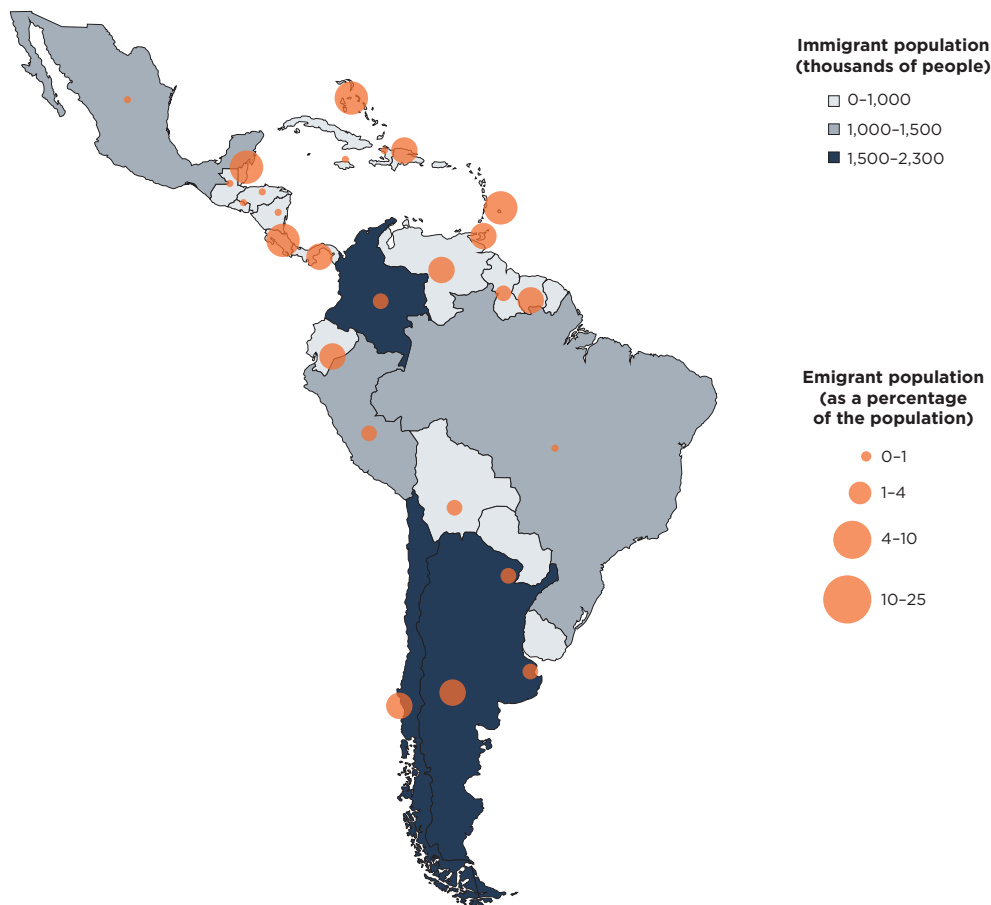
Map 1.2 also shows other interesting facts. Within the Latin American and Caribbean region, Argentina has the largest foreign-born population, as it hosts almost 2.3 million immigrants, mainly from Bolivia and Paraguay. The large migrant inflows from Venezuela have made Colombia the second-largest receiving

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

<sup>11</sup> DataMIG, IDB Migration Unit, Inter-American Development Bank, <https://datamig.iadb.org/profile>.

**Map 1.2. Intraregional migration flows are increasingly significant**

*Immigrant population by destination country in Latin America and the Caribbean (thousands of people and percentages), 2020*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

country. This is an abrupt change, since for decades Colombia was source of emigration. The situation is similar in Mexico, which has become a major destination country for Central American migrants: by 2020, it was hosting 1.2 million migrants (9.5 percent of whom are from Central America). After Mexico, the country with the third-largest migrant population is Chile, which receives migrants from Haiti, Peru, and, more recently, Venezuela. The main features of these intraregional migration flows and the context in host countries make the Latin American and Caribbean region an interesting case study, and one that differs from what is described in most of the existing literature on international or intraregional migration.

## 1.2. Attitudes Toward Migration and Migration Policies

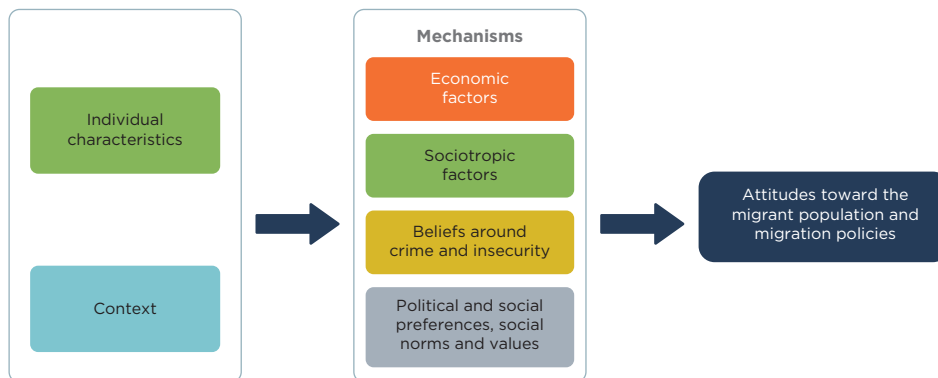
The intensification of intraregional migration in Latin America and the Caribbean and the potential impact of this movement on the region's economies and the welfare of both the native and the migrant populations is pushing the region's governments to enact policies to maximize the benefits from migration and mitigate its negative effects. The implementation of these policies has sparked debate and controversy. Migration has become an increasingly important topic within the political debate, forcing

governments to be more sensitive to public opinion, which is shaped by the attitudes and preferences of the local population in relation to migration.<sup>12</sup>

To gauge how the migrant population is perceived by the native population, we need to gain an in-depth understanding of their attitudes and preferences. This knowledge is also crucial to have when designing public policies and interventions that seek to promote the inclusion of the migrant population in the destination countries. Likewise, the willingness of the local population to welcome migrants and give them economic opportunities affects the migrants' potential for integration within the host society.<sup>13</sup> In this way, the local population's attitudes shape policy discussions and the design of migration-related policies.<sup>14</sup>

Which groups in a society look most favorably on migrants? What mechanisms explain these attitudes? How do prejudices, misperceptions, and apprehensions about the migrant population shape preferences and attitudes among the host population? Is it possible to reduce hostility toward the migrant population? This section examines these questions based on the existing literature, grouped according to the variables presented in figure 1.3. Individual attitudes and preferences around migration are shaped by the context in the migrants' countries of origin and destination, as well as the specific characteristics of the migrant and local populations. These interactions of context and characteristics are mediated, in turn, by the following mechanisms: i) the local population's concerns about the impact that migration may have on the economy and culture of the destination country and security-related matters, and ii) the local population's political and social preferences, social norms, and values.

**Figure 1.3. Attitudes and preferences toward the migrant population and migration policies: Mechanisms**



Source: IDB/UNDP.

### 1.2.1. Economic factors

The local population may fear that the arrival of migrants may harm their financial circumstances. Two mechanisms may cause this deterioration: a worsening of conditions in the labor market, especially in relation to wages and employment levels, and increased fiscal burdens.<sup>15</sup> If the native-born population thinks that the entry of migrants intensifies labor market competition, opposition to immigration may deepen.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner (2016), Alesina and Stantcheva (2020), and Cattaneo and Grieco (2021).

<sup>13</sup> Jaschke, Sardoschau, and Tabellini (2021) and Alan et al. (2021).

<sup>14</sup> Mayda (2006), Facchini and Mayda (2009), Banulescu-Bogdan, Malka, and Culbertson (2021), and Tabellini (2019).

<sup>15</sup> Scheve and Slaughter (2001), Mayda (2006), Facchini and Mayda (2009), Card, Dustmann, and Preston (2012), Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner (2016), and Tabellini (2019).

<sup>16</sup> Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner (2016), Alesina, Murard, and Rapoport (2021), and Banulescu-Bogdan, Malka, and Culbertson (2021).

The arrival of migrants, especially large numbers over a short period of time, can prompt the local population to feel that labor market competition is increasing, which may induce anxiety about job uncertainty. However, the potential negative impact of migration on employment depends on the skill profiles of the migrant and native populations, such that this factor mediates the latter's attitudes toward migration.<sup>17</sup> When migrants' average skill level is below the skill level of the local population, low-skilled native workers may feel that their jobs are at risk and may be less likely to express political support for the arrival of migrants in their countries.<sup>18</sup> In developing countries, where a high percentage of the labor force tends to have more informal employment arrangements, such feelings may be even more pronounced.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, skilled workers and high-income individuals will likely feel less threatened by the labor competition brought about by the arrival of lower-skilled migrants, either because their job prospects are not affected or because they benefit from the arrival of migrants whose skills complement, rather than substitute, for their own.<sup>20</sup> However, when people work in occupations that require specific skills and for which there are limited employment opportunities, job uncertainty triggered by the high cost of moving to other occupations can prompt even people with high levels of education to oppose migration.<sup>21</sup>

The belief that labor market conditions worsen with an influx of immigrants often does not reflect reality. Yet hostility toward the migrant population may arise even when they have a positive impact on the economy.<sup>22</sup> The available evidence on the impact of migration in developed countries shows that the average impact on wages and employment is negligible, though in some cases, there is a marginal short-run negative effect on specific population groups that fades in the medium term.<sup>23</sup> The economic evidence for developing countries is recent and focuses on short-term effects from migration on the labor market. Several studies have found a negative effect that is restricted to native workers employed in low-skilled jobs and the informal sector.<sup>24</sup> In the long term, these labor market effects persist among low-skilled women workers in developing economies.<sup>25</sup>

Migration may also increase the fiscal burden in the destination country; this is due to an increased demand for spending on social services that is not offset in the short term by additional tax revenue collected from the migrant population.<sup>26</sup> On the one hand, governments may reduce per capita social investment to subsidize specific services for the migrant population. Because this reallocation may affect lower-income groups among the native population, such a policy shift could lead to greater opposition to migrants from this particular constituency.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, governments may increase taxes to cover the new fiscal demands associated with immigration, and this policy choice would primarily affect the country's higher-income population. Raising taxes might prompt a decline in pro-immigration attitudes among higher-income households.<sup>28</sup> Evidence from developed countries, especially those with more generous welfare states, indicates that positive attitudes toward migration tend to decline among groups with higher incomes.<sup>29</sup> However, when the migrant population is skilled, the government's additional fiscal burden is not high. Rather, the migrant population pays taxes and thus contributes to strengthening the country's fiscal balance. In this particular case, concerns about the potential increased fiscal burden that

17 Mayda (2006) and Facchini and Mayda (2009).

18 Scheve and Slaughter (2001), Dustmann and Preston (2007), Facchini and Mayda (2009), Dražanová (2020), and Ajzenman, Domínguez, and Undurraga (2022).

19 Alrababa'h et al. (2021).

20 Mayda (2006).

21 Pardos-Prado and Xena (2019).

22 Tabellini (2019), Facchini, Margali, and Nakata (2022), and Ajzenman, Domínguez, and Undurraga (2022).

23 Blau and Mackie (2017) and Clemens and Hunt (2019) review the recent literature on the topic.

24 The studies on Latin America include Calderón-Mejía and Ibáñez (2015), Pacheco (2019), Contreras and Gallardo (2020), Hiller and Rodríguez Chatruc (2020), Blyde (2020), Morales and Pierola (2020), Olivieri et al. (2021), and Ajzenman, Domínguez and Undurraga (2022). Verme and Schuettler (2021) review the literature on the impacts of the refugee population on the local population's working conditions.

25 Morales (2018).

26 Dempster, Leach, and Hargrave (2020).

27 Mayda (2006) and Tabellini (2019).

28 Mayda (2006), Dustmann and Preston (2007), Facchini and Mayda (2009), and Alesina, Murard, and Rapoport (2021).

29 Facchini and Mayda (2009) and Alesina, Murard, and Rapoport (2021).

could result from migrants likely do not influence the attitudes of the local population toward these new arrivals.<sup>30</sup> In fact, there is less opposition to receiving migrants when migrants are more skilled.<sup>31</sup>

In sum, economic factors influence the native population's preferences and attitudes toward migrants differently in developed and developing countries.<sup>32</sup> While economic concerns about migration play a less significant role in developed countries, these concerns are more important in developing ones.<sup>33</sup> The exact reasons for this are unclear, but the fact that migration has more of an impact on local labor market conditions and the allocation of what might be limited state services in developing countries may partially explain why economic factors exert a relatively greater influence on antimigration attitudes among the native population.

### 1.2.2. Beliefs that public safety is deteriorating and crime is rising

Around the world, a standard narrative identified in the literature is the common perception that migration and an increased flow of migrants leads to a decline in public safety, accompanied by rising crime and delinquency rates.<sup>34</sup> Although the literature does not find that migration has an effect on crime, the local population may form prejudices based on erroneous perceptions that migration is related to criminal activity.<sup>35</sup> These prejudices tend to be more evident when the migrant population has a low level of education. The lower educational standards among the migrant population may cause worries among the local population: the arrival of new migrants with low educational levels may induce more concerns related to crime, and to a less extent, drive behavioral changes related to preventing crime.<sup>36</sup>

The literature highlights the role played by the media in shaping people's beliefs and opinions about immigration and foreigners in destination countries.<sup>37</sup> Specifically, the media contributes to generating the perception that migration is associated with rising crime rates; this occurs through the overuse of words such as “illegal” or “crime” and by overrepresenting offenses perpetrated by migrants.<sup>38</sup> For example, a change in the regulations of a German newspaper to use a person's place of origin, in articles about crimes changed the native population's attitudes toward immigration. Reporting the nationality of the perpetrators reduced the false perception that migrants were heavily involved in criminal activity. This policy contributed to lessening public opinion opposed to immigration.<sup>39</sup>

### 1.2.3. Sociotropic factors

Hostility toward the migrant population and pressure from certain native groups favoring restrictive migration policies are rooted in more than just fears based on self-interest.<sup>40</sup> Cultural prejudices, preferences for a more homogeneous society, and perceived threats to national identity and values are issues that repeatedly emerge in the local population's opposition to migration.<sup>41</sup>

Various studies show that in developed countries, the native population's concerns about the cultural and social effects that migration may have on the receiving country—these are called “sociotropic worries”—

30 Alesina, Murard, and Rapoport (2021).

31 Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner (2016).

32 See, for example, OECD (2018).

33 Gonnot, Dražanova, and Brunori (2021).

34 Banulescu-Bogdan, Malka, and Culbertson (2021).

35 Ajzenman, Domínguez, and Undurraga (2020), OIM and MPFN (2022), and Fasani et al. (2019).

36 Ajzenman, Domínguez y Undurraga (2020).

37 Héricourt and Spielvogel (2014).

38 Kim et al. (2011), Branton and Dunaway (2008), Djourelova (2020), and Couttenier et al. (2019).

39 Keita, Renault, and Valette (2021).

40 Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) and Dempster, Leach, and Hargrave (2020).

41 Scheve and Slaughter (2001), Mayda (2006), Dustmann and Preston (2007), Hangartner et al. (2019), Tabellini (2019), Banulescu-Bogdan, Malka, and Culbertson (2021), and Facchini, Margalit, and Nakata (2022). Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) provide a detailed review of the literature on the relationship between sociotropic concerns and attitudes toward migrants.

can be as important, or more important, than economic considerations.<sup>42</sup> The effect that sociotropic factors have on the desire to restrict the entry of migrants is between two and five times higher than reasons related to economic factors.<sup>43</sup> Several studies conducted in developed countries point to evidence that greater cultural distance between the local and migrant populations heightens antimigration attitudes.<sup>44</sup> This effect is particularly pronounced when migrants are very low-skilled workers.<sup>45</sup>

The strong negative effect stemming from a preoccupation with sociotropic worries may exacerbate intolerance toward the migrant population, despite the economic benefits that migration brings to the country.<sup>46</sup> This observation further suggests that such attitudes are based more on prejudice and visceral reactions than on evidence-based calculations of the economic costs and benefits of migration.<sup>47</sup> All these attitudes can lead voters to demand that their country shut its borders to new immigrants, but this economic policy is actually detrimental to their own self-interests and the nation's economic growth.<sup>48</sup>

#### 1.2.4. Preferences, social norms, and values

Preferences, social norms, and values underlie people's sociotropic concerns and their behavior toward the migrant population. Individual attitudes related to identity (intergroup preferences versus intragroup preferences), prejudices, prosocial inclinations, values, ideology, and political preferences all interact to influence people's views on migration.<sup>49</sup>

Persons with strong intergroup preferences favor interactions with people from their own social, cultural, ethnic, or religious group to the detriment of other groups in the population, such as migrants. People with strong intergroup preferences set boundaries to separate their group from a specific group, such as "migrants," by assigning common and often negative characteristics to this group, thus generating exclusionary dynamics.<sup>50</sup> This in-group versus out-group mentality can lead people to fear others, be intolerant of differences, and feel that their group will lose its majority status as a result of migration. Quantitative evidence from developed countries shows a high correlation between strong intergroup preferences and hostility toward the migrant population.<sup>51</sup> Narratives that reinforce the idea of "us versus them" sometimes result in restrictive policies opposed to migration, despite the economic benefits that greater diversity would bring.<sup>52</sup> Parochialism and strong intergroup preferences nourish prejudices and biased viewpoints toward the foreign population, resulting in higher levels of discrimination and xenophobia.<sup>53</sup>

Ignorance, or simply a lack of knowledge, regarding the reality of migrants' lives can reinforce biases against them, thus leading to even more negative attitudes.<sup>54</sup> Erroneous misperceptions also reinforce a group's identity and intragroup preferences.<sup>55</sup> A lack of knowledge is also a source of prejudice that can be mitigated through information campaigns that seek to correct misinformation about the migrant population, by drawing attention to their actual circumstances and their contributions to the host country.<sup>56</sup> Several studies find that perceptions concerning migration and the persons who

42 Card, Dustmann, and Preston (2012), Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014), Dempster, Leach, and Hargrave (2020), and Facchini, Margalit, and Nakata (2022).

43 Card, Dustmann, and Preston (2012).

44 Dustmann and Preston (2007), Card, Dustmann, and Preston (2012), Tabellini (2019), Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner (2016), and Alesina and Stantcheva (2020).

45 Dustmann and Preston (2007) and Card, Dustmann, and Preston (2012).

46 Card, Dustmann, and Preston (2012) and Facchini, Margalit, and Nakata (2022).

47 Dustmann and Preston (2007) and Facchini, Margalit, and Nakata (2022).

48 Tabellini (2019).

49 Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner (2016), Tabellini (2019), Alesina and Stantcheva (2020), and Alesina, Murard, and Rapoport (2021). Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) provide a detailed review of the literature on the relationship between sociotropic concerns and attitudes toward migrants.

50 Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) and Alesina and Tabellini (2022).

51 Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner (2016), Tabellini (2019), Alesina and Stantcheva (2020), Alesina, Murard, and Rapoport (2021), and Alan et al. (2021).

52 Tabellini (2019) and Holland, Peters, and Zhou (2021).

53 Mayda (2006) and Levy-Paluck and Green (2009).

54 Alesina and Stantcheva (2020).

55 Alesina and Tabellini (2022).

56 Levy-Paluck and Green (2009) and Facchini, Margalit, and Nakata (2022).



migrate are far from the actual reality, so information campaigns have been implemented to correct these misperceptions.<sup>57</sup> However, when antimigration attitudes are based on prejudices, not simply on misinformation, these types of campaigns can reinforce xenophobic attitudes.<sup>58</sup>

Altruism and a sense of justice, both prosocial preferences, are related to attitudes that are more favorable to migration and support more generous migration policies.<sup>59</sup> Appealing to altruistic considerations may increase public support for the migrant population. The evidence further shows that altruism towards migrants develops the longer that people interact with the migrant population.<sup>60</sup>

It is clear that the values held by individuals and groups influence attitudes toward the migrant population, but there is scant evidence of this relationship, beyond that based merely on correlations. A positive correlation has been observed between favorable attitudes toward migration, and values promoting multiculturalism and universalism.<sup>61</sup> Negative narratives about the migrant population often appeal to certain values and moral constructs; for example, by linking irregular migration with breaking the law.<sup>62</sup> It has also been observed that people who value public safety, social conformity, nationalism, and ethnocentrism have more negative views of the migrant population.<sup>63</sup> The arrival of large numbers of migrants may further exacerbate these values.<sup>64</sup>

Ideologies and political preferences also shape people's attitudes toward the migrant population and migration policies. First, people to the right of the political spectrum tend to support more restrictive migration policies.<sup>65</sup> Second, political preferences interact with other mechanisms and either intensify or weaken individual attitudes toward migration. For example, people on the left of the ideological spectrum react more strongly to humanitarian factors.<sup>66</sup> Third, people in the center of the political spectrum are generally more willing to change their minds about migration policies.<sup>67</sup> Finally, the local population may reject the arrival of migrants due to preconceptions of their political leanings. For example, a study in Colombia found that the local population was against the arrival of Venezuelan migrants because the native population assumed that Colombian migrants held left-wing sympathies.<sup>68</sup> Two implications emerge from considering ideological and political preferences in the receiving country. First, the discussion around migration policies can easily be instrumentalized using political discourse. Second, an intensification in migration flows can generate hostile reactions and negative political consequences for parties advocating pro-migration policies<sup>69</sup>

To summarize, the discussion in this subsection assumes that attitudes toward migration are malleable and may change in response to new information or changes to the context in which migration is framed. However, initial attitudes may also prove to be stable and remain entrenched because of certain psychological predispositions and ideological motivations.<sup>70</sup> Negative narratives tend to be more fixed.<sup>71</sup> For example, the population of the United States and Western Europe are divided into a politically sophisticated minority with stable attitudes and a politically unsophisticated majority with unclear, volatile attitudes.<sup>72</sup>

57 Alesina and Stantcheva (2020), Facchini, Margalit, and Nakata (2022), and Alesina and Tabellini (2022).

58 Alesina and Stantcheva (2020), and Kustov, Laaker, and Reller (2021).

59 Levy-Paluck and Green (2009) and Dempster, Leach, and Hargrave (2020).

60 Alan et al. (2021) and Bursztyn et al. (2021).

61 Mayda (2006) and Dempster, Leach, and Hargrave (2020).

62 Banulescu-Bogdan, Malka, and Culbertson (2021).

63 Mayda (2006), Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014), Dempster, Leach, and Hargrave (2020), and Dražanová (2020).

64 Zhou (2019).

65 Alesina, Murard, and Rapoport (2021), Alesina and Stantcheva (2020), and Steinmayr (2021).

66 Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner (2016).

67 Dempster, Leach, and Hargrave (2020).

68 Holland, Peters, and Zhou (2023).

69 Dempster, Leach, and Hargrave (2020), Banulescu-Bogdan, Malka, and Culbertson (2021), and Tabellini (2019).

70 Kustov, Laaker, and Reller (2021).

71 Banulescu-Bogdan, Malka, and Culbertson (2021).

72 Kustov, Laaker, and Reller (2021).

### 1.2.5. Individual characteristics

Age and educational attainment are strongly correlated with attitudes toward migration. While a person's age and level of education may be reflected in some of the mechanisms discussed in the previous sections, these two characteristics may also directly shape these attitudes. Better-educated people are more supportive of migrants and migratory policies.<sup>73</sup> Better-educated people have more accurate information about the migrant population and the positive effects of migration, are higher-skilled and therefore less fearful of labor market competition from migrants, and are apt to be more politically sophisticated.<sup>74</sup>

The statistical evidence also shows a growing relationship between age and antimigration attitudes. Older people tend to be more critical of migration, and antimigration attitudes among them are more stable.<sup>75</sup> However, there is also recent evidence, disaggregated by age cohort, suggesting that attitudes toward migration may be correlated with generational groups but not necessarily with age.<sup>76</sup>

### 1.2.6. Country context

Attitudes toward migration are dependent on the national context and the community where a person resides. The juncture between institutions, economic and social policies, the country's political dynamics, and media narratives help form the overall context that influences attitudes toward migration.<sup>77</sup> Few studies explore how the country-specific context affects the local population's attitudes toward migration, yet surely this is because of how difficult it is to establish causal relationships between changes in the context in which migration takes place and shifts in attitudes toward migration.

The available evidence of the effect of economic changes on attitudes is limited and confined to a very short time period. During economic crises, there is a temporary deterioration in favorable attitudes toward migrant populations.<sup>78</sup> Conversely, the initial arrival of migrants in a country seems to trigger feelings of solidarity with migrants that then deteriorate as migration flows intensify, eventually reaching the point where hostile feelings begin to dominate.<sup>79</sup>

## 1.3. Attitudes Toward Migration in Latin America

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the available evidence on attitudes and preferences toward migration is scarce, and only covers a few countries and time periods. This section analyzes these attitudes and preferences based on survey data from Gallup, Latinobarómetro, the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), and the World Values Survey (WVS) (see table 1.A1.1 for a description of each survey). This analysis only discusses seven of the nine countries in which the ACOGER+9 survey was carried out, since the samples from this survey data do not usually cover the two Caribbean countries (Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago) and, in some cases, do not include all the other countries where the intervention was implemented. The discussion is organized in terms of the factors mentioned in figure 1.3.

73 Alesina, Murard, and Rapoport (2021).

74 Mayda (2006), Dustmann and Preston (2007), Facchini and Mayda (2009), Alesina and Stantcheva (2020), and Kustov, Laaker, and Reller (2021).

75 Gonnot, Dražanova, and Brunori (2021) and Kustov, Laaker, and Reller (2021).

76 Dražanová (2020).

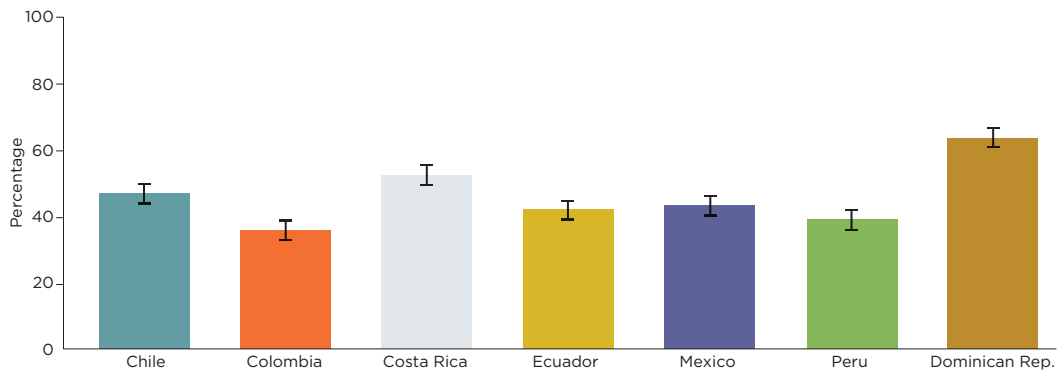
77 Scheve and Slaughter (2001), Levy-Paluck and Green (2009), Alesina, Murard, and Rapoport (2021), Banulescu-Bogdan, Malka, and Culbertson (2021), and Dempster, Leach, and Hargrave (2020).

78 Kustov, Laaker, and Reller (2021).

79 Banulescu-Bogdan, Malka, and Culbertson (2021).

**Figure 1.4. A minority of the population tends to favor migration**

*People who take a positive or very positive view of receiving migrants from Latin America (percentage), 2020*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

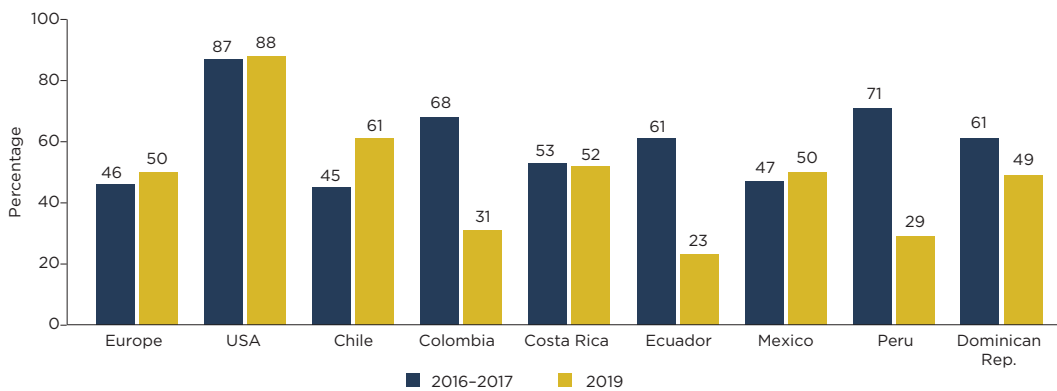
**Note:** 95 percent confidence intervals were estimated. Confidence intervals in black represent individual country values but do not show a direct comparison between two particular countries.

### 1.3.1. Attitudes toward migration and migration policies

In the ACOGER+9 countries, the willingness to receive migrants is low. For each of the seven countries, figure 1.4 shows the percentage of people who have positive or highly positive views about receiving immigrants from elsewhere in Latin America. In 2020, just around half or less of the population in these countries supported accepting migrants. The one exception is the Dominican Republic, where favorable attitudes toward migration are more prevalent. In 2019, a similar percentage in the Dominican Republic said that welcoming migrants was good for the country (figure 1.5). The trends toward an acceptance of migrants in the ACOGER+9 countries are similar to the percentages recorded in Europe, but are considerably lower than those observed in the United States.

**Figure 1.5. Recent decline in the acceptance of migrants**

*People who think that migrants living in the country is a good thing (percentage), 2016–2017 and 2019.*



**Source:** Drafting IDB/UNDP based on data from Gallup, 2016–2017 and 2019.

**Note:** In the United States, the survey was implemented in 2017. Europe does not include the Czech Republic.

Attitudes toward migration differ significantly among the ACOGER+9 countries. For example, in 2016, 45 percent of the Chilean population said that receiving migrants has a positive impact on the country, while in Peru, this share was 71 percent (figure 1.5).

There has been a marked decline in support for migration, especially in countries that did not formerly receive migrants but have experienced large, sustained influxes in recent years. For instance, attitudes in favor of migration were more prevalent in Peru (70.7 percent) than in any of the ACOGER+9 countries in 2016, but this rate plummeted to 29 percent in 2020. Colombia and Ecuador exhibit similar behavior. In 2020, the Andean countries and Mexico, which have received significant numbers of migrants in recent years, were the most reluctant to accept the arrival of migrants (figure 1.4). In contrast, attitudes in Europe and the United States towards migrants are fairly stable (figure 1.5).

Low support for accepting migrants does not necessarily map into low support for granting migrants access to health, education, and housing on equal terms with the native-born population. Table 1.1 shows that a significant percentage of the population in seven of the nine ACOGER+9 countries agree or strongly agree with granting migrants access to these social services. This support rate ranges from 47 percent in Peru to 74 percent in the Dominican Republic. In fact, in all these countries, support in favor of the migrant population obtaining access to health, education, and housing on equal terms with the local population is relatively high, compared to more widely-held negative attitudes toward the country accepting migrants. Though many people are in favor of providing social programs to migrants on the same basis as the services provided to the local population, there is still a very high percentage of Latin Americans who are against granting the migrant population access to state programs.

However, in these seven countries, the local population is more reluctant to express support for the unrestricted entry of migrant workers. Most people (between 71 percent in Ecuador and 83 percent in Chile) prefer to restrict the entry of labor migrants through strict limits or mechanisms that only permit entry when job vacancies are available (figure 1.6).<sup>80</sup> In any case, the situation differs among the seven countries. While in Ecuador almost a quarter of the population agrees with prohibiting the entry of labor migrants, only 12 percent of respondents in Chile do so. Attitudes toward regulating the entry of migrants have remained stable over the years in Chile and Mexico but deteriorated considerably in Peru between 2005–2009 and 2017–2020, when the flow of migrants into the country increased (figure 1.A1.1). The local population's concerns around rising labor market competition and potential income loss are likely determining factors for the low overall acceptance of migrants shown in figures 1.4 and 1.5.

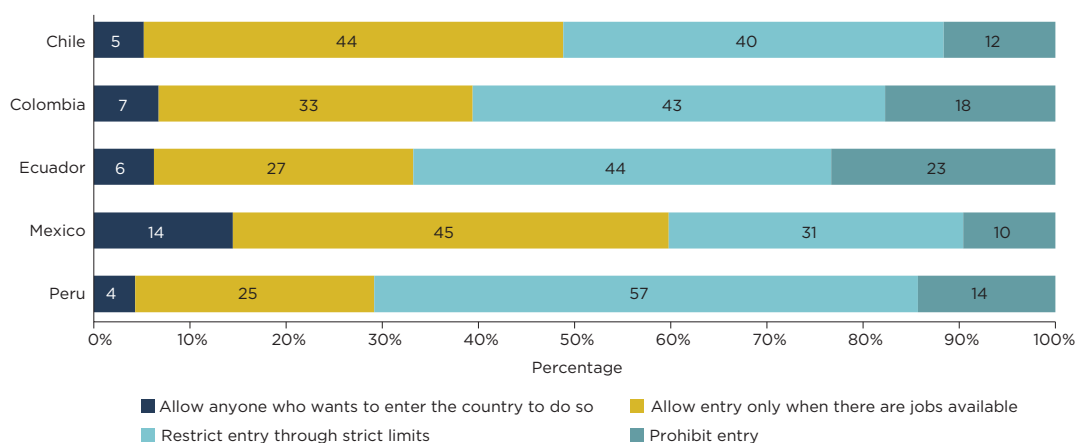
**Table 1.1. A high percentage of people continue to oppose migrant access to state programs**

*People who agree or disagree that migrants should have the same access to health, education, and housing as the local population (percentage), 2020*

Migrants should have the same access to health, education, and housing as the local population		
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
Chile	60	40
Colombia	60	40
Costa Rica	62	38
Dominican Republic	74	26
Ecuador	63	37
Mexico	61	39
Peru	47	53

Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

<sup>80</sup> The difference between the data for Chile and the numbers shown in the figure 1.6 is due to the rounding of decimals.

**Figure 1.6. Most people favor some restriction on the entry of migrant workers***People in favor of each form of restriction (percentage), 2017–2020*

Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the 2017–2020 World Values Survey (WVS).

### 1.3.2. Economic factors

A concern frequently expressed in the ACOGER+9 countries is the migrant population's potential negative economic impact on the host countries. Higher unemployment rates or a larger fiscal burden as a consequence of migration are the main concerns. In 2018, a significant percentage of the population (ranging from 39 percent in Mexico to 79 percent in Colombia and Peru) believed that migration contributed to higher unemployment rates. In contrast to Europe and the United States, concerns over the effects of increased labor market competition are at the forefront of local people's attitudes toward migration. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the percentage of people who were concerned about the effect of immigration was higher than in the United States (33 percent), while in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, it was significantly higher than in Europe (50 percent) (table 1.A1.2). In 2020, people seemed to feel more strongly that migrants were competing with them. In Chile and Ecuador, close to 70 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that migrants compete for people's jobs (table 1.A1.3).

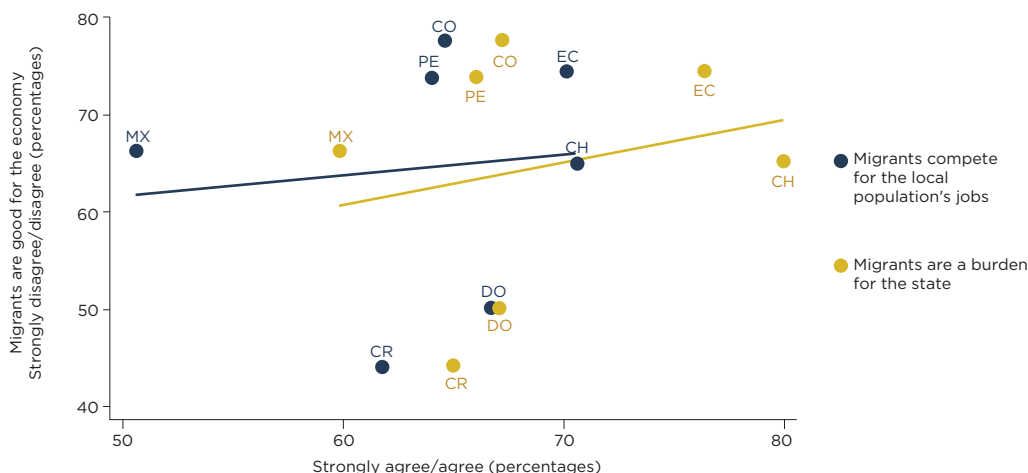
An even greater source of concern is the potential fiscal burden resulting from immigration. On average, two-thirds of the population in the ACOGER+9 countries viewed immigrants as a fiscal burden for the country; only one-third disagreed with this statement (table 1.A1.3).

The belief that the arrival of immigrants negatively impacts unemployment and the fiscal burden in a destination country contributes to high levels of pessimism around the benefits of immigration for the economy. On average, 65 percent of the population in the ACOGER+9 countries disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that immigrants are good for the economy. In the Andean countries, which have experienced intense interregional migration flows in recent years, these percentages were particularly high: 74 percent in Peru, 75 percent in Ecuador, and 78 percent in Colombia. This negative perception persists despite evidence showing that immigration has not had a high impact on the aggregate labor markets, and that any effects have been highly concentrated among specific sectors of the population.<sup>81</sup>

81 Pacheco (2019), Contreras and Gallardo (2020), Blyde (2020), Morales and Pierola (2020), and Olivieri et al. (2021).

**Figure 1.7. Beliefs that Migrants Increase the Fiscal Burden are correlated with beliefs about their detrimental effect on the country's economy**

*Correlation between the belief that migrants increase labor market competition and the fiscal burden and the belief that their arrival has a negative effect on the economy (percentage), 2020*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

**Note:** The data shown here is for the following countries: Colombia (CO), Chile (CH), Costa Rica (CR), the Dominican Republic (DO), Ecuador (EC), and Mexico (MX). The horizontal axis shows the percentages of people who agree or strongly agree with the statement that immigrants compete for jobs with the local population, as well as the percentages of people who agree or strongly agree with the statement that immigrants are a fiscal burden for the state. The vertical axis shows the percentages of the population that disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that immigrants are good for the economy.

Are beliefs around a higher fiscal burden and increased labor market competition resulting from immigration correlated with the belief that the immigrant population harms the country's economy? Figure 1.7 explores these correlations for the ACOGER+9 countries. Negative views of both dimensions (the fiscal burden and labor market competition) coincide with the view that immigration imposes a burden on the country's economy. Nonetheless, the correlation between the belief that migrants increase labor market competition and the perception that their arrival has a negative effect on the economy is weaker.

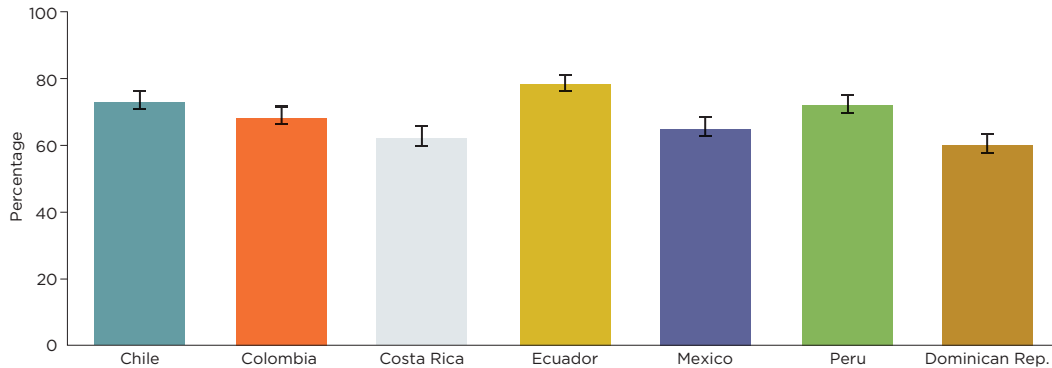
The main factor motivating these beliefs may be underlying economic self-interest: people may fear that the arrival of immigrants may have a negative impact on their financial circumstances or there may be genuine concern over the country's future, even if this concern lacks a factual foundation. These concerns transcend economic factors. In fact, in developed countries, sociotropic motivations play a more prominent role in explaining the native population's attitudes toward immigrants. Beliefs around the impact that migration may have on public safety and crime in the destination country also tend to be highly correlated with negative attitudes toward the migrant population.

### 1.3.3. Beliefs relating to migration's effect on public safety and crime rates

The population in the host country may believe, often erroneously, that the large-scale arrival of immigrants causes the country's security conditions to worsen. Natives in Latin America and the Caribbean are no exception to this belief. Concern over immigration leading to rising crime rates is prevalent in all the countries in the study, even more so than concern over the potential effects of migration on the economy. Figure 1.8 shows that the percentage of people who believe that immigration causes an increase in crime ranges from 60 percent in the Dominican Republic to 79 percent in Ecuador.

**Figure 1.8. The Concern that migrants increase the crime rate in destination countries is widespread but unfounded**

People who agree or strongly agree that migration increases crime (percentage), 2020



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

Note: 95 percent confidence intervals were estimated. Confidence intervals in black represent individual country values but do not show a direct comparison between two particular countries.

Recent studies conducted in Chile and Colombia show that these beliefs do not reflect reality, as immigration has not led to a rise in crime in either country.<sup>82</sup> But there have been real consequences stemming from this false belief. In Colombia, an increase in the number of reported crimes was accompanied by greater victimization of the immigrant population, particularly women. After recent initiatives to regularize immigration status, there was an increase in the number of migrant women who reported having been victims of sexual and intrafamily violence.<sup>83</sup>

#### 1.3.4. Sociotropic factors

The increase in cultural diversity brought by the arrival of immigrants does not translate into positive views of their value to society. In the ACOGER+9 countries, the immigrant population's contributions in the form of ideas and culture are largely viewed in a negative light. However, as with the other factors analyzed above, the countries in the study fall into two groups in this regard. Countries that over their history have received immigrant populations of various nationalities and for longer periods (such as Chile, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic) are less pessimistic about the migrant population's contributions to society. On the other hand, a high percentage of the population in the Andean countries (Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru) and Mexico do not believe that immigrants contribute to society through their ideas and culture: in these four countries, slightly more than two-thirds of the population disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement on this point (figure 1.11).

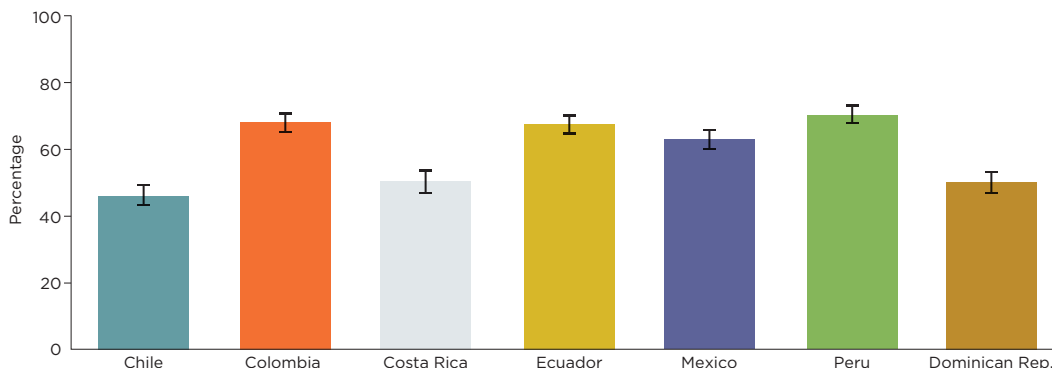
Moreover, 2018 data from the WVS show that the bulk of the local population in Latin America believe that the arrival of immigrants heightens social conflicts. Fifty-two percent of the people in Chile agree that migrants cause social conflicts, while this figure is 67 percent in Ecuador, 80 percent in Peru, and 81 percent in Colombia. Forty percent of the people in Mexico agree that migrants cause social conflicts. It is worth noting that Mexico is the only one of these countries where negative views on how migrants impact social conflict are lower than the United States, for which the figure is 41 percent.

<sup>82</sup> Ajzenman, Domínguez, and Undurraga (2020), Knight and Tribín-Urbe (2020), and Ibáñez, Rozo, and Bahar (2020).

<sup>83</sup> Ibáñez, Rozo, and Bahar (2020).

**Figure 1.9. Not everyone appreciates the diversity brought by the migrant population through their ideas and culture**

People who disagree that migrants contribute to society through their ideas and culture (percentage), 2020



Source: Compiled by IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

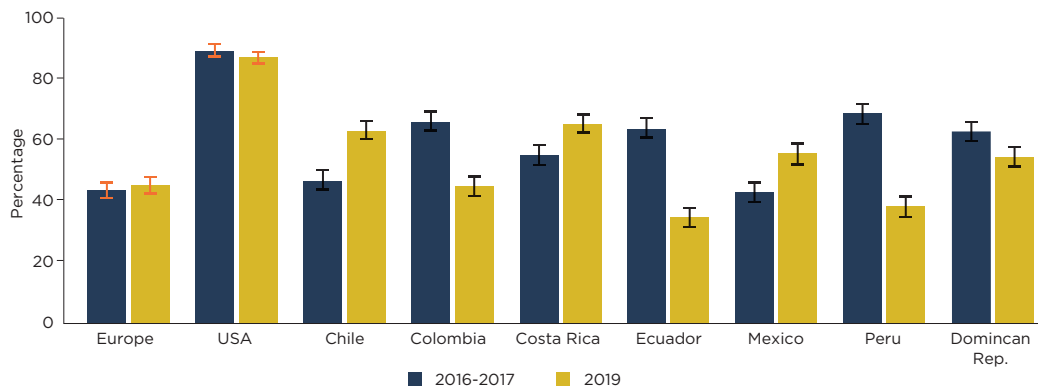
Note: "Migrants enrich our society through their ideas and culture" scores a 1 when people disagree or strongly disagree. Confidence intervals of 95 percent were estimated. Confidence intervals in gray represent individual country values but do not show a direct comparison between two particular countries.

A reluctance to accept greater social and cultural diversity may result from strong intergroup preferences that lead people to favor the construction of more homogeneous societies and exclude other social groups. Some ACOGER+9 countries have limited experience with immigrant populations, which may deepen the apprehension toward them and reinforce insular attitudes.

The data presented in figure 1.10 confirms that intergroup preferences are strong in Latin America and the Caribbean, expressed via the percentage of people who would look positively on a close relative being married to an immigrant. These shares have declined slightly in some countries. More than 80 percent of respondents in the United States agreed with this statement in 2016 and 2017. In Ecuador and Peru, the Latin American countries with the highest percentages, this share was approximately 70 percent, and in Chile and Mexico, it hovered around the 40 percent mark. In 2019, acceptance plummeted to 40 percent or less in the Andean countries in the sample.

**Figure 1.10. There is a strong preference for a more homogeneous society**

People who look favorably on a close relative being married to an immigrant (percentage), 2016-2017 and 2019.



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from Gallup, 2016-2017 and 2019.

Note: 95 percent confidence intervals were estimated. The confidence intervals in black indicate statistically significant differences at a significance level of at least 5 percent between 2016-2017 and 2019. Intervals in orange indicate that the difference is not statistically significant.



However, apprehension around social ties with immigrants is much lower for more distant relations. For example, only a small percentage of the population in these countries reported that they would not be willing to have migrants as neighbors, and these percentages also remained fairly stable over time in almost all countries except Peru, where unwillingness to live near migrants increased between 2005–2009 and 2017–2020 (figure 1.11).

## 1.4. This Book

The recent growth in intraregional migration in Latin America and the Caribbean may increase in the coming years. International experience has shown that migrant flows intensify once migration corridors have been established because the costs of migrating decrease due to the support provided by migrant networks.<sup>84</sup> Paired with the relative cultural closeness between countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, this could result in increased intraregional migration and economic benefits for the region.

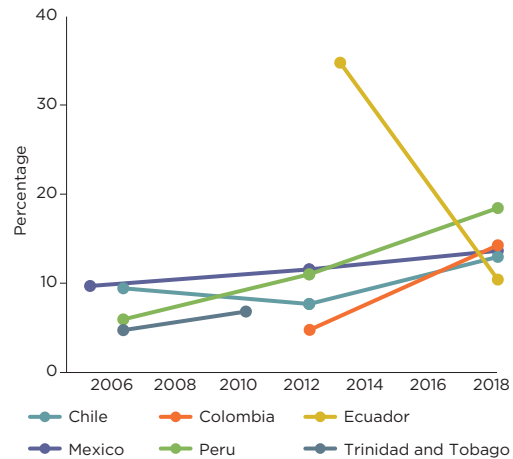
By strengthening regional integration and generating opportunities for economic development, intraregional migration will promote economic growth, spur innovation, and expand productivity. First, migration helps to strengthen trade ties and integration between countries.<sup>85</sup> Second, since migrants are often younger and more skilled than the local population in these countries, migrants may improve the labor force in a way that could benefit countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Third, the diversity brought by migration helps to boost innovation and promotes entrepreneurship.<sup>86</sup> Finally, the arrival of the migrant population increases the demand for products, which partially or fully outweighs the initial negative effects of migration on labor markets.

However, this process is not cost-free, especially in the short term. For example, some population groups may experience temporary negative effects on their labor market prospects or face increased housing prices.<sup>87</sup> Such temporary negative effects, misinformation, and prejudices have led to strong antimigration attitudes in several countries in the region. If these antimigration attitudes persist, they may become an obstacle to the integration of the migrant population in the receiving countries, thus diminishing the economic benefits from migration.

Is it possible to implement concrete initiatives to temper opposition to migration? Can campaigns that provide truthful information about the migrant population or seek to arouse empathy toward them, and contribute to reducing hostile antimigrant attitudes? This book seeks to contribute to this debate through the design, evaluation, and analysis of the effectiveness of two simple interventions that were carried out in nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean: Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican

**Figure 1.11. Lower apprehension toward immigrants when social relationships more distant**

*People who would not like to have migrants as neighbors (percentage), 2005–2018*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the WVS, 2005–2009, 2010–2014, and 2017–2020.

<sup>84</sup> Munshi (2003).

<sup>85</sup> Iranzo and Peri (2009) and Mayda (2010).

<sup>86</sup> Bahar and Rapoport (2018) and Bahar et al. (2022).

<sup>87</sup> Morales (2018) and Depetris-Chauvin and Santos (2018).

Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago. These low-cost, scalable interventions consist of showing people in each country two types of videos. The first provides information about the migrant population in each country, and the second tells the story of a migrant woman and her new life in the destination country. This book contributes to the literature on attitudes toward immigrants. Until now, the evidence on this topic has come chiefly from developed countries that have experienced constant immigration for decades and where there are major differences between the native population and the migrant population. The nine countries in this study differ from this profile in several respects. Most had never experienced large migration flows in such a short period, the cultural differences between the migrant and local populations are smaller, their labor markets are more precarious, and the state's capacity is lower.

Chapter 2 describes the interventions. Chapters 3 through 5 provide an overview of the migration context in each of the countries included in the study and examine the impact of the intervention. The final chapter compares this impact in the nine countries and examines the potential causes of the similarities and differences observed. The book concludes by presenting a series of policy recommendations to improve the local population's attitudes toward migration.

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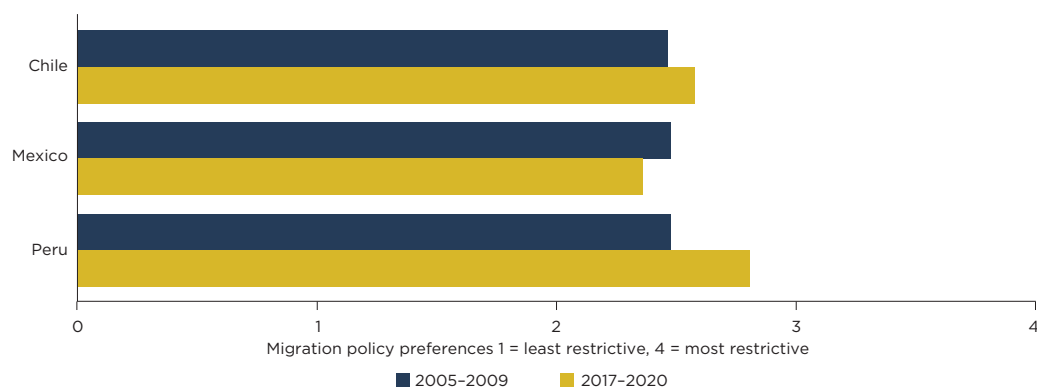
## Annex 1.A1

**Table 1.A1.1. Description of existing surveys: Latinobarómetro, World Values Survey, LAPOP, and Gallup.**

	Latinobarómetro	World Values Survey	Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)	Gallup
Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General attitudes toward migration</li> <li>- Economic factors</li> <li>- Cultural factors</li> <li>- Views on security and crime</li> <li>- Political and social preferences, social norms and values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General attitudes toward migration</li> <li>- Economic factors</li> <li>- Cultural factors</li> <li>- Views on security and crime</li> <li>- Political and social preferences, social norms and values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General attitudes toward migration</li> <li>- Political and social preferences, social norms and values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General attitudes toward migration</li> <li>- Political and social preferences, social norms and values</li> </ul>
Round	2020	2017–2020	2018–2019	2016 and 2019
Years	2020	2018	2018 and 2019	2016 and 2019
Countries	Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru	Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru	Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru	Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru

Source: IDB/UNDP.

**Figure 1.A1.1. Acceptance of policies favoring the entry of labor migrants in Chile, Mexico, and Peru, 2005–2009 and 2017–2020**



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the WVS 2005–2009 and 2017–2020.

Note: The data presented are the average of the value of the responses to the question on acceptance of labor migrants entering the country. The following response options were provided: i) allow free entry (= 1); ii) allow entry as long as jobs are available (= 2); iii) impose strict limits (= 3); and iv) prohibit the entry of migrants coming to the country to work (= 4).

**Table 1.A1.2. Beliefs about how migration affects labor markets (in percentages), 2017–2020.**

	Migrants take important jobs			Unemployment increases		
	Disagree	Hard to say	Agree	Disagree	Hard to say	Agree
Chile	40	19	41	32	23	45
Colombia	51	10	39	16	5	79
Ecuador	26	34	40	15	17	69
Mexico	31	33	37	37	24	39
Peru	18	3	79	17	2	81
Europe	38	18	44	34	15	51
United States	7	36	57	21	46	33

**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the WVS 2017–2020.

**Note:** The data presented shows the percentage of respondents who disagreed with, found it hard to respond to, or agreed with the statements that migrants take jobs and increase unemployment.

**Table 1.A1.3. Views on how migrants affect the country's economy (in percentages), 2020**

	They are good for the economy		They come to compete for our jobs		They are a burden on the state	
	Strongly agree/ Agree	Strongly disagree/ Disagree	Strongly agree/ Agree	Strongly disagree/ Disagree	Strongly agree/ Agree	Strongly disagree/ Disagree
Chile	35	65	71	29	80	20
Colombia	22	78	65	35	67	33
Costa Rica	56	44	62	38	65	35
Dominican Republic	50	50	67	33	67	33
Ecuador	25	75	70	30	76	24
Mexico	34	66	51	49	60	40
Peru	26	74	64	36	66	34

**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

**Note:** The data presented expressed the percentage of respondents who strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, or disagree with the statements that migrants are good for the economy, compete for jobs, and are a burden on the state. Responses were grouped into two categories: i) strongly agree and agree, and ii) strongly disagree and disagree.





CHAPTER 2

# EXPERIMENTS TO IMPROVE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT MIGRATION



## 2.1. Experimental Interventions and Attitudes Regarding Migrants

Why try to influence the perceptions that a population has regarding migration? At first glance, attempting to influence people's attitudes about migration and the migrant population may seem counterintuitive. All socioeconomic and demographic phenomena have consequences, and citizens are free to form their own opinions about these developments. However, people may arrive at these viewpoints based on information that is prejudiced, biased, or erroneous. There are many reasons why people may form inaccurate views about migration and the migrant population: (i) the local population may not have direct contact with the migrant population or direct knowledge of their circumstances; (ii) obtaining objective information is often costly; (iii) people may not have the resources needed to interpret information correctly, or may adhere to a series of pervasive cognitive biases that are documented in the literature; (iv) different organized stakeholders may serve their interests by presenting biased information about migrants; or (v) a lack of empathy may lead to forming prejudices toward and disapproval of the migrant population. Hence, this initiative aims to work with existing data sources on migration and the experiences of the migrant population to present better information, as free from bias as possible and using a nonpaternalistic approach, in order to try influencing attitudes toward migration. This study compares the effectiveness of fact-based interventions with other approaches that use narratives about the life of a migrant woman: the intention is to generate empathy for people in these situations. When prejudices arise from a lack of sympathy and emotional understanding, providing straightforward information about the migrant population may not be an effective way of changing attitudes toward this group. To some extent, the exercise approaches the problem by means of expanding the freedom of choice— through correcting the most common social biases directed towards migrants and generating empathy for their situation.<sup>1</sup>

Analyzing the effects of the interventions described in this book has the potential to inform the design of future policies and contribute to accelerating the integration of the migrant population into the receiving communities. This chapter discusses why it is important to use these experiments as part of an effort to change local perceptions regarding migration. It explains what constitutes these experiments, how they have been conducted in different countries over time, and sets up the experimental design. The results of these findings are described and analyzed in the remaining chapters of this book.

## 2.2. The Efficacy and Impact of Experimental Interventions

Randomized controlled experiments are used to empirically evaluate the impact of a policy or intervention. These types of experiments have played a key role in analyzing topics as diverse as how a drug affects people's health, the effect of a particular education policy on student learning, or whether including messages delivered on public utility bills influences consumer payment behavior. This book is part of

<sup>1</sup> Tversky and Kahneman (1974) coined the term "cognitive bias" to refer to systematic patterns that affect the way we perceive reality. Some of the most common cognitive biases are confirmation bias (misinterpreting information to support preconceived ideas), anchoring bias (extrapolating information based on an initial piece of evidence), ingroup bias (giving preferential treatment to people we perceive to belong to the same group), the framing effect (when the way information is presented affects people's decisions), and self-serving bias (when people attribute positive outcomes to their ability and explain undesirable outcomes as the result of external events).

an extensive branch of literature describing the results of these types of experiments, which consist of specific interventions aimed at changing a population's perceptions or behavior.<sup>2</sup>

The basic idea underlying this kind of experiment involves dividing the participants into two groups. If the sample size is large enough, this form of selection ensures that the characteristics of the two groups are, on average, identical. The only difference between the two groups is that the intervention is applied to only one of them, called the treatment group, but not to the other one, called the control group. Randomly assigning participants to one of the groups in the experiment enables researchers to measure the impact of the policy intervention. When comparing the average results for the two groups, any differences identified can be attributed exclusively to the policy or intervention implemented in the experiment.

Experiments oriented around changing people's views are grouped into two categories.<sup>3</sup> The first group of experiments concentrates on informing individuals about the actual traits of certain segments of the population or social contexts by using statistical data, with the aim of getting participants to adjust or update their opinions and preferences.<sup>4</sup> The second group of experiments consists of applying qualitative treatments with the objective of influencing people's beliefs through narratives, anecdotes, or immersive experiences, such as perspective-taking exercises. This second approach can bring about changes in political attitudes. For example, the treatment showcasing underrepresented individuals challenges various stereotypes; these sessions oriented around using softer approaches can shift norms and beliefs surrounding a psychosocial problem.<sup>5</sup> Studies that use qualitative treatments tend to have more pronounced effects on participants' beliefs compared to studies employing treatments that focus on providing quantitative, factual information.<sup>6</sup> However, the field of behavioral economics has great potential yet to be explored: more experimental research needs to be conducted to examine the scope of these qualitative interventions and compare their effectiveness to quantitative approaches that provide statistical information. The relative efficacy of these two approaches is one of the central inquiries addressed in this book.

### 2.3. Breaking Down Prejudices and Appealing to Empathy to Improve Attitudes Toward Migrants

The experiments presented in this book evaluate which type of intervention is most effective at bringing about a positive change in the local population's attitudes toward immigration. The most pressing barriers to the social inclusion of migrants include misinformation, a lack of empathy, as well as prejudicial and exclusionary attitudes directed toward them. As discussed in the previous chapter, evidence gathered from various countries around the world documents generally negative attitudes toward migrants. These opinions tend to be based on the belief that migrants compete with the local population for jobs and state social services, tend to get involved in illegal activities, and threaten fundamental national values.

This initiative explores the effectiveness of two simple interventions carried out in nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. These simple interventions are low-contact and low-cost initiatives.<sup>7</sup> The

<sup>2</sup> The IDB's behavioral economics group has pioneered research in this field in Latin America and the Caribbean. Martínez, Rojas, and Scartascini (2022) provides an overview of this research.

<sup>3</sup> See Bursztyn and Yang (2021) for a meta-analysis of the empirical literature on this type of experiment, based on a review of 79 papers published in the last 20 years.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Jørgensen and Osmundsen (2022) presented Danish citizens with objective figures on non-Western migrants with the aim of bringing about a change in local migration policy preferences.

<sup>5</sup> Beaman et al. (2009), Ashraf et al. (2020), and Turetsky and Sanderson (2018).

<sup>6</sup> Bursztyn and Yang (2021), Williamson et al. (2020).

<sup>7</sup> These initiatives do not include interventions that promote contact between antagonistic groups such as those studied by Mousa (2020) and Lowe (2021). While these can bring about more inclusive behavior, they are more complex and more costly to replicate at scale.

first, an informative intervention, seeks to combat misinformation based on biased beliefs about the true scale of migration and the characteristics of the migrant population residing in the country.<sup>8</sup> The second intervention is an emotional appeal that seeks to generate more empathetic perspectives in order to foster more inclusive attitudes and behaviors.<sup>9</sup>

While the factors shaping the native population's attitudes toward migration have been studied extensively, less attention has been paid to the effects of simple interventions seeking to improve such attitudes. Previous studies have focused on improving attitudes by providing factual information about the migrant population or information that triggers an emotional reaction. The evidence associated with treatments that provide quantitative information suggests that the local population tends to overestimate the size of the migrant population residing in their country and is apt to form biased beliefs about them. Providing the local population with facts about the size and the characteristics of the migrant population tends to correct such misunderstandings, but does not alter native attitudes toward migrants.<sup>10</sup> A more promising approach is providing information on the impact that migration has on the economy. For example, providing evidence demonstrating that migration does not have a negative impact on the US labor market has changed local attitudes and behaviors toward low-skilled migrant workers residing in the country.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, interventions may seek to evoke an emotional response centered on perspectives connected to real or hypothetical migration-related situations: such interventions can induce altruistic responses, improve attitudes and behaviors, or encourage support for marginalized populations or victims of discrimination. For example, these types of inventions may include perspective-taking exercises that encourage participants to put themselves in a refugee's mindset, whether through role-playing games in which they put themselves in the place of migrants or ethnic minorities; through videos about migrants' personal struggles, or through references to their own family histories.<sup>12</sup>

The experiments described in this book contribute to the behavioral economics literature, as the interventions use a large sample of people to evaluate the impact, in various countries, of implementing an informative intervention and an emotive intervention. Existing studies generally focus on a single type of intervention but do not compare more than one type to ascertain which approach is more effective for a given population.<sup>13</sup> Prior studies have also tended to focus on a single country, whereas the findings presented in this book open up the possibility of replicating and reproducing the main features of the intervention in other contexts.

This project also enhances the existing literature by focusing on a developing region, namely Latin America and the Caribbean, thus complementing the vast majority of research to date that has focused on migration to the United States and Western Europe. Migrants in the developed world generally have fewer qualifications related to employment or education compared to the native-born population, and tend to come from countries with very different cultures. Consequently, the findings from these studies may not apply to Latin America and the Caribbean, where recent migratory flows typically entail the sudden arrival of large numbers of migrants with comparable levels of education and relatively similar cultural backgrounds (e.g., Venezuelans that have migrated to Colombia). This project also includes countries in the Caribbean, a region that has experienced high levels of both immigration and emigration, a situation that is not usually represented in opinion polls (including LAPOP, Latinobarómetro, and WVVS, among others).

8 Alesina, Miano, and Stantcheva (2018), and Grigorieff, Roth, and Ubfal (2020).

9 Adida, Lo, and Platas (2018), and Alan et al. (2021).

10 Alesina, Miano, and Stantcheva (2018); Hopkins, Sides, and Citrin (2019); Grigorieff, Roth, Ubfal (2020); and Williamson (2020).

11 Haaland and Roth (2020).

12 Alesina, Miano, and Stantcheva (2018); Simonovits, Kézdi, and Kardos (2018); Williamson (2020); Chatruc and Rozo (2021); Dinas, Fouka, and Schläpfer (2021); and Kalla and Broockman (2021).

13 The study by Adida, Lo, and Platas (2018) is one exception, as it includes an information-based intervention in addition to the perspective-taking exercise mentioned above. The intervention they describe differs from the literature, as it does not point to a common misperception, but rather conveys information on the number of refugees admitted to the United States compared to other countries.

## 2.4. Experimental Strategy: Online Videos and Surveys

The strategy implemented for conducting the experiments described in this book began with the online participants completing a baseline survey. The survey inquired about their demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds and their political preferences.<sup>14</sup>

The second step consisted of administering the informative, emotive or placebo video. Participants were randomly assigned to one of these three groups:

**Treatment Group I: Informative Video.** Participants were shown a video conveying facts about the size of the migrant population living in their country, along with information about the migrants' countries of origin and education levels. Any biases in the participants' responses were detected.<sup>15</sup> The video sought to combat prejudices by mentioning that, in general, the results of studies in Latin America and the Caribbean have not found links between increased immigration and adverse labor market outcomes for the native-born population, or a connection between increased migration and rising crime rates.<sup>16</sup>

**Treatment Group II: Emotive Video.** This group was shown a video focusing on the difficulties that migrant women encountered or overcame in their country of origin (poverty, persecution, or illness) and in the receiving country (mistreatment, linguistic and cultural barriers, stereotypes, or difficulties related to work). A different video was used for each country in the sample. Each video contained a single testimony from a migrant mother from the country with the largest migrant population in the receiving country. All the women in the videos had finished secondary school or attained an even higher level of education and were living and working in the host country.

**Control Group: Placebo Video.** This group was shown a video on a topic unrelated to the study, and therefore unlikely to influence their opinions about migration. The reason for showing the control group a video unrelated to migration was to control for differentials between the groups related to attrition, given the time required to answer the survey, and to control for the experience of watching a video.

After providing one group with relevant information, appealing to the emotions of another group, and administering a placebo to a third group, the researchers had the participants respond to a questionnaire in order to measure changes in their attitudes, beliefs, political and social preferences.<sup>17</sup>

## 2.5. A Broad, Varied Sample that Captures the Different Realities of Life in the Region

The experiments were conducted using participants from nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean: Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago. These countries constitute an interesting laboratory for testing how effective different types of messages are at transforming the local population's attitudes toward the migrant population, as several of these countries have recently experienced massive inflows of migrants. This is especially

<sup>14</sup> The complete questionnaire is included in Annex 2.A1.

<sup>15</sup> This template is adapted for each of the nine countries to include country-specific statistics. Specifically, the videos provide the following statistics in an instructive fashion: the number of migrants living in the country per 100 people; the number of migrants from the top three countries of origin, per 100 migrants; the number of migrants, per 100, that completed secondary education; and the number of migrants, per 100, whose highest educational attainment is a tertiary or university degree.

<sup>16</sup> Information on Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole is used because evidence is not available on these issues for all the countries in the sample, and it is better to refer to the region in general rather than using statistics from another country. Furthermore, unlike Haaland and Roth (2020), this video does not refer to specific studies that do not find evidence of negative labor market outcomes (Bahar, Ibáñez, and Rozo, 2021) or an increase in crime (Ajzenman, Domínguez, and Undurraga, 2020, and Knight and Tribín, 2020).

<sup>17</sup> Most of the questions have already been used in other surveys. Question 21 was taken from a survey Gallup conducted in 140 countries in 2016 and 2017 and updated in 145 countries in 2019. The complete survey is included in Annex 2.A1.

the case in the countries that have received large numbers of Venezuelan migrants: in just six years, Venezuelans have become the third-largest group of nationals migrating in response to a crisis in their country of origin, an amount only surpassed by the Syrian and now the Ukrainian migrant populations. Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru are among the leading regional destinations for the diaspora and are now hosting close to 4 million Venezuelans. Of course, to a greater or less degree, all countries in the sample have received Venezuelan migrants over the last five years. The sample also includes countries with a long history of receiving migrants, such as the Dominican Republic (a longstanding destination for the Haitian population), Costa Rica (a central destination for Nicaraguan migrants), and Barbados (a key destination for Guyanese migrants). It also includes Chile, a more recent destination for the Haitian migrant population, and Mexico, which receives migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

The variety of the migratory flows and the receiving countries included in this study enriches the analysis, allowing us to gauge the effectiveness of the interventions in very diverse economic, social, and cultural contexts. It also enables us to offer policy recommendations tailored to suit the realities of these different settings.

Each of the samples for the seven Spanish-speaking countries (Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru) is comprised of approximately 2,400 participants; the one exception is the sample for the Dominican Republic, which includes 3,600 people. In the experiment involving the Dominican Republic, a third treatment group was added to explore the effects of two emotive videos relating the stories of migrants with very distinct backgrounds. One portrays a Haitian woman who represents the Haitian migrant population. The Dominican population has a long history of interaction with Haitians, who speak a different language and whose cultural idiosyncrasies are relatively different. The second video focuses on a Venezuelan woman who represents the Venezuelan migrant population, more recent arrivals whose culture is much closer to that of the Dominican population. Each of the samples for the two smaller English-speaking Caribbean countries, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, is comprised of 2,100 participants. The total sample for the nine countries is approximately 22,000 participants.<sup>18</sup> In each country, participants are equally divided between treatment and control groups. As mentioned above, participants were randomly assigned to each group.

In the seven Spanish-speaking countries, the invitation to participate was issued via campaigns on Facebook and Instagram, with the help of a company specializing in market research and opinion polls. The announcements invited people to answer an online survey about their country, without specifically mentioning that the subject concerned migration or the migrant population. The sample selection included participants of different genders, ages, and regions of the country.<sup>19</sup> These regions varied by country.

In the two Caribbean countries, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, participants were contacted by telephone with the help of another company specializing in market research and opinion polls.<sup>20</sup> The surveys were implemented online with the help of pollsters, who were responsible not only for reaching out to the participants by telephone and inviting them to take part in the survey, but also for following up to make sure that they completed the survey. Calls to households were made randomly via cell phones and landlines, targeting people aged 18 and over.

The sampling strategy does not ensure a nationally representative sample. In this case, however, to identify the impact of the interventions, the sample for each country needs to be comparable, which is

<sup>18</sup> The surveys were carried out between November 2021 and March 2022.

<sup>19</sup> In other words, the sample selection process is stratified by gender, age, and region.

<sup>20</sup> Due to logistical constraints, it was not possible to hire a single firm that could work in all nine countries simultaneously.

achieved by randomly assigning participants to the different treatment and control groups. If the sample size is large enough, the randomization makes it possible to obtain groups that are practically identical and comparable to each other before the interventions are implemented. The differences between the responses from the three groups can be measured using the questions they answered after being shown the video. If these differences are large enough, these results can be attributed to the impact of the interventions.

## 2.6. Estimating the Effects of the Interventions on Four Major Categories of Interest

The surveys conducted in the experimental context described above allow us to estimate the effects of interventions on four dimensions: i) political preferences and social norms; ii) economic motivations; iii) sociotropic factors; and iv) perceptions centered around crime and social stigma.

**1) Political Preferences and Social Norms.** Ten questions inquire whether participants:

- a) think it is good or bad for migrants to live in their country.
- b) think it is good or bad for migrants to become their neighbors.
- c) think it is good or bad for a close relative to marry a migrant.
- d) agree with the government providing migrants with humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care).
- e) agree with the government providing migrants with health services on the same terms as the local population.
- f) agree with the government providing migrant children and young people with educational services on the same terms as the local population.
- g) agree with the government providing migrant children with health services on the same terms as the local population.
- h) agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.
- i) agree that it is not difficult to see issues from the migrants' point of view.
- j) would donate to an organization that helps migrants.

**2) Economic factors.** Four questions ask whether participants:

- a) agree with the government providing migrants with a work permit or document allowing them to work legally.
- b) agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy.
- c) agree that migrants do not come to compete for their jobs.
- d) agree that migrants are not a burden on the state.

**3) Sociotropic Factors.** Two questions ask whether participants:

- a) agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it.
- b) agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and cultures.

**4) Beliefs round Crime and Social Stigma.** Two questions ask whether participants:

- a) agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime.
- b) agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work.



## 2.7. How Do the Surveys Measure the Effects of the Interventions?

For those interested in understanding the technical details of this exercise, this section presents the empirical strategy that is applied to identify the impact of the treatments implemented in the experiments.

### 2.7.1. Base model

Using the data collected from the survey responses conducted after presenting the videos, the following equation was estimated for each country:

$$y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 Info_i + \beta_2 Emot_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where  $i$  indexes the participants,  $y$  is the outcome of interest,  $Info$  is a binary variable that takes the value of 1 for participants assigned to the informative group and 0 otherwise,  $Emot$  is a binary variable that takes the value of 1 for participants assigned to the emotive group and 0 otherwise, and  $\varepsilon_i$  is the error term.

For questions 1.a, 1.b and 1.c, a multivariate *multinomial logit* model was estimated in which the dependent variable may take the value of “good,” “it depends” and “bad,” as per the categories described in section 2.6. For the remaining questions, a linear probability model was estimated in which the dependent variable is a dichotomous variable that takes the value of 1 when the response is “agree” or “somewhat agree” and a value of 0 when the response is “disagree” or “somewhat disagree.” The dependent variable is coded so that the responses termed “agree” or “somewhat agree” correspond to responses in favor of migration.

In addition to the separate calculations made for each country, the results of which are presented in chapters 3 through 5, calculations were also made for the pooled sample of all nine countries. The results of this version of the model are presented in chapter 6. The motivation behind the pooling strategy was to obtain a much larger sample and increase the statistical power, which makes the estimates more precise.

The specification that grouped all the countries is defined as follows:

$$y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 Info_i + \beta_2 Emot_i + \delta_c + \varepsilon_i$$

where  $c$  indexes the participant’s country. All terms in this equation are identical to the previous equation, in addition to  $\delta_c$ , which represents country-fixed effects.

This regression was first estimated by pooling the data from the seven largest countries to identify potential biases associated with differences in the data collection methodologies among the different countries and then pooling the data for the two smaller English-speaking Caribbean countries. The results were qualitatively similar using either grouping.

The pooled calculations were reviewed to ensure that the resulting participant sample was balanced according to the following attributes: gender, age range, maximum educational attainment, real and subjective income quintile, having children, being unemployed, political ideology (left, center, right)<sup>21</sup>, and initial levels of acceptance of different people and empathy.<sup>22</sup> The balance between the groups is not

21 Along the scale of political ideology, which ranges from 0 (left-wing) to 10 (right-wing), those who place themselves in categories 0, 1, 2, and 3 are classified as being in the left-wing category, while those who place themselves in categories 7, 8, 9, and 10 are classified as being in the right-wing category.

22 The balance tests are available in the online statistical annex.

perfect. Some of the variables that could be correlated with the experiment results are unbalanced. These variables are not included as controls in the estimations because the bias induced by the sample loss if included is greater than the bias associated with the imbalance between groups.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, to ensure that there is no bias caused by systematic nonresponses to some questions used in the estimations, all the exercises are performed: i) on the original database; ii) on a database which eliminated those participants who failed answer five or more questions, and iii) on a database in which missing responses are replaced using the control group's average response. This book discusses the results obtained from the original database after confirming that these results are similar to those obtained using strategies to control for nonresponses.

### 2.7.2. Model with heterogeneities

In addition to the base model presented in section 2.7.1, eight different models with heterogeneities are estimated for each of the nine separate countries and using the data for all nine. In these models, the treatments interact with different participant characteristics—sex, age range, maximum educational attainment, real income quintile, subjective income quintile, having children, being unemployed, and political ideology (left-wing, center, right-wing). The book presents the results of the base model and discusses the results of these other models that take heterogeneities into account. More specifically, heterogeneous effects with statistical significance are discussed. In some countries, the number of participants aged 65 and over is small (Barbados, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Trinidad and Tobago). In such cases, age groups are redefined by aggregating the highest categories.

The analysis that allows for heterogeneous effects explores the possibility of the interventions having different impacts on each subgroup, depending on how predisposed they are to having negative attitudes toward migrants. Ideally, the interventions should serve to change the attitudes of those with prejudices. However, because people tend to ignore information that conflicts with their beliefs, this sort of intervention tends to only affect those who already have relatively positive attitudes.<sup>24</sup> In light of this fact, the analysis begins by identifying which demographic characteristics and political preferences in the control group are associated with unfavorable views of migrants. According to previous studies, these subgroups tend to be women, older people, people with low levels of education, people employed in sectors where they compete for jobs with the migrant population, and people who identify their political beliefs as being on the right side of the political spectrum.<sup>25</sup>

Heterogeneous treatment effects were estimated using the following specification:

$$y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 Info_i + \beta_2 Emo_i + \delta \sum_{j=1}^n Info_i \times Subg_{ji} + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^n Emo_i \times Subg_{ji} + \eta \sum_{j=1}^n Subg_{ji} + \varepsilon_i$$

As the participant characteristics may fall into more than two categories,  $j$  corresponds to the total number of categories for each characteristic.  $Subg$  is a dichotomous variable that takes the value of 1 if individual  $i$  belongs to a specific subgroup  $j$  using the traits mentioned above and 0 if they do not belong to subgroup  $j$ .

As in the previous cases, the estimations are performed alternatively on three versions of the databases to ensure that the results are not biased by the systematic nonresponses in the sample.

<sup>23</sup> One version of the exercises that was performed on the reduced databases obtained after taking controls into account shows that changes in statistical significance or the magnitude of the coefficients are the result of nonrandom loss of observations rather than of the inclusions of the controls.

<sup>24</sup> Taber and Lodge (2006).

<sup>25</sup> Pardos-Prado and Xena (2019); Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014); and Mayda (2006).

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## Annex 2.A1. Baseline Questionnaire Used in the Experiment Surveys

**1) Which country were you born in?**

- a) In [country]<sup>26</sup>
- b) Another country

**2) What year were you born in? [if the respondent answers that they were born after 2003, the interview does not continue as participants must be over 18 years to take part].**

**3) Which city or municipality do you live in? [Drop-down list of cities and departments/provinces].**

**4) What is your gender?**

- a) Female
- b) Male
- c) Other

**5) What is your marital status?**

- a) Married/civil union
- b) Single
- c) Separated/divorced/widowed

**6) How many people live in your household, including yourself? Think about the people whom you share a dwelling with and eat a meal with most days.**

**7) Do you have children?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**8) What is the highest level of education you have attained?**

- a) No formal education
- b) Incomplete primary education
- c) Complete primary education
- d) Incomplete secondary education
- e) Complete secondary education
- f) Incomplete tertiary or university education
- g) Complete tertiary or university education or more

---

<sup>26</sup> [Country] refers to the respondent's country of origin.

**9) What is your current activity?**

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| a) Full-time employee (8 hours a day or more)     | d) Unemployed and seeking work      |
| b) Part-time employee (less than 8 hours per day) | e) Student                          |
| c) Own business, independent, or self-employed    | f) Unemployed and not seeking work\ |
|   | g) Retiree/pensioner                |
|   | h) Domestic work and childcare      |

**10) Imagine a flight of five steps, with the poorest people in the country standing on the first step and the richest on the fifth. Where would you place yourself?**

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| a) 1—Poorest | e) 5—Richest                                |
| b) 2         | f) I do not know/I would rather not answer. |
| c) 3         |   |
| d) 4         |   |

**11) In the last 30 days, was there a time when your household ran out of food due to lack of money or other resources?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**12) Do you receive government subsidies, social programs, or cash transfers?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**13) In politics, we often talk about “left-wing” and “right-wing.” Where would you place yourself on a scale where 0 stands for the far left and 10 for the far right?**

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| a) 0—Left | g) 6  |
| b) 1      | h) 7  |
| c) 2      | i) 8  |
| d) 3      | j) 9  |
| e) 4      | k) 10—Right                                 |
| f) 5      | l) I do not know/I would rather not answer. |

**14) What is your total monthly household income (including all household members) in [country currency], basing your answer on a recent typical month? [Show income quintile ranges by country].****15) This list contains descriptions of several groups of people. Can you indicate whether or not you would mind having people from these groups as neighbors?**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans people                     | d) People of a religion that is different to your own |
| b) Migrants  |   |
| c) People of a race or ethnicity that is different to your own |   |

**16) Please read the following statements and select whether you agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree with each.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a) Sometimes it is difficult to see things from other people's points of view | c) In [country], everyone has the opportunity to succeed and achieve economic success |
| b) I often feel concerned for people with fewer opportunities than me         |   |

**17) What has the most influence on whether a person is poor?**

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| a) Lack of effort on their part       | c) [At this point, the participant is shown the video they have been assigned] |
| b) Circumstances beyond their control |  |

**18) Out of every 100 inhabitants of [country], how many people do you think are migrants?**

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| a) Less than 5       | d) Between 20 and 30 |
| b) Between 5 and 10  | e) More than 30      |
| c) Between 10 and 20 |                      |

**19) In [country], [number] out of every 100 people have a complete secondary education. How many of every 100 migrants do you think have a complete secondary education?**

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| a) Less than 5 people | d) Between 20 and 30 |
| b) Between 5 and 10   | e) More than 30      |
| c) Between 10 and 20  |                      |

**20) Please read the following sentence and indicate whether you agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree. "Sometimes it is hard to see things from migrants' point of view."**

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| a) Agree          | c) Somewhat disagree |
| b) Somewhat agree | d) Disagree          |

**21) If you had some extra money, which of the following organizations in your country would you donate to, if any?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a) An organization that helps migrants         | c) An organization that protects the environment |
| b) An organization that defends women's rights | d) An organization that helps poor people        |
|  | e) I would not donate money to anyone            |

**22) Please read the following sentences and select whether you think that the circumstances they describe are good or bad or that it depends.**

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| a) Migrants living in your country   | c) A migrant marrying a close relative of yours |
| b) Having a migrant as your neighbor |   |

**23) Please read the following sentences and indicate whether you agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree with each.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a) Migrants living in [country] are just as trustworthy as [country's nationality]. | e) Most migrant women end up engaging in prostitution. <sup>27</sup>           |
| b) Migrants contribute to the country's economy.                                    | f) Migrants improve our society by bringing new ideas and cultures.            |
| c) Migrants come to compete for our jobs.   | g) Migrants are a burden on the state.   |
| d) Migrants increase crime.   | h) In general, migrants contribute more to the country than they take from it. |

**24) Please read the following sentences and indicate whether you agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree with the government of [country] providing migrants living in the country access to:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a) Humanitarian aid, such as temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care | d) Education services for children and young people on the same terms as [country's Nationality] |
| b) A work permit or document that allows them to work legally                    | e) health services for migrant children on the same terms as [country's nationality].            |
| c) Health services on the same terms as [country's nationality]                  |  |

**25) Are you in contact with migrants in your daily life?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a) Yes, some of my friends are migrants                             | e) Yes, my life partner is a migrant                    |
| b) Yes, some of my acquaintances (at school/work/etc.) are migrants | f) Yes, some of my neighbors are migrants               |
| c) Yes, some of my employees or service providers are migrants      | g) Yes, I am in contact with migrants in some other way |
| d) Yes, my employers are migrants                                   |   |

<sup>27</sup> Although the question was asked in this format, the term "sex work" is used in the book instead of "prostitution."





CHAPTER 3

# MIGRANTS IN MEXICO, COSTA RICA, AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



## 3.1. Mexico

### 3.1.1. Migration in Mexico

#### ***Mexico is a net population exporter and serves as the main transit corridor for migrants heading to the United States***

There is very little immigration into Mexico compared to the emigration of Mexicans to other countries. In 2020, there were around 1.2 million immigrants sheltering in the country, amounting to 0.9 percent of its total population. This number contrasts sharply with the almost 11.2 million Mexicans living outside their country during that same year, a figure that is equivalent to 9 percent of Mexico's population (figure 3.1A). Between 1990 and 2020, the number of immigrants almost doubled, but their share of Mexico's population remained at 0.8–0.9 percent (figure 3.1B). The most notable changes over these three decades are related to the immigrants' countries of origin. In 1990, 62 percent of all migrants living in Mexico were from Latin America and the Caribbean, while in 2020, migrants from this region amounted to just 23 percent. By contrast, the share of immigrants from the United States went from representing 28 percent of all immigrants living in Mexico in 1990 to 67 percent in 2020. The next-largest migrant communities relative to the total Mexican population are migrants from Venezuela (6 percent), Guatemala (4 percent), and Honduras (3 percent).<sup>1</sup> Based on data from the Migration Policy Unit of Mexico's National Population Council (CONAPO), 4 out of 5 US citizens living in Mexico are of Mexican descent.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, between 3 to 4 out of 10 migrants who are in transit in Mexico are headed to the United States or Canada.<sup>3</sup> Of all the migrants in transit, Mexico's Migration Policy, Registration, and Personal Identity Unit (UPMRIP) estimates that 9 out of 10 are from Central America.<sup>4</sup>

In 2020, children under 15 accounted for a large share of immigrants in Mexico (52 percent). This share contrasts with the much smaller fraction of the Mexican population in this age group, a difference which seems to be due to the growing percentage of children aged 0–9 among the country's immigrant population. The distribution of the total population among the other age groups is much more uniform (figures 3.2A and 3.2C). Furthermore, the levels of education attained by adult migrants are similar to those attained by the national population. Of all adults over 25 living in Mexico, the highest education level for approximately 65 percent is primary education.<sup>5</sup>

#### ***The gap between the vision and the implementation of Mexico's migration policy***

Over the past three decades, the Mexican government has focused its migration strategy on protecting the human rights of migrants, acknowledging their particularly vulnerable situation. Nevertheless, a large gap persists between the vision underlying Mexico's migration policy and its execution. This has led Mexico to enact reactive containment measures based on controlling migration and defending its

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

<sup>2</sup> SEGOB (2018).

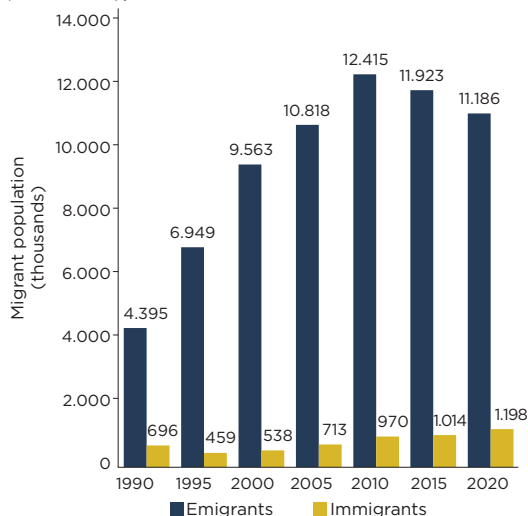
<sup>3</sup> Estimates based on data from a report published by the Ministry of the Interior (SEGOB), which said: "By 2013, there were 253,119 individuals in transit through Mexico, 236,572 of them from Central America and 16,547 from elsewhere in the world. By 2018, there were a total of 388,608 individuals in transit, 355,619 from Central America and 32,989 from other regions around the world" (SEGOB, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> SEGOB (n.d.).

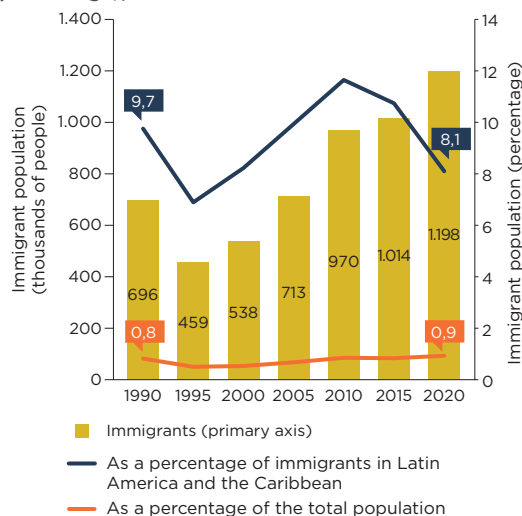
<sup>5</sup> National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (ENIGH) 2018.

**Figure 3.1. Mexico expels far more migrants than it receives**

**A. Cumulative migrant inflows and outflows (thousands), 1990–2020**



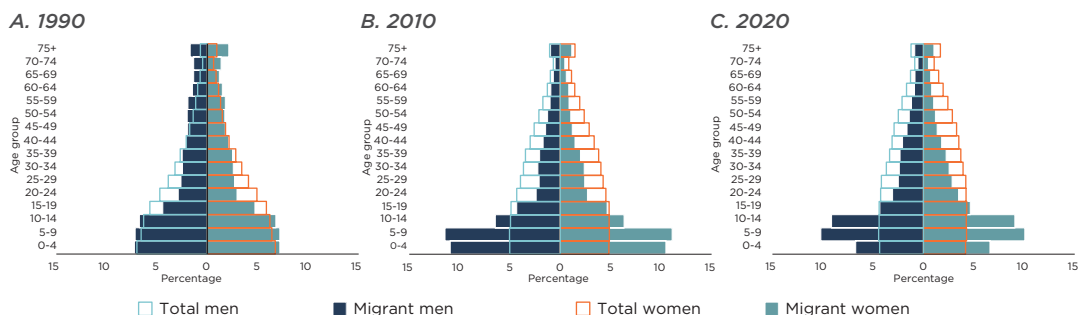
**B. Cumulative migrant inflows (thousands and percentage), 1990–2020**



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

**Figure 3.2. In Mexico, most migrants are minors aged 8–14**

*Migrant population and total population by age group and sex (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

Note: The total population includes all people living in Mexico (locals and migrants).

national security, with limited resources devoted to institutional coordination.<sup>6</sup> Several factors fuel this inconsistency. First, the asymmetries that have developed along the migratory corridor that crosses the country, are compounded by the poverty, political instability, and violence that motivates Central American migrants to leave their countries of origin. Second, the border’s economic and institutional vulnerability in the face of organized crime and corruption. Third, the changing priorities in US migration policies and incentives to cooperate with Mexico.<sup>7</sup> In the face of the increasing complexity that these challenges pose for a comprehensive and unified policy response in Mexico, the country’s migrant

6 París et al. (2016); Canales-Cerón and Rojas-Wiesner (2018), and Sánchez-Montijano and Zedillo (2022). París et al. (2016); Canales-Cerón and Rojas-Wiesner (2018), and Sánchez-Montijano and Zedillo (2022).

7 Knippen, Boggs, and Meyer (2015), and Cornelius (2018).

population continues to be exposed to the risk of victimization tied to the extreme vulnerability they face on their northward journey.<sup>8</sup>

At the beginning of the 21st century, Mexico updated its migration policy by decriminalizing undocumented migration in 2008 and passing the Migration Act in 2011. Both were key steps toward carrying out the commitments contained in international conventions based on human rights and facilitating migratory flows, in contrast to the punitive vision embodied in the General Population Act of 1974; these actions promised to more clearly define institutional roles.<sup>9</sup> However, these initiatives have been counteracted by policies focused on toughening security along Mexico's southern border through increased military presence, such as the *Programa Frontera Sur* [Southern Border Program].<sup>10</sup> Based on the premise of safeguarding the human rights of migrants entering and traveling through Mexico, as well as promoting development in the region, this program militarized and expanded the number of checkpoints along Mexico's southern border. Although this measure failed to control migratory flows in a sustained manner, it did increase the risks and vulnerabilities migrants encounter in transit.

Furthermore, since 2000 Mexico has implemented at least nine regularization processes, redefining categories used to establish migratory status, classify beneficiaries, the validity periods for permits, eligibility requirements, and sanctions linked to application requests.<sup>11</sup> Applications for refugee status in Mexico have increased in recent years. But the country's refugee system has not had the same support as the migratory control system and remains unable to respond to the current challenges. Meanwhile, recent measures aimed at developing institutional and regional coordination, as well as regularizations and guarantees for populations in transit, have been subordinated to the demands of overseeing migratory flows.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Little is known about how migration affects Mexico***

Despite the complexity of North America's migratory corridor and the place that Mexico occupies as a focal point for emigration, human traffic, and return migration, there is little rigorous evidence concerning the socioeconomic effects of migration within the country.<sup>13</sup> In general, the evidence available on the impact of migration consists of descriptive efforts and qualitative data at the local level, especially in the border areas. We know, thanks to these findings, that while migrants living in Mexico have not acquired a collective identity and have not received the same level of government support offered to European immigrants who arrived in the country in the 20th century, they possess qualifications that are valued in Mexico's labor market. Many of these migrants have successfully developed businesses and established professional careers in the academic and scientific sectors.<sup>14</sup> In fact, the recent integration of asylum seekers into the formal labor market sector has the potential to generate revenue gains for the Mexican

8 The violence experienced by migrants is one of the key features of the transit route to the United States. In 2009, more than 9,000 migrants were kidnapped (Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 2011). In 2010, 72 migrants were massacred by members of an organized crime gang operating in San Fernando, Tamaulipas, while 50 Central American migrants went missing in the state of Oaxaca (González-Murphy and Koslowski, 2011).

9 González-Murphy and Koslowski (2011); París et al. (2016); and Canales-Cerón and Rojas-Wiesner (2018). Since 1993, Mexico's migration policy has been implemented through the National Migration Institute, a decentralized technical institution that reports to SEGOB. It was originally created in response to the urgent need for a border control instrument that addressed the demographic flows caused by economic crises and political instability in Latin America. More recently, it has found itself with the complex task of protecting national security through migration control while also protecting migrants, regardless of their migration status.

10 Arriola-Vega (2017).

11 IOM (2021); Acosta and Harris (2022). Most of these processes have been temporary and extraordinary. Only three ordinary processes launched in 2012 currently remain in force, aimed at regularizing migrants in the following categories: (i) individuals who have migrated for humanitarian reasons; (ii) individuals who have family ties with Mexicans or with migrants who have been granted temporary or permanent residence; or (iii) individuals whose migration documents have expired or whose current economic activities differ from those that were initially approved.

12 Hernández-López (2020).

13 Migration outflows, on the other hand, have received considerable academic attention, and there is substantial research that provides causal evidence on the impact of these. For example, Aydemir and Borjas (2006) note that outflows of Mexican migrants increased the relative wages of US workers with average education levels by 5–8 percent, while also decreasing the relative wages of US workers with low education levels by 1 percent. McKenzie and Rapoport (2007) say that Mexican migration outflows to the United States may have reduced inequality within Mexican communities by extending the gains from migration to communities' most vulnerable members through local and family networks. Mishra (2005) says that migration outflows in 1970–2000 had a significant positive impact on Mexican wages on a national scale, with the added consequence of triggering an increase in wage inequality among workers with different levels of education.

14 Canales (2022).

economy, as these asylum seekers pay taxes and make contributions to social security.<sup>15</sup> It is also known that in some areas on the southern border, the capacity to provide migration-related services has been overwhelmed due to increased migratory inflows originating from Central America, from those seeking to escape poverty and violence in their own countries. Mexico's state services lack sufficient resources to provide these migrants with shelter and the legal support they need to apply for asylum.<sup>16</sup>

Descriptive evidence about the effects of Mexico's migration policy in the 21st century has been confined in scope, as the examination has concentrated on the efforts directed to protecting its national security. This focus has aggravated the threat that transnational organized crime poses to the migrant population: this group is particularly vulnerable to being victimized with impunity, as fears of deportation make them reluctant to contact the authorities. Despite underreporting and difficulties in verifying data, the available information suggests a steady increase in the number of kidnappings and homicides of migrants over the last decade.<sup>17</sup> Besides this, coercive action along the borders puts extra pressure on the local communities, which makes them more predisposed to adopting xenophobic attitudes. The local social services infrastructure does not always have the capacity required to absorb the surging demand caused by rising waves of migrants who decide to settle in these communities rather than continue their journey.<sup>18</sup>

Efforts to intensify migration control which took place in 2014–2015 as part of the Southern Border Program, were associated with an increase in the number of arrests in Mexico, a diversification of the routes and means of transport used to enter the country, and a rise in the number of reported crimes and human rights violations suffered by migrants.<sup>19</sup> These heightened controls indirectly contributed to a temporary reduction in the number of Central Americans arrested while in transit by US border authorities, though these numbers went up again in 2016 after these enforcement operations diminished.<sup>20</sup> By issuing documentation for tourists and migrant workers that facilitated their lawful entry, the program also helped to strengthen economic ties fostering regional growth. It also improved the information infrastructure used to monitor illegal traffic along the border, and thus enhanced the potential to assist migrants who might be at risk.<sup>21</sup>

In light of this overall background, all the analytical research into the problems migration poses to Mexico and its neighbors will be incomplete if it does not study the direct and indirect repercussions of US migration policy on demographic flows from, to, and through Mexico. A precise consideration of the repercussions that US policy on the Mexican government's responses also needs to be considered, as do the distribution of costs and the institutional efforts required to articulate coordinated responses in the border areas. For instance, building a wall between the United States and Mexico appears to have contradictory effects. In fact, the presence of the wall in a given town is linked to a 27 percent reduction in undocumented migration in that town, a 15 percent reduction in migration in adjacent towns, and a 35 percent reduction in migration in non-border municipalities.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the wall's existence does not reduce the probability of undocumented migrants deciding to re-enter the country if they get deported, even if this involves using more dangerous routes.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, it has been reported that the more than 64,000 asylum seekers whom the United States returned to Mexico between 2019 and 2020, under the framework of the Migrant Protection Protocols, still lacked guarantees regarding access to

15 UNHCHR (2021); Cabrera and Casas-Alatrister (2022).

16 Isaacson, Meyer, and Morales (2014).

17 Leutert (2018).

18 International Crisis Group (2018).

19 Knippen, Boggs, and Meyer (2015).

20 Leutert (2019). The Southern Border Program was part of the government response to the increase in the inflow of Central American migrants since 2011. The main purpose of this program was to provide increased protection to migrants arriving through the border with Guatemala and Belize and to ensure regional security and economic development in border areas. This was supposed to involve regularization, better infrastructure, and improved security technology, as well as increased coordination among various agencies and countries. The program also had the implicit goal of discouraging the flow of Central Americans to the United States.

21 Leutert (2018).

22 Feigenberg (2020).

23 Wong et al. (2014).

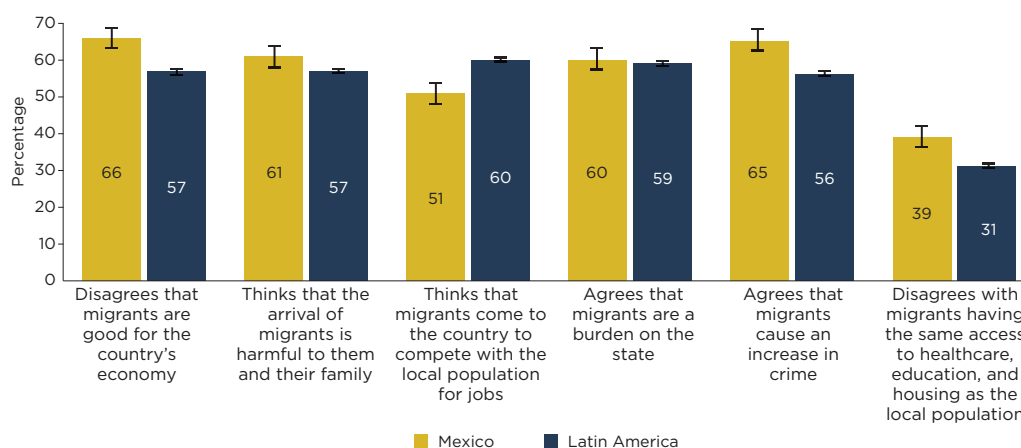
housing, healthcare, education, employment, and legal representation by mid-2020, and even faced an elevated risk of victimization.<sup>24</sup>

### 3.1.2. Attitudes toward migration

The data in the Latinobarómetro 2020 opinion poll show that the proportion of Mexicans with negative views of the effects that migration has on their country and their families is greater than the proportion of Latin Americans who, on average, have negative perceptions regarding migration.<sup>25</sup> In Mexico, only 34 percent of respondents think that migrants are good for the country's economy (compared to 43 percent of respondents in Latin America), and 61 percent think that the inflow of migrants is detrimental to their families (compared to 57 percent in Latin America). This is the case even though a smaller share of Mexicans believe that migrants compete for jobs with the local population (51 percent of respondents in Mexico, compared to 60 percent in the region). This opinion might indicate that Mexicans are more concerned about migrants being a burden on the state (58 percent of respondents believe this, a share that is statistically identical to the 59 percent among Latin Americans in general) or causing an increase in crime (65 percent of Mexicans think this compared to 56 percent of Latin Americans). These negative perceptions may be why a higher percentage of Mexicans do not agree migrants should have the same access that the local population has to healthcare, education, and housing (39 percent of Mexicans disagree with this, compared to 31 percent of Latin Americans) (figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3. Compared to the average in Latin America, a greater share of Mexicans have a negative attitude toward migrants**

*Mexicans and Latin Americans in each category (percentage), 2020*



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

Note: Responses from the "I do not know/No response" category were excluded. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregate for Latin America, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the difference is not statistically significant, and the percentages in both cases are identical.

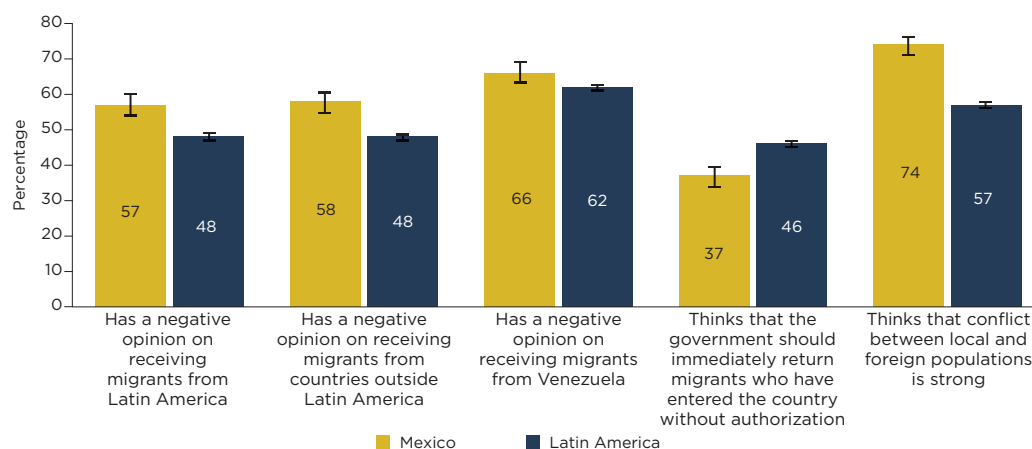
24 Leutert (2020). Also known as the Remain in Mexico (Quédate en México) policy, Migrant Protection Protocols were adopted by the US and Mexican governments to establish new guidelines for processing applications for asylum along the land border between the two countries. In practical terms, this policy requires Spanish-speaking asylum seekers who are not Mexican nationals and who cross the border into the United States to remain in Mexico until their application has been processed.

25 The Latinobarómetro survey is representative on a national scale and adequately reflects the country's population distribution by gender, age group, and level of education. Details of the survey are available on the Latinobarómetro website.

Besides their having a greater resistance to the migrant population, in general, compared to the average population in Latin America, Mexicans tend to reject Venezuelan migrants more frequently than migrants coming from other countries. Specifically, 66 percent of Mexicans have a negative opinion of Venezuelan migrants, compared to 57 percent of Mexicans expressing the same sentiment concerning migrants from other Latin American countries and 58 percent holding negative views of migrants from outside Latin America. All the same, Mexicans generally have less extreme opinions on irregular migration than the average Latin American. Among Mexicans, 37 percent believe that the government should immediately return those migrants who enter the country without authorization, while on average, 46 percent of Latin Americans share this view. Mexicans are aware of friction between the local population and the migrant population: 74 percent of Mexicans believe that there is significant conflict between the two groups (figure 3.4).

**Figure 3.4. Within Latin America, Mexico's population has the largest share who believe there is significant conflict between locals and migrants**

*Mexicans and Latin Americans in each category (percentage), 2017 and 2020*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020. The question on conflict between the national and foreign populations is based on data from Latinobarómetro 2017.

**Note:** Responses from the "I do not know/No response" category were excluded. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregate for Latin America, using 5 percent significance levels.

### 3.1.3. Experiment results

A total of 2,432 individuals took part in the experiment conducted in Mexico.<sup>26</sup> The characteristics of the participants are as follows: 55 percent are men, half are aged 46–64, 63 percent had no higher education, and 61 percent are in the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution (although most participants say they are in the middle of the income distribution).<sup>27</sup> Further, 77 percent have children, and 47 percent say their views fall in the center of the political spectrum (figure 3.5).<sup>28</sup> The online statistical annex contains descriptive statistics for the treatment and control groups.<sup>29</sup>

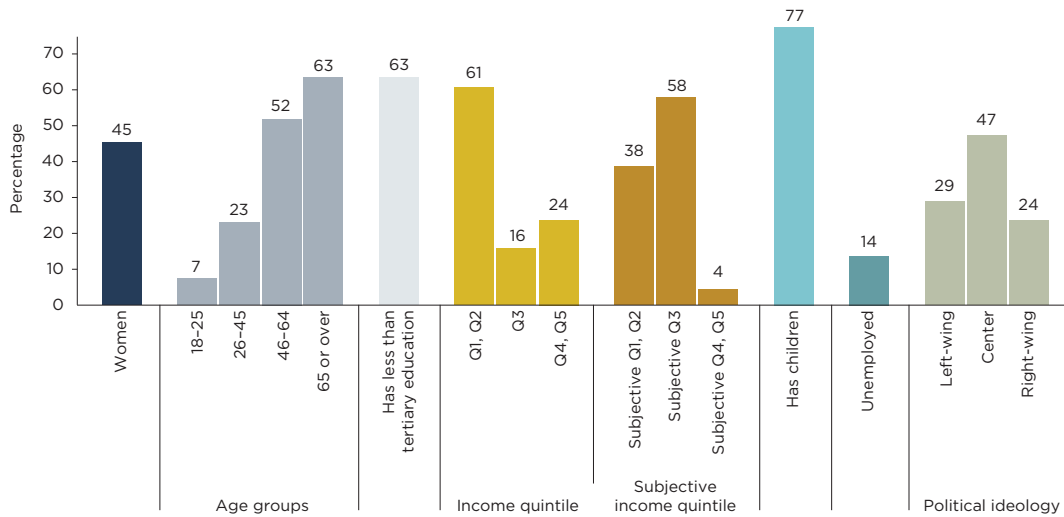
<sup>26</sup> A total of 813 participants were shown a placebo video while they completed the survey. This is the control group, representing the opinions of Mexicans *before* the interventions. A total of 818 participants were shown an emotive video and 801 were shown an informative video. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the methodology.

<sup>27</sup> Based on data issued by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), the population was divided into the following income quintiles: (i) less than MXN7,300; (ii) MXN7,300–11,300; (iii) MXN11,300–16,400; (iv) MXN16,400–25,100; and (v) more than MXN25,100.

<sup>28</sup> The sample collected in Mexico is not strictly comparable with the Mexican population. According to ENIGH 2020, Mexico has a greater share of women (52 percent) and a younger population than the sample (19 percent of the country's population is aged 18–25 and 42 percent is aged 26–46). Further, the average level of education in Mexico is lower than among the participants in the experiment (72 percent of the population has less than a tertiary education), while the percentage of unemployed individuals is also lower (2 percent).

<sup>29</sup> These groups are comparable for all characteristics except their level of empathy: a larger share of people in the treatment groups express concern for others who have had fewer opportunities, and higher-income individuals are overrepresented in treatment groups.



**Figure 3.5. Description of the Participant sample in Mexico***Distribution by characteristic (percentage)*

Source: IDB/UNDP.

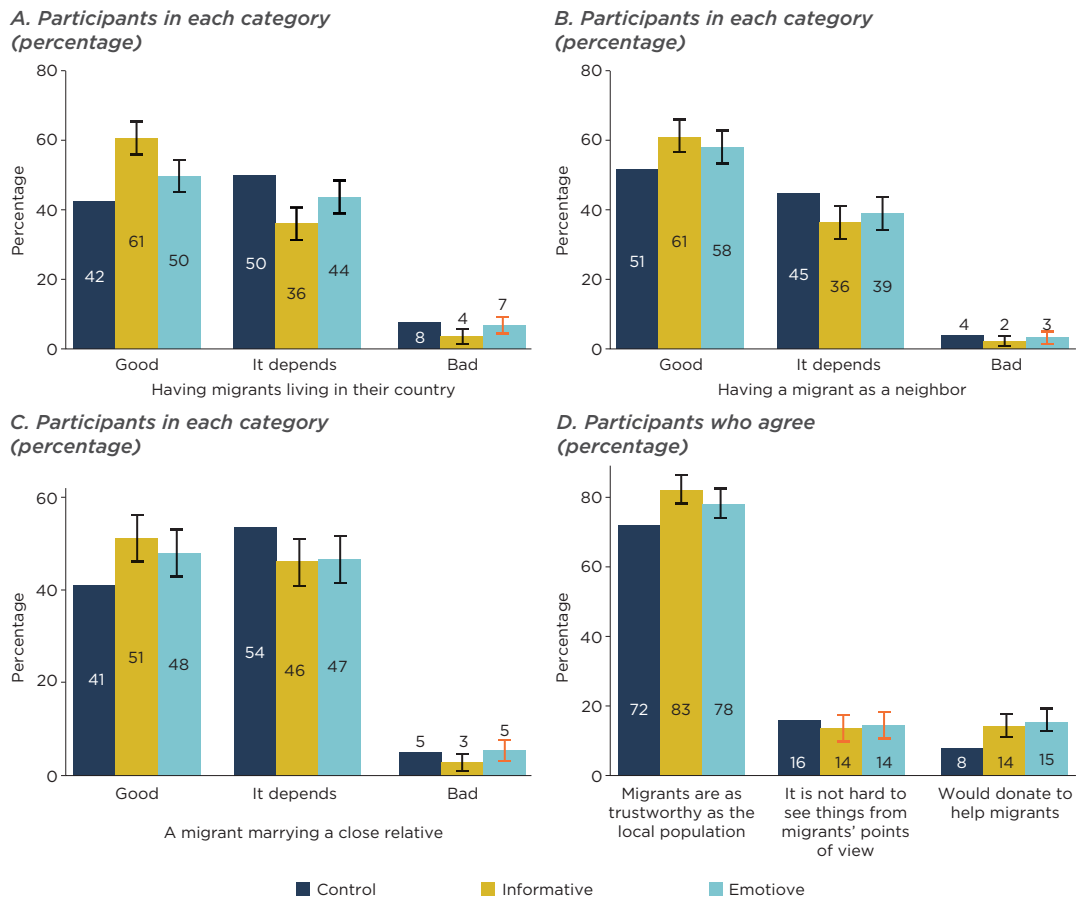
***In Mexico, the informative video has a positive effect that is greater than or equal to that of the emotive video. Providing information is a more effective method of changing Mexican attitudes toward migrants.***

The ability of the videos to affect social norms and political preferences is evaluated using two types of questions. The first type of question explores how predisposed Mexicans' are to accepting migrants as part of society.

First, participants were asked their opinion about having migrants in their country, having a migrant as a neighbor, and having a migrant marry a family member. The options for responding were: *good*, *bad*, or *it depends*. In regard to these three questions, both interventions shifted individuals who initially answered "it depends" toward a positive answer, thus increasing the number of participants who consider the social integration of migrants to be "good." In addition, the effect of the informative video is always greater than or equal to that of the emotive video (figure 3.6). The strongest effect produced is the participants' more favorable attitudes to migrants establishing residence in Mexico. Providing information prompted an 18-percentage-point increase in this sentiment (going from 42 percent to 61 percent). On this same issue, the effect of the emotive video is much lower, just 7 percentage points (figure 3.6A). Both these improved results are concentrated among those lower-income participants who, before the interventions, registered the lowest levels of willingness to accept migrants.

On the question about having a migrant as a neighbor or marrying a family member, viewing the informative video increased the share of participants answering "good" by 10 percentage points (going, on average, from 46 percent to 56 percent). Watching the emotive video induced a 7-percentage-point increase (from 46 percent to 53 percent, on average) in positive responses. These interventions are most effective for changing perceptions among those individuals who did not initially have firm negative views of the migrant population. The effect on participants who initially answered "bad" was limited and was only different from 0 among those participants watching the informative video (figures 3.6B and 3.6C).

**Figure 3.6. In Mexico, both videos increase the share of respondents who think it is good to have migrants in the country**



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented in panels A, B, and C is the result of estimating a multinomial logistic model, and the data presented in panel D is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

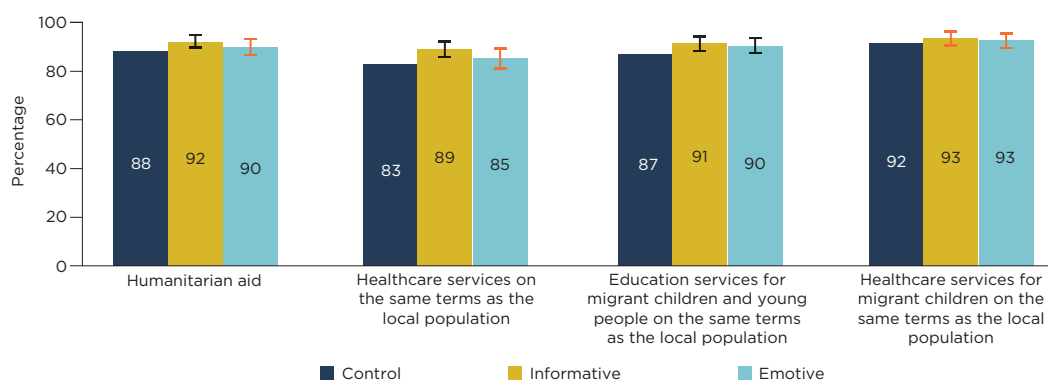
Another question in the group of questions about political preferences and social norms explores the level of trust in migrants. Among participants in the control group, 72 percent trust migrants as much as they trust locals. This percentage is 83 percent among the participants who were shown the informative video and 78 percent among the individuals who watched the emotive video. Again, the informative video proves to be more effective. The two videos produce the same result for the last two questions in this group. When posing the statement that “it isn’t hard to see things from migrants’ points of view,” 16 percent of participants in the control group agreed, and neither of the two videos changed this share. Finally, only 8 percent of participants said they would donate to an organization that helps migrants. Exposure to either of the two videos almost doubled this percentage, taking it to 15 percent on average (figure 3.6D). The effect of the emotive video was concentrated among participants who identify as left-wing and those who place themselves in the lowest income quintiles.

**Most Mexicans agree with the government providing social services to migrants and providing Mexicans with information has a positive influence on this view.**

The second set of questions explored how effectively the videos are at influencing people's preferences concerning policies directed toward migrants. Around 87 percent of respondents in the control group agree that the government should provide migrants with the following: (i) humanitarian aid; (ii) healthcare services of the same quality as those provided to the local population; (iii) education services to migrant children and adolescents similar to those provided to the local population; and (iv) healthcare services to migrant children under the same conditions as extended to Mexican children. On average, the informative video increases this share to 91 percent, with a single exception: it does not impact respondents' views on providing healthcare services to migrant children on equal terms with locals. In contrast, the emotive video only managed to increase by 3 percentage points the share of respondents who agree Mexican and migrant children should receive the same quality of educational services (from 87 percent to 90 percent), but it has no impact on the rest of the responses discussed here. In any case, initial response levels favoring migrants are high, so all the effects linked to these interventions are nonnegligible (figure 3.7). The impact of the informative video on preferences regarding the equal provision of healthcare services is concentrated among unemployed respondents.

**Figure 3.7. In Mexico, overcoming information bias is the most effective approach to influence policy preferences**

*Participants who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

***In Mexico, most people acknowledge that migrants are beneficial for the country's economy but believe that migrants compete with Mexicans for jobs. Providing information helps to improve this view.***

In Mexico, 87 percent of the control group agrees with the government granting work permits to migrants. The two videos managed to increase this share by 5 percentage points, on average. Within the control group, 68 percent agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy. In this case, the informative video has a greater effect (increasing the share to 84 percent), than the emotive video (increasing the share to 76 percent).

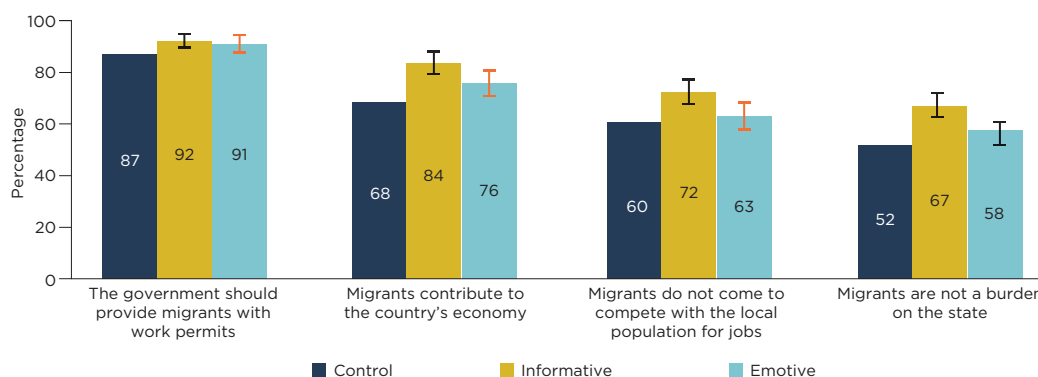
Despite acknowledging these contributions, an important segment of the population describes migrants as a source of competition in the labor market. Forty percent of the Mexicans in the control group believe

that migrants compete for jobs with the local population. The emotive video fails to change this opinion. However, providing information has a significant effect—28 percent of individuals who were shown the informative video view migrants as competition in the labor market.

Further, approximately half (48 percent) of Mexicans in the control group believe that migrants are a burden on the state. In this case, the informative video is twice as effective as the emotive video in percentage points. The informative video reduces this share to 33 percent, while the emotive video lowers this sentiment to 42 percent (figure 3.8). The effect of the emotive video is concentrated among lower-income participants and participants who perceive themselves to be in the lowest-income quintiles.

**Figure 3.8. The informative video reduces the number of people who perceive that migrants compete with mexicans for jobs, but the emotive video has no effect**

*Participants who agree (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

***The informative video is much more effective than the emotive video at positively influencing local population's overall view of migrants' contributions to the country***

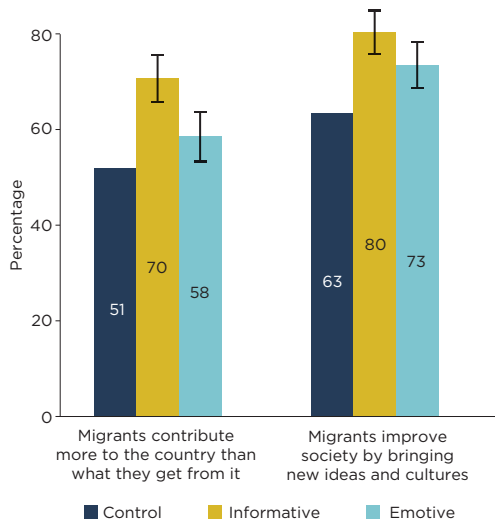
The Mexicans in the control group are equally divided as to their views on what migrants provide to the country and what they receive from it. Only 51 percent of the participants in this group think that migrants contribute more to Mexico than they receive. The two interventions managed to increase this percentage but to different extents. As in the previous cases, the informative video is more effective than the emotive video: while the informative video increases the share to 70 percent, the emotive video raises it to 58 percent.

Additionally, 63 percent of the participants in the Mexican control group agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and cultures. Again, both videos have a positive impact on this perception, but the informative video has a greater effect. Among participants who were shown the emotive video, 73 percent video agreed with the statement, compared to 80 percent of those who saw the informative video (figure 3.9).

*In Mexico, the informative video significantly reduces the percentage of respondents who perceive that migrants increase crime. While the emotive video does not affect the view that crime rates increase with the arrival of migrants, it does reduce some prejudices against migrant women.*

**Figure 3.9. In Mexico, the participants' views on migrants' contributions to the country improved more when using an informative appeal rather than the emotive approach**

Participants who agree (percentage)

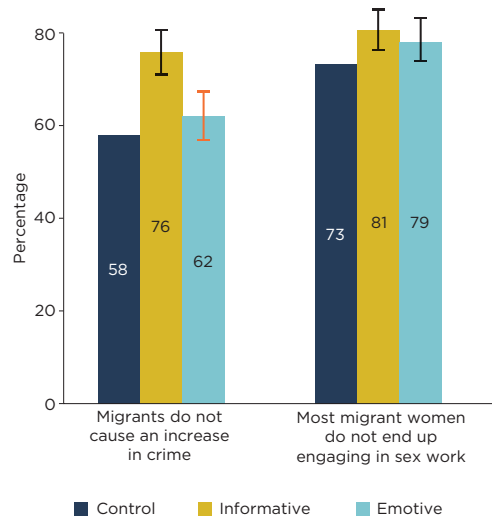


Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels.

**Figure 3.10. In Mexico, providing information and telling life stories reduces by the same magnitude the perception that all migrant women engage in sex work**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

Social stigma impedes the smooth integration of migrants into the receiving society. One of the most commonly held views—that is contradicted by the available empirical evidence—is that crime increases with the arrival of migrants and that the majority of migrant women engage in sex work. Among Mexicans in the control group, 58 percent agree that crime does not increase with the arrival of migrants, while 73 percent agree that most migrant women do not end up resorting to sex work. Despite these high numbers, a nonnegligible portion of the population still hold these prejudices. With regard to beliefs about crime, the informative video is the only successful intervention: it increases the share of participants who do not believe that the arrival of the migrant population leads to a rise in crime, going from 58 percent to 76 percent (a rise of 18 percentage points), which represents a significant change. In relation to the stigma attached to migrant women, both experiments have the same result—they increase the share of participants who do not believe that most migrant women resort to sex work from 73 percent to approximately 80 percent. In this group of questions, as in previous ones, the informative video has the same effect or a more pronounced effect than the video appealing to the emotions of the participants in the experiment (figure 3.10). In particular, the informative video is more effective among participants with lower levels of education, while the emotive video is more effective among the participants who are unemployed.

### **Summary**

These results are promising. The experiments based on surveys show that it is possible to change Mexican perceptions regarding the migrant population. While the interventions do not change the attitudes of the minority who have adopted a negative stance towards migrants, delivering information and exhibiting the history of a migrant woman's life prove to be effective at modifying the attitudes of those persons who do not hold definitive positions.

The interventions manage to transform the perceptions that up to one-fifth of the participants have on some issues. Both video interventions are effective, but the informative video is the most effective in Mexico. Its most pronounced results are improving the perceptions that local population has about the economic motivations of the migrant population, breaking down social stigmas, promoting a public policy agenda for the migrant population, and increasing the share of participants who believe that the contributions migrants make outweigh the burdens they impose on Mexico. Table 3.1 summarizes these results. In the table's last two columns, different colors are used to reflect the relative magnitude of the results. When the same color is used in a given row to highlight the effects of the emotive and informative videos, it means that both interventions were equally effective.

**Table 3.1. In Mexico, the video's effectiveness varies, depending on the category of the perception being questioned***Summary of results (percentage and percentage points)*

Category	Question	Control group (percentages)	Effect of the informational video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally charged video (percentage points)
Policy preferences and social norms	Having migrants living in their country is a good thing.	42.4	18.2	7.2
	Having a migrant as a neighbor is a good thing.	51.5	9.9	6.4
	A migrant marrying a close relative is a good thing.	41.1	10.1	6.8
	Agree that the government should provide migrants humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care.)	88.4	3.8	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants healthcare services on the same terms as the local population.	82.9	6.1	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants children and young people with education services on the same terms as the local population.	87.2	4.1	3.3
	Agree that the government should provide healthcare services for migrant children on the same terms as the local population.	91.5	0	0
	Agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.	72.3	10.3	6.2
	Agree that it isn't hard to see things from migrants' points of view.	15.8	0	0
	Would donate to an organization that helps migrants.	7.8	6.4	7.4
Economic factors	Agree that the government should give migrants work permits or documentation that enables them to work legally in the country	87.0	4.8	3.9
	Agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy	68.3	15.4	7.3
	Agree that migrants do not come to compete with the local population for jobs	60.4	12.1	0
	Agree that migrants are not a burden on the state	51.6	15.4	6.0
Cultural factors	Agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it	51.5	18.7	6.6
	Agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and culture	63.1	16.8	9.9
Social stigma	Agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime rates	58.0	17.8	0
	Agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work	73.3	7.4	5.3

Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Gray cells indicate that the effect is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. For each question, a darker cell color indicates a comparatively greater effect. When coefficients are shown in the same color, the difference between them is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

## 3.2. Costa Rica

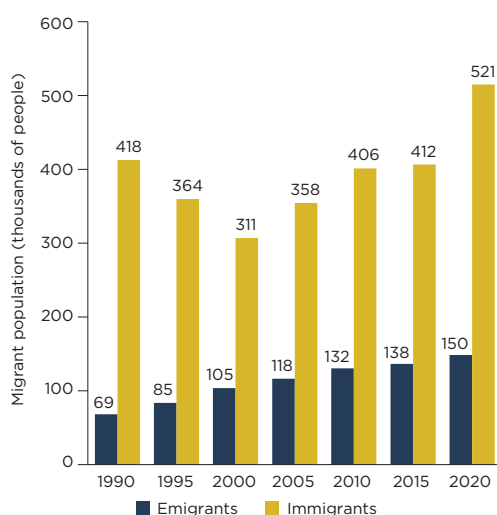
### 3.2.1. Migration in Costa Rica

**Costa Rica is a net migrant receiver, as well as one of the countries with the largest number of migrants as a share of the total population**

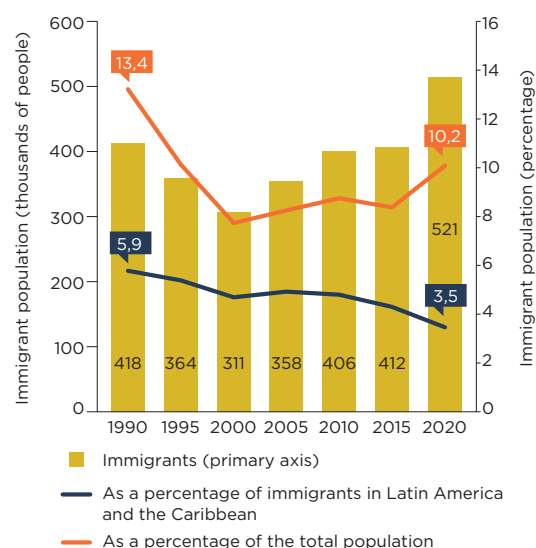
Costa Rica has traditionally been a receiving country for migrants and asylum seekers, as well as a transit country. Over the past 30 years, the annual immigration rate has been persistently higher than the emigration rate (figure 3.11A). In 2020, 521,000 migrants had settled in Costa Rica, equivalent to 10.2 percent of the country's total population. This makes it one of the countries in the region with the largest share of migrants relative to the total population (figure 3.11B). The share of migrants living in Costa Rica is largely explained by the waves of migration from Nicaragua: Nicaraguans accounted for 24 percent of all migrants in Costa Rica in 1990, 74 percent in 2000, and 67 percent in 2020.<sup>30</sup> After Nicaragua, the most common countries of origin are Venezuela and Colombia, each accounting for 5 percent of all migrants living in Costa Rica. Nicaraguan migration also explains the changing trend in cumulative migration, which had been falling but then started to increase in 2000 (box 3.1).

**Figure 3.11. Costa Rica Has a Very Large Share of Immigrants Relative to Its Total Population**

**A. Cumulative migrant inflows and outflows (thousands), 1990–2020**



**B. Cumulative migrant inflows (thousands and percentages), 1990–2020**



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

Most of the migrants living in Costa Rica have low levels of educational attainment and have received slightly less education than the average Costa Rican citizen. Approximately 70 percent of all migrants have primary education or less (compared to 60 percent of all Costa Ricans). Only 22 percent of migrants (and 27 percent of Costa Ricans) have a complete secondary education, while 8 percent of migrants (and 13 percent of Costa Ricans) have attained a tertiary education or higher. In terms of

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.



### Box 3.1. Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica<sup>a</sup>

Nearly two out of three migrants living in Costa Rica are from Nicaragua. This trend has been relatively stable over the past 10 years, and is largely explained by the presence of Nicaraguan citizens who are permanent residents. The relative weight of the Nicaraguan population among migrants who have been granted special residence permits—which includes temporary workers, asylum seekers, and refugees—is lower, on the order of around 50 percent. However, it increased exponentially between 2010 and 2020. In 2020, 61 percent of all asylum applications were filed by Nicaraguans, but only 49 percent of these were approved.

The most recent data from representative surveys indicate that the demographic composition of the Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica differs slightly different from the local Costa Rican population. The majority of Nicaraguan migrants tend to concentrate in the 18–34 age range (68 percent), and women are overrepresented among the Nicaraguan population (women make up 56 percent of Nicaraguan migrants, compared to women accounting for 52 percent of the local population). Nicaraguan migrants predominantly reside in central and northern Costa Rica, as these locations afford access better to opportunities and proximity to the Nicaraguan border, respectively.

However, the most obvious contrasts between Costa Ricans and the Nicaraguan resident population are socioeconomic. Nicaraguan households tend to be more impoverished: 24 percent live in poverty, and 10 percent live in extreme poverty, compared to 19 percent and 7 percent of Costa Rican households, respectively. Other indicators deliver similar results: in Costa Rica, 60 percent of Nicaraguan households are poor based on multidimensional factors, compared to 19 percent of Costa Rican households.

Nicaraguan migrants more frequently report encountering obstacles to their educational progress, such as absenteeism, dropping out, or lagging behind. For example, close to 10 percent of these households with members aged 7–19 report educational lags of at least two years, an issue that only affects 4 percent of Costa Rican households with members in this same age group. There are also differences in terms of health insurance. At least 38 percent of the Nicaraguan households living in Costa Rica report having at least one member without insurance, compared to 33 percent of Costa Rican households.

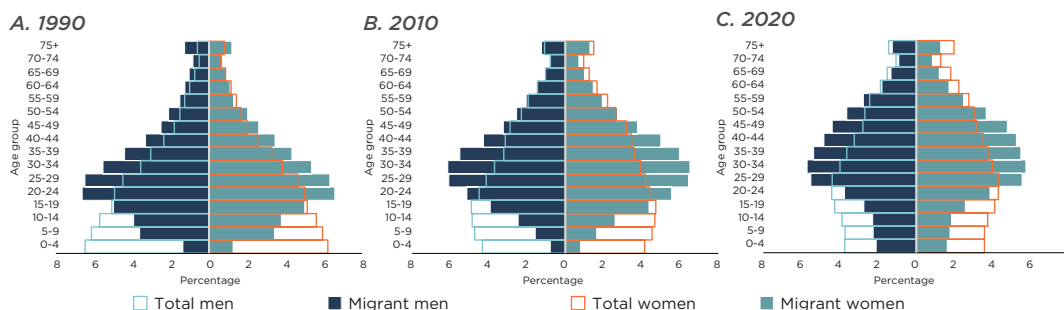
In Costa Rica's labor market, on the national level, jobs are most concentrated in the services sector, which employs 71 percent of the total working population. Nevertheless, the Nicaraguans who are working in Costa Rica are less likely to be employed in the services sector (64 percent, compared to 72 percent of employed Costa Ricans) and are more likely than locals to work in the primary sector (17 percent, compared to 10 percent). Further, barriers to the stability and dignity associated with participating in the labor market affect Nicaraguans disproportionately. Indeed, 22 percent of Nicaraguan households with working members report being paid less than the minimum wage, and 45 percent of them report experiencing other labor rights violations (compared to 12 percent and 15 percent of Costa Rican households, respectively). Likewise, an estimated 56 percent of all Nicaraguan-born workers who were employed in 2022 had informal jobs, while this percentage stood at 42 percent for Costa Rican nationals.

<sup>a</sup> The statements and statistics contained in this box draw extensively from Solís and Hernández (2022). Their work features a deeper analysis of the sociodemographic composition of locals and migrants in Costa Rica based on official statistics, including national censuses, the 2021 National Household Survey (ENAH0), the 2022 Ongoing Employment Survey (ECE), and statistics gathered by the Migration and Alien Affairs Authority (DGME).

age, on average, the migrant population is older than the local population, and the share of working-age migrants is rising steadily. In 1990, 27 percent of all migrants in Costa Rica were under 20, while 67 percent were aged 20–64. By 2020, these percentages had shifted to 17 percent and 76 percent, respectively (figure 3.12).

**Figure 3.12. In Costa Rica, most migrants are of working age**

*Migrant population and total population by age group and sex (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.  
Note: The total population includes all people living in Costa Rica (locals and migrants).

### **Costa Rica's migration policy still confronts major challenges**

Costa Rica's migration policy has made great strides toward becoming more comprehensive, but some structural hurdles persist. The constitution mandates that the regular migrant population has the same rights as the local population in terms of accessing public services, such as healthcare, basic education, and worker protection. However, these guarantees are still denied to irregular and transitory migrants.<sup>31</sup> The country has also designed an institutional framework to address migration-related problems in a well-coordinated and timely manner, in line with international protocols and the promotion of human rights.<sup>32</sup> However, the country has failed to ratify certain international instruments, and Costa Rica's capacity to implement the applicable regulations has been overtaken in recent years by the sudden arrival of large numbers of foreigners over a short time period and the increasing number of asylum applications.<sup>33</sup> Between 2013 and 2017, Costa Rica received 15,325 asylum applications, compared to 167,545 between 2018 and April 2022.<sup>34</sup>

Costa Rica's official approach to this migratory phenomenon is not a limited reaction to the current circumstances; this response has been shaped by fluctuating cycles of migration that occurred between the late 20th century and the early 21st century.<sup>35</sup> The arrival of foreigners fleeing political and civilian conflicts in El Salvador and Nicaragua during the 1980s led to the adoption of the 1986 Migration Act, which was predominately based on controlling these migratory flows.<sup>36</sup> Between 1990 and 2015, the migratory profile changed and came to be dominated by economically motivated pendular and semipendular migration. This led to a change in the legal framework that sought to provide timely and comprehensive assistance to the migrant population and asylum seekers. In 2005, the first attempt to

31 OECD and ILO (2018a).

32 Solís and Hernández (2022).

33 OAS (2020); Acosta and Harris (2022).

34 Refugee Unit, Migration and Alien Affairs Authority.

35 Chaves-González and Mora (2021).

36 Segura (2015).

update regulations was heavily criticized by civil society and international organizations for its punitive approach and the absence of safeguards for the migrants' human rights, despite these rights being included in Costa Rica's constitution and international agreements approved by the country.<sup>37</sup> As a result of this public debate, the Migration and Aliens Act (Law No. 8764) was approved in 2009 and instituted in 2011. Within the context of migration, this law introduced and prioritized the concept of integration and established pathways toward regularization and guarantees for human rights.

The migratory pressures that have defined the demographic flows since 2015 are the result of several factors. Motivated by political and economic uncertainty, many Latin Americans have opted to settle in Costa Rica. This pattern has been compounded by the Venezuelan migration crisis, the arrival of intercontinental migrants en route to the United States, and the sudden inflow of Nicaraguan migrants since 2018, following the upsurge in sociopolitical tensions in that country. Currently, Costa Rica's Comprehensive Migration Policy for 2013–2023 guides the management, oversight, and coordination of migratory flows: it is rooted in a quest for efficiency, inclusion, and better institutional capacities.<sup>38</sup> In addition, there are three ordinary regularization processes currently in place, but these focus exclusively on assisting the relatives of Costa Ricans, addressing humanitarian emergencies, and welcoming indigenous persons.<sup>39</sup> There are at least three other extraordinary regularization processes and bilateral agreements with Nicaragua and Panama in place, all of which have focused on addressing the productivity needs of specific economic sectors or which apply only to certain nationalities and residency periods.<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately, the very specific nature of these regularization measures has reduced their potential impact by tending to encourage irregular entry into Costa Rica, and informal labor relationships.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, the flexibility to grant work permits in the context of the asylum system has had the side effect of converting this instrument into a *de facto* alternative protection mechanism for individuals who apply for asylum and who wish to regularize their migration status, thus saturating the system.<sup>42</sup>

### ***How does migration affect Costa Rica?***

#### **The effects of migration**

There is evidence of the effects of migration on Costa Rica in various settings. The migrant population is estimated to contribute between 11.1 and 11.9 percent of all value added in Costa Rica. Yet this contribution tends to focus on low-productivity sectors and is not associated with business creation.<sup>43</sup> Within the labor market, the concentration of the migrant population in a given region tends to be associated with a reduction in the employment rate of locals with similar skills, suggesting that foreign labor competes with local labor. However, the presence of the migrant population has not affected the average income of the local population who possess similar skills.<sup>44</sup> The evidence indicates that the impact of migration on the occupations and wages of Costa Rican workers has not been uniform along the skill spectrum; rather, the effect varies considerably depending on the characteristics of the local population.<sup>45</sup> For instance, the arrival of low-skilled migrants has had a positive impact on the employment and the salaries of highly qualified women, but at the same time, it has had a negative impact on the wages of unskilled Costa Rican workers. The relationship between the concentration of the migrant population and the probability that the local population will enter the labor market also varies in the economic sector.<sup>46</sup> The effect of the

37 OECD and ILO (2018a).

38 Ministerio de Gobernación y Policía (2020).

39 IOM (2021).

40 OAS and OECD (2017); OECD and ILO (2018a); Acosta and Harris (2022), and IOM (2021).

41 Ramón et al. (2022). The most recent bilateral decisions, in the context of labor market frictions triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, promise to pave the way for more flexible conditions for foreign firms and foreign workers through formal activity.

42 Seele and Bolter (2020).

43 OECD and ILO (2018a).

44 Gindling (2009); Cardozo, Martínez-Zarzoso, and Díaz Pavez (2020).

45 Blyde (2020).

46 Mora Román and Guzmán (2018).

migratory shock on the local labor supply, therefore, has not been exclusively one of complementarity nor one of substitution.

In the field of public finance, the per capita contribution of the migrant population to tax collection has been lower than that of the local population, while, on average, public spending on migrants has been systematically equal to or lower than expenditures on locals (depending on the measurement method used). Therefore, the net fiscal contribution of the migrant population could be positive or negative.<sup>47</sup> It is not necessarily true that the migrant population represents an additional burden on public funds. In fact, the migrants living in Costa Rica are significantly less likely than locals to receive government transfer payments or to use public healthcare services.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, migrant workers (whether salaried or self-employed) in Costa Rica are usually more likely than locals to contribute to social security systems.<sup>49</sup>

### The effects of public policy

Despite the shortage of quantitative assessments centered on Costa Rica's current migration policy, recent findings based on qualitative methods show different degrees of delay in regularizing and registering migrants, as well as in obtaining access to education, healthcare, and employment.<sup>50</sup> Legal provisions guarantee access to education for all children living in Costa Rica, regardless of their migration status. The education system has managed to welcome students of foreign origin in relatively flexible ways, but there is no explicit guarantee concerning the education of irregular migrants.<sup>51</sup> The healthcare system, which in theory is universal, only covers regular migrants who are linked to the social security system. Medical care for adults who are part of the irregular migrant population is restricted to prenatal and emergency services.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, labor market interventions continue to protect local workers, but firms are limited as to the amount of foreign-born workers they may hire, as well as the share of a given company's total payroll that can go to these employees. Consequently, significant barriers still exist in the path to crafting initiatives that simultaneously meet the needs of migrants and locals.<sup>53</sup> Viewed through this lens, the labor market faces the most difficulties, while significant advances have been made in registration and regularization, followed by progress in health and education.

### 3.2.2. Attitudes toward migration

The data from the Latinobarómetro 2020 opinion poll shows that Costa Rican society is divided in terms of its perceptions about migration.<sup>54</sup> On the one hand, the share of Costa Ricans who are negatively predisposed toward the migrant population is above the regional average. In this 2020 poll, 62 percent of the Costa Rican population believed that migrants cause an increase in crime (compared to 56 percent of the population in Latin America), 65 percent agreed that migrants are a burden on the state (compared to 59 percent in Latin America), and 38 percent disagreed with migrants having the same access to healthcare, education, and housing as the native-born population (compared to 31 percent in Latin America). On the other hand, despite these negative attitudes, more than half of the Costa Rican population said that migrants are good for the country's economy (only 44 percent of Costa Ricans think

47 A report by the OECD and the ILO (2018a) presents two public spending allocation scenarios to estimate the magnitude of the tax pressure exerted by migrants. The essential difference between the two scenarios stems from the fact that the allocation of costs associated with public debt and the provision of pure public goods (administration, defense, environment, trade, tourism) is not usually very sensitive to population size. When these costs are shared among the entire population, there is almost no difference between fiscal expenditure on locals and migrants. When these costs are shouldered by locals alone, based on the assumption that the per capita amount would be the same if there were no migrants, the average public expenditure on migrants amounts to 60 percent of the amount for locals. This is why net fiscal contributions may be positive or negative.

48 OECD and FUNDEVI (2017); Voorend, Bedi, and Sura-Fonseca (2021).

49 Gatica López (2018).

50 Chaves-González and Mora (2021).

51 OECD and FUNDEVI (2017); Seele and Bolter (2020); Acosta and Harris (2022).

52 Seele and Bolter (2020). This restriction is not applicable to individuals under the age of 18.

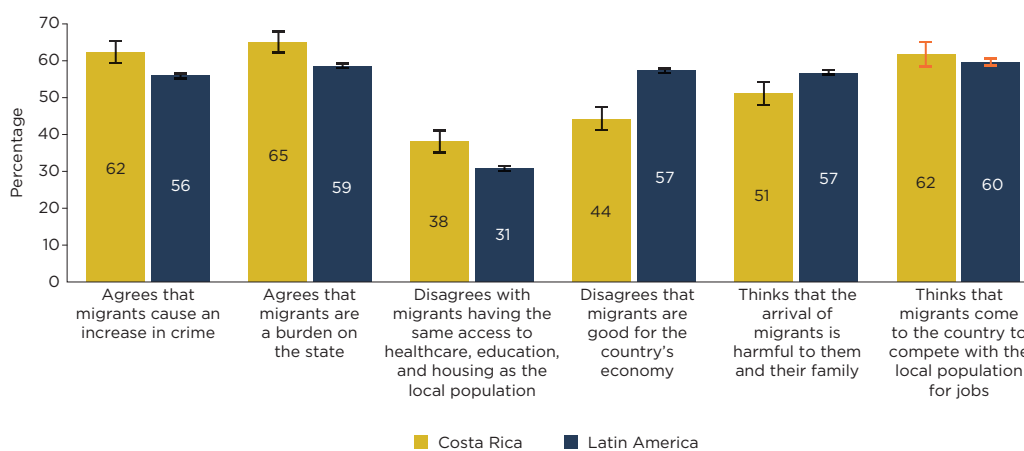
53 Chaves-González and Mora (2021). This analysis uses a multidimensional index to measure the degree of compliance in the four aspects of integration, based on various parameters of access, coordination, dissemination and communication, and social cohesion.

54 The Latinobarómetro survey is representative on a national scale and adequately reflects the country's population distribution by gender, age group, and level of education. Details of the survey are available on the Latinobarómetro website.

the opposite, compared to 57 percent throughout Latin America), while 51 percent deemed the inflow of migrants to be detrimental to them and their families (compared to 57 percent in Latin America). Costa Ricans' opinions were similar to the Latin American average in other aspects: 62 percent of Costa Ricans felt that migrants come to their country to compete for jobs with the local population, a percentage that is not statistically different from the regional average (figure 3.13).

**Figure 3.13. While Costa Ricans are divided in their opinions on migration, they view its economic impacts less negatively than other Latin Americans**

*Costa Ricans and Latin Americans in each category (percentage), 2020*



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

Note: Responses from the "I do not know/No response" category were excluded. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregate for Latin America, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and the percentages in both cases are identical.

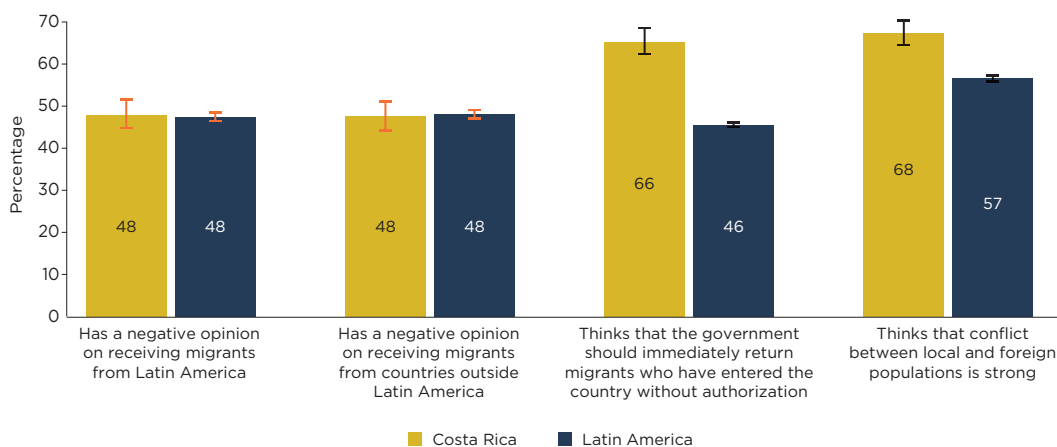
In terms of their willingness to receive migrants, Costa Ricans had very similar views to the regional average for Latin America, and the countries of origin did not appear to make a difference in this regard. Among Costa Ricans, 48 percent looked unfavorably on receiving migrants from other Latin American countries and from other regions (a percentage that is equal to the average for Latin America). However, Costa Ricans had stronger views about irregular migration and thought that a high level of conflict existed between the national and the foreign population. Of all the countries in the sample, Costa Rica had the largest population share of the population which believed that the government should immediately return migrants who entered the country via unauthorized means (66 percent of Costa Ricans believe this, compared to 46 percent of Latin Americans), while 68 percent of Costa Ricans thought that significant conflict existed between the national and foreign populations (compared to 57 percent of Latin Americans) (figure 3.14).

### 3.2.3. Experiment results

A total of 2,497 individuals were interviewed in Costa Rica;<sup>55</sup> 56 percent of them are women. Most participants in the experiment are aged 46–64 (42 percent), had no tertiary education (72 percent), and belong to the two bottom deciles of the income distribution (61 percent).<sup>56</sup> Further, most of them

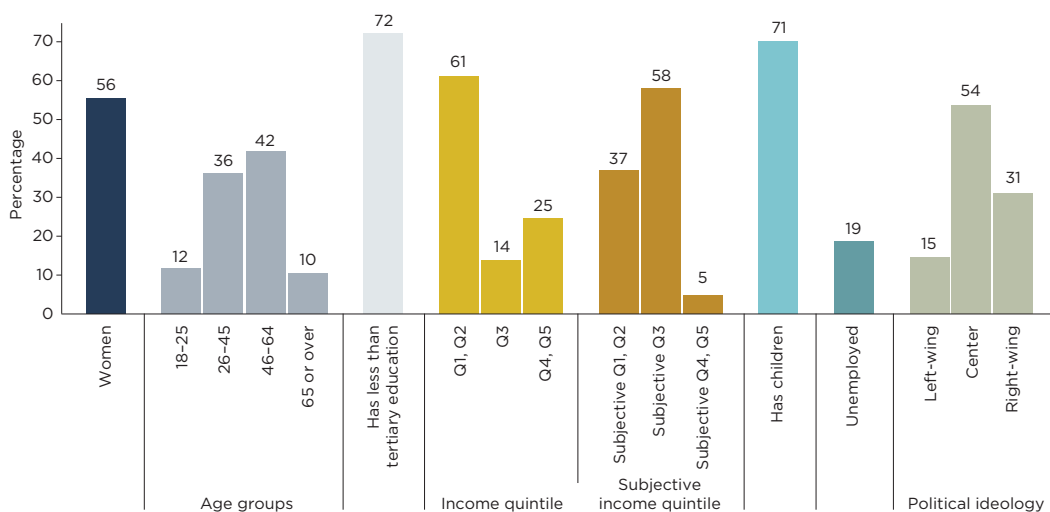
<sup>55</sup> A total of 817 participants are in the control group (they were shown a placebo video on a topic that was not related to migration), while 836 participants were shown the informative video and 844 were shown the emotive video. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the methodology.

<sup>56</sup> Based on data from Costa Rica's National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC), the population was divided into the following income quintiles: (i) less than CRC340,000; (ii) CRC340,000–525,000; (iii) CRC525,000–785,000; (iv) CRC785,000–1,300,000; and (v) more than CRC1,300,000.

**Figure 3.14. In Costa Rica, people strongly oppose irregular migration***Costa Ricans and Latin Americans in each category (percentage), 2017 and 2020*

Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020. The question on the conflict between the national and foreign populations is based on data from Latinobarómetro 2017.

Note: Responses from the "I do not know/No response" category were excluded. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregate for Latin America, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant, and the percentages in both cases are identical.

**Figure 3.15. Description of the participant sample in Costa Rica***Distribution by characteristic (percentage)*

Source: IDB/UNDP.

have children (71 percent) and place themselves at the center of the political spectrum (54 percent) (figure 3.15).<sup>57</sup> Descriptive statistics for treatment and control groups are available in the online statistical annex.<sup>58</sup>

57 The participant sample collected in Costa Rica is not strictly comparable with Costa Rica's population. According to the 2020 National Household Survey (ENAH0), the country's population has a smaller share (52 percent) of women than the sample, as well as a smaller share of individuals aged 46-64 (30 percent). Individuals aged 18-25 (18 percent of the total population) and over the age of 65 (17 percent) are underrepresented in the participant sample. Costa Rica's population also has a lower level of education than the sample (82 percent of the population has attained a tertiary education or lower), while the percentage of unemployed individuals is also lower (9 percent).

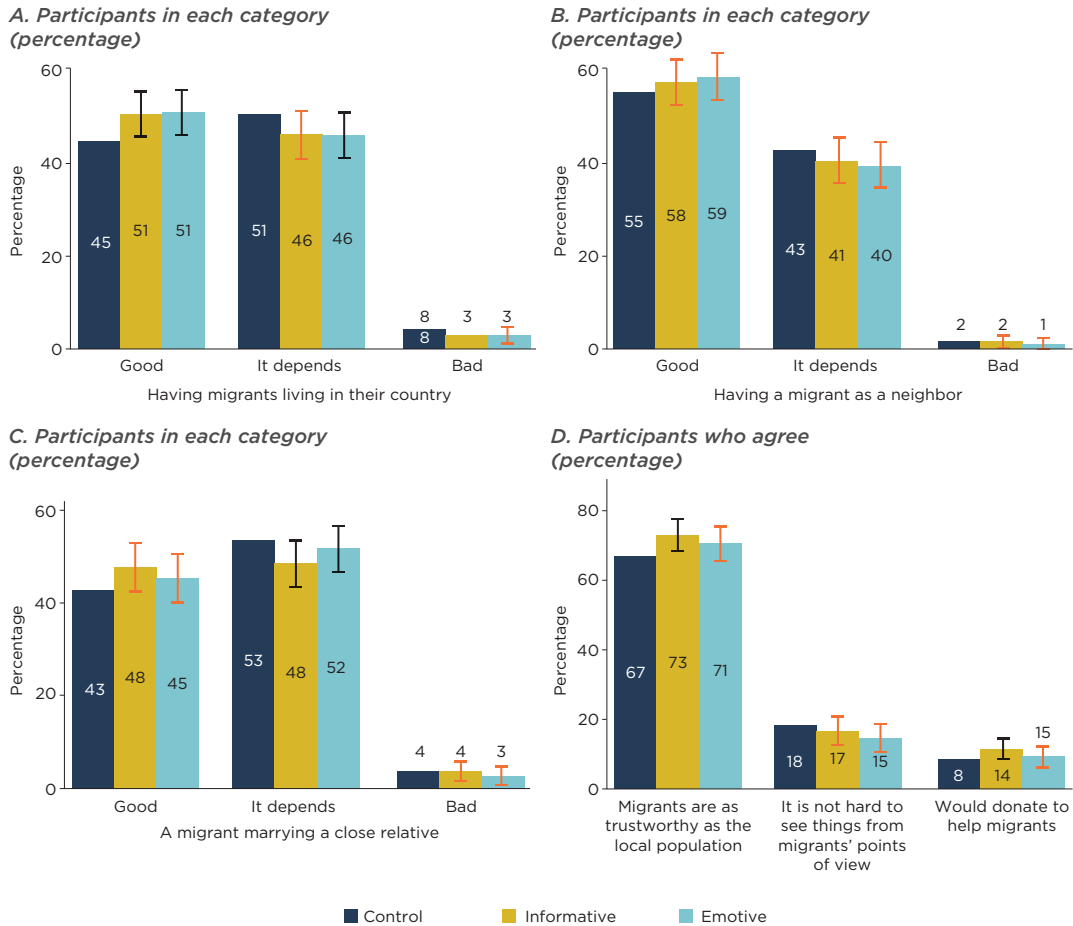
58 The treatment and control groups are comparable in terms of all but three participant characteristics. The group that was shown the informative video contained fewer individuals aged 26-45 and more individuals without a tertiary education than the other two groups. Further, individuals who have children were overrepresented in the treatment groups.

**The two videos improve Costa Ricans' acceptance of migrants, but only the informative video influences their trust in migrants and willingness to make donations that benefit migrants. In contrast, only the emotive video increases locals' support for the provision of humanitarian aid, education, and healthcare to migrants.**

Two types of questions were asked to measure whether this experiment is able to change the Costa Rican population's political preferences and social norms. The first set of questions explored people's willingness to accept migrants in their country and their own social circles. First, participants were asked how they felt about having migrants in their country, having a migrant as a neighbor, or having a migrant marry a family member. The response options were: *good*, *bad*, and *it depends*. Participants mostly responded by saying that having migrants in their country, as neighbors, or in their family circles was "good" thing or that "it depends," while a small percentage believed that the presence of migrants is "bad."

The two treatment videos increase the share of participants who consider it good to have migrants in the country, going from 45 percent to 51 percent (figure 3.16A). Both interventions serve to convince those

**Figure 3.16. In Costa Rica, the informative video is the only intervention that improves trust towards migrants**



**Source:** IDB/UNDP.  
**Note:** The data presented in panels A, B, and C is the result of estimating a multinomial logistic model, and the data presented in panel D is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

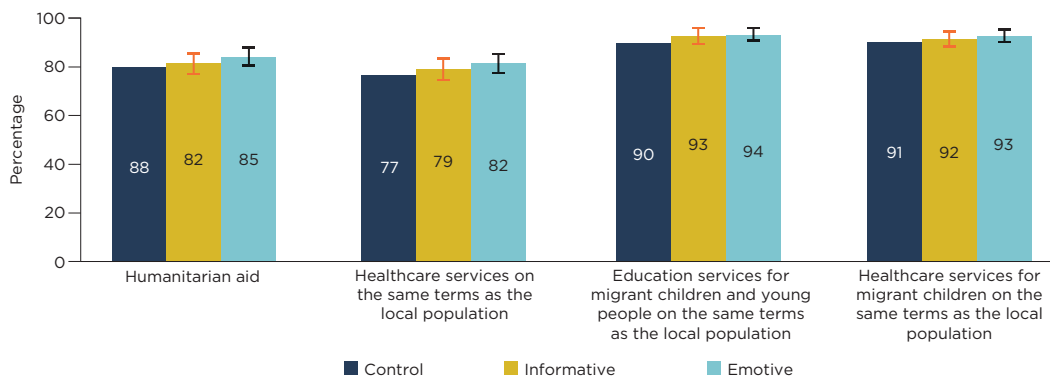
participants who did not initially express negative views of the migrant population (those individuals who responded “it depends”). However, neither of the two treatments manages to change Costa Ricans’ opinions with respect to having a migrant as their neighbor or having them marry a close family member (figures 3.16B and 3.16C).

This same group of questions has three measures to gauge levels of empathy for and trust in migrants: 67 percent of Costa Ricans in the control group agree that migrants are as trustworthy as locals, while 18 percent say that they find it easy to see things from the migrants’ viewpoints, and 8 percent would donate to an organization that helps migrants. In this last case, the approval level is low, but it is higher than the responses recorded for other countries in the experiment. The emotive video fails to change these responses. The informative video, however, increases, to 73 percent, the share of participants who think that migrants are as trustworthy as locals (a 6-percentage-point increase) and induced a 3 percentage point increase in their willingness to make donations to aid migrants (figure 3.16D).

The second set of questions assessed support in Costa Rica for government policies that assist migrants and permits them to access state services. Support levels were high from the outset but lower than in other countries in the experiment. At least 77 percent of participants agree with the government providing migrants with temporary accommodations, along with food and emergency medical care, and granting them equal access to the same quality of healthcare and education as provided to the local population. The emotive video is more effective than the informative video at improving the readiness to help the migrant population. On average, the emotive video marginally increases levels of support (going from 85 percent to 89 percent), while the informative video has no effect on changing these attitudes (figure 3.17). The effect of the emotive video is concentrated among the participants who are experiencing a spell of unemployment. Despite having no impact on the average individual, the informative video changed the level of support for providing healthcare to migrant children among those participants aged 26–45 and modified the level of support for providing education services among the participants with the lowest incomes.

**Figure 3.17. In Costa Rica, the emotive video marginally increases support for policies that benefit migrants**

*Participants who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.



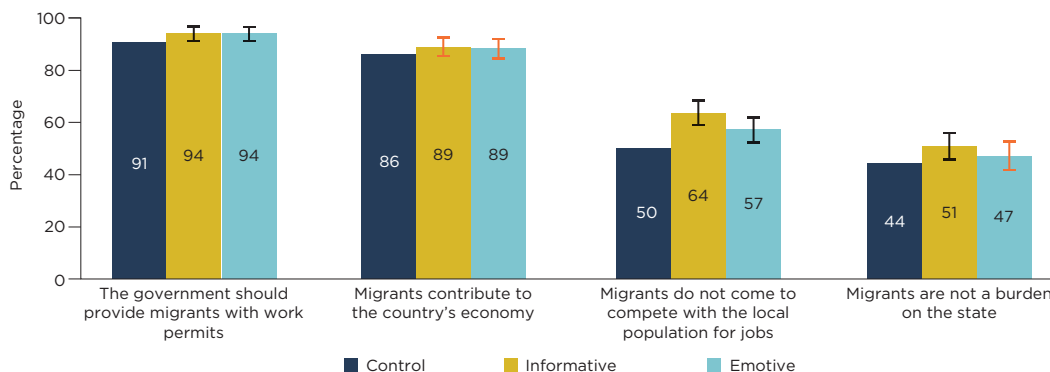
***In Costa Rica, the informative video has an impact that is greater than or equal to the impact that the emotive video has on improving views on how migrants affect the country's economy and labor market.***

The majority of Costa Ricans in the control group (86 percent) recognize the economic benefits that come to the country with the migrants' arrival. Neither of the two interventions succeeds in increasing this share. Although they do acknowledge the potential gains from migration, more than half of the Costa Ricans in the control group consider that the migrant population imposes a burden on the government. Only 44 percent of the control group holds the opposite view. The informative video manages to increase this share from 44 percent to 51 percent (a 7-percentage-point rise) (figure 3.18). This effect is concentrated among the least educated participants and those who are unemployed. The emotive video has no effect on altering this sentiment.

The participants are divided in how they view the impact that the migrant population has on the labor market. Indeed, 50 percent of Costa Ricans in the control group do not believe that migrants compete with the local population for jobs. Although both videos are effective at improving this perception, the informative video is almost twice as effective as the emotive video: 64 percent of participants who saw the informative video believe that migrants do not compete with them for jobs (a 13-percentage-point change), compared to 57 percent of the participants who watched the emotive video (a 7-percentage-point change). Surprisingly, although participants in the control group feel that migrants compete with them in the labor market, 91 percent agree with the government issuing work permits to migrants. In this case, both videos have the same effect, increasing this share to 94 percent. The emotive video has a smaller effect among unemployed participants, while the impact of the informative video is concentrated among individuals whose political ideology is at the center of the spectrum (figure 3.18).

**Figure 3.18. In Costa Rica, the informative video is more effective at changing views on the economic impact of migration**

*Participants who agree (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

**Note:** The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate the difference is not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

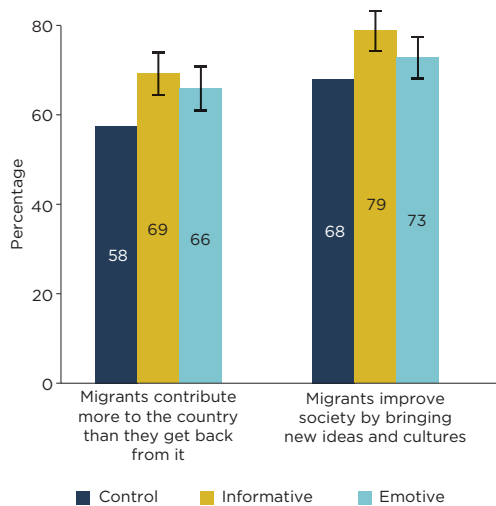
***In Costa Rica, both videos increase the share of participants who believe that migrants contribute to society and the country at large. The informative video is more effective at making locals more optimistic about the consequences of receiving individuals with new ideas and cultures.***

In Costa Rica, 58 percent of the control group believes that migrants contribute more to the country than they receive. Both videos increase this share to around 68 percent. The difference between the effects of the informative video and the emotive video is not statistically significant, yet the emotive video is particularly noteworthy for its effectiveness among participants with right-wing political views.

A high fraction of participants in the control group (68 percent) agree that migrants improve society by contributing new ideas and cultures. Both videos increase this share, albeit to different degrees. While 79 percent of participants in the treatment group that watched the informative video agreed with this statement, 73 percent of participants in the group that saw the emotive video do so (figure 3.19).

**Figure 3.19. Both videos promote positive views of the contributions migrants make to Costa Rica, but the informative video is the most influential**

Participants who agree (percentage)

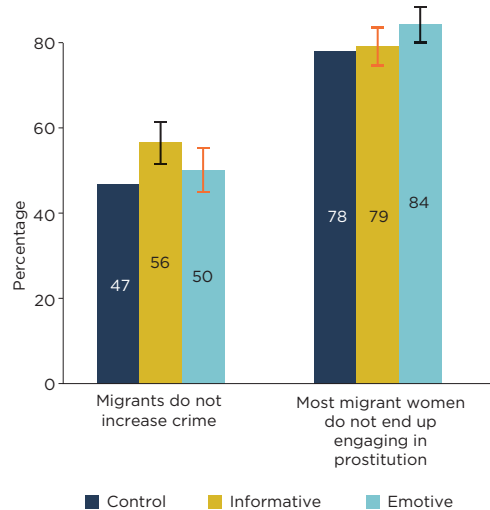


Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels.

**Figure 3.20. In Costa Rica, the emotive video reduces the share of people who think that most migrant women engage in sex work, but it does not impact beliefs that migrants increase criminal activity**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

**Only the informative video succeeds at changing perceptions among the local population that the arrival of migrants is associated with a rise in crime with the local population.**

Social stigmas associated with migrants affect how well this population integrates. The belief that the arrival of migrants leads to an increase in crime rates is one of the most common views among the local population. It is a particularly complicated belief because it divides society and makes life even harder for migrants. In Costa Rica, only 47 percent of the control group believe that the arrival of migrants does not generate a rise in criminal activity; this result is significant, as it means that more than half (53 percent) of all Costa Ricans do consider that a rise in crime is a consequence of migrants coming to the country. On this question, only the informative intervention succeeds in altering this perception. Among participants who saw the informative video, 56 percent then opine that migrants do not cause a rise in crime (a

10-percentage-point increase). While the emotive video has no effect on the average citizen, it does affect the attitudes of participants who place themselves at either extreme of the political spectrum.

Another frequently held belief is the perception that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work. In Costa Rica, 22 percent of participants in the control group agree with this view. Unlike the results for the previous question, the informative video does not change the share of people holding this view. The emotive video, conversely, has the desired impact and reduces the share of individuals holding this belief, going from 22 percent to 16 percent (figure 3.20). The effect of this intervention is particularly pronounced among participants who identify with left-leaning political and those who identify as being in the lowest income quintiles.

### **Summary**

The results of these survey-based experiments show that in Costa Rica, it is possible to change local attitudes toward the migrant population. Both the informative video (which gives a sense of how many migrants are arriving and the consequences of these inflows) and the emotive video (in which a migrant woman tells her life story) are effective interventions that change people's attitudes toward migration in the short term. The informative video is more effective in some cases, and the emotive video is more effective in others, depending on the question being asked. A small share of the Costa Ricans who took part in this experiment were initially opposed to immigration and held fast to these views. However, most participants began the experiment having positive views or being undecided as to their feelings about the arrival of migrants in the country. Both treatment videos are effective at improving the majority of the responses among the latter two groups.

The informative intervention is more effective at: (i) fostering empathy and support for the idea that both groups, migrants and locals, merit the same degree of trust; (ii) increasing the will to make donations to organizations that assist migrants; (iii) reducing the view that migrants compete for jobs with the local population and are a burden on the government; (iv) strengthening the view that the new ideas and cultures that migrants bring are positive for the country; and (v) reducing the number of people who think that the arrival of migrants causes an increase in crime. In contrast, providing information does not prompt locals to increase their support for other policy initiatives that favor the migrant population. In this instance, empathetic appeals prove to be more effective. Watching the emotive video increases some support for public policies that assist migrants when they arrive in the country. The emotive video is also more effective at changing the majority view that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work. Both the informative and emotive videos have similar effects on public opinion: each increases the share of the local population that views social integration as a positive development, that views migrants as contributing more to the country than they gain from it, and also increases support for government initiatives that grant work permits to migrants. Table 3.2 summarizes these results. In the last two columns of the table, different colors are used to reflect the relative magnitude of the results. When the same color is used in a given row to highlight the effects of the emotive video and the informative video, it means that both interventions are equally effective.

**Table 3.2. In Costa Rica, the effectiveness of the video inventions depends on the belief in question**  
*Summary of results (percentages and percentage points)*

Category	Question	Control group (percentages)	Effect of the informational video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally charged video (percentage points)
Policy preferences and social norms	Having migrants living in their country is a good thing.	44.8	5.9	6.2
	Having a migrant as a neighbor is a good thing.	55.4	0	0
	A migrant marrying a close relative is a good thing.	42.9	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care.)	80.2	0	4.5
	Agree that the government should provide migrants healthcare services on the same terms as the local population.	77.2	0	4.6
	Agree that the government should provide migrants children and young people with education services on the same terms as the local population.	90.5	0	3.3
	Agree that the government should provide healthcare services for migrant children on the same terms as the local population.	90.6	0	2.7
	Agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.	66.8	6.3	0
	Agree that it isn't hard to see things from migrants' points of view.	18.4	0	0
	Would donate to an organization that helps migrants.	8.4	3.1	0
Economic factors	Agree that the government should give migrants work permits or documentation that enables them to work legally in the country	91.1	3.2	3.2
	Agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy	86.4	0	0
	Agree that migrants do not come to compete with the local population for jobs	50.3	13.4	6.9
	Agree that migrants are not a burden on the state	43.8	7.1	0
Cultural factors	Agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it	57.5	11.8	8.4
	Agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and culture	68.1	10.7	4.8
Social stigma	Agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime rates	46.7	9.8	0
	Agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work	78.1	0	6.2

Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Gray cells indicate that the effect is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. For each question, a darker cell color indicates a comparatively greater effect. When coefficients are shown in the same color, the difference between them is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

### 3.3. Dominican Republic

#### 3.3.1. Migration in the Dominican Republic

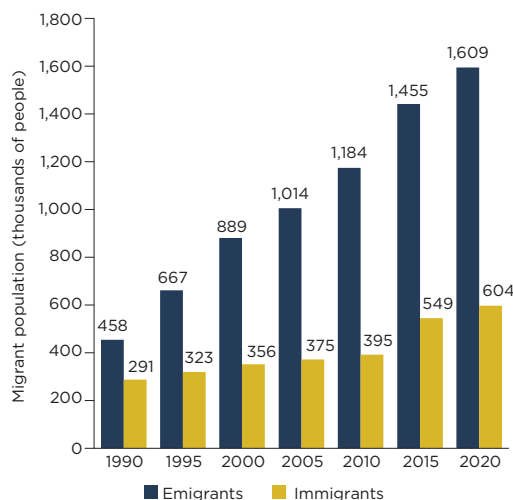
***The Dominican Republic is a net population exporter and the main receiving country for Haitian migrants***

The Dominican Republic generates migratory outflows that are almost three times as large as the inflows of immigrants entering the country. Despite its sustained economic growth, at an average annual rate of about 5 percent over the last three decades, many Dominicans choose to migrate in search of better opportunities. Almost 15 percent of the country's native-born population is currently living abroad (figure 3.21A).

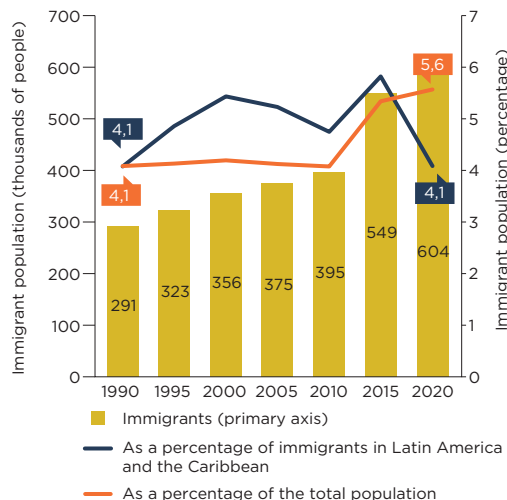
At the same time, the country's strong economy makes it an attractive destination for migrants. In 2020, there were 603,794 immigrants living in the Dominican Republic, accounting for 6 percent of the country's total population and 4 percent of the total migrant population in Latin America and the Caribbean: this latter figure includes 1,500 refugees, equivalent to 0.3 percent of all refugees in the world.<sup>59</sup> Between 2010 and 2020, the number of immigrants in the Dominican Republic increased by 53 percent (figure 3.21B).

**Figure 3.21. The Dominican Republic sends more migrants than it receives, inflows are rising**

**A. Cumulative migrant inflows and outflows (thousands), 1990–2020**



**B. Cumulative migrant inflows (thousands and percentages), 1990–2020**



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

Historically, Haiti has been the main source of immigration to the Dominican Republic, and this trend has continued without interruption to the present day (box 3.2). In 2020, 82 percent of all migrants living in the Dominican Republic were Haitians. Some factors behind this migratory pattern include the development of the Dominican agricultural sector, as well as the poverty and violence that prevail in Haiti.<sup>60</sup> More

<sup>59</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

<sup>60</sup> IOM and INM RD (2017).

### Box 3.2. A Brief history of Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic

The history of Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic is linked to the development of the Dominican sugar industry. In the late 19th century, the drop in sugar prices and the industry's subsequent decline in wages resulted in many Dominican workers transitioning into other economic sectors. This shrinkage in the sugar industry's labor force was initially offset by the workers arriving from the English-speaking Caribbean.

The US occupation of Haiti (1915–1934) and the Dominican Republic (1916–1924) facilitated labor mobility between the two countries, serving the productive needs of each economy. The boom in the Dominican Republic's sugar industry attracted a large number of Haitian arrivals, who mainly came as temporary workers on the country's sugar plantations. While diplomatic disputes increased following the massacre of Haitians, which took place at the border in 1937, during the Trujillo dictatorship (1930–1961), a tacit agreement enabled Haitians to work clandestinely in the sugarcane fields.

When the Dominican sugar refineries were nationalized in the 1950s, binational agreements permitted the mass recruitment of Haitians as temporary workers in this sector. This arrangement was particularly important during the 1970s when international sugar prices rose. The growing labor demand for workers to cut and harvest sugarcane led many Haitians to remain in the Dominican Republic once the harvest season ended.

The crisis in the Dominican sugar industry that began in the mid-1980s prompted many Haitian workers in this industry to seek economic opportunities in other sectors and regions of the Dominican Republic, particularly in places that relied intensively on low-skilled labor. This trend intensified after repealing rules that regulated the mass hiring of temporary workers for jobs in the sugar refineries; the ending, in 1986, of the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti; and the ensuing political instability in Haiti during the 1990s.

Over the last 20 years, the flow of Haitian migrants into the Dominican Republic has increased, and this trend has intensified since the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. This influx has also been fueled by economic growth in the Dominican Republic. Haitian migrant labor is now concentrated in the country's construction and agricultural sectors.

Source: IDB/UNDP based on International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Instituto Nacional de Migración de la República Dominicana (INM RD) [National Institute of Migration of the Dominican Republic], *Perfil migratorio de República Dominicana*, 2017.

recently, the Dominican Republic also has been receiving Venezuelan migrants from Venezuela searching for opportunities, given the political and economic instability that exists in their own country. In 2020, Venezuelans accounted for 6 percent of the Dominican Republic's migrant population.<sup>61</sup>

There is a gender imbalance among the migrant population residing in the Dominican Republic: men account for 63 percent of all migrants. Moreover, 67 percent of all migrants in the country are aged 25–44, and the highest level of educational attainment for 63 percent of adult migrants is a primary education

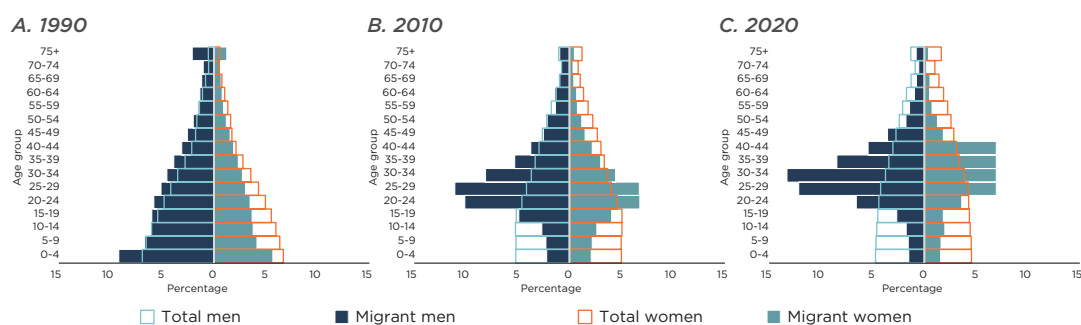
<sup>61</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *International Migrant Stock 2020*.

or less.<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile, 27 percent of adult migrants have a full secondary education, and 10 percent have attained tertiary education. In comparison, the adult Dominican population has, on average, higher educational levels: 3 out of 10 Dominicans have a complete secondary education, and an additional 3 out of 10 have at least a tertiary education.<sup>63</sup>

The age composition of the migrant population has evolved over time. While in the 1990s, a large share (55 percent) of migrants in the Dominican Republic were under 25, this population is now older; in 2020, only a quarter of migrants were under 25. This change in the age structure is also evident in the total Dominican population, but it is more pronounced among the country's migrant population. The data suggest that, in recent years, the migrant population has come to be predominantly composed of working-age individuals rather than entire families (figure 3.22).

**Figure 3.22. Most migrants in the Dominican Republic are in the 25–44 age range**

*Migrant population and total population by age group and sex (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

Note: The total population includes all individuals living in the Dominican Republic (nationals and migrants).

***Despite developing numerous institutional and regulatory instruments, the Dominican Republic does not yet have a comprehensive migration policy***

During the 20th century, the Dominican government developed the country's migration policy around three core areas that remain at the center of its current response: border control, industrial prosperity, and the construction of a national identity. Based on these priorities, during the first half of the 20th century, laws mandated that migrants be divided into two groups. The first group predominantly consisted of Haitian workers with limited naturalization rights, as they were admitted to the country for the sole purpose of strengthening the agricultural sector. The second group was made up of well-educated foreigners of European descent who were given incentives to settle in the Dominican Republic with the goal of promoting the country's cultural and business initiatives. Later, the island's political and economic development during the second half of the 20th century was marked by the transition to democracy that followed the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic (1930–1961) and the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti (1957–1986), triggered an increase in migratory movements. These changes led to establishing specific criteria to regularize the migration process, although labor market protections for Dominican citizens remained in place.

<sup>62</sup> Data on age and gender composition from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

<sup>63</sup> The data concerning education levels among migrants are from the 2017 National Immigrant Survey, while the corresponding data for Dominicans living in the Dominican Republic are from the 2016 Continuous National Labor Survey.

During the 21st century, the Dominican Republic has developed institutional and regulatory mechanisms to facilitate the social integration of migrant populations. The country has supplemented these policies with social development programs that are either universal or specifically targeted toward migrants, with a focus on promoting inclusion and recognizing human rights.<sup>64</sup> The General Migration Act of 2004 enabled coordination among state institutions to develop a more cohesive response to the migratory phenomenon. The following years have seen the creation or reform of various institutions to address issues related to migrants, including the National Migration Council and the National Migration Institute.<sup>65</sup>

Under this legal framework, the government has made important strides to regularize the Dominican Republic's migrant population, but these actions have not always been effective. Obstacles to implementation and legal contradictions have meant that, to date, there is no consolidated path to guide the transition from one migratory status to another designation and to ensure a more efficient regularization process for all migrants.<sup>66</sup> For instance, the 2013 National Plan to Regularize Foreigners with Irregular Migratory Status in the Dominican Republic received applications from 288,466 foreigners, 98 percent of whom were Haitians. However, only 3 percent of the Haitians who filed a request met the criteria. Instead of permanently advancing their regularization process, they received temporary work permits that had to be renewed and that, in many cases, have since expired.<sup>67</sup> In contrast, the 2021 Normalization Plan, designed to grant Venezuelan migrants the status of nonresident foreigners, enabled 41 percent of the 42,000 Venezuelans who had applied by mid-2022 to access temporary study permits and work visas.<sup>68</sup>

Through the use of surveys that are representative of the migrant population in the Dominican Republic, there have been recent advances in data collection that shed light on the potential gains to be had by implementing a strategy centered on generating migration statistics and assessing the instruments and programs that have implemented in the Dominican Republic. The end goal is to analyze the road that has been traveled, to understand the current landscape, and, based on the present state of affairs, adopt new courses of action.<sup>69</sup> The convergence of long-standing immigration from Haiti with the new waves of Venezuelan migrants adds a layer of complexity to the government's response.

### ***How does migration affect the Dominican Republic?***

#### **The effects of migration**

There is recent evidence examining the effects that migration has had on the Dominican Republic's labor market. The findings are mixed, and not all of the data establishes causal relationships. There is a correlation between the concentration of migrants in the working population with different occupational skill categories and unemployment rates.<sup>70</sup> In job categories with a large share of migrant workers, there is a higher probability that Dominican workers in these jobs are more likely to work part-time, but there is no relationship between the share of migrant workers in a job category and the average wages of Dominican workers. The one exception observed is in occupations employing the most highly skilled workers, as the average wage of Dominican workers is inversely related to the share of migrant workers.<sup>71</sup> In line with this last finding, the Haitian migrant population's higher rate of labor market participation is not associated with changes in the average wage of Dominican workers. On the contrary, given the Haitian's lower levels of educational achievement compared to Dominican workers, this migrant population complements the human

64 Paredes, Balbuena, and Gómez (2021).

65 Morales and Rodríguez (2022) summarize the political response over the past 20 years.

66 Morales and Rodríguez (2022).

67 Morales and Rodríguez (2022).

68 Resolution 00119-2021; Amaral (2021); and Diario Libre (2022).

69 For example, Morales and Rodríguez (2022) note that the impact of the National Plan to Regularize Foreigners (PNRE) on migration status and on migrants' access to social security, education, and housing remain unknown.

70 Skill categories are sets based on individuals' educational attainment levels and work experience.

71 OECD and ILO (2018b).



capital of skilled Dominican workers rather than being labor market substitutes for these natives.<sup>72</sup> However, compared to highly skilled Dominican workers, Haitian migrants have an entirely different effect on the labor market conditions of low-skilled Dominican workers, among those with low educational attainment levels, who work in the informal sector of the labor market. The results of various simulations show that, for every 1,000 additional Haitian migrants who enter the informal sector, the average wage of Dominican workers goes down by 1 percent.<sup>73</sup> It has also been observed that a larger share of migrant women in a given province marginally reduces the number of hours worked and the average wage earned by Dominican women with low levels of education. Conversely, a larger share of migrant women living in an area tends to increase the number of paid work hours for higher skilled Dominican women with dependents, meaning children or elderly persons, relative to their peers who do not have family care-giving responsibilities.<sup>74</sup>

It is estimated that the migrant population's contribution to economic growth between 2010 and 2014 amounted to 4–5 percent of the Dominican Republic's GDP (gross domestic product). It has also been found that the net fiscal contributions of migrants are greater than those made by the native Dominican population. During this period, migrants paid more indirect taxes and received fewer benefits in terms of welfare assistance and social security.<sup>75</sup> This recent data provides no evidence of the impact of the migrant population on the country's education and healthcare systems or on the fiscal cost of providing these services to migrants living in the country.

### The effects of public policy

While there is little evidence concerning the impact of policies that affect migrants, one study has assessed the impact of recent changes to the legal framework, particularly how citizenship is defined, that have had adverse consequences for Haitian migrants living in the Dominican Republic. Including undocumented migrants in the category of “migrants in transit”—one of the consequences of the constitutional amendment of 2010—increased the likelihood of Haitian men working in the informal sector of the Dominican labor market. Likewise, the 2013 ruling of the Constitutional Court, which imposed the category of “migrants in transit” on all individuals born in the Dominican Republic to parents who were undocumented migrants, retroactive to 1929, has significantly reduced the rates of school attendance for migrant children of Haitian descent.<sup>76</sup>

### 3.3.2. Attitudes toward migration

The data gathered in the Latinobarómetro 2020 survey show a division in Dominican society regarding its perceptions about migrants. This indication is not very different from the average attitude recorded in the region. Although Dominicans appear to be less inclined than the average Latin American to think that migrants are not good for the national economy (50 percent of Dominicans believe this, compared to 57 percent elsewhere in the region), 55 percent of Dominicans regard the arrival of migrants to be harmful to them and their families. This negative perception may be linked to the fact that migrants are regarded as competitors in the labor market (67 percent of Dominicans hold this view, compared to 60 percent of Latin Americans), are thought of as a burden on the state (67 percent of Dominicans, compared to 59 percent of the regional population), and are viewed as causing a rise in crime (respectively, 60 percent of Dominicans and 56 percent of Latin Americans). However, 74 percent of Dominicans agree

72 Sousa, Sánchez, and Báez (2017).

73 Kone and Ozden (2017).

74 Hiller and Rodríguez Chatruc (2020). For example, a province in the top quarter of the distribution in terms of immigrant women inhabitants is associated with 0.38 hours less paid work per week and with a wage that is almost 2 percent lower than in a province in the bottom quarter in terms of numbers of immigrant women. The main assumption behind this measure of province-level exposure is that there is some form of inertia over time in the way that immigrants are spatially distributed.

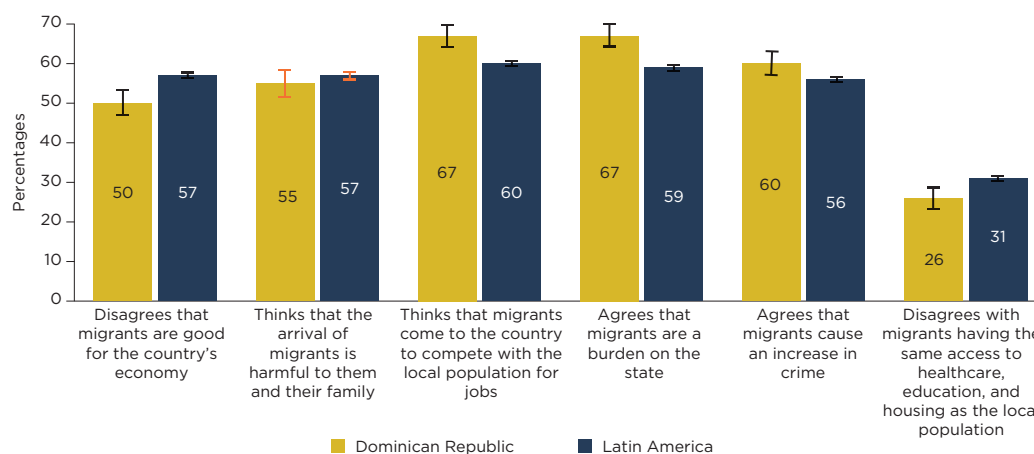
75 OECD and ILO (2018b).

76 Amuedo-Dorantes, Gratereaux Hernández, and Pozo (2017).

that migrants should have the same access that the country's citizens have to healthcare, education, and housing (compared to 69 percent in Latin America). These results are in line with (though not identical to) this book which was not based on a representative sample (figure 3.23).<sup>77</sup>

**Figure 3.23. Over half of dominicans believed that the arrival of migrants is harmful to them and their families**

*Dominicans and Latin Americans in each category (percentage), 2020*



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

Note: Responses from the "I don't know/No response" category were excluded. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregate for Latin America, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and the percentages in both cases are identical.

While Dominicans are less resistant to intraregional migration compared to the average Latin American, it is noteworthy that a greater share of the population has a negative attitude toward Haitian migrants (74 percent of Dominicans, compared to an average of 61 percent among other Latin Americans); a smaller share feels the same way about the arrival of Venezuelan migrants (50 percent of Dominicans, compared to 62 percent of Latin Americans) (figure 3.24). Interestingly, the levels of rejection of these two groups of migrants are indistinguishable on a regional scale, although the only other countries where Haitian migration is sizeable are Brazil and Chile. The tendency to judge Haitian migrants more harshly than migrants from other countries has also been stressed in other studies. For example, even though the Dominican agricultural sector depends heavily on Haitian labor, some agricultural producers claim that Haitian migrants make no contribution to the Dominican economy or cost the country more than they contribute.<sup>78</sup> This sentiment could be due to the more significant cultural distance that exists between Haitians and Dominicans, and to the low level of Haitian integration in Dominican society, which is made more difficult by the language barrier. Only around 33 percent of the Haitian migrants who live in the Dominican Republic have a good command of spoken Spanish.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, compared to the average Latin American, Dominicans have a harsher stance toward unauthorized migration. Indeed, 59 percent of Dominicans believe that the government should immediately return those migrants who enter the country in an irregular manner (compared to 46 percent of all Latin Americans), and 65 percent of Dominicans think there is a strong degree of conflict between the native and foreign populations (compared to 57 percent of Latin Americans).

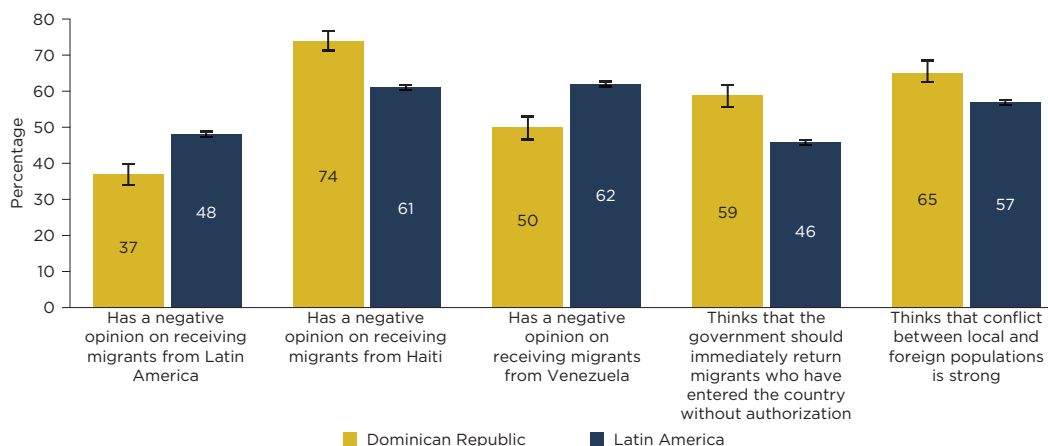
<sup>77</sup> The Latinobarómetro survey is representative on a national scale and adequately reflects the country's population distribution by gender, age group, and level of education. Details of the survey are available on the Latinobarómetro website.

<sup>78</sup> Macías Hernández (2021), based on a survey of members of the Dominican Agroindustrial Board; Ciriaco Cruz and Gratereaux Hernández (2020), based on a survey of agricultural producers.

<sup>79</sup> National Immigrant Survey 2017.

**Figure 3.24. Compared to the average Latin American, Dominicans have harsher views of unauthorized migration**

*Dominicans and Latin Americans in each category (percentage), 2017 and 2020*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020. The question on conflict between the national and foreign populations is based on data from Latinobarómetro 2017.

**Note:** Responses from the “I do not know/No response” category were excluded. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregate for Latin America, using 5 percent significance levels.

### 3.3.3. Experiment results

Given that the experimental framework acknowledges that in the emotive video treatment, the migrant’s nationality might affect the results, in the Dominican Republic, the experiment was modified to assess not only the differential impact of the informative video and the emotive video, but also the potentially different impact of using the life story of a Haitian migrant woman or a Venezuelan migrant woman. The Haitian woman in the first emotive video reflects the country’s historic experience with migration; namely, the arrival of migrants whose background and language are different from those of the average Dominican. The Venezuelan woman in the second video represents migrants who have arrived more recently and whose characteristics are much closer to those of the local population. In fact, the exposure to these two different life stories generated different responses from the participants in the experiment.

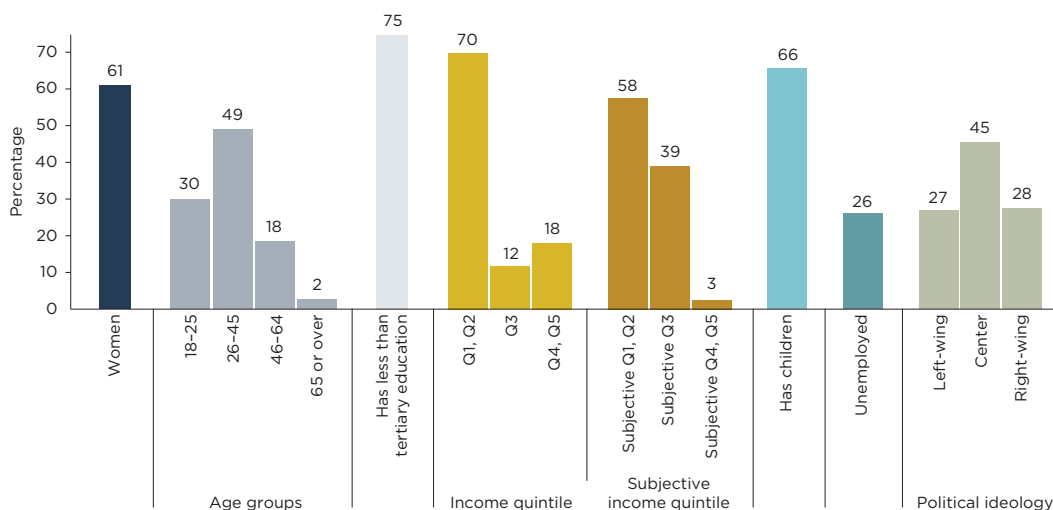
In the Dominican Republic, 3,542 individuals took part in the experiment.<sup>80</sup> Most participants in the sample (61 percent) were women, 49 percent were individuals aged 26–45, and 75 percent did not have a tertiary education. Additionally, 26 percent of the participants were unemployed, and 70 percent perceived themselves as being in the bottom two quintiles of the income distribution.<sup>81</sup> Finally, 45 percent described themselves as being at the center of the political spectrum (figure 3.25).<sup>82</sup> Descriptive statistics for the treatment and control groups are available in the online statistical annex.<sup>83</sup>

80 Within the sample, 960 participants were in the control group and were shown a placebo video, 846 were in the group that watched the informative video, 887 were in the group that was shown the emotive video about the Haitian migrant woman, and 849 were in the group that was shown the emotive video about the Venezuelan migrant woman. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the methodology.

81 Based on data issued by the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic, the population was divided into the following income quintiles: (i) less than DOP20,000; (ii) DOP20,000–28,000; (iii) DOP28,000–38,000; (iv) DOP38,000–57,000; and (v) more than DOP57,000.

82 The experimental sample is not strictly comparable to the Dominican population. According to the 2020 Continuous National Labor Survey (ENCFT), the following groups are overrepresented in the experiment sample: women (52 percent of the population), young people aged 18–25 (20 percent), and individuals aged 26–45 (38 percent). Individuals aged 46–64 and people older than 65 (27 percent and 14 percent, respectively) are underrepresented in the sample. The sample also holds a much greater share of unemployed individuals and individuals in income quintiles 1 and 2.

83 These groups are comparable in terms of all participant characteristics, with a few exceptions. The sample is unbalanced in terms of the share of individuals with children included in the Haitian emotive video treatment group vis-à-vis other groups. There are more individuals who identify as left-wingers in the control group than in the informative treatment and Haitian emotive treatment groups, while there are also more right-wing individuals in the latter group than in the control group. There is also a smaller share of individuals with tertiary education in the control group than in informative and the Haitian emotive treatment groups. The treatment group that was shown the emotive video on the Haitian woman contains a smaller share of individuals aged 46–64 and a larger share of young people aged 18–25, compared to the control group. This difference is also true in the case of the treatment group that was shown the informative video.

**Figure 3.25. Description of the participant Sample in the Dominican Republic***Distribution by characteristic (percentage)*

Source: IDB/UNDP.

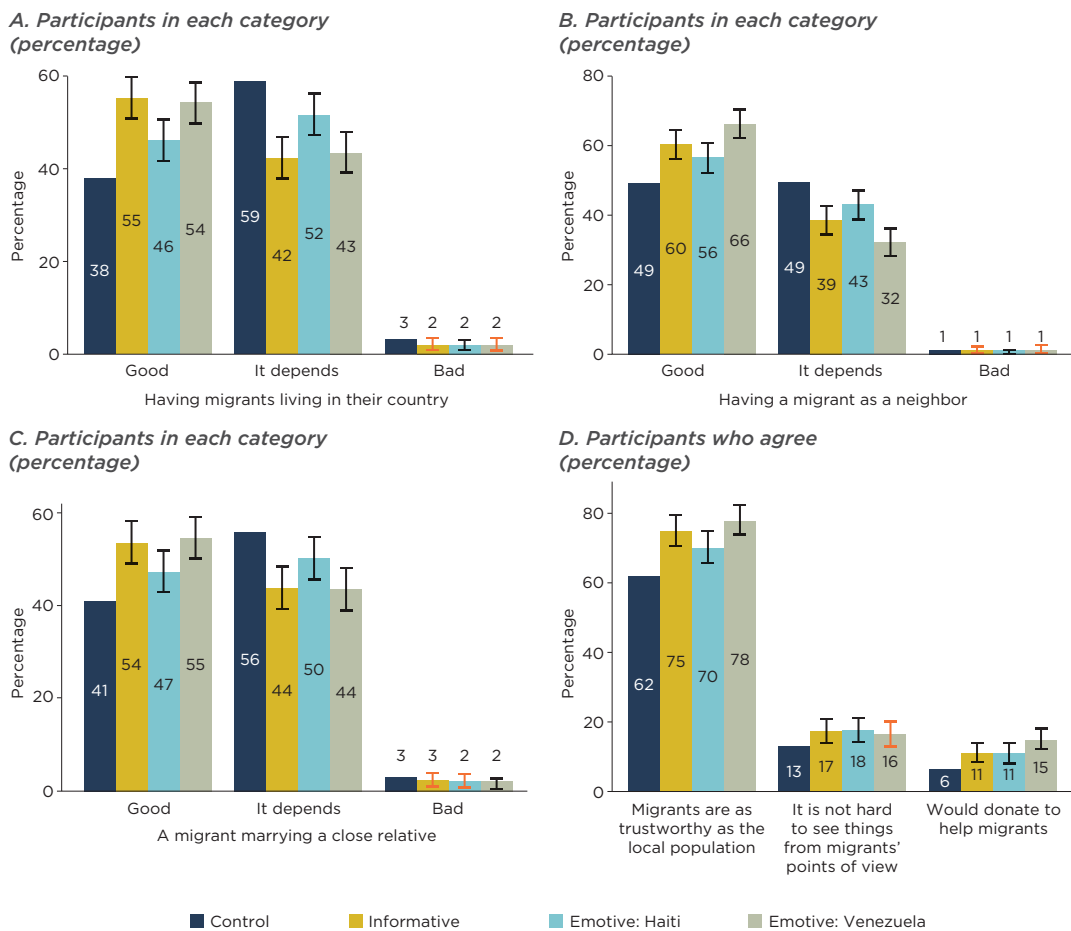
***In the Dominican Republic, the three videos prompt positive changes in levels of acceptance of migrants and willingness to support migrant protection policies. However, in most cases, emotive videos are more effective than the informative video, while reactions to the life story of the Venezuelan migrant woman are particularly pronounced.***

The ability to affect people's views on migration policies and social norms were evaluated using two types of questions. The first set of questions looked at how willing people were to accept migrants in the country and in their own social circles. Respondents were asked what they thought about having migrants living in their country, having a migrant as their neighbor, and having a migrant marry a close family member. The response options were: *good*, *bad*, and *it depends*. The three treatment videos increase the share of participants who consider that the social integration of migrants is positive. However, the emotive video depicting the Venezuelan migrant woman is always equally or more effective at changing views than the other two videos. On average, the emotive video showing the story of the Venezuelan migrant woman increases the share of respondents favoring the social integration of migrants by 16 percentage points, while the informative video improved it by 14 percentage points, and the emotive video of the Haitian migrant woman did so by 7 percentage points (relative to a starting point of 43 percent). However, for two of the three questions, the effect of the video showing the Venezuelan woman is not statistically different from the effect of the informative video. On the other hand, the video of the Haitian migrant induces a marginal reduction (of 1 percentage point) in the share of participants who consider having a migrant as their neighbor to be a bad thing, while the video of the Venezuelan migrant causes a similar drop in the share that thinks it would be bad if a migrant married a close family member. The remaining changes from the emotive treatment concern the responses of individuals who did not initially hold a negative view of migrants (people who, if they had not been shown the video, would have said, "it depends") (figures 3.26A, 3.26B, and 3.26C).

Another important indicator in this same category relates to a question about how much trust there is toward the migrant population. In this regard, 62 percent of individuals in the control group said they trusted migrants as much as they trusted locals. This percentage increased to 78 percent after watching the emotive video of the Venezuelan migrant woman and to 70 percent in the case of the video of the

Haitian migrant woman. The informative video had no impact on increasing the level of trust in migrants. On the question regarding seeing issues from the migrant perspective, the video of the Haitian woman and the informative video both improve Dominicans' willingness to empathize with migrants' points of view (from the control group's 13 percent to about 18 percent). In this case, the video of the Venezuelan migrant has no impact. Finally, all three treatment videos increased participants' willingness to make donations to help migrants, compared to the control group's 6 percent. However, the video of the Venezuelan migrant's life story has a greater effect than the other two (9 percentage points, compared to 5 percentage points) (figure 3.26D).

**Figure 3.26. In the Dominican Republic, all three treatment videos improve the acceptance of migrants in the short run**



Source: IDB/UNDP.

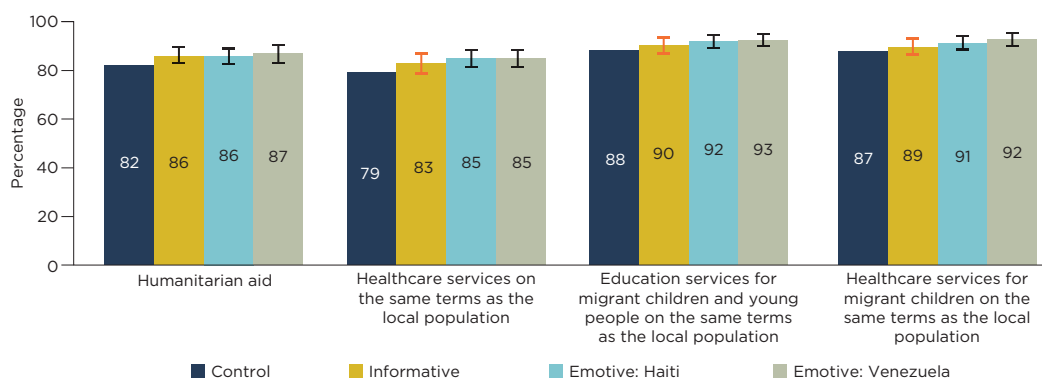
Note: The data presented in panels A, B, and C is the result of estimating a multinomial logistic model, and the data presented in panel D is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

The second set of questions explored how far the videos influenced people's preferences concerning support for specific policies. The experiment results suggest that most participants agree that the government should offer social services to migrants. At least 79 percent agree that the government should provide migrants with humanitarian aid, the same quality of healthcare services as those provided

to locals, and healthcare and education services for migrant children. The two emotive videos increase participants' support for different forms of government assistance by about 5 percentage points. The migrant's nationality does not have a differentiated impact on this response, except when participants are asked whether they agree that the government should provide healthcare services to migrant children on the same terms as Dominican children. In this case, exposure to the Venezuelan migrant woman's life story has a marginally higher impact (1 percentage point). In contrast, exposure to the informative video does not change participants' preferences, except concerning support for humanitarian aid, where it has the same effect as both emotive videos (figure 3.27).

**Figure 3.27. In the Dominican Republic, information is the least effective approach to changing preferences concerning policies that favor migrants**

*Participants who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

***The three videos affect the number of participants who see the arrival of migrants as being economically advantageous for their country. Regarding the potential costs of migration in the labor market and on government spending, the three videos reduce these concerns, but the video of the Venezuelan migrant and the informative video has a more pronounced effect than the Haitian woman's life story.***

A large share of Dominicans acknowledge that the inflow of migrants is beneficial for their country's economy. In the control group, 81 percent of participants believe that migrants make a contribution to the national economy, while 90 percent agree that the government should provide migrants with work permits. The three treatments are equally effective at increasing the share of participants in the Dominican Republic who hold these views. Exposure to the videos increases these percentages, achieving a range from 87 percent to 94 percent. Exploring whether these responses vary among different social groups reveals that the informative video's effect is largely explained by its ability to influence the attitude of unemployed individuals.<sup>84</sup>

On the other hand, Dominican participants see the migrant population as a source of competition in the labor market: 47 percent of participants in the control group believe that migrants do not compete with them for jobs, which then implies that more than half of all participants hold the opposite view. In this

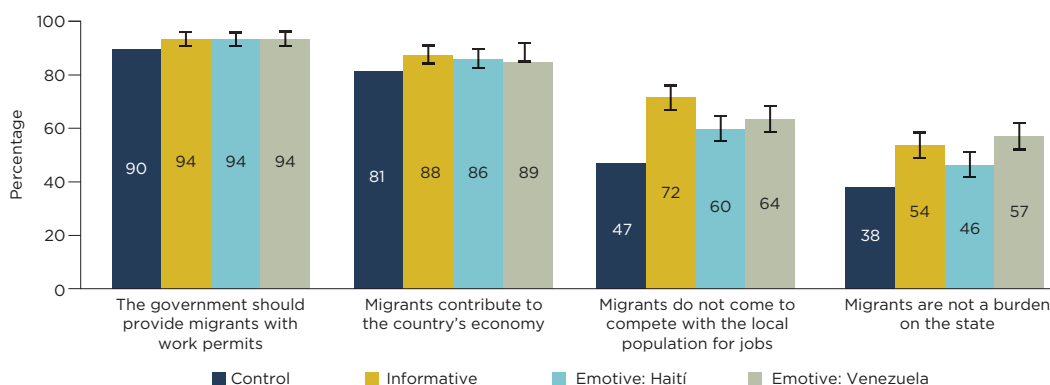
84 Further details of the heterogeneous effects of the various treatments are available in the online statistical annex.

case, although all three treatments are effective at changing people's views, the informative video has the greatest impact. In the group that watched the informative video, 72 percent of participants believe that migrants do not come to the country to compete with locals for jobs. This share fell to 60 percent among the participants who saw the video of the Haitian migrant and 64 percent among those who watched the video of the Venezuelan migrant. The difference between the effect of the informative video and that of the emotive video of the Venezuelan migrant woman is not statistically significant.

Views regarding migrants' contribution to the country's economy coexist with the widely held view that migrants are a burden on the state. Only 38 percent of Dominicans in the control group feel that this is not the case. On this issue, the video that was most effective at changing people's attitudes is the one showing the life story of the Venezuelan migrant woman. The share increased by 57 percent in the group that watched this video, compared to a rise of 54 percent in the group that was shown the informative video. The video of the Haitian migrant woman is also effective at improving views, but to a lesser extent (46 percent) (figure 3.28).

**Figure 3.28. The informative video and the emotive video featuring the Venezuelan migrant are the most effective ways to change beliefs in the Dominican Republic that migrants are a source of labor market competition**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels.

***The video of the Venezuelan migrant woman has a stronger effect on the belief that the inflow of migrants improves Dominican society by increasing cultural diversity. The informative video also has a positive impact, but of a smaller magnitude.***

In the Dominican Republic, participants are divided in terms of their views on how much migrants contribute to the country relative to what they receive from it. Among participants in the control group, 50 percent say that they think that migrants contribute more to the country than they get back from it. The three video treatments improve this view, although they do so to varying degrees. The video of the Venezuelan migrant woman proves to be the most effective intervention. Specifically, 69 percent of participants in the group that watched this video came to acknowledge that the balance leans in favor of the country (a change of 17 percentage points). Exposure to the informative video and to the emotive video showing the life story of the Haitian migrant woman also increase the share of participants who acknowledge that the balance is positive in favor of the country: the informative video moves this share to 65 percent (up 14 percentage points), and the emotive video raises the share to 59 percent

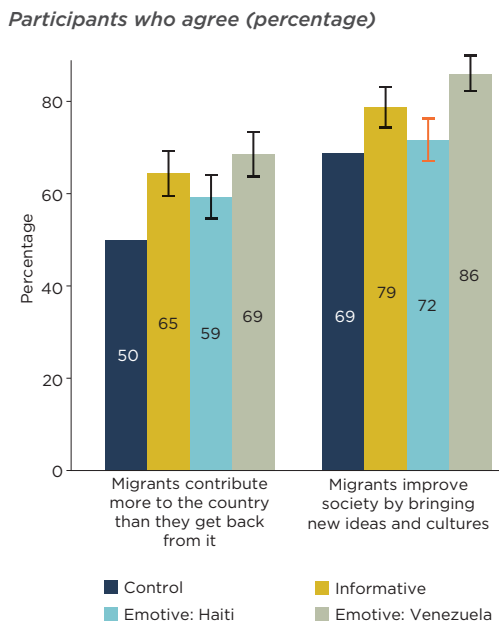
(up 9 percentage points). The effects of these two treatments are statistically identical, so this result was further explored to see whether the impact varies among different social groups. The effect of the emotive video depicting the Venezuelan migrant woman is concentrated among the participants who are unemployed and those who do not have children.

A large share of Dominicans (69 percent of participants in the control group) agree that migrants improve society by contributing new ideas and cultures. While the treatment using the Haitian migrant woman has no influence on altering this percentage, it is striking that the life story of the Venezuelan migrant does have a significant effect in the desired direction. After watching the emotive treatment featuring the Venezuelan woman, 86 percent of the participants acknowledged that migrants have a positive effect on society (an improvement of 17 percentage points). The informative video also has a positive impact of 10 percentage points (figure 3.29).

During the process of integrating migrants into the host society, overcoming social stigma is a major challenge. The local population often perceives that the arrival of migrants is accompanied by an increase in crime and that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work. However, most Dominicans do not subscribe to these views: 56 percent of the control group do not associate migrants with a rise in crime, while 61 percent of the control group disagrees with the statement regarding migrant women. However, the share of the Dominican population holding the opposite perspectives (44 percent and 39 percent, respectively) is still significant.

The three videos reduce the view that migration causes an increase in crime, although the informative video has a more significant impact in this regard. On the other hand, the informative video fails to reduce the stigma attached to migrant women, while the other two videos do manage to reduce this prejudice. With regard to the belief that migrants cause an increase in crime, exposure to the informative video and to both emotive videos reduced the share of those who held this belief from 44 percent to 26 percent (in the case of the informative video) and to between 30 and 38 percent (emotive videos).<sup>85</sup> Regarding the stigma attached to migrant women, providing the information is ineffective at changing this perception, but exposure to both life stories reduces the share of participants who associate migrant women with sex work, dropping from 39 percent to approximately 32 percent. Contrary to the earlier findings described above, in this particular case, the life story of the Haitian migrant woman proves just as effective as the life story of the Venezuelan migrant woman in changing participants' views (figure 3.30).

**Figure 3.29. Dominican views on migrants' contributions to the country depended on their county of origin**



**Source:** IDB/UNDP.  
**Note:** The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

<sup>85</sup> The effects of the two emotive videos are statistically indistinguishable, which is why a spectrum of values is cited.



### Summary

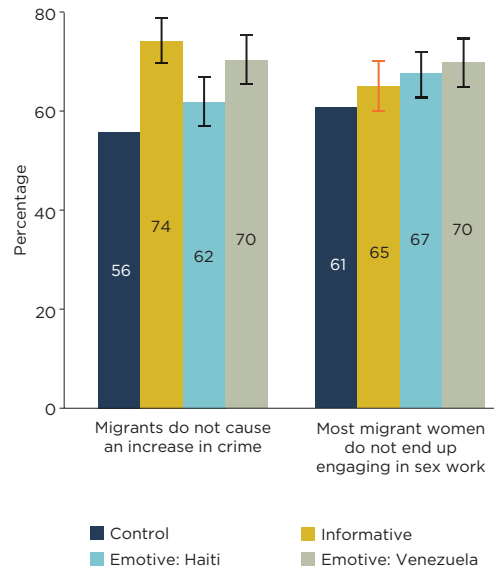
The results of this survey-based experiment show that it is possible to change local views on migrants. Both the informative treatment aimed at correcting misconceptions or prejudice and the emotive treatment focusing on life stories to trigger empathy are effective at changing people's views. The relative effectiveness of both types of intervention—informative and emotive—depends on the specific attitudes in question. In the experiment conducted in the Dominican Republic, the effect of the emotive response is often sensitive to the nationality of the migrant whose life story is told.

Interventions seldom change the attitudes of individuals who already harbor negative views of the migrant population, and even if there is a change, it is minor. In practice, it is usually a minority of the local population that holds such views. In contrast, both the provision of information and exposure to life stories proved to be effective ways of changing the views of those individuals who did not have strong initial opinions about migrants. However, the emotive video showing the life story of the Haitian migrant woman is systematically less effective than the other two interventions, while the emotive video of the Venezuelan migrant woman and the informative video have similar effects. In conclusion, the informative video appears to be the most effective approach to improving the acceptance of migrants in the Dominican Republic.

Providing information was also the best way of getting the local population to acknowledge that it is not difficult to see issues from the viewpoint of migrants, improving perceptions that are based on economic factors, and countering the view that associates migrants with an increase in crime. In contrast, the information-based approach is not effective at changing opinions regarding public policy and the provision of government services for migrants. In these cases, appealing to respondents' empathy through a life story proves more effective, and the nationality of the migrant in question does not make a difference. The same strategy of using an emotional appeal works better for ameliorating the social stigma attached to migrant women—putting a face on these women and telling their struggles improves attitudes toward them, whatever their nationality. Providing information fails to achieve this goal. Finally, people's willingness to view migrants as not being a burden on the state, as contributing more to the country than they receive from it, and as improving society with new ideas and cultures appears to be influenced by the long history of Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic. In this instance, the effectiveness of the emotional response depends on the migrant woman's nationality. In all these three cases, in terms of its effectiveness, the provision of information plays an intermediate role, but it may be the best approach to achieving an impact that is independent of appeals that discuss the migrants' specific nationality. Table 3.3 summarizes these results, using color coding to show the relative magnitude of different effects. When the same color is used to highlight results in a given row, this means that all interventions are equally effective.

**Figure 3.30. In the Dominican Republic, hearing the life stories of migrant women—regardless of their country of origin—reduces the belief that most migrant women engage in sex work**

*Participants who agree (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

**Table 3.3. In the Dominican Republic, the effectiveness of the different videos depends on the type of belief in question***Summary of results (percentages and percentage points)*

Category	Question	Control group (percentages)	Effect of the informational video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally (Haiti) charged video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally (Venezuela) charged video (percentage points)
Policy preferences and social norms	Having migrants living in their country is a good thing.	38.0	17.4	8.2	16.3
	Having a migrant as a neighbor is a good thing.	49.3	11.1	7.2	17.1
	A migrant marrying a close relative is a good thing.	41.2	12.4	6.2	13.5
	Agree that the government should provide migrants humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care.)	82.1	4.1	3.8	5.0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants healthcare services on the same terms as the local population.	79.4	0	5.7	5.7
	Agree that the government should provide migrants children and young people with education services on the same terms as the local population.	88.3	0	3.6	4.3
	Agree that the government should provide healthcare services for migrant children on the same terms as the local population.	87.4	0	3.7	4.9
	Agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.	62.1	12.8	8.0	15.8
	Agree that it isn't hard to see things from migrants' points of view.	13.1	4.2	4.4	0
	Would donate to an organization that helps migrants.	6.4	4.6	4.3	8.7
Economic factors	Agree that the government should give migrants work permits or documentation that enables them to work legally in the country	89.9	3.7	3.7	3.9
	Agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy	81.5	6.2	4.7	7.1
	Agree that migrants do not come to compete with the local population for jobs	46.9	24.7	13.0	16.7
	Agree that migrants are not a burden on the state	38.2	15.5	8.3	19.1

Category	Question	Control group (percentages)	Effect of the informational video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally charged video (Haiti) (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally charged video (Venezuela) (percentage points)
Cultural factors	Agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it	50.1	14.4	9.2	18.5
	Agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and culture	69.1	9.7	0	17.0
Social stigma	Agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime rates	55.8	18.3	6.1	14.5
	Agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work	60.8	0	6.6	9.0

Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Gray cells indicate that the effect is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. For each question, a darker cell color indicates a comparatively greater effect. When coefficients are shown in the same color, the difference between them is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

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CHAPTER 4

# MIGRATION IN SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES





## 4.1. Chile

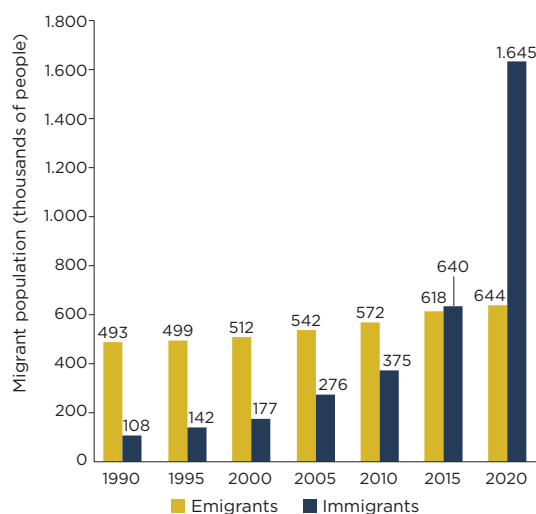
### 4.1.1. Migration in Chile

#### *Chile has experienced different migratory flows throughout its history*

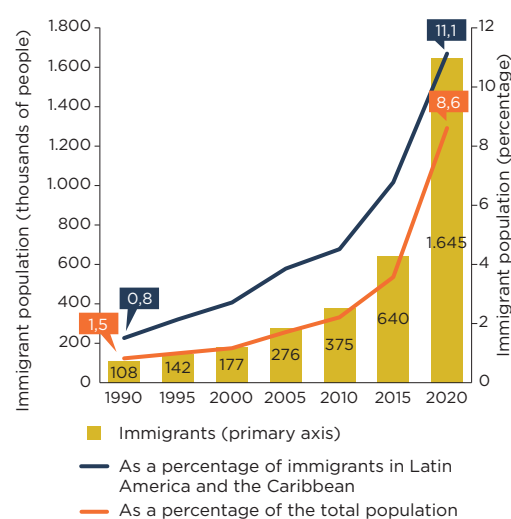
Beginning in the 1990s, Chile's economic growth, along with its stable political and social institutions, led to an increase in migration to the country. Chile's migrant population has continued to grow over the last 20 years, particularly during the last decade. By 2010, Chile was home to 375,000 migrants (2.2 percent of its total population). By 2020, these numbers had grown significantly: there were now more than 1.6 million migrants in Chile, accounting for 8.6 percent of the country's total population. As a result of this growth, since 2015, cumulative immigration into the country has exceeded Chilean emigration (figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1. Immigration to Chile is increasing, while its emigration rates remain stable**

**A. Cumulative migrant inflows and outflows (thousands), 1990–2020**



**B. Cumulative migrant inflows (thousands and percentages), 1990–2020**



Source: IDB/UNDP, based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

Historically, the migrant population in Chile mainly came from other South American countries. In the 1990s, a large number of the country's migrants were from the neighboring countries of Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, the Peruvian population represented 33 percent of Chile's total migrant population.<sup>2</sup> However, in recent years, the country has experienced an increase in Haitian and Venezuelan migration (box 4.1). In 2020, 8 percent of the migrant population in Chile was from Bolivia, 14 percent from Haiti,

<sup>1</sup> Reveco and Mullan (2014).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

### Box 4.1. The Haitian population in Chile

The growth of the Haitian population in Chile is a phenomenon that has intensified in recent years. Given the increasing difficulty of migrating to what historically have been the main destination countries for Haitians, such as the United States and the Dominican Republic, migratory flows from Haiti have been redirected to South America.<sup>a</sup> These flows began to intensify in 2010 after the natural disasters that struck the country. At that time, only four South American countries did not require Haitians to apply for entry visas, so migration to these countries took hold and then intensified in the wake of the natural disasters that have continued to enter the country.<sup>b</sup>

In 2018, the Chilean government implemented a visa requirement for Haitians wishing to enter the country. The requirements for accessing a tourist visa—such as having a valid passport, a legalized background certificate, or a hotel reservation—have made it harder for Haitians to enter Chile and have spurred irregular migration.<sup>c</sup>

In 2019, the Haitian population living in Chile had risen to around 185,000. Estimates based on the 2017 Chilean census show that the Haitian population had an average age of 30, that there were proportionally more men than women, and typically had a low level of education. At that point, only 15 percent of the Haitian migrants living in Chile had a tertiary education, and 57 percent had an incomplete secondary education.<sup>d</sup> In 2017, the Haitian population was mainly concentrated in Santiago and had high rates of labor market participation.

However, in the last few years, new trends in this migratory flow have been observed. In 2019, the Haitian population was the only one with a negative migratory balance: around 7,000 Haitian migrants entered the country via regular means, while around 10,000 left. This shift is due to the more restrictive migratory policies that Chile adopted in 2018 and the fact that Haitians are seeking opportunities in countries further north.<sup>e</sup>

a Rojas and Koechlin (2017).  
b Villarroel (2021).  
c Thayer (2019).  
d Canales (2019).  
e SJM (2020).

15 percent from Peru, and 32 percent from Venezuela.<sup>3</sup> Along with Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, Chile is one of the four countries hosting the majority of the Venezuelan population in South America (there are currently more than 400,000 Venezuelan migrants in Chile).<sup>4</sup>

The dynamics of migratory movements to Chile have resulted in the country having a heterogeneous migrant population with varied demographic characteristics, family profiles, educational levels, skill profiles, and, in the case of migrants from Haiti, a different language. The opportunities and challenges posed by these mixed flows set Chile apart from the rest of South America.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

<sup>4</sup> R4V (n.d.).

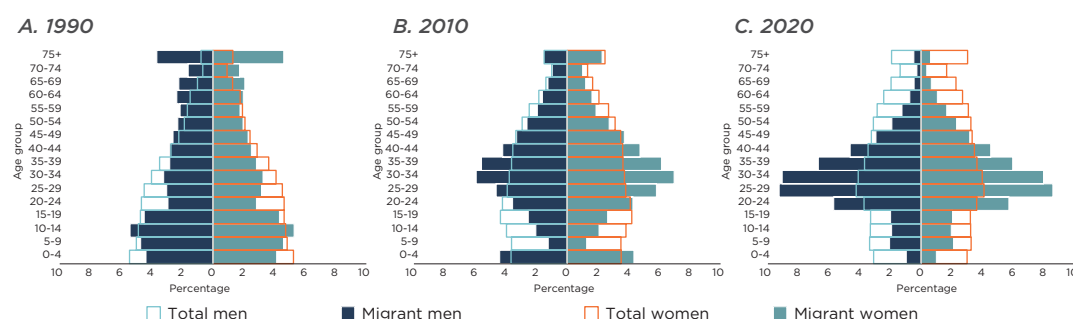
### From family migration from neighboring countries to young migrants of more distant origins

As in other countries in the region, the profile of the population migrating to Chile has changed over the last ten years. The shift from flows mainly comprised of nuclear families from neighboring countries, such as Peru, to an increase in Venezuelan and Haitian arrivals, has changed the demographic profile of Chile's migrant population, specifically in terms of its age composition and educational achievement.

The change in the age composition of the migrant population has largely occurred in the 0–14 age group: in 1990, this cohort represented 29 percent of the migrant population but only accounted for 10 percent in 2020. Likewise, there has been a decrease in the migrant population over the age of 65 (going from 16 percent in 1990 to 3 percent in 2020). In Chile, these changes reflect the transition from the historic pattern of family migration from neighboring countries to receiving flows from Haiti and Venezuela consisting of younger, working-age people. In 2020, 57 percent of the migrant population was aged 25–44, as compared to 24 percent in 1990 and 44 percent in 2010 (figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2. Chile's migrant population is concentrated in the 25–44 age bracket**

*Migrant and total population by age group and sex (percentage)*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP, based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

**Note:** The total population includes all people living in Chile (nationals and migrants).

In Chile, there are demographic differences between the local and migrant populations. First, the country's migrant population tends to be more concentrated among working-age individuals. According to 2020 data from the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 68 percent of Chile's migrant population is in the 20–34 age range, though only 38 percent of the country's total population belongs to this age group. Furthermore, according to the 2020 National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (CASEN), the geographic distribution of the two populations is also different.<sup>5</sup> The migrant population is concentrated in urban areas and in Santiago, the capital city (97 percent), while this is the case for a slightly lower percentage of the local population—88 percent. Similarly, 66 percent of the migrant population is located in Santiago, while only 40 percent of the local population lives there.

In terms of educational attainment, between 2015 and 2020 Chile saw an increase in the educational levels of its migrant population, especially in terms of migrants with a tertiary education, which went from 31 percent in 2015 to 39 percent in 2020. This increase may be attributed to recent flows of Venezuelan

<sup>5</sup> The sample sizes of migrants included in household surveys in the region are small, which may affect their statistical representativeness. More information on the representativeness of the migrant population in household surveys can be found in Perdomo (2022).

migrants, who tend to have higher levels of education. On average, Chile's migrant population has higher levels of education than the local population. Forty-nine percent of the migrant population has a tertiary degree, while this is true for just 32 percent of the local population. A similar pattern is observed among the lower educational classifications: only 9 percent of Chile's migrant population has not completed any formal education, compared to 17 percent of the local population, and 3 percent of the migrant population have only finished primary school, compared to 8 percent of the local population.

### ***A new path toward a comprehensive migration policy***

Until 2021, Chile's migration legislation were among the oldest in the region, having been in place for more than 40 years. The Migration Act of 1975 was created during the country's military dictatorship, so it was conceived under a logic of prioritizing national security and border control.<sup>6</sup> Under the terms of the 1975 legislation, work visas were subject to the prior existence of an employment contract that complied with certain conditions (for example, once the employment relationship ended, the employer was obliged to pay for return travel for the worker, as well as his or her family, to their country of origin). This law made it very difficult for foreigners to obtain work contracts and posed major challenges when it came to regularizing immigration.<sup>7</sup>

However, some advances on migration policy were made in the years prior to 2021, through the enactment of a series of policies principally designed to provide social assistance and regularize the status of migrants.<sup>8</sup> In 1998, the first regularization process occurred, and it was followed by three more, the last of which took place in 2021, under the auspices of the new migration legislation.<sup>9</sup>

Chile's Migration Act of 2021 represents important advances in comparison to the previous law. The creation of the National Migration Service will strengthen the country's migration-related institutions. The law acknowledges that migrants have human rights and that it is the state's duty to guarantee these rights. Another important step forward is the decriminalization of the migrant population, which constitutes a change with respect to the previous regulation that deemed it a crime to enter the country without authorization.<sup>10</sup> Numerous provisions on the regularization of migration in Chile were also incorporated into this 2021 Act.<sup>11</sup>

Despite these advances, the law still contains certain conditions, such as requiring migrants to have a two-year residency permit in order to access social benefits. Imposing such conditions hinder the real exercise of the human rights that the legislation recognizes.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, the implementation of a visa system is a barrier to the entry of interregional migrants in search of work or refuge, who are not always able to obtain a visa in their country of origin.<sup>13</sup>

Access to education in Chile is guaranteed and universal. Primary and secondary education are compulsory and free of charge in the country, regardless of a student's migration status. At the beginning of 2000, the government established a series of measures through the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Education that sought to guarantee the admission and retention of migrant students in Chilean schools.<sup>14</sup>

6 Rojas, Pedemonte, and Dittborn (2016); Decree-Law No. 1094.

7 Reveco and Mullan (2014).

8 Stefoni and Contreras (2022).

9 Stefoni and Contreras (2022).

10 Despite this, expulsions in response to irregular entry into the country continue to be reported. For more information, see OAS (2021).

11 R4V (2022).

12 Stefoni et al. (2021).

13 In Chile, the authority with direct jurisdiction over migration issues is part of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security. However, the entry and exit of people into and out of the national territory is the domain of the Criminal Investigations Police.

14 Circular No. 1179 of the Ministry of the Interior (January 28, 2003). As part of the Right to Education campaign, the Ministry of the Interior promoted the educational inclusion of the children of migrants residing in Chile regardless of the migration status of the child or their family. Official Notice No. 07/1008-1531 of the Ministry of Education established that education authorities and schools should facilitate and expedite the entry of migrant students into the Chilean school system.

These measures also sought to promote intercultural policies within the school system to strengthen the sociocultural inclusion of migrant children and adolescents.

Chile has also taken steps toward guaranteeing the migrant population's right to healthcare, regardless of their migration status. In 2017, the International Migrant Health Policy was formulated based on the findings of the Comprehensive Initial Health Care Plan for International Migrants.<sup>15</sup> This policy, the outcome of public consultation and social participation, eliminated certain legislative and legal barriers to increasing the coverage of migrants in the public healthcare system. Between 2013 and 2017, the number of migrants with public health insurance coverage doubled, going from 243,000 to 506,000, and the rate of service use increased from 0.81 to 1.36 per 100 migrants.<sup>16</sup>

In March 2022, a new government took office in Chile. At the time of this writing, the Boric administration had released the Government Program 2022–2026, which establishes its commitment to implementing a safe, orderly, regular migration policy that respects human rights. The government is also preparing to sign the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (the Marrakesh Pact): the regulations that are currently in force in Chile are now being reviewed to bring them in line with this instrument.<sup>17</sup>

### ***How does migration affect Chile?***

Over the last 10 years, the changing migratory context in Chile has had different social and economic impacts on the country. Recent studies estimate that migration may give a significant boost to Chile's economic growth by partially offsetting the aging of the local population.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, there is evidence regarding the impact of the migrant population on the Chilean labor market. Recent studies show that one of the main challenges faced by host communities in countries such as Chile is the impact of migrant flows on the labor indicators for the local population. According to a 2020 study, the increase in migration to Chile between 2015 and 2017 reduced the wages of lower-skilled local workers by 2–3 percent, with the main effect on male workers. This reduction was associated with the fact that the migrant population, which is comparatively better qualified than the local population, encounters a scenario known as “downgrading,” meaning that they end up taking jobs that are below their true skill level.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, one potentially beneficial aspect of migration is the increase in the country's human capital, given that Venezuelan migrants have higher educational levels than the Chilean population, on average.<sup>20</sup> Recent studies find that exposure to migrants triggers feelings of hostility, especially in association with concerns around labor market conditions. In Chile, although migration has not affected employment rates, it has led to an increase in concerns related to unemployment.<sup>21</sup>

However, an increase in investment in response to migration is expected in the medium term, as positive effects on economic growth will be generated by the growth in the labor force and the increased productivity this will bring about.<sup>22</sup> It is estimated that migrants moving to more skilled jobs could contribute to increasing the country's productivity.<sup>23</sup> On the fiscal impact, recent studies conclude that by generating more revenues than expenditures, the migrant population has increased the fiscal capacity of the Chilean state in recent years. The age composition and employment levels of the migrant population

<sup>15</sup> Ministerio de Salud de Chile (n.d.).

<sup>16</sup> Wiff et al. (2022).

<sup>17</sup> The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195), also known as the Marrakesh Pact, was adopted under the auspices of the United Nations at an intergovernmental conference on migration held in Marrakesh, Morocco, on December 10, 2018. The government's guidelines around are included in Observatorio Regional de Planificación para el Desarrollo de América Latina y el Caribe (n.d.).

<sup>18</sup> Banco Central de Chile (2017).

<sup>19</sup> Contreras and Gallardo (2020).

<sup>20</sup> Contreras and Gallardo (2020).

<sup>21</sup> Ajzenman, Domínguez, and Undurraga (2022).

<sup>22</sup> Banco Central de Chile (2019).

<sup>23</sup> Aldunate et al. (2019).

mean that they contribute to increasing the country's level of income and GDP, and thus also help to boost tax revenues.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, different studies have focused on measuring the impact of Venezuelan migration on the security of Chilean citizens.<sup>25</sup> Studies conducted between 2006 and 2018 indicate that the migrant population has little involvement in crime and that even their relative participation in criminal activity has been falling in recent years. Official data from Chile's National Institute of Statistics (INE) suggest that most arrests for violent crimes do not involve migrants. In 2019, the migrant population accounted for 0.7 percent of all arrests related to violent crime in the country.<sup>26</sup> However, Chile is seeing an increase in crime-related concerns and attitudes associated with these concerns.<sup>27</sup>

With regard to the impact of migration on Chile's education system, a series of existing barriers make the adequate inclusion of migrants quite difficult. These difficulties mainly involve access to the education system (due to problems associated with migration status), tensions between students that can lead to bullying, and differences in the academic performance of migrant and local students.<sup>28</sup> In the case of Haitian children, the weakness of intercultural policies within Chile's educational system increases their experiences of discrimination and racism.<sup>29</sup>

#### 4.1.2. Disparate attitudes toward migration

According to Gallup's Migrant Acceptance Index, Chile is one of the countries in the region where there has been an improvement in acceptance towards the migrant population between 2016 and 2019 (from 5.17 to 6.28).<sup>30</sup> The index, which is constructed based on three questions, allows a comparison of public perceptions toward the migrant population between 2016 and 2019. However, recent regional surveys indicate that there are opposing perceptions of migration in the country.

Data from Latinobarómetro 2020 show that, compared to the regional average in Latin America, the Chilean population feels less strongly that the arrival of migrants in their country is harmful to them or their families (39 percent in Chile and 57 percent in Latin America) (figure 4.3).<sup>31</sup>

Yet disparate opinions are observed among the Chilean population when asked about their perceptions on migrants from different origins. Fifty-four percent of the Chilean population have a negative view of receiving migrants from Latin America, as compared to 48 percent of respondents in Latin America. Similarly, 64 percent of the Chilean population have a negative view of receiving migrants from Venezuela, compared to 62 percent of Latin Americans. This result is similar to the level of acceptance related to the Haitian population: 64 percent of the Chilean population have a negative view of receiving Haitian migrants, compared to 61 percent in Latin America. Chile is slightly more open to migration when it comes from outside the region: 47 percent of the Chilean population have a negative view of receiving migrants from countries outside of Latin America, compared to 48 percent of the Latin American population.

24 Yáñez (2020).

25 Blanco, Loreto, and Vega (2020).

26 INE (2021).

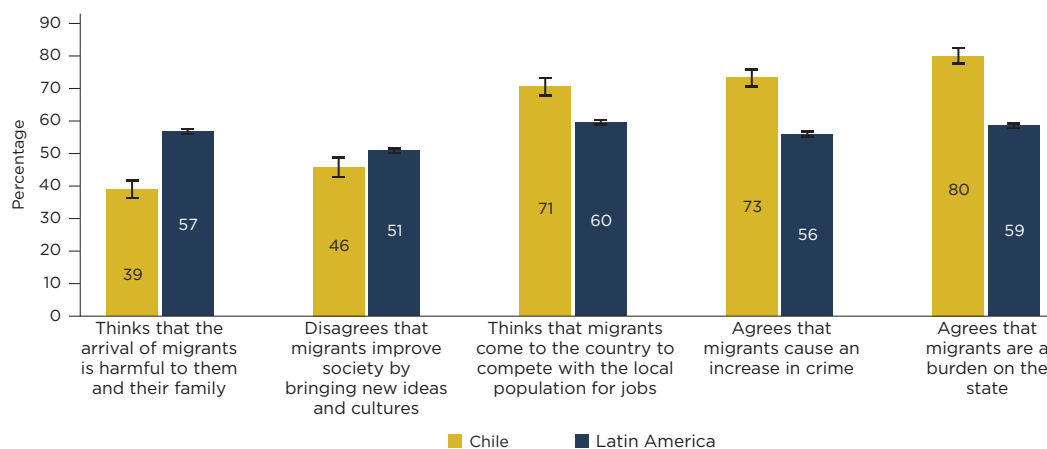
27 Ajzenman, Domínguez, and Undurraga (2020).

28 Contreras and Gallardo (2020).

29 Melis and Valderrama (2017), and Stang et al. (2021).

30 The maximum value that the Gallup Migrant Acceptance Index can take is 9.

31 This section includes data from public opinion polls that collect sample information from various countries relating to a range of topics over time. However, the same questions are not usually asked from one round to the next, which makes it harder to compare data. In the case of Chile, data from two surveys was used: the 2020 Latinobarómetro survey and the 2016 and 2019 Gallup surveys. The former contains information that was collected from a sample of 1,200 Chileans in October and November 2020. As part of their 2016 and 2019 surveys, Gallup surveyed a sample of 1,008 Chileans between June and July 2016, and 1,060 Chileans between November 2019 and January 2020, respectively.

**Figure 4.3. In Chile, there are opposing perceptions of migration***Chileans and Latin Americans in each category (percentage), 2020*

Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

Note: Responses from the "I do not know/No response" category were excluded. Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregate for Latin America, using 5 percent significance levels.

Chileans are more concerned about labor market competition than the average for Latin America. Some 71 percent of the Chilean population think that migrants compete with the local population for jobs, compared to 60 percent of the Latin American population. Similarly, 73 percent of the Chilean population believes that migrants cause an increase in crime, compared to 56 percent of Latin Americans. Both of these negative perceptions may be related to a strong belief that migrants are a burden on the state (80 percent of respondents in Chile think this, compared to 59 percent in the region). However, more than half of Chile's population feel that migrants improve society and the local culture: 54 percent of the Chilean population agrees that migrants improve society, compared to an average of 49 percent of Latin Americans (figure 4.3).

On the other hand, Chile, is a country with opinions similar to the regional average in terms of receiving migrants experiencing political persecution or providing the migrant population with access to public services. In 2020, 43 percent of the Chilean population did not agree that their country should help migrants experiencing political persecution, an average similar to the regional average (37 percent). Likewise, 34 percent of Chileans did not agree that migrants should have the same access to healthcare, education, and housing as the local population (compared to 29 percent among respondents in Latin America as a whole). Finally, the results show that 59 percent of the Chilean population believes that the government should immediately return those migrants who enter the country via unauthorized means, compared to 46 percent of Latin Americans.

#### 4.1.3. Experiment results

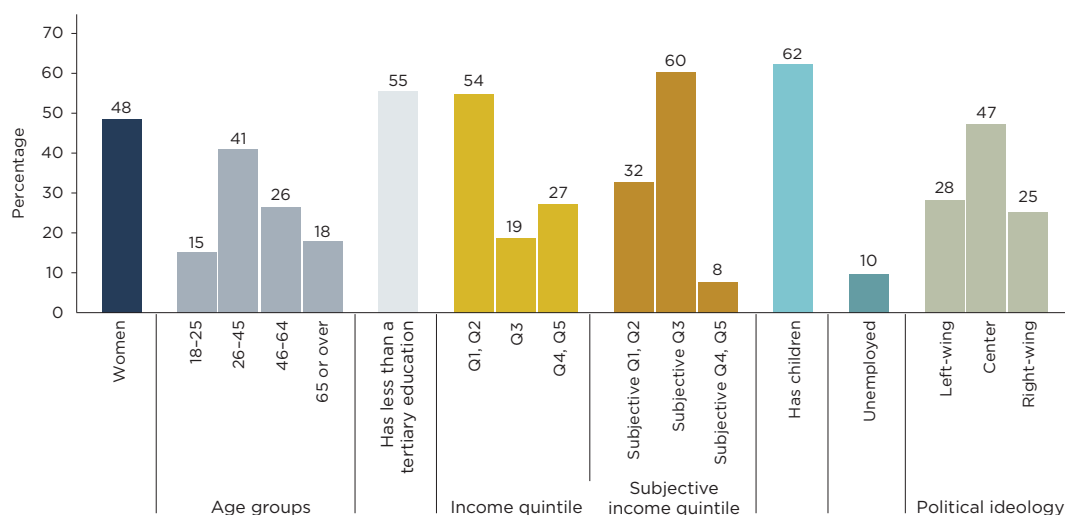
The sample of the Chilean population that took part in the study consisted of 2,423 people.<sup>32</sup> Some 52 percent of the sample are men. The majority are aged 18–45 (56 percent) and have children (62 percent). In terms of political ideology, the majority are on the left or in the center of the spectrum (28 percent and 47 percent, respectively). Furthermore, 45 percent of respondents have a higher education, and

<sup>32</sup> Some 812 participants were in the group that watched a placebo video (i.e., the control group); 802 belonged to the group that watched the emotive video; and, finally, 809 belonged to the group that watched the informative video. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the methodology.

54 percent are in quintiles 1 and 2 of the income distribution.<sup>33</sup> Finally, just 10 percent of the sample are unemployed (figure 4.4).<sup>34</sup> Descriptive statistics for the treatment and control groups can be found in the online statistical annex. In Chile, these groups are comparable for all participant traits.

**Figure 4.4. Description of the participant sample in Chile**

*Distribution by characteristic (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

***In Chile, the informative video improves acceptance of the presence of migrants in the country, and the emotive video improves the willingness to accept a migrant as part of the family, but neither video increases trust in migrants or empathy toward them, nor did the videos increase support for policies favoring migrants.***

The capacity to affect preferences regarding migration policies and social norms through the two interventions was evaluated based on two types of questions. The first set of questions explores whether the videos affect people's willingness to accept the presence of a migrant population in the country, to accept a migrant as a neighbor, or as the spouse of a close relative. The informative video improves acceptance of the migrant population in the country. Exposure to this video generated a 7-percentage-point increase in the share of Chileans answering "good" when asked what they think about migrants living in their country, as compared to the control group (44 percent and 51 percent, respectively) (figure 4.5A). This positive effect is concentrated in the high-income group (quintiles 4 and 5).<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, the emotive video improves participants' willingness to accept a migrant person as part of their family. After watching the emotive video, the percentage of people who think that a close relative marrying a migrant is "good" is 8 percentage points higher than the percentage for the control group (48 percent and 56 percent, respectively) (figure 4.5C). Finally, it is important to mention that the informative video has an unexpected effect on the group of people who already looked unfavorably on having migrants

<sup>33</sup> Based on data from the Chilean National Institute of Statistics, the population was divided into the following income quintiles: i) less than CLP556,000; ii) CLP556,000 to CLP800,000; iii) CLP800,000 to CLP1,122,000; iv) CLP1,122,000 to CLP1,760,000 Chilean pesos; and v) more than CLP1,760,000.

<sup>34</sup> The sample collected in Chile is not strictly comparable with the Chilean population. According to the 2020 CASEN Survey, the country's population is made up of fewer men (45 percent) than the sample, is older (48 percent are aged 18-45) and is less educated (37 percent have a higher education).

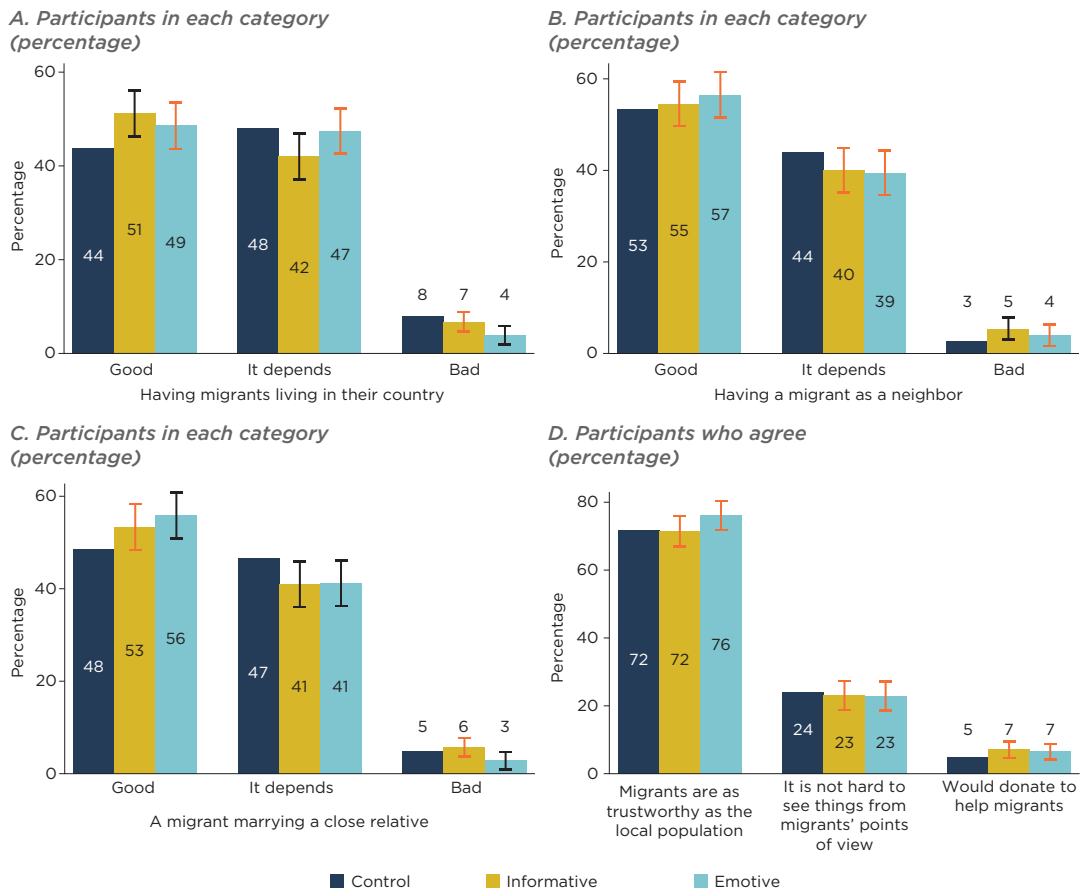
<sup>35</sup> The variety of effects caused by the different treatments are not discussed in the text but can be consulted in the online statistical annex.



as neighbors. The percentage of people who answered “bad” when asked how they feel about migrants being their neighbors increases from 3 percent in the control group to 5 percent in the group who watched the informative video (figure 4.5B).

Other relevant indicators in this same category of questions are trust and empathy toward the migrant population. Some 72 percent of people in the control group said they trusted migrants as much as the local population. Exposure to the videos did not bring about a change in this figure. Similarly, neither of the treatment videos have any effect on people’s willingness to empathize with the migrant population’s perspective (24 percent in the control group) or to donate money to help migrants (5 percent in the control group) (figure 4.5D).

**Figure 4.5. In Chile, the videos are not effective at improving trust in the migrant population or increasing empathy toward them**



Source: IDB/UNDP.

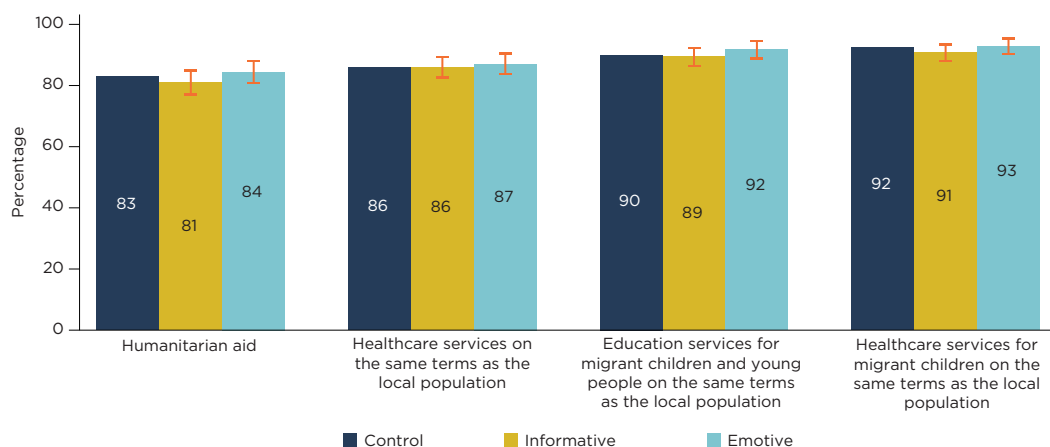
Note: The data presented in panels A, B, and C are the result of estimating a multinomial logistic model, and the data presented in panel D is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

The second set of questions explores whether the videos changed people’s attitudes to migration policies. Exposure to the videos does not affect these attitudes. However, the majority of the control group agrees that the government should provide social services to the migrant population. Some 83 percent or more agree that the government should provide humanitarian aid to migrants, offer them the same quality of

healthcare that the local population receives, and provide healthcare and education to migrant children on the same terms as the local population (figure 4.6).

**Figure 4.6. In Chile, neither video increases the share that favors the government helping the migrant population**

*Participants who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences between each treatment group and the control group are not statistically significant, using 5 percent significance levels, such that the treatment effect is null.

***Both videos have a positive effect on the local population's opinion of the economic impact of migration in the country. The informative video also has a positive effect on opinions regarding the migrant population's impact on the labor market.***

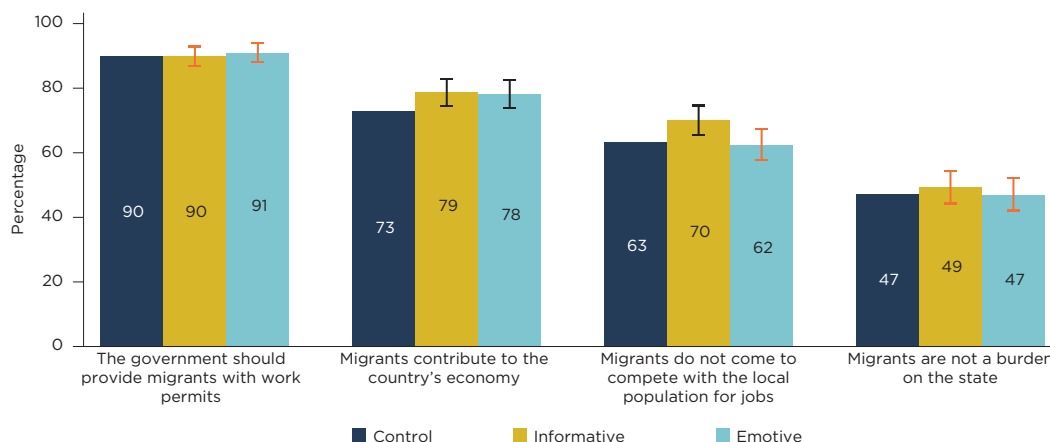
The majority of the control group thinks that the arrival of the migrant population brings economic benefits to their country. Some 73 percent believe that migrants contribute to the country's economy, and 90 percent agree that the government should provide migrants with work permits. Exposure to the treatment videos does not affect levels of support for the government giving work permits to the migrant population. However, the videos do generate an average increase of 6 percentage points in the share of people who believe that migrants contribute to the country's economy (going from 73 percent to 79 percent in the groups that watched the treatment videos).

Labor market competition seems to be an issue that concerns the control group. Almost 40 percent of this group agree that migrants compete with them for jobs. Only the informative video is effective at changing this opinion. Some 30 percent of those who watched the informative video agree that migrants come to compete with the local Chilean population for their jobs (down from 37 percent in the control group). Examining whether the responses vary among different population groups reveals that the positive effect of the informative video is concentrated among people with low incomes (quintiles 1 and 2).

Despite believing that migrants contribute to the country's economy, in Chile the participants in the control group also believe that migrants are a burden on the state. Only 47 percent hold the opposite opinion. Unfortunately, neither of the treatments generates a reduction in the percentage of people who have this perception (figure 4.7).

**Figure 4.7. In Chile, both videos improve perceptions of the migrant population's contribution to the country's economy**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences between each treatment group and the control group are not statistically significant, using 5 percent significance levels, such that the treatment effect is null.

***In Chile, exposure to both videos increases the share of respondents who believe that the migrant population makes a net positive contribution to the country. The emotive video also improves people's views of the migrant population's contribution to cultural diversity.***

Overall, most participants in the study are aware of the contribution that migration makes to Chilean society. However, not everyone agrees that this contribution is greater than the benefits that migrants receive from the country. Fifty-five percent of the control group think the contributions of the migrant population exceed what they get back from the country. Both interventions improve these perceptions, and by a similar extent. On average, 64 percent of the participants who saw the emotive video and the informative video recognize that the contribution of the migrant population is greater than the benefits that this population receives from the country.

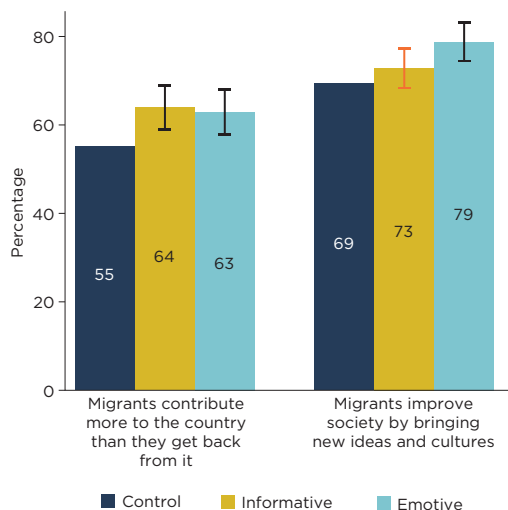
Regarding the cultural contribution of the migrant population, a large proportion of the control group (69 percent) agrees that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and cultures. Exposure to the informative video has no impact on these results, but exposure to the emotive video generates a 10-percentage-point increase, raising the share to 79 percent. This effect is concentrated among people with no tertiary education (figure 4.8).

***In Chile, neither treatment videos improves the perception that migration is associated with increases in crime and insecurity. Nor do they correct the stigma attached to migrant women***

Social stigma poses an important challenge during the process of integrating the migrant population into the receiving society. In Chile, the study's participants seem to be diverging. While only 47 percent of the control group do not associate the migrant population with an increase in crime, 80 percent of the control group disagrees with the statement that migrant women end up engaging in sex work. Neither of the two treatment videos generates a significant change in perceptions related to crime and social stigma (figure 4.9).

**Figure 4.8. In Chile, an emotional appeal leads more participants to recognize the migrant population's contributions**

Participants who agree (percentage)

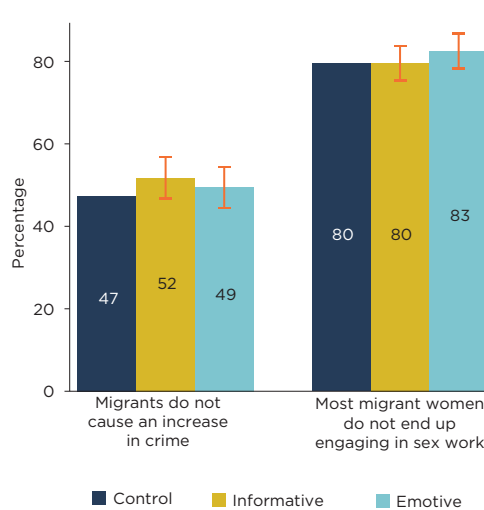


Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

**Figure 4.9. the videos do not change Chileans opinion on the impact of the migrant population on insecurity and crime**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences between each treatment group and the control group are not statistically significant, using 5 percent significance levels, such that the treatment effect is null.

**Summary**

In Chile, the interventions are less effective at influencing beliefs and prejudices about the migrant population than compared to the impact in other countries. The emotive video generates significant changes in perceptions related to the contributions that the migrant population makes to Chilean society. The two interventions produce positive changes in perceptions related to the acceptance of the migrant population. However, the interventions do not increase trust in and empathy for migrants; the informative video even has a negative effect on people’s willingness to accept migrants as neighbors.

Neither of the interventions corrects the Chilean population’s erroneous perceptions about migrants. The videos do not reduce the percentage of the participants who associate migrants with crime and insecurity, nor the percentage who think that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work. Moreover, they have no influence on changing the idea that the migrant population represent a burden for the state, nor do they have an impact on preferences regarding migration policies. In Chile, the lack of positive results may be partly explained by the majority’s initially favorable attitudes toward migrants, so improving outcomes through the interventions may be more difficult than in countries where the starting point is lower. Compared to the other countries in the sample, after Barbados, the fact is that before the interventions, Chile has, the second-highest number of responses expressing a positive view of migration. These results are summarized in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1. In Chile, the effectiveness of the treatment videos varies, depending on the belief in question***Summary of results (percentages and percentage points)*

Category	Question	Control group (percentages)	Effect of the informational video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally charged video (percentage points)
Policy preferences and social norms	Having migrants living in their country is a good thing.	42.8	9.0	5.7
	Having a migrant as a neighbor is a good thing.	52.0	0	5.3
	A migrant marrying a close relative is a good thing.	39.5	7.8	6.0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care.)	86.7	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants healthcare services on the same terms as the local population.	86.3	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants children and young people with education services on the same terms as the local population.	92.6	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide healthcare services for migrant children on the same terms as the local population.	93.1	0	0
	Agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.	55.2	10.4	6.2
	Agree that it isn't hard to see things from migrants' points of view.	16.3	0	0
Would donate to an organization that helps migrants.	6.6	8.1	7.4	
Economic factors	Agree that the government should give migrants work permits or documentation that enables them to work legally in the country	88.3	3.9	3.5
	Agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy	57.1	17.3	8.2
	Agree that migrants do not come to compete with the local population for jobs	37.4	17.8	9.7
	Agree that migrants are not a burden on the state	40.4	8.3	8.5
Cultural factors	Agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it	43.6	18.1	7.2
	Agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and culture	58.6	16.1	7.2
Social stigma	Agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime rates	28.7	16.6	6.9
	Agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work	51.9	0	5.5

Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Gray cells indicate that the effect is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. For each question, a darker cell color indicates a comparatively greater effect. When coefficients are shown in the same color, the difference between them is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

## 4.2. Colombia

### 4.2.1. Migration in Colombia

#### ***Colombia has been a net recipient of immigrants since 2016***

Colombia currently sends migrants, receives migrants, and hosts migrants in transit to other countries. Historically, it has sent migrants to international destinations, as the country's prolonged civil conflict pushed the population abroad. By 2020, an estimated 3 million Colombians resided outside the country (figure 4.10A). Although this cumulative figure is greater than the number of immigrants currently residing in Colombia, since 2016 the annual inflow of migrants has outstripped the number of Colombians leaving the country (figure 4.10B). Since 2000, the tightening of migration policies in North America and Europe has not only altered the destinations of Colombian migrants, but has also turned Colombia into a transit country for migrants and refugees coming from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. More recently, Venezuela's political and economic instability has made Colombia one of the primary receiving countries for Venezuelan migrants. This increasing migration from Venezuela is the main reason why Colombia has become a net recipient of migrants since 2016. The country went from hosting 159,000 immigrants in 2015 to having an immigrant population of around 2 million in 2020, representing 4 percent of the total population (figure 4.10C). During this same period, Colombia went from hosting 2 percent to 13 percent of Latin America's total migrant population (figure 4.10C).

The characteristics of the migrant population in Colombia have evolved over time. First, their age structure has changed. In 1990, almost half of the country's migrants were under 15 (45 percent), while in 2020 this age group only accounted for about a third of migrants (31 percent). Conversely, the share of migrants aged 25–59 increased from 31 percent of the total in 1990 to 39 percent in 2010, and then to 43 percent in 2020 (figure 4.11). A second major change in the composition of Colombia's migrant population is their nationality of origin: In 1990, Venezuelan migrants accounted for 32 percent of the migrant population, but this share was 93 percent in 2020.<sup>36</sup> Some Venezuelan migrants intend to stay in Colombia permanently, while others are in transit to other destinations. While Venezuelans are a highly varied migrant population, most of them are in extremely vulnerable circumstances. Some 92 percent of Venezuelan migrants say that their reason for leaving their country is the need to find better economic conditions.<sup>37</sup>

#### ***In recent years, bilateral relations with Venezuela have shaped the Colombian government's response***

Since net emigration characterized the demographic movements in Colombia during the 20th century, until recently the country's migration policy was limited to border control. It took a restrictive and utilitarian view of migrants, based on the contributions that foreign labor made to the country's productivity.<sup>38</sup> Colombia's transformation into a net recipient of migrants, beginning in 2016, has been accompanied by initiating more open and favorable policies to ease the integration of migrants arriving in the country.<sup>39</sup>

Since the 1990s, Colombia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been in charge of supervising and enforcing the country's migration policy. In 2003, this ministry established the Intersectoral Commission on Migration to coordinate measures implemented at the executive level. In 2009, the Comprehensive Migration

<sup>36</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

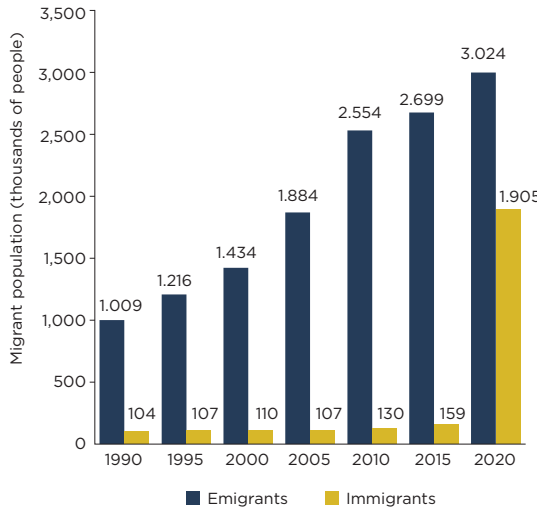
<sup>37</sup> Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística [National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia], Pulse of Migration Survey 2021.

<sup>38</sup> Ciarlo (2015).

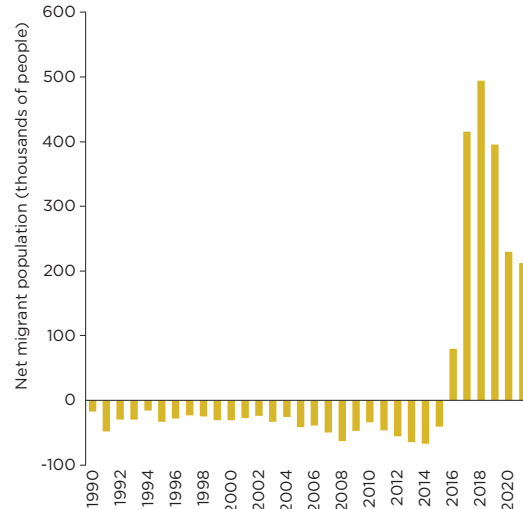
<sup>39</sup> Bitar (2022) summarizes the government's response to migration over the past 20 years.

**Figure 4.10. Since 2016, Colombia has been a net recipient of migrants**

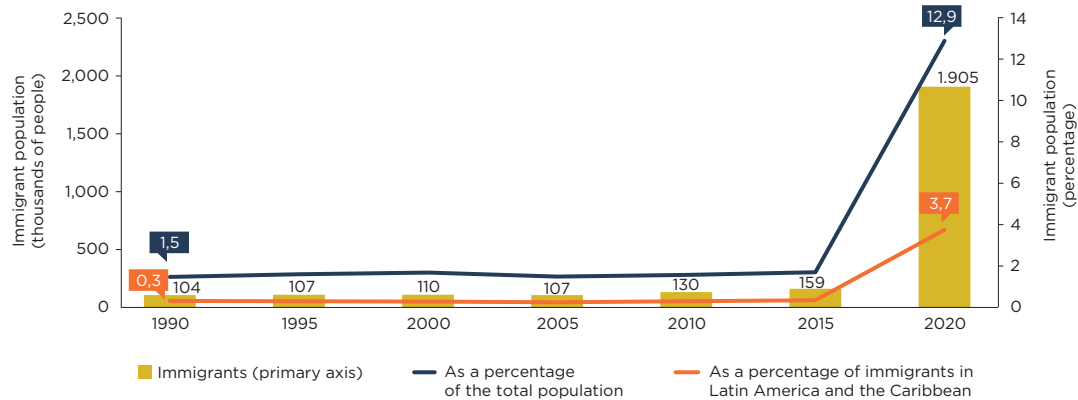
**A. Cumulative migrant inflows and outflows (thousands), 1990–2020**



**B. Annual net migration (thousands), 1990–2020**



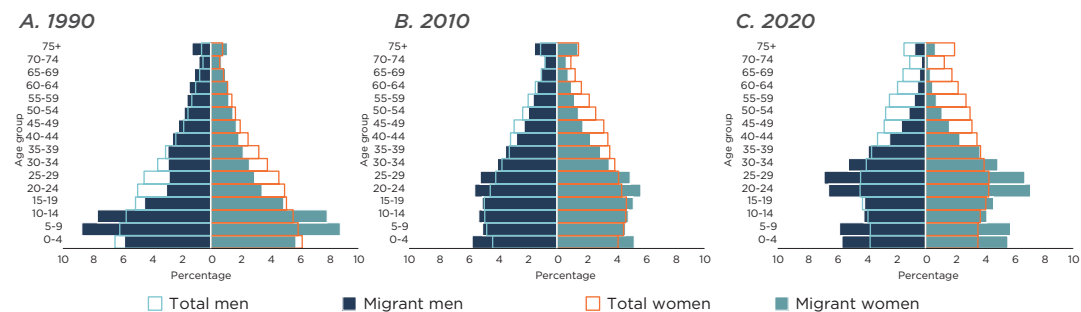
**C. Cumulative migrant inflows (thousands and percentages), 1990–2020**



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020 (panels A and C) and World Population Prospects 2022 (panel B).  
**Note:** The net migrant population data presented in panel B is the annual difference between the inflow of immigrants and the outflow of emigrants. Thus, these annual results differ from the cumulative five-year values.

**Figure 4.11. In Colombia, the proportion of migrants aged 25–60 is rising**

**Migrant and total population by age group and sex (percentage)**



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.  
**Note:** The total population includes all people living in Colombia (nationals and migrants).

Policy established guidelines to guarantee a coordinated response to the Colombian population living abroad and to the foreign population residing in Colombia.<sup>40</sup> Although the scope of its actual impact has generally been limited to consular attention abroad and border control initiatives, this policy's strategic vision was conceived as a step toward a comprehensive approach to migration that targeted specific populations; committed to international statutes and regional agreements; and guaranteed the migrant population's human rights,<sup>41</sup>

Bilateral relations between Colombia and Venezuela centered around recent migratory movements taking place on their shared border have shaped the Colombian government's policy response in recent years.<sup>42</sup> Between 2011 and 2014, a border integration initiative was enacted, which established zones along the border for the free transit of citizens of both countries, but then in 2015 a border crisis ensued. Venezuela unilaterally closed its border following a confrontation in which Venezuelan armed forces officers were killed, and ordered the deportation of at least 1,950 Colombians, which later that year prompted the voluntary return of at least 22,342 more Colombians.<sup>43</sup> This incident was one of the first tests of Colombia's capacity to respond to a humanitarian crisis.

When the shared border reopened in 2016, Venezuelan migrants entered Colombia en masse, but these trips were largely temporary and circular in nature, mainly motivated by the need to purchase supplies and then return home. The Colombian government responded to these pendular migration patterns by issuing Border Mobility Cards that were valid for up to seven days for restricted use in areas near the border. However, since 2017, the number of Venezuelan migrants settling permanently in Colombian territory has grown exponentially.<sup>44</sup> Colombia introduced the Special Stay Permit to provide the growing number of regular migrants intending to settle in the country with a path for obtaining employment, access to the health system for two years, and access to education and early childhood care services, among other state programs. Access to these benefits was conditional on using the System for Identifying Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programs (Sisbén) to determine a migrant's eligibility.<sup>45</sup>

In 2018, the Colombian government shifted its attention to identifying the country's irregular immigrant population. It created the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants, which enrolled 442,464 irregular immigrants; this registry then served as the starting point for migrants seeking to regularize their migration status. The benefits of the Special Stay Permit were extended to about 64 percent of the migrants identified by this program.<sup>46</sup>

In 2020, the government launched the Special Stay Permit to Promote Formal Employment, an initiative that issued 8,960 permits to irregular migrants who had job offers.<sup>47</sup> In 2021, the most significant milestone in the country's migration policy occurred with the passage of the Temporary Statute of Protection for Venezuelan Migrants, which replaced the Special Stay Permit and the Special Stay Permit to Promote Formal Employment. The objective of this 2021 statute is to provide migrants with formal identification documents and regularize their status, as 56 percent of migrants were residing in Colombia irregularly. By issuing temporary residency permits, carrying out diagnostic exercises to assess their needs, and providing greater facilities for their entry into the labor market and the state's social programs, the goal is to include irregular migrants in an ordinary migratory process.<sup>48</sup>

40 CONPES Document 3603 of 2009.

41 Ciurlo (2015).

42 These events are analyzed in greater detail in Bitar (2022).

43 OCHA (2015).

44 Bitar (2022).

45 World Bank (2018).

46 Ibáñez et al. (2022).

47 OMV (2021).

48 Decree no. 216 of 2021.



The Border Act establishes a special regime for departments and municipalities located near the border, and creates border zones that receive special assistance coordinated by government agencies, which is part of the work conducted by the Intersectoral Commission for Border Integration and Development.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, the new Comprehensive Migration Policy—which seeks to promote a safe, orderly, and regular migratory process and the socioeconomic inclusion of migrants—delineates Colombia’s new approach to migration, which is oriented toward guarantees for inclusion.<sup>50</sup>

### **Overall, the effects of migration in Colombia are positive**

#### **Impacts of migration**

Given its magnitude and concentration over a short time period, the influx of Venezuelan migrants has put pressure on Colombia’s healthcare, education, and social protection services, particularly as these migrants have tended to settle in areas with pre-existing deficits in their capacity to supply basic public services.<sup>51</sup> Assuming that the per capita outlay for the migrant population is the same as for the local population, it is estimated that between 2020 and 2022, the additional pressure brought by these arrivals of migrants would translate into an increase in fiscal expenditures on healthcare and education of 0.2–0.4 percent of GDP.<sup>52</sup> However, migration is also expected to lead to economic growth in the short and medium term. Indeed, the findings point to an increase in economic activity and tax revenue, even in the face of falling real wages for lower-skilled workers and rising unemployment levels associated with the increase in the labor supply. Some scenarios even suggest that any adverse effects on the national budget will be offset by increased output, consumption, and employment levels.<sup>53</sup> Recent evidence at the municipal level also suggests that public spending has not actually increased but rather has been reallocated to meet the growing demand for services.<sup>54</sup>

The available empirical evidence identifies the short-term effects that immigration had on the national economy. Venezuelan migration generated an increase in short-term labor productivity in Colombia between 2013 and 2019, driven mainly by a greater supply of skilled labor.<sup>55</sup> However, the arrival of migrants from Venezuela has led to lower rates of labor market participation and employment among the native-born population.<sup>56</sup> The increase in the supply of foreign labor has also had a negative impact on real wages, between 1 percent and 7 percent.<sup>57</sup> The literature that has specifically investigated the effects of the mass migratory movement after the border was reopened in 2016 finds that this influx led to a substantial decline in real hourly wages in areas where this influx was significant relative to the economically active native population. Furthermore, the effect was found to be more pronounced for men, informal workers, and less-skilled workers.<sup>58</sup> The evidence is mixed regarding the effects of migration on formal employment among Colombians. While some studies report that there are no significant effects, others identify a slight increase in the probability that Colombians will find a job in the formal labor market as a consequence of migration. An increase in underemployment also has been identified: together with the negative effect on the employment rate, this result points to the rigidity of the Colombian labor market when it comes to absorbing additional workers in a timely manner.<sup>59</sup>

49 Law no. 2135 of 2021.

50 Law no. 2136 of 2021.

51 World Bank (2018).

52 Melo-Becerra et al. (2020).

53 De la Vega (2020), and Valencia et al. (2020).

54 Traettino (2022).

55 Mutis et al. (2021).

56 Bonilla-Mejía et al. (2020).

57 Caruso, Canon, and Mueller (2019), and Lebow (2022).

58 Peñaloza Pacheco (2019).

59 World Bank (2018), and Tribin-Urbe (2020).

Venezuelan migration has had an impact in other areas as well. It has pushed up urban real estate prices: between 2013 and 2019, a 1 percent increase in the annual inflow of Venezuelan migrants in the country's major cities led to a 1.25 percent increase in the price of rental housing.<sup>60</sup> In the educational realm, Venezuelan migrants did not affect enrollment levels among the local student population or their performance at school, but promotion rates went down and dropout rates rose.<sup>61</sup> These recent migratory shocks have also increased voter participation in presidential elections in the migrant-receiving municipalities and have modified voter preferences along the ideological spectrum: electoral support for left-wing candidates has fallen while support for right-wing alternatives has had a proportional increase.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, migration has had an impact on Colombians' public policy preferences. It has been observed that an increase in the concentration of migrants at the municipal level lowers support for income redistribution policies.<sup>63</sup> Finally, it has been documented that the wave of Venezuelan migration that followed the reopening of the Colombia-Venezuela border in 2016 was associated with an increase in homicides of Venezuelan migrants in Colombian border municipalities, but had no effect on homicide rates among the local population.<sup>64</sup>

### Effects of public policy

The 2018 expansion of the coverage of the Special Stay Permit, which as a third policy step granted work permits and access to public services to close to half a million undocumented Venezuelans, did not have any substantial short-term impacts on Colombia's labor market.<sup>65</sup> However, the measure succeeded in increasing income and spending capacity of this portion of the migrant population, while also improving their working conditions and access to state services.<sup>66</sup> In addition, this policy decision increased the number of formal businesses that were started by beneficiaries as a result of facilities aimed at migrant entrepreneurs.<sup>67</sup> There is also evidence that the measure led to an increase in the number of official reports filed by Venezuelan women who were victims of crimes.<sup>68</sup>

### 4.2.2. Perceptions of migration

Generally speaking, Colombians have a more negative perception of the arriving migrants compared to the average attitude in the region. Colombia is the country with the largest share of people who disagree with the statement that migrants are good for the country's economy (78 percent disagree, compared to 57 percent in the Latin American and the Caribbean region). Besides believing that the arrival of migrants is not good for the country, 67 percent of Colombians think that migrants are a burden on the state (compared to 59 percent in the region as a whole), 68 percent believe that migrants cause an increase in crime (versus 56 percent in the region), and 65 percent feel that migrants compete with the local population for jobs (versus 60 percent in the region). Within the region, Colombia has the second-highest percentage of the local population who think that the arrival of migrants is detrimental to them and their families (80 percent, compared to 57 percent for the region as a whole). These attitudes may be related to the fact that a larger share of the Colombian population (40 percent) disagree with giving migrants access to the same level of healthcare, education, and housing that the local population receives, as compared to 31 percent for the region as a whole (figure 4.12)

60 Forero-Vargas and Iturra (2022). In this case, the influx of immigrants recorded each year in a given city is equivalent to the population of migrants of Venezuelan origin in the previous year expressed as a proportion of the population residing there two years previously.

61 Rozo and Vargas (2020).

62 Rozo and Vargas (2021).

63 Martínez-Correa, Peñalozza-Pacheco, and Gasparini (2022).

64 Knight and Tribin (2020).

65 Bahar, Ibáñez, and Rozo (2021).

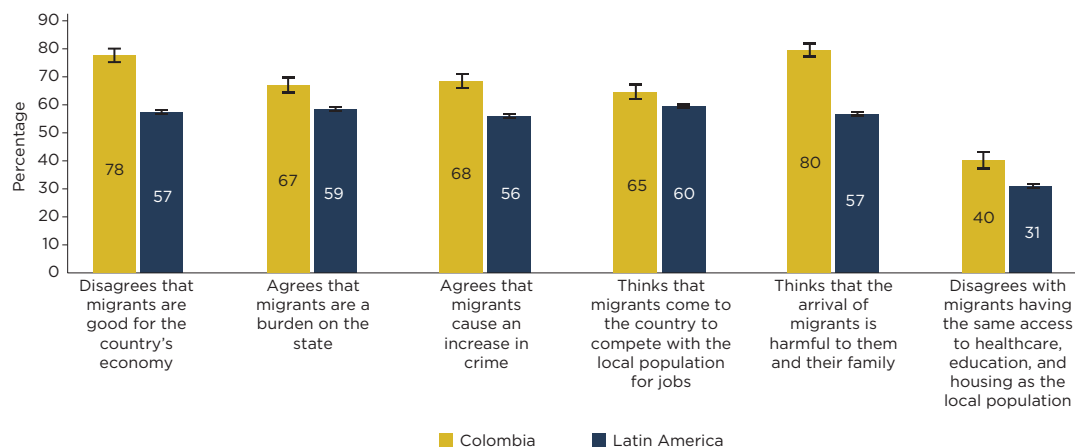
66 Ibáñez et al. (2022).

67 Bahar, Cowgill, and Guzman (2022).

68 Ibáñez, Rozo, and Bahar (2021).

**Figure 4.12. Colombians are much less willing to host migrants, compared to the average in Latin America**

Colombians and Latin Americans in each category (percentage), 2020



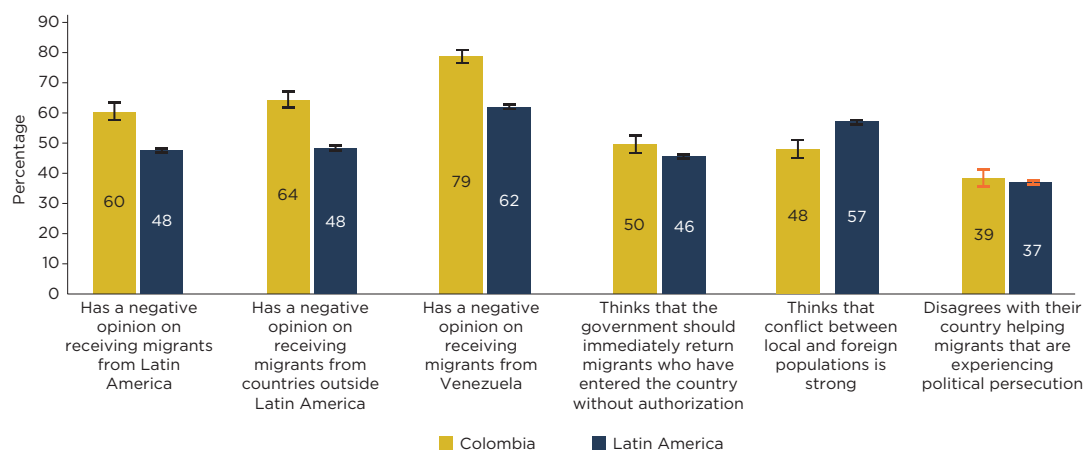
Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

Note: Responses from the "I don't know/No response" category were excluded. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregate for Latin America, using 5 percent significance levels.

In general, Colombians have a low predisposition toward receiving migrants, but the data reveals that this willingness is even lower when it comes to taking in Venezuelan migrants. Sixty percent of Colombians disagree with accepting migrants coming from countries outside of Latin America, 64 percent do not wish to receive migrants from other countries in the region, and 79 percent are against the country receiving Venezuelan migrants. These three percentages are above the regional averages: 48 percent of people in Latin America do not agree with receiving migrants from other regions or other countries in the region, and 62 percent do not agree with receiving Venezuelan migrants. Moreover, 50 percent of Colombians believe that the government should immediately return those migrants who enter the

**Figure 4.13. Colombians reject Venezuelan migrants more than migrants from other countries**

Colombians and Latin Americans in each category (percentage), 2017 and 2020



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020. The question on conflict between the national and foreign populations is based on data from Latinobarómetro 2017.

Note: Responses from the "I don't know/No response" category were excluded. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregate for Latin America, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the difference is not statistically significant, and the percentage in both cases is identical.

country in an unauthorized manner, compared to 46 percent in Latin America as a whole. Nevertheless, the share of Colombians who believe that there is significant conflict between the native-born population and foreigners is lower than the average for Latin America (48 percent versus 57 percent, respectively). Likewise, similar shares of the population in Colombia and the region as a whole agree that their country should help migrants experiencing political persecution (61 percent and 63 percent, respectively, meaning that the shares are not statistically different) (figure 4.13).

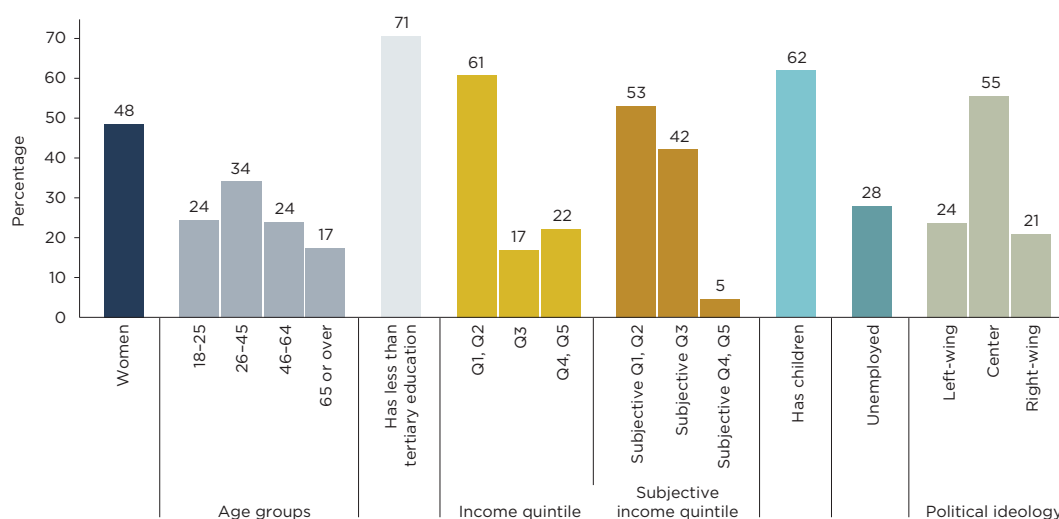
### 4.2.3. Experiment results

#### *The informative video is more effective at changing how Colombians view migrants*

Some 2,769 people participated in the experiment in Colombia.<sup>69</sup> The majority of the sample (52 percent) are men, 34 percent are aged 26–45, 62 percent have children, and 28 percent are unemployed. Some 71 percent of respondents do not have a higher education, and 61 percent are in the country’s lowest two income distribution quintiles.<sup>70</sup> More than half fall in the middle of the political spectrum (55 percent) (figure 4.14).<sup>71</sup> Descriptive statistics for the control and treatment groups are available in the online statistical annex.<sup>72</sup>

**Figure 4.14. Description of the Participant Sample in Colombia**

*Distribution by characteristic (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

69 The 898 participants who watched the placebo video make up the control group, which represents the opinions of Colombians before the interventions. Some 943 people watched the emotive video and 928 watched the informative video. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the methodology.

70 Based on data from the Colombian National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), the population was divided into the following income quintiles: i) less than COP675,000; ii) COP675,000 to COP1,180,000; iii) COP1,180,000 to COP1,814,000; iv) COP1,814,000 to COP3,000,000, and v) more than COP3,000,000.

71 There are some sociodemographic differences between the sample and the Colombian population. According to the 2020 Large-Scale Integrated Household Survey (GEIH), the share of women in the experiment sample is 4 percentage points lower than in the country. In addition, people aged 18–25 are overrepresented (6 percentage points), as are people over 65 (4 percentage points), but there is a lower share of people in the sample aged 26–45 (6 percentage points) and 46–64 (3 percentage points). There is also a higher proportion of unemployed people in the sample (16 percentage points) and of people belonging to the lowest quintiles of the income distribution (quintiles 1 and 2). However, the proportion of people without a tertiary education is similar to that recorded in the national population as a whole.

72 These groups are comparable for all participant characteristics, with some exceptions: political ideology, some age groups, the number of people who place themselves within quintile three of the income distribution, and beliefs around equal opportunities, measured as the percentage of people who believe that everyone in Colombia has the opportunity to succeed.

***Both videos have a positive effect on acceptance of and trust in the migrant population, but do not increase the empathy levels of the local population or influence their opinions regarding the assistance that the government should provide migrants.***

Two types of questions seek to understand how malleable Colombians' political opinions and social norms are in relation to migrants. The first set measures how willing Colombians are to have migrants integrated within their social circles. Participants were asked their opinions about having migrants living in their country, having a migrant as a neighbor, or having a migrant marry a family member, with the options for responding being "good," "bad," and "it depends."

Among Colombians in the control group, acceptance levels are low but comparable to their peers from other countries in the region. Among the control group, only 43 percent think it is positive for migrants to live in Colombia, 52 percent look favorably on having migrants as neighbors, and 40 percent think it is acceptable for a migrant to marry a relative. The two interventions result in a marginal increase in these percentages. The emotive video increases the number of people who think that it is good for there to be migrants in the country (49 percent) and to have migrants as neighbors or relatives (57 percent and 46 percent, respectively). Conversely, the informative video does not change opinions on having migrants as neighbors, but it did succeed in influencing the participants' two other responses to the first set of questions: 52 percent and 48 percent of those who saw the informative video came to look favorably on migrants being in the country and marrying into their families, respectively. Although both videos have a positive effect, these are not statistically different from each other. The main effect of the informative video is on the responses of those people who at the outset do not have strong opinions and who likely would have answered "it depends" to the questions (figures 4.15A, 4.15B, and 4.15C). An interesting heterogeneous effect is that the informative video reduces the share of less-educated people who view the presence of migrants in their country and social circle to be bad.<sup>73</sup> But the emotive video prompts less-educated people who were initially unsure how they felt about having migrants as neighbors to then view this as being a good thing.

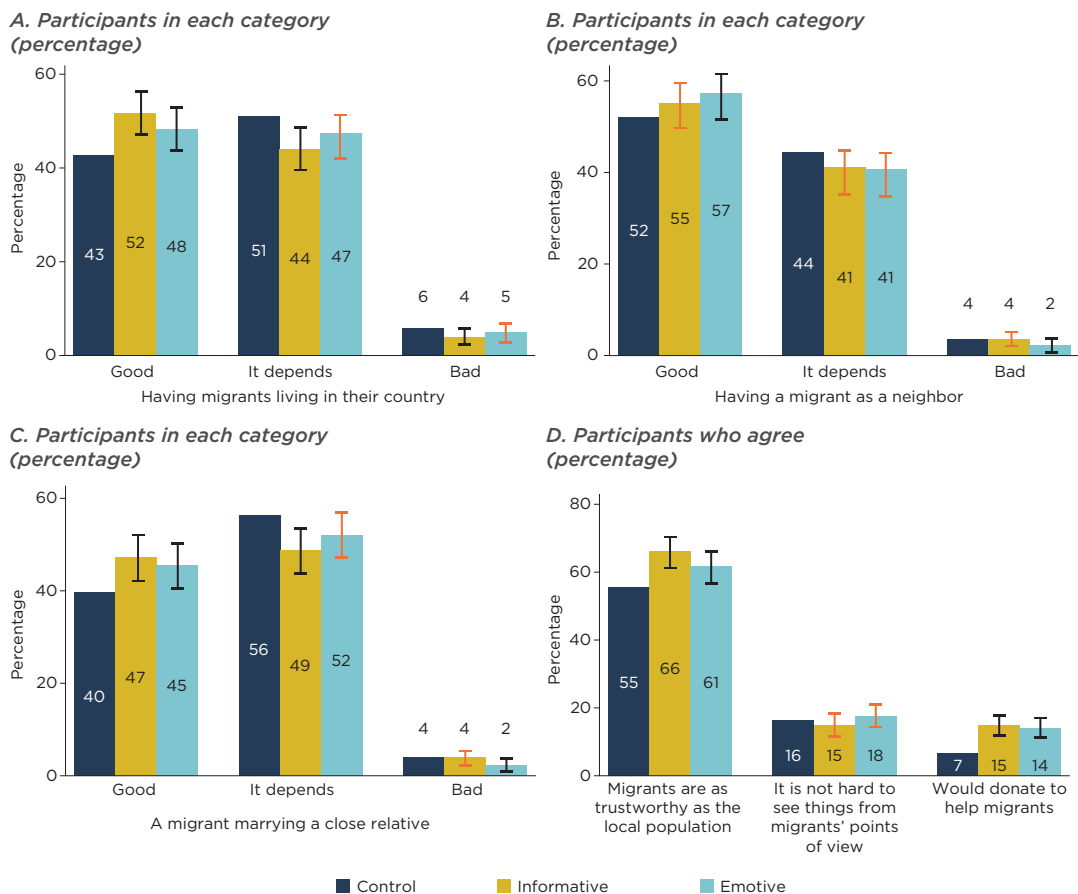
In this category, another important indicator is the level of trust toward migrants. Only 55 percent of Colombians in the control group say that they trust migrants as much as the local population. In this case, the two videos have the same effect: they manage to increase this percentage to approximately 64 percent. The effect of the informative video is concentrated among people without children. Similarly, both videos double the percentage of people who would be willing to donate to an organization that supports migrants (going from approximately 7 percent to 14 percent). However, neither of the two videos induce the average participant to feel more empathy toward migrants (figure 4.15D).

The second set of questions explores the ability of the videos to alter people's preferences regarding migration policies. The results show that most Colombians already agree with the government offering public services to migrants. At least 86 percent of the control group agrees that the government should offer migrants humanitarian aid, and provide the same quality of healthcare services to migrant adults and children, as well as the same level of educational services, as the local population receives. The treatment videos did not affect these baseline opinions. However, the emotive video makes it more likely that unemployed participants will support providing the migrant population with humanitarian aid (figure 4.16).

***Both treatment videos have a positive effect on how the local population views the impact of migration on the economy and the labor market. However, the informative video generates a greater positive effect than the emotive video.***

<sup>73</sup> The variety of effects caused by the different treatments are not discussed in the text but can be consulted in the online statistical annex.

**Figure 4.15. In Colombia, both of the two treatment videos marginally improve the acceptance of migrants in the short term**



Source: IDB/UNDP.

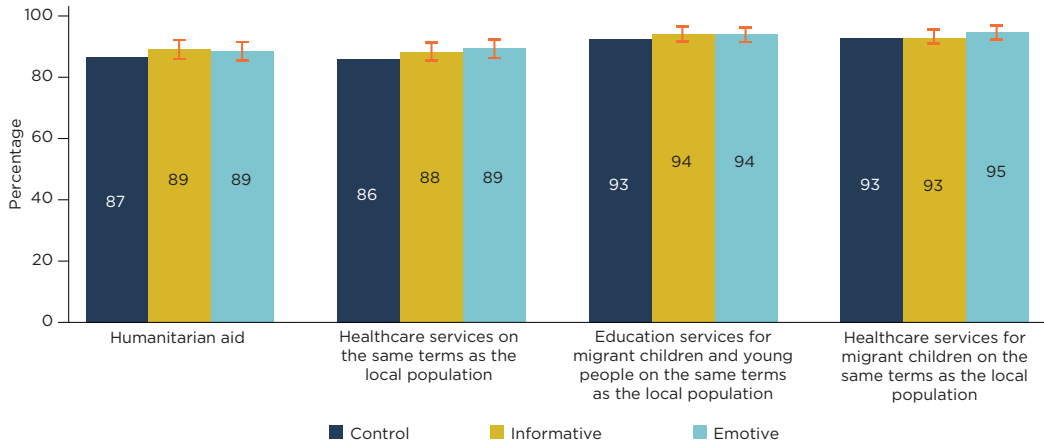
Note: The data presented in panels A, B, and C is the result of estimating a multinomial logistic model, and the data presented in panel D is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

Colombia is the country where the least number of people thought that the migrant population makes positive contributions to the local economy (57 percent). The two treatment videos significantly raise this percentage, but even after accounting for this effect, the average acceptance levels remain below those recorded in the other countries. The informative video increases this percentage to 74 percent, while the emotive video raises it to 65 percent. The effect of the informative video is concentrated among people aged 18–25 and people without children. The perception that migrants do not contribute to the country’s economy often goes hand-in-hand with the idea that migrants are a burden on the state. Only 40 percent of Chileans in the control group hold the opposite views. In this case, the two videos are equally effective and increase this share to approximately 49 percent. Although the scale of the effect of the two videos is the same, the change enabled by the emotive video is concentrated among women and 18–25-year-olds. This younger age group experiences a change (17 percentage points) that is more than double the change experienced by the average participant (8 percentage points).

Every group of Colombians think that migrants increase competition in the labor market. Only 37 percent of the control group does not think that migrants come to Colombia to compete for their jobs. In this

**Figure 4.16. In Colombia, the interventions do not change policy preferences regarding the provision of assistance to the migrant population**

*Participants who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)*



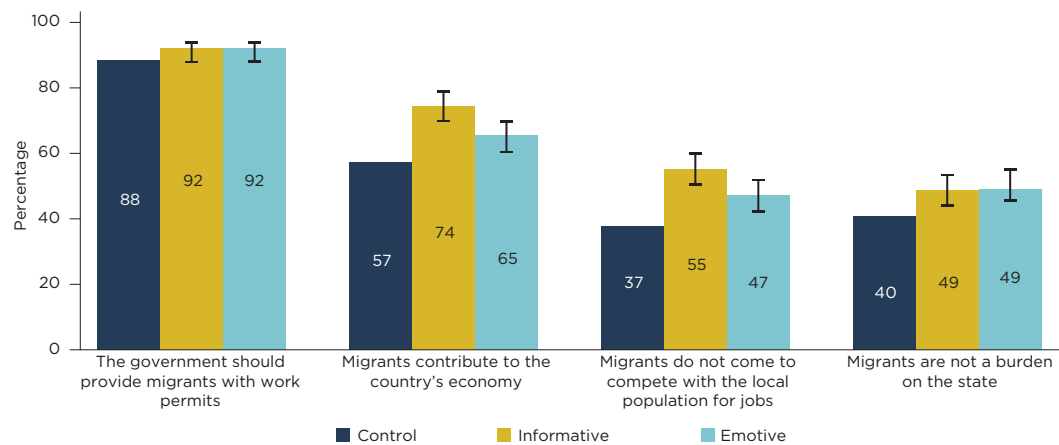
Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences between each treatment group and the control group are not statistically significant, using 5 percent significance levels, such that the treatment effect is null.

instance, both interventions are effective at changing this opinion, but the effect of the informative video is almost twice as significant as the emotive video, as measured by percentage points. In the group exposed to the informative video, 55 percent believe that migrants do not compete with them for jobs, as compared to 47 percent among those exposed to the emotive video. The effect of the informative video is concentrated among people aged 18-25 and the unemployed, while the emotive video mainly affects people without tertiary education.

**Figure 4.17. In Colombia, providing information is the most effective intervention to change perceptions about migrants and labor market**

*Participants who agree (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels.

Despite recognizing competition in the labor market and the implications that this may have with relation to wages and unemployment, a high proportion of people in the control group (88 percent) agree with the government providing migrants with work permits. Again, both videos are equally effective at increasing this percentage: 92 percent of participants exposed to the informative or emotive videos agree that the government should grant migrants work permits (figure 4.17).

***In Colombia, both videos have a positive effect on the local population's views on migrants' contributions to cultural diversity. However, the informative video has a greater effect.***

Most Colombians in the control group believe that migrants take more from the country than they contribute to it. Only 44 percent of the control group think that the contributions of migrants are greater than the benefits they receive. Both interventions improve these rates, but delivering information changes a greater number of views. Some 62 percent of the group exposed to the informative video think that the migrant population contributes more to the country than they receive from it. Exposure to the emotive video only raises this proportion to 51 percent. The informative video is more effective among people who do not have children, while the emotive video is more effective among younger people (18- to 25-year-olds).

Some 59 percent of control group participants agrees that migrants improve Colombian society by bringing new ideas and cultures. The informative treatment is more effective than the emotive intervention at changing the views of those who hold the opposite view. The informative video raises this percentage to 75 percent, which is a significant effect. The emotive video also generates a positive change, but the share only rises to 66 percent. The effect of the informative video is largely concentrated among women and people without children, and both videos have a greater effect on young people (figure 4.18).

***Both videos are effective at correcting the perception that the arrival of migrants increases crime and insecurity in the receiving communities. However, only the emotive video succeeds at correcting the stigma that associates female migrants with sex work.***

Social stigma is a barrier to social integration. One of the most common discourses that reinforce biases against migrants is the belief that their arrival leads to an increase in crime. In Colombia, only 29 percent of the control group does not hold this view. Both videos are effective at correcting this misperception, but to differing degrees. While the emotive video raises this percentage from 29 percent to 36 percent (an increase of 7 percentage points), the informative video is more effective, increasing this share to 45 percent. Once again, the effect of both videos is concentrated among people aged 18-25, and the effect of the informative video is concentrated among people who do not have children.

Another recurring misconception is that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work in their destination country, a stereotype that can affect the job prospects of women and increase their levels of harassment. In Colombia, almost half of the control group (48 percent) believe that migrant women often end up engaging in sex work. Only the emotive video is effective at tempering this view, lowering this proportion to 43 percent (figure 4.19).

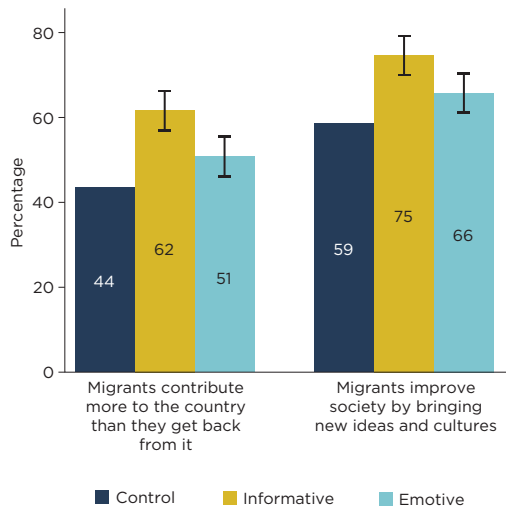
### **Summary**

The results indicate that these short videos are a low-cost tool that serves to improve Colombians' short-term views of migrants, especially in relation to economic factors (e.g., the videos increase the percentage of participants who agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy) and sociotropic factors (e.g., the videos increase the percentage of those who agreed that migrants improve society by bringing



**Figure 4.18. In Colombia, providing information is more effective than telling a life story for improving perceptions about what migrants bring to the country**

Participants who agree (percentage)

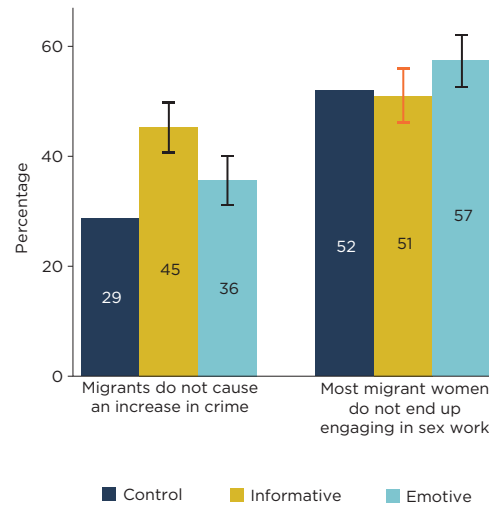


Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels.

**Figure 4.19. In Colombia, only the emotive video is effective at changing the belief that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown by the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

new ideas and cultures). Although both the informative and emotive videos result in positive changes, the scale of the effect is different for each treatment. The informative video is almost always as good or better at correcting prejudice than showing the emotive video that is based on a migrant's life story.

Although there are some differences between the two interventions, both are particularly effective at correcting misperceptions and improving attitudes toward the migrant population among 18- to 25-year-olds, the less educated, and those without children.

In contrast to observations from other countries in the region, in Colombia the videos do not change preferences related to public policy and the provision of services for migrants, perhaps because the initial perceptions on these issues are relatively positive. The only case in which the informative video has less of an impact than the emotive video is correcting the misperception that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work. On the other questions, both videos have positive effects. These results are summarized in table 4.2.

**Table 4.2. In Colombia, the effectiveness of the interventions varies, according to the belief in question***Summary of results (percentages and percentage points)*

Category	Question	Control group (percentages)	Effect of the informational video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally charged video (percentage points)
Policy preferences and social norms	Having migrants living in their country is a good thing.	42.8	9.0	5.7
	Having a migrant as a neighbor is a good thing.	52.0	0	5.3
	A migrant marrying a close relative is a good thing.	39.5	7.8	6.0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care.)	86.7	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants healthcare services on the same terms as the local population.	86.3	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants children and young people with education services on the same terms as the local population.	92.6	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide healthcare services for migrant children on the same terms as the local population.	93.1	0	0
	Agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.	55.2	10.4	6.2
	Agree that it isn't hard to see things from migrants' points of view.	16.3	0	0
	Would donate to an organization that helps migrants.	6.6	8.1	7.4
Economic factors	Agree that the government should give migrants work permits or documentation that enables them to work legally in the country	88.3	3.9	3.5
	Agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy	57.1	17.3	8.2
	Agree that migrants do not come to compete with the local population for jobs	37.4	17.8	9.7
	Agree that migrants are not a burden on the state	40.4	8.3	8.5
Cultural factors	Agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it	43.6	18.1	7.2
	Agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and culture	58.6	16.1	7.2
Social stigma	Agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime rates	28.7	16.6	6.9
	Agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work	51.9	0	5.5

Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Gray cells indicate that the effect is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. For each question, a darker cell color indicates a comparatively greater effect. When coefficients are shown in the same color, the difference between them is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

## 4.3. Ecuador

### 4.3.1. Migration in Ecuador in context

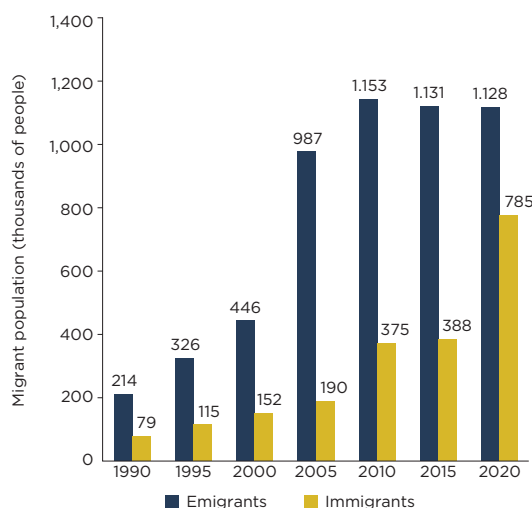
#### *Ecuador has a long history of emigration, but since 2014 has been a net recipient of migrants*

Ecuador has a long history of emigration that began to gather momentum in the 1960s, and grew over the years. Thousands of Ecuadorians departed the country between 1990 and 2001.<sup>74</sup> Economic factors such as increasing poverty rates, which soared from 39 percent in 1990 to 65 percent in 2001, and increasing unemployment prompted large numbers of people to emigrate, particularly young people and women.<sup>75</sup> Initially, their main destination was the United States, but more recently, Spain and Italy have started receiving larger numbers of Ecuadorians.

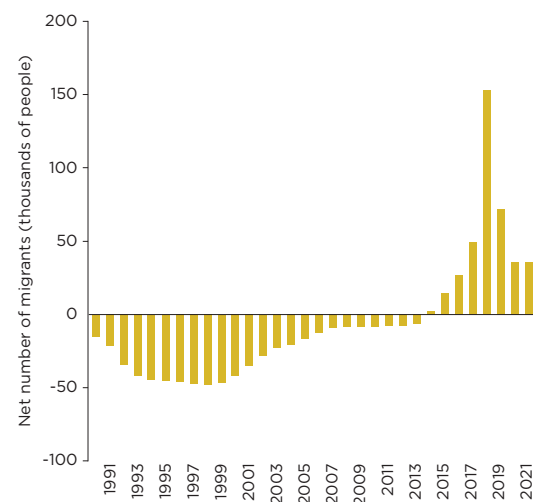
Since 2000, Ecuador has also experienced an increase in international immigration.<sup>76</sup> The dollarization of the country's economy in 2000 has contributed to Ecuador becoming a destination country for some migratory flows from within Latin America and the Caribbean. The principle of universal citizenship and free mobility, which came into force through Ecuador's new Constitution in 2008, has also attracted new migrants.<sup>77</sup> In 2010, the majority of Ecuador's migrant population consisted of Colombians (59 percent), US citizens (6 percent), and Peruvians (3 percent). Most Peruvian migrants were motivated by economic factors, while those from Colombia were mostly people who had left their country to escape the internal armed conflict.<sup>78</sup> Since 2014, Ecuador has been a net recipient of migrants (figure 4.20). In 2020, 50 percent of the country's migrant population came from Venezuela and 26 percent came from Colombia.

**Figure 4.20. Ecuador continues to receive more migrants**

**A. Cumulative migrant inflows and outflows (thousands), 1990–2020**



**B. Annual net migration (thousands), 1990–2021**



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

**Note:** The net migrant population data presented in panel B is the result of the difference between the flow of immigrants and the flow of emigrants each year. They are thus different from the cumulative five-year values.

<sup>74</sup> Álvarez-Velasco et al. (2020).

<sup>75</sup> Álvarez-Velasco et al. (2020), and UNFPA and FLACSO (2006).

<sup>76</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

<sup>77</sup> Such as migrants from Cuba—Defensoría del Pueblo de Ecuador (2010).

<sup>78</sup> Ecuador has recognized a significant number of the Colombians arriving in the country as refugees (Jokisch, 2007).

In Ecuador, the migrant population went from representing 2.5 percent of the total population in 2010 to 4.4 percent in 2020. In 2010, there were 375,000 migrants in Ecuador, a figure that grew to 784,000 by 2020 (figure 4.20). Between 2010 and 2015, Ecuador's migrant population remained stable (going from 375,000 migrants in 2010 to 388,000 in 2015). Over the last five years, the exponential growth is due to the increasing number of Venezuelan migrants arriving in the country, who accounted for 50 percent of Ecuador's total migrant population in 2020.<sup>79</sup>

Ecuador is characterized as a transit country, as well as a permanent destination, for Venezuelan migrants. Since 2019, Ecuador has been hosting one of the largest Venezuelan populations in the world: some 389,000 Venezuelan migrants were registered as of June 2020.<sup>80</sup>

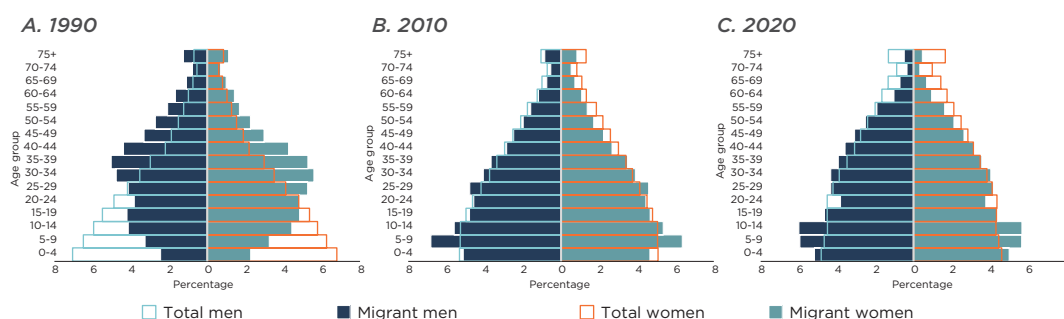
### **Historical migration from Colombia and the new reality of transient and permanent migration from Venezuela**

Migratory flows to Ecuador have evolved in recent years, and the country's migrant population increased to 785,000 people by 2020. Not only has Ecuador become a transit country for Venezuelan migrants, but many are settling permanently, which has led to changes in the profile of the migrant population (box 4.2).

In regard to the evolution of the migrant population's age distribution, a marginal change has been observed among the younger population: the share of those under the age of 14 has dropped (from 34 percent in 2010 to 33 percent in 2020), as has the share of those between 15 and 25 (from 18 percent in 2010 to 17 percent in 2020). There has also been a marginal increase in the population aged 45–64, which went from 14 percent to 16 percent over the same period (figure 4.21).<sup>81</sup>

**Figure 4.21. In Ecuador, the migrant population is predominantly composed of people under the age of 18**

*Migrant and total population by age group and sex (percentage)*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

**Note:** The total population includes all people living in Ecuador (nationals and migrants).

79 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

80 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020. According to the Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), there were more than 500,000 migrants from Venezuela in Ecuador by August 2022 (R4V, n.d.).

81 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

### Box 4.2. Venezuelan migration in Ecuador

The end of 2014 saw the first flows of migrants from Venezuela to Ecuador, which initially enabled this population to enter without needing a visa or passport. However, the implementation of more restrictive measures in the region's other countries prompted Ecuador to start requiring Venezuelan citizens to hold valid passports as of August 2018. It subsequently added a visa requirement for Venezuelans wishing to enter the country.<sup>a</sup> Between 2015 and 2019, almost 400,000 Venezuelans decided to settle in Ecuador. It is worth noting that between 2017 and 2019, at least 8 out of every 10 Venezuelans arriving in Ecuador had traveled overland.<sup>b</sup>

Important changes in the characteristics of migratory flows from Venezuela to Ecuador occurred between 2017 and 2019. Until 2018, the percentage of male Venezuelan migrants was higher than that of women (almost three-fifths of the migrant population from Venezuela were men). However, by mid-2019, the share of Venezuelan migrant women was on par with that of men.<sup>c</sup> Furthermore, according to the Survey of People in Movement and in Host Communities in Ecuador, in 2016, 12.2 percent of the Venezuelan migrants residing in Ecuador had an irregular migration status, while in 2019, this figure had increased to 44.7 percent.

More recent data collected by Ecuador's registry of Venezuelan citizens who migrated to the country between 2019 and 2020 suggest that the majority of Venezuelan migrants in Ecuador are women (51.2 percent), 44 percent are aged 25–35, and 32.1 percent are aged 36–55. The majority of Venezuelan migrants have attained either a secondary education (45 percent) or tertiary education (37 percent). Turning to their areas of residence, Pichincha, in the Sierra region, is hosting 44 percent of the total number of registered migrants from Venezuela. Regarding working conditions, data from the registry suggests that only 16.9 percent of Venezuelan migrants have a formal employment contract, while 46 percent are earning less than Ecuador's minimum wage. Those with higher levels of education are more likely to have a formal contract.<sup>d</sup>

With regard to accessing public services, such as healthcare, it is observed that close to half of the migrants from Venezuela or their families have used public healthcare centers in Ecuador (49 percent). Despite the unexpected arrival of the Venezuelan population in Ecuador, the country has implemented various initiatives to promote their inclusion. Data from the registry collected between 2019 and 2020 indicate that 9 out of 10 Venezuelan migrants plan to reside in Ecuador for more than two years.

a World Bank (2020).  
b IOM (2022).  
c World Bank (2020).  
d IOM (2022).

Between 2015 and 2020, a difference has also been observed in the migrant population's highest level of educational attainment. While in 2015, 40 percent of the migrant population had a primary education or less, by 2020 this indicator had fallen to 33 percent. Likewise, there is evidence of an increase in the migrant population with a tertiary or higher education (26 percent in 2015 versus 31 percent in 2020).<sup>82</sup>

82 2021 National Employment, Unemployment, and Underemployment Survey (ENEMDU). The sample sizes of migrants included in household surveys in the region are small, which may affect their statistical representativeness. More information on the representativeness of the migrant population in household surveys can be found in Perdomo (2022).

A comparison of the demographic characteristics of the migrant population and the local population also reveals some significant differences. First, the migrant population is slightly younger: 25 percent are between 25 and 39, while 19 percent of the local population is in this age range.<sup>83</sup> In fact, there are more working-age adults in the migrant population than in the local population (71 percent and 62 percent, respectively).<sup>84</sup> The geographic distribution of the two populations also differs, as Ecuador's migrant population tends to live in urban areas and the capital city. While 90 percent of the migrant population is located in urban areas, this is only true for 67 percent of the local population. Similarly, 30 percent of the migrant population are located in Quito, the capital of Ecuador, while only 15 percent of the local population live in that city.<sup>85</sup>

On average, the migrant population in Ecuador has a higher level of education than the local population. While 29 percent of the migrant population has a tertiary education, just 18 percent of the local population has this level of attainment. A similar pattern is observed in categories of lower educational attainment: among the migrant population, only 8 percent and 15 percent have not completed any formal education, or only have a primary education, respectively, as compared to 10 percent and 34 percent of the respective local population.<sup>86</sup>

### ***From freedom of movement to a shift in migration policy***

In 2008, the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador included several innovative principles regarding human movement, as it recognized the right to migrate and the principle of universal citizenship.<sup>87</sup> The 2008 Constitution contemplates not just political rights but also economic and labor rights, an approach based on a human rights perspective. The text decriminalizes human mobility and prohibits the use of a person's migratory status as grounds for discrimination. This new migration policy was focused on the situation of Ecuadorians and their families who were living abroad. As of 2008, foreigners were permitted to enter Ecuador without the need for a visa, which led to an increase in migration from Africa, Europe, Asia, and the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>88</sup>

In 2017, Ecuador passed the new Organic Law on Human Mobility, which established a new migratory category: South American citizenship.<sup>89</sup> This law allowed entry and residence in Ecuador by people from the member countries of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), including Venezuela. Despite the high cost of the UNASUR visa, the legislation facilitated the regularization and temporary stay of migrants coming from within the region.

However, in response to the increase in migratory flows from Venezuela, Ecuador has tightened its migration policy toward this migrant population. In 2018, Ecuador's migration policy shifted, as Venezuelan migrants were now required to hold passports to enter the country, then an entry visa requirement was added in 2019.<sup>90</sup> This shift is a departure from the principles established in the 2008 Constitution.

The increase in Venezuelan migration to Ecuador has presented challenges in terms of the large-scale regularization and inclusion of migrants. Between 2015 and 2019, the total number of residency permits granted by Ecuador increased from 48,000 to 109,000.<sup>91</sup> However, most of these permits were

83 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

84 ENEMDU 2021.

85 ENEMDU 2021.

86 ENEMDU 2021.

87 Jacques (2016) and Pugh (2017). Article 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador states that "people's right to migrate is recognized."

88 Franco (2017) and Herrera (2022).

89 Gissi Barbieri et al. (2020), and Acosta, Blouin, and Freier (2019). This migration category has not been in force since Ecuador's departure from UNASUR in 2019, and the reform of the Organic Law on Human Mobility in 2021.

90 Gissi Barbieri et al. (2020).

91 IDB (2021).

temporary (only 14 percent of the permits granted in 2019 were permanent) and therefore did not ensure the medium- or long-term regularization of the Venezuelan population's migration status. From this perspective, and with the objective of regularizing the Venezuelan population's migration status, the country implemented the exceptional humanitarian visa in 2019, which was open to people who had entered the country regularly before July 26 of that year. These two-year visas ceased to be valid in 2021. A migration amnesty was also implemented for migrants from Venezuela who had entered the country regularly through migration checkpoints up to the date that the Executive Decree governing this amnesty became effective, and whose migration status had become irregular because they had overstayed the time they had been granted when they entered the country.<sup>92</sup> However, the amnesty did not cover people that entered Ecuador via irregular border crossings, who remained outside the scope of the regularization processes.

In 2021, reforms to the Organic Law on Human Mobility were approved, which established stricter security-related criteria that affect the Venezuelan population's migration status. Although the legislation does contemplate options for regularization, the requirements and costs of obtaining the documents in question (such as renewing passports) complicate the situation for many people by making it difficult to attain a regular migration status.<sup>93</sup> Despite the fact that Ecuador's 2008 Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of movement and equal rights for people in movement, in practice, the migrant population's ability to access these rights is hampered by their lack of documentation and their irregular migration status. On September 1, 2022, registration began for a new regularization process through the exceptional temporary residency visa.<sup>94</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that the regularization of migration status in Ecuador allows access to social services, such as healthcare and education, regardless of migratory status, and guarantees the migrant population's right to work.<sup>95</sup>

### ***The impacts of migration in Ecuador***

As in other countries in the region, the increase in migratory flows to Ecuador has presented challenges and opportunities. The country's challenges have escalated with the unexpected arrival of the Venezuelan migrant population. Descriptive studies underline how the lack of a regular migration status makes it hard for the migrant population to access the formal labor market.<sup>96</sup> Given the concentration of Venezuelan migrants in certain regions of the country, some studies find that in these same regions, Venezuelan migration has had a negative impact on the young Ecuadorian population, which tends to have low levels of education.<sup>97</sup> In the short term, young Ecuadorian workers with low levels of education who live in regions that have received large influxes of Venezuelan migrants are negatively affected by the arrival of this population.<sup>98</sup> The results point to a decline in the quality of employment, a 5-percentage-point increase in the rate of informal employment, and a 13-percentage-point reduction in income compared to workers with a similar profile living in areas where the influx of Venezuelans is very low or nonexistent.

While the Venezuelan migration poses challenges to Ecuador, it also offers opportunities. If a focus on its potential is harnessed through an efficient allocation of human resources, estimates suggest that Ecuador could generate annual gains between 1.6 percent and 1.9 percent of GDP.<sup>99</sup>

92 R4V (2022), and Gissi Barbieri et al. (2020).

93 R4V (2022).

94 Osorio Idárraga (2022).

95 Acosta and Harris (2022).

96 World Bank (2020).

97 Olivieri et al. (2021) and World Bank (2020).

98 Olivieri et al. (2021).

99 World Bank (2020).

Prejudices and false images about any migrant population (for example, Venezuelans or Colombians) that associate their arrival with rising delinquency and crime rates in the receiving country constitute a barrier to hiring and integrating this population into the Ecuadorian labor market.<sup>100</sup> Stereotypes and prejudices about migrant women have a particularly adverse effect on the labor market experiences of young women and increase their risk of suffering harassment or abuse.<sup>101</sup>

In Ecuador, the migrant population has universal access to the country's healthcare systems. According to a World Bank study, a person's migration status does not impede access to healthcare, and more than 40 percent of the Venezuelan population have reported needing these services. Of this total, 70 percent received care at a public or private healthcare facility.<sup>102</sup> Finally, a 2013 study on Colombian migrants in Ecuador notes that social and economic exclusion affects the health and well-being of this population (as reflected in indicators on issues such as food security).<sup>103</sup>

### ***The effect of public policies in Ecuador***

Despite free and universal access to public services in Ecuador, the increase in migratory flows to the country has posed practical challenges to guaranteeing coverage and inclusion in these public systems. According to a 2020 study on the Venezuelan population, only 44 percent of Venezuelan children and adolescents are enrolled in the Ecuadorian education system.<sup>104</sup> This study points out that the migrant population's main barriers to educational access are the lack of places at schools and the lack of documentation, despite the fact that Ecuadorian legislation guarantees universal access to education.<sup>105</sup> The study also highlights that the costs associated with education (such as transportation, uniforms, or books) and xenophobia within schools are obstacles that may prevent Venezuelan migrant children from staying in school. Another study focusing on Colombian and Haitian children finds that different nationalities experience different forms of exclusion in Ecuadorian schools.<sup>106</sup> Another 2014 study argues that in Ecuador, the displaced Colombian population's access to school is not hindered by their migration status and a lack of documents —instead, the main obstacles are the administrators' lack of information about these processes and the failure to implement an inclusive legal framework.<sup>107</sup>

Ecuador continues to confront major challenges related to its migration policy, especially the regularization of migration, which plays an essential role in the inclusion of the migrant population in the country's labor market. Most migrants in Ecuador plan to stay in the country: this points to the need for designing and implementing inclusive, long-term public policies to take advantage of the potential benefits of migration.

### **4.3.2. Perceptions of migration**

Ecuador is one of the countries in this study with the greatest decrease in the migrant acceptance index, second only to Peru. This index, constructed by Gallup, shows that in Ecuador, the migrant acceptance index fell by 2.62 points, going from 6.13 in 2016 to 3.51 in 2019, a 42 percent drop. Similarly, 2018 data from the World Values Survey (WVS) also suggests a scenario in which prejudices toward the migrant population worsened between 2018 and 2020.

100 Malo (2020).

101 Malo (2020).

102 World Bank (2020).

103 Shedlin et al. (2013).

104 World Bank (2020).

105 World Bank (2020).

106 Bautista (2013).

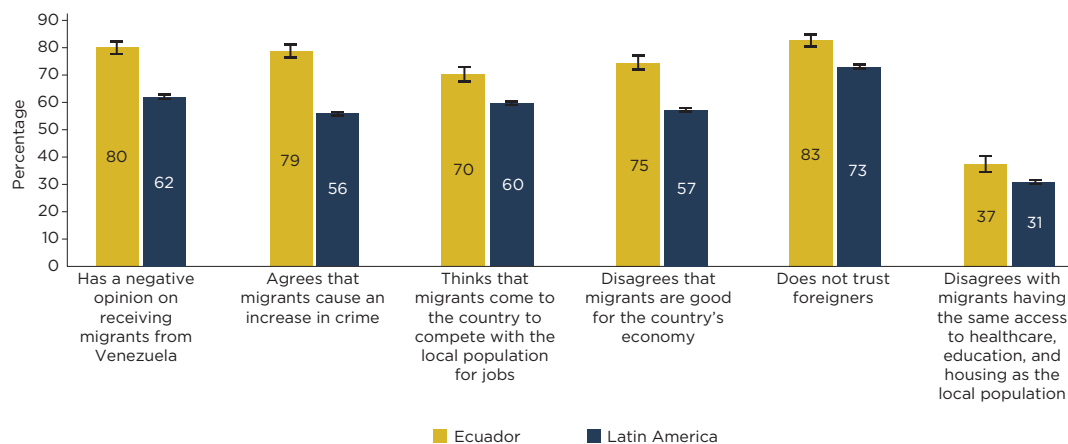
107 Rodríguez-Gómez (2019).



In Ecuador, as in other South American countries, public opinion toward the migrant population, especially Venezuelan migrants, has deteriorated with the increase in migratory flows over the last five years. Data from Latinobarómetro indicates that the Ecuadorian population has negative opinions on receiving migrants in their country.<sup>108</sup> Among Ecuadorians, 57 percent think negatively about receiving migrants coming from outside of Latin America, compared to the average of 48 percent in the Latin American region. However, in Ecuador the proportion of people who look unfavorably on migrants is even greater (58 percent), especially those from Venezuela (80 percent in Ecuador, compared to 62 percent in Latin America).

**Figure 4.22. In Ecuador, perceptions about migration are more negative compared to the averages in Latin America**

*Ecuadorians and Latin Americans in each category (percentage), 2017 and 2020*



**Source:** IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020 and the 2017–2020 WVS.

**Note:** Responses from the “I don’t know/No response” category were excluded. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregate for Latin America, using 5 percent significance levels.

In Ecuador, as in other countries in the region, there is a perception among the local population that migrants compete with them for jobs. According to the 2020 Latinobarómetro survey, 79 percent of Ecuadorians agree that migrants cause an increase in crime rates and insecurity, and 70 percent believe that migrants compete for jobs (the respective regional averages are 56 percent and 60 percent) (figure 4.22).

Ecuadorians consider the arrival of the migrant population to be detrimental to them and their families (in Ecuador, 79 percent of the population holds this view, compared to 57 percent in Latin America; Ecuador’s percentage is the highest in the region).<sup>109</sup> Likewise, most Ecuadorians did not think that migration has a positive impact on their country. Among the respondents, 75 percent disagree that migrants are good for the country’s economy; 67 percent disagree that migrants improve local society and culture, and 76 percent believe that migrants are a burden on the state (these respective percentages are 57 percent, 51 percent, and 59 percent in the Latin American region). These perceptions translate into low indicators of trust between the local and migrant populations. The data from the 2018 WVS show that

<sup>108</sup> This section includes data from public opinion polls that collect sample information from various countries relating to a range of topics over time. However, the same questions are not usually asked from one round to the next, which makes it harder to compare data. In the case of Ecuador, data from three surveys was used: i) Latinobarómetro 2020; ii) the 2016 and 2019 Gallup surveys, and iii) the 2017–2020 round of the World Values Survey (WVS). Latinobarómetro 2020 contains information that was collected from a sample of 1,200 people in November 2020. Gallup surveyed two different samples of 1,000 people between June and August 2016 and August and October 2019, respectively. Finally, the 2017–2020 MSE collected data from a sample of 1,200 people between January and March 2018.

<sup>109</sup> Latinobarómetro 2020.

only 17 percent of Ecuadorians somewhat or completely trust people of another nationality (compared to 27 percent of the Latin American population).

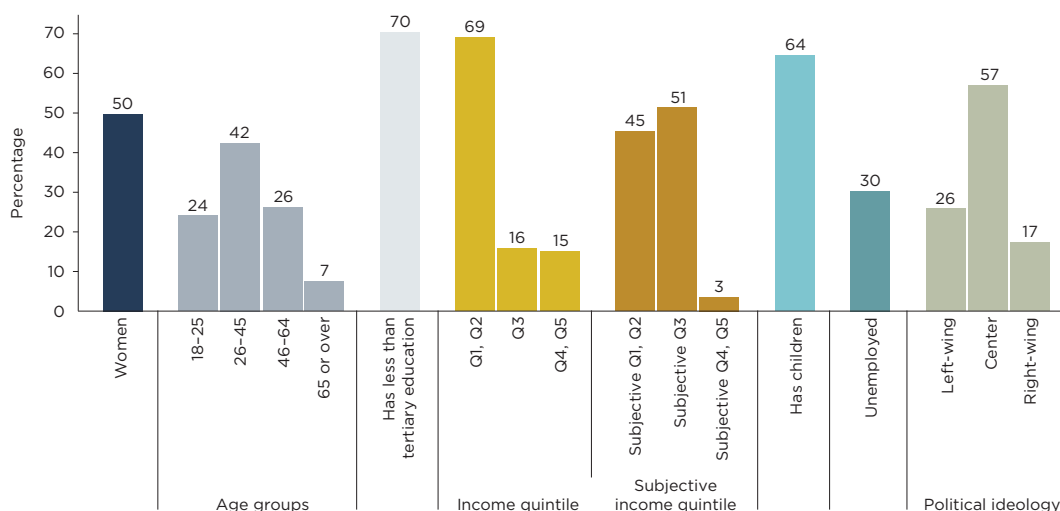
Despite these indicators, Ecuadorians believe that migrants have the right to be granted refuge and access to government-provided social services. On the other hand, 50 percent of Ecuadorians believe that the government should immediately return those migrants who enter the country irregularly, a percentage that is similar to the Latin American average (46 percent). Likewise, 37 percent of Ecuadorians disagree that migrants should have the same access to healthcare, education, and housing as the Ecuadorian population (compared to 31 percent of the Latin American population).

### 4.3.3. Experiment results

In the experiment conducted in Ecuador, 2,762 people participated.<sup>110</sup> About 50 percent of the sample are men. Most people in the sample are aged 26–45 (42 percent) and have children (64 percent). In terms of political ideology, the majority identify with the left or the center of the spectrum (26 percent and 57 percent, respectively). Some 30 percent of participants have tertiary education, and 69 percent are in quintiles 1 and 2 of the income distribution.<sup>111</sup> Finally, 30 percent of the sample is unemployed (figure 4.23).<sup>112</sup> Descriptive statistics for the control and treatment groups are available in the online statistical annex.<sup>113</sup>

**Figure 4.23. Description of the participant sample in Ecuador**

*Distribution by characteristic (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

<sup>110</sup> Some 934 participants were in the group that watched a placebo video (i.e., the control group); 931 belonged to the group that watched the emotive video; and, finally, 897 were shown the informative video. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the methodology.

<sup>111</sup> Based on data from the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses of Ecuador (INEC), the population was divided into the following household income quintiles: i) less than US\$400; ii) US\$400 to US\$600; iii) US\$600 to US\$900; iv) US\$900 to US\$1,400; and v) more than US\$1,400.

<sup>112</sup> The sample collected in Ecuador is not strictly comparable with the Ecuadorian population. According to data from the 2021 ENEMDU, on average, the local population has a lower proportion of men (48 percent) than the sample, is older (37 percent of the Ecuadorian population is aged 26–45), is less educated (26 percent of the Ecuadorian population has a higher education), and has a higher proportion of unemployed people (35 percent).

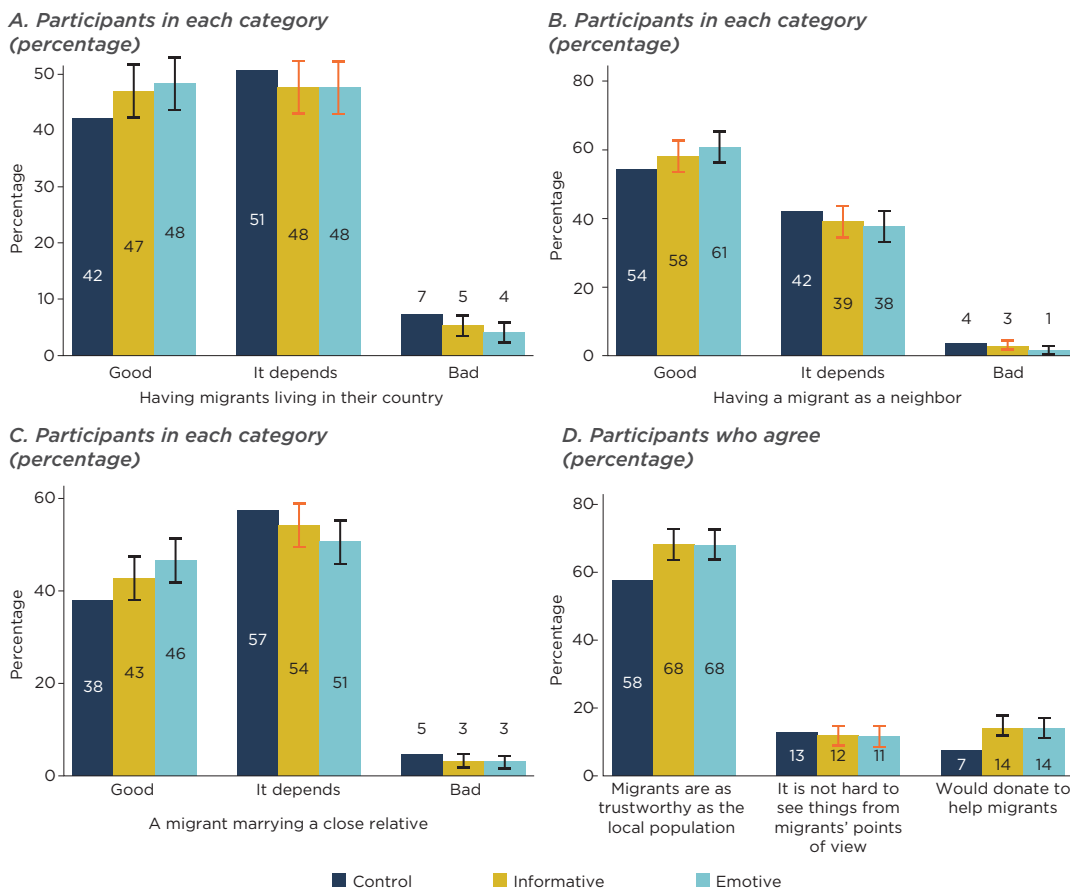
<sup>113</sup> These groups are comparable for all participant characteristics except age groups, income quintiles, and political ideology.

**Both videos have a positive effect on promoting acceptance of and trust in the migrant population, and a willingness to help them. The emotive video also has a positive effect on people's willingness to support the government providing social and humanitarian services to the migrant population.**

The capacity of the two interventions to influence preferences regarding migratory policies and social norms is evaluated using two types of questions. The first set explores people's willingness to accept migrants in the country or in their social circles, such as their neighborhood or family group.

Compared to the control group, the emotive video increases the willingness to accept migrants in all the areas included in the survey: it generates a 6-percentage-point increase in the share of the population who think that the presence of migrants in the country is a good thing (from 42 percent to 48 percent) (figure 4.24A), a 7-percentage-point increase in the share of those who look favorably on the presence of migrants in their neighborhood (from 54 percent to 61 percent) (figure 4.24B), and an 8-percentage-point increase in the share of those who take a favorable view of a migrant marrying someone in their family (from 38 percent to 46 percent) (figure 4.24C). The informative video has a statistically equivalent effect on the first and third scenarios but failed to increase the willingness to receive migrants in the

**Figure 4.24. In Ecuador, both video interventions improve acceptance of and trust in the migrant population**



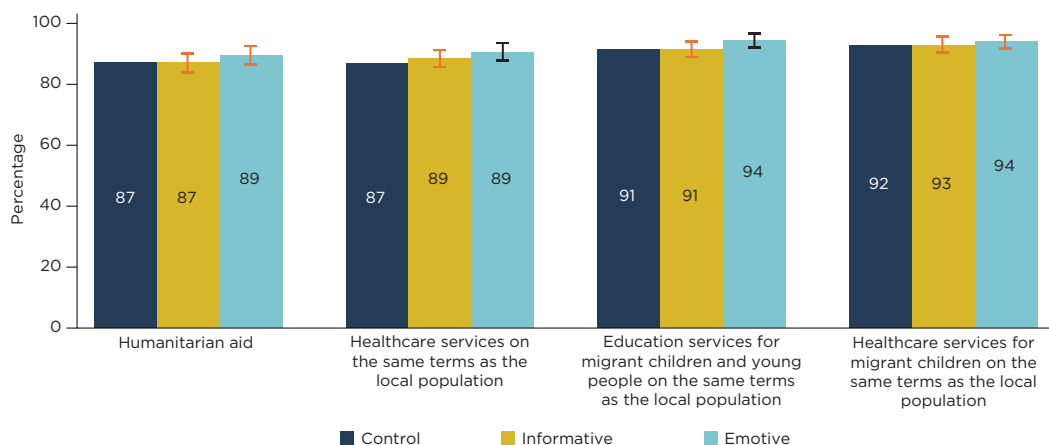
**Source:** IDB/UNDP.  
**Note:** The data presented in panels A, B, and C is the result of estimating a multinomial logistic model, and the data presented in panel D is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

neighborhood. One aspect in which Ecuador stands out is how effective the two videos are at improving the attitudes of people who initially had a negative stance toward migrants. On average, the two videos reduce the probability of a negative response to questions about the willingness to accept migrants by 2 percentage points.

The other relevant indicators in this same category are trust in and empathy toward the migrant population. The control group has difficulty empathizing with migrants: only 13 percent feel that it is not difficult to empathize with the migrants' point of view, and only 7 percent are willing to donate money to help them. Neither video increases the percentage of participants who think that it is not difficult to see things from migrants' points of view. Nevertheless, both videos double the percentage of participants willing to donate money to help migrants: this share increases from 7 percent to 14 percent among the

**Figure 4.25. In Ecuador, the emotive video is the only effective intervention that increases support for providing services to migrants**

*Participants who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

groups that watched the informative or emotive videos. As for having trust in migrants, 58 percent of the control group think that migrants are as trustworthy as the Ecuadorian population. The videos generate a 10 percentage point increase in this share, raising it to 68 percent (figure 4.24D).

The second set of questions explores the ability of the treatments to transform preferences on migration policies. The majority of the control group agrees that the government should offer social services to migrants. On average, 87% of the control group approves of the government providing migrants with humanitarian aid, and offering them the same quality of healthcare services that it offers the local population, as well as giving migrant children access to healthcare and education services. Only exposure to the emotive video modifies these preferences: on average, 93 percent of those who saw this video agree that the government should provide the migrant population with social services (figure 4.25).

***In Ecuador, both videos are effective at improving perceptions on the impact that the migrant population has on the country's economy and labor market.***

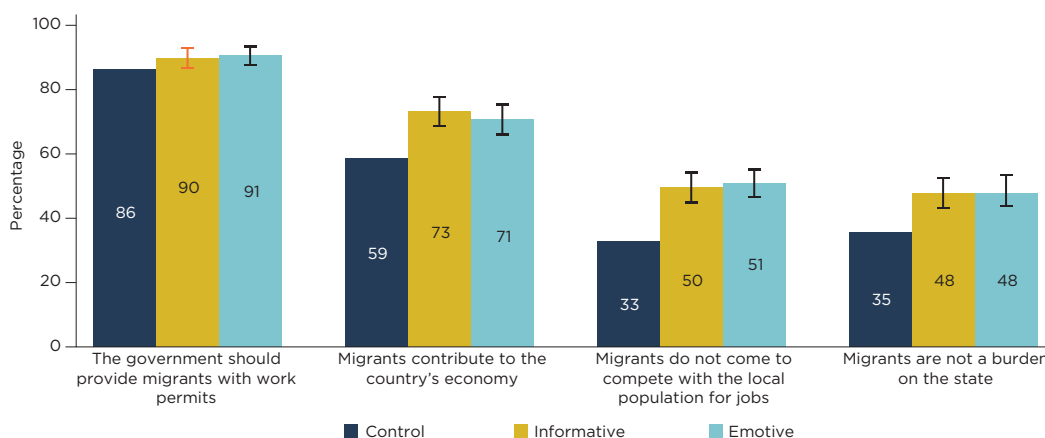
The majority of the control group recognizes that the arrival of migrants brings economic benefits to their country. Some 59 percent believe that migrants contribute to Ecuador's economy, and 86 percent agree that the government should provide migrants with work permits. Both treatments are equally effective at increasing the proportion of people who share these opinions. Exposure to both videos raises these figures to about 72 percent and 91 percent, respectively.

Labor market competition is an issue that concerns the Ecuadorian population. Almost 70 percent of the control group agrees that migrants come to their country to compete with them for jobs. In this case, both videos are effective at changing this perception. After the treatments, approximately 50 percent of people agree that the migrant population competes with them for their jobs (which is equivalent to a reduction of approximately 18 percentage points compared to the control group). The effect of the two videos is statistically indistinguishable. The emotive video is particularly effective at changing the views of people in quintiles 1 and 2 of the income distribution.<sup>114</sup>

Despite their recognition that migrants contribute to the country's economy, participants in the control group also believe that migrants are a burden on the state. Only 35 percent of the control group does not hold this view. Both videos are equally effective at improving this perception. After watching the two videos, the percentage of people who hold the opposite opinion increases to 48 percent in both treatment groups (figure 4.26).

**Figure 4.26. In Ecuador, both videos substantially reduce the perception that the migrant population is a burden on the state**

*Participants who agree (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

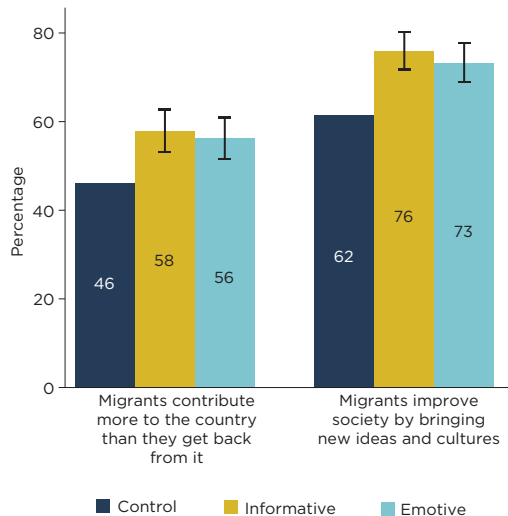
Note: The data presented results from estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels.

***Both treatment videos have a positive effect on Ecuadorian's views on the migrant population's contributions to the country's cultural diversity.***

<sup>114</sup> The variety of effects caused by the different treatments are not discussed in the text but can be consulted in the online statistical annex.

**Figure 4.27. Both interventions promote the recognition of the contributions that the migrant population makes to Ecuadorian society**

Participants who agree (percentage)

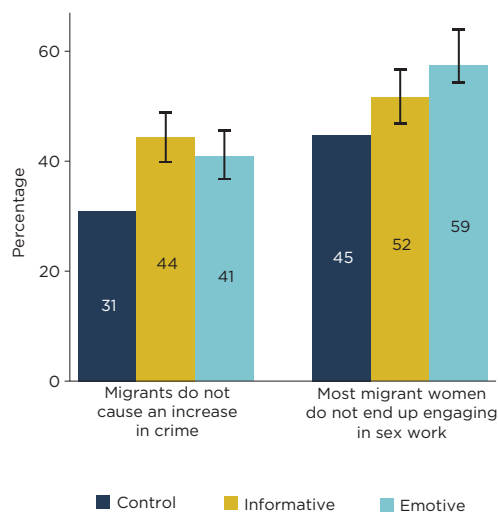


Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels.

**Figure 4.28. In Ecuador, the emotive video is more effective at correcting negative views that stigmatize migrant women**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels.

The majority of the control group is aware of the contribution that migrants make to the Ecuadorian society. However, not everyone in the control group believes that these contributions outweigh the benefits that migrants receive from the country. Only 46 percent of the control group agrees with the statement that migrants give more to the country than they receive from it. Both interventions are equally effective at improving this view. Approximately 57 percent of the participants who saw the emotive video or the informative video recognize that the migrant population contributes more to the country than the benefits they get from it (an 11-percentage-point increase). Examining whether the responses vary among the different population groups shows that the positive effect of the emotive video is concentrated among men and that of the informative video is more effective among people without children.

Regarding the cultural contributions of the migrant population, a large share of the control group (62 percent) agrees that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and cultures. Both videos are equally effective at increasing this perception, which rises to 75 percent in the treatment groups (figure 4.27).

**Both videos transform the views of the local population associating migration with increasing crime rate and female migrants with sex work. The emotive video has a greater positive impact on reducing the stigma that affects migrant women.**

Social stigma is a major hurdle to the inclusion of the migrant population in the receiving society. Local citizens often think that crime rates increase with the arrival of migrants and associate migrant women with sex work. The control group seems to follow this trend, as 69 percent of this group connects the migrant population with an increase in crime, while 55 percent of the group think that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work.

The two treatments significantly modify the perception that associates the arrival of migrants with a rise in crime rates and are also effective at reducing social stigma, although to different extents. On the one hand, both treatments are equally effective at improving the perception associating migrants with an increase in crime, since they generate around 12 percentage point reduction in the share of people who make this association (57 percent). The effect of the emotive video is concentrated among women and people under the age of 45. The emotive video is also more effective at reducing the stigmatization of migrant women, as it lowers the share of people holding such misconceptions by about 14 percent (bringing the percentage down to 41 percent), while the informative video reduces it by 7 percentage points (to 48 percent) (figure 4.28).

### **Summary**

The results of the interventions carried out in Ecuador show that it is possible to change people's attitudes and opinions about the migrant population. Overall, both interventions are effective, but the emotive video seems to be more effective in some cases. The emotive intervention performs better than the informative one at improving the acceptance of the migrant population in the neighborhood, increasing support for migrants being able to access healthcare and education services, and reducing the stigma that affects migrant women.

Both interventions are equally effective at increasing trust in the migrant population and the willingness to make donations to help them. The two videos have significant effects, statistically indistinguishable from each other, on perceptions that associate migrants with an increase in labor market competition and increased fiscal pressures on the state. Both videos are equally effective at increasing the percentage of people who believe that the migrant population contributes to the country's economy, gives more to the country than they receive from it, and improves society by introducing new ideas and cultures.

Ecuador stands out as one of the countries where, in general, initial attitudes toward migrants were least favorable and where the interventions achieve the greatest changes. It is also one of the countries where the experiment succeeds in changing the opinion of people who initially had a negative view of the migrant population. These results are summarized in table 4.3.

**Table 4.3. In Ecuador, the effectiveness of the treatment videos varies depending on the type of belief in question***Summary of results (percentages and percentage points)*

Category	Question	Control group (percentages)	Effect of the informational video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally charged video (percentage points)
Policy preferences and social norms	Having migrants living in their country is a good thing.	42.2	4.8	6.1
	Having a migrant as a neighbor is a good thing.	54.2	0	6.6
	A migrant marrying a close relative is a good thing.	37.9	4.7	8.6
	Agree that the government should provide migrants humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care.)	86.8	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants healthcare services on the same terms as the local population.	86.8	0	3.7
	Agree that the government should provide migrants children and young people with education services on the same terms as the local population.	90.9	0	3.4
	Agree that the government should provide healthcare services for migrant children on the same terms as the local population.	92.4	0	0
	Agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.	57.9	10.2	10.2
	Agree that it isn't hard to see things from migrants' points of view.	12.8	0	0
	Would donate to an organization that helps migrants.	7.3	6.6	6.8
Economic factors	Agree that the government should give migrants work permits or documentation that enables them to work legally in the country	86.4	3.4	4.2
	Agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy	58.6	14.7	12.1
	Agree that migrants do not come to compete with the local population for jobs	32.8	16.8	18.1
	Agree that migrants are not a burden on the state	35.2	12.6	13.2
Cultural factors	Agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it	46.0	11.9	10.2
	Agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and culture	61.5	14.5	11.8
Social stigma	Agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime rates	30.8	13.6	10.2
	Agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work	44.6	7.1	14.4

Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Gray cells indicate that the effect is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. For each question, a darker cell color indicates a comparatively greater effect. When coefficients are shown in the same color, the difference between them is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level.



## 4.4. Peru

### 4.4.1. Migration in Peru

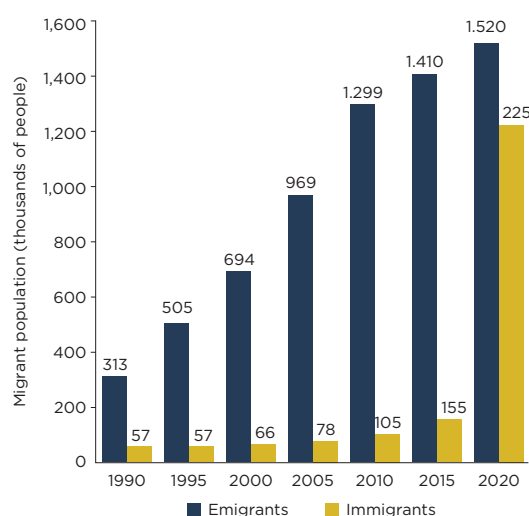
**Peru has experienced exponential growth in migratory flows over the last five years due to Venezuelan migrants**

Throughout its history, Peru has experienced multiple and sizeable migratory movements. These include: i) flows of migrant workers from China that arrived in the country between 1850 and 1875; ii) an influx of Japanese migrants in the early 20th century, whose arrival stimulate the country's agricultural production; and iii) the arrival of European and Asian migrants during the two world wars. All of these international flows of migrants have made Peru a culturally diverse country with a tradition of accepting medium-sized flows of extra-regional migrants.<sup>115</sup>

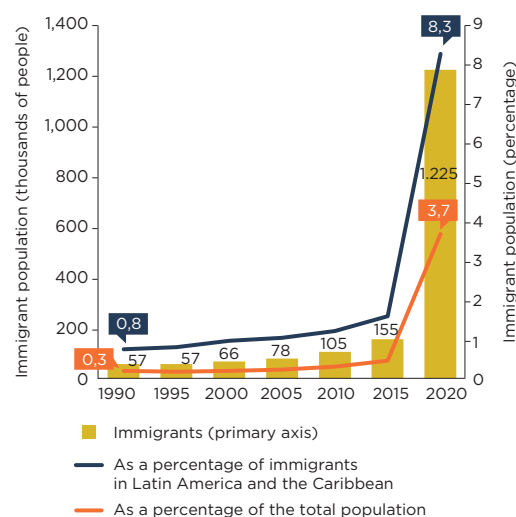
Peru also has a long history of emigration abroad, mainly to countries such as Argentina, Spain, the United States, and Venezuela.<sup>116</sup> Between 1990 and 2009, international emigration from Peru was on an upward trend. However, it has diminished over the last ten years.<sup>117</sup> On the other hand, international immigration into the country has grown significantly during the last 20 years (figure 4.29A). Since 2000, Peru has become a country of origin, transit, and destination for international migration. This trend has intensified since 2017.<sup>118</sup>

**Figure 4.29. Peru is experiencing rising emigration and immigration**

**A. Cumulative migrant inflows and outflows (thousands), 1990–2020**



**B. Cumulative migrant inflows (thousands and percentages), 1990–2020**



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

<sup>115</sup> World Bank (2019). Since the 1960s, Peru has experienced intense migration to its major cities from the rest of the country.

<sup>116</sup> Altamirano (2003).

<sup>117</sup> INEI (2021).

<sup>118</sup> IDB (2021).

Between 2010 and 2020, the country's migrant population as a proportion of Peru's total population went from 0.4 percent to 3.7 percent (figure 4.29B). In 2010, the country's migrant population amounted to 105,000 individuals, more than 50 percent of whom were from outside the region.<sup>119</sup>

In 2020, only 12 percent of Peru's migrant population came from countries outside the region. The exponential growth that has taken place over the last five years stems from the intensification of the migratory flow originating from Venezuela, which by 2020 accounted for more than 75 percent of the country's migrant population.<sup>120</sup>

Peru is among the world's largest recipients of Venezuelan migrants; it registered a total of 941,000 Venezuelans by June 2020, second only to Colombia.<sup>121</sup> In 2022, according to the annual report on global trends published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Peru now has more than 1.2 million migrants from Venezuela. Around 80 percent of these Venezuelans reside in Lima, and they now represent 8 percent of the working-age population living in the capital.<sup>122</sup>

### ***Peru's migrant population now mainly comes from Venezuela***

In the last ten years, migration in Peru has changed considerably, not only in terms of its size and dynamics, but also in terms of its characteristics. The increase in migrants coming from Venezuela has led to changes in the demographic composition of the country's migrant population, specifically in terms of its age and education levels.

First, the last decade has produced a change in the nationalities with the largest presence in the country. In 2010, the majority of Peru's migrant population came from Argentina, Chile, and the United States.<sup>123</sup> This population was characterized by having high educational attainment and being employed, either as dependent or independent workers.<sup>124</sup> By 2019, the foreign population residing in Peru came mostly from two countries in the region: Venezuela and Colombia.<sup>125</sup> Although there was no change in the distribution of the migrant population by sex between 2010 and 2020 (46 percent of migrants were female in 2010, to 48 percent in 2020), there was a shift in the age composition of the migrant population between 2010 and 2020 (figure 4.30). The data suggest that in recent years, Peru has experienced a younger migration oriented toward family reunification, which is consistent with the migratory dynamics of the Venezuelan population. However, the Venezuelan migrant population has varied between 2017 and 2020, especially in terms of age and educational background (box 4.3).

In 2010, 34 percent of the migrant population in Peru was between 25 and 44 years old, 24 percent was between 45 and 64 years old, and 11 percent were over 65 years old. By 2020, Peru's migrant population was younger: 40 percent was between 25 and 44 years old, and 13 percent was between 45 and 64 years old. Likewise, only 3 percent was over 65 years old.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, the number of children between 0 and 9 years old migrating to Peru increased from 18 to 29 percent in this decade.<sup>127</sup>

In Peru, there are significant differences between the local population and the migrant population. The country's migrant population tends to be younger than the Peruvian population.<sup>128</sup> According to the

<sup>119</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

<sup>120</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

<sup>121</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

<sup>122</sup> UNHCR (2022).

<sup>123</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

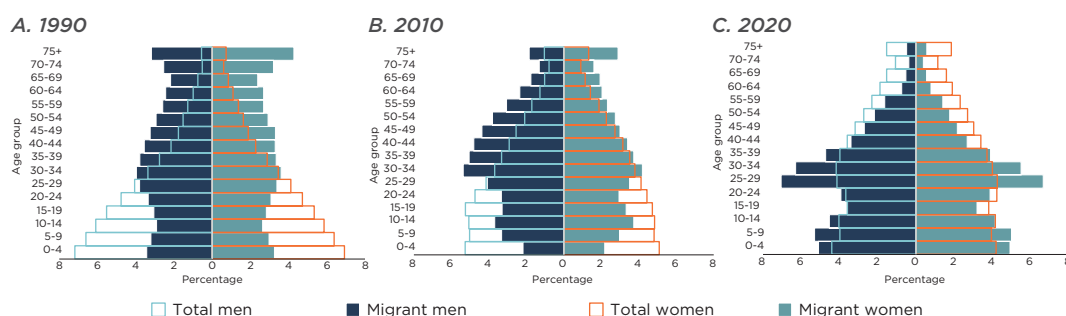
<sup>124</sup> IOM (2012).

<sup>125</sup> INEI (2021).

<sup>126</sup> Martínez et al. (2022) discusses the potential effects of changes in the age composition of the migrant population on the labor market.

<sup>127</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

<sup>128</sup> For example, in the 25–39 age group, the difference is 5 percentage points greater among the migrant population (34 percent in 2020 according to the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020, and 19.5 percent according to ENAHO 2020).

**Figure 4.30. In Peru, there was an increase in migrants aged 25–39***Migrant and total population by age group and sex (percentage)*

Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

Note: The total population includes all people living in Peru (nationals and migrants).

### Box 4.3. Venezuelan migration in Peru

The increase in the migrant population from Venezuela has produced major changes in Peru's migratory dynamics and has generated challenges and opportunities for Peru's institutional structures.<sup>a</sup> The increase in Venezuelan migration was accompanied by important changes in Peru's migration policy. From 2017 onward, specific rules were developed regarding the Venezuelan population's entry and stay in the country. Between 2017 and 2022, more than five extraordinary migration regularization programs aimed at the Venezuelan population were implemented.<sup>b</sup> These policies have been characterized by numerous changes, which have generated barriers to the mobility and regularization of the Venezuelan population, as well as limitations to the full exercise of their rights.<sup>c</sup> Since 2017, the profile of Venezuelan migrants has been changing in terms of their education level, gender, age distribution, and labor status. The first flows from Venezuela were mostly young men with high levels of education.<sup>d</sup> This pattern changed in the following years when there was an increase in the number of Venezuelan women arriving in the country and a decrease in the Venezuelan migrants' average education level.<sup>e</sup> By 2021, migration from Venezuela was mainly comprised of younger people: 40 percent were aged 20–35, and 70 percent were working-age. In 2021, the Venezuelan migrant population also had higher education levels than the local population: 25 percent of the migrants had a tertiary education, while this was only true for 13 percent of the local population.

In Peru, the unexpected arrival of large numbers of Venezuelans has brought new challenges, including the regularization of migration status, the integration of the newly arrived Venezuelan population into the labor market, and the need to guarantee their access to public services, such as education and healthcare, as well as to promote social cohesion. However, this wave of migration also presents important opportunities: Peru could take advantage of Venezuelan human capital with higher education levels than the Peruvian national average, the cultural diversity that migrants bring, and the positive economic impacts on the country. It is estimated that the impact of Venezuelan migration on the country's potential net tax revenues could be equivalent to 0.23 percent of GDP, on average, between 2019 and 2025.<sup>f</sup>

a World Bank (2019).

b Acosta and Harris (2022).

c Blouin et al. (2021).

d IOM (2018).

e INEI (2018).

f World Bank (2019). This estimate is pre-Covid, so it does not take into account the impacts of the pandemic, and it is based on assumptions of flows and policy changes that would make the most of the potential benefit of migration for the Peruvian economy.

2020 National Household Survey (ENAHO), the migrant population is, on average, better educated than the local population.<sup>129</sup> Some 35 percent of Peru's migrant population has a tertiary education, while this is true for just 23 percent of the local population. A similar pattern is observed with regard to lower educational categories. The geographic distribution of the two populations also differs. The migrant population tends to be located in urban areas and the capital city (97.6 percent) to a greater extent than the Peruvian population (79.2 percent).<sup>130</sup>

### ***Peru's migration policy and its institutional framework***

The institutional framework that governs migration in Peru has undergone major changes over the last 10 years, all in an attempt to anticipate and address the transformations in the flow of migrants that have been coming to the country. In terms of legislation, the Migration Act and the National Migration Policy 2017–2025 were passed in 2017. These two laws seek to ensure the interinstitutional and intergovernmental coordination of migration policy. The new Migration Act regulates (i) the entry and exit of people from the country; (ii) the country's residency requirements for foreigners and the administrative procedures for migration; and (iii) the issuance of identity documents for foreigners.<sup>131</sup> This Act incorporates principles such as the migrant population's equality before the law vis-à-vis Peruvian citizens, and mandates giving priority attention to people in vulnerable positions. Although the Migration Act recognizes the rights of migrants, in practice, there are challenges and gaps in its application.<sup>132</sup>

The total number of residency permits granted by Peru increased from 17,000 in 2015 to 173,000 in 2019. However, most of these permits were temporary (only 13 percent of those granted in 2019 were permanent).<sup>133</sup> This is due to the different extraordinary regularization processes that since 2017 have been enacted in the country. These temporary permits, usually extended for a year or two, have targeted the Venezuelan population.<sup>134</sup>

In 2020, the Temporary Residency Permit Card was approved as an exceptional and specialized, yet still temporary, measure intended to regularize the migratory status of foreigners in Peru.<sup>135</sup> As of August, 2022, this measure was still in effect. The document regularizes an individual's migration status for a two-year period, and allows them to qualify for one of the temporary status categories specified in the Migration Act. This program is open to Venezuelans who entered the country via regular means. Through the Refugee Act of 2002, Peru also has procedures for extending protection to international refugees.<sup>136</sup>

A good practice in Peru is the Intersectoral Migration Management Work Group (MTIGM), a multistakeholder authority created in 2011 that is attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This authority's focal point is the National Integration Strategy for the Migrant Population, which is currently in the process of being approved.

The regularization process in Peru recognizes that migrants have the right to work and access public services. Foreigners who have a residency permit have the same rights to social security as the Peruvian population. However, in the formal labor market, there is a limit to the number of foreigners that a company may hire. These limits apply to Peruvian and foreign-owned companies, which are permitted to

<sup>129</sup> The sample sizes of migrants included in household surveys in the region are small, which may affect their statistical representativeness. More information on the representativeness of the migrant population in household surveys can be found in Perdomo (2022).

<sup>130</sup> ENAHO 2020.

<sup>131</sup> Legislative Decree No. 1350.

<sup>132</sup>

<sup>133</sup> IDB (2021).

<sup>134</sup> Acosta and Harris (2022).

<sup>135</sup> Supreme Decree No. 010-2020-IN.

<sup>136</sup> Law No. 27891 or the Refugee Act of December 22, 2002. According to UNHCR estimates, Peru is the country that has received the highest number of applications for refugee status from Venezuelans (more than 532,000 claims).

employ foreign citizens, provided that they do not make up more than 20 percent of the total number of employees (with some exceptions) and that their wages do not exceed 30 percent of the total payroll.<sup>137</sup>

In Peru, education is a universal right, but in recent years the arrival of Venezuelan migrants has posed new challenges to the inclusion of this population in the education system.<sup>138</sup> In 2019, it was estimated that Peru's school-age population (those aged 0–17) increased by approximately 118,000 children. Peru's Ministry of Education had already absorbed about 35,152 Venezuelan students, primarily concentrated in Metropolitan Lima.<sup>139</sup> The Venezuelan migrant population faces challenges when enrolling in the education system due to a lack of information on the procedural requirements, various informal barriers, and the lack of places in schools.

Recent migratory flows also present an important challenge in terms of access to the country's public healthcare services. Historically, public services in Peru have been underfunded, resulting in deficient services, especially in the healthcare sector. According to 2019 data on the Venezuelan migrant population, only a small share of those who experienced health problems sought care at medical facilities.<sup>140</sup> Not all migration regularization documents in Peru enable bearers to access public health insurance, which results in many migrants being excluded from these services.<sup>141</sup>

### ***How does migration affect Peru?***

One of the main challenges confronting host communities is the integration of the migrant population into the labor market. Informal employment, underemployment, and getting university degrees recognized are some of the challenges that the migrant population faces in Peru. Given the recent wave of Venezuelan migration to the country, several studies have measured this population's social and economic impact. These recent migratory flows bring major opportunities for Peru's economic development, which could result from taking advantage of the skilled labor that migrants could provide (as health technicians, teachers, and doctors, among others), as doing so could compensate for the country's shortage in professionals in Peru.<sup>142</sup> It has been found that in certain areas of Peru where there is a higher proportion of migrants from Venezuela and where the community values diversity, the quality of local services and the community are better.<sup>143</sup>

Despite the Venezuelan population being more highly skilled than the local population, most of these migrants are employed in the informal sector, earn lower incomes, and perform tasks that are unrelated to their skills, as they are mainly employed in the service and trade sectors.<sup>144</sup> Recent studies show that the flow of Venezuelan migrants that have arrived in the country since 2017 have had a positive impact on the Peruvian labor market.<sup>145</sup> Although Peru's economy has grown at a slower rate since 2015, the country's labor market has almost entirely absorbed the supply shock triggered by the arrival of migrants from Venezuela.<sup>146</sup> There is evidence that in certain areas of the country, the presence of migrants from Venezuela leads to better labor market outcomes for the local population.<sup>147</sup>

137 Legislative Decree No. 689, Law for the Hiring of Foreign Workers of November 4, 1991, Article 4.

138 World Bank (2019).

139 World Bank (2019).

140 World Bank (2019).

141 R4V (2022). Only those holding foreign citizen ID cards can access public health insurance.

142 Mendoza and Miranda (2019).

143 Groeger, Leon-Ciliotta, and Stillman (2022).

144 Torres and Galarza (2021), and World Bank (2019).

145 Asencios and Castellares (2020).

146 Morales and Pierola (2020).

147 Groeger, Leon-Ciliotta, and Stillman (2022).

Heterogeneous short-term effects have also been identified, with a positive employment response in nonservice sectors and a negative earnings response for service sector workers.<sup>148</sup> This indicates that the high levels of informal employment and underemployment affecting migrants as a result of their educational qualifications not being recognized could be detrimental to a group of less educated and, therefore, more vulnerable Peruvian workers. Other studies have sought to measure the impact of the Venezuelan migration on the security of Peruvian citizens. The findings indicate that Venezuelan migration does not have a significant effect on the crime rate.<sup>149</sup> The insecurity perceived by the Peruvian population has been fueled by the sensationalism of the Peruvian media.

Peru continues to face important challenges in matters related to its migration policy. These encompass implementing long-term migration regularization policies, including the migrant population in social policies that promote social integration and cohesion, and liberalizing access to the formal labor market by allowing exceptions, based on the complementarity of foreign workers' skills, to the existing quotas imposed on the amount of foreign nationals that firms are allowed to hire.

#### 4.4.2. Trends in attitudes toward the migrant population in Peru

According to Gallup's Migrant Acceptance Index, Peru is the country that recorded the largest drop in the acceptance of the migrant population between 2016 and 2019. While the global average for the index dropped from 5.34 in 2016 to 5.21 in 2019, in Peru, the index fell from 6.33 to 3.61.

In Peru, opinions about migrants are ambivalent and have exhibited a negative trend in recent years.<sup>150</sup> The local population's main concerns relate to perceptions associating the arrival of the migrant population with a rise in criminal behavior and labor market competition. Among the Peruvians surveyed, 72 percent agree that migrants cause an increase in crime, while 64 percent think migrants compete with them for jobs.<sup>151</sup>

According to data from Latinobarómetro 2020, that year Peruvians were concerned about migration (figure 4.31).<sup>152</sup> Of the people surveyed, 78 percent say that the arrival of the migrant population is detrimental to them and their families, 74 percent believe that migration is not good for the country's economy, and 70 percent contend that migrants do not improve the local society and culture (the averages for Latin America are 57 percent for the first two statements and 51 percent for the third). The majority of respondents did not believe that migrants contribute to the country (73 percent of Peruvians disagree with the statement that migrants give back more to the country than they receive from it, compared to 67 percent for Latin American population). In addition, 58 percent of the Peruvian population disagrees with aiding those migrants who are suffering from political persecution in their home countries, compared to the regional average of 37 percent.<sup>153</sup>

In contrast to what was observed in the region's other countries, in 2020, Peruvians had negative opinions regarding the prospect of receiving migrants from regions outside Latin America (58 percent of the Peruvian population view this as negative, compared to 48 percent among the Latin American population). However, the Peruvian population's main concern is the Venezuelan population: 81 percent of Peruvian respondents has a negative view toward receiving Venezuelan migrants, compared to 62 percent among Latin Americans.

148 Morales and Pierola (2020).

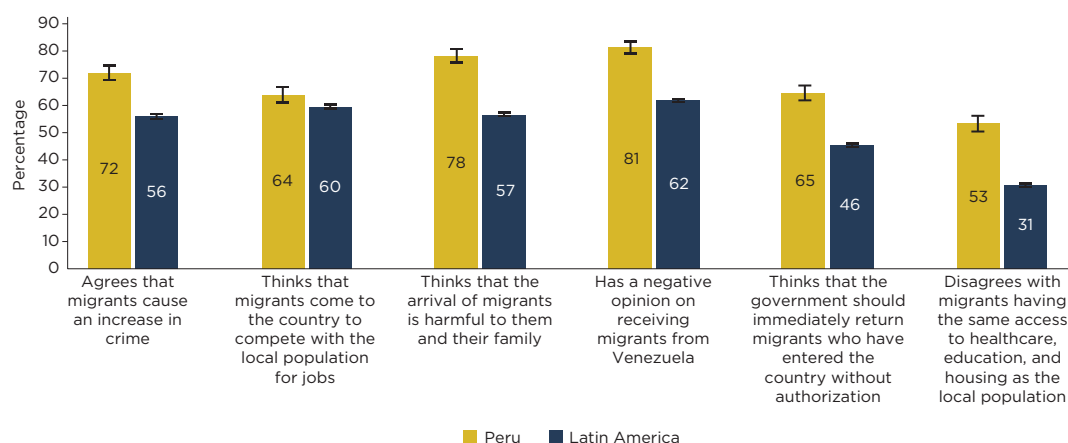
149 Castro and Mejía (2020).

150 IOP (2020).

151 Latinobarómetro 2020.

152 This section includes data from public opinion polls that collect sample information from various countries relating to a range of topics over time. However, the same questions are not usually asked from one round to the next, which makes it harder to compare the different sources. In the case of Peru, data from two surveys was used: the 2020 Latinobarómetro survey and the 2016 and 2019 Gallup surveys. Latinobarómetro 2020 contains data from a sample of 1,200 Peruvians that was collected in November 2020. Gallup surveyed two different samples of 1,000 people in Peru between June and August 2016 and August and October 2019, respectively.

153 Latinobarómetro 2020.

**Figure 4.31. Peruvians have negative views of migration***Peruvians and Latin Americans in each category (percentage), 2020*

Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from Latinobarómetro 2020.

Note: Responses from the "I don't know/No response" category were excluded. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregate for Latin America, using 5 percent significance levels.

Peru is a country where the prevailing belief is that a restrictive government response to migration is needed: according to data from Latinobarómetro 2020, 65 percent of Peruvians believe that the government should immediately return migrants who enter the country in an unauthorized manner, compared to the regional average of 46 percent. Despite these figures, only 58 percent of the Peruvian population believes that a conflict exists between the country's native-born and foreign populations.

Finally, Peruvians recognize the importance of the migrant population being able to access basic services.<sup>154</sup> According to Latinobarómetro 2020 data, almost half of the Peruvian population agrees that migrants should have the same access to healthcare, education, and housing as the local population (47 percent).

#### 4.4.3. Experiment results

Some 2,442 people took part in the experiment carried out in Peru.<sup>155</sup> On average, 55 percent of the sample are men and had children. Most people in the sample are aged 18–45 (58 percent) and employed (84 percent). Some 38 percent of participants have a higher education, and 50 percent are in quintiles 1 and 2 of the income distribution.<sup>156</sup> In terms of political ideology, the majority are in the center of the spectrum (around 60 percent) (figure 4.32).<sup>157</sup> Descriptive statistics for the control and treatment groups are available in the online statistical annex.<sup>158</sup>

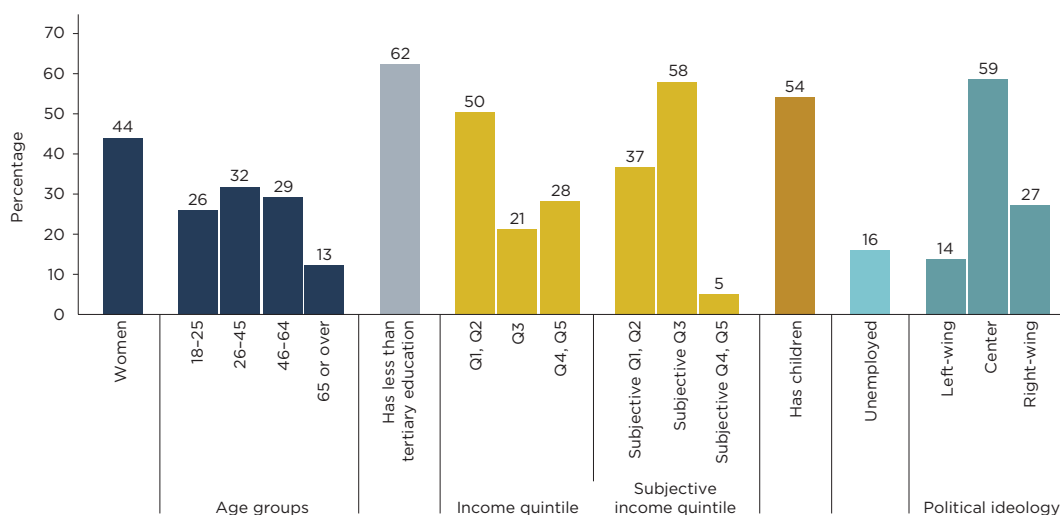
154 Latinobarómetro 2020.

155 Of this total, 819 participants were in the group that watched a placebo video (i.e., the control group), 801 belonged to the group that watched the emotive video, and 822 were shown the informative video. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the methodology.

156 Based on data from the National Institute of Statistics and Information of Peru (INEI), the population was divided into the following income quintiles: i) less than PEN900; ii) PEN900 to PEN1,600; iii) PEN1,600 to PEN2,500; iv) PEN2,500 to PEN4,000; and v) more than PEN4,000.

157 The sample collected in Peru is not strictly comparable to the Peruvian population. According to data from the 2020 ENAHO, the local population has a lower proportion of men (48 percent) than the sample, on average, is older (54 percent of the Peruvian population is aged 18–45), is less educated (26 percent of the Peruvian population have a higher education), and has a lower share of unemployed people (3 percent).

158 These groups are comparable for all participant characteristics, with some exceptions: in the group that saw the emotive video there were fewer people aged 18–25, more people in quintile 3 of the income distribution, more people who identified as being at the center of the political spectrum, and fewer people who said that it is hard to see things from other people's point of view. In the group that watched the informative video, there were fewer people who think that everyone in their country has an opportunity to succeed.

**Figure 4.32. Description of the participant sample in Peru***Distribution by characteristic (percentage)*

Source: IDB/UNDP.

***Both treatment videos have a positive effect on promoting acceptance of the migrant population, trust in them, willingness to help them, and support for the government providing humanitarian aid and access to healthcare services. Neither video increases the share of people who are in favor of the government providing migrant children with healthcare and education services, but support for this policy was high to begin with.***

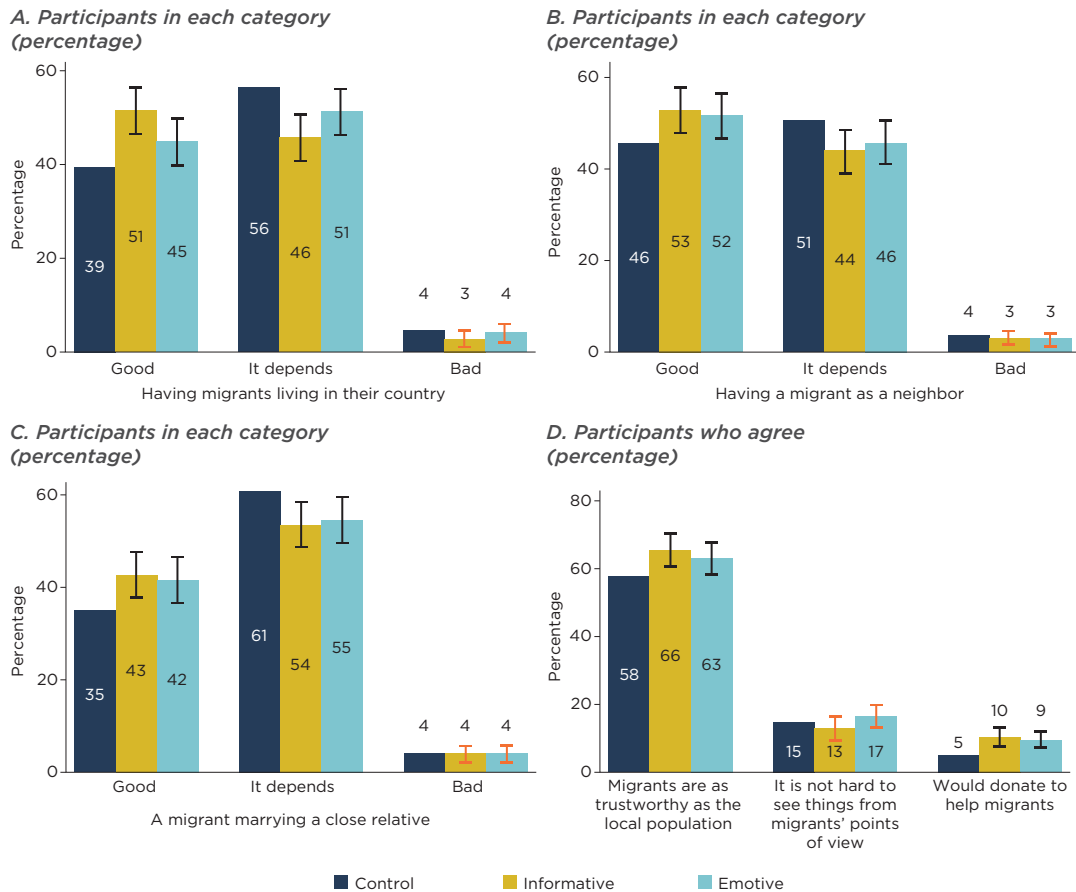
The capacity to affect preferences related to migratory policies and social norms through the different interventions was evaluated using two types of questions. The first set of questions explores the ability to affect the willingness to accept migrants in the country, the neighborhood, or as part of their immediate family.

The two videos substantially increase the share of people who are willing to accept migrants in society. The percentage of people answering “good” to these three questions after viewing the informative video is, on average, 9 percentage points higher than the percentage for the control group. The emotive video has a positive effect of 6 percentage points, on average, relative to the percentage for the control group. Neither of the two treatments is effective at changing the attitudes of those who already had a negative stance toward the migrant population. In other words, exposure to the videos does not reduce the percentage of people answering “bad” to the three questions that measure acceptance levels regarding migrants (figures 4.33A, 4.33B, and 4.33C).

Other relevant indicators in this same category are trust and empathy toward the migrant population. It appears that most people in the control group have difficulty empathizing with the migrant population: only 15 percent think that it is not difficult to empathize with the migrants’ viewpoint, and just 5 percent would be willing to make donations to help them. Neither video increases the percentage of participants who think that it is not difficult to see things from the migrant perspective. In contrast, both videos have a positive effect on the probability of trusting migrants (a 7-percentage-point increase) and on the willingness to donate to help migrants (a 5-percentage-point increase). This last effect represents an increase that more than doubles the initial share (figure 4.33D).



**Figure 4.33. In Peru, the two videos are effective at increasing acceptance of and trust in the migrant population**



Source: IDB/UNDP.

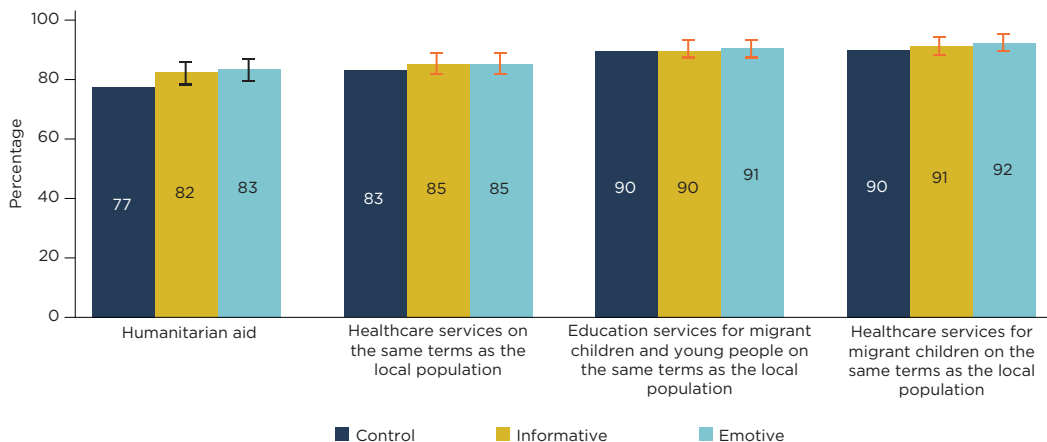
Note: The data presented in panels A, B, and C is the result of estimating a multinomial logistic model, and the data presented in panel D is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

The second set of questions explores the ability of the treatments to change preferences on migration policies. The majority of the control group, 77 percent or more, agree that the government should provide migrants with social services such as humanitarian aid, healthcare of the same quality as the local population, and healthcare and education for migrant children. Both videos are effective at increasing the share of respondents who agreed with providing the migrant population with humanitarian aid, going, on average, from 77 to 83 percent. Neither of the two videos is effective at increasing support for the government providing healthcare services and education services to migrant children on equal terms with the local population. However, in the control group, the level of support for this measure was already high (90 percent agree) (figure 4.34).

**Both videos have a positive effect on how the local population views the impact of migration on the economy and the labor market. However, the informative video has more of a positive effect than the emotive video.**

**Figure 4.34. In Peru, the interventions do not increase support for the government providing education and healthcare to migrant children, but the initial level of support was high**

Participants who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

The majority of the control group, 72 percent, believe that the arrival of the migrant population brings economic benefits to their country. After watching the informative video, 82 percent believe that migrants contribute to Peru's economy. Further to this point, 91 percent of the control group agrees with the government granting work permits to migrants. Neither video generates a change in the responses to this question.

Competition in the labor market is a concern for people in the control group, as 62 percent think that migrants compete with them for jobs. After the treatments, the proportion of people holding this view decreases by 8 percentage points among those who watched the emotive video and by 18 percentage points among those who saw the informative video.

Despite believing that migrants contribute to the country's economy, the control group also thinks that migrants are a burden on the state—only 43 percent think otherwise. This percentage increases to 54 percent after exposure to the informative video and 48 percent in the case of the emotive video. Examining whether the responses among different population groups varies, the informative video's positive effect is largely explained by its effect on women in the sample.<sup>159</sup> Similarly, the positive effect of the informative video on the view that migration benefits the economy is concentrated among young people (18- to 25-year-olds), those with less than a tertiary education, and those with no children (figure 4.35).

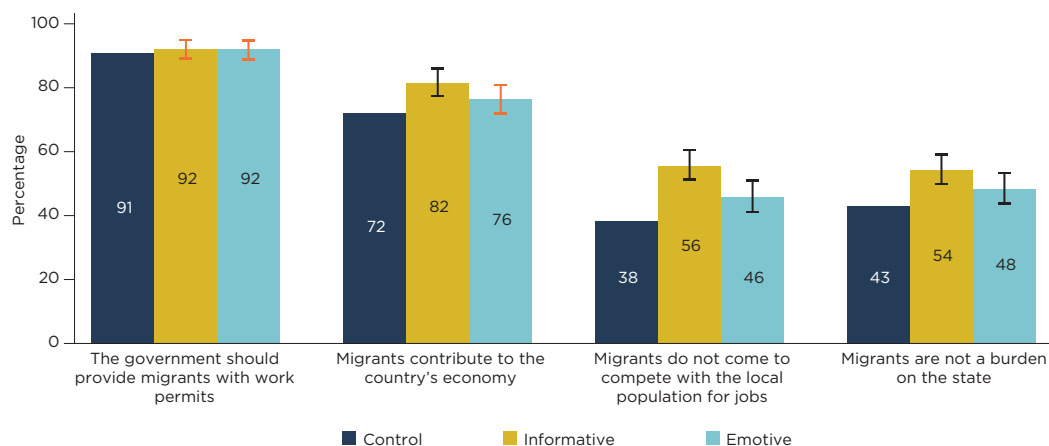
**Both videos have an equally positive effect on Peruvian views on migrants' contributions to the country's cultural diversity.**

The majority of the control group acknowledges the contribution that migrants make to Peruvian society. However, not everyone in this group agrees that migrants contribute more to the country than they get back from it. Indeed, only half of the control group thinks that migrants contribute more to the country

159 The variety of effects caused by the different treatments are not discussed in the text but can be consulted in the online statistical annex.

**Figure 4.35. In Peru, the informative video is more effective than the emotive video at changing views of the economic impact of migration**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

than they receive from it. Both of the interventions improve these opinions. About 60 percent in each treatment group recognizes that the contributions migrants make to the country are greater than the benefits they receive from it. The average effect of the two videos is statistically indistinguishable. The effect of the informative video is concentrated among women aged 18–25.

Turning to how the migrant population contributes to local culture, the control group largely agrees that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and cultures (66 percent). This figure increases to almost 75 percent after viewing either video (figure 4.36).

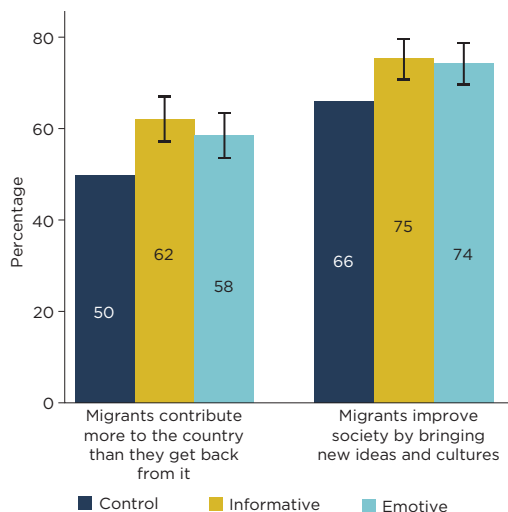
**Both videos influence the local population's views associating female migrants with sex work. The informative video also modifies beliefs associating migration with an increase in crime.**

Social stigma is an important challenge during the process of integrating the migrant population into the receiving society. Local citizens frequently believe that crime rates increase with the arrival of migrants, and the perception associating migrant women with sex work is also common. In Peru, 74 percent of the control group associates migration with an increase in crime, while 53 percent agree that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work.

Both treatments are effective at transforming beliefs that associate female migrants with sex work, but only the informative video improves the negative perceptions that connect migration with crime. Providing information successfully reduces the share of people who associate migration with crime to 58 percent, which is 16 percentage points lower than the result for the control group. On the stigma linking migrant women to sex work, both the informative video and the emotive video increase the share who disagree that migrant women end up engaging in sex work. On average, the videos bring about a 9-percentage-point increase compared to the control group. Examining whether responses varied among different population groups reveals that the effect of the informative video on beliefs associating migrants with crime is concentrated among young people aged 18–25 (figure 4.37).

**Figure 4.36. In Peru, the treatment videos improve perceptions about the migrant population's contribution to culture and diversity**

Participants who agree (percentage)

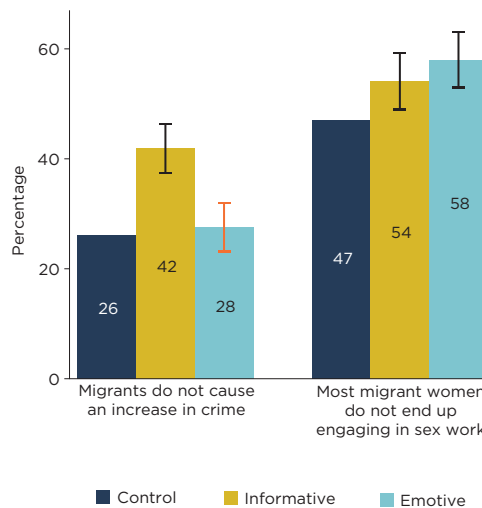


Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels.

**Figure 4.37. In Peru, the informative video is very effective at correcting the perception that the presence of migrants increases crime**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

### Summary

The results of the interventions conducted in Peru show that it is possible to change certain opinions about the migrant population, although it is difficult to modify some beliefs. In general, the informative video is equally or more effective than the emotive video.

The two interventions lead to significant changes in the level of acceptance of migrant population, from willingness to accept migrants living in the country to marrying a close family member. Similarly, the interventions increase trust in the migrant population and the willingness to help them. Both interventions have significant effects on transforming perceptions that migrants increase labor market competition and are a burden on the state. The interventions are also effective at increasing the percentage of people who agree that the migrant population contributes more to the country than it takes from it, and the percentage of people who think that migrants improve the society by bringing new ideas and cultures. The treatments also affect preferences on migration policy. Finally, in Peru, only the informative video managed to raise the percentage of those who think that migrants contribute to the country's economy and reduce the share of those who associate migration with an increase in crime. These results are summarized in table 4.4.

**Table 4.4. In Peru, the effectiveness of the treatment videos varies, depending on the type of belief**  
*Summary of results (percentages and percentage points)*

Category	Question	Control group (percentages)	Effect of the informational video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally charged video (percentage points)
Policy preferences and social norms	Having migrants living in their country is a good thing.	39.3	12.1	5.4
	Having a migrant as a neighbor is a good thing.	45.6	7.4	6.1
	A migrant marrying a close relative is a good thing.	34.9	7.8	6.6
	Agree that the government should provide migrants humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care.)	77.5	5.0	6.0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants healthcare services on the same terms as the local population.	83.0	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants children and young people with education services on the same terms as the local population.	89.8	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide healthcare services for migrant children on the same terms as the local population.	90.0	0	0
	Agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.	58.3	7.7	5.1
	Agree that it isn't hard to see things from migrants' points of view.	14.8	0	0
	Would donate to an organization that helps migrants.	5.0	5.3	4.4
Economic factors	Agree that the government should give migrants work permits or documentation that enables them to work legally in the country	90.8	0	0
	Agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy	72.2	9.5	0
	Agree that migrants do not come to compete with the local population for jobs	38.4	17.3	7.5
	Agree that migrants are not a burden on the state	43.0	11.3	5.3
Cultural factors	Agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it	49.9	12.4	8.5
	Agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and culture	66.2	9.1	8.1
Social stigma	Agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime rates	26.1	15.8	0
	Agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work	47.0	7.2	11.0

Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Gray cells indicate that the effect is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. For each question, a darker cell color indicates a comparatively greater effect. When coefficients are shown in the same color, the difference between them is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

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CHAPTER 5

# THE MIGRANT POPULATION IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN



## 5.1. Barbados

### 5.1.1. Migration in Barbados

#### ***Barbados is a key player in intraregional migration in the Caribbean and a net population exporter***

Within the Caribbean, Barbados is one of the most developed countries and has one of the region's highest per capita incomes.<sup>1</sup> Like many Caribbean countries, it has a long history of emigration that dates back to the second half of the 19th century, when migratory labor flows from Barbados to other Caribbean islands intensified.<sup>2</sup> Relative to the size of its population, Barbados has sent a substantial number of emigrants to the rest of the Caribbean, North America, and the United Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> In recent years, the country has also experienced the process of return migration.<sup>4</sup>

Immigration, particularly intraregional migration, is also part of the history of Barbados and the Caribbean, a region characterized by close connections between the islands. In response to the interconnectedness of the Caribbean, recent decades have brought a push for regional integration and free mobility. Barbados is one of the founding members of the Caribbean Community (Caricom), established in 1973, that aimed to promote the creation of new regional integration and coordination mechanisms that remain strong to this day. Migration has become a priority for Caricom in recent years, as demonstrated by the region's increasing freedom of movement and the integration achieved through the Caribbean Common Market.

The economy in Barbados is a key factor in attracting the intraregional migrant population, particularly since salaries and incomes are higher in Barbados than in other Caribbean countries.<sup>5</sup> Since 2001, the country has seen a rise in intraregional migration motivated by those seeking higher education: Barbados houses the main campus of the University of the West Indies, which also has sites in Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica.<sup>6</sup>

Though in recent years there is no evidence of an exponential increase in migratory flows to Barbados, immigrants account for a large share of the country's population (figure 5.1). Between 1990 and 2020, the migrant population went from representing 9.2 percent of the country's total population to 12.1 percent: there were 24,000 migrants in 1990 and 35,000 in 2020.<sup>7</sup> In 2020, the majority of the migrant population in Barbados came from Guyana and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

#### ***Stable migration flows and changing demographics***

For the most part, migratory flows to Barbados have remained steady over the last ten years. Between 2010 and 2020, the migrant population went from representing 11.6 percent of the total population to

1 Aragón and El-Assar (2018).

2 Brown (2005). This type of labor migration was called indentured servitude.

3 Ebanks, George, and Nobbe (1975).

4 Gmelch and Gmelch (1995), and Potter (2005).

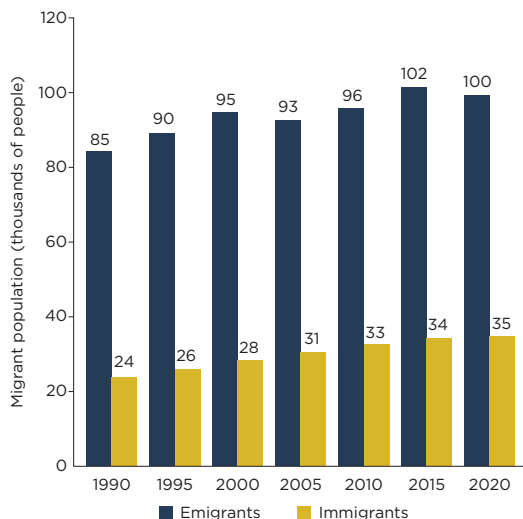
5 ACP Observatory (2013).

6 ACP Observatory (2013).

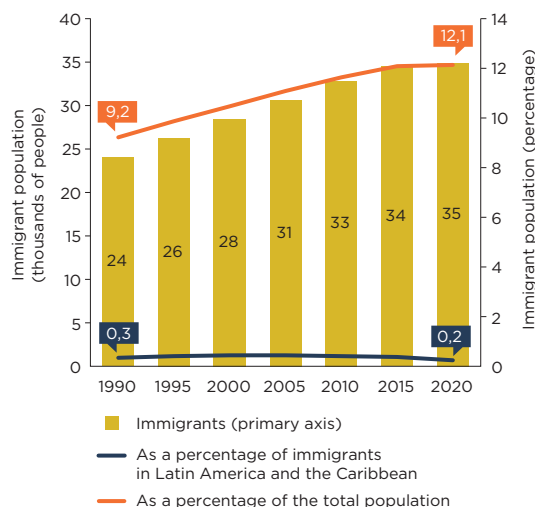
7 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

**Figure 5.1. Barbados is a net sending country, but immigration is rising**

**A. Cumulative migrant inflows and outflows (thousands), 1990–2020**



**B. Cumulative migrant inflows (thousands and percentages), 1990–2020**



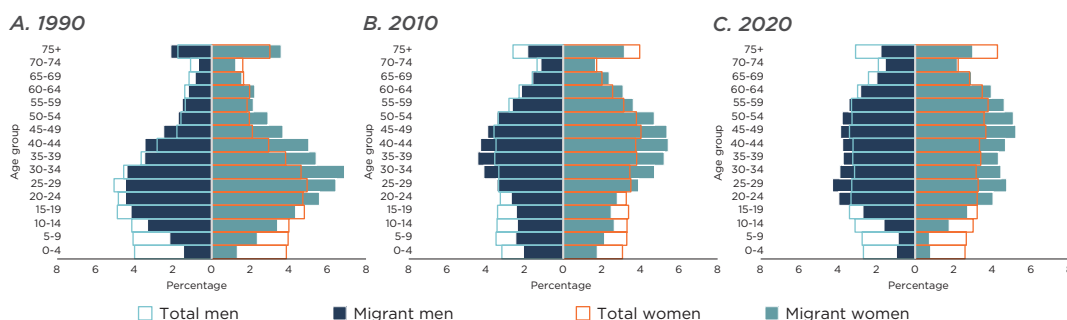
Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

12.1 percent. This is because there were no new or large-scale migratory flows during this period. In 2010, 19 percent of the country’s migrant population came from Guyana, and 9 percent was from St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Since then, the portion of the migrant population from these countries has remained constant, and in 2020 the distribution by nationality was similar.<sup>8</sup>

Yet the demographic profile of Barbados’s migrant population has changed in recent years, specifically in terms of its age structure (figure 5.2). Between 2010 and 2020, the share of migrants in the youngest age bracket (0- to 14-year-olds) fell from 13 percent to 7 percent. There was an increase in the population over the age of 45 (including 3-percentage-point increases in the share of 45- to 65-year-olds and people

**Figure 5.2. The migrant population in Barbados is increasingly concentrated among older age brackets**

*Migrant and total population by age group and sex (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.  
 Note: The total population includes all people living in Barbados (nationals and migrants).

8 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

over 65).<sup>9</sup> This demographic change is due to the natural aging of the country's population. In contrast to other countries in the region, the majority of the migrant population in Barbados is not young.

A comparison of the migrant population with the local population reveals some differences and important similarities in their demographic characteristics. First, the migrant population has an age composition that, on average, is similar to the local population. According to the results of the 2016 Labor Force Survey, the average age of migrants was 48, compared to 46 for the local population.<sup>10</sup> The percentage of working-age people is similar in both populations (82 and 83 percent, respectively).

On average, the migrant population in Barbados has lower levels of education compared to the local population: 21 percent of migrants do not have any formal education or only have a primary education, but only 15 percent of the local population has this same level of education. The pattern is similar for higher levels of educational attainment levels: 79 percent of the migrant population and 85 percent of the local population in Barbados do not have a complete secondary education or higher.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Migration policy to further regional integration***

Intraregional migration is common in the Caribbean; in 2020, intraregional migration accounted for 64 percent of the migrant population in the Caribbean.<sup>12</sup> Barbados is one of the Caribbean countries that receives the largest quantity of migrants who are citizens of other Caricom nations. In 2017, the country recorded about 147,000 migrants entering under the Caricom condition promoting the freedom of movement.<sup>13</sup>

The quest for regional integration and freedom of movement that exists in the Caribbean began decades ago. Through the Treaty of Chaguaramas (1973), Caricom was founded, with its original member states of Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, with the intent of encouraging freer movement of capital and labor. This goal took shape through the establishment of free mobility regimes and the promotion of greater regional integration under the Caribbean Common Market, which came into effect in 2006 through the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. Although full freedom of movement has not yet been achieved, citizens of Caricom member states are entitled to a partial form of free mobility, as they may stay in other Caricom countries for six months without needing a visa. However, these types of stays do not include permission to work and may be restricted due to national security concerns. In many countries, while the six-month stay has been implemented administratively, it has not been fully incorporated into national immigration laws, a situation that sometimes results in inconsistent practices.

Barbados does not have permanent mechanisms for migratory regularization, nor has it developed extraordinary regularization mechanisms over the last ten years.<sup>14</sup> In 2009, the government announced an amnesty program for all migrants from other Caricom states whose migration status was irregular, but who had lived in Barbados for at least eight years prior to December 31, 2005. The policy measure established that migrants who were unable to regularize their status before the deadline would be deported to their home countries.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the laws in Barbados are not clear regarding migrants' access to education. However, legislation has been established that requires migrants residing in the country to present documentation and pay fees in order to attend school.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, there is no clear regulation regarding the migrant population's access to healthcare, which is available only to citizens or permanent residents. Thus,

9 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

10 The sample sizes of the migrant population included in household surveys in the region are small, which may affect their statistical representativeness. More information on the representativeness of the migrant population in household surveys can be found in Perdomo (2022).

11 According to data from the Labor Force Survey of 2016.

12 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

13 Aragón and Mawby (2020).

14 Acosta and Harris (2022).

15 ACP Observatory (2013) and Dietrich Jones (2013).

16 Acosta and Harris (2022).

Barbados restricts access for migrants whose migration status is irregular. Those migrants with legal status also effectively have limited access to healthcare, given the high costs of medical care.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, Barbados does not have a legal or institutional framework for assisting refugees. Although most Caribbean nations have signed and ratified the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, the region as a whole lacks the institutions and regulatory frameworks that ensure the provision of asylum and assistance to refugees.

### ***A gap in the evidence on the impacts of migration flows in the country***

There is a gap with respect to studies that analyze and provide evidence on the impact of migration in Barbados, especially those that treat the most recent migratory flows. In part, since there have been no massive migration flows in recent years, there is no documentation of such effects.<sup>18</sup> However, Barbados continues to experience elevated outflows of qualified individuals with a tertiary education though, more recently, some migrants who left Barbados have begun to return. In relative terms, Barbados is among the ten principal countries in the world with the highest migration rates. This immigration of qualified workers signals that the country is losing skilled professionals.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, qualitative studies show that in Barbados, immigrants occupy high-level jobs and start new businesses in the country.<sup>20</sup>

The return of a first- or second-generation Barbadian population who had migrated outside the country also constitutes another important trend in the country. Some qualitative studies explore the impact of return migration not only on the country, but also on the lives of the returning migrants.<sup>21</sup> A 1987 study concludes that return migration to Barbados also brought the transfer of ideas, skilled labor, and capital, thus contributing to the nation's economic development.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Between apprehension and multiculturalism***

Given the diverse characteristics of the country's migrant population, different migrant groups experience distinctly different realities and likely encounter different types of prejudice in Barbados. However, there is a shortage of information on trends in local public opinion on migration.

Some studies conducted over the last 20 years provide information on the local attitudes among Barbadians. Within the country, there has been a surge of public conversations and debates about migration, especially after Barbados joined the Caribbean Common Market in 2016, which facilitated the movement of skilled labor between member countries. The topic was also part of the public discussion after the government implemented the migration amnesty in 2009.

The national debate on migration intensified between 2008 and 2010.<sup>23</sup> The debate focused largely on Indian-Guyanese migrants and revolved around a narrative that portrayed this population as destructive and invasive.<sup>24</sup> The focus of this discussion on a specific ethnicity and nationality reflects the migratory dynamics in Barbados, whereby certain groups of migrants suffer the consequences of being associated with different stigmas. In fact, the migrant population in Barbados confronts discrimination in diverse spaces and contexts.<sup>25</sup> For example, foreigners face explicit discrimination when accessing healthcare,

17 Aragón and El-Assar (2018).

18 A recent exception is the work of Dietrich Jones (2022), which looks at immigration in Barbados, and migration more broadly speaking.

19 ACP Observatory (2013).

20 IOM (2017).

21 Potter (2001).

22 Gmelch and Gmelch (1995).

23 Dietrich Jones (2013).

24 Cumberbatch (2015).

25 ACP Observatory (2013).



as evidenced by the existence of waiting lists strictly intended for them. Negative opinions also circulate among the local population about the impact that the migrant population has on social services. There is a feeling of apprehension and distrust toward the migrant population, especially migrants of certain nationalities, such as the Indian-Guyanese community.<sup>26</sup>

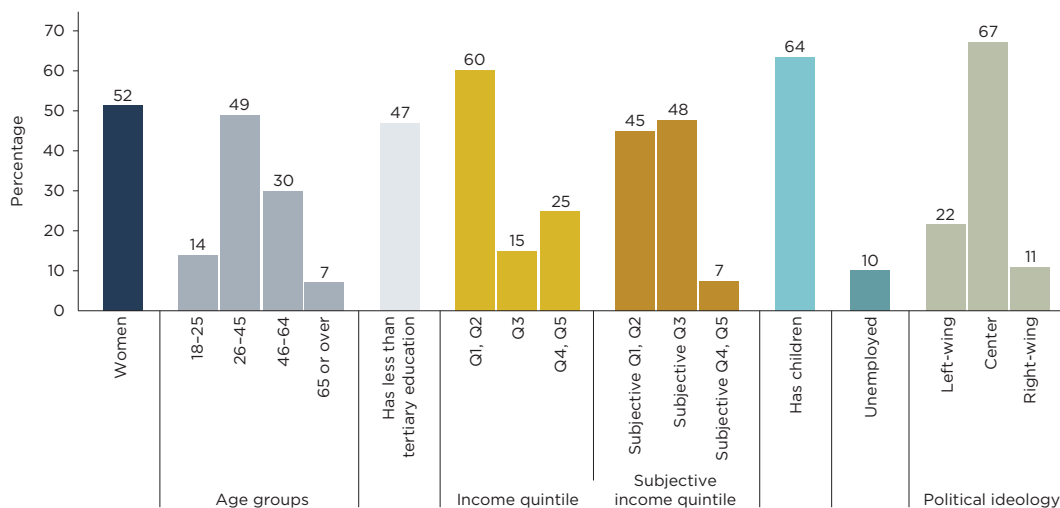
Given the relative ethnic homogeneity of the Barbadian population, minorities with other backgrounds commonly report that they are victims of discrimination and experience rejection, while other groups receive preferential treatment.<sup>27</sup> In addition to the ethnicity factor, the concentration of migrants working in occupations that the local population consistently disdain also contributes to the discriminatory attitudes harbored against migrants.<sup>28</sup>

### 5.1.2. Experiment results

The experiment conducted in Barbados had 2,112 participants.<sup>29</sup> Forty-eight percent were male, the majority of the participants were in the 26–45 and 46–64 age brackets (49 percent and 30 percent, respectively), and most had children (64 percent). In terms of political ideology, the majority fall in the center of the political spectrum (67 percent), followed by those who identified as right-wing (22 percent). Around half of the participants had a higher education (53 percent), and 60 percent are in quintiles 1 and 2 of the income distribution.<sup>30</sup> Finally, just 12 percent of the sample were unemployed (figure 5.3)<sup>31</sup>. Descriptive statistics for the control and treatment groups are available in the online statistical annex<sup>32</sup>.

**Figure 5.3. Description of the participant sample in Barbados**

*Distribution by characteristic (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

<sup>26</sup> ACP Observatory (2013).

<sup>27</sup> ACP Observatory (2013).

<sup>28</sup> ACP Observatory (2013).

<sup>29</sup> Some 715 participants were in the group that watched a placebo video (i.e., the control group); 705 belonged to the group that watched the emotive video; and, finally, there were 692 in the group that watched the informative video. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the methodology.

<sup>30</sup> Based on data from the Barbados Statistical Service, the population was divided into the following income quintiles: i) less than BBD2,100; ii) BBD2,100 to BBD3,399; iii) BBD3,400 to BBD4,999; iv) BBD5,000 to BBD6,799; and v) more than BBD6,800.

<sup>31</sup> The demographic traits of the sample collected in Barbados differs in some respects from the Barbadian population as a whole. According to data from the 2016 Labor Force Survey, on average, the local population is older (52 percent of the Barbadian population are over the age of 46) and is less educated (35 percent have a higher education).

<sup>32</sup> These groups are comparable for all participant traits, with some exceptions: people over the age of 64 were overrepresented in the group that watched the informative video; people who identify as being left-wing were overrepresented in the control group; and people who identify as being in the center of the political spectrum were overrepresented in the group that watched the emotive video.

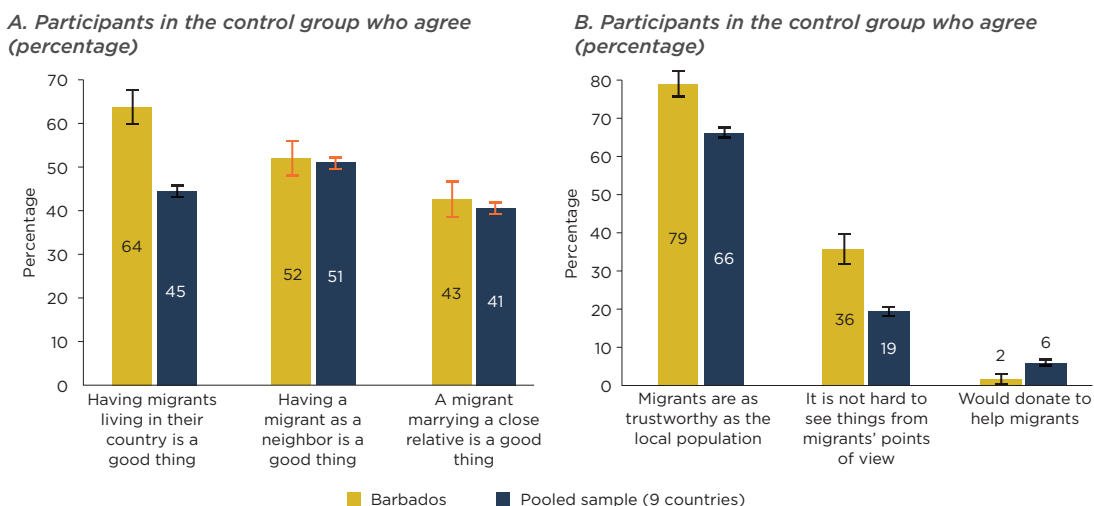
**New Evidence on the Local Population’s Attitudes and Perceptions of the Migrant Population**

The shortage of statistics that showcase the prevailing attitudes that the local population in Caribbean countries have about migration complicates any attempt to study the impact of interventions on these attitudes. In addition to contributing to a deeper understanding of the channels that might modify Barbadian attitudes toward migrants, this project also constitutes an unprecedented diagnostic review of how the local population currently sees migration. The attitudes of the control group are an important starting point.<sup>33</sup>

***In Barbados, the control group is more open to the arrival of migrants and tends to trust them and empathize with them to a greater extent than participants from the other countries in the sample. However, the Barbadian control group expresses similar levels of acceptance of the migrant population in their close social circles and are less willing to donate to their cause.***

The baseline acceptance levels toward migration in Barbados are considerably higher than in the pooled sample. While 64 percent of the Barbadian control group looks favorably on having migrants living in their country, only 45 percent of the pooled control group concurs with this stance. Even so, both groups express similar attitudes toward having migrants as neighbors or as part of their families (figure 5.4A). The share of Barbadians in the control group who trust migrants as much as the local population is notably higher than in the pooled sample (79 percent versus 66 percent, respectively). Moreover, Barbadians tended to show greater empathy toward migrants: 36 percent of the control group say that they do not find it hard to see things from the migrants’ viewpoint, as compared to just 19 percent in the pooled sample. All the same, the Barbadian control group is less inclined to donate money to causes serving migrants than is the pooled sample (2 percent and 6 percent, respectively) (figure 5.4B).

**Figure 5.4. In Barbados, the local population has a more open attitude toward migration than the average of the pooled sample**



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the pooled sample with significance levels of at least 5 percent. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and the percentages in both cases are identical.

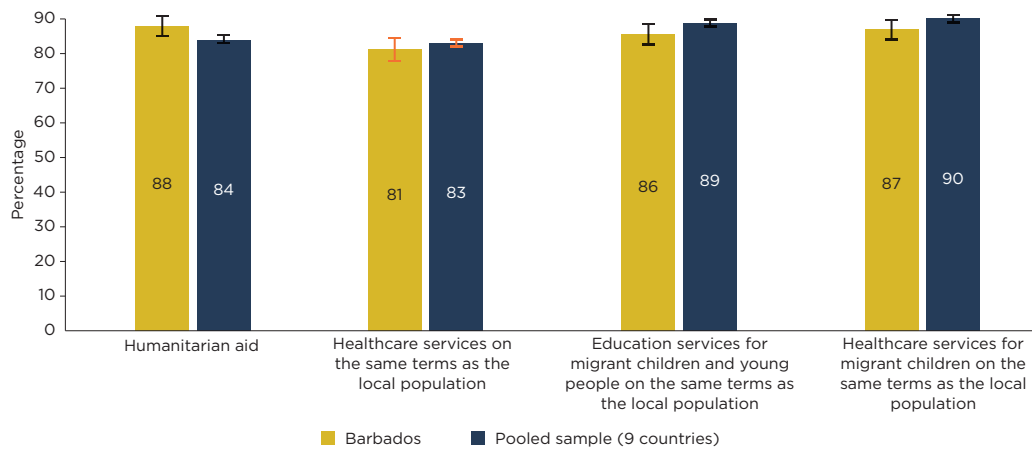
<sup>33</sup> Some 50 percent of the members of the control group were women, 51 percent were aged 26–45, and 53 percent had a tertiary education. Although 61 percent belonged to the lowest two quintiles of the income distribution, almost half of the participants placed themselves in the middle of this. Almost 2 out of every 3 members of the group had children, 12 percent were unemployed, and 65 percent placed themselves at the center of the political spectrum.

**The attitudes of the Barbadian control group reveal a high degree of support for the government providing humanitarian, education, and healthcare services to the migrant population on an equal basis with the local population. In addition, a larger share of the control group acknowledges the benefits of migration for the economy, and a smaller share are concerned about migrants competing for their jobs.**

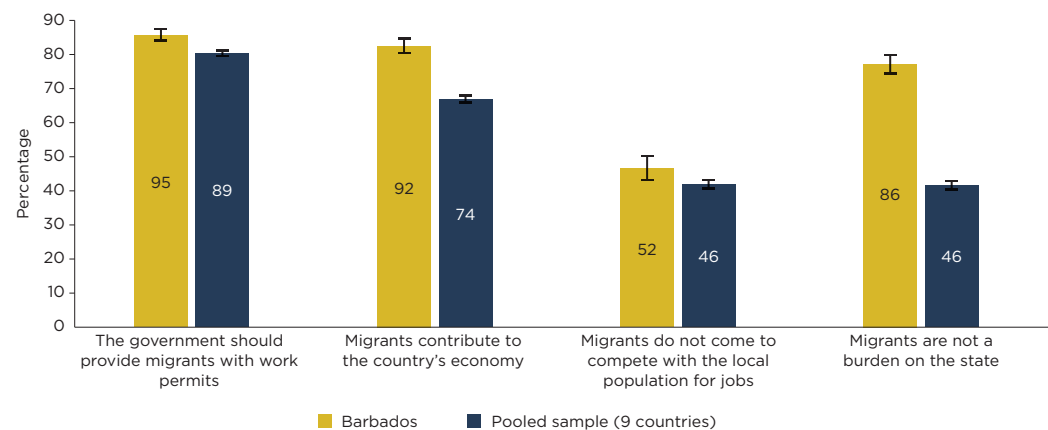
More than 80 percent of the control group in Barbados are in favor of the government providing migrants with humanitarian aid and quality healthcare, education, and child healthcare services. With the exception of humanitarian aid, the support levels recorded are statistically equal to or marginally below the pooled averages, which range from 83 percent to 90 percent. In any case, the results suggest that Barbadians largely have a positive view of the government providing assistance to the migrant population (figure 5.5A).

**Figure 5.5. The Share of Barbadians acknowledging that migration benefits the economy is higher than the average for the pooled sample**

*A. Participants in the control group who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)*



*B. Participants in the control group who agree (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the pooled sample with significance levels of at least 5 percent. Intervals in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and the percentages in both cases are identical.

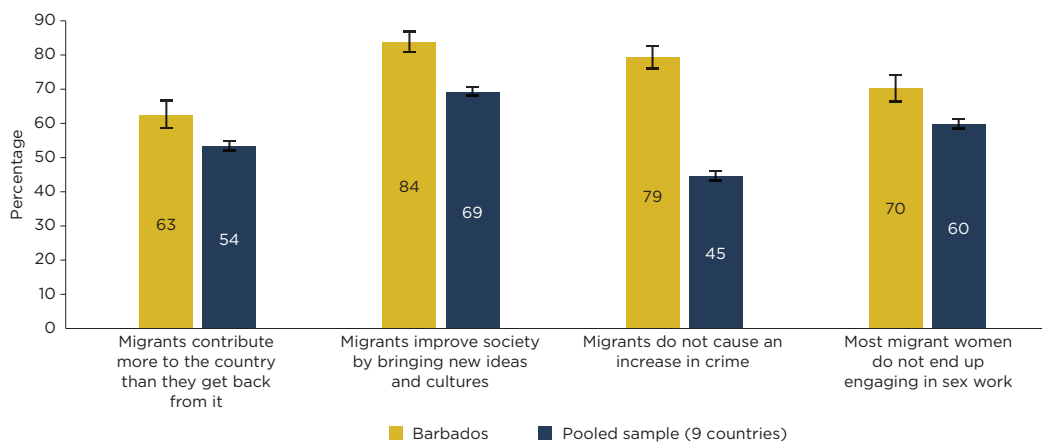
Indeed, acceptance of the migrant population in the country is reflected in the large share of participants who feel that migration has a positive impact on the economy and the labor market. In Barbados, 95 percent of the control group are in favor of providing migrants with work permits, 92 percent think that migrants contribute to the country's economy, and 52 percent do not believe that migrants compete with the local population for jobs. More broadly, 86 percent do not think that migrants are a burden on the state. In all these cases, these percentages were significantly higher than those recorded in the control group for the pooled sample (figure 5.5B).

***Barbadians are more inclined to acknowledge migrants' contributions to society and are less likely to associate migrants with crime and sex work.***

In Barbados, 63 percent of the control group agree that migrants give more to the country than they get back from it, and 84 percent think that migrants improve society through their ideas and cultures. Similarly, 79 percent of the control group disagree with the statement that migrants increase crime, and 70 percent do not share the prejudice that associates female migrants with sex work. These values contrast markedly with the averages for the control group in the pooled sample, which in all cases are lower (figure 5.6).

**Figure 5.6. In Barbados, a much lower proportion of respondents associate migrants with crime and sex work compared to participants in the other countries**

*Participants in the control group who agree (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the pooled sample, using 5 percent significance levels.

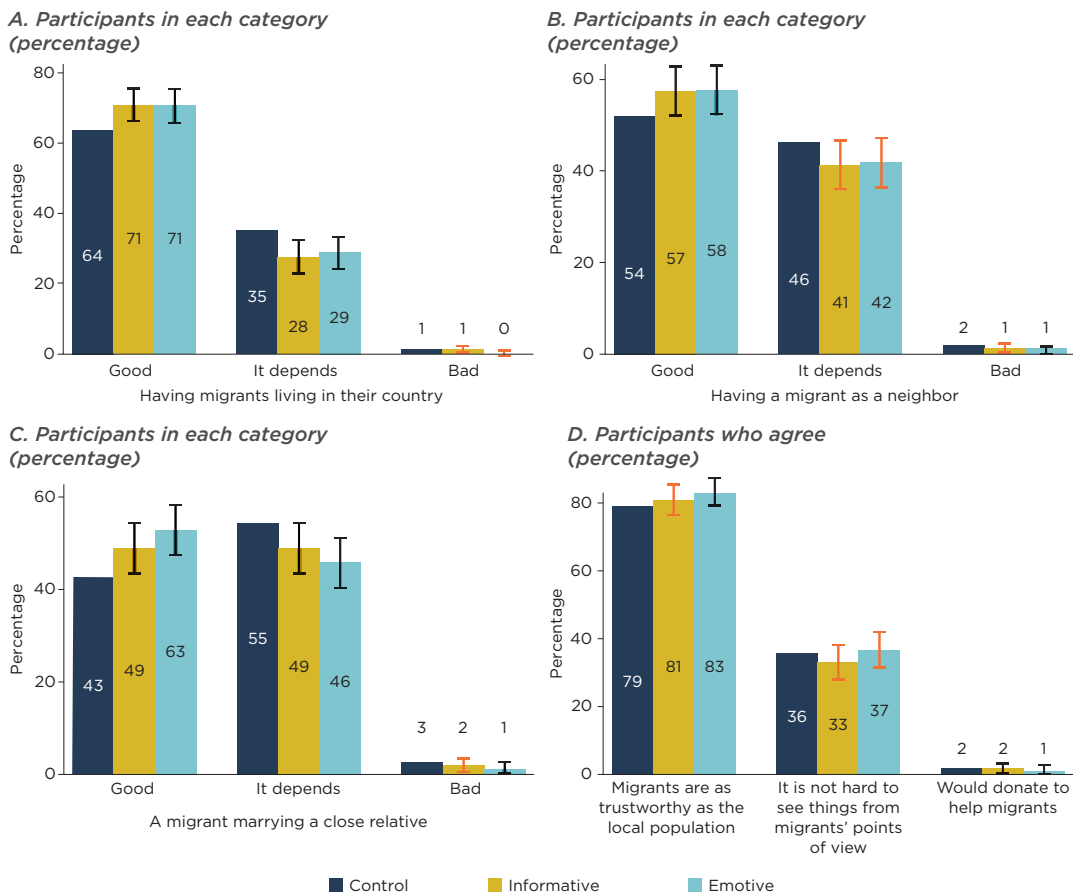
### ***Impacts of the Interventions***

***Both treatment videos have a positive effect on respondents' acceptance of the migrant population. The emotive video also has a positive effect on trust in migrants. Even so, neither of the videos increases empathy toward migrants or support for the government providing them with social and humanitarian services.***

The ability of the treatment videos to affect preferences related to migratory policies and social norms were evaluated using two sets of questions. The first set of questions examines the extent to which the videos made people more inclined to accept migrants in the country, their neighborhood, or as part of their family.

Both videos prove to be equally effective at improving attitudes in this regard. On average, both videos prompt a 7-percentage-point increase in the share of people willing to accept migrants in the country (from 64 percent to 71 percent) (figure 5.7A), a 6-percentage-point in the share of people willing to accept migrants in their neighborhood (from 52 percent to 58 percent) (figure 5.7B), and an 8-percentage-point increase in the share of people willing to accept a migrant as part of their immediate family (from 43 percent to 53 percent) (figure 5.7C). Neither of the videos is effective at changing the views of those who already had a negative position toward the migrant population. In other words, the treatment videos do not affect the percentage of those who initially responded that having migrants in the country, in the neighborhood, or in their close family is a bad thing.

**Figure 5.7. In Barbados, the Emotive video is effective at increasing empathy toward migrants**



Source: Compiled by IDB/UNDP.

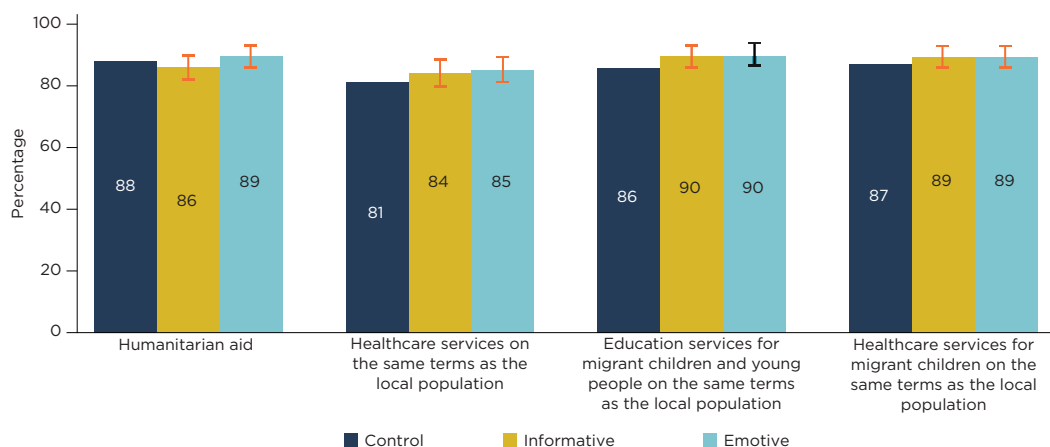
Note: The data presented in panels A, B, and C is the result of estimating a multinomial logistic model, and the data presented in panel D is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

The other indicators that are probed through this set of questions are trust and empathy toward the migrant population. Only 79 percent of the control group say they trust migrants as much as the local population. Exposure to the emotive video results in about a 4-percentage-point increase (taking this share to 83 percent), while the informative video has no impact. Most participants in the control group have difficulty empathizing with migrants: only 36 percent think that it is not difficult to see things from migrants' point of view, and just 2 percent would be willing to donate money to help them. Neither of the treatment videos is effective at changing these positions (figure 5.7D).

The second set of questions explores how far the videos were able to change people's opinions on migration policies. Exposure to the videos does not influence Barbadians' views, with one exception: both videos trigger a 4-percentage-point increase in support for the government providing migrants with access to education services of the same quality as those received by the local population (taking the percentage from 86 percent to 90 percent). However, as noted above, most of the control group agrees that the government should provide social services to the migrant population (figure 5.8).

**Figure 5.8. In Barbados, the treatment videos did not affect support for the government assisting migrants**

*Participants who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

***Neither of the videos has a positive effect on Barbadians' views of the economic impact of migration in the country. However, both videos positively affect opinions regarding the migrant population's impact on the labor market.***

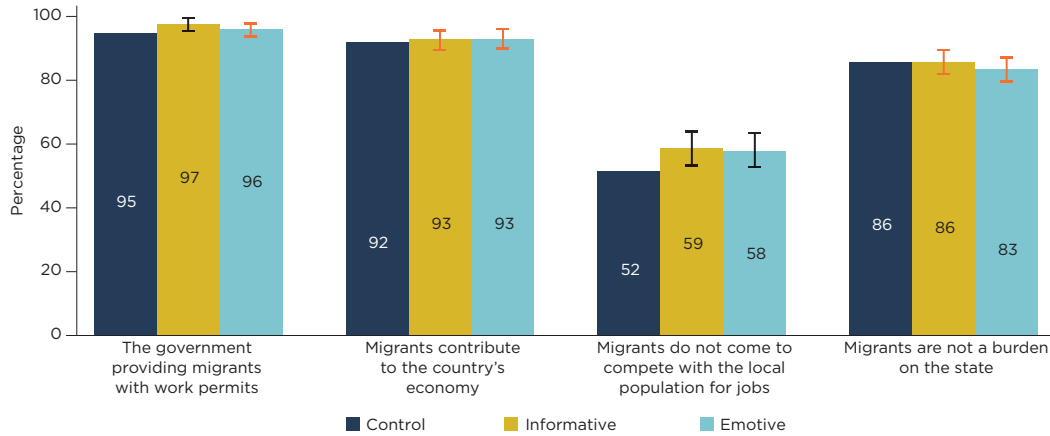
A substantial percentage of the Barbadian control group think that the arrival of migrants brought economic benefits to their country (92 percent). In keeping with this sentiment, 86 percent do not believe that migrants are a burden on the state. These figures may help explain the high percentage of the control group that agrees with the government granting work permits to migrants (95 percent). Neither video has a positive effect on the first two questions, which may be because acceptance levels in Barbados are extremely high to begin with. However, both treatments are effective at increasing the likelihood that those participants with higher education will acknowledge the economic benefits of the arriving migrant population.<sup>34</sup> The informative video also prompts a 2-percentage-point increase in support for the government issuing migrants with work permits (from 95 percent to 97 percent).

Although they agree with the government providing work permits to the migrant population, almost half of the participants in the control group believe that migrants compete with them for jobs. Both videos elicit, on average, about a 7-percentage-point increase in the share of the local population who do not think that migrants threaten their jobs (from 52 percent to 59 percent) (figure 5.9A).

<sup>34</sup> The variety of effects caused by the different treatments are not discussed in the text but can be consulted in the online statistical annex.

**Figure 5.9. In Barbados, both treatment videos help to correct the idea that migrants compete with the local population for jobs**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in the black indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels. Intervals shown in orange bars indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

***Both videos have an equally positive effect on Barbadians' views on migrants' contributions to the country's cultural diversity.***

The majority of the control group is aware of the contribution that migrants make to Barbadian society through their ideas and cultures. However, they do not believe that migrants give more to the country than they get back from it. In the control group, 84 percent agree that migrants improve society by contributing new ideas and cultures, but only 63 percent think that these contributions outstrip the benefits they receive. Both videos improve these attitudes, and their effects are the same. After watching the videos, about 72 percent of the participants say they think that migrants' contributions to Barbados exceed the benefits that they receive from the country. Furthermore, 90 percent of those who watched the videos say that the migrant population improves the host society. The positive effects of the emotive video are mainly found among participants who identify as right-wing (figure 5.10).

***Neither of the treatment videos improve perceptions that associate migration with increased crime and female migrants with sex work.***

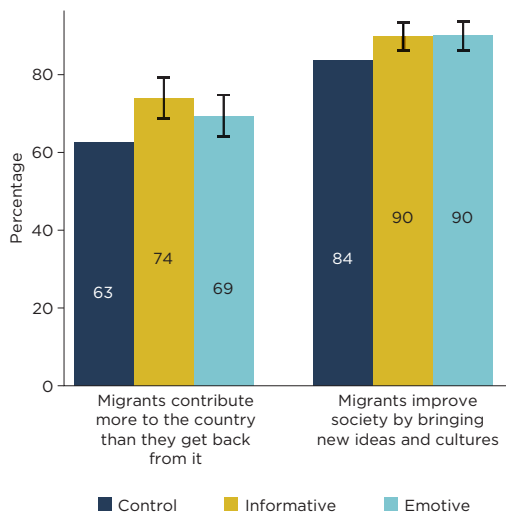
Social stigma is a major challenge encountered during the process of integrating the migrant population into the receiving society. Local citizens frequently perceive that crime increases with the arrival of the migrant population and associate migrant women with sex work. As noted above, the majority of the control group does not share these beliefs, which is perhaps why neither video treatment influences these views (figure 5.11).

**Summary**

In Barbados, exposure to the treatment videos succeeds at improving local acceptance of the migrant population, trust in them, attitudes toward the impact of migrants on the labor market, support for the government issuing work permits, and understanding of the migrant population's contributions to society.

**Figure 5.10. In Barbados, the two treatment videos increase the share of the local population who acknowledge the migrant population’s contribution to cultural diversity**

Participants who agree (percentage)

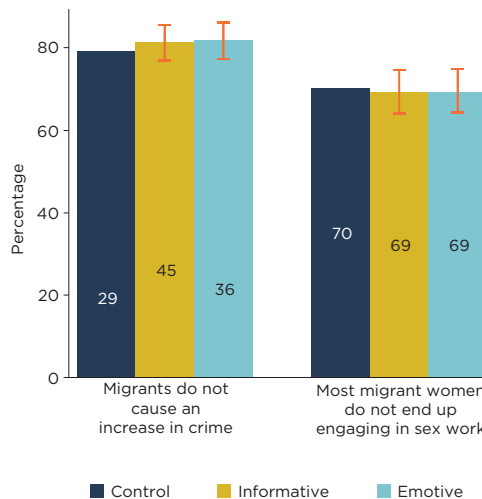


Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent significance levels.

**Figure 5.11. In Barbados, the interventions are not effective at reducing the social stigmas that affect the migrant population**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences between each treatment group and the control group are not statistically significant, using 5 percent significance levels, such that the treatment effect is null.

However, neither of the videos increases empathy toward migrants or support for the government providing them with humanitarian aid or access to social services, with the exception of education services. Nor does exposure to the videos affect Barbadians’ attitudes toward migrants’ economic contributions to the country, the fiscal burden they represent for the state, or reduce the social stigma that associates migrants with crime or sex work. This lack of any influence may be due to a “ceiling effect,” since before the interventions, the local population’s initial levels of acceptance and openness toward the migrant population were high, often outstripping those recorded in the other eight sample countries. These results are summarized in table 5.1.



**Table 5.1. In Barbados, the effectiveness of the treatment videos varies, depending on the type of belief***Summary of results (percentages and percentage points)*

Categoría	Pregunta	Control group (percentages)	Effect of the informational video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally charged video (percentage points)
Policy preferences and social norms	Having migrants living in their country is a good thing.	63.7	7.2	6.9
	Having a migrant as a neighbor is a good thing.	52.0	5.5	5.5
	A migrant marrying a close relative is a good thing.	42.7	6.3	10.2
	Agree that the government should provide migrants humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care.)	88.0	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants healthcare services on the same terms as the local population.	81.2	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants children and young people with education services on the same terms as the local population.	85.6	3.9	4.6
	Agree that the government should provide healthcare services for migrant children on the same terms as the local population.	87.0	0	0
	Agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.	79.1	0	4.3
	Agree that it isn't hard to see things from migrants' points of view.	35.8	0	0
	Would donate to an organization that helps migrants.	1.8	0	0
Economic factors	Agree that the government should give migrants work permits or documentation that enables them to work legally in the country	95.3	2.1	0
	Agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy	91.8	0	0
	Agree that migrants do not come to compete with the local population for jobs	51.8	7.0	6.7
	Agree that migrants are not a burden on the state	85.8	0	0
Cultural factors	Agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it	62.7	11.4	6.7
	Agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and culture	84.0	6.0	6.1
Social stigma	Agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime rates	79.4	0	0
	Agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work	70.4	0	0

Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Gray cells indicate that the effect is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. For each question, a darker cell color indicates a comparatively greater effect. When coefficients are shown in the same color, the difference between them is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

## 5.2. Trinidad and Tobago

### 5.2.1. Migration in Trinidad and Tobago

#### *Trinidad and Tobago attracts migrants seeking better living conditions*

Trinidad and Tobago, the southernmost country in the Caribbean, is an attractive destination for migrants looking for a better life. Intraregional migration to the country is mainly motivated by two factors: its relative macroeconomic prosperity—as reflected in the per capita GDP of US\$24,457 in 2021, which, despite a recent slowdown, is above the Caribbean average—and its geographic proximity to South America.<sup>35</sup> In Trinidad and Tobago, immigration coexists with an ongoing brain drain.<sup>36</sup> The country's annual net migration rate, which historically was negative, has increased considerably as a result of the exponential increase in migration inflows to the island. This rate went from being equal to  $-4$  per 1,000 inhabitants in 2000 to being positive every year since 2017, except in 2019.<sup>37</sup> Although in the five-year aggregate, the country sends more migrants than it receives (figure 5.12A), recent changes have emerged in the share of immigrants relative to the total population. Between 1995 and 2015, this share hovered around 3.5 percent (figure 5.12B), but increased by a large margin between 2015 and 2020. By 2020, about 80,000 international migrants were living in Trinidad and Tobago, equivalent to around 5.6 percent of the country's total population (figure 5.12B).

Migrants in Trinidad and Tobago come from developing countries in the region, and the main driver for immigration is the search for work or educational opportunities.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, almost 35 percent of migrants in the country are refugees or asylum seekers.<sup>39</sup> Venezuela is the most frequent country of origin: Venezuelan migration in Trinidad and Tobago has grown from 3 percent of total migrants in 1990 to just over 30 percent in 2020.<sup>40</sup> An estimated 34,100 Venezuelan nationals were living in Trinidad and Tobago in 2022.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, the country received more than 20,000 asylum requests from Venezuelan citizens between 2015 and 2021.<sup>42</sup>

As has also been the case in other islands in the South Caribbean, the arrival of Venezuelans in Trinidad and Tobago has been particularly complex due to the geographic proximity between the two countries, the size of the island, and its limited institutional capacities for absorbing migrants.<sup>43</sup> The absence of effective migration policies and asylum protocols has incentivized irregular migration, a development that has exposed the migrant population to various risks, provided incentives for human trafficking, and put excessive pressure on national security and protection systems.<sup>44</sup> This situation has been compounded by the proliferation of xenophobic attitudes, which pose profound challenges to inclusion and pushes migrants into a cycle of vulnerability from which it is difficult to escape.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, loopholes in the Immigration Act still prevent Venezuelans from formalizing their migration status or being recognized as refugees by the government of Trinidad and Tobago. This subject will be taken up later in the discussion.

According to data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in 2020, 34 percent of migrants were aged 25–44. In 2020, the age distribution of migrants was very similar to that of the total population. Between 1990 and 2020, demographic changes and the aging of the total

35 World Bank, World Development Indicators. Value expressed in 2017 PPP US dollars. Since 2008, the country's economy has gradually lost the growth momentum it enjoyed between 1990 and the first half of the 2000s.

36 OECD and DESA (2013).

37 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects 2022. A negative net migration rate implies that emigration from a country is greater than immigration to it.

38 Anatol, Kirton, and Nanan (2013).

39 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects 2022.

40 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

41 R4V (2022).

42 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Refugee Data Finder.

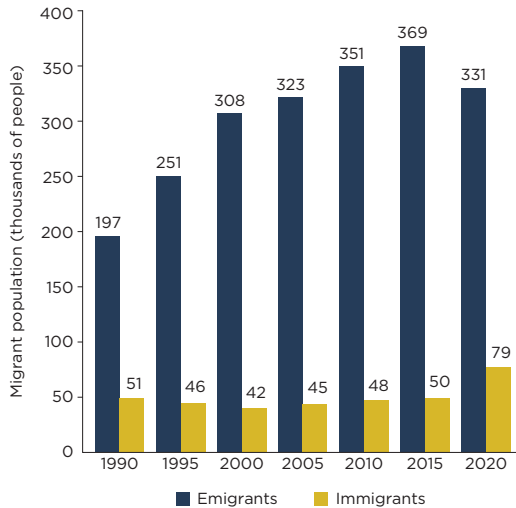
43 HRW (2018).

44 Teff (2019).

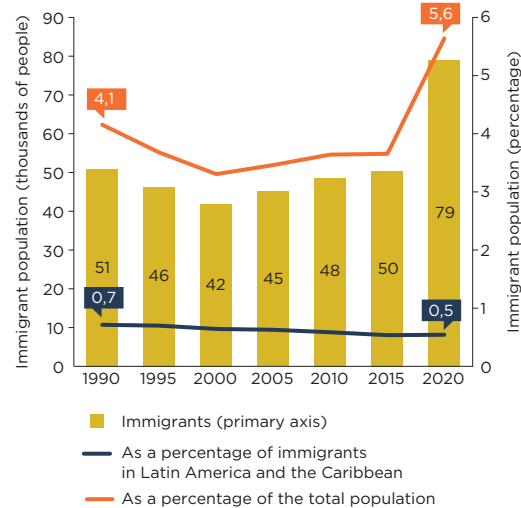
45 R4V (2022).

**Figure 5.12. Trinidad and Tobago sends many more migrants than it receives**

A. Cumulative migrant inflows and outflows (thousands), 1990–2020



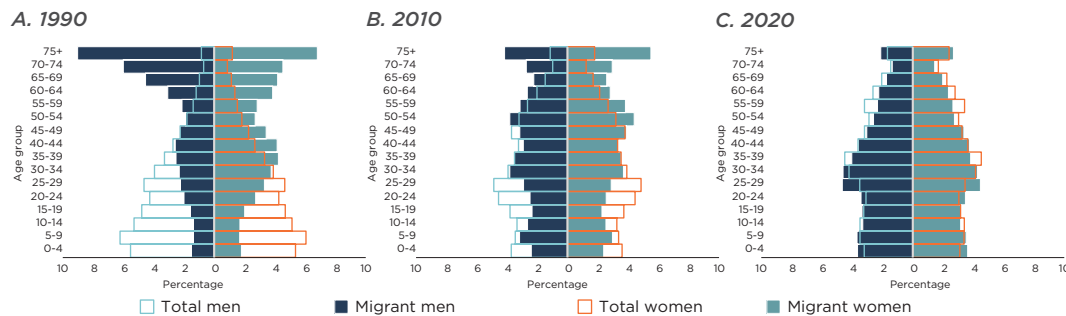
B. Cumulative migrant inflows (thousands and percentages), 1990–2020



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

**Figure 5.13. In Trinidad and Tobago, the majority of migrants are aged 25–44**

Migrant and total population by age group and sex (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Migrant Stock 2020.

Note: The total population includes all people living in Trinidad and Tobago (nationals and migrants).

population became evident. The country has also seen an increasing concentration of migrant children aged 0–14, going from 9.4 percent of the migrant population in 1990 to 20.9 percent in 2020 (figure 5.13).

**Trinidad and Tobago has a highly selective migration policy and legislative revisions are just beginning to be developed**

Between 2000 and 2015, Trinidad and Tobago's migratory policy focused on the growing numbers of migrants arriving from Guyana and Jamaica under the framework established by the Caribbean Common Market. This is a selective immigration system in which most Caricom nationals who can prove they are highly skilled workers are entitled to reside permanently in other countries in the bloc.<sup>46</sup> The large-scale arrival of Venezuelan migrants from 2015 onward posed new challenges for Trinidad and Tobago

46 Anatol, Kirton, and Nanan (2013). Between the 1960s and the 2000s, immigration to Trinidad and Tobago was driven by the search for employment in the energy and service sectors and came mainly from neighboring English-speaking Caribbean countries. However, the establishment of the Caribbean Common Market between 2006 and 2008 formalized and prioritized the mobility of skilled labor among member states.

on matters related to migration.<sup>47</sup> The country has a selective migration policy toward non-Caricom nationals: migrants' qualifications are assessed, they must prove that they have the means to support themselves and their immediate family, and must reside continuously in the country for between one to three years. In Trinidad and Tobago, migrants who are not protected by the Caribbean Common Market agreements lack access to permanent regularization mechanisms. Likewise, the right to work is limited to those who have work permits, which are issued at the discretion of the Ministry of National Security.

As for granting other rights to migrants residing in the country, neither the Constitution nor the Immigration Act clearly states whether the migrant population can access health services or whether the government has an obligation to provide such services on an equal basis with the local population. Under the current legislation, the Education Act guarantees all people with residency permits access to education services. However, there are indications that migrant children from Venezuela have problems entering the country's education system.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, Trinidad and Tobago is one of the few countries in the Caribbean region that does not have legislation covering refugees. The absence of a national regulatory framework setting out basic obligations in matters of legal protection means that even people who are granted asylum by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and are residing legally in the country are not guaranteed the right to work, receive healthcare, or enroll in the education system.<sup>49</sup> In fact, irregular entry constitutes a crime under the Immigration Act of 1969, so many asylum seekers without proper documentation risk detention or deportation.

Various geographical restrictions associated with the size of the islands and the defense of national security interests underpin Trinidad and Tobago's migration policy.<sup>50</sup> The growing numbers of Venezuelan migrants who arrived in the country between 2015 and 2019 appear to have prompted a tightening of immigration and border control, despite a brief amnesty period in 2019, during which temporary work permits were granted to about 16,500 Venezuelans.<sup>51</sup> At the present time, Venezuelans interested in entering Trinidad and Tobago must have a visa issued in Venezuela, a requirement that did not exist before 2020.

### ***Very little is known about how migration affects Trinidad and Tobago***

There is a notable lack of analysis on the effects of migration going to and from Trinidad and Tobago. The impact of Trinidadian emigrants has been documented descriptively. In general, these emigrants are highly educated individuals who inject resources into the country's economy through sending remittances.<sup>52</sup> Returning Trinidadian emigrants add to the country's skilled labor force and contribute to human capital formation when they reestablish residency in the country.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, it has been documented that immigrants residing in Trinidad and Tobago seem to want to settle permanently and express a high level of satisfaction with their decision to migrate to the country.<sup>54</sup>

Immigration, particularly undocumented immigration, is perceived as a phenomenon with more negative than positive effects on the country's development. Although no quantitative estimates of the positive impact of the immigrant population are available, it is believed that they contribute to the Trinidadian economy primarily by working in occupations in which there is little local labor supply.<sup>55</sup> However, in the view of several stakeholders—

47 Thomas-Hope (2022) contains a compendium of migration trends and government responses over the past 20 years.

48 R4V (2021).

49 Nakhid and Welch (2017), and Amnesty International (2021).

50 Herbert (2021).

51 Herbert (2021).

52 Anatol, Kirton, and Nanan (2013).

53 Anatol, Kirton, and Nanan (2013).

54 Anatol, Kirton, and Nanan (2013), based on interviews conducted with a nonrepresentative sample.

55 Waldropt-Bonair et al. (2013).

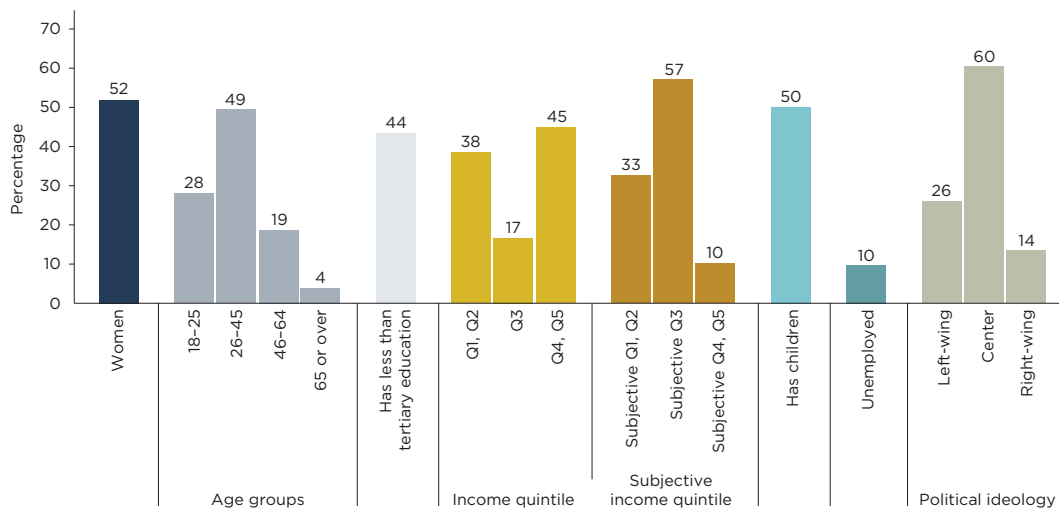
including the government and nongovernmental organizations—immigrants (especially undocumented immigrants) barely pay any taxes and, instead, generate a fiscal burden for the state.<sup>56</sup> Another common belief is that the immigrant population has a detrimental effect on the labor market by accepting lower wages or competing for jobs that “should be” for Trinidadians and Tobagonians and that migrants contribute to increasing the number of people in the local population who are vulnerable or impoverished.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, many people think that migrants are involved in illegal activities and put a greater burden on the judicial system.<sup>58</sup> However, little attention has been paid to crimes perpetrated against the immigrant population, even though there is evidence that this population is more vulnerable to human trafficking, exploitation, and abuse.<sup>59</sup>

## 5.2.2. Experiment results

A total of 2,146 individuals took part in the experiment conducted in Trinidad and Tobago.<sup>60</sup> Of this total, 52 percent of the participants were women, 49 percent were aged 26–45, and 50 percent had children. Some 56 percent of respondents did not have a higher education, and 45 percent are in the country’s lowest two income distribution quintiles.<sup>61</sup> More than half of the participants (60 percent) fell in the middle of the political spectrum (figure 5.14)<sup>62</sup>. Descriptive statistics for the treatment and control groups are available in the online statistical annex.<sup>63</sup>

**Figure 5.14. Description of the participant sample in Trinidad and Tobago**

*Distribution by characteristic (percentage)*



Source: Compiled by IDB/UNDP.

<sup>56</sup> Waldropt-Bonair et al. (2013).

<sup>57</sup> Waldropt-Bonair et al. (2013).

<sup>58</sup> Gibney (2000), Thomas-Hope (2006), and Peters and Berkeley (2021). The local media narrative on Venezuelan women is a negative one that highlights problems related to sex work, gender-based violence, and human trafficking. See Teff (2019).

<sup>59</sup> Anatol and Kangalee (2021).

<sup>60</sup> Some 750 of the participants watched a placebo video and made up the control group, which reflects the opinions of Trinidadians and Tobagonians before the interventions. Some 697 people watched the emotive video, and 699 watched the informative video. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the methodology.

<sup>61</sup> Based on data from the Central Statistical Office, the population was divided into the following household income quintiles: ii) less than TTD4,100; ii) TTD4,100 to TTD6,199; iii) TTD6,200 to TTD9,199; iv) TTD9,200 to TTD14,299; and v) more than TTD14,300.

<sup>62</sup> The sample collected in Trinidad and Tobago is not strictly comparable with the local population. According to the 2015 Continuous Sample Survey of Population, people aged 18–25 are overrepresented in the sample (13 percentage points), as are people aged 26–45 (10 percentage points), but there is a lower share of people aged 46–64 (12 percentage points) and over 65 (11 percentage points). The experiment sample is better educated than the local population (the share of people without a tertiary education in the sample is half of what is reported in the household survey), and unemployed people are overrepresented (8 percentage points).

<sup>63</sup> These groups are comparable in terms of all participant traits, except for their political leanings: fewer people in the sample describe themselves as being at the center of the spectrum. Participants in the two treatment groups are more open to having neighbors from other subgroups (including other religions, races, and genders), and their internal locus of control is lower, on average, than that observed in the control group participants (“the factor that has the most influence on whether someone is poor is their lack of effort”), as is their external locus of control (“everyone has the chance to succeed in this country”).

***New evidence on attitudes and perceptions toward the migrant population”***

Given the limited availability of data on the Caribbean population’s attitudes toward migration, the data collected in Trinidad and Tobago is valuable, as it provides insight into people’s overall views on the recent migration that the country has experienced. The control group’s attitudes sheds light on the broader context in Trinidad and Tobago.<sup>64</sup>

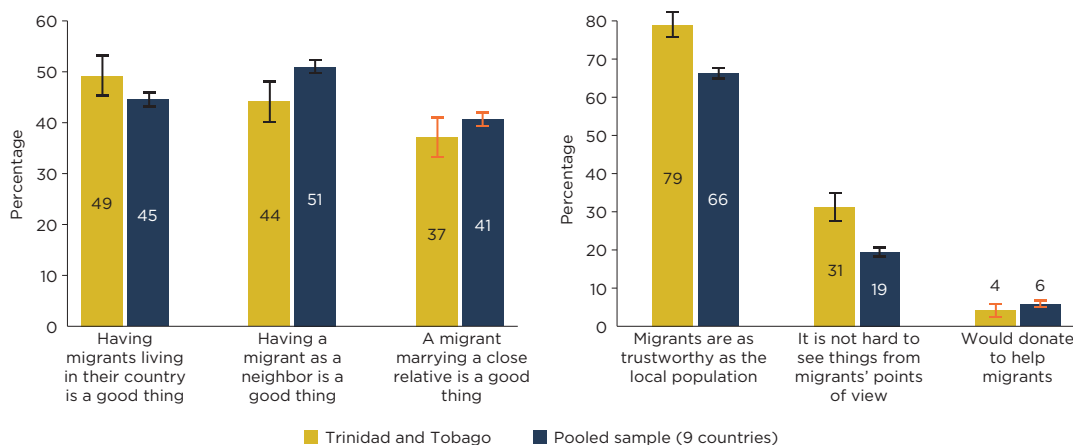
***Trinidadians and Tobagonians in the control group tend to be at one of the two extremes in terms of their levels of acceptance, trust, and empathy toward migrants. Compared to the other countries in the sample, they have higher overall levels of acceptance, trust, and empathy, but their willingness to accept migrants in their neighborhood is lower, as is their willingness to donate money to causes that benefit migrants.***

Compared to the average participant in the aggregate sample, Trinidadians and Tobagonians are more likely to look on migrants arriving in their country as a good thing. Still, they are less likely to think that having migrants in their social circles is positive. Indeed, 49 percent of the control group has a positive view of migrants living in their country, compared to 45 percent in the pooled sample. After Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago has the second-highest percentage of positive responses to this question. In contrast, only 44 percent of the control group say that having migrants as neighbors is good (the lowest figure in the entire sample), compared to an average of 51 percent in the pooled sample. Only 37 percent of the control group looks favorably on a migrant marrying a close relative, which is on par with the average for the pooled sample (figure 5.15A).

**Figure 5.15. Most Trinidadians and Tobagonians trust migrants as much as they trust the local population**

*A. Participants in the control group who agree (percentage)*

*B. Participants in the control group who agree (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the pooled sample with significance levels of at least 5 percent. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and the percentages in both cases are identical.

64 Some 51 percent of the control group were female, 50 percent were aged 26–45, and 55 percent had a tertiary education. The group appeared to be well distributed along the income scale, even though most participants placed themselves in the middle quintile. Less than half had children, 10 percent were unemployed, and 3 out of 5 said their political sympathies lie at the center of the spectrum.

The Trinidadians and Tobagonians in the control group are more likely to trust migrants and empathize with them than the participants in the pooled sample. A high percentage of the control group in Trinidad and Tobago say that they trust migrants as much as the local population (79 percent). This is higher than the average for the sample countries (66 percent) and is substantially higher than the percentage reported in Colombia, the country in the sample with the lowest trust levels (55 percent). Participants in the control group are also more likely than those in the pooled sample to say that it is not difficult to see things from the migrants' viewpoints (31 percent and 19 percent, respectively). Few people in the pooled control group for Latin America would be willing to donate to an organization that helps migrants. In Trinidad and Tobago, only 4 percent would be willing to do so, a figure that is not statistically different from the regional average (figure 5.15B).

***In Trinidad and Tobago, more than 82 percent of people believe that the government should provide the migrant population with humanitarian aid and access to the same healthcare and education that the local population receives. Trinidadians and Tobagonians are more likely than people in other countries in the sample to acknowledge the contribution that migrants make to their country but also see them as a source of labor market competition and a potential burden on the state.***

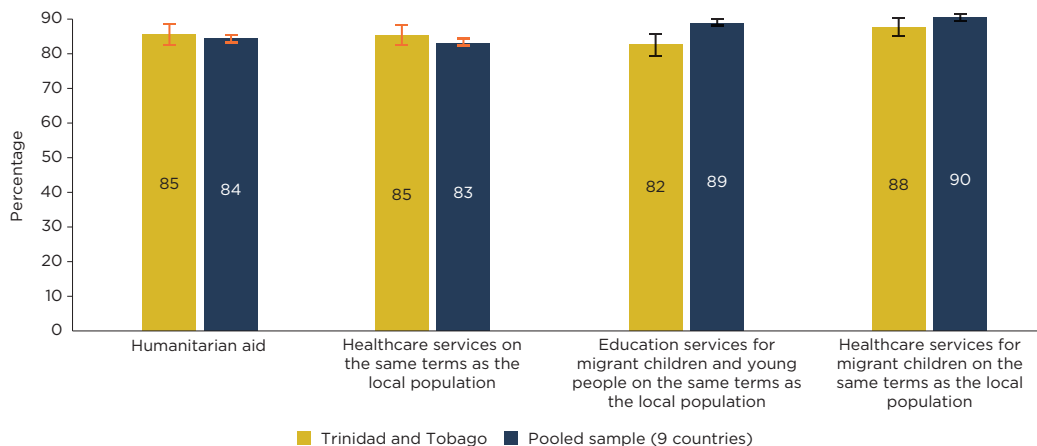
In Trinidad and Tobago, a high percentage of the control group agrees that the government should provide the migrant population with humanitarian aid and give them access to healthcare and education services on equal terms with the local population. With specific regard to humanitarian aid and access to healthcare services, the views of the participants in the control group are similar to the average for the pooled sample: 85 percent of Trinidadians and Tobagonians agree that migrants should have access to these services. However, when asked about migrant children's access to healthcare and education services, the percentage of the control group in favor of the government providing this is somewhat lower than the average for the pooled sample. Indeed, 82 percent of the control group agrees that migrant children and young people should have equal access to education (the lowest percentage recorded) compared to 89 percent in the pooled sample. Likewise, 88 percent agree with providing migrant children with healthcare services on equal footing with locals, compared to 90 percent in the pooled sample (figure 5.16A).

Furthermore, 87 percent of the control group agrees with the government providing migrants with work permits. This share is similar to the average for the pooled sample. Some 84 percent of the control group in Trinidad and Tobago believe that migrants contribute to the country's economy, compared to 74 percent of the control group in the pooled sample. However, while Trinidadians and Tobagonians are more likely to acknowledge the contributions that migrants make to their country, a greater share also perceive them as a source of labor market competition and a potential burden on the state. Some 60 percent of participants in the control group in Trinidad and Tobago consider migrants as competitors in the labor market for jobs, compared to 54 percent of the control group in the pooled sample. Likewise, 59 percent think that migrants are a burden on the state, compared to 54 percent of the pooled sample (figure 5.16B).

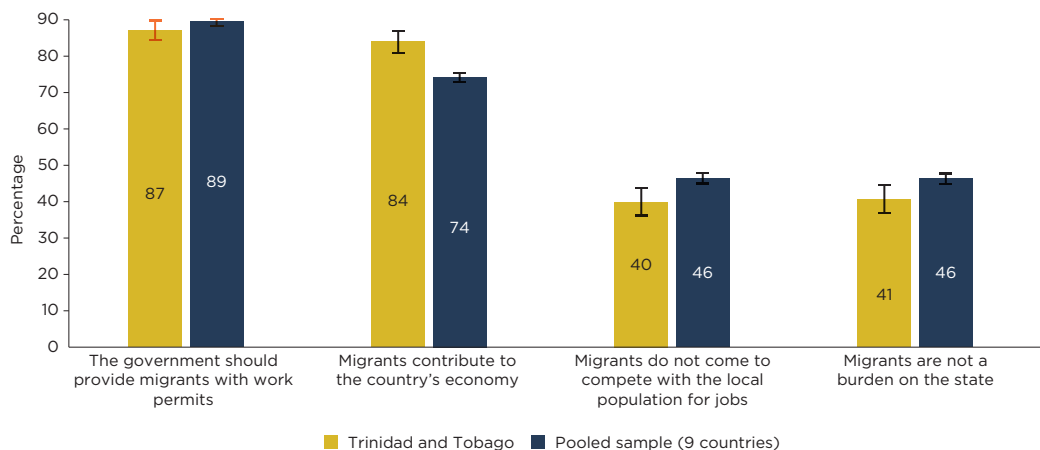
***Trinidad and Tobago is the country with the largest share of control group participants who believe that migrants contribute more to the country than they get back from it and that they improve society by bringing new ideas and culture. However, it is also the country where migrants are most often stigmatized, especially women.***

**Figure 5.16. In Trinidad and Tobago, a high percentage of the local population perceive migrants as competitors in the labor market**

*A. Participants who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)*



*B. Participants in the control group who agree (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

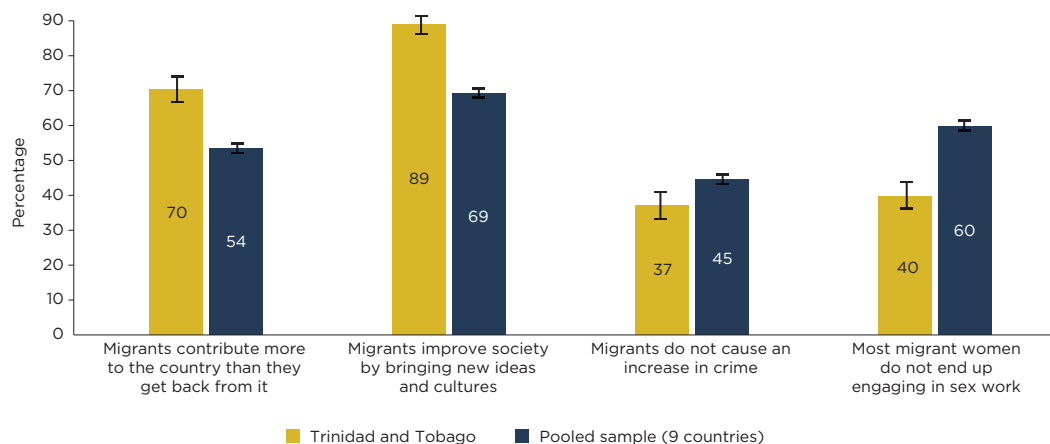
Note: Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the pooled sample with significance levels of at least 5 percent. Intervals in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and the percentage in both cases are identical.

The overall balance between what migrants receive from the country and what they bring to it is more positive in the Caribbean countries. Trinidad and Tobago is the country with the highest percentage of control group participants who believe that migrants give more to the country than they get back from it (70 percent) and that they improve society by bringing new ideas and cultures (89 percent). These proportions are considerably higher than the corresponding averages for the control group in the aggregate sample (54 percent and 69 percent, respectively). However, the Trinidadians and Tobagonians in the control group also stigmatize the migrant population to a greater extent. Some 63 percent of participants in the control group associate the presence of migrants with an increase in crime, compared to 55 percent of the control group in the pooled sample. Likewise, 60 percent of them believe that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work, compared to 40 percent of the pooled sample (figure 5.17).



**Figure 5.17. In Trinidad and Tobago, the migrant population is frequently associated with crime and sex work**

Participants in the control group who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between the country and the aggregated sample with significance levels of at least 5 percent.

### Impacts of the interventions

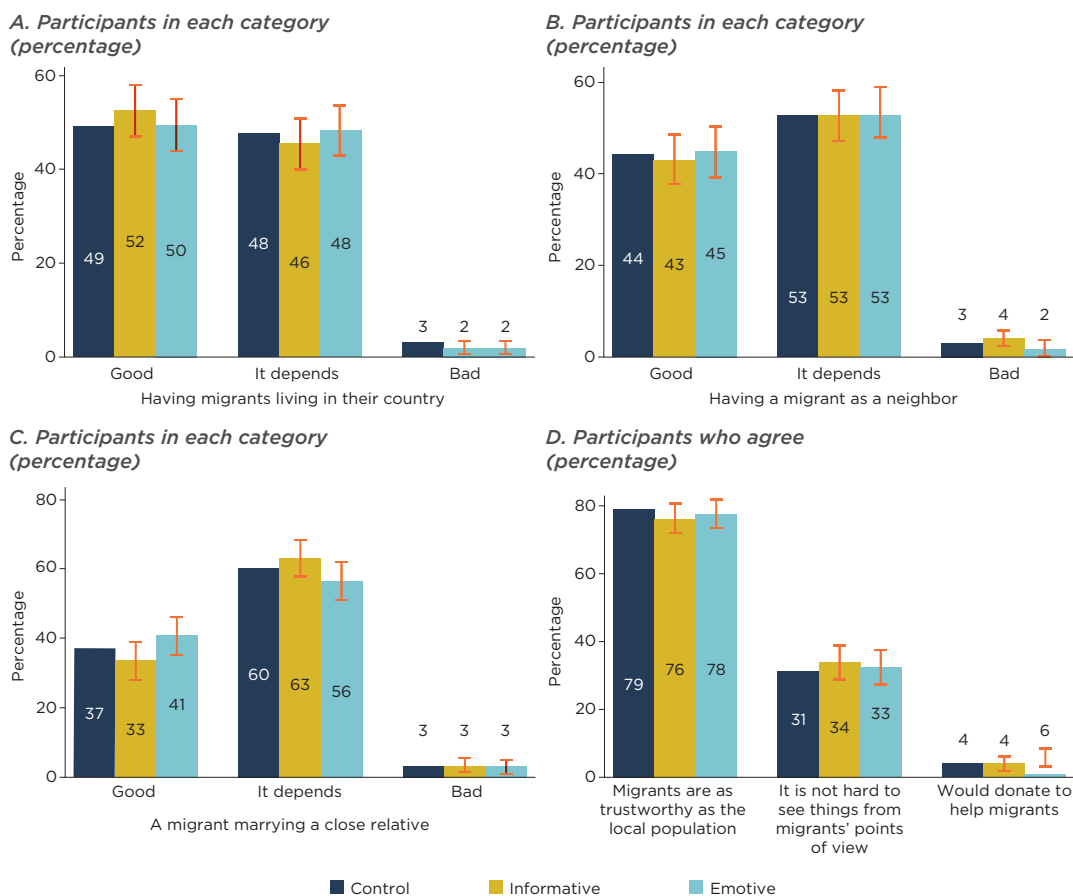
***In Trinidad and Tobago, neither of the treatment videos succeeds at increasing the levels of acceptance, trust, or empathy toward the migrant population, or support for providing them with humanitarian aid or access to social services.***

The effectiveness of the treatment videos at changing social norms and policy preferences was evaluated using ten questions. The first set of six questions explored the local population's willingness to accept migrants as part of society. The first three questions probed their opinions on the following situations: having migrants living in their country, having a migrant as a neighbor, and a migrant marrying a close relative. The three response options were: "good," "bad," and "it depends." Between a third and half of participants responded "good" to these three questions, and only 3 percent said they thought the situations were "bad." The results reveal that exposure to either of the videos does not have a significant effect on changing the participants' initial positions (figures 5.18A, 5.18B, and 5.18C). The next three questions explored levels of trust, empathy, and solidarity toward migrants. Again, the treatments do not have the desired effect. For example, although 79 percent of the control group agree that migrants are as trustworthy as locals, neither treatment video changed this share (figure 5.18D).

The second set of four questions explored whether the videos changed people's views on policies that seek to provide support and services to migrants. As noted above, the vast majority of the control group agrees that the government should provide migrants with social services. Between 82 and 88 percent agree that the government should provide humanitarian aid to migrants, healthcare for adults and children of the same quality as are provided to the local population, and education services for migrant children and young people on equal terms with the local population. Neither of the treatment videos changes these preferences (figure 5.19).

***The emotive video increases support levels among Trinidadians and Tobagonians for the government issuing work permits to migrants, but neither of the treatments affects public opinion on the economic impact of migrants regarding if they are a burden on the state or if they compete for jobs with the local population.***

**Figure 5.18. In Trinidad and Tobago, the interventions do not generate the desired change in the social norms that determine attitudes about migrants**



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented in panels A, B, and C is the result of estimating a multinomial logistic model, and the data presented in panel D is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in the orange bars indicate that the differences between each treatment group and the control group are not statistically significant, with significance levels of at least 5 percent, such that the treatment effect is null.

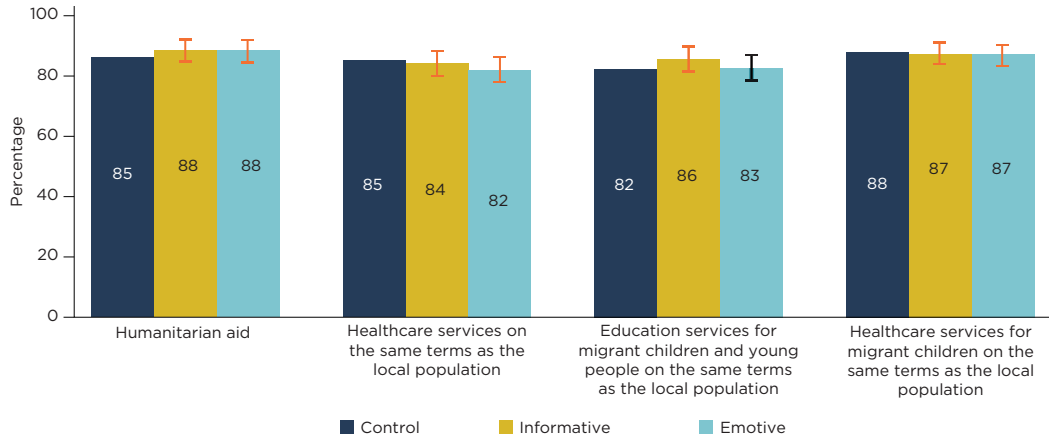
In Trinidad and Tobago, the majority of the control group acknowledges that migrants do contribute to the country's economy. Some 84 percent of the participants in the control group who watched the placebo video agree with this statement, but neither of the treatment videos increased this share. Likewise, a high percentage of the control group agrees with the government granting work permits to migrants (87 percent). In this case, the emotive video increases the share favoring this policy to 91 percent. Neither video changes the view that migrants compete with the local population for jobs, a belief shared by 60 percent of people in the control group. Nor did exposure to the treatment videos change the perception that migrants are a burden on the state, a view that is held by 59 percent of the control group (figure 5.20).

***The emotive video has a positive effect on the local population's opinion about migrants' contributions to society, but neither of the videos changes the extent to which Trinidadians and Tobagonians recognize the migrants' contribution to cultural diversity.***

Most of the control group (70 percent) think that migrants contribute more to the country than they receive from it. Exposure to the emotive video moves this share up to 76 percent. Further, 89 percent of participants in the control group agree that migrants improve society by contributing new ideas

**Figure 5.19. In Trinidad and Tobago support for providing services to the migrant population is high, but did not increase after the interventions**

Participants who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)

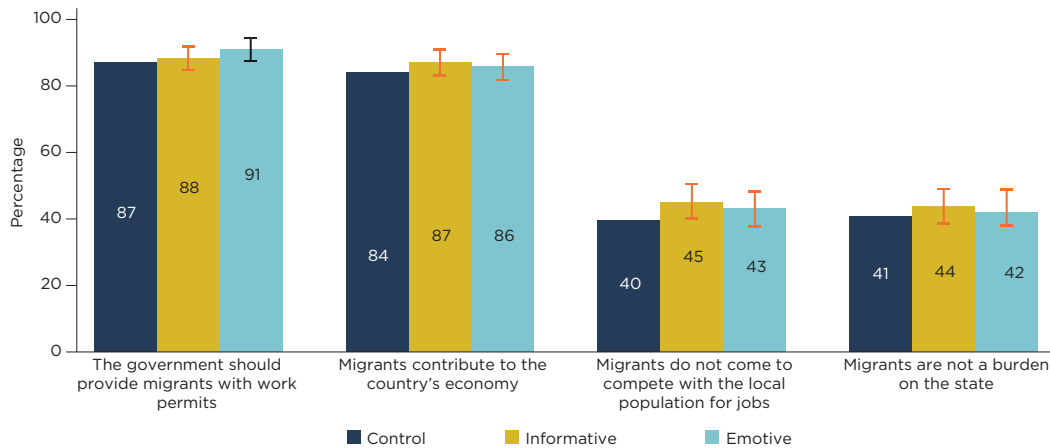


Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in the orange bars indicate that the differences between each treatment group and the control group are not statistically significant, using 5 percent significance levels, such that the treatment effect is null.

**Figure 5.20. In Trinidad and Tobago, the emotive video increases support for the government granting work permits to migrants**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

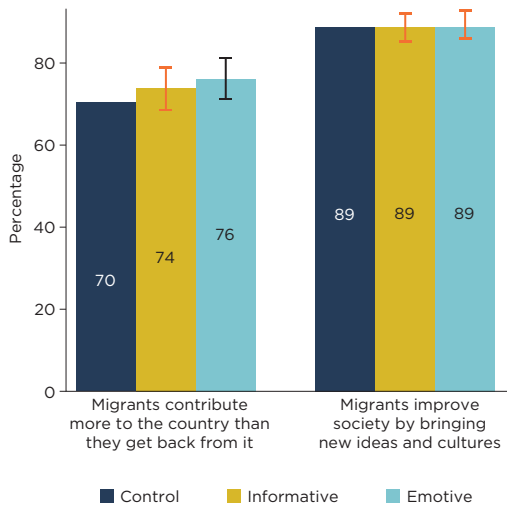
Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

and cultures. Despite this high starting point, or perhaps because of it, neither of the treatment videos increases this percentage (figure 5.21).

***Neither of the treatment videos succeeds in reducing the association between migration and rising crime and insecurity in the host communities, nor do the interventions reduce the stigma attached to migrant women.***

**Figure 5.21. In Trinidad and Tobago, the emotive video prompts more people to acknowledge the contributions migrants make to the country**

Participants who agree (percentage)

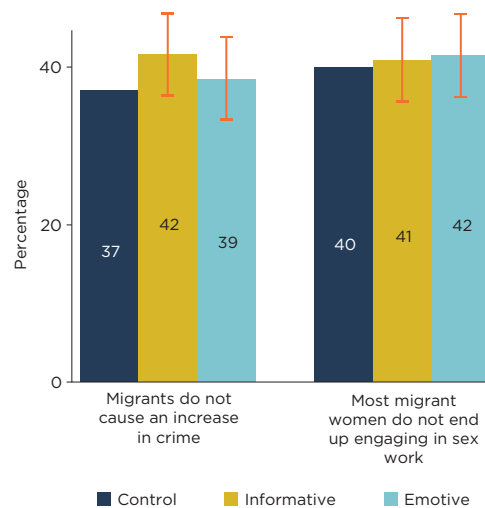


Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in the black bars indicate statistically significant differences between each treatment group and the control group, using 5 percent levels. Intervals shown in orange indicate that the differences are not statistically significant and that the treatment effect is null.

**Figure 5.22. In Trinidad and Tobago, the treatment videos do not reduce the prejudice associating migrants with crime and sex work**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Confidence intervals shown in the orange bars indicate that the differences between each treatment group and the control group are not statistically significant, using 5 percent significance levels, such that the treatment effect is null.

A common belief in many countries is the idea that crime increases with migrant inflows and that most migrant women engage in sex work. In many cases, this stigmatization of migrants jeopardizes their social integration in the host country. This seems to be the case for Trinidad and Tobago.<sup>65</sup> Some 63 percent of the Trinidadians and Tobagonians in the control group agree that migrant inflows do not increase crime, while 60 percent think that most migrant women eventually resort to sex work. This percentage is higher than in any other country in the sample; this result shows that migrant women face a high level of stigmatization in Trinidad and Tobago. While in most countries, the informative video treatment seems to reduce the perception that the arrival of the migrant population is accompanied by an increase in crime, and the emotive video reduces stigmas about migrant women, neither approach is effective in Trinidad and Tobago (figure 5.22).

### Summary

The experiments demonstrate that in Trinidad and Tobago, it is difficult to change the local population’s attitudes toward migrants. Providing information and narrating a migrant’s life story do not seem to be effective interventions for modifying perceptions on the vast majority of the issues examined in this study. Delivering information has no effect. Likewise, appealing to people’s emotions only results in two positive effects: increasing the local population’s support for the government providing the migrant population with work permits and making them more likely to recognize the contributions that migrants make to the country. These results are summarized in table 5.2.

65 Herbert (2021).

**Table 5.2. In Trinidad and Tobago, the effectiveness of the videos varied depending on the type of belief in question***Summary of results (percentages and percentage points)*

Categoría	Pregunta	Control group (percentages)	Effect of the informational video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally charged video (percentage points)
Policy preferences and social norms	Having migrants living in their country is a good thing.	49.3	0	0
	Having a migrant as a neighbor is a good thing.	44.2	0	0
	A migrant marrying a close relative is a good thing.	37.2	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care.)	85.5	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants healthcare services on the same terms as the local population.	85.2	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide migrants children and young people with education services on the same terms as the local population.	82.3	0	0
	Agree that the government should provide healthcare services for migrant children on the same terms as the local population.	87.5	0	0
	Agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.	79.0	0	0
	Agree that it isn't hard to see things from migrants' points of view.	31.4	0	0
	Would donate to an organization that helps migrants.	4.3	0	0
Economic factors	Agree that the government should give migrants work permits or documentation that enables them to work legally in the country	87.4	0	3.7
	Agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy	84.0	0	0
	Agree that migrants do not come to compete with the local population for jobs	40.1	0	0
	Agree that migrants are not a burden on the state	40.8	0	0
Cultural factors	Agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it	70.4	0	5.7
	Agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and culture	88.8	0	0
Social stigma	Agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime rates	37.1	0	0
	Agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work	40.0	0	0

Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: Gray cells indicate that the effect is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. For each question, a darker cell color indicates a comparatively greater effect. When coefficients are shown in the same color, the difference between them is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

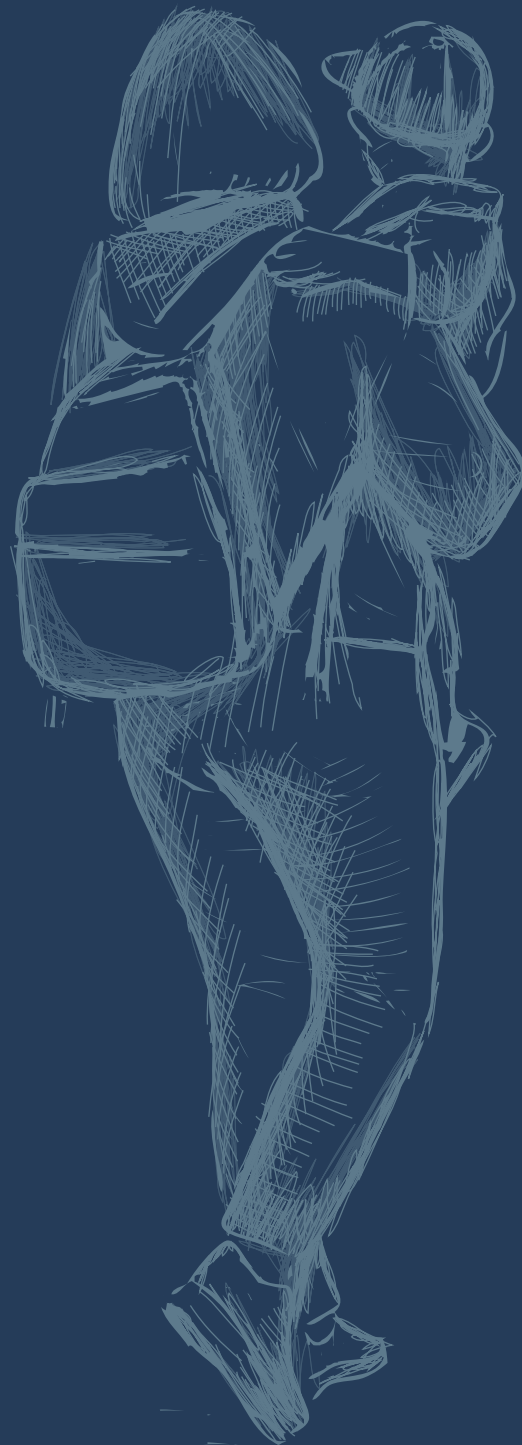
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CHAPTER 6

# HOW IS THE REGION AS A WHOLE DOING?





In Latin America and the Caribbean, the local population's perceptions regarding migration, its consequences, and migratory policies are complex and ambiguous, as the preceding chapters have shown. On the one hand, the local population looks favorably on the contributions migrants make to society, and a high percentage of these trust migrants. On the other hand, the majority of the local population does not perceive or fully understand the overall benefits of migration. Many locals harbor prejudices towards migrants that leads to their stigmatization and their social exclusion. The local population is greatly concerned about the economic effects of migration, as measured by labor market competition and fiscal spending. In contrast to what is observed in developed countries, where the principal migration-related concerns are motivated by sociotropic factors, the most significant worries for the local population in Latin America and the Caribbean relate to the potential economic consequences of migration. The participants in the experiment also express little empathy with and altruism toward migrants. Despite all this, the local population is in favor of the government providing migrants with humanitarian aid, granting them the same access to state social programs (such as education and healthcare) that the local population has, and establishing only a few entry restrictions to entry.

Although there is a relative consensus among the countries in the sample in terms of attitudes toward migrants, there are some topics where the variation between countries is significant. Preferences related to migration policies and social norms are similar across the different countries analyzed. In contrast, there is substantial divergence in positions centered around economic concerns, the weight of social stigma, and levels of empathy and altruism toward migrants. While respondents in Barbados and Chile have relatively more favorable views about migrants, those in Colombia and Ecuador—countries with large inflows in recent years—have less favorable attitudes toward migrants.

The goal of this chapter is to analyze the impact of the interventions on the pooled sample of countries, compare the impact of the interventions in the different countries, and provide policy recommendations.

## 6.1. Experiment Results

The estimation of the effects of the intervention is based on the pooled dataset for the nine countries used in the experiment and reports the average results of the interventions.<sup>1</sup> These results can be read as a weighted average of the results for the individual countries and have an additional advantage: given the larger database, there is greater certainty that the observed effects can be attributed to the interventions. The larger sample size improves its explanatory power; consequently, the estimates are more precise. This explains why there are effects observed in the pooled sample that are not statistically observable at the individual country level.

In the resulting sample of 22,276 participants, 51 percent are women, and 39 percent are between the ages of 26 and 45.<sup>2</sup> Of these, 63 percent do not have a tertiary education, and 19 percent were unemployed at the time of the survey. Additionally, 59 percent of the sample are in the poorest 40 percent of their

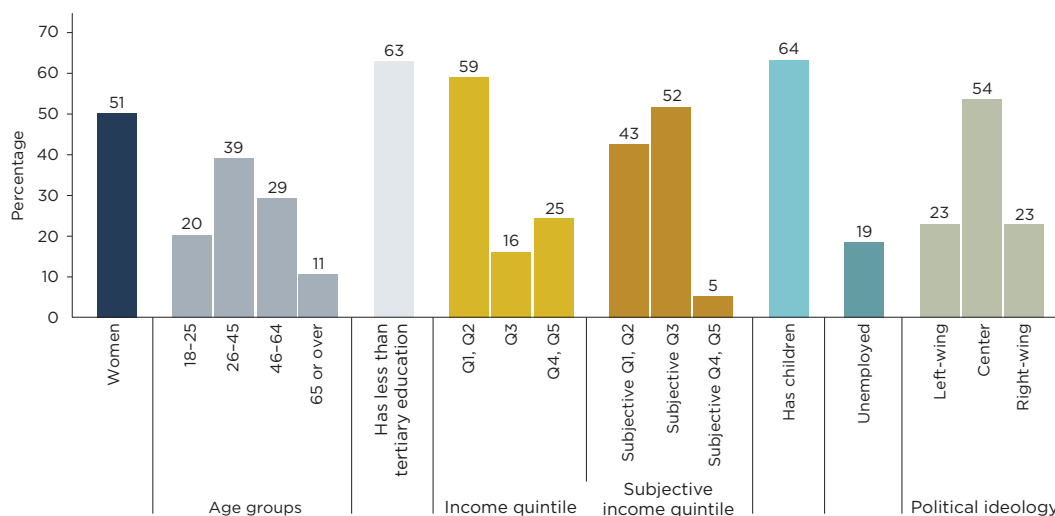
1 The pooled database includes the data from the samples for Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago.

2 A total of 7,518 participants were in the control group, 7,435 were in the group that watched the emotive video, and 7,323 people were in the group that watched the informative video. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the methodology.

country's income distribution (quintiles 1 and 2), but only 43 percent placed themselves in this part of the distribution. Within the aggregate sample, 64 percent of the participants have children. When asked about their political ideology, 54 percent self-identify as being at the center of the political spectrum. Descriptive statistics for the control and treatment groups are available in the online statistical annex (figure 6.1).<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 6.1. Description of the pooled participant sample**

*Distribution by characteristic (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

The treatment videos vary by country, but the structure and objectives are the same for all. Although the informative videos are identical as far as the available information allowed, some statistics were not available in every country.<sup>4</sup> The emotive videos are different because, while all of these videos present the life stories of migrant women, each focuses on a different woman who is most representative of the migrant population in each country, as their life histories depend on their individual contexts. The emotive treatments, thus, are not strictly homogenous.<sup>5</sup>

The participants' feedback is heterogeneous within the different countries: for each country, there is a wide variety in responses to each question.<sup>6</sup> In addition, there are countries, such as Mexico and the Dominican Republic, where the interventions have an effect on many of the variables, while in some others, like Barbados, Chile, and Trinidad and Tobago, the interventions only have an impact on a few dimensions. This may be due to the high levels of initial support registered in these countries on nearly all the dimensions prior to interventions. The only result common to all countries, with one exception, is that the experiments do not generate adverse effects: the interventions do not change the views of the

<sup>3</sup> All groups are comparable for all participant characteristics, with four exceptions. First, there are fewer people aged 26-45 among those who watched the emotive video. Second, those in this group also have a lower internal locus of control ("the factor that most influences whether a person is poor is their lack of effort"). Third, there are fewer people who say they are left-wing in the group that watched the informative video and more people at the center of the political spectrum. Finally, this group also contains a larger share of people in the lowest income distribution quintiles.

<sup>4</sup> In Trinidad and Tobago, data on educational attainment was not included because it was not available.

<sup>5</sup> The videos used in the experiments are available on the websites of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), where the materials from this project are hosted. The Dominican Republic was the only country in which the exercise included two different emotive videos (see chapter 2). This chapter uses the results using the Haitian migrant woman. The results differed only marginally when the video of the Venezuelan migrant woman was used. These results are available in the online statistical appendix.

<sup>6</sup> Annex 6.A1 contains a summary of the control groups' responses in all the countries included in the experiment.

typical citizen in each country or move their views in a direction that is less favorably disposed toward the immigrant population.<sup>7</sup> The rest of this section examines the results of the experiment for the different categories of questions.

In order to illustrate the magnitude of the impact of the interventions on each variable, we also discuss the average impact of each intervention, expressed as a percentage of the pre-existing gap between the countries that initially present the least favorable and the most favorable positions.<sup>8</sup> This way of analyzing the results allows us to compare the relative effectiveness of the videos in moderating negative perceptions of migrants and migration policies. For example, when asked about perceptions that associate migrant women with sex work, the average effect of the emotive video represents only 16 percent of the gap that exists between the countries with the highest and lowest levels of stigma (Chile and Trinidad and Tobago, respectively). This is the case in which the interventions have the smallest relative effect. In contrast, when asked whether they would donate resources to an organization that helps migrants, the effect of either intervention represents 61 percent of the gap between the countries with the highest and lowest willingness to make donations (Costa Rica and Barbados, respectively). This is the belief on which the interventions have the largest relative effect, a result that is potentially explained by the fact that the percentage of people willing to make donations to migrant organizations is very low to begin with (6 percent of the control group).

***Both video treatments are successful at influencing participants' levels of acceptance of the presence of migrants in their society, neighborhood, and immediate family. The videos are more effective at improving the attitudes of those who have not taken an extremely negative stance toward the migrant population. The emotive video is especially effective at increasing acceptance among people with children.***

Before administering the interventions, differences were observed in the levels of acceptance of migrants among the different population groups, which in some cases coincides with and in other cases differ from the evidence analyzed in chapter 1.<sup>9</sup> The greatest differences are found among the different age groups: the probability of considering it a good thing that migrants are part of their close social circles is higher among younger people and decreases as age increases.<sup>10</sup> These results coincide with evidence from other countries outside of Latin America and the Caribbean. The perceptions and attitudes of young people are still in the formative process, and they tend to have more positive views of migrants. Their opinions also tend to be more malleable to the influence of outside interventions. In general, people who consider themselves as being on the left of the political spectrum are more likely to look favorably on migrants being in their country, while those who consider themselves on the right are more apt to see migration as a bad thing. This result is a common finding in developed countries. Additionally, there are differences between the levels of acceptance according to the level of income. The proportion of people in the top 40 percent of the income distribution (quintiles 4 and 5) who consider it a good thing to have migrants in their neighborhood is lower than that of the average person. Finally, people with children are less likely to consider it a good thing to have migrants in their countries and in their close social circles.

7 The single exception is Chile, where the informative video increased the share of people who said they thought that having a migrant as a neighbor was a bad thing.

8 Two components were used to calculate this percentage: the value of the maximum impact of the interventions, measured in percentage points, and the difference between the initial values in the countries with the most favorable and least favorable starting attitudes toward migrants. When the effect of both interventions is statistically equivalent, the average of the two is used.

9 This chapter only reports differences between population groups that are significant at least 5 percent.

10 The share of 18- to 25-year-olds who think that it is positive for a close relative to marry a migrant is 19 percentage points higher than the share of over-65s who think so. Likewise, the share of people aged 26-45 is 13 percentage points higher and that of people 46-64 is 8 percentage points higher.

The two videos increase the share of the participants who accept the presence of migrants in their society, neighborhood, and close family.<sup>11</sup> In particular, the videos are most effective at modifying the perceptions of people who do not have extreme positions to begin with; that is, those who are undecided. After the experiment, the proportion of people who consider having migrants in the country to be a positive thing increases. Compared to the control group, the percentage answering “good” to the three questions increases by approximately 6 and 10 percentage points among those who watched the emotive video and the informative video, respectively. Likewise, among those who watch the informative video, the percentage of people who think that it is “good” to have a migrant as a neighbor is 5 percentage points higher than that of the control group; the share of those who think it is “good” to have migrants in their country is 10 percentage points higher; and the percentage of those who think it is “good” to have a migrant marry a close relative is 6 percentage points higher (figure 6.2A). The emotive video is particularly effective among people with children.<sup>12</sup> At least one of the two videos is effective at increasing the acceptance of migrants in the neighborhood and family in almost all the countries in the study, except Costa Rica and Trinidad and Tobago. The average impact of the interventions is high, accounting for 37 percent, 46 percent, and 47 percent of the gap between the countries with the least and most favorable positions on accepting the migrant population in the country, neighborhood, and family, respectively. In Mexico and the Dominican Republic, the informative intervention is particularly effective.

***The two videos improve the willingness to trust migrants, but neither makes it easier to see things from the migrants’ perspective. While both videos improve people’s willingness to donate to causes that help migrants, this willingness remains extremely low.***

Before the experiment, levels of trust and empathy toward migrants also varies among the different groups. In addition to expressing higher levels of acceptance of migrants, younger people also empathize more with them. The percentage of people who did not think that it is hard to see things from the migrants’ point of view is higher among younger cohorts.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, less-educated people and those with children are less likely to agree with the statement that it is not hard to see things from the migrants’ perspective. People who place themselves in the lowest two quintiles of the income distribution, people with children, and unemployed people expressed marginally lower levels of trust in migrants. There is no difference in the baseline levels of empathy and trust toward migrants between income groups.

With respect to the questions that capture the capacity to empathize with and trust migrants, the two treatment videos produce effects going in the desired direction. Among participants in the control group, 66 percent say that they trust migrants as much as they trust the local population. This share increases by nearly 6 percentage points after watching either of the two videos, an increase that represents 25 percent of the gap between the countries with the highest and lowest levels of trust in migrants, Barbados and Colombia, respectively. However, both the initial stance of the local population and the effectiveness of the videos in changing their views vary greatly from country to country. For example, in Colombia the initial proportion is lower, at 55 percent, while in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago it is 79 percent, much higher. The two interventions are effective at influencing the participants’ responses in Colombia but have no effect in Trinidad and Tobago; only the emotive video has an impact in Barbados.

Neither of the two treatment videos increase the proportion of those who think it is not difficult to see things from the migrants’ viewpoint. This share is 19 percent, on average, and varies considerably across

<sup>11</sup> The response rate to the questions that looked at acceptance of migrants was particularly low compared to other questions in the survey. Around 8 percent of people in the control group did not answer the question about a migrant marrying a close relative, and 6 percent did not answer the questions about migrants living in their country or being their neighbors. Both videos prompted more people to answer these questions. On average, the emotive video reduced the nonresponse rate by 1 percentage point, and the informative video did so by 2 percentage points.

<sup>12</sup> The variety of effects caused by the different treatments are not discussed in the text but can be consulted in the online statistical annex.

<sup>13</sup> The percentage of people who think migrants are trustworthy is 9 percentage points higher among participants aged 18–25 than among the over 65, 8 percentage points higher among those aged 26–45, and 5 percentage points higher among those aged 46–64.

countries (from 13 percent in Ecuador and the Dominican Republic to 36 percent in Barbados). The only country where the videos have an effect on modifying this perception is the Dominican Republic, where the initial share increases by 4 percentage points after one of the interventions.

Almost no one says that they would donate to an organization that helps migrants (just 6 percent of the control group agrees with this statement). Even so, the treatment videos manage to almost double this proportion (to approximately 10 percent), and the average impact of the interventions is very large: this average represents 61 percent of the gap between the countries with the highest percentage (Costa Rica) and the lowest percentage (Barbados) of people willing to donate. On this question, the effect of the treatment videos is more concentrated among men. The interventions have no impact in Barbados, Chile, and Trinidad and Tobago (figure 6.2B)

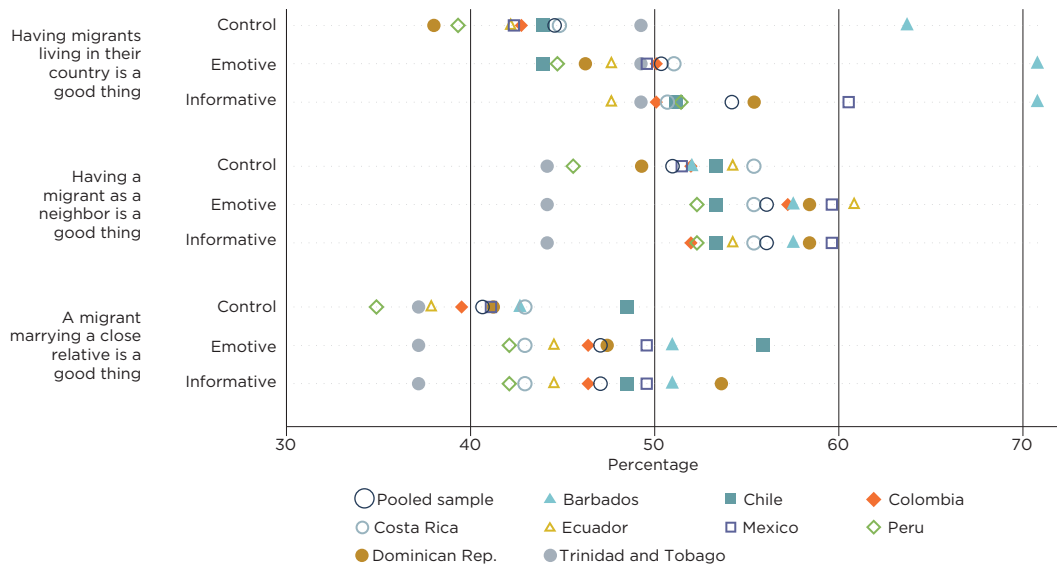
***Before the interventions, a large share of the region's population was already in favor of governments providing humanitarian aid, healthcare, and education services to the migrant population. Both videos are equally effective at increasing this share. In some cases, the emotive video is marginally more effective. However, the average result obscures differences between the individual countries.***

In general, citizens in Latin America and the Caribbean are in favor of governments providing humanitarian aid and other services to migrants. At least 83 percent agree that the government should provide humanitarian aid to migrants, healthcare of the same quality as received by the local population, and equal education services for migrant children and young people. On these responses, acceptance rates are high in every country, with only minimal differences between them. This high support contrasts with the population's low willingness to accept the presence of migrants in their country, neighborhood, or family. However, preferences regarding the support that governments should provide migrants also vary among the different population groups. The percentage of the participants who are in favor of the government giving migrants access to health services is 3 percentage points higher among people with lower incomes (quintiles 1 and 2), despite the possibility that the saturation of these services could directly affect the respondents in these lower-income groups. Among people who identify with the political right and those who have children, the percentage who support providing services to migrants is lower.

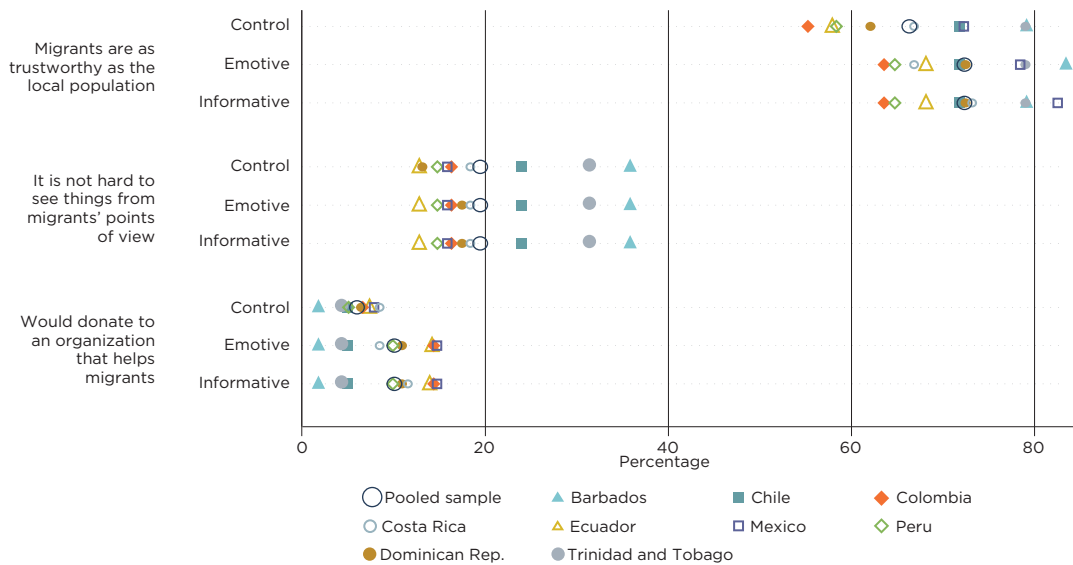
The two videos are equally effective and brought about a marginal increase, between 2 and 3 percentage points, in the share of people who agree that migrants should have access to healthcare and education services under the same conditions as the local population. Although the effect is low in absolute terms, given the low heterogeneity between countries, this improvement represents between 21 and 29 percent of the gap between the countries that have the lowest and highest levels of support. For changing the levels of support expressed for governments providing services to migrants, only the emotive video is effective (an improvement of 3 percentage points). With regard to providing migrant children with healthcare services, the emotive video is marginally more effective (an increase of 2 percentage points, compared to 1 percentage point for the informative video) (figure 6.3). Both videos are particularly good at modifying the views of the unemployed and those who self-identify as having a right-wing political ideology. This latter result is an unusual finding, given that those individuals at the extreme ends of the political spectrum tend to have fairly fixed positions. On the question regarding humanitarian assistance, the emotive video has a greater effect among men. The effect of the interventions, however, varies substantially between countries. For example, in Chile and Trinidad and Tobago, neither of the two videos manages to increase the share of people who agree with providing these four services (humanitarian aid, equal healthcare services for migrant adults and children, and equal education services for migrant children). In Mexico, the informative video is always equally or more effective than the emotive video, while in Costa Rica, the informative video is always the more effective of the two treatments.

**Figure 6.2. Both treatment videos are effective at improving levels of acceptance and trust in migrants**

**A. Participants who agree (percentage)**



**B. Participants who agreed (percentage)**



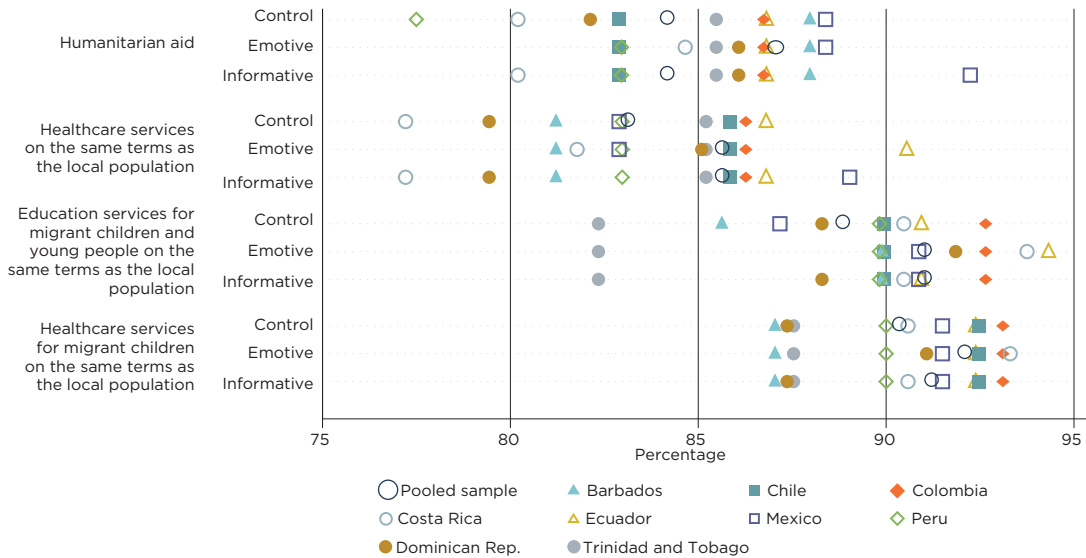
Source: IDB/UNDP.

**Note:** The data presented in panel A is the result of estimating a multinomial logistic model, and the data presented in panel B is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Only the effects that are significant at a 5 percent confidence level are included in the figure. When the difference between the two effects is not statistically significant, the average of the two is presented.

**Although most respondents think that migrants contribute to the economy and should be granted work permits, a significant share regard migrants as competitors in the labor market and deem them a burden on the state. Both videos improve these perceptions, but the informative video has a greater effect.**

**Figure 6.3. Both videos increase the local population's support for the government providing migrants with humanitarian assistance and other services**

*Participants who agree with the government providing the following services to migrants (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Only the effects that are significant at a 5 percent confidence level are included in the figure. When the difference between the two effects is not statistically significant, the average of the two is presented.

The vast majority of the participants in the experiment think that migrants confer benefits on their country's economy. Among the control group in the pooled sample, 74 percent believe that migrants contribute to their respective country's economy; yet this average conceals variation across the different countries and population groups. This average percentage is the lowest in Colombia (57 percent) and the highest in Barbados (92 percent). The percentage is lower among the unemployed, probably due to their having greater fears of facing potential labor market competition from migrants. In contrast, among the higher-income respondents (those in quintiles 4 and 5), a greater percentage of them believe that migrants bring economic benefits to their country. The two videos improve this perception, but the informative video has a greater effect than the emotive video (respectively, 9 percentage points and 5 percentage points). The impact of the informative video represents 25 percent of the gap between the countries with the highest and lowest percentage of participants who recognize the economic benefits of migration.

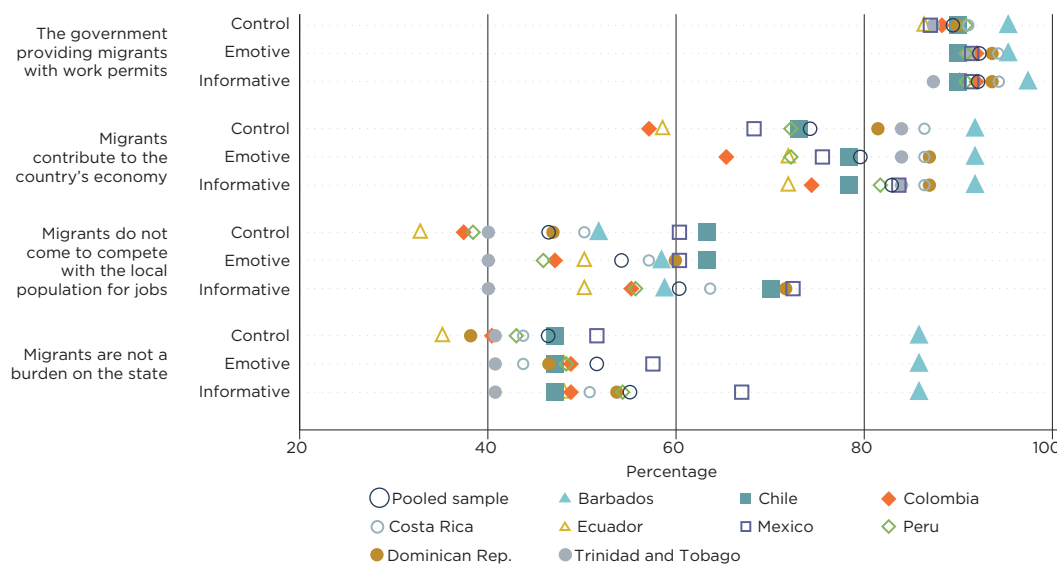
Despite recognizing these contributions, almost half of the respondents believe that the arrival of migrants generates more competition in the labor market. Just 46 percent of the control group holds the opposite view. There is substantial variation among the countries in the sample. In Ecuador, only 33 percent believe this, compared to 63 percent of the Chilean participants. There are also differences between different groups in the population. Women, people with tertiary education, people without children, and the unemployed are less likely to think migrants compete for their jobs. Except for women, the responses of these three groups are aligned with the findings from other countries: people with better working conditions are much less fearful of competing with migrants for jobs. On the contrary, a higher percentage of people with lower incomes (quintiles 1 and 2) and those who perceive themselves to be at the bottom of the income distribution are more inclined to believe that arriving migrants will compete with them for jobs. On average, the informative video has a more positive effect on this perception.

The emotive video increases this share from 46 percent to 54 percent (8 percentage points), while the informative video increases it to 60 percent (14 percentage points). The effect of the emotive video is concentrated among people between the ages of 18 and 45, and the effect of the informative video mainly influences people without tertiary education. In both cases, the interventions are effective at changing the perception among lower-income respondents that migrants are a source of labor market competition. Again, the average for the pooled sample hides a variety of effects in different countries. In Ecuador, despite a low starting point, the two treatments are highly effective at increasing the percentage who believe that migrants do not increase labor market competition (the videos trigger increases of about 18 percentage points, representing a 55-percent increase over the control group's share). At the other extreme, in Trinidad and Tobago neither video affects the responses.

Slightly less than half of the control group believes that migrants are not a burden on the state (46 percent). This concern is lowest among those aged 18–45 and people without children; this concern is most prevalent among those people who identify with right-wing political ideologies. Again, the average conceals substantial heterogeneity across countries: Ecuador is at one extreme (35 percent), and Barbados at the other (86 percent). Compared to the control group in the pooled sample, the informative video achieves a 9-percentage-point change in the desired direction, while the emotive video prompts a minor shift (5 percentage points). After exposure to the videos, the country with the lowest percentage is Trinidad and Tobago (41 percent), where neither of the treatments has an effect (figure 6.4).

**Figure 6.4. Overall, the informative video is more effective at improving perceptions on the contributions migrants make to the economy**

*Participants who agree (percentage)*



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Only effects that are significant at a 5 percent confidence level are included in the figure. When the difference between the two effects is not statistically significant, the average of the two is presented.

The impacts of the interventions are significant. The effect of the informative video is particularly high—45 percent—expressed as the proportion of the gap between the country where respondents expressed the most concern about labor competition (Ecuador) and the country where this concern was the lowest (Chile). On the other hand, the interventions only have a very minor impact on the share of participants



who believe that the fiscal burden increases due to the arrival of the migrant population (an increase of just 17 percent of the gap between the countries at either extreme of the range of responses).

Finally, 89 percent of people in the control group agree with the government granting work permits to migrants, and there are no differences between the different population groups with respect to this position. On this position, there are also fewer differences between the various countries in the sample. At least 86 percent of the participants from all the countries agree with providing work permits to the migrant population. It is surprising that fears of a possible increase in labor market competition do not lead to a greater demand for restrictions to limit the entry of migrants. In terms of the preferences related to providing work permits to migrants, the average effect of the two videos is the same: an increase of 3 percentage points, which is equivalent to 32 percent of the gap between the countries with the most and least favorable attitudes on this issue. The scale of the impact is similar in countries in which the videos have a positive impact on these preferences: Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Mexico. In Barbados, only the informative video is effective, while in Trinidad and Tobago, only the emotive video is effective.

***The two interventions increase the proportion of people who recognize the benefits brought by the arrival of migrants and their contributions in terms of new ideas and culture. The informative video is equally or more effective than the emotive video in promoting the local population's recognition of their contributions to society.***

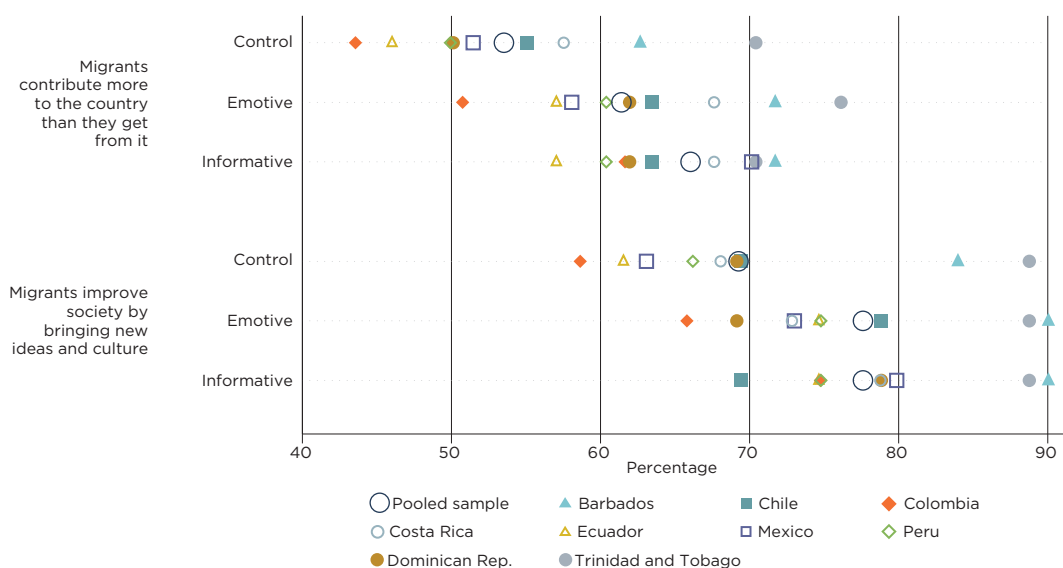
The people in the sample are divided with respect to the balance between what they think migrants contribute to and receive from their countries. Only 54 percent of the control group think that the contributions of the migrant population outweigh the benefits that they receive from it. This perception is homogeneous across the different population groups, but with a single exception: it is 5 percentage points lower among people who self-identify with ideologies that skew to the right of the political spectrum. The countries fall into two distinct groups on this issue. The two Caribbean countries, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, take a clearly positive stance toward the contributions that migrants make to the receiving countries, while in other countries, the perceptions are more unfavorable, ranging from 44 percent in Colombia to 58 percent in Costa Rica. On average, exposure to the emotive video increases this proportion by 8 percentage points (to 62 percent), while exposure to the informative video increases it by 13 percentage points (to 67 percent). The impact of the informative video is substantial: expressed as the proportion of the gap—47 percent—between the country that is most likely to acknowledge the contribution of migrants and the one least likely to do so. The result of the interventions for the pooled sample accurately reflects the outcome in most of the individual countries: both videos move attitudes in the desired direction in all countries except for Trinidad and Tobago, where only the emotive video is effective. The informative video has a particularly outstanding effect in Colombia and Mexico, where it results in an almost 20 percentage point increase in the share of people who think that the migrant population gives back more to the country than they get from it.

A relatively large proportion of the control group (69 percent) agrees that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and cultures. Unlike what is observed in developed countries, sociotropic concerns are not particularly strong in the sample countries, and this perception does not vary much among the different population groups. Yet again, there are major differences between the countries and the perceptions on the benefits that migrants bring: the percentages range from 59 percent in Colombia to 89 percent in Trinidad and Tobago. The two videos have the same average effect: they increase the proportion of people sharing this view by 7 to 10 percentage points (going from 69 percent to 78 percent, approximately) and close the gap by 28 percent. This represents a considerable effect, given that even in Colombia, the country with the lowest initial percentage of people who agree that migrants improve

society, there is a higher share of agreement after the treatment. The informative video proves to be more effective at modifying the positions of people without tertiary education. At the country level, the videos are effective in almost every case, albeit with three exceptions: only the emotive video is effective in Chile, while in the Dominican Republic, only the informative video is effective, and in Trinidad and Tobago, neither of the interventions has an effect. The informative video has a particularly large impact on perceptions in Colombia and Mexico: in these countries, the informative video is much more effective than the emotive video (figure 6.5).

**Figure 6.5. Providing information about migrants is an effective strategy for increasing the recognition of their contributions to society**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Only the effects that are significant at 5 percent confidence level are included in the figure. When the difference between the two effects is not statistically significant, the average of the two is presented.

**The informative video is a highly effective approach to influencing perceptions that migrants affect public safety and crime rates. In contrast, this intervention is less effective at reducing the stigma attached to migrant women. For this purpose, the emotive video is more effective than the informative video.**

Social stigma hinders the integration of migrants in the receiving countries. The two most recurring discussions in the public sphere concerning migrants associate their arrival with rising crime and contend that the majority of migrant women end up engaging in sex work. Only 45 percent of participants in the control group do not believe that migrants increase crime. The proportion who thinks that migrants cause an increase in crime is lower among individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 and people in quintiles 4 and 5 of the income distribution. In contrast, this proportion is higher among the less educated, people with children, the unemployed, and those who sympathize with right-wing political beliefs. There are also large differences from one country to the next in the share of people who do or do not perceive that migrants cause a rise in crime. Peru has the most skeptical outlook—only 26 percent of people do not associate migrants with greater insecurity—whereas 79 percent in Barbados do not associate migrants

with a rise in crime. On average, the informative video is the most successful intervention for correcting this perception: it results in a 12-percentage-point increase (taking the percentage from 45 percent to 57 percent), which represents 22 percent of the gap between the most skeptical and the least skeptical country in terms of associating migrants with crime. The emotive video, on average, brings about a smaller but still positive change (4 percentage points). Exposure to either of the videos is particularly effective at changing the attitudes of less-educated people. At the country level, the results of the experimental interventions vary widely. Neither of the two videos has a significant effect in Barbados, Chile, or Trinidad and Tobago. In Costa Rica, Mexico, and Peru, only the informative video has an impact. And in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Ecuador, both treatment videos are effective, but the informative video has a greater impact.

Among the control group, 60 percent do not believe that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work. The extent to which respondents associate female migrants with sex work varies from one group to the next. The proportion stigmatizing female migrants is higher among the youngest age groups and is lower among the older age groups. It is also higher among the less educated, the unemployed, and the poorest income groups (quintiles 1 and 2) but decreases as income levels go up. There are also huge differences between countries in terms of these initial perceptions. In Trinidad and Tobago, only 40 percent of the control group does not stigmatize migrant women. At the other extreme is Chile, where 80 percent of the control group does not associate migrant women with sex work.

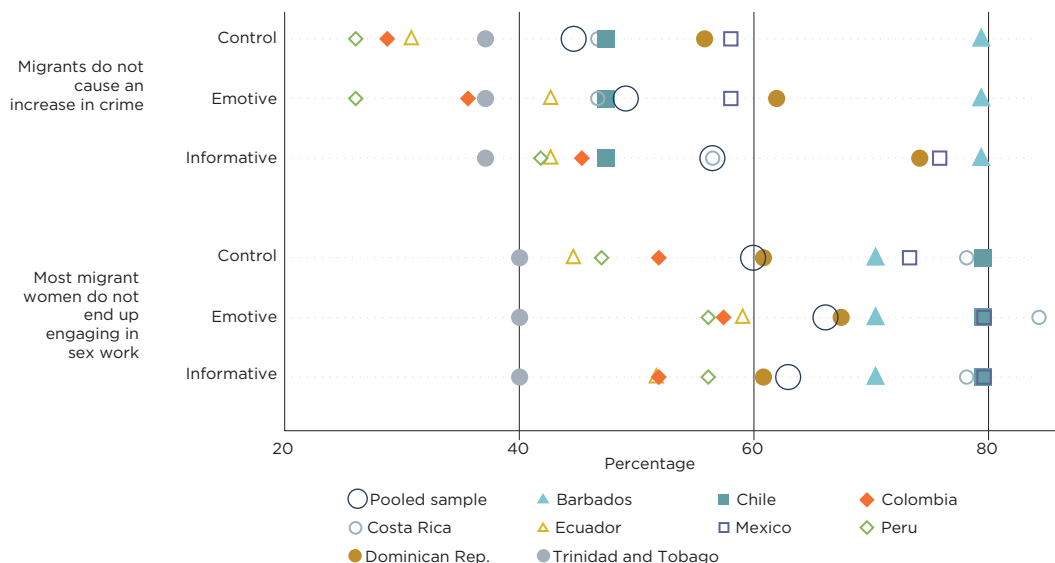
On average, the informative video has a mildly positive effect on improving this perception (by 3 percentage points). The emotive video, on the other hand, results in a 6-percentage point increase in the share of people who recognize that most migrant women do not end up as sex workers (taking the total share from 60 percent to 66 percent). This effect is equivalent to closing 16 percent of the gap between the countries with the highest and lowest levels of stigmatization of female migrants; however, this improvement is low compared to the effect of the treatment videos on the other variables analyzed. The effect of the informative video is concentrated among the respondents who are less educated, those in lower income brackets, and those who think of themselves as having right-wing political views. The emotive video has a greater effect on people under 65, the less educated, those with lower income levels (quintiles 1 and 2), and the unemployed. The results vary widely across countries. The informative video only influences attitudes in Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru. Neither video intervention is effective in Barbados, Chile, or Trinidad and Tobago. In Colombia, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic, only the emotive video is effective. In Mexico, the difference between the effects of the two treatment videos is indistinguishable, but in Ecuador and Peru, the emotive video has a greater effect (in percentage points, it has approximately twice the effect compared to the other countries where this emotive video effective at improving views) (figure 6.6).

### **Summary**

The results based on the pooled data show that the video interventions are capable of modifying people's short-term views on multiple topics by reducing the information bias and other prejudices that often feed into attitudes that ultimately compromise migrants' well-being. In general, the experiment succeeds in changing the attitudes and perceptions of those who have not already adopted a markedly negative stance toward the migrant population. The videos are particularly effective at improving the willingness of younger people, the less educated, those with lower incomes, and those who identify as right-wing to welcome migrants more openly and generously. In addition, the videos are more effective when there is greater scope for transforming attitudes and opinions.

**Figure 6.6. The informative video is more effective at addressing stereotypes associating migration with crime, while the emotive video is more effective at lowering the stigmas about migrant women**

Participants who agree (percentage)



Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: The data presented is the result of estimating a linear probability model. Only the effects that are significant at the 5 percent confidence level are included in the figure. When the difference between the two effects is not statistically significant, the average of the two is presented.

In many of the cases, although the actual numbers vary somewhat, it is not possible to statistically confirm that one video has a greater effect than the other one. However, the informative video is more effective at reducing the perception that migrants come to the receiving country to compete for jobs with the local population and that the arrival of migrants reduces public safety and causes an increase in crime. The informative video is also more effective at improving recognition of the contributions that the migrant population makes to the destination country’s economy. It increases the willingness to take an optimistic view regarding the arrival of migrants in their country, reduces the belief that migrants are a burden on the state, and counters the idea that migrants receive more from the receiving countries than they give back. However, the informative video is not effective at changing the level of public support for the government providing migrants with humanitarian aid. Conversely, the emotive video is more effective than the informative video at increasing support for the government providing migrant children with healthcare services on the same terms as the local population receives, as well as changing the perception that most migrant women end up engaging in sex work. The only case in which neither of the two videos is effective is when asking how easy it is to see issues from the migrants’ perspective.

Pooling the data allows us to identify the average results across the samples from all nine countries, and this larger database improves the statistical robustness of the coefficients used to measure the effects of the treatments. These averages, however, hide heterogeneities in the starting points and the results of the experiments between countries. Therefore, these averages do not replace the country-specific results presented in the previous chapters.

A result that is common to the pooled sample and to each of the countries considered separately, and thus has relevance for policy design, is that the interventions have no adverse effects: they either contribute

to transforming attitudes in the desired direction or have no effect, but the treatments never influence attitudes in a direction that could be detrimental to the migrant population.<sup>14</sup>

These findings offer three broad messages regarding the local population's perceptions of migrants in nine Latin American and Caribbean countries. First, the local population does not have a uniform stance on the migrant population. While they fear labor market competition from migrants, are concerned about their alleged involvement in crime, and generally reject the presence of migrants in their close social circles, they do support policies to help migrants, do not favor a total ban on their entry, and appreciate that migrants provide cultural enrichment to the receiving country. These are nuanced positions that need to be comprehended in greater depth to, on the one hand, understand what fears influence people's perceptions and, on the other hand, to take advantage of the windows of opportunity offered by the favorable attitudes already present.

Second, economic concerns are particularly strong in the countries that are included in this study. This finding is diametrically opposed to what has been observed in developed countries, for which the evidence is increasingly clear: sociotropic concerns are dominant, while economic concerns are restricted to some population groups. Although the scope of the study presented in this book does not allow us to identify the reasons underlying this difference, it is probable that the precariousness of labor markets in Latin America and the Caribbean and high levels of economic uncertainty spark greater fears among the local population about the labor competition that migration may bring.

Third, the videos are effective, at least in the short term. The informative video helps shift erroneous perceptions regarding the economic impact of migration and the involvement of migrants in criminal activities. The effect, moreover, is not negligible. The emotive video, for its part, helps people to look more favorably on the presence of migrants in their country, neighborhood, or family. It is also effective at building support for granting migrants access to various social programs and for recognizing that migrants make significant contributions to society. This last finding implies that interventions that concentrate solely on providing information or conveying emotional messages will have a limited effect. These results are summarized in table 6.1.

## 6.2. What Can Governments and Other Stakeholders Do? Some Ideas for Discussion

As detailed throughout this book, Latin America and the Caribbean are confronting an unprecedented flow of intraregional migration, accompanied by other human movements that differ in their composition and routes. These events have required countries in the region to adopt, over a very short period of time, a series of public policy initiatives. Their responses include instituting reforms within the agencies or entities that are responsible for administering these processes, and reforming existing legal frameworks to better address the requirements of this new migratory landscape.

As in other regions of the world, these movements, especially if they are large in scale and occur over a very short period, affect local opinion.<sup>15</sup> In general, public acceptance of migrants is negatively affected when a given country has no significant history of migration or when migration flows unfold the manner they recently have in Latin America and the Caribbean. Understanding, analyzing, and measuring public

<sup>14</sup> The single exception to this is the informative video shown in Chile, which increased the share of people who think that having a migrant as a neighbor is a bad thing, going from 3 percent to 6 percent.

<sup>15</sup> A growing body of literature has focused on understanding how migration affects the beliefs and attitudes of local populations toward migration and migrants. This literature is reviewed in detail in chapter 1.

**Table 6.1. The Effectiveness of the interventions varies***Summary of the results of the pooled sample (percentages and percentage points)*

Category	Question	Control group (percentages)	Effect of the informational video (percentage points)	Effect of the emotionally charged video (percentage points)
Policy preferences and social norms	Having migrants living in their country is a good thing.	44.6	9.6	5.8
	Having a migrant as a neighbor is a good thing.	51.0	5.1	5.2
	A migrant marrying a close relative is a good thing.	40.6	6.4	6.4
	Agree that the government should provide migrants humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care.)	84.2	0	2.9
	Agree that the government should provide migrants healthcare services on the same terms as the local population.	83.1	2.3	2.8
	Agree that the government should provide migrants children and young people with education services on the same terms as the local population.	88.8	1.9	2.5
	Agree that the government should provide healthcare services for migrant children on the same terms as the local population.	90.3	0.9	1.7
	Agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.	66.3	6.7	5.4
	Agree that it isn't hard to see things from migrants' points of view.	19.4	0	0
	Would donate to an organization that helps migrants.	6.0	4.2	3.9
Economic factors	Agree that the government should give migrants work permits or documentation that enables them to work legally in the country	89.4	2.7	2.8
	Agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy	74.2	8.7	5.3
	Agree that migrants do not come to compete with the local population for jobs	46.5	13.9	7.7
	Agree that migrants are not a burden on the state	46.4	8.7	5.2
Cultural factors	Agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it	53.5	12.5	7.9
	Agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and culture	69.3	9.9	6.8
Social stigma	Agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime rates	44.6	11.8	4.4
	Agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work	59.9	3.0	6.2

**Source:** IDB/UNDP.

**Note:** Gray cells indicate that the effect is not statistically significant at the 5 percent confidence level. For each question, a darker cell color indicates a comparatively greater effect. When coefficients are shown in the same color, the difference between them is not statistically significant at the 5 percent confidence level.

opinion on migration is now a necessity, given that migration has become a fact of life in the region and will remain so for some years. This necessity is most evident in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, where migration has not been studied or analyzed on the same level as it has in other parts of the world.

Beyond measuring and analyzing how the local population views migration, it is necessary to act on this information. Based on the results presented in this book, we are able to identify the different responses that people in the various receiving countries have to these arrivals. The differences may have to do with dissimilar characteristics of the migratory flows in terms of their profiles, volume, and geographic origin. These reactions are also influenced by each country's specific history with migration, as well as the country's socioeconomic and political situation at the time that the experiment was conducted.

The possibility that attitudes can be modified by providing different types of information is widely documented in the literature.<sup>16</sup> However, interventions aimed at influencing the attitudes that the local population has toward migrants have been concentrated in developed countries, where the context is different, and there is a longstanding history of migration. Since migration is a relatively recent phenomenon in Latin America and the Caribbean, this book contributes to a broader discussion of the topic.

Identifying issues, tools, and forms of communication and outreach that reduce misperceptions and highlight the reality of the migratory phenomenon will benefit the region's migrant population, and also the governments and international agencies that cooperate on migratory issues. When public opinion is averse to the integration process, it generates costs that are detrimental to the development of society as a whole and makes it difficult to implement policies to take advantage of the benefits that migration has to offer. Various studies corroborate that the citizenry's perceptions can affect policy decisions on issues relating to migrants and refugees.<sup>17</sup>

Although there is little regional evidence on the dominant themes in the discourse on migration in Latin America and the Caribbean, some studies have compared countries in this region with other parts of the world. These results correspond to the results from the pooled sample presented in the first part of this chapter, which show that issues related to the economy and the labor market are a particular source of concern in the countries included in this study. One finding from this study that coincides with the existing literature is the association of migration with threats to public safety and crime, which is one of the greatest concerns for people in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Based on several of these studies and the results of the experiments carried out, the following subsections propose some guidelines that may prove helpful when designing public policies that focus on communication migration-related issues in the region. Although there is no one-size-fits-all approach, it is important to extract some general recommendations when seeking to contribute to the public policy debate.

The main questions that a government official attempting to influence public attitudes toward migration should ask are: i) What type of messages or information should be conveyed? ii) How should the messaging or campaign be crafted? iii) Who should the information come from? and iv) Whom should the messaging or campaign target? A series of reflections are presented below in response to these four questions.

<sup>16</sup> This literature is reviewed in detail in chapter 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ruhs (2022).

### 6.2.1. What type of messages or information should be conveyed?

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It is vital for governments to shape public narratives during times of increased migratory flows. The pooled results show that providing information leads to positive changes in public opinion in almost all countries. It is essential to use up-to-date information to construct a coordinated, evidence-based narrative. It is not always easy to compile the necessary data due to limited administrative records from migration authorities and it is a complicated task to account for the number of people entering the country through porous borders and irregular crossings. Therefore, it is advisable to consult the data available from primary sources (i.e., administrative records) and from secondary sources (e.g., universities, academic centers, NGOs, and UN agencies).

There is evidence in the literature showing that under different scenarios, there is a propensity to magnify the volume of migration with respect to the actual numbers, so the first step governments should take is initiating outreach campaigns that report on the real volume of migration that the country is receiving. Whenever possible, the origin location of the migrant population and how they are arriving should be clearly conveyed. Later on, if the flow continues and appears to be more permanent, gathering data on the migrant population's demographic and socioeconomic profiles will contribute to building effective public information campaigns on the inclusion of migrants in the labor market and the economic contributions that they bring to the receiving country. These suggestions address the local population's concerns, recorded in the responses to the experiment described in this book, about the economic effects that migration has on the receiving countries.

In addition to reporting the actual volume of migration and other relevant data, various studies suggest that it is vital for all levels of government to make it clear that the situation is under control and that a plan is in place to address and manage the arriving migrant population.<sup>18</sup> Using expressions such as “invasion” or “human tide” heightens the local population's concerns about the effects of migration. Many government officials who have dealt with these issues—such as Rui Marques, Portugal's former high commissioner for migrants and ethnic minorities during the migration crisis in Europe—state that, based on their experience, it is vital to convey a message to citizens that the country has control over its borders and migratory flows. This rhetoric is better received and engenders trust in the local population when the government acknowledges that these processes produce short-term impacts but a plan exists to manage them.

This issue of control over the situation is consistent with another task that governments need to focus on, which is related to negative perceptions about migration that are rooted in the belief that the arrival of the migrant population leads to rising crime rates. The exercise shows that among the participants, this is one issue where the percentage of public opinion regarding migrants is very low to begin with in nearly all the countries in the study. This finding is also corroborated by analyses of social media platforms which have found that associating an increase in violence or crime with the arrival of migrants is the main trigger for online xenophobic conversations. When attempting to address this issue, it is essential to convey clear information that is easy to understand. Governments need to provide precise figures on the actual percentage of migrants involved in crimes, details on the type of crimes, and information on whether migrants are also victims of crime.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Banulescu-Bogdan (2022b).

<sup>19</sup> On this matter, the role of the authorities and the media is vital when it comes to mentioning or concealing a perpetrator's nationality. This is discussed in more detail in the section on who conveys the message.



From another perspective, a study based on analyzing 135 migration-related communications campaigns on both sides of the Mediterranean shows how values-based messaging seems to yield positive results.<sup>20</sup> Evidence from other parts of the world, especially the United States, shows that information campaigns based on transforming values are effective at modifying the attitudes of those who want to promote anti-migration sentiments, as well as being potentially useful for improving perspectives among the general population.

Along this same line of analysis, results from studies carried out in Germany and other countries that have become part of the guidance on communicating about migration-related issues all highlight the importance of using terms such as “shared humanity” or “the human family.”<sup>21</sup> The idea behind this approach is that values-based messaging should be rooted in solidarity and a focus on people or human beings instead of always referring to these arrivals as migrants. Using narratives that focus on portraying migrants as fellow humans in the government’s public discourse helps to generate empathy and solidarity.

An additional guideline is to mention children, adolescents, and families when crafting informative messages about the need to provide migrants with humanitarian aid and to promote their integration into the receiving society. The results of the experiments described in this book, added to other studies and analyses of the region’s social media, show that people in Latin America and the Caribbean generally respond more positively to messages about migration that mention children and families, including local groups that are initially against migration.<sup>22</sup>

### 6.2.2. How should messaging or campaigns about migration be crafted?

Having reviewed some initial ideas about what to say about migration, it is also important to analyze if there are ways of transmitting these messages and content to help promote positive attitudes toward migration. The results of the experiments show that, despite some general reactions that are almost the same everywhere, there is also considerable heterogeneity among the nine countries included in the study.

Therefore, a good starting point is to consider the relevant local context when crafting messages about the challenges posed by migration, including an analysis of the particular country’s history of migration. This approach is corroborated by several successful campaigns carried out in cities in the United States and England that experienced an influx of migrants.<sup>23</sup>

When crafting these messages, considering the history of migration in each country or city should help make better connections with the local population. Countries that have experienced numerous waves of emigration may be more sensitive to the issue, given what may be preexisting expectations as to how they would want their own emigrants to be treated in other countries. In Colombia, some studies on perceptions of Venezuelan migrants show that positive views on their arrival (particularly toward the migrants that arrived in 2018 and 2019) are related to the respect with which Colombian emigrants to Venezuela had been treated: “a few years ago, it was Venezuela that took in Colombians.” This previous experience helped the local Colombian population adopt a more positive stance toward the Venezuelan migrants arriving in their country. It is also helpful to identify and promote community actions to support migrants.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Dennison (2019).

<sup>21</sup> COE (2021).

<sup>22</sup> Bloemraad, Silva, and Voss (2016). One example is the television campaign conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Caracol TV, and Save the Children in Colombia, which showed children playing the telephone game and whispering messages to each other until these eventually became xenophobic. The campaign was a huge success and had a positive impact in Colombia. The video is available here.

<sup>23</sup> COE (2021).

<sup>24</sup> See UNDP (2015).

Beyond the humanitarian or emergency assistance that may be required at the start of a sudden large-scale influx of migrants, once the implementation of medium-term integration measures begins, it is important to convey the idea that these programs benefit the receiving communities as well as the migrant population. This idea appears to be a fundamental consideration but is frequently left out of the official discourse, an omission that can give rise to local tensions with some of the humanitarian agencies on the ground. Various experiences in other parts of the world have demonstrated that integration programs become more sustainable when these projects also benefit the local community, as the local population takes ownership of these initiatives and looks more favorably on migrants. Moreover, this finding is also consistent with some experiments which show that highlighting sociotropic factors promotes more favorable attitudes toward migration and reinforces the idea that policies designed to cope with the arriving migrants are not “unfair” to the interests of the local population.<sup>25</sup>

Another consideration is how to portray migrants in order to improve perceptions about this population. As already mentioned, encouraging a compassionate approach toward migrants may work in some scenarios, but its effectiveness is limited for maintaining a positive perception. Thus, based on the available evidence, including the results of the experiments conducted for this study, the recommendation is to craft messages that show migrants performing actual activities that support the local population, such as work carried out by doctors, nurses, firefighters, or teachers. Migrants should be shown as individuals who are capable of contributing to local development. Campaigns have portrayed migrants as people who only take from the receiving communities, not as people who can contribute to these communities. In other countries and cities, campaigns that portray real-life experiences have been effective in improving perceptions of migrants, and such approaches are also valuable because they involve migrants in constructing their own narratives. Some examples of this are the initiatives developed by the Council of Europe’s Intercultural Cities Programme, which has had positive effects on promoting social integration and improving attitudes toward migrants.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, an additional idea for discussion has to do with the scope of the campaigns. That is, announcements made by the national and subnational governments when a large-scale inflow of migrants is taking place can be presented as the need to respond to an emergency situation or as a structural shift in the country’s approach to migration. Any discourse based on a humanitarian appeal needs to be accompanied by ideas on what a medium-term integration process might look like. However, the evidence points out that there are differences between perceptions related to migrants and perceptions related to changes in migration policy. This means that changing perceptions on these two issues are not necessarily the same, nor do they move in the same direction or change at the same speed. Examples of this type of analysis have been conducted in the United States.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, when crafting these messaging campaigns, it is essential to take the timing of any measures into account. In other words, the campaigns should mention that there are short-term measures implemented specifically to respond to the arriving migrants, as well as medium-term or second-generation plans to promote their integration, and initiatives that will require broader debate to address longer-term issues relating to political rights or nationality. In all of these instances, good coordination between the national and local levels of government is important to ensure that the messaging is consistent.

Continuing the point raised in the previous section, if the government decides to move forward with initiatives to regularize the migrant population, it is advisable to clearly announce who is eligible to participate in these initiatives. It is also imperative to promote the benefits that these processes will confer on migrants, as in the case of the 2018 regularization program in Colombia, and also on the local population, which will see gains in terms of greater security and contributions to the formal economy, among other positive effects.<sup>28</sup>

25 Banulescu-Bogdan (2022b).

26 COE (2022a and 2022b).

27 Schildkraut (2013).

28 Ibañez et al. (2022).

### 6.2.3. Who should provide the information?

When deciding who should provide the public with information on migration-related issues, consider the importance of having messages delivered by different stakeholders. On this point, the literature has determined that the messaging that comes exclusively from the government frequently does not have the desired effect. Recent research conducted in five countries with very diverse migration scenarios (Colombia, Lebanon, Morocco, Sweden, and the United States) analyzed the narratives centered around migration and concludes that top-down government messaging usually clashes with perceptions on the ground. Consequently, the recommendation is to look for high-profile individuals to convey or repeat government messaging in favor of migration or to communicate factual information. Including both migrants and locals in this messaging will make it more realistic. An ample body of evidence supports this approach. In conveying these messages, relying on organizations with ties to the civilian population or to the diaspora may also have positive effects. There are interesting examples of this approach in the United States, based on initiatives implemented by the Bibles, Badges, and Business for Immigration Reform network, a coalition of religious groups, lawyers, and businesspeople who manage to reach broad audiences when they discuss immigration issues.<sup>29</sup>

It is also important to analyze the effect that public figures or celebrities can have on reducing prejudice when their voices are used to deliver information seeking to improve attitudes and debunk myths about migrants. These narratives should emphasize the role that migrants play in everyday life, including activities that help the local community. One recent example, though it focuses specifically on religious issues rather than on migration, is a study from the Immigration Policy Lab at Stanford University. The paper shows how Mohamed Salah, the well-known athlete who plays for Liverpool FC, served as the spokesperson for a message that resulted in a 16 percent reduction in hate crimes and contributed to a decrease in Islamophobic messages on fan-based social media accounts in this region of England<sup>30</sup>

Another issue concerning who should serve as spokespersons on migration-related issues, especially in the context where there has been a sudden influx of migrants, concerns the coordination of horizontal, vertical, and cross-cutting messaging. Initially, it is desirable for the government to take the lead and appoint an official government-authorized spokesperson—this is horizontal coordination. Nothing is more confusing or detrimental to public opinion than sending different messages from different authorities at the same government level (for example, ministries or secretariats). At the same time, vertical coordination enables the messaging to share concepts and to coordinate with local authorities, which is vital for preventing attitudes toward migrants from deteriorating and for letting the public know that the situation is under control. The reality is that many migrants arrive and settle in border cities or, in some cases, move to other regions, so the local authorities often must attend to situations that arise in the short term.<sup>31</sup>

Cross-cutting coordination refers to the possibility of crafting a consolidated message with humanitarian organizations and development agencies (multilateral organizations, civil society organizations, and local and international NGOs, among others). The idea is not to change the role any of these organizations plays or to promote one single message with the country's government, but it is essential to coordinate the distribution of these tasks and establish priorities. It is crucial for the general public to feel that all stakeholders (the national government, the local government, and civil society organizations, among others) are acting in a coordinated manner, as this reduces the sense of a loss of control that may arise during these migratory processes.

29 COE (2021).

30 Alrababa'h et al. (2019).

31 Achieving this kind of coordination is clearly not easy, especially in federal states, where regional and local authorities may have legal responsibilities in the matter and where the issue may also be highly politicized. All the same, some coordination mechanisms need to be put in place (for example, committees or humanitarian emergency bodies) to reach a consensus on the different issues so as to convey a more unanimous message to the general public.

The media plays a central role in shaping public attitudes about migration. There is ample evidence showing that media-generated information influences public opinion about migration and can even generate changes in perceptions about migrants.<sup>32</sup> A recent study from the Sorbonne Economics Centre shows how a German newspaper's disclosure of the nationality of those who committed crimes, even when the perpetrators were German, reduced the association that its readers made between migration and crime in the newspaper's geographic area of influence. This media coverage contrasts with what was observed in other areas of Germany where media accounts did not mention the nationality of a criminal, or only did so when the person in question was a migrant.<sup>33</sup> Here, but one of many other cases, is an example of the operation of availability bias, whereby the offender's nationality is only emphasized when this person is a migrant. These media practices can have a particular effect on public beliefs around crime and migration.

Therefore, governments need to work with the media, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to have an ample foundation of facts and figures in order to ensure that the media does not fuel any of the local population's pre-existing biases and negative views, and to focus on approaches that convey positive stories about migration.

#### 6.2.4. Whom should the messaging target?

Some ideas have been discussed about what to say, how this messaging should be conveyed, and who should compile and provide factual or emotive information that will help shift public perceptions about migration. This final subsection discusses whether these messaging campaigns should target just one specific population group, or whether a unified messaging approach should be employed.

The first consideration is the concept of the movable middle, which refers to a broad swath of the general public that does not have strong opinions for or against issues related to migration. A publication by the Center for Global Development, which is based on analyzing a study authored by the Overseas Development Institute and the European Policy Center, stresses that it is very important for messaging campaigns not to focus only on the population groups that are already in favor of migration, as such a targeted approach is insufficient (in other words, preaching to the choir is not enough). Campaigns also need to establish which messages are appropriate to persuade the movable middle.<sup>34</sup> Several organizations are working on segmenting public opinion on various issues, including migration, to better establish what content should be included in this messaging.<sup>35</sup>

It is important to recognize that the majority of the region's population is in this group termed the movable middle. The IDB has analyzed social media conversations on migration that have taken place in Latin America and the Caribbean, and finds that the majority of these discussions (more than 60 percent) are neutral, while the rest are either explicitly in favor of or against migration.<sup>36</sup> This finding is consistent with the results of studies conducted in other parts of the world.<sup>37</sup> Finally, according to studies conducted in several countries, it is very difficult to change the views of those sectors of the population that are strongly opposed to migration. The experiments described in this book further support these findings: it is difficult to persuade those who hold strongly anti-migrant views.<sup>38</sup> Yet the experimental interventions show that specific groups within the movable middle do change their minds after watching the videos—

32 Kondor et al. (2022).

33 Keita, Renault, and Valette (2021).

34 Butcher, Dempster, and Neidhardt (2021).

35 More in Common.

36 Luzes and van der Werf (2022). This is part of the laboratory on citizens' attitudes to migration that the IDB Migration Unit will be launching soon, and which this experiment and publication are also part of.

37 Banulescu-Bogdan (2022a).

38 Kustov, Laaker, and Reller (2021).

again, this is the majority of the population who have not initially adopted a negative stance toward migrants.

This observation underscores the need to segment messages that are tailored to specific audiences, as there is a variety of effective interventions. Stakeholders must find creative ways of reaching the subgroups that comprise the movable middle. It is important not to focus campaigns exclusively on those who strongly oppose migration, since their position is very difficult to change. Nor does it make sense to only target people who are in favor of migration: while they can act as a sounding board for ideas, persuading them does not help achieve the desired large-scale effects.

For example, within the local population, children are one of the important subgroups to target. To change their views and attitudes, countries need to invest in targeted messages and experiments to promote the development of socioemotional skills in children, such as empathy, mutual respect, and teamwork.

Another point worth considering is the methods that migrants use to communicate. In Latin America and the Caribbean, some surveys of migrants have found that they trust the social media websites maintained by migrant associations and Facebook groups, among others. Governments should be aware that to effectively convey messages, they must use the best platforms and channels for reaching their target audience. In turn, the local population also communicates using nontraditional media, so these channels must be considered when designing media campaigns to promote more favorable attitudes toward migration.

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### 6.3. Annex 6.A1. Control Group Responses

**Table 6.A1.1. Control group responses in each country**

*Participants in the control group who agree (percentage)*

		Pooled sample	Barbados	Chile	Colombia	Costa Rica	Ecuador	Mexico	Peru	Dominican Republic	Trinidad and Tobago
Policy preferences and social norms	Having migrants living in their country is a good thing.	45	64	44	43	45	42	42	39	38	49
	Having a migrant as a neighbor is a good thing.	51	52	53	52	55	54	51	46	49	44
	A migrant marrying a close relative is a good thing.	41	43	48	40	43	38	41	35	41	37
	Agree that the government should provide migrants humanitarian aid (temporary shelter, food, and emergency medical care.)	84	88	83	87	80	87	88	77	82	85
	Agree that the government should provide migrants healthcare services on the same terms as the local population.	83	81	86	86	77	87	83	83	79	85
	Agree that the government should provide migrants children and young people with education services on the same terms as the local population.	89	86	90	93	90	91	87	90	88	82
	Agree that the government should provide healthcare services for migrant children on the same terms as the local population.	90	87	92	93	91	92	92	90	87	88
	Agree that migrants living in their country are as trustworthy as the local population.	66	79	72	55	67	58	72	58	62	79
	Agree that it isn't hard to see things from migrants' points of view.	19	36	24	16	18	13	16	15	13	31
	Would donate to an organization that helps migrants.	6	2	5	7	8	7	8	5	6	4
Economic factors	Agree that the government should give migrants work permits or documentation that enables them to work legally in the country	89	95	90	88	91	86	87	91	90	87
	Agree that migrants contribute to the country's economy	74	92	73	57	86	59	68	72	81	84



		Pooled sample	Barbados	Chile	Colombia	Costa Rica	Ecuador	Mexico	Peru	Dominican Republic	Trinidad and Tobago
	Agree that migrants do not come to compete with the local population for jobs	46	52	63	37	50	33	60	38	47	40
	Agree that migrants are not a burden on the state	46	86	47	40	44	35	52	43	38	41
Cultural factors	Agree that migrants give more back to the country than they get from it	54	63	55	44	58	46	51	50	50	70
	Agree that migrants improve society by bringing new ideas and culture	69	84	69	59	68	62	63	66	69	89
Social stigma	Agree that migrants do not cause an increase in crime rates	45	79	47	29	47	31	58	26	56	37
	Agree that most migrant women do not end up engaging in sex work	60	70	80	52	78	45	73	47	61	40

Source: IDB/UNDP.

Note: A color gradient is used in the table to indicate how far participants agree with each statement: the darker the color used, the higher the percentage of participants in the control group who agreed with the statement.

