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Explaining the Impact of South-South Migration: Evidence from Chile's Immigration Boom

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Abstract

Studies have extensively documented the effect of immigration on anti-immigration attitudes in high-income democracies. However, comparative political research has devoted less attention to South-South migration. We examine the impact of immigration on attitudes toward immigrants in Chile, which has experienced a threefold increase in its foreign-born population in the last decade. Using an instrumental variable design, we find that exposure to immigration increases hostile attitudes toward immigrants. Regarding the underlying factors driving hostile attitudes toward foreign-born groups, we find robust evidence pointing to immigration creating a public service shortage, which could explain the observed hostility. Conversely, we do not report evidence backing cultural anxieties or labor market competition. Hence, the Chilean case points to anti-immigrant attitudes gaining ground in contexts where welfare state provisions are limited and often precarious.

Keywords Migration · Xenophobia · Skill level · Fiscal burden · Latin America · Chile

In September 2021, hundreds of people rallied in Iquique, located in Chile's northern provinces, to protest immigration. For years, Iquique and other urban centers across the country had become a hub for immigrants, many arriving from crisis-struck Venezuela and Haiti and residing with an unauthorized status. As a result, the country's societal composition changed quickly. Government statistics reveal that immigrants increased from 2.5% of the total population in 2015 to 6.6% in 2019. The government initially welcomed immigrants. Yet, as the protest in Iquique suggested,

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a portion of the population began rejecting immigrants—frequently displaying national flags and chanting slurs like "Chileans first." The rally in Iquique took a turn for the worse when protestors started burning the belongings of immigrants the police had recently evicted from their residences (Montes, 2021). Growing hostility toward immigrants, like the events that unfolded in Iquique, forced the government to backtrack on its more open-border approach. In October 2022, leftist president Gabriel Boric echoed those concerns by announcing that unauthorized immigrants had to "either legalize their situation or leave" (Reyes, 2022). Boric's speech epitomized a striking turn of events, shedding light on how migration impacted political discourse in the South American country experiencing an immigration boom.

Researchers have extensively examined how immigration shapes anti-immigration attitudes, redistributive preferences, and voting behavior (Barone et al., 2016; Dahlberg et al., 2012; Edo et al., 2019; Halla et al., 2017). Notwithstanding their insights, these studies primarily focus on high-income Western democracies. Although the surge in migration across Global South countries has also driven scholars to study their effects (Martinez-Correa et al., 2022; Freier & Pérez, 2021; Rozo & Vargas, 2021; Lebow, 2022; Ajzenman et al., 2023), we still know comparatively less about the consequences of South-South migration. Therefore, this article seeks to answer the following questions: To what extent does a sudden surge of south-south immigration shape hostile attitudes toward immigrants among the local population? What are the underlying mechanisms explaining that potential impact? Drawing from various sources—census records, socio-economic surveys, and public opinion polls—we explore both questions in Chile using an instrumental variable (IV) design.

We proceed as follows. The next section reviews the theory describing the effects of immigration and formulates the study's hypotheses. Then, we justify the case selection. The fourth section outlines the research design. We examine and analyze the results in the fifth section. The conclusion discusses and summarizes our primary findings.

Theory and Hypotheses

Immigration and Hostile Attitudes

There is an ongoing debate concerning the relationship between migration and anti-immigrant attitudes, particularly xenophobia. That debate points in two directions. First, scholars have discussed how an influx of immigrants can trigger hostile attitudes (Berezin, 2006; Delanty & Millward, 2007; Zolberg, 2006). Whereas those studies commonly focused on South-North migration, scholars have taken steps to show a similar relationship in developing countries (Crush & Ramachandran, 2010). Indeed, both regions share similarities in their critical view toward immigrants, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has ushered in a new era of xenophobic views (Esses & Hamilton, 2021). Second, scholars have devoted much attention to explaining how immigration can decrease critical attitudes toward immigrants (Jolly & DiGiusto, 2014; Rodon & Franco-Guillén, 2014; Savelkoul et al.,

2011). This research branch, known as contact theory (Allport et al., 1954), stresses that interactions between the local population and immigrants help reduce hostility and prejudice toward immigrants.

While contact theory sheds light on decreasing hostility toward immigrant groups, much of what we know stems from studies focusing on high-income democracies (Crush & Ramachandran, 2010). Even in those countries, a recent surge of immigrants has triggered the rise of right-wing xenophobic parties. Mendez and Cutillas (2014) find that African immigration increased the support of anti-immigration coalitions in Spain. Brunner and Kuhn (2018) show that the presence of culturally different newcomers results in voting against pro-immigration platforms in Switzerland. Edo et al. (2019) reveal how immigration, especially from non-Western countries, increases the far-right vote in France. Dustmann et al. (2019) also find evidence supporting this claim in Denmark. Norris and Inglehart (2019) argue that combining immigration and economic grievances has triggered an authoritarian reflex in Western countries.

How the previously outlined relationship navigates the Global South remains comparatively unaddressed. Still, recent studies indicate that South-South migration can also drive critical attitudes. For instance, Rozo and Vargas (2021) find that the massive influx of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia has translated into increased support for the ideological right. Therefore, we seek to deepen our knowledge of the relationship between the influx of immigrants and critical views arising in the local population. Due to the features of Chile's immigration boom (which we detail in the next section) and the growing signs of hostility toward immigrants, we formulate our first hypothesis:

H1: Exposure to immigration fuels negative attitudes from the local population. Higher exposure to immigrants increases hostile views toward immigrants in Chile.

Out-Group Hostility

Scholars have repeatedly discussed how immigration fuels hostile attitudes toward newcomers because of out-group differences. Alesina et al. (2001) assert that the existence of in-group bias makes people less willing to redistribute resources to outside groups, as people tend to distrust those who are not alike. Sniderman et al. (2004) build on this idea by highlighting the notion of a "cultural threat," translating into how the local population feels threatened by perceived cues or signals from immigrant groups. Adida (2011) finds that ethnic similarity limits integration, as it encourages political actors to create boundaries across ethnic groups, hindering assimilation between local and foreign groups. Alesina et al. (2021) deepen this analysis by focusing on 16 European countries and finding a detrimental effect on redistribution preferences. Their results point to out-group differences, particularly the country of origin, as fueling anti-redistribution preferences, "negative association…is stronger when immigrants originate from Middle-Eastern or Eastern European countries, are less skilled than natives and experienced more residential

segregation" (Alesina et al., 2021, p. 925). In Sweden, Dahlberg et al. (2012) found that a massive influx of refugees negatively impacted redistributive preferences, mainly in high-income groups. Ward (2019) shows how Germans view large groups of immigrant men as a cultural threat.

However, not all studies point in the same direction. Vertier et al. (2023) provide insights by studying the impact of France's share of African and Middle Eastern refugees. The relocation of refugees caused a decrease in the vote share of the right-wing National Front. This finding supports the contact hypothesis, which asserts that intergroup interactions reduce group prejudice (Allport et al., 1954). In Austria, Steinmayr (2021) reached a similar conclusion, as refugee inflows decreased the support of the far-right Freedom Party in state elections.

We aim to expand knowledge of the relationship between out-group differences and critical views toward immigrants in the Global South. We take this step by exploring whether ethnic differences between Haitian and Venezuelan immigrants (more on this below) shape critical attitudes toward immigrants in Chile:

H2: Out-group differences, or cultural anxieties, drive negative attitudes toward immigrants. Higher exposure to Haitian immigrants, compared to Venezuelan immigrants, explains hostile views toward immigrants in Chile.

Labor Market Competition

A second explanation claims that the position of immigrants in the labor market—particularly their educational background—conditions attitudes toward immigration (Mayda, 2006; Scheve & Slaughter, 2001). Individuals with higher education levels, and consequently, who are less likely to encounter competition from immigrants (as they tend to have lower educational backgrounds), are more supportive of immigration (Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996; Scheve & Slaughter, 2001; Dustmann & Preston, 2007; Mayda, 2006; O'Rourke & Sinnott, 2006; Facchini & Mayda, 2009). Hainmueller et al. (2015, p. 194) summarize these findings, "individuals are substantially more opposed to immigration the more they perceive the incoming immigrants as harming their own earning prospects." Researchers focusing on Western Europe find evidence supporting one side of this argument, as the local low-skilled worker population is more likely to reject low-skilled immigrants. This finding stems from cross-country studies (Moriconi et al., 2018) and case studies covering Austria (Halla et al., 2017), France (Edo et al., 2019), Italy (Barone et al., 2016), the United Kingdom (Becker et al., 2017), and the USA (Mayda et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, recent studies have forced revisiting this assumption. Growing evidence suggests that workers do not compete significantly with foreign-born populations with similar skill levels (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007, 2010). Hainmueller and Hiscox (2010, p. 61) conducted a US survey experiment and concluded that "rich and poor natives are equally opposed to low-skilled immigration in general." Similarly, Pardos-Prado and Xena (2019) suggest shifting the debate from challenges in labor demand to the traditional lens that prioritizes labor supply "anti-immigrant attitudes, and that classical labor market competition theory is empirically weak…

Low levels of skill transferability and high levels of job scarcity seem to increase subjective perceptions of job insecurity and anti-immigrant concerns" (Pardos-Prado & Xena, 2019). While the classic labor market competition assumption occurs in particular industries and contexts of economic downturns (Dancygier & Donnelly, 2013; Malhotra et al., 2013; Pecoraro & Ruedin, 2016), new evidence forces reconsidering those claims (Dustmann & Preston, 2007; Hainmueller et al., 2015; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007, 2010; Pardos-Prado & Xena, 2019).

Our study seeks to shed further light on this debate by exploring whether labor market competition is a determinant of hostile views toward immigrants in Chile, complementing existing studies on the subject (Lebow, 2022). We formulate the third hypothesis:

H3: Labor market competition affects negative views toward immigrants. Individuals with lower education levels are more inclined to display more hostile views toward immigrants in Chile.

Fiscal Burden

The third central argument alludes to the fiscal consequences of immigration. This line of research states that the distribution of welfare policies and their perceived access by foreign groups play a role in shaping attitudes toward immigrants (Hanson et al., 2007; Facchini & Mayda, 2009; Dustmann & Preston, 2007, Dustmann et al., 2005). Dustmann and Preston (2007), who examine British attitudes, assert that accepting foreigners depends on the perceived burden of their fiscal cost, "welfare concerns are generally a more important driver of attitudes than labor market concerns, in particular toward groups with a high welfare dependence" (Dustmann & Preston, 2007, p. 4). Under this logic, the local population that depends on public services should reject immigrants deemed to produce a net cost to the government.

Studies provide further evidence of how perceived access to public resources and welfare regimes fuels hostility toward immigrants—including changes in the quality of public services. Halla et al. (2017) show that in Austria, among communities exposed to immigration, voters with worse access to public services tend to vote more for right-wing and anti-immigrant parties. Becker et al. (2017) find that immigration from Eastern Europe caused a moderate increase in the vote share of the right-wing U.K. Independence Party because the inflow augmented the pressure on local public services. Barone et al. (2016) reveal that Italians have a more hostile view of immigrants when rivaling them for school access. In Germany, Otto and Steinhardt (2014) find a strong relationship between views of immigrants and their "burden" on the welfare regime.

We seek to expand that knowledge to the Global South by formulating the fourth and final hypothesis in Chile:

H4: Access to public resources, or the fiscal burden approach, determines negative views toward immigrants. Individuals who reside in municipalities that are

more stretched thin in their finances are more likely to have hostile views toward immigrants in Chile.

Case Selection and Theoretical Contribution

European migration to Chile was lower than in other Latin American and Caribbean countries. Scholars barely report a few hundred immigrants within the territory during the colonial period, which should not be a source of surprise considering how Chile was one of the poorest and most isolated Spanish domains (Collier & Sater, 2004). In 1824, the government began a selective migration policy by welcoming European settlers. As a result, in the 1854 census, immigrants represented 1.36% of the population (Aninat & Vergara, 2019). As Chile transitioned to the 20th century, the country experienced migration waves from Palestine, Italy, Croatia, and Spain. The program of selected migration, which the government terminated in 1905, boosted the immigrant population to 4.1% in 1907. However, immigration experienced a steady and lengthy decline for several decades. In 1982, Chile's foreign-born population reached its lowest point, equaling less than 1%. Immigration flows resurged after Chile's 1990 transition to democracy, an era marked by growth and increased living standards (Aninat & Vergara, 2019).

Table 1 shows the share of immigrants over the total Chilean population by country of origin from 1992 to 2019. We draw three main observations. First, we report a steady increase in the immigrant population between 1992 and 2019: the share of the foreign-born population is eight times higher than it was 28 years ago. The online appendix shows immigrant settlement patterns over time (see supplementary materials A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5). Second, the composition of the immigrant population has experienced relevant shifts. In 2002, Peruvians and Argentinians represented the bulk of immigrants. By 2019, however, Venezuelans became the dominant group, closely followed by Peruvians, Haitians, and, to a lesser extent, Colombians. Third, Chile's immigrant population experienced a massive surge from 2015 to 2019, marked by a growing Haitian and Venezuelan diaspora, which, as Table 2 shows, parallels trends in other countries.

Table 1 Share of immigrant population in Chile by country of origin

	1992	2002	2013	2015	2017	2019
Peru	0.16	0.25	0.68	0.78	0.93	1.19
Argentina	0.26	0.33	0.31	0.31	0.30	0.40
Bolivia	0.07	0.08	0.15	0.26	0.29	0.41
Colombia	0.02	0.03	0.28	0.35	0.63	0.78
Venezuela	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.07	1.02	1.52
Haiti	0	0	0.03	0.11	0.41	0.95
Others	0.26	0.51	0.57	0.62	0.82	1.36
Total Foreign	0.79	1.22	2.05	2.5	4.4	6.6

Source: Authors, based on the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (2020), and Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (2020)

Table 2 Number and share of immigrant population by country

		2015	2019
Chile	N	449,250	1,254,000
	Share	2.5	6.6
Colombia	N	139,000	1,100,000
	Share	0.29	2.22
Peru	N	154,000	782,000
	Share	0.51	2.44
Argentina	N	2,100,000	2,200,000
	Share	4.87	4.95

Source: Authors, based on the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (2020) and International Organization for Migration (2020)

Most research on hostile attitudes toward immigrants and the factors underpinning those reactions focus on high-income democracies. Nevertheless, in recent years, there has been a push by scholars seeking to expand some of these findings to the Global South (Hujo, & Piper, N. (Eds.)., 2010; Crush & Ramachandran, 2010; Ferrant & Tuccio, 2015; Martinez-Correa et al., 2022; Rozo & Vargas, 2021; Lebow, 2022). In Latin America, Haitian and especially Venezuelan immigration has drawn much attention (Bredl, 2011; Arcarazo & Freier, 2015; Freier & Parent, 2019; Freier & Pérez, 2021; Malo, 2022). Scholars have looked explicitly into how immigration drives hostile attitudes. Arcarazo and Freier (2015) examine Latin America's discursive gaps in immigration. Their study, which focuses on Argentina, Brazil, and Ecuador, shows how governments continue restricting universal rights to irregular immigrants, notwithstanding adopting a liberal and welcoming public discourse. Freier and Parent (2019) discuss how the massive volume of Venezuelan migrants has triggered hostile responses in Latin America. In their view, the inflow of Venezuelans has resulted in "putting more stress on already underperforming public services and stirring up more xenophobic sentiment" (Freier & Parent, 2019, p. 59). Malo (2022) provides robust insights concerning Venezuelan immigrants in Ecuador, where xenophobia "forces many Venezuelans into invisibility" (Malo, 2022, p. 105). Studies on the Haitian diaspora point to similar observations (Zacaïr, 2010). Martinez-Correa et al. (2022) offer one of the most ambitious and compelling takes by comparing attitudes toward immigration in 12 Latin American countries from 2008 to 2018. Their study finds that "immigration reduces the demand for redistribution in Latin America, even when most immigrants come from neighboring countries and share a similar culture—including language and religion—with their hosts" (Martinez-Correa et al., 2022, p. 247).

The studies previously discussed provide rich insights into the multifaceted and intersectional nature of immigration in Latin America, particularly among the Venezuelan and Haitian diaspora. However, many features remain unaddressed, including the extent to which immigration fuels hostility and, more importantly, the ability to identify the mechanisms driving those views. We take a step in that direction by examining the Chilean case and drawing on the theory that links

hostility to immigration due to out-group differences, labor market competition, and fiscal burden to test our hypotheses (see Fig. 1).

Data and Research Design

This section examines the data sources and explains our empirical approach. We describe the data and explain the instrumental variable (IV) estimator. Then, we provide further insights concerning the mechanisms that determine hostile attitudes toward immigrants.

Table 3 summarizes all the relevant variables employed in the models. We use data from Chilean censuses conducted by the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (2020) and the National Socio-Economic Characterization Survey (CASEN) conducted by the Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (2020) to measure immigration. The 2002 census data represents the baseline immigration levels before the most recent migratory wave, marked by an influx from Haiti and Venezuela. The primary independent variable corresponds to the share of immigrants as a percentage of the total population at the municipal level (N=345). The variable is continuous, where higher values translate into a larger share of immigrants. We code two additional dichotomous variables, equaling one if the municipality is above the 50th or the 75th percentile regarding the immigrant population and zero otherwise, to test for a potential effect of the magnitude of immigration. We also rely on the CASEN waves of 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017 to compute the share of immigrants by Venezuelan and Haitian nationality over time.

For our first hypothesis, which focuses on hostile views, we use the Bicentenario Survey waves of 2017 and 2018 conducted by the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2020) to compute the outcome. The surveys represent adults and contain essential questions on views toward immigrants. These questions include perceptions of the impact of immigration on the economy and labor market, whether they should have equal access to public services, deportation of unauthorized immigrants, and whether the perceived number of immigrants is "excessive." We code these outcomes dichotomously, where one indicates if the respondent agrees with a particular statement about immigration and zero otherwise (see Table 3). We appended both versions of the survey to increase the sample size. The dataset includes 86 different municipalities, including the primary urban centers.

We rely on different data sources for our remaining hypotheses, which test the theoretical assumptions of hostility toward immigrants. First, we turned to the

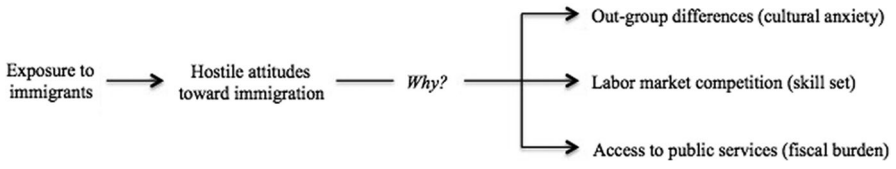

Fig. 1 Summary of theoretical relationships

Table 3 Description of the main variables

Variable name	Type	Description	Source	Years
Foreign share	Ind. Variable	% foreign per municipality	Casen / Census	2013, 2017
Venezuelan share	Ind. Variable	% Venezuelans per municipality	Casen / Census	2013, 2017
Haitian share	Ind. Variable	% Haitians per municipality	Casen / Census	2013, 2017
Exposure 50th	Ind. Variable	1 if above 50th, 0 otherwise	Casen / Census	2013, 2017
Exposure 75th	Ind. Variable	1 if above 60th, 0 otherwise	Casen / Census	2013, 2017
Foreign share 1992	Instrument	% foreign 1992	Census	1992
Econ	Outcome	1 if agree or strongly agree immigrants help the economy, 0 otherwise	Bicentenario	2017, 2018
Work	Outcome	1 if agree or strongly agree that harm jobs, 0 otherwise	Bicentenario	2017, 2019
Public	Outcome	1 if agree or strongly agree in same access to public services, 0 otherwise	Bicentenario	2017, 2018
Deport	Outcome	1 if believes illegals should be deported, 0 otherwise	Bicentenario	2017, 2018
Excessive	Outcome	1 if believes the N of immigrants is excessive, 0 otherwise	Bicentenario	2018
Education	Predictor	10 categories, from no studies, to graduate school	Bicentenario	2017, 2018
Ed. Inv.	Outcome	Log of municipal investment in education per person	SINIM	2011, 2013, 2015, 2017
Health inv.	Outcome	Log of municipal investment in health care per person	SINIM	2011, 2013, 2015, 2017
Ed. share	Outcome	Share of municipal investment in education	SINIM	2011, 2013, 2015, 2017
Health share	Outcome	Share of municipal investment in health care	SINIM	2011, 2013, 2015, 2017

CASEN survey to explore out-group differences, which allows us to compute the share of Haitian and Venezuelan immigrants. Second, the Bicentenario survey enables computing the educational background of respondents (a continuous variable ranging from no studies to graduate degree), which we use to test the skill level assumption. Third, we use data from the Sistema Nacional de Información Municipal or SINIM (2020), which collects information on municipal spending, to test the theory of access to public services. We merged SINIM data from 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017 with CASEN-based shares of immigrants for those years. The variable "Ed. inv" is the total investment of the municipality in public education in thousands of Chilean pesos in 2019. In Chile, municipalities administer public schools. The central government provides funds through per-student vouchers. At the same time, municipalities can decide to invest extra resources in education. This variable captures the extra investment made by local governments. "Health inv." represents the total municipal investment in the healthcare sector in thousands of 2019 Chilean pesos. Whereas municipalities do not administer large hospitals, they still contribute additional resources. Higher values mean that the local government invested more resources in both variables. We log and adjust both variables by population size. The variables "Ed. share" and "Health share" is the monetary contributions of the municipality as a percentage of the total amount spent on education and health care. This measure adjusts for the resources already spent in those areas.

We use an IV estimator to identify the effect of immigration on attitudes. The instrument is exposure to immigration in 1992 or the municipal share of immigrants in that year. In turn, the instrumented variable is the share of immigrants in 2017. Altonji and Card (1991) first used this strategy to study the effects of immigration on the labor market, which has gained popularity in research focusing on Western Europe (Barone et al., 2016; Edo et al., 2019). The central assumption is that past immigrant settlement patterns affect attitudes over time through their influence on current settlement patterns. There are two reasons to believe that this assumption holds. First, immigration was minimal in 1992. Hence, the presence of few immigrants should not have modified attitudes significantly decades later. Second, Chilean immigration patterns have substantially changed over time. After 2013, immigrants settled in different regions compared to prior decades. While it is desirable to have a significant correlation between the instrument and the treatment, Jaeger et al. (2018) show that the exclusion restriction is more likely to hold when the first stage is not excessively high because it indicates changes in settlement patterns over time. In Chile, the correlation between immigrants' share in 2017 and 1992 is 0.51, suggesting this is the case. We estimate the IV using the following regression model:

$$\text{att}_{im} = \beta_0 + \beta(im\hat{m})_m + \delta_r + \beta_2(\text{dem})_{im} + \epsilon \tag{1}$$

where *att_im* is an indicator of attitudes toward immigrants of individual *i* at municipality *m*, *imm* the share of foreigners in municipality *m* instrumented by the share of immigrants in 1992, δ are regional fixed effects, and *dem* is a vector of demographic covariates, including age, gender, education, income, survey, and baseline share of immigrants. Thus, under the basic assumptions of the IV estimator, the model

identifies the impact of immigration in 2017 on hostility toward immigrants in 2017 and 2018, adjusting by regional fixed effects and several individual-level covariates.

To test whether being above a certain level of exposure affects anti-immigrant attitudes, we created dummy variables equal to one if a person lives in a municipality above the 75th or 50th percentile of exposure, zero otherwise. Since creating any discrete cutoff is necessarily arbitrary, we selected easy-to-interpret quartiles. The regression equation using these variables is as follows:

$$\text{att}_{im} = \beta_0 + \beta\left(50\hat{th}\right)_m + \delta_r + \beta_2(\text{dem})_{im} + \epsilon \tag{2}$$

$$\text{att}_{im} = \beta_0 + \beta\left(75\hat{th}\right)_m + \delta_r + \beta_2(\text{dem})_{im} + \epsilon \tag{3}$$

In all cases, the coefficient of interest is β, representing the increase in percentage points on the probability of observing the outcome. All the outcomes are dichotomous, making these regressions linear probability models (LPM).

Mechanisms

We test three plausible mechanisms explaining changes in attitudes: differences in ethnicity among immigrants, the effect of skill level, and access to local public services. Regarding the first, we distinguish between the share of Venezuelan and Haitian immigrants to understand whether out-group differences play a role. Whereas Chileans and Haitians differ in language, race, and ethnicity, Chileans and Venezuelans are typically more alike, sharing a common language. Thus, we use the share of Haitians as a proxy for exposure to a culturally different group. Unfortunately, we cannot use the IV estimator to compute these quantities because there is no significant correlation between Haitians' municipal-level share and the previously outlined instrument. As we explained, Haitian immigration has markedly different settlement patterns than the baselines of 1992 and 2002 (see Table 1). Therefore, we estimate a set of ordinary least squares (OLS) models, regressing the attitudinal variables described above on the share of Venezuelans and Haitians. Here, the coefficients of interest are ω and λ, the marginal effect of an additional percentage point of Haitians and Venezuelans, respectively. These regressions provide correlational evidence of a cultural threat-type mechanism. Moreover, when interpreting the coefficient of the share of Haitian migrants, we are controlling for the share of Venezuelans and vice versa:

$$\text{att}_{mt} = \beta_0 + \omega(\text{haitian})_{mt} + \lambda(\text{ven})_{mt} + \delta_r + \beta_2(\text{dem})_{im} + \epsilon \tag{4}$$

Second, we explore the possibility of labor market competition by analyzing whether low-skilled workers drive hostile attitudes, especially among people exposed to immigration. Once more, we rely on correlational evidence, given the impossibility of instrumenting the interaction between the share of migrants and educational levels (which would require two instruments: one for the share of immigrants and another for skill levels). The coefficients of interest are $\varphi 1 + \varphi 3$, the

effect of exposure to immigration on attitudes at different education levels. To this effect, we estimate the following OLS models:

$$\text{att}_{mt} = \beta_0 + \phi 1(\text{lowskill})_{mt} + \phi 2(\text{imm})_{mt} + \phi_3(\text{imm} * \text{lowskill})_{mt} \quad (5)$$

In addition, we estimate the effect of immigration on public goods expenditures (education and health care) through a two-way fixed effects model, which allows exploiting the panel structure of this data. We regress the outcomes of interest on the share of the immigrant population in 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017. The regression equation is as follows: *spending_mt* measures spending on health care or education in municipality m at time t. The coefficient of interest is η, the marginal effect of immigration on public spending. A negative coefficient would mean that increasing exposure levels to immigration decreases public spending.

$$\text{spending}_{mt} = \beta_0 + \eta(\text{imm})_{mt} + \delta_m + t_t + \epsilon \quad (6)$$

Before describing the results, we want to highlight the difficulty of testing for mechanisms. Indeed, we cannot provide definite proof of why people may be acquiring hostile views due to contact with immigrants. With the data at our disposal, we can provide supplementary evidence of a concurrent phenomenon caused by immigration, which tentatively is linked to the change in perceptions. For instance, if low-skilled workers heavily drive negative perceptions, we may find that labor-market competition is a reasonable explanation for the increase in hostility. Likewise, if immigrants are causing some shortages in welfare provisions, we could also find it a reasonable explanation. However, we stress that these explanations are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive.

Results

Table 4 shows the results of the IV models linking exposure to immigration with different attitudinal outcomes. The top panel displays the continuous version of the share of foreigners, while the middle and bottom panels exhibit different percentiles. First and foremost, we report that exposure to immigration significantly affects all outcomes except one in the expected direction. Since we measure the exposure to immigration as a percentage, the coefficients represent the marginal effect of one percentage point. Moreover, the dependent variable is dichotomous. Hence, the marginal effect represents changes in the probability of observing the outcome (y=1). For ease of interpretation, we multiply the coefficient by 10 to compute the effect of a ten-percentage point increase in the share of immigrants. In this case, an additional ten percentage points of exposure to immigrants increases the probability of believing that unauthorized immigrants should be deported by 8.9 percentage points (see column 2 in Table 4). Similarly, a ten percentage point increase in immigrants decreases the chance of perceiving immigration as positive for the economy by 14.3 percentage points (see column 5 in Table 4).

The middle and bottom panels point in the same direction. We find that highly exposed municipalities (above the 75th percentile) drive these effects, especially the

perception that immigrants are "excessive" and do not contribute to the economy (see columns 3 and 5 on the middle panel of Table 4). It is worth noting that exposure to immigration affects different dimensions of these attitudes, including the perception of unauthorized immigration, the volume of immigration, their impact on public services, and their effect on the economy.

We now turn to the following question: What mechanisms explain those hostile attitudes? In this section, we explore the three sources arising from the theory. Table 5 correlates exposure to Haitian and Venezuelan immigrants with the attitudes previously outlined. If the effects stand out for Haitians, it is reasonable to conclude that immigration increased hostility due to out-group tensions. However, most of the coefficients for exposure to Haitian immigration are insignificant, unlike

Table 4 Estimated impact exposure to immigration on attitudes towards immigrants (instrumental variable)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	First Stage	Deport	Excessive	Public	Econ.	Work
Share Imm. 1992	1.76***					
	(0.0399)					
Share Imm. 2017		0.0089***	0.0177***	-0.0017	-0.0143***	0.0100***
		(0.0007)	(0.0019)	(0.0018)	(0.0024)	(0.0012)
F-test	414.3	37.66	839.7	11.40	6.659	13.71
Obs.	3639	3509	1746	3553	3533	3552
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	First Stage	Deport	Excessive	Public	Econ.	Work
Share Imm. 1992	0.16***					
	(0.00)					
75th Percentile		0.22***	0.44***	-0.04	-0.35***	0.24***
		(0.02)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)
F-test	1163	13.29	138.1	10.87	17.86	7.300
Obs.	3639	3509	1746	3553	3525	3552
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	First Stage	Deport	Excessive	Public	Econ.	Work
Share Imm. 1992	0.12***					
	(0.01)					
50th Percentile		0.28***	0.23***	-0.11**	-0.16	0.16*
		(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.10)	(0.08)
F-test	386.2	4.554	36.17	36.96	7.998	12.66
Obs.	3639	3509	1746	3553	3533	3552

All the outcomes are dichotomous variables. Therefore, each coefficient is the change in the probability of a given perception.

Source: Authors, based on the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (2020) and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2020)

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01. Standard errors are clustered at the regional level. All the models are adjusted for age, gender, education, income, population, poll, region fixed-effects and baseline share of immigrants.

for Venezuelans, where exposure to immigration has a more substantial explanatory power—presumably because they represent a larger immigrant community. Thus, the evidence suggests that the negative perception of immigrants has more to do with numbers than out-group differences.

Table 6 shows a regression model interacting skill level with exposure to immigration to test whether respondents with lower education levels drive the correlation between exposure to immigration and anti-immigrant attitudes. In general, there is no interactive effect between education and exposure to immigration. Hence, the empirical results suggest that labor market competition is not a strong determinant of hostile attitudes.

Table 7 shows the effect of immigration on public goods provision using a two-way fixed effect model over four years. In all the models, immigration negatively affects the provision of public goods (education and health). For instance, a one-percentage point increase in the immigrant population decreases the share of municipal healthcare investments by 13 percentage points (see column 3 in Table 7). These effects are substantial, implying that the inflow of immigrants caused a significant shortage in public expenditures at the municipal level. Therefore, the impact of immigration on public goods likely explains the observed attitudinal shifts. To check for the robustness of this model, we present a lead version of the share of immigrants to determine whether the previous trend explains the result. As shown in the bottom panel of Table 7, the leads are insignificant, increasing our results' validity.

Robustness Checks

We included several robustness checks to validate our results. Tables 8, 9, and 10 show those results. First, we estimated the IV models using a probit specification in

Table 5 Estimated impact exposure to Haitian and Venezuelan immigration on attitudes towards immigrants (OLS)

	(1) Deport	(2) Excessive	(3) Public	(4) Econ.	(5) Work	(6) Deport
Share Haiti 2017	-0.0003	-0.0289*	-0.0169*	0.0055	-0.0265***	-0.0003
	(0.0046)	(0.0154)	(0.0088)	(0.0051)	(0.0082)	(0.0046)
Share Ven. 2017	0.0043***	0.0050***	0.0051***	-0.0056***	0.0048***	0.0043***
	(0.0006)	(0.0012)	(0.0012)	(0.0012)	(0.0014)	(0.0006)
R^2	0.108	0.0470	0.0949	0.0495	0.0378	0.108
Obs.	3608	1797	3652	3623	3650	3608

All the outcomes are dichotomous variables. Therefore, each coefficient is the change in probability of a given perception

Source: Authors, based on the Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (2020) and Sistema Nacional de Información Municipal (2020)

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01. Standard errors are clustered at the regional level. All the models are adjusted for age, gender, education, income, population, poll, region fixed-effects and baseline share of immigrants

Table 6 Estimated impact exposure to immigration and skill-level on attitudes towards immigrants (OLS)

	(1) Deport.	(2) Excessive.	(3) Public	(4) Econ.	(5) Work
Share Imm. 2017	0.0106**	0.0175**	-0.0044	-0.0043	0.0042*
	(0.0039)	(0.0074)	(0.0058)	(0.0024)	(0.0023)
No Education	0.1159***	0.0302	0.0038	-0.0874*	0.1504***
	(0.0307)	(0.0521)	(0.0396)	(0.0429)	(0.0383)
Primary	0.0791**	0.0613	-0.0538**	-0.0400	0.0689*
	(0.0294)	(0.0606)	(0.0195)	(0.0307)	(0.0326)
High School	0.0427	0.0676	-0.0362	-0.0403*	0.0414*
	(0.0320)	(0.0534)	(0.0277)	(0.0189)	(0.0231)
No Education*Share Imm. 2017	-0.0038	-0.0078	-0.023*	0.0035	-0.0234
	(0.0216)	(0.0075)	(0.011)	(0.0103)	(0.0143)
Primary*Share Imm. 2017	-0.0066	-0.0108	-0.0015	-0.0088*	0.0011
	(0.0075)	(0.0079)	(0.007)	(0.0042)	(0.0076)
High School*Share Imm. 2017	-0.0022	-0.0116	-0.0014	-0.0005	-0.0059***
	(0.0043)	(0.0084)	(0.0027)	(0.0024)	(0.0018)
R^2	0.11	0.05	0.10	0.05	0.04
Obs.	3608	1797	3652	3623	3650

All the outcomes are dichotomous variables. Therefore, each coefficient is the change in the probability of a given perception

Source: Authors, based on the Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (2020) and Sistema Nacional de Información Municipal (2020)

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01. Standard errors are clustered at the regional level. Omitted category: college educated. All the models are adjusted for age, gender, education, income, population, poll, region fixed-effects and baseline share of immigrants

the second stage of the two-stage least squares, given that our outcome is dichotomous. Table 8 reveals that the results point in the same direction as the primary models.

We use the original scales of three of the outcomes as a second robustness check. As explained above, we dichotomized three of the outcomes. However, it is possible to use the original variables, given that they use an ordinal scale—or the extent of the agreement with a given statement. Table 9 shows the results corroborating our findings. For instance, the middle panel shows that living in a municipality in the 75th percentile of the share of immigrants substantially decreases respondents agreeing that immigrants contribute to the economy and increases the idea that they harm local jobs.

Additionally, we estimated the same IV model, but instead of employing the share of immigrants as a predictor, we used the share of Venezuelan immigrants. We aimed to double-check whether the number of immigrants was the critical factor explaining the results, considering that Venezuelan immigrants arrived in

Table 7 Estimated impact exposure to immigration on public services (two-way fixed effects)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Ed. share	Ed. share	Health share	Health share
Share Imm.	-0.30***	-0.25**	-0.12***	-0.13***
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R^2	0.890	0.892	0.603	0.604
Obs.	1045	1045	988	988
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Ed. share	Ed. share	Health share	Health share
Share Imm. lead	-0.04	-0.04	-0.01	0.05
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R^2	0.936	0.936	0.694	0.593
Obs.	411	411	700	384

Controls include average age, average income, population and urban status

Source: Authors, based on the Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (2020) and Sistema Nacional de Información Municipal (2020)

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01. Standard errors are clustered at the regional level

Table 8 Estimated impact exposure to immigration on attitudes towards immigrants (Instrumental Variable probit)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Public	Deport	Excessive	Econ	Work
Share Imm. 2017	-0.0065	0.0238***	0.0561***	-0.0384***	0.0277***
	(0.0048)	(0.0021)	(0.0071)	(0.0068)	(0.0035)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Public	Deport	Excessive	Econ	Work
75th Percentile	-0.1662	0.5870***	1.3674***	-0.9253***	0.6515***
	(0.1304)	(0.0616)	(0.2351)	(0.1172)	(0.0715)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Public	Deport	Excessive	Econ	Work
50th Percentile	-0.3461*	1.1553***	2.3359***	-1.7378***	1.2289***
	(0.2008)	(0.2148)	(0.1534)	(0.4849)	(0.3043)

All the outcomes are dichotomous variables. Therefore, each coefficient is the change in the probability of a given perception

Source: Authors, based on the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (2020) and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2020)

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01. Standard errors are clustered at the regional level. All the models are adjusted for age, gender, education, income, population, poll, region fixed-effects and baseline share of immigrants

Table 9 Estimated impact exposure to immigration on attitudes towards immigrants using original scale (Instrumental Variable)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	First Stage	Public	Econ.	Work
Share Imm. 1992	1.7575***			
	(0.0483)			
Share Imm. 2017		-0.0052	-0.0322***	0.0249**
		(0.0065)	(0.0058)	(0.0102)
F-test	1325	2.463	86435	377.9
Obs.	3639	1754	1728	1752
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	First Stage	Public	Econ.	Work
Share Imm. 1992	0.16***			
	(0.00)			
75th Percentile		-0.13	-0.80***	0.60***
		(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.22)
F-test	1163	10.07	44.36	535.4
Obs.	3639	1754	1728	1752
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	First Stage	Public	Econ.	Work
Share Imm. 1992	0.12***			
	(0.01)			
50th Percentile		0.90***	0.29***	0.39
		(0.28)	(0.08)	(0.31)
F-test	386.2	95.73	979.1	292.8
Obs.	3639	1754	1728	1752

All the outcomes are dichotomous variables. Therefore, each coefficient is the change in the probability of a given perception

Source: Authors, based on the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (2020) and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2020)

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01. Standard errors are clustered at the regional level. All the models are adjusted for age, gender, education, income, population, poll, region fixed-effects and baseline share of immigrants

large numbers in Chile after 2015. The results, shown in Table 10, are virtually the same. The main difference with Table 4 is that we do not report an effect of being above the 50th percentile of Venezuelan immigrants (bottom panel). Thus, in Venezuelan migration, the effects are driven by municipalities with a very high share of immigrants from that country.

Discussion and Conclusion

Scholars have made considerable inroads in explaining migration and its effects. Still, we know more about the consequences of migration on anti-immigrant attitudes in high-income democracies compared to developing settings. Since

Table 10 Estimated impact exposure to Venezuelan immigration on attitudes towards immigrants (instrumental variable)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	First Stage	Deport	Excessive	Public	Econ.	Work
Share Imm. 1992	0.3***					
	(0.0259)					
Share Ven. 2017		0.0118***	0.0236***	-0.0022	-0.0192***	0.0135***
		(0.0009)	(0.0026)	(0.0024)	(0.0030)	(0.0016)
F-test	133.7	24.15	704.2	12.27	6.980	81.32
Obs.	3639	3509	1746	3553	3533	3552
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	First Stage	Deport	Excessive	Public	Econ.	Work
Share Imm. 1992	0.10***					
	(0.00)					
75th Percentile		0.40***	0.76***	-0.07	-0.63***	0.44***
		(0.03)	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.05)
F-test	401.2	152.8	133	15.71	55.98	71.06
Obs.	3639	3509	1746	3553	3533	3552
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	First Stage	Deport	Excessive	Public	Econ.	Work
Share Imm. 1992	0.09***					
	(0.01)					
50th Percentile		5.04	7.99	-0.95	-6.26	5.06
		(9.93)	(16.22)	(2.67)	(9.16)	(9.34)
F-test	201.5	1.461	1441	0.513	5.663	8.912
Obs.	3639	3509	1746	3553	3533	3552

All the outcomes are dichotomous variables. Therefore, each coefficient is the change in the probability of a given perception.

Source: Authors, based on the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (2020) and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2020)

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01. Standard errors are clustered at the regional level. All the models are adjusted for age, gender, education, income, population, poll, region fixed-effects and baseline share of immigrants.

South-South migration has become increasingly relevant in developing countries, it is crucial to shift scholarly attention to those regions to understand the effects of migration more comprehensively. This point is particularly relevant in Latin America and the Caribbean, where countries have experienced a sudden influx of migrants from crisis-struck nations—including Haiti and Venezuela—which has the potential to have profound political ramifications.

This article takes a step in that direction by focusing on Chile, a country that, in a short period, experienced a significant uptick in its foreign-born population. That population increased from 2.5% in 2015 to 6.6% in 2019. In addition to the expansion of its foreign-born population, Chile underwent a profound shift in the composition of immigrants: Venezuelans rose to the top of the foreign-born population,

closely followed by Haitians in third place. In this vein, our article sought to shed light on two points, starting with whether exposure to higher rates of immigrants fuels hostility in the local population. The evidence points in that direction. Indeed, exposure to immigrants increases the probability of believing that unauthorized immigrants should be deported. Likewise, a higher presence of immigrants reduces the chance of perceiving immigration as positive for the economy. Therefore, our empirical findings support the study's first hypothesis and fall in line with the evidence available in high-income democracies (Berezin, 2006; Delanty & Millward, 2007) while providing further proof of this relationship in developing settings (Crush & Ramachandran, 2010).

We then shifted to examine the mechanisms driving hostility toward immigrants. The theory links out-group differences, labor market competition, and fiscal burden to forming hostile attitudes in the local population toward immigrants. Our study tested all three theoretical premises and found no evidence supporting out-group differences and labor market competition—forcing us to discard the second and third hypotheses. Instead, we uncovered strong evidence favoring the fiscal burden theory. The results reveal that municipalities with higher immigrant groups experienced substantive shortages in health care and education investment, presumably because they were unprepared to deal with such a large inflow of immigrants. This finding aligns with what scholars have demonstrated in high-income (Hanson et al., 2007; Facchini & Mayda, 2009; Dustmann et al., 2005, Dustmann & Preston, 2007) and developing settings (Freier & Parent, 2019).

Therefore, this article complements existing knowledge focusing on South-South migration. In addition to providing evidence that higher exposure to immigrants is associated with anti-immigrant attitudes and that the fiscal burden theory likely drives that relationship in Chile, we make three recommendations for expanding the research agenda.

First, our findings offer a glimpse of hope and a cautionary tale. While an increase in immigrants drives hostile attitudes, the underlying explanatory factors point to shortages of public goods—as opposed to cultural anxieties or labor market competition—as driving that outcome. This result suggests that investing in local government expenditures can potentially decrease hostile attitudes toward immigrants. In other words, expanding welfare regimes at the local level could offset animosity toward immigrants. Although it is an open question whether Latin American and Caribbean governments, stretched thin financially after the COVID-19 pandemic, can move in that direction, studies should expand on these findings to deepen the link between attitudes toward immigrants and fiscal resources, particularly at the local level.

Second, it is a well-documented fact that immigration can affect political preferences, as reported by studies focusing on high-income democracies (Halla et al., 2017). Researchers should explore the intersection between immigration and voting in developing settings like Latin America and the Caribbean. Indeed, the Haitian and, especially, Venezuelan diaspora have extended regionwide. It would be interesting to find whether, in Latin America and the Caribbean, with its more volatile electoral preferences and party systems (Sánchez-Sibony, 2024), studies uncover similar accountability patterns as those reported elsewhere. This research branch also

applies to the Chilean case, with its shifting political landscape (Argote & Visconti, 2023; Perelló & Navia, 2020).

The third point concerns the applicability of our findings. On the one hand, our results warrant further research, and we are cautious about taking them at face value. The evidence focuses on the immediate aftermath of Chile's immigration boom—an era marked by the sudden influx of immigrants and a profound shift in their composition. The contact theory hypothesis underlines the need for more prolonged interactions between locals and immigrants to reduce hostile attitudes from the former to the latter. In this regard, the passage of time will be fundamental to determine whether, in the wake of Chile's immigration boom, hostile attitudes will remain in place or, quite possibly, decrease as predicted by the contact theory hypothesis. Moving forward, scholars interested in the subject should rely on longitudinal analyses to account for shifts in attitudes toward immigrants more adequately. On the other hand, our article focuses exclusively on the Chilean case. While providing relevant insights, it remains insufficient to grasp the complexity of South-South migration. Due to its specificities, what drives anti-immigrant attitudes in Chile may or may not have a similar effect elsewhere in the Global South. Hence, we encourage researchers to continue studying South-South migration in Latin America—and beyond.

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Data Availability All datasets and codes are available on Dr. Pablo Argote's personal website: https://pabloargote.github.io/.

Declarations

Competing Interests The authors declare no competing interests

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