

Immigration and Deportation Attitudes in the United States and Brazil

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Trump reveals plan for 'largest domestic deportation operation in American history'

by Ryan King, Breaking Politics Reporter |  | March 05, 2023 09:40 AM

First U.S. deportation flight lands in Venezuela under new Biden crackdown

By Liliana Salgado and Daniel Becerril

October 19, 2023 8:23 PM EDT · Updated 7 days ago



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US and Mexico begin mass deportation of Venezuelan migrants

The
Intercept_
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_VOZES



Deportação e trabalho escravo: governo e Exército tornam política migratória um desastre humanitário

Enquanto o país vivia a maior crise sanitária em um século, Bolsonaro passa a "boiada" nas políticas migratórias, com ajuda dos militares.

Research questions

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What conditions successfully contrast support for deportation?

Literature: public opinion on immigration

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- Perspective-getting reduces negative attitudes toward outgroups (Adida et al. 2018, Alesina et al. 2019, Kalla and Broockman 2020, 2023)
- Greater support for migrants...
 - Experiencing violence and vulnerability (Bansak et al. 2016)
 - Making economic contributions (Kootstra 2016, Magni 2022)

Hypotheses

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H1: **Narratives** about immigrants' lives will reduce support for deportation of unauthorized immigrants. Both narratives about immigrants' **economic contributions** and **risk of violence**.

H2: Economic contributions will be especially helpful for **immigrants from lower-income, culturally and ethnically more distant countries** because of **expectancy violation**.

H3: Economic contributions will have an impact on deportation attitudes in countries with **high baseline levels of support for deportation** as well as those with **lower support for deportation**.

Cases: United States and Brazil

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 - Far-right opposition to immigrants

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- Key similarities
 - High immigration inflows historically
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 - Far-right opposition to immigrants
- Key differences
 - Larger immigrant population in the U.S.
 - Higher **deportation** levels and support in the U.S.

Data

- Two surveys in fall 2022
- United States (2,100 respondents) and Brazil (1,200 respondents)
- The samples match census quotas for gender, age, race, education
- We embedded two experiments

Experiment 1: Immigrant perspective-getting

Treatment 1:

Hard-working immigrant story

Please read the story of an immigrant in the US.

Maria came to the US at age 25. She lives with her husband - a construction worker - and two small children in a one-bedroom apartment. For the past 5 years, she has been working in a retail store. She starts work at 5 am every day. When her shift ends, Maria starts her second job as a cleaning lady. She then makes dinner for her family and helps the children with their homework. After that, Maria takes online courses until midnight. Maria and her husband have no free time and have not taken any holidays since arriving in the US. She hopes to be able to find a job one day where she can apply the skills she's acquiring through her online classes. Please answer the following questions.

Treatment 2:

Humanitarian concern story

Please read the story of an immigrant in the US.

Maria came to the US at age 25. She lives with her husband - a construction worker - and two small children in a one-bedroom apartment. For the past 5 years, she has been working in a retail store. She left her country because she faced persecution due to her political views as well as her ethnicity. She has been a victim of torture and has no surviving family members. If she was to return to her country of origin, she would face a high risk of violence. Please answer the following questions.

Control: no story

Experiment 1: Outcome variable

“Some immigrants in the United States are in the country illegally. Which comes closer to your opinion?”

- a. They should be able to stay if they can fulfill the requirements
- b. They should be deported

Experiment 1 results: United States

	They should be able to stay if they can fulfill the requirements	They should be deported
Control group	65% <i>[61.4% , 68.6%]</i>	35% <i>[31.4% , 38.6%]</i>
Treatment 1: Immigrant's economic contributions	76.7% <i>[73.6% , 79.8%]</i>	23.3% <i>[20.2% , 26.4%]</i>
Treatment 2: Immigrant's risk of violence	83.9% <i>[81.2% , 86.6%]</i>	16.1% <i>[13.4% , 18.8%]</i>

Experiment 1 results: Brazil

	They should be able to stay if they can fulfill the requirements	They should be deported
Control group	88.2% <i>[85% , 91.4%]</i>	11.8% <i>[8.6% , 15%]</i>
Treatment 1: Immigrant's economic contributions	93.3% <i>[90.8% , 95.8%]</i>	6.7% <i>[4.2 % , 9.2%]</i>
Treatment 2: Immigrant's risk of violence	96.8% <i>[95.1% , 98.5%]</i>	3.2% <i>[1.5% , 4.9%]</i>

Experiment 2: Immigrants' economic contributions & country of origin interact

Randomization: (1) country of origin; (2) economic contributions

“Do you support or oppose deporting immigrants like [Jose/Jason] who immigrated from [Mexico/Canada] to the US and is currently in the US illegally?”

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“Do you support or oppose deporting immigrants like [Jose/Jason] who immigrated from [Mexico/Canada] to the US and is currently in the US illegally?”

*“Do you support or oppose deporting immigrants like [Carlos/Carter] who immigrated from [Mexico/Canada] to the US and is currently in the US illegally, **but started a business that created over 500 jobs in the US?**”*

Experiment 2 results: United States

	Undocumented Mexican immigrants	Undocumented Mexican immigrants <i>with economic contributions</i>	Undocumented Canadian immigrants	Undocumented Canadian immigrants <i>with economic contributions</i>
Opposition to deportation	30% [27.2%, 32.8%]	48.9% [45.9%, 51.9%]	29.8% [27%, 32.6%]	43.7% [40.7%, 46.7%]

Percentages indicate respondents who “oppose” and “strongly oppose” deportation on a 5-point scale

Experiment 2 results: Brazil

	Undocumented Venezuelan immigrants	Undocumented Venezuelan immigrants <i>with economic contributions</i>	Undocumented Portuguese immigrants	Undocumented Portuguese immigrants <i>with economic contributions</i>
Opposition to deportation	55.6% [51.6%, 59.6%]	72.6% [69%, 76.2%]	48.2% [44.2%, 52.2%]	70.8% [67.2%, 74.4%]

Percentages indicate respondents who “oppose” and “strongly oppose”
deportation on a 5-point scale

Conclusion

- Narratives focused on economic contributions and risk of violence positively affect deportation attitudes.
- Economic contributions reduce support for deportation regardless of immigrant nationality.
- Effects especially strong for immigrants from lower-income and culturally more distant countries (*expectancy violation*) in the U.S.