

# Who's Deserving? How People Experiencing Displacement View Migrant Identity and Asylum Policy.

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# What do wealthy countries owe to migrants seeking to enter?



News · World · Europe

## Italy threatens to send stranded migrants back to Libya unless Europe steps in to help

By **Bel Trew** | Monday 20 August 2018 12:45 |



National Security

## U.S. slashes the number of refugees it will allow into the country

By **Carol Morello**  
September 17

## Research Questions

**For individuals experiencing forced displacement situations within the Global South (migrants and potential migrants; IDPs, refugees, asylum-seekers, “people of concern”):**

- How do they conceptualize the label of “refugees”?
- What do they think about the ethics of migration?
- Who do they think deserve priority to enter states in the Global North or resettlement benefits?
- How do they think about the rights of countries to limit those that they admit and to prioritize certain types of migrants?
- How do they weigh the trade-off between numbers and rights and benefits?

### **Given the state of the world, migrants hold instrumentalist and sociotropic concerns:**

- care more about their ability to enter a state and less on an individual's ability to integrate
- those fleeing conflict (economic crisis) favor traditional definition and policies that prioritize those fleeing conflict (broader interpretations of "refugee")
- also care about particularly vulnerable groups (e.g. women)

### **Alternative is a perspective taking/ linked fate view: migrants identify with migrants as a group in general**



# Why We Should Care About Migrants' Views

## **Migrants' agency**

Migrants ignore laws they view as invalid

Migrants' advocacy can change laws

If we care about immigration reform working, we need to know what the migrants want

# Literature & Contributions

# Normative literature & Refugee/Migrant Binary

## **Normative literature**

Who is a “refugee”?

What do states owe refugees?

## **The Refugee/Migrant Binary in practice**

Refugee: Limited legal definition in International Law, but has expanded over time

“Asylum seekers” is a dirty word now

“Forced migrants” denies agency to those moving

**“Migrants from forced displacement crises” or “Migrants”**

# Public Opinion of (mostly Global North) Host Citizens

## **Who deserves entry?**

Economic (high-skilled, educated)

Racial and cultural (ability to integrate)

Humanitarian

→ Largely instrumental reasons

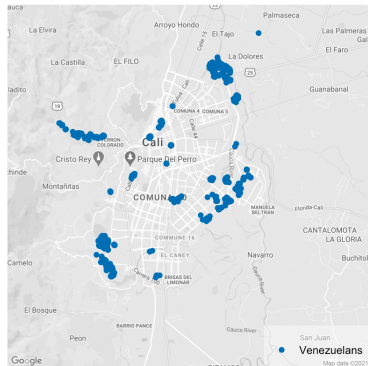


# Survey Data and Ethics

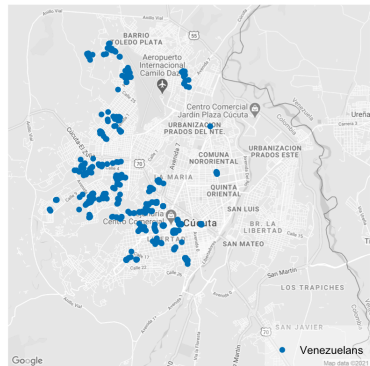


## 2019 Survey of 1,600 Venezuelans in Colombia

Cali



Cúcuta



**Figure:** Maps of Cali (right) in southwest Colombia, and Cúcuta (left) in northern Colombia along the Venezuelan border, showing the locations of survey respondents.



# Research Ethics

## **Population**

Individuals with some sort of legal status/ unlikely to be deported

No one in camps

Payment as thank you for their time

## **Questions**

Try to prevent re-traumatization

Closed choice questions on violence

Some emotional distance

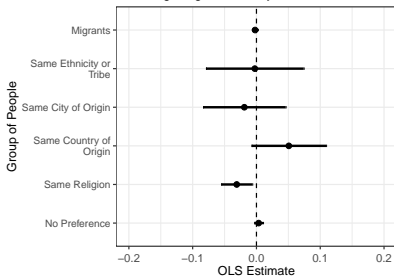
## **Where to survey**

Enumerator safety was paramount

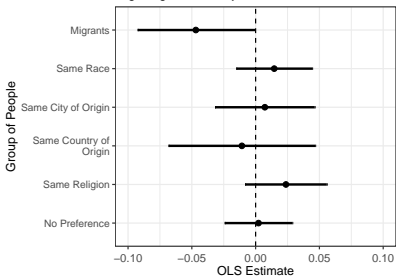
# Results

# Which Groups do Respondents Identify With?

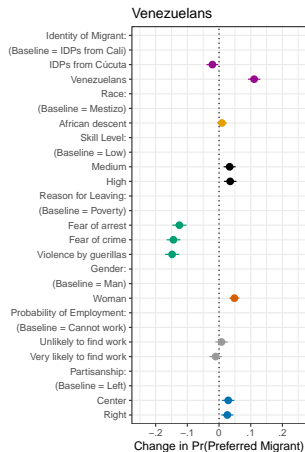
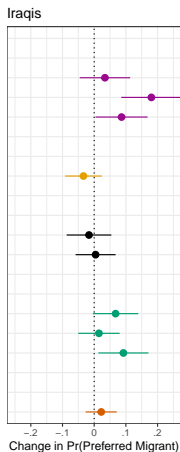
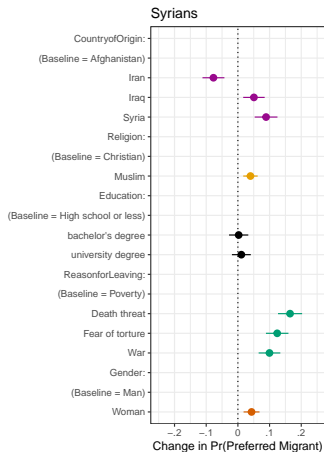
Syrians and Iraqis: Relationship between Years Migrating and Primary Identification



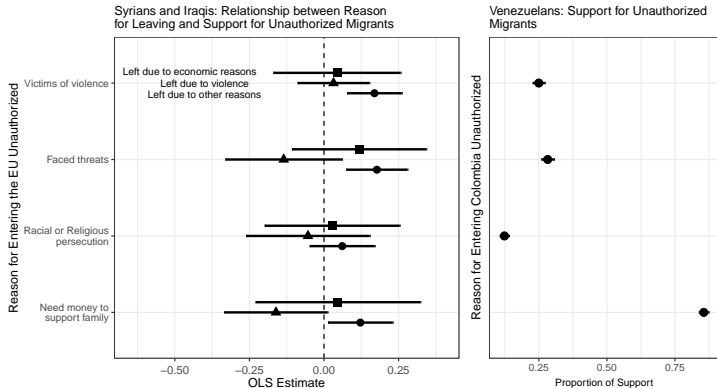
Venezuelans: Relationship between Years Migrating and Primary Identification



# Who should be Eligible for Asylum and Resettlement?

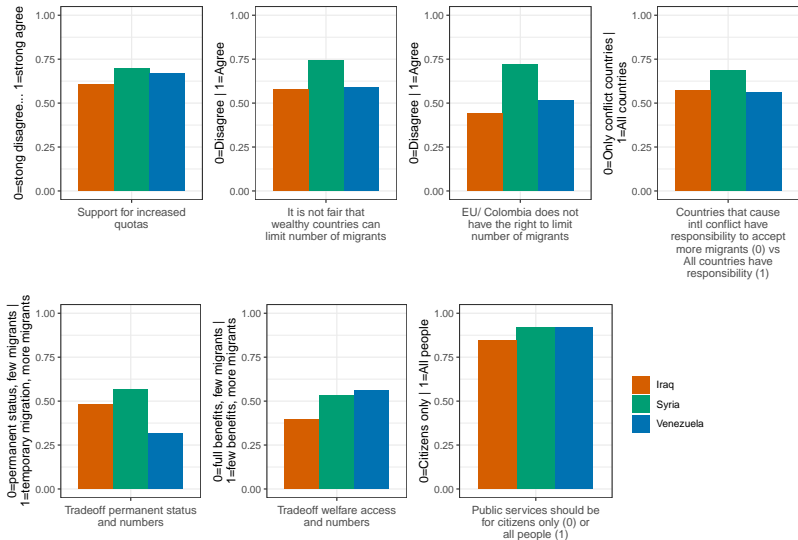


# When is Unauthorized Entry Justified?





# Support for Changes to Policy?





## Conclusion

Instrumentalism / sociotropism

Little evidence of perspective taking/ creation of migrant identity / linked fate

### **Changing the interpretation of a “refugee”**

Definition hasn't changed but interpretation has

Migrants have agency in changing the interpretation

Thank you.  
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