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Public perception and attitudes on migrants in the time of COVID-19: Mexican case

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Public perception and COVID-19

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Public perception and COVID-19

“Several political parties have taken advantage of the COVID-19 crisis to promote conspiracy theories against migrants, in favour of white supremacy, ultranationalists, anti-Semites and xenophobes that demonize refugees, foreigners, prominent people and political leaders.” (Human Rights Watch, 2020)

Public perception and COVID-19

What does recent literature say? (mostly in Europe and USA):

On the one hand, academic literature has mentioned that “crisis will necessarily lead to **increased anti-immigration sentiment**” (Dennison and Geddes, 2020).

In the same vein, Gamlen (2020) observes that during times of crisis, immigrants are often used as **scapegoats**, and asserts that **anti-immigration sentiment** is on the rise.

Public perception and COVID-19

On the other hand, COVID-19 is **not** affecting because of:

1. An **historical tendency**: “attitudes towards migrants have gradually become more positive year-on-year for the last 20 years or so. There is little to suggest that the COVID-19 crisis will dramatically undermine or reverse this long-term trend.” (Dennison and Geddes, 2020)
2. Positive discourses, such as “**essential workers**”; who are considered central to maintaining basic economic and public health infrastructure during the crisis period (Fernandez-Reino et al., 2020)
3. **Not more attention** being paid to the migration question: citizens and governments prioritize other concerns (economic, health-care, education); migrants also are less exposed to direct public debate (Dennison and Geddes, 2020)

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Research Question and Hypotheses

Despite the importance, there almost no data about public opinion and attitudes on migrants (refugees and immigrants) in COVID-19 context. **Object:** to analyse in a comparative manner the effect of COVID-19 on public opinion.

RQ: To what extent COVID-19 affects public attitudes towards migrants?

Hip 1: COVID-19 affects negatively attitudes toward migrants.

Hip 2: Nationality explains the effect (Chinese?).

Hip 3: Attitudes towards migrant in the economic domain are more affected than socio-cultural domains.

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What is going on in Europe?

QA5. What do you think are the two most important issues facing **the EU** at the moment?
(MAX. 2 ANSWERS) %

		Economic situation	The state of Member States' public finances	Immigration	Health	The environment and climate change	Unemployment	Rising prices/ inflation/ cost of living	EU's influence in the world	Terrorism	Crime	Pensions	Taxation	Energy supply
EU27		35	23	23	22	20	17	10	10	7	6	4	3	3
BE		33	20	23	31	26	14	9	8	5	7	5	3	3
BG		36	13	33	23	12	11	16	10	12	8	3	2	4
CZ		26	28	38	14	11	6	17	10	15	8	4	3	1
DK		42	20	24	14	44	19	3	10	5	3	1	1	2
DE		35	32	27	10	24	12	10	15	6	8	2	2	2
EE		37	34	40	12	22	8	6	18	9	5	1	2	3
IE		47	31	15	26	35	13	9	11	4	1	0	3	2
EL		34	23	38	30	6	18	6	14	7	9	2	2	2
ES		43	15	13	37	9	30	5	4	2	1	6	2	1
FR		33	17	21	21	28	18	11	9	8	9	5	2	3
HR		33	25	25	31	11	14	10	10	10	9	3	3	3
IT		42	21	21	24	11	28	11	5	4	4	5	8	3
CY		32	12	53	18	8	16	5	6	15	19	1	2	0
LV		30	23	36	12	15	11	10	8	13	7	3	6	1
LT		25	15	30	16	16	8	12	12	19	9	2	4	2
LU		33	20	21	30	36	16	5	18	1	6	2	2	2
HU		29	22	40	15	20	9	12	10	12	7	4	1	4
MT		22	7	61	30	12	9	7	3	4	8	3	2	2
NL		41	37	20	27	36	9	3	15	2	4	1	1	1
AT		36	21	18	30	21	17	13	7	5	9	6	4	3
PL		21	19	24	20	19	5	18	10	14	6	5	6	6
PT		38	34	10	45	4	28	5	5	5	5	2	2	0
RO		25	17	19	31	14	12	15	9	11	11	6	5	5
SI		33	15	33	37	10	12	5	10	7	7	3	3	2
SK		26	31	35	10	13	11	18	10	14	12	4	2	2
FI		37	44	25	13	30	8	7	14	8	6	1	3	2
SE		38	22	25	14	49	15	4	12	5	7	1	1	5

What is going on in Europe?

QA3a. What do you think are the two most important issues facing **(COUNTRY)** at the moment? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS) %

		Economic situation	Health	Unemployment	Rising prices/ inflation/ cost of living	The environment and climate change	Government debt	Immigration	Pensions	The education system	Crime	Housing	Taxation	Terrorism	Energy supply
EU27		33	31	28	18	14	12	11	10	9	8	5	5	3	2
BE		31	34	22	12	16	19	13	10	9	8	4	7	2	3
BG		43	32	28	37	4	5	4	12	7	10	1	2	1	1
CZ		28	16	10	41	7	28	9	13	4	6	10	5	3	1
DK		34	27	24	4	43	11	14	6	8	7	3	4	3	2
DE		25	15	15	15	26	15	17	10	16	11	11	3	5	2
EE		39	27	29	25	12	12	15	14	8	1	2	6	0	5
IE		29	50	18	17	16	12	2	2	7	3	37	5	0	0
EL		49	24	44	7	2	14	33	6	3	5	0	6	1	1
ES		42	50	47	6	3	8	3	8	4	2	3	4	0	0
FR		26	31	37	15	20	10	9	13	7	14	2	2	4	2
HR		39	30	37	18	2	15	6	11	7	16	3	3	1	1
IT		47	25	40	10	4	14	14	5	6	5	1	11	2	2
CY		50	21	28	17	4	3	29	3	12	15	5	3	4	1
LV		28	32	23	24	2	7	6	18	14	2	4	24	0	1
LT		22	27	21	46	4	9	7	12	14	5	1	13	0	1
LU		18	23	17	22	23	8	6	4	10	8	52	4	1	2
HU		21	39	23	37	6	5	11	14	11	6	4	4	2	2
MT		18	25	4	17	14	2	58	3	4	7	7	1	1	1
NL		34	47	15	10	35	3	11	7	9	5	17	1	2	2
AT		30	37	30	13	15	9	13	9	9	8	5	5	4	5
PL		22	30	10	48	10	12	4	10	7	5	5	7	3	4
PT		52	56	40	12	2	7	2	7	6	3	1	4	0	0
RO		31	40	14	28	8	8	4	16	14	10	4	4	2	4
SI		33	57	21	9	7	9	9	11	4	5	6	5	0	1
SK		37	23	21	43	8	13	4	13	9	6	6	6	1	2
FI		40	22	31	11	24	30	13	5	8	3	2	8	1	1
SE		24	29	25	5	35	1	21	7	14	21	5	4	1	5

1st MOST FREQUENTLY	2nd MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED ITEM	3rd MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED ITEM
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Perception and attitudes on migrants
in Mexico

Perception and attitudes on migrants in Mexico

Survey Objective: to explore public opinion about foreigners and migration in Mexico.

National Omnibus Survey (telephone), with 12 questions.

Three aspects of the migratory phenomenon:

1. Knowledge and acceptance of the immigrant population;
2. Contribution of immigrants to the country;
3. Opinion on the implementation of public policies.

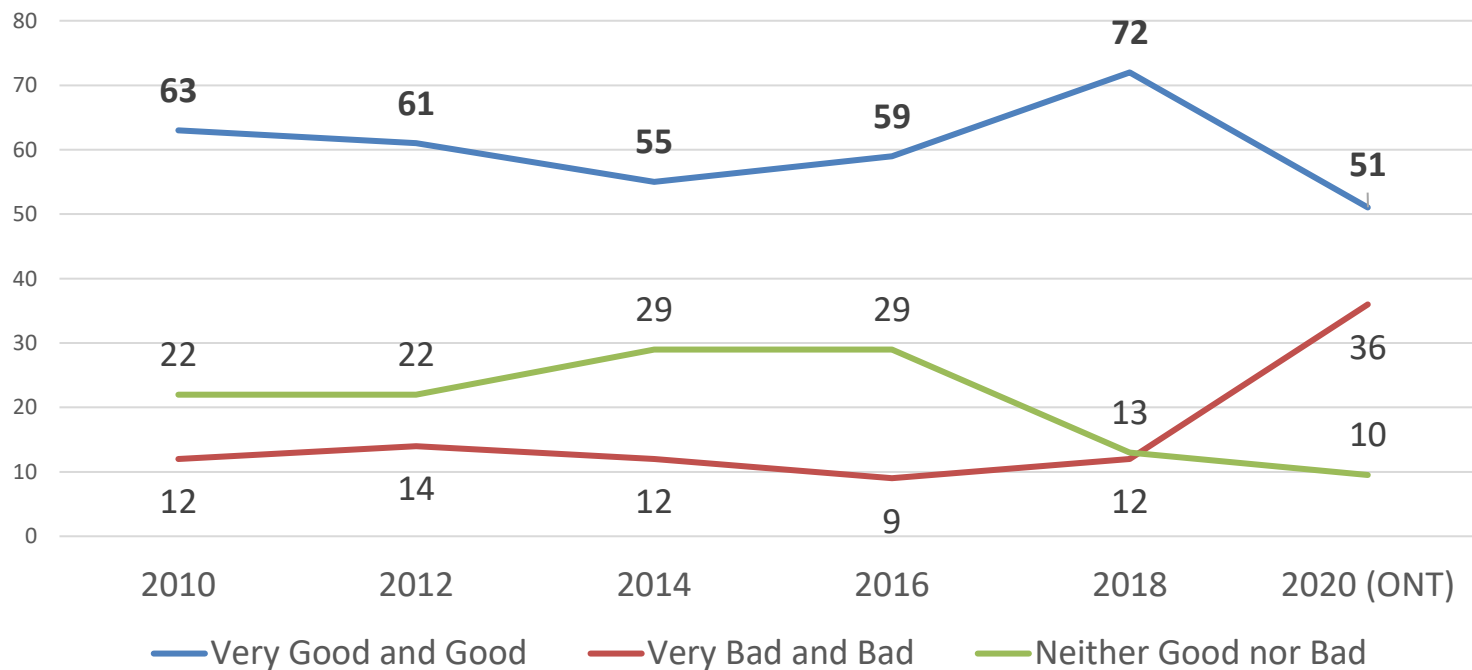
Perception and attitudes on migrants in Mexico

Population	Mexicans + 18 y/o, national residence with landline or mobile phone	
Sample and y sample error	Sample size	Theoretical sample error
	1,002	+/- 3.1
Data collection	Phone interviews with the help of electronic devices with the SurveyToGo app.	
Sampling frame	Two frames of reference (dual frame): list of numerical series of fixed telephones and the list of numerical series of cellular telephones of the Federal Institute of Telecommunications (IFT).	
Survey dates	From 1 to 17 July 2020.	
Response rate	n.d.	

Perception and attitudes

Graph 1. General Opinion about Foreigners in Mexico, 2010-2020

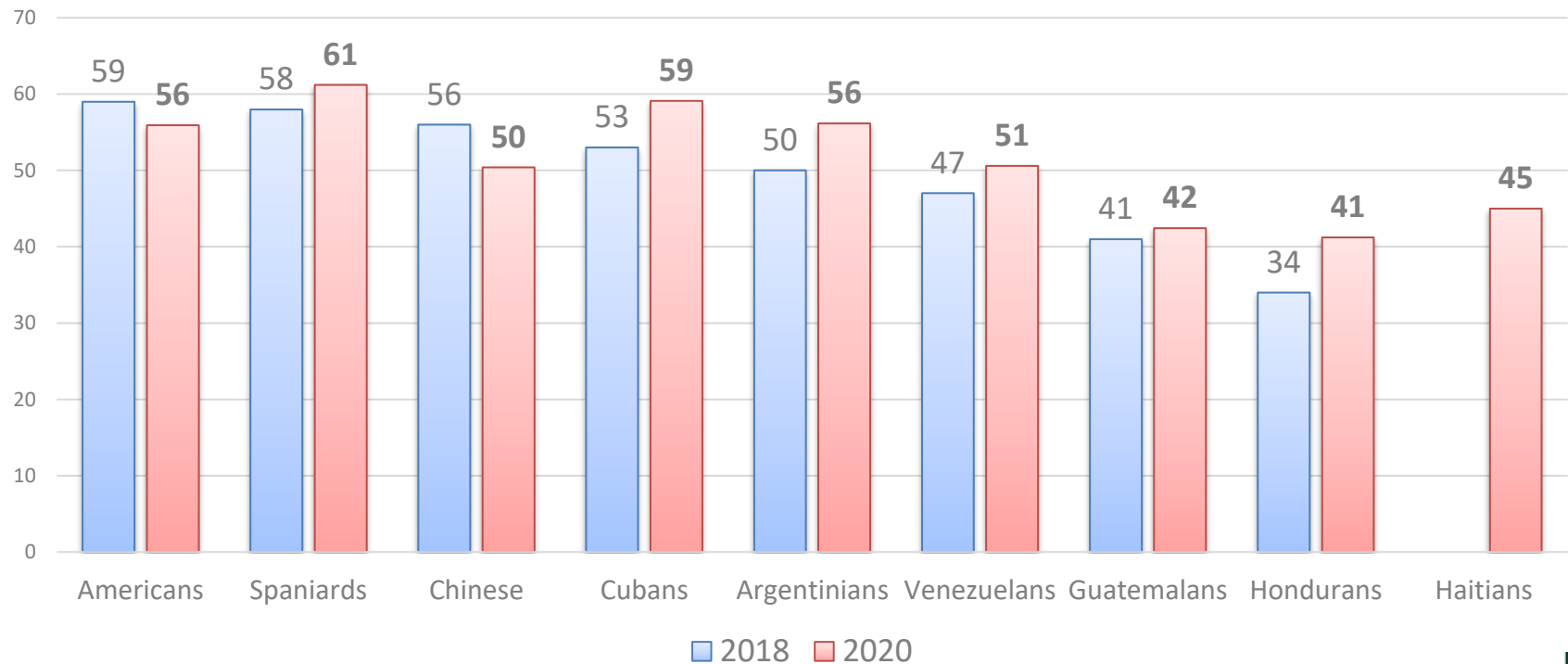
"In general, what is your opinion about foreigners living in Mexico?"
(Percentages of responses)



Sources: México, las Américas y el Mundo, 2010-2018; Omnibus Nacional Telefónico (ONT), 2020.

Perception and attitudes

Graph 2. Public Opinion about Groups of Foreigners in Mexico, 2018 and 2020.
"What is your opinion about the following groups of foreigners living in Mexico?"
(Percentage of responses "Very Good" and "Good" opinion)



Sources: México, las Américas y el Mundo, 2018; Omnibus Nacional Telefónico (ONT), 2020.

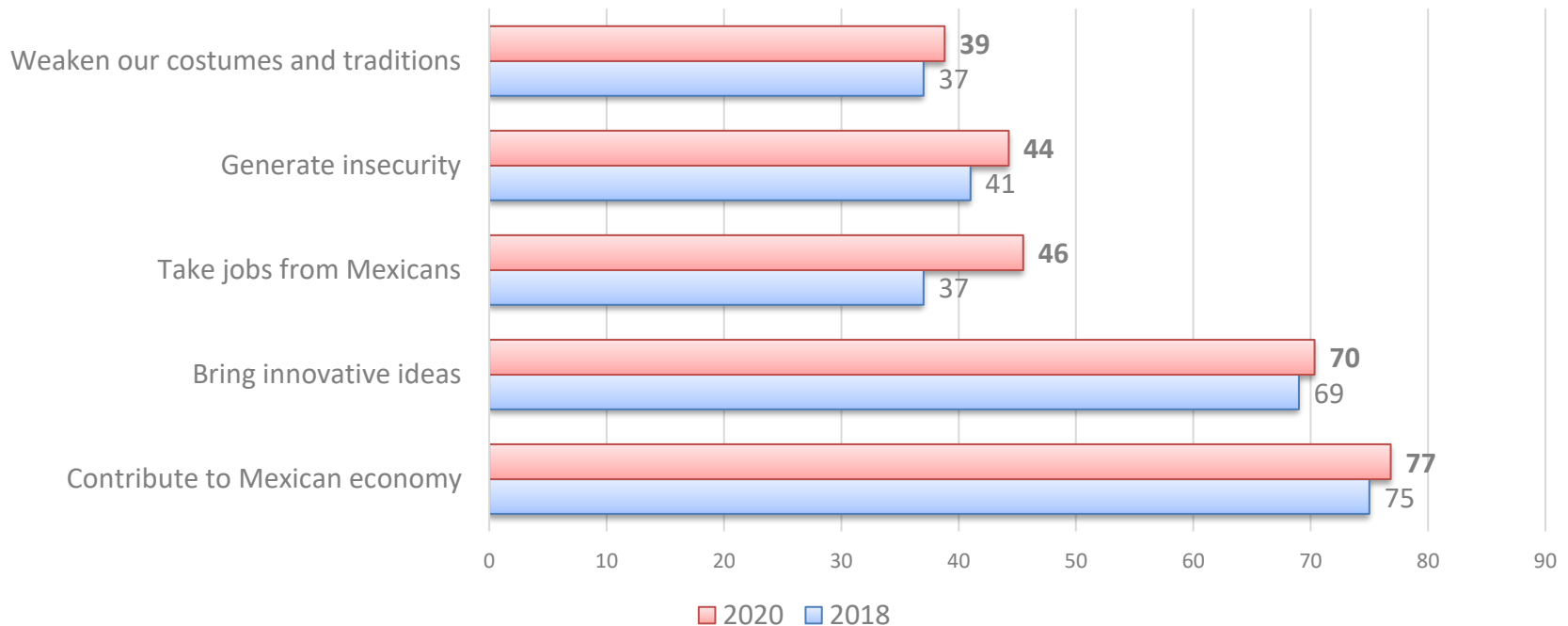
Perception and attitudes

Graph 3. Attitudes toward Immigrants in Mexico, 2018 and 2020

"Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

Foreigners living in Mexico..."

(Percentage of "Agree" responses)



Sources: México, las Américas y el Mundo, 2018; Omnibus Nacional Telefónico (ONT), 2020.

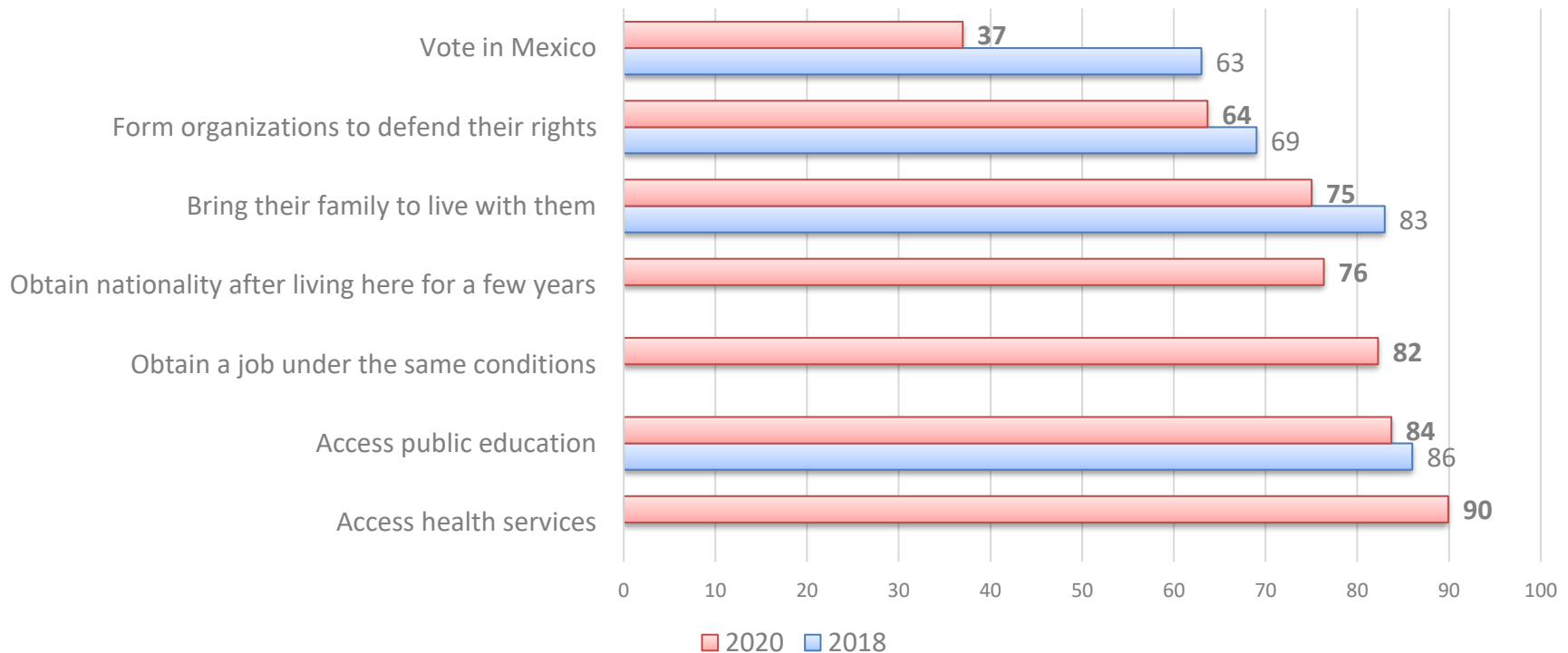
Perception and attitudes

Graph 4. Public Preferences of Granting Rights to Foreigners in Mexico, 2018 and 2020

"Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

Foreigners in Mexico can..."

(Percentage of "Agree" responses)



Sources: México, las Américas y el Mundo, 2018; Omnibus Nacional Telefónico (ONT), 2020.

Conclusions

Hip 1: COVID-19 affects negatively attitudes toward migrants

✓ From 72% (2018) to 51% (2020) respondents with good opinion.

Hip 2: Nationality explains the effect

✓ Particularly, the change affects Chinese and Americans.

Hip 3: Attitudes towards migrant in the economic domain are more affected than socio-cultural domains

✓ The change increases negative perceptions about job market, but also political rights.