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Networks of Disinformation: The Proliferation of Hate Speech in Chile and Colombia During the Venezuelan Migration Crisis

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Recommended Citation

Introduction

- Mentee of Research Assistant Professor, Dr. Erika Frydenlund from the Virginia Modeling, Analysis, and Simulation Center
  - + colleagues at VMASC and the Universidad del Norte in Colombia
  - + cohort members in the WS-DL lab
- Senior at the University of California, Berkeley, studying Political Science, Data Science, and Spanish

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Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Crisis

- The largest recorded refugee and migrant crisis in the Americas, over 6 million people displaced. (World Bank)
- Colombia and Chile have the first and fourth highest number of Venezuelan migrants, respectively.
- Prevailing perception that Venezuelan migrants are bringing crime, although crime data says otherwise.
- Instances of extreme anti–Venezuelan sentiment, protests, and hate crimes in both countries.

Venezuela

Colombia

Chile

Methodology

Hashtag/Keyword Selection

– Consult fact checking organizations in Colombia and Chile, such as ColombiaCheck

Twitter query:

– **One or more:**
  – Veneco
  – Venecos
  – Veneca
  – Venecas
  – NoMasVenezolanos
  – VisaALosVenecos
  – FueraVenecos
  – NoMasVenecos
  – NoEsInmigracionEsInvasion
  – FueraInmigrantesIlegales
  – VenecoEsSicariato
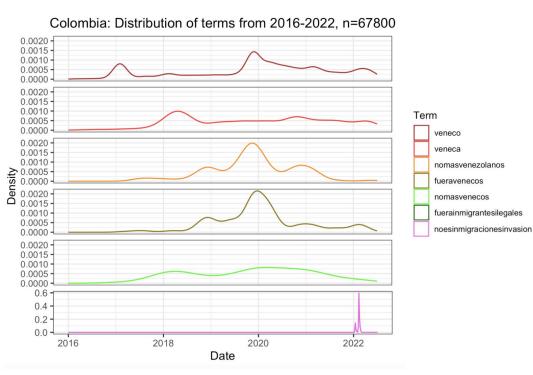
Twitter query cont:
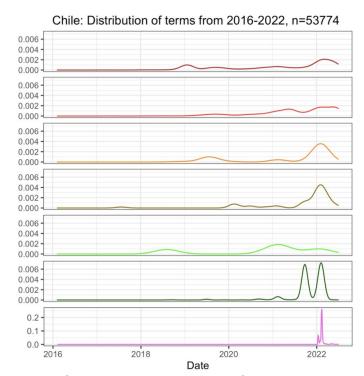
– **Place indicator**
  – (colombia OR place_country:CO)
  – (chile OR place_country:CL)
– **Language indicator**
  – lang:es
– **Date filter**
  – 2016-01-01 to 2022-07-01

Beginning of term use corresponds to increase in arrival of migrants

Colombia: Distribution of terms from 2016-2022, n=67800

Chile: Distribution of terms from 2016-2022, n=53774

Term
- veneco
- veneca
- nomasvenezolanos
- fueravenecos
- nomasvenecos
- fuerainmigrantesilegales
- noesinmigracionesinvasion
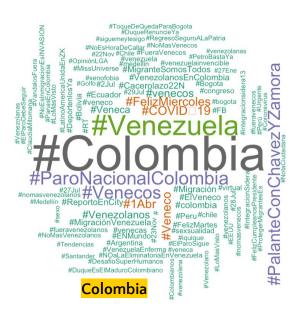
The number of Venezuelans in Colombia doubled in less than four months, from 300,000 in June 2017 to 660,000 in the end of November 2017.

The number of Venezuelans in Chile grew from 83,000 in 2017 to 289,000 in 2018, and further to 455,000 in 2019.

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Negative sentiment towards Venezuelans is communicated differently across countries

Colombia

– Hashtags are more general
– Most hate speech communicated outside of hashtag network

Chile

– Hashtags contain negative sentiment
– Tied to specific events

Sentiment analysis with PySentimiento

Positive

Raú
@Raulalberto1

Acabo de ver a Sumito Estevez en mega, y me sentí tan orgulloso de ser veneco. Sumito es como un enciclopedia cultural venezolano con un acerbo intelectual internacional. No puedo irme de Chile sin visitar su restaurante

Translated from Spanish by Google

I just saw Sumito Estevez in mega, and I felt so proud to be Veneco. Sumito is like a Venezuelan cultural encyclopedia with an international intellectual wealth. I can't leave Chile without visiting your restaurant

6:12 PM · Jun 28, 2022 from La Florida, Chile · Twitter for Android

1 Like

Neutral

T Solari 🇨🇱 🇮🇹
@TauOmega3

Chile: Hoy Viernes 11-Feb, siendo las 15:45h #NoEsInmigracionEsINVASION es Trending Topic con 23,8K Tweets.

Translated from Spanish by Google

Chile: Today Friday 11-Feb, at 15:45h #NoEsInmigracionEsINVASION is a Trending Topic with 23.8K Tweets.

10:45 AM · Feb 11, 2022 · Twitter Web App

78 Retweets   **5** Quote Tweets   **90** Likes

Negative

Ginny☆17. 🇳🇬
@Parritaaaaaaaa

¿No se han dado cuenta qué desde qué llegaron los venecos a Colombia todo es más mierda?

Translated from Spanish by Google

Haven't you realized that since the venecos arrived in Colombia everything is more shit?

6:53 AM · Oct 28, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

7 Retweets   **1** Quote Tweet   **83** Likes

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Hate-speech analysis with PySentimiento
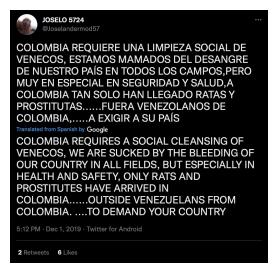
Hateful

Ornella #RepublicanaDe❤️🇨🇱
@OrnelaTheCat

En 30 años Venezuela No había tenido un % tan bajo de delincuencia y asesinatos, saben por qué ? El hdp de Maduro los mando a los delincuentes a Chile, #NoEsInmigracionEsINVASION
Translated from Spanish by Google
In 30 years Venezuela had not had such a low percentage of crime and murder, do you know why? Maduro's hdp sent the criminals to Chile, #NoEsInmigracionEsINVASION

3:49 AM · Feb 11, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

400 Retweets   **26** Quote Tweets   **950** Likes

Targeted

Ruby - Teresa 91 👩‍⚖️ María Guadalupe del Mar.
@RubyT9911

¡Fuera de COLOMBIA veneco comunista! @JUANCATANUS
Translated from Spanish by Google
Get out of COLOMBIA communist poison! @JUANCATANUS

9:16 AM · Nov 11, 2019 · Twitter for Android

2 Likes

Aggressive

JOSELO 5724
@Joselandermod57

COLOMBIA REQUIERE UNA LIMPIEZA SOCIAL DE VENECOS, ESTAMOS MAMADOS DEL DESANGRE DE NUESTRO PAÍS EN TODOS LOS CAMPOS,PERO MUY EN ESPECIAL EN SEGURIDAD Y SALUD,A COLOMBIA TAN SOLO HAN LLEGADO RATAS Y PROSTITUTAS......FUERA VENEZOLANOS DE COLOMBIA,.....A EXIGIR A SU PAÍS
Translated from Spanish by Google
COLOMBIA REQUIRES A SOCIAL CLEANSING OF VENECOS, WE ARE SUCKED BY THE BLEEDING OF OUR COUNTRY IN ALL FIELDS, BUT ESPECIALLY IN HEALTH AND SAFETY, ONLY RATS AND PROSTITUTES HAVE ARRIVED IN COLOMBIA......OUTSIDE VENEZUELANS FROM COLOMBIA. ....TO DEMAND YOUR COUNTRY

5:12 PM · Dec 1, 2019 · Twitter for Android

2 Retweets   **6** Likes

How do the cultural differences of Colombia and Chilean disinformation networks reflect the limitations of sentiment analysis algorithms?

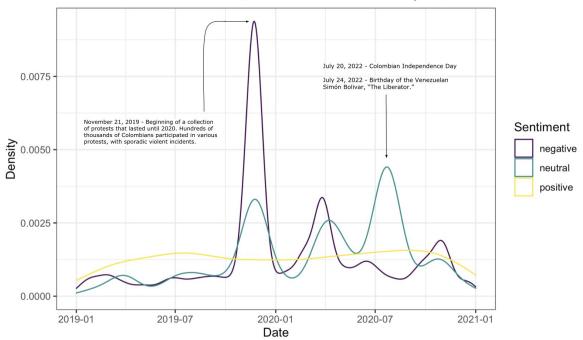# Sentiment analysis results for Colombia

Sentiment	Proportion of Tweets
Positive	0.007
Neutral	0.256
Negative	0.747

Colombia: Distribution of Sentiment from 2019-2021, n=32156

But the PySentimiento algorithm is not totally accurate

El más grande Veneco de todos los tiempos es nuestro Simón Bolívar, que libertó cinco naciones incluyendo a Colombia de donde se trata de denigrar al venezolano con ese descalificativo, por más berraquera que tengan su LIBERTAD se la debe a un VENEZOLANO.

Translated from Spanish by Google

The greatest Veneco of all time is our Simón Bolívar, who freed five nations including Colombia, where it is a matter of denigrating the Venezuelan with that disqualification, no matter how angry they are, their FREEDOM is due to a VENEZUELAN.

5:58 AM · Nov 23, 2019 · Twitter Web App

405 Retweets 30 Quote Tweets 475 Likes

Both of these tweets had some of the highest numbers of retweets on November 23, contributing to a large spike in negative sentiment

Roman Camacho @RCamachoVzla

Colombianos usando el "Veneco" para isultar a venezolanos en #Colombia... pero no recuerdan q ese término era usado por colombianos hacia otros colombianos que habían regresado de #Venezuela después de haber emigrado... cuando Venezuela estaba mejor... #ParoNacionalColombia

Translated from Spanish by Google

Colombians using "Veneco" to insult Venezuelans in #Colombia ... but they don't remember that this term was used by Colombians towards other Colombians who had returned from #Venezuela after emigrating... when Venezuela was better off... .
#ParoNacionalColombia

5:27 AM · Nov 23, 2019 · Twitter for Android

1,129 Retweets 32 Quote Tweets 1,337 Likes

AnalyzerOutput(output=NEG, probas={NEG: 0.817, NEU: 0.160, POS: 0.024})

AnalyzerOutput(output=['hateful'], probas={hateful: 0.787, targeted: 0.038, aggressive: 0.425})

AnalyzerOutput(output=NEG, probas={NEG: 0.753, NEU: 0.244, POS: 0.003})

AnalyzerOutput(output=['hateful', 'aggressive'], probas={hateful: 0.930, targeted: 0.023, aggressive: 0.641})

Conclusion: Social media use is significantly different across countries, so our disinformation research must be, too.

◉ Emergence of negative sentiment towards Venezuelans correlate with the arrival of migrants in one's own country, not the beginning of the global crisis itself.
◉ Chile: Widely used hashtags proliferate hate speech
◉ Colombia: Usage of slurs signal hate speech
◉ We need more nuanced approaches to disinformation research
   ○ Better variety in Spanish language sentiment-analysis algorithms
      ■ Tweets that *counteract* disinformation/hate-speech were flagged as negative and/or hate speech
      ■ PySentimiento model, roBERTuito trained with 500 mil tweets, but no country distinction.
   ○ Hate speech, disinformation or both?

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