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**Socio-economic Impact of Venezuelan Migrants to Colombia:
Drivers, Challenges, and Consequences**

by

Asif Khan

&

Najiat Hoque

Characters: 56350

Abstract

The current Venezuelan migration system has caused significant problems for Colombian society in terms of socioeconomic issues. This paper aims to establish the history of migration, the reasons for migration, and the effects of migration with emphasis on the social, economic, and health aspects for both nations. In this paper, the legislative environment, social services, and migration policies of Colombia will be discussed using push-pull and integration theories. This paper will outline the challenges that affect the host country of Colombia, including the pressure put on the Colombian healthcare system, challenges in the labor market, and insecurity issues related to this migration, as well as the challenges faced by Venezuelans in the process of acculturation. The humanitarian response involving the UN, the USA, the EU, and other international actors is also mentioned, revealing how the international community responded to the crisis. This study identifies several significant issues, including discrimination, xenophobia, and economic integration. These findings emphasize the necessity for coordinated policy advocacy and social intervention to effectively address migration and the integration of migrants. Furthermore, the study highlights the need for countries to maintain cooperation and develop new policies to mitigate the negative impacts of mass migration and support the affected populations.

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Introduction

“Migration is a manifestation of humanity's desire for dignity, safety, and a better future. It is a component of the social fabric, our basic being as a human family” – Ban Ki-moon (Moyo and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2022).

In this initiative, the study strives to cover Venezuela's migratory situation and examine how migration affects the economy and society. The migratory situation in Venezuela has progressed through many critical stages in recent years, primarily due to long-term economic suffering and failure. As a result, people feel hopeless and depressed (Hanson, 2018a). This movement has had far-reaching humanitarian implications and influenced government decisions. Colombia has become the preferred destination for Venezuelans.

The study will explore this topic from the standpoint of migrants and evaluate the situation through the prism of its socioeconomic consequences. Following this introduction, the study will begin by discussing the backdrop of the situation, offering a quick overview of the crisis's historical context. Next, it will examine the methodology, detailing how the article was approached and the theoretical framework employed. Then, it will present a literature review section, highlighting the evolving arguments and ideas of various authors. Finally, the study will proceed to the primary discussion of the concepts and arguments surrounding the socio-economic impact of Venezuelan migrants to Colombia.

Problem Statement

Despite Colombia's openness to Venezuelan migrants, many Venezuelans continue to face significant challenges in achieving economic and social stability. Securing stable employment and gaining full social acceptance remains difficult for many of these migrants. This research aims to identify the specific drivers, challenges, and socioeconomic consequences faced by Venezuelan migrants in Colombia and, if possible, propose solutions to these issues. To discuss those issues, we came up with the following research question accordingly:

What are the drivers behind the migration of Venezuelans to Colombia, and how are the socio-economic challenges being faced by Venezuelan migrants to get integrated into Colombian society?

Background of the study

In recent years, Colombia has seen a considerable scale of migration from its neighboring countries. This migration pattern is unprecedented in Colombia's history (Sassen-Koob, 1979). As a result, they face significant socioeconomic challenges. Venezuelans are fleeing their nation mostly due to economic hardship and political uncertainty. The Venezuelan population feels that the current situation will not change soon (Hanson, 2018a). Venezuela's migration history shows patterns that date back to the 1940s, when immigration started to diversify the population of the nation (Sassen-Koob, 1979). To find solutions to the socio-economic problems faced by Venezuelans in their country, the Venezuelan government took several initiatives, such as post-1973 immigration policies, which had a great impact on the history of Venezuelan migration (Sassen-Koob, 1979). This impact was positive as it helped manage the influx and supported economic stability. The relationship between the different types and intensities of immigration and the different types of economic growth was not surprising because economic fluctuations often influence migration patterns (Sassen-Koob, 1979). Migration from Venezuela can be classified as a mixed migratory movement that includes asylum seekers, refugees, victims of human trafficking, unaccompanied or separated minors, and irregular migrants (Aliaga Sáez et al., 2022b). Despite adopting many precautions, the Venezuelan government urged Colombia to reassess its migration policies and create a comprehensive public strategy due to the increasing migrant influx (Aliaga Sáez et al., 2022b). The Colombian government is particularly concerned about the enormous number of migrants, which has steadily increased between 2014 and 2019 (Aliaga Sáez et al., 2022a). International humanitarian organizations and the UN system have also supported a variety of collaboration initiatives and coordination mechanisms, including the Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows (Aliaga Sáez et al., 2022b).

Socio-Economic Impact:

Migration, Border, Health & Criminal Activities on Colombia-Venezuelan Border

The relationship between Venezuela and Colombia has been complex and contentious, dating back to the dissolution of Greater Colombia in 1831, which originally unified Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama (González Verjel & Lancheros Maldonado, 2015). The border between the two nations is notorious for its involvement in the narcotics trade, human rights violations, and other illicit activities (González Verjel & Lancheros Maldonado, 2015).

Among the multiple boundaries between the two nations, the regions of North Santander in Colombia and Tachira State in Venezuela are particularly emphasized due to their significance (González Verjel & Lancheros Maldonado, 2015). These border areas are heavily influenced by political dynamics, the Colombian armed conflict, and various criminal activities, including widespread corruption (González Verjel & Lancheros Maldonado, 2015).

One of the most severe issues affecting migrant women at the border is sexual and gender-based violence. This is relevant for the study as it highlights the heightened vulnerabilities and challenges faced by migrant women, which have significant implications for their socio-economic integration and overall well-being. As Colombia is the most desirable destination for Venezuelan migrants, many cross the border by any means possible (Calderón-Jaramillo et al., 2020). Research indicates that 1,421 Venezuelan migrants were treated by health professionals as victims of sex and gender crimes linked to the border crisis, although migration is not the only contributing factor (Calderón-Jaramillo et al., 2020). The complex interconnections between the two nations have led to mutual accusations during the COVID-19 pandemic, further complicating the situation (González Verjel & Lancheros Maldonado, 2015). Besides the pandemic, institutional weaknesses and historical issues have exacerbated tensions (González Verjel & Lancheros Maldonado, 2015). While the border might occasionally be a peaceful area, it has become a significant source of ongoing conflict and recurring challenges (González Verjel & Lancheros Maldonado, 2015).

Theoretical Perspective

In this research, the push-pull theory and the integration theory are used in a dual manner to understand the multifaceted nature of Venezuelan migration to Colombia and the effects it has on the socio-economy. The push-pull theory explains the factors that force Venezuelans out of their country with the push factors including economic and political instabilities, and human rights violations among others as well as the pull factors including perceived stability and economic opportunities in Colombia as noted by Nguyễn Đình (2019). It is through this framework that one can understand the first steps towards migration.

Integration theory further enhances the push-pull theory by considering how migrants assimilate or fit in the social and economic context of the receiving country. It also analyses the difficulties Venezuelans encounter in their host country, Colombia, in terms of socio-economic reintegration, employment opportunities, and acceptance. Some of the integration theory dimensions include acculturation, which is the process of assimilation of culture that the

migrants have to undertake, integration policies that have to be put in place to enhance integration, and integration as the process through which the migrants, as well as the host society, change to adapt to each other (Ward, 2013).

This study seeks to fill this gap by adopting an analytical framework that combines the push-pull factors theory and the integration theory to understand the Venezuelan migration to Colombia. These theories will help explain the reasons for migration and the patterns of integration that affect the socio-economic status of migrants in the destination country.

Research Methodology

This research adopts an all-encompassing research methodology involving the use of online articles, journals, newspapers, and reports from various media sources to establish the socio-economic implications of Venezuelans' migration to Colombia. The authors used these source materials to gather information and understand the social and economic implications of migration from Venezuela to Colombia (Lebow, 2022).

The literature review process involved systematic organization and analysis of data at multiple levels: First, it would be useful to explore the national level of influence on Venezuela and Colombia, and second, to look at the specifics of the effects on the regularization programs, the integration of migrants into labor markets, the access to healthcare and education services. Conceptual frameworks were used to guide the analysis of reports and studies by migration authorities, local government, NGOs, academe, and intercessional agencies such as the UNHCR, UNDP, IMMAP, and IOM.

Given the abundance of literature available on the subject, the CRAAP approach (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose) was used to validate the gathered information (Rozet et al., 2007). This approach helped in the assessment of sources in terms of their time of publication, their relation to the subject of the study, the credibility of the sources, the reliability of the information, and the purpose of the source.

In terms of data collection and analysis, this study employed a mixed research method, which combines both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Although conducting field research and carrying out primary surveys and interviews was not possible due to practical limitations, the research approach in this study involved a systematic review of the literature that offered a detailed understanding of the complex issues arising from the Venezuelan migration crisis and its implications for socio-economic life in Colombia (Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019; Nind, 2020).

The issue of ethical considerations was also maintained throughout the research process, to address the ethical concerns in the study, the authors tried to be aware of their personal bias and all the information was gathered from reputable sources and peer-reviewed articles (Tandoc Jr., 2019).

This approach allowed for an informed analysis of the socio-economic aspects of the Venezuelan migration to Colombia and provided insight into the obstacles that Venezuelans face, as well as the measures that should be taken to ensure that the integration of migrants into Colombian society is successful.

Literature Review

In this section, the authors analyzed how different experts have investigated the social and economic effects of the Venezuelan migration in Colombia. The gathered literature focuses on the economic, social, and political impacts of Venezuelan migration with most of the studies falling under quantitative research. This review will help the reader gain further insight into the migration crisis and its effects.

Venezuelan Migration Crisis

Venezuela has been facing a critical migratory crisis in the recent past. According to the observation by Rebecca Hanson (2018), many people in Venezuela are depressed and this has forced some of them to seek asylum in other countries. Immigration is not a recent issue in Venezuela, it has been a continuous process for some time now. The continued economic hardship has made people give up on the chances of improving their economic fortunes in the future. Hanson laments that the so-called mental health aspect of the crisis is a perfect illustration of how financial insecurity is tied to psychology.

Social, Economic, and Political Challenges

Several studies have been conducted to address the social, economic, and political challenges raised by Venezuelan migration. Bahar et al. (n.d.) and Sassen-Koob (1979) have examined the historical and economic factors influencing migration patterns. Sassen-Koob's early work identified the connection between economic growth and immigration, laying the foundation for understanding the current migratory trends.

Ordóñez and Arcos (2019) discuss the social integration and related difficulties faced by migrants. According to these authors, the Colombian government has implemented various

security and governance measures to manage the increasing migratory influx. They also examine host nation policies, focusing on the legal framework, social services, and integration efforts. The comprehensive migration strategy highlights the benefits of migration while emphasizing the need for long-term integration development.

Bahar's study is crucial in this context as it confirms that Venezuelan immigrants commit fewer crimes than the native population, implying that popular views of an increase in crime driven by immigration are incorrect (Aliaga Sáez et al., 2022b). According to this data, in 2019, Colombia had just 2.3% of arrests for violent crimes involving Venezuelan immigrants and 5.4% for other types of crimes, the majority of which occurred in border regions (Aliaga Sáez et al., 2022b). Their research indicates that there was no consistent rise in crime in the nation because of the immigration crisis, which helps to partially demolish the unfavorable stereotype of immigrants (Aliaga Sáez et al., 2022b).

Role of International Organizations

Organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) play crucial roles in promoting human rights, supporting local development plans, and preventing unsafe migration (Angeleri & Murphy, 2023; Bitar, 2022; Ordóñez & Arcos, 2019). These organizations collaborate with the Colombian government to implement effective migration policies and provide humanitarian assistance. Studies indicate that Colombia has been effective in adopting laws and restrictions to manage the migratory surge (Bitar, 2022).

Social Services and Integration

Information about social services and integration has been obtained from various statistical literature. While the authors provide extensive information, their descriptive and analytical approaches could be improved by revitalizing the legal frameworks. An analytical method was also used to address issues and their positive effects, such as improvements in health and education, which required long-term updates and were discussed appropriately.

Humanitarian Assistance

Several sources highlight the United States' significant role in providing humanitarian assistance. Approximately six million Venezuelans have migrated since 2015, a substantial number. To address these issues, the authors presented the economic backdrop, international

engagement, and quantitative data. Despite the Maduro regime denying help in 2018, the United Nations took a humanitarian step in 2019. Norway supported Maduro and acted as a mediator between him and President Juan Guaido (Kleszczyńska, 2020; Margesson, n.d.; UNHCR Global Compact Report, n.d.; Van Roekel & De Theije, 2020).

Social and Economic Integration Challenges

The literature also addresses the challenges of integrating Venezuelan migrants into Colombian society. Discrimination and xenophobia are significant barriers to integration. The Colombian government has made efforts to regularize the status of Venezuelan migrants through programs such as the Special Stay Permit (PEP) and the Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants (TPSV) (Bitar, 2022). These measures aim to provide legal status and access to social services, but the integration process remains fraught with challenges.

The reason behind migration

Based on extensive research on the Venezuelan migration crisis, several key factors contribute to the exodus of Venezuelans. The fundamental reasons include governmental and institutional instability, social inequality, poverty, and the collapse of the national economy (Aliaga Sáez et al., 2022b). The country's catastrophic situation, marked by a lack of steady work opportunities, has been identified as a primary cause of migration. The failure of the state and its institutions to protect and support its population has resulted in widespread poverty, social inequity, and economic disaster.

The political leadership under the late President Hugo Chavez, characterized by anti-American policies, strained ties with the US, and social division, further exacerbated the crisis (Hellinger and Spanakos, 2016). This led to a loss of foreign investment and the shutdown of manufacturers due to a lack of raw materials, resulting in food shortages and widespread demonstrations. Since 2013, millions of Venezuelans have been compelled to flee their country due to hyperinflation caused by ineffective macroeconomic and investment policies (Usman et al., 2023).

The crisis began with an oil crisis in 2012, which worsened in 2016 and 2017, leading to food and medication shortages and the depreciation of the currency. The primary goals of the victims were to access basic human rights and improve their standard of living (Aliaga Sáez et al., 2022b). Corruption was widespread, with the Maduro government accused of funneling foreign

funding to political party members and government officials (Mora et al., 2022). The combination of economic downturn and political dissatisfaction resulted in increased out-of-country migration, social chaos, and a lack of security.

Rebecca Hanson's research, based on her experiences, describes how individuals grew desperate for survival due to the significant medical crisis caused by a shortage of foreign reserves to purchase necessary medical supplies (Page et al., 2019). The scarcity of water exacerbated health problems, leading to more people fleeing for medical reasons. The social, economic, and political challenges in Venezuela have resulted in famine, sickness, and the fear of death for many. Fundamental rights such as food, health care, security, and a decent quality of living have been severely infringed. Many Venezuelans fled due to fears of violence, extortion, human trafficking, joining armed organizations, prejudice, or xenophobia (Rina M. Arias, 2020).

The anxiety associated with obtaining CLAP (the government-subsidized food package), establishing a livelihood, and collecting cash was laborious and frustrating. Additionally, aggressive and militarized policies led to thousands of killings by state security forces (Hanson, 2018). Despite some governmental attempts to address the situation, bad economic policies, increasing government corruption, and political dissatisfaction have driven more migration. The government's cryptocurrency policy, backed by oil, gas, gold, and diamonds, failed to reduce dependency on the dollar and allowed for mining and exploitation in protected areas (Hanson, 2018).

Due to political upheaval, Venezuela was unable to foster labor force expansion. Embargoes and sanctions further devastated the economy (Di John, 2005) According to Ravenstein's migration hypothesis, economic crises boost migration. The migration flow demonstrates the economic slump and lack of work opportunities, both reasonable causes for migrating (Bahar et al., 2018). Many individuals leave their country to seek a better future and enhance their standard of living, which can have positive or negative impacts depending on the host country and circumstances. As a result of this devastation, Venezuela became economically undeveloped by the beginning of the twenty-first century (Rina M. Arias & Neida Al-Arias, 2020).

Effect of the migration

There are various implications for Venezuelan migrants in the sector including health care, employment, security, health, social and economic integration, and policy issues. These effects are not just a result of the country's past but are connected to the country's current economic status and social reality.

Healthcare System Strain

Colombia as a neighboring country to Venezuela has been grappling with the impact of the large number of Venezuelans seeking asylum which has led to increased pressure on the health sector. The system is relatively small in terms of resources, and thus, it cannot effectively address the needs of the growing number of patients. This strain escalates xenophobia among Colombians who consider migrants as a burden to the various social services. Due to the pressure and demands of the healthcare system, more people are experiencing long waiting lists, congested healthcare centers, and poor healthcare services. Migrants' arrival has also exposed gaps in Colombia's health care system, especially in the frontier areas where the number of immigrants is most evident.

Labor Market Disruptions

The political and economic crisis that has engulfed Venezuela in recent years has had a significant impact on the labor market in Colombia. Despite the ongoing economic upturn in Colombia, which has been a long time in the making due to internal conflict, the challenge that has arisen is how to incorporate millions of people, who are mostly low-skilled workers. Many Venezuelans have also supplied the labor market with demands for labor that is physically demanding and low wages. This has been partly beneficial to sectors that demand cheap labor but has at the same time opened up the market to competition hence reducing wages in the informal sector. The minimum wage in the sector of formal employment results in an excess supply of workers, thus creating a below-equilibrium demand for workers which in turn leads to an oversupply of workers in the informal employment sector where wages are suppressed (Suryahadi et al., 2003).

Public Safety Concerns

This has raised concerns over the security of the public in Colombia due to migration. The lack of control of the borders and the high number of unauthorized entries pose a problem for controlling the migrant flows. As a result of this, several crimes related to Venezuelan migrants have been on the rise including theft, smuggling, and drug trafficking among others. The perception of a rise in criminal activity has intensified xenophobic sentiments and has been one of the key drivers of public resistance to the migrants. This results in the lack of proper documentation and tracking of migrants, which makes it difficult to address these problems (Beyrer, 2019).

Public Health Challenges

Colombia has been a country that has been affected by Venezuelan migrants in one way or the other, and this has posed a lot of challenges to the public health sector in particular. The Venezuelan migrants also face social problems such as gender-based and intra-family violence due to the Venezuelan social crisis and lack of support. CAMP surveillance of migrant sites has established several diseases among the affected population as being caused by acute respiratory tract infections, malaria, malnutrition in children, HIV/AIDS, varicella, hepatitis, and flu-like illness. Colombia and Venezuela share a border and the area is especially sensitive to these public health issues; the two nations must work together to combat the difficulties (Beyrer, 2019).

This has been due to poor prenatal care which has resulted in complications among Venezuelans giving birth in Colombia. This has stretched Colombia's maternal and child health services to the limit. Organizations such as the Colombian Red Cross and other international bodies have also upped their healthcare response operations to meet these needs. Public hospitals, which are mostly funded through insurance and other resources, are able to offer very basic emergency procedures; however, WHO and UNHCR offer supplementary aid to public health systems. The concerns of sustainability and the availability of healthcare services at all times are some of the issues of concern for Colombia's authorities (Beyrer, 2019).

Socio-Economic Integration

The crisis of migration has not left the socio-economic conditions of Venezuelans in Colombia and highlighted the problem of the effectiveness of migration policies and regulations. These policies have broad social, economic, and political consequences for both the migrants themselves and the receiving state. It has become apparent that the process of migration has put pressure on Colombia to assimilate the new groups of people socially and economically. Social and labor insertion, health and medical services, as well as education management policies, are essential but challenging to achieve (Cheung, 2012).

Economic and Policy Challenges

Other effects that have been observed in Colombia due to the economic crisis in Venezuela include higher unemployment levels and rising economic pressure. It is therefore important that countries put into practice sound and sustainable migration policies as a way of enhancing the achievement of the SDGs of decreasing inequality and promoting humane migration. However, these goals are not easy to achieve especially due to the large scale of the migration and the existing economic precarities in Colombia. The largest challenge to the country's administration is the dilemma of addressing humanitarian issues with immigrants on one hand and the economic and social assimilation of immigrants on the other hand.

Social Integration and Community Impact

Even though many Venezuelans are seeking asylum in Colombia and trying to build a new life there, their integration into society has not been easy. There is discrimination and xenophobia, and migration is a process where immigrants are confronted with hostility and prejudice from residents. This social friction makes it difficult for migrants to assimilate into the society they have relocated to, as they have challenges in getting jobs, being granted services, and being involved in social and civil activities. The effects on migrants are immense especially on their psychological well-being due to the trauma and stress that they may be experiencing from the situations in Venezuela.

Long-Term Implications

Analyzing the Venezuelan migration crisis from a long-term perspective, one can identify several challenges that Colombia might face. While addressing the concerns of the displaced people in the country, Colombia needs to focus on how to assimilate these people into society

in the future. This entails making sure that children who are migrants get an education; adults get skills for jobs through vocational training and employment; and emotional problems among the migrants. The outcome of such efforts will determine the extent of improvement in social reintegration and economic prosperity of Colombia in the future.

Socio-Economic Integration of Venezuelan Migrants

Social integration refers to the process of assimilating outsiders into a community, involving mechanisms for economic mobility and social inclusion for immigrants. In the context of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, integration impacts institutions and organizations that promote social development, including government services for linguistically diverse communities, healthcare, the labor market, and the education system. Successful population integration leads to enhanced economic, cultural, and social output.

In recent years, Colombia has faced significant challenges related to security and governance due to the annual migration of thousands of Venezuelan migrants, particularly in historically border areas and other regions (Ordóñez, 2019). Despite the unexpected demand for their institutions, there have been notable improvements, especially in healthcare, education, and the labor market (Ordóñez, 2019). In the following paragraphs, I will analyze some of Colombia's policies and the issues they face in integrating Venezuelan migrants.

Host Country Policies

Hugo and Ordóñez write that Colombia has traditionally welcomed immigrants with a Special Stay Permit (PEP3), a quasi-open-door policy created to address transitory situations (Ordóñez, 2019). According to the UNDP report, the Colombian government's transition from a Border Mobility Card to a Special Stay Permit was a significant step forward in identifying and registering migrants (Bitar, 2022). Colombia's migration management agency, "Migration Colombia," along with the Colombian government's response to the massive migrant surge, sparked intense political and public debate. Initially focusing on border management, the government progressed to regularizing migrant documents, allowing them to live in various parts of the country, and providing social services and humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable communities.

Legal frameworks for migrants

Colombia has made considerable progress in developing migration stages. However, many migrants were unable to obtain a Special Stay Permit (PEP3). Despite this, the recognition, registration, and regularization of illegal Venezuelan migrants in Colombia marked a significant achievement. Following the establishment of the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants, most Venezuelan migrants were able to secure regular migratory status (Bitar, 2022). Documenting migrants proved an effective means of accessing social programs, healthcare, pension systems, and the labor market. These policies significantly impacted the Venezuelan migrant community, improving working conditions, access to public services, and a sense of belonging in Colombian society, which contributed to reducing anxiety and depression and formalizing labor (Bitar, 2022).

In 2021, the Colombian government developed a more effective program, the TPSV (Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants), which aims to determine if regular inhabitants of Venezuelan migrants without administrative or criminal concerns are eligible for a 10-year temporary protection status (Angeleri, 2023). A critical component of the policy is the "R visa," a renewable residence permit that allows for indefinite admission into Colombia, facilitating access to the formal labor market, educational opportunities, and comprehensive healthcare (Angeleri, 2023). The TPP provides economic, political, and human rights protections similar to those of local citizens, balancing the local and migrant populations of Colombia.

Throughout this process, immigrant adults and children have realized fundamental or international human rights in 37 instances. These new migration policy measures must protect the rights and social integration of irregular migrants, who are especially vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation and are not covered by existing regularization methods. Colombia advocates for human rights treaties as the primary source of law in its domestic legal system to ensure compliance with international responsibilities in response to the mixed mobility of migrants and refugees (Angeleri, 2023). The state aims to collect more data through the registration of immigrants to establish policies that will support and encourage their social inclusion. All migrants with a Special Stay Permit, those who have applied for illegal immigration, a Colombian visa, or refugee status, are eligible for this program, provided they were in Colombia before January 31, 2021 (Bitar, 2022). The program also applies to those

who frequently enter the nation for unrestricted admission during the first two years of the statute's existence.

The Migration Act (Act 2136 of 2021), which consists of strategic plans for border zone development and integration, will be implemented under the supervision of the Intersectoral Commission for Border Development and Integration, following its integration and development policy. This established the broad criteria for Colombia's recently passed Comprehensive Migration Policy. One primary goal of this policy is to coordinate the operations of state agencies beyond the Ministry of International Affairs, including those at the central, departmental, and municipal levels, as well as international organizations (Bitar, 2022). The Comprehensive Migration Policy recognizes the benefits of orderly immigration for both Venezuelans and Colombian migrants abroad. According to the IOM, from 2017 to November 2020, Colombia adopted temporary protection measures for Venezuelan migrants in nine phases.

However, the TPSV may not be as effective as it could be due to a general lack of awareness among Colombians. Studies indicate that the law's primary flaws include the need for continuous new procedures to regularize newly arriving populations while keeping previously registered migrants up to date. This has been a less effective long-term integration approach, requiring significant changes in the future. These aspects are crucial for migrants and refugees to establish a sustainable existence in their new host communities, even though they are limited in long-term integration and participation (Brell et al., 2020).

The most recent "Special Stay Permit for the Promotion of Formalization" (PEPFF) program, based on job authorization for those in the irregular formal sector, took nine months to make available to 7,000 Venezuelans. A significant accomplishment of the program was providing nationality to Venezuelan children whose parents are legal residents. Another milestone was allowing over 200,000 Venezuelan citizens to attend Colombian schools. The inclusion of the universal right to education for everyone in Colombia's constitution, which took effect in 2022, was a significant step toward ensuring Venezuelan nationals living in Colombia could exercise their right to education (Brell et al., 2020).

Social Services and Integration Programs:

Colombia has implemented several programs in collaboration with diverse organizations to facilitate the integration of Venezuelan migrants. These programs are responsible for various tasks, including setting priorities, executing plans, identifying gaps, and maintaining humanitarian conditions. They coordinate efforts with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to support government-led initiatives. These programs demonstrate the government's commitment to protecting human rights (UNHCR, 2023).

In 2018, the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management and the Border Management Agency collaborated to organize migration roundtables, leading to the establishment of five city roundtables, four subregional border roundtables, and 19 department roundtables. This coordination involved central government agencies, the National Police Force, border control agencies, and local governments (Gobierno de Colombia, 2020; Bitar, 2022).

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the IOM have integrated their assistance to the migrant community into local development plans to build sustainable solutions. IOM's well-trained staff ensures the safe, orderly, and regular movement of migrants. On the other hand, UNHCR aims to provide Venezuelans with international protection and legal assistance by collaborating with large and small enterprises and business groups to promote opportunities for socio-economic inclusion (Bitar, 2022).

In 2021, UNHCR developed assistance programs as part of local development plans, as detailed in the "Libro Blanco de Migración" [White Book on Migration]. These plans focus on monitoring development in policy sectors, particularly in specific regions of the country, based on relocation plans, accommodation, primary healthcare, guidance, and information dissemination (Bitar, 2022).

Challenges Faced by Migrants

Discrimination and Xenophobia

Xenophobia is a significant challenge for the host country when enacting immigration policies. Various forms of prejudice instill anxiety in migrants about being exploited in different ways. Local administrations are concerned about migrant instability, health, and unemployment among the many issues they must address (Bitar, 2022). The Colombian public often holds unfavorable views of Venezuelan migrants, which complicates their stay in the host nation. Security concerns related to xenophobia can impede migrants' access to hospitals and clinics (Bitar, 2022).

Research indicates that cultural differences, educational barriers, and associations with violence in border regions contribute to the spread of xenophobia (Rosen & Crafter, 2018). Migrants often face societal prejudice, which affects their access to essential services such as healthcare, banking, utilities, and broadband. Despite international conventions like the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which prohibits discrimination based on nationality, misinformation in the media has made migrants uncertain about using available services (Rosen & Crafter, 2018).

Many migrants experience discrimination in the form of abuse by locals. Lack of trust has limited opportunities for Venezuelan businesses to engage in the economic sector. Even highly reputable, educated, and experienced candidates face low employment rates (Bitar, 2022). Rejections in the migration regularization program pose significant barriers, contributing to increased prejudice and xenophobia. The Xenophobia Barometer research suggests that media coverage emphasizing criminal behavior by migrants exacerbates negative attitudes without solid evidence (Bitar, 2022). Migrants are often blamed for social ills and violence, with terms such as "socioeconomic crisis," "fear and anxiety," "discrimination in racism and sexism," and "protection of children and adolescents" further fueling xenophobia (Rosen & Crafter, 2018). Additionally, competition among insecure migrants for opportunities contributes to xenophobia (Bitar, 2022).

Economic integration difficulties

One of the Colombian government's primary aims is to encourage the economic integration of immigrants. Local administrations are particularly concerned about employment, and various organizations have shown interest in collaborating to address this issue. According to research, the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants is a critical factor in determining economic growth (Arilla, 2022). However, the Colombian government has long struggled to integrate a large number of migrants into the labor market effectively.

Integration plans primarily focus on documenting migrants to facilitate their employment. This documentation is crucial for incorporating migrants into the workforce, driven by the need to maintain security and reduce potential criminal activity. Violence and instability experienced during and after migration can destabilize social, political, and economic conditions. Therefore, integration strategies should prioritize documenting migrants and assisting them in entering the labor force (Bitar, 2022).

Colombia's Employment-Based Regularization Programme (PEPFF) allows Venezuelan migrants to apply for formal sector positions, promoting formal labor. Regularization is prioritized to reduce the likelihood of criminality. However, even with genuine degrees, many Venezuelans find themselves relegated to informal or education-related jobs due to a lack of support and community interest. Educational barriers remain significant, and the implementation of education programs for a large migrant population is far from complete. Consequently, access to Colombia's labor market remains limited, and working conditions are often subpar (Bolter, 2020).

Research indicates that Venezuelans prefer working in the informal economy over formal sectors, primarily due to their low education levels, which presents a challenge for the government in integrating them into the formal labor market (Arilla, 2022). Enhancing the education of migrants is crucial for better integration. Additionally, fostering job development and expanding opportunities across various industries can help mitigate the negative impacts of current integration policies (Bitar, 2022).

Humanitarian Response to the migration crisis

The arrival of COVID-19 in March 2020 further complicated the country's already dire migratory situation (Margesson, n.d.). As a key contributor to the humanitarian response to the Venezuelan crisis, the United States assists refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable people (Office of the Spokesperson, 2023). Since 2015, around 6 million Venezuelans have fled their homeland, seeking shelter in 17 countries, with more than 7.7 million people in Venezuela requiring immediate humanitarian assistance. In response, the US ambassador to the UN pledged over \$140 million in additional aid and more than \$31 million for development causes during the 2023 international conference in Brussels, showing solidarity with Venezuelan refugees and their host countries (Office of the Spokesperson, 2023).

The Secretary-General proposed assigning special representatives from UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to coordinate efforts among communities, governments, and regional institutions to address the nation's migration crisis (Kleszczyńska, 2020). The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) established its coordination structure along with regional hubs in Venezuela in February 2019 (Margesson, n.d.). Although the Maduro government provided significant humanitarian assistance in 2018,

the UN humanitarian entity gained access in 2019 to maximize its humanitarian and protection activities (Margesson, n.d.).

By August 2020, this initiative had reached 129 operational actors with 234 future projects planned. UNOCHA and its partners developed the 2020 humanitarian response plan to manage and assess responses for the most vulnerable individuals in the country. The program provided extensive assistance in areas such as food security, water, sanitation, hygiene, and health (Margesson, n.d.). However, the UN faced constraints such as limited supplies of water and fuel, extended power outages, and communication problems due to criminal activity (Margesson, n.d.).

The European Union firmly opposed Nicolas Maduro's legislative efforts, supporting Juan Guaidó as interim president. This move highlighted the complexities of the crisis, even with an integrated executive body (Kleszczyńska, 2020). Consequently, Canada, the EU, Panama, and Switzerland imposed sectoral sanctions on lawmakers who supported Maduro's administration or were involved in his decisions (Kleszczyńska, 2020). An International Contact Group, including EU countries, Uruguay, the UK, Spain, Sweden, Italy, Costa Rica, Ecuador, France, Germany, Portugal, Panama, and the Netherlands, was established to foster positive ties with Latin American countries. The main aim was to control the electoral process in Venezuela, combine humanitarian activities with efforts to free political prisoners and establish a new electoral council (Kleszczyńska, 2020).

In October 2019, Brussels hosted an international solidarity conference focused on South American migration and Venezuelan refugees. The primary goal was to increase global awareness of Venezuela's migration and refugee crisis in relation to the country's political and economic downturn (Kleszczyńska, 2020). They also aimed to establish a long-term financial scope within the public and private sectors to sustain ongoing activities addressing the crisis (Kleszczyńska, 2020).

Norway, along with other European and Scandinavian nations, has consistently supported Venezuela during this crisis. In 2019, Norway played a crucial role as a mediator between President Maduro and interim president Juan Guaidó (Kleszczyńska, 2020). However, the likelihood of Nicolas Maduro running for office again posed a significant challenge. Following Chavez's death in 2013, Maduro assumed office and imposed strict regulations on the population, leading to public demonstrations in 2017 demanding respect for the separation of

powers, the release of political prisoners, and the delay of early presidential elections (Kleszczyńska, 2020). The different governance structures that Maduro has put in place have limited the ability to adequately address the humanitarian crisis in the country (Kleszczyńska, 2020). This division makes it challenging to address the problems, and while some Latin American nations back Maduro, the government remains in power (Kleszczyńska, 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study aimed at understanding the Venezuelan migration crisis and its socioeconomic impacts. In this discussion, the historical background of the migration and the effects that followed were analyzed. The purpose of this study was to learn about the situation in both Venezuela, as well as in Colombia, about the drivers related to migration, and about the social and economic context shared by millions of people affected by this migration. To do this, we looked at the literature to get a further understanding of the situation. These discussions covered the legal systems and structures, social services, and migration policies of Colombia as the host country while focusing on social incorporation systems. We also considered such things as the controversies, humanitarian actions, and other relevant factors associated with this kind of migration.

Thus, the study suggests that policy advocacy and social intervention would be the most relevant strategies for tackling the problems related to Venezuelan migration. Although it may not be possible to replicate this approach in every case, it outlines a process for creating integrated solutions that consider the complex nature of migration and its effect on migrants and the populations in the receiving countries.

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