

# MIGRATORY REALITY IN THE SAN JOSÉ DE CÚCUTA BORDER ZONE

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## ABSTRACT

This research corresponds to an analysis of the current reality of the territory of the Colombian-Venezuelan border of San José de Cúcuta, based on the characterization of migrants who have arrived and settled in the northwestern sector, informal settlement La Fortaleza Comuna No. 8 in the peripheral area of the city, from where an international Venezuelan human mobility was evidenced, which took greater strength in 2015, after the breakdown of relations between the Colombian and Venezuelan State, aggravating the humanitarian crisis, security and stability of the border territory. The methodological framework corresponded to a positivist approach, which allowed the characterization of the population concerning their social and economic environment, as well as the socio-demographic characteristics of the household, access to health services, education, labor and occupational skills, financial inclusion, housing and household characteristics and aspects of migration. As findings and conclusions, it is highlighted that the migratory phenomenon has generated an informal appropriation of the territory in San José de Cúcuta with greater emphasis on the expansion land located in the northwestern side of the city -sector La Fortaleza. This generated a fragmentation of the urban space and spatial isolation that resulted in the disintegration of the social fabric, which in the case of the border city is evidenced by residential segregation, deterioration and difficulties in mobility, problems of access to services and reduced access to opportunities.

**Keywords:** Population Characterization, Border, Migration, Human Mobility, Territory, Territory

## I. INTRODUCTION

The migration phenomenon is nowadays a priority issue in the main work tables worldwide and for the different disciplines that deal with the study of human beings and their relationship with the environment, such as anthropology, sociology, social and human sciences, psychology, social work, architecture and law; among others.

In this sense, for authors such as Aguilar-Barreto et al. (2017), within academic studies, each branch of knowledge presents specific studies and contributions from their work and understanding

of the migration phenomenon. An aspect worth highlighting for this phenomenon corresponds to its complexity when taking into account that its characteristics, problems, advantages and disadvantages vary according to the social, economic, political and territorial context in which it develops. In this sense, the States and international and national organizations have been in favor of the generation of regulations that favor the recognition of fundamental rights, access to justice, the strengthening of public policies, and the protection of the human being; thus becoming a challenging element for the governments in

terms of generating answers for the productive sectors, the labor market, citizen security; which in this case corresponds to the Colombian-Venezuelan border.

In this sense, the objective of this article consists in the characterization of the Colombian-Venezuelan migratory reality that lives in the northwestern sector of the informal settlement La Fortaleza, commune No. 8 of the territory of San José de Cúcuta, to identify the perspectives, challenges and problems of the migratory phenomenon concerning the satisfaction of the basic needs of migrants in aspects such as health, education, housing, economic, social and services, to establish the migratory reality of this population group and its impact on the territory.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

In this research process, the positivist approach was selected because of the development of a systematic process and without influencing the opinion of the informants towards any tendency (Rodríguez, 2003). A questionnaire was designed, which is the tool suggested for the development of this type of study to access a large number of informants (García, 2003). This instrument was composed of three sections, each with a clear intention, starting with the general characteristics of the informant, and then moving on to the identification of various aspects associated with social conditions and access to different services linked to daily life; ending with the identification of housing characteristics. In all the items, closed response options were provided with the selection of a single response to the aspects mentioned.

The instrument was endorsed by the judgment of three experts who worked for more than two years with the migrant population arriving in the city. Once the review was completed, approaches were made to various social leaders of the community under study. In this way, it was possible to guarantee that the informants were committed to providing the required information following a field design, given that the data were collected from the primary source and in their place of residence.

The population of interest corresponded to migrants who arrived and settled in the northwestern sector of the city of San José de Cúcuta, Department of Norte de Santander - Colombia. For the selection of the sample, non-probabilistic sampling was used under the voluntary sampling technique (Martínez, 2012), applied to Comuna 8, La Fortaleza sector, where a door-to-door visit was made to discuss the objective of the research and the use of data under confidentiality criteria, thus achieving a sample size of 90 key informants. The instrument used made it possible to determine the spatial and social segregation of Venezuelan migrants who have arrived in the city, through study dimensions such as: social aspects, socio-demographic characteristics of the household, access to health services, education, labor market, labor and occupational skills, financial inclusion, migration, family reunification and return, discrimination and perception of integration, housing and household characteristics.

Once the sample size was completed, the data were digitized in a data in SPSS software to process them and generate the information, which was organized in frequency tables, reporting absolute frequencies and their equivalent percentage. Due to the treatment given to the data, it is concluded that in this research the problem has been approached at a descriptive level (Arias, 2012).

## 3. MIGRATION ON THE COLOMBIAN-VENEZUELAN BORDER

The Colombian-Venezuelan border is comprised of the municipalities of Carmen, Teorama, San José de Cúcuta, Tibú, Ragonvalia, Toledo, Herrán, Villa del Rosario, Puerto Santander and El Escobal (Colombia, Norte de Santander) as well as San Antonio del Táchira, Rafael Urdaneta, Pedro María Ureña, Ayacucho, Lobatera, García de Hevia and Bolívar (Venezuela, Táchira State). During its history, it has been considered one of the most active land borders in Latin America, taking into account that through it goods, services and people are mobilized with a high focus on commercial exchange and social and cultural relationships (Mazuera et al., 2017). It should be

noted that the territorial dynamics of each of the States have configured positive and negative scenarios that have resulted in socio-territorial effects for each of the territories. Thus, the historical development of this border has gone through complex situations in response to governmental events through which its opening or closing has been in constant change (Linares, 2019).

Human mobility or international migration along the Colombian-Venezuelan border is characterized by four types of migration: pendular, when taking into account that the mobilities are carried out employing constant passages between the territories, under the purpose of the supply of basic inputs and family basket; transit, which refers to the human transfer through the territory not with the purpose of settling, but to continue to another country; regular, which corresponds to that which is carried out through the seven migration control points (Simón Bolívar International Bridge, Francisco de Paula Santander Bridge and Puerto Santander in

Norte de Santander). It is noteworthy that the period of stay corresponding to this type of migration is 90 days, and irregular, determined by the entry to the territory through unauthorized access (control) or established upon exceeding the 90-day stay (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights [IACHR], 2015, p. 67).

For the Colombian-Venezuelan border, international migration is considered a relevant and high-impact urban fact. This when taking into account that its origin is determined by internal and external factors considered as triggers for human mobilities (Table 1), which for the case of this border meant an increase in the migration rate from 2015 in response to the worsening of the Venezuelan internal problems and crisis, the breakdown of relations between the Colombian and Venezuelan States and the closure of the border; motivating the transfer of a high percentage of the Venezuelan population to Colombian territory in search of improving their quality of life and the satisfaction of their basic needs (Tolosa, 2018).

Table 1 Factors associated with migration

<b>Internal</b>	<b>External</b>
Frustration with life expectations.	Lack of alternatives for occupational attainment
Frustration in personal fulfillment.	Social uncertainty about the economic future.
Generational mandate linked to the family migration chain community.	General insecurity in the face of growing violence.
Access to information about options abroad.	Unmet basic needs.
Conviction of the impossibility of ethical-value fulfillment in the society of origin.	

In response to the above, in the Colombian territory (with special emphasis on the city of San José de Cúcuta as a receiving, transit or host city) the demand for the provision of services such as

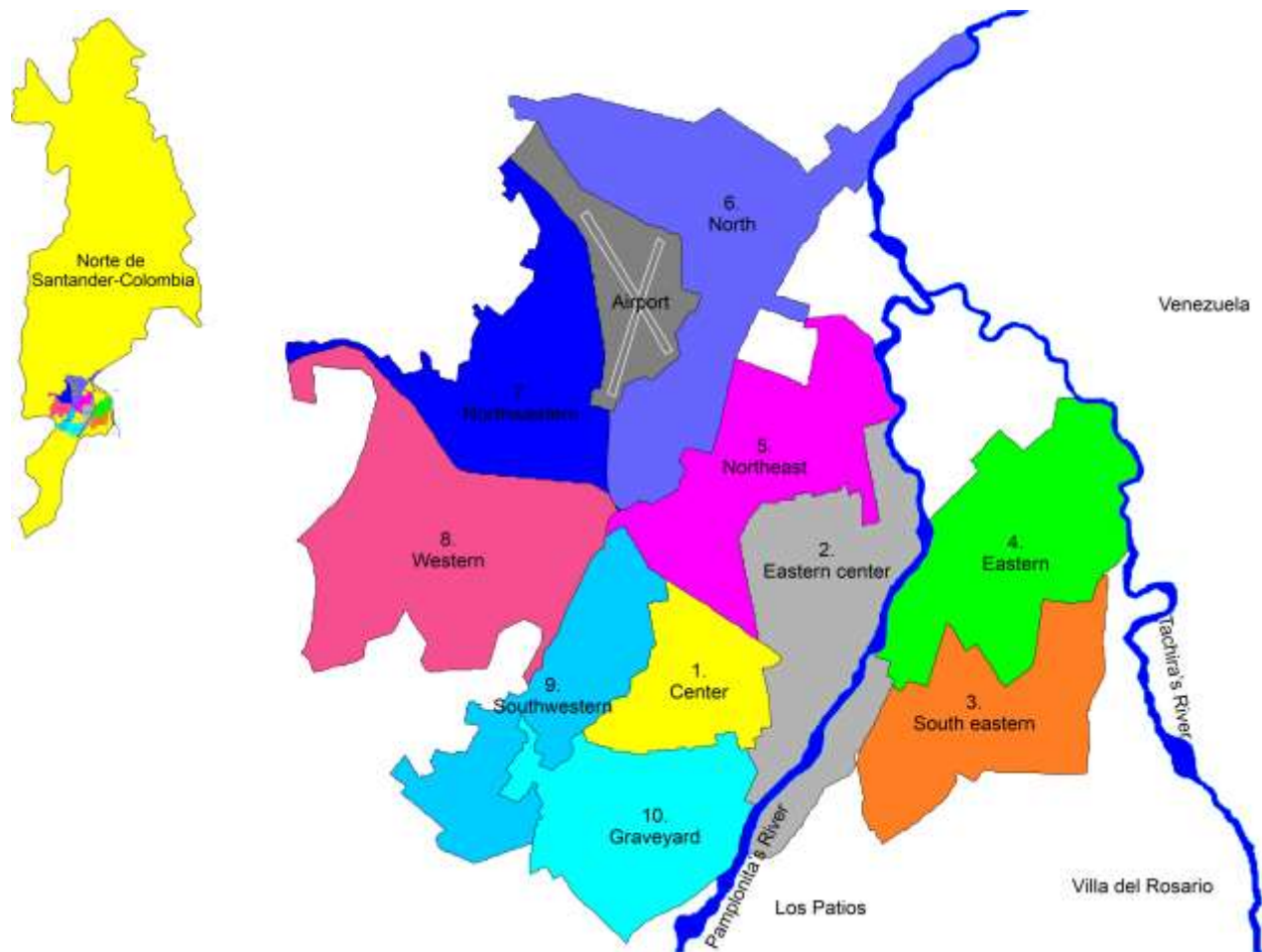
health, education, housing and infrastructure has increased, resulting in an affectation of the border territory in terms of socio-spatial segregation, promoting inequality, extreme poverty,

informality and unemployment, which for the month of June 2022 corresponded to 14.6% according to DANE, ranking fourth nationally. It should be noted that the migratory phenomenon has generated an informal appropriation of the territory with greater emphasis on the expansion land located on the northwestern side of the city, generating a fragmentation of the urban space and spatial isolation that results in social disintegration, which in the case of the aforementioned border city is evidenced in residential segregation, deterioration and difficulties in mobility, problems of access to

services, environmental degradation and xenophobia, among others (Sierra et al., 2020).

In this sense, for this research, the sector known as La Fortaleza located in the commune (urban administrative subdivision) number 8 of the city of San José de Cúcuta, Norte de Santander, Colombia, is considered one of the epicenters of reception of Venezuelan migrants under the characterization of informal appropriation of the territory, was taken as a geographical framework (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Distribution by municipality (urban administrative subdivision) San José de Cúcuta



Source. Own elaboration

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is the descriptive report derived from the processing of the data collected from the

group of informants, who have been located in the sector called La Fortaleza, in Comuna 8 of the city of San José de Cúcuta, for more than six months. The findings are presented in terms of the three sections that make up the instrument.

**First Section:** Various aspects were explored on general aspects of the group of informants. Table 2 shows that, in the opinion of the respondents, the migration process has a greater flow in the first and fourth quarter of each year, but when observing the migration process as a timeline, it was identified that it began in 2015, a situation that coincides with the unilateral closure by the Venezuelan government of its borders with Colombia (August 19, 2015) and that has been maintained to date, showing that approximately 90% of the respondents have arrived in Colombian territory in the period between 2017 and 2021. Regarding the State from where they come from Venezuela, it could be verified that people have arrived in the city from all the Venezuelan geography, being the states of Zulia, Táchira and Apure (bordering Colombia) the ones that concentrate approximately 68% of the informants. In this regard, the report by Rodríguez & Ito (2016) highlights,

With the closure of the border ordered by the Venezuelan Executive and the establishment of a state of emergency in different municipalities of the four border territorial entities of the neighboring country - Zulia, Táchira, Apure and Amazonas - in August 2015, it became evident that the reading of the problems carried out from the centers of power in Colombia and Venezuela differs significantly (p. 169).

As can be seen, the migratory phenomenon emerged as a response to the measures taken at the executive level in the capitals, each with different motivations, for example, in the first days of August before closing the border, the Venezuelan president ordered the implementation of the so-called Operations for the Liberation and Security of the People (OLP) in the border areas, starting in the State of Táchira, since for them the main problem in the borders with Colombia was the crime caused by the actions of Colombian paramilitaries located in these border areas, a situation that generated violent actions that caused terror in the population forcing them to leave the country to save their lives and those of their families (Rodríguez & Ito, 2016).

Table 2 Contingency table between the Year vs. the quarter in which the migrant entered Colombia

Quarter of the year	Year of entry into Colombia								Total
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
First	1.1%	2.2%	3.3%	8.9%	6.8%	6.6%	3.3%	2.2%	<b>34.5%</b>
Second			2.2%	4.4%	4.4%		1.1%		<b>12.1%</b>
Third	4.5%		1.1%	4.4%	5.6%	3.3%	5.6%		<b>24.5%</b>
Fourth			4.4%	6.7%	4.4%	7.8%	5.6%		<b>28.9%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>24.4%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Regarding the demographic characteristics of the informants, the predominance of women between 18 and 45 years of age was determined, with approximately 79% of the cases (see Table 3), a situation that coincides with Pinzón Briceño (2020), who states that migration from Venezuela

has become more feminized. Of this group of women, only 2% were found to be pregnant. As reported by Acosta (2019):

Of the Venezuelans leaving the country, a large number pass through Colombia, either in transit to

other countries or to stay in one of its cities. For the city of Cúcuta, this population flow has meant a real tragedy, which has made necessary the presence of national and international organizations in the region to assist migrants and the urgent construction of shelters (p. 87).

The author mentions the demographic characteristics of this migrant population identified as the most vulnerable since they do not have the economic resources to adequately carry out this migratory process, so they make their journeys as walkers.

The phenomenon of walkers became more noticeable in mid-2018. At first, they were

Table 3 Contingency Table between Age Range vs. Gender

		<b>Genre</b>		
		Female	Male	<b>Total</b>
<b>Age range</b>	Between 18 and 30 years old	36.0%	10.1%	<b>46.1%</b>
	Between 31 and 45 years old	23.6%	9.0%	<b>32.6%</b>
	Between 46 and 60 years old	15.7%	5.6%	<b>21.3%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75.3%</b>	<b>24.7%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Regarding the nationality of the informants, it was verified that 90% of them are Venezuelan and the remaining percentage are Colombian returnees. Of this percentage of Venezuelan citizens, 39% have a border permit and only 21% of them have it in force, that is, approximately 69% of those surveyed are irregular migrants in Colombian territory. The migratory flow of these informants was explored and it was possible to identify that only 1% are migrants who consider returning to their country of origin.

The regularization of Venezuelan citizens in Colombia is a rather complex process since there are no real figures on the number of them since many of them have entered the country through paths controlled by illegal groups. To highlight a figure of the conditions of illegality, what is stated by Acosta (2019) is quoted: "Of the 1,447,171

exclusively young men, but then women, children, entire families, even pets and people with chronic illnesses and motor disabilities began to join the groups. The volume of walkers was so large that Colombia began to set up hydration points on the Cúcuta-Bogotá Road, restrictions on the passage of pregnant women and children, and vaccination points for children in La Parada, the first town after the Simon Bolivar Bridge; shelters were also created to eat and use sanitary services. Some of these shelters are the result of popular, individual and international organizations' initiatives in the area of La Parada (Acosta, 2019, p. 88).

Venezuelans that Migración Colombia estimates have arrived in the country, 699,677 are in an irregular situation, either because they exceeded the legal time of stay or because they entered without authorization through illegal passages or trails" (p. 87).

Second Section: In this second section the instrument is divided into nine dimensions of analysis to perform a complete characterization of various aspects such as the conditions of daily living within their family group or daily cohabitation, along with access to various services such as health or education.

### **Dimension I. Social Aspects**

73% of the Venezuelan informants entered Colombia with other family members, that is, the migration process was carried out as a family, an

aspect that has been maintained in 69% of the cases after the elapsed time. In contrast to the above, 27% stated that they entered the country alone. A small percentage of informants (4.4%) stated that their relatives have moved to the city of Bucaramanga in search of better living conditions, but that they still reside in San José de Cúcuta.

When asked about the possible effects that they have experienced in their family group as a result of the migration process, three positions were identified: 47% stated that during this time their family unit has been consolidated, in contrast to 39% who stated that they have had many difficulties that have led to family disintegration; finally, the remaining percentage stated that they have not experienced any variation within their family.

When exploring the main need of the informants and their families, it was determined that 57% lack a decent and well-paid job that allows them access to better living conditions, followed by the need for decent housing in 20% of the cases, and the remaining percentage is equally distributed between access to health and education services.

Pinzón (2020) highlights the various family affectations experienced by migrants due to the process of forced displacement that they must undertake on many occasions alone, leaving behind the rest of the people while they find better living conditions that allow them to reunite and coexist as a single family group. For this reason, the separation of family members has a significant psychological impact on the couple and their children.

However, forced movement creates complex situations affecting the processes and patterns of family relationships, since the family and the home are the cornerstones of society; motherhood, childcare, and support for the sick and elderly dependents are among the main functions of the family and the home (...). This is why decisions about migration and other aspects of movement affect the interior of the family, including family composition, marital union, ties with children and the support network of the extended family (p. 9).

## **Dimension II. Socio-demographic characteristics of the household**

Regarding the characteristic aspects of the family group of the informants, it was determined that approximately 73% have only one nationality, being predominantly Venezuelan in 66% of the cases, in contrast with the remaining 27%, who have both nationalities (Colombian and Venezuelan). For the time they have been living in Colombia, 73% have been living in the country for one or more years, and 46% have been living in the country for more than three years.

Since approximately three out of every four respondents have been in Colombia for more than one year, their legal or migratory status was explored, and it was determined that 49% are living irregularly. In addition, they were asked about the highest level of schooling attained by the persons in the family group (over five years), determining that 86% have attended and are currently attending some level of the educational process, from elementary school to higher education. It is worth noting that the remaining percentage stated that they had no schooling at all.

Pinzón (2020) also assures that the migratory flow occurs in three groups according to their characteristics: first, the highly qualified professionals, followed by professionals, technicians and qualified young people, to finish with those people who correspond to the intellectual capital and the labor force. For the above mentioned, the people who are migrating from Venezuela after 2014 correspond to those groups of people with a lower level of academic training, which limits their income and access to better living conditions.

## **Dimension III. Access to Health Services**

As mentioned above, a percentage of the informants affirmed the need for health services in Colombia. In this direction, we inquired about the type of regime to which they were affiliated, determining that 62% do not have access to health services, 36% are affiliated as subsidized to EPS and the remaining percentage is reported as contributors to the system.

When informants were asked about the reasons why they have not had access to the health system in Colombia, it was identified that half of them stated that they do not have the documents (given their irregular status) required by the system to affiliate them, 30% said that their affiliation process is in process and that they are waiting for a visit from officials of the System for the Identification of Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programs - Sisben, while the remaining percentage does not know the process they must go through to access the health system.

In Fernández-Niño et al. (2019), it is stated that "in Colombia, there are currently more than one million Venezuelan migrants, of which about half are irregular or are in the process of regularization, and of them, approximately half are women of reproductive age" (p. 209), the authors continue stating that

In recent years, the country has seen a marked increase in the provision of health services for migrants, which is significantly explained by prenatal care and care for the delivery and puerperium of Venezuelan pregnant women. Thus, in 2018, more than three thousand births of Venezuelan migrants were attended in the country's public hospital network, a fourfold increase over the previous year, which constitutes a financial and management challenge in Public Health for health systems at the national and regional levels (Fernández-Niño et al., 2019, p. 209).

The above shows the demand for health services by the migrant population and, given the predominance of the female gender, it is obvious the increase in the number of deliveries attended, added to the fact that, in many cases, women who are about to give birth arrives at the city's hospital demanding to be attended.

#### **Dimension IV. Education**

Access to education is another service necessary for the process of insertion and social development of migrants arriving in the country. In this regard, approximately 67% of those surveyed stated that within their family nucleus

people are attending educational institutions, 52% of them being between one and three students.

The remaining percentage stated that within their family group there are no people in this academic condition for various reasons, among which they highlight that they are not yet of school age or do not have the required documents to complete the academic enrollment process, so they are denied access, or simply, at this time this is not a priority at the family level.

Regarding the academic training of migrants who have arrived in Colombia from Venezuela and their possible educational training needs, authors such as Guataquí et al. (2017) mention that "the migrant population from Venezuela does not have particularly high educational levels (more than 80% have at most secondary education)" (p. 2), which added to the event of migrating as a family with at least two school-age children, highlight the need for support policies that guarantee the academic training of minors and the development of professional skills, for those of working age. In this regard, López et al. (2018) highlight that out of 442,462 people in the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia (RAMV) 118,709 are children and adolescents and of them 33,107 are currently studying, this "poses a major challenge for the government in terms of the care of these children and their subsequent integration into Colombian society" (p. 12).

#### **Dimension V. Labor market**

The working conditions of the informants are an important aspect to consider since it is through it that income is generated that can guarantee decent living conditions. In this regard, it was determined that 18% of those surveyed are currently working, accumulating between 24 or fewer hours per week, so it could be said that they are temporary or informal activities. The rest of the people are unemployed.

They were asked if because of the social isolation derived from Covid-19, their weekly hours have been affected, to which 86% affirmed yes, having a negative effect on their income since it has been ostensibly reduced. Regarding the labor situation of migrants who have arrived in Colombia, it is



estimated that the time of their arrival in the country is an influential aspect of their labor condition, for example

the chronology of the migratory event is key: while 67.3% of migrants who arrived in Colombia more than 2 years ago and less than 5 years ago are employed, the employment of those who arrived less than two years ago is lower by 10 percentage points (57.2%) and the percentage of unemployed is greater (15,7% vs. 10%) (Guataquí et al., 2017, p. 2)

### **Dimension VI. Labor and occupational competencies**

As already mentioned, the working conditions of the informants have been precarious. In this sense, the labor or occupational competencies that people have were explored, identifying that only 11% of them are professionals in the areas of health and engineering, while the remaining percentage in Venezuela were engaged in various activities among which stand out: independent trader, vendors in various commercial sectors such as agricultural products, hardware stores, butcher shops, prepared foods or were engaged in household activities or caring for family members.

Currently, these people in Colombia are engaged in various activities such as informal sales (coffee or food), working in hairdressing, recycling activities, kitchen assistants, domestic workers or independent traders, mainly carrying products that are scarce in Venezuela and purchased in Colombia. Given the activities carried out by these people, it was determined that 82% consider that they require training in the development of new skills that will allow them to access new and better job opportunities that will guarantee them a better quality of life.

Approximately 23% of the informants surveyed stated that between 2 and 4 people in their households currently work, mainly informally, since only 2% have a formal employment relationship.

Regarding the labor displacement of Colombian citizens by Venezuelan migrants Bahar et al. (2018) mentions that

The economic impact (...) depends largely on whether their skills substitute or complement those of the native population. Academic research based on many different episodes suggests that the flow of migrants and refugees tend to have little impact on the employment rates of locals, suggesting complementarity. However, it would be prudent to take measures to avoid labor displacement of those Colombians whose skills could be, to some extent, substitutes for migrant labor (par. 5).

### **Dimension VII. Financial inclusion**

In the process of characterizing the migrants, their relationship with the financial system was explored, 80% said they did not have any financial product in Colombia, while of the remaining percentage, 4% have a savings account, and 16%, in case of economic emergencies, have resorted to informal credit with high-interest rates, such as drop-by-drop lenders. Concerning the difficulties in accessing national banking services, it was found that 32% do not meet the requirements, 21% have applied for a savings account, but do not have the resources to keep it active, and the remaining percentage is simply not interested.

When asked if, in the last year, any member of the household had sent money to Venezuela, 37% said yes, approximately every four months, using various channels such as Efecty, Western Union, Giros and Finanzas, and in very few cases, through a family member who has traveled to Venezuela.

Regarding the importance of remittances sent by migrants from abroad to their country of origin where they have surely left relatives or assets, this income improves the purchasing power of the households that receive it, so they can have access to more and better life opportunities. In this sense, Castellano and Goncalves (2019) state that

once they migrate, individuals have the possibility of sending money back to the households they came from. The reasons for this are varied (...) they can be summarized as altruism (the inclination to send remittances because the migrant cares about the household he/she left behind), as an informal payment of the money lent by their families to be able to carry out the

migration process, to send money to maintain unsold goods (in case the migrant plans to return), or to contribute to maintaining household consumption. But beyond the migrants' reasons for sending remittances, in those households that receive remittances, these become an important part of total income (p. 2).

**Dimension VIII: Migration, family reunification and return**

When exploring the motivations that informants had for migrating from Venezuela, 80% of the opinions concentrated mainly on the scarcity of goods and services, such as food, medicines, electricity, water or gasoline, and the need to look for better job opportunities. When asked if they would be interested in bringing back to Colombia the relatives who have remained in Venezuela, opinions are divided, 52% said yes in a period of no more than one year, while the remaining 48% stated that they would not do so, because they must take care of the goods they have left in Venezuela, and they also hope that things may change in Venezuela and thus return (a desire present in 12% of the informants). Another reason why family members stayed there is associated with the high costs of the trip, so in search of the economy, they expose themselves to long hours of walking in climatic conditions, in many cases, adverse to the physical integrity of every human being.

Since a few informants expressed their desire to return to their country, we inquired about their

main motivation, identifying as the main reason the desire to be united as a family again. They hope that this return process will not take more than two years, but what they do say is that they will not return empty-handed; therefore, they wish to work and save money to take with them.

Regarding the family reunification process, Bonilla (2012) points out that regardless of the migrant's gender, if the migrant is of reproductive age, it may affect population growth in both countries (the country of origin and the receiving country), while at the same time running the risk of disintegration of the family they had in their country of origin

Both female and male migrants of childbearing age alter the rhythm of population growth rates, since their absence from their homes reduces the possibilities of population reproduction, but also has a similar effect in the country of destination, since the arrival of this population component, by establishing new temporary or stable relationships with the native population of the country of arrival, also alters the family composition and the rates of growth and labor reproduction (p. 277).

Table 4 shows that those informants who say that they do not feel discriminated against in Colombia, because they have not been victims of xenophobic situations or that these situations have occurred very rarely, in contrast to those who say that this has been a recurrent situation in social interaction with the inhabitants of the city, have not been victims of xenophobia

Table 4 Contingency table between whether you have felt discriminated against in Colombia vs. the frequency of occurrence of it

		<b>Have you felt discriminated against or rejected in Colombia?</b>			
		NR	Yes	No	<b>Total</b>
<b>How often have you felt discriminated against?</b>	NR	1.1%	2.2%	37.1%	<b>40.4%</b>
	All the time		1.1%		<b>1.1%</b>
	Several times		15.7%		<b>15.7%</b>
	A lot of the time		11.2%		<b>11.2%</b>

	Few times	10.1%	21.3%	<b>31.5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>58.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Dimension IX. Discrimination and perception of integration

The information shown in Table 4 evidences xenophobic attitudes on the part of Colombians, which is corroborated when asked if they consider that in Colombia they have been discriminated against because of their nationality, 58% said yes, a situation that is recurrent when walking down the street or applying for a job opportunity, mainly. In this sense, Perilla's research (2020) assures that the rejection shown in Colombia towards Venezuelan migrants could be encouraged by the economic situation offered by their country, that is, they are not seen as people who contribute to the development of the Colombian economy.

Colombia, a country bordering Venezuela, currently registers the highest rate of arrival of migrants and refugees from that country. Currently, in Colombia, there is a worrying context that shows how recurrent rejection, discrimination, and attacks against refugees have become. These behaviors, which dehumanize and attack dignity, are not common among other foreign citizens (Perilla, 2020, p. 119).

Despite the adverse situations that Venezuelan citizens in Colombia have had to face, 83% stated that they have integrated satisfactorily into the culture of the country or the region. The 11% affirmed that with the arrival of covid-19 in March 2020, situations of rejection increased, because, in Venezuela, the Government always denied the existence of the pandemic and no preventive vaccination actions were carried out, which created the imaginary that they were potential carriers of the virus.

Finally, opinions have been divided among informants when asked about the difficulty in accessing various goods and services in Colombia, with a slight predominance (55.6%) in favor of the fact that the processes have been quite costly for them.

### Third Section: Spatial Aspects - Housing and Household Characteristics

The last aspect to explore among the informants corresponds to the housing conditions they currently have in the La Fortaleza sector. It was determined that 38% live in a house or apartment, while the remaining percentage live in rooms or spaces shared with other families as neighbors or possible settlements. In terms of access to public services, 28% have access to water supply, while only 5% have sewerage.

Regarding the characteristics of the materials used in the place of residence, 52% mentioned that they were made with block, brick and cement; while the remaining percentage have resorted to lowering quality materials such as zinc, cloth, canvas, cardboard or waste material. Concerning the characteristics of the floor, it was determined that half of them have cement, gravel or tile floors; in contrast to the other half, who has sand, trodden earth or rough wood floors.

Concerning housing tenure, it was identified that 57% live in rented housing, 23% have possession of land, but without title to it, 6% are owners and the rest pay daily for the use of the space. These spaces that they inhabit offer 60% of the informants only one room, 30% have two rooms and the rest have three rooms.

In 58% of the cases the household is made up of two to four people, 30% between five and seven people and the rest live with more than seven people. Concerning the effects on the household, due to the mandatory confinement resulting from Covid-19, 76% stated that they were affected by the deterioration of their income, which in turn led to limitations in access to food and other services, and in some cases they even experienced eviction.

When asked about their current living conditions concerning those experienced during the confinement, 59% stated that they have been improving, compared to the remaining percentage, who stated that with the arrival of the pandemic

everything has been detrimental to their living conditions.

Finally, 31% affirmed that with the arrival in Colombia their economic situation has improved concerning what they experienced in Venezuela, but 69% affirmed that they have experienced negative changes since their living conditions have deteriorated. In addition, they were asked if they had been visited by Sisben officials, to which 83% affirmed that they had not.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The migratory phenomenon is a historical fact that has accompanied humanity throughout the years. Human mobilities are carried out in the search for a better quality of life and the fulfillment of the exceptions concerning it. The objective of this research corresponded to the characterization of the Venezuelan migrant population that inhabits the Sector de la Fortaleza located in commune number 8, western sector of the city of San José de Cúcuta, an informal settlement that was configured in 2015, a representative date in the increase of Venezuelan international human mobilities, which arrived in the city in response to the aggravation of the Venezuelan internal problem.

Among the most relevant aspects presented in the results of this research, the following are highlighted:

1) *That 90% of the population increase derived from international Venezuelan migration corresponds to movements of Venezuelan origin*, which is one of the main challenges that the city of San José de Cúcuta must face to comply with the provisions of the Sustainable Development Goals agenda in goal 1 of reducing and ending poverty.

2) *Segregation by residential areas*, taking into account that the population under study stated that they did not own the land tenure of the houses settled in the sector of La Fortaleza. In addition, it should be noted that in response to this type of segregation, the migrant population studied presents characteristics associated with inequality and poverty that prevent them from having access

to welfare or social advancement. This is also one of the main reasons why this human settlement is located on the periphery of the city.

3) *Demand for services and infrastructure*, which is directly proportional to population growth. In this sense, the health sector becomes one of the aspects of greatest concern, since 62% of the informants stated that they did not have access to health services, while the number of births grew considerably, taking into account the predominance of the female gender in the Venezuelan migrant population. Concerning the Fortaleza sector, it should be noted that due to its informal nature, no health infrastructure can provide the services required by the resident population.

4) *Unemployment*, in this regard, this research suggests the existence of socio-spatial segregation associated with the location and distance of the human settlement concerning the places where there are job offers and employment opportunities. This is reflected in the fact that only 18% of those surveyed are working, and that most of them do so on a temporary and informal basis, a scenario that was even more affected by the social isolation mandated by the Covid - 19. This is even more relevant when taking into account that the informant population (82%) stated that they require training in the development of new competencies to assume new responsibilities.

5) *Financial inclusion*, is presented as a scenario derived from unemployment, informality and non-compliance with the requirements for obtaining financial products (80%). This results in the promotion of informal money lending at high-interest rates, and the migrant population sends foreign currency to their relatives still living in Venezuela to meet their economic needs.

6) *Family reunification*, is presented as one of the main motivations for returning to their country of origin, taking into account that the migration phenomenon triggered a family disintegration, which is expected to be solved in a short time by migrants living in Colombian territory.

7) *Integration in the host country*, the informants mentioned that during the process of residence in the city of San José de Cúcuta they have been able to integrate satisfactorily (83%), however, it is

also noted that the population of origin has manifested scenarios of xenophobia and discrimination due to the social imaginary of the Colombian citizens for the economy of the city.

Finally, it can be concluded that the development of this research for the sector of La Fortaleza allowed understanding that Venezuelan migrants present a decrease in opportunities for access to social capital opportunities, as well as social isolation that promotes the development of a marginal subculture, the disintegration of the social fabric and the weakening of the sense of citizenship. It should be noted that the development of this research only presents results of aspects associated with socio-spatial segregation, for this reason, it is encouraged that this topic continues to be developed to deepen aspects related to the migratory phenomenon and its incidence in the host territories.

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