



## Venezuelan Migrants in The Colombian Labor Market

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### Abstract

Work is a key element of social integration since it is not only a source of livelihood but also a way of acquiring social recognition and facilitating access to other services such as education, health, environment, housing and culture. The absence of work can mean social exclusion and marginalization, especially when dealing with individuals in conditions of migration and critical circumstances such as the pandemic generated by Covid-19. The objective of this research is to determine how Venezuelan migrants have been integrated into the Colombian labor market and, through it, into society. The research is carried out in the first semester of 2021, collecting information from Venezuelan migrants who were working at that time. The study method is positivist, with an explanatory scope and transversal cut, using work as a central theory of discussion as a social integrator. The main results indicate that the economic and social imbalance produced by the pandemic and the migratory flows have generated the loss of the status quo of the local population, and conformity, harassment, discrimination and even xenophobia toward migrants are beginning to be perceived. Most of them have the necessary skills to seek employment and Colombia's institutional conditions allow them to find work and opt for naturalization as citizens with full rights and duties, although in times of the pandemic this insertion has been interrupted.

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## **Introduction**

Since the closure of the border in 2015 due to differences between the governments of Colombia and Venezuela, the presence of Venezuelans in Colombia has gradually increased. As of June 2019, there were about 1.5 million residents; in February 2020, the month of the beginning of the pandemic, about 2 million were identified; in March 2020 some Venezuelans began to return to their country voluntarily, due to the confinement, mobility restrictions and the fact that many companies had to close; by June 2020, the number of migrants was reduced by 14.1% to 1.7 million (Migration Colombia, 2020). However, after February 2021, when the economic reactivation begins, the migratory flow increases by 35.9% to reach 2.4 million in June 2021 (PMV Observatory and UNFPA, 2021).

Faced with this situation, the government has taken measures to facilitate the incorporation of Venezuelans into the labor market, as a way to alleviate the migratory diaspora, creating rules that offer dignified conditions to migrants and allow them to be incorporated into society. However, due to the confinement by the Covid-19, there is an economic crisis, which generated the closure of companies, and loss of jobs and as a conscience, the empathy of Colombian citizens with migrants is beginning to be undermined, considering that unemployment, poverty and insecurity rates are increasing, which generates contempt, harassment, discrimination and xenophobia.

It is in this context that this research is developed, with social work theories as a key factor in social integration, considering that employment not only solves an economic problem but is also the way to belong to the social fabric and achieve recognition in the community. Furthermore, the literature considers that successful labor integration requires two fundamental conditions: the individual competencies of the migrant and the institutional conditions of the receiving country.

The research is carried out in Norte de Santander, Colombia, where it is estimated that there are about 150 Venezuelans. The information was obtained from 150 migrants who were working during the first semester of 2021, the period in which the fieldwork was applied.

The first part of the article discusses the theoretical bases consisting of work as the main mechanism of social integration of every individual, the individual competencies of the migrant and the institutional conditions of the receiving country, to achieve a successful labor integration. Subsequently, the research method is presented, the results are presented and some conclusions are drawn from the findings confronted with the theoretical body.

## **Theoretical Basis**

### **Work as a social integrator**

The first body of theory presented here refers to work as a fundamental element of an individual's integration into society, which, particularly in the case of migration, is the gateway to a new social and business fabric. Initially, it had a negative connotation referring to coercion, punishment, effort or penalty that the human being had to pay to find a family and individual welfare. Subsequently, work represented a positive charge that constituted the central nucleus in the construction of personal and social identity, self-realization, satisfaction and self-improvement (Blanch, 2003; Borges, 1997).

From opposite approaches, studies analyze the incidence of work or the absence of it in the structuring of the individual's personality, economic condition, physical and mental health, relationships with family and society, self-esteem and identity formation, identifying two fundamental functions of work: to provide a source of income to satisfy the primary needs of the human being and to facilitate the individual's social relations by assigning roles, status and social identity (Blanch, 1990). The absence of a job can produce personality disorders and delays in the formation of social identity (Pagés, 2005; Niesbet, 1975).

Work, then, constitutes a central dimension of social integration since, for most people, it is not only a source of sustenance but also a way of acquiring recognition and facilitating access to other services such as education, health, the environment, housing and culture. The absence of it can mean social exclusion and marginalization. From the perspective of migration, it is clear that work is fundamental to solving a source of income, solving a family problem and seeking an identity in the receiving society.

The incorporation of migrants into the productive processes, perhaps beginning with slavery, which sought labor to accumulate capital, had its greatest boom from the 17th century to the mid-19th century, when it was the first time that migrants were incorporated into the labor force (Blackburn, 1988). The migration of migrants to the productive processes, perhaps beginning with slavery, which sought labor to accumulate capital, had its greatest boom from the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, when nearly 15 million people moved between Africa and the Americas (Appleyard, 1991). After the Second World War, Western Europe and the United States sought labor force through policies to favor immigration and acquire the necessary labor force to develop economic activities such as manufacturing, agriculture and construction (Castles et al., 1973). Nowadays, it is recurrent that countries with a capitalist model have areas of high industrialization, which require a labor force and therefore many people move in search of opportunities (Cohen, 1987).

### **Factors that facilitate or inhibit social integration of the migrant**

Whatever the motivation or form of migration, the literature reports some factors that inhibit the process of incorporation of migrants into the labor market and thus give them a way to find their identity and insertion into a business fabric. These factors fall into two categories: a) the individual characteristics of the migrant, and b) the institutional practices of the receiving country (Blanco, 2004; Pellegrino, 2001; Papademetriou & Martin, 1991; Batalova & Fix, 2008).

For Fernandez 2008, the individual characteristics of the immigrant have to do with factors such as motivation of the immigrant, adaptability, belonging to social support networks, willingness to learn, the multiplicity of skills and competencies, availability of geographic mobility, ability to relate, immediacy and urgency of work, long-term expectations, system knowledge, training and work experience in terms of their culture of origin, among others (Figure 1).

Regarding institutional practices, labor integration has to do with other variables such as the availability of tools for job search, legal stability, job insecurity, ease of degree recognition and the possibility of acquiring a work permit in the host country (García, 2006), as shown in Figure 1.

Likewise, Laparra & Martínez (2003) believe that the receiving society needs to adapt migration policies, trying to eliminate the labor irregularities that give rise to informality, labor precariousness or subcontracting and adapt the demands of the productive system to the needs of immigrant workers. Thus, the integration of the immigrant into the labor market implies complex dynamics of interaction

and behavior modification not only in the immigrant population but also in the receiving society, which means breaking some social paradigms, which some individuals may not be willing to accept so that the receiving State must take the necessary measures to ensure the integration of immigrants into the labor market (Bermúdez, 2010). Therefore, the receiving State must legislate to facilitate the migratory process.

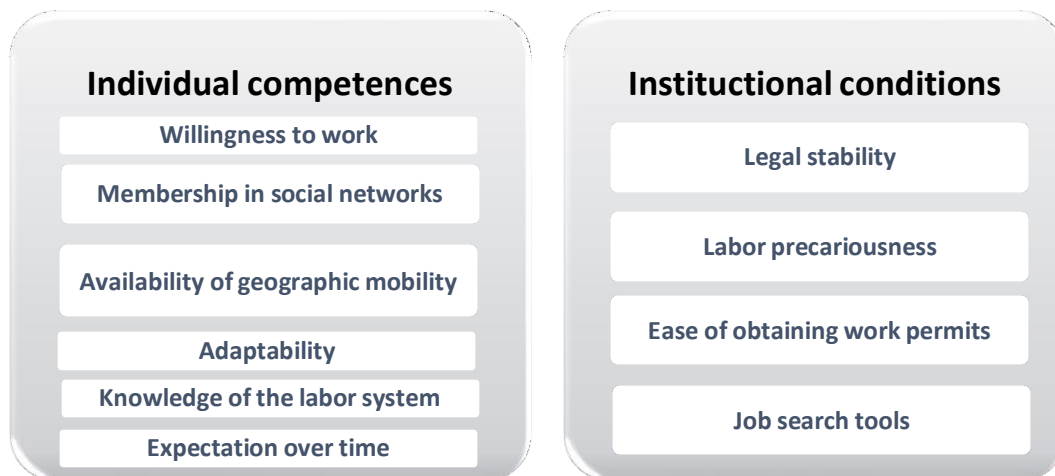


Figure 1. Conditions inhibiting or contributing to the labor integration of immigrants.  
Source: Own elaboration based on Malgesini (1998) and Garcia (2006).

In addition, it may be necessary to intervene, given some inequalities between immigrant labor, due to lack of transfer or validation of human capital in the country of origin and destination, or even the high profile of the migrant in the country of origin (Bratsberg & Ragan, 2002; Ferrer & Riddel, 2003) or even the high profile of migrants in low-skilled sectors such as construction, hospitality or agriculture, in which the state must intervene (Abowd & Freeman, 1991; International Labor Organization (ILO), 2010) in which the State must intervene and regulate.

### **Migratory Flow during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Since the border closure in 2015 due to differences between the governments of Colombia and Venezuela, the presence of Venezuelans in Colombia has been increasing gradually and, according to figures from Migration Colombia as of June 2019, about 1.5 million were residing in February 2020, which is the date of the beginning of the pandemic. In March 2020, some Venezuelans began to return to their country voluntarily, due to the confinement, mobility restrictions and the fact that many companies had to close, thus it is estimated that by June 2020, the number of migrants was reduced by 14.1% to reach 1.7 million (Migration Colombia, 2020).

By February 2021, the Colombian government approved an economic reactivation plan, which sought to gradually open up industry, commerce and services, generating job opportunities and reactivating the productive apparatus (DNP, 2021). The plan sought to gradually open up industry, commerce and services, generating job opportunities and reactivating the productive apparatus. Although the borders remained officially closed, the migratory flow from Venezuela to Colombia

increased by 35.9%, reaching 2.4 million Venezuelans residing in Colombia by June 2021 (PMV Observatory and UNFPA, 2021)

Despite the solidarity and intention of the Colombian government to help with the Venezuelan migratory crisis and to create the norms for them to have dignified conditions and the least traumatic incorporation into society possible, in times of confinement by Covid-19, the government's priorities were forced to change and the perception of society was also altered. The arrival of the pandemic generated an economic crisis, not only in Colombia but also in many regions of the world, so social imaginaries have also begun to believe that Venezuelan migrants increase unemployment, poverty and insecurity rates, which generates contempt, harassment, discrimination and xenophobia.

However, this is not a condition exclusive to Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, but rather consequences that occur when there are economic and social imbalances produced by overpopulation and lack of opportunities, a product of any massive migratory process, which is perceived as a risk of losing their status quo (Carvajal, 2015). In these circumstances, although the national government of Colombia has been supportive and has implemented social assistance programs with the help of international organizations, with the health crisis caused by Covid-19, it is perceived that such aid is not enough, employment opportunities are scarcer and the problems of migrants are aggravated.

## Methodology

According to Hernández et al. (2003), this is a non-experimental quantitative research. In quantitative research, data are collected and analyzed to answer the researcher's questions (or hypotheses). In this type of study, numerical measurement is the basis for extracting results, relying on statistics to determine behaviors and relationships in the population. It is cross-sectional because the information is collected at a single point in time, at the end of the year 2020, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. "Cross-sectional research designs collect data at a single point in time and are intended to describe variables and analyze their incidence at a given point in time." (Hernandez et al., 2003).

The estimated migrant population in Norte de Santander is approximately 151,053. (National Council for Economic and Social Policy of Colombia, 2018), so the sample is calculated through the following formula:

$$n = \frac{k^2 * N * p * q}{k^2 * p * q + N * E^2}$$

Where: n= number of individuals in the sample, N= Population; p= 95 %, k = 1.96, (multiple of standard error for a confidence level of 95 %), E= 5% (percentage error). Therefore, the sample is 150 respondents.

The reliability of the instrument was tested through a pilot test using Cronbach's Alpha statistic, giving a result of 0.885. The value of Cronbach's Alpha ranges from zero (0) to one (1), and the closer it is to one (1), the greater the degree of reliability.

## Results

### Characterization of the population

First, the sociodemographic characteristics of the observed population are presented. Regarding gender, it was found that 51.3% are women while 48.7% are men; the largest age ranges are between

20 and 50 years of age, where 91.3% of the population is concentrated and over 50 years of age has a percentage of 8%; 91.3% of the population under study has been in Colombia for 5 years or less; 72.7% of the respondents reported having less than 3 years working while 15% have between 3 and 5 years (Table 1). Regarding respect to the educational level of the observed population, 62.7% had university studies, 22.7% up to high school and 14.7% only in elementary school. The large percentage of the population that is working and has university studies stands out in this finding. The World Bank (2018), considers that these same educational levels in the interior of the country may be higher by 1.3 years, since the most vulnerable populations are located in border areas, due to various circumstances, but especially to the costs of transfer and legalization of documents.

Regarding the type of contract that workers have, it was found that 42% have a formal contract and 58% have an informal contract, that is, a verbal agreement between the worker and the employer, which means that workers do not have social security and do not contribute to the pension system.

To the question “Due to the Covic-19 pandemic, will you return to your country?”, respondents indicated that they would return to their country 40.2%, and they would remain in Colombia 59.8% (Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of the migrant population

		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Woman	77	51.3
	Man	73	48.7
	Total	150	
Age	Less than 20 years old	1	0.7
	Between 20 and 30 years old	34	22.7
	Between 30 and 40 years old	38	45.3
	Between 40 and 50 years old	35	23.3
	More than 50 years	12	8.0
	Total	150	
Years living in Colombia	1 year or less	20	13.3
	Between 1 and 3 Years	80	53.3
	Between 3 and 5 years	37	24.7
	Between 5 and 7 years old	4	2.7
	More than 7 years	9	6.0
Total	150		
Years working in Colombia	1 year or less	40	26.7
	Between 1 and 3 Years	69	46.0
	Between 3 and 5 years	23	15.3
	Between 5 and 7 years old	9	6.0
	More than 7 years	9	6.0
Total	150	100.0	

Has an Employment Contract	Yes	63	42.0
	No	87	58.0
	Total	150	
Educational Level	Primary	22	14.7
	High School or Baccalaureate	34	22.7
	College or University	94	62.7
	Total	150	100.0
To the question "Due to the Covic-19 pandemic, will you return to your country?"	Back to my country	61	40.7
	Staying in Colombia	89	59.3

Source: Own elaboration

**Work as a means of social integration.** Secondly, some indicators are presented to show work as a means of social integration in Colombia, which allows the individual to be part of a group, community, company or State and creates the necessary links to act as a social being, linked to concepts of evolution, wellbeing, development and progress (Niesbet, 1975).

**Work as individual and family sustenance.** According to the information presented in Table 2, the individuals under study consider that the work they have allows them to support themselves and their families in the following proportions: Completely and Almost completely 72.6%, moderately 8.7%, and Little and Very little 19%.

Table 2. Work as an individual and family livelihood

	Frequency	Percentage
Very little	8	5.3
Little	20	13.3
Moderately	13	8.7
Almost completely	71	47.3
Completely	38	25.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

**Work as recognition and social status.** Table 3 presents information on how immigrants perceive work as recognition and social status, highlighting that 70.7% believe that work provides very little recognition, while only 5.3% consider that employment provides full recognition in the society.

Table 3. Work as recognition and social status

	Frequency	Percentage
Very little	106	70.7
Little	24	16.0
Moderately	12	8.0
Almost completely	8	5.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

**Job Satisfaction.** This refers to an ex-post expression of the individual's preference for his or her current job for the “ideal” that he or she should have. This means a comparison of the main characteristics of a job that the individual wishes to have and considers a good job and the one he/she currently performs, in short, it constitutes a judgment that compares his/her current job situation with the ideal one, in terms of his/her skills, experience, qualifications and salary (Burón, 2010).

Table 4. Job Satisfaction

	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	23	15.3
Satisfied	50	33.3
Moderately satisfied	45	30.0
dissatisfied	20	13.3
Dissatisfied	12	8.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

Table 4 shows the job satisfaction of Venezuelan immigrants, in which 46.6% are Very Satisfied or Satisfied, while the remaining population is Moderately Satisfied, Not Satisfied or Dissatisfied.

**Individual Competencies.** Thirdly, the results present the individual characteristics of migrant workers, which refer to their capacity to adapt, willingness, learning, belonging to social support networks, availability of geographic mobility, capacity to relate to the receiving population, immediacy, system knowledge, training and work experience in terms of their culture of origin, among others (Fernandez, 2008).

**Adaptation to work and the new society.** Adaptation refers to the functioning and behavior of the individuals in society and work, for culture, leadership, perseverance and assertive decision-making in the new reality, to act under the values and customs of the host country and succeed in their integration (Rodriguez et al., 2008).

Table 5. Adaptation of the immigrant to work and the new society

	Frequency	Percentage
Almost completely Adapted	93	62.0
Moderately adapted	29	19.3
Poorly adapted	24	16.0
Nothing adapted	4	2.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

62% of the individuals under study say that they are almost completely adapted to Colombian labor and social realities, while 18.7% are not very or not at all adapted. It should be noted that none of the immigrants surveyed stated that they were Completely adapted to their work and society (Table 5).

**Availability to relocate to another geographic region.** The availability of relocation would allow the effectiveness of government policies to insert the immigrant socially and into the labor market since it would focus on areas where there is a need for labor and where companies can hire



them. Naturally, geographical relocation can lead to changes in the size, composition and structure of the immigrants' relationship system about their social and family fabric (Maya, 2009).

Table 6. Availability to locate in another geographic region

	Frequency	Percentage
Very willing	41	27.3
Available	54	36.0
Moderately willing	29	19.3
Unwillingness	17	11.3
Nothing willing	9	6.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

The information found indicates that 63.3% would be Very willing or Willing to relocate geographically if there were better working conditions, 19.3% are hesitant to make that decision while 17.3% are Unwilling or Not at all willing to move to another region (Table 6).

**Ability to relate to local citizens.** The ability to relate to new people in a complex process there is already an emotional charge related to the search for balance between the assimilation of the new and the mourning of change, family separation, loss of friends, change in the quality of life, low economic and social status, resistance to change, fear of failure, illegality, nostalgia and uprooting (Ferrer et al., 2014).

Table 7. Capacity to relate to local citizens

	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfactorily	99	66.0
Moderately	51	34.0
Total	150	100.
	0	

Source: Own elaboration

According to those interviewed, 66% relate satisfactorily while the remaining 34% consider that they do so moderately (Table 7).

**Urgency at the time of getting a job.** For the immigrant, employment is a fundamental objective, at the expense of other aspects such as personal or professional development, therefore, it has a character of immediacy or urgency, which can hinder their job and salary satisfaction in the long term (Fernández, 2008).

Table 8. Urgency to get a job

	Frequency	Percentage
High urgency	123	82.0
Low urgency	27	18.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

According to the information provided by Venezuelan immigrants, 82% of them had a great urgency to find a job in Colombia, while 18% had little urgency (Table 8).

**Means of Employment.** According to immigrants, their most frequent means of obtaining employment in Colombia are through a friend or relative (88%), through an advertisement (6%), employment exchanges (4.7%) and lastly the Public Employment Service (1.3%) (Table 9).

Table 9. Means of Obtaining Employment

	Frequency	Percentage
A family member	35	23.3%
A friend	97	64.7%
Employment Opportunities	7	4.7%
Public Employment Service	2	1.3%
An advertisement	9	6.0%
Total	150	100,0

Source: Own elaboration

**Work is commensurate with labor skills.** One of the most frequent problems of migration in receiving countries, as reported in the literature, is that immigrant labor may be excluded from certain occupations and highly concentrated in certain less skilled jobs, which can create instability and job insecurity and, in more endemic cases, cause discrimination and xenophobia (Ortega, 2005; Muñoz & Antón, 2010).

Because the immigrant generally has immediacy or urgency in obtaining a job, as explained above, it is possible that they accept working conditions below the established standards, below their qualifications and academic and work capacity, to secure a place in the labor market, which necessarily in the medium term may bring consequences of dissatisfaction and instability (Lui et al., 2004; Parasnis, 2006). In the medium term, this may necessarily lead to dissatisfaction and instability.

Table 10. Work is commensurate with job skills

	Frequency	Percentage
Completely	95	63.3
Hardly adaptable	39	26.0
Do not adapt	16	10.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

In this item, only 25.3% of the individuals under study state that their employment is completely in line with their capabilities, while another 25.3% believe that it is not in line and 49.3% believe that their employment is moderately in line with their capabilities (Table 10).

**Adaptation to Colombian culture.** As shown in Table 11, 63.3% of Venezuelan immigrants have completely adapted, 26% consider that they have almost not adapted and 10.7% of the individuals surveyed consider that they have not adapted to Colombian culture and customs.

Table 11. Adaptation to the Culture and Workplace

	Frequency	Percentage
Does not fit	16	10.7
Hardly adaptable	39	26.0
Completely adaptable	95	63.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

**Institutional Practices.** The third part details the characteristics and institutional conditions of the receiving country, in this case Colombia, which has the power to adapt migration policies in an attempt to eliminate the labor irregularities that give rise to informality, labor precariousness or subcontracting of the immigrant (Laparra & Martínez, 2003).

**Means to qualify and train themselves in Colombia.** According to the information gathered from the subjects of the study, 38% believe that they always or almost always find means in Colombia to qualify or train themselves, 36.7% believe that sometimes, while 25.3% state that they never or almost never can do so (Table 12).

Table 12. In Colombia, you find ways to qualify and train yourself

	Frequency	Percentage
Always	19	12.7
Almost always	38	25.3
Sometimes	55	36.7
Almost never	17	11.3
Never	21	14.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

**Access to education for migrants and their families.** According to the perception of the individuals surveyed, 29.3% consider that they do not have access to education in Colombia for the immigrant and their families while 70.7% believe that they do have opportunities to access education (Table 13).

Table 13. Access to Education for Migrants and their Families

	Frequency	Percentage
No	44	29.3
Yes	106	70.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

Although the Colombian State has made efforts to guarantee equal rights for all inhabitants of its territory, which has been applauded by the international community, some migrants still believe that they do not have access to the educational system, possibly due to the difficulties of the pandemic, lack of knowledge or because it has not carried out the necessary procedures to do so.

**Ease of degree recognition.** Regarding the process of degree recognition in Colombia, immigrants consider it to be Very easy or Easy 26.6%, moderately easy 38% and Difficult or Very Difficult 35.4% (Table 14).

Table 14. Ease of recognition of degrees

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Easy	5	3.3
Easy	35	23.3
Moderately easy	57	38.0
Difficult	25	16.7
Very Difficult	28	18.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

A study carried out by the International Organization for Migration (UN Migration, 2019) considers that the difficulty for the validation of Venezuelan degrees is due to the great difficulty or almost impossibility to apostille the degrees in Venezuela and as a consequence, Venezuelan immigrants compete with locals for those unskilled jobs or jobs in the informal economy, especially in the younger population.

**Possibility of naturalization.** Naturalization or nationality by adoption is the concession that the Colombian State makes to grant foreigners the Colombian nationality by adoption through a Letter of Nature or Resolution of Inscription. The norms that regulate this process is the Political Constitution in its article 96 and Decree 1067 of 2015.

Table 15. Possibility of Naturalization

	Frequency	Percentage
No	79	52.7
Yes	71	47.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

According to the data provided by the immigrants, 47.3% of them have the possibility of being naturalized in Colombia, while 52.7% believe they do not have that option (Table 15).

**Ease of obtaining a work permit.** Table 16 shows the information related to the perception that immigrants have of getting a job in Colombia. 41.4% believe it is Very easy or Easy, 26% consider the process to be of medium difficulty, while 32% consider it Difficult or Very difficult.

Table 16. Ease of obtaining a work permit

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Easy	13	8.7

Easy	49	32.7
Medium difficulty	39	26.0
Difficult	17	11.3
Very difficult	32	21.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

**The migrant has the same employment opportunities as Colombians.** The perception that Venezuelans in Colombia have is that they have a Different or Very different possibility of finding employment compared to Colombians, while 35% consider that they have Equal or Almost equal opportunities (See Table 17).

Table 17. Migrants have the same employment opportunities as Colombians.

	Frequency	Percentage
Equal	21	14,0
Almost equal	32	21,3
Medium	31	20,7
Different	25	16,7
Very different	41	27,3
Total	150	100,0

Figure 2. Own elaboration

**Discrimination or Stigmatization.** Regarding discrimination or stigmatization of Venezuelans in Colombia, it can be affirmed that 50% have been discriminated against sometimes, while 20% consider that they always or almost always feel discriminated against or stigmatized (Table 18).

Table 18. Discrimination or Stigmatization

	Frequency	Percentage
Always	19	12.7
Almost always	12	8.0
Sometimes	75	50.0
Almost never	31	20.7
Never	13	8.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Own elaboration

Regarding the Colombian institutional conditions, which are the second key factor in the incorporation of migrants into the labor market, the most important aspects can be highlighted: the legal system, beginning with the national constitution, laws, decrees and resolutions, seeks to have the necessary mechanisms to ensure that all Colombian inhabitants, regardless of their nationality, creed or race, can function as autonomous individuals and have access to health, education and labor services.

## Conclusions

It is estimated that in Colombia at the beginning of 2020, before the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, around two million Venezuelans were living in the country. Up to that time, the Colombian government had made great efforts so that migrants could have orderly and dignified incorporation, and even help the economic and social development of the country. But due to the confinement experienced during 2020 and 2021, many companies had to close, jobs were lost and various economic and social problems arose, to which the government had to give priority.

At the same time, some Venezuelans began to return to their country voluntarily, due to the loss of their jobs and mobility restrictions, so it is estimated that by June 2020 the number of migrants had decreased by 14.1% to 1.7 million (Migration Colombia, 2020). But later, with the reactivation of the country's productive apparatus, the migratory flow increases by 35.9% to reach 2.4 million Venezuelans residing in Colombia by June 2021 (PMV Observatory and UNFPA, 2021).

The economic and social imbalance caused by the pandemic and migratory flows has led to the loss of the status quo of the local population, and there is a growing perception of dissatisfaction, contempt, harassment, discrimination and even xenophobia towards migrants, who are seen as competing for jobs and increasing insecurity.

From a theoretical perspective, work is the main means for an individual to become incorporated into society, and in the case of migrants, it not only resolves economic and family urgency but also facilitates the individual to build his or her social fabric and successfully incorporate into the population. To facilitate the incorporation of the migrant, two conditions are fundamentally required: a) the individual competencies of the migrant and b) the institutional conditions of the receiving country.

In this sense, the research findings indicate that migrant workers consider that the employment they have obtained in Colombia solves their main individual and family problems and constitutes a way for them to feel part of the social fabric. In addition, it was established that the individuals observed have a good capacity to adapt to the work and the new society; most of them are willing to relocate geographically if necessary; they consider that they have a good capacity to relate at work and with local citizens and that the work is according to their labor skills. It was also found that most of them had urgency when looking for a job and that the most effective way to find it was through their network of family and friends.

With Regarding Colombia's institutional conditions to disappoint the migrant, the individuals observed consider that in this country they find conditions for qualification and training; they have access to education for themselves and their families; they consider that there are difficulties in validating degrees. Approximately half of them believe that they are likely to be naturalized and that it is easy for them to find employment. In addition, it was observed that half of the population considers that they have the same facilities and opportunities as local citizens; and finally, about one-third of the observed population considers that in Colombia they have ever felt discrimination and stigmatization.

In sum, migrants consider that they possess most of the skills and that Colombia offers them the possibility of joining the labor market, even despite the problems generated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

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