South America Research Report

THE POLITICS AND PROCESSES OF REFUGEE LEADERSHIP

A Comparative Analysis of Factors Conditioning Refugee Leadership in The Global South

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ACRONYMS

CASEN	Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional
CONPES	Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DANE	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística
DAS	Departamento de Acción Social
DEM	Departamento de Extranjería y Migración
ETPV	Estatuto Temporal de Protección para Migrantes Venezolanos
FEM	Foro Especializado Migratorio del MERCOSUR y Estados Asociados
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GIFMM	Interagency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDPAC	District's Institute for Citizen Participation - Instituto Distrital de la Participación y Acción Comunal
INDH	Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MLOs	Migrant-Led Organizations
MRE	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OM3	Observatory of Migrations, Migrants and Human Mobility
OVM	Observatory of Venezuelan Migration
RLOs	Refugee-Led Organizations
PDI	Policía de Investigaciones
RUMV	Registro Único de Migrantes Venezolanos
R4V	Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela
SERMIG	Servicio Nacional de Migraciones

ACRONYMS

SERVEL	Servicio Electoral
SJM	Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes
UAH	Universidad Alberto Hurtado
UDP	Universidad Diego Portales
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

Latin America has been and is until now a region of emigration. Only recently, the region has also become a transit and destination region. In the past ten years, there have been two major displacements in the region: the Haitian and the Venezuelan.

7.89 MIL

The Venezuelan exodus has reached more than 7.89 million and it is one of the largest in the world.

(Inter- Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela - R4V, 2024).

The Haitian has been a constant since the earthquake in 2010 and because of political unrest which remains until today. Regarding agency, Haitian leaders have been overlooked in their spaces and face several struggles due to language barriers and discrimination (Apollon & Torres, 2023). On the other hand, seeking to help their communities in the countries of destination, displaced Venezuelans – women in particular (Woldemikael et al., 2022) – have organized rapidly in the past years, creating associations and other NGOs to assist their fellow nationals with protection needs. In 2021, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) published the results of the first exploratory study on Venezuelan-led civil society organizations concluding on the diversity of actions and goals they have implemented in supporting their fellow nationals (IOM, 2021).

Many leaderships have emerged at different levels involving not just Refugee-led organizations (RLOs) but also community leaders. Indeed, leadership can take different shapes and take place at different levels. It can be formal when it is defined or embedded in a structure, or informal when it takes place at the community level, and it's legitimated by the community itself (bottom-up approach). This simplification has nuances, though. With the lens of the state-centered approach, leadership could influence policy change, meaning, change the structures. There is leadership that takes place regionally and/or internationally as well, to influence the global refugee regime.

Leaders emerge when states fail to address their necessities and are unable to provide for their citizens' or non-nationals rights. They then take political action.

How do leaders engage? They engage in domestic policy processes, working within institutional structures to influence change, mobilizing communities in self-help initiatives, using social and traditional media to change public perceptions about refugees, and producing innovative research on refugee issues from the perspective of those with lived experience of displacement. Some leaders may advocate for forced migrant's rights and access to state services while others assume the role of the state in emergency contexts (Alio et al., 2020).

They can also be mentors to emerging leaders in their communities. Not all leaders engage in political participation and there are new forms of leadership emerging.

This research analyses the political opportunity structure for refugee leaders in Colombia and Chile.

What is refugee leadership and how is it understood within displaced communities? In which forms is refugee leadership expressed? What variation exists in expressions of refugee leadership within South America? We first describe the context of the Venezuelan and Haitian forced displacement in Colombia and Chile (2014-2024). Secondly, we describe our methodological approach. Thirdly, we analyze the different political spaces for the participation of migrants and refugees in different levels in both countries and the barriers to access them. Fourthly, we analyze leadership considering the definitions, forms, and strategies used by leaders to advocate. Lastly, we analyze the power structures both top-level and bottom-up within RLOs and with other relevant actors.

1. BACKGROUND
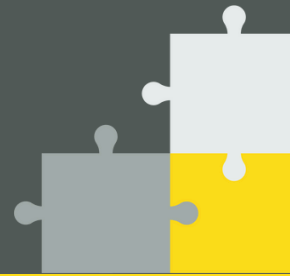
1. CONTEXT OF THE VENEZUELAN AND HAITIAN FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN COLOMBIA AND CHILE IN THE PAST TEN YEARS

1.1. THE HAITIAN FORCED DISPLACEMENT

The Haitian displacement is determined by a series of processes, facts and situations. We can attribute it to structural aspects such as weak economic growth (Banco Mundial, 2021), a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 health crisis, economic inequality, political instability, and high levels of violence and impunity (Charles et al., 2020). In addition, the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti had devastating consequences, causing a humanitarian crisis. This milestone is considered an important factor in the massive expulsion of people (Rojas et al., 2015) and it is the starting point for the departure of large numbers of Haitians to other latitudes. Subsequently, a new earthquake occurred in August 2021 that left at least 1.2 million people affected, including a significant number of children and adolescents, nearly 2,000 dead, and thousands more injured. This exacerbated the situation of vulnerability and the need for urgent attention in the country (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2021) [1].

Added to the difficulties in establishing a democratic regime and participatory democracy in the country, the constant instability, protests, and demonstrations, the assassination of President Jovenel Moise in July 2021 deepened the institutional crisis in the country, with a sustained increase in insecurity and violence.

Thus, there is currently a scale of violence in the country and the deterioration of relations with the Dominican Republic, which has generated a serious situation in terms of human rights violations (González Valdés, 2021; Maresca, 2024). These factors have promoted the massive exodus of Haitians to other countries, not only to North America but also to South America in the past decade, Brazil and Chile are receiving countries (Rojas et al, 2015). Although there is no updated data on the Haitian displacement in Latin America (it is only possible to find updated data for those countries that receive more Haitians, such as Brazil or Chile).

A large portion of the displaced population aimed to migrate to the United States or Canada, but the lack of options caused people to settle in other countries such as Brazil and Chile, the main destinations of Haitians in Latin America.

By 2024, there were 728.586 Haitian migrants in Chile (Servicio Nacional de Migraciones - SERMIG, 2024a), representing 9.8% of the migrant population in this country. 62.8% of Haitians in Chile are men and 37.9% are women and 66.8% of them are between 20 and 39 years old (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas- INE & SERMIG, 2023) (See Annex 2).

However, since 2019 Haitians have left the country. The data indicates that during 2021 more than 3,534 (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes - SJM, 2021) Haitians left, an underestimated number that does not consider departures through irregular crossings. The re-emigration of Haitians is caused by factors such as regularization issues, difficulties in their inclusion in Chilean society, and factors associated with the pandemic such as lack of employment opportunities due to confinement measures, impoverishment, and lack of social assistance (Paúl, 2021). According to the National Migration Survey 2022 (Banco Mundial, SERMIG & Centro Universidad Católica, 2022), most Haitian people surveyed arrived in 2017 to Chile, arguing lack of opportunities, economic crisis, and the increase in crime, violence, and insecurity as the main reasons for leaving their country of origin.

Figure 1. Evolution of the Haitian migration to Chile (2012-2023) [2]
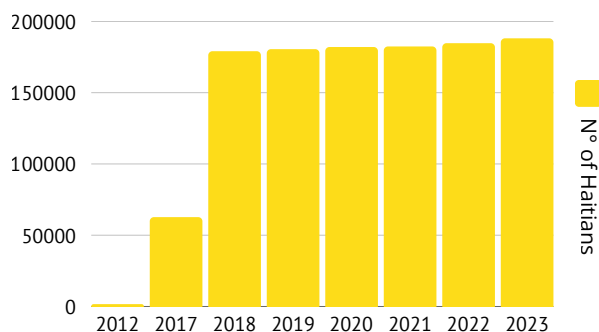
Source: Authors' elaboration based on INE-SERMIG data (2024), accessed January 16, 2025.

For Haitians, Colombia is only a transit country to reach the United States, this situation has generated a humanitarian crisis in the Darién Gap, which is a mandatory passage to reach Panama and continue their journey to North America, the Darién Gap has become one of the most dangerous migration routes in the world. According to the migration service of Panama, in 2023 more than half a million people crossed the border irregularly between Colombia and Panama through the Darién Gap, 328,650 of them were of Venezuelan nationality and 46,442 of Haitian nationality (Migración Panama, 2024). In the first quarter of 2024, Venezuela and Haiti continue to occupy the first and second place with 70,092 and 7,329 people respectively. Colombia migration figures for the first quarter of 2024 reported 124,441 irregular migrants in transit, of which 81,741 are Venezuelans and 11,034 Haitians (Migración Colombia, 2024).

1.2. THE VENEZUELAN DISPLACEMENT

Venezuelans fled their country because of an ongoing humanitarian crisis that worsened when Nicolás Maduro took power in 2013 (Castro Franco, 2019). Since 2015, when a diplomatic clash exploded, with Venezuela deporting and expulsing Colombians who have fled since the eighties because of violence, more Venezuelans have started to leave their country (López Villamil, 2019). Venezuela has hosted Colombian refugees since 1980, and, at the border, many have both nationalities, including binational indigenous communities. The forced return of Colombians was followed by the exodus from Venezuelans. This had repercussions for border regions that faced the most pressure initially on their institutions (Ordóñez & Arcos, 2019).

By 2018, one million Venezuelans had arrived in Colombia and by 2019 the number had reached 1.6 million persons. As the conditions in Venezuela worsened, more and more people fled looking to escape it and, the persons arriving in Colombia were more and more vulnerable. In 2019, Betts labeled the Venezuelan displacement as survival migration, which are "situations in which people are fleeing fragile and failed stares but are not recognized as refugees", adding states should guarantee their rights as refugees (Betts, 2019). The humanitarian needs have increased over time for new arrivals as the situation in Venezuela has deteriorated.

In the period between 2012 and 2015, the main destination countries were Colombia, Panama, and the Dominican Republic (Freier & Parent, 2019). Thus, the forced migration of millions of persons from Venezuela from 2015 onwards became evident in the continent due to the collapse of social and economic conditions in Venezuela which resulted in the shortage of food and medicines, and rising insecurity among others. In 2024 it was estimated that more than 7.81 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela (R4V, 2024) had left and 6.7 million of them remained in Latin America, setting a precedent regarding forced displacement in the region. Colombia hosts almost 3 million of these displaced Venezuelans and over 600.000Colombian returnees from Venezuela. According to data from the R4V platform (2024), Colombia is the country that has received the most Venezuelan migrants in the region.

According to Migración Colombia [3], as of January 20, 2025, it was estimated that there were 2.857.528 Venezuelans in Colombia. Bogotá is the city with the largest number of Venezuelans in Colombia,

with 589,858, La Guajira, is the sixth department with more Venezuelans in Colombia with 158,823, of which 46,720 live in Riohacha. The number of Venezuelan migrants is decreasing at the national level, by December 2022, the presence of migrants from Venezuela in the country reached its highest point, with 2,896,748 persons. Since then, the figure has fallen every month.

On April 12, 2024, the research team sent two requests for public information to Migración Colombia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting the official figures of refugees and foreign identity cards in Colombia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent the response with the following information: from 2017 and as of March 31, 2024, there are a total of 1,376 Venezuelan nationals recognized as refugees out of a total of 63,000 [4] applications received. The response also states that "It is necessary to highlight that this agency does not have disaggregated information by the city of residence, age, ethnic group, sexual orientation, or gender".

Figure 2. Evolution of the Venezuelan migration to Colombia (2014-2024)
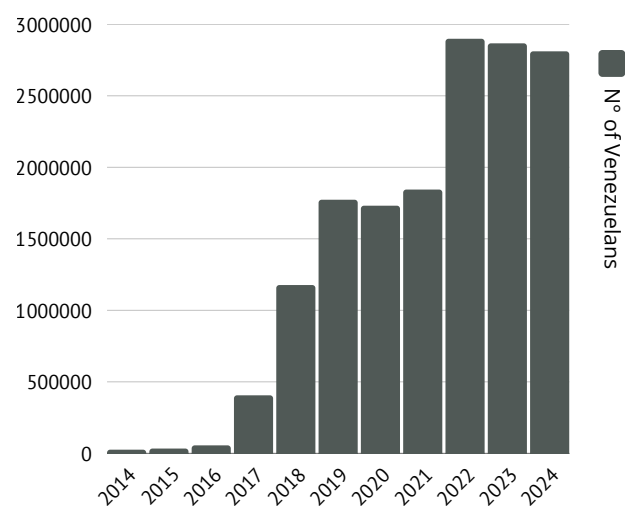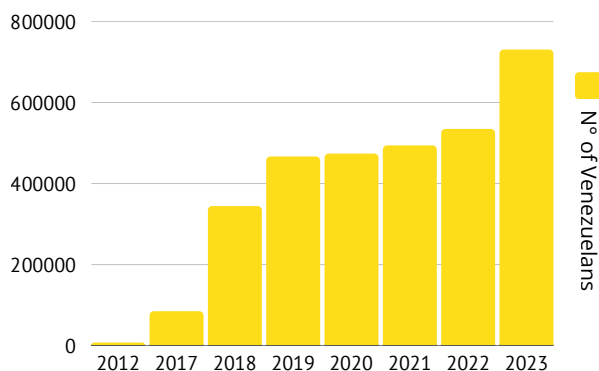

Source: Authors elaboration based on the Observatory of Migrations, Migrants and Human Mobility (OM3), of Migration Colombia accessed January 16, 2025.

In the case of Chile, the arrival of Venezuelans is more recent than for Colombia. Between 2015 and 2016 the figures show a significant increase in visa applications (from 9,591 cases to 30,751) (INE, 2020). In 2018 there was an increase in the migrant population in Chile, with Venezuelans representing 23% of the total number of migrants in the country (INE & DEM, 2019).

Current data from the National Migration Service (SERMIG, 2024b) indicates that by October 2024, there were 728.586 Venezuelans in Chile, which represents 38% of the total number of migrants, a figure that has been increasing since 2018. Between 2018 to 2019, the Venezuelan community was the one that grew the most with 55.6% more than in 2018, when it represented 26.3% of the total number of foreign people (IOM& Foro Especializado Migratorio del MERCOSUR y Estados Asociados -FEM,2022). 50.8% of them were men, while 49.2% were women. Most of this population (58.5%) is between 20 and 39 years old (INE & SERMIG, 2023a). The following graph shows the evolution of Venezuelan migration in Chile over the last 10 years.

Figure 3. Evolution of the Venezuelan migration to Chile (2012-2023)

Source: Authors' elaboration based on INE-SERMIG data (2024), accessed January 16, 2025.

In addition, in the last 10 years, 226,870 permanent residence visas have been granted to Venezuelans (INE & SERMIG, 2023b) and only 69 refugee applications have been recognized (INE & SERMIG, 2023c). By 2022, a total of 107,223 migrants residing in Chile were in an irregular situation. The foreign population in an irregular situation comes mainly from Venezuela (65.9%), followed by Bolivia (11.3%) and Colombia (6.6%) (INE & SERMIG 2023d).

Box 1: Expulsions in the Chilean context
In general, migration policies in Chile amalgamates securitist, economist and false humanitarianism, with the negative selectivity of migrants at its core (Andrade Moreno, M., & Cociña Cholaky, 2024) as a principle. The immigration legislation establishes a series of measures for persons who do not meet the requirements or conditions to remain in the country, to prohibit the entry of persons or urge them to leave the country (SJM, 2023). According to data presented in the statistical yearbook of SJM (2023), between the years 2013 and 2022, 33,969 administrative expulsions and 7,951 judicial expulsions were decreed and executed. The former reached its peak in 2021 (during the sanitary emergency period) with 6,889 expulsions, while the peak of judicial expulsions was reached in 2018 with 1,720. Precisely since 2018, an increase in the number of both types of expulsions has been observed. However, during the last years we have seen a decrease in expulsions, with 946 expulsions during 2023 (607 judicial and 339 administrative) and 251 expulsions during 2024 (151 administrative and 100 judicial). Regarding deportations, during the year 2022 there were a total of 3,150.

1.3. REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK ON MIGRATION AND REFUGEE ISSUES

1.3.1. COLOMBIA

The response of the Colombian government to an unprecedented displacement from Venezuela was not delayed. In 2017, they adopted the first regularization program that was seen as an open-door policy toward Venezuelans (Selee & Bolter, 2021). It granted Venezuelans a temporary permit for 2 years that was renewed until 2021. The period from 2015 to 2018 was based on the concept of generosity but consolidated a strategy of irregularization (Palma-Gutiérrez, 2021). This process was not deprived of challenges because of the difficulties in accessing rights, particularly, the right to work (López Villamil & Dempster, 2021).

10 YEARS In 2021, the Colombian government granted Venezuelans a temporary protected status for ten years (Estatuto Temporal de Protección para Migrantes Venezolanos - ETPV)

which was celebrated by many international actors, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and IOM [5]. This permit allowed Venezuelans to obtain permanent residency, provided that certain requirements were met. Despite the celebration of the EPTV, in Colombia, there is a liminal legality where recipients of temporary protection are aware of the fragility of their status (Del Real, 2022). As temporary protection, there is a risk the decree could be revoked by the national government at any time.

Behind these ad-hoc and exceptional measures, refugee status is almost non-existent for Venezuelans although the Colombian legislation has internalized the definitions of the Statute of 1951 and the Cartagena Declaration of 1984 (DECRETO 2840, 2013 and LEY 2136 de 2021). In 2023, the number of first asylum applicants increased by 4.7%, to reach around 5 800. Most applicants came from Venezuela (5 600), Cuba (100) and Ecuador (25). The largest decrease nationals of Cuba (-100). Of the 4 630 decisions taken in 2023, 1% were positive. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development -OECD, 2024). This indicates that the Colombian government has systematically refused to recognize Venezuelans as refugees. A recent study identified the main limitations of the refugee system in Colombia:

> (1) the predominance of the punitive approach to protection; (2) The National Commission for Refugees's failure to adapt to the magnitude and nature of the demand, (3) the secrecy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; (4) the limited role of the Ombudsman Office (5) the dispersion of the response; (6) the prevalence of an immigration approach; and (7) the generalization of the sanctioning attitude (JRS, 2023).

Notwithstanding these measures, more than 500.000 Venezuelans remain with an irregular status and unprotected in Colombia.

Institutionally, the presidential Office created unofficially the Border Management Office in 2018 to coordinate the response both with Ministries and international cooperation from different countries. Since Colombia didn't have a history of large immigration, there were no institutions put in place for the management of this influx.

The Office was shut down in 2022 and its functions were moved to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Equality, putting the issue on the agenda of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Venezuela and disregarding inclusion policies for Venezuelans at the internal level (Guerrero Ble, 2023). This undermines the possibility of considering Venezuelans as persons in need of protection assuming the government of Colombia does not consider anymore the situation of Venezuela as a risk for them to return.

Local policies

Locally, since January 2024, the different phases of the Bogotá District Development Plan 2024-2027 "Bogotá Walks Forward" have been carried out, this Plan constitutes the framework of action of the policies, programs, strategies, and projects of the current administration. It is essential to refer to this plan because it does not have projects or policies focused on migration, even though Bogotá is home to more than half a million Venezuelan migrants, which shows that the migratory phenomenon is not a priority of the current government. In the draft agreement document, which has 180 articles, reference is only made to the migration problem on two occasions: in the second chapter dedicated to the financial strategy of the Plan, article 133.2 "The District Administration will manage before the Nation greater resources for comprehensive early childhood care, quality of basic and secondary education, Care for people in situations of displacement, migration and refuge [...]" and in the third chapter dedicated to investments charged to the general royalty system, article 155, which lists the projects and initiatives that may be eligible for financing with royalty resources. Project No.149 refers to an educational project for the formulation of productive

enterprises for different groups of women, including migrant women.

The Riohacha Development Plan 2024-2027 "Socially Healthy and Sustainable Riohacha" was approved on May 30, 2024. The document available at the Riohacha´s Mayor Office website to date, July 14, is a draft, the plan includes a detailed demographic context of the migrant population residing in this municipality, recognizing the importance of Riohacha as a migratory epicenter. It also includes detailed information on poverty indexes, and a mapping of barriers that limit access to rights for the migrant population, including institutional capacity, financial resources and the absence of specific areas for migration management that affect access to education, health, employment and financial services, among others. This plan recognizes the importance of developing actions to ensure "the needs and rights of the migrant and refugee population are recognized and addressed comprehensively and sustainably. This requires a participatory and multisectoral approach that involves all relevant sectors that make up the Local System of Migration Governance and promotes inclusion and diversity as fundamental values of local development", a series of strategies are established to achieve this objective.

However, regarding the participation of the migrant population in the sectoral citizen participation tables, there is no evidence of a table with the migrant population or MLOs. This was confirmed by some of the leaders interviewed during the fieldwork in Riohacha, when the researchers asked them about their participation in the development plan, they said that they were not considered in a significant way, that they did send some proposals but that as far as they know they were not included in the plan.

Constitutional Court

The role of the Constitutional Court has been pivotal in ensuring access to rights. There are two recent rulings issued by the Constitutional Court, which mark an important precedent in the recognition of the rights of migrants. Ruling SU-543 DE 2023 orders the National Government, within 6 months following notification of this ruling, to: Design and implement a Public Policy to resolve the structural problem of saturation and congestion in the processing of refugee applications. This Public Policy must aim at overcoming the administrative, financial, and regulatory barriers and obstacles that, according to the Ministry of Foreing Affairs (MRE), negatively affect the expeditious processing of refugee applications. This Ruling is also very important for jurisprudence regarding asylum seekers who had to voluntarily withdraw their application if they wanted to obtain the Temporary Protection Permit. The Constitutional Court ordered on the grounds of unconstitutionality, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Special Administrative Unit of Migration Colombia to disapply Articles 16 and 17 of Decree 216 of 2021, according to which asylum seekers must withdraw their application.

Ruling T-166 DE 2024 order Migración Colombia to: "issue a resolution within two (2) months that creates the possibility that any person who has failed to comply with the temporary requirement to register in the RUMV (Single Registry of Venezuelan Migrants) for a reason of force majeure associated with a condition of historical discrimination, especially, the state of health and the fact of living or being a survivor of violence, can access it outside the original period".

This registration was mandatory to access the Temporary Protection Permit and had to be done before May 28, 2022.

1.3.1. CHILE

The Migration Law in Chile has been in force since 2021. However, this law replaced previous legislation that originated in 1975, therefore, there existed for years a law that governed the aspects related to migration created during the dictatorship period in Chile. Therefore, it was a law that understood the foreigner as a threat to the country (Stefoni, 2011).

The Migration Law of 2021 establishes the duties and obligations of migrants arriving in Chile, seeking a safe, regular, and responsible migration. According to the official website, this law establishes a flexible catalog of visas for adequate control and regularity of migration. Also, through this law a new institutional framework is created: the National Migration Service (which replaces the former Department of Immigration and Migration) and its regional Directorates, allowing decentralization of attention, information, analysis, inclusion, and delivery. Finally, administrative expulsions are facilitated to discourage the use of unauthorized passages.

Likewise, this regulation in addition to updating the country's legal approach, also makes mention of refuge by establishing the subcategory of "Complementary Protection" as a second option to obtain a residence permit in the case of those persons whose refugee application will be rejected, thus complementing Law 20.430 which establishes provisions on refugee protection in Chile, which was published on April 15, 2010 and implements the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees to which Chile adhered on June 8, 1972.

In this same law, there is a decree that establishes the procedure for enrolment and grants a unique National identification number for foreigners. However, the lack of information on this process has generated chaos and long waits for this process. [6]

The main institutional structure that supports this immigration law is the SERMIG which is a decentralized public service, with a legal personality, under the President of the Republic through the Ministry of Interior and Public Security. The purpose of this institution is to implement the national immigration policy and ensure its proper functioning. Therefore, the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security is the institution in charge of the country's internal security, migratory flows and refugees, but the body that manages these matters is SERMIG.

On the other hand, border control is the responsibility of the Investigative Police (PDI), which, together with the Carabineros de Chile, carries out identity and migration control, including expulsions ordered by the Undersecretariat of the Ministry of the Interior.

In terms of refugee status, the "Commission for the Recognition of Refugee Status", which is made up of the Refugee Department of the SERMIG and other State institutions, is responsible for resolving refugee applications, as well as the "Intersectoral Committee for Social Action for Refugees and Asylees" of the Department of Social Action (DAS) of the Undersecretariat, with the participation of the aforementioned State institutions, international UN agencies and civil society organizations that work for the rights of migrant and refugee communities in the country.

This instance does not contemplate the participation of organizations led by refugees or displaced persons.

In November 2024 a bill modifying the Immigration and Foreigners Law was approved in the House of Representatives and is currently awaiting discussion and approval by the Senate during January 2025. This amendment broadens the grounds for expulsion for migrants who have committed crimes, revokes residency permits for those who have committed repeated offenses against coexistence and increases the requirements for access to Chilean nationality.

This initiative was not exempt from criticism, despite its approval. This is due to the restrictions that could be generated against children and adolescents, in addition to the disincentive to regularize the migratory situation of workers in an irregular situation in Chile, since it penalizes people who hire workers in an irregular situation. Sanctions are also included for people legally residing in Chile, as immigration permits can be revoked for people convicted of repeated offenses for noise pollution, fights, street commerce, etc. In response to this, migrant-led organizations[7] published a public statement in which they rejected this modification because of the excessive impact on people who incur in minor offenses or administrative non-compliance. In addition, they point out that the provision that allows the expulsion of migrants with pending cases for crimes, without waiting for the conclusion of the judicial process violates basic principles such as the presumption of innocence, due process and rights such as equality before the law, even -argumentatively- could generate the expulsion of children and adolescents.

Meanwhile, the government points out that this law, in addition to expanding the grounds for prohibition of entry into the country, incorporates biometric data in the registry of irregular migrants[8], protects children and adolescents, and establishes sanctions for the transport of irregular migrants. This modification of the law is still under discussion and has generated controversy and debate in Chilean society with opposing positions from different sectors.

> **Box 2: Special visas for Haitians and Venezuelans**
> During 2018 and because of the massive arrival of people from Haiti and Venezuela, special measures were created for the entry of these migratory flows.
> For the Haitian community, a consular visa was established (currently called Prior Authorization) to access a tourist visa and enter Chile but which does not allow working in national territory. In addition, family reunification was established, and the "Orderly Return Plan" was established for families or individuals to request to be voluntarily returned to Haiti.
> The same year, for the Venezuelan community, the Visa of Democratic Responsibility (VR) was created to facilitate the arrival of qualified Venezuelans. In addition, in 2019, the use of expired identity documents for immigration procedures and as travel documents is allowed. In the same year, safe-conduct was granted for the entry of Venezuelan persons to Chile. This contrasts with the decree of June 2021 that establishes a consular tourist visa (currently Prior Authorization) for the same community.

These measures have adopted a securitized approach by placing barriers to the arrival of people from other countries (Stefoni, 2011; Oyarzún, Aranda & Gissi, 2021).

This is seen in the measures adopted for the Haitian and Venezuelan population, where prior authorization obtained from the country of origin (through the consular visa) has been promoted, even knowing that the institutional framework in these countries does not work optimally, where the possibility of obtaining documents to carry out procedures is difficult.

Although some progress has been made in facilitating the migration process, such as allowing expired identity documents or extending the validity of documents, protection measures for both populations have been subject to the political will of the government in power. This has not only generated a sense of instability and insecurity among the migrant population but has also encouraged irregular entry into the country.

1.4. SOCIAL COHESION IN HOST COMMUNITIES

1.4.1. ATTITUDES TOWARDS VENEZUELANS IN COLOMBIA

Regarding the social context, social attitudes towards Venezuelans were predominantly negative during the COVID-19 crisis (Chatruc & Rozo, 2021). One of the factors influencing Colombians' opinion towards Venezuelans is the politicians' tendency to use them as scapegoats for rising insecurity and unemployment[9], or for political campaigns in electoral contexts. An exclusion and threat imaginary were created around Venezuelans (Aliaga et al., 2018). For instance, among secondary students, nationalist and xenophobic sentiments have emerged due to the prioritization of the issue in the public agenda above unresolved domestic issues (Bellino & Ortiz-Guerrero, 2023). The social attitudes towards Venezuelans in Colombia fluctuate depending on the political and social context.

Between January and December 2021, the Xenophobia Barometer in Colombia[10] published their last report, they captured and classified around 576,817 publications referring to the migrant and refugee population from Venezuela in Colombia, from Twitter, news portals, and web media in Bogotá, Medellín, Cúcuta, Barranquilla and Cali. The Barometer measures the rate of xenophobia, understood as the rejection of the foreign population. This report showed that in the first quarter of 2021, there was an increase in xenophobia messages of 24.1% compared to the last quarter of the previous year, this was partially due to the national government's announcement of the Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants.

Regarding the two departments where this project fieldwork will be carried out, Cundinamarca and La Guajira, they were at opposite ends of the xenophobia rate, with the highest rate of xenophobia (15%) and the lowest rate (5%) respectively (Xenophobia Barometer, 2021).

According to the Political Culture Survey (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística - DANE, 2021), in 2019 75.7% of the population in Colombia did not trust people of another nationality and had contradictory opinions about Venezuelan migration. This is reiterated by OXFAM (2019), pointing out that in Colombia there is an imaginary or perception of migration as a factor of insecurity and delinquency, an imaginary fueled by the content disseminated on social networks that promotes or motivates xenophobic and discriminatory actions (Raza e Igualdad, 2023). In a study published by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in 2021, it is concluded that Colombians understand the reasons why migrants left their homes,

but competition for jobs in certain sectors and the imaginary of the migrant as a lawbreaker are presented as barriers to integration (Namen, Rodríguez Chatruc, M., y Romero Bejarano, 2021).

1.4.2. RACISM, RISING DISCRIMINATION, AND XENOPHOBIA IN CHILE

Even though Chile seems to offer refugees an "oasis of political and economic stability", as it is one of the countries in the region with the best economic indicators, the reality is many are just developing strategies to survive (Zenteno Torres & Salazar, 2023). In Chile, the social context for the migrant population is difficult and can even be hostile. This section will review examples and data regarding the reactions of Chilean society to migration to give an overview of what migrants face when they arrive in the country.

An example of racism in Chile that shows the existing legal framework for its prevention was the case of the complaint filed by the Haitian organization Haitian Community in Chile in March 2024 against the Chilean singer Pablo Herrera for xenophobic and racist statements made by him in a radio program, thus applying the so-called Chilean Antidiscrimination Law (No. 20.609), which was published in 2012 to be the first legal definition of what Chilean regulations will understand as discrimination in its different forms beyond what the Constitution says. 609) which was published in 2012 to be the first legal definition of what Chilean law will understand as discrimination in its different forms beyond what the Constitution says, as well as establishing a legal complaint procedure that can result in monetary sanctions for the accused person and modifying other legal instruments of the State administration so that this principle of non-discrimination also applies to Chilean civil servants.

The social context is not promising: 49% of Chileans consider irregular immigration to be the cause of criminality[11]. Even among migrants themselves, there are discriminatory attitudes that can favor restrictive policies (Doña-Reveco & Gouveia, 2022). Likewise, the Universidad Católica -UC Bicentennial Survey (2022) among its results, shows that 71% of respondents believe that there is a great conflict between Chileans and immigrants. This figure has increased considerably since 2017, when it reached 38%. In the same survey against the question "Do you believe that the number of immigrants in the country is excessive, adequate or low?"82% of the participants believe that there is an excessive number of immigrants in Chile. The response to the same question during the year 2023, increased to 86% (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile -PUC, 2024). More recently, the Plaza Pública survey (CADEM[12], 2024) shows that 90% of respondents believe that more restrictions should be placed on migration. In addition, the same survey shows that 70% of people think that there is a great conflict between foreigners and Chileans.

On the other hand, in the survey, "Chilenos y Chilenas hoy" (Espacio Público- IPSOS, 2022) 67% of the respondents agree that migration is harmful to the country because it increases social problems. From another perspective, 42% of Haitians who participated in the National Migration Survey (World Bank, SERMIG & Centro UC, 2022) indicated having suffered discrimination because of their nationality, while 28% of Venezuelans reported having felt discriminated against for the same reason.

In addition to the above, several studies have found the existence of racist practices in the Chilean educational system (Tijoux, 2013; Riedemann and Stefoni, 2015; Salas et al., 2017), in the health system (Tijoux & Ambiado, 2023), in the political sphere (Cociña Cholaky, 2020), in the neighborhoods (Bonhomme, 2021), among other spaces. The once-positive vision of Chile is replaced with the waiting and hope of Venezuelans who have unclear ideas about their future in the country (Torrent & Barbieri, 2023).

2. METHODOLOGY
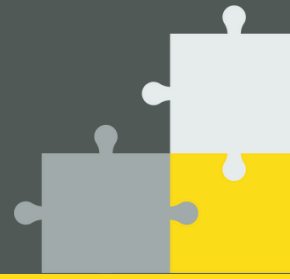
2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

First, we assume the leadership of refugees and displaced people can take different forms. We consider the process of refugee leaders and their intention to engage in national or local policy processes, working within political structures to influence social transformations. We step away from those perspectives that understand refugees as passive entities waiting for assistance from external actors. This is a relevant issue if we consider that the migration has doubled in the past thirty years in Latin America and the Caribbean. The region went from hosting nearly 7 million migrants in 1990 to having a migrant population of almost 15 million persons in the year 2020 (Cruces et al., 2020). Furthermore, a UNHCR report (2023) indicates that there are five major displacement situations in the region: in Colombia, Central America and Mexico, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Venezuela, the latter two being fundamental in the analysis of refugees and displaced people in the selected cases for this research: Colombia and Chile.

Based on this context, the research team reflected on the methodology. Firstly, the selected tools will allow us to compare the Colombian and Chilean contexts, considering their similarities and differences (as well as the East Africa contexts). Secondly, we seek to generate mechanisms of co-production of research as one of the fundamental elements in working with refugees and displaced people through compliance with principles such as

the promotion of inclusion and respect, the benefit for all subjects involved, accessibility, continuous ethics of care, aspects of security and protection for participants, and trust (Harley & Wazefadost, 2023). To generate these protective spaces, the transparency of the research team with those who participate in the research will be fundamental. Therefore, we consider the qualitative research approach to be adequate for the objectives set out in this research, since we also consider that it is an approach that promotes spaces for the co-production of information.

In this context, an intra-team and inter-team reflection was held (from Latin America and East Africa) to decide the most appropriate data collection methods for the research with refugees and displaced persons. We considered the benefits and constraints of each of the qualitative tools. In addition, we elaborated a list of risks associated with the fieldwork and the research in the selected cases and with the subjects of interest and mitigation strategies for these risks. This methodological note presents the case studies, the selected data collection methods, and the profile of the participants. We consider the risks and possible mitigation strategies during the fieldwork and the positionality of the researchers on the Latin American team. We include the training needs of the research team on methods and methodologies.

2.1. CASE STUDIES

The selection of cases of study of the politics and process of leadership in South America is based on the following criteria: nationality, feasibility, the basis of comparison at the national and sub-national levels, and existing networks. Defined as "an intensive study of a single unit to generalize across a larger set of units" (Gerring, 2004), a case study can be of a single unit or cross-unit. This study will be based on two selected cases in Latin America considering the criteria mentioned above. The study assumes that "Concrete experiences can be achieved via continued proximity to the studied reality and via feedback from those under study" (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 303). Considering the research is coproduced with refugee leaders, the strategy for selecting the cases is informed-oriented with a stratified sample of specially selected subgroups within the population. In both cases, the subgroup is composed of forcibly displaced leaders. The characteristics of the subgroups for each case are described below and consider the intersectional approach.

The study takes a comparative approach between the cases of Colombia and Chile, given their relevance in the context of the past ten years of intraregional migration in Latin America. Colombia is the country that hosts almost 40% of forcibly displaced Venezuelans, about 3 million. Some countries of interest such as Peru, which has received over 1.5 million Venezuelans, and Ecuador, with more than 500.000 Venezuelans have similar characteristics to Colombia receiving mostly Venezuelans. Chile has received more than 440.000 forcibly displaced Venezuelans, and it is host to Haitians, Peruvians, and Colombians as well.

Both countries have had a significant increase in their immigrant populations since 2012: Colombia has seen an increase of 90% while Chile has seen an increase of 70% according to the latest report of the OECD (2023). Both countries have responded to Haitian and Venezuelan displacement with ad hoc measures to either regularize their status or restrain their entry, leaving many unprotected. These responses present different political opportunity structures in both countries. Colombia had an open-door policy toward Venezuelans while Chile has adopted more restrictive policies, specifically towards Haitians and Venezuelans.

2.1.1. LOCATIONS

Colombia

For the case of Colombia, the study focuses on forcibly displaced Venezuelan leaders, with a gender approach in two regions: La Guajira, where we will do fieldwork in Riohacha and Maicao, and Bogotá. Bogotá is the capital of Colombia and has nearly 8 million inhabitants without considering its metropolitan area. As of August 31, 2023, Bogotá was the city with the largest number of Venezuelans, 605,376, or 21,05% of the total number of Venezuelans in Colombia (Migración Colombia, 2023). In 2022, 24.2% of Venezuelan migrants living in Colombia reported that the department where they resided when they first arrived in the country was Bogotá (DANE, 2022). The capital of the country offers greater employment opportunities, and access to education, health, and livelihood services and it has a less violent context compared to other regions. However, Bogotá is not excluded from the dynamics of violence, even the Ombudsman's Office has issued early warnings that may affect the migrant and refugee population, especially on issues related to common and organized crime.

Bogotá offers spaces for the participation of migrant and refugee leaders. In the city, there is a network of 19 RLOs who have worked closely with the local government, creating opportunities for participation in local councils and providing inputs for the local migration policy. They are included in a mechanism for migrant participation called the "Intersectoral Table for Migrants" from the District's Institute for Citizen Participation (IDPAC). Recently, the Mayor's Office of Bogotá launched an open call for people belonging to migrant-led organizations to register as candidates to be part of local Human Rights committees.

Riohacha and Maicao are in Colombia, in the northern department of La Guajira, which is the northernmost territory of Colombia, and one of the three border departments with Venezuela, the other two are Norte de Santander and Arauca (See Annex 2.). By August 2023 La Guajira was the sixth department with more Venezuelans in Colombia (164,095), 5,7%, of which 69,624 live in Maicao and 47,893 in Riohacha (Migración Colombia, 2022). La Guajira is the land of binational Wayúu indigenous people. This department has seen an increase in forcibly displaced Venezuelans arriving, where they live in precarious conditions (Guerrero-Blé & López Villamil, 2022). Although La Guajira is also affected by the Colombian armed conflict, the situation is less dangerous than in the department of Norte de Santander, which is the department with the third largest number of Venezuelans in Colombia and the border region where most Venezuelans cross the border. In the last seven years, the Ombudsman's Office has issued 14 early warnings in Norte de Santander that could affect Venezuelans, compared to 5 in La Guajira, which is one of the main reasons for choosing La Guajira over Norte de Santander.

La Guajira is a department that has historically been marginalized by the state, and most importantly, due to the high influx of migrants in Norte de Santander, there is a higher presence of international cooperation agencies and research on different topics, while La Guajira is a territory with greater possibilities for exploration in all issues related to Venezuelan displacement.

Chile

In the case of Chile, the subgroup of study comprises Venezuelans and Haitians which will reflect the leadership of other nationalities in a context where immigration policy is restrictive and there is rising xenophobia. The study will take place in the provinces of Tarapacá and Antofagasta, in the northern region, and Santiago, the capital city. We consider Santiago, which is the capital of Chile and home to about 7.9 million inhabitants (INE, 2019)[13]. As Chile is a centralized country, most of the activities and population are concentrated in this city. Santiago hosts more than 56.8% of the total foreign population in Chile, with over 1,089,049 foreigners residing in the metropolitan area, accounting for 11% of the total population as of 2021. Of this total of migrants, 40.38% of the population corresponds to Venezuelans and 10.7% to Haitians (INE, 2023). This city is pivotal for the research because it is the political and economic center of the country, where a large part of the political activities take place and, therefore, where there is the largest number of migrant and refugee-led organizations in the country, due to the high density in some communes like Santiago or Estación Central.

While there are many countries where forced displaced persons arrive throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, the selected countries are based on the necessity to address different social and political contexts and study the leadership of different nationalities of forcibly displaced persons within the Global South.

2.2. DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND FRAMEWORK

As part of the co-design of the methodology, the team conducted a "traffic light exercise", in which the advantages and disadvantages of the data collection methods were analyzed. In this exercise, the red color was assigned to the methods that were not considered relevant or efficient for this project, the orange color to methods that, although they may be useful, are not the most effective, and the green color was assigned to those methods that the team considered to be the best options in terms of time, economic and human resources and the quality of information that is expected to be collected. This exercise resulted in the choice of the following data collection methods: literature review, semi-structured interviews. focus group discussions, key informant interviews and participant and non-participant observation.

Table 1. Fieldwork Activities

Activity	Colombia	Chile	Total
Semi-structured interviews with leaders	17	21	**38**
Focus Group Discussion	2	2	**4**
Key Informant Interviews	5	7	**15**
Experts	2	3	**5**
International Organizations	1	1	**2**
Institutions	2	3	**5**
Refugee-led Organization visits	5	0	**5**

In Chile, fieldwork began on June 6, starting with interviews with leaders, several of which were mainly online. Mostly because we interviewed leaders located in the north of Chile. Between June 6 and June 21, 14 interviews will be conducted with Venezuelan and Haitian leaders. During the week of June 24th other interviews were conducted with leaders, institutions and experts. In addition, two focus groups were conducted with Venezuelan and Haitian leaders.

The team conducted 6 online interviews with people living outside Santiago (capital of Chile); 1 in Punta Arenas, 4 in Antofagasta and 1 in Iquique. In addition, 3 online interviews were conducted with leaders living in Santiago and 12 face-to-face interviews were conducted in the same city.

In Colombia the interviews were carried out between June 12 and July 05, 2024, in Bogotá most of the interviews were conducted virtually, as leaders in different parts of the country were also interviewed. The researchers traveled to Riohacha from June 17 to 19, on this trip they were able to conduct interviews with leaders, with a representative of an international organization and with a representative of the local mayor's office. Two focus group discussions were conducted, one in Riohacha on June 19 and one in Bogotá on July 2.

2.3. LEADER'S PROFILES

In Colombia, eight of the leaders are women and seven are men, most of them are older than 35 years old, and half of them are binational (Colombian and Venezuelan), the high number of leaders holding both nationalities respond to the migration process from Colombia to Venezuela, so half of the leaders either were born in Colombia or their parents are from Colombia (See Annex 3.). Three of them identify as Afro and one as LGBTQ+. All but one of them are the directors, founders, or legal representatives of the organizations they represent. The team carried out 5 in-person interviews in Bogotá and 4 in Riohacha, which were the two cities chosen for the fieldwork. The researchers decided to carry out 5 virtual interviews in other cities with migrants with great leadership: 1 in Medellín, 2 in Cali, 1 in Cúcuta, and 1 in Barranquilla.

In Chile, on the other hand, 13 of the leaders are women, while 8 are men. It is important to note that the majority (11) of the women leaders are Venezuelan, while two are Haitian. In this regard, 16 of the leaders interviewed are Venezuelan (and only one of them has dual nationality), while 5 are Haitian. One of the leaders belongs to the LGBTQ+ community. Most of them are directors, presidents, or coordinators of an MLO, while 2 fulfill other functions in the organizations and one leader is independent. In addition, the leaders who participated in the research in Chile were between 29 and 65 years old.

3. PARTICIPATION

3. MECHANISMS FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

3.1. COLOMBIA

As mentioned in a recent paper on refugee participation, the growing acknowledgment of the importance of meaningful involvement of refugees is evident in the global refugee framework (Milner et al. 2022). This recognition underscores that the participation of refugees in policies impacting them is crucial for legitimacy. The 2018 Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) by the United Nations emphasizes that effectiveness in responses is achieved when there's active and meaningful engagement with the individuals intended to be protected and assisted (Khan, 2024).

Participation of citizens in politics is one of the main features of democratic systems. However, the traditional concepts of political participation and citizenship, limited to the only exercise of the right to vote for the nationals of a country, are being overcome by new analysis that insist on the existence of "new ways" of participation and citizenship. [...] that are inserted in the field of collective action and that make room for a set of citizen actions, beyond the exercise of the right to vote" (Martínez, 2014). It is this scenario of new ways of participation this research will focus on in spaces where Venezuelan migrants in Colombia could participate in the political agenda and influence decision-making that directly affects them.

"
In the region, there are few policies or programs that promote the political participation of migrants and refugees. Although in some cases there is awareness of the importance of participation, this does not always result in the promotion and/or approval of initiatives in this direction, or the allocation of resources for it

– Organization of American States OAS, 2023
"

In this section we highlight some of these initiatives that promote spaces for the participation of the migrant and refugee population in Colombia, understanding that the work of RLOs and MLOs can contribute to responding to the multiple needs of millions of Venezuelans (IOM, 2021).

> **The territories from which leaders carry out their work can play an important role in recognition and leadership trajectories.**

Living far from the capital cities of both Colombia and Chile can be an obstacle due to the political-administrative centralization of both countries,

i.e., living in Santiago (capital of Chile) or Bogota (capital of Colombia) allows access to spaces or authorities that is difficult in border regions. The territory where one lives is a barrier because both Colombia and Chile are countries that function centrally. Therefore, not living in the national capitals hinders participation and advocacy towards authorities, being a variable of exclusion.

3.1.1. FORMAL MECHANISMS FOR PARTICIPATION

The National Civil Society Board for Migration

The Law 1465 of 2011, decreed by the Congress of the Republic of Colombia, creates the National Migration System, which is to be integrated, among other actors, by the National Civil Society Board for Migration. This Law establishes that this Table

> **"**

will be an open participation space, under the coordination of Colombia Nos Une[14], to which any Colombian citizen residing abroad or in the national territory as a returnee or regular migrant in Colombia, interested in the migration issue, may register. Registration to this Board will allow you to obtain up-to-date information related to the institutional development of the Comprehensive Migration Policy of the Colombian State and participate in the activities for its discussion and development

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– Law 1465, 2011, Art.5

The Diplomatic Missions and Consular Offices of Colombia are responsible for convening the citizens who are part of the Board to participate in the formulation and

consolidation of suggestions, recommendations, and proposals addressed to the National Migration System.

In 2016, the first meeting for the creation of the Board was held, in which civil society organizations, the Colombian community abroad, foreigners in Colombia, academia, the private sector, and international organizations, among other actors, participated. This meeting aimed to adjust and offer recommendations for modifications to migration policy and advance the generation of channels that promote their participation in the construction of the National Migration System in Colombia.

In May 2023, the first pilot of the National Civil Society Board for Migration was carried out, to validate its viability and design. Through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and their respective consulates, between March 11 and 30, 2023, registrations were opened to vote or representatives and participate in this pilot, in this initiative 7,098 people registered. The elections took place in April 2023, with 11 representatives of Colombians abroad, 7 representatives of returned Colombians, and 7 belonging to the migrant population in Colombia (IOM, 2023). According to Colombia Nos Une, some achievements of this pilot were: the promotion of dialogue and participation, the strengthening of citizen participation, the high participation, the multidisciplinary collaboration, and the implementation of Law 2136 of 2021, among others. Regarding this last achievement, Colombia Nos Une believes that the effectiveness of said Law has been tested through this pilot, which has made it possible to make necessary adjustments before launching the process of convening the Board[15].

Right to Vote of Foreigners Living in Colombia

According to Law 1070 of 2006, foreigners living in Colombia may vote in municipal and district elections and popular consultations, such as in the elections of district and municipal mayors, district and municipal councils, and local district and municipal administrative boards, meeting the following requirements: a) have a resident visa, b) prove at least five continuous and uninterrupted years of residence in Colombia, c) possess a resident ID, d) be registered in the electoral register, and e) not be subject to constitutional and legal disabilities.

Local and Regional Migration Boards

Some local governments have created migration boards, a strategy for the establishment of local discussion spaces for decision-making regarding Venezuelan migration. These boards were created as a strategy of coordination between the national government, local authorities, international cooperation and civil society in the departments and municipalities with a high presence of Venezuelans (Conpes 4100, 2022). They became especially important as they became the mechanism through which the three levels of government: national, departmental and municipal, meet to find solutions and generate actions to assist those who arrived (Government of Colombia, 2020). There are more than 25 boards created.

These boards operate at different levels[16]: regional, departmental, sub-regional border and municipal border. La Guajira belongs to the regional boards at three levels: regional, departmental and municipal, including the municipality of Riohacha.

Some migration boards have as permanent guests CSOs representing the migrant, refugee and/or returnee population, as is the case of the municipality of Cúcuta in the border area with Venezuela. In the decree of the Riohacha´s Migration Board, RLO or MLO are not invited to participate, not even as guests.

Regarding Bogotá, according to the website of the Colombian Foreign Ministry[17], the migratory board was installed on November 30, 2018, however, in subsequent government reports, this board does not register in operation. But there is an Intersectoral Commission of the Capital District for the Care and Integration of the Population from Mixed Migratory Flows, created in 2021, to lead, guide and articulate the formulation and development of the district strategy for emergency humanitarian care, assistance, stabilization and integration for the refugee, migrant and returnee population of any nationality, in a vulnerable situation. However, RLO representatives are included just as optional guests to specific sessions, when their participation is considered pertinent.

During the interviews conducted in Bogotá and Riohacha, most people agreed that the migrant population does not have a significant participation in these types of spaces. In Riohacha, statements of this type were much more explicit, and contrast with the interview conducted with the mayor's office advisor for migration issues, in which he affirms that the administration has an open-door policy for the participation of the migrant population, although he does acknowledge that there is no established protocol for the election of representatives of this population group.

In the case of Bogotá, the high counselor for migration affairs of the capital district during the government of Claudia López (2020-2024), explained during the interview that there are institutional spaces to talk about budgets, for example, and that there are other spaces for significant participation that they achieved, such as the human rights committees.

In December 2023, Bogotá adopted the District Public Policy on Reception, Inclusion and Development for the new Bogotanos[18] (International Migrant Population), aimed at promoting access to goods and services for the reception and inclusion of the migrant population. For the formulation of this policy, a citizen participation strategy was designed, through different methodologies such as focus groups and workshops, in which RLOs representatives were invited to participate. This policy establishes as one of its principles social participation, and it refers to the intervention of people and their organizations in the construction of the public sphere, to influence decision-making processes and the construction of public policies.

Bogotá also offers spaces for the participation of migrant and refugee leaders. In the city, there is a network of 19 RLOs who have worked closely with the local government, creating opportunities for participation in local councils and providing inputs for the local migration policy. They are included in a mechanism for migrant participation called the "Intersectoral Table for Migrants" from the District's Institute for Citizen Participation (IDPAC), and they have participated in tables for the formulation of the District Development Plan. Additionally, the mayor's office of Bogotá launched an open call for people belonging to migrant-led organizations to register as candidates to be part of local Human Rights committees.

During the interviews, there were two formal spaces for participation that were frequently mentioned as important spaces for advocacy: the Coalition for Venezuela, to which a section is dedicated in section 5 for regional networks, and the Interagency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows, GIFMM, which functions as a coordination space led by UNHCR and the IOM for the response to the situation of refugees and migrants in Colombia.

3.1.2. INFORMAL SPACES

In Colombia, there are limited formal spaces for the participation of the migrant population from Venezuela. However, efforts made to create these spaces should not be ignored. It is important, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, to recognize the new ways of participation, beyond their political action from the traditional structures of power, acknowledging

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>
> the diverse ways refugees enact agency within their own local, political, and social realities and positionalities
>
> – Khan, 2024
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> "

In this sense, the lack of formal spaces is not equal to the lack of participation and leadership, as refugee participation agency can be expressed also outside the traditional power structures.

It is not clear how many RLOs and MLOs exist in Colombia, but according to some research, the number can go up to 200 (OVM, 2021). The Venezuelan Observatory of Migration (OVM) of the Andrés Bello Catholic University carried out a regional mapping of Venezuelan-led associations between December 2020 and January 2021, they sent a survey to 326 organizations, of which 204 were in Colombia. Also, there is an Integrated Social Protection Information System in Colombia called SISPRO that includes a database of 197 organizations offering services to the migrant population in Colombia[19], it is important to clarify that this database also includes international NGOs, not just Venezuelan-led organizations. In the focus group carried out in Bogotá, one of the participants said that in Colombia there are more than 100 legally established organizations and around 400 without formal registrations.

The leaders interviewed mentioned several networks and spaces for participation at the local, regional, and even international levels, some of which are formally formed and others empirically. However, they also recognized that networking is not easy and that egos and powers within the organizations themselves make it a difficult task.

This context is important to understand that participation and leadership go beyond formal spaces, as many of these initiatives and leaders create and lead spaces for participation in their communities and demand their rights. As the OVM research suggests, given the number of associations and organizations created between 2017 and 2018, the years of greatest exodus, it can be said that among migrants from Venezuela, there was immediately a search for forms of organization, and

"

another interesting aspect is the level of formalization of Venezuelan migrant associations and organizations since 73% of them are registered in the host country through legal status. This aspect is relevant in organizational terms, as this level of formalization is uncommon in newly created associations

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– Armas, C; Freitez, A, 2021

3.2. CHILE

The direct political participation and representation of the migrant and displaced community is regulated and conditioned by the Political Constitution of Chile in its articles N° 13, 19, and 25 which establishes the equal possibility of participating in public meetings as with Chilean citizens.

Special requirements are established to exercise the right to vote with the requirement to obtain the so-called "avecindamiento" (five or more years with a valid residence permit in the country) or the requirement of having been born in Chile (Constitution of Chile, 1980). This is complemented by articles 188 and 119 of the same constitution as laws 18.695 and 19.175 that detail the requirements to vote in elections or run for councilman, mayor, regional governor and congressman.

Other spaces for participation are those established by Law 20.500 and Presidential Instruction N°007 of 2022, which regulate citizen spaces: spaces and places of inclusion for citizens in the State and its public policy on how these spaces will function, their objectives and some requirements for citizens to participate through legally constituted social organizations or representatives, both cases in which migrant or displaced communities are not directly excluded, but are required to have at least a Chilean RUN for their legal and administrative identification at least in each organization space of representation (Presidential Instruction N°007, 2022). All of them are consultative spaces and not directly binding with the decisions of the State.

There is a hypothesis that due to the transformation of the migratory political context that the country has experienced in recent years, there has been greater associativity among migrants and their organizations (Torreblanca, 2020). This has been evidenced, for example, in the beginning of the first participation of the migrant community in the Chilean public space through public demonstrations between 2009 and 2014, when 25 of these actions were registered (Ramírez and Bravo, 2014).

3.2.1. FORMAL MECHANISMS FOR PARTICIPATION

It is important to keep in mind that Chile is a country where power and political participation is centralized. Nevertheless, spaces have been opening up for the migrant population at the local level. In this sense, municipalities have played a fundamental role in generating dialogue roundtables, consultative spaces and the development of activities that allow the political and socio-cultural participation of the migrant population in the municipalities.

Registration of MLOs

There has been an increase in the number of non-profit organizations or foundations registered with the Civil Registry and Identification Service (Servicio de Registro Civil e Identificación). In the case of the Venezuelan and Haitian communities, 30 organizations are from the Venezuelan community, with 57% located in the Metropolitan Region, while in the case of the Haitian community since 2006 with 47 organizations of which 81% are located in the Metropolitan Region.

Civil Society Council of the National Migration Service

Regarding formal spaces, there are intersectoral roundtables and Civil Society Councils (COSOC). These spaces are implemented by state agencies and have a consultative nature. They discuss issues related to migration, for example, the "intersectoral roundtable of social action for refugees and asylum seekers of the Department of Social Action of the Undersecretariat of the Interior (under the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security) and the recently formed COSOC of the National Migration Service. The former is composed of State institutions and services such as organizations that support migrants and refugees, and the latter is composed of nineteen Councilors elected through the vote of registered organizations in three categories: organizations of migrants and displaced persons, NGOs and academics At least one organization led by migrants and displaced persons participates in this space, as well as seven councilors of Venezuelan nationality.

In the area of migration, there have also been specific proposals for participation, which were presented with the new Migration Law 21.325 in its sixth article where the principle of integration mentions the importance of achieving the participation of the migrant community, which was later confirmed with Exempt Resolution No. 925 in April 2023 with the approval and publication of the regulation of citizen participation for the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security, which includes the SERMIG, and which confirms and concretizes the proposals of the Presidential Instruction No. 007 (Presidential Instruction N°007, 2022).

Another precedent is Decree No. 181, issued in December 2023, which published the National Policy on Migration and Foreigners. This policy, in its seventh axis, ratifies the objective of allowing better integration and participation of the migrant community in the country as well as Chileans abroad, which in the first case is materialized in the "Modernization of migration management" and seeking to effectively implement the N° 20.500 (Decree No. 181, 223), guiding the conformation and operation of the spaces of the National Migration Service such as the COSOC.

This implementation has been reflected in the draft of its participatory account 2024 where they have included citizen participation as one of the indicators of its management, which materialized in the functioning of the COSOC. This document highlights that among its challenges, it proposes to develop two training spaces for citizens, as well as to maintain existing participation spaces (SERMIG, 2024).

Intersectoral Board for the Social Action of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Another important formal institutional space for participation is the "Mesa Intersectorial para la acción social de personas refugiadas y solicitantes de refugio" of the Department of Social Action (DAS) of the Undersecretariat of the Ministry of the Interior (mentioned above). This table could be a space that promotes the participation of organizations led by refugees and displaced persons in Chile, however, only representatives of different ministries of the State, international organizations such as UNHCR, UN Women and ILO, together with religious organizations of civil society working for the rights of migrant and refugee communities in the country and representatives of academia have participated in it[20].

Lobby Law

A relevant area of formal participation is related to the capacity of migrant and displaced communities to lobby the State and its powers. This is to participate in public debate, influence decision-making or the implementation of public policies. It is in this context that the "Lobby Law" No. 20 has been used by organizations that support migrants and displaced social organizations to negotiate with the executive and legislative branches. In the first case, the law has been used on five occasions by at least three different Venezuelan organizations to dialogue with the director of the National Migration Service, while in the second case in the lower house of Congress, the law has been used twenty-six times by the Venezuelan community and three by the Haitian community, and at least seventeen times by UNHCR, SJM Chile and the Venezuelan association between 2016 and 2024.

In the case of the upper house of Congress, only three activities by a private lobbyist, UNHCR, and a pro-immigrant and displaced organization are recorded[21].

Electoral Participation

Electoral participation is also one of the most important areas. In the Chilean case, there are constitutional articles that establish the possibility of meeting in public spaces, requirements for obtaining citizenship and the possibility of voting in elections for citizens.

Various studies such as SJM (2022) show that the electoral participation of the foreign population has been increasing in recent years. This is important because it shows an interest from the migrant population (especially from recent flows such as the Venezuelan) in the exercise of political participation, with the objective of having decision-making power in the national political contingency, as well as influencing certain spaces of power. This is also relevant because it can change political dynamics at the national and territorial levels. For example, in some communes of Santiago, close to 30% of the voters are migrants. Therefore, the migrant vote can become decisive in certain territories[22].

In recent years, Chile experienced two constituent processes (between 2022 and 2023) that sought to develop and implement a new constitution in the country. However, despite being a democratic process, no requirements were established to allow the migrant population to participate in the elections of constitutional representatives or in voting on constitutional proposals.

A similar situation occurred in the case of presenting themselves as representatives. These regulations maintained the requirements established by the general regulations, which created a problem for migrants to be able to sponsor candidate since they were required to Migrants could also not present themselves as representatives or sponsor candidates, as they were required to have Chilean nationality. Now, in the process of generating a new Constitution, there was a space for proposals of norms from the citizenry, another to present projects to constituent representatives and a final space to convene spaces for citizen dialogue on proposals for norms. In these last two spaces, initiatives were presented by organizations supporting migrants and by Venezuelan organizations in Chile[23].

3.2.2. INFORMAL SPACES

As for informal spaces, the participation in socio-cultural activities organized with other groups is mentioned, as well as the existence of different institutions and organizations (such as Legal Clinics of Universities or RLOs dedicated to information) that offer legal orientation and counseling for migrants.

In the National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (CASEN) (Ministry of Social Development and Family, 2022), participants are asked about their participation in different types of organizations. For both Haitians and Venezuelans, participation in organizations is low, since a significant percentage does not participate in any group or organization. Despite this, 20% of Haitians report participating in a religious group or church, while 3.1% of Venezuelans report participating in a sports or recreational club. Although these categories do not contemplate political participation and focus on community and sociocultural participation, these results show that participation in these types of organizations is significant (IOM, 2015; SJM-Ekhos, 2022; World Bank, SERMIG & Centro UC, 2022)

4. LEADERSHIP
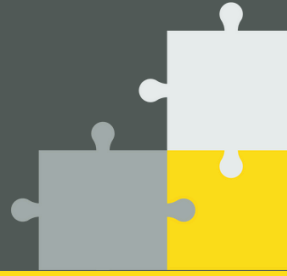
4. THE LEADERSHIP OF VENEZUELAN AND HAITIAN DISPLACED IN COLOMBIA AND CHILE

4.1. DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP WITHIN DISPLACED COMMUNITIES

4.1.1. SELF-RECOGNITION AS A LEADER

Not all leaders recognize themselves as such and some consider it a process, they didn't become leaders from one day to the other. When leaders were asked during the fieldwork about the meaning of leadership, many paused in silence before answering the question, which shows how difficult it can be for them to think about leadership and assume themselves as leaders. As the literature on leadership points out (Castro Solano, 2007), leadership is a social process with affectations between different individuals or groups. Some of the leaders recognize that they have not had a previous trajectory and the point of origin of their leadership lies in observing -in the country of destination- the needs of the community or having lived an experience where they felt vulnerable in a particular situation, being a leadership that arises in a sometimes-circumstantial way.

Another important factor is the support and recognition of others. In the following quote, the interviewee highlights the importance of support from the community or a team to be a leader.

“

What does leadership mean to me? Eh, to do, I think it is to do but to do as a team, that is, the leader is not there doing alone, but he does, but he does it as a team, he forms and forms a team, he walks and walks with a team

”

– MA, woman, Venezuelan leader based in Colombia

In this sense, one could not be a leader without the support of a group. Recognition, the interviewees point out, plays a fundamental role in the leadership trajectory.

On the other hand, other leaders say that they began their careers in their country of origin. Some had a political trajectory, and others were activists. For example, there is an interesting characteristic in the leaders we interviewed in Colombia: several of them were activists in Venezuela. That trajectory has helped them consolidate their leadership, not from politics but from the struggle for the human rights of migrants. Also, a significant number of the Venezuelan leaders interviewed reported having some previous leadership or participation experience, often linked to work in Chile and Colombia. Thus, the case of Venezuelan leaders shows a permanent connection with their country of origin, and they are constantly linked to the political and social processes of Venezuela.

> **"** _____

I am not... well, I come from a family, my mother in her time, my grandmother... I was raised by my grandmother, she also took leadership in her years, so leadership comes from behind, from behind and it is an innate leadership

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– KS, woman, Venezuelan leader based in Chile

Now, on the question of whether they consider themselves leaders, gender is relevant. It is more difficult for the women interviewed to define themselves as leaders; many of them dissociate themselves from the category of a leader by using others to describe themselves, such as promoting "participative leadership", and "humanitarian collaborator", among others. If we hypothesize in this regard, we could say that this difficulty is due to the approaches of each leadership and the organizations they represent, with humanitarian and social aid being the predominant type in the case of women Another possible hypothesis is that the obstacles that they go through during their trajectory may have made it difficult for them to reach success in their trajectories and identify themselves as leaders. They are leaders because they had to. On the other hand, men find it easier to recognize themselves as leaders, saying openly that they do recognize themselves as such based on their work and their skills.

4.1.2. DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP

The definitions of leadership are mixed, and the interviewees provide different perspectives. First, there is the idea that leadership is a service to a group, a community, or a society.

In this sense, the leader puts himself at the disposal of others to carry out certain tasks, play the role of mediator between their communities and the institutions, and make the necessary links to provide solutions to the demands of their communities. Another interesting definition of leadership is that of an agent capable of mobilizing the population towards certain common objectives.

A second element of leadership that the interviewees pointed out was the desire or eagerness to occupy a position of power or in politics, as a defining trait of the leader. On some occasions, the interviewees did not define themselves as leaders because they stated that occupying some type of position that holds power is not one of the objectives of their work. In other words, the leader wishes to guide, to mobilize. An interviewee points out:

> **"** _____

I don't, I simply want to help, and in one way or another, I mobilize, this, when I set up this management that I am talking about. Yes, but no, no, not with an objective of "let's go there and this is it", I don't have that, at least not now at this moment in my life. (...) but not at this moment, no, I don't have that need nor do I have those aspirations, nor those expectations. I think that is fundamentally the trait of leadership that I do not have

_____ **"**

– Woman, Venezuelan leader based in Chile

Most people agree that leadership is about raising the voice for the voiceless and perceive it as an ability to guide and inspire others to meet common goals rather than individual ones.

4.1.3. PROFILES OF THE LEADERS

In terms of leader profiles, we can find some differences between the two countries studied. These differences refer to Venezuelan leaders. In the case of Chile, we could see that many of the interviewees are professionals, with university degrees and, many times, involved in politics. Most of them belong to the upper and middle classes of society, therefore, there would be an elitization of leadership. In addition, all of them have resolved their migratory status in the country of destination, but none of them are formally recognized as refugees. One of them is currently seeking asylum in another country This is due to the few recognized refugees in Chile.

In Colombia, the situation is different. Many of the leaders come from more vulnerable situtations and there are only a few interviewees who come from the middle and upper classes in Venezuela. Regarding their migratory status, some have binationality; Colombian and Venezuelan, but only one of the interviewees has been formally recognized as a refugee. In both countries, there is an important similarity among leaders. Most of them recognize the hard work of their leadership, especially in responding to the needs of the community they represent.

Of those interviewed from Venezuela, the majority stated that they had been forced to leave their country due to the economic and political situation; of this group, a couple considered themselves forcibly displaced and even sought refuge in the country. A couple of other interviewees indicated that their migration was for economic reasons or a family decision that was not related to the context of their country of origin.

Another important difference is related to the financing of their work. For example, in Colombia, the leaders have resources granted by the international aid and development agencies, which play an important role in the work of the leaders. In Chile, there are no funders, and the work of the leaders is self-financed, so they must devote their free time to the exercise of leadership and have a job that allows them to support their personal lives and their work with the community. Others have also applied to competitive funds to finance some initiatives carried out by their organizations.

Leadership takes different forms from where the subject stands in terms of nationality, gender, city, and background. Although there was no explicit definition of new forms of leadership, during the fieldwork in Chile and Colombia, we observed that there were strategies for exercising leadership that differed from the conventional or historical ones developed by the leaders. These new leaderships that we were able to detect are found in both national territories but could be observed more strongly in Colombia through the interviews.

The main characteristics of this type of leader are that they are young, they have other types of trajectories since their leadership has been rather emerging. In addition, they are critical of traditional leadership and institutional political participation spaces. They move away from traditional political participation and advocacy because they question the established power structures, whether hierarchical or patriarchal, that exist in migrant and refugee communities. They use social networks more frequently to generate campaigns to mobilize their ideas and objectives and to generate other interventions to develop their actions and strategies.

4.1.4. SKILLS

During the fieldwork, when asked for a definition of leadership, the people interviewed identified a series of characteristics that a good leader should have or develop. One of the main characteristics mentioned was empathy, knowing how to understand others in the community, put oneself in someone else's place, identify their needs, and work for them. Other cross-cutting skills were communication, social capital and social skills such as the capacity of dialogue, convening, making contacts and networks, among others.

For the interviewees, the ability to create links with other people, organizations, and institutions is important. This is directly related to another characteristic mentioned above. Charisma would be an attribute that a leader should have or develop during his or her career. Other related skills were listening to others, having a vocation of service, willingness to help, and being in connection with the group with which he/she works. Precisely, these skills are linked to the definition of leadership from the notion of service to the community. Also, being able to identify the needs of the community is a skill that the interviewees consider pivotal for the exercise of leadership.

Those interviewed who defined a leader as a person capable of mobilizing the community, for instance, that the leader must be able to convince others and have the power to convene groups around common objectives, pointed out that the skills of a leader should be networking, managing, organizing, negotiating, reaching agreements, generating friendly workspaces and working to generate changes and transformations in society. In this line, leadership also requires acceptance, support, and validation from the community.

4.2. STRATEGIES AND BARRIERS TO EXERCISING LEADERSHIP

The leaders' objectives and the areas in which the participants exercise their leadership are multiple, ranging from humanitarian aid to advocacy in public policies. They also participate in spaces with different geographic scopes and greater or lesser political formality.

In this section, we will delve deeper into the strategies exercised by the leaders to carry out their work. To characterize these strategies and the barriers leaders encounter, we have categorized these different forms. This does not mean that these forms are mutually exclusive, but that they can be developed jointly within the exercise of leadership.

The first important distinction concerns the objectives of leaders and their organizations. Some prioritize those objectives related to humanitarian aid to the community, access to rights, and regularization and opening of spaces, while others advocate for public policies and advocacy at the international level. This will also guide the strategies used by each of them.

4.2.1. AWARENESS-RAISING AND TRAINING

The first strategy identified is promoting a positive discourse on migration to facilitate the processes of inclusion of migrants in society. We have called this type of strategy awareness-raising and training, as it has two main axes: raising awareness among the general population about the situations experienced by forcibly displaced persons through social networks, campaigns, and partnerships with organizations that support migrants such as the Jesuit Migrant Service (SJM) at the national level or the UNHCR at the international level.

Another dimension of this strategy is training, which emphasizes the training of authorities and professionals in government institutions. We emphasize that this strategy is the one that mainly identifies Haitian leadership, whose concern has been to fight the discourse of discrimination in Chile. In the focus group with Haitian leaders held in Chile, participants mentioned that awareness-raising has been their focus in recent years. They point out that they are in the process of raising awareness of the negative discourse on migration in Chilean society, and that they need "leaders to change the image". This being their priority, they visualize and point out that they are preparing the ground for participating in other spaces. Although this strategy is generally developed at the local level, through links with international organizations or CSOs with political influence at the global level, leaders can take their awareness-raising campaigns to another level; either nationally, or by presenting them in commissions linked to the government or the international level.

The main barrier to carrying out this type of strategy is the discourse of xenophobia, discrimination, rejection, and stereotypes promoted by the media, civil society, and State agents, as well as the instrumentalization of migration for political campaigns that criminalize migration under a securitization approach, during elections. The lack of awareness is a difficulty as well as the unwillingness of the authorities to train and promote a positive discourse on the inclusion of migrants. The fear on the side of governments to open their doors to the integration of the migrant population is something that hinders the work of these leaders.

However, another of the main difficulties for the exercise of this type of leadership is the lack of institutional knowledge of the inclusion of migrants in spaces of participation and regarding the legal structure to be able to take action to influence, especially in cases of serious complaints of discrimination against the migrant population. These difficulties arise for leaders who have recently arrived in Colombia or Chile or for Haitian leaders who do not understand Spanish. This makes it difficult for some leaders to go a step further. Actions within this type of leadership often remain at a discursive level.

4.2.2. INFORMING AND FACILITATING ACCESS TO SERVICES

A second strategy aims to provide a humanitarian response to the needs of the community to be able to settle in the destination country. This type of strategy is characterized by informing and facilitating access to services within their communities. For example, providing legal orientation for the regularization process or helping to find jobs, offering training for migrants, and ensuring access to health services, among other objectives.

In this type of strategy, leaders generally focus on a specific area related to the needs of the migrant population (education, health, regularization of migratory status, etc.) or on a particular group (women, children, senior citizens), which limits and focuses their organization's work. The leaders who generally use this strategy mobilize at the local level (cities, regions, or departments) with participation in formal political spaces. Those who use this strategy have been able to access formal policy spaces thanks to their contact with other leaders who are part of other spaces of participation.

In addition, this type of strategy is complemented by using networks or alliances with other organizations. These links allow for permanent contact and updates on the work of other RLOs and their leaders, allowing for referrals in cases of attention to migrants, emergency response, and humanitarian aid. Therefore, due to the specificity of the work of these leaders (either with a population group or in a specific community), upon receiving a case that requires support, communication with other organizations allows for referral to whoever is relevant. A Venezuelan leader recalls:

> And I don't know what and then we are always all, like in the same circle and so are the different groups. I have groups of Haitians, I have groups of Dominicans, Colombians, who I have met throughout my work, and we also support each other. There are the guys from Peru, from Polvos Azules, who also have a spectacular work. In other words, it is impossible for me to say that I do not work, I do not know these networks with which I have done some activity, more than once, or that they need some information and I have gone to support them

– MLL, woman, Venezuelan leader based in Chile

However, during the analysis, it was possible to identify barriers associated with the exercise of this type of leadership. In the first place, the lack of information and the fear of approaching the authorities makes it difficult to generate actions to respond to the needs of migrants or to reach more people.

Another barrier is related to the leader's lack of knowledge -especially when they begin their leadership journey in the destination country- about the functioning of the institutions, which makes it difficult for them to navigate the legal and political structures and provide information, guidance, and efficient help.

4.2.3. LOBBYING

Another strategy that was identified during the interviews was lobbying. Many leaders have developed this type of strategy, especially at times when the public debate is at its peak (such as evaluation processes of bills on migration) or when facing emergencies (such as the humanitarian crisis caused at the borders during the pandemic).

In this type of strategy, different actions are used to carry out advocacy processes. In Chile, for example, the Lobby Law has been used to request meetings with government or congressional authorities to raise awareness of a particular situation of the migrant population. Thus, negotiation with authorities has been used to influence some public policies, legal resolutions, and even regularization processes that affect migrants or a particular nationality.

Several leaders indicate having come to Congress to present projects or perspectives regarding a bill, others indicate having met with politicians to present an idea, especially when it comes to migration regularization processes, and there are even leaders who declare having been political advisors for migration issues (in the case of Venezuelan leaders), which allows them to position themselves in institutional politics.

The following quote reports on a lobbying strategy carried out by a leader in conjunction with other organizations to address issues related to migration:

> Well, first we organized what each organization was going to discuss in their lobby meetings with decision-makers and managed the different approaches, which I think worked very well for us, didn't it? And secondly, well, our agenda was tremendous. We met with, I would say, 80% of the deputies and senators at that time. (...) Well, one of the things we were pointing out the most was the issue of revalidation and validation of university degrees. I remember that with the English Patient, the Foundation[24], we saw that the wording of this particular point was 3 or 4 lines. Then, in a new migration law, to dedicate only 3 or 4 lines to this very important part, which also involved Chileans, because there were a number of people who study abroad and come back, and to validate (...) So, we focused primarily on that and also on the possibility of changing the migratory status in the territory. We did very well with one, which is the revalidation and validation of university degrees, and not so well with the other. We were successful in the removal of the criminalization of entry through unauthorized passages, that was achieved, but the articulation was important.

– PR, woman, Venezuelan leader based in Chile

In general, this type of strategy is used at the national and local levels, with some participation at the national level through participation in networks. Several leaders we interviewed have participated in international political advocacy events such as the Cartagena Process or the Quito Process, either as attendees at meetings to establish proposals or as representatives. Therefore, networks are fundamental to accessing these spaces. Entry to spaces such as these is influenced by the recognition and trajectory of the leaders by other leaders, organizations, authorities, and even civil society. In this sense, positioning within networks of contacts and through recognition is relevant to developing leadership work, mobilizing slogans, objectives, campaigns, and political projects, as mentioned by a leader:

> So we have the spaces, we just have to demonstrate that we are well positioned, even the recognition as an anchor or referent organization in Guajira, we have it, and when they come and tell us... and I: well I don't know if it is like that, but if you want, come on sister, we will receive you here, nothing happens

– MA, woman, Venezuelan leader based in Colombia

It is important to point out that other leaders have a good command of the dynamics of the institutional political structure in both countries, which has facilitated their advocacy work, and participation in spaces such as Congress and has allowed them to achieve some of the objectives that they mobilize. For example, they have established relationships with institutions such as municipalities, have generated contacts with authorities or with representatives of political parties, which allows them easier access to these spaces.

Among the barriers to the exercise of this type of leadership, of course, the lack of political will can be a factor that determines exclusion from a space or failure in advocacy processes. Likewise, the political affinity between leaders and authorities can be a factor that facilitates or hinders these processes. Thus, the possibilities of advocacy through lobbying are subject to the political will of the authorities. This happens more often in the case of Venezuelan leaders, whose position vis-à-vis the regime in their country of origin has led them to establish links or affinities with some political sectors, and their possibilities of participating in some spaces will depend -to some extent- on the government in power. This situation has been more present in the case of Colombia than in Chile.

In the case of Colombia, in the discourse of those interviewed, the idea appeared that corruption has reached these spaces and that many of them are only composed of officials and not representatives of migrants or RLOs. In both cases, this has constituted a barrier to political advocacy and has been criticized by the leaders as it restricts the possibilities for the exercise of leadership.

4.2.4. MEDIA LEADERSHIP

A final leadership strategy is what we have called media leadership (Laguna Platero, 2011). The purpose of this strategy is to position the reality and needs of migrant communities in different media spaces. This type of leadership, appearance, and participation in the public space is fundamental to making their work known. Therefore, different actions are used from different platforms of visibility.

Leaders often utilize various media outlets to promote their causes and ideas through press releases, communiqués, opinion columns, and more. Social networks also play a crucial role in reaching a wider audience. However, challenges arise when trying to raise awareness through these channels due to xenophobic discourse and negative attitudes toward migration in host societies, as well as a lack of awareness among authorities. These factors create a hostile environment for migrants, which can limit their visibility and impede advocacy and participation efforts.

A few leaders have linked with politicians and supported their campaigns through their social networks, mobilizing the discourses of a political party. In this type of action, a barrier may be the willingness of politicians to accept the leaders' proposals, as well as the media's use of migration to add votes (especially at the local level).

An important platform for visibility used by this type of leadership is participation in academic events, whether in talks, presenting at meetings or congresses, participating in studies and research, etc. The leaders who have participated in these platforms have a more academic profile and are connected to higher education institutions, particularly in Chile. However, an obstacle to the exercise of leadership based on this strategy is that, generally, the panels of experts in academic spaces are from the host country, leaving out migrant and refugee leaders to speak and expose issues that concern them.

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> I mean, it bothers me a lot when they say "we are going to talk about the reality of migration" and the panel is all Chileans. So, I understand that not only migrants can have a view of migration, in fact, it is a mistake to think so, but to generate a diagnosis without migrants is like too much. Then, Chile is a country of many castes[25], of many... we in Venezuela call it [I don't understand], I don't know what the word would be, but of many small groups, sometimes half sects. Then you have like the sect of the academics
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>
> – RR, man, Venezuelan leader based in Chile

A final leadership strategy is what we have called media leadership (Laguna Platero, 2011). The purpose of this strategy is to position the reality and needs of migrant communities in different media spaces.

From all the strategies reviewed, it is possible to exercise leadership, participate in different spaces, and generate advocacy processes. Despite this, we can find transversal barriers to the exercise of these strategies such as: a climate of hostility towards migration in civil society, the lack of recognition of the political trajectory and work of the leaders, the lack of binding instances -beyond the consultative-, the hierarchical relationships (top-down) that are established with the authorities, among others.

Particularly in the case of the Haitian community, language is a cross-cutting barrier to accessing spaces for participation and informing the communities. In Chile, there has been slow progress towards providing information to the Haitian population in Créole,

but it has limited the possibilities of participation and the emergence of leadership, as a leader shared with us:

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> In order for people to participate in things you have to ask people and especially if it is in Spanish-speaking spaces... that is, if the conversation is going to be in Spanish, obviously there is the language barrier again, so, for there to be spaces... for there to be participation in the spaces, it is to be able to convene them
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> – Woman, Haitian leader based in Chile

Unlike Venezuelan leaders, Haitian leaders have not participated strongly in formal spaces from which they can advocate. In the focus groups, participants indicated that they did not participate in the COSOC, nor did they have access to information to participate promptly. The language barrier and the lack of networks may be an explanation for the lack of access of this community to these spaces. Thus, the interviews indicate that the Venezuelan population has had a closer relationship with institutions than the Haitian community. In most cases, the relations with institutions are described as dialogue or consultation

Other barriers are related to the characteristics of the leaders, for example, the territory in which they live (especially in the Chilean context), gender, age, and political stance. In this sense, intersectionality is a transversal element in the analysis.

5. POWER RELATIONS
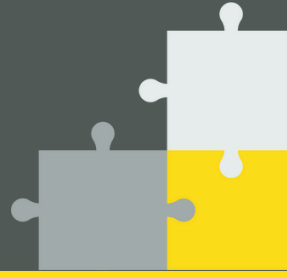
5. POWER RELATIONS WITHIN LEADERS AND WITH OTHER ACTORS

It is the political opportunity structure that affects how leaders undertake political action. The constraints of the political system itself can block the possibility of political action. In each context, some conditions affect their possibilities. These conditions may be related to political responses to forced migration, the localization of power, and the flexibility of norms for taking collective action, among others. In addition to the structure of political opportunities, individuals have differentiated experiences when it comes to engaging in political action.

5.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERSECTIONALITY IN THE EXERCISE OF LEADERSHIP

In terms of power, during the interviews in Chile, leaders mentioned some factors that influence political structures and permeate their work. One idea that emerges from the discourse of some leaders -mainly Haitians- is that there is a racist structure in Chilean society that excludes certain people from spaces of participation and influence. Thus, skin color and country of origin may be elements that determine the legitimacy of leaders in the political sphere.

These forms of exclusion are not only related to discourse with racist overtones in the host community but there is also exclusion from the political structure because they are unaware of its functioning due to lack of information, lack of access to formal spaces,

and the language barrier so that the work of Haitian organizations is generally focused at the local level (in neighborhoods, communes, etc.). A Haitian leader underlines:

> " Those we were able to bring together, therefore, also as a community, are of different nationalities and we raise the problem and the common denominator that we almost always see: it is racism, problems of discrimination, especially structural. Therefore, we seek to support each other to move forward. Already in this context of migration, because of human mobility, as we could see it, we have to be aware of the fact that we have to face the problem of racism and discrimination

– MAJ, Woman, Haitian leader based in Chile

One of the leaders told us that the situation of racism faced by the community in Chile is very harsh. She pointed out how women leaders have less participation in political spaces and how it is difficult for them to express their opinions, showing themselves to be diminished in front of others. The same leader told us how racism towards the Haitian population is expressed in everyday situations in Chile:

> I believe that the Haitian community, because of a cultural issue, and they try to go unnoticed, so I tell you, that is to say that they blame you for the fact that in Chile there is already AIDS is nonsense, it has an impact on you as a person. When the pandemic started, the media got into the cité, the cité are these houses where people live crowded together (...) They would go into a cité and expose a number of people of color, so that is why there was COVID in Chile. So, that's why I tell you, when they took it out on the Haitian community they were very cruel. So, I believe that the best way to protect oneself is to go unnoticed.

– PR, Woman, Venezuelan leader based in Chile

Skin color can be a beneficial factor in the exercise of leadership, but also a hindering factor. That is, it could be that a black person can position himself as a community leader because he represents the interests of the Afro population in Chile, but it can also be a barrier to accessing certain spaces for political participation and advocacy.

Another important factor is gender. Although most of the women leaders we interviewed are women and play an important role in organizations, networks, and humanitarian aid, it was difficult to find Haitian women leaders in Chile to be interviewed or they put more obstacles in the way of being interviewed.

Thus, in the Haitian community, there are hierarchies related to the gender and age of the leaders. Generally, there is greater recognition and respect for male and older leaders.

In contrast, in the Venezuelan community in both countries, women leaders are in the majority and have been at the helm of important political processes. We were struck by the fact that, during the results validation workshop, the women emphasized the empowerment of women leaders, pointing out that most of the leaders are women and that they have become important political agents in Colombia and Chile. In their interventions, the women focused on their ability to "organize and manage a house", which allows them to perform better in politics. One interviewee refers to this idea:

> Suddenly, people sometimes say to us "yes, we are vulnerable", vulnerable in certain things, but we really manage in all senses, we manage the house, the money, the children, that the husband is well, that all of us who are married... I have 24 years with my husband, maintain, what we are going to do, how we do, it in each facet, and how we live the changes. So it's a challenge, isn't it? So I say, 'hey, but why do we women always make ourselves vulnerable if we are a power within a nation' (...).

– KS, Woman, Venezuelan leader based in Chile

Women play an important role as active participants and leaders among migrant communities, who contribute to providing services and demand rights, and with a regularization process ongoing in Colombia,

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consideration should be paid to the role of these women leaders in working alongside policy actors in often uncompensated and unrecognized roles who have and will continue to advance the development of Colombian society and promote social cohesion within their communities

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– Woldemikael et. al., 2022

Again, intersectionality determines hierarchies between the leaders themselves and the organizations, also delimiting access to spaces for political participation and advocacy. Thus, variables such as age, gender, nationality, skin color, and even migratory status can determine the leadership trajectories of these people.

Despite the above, throughout the validation workshop held with some of the leaders participating in the research to discuss the preliminary findings, there was a posture on the part of the participants of not showing weakness in front of others, seeking to appear powerful and confident in their work. Many times, they discarded what was said by the participants in the quotes shown in the workshop, even contradicting certain positions stated by themselves in the interviews.

5.2. POWER WITHIN LEADERS AND BELONGING TO NETWORKS

Networks and relationships are fundamental for the exercise of leadership, for access and participation in some spaces, and for the development of advocacy processes. The links with international organizations have made it possible to raise campaigns,

support activities or initiatives of the organizations, finance these initiatives, participate in events -most of them national or international- organized by the same IOs, and support advocacy processes in some cases. Something similar occurs with the links with CSOs that support certain processes of advocacy in the public debate, awareness-raising, and support in the organization or financing of RLOs activities.

The interviewees -especially from the Venezuelan community- stated that they seek to coordinate their efforts through networks with other MLOs or RLOs and with governmental institutions. They emphasize the importance of establishing and maintaining a good relationship with all stakeholders. A Venezuelan leader affirms:

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It is in the ability to build social fabric, to unite people who do not necessarily know each other, to be able to connect and be a bridge between different personalities, organizations, people who do not necessarily think alike and who do not necessarily know each other, but that work of weaving networks and building bridges has been fundamental for me and I feel that it is something that stands out for me in my own work and I also feel that it is something that recognizes me

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– CC, Man, Venezuelan leader based in Chile

There are collaboration networks between organizations of the same nationality, mainly in the case of the Venezuelan community. Some examples of the most massive and important networks are:

Coalición por Venezuela, PACUHR (The Panamerican and Caribbean Union for Human Rights), in the case of the Venezuelan community and REDMA (Hemispheric Network for the Rights of Haitian Migrants) in the case of Haitian community. In these networks, collaborations are generated to respond to the needs of the community or referrals of cases in response to these humanitarian aid needs. Another type of network is between organizations that work or are dedicated to similar issues, for example, attention to women, children, the elderly, etc.

Often these links and alliances also consider relations with political parties or with political figures, especially in the case of Venezuelan leaders with a previous political trajectory in their country of origin. Another leader tells us he is part of a political movement aiming to incentivize the vote:

"

I am currently, from the social organizations, leading the Great National Alliance in this new Venezuelan election process, where Chile is going to.... Where here (...). I am from the social organizations, again, because I arrive to coordinate the primaries because the political and social actors and the regulations of this primary process needed a person from the social organizations who was impartial, who understood the parties, who had credibility, who had training processes to lead this process. Once the primary was over, I was again asked to lead the Grand National Alliance. The Great Alliance is to involve all these people who do not feel they are identified with parties, actors or anything else, but to call for participation and my position now is to call for participation in this July 28, •••

••• for people to integrate, for all the actors of the Venezuelan civil society who are here to integrate. And to promote this with the allied actors, so that they know what is happening here

– MG, man, Venezuelan leader based in Chile "

Another type of partnership is the one mentioned above. There are relationships between the same organizations of migrants or refugees that involve the organization of activities, awareness-raising campaigns, referral networks for humanitarian aid, or organizations to draft proposals for advocacy processes. For example, in the participation in dialogue roundtables with the participation of representatives of the migrant population - like COSOC in Chile-, many organizations generate relationships (generally through communication channels such as Whatsapp) to raise proposals that a representative and participant of the roundtable will expose and propose in these instances.

They also partner in networks to carry out processes to influence the migratory policy of the different countries. In these processes, the idea is to generate pressure on the authorities or to publish communiqués signed by a group of organizations to publicly state their position on a specific debate or event. Another type of link is the joint work to carry out joint processes to influence the migratory policy of the different countries. In these processes, the idea is to generate pressure on the authorities or to publish communiqués signed by a group of organizations to publicly state their position on a specific debate or event. An interviewee tells us how this type of processes is developed:

> What we have done on several occasions when things are taken, things are decided that do not make us feel comfortable or that we consider to be infringing or that we consider… we have a divergent opinion, is that we make a joint public statement signed by all the organizations that are part of this coalition and in which we make it clear that we do not agree with this, that we consider that this is this, this way or that way.

– AM, Woman, Venezuelan leader based in Chile

In the Haitian community, there are connections between organizations and leaders; however, significant networks that facilitate advocacy processes or create opportunities for political participation appear to be lacking. As a result, Haitian leaders and organizations tend to be less interconnected with one another.

Now, although networking allows for a series of advantageous connections for the exercise of leadership, it also entails difficulties, since egos and powers within the organizations themselves make it difficult. There are differences between the organizations themselves and the leaders who preside over them which translates into power hierarchies. In the FGDs carried out in Colombia and some of the interviews with leaders, the participants mentioned that some barriers to the participation of the RLOs and MLOs are established by the leaders themselves who do not provide spaces for other migrants with diverse and more appropriate knowledge to participate in them. There would exist a competition or struggle for access to some spaces and political recognition among leaders of different organizations. An interviewee emphasizes:

> But I feel that there is a power struggle, a struggle to appear. (…) So it is like a theme: us and you, you and us, we are better, and we fall into that game, unfortunately.

– MA, Woman, Venezuelan leader based in Colombia

On the other hand, there will be organizations that belong to international-level networks, for example, the case of Coalición por Venezuela. In this type of network with worldwide recognition and work, there is a feeling of "superiority" over other organizations that have not been accepted in these networks. Networks such as this one are considered by the leaders interviewed as the maximum space for participation and advocacy for the RLOs and MLOs.

Although not explicitly mentioned by the interviewees, it was also possible to observe certain quarrels between these international networks. The leaders interviewed indicated that, although they would not be involved in these conflicts, they do exist at the interpersonal level. A Venezuelan leader came up with an example of his relationship with another RLO:

> [Name of a RLO] are my friends, but they are a little bit more center-left. So my friends who are a little bit more right-wing, then when they… 'They met with so-and-so' and kind of… but, well, it's kind of part of this (…) I mean, I am organizing something with [Name of a RLO], but, I mean, it does not always have good relations with the rest of the world with which I have good relations. •••

" So I am the bridge, I say 'If we want something to go well and that we all work together, let's work then', but sometimes I also say 'You know what? I am bored, kill yourselves if you want to", because this is also exhausting. I tell you, the thing about "nobody pays me for this, in the end, everybody ends up angry with you because I have to tell them, 'look, you are right about this, but you are not right about this

– RR man, Venezuelan leader based in Chile **"**

Finally, there are processes for knowledge transfer to emerging organizations facilitated by experienced leaders. This involves training and strengthening networks for newer or younger leaders. Additionally, the role of women leaders has been crucial in supporting the development of younger or emerging women leaders on their journeys.

5.3. FUNDING FOR RLOSs AND MLOSs

Regarding resources to support the work of the leaders, there are different dynamics in the countries studied. In the case of Chile, leaders do not receive any direct funding for the work of their organizations. Many of them seek to participate in calls for proposals for competitive funds that allow them to obtain resources to finance their various activities. Others seek financing by developing fundraising activities such as product sales, cultural activities, consultancies, etc. A Venezuelan leader in Chile told us:

" I use consultancies and what I earn from consultancies or other things, to be able to continue with the work of the organization and we have all done that... all the team and it is important to emphasize that I am only the face of a team that is behind. A multidimensional team, we have lawyers, we have journalists, we have academics, and everybody does their bit.

– PR, woman, Venezuelan leader based in Colombia **"**

However, a problem for these leaders is that they must have other jobs to live and support themselves, which considerably reduces the time they can dedicate to the exercise of their leadership. The compatibility of both activities (formal work versus political participation and advocacy) hinders the possibilities of development and growth for these leaders.

In the case of Colombia, funding dynamics work differently from those in Chile. During the fieldwork, all interviewees—including those with leaders and representatives of public institutions—made references to the international cooperation from a range of agencies as a significant force in facilitating advocacy and participation for migrant leaders. One leader living in Barranquilla tells us:

" All the work we have developed together with the international cooperation, which has really been ours, really that shoulder because to also reach the institutional framework it was through international cooperation

– TF, Venezuelan leader based in Colombia **"**

However, it is important to note that this increased accessibility to advocacy spaces is not viewed positively by everyone. While most leaders express gratitude to international agencies for enabling their participation in important discussions and, in some cases, for providing economic support, some view these agencies as imposing solutions that aim only to meet predetermined indicators and goals. This perspective suggests a lack of understanding of the actual needs of migrants. Additionally, the involvement of migrants in advocacy spaces is often influenced by donor guidelines. A leader severely criticizes the agenda-setting from donors in the development of the program of the RLOs:

> And we are in a process of transition towards being able to generate our own funds and to be able, at least, to reach a 50-50 stability in order not to depend on the decisions of the cooperation, because what ends up happening is that the cooperation often ends up defining where the organizations are going. After all, they are the ones who decide what to invest in us. We have achieved very interesting negotiation processes with the cooperation that have allowed us to be ourselves, but this is not the reality of most of them.

– AMK, woman, Venezuelan leader based in Colombia

The international agencies are so powerful on the ground that even Riohacha's government plan mentions international cooperation as a fundamental actor in responding to the needs of the migrant population. Indeed, these resources for refugee and migrant leaders in

Colombia represent a possibility of accessing spaces for participation. As an interviewee pointed out:

> Spaces sometimes have to do with resources. Resources ultimately represent power. Economic power also means that spaces are closed to you. There are places, people, initiatives where you are simply not considered to be, because you do not have the power that resources represent

– YG, woman, Venezuelan leader based in Colombia

In this sense, funding and economic resources represent power in this structure. During fieldwork, different donors (USAID, UN agencies, INGOs) were mentioned by some interviewees as an actor that only imposes what should be done to comply with indicators and goals that have been established without knowing the needs of migrants and that the participation of migrants in advocacy spaces is often conditioned by donor guidelines, undermining meaningful refugee participation. Despite this, donors have played an important role in building the capacities of RLOs and supporting community leadership.

5.4. TOP-DOWN RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships with public institutions are also a fundamental aspect of the leaders' work. Therefore, the type of relationship they establish with the authorities can be a determining factor for participation and advocacy. Some leaders agree that -in both countries- the possibility of advocacy is facilitated or limited by political affinities with the authorities, as well as by their political will to dialogue and relate to migrant communities.

Thus, their positionality vis-à-vis the Venezuelan authoritarian regime is key to mobilizing their demands to the State. There is even a political stigmatization of Venezuelans, since in the host communities, they are labeled as "fascists" or "Chavistas"[26] and, more generally, as belonging to a right-wing.

Another relevant factor is the recognition the leader has from the community. The recognition of their leadership trajectory allows them to have greater influence and access to the authorities, especially those of higher rank. In the case of those leaders who live outside the capital cities, territorial and focused work often allows them to generate closer relations with local authorities.

In the case of Colombia, open-door policies promoted or allowed the multiplying of RLOs from 2017 onwards. However, the situation has taken another turn with the change of administration in 2022, and many RLOs are lacking the funds to keep their operations. In the case of Chile, although there is a left government and there could be conflicts with Venezuelans opposed to the regime, the experience of relations established with authorities is usually cordial with few bad experiences, according to the interviewees.

However, there are differences in terms of nationality. The Venezuelan community has had a greater approach, especially in the right-wing government of Sebastián Piñera than in the case of the Haitian community, whose approaches to the authorities have been scarce and in specific circumstances.

In the Chilean case, we noticed a distance between the authorities and the migrant and refugee community. Although there are spaces for political participation, many of them are consultative and non-binding.

Therefore, policies or measures in this country are constructed and implemented under a top-down logic, that is, with little participation from the directly affected communities. A Venezuelan leader explained to us:

> I believe that policies are already delineated from above and that sitting at a table to talk to us is only a requirement. In reality, we have not perceived, in spite of the fact that the treatment has been extraordinary and very respectful and no, nothing to say, in terms of the substance and the effect of these negotiation and conversation tables, I believe that, well, "yes, I understand you, I listen to you, take note, everything you tell me is very interesting, but we are going to do it the way we want". That was at least my personal appreciation in that sense

– AM, woman, Venezuelan leader based in Chile

Despite the above, the authorities point out that one strategy is not to disseminate or make these spaces visible in the media or other channels, as public opinion may be negative (i.e. increased discrimination or xenophobia) towards the processes of participation of migrants and refugees.

During the interviews conducted in Bogotá and Riohacha, most people agreed that migrants do not have a significant participation in these types of spaces. In Riohacha, statements of this type were much more explicit. This contradicts the interview conducted with the mayor's office advisor for migration issues, in which he affirms that the administration has an open-door policy for the participation of the migrant population.

Although he does acknowledge that there is no established protocol for the election of representatives of migrants. In the case of Bogotá, the former high counselor for migration affairs of the capital district during the government of Claudia López (2020-2024), explained during the interview that there are institutional spaces to talk about budgets, for example, and that there are other spaces for significant participation that they achieved, such as the human rights committees.
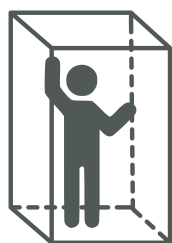
Therefore, there are few spaces for migrants to participate in both countries, in some cases due to the limited possibility of advocacy and, in others, due to the corruption that has intruded in these instances, limiting spaces for participation and being occupied exclusively by the authorities.

Likewise, as noted above, the participation of people with lived experience of displacement experts in political and academic spaces is scarce. This is an example of the closed spaces in both countries and of a political structure that does not allow or does not open spaces for these leaders to have an impact. Many of the leaders interviewed refer to the fact that policies and programs that directly concern migration or the respective debates are made without them, without considering their opinions, ideas, experiences and needs, that is, policies "For them but without them".

Furthermore, there were even cases of threats to human rights defenders by State and non-State agents, which would prevent them from participating and expressing themselves freely in some spaces. On the other hand, in the case of Chile, there is no fear of expression and participation, but there is fear of participating in the registration or enrollment process established in 2022 in the country, due to fear of retaliation or deportation by migrants in an irregular situation.

Despite this, the Venezuelan community in both countries has managed -with increasing scope- to constitute itself as a political force due to its electoral capacity for electing local authorities, for example.

Therefore, public institutions are key to enabling or hindering their work, so it is necessary to create more binding and open spaces and to work against xenophobic and racist discourses, as well as to validate the leadership and work of displaced and refugee organizations in a public way. Likewise, states and their agencies are the ones that hold the power to recognize the work of organizations and their representative leaders.

6. SUPPORT NEEDED
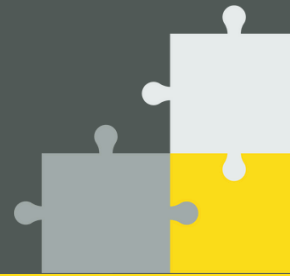
6. SUPPORT NEEDED FOR RLOS AND LEADERS

Over the fieldwork, we asked leaders what support they needed; their answers covered a range of issues. Haitian leaders point out needs in mental health support, orientation, access to information by eliminating the language barrier, inclusion, as well as respect, and non-discrimination. The latter has been highlighted as the main concern of the participants. In the case of the Venezuelan community, information, counseling, humanitarian aid, and integration are iterated. They also stressed the need for regularization, documentation, shorter delays in migratory processes, protection, access to services, female empowerment, and training for labor inclusion. We outline four pressing issues to support refugee and migrant leaders:

1. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Despite the resilience of the leaders who participated in the research, many of them underlined the need for mental health support and more programs targeting psychosocial attention. Leaders also shared with us their migratory grief and how they try to build their communities to heal this grief. If they are not doing well, they cannot support others arriving, they told us. Most leaders have great resilience and are optimistic for the future despite, sometimes, their vulnerabilities and needs.

2. CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

The needs of the leaders include training in a range of tasks. The first is about the management of their organizations and all the bureaucracy it implies in each country. Creating an organization is somehow easy, but most organizations in Chile rely on one person. Therefore, they cannot handle small projects. The perks of presenting projects to donors are not easy for most of them, however, a few have acquired experience throughout the years and can train smaller RLOs in Colombia. Second is the possibility of accessing scholarships for training since they lack the funds to pay for this type of training resource. Third is related to their lack of capacity to create an advocacy strategy in the medium and long term. Often, they react to a specific change in regulations, but they do not have a strategy. Fourth, which adds to the third, is communication. For some leaders, it's key to learn communication and diplomacy skills, both written and oral for their advocacy strategies. Finally, there is a pressing necessity to empower female leaders in some participation spaces led by men.

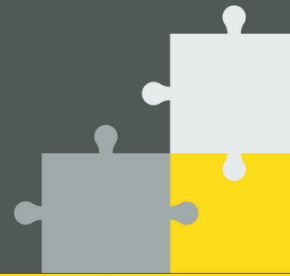## 3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL REFUGEE PARTICIPATION AND ADVOCACY

Leaders recalled the need to have more spaces and mechanisms for direct dialogue between the migrant and refugee community and the government, whether at the national or local level. Leaders in Chile, in most cases, have a job and the activities of their organization must be done in their free time, so the time they have free is scarce and this can be a limitation in their advocacy processes. More generally, mechanisms for participation are scarce and, when they exist, the decisions made do not consider their opinions despite being heard.

4. FUNDING

In Colombia, most leaders lack an income and do not meet their basic needs. They are sometimes as vulnerable as the people they want to help. Others come from the elite in Venezuela and appeal to philanthropy for their financial stability, helped by the diaspora in the United States. The first, claim the need for more financial resources and funding to devote more time to their community work and being able to develop more networks and projects.

Regarding the needs of the RLOs, the majority indicated that funding and having a permanent space are fundamental. In light of donor fatigue, some declared to be worried about the future of their organizations and their survival.

CONCLUSIONS

Colombia and Chile have had different responses to the arrival of forcibly displaced persons from Venezuela and Haiti in the past ten years. On one side, Colombia rapidly adopted ad hoc measures to regularize the Venezuelan population unable to process asylum applications because of a flawed system. Before their arrival, migration policies focused on the Colombian diaspora. On the other side, Chile had traditional immigration from Peru and slowly began to attract persons from Colombia, Haiti, and lately, Venezuela. Its migration law was recently updated but, as in Colombia, the growing arrival of persons in need of protection came with the modification of visa procedures both for Venezuelans and Haitians, which didn't provide them protection. In the years after the pandemic, policies have been security-oriented, with the militarization of the northern border areas of the country. In neither of the two cases selected, Venezuelans are extensively recognized as refugees, but it is even more concerning in Chile since there is a lack of transparency in the processing of asylum claims.

In Colombia, Venezuelans have organized to respond to their inclusion challenges from the local/community to the national level assisting their fellow nationals but also raising their voices in different spaces and trying to influence decision-makers to improve their living conditions. Within these organizations, leaders with lived experience of forced displacement have emerged, many of them are women.

In Chile, the growing xenophobia in the context of social unrest provides a different scenario for exercising leadership for forcibly displaced Venezuelans and Haitians. Moreover, xenophobia has been increasing to the point of proposing extreme measures to discourage migration and hinder the regularization of migrants. Local contexts provide different political opportunities to forcibly displaced persons in terms of participation, organization, mobilization, and decision-making.

Leaders define themselves from their agency and their communities and highlight the main skills they consider a leader should have. They mobilize different strategies that range from information to lobby and, for the Chilean case, electoral participation. While mobilizing different strategies, leaders encounter barriers related to lack of information and discrimination, among others. They also struggle to participate in formal spaces due to their nationality, language, or migratory status. Meaningful refugee participation becomes a challenge where some spaces for migration management and coordination are closed to RLOs.

The stakeholders involved in these contexts have different power relations to be analyzed as we aim to understand the factors that condition the leadership of forcibly displaced persons in Colombia and Chile.

The relationship of leaders with public institutions and authorities is mixed and sometimes relies on their political affinity with the government.

There are also strong power relations between migrant and refugee leaders. Venezuelans have organized in Federations regionally and affiliation is key to ensure advocacy in the global fora. On the other side, Haitians have taken shy steps toward their organization in a regional community. More traditional leadership prevents women from emerging as leaders.

Refugee leadership is yet to be studied both within RLOs and individually. In Latin America, with a constant flow of displaced persons across borders and the multiple ad-hoc permits and forms of (un)protection, leaders have emerged to respond to the needs of migrants and refugees but also as powerful voices contesting restrictive measures put in place by some governments. Advocating for their rights, they are recognized by host communities as powerful agents representing migrants and their needs. However, in host governments, leaders are not recognized as having a voice and vote, particularly at the national level with some differences between Colombia and Chile.

NOTES
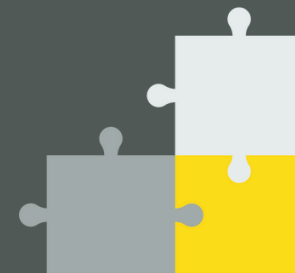
[1] The Coalición for Venezuela is an example of it. It is a Federation of more than 64 organizations in 20 countries in the Americas, now expanding to Europe and advocating for more funds, raising their voices in some international spaces. Indeed, Coalición por Venezuela members have raised their voices in some international spaces, one of them is the recent international donor's conference held in Canada, advocating for their rights but also looking for more funding for Venezuelan-led organizations, see here their statement: https://www.coalicionporvenezuela.org/index.php/blog/108-venezuelan-refugees-and-diaspora-call-for-meaningful-participation-in-the-response-to-the-venezuelan-refugee-and-migrant-crisis.

[2] This data is an estimate of the number of foreigners residing in Chile made by the National Migration Service (SERMIG) together with other government institutions. For the population in a regular migratory situation, all residency procedures carried out at SERMIG or MINREL are used, for example: residency permit applications, and refugee applications, among others. In the case of the population in an irregular migratory situation, the following are used: enrollment in an official educational establishment in the country, police reports, registration in the biometric registry and expiration of tourism extensions.

[3] Consulted on January 21st 2025. https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/migraci.n.colombia/viz/MigrantesvenezolanosenColombia-Junio2024/MigrantesvenezolanasosenColombia

[4] It is important to clarify that the response does not specify whether the 63,000 applications are only from Venezuelans or if it is the sum of all refugee applications including all nationalities.

[5] For more information, please review: https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/en/node/24624

[6] For more information, see: https://cooperativa.cl/noticias/pais/poblacion/inmigrantes/registro-civil-suspendio-enrolamiento-de-migrantes-tras-caotica-jornada/2024-12-16/180155.html

[7] I.e. Organización Migrantas, Colectivo Sin Fronteras and Coordinadora 8M

[8] The Biometric Registration is a national registry aimed at foreigners over 18 years of age, who have entered Chile through an unauthorized crossing point, and who are currently residing in Chile. To carry out this registration, personal, biometric (facial photograph and fingerprints) and documentary data of the persons who meet the requirements for registration are considered. This data is subsequently stored in the National Registry of Foreigners of SERMIG in Chile.

[9] For more information, please review: https://ideaspaz.org/publicaciones/investigaciones-analisis/2019-08/migrantes-venezolanos-y-su-impacto-en-la-seguridad-mitos-y-realidades

[10] The Barometer is a platform that systematizes and disseminates information from the analysis of conversations on Twitter and the media about the migrant population in Colombia. It is an alliance between the Otraparte Corporation, the Migration Observatory of the Universidad Externado de Colombia, the Interpreta Foundation of Chile, among other organizations.

[11] For more information, please review: https://lyd.org/centro-de-prensa/noticias/2023/10/crece-la-inseguridad-y-la-migracion-en-chile/

[12] Cadem is a Chilean market research and public opinion company.

[13] These data correspond to estimates made by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) based on the 2017 Census in Chile.

[14] Colombia Nos Une is an Internal Working Group attached to the Directorate of Migratory Affairs, Consular Affairs, and Citizen Service, which seeks to link Colombians abroad and make them subjects of public policies.

[15] Memoirs of the first pilot available here: https://www.colombianosune.com/noticia/algunos-logros-del-ejercicio-piloto-de-la-mesa-nacional-de-la-sociedad-civil-para-las-migraciones. In December 2024, a new board was selected.

[16] The regional tables are called Unified Command Center, PMU for its acronym in Spanish.

[17] For more information, please review: https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/newsroom/news/mesa-gestion-migratoria-instalo-bogota-viernes-abre-medellin

[18] Name given to people from Bogotá.

[19] For more information , please see: https://www.sispro.gov.co/observatorios/onmigracionysalud/Paginas/Apoyo_migrantes.aspx

[20] Access to Information Request AB001T0012432 answered on April 16, 2024 by the Chilean Undersecretary of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security.

[21] Information consulted in the Lobby Law portal https://www.leylobby.gob.cl/ between May 13 and 22, 2024.

[22] For more information, please review: https://elpais.com/chile/2024-10-23/el-voto-migrante-en-chile-pone-incertidumbre-en-las-elecciones-de-tres-municipios-entre-ellos-santiago.html

[23] For more information, please review: https://participacionpopular.chileconvencion.cl/ and https://www.secretariadeparticipacion.cl/

[24] Fundación ONG El Paciente Inglés seeks transparency and quality in the process of revalidation of foreign degrees in Chile.

[25] These are words used literally by the interviewee, they refer to closed groups.

[26] Chavistas are named after former President Hugo Chavez, who remained in power from 1999 until his death in 2013 in Venezuela.

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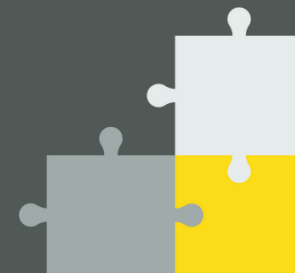
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ANNEX 1. INFOGRAPHICS OF VENEZUELAN DISPLACEMENT IN COLOMBIA

FIGURES OF VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS IN COLOMBIA

January 31, 2024

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS (TOTAL)

REGULARS: 75.548   **$2.857.528**

REGULARIZED*: 1.908.694
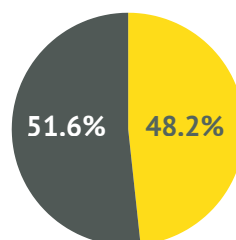
IN PROCESS OF REGULARIZATION: 384.312

IN IRREGULAR SITUATION: 488.974

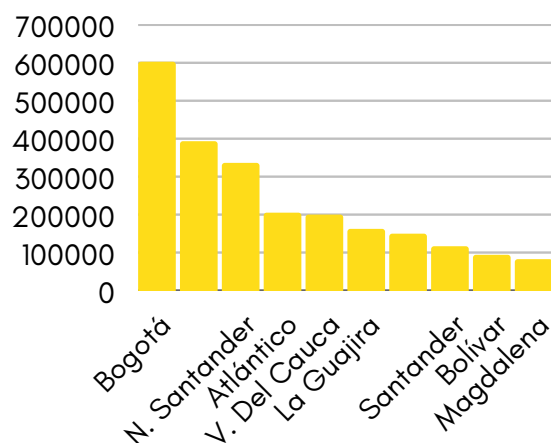**Temporary Protection Permit (PPT) authorized by Decree 2016 of 2021.*

AGE AND GENDER RANGE
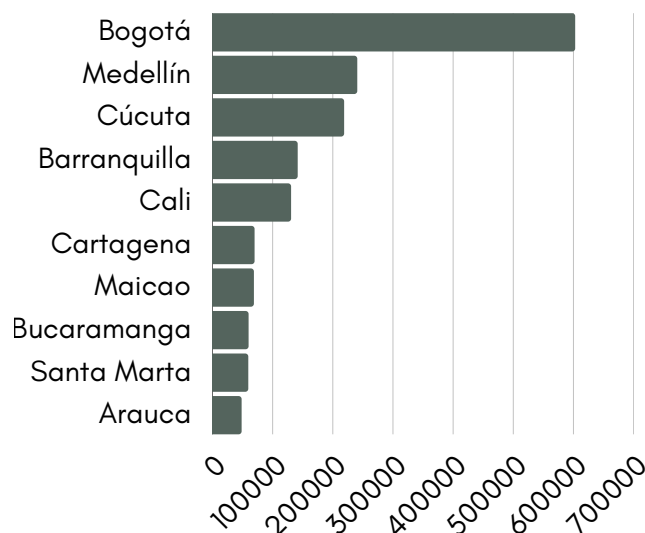
29.55% of Venezuelan migrants are between the ages of 18 and 29.

■ Mujeres   ■ Hombres

51.6%   48.2%

DISAGGREGATION BY DEPARTMENT TOP 10

DISAGGREGATION BY CITY TOP 10

FIGURES OF VENEZUELAN AND HAITIAN MIGRANTS IN CHILE

February 24, 2024

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VENEZUELAN AND HAITIAN MIGRANTS (TOTAL)*

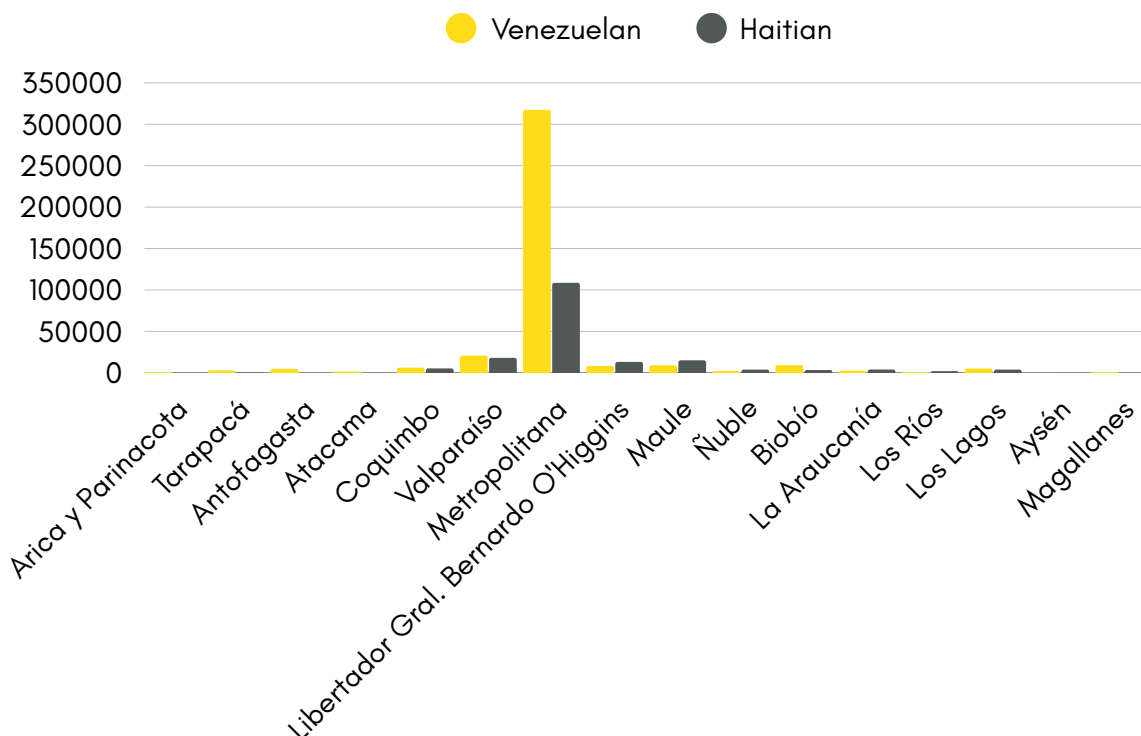|	Venezuelan migrants	Haitian migrants
Total	532.715	184.721
Temporary residences granted	666.198	293.170
Definitive residences granted	226.870	78.624
Recognized refugee claims	69	0

Venezuelan migrants

Women 49.2%   Men 50.8%

Haitian migrants

Women 49.2%   Men 50.8%

- *58.5% of Venezuelan migrants are between the ages of 20 and 39*
- *70.5% of Haitian migrants are between the ages of 20 and 39*

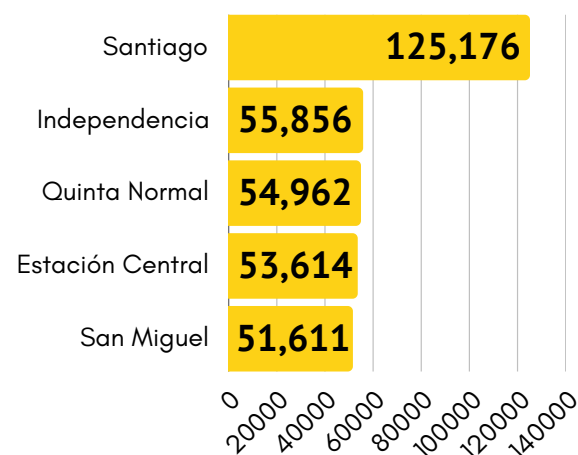# ANNEX 2. INFOGRAPHICS OF VENEZUELAN AND HAITIAN DISPLACEMENTS IN CHILE
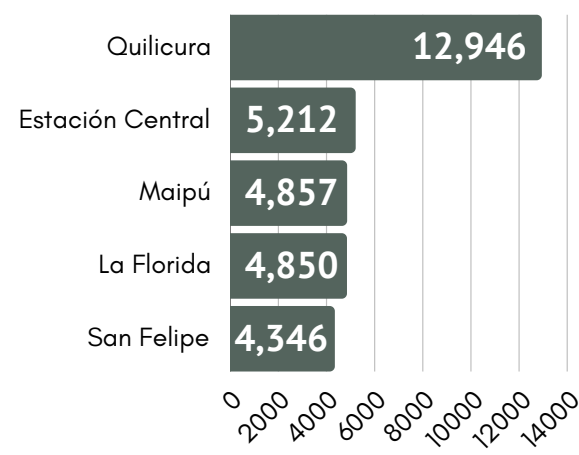
DISAGGREGATION BY REGION

Legend: ● Venezuelan ● Haitian

Regions (x-axis): Arica y Parinacota, Tarapacá, Antofagasta, Atacama, Coquimbo, Valparaíso, Metropolitana, Libertador Gral. Bernardo O'Higgins, Maule, Ñuble, Biobío, La Araucanía, Los Ríos, Los Lagos, Aysén, Magallanes

Y-axis: 0, 50000, 100000, 150000, 200000, 250000, 300000, 350000

DISAGGREGATION BY COMMUNE

Venezuelan migrants

Commune	Value
Santiago	125,176
Independencia	55,856
Quinta Normal	54,962
Estación Central	53,614
San Miguel	51,611

Haitian migrants

Commune	Value
Quilicura	12,946
Estación Central	5,212
Maipú	4,857
La Florida	4,850
San Felipe	4,346

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LOCAL ENGAGEMENT REFUGEE RESEARCH NETWORK

GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG