CROSSCUTTING REFLECTIONS: PERCEPTIONS AND NARRATIVES ON MIGRANTS AND RETURNEES

EL BARÓMETRO | corporación Otraparte | ODISEF Observatorio de Investigaciones Sociales en Frontera

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INDEX

01.INTRODUCTION

This document presents the results of the analysis to identify xenophobia and discrimination dynamics faced by the Venezuelan migrant population in host countries (Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru). The analysis draws from surveys and social listening data gathered throughout 2025, with data cutoff on December 15.

The main objective of this study is to comprehensively understand and analyze the dynamics of discrimination and xenophobia against Venezuelan migrants in host countries, through methodological triangulation of ODISEF survey data and social listening insights. This generates contextualized knowledge that provides evidence to guide decision-making by humanitarian and international cooperation organizations, while also strengthening ODISEF's analytical and dissemination capacities.

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of this complex phenomenon, the research adopted a mixed-methods design based on a triangulation strategy. The methodology integrates two simultaneous components:

Quantitative component: Descriptive and pattern analysis of a survey conducted by ODISEF among people on the move along the Táchira (Venezuela)–Norte de Santander (Colombia) border corridor. The survey targeted individuals heading to or returning from Venezuela assisted by the Observatory at its care point in the San José Obrero ecclesiastical parish, San Josecito, Torbes Municipality, Táchira State, Venezuela. This analysis used only returnee data, disaggregated by country of return, sex, and timeframe.

Qualitative component: Social listening via Brandwatch to capture narratives, developments, and triggering events in the digital ecosystem.

The results phase stems from cross-interpretation analysis. The study identified clear links between discrimination experiences reported by survey respondents (e.g., job denial, physical or verbal aggression, rejection, particularly in Q2) and social media discourse trends across five categories (health, education, xenophobia, employment, and women). This approach shows how online violence materializes into physical and structural barriers, detailing the phenomenon's manifestations by domain (employment, health, gender) and specific temporal contexts.

In addition to the triangulation, the study examined discriminatory narratives against Venezuelan migrants in Spain through social listening. The query (a keyword-based search using Boolean operators) was constructed from insights gathered through focus groups with Venezuelan migrants in Spain, interviews with Spanish citizens, and digital ethnography.

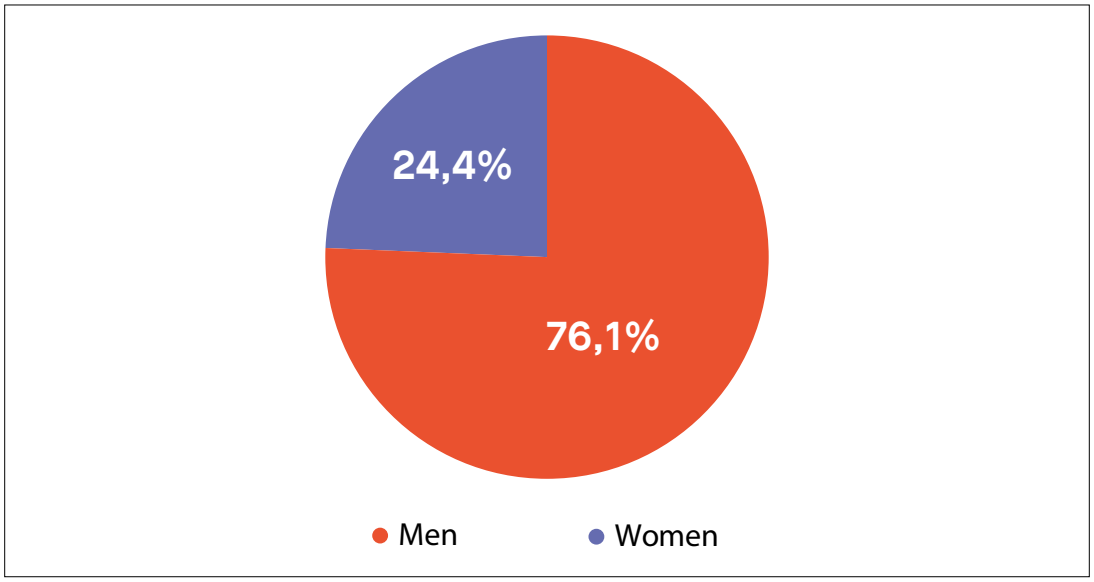
This document is organized into five sections. The first gives an overview of the returned population's demographic profile and flow distribution by country of origin during the analysis period, based on survey data. The second section details country-specific findings for Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. It presents disaggregated survey and social listening analyses. For each country, quarterly triangulation links the two data sources and concludes with country-specific insights. The third section presents social listening results from Spain. The fourth offers general conclusions on identified discrimination patterns. The fifth provides recommendations for strategic actors to prevent and address discrimination against migrant populations.

02. GENERAL SURVEY FINDINGS

General description

Data collection from January 1 to December 15, 2025, covered a total sample of 1,825 returnees. Demographic analysis reveals a strong male predominance in return flows during this period, with 76.1% of respondents being men (1,382 individuals) compared to 24.4% women (443 individuals).

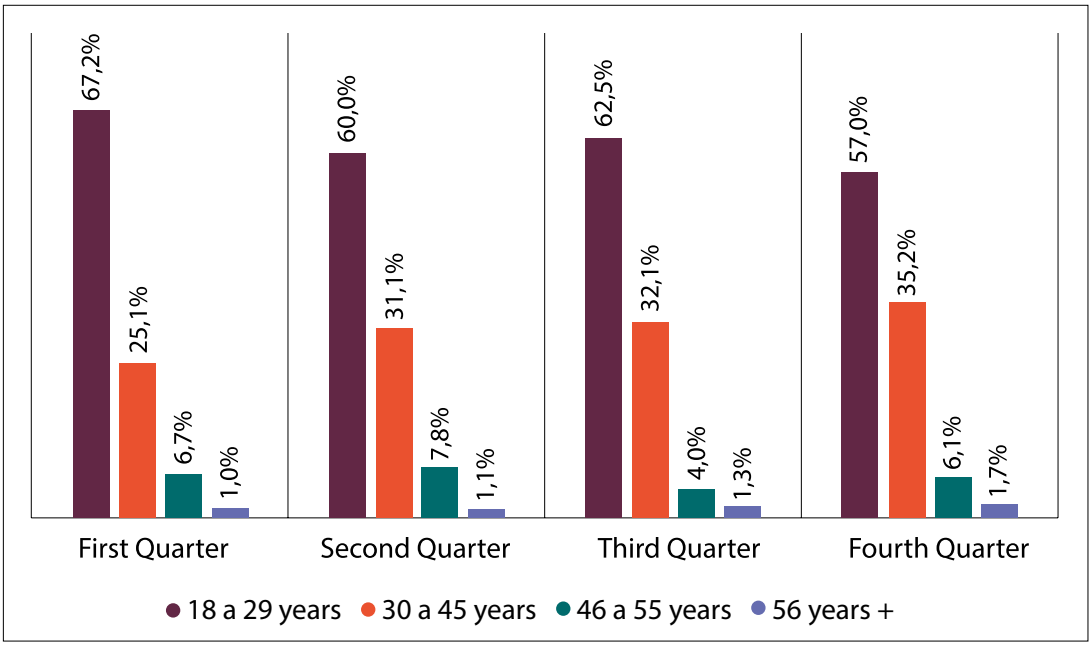
Figure 1. Returnees by sex



Source: Authors' own elaboration

By age, returnees are predominantly young and in their prime working years: 61.9% are between 18 and 29, while 30.5% are between 30 and 45.

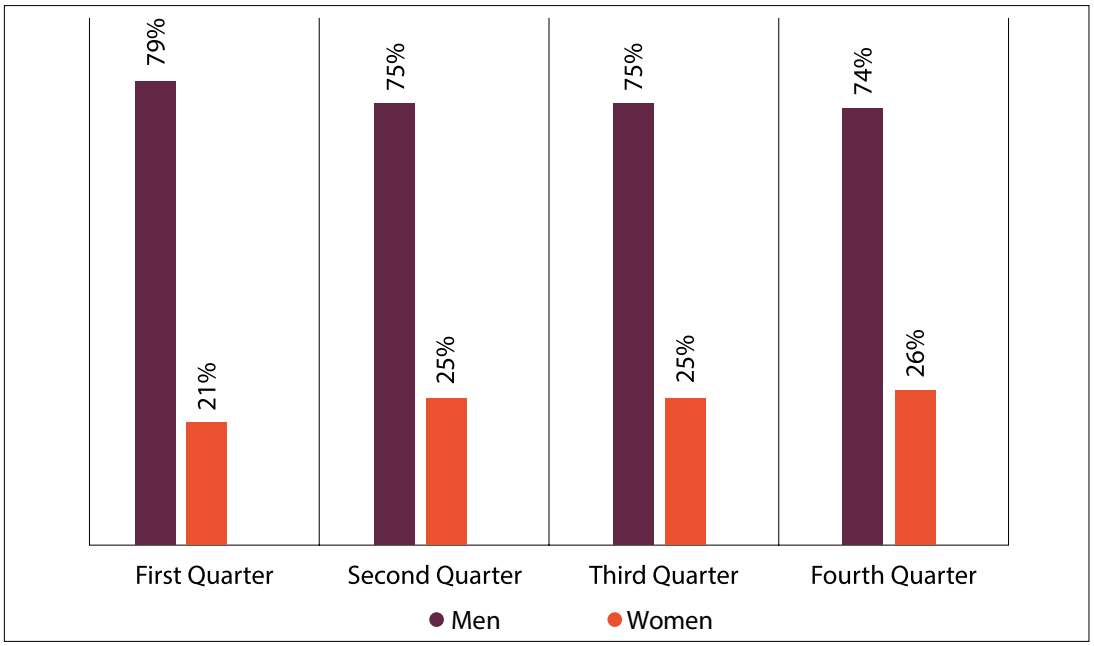
Figure 2. Returnees by age



Source: Authors' own elaboration

Quarterly trends reveal fluctuating and evolving patterns in the profile of returnees. While young men predominated across all periods, the proportion of women (Figure 3) and individuals aged 30-35 and 56+ (Figure 2) increased gradually over time.

Figure 3. Returnees by sex and quarter

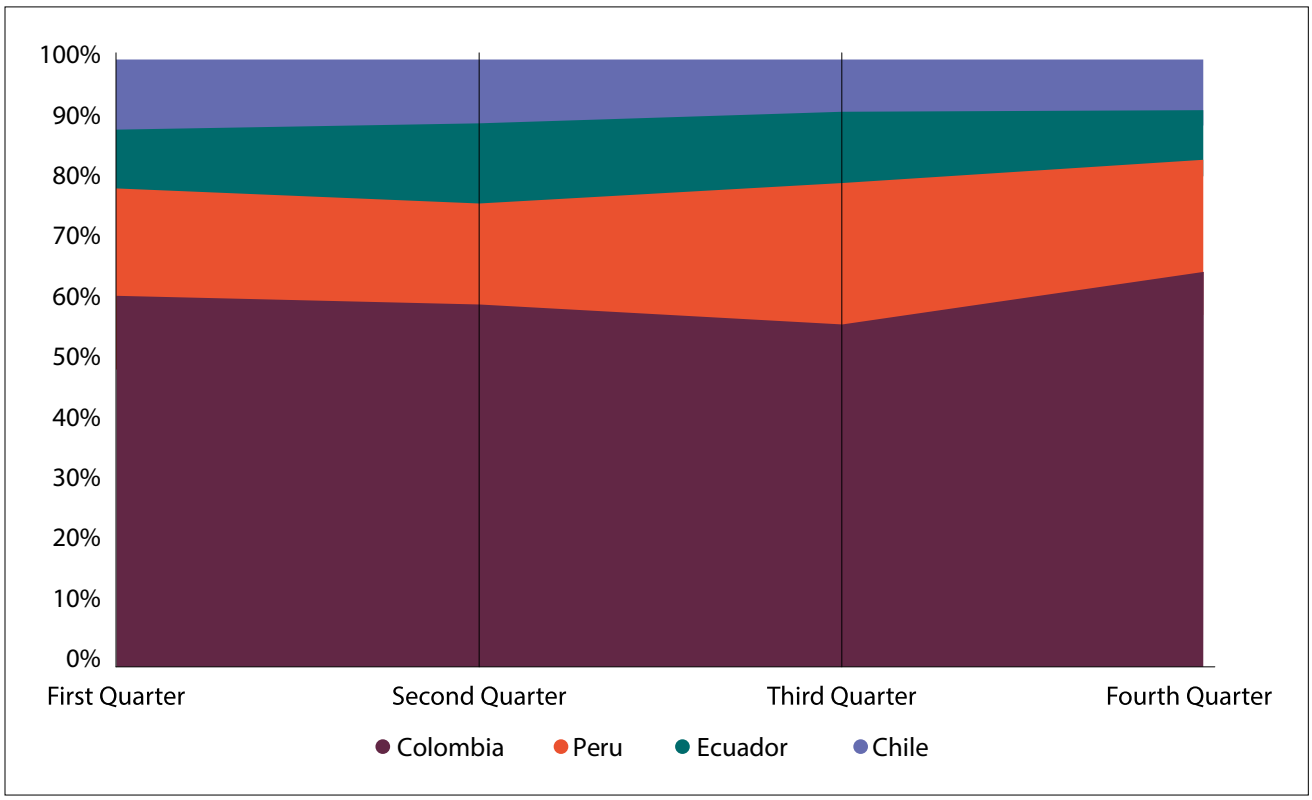


Source: Authors' own elaboration

Country of return for survey respondents

Analysis of 2025 return flows shows that 76.3% of returnees came from four countries, with Colombia as the primary country of return, accounting for 46% of the total sample (840 individuals). Peru follows Colombia with 14.3% (261 individuals), Ecuador with 8.3% (152 individuals), and Chile with 7.6% (139 individuals).

Figure 4. Returnees by country of return, by quarter



Source: Authors' own elaboration

Further demographic analysis by country of origin reveals gender-differentiated profiles. Men predominated in flows from Peru and Chile, exceeding 80% in multiple quarters (Peru in Q1 and Q4; Chile in the first three quarters). By contrast, Ecuador showed the highest relative proportion of women (over 30% in Q2 and Q3), followed by Colombia (in Q4).

Quarterly trends show significant changes in country rankings and gender composition. These patterns suggest specific expulsion dynamics:

First Quarter
Colombia dominated with 58.7% of returnees. Peru ranked second at 7.4%. Of these, 87.5% were men, higher than in other countries. Chile placed third (11.2%), with a significant participation of men (84.4%), followed by Ecuador (9.2%).

Second Quarter
The return trend from Colombia decreased slightly (56.6%). Peru remained second (15.9%). Ecuador placed third (12.5%), with women's participation at its highest for the quarter (35.6%). Chile ranked fourth (10%), with mostly men (87.2%).

Third Quarter
Colombia remained in first place, but with a decrease in flow (52.5%). Peru consolidated its second place with a significant increase, reaching 21.4%. Ecuador followed in third place with 11% of returnees, of whom 30.3% were women. Chile ranked fourth with 8% of returnees, of whom 87.5% were men.

Forth Quarter
The proportion of returnees from Colombia increased, reaching the highest figure for the analyzed period (61.4%), consolidating this country in first place. Peru remained second with 17.7% of returnees, of whom 82.7% were men. The proportion from Chile and Ecuador was 7.8% in each country, down from previous quarters.

03. FINDINGS BY COUNTRY

Here you will find the findings from the survey and social listening. Also included is the triangulation resulting from cross-referencing this data for each quarter of 2025.

CHILE

SURVEY FINDINGS

The experience of returnees from Chile reveals a progressive deterioration in labor reception during the quarter. While in January 63.4% of respondents stated that they had been denied work "never" or "occasionally," this perception of stability declined in February, when 57.1% of responses concentrated on frequent rejection options ("always" and "frequently") with only a minimal difference from "never" or "occasionally," which totaled 57.2%, just a hundredth of a percentage point more. In March, the negative trend reversed, with "occasionally" and "never" accounting for 50% of responses, versus 40% for "frequently." Notably, that month, women reporting they "never looked for work" emerged (33.3% of the monthly female sample), potentially indicating labor discouragement due to rejection of fellow nationals or permanent dedication to caregiving tasks, activities not typically considered work.

Analysis of discrimination patterns in the quarterly aggregate reveals clear differences by sex. Men reported denial frequency more intensely, with 87.5% selecting "frequently." Their main barrier was administrative, with "lack of documents" cited by 84.2%. In contrast, women faced symbolic and physical barriers: "their appearance (the way they look)" was most often selected by women, accounting for 66.7% of responses in that category. Notably, 44.4% of respondents cited "being a migrant or foreigner," primarily men.

Regarding aggressions, verbal violence predominated ("mockery, insults, or shouting") at 48.9%. The main perpetrator identified was the "general resident population" (82.6%), indicating widespread social xenophobia. However, February stands out, with increased reports against "employers" and "security agents" (26.7% each), coinciding with the month of the highest perception of labor rejection.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

Digital discourse in Chile revealed a hostile environment dominated by dehumanizing expressions such as "mierda" (shit). Xenophobic narratives are highly reactive to media and entertainment events. The most significant trigger occurred late February, when comedian George Harris's routine at the Viña del Mar Festival sparked a 2,636% surge in conversation volume. Comments reflect aggressive nationalism: "Hay que encontrar a ese veneco de mierda mal agradecido y hacerlo cagar" (We have to find that ungrateful veneco piece of shit and make him shit himself) and calls for police action: "Urgente!! que la PDI aproveche de allanar la quinta Vergara, está lleno de Venecos ilegales" (Urgent!! Let PDI raid Quinta Vergara, it's full of illegal Venecos).

Illustration 1. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Chile. Q1

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

Regarding women, digital discourse revealed a narrative of extreme symbolic violence that criminalizes and hypersexualizes them. A violent incident in February triggered a 6,400% spike in conversation, where Venezuelan women were labeled with denigrating stereotypes linking prostitution to organized crime: "Venekas... mantenidas, prostitutas... ordinarias" (Venekas... freeloaders, prostitutes... low-class) and "prostituta venezolana... miembros del tren de Aragua" (Venezuelan prostitute... Tren de Aragua members). In education and health spheres, narratives centered on abuse of free services "quieren... casa, salud, educación... gratis" (they want... housing, health, education... for free) and professional disqualification "su nivel profesional es muy bajo" (their professional level is very low).

FIRST QUARTER

TRIANGULATION

The Viña del Mar incident with George Harris likely impacted employability. The relative labor stability reported in January surveys broke down sharply in February, when labor rejection surged to 57.1%. This deterioration coincided with the 2,636% peak in digital hostility triggered by the Viña del Mar Festival at the end of February. These trends suggest that labor integration for migrants in Chile can be volatile and susceptible to public opinion and hate speech, raising entry barriers in the labor market and hardening employers' attitudes.

On the other hand, certain correspondence was evident between quantitative findings and digital narratives regarding women. In the survey, women disproportionately reported job denial due to "their appearance" (66.7% of those responses were female). Contrasting this with social listening reveals that "appearance" is not judged by neutral aesthetic standards, but through moral and criminal lenses. The digital narrative reducing Venezuelan women to "sexual merchandise" or "prostitutes" explains why personal image becomes a labor exclusion barrier in the physical world.

SECOND QUARTER

SURVEY FINDINGS

Returnees from Chile report a deterioration in labor integration throughout the second quarter. In April, perceptions appeared moderate, with 62.5% of responses indicating job denial occurred "occasionally" or "never." However, this perception changed drastically by June, when the combined "frequently" and "always" options reached 47.4% (versus 25% and 35% in prior months), mainly reported by men, indicating rising employment access barriers.

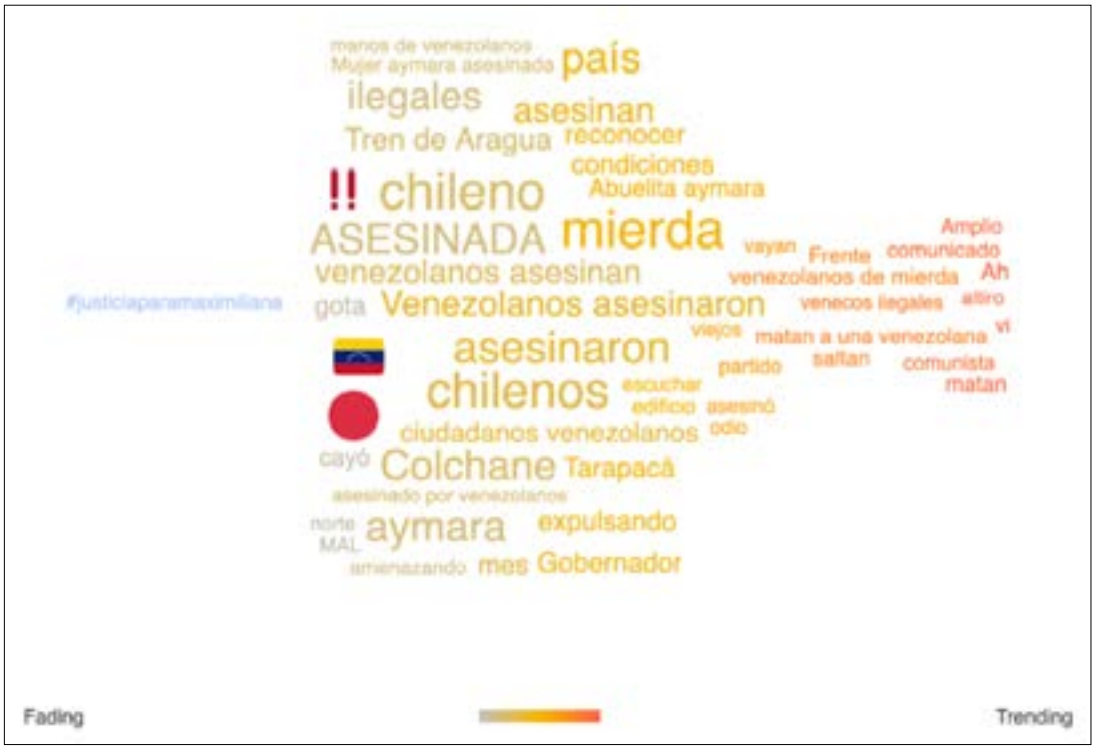
This period, revealed that in Chile, direct xenophobia outweighs administrative barriers: quarterly consolidated data shows "being a migrant or foreigner" as the main reason for job denial at 80%, surpassing lack of documents (66.7%). This suggests exclusion based on nationality rather than administrative status, with interactions characterized by verbal aggression demanding their return to their country (29.8%) or by mockery and insults (38.3%).

Additionally, an increase in rejection perceptions was observed during migratory transit toward the end of the period: in June, those reporting rejection "many times" or "few times" in transit communities increased significantly compared to previous months.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

During the second quarter in Chile, public discourse was dominated by hate narratives triggered by high-impact criminal events. The April murder of an Aymara indigenous woman in Colchane, a town near the Chile-Bolivia border, triggered a 373% surge in xenophobic discourse, positioning narratives that collectively blame Venezuelans and demand their expulsion through dehumanizing terms like "plaga" (plague) or "mierda" (shit), while prioritizing justice for nationals over foreigners.

Illustration 2. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Chile. Q2



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

In the labor sphere, a specific narrative emerged in May linking Venezuelan hiring to workforce precarization and Chilean labor displacement, exemplified by tweets about Santiago's metro construction works: "despidieron a personal chileno y contrataron venezolanos" (they fired Chilean staff and hired Venezuelans). Additionally, dangerous narratives intersecting health and sex were identified. In April, a viral story blaming a Venezuelan woman for an alleged HIV infection, described with zoophilic terms ("mona" (monkey)), triggered a 2,492% surge in health conversation. Likewise, in June, a Venezuelan woman's homicide by a neighbor was downplayed online, qualifying away its hate crime nature, while stigmatizing Venezuelan women through prostitution associations in specific Santiago areas.

SECOND QUARTER

TRIANGULATION

The alignment between social media conversation and the reality reported by returnees is clear in the hardening of labor barriers observed in the survey, which shifted from moderate denial in April to frequent denial in June, possibly coinciding with the accumulation of narratives criminalizing Venezuelan presence. Specifically, the May narrative accusing Venezuelans of being "mano de obra barata" (cheap labor) and less competent (in the Santiago Metro case) precedes and accompanies the increase in labor rejection reported in May and June.

Furthermore, the primacy of the reason "being a migrant" (80%) over lack of documents for denying employment aligns with the widespread stigmatization observed on social media following the April Aymara woman case. Chilean society, exposed to discourses labeling migrants as "murderers" or contagious agents (health narrative), appears to have erected nationality-based entry barriers. The increase in transit rejections reported in June also triangulates with the "uncontrolled borders" narrative and the demands for mass expulsions prevalent in public discourse.

THIRD QUARTER

SURVEY FINDINGS

According to survey data, returnees from Chile during the third quarter faced a complex labor integration environment in which administrative barriers outweighed direct xenophobia, though the latter remained significant. In the quarterly consolidated results, the primary reason for job denial was "lack of documents", cited by 62.5% of respondents, surpassing "being a migrant or foreigner", which was cited by 50%. This pattern varied month to month: in July, responses about job denial frequency were polarized between those "never" rejected (33.3%) and those "always" rejected (33.3%). However, July revealed an alarming gender gap: while only 33.3% of men reported being "always" denied work, this figure doubled to 66.7% for women, evidencing double vulnerability. By September, perceptions diversified with 22.2% reporting "frequent" denials, though lack of documents remained the primary barrier.

Regarding experienced aggressions, the quarter was marked by verbal violence. The predominant form was verbal aggression demanding return to Venezuela, reported by 45.8% of respondents, closely followed by mockery and insults at 41.7%. A distinctive finding for Chile compared to other countries is the aggressor profile: while the civil population was responsible for most cases, employers accounted for 33.3% of identified aggressors, suggesting the presence of hostile work environments. Additionally, transit community experiences reflected constant difficulties, with 20.7% of respondents reporting having felt rejection "many times" (12.7%) and "once" (8%) during their return journey.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

Chile's digital ecosystem was dominated by politicized and dehumanizing hate narratives. The word cloud highlights terms like "mierda" (shit), "ilegales" (illegals), "comunista" (communist), and "#noalvotoextranjero" (#NoForeignVote), intertwining migration with Chile's internal political crisis.

Illustration 3. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Chile. Q3

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

In July, the online conversation surged by 425%, triggered by a tweet reporting the hiring of a Venezuelan journalist in government, which activated narratives of political infiltration in the Armed Forces.

Simultaneously, in the labor sphere, a narrative accusing political sectors of importing "cheap labor" surged by 1,932%, with users explicitly stating that "la derecha trajo a los venezolanos... para explotar" (the right brought Venezuelans... to exploit them).

Health was another focus of stigmatization, with mentions spiking by 7,620% linking migrants to diseases and filth, using qualifiers like "insalubres" (unsanitary) or "lacra" (scum).

By September, xenophobia turned against women following the discovery of a sex trafficking ring, spiking mentions by 478% using terms like "putas vnks" (Venezuelan whores) to generalize criminal and immoral behavior toward all migrant women.

THIRD QUARTER

TRIANGULATION

The correspondence between lived barriers and digital discourse is striking in the labor sphere. The narrative detected on social media about Venezuelans as "cheap and easily exploitable labor" finds its counterpart in the survey, where 33.3% of physical or verbal aggressions came from employers. The digital perception of migrants as rightless economic tools appears to translate into real workplace mistreatment.

Likewise, the high prevalence of verbal aggressions demanding return to Venezuela (45.8% in the survey) aligns with the virulence of political discourse on social media demanding expulsions and blaming migrants for political, social, security issues, and public health problems.

Women's situation reveals a troubling connection: September's narratives labeling them as "putas" ("whores") or sexual criminals coincide with the extreme labor exclusion reported by women in July, where 66.7% indicated they were "always" denied work, suggesting that the stigma associated with sex and nationality operates as a barrier.

FOURTH QUARTER

SURVEY FINDINGS

Returnees from Chile during the fourth quarter highlight the persistence of structural barriers to integration, particularly in the labor sphere. Job access was consistently conditioned by a lack of documentation and a nationality stigma. Analyzing denial frequency, "frequently" remained the dominant response, accounting for more than 50% throughout the three months. However, exclusion intensity varied by gender; in October, an absolute exclusion peak occurred, with 11.1% of respondents (all women) reporting that work was "always" denied. By year-end December, while more people faced no rejection, the primary denial reason sharpened to strictly "being a migrant or foreigner", a view unanimously shared by male respondents that month.

Regarding violent experiences, the social environment proved hostile: 60.9% of respondents suffered mockery, insults, or shouting, while a concerning 43.5% reported verbal aggressions demanding return to Venezuela. Physical violence was also significant, affecting 44.4% of the sample in October.

A critical protection finding is the instrumentalization of migration authorities as threats: in October, 100% of those reporting threats of being reported to authorities were women, a gender vulnerability trend persisting at 66.7% in the quarterly total. This hostility permeates even the return journey, where women reported much higher rejection frequency on transit routes compared to men.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

Chile's digital ecosystem during this period was saturated by narratives criminalizing migration and dehumanizing Venezuelan workers. The conversation was primarily driven by citizen security events, such as the November homicide of a merchant in Conchalí commune. Among presumed perpetrators were two Chilean citizens and one Venezuelan. This incident spiked mentions by 132%, with discourse turning to offensive terms like "mierda" (shit) and "asesinos" (killers) to draw a moral boundary between locals and migrants. The viralization of videos about this and other violent incidents was key to consolidating the migrant's image as a public threat.

Illustration 4. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Chile. Q4

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

In the labor sphere, mentions exploded by 1,175% in October, centered on the "cheap labor" narrative. This view not only precaritizes workers but weaponizes them politically by accusing right-wing sectors of promoting migration to weaken unions, as seen in tweets stating: "Éste wueón junto a la derecha, fueron quienes nos trajeron la plaga de venezolanos, porque les daban votos y eran mano de obra barata y sin sindicatos" (This asshole, along with the right, were the ones who brought us the plague of Venezuelans because they gave them votes and were cheap labor without unions). By December, conversation grew even more aggressive amid demands for labor benefits like Christmas bonuses, labeling migrants as abusive and unproductive: "Las lacras siempre piden más a pesar que su rendimiento es inferior... Los venezolanos son mano de obra barata, nada más q eso" (sic) (Scum always demands more despite their inferior performance... Venezuelans are cheap labor, nothing more).

Other sectors like education and health were also stigmatization foci. In October, news of an alleged migrant attack on a student spiked mentions by 966%, branding Venezuelans as "animales" (animals) or "salvajes" (savages). In the health sphere, street food vendor inspections linked nationality to unsanitary conditions and parasitism, with messages claiming migrant users were "prepotentes y faltas de respeto" (arrogant and disrespectful). Finally, the conversation about Venezuelan women showed convergence between xenophobia and misogyny, with 174%-225% increases in mentions sexualizing them or labeling them prostitutes and "prepago" (paid companion/prostitute), while mocking their names.

TRIANGULACIÓN

Triangulating data reveals a clear correspondence between lived labor exclusion and digital hate discourse. The "cheap labor" narrative (1,175% October peak) is not just a debate on social media; it manifests in the fact that 52.2% of returnees reported frequent job denials and marked exclusion due to irregular status. The Conchalí case-fueled criminality stigma finds its correlate in practice: while on social media migrants are labeled "animales que matan por deporte" (animals that kill for sport), 34.8% of returnees suffered real physical aggressions and 60.9% verbal violence. Women's situation is particularly alarming, as unsanitary stigma and sexualized hate campaigns temporally coincide with appearance-based rejection exclusively reported by them in October.

CHILE CONCLUSIONS

Quarterly integrated analysis conclusions for Chile reveal a sustained pattern of human rights violations against the migrant population, particularly in work access, dignity, and safety. Media and internal political events fueled discrimination both online and in migrants' daily lives.

Job right denial was recurrent throughout the year, initially justified by administrative arguments and, toward period-end, explicitly tied to migrant/foreigner status. This structural exclusion reinforces narratives framing migrants as cheap labor, less competent, and expendable, while criminalizing them and blaming political sectors for their arrival. Xenophobic conversation persistently focused on criminality, work, health, and education, creating an environment legitimizing violence.

Women migrants faced a particularly grave impact through sustained stigmatization based on appearance, moral judgments, and criminalization. They were repeatedly portrayed as public health threats (sexualized and accused of spreading HIV), positioning acts of symbolic violence that violate their dignity, equality, and health rights. These narratives not only operated in the discursive realm but also translated into labor and social exclusion practices; in some quarters, returnee women reported never seeking work or always being denied, evidencing cumulative discrimination that inhibits rights exercise and normalizes forced desistance.

Triangulation between social listening and surveys confirms mockery, insults, aggressions, and 'go back to your country' pressures as constant experiences perpetrated by residents, employers, and security agents. This aggravates violations through institutional power actors. Media and political events triggered xenophobic conversation spikes and daily aggressions. By year-end, violence diversified with increased physical aggressions and authority calls, coinciding with José Antonio Kast's election and greater legitimization of discriminatory discourse and practices from power spaces.

COLOMBIA

SURVEY FINDINGS

In Colombia, 37.1% of returnees reported frequent or constant job denial during the quarter. A distinctive finding shows the "never sought work" option with the narrowest gender gap (44.4% women), suggesting prior entry barriers for women. Rejection reasons are structural: "lack of documents" (59.4%) and "being a migrant or foreigner" (42.7%).

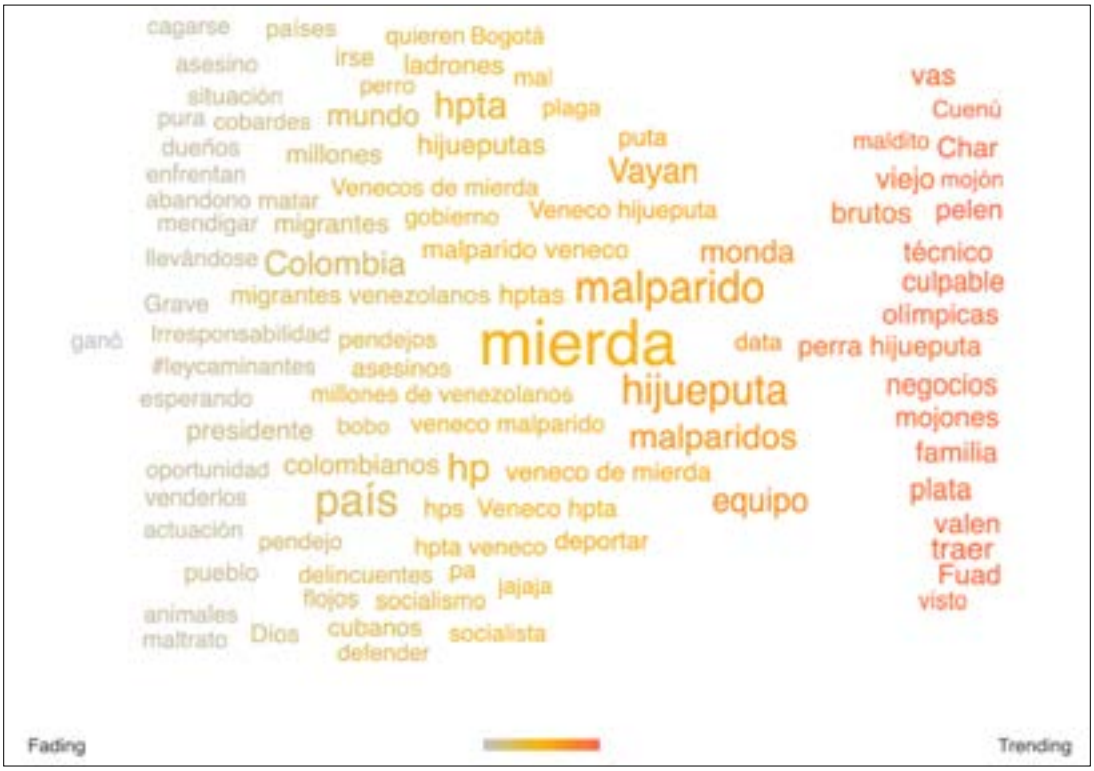
However, the most significant finding is the shift in the perpetrators of violence. While the "general resident population" remains the primary aggressor (90.7%), reflecting everyday social tension, reports pointing to "security agents" showed a sustained and concerning growth: rising from 18.9% in January to 35.4% in February, peaking at 39.4% in March. This indicates a progressive hardening in the profiling and treatment by public forces toward the migrant population, particularly men.

Throughout the quarter, two types of aggressions were most frequently reported: "received mockery, insults, or shouts" at 45.7% and "was verbally aggressed to return to Venezuela" at 33.5%. The first and second types were mainly reported by men: 79.5% (89 people) for the first and 82.9% (68 people) for the second.

HALLAZGOS SOCIAL LISTENING

In January, Nicolás Maduro Moros's presidential inauguration triggered a 188% surge in conversation centered on the "cowardice" stigma. Narratives positioned migrants as opportunists "están esperando la oportunidad para irse a un país mejor" (waiting for the chance to leave for a better country) rather than "cagarse a tiros por su país" (fighting to the death for their country).

Illustration 5. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Colombia. Q1



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

In March, the focus shifted toward women and crime. News of a human trafficking ring led by a Venezuelan woman generated a 107.4% increase in discriminatory discourse against migrant women. This reactivated stereotypes associating Venezuelan women with disease and crime: "Viagra, ron y Veneca = Infarto y VIH" (Viagra, rum, and Veneca = Heart attack and HIV) and "solo exportaron putas y ladrones" (they only exported whores and thieves).

Insults targeting Atlético Junior's technical director, Venezuelan César Alejandro Farías Acosta, clustered on the illustration's right side, evidence the normalization of xenophobic insults in sports settings.

TRIANGULATION

A correspondence emerges between anti-human trafficking operations or news of crimes involving Venezuelan migrants and police hostility toward the migrant population. The sustained increase in aggressions by "security agents" reported in the survey, peaking at 39.4% in March, coincides with March's digital landscape of dismantled trafficking rings and high-profile arrests. The high visibility of migrant crime news appears to trigger an immediate institutional response: heightened police profiling and hostility on the streets, affecting the general migrant population unlinked to any crimes.

Additionally, the verbal aggression frequently reported in the survey, "was verbally aggressed to return to Venezuela" (40% on average), finds support in digital narratives. Tweets labeling migrants as "cowards" and demanding they "leave" socially reproduce direct verbal aggression.

SURVEY FINDINGS

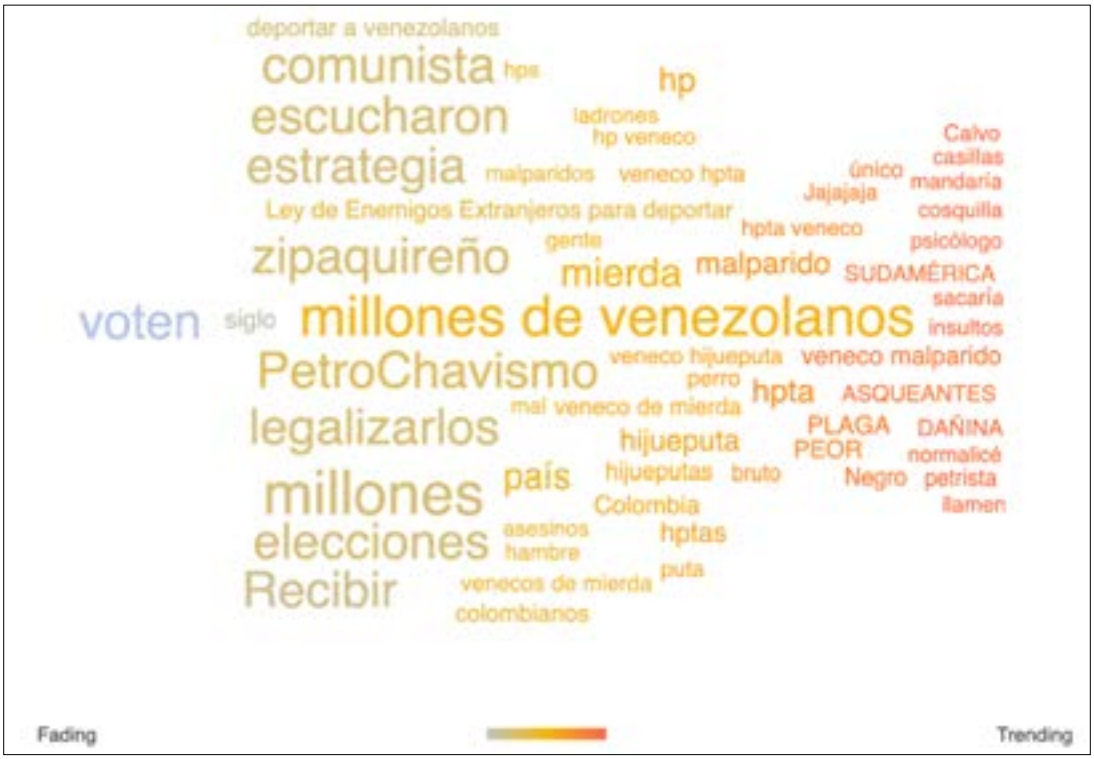
In Colombia, labor discrimination reported by returnees remained high and constant. During the second quarter, 41.9% of respondents reported that work was denied "frequently" or "always." A relevant finding is the gender gap in job seeking: the "never sought work" option was the only one in which women outnumbered men (52.6% of responses in this category), suggesting job discouragement or a retreat into caregiving roles in a hostile environment. Exclusion reasons combined "being a migrant or foreigner" (69.8%) and lack of documents (63.7%).

Verbal violence was the clearest manifestation of xenophobia in Colombia. The most frequent aggressions were "mockery, insults, or shouts" (48.7%) and being "verbally aggressed to return to Venezuela" (46.8%). This latter type of aggression, which denotes explicit rejection, remained constant throughout the period. Although the resident population is usually the primary aggressor, June saw specific reports against public officials and security agents by men, coinciding with an increase in rejection perceptions during migratory transit toward the quarter's end.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

In the second quarter, social media discourse in Colombia was characterized by the political instrumentalization of migrants. In April, a 361% spike in xenophobic conversation was driven by narratives portraying migrant regularization as a "PetroChavismo strategy" to win elections, labeling Venezuelans as political tools rather than rights-bearing subjects, alongside the spread of disinformation.

Illustration 6. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Colombia. Q2



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

In the educational sphere, June recorded a significant 2,200% increase in conversation due to disinformation linking Venezuelan students with the "Tren de Aragua" and alleged expulsions from the United States, reinforcing criminal stigma even in school settings. In the labor sphere, narratives emerged portraying migrants as "cheap labor" displacing locals, alongside gender narratives attacking Venezuelan women using terms like "prepago" (paid companion/prostitute) to discredit public figures associated with them.

TRIANGULATION

A correspondence can be established between the political narrative of receiving "millions of Venezuelans" and verbal violence on the streets. The high incidence of verbal aggression demanding return to Venezuela (46.8%) reported in the survey represents the materialization of digital discourse portraying Venezuelans as a "plaga" (plague) or an "electoral strategy" that must be neutralized or expelled.

Likewise, June's narrative criminalizing students and linking the Venezuelan migrant population to international criminal gangs temporally coincides with the increase in perceived rejection along migration routes and reports pointing to security agents in that same month. Digital stigmatization seems to legitimize a hostile environment where migrants are seen as threats to national security and employment, validating the consistent access barriers to work reported in the survey.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Colombia, as the main recipient of Venezuelan migrants, shows deep exclusion dynamics based on nationalist narratives. Unlike Chile, the hegemonic reason for job denial during the quarter was "being a migrant or foreigner" (65.1%), prevailing over lack of documents (56.9%), indicating deeply rooted cultural xenophobia.

Labor barriers remained constant and high: 31.8% of the quarterly total reported job denial "frequently", a perception consistent across the three months. While men reported higher absolute rejection rates, women faced significant exclusion too, with 38.1% indicating work was "always" denied, compared to 61.9% of men in that extreme category.

The aggression landscape is particularly alarming due to the incidence of physical violence. While "mockery, insults, or shouting" was most common (48.4%), physical aggression was reported by 21% of respondents (33 people). Perpetrators were distributed equally between employers and the civil population in the quarterly total (42.9% each), evidencing that hostility is transversal across different spheres of daily life.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

Conversation in Colombia was characterized by highly offensive language. The most recurrent terms were direct insults like "mierda" (shit), "hijueputa" (son of a bitch), "malparido" (bastard), and "hp" ("hijueputa" abbreviation), frequently associated with organized crime accusations ("narcos" and "cartel").

In September, football served as a powerful catalyst for hate. During the final World Cup qualifier, in which Colombia defeated Venezuela, X messages targeted Venezuelan player Nahuel Ferraresi, recalling his mocking attitude toward an Atlético Nacional player in the Copa Libertadores. This spiked mentions by 486%, escalating from personal insults to generalized nationality attacks like "veneco triple hijueputa" (triple son-of-a-bitch Veneco).

Illustration 7. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Colombia. Q3

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

Months earlier, in July, public health became the focus after a yellow fever case, spiking messages by 1,000%, labeling migrants "insalubres" (unsanitary). In the labor sphere, unfair competition and exploitation narratives strengthened, with comments on Rappi (Colombia's leading delivery app platform) suggesting Venezuelans "vendan barato... como los chinos" (sell cheap... like the Chinese) and hinder unemployment reduction.

Additionally, August viralization of a video showing aggression by Venezuelan women spiked gender xenophobia by 551%.

TRIANGULATION

A correspondence exists between online verbal violence and street experiences. The saturation of insults like "hijueputa" (son of a bitch) and "malparido" (bastard) in digital spaces materialized in survey findings where "mockery, insults, or shouting" was the most reported violence form (48.4%). Online hate discourse did not remain confined to screens; it permeated daily interactions.

Likewise, job denial primacy due to "ser migrante" (65.1%) triangulates with September (football) and August (work/Rappi) narratives, where rejection targeted Venezuelan national identity per se as undesirable or unfair competition, beyond migration status.

Narratives repeatedly associating Venezuelans with crime and cartels, reinforced by viral aggression videos, created permissiveness for violence that may explain Colombia's high physical aggression rate (21%), validating corporal punishment as a social response to the perceived threatening "other".

SURVEY FINDINGS

In Colombia, labor exclusion of the Venezuelan population remained constant in the last quarter, with 50.6% of respondents reporting frequent denials. October recorded the highest rejection level (62%), though November showed a concerning phenomenon: exclusión absoluta o total perception ("always") drastically increased from 4.2% to 14%. Job access obstacles primarily stem from the lack of documents (75.7%), but migrant status per se constitutes a barrier for 52.1% of returnees.

Verbal violence predominated, affecting 53.3% of respondents through mockery and shouting. Physical aggression maintained significant figures (18.3%), reaching an alarming December peak where 34.8% of the few registered returnees that month reported being victims of blows or shoves. November also stood out for increased expulsions or denials of public place entry, affecting nearly 20% of that month's sample. On return routes, while most felt no rejection, 16.6% experienced hostility in transit communities.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

Digital conversation in Colombia was marked by foul language and generalized criminalization. Terms like "mierda" (shit), "hp" ("hijueputa" abbreviation), and "hijueputa" (son of a bitch) formed the basis of discourse linking Venezuelans to insecurity, using qualifiers like "asesinos" (killers), "perros" (dogs), and "ladrones" (thieves). The main trigger was the October homicide of a Universidad de los Andes student, where alleged participation by a Venezuelan citizen activated hate narratives against the entire nationality and Tren de Aragua, spiking conversation by 168%.

Disinformation also played a key role in economic stigmatization. The spread of fake news about company closures, such as Whirlpool's, was used to blame migration for unemployment and insecurity, linking it to the current government's political management.

Illustration 8. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Colombia. Q4

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

In the health sphere, narratives reemerged associating the Venezuelan population with sexually transmitted diseases, accusing them of "esparcir el sida" (spreading AIDS) and linking women to prostitution, doubling mentions by 100% on this topic. Xenophobic misogyny also targeted public figures by nationality, using insults like "puta venezolana" (Venezuelan whore) and corruption accusations.

In the education sphere, mentions increased by 28%, triggered by news of a xenophobia case against a Venezuelan student in Rosario, Argentina, where a teacher told her "vuélvase a su país" (go back to your country).

TRIANGULATION

A correspondence exists between digital violence peaks and physical exclusion reported in Colombia. Expulsion demands recorded online after the Universidad de los Andes student case temporally coincide with November, when the survey recorded the highest volume of expulsions and public place entry denials (19.8%). Similarly, the stigma linking women to HIV and sex work appears to translate into real, premature labor barriers: in November, 66.7% of those denied employment due to alleged "lack of experience" were women, suggesting prejudice prevents even evaluation of their technical capacities. Finally, the massive use of insults and the portrayal of migrants as health threats on social media explain why over half of returnees suffered verbal aggression in daily interactions.

COLOMBIA CONCLUSIONS

Findings for Colombia reveal systematic human rights violations against the migrant population, with a differentiated gender impact. In the first and second quarters, a significant number of women reported never seeking work, suggesting structural barriers to labor market access beyond individual will. This exclusion is reinforced by the survey's most cited denial reasons: lack of documents and, more strikingly, simply being a migrant or foreigner. Discursively, predominant narratives associate migrant women with prostitution, trafficking, HIV, and even criminality, creating a stigmatization framework limiting work, equality, and discrimination-free life rights. Social listening analysis shows that news about anti-trafficking operations, far from promoting protection, reinforces narratives criminalizing migrant women and shifting structural responsibility onto them.

In the education and work spheres, the migrant population is represented as unqualified or reduced to specific trades, as seen in the recurrent association of Venezuelans with delivery work on platforms like Rappi. These representations limit recognition of diverse educational trajectories, professional competencies, and reinforce labor precariousness as their near-exclusive destiny.

In terms of violence and discrimination, triangulated sources confirm that the main aggressors were the resident population, security agents, public officials, and employers, revealing xenophobia normalization at social and institutional levels. Most frequent aggressions were insults and "Go back to Venezuela" demands, but in the third and fourth quarters, physical aggressions gained relevance, evidencing violence escalation. External events, like Nicolás Maduro's inauguration, foreign country news, football matches, and regional political debates, triggered xenophobia spikes and explicit expulsion demands. In the political sphere, migrants were repeatedly labeled cowards and instrumentalized by political figures and sectors. Fake news accordingly fueled indignant reactions against migrants.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Ecuador exhibited a particular pattern of discrimination. For 45.9%, job denial was "never" or "occasionally", yet those who did face barriers overwhelmingly cited "being a migrant or foreigner" (66.7%) as the cause, surpassing even lack of documents (55.6%). This indicates that xenophobia is anchored in nationality rather than migratory status.

Regarding aggression, hostility appears concentrated entirely within civil society: 100% of quarterly consolidated respondents identified the "general resident population" as responsible for discriminatory acts. However, when disaggregated by month, February showed a peak in tension, with 50% of responses also pointing to "security agents."

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

In Ecuador, the discourse had a strong political component, amplified by the electoral context. Xenophobia not only arose from the general population but was also promoted by political figures. The debate on the "Migratory Amnesty" and migration was used as a weapon between former President Rafael Correa and then-candidate Daniel Noboa to discredit each other.

Illustration 9. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Ecuador. Q1

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

In the labor sphere, discrimination was explicitly positioned through candidate Luisa González's campaign discourse, who stated: "Voy a devolver a los venezolanos... que nos quitan el empleo" (I will return the Venezuelans... who are taking our jobs from us), generating a massive 2,680% increase in the conversation on that topic in March. In healthcare, migration was blamed for the hospital collapse, stigmatizing Venezuelans as HIV carriers: "vienen acá porque les dan las medicinas" (they come here because they get the medicines) and linking this to prior government policies.

TRIANGULATION

The survey showed that "being a migrant" is the main employment barrier (66.7%), ahead of having an irregular migratory status. This may correspond to the electoral political narrative identified in social listening: when candidates promise expulsions under the argument that Venezuelans "nos roban el trabajo" (steal our jobs), they socially validate employers discriminating based solely on national origin. Electoral politics enables economic and labor exclusion while also demonstrating the volatility of migration policies and the political instrumentalization of this population.

The survey finding that 100% of aggressions come from the "general resident population" is explained by the omnipresence of the migration issue in public debate. As politicians portray migrants as the scapegoats for corruption, insecurity, and the health crisis, citizens adopt defensive-aggressive stances, generalizing rejection in everyday interactions.

SURVEY FINDINGS

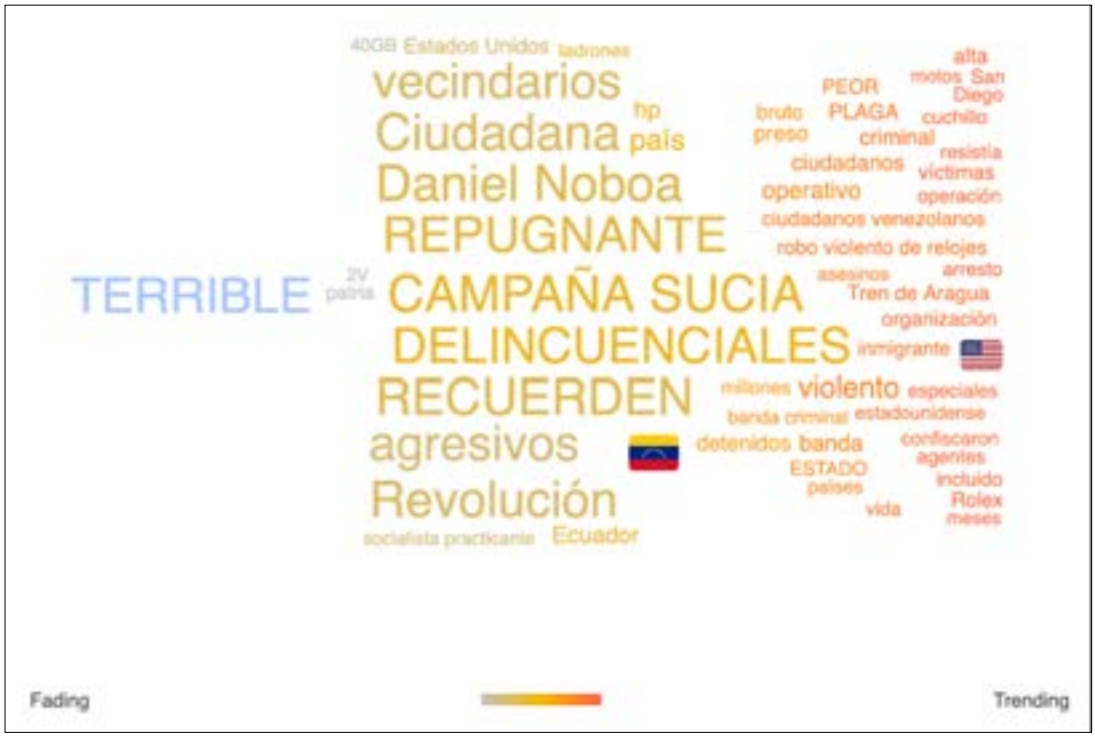
While responses about job denial were divided in April and May, in June a significant spike was observed: 58.3% of respondents reported being denied work "frequently" or "always." The structural reasons for this denial were "being a migrant or foreigner" (68.3%) and "lacking documents" (70.7%). Notably, in May, the "never sought work" option was selected entirely by women, reinforcing the hypothesis of differentiated gender barriers.

Additionally, perceptions of migratory route safety deteriorated in June: while the majority in May (53.3%) reported no rejection, this figure dropped to 16.7% in June. This led to a generalization of barriers, with 66.7% of returnees reporting rejection at least "a few times," indicating that low-intensity hostility experiences ceased to be isolated events.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

Ecuador's discourse was shaped by the electoral contest, where migrants were instrumentalized between candidates, accused of being shock groups or "criminal gangs" hired by the opposition. This created an environment where Venezuelans became synonymous with political destabilization and criminality.

Illustration 10. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Ecuador. Q2



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

However, the most relevant finding for triangulation occurred in late June. A 704% surge in employment-related discourse was triggered by news linking criminal gangs to "delivery services", a trade commonly associated with Venezuelan migrants. Additionally, discourse on women peaked at 840% that month, related to the rescue of trafficking victims, which, while highlighting the crime, also reinforced the association between Venezuelan women and forced prostitution.

TRIANGULATION

A correspondence is observed in June between the increase in reported job denials in the survey (58.3% frequent rejection) and the viralization of news at the month's end, criminalizing delivery work. By labeling one of the primary sources of migrant employment as a "facade for theft," the entire working collective is stigmatized, closing doors to employability.

Additionally, June's demographic pattern, where returned women's participation peaked at its highest in the quarter (41.7%), triangulates with the peak in discourse on dismantled human trafficking and sexual exploitation rings that same month. It could be inferred that the heightened insecurity for women, evident in news about trafficking rings, combined with widespread labor hostility, acted as an accelerated expulsion factor for the female population during this specific period.

SURVEY FINDINGS

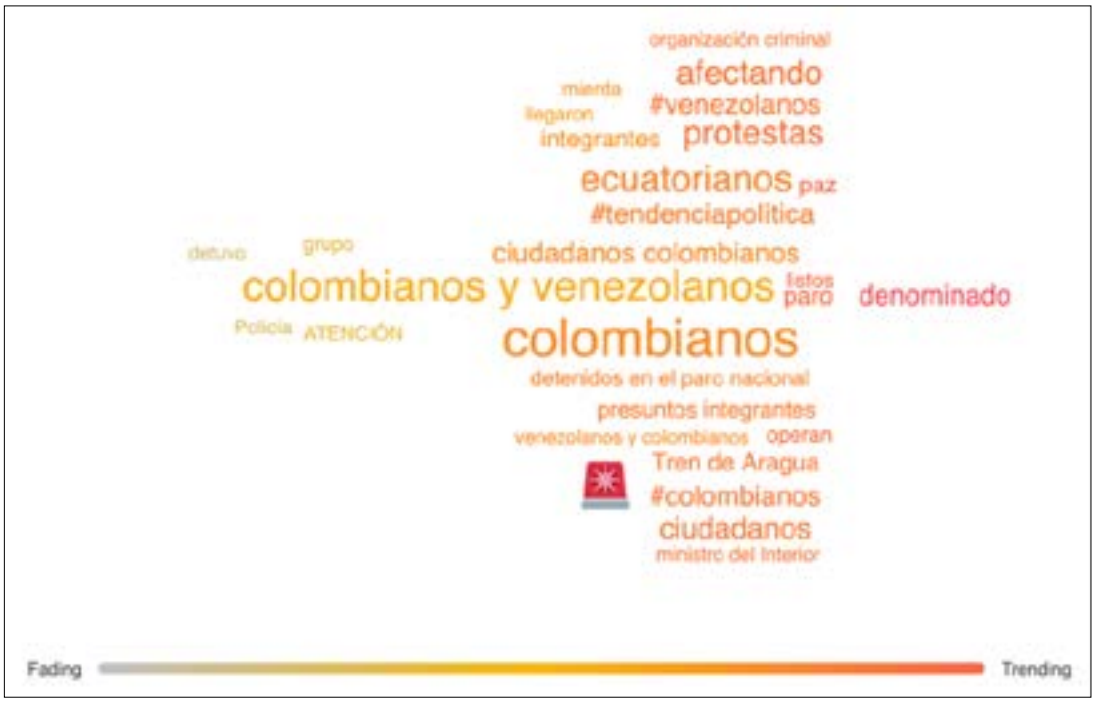
In Ecuador, labor integration deteriorated progressively during the quarter. In July, 35.7% reported frequent labor denials, climbing to 50% in August, reflecting a closing of opportunities. The cause of this rejection was "being a migrant or foreigner" throughout all months, an option that dominated responses with 68.2% in the quarterly aggregate, widely surpassing lack of documents (50%), and denoting strong discrimination by national origin.

Violence experienced focused primarily on mockery and insults (45.5%) and verbal aggressions demanding return (30.3%). However, the most revealing data emerged in September: for the first time in the quarter and differing from other countries, security agents (police or armed forces) were identified as directly responsible for aggressions, actors pointed out exclusively by men.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

Ecuador's digital climate was strongly conditioned by the security crisis and social conflict. In September, during the National Strike, xenophobic mentions exploded with a 2,423% increase, driven by a scapegoat narrative blaming Venezuelans and Colombians for "generating disturbances" and vandalism to delegitimize the indigenous protest.

Illustration 11. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Ecuador. Q3



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

Parallelly, the citizen security discourse turned xenophobic in September after a homicide involving a woman known as "Alias La Chama", generating a 1,472% increase in mentions demanding deportations and using terms like "sanguinarios" (bloodthirsty).

In the labor and education spheres, August registered a 3,757% peak in mentions attacking foreign university professors (Cubans and Venezuelans), accusing them of having fake degrees or being "agitadores" ("agitators"), questioning their professional legitimacy.

TRIANGULATION

Data triangulation in Ecuador provides clear evidence of the criminalization of migration. Survey respondents identifying security agents as aggressors in September temporally coincides with the National Strike narrative, where public opinion and political actors demanded heavy-handed measures against foreigners accused of vandalism. The digital environment legitimized police action against migrants, reflected in returnees' experiences.

Similarly, the high labor rejection rate for "being a migrant" (68.2%) corresponds with August's smear campaigns against foreign professionals in universities, establishing the migrant as a fraud or threat ("fake degrees", "agitators"), thus closing labor market doors based on nationality prejudice rather than capacity. Finally, the "Alias La Chama" case reinforced the criminal stigma, aligning with verbal aggressions demanding return under the premise of expelling national danger from the country.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Although the Ecuador returnee sample is smaller, the data reveal sharpened national prejudice. During the quarter, both lack of documents and simply being a migrant carried equal weight as labor rejection reasons (66.7% each). Notably, nationality-based rejections escalated month by month, rising from 57.1% in October to 100% in December. Violence experienced manifested primarily in mockery and insults (56.5%) and in verbal aggression demanding return to their country (39.1%).

October was particularly critical for physical aggression, with the region recording its highest percentage (28.6%) that month. Additionally, Ecuador presented the most hostile return route, the only country where the most frequent response was feeling rejection "a few times" rather than "none" during transit.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

In Ecuador, xenophobic discourse was characterized by quasi-police language positioning nationality as the direct cause of crime. Phrases like "sujetos de nacionalidad venezolana" (Venezuelan nationals) orbit around terms like "delincuentes" (criminals), "asalto" (robbery), and "persecución" (chase). Two criminalization peaks marked the period: one in October (489%) due to extortions in Santa Elena, and another in November (558%) following the capture of a narco-submarine with Venezuelan crew members, reinforcing the idea of "importing" criminal structures.

Illustration 12. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Ecuador. Q4

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

In the education sphere, October registered a 271% increase generated by a tweet mentioning teachers of various nationalities, including Venezuelan, as "adoctrinadores" (indoctrinators) in academia and "podredumbre" (scum), a trend amplified by news of a teacher in Rosario, Argentina, who told a Venezuelan student "vuélvase a su país" (go back to your country).

In the health sphere, although post volume showed no significant increase, stigmatization resurfaced, targeting migrants with HIV, equating the migrant population with an "infección de degenerados" (infection of degenerates) spreading across the country, and accusing them of receiving priority care over nationals.

TRIANGULATION

Triangulation shows how "criminal invasion" and "indoctrination" discourse can affect employability. The 100% labor rejection rate by nationality in December occurs parallel to digital narratives demanding "limpiar la podredumbre" (clean the scum) from institutions, and accusing migrants of importing criminal structures.

November's health narrative labeling migrants as "infección de degenerados" (infection of degenerates) coincides with the fact that in that same month, the main reported reasons for labor denial were nationality and lack of documents, reinforcing the idea of the migrant as an external and dangerous element that should not be integrated.

ECUADOR CONCLUSIONS

Results for Ecuador evidence a sustained pattern of rights violations against the migrant population. Throughout the analysis period, the primary labor exclusion reason was simply being a migrant, revealing direct discrimination transcending administrative frameworks and affecting access to dignified livelihoods, rooted in nationalism and xenophobia. Both the survey and digital conversation identified the general population and security agents as the main aggressors, showing xenophobia operating at both social and institutional levels, weakening equality and non-discrimination guarantees.

Social listening reveals intense conversation about work and criminality, constructing a narrative intersection that presents migrants as suspicious or potentially criminal in labor spaces. This association was instrumentalized by political actors, particularly during high-tension contexts such as presidential elections and the National Strike, where migration served as a scapegoat for structural insecurity and unemployment. These narratives not only reinforce social rejection but also legitimize exclusionary and control practices that violate workers' rights and the presumption of innocence.

The impact was particularly severe on migrant women amid rising human trafficking cases and increased insecurity, heightening their exposure to multiple forms of violence. Likewise, an education-politics intersection emerged in narratives accusing Venezuelan teachers of indoctrinating students in socialism at public educational institutions. This baseless accusation contributes to professional and national stigmatization, affecting education, work, and freedom of thought rights, while consolidating distrust toward the migrant population.

PERU

SURVEY FINDINGS

In the labor sphere, while 63.4% of respondents reported job denial "never" or "occasionally," those experiencing exclusion reported it most often due to "lack of documents" (60.5%) and "being a migrant or foreigner" (42.1%).
A distinctive pattern in Peru is the high involvement of state actors in acts of aggression. Over the quarter, 25.7% of respondents identified "public officials" as aggressors, a consistently high figure compared to other countries, adding to the 28.6% who pointed to "security agents". Furthermore, violence escalated in severity toward the period's end: in March, reports of physical aggressions emerged (31.8% of responses that month), affecting men exclusively. This marks a break from the purely verbal violence observed in previous months.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

In Peru, the narrative is characterized by open confrontation and exacerbated nationalism. The main triggering event was the Peru vs. Venezuela football match for World Cup qualifiers in March, which generated a massive 696% surge in xenophobic discourse. Messages explicitly expressed desires for violent expulsion: "lárguense del Perú hijos de putas" (get out of Peru, you sons of bitches) and "nos roban en la calle... y nos roban en el fútbol" (they rob us on the street... and they rob us in football).

Illustration 13. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Peru. Q1

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

In the healthcare sector, the narrative is one of 'zero-sum': migrant care is perceived as detrimental to nationals. Indignation arose over foreigners' affiliation to the Seguro Integral de Salud (SIS) (Peru's universal health insurance), with comments such as: "cruel es que tu le quites la medicina de tu hijo peruano... y se lo deas a un venezolano" (it is cruel that you take the medicine from your Peruvian child... and give it to a Venezuelan). Venezuelan women are also strongly associated with HIV and prostitution.

TRIANGULATION

The temporal triangulation establishes a possible correspondence between the unprecedented surge in physical aggression reports in the survey during the March World Cup qualifier match, which exacerbated nationalist sentiments on social media. Football may have acted as a catalyst that transformed verbal and digital violence into physical violence, legitimizing assaults under the guise of sports rivalry and criminal stigma.

The high rate of aggressions by "public officials" (25.7%) and "security agents" (28.6%) can be linked to social media pressure criticizing the government for being "tibio" (lenient) and providing services to migrants. In a scenario where offering health or education to a foreigner is seen as a betrayal of nationals, public officials appear to act as a containment barrier, exercising direct discrimination in access to services and rights as a defense mechanism against public opinion.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Labor exclusion remained a constant, though with fluctuations. In the consolidated data, 72.7% of respondents indicated that the main reason for being denied work was "being a migrant or foreigner," a figure significantly higher than the "lack of documents" (58.2%). This points to deeply rooted xenophobia operating independently of migratory regularization. June showed polarization: while one significant group reported frequent job denials (47.4%), another reported no problems.

Verbal aggressions were frequent, with 56% reporting mockery and 54.7% reporting verbal aggression, urging them to return to Venezuela. Notably, in May, women reported higher proportions of rejections in public places than men, indicating gender-based spatial discrimination. Additionally, perceptions of rejection along the migratory route increased in June, reaching 63.2%.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

The narrative stood out for its virality, endorsed by political actors. In April, statements by Congressman Edwin Martínez suggesting that "los asesinos peruanos maten a los asesinos venezolanos" (Peruvian killers kill Venezuelan killers) triggered a 1,820% surge in xenophobia, normalizing discourses of social cleansing and direct violence. The association between Venezuelans and "sicarios" (hitmen) or extortionists is widespread.

Illustration 14. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Peru. Q2

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

In the healthcare sector, the "biological risk" narrative persisted in April, blaming Venezuelan women for spreading HIV, with a 900% surge in discourse driven by the spread of a story about a Chilean woman allegedly infected by her husband, a worker in Chile's mining zone, after he reportedly had sexual relations with a Venezuelan migrant there. In May, the murder of a Venezuelan woman by internet technicians generated a conversation spike, an event covered by some media and posted out of morbid curiosity or re-victimization.

TRIANGULATION

The high prevalence of "being a migrant" as the reason for job denial (72.7%) finds its parallel in the national security narrative promoted by opinion leaders. When public figures reproduce the idea that Venezuelans are "hitmen" or "extortionists", the stigma transfers directly to the labor market, turning nationality into a risk factor for employers.

Likewise, the generalized verbal aggression reported in the survey (56%) reflects the permissive atmosphere fostered by violent political discourse, such as that from Congressman Edwin Martínez in April. The health narrative portraying women as disease carriers could be correlated with the May survey finding, where women reported more frequent rejection and expulsion from public spaces, suggesting that the "danger" stigma (whether criminal or sanitary) restricts their access to social spaces.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Peru presents the most hostile and exclusionary scenario in the region, according to respondents in the third quarter. An overwhelming 88% of returnees reported that the reason given for denying them work was "being a migrant or foreigner", the highest figure recorded among the four countries in that period. Lack of documentation, although present (46%), was overshadowed by the magnitude of nationality-based rejection. The frequency of this denial was severe, with 43.8% reporting "frequent" rejection.

Violence in Peru went beyond mere words. In addition to mockery (62.5%), the country recorded a high rate of physical aggression (23.4%) and a considerable percentage of denial of entry to public places (18.8%), suggesting spatial segregation against the Venezuelan migrant population. A critical finding is that 100% of aggressors identified in the quarterly aggregate were members of the civilian population, indicating that xenophobia is not an isolated phenomenon but a widespread and normalized practice.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

Discourse in Peru centered on criminality and absolute dehumanization. The word cloud was dominated by terms like "lacras" (scum), "sicarios" (hitmen), "salvajes" (savages), and "Tren de Aragua", constructing a discursive equivalence between Venezuelan and "delincuente" (criminal).

Illustration 15. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Peru. Q3

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

In September, police news triggered a 343% increase in conversation, used to attribute national insecurity to the Venezuelan presence.

Politics also played a key role, blaming former presidents for "abrir las puertas (opening the doors) to criminals. Intolerance reached the point where, in September, a video of a Venezuelan commenting on the Argentine economy was used in Peru to demand mass deportation, demonstrating that any migrant visibility is questioned or punished.
Additionally, the discovery of trafficking rings in July paradoxically increased stigma toward female victims, associating them with prostitution and crime.

Also in July, a narrative emerged labeling the migrant population "insalubre" (unhealthy), accusing them of "antihigiénicos" (unhygienic) behaviors or linking them to tuberculosis, referencing one of the causes of death attributed to Simón Bolívar.

TRIANGULATION

The primacy of nationality-based rejection in the survey (88%) finds direct explanation in the dominant digital narrative: in Peru, "Venezuelan" has been resemantized as synonymous with "criminal" or "sicario" (hitman) by public opinion. Migrants are rejected not for administrative procedures, but due to fear and hatred sown by constant association with gangs like Tren de Aragua.

This criminalization has concrete spatial effects: survey reports of entry denials to public places (18.8%) resonate with narratives labeling Venezuelans as "salvajes" (savages) or "insalubres" (unhealthy) (as seen in July's health peak), thus justifying their hygienist exclusion from common spaces. Finally, language dehumanization ("lacras" (scum), "mierda" (shit)) creates the necessary atmosphere to enable reported physical violence (23.4%), legitimizing aggression and vigilante justice as defense mechanisms against perceived threat.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Peru continued as the most hostile scenario for returnees. 46.2% of respondents reported labor denials "frequently", but the "always" figure (total exclusion) is significant at 9.6%. The predominant reason was "being a migrant or foreigner" (65.9%), surpassing lack of documents (63.4%). In December, this reason reached 88.9% among male respondents.

Aggression figures were the highest among the four countries: 67.3% suffered mockery or insults, 36.5% received shouts demanding a return, and 30.8% reported being denied entry to public places, indicating permanent segregation. This aggression pattern shifted in December: while verbal aggression remained first, public place entry denials or expulsions took second place (36.4%), and threats to call migration authorities took third place (27.3%). Notably, physical aggressions affected 21.2% of respondents throughout the quarter.

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

Discriminatory conversation revolved around the criminalization of the migrant population and accusations of collapsing public services. It was characterized by terms like "delincuentes" (criminals), "criminales" (criminals), "sicarios" (hitmen) and "extorsiones" (extortions), used to broadly link the Venezuelan population with organized crime and public security deterioration—a usage that intensified following posts reporting detention of Venezuelan nationals, also blaming Peruvian political figures or the political left for the migration flow.

Illustration 16. Topic cloud of xenophobic mentions in Peru. Q4

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

Xenophobic conversation intensified between October 6 and 12, registering a 380% increase. The homicide of a public transport driver in San Juan de Miraflores and the subsequent transport strike in Lima were the triggers consolidating narratives broadly blaming the Venezuelan population for insecurity. Posts repeatedly pointed to alleged "sicarios venezolanos" (Venezuelan hitmen) for the violence. During this juncture, mass expulsions were demanded, and the government was accused of allowing their entry and fostering criminal activity.

Between October 13-19, mentions using Peruvian women to reinforce xenophobic narratives increased by 133%. Posts associated Venezuelan migrants with violence against local women, whose suffering legitimized insults and hate calls against migrants. At the health intersection, a narrative emerged using the figure of thousands of girls infected or raped by Venezuelans, who, through their "lepra vaginal" (vaginal leprosy), had collapsed health services, criticizing the Peruvian government's HIV/AIDS management.

In education, the case of a teacher in Rosario, Argentina, who allegedly told a Venezuelan student, "regresara a su país" (go back to your country), went viral, leading to a 980% increase in conversation. In the labor sphere, although no increase tied to specific events occurred, the narrative that Venezuelans represent cheap labor benefiting business owners persisted. Accordingly, they are blamed for job losses, worsening conditions, and even referencing trades stereotypically associated with other vulnerable populations like LGBTI persons.

TRIANGULATION

Contrasting survey findings with social listening reveals a permanent and intense atmosphere of discrimination and exclusion toward the Venezuelan migrant population.

The 30.8% of returnees denied entry to public places directly resonates with October's "health collapse" and "vaginal leprosy" narratives justifying migrant exclusion from common spaces for social hygiene, amplified by the viral news of a teacher aggressing a Venezuelan student in Argentina as potential justification for migrant rejection.

Likewise, the "sicariato venezolano" (Venezuelan hitmen) narrative (380% peak in October) explains why nationality-based labor rejection reached such high levels (up to 88.9% in December): employers see not workers, but potential criminal threats. Finally, the idea that migrants "take jobs" from local vulnerable sectors would reflect the persistent labor denial reported by 46.2% of the sample.

PERU CONCLUSIONS

Findings for Peru evidence a scenario marked by aggression from multiple actors. Source triangulation identifies recurrent aggressors as security agents, public officials, and civil society sectors, revealing violence normalization at both social and institutional levels. These aggressions manifested verbally through insults, mockery, and demands to "regresen a su país" ("go back to your country"), with physical violence intensifying in the last quarters. Spaces like football matches served as triggers for exacerbated nationalist discourses that reinforced migration-crime associations and expulsion calls.

In the labor sphere, job denial persisted throughout the year due to the lack of documents and, more explicitly, in the third and fourth quarters, simply being a migrant. This exclusion was articulated through constant criminalization that permeated other rights, such as health access. In this scenario, xenophobic narratives portrayed migrants as a burden, generating competition and service deterioration for nationals, while reproducing stigmas of unhealthiness. Particularly gravely, migrant women were blamed for HIV transmission, reinforcing symbolic violence affecting their health rights.

Impact on migrant women proved transversal and aggravated by revictimization. Public space rejections and reiterated criminalization associated them with prostitution, a narrative fueled by media coverage of anti-trafficking operations shifting focus from protection to punitivism and moralization. Throughout the year, political actors called for violence against migrants, alongside exhortations to authorities (especially visible in the third and fourth quarters), contributing to legitimizing aggressions. On the other side, political narratives also mobilized toward blaming sectors and figures for "bringing" migrants, consolidating an exclusion framework hindering migrant rights protection and guarantee.

SPAIN

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS

The social listening exercise on digital conversations in Spain about Venezuelan migration in 2025 identified narrative patterns shaped by varying intensities and emphases across quarters. Throughout the year, debates on xenophobia, employment, housing, health, education, and women not only fluctuated in volume but also reconfigured according to international developments, local political agendas, and specific media events. Quarterly analysis revealed how these narratives were activated, shifted, and, in some cases, normalized.

During the first quarter of 2025, conversation was heavily conditioned by the international context, particularly mass deportations of migrants from the United States and the possibility that Spain might receive part of that population. Xenophobia consolidated as the dominant axis during this period. A peak on February 13—with a 744% surge in mentions—showed how anticipation of Venezuelan migrants' arrival activated rejection-prone narratives. These are structured around dehumanization (using insults like "plaga" (plague) or "venecos" (derogatory term for Venezuelans)) and securitization, associating migration directly with organized crime, especially the Tren de Aragua. Even before migrants' effective arrival, digital conversations constructed scenarios of future chaos and violence, reinforced by memes and images caricaturing Venezuelans as armed subjects or criminals.

In contrast, the employment sphere during the first quarter showed a pro-migrant narrative. The 281% surge between late January and early February occurred within the debate over TPS revocation in the United States. Here, a significant portion of the conversation defended migrants' right to work, emphasizing that even in irregular conditions, many work, pay taxes, and contribute to local economies. A counter-narrative emerged, challenging the automatic conflation of migration with criminal illegality—though this defense often framed comparisons with other national contexts rather than focusing exclusively on Spain.

The women category during the first quarter revealed a dual dynamic. On one hand, Venezuelan mothers emerged as political subjects confronting power through grief and denunciation, particularly in demands for the release of detained sons in El Salvador. These narratives appealed to empathy and human rights. On the other hand, a misogynistic drift emerged where conversation shifted toward physical appearance and symbolic competition between Venezuelan and Spanish women, even referencing beauty pageants. This tension shows how gender becomes a symbolic battleground mixing victimization, national pride, and sexism.

In housing and health, the first quarter consolidated a pattern repeated throughout the year: instrumentalization of public services as rejection arguments. In housing, though volume remained low, February mentions linked the housing crisis and price increases to migrant reception, presenting the Venezuelan population as a factor that aggravates a pre-existing structural problem. In health, the 550% surge in mid-February revealed clear polarization: while some posts highlighted medical care as a humanitarian response, others warned of healthcare system collapse, reinforcing the ironic notion that Spain cannot be "the world's hospital".

Illustration 17. Word cloud of mentions in Spain. 2025

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

The second quarter of 2025 was characterized by stabilization in overall volume, but with significant peaks in xenophobia and education. In May, xenophobia intensified again—this time less tied to migrant arrivals and more to everyday criminalization. Mentions drew on police reports, migration controls in other countries, and expulsion rhetoric, constructing the migrant as a constant nuisance or threat. This quarter showed discursive escalation, with expressions of racialization and dehumanization more explicit, including explicitly racist insults.

In housing, debate reactivated around resource competition and the use of "Little Caracas" as a symbol of urban space appropriation in Madrid. This term began consolidating as a negatively charged signifier, associated with price increases and a supposed threat to local habitability—though counter-narratives also emerged highlighting fiscal contributions from working migrants.

In education, the second quarter was marked by the spread of news about the Venezuelan education system's crisis. Here, the conversation shifted from the Spanish context to the country of origin, reinforcing an image of structural deterioration that serves as background to justify migration but also feeds perceptions of migrants as deficient or lacking intellectual and professional capacities.

Illustration 18. Topic cloud of mentions in Spain. 2025

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on Brandwatch, 2025

THIRD QUARTER

The third quarter evidenced an interesting reconfiguration of xenophobia. The 133% increase between July and August was accompanied by internal fragmentation of migrant discourse. Prominent voices from Venezuelans identifying as "legales" (regular migrants) emerged and, from that standpoint, reproduced exclusionary logics toward irregular migrants, justifying deportations and criminalization. This division introduced internal othering within the migrant collective. Meanwhile, xenophobic expressions persisted toward other racialized groups, suggesting Venezuelan conversation fits within a broader rejection framework of the "other" migrant.

In the women's debate, the figure of mothers reemerged as political subjects, but a stereotypical narrative that reduced migrant women to feminized occupations such as aesthetics and service work, limiting their social identity to those roles, was also introduced. In the housing category, the "Little Caracas" symbol regained strength, now associated not only with gentrification but also with drug trafficking suspicions and political disputes, further stigmatizing even economically well-off migrants.

In the education and health categories, the third quarter refocused conversation on Venezuela and other host countries, using health crises or education reforms as discursive resources that indirectly shape migration perceptions in Spain. Stigmatization of Venezuelan health professionals in other contexts serves as a warning and fuels distrust.

FOURTH QUARTER

Finally, the fourth quarter showed intensified xenophobia tied to police and media events. The 146% increase in November resulted from repeated coverage of operations against criminal organizations, where emphasis on Venezuelan origin reinforced the generalization of crime as an identity trait. Tone became more mocking and violent, with explicit dehumanization and references trivializing violence.

In housing, the term "Little Caracas" definitively consolidated as a discursive device simplifying migrant collective diversity into two extremes: poverty and ostentatious wealth—both equally questioned. Education and health categories, by contrast, recovered a more institutional tone, though not without suspicion, particularly when questioning professionals' legitimacy or comparing administrative treatment across migrant groups.

04. CONCLUSIONS

• Across the four Latin American countries observed, a pattern of discrimination against migrant populations emerged in the labor sphere. While the survey variable "job denial" allows for diverse interpretations, combined with "reasons for denial," it constitutes proxy variables evidencing discrimination and violence also evident in social listening findings. Job denial is formally justified by lack of documentation, but in practice shifts toward direct exclusion based on migrant or foreign status, particularly in the year's final quarters. This pattern reveals systematic violations of the right to work and decent living conditions, articulated with narratives portraying migrants as cheap, disposable, or less competent labor.

• Criminalization constitutes the most persistent narrative axis and serves as an explanatory framework that influences other rights domains. In Colombia and Peru, this type of narrative predominated, evidenced specifically in social media language and aggressions by security agents, triangulated with news of criminal acts involving Venezuelan migrants. In Chile, Ecuador, and Peru, the work-criminality intersection legitimizes labor exclusion; across all countries, this criminalization strengthens through news of operations and political discourse associating migration with crime. In all cases, political actors instrumentalize insecurity to mobilize social rejection, consolidating a climate that weakens the presumption of innocence, erodes migrant rights and the limited institutional framework that could protect this population, and normalizes control and violence practices.

• Migrant women faced specific, high-impact acts of discrimination, particularly in Chile, Colombia, and Peru. Narratives directly associate them with prostitution, human trafficking, criminality, and HIV transmission, configuring intersections across health and security domains. These accusations impact daily life, as surveys demonstrate: public space rejection, labor exclusion, job search abandonment, revictimization, and heightened exposure to risks like exploitation. The narratives revealed the moralizing component in some publications, judging and stigmatizing migrant women.

• On one hand, the health sphere shows instrumentalization as a rejection argument based on the migrant population's unhealthiness, portraying them as generators of contagions through both their practices and personal hygiene. This pattern proves particularly visible in Peru and Chile, intersecting with gender narratives holding migrant women responsible for diseases. On the other hand, health emerges in terms of strain on services or system collapse, to the detriment of national population care.

• Education appears consistently but intersects with political, security, or labor narratives: Venezuelan teachers accused of indoctrination in Ecuador, or migrants portrayed as underqualified in Colombia and Chile, limiting recognition of their skills and educational/professional trajectories.

• Across the four countries, normalization and escalation of violence were observed, expressed through constant verbal aggressions (insults, mockery, calls to "go back to their country"), as well as increased physical aggressions, public space exclusion, or calls to authorities. Aggressions are perpetrated by society at large, evidencing generalized hostility, but also by public officials (including authorities) and employers, revealing the existence and potential of institutional violence.

• Events such as elections, national strikes, presidential inaugurations, football matches, and international developments, as well as news where alleged victims or perpetrators of violence are migrants, activate surges in xenophobic conversation volume, with varying nationalist tones, confirming that violence remains available, latent, and structural.

• In Spain, conversation was strongly influenced by international developments and media events, activating surges in anticipatory narratives framing the Venezuelan migrant population as a potential threat. Within this framework, dehumanizing securitized content recurred in posts, particularly when associating migrants with organized crime, especially the Tren de Aragua.

• Housing, health, employment, and women emerged as spheres where discrimination manifested. Competition for resources, symbolized in notions like "Little Caracas", the idea of public service collapse, disputes over women's appearance, or the lack of capacities among Venezuelan professionals, and reinforcement of the notion of Venezuelan population precarity, all strengthened xenophobia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. STRENGTHENING AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND REGULARIZATION

• Consolidate a regional migration architecture that transcends temporary mechanisms, operating permanently and updated to comprehensively protect the population.
• Expand mechanisms for issuing identities and work permits, strengthening cooperation with consulates and embassies to eliminate bureaucratic barriers.
• Implement active outreach campaigns (led by non-police entities) and offer free legal assistance directly at borders, workplaces, and reception neighborhoods to resolve pending procedures.

2. ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT

• Conduct large-scale campaigns showcasing real professional trajectories and testimonials from companies that hire under the law, and promoting incentives for competency-based recruitment.
• Create training spaces on labor regulations and inclusion to reduce private sector fear or ignorance.
• Generate and disseminate data on migration's positive impact on the tax system, social security, and local economy to support fact-based permanence policies.

3. GENDER AND INTERSECTIONALITY

• Design employability programs that recognize migrant women's caregiving roles and ensure their access to sexual and reproductive health services.
• Establish victim support frameworks that prevent re-victimization and combat gender stereotypes and sexualization, which fuel discrimination.

4. NARRATIVE, MEDIA, AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE MANAGEMENT

- Conduct ongoing monitoring of political and media discourse to detect migration's use as a campaign tool, promoting ethical agreements that prevent xenophobia.
- Establish protocols and style guides for journalists, supported by monitoring of disinformation and discriminatory language.
- Promote legislative reforms and judicial processes that sanction hate speech by public figures, closing current impunity gaps.

5. HUMAN SECURITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY CONTROL

- Train security forces to prevent racial/migration profiling, and implement oversight protocols and secure reporting mechanisms to address authority abuse.
- Maintain a humanitarian presence at critical points with psychosocial support, safe route signage, and community-involved action protocols along transit paths.
- Identify aggression hotspots for targeted social interventions and use social media analysis to detect harassment incidents early.

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