The Sociocultural Adaptation and Integration of Migrants and Refugees
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The Sociocultural Adaption and Integration of Migrants and Refugees analyses the sociocultural adaptation and integration of temporary and permanent migrants and refugees. The chapters are based on empirical and documental research. Several topics are discussed, such as the social integration of Russian immigrants in Brazil in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and recent Venezuelan immigrants’ social relations and integration. Three chapters focus on the social and cultural relationships of international students. The first deals with the role of romantic relationships in the sociocultural integration of these temporary migrants in Brazil. The following chapters describe and analyse the friendships of Latin American graduate students in Brazil after returning to their home countries and how these are related to international scientific cooperation. Another study on temporary migrants reports the adaptation and integration of expatriated workers from an interpersonal perspective. The last four chapters are based on the international literature on refugees approaching the family structure and dynamics in refugee camps and friendships of encamped refugees, based on African, Asian, and European refugee camps. The participation of friends is also analysed in the refugees’ first stages of displacement, during their migration journey, upon arrival and the initial settlement in a new country. Finally, refugees’ social and cultural integration in Africa, Asia, and Europe are discussed. Throughout the book, the interpersonal dimensions of social processes are emphasized. This book is aimed at students and researchers in Psychology and Family Studies, Sociology, Communication Studies, Anthropology, and others.

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Agnaldo Garcia
CHAPTER ONE

THE SOCIAL LIFE AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN IMMIGRATION TO BRAZIL

AGNALDO GARCIA

Russian immigration to Brazil started in the 19th century, and from 1884 to 1958, more than 110 thousand immigrants with different social, economic, and religious profiles arrived in Brazil (Vorobieff 2006). The first wave of Russian immigration occurred in the 19th century (Cortês 1958), in the early 1870s, comprised mainly peasants due to economic, political, or religious motives (Bytsenko 2006). From 1887 to 1898, Russian immigrants went to São Paulo to work in rural areas (Cortês 1958). From 1905 to 1914 (Cortês 1958), Old Believers (Staroveri) went to São Paulo and Mato Grosso (Vorobieff 2006). After the Russian Revolution and World War I, dissidents, including Old Believers (Staroveri), came to Brazil (Cortês 1958, Vorobieff 2006) with professionals from different areas (Melo 2010).

The fourth period (the 1940s and 1950s) was partly the result of World War II, including Russians displaced by war in Europe in the 1940s, and partly because of the Chinese Revolution, concerning the Russian refugees from China, in the 1950s, with the majority settling in São Paulo (Vorobieff 2006), forming the most significant wave of immigrants until then (Melo 2010). Russians from Europe arrived in the 1940s, and those from China in the 1950s (Ruseishvili 2018). The Russian refugees from Europe and China after the Second World War had different demographic and social profiles and concentrated in São Paulo, with the professional characteristics of the groups determining their distribution in the city’s neighborhoods (Ruseishvili 2018). While Russians from Europe went to the peripheral and industrial districts, the Russians from China settled in the areas close to the city center as they came mostly from cities, employed mainly in commerce and the various service sectors. The
Russian immigrants who went to São Paulo after the Second World War were workers inserted in the urban context without knowledge of the Portuguese language.

The fifth period is related to recent Russian immigration, taking place at the beginning of the 21st century (Uebel and Rückert 2016). The authors report the presence of 836 Russians in Rio Grande do Sul from 2007 to 2014, mainly academic immigrants and those occupying specialized jobs in Porto Alegre, Santa Maria and Caxias do Sul. From 2000 to October 2020, 7,031 Russian immigrants “applied for registration in the country” (Henriques and Ruseishvili 2019, 87). The successive waves of Russian immigration, each with different characteristics, resulted, in São Paulo, in a complex community formed by “people from different historical periods, social classes, regions of Russia, different creeds and even with ideological differences” (Vorobieff 2006, 45).

**Migration, Social Life, and Interpersonal Relationships**

This chapter explores the development of interpersonal relationships in Russian immigration to Brazil, based on Hinde (1979, 1987, 1997). The author proposes a systemic and dialectical approach to interpersonal relationships considering different levels of complexity, from short interactions between people to more lasting relationships, which are at the basis of forming groups that, in turn, would be at the base of society. These levels would still be related to the physical environment and socio-cultural structure. All these elements are subject to mutual influence.

In Brazil, some investigations used this theoretical framework to approach interpersonal relationships in the migratory context. For instance, Merizio and Garcia (2014) investigated the role of different types of interpersonal relationships in the lives of Greek immigrants in Brazil, including relationships within the Greek community and with people from other countries, including Brazilians. Interpersonal relationships were considered fundamental for the adaptation process to the country.

The purpose here is to analyze references to social life and interpersonal relationships in studies about Russian immigration to Brazil. These references, based on thematic analysis, were divided into three central themes: families and friends, including references to couples, parents and children, and the extended family; community and religion, including the organization of Russian and religious communities and specific groups inside these communities, as well as the contacts with other foreigners and Brazilians; and educational and work institutions. All
phases of the migration process were considered, from the decision to migrate to establishing communities in Brazil.

**Family and Friends**

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Russian immigration to Brazil was encouraged by the Brazilian government, especially in family groups, "to occupy areas of low demographic density, and the system adopted was the establishment of colonial nuclei based on family work and small property" (Bytsenko 2006, 31). According to this author, the São Paulo State, in Brazil, organized the agricultural colony of Nova Odessa for Russian immigrants formed by farming families. The information provided to attract Russian migrants emphasized family migration, considered adequate for agricultural activity.

However, in other periods, the integrity of the Russian family was affected by immigration. For instance, refugees from the 1917 revolution had damaged their family structure, and traditional transmission modes between generations were interrupted. Family dissolution was especially valid for those who emigrated single in adulthood, like most emigrants in this group. Few families have managed to maintain their basic family structure (Ruseishvili 2016). In this group of adult refugees in São Paulo, "endogenous marriage was a need to preserve patterns of sociability destroyed by displacement" (Ruseishvili 2016, 219). On the other hand, members of the Russian community already born in Brazil or who had immigrated in childhood, having studied in Brazil, were not so restricted, with mixed marriages occurring. The age of later immigrants, forcibly displaced by war and those from China, was also proposed as a determining factor in the spouse’s choices (Ruseishvili 2016).

Families usually are the focus of the narratives of Russian immigration to Brazil. Data on transportation, accommodation and even personal accounts are produced around specific families, which also reveals the role of the family as the organizing nucleus of migration experiences. Russian immigrant families told the history of the Russian community in São Paulo (Vorobieff 2006).

For example, a participant informed that several families had pleaded together to enter Brazil, arriving at Santos in 1926. He then reports that his father and others sought better jobs in other cities in São Paulo, and when they succeeded, their families were transferred to the new place. The family also moved within the state when better conditions were available. Russian families helped each other as friends and married within the community. In another family, the participant informed that couples with
children had priority to leave European refugee camps due to war. In Brazil, they stayed with several immigrant families and were helped by other immigrants. The narrative focuses on family, friendship, and solidarity (Vorobieff 2006).

The immigrants’ memories are organized mainly in family histories before, during and after the migratory movement. In the most recent period, with an emphasis on the immigration of specialized workers and international students, the role of the family unit is not so evident in the few investigations carried out. Families will make the basis of the Russian community in the rural and urban environments.

Russians who migrated from China to Rio de Janeiro from 1949 to 1960 mentioned help from relatives and friends already living in Brazil when they arrived. The author concludes that having relatives and friends in Rio de Janeiro was essential for choosing the place of destination and for their adaptation. Religious festivities also facilitated their socialization with compatriots (Cavalcante 2019). Russian immigrants “found it very difficult to adapt to Brazilian customs and also to implant their culture in Brazil” (Mello and Martínez-Avila 2021, 8).

**Russian Community: Religion and Development**

Russian families, who played a central role in the immigration narratives, although not equally in all periods, also originated Russian communities in Brazil. In the organization of these communities, religion was also relevant. In São Paulo, for instance, the Orthodox Church contributed decisively to Russian society’s development and cohesion. The immigrants’ community life, bringing together several Russian families, was described in rural and urban environments, especially in São Paulo.

Religion and language were influential in keeping Russian immigrant communities connected in Brazil, including the Old Believers or Staroveri, who established themselves as communal farmers in Paraná, Mato Grosso, and Tocantins (Freitas 2019). The social life of German-Russian immigrants living in rural communities in Santa Catarina in the 1930s involved families visiting each other and family and community celebrations with traditional songs and dances along with religious traditions (Onghero and Carbonera 2010). Religious activities were good opportunities for the community to meet, talk and program social activities involving neighbors and the community. Religious community parties and wedding parties were also a time for families to meet (Onghero 2010).
These German-Russian immigrants were also in contact with people from other cultural groups. Their relationships with Brazilians were collaborative, making it possible to learn about what to plant and how to use work tools in a new environment. Brazilians also helped them in cases of health problems with information about medicinal herbs and home treatments. The language difference did not prevent communication, which was done through gestures and demonstrations, mainly when immigrants employed Brazilians. These interactions also contributed to the learning of the Portuguese language. Although relations with the German-Brazilian group were not so positive, they eventually established good relations with this group, with the adoption of typical foods and cultural habits, music, and dances, in addition to marriages between the descendants of the two groups. In the reports about their arrival in Brazil, they inform having sought to create bonds of collaboration and friendship with other ethnic groups (Onghero 2010).

The most detailed information involving a more significant number of immigrants for a longer time refers to Russian immigrants who settled in São Paulo. In this case, the orthodox religion occupied a central position in the organization of the Russian community. According to Vorobieff (2006), the Russian society in São Paulo was organized around religious centers (parishes), which also gave rise to cultural groups (folk groups, choirs and other associations), revealing an identification of traditions with religion.

The Russian Orthodox Apostolic Catholic Church in Exile was essential for the Russian community in São Paulo (Loiacono 2005). The Church has been linked to the Archbishop of New York since 1927. It has preserved cultural traditions beyond religion, such as language, calendar, folklore, and other cultural elements, especially after the Russian Revolution of 1917. In Brazil’s absence of other Russian associative institutions, the church maintained spiritual and cultural traditions, providing contact between ethnic peers.

Religion was fundamental for Russian immigrants in São Paulo, so “the evolution of the Russian community in the city of São Paulo is often confused with the evolution of their parishes” (Vorobieff 2006, 64). Most Russians in São Paulo are Orthodox Christians, despite being “a heterogeneous community, formed by immigrants of different origins, time of arrival in the country, different cultural levels, social classes, ideologies, but united by language, customs, culture and faith” (Vorobieff 2006, 64). Russian immigrants, as soon as they settled in the country, in rural and urban areas, sought to organize their religious life, and religion
allowed local social integration and cultural preservation (Vorobieff 2006).

Although fundamental to Russian migration in Brazil, the religious organization has also transformed, even the most traditional groups, such as the Staroveri or Old Believers. In the Russian community (Staroveri) in Mato Grosso, changes generated by advances in information technologies and media have been observed (Silva 2014; Silva and Tavares 2015), especially among young people, affecting the daily life of many community members. However, even with the internet and cell phones and the exchange of information on social networks, they have not lost their religiosity and continue participating in liturgies as community members.

Although important for connecting the Russian community, in São Paulo, at least for the decades of 1920 to 1940, immigrant families in the community were marked by a social stratification maintained by the church, as observed on parish registers (Ruseishvili, 2019).

Sometimes, the seeds of a Russian community were already identified in the migration process when migrants were still in the middle of their trips to Brazil. About the Russians who migrated in the 1920s to the 1950s and settled in São Paulo,

for many, the friendly and neighborhood relationships created during the crossing have become complex social networks preserved through the generations. Throughout the first years in Brazil, these networks acted to help families to place themselves in the local labor market, as well as to find housing and preserve their festive and everyday language and customs (Ruseishvili 2016, 133).

In São Paulo, the Russian community was fragmented and counted on the neighboring solidarity network from the 1920s until the beginning of World War II. At the end of the 1920s, more structured organizations emerged, and in the 1930s, dozens of organizations could be found in São Paulo (Ruseishvili 2016).

The development of the Russian community in São Paulo was associated with creating immigrant organizations with different purposes. According to Ruseishvili (2016), Russian immigrant groups organized after the Russian revolution were more focused on the first generation of immigrants with a political nature, and a few promoted cultural events. After the second war, there was a break with the previous community organization, although the Russian Orthodox Church continued to be fundamental, as parishes served as community centers. Organizations created in the 1940s and 1950s were more concerned with assisting those
with needs in the community, including organizations to take care of the children and elderly, built by immigrants.

Russian immigration and developing a local community in São Paulo are a complex phenomenon. The geographic distribution of Russian immigrants in the 1940s and 50s in São Paulo depended on their origin. While the war displaced Russians from Europe established in the peripheral and industrial districts, the Russians from China, more focused on trade, settled close to the city center. As they did not master Portuguese, they preferred to live close to other Russian families and provide mutual assistance within the community, resulting in the concentration of Russians in specific neighborhoods (Ruseishvili 2018).

In recent times, the Russian community of São Paulo still comprises several cultural groups associated with folk dance and music, with the participation of Brazilian supporters, assistance entities, and commercial entities (Vorobieff 2006). The evolution of the Russian community in São Paulo was influenced by religion and promoted social integration of the community besides the organization of groups to preserve cultural traditions.

**Educational Institutions and Companies**

While the groups related to the Orthodox Church were fundamental for promoting and preserving cultural traditions, educational institutions (some related to religious groups) and companies have been relevant organizations for the insertion of Russian immigrants in Brazilian society, especially after the Second World War. Two educational institutions for Russian immigrants are noteworthy in Brazil: the São Vladimir Institute, in Santos, for boys, and the Santa Olga Institute, in São Paulo, for girls. Catholics created the first to integrate Russian children who arrived as refugees from China between 1958 to 1968 (Vieira, Menezes, and Silva 2017). In 1953, the Zubarev family in Diadema began to receive Russian boys. As the number of children increased, the São Vladimir Institute was created and transferred to Santos in 1957, operating until 1968. Inmates attended schools in the city, and the institution aimed to insert students into the local culture and develop knowledge and appreciation of Russian culture. There was an Orthodox Chapel in which masses were celebrated in the Byzantine rite. The inmates had classes on Russian history and literature, typical Russian dance and music, and the Russian language. Based on interviews with people linked to the Institute, Vieira, Menezes, and Silva (2017) report their success in integrating refugee children in Brazil through a process of cultural hybridization.
The institute not only made it possible for Russian refugee children to live together but also allowed them to live with other Russian boys. They also reported excursions, allowing them to live with Russians, adults, and children who did not necessarily study at São Vladimir. According to one of the regulars, the Institute allowed him to keep in touch with people who spoke his language and were of the same nationality, culture, and religion (Vieira, Menezes, and Silva 2017).

In several other studies, educational institutions appear as the stage for relations between Russian immigrants, their descendants, and the local community. One of these studies was carried out in Paraná, where there is a community of Russian immigrants who arrived in Brazil in 1959, in the countryside, where about forty residents live, who still follow the Byzantine calendar (Lucena and Campos 2018). A diversity of positions was found regarding linguistic boundaries and the processes of inclusion and exclusion at school by teachers, students, and the management team concerning students of Russian immigrant descent. From an ethnographic perspective, Campos de Paris (2015) analyzed language practices in a scenario where immigrants and descendants of Russians and Brazilians interact. The three central themes were language practices, linguistic education, and identities, concluding that using only a language segregates students in the school space.

Learning the local language is vital in immigrants’ social integration and relationships with other groups. Moroz, Almeida and Martins (2008) highlighted the importance of formal learning in an investigation of Portuguese acquisition by Russians and Bulgarians who successfully adapted to Brazil. Even so, all the participants referred to the knowledge gained in their daily contact with Brazilians, friends, neighbors, and workmates. Among the reports regarding the strategies used to learn Portuguese, some participants reported the help of Russian friends who already spoke Portuguese, asking colleagues and friends to correct their use of the Portuguese language. It was also important the constant contact with Brazilians, including informal interactions. Brazilian workmates, relatives already in Brazil and Russian neighbors who knew little Portuguese helped to master the local language. According to the authors, everyday contexts include family, neighborhood, and church, among others, with parents, friends, and neighbors acting as educational agents.

From a more formal teaching perspective, Ferreira (2008) investigated the affectivity and motivation in learning Russian at the University of São Paulo, noting that “the admiration and interest in literate Russian culture, literature, history and the arts in general, is what drives most of these students to study Russian” (125). Only two participants indicated their
interest in knowing their origins, and little information on possible relations with the Russian community is available.

Some investigations about recent Russian migration to Brazil suggest a more specific pattern of migration, related primarily to educational institutions, mainly universities, and the occupation of particular jobs. Regarding this most recent immigration, little has been investigated. Uebel and Rückert (2016) proposed a new migratory wave concerning Russian immigration to the State of Rio Grande do Sul at the beginning of the 21st century, reporting the presence of 836 Russians in the 2007-2014 period. These immigrants occupy specialized jobs or are academic immigrants, concentrated in places such as Porto Alegre, Santa Maria, and Caxias do Sul. They are mostly university professionals, higher education students and professionals working in technology and automobile companies, and informal and commerce professionals.

Winter and Romero (2017) investigated Russians who lived or had lived in Brazil as students and professionals. These Russians were in Brazil due to personal relationships, such as dating and marriage (five) and studies (two), especially women accompanying their husbands to Brazil. In this group, relationships stood out as the main reason to come to Brazil. Changes in identity and interpersonal relationship patterns or expectations resulted from the experience in Brazil. For instance, they became more tolerant of foreigners or friendly with strangers. They recognize personal interaction as a source of change.

Supporters of Russian culture and language comprise people not belonging to the local Russian community, as in language courses at the University of São Paulo. In short, these educational institutions serve as a place of interaction between Russian immigrants and their descendants, with people from their community and people of other nationalities. Jobs can also be seen as privileged environments for new Russian migrations, with an essential role in intimate relationships, such as couples.

Educational institutions and work organizations help integration into broader society. There is little information regarding the labor market and the establishment of interpersonal relationships. In the most recent Russian immigration, social organization is related to educational and professional insertion. Studies aimed at Russian immigrants at school and work usually refer to insertion in school and work environments not restricted to the Russian community.
Discussion

Based on a documental investigation, the present study focused on the social life and, specifically, on interpersonal relationships of Russian immigrants in Brazil. Family relationships were narrated in all phases of Russian immigration. Usually, Russian immigration to Brazil was described as a family phenomenon. Families were generally considered in European refugees’ selection criteria and Brazilian immigration policies as priorities. Families migrated together, and some details about marriage, relationships between parents and children and extended family members are identifiable in the reports. The family appears as a narrative unit, although the migration also involves singles.

In the development of Russian communities in Brazil, families and churches influenced interpersonal relationships. Relations with the local community, Brazilians, and other foreigners, also developed. At the borders of Russian society, cultural differences, including language, become more evident and offer new challenges for establishing interpersonal relationships.

Interpersonal relationships are usually mentioned in family, the religious community, Russian society, and its various political, cultural, charitable, and commercial organizations. The Russian community enables interpersonal relationships between compatriots, in the religious community, in families, with neighbors, and with people outside the community, such as Brazilians or other foreigners. These social structures are based on cultural traditions linking people and groups. Friendships are also mentioned inside and outside the Russian community.

The consideration of distinct levels of social complexity proposed by Robert Hinde is relevant for investigating interpersonal relationships in the migratory context to understand how these relationships are established in families, organizations, and religious communities related to national societies. The physical environment and sociocultural structures influence these. Urban or rural environments are examples of different external conditions faced by immigrants. Laws favoring the immigration of families exemplify how sociocultural systems may affect relationships. Religious institutions are another example of how sociocultural structures affect interpersonal relationships and social integration, either by maintaining cultural traditions common to immigrants or providing possibilities for personal contact. National cultural traditions, including music, dance, typical foods, and drinks, are mediating elements for establishing interpersonal relationships within the community. Russian
immigrant families maintain dialectical relationships of mutual influence with the national and religious communities.

A dialectical relational model of interpersonal relationships as something affecting and being affected by different levels of complexity, from interactions to society, besides considering the physical environment and sociocultural structures, provides a comprehensive and exciting framework to understand relationships in the migratory context as the case of Russian immigration to Brazil. While family and community factors stand out in studies on Russian immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries, recent immigration to Brazil suggests a more significant influence of more individual aspects, such as professional or educational factors. However, family/marital relationships are still reported as critical.

Conclusion

Interpersonal relationships in the migratory context, specifically Russian immigration to Brazil, are part of a system involving diverse levels of social complexity. Based on social and historical documents and investigations, references to interpersonal relationships were observed on different occasions, from family and friendship relationships to interpersonal relationships in religious, educational, and work organizations related to the Russian community. Usually, the family dimension stands out in rural and urban migration, with community relations influenced by a similar language, culture, and religion. Recent immigration, however, seems to occur within different patterns of interpersonal relationships in a more fluid way and without integration into more expressive ethnic-cultural communities.

From a relational perspective, this documental investigation on Russian immigration to Brazil describes how interpersonal relationships may be understood in a larger social, historical, cultural, and environmental framework, including different levels, evidencing the complexity of interpersonal relationships in the migratory context.

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CHAPTER TWO
SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE VENEZUELAN RECENT MIGRATION PROCESS

DANIELA MARISOL PÉREZ ANGARITA, AGNALDO GARCIA AND BEATRIZ DE BARROS SOUZA


In other countries, such as Cuba, Colombia, Haiti, Mexico and Honduras, many migrants also result from local factors, such as natural disasters or economic, political, and social crises (Martínez and Orrego 2016; International Organization for Migrations 2018; Stefoni 2018). Such countries have witnessed forced migrations for different reasons: in Colombia, due to the armed conflict; in Haiti, due to the 2010 earthquake; while Cuban, Mexican and Honduran migrants searched for a better life quality (International Organization for Migrations 2015; Organización de los Estados Americanos 2017).

The Current Venezuelan Migration

From 2010 to 2018, around four million people left the country either as economic migrants or asylum seekers, with a sharp increase in the migratory flow during the 2015-2018 period due to its ongoing crisis (UCAB 2017; Stefoni 2018).
In addition to the already challenging economic, political, and social situation, there was a humanitarian crisis with severe consequences for this population (Bermúdez et al. 2018). The increase in this migratory flow is alarming, evidencing the progressive and accelerated deterioration of living conditions in the country, which are far from ideal. Current basic needs of food, medicine, housing, employment, security, and education are unattended (Castro and Álvarez 2017; UCAB 2017; Stefoni 2018), leaving thousands of Venezuelans vulnerable to physical and psychological suffering. Due to this situation, the country’s status has changed from receiving to sending migrants to other countries, with a migratory outflow towards several countries, amounting to one of the highest numbers in the region in the 21st century (De La Vega and Vargas 2017).

During the 70s and 80s, for instance, it was all very different for Venezuela since it was considered together with Argentina as one of the leading destinations for migrants due to the economic development, receiving European and mainly Latin American migrants (Castro and Álvarez 2017; Bustillos, Painemal, and Albornoz, 2018; González and Fazito 2018).

In the last decade, the different groups of Venezuelan migrants can be classified by their leaving period, destination countries, academic status, or economic resources. Thus, the first group was made up of entrepreneurs and merchants, i.e., people with high financial income, who left the country approximately during the years 2000-2010, mainly to Spain and the United States (De la Vega and Vargas 2014; Martínez and Orrego 2016).

The second wave of qualified professionals included workers with postgraduate studies, mainly university professors, doctors, and engineers, migrating approximately during 2010-2015. Both movements represent Venezuela’s considerable loss of human capital (De la Vega and Vargas 2014; Freitez 2014; Panadés Inglés 2014).

A third group left during 2015-2018 comprising people without university training, mostly of low income, with survival troubles due to high economic inflation and currency devaluation levels, food and medicines shortages, and social security issues. This group left predominantly by land to cross the borders of Brazil and Colombia (Castro and Álvarez 2017; UCAB 2017).

Venezuelans generally preferred other Latin America as host countries, concentrating in Colombia, Peru, Panama, Chile, Argentina, and Ecuador (Texidó and Gurrieri 2012; UCAB 2017; International Organization for Migrations 2018; Stefoni 2018). Likewise, people of other nationalities who had previously come to Venezuela as migrants are likely to leave and
return to their places of origin (Martínez and Orrego 2016; International Organization for Migrations 2018). This last period could also be characterized by the massive return of Colombian migrants living in Venezuela to their native land (Bustillos, Painemal, and Albornoz 2018). For all the previously exposed issues, this investigation arose to address the problems about this phenomenon, which is also relevant for its psychological and social repercussions.

Venezuelan migrants living in Colombia informed that the main reasons to leave Venezuela were insufficient income (62.9%); food scarcity (49.9%); difficulties in finding a job (31.1%); and risk or threats to life, freedom, and integrity (13.5%). Venezuelan migrants in Colombia had basic/elementary education (27.7%), secondary level (47.0%), and technical or university level education (22.0%). Almost half (48.7%) lived in critical overcrowding conditions. About half of these migrants reported being discriminated against or rejected. Concerning integration in Colombia, about 25% reported feeling very integrated, about 16% poorly integrated, about 10% in an intermediary situation, and only 1.4% were not integrated. Problems reported were related to finding a job, obtaining legal migration documents, accessing health services, acquiring internet and television resources, being accepted and registered in educational institutions, and getting cellular phone services (Alarcon et al. 2022).

Venezuelan migrants in Colombian and Brazilian border towns report similar economic and political motivations to migrate. These migrants face housing problems, overcrowding shelters, and insufficient access to health, schools, and hospitals. This situation can also be a source of conflict between the native population and migrants, and xenophobia occurs in both countries. Border cities were unprepared to quickly receive a large flow of people (Niño 2020). In Peru, Venezuelan migrants are subject to high levels of anxiety (19%) and depression (23%) (Carroll et al. 2020). Venezuelan migrants presented a high demand for health, mainly “among patients with chronic and severe conditions that were previously unattended and that are complicated by malnutrition and social factors such as housing instability” (Doocy et al. 2019, 87).

In Brazil, most Venezuelan refugees arrive through the border city of Pacaraima, in the state of Roraima. The town is isolated from the rest of Brazil by the Amazon rainforest. Roraima state has the lowest per capita income in Brazil, and few economic opportunities are available for refugees (Wolfe 2021).

Venezuelan migrants in Pasto, Colombia, migrated as family units (66.1%). They live in areas close to commercial activity in precarious housing conditions, paying monthly rentals (45.6%) or daily rentals
(38.9%), and 10% do not have a fixed place. Working conditions are also precarious; most of them (73.3%) were engaged in street sales, linked to poorly paid informal jobs. Before emigrating, they worked in construction (13.3%), commerce (11.1%) or independent businesses (7.2%). As only some have a Special Stay Permit (21.7%) or a passport (28.3%), access to formal employment is difficult. However, many “have experience and an outstanding educational level” (Paz-Noguera, Alpala-Ramos, and Villota-Vivas 2021, 86).

This investigation described the process of international migration among Venezuelans living in Latin American countries, presenting aspects related to the decision to emigrate, their journey, and their life in the host country. Contact with the research participants was made through email and Facebook. Data were collected using an online questionnaire, including sociodemographic information on the migration and adaptation process in the host country. Data analysis was carried out through descriptive statistics.

**Sociodemographic Data**

A total of 100 adult Venezuelans, 50 females and 50 males, currently residing in nine Latin American countries, aged between 18 and 45, participated in the investigation. These migrants lived in Chile (25), Brazil (20), Peru (15), Argentina (13), Ecuador (12), Colombia (9), Panama (2), the Dominican Republic (2) and Costa Rica (2). Most of them were single (76%) and had a university degree (84%), and some with graduate studies (20%). Most do not practice any religion (53%); among the religious ones, 91% are Catholic, and 9% are Evangelical Christians.

In the host country, these migrants usually live with someone else, including the spouse (33%), friends (14%), children (8%), siblings (5%), cousins (6%), brother-in-law (4%), father (1%), mother (3%), a nephew (2%), study colleagues (2%). Most had lived in the host country for less than two years (58%), and some from one to six months (32%). This time living abroad as migrants coincides with the situation in Venezuela that has worsened, forcing people to flee (UCAB 2017).

After this brief participants’ sociodemographic description, results were divided into five themes to describe aspects related to the migration process, including the decision to migrate; leaving the country: the journey; academic, professional, and labor aspects; arrival conditions and adaptation to host country; and emotions and feelings related to the migration process.
Decision to Migrate

The participants’ main reasons for leaving Venezuela were, namely: insecurity to remain (78%), economic difficulties (76%), shortage of essential products, mainly food and medicines (72%), inflation (67%), and work (53%), or studies (32%) related reasons. These data coincide with several studies on this migration group, indicating that Venezuelans migrate mainly to countries that guarantee citizen security and cover economic needs to achieve stability (Bermúdez et al. 2018).

Based on the consultation of 14,578 Venezuelans who emigrated between April 9 and May 6, 2018, 59.2% of the Venezuelan emigrants interviewed had university studies, and 14.4% had to abandon their studies when they decided to emigrate. This report also shows that 93.9% of migrants had the purpose of sending remittances to their home of origin (Bermúdez et al. 2018).

The decision to emigrate was considered a personal one (75%), but the influence of others was also observed. This decision also weighed the opinion of the family (34%), spouse (27%) and friends (23%). About half the group had already considered migrating (49%), while others had never felt this (51%).

The declared reasons for choosing the host country were economic stability (54%), the presence of some close person living in the country (37%), geographical location (15%), study opportunities (11%), and job opportunities (7%). Plans or goals to develop in the destination country are mainly related to work (90%), personal dreams (74%) and academic pursuits (58%). These data coincide with the migratory trends in Latin America, in which migrants are mainly motivated to leave their country to work and seek economic improvements (International Organization for Migrations 2018). In sum, the decision to migrate is based on several economic and social factors, significantly better economic conditions to work and study, also influenced by social contacts.

Leaving the Country: The Journey

The participants left the country individually (51%) or with others (49%), mainly with a spouse (17%), a relative (15%) or friends (15%). Only 2% migrated supported by an organization.

Concerning funding, one in four participants had no financial aid to leave the country (26%). The support was primarily from family (56%), spouse (17%), friends (21%) or organizations, such as churches and universities (5%). The majority had no problems during the flee (70%);
however, others faced some difficulties (30%), including transportation (13%), lack of information (13%), economic problems (11%), and travel documents (3%).

Participants left the country either by plane (58%) or by land (42%). The Colombian border presents a more significant migration inflow than the Brazilian one since the first is both a destination and a place of transit to reach other South American countries, such as Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay. Despite the linguistic differences, the border with Brazil is also a destination for Venezuelans (International Organization for Migrations 2018). Without financial aid from abroad, participants were forced to leave the country on land.

**Academic, Professional and Labor Aspects**

Most participants had a university degree (84%), including a master’s (15%) or a Ph.D. (or equivalent) degree (5%). Most were not studying at the time of this investigation (76%). Others were undergraduate students (12%), master's students (6%), doctorate candidates (4%) or taking language courses (1%). They had different formations, including education (27%), engineering (17%), and psychology (11%), among others.

Although most had a university degree, a few exercised their profession or worked in their formation area. In this case, the majority (65%) were not practicing their former careers. For instance, only six psychologists and three engineers were working as such. Most have also indicated other people from Venezuela (75%) or different countries (74%) in their current school or workplace in their host country.

Regarding work activities at the time of leaving, most participants were exercising their profession (64%), while a smaller group was engaged in other activities (36%), and the majority had a permanent job (70%). In the host country, most of them (65%) were not in the former professional field, being predominantly enrolled in commercial activities, such as salespersons (15%) or sales promoters (3%), or informal commerce (5%). As to adaptation, some felt adapted at work (43%), others are in this process (47%), and some are still not adapted (9%).

Overall, these data match statistics on Venezuelan migrants being considered as part of a skilled migration while also, nevertheless, in most cases, facing difficulties in exercising the profession in which they were trained or had been formed (Freitez 2014; De la Vega and Vargas 2014; Páez 2016).
Arrival Conditions and Adaptation to the Host Country

The arrival conditions and adaptation process to the host country were related to previous contacts. Most participants were received by someone in their host country (76%), mainly a relative (30%), friend (29%), spouse (11%), or some institution (6%), suggesting that Venezuelan migrants are creating networks in Latin America and abroad (González and Fazito 2018). Upon arrival or permanence in the host country, most had no problems (52%). In comparison, others had difficulties at work (23%), some financial or administrative problems (21%), housing issues (21%), food (16%) or language-related difficulties (10%) and points on academic activities (2%).

In their adaptation process, the participants tried to adopt host country habits to relate better (78%). As to what they miss the most from their country, they have mentioned: family (89%), friends (80%), food (58%), culture (51%), climate (51%) and spouse (16%). In the host country, what they enjoy or feel most comfortable with is the cultural exchange (65%), their acquaintances (62%), the food (37%), their work activities (34%), the weather (30%), their academic activities (14%), the economic stability (12%) and the security (12%). In the host country, most were not helped by any institution or group in their integration process (86%). The leading supporting institutions were the Catholic and Evangelical churches, other religious groups, and some educational institutions, primarily universities.

Most participants have told us that they have adapted to the country (80%), while others consider that they are not yet adapted (20%). Several are either planning to move abroad (41%) or considering this possibility (33%). The reasons for such another move are mainly the lack of economic stability (45%) and adaptation problems (32%). In a resettlement case, the top potential countries are Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, in Latin America, besides Spain, England, France, and the United States.

Concerning a return to Venezuela, some do not intend to return in the next five years (43%), while others consider this possibility (40%). Only a few had plans to return (17%), depending on if the situation of the country improves (84%), if they do not achieve economic stability in the host country (10%) and if they fail to adapt to the host country (6%).

Emotions and Feelings related to the Migration Process

International migration affects all life aspects, including psychological or emotional reactions. Participants noted that before leaving the country,
they experienced mainly anxiety (79%), stress (77%), uncertainty (78%), fear (75%), rage (66%) and sadness (65%). During the emigration process, they experienced mainly sadness (71%) of being away from their loved ones; this emotion is associated with the separation and mourning processes proper to migrants. They also reported feeling uncertainty (68%), anxiety (66%), fear (62%), stress (58%), loneliness (55%), longing (49%), rage (44%), despair (28%), hatred (18%), guilt (17%), and indifference (8%). The feelings were not all negative, as hope (57%) and joy (8%) were also mentioned.

Upon arrival at the host country, the participants agreed that the primary emotions experienced were uncertainty (75%), anxiety (70%), sadness (70%), longing (68%), hope (60%), fear (60%), anger (42%), loneliness (54%). Among the emotions that the participants feel when remembering that Venezuela is in crisis are rage (83%), sadness (79%), despair (56%), fear (52%), hatred (50%), stress (49%), uncertainty (48%), anxiety (44%), hope (22%), longing (23%), guilt (21%), loneliness (10%), and indifference (7%).

They also indicated that when they meet other Venezuelans in their current country of residence, the predominant emotions are joy (75%), followed by hope (31%) and longing (27%). Some have also indicated indifference (11%), sadness (7%), anxiety (5%), uncertainty (4%), stress (3%), and fear (3%). Most consider that some of their personality traits have changed or become more pronounced since they emigrated, namely: security (64%), autonomy (60%), confidence (54%), extraversion (27%), introversion (17%), mistrust (15%), insecurity, tolerance and patience (15%).

Discussion

The international migration process impacts all areas of a person's development, affecting interpersonal relationships, affectivity, and motivation, among others, and putting migrants in a vulnerable condition (Garcia et al. 2017). One of their main challenges is a healthy and productive adaptation to achieve personal well-being and economic growth in the host country, which generally depends on their ability to deal with the demands of the new context and the cultural differences (Ferrer et al. 2014; García, Neto, and Góes 2014).

Among the several common elements in their migration process, the participants of this research highlighted: the decision to migrate, the separation from their loved ones and the adaptation process. As the first and most crucial moment, decision-making was influenced in some cases