

Urban Profiles of the Colombian Population in Quito

Refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants

Main results and recommendations

UNHCR and Insituto de la Ciudad 2014



This research was conducted thanks to the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It forms part of a joint project on Profiling Urban Refugee Situations between UNHCR, the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) and the Feinstein International Centre (FIC, Tufts University), funded by the US Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM). The opinions expressed here belong to the authors and therefore do not represent the official position of any of these organizations.



Introduction

The main humanitarian impact of the internal armed conflict that has been affecting Colombia for decades is the forced displacement of more than 10% of its population. Although the majority have been displaced internally, a significant number has left the country in search of asylum. Within Latin America, Ecuador has traditionally been the country receiving the greatest number of persons in need of international protection, receiving close to 170,000 Colombian asylum seekers up to the beginning of 2013, as well as the country with the greatest number of recognized refugees, with more than 55,000 up to the same date (UNHCR, 2013). More than two thirds of the Colombian population has settled in urban areas in the country, mainly in big cities such as Quito and Guayaquil, but also in provincial capitals such as Cuenca, Santo Domingo and Ibarra.

A significant proportion of these refugees were recognized in 2009 and 2010 as part of the 'Extended Registration' policy. Consequently, the rate of recognition of asylum seekers increased to 45 per cent in 2009, but fell to just 13% in 2012, according to figures from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility. The latter year also saw the introduction of new regulations for the refugee status determination process used by the Ecuadorian State, adding a prior admissibility stage and a deadline for applications after arriving into the country. This has led to an increase in the proportion of the total number of Colombians in Ecuador whose applications have been rejected. In addition, there are many Colombians considered as "invisible population", that is to say those who have been forced to migrate from Colombia but who do not know how to, or do not wish to, ask for asylum, as well as those in other migratory situations (naturalized, 'visa de amparo' [for those with Ecuadorian relatives] or with another type of visa).

Despite the diverse nature of the patterns and reasons for displacement from Colombia to Ecuador, the existing information regarding refugees focuses mainly on those who have been formally recognized by the Ecuadorian State.¹ This does not allow the phenomenon to be understood comprehensively and does not provide data allowing comparisons to be made between the different categories of persons in need of international protection that account for similarities or differences regarding various subjects, such as the displaced population's experience of migration, the exercise of their rights in their places of destination and their interactions with a local urban population that is itself diverse and complex.

1 | See, among others: Ortega and Ospina (Coord., 2012) and Bilsborrow and CEPAR (2006).

Objectives

Given this background, UNHCR Representation in Ecuador led a research study about the profiles of the Colombian population living in the Metropolitan District of Quito. The main objective of this research is to provide up-to-date, reliable and agreed-upon information on living conditions and access to rights, as well as inclusion and coexistence in the urban space, through a comparative analysis of population groups with different migratory situations.

It is hoped that the results of the research will become a useful tool for developing policies and programmes adapted to the specific context of the Colombian population living in the city, through the identification of each group's specific vulnerabilities and capacities. It is also hoped that disseminating and raising awareness of the information collected will encourage the reduction of discrimination, prejudice and barriers to good living standards faced by immigrants as well as those who welcome them, as a better strategy providing lasting solutions for a mobile society. Lastly, it is hoped that the process and methodology followed with regards to Quito can be replicated in other cities in Ecuador with a resident Colombian population.

Research process

The study is part of a pilot on Urban Profiling of Refugee Situations, the result of cooperation between UNHCR, the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) and the Feinstein International Centre (FIC), financed by the US Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM), which began with a study on the refugee population in Delhi, India, in 2013. Based on this initiative, a framework was developed in Ecuador for inter-agency coordination and participation that incorporated organizations with different scopes of action- international, national and local- and capacities: Casa de la Movilidad Humana (Human Mobility Department) in the Metropolitan District of Quito; Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Latin American academic institution); Dirección General de Refugiados (Refugee Directorate) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility; Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (National Institute of Statistics and Censuses); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Ecuador office; and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) Ecuador office. These organizations formed a Steering Committee, convened to discuss and approve key stages of the process, from the methodological design to the analysis of the results and identification of final recommendations.

The research about urban profiles was conceived as a comprehensive process, comprising various inter-connected stages. During the initial preparatory phase (April to June 2013), the need for the study and its objectives were jointly identified, and the methodology and data collection tools were developed. The data collection phase (July to September 2013) included staff training, pilot tests and the organization of the fieldwork. Lastly, the analysis and reporting phase (October 2013 to March 2014) covered data processing and the presentation and discussion of the results in order to reach a consensus regarding the main conclusions and recommendations.

Methodology

The study used a mixed methods research combining primary collection of quantitative data with qualitative information. The quantitative data was collected by Perfiles de Opinión, a research company specializing in public and social opinion studies, through a survey of households containing members originating from Colombia and living in the Metropolitan District of Quito.² The qualitative information was collected by a team of researchers from the Instituto de la Ciudad, a research centre attached to the Planning Secretariat of the Municipality of Quito, through semi-structured interviews with a sub-sample of the group who were initially surveyed, as well as through focus groups. The geographic area corresponded to the urban and peri-urban areas of Quito, particularly those with the highest concentrations of Colombians recognized as refugees and asylum seekers.

The quantitative survey faced the methodological challenges commonly associated with the characteristics of displaced and refugee populations living in urban areas, mainly their low concentration/high dispersion (the Colombian population represents just 3 per cent of the total inhabitants of Quito and does not follow clear concentration patterns in specific areas of the city) and their relative “invisibility” (caused by informal/irregular migratory situations and negative perceptions towards the Colombian population). Faced with difficulties in accessing the population, and in the absence of a complete sampling frame, it was necessary to complement the multi-stage probability design that had been initially planned (selection of neighbourhoods, full enumeration and random selection of households) with other methods, including purposive selection (through local organizations and at the community’s meeting places) and snowball sampling (interviewees referred other Colombians known to them).³ Various strategies were also implemented to improve the efficiency of the fieldwork, including an awareness-raising programme for leaders and individuals well-known in the neighbourhoods, extended working hours and greater visibility of the organizations leading the research.

In total, 1,856 survey interviews of households where at least one Colombian was residing were completed (surpassing the target sample of 1,500). A total of 5,916 individuals resided in these households, of whom 4,271 (72%) were born in Colombia. The quantitative component was supplemented by 45 semi-structured interviews, ensuring a balance between men and women, as well as between categories of migratory situations. Lastly, 4 focus groups were held: one with women who were the head of their households, one with men between 16 and 22 years old, one with girls between 12 and 15 years old and one with persons of Ecuadorian nationality.

2 | Owing to the need to focus efforts on the identification and selection of the Colombian persons to be surveyed, the study did not consider interviewing the neighbouring Ecuadorian households. However, using the available secondary information, such as the 2010 Population Census, comparative analyses between the living conditions of the Colombian population and those of the Ecuadorian population have been carried out in some cases.

3 | The distribution of the final sample was as follows: 24% through probability sampling, 42% through snowball and 34% through purposive selection of interviewees or referrals. Although the use of non-probability methods introduces the risk of bias in the information collected, analysis of the final results confirmed that the main demographic characteristics of those surveyed through probability sampling do not differ significantly from those surveyed through calls for interviewees or referrals, allowing us to be confident that the results are representative of the general situation of the different population groups.

The quantitative information was gathered through an adapted version of the questionnaire used in the pilot study of the urban refugee population in Delhi. This questionnaire collected information relating to the composition of households; socio-demographic characteristics; migration experiences; access to health care; education; employment and economic situation; future intentions; and local integration. In order to analyse the quantitative indicators together with the specific experiences reflected in the interviews and focus groups, three key themes were defined: i) migration patterns and experiences; ii) living conditions; and iii) integration in the urban setting. For all themes, a dialogue was favoured that encouraged understanding of the Colombian population in terms of its integration as citizens and its relationship with the Ecuadorian population, as well as the impact that the different types of migratory condition and documentation might have on the situation of households.

Main results

In the following sections, the main findings of the research are summarized in relation to the different themes and areas.

Migratory situation and analysis categories

After classification of all the 1,856 households by the migratory situation of their members, it was found that 47% contained at least one recognized refugee, 10% contained at least one asylum seeker whose application was pending, 9% contained at least one asylum seeker whose application had been rejected or unadmitted, 13% contained no members who had sought asylum, 11% contained at least one naturalized person, 5% contained at least one member with a visa de amparo and 5% contained at least one member with another type of visa.

With the aim of ensuring a minimum size for a margin of error of +/-5% when calculating the main indicators, the final sample was categorized by household in three large groups: (Group 1) households⁴ with at least one Colombian person recognized as a refugee or one asylum seeker awaiting a decision- hereafter, refugee/asylum seeker households- comprising 1,059 surveys (57% of the total); (Group 2) households with at least one person whose application had been unadmitted, rejected or who had not sought asylum- hereafter, rejected/non-asylum seeker households- comprising 394 surveys (21%); and (Group 3) households with at least one person with another type of migratory situation in the country- hereafter, households with another situation- comprising 403 surveys (22%).

Therefore, the first group included households with persons who had been forced to migrate, who had applied for refugee status and who possessed the associated documentation (66% of

4 | Although information on migratory situation was gathered at the individual level, the study used the “household” as a unit of observation. To that end, the migratory situation of the households was determined sequentially by the situation of at least one of its members, in the following order: recognized refugees, asylum seekers, rejected or denied applications, non-asylum seekers, other migratory situation. Therefore, in a mixed household (e.g. a refugee living with an Ecuadorian person), the migratory situation was determined by the Colombian person.

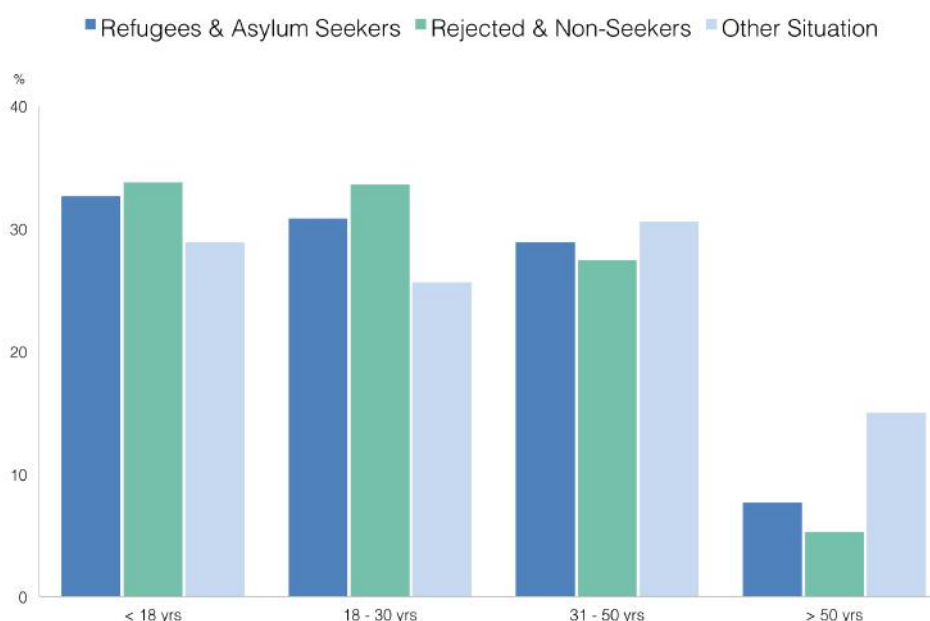
Colombians in this category were recognized refugees, and the applications of 19% were still being processed) which can be allowing them to access humanitarian aid and other services; the second group included those households with members who had been forced to migrate but do not have a regularized migratory situation (40% of the Colombians in this category had sought asylum but had been unsuccessful and 52% had not sought it), which may have had a negative effect on their situation and degree of integration in the city; and the third was made up of households with a migrant population (whether forced or for other reasons) who had managed to acquire another legal status (29% had visas de amparo, 45% were naturalized and 24% had another type of visa) and that therefore might reflect different levels of integration and wellbeing compared with the previous groups.

Socio-demographic characteristics

The average size of the surveyed households varies between 3.0 and 3.3 persons, with no significant differences between the migratory situation categories. This figure is not far from the average size of all households in the province of Pichincha, equivalent to 3.5 persons according to the last census (INEC, 2010). There is also a balance in terms of the gender distribution of the persons living in the households surveyed. However, most households are male-headed, with only 20% of households having women as sole heads, again without significant differences between the categories.

The average age in rejected/non-asylum seeker households is slightly lower than in refugee/asylum seeker households (24.4 vs. 25.8 years), and in both cases is significantly lower than the average age in households with another migratory situation (29.6), which, in turn, is similar to the average age in the province of Pichincha (29 years) according to the last census (INEC, 2010). With regard to age groups, is observed that the lower average age in the first two household categories compared with the third is explained by a greater proportion of persons aged between 0 and 17 years (+4 to +5 percentage points [pp] difference) and 18 to 30 years (+5 to +8 pp), in contrast with a lower proportion in the over-50 years age group (-7 to -10 pp).

Graph 1: Distribution of household members by age group



Regarding the civil status of adults, the majority are married or cohabiting (60 to 63%), although in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non- asylum seeker households people are less likely to be married compared with households with another situation (-3 to -4 pp), and more likely to be single (+2 to +4 pp).

Persons in all household categories self-identify ethnically as mixed-race/mulatto (72 to 78%), although there is a lower proportion in households in the first two categories than in households with another situation (-6 pp). In contrast, the proportion of persons who consider themselves to be black or of African descent in the first two categories is greater than in households with another situation (+7 to +9 pp).

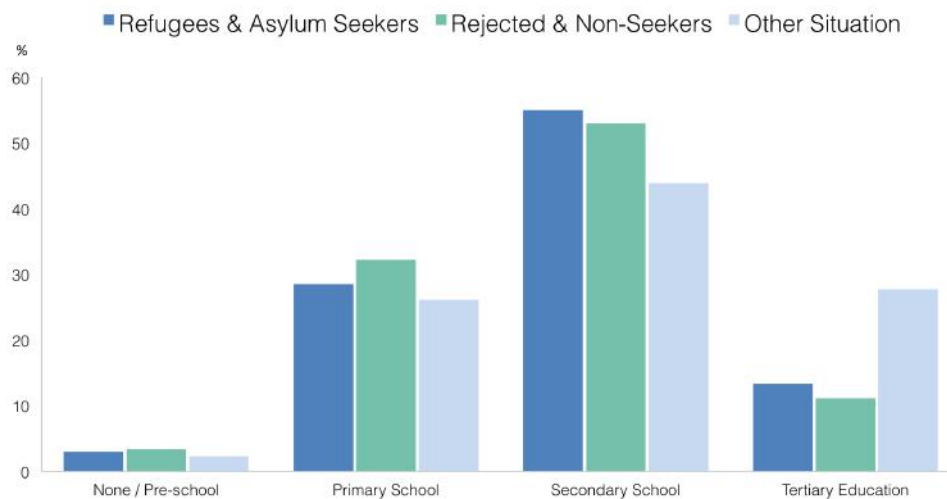
The survey found that the average number of live births per household is practically the same across the different categories (2.1 to 2.2 pp), but significant differences were observed when only children born in Ecuador were taken into account, with a lower average for refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households compared with households with another situation (-0.8 pp).

As expected, most persons surveyed had been born in Colombia, particularly in the first two household categories (79 and 73% respectively), although an important proportion of their population had been born in Ecuador (20 and 23%). For households with another situation, even a balanced distribution between Colombians and Ecuadorians is observed (52 vs. 47%). The first two cases might reflect the rate of marriages between Colombians and Ecuadorians, while in the third case the balance probably results from the higher average number of children born in Ecuador.

Lastly, significant differences are observed between the categories regarding the highest level of education attained by the surveyed population (>5 years), particularly for those with a university or higher education, whose representation is significantly lower in the first two categories than in households with another situation (-14 to -16 pp). This result could be associated in part to the higher average age observed in the third category, but it is also evidence of different levels of human capital among the groups. For the first two household categories, the proportion of those who have completed secondary education varies between 64 and 68%. Most persons in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households had obtained their highest qualification in Colombia (66%), with the opposite being true in households with another situation (42%).

In summary, it can be stated that households with members who are Colombian refugees or asylum seekers have a very similar demographic profile to that of households with Colombian members whose application had been rejected or where no one had sought asylum. In general, it is a relatively young population, mostly living in nuclear families, and although their average human capital may not necessarily be suited to the urban labour market, their profile suggests significant productive and commercial potential for the city. A significant degree of family ties with Ecuador also stand out, through either children or spouses who had been born in the country. At the same time, a demographic difference between the first two household categories and persons with another migratory situation is observed, with indicators that generally suggested that the latter are less vulnerable.

Graph 2: Distribution of persons aged over 5 by highest education level



Migration routes and experiences

The information gathered allowed researchers to obtain a characterization of the migration experiences of the Colombian population in Quito, taking the information given by the oldest Colombian in each household as a reference point.

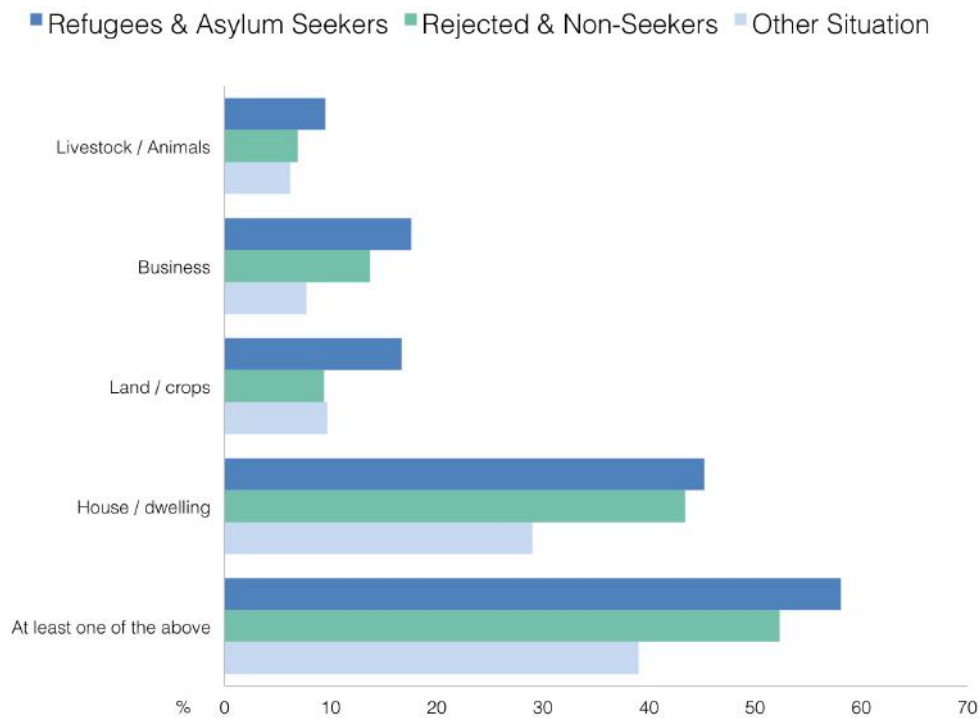
Departure from Colombia

A significant proportion of the Colombian population had been internally displaced prior to their arrival in Ecuador (30 to 42%); this was more likely for persons in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households than for those in households with another situation (+9 to +12 pp).

The place of residence in Colombia had been mainly concentrated in four departments: Valle del Cauca (23 to 33%), Cundinamarca (10 to 24%), Nariño (12 to 17%) and Antioquia (8 to 10%). Only Nariño is a border area; the other three areas are further towards the centre of Colombia. Persons in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households are more likely to come from Valle del Cauca compared with those in households with another situation (+9 to +10 pp), and less likely to come from Cundinamarca (-11 to -14 pp). Additionally, most Colombian persons surveyed come from urban areas (between 72 and 77% per category).

The proportion of households that had had to abandon at least one type of property or belonging varies between 52 and 58% for refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households, both cases above the proportion observed for households with another status (+13 to +19 pp). Among the most frequently abandoned property are homes, lands or crops, and businesses (18, 14 and 8% respectively).

Graph 3: Proportion of persons who abandoned property when leaving Colombia



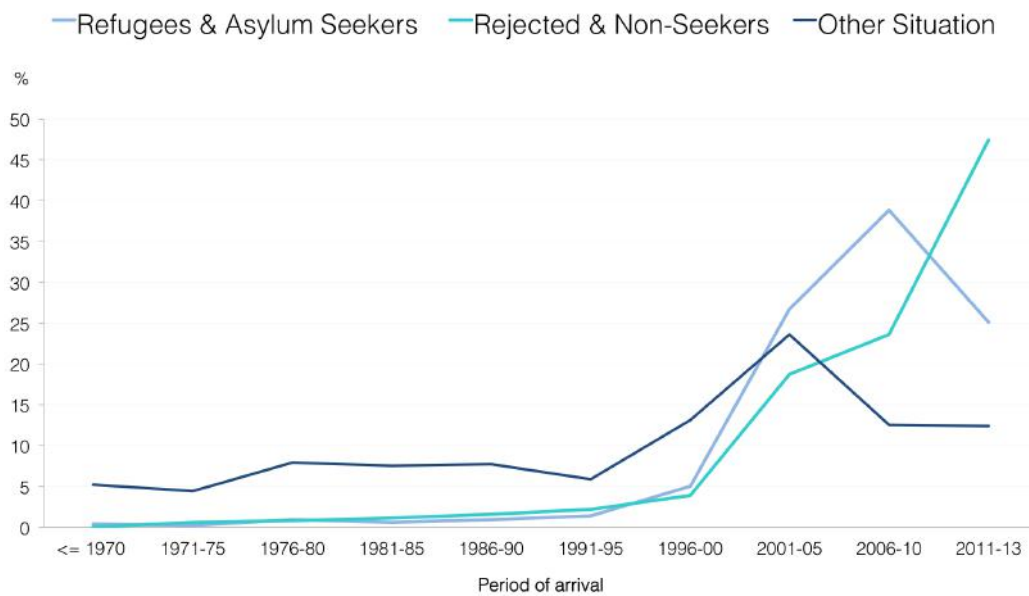
Family fragmentation on departure from Colombia is quite frequent; the percentage of persons who had not migrated to Ecuador with all members of their households in Colombia varies between 60 and 64%. Most report that those family members who had been part of their household in Colombia but who had not migrated with them are parents/grandparents (56 to 71%) and children (23 and 42%), and to a lesser extent spouses (9 to 20%).

As expected, those in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households indicated that their reasons for leaving Colombia mostly related to the conflict/general violence (71 and 57% respectively) or the fear of losing their lives because of threats and persecution (63 and 47%), while the lack of work opportunities was in third place (20 and 33%). In the case of households with another migratory situation, these three reasons are also the most frequent, but in a different order: work (58%), conflict/violence (25%) and fear for their lives (20%). It should be noted that in the testimonies gathered during the qualitative component, there were reports of migrants who, while not suffering violence or direct threats, had experienced indirect difficulties in accessing sufficient livelihoods because of the armed conflict.

Arrival in Ecuador

The year of arrival of Colombians in Ecuador is one of the indicators that best contextualizes the differences between each group's profile. A historic migration flow is observed in the case of households with another migratory situation, with 31% arriving in Ecuador before 1990 and 21% between 1991 and 2000, compared with 25% between 2006 and 2013. Quite a different behaviour is observed among refugee/asylum seeker households, whose distribution reveals that only 9% arrived before 2000, 64% arrived between 2006 and 2013, and 25% arrived in the previous three years. This trend is even more marked in the case of rejected/non-asylum seeker households, of whom 71% arrived between 2006 and 2013, with almost half (47%) arriving in the previous three years.

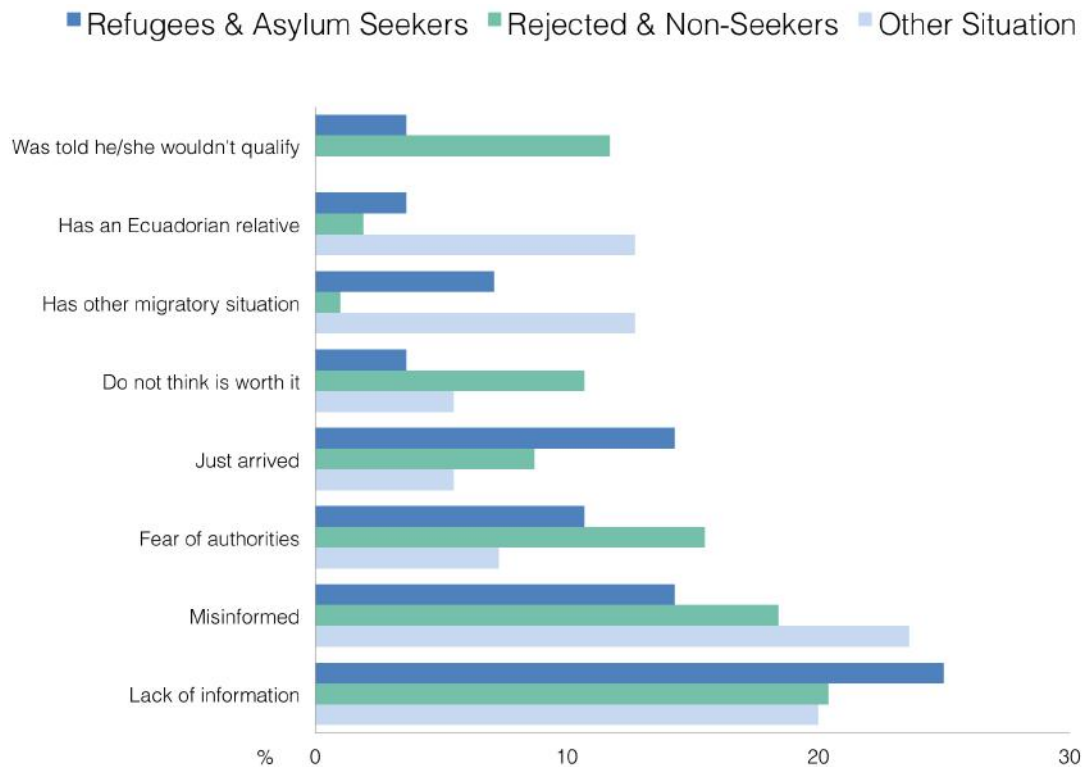
Graph 4: Distribution of the Colombian population by period of arrival in Ecuador



Around 25% of the Colombian population in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households has lived in other places in Ecuador previously, a proportion that is greater in the case of households with another migratory situation (+6 pp). The main reasons for arriving in Quito are broadly the same for the population in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households: better employment opportunities (49% in both cases), security (48 and 40%) and presence of friends or relatives (23 and 31%). In the case of households with another migratory situation, employment-related reasons occupy first place more often (+10 pp), while security reasons occupy third place and are less frequent (-18 to 27 pp).

Of the Colombians who had left because of conflict, violence or fear, almost all of those in refugee/asylum seeker households have sought asylum in Ecuador at some point, as expected given the study's classification. This figure reaches only 61% of persons in rejected/non-asylum seeker households, and 56% in households with another situation. Among those who have not sought asylum, the most important reasons reported are a lack of information (20 to 25%) and misinformation (14 to 24%). For those in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households, fear of approaching the authorities is another frequent reason (11 and 16%), while in the second group, being told that their case would not be accepted (12%) and not considering it worth it (11%) are also important reasons. For households with another migratory situation, being married/having an Ecuadorian parent or already holding another migratory situation are mentioned frequently (13% each).

Graph 5: Distribution of the displaced Colombian population arriving in Ecuador that has not sought asylum, by main reasons



In summary, the analysis of the Colombian population's migration experiences and patterns allowed certain key differences between the study's categories to be identified, especially the relationship between a person's date of arrival in the country and their current migratory situation. It is observed that those who are recognized as refugees have mostly arrived in the country during the second half of the previous decade, probably allowing them to benefit from the period of extended registration. On the other hand, persons whose applications has been rejected or who have not presented an application are more likely to have arrived during the current decade, which has seen a change to the regulations determining refugee status. Lastly, there is a group of persons who have mostly migrated in past decades, which has probably facilitated the regularization of their migratory situation, in many cases through visa transfers.

Living conditions

The information gathered allowed us to characterize the living conditions of the different population groups being studied with regard to areas such as education, health, housing, employment and resources.

Education and health

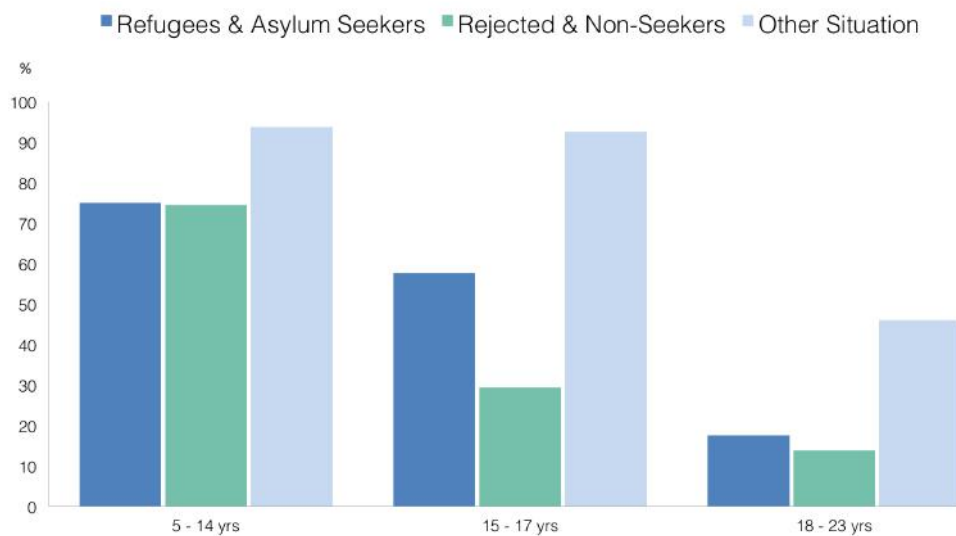
There are significant differences in the attendance rates at education institutions for the school-age population according to migration category. For children and adolescents of primary school age (5 to 14 years) in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum

seeker households, the rates are 75 and 74%, compared with 94% for those in households with another situation. The situation is even more critical for children and adolescents of middle school age (15 to 17 years), particularly for those in rejected/non-asylum seeker households, where the rate is just 29% (a difference of -35 and -63 pp compared with refugee/asylum seeker households and households with another migratory situation). For young people of university age, the rates are just 18 and 14% for the first two categories, compared with 46% for the third.

When these indicators are disaggregated further, no significant differences according to gender are found within each category, although rates are slightly higher for girls (+3 and +7 pp). However, a significant difference is found in the greater access recorded among children born in Ecuador compared with those born in Colombia, for all categories (+16 to +34 pp). Children in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households are more likely to attend public institutions compared with households with another migratory situation (-17 to -22 pp).

Among children who do not attend education institutions regularly, a lack of resources and documentation are the main reasons given. The latter reason is fairly common (32%) among rejected/non-asylum seeker households, as expected. Despite the fact that most children attended public institutions, there are costs relating to transport and materials that the poorest families cannot meet. It is also observed that between 9 and 13%, depending on the category, report discrimination as the main reason.

Graph 6: School attendance rate of the school age population

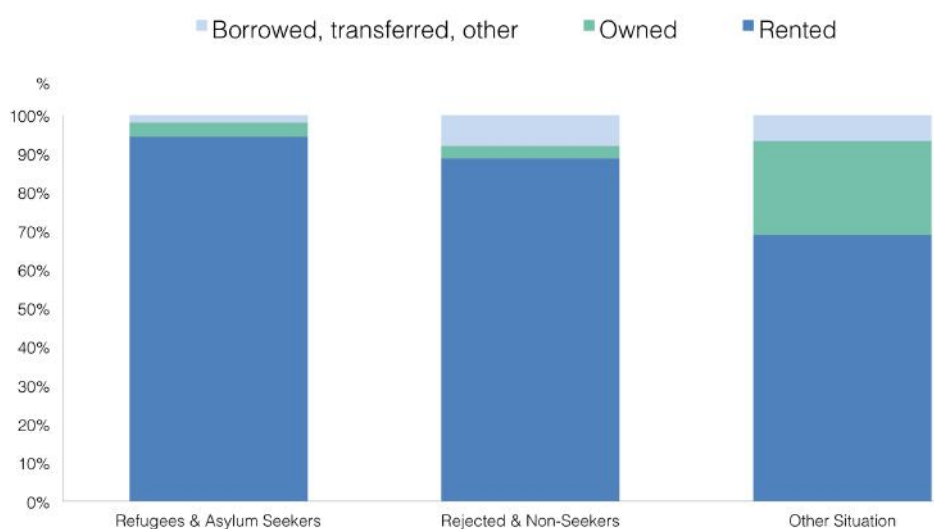


Analysing access to health-care services when required during the previous six months, between 65 and 74% of persons have attended a public health centre or hospital when necessary, and between 19 and 31% have used private health care, particularly those in households with another migratory situation. It should be noted that 8 and 14% of persons in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households have not accessed health-care services when ill or after an accident, citing among the most significant reasons a lack of resources and documentation and health insurance. The former may be associated with the cost of purchasing medicines, while the second is more difficult to explain, and could indicate a lack of information on universal and free access to health services in Ecuador.

Housing

Only 4 and 3% of refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households are house owners in Quito, a rate that reaches 24% for households with another migratory situation. The vast majority (69 to 94%) are currently renting their housing, which contrasts with the situation of the population of Pichincha in general, where 37% of households rent (INEC, 2010). The greater access to home ownership for households in the third category in contrast with refugee households may indicate that documentation is not the most significant factor, rather the longer residence time of the first group in Quito could be the key factor.

Graph 7: Distribution of households by type of housing tenancy



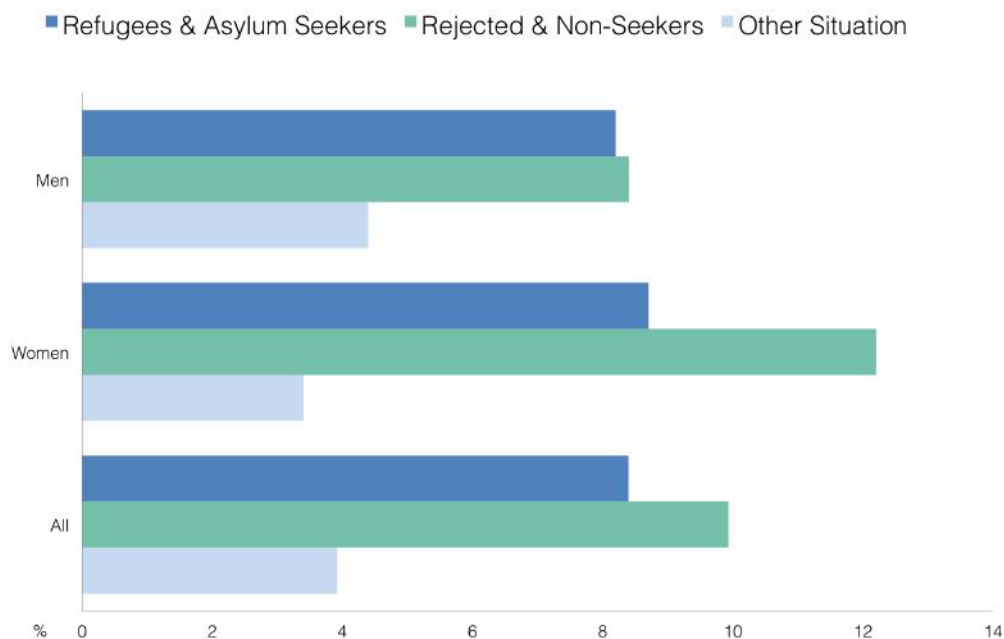
Although the lack of documentation is one of the difficulties mentioned by the population in relation to accessing housing in Quito, particularly among rejected/non-asylum seeker households (17%), the two main reasons cited by these households, as well as by refugee/asylum seeker households, are rejection because they are foreigners (31 and 42%) and a lack of resources (22% in each case). It should be highlighted that a significant proportion of households (25 to 29%) say that they had not experienced any problems.

Other housing indicators did not reflect greater vulnerabilities or significant differences between groups. A small proportion of households reside in at-risk areas (6 to 8%), the vast majority do not share their housing with other households (95 to 97%), and a large proportion has at least one room exclusively for sleeping (92 to 97%), although fewer households have two or more rooms for sleeping (42 to 68%), particularly among rejected/non-asylum seeker households. In general, these indicators may reflect Colombian households' decisions to prioritize rented housing in populous areas in order to facilitate access to services, transport and employment opportunities.

Employment

When enquiring about the main occupation of the working age population,⁵ it is found that, firstly, the proportion of the population that is economically active (working or seeking employment) do not differ between categories (72 to 73%). However, there is a significant difference in the unemployment rates of this active population, which stand at 8.4 and 9.9% for persons in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households, contrasting with 4.4% in households with another migratory situation (compared also to the 4.7% recorded for the entire Pichincha population in 2010). This indicates that although similar proportions of each group are seeking employment, those in the last category are more likely to find it.

Graph 8: Unemployment rates among the economically active population, by gender



When the economic participation and unemployment indicators are disaggregated, it can be observed that, at the gender level, there is a common pattern within each category, with participation rates among women being significantly lower than among men (-21 to -26 pp). In the case of persons in rejected/non-asylum seeker households, unemployment rates among women are greater than among men (12.2 vs. 8.4%). As with the findings relating to access to education, persons born in Colombia record higher rates of unemployment compared with those born in Ecuador (9.0 vs. 3.6% in refugee/asylum seeker households and 11.7 vs. 1.0% in rejected/non-asylum seeker households).

When the status of employed persons was analysed, it was notable that the distribution according to type of position is similar across the categories, with the population divided between private and public sector employees (56 to 59%) and self-employed persons and employers (38 to 42%). This contrasts with what is observed for the entire Pichincha population in 2010, when employees had accounted for 61%, self-employed persons and employers for 25% and day labourers and domestic workers for 5% each (INEC, 2010).

⁵ | The working age population corresponds to those aged over 12 years, allowing a measurement of child labour and the ability to make international comparisons. It should be clarified that the legal minimum working age set out in the Constitution of Ecuador is 16 years.

According to the qualitative interviews, self-employment mainly stems from difficulties in accessing stable employment, but also reflects a rejection of labour exploitation. It is also related to the sectors where Colombians are most likely to find employment: informal sales, bar and restaurant businesses, and beauty. The interviewees revealed that in these sectors there are fewer requirements for finding employment because they are employed informally, in many cases being contracted for specific days or times.

Other differences observed relate to: i) the greater likelihood of having experienced non-payment or labour discrimination in the case of persons in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households (29 and 33%) compared to those in households with another situation (17%); ii) the high number of verbal employment contracts (72 and 82%) for employed persons living in households in the first two categories.

Persons in refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households depend to a greater extent on friends and neighbours when seeking employment (+9 and +11 pp), and less on classified advertisements (-6 pp), compared with those living in households with another situation. The qualitative information identified two types of cooperation: recommendations of a particular type of employment to those seeking employment from friends and family, and preferential employment of friends, family or persons of Colombian nationality in new businesses.

There was also a significant difference between the proportion of persons who have not experienced problems in finding work in the third household category (57%) compared with the first two categories (31 and 26%). For those categories, a lack of documentation and discrimination are the main obstacles. The large number of persons in refugee/asylum seeker households who cited a lack of documentation as a problem is notable. One hypothesis identified during the interviews was that employing a refugee or asylum seeker involved a level of documentation that, in some employers' opinions, could cause problems or require additional effort.

Lastly, lower levels of access to the financial system are detected for the self-employed in the first two household categories, who have applied for or accessed credit or initial capital for their businesses less frequently than persons in households with another migratory situation (-12 to -16 pp). When initial capital is needed, the majority of those in the first two groups depend on their own resources (66 and 69%), while those in the third group access formal credit more frequently (26%). This trend probably relates to the networks that those in the last group have built thanks to the greater percentage of families comprising persons of more than one nationality and the greater duration of their residence in the city.

Assets and financial resources

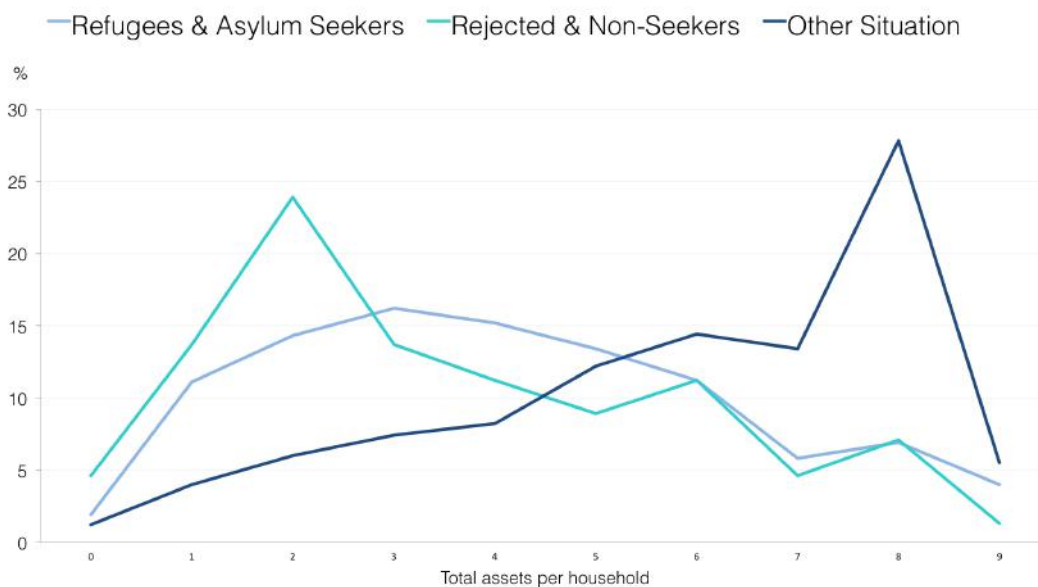
The main source of income for most households in all categories is paid employment (56 to 59%) or profits from businesses or self-employment (34 to 39%), with very low levels of access to, or dependence on, financial help from friends, family or institutions.

The previous indicator is supplemented by data concerning access to some type of external aid after arrival in Quito, finding that most households with another migratory situation and rejected/non-asylum seeker households (75 and 88%) have not received any aid, in contrast with the proportion among refugee/asylum seeker households (47%).

Similar to what is observed for the self-employed, in general levels of access to the financial system are significantly lower for refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households, while only 26 and 20%, respectively, have a bank account, compared with 65% of households with another migratory situation. This owes largely to banks' greater acceptance of documents such as visas de amparo or residence visas compared with refugee visas. The main reason given by households in the first two categories for not having a bank account is lack of documentation (49 and 65%).

A useful indicator for measuring the population's level of wealth and well-being in an aggregated way is the average number of assets per household. The survey investigated access to 10 different goods (television, mobile telephone, furniture, computer, internet, car, motorcycle, DVD player, refrigerator and washing machine) and found that, on average, households with another migratory situation own 5.8 of these goods, compared with an average of 4.1 for refugee/asylum seeker households and 3.6 for rejected/non-asylum seeker households.

Graph 9: Distribution of households by average number of assets owned



In summary, the information analysed shows that the different migratory situations of the Colombian population affects living conditions and levels of well-being in Quito. In most areas, households with another migratory situation display better indicators than those of refugee/asylum seeker households, which, in turn, are often better off than those of rejected/non-asylum seeker households. It is clear that for the latter, a lack of documentation has a negative effect on their access to, and enjoyment of, rights, but negative trends are observed even for those with refugee visas, leading to the conclusion that there are different circumstances beyond the legal sphere, such as discrimination or labour exploitation, that imply that refugee status alone do not guarantee full access to rights.

Integration in the city

Although the Colombian population living in Quito is characterized by its high degree of dispersion throughout the city, there is a noticeable tendency to live principally in Quito's working-class neighbourhoods. Although the city has a good coverage of services, there are areas that receive less attention than others. In many cases, it is in these neighbourhoods where internal migrants settle, so it is to be expected that international migrants experience similar problems to the local population to a large extent.

In general, the initial place of arrival for persons of Colombian nationality depend on the social networks that they have formed in their home country. These networks may have comprised family, friends or even friends of friends. Initial help from family members might continue for an extended period of time, but at some point a new arrival must find their own house to rent. It is therefore clear that immigrants do not necessarily live in their desired areas; rather they arrive in the areas accessible to them. Many have chosen areas such as Comité del Pueblo, Solanda, Carcelén, Carapungo and Centro Histórico, established centres with a good provision of basic services and businesses and where they could acquire products such as food, medicine and other items. Some migrants have been able to access products and raw materials in their neighbourhoods, which they later distribute as informal sellers.

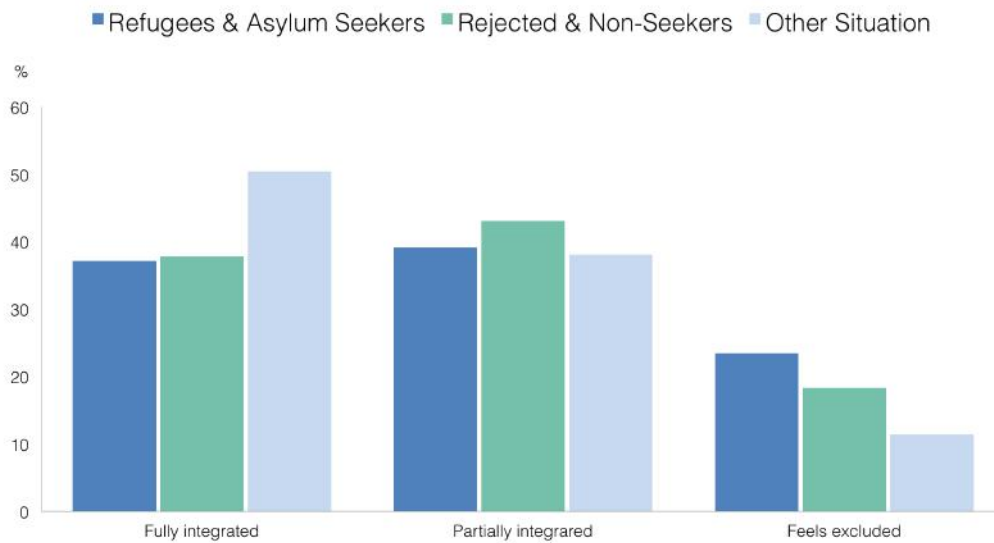
In the same way as many locals, Colombians find that there are areas of the city that are unsafe, which they prefer to avoid. However, some Colombians compare the city of Quito with their own city, and the violence that they have experienced there, and conclude that their lives are now very different and peaceful. Despite the crime that they witness, they see Quito as a very calm city, a fact that could serve to provide cohesion and social integration.

These perceptions of security in their daily lives in Quito are also reflected in the survey. Therefore, although crime/insecurity emerge in first place when the main problems in their neighbourhoods are investigated (39 to 49%), it is interesting to observe that the second most frequent is the absence of problems in the neighbourhood (39 to 48%). These data suggests that there are processes of integration for the Colombian population in their places of residence.

It is also observed that the majority of the Colombian population has not been evicted during their residence in Quito, although a bigger proportion of refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households have been evicted than of households with another situation (22 and 18% vs. 9%). The main reason for evictions mentioned by those surveyed is that "the landlord did not want them", confirmed by the qualitative research, which found that one of the most difficult stages in the process of renting an apartment is the initial contact with the landlord. Failure to pay rent is the second most common reason for eviction.

Although there are some differences between categories, it is observed that most households in the Colombian population in Quito feel semi or totally integrated in their neighbourhoods. In any case, lower levels of integration are seen among refugee households and rejected households (76 and 81%), compared with among households with another situation (88%). Bearing in mind the differences in the migration patterns and histories between the categories, it can be concluded that the level of integration in the neighbourhoods is directly related to the length of residency in the city.

Graph 10: Distribution of households by perceptions of integration level in the neighbourhood



The evidence relating to participation in social organizations by persons of Colombian nationality residing in Quito is not encouraging. Between just and 23% participate in some type of community organization, and the majority of those are involved with religious organizations. Financial needs could be a determining factor preventing them from participating actively in these spaces.

In summary, despite the problems of discrimination and rejection reported by the Colombian population regarding their access to different services and spaces in the city, it is found that the Colombian population has managed to create bonds allowing them to identify with, and take ownership of, the places where they live in contrast with the imposed stigmas. There are links connecting Colombian persons to their neighbourhoods that are sometimes stronger than those created by nationality. Some believe that belonging to a particular social class bring them closer to their neighbours.

Future intentions

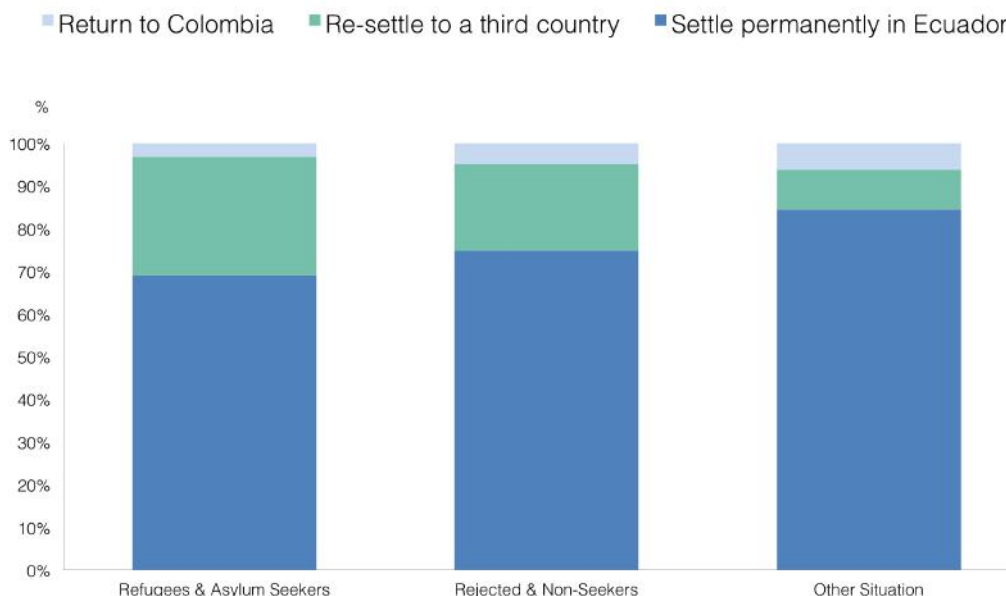
Most Colombian households intend to settle permanently in Ecuador, although this is the intention of fewer refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households (69 and 75%) than households with another migratory situation (84%). The second option is to live in a country other than Colombia or Ecuador, particularly among the first two categories (28 and 20%). Lastly, the proportion of households wishing to return to Colombia is minimal in all categories (3 to 6%).

Within the majority group that do not wish to return to Colombia, when they are asked what circumstances would lead them to consider returning, the majority emphasizes that they would not return for any reason (65 to 68%), while the rest would consider returning if security conditions improves, if the conflict ends and/or if employment conditions improve.

It is notable that among households that wish to settle permanently in Ecuador, the main reason is because they feel peaceful or safe, particularly refugee/asylum seeker households and rejected/non-asylum seeker households (72 and 66%). The better employment conditions in Ecuador and having family in the country are also mentioned as important reasons.

Among the households that wish to live in another country, the main reason is to improve their financial situation (58 to 62%), but factors relating to insecurity, persecution and discrimination in Ecuador also stand out as frequent reasons.

Graph 11: Distribution of households by intentions regarding future place of residence



Lastly, a significant proportion of Colombians displayed an interest in another migration regularisation option, particularly among rejected households (88%), but even among households of recognized refugees (83%). Among households with another migratory situation, 66% were interested.

The interest shown in options other than refugee visas is explained through different reasons. Firstly, according to the statements of interviewees and those working for organizations assisting refugees, refugee visas draw attention to the fact that they are foreigners, possibly stigmatizing persons of Colombian nationality. Secondly, a determining factor is the desire to be reunited with family who had remained in Colombia, given the high rates of family fragmentation that is observed.

Of the migration regularization options, 80% of refugee households display an interest in naturalization and 9% in visas de amparo. For rejected/non-asylum seeker households, naturalization is the preferred option, at 59%, followed by visas de amparo at 13%, refugee visas at 18% and working visas at 9%. These figures reflect their greater difficulty in becoming naturalised because of the requirement for legal residency of three years.

The high percentage of households interested in naturalisation contrasts with the figures relating to whether they have applied for it. In the case of refugees, only 21% has applied; obviously, the figure among rejected/non-asylum seeker households is lower, at 16%, compared to 42% among households with another migratory situation.

According to the interviews, the reason for not applying for naturalisation in the case of those who met the requirements is the lack of financial resources. It should be remembered that the cost increased significantly as more family members apply for naturalization. With regard to the visa de amparo, although it is more financially accessible than naturalization, many persons and households still struggle to cover the amount. This is further complicated by the requirements and necessary processes, and their additional costs. Another problem with visas de amparo obtained through marriage to an Ecuadorian is that they may be lost if the couple legally separates.

Conclusions

In general, the results of the study show that the migratory situation of the Colombian population, reflected by the type of documentation that they possess, has an effect on their level of access to rights and, therefore, on their level of social integration in the city of Quito. The differences between the three migration categories are evident: from being able to acquire goods such as refrigerators and computers to opening a bank account and accessing education. Rejected/non-asylum seeker households exhibit the worst living conditions and most limited access to rights. Furthermore, although refugee/asylum seeker households experience better conditions in some aspects than the first category, their situation is almost always worse than households with another migratory situation.

Moreover, a lack of documentation proves to be a vicious circle in two senses: firstly, the degree to which it creates difficulties requiring greater investment of energy and resources, and secondly, because the consequences of constantly dealing with unforeseen events are passed on to younger generations. This is especially clear in relation to the lack of access to education, poorly-paid employment and job insecurity.

Although access to the asylum system is being increasingly restricted, such restrictions have not had a determining effect on the desire of persons of Colombian nationality residing in Ecuador to establish themselves there permanently, even without documentation. This is clearer in the case of those who have already settled in Ecuador, and their return to Colombia would perhaps come at a much higher price than if they were exposed as an undocumented immigrant. As a consequence, there emerges a need for greater reflection on forced migration and eligibility criteria on the part of decision-making bodies, perhaps while taking into account the country's past positive and negative experiences in this regard. The study wishes to reiterate these points because actions protecting those in need of international protection who are already resident in the country must be linked to a comprehensive advocacy plan regarding access to the system protecting those whose applications are denied or rejected, in order to guarantee sustainability and strengthen the State's successful spaces.

Similarly, it is vital that the regularization options currently available are more consistent with the experiences of the country's Colombian population, and of foreigners in general. This could mean greater access to rights, in accordance with the constitutional framework, as well as benefitting the State itself. The figures indicate that persons with another migratory situation (whose documents are in order) require public health and education services less often and also access private financial services, such as credit, to a greater extent.

Although some persons with refugee visas are aware of their rights, in some cases leading them to initiate proceedings in the relevant ministries, employment conditions appeared to be an area where awareness of rights should be raised not only among the Colombian and foreign population living in the country, but also among all those responsible for others in an employment setting. The need to raise awareness of the employment regulations framework among small businesses is also notable, which in this case represents a vital access route to employment for Colombians in Ecuador. The common perception that undocumented immigrants do not have any rights makes all of this much more critical in the case of such immigrants.

Lastly, despite the difficulties facing them on a daily basis, the Colombian population's feeling and perception of integration in the city of Quito is high, as it is their desire to settle permanently in the city. In order to establish a collective dialogue allowing Quito's population to understand why the Colombian population left their country, and to work together to strengthen the collective right to live peacefully, it is important that the people of Quito understand that most Colombian nationals seek and enjoy peace in the city.

Policy Recommendations

Given the evidence and analysis obtained through this study, it is recommended that institutions focus their policies on:

At the local level

- Strengthening their lines of work relating to social diversity, not only regarding Colombians, but related to human mobility in its various forms. The local Government should undertake campaigns in a range of fields, including communication, social participation, urban art and sports, which demonstrate the potential that social diversity represents for the city. All communities in the city make highly relevant contributions every day, which should be highlighted. Demonstrating how Colombian nationals rely on their own work rather than on state benefits or NGOs could serve to remove prejudices.
- Creating programmes that bolster the positive perception of Quito as a peaceful place, with participatory activities helping to perpetuate and improve peace in society. The research found that many Colombians have a strong perception of peace in the city of Quito, which could be an element of social cohesion promoted by locals and Colombians together.
- Encouraging those Colombians who have been in the city for longer and who have good experiences of social integration to share their memories.
- Developing material providing information on the rights of the local and migrant populations. Awareness of rights should be raised not only among the refugee and migrant populations, but also among potential employers, neighbours and public institution staff.
- Establishing an observatory to which immigrants, regardless of their situation, can report discrimination.
- Creating a view of the people of Quito from the standpoint of immigrants. To do this, the community could participate in building a profile of the population of Quito from the point of view of internal and foreign immigrants. This would allow self-examination, thus promoting the understanding of local idiosyncrasies.
- Looking for ways to connect persons of Colombian nationality to the municipality's Community Development Centres, which have proven to be effective in revitalizing neighbourhoods and creating ways to develop potential. Participation in these types of leisure and training activities will strengthen social integration processes.
- Inviting refugee and migrant organizations to discuss subjects relating to the city, such as mobility, the environment, public spaces and human rights, among others.
- Drawing up municipal by-laws promoting the access to, and continued attendance at, local public education institutions for young Colombians. The municipality has a good range of education opportunities and programmes, such as the Advanced Basic Course, which are especially important for young people whose studies have been set back for various reasons. If the municipality aims to make completion of secondary school universal, it should make international immigrants a priority group.

- Promoting microcredit for the local population and immigrants. The self-employed are able to pay if they can invest in their initiatives. If they are able to pay in informal credit systems such as *gota a gota*, which is more intensive and requires daily production, or *chulco*, where interest rates are very high, they would easily be able to pay back credit given by national institutions or the local Government. This could be complemented by encouraging Colombians to participate in setting up small businesses, regardless of their migratory situation.
- Revising the municipal regulations governing street-vending. The self-employed engage in this activity through necessity and the municipality should seek ways to raise their status. The way that informal selling is dealt with should go beyond repression, in order to begin to view these persons as productive individuals with the potential to become involved in other types of activities. At the same time, the impact of this type of activity, particularly on the health of people who work in the street, should be considered, and a solution to these difficulties found.
- Creating mechanisms to include informal traders of Colombian nationality in existing local organizational processes. Additionally, the municipality could encourage the participation of migrants in the allocation of space in municipal markets, which should also have nurseries and play areas for the children of those working there.
- If possible, including the international migrant population in processes relating to affordable housing, at both the municipal and State levels, without requiring all documentation to be in order.

At the national level

- Gathering and centralizing information on the migrant population. In this study, and in many others that have been carried out previously, there were serious problems with collecting reliable information on human mobility processes, especially at the quantitative level. The results obtained as part of this research, including the databases, should be accessible by the public so that researchers, social leaders and organizations and institutions working with these groups can manipulate and explore reliable information.
- Promoting and facilitating the documentation of undocumented persons, taking as a basis the principles of universal citizenship contained in the Ecuadorian constitution.⁶ This would not only improve their precarious living conditions, but would also allow the country to benefit from their social capital.
- Bringing the refugee identification documentation in line with the national documentation system governed by the Civil Registry.
- Reviewing the eligibility criteria included in current legislation on the asylum system. Some of the processes imposed, such as the need to present an application for recognition as a refugee within 15 days of entering the country, marginalise persons in need of protection.

6 | It is also necessary to work on a plan to disseminate the “migratory options” to the migrant population (visa de amparo, naturalization, work visas, MERCOSUR residency agreement, etc.).

- Promoting access to rights for persons with refugee visas. High rates of exclusion from social security, the financial system and even education are detected. The State should create regulations allowing them to access their rights in the same way as Ecuadorians, in accordance with domestic and international regulations.
- Effectively guaranteeing the right to universal education for children, adolescents and young people, regardless of their migratory situation. The Ecuadorian State recognizes this formally through the Ministry of Education; however, the strategies and mechanisms developed have not produced the expected results, especially regarding children and parents who do not have their documentation in order.
- Implementing mechanisms that guarantee the refugee population the right to work. Problems were detected relating to discrimination and a lack of recognition of this type of documentation by the local population and employers. To that end, it is important to undertake mass dissemination campaigns regarding the reasons why they have refugee status and what rights are guaranteed by their protection by the State.
- Paying special attention to children of Colombian origin, and child migrants in general, who are in early childhood (0-5 years) in order to include them effectively in State programmes aimed at this group. Children between 0 and 5 years represent the second biggest group of persons in need of international protection living in the district and the State and municipality are responsible for guaranteeing the rights of this growing population group, which will be difficult if their parents are undocumented and cannot work in decent conditions.
- Facilitating naturalisation for persons of Colombian nationality who wish to do so. This includes reducing the cost of the process.
- Facilitating procedures for naturalisation or obtaining a visa de amparo for pregnant women in order to guarantee their rights and those of their unborn children. This group of women is especially vulnerable to labour exploitation.
- National and international humanitarian aid organizations providing aid to migrants should take an integrated approach that considers local contexts regarding poverty and deprivation. Donations made specifically to foreign populations without bearing in mind the context in the host community create social disputes with the locals, who feel doubly excluded.

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The main humanitarian impact of the internal armed conflict that has been affecting Colombia for decades is the forced displacement of more than 10% of its population. Ecuador has been one of the countries receiving the greatest number of persons in need of international protection. The majority of the population has settled in urban areas in the country, mainly in big cities such as Quito. Despite the diverse and disperse nature of the Colombian population in the city, existing information has focused mainly on those who have been formally recognized as refugees by the Ecuadorian State.

During 2013, UNHCR Representation in Ecuador led a research study about the profiles of the Colombian population living in the Metropolitan District of Quito. The study's main objective is to provide up-to-date, reliable and agreed-upon information on living conditions and access to rights, as well as inclusion and coexistence in the urban space, through a comparative analysis of population groups with different migratory situations.

The study is part of a pilot on Urban Profiling of Refugee Situations, the result of cooperation between UNHCR, the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) and the Feinstein International Centre (FIC), financed by the US Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM).

