

A DESCRIPTION OF THE RECENT SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC AND OCCUPATIONAL PROFILES OF GENERAL MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES, HAITIANS AND VENEZUELANS IN BRAZIL

LILIANA ACERO

Affiliation: Postgraduate Programme on Public Policies, Strategies and Development (PPED) at the Institute of Economics (IE) at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ)

Address: Rua Conselheiro Lafaiete 104, Ap. 202, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, CEP 22081-020, Brazil.

Telephone: +5521976296337

Corresponding Author: Liliana Acero

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ABSTRACT

In the last decades, the increase in Latin American migration to Brazil has been exponential with profound changes in sociodemographic and occupational profiles, towards the feminization of migration and limited access to social assistance. The study's main aim is to develop a statistically -based exercise involving a detailed description of those present trends in Brazil in general, as well as a specific one on Haitians and Venezuelans, two of the main migrants' nationalities. The analysis intends to provide new inputs to advance the state of the art on public migration governance and policy implementation upgraded to present trends and intersectionality by gender. It describes comparatively migrants' characteristics, refugee status, temporary visas' approvals, integration into different economic activities in the formal labour market and migrants' kind of jobs by gender. It is a qualitative study based on secondary data, statistical analysis and socioeconomic interpretation following selected specialized literature. The study shows, among other, that a considerable number of Haitians and Venezuelans has been integrated into the formal labour market though usually, in low-level, ill-paid precarious jobs and especially, within industrial production. Recent changes on migrant registration involve centralization into a unique legal framework that will affect the migrant nationalities focused.

Keywords: Brazil; migration; sociodemographic profile; Venezuelan migrants; Haitian migrants; refugee status; occupational profile; migration governance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, the phenomenon of international migration has intensified, most especially in Latin America and mainly, in Brazil. With the growth of migration displacements South-South, characterized by the entry to Brazil of individuals mainly from nations such as Venezuela, Bolivia and Haiti, among other.

According to the last Brazilian Demographic Census (IBGE, 2022), the total foreign-born population, was of approximately one million migrants, where roughly 72% corresponded to Latin Americans. This type of residents amounted to 646,000 migrants, more than a three-and-a-half-fold rise from those living in Brazil in 2010 (183,000 Latin American migrants)

Between 2022 and July of 2024, according to OBMIGRA (2024), 62,3 million movements of people were identified at the frontier posts and 481 thousand migrants became regular residents, corresponding to a majority of men but also with an increasing participation of women, children and adolescents. Refugee status was requested by 139,2 thousand people, led by Venezuelans, but with a considerable participation of Cubans and Angolans and 87,5 thousand individuals were recognized as such. Refugee approvals for Venezuelans accounted for 96% of this people and women for 47.2%. Meanwhile, 306,8 thousand migrants were registered in the formal labour market: a majority of young Haitian and Venezuelan men, as will be detailed in the following sections of this paper. Investment authorizations in firms became of the order of 69,416,916 US dollars and investments in real state roughly of 88,031,508 US dollars, revealing the economic advantages this international migration has brought to the country.

2.0 AIMS

The aim of the present study is to present an exercise involving a detailed description of different sociodemographic and occupational profiles of migrants and asylum seekers in Brazil in general, as well as a specific one on the Haitian and Venezuelan nationalities. It seeks to provide a general panorama on the characteristics of international migration to Brazil, especially that of Haitians and Venezuelans, on their types of temporary visa registration, their integration into the formal labour market and specific economic activities, as well as, the kinds of jobs they tend to perform in comparative terms.

It addresses the following questions:

- What main sociodemographic changes have there been in the last years among general migration to Brazil, as well as, in the two most relevant Latin American nationalities of recent migrants in Brazil, i.e. Venezuelans and Haitians?
- What are the patterns of approvals of temporary visas and refugee status like among them?
- How do they tend to integrate into the formal labour market and request for access to social policy programmes?

3.0 SELECTIVE CONSIDERATIONS ON THEORY AND METHOD

3.1 Main Concepts and Materials

A discussion of international migration merits approaching the prominence it has had in recent decades, as well as the role played by national states in the protection of migrants' rights. However, regional migration policies have been largely directed to seek for the promotion of national sovereignty and hence, a securitization approach to frontier and general migration controls has been implemented in Brazil (Acero, 2025 a). Lately, these frontier controls have become widely digitalized, where biometric technologies and data-sharing agreements are used to monitor and filter human mobility (Cabrera-Medina et al., 2024).

Migration governance has been defined as a paradigm to approach international migration involving the possibility of governments to reconcile the characteristics, causes, and effects of migration movements with the expectations and social demands about them and the effective

possibilities of states to respond adequately to changes in the profile of their national populations (Marmora,2010; Domenech, 2018). States channel and direct flows often supported by paradigms elaborated and implemented jointly with United Nations international organizations that deal with migrants (Organization for International Migration -OIM) or refugees (High Commission of United Nations for Refugees- UNHCR) (Mezzadra & Nielson 2016).

Migrants and refugees in many Latin American countries, including Brazil, have been dealt with through a lens on race, class and gender-based stereotypes and prejudices, as enemies, potential criminals or individuals who displace the host citizens from jobs and social services. Often they are feared by authorities and the public at large. Therefore, legal registration at the host society has become lately more cumbersome and/ or restrictive. In the case of Brazil, it has historically evolved in a patchwork fashion, creating different types of registration and hierarchies for different nationalities of migrants, e.g. humanitarian visas and family reunion visas prioritized for Haitians versus refugee status massively approved in 2019 for more recent Venezuelan migration.

However, it is worth noting that the initial version of the 2017 Migration Brazilian law emerged from an extensive process of civic participation at national, State and local levels, under the name of National Conference on Migrations, Refugee and Statelessness (COMIGRAR). Two Conferences were held in 2014 and 2024 with the main aim of gathering updated information on the needs of migrants through their active participation and representation (e.g. Soares, 2025). The proposals arising were included in the legal framework: Plan for Migrants, Refugees and Statelessness (PlanMigra- Federal Decree n. 12.657/2025) approved in 2025 and the National Policy for Migrations, Refugee and Statelessness (PNMRA). The Plan presents four main axes: (a) Document Regularization; (b) Socioeconomic Integration; (c) Access to Services; and (d) Struggle Against Xenophobia.

According to Chaves (2025), these measures, in spite of representing an advance in legislation, have a number of flaws: in: the definition of community embedment, on the relationship between, for example, the National Council of Migration (CNIg) and the Welcome Operation for Venezuelans, the postponement of regulation on assistance equipment and documental regularization, as well as the omission of subjects, such as, mobility due to climate change, protection of children and unaccompanied adolescents and the refugee system.

Since 2026, Brazil has significantly overhauled its humanitarian migration system, transitioning from country-specific ad-hoc programs to a unified and centralized humanitarian visa framework for different migrant nationalities. However, new visa applicants now need to secure a commitment from a Brazilian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) which, in turn, must hold a formal cooperation agreement with the federal government and demonstrate its capacity to provide accommodation and integration support to migrants.

In both the cases of Venezuelan and Haitian migrants in Brazil- to be analysed - local economic crisis, violence, persecution and permanent political uncertainty, have induced migration, looking for better living conditions or mere subsistence (Acero, 2025 c; Acero, 2026a; b). The study of Brazilian Latin American migrants' profiles and occupations shows their difficulties to attain permanent visas, their jobs at the lowest ladder of occupational categories, their

selective integration into the formal labour market, their lower wages on average relative to those of hosts and the many restrictions to access public social services. They also often face occupational downgrading, working in positions that do not match their qualifications (Shamsuddin et al., 2021).

Gender hierarchies are usually reproduced or even intensified among migrants. Women tend to occupy more precarious jobs than men, especially among Haitian female migrants, or remain outside the formal labour market altogether in larger proportions than males, as is the case among Venezuelan female migrants— even when recent trends often involve the feminization of migration (Tonhati & Macedo, 2020). While migration offers some women increased autonomy, it often reinforces existing inequalities through what researchers have called the "feminization of vulnerability."

Bastia (2014) has stated that lately the female migrant has become the 'new quintessential intersectional subject'. The concept of intersectionality, rooted in feminist theory of power and difference, initially developed by Crenshaw (1991) and critical race theorists It has contributed to make visible the interconnected and constitutive nature of multiple forms of oppression in migration processes. Gender is also constituted by axes of differentiation such as, class, race, ethnicity and informed by normative notions of sexuality (Bürkner, 2012). It shapes migration but migration also can challenge existing gender relations (Donato et al., 2006). This study is based upon the concepts of the State's changes in migration policies and the control of migration governance, especially through registration procedures for migrants and refugees, work permits and occupational profile in the formal labour market, as well as, intersectionality – prioritizing the gender variable.

3.2 Method

This exploratory and descriptive article is mostly based on secondary sources, most especially, on recent statistical data for the last 2 to 5 years regarding each topic addressed , i.e. general migration flows in Brazil, new migrant recruits to the formal labour market, an example of the amount of migrants' registrations for social welfare programmes in CadÚnico in the Southeast Region of Brazil, as well as, a detailed presentation of Haitian and Venezuelan migrants' socioeconomic and occupational characteristics. The study interprets the information retrieved drawing upon specialized academic literature and official documents. The sources of statistics are drawn mainly from The Unique Register for Social Programmes (CadÚnico), annual reports by the Observatory for International Migrations (OBMIGRA) – a research project of the University of Brasilia (UnB) in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP) – and information found in the public Portal for Labour Migration (accessed through DATAMIGRA). Most of the data is based on the results already processed of data collected in the XII Demographic Census i.e. the last Brazilian Census of 2022. Availability of microdata from this Census on the recent period varies according to the topic analysed and, when possible, this study tries to cross reference the information. The statistical data retrieved has only sometimes been presented as Tables and more often, it has been added to the text together with its interpretation.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the following sections, the main statistical findings on Brazilian migrants' and refugees' profiles and occupations are summarized, with data often presented in Tables built for this purpose. Results are discussed in the light of relevant theoretical and empirical studies specialized on migration and refuge. Most sections focus on how those themes play out among Haitian and Venezuelan migrants and asylum seekers in Brazil, their differences and similarities.

4.1 General Migration Flows in Brazil

Data produced and published in the annual reports by the International Migrations Observatory (OBMIGRA) on total migration in Brazil has been analysed for 2022 and 2023. In those years, the total number of international migrants represented 475,008 individuals, composed by 256,743 of men and 218,265 of women. There was a minor decrease in the number of migrants registered within Brazil between those years, which also affects their distribution by gender. Although in both years men surpass women, their proportions are quite similar (being women roughly 10 points less than men).

Relating age, the main age-cohort to which migrants belong is that of 25 to 40 years old (28.58%), a group in productive and reproductive ages. This is partly why the proportion of the number of children and adolescents is also high among migrants (19.91% of the total). This main age group is followed by that between 40 and 45 years old (representing 17.68% of the total), another group that tends to participate substantively in the labour market. It is interesting to note that the adolescent population and the young (15 to 25 years old cohort) figure highly among migrants, corresponding to 17.16 % of the total migrant population.

Table 1: Number of children born alive among Brazilian female migrants 12 years and over in 2010 and 2022

Number of Children	2010(n)	2010(%)	2022(n)	2022(%)
1	13,212,531	25.68	16,469,907	28.42
2	15,240,076	29.62	19,406,553	33.49
3	9,779,471	19.01	10,926,076	18.85
4	4,684,025	9.1	4,732,224	8.17
5	2,621,874	5.1	2,367,501	4.09
6 or more	5,908,659	11.49	4,051,456	6.99
Total	51,446,636	100	57,953,716	100

Source: Own study based upon the Brazilian Demographic Census (2022).

Table 1 shows that most female migrants of 12 years of age and over, had two children born alive, in 2010 (29.62%) and in 2022 (33.49%), but there is quite a relevant proportion of these women that have had only one child in those two years – 25.68 % and 28.42% respectively. The rate of those with 3 children, though substantively smaller, is still high 19.01% and 18.85%. As the number of children per women increases, the proportion of these mothers in the total tends to diminish. Moreover, the amount of those females with 4 to 6 children or more born live significantly decreases during 2022, as part of the global tendency towards smaller families. About 10% of Venezuelan women arrive in Brazil pregnant but face lack of child care in the host country. While the Brazilian public health system (SUS) provides prenatal care, cultural barriers and stigma often limit women's use of contraception, maintaining reproductive patterns from their home country (Silva, 2022).

The statistics for asylum seekers in Brazil in 2022 and 2023 reveal a significant upward trend in applications and official recognitions, largely driven by regional migration and enhanced processing efficiency by the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE). The number of asylum seekers is high in those years, a total of 108,983 individuals and it increases from 2022 to 2023. This trend can be partly explained due to the facilities to obtain massive refugee status approved by government for Venezuelans in 2019, arriving at the Northern States during the latest flow that began around 2015 and which constituted a 'humanitarian crisis' (Acero, 2026a). The majority of asylum seekers between 2022 and 2023 –with minor differences between the two years- are children and early adolescents, i.e. < 15 years old, corresponding to 29,328 cases. Secondly, there are 36,195 individuals seeking for refuge in the 25-40 years old cohort, unsurprisingly, as this is the main age-cohort that has migrated to Brazil. The total sum of the young in those two years represents 21.07% of the total (i.e. 22,968 individuals aged between 15 and 25 years old), also an important proportion of migrants, many of them perhaps living still with their family and others with a single status that have migrated on their own.

The large amount of children and adolescents looking for refugee status might reflect the fact that migrant families – especially those from Latin American countries- tend to have many siblings e.g. estimated average fertility rates in the case of Haitian female migrants is 2.4 to 2.8, i.e. higher than in Brazil (1.5) according to the 2022 Demographic Census. Among Venezuelan female migrants, 40% of them have 2-3 children and 16% of them more than 4 (Fiocruz, 2023).

4.2 New general migrant recruits to the formal labour market

A total of 395,420 migrants were recruited for the formal labour market between 2022 and 2023, a considerable amount of new arrivals if the high general unemployment levels in Brazil (5.8% in February 2026, i.e. 6,2 million people according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and the amount of informal market jobs (37.5 % or 38.5 million workers) are considered (Indio do Brasil, 2026). The new jobs mentioned were occupied by approximately, 2/3 of men and 1/3 of women. Gender distribution was similar in both years, with a minor scale up among women in 2023. Migrant admissions to formal employment correspond predominantly to a young generation, in the 20 to 40 age-cohort in both years. This group is followed in volume by those in the 40 to 65 years old age-cohort. The amount recruited from the older generation has been declining, while that of adolescents and

the very young (less than 20 years old) has somewhat increased between those two years (Cavalcanti, et.al. (org.) 2015).

The educational level of migrants in formal jobs is relatively high. At least, two thirds of them have completed their middle level schooling (i.e. high school or secondary schooling). Meanwhile, very few of them are illiterate, 2.01% in 2022 and 2.44 % in 2023. A relatively high proportion have completed a higher-level education i.e. University-level (10.73% in 2022 and 9.02 % in 2023).

The migrant population seems significantly formally qualified, compared to the educational levels of the general Brazilian population (Bello, 2026). There is a marked dichotomy in the educational levels among citizens in the host society. In 2024, illiteracy rates represented 5.3% among the Brazilian population of 15 years old and over - i.e. higher than that of migrants in the formal labour market. As regards Brazilian nationals, University level schooling had been completed by 20.5 % among those 25+ years old, i.e. a proportion higher than that of formally employed migrants.

4.3 Migrants' Registration at CadÚnico in the Southeast Region of Brazil

Established in 2001, CadÚnico (The Unique Register for Social Programmes) is Brazil's massive database for social assistance or social protection, with a management responsibility decentralized in the hands of municipalities across the country. It is used by the government to identify the lowest-income families and determine who is eligible for over 30 different social programs (Barros et al., 2009). It gathers information about families, such as on housing conditions, educational levels and income, to grant access to social benefits for which host and migrants have to be registered. Some of the key social programmes that can be thus accessed are: (a) The Family Allowance (Bolsa Família): a monthly cash transfer programme; (b) The Social Tariff for Electricity: discounts of up to 65%; (c) The Continuous Provision Benefit (BPC): a monthly minimum wage for seniors (65+) and the disabled; (d) Gas Assistance: a subsidy for gas cylinders for cooking; (e) Youth Identification (ID): tickets for free or discounted interstate travel and access to cultural event for 15 to 19 years old individuals; and (f) Fee Waivers: to register for the Federal public and the National High School Exams (ENEM) (Barros et al., 2009).

Eligibility for registration includes those individual citizens earning half a minimum wage per month (minimum wage 305.17 US dollars per month, in January 2026 dollars); belonging to families with an income of three minimum wages and special cases, if required by a specific social program. The final registration process is in person and somebody over 16 years old must be designated as a family representative. Data details need to be compulsorily updated every two years or else benefits are withdrawn.

A study by Bello et al. (2009) has organized the registry's socioeconomic information into six dimensions: (a) vulnerability: the demographic composition of families, pregnant and breast-feeding women as well as people with special needs; (b) access to knowledge; (c) access to work; (d) availability of resources (income, family and nutrition expenses per capita) ; (e) child development; and (f) housing conditions (access to basic public services such as, water,

sewage and electricity) . Each family's type of poverty has its own characteristics and the registry allows to define the nature of their poverty.

Digitalization of the registry between 2024 and 2026 accelerated enormously and the New CadÚnico was launched in 2025. In the earlier days, only 18% of local households had internet access and computers. However, in 2022, the digital divide excluded around 20% of households in Brazil with no access to internet (Direito et al., 2024). For 2025, the government had as a priority the digital integration of migration information with systems like CadÚnico.

As the Southeast Region concentrates a large proportion of Brazil's population and resources, the behaviour of migrants seeking social policies can be representative of the types of demands of them in the country. Migrant seekers of government social assistance, has been growing significantly between 2012 and 2022, corresponding to 1.14% of the total of registries in 2012 and to 23.23% in 2022 in the Southeast Region. Women migrants tended to register more frequently than men, as they are more often appointed as family representatives – following gender stereotypes related to household chores and social assistance.

Table 2: Number and % of migrants registered in CadÚnico at the Southeast Region of Brazil by nationality between 2012-2022

Nationality	Number	%
Bolívia	111,411	20.81
Haiti	69,974	13.07
Venezuela	57,941	10.82
Portugal	56,983	10.65
Angola	29,444	5.50
Japan	26,542	4.96
Not specified /Reserved (RAIS)	16,994	3.17
Peru	15,081	2.82
United States	13,884	2.59
Paraguay	13,144	2.46
Argentina	11,392	2.13
Chile	10,831	2.02
Italy	9,771	1.83
Spain	9,015	1.68

Colombia	6,949	1.30
Other nationalities	75,962	14.19
Total	535,318	100

Source: Own study based upon the 2022 Brazilian Demographic Census.

Registrations include 535,318 migrants for the period 2012-2022 in this Southeast Region, showing the important place assigned by migrants to social policies to complement their earnings or else, as their main source of income (Table 2). The migrant nationality that prevailed in registration were Bolivians (20.81%) – one of the oldest and poorest Latin American migrant flows in Brazil. They are followed by Haitians (13.07%) – also living in precarious conditions – and then by Venezuelans (10.82%). It is interesting to observe that Portuguese migrants – once the main migration nationality and with a relatively high income status – have lately been also registering for social assistance.

4.4 Haitian and Venezuelan Migrant Profiles

According to the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V, 2025); Castro (2020) and Uebel (2017), the percentage of Venezuelan migrants in the total of migrants in Brazil has been increasing throughout the decade. Meanwhile, that of Haitians has been diminishing substantively, a total 13,432 individuals in 2022 plus 2023, representing 2.82 % of the total migrant population in 2023.

The number of Venezuelan migrants, as analysed by OBMIGRA in 2022 and 2023, is approximately 20 times higher than that of Haitians, and they represented more half of the total migrant population in Brazil (i.e. 56.88% in 2022 plus 2023). The distribution between genders varies between nationalities. While in 2022, among Haitians, men predominated (54.52%), in 2023, Haitian migration had feminized (53.63% of women versus 46.37% of men). Instead, among Venezuelans, the distribution of people by gender is similar in both years, though a small proportion of men predominates.

4.5 Refugee Status

In Brazil, the processing of requests for refugee status for Haitians and Venezuelans follows two distinct legal and administrative tracks. While Venezuelans benefit from a simplified recognition process, Haitians have historically been integrated through a humanitarian visa system rather than following the traditional asylum path. Decisions taken on refuge by the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE) usually consist of migrants' documental analysis and validation by a specialized board and one or two often face-to-face interviews with the migrant in question. These may include tricky questions to test the veracity of declarations or problematic themes – remembering that most asylum seekers have undergone traumatic situations (Acero, 2025 b; c). The acceptance or rejection process assumes, according to Castro (2020), a subjective and emotional character.

According to DATAMIGRA, the amount of asylum seekers is relatively low among Haitians corresponding to a total of 1,058 cases between 2022 and 2025, equal for both genders in 2022, a bit higher for women in 2024 and one and a half lower than men’s for women in 2025. Meanwhile, DATAMIGRA shows that Venezuelan requests in this longer period, between 2022-2025, represented 356,133 individuals i.e. more than 30 times the number of Haitians’ requests. Men’s requests predominated throughout all years with a small difference of approximately 5 to 6 points in favour of them.

Table 3: Type of CONARE’s decisions on refuge approvals for Haitians between 2022 and 2025

Decision Type*	2022 (n)	2022 (%)	2023 (n)	2023 (%)	2024 (n)	2024 (%)	2025 (n)	2025 (%)
Approved	3	0.07	-	-	-	-	-	-
Archived	69	1.54	35	0.45	13	1.94	18	3.70
Extinct	4,409	98.39	7,700	99.55	657	98.06	468	96.30
Total	4,481	100	7,735	100	670	100	486	100

***Note:** The decisions taken can refer to asylum requests made in other years.

Source: Own study based upon DATAMIGRA.

For Haitians, only 3 requests for refuge were approved in 2022 and there is no data and/or no requests in the following years. Between 2023 and 2025 requests were either archived or extinct according to DATAMIGRA.

The situation of refuge approval among Venezuelans is totally different (Table 4). First, more categories have been measured, e.g. the loss of the condition of refuge. Second, a difference is established between approvals and the extension of approvals and, in 2022, they involved 4,514 individuals. Out of the asylum requests (112,644) in 2023, well more than half were approved (66.79% of them). But approvals tend to diminish the following years, corresponding to only 8,232 cases in 2025.

Table 4: Type of decisions on refuge approvals for Venezuelans in the period 2022 to 2025

Decision Type*	2022 (n)	2022 (%)	2023 (n)	2023 (%)	2024 (n)	2024 (%)	2025 (n)	2025 (%)
Loss of refuge condition	2	0.02	3	0.00	27	0.10	-	-

Extension of Approval	1,567	7.56	29	0.03	4	0.01	-	-
Archived	1,720	8.30	13	0.01	7,972	28.35	161	1.09
Approved	2,947	14.2 2	75,238	66.79	12,72 2	45.24	8,232	55.7 2
Extinct	14,48 2	69.9 0	37,361	33.17	7,396	26.30	6,382	43,1 9
Not approved	-	-	-	-	1	0.00	-	-
Total	20,71 8	100	112,64 4	100	28,12 2	100	14.77 5	100

***Note:** The decisions taken can refer to asylum requests made in other years

Source: Own study based upon DATAMIGRA.

It is interesting also to observe how the category of 'loss in the condition of refuge' (due to non-renewal of the request) is very frequent among this nationality. Probably because the request was made from an initial impulse for entry or settlement in Brazil and, once survival conditions improve, it is not renewed. Also, the request for refugee status extension (a category non-existent among Haitians) has been often approved, especially during 2022.

It is to be observed that, Venezuela remains the largest source of refugees in Brazil, as the Brazilian government (via CONARE) recognizes a situation of "serious and generalized violation of human rights" in that country, so their claims are processed under a prima facie (at first sight) basis. Unlike Venezuelans, Haitians are rarely granted refugee status. Instead, Brazil uses a specific Humanitarian Visa (Visto Humanitário) framework to provide them legal standing. While there are roughly 90,000 Haitians in Brazil with alternative protection or humanitarian residence, very few are classified as refugees in the strict legal sense. This is because their displacement is often categorized by the State as being driven by environmental disasters or economic collapse rather than the specific political persecution required by the 1997 Refugee Act (Acero, 2025 b)

Effective since January 1, 2026, the previous country-specific ordinances for Haitians were replaced by a single overarching legal framework. This new system requires proof of hosting capacity by an NGO for those applying from abroad, though a transitional provision protects Haitians already in the country as of late 2025.

4.6 Temporary Visas

According to DATAMIGRA, total migrant temporary visas approved for Haitians have been growing annually to a total of 30,298 cases in 2025 and they increased almost ten times in the period 2022-2025. However, among Venezuelans, the amount of migrant temporary visa

approvals is not very high (689 cases), as this nationality tended to seek refugee status. However, they increase approximately four times in that period, though starting from a reduced number in 2022, i.e. 167 cases.

What type of temporary visas have been mainly approved for each nationality of migrants?

The two main categories of visas approved for Haitian migrants are those of humanitarian welcome- that was officially promoted for this nationality since 2010- and most especially, those visas for family reunion (Table 5). The peak of approvals for the first kind took place in 2023; while that of the second kind happened during 2025. It seems that given changes in the legal framework affecting them, Haitians have switched from humanitarian welcome visas to family reunion ones.

Family reunion visas (18,074 approvals) more than double the amount of different types of visas issued between 2022 and 2025, increasing from 32.85% to 74.55% in the period. The social and public pressure exercised by migrant collectives and NGOs supportive of migrants contributed substantively to this last increase (Demetrio et al., 2023). Moreover, since the beginning of 2026, while the definition and issuing of humanitarian visas for Haitians is in a transition phase, the standard family reunion visa (VITEM IV) remains as the primary legalization path for this nationality. It consists of a two year temporary residence, which includes full rights to work and study in Brazil and it is available for those migrants who already have a family member (spouse, child, parent, or dependent sibling) who is a permanent resident or citizen in Brazil.

Table 5: Type of temporary visas issued to Haitians between 2022 and 2025

Type of Visa	2022 (n)	2022 (%)	2023 (n)	2023 (%)	2024 (n)	2024 (%)	2025 (n)	2025 (%)
Humanitarian Welcome	1,808	48.10	3,714	40.89	1,154	14.41	709	7.50
Family Reunion	1,235	32.85	4,015	44.20	5,779	72.18	7,045	74.55
Visit	461	12.26	984	10.83	921	11.50	1,397	14.78
Study	165	4.39	210	2.31	111	1.39	236	2.50
Courtesy	74	1.97	35	0.39	3	0.04	26	0.28
Other	8	0.21	95	1.05	11	0.14	18	0.19
Official	3	0.08	17	0.19	4	0.05	4	0.04
Work	3	0.08	6	0.07	12	0.15	11	0.12
Diplomatic	2	0.05	6	0.07	6	0.07	1	0.01

Other Temporary	—	—	1	0.01	5	0.06	3	0.03
Total	3,759	100	9,083	100	8,006	100	9,450	100

Source: Own study based upon DATAMIGRA.

Visas to carry out visits represent a high proportion of those issued in 2025. Perhaps, this responds either to a tendency of Haitians to enter Brazil as tourists and, once in the country, try to switch to another visa type, or it may reflect those visas issued for brief visits to relatives and friends of migrants who are already settled in Brazil. Working visas for Haitians are scarcely issued in this period, representing only 0.12% of the total in 2025, as well as, study visas, though the proportion of the last is somewhat higher (2.50%).

Table 6: Type of temporary visas issued to Venezuelans between 2022 and 2025

Type of Visa	2022 (n)	2022 (%)	2023 (n)	2023 (%)	2024 (n)	2024 (%)	2025 (n)	2025 (%)
Work	101	60.48	63	61.17	103	57.87	134	55.60
Study	38	22.75	26	25.24	43	24.16	75	31.12
Family Reunion	11	6.59	2	1.94	9	5.06	17	7.05
Official	5	2.99	6	5.83	8	4.49	3	1.24
Diplomatic	5	2.99	1	0.97	3	1.69	—	—
Visit	5	2.99	2	1.94	9	5.06	7	2.90
Other Temporary	2	1.20	1	0.97	2	1.12	3	1.24
Courtesy	—	—	2	1.94	1	0.56	2	0.83
Total	167	100	103	100	178	100	241	100

Source: Own study based upon DATAMIGRA.

The small amount of temporary visas for Venezuelans in the period under study may be related to two main causes. First, the fact that many Venezuelans applied for refugee status and second, that another important part of these migrants have already become permanent residents. The majority of visas granted during those years for this migrant nationality are work permits (55.60

% in 2025) and secondly, those for study (31.12% also in 2025), with peaks in 2025 and 2024, respectively. Venezuelan migrants in Brazil highly value the legal guarantee of universal access to education, which is granted by Brazil regardless of documentation status and that provides them with certain benefits in relation to their country of origin (World Bank, 2021). There is not a high proportion of approvals of family reunion visas (7.5%). Meanwhile, diplomatic visas are null in 2025, probably due to the distance taken by the Brazilian government from Venezuelan authorities.

4.7 Economic sector activities and occupations in the formal labour market

In the formal labour market, Venezuelans’ jobs and, most especially, those of Haitians tend to be precarious and ill-paid (e.g. Handerson, 2017; Jarochinski-Silva & Baeninger, 2021).

4.7.1 Haitians

In the formal labour market in 2023 there were a total of 42,562 Haitian workers employed, according to OBMIGRA data. Well more than half of Haitian migrants were industrial production and service workers, though with a certain reduction of around 4,000 of them in 2023. Some authors consider that after a precarious labour and social integration experience many have emigrated to other countries, specially to the USA and Canada. The exact amount is difficult to estimate as they tend to leave the country towards the North by land (Acero, 2025 b). [Until 2024, the Federal Police estimated that out of the 161,000 Haitians that had entered the country since 2010, roughly 83,000 had legal documents to continue living in Brazil, i.e. almost a half of them had left the country or were in a transit situation].

Table 7: Haitian migrants’ sectors of economic activities in 2022 and 2023

Sector	2022 (n)	2022 (%)	2023(n)	2023(%)
Public Administration	18	0.04	19	0.04
Education, health & social services	664	1.37	641	1.51
Agriculture	811	1.67	547	1.29
Construction	4,497	9.25	3,978	9.35
Commerce & repair	7,453	15.33	5,855	13.76
Other services	9,768	20.09	9,333	21.93
Industry	25,409	52.26	22,189	52.13
Total	48,620	100	42,562	100

Source: Own study based upon OBMIGRA Annual Report (2024)

During the years 2022 and 2023, following OBMIGRA, the economic activities where the vast majority of Haitian migrants were employed were those in industry (52.22% and 52.13%

respectively by year, i.e. around 25.000 individuals diminishing to 22.000) (Table 7). Other studies show that these migrants tend to be located at slaughter houses, meat and other food processing firms and meat- packaging industries in the South States of Brazil where they face long shifts and physical strain (Cavalcanti et al. (org.), 2015). These activities are low-skilled, labour-intensive, often involving high turnover and occupational downgrading where relatively highly educated individuals take on manual tasks. However, Brazilian entrepreneurs' interest in this labour force has been enormous, due to their work capacity, discipline and ethics.

Tonhati e Macedo (2020) found that Haitian women's main industrial occupations included cleaner, production line feeder, assistant in food services and meat processing. These jobs fall under what has been termed as '3D jobs: Dirty, Dangerous, and Demeaning', which often entail work in environments that are unhealthy, hazardous, and socially undervalued, despite being part of the formal labour market. Magalhães & Baeninger (2017) comment that these workers were often abusively exploited, suffered violations of their rights, and a devaluation of their labour force. They perceived an average monthly salary rate of 298.75 US dollars (almost the minimum Brazilian wage for 2025), which represented the lowest wages among all migrant nationalities. Wage disparities are to be explained not only by structural causes but also involve racial prejudices and linguistic constraints. Discrimination is often dual-layered, based both on nationality and race. This stigma facilitates the normalization of lower wages and hazardous working conditions for Haitian workers compared to local labour (Pinheiro, 2017).

The second sector in which Haitians engage is that of 'other services', but in less than half the proportion of those located in industrial activities for both years. This sector is responsible for between 20.09% and 21.93% of their jobs – around 10,000 workers in jobs that tend to require a better knowledge of the host language than those in industry. These activities include, for men, work as gas station attendees, gardening, commercial cleaning, warehousing, cargo handling, and increasingly, drivers or delivery workers in the gig economy. Women's entry point in services was mainly in the hospitality sector, as kitchen assistants, dishwashers and waiters (Baeninger & Peres, 2017). The third sector of economic concentration is that of commerce and repair where Haitians' participation is much smaller and declines significantly between those two years, from 7,453 to 5,855 individuals. They were involved in commerce and retail as shop assistants, stockists, and supermarket cashiers.

Their role as potential construction workers had been initially promoted by the Federal Government through the presence of Brazilian personnel in Haiti, as members of The United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTACH) where Brazil had a leadership role. Vacancies as workers in the construction sector were presented as a reason for migration from Haiti. New workers were required in Brazil for the building of the infrastructure for sports events in the early 2000s, i.e. the World Cup in 2014, the Olympic Games in 2016, and the Cup of America in 2019 (Handerson, 2015). Haitians saw their opportunity to find work, and around 30% of them were employed in the early 2000s in civic construction, mainly at the city of Rio de Janeiro. But as these construction sites were finished, the sector lost its weight in the supply of jobs to Haitians, which were reduced from 15. 33% in 2022 to 13. 76% in 2023.

Agricultural, forestry, fishing and hunting workers – occupations in high demand during the initial years of Haitian migration- have been reduced, representing between 656 to 525

employees in 2022 and 2023. Scholars have gathered evidence that in those agricultural-related jobs, this migrant nationality has suffered strong discrimination, maltreatment and super-exploitation that has, in some cases, been considered as analogous to slavery (Pinhero, 2017; Santos, 2019; Portes Virginio, 2023).). Research on slavery-like practices often identifies debt bondage as a key mechanism, where the costs of travel or housing are used to keep migrants tied to a specific employer (Allain, 2012).

Table 8: Haitian migrants’ occupational group in 2022 and 2023

Occupational Group	2022 (n)	2022 (%)	2023 (n)	2023(%)
Higher members of public agencies, leaders of public interest organizations, firms & managers	128	0.26	125	0.29
Science & Arts Professionals	141	0.29	159	0.37
Middle-level Technicians	660	1.36	648	1.52
Workers in administration services	3,064	6.30	2,846	6.69
Service workers and salesmen/women	10,443	21.48	9,595	22.54
Agricultural, forestry, hunting and fishing workers	656	1.35	525	1,23
Industrial workers in production of goods and services	32,685	67.22%	28,061	65.93
Maintenance & Repair workers	843	1.73	603	1.42
Total	48,620	100	42,562	100

Source: Own study based upon OBMIGRA Annual Reports.

A smaller range of Haitian migrants (in the order of 3,000 workers) were employed in administration services, usually occupying low rank positions. However, this only represented 0.04% among the overall sector of activities at which they worked, most probably, because linguistic differences become a central obstacle for their employment. Though less common, some of them work in entry-level administrative roles, often within large companies that have specific inclusion programs.

It is interesting to observe the scarcity of middle level technicians among |Haitians (more than 650 jobs). These occupations require a form of specialized training not easily available in Haiti and costly in Brazil. Furthermore, Haitian professionals in science and arts were in the order of 141 and 159 individuals in 2022 and 2023 respectively, as to access employment in this type of professions they generally need to hold a University degree.

Women’s employment in the formal labour market during those years represented roughly a third of that of men’s. Haitian male migrants tend to self-define themselves as the only breadwinners or the main ones within domestic households, following a traditional engendered division of labour. This traditional stereotype is a complex intersection of inherited cultural norms from Haiti and the practical constraints of the Brazilian labour market. Men tend to be portrayed as working in heavy industry and women as domestic or service providers. But these dynamics are frequently partly reshaped by the migration process itself according to the Migrant Pastoral Service (part of CIMI) (ex. Dornelas, 2018).

4.7.2 Venezuelans

Venezuelans’ total number of formal occupations for 2023 was of 121, 827 individuals, almost three times more than working Haitians (Table 9). According to recent data from the administrative registry of employed and unemployed workers (CAGED) at the Ministry of Labour and OBMIGRA, Venezuelans represent the main foreign nationality with contracts in the formal labour market in Brazil, but they face strong occupational downgrading compared to their high educational qualifications and low-level jobs.

Table 9: Venezuelan migrants’ sector of economic activities in 2022 and 2023

Sector	2022 (n)	2022 (%)	2023 (n)	2023 (%)
Domestic services	5	0.01	-	-
Public Administration	72	0,09	106	0.09
Agriculture	1,856	2.21	2,591	2.13
Education, health & social services	1,960	2.33	2,439	2.00
Construction	5,612	6.67	8,379	6.88
Commerce & Repair	19,653	23.37	25,948	21.30
Other services	22,926	27.26	31,983	26.25
Industry	32,006	38.06	50,381	41.35
Total	84,090	100	121,827	100

Source: Own study based upon OBMIGRA Annual Reports.

Venezuelan migrants’ pattern of employment within the formal labour market follows trajectories that show a number of differences from those of Haitians. The three main sectors of economic activities they engage in are the same as in the case of Haitians i.e. first, a large majority works in industry that represents half of their economic activities; second, in other services – though in a somewhat larger proportion than Haitians (26,25% in 2023) and third,

in commerce and repair, with percentages close to the last sector's activities. Due to the linguistic proximity (Spanish and Portuguese) and the humanitarian nature of Operação Acolhida, to be discussed later on in this section, they are sometimes faster to integrate into service sectors that require public interaction.

In contrast to Haitians, Venezuelans' proportion of workers in construction activities, as well as in agriculture has increased substantively from 2022 to 2023. Venezuelan men hired in construction activities often take these jobs as a point of entry into the formal labour market. Instead, the growth in the agricultural sector is directly related to the relocation strategies adopted by the Welcome Operation (Operação Acolhida). A large proportion of the Venezuelan workforce concentrated in the agroindustry sector, especially within the food sub-sector dealing with poultry, pig and cow meat processing and refrigeration. These activities are located in the Southern States, mainly at Santa Catarina, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul and tend to have better wages and labour conditions than those occupied in agriculture by Haitians. (Castro & Barros, 2022).

The Welcome Operation was organized by the Federal Government alongside the Armed Forces, i.e. in a civil-military collaboration (Vasconcelos & Machado, 2021). This implied a change in the previous form of migration governance and it became an extreme example of 'directed migration' (Baeninger et al., 2022). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Silva, 2022), this policy had three-man axes of intervention: (a) Border management: to reorder and check the migration flow,; (b) Welcoming: the creation of temporary shelters that provided meals, personal hygiene kits, health assistance, Portuguese lessons, recreational activities, as well as the protection and defence of rights; and (c) Internal Relocation: aimed at preventing an overwhelm in the Northern States. It was also aimed at the voluntary relocation of Venezuelan migrants to States other than those of Roraima and the Amazon that were already overcrowded with an abrupt and chaotic migration flow. With the support of the International Organization of Migration (IOM), it offered to migrants' voluntary relocation through internal migration to other Brazilian sites, like São Paulo and the Southern States (Castro, 2020). Until 2026, through Operation Welcome (Operação Acolhida), over 148,000 Venezuelans have been voluntarily relocated from the border regions to over 1,000 different Brazilian cities to facilitate integration.

Moreover, a new category of economic sector appeared as relevant in the Venezuelan migrants' distribution by economic activity, i.e. their important role within education, health and social services where 2,439 migrants were employed in 2023. Their high educational qualifications This is a sector that has played a minor role among Haitians' economic activities.

Table 10: Venezuelan migrants' occupational group in 2022 and 2023

Occupational Group	2022(n)	2022 (%)	2023(n)	2023(%)
Armed Forces, Police & Military Firemen	1	0.00	2	0.00

Higher members of public agencies, leaders of public interest organizations, firms & managers	890	1.06	994	0.82
Science & Arts Professionals	1,478	1.76	1,718	1.41
Middle-level Technicians	2,531	3.01	3,607	2.96
Administrative services workers	10,254	12.19	14,046	11.53
Service workers & Salesmen/women	24,361	28.97	34,040	27.94
Agricultural, forestry, hunting and fishing workers	1,723	2.05	2,594	2.13
Industrial workers in production of goods and services	40,493	48.15	62,018	50.91
Maintenance & Repair workers	2,359	2.81	2,808	2.30
Total	84,090	100	121,827	100

Source: Own study based upon OBMIGRA Annual Reports.

In terms of occupations, half of Venezuelan migrants were in 2022 and 2023 workers involved in the production of industrial goods and services. More than a quarter of them had service jobs and worked in sales, though in a higher proportion than Haitians. As Venezuelan migrants' qualification levels are quite high, they are well represented and in the rise as middle-level technicians and professionals in the sciences and arts, corresponding respectively to the inclusion of 3,607 individuals and 1,718 in 2023.

Venezuelan migrants were distributed by gender in 2023 as follows: 63.41% of men versus 36.59% of women, similarly to that of Haitians, though Venezuelan women tend to be more active in generating income in other ways, such as in informal jobs and as entrepreneurs. Though overqualified for the positions they occupy, Venezuelans tend to have integrated more easily into the labour market than Haitians and have faced lower levels of discrimination. How much has the Welcome Operation a say in the difference in job integration remains as an open question (Acero, 2026 a).

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

This study has provided a description of the main sociodemographic and socioeconomic patterns of Brazilian migrants and has explored in more detail those of two of the main migrant nationalities in Brazil, that of Haitians and Venezuelans. Coming back to the questions set out initially, the presence of Latin American migrants in Brazil has increased and so has the number of applications and approvals of asylum seekers in Brazil in 2022 and 2023. While the amount of Venezuelans has increased that of Haitians has been decreasing.

Venezuelans show a high level of formal education, e.g. complete secondary schooling and beyond - that surpasses those of the host population. There have also been gradual changes in intersectionality by gender, towards the inclusion of women into the formal labour market, i.e. a certain 'feminization' of migration, more relevant among Haitians. Though, generally, the distribution between genders corresponds to 2/3 of men and 1/3 of women. Migrants are young, belong to a productive age-cohort and have high fertility rates, with children and adolescents representing a substantive proportion of general migrants, as well as refugees. Refugee status has been granted to half of Venezuelan migrants, the main seekers among the nationalities studied and to much fewer Haitians.

Migration policy has changed and has recently been centralized into only one legal framework, as a new way of State governance, modifying the otherwise fragmented forms of visa registration assigned by nationality. Previously, it involved mainly humanitarian visas for Haitians, initially also for Venezuelans, or in the last case, almost direct permanent visas and later on, massive access to refugee status. At present, there is a high approval of family reunion temporary visas for Haitians and of work visas for Venezuelans.

A considerable amount of migrants has been integrated into the formal labour market though usually, in low-level, ill-paid precarious jobs. For example, production in industry concentrates more than half of formally employed Haitians and Venezuelans, services come next and commerce and repairs occupies the third place of recruitment. Their access to social programmes, e.g. registration of migrants at CadÚnico in the Southeast Region of Brazil, is substantive and has grown in the past decade. However, the social programmes to which they have had better access has not been sufficiently researched.

The study presents a number of limitations. It relies mainly upon statistical information, though the data collected is analysed and discussed in the light of specialized social science literature on Brazil's migration patterns. Some of the statistics are not updated to the present as these have not been officially published yet, as neither have been most of the micro-data raised by the 2022 Census, e.g. those relating race and ethnicity. The study might require research on the real access of migrants and refugees to social programmes but the analysis of this aspect would require a specific study that is left for future academic endeavours.

In spite of this, the study illustrates aspects that can be useful in designing public migration policies, their implementation and follow up. It also situates the specifics found among two different migrant nationalities with substantive differences in cultural backgrounds and resettlement social integration to the host society, a key aspect for adequate and participatory migration governance and human rights.

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