

# Scientometric analysis of academic production on migration and displacement in Colombia.

## Análisis cienciométrico sobre la producción académica de migración y desplazamiento en Colombia.

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### Abstract

Colombia has experienced various processes of human mobility, ranging from forced displacement due to internal armed conflict to the recent massive migration from Venezuela. This study presents a scientometric and qualitative analysis of academic production on migration and displacement in Colombia between 2000 and 2025, examining 418 articles sourced from the Scopus and Web of Science databases. It considers indicators such as publication volume, leading authors, journals, collaboration networks, editorial impact, and predominant themes. The findings show an increase in scientific output, particularly during key events like the Peace Agreements and the Venezuelan migration crisis. However, the majority of this research is led by foreign authors, while the participation of Colombian researchers remains limited. This highlights the urgent need to strengthen local research, improve the visibility of national publications, and foster scientific collaboration both nationally and internationally. The qualitative analysis also underscores the importance of incorporating multidisciplinary approaches and consolidating strong domestic research networks. These are essential to producing context-specific knowledge that can support the design of more inclusive and effective public policies on human mobility. Although academic interest in the subject has grown, structural challenges in Colombian research continue to limit its impact and autonomy in this field.

**Keywords:** Displacement, Migration, International collaboration, Colombia

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## Resumen

Colombia ha experimentado diversos procesos de movilidad humana, desde los desplazamientos forzados por el conflicto armado interno hasta la reciente migración masiva desde Venezuela. Este estudio realiza un análisis cienciométrico y cualitativo de la producción académica sobre migración y desplazamiento en Colombia entre 2000 y 2025, examinando 418 artículos extraídos de las bases de datos Scopus y Web of Science. Se consideraron indicadores como el volumen de publicaciones, autores más destacados, revistas, redes de colaboración, impacto editorial, y temas predominantes. Los resultados muestran un aumento en la producción científica, especialmente en momentos clave como los Acuerdos de Paz y la crisis migratoria venezolana. Sin embargo, se evidencia que la mayoría de esta producción es liderada por autores extranjeros, mientras que la participación de investigadores colombianos es limitada. Este panorama revela la necesidad urgente de fortalecer la investigación local, aumentar la visibilidad de las publicaciones nacionales y fomentar la cooperación científica tanto a nivel nacional como internacional. Asimismo, el análisis cualitativo destaca la importancia de incorporar enfoques multidisciplinarios y consolidar redes de investigación sólidas dentro del país, con el fin de generar conocimiento contextualizado que sirva de base para el diseño de políticas públicas más inclusivas y eficaces en materia de movilidad humana. Aunque el interés académico ha crecido, los desafíos estructurales en la investigación colombiana continúan limitando su impacto y autonomía frente al tema.

**Palabras clave:** Desplazamiento, Migración, Colaboración internacional, Colombia

## 1. Introduction

Colombia represents a paradigmatic case of complex human mobility in Latin America. Its internal armed conflict has triggered one of the world's most prolonged and large-scale forced displacements: official figures report that over 6.9 million people have been uprooted within the country, most coming from rural areas and resettled in urban environments. This phenomenon has profoundly reshaped Colombia's territorial, social, and economic configuration [1]; [2]. Some authors describe Colombian internal displacement as a highly complex process, marked by cumulative vulnerabilities and repercussions for mental health, social cohesion, and urban sustainability. Carrillo [2] emphasizes that the concentration of displaced populations in cities has overburdened basic services and generated new patterns of urban poverty.

Since 2014, the worsening political and economic crisis in Venezuela has made Colombia the primary destination for Venezuelan migrants. This newer migratory influx has exacerbated the country's challenges around social integration, access to services, and multilevel governance. Agarwal-Harding et al. [2]; [2], [3] highlight significant gaps in healthcare access between migrants and Colombian nationals, while recent migration studies warn of the ethical and political difficulties involved in constructing sustainable reception frameworks [2]; [2], [3]; [2], [3], [4]. The convergence of internal forced displacement and international migration thus positions Colombia as a key node in human mobility studies, while demanding urgent development of intersectional, multidimensional public policies.

Despite this reality, academic knowledge on migration and displacement in Colombia remains highly fragmented. Various studies have examined specific dimensions from disciplines such as economics, public health, or law, but without transversal articulation or thematic systematization that would reveal overarching patterns, prevailing approaches, or critical gaps. For example, Ibáñez & Moya [5] analyzed the economic effects of displacement, whereas Sierra-Puentes & Correa-Chica [6] synthesized research on socioeconomic conditions; both approaches, however, focus on isolated variables without integrating other dimensions such as psychosocial impacts, historical memory, or the phenomenon's political implications.

This article presents a bibliometric analysis of the academic output on migration and displacement related to Colombia, drawing on Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) databases and complemented by a qualitative contextual review. We examine thematic trends, scientific collaboration networks, the most active disciplines, and key socio-historical milestones—such as the armed conflict, the 2016 Peace Agreement, and the Venezuelan migration crisis. The objective is to map and systematize existing knowledge, highlighting both its advances and its fragmentations, in order to contribute to a more integrated research agenda aimed at formulating inclusive and sustainable public policies.

This research is structured in four sections: first, we outline the methodological foundations of our analysis; second, we present the main thematic and collaborative findings; third, we reflect on the limitations and opportunities of the current academic production; and finally, we offer conclusions that underscore the need to strengthen an interdisciplinary perspective on human mobility in Colombia.

## 2. Methodology

A systematic review design and bibliometric analysis were employed. Initially, an exhaustive search was conducted in the WoS and Scopus databases, with a cutoff date of May 14, 2025. To cover the relevant dimensions of interest, keywords combined with Boolean operators were used: "displacement", "migration", "Colombia", "humanitarian aid", and "forced displacement" [7], [8]; [9] The search was limited to journal articles (document type: Article) published between 2000 and 2025. In WoS, 285 records were retrieved, and in Scopus, 327 records (see Table I) [10]; [11].

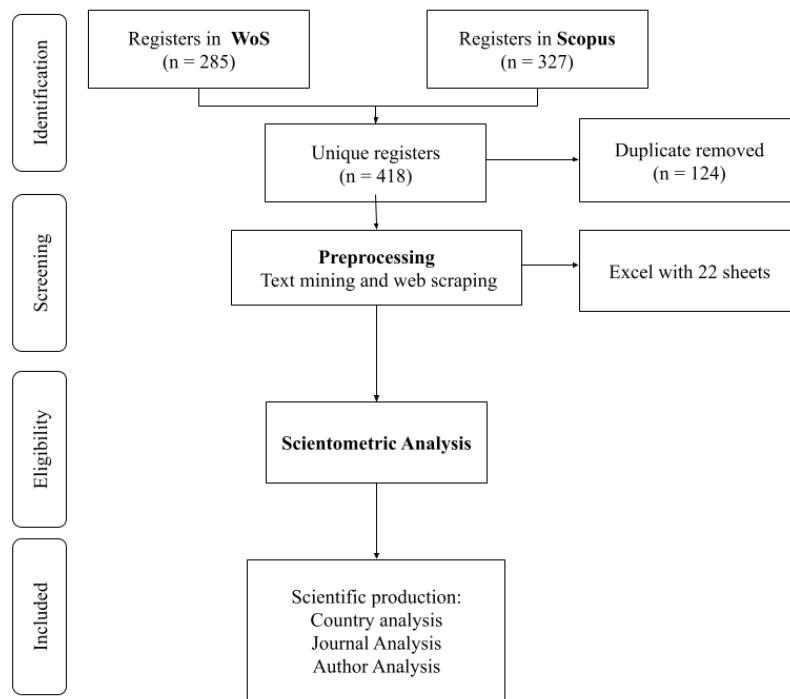
**Tabla I.** Search Parameters Used in Scopus and WoS Databases

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Web of Science</b>	<b>Scopus</b>
<b>Range</b>	2000	2025
<b>Date</b>	May 14, 2025	
<b>Document Type</b>	Articles	
<b>Words</b>	"displacement" OR "migration" OR "Colombia" OR "humanitarian aid" OR "forced displacement"	
<b>Results</b>	285	327
<b>Total (WoS+Scopus)</b>	418	

After the initial identification, the records were unified, and duplicates were removed (124 shared articles). The selection flow followed a PRISMA-type diagram: from the initial total (612 records), the list was refined, resulting in a final sample of 418 unique articles included in the analysis (see Figure 1). The eligibility criteria excluded publications not focused on Colombian migration/displacement or non-academic works. Based on the final set of 418 documents, bibliometric and network analyses were performed. Descriptive metrics of annual article production and accumulated citations were generated, along with analyses by country and institution [12], [13], [14].

Scientific collaboration was evaluated by constructing co-authorship networks. Among other measures, the effective size and constraint coefficient of the most productive authors were calculated. Regarding publications, journals with the highest number of articles and citations were identified, incorporating impact indicators such as the SJR (Scimago Journal Rank) and the quartile in which they are ranked.

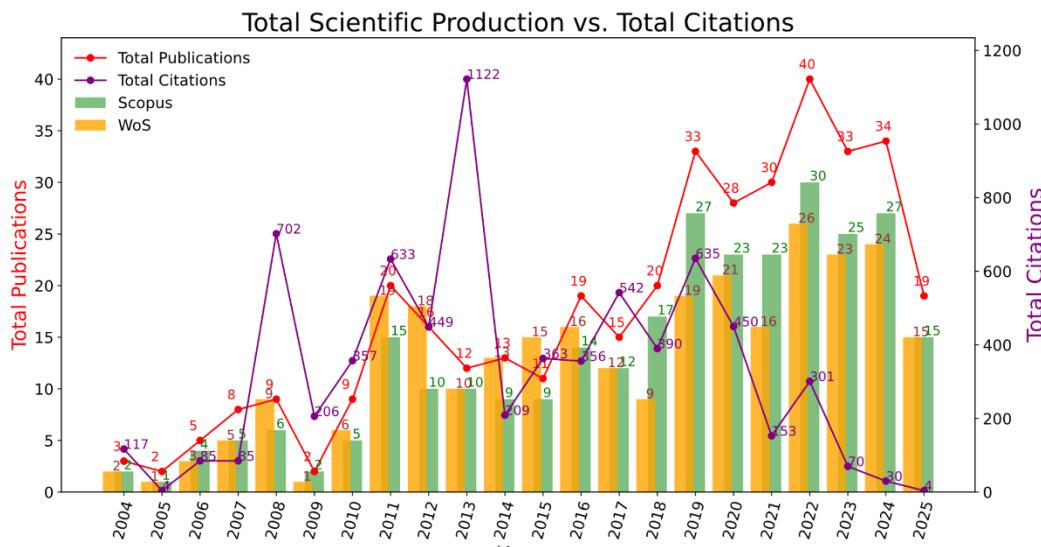
Finally, a qualitative content analysis was conducted. Abstracts and keywords were manually examined to interpret the meaning of the quantitative patterns in the Colombian socio-historical context.



**Figure 1.** PRISMA flowchart.

### 3. Results

Academic production on migration and displacement in Colombia has shown sustained growth between 2000 and 2025. Based on an analysis of 418 unique articles retrieved from the Scopus and Web of Science databases, it was possible to identify three clearly differentiated phases in terms of both the volume and thematic orientation of the literature (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Joint Evolution of Annual Article Production and Total Accumulated Citations

In the early years of the 21st century, when the internal armed conflict in Colombia intensified, resulting in a wave of deaths and displaced people across all regions of the country [15], [16], there was a very low annual production of articles, generally fewer than ten per year, indicating a low tendency for scientific production on these topics. In contrast, over the last decade, an increase in production has become increasingly frequent.

A second phase, between 2011 and 2016, corresponds to a period of academic momentum coinciding with the peace process between the Colombian government and the FARC [15]; [17]. During these years, there was a growing interest in policies related to reparation, land restitution, and transitional justice [18], which was reflected in a sustained increase in publications. This phase also marks the beginning of greater participation in international research networks, as well as a thematic diversification towards issues such as the return of displaced persons and territorial governance [19].

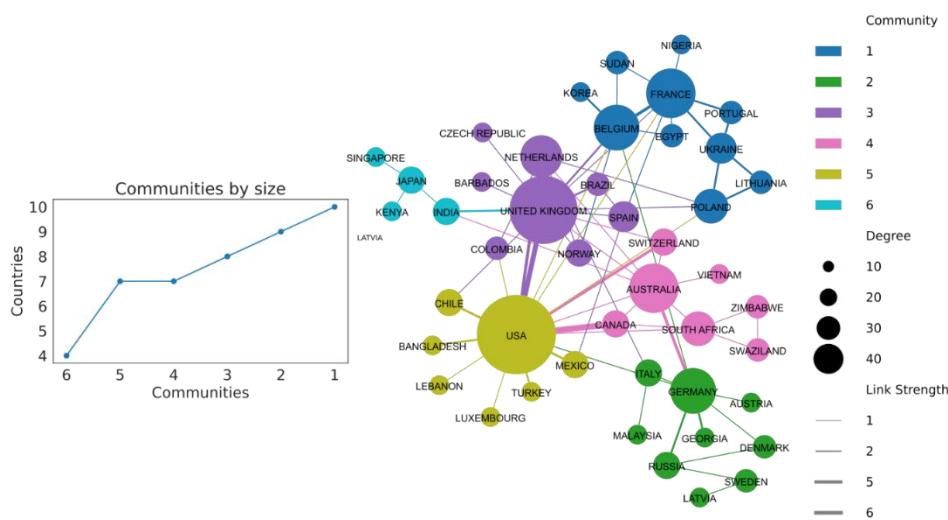
Finally, between 2017 and 2025, a phase of expansion and consolidation of the field can be identified, driven mainly by the surge of the Venezuelan exodus into Colombia [20]; [21]. During this period, the highest peak in production was reached, with 40 articles published in 2022. Given this social phenomenon, research diversified into multidisciplinary approaches involving public health, education, informal employment, and the socio-economic integration processes of the migrant population. Overall, this trend reflects not only sustained quantitative growth but also greater analytical complexity in addressing human mobility in Colombia.

Throughout the period 2004–2022, the accumulated citations for these articles show an anomaly, as they increase and decrease, which may indicate instability in the interest in this topic. From 2022–2025, a decreasing trend in citations is evident, and in the last two years (2023–2025), publications have declined to fewer than 40 per year. These results reflect that academic production is also unstable; however, interest in this type of scientific literature on human mobility in Colombia has gradually declined, confirming a general trend of social and academic disinterest in the post-conflict context.

### 3.2 Country Analysis

Figure 3 shows that scientific production is predominantly concentrated in Global North countries. The United States leads with 96 articles (22.96% of the total), followed by the United Kingdom with

39 articles (9.33%) and Canada with 22 articles (5.26%). In contrast, Colombia—the country under study—represents only 3.58% of the publications, with an average of 4.1 citations per article, significantly lower than the leading countries, which exceed 10 citations per article. This distribution reflects a pattern widely documented in bibliometric studies, where destination countries—in this case, the Global North—tend to dominate academic production related to countries in the Global South [22]; [23]; [24].



**Figure 3.** Global collaboration network among countries in scientific research on migration and displacement related to Colombia, illustrating the intensity and structure of international partnerships in this field.

This imbalance highlights both the differences in research capacities and the limited connection between local institutions and the more visible international networks. As noted by Piccoli et al., researchers from the Global South face structural barriers that limit their access to editorial networks, funding, and scientific collaboration, directly impacting their ability to publish in high-impact journals [25]. Additionally, Yadav et al. point out that, in the field of migration studies, countries of origin such as Colombia often play a subordinate role in knowledge production, while research agendas are largely defined by the receiving countries in the Global North [26].

The analysis of author affiliations (see Table II) reveals a predominant pattern of international collaboration, with the United States leading the list of countries by the number of publications, contributing 96 articles, which represent 26.0% of the total output. It is followed at a distance by the United Kingdom with 39 articles (10.6% of scientific production) and Canada with 20 articles (5.4%). China follows with 19 articles (5.2%), and Germany with 18 articles (4.9% of publications). In Latin America, the country with the highest production is Brazil, with 12 articles, corresponding to 3.25%, while notably, Colombia—the country of origin of the migration and displacement phenomena—contributes only 11 articles, accounting for 2.98% of the total. This distribution evidences that most studies are conducted from abroad or in collaboration with institutions within the country, aligning with patterns described in global bibliometric studies that highlight the dominance of destination countries in migration research and the low participation of countries of origin in these investigations [27], [28].

**Table II.** Distribution of scientific production and citation impact by country in the field of migration and displacement studies related to Colombia.

Country	Production		Citation		Quality			
	Count	%	Count	%	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
USA	96	26.02	1695	35.83	38	12	3	5
UNITED KINGDOM	39	10.57	729	15.41	10	4	2	1
CANADA	20	5.42	275	5.81	6	6	0	0
CHINA	19	5.15	207	4.38	8	6	1	2
GERMANY	18	4.88	374	7.91	5	1	0	1
AUSTRALIA	16	4.34	205	4.33	7	1	0	0
BRAZIL	12	3.25	18	0.38	2	1	1	4
COLOMBIA	11	2.98	12	0.25	0	2	0	3
INDIA	10	2.71	16	0.34	1	0	1	2
MEXICO	9	2.44	13	0.27	0	1	2	0

This territorial distribution of scientific production suggests that migration topics in Colombia primarily attract foreign researchers, particularly from the United States and Europe, possibly due to consolidated academic networks and greater external funding. However, the fact that Colombia does not appear among the leading producers highlights the need to strengthen local research efforts. In terms of citations, articles authored by researchers from the United States also accumulate the highest total number of citations, approximately 1,695 in total, while the average number of citations per article is higher in countries such as the United States (~35.8) and Germany (~7.9), and significantly lower in Colombia (~0.25). This reflects an asymmetric and unequal pattern in the circulation and production of scientific knowledge at the national level [22].

### 3.3 Journal Analysis

Table III shows that scientific production is concentrated in high-visibility international academic journals. Among the ten sources with the highest number of published articles, journals specialized in migration and humanitarian studies stand out. The top positions correspond to the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (five articles, SJR  $\approx$  1.321, Q1) [16], [26] and the International Migration Review (six articles, SJR  $\approx$  1.064, Q1). Among Colombian publications, the most active are Cuadernos Geográficos (three articles, SJR  $\approx$  0.279, T3 quartile) [29] and Andamios (four articles, Q2 quartile)[29], [30].

**Table III.** Top Ten Journals: Research Impact, Indexing, and Quartile Metrics

Journal	SN	WoS	Scopus	Total	SJR	H-Index	Quartile
Journal Of Ethnic And Migration Studies	1369183X	5	5	5	1.321	122	Q1
International Migration review	01979183	6	6	6	1.064	120	Q1
International Migration	00207985	6	6	6	0.858	82	Q1
International Review Of The Red Cross	16075889	4	4	5	0.455	48	Q1
Refuge	02295113	3	0	3	0.336	35	Q1

Journal	SN	WoS	Scopus	Total	SJR	H-Index	Quartile
Journal Of Theoretical And Philosophical Psychology	10688471	2	0	3	0.352	30	Q1
Migration Studies	20495838	3	0	3	1.004	23	T1
Cuadernos Geográficos	02105462	2	0	3	0.279	16	T3
Andamios	18700063	2	2	4	0.179	16	Q2
Forced Displacement and Migration Approaches and Programmes of International Cooperation		0	3	3			

In most of the listed journals, the articles are Q1, reflecting the high editorial quality of these sources. These figures indicate that relevant literature is circulating mainly in top-tier international journals, while only a small fraction is disseminated in local outlets. This pattern aligns with the dominant thematic trends: as a globalized field, scholars seek to disseminate their findings in leading journals within the social and political sciences circuit. Nevertheless, the presence of geography and anthropology journals (Cuadernos Geográficos, Andamios) indicates a certain disciplinary diversity among the sources, and although these contributions are less frequent, they reflect the multidimensional nature of the migration phenomenon [31]; [32] (see Table 3 for details on the main journals).

The dissemination of knowledge on migration and displacement in Colombia has been concentrated in international academic journals, particularly those in the Q1 quartile of the Scimago Journal Rank. Notable examples include the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (18 articles, SJR 1.321) and the International Migration Review (12 articles, SJR 1.064), both with high impact and global visibility. Other relevant journals, though with a lower volume, include Cuadernos Geográficos and Andamios. However, no Colombian journal was identified among the main publication outlets, highlighting an editorial gap and a significant challenge for building national capacities for scientific dissemination. Although Latin American journals are present, they have a limited impact in terms of citations and international visibility.

The identified editorial gap suggests that Latin American journals show low incidence in terms of citations, indexing, and international reach. Furthermore, editorial legitimacy in the migration field continues to be constructed through outlets dominated by English-language journals, representing a significant challenge for consolidating platforms for scientific production and dissemination in Colombia and Latin America [22]; [31].

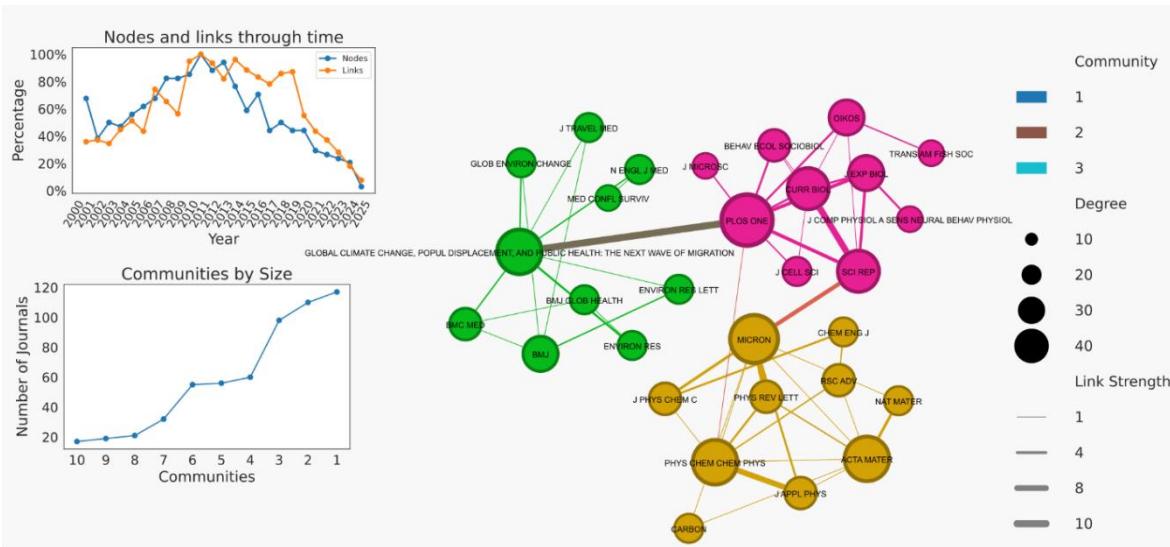


Figure 4. Journal Citation Network Highlighting Collaborative Communities

### 3.4 Author Analysis

The collaborative networks appear to be relatively dispersed, with leading authors tending to work in small groups. Network metrics (effective size and constraint) indicate that, overall, the low connectivity of these networks suggests that a consolidated national core of collaboration has not yet emerged. The research community in this field remains globally fragmented, with international peer collaboration predominating, while the articulation among Colombian researchers is weak or practically nonexistent (see Figure 5).

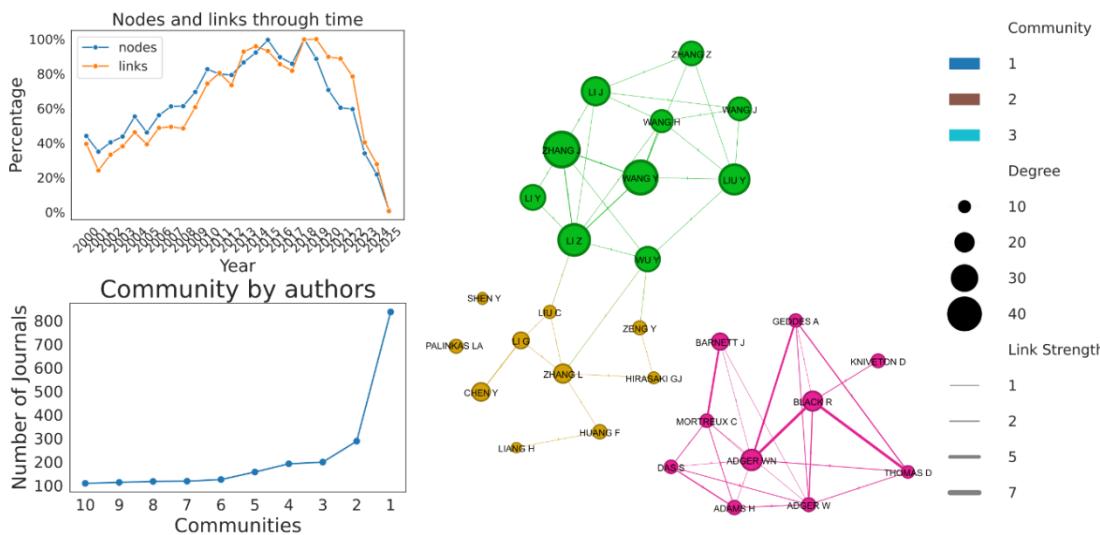


Figure 5. Collaborative Network of Leading Authors and Their Interconnections

The authorship analysis reveals a fragmented and poorly articulated landscape, with 318 unique authors identified, of which only a small group demonstrates a continuous trajectory or significant impact (see Table IV). Regarding the most productive authors, the top positions are held by researchers who have published between three and four articles on the topic. The most prolific author

is Zhou X (four articles, 90 accumulated citations) [33], followed by Yu H (three articles, 70 citations) and Zhang L (three articles, 66 citations). Most of these authors are affiliated with institutions outside of Colombia, particularly universities in the United States and the United Kingdom, which reinforces the conclusion of foreign leadership in research on Colombian migration. Only one of the most productive authors has a Colombian affiliation: J Suescun (three articles, four citations) [34], whose output appears modest compared to his international counterparts.

**Table IV.** Most Productive Authors in Studies on Migration and Displacement in Colombia, 2000–2025

Author	Papers Total	Total Citations	H-Index	Effective_Size	Constraint	CDI
ZHOU X	4	90	3	1.0	0.49	0.14
CHEN H	3	26	1	20.15	0.13	0.15
JEFFERY L	3	19	2	2.0	0.5	1.0
KOSER K	3	55	3	5.0	0.31	0.5
OLIVER-SMITH A	3	86	2	12.33	0.19	0.27
SCHMOOK B	3	38	3	5.75	0.36	0.31
SUESCUN J	3	4	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
YU H	3	70	3	1.0	0.49	0.14
ZHANG L	3	66	2	28.82	0.1	0.16
ZHAO S	3	78	2	1.0	0.65	0.2

#### 4. Conclusions

This research confirms that academic production on migration and displacement in Colombia has experienced sustained growth since the late 20th century and the early 2000s, driven primarily by critical moments in the country such as the signing of the Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC in 2016 and the Venezuelan migration crisis. However, this growth has been largely reactive to these events, focusing on responding to specific situations, which suggests the urgency of promoting prospective research that analyzes, from a multilateral perspective, the transformations of human mobility and their effects on the country's social and territorial fabric.

Despite its relevance, Colombia appears as a marginal actor in terms of authorship within these studies, as less than 3% of the articles reviewed include researchers affiliated with Colombian institutions. Additionally, the visibility of national journals is limited compared to the dominance of high-impact international dissemination channels. This geographic and editorial gap not only hinders the circulation of knowledge rooted in local realities but also obstructs the incorporation of such evidence into the formulation of public policies adapted to the Colombian context.

The analysis of collaboration networks and thematic approaches reveals a fragmented field, with scientific alliances concentrated in the Global North and studies tending to privilege socioeconomic perspectives while leaving psychosocial, territorial, and historical memory dimensions in the background. Likewise, although bibliometric methodologies provide a rigorous overview of research trends, there is a clear need to combine these methods with qualitative field studies, ethnographies,

in-depth interviews, and analyses of community processes to enrich the understanding of the diversity and complexity of human mobility in the country.

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