

Participation Of The Migrant Population In The Informal Economy Under The Influence Of Insecurity: A Bibliometric Study

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ABSTRACT

The current bibliometric study addresses the complex processes that impact migrants in their quest for economic opportunities in unstable environments by examining the link between migration, insecurity, and informal work. This topic's research output was examined from 1996 to 2023 using data gathered from Scopus. According to the statistics, there has been a noticeable increase in scientific output recently, with a considerable rise in the number of publications in 2020, 2022, and 2023. Top journals are the International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy and the International Journal of Labor Economics. The majority of articles are focused in the United States, Brazil, India, and the United Kingdom. Queens College, University of São Paulo, and Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale De Lausanne (EPFL) are the most active universities in this discipline. Carranza E, Ludermir Ab, Olivieri S, Ortega F, Rivadeneira A, and Theodore N. are the writers who stand out the most. The terms "migration", "employment", "informality", "labor migration", "human", "article", "female", and "developing countries" are also very significant. These results underline the necessity of policies and programs that meet the particular needs of migrants in environments of social and economic insecurity, as well as the significance of comprehending the intricate relationships that exist between migration, insecurity, and informal work. As a result, this study offers a solid framework for future research in this area and emphasizes the need to address the difficulties faced by migrants in their search for better living conditions.

Key words: migration, migrants, entrepreneurship, vulnerable population, migrant women, bibliometric analysis.

1 INTRODUCTION

Vulnerable populations in the modern world face several important obstacles that prevent them from taking advantage of fair economic and social possibilities. These groups are often in a fragile situation regarding their participation in the formal economy due to their lack of resources and their vulnerability to different types of discrimination and marginalization. (Lwanga-Ntale & Owino, 2020). For these excluded groups, the informal economy, which is characterized by economic activity carried out without taking into account legal labor laws and safeguards, becomes a desirable alternative in their search for subsistence and survival (Modirapula, 2023).

Migrants are a notable subset of vulnerable communities that have specific difficulties attempting to participate in the formal economy. People who are forced to flee their native

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countries in search of better living conditions and economic prospects, sometimes find themselves excluded in the countries to which they move, encountering linguistic, cultural and legal obstacles that make it difficult for them to integrate into the official labor market (Ramírez, 2022). Because of this, large numbers of immigrants are forced to enter the informal sector, where they are subject to unstable employment circumstances, lack of social and legal rights, and a host of other types of insecurity (Agudelo-Suárez et al., 2020).

Migration has been widely studied through a variety of analytical lenses due to its significant impact on societies of origin and destination. Migration is a complex phenomenon that involves a series of economic, social and political factors that influence people's decision to leave their homes and seek new opportunities elsewhere (De Haas, 2021). Individuals and families frequently leave their home countries in search of a better life abroad due to limited economic prospects there, resulting from problems such as poverty, unemployment and restricted access to essential services (Hasanović et al., 2020). However, after arriving at their destinations, migrants encounter a series of challenges that can make their integration into the receiving community difficult. Ultimately, this impacts not only the rights and well-being of migrants but also presents obstacles for public policies in receiving countries (Mattes & Lang, 2021).

Aside from the structural and economic obstacles that immigrants face in the informal economy, they also face unstable circumstances that can exacerbate their circumstances. Numerous factors, such as exposure to violence, organized crime, labor exploitation, and prejudice, can lead to feelings of insecurity (Idemudia et al., 2020). Due to these circumstances, migrants may become even more vulnerable and dependent on the informal sector of the economy, further endangering their safety and well-being. The intricate question of the correlation between the informal sector and insecurity among vulnerable groups, such as migrants, deserves substantial consideration on a global scale (Innes et al.). The number of people forced to migrate has increased due to issues such as climate change, political and social unrest, and economic inequality. These individuals then face economic and security difficulties when they arrive in their new places (Bharadwaj et al., 2022).

Due to institutional and legal restrictions that prevent them from obtaining regular employment, migrants are often forced to work in the informal sector. Immigrants seeking employment in the formal sector face many obstacles, including restrictive immigration laws, discrimination in the labor market, and non-recognition of foreign degrees and credentials (Okafor & Kalu, 2023). As a result, large numbers of migrants seek employment in the informal sector, where they risk being exploited and facing unstable employment circumstances. The informal economy is another area where migrants can be affected by insecurity (Arslan et al., 2021). Due to the absence of social and legal safeguards, migrant workers in the unorganized sector may be subject to violence and abuse at work, as well as exploitation by dishonest employers. Furthermore, a high level of insecurity in the places where migrants settle can make it more difficult for them to find employment and earn a living, which can lead to greater dependence on the black market (Sallan Gül et al.).

It is essential to understand that migrants may turn to the informal sector as a response to the obstacles and restrictions they encounter in the official labor market and not as an option. For migrants and their families, informal work can be an important source of money, but it can also expose them to a variety of dangers and difficulties, such as personal and financial insecurity (Hammer & Ness, 2021). In the end, combating the problems of the informal economy and insecurity among migrants requires a comprehensive strategy that takes into account the structural obstacles that migrants encounter in their new countries, as well as the fundamental reasons for the movement (Hermele, 2021). To address the underlying socioeconomic factors that impact both migrants and receiving

communities, greater knowledge of the convergence of migration with crucial characteristics such as insecurity and labor informality is necessary.

Given this, it makes sense to develop a bibliometric analysis to evaluate the current level of knowledge about the participation of the migrant population in the informal economy while experiencing instability. The purpose of this study is to present an overview of previous research in this area, as well as highlight knowledge gaps and indicate areas that need further research (Ramírez et al., 2023). Furthermore, it aims to improve understanding of the elements that influence immigrants' participation in the informal sector and the consequences for their security and well-being. By doing this, the study will lay a strong platform for future research and policy initiatives that address the problems faced by migrants at the nexus between the informal sector and insecurity, both nationally and globally.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article analyzes research articles that have been added to the Scopus metasearch engine in order to study the literature on the migrant population and its relationship with the informal economy and insecurity. By observing citations in scientific journal articles, bibliometric analysis aims to evaluate the impact of publications based on their distribution (Karakose et al., 2022). Word frequency analysis has also been used for the analysis of published literature in other disciplines, providing information on "hot" topics and topics that lasted longer than fads. In addition, through bibliometric studies, phrase co-occurrence analysis and statistical identification of research, authors, journals, locations and institutions associated with a study topic are carried out (Ramírez-Duran et al., 2023).

As the first step of the analysis, the variables to be studied with their respective descriptions were proposed, assuming the starting point of the bibliometric study proposed in the previous paragraphs.

Table 1 Keyword standardization

Variable	Descriptor
Migration	"Migration" "employment"
Labor insecurity and informality	"Social insecurity" "informality" "Informal work"

Source: author using R software based on information from Scopus .

The following search formula was used to find the pertinent data: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Migration") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("employment") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Social insecurity") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("informality") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Informal work")). In this equation, Boolean operators such as "AND" and "OR" are applied in addition to key terms related to the topic of study. 83 retrievable research publications were obtained after sorting them by knowledge domains, languages and the years 1996 to 2023. Data were obtained as a CSV file from the Bibliometrix package, which is part of the RStudio statistical software package, and were handled using the Biblioshiny program. The generated tables, maps and graphs are found in the results section, shown below.

3 RESULTS

Table 2 General search information

MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1996:2023
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	75
Documents	83
Annual Growth Rate %	9,64
Document Average Age	6,63
Average citations per doc	12,04
References	4310
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	295
Author's Keywords (DE)	297
AUTHORS	
Authors	171
Authors of single-authored docs	37
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	37
Co-Authors per Doc	2,13
International co-authorships %	22,89
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	70
book	3
book chapter	8
review	2

Source: author using R software based on information from Scopus.

The previous table (table 2) allows to identify the general elements associated with the scientific production of the area of knowledge, where a growth of 9.64% is observed in recent years, in a total of 83 sources with 171 authors present in the publications. Likewise, the growth of scientific production can be seen more clearly in figure 1; of this, the years 2020 (10), 2022 (13) and 2023 of (12) stand out with the number of articles published each year, in which there was a notable growth in publications related to the research topic, in these years are concentrated 42.17% of all research conducted.

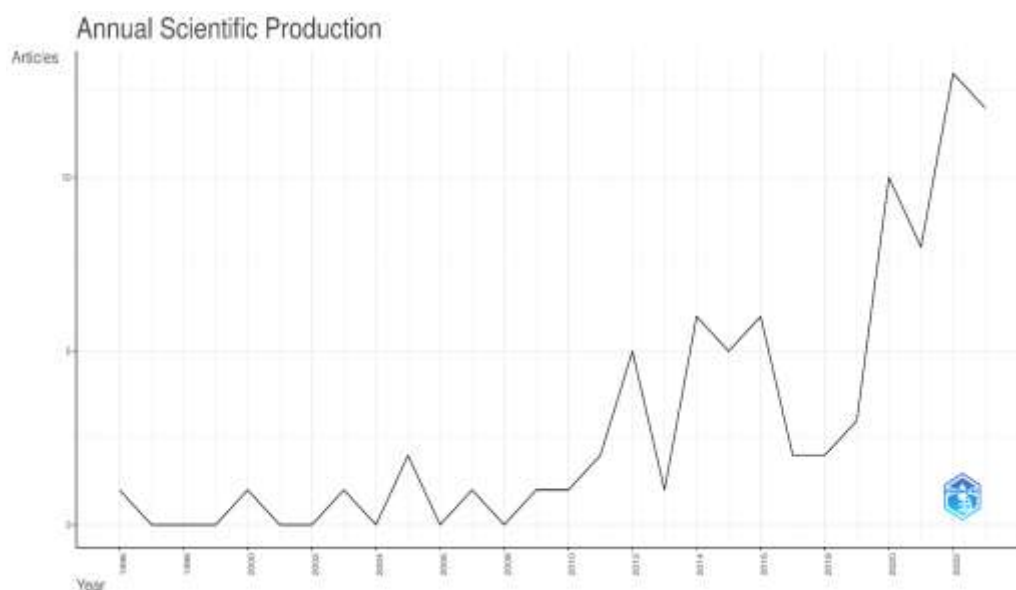


Fig. 1. Annual scientific production, source: author based on information from Scopus.

Next, the most relevant sources are shown based on the frequency of publication on the topic and through the percentiles shown using Bradford's law; this law classifies journals into three performance zones, each with an increase in the number of journals and a similar proportion of articles. Bradford's law was applied to determine the value of each of these indicators (Borghain et al., 2021).

Table 3 shows the percentages corresponding to each Bradford's Law Zone. It should be noted that the zone is the one that concentrates the most publications with 33.73% with twenty-eight (28) titles in twenty (20) journals, figure 2 shows the most representative journals according to this law.

Table 3 Bradford's Law

Zone	No. Journals	No. Titles	Percentages
Zone 1	20	28	33,73%
Zone 2	28	28	33,73%
Zone 3	27	27	32,53%

Source: author using R software based on information from Scopus.

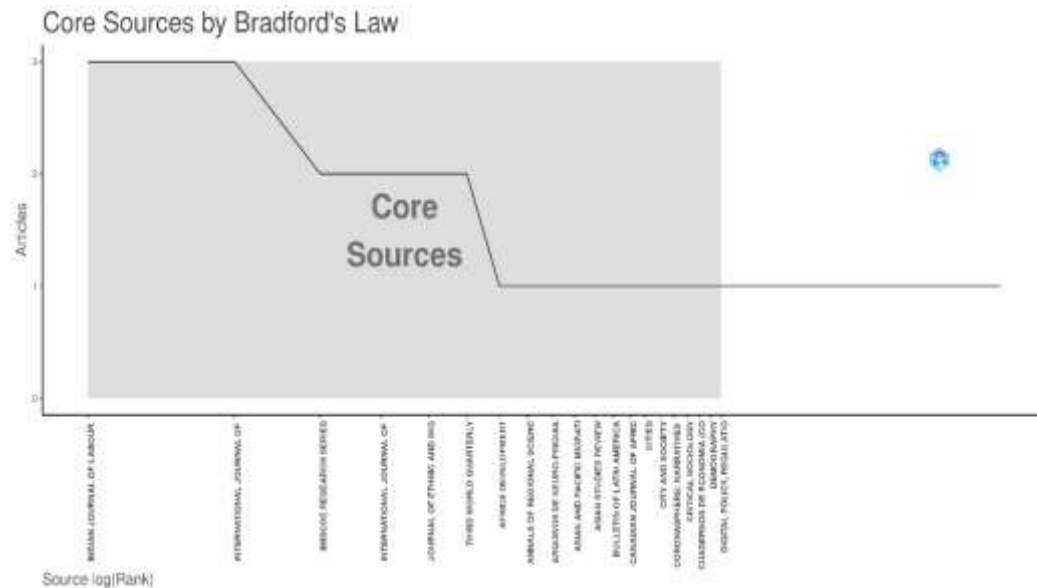


Fig. 2. Bradford's Law, source: author based on information from Scopus.

In accordance with the above, Table 4 shows how the Indian Journal Of Labour Economics, International Journal Of Sociology And Social Policy lead the area with three (3) publications each, followed by Imiscoe Research Series with two (2) publications.

Table 4 Most relevant sources

Sources	Articles
INDIAN JOURNAL OF LABOUR ECONOMICS	3
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY	3
IMISCOE RESEARCH SERIES	2
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY	2

JOURNAL OF ETHNIC AND MIGRATION STUDIES	2
THIRD WORLD QUARTERLY	2
AFRICA DEVELOPMENT	1
ANNALS OF REGIONAL SCIENCE	1
ARQUIVOS DE NEURO-PSIQUIATRIA	1
ASIAN AND PACIFIC MIGRATION JOURNAL	1

Source: author using R software based on information from Scopus.

On the other hand, in terms of countries, it is observed that the United States is the greatest exponent in terms of scientific productivity with 37 contributions, followed by Brazil with 15, India with 15, the United Kingdom with 12, South Africa with 10, among others, this can be seen in table 5.

Table 5 Scientific production by country

Country	Frequency
USA	548
CHINA	518
SPAIN	399
UK	148
MEXICO	83
BRAZIL	71
CANADA	67
AUSTRALIA	66
COLOMBIA	66
PORTUGAL	64

Source: author using R software based on information from Scopus.

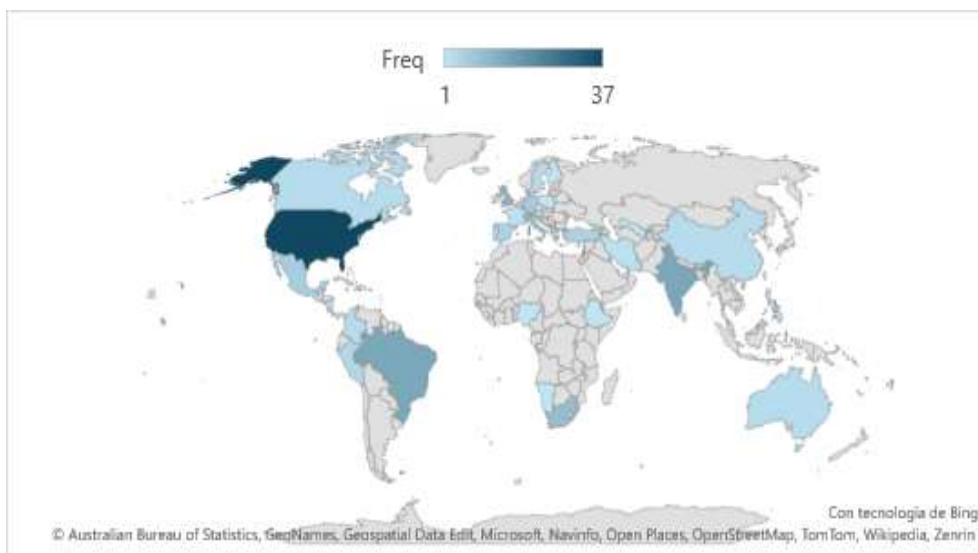


Fig. 3. Scientific production by country, source: author based on information from Scopus.

Following this order of ideas, figure 4 shows the institutions that have made the most contributions on the topic of study, Queens College with eight (8) contributions, followed by University Of São Paulo with five (5) contributions and finally Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale De Lausanne (Epfl) with three (3) contributions; These contribute 13.22% of all publications.

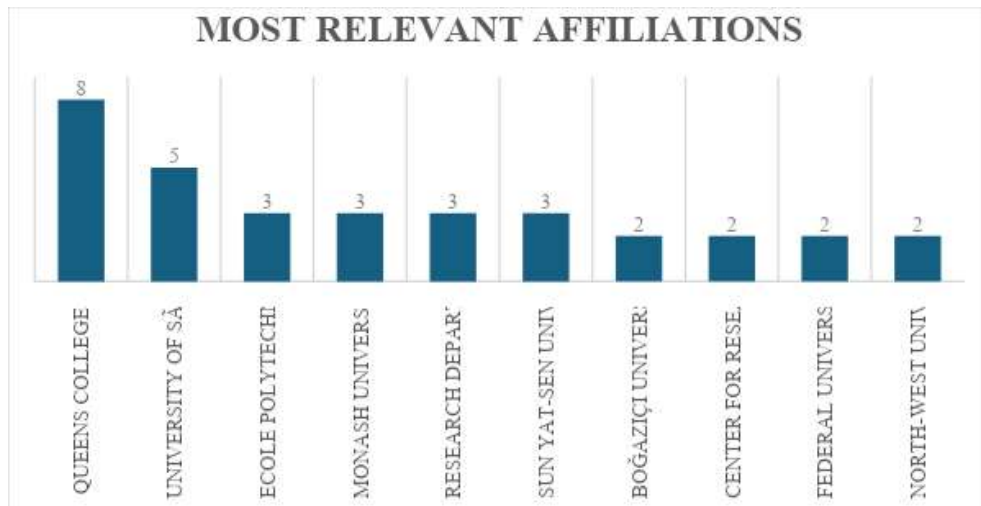


Fig. 4. Most relevant affiliations, source: author based on information from Scopus.

To measure productivity per researcher, the frequency index is taken as a reference; about which the leadership of Carranza E, Ludermir Ab, Olivieri S, Ortega F, Rivadeneira A, Theodore N is observed with two (2) works each.

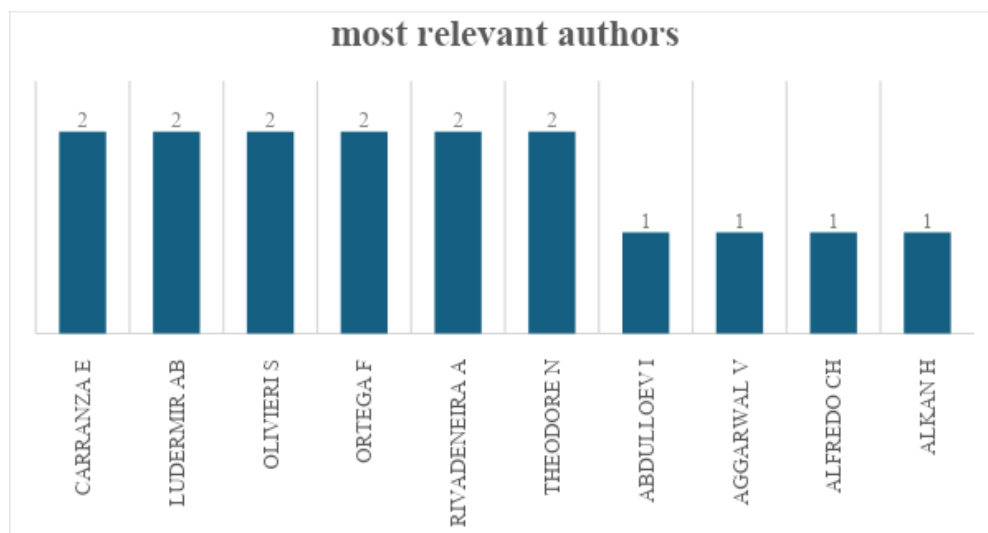


Fig. 5. Most relevant authors, source: author using R software based on information from Scopus.

Lotka's law allows mapping the production curve on the N of authors to more clearly understand the impact of authors on the area of knowledge (Junior et al., 2023). Regarding this, table 6 shows how 96.50% of the authors have made a single contribution, followed by 3.50% who have made at least two. From the above it can be inferred that the majority of authors who investigate this topic are transitory.

Table 6

Lotka's Law

Documents written	N. of Authors	Proportion of Authors
1	165	0,965

Source: author using R software based on information from Scopus.

On the other hand, table 7 shows the twenty articles related to the study topic that have the most citations; the three most representative are: MCGREGOR J, 2007, J ETHN MIGR STUD, SWIDER S, 2015, WORK EMPLOY SOC & CRUSH J, 2015, MEAN STR: MIGR, XENOPHOB AND INF IN S AFR.

Table 7 Most cited articles

Paper	DOI	Total Citations	TC per Year	Normalized TC
MCGREGOR J, 2007, J ETHN MIGR STUD	10.1080/13691830701359249	174	9.67	1.00
SWIDER S, 2015, WORK EMPLOY SOC	10.1177/0950017014526631	93	9.30	2.74
LUDERMIR AB, 2003, SOC PSYCHIATRY PSYCHIATR EPIDEMIOL	10.1007/s00127-003-0658-8	51	2.32	1.00
KNIGHTS M, 1996, TRANS INST BR GEOGR	10.2307/622928	44	1.52	1.00
SRIVASTAVA R, 2019, INDIAN J LABOUR ECON	10.1007/s41027-019-00178-5	38	6.33	2.85
SMIT R, 2014, SOUTH AFR REV SOC	10.1080/21528586.2014.917876	32	2.91	2.53
COHEN A, 2020, INT J COMP SOCIOL	10.1177/0020715218815543	31	6.20	2.77
DINLER DŞ, 2016, THIRD WORLD Q	10.1080/01436597.2016.1175934	27	3.00	2.61
HUANG G, 2020, SUSTAINABILITY	10.3390/su12072738	26	5.20	2.32
MILGRAM BL, 2014, CITY AND SOC	10.1111/ciso.12038	24	2.18	1.89
SPRINGER SK, 2020, INT J LIFE CYCLE ASSESS	10.1007/s11367-020-01828-3	20	4.00	1.79
PANIKKAR B, 2015, PLOS ONE	10.1371/journal.pone.0142686	18	1.80	0.53
GARCIA-MURILLO M, 2017, DIGIT POLI REGUL GOVERN	10.1108/DPRG-02-2016-0004	18	2.25	1.57
VILLARREAL A, 2013, DEMOGRAPHY	10.1007/s13524-012-0153-5	18	1.50	1.00
BUSSO M, 2021, REG SCI URBAN ECON	10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2021.103658	18	4.50	3.89
JAYARAM N, 2020, INDIAN J LABOUR ECON	10.1007/s41027-020-00288-5	16	3.20	1.43

publications. In contrast, the journals that publish the most on the topic include the International Indian Journal of Labor Economics and the International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, which lead the field with three publications each. Imiscoe Research Series is in second place with two publications, which represents 10% of the total. The remaining publications are distributed in various journals.

The institutions that have contributed the most to the topic of the study are Queens College, with eight (8) contributions, University of São Paulo, with five (5) contributions, and Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale De Lausanne (Epfl), with three (3) contributions. Together, these institutions have contributed 13.22% of all publications. With two (2) contributions each, Carranza E, Ludermir Ab, Olivieri S, Ortega F, Rivadeneira A and Theodore N are the authors with the most published works. This is in consideration of the fact that 22.89% of the researchers in this field come from international co-authorships. The terms “migration” “employment” “informality” “labor migration” “human” “article” “female” “developing countries” are those most closely associated with the research topic.

This bibliometric study highlights trends and key actors in the area and offers a comprehensive overview of academic research on the connection between migration, insecurity and informal work. The results underscore the need for policies and programs that meet the particular needs of migrants in environments of social and economic instability, as well as the importance of addressing the intricate relationships between these elements.

However, it is essential to remember that this study also identifies areas where more research is required. For example, a deeper understanding is needed on the ways in which certain variables (such as gender, age and migration status) affect the connection between labor informality, insecurity and migration. More in-depth studies are also required on migrants' resilience and adaptability tactics in the face of unstable living and employment situations. Ultimately, this study provides a foundation for future research that addresses these and other important questions about migration and informal work in a context of social and economic uncertainty.

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