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The future of Brazil-Venezuela partnership under a migration crisis context: confidence-building measures by border understandings.

O futuro da parceria Brasil-Venezuela em um contexto de crise migratória: medidas de fortalecimento da confiança por entendimentos fronteiriços.

El futuro de la asociación Brasil-Venezuela en un contexto de crisis migratoria: medidas de fomento de la confianza mediante acuerdos fronterizos.

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Resumo: A história das relações internacionais do Brasil e da Venezuela é fundamental para a segurança e estabilidade sul-americana. A crise migratória venezuelano-brasileira (2015-2021) criou certo grau de incerteza, mas também gerou medidas de fortalecimento da confiança capazes de mobilizar a opinião pública, integrar políticas públicas governamentais, induzir a coordenação multinível e multiator e articular organizações internacionais com organizações da sociedade civil. Ao avaliar criticamente as relações entre o Brasil e a Venezuela na fronteira, poderíamos extrair alguns insights sobre como pensar sobre segurança e funcionamento humanitário na política global do século XXI. Uma perspectiva aprofundada a partir das relações bilaterais históricas permite perceber que a atual crise migratória venezuelano-brasileira se conecta a múltiplas tensões do passado que ecoam no presente e abre caminho para se repensar o futuro das relações internacionais sul-americanas. . O pano de fundo histórico produz, ao mesmo tempo, nós de tensão e a plataforma da parceria estratégica entre Brasil e Venezuela. Na segunda parte, passamos a pensar criticamente sobre ideias, discursos e ações realizadas diante de. As relações de fronteira entre a Venezuela e o Brasil em uma crise migratória justificam um melhor contexto de defesa, segurança e política humanitária com base em medidas de fortalecimento da confiança, visando o futuro de uma parceria estratégica.

Palavras-chave: Fronteiras; crise humanitária; Relações Brasil-Venezuela

Abstract: The history of international relations of Brazil and Venezuela is fundamental for South American security and stability. The Venezuelan-Brazilian migratory crisis (2015-2021) created a certain level of uncertainty but also generated confidence-building measures capable of mobilizing public opinion, integrating governmental public policies, inducing multilevel and multiactor coordination, and networking international organizations with civil society organizations. By critically assessing Brazilian-Venezuelan border relations we could draw some insights on how to think on security and humanitarian functioning in 21st Century global politics. An in-depth perspective based on historical bilateral relations makes it possible to realize that today's Venezuelan-Brazilian migratory crisis connects itself to multiple tensions of the past that echoes through the present and paves the way to re-imagine the future of South America's international relations. The historical background produces, at the same time, nodes of tension and the platform of the strategic partnership between Brazil and Venezuela. In the second part, we move on to critically thinking on ideas, discourses, and actions taken in face of. The Venezuelan-Brazilian border relations under a migratory crisis make the case for an improved context of defense, security, and humanitarian politics grounded on confidence-building measures, envisioning the future of a strategic partnership.

Keywords: Borders; humanitarian crisis; Brazil-Venezuela relations

Resumen: La historia de las relaciones internacionales de Brasil y Venezuela es fundamental para la seguridad y estabilidad de América del Sur. La crisis migratoria venezolana-brasileña (2015-2021) generó cierto nivel de incertidumbre pero también generó medidas de fomento de la confianza capaces de movilizar a la opinión pública, integrar políticas públicas gubernamentales, inducir la coordinación multinivel y multiactor, y relacionar organizaciones internacionales con organizaciones de la sociedad civil. Al evaluar críticamente las relaciones fronterizas entre Brasil y Venezuela, podríamos extraer algunas ideas sobre cómo pensar sobre la seguridad y el funcionamiento humanitario en la política global del siglo XXI. Una perspectiva en profundidad basada en las relaciones bilaterales históricas permite darse cuenta de que la actual crisis migratoria venezolana-brasileña se conecta a múltiples tensiones del pasado que resuenan en el presente y allanan el camino para reimaginar el futuro de las relaciones internacionales de América del Sur. . El trasfondo histórico produce, al mismo tiempo, nodos de tensión y la plataforma de la alianza estratégica entre Brasil y Venezuela. En la segunda parte, pasamos al pensamiento crítico sobre las ideas, los discursos y las acciones emprendidas frente a. Las relaciones fronterizas entre Venezuela y Brasil bajo una crisis migratoria abogan por un mejor contexto de política de defensa, seguridad y humanitaria basado en medidas de fomento de la confianza, visualizando el futuro de una asociación estratégica..

Palabras clave: Fronteras; crisis humanitaria; Relaciones Brasil-Venezuela

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INTRODUTION

History has multiple meanings and functionalities, partially fulfilled with lessons derived from past experiences (DURANT; DURANT, 1968) that would enable us to see the present moment more clearly. A better comprehension of our current conditions based on historical perspective would help to make decisions in a scenario of growing vagueness and disinformation (BRANDS; SURI, 2016). Hereafter, the historical perspective permits gathering a set of data and qualitatively analyze it by searching for continuities and discontinuities, regularities, and singularities. Cases, events, and phenomena from the past could garble our perceptions of the present and perhaps prepare us to act on the future (DUROSELLE, 2000).

The history of international relations of Brazil and Venezuela has been a fascinating trajectory toward the construction of a security and defense neighborhood in South America (GEHRE, 2017). The central argument of this text is that the Venezuelan-Brazilian migratory crisis (2015-2021) generated confidence-building measures related to public opinion mobilization, national and subnational governmental public policies, multilevel and multi-actor coordination, and international organizations and civil society integrated actions.

The present article aims to critically assess the Brazilian-Venezuelan border relations to draw some valuable insights on how to increase awareness about integrated security and humanitarian aid in the 21st Century global politics. In-depth perspective based on historical bilateral relations makes it possible to realize that Venezuelan-Brazilian migratory crisis connects itself to multiple tensions of the past that echoes through the present and paves the way to re-imagine the future of South America's international relations.

In the first part of this text, we dive into the historical elements that, at the same time, constitute nodes of tension and the foundation under which lies the very conception of a strategic partnership between Brazil and Venezuela (GEHRE, 2012 c). The historical background is essential to understand how Brazil and Venezuela reenacted confidence-building measures previously built in their border relations. In the second part, we critically

discuss ideas, discourses, and actions taken in the face of the Venezuelan-Brazilian migratory crisis. Brazilian-Venezuelan responsiveness to the migrant crisis both mirrored historical agreements and create a new flux of understandings. Finally, considering the border relations and the South American defense context, security, and humanitarian politics, we outlined some possible conclusions to envision the future of the Venezuelan-Brazilian partnership.

BRAZIL, VENEZUELA, AND THE PROCESS OF BUILDING CONFIDENCE MEASURES

In this first part of the text, we discuss how confidence measures are affected by bilateral tensions, and how Brazil and Venezuela reacted to the emergence of specific strains in different areas that marked the trajectory of their bilateral relations. In this part, it is possible to perceive how past and present converge: the current migration crisis, its amplitude, and reactions are temporally connected to a historical set of tensions and (mis)perceptions experienced by Brazilians and Venezuelans border relations.

Borders as defining elements

Borders have been the defining elements of Brazilian-Venezuelan history, mediating moments of crisis and opportunities. The political practice of producing borders is the territorialization of space and the relationships that are established in that place beyond the border regions themselves (PAASI, 2009). Popular culture, educational programs, other forms of awareness and learning are part of this differentiation process, which begins in some cases and, in others, are consolidated, with the drawing of limits and the definition of borders (PAASI, 2011), which gains its importance due to territoriality as an organizing principle of social and political life (ANDERSON; 'O'DOWD, 1999). The differentiation process affects people's lives even when these borders are not insurmountable walls, as there is the performance of legislation and public services, the border being the physical and symbolic repository of the national State.

The border initially dehumanizes the territory, overlapping the State over the lives of those living there, creating a reality based on the difference (HOUTUM, 2011). In the classic literature on International Relations, the internal is understood as a place of order and sovereignty and the external as a place of disorder and anarchy. The order comes from creating an international system based on power relations (MORGENTHAU, 1978; MEARSHIMER, 2011; BULL, 2002). As part of the mechanism of international politics, the idea of difference is thus institutionalized with two goals: to develop stable sovereign states and consolidate the power difference in the international system. However, there are structural problems regarding the global-local orders because of the inconclusiveness of sovereign states' formation throughout the international system (AYOOB, 1995).

In that sense, borders are political acts carried out by States to delimit their physical space, their possession over a given territory. So often, we tend to naturalize these political divisions because we already have our lives included within this political conformation, but the Brazilian-Venezuelan case is emblematic of the sense that border constitutions need to be reframed, overcoming the Manichaeism and simplism imposed by the traditional theories. Brazil and Venezuela were born from a direct dispute between Spain and Portugal in the new World. However, they are part of an expanded Amazon territory, culturally marked by contacts with Caribbean populations and by a European power game in the north of South America.

Whether theorists suggest that borders are an essential variable of the international order, influencing the use of power and the making of strategies (DIENER; HAGEN, 2012), it is necessary to consider Brazil-Venezuela's border relations as the result of colonialism. Portuguese, Spanish, Holland, France, Great Britain, and North American greed for land and resources was intentionally directed with an imperialist sense of aggrandizement of power. Brazil and Venezuela were supporting actors in that great power politics play, from the control over the Amazon River and the establishment of colonies to crafting unequal trade regimes and military intervention.

Nonetheless, the Brazil-Venezuela border relations seem richer and contain more than just colonialist diplomatic relations, reflecting local people and native communities' interests and dynamics create a culturally diverse humanitarian mosaic to defense and security directives. Nowadays, Brazilian-Venezuelan border relations engulf a combination of permissive practices and constraints related to (un)cooperative and (un)coordinated policies to ensure human security by fighting inequality and improving education and health care services. In that sense, the migration crisis had encountered a particularly permissive environment to potentialize all the negative impacts, effects to migrants and local inhabitants of the cities of Pacaraima and Boa Vista, as well as along the migrant's internalization policy chain to other Brazilian cities.

Not surprisingly, almost 200 years of Brazilian-Venezuelan bilateral relations have generated troubles and induced the building of confidence measures. The countries' borders relations incorporate structural elements to understand and connect past events to present experiences, being relevant for the future. Crises could separate us if a common history mediated by border relations were not powerful enough, as a political key, to overcome challenges and bring populations closer together.

A brief history of Brazil-Venezuela border *relations*

The present migratory crisis is part of a Brazil-Venezuela border relations history, and it is based on the construction of a bilateral agenda structured on central themes, such as politics, diplomacy, security, indigenous peoples, commerce, infrastructure, energy, mining, as well as the pivotal role of Boa Vista city.

The political agenda pushed forward border (in) stability in terms of territorial markers (such as agreements and treaties) and sovereignty; regulation of the navigation regime, commerce and people influx; and the containment of several threats related to the foreign presence on Brazilian-Venezuelan territories. At the same time, the political agenda was based

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on the concept of vivification, which is on the willingness of governments to provide development to regions considered uninhabited and distant from the core of the nation. Thus, this process of border enrichment took place through a) the creation of administrative units (territories, states, departments, municipalities); b) the establishment of military constructions such as bases, hospitals, barracks, and airstrips at specific points on the border; c) the building of roads and energy connection infrastructure; d) the establishment of human settlement and links between Boa Vista, Santa Elena do Uairén and Amazonian cities, such as Manaus (GEHRE, 2012a).

Bilateral relations have been incremented due to the need to establish more consistent diplomatic ties. This happened from the timid diplomatic approach in the 19th Century to the consolidation of the border and commercial frameworks and the creation of consular representations and embassies. Specifically, the instrument of presidential diplomacy boosted this process of rapprochement between the two countries. The Brazilian-Venezuelan border landmark number 8, known as BV-8, between Pacaraima and Santa Elena de Uairén became a symbolic place for their partnership. In this context, the meetings between Médici-Caldera (1970s), Lusinchi-Figueiredo (1980s), Fernando Collor de Mello and Carlos Andrés Pérez (1990), Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Rafael Caldeira (1990-2000), and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez (2000-2010), would seal the so-called Brazil-Venezuela's strategic partnership. Presidential diplomacy would systematically reissue initiatives and proposals for border cooperation that would serve essential sectors such as health, transport, communication, education, sanitation, energy, and road infrastructure, providing new large-scale projects for Brazilian companies in Venezuela (GEHRE, 2012b).

Another agenda historically constituted was bilateral trade. From the 19th Century onwards, border commercial relations were marked by the following dynamics: a) expansions and shrinks; b) tariff wars over goods transit taxes; c) a curious cut off in the Brazilian livestock production to Venezuelan markets; d) shortages episodes; e) precarious institutional aspects, such as lack of staff and inadequate facilities of border authorities; and f) a flawed regulatory framework for disciplining import and export activities. If geographical obstacles made

transport and mobility difficult, corrupt practices encourage trade detours and embezzlement. It was routine to see several trucks coming from different parts of Venezuela to unload goods in Santa Elena and to be repacked onto other trucks, sometimes Brazilian ones, to reach Boa Vista's market, circumventing inspection and avoiding the payment of taxes (GEHRE, 2012a).

Another relevant bilateral agenda regards security. The problem of illicit activities pointed to the border sensitivity between Brazil and Venezuela in the face of trafficking and the smuggling of diamonds, gold, and goods in general. The binational security agenda has: a) encompassed the undue exploitation of rubber in Venezuelan territory by Brazilians in the 1940s; b) concerned about communist penetration in the Amazon from the 1960s to the 1980s; c) offered a scenario where the was a constant presence of garimpeiros in foreign territory and the growth of crimes associated with drug cartels in the 1990s; as well as d) increased the traffic of arms, animals, wood, and people, and deviation of fuel in the 2000s. Among the results of this process of border securitization issues, it is possible to identify a kind of bilateral intelligence standing out, a framework of routines and decision-make procedures prepared to deal with border problems (GALVÃO; CORTINHAS, 2014).

Because of the political and security concerns, the influx of people and the migration through the border were consolidated as part of the bilateral agenda. On the one hand, Brazilian human penetration contributed to dynamically boosting the other side of the border, despite being deemed undesirable by Venezuelans due to the disorder produced by this demographic pressure. On the other hand, Brazilians with different occupations – traders, "rubber soldiers", garimpeiros, civil servants, and tourists - built a symbolic bridge between the two countries with their comings and goings. Caracas shaped a specific program of territorial occupation, called Venezolanización de la Gran Sabana and constantly used diplomatic channels to complain about the lack of reciprocity of the Brazilian government, accused of rigorously applying the Foreigners Law to drive away undocumented Venezuelan citizens, and not worrying about the illegal Brazilians who were thinking about living in Venezuela (GEHRE, 2012a).

A particular case of human flow – associated with the dimension of security, due to its implications for national sovereignty – is the place of indigenous community on their bilateral agenda. The Venezuelan-Brazilian Amazonia, although much less dynamic – marked by major geographical accidents – gained visibility, due to the institutional design of a transnational indigenous community, mostly Yanomami, constituted on both sides of the border. The Amazon would not, therefore, be this static force blocking the integration between Brazil and Venezuela. On the border between Santa Helena and Pacaraima - and by extension in Boa Vista – it is possible to encounter different ethnicities such as the Ingarikó, Patoma, Taurepang, Macuxi, and Wapixana, original folks who do not need to recognize this abstraction called sovereignty, but that are fighting to have their rights recognized for the maintenance of their lifestyle (SIMÕES, 2017).

Another topic connecting Brazilians and Venezuelans, and that is considered critical because involving political, diplomatic, security, and human rights issues at the same time – and which has a long historical trajectory – regards to illegal mining. The issue of mining was already on the political radar in the 1940s when the exploration of gold and diamonds in areas of the Bolívar State went directly to the Brazilian border, with no effective control at that time. This locality, a sparsely populated border area, and with limited economic activity, made gold and diamond mining, as well as its contraband to English Guiana, Bolívar, and Roraima, an important source of local income. In this scenario, numerous camps of Brazilian garimpeiros shaped the exploration cycles of the Venezuelan Guyanese massif along the rivers that formed the Caroní basin, a tributary of the Orinoco River. Multiple factors have made mining this organized and lasting activity in border relations: the difficulties in monitoring the vastness of the territories; cycles of adverse economic conditions in Brazil and Venezuela – high inflation, inequalities and the lack of income would push people to pursue the dream to become rich overnight; valorization of gold in the international market; facilities for the sale of gold on the parallel market; and this collective imaginary of power and wealth around life in gold mining (GEHRE, 2012 a).

The road connecting Manaus, Boa Vista and Santa Elena would facilitate the access to the border region and provided to the city an improvement of the licit and illicit commercial flow, as well as illegal mining, prostitution, and smuggling. On the Brazilian side, the farmers' connivance and support, and political colonels in Boa Vista, encouraged the expansion of the mining frontier in the State, which made the confrontation between garimpeiros and indigenous people a systematic and increasingly bloody happening. From the Serra do Tepequém, Pacaraima, and other border regions with Venezuela – particularly the northwestern portion that covered a large part of the Yanomami community – the confrontations became constant and violent between indigenous and non-indigenous people, often with government complicity (MENDIBLE-ZURITA, 1993).

The border agenda of Brazil and Venezuela depended heavily on the infrastructure theme. In addition to supplying the region with road interconnections and aerial connections, by building highways and establishing air routes, it was necessary to create an energy interconnection, which would become one of the fundamental axes of the bilateral strategic partnership. The configuration of the so-called "Guri line" required years of technical studies necessary to make the power generation project feasible. From Raúl Leoni Hydroelectric Plant, in Guri, departure a line of transmission reaching the city of Santa Helena into the border with Brazil. Managed by a coordinated action between EDELCA (Venezuelan energy company) and Eletronorte (Brazilian energy company), the energy was retransmitted to Boa Vista and Manaus. Inaugurated on August 13, 2001, the Guri line was considered a strategic work and visually a symbol of the union between Venezuela and Brazil/Roraima. It was known that regional growth was not possible without the energy and that the idea of being able to rely on "the electricity produced in the neighboring country, friend and brother" was the epitome of Brazilian-Venezuelan cooperation (CARDOSO, 1998).

The bilateral agenda is completed with the advent of the city of Boa Vista as a geographical pivot of the border history between Brazil and Venezuela. The city has become an important reference in the governance of the problems between Venezuela and Brazil, in multiple dimensions: a) a connection route between the Venezuelan and Brazilian territories,

and with the other Brazilian states, particularly with the city of Manaus; b) a hub for trade and services capable to vivify the border areas; c) a geostrategic reference point in South America chessboard, concerning the performance of extra-regional powers in the region; and d) a key part of the Amazon-Orinoco integration axe, to link Rio Branco basin and Venezuelan Gran Sabana. (GEHRE, 2012a).

The first part of the present work has edified a framework based on the history of Brazil and Venezuela border relations. Confidence-building measures are path-dependent on several bilateral issue-areas: the pivotal geopolitical connections of cities in both sides of the border; the infrastructural constructions, especially on transport and energy; the establishment of subnational agreement on dispute resolutions about illegal mining; indigenous people affirmative actions; and normative regimes on commerce, tourism, health, education and other public policy's themes. In that sense, confidence-building measures are enduring bilateral institutions that can be accessed by both countries in moments of crisis. In sum, understanding the historical origins of confidence-building measures between Brazil and Venezuela allows us to analyze how the current crisis could be positive critical juncture to reinforce their strategic partnership.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VENEZUELAN-BRAZILIAN MIGRATORY CRISIS

In this second part of the text, we discuss how Brazil and Venezuela reacted to the outbreak of a migratory crisis (2015-2021), which was triggered by multiple forces profondes (social, economic, cultural, and demographic) (RENOUVIN & DUROSELLE 1991). In this part, the migration crisis is discussed as an ambivalent historical force of the strategical partnership transformation. On one side, a national Venezuelan problem became a transnational border preoccupation with global implications; and on the other side, a security (strategic and military) issue was linked to human rights impasses. This part ties up history and statecraft to highlight how confidence building measures – related to political, military and humanitarian

responses – could be engineering by a governance design at the Brazil-Venezuela border to face the outbreak of the migratory crisis.

The outbreak of the migratory crisis and its international implications

It is possible to associate the increase in the flow of Venezuelans entering territories in neighboring countries, such as Brazil and Colombia with the deterioration of the political and economic situation in Venezuela during the presidency of Nicolás Maduro. Most of the forces driving migratory dynamics are related to the deterioration of the national socioeconomical conditions, natural disasters or persecution (PEREIRA, 2020). Numerous economic problems, such as fluctuations in the price of the oil barrel, in addition to the non-approval of various economic and political sectors concerning the country's development, the death of Hugo Chávez, and less supporting from various national sectors to Nicolás Maduro generated what we now understand as a widespread crisis in Venezuela. Therefore, to achieve better living conditions, countless Venezuelans decided to migrate to border countries, and, as a result, all these countries needed to adapt to receive them (PENNAFORTE AND OLIVEIRA, 2019).

The Venezuelan situation have systemic effects on South America neighborhood on defense and security, improving region's vulnerabilities in three dimensions: a) energy, as it is one of the main producers of oil and gas; b) social, catalyzing the flow of migrants and refugees; c) security, by increasing political instability, structural violence, and facilitating criminal activity, whether organized or not when crossing people, weapons and drugs (PÊGO, 2021).

Increasing pressure on South American borders has made migration a critical issue. On the one hand, it appears that the pressure on the Venezuelan-Colombian border was much greater due to a previously established migratory network between both countries, including greater cultural and linguistic proximity. On the other hand, Brazil has become a pole of attraction for the infrastructural facilities of access to the national territory and for the

economic development of Brazilian cities, which attracted many of the migrants to a new way of life, quite different from the hardships of an excessively restrictive regime.

The migration crisis international implications consist of three basic factors that continued to deepen between 2015 and 2021: 1) the governance crisis; 2) the economic crisis; 3) the humanitarian crisis. At the same time, factors, such as American pressure, the fragile performance of the Lima's Group, the low reach of initiatives by the international community, and the strong political and military polarization in Venezuela increased the crisis and pushed aside the short-term resolutions. The result is the expansion of institutional pressures that generate spillovers at subnational, national, and regional levels, putting the institutional capacities to solve it in check (VAZ, 2017).

In fact, South America was confronting a fragmentation in its integration process and the decay of a post-hegemonic regionalism model (NEVES; ARAUJO, 2021). At that time, Brazil would join forces with other countries (Argentina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru) to build a regional response within the scope of Lima's Group, criticizing the human rights violations and the rupture in the democratic order in Venezuela.

The interference of the United States in Latin America politics, under the presidency of Donald Trump, was wide open, trying to control many of the countries in the Lima's Group and inducing them to adopt a tougher tone toward Caracas. Trump – governing from his official twitter account – tried to bully Nicolas Maduro by threating Venezuela with a 'military option' as US-Venezuela relation faded . Undoubtedly, Washington was keen on reedit a center-peripheral relation to Latin-America and reinforce the imperfection of power between the United States, Brazil and Venezuela (GEHRE; ARRAES, 2021). In fact, US interference in Venezuela has been going on since the Barack Obama administration, increasing in the Donald Trump administration with the interference in the Lima Group and the discussion of the possibility of armed intervention in Venezuela. In 2014, the US Congress passed Venezuela's Human Rights Defense Act No. 113-278, which provides sanctions against the Venezuelan State. Currently, sanctions are not only applied by the USA but are also applied by countries

in the European Union, Canada, and the United Kingdom, for example. By 2020, 150 sanctions had been applied to Venezuela. Sanctions have further hampered the country's economic viability (MELLO, 2020).

Notably, Brazil would cease to be a relevant actor and capable of contributing to the resolution of crises in the continent. Instead of being proactive, the Brazilian foreign policy of Ernesto Araújo and Jair Bolsonaro had become reactive and quite sterile on new ideas (GEHRE, 2020). The standard procedure, when there is an escalation of violence between two states, or when different kinds of crises are spilling over, is to close the border to stop these effects. Venezuela had already closed the border with Brazil in December 2016 and repeated the act in February 2019. The alleged cause would be the Brazilian interference in internal affairs, justified by the humanitarian aid in favor of self-declared President Juan Guaidó. Therefore, Brazil, in one of the reactions to the migratory crisis, closed its border with Venezuela, on August 6, 2018, through an injunction against the establishment of the State Decree of Roraima No. 25,681-E, which dealt with the possibility of Venezuelans access public services in Brazil with valid passports .

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, Brazil again closed its border with neighboring countries, including Venezuela, according to guidelines contained in Law 13.979, of February 6, 2020 (BRASIL, 2020a). It should be noted that Venezuela has not closed the border with Brazil, even with Maduro taking control measures and raising the tone about the Brazilian management of the pandemic, calling the Brazilian strain of the virus 'Bolsonaro mutant'. The challenging rhetoric, however, did not prevent Venezuela from donating respirators to mitigate the Brazilian crisis (CRAVEIRO, 2021).

At certain point, we could consider that the Venezuela's migratory crisis became a humanitarian problem in many border countries. According to the Regional Action Plan for Venezuelan Migration, published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2018), between 2015 and 2017, more than one million and six hundred thousand Venezuelans decided to settle in countries, such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador. During this

period, 57.000 people migrated to Argentina, 119.000 to Chile, 600.000 to Colombia, and 39.000 to Ecuador.

It is observed that Venezuelans sought countries with easy entry, short border trajectory, and ease for the usage of their mother tongue for communication. Currently, according to data referring to March 2021, from the Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants of Venezuela (R4V, 2021), more than 5 million people have migrated to other countries. From this total, 2.476.781 formally applied for residence permission in these locations. Also, according to data from such a platform, until October 2020, 262.441 Venezuelans migrated to Brazil seeking for better subsistence conditions. Therefore, Brazil is the fifth country in South America that receives the most Venezuelans, and that needed to adapt logistically, legislatively, and with public policies to receive them .

The distinction between the concepts of migrant and refugee is important for understanding the migration issue. Initially, many Venezuelans who had the financial capacity to migrate to other countries, did so as soon as they realized the onset of a crisis in Venezuela. There are still no specific data on the migratory status of these people, but it is believed that several of them did not ask the countries to which they migrated for recognition as refugees. The concepts of refuge and migration could be associated with some failure of the State to provide resources so, that its citizens can live in a dignified manner in their territory. Thus, refugees are citizens for whom the country of origin has failed to provide protection (HADDAD, 2008).

In the receiving country, the migration of refugees from one country to another also creates structural problems. Concerning the logistical context of the migration of Venezuelans to Brazil, the city most affected by the arrival of Venezuelans was Pacaraima , the gateway to Brazil for those coming from Venezuela. Therefore, the arrival of all these Venezuelans has caused numerous problems to the city. The city does not have the adequate infrastructure in terms of health, education, basic sanitation, public safety, and housing to adequately deal with the high number of daily migrants arriving.

A series of protests, confrontations, and hostility of Brazilians against Venezuelan population in the city is elucidating this issue. In one of many demonstrations of Brazilians against Venezuelan migrants, in Pacaraima, the local inhabitants destroyed improvised camps of the neighboring population, burning their belongings (EL PAÍS, 2018). The election of Jair Bolsonaro unleashed an ultraconservative political movement based on ideas of armamentism, patriotism and xenophobia, which included a negative image of the "venezuelanization" of Brazil as a synonym of backwardness and disregarding Brazil's international and democratic commitments in its foreign policy. In February 2019, some cases of Venezuelan clashed with the Bolivarian National Guard were also reported, which demonstrates the existing tensions on the border (CHAVES; COSTA, 2019).

Moreover, the bilateral relations would enter troubled waters at the borders. A landmark of this diplomatic retraction is the total withdrawal of all Brazilians who work in official positions of Brazil (diplomats, administrative officials, and attaches) in Venezuela, which weakens exchanges at the diplomatic, consular, and military levels (BRASIL, 2020). This also means a reduction in the capacity to contribute to the resolution of the crisis in Venezuela and its impacts on South America.

Responses to the Venezuelan-Brazilian migratory crisis

A political response to a humanitarian crisis would necessarily involve the city of Boa Vista as the geographic pivot of the region by making it a host city and a route for Venezuelan refugees who would be directed to other large cities such as Manaus (Amazonas), Belém (Pará) and São Paulo (São Paulo), which also received Venezuelans in large quantities.

To receive Venezuelans who arrived in Brazil, as well as to ensure that such arrival did not generate other problems than those already faced by the host cities, the Brazilian

government needed to organize itself operationally and legislatively (PEREIRA, 2021). Thus, the multiactor response to the migratory crisis of Venezuelan was based on four main pillars: a) the Federal government reaction, characterized by the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE) bureaucratic procedures; b) the Acolhida Operation, represented by the Armed Forces in locus operations, c) the United Nations role, represented by The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); and d) performance of Civil Society, represented in this text by Caritas São Paulo (PEREIRA 2021).

Concerning the Brazilian response to the humanitarian challenge, we can undoubtedly consider the Federal government role in manage the crisis, inducing counter measures of reception, registration, organization and care. Also, the Brazilian government stablished coordinated actions and partnerships with subnational authorities, university, private institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the United Nations (UN). According to Pereira (2021), the Brazilian government proceeded in four main areas:

1) Reception – welcoming Venezuelan's migrants indigenous and no indigenous at Brazil-Venezuela borders.

2) Registration – classifying people in a system (SISCONARE) for the processing of requests for recognition of the refugee condition; and for working permits.

3) Organization – ordering of the border, reception in shelters and processes of internalization.

4) Care – developing public policies, by the ministries and the Civil House, so that each Venezuelan can live in Brazil with dignity.

With the growing movement of Venezuelans towards Brazil, in mid-2016, the Brazilian government considered the need to update almost all legislation that defined the mechanisms for receiving refugees. Thus, according to Pereira (2021), numerous normative resolutions

were created or updated, and CONARE initiated a joint action among its members so that local, state, and federal authorities were guided on the issue of incoming refugees. In addition, there is a search for greater speed in the analysis of asylum applications so that more people can be recognized as refugees in Brazil.

The SISCONARE platform was created to compose this set of measures to speed up the processes (BRASIL, 2021b). Greater speed and accuracy have been achieved during the insertion of data on refugees by the Federal Police (PRF) and during the analyses carried out by CONARE members. In addition, there is an increase in transparency by allowing access to the process by the refugee himself.

According to data from the platform "Cooperation Project for Analysis of Refugee Decisions in Brazil", a partnership between the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, UNHCR, and CONARE, from January 2017 to December 2020, 69.098 refugee requests cases were analyzed based on SISCONARE input data. From these analyses, 54.471 refer to Venezuelan requests and, of this total, 46.647 were recognized as refugees .

Aiming to face the challenge by formulating a political response on their ideological bias, the Brazilian government decided to implement a military response in the context of a humanitarian crisis. In addition to the work carried out by the federal government through CONARE, according to Provisional Measure nº 820, of February 16, 2018 (BRASIL, 2018c), converted into law nº 13.684, of June 21, 2018 (BRASIL, 2018b), Brazil started to establish emergency assistance measures that would be developed by the various agents of the Federal, State, and municipal governments. In addition, and legally bounded on Decree nº 9.286, of February 15, 2018 (BRASIL, 2018a) , it was established that the Ministry of Defense would compose the Federal Emergency Assistance Committee, creating the so-called Acolhida Operation.

The main purpose of this Committee was to provide measures of emergency assistance for welcoming Venezuelans, through partnerships with entities such as the UN, for example. Geopolitically, Acolhida Operation was designed on two main objectives: to welcome migrants

and refugees and to minimize the impacts of the humanitarian crisis in Brazil, avoiding the spillover effects of the crisis.

In the escalation of the crisis, Acolhida Operation was implemented in March 2018 by the Armed Forces, in partnership with other institutions of the federal, State, and municipal governments, together with United Nations agencies and partner Non-Governmental Organizations to welcome immigrants who are in vulnerable situations in Pacaraima and other units of the Brazilian federation, assisting those who may only be in transit in the country. It is worth mentioning that Acolhida Operation was organized in three axes of decision-making procedures:

1. Guarantee of law and order (GLO) – methods of ordering the border related to documentation check, vaccination, and illicit control operation.

2. Logistics – process of migrants' triage and distribution of persons to their shelter and to have access to food, and health care.

3. Mobility – Internalization that is the phase of voluntary displacement of migrants and Venezuelan refugees from Roraima to other units of the Federation, aiming at socio-economic inclusion.

It is important to point out the social role of the Brazilian Armed Forces, which are particularly responsible for ordering the border, for the logistical organization of the spaces of the Interiorization and Screening Posts (PITRIGS), of the reception centers and temporary accommodation in Pacaraima, Boa Vista and Manaus, by providing food, basic health care, including vaccines required by Brazil, and the Venezuelan interiorization process.

According to the Interiorization and Integration Report published by UNHCR in February 2021, people who cross the border and arrive in Pacaraima, Boa Vista, or Manaus are directed to the Interiorization and Screening Posts (PTRIGS), where they are identified, registered, and forwarded to one of the following locations: reception centers, temporary accommodation or interiorization flights. In this process, the Armed Forces, together with the UNHCR partnership, screen and establish the profiles that will be assigned to the reception

centers and/or internalized to other cities in cases related to family reunification, job opportunities, transfer to another reception center, or social reunion.

As it can be seen, the Brazilian government works in partnership with the United Nations, through agencies such as UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA in joint actions to provide better reception of Venezuelans who arrive in Brazil. In this regard, the role of the UNHCR has been of paramount importance in the process of welcoming Venezuelans. According to Pereira (2021), such agency has been active in the Brazilian response, since 2016, through technical assessments of the situation in Venezuela, in Roraima, Manaus, Belém, and São Paulo. In addition, it is active in advising the government on the design of strategies to be developed, in coordination and advocacy with local authorities, in establishing partnerships with private companies to provide job opportunities and financial assistance to Venezuelans, in the analysis of protection cases, and in assisting the Armed Forces in the internalization processes.

Nevertheless, a humanitarian response also had to be formulated to deal with a humanitarian crisis. As part of the response to the humanitarian crisis, it is important to mention that UNHCR does not acted alone and that other United Nations agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations, also carry out numerous actions to ensure that Venezuelans are welcomed in a dignified manner. Regarding such organizations, it should be noted that they have the consent of the Brazilian government to develop activities in the country. Thus, we can mention some examples of non-governmental organizations, such as AVSI Brazil (2020) , World Vision Brazil (2020) , Fraternity without Borders (2020) , and Caritas São Paulo (2020), who have consistent work with refugees in the states of Roraima, Amazonas, and São Paulo.

In this article, we focus on Caritas São Paulo social role in supporting the Venezuelan migrants, since this institution is a non-governmental organization that supports the Nacional Commission for Refugees (CONARE) to analyze and judge the asylum requests in Brazil. Furthermore, as defined by the institution itself (CÁRITAS, 2021), it has more than 170 member organizations around the World, is linked to the Catholic Church and it is a very engaged institution for supporting refugees in Brazil.

According to Pereira (2021), in Brazil, Caritas São Paulo acts on the issue of asylum by being a member of CONARE, but without a vote, that is, it provides support for the analysis of asylum requests, but does not decide about the refugee conditions that would be granted. In addition, Caritas São Paulo also offers Venezuelan migrants programs of 1) Protection, with Venezuelan eligibility jobs and other migrants arriving in Brazil, seeking to analyze the situation of each one of them when carrying out analyzes on the possibility of persecution, the situation of the country of origin, migration profiles according to legislation; 2) Social Assistance, orienting and guiding Venezuelans to health care in the states, in addition to assisting UNHCR in the eligibility process for the provision of CBI grants , managing donations and establishing partnerships with other entities or state governments to welcome these people; 3) Social Integration, promoting education and work opportunities for Venezuelans; and 4) Mental Health, promoting individual and group psychological assistance.

Brazilian adaptations to deal with migrants still presents inconsistencies, particularly in the difficulty in offering an integrated national response. A good governance of the migratory problem would guide the work of multiple stakeholders, with joint actions that seek to promote better living conditions for Venezuelans in Brazil. This is necessary to obtain better results and avoid the escalation of violence in Brazilian territory through tensions that stem from the spillover of the Venezuelan crisis.

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic induced the closure of borders and resulted in rise of people's vulnerability on Brazil and Venezuela borders. Considering the Brazilian Federal Government's ideological position (and pandemic denial), the closing of the border was probably a reaction to the Venezuelan government rather than a strategically and coordinated action to reduce the impacts of the pandemics. For instance, restrictive mobility policy to reduce infections did not result in what was intended due the lack of articulation between Brazil and Venezuela governments. Moreover, the impact on Venezuelans in Brazil has increased with the worsening of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country (ARAUJO; NEVES, 2021).

Thus, it is also necessary to think and develop healthier and integration strategies for Venezuelans in Brazil. According to data from the Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants of Venezuela, until March 25, 2021, 423,27 Venezuelans were infected by the disease in Brazil, on a scale of up to 1.000 people. Therefore, according to information made available by the same platform, the Brazilian government has established, from actions between Acolhida Operation, UNHCR, and partners, measures to restrict and protect Venezuelans, as well as the creation of campaign hospitals to receive cases of COVID-19.

CONCLUSIONS: THE FUTURE OF BRAZILIAN-VENEZUELAN PARTNERSHIP

The migrant crisis reflects the melting down of Venezuelan governability since the death of Hugo Chavez, pushing many Venezuelans to migrate to other countries seeking better opportunities for personal and professional development. Nonetheless, a critical appraisal of the episode points to the fact that the migration crisis cannot be qualified as a "Venezuelan" issue but should be seen as a "Venezuelan-Brazilian" problem. In fact, the Venezuelan migrants are made more vulnerable by several factors, some of which are precisely due to the inaction of the Venezuelan and Brazilian states.

In the same way, it is necessary to understand that the role of the Brazilian armed forces, which was the structuring of the welcomed operation, would not have been successful without the full functioning of Brazilian democracy. In fact, we can say that Acolhida Operation contributed to regional security and stability in four main ranges: a) strengthening the construction of regional understandings to deal with the crisis; b) mitigating negative effects, such as poverty and lack of social assistance to migrants; c) promoting regional stability; and d) favoring the reestablishment of democracy in the neighboring country.

The role of Federal Government was the best possible considering the ideological frame that limited a better understand of the migrant crisis. Brazilian government was responsible to articulate action with local authorities, International Organizations, and civil society organizations. Likewise, and despite the cases of xenophobia and discrimination against migrants, it is possible to affirm that for history the attention and care provided by the two countries has strengthened the credentials of the existing measures of mutual trust.

It can be said that Roraima was highly impacted by the migrant crisis, when dealing with the humanitarian and security impacts of Venezuelans indigenous and no indigenous in its territory. A permissive context present in Roraima – hostilities against environmentalism and indigenous rights, as well as territorial conflicts – have amplified the already existent tensions between different social actors. Vulnerabilities and social conflict became even more sensitive with the outbreak of the migratory crisis.

The existing pressures, which overloaded the local authorities and institutions, which are very focused on illegal mining, deforestation, advancing the agricultural frontier, and disrespect for the indigenous people, ended up overflowing with the advent of the crisis. Therefore, the migratory crisis is not only a Venezuelan crisis even though it is the result of political and economic problems of a government established in Caracas, but it is a South American crisis, with a "Venezuelan-Brazilian" dimension, co-constituted to the extent that the responses generated by Brazil were developed between 2015 and 2021, to guarantee dignified attention to migrants and refugees.

Regarding the future of the Brazil-Venezuela partnership, it is possible to speculate that it requires a deep knowledge of the history of international relations in South America (GEHRE, 2009). Moments of crisis and tensions are part of our South American trajectory. It was possible to understand that the worsening of the Venezuelan crisis and the continuous decrease in the institutional capacity to manage crises did not prevent the building of confidence measures based on border relations under this tense bilateral episode. In the absence of a robust regional integration framework that could support this crise resolution, initiatives such as the Acolhida Operation and the complex governance designed linking

multiple regional, national, sub-national, and non-governmental actors, kept the cooperation framework necessary and fundamental for the containment of the crisis externalities.

Considering that the spillover of the Venezuelan crisis adds to the Brazilian health crisis, it is extremely necessary the commitment of more resources, both budgetary and strategic, the creation of public policies and the improvement in the integration between partnerships with private, public, national, and international institutions so that the Brazilian response to the Venezuelan refugee crisis develops efficiently, providing a better life for these people.

Finally, we point out that history does not need to unveil only the problems produced by personalities in a position of power. History serves this purpose to reinvigorate our hopes for accessing to the possible lessons of moments of crisis that we experience. Returning to Will and Ariel Durant ideas on historical lessons, 'the knowledge of history can teach us that civilization is a cooperative product, that almost all people contributed to it'. Therefore, there is a need for greater international cooperation, as well as integrated regional actions so that crises can be managed and transformed into opportunities for common learning.

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