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Clashing cartographies in indigenous refugees' sheltering practices: the embodiment of an alternative sense of spatiality and temporality in an indigenous shelter demobilisation in the north of Brazil

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Abstract: In the present article, we examine the situation of indigenous refugees in Roraima, Brazil, and reflect on the way sheltering practices affect their subjectivity. We analyse the demobilisation of the *Pintolândia* shelter, focusing particularly on the refusal of its residents to relocate, as to present refugee sheltering as a practice that infringes individuals of subjectivity, whilst being an embodied space that represents a yet unrealised possibility. Through this examination, we reflect about the way their agen-

cy, politics, and subjectivity challenge the spatial dynamics established by the powerful structures that manage refugee shelters. As to do so, this article is divided into three sections. The first provides a contextual narrative of the housing practices for the indigenous migrant population in Roraima, mapping the evolution of sheltering strategies over the years. The second section addresses the complexities and contradictions of sheltering indigenous refugees within a framework designed for the general refugee population, examining the impact on their specific rights as indigenous peoples. The final section focuses on the demobilization of the Pintolândia shelter, presenting the moving strategy as a governmentality mechanism and interpreting indigenous resistance to relocation as an expression of alternative spatiality and temporality.

Keywords: Indigenous shelters; necrocolonial politics; cartographies of mobility.

Cartografias em conflito nas práticas de acolhimento de refugiados indígenas: a corporificação de um sentido alternativo de espacialidade e temporalidade na desmobilização de um abrigo indígena no norte do Brasil

Resumo: No presente artigo, examinamos a situação dos refugiados indígenas em Roraima, Brasil, e refletimos sobre a forma como as práticas de acolhimento afetam sua subjetividade. Analisamos a desmobilização do abrigo Pintolândia, focando particularmente na recusa dos seus residentes em se mudarem, de modo a apresentar o acolhimento de refugiados como uma prática que fere a subjetividade dos indivíduos, ao mesmo tempo que é um espaço corporificado que representa uma possibilidade ainda não concretizada. Através deste exame, refletimos sobre a forma como a sua agência, política e subjetividade desafiam a dinâmica espacial estabelecida pelas poderosas estruturas que gerem abrigos para refugiados. Para tanto, este artigo está dividido em três seções. O primeiro traz uma narrativa contextual das práticas de moradia da população indígena migrante em Roraima, mapeando a evolução das estratégias de acolhimento ao longo dos anos. A segunda secção aborda as complexidades e contradições do acolhimento de refugiados indígenas num quadro concebido para a população refugiada em geral, examinando o impacto nos seus direitos específicos como povos indígenas. A seção final enfoca a desmobilização do abrigo Pintolândia, apresentando a estratégia de mudança como mecanismo da governamentalidade e interpretando a resistência indígena à realocação como expressão de espacialidade e temporalidade alternativas.

Palavras-chave: Abrigos indígenas; política necrocolonial; cartografia da mobilidade.

Cartografías enfrentadas en las prácticas de refugio de refugiados indígenas: la encarnación de un sentido alternativo de espacialidad y temporalidad en una desmovilización de refugios indígenas en el norte de Brasil

Resumen: En el presente artículo, examinamos la situación de los refugiados indígenas en Roraima, Brasil, y reflexionamos sobre la forma en que las prácticas de refugio afectan su subjetividad. Analizamos la desmovilización del refugio de Pintolândia, centrándonos particularmente en la negativa de sus residen-

tes a reubicarse, para presentar el alojamiento de refugiados como una práctica que vulnera la subjetividad de los individuos, al mismo tiempo que es un espacio encarnado que representa una posibilidad aún no realizada. A través de este examen, reflexionamos sobre la forma en que su agencia, política y subjetividad desafían la dinámica espacial establecida por las poderosas estructuras que administran los refugios para refugiados. Para ello, este artículo se divide en tres secciones. El primero proporciona una narrativa contextual de las prácticas de vivienda para la población indígena migrante en Roraima, mapeando la evolución de las estrategias de vivienda a lo largo de los años. La segunda sección aborda las complejidades y contradicciones de albergar a refugiados indígenas dentro de un marco diseñado para la población de refugiados en general, examinando el impacto en sus derechos específicos como pueblos indígenas. La sección final se centra en la desmovilización del refugio de Pintolândia, presentando la estrategia de cambio como un mecanismo de gubernamentalidad e interpretando la resistencia indígena a la reubicación como una expresión de espacialidad y temporalidad alternativa.

Palabras-clave: abrigos indígenas; política necrocolonial; cartografía de la movilidad.

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INTRODUCTION

In November 2021, a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative visited the *Pintolândia* shelter in the city of Boa Vista, one that since October 2017 only sheltered indigenous people from Venezuela. The representative gathered the more than 620 sheltered indigenous people and communicated that the facility would be closing its activities, and the current residents would be transferred to another shelter. According to five indigenous leaders, "they were not consulted at any time, on the contrary, they witnessed their speeches being silenced by Operation Welcome" (ALMEIDA, 2022). These events allow us to question the way these resisting individuals' agency, politics, and subjectivity challenge the spatial dynamics established by the powerful structures of refugee shelters.

Refugee camps, or as in this case camp-like places, evoke the image of "charitable spaces that are providing assistance" (BRANKAMP, 2022, p. 107). Notwithstanding, examining the camp requires a deeper dive as to encapsulate the many intricacies involved in the practices of sheltering refugees. Camps are tools to control (im)mobility portraying in many ways power geometries that enact "a palliative biopolitics that fosters 'vulnerable' life" (BRANKAMP, 2022, p. 107). Our first argument goes in that sense, resting on theoretical engagements under critical camp studies, proposing that the supposed benevolent practice of refugee sheltering should be also understood as a creation of "geopolitical architectures" (RAMADAN, 2013, p. 67) which foment ontological insecurity though the "relentless extraction of human life-time" (BRANKAMP, 2022, p. 120). The space of the camp operates under a logic that infringe the encamped of their subjectivity which renders shelters as "inhuman rather than human geographies" (MCKITTRICK, 2013, p. 7). Thinking in terms of geography, however, allows us to take one step further. The shelter is also shaped by resistances, struggles and practices of disruption. In this sense, our argument unfolds in a second proposal that invites a reading of the geography of the shelter also as "a legitimate, if precarious, place of belonging" (BRANKAMP, 2022, p. 115). The camp or camp-like space should also be understood not only a site for a "bio-geo-politics" (MINCA, 2015, p. 75), but also a locus where a horizon for "dreams of resettlement, regaining benefits of citizenship, and popular rejections of the status quo" (BRANKAMP, 2022, p. 120). In light of such dichotomous understandings, we put forward a reading of the shelter as a site of clashing cartographies for it is where colonial violence and resistance meet, providing an alternative form of spatiality and temporality. In this article we read the process of demobilisation of the Pintolândia shelter and the consequent objection by some of its residents as the creation of such encounter between confinement and possibilities of other worlds – a "counter-mapping" of this space (WEIMA; MINCA, 2022, p. 3).

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Our aim is to examine the situation of the indigenous refugee[1] population sheltered in the state of Roraima, Brazil, in an effort of reflecting about the way these sheltering practices unsettle these people's subjectivity. More specifically, we look at the refusal to be moved to a new shelter in an attempt to understand this process as a call for a "right to the camp, [...] a claim for the recognition of legitimacy to live life fully in the spaces of exile" (WORONIECKA--KRZYZANOWSKA, 2017, p. 167) . As to do so, this article is divided into three sections. The first presents a narrative that aims to make a contextualization of the practices that are taking place in the state of Roraima of housing the indigenous migrant population. Through section one, we map the sheltering strategy for the indigenous refugee population and the changes it has gone through the years. The second section engages with the notion of sheltering indigenous refugees pondering about the many complexities and contradictions that are implicated in the practice of housing indigenous peoples through a strategy developed for the general refugee population worldwide. In this sense, we examine the impacts of sheltering in their specific rights as indigenous peoples. Finally, the last section focuses more specifically on the demobilisation of the *Pintolândia* shelter. It first presents the relocation strategy as a governmentality mechanism and then proposes a reading of the indigenous refugee resisting the shelter relocation as the embodiment of an alternative sense of spatiality and temporality.

1. SHELTERING MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES: THE BRAZILIAN RECEPTION OF VENEZUELANS IN RORAIMA

According to data provided by the R4V Platform, Brazil has so far received more than 449,000 Venezuelans in its territory. The flow of Venezuelans to Brazil intensified exponentially between 2015 and 2017 (UNODC, 2021). However, it was only in 2018 that the Government of Brazil, together with partner organisations, structured a unified response to this migratory phenomenon (UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 18; UNODC, 2021).

The migratory flow of Venezuelans to Brazil was primarily directed to Roraima, the Brazilian state that borders Venezuela. Most of the Venezuelan refugees enter Brazil through the border town of Pacaraima and travel the hundred-mile-long route to reach the city of Boa Vista. In December 2016, UNHCR started sheltering Venezuelans in the state of Roraima. As

1 We are aware that the very expression indigenous refugee carries an intrinsic contradiction, combining two words that can be many times pertaining from different worlds. Even though the juxtaposition of the terms 'indigenous' and 'refugee' may emphasize the dimension of intersectionality and, consequently, of profound vulnerability of those thus qualified, it is equally recognized that this dual subjective condition is operated in the daily management of national and international institutions, privileging one condition or the other, as to fulfil accountability requirements and satisfy protection standards within the limits of institutional purpose and convenience. However, due to the lack of a more appropriate term to encapsulate the condition of the different ethnicities of indigenous peoples from Venezuela that migrated to Brazil, we are opting to use the term indigenous refugee.

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to do so, it opened the *Pintolândia* shelter in Boa Vista. The shelter accommodated both the indigenous and non-indigenous migrant population. At that point, migrants and refugees' reception dynamics relied heavily on Roraima's civil society, more specifically the Catholic Church and international organisations such as UNHCR and Fraternity - International Humanitarian Federation (FIHF), which collaborated by providing shelters and assistance to the refugees and migrants in situation of vulnerability (UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 31).

In the beginning of 2017, UNHCR declared that the situation in the state of Roraima was at a Level 1 state of emergency. Such a move meant that the scenario could easily evolve to a humanitarian emergency, therefore requiring the agency to enhance its preparedness and take anticipatory or early action (UNHCR, 2023a, 2023b). Only one shelter, however, was not enough to accommodate the demand existing in the state of Roraima at that time. To deal with the constant migratory flow towards Roraima, UNHCR opened at the end of 2017 three more shelters. The *Tancredo Neves* shelter was opened in a gymnasium in the city of Boa Vista, in October 2017. It received two groups of refugees. The first group was taken to the shelter on 28 October 2017. This group comprised Venezuelans who, until that moment, had been living at the city's Bus Station (CHAVES; OLIVEIRA, 2017). Due to conflicts between indigenous and non-indigenous Venezuelans, there was a need to separate these groups. The second group housed in *Tancredo Neves*, then, included non-indigenous Venezuelans who lived in the *Pintolândia* shelter (BRANDÃO; OLIVEIRA, 2017). From that moment onwards, *Pintolândia* became exclusively dedicated to sheltering the indigenous refugee groups (UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 38).

The *Janokoida* shelter was created in November 2017, in the border town of Pacaraima. Its aim was to accommodate the indigenous groups from Venezuela that chose to stay in the border town (UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 41). Among the Venezuelan refugees moving to Brazil, there is a considerate number of indigenous groups. So far, the humanitarian organisations and Brazilian authorities have identified five different ethnic groups, the Warao, which comprise about 70% of the indigenous migrants in Brazil, the Pemon, the E'ñepá, the Kariña and the Wayúu (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2020c). Indigenous people from Venezuela, especially the Warao, are sometimes incorrectly described as nomads (UNHCR BRAZIL; BRASIL, 2021). The lack of adequate conditions to maintain their cultural habits mostly forces them to travel through Brazilian territory. Most of the indigenous people that live in Boa Vista prefer to have their cross-border status recognized, instead of moving to more central parts of the country (R4V BRAZIL WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, 2022).

Alongside the increase in sheltering actions in Roraima, also grew the number of entities that arrived in the state at the end of 2017 (UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 38). Until 2017, sheltering activities were carried out by non-governmental organisations in partnership with local governments and UNHCR support. This meant that resources were very limited, and these

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organisations were dealing with a constantly growing demand. Housing was not available for all people in a situation of vulnerability. Institutions were aware of the need for a swifter and coordinated response to the situation (UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 40).

In 2018, there was a profound change in the sheltering of Venezuelans in Roraima, due to issues that are related both to the greater role of the Brazilian authorities and to the exponential expansion and redesign of the sheltering strategy. Early in the year, the Brazilian government entered negotiations with UNHCR to align emergency assistance measures for Venezuelan migrants and refugees (UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 18). On 15 February 2018, the Brazilian government created the Federal Committee for Emergency Assistance, an entity designed to structure the welcoming policies directed to the people in vulnerable situations due to the migratory flow. The Committee would be an inter-ministerial task force that had the possibility of including members of governmental entities and non-governmental organisations as guests. In the division of tasks, the Ministry of Defence was tasked with executing the operation (BRAZIL, 2018a). In other words, by creating this task force, the Brazilian government was now the one establishing the governance of the emergency action to receive the Venezuelan population in Brazil.

In light of this scenario, the Ministry of Defence authorised the implementation of an operation under its coordination that aimed to engage in humanitarian activities in the state of Roraima (MINISTRY OF DEFENSE [BRAZIL], 2018). At that moment, Operation Welcome (*Operação Acolhida*) was initiated in the cities of Boa Vista and Pacaraima. Therefore, February 2018 marked not only the moment in which the humanitarian response to Venezuelan migration to Brazil was federalized, but also its militarization. Operation Welcome's activities are structured through three pillars. One is border management, which involves not only the reception and regularisation of migrants and asylum seekers who arrive in Brazil through the state of Roraima, but also the provision of documentation, basic medical care, and immunisation. The second pillar of Operation Welcome, which is where our focus lies, is sheltering. This pillar concerns the management of sheltering activities, which, besides providing housing, involves aspects such as providing food, education, health care and social protection for migrants and refugees. Most shelters use the Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) – the result of a partnership between UNHCR and the companies Better Shelter and Ikea Foundation –, which have windows installed to adapt them to the high temperatures of Roraima (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2019). Indigenous shelters, in turn, use a different structure, implementing hammocks and communal kitchens, an attempt to create for them the means for producing culturally appropriate meals (R4V, 2021). Interiorization is the third pillar and involves the voluntary dislocation of migrants and refugees to other states in Brazil where they have greater access to economic and integration opportunities (IOM BRAZIL, 2023).

The federalization of the response to the humanitarian situation in Roraima meant that the coordination of the shelters created to accommodate Venezuelan refugees was transferred to Operation Welcome. Putting in other words, from that point onwards an Army's Humanitarian Logistics Task Force was responsible for the daily management of the shelters alongside partner organisations. Operation Welcome began to take shape in March 2018. The number of shelters in the city of Boa Vista tripled with the opening of *Jardim Floresta*, *São Vicente*, *Latife Salomão*, *Nova Canaã*, *Santa Tereza, Rondon 1*, *Rondon 2* and *Rondon 3*. These shelters were created to receive the newly arrived migratory flow and the approximately 900 migrants and refugees living in Simon Bolívar Square, in Boa Vista (UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 54; BRAZIL, 2018b; CHAVES; OLIVEIRA, 2017). At the same time, a transit shelter was opened in the city of Pacaraima, called *BV-8* (UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 18). Located on the border with the city of Santa Elena de Uairén (Venezuela), *BV-8* is the only shelter that establishes a maximum stay length. *BV-8* receives those who are waiting for their documentation or who are in quarantine after immunisation, those who are waiting to be transferred to shelters in Boa Vista, and those who have already been approved in the interiorization process. Subsequently, given the agglomeration of migrants on the streets of Pacaraima, the accommodation rules were expanded to comprise Venezuelans that did not belong in any the previous categories but nevertheless were in a state of vulnerability and/or homelessness (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2020d, p. 19, 2022c). During the year of 2018, UNHCR declared that the humanitarian emergency in Roraima had reached level 2, which meant that the migratory flow to Roraima was increasing very quickly, demanding more resources than available.

In 2020, a new challenge was added to the humanitarian situation, the Covid-19 pandemic. Throughout the year, three new shelters were opened in Boa Vista: one to provide a minimum of security for Venezuelan migrants and refugees who were already living in the area in a spontaneous settlement (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2020a, p. 1, 2020d, p. 17); a second one that received migrants and refugees who were living at the *BV-8* transit shelter, in Pacaraima (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2021a, p. 2; UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 19); and the *Pricumã* shelter to receive people with disabilities or serious illnesses (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2021b, p. 3).

At the beginning of 2021, the *Jardim Floresta* shelter underwent restructuring to house only the indigenous population. Two groups were directed to *Jardim Floresta*: one from the resettlement of Venezuelan indigenous peoples of the Warao and E'ñepa ethnic groups who lived in the spontaneous settlement *Ka'Ubanoko*;[2] and another from the *Janokoida* indigenous shelter, which was operating above maximum capacity (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2021c, p. 3; UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 19; FFHI, 2021a). The *Nova Canaã* and *Tancredo Neves* shelters went through the same restructuring, becoming indigenous shelters (FFHI, 2021b, 2021c).

2 For a better understanding of the *Ka'Ubanoko* settlement, which created a structure of collective self-management, see de Araujo Castro (2021).

The restructuring of *Jardim Floresta*, *Tancredo Neves* and *Nova Canaã* shelters is part of a wider process that sought to redistribute particularly the indigenous sheltered population in new or reformed shelters to 'better' accommodate them. As part of this reorganisation, *Rondon 5* shelter was opened to become the new centre of the interiorization process, previously the role of *Rondon 2* (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2022a, p. 2; AVSI BRAZIL, 2023).

Figure 1 – New sheltering cartography in the city of Boa Vista



Source: GoogleEarth (marked by the authors).

The most recent step in this process involved the transition of *Rondon 3* into an indigenous shelter, which reopened under the name of *Waraotuma a Tuaranoko*. The indigenous communities that lived in the *Nova Canaã*, *Tancredo Neves* and *Pintolândia* shelters were relocated in the beginning of 2022 to *Tuaranoko* shelter and humanitarian organisations and the Brazilian army ended their activities in these locations (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2022d; UNHCR BRAZIL; SILVA, 2022, p. 20). Figure 1 exhibits where the largest part of Operation Welcome's shelters is currently situated. The larger picture of this shelter restructuring process meant moving the housed refugees to bigger shelters that, except for *Jardim Floresta*, are all four reunited in the same place in the city. The number 1 in the image is shelter *Rondon 5*, number 2 is *Tuaranoko*, formerly *Rondon 3*, number 3 is *Pricumã* and number 4 is *Rondon 1*.

In the state of Roraima, seven shelters remain open under the management of the Logistics Task Force: *Janokoida*, *Tuaranoko*, and *Jardim Floresta* housing the migrant indigenous population; and *Pricumã*, *Rondon 1*, *Rondon 5*, and *BV-8* housing mostly non-indigenous Venezuelans (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2023c). While *Nova Canaã* and *Tancredo Neves* indigenous shelters

were deactivated with the resettlement to *Tuaranoko*, the *Pintolândia* shelter had to undergo a gradual deactivation for some of the sheltered individuals refused the relocation (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2022b, p. 2).

2. MANAGING (IM)MOBILITY: INDIGENOUS SHELTERS AND THE STATE'S NECROCOLONIAL POLITICS

Our aim in this section is to examine and reflect on matters arising from Operation Welcome's demobilisation of the *Pintolândia* indigenous shelter. Both the absence of a perspective other than an endless stay in a shelter and the shelter´s dissolution are manifestations of a necrocolonial politics. Not only being associated with the death of the body that takes place in colonialism, but also constructing a radical aesthetic of indigenous, LGBTQIA+ and black people's pain, death and suffering. This aesthetic creates the conditions for capturing minds as to make the bodies subjected to power more docile (FIGUEIRA, 2020b).

This necrocolonial politics is deeply interrelated to a politics of abandonment, a "projected disappearance" of vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples, "and thus their legal inclusion only through their exclusion, resulted from a state rule composed of a sense of benevolence and inevitability" (DE LA CADENA, 2015, p. 154). As Marisol de la Cadena (2015) emphasises, this politics of abandonment involves two intertwined biopolitical assumptions: while systematically denying fair claims made by these groups, normalising their "(in)existence," it tries to assimilate and 'help' them. The latter is accomplished through channels that facilitate the integration of the group into the social role that power imposes on them. It becomes about choosing options made available by those who have control over resources. There are factors associated with these choices that can be positive – such as prizes, parties, celebrations, advantages – or negative – such as pain, isolation, shame and even violence. Indigenous refugees' endless waiting in shelters, such as the people in *Pintolândia*, as well as the demobilisation of a shelter, without proper consultation, are events that reflect this politics of abandonment.

Pintolândia was a shelter created at a gymnasium with capacity for around 700 people, in a neighbourhood that gave the shelter its name. It was the first shelter to be structured in the city Boa Vista since the beginning of the Venezuelan migration to Brazil. Initially, the shelter received indigenous and non-indigenous people. Due to cases of violence committed mainly against indigenous people, the groups were separated, leaving only indigenous families of Warao and E'ñepá ethnic groups in *Pintolândia*. At that point the shelter was managed by the Secretary of Labour and Social Welfare of the state of Roraima (SETRABES). With the creation of Operation Welcome, in 2018, the administration of *Pintolândia* was taken over by the military and then administered alongside the Operation's partner institution, Fraternity - International Humanitarian Federation.

As introduced in the previous section, sheltering is amongst Operation Welcome's pillars. It relies on the international experience of one of its main partners, UNHCR. Based on its practice of sheltering refugees in different regions of the world, UNHCR has been elaborating a vast material on the subject, such as the Emergency Handbook (UNHCR, 2020). Notwithstanding the experience of these organisations and their best practices, sheltering indigenous refugees presented additional challenges due to the cultural specificity and vulnerability of these populations. These aspects bring along a series of international norms, which guarantees to indigenous peoples a string of specific rights. In a similar vein, Brazil recognizes fundamental rights for indigenous peoples, guaranteed in the Constitution and infra-constitutional legislation.

Thus, considering not only the cultural particularity, but also the specific national and international regulations, which aim to protect the culture of each indigenous people (expressed in their traditions, customs, languages, beliefs, ways of life and the relationship with the land), one can ask whether the shelter model adopted by Operation Welcome is capable of offering the necessary conditions for the protection and preservation, in the medium and long term, of the culture of the sheltered indigenous group.

As an emergency response, the shelter was conceived as a solution for the protection of the indigenous refugees. Nevertheless, as many authors from critical camp studies have examined, the practice of refugee sheltering in encampments obscures a "(re)production of structural harm and precarity in the guise of protecting human life over long periods of time" (BRANKAMP, 2022, p. 107–108). Adding to this literature, we propose that the protraction of permanence corresponds to a necrocolonial mechanism of cultural erosion.[3] The reality of indigenous refugees has been that of an endless extension of emergency measures, without any perspective for a life after the camp. Particularly in the case of indigenous groups, this politics of exhaustion has devastating impacts on the preservation of their culture.

All members of the sheltered indigenous families are affected, but the impact is even more severe on children. Some examples are: (1) their access to schools; (2) for some of these indigenous peoples, the transition from rural to urban contexts; and (3) the distinct needs and cultural patterns of each indigenous group, internal diversity due to different levels of school, professional and academic training, among other things. Internationally recognized indigenous rights already contemplate the issue of access to education. International Labour Organization (ILO)'s Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, widely known as Convention 169, recognizes the prerogative of indigenous peoples to create "their own educational institutions and facilities, provided that such institutions meet minimum standards established by the competent

3 The term "cultural erosion" refers to the effects on the culture of a certain social group resulting from the use of management mechanisms available to power. These mechanisms comprise practices that range from hostility towards traditional cultural expressions to the encouragement of adopting behaviours not associated with native culture.

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authority in consultation with these peoples. Appropriate resources shall be provided for this purpose" (ILO, 1989, art. 27). Nonetheless, indigenous refugees hardly have the opportunity of having an education that is culturally adapted to their needs.

An International Organization for Migration (IOM) report in partnership with the Brazilian government mapped 3,328 indigenous people from Venezuela, among which 1,725 were, in 2021, between 0 and 19 years old. Only 29% of indigenous refugees or migrants, of any age, were enrolled in an educational institution in Brazil. Considering the age group, 58% of children between 0 and 12 years old and 41% of young people between 13 and 18 years old were enrolled in some institution. The percentages were even smaller when referring to access to indigenous education: 12% of children between 0 and 12 years old; 14% of young people between 13 and 18 years old. The report does not inform to which ethnic group the indigenous teaching identified in the survey corresponds (MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP [BRAZIL], 2021). In any case, despite the efforts made by UNHCR and other institutions, the conditions of the shelter and its geographical location in the city affect the children's access to schools (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2022e).

The second aspect that we emphasise is the impact for indigenous refugee groups resulting from the migration to the city. During the sixth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), held in 2007, the negative and positive aspects of the increasing migration of indigenous groups to urban contexts were discussed. Even though life in the city brings indigenous groups closer to certain social and economic resources, the UNPFII has warned about the difficulties urban indigenous people face in gaining access to employment and other activities – that enable financial income, housing, school and culturally adequate health – and facing racism and discrimination. Furthermore, life in the city should not imply a rupture with the ancestral land. Their land will always hold an existential character for indigenous people. Furthermore, the UNPFII draws attention to the absence of adequate consultation processes to which indigenous people living in cities are also entitled (PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES, 2007).

These difficulties are part of the reality of indigenous refugees in Brazil. In the case of the Warao, there is great diversity among them due to their different school and academic background. Internal displacements in Venezuela, which occurred mainly in the second half of the last century, led groups of this ethnic people to urbanise (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2021d). As a result, some Warao families had access to secondary education and technical or higher education. Thus, the current Venezuelan diaspora brings to Brazil indigenous people who come from urban and rural contexts and who occupy very different positions in the broad spectrum of formal education. According to the aforementioned report prepared by the IOM and the Brazilian government, the schooling of the indigenous people who participated in the survey aged between 19 and 59 years old was: 17% with complete secondary education, 5% with higher education and 2% with technical education and professional (MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP [BRA-

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ZIL], 2021). These peoples' have different needs and different future perspectives for which it would be necessary to create specific public policies.

The everlasting stay in a refugee shelter, without a perspective for a life after the camp – which should be found through a methodology that involves, at all stages, the participation of interested indigenous groups –, tends to create situations of attrition, conflict and even violence, with the sheltered as victims in general, given their vulnerability and dependence on Operation Welcome's resources (RODRIGUES, 2021). Circumstances such as these lead to the adoption of alternative strategies by those sheltered, such as leaving the shelter to seek opportunities in other cities or joining autonomous/spontaneous occupations that, despite not having the same resources as the shelters of Operation Welcome, enable greater freedom of decision and the expansion of the exercise of their right to self-determination.

The absence of a horizon for their lives after the shelter, which should take into consideration the internal diversity of the indigenous refugees' groups, combined with the indigenous capacity to resist and not resign themselves to the circumstances, gave rise to the creation of sufficient conditions for autonomous dispersion of indigenous refugees throughout the Brazilian territory, mainly by indigenous peoples of the Warao ethnic group, already historically marked by internal displacements in Venezuela. Indigenous refugees do not want to spend years of their lives in shelters, with little or no possibility of living according to their tradition, culture and future perspectives (R4V BRAZIL WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, 2022). The lack of a prospective for a future for indigenous people from Venezuela of their own design prevents the full realisation of their lives in Roraima. Without options, and due to their lack of eligibility, for many years, for the interiorization process led by Operation Shelter, many sought their own paths, interiorizing themselves, or constituting autonomous/spontaneous settlements, in the quest to expand their self-determination.

In April 2022, Operation Welcome withdrew from the *Pintolândia* shelter. The alternative offered to those sheltered was the transfer to *Rondon 3*, which would also receive indigenous refugees from *Nova Canaã* and *Tancredo Neves* shelters, making it the largest indigenous shelter in Latin America, with a capacity for 1500 people. *Rondon 3* was named *Waraotuma a Tuaranoko* by the sheltered community. The move implied a reunion of the population of three indigenous shelters into one. Besides *Tuaranoko*, Operation Welcome maintained only two other indigenous shelters: Jardim Floresta, in Boa Vista, and *Janokoida*, in Pacaraima, respectively with a capacity for 460 and 400 people (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2023c). Processes of forced relocation to new camps or abandonment are engines that "often produce further precarity" (BRANKAMP, 2022, p. 108).

The creation and demobilisation of shelters takes place according to decisions that correspond to the management strategies of Operation Welcome. In the case of indigenous shelters, however, there are further complexities related to the decision-making process. Under

the terms of ILO's Convention 169, incorporated into the Brazilian legal system as a human rights convention,[4] indigenous peoples must be consulted on all legislative and administrative measures that affect them (ILO, 1989, art. 6). Consent to a policy or measure should be free, prior and informed and must comply with a methodology defined by the consulted indigenous people, which, in general, presupposes the prior construction of a consultation protocol.

Another aspect that must be considered is the interest of the sheltered indigenous people in seeing their aspirations for a life after the camp to come true. Article 46 of Law 9.474/1997 declares resettlement in Brazil as a possible lasting measure that can be implemented by the Brazilian State. This is perhaps one of the main demands of the indigenous groups from Venezuela that find themselves in Brazil. In consultation with indigenous peoples on the main issues related to their living conditions as refugees in the country, carried out by R4V Platform, in 2021, in the cities of Boa Vista, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre and Recife, the demand for a place to live according to their culture was widely present among the answers (R4V BRAZIL WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, 2022).

3. CHALLENGING CARTOGRAPHIES OF MOBILITY: INDIGENOUS REFUGEES' SPACE PRODUCTION

The news of the *Pintolândia* shelter's demobilisation generated perplexity in many of its residents. There was an absence of an adequate consultation process regarding what would happen to the place that many had as closest reference to a home. At one point, *Pintolândia* sheltered more than 700 people (UNHCR BRAZIL, 2020b). Faced with the news that it would be demobilised, and its inhabitants transferred to another shelter in a remote part of the city, a group of around 270 indigenous people decided to stay. Even though this decision would mean an increase in their vulnerability, since they would be outside the scope of Operation Welcome, many chose to not go along the plan that the Operation had for them (RAMALHO, 2022).

The closing of shelters without adequate consultation, as it happened with *Pintolândia*, was responded with resistance from a group of about 270 people who preferred to remain in the deactivated shelter, rather than be housed somewhere else. The moving through shelters would only result in the perpetuation of their submission to the emergency response system of Operation Welcome. Staying in a deactivated shelter, of course, implies inserting oneself in a condition of greater vulnerability, as these people can no longer rely on the food and other means provided by managing entities. This stance also represented a way of trying, at the cost of their personal sacrifice, to carry out what would be the closest thing to a durable resettle-

4 In Brazil, whether a treaty is internalised as a human rights treaty or not is relevant, for if so it is at least supra-legal, having the possibility of holding the status of a constitutional amendment.

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ment solution, for it represents "the possibility of organising and imagining collective futures differently" (PIERRE, 2020, p. 395).

The sheltering practices of the State and its partner organisations carry within them a deeper meaning than their depiction as actions of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable refugee populations. Considering the elements introduced in the previous section, we can understand how sheltering is a practice that is mapped onto the landscape, consequently creating a location for where these (indigenous) refugees are located within the State. The restructuring of the shelters examined in section one presents a situation where these individuals placed within the broader landscape of the city are becoming further circumscribed, changing from a dispersed to a centralised containment. These ceaseless relocation of refugees from one shelter to another emphasise the lack of a gaze that sees them as part of society, making them instead managed bodies that are merely administered according to the needs of the institutions, the case of indigenous refugees being the ultimate example of such a situation. Opondo and Rinelli (2015, p. 938) reflecting on the relationship between the refugee and the space propose that these individuals, when claiming certain spaces in the urban setting "as their own territory, a piece of their own land or 'home' from which they can find comfort and refuge," they are performing a "legal inversion." They create:

> [I]n the city a zone of survival [...] [which] also becomes a site of contestation over migrants' right to the city and a challenge to urban policing characterized by the authorities' attempts to regulate refugee presence and the immigrants' reclamation of urban space. Precarious and untidy as it may seem, [...] [these spaces point] to the possibility of pluralist urban existence that disturbs the dichotomy between the city and the camp or illegitimate foreignness and legitimate urban life characterized by citizenship, multiculturalism, or complete integration" (OPONDO; RINELLI, 2015, p. 938).

Indigenous refugees from the outset have been a challenge to the welcoming system set up by the local authorities and international organisations later taken over by Operation Welcome. Internationally acknowledged best practices and recognized models of sheltering, such as the Ikea Foundation and Better Shelter's RHUs used in many of the Boa Vista shelters, did not fit the needs of indigenous peoples. Likewise the interiorization policy, an important pillar of the Operation, did not satisfy the needs of indigenous peoples living in the shelters, at first, for not being incorporated into the plan which only encompassed the non-indigenous population and, then, for only being 'included' in such plan, instead of having their condition of indigenous people recognized and thought of in a way that seeks to find possibilities that contemplate their particular necessities. As no viable alternative has been proposed, these indigenous refugees continue to endure the sheltered space.

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Such situation emphasises how migration processes are actually marked by never-ending and constantly interrupted movements. These indigenous refugees are at the same time sheltered, and therefore caged within certain spaces they are allowed to occupy, and in constant circulation, for the restructuring of the shelters – a need that results from the very lack of possibilities to a life after the camp for these peoples – means a constant reshuffling of people in between them. The scholarly literature under critical camp studies have sought to make sense of the way sheltered life is in fact represented by intermittent movement. De Vries and Guild (2019, p. 8) stress that "migration trajectories are often characterised by recurring or continued displacement," making this a process of "fractured mobility" (DE VRIES; GUILD, 2019, p. 7). Martina Tazzioli (2020, n.p.) calls this a mode of "governing mobility through (forced) mobility," a formulation that encapsulates the governmentality that takes place through the control of disordered mobility. In this fluctuation between permanence/impermanence, settlement/unsettlement, Opondo and Rinelli (2015, p. 932) locate a dialectic between movement and capture. This was further elaborated by Brankamp (2022) as a continuum between encampment, a gradual discontinuation of services and the camp closure. A dance that makes refugees momentarily disappear by displacing them to subsequent encampment (BRANKAMP, 2022, p. 116).

These spaces of sheltering materialise what De Vries and Guild (2019, p. 8) call a "politics of exhaustion," which can "be understood as a form of structural violence that impacts and intensifies over time as people continue to be pushed across and held up in a range of institutionalised and informal spaces of transit, and which also includes forms of direct, daily violence." Such notion encapsulates the accumulated effects that practices of governmentality have over the bodies of refugees and migrants over time and across different spaces. The shelter is a place of constant (re)negotiation between top-down practices, which ends up mostly erasing and silencing the sheltered population, and these individuals' claim of their acknowledgement. These dialogues and negotiations often emphasise power disparities.

In that sense, beyond the intricacies of the corporeal mobility of people, through the situation of sheltered indigenous refugees:

> We can begin to see that uneven powers of "motility" – meaning the capability for mobility and control over the mobility of others – and differential "accessibility" to various kinds of spaces and social goods are not just the result of racial, gendered, classed, sexed, and other formations, but are also *productive of* those hierarchical systems of differentiation, through various kinds of enablement and disablement (SHELLER, 2018, p. 20).

The protracted situation of (im)mobility came to define many aspects of these indigenous refugees' lives. The many pressures and interventions these peoples face in many ways

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structure their conditions of living and enable an understanding of them "within the terms set by neoliberal projects: a pained body, a site of endemic violence and monstrous poverty" (PIERRE, 2020, p. 394).

By bringing the story of *Pintolândia*, which after the demobilisation was renamed by its residents *Yakera Ine*, our aim is to challenge such comprehension presenting the scenario as one of clashing cartographies. The abandoned shelter is at the same time "the penultimate site [...] of dispossession, [...] violence, racial encounter, and innovative resistance" (MCKITTRICK, 2013, p. 8). The landscape created in the indigenous refugees' shelter would encapsulate what Katherine McKittrick (2013, p. 2) called "a conceptualization of time-space" that connect their land and the erased shelter, consequently emphasising the ways the shelter is an ongoing locus of "violence [...] that can no longer analytically sustain this violence." The sheltering system put in place in the state of Roraima is traversed into the indigenous refugee's life in a way that brings together control and resistance, mobility and immobility.

The situation of the indigenous refugees of *Yakera Ine* brings "into sharp focus how colonial logics of dispossession continue to shape lives while at the same time opening the possibility of dreaming, reinventing, and resisting" (PIERRE, 2020, p. 395). By refusing to move to a "more equipped" shelter, these indigenous refugees are denying the very logic that permeates processes of refugees' reception systems, that of managerialism. They escape the controlling practices and make room to their own drawing of their spaces. In that sense, these indigenous refugees are nurturing "alternative senses of spatiality and temporality" (PIERRE, 2020, p. 398). Their disruption should not be read simply as a fight against confinement but rather a struggle against their de-subjectivation. The solutions provided by the humanitarian apparatus dictate "a pre-existing roadmap to liberation" while real liberation should be "organically found in acts of disruption and undoing among refugees as well as in their irreverent claims to a life after the camp" (BRANKAMP, 2022, p. 122). The idea is to

> Rather than reducing these mobilisations among the encamped to pre-formed visions for closing or replacing camps, their most existential demand is for an embodied justice that can recover "wasted" or "lost" time in a future of their own design (BRANKAMP, 2022, p. 122).

Notwithstanding, it is not about romanticising a situation of extreme precarity. Our emphasis is on the notion that the geographies of indigenous refugees' (im)mobility, here understood through the resistance of the indigenous peoples' of *Yakera Ine*, provide elements for us to notice that their sheltered bodies carry in it a history of encounters and resistance practices that are "spatialize[d] acts of survival" (MCKITTRICK, 2013, p. 8). Through their resistance, they embodied the space and have it tell their story. While the sheltered or interiorized (many times referred to as integrated in UNHCR documents) bodies accept the choices offered "within the

call to order," the resisting individuals refused these calls for regulation (PIERRE, 2020, p. 400). The result was a politics of erasure of these peoples from the sheltering cartography. However, by choosing not to adapt into the established terms these individuals avoided falling into a trap, the "trap of reading THEIR location within homogeneous, hierarchical, and ordered structures of power [...], emptied from the concreteness of [their] thick histories, feelings, bodies, geographies, and spiritualities" (PIERRE, 2020, p. 400). In that sense, we accept Beaudelaine Pierre's (2020, p. 406) invitation to see the body as "geographies, landscapes, and constitutes by itself worlds, lands, politics, and legitimacies" or, in other words, to see the "body as a map."

CONCLUSION

The collective right of these peoples to exist (physically or culturally), regardless of the factual condition that qualifies it as a group of refugees, is preserved regardless of state recognition. However, the repeated refusal to fulfil the conditions that allow these indigenous people to exist as such can lead to ethnocide, understood as a set of actions that prevent an ethnic group from continuing to exist (SOUZA FILHO, 2018).

Complex migratory processes such as the Venezuelan one requires humanitarian responses by the receiving State that take this complexity into account. Aspects related to ethnicity must be given special attention so that policies whose main consequence is a slow and painful process of ethnocide are not implemented. The refugee indigenous groups are of different ethnicities. Even ethnic groups are not culturally monolithic in themselves. Their bodies carry the stories of a series of cultural negotiations with the Venezuelan non-indigenous society. Consequently, the demands regarding a life after the shelter from these groups are diverse. Not facing the diversity and ontological complexity of these ethnic groups is taking a path that can lead to their cultural erosion and possible disappearance (FIGUEIRA, 2020a). And children will probably be the first victims of a policy that caters to refugees but inadequately to indigenous peoples.

The control of time and space by migration policy managers for indigenous refugees has prevented the implementation of measures in which they can realise their full dignity. The time of emergency is when it is inevitable to postpone settlement solutions. It is a management of waiting for a promise that, even if provided for by law, such as the settlement, in times of emergency – and as long as it lasts –, it will not be possible to fulfil. In the spatial dimension, the frequent relocation of refugees, based on the improvement of the shelter space, generates the feeling that something is happening. Movement, however, is like that of a wheel: from one shelter to another, but not to a more permanent or unconstrained settlement.

The resistance to the relocation by the indigenous people who remained in *Yakera Ine*, but also the decision of some indigenous refugees to face an autonomous interiorisation, are

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organic reactions to the necrocolonial condition of policies directed at indigenous refugees. The resistance of these indigenous groups is not limited to a mere insurgency against the system of rules resulting from migratory management and refugee shelters. It has an existential character and stems from an imperative of ontological preservation. Even though the practices of sheltering refugees are constantly attempting to produce bare life, these individuals through their disruption of the imposed order prove to be much more. The camp is not able to fully annihilate their subjectivity and liberation through everyday acts is always a yet unrealised possibility in their horizon. The camp is landscape where the refugee imprints their corporeality.

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