

THE BRAZILIAN RESPONSE TO THE RECENT VENEZUELAN IMMIGRATION TO RORAIMA¹

A RESPOSTA BRASILEIRA À IMIGRAÇÃO VENEZUELANA RECENTE EM RORAIMA

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the migration flows caused by the Venezuelan political and economic crisis and the Brazilian response to the problem. The article will analyse the causal links underpinning Venezuelan immigration, in order to identify its consequences and the measures taken by the Brazilian Government to minimise the impact of this crisis. First, the theoretical and methodological concepts will be presented, after which the Venezuelan historical context will be explained, as will the Brazilian response to the crisis. The study uses process-tracing methods and is based on the securitization theory advanced by Barry Buzan and Olav Weaver, authors of the Copenhagen school. To solve this migration crisis, the Brazilian government recognised the vulnerable situation of the state of Roraima and created the Federal Emergency Assistance Committee, whose work resulted in Ministry of Defence directives that established the parameters and responsibilities for conducting Control and Reception operations.

Keywords: Venezuelan crisis, immigration, Brazil.

RESUMO

O presente artigo tem como tema central o processo migratório resultante da crise política e econômica venezuelana e a resposta brasileira subsequente. Pretende-se analisar as conexões causais da questão migratória venezuelana, identificar as consequências e apresentar as soluções estruturadas pelo Governo brasileiro a fim de minimizar as implicações dessa crise. Para tanto,

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aborda-se num primeiro momento a concepção teórico-metodológica, depois o contexto histórico venezuelano e em seguida o comportamento do Brasil face à crise. A metodologia adotada neste artigo foi a do rastreamento de processos e a teoria escolhida para fundamentar o estudo foi a da securitização desenhada por Barry Buzan e Olav Weaver, autores da Escola de Copenhaga. Como abordagem para solucionar esta crise migratória, o Brasil reconheceu a situação de vulnerabilidade do Estado de Roraima e criou o Comité Federal de Assistência Emergencial, o que resultou em diretrizes do Ministério da Defesa que estabeleceram os parâmetros e responsabilidades para a execução das operações Acolhida e Controle.

Palavras-Chave: Crise venezuelana, imigração, Brasil.

1. Introduction

Migration is the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State. (IOM, 2009, p.40)

Migration is part of the history of civilisation. The first reports of population movements date back to prehistoric times, when Neanderthals and Sapiens left Africa for Europe and Asia. In ancient history, the Jewish exodus and the migrations of barbarian peoples in Europe changed the features of the regions where they occurred. The great naval expeditions of the 14th and 15th centuries led to the discovery of new colonies and to the subsequent settlement of Europeans in the American continent. Furthermore, the forced migration of African slaves also contributed with customs and genetic heritage to the composition of the Brazilian population (Franchi, 2019).

Brazil's national identity has been constructed around the miscegenation of different ethnic groups. The indigenous populations were joined by the Portuguese, and later by Africans, forming the core of Brazilian society (Darcy, 2015). In addition to the Portuguese colonisation, other European peoples arrived in the Dutch invasions during the colonial period brought. At that time, several Azorean couples came to the country sponsored by the Portuguese crown (Riley, 2003). There were several migration waves from the late 19th to the early 20th centuries, during which Italians, Portuguese, Spanish, Germans, Japanese and Lebanese groups settled in the south and southeast regions. According to Azevedo, this movement was orchestrated by the Brazilian elites in an attempt to make the population less mixed (De Azevedo, 1987). Even though these ethnic groups arrived in different waves and periods, the fact remains that migrants of different origins have collaborated in building the country's identity as a mixed nation (Darcy, 2015; Giarola, 2012).

During the late 20th century, several conflicts, including the two great wars, forced thousands of people into involuntary displacement. The phenomenon has influenced the Brazilian migration policy, as Brazil began to receive migrants through the International Refugee Organization (Andrade, 2005).

In October 1945, while World War II was still being fought, the United Nations (UN) organization was established to facilitate global cooperation. Since its inception, the UN has committed to promoting human rights and providing humanitarian assistance to thousands of world war refugees. In 1950, the role of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR) was created to deal specifically with the issue of forced migration.

Over the years, in addition to refugees from war-torn countries, the organization has helped other people who needed support for various reasons.

Aside from historical events, other causes have directly influenced and/or influence migratory movements, such as hunger, natural disasters, climate change, environmental degradation; intra-state and interstate disputes, political persecution; favourable international climate.

An international migration event has impacts for the host countries, for the countries of origin and for those that host migrants on a temporary basis. It takes place at international borders, airports and ports and has specific features depending on region. These movements are facilitated by easy access routes, regional integration initiatives, bilateral diplomatic agreements, lack of border checkpoints and the presence of solidarity networks (Aragón, 2009). Migrations are complex phenomena that can change the regions where they occur, especially with regards to psychosocial (education, health, culture, work, demography), political (diplomacy, sovereignty, borders), economic (trade, investment, economic integration, income and labour market) and military (articulation, organization and logistics) factors.

In desirable destinations, mass migration creates imbalances between urban development and the creation of jobs and services, which has immediate effects but also leads to short-, medium- and long-term changes (Castiglioni, 2009).

South America, a subcontinent with about 12% of the world's land area and 6% of the world's population, receives immigrants from countries both inside and outside the American continent. In a recent example, the instability and crisis in Haiti was worsened by the 2010 earthquake, which led part of the country's population to scatter across the continent. In the case of Venezuela, supply shortages have worsened the crisis, forcing its citizens to immigrate to various South American countries.

Since 2015, increasing numbers of Venezuelans have crossed the Brazil-Venezuela border to purchase various products, but mainly food and medicine. That year, few Venezuelans emigrated or applied for asylum. However, in 2016, the flow began to increase and gradually, over that same year, the characteristics of the migratory movement changed, with more Venezuelans seeking medical and hospital services and settling in Brazil. Although Venezuela has other neighbouring nations (Guyana and Colombia), the southernmost and easternmost states only have a border with Brazil and Guyana, and have no land links to Guyana. Venezuela has borders with the Brazilian states of Amazonas and Roraima, but the main gateway for refugees is the state of Roraima. This movement is facilitated by the highway that connects Caracas to Manaus in the Amazon, which cuts across the Roraima state. The BR-174 is Roraima's largest highway, connecting the Brazil-Venezuela border (in the Pacaraima-RR municipality) to Manaus, the capital of the Amazon state. On the Venezuelan side, it merges with Rota-10, a highway that runs from north to south, cutting across several Venezuelan states from the highway system near the Caribbean Sea to the Brazilian border in Bolívar state.

Roraima is Brazil's northernmost state. It has land borders with Venezuela and Guyana,

a population of 576,568 (IBGE, 2018) and an annual revenue of 11 million *reais*. Some of its distinctive features are: its distance from the country's political and economic centre; the fact that approximately 46% of the state is marked as Indigenous Land; that it is not connected to the national electrical grid (the state gets its power from the Guri Hydroelectric Power Plant in Venezuela); there are problems with border and environmental violations at the border strip.

The state's health system has resources, jobs and beds to serve a population of about five hundred thousand, and has limitations that make it vulnerable to abrupt changes in population numbers and profile. The exponential growth of the flow of Venezuelans since 2016 has affected the state of Roraima, mainly in terms of work and health related issues due to a depleted labor force and to the fact that the hospital network was planned to serve a smaller population.

In a first stage, Venezuelan immigrants were received and hosted by the local authorities. The state government and the Boa Vista municipality requested support from the federal government and provided limited support to improvised shelters. The Army's engineer construction battalion stationed in Boa Vista helped clean and maintain some shelters. Nongovernmental organizations and institutions linked to different religious groups were directly involved by conducting donation campaigns and administering shelters. However, despite these efforts, the food and health situation remained precarious.

In 2017, the shortages in Venezuela grew worse and the number of Venezuelans entering Brazil increased once again. As a result, the Brazilian government organized Operation Acolhida to address the influx of migration to Roraima. The object of this study is the Brazilian response to the Venezuelan migration crisis. The study is delimited in terms of space to the geographical area of the Brazilian territory (although some information about Venezuela is provided, as it was deemed essential to explain the problem); in terms of time, to the period from 2015 (the year the flow of Venezuelans to other countries began to grow) to late 2018. The general objective (GO) of this study is to analyse the Brazilian government's response to the Venezuelan migration crisis. The following specific objectives (SO) helped operationalise the GO and guide the process:

Specific Objective 1 – To describe the historical events that triggered the Venezuelan migration crisis.

Specific Objective 2 – To understand the measures taken by the Brazilian government to deal with the Venezuelan diaspora.

To achieve the GO, the study will answer the following research question (RQ): How do the emergency measures taken by the Brazilian government mitigate the risk of instability in the region?

2. Theoretical and methodological design

The method of process tracing is often used when analysts engage in *historical explanation*: that is, the identification of the causes of outcomes that have already occurred. These explanations are usually composed of sequences of events or causal chains in which factors located at different points in time contribute to an outcome. (Mahoney, 2015, p.202)

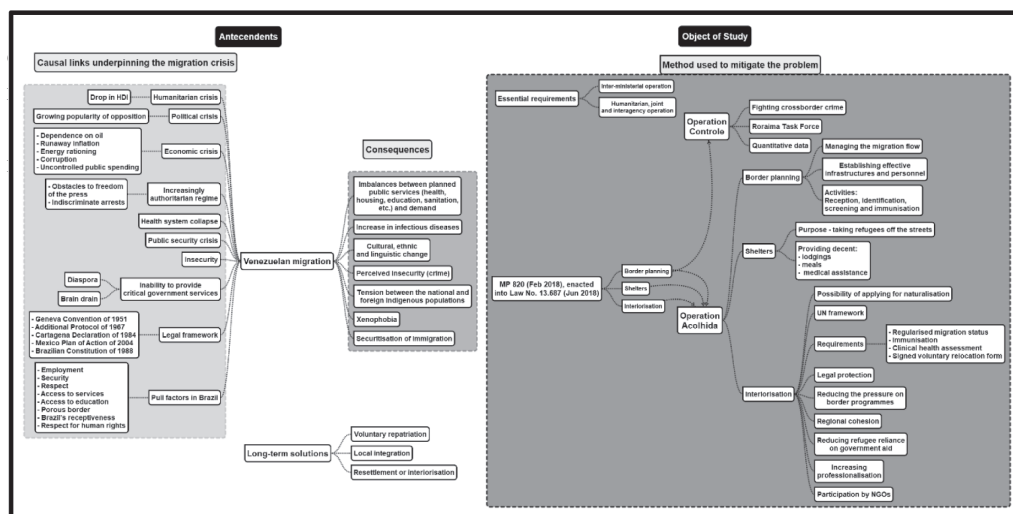


Figure 1 – Process tracing mind map of a migration management system

The theory that underpins this study is the securitisation theory advanced by Barry Buzan and other authors of the Copenhagen School. The Copenhagen School² was an organization that brought together a group of theorists who held discussions during its time of activity. It supported the principles outlined by Onuf (1998), a pioneer of constructivism, arguing that the world is a social construct created through speech acts and social relationships, and framed the concept of securitisation as a social construct. For a subject to be accepted as a security issue, it must first be declared one; this process can be identified through discourse analysis.

According to Buzan and Hansen (2012), with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar conflict, security studies faced new challenges. The studies published during that period were materially and ideologically influenced by the end of bipolarity and questioned the very nature of the studies that had been published up to that point, which focused on the rivalry between superpowers and the threat of a nuclear war between them.

The broader scope of the Copenhagen School had an important role in the evolution of International Security Studies. Buzan and Weaver, two of the school's most respected authors, proposed a new way of analysing the topic that broke with the bipolar model and replaced it with a holistic approach to the security of human communities and nations. Thus, according to Buzan, security studies should address not only military and political issues, but also economic, environmental and societal issues.

According to Buzan et al., (1998), the security studies sets out a new and comprehensive framework of analysis for security studies. Establishing the case for the wider agenda, it both answers the traditionalist charge that the wider agenda makes the subject incoherent

² The school was established in the 1980s and was influenced by the theoretical concerns of the time. It aimed to develop a set of concepts and analytical frameworks that would make it possible to analyse international security from a broad perspective (Tanno, 2003).

and formulates security to incorporate the traditionalist agenda. It examines the distinctive character and dynamics of security in five sectors: military, political, economic, environmental, and societal. It rejects the traditionalists' case for restricting security to one sector, arguing that security is a particular type of politics applicable to a wide range of issues.

International migration, one of the issues that has been analysed from this security perspective, has become increasingly relevant because there are currently over 65 million displaced people in various parts of the world (Trends, 2016). The problem is serious enough to constitute a threat to stability in some nations. Today's mass migrations are comparable to events such as the two World Wars and the Great Depression because they affect all regions of the Earth in varying degrees of intensity (Buzan et al., 1998, p.85).

Securitisation takes an issue beyond the principles outlined in policy. Issues can be defined as: non-politicised, politicised and securitised. A non-politicised issue is an issue in which the State is not involved, whereas a politicised issue is part of the government's agenda and is addressed by government policies; a securitised issue requires immediate and urgent action (Buzan et al., 1998).

This approach, which frames multisectoral issues as security issues, is a dynamic process that changes depending on the actions of securitisation agents and organizations. According to Buzan et al., (1998) it is determined by the population's need for securitisation³ in regards to certain issues, as well as by the narrative that is built around them.

This aspect of securitisation which Buzan describes in his work is reinforced by the fact that environmental issues in the Legal Amazon region are a sensitive subject for the Brazilian government. During the 20th century, the Amazon region was interpreted and managed as a frontier of development, with sufficient natural resources to support the country's development (Franchi, Bursztyn & Drummond, 2011). Therefore, this region has received and continues to receive special attention from the Brazilian government. To demonstrate this, Medeiros lists the challenges that the Brazilian Army has faced in the region, from geopolitics (international panorama) to the securitisation of domestic issues (territorial sovereignty and development support) (Medeiros, 2020). As the author notes:

[...] the military presence in that border [the Amazonian border] has a special significance that goes far beyond traditional geopolitical concerns. Not only is it a spearhead for the Government in remote areas, it has taken on, often on a permanent basis – and this is more obvious in the case of Brazil – the government's responsibilities, such as managing regional development in different areas: health, education, construction, etc. In the midst of a historic national state building process, the region's armed forces still perform tasks beyond what is generally considered to be the scope of defence. (Medeiros, 2020, p. 92)

The number of military and interagency operations carried out in the region, especially at the border strip, is further evidence of the securitisation of the Amazonian region by the Brazilian government (Almeida, França & Franchi, 2020). The National Defence Policy states that:

³ When an issue becomes securitised, it leaves the sphere of normal politics and becomes an urgent issue.

Borders require attention because people, goods and property pass through them, integrating and bringing the country closer to its neighbours, at the same time as transnational criminal activities are perpetrated through them, which means that this porosity requires constant vigilance, coordinated action between defence and public security agencies, and close cooperation with neighbouring countries. (Brazil, 2013, p. 8)

As the above shows, the attention given by the Brazilian government to certain regions, particularly the Amazon borders, is not only framed within a global movement of new security agendas, but also of national agendas that have been historically built over the last centuries, supported by legislation regulating the use of the Armed Forces (Jiménez & Franchi, 2020).

3. Venezuelan history

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a country on the northern coast of South America, bordered by the Caribbean Sea. It borders Colombia to the west, Brazil to the south, Guyana to the east and the Caribbean islands to the north. It shares a border of approximately 743 kilometres with Guyana but no road connections. Venezuela has a border dispute with Guyana over the territory of Essequibo, which escalated after news of the discovery of offshore oil in the Orinoco Delta region (Carnevali, 2015). There is a dense network of cities and roads alongside the Venezuela-Colombia border, the country's most densely populated border strip. The border with Brazil is approximately 2,199 kilometres across. Although it is similar in length to the Colombian border, it has low population density and there are few roads connecting the two states. As Figure 2 shows, the region has only one major highway.



Figure 2 – Venezuelan borders
Source: Adapted from Nations (2016).

Despite their differences, the Venezuelan borders with both Colombia and Brazil are more than simply borders, they are areas where nations actively interact and, as Oscar Medeiros argues (Medeiros, 2020), are more accurately described as a frontier.

In the early 20th century, Venezuela went through a period of successive authoritarian governments which culminated in the 1950s with the dictatorial government of Marcos Pérez Jiménez. The Punto Fijo Pact was signed in 1958, after this period of instability. The agreement aimed to preserve democracy by ensuring alternation in power between political parties. It was described as a Governance Pact, although the left was blocked from participating in the process. In addition to this Pact, the Betancourt Doctrine restricted Venezuela's relations with dictatorial governments and protected Venezuela's democratic stability for nearly three decades (Langue, 2005).

In the 1970s, Venezuela went through a period of changes that set in motion policies which aimed to recruit professional immigrants and skilled workers. At that time, the country was known for receiving immigrants (Silva, 2018).

In 1988, benefitting from the oil profits of the previous decade, Carlos Andrés Pérez was elected for a second term as President of the Republic. During this second term, a sharp drop in oil prices meant Pérez had to manage the Central Bank's increasingly depleted reserves (which dropped from US\$13.75 billion in 1985 to US\$6.67 billion in 1988), inflation rates that reached 40.3% per year, high levels of unemployment and a drop in wages, in addition to capital flight (Maringoni & da Costa, 2009).

In 1989, the country faced an uprising known as the *Caracazo* riots. The protests were motivated by public discontent with the economic measures imposed by the Pérez administration, which resulted in loss of public support for the Punto Fijo Pact (Langue, 2005). Three years later, in 1992, the Revolutionary Bolivarian Movement-200 (MBR-200) organized a military coup attempt codenamed Operation Zamora. Lieutenant Colonel Hugo Chávez Frias participated in the operation, which was deemed a failure, as the rebels surrendered and were taken into custody in less than 48 hours (Silva, 2018). Hugo Chávez's arrest can be considered the beginning of his political career due to the media coverage of his speech from the national jail, where he said his famous line: "For now, I am retiring". In 1994, Hugo Chávez was amnestied after serving two years of his prison sentence, after which he resigned from the military and went into politics.

Chávez founded the *Movimiento V República* (MVR) in 1997, and was elected president by the MVR the following year, with 56 percent of the vote (Barros, 2006). Chávez took office as president in 1999 and, after a favourable referendum, convened a Constituent Assembly composed of 131 representatives, 120 of whom had affiliations with *chavismo*. Chávez also spearheaded the Bolivarian Revolution, a term he coined for the political, economic and social changes that aimed to institute a new socialism, which had an impact on institutions, as the government directly interfered in certain matters, such as the promotion of general officers (Silva, 2018).

In April 2002, a general strike was called by the CTV (Confederation of Venezuelan Workers, the country's largest labour union), Fedecámaras (Venezuela's largest business association) and PDVSA employees (Petróleo de Venezuela S.A., a state-owned oil company). The strike lasted 48 hours and ended on 11 April 2002 with a protest march in Caracas that was violently repressed, killing and injuring civilians (Ribeiro, 2009).

On 12 April 2002, a successful coup led to the arrest of President Chávez, to the dissolution of the National Assembly and the Supreme Court, and to the annulment of the Constitution. The coup was orchestrated by opponents of the regime and ended after almost 48 hours, largely due to the fact that the Armed Forces supported the Bolivarian Revolution and Chávez (Silva, 2018).

By the early hours of 14 April, Chávez had already returned the Miraflores Palace. In the wake of the events of April 2002, Chávez announced unpopular measures that led to another strike in December 2002, which became known as *paro petrolero* (Ribeiro, 2009). As a result of this strike, which was dubbed “oil sabotage”, Chávez nationalised the PDVSA, fired about 18,000 employees and replaced them with *chavistas*, causing the company’s production to drop to half (Silva, 2018).

Chávez ruled Venezuela until 2013, with a *modus operandi* that relied on welfare policies financed by redistributing PDVEZA’s profits and on appointing AAFB officers to executive and legislative positions. This policy resulted in a spike in public debt, but also in societal advances such as an improved Human Development Index (HDI)⁴, a rise in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a reduction in poverty rates. It also put Chávez at the forefront of 21st century socialism and of the South American political arena, and allowed him to influence several countries, including Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia and Ecuador (Chart 1).

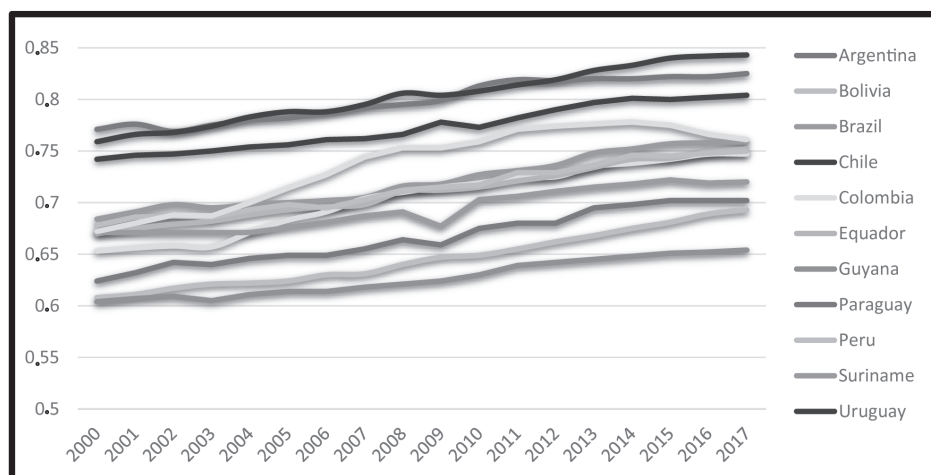


Chart 1 – Human Development Index - South America (1990-2017)

Source: Adapted from UNDP (2019).

After Chávez’s death in 2013, his chosen successor Nicolas Maduro took office, inheriting an oil crisis and a country in socioeconomic decline due to the weight of the debt created by the Bolivarian welfare policies (Silva, 2018).

Chart 2 compares Venezuela’s HDI to that of its neighbouring countries (the main destinations for Venezuelan refugees). From 2013 to 2017, Venezuela was the only country whose HDI dropped due to its economic and social policies.

⁴ Since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has issued a series of annual Human Development Reports (HDRs) which rank the world’s countries according to their Human Development Index (HDI).

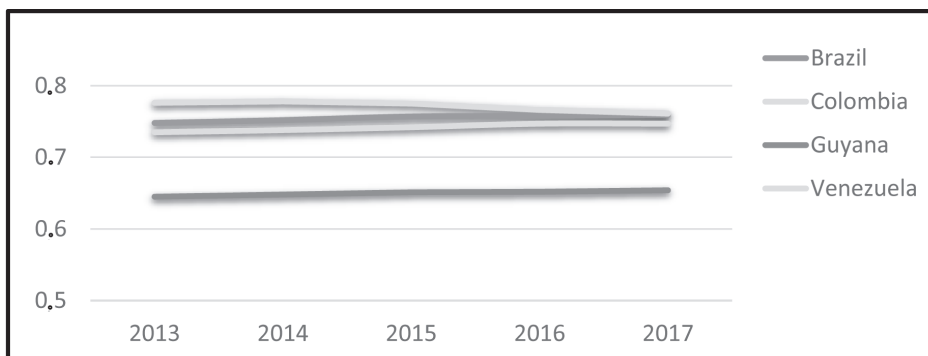


Chart 2 – HDI - Brazil, Colombia, Guyana and Venezuela

Source: Adapted from UNDP (2019).

From 2014 onwards, the gradual breakdown of Maduro’s government led to a resurgence of opposition movements, which in turn led to confrontations and arrests. In response, the regime hardened its policies.

Thanks to the government’s dwindling popularity, the opposition won about 2/3 of the National Assembly seats in the 2015 parliamentary elections. However, Maduro managed to bypass the legislative body and hold on to power through the Supreme Court (about 33 judges were appointed by the last two presidents) and the Electoral Courts, with support from the military and some sectors of civil society.

The recession that hit the country since 2013 was caused by the inflationary imbalance, the humanitarian crisis, the obstacles to freedom of the press, the degradation of the health system, energy rationing and the growing popularity of the opposition. As a result of this recession, the country declared an economic emergency and there was a spike in immigration, as Chart 3 shows.

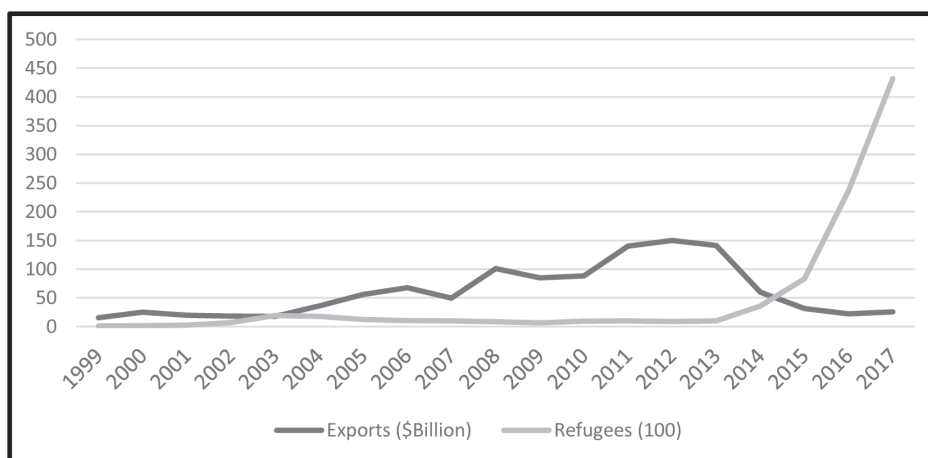


Chart 3 – Exports / refugee ratio

Source: Adapted from OEC (2018) and UNHCR (2018).

The Latin American movement known as “Turn to the right” emerged as the phenomenon known as “Rose Wave”, which swept Latin America from the late 20th century to the early 21st century, began to decline. The “Rose Wave” movement started with the election of Hugo Chávez as Venezuelan President and spread to Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua and Ecuador, electing leftist governments in several Latin American countries.

It was not “the left” that conquered Latin America, but “the lefts”. While this process was “a plural movement with several similar characteristics, it was clearly a heterogeneous phenomenon due to its local specificities”. (Arantes, 2016, p. 64)

The “Turn to the right” began in mid- 2016 when right-wing and centre-right governments started taking back power in Latin America, bolstered by a crisis caused by European and American financial pressures, the drop in oil prices, the decrease in demand for raw materials, compounded by a drop in prices, and diplomatic retaliation (Visentini, 2015).

This right-wing wave provides a new reinterpretation of Latin American liberalism and conservatism, mixing elements of individualism / entrepreneurship, religious discourse, unfounded claims of technical-based management, anti-statism and nationalism. (Cruz; Kaysel & Cotas, 2015)

The Lima Group was established in 2017 to discuss the critical situation in Venezuela, which stemmed from the rise in migration flows and the political misalignment between Venezuela and the majority of South American countries.

The group comprises 14 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Saint Lucia) and its goal is to find solutions to restore democracy to Venezuela by peaceful means. To achieve this, the group established 16 positions, including: the non-recognition of the National Constituent Assembly, the support to and solidarity with the National Assembly, the repudiation of the use of force, and the condemnation of human rights violations (Lima, 2017).

In 2017, due to the instability in Venezuela, Mercosur suspended Venezuela’s political rights for breaching democratic order. In 2018, the Organization of American States (OAS) approved a resolution to suspend Venezuela from the Organization. Still in 2018, internal deadlocks in the choice of the Organization’s Secretary General led the main members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) (the South American bloc created in 2008 by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez to foster regional integration) to suspend their participation, claiming to be redirecting priorities and policy trends.

In the May 2018 elections, Maduro was re-elected for a six-year term. The results were not accepted by the opposition, nor by countries such as Brazil and the United States, deepening Venezuela’s international isolation. Voter turnout was low, with abstention reaching 50%.

Nicolás Maduro has had a troubled government as President of Venezuela. In less than a year, the country witnessed a shortage of basic commodities on its shelves, inflation soared, the economy slowed down, and the currency, which had already been spiralling downwards, depreciated further. The IMF forecasts for 2020 predicted a contraction of about 15% in the gross domestic product (GDP) and a spike of about 13,000% in product prices.

The main factors behind the Venezuelan economic crisis are: the Dutch disease⁵ (dependence on oil), checks on prices and currency exchange rates (which has led to capital flight, general discouragement and corruption) and uncontrolled public spending.

In addition to the economic crisis, Venezuela faces a serious public security and governance crisis that can be explained by the following factors:

- Widespread penetration of organized crime in state institutions;
- Kleptocracy;
- Transfer of state powers to civilian armed groups;
- Exponential rise in organized crime;
- High levels of violence between state and non-state actors;
- Export of criminal activity;
- Widespread international accusations of criminal behaviour (Insight crime, 2018).

As these two centuries of history have shown, the Venezuelan Bolivarian model is clearly on the decline, especially since 2015, when Maduro's government lost the parliamentary elections. Since that year, the flow of emigration increased significantly due to a climate of popular pressure and political and economic deterioration.

The Venezuelan diaspora is not a new process. It began during President Chávez's administration and has escalated under Maduro. It is not an easy process to study because the Venezuelan government has not published any official data on the transit of its citizens since 2000 (de La Veja & Vargas, 2014, p. 5)

Venezuela, a country that was known as an immigration destination during the second half of the 20th century, has been experiencing a recent wave of emigration that has had repercussions for Brazil due to the influx of Venezuelan citizens, especially through the state of Roraima. As this state does not have a recent history of welcoming foreigners, it was not prepared in terms of migration support services and there was initial resistance from local residents (who quickly associated Venezuelan migration to prostitution, job insecurity, diseases and job competition).

In the past, Brazil was not a destination for Venezuelan immigrants, who preferred countries with higher HDI or countries with the same mother tongue such as the United States, Spain and Colombia. However, this trend has not changed.

Between January and September of 2017 about 48,500 Venezuelans applied for asylum globally, almost twice as much as the previous year. By July 2017, there were an estimated 300,000 Venezuelans in Colombia, 40,000 in Trinidad and Tobago, and 30,000 in Brazil, with various migratory status or even illegally. (Civil, 2018, p. 6)

Venezuelan immigration is economically motivated and focuses on three regions: North America and Europe, the destinations of wealthier citizens; Spanish-speaking Latin countries, the choice of middle-class Venezuelans; and border countries, which are the destination of poorer citizens. The latter has the most impact on the host countries.

According to the US Department of Homeland Security (USDHS), over 154,000 Venezuelans obtained permanent residence in the US between 1990 and 2013. Most of them

⁵ The term "Dutch disease" refers to the chronic overvaluation of a country's exchange rates. It is caused by the exploitation of abundant and cheap resources, which are produced and exported at an exchange rate that is clearly more advantageous than the exchange rates that allow other tradable goods companies that use state-of-the-art technology to be competitive internationally (Pereira & Marconi, 2007).

are skilled professionals who do not plan on returning to their homeland, in what is clearly a brain drain movement.

Due to the crisis' persistence and intensification, Brazil has become a destination for Venezuelan immigrants, especially since 2016. As the next section will show, in 2017 and 2018 the influx of Venezuelans into the country dramatically increased in comparison to previous years.

The above analysis shows that Venezuela's historical orientation has led it to the current political and economic crisis. The Venezuelan diaspora has settled in several countries, including Brazil, due to geographical, cultural, economic and social factors.

4. Brazil and the Venezuelan crisis

The gateway for Venezuelan refugees into Brazil is the state of Roraima. Brazil's northernmost state has land borders with Venezuela and Guyana (12.2% of Brazil's land borders). It has peculiar features, such as:

- Its distance from the country's political and economic centre;
- Approximately 46% of the state has been marked as Indigenous Territory (it is Brazil's largest Indigenous State, with 32 demarcated Indigenous Territories);
- It is cut off from the national electrical grid (it gets its power from the Guri hydroelectric plant in Venezuela);
- There are problems with illegal border activity and environmental crimes along the border strip: fraud, smuggling, illegal mining, deforestation and drug trafficking (in small quantities);
- There are (municipal) urban centres that actively interact along the border strip (Pacaraima-Brazil and Santa Helena de Uairém-Venezuela).

Since Brazil has only one densely populated border (Pacaraima), Vaz (2017) lists some aspects that attract or repel the Venezuelan migration flows (shown in Table 1).

Table 1 – Aspects that attract or repel Venezuelan immigration

Pull factors	Push factors
- Easy access to the BR174, which connects Manaus to Boa Vista, which facilitates the flow of people.	- Relative distance to major economic and demographic centres.
- Longstanding political and economic interactions and social ties in the region.	- Limited capacity of local economies to absorb a significant increase in labour supply.
- The perception that the Brazilian government is not invested in stopping the influx of Venezuelan migrants.	- The fact that other border areas, such as Colombia, are more attractive due to their greater population density.

Source: Adapted from Vaz (2017).

The Brazil-Venezuela border is not densely populated, but it is still a dynamic area for the local economy and urban network.

Thus, Brazil has become a migratory corridor for Venezuela, and the current migration density is changing the daily life of border cities, particularly in the state of Roraima, and especially in the municipalities of Boa Vista and Pacaraima.

Of all public services, the increased influx of Venezuelan immigrants has had the greatest impact on the health system. Local doctors and administrators have reported that there is a real risk of an increase in infectious diseases, which can lead to epidemics and even to the

resurgence of diseases that Brazil had practically eradicated through vaccination.

In late 2016, in response to the overload of the state and municipal health system (as shown in Table 2), a Public Health Emergency of National Interest (ESPIN) was declared in Boa Vista and Pacaraima, which streamlined administrative processes in order to address the disproportionate demands which the intense and constant migration influx placed on the Universal Healthcare System (Decree No. 22.199 of 06 December 2016, Government of the State of Roraima).

Table 2 – Impact of Venezuelan immigrants on the Regional Health System

Costs (R\$)	2015	2016	2017 (Abril)
Hospitalisations	R\$ 34,834.00	R\$ 40,269.00	R\$ 53,640.00
Total expenditure	R\$ 24,556,486.66	R\$ 29,133,807.87	R\$ 49,161,481.39

Source: Franchi (2017).

Since 2017, the number of Venezuelan asylum seekers have increased significantly, in what can be called a recent and unprecedented flow (Simoes, 2017), as depicted in Chart 4.

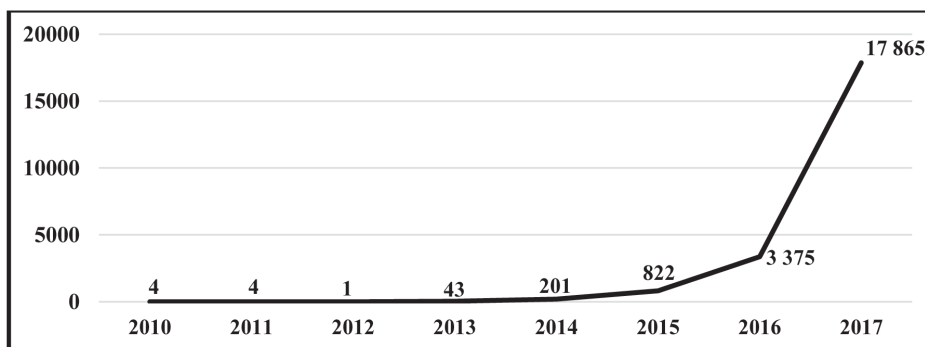


Chart 4 – Requests for asylum in Brazil

Source: Brazil (2017).

In February 2018, the Brazilian government formally recognised the vulnerable situation of the State of Roraima (Decree No. 9.285) and created a Federal Committee for Emergency Assistance (Decree No. 9.286) to coordinate all humanitarian actions. This Committee comprises representatives from various government agencies and ministries, and is coordinated by a general officer in the Brazilian Army.

Following the above decrees, the Ministry of Defence published Ministerial Directives No. 03 and 04 of 2018, which established parameters and responsibilities for conducting operations Acolhida and Controle.

It should be noted that the use of military forces in humanitarian operations such as Operation Acolhida has been a hallmark of postmodern armies (Moskos, Williams & Segal, 2000).

Operation Acolhida was planned according to current military doctrine and can be classified as a humanitarian, joint and interagency operation that aims to provide humanitarian assistance (reception, identification, screening, immunisation, hosting and reallocation) to Venezuelan immigrants in the state of Roraima, in response to the migration

flow caused by the humanitarian crisis (Ceravolo, Paiva & Franchi 2020).

Table 3 provides some useful definitions.

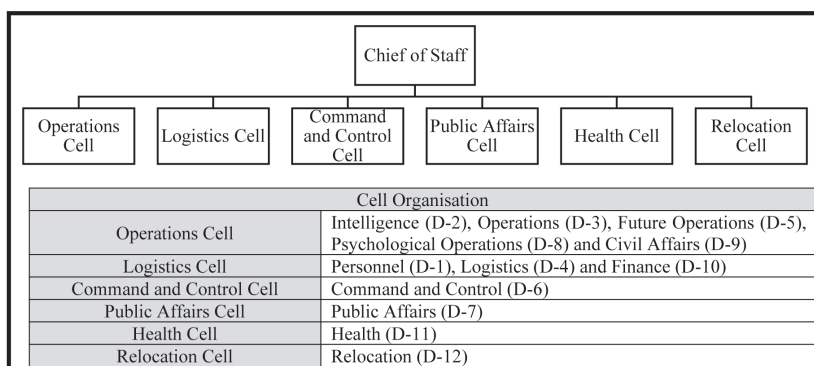
Table 3 – Concepts and definitions

Concept	Definition
Joint Operation	"An operation that involves the coordinated use of elements from more than one force , with independent or complementary purposes but not under a single command" (Brazil, 2015).
Humanitarian Assistance	"Action taken by a State or member States of the United Nations Organization for the urgent provision of different forms of assistance to citizens of countries afflicted by disasters, or devastated by war between conflicting nations, with the aim of protecting, supporting and providing for the wellbeing of affected populations, respecting the principle of non-intervention " (Brazil, 2014).
Humanitarian Assistance Operation	"An operation that is specifically planned to alleviate human suffering caused by disasters which pose a serious threat to life or result in extensive damage or loss of property. Its goal is to use military capabilities to complement the disaster response efforts by government and non-governmental organizations" (Brazil, 2014).
Humanitarian Assistance Force	"A temporary force established to conduct a Humanitarian Assistance Operation, with capabilities that integrate disaster response efforts in Brazil or abroad" (Brazil, 2014).

Source: Adapted from Brazil (2015).

The Operation is conducted by a Humanitarian Logistics Task Force that cooperates with the Federal, State and Municipal Government. It is tasked with implementing emergency assistance measures to receive Venezuelan immigrants who meet the legal requirements and are in a situation of vulnerability and lack of assistance. This Task Force is staffed by about 500 military personnel from the three branches and is coordinated by a Brazilian army division general. Its General Staff is structured as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 – Organization of the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force



Source: Oliveira (2018).

As with all joint operations, Operation Acolhida was planned according to the doctrine of the Ministry of Defence (Brazil, 2011) and includes a conceptual component, which aims to understand the problem and elaborate an operational plan, and a detailed component that aims to solve the problem.

The conceptual component determined that a solution would have to be based on three pillars: border planning, shelter and interiorisation (Ceravolo et al., 2020).

The conceptual component guided the detailed planning of Operation Acolhida, as shown in the overview presented in Figure 3.

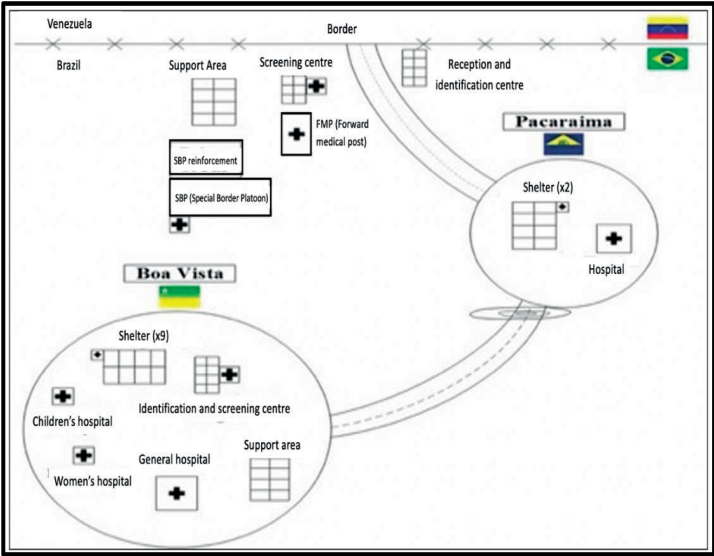
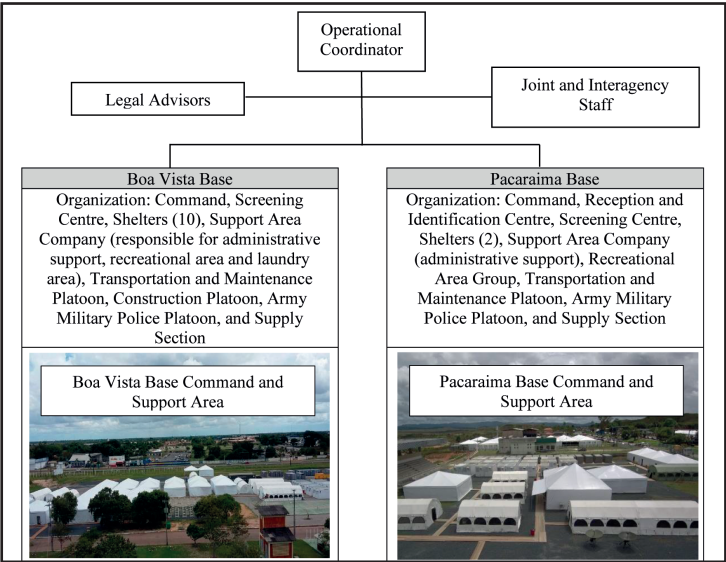


Figure 3 – Detailed planning of Operation Acolhida
Source: Oliveira (2018).

As Pacaraima and Boa Vista are the two cities that have been the most affected by the increase in Venezuelan migration, the Task Force set up a headquarters in each city and organized its forces as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5 – Organization of the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force



Source: Oliveira (2018).

The Operation was conceived to operate from five facilities, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 – Organization of Operation Acolhida

Facility	Location	Purpose	Agencies	Activities
1.Reception and Identification Centre	Pacaraima	Identifying the reasons for entering Brazilian territory (tourism, temporary residence or asylum)	- Brazilian Armed Forces; - Federal Police (FP); - Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA); - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and - International Organization for Migration (IOM).	- Reception and orientation of citizens wishing to cross the border. - Identification and entry checks (Federal Police). - Checking immunisation status. - Offering a meal.
2. Screening Centre		Registration, luggage inspection, issuing working paper.	- Brazilian Armed Forces; - PF; - Federal Revenue (FR); - ACNUR; - IOM; - Ministry of Health (MS); - Ministry of Social Development; - Ministry of Human Rights; - United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF);	- Collecting the biometric data of immigrants requesting temporary residence and asylum seeker. - Luggage inspection. - Regularisation of migration status. - Provision of documents. - Phytosanitary inspection. - Immunisation; - Social assistance. - Protection and defence of rights. - Activities with children. - Providing another meal.
3. Forward Medical Post (FMP)		Emergency medical care of isolated cases of low and medium complexity.	- Brazilian Armed Forces: medical field team composed of doctors, dentists, pharmacists and military nurses.	- Health screening. - 20 beds.

Facility	Location	Pupose	Pesonnell	
			Capacity	Occupancy
Shelters in Pacaraima	Janakoida	Houses indigenous refugees – families (transitional shelter)	224	408
	BV-8	Houses nonindigenous refugees – shelter intended for regularisation of migratory status	500	238
Abrigos em Boa Vista	Pintolândia	Houses indigenous refugees – families	448	690
	Tancredo Neves	Houses nonindigenous adults	232	284
	Jardim Floresta	Houses nonindigenous refugees – families	594	568
	São Vicente		278	367
	Nova Canãa		390	387
	Rondon I		726	801
	Hélio Campos	Houses nonindigenous – families and adults	250	253
	Palácio Latife Salomão		300	431
	Santa Tereza		514	511
	Rondon III		1000	370
	Rondon II	Houses nonindigenous refugees – transitional shelter intended for interiorisation processes	640	415
TOTAL			6.196	5.723
- The shelters comply with the standards set forth in the UNHCR publications. - The military personnel in Operation Acolhida provide all the logistical support required to operate the shelters, such as construction and repairs, external and internal security, medical care and meal provision. - The Humanitarian Logistics Task Force provides hot meals to nonindigenous shelters and dry goods to indigenous shelters. - Tasks carried out in the shelters: providing three meals a day; distributing food to indigenous shelters; distributing personal hygiene and cleaning kits, including diapers; daily cleaning, Portuguese classes; activities for children; cultural and recreational activities; supplying raw materials for Warao indigenous crafts; providing telephones to communicate with relatives in Venezuela; protecting and defending rights and providing 24 hour security.				

Source: Adapted from Civil (2018).

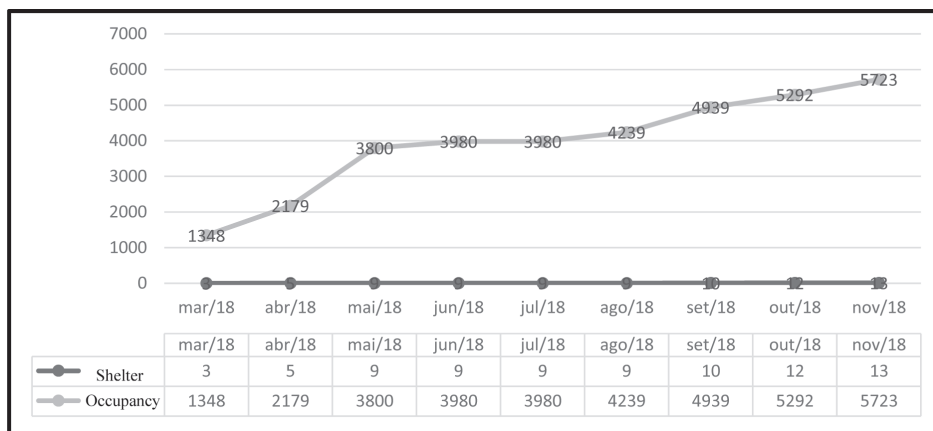


Chart 5 – Shelter occupancy over time
Source: Adapted from Civil (2018).

The shelters in the urban area of Boa Vista have been planned based on studies such as the one conducted by UNHCR, which estimates that about 60% of the world's refugees and 80% of displaced people live in urban areas. Many avoid camps outside urban areas because of the lack of job opportunities (Park, 2016).

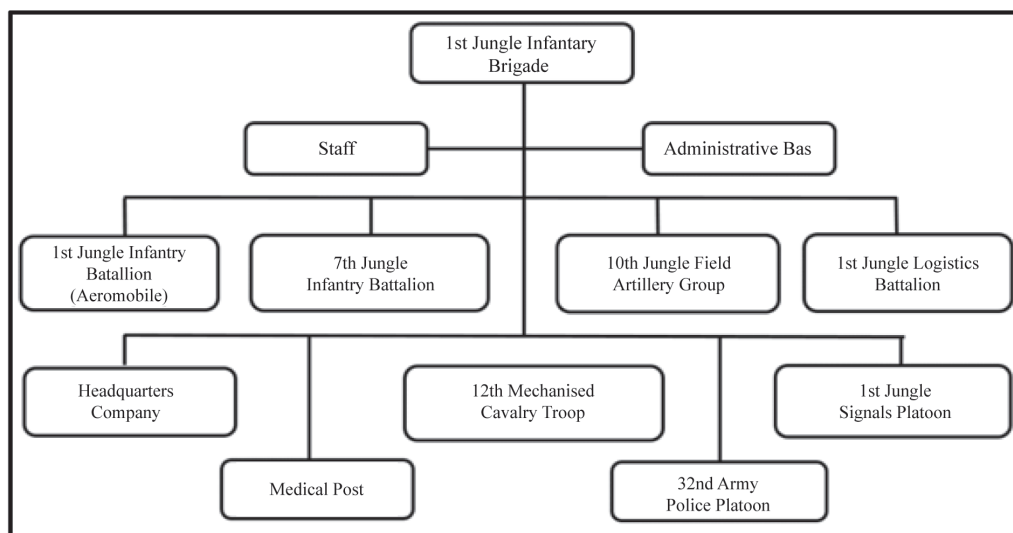
The Humanitarian Logistics Task Force decision to set up camps in the urban area of Boa Vista was based on the assumption that 500 Venezuelans would be relocated each month.

Operation Controle was developed according to the provisions of Ministerial Directive No. 04/2018 issued by the Brazilian Army with the objective of fighting cross-border crime and supporting migration control operations under the responsibility of the Federal Police, with the state of Roraima as area of operations.

This directive tasks the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade with intensifying surveillance along the Roraima state border, in accordance with the provisions of the Operational Plan for Operation Controle, which was developed by the Amazon Military Command according to the Operational Planning Directive issued by the Land Operations Command. Thus, in order to fight cross-border crimes and support migration control actions under the responsibility of the federal police, as of 20 February 2018 the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade intensified surveillance on the Roraima State border, conducting preventive and enforcement military actions, particularly in the areas of operations of the special border platoons in Pacaraima and Bonfim, and in deep areas along the highways from Venezuela and Guyana (Ceravolo et al., 2020).

The 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade is a large unit with a strength of 3,200 troops from various combat, combat support, and logistics support organizations, which are structured as outlined in Table 7.

Table 7 – Organization chart of the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade



Source: Oliveira (2018).

Like Operation Acolhida, it was developed according to the two steps advised in the planning methodology for land operations: conceptual planning - operational design of the Army; and detailed planning – situation assessment by the commander.

The Conceptual Planning phase determined that, to solve the problem of fighting crossborder crime and supporting migration control actions, the following aspects should be addressed:

- The importance of the BR-174 and BR-401, the two main highways from Venezuela and Guyana;
- The large number of secondary roads near the BRs;
- The porous nature of the borders with Venezuela and Guyana.

The conceptual planning envisioned a possible solution for the problem:

- Establishing roadblocks and checkpoints at the border;
- Conducting patrols on foot and using technological assets in the porous areas;
- Increasing integration between public security agencies and inspection agencies operating at the border and on federal highways;
- Enlisting the support of the population in all operations;
- All operations must be conducted according to the principles of visibility and legality.

Based on the conceptual planning, the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade's detailed planning identified the need to set up a Task Force⁶ due to the complexity of the activities and the number of personnel that would reinforce it (army police troops, engineers, signals, psychological operations and intelligence troops).

The Roraima Task Force is organized into detachments with specific tasks, as shown in Table 8.

⁶ A temporary group of forces, of unit or subunit size, under a single command, created to accomplish a specific operation or mission that requires the use of a specific type of appropriate force.

Table 8 – Task organization of the troops in Operation Controle

Detachment	Constituent	Tasks assigned
Border	1st and 7th Jungle Infantry Battalions, 7th Army Police Battalion and 12th Mechanised Cavalry Troop (reconnaissance teams)	- Setting up roadblocks and checkpoints near the Pacaraima border, on the BR-174, and in Bonfim, on the BR-401; and - Motorised and foot patrols along the border in the regions of Pacaraima and Bonfim
Roadblock	10th Jungle Field Artillery Group and Mechanized Cavalry Troop	Setting up deep area roadblocks and checkpoints on the BR-174 and BR-401 (highways from Venezuela and Guyana)
Command and Control	1st Jungle Signals Battalion and 1st Jungle Signals Platoon	Installation, use and maintenance of communications system in the area of operations
Information	4th Intelligence Company and the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade Intelligence Operations Group	Intelligence collection and analysis in the area of operations
Engineering	6th Construction Engineer Battalion	Building lodging for the troops
Logistics	Troops from the 1st Jungle Logistics Battalion	Providing logistical support to troops deployed in the regions of Pacaraima and Bonfim
Dissemination	Experts in public affairs	Disseminating institutional information about Operations Controle
Psychological Operations	Detachment from the 1st Psychological Operations Battalion	Conducting campaigns prioritising three target audiences: our troops, the population of Boa Vista and immigrants

Source: Oliveira (2018).

In regards to fighting crossborder crime, the data revealed that 32 (thirty-two) Venezuelans have been arrested for attempting to enter Brazil irregularly. It should be noted that many of them are used as “mules” who are paid about four US dollars to enter Brazil illegally, transporting smuggled goods and contraband (Oliveira, 2018).

One of the measures taken by the Roraima Task Force commander to support migration control actions was to record the number of Venezuelans that pass through the checkpoint on the BR-174 highway. The collected data showed that, on average, of the 373 (three hundred and seventy-three) Venezuelans crossing the BR-174 checkpoint, about 126 return to Venezuela, which means that approximately 247 (two hundred and forty-seven) remain in Brazil⁷.

These records, combined with the data collected at the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force reception and identification centre (which recorded an average of 548 entries and 138 exits, which corresponds to 410 Venezuelans that remain in Brazil every day) makes it possible to monitor the Venezuelan migration flow⁸.

Therefore, the Brazilian government has responded to the worsening political and economic situation in Venezuela by implementing migration control and border security policies that effectively meet international demands and respect the provisions of the international regulations and conventions which Brazil has committed to uphold.

5. Conclusions

Migration is a complex phenomenon that has different psychosocial, political, economic and military effects on the regions of origin, destination and transit. Today, Venezuela is a

⁷ Averages from April to October 2018.

⁸ Averages from July to October 2018.

country of origin for migration flows to South America and overseas. The crisis in Venezuela is complex and has social, economic and political consequences for which there are no short-term solutions. Thus, the trend of migratory flows to neighbouring countries is expected to continue, with some fluctuation. As the data showed, South American countries are both final destinations and transit areas for Venezuelan migrants, with different consequences. Brazil is one of those countries, and it is sometimes used as a gateway, others as a destination for thousands of Venezuelans.

The Amazon region is an area of geopolitical and international importance for the Brazilian government, and the federal government takes its control and ensuring national sovereignty very seriously.

Therefore, the government pays special attention to the areas of the Amazon with the most active border crossings. It was precisely this influx of Venezuelans to an Amazon border in an isolated region that led the federal government and several ministries to become involved in the planned response. Following the Brazilian federal government's formal recognition of the vulnerable situation of the state of Roraima (Decree No. 9.285, 2018), a Federal Emergency Assistance Committee (Decree No. 9.286, 2018) was established to coordinate humanitarian actions in the region. Following the above decrees, the Ministry of Defence published Ministerial Directives No. 03 and 04 of 2018, which established parameters and responsibilities for conducting operations *Acolhida* and *Controle*.

Operation *Acolhida* can be classified as a humanitarian, joint and interagency operation that aims to provide humanitarian assistance (reception, identification, screening, immunisation, hosting and reallocation) to Venezuelan immigrants in the state of Roraima, in response to the migration flow caused by the humanitarian crisis.

Operation *Controle* had the objective of fighting crossborder crime and supporting migration control actions under the responsibility of the Federal Police, with the state of Roraima as its area of operations.

The study showed that the Brazilian government did not adopt emergency measures due to the risk of national instability, but to the risk of instability in one of its federal states, the state of Roraima. The instability that may have ensued if the federal government had not acted assertively and effectively would have led, in a first stage, to the deterioration of basic services for Brazilians and foreigners in that territory (health care, security, education, among others). In a second stage, it would have reached the municipal and state governments.

The Brazilian response was implemented through a complex inter-ministerial, interagency operation with the participation of non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. The United Nations have stated that the timely and efficient manner in which the problem of Venezuelan immigration has been handled so far is an example of a successful solution. From a military perspective, the planning, preparation and execution of a series of actions that involved multiple agencies in an operation with a significant number of migrants, with standards that respect international law, is proof of Brazil's ability to deal with this type of issue. The lessons learned and capabilities developed during the last years of Operation *Acolhida* and Operation *Controle* provide an invaluable contribution to the country.

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