



MIGRANT TRAJECTORIES:

venezuelan youth in Peru



Executive Summary

Migrant trajectories: Venezuelan youth in Peru

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INTRODUCTION

Since 2015, the political and economic situation in Venezuela has generated a deep crisis that has occasioned a massive migration of people to different countries in Latin America and the world. More than one million Venezuelans have arrived in Peru in the last five years. Our country has also become the nation with the largest number of asylum seekers of Venezuelan nationality in the world. This massive migration is a new phenomenon for Peru, which has traditionally been a place of origin or transit of migrants rather than a destination.

1. The problem

Venezuelan migration is due to various factors such as degradation of living conditions in all socioeconomic strata, food and medicine shortage, hyperinflation, and the decline of purchasing power of salaries, increased insecurity and violence, and heightened threat to fundamental rights and freedoms because of the political crisis. Venezuelan migration, and particularly its situation in Peru, has been the subject of interest from international organizations and civil society, as well as from different scholarly disciplines. However, the trajectories of Venezuelan migrants have not been studied from any perspective until now. Exploration of this specific subject is the main contribution of the book summarized in this executive summary.¹

2. Regulatory context

To understand the reality of Venezuelan migration in Peru, it is necessary to begin considering the existing regulations. The pertinent regulatory framework to 2019 can be summarized as follows:

¹ Being a summary, this paper does not include citations and bibliographical references. These can be found in detail in the full-length book: Blouin, C., Borios, S., Cavagnoud, R., Gamio, G., Huaita, M., Salmón, E., Vega, P. and Vigo, C (2021). *Trajectorias migrantes: la juventud venezolana en el Perú* (Migrant trajectories: Venezuelan youth in Peru). Lima: Fondo Editorial PUCP.

Refugee Law and its Regulations (2002)	Legislative Decree 1350 (2017)	National Human Rights Plan 2018-2021 (2018)	Specifica regulatory measures in face of Venezuelan population increase (2017-2019)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They gather international standards such as the non-refoulement principle and the non-criminalization of refugees. However, in recent years, the asylum system has been changed; for example, with the implementation of a fast track procedure in 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The New Migration Law establishes principles to protect migrant population. However, it has given rise to practices that are related to a logic of control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It included people that had not been addressed in previous plans, such as stateless people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Temporary Residence Permit (PTP) was adopted. Other measures were taken, such as protocols for migration control in airports and migration checkpoints, Venezuelans were requested to produce a passport and emergency was declared in three districts of Tumbes. A humanitarian visa was requested to Venezuelans.

3. Theoretical framework: trajectories, projects, migration strategies and their stages

This research is organized around the following concepts:

Migration trajectories	They represent transit situations before, during and after the migration process. They are part of people's life journey and are influenced both by the context and by personal and family trajectories.
Migration project	It consists of choosing destination, route, stay time and goal of migration.
Migration strategies	Actions undertaken towards realizing the migration project.
Stages	The migration journey has several stages: preparation, migration itself, settlement and integration.
Migration network theory	This theory, proposed by Claudia Pedone, summarizes the migrant person's relationship with other nodes within a network that emerges from interconnection between nodes. They can refer to institutions, regulations, groups and people.

This research conceives nodes as factors that structure the migratory network which emerges from the network of links between migrants and institutions, regulations, groups and people. Special attention is paid to regulatory, institutional, economic, and social factors, and it seeks to explain how these factors inform the projects, strategies, and migration trajectories of young Venezuelans in Peru according to the stage of the migration process they are in. Likewise, this group's migration trajectories are classified and compared according to profiles, reasons, entry and exit dynamics, and stages in their migration process.

4. Methodology

This research used two observation units to study the migration trajectories of Venezuelans in Peru: individuals and regulations. These were examined using data collection tools derived from qualitative research, such as organization and network mapping, in-depth interviews, and literature review. Furthermore, a longitudinal observation and analysis was undertaken, which involved interviewing young migrants at two separate times, approximately, along a year. The first interview took place face to face between January and March 2020; and, the second, remotely between January and April 2021.

Young Venezuelans of both sexes living in the three cities with the largest number of Venezuelans according to statistics from international organizations (Lima, Tumbes, and Tacna) were interviewed. It was specifically chosen to interview young people with ages that go from 18 to 35 years, as this is an age group with life projects still in the making or, in any case, transformable. Sample design was in charge of an interdisciplinary team from the Interdisciplinary Group for Research on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (GRIDEH). Taking the migration process stages, education level, and sex and gender as variables, between 15 and 18 interviews were conducted per region; in total, 51 interviews of this type were carried out. Also, between 5 and 6 interviews were conducted per region with public officials and with officials from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A total of 16 interviews were conducted.

Interviews were conducted following an informed consent protocol previously approved by the University Ethics Committee and a semi-structured interview guide. They focused on the different stages that have marked the life journey of the young people interviewed and gave special importance to their lives in Venezuela, the decision to migrate, the trip and arrival in Peru, and all the kinds of vulnerability experienced by them in health, education and work. The set of collected biographical data was transcribed and then systematized and analyzed with the aid of the Ageven matrix, a tool that enables reconstruction of the main phases and sequences of a person's life journey.

At the same time, national and international regulations on migration and asylum were reviewed. Finally, collected information was triangulated by reviewing literature and consulting official statistical sources, including requests for access to public information. Thus, interdisciplinary research, including social, human and legal sciences, was carried out. Additionally, it was qualitative type and had a gender approach.

5. Thematic areas

Research was divided into seven chapters. Their main contents are presented in this executive summary:

Chapter	Title	Author
1	Flee to live: social crisis and "survival migration"	Stéphanie Borios
2	Migration and refugee measures adopted in Peru in light of the non-refoulement human right of Venezuelan migrants	Elizabeth Salmón y Crisbeth Vigo
3	Between waiting and fear: the legal trajectories of Venezuelans in the Tumbes region	Cécile Blouin
4	Gender, caregiving and family responsibilities of Venezuelan youth: a typology of migration trajectories in the context of crisis	Robin Cavagnoud
5	Public policies, families and reunification in the context of Venezuelan migration to Peru	Marcela Huaita Alegre
6	Experiences of discrimination against young Venezuelan migrants: discourse construction and impacts on daily life	Pablo Vega Romá
7	Ethics and migration: considerations on Venezuelan migration in times of crisis	Gonzalo Gamio Gheri

This study offers a rigorous understanding of Venezuelan migration as a fact of our social life and proposes a vision aimed at developing the links between national citizens and migrants with values of justice and solidarity, and within a framework of respect for human rights and for the principles of democracy. Analyzing and understanding Venezuelan migration is an indispensable and necessary task to think about public policies on migration and asylum. The book's chapters are a starting point to generate and foster changes in public policies on the matter.

CHAPTER 1. FLEE TO LIVE: SOCIAL CRISIS AND “SURVIVAL MIGRATION”

Stéphanie Borios

Introduction

This chapter aims to demonstrate that the recent Venezuelan emigration should be understood as a *survival* migration. It explains how the massive Venezuelan migration is directly linked to the current socioeconomic and political crisis Venezuelans daily live through, a crisis reflected in a total lack of protection and in the deprivation of human rights such as education, work, health and food safety, among others.

1. Migrations in times of crisis: between “forced migration” and “survival migrations”

Some characteristics of the Venezuelan migratory flow due to the generalized internal crisis are the following:

Variety of receiving countries and exit routes.	The country of origin is unable to provide necessary documentation for an orderly migration.	Migrant vulnerability based on less educational and economic resources.	Complex management for transit and/or destination countries due to the massive and sudden number of people with basic needs.
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The most appropriate viewpoint to analyze this context of human mobility could be the concept of “survival migration”, as it highlights from the start the vulnerability affecting people who leave their country of origin given that their subsistence is at risk.

2. Crisis escalate, progressive isolation of people and rights violations in Venezuela

The Venezuelan government has made its citizens completely dependent on its services and products through social benefits such as bonuses. This fact is at the origin of the current crisis. Although social programs were put in place to support those most disadvantaged in terms of access to basic services, they included coercive measures and mechanisms for citizen control.

According to interviews with young Venezuelans, protests demanding guarantees for basic rights are added to this crisis. In 2020 and at the beginning of 2021, the main claims were about the rights to housing and basic services, to employment, to free movement (a claim motivated by fuel shortages), to political participation, to health and to education.

3. Serious and chronic food insecurity

Food security is a human right. Therefore, States must ensure that their citizens do not suffer from hunger since, otherwise, the right to life is at risk. Some critical data on this issue have been identified in Venezuela in recent years:

- At least 1 out of 4 households is in a state of severe food insecurity.
- 30% of children under 5 years of age suffer from chronic malnutrition.
- There are continuous periods of extreme food deprivation.

The crisis worsened by periods; food products became scarce, and queues became necessary to get what little was available. Below, you can see food shortage periods and some responses by Government:

2015	2016	2018
The only alternatives to get food were social programs or "missions" such as Mercados de Alimentos S.A. (MERCAL) and state-owned companies such as the Venezuelan Food Producer and Distributor S.A. (PDVAL).	Local Supply and Production Committees (CLAP) distributed food bags and boxes with other products to people previously registered. This led to the closure of businesses that distributed food and to expand the government's role.	Arrival of imported products at very high prices and thus unaffordable for most families.

In the face of this tragic food crisis, Venezuelans resorted to different mechanisms to ensure at least minimum food supply.

3.1. Individual and family strategies to relieve the lack of food

According to the United Nations World Food Program, Venezuelan families have the following survival strategies:

Food variety and quality reduction.
Portion size reduction.
Work in exchange for food.
Sale of family assets in exchange for products.

These partly coincide with strategies used by young people interviewed in the project, as shown below.

3.1.1. Rationing, sacrifice and aid among family and friends

Interviewed people pointed out that most of them ate little and/or skipped meals to feed their children and other dependents. They also reported having helped family and friends, contributing to the food basket together. Some quit school or university to work and get food.

3.1.2. Adherence to the PSUV and Access to food: the CLAP – Local Committee for Supply and Production

Faced with food shortages, many had applied for the homeland card and to join the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV). This allowed them to be listed in the government system and buy monthly food boxes, as well as to access bonuses. The nutritional quality of such foods is highly questioned, as well as the delivery criteria and frequency irregularity. Access to the right to food is indirectly conditioned to adherence to the ruling party.

3.1.3. Queueing and “bachaqueo”

Initially, scarcity manifested in lack of basic hygiene products. Soon food also became scarce. Violation of the right to food had an even greater impact on women, who queued to provide food, thus exposing themselves to insecurity, and even disrupted their life projects by becoming bachaqueras (people paid to queue to buy regulated food and resell it at higher).

3.1.4. Receiving and using remittances

Remittances sent by relatives and friends who left is key to supporting the people who stayed in Venezuela. Lacking this source of income, many would find it impossible to access food and medicine.

3.2. Consequences of acute food insecurity in production and reproduction

Lack of food in Venezuela has direct impacts on people's health. Besides, this can also affect Venezuelan women's sexual and reproductive rights, since they may choose not to have children due to the low life quality, they feel they could offer them. Additionally, according to several people, such context has affected their work performance. All these reasons are an important part of the decision to migrate.

4. Health system crisis

The second main reason —besides food security—to leave the country was the inaccessibility of medicines, which are either too expensive or unavailable. The Venezuelan health system has seriously deteriorated, and this is particularly evident in the lack of: a) medical supplies; b) specialized health personnel; c) electricity, which affects the functioning of the entire health system; and d) gasoline to transport patients.

5. Educational system crisis and the right to information and connectivity

Some causes have been identified regarding the educational system crisis in Venezuela, as shown below:

Institutionalized mistreatment of teaching staff, administrative staff and students, expressed in terrible working conditions and very low wages.

Lack of gasoline, which hampers transportation to schools.

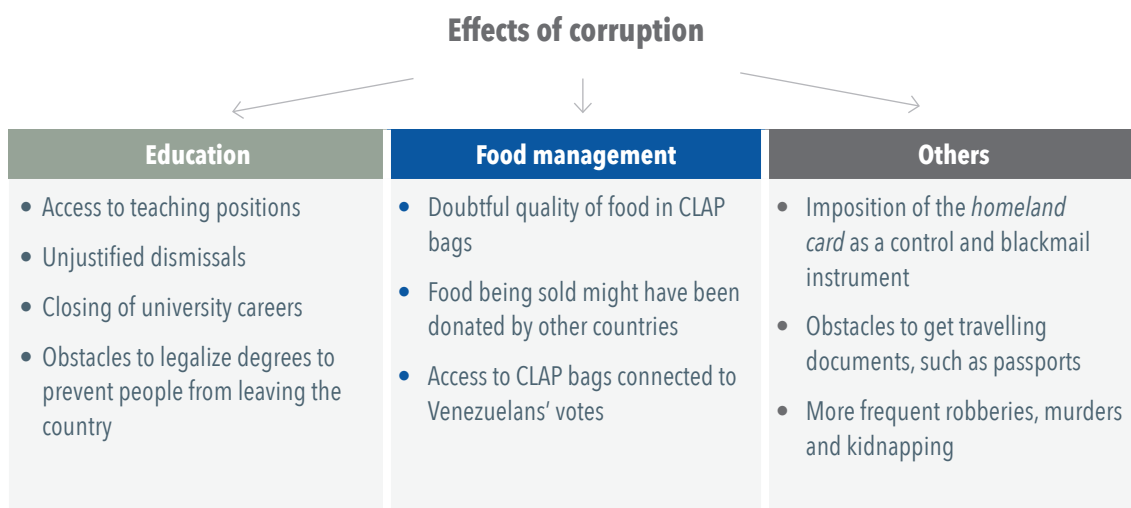
Deficient supply of basic services, which hinders school operation.

Serious decline in the education system quality due to "information malnutrition" and lack of access to technology.

6. Authority crisis: corruption, coercion, and repression

Corruption is entrenched in all sectors. Some interviewees declared that access to jobs and livelihoods depends on voting for the ruling party. The *homeland system*, a database managed by Government that controls information on Venezuelan citizens, allows the Government to track the citizens' voting records and thus to restrict access to jobs for those who support the opposition, even if they meet the requirements for a given position.

Below, you can see some sectors where the effects of corruption are evident:



7. Survival migration: between visibilization and access to rights

It is useful to speak of “survival migration” in the Venezuelan case because this term acknowledges the complexity of the migration crisis, the multiplicity of causes (lack of food, lack of access to health, environmental degradation, persecution, lack of employment opportunities), and the interrelation between them. Regardless of why a person chooses to migrate, their fundamental rights have been violated, which should imply that the international community allows these migrants to cross borders in search of a place where they can take refuge and enjoy these rights.

Although the concept of survival migrant is not legal and cannot have legal protection consequences, it is useful to capture all the crisis facets in the country of origin, to make all the cutting back to their freedoms visible, how each individual and/or family may have been impacted and, finally, how their lives have been reduced to survival situations and how fleeing has become almost inevitable.

Speaking of survival migrants can perhaps contribute to understanding the complexity of migration trajectories, which are rarely due only to economic reasons, and to sensitize both scholars and public opinion about these new human tragedies.

Conclusions

- The State no longer safeguards the rights of its citizens in Venezuela, but instead violates them.
- Violation of rights has put Venezuelans in a survival situation. The search for rights is what motivates their departure.
- The vulnerability that made them leave their country goes with them throughout their journey.
- Although the survival migrant concept is not legal, it can be used in parallel with the legal refugee claim.
- In these life stories, migration has never been part of the young people's life plan; rather, it was imposed as the only way out.

CHAPTER 2. MIGRATION AND ASYLUM MEASURES ADOPTED IN PERU IN LIGHT OF THE NON-REFOULEMENT HUMAN RIGHT OF VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS

Elizabeth Salmón y Crisbeth Vigo

Introduction

This chapter seeks to determine whether migration control measures—especially the requisites imposed to enter Peruvian territory—, and the measures referring to the procedure for requesting refugee status, affect the right to non-refoulement. This is particularly necessary when difficulties in the migration regularization process coexist with an adverse economic context for the integration of migrants.

1. The complementarity between the autonomous human right to non-refoulement and the right to non-refoulement due to a cause applied to foreigners

Venezuelan migrants in Peru—as foreigners— are entitled to the autonomous human right to non-refoulement and the right to non-refoulement due to a cause. The right to non-refoulement in the Inter-American human rights system (IAHRS) has two fundamental components: a) the personal component; and b) the objective component.

Personal Component (entitlement regarding the right)	Objective Component
Protection is not restricted to refugees or applicants for refugee status, but is extended to all foreigners who find themselves in a situation in which their life or safety is in danger.	It refers to prohibited behavior, threat or risk regarding life or freedom, threat causes, and the place to which return or expulsion is prohibited.

International Human Rights Law (IHRL) also contemplates the so-called “human right to non-refoulement due to a cause (*derecho a la no devolución causal*)”: the right that is generated in the face of the possibility of suffering torture. To the extent that the right of non-refoulement due to a cause or on grounds of torture is broader in scope than the right of non-refoulement under International Refugee Law (IRL), this protection, as indicated by the Human Rights Committee, covers “all foreigners”. Therefore, regardless of the situation (regular or irregular) and the legal category (“refugees” or “migrants”), States are absolutely obliged not to return or expel foreigners who are at real risk of suffering torture.

Both the autonomous human right to non-refoulement and the right to non-refoulement due to a cause are complementary to the extent that, faced with a situation of risk in the State of origin or residence, the foreigner may allege: a) threat or risk to his/her life or freedom for reasons of race, nationality, religion, social status or political opinion; or b) real risk of suffering torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

1.1. Dichotomy between “migrant” and “refugee” to exercise the human right to non-refoulement

An “inclusive vision” of the term “migrant” is proposed in this chapter. According to such term, a migrant is considered as anyone who has changed his/her usual place of residence (excluding tourism) regardless of the reason for this. The definition of “refugee” is based on three main instruments: the 1951 Convention, the 1984 Cartagena Declaration and the 1969 OAU Convention. According to the traditional definition, a refugee is considered to be someone who is outside their country of origin, who has well-founded fears of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, and who is unable or unwilling —because of such fears— to avail themselves of the protection of their country of origin.

In terms of entitlement to the right to non-refoulement in the IAHRS, it can fall on both migrants and asylum seekers, since article 22, section 8 of the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR) protects all “foreigners.” In terms of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (Inter-

American Court), our system acknowledges the right to non-refoulement to any foreign person, and not only asylees or refugees, when their life, integrity and/or freedom are at risk of violation, regardless of their legal or immigration status in the country.

1.2. The scope of the human right of migrants to non-refoulement and its relationship to IHRL

Pursuant to article 22, section 8, of the ACHR, the right to non-refoulement of migrants prohibits expelling or returning a person to another country, whether or not the country of origin. The scope of said prohibition is described below:

When the right to life or personal liberty of the person to be expelled is at risk of violation due to their race, nationality, religion, social condition or political opinions.

When there is a risk for said person to suffer torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

When there is a risk for said person to suffer an arbitrary interference in the right to family and private life.

In this way, according to the regulatory framework under study, Venezuelan migrants in Peru enjoy the broad protection granted by the human right to non-refoulement, although, at the level of domestic legislation, this right has not been incorporated in the same terms in which the ACHR or the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Treatment or Punishment (CAT) has.

2. Possible transgressions of the right to non-refoulement in Peruvian migration and asylum policies

Some of the migration and asylum measures adopted by the Peruvian State with respect to Venezuelan migrants will be analyzed below, considering the context of massive flows of Venezuelan population in Peru.

2.1. Migration measures

The response of Latin American countries to Venezuelan migration can be staged at three moments:

- a. Border opening
- b. Partial border closing

c. Total border closing (with the specificity of the Colombian case within the context of COVID-19)

Therefore, there is an evident need to guarantee the entry of foreigners to the territory based on the protection against refoulement, whenever there is a real risk of violation of their fundamental rights if they are returned to their State of origin and/or residence. Naturally, this standard must be applied reasonably and keeping observance of the right to non-refoulement elements so that it does not lead to eliminate the sovereign power of the States to design and implement their immigration policy.

2.2. Asylum measures

The procedure to request acknowledgment of refugee status in Peru is handled by the Executive Secretariat of the Special Commission for Refugees in Peru (CEPR), ruled by the Refugee Law and its Regulations. According to such regulations, the request for refugee status can be submitted: a) at borders, immigration control posts and police or military stations; or b) before the CEPR in Lima or in its decentralized offices.

In many cases, applications for refugee status have been submitted as an alternative mechanism for regularizing the migration status of Venezuelan migrants in our country, because: a) the migrants could not access the PTP (Temporary Work Permit) or other migratory status; or b) to have some formal document while the PTP process took place or until reaching a migratory status that allows them to regularize their stay in Peru.

It is essential to understand the impact of procedural changes for requesting refugee status on Venezuelans who are especially vulnerable due to a combination of factors, such as being victims of human trafficking, having disabilities, and being either elderly, female, or children. In fact, the political discourse about closing borders (translated into the increase in requirements for regular entry) and rejection of entry for applicants to refugee status have generated irregular entry and stay, which increases risks regarding human trafficking, different forms of exploitation and abuse, violence (including sexual and gender-based violence) and discrimination or, generally, exposure to risks that might increase their vulnerability.

Conclusions

- The human right to non-refoulement has made it possible to limit one of the States' original powers: to set the requirements to access their territories.
- The region's states' legislative or administrative measures have been changing based on the numbers of Venezuelan migrants at the borders and, with that, the saturation of the migration or asylum systems.
- Changes in immigration control measures and refugee status application procedures adopted by the Peruvian State potentially or affect the right to non-refoulement.
- It has been demonstrated that there is no awareness among immigration officials that certain practices concerning entry authorization are incompatible with the right of non-refoulement.
- Despite COVID-19 challenges, it is essential to assume a clear, reasonable, and consistent position of respect for international human rights standards.

CHAPTER 3. BETWEEN EXPECTANCY AND FEAR: LEGAL TRAJECTORIES OF VENEZUELAN IN THE TUMBES REGION

Cécile Blouin

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the legal trajectories of Venezuelan migrants in the Tumbes region at the beginning of 2020. It understands legal trajectories as the paths they take to define and redefine their migration status. It examines how legal trajectories are characterized by complexities and challenges depending on regulations, migration policies and practices of different institutions on the ground. Likewise, the analysis includes migrants' strategies in view of a hostile and, at the same time, selectively hospitable migration policy. Faced with this, migrants experience situations of protracted waiting and latent fear.

1. Tumbes: between transit region and possible destination for Venezuelans

In the context of Venezuelan migration to Peru, the field work carried out for this research project found that the Tumbes region, which separates this country from Ecuador, has been characterized by:

Being part of the migration route to South America.

Having a closer connection to migration, due to its being a border city. Despite this, until the Venezuelan population flows, it had never seen such levels of migration, which made it a focus of attention between 2017 and 2019.

Being a transit area for Venezuelans, subject to economic, family or legal border limitations.

Becoming a possible destination for Venezuelan migrants.

Sheltering the most vulnerable Venezuelan population.

Experiencing changes in mobility dynamics following restrictions to entry applied to the Venezuelan population by the Government.

2. Interviewed people's migration profile: analysis from the perspective of the hostility and selective hospitality policy

The migratory profile of Venezuelans interviewed in Tumbes reveals a diversity of migratory status in accordance with the Peruvian “hostility and selective hospitality policies.” Eduardo Domech understands the latter as follows:

Hostility Policies	Selective Hospitality Policies
They are characterized by having the effect of criminalizing and securitizing migration and borders.	They establish differences among the migrant population, which favor desirable migrants to access regularization and which applies undesirable migrants measures such as expulsion.

Until June 2019, Peru's migration policy towards Venezuelans underwent changes, setbacks, and strides simultaneously, which generated ambiguous situations and precarious statuses:

Temporary Permanence Permit (PTP) (2017)	Passport required (August 2018)	Procedural change in the asylum application (June 2019)	Humanitarian visa requires (June 2019)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temporary measure that does not grant residence.• Access limitations due to time and cost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access limitation due to lack of papers, uncertainty in terms and cost.• There were exceptions to this due to humanitarian reasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entry into Peruvian territory is not allowed without an application pre-assessment, which requires “camping” in the facilities of the Binational Border Service Center (CEBAF).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the announcement of this measure, a “good” and “bad” migrants discourse was used, and the need to protect national security was emphasized.

The foregoing shows the complexity of the migration policy towards this population in recent years. Diverse factors such as the entry time, identity document, attitude and practice of officials on duty

or being able to access legal advice are factors that decisively influence the migratory profile. The migratory profiles of the 21 people interviewed in Tumbes are witness to this:

Migration status		Total number ¹	Number per identity document
More stability	Alien registration certificate	2	Passport: 0
			ID: 2
			Undocumented: 0
	PTP	2 ²	Passport: 0
			ID: 2
			Undocumented: 0
	Refugee applicant	7 ³	Passport: 3 ⁴
			ID: 4
			Undocumented: 0
	Irregularity	11 ⁵	Passport: 2 ⁶
			ID: 6
			Undocumented: 3
Less stability			

-
- 1 The total number is 22, since one person has PTP and is also an applicant for refugee status. This person will soon access a foreigner's card through *special immigration status*.
 - 2 The case of a person who had been notified about the granting of a card to her for family reasons is included.
 - 3 Two people are in the Refugee Housing Unit (RHU) of the Binational Border Service Center (CEBAF) waiting to be admitted to enter the territory.
 - 4 The case of a person who is beginning to process his humanitarian visa is included, since he has been detained and taken to the CEBAF for entering the territory irregularly.
 - 5 One person with an expired passport is included.
 - 6 One person with an expired passport is included.

3. Migration experience: expecting and fearing

The migration experience of interviewed people can be understood in terms of expecting and fearing:

Expecting	Fearing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has many faces and accounts for diverse facts.• Must not be understood as lack of action. While migrants wait, they redefine their journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fright and fear are common feelings among migrants in face of the "violence of law" and policy actions.• Fear feelings vary among migrants.

In the Peruvian case, hostile immigration control practices by the State, such as identity control operations and xenophobic messages by local authorities, have been reinforced since 2018, while previously mentioned regulatory changes were being experienced. Faced with the impossibility of expelling the entire irregular migrant population, other mechanisms have been developed, such as constant non-admission operations and acts, to generate fear and uncertainty.

Field work showed that fear was part of the experiences among Venezuelans who had an irregular status outside the CEBAF. The interviewees expressed fear of possible detention or expulsion from the country even with a refugee claim. On the other hand, interviews showed that people left in limbo at the CEBAF in Tumbes wait indefinitely due to lack of clarity about deadlines and results of their procedures. This situation also affects people outside the CEBAF requesting refugee status.

Faced with the hostile Peruvian immigration policy, interviewees experience oscillates between expecting and fearing. In view of this, it is necessary to continue exploring this population's forms of resistance simply by not giving up their migratory project, even if they are expelled, and finding ways to cope with this expecting and fear through family, friend and, in a few cases, some civil society organizations' support.

Conclusions

- Peruvian migratory policy, characterized by hostility and at the same time selective hospitality, has had an impact on migrant population trajectories in Tumbes.
- Arrival of transit migrants and their progressive settlement have generated new dynamics in Tumbes.
- Analysis of migration trajectories reveals an uncertain, unstable, and hostile migratory reality marked by (long) moments of expecting and fearing, as well as heterogeneous migratory trajectories marked by personal, institutional, and political factors.
- It is still unclear how immigration amnesty will be implemented in October 2020, and the asylum system continues to collapse with no solution in sight in the short or medium term. This makes expecting and fearing increase among migrants. Faced with this reinforced hostility, this group has had to develop survival strategies.

CHAPTER 4. GENDER, CAREGIVING AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES OF VENEZUELAN YOUTH: A TYPOLOGY OF MIGRATION TRAJECTORIES IN A CONTEXT OF CRISIS

Robin Cavagnoud

Introduction

This chapter seeks to put in perspective and analyze the diversity of migration trajectories of young Venezuelan men and women to Peru, while considering the context of crisis and the responsibilities resulting from their family situation.

1. Contextual, theoretical, and methodological elements

1.1. Venezuelan exodus: an unprecedented case in the continent

Since 2016, Latin America has been the stage of an exodus of Venezuelan citizens, caused by deterioration of living conditions and the humanitarian crisis the country is going through. Shortage of food and medicine, added to difficulties affecting water, gas and electricity supply, are some of the manifestations of this situation that has caused an unprecedented emigration in the region.

A regional study carried out in Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil and Peru with Venezuelan children and adolescents who left Venezuela with their families shows the impact of migration on the youngest migrants' emotional condition, on their exposure to violence during and after the trip, as well as on the expression of their concerns and hopes in the country of destination.

1.2. Venezuelan migrations to Peru

Regarding the situation of Venezuelan children and adolescents in Peru, the evolution in organizing their daily lives and the different forms of vulnerability since the crisis began in the country of origin show that violence is present in different dimensions throughout the migration trajectories of adolescents, all the way from the previous life stage in Venezuela, through the transit to Peru, and in the process of settling and integrating in this country. Some adolescents migrate without family members, as they seek ways to get ahead thanks to a sense of autonomy developed since adolescence and despite social protection devices that classify them in a category of “minor” they do not identify with.

1.3. Studied population and analysis method

The analysis we propose is based on the results of a qualitative research derived from the collection of individual biographies in a sample of 51 young Venezuelans. These biographies are focused on their migration and post-migration experience between Venezuela and Peru, as well as the evolution of their daily life and their livelihood between both countries.

2. Characterization of the “crisis” as a contextual factor conditioning Venezuelan migrations

2.1. Social and economic crisis as a common denominator

Contextual factors that urged young people to leave their country are related to the social crisis that Venezuela is going through, a well-known and widespread phenomenon in the media since 2015 and 2016, which is expressed in serious economic and political problems.

The crisis shows in different ways, as portrayed below:

Queuing to get food.

Other significant difficulties as lack of medicine during the health emergency, or pregnancy follow up and deliveries.

Insecurity problems or violent clash against the police, oftentimes leading to fatal outcomes due to police repression.

2.2. Family crisis

The economic crisis consequences on families are obvious. They show in a set of vulnerability factors that have become more acute in recent years due to loss of purchasing power in households. The crisis consequences are thus felt in all areas of family well-being, in addition to causing mental health problems and depression.

2.3. From personal crisis to decision to leave

On a personal level, the crisis consequences are mainly reflected in malnutrition problems, as well as in depression and despair due to the unfeasibility of meeting daily needs and to future uncertainty.

3. Migration as an individual initiative with different family support degrees in the distance

Young people have opted for a form of individual mobility from Venezuela. This means that they are not accompanied by any relative from their inner domestic circle. However, they can travel with a person who is part of their extended kinship network. Since the cohabitant relatives in Venezuela are not present, the question of their remote care and the prospects of migration in the family project arises. Thus, the following three types of migratory trajectories have been found in this form of individual mobility:

"Adventure" migrations	Youth who migrate from Venezuela to Peru without a previous plan or a specific goal to support their families in Venezuela. They are young, only men, who migrate alone to another country within the region seeking better opportunities. They do not have parental responsibilities or the task of sending remittances to relatives staying in Venezuela.
"Selfless" migrations	Youth who also travel alone from Venezuela to Peru, but with the objective of giving comprehensive remote support to their families of origin. We designate these migrations as forms of "selflessness", a term to which we give a meaning close to "sacrifice" and "dedication". This type includes men and women.
"Exploration" migrations	Youth who leave Venezuela in order to work, send remittances to their relatives and, if or when possible, consider the possibility of bringing their close relatives (partner, children, parents) to Peru. We call them "exploration" migrants, although they could also be designated as "test" migrants, and they are mostly women.

4. Migrations within a family and “face-to-face” collective care dynamic

Other migratory trajectories of young people take place through the family group, mainly with children, siblings or parents from Venezuela to Peru. Despite differences, the three types shown below share this common aspect and complete the three categories shown above as part of the same typology.

Family reunification migrations	<p>The focus here is on the young ego (reference person in the analysis) and, eventually, on his/her accompanying relatives who have migrated from Venezuela to Peru to meet his/her partner, sibling, or parent. Therefore, these are migrations whose objective is family reunification or regrouping after an “exploration” migration.</p> <p>For most of these youth, the migratory experience of family reunification means better living conditions in Peru compared to the previous period of life in Venezuela. However, such satisfaction shows some limitations in the labor and social spheres.</p>
Close-family migrations	<p>Youth who migrate from Venezuela to Peru with close family members are the largest group in the research. These are not concentrated in a specific age group and are both men and women. Their migration trajectory presents two main configurations: a) they leave with the members of their family of origin (parents and siblings) when they are not in a formal union and do not have children; or b) they leave with the members of their procreation family (partner and children).</p>
Single-parent close family migrations	<p>These are young women who are mothers separated from their partner or the father of their children, and who migrate in extremely precarious conditions with small children and many immediate needs. During the settlement and integration stage in Peru, these women work as peddlers, which allows them to earn a basic income for the care of their children, in addition to the support they may receive from friends or family members that host them.</p>

Conclusions

- These types of trajectories are not closed categories. For example, migrations that initially appear as forms of “adventure” may transform into long-term migrations with a project of settling and stabilizing in the country of destination, and the possibility of regularly sending money to family members who stayed in the country of origin.
- Family responsibilities that determine the type of each young person’s migration trajectory lie basically on sending remittances, any care that can be assumed at a distance and implementation of migration projects that allow the reunification of the family unit in some cases.
- The social relations of young migrants with their peers represent a key factor in implementing the migration project and in moving between both countries.
- Regarding gender differences, some types include just one of the sexes. “Adventure” migrations, for example, are exclusively represented by men and show mobility as part of the construction of autonomy and masculinity throughout youth. On the contrary, the group that includes single-parent families traveling with small children comprises only women who are in a highly vulnerable situation due to their exposure to risks of violence and depression.
- “Exploration” migrations also show a larger contingent of women, but the qualitative approach of this research suggests caution and does not allow to draw definitive conclusions.
- In the other groups proposed in the typology, a certain balance is observed in the sexes, and differences between the trajectories are essentially due to the quality of the young people’s social bond with their family of origin and their commitment to care for their relatives, particularly when these are young children or older adults.
- The reproductive journey of each migrant, the composition and structure of their family of origin, combined or not with a family of procreation, and the search for personal fulfillment through migration, are several of the factors that allow us to understand the construction of migratory trajectories among young people and the importance of their family role as migrants.
- Diversity in the migratory phenomenon is matched with youth heterogeneity, beyond the context of crisis.

CHAPTER 5. PUBLIC POLICIES, FAMILIES AND REUNIFICATION IN THE CONTEXT OF VENEZUELAN MIGRATION TO PERU

Marcela Huaita Alegre

Introduction

This chapter describes the families of the young Venezuelans who participated in the study, as well as their possible need for reunification (partners, sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, etc.), from a gender perspective and in the light of the national legal framework.

1. The dynamic concept of family

The definition of “family” is complex and can evolve according to social contexts. Thus, there are a variety of family forms:

Heterosexual family: a man and a woman, married or not, with or without children

Homoparental family: two people of the same sex, married or not, with or without children

Matrimonial family: two married people with or without children

Common law families: two people who are partners with or without children

Monoparental family: a man or a woman with children

Nuclear family: two people, married or not, with or without children

Extended family: any of the families described above who lives with a person with links that relate to them (grandfather/grandmother, uncles/aunts, cousins, nephews/nieces)

2. The State's responsibility and its duty to protect families through the human rights constitutional and international framework

2.1. Families and their diversity

The right to found a family lies in human nature and is part of the fundamental rights. For this reason, the main human rights treaties and the Constitution of Peru establish protection of families. Although nuclear families with married heterosexual couples have traditionally received greater protection and recognition, other family forms, such as common law unions or extended families, have been gaining recognition and conquering rights in the Peruvian legal system. This acknowledgment of family diversity has also been protected in the Inter-American Court's decisions.

2.2. The household

The concept of household is not legally acknowledged in Peruvian regulations; however, it is a concept to which the Inter-American Court has referred indicating that States must favor its development and strength. The notion of household refers to the links generated in the interpersonal relationship of its members, where elements such as coexistence, frequent contact, personal and affective closeness are recognized. Thus, the household is not limited to kinship ties and is compatible with the diversity of family composition.

3. The families of young Venezuelan migrants in Peru (characterization)

Venezuelan migration is characterized by being family-based. This means that besides people travelling alone, there is a large contingent of family groups who travel. Another characteristic is that most migrants are youth.

Twenty-seven young migrant women and twenty-four men with an average age of 26 years were interviewed for this project. Regarding family compositions and ties, field work showed that:

- Half of interviewed people self-identified as single and the other half acknowledged having a stable relationship (married or not) or past relationship (breakup).
- 23 people classified their family status based on their “procreation family” (partners, children) and 28 people based on their “family of origin” (parents, siblings, etc.).

- People who identify themselves as married are mostly women, in a ratio of 6 to 1. Likewise, it is mostly women who state that their family composition includes their “family of procreation”, in a ratio of 17 to 6. Among the people who recognize themselves as single, the majority are men, in a ratio of 15 to 10. Similarly, it is mostly men who refer to their “family of origin”, in a ratio of 18 to 10.
- The most recurrent family forms at the time of the interviews were nuclear and single-parent families, followed by blended families and single people. Four people identified as homosexual.
- In most cases, the mother, followed by the father, grandparents, and in-laws were identified as the household ascendants. On the other side, the descendants who were part of the household were, for the most part, children under 6 years of age, followed by children under 10 and 18 years of age. 29 people acknowledged a heterosexual partner, and 2 acknowledged a same-sex partner. 49 people referred to the brothers and sisters as part of their close family.
- Interviewees recognized as part of their family both those people with whom they have a blood relationship or by affinity as well as people with whom they have frequent contact and personal and affective closeness.
- In 14 cases, interviewed people traveled with their (heterosexual) partners and in 13 cases they also traveled with their children. Two people traveled with their mother or father, and 6 people traveled with their siblings. In addition, 8 people traveled with members of their extended family, such as cousins, uncles/aunts, brother-in-law, and cousin of the couple, and 16 people mentioned friends.
- Finally, 33 people expressed their desire to reunite their family, 4 indicated said that they preferred that their relatives stay in Venezuela, 2 were undecided and 12 did not address the issue.

4. Families in the Peruvian migration policy and State obligations

4.1. Family migration

According to the IOM, during the migration process, a person and their family may experience different situations:

Family formation

A national or resident of a country marries or joins a non-resident foreign person, and through marriage helps him/her to change his/her immigration status.

Accompanying family

One person is the main migrant, but is accompanied by members of his/her family.

International adoption

A national or resident of a country adopts a foreign boy or girl and requests recognition as a national of the country by virtue of the legal bond of adoption.

Family reunification

A person or several members of a family wish to reunite with another person/s from the same family, who legally reside in another country.

Transnational families

The members of a family live physically separated from each other due to migration processes, but keep family ties alive. This allows them to be part of a family unit despite the distance.

These family processes can occur regardless of the family type its members belong to. However, the legislation of each country will determine the extent to include those who are considered “members” of a family and, therefore, with the possibility of acknowledging their rights or not.

4.2. Change in the Peruvian migration policy regarding families and their members

It is possible to differentiate four periods in the Peruvian State’s policy regarding migrants and their families:

Period	Years	Description
Restrictive approach	1991-2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative Decree 703 is adopted. It established an extremely restrictive vision of family: it referred only to the family of matrimonial origin, and the migratory status of its members was totally subsumed to the status and migratory status of the holder. Only adults and unmarried daughters were included for the purposes of considering migration units.
Visibilization	2008-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative Decree 1043 is adopted. It incorporated amendments to the Immigration Law. It differentiated between holder and family members and recognized and categorized the latter as holders in relation to their migratory status. Thus, their immigration status could change separately from that of the holder.
Broader approach and acknowledgment	2015-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative Decree 1236 is adopted. It incorporated, together with the principles of fundamental rights and state sovereignty, other principles such as the best interests of the child and adolescent, and the family migration unit. Likewise, it acknowledged rights both to families based on marriage and to those based on common law union and included the concept of household. The norm acknowledges that the household includes children and parents of the spouses or members of the common law union, and grants equal benefits to children and stepchildren when they are minors or single adults who cannot attend to their own subsistence due to disability, and only to direct children under 28 years of age if they are single and successfully follow technical or higher studies. In the same way, it established that the migratory status of the foreign holder and his/her relatives may be different. Despite this progress, this decree never came into force because it was not regulated.
Fulfillment of rights	Since 2017 to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative Decree 1350 and its regulations in Supreme Decree 007-2017-IN, are adopted. They gather the changes set forth by Legislative Decree 1236 and makes them come into force. In addition, it acknowledges groups of people in situations of vulnerability. The National Migration Policy 2017-2025 (Supreme Decree 015-2017-RE) is also adopted at this stage. It follows the same line as the aforementioned regulations.

As can be deduced from the foregoing, accelerated steps have been taken in expanding acknowledgment of the diversity of families and their members in the last five years. However, despite positive changes, the Peruvian migration policy has not yet been widened sufficiently to be respectful of the human rights of migrant family members. Thus, implemented household delimitation leaves out people who could be part of said household and establishes a differentiation that could at some point be considered undue state interference.

5. Tensions between migration policy and State obligations regarding human rights of diverse family members

Not all families enjoy the same protection in Peruvian legislation. Indeed, according to it, only the following categories may apply for family reunification: fathers/mothers, spouses, cohabitants in a strict common law union, children, stepchildren under 18 or older with disabilities, and studying single children up to 28 years old. Thus, blended or reconstituted families, extended families and families based on same-sex couples have a lesser acknowledgment.

6. Family links and future family reunification

Interviews showed, among other facts, that:

- One element that determines the decision to migrate is the need to improve the living standards of migrants and their families.
- Forming one's own family is socially one of the most recurrent life projects; in particular, the possibility of having children; but this can be reconsidered according to life trajectories, both among men and women.
- A large part of the young women state that they have established a valuable relationship with a partner. In addition, they have children of different ages born before their decision to migrate. They make up a greater number of young people who traveled accompanied by their children. In turn, young men declare themselves mostly single and without children; a second group recognizes partnership ties, and a smaller number declare they have children or have traveled accompanied by them. This allows us to think that the latter may have more flexibility in their life projects and in the organization of new families than young women who already assume family responsibilities.

- The experience of separation from their family of origin, beyond socioeconomic circumstances that can determine the decision to migrate, can be lived with a certain expectation. However, this expectation among women can be mediated by family responsibilities assumed at an early age.
- Motherhood is a very important element in women's identity. Therefore, being young migrants with dependent children can be a determining factor regarding the decisions they must make in relation to the willingness to be separated from their children for long periods or to face the stress of keeping children with them in extremely difficult circumstances.
- Establishing friendly or loving relationships is an area of great relevance, especially at the age of interviewed migrants. Being in a relationship and having children can increase the difficulties of integrating into destination cities, given that as young people they must face various problems, and that overcoming crises is a challenge.

Migration can lead young men and women to face important but differentiated challenges regarding their family group. In the future, if they settle in Peru, they are likely to consider the possibility of family reunification. This can be even more complex if their own migration difficulties and their status as immigrants or refugees are considered, as well as the documentation they may have had when entering Peru.

Despite everything, in accordance with our regulations, a family reunification project will be especially successful for heterosexual, married or common-law families without matrimonial impediment, with children. Other types of family will face serious difficulties.

Considering the importance of the family bond and the right of every person to live in a family, as well as the recognition of their diversity, these margins should be expanded in the near future to be more comprehensive in family reunification regulations.

CHAPTER 6. EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST YOUNG VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS: DISCOURSE CONSTRUCTION AND IMPACTS ON DAILY LIFE

Pablo Vega Romá

Introduction

This chapter addresses discrimination situations that young Venezuelans have experienced in the cities of Lima, Tacna, and Tumbes, aiming to analyze the xenophobic discourses that emerge in these experiences, how they impact the daily life of Venezuelan people in Peru and its consequences over the possibility of an intercultural project in the migration context.

1. Thinking xenophobia

1.1. Defining the concept

To approach the forms of discrimination experienced by Venezuelan people in Peru, it is necessary to understand some concepts:

Xenophobia	Ethnocentrism	Nation - centrist
Following Marta Rangel, it is mainly the "fear of foreigners, but it is also used to refer to different ethnic groups or people whose identity is unknown to us."	According to Antonio Alaminos, Cristina López and Óscar Santacreu, it is the "perception of one's own culture and lifestyle as superior to those of other societies."	According to Alejandro Grimson, Silvina Merenson and Gabriel Noel, it is the "naturalization of the national scale when observing the production and legitimation of analytical categories and concepts evaluatively applied to any space-time."

These concepts allow us to understand that xenophobic events should not be explained in isolation, but instead require unbundling the logics that operate in the cultural fabric of societies to contextualize the rationalities and feelings that have been generated, in a particular way, in a specific population, against an otherness considered foreign. This situation becomes more complex in countries that have structural problems, such as lack of employment, insecurity, or great deficiencies in providing basic services, which have historically affected the people, and which influence emergence of a favorable context for blaming such situations on social groups perceived as “alien” to a nation.

1.2. Venezuelan migration in Peru

The Venezuelan migration process has some salient characteristics in Peru:

Informal labor of Venezuelan migrants.

Difficulty to get a regular immigration status due to the tightening of immigration control measures.

Peru has traditionally been a country that sends rather than a country that receives migrants.

Two opinion polls conducted by the Institute of Public Opinion reflect that Peruvians are prone to assume discriminatory discourse and practices against Venezuelan migrants.

These polls also show a link between the negative perception of the Venezuelan migration and the acknowledgment of cultural differences between the local and foreign population.

Peruvian authorities have followed a similar trend, blaming Venezuelan migrants for problems that existed before their arrival and explicitly promoting rejection and hatred against the foreign “other.”

2. Xenophobia against Young Venezuelan migrants

2.1. Discrimination in daily life

Interviews during the field work in Tumbes, Tacna and Lima showed that most Venezuelan youth, both men and women, had felt discriminated against due to their status as foreigners in the country, mainly during their work activities. However, cases were also identified in which discrimination was experienced in public spaces at a time when Venezuelans were engaged in other types of activities.

According to situations described by the young migrants, the differentiation between Peruvians and Venezuelans is made through an identification process, based on the use of language as a distinctive

feature. This previous process of population “classification”, within a specific nationality, is how discriminatory acts are produced.

Interviews show that the xenophobic events did not occur in a situation of conflictive interaction, such as a robbery, an argument, or a fight, but rather unexpectedly. Likewise, in the context of rejection towards Venezuelans, the term “veneco” has become a common denominator that allows more automatically articulating the association of Venezuelans with various negative qualifiers. Finally, it is necessary to underline that discrimination acts have had repercussions on different age groups, including minor relatives of interviewees, who experienced discrimination by Peruvian children in educational spaces.

2.2. Exploring the causes

During the interviews, some Venezuelan citizens mentioned the role played by the media in stigmatization against them, noting, for example, the differences made when presenting crimes committed by people according to their nationality. Consumption of media information that links the Venezuelan population with crime generates a predisposition on Peruvians when assuming a certain attitude towards Venezuelan migrants with whom they interact.

On the other hand, the interviews also expressed critical opinions regarding the attempt to construct, through the media and symbolically, images of Venezuelan migrants as a homogeneous group, with essential and immutable characteristics, stemming from their place of origin. In this regard, when these characteristics are presented as negative, and even as dangerous, the founding elements for externalizing xenophobia emerge. Some interviewees emphasized that prejudice towards people of their nationality was built on the bad behavior of some of their nationals. The problem with this type of discourse is that, beyond criticizing the homogenization of Venezuelans, it tends to justify rejection under the assumption that they carry out criminal activities. This does not mean that such acts should not be criticized or sanctioned, but it should be emphasized that xenophobia does not arise from migration, but rather stems from a negative conception of cultural difference, where intrinsic characteristics attributed to certain populations are used as a mechanism to justify rejection and violence.

In short, following Ana María Lara, images built about migrants are articulated by social actors in interaction, public opinion configured from the media, and within the cultural and political context in which attitudes and perceptions about a given society are permanently reformulated.

3. Impacts of xenophobia and future perspectives

In Tacna, Tumbes and Lima, cities where the fieldwork for this research project was carried out, Venezuelan migrants are subject to multiple situations of potential discrimination. This contributes to the deepening of certain ties of solidarity among people of the same nationality, as confirmed by most of those interviewed. This panorama, added to the existence of the latent xenophobic problem, contributes to consolidate the symbolic borders between “what is Peruvian” and “what is Venezuelan”. These factors deepen the vulnerability condition of Venezuelan migrants, who usually have pressing economic needs, a high level of insertion in informal work, and difficulties to get regular immigration status.

Now, to deactivate the rationale underlying the described xenophobic context, it is necessary in the first place to stop considering that the differences and attributes on which the division between the foreign “them” and the national “us” are natural; and, secondly, to establish what roles and initiatives should be fulfilled both by the receiving society and the migrant population to build an intercultural project in the context of international migration. As for the latter, it is essential to begin to recognize cultural differences as a characteristic that is not problematic and to think of Interculturality as a possibility of dialogue and encounter, beyond recognition. The pending tasks include:

Sensitization actions that revert cultural difference nationwide.	Public actions assumed at government entities to build a discourse that assumes migration and its consequences as a cultural and economic possibility.	Mass media responsibility when building and circulating images of migrants.
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Conclusions

- The main manifestation of xenophobia is rejecting certain social groups considered *foreigners*. In the Peruvian case, the “nation-centrism”, on which this rejection is based, is expressed in the distinction between “what is Peruvian” and “what is Venezuelan”.
- In countries where there are long-standing structural problems, such as Peru, migrations are often used as a justification to explain such problems.
- The narratives of young Venezuelans allowed us to see the implications of xenophobic discourse in their daily lives. Faced with this type of experience, they resorted to emphasizing that not all Venezuelans were the same. However, this reasoning can be a problem, since there is a risk for people to internalize explanations that reduce discrimination to causes that are exogenous to the receiving society, which would prevent addressing the main roots of the problem.
- The term “veneco” proved to have a negative semantic load.
- The construction of an intercultural project must consider citizen actions and State policies that make the population aware of Venezuelan migrants’ rights, and that place dialogue as a central axis.

CHAPTER 7. ETHICS AND MIGRATION: REFLECTION ON THE VENEZUELAN MIGRATION IN CRISIS TIMES

Gonzalo Gamio Gheri

Introduction

This chapter approaches migration from ethics. It proposes to examine the difficulties experienced by migrants upon arrival at their destination, particularly when they are—as is often the case—in conditions of physical and economic vulnerability. Risks and injustices suffered by migrants will be discussed here, as well as ideas and practices that can be used to counter and prevent them. These ideas will be developed around the case of Venezuelan migration in Peru.

1. Fear to strangers. Migration and violence

Migrating is often a dramatic experience, a trying process in which entire families risk their lives in an adverse or even hostile setting. Indeed, it is quite common for part of the inhabitants of the place of destination to reluctantly receive newcomers. Immigrants are often exposed to stigmatization and violence.

Stigmatization of foreigners as criminals, or as persons willing to undertake difficult jobs and carry out cumbersome tasks in exchange for a meager salary, generate potential forms of violence. From the standpoint of someone who is prey to xenophobic prejudice, migrants' willingness to be victims of underemployment leads to distortions in the labor market that could seriously harm native workers. Hostile treatment to foreigners seeking to settle in the reception country is a stark expression of ideological intolerance in some sectors of society.

2. Practical reason and empathetic projection

From a civic perspective, it is necessary to work in the field of mentalities. The fear of strangers as an attitude that underlies migrant stigmatization and the exercise of violence against them is opposed by an empathy-based ethic. Although attention to structural policy issues —linked to matters of distributive justice and employment promotion— are essential to guarantee access to rights for the most vulnerable sectors of society (including migrants), critical examination and reform of our mentalities are fundamental for affirming a humanitarian culture.

Empathetic projection is a cardinal process to develop a humanitarian ethic. It is an operation of reason and imagination that implies that agents can put themselves in the place of another person with the purpose of “feeling with him/her”.

3. Migration, integration, and justice

Integration of Venezuelan migrants to Peruvian society is problematic due to various reasons.

Although the Peruvian government had initially provided facilities for the entry of Venezuelan citizens to Peru, later the authorities raised greater requirements to allow their stay in the country.

The procedures to access required documents are cumbersome, have a cost and take time.

Lack of documents is a serious impediment to get a formal job.

Many migrants who have found a job in Lima earn less than the minimum living wage.

Although many migrants have professional degrees, they encounter serious procedural and economic difficulties to validate their academic credentials.

Preschool and school bullying is a frequent manifestation of discrimination against immigrants. It implies a form of social stigmatization (“they are like that”) that erodes the victim’s self-esteem. This type of harassment is a form of symbolic violence that has destroyed the lives of many people. Having to migrate and take root in a new land is already a difficult and often heartbreaking decision; having to deal with people’s prejudice and hostility towards migrants and their children can quickly become a true nightmare.

Oftentimes, these hostile attitudes seek justification in the criminalization of Venezuelans. In some media outlets the Venezuelan migration is presented as a relevant factor for understanding the current crisis in Perú. Some op-ed writers in conservative media refer to Venezuelan migration as

an “invasion” and consider that humanitarian attention to migrants is contrary to our “national interests.”

Stigmatization makes violence against foreigners particularly disturbing. Aggression against migrants does not target only the individual, but also what he/she represents; namely, the group to which he/she belongs, his/her culture and lifestyle. A hate message is communicated to the community through these actions. Prejudice leads to stigmatization, and this can turn into hatred. Hatred of strangers can turn migrants into enemies.

4. Integration and critique of prejudice. Ethics and attention to migration in pandemic times

The tightening of migrant admission policies by the Peruvian State has generated serious difficulties for the medical care of Venezuelan citizens who are trying to get asylum in Peru in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many do not even have a fixed place to live in while processing the corresponding immigration permit or authorization to stay in the country. They neither have access to shelters. They belong to the weakest sectors in the context of this health crisis.

Peru’s labor environment is fundamentally precarious and informal. The pandemic has caused hundreds of thousands of Peruvians to lose their jobs. The Venezuelan community in our country has suffered deeply in the last year because of the economic troubles in Peru. Many of the Venezuelan immigrant stories involve shrinking wages, and even situations in which employers refused to pay their salaries.

Despite such critical situation and governmental policy limitations, the Peruvian State has adopted some correct decisions regarding the protection of immigrants.

Conclusions

- Mentality change—going from fear of strangers to an ethic of empathy—demands a joint effort by Government and civil society in the field of education and culture. It is necessary to build a genuine democratic citizenship.
- The stories of many Venezuelan immigrants in Peru and other regions of Latin America are stories of terrible deprivation and suffering, but also of indomitable perseverance in the struggle to take charge of their lives and move their loved ones forward. These stories are ethically exemplary and deserve our respect and recognition.
- It is necessary to disseminate in Perú a reasonable and sensitive approach concerning these stories and experiences, so that the citizens, acting as moral and political agents, can defend the rights and freedoms of migrants.
- Forging a culture of solidarity with migrants is an important measure, an initiative that must find a place in civil society through associations oriented towards this type of views and actions.
- The Venezuelan community should urgently organize itself, creating and strengthening institutions from which they can coordinate common actions and convey a clear message regarding inter-community contact and respect for the rights of immigrants.
- Building institutions is essential to set out a careful dialogue about the situation of Venezuelan immigrants and to lay the foundations for a healthy coexistence based on mutual learning and concern for the rights of people, both national and foreigner.



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